

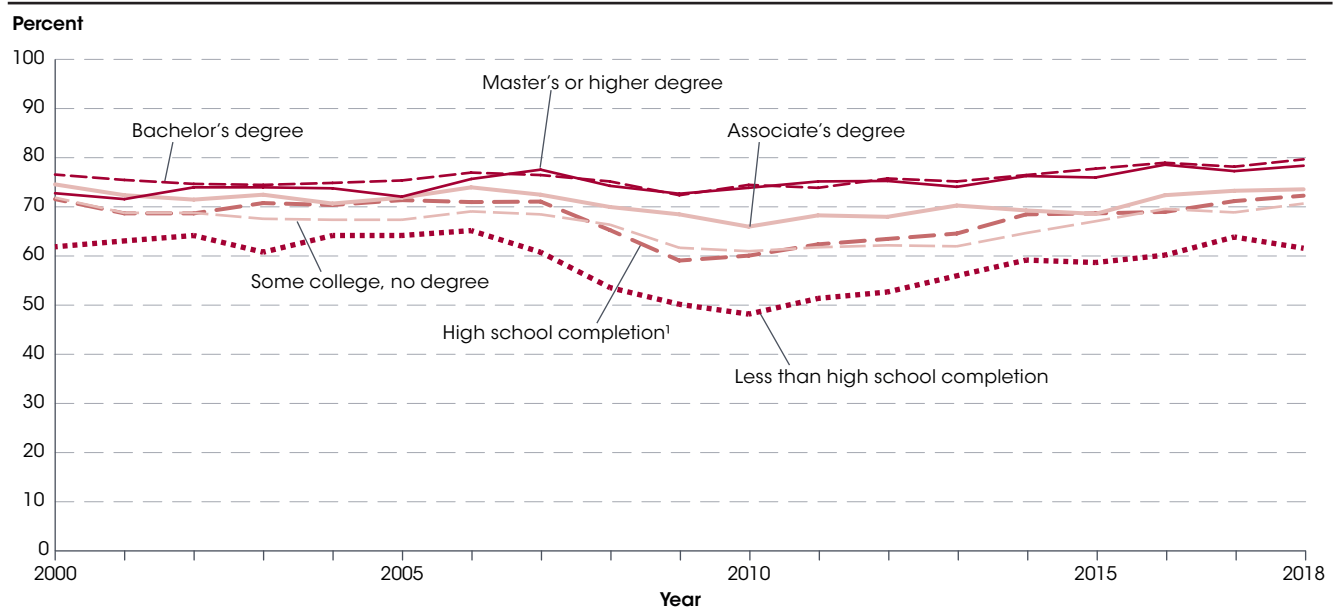
# Annual Earnings

For 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round in 2018, higher educational attainment was associated with higher median earnings. This pattern was consistent from 2000 through 2018. For example, in 2018 the median earnings of those with a master's or higher degree (\$65,000) were 19 percent higher than the earnings of those with a bachelor's degree (\$54,700), and the median earnings of those with a bachelor's degree were 57 percent higher than the earnings of high school completers (\$34,900).

This indicator examines the annual earnings of 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round (i.e., worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year). Many people in this age group recently exited formal education and may be entering the workforce for the first time or transitioning from part-time to full-time work. In 2018, some 74 percent of those who were in the

labor force<sup>1</sup> worked full time, year round. This percentage was generally higher for those with higher levels of educational attainment. For example, 80 percent of those with a bachelor's degree worked full time, year round in 2018, compared with 72 percent of high school completers (those with only a high school diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED) in this age group.

**Figure 1. Percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds in the labor force who worked full time, year round, by educational attainment: 2000-2018**



<sup>1</sup> Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.  
 NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and military barracks. Full-time, year-round workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year. The labor force refers to the population who reported working or looking for work in the given year.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2001-2019; and previously unpublished tabulations. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 502.30.

