

Profile of young adults aged 18-24 in the United States

Young people aged 18-24 are in a pivotal transition period from childhood to adulthood and financial independence. Those who earn a high school diploma and a post-secondary credential are much more likely to succeed in the labor market. Blacks and Hispanics consistently fare worse on educational and employment outcomes, placing their economic prospects at risk as well as the nation's ability to maintain a skilled and competitive workforce.

All data presented is for the three year period 2011-2013.

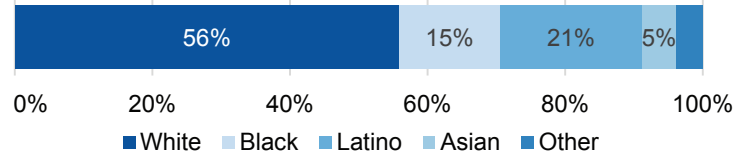
DEMOGRAPHICS

Young adults aged 18-24 Share of total population
31,352,310 10.0%

Of young adults in the United States, **10.3 percent** are foreign born. The top countries of origin are: **Mexico (33%), China (6%), and India (4%)**.

Just over half of young adults in the United States are white.

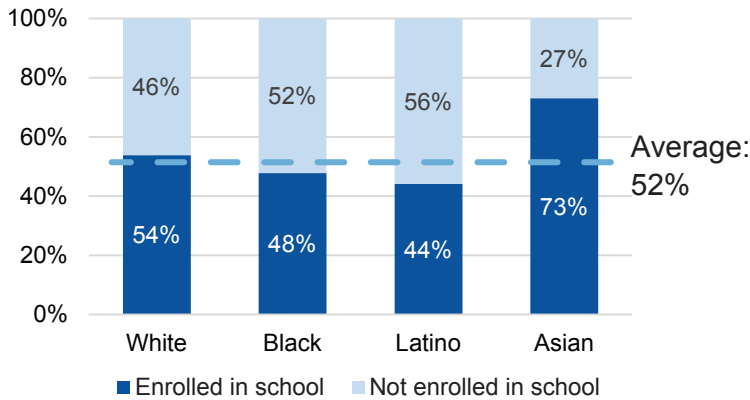
Race/Ethnicity, 18-24 year olds



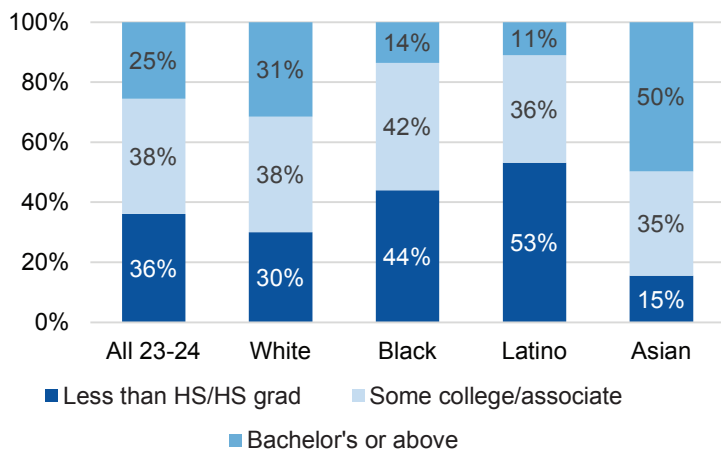
EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Blacks and Latinos have somewhat lower rates of school enrollment than whites and Asians, but have much lower levels of educational attainment by their mid 20s.

