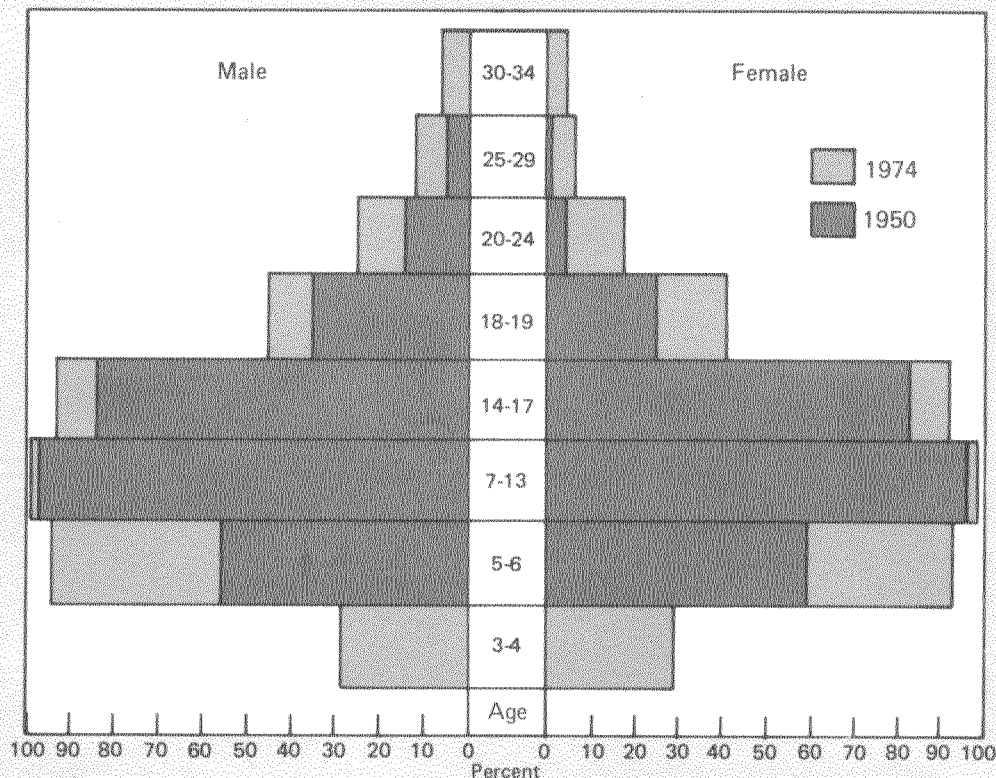


# Population Characteristics

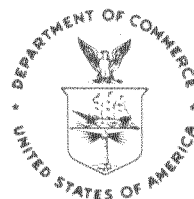
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## SCHOOL ENROLLMENT—SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS: OCTOBER 1974

Figure 1. School Enrollment Rates by Age and Sex:  
 October 1974 and October 1950



Note: Data for 1950 are limited to persons 5 to 29 years old  
 Source: Table A





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CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

**Population Characteristics**

**SCHOOL ENROLLMENT—SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS: OCTOBER 1974**

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# SCHOOL ENROLLMENT—SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS: OCTOBER 1974

This report presents an analysis of data from the Current Population Survey on school enrollment for October 1974. Recent changes in college enrollment are discussed in the text. Changes in school enrollment patterns for students attending nursery school through college by socioeconomic characteristics such as age, race, sex, and income level are presented in statistical tables. Persons in the Armed Forces living in barracks or inmates of institutions are not included in the population estimates shown in the statistical tables.

## INTRODUCTION

In October 1974, at least one in every four persons in the United States was enrolled in school. Including students in nursery school through college, 61.4 million persons 3 years old and over were attending school. This does not include students in technical or vocational school or adult education classes. A quarter century ago, in 1950, only about one-fifth of the population was enrolled in school (table A). The changes in enrollment since then have been greatest among the youngest and oldest students, whose school attendance is voluntary. The enrollment rate (that is, the percent of an age group enrolled in school) has changed little among students of compulsory school attendance age; about 98 percent of all children 6 to 15 years old were enrolled in regular school in 1950 and 99 percent in 1974. About 392,000 children 6 to 15 years old were still not in school for various reasons in 1974. Among children under 6 years old, the enrollment rate has increased by about two-thirds in the last decade to about 50 percent; and the enrollment rate for persons 16 to 29 years old has

increased by about four-fifths since 1950.<sup>1</sup> The increases in enrollment rates for persons 16 to 29 years old have been especially large for women.

