

# Women Outperform Men in Educational Attainment



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One very important aspect of U.S. economic success, prosperity, and growth over the decades has been increasing educational attainment of the populace over time. An educated workforce is associated with higher productivity, increasing real incomes, and a better standard of living.

Levels of education have risen steadily in America over the past 70 years. In the 1940 Census, 24.5 percent of people age 25 and over had at least a high school diploma. By 2010 this had increased to 85.0 percent, with 27.9 percent having attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

In recent years, one trend of particular note has been the relatively large increase in educational attainment of women. This trend is most readily illustrated by examining the educational attainment among the younger generation, those 25 to 34 years of age.

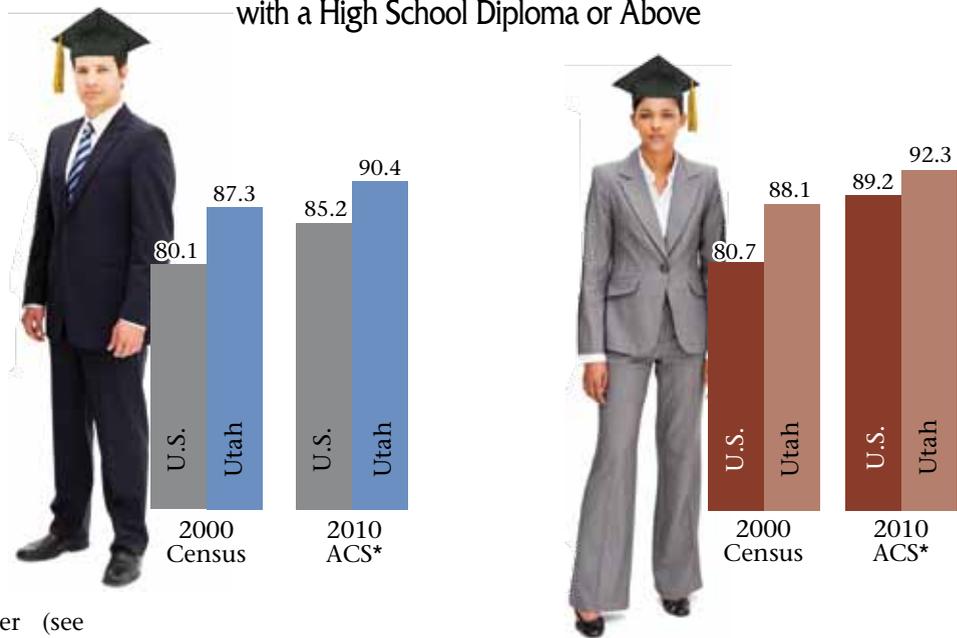
The 2000 Census showed nationally that 80.1 percent of males, ages 25 to

34 had at least a high school diploma, increasing to 85.2 percent as measured by the American Community Survey (ACS) in 2010. Females, 25 to 34 years of age, registered 80.7 percent with at least a high school diploma in 2000, increasing to 89.2 percent in 2010.

When you look at college-level education at the national level, women significantly surpassed the level of attainment by men. In 2000, 26.1 percent of males 25 to 34 years of age had a college diploma or above, increasing by just one percentage point to 27.1 percent by 2010. For women of the same age, measured attainment of a college degree or higher was 22.8 percent (3.3 percentage points below the men) in 2000, increasing by 12.2 percentage points to 35.0 percent in 2010.

Looking at this same data for those in the 25 to 34 age group in Utah, we see that men exceeded the educational attainment levels of men nationally for those with at least a high school diploma and also for those with a

### Percent of the Population 25-34 Years of Age with a High School Diploma or Above

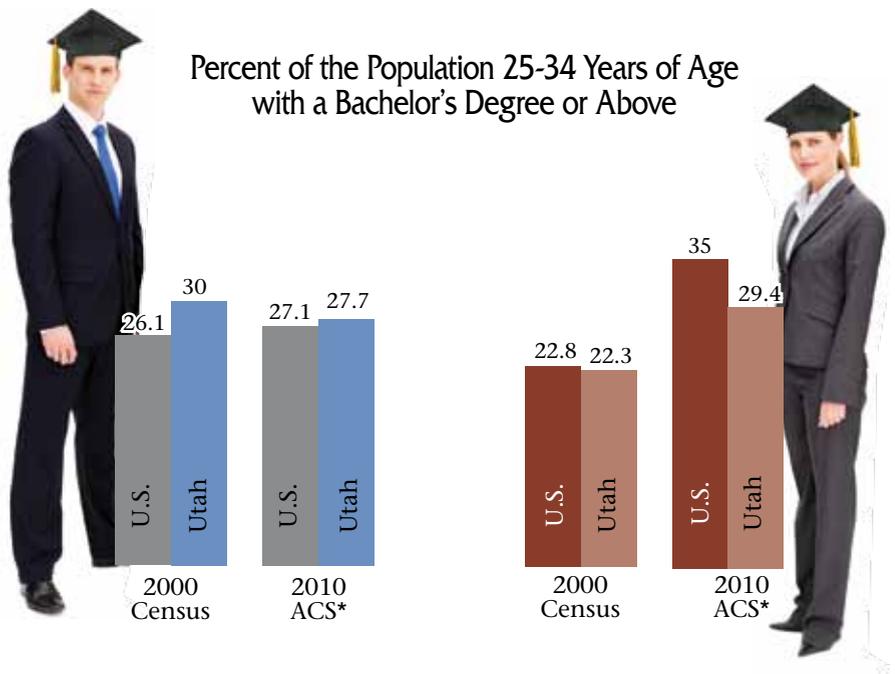


bachelor's degree or higher (see figures 1 and 2). However, the edge Utah men had in 2000 over their national counterparts has narrowed in both cases. Of concern for Utah, in 2000, 30.0 percent of men had a bachelor's degree or higher, but by 2010 this had dropped to 27.7 percent.

For Utah women in the 25 to 34 age group, 92.3 percent—3.1 percentage points above the national level for women—have a high school diploma or above in 2010. While more Utah women in 2010 have a college degree or higher (29.4 percent) than Utah men (27.7 percent), Utah women are 5.6 percentage points below the national level.

Traditionally, Utah values educational attainment and outperforms the levels achieved nationally. However, if current trends continue, Utah's educational attainment levels may fall below national averages, particularly the percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree and above. ⓘ

### Percent of the Population 25-34 Years of Age with a Bachelor's Degree or Above



\*ACS—American Community Survey One-Year Estimates

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.