

Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report

CHAPTER 11



Employment and Earnings



Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report

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This chapter is part of a larger report by the American Council on Education (ACE) titled *Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report*. The report and its accompanying microsite provide a data-informed foundation for those working to close persistent equity gaps by providing a comprehensive review of the educational pathways of today's college students and the educators who serve them.

Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report and the microsite were made possible through the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Visit www.equityinhighered.org to learn more about the project and to download the full report containing more than 200 indicators on race and ethnicity. Also available on the site are downloadable figures, detailed data, and other resources on race and ethnicity in higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

A postsecondary education provides an opportunity to millions of Americans to improve their futures and those of their families. Recent research has shown that attaining a postsecondary credential results in both individual and public benefits, such as living healthier lives and active civic engagement (McMahon 2009; Ma, Pender, and Welch 2016; Turk 2019). However, examining employment and earnings after postsecondary graduation provides a complex picture of racial and ethnic inequities that permeate our nation. Research has shown persistent gaps in college enrollment, attainment, and earnings based upon race and ethnicity (Farley and Allen 1987). These findings persist today. A study of economic opportunity and upward mobility found disparities in economic outcomes by race and ethnicity when comparing White children with both Black¹ and Hispanic children. As the findings show, Hispanics move up in income distribution from generation to generation, while Black children have higher rates of downward income mobility and lower rates of upward income mobility when compared with White children (Chetty et al. 2018).

As shown in previous chapters of this report, there are substantial differences across racial and ethnic groups in the completion rates of students who enroll in postsecondary education, the types of credentials students earn, and the institutions at which they complete.² In addition, there are differences in how students finance their education and how much educational debt they accumulate. These factors contribute to post-graduation employment and earnings.³ Overall, Census data show that median annual earnings and the likelihood of being in the labor force, of being employed, and of working full time, increase with each additional level of educational attainment. While these patterns appear across all racial and ethnic groups, there is variation across groups. For example, American Indians or Alaska Natives, African Americans, and Hispanics have lower median annual earnings than other groups, even within the same levels of educational attainment. These gaps are troubling and prompt critical questions regarding the access and opportunities afforded to members of different racial and ethnic groups.

KEY FINDINGS

- Across age groups, those who had earned a college degree were more likely to be employed full time in 2016 than those who had not completed a degree.
- In 2016, the unemployment rate for White graduates ages 35 to 44 whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree was lower than that for Black graduates (2.7 percent and 5.1 percent, respectively).
- Overall, Whites and Asians had the highest median annual earnings, while American Indians or Alaska Natives and Hispanics had the lowest overall median annual earnings.
- For adults ages 25 and older whose highest credential was a bachelor's degree, the median annual earnings ranged from about \$41,000 for American Indians or Alaska Natives to over \$57,000 for Asians.
- Median annual earnings for Asians in STEM⁴ occupations with a bachelor's degree were roughly \$22,000 higher than those of Asians whose highest degree was an associate degree, while this difference for Blacks in STEM occupations was \$13,000.

1 The terms Black and African American are used interchangeably.

2 For more information on undergraduate student completion, please see Chapter 5 of this report, "Undergraduate Persistence and Completion." For more information on graduate student completion, please see Chapter 6 of this report, "Graduate School Completion."

3 Research also shows that choice of majors also plays an integral role in labor market outcomes (Carnevale and Cheah 2018).

4 STEM occupations were defined as having a two-digit Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) code of 15 (Computer or Mathematical Occupations), 17 (Architecture and Engineering Occupations), or 19 (Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations).

- Adults in education occupations saw modest gains with an associate degree, but their median annual earnings relative to high school graduates increased to nearly \$40,000 once they completed a bachelor's degree.
- Among adults in health occupations, Asians, Hispanics, and Whites with graduate degrees all had median annual earnings \$30,000 more than their peers whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree.

This chapter analyzes data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is a yearly 1 percent sample of all Americans; it includes a little over 3 million observations each year. ACS also releases a five-year sample, which includes all observations from the most recent five years, and has a sample size of around 16 million. The very large sample size of the five-year sample allows for the measurement of characteristics of small subgroups with good precision. This chapter analyzes data from the 2016 five-year sample, making them representative of Americans during 2012 to 2016.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS, BY AGE

Employment status varies by educational attainment, with those who have attained higher levels of education more likely to be in the labor force, to have lower rates of unemployment, and to be employed full time.

This section presents information on employment status. Individuals are considered to be in the labor force if they are either employed or actively seeking a job. Individuals working at least 35 hours per week are categorized as having full-time employment. The unemployment rate is the share of people in the labor force who are not employed. People without jobs who are not actively seeking employment—who are not in the labor force—do not affect this measure. Individuals not in the labor force include a host of categories, including students, retired workers, and stay-at-home parents (U.S. Census Bureau 2018).

Ages 25 to 34

In 2016, among adults who were employed, those with an associate degree were 2.4 percentage points more likely than adults with only a high school diploma or alternative credential to be employed full time (84.0 percent compared with 81.6 percent). Roughly 89 percent of adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree were employed full time, 7.8 percentage points higher than among those with only a high school credential. The unemployment rate of all 25- to 34-year-olds whose highest level of education was high school was 11.1 percent, double that of adults whose highest level of education was an associate degree (5.5 percent) and more than triple that of adults whose highest level of education was a bachelor's degree (3.5 percent). Among adults ages 25 to 34,⁵ 22.4 percent of those whose highest level of education was high school were not in the labor force, compared with 11.4 percent of adults whose highest degree was an associate degree and 8.6 percent of adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree.

Table 11.1: Employment Status of Adults Ages 25 to 34, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	All racial and ethnic groups	34.6%	15.0%	78.3%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	50.1%	32.3%	73.2%
	Asian	34.4%	9.1%	79.2%
	Black	46.8%	31.3%	67.2%
	Hispanic	28.1%	9.8%	81.8%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	43.4%	13.7%	74.8%
	White	38.8%	18.5%	75.0%
	More than one race	41.8%	21.1%	72.2%
High School Graduate or Equivalent	All racial and ethnic groups	22.4%	11.1%	81.6%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	32.5%	19.6%	82.0%
	Asian	23.6%	8.1%	80.6%
	Black	26.3%	18.6%	78.0%
	Hispanic	21.1%	8.8%	83.4%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	22.8%	11.4%	83.8%
	White	21.5%	10.0%	81.8%
	More than one race	25.0%	12.9%	77.7%

⁵ Adults ages 25 to 34 are among those most likely to be enrolled in graduate education. The U.S. Census classifies students in the category “not in the labor force.”