**Enrollment of older college students.** The most dramatic increase in college enrollment in the 1970's have been among older students.<sup>2</sup> Although half of the college students were still 18 to 21 years old, students 25 years old and over comprised one-third of all college students in 1974. Of the 9.9 million persons in college in 1974, 1 million were 35 years old and over. The older students (25 years and over) made up about two-thirds of all part-time students and one-sixth of the full-time students. In addition to persons in college, there were about 154,000 persons 25 years old and over enrolled in school below the college level.

Among students under 35 years old, about 60 percent of the increase in college enrollment in the 1970's has been among those 25 to 34 years old. Increases in enrollment by these students has been especially dramatic since 1970, following the large increases among younger students in the mid-1960's when the children who were born during the period of the post-

<sup>1</sup>These figures are significantly different at the 90 percent level of confidence.

<sup>2</sup>From 1972 to 1974 the number of college students 25 years old and over has increased by about one-fourth. No survey information on students 35 years and over is available for years prior to 1972.

**Table A. School Enrollment Rates for Persons 3 to 34 Years Old, by Age and Sex:  
October 1974 and October 1950**

Age	Percent enrolled, 1974			Percent enrolled, 1950		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
3 and 4 years.....	28.8	28.1	29.5	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
5 and 6 years.....	94.2	94.4	93.9	58.2	56.8	59.5
7 to 13 years.....	99.3	99.2	99.5	98.7	98.7	98.7
14 to 17 years.....	92.9	93.3	92.5	83.4	84.4	82.3
18 and 19 years.....	43.1	45.8	40.7	29.7	35.7	24.3
20 to 24 years.....	21.4	25.8	17.3	9.2	14.3	4.6
25 to 29 years.....	9.6	12.7	6.7	3.0	5.9	0.4
30 to 34 years.....	5.7	6.7	4.6	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
6 to 15 years.....	99.0	98.9	99.1	97.6	97.5	97.7
16 to 29 years.....	32.1	35.6	28.8	17.7	21.9	13.8

NA Not available.

World War II baby boom reached college age and crowded the colleges, as they had crowded elementary and secondary schools the decade before. In 1974, persons 25 to 34 years old comprised one-fourth of all college students under 35 years old; in the mid-1960's the corresponding proportion was less than one-fifth, when the enrollment of persons 25 to 34 years old barely kept up with the increases in enrollment of the younger students.

The last time older students were such a large part of the college population was in the mid-1950's when large numbers of veterans were returning to school on the GI Bill. At that time one-third of the older male students were veterans; in the late 1940's and early 1950's 9 out of 10 were veterans, and in 1974 about 55 percent were veterans. Two factors contributed to the older college population in the mid-1950's: (1) there were proportionately more persons 25 to 34 years old in the college age population than in the 1960's and 1970's; and (2) veterans' benefits enabled older men who served in the Korean conflict to enroll in college.

Since 1970, the proportion of persons 18 to 24 years old enrolled in college has remained the same (about 25 percent); the proportion of persons 25 to 34 years old enrolled has increased from about 2 percent in the early 1950's, to 5.5 percent in 1970, and 7.5 percent in 1974. Graduate school accounts for a large proportion—but not all—of the students 25 to 34 years old (see table B). About 42 percent of these older students were graduate students and 33 percent were just beginning college as

freshmen and sophomores. Women comprised 38 percent of college students 25 to 34 years old in 1974, less than their proportion of all college students under 35 years old. Black students comprised about one-tenth of all college students 25 to 34 years old, half were freshmen and sophomores, and only one-fourth were graduate students, quite different from the distribution of all older students.

The 1 million students 35 years old and over enrolled in college in 1974 comprised one-tenth of all college students (table C). About half of these students were women; about four-fifths attended college part time and were in the labor force.