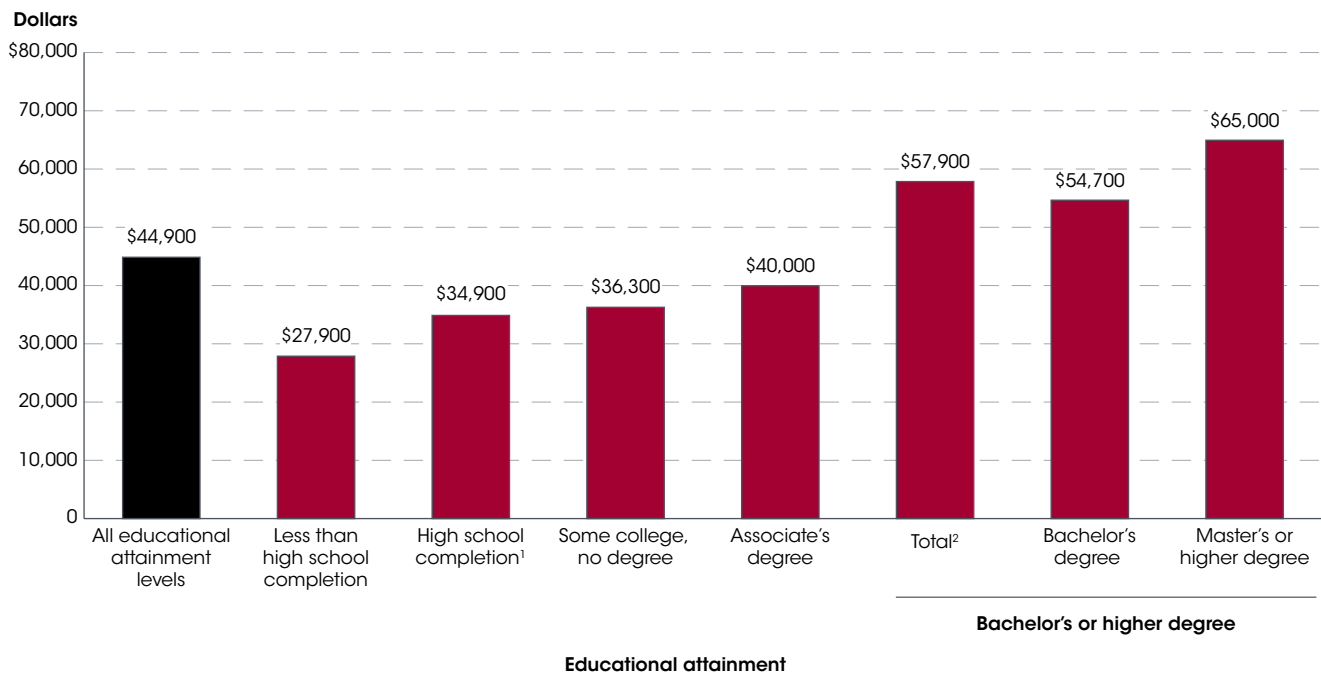
Changes over time in the percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds in the labor force who worked full time, year round varied by level of educational attainment. The percentage of labor force participants who worked full time, year round increased among those with a bachelor's degree (from 77 percent in 2000 to 80 percent in 2018) and those with a master's or higher degree (from 73 percent in 2000 to 78 percent in 2018). At educational attainment levels

lower than a bachelor's degree, there was no measurable difference between 2000 and 2018 in the percentage of labor force participants who worked full time, year round: those who did not complete high school (62 percent in 2018), those who completed high school (72 percent in 2018), those with some college but no degree (71 percent in 2018), and those with an associate's degree (73 percent in 2018).

More recently, between 2010 and 2018 the percentages of 25- to 34-year-olds in the labor force who worked full time, year round increased for every level of educational attainment. For example, during this period, the

percentage of high school completers who worked full time, year round increased from 60 to 72 percent, and the corresponding percentage of those with a bachelor’s degree increased from 74 to 80 percent.

