

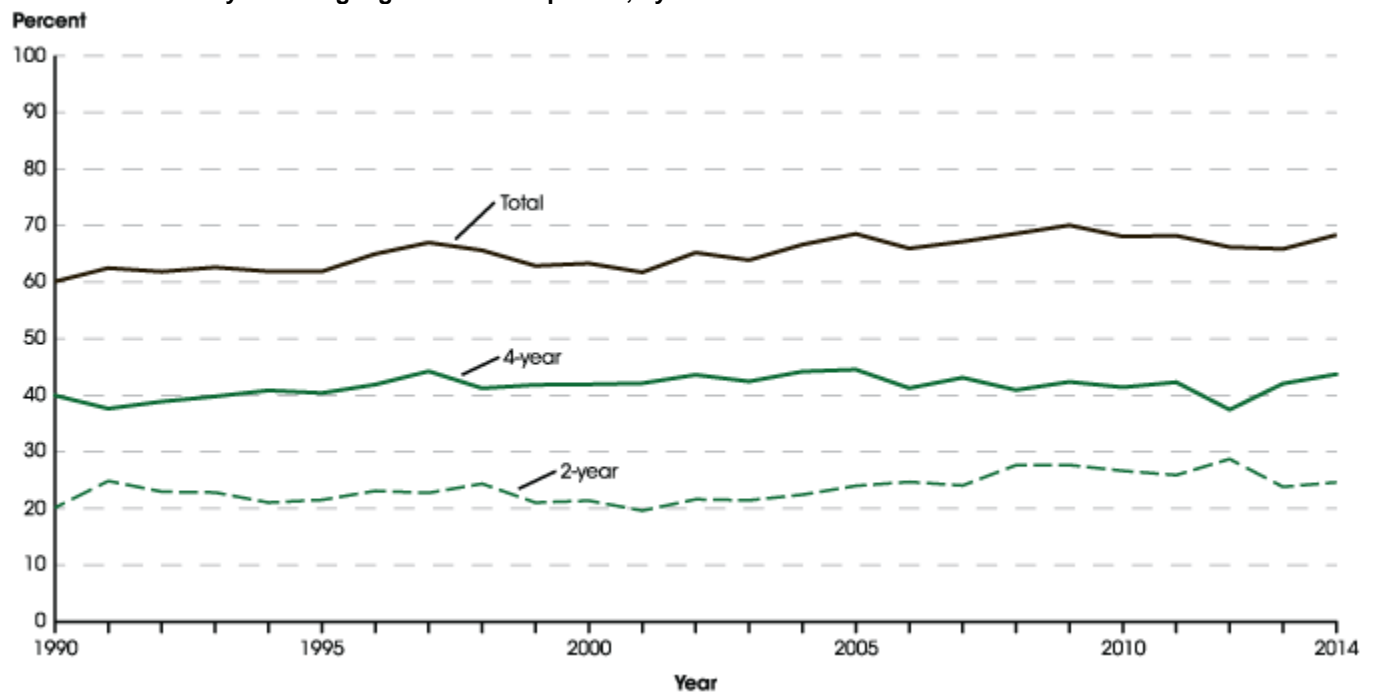
Immediate College Enrollment Rate

(Last Updated: May 2016)

The immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers increased from 60 percent in 1990 to 68 percent in 2014. The rate in 2014 for those from high-income families (81 percent) was nearly 29 percentage points higher than the rate for those from low-income families (52 percent). The 2014 gap between those from high- and low-income families did not measurably differ from the corresponding gap in 1990.

Of the 2.9 million high school completers in 2014, some 2.0 million, or 68 percent, enrolled in college by the following October. This rate, known as the *immediate college enrollment rate*, is defined as the annual percentage of high school completers (including GED recipients) ages 16 to 24 who enroll in 2- or 4-year colleges in the fall immediately following high school. The immediate college enrollment rate increased 8 percentage points from 1990 (60 percent) to 2014 (68 percent) and 5 percentage points between 2000 (63 percent) and 2014. The 2014 rate was not significantly different from the corresponding rate in 2013.

