

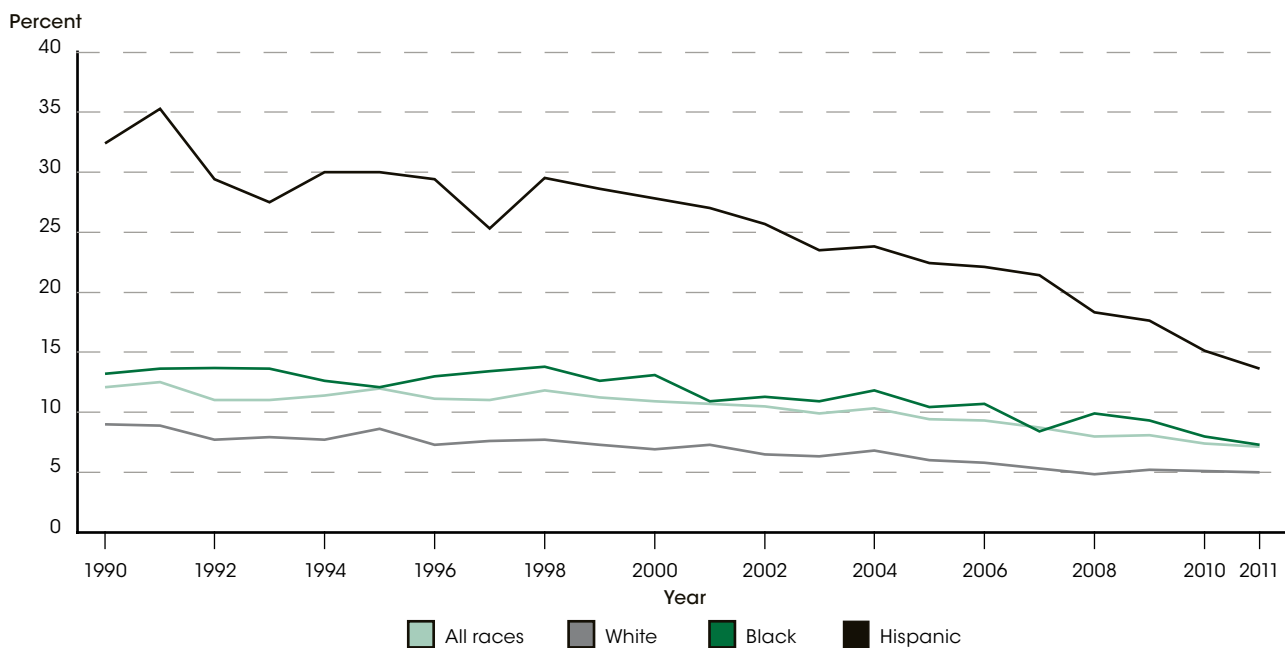
Status Dropout Rates

The gap in the status dropout rate between high-income and low-income families narrowed between 1970 and 2011, particularly during the past two decades, when the gap narrowed from 21 percentage points in 1990 to 11 percentage points in 2011.

The *status dropout rate* represents the percentage of 16-through 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a General Educational Development [GED] certificate). In this indicator, status dropout rates are estimated using both the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the American Community Survey (ACS). Data for the CPS have been collected annually for decades, allowing for detailed long term trends for the civilian, noninstitutionalized population. Young adults in the military or those who are incarcerated are not included in the CPS measure. National-level data from the ACS are available from 2000 onward. Data for those living in group quarters, including those in institutionalized and noninstitutionalized settings, from the ACS are available from 2006 onward. The 2010 ACS has larger sample sizes than the CPS, which allows for more detailed comparisons of status dropout rates by sex, race/ethnicity, and nativity.

Based on the CPS, the status dropout rate declined from 12 percent in 1990 to 7 percent in 2011. Reflecting the overall decline, the status dropout rate also declined for young adults in all but the highest family income category during this period. The status dropout rates declined for low-income families (the bottom 25 percent of all family incomes) from 24 percent to 13 percent, middle-low income families from 15 percent to 9 percent, and middle-high income families from 9 percent to 5 percent. There was no measurable change for high income families (the top 25 percent of all family incomes). Over this period, the dropout rate for young adults in the highest income families was consistently lower than the rates for those in lower income families. While differences remained, the gap in the status dropout rate between high-income and low-income families narrowed between 1970 and 2011, particularly during the past two decades, when the gap narrowed from 21 percentage points in 1990 to 11 percentage points in 2011.