**Figure 2. Median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34, by educational attainment: 2018**



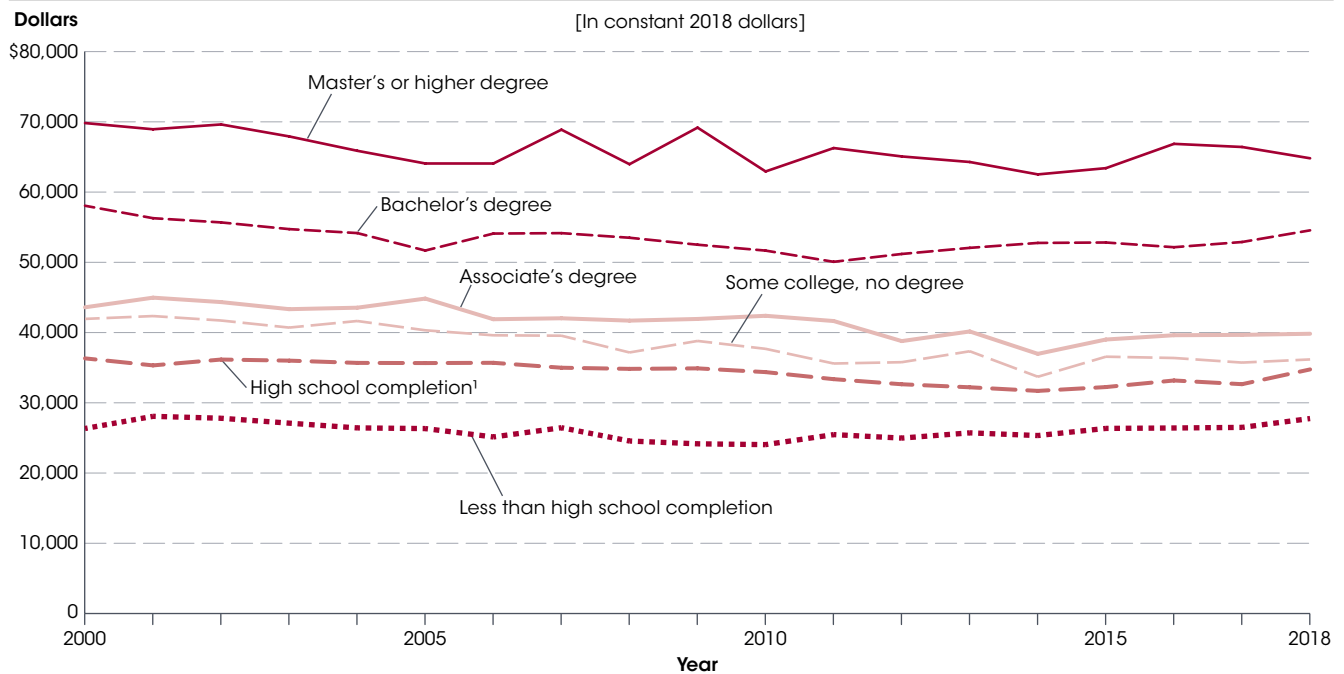
<sup>1</sup> Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

<sup>2</sup> Represents median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34 with a bachelor’s or higher degree.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and military barracks. *Full-time, year-round* workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 502.30.

For 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round, higher educational attainment was associated with higher median earnings; this pattern was consistent from 2000 through 2018. For example, in 2018, the median earnings of those with a master’s or higher degree were \$65,000, some 19 percent higher than the earnings of those with a bachelor’s degree (\$54,700). In the same year, the median earnings of those with a bachelor’s degree were 57 percent

higher than the earnings of high school completers (\$34,900), and the median earnings of high school completers were 25 percent higher than the earnings of those who did not complete high school (\$27,900). This pattern of higher earnings associated with higher levels of educational attainment also held for both males and females, as well as for those who were White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian.

**Figure 3. Median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25-34, by educational attainment: 2000-2018**

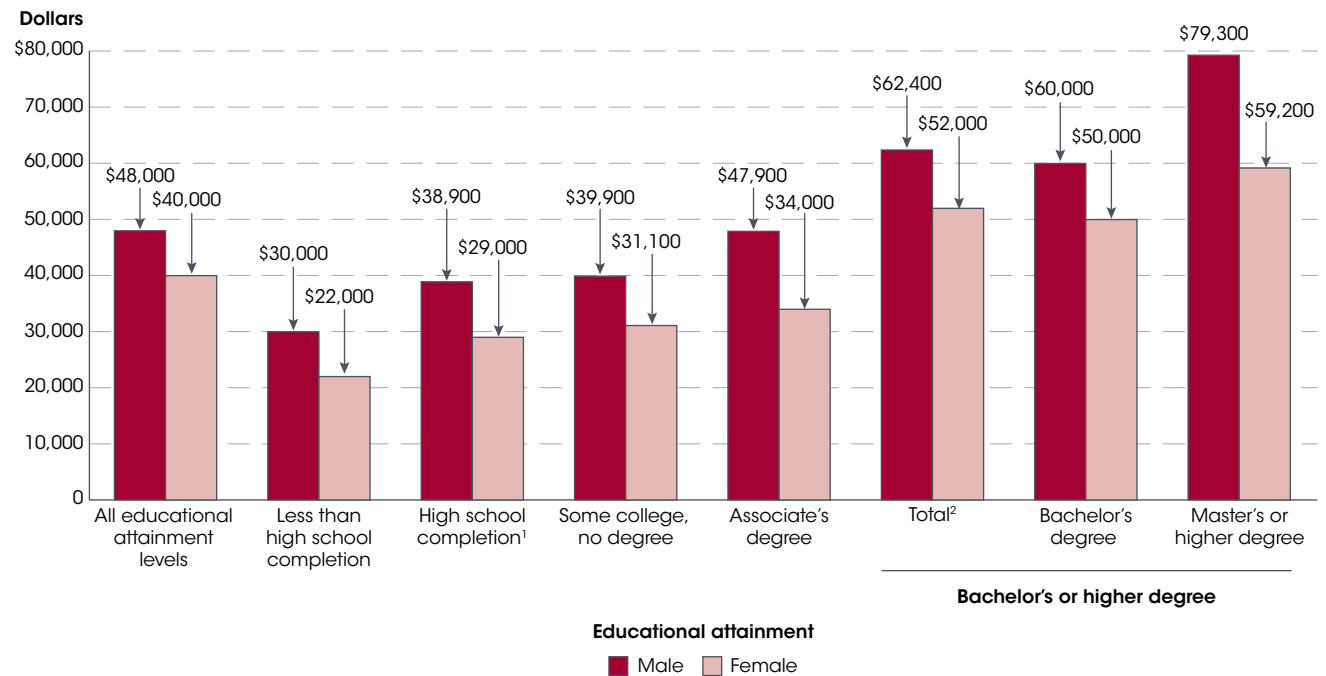
<sup>1</sup> Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and military barracks. *Full-time, year-round* workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year. Earnings are presented in constant 2018 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), to eliminate inflationary factors and to allow for direct comparison across years.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2001-2019; and previously unpublished tabulations. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 502.30.