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Some College but No Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	15.5%	8.1%	82.5%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	23.7%	14.0%	81.2%
	Asian	17.2%	7.8%	81.0%
	Black	14.6%	13.1%	80.8%
	Hispanic	15.4%	7.5%	82.9%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	15.6%	9.1%	81.7%
	White	15.6%	6.7%	83.0%
	More than one race	17.1%	10.2%	80.2%
Associate Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	11.4%	5.5%	84.0%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	16.4%	7.1%	85.8%
	Asian	17.6%	5.8%	80.9%
	Black	10.2%	9.4%	83.1%
	Hispanic	11.6%	6.0%	85.0%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	17.0%	10.3%	85.1%
	White	11.1%	4.6%	84.2%
	More than one race	12.9%	7.0%	79.7%
Bachelor's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	8.6%	3.5%	89.4%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	10.3%	4.9%	91.3%
	Asian	16.2%	4.3%	90.6%
	Black	6.3%	5.8%	89.8%
	Hispanic	9.2%	5.0%	87.8%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	8.9%	8.8%	85.9%
	White	7.7%	2.9%	89.5%
	More than one race	8.9%	4.8%	87.9%
Master's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	7.6%	2.5%	91.7%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	7.8%	0.6%	91.1%
	Asian	17.4%	3.3%	94.4%
	Black	4.0%	4.2%	93.3%
	Hispanic	6.5%	3.0%	91.7%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	3.6%!	3.9%	86.5%
	White	5.8%	2.1%	91.0%
	More than one race	8.3%	3.3%	90.4%
Professional Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	5.5%	2.7%	92.4%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	5.3%!!	1.8%	83.7%
	Asian	9.2%	3.0%	92.7%
	Black	5.0%	4.4%	93.8%
	Hispanic	10.6%	4.3%	90.0%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	7.6%!!	4.0%	83.6%
	White	4.2%	2.4%	92.5%
	More than one race	4.7%	3.9%	91.2%

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Doctoral Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	4.0%	1.8%	92.2%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	10.7%!!	#	58.0%
	Asian	6.2%	1.4%	93.8%
	Black	4.4%	2.2%	93.4%
	Hispanic	5.7%	2.2%	90.9%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	#	#	96.0%
	White	3.0%	1.8%	91.9%
	More than one race	8.1%	4.0%	90.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: This table includes all individuals, including those in the military, incarcerated, or enrolled in school. Those in the military are counted as employed. Those incarcerated are counted as not in the work force. Those enrolled in school are counted the same way as individuals who are not enrolled. Employed includes individuals employed either full or part time. Individuals working at least 35 hours per week are categorized as having full-time employment. The unemployment rate is the share of people in the labor force who are not employed. People without jobs who are not actively seeking employment—who are not in the labor force—do not affect this measure. Individuals not in the labor force include a host of categories, including students, retired workers, and stay-at-home parents. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%. | !! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error is >50%. | # Zero observations.

- Among adults whose highest degrees were associate and bachelor's degrees, Blacks and Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders ages 25 to 34 had higher unemployment rates than their peers in other groups, while White adults had the lowest unemployment rates. For example, the unemployment rate for those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree ranged from 2.9 percent for White graduates to 8.8 percent for Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander graduates.
- The unemployment rate of Black adults who had completed only high school was more than triple that of Black adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (18.6 percent and 5.8 percent, respectively). Whites followed a similar pattern, where the unemployment rate of White adults who had completed only high school was more than triple that of those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (10.0 percent and 2.9 percent, respectively).
- In 2016, among college graduates whose highest level of education was an associate degree or bachelor's degree, Black adults ages 25 to 34 were least likely to be out of the labor force (10.2 percent and 6.3 percent, respectively).

Ages 35 to 44

Across all levels of educational attainment, the majority of adults ages 35 to 44 who were employed had full-time employment, although adults with higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to be employed full time. The unemployment rate decreased with each additional level of educational attainment, where adults who had completed only high school had an unemployment rate of 8.2 percent, compared with 4.7 percent for adults whose highest degree was an associate degree and 3.1 percent for adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree. The share of the population out of the labor force declined as level of education increased. Roughly 22 percent of adults ages 35 to 44 whose highest level of education was high school were not in the labor force, compared with 13.1 percent of adults whose highest degree was an associate degree and 12.0 percent of adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree.

Table 11.2: Employment Status of Adults Ages 35 to 44, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	All racial and ethnic groups	31.9%	10.5%	80.9%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	50.1%	19.7%	77.2%
	Asian	26.9%	6.5%	79.7%
	Black	45.4%	23.5%	73.8%
	Hispanic	25.7%	7.4%	82.5%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	32.4%	10.1%	80.9%
	White	38.9%	14.0%	79.7%
	More than one race	40.3%	14.8%	75.0%
High School Graduate or Equivalent	All racial and ethnic groups	21.8%	8.2%	84.7%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	32.0%	14.0%	83.1%
	Asian	21.6%	5.9%	83.2%
	Black	25.8%	13.5%	83.9%
	Hispanic	20.3%	6.9%	84.9%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	19.2%	10.6%	86.0%
	White	21.0%	7.3%	85.0%
	More than one race	27.3%	10.4%	82.5%
Some College but No Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	16.6%	6.3%	85.7%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	24.6%	11.8%	86.2%
	Asian	18.1%	5.2%	84.4%
	Black	16.4%	9.7%	86.3%
	Hispanic	15.9%	6.1%	86.4%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	15.2%	9.8%	87.2%
	White	16.5%	5.4%	85.5%
	More than one race	21.3%	8.9%	83.6%
Associate Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	13.1%	4.7%	85.5%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	19.0%	8.8%	85.4%
	Asian	19.2%	4.9%	84.7%
	Black	11.8%	6.9%	87.4%
	Hispanic	13.3%	5.1%	86.1%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	13.1%	4.5%	88.2%
	White	12.7%	4.1%	85.1%
	More than one race	14.7%	5.7%	84.9%
Bachelor's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	12.0%	3.1%	88.2%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	12.4%	3.8%	90.8%
	Asian	16.9%	3.7%	89.1%
	Black	7.5%	5.1%	91.8%
	Hispanic	12.8%	4.0%	88.6%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	11.9%	3.1%	91.3%
	White	11.7%	2.7%	87.6%
	More than one race	11.9%	4.0%	86.9%