School enrollment, 18-24 year olds



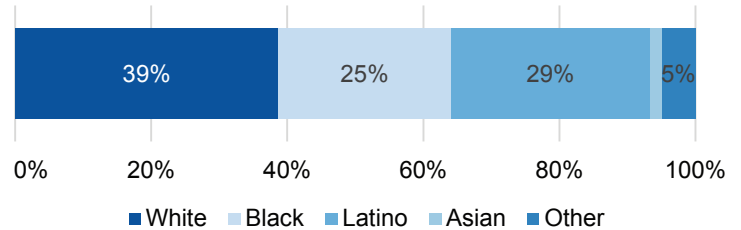
Educational attainment, 23-24 year olds



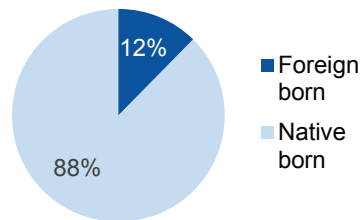
DISCONNECTED YOUTH

Of young adults aged 18-24 in United States, **2,602,300** or **8.3 percent** are disconnected, meaning they are low-income (with income less than 200 percent of the federal poverty line), neither in school nor working, and have less than an associate degree. These young people are at increased risk for poverty and unemployment.

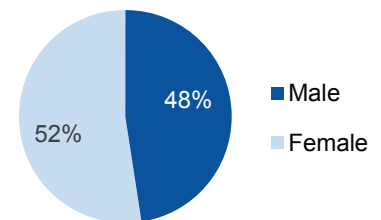
Race/Ethnicity



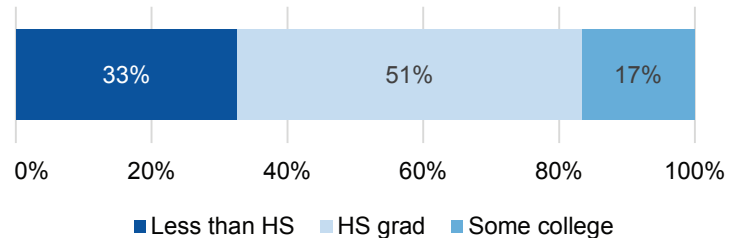
Nativity



Gender



Educational attainment



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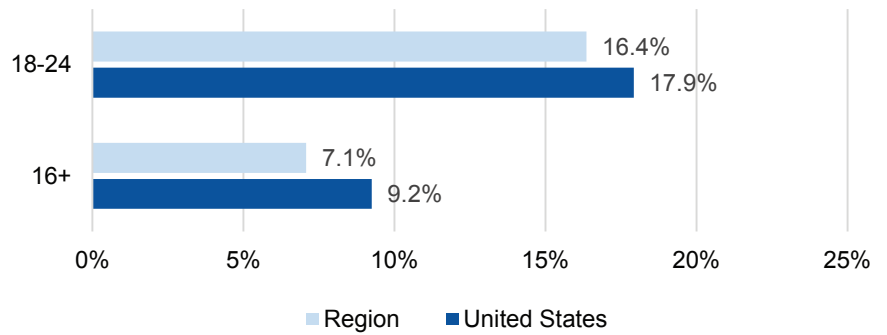
EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

Young people typically have higher unemployment rates and lower earnings than older workers, consistent with their lower levels of experience and skills. However, young people of color and those with lower levels of education are particularly likely to experience low employment rates and earnings.