Two-year and four-year college. More persons (14 to 34 years old) were attending undergraduate school in the United States in 1974 than ever before. The most recent gains in college enrollment appear to be created by new students entering rather than students remaining in college longer, as indicated by the substantial increase at the freshman and sophomore levels in the last year. Between 1973 and 1974, junior and senior enrollment did not change significantly, whereas freshman and sophomore enrollment increased 11 percent and accounted for about four-fifths of the total increase.

The college enrollment gains were also due to increases in enrollment in junior and community colleges, which have increased their share of the total undergraduate population. These schools enrolled 21

Table B. Characteristics of College Students 25 to 34 Years Old: October 1974

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Number			Percent		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total, 25 to 34 years old	29,215	14,133	15,082	(X)	(X)	(X)
Enrolled in college.....	2,202	1,371	831	100.0	100.0	100.0
Freshman.....	366	190	176	16.6	13.9	21.2
Sophomore.....	350	236	114	15.9	17.2	13.7
Junior.....	272	170	102	12.4	12.4	12.3
Senior.....	284	209	75	12.9	15.2	9.0
Graduate.....	932	567	365	42.3	41.4	43.9
Full time.....	818	562	257	37.1	41.0	30.9
Part time.....	1,383	809	574	62.8	59.0	69.1
White.....	1,921	1,205	716	87.2	87.9	86.2
Negro.....	224	130	94	10.2	9.5	11.3
Married, spouse present.....	1,474	978	496	66.9	71.3	59.7

X Not applicable.

percent of the undergraduates in 1966 (the first year for which data were available) and 28 percent in 1974. About one-fourth of all junior college enrollees were students over 21 years old attending part time. Since 1970, junior college enrollment has increased by nearly one-fourth, largely among students over 21. In 1970, 31 percent of the junior college students were over 21; in 1974, 42 percent were over 21. In both years about 14 percent of the students in the first 2 years of 4-year colleges were over 21 years old.

Two-year and four-year college populations differ in several ways. More students in junior colleges than 4-year colleges are older, married, attending part time, from less affluent homes, and with parents who have less education than students in four-year colleges or universities. Part-time attendance is most common in 2-year schools. Forty percent of the students in 2-year colleges and 15 percent in 4-year colleges were attending part time. Among junior college students, 30 percent were married and living with their spouses, twice the proportion who were married among those in 4-year colleges.

Among the dependent family members 18 to 24 years old enrolled in college in 1974, those in junior college had lower family incomes than those in 4-year colleges. Thirty-one percent of these dependent family members in junior colleges had family incomes of less than \$10,000 in the previous 12 months; whereas 19 percent of those in the first 2 years of 4-year colleges had less than \$10,000.<sup>3</sup> Most "dependent" college students are members of their parents' households, even though they may be living in college housing or private housing at the college. A dependent family member is a relative of the household head, other than a wife, who is not married with spouse present. Fully 72 percent of junior college students 18 to 24 years old, and an even larger proportion, 85 percent, of students in the first 2 years of 4-year colleges are dependent family members.<sup>4</sup> Among dependent family members in 2-year colleges,

<sup>3</sup> Dependent family members are students of "other marital status" in table 24.

<sup>4</sup> These figures are based on the number of persons reporting type of college.

Table C. Characteristics of Students 35 Years Old and Over: October 1974

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	White	Negro and other races	Percent of college students		
				Total	White	Negro and other races
Total, 35 years old and over.....	86,205	77,198	9,007	(X)	(X)	(X)
Enrolled below college level.....	78	43	35	(X)	(X)	(X)
Enrolled in college.....	1,025	908	117	100.0	100.0	100.0
Male.....	476	414	62	46.4	45.6	53.0
Female.....	548	493	55	53.4	54.3	47.0
Full time.....	209	173	36	20.4	19.1	30.8
Part time.....	811	730	81	79.1	80.4	69.2
Not reported.....	5	5	-	0.5	0.6	-
In labor force.....	823	729	94	80.3	80.3	80.3
Male.....	423	372	51	41.3	41.0	43.6
Female.....	400	356	44	39.0	39.2	37.6
Not in labor force.....	202	179	23	19.7	19.7	19.7
Married, spouse present.....	790	713	77	77.1	78.5	65.8
Other marital status.....	235	195	40	22.9	21.5	34.2

- Represents zero. X Not applicable.



only 16 percent were from families in which the head completed college and 29 percent were from families in which the head had not completed high school. Of families of students in the first 2 years of 4-year schools, 34 percent of the heads had completed college and only about 19 percent had not completed high school.