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Master's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	8.6%	2.4%	90.1%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	9.0%	4.7%	92.6%
	Asian	12.8%	2.9%	92.5%
	Black	4.6%	3.7%	93.9%
	Hispanic	8.3%	2.7%	91.7%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	6.7%!	0.2%	90.4%
	White	8.2%	2.0%	89.0%
	More than one race	8.9%	4.3%	90.1%
Professional Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	6.8%	1.7%	89.2%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	1.3%!!	2.6%	91.7%
	Asian	8.0%	1.8%	88.1%
	Black	5.8%	2.7%	92.6%
	Hispanic	12.1%	2.3%	87.8%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	19.7%!!	#	77.8%
	White	6.0%	1.5%	89.3%
	More than one race	7.7%	3.5%	90.5%
Doctoral Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	5.6%	2.0%	91.5%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	13.6%!	4.1%	86.8%
	Asian	7.1%	2.4%	93.5%
	Black	5.8%	2.6%	92.0%
	Hispanic	7.1%	2.3%	90.9%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	41.5%!	#	76.2%
	White	4.8%	1.7%	90.9%
	More than one race	6.2%	2.7%	91.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: This table includes all individuals, including those in the military, incarcerated, or enrolled in school. Those in the military are counted as employed. Those incarcerated are counted as not in the work force. Those enrolled in school are counted the same way as individuals who are not enrolled. Employed includes individuals employed either full or part time. Individuals working at least 35 hours per week are categorized as having full-time employment. The unemployment rate is the share of people in the labor force who are not employed. People without jobs who are not actively seeking employment—who are not in the labor force—do not affect this measure. Individuals not in the labor force include a host of categories, including students, retired workers, and stay-at-home parents. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%. | !! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error is >50%. | # Zero observations.

- Among employed adults ages 35 to 44 whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree, Black and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander adults were more likely than those in other groups to be working full time (91.8 percent and 91.3 percent, respectively).
- Among adults ages 35 to 44 whose highest degree was an associate degree, the unemployment rate of American Indians or Alaska Natives was more than double that of Whites (8.8 percent and 4.1 percent, respectively).
- Among adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree, Blacks had the highest unemployment rate (5.1 percent), while White adults had the lowest unemployment rate (2.7 percent).
- In 2016, among college graduates whose highest level of education was an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or master's degree, Black adults ages 35 to 44 were least likely to be out of the labor force, while Asians were the most likely to be out of the labor force. Among professional and doctoral degree⁶ recipients, Asian and Hispanic adults were more likely than their Black or White peers to be out of the labor force.

⁶ Professional degrees reflect those classified as doctorate-professional practice, including chiropractic, dentistry, law, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, and other degrees for which a credential or license is required for professional practice. Doctoral degrees reflect those classified as doctorate-research/scholarship degrees, including PhD, EdD, DMA, and other research-based degrees.

Ages 45 to 54

Across all levels of educational attainment, the majority of all adults ages 45 to 54 who were employed had full-time employment, although the share of those with full-time employment increased with educational attainment. Roughly 90 percent of employed adults who completed a graduate degree had full-time employment, compared with 85.2 percent of adults with only a high school credential. The unemployment rate of adults ages 45 to 54 who had completed only high school was almost twice that of those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (6.7 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively). Nearly one-quarter of adults ages 45 to 54 whose highest level of education was high school were not in the labor force (23.8 percent), compared with 15.3 percent of adults whose highest degree was an associate degree and 12.3 percent of adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree.

Table 11.3: Employment Status of Adults Ages 45 to 54, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	All racial and ethnic groups	37.5%	9.9%	80.6%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	55.4%	18.5%	73.4%
	Asian	29.3%	7.3%	78.7%
	Black	52.0%	18.8%	75.4%
	Hispanic	27.2%	7.5%	82.5%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	34.0%	14.0%	77.2%
	White	44.7%	11.1%	79.8%
	More than one race	48.2%	13.5%	78.1%
High School Graduate or Equivalent	All racial and ethnic groups	23.8%	6.7%	85.2%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	34.8%	12.4%	84.3%
	Asian	21.0%	5.7%	83.2%
	Black	29.5%	10.7%	85.2%
	Hispanic	21.3%	6.4%	85.0%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	22.4%	9.4%	87.7%
	White	23.0%	5.9%	85.4%
	More than one race	29.6%	9.2%	83.2%
Some College but No Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	19.0%	5.4%	86.1%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	30.2%	9.8%	84.8%
	Asian	17.6%	5.1%	85.9%
	Black	22.0%	8.1%	87.6%
	Hispanic	17.9%	5.6%	86.0%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	21.1%	6.2%	85.6%
	White	18.2%	4.8%	85.9%
	More than one race	28.2%	8.1%	83.2%
Associate Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	15.3%	4.4%	85.5%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	21.5%	7.5%	88.2%
	Asian	17.1%	4.6%	83.9%
	Black	16.5%	6.7%	88.2%
	Hispanic	15.4%	5.3%	86.4%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	16.0%	6.0%	84.9%
	White	14.9%	3.8%	85.1%
	More than one race	20.5%	6.8%	85.1%

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Bachelor's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	12.3%	3.5%	87.4%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	15.4%	4.1%	89.7%
	Asian	15.3%	3.9%	87.4%
	Black	10.4%	5.1%	91.8%
	Hispanic	12.6%	4.6%	87.0%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	11.7%	10.1%	85.6%
	White	12.1%	3.2%	87.0%
	More than one race	15.0%	5.7%	86.9%
Master's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	8.6%	2.9%	90.2%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	15.5%	3.4%	91.1%
	Asian	11.1%	3.5%	90.7%
	Black	6.4%	4.5%	92.8%
	Hispanic	8.6%	3.4%	90.1%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	14.9%	3.1%	91.4%
	White	8.5%	2.5%	89.9%
	More than one race	11.0%	4.9%	89.1%
Professional Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	7.6%	1.9%	88.8%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	13.2%	4.5%	91.9%
	Asian	7.5%	1.9%	88.5%
	Black	7.0%	2.6%	91.8%
	Hispanic	10.6%	2.7%	87.6%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	4.6%!!	#	80.8%
	White	7.3%	1.7%	88.9%
	More than one race	7.6%	2.3%	84.7%
Doctoral Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	6.0%	2.3%	91.8%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	10.8%!	6.0%	85.1%
	Asian	5.7%	2.9%	94.5%
	Black	6.2%	4.1%	92.7%
	Hispanic	7.9%	3.3%	88.6%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	7.4%!!	#	#
	White	5.7%	1.9%	91.3%
	More than one race	10.8%	3.4%	91.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: This table includes all individuals, including those in the military, incarcerated, or enrolled in school. Those in the military are counted as employed. Those incarcerated are counted as not in the work force. Those enrolled in school are counted the same way as individuals who are not enrolled. Employed includes individuals employed either full or part time. Individuals working at least 35 hours per week are categorized as having full-time employment. The unemployment rate is the share of people in the labor force who are not employed. People without jobs who are not actively seeking employment—who are not in the labor force—do not affect this measure. Individuals not in the labor force include a host of categories, including students, retired workers, and stay-at-home parents. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%. | !! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error is >50%. | # Zero observations.

- Among employed adults ages 45 to 54 whose highest level of education was a bachelor's degree, Blacks were more likely than any other group to be working full time (91.8 percent), while Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders were the least likely to have full-time employment (85.6 percent).