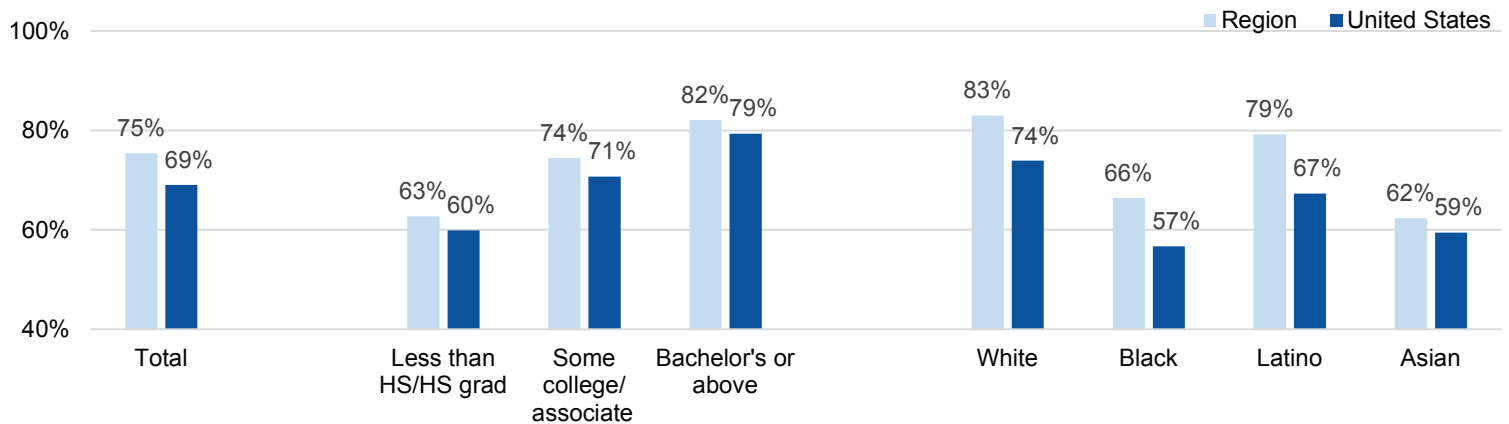
The United States's labor market is made up of workers of all levels of education.

Thirty-three percent (33%) of people working in the United States have a bachelor's degree or above, with median annual earnings of **\$63,000**. A slightly larger share, **35 percent**, of people working in the United States have a high school diploma or less, with median annual earnings of **\$30,000**.

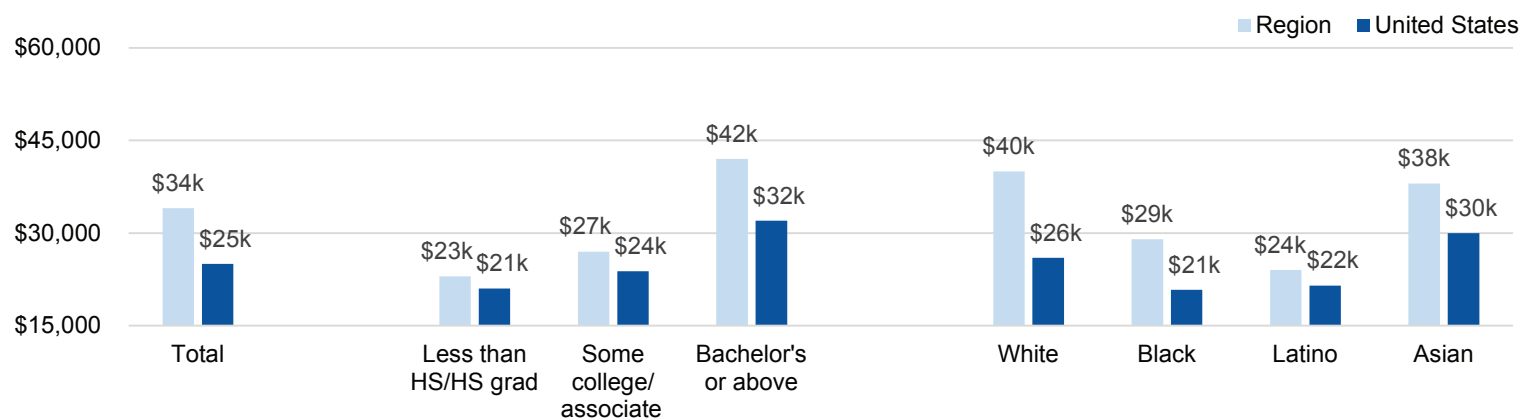
Unemployment rate



Employment rates, 23-24 year olds



Median annual earnings of 23-24 year olds*



NOTES

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-year microdata.

*Median annual earnings presented for workers who are employed full-time, year-round in 2013 dollars. Data presented for the region includes the District of Columbia, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Alexandria City, Arlington County, Falls Church City, Fairfax City, and Fairfax County. For more information, contact Martha Ross, Fellow, at mross@brookings.edu or Nicole Prchal Svajlenka, Research Analyst, at nsvajlenka@brookings.edu.