The median earnings (in constant 2018 dollars)<sup>2</sup> of 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round declined from 2000 to 2018 at most educational attainment levels. The exceptions were those who did not complete high school and those with a master's or higher degree: neither of these groups had a measurable change in median earnings between these two years. During this period, the median earnings of high school completers in this age group declined from \$36,500 to \$34,900 (a 4 percent decrease). The median earnings of those with some college but no degree declined from \$42,100 to \$36,300 (a 14 percent decrease). Similarly, the median earnings of those with an associate's degree declined from \$43,700 to \$40,000 (a 9 percent decrease). The median earnings of those with a bachelor's degree declined from \$58,200 to \$54,700 (a 6 percent decrease).

The difference in median earnings between 25- to 34-year-olds with a bachelor's degree and those who were high school completers was smaller in 2018 than 2000. In 2000, the median earnings of those with a bachelor's degree were \$21,800 higher than the median earnings of high school completers; in 2018, this difference was \$19,800. The narrower gap in 2018 was primarily due to the decrease in earnings for those with a bachelor's degree. Differences between median earnings of individuals who completed high school and those who did not and between median earnings of individuals with a master's or higher degree and those with a bachelor's degree did not change measurably during this same period.

**Figure 4. Median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34, by educational attainment and sex: 2018**

<sup>1</sup> Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

<sup>2</sup> Represents median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34 with a bachelor's or higher degree.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and military barracks. Full-time, year-round workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 502.30.

In 2018, the median earnings of 25- to 34-year-old males who worked full time, year round were higher than the corresponding median earnings of their female peers at every level of educational attainment, ranging from 20 percent higher for those with a bachelor's degree to 41 percent higher for those with an associate's degree. For example, the median earnings of males in this age group with a master's or higher degree (\$79,300) were 34 percent higher than those of their female peers (\$59,200). The median earnings of male high school completers in this age group (\$38,900) were 34 percent higher than those of their female peers (\$29,000).

In general, the median earnings of White 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year round exceeded the

corresponding median earnings of their Black and Hispanic peers at most attainment levels in 2018. For instance, the median earnings for those with a bachelor's degree were \$57,700 for those who were White, compared with \$45,100 for their Hispanic peers and \$40,900 for their Black peers. The exceptions were those with some college and those with a master's or higher degree, where there were no measurable differences in median earnings between those who were White and Hispanic. However, among those with a master's or higher degree, those who were Asian had higher median earnings (\$80,100) than their White (\$63,600), Hispanic (\$59,900), and Black (\$53,800) peers.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> The labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment.

<sup>2</sup> Constant dollars based on the Consumer Price Index, prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 502.30

**Related indicators and resources:** [Earnings and Employment \[Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups\]](#); [Employment and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment](#); [Employment Outcomes of Bachelor's Degree Holders \[web-only\]](#); [Post-College Employment Outcomes by Field of Study and Race/Ethnicity \[The Condition of Education 2016 Spotlight\]](#)

**Glossary:** Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree; Constant dollars; Consumer Price Index (CPI); Educational attainment (Current Population Survey); Employment status; High school completer; High school diploma; Master's degree; Median earnings; Racial/ethnic group