Figure 1. Percentage of recent high school completers who were enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges by the October immediately following high school completion, by level of institution: 1990–2014



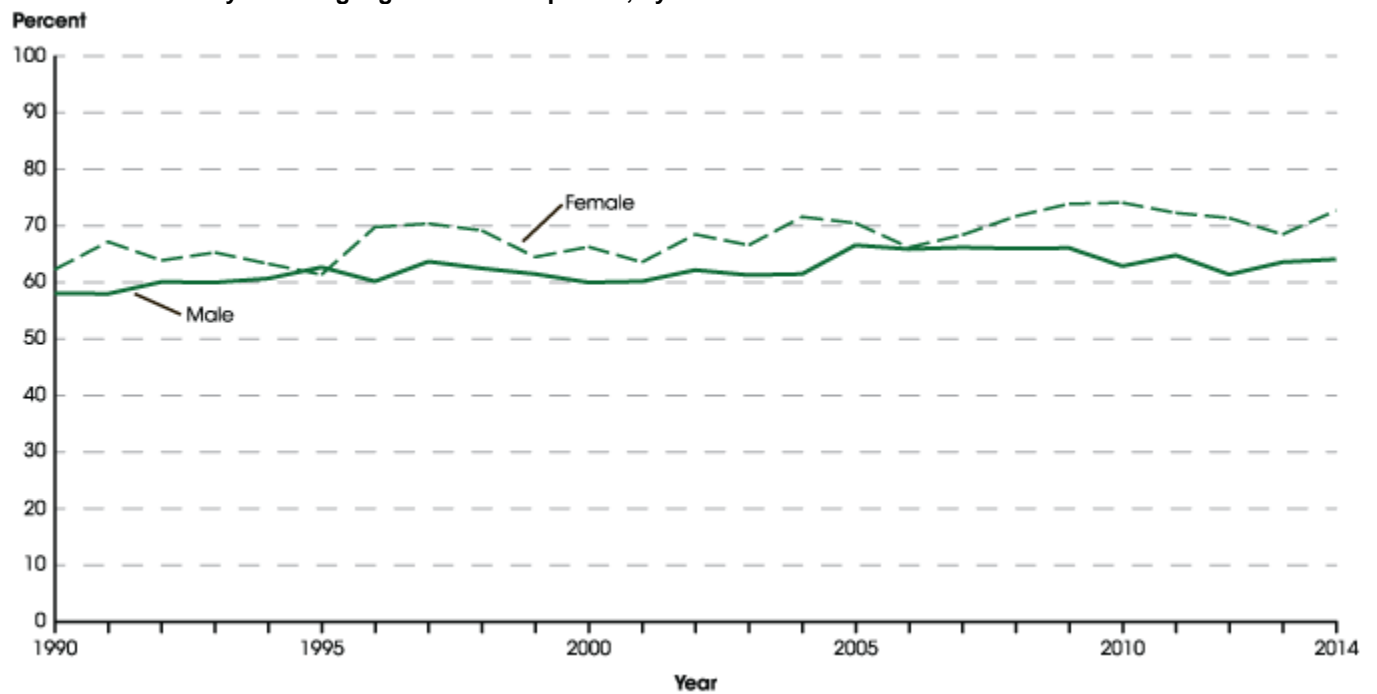
NOTE: Includes individuals ages 16 to 24 who graduated from high school or completed a GED during the calendar year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1990–2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, [table 302.10](#).

The immediate college enrollment rate at 4-year colleges (44 percent) was higher than the rate at 2-year colleges (25 percent) in 2014, and has been each year since 1990. The immediate college enrollment rate of high school completers at 2-year colleges increased from 1990 (20 percent) to 2014 (25 percent); however, the rate in 2014 was

not measurably different from the rate in 2000 and 2013. At 4-year colleges, the immediate college enrollment rate in 2014 (44 percent) was not measurably different from the rate in 1990, 2000, and 2013.

