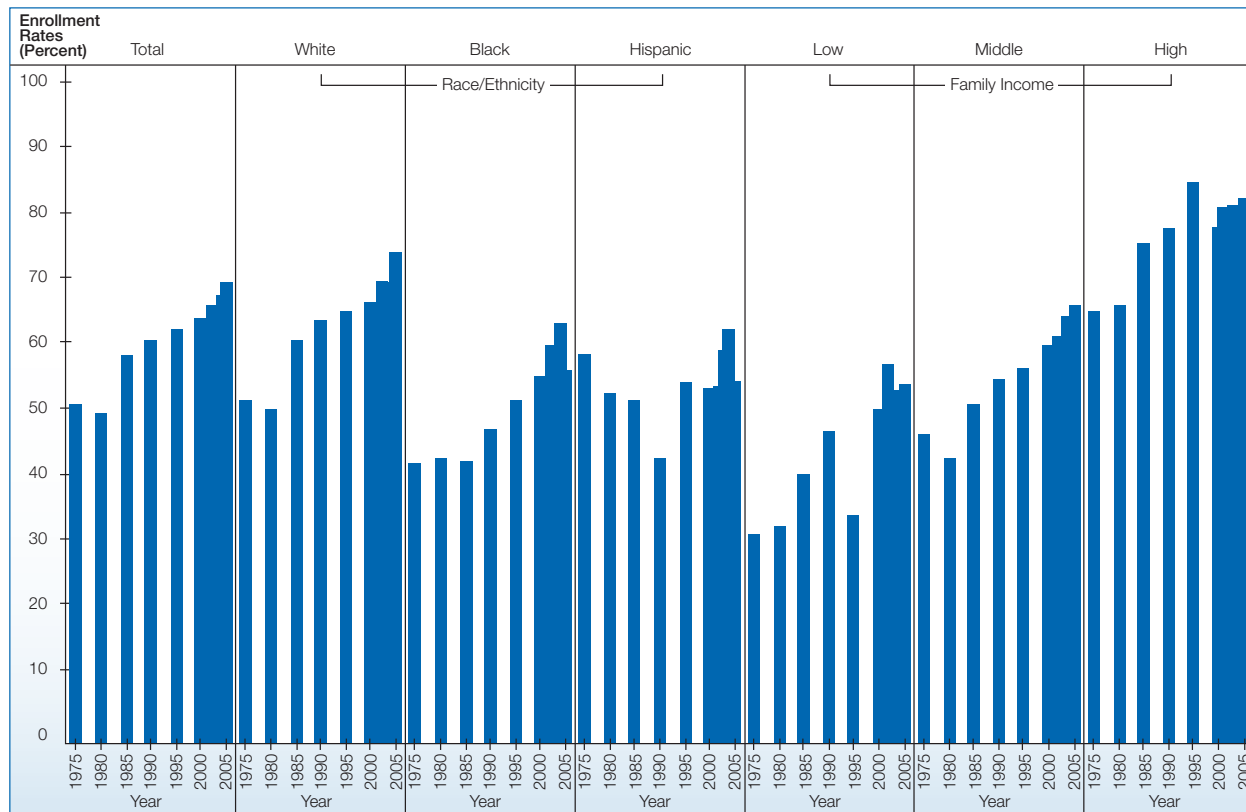


Over two-thirds of all U.S. high school graduates enroll in postsecondary education immediately after graduation, although immediate enrollment rates for low-income families are lower.

Figure 13. High school graduates enrolled in college in October after completing high school, by race/ethnicity and family income*: 1975–2005



SOURCE: Appendix Table 1-22, *Science and Engineering Indicators 2008*, National Science Foundation.

NOTES: Data are only available for 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000–2005.

(*)Family income categorized as: low income includes families in lowest 20% of income distribution, middle income includes families in middle 60%, and high income includes families in highest 20%.

Why is this indicator important?

- College enrollment rates influence the size of the future workforce qualified for certain occupations.

Key Observations

- Between 1975 and 2005, the percentage of students ages 16 to 24 enrolling in college immediately following high school graduation rose from 51 to 69%, with increases evident across all income levels.
- Over 80% of high school graduates from high-income families attend college immediately after graduation, compared with 54% from low-income families.

Related Discussion

- High school completion rates have been increasing gradually and the white-black gaps in completion rates have been narrowing. (*SEI 2008* Appendix Table 1-22).
- In 2005, 88% of 18 to 24 year olds not enrolled in high school had received a high school diploma or earned an equivalent credential such as a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) certificate, up from 84% in 1975. (*SEI 2008* Figure 1-22).