**Enrollment of black and white students.** College enrollment of black students has increased in the last decade as they have become a larger proportion of all college students 16 to 34 years old (table D). Black college students were 9 percent of all students in 1974; they made up only about 5 percent of all students in 1964. The number of black students in college increased by 19 percent from 1973 to 1974 and by 56 percent since 1970. The corresponding white enrollment rose 15 percent since 1970.

Although in the past 10 years, black enrollment has approached the level of white enrollment, racial differences remain between college classes. There is a substantially smaller proportion of black students in the senior year than in the freshman year. In the freshman year, blacks made up about 12 percent of all students in 1974, about the same as their proportion in the population; in the senior year, they were 7 percent of all students. At the beginning of the decade, they were 9 percent of all freshmen and 5 percent of the seniors (not

significantly different from seniors in 1974). Although blacks entered college as freshmen at a rate proportional to their share of the population in 1974, black seniors who were ready for graduation constituted a lower proportion than their share of the total population. The number of black seniors enrolled in college may be low both because a lower proportion entered as freshmen 3 years earlier and because many discontinued enrollment.

College discontinuation rates have been substantial for all groups—black, white, male, and female. Among all students 16 to 34 years old, there were about twice as many freshmen as seniors in 1974; among blacks three times as many students were freshmen as seniors, about the same as at the beginning of the decade. Although some of the difference between the number of freshmen and seniors in each year may be caused by increases in freshman enrollment over time, a substantial part of the difference in 1974 was due to discontinuing enrollment in the first few years of college. For all students there were about 56 percent as many seniors in 1974 as freshmen 3 years earlier. In the same period the number of white college freshmen did not change significantly, while black freshmen increased by about one-third.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>See *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 241, "Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1971."

Table D. College Enrollment of the Population 16 to 34 Years Old, by Year of School, Sex, and Race: October 1974

(Numbers in thousands)

Year of school	All races	White		Negro		Other races
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
NUMBER						
Total, all years.....	8,821	4,365	3,412	422	391	232
Freshman.....	2,552	1,111	1,060	134	178	70
Sophomore.....	1,999	999	737	116	82	65
Junior.....	1,422	700	568	67	52	35
Senior.....	1,360	732	506	54	41	27
Graduate.....	1,490	823	541	50	38	37
PERCENT						
Total, all years.....	100.0	49.5	38.7	4.8	4.4	2.6
Freshman.....	100.0	43.5	41.5	5.3	7.0	2.7
Sophomore.....	100.0	50.0	36.9	5.8	4.1	3.3
Junior.....	100.0	49.2	39.9	4.7	3.7	2.5
Senior.....	100.0	53.8	37.2	4.0	3.0	2.0
Graduate.....	100.0	55.2	36.3	3.4	2.6	2.5

Men who enroll in college as freshmen are more likely to remain through 4 years of college than women. Men made up 55 percent of freshmen in 1971 and 60 percent of seniors in 1974. Although college participation of other groups has been increasing, white men still made up about half of all college students in 1974 (49 percent, a decrease of 5 percentage points since 1971). White men constituted 44 percent of freshmen and 54 percent of seniors in 1974. They were 19 percent of the freshman class in 1971, when most of the 1974 seniors should have entered college.<sup>6</sup> White women, on the other hand, constituted 40 percent of the freshman class in 1971 and remained about the same proportion as seniors in 1974. Black students made up 9.5 percent of freshmen in 1971 and decreased to 7.0 percent of seniors 3 years later (significant at the 90 percent level of confidence). Not only do significant numbers of each group fail to continue their educations, but white men are less likely to leave college before graduation than the others.