Figure 2. Percentage of recent high school completers who were enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges by the October immediately following high school completion, by sex: 1990–2014

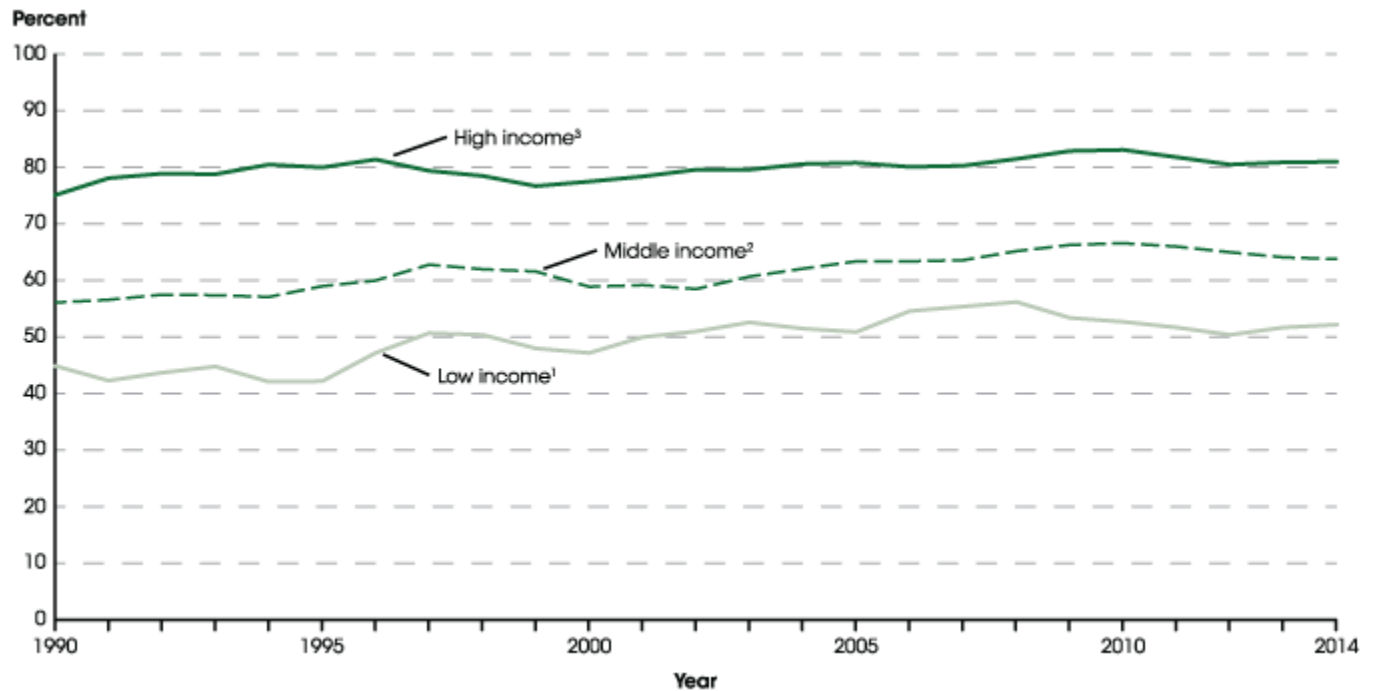


NOTE: Includes individuals ages 16 to 24 who graduated from high school or completed a GED during the calendar year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1990–2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, [table 302.10](#).

In 2014, the immediate college enrollment rate for female high school completers (73 percent) was higher than the corresponding rate for males (64 percent). This pattern between males and females was also observed at 2-year colleges. The immediate college enrollment rate for female high school completers increased from 1990 (62 percent) to 2014 (73 percent); it also increased from 2000 (66 percent) to 2014. The rate for female high school completers in 2014 was not measurably different than the rate in 2013. The rate for male high school completers in 2014 (64 percent) was not measurably different from the corresponding rate in 1990, 2000, and 2013.