- The unemployment rate of American Indians or Alaska Natives who completed only high school was three times that of those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (12.4 percent and 4.1 percent, respectively). The unemployment rate for Blacks who had completed only high school was more than twice that of those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (10.7 percent and 5.1 percent, respectively).
- Regardless of educational attainment, American Indians or Alaska Natives were more likely than all other groups to be out of the labor force.

Ages 55 to 64

Employment status among adults ages 55 to 64 followed a slightly different pattern than among younger adults. While the majority of all employed adults in each college degree category were employed full time, this share was lower than in the younger age brackets. The unemployment rate of adults whose highest level of education was a high school credential (5.5 percent) was higher than that of adults whose highest degree was an associate or bachelor's degree (4.5 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively). Over four in 10 adults whose highest level of education was a high school credential were not in the labor force (40.3 percent), compared with 31.2 percent of adults whose highest degree was an associate degree and 27.5 percent of adults whose highest degree was an bachelor's degree.

Table 11.4: Employment Status of Adults Ages 55 to 64, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	All racial and ethnic groups	53.7%	8.2%	77.2%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	67.3%	10.7%	75.0%
	Asian	48.0%	7.3%	74.0%
	Black	63.2%	12.3%	74.7%
	Hispanic	45.1%	7.8%	79.2%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	52.9%	15.6%	79.2%
	White	57.7%	7.3%	76.7%
	More than one race	60.7%	9.8%	74.8%
High School Graduate or Equivalent	All racial and ethnic groups	40.3%	5.5%	81.3%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	50.7%	8.8%	80.9%
	Asian	36.9%	6.2%	79.6%
	Black	47.3%	8.3%	81.9%
	Hispanic	38.3%	6.7%	80.8%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	45.8%	9.2%	80.8%
	White	39.3%	4.9%	81.4%
	More than one race	46.1%	6.7%	79.1%
Some College but No Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	35.8%	5.3%	81.7%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	46.1%	7.0%	83.3%
	Asian	31.4%	5.5%	82.1%
	Black	42.4%	7.3%	82.9%
	Hispanic	33.8%	6.4%	82.8%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	37.1%	4.8%	86.3%
	White	34.7%	4.8%	81.5%
	More than one race	46.6%	7.5%	80.1%

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Associate Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	31.2%	4.5%	81.5%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	40.6%	5.5%	81.4%
	Asian	30.3%	4.7%	81.8%
	Black	35.7%	6.4%	85.2%
	Hispanic	31.8%	5.3%	82.8%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	35.4%	3.8%	84.9%
	White	30.4%	4.1%	80.9%
	More than one race	39.6%	6.9%	82.0%
Bachelor's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	27.5%	4.2%	83.4%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	33.5%	6.2%	85.1%
	Asian	28.2%	4.6%	85.2%
	Black	29.0%	6.3%	86.8%
	Hispanic	26.6%	5.4%	85.7%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	34.1%	5.7%	84.7%
	White	27.3%	3.9%	82.8%
	More than one race	30.3%	6.9%	83.5%
Master's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	25.6%	3.6%	84.1%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	30.6%	4.5%	89.7%
	Asian	23.1%	4.6%	87.3%
	Black	25.4%	5.2%	86.6%
	Hispanic	23.1%	4.4%	86.5%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	26.7%	3.5%	90.9%
	White	25.9%	3.3%	83.5%
	More than one race	24.3%	5.1%	86.3%
Professional Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	17.1%	2.0%	85.8%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	26.7%	2.0%	89.9%
	Asian	16.2%	2.5%	86.5%
	Black	22.1%	4.2%	88.7%
	Hispanic	18.8%	3.9%	84.5%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	18.5%!!	#	84.0%
	White	16.8%	1.7%	85.6%
	More than one race	17.5%	2.2%	83.6%

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Doctoral Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	14.8%	2.4%	87.3%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	19.1%	1.4%	83.1%
	Asian	14.2%	2.6%	92.3%
	Black	16.6%	4.0%	88.0%
	Hispanic	17.3%	3.6%	85.2%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	15.4%!!	6.2%	#
	White	14.4%	2.1%	86.8%
	More than one race	21.4%	3.6%	86.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: This table includes all individuals, including those in the military, incarcerated, or enrolled in school. Those in the military are counted as employed. Those incarcerated are counted as not in the work force. Those enrolled in school are counted the same way as individuals who are not enrolled. Employed includes individuals employed either full or part time. Individuals working at least 35 hours per week are categorized as having full-time employment. The unemployment rate is the share of people in the labor force who are not employed. People without jobs who are not actively seeking employment—who are not in the labor force—do not affect this measure. Individuals not in the labor force include a host of categories, including students, retired workers, and stay-at-home parents. | !! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error is >50%. | # Zero observations.

- Among employed adults ages 55 to 64 whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree, the share of full-time employment ranged from 82.8 percent of Whites to 86.8 percent of Blacks.
- Blacks and adults of more than one race had the highest unemployment rates among adults whose highest degree was an associate degree (6.4 percent and 6.9 percent, respectively) or bachelor's degree (6.3 percent and 6.9 percent, respectively).
- Among adults whose highest degree was an associate degree, about four in 10 American Indians or Alaska Natives and adults of more than one race were not in the labor force (40.6 percent and 39.6 percent), compared with 31.2 percent of all adults in this age group who had this degree.

Ages 65 and Older

The majority of adults ages 65 and older were not in the labor force in 2016. Among adults who remained employed, differences emerged by level of educational attainment, with those with higher levels of education being more likely to work full time. Among all adults ages 65 and older who were employed, more than 60 percent of all professional degree holders and doctoral degree holders had full-time employment, compared with roughly half of all adults without a college degree who were employed.

Table 11.5: Employment Status of Adults Ages 65 and Older, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	All racial and ethnic groups	90.9%	6.4%	53.7%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	91.9%	4.6%	56.4%
	Asian	91.5%	4.9%	61.9%
	Black	91.0%	9.1%	51.9%
	Hispanic	88.4%	7.5%	62.6%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	90.0%	8.1%	43.6%
	White	91.7%	5.1%	48.4%
	More than one race	90.2%	7.4%	56.5%

