

YOUNG WORKERS WITHOUT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE HOLD SHORT-TERM OR NO JOBS

About 5 percent of 21-year-olds who never attended college have not held a job since graduating from or dropping out of high school, while another 41 percent have not held a job that lasted more than one year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.. By contrast, young adults who previously had attended college but were no longer enrolled at age 21 were more likely to be employed and to be working long-term jobs. “At age 21, labor force status differed substantially between high school dropouts, high school graduates who had never attended college, and individuals who had left college.”

Between their 20th and 21st year, some youths who dropped out of high school complete their education, while some high school graduates who delayed college, enroll, and some who enrolled in college after high school leave before earning a four-year degree and are working or serving in the military. About 46 percent of 21-year-olds had graduated from high school or earned an equivalent degree but were not attending college, while 41 percent were enrolled in college and 13 percent were high school dropouts. About 12 percent of high school graduates who were not enrolled in college at age 20 were attending college at age 21 and 6 percent were enrolled in a training program. On the other hand, 17 percent of those who attended college at age 20 were no longer enrolled one year later at age 21 and 1 percent were enrolled in a training program.

Among young adults not enrolled in college, “those with more education were more likely to be employed in civilian jobs or in the military.” Nearly eight of 10 high school graduates who had some college experience but were no longer enrolled were employed in civilian jobs and 4 percent were serving in the military, while seven out of 10 high school graduates who never attended college held jobs and 6 percent were in the military. By contrast, only six of 10 high school dropouts were employed and less than 1 percent were in the military. About 9 percent were unemployed, and 31 percent were not participating in the labor force either by working or by looking for work while unemployed.

Among 21-year-olds, who never attended college, 6 percent had never held a job since graduating from or leaving high school, while the longest job held by another 45 percent lasted one year or less. More high school dropouts than high school graduates had their longest job last for one year or less (51 percent versus 42 percent) or never held a job (8 percent versus 6 percent). Similarly, high school dropouts also tended to be unemployed for more weeks of the year than graduates (42 percent versus 23 percent), while more high school graduates than dropouts had held a job for more than one year (52 percent versus 41 percent).

Among all 21-year-olds, women are more likely to be enrolled in college than men (46 percent versus 36 percent), and to have been enrolled one year earlier at age 20 (84 percent versus 80 percent). Among high school graduates not enrolled in college, women were employed in roughly the same proportion as men, both those with some college experience (77 percent versus 78 percent) and those who never went to college (71 percent versus 72 percent). By contrast, among high school dropouts, men were more likely to work than women (68 percent versus 50 percent). Conversely, among 21-year-olds not enrolled in college, fewer women than men participated in the workforce, either working or looking for work while unemployed, especially among high school dropouts (41 percent versus 23 percent).

The report is available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/nlsyth.pdf>.

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