Figure 3. Percentage of recent high school completers who were enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges by the October immediately following high school completion, by family income: 1990–2014



¹ Low income refers to the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes.

² Middle income refers to the 60 percent in between the bottom 20 percent and the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

³ High income refers to the top 20 percent of all family incomes.

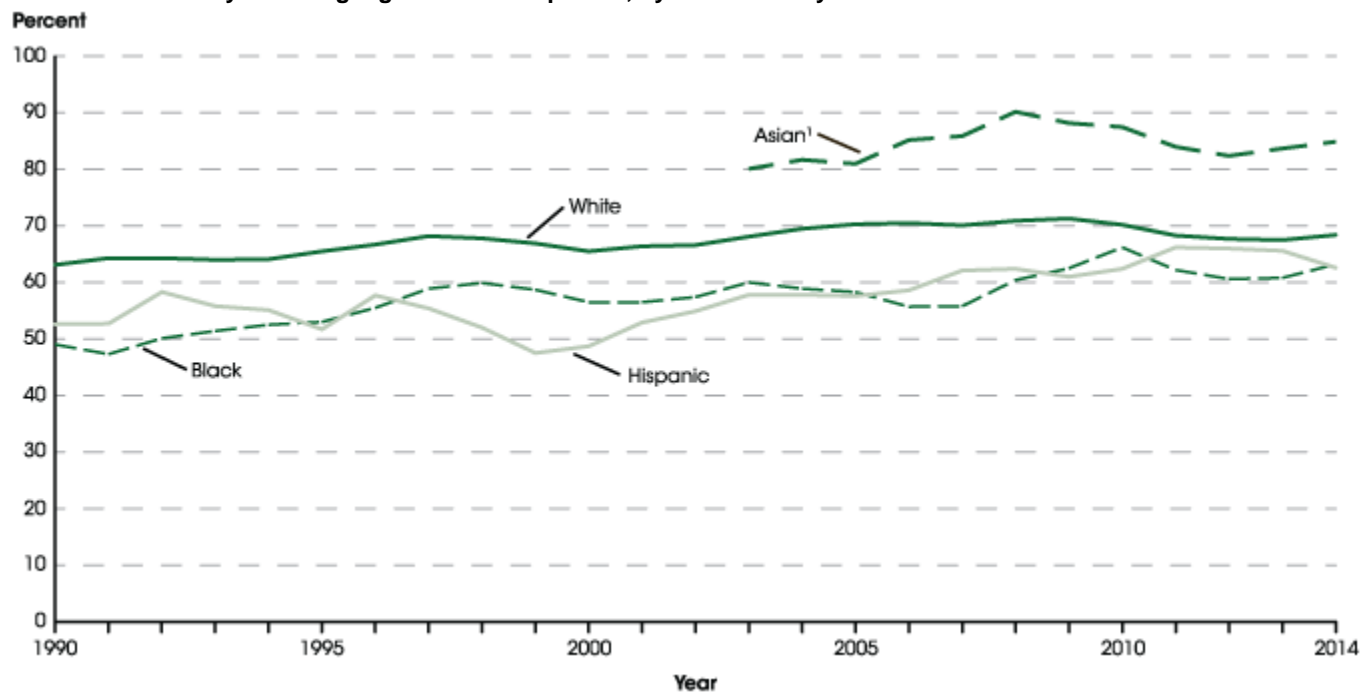
NOTE: Includes individuals ages 16 to 24 who graduated from high school or completed a GED during the calendar year. Due to some short-term data fluctuations associated with small sample sizes, percentages for income groups were calculated based on 3-year moving averages, except in 2014, when estimates were calculated based on a 2-year moving average.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1990–2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, [table 302.30](#).

