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ETS's Addressing Achievement Gaps Symposium

## Advancing Success for Black Men in College

*A Statistical Profile*

ETS's Addressing Achievement Gaps Symposium

# Advancing Success for Black Men in College

Co-sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund

June 23, 2014 • National Press Club • Washington, D.C.



## A Statistical Profile of the Educational and Life Status of Black Men in College

Since 2010, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and ETS have partnered to examine the educational path of Black boys and men in the United States — from birth through the college years. Before they reach the postsecondary stage, too many Black men have already left the education track. Among Black men who graduated from high school in 2012, a little over half were enrolled in postsecondary education in October of that year.<sup>1</sup> In 2002, 72 percent of Black male high school sophomores reported that they “expect to attain a bachelor’s degree or higher”; however the data show that in 2013 only 17 percent of Black men ages 25–29 had actually attained a bachelor’s degree.<sup>2</sup> What accounts for this disconnect between these young men’s expectations and their degree attainment?

If the current trend in degree attainment continues, roughly 17 percent of Black college freshmen will attain a degree within six years, compared to 35 percent of their White peers.<sup>3</sup> Further up the ladder of higher education, the proportion of Black men continues to decrease. In 2011, Black men accounted for less than 6 percent of undergraduate students and less than 4 percent of the students enrolled in graduate studies, although 8.7 percent of the population of 18–29 year olds were Black men in 2011.<sup>4</sup>

This underrepresentation of Black men in higher education is unacceptable. Our nation must do more to help advance the success of young Black men who enter the gates of higher education. We urge you to consider the best strategies and support systems to encourage more of these young Black men to pursue a postsecondary education, and ensure that they exit with a college degree.

**There are 2.3 million young Black men, ages 18–24, living in the United States.**

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, “Enrollment Status of High School Graduates 15 to 24 Years Old, by Type of School, Attendance Status, and Sex: October 2012.”

<sup>2</sup> Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS:02); Digest of Education Statistics 2013, Table 104.20, advance release.

<sup>3</sup> BPS: 2009 Beginning Postsecondary Students. Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/31/2014.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States and States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2012.” Release date: June 2013. **Note:** This number does not include those Black men who are also Hispanic or who are of more than one race.

## Black Men 18–24

In 2012, there were 2.3 million Black men in the United States ages 18–24 — 7.5 percent of all 18–24 year olds were Black men, while 12.7 percent of all Black men and boys were ages 18–24.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2012". Release date: June 2013.

**Note:** This does not include those Black men who are also Hispanic or who are of more than one race.

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## Poverty

28 percent of Black men ages 18–24 are poor compared with 20 percent of all people in that age group. 13 percent of Black men ages 18–24 are extremely poor compared with 11 percent of all people in that age group.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2013.

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## Postsecondary Enrollment

37 percent of all Black men ages 18–24 who were not in K–12 were enrolled in postsecondary education in 2012, compared with 44 percent of all students ages 18–24 who were not in K–12.

53 percent of Black men ages 15–24 who graduated from high school in 2012 were enrolled in two- or four-year colleges in October 2012, compared to 66 percent for all 2012 high school graduates in this age group.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), "Enrollment Status of the Population 3 Years Old and Over, by Sex, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Foreign Born, and Foreign-Born Parentage: October 2012" and "Enrollment Status of High School Graduates 15 to 24 Years Old by Type of School, Attendance Status, and Sex: October 2012".

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## Enrollment by Institution Type

Of Black male undergraduates in 2012, 10 percent were in certificate programs, 47 percent were in associate degree programs and 42 percent were in bachelor's degree programs.

Of Black male undergraduates in 2012, 23 percent were in public four-year institutions, 10 percent were in private not-for-profit four-year programs, 41 percent were in public two-year institutions and 19 percent were in private for-profit programs.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/26/2014.

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## Full-Time vs. Part-Time Enrollment

51 percent of Black male undergraduates in 2012 attended college exclusively full time, 32 percent attended exclusively part time and 18 percent were mixed full and part time.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/31/2014.