Figure 1. Status dropout rates of 16- through 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: 1990 through 2011



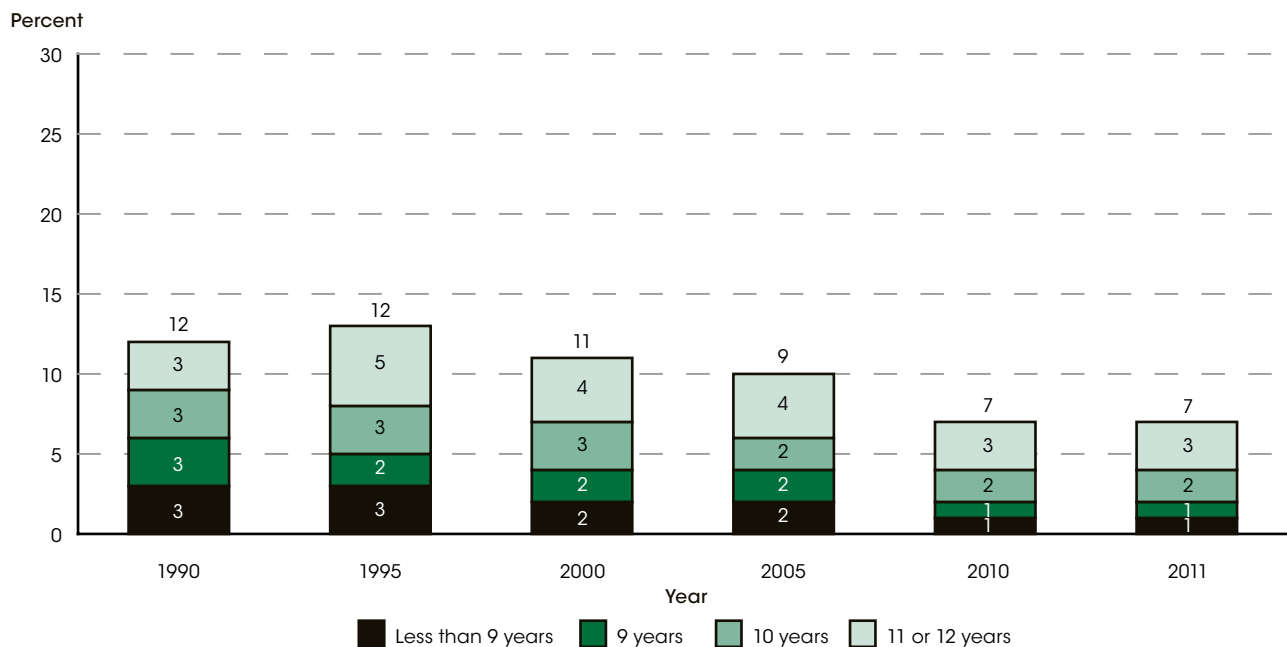
NOTE: The "status dropout rate" represents the percentage of 16-through 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a General Educational Development [GED] certificate). Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in prisons, persons in the military, and other persons not living in households. Data for all races include other racial/ethnic categories not separately shown. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 1990 through 2011. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 128.

For more information, see the Reader's Guide and the Guide to Sources.

Reflecting the overall decline in the status dropout rate between 1990 and 2011, the rates also declined for Whites (from 9 percent to 5 percent), Blacks (from 13 percent to 7 percent), and Hispanics (from 32 percent to 14 percent). Over this period, the status dropout rate was lowest for Whites, followed by Blacks and Hispanics. For example,

in 2011, the status dropout rate for Whites (5 percent) was lower than the status dropout rates for Blacks (7 percent) and Hispanics (14 percent). The gap between Whites and Hispanics narrowed from 23 percentage points in 1990 to 9 percentage points in 2011; the gaps between Whites and Blacks in these two years were not measurably different.

Figure 2. Status dropout rates of 16- through 24-year-olds, by number of years of school completed: Selected years, 1990 through 2011