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
High School Graduate or Equivalent	All racial and ethnic groups	86.4%	4.4%	51.6%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	85.5%	7.2%	59.6%
	Asian	86.5%	4.7%	64.3%
	Black	85.3%	5.9%	56.3%
	Hispanic	83.6%	5.3%	61.3%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	86.3%	2.1%	61.9%
	White	86.7%	4.1%	49.8%
	More than one race	85.3%	7.2%	58.1%
Some College but No Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	81.0%	5.1%	54.9%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	79.3%	7.7%	66.9%
	Asian	80.1%	5.3%	66.1%
	Black	80.8%	7.9%	58.1%
	Hispanic	77.9%	5.9%	63.2%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	74.6%	10.5%	63.7%
	White	81.2%	4.7%	53.7%
	More than one race	80.0%	8.0%	53.9%
Associate Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	78.8%	5.0%	56.9%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	76.1%	7.0%	80.1%
	Asian	79.7%	4.8%	67.3%
	Black	78.2%	6.9%	60.6%
	Hispanic	77.4%	5.7%	63.2%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	83.8%	1.2%	50.0%
	White	78.8%	4.7%	55.3%
	More than one race	80.2%	7.3%	60.0%
Bachelor's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	77.3%	4.3%	59.5%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	75.7%	4.4%	65.7%
	Asian	78.1%	5.4%	70.2%
	Black	77.3%	6.4%	62.3%
	Hispanic	75.1%	5.9%	66.4%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	75.0%	3.5%	74.3%
	White	77.3%	4.0%	58.2%
	More than one race	74.4%	6.1%	63.4%
Master's Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	75.4%	3.8%	55.5%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	68.7%	5.3%	68.0%
	Asian	72.4%	4.9%	66.8%
	Black	76.0%	5.9%	60.0%
	Hispanic	71.4%	6.3%	64.0%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	69.9%	15.6%	74.0%
	White	75.6%	3.5%	54.3%
	More than one race	72.5%	6.8%	55.6%

		Percent Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Share of Employed Working Full Time
Professional Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	60.9%	2.0%	63.4%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	68.3%	5.0%	82.2%
	Asian	61.3%	1.6%	69.5%
	Black	63.3%	5.5%	62.0%
	Hispanic	62.2%	2.7%	69.1%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	55.7%	#	70.2%
	White	60.7%	1.8%	62.6%
	More than one race	63.0%	3.0%	65.5%
Doctoral Degree	All racial and ethnic groups	64.7%	2.7%	64.7%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	64.3%	0.8%	79.7%
	Asian	66.7%	3.4%	76.2%
	Black	61.5%	5.1%	69.1%
	Hispanic	61.9%	4.1%	68.1%
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	75.2%	#	76.5%
	White	64.9%	2.4%	63.3%
	More than one race	61.1%	4.6%	70.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: This table includes all individuals, including those in the military, incarcerated, or enrolled in school. Those in the military are counted as employed. Those incarcerated are counted as not in the work force. Those enrolled in school are counted the same way as individuals who are not enrolled. Employed includes individuals employed either full or part time. Individuals working at least 35 hours per week are categorized as having full-time employment. The unemployment rate is the share of people in the labor force who are not employed. People without jobs who are not actively seeking employment—who are not in the labor force—do not affect this measure. Individuals not in the labor force include a host of categories, including students, retired workers, and stay-at-home parents. | # Zero observations.

- Within all postsecondary degree categories, with the exception of professional and doctoral degree holders, Hispanic adults were more likely than White, Black, and Asian adults to be in the labor force and more likely to be employed.
- Within all postsecondary degree categories, with the exception of professional degree holders, White employed adults were less likely than Black, Hispanic, and Asian employed adults to be working full time.

Employment Status Patterns Across Age Groups

- Labor force participation was lower for adults ages 55 to 64 than for those ages 45 to 54 across all levels of education and all racial and ethnic groups. The decline in labor force participation was much smaller for professional and doctoral degree holders in the 55 to 64 age group than for those with lower levels of educational attainment, but in each degree category, the declines were smaller among White, Asian, and Hispanic graduates than among those from other groups.
- Among American Indian or Alaska Native and Black graduates whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree, the unemployment rate was at least 1 percentage point higher among adults 55 to 64 years old than among those 45 to 54 years old. The same is true of American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic graduates whose highest degree is a master's degree and among Black and Hispanic professional degree recipients.
- Among Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree, the unemployment rate of adults ages 45 to 54 was more than 4 percentage points higher than those 55 to 64 years old.

MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS, BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Overall, median annual earnings increased with each additional level of educational attainment, with adults with master's, doctoral, and professional degrees having higher median annual earnings than those with undergraduate degrees or less. While all racial and ethnic groups followed a similar pattern, differences emerged based upon race and ethnicity; Asians and Whites had higher median annual earnings than other racial and ethnic groups both overall (\$44,307 and \$41,216, respectively) and within each postsecondary degree category. Overall, American Indians or Alaska Natives and Hispanics had the lowest median annual earnings (\$28,995 and \$27,179, respectively), roughly \$10,000 less than the overall median annual earnings.

Table 11.6: Median Annual Earnings of Adults Ages 25 and Older, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	High School Graduate or Equivalent	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Profes- sional Degree	Doctoral Degree	All Education Levels
All racial and ethnic groups	\$20,800	\$29,100	\$34,430	\$39,493	\$52,000	\$64,809	\$95,000	\$84,049	\$37,094
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$18,248	\$24,331	\$28,851	\$32,404	\$41,316	\$50,690	\$67,948	\$61,842	\$28,995
Asian	\$20,253	\$25,089	\$32,442	\$37,308	\$57,495	\$81,104	\$101,380	\$92,735	\$44,307
Black	\$17,517	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$33,452	\$45,337	\$56,000	\$79,000	\$75,000	\$30,379
Hispanic	\$20,608	\$25,345	\$30,912	\$35,442	\$44,607	\$60,758	\$69,952	\$74,000	\$27,179
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$21,638	\$29,166	\$31,570	\$35,542	\$48,000	\$52,859	\$77,279	\$75,948	\$31,392
White	\$23,699	\$30,912	\$36,100	\$40,552	\$53,670	\$63,796	\$100,000	\$85,000	\$41,216
More than one race	\$20,253	\$27,000	\$31,200	\$36,455	\$50,000	\$61,823	\$80,000	\$78,063	\$36,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Note: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included.

- American Indians or Alaska Natives had the lowest median annual earnings across most levels of educational attainment. Blacks had the lowest median annual earnings among those who did not have a high school credential (\$17,517).
- Whites had the highest median earnings among all groups for those who had not graduated from high school (\$23,699), had only a high school credential (\$30,912), had some college but no degree (\$36,100), and whose highest degree was an associate degree (\$40,552). Asians had the highest median earnings among those with a bachelor's degree or above.
- The median annual earnings among those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree ranged from \$41,316 for American Indians or Alaska Natives to \$57,495 for Asians, a difference of more than \$16,000 (39.2 percent). The earnings gap between these two groups was more than \$30,000 (60.0 percent) among adults whose highest degree was a master's degree.

Median Annual Earnings, by Educational Attainment and Age

Overall, median annual earnings increased with educational attainment within each age group. Median annual earnings varied across age, with 45- to 54-year-old adults having higher earnings overall than other age groups. However, earnings peaked for Asians between the ages of 35 and 44 and for American Indians or Alaska Natives between the ages of 55 and 64.