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## Fact vs. Fiction

Contrary to oft-repeated claims, there are more Black men in college than in prison. There were 841,000 Black male inmates held in custody in state or federal prisons or local jails in 2009, but 1,037,000 Black men were enrolled in college in fall 2009.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2009. Table 16: Prison inmates at midyear 2009, Estimated number of inmates held in custody in state or federal prison, or in local jails, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin, June 30, 2000–09. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/pim09st.pdf>.

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Source: National Center for Education Statistics. 2010. Table 237: Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by level of student, sex, attendance status, and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1976 through 2010. Retrieved from [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11\\_237.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11_237.asp).

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## Parental Education

40 percent of Black men who were undergraduates in 2012 were the children of parents with a high school diploma or less education, compared to 26 percent of White male undergraduates.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/20/2014. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/datalab/quickstats/createtable.aspx>.

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## Undermatching

High-achieving, low-income students are more likely than high-achieving, high-income students to "undermatch" and enroll in colleges where they are overqualified for admission.

Source: Hoxby, Caroline and Christopher Avery. "The Missing 'One-Offs': The Hidden Supply of High-Achieving Low-Income Students." *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, Spring 2013. Retrieved from [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/projects/bpea/spring%202013/2013a\\_hoxby.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/projects/bpea/spring%202013/2013a_hoxby.pdf).

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## College Readiness

In 2013, while 69 percent of Black students who took the ACT® test had taken a core curriculum in high school, only 5 percent of Black students who took the test scored “college ready” in all four tested subjects. 74 percent of all students who took the ACT® test had taken a core curriculum in high school and 26 percent of all test takers scored “college ready” in all four tested subjects.

Source: ACT, Inc. ACT Profile Reports for Individual States, Graduating Class 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2013/profilereports.html>.

## Working Students

37 percent of Black male undergraduates in 2012 worked more than 40 hours a week. This is only slightly greater than the share of White male students working 40 hours a week (35 percent).

46 percent of Black undergraduates who worked 40 or more hours a week received no Pell grant.

65 percent of Black men who worked while they were undergraduates in 2012 identified themselves primarily as students, not as employees.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/20/2014.

## Federal Financial Aid

80 percent of Black male undergraduates in 2012 applied for federal financial aid, compared to 63 percent of White male undergraduates.

66 percent of Black male undergraduates in 2012 received a Pell grant, compared to 30 percent of White male undergraduates.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/26/2014.

68 percent of Black male undergraduates and 49 percent of White male undergraduates had federal student aid. 6 percent of Black male undergraduates had merit-only grants from institutions, compared with 10 percent of White male undergraduates in 2012. 5.5 percent of Black male undergraduates received work study.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/26/2014.

## Private Student Loans

5 percent of Black male undergraduates in 2012 had private student loans.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/26/2014.

## Immigrant Students

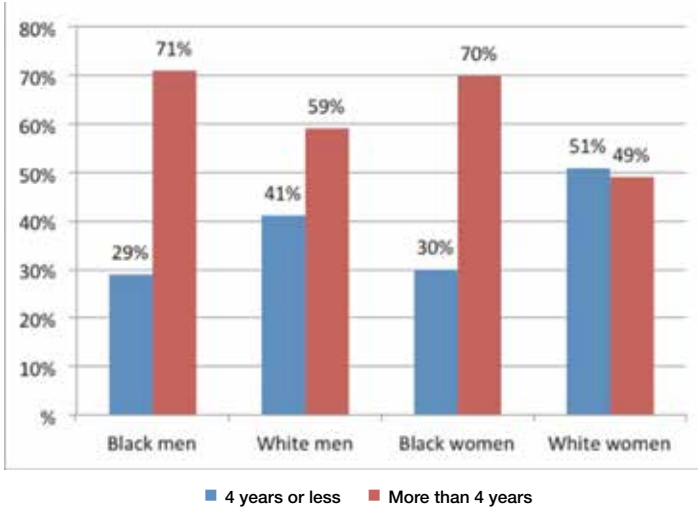
93 percent of Black male undergraduates in 2012 were U.S. citizens, 6 percent were resident aliens and 1.4 percent were foreign or international students.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/31/2014.