Table E and figure 2 show an approximation to college enrollment of the 1971 freshman class by sex and race, based on the number of students in the first

<sup>6</sup>1971 freshmen and 1974 seniors were significantly different at the 94 percent level of confidence.

year of college in 1971 and the proportion remaining in school through the fourth year in 1974; these data provide an estimate of the proportion of freshmen who complete college and demonstrate the differences in discontinuation rates for some of the population groups. These figures are not based on a longitudinal survey but represent an annual survey of each college class. Thus they may not represent actual experiences of a single college class. For all students, there were only a little over half as many seniors in college in 1974 as there were freshmen in 1971. For white men, there were about 61 percent as many seniors and for black females about 35 percent as many seniors as freshmen 3 years earlier. Although not all students who complete college finish in 4 years, at least half do; for example, about 10 percent of sophomores and juniors and 4 percent of seniors in 1974 had been out of school in 1973 and returned in 1974.

Black and white college students were equally likely to be attending full time in 1974. About three-fourths of the 16 to 34 year old college students in each group were attending full time. About 57 percent of both black and white students were under 22 years old and one-fourth were 25 to 34 years old. About one-fourth of the black and white students were married and living with their spouses and about 45 percent of both black and white students were women.

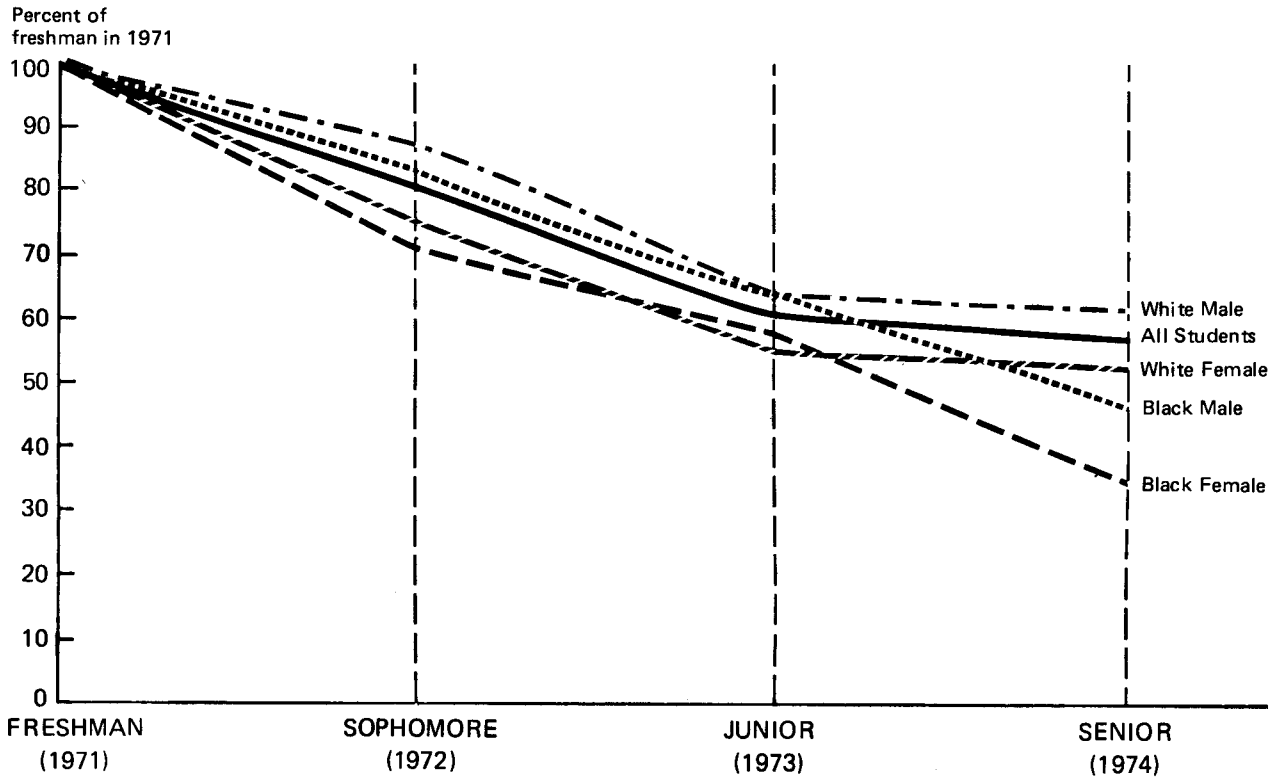
Table E. College Enrollment of the 1971 Freshman Class: October 1971 to October 1974