Ages 25 to 34

In 2016, the median annual earnings among adults ages 25 to 34 were \$30,414. Median annual earnings among adults in this age group increased with educational attainment, with bachelor's degree holders earning 79.3 percent more (about \$19,000) than high school graduates. Overall, Asians had the highest median annual earnings (\$40,505) among all racial and ethnic groups, while American Indians or Alaska Natives had the lowest (\$22,304).

Table 11.7: Median Annual Earnings of Adults Ages 25 to 34, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	High School Graduate or Equivalent	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Profes- sional Degree	Doctoral Degree	All Education Levels
All racial and ethnic groups	\$18,248	\$24,000	\$27,373	\$31,428	\$43,037	\$52,268	\$62,722	\$62,854	\$30,414
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$13,281	\$20,000	\$22,304	\$28,225	\$35,124	\$43,905	\$31,361!	\$59,746	\$22,304
Asian	\$18,547	\$22,998	\$28,225	\$30,912	\$51,520	\$70,000	\$62,722	\$62,000	\$40,505
Black	\$12,983	\$20,000	\$23,317	\$26,790	\$36,588	\$46,000	\$59,000	\$62,722	\$24,331
Hispanic	\$19,026	\$22,998	\$26,329	\$30,379	\$40,000	\$50,690	\$54,611	\$52,268	\$25,000
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$17,235	\$25,345	\$25,345	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$67,948	\$60,828!	\$26,936
White	\$18,547	\$25,345	\$29,881	\$33,797	\$44,307	\$51,520	\$64,812	\$64,915	\$34,430
More than one race	\$16,728	\$22,481	\$26,134	\$30,379	\$41,216	\$51,000	\$60,000	\$55,759	\$30,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%.

- Hispanics had the highest median annual earnings among all adults who had not completed high school (\$19,026), while Blacks had the lowest (\$12,983).
- Median annual earnings among adults whose highest degree was an associate degree ranged from \$26,790 for Blacks to \$33,797 for Whites, a difference of more than \$7,000 (26.2 percent).
- The median annual earnings of Asians whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (\$51,520) were substantially higher than those of Blacks (\$36,588) and American Indians or Alaska Natives (\$35,124) with this degree.
- The largest earnings gap among all racial and ethnic groups with a doctoral degree was between Whites and Hispanics (24.2 percent). Whites had the highest median annual earnings of all groups with this degree (\$64,915)—over \$12,000 more than the median for Hispanics with the same degree (\$52,268).

Ages 35 to 44

The median annual earnings of adults ages 35 to 44 were \$40,552. Median annual earnings varied by level of educational attainment, with bachelor's degree holders earning 93.6 percent more (about \$28,000) than high school graduates. Professional degree holders had the highest median annual earnings (\$104,070). Overall, Asians had the highest median annual earnings (\$55,000) among all racial and ethnic groups, while Hispanics had the lowest (\$29,366).

Table 11.8: Median Annual Earnings of Adults Ages 35 to 44, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	High School Graduate or Equivalent	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Profes- sional Degree	Doctoral Degree	All Education Levels
All racial and ethnic groups	\$21,000	\$30,379	\$36,455	\$40,552	\$58,800	\$70,000	\$104,070	\$84,674	\$40,552
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$18,248	\$25,345	\$30,379	\$31,361	\$42,580	\$52,000	\$65,000	\$60,828	\$30,414
Asian	\$20,276	\$25,760	\$35,442	\$40,505	\$70,000	\$91,242	\$121,656	\$90,674	\$55,000
Black	\$17,980	\$25,345	\$30,912	\$35,000	\$48,607	\$60,000	\$85,000	\$78,402	\$32,949
Hispanic	\$20,907	\$26,359	\$34,827	\$38,480	\$50,000	\$65,821	\$80,000	\$75,000	\$29,366
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$24,000	\$30,400	\$32,847	\$40,000	\$51,520	\$60,000	\$70,966!	\$75,948	\$35,033
White	\$25,089	\$32,615	\$39,155	\$41,870	\$60,758	\$68,000	\$106,327	\$84,674	\$45,787
More than one race	\$20,608	\$30,379	\$35,542	\$40,505	\$57,495	\$68,006	\$100,000	\$89,000	\$41,814

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%.

- Whites ages 35 to 44 had the highest median annual earnings among all adults whose highest degree was an associate degree or less. Whites with an associate degree had median annual earnings of \$41,870, roughly \$10,500 (33.5 percent) more than American Indian or Alaska Native adults with this degree (\$31,361).
- Asians whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree had substantially higher median annual earnings (\$70,000) than American Indians or Alaska Natives (\$42,580) with this same degree (roughly \$27,400 or 64.4 percent). This earnings gap between these two groups was 75.5 percent (nearly \$40,000) for master's degree holders.
- Asians, Whites, and adults of more than one race who had earned a professional degree all had median annual earnings of \$100,000 or more.

Ages 45 to 54

The overall median annual earnings of adults ages 45 to 54 were \$42,580. Median annual earnings increased with each level of educational attainment, with bachelor's degree holders earning 91.2 percent more (about \$30,000) than high school graduates. Across educational attainment levels, professional degree recipients had the highest median annual earnings (\$114,373), followed by doctoral degree recipients (\$99,309). Overall, Whites had the highest median annual earnings (\$48,428) among all racial and ethnic groups, while Hispanics had the lowest (\$30,379).

Table 11.9: Median Annual Earnings of Adults Ages 45 to 54, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	High School Graduate or Equivalent	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Profes- sional Degree	Doctoral Degree	All Education Levels
All racial and ethnic groups	\$23,317	\$32,809	\$40,505	\$44,556	\$62,722	\$76,035	\$114,373	\$99,309	\$42,580
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$20,907	\$26,790	\$31,942	\$37,468	\$49,676	\$60,000	\$81,011	\$66,975	\$32,404
Asian	\$20,580	\$26,126	\$36,692	\$41,216	\$60,000	\$93,163	\$131,794	\$110,000	\$45,569
Black	\$20,253	\$28,354	\$35,442	\$38,678	\$52,718	\$65,000	\$93,000	\$80,493	\$35,483
Hispanic	\$22,304	\$28,995	\$36,455	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$70,885	\$81,011	\$85,061	\$30,379
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$23,317	\$30,414	\$36,455	\$35,000	\$57,495	\$61,000	\$91,242	\$87,583	\$35,000
White	\$27,179	\$35,542	\$42,000	\$46,368	\$65,945	\$77,279	\$120,000	\$99,948	\$48,428
More than one race	\$24,729	\$31,392	\$37,569	\$41,216	\$57,495	\$72,127	\$101,380	\$85,000	\$41,518

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%.