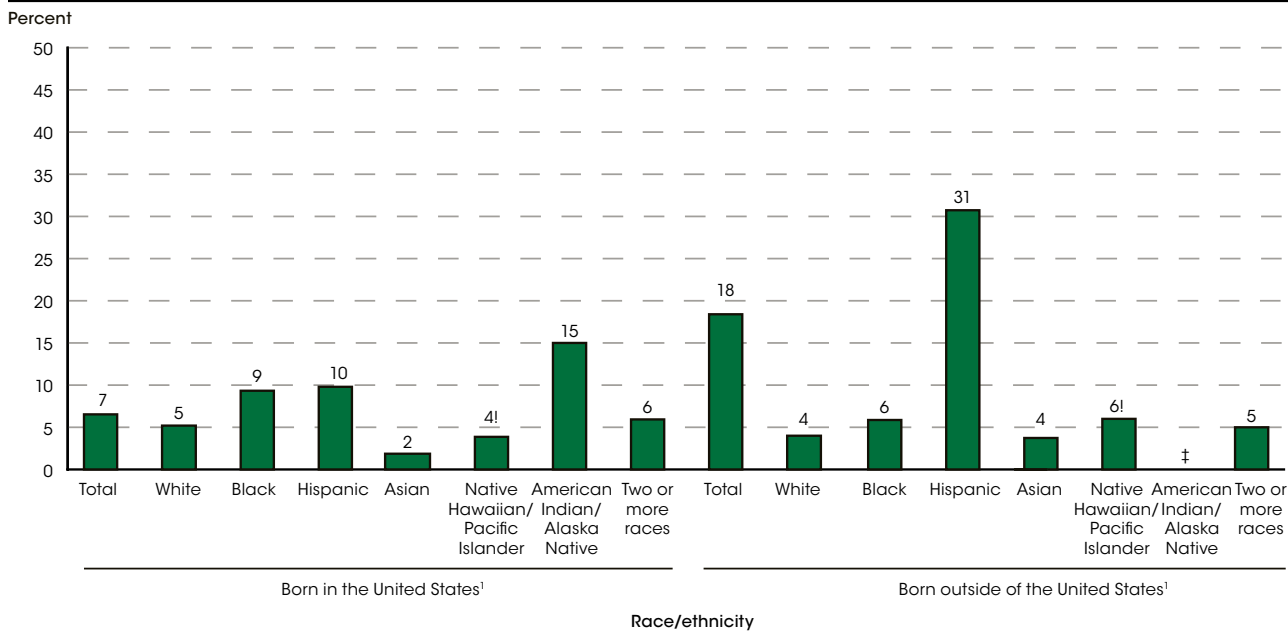


NOTE: "Status dropouts" are persons 16 through 24 years old who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a General Educational Development [GED] certificate). Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in prisons, persons in the military, and other persons not living in households. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 1990 through 2011. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 129.

The level of schooling completed by high school dropouts has increased over the past few decades. Reflecting both the decline in the dropout rate and the decrease in the percentage of dropouts with low levels of education, the overall percentage of the young adult population with less than 9 years of schooling decreased from 3 percent in 1990 to 1 percent in 2011. This group, which had

essentially not attended high school, accounted for 29 percent of status dropouts in 1990, compared with 18 percent in 2011. The percentage of dropouts who had completed 11–12 years of school was 3 percent in 1990 and 3 percent in 2011. In 2011, however, this group was a larger proportion of high school status dropouts (48 percent) than they were in 1990 (26 percent).

Figure 3. Status dropout rates of 16- through 24-year-olds in the noninstitutionalized group quarters and household population, by nativity and race/ethnicity: American Community Survey (ACS) 2010



[!] Interpret data with caution.

[‡] Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

¹ United States refers to the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

NOTE: This figure uses a different data source than figure 1; therefore, estimates are not directly comparable to the 2010 estimates in figure 1.

Noninstitutionalized group quarters include college and university housing, military quarters, facilities for workers and religious groups, and temporary shelters for the homeless. Among those counted in noninstitutionalized group quarters in the American Community Survey (ACS), only the residents of military barracks are not included in the civilian noninstitutionalized population in the Current Population Survey. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 130.

The ACS allows for comparisons of status dropout rates for 16- through 24-year-olds residing in households, as well as those in noninstitutionalized group quarters (such as military quarters), and institutionalized group quarters (such as adult and juvenile correctional facilities and nursing facilities). Among those living in households and noninstitutionalized group quarters, the status dropout rate was 8 percent in 2010. A higher percentage of males than females were status dropouts (9 vs. 7 percent). Differences between males and females overall were reflected in each racial/ethnic group except for Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders. Data for 16- through 24-year-olds living in institutionalized group quarters also showed a higher dropout rate for males than females.

However, the rates were notably higher than for those in households and noninstitutionalized group quarters. In 2010, the status dropout rate for those in institutionalized group quarters was 37.4 percent.

In 2010, Hispanics and Asians born in the United States had lower status dropout rates than did their counterparts born outside of the United States, whereas U.S.-born Whites and Blacks had higher status dropout rates than did their foreign-born counterparts. A higher dropout rate among Hispanics who were foreign born (31 percent) versus those who were native born (10 percent) partially accounts for the relatively high overall Hispanic dropout rate (16 percent).

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, tables 128, 129, 130

Glossary: Dropout, GED certificate, High school diploma, High school equivalent certificate