(Numbers in thousands)

Race and sex	Number enrolled (students 16 to 34 years old)				Percent of first year students in 1971			
	Freshman (1971)	Sophomore (1972)	Junior (1973)	Senior (1974)	Freshman (1971)	Sophomore (1972)	Junior (1973)	Senior (1974)
Total.....	2,438	1,965	1,476	1,360	100.0	80.6	60.5	55.8
Male.....	1,331	1,152	851	811	100.0	86.6	63.9	60.9
Female.....	1,107	813	625	549	100.0	73.4	56.5	49.6
White.....	2,166	1,760	1,306	1,238	100.0	81.3	60.3	57.2
Male.....	1,194	1,041	764	732	100.0	87.2	64.0	61.3
Female.....	971	719	541	506	100.0	74.0	55.7	52.1
Negro.....	232	178	142	95	100.0	76.7	61.2	40.9
Male.....	114	95	73	54	100.0	83.3	64.0	47.4
Female.....	118	83	69	41	100.0	70.3	58.5	34.7

Note: This is an approximation of retention rates based on annual data on total number of persons in each college class.

Figure 2. College Enrollment of the 1971 Freshman Class: October 1971 to October 1974



Source: Table E

Both blacks and whites have experienced large increases in college enrollment among older students in the 1970's (table F). The increase in total enrollment among white students since 1970 has been only 15 percent, but for blacks it has been 56 percent. For both groups about half of the increase was among students 25 years old and over. Among 18- and 19-year-olds the proportion of whites enrolled in college decreased from 1970 to 1974. Although it appears that for blacks college enrollment rates have increased for each age group and the difference between the rates for whites and blacks at each age is narrowing, the trend is not statistically significant.

In 1970, the discrepancies between enrollment rates of blacks and whites based on income were appreciable. Among dependent persons 18 to 24 years old in families making less than \$10,000, about twice as large a proportion of whites as blacks were enrolled in college. Among those in families with income of \$10,000 and over, the corresponding difference was smaller (significantly different from families making less than \$10,000 at the 90 percent level of confidence).

However, in 1974, black and white students in the highest and lowest income ranges were attending in more equal proportions. Although a smaller proportion of white families than black families were in lower

income levels, the college attendance of dependent family members 18 to 24 years old was about the same for the two groups in 1974.<sup>7</sup> For persons in families with less than \$10,000 income in the previous 12 months, about the same proportion of blacks and whites attended college. This is also true for those families making \$20,000 or more. For both races, about 20 percent of the lowest income group and 54 percent of the highest income group were in college. For persons in middle income families, making \$10,000 to \$19,999 total money income, white persons were still more likely to be enrolled in college. For both groups the probability of college enrollment tended to increase with income.

The lower income distribution of black families was reflected in the fact that 64 percent of the 18 to 24 year-old black students who were dependent family members in 1974 were from families with incomes of less than \$10,000, whereas 16 percent of white students were from families of the same economic status. One-fourth of the black students and 43 percent of the white students were from middle income families making \$10,000 to \$19,999.

<sup>7</sup> Dependent family members are students of "other marital status" in table 13.