- Among adults ages 45 to 54 whose highest degree was an associate degree, Whites had median annual earnings 32.5 percent higher (roughly \$11,000) than Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders (\$46,368 and \$35,000, respectively).
- Among adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree, Blacks (\$52,718), Hispanics (\$50,000), and American Indians or Alaska Natives (\$49,676) had lower median annual earnings than Whites (\$65,945).
- Asians and Whites who had earned a professional degree had the highest median annual earnings, of \$120,000 or more.

Ages 55 to 64

The median annual earnings of adults ages 55 to 64 were \$41,216. Median annual earnings increased with each additional level of educational attainment, with those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree earning 80.0 percent (over \$25,000 per year) more than high school graduates. Overall, Whites had the highest median annual earnings (\$45,000) among all racial and ethnic groups, while Hispanics had the lowest (\$29,270).

Table 11.10: Median Annual Earnings of Adults Ages 55 to 64, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	High School Graduate or Equivalent	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Profes- sional Degree	Doctoral Degree	All Education Levels
All racial and ethnic groups	\$23,521	\$31,942	\$39,000	\$42,860	\$57,495	\$67,948	\$108,000	\$96,173	\$41,216
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$25,000	\$27,388	\$32,302	\$36,455	\$46,368	\$53,670	\$76,035	\$58,733	\$32,442
Asian	\$20,276	\$25,316	\$35,483	\$40,552	\$51,223	\$78,402	\$113,343	\$109,763	\$38,480
Black	\$21,000	\$27,821	\$33,455	\$37,633	\$50,000	\$60,828	\$86,765	\$77,357	\$33,455
Hispanic	\$21,638	\$27,821	\$35,033	\$38,480	\$45,569	\$62,722	\$76,035	\$83,629	\$29,270
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$25,345	\$30,379	\$39,600	\$40,000	\$51,520	\$66,975	\$75,000!	\$82,431!	\$35,442
White	\$27,900	\$34,000	\$40,505	\$44,950	\$60,000	\$68,994	\$112,313	\$96,857	\$45,000
More than one race	\$22,000	\$30,379	\$35,442	\$42,531	\$50,690	\$65,000	\$100,000	\$86,000	\$39,493

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%.

- Among all adults who had completed only a high school credential or had not completed high school, Asians had the lowest median annual earnings of all racial and ethnic groups (\$25,316 and \$20,276, respectively). In contrast, Asians had the highest median annual earnings in each graduate degree category.
- Among adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree, Hispanics had the lowest median annual earnings (\$45,569), 24.1 percent (about \$14,000) less than Whites, who had the highest median annual earnings of bachelor's degree holders (\$60,000).
- Among adults ages 55 to 64 whose highest degree was a master's degree, Asians had the highest median annual earnings, while American Indians or Alaska Natives had the lowest. Asians had median annual earnings of \$78,402, nearly \$25,000 (46.1 percent) more than the median annual earnings of American Indians or Alaska Natives with this degree (\$53,670).

Ages 65 and Older

Median annual earnings of adults who were at or approaching retirement age were lower than those of younger workers. The median annual earnings of adults 65 and older were \$23,291 in 2016. While median annual earnings were lower across all levels of educational attainment for all racial and ethnic groups, those ages 65 or older who had earned professional and doctoral degrees had much higher earnings than adults with lower levels of educational attainment. Overall, Asians had the highest median annual earnings (\$30,718) among all racial and ethnic groups, while Blacks and Hispanics had the lowest (nearly \$21,000 each).

Table 11.11: Median Annual Earnings of Adults Ages 65 and Older, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate	High School Graduate or Equivalent	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Profes- sional Degree	Doctoral Degree	All Education Levels
All racial and ethnic groups	\$15,680	\$17,517	\$22,000	\$25,000	\$31,361	\$31,839	\$78,000	\$65,858	\$23,291
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$15,471	\$19,262	\$25,000	\$27,848	\$31,942	\$44,607	\$106,000	\$48,800	\$23,699
Asian	\$19,262	\$21,226	\$26,134	\$30,912	\$36,064	\$51,520	\$101,380	\$86,173	\$30,718
Black	\$15,353	\$18,600	\$21,000	\$23,802	\$28,233	\$32,000	\$52,657	\$50,489	\$20,608
Hispanic	\$17,200	\$20,253	\$25,089	\$26,359	\$30,379	\$39,016	\$57,787	\$65,000	\$20,907
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$15,400	\$25,345	\$30,912	\$50,632!	\$49,400	\$19,200!!	\$69,000!	\$56,773!!	\$27,373
White	\$15,000	\$16,810	\$21,638	\$24,729	\$31,361	\$30,912	\$78,402	\$65,821	\$23,521
More than one race	\$15,000	\$18,248	\$21,722	\$27,373	\$33,100	\$31,988	\$50,000	\$58,800	\$23,696

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%. | | !! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error is >50%.

- The median annual earnings of White adults ages 65 and older whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree were nearly twice the median annual earnings of those who had completed only high school (\$31,361 and \$16,810, respectively).
- Blacks in this age group whose highest degree was an associate degree or a bachelor's degree had lower median annual earnings in 2016 (\$23,802 and \$28,233, respectively) than other racial and ethnic groups with the same degrees.

Median Annual Earnings Across Age Groups

- Overall, Asians had the highest median annual earnings among adults 25 to 34 years old, 35 to 44 years old, and ages 65 and older; Whites had the highest median annual earnings among adults 45 to 54 years old and among adults 55 to 64 years old. Black, Hispanic, and American Indian or Alaska Native adults had lower earnings in each age group.
- Across all age groups and all levels of educational attainment, median annual earnings in 2016 ranged from \$27,179 for Hispanic adults ages 25 and older to \$44,307 (63.0 percent higher) for Asians. The gap was smallest for adults ages 55 to 64, among whom the median earnings for Asians was 31.5 percent higher than the median for Hispanics (\$38,480 and \$29,270, respectively). The gap was largest for adults 35 to 44 years old, among whom the median annual earnings level for Asians was 87.3 percent higher than the median for Hispanics (\$55,000 and \$29,366, respectively).

Median Annual Earnings, by Educational Attainment and Select Fields

Median annual earnings within fields increased with each additional level of educational attainment. It is important to note that the jobs within occupational fields differ with educational attainment. For example, someone with a bachelor's degree who works in health occupations could be a registered nurse, nutritionist, or researcher, whereas those in these fields whose highest degree is an associate degree are more likely to be medical technicians or licensed practical nurses. Someone with a graduate degree in education could be a teacher, principal, or reading specialist, whereas those with lower levels of attainment are more likely to be early childhood teachers or classroom assistants. The sections below provide examples of the relationship between education and earnings within select occupational fields.

Business, Management, and Financial Occupations

Among adults in business, management, and financial occupations, median annual earnings of all adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree were \$70,966, almost \$20,000 (37.7 percent) more per year than those who had some college but no degree or an associate degree (\$51,520 each). Adults who had completed a graduate degree in these fields had median annual earnings of \$91,242, over \$20,000 (28.6 percent) more than those with a bachelor's degree.