## Less Than One-Third of Black Men Who Graduate Do So in Four Years

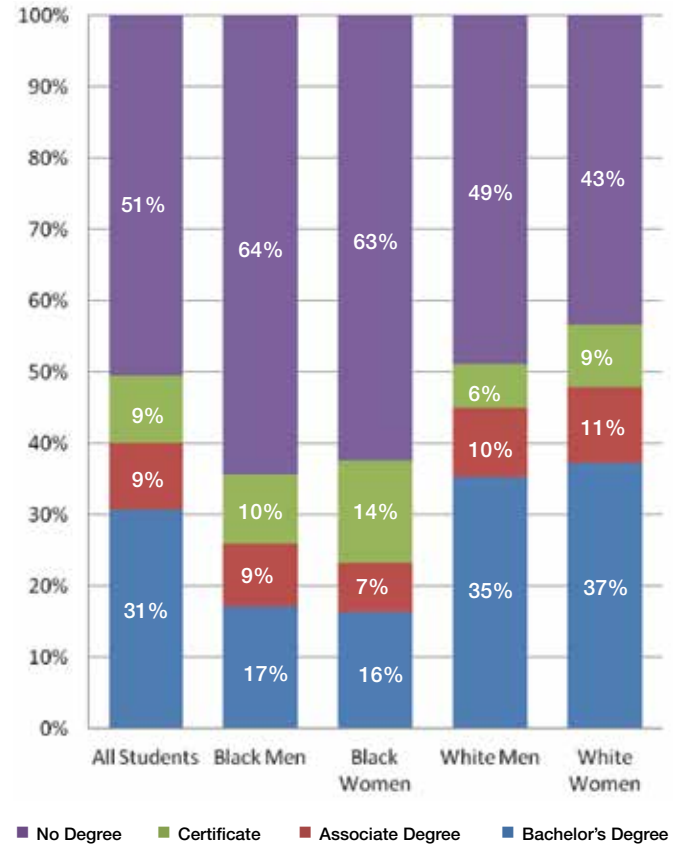
Time to Graduation for College Graduates in 2008



Source: B&B:09 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study. Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/31/2014.

## Black Men Were Half as Likely as White Men to Earn a Bachelor's Degree Within Six Years of Entering College

Highest Degree Attained Through 2009 by Undergraduates Starting in 2003–2004



Source: BPS:2009 Beginning Postsecondary Students. Computation by NCES QuickStats on 3/31/2014.



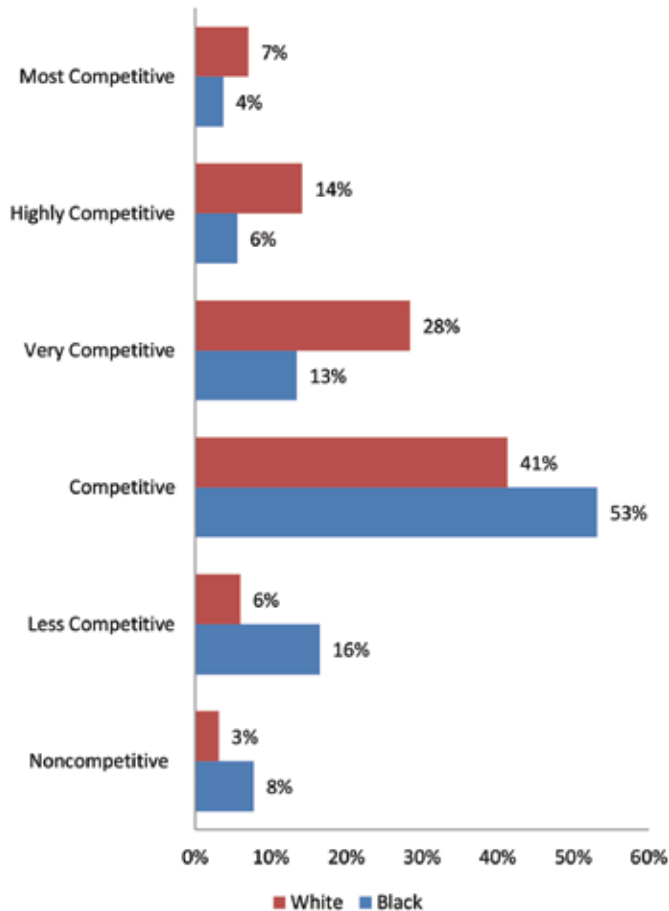
## Educational Attainment Over 25 Years Old