Table F. College Enrollment of Persons 16 to 34 Years Old, by Race and Age:  
October 1974 and October 1970

(Numbers in thousands)

Age	1974				1970			
	Number		Percent		Number		Percent	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
Total, 16 to 34 years old.....	7,776	813	14.2	11.2	6,759	522	14.1	8.3
16 and 17 years.....	267	33	3.8	3.0	230	21	3.5	2.1
18 and 19 years.....	2,308	233	34.4	23.2	2,361	191	39.3	21.8
20 and 21 years.....	1,940	190	30.1	21.3	1,684	152	31.9	19.9
22 to 24 years.....	1,341	132	14.9	11.0	1,260	73	15.1	7.0
25 to 29 years.....	1,308	136	9.4	8.3	853	54	7.2	3.8
30 to 34 years.....	613	88	5.3	6.3	371	31	3.8	2.6

Table G. College Enrollment Rates for Dependent Family Members 18 to 24 Years Old, by Family Income:  
October 1974 and October 1970

(Percent enrolled)

Total money income <sup>1</sup>	1974			1970		
	Total	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro
Total.....	35.5	37.6	22.2	39.3	42.5	20.4
Less than \$10,000.....	21.8	21.6	19.9	27.6	30.9	16.3
Less than \$5,000.....	15.7	15.6	14.6	17.0	20.6	10.8
\$5,000 to \$9,999.....	26.0	24.5	26.6	33.6	35.1	23.9
\$10,000 or more.....	42.7	43.4	30.7	52.0	52.8	37.1
\$10,000 to \$19,999.....	35.8	36.6	25.7	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
\$20,000 and over.....	54.2	54.0	54.8	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Current dollars.

#### EXPLANATION OF POPULATION ESTIMATES

In order to obtain estimates of the characteristics of the civilian noninstitutional population at the time the Current Population Survey is taken, weighted sample results of the survey are inflated using the most recent postcensal population estimates as bases. The base for inflation factors used with the October 1972 to 1974 surveys was the 1970 Census of Population; all previous years (since 1961) have been based on the 1960 Census of Population. A comparison of October 1971 survey data based on the 1960 census with revised data using the 1970 census as a base, shows the 1970-based estimates for all ages under 12 years old to be smaller than the

1960-based estimates. In comparing data based on different census years, it is important to consider the effect of weighting procedures. Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 260, appendix table B shows school enrollment data by age, sex, and level for October 1971 based on the 1970 census figures.

#### RELATED REPORTS

Advance data on school enrollment for October 1974 were presented in Series P-20, No. 278. Statistics on school enrollment for October of the years prior to 1974 have been published in other reports in Series P-20. See backcover for list.

Data on college plans of high school seniors for October 1974 were presented in "College Plans of High School Seniors: October 1974," **Current Population Reports**, Series P-20, No. 284. Data on nursery school and kindergarten enrollment for October 1974 were published in DHEW Publication No. (NCES) 76-147, "Preprimary Enrollment: October 1974" by the National Center for Education Statistics. A report on the relationship between preprimary enrollment of children and labor force participation of mothers from the years 1967 to 1974 is being prepared by the Bureau of the Census.

Statistics on school enrollment for cities, standard metropolitan statistical areas, States, regions, and the United States appear in reports of the decennial censuses. Detailed statistics on school enrollment by age and socioeconomic characteristics for regions and the United States are presented in Subject Reports of the 1970 census, especially in PC(2)-5A, **School Enrollment**.

Figures on school enrollment from the October Current Population Survey differ from decennial census data for reasons in addition to the difference in the dates. In the first place, the survey data exclude the institutional population and members of the Armed Forces. These two groups were included in the census. Second, there were differences in field work. The small

group of Current Population Survey enumerators were more experienced and had more intensive training and supervision than the large number of temporary census enumerators and may have more often obtained more accurate answers from respondents. Third, the census was taken in April and relates to enrollment since February 1, whereas the surveys were taken in October and relate to enrollment in the current term. This difference in months of the year affects not only the extent of school enrollment (through "dropouts" during the school year, etc.) but also the level of school in which persons of a given age are enrolled.

**Data from school systems.** Information on college enrollment is also collected and published by Federal, State, and local governmental agencies, and by independent research organizations. This information is generally obtained from reports of school systems and institutions of higher learning, and from other surveys and censuses. These data are only roughly comparable with data collected by the Bureau of the Census by household interviews, however, because of differences in definitions, subject matter covered, and enumeration methods. The census data are subject to sampling variability, which may be relatively large where numbers for specific age or population groups, or for given school categories, are small.