In each year from 1990 to 2014, the immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers from high-income families was higher than the rates for their peers from middle- and low-income families; the rate for high school completers from middle-income families was also higher than that for their peers from low-income families. In 2014, the immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers from high-income families (81 percent) was 17 percentage points higher than the rate for those from middle-income families (64 percent) and 29 percentage points higher than the rate for those from low-income families (52 percent).¹ Also, the immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers from middle-income families in 2014 was also higher than that for high school completers from low-income families.

In 2014, the gap between the immediate college enrollment rates of high school completers from high- and middle-income families, as well as the gap between high school completers from high- and low-income families, were not measurably different from the corresponding gaps in 1990 and 2000. Similarly, the gap between the immediate college enrollment rates of high school completers from middle- and low-income families in 2014 was not measurably different from the corresponding gap in 1990 and 2000.

Figure 4. Percentage of recent high school completers who were enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges by the October immediately following high school completion, by race/ethnicity: 1990–2014



¹ Separate data on Asian high school completers have been collected since 2003.

NOTE: Includes individuals ages 16 to 24 who graduated from high school or completed a GED during the calendar year. Due to some short-term data fluctuations associated with small sample sizes, percentages for racial/ethnic groups were calculated based on 3-year moving averages, except in 2014, when estimates were calculated based on a 2-year moving average. For the data for Asian high school completers, the moving average for 2003 reflects an average of 2003 and 2004. From 2003 onward, data for White, Black, and Asian high school completers exclude persons identifying themselves as of Two or more races. Prior to 2003, each respondent could select only a single race category, and the "Two or more races" category was not reported. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1990–2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, [table 302.20](#).

In 2014, the immediate college enrollment rate for White high school completers (68 percent) was not measurably different from the rates for Black (63 percent) and Hispanic (62 percent) high school completers, even though the rate for White high school completers has been higher than the rates for Black and Hispanic high school completers in most years since 1990. The immediate college enrollment rate in 1990 was 63 percent for White students, 49 percent for Black students, and 52 percent for Hispanic students. For Asian high school completers, the immediate college enrollment rate (85 percent) was higher than the rates for White, Black, and Hispanic high school completers in 2014. The rate for Asian high school completers was also higher than the rates for their peers in each year since 2003, when the collection of separate data on Asian high school completers began.²

Between 1990 and 2014, the immediate college enrollment rate increased for White (from 63 to 68 percent) and Black (from 49 to 63 percent) high school completers. In contrast, the immediate college enrollment rate for Hispanic high school completers did not change measurably between 1990 and 2014.

¹ Due to some short-term data fluctuations associated with small sample sizes, estimates for the income groups and racial/ethnic groups were calculated based on 3-year moving averages, except in 2014, when estimates were calculated based on a 2-year moving average. Additionally, for the data for Asian high school completers, the moving average for 2003 reflects an average of 2003 and 2004.

² Prior to 2003, data were collected for the combined race category of Asian/Pacific Islander.

Glossary Terms

[College](#), [Enrollment](#), [High school completer](#), [Postsecondary institutions \(basic classification by level\)](#), [Racial/ethnic group](#)

Data Source

Current Population Survey (CPS)

PDF

- [Download/View](#) the PDF containing this indicator and corresponding figures. (250 KB)

Reference Tables

- [Table 302.10 \(Digest 2015\)](#): Recent high school completers and their enrollment in 2-year and 4-year colleges, by sex: 1960 through 2014
- [Table 302.20 \(Digest 2015\)](#): Percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in 2- and 4-year colleges, by race/ethnicity: 1960 through 2014
- [Table 302.30 \(Digest 2015\)](#): Percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in 2-year and 4-year colleges, by income level: 1975 through 2014

Related Indicators

- [Undergraduate Enrollment](#)
- [Public High School Graduation Rates](#)
- [Status Dropout Rates](#)

Previous Versions of This Indicator

- [May 2015](#) - (168 KB)
- [January 2014](#) - (596 KB)
- [January 2013](#) - (161 KB)