In 2013, 28 percent of Black men age 25 and older had a postsecondary degree compared to 41 percent of men age 25 and older of all races. Another 20 percent of Black men in this age group had some college, but no degree compared to 17 percent of men of all races.

Source: Educational Attainment in the United States: 2013 – Detailed Tables Table 1. Educational Attainment of the Population 18 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/cps/2013/tables.html>.

## Among Male Undergraduates 18–24, Black Men Are More Likely to Enroll in Less Competitive Colleges Than White Men

Percentage of Full-Time, First-Time Freshman Enrollment by Barron's College Selectivity Ratings: Race/Ethnicity, Male, Fall 2012

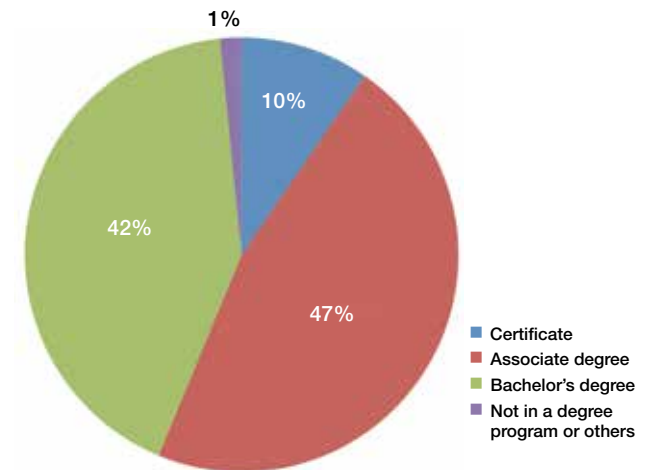


Source: Enrollment: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2012, Enrollment component. Barron's Profiles of American Colleges 2013, 30th Edition. ETS Calculation.

**Note:** These data represent student enrollment at institutions ranked by *Barron's Profile of American Colleges 2013* with IPEDS 2012 Fall enrollment data. Includes only Title IV institutions. This table includes 1,407 ranked institutions.

## More Than Half of Black Men in Postsecondary Education Are Enrolled in Nonbachelor Degree Programs

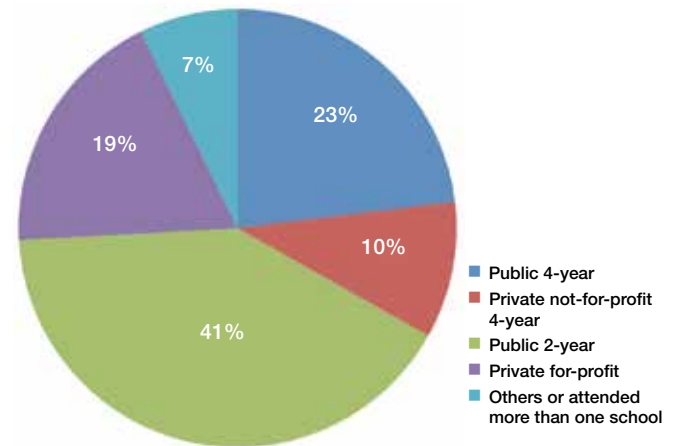
Undergraduate Degree Program  
Black Male Undergraduates (2012)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 5/9/2014.

## About 1/5 of Black Male Undergraduates Attend For-Profit Institutions

Institution Sector  
Black Male Undergraduates (2012)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12). Computation by NCES QuickStats on 5/9/2014.

This profile was written by staff from ETS's Policy Evaluation & Research Center and the Children's Defense Fund.

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