Benefits of Higher Education

Higher education remains a catalyst for social mobility and promotes numerous benefits for individuals and communities.

**EARNINGS**
College graduates have higher median annual earnings.

- **Graduate or professional degree**: $75,495
- **Bachelor’s degree**: $56,344
- **Some college or associate degree**: $38,125
- **High school diploma or equivalent**: $31,956


**HEALTH**
- **Adults who have college degrees are less likely to smoke.**
  - Bachelor’s degree or higher: 6%
  - High school diploma or equivalent: 23%

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Health, United States, 2019, Table 18.

- **Adults with college degrees are more likely to meet exercise guidelines.**
  - Bachelor’s degree or higher: 65%
  - High school diploma or equivalent: 43%


**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**
College graduates are more likely to vote. In both the 2016 and 2020 elections, more degree holders voted than those who have a high school diploma or equivalent.

- **Graduate or professional degree**: 80% in 2016, 83% in 2020
- **Bachelor’s degree**: 74% in 2016, 78% in 2020
- **Some college or associate degree**: 63% in 2016, 70% in 2020
- **High school diploma or equivalent**: 52% in 2016, 56% in 2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2016, Table 5; U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2020, Table 5.

**EMPLOYMENT**
Adult degree holders and those with some college represent a larger share of workers than those with a high school diploma or less.

- **Hold a degree or have some college, but no degree**
  - 69%
- **Hold a high school diploma or less**
  - 32%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2018–2019, Table 5.3. Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.