Table 11.12: Median Annual Earnings of Adults in Business, Management, and Financial Occupations, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	High School Diploma or Less	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
All racial and ethnic groups	\$44,050	\$51,520	\$51,520	\$70,966	\$91,242
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$42,556	\$43,276	\$45,000	\$59,814	\$70,000
Asian	\$40,505	\$50,177	\$50,000	\$70,000	\$97,325
Black	\$38,124	\$43,905	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$75,000
Hispanic	\$38,000	\$46,368	\$47,391	\$60,828	\$83,132
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$42,531	\$41,814	\$42,246	\$61,823	\$81,104
White	\$46,581	\$53,580	\$53,580	\$74,007	\$94,082
More than one race	\$43,593	\$49,459	\$50,000	\$65,000	\$83,132

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included. | Business, Management, and Financial Occupations were defined as having a two-digit Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) code of 11 (Management Occupations) or 13 (Business and Financial Operations Occupations).

- Bachelor's degrees had the largest dollar earnings increase over associate degrees for Whites and Asians in business, management, and financial occupations (a \$20,427 difference for Whites and \$20,000 difference for Asians). The largest percentage difference was 46.3 percent (\$19,577) for Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders.
- Hispanics and Asians had the largest differences in median annual earnings between those with a graduate degree and those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (a \$27,325 or 39.0 percent difference for Asians and \$22,304 or 36.7 percent difference for Hispanics).

STEM Occupations

Among adults in STEM occupations, adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree had median annual earnings of \$78,402, about \$17,500 (28.9 percent) more than those whose highest degree was an associate degree. Adults with graduate degrees in STEM occupations had median annual earnings of \$90,125, roughly \$12,000 (15.0 percent) more than bachelor's degree holders.

Table 11.13: Median Annual Earnings of Adults in STEM Occupations, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	High School Diploma or Less	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
All racial and ethnic groups	\$52,000	\$60,793	\$60,828	\$78,402	\$90,125
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$45,569	\$48,087	\$46,784	\$65,897	\$70,000
Asian	\$54,745	\$60,828	\$60,828	\$82,431	\$94,283
Black	\$50,000	\$52,000	\$55,000	\$68,000	\$79,998
Hispanic	\$47,040	\$53,313	\$55,404	\$70,885	\$82,000
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$50,690	\$64,915	\$68,938	\$75,000	\$73,175
White	\$53,313	\$62,722	\$61,823	\$79,000	\$90,000
More than one race	\$55,000	\$55,759	\$56,449	\$74,000	\$83,629

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included. | STEM Occupations were defined as having a two-digit Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) code of 15 (Computer or Mathematical Occupations), 17 (Architecture and Engineering Occupations), or 19 (Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations).

- Median annual earnings for Asians in STEM occupations whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree were 35.5 percent (roughly \$22,000) higher than the median for Asians whose highest degree was an associate degree; this difference for Blacks was only 23.6 percent (\$13,000) and for Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, it was 8.8 percent (about \$6,000).
- Blacks and Hispanics had the largest differences in median annual earnings between those with a graduate degree and those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (a \$11,998, or 17.6 percent, difference for Blacks and a \$11,115, or 15.7 percent, difference for Hispanics).

Education Occupations

Among adults in education occupations, median annual earnings for those whose highest degree was an associate degree were slightly higher than the median for those with some college but no degree (\$18,248 versus \$19,262). The median annual earnings of adults whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree were \$38,000, roughly twice as high (about \$19,000 more) as the median for those with an associate degree. Adults with a graduate degree in this field had median earnings 42.1 percent (\$16,000) higher than the median for those with bachelor's degrees.

Table 11.14: Median Annual Earnings of Adults in Education Occupations, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	High School Diploma or Less	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
All racial and ethnic groups	\$17,316	\$18,248	\$19,262	\$38,000	\$54,000
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$20,276	\$22,278	\$23,287	\$35,000	\$48,662
Asian	\$23,216	\$20,907	\$20,000	\$30,379	\$55,695
Black	\$20,000	\$20,608	\$20,608	\$37,105	\$51,644
Hispanic	\$19,059	\$19,700	\$20,759	\$41,216	\$53,731
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$28,000	\$28,225	\$20,608	\$36,588	\$51,520
White	\$16,000	\$17,215	\$18,547	\$38,000	\$54,359
More than one race	\$20,000	\$20,608	\$20,608	\$37,500	\$51,644

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included. | Education Occupations were defined as having a two-digit Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) code of 25 (Education, Training, and Library Occupations).

- The median annual earnings of Hispanics and Whites in education occupations whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree were approximately twice as high as the medians for members of these groups with an associate degree (about \$20,000 and \$19,000 more, respectively). These were the largest differences across all racial and ethnic groups.
- Asians had the largest difference in median annual earnings between those with graduate degrees and those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (\$55,695 compared with \$30,379).

Health Occupations

Among adults in health occupations, median annual earnings of those whose highest degree was an associate degree were \$43,543, roughly \$13,000 (43.6 percent) more than the median for adults who had some college but no degree. Median annual earnings for those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (\$55,404) were about \$12,000 (27.2 percent) more than the median for adults with an associate degree (\$43,543). The largest increase in median annual earnings was for those who earned graduate degrees. Adults with a graduate degree earned 55.4 percent (about \$31,000) more than those whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree (\$86,074 compared with \$55,404).

Table 11.15: Median Annual Earnings of Adults in Health Occupations, by Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity: 2016

	High School Diploma or Less	Some College but No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
All racial and ethnic groups	\$24,303	\$30,315	\$43,543	\$55,404	\$86,074
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$24,331	\$26,359	\$40,505	\$50,000	\$65,821
Asian	\$24,043	\$33,452	\$48,662	\$65,897	\$101,380
Black	\$23,317	\$28,225	\$38,000	\$52,657	\$78,402
Hispanic	\$22,669	\$29,270	\$40,505	\$50,690	\$81,000
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$28,851	\$34,003	\$40,100	\$55,695	\$82,431
White	\$25,089	\$30,414	\$45,000	\$54,359	\$85,061
More than one race	\$24,729	\$30,000	\$42,246	\$53,731	\$81,538

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 5-Year Estimates (2012–2016)

Notes: Only earnings for employed adults are included. All employed adults (both full and part time) are included. | Health Occupations were defined as having a two-digit Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) code of 29 (Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations) or 31 (Healthcare Support Occupations).

- Asians, Hispanics, and Whites with graduate degrees all had median annual earnings 53.8 percent to 59.8 percent (at least \$30,000) more than those in these groups whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree. The earnings increase was 31.6 percent (just \$15,821) for American Indians or Alaska Natives.

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