



# Research Brief

THE COMMONWEALTH'S OFFICIAL SOURCE OF POPULATION AND ECONOMIC STATISTICS

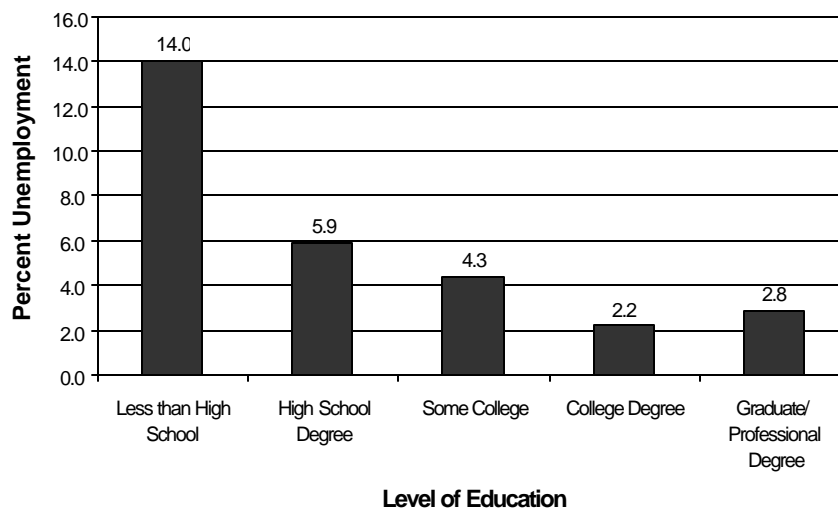
February 17, 2000

## Direct Correlation in PA Between Young Adult Workers' Salaries and Educational Attainment

MIDDLETOWN, Pa—Pennsylvania is ranked 30th nationally and falls well behind adjacent states such as Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Delaware in the educational attainment of its total adult population. In the Commonwealth, 49.8 percent of the young adult labor force ages 18 to 39 has a high school education or less while only 25.6 percent has a college or graduate degree.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center at Penn State Harrisburg reports that total average unemployment for young workers in the state from 1995 to 1997 was 5.3 percent. The unemployment rate for high school dropouts in that age group was 14 percent compared to the 2.2 percent unemployment rate of those with college degrees. In that same period, young workers in the state with high school degrees had an unemployment rate of 5.9 percent, those with some college had a 4.3 percent unemployment rate and those with graduate and profession degrees had a 2.8 percent unemployment rate.

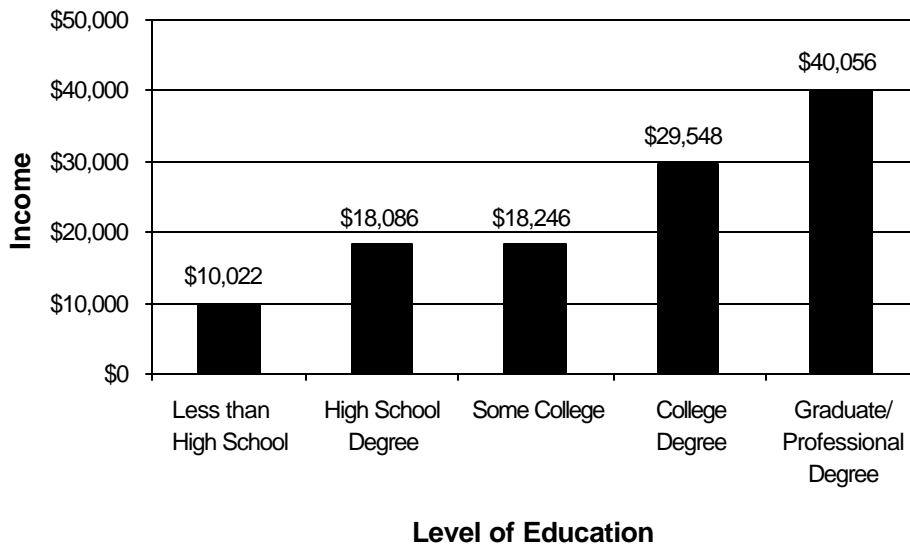
**Unemployment Rate of Pennsylvania Young Workers in the Labor Force by Educational Attainment: 1995 to 1997**



Dr. Gordon De Jong and Pamela Klein of the Population Research Institute at Penn State University find in their report, *Educational Attainment of Pennsylvania’s Young Workers: What’s it Worth?*, a high occupational segregation based on educational attainment. According to this report, 88 percent of graduate and professional degree holders and 58 percent of baccalaureate degree graduates in the state held professional and managerial positions, while 40 percent of high school dropouts and 28 percent of high school diploma-only workers were operators, fabricators or laborers.

Dr. De Jong states, “Pennsylvania starts the 21st Century with half of its young adult workers with no more than a high school education.” Young workers in the state with less than a high school education had a median annual personal income of just over \$10,000 and those with high school-only educations had a median annual personal income of slightly over \$18,000 during the 1995 to 1997 period. By comparison, the median annual personal income for young college graduates in the Commonwealth was 63 percent higher and for graduate and professional degree graduates 120 percent higher.

**Median Personal Income of Pennsylvania Young Workers in the Labor Force by Educational Attainment: 1995 to 1997**



For more information on this topic, please access *Educational Attainment of Pennsylvania’s Young Workers: What’s it Worth?* on the Data Center web site at [www.psd.c.hbg.psu.edu](http://www.psd.c.hbg.psu.edu) under “What’s New.”

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the Commonwealth's official source of population and economic statistics and services. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's national State Data Center Program.

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Editors: For additional data, contact Amy Jonas at the Data Center's State Capital Office, (717) 772-2710, or for comments on this topic contact Dr. Gordon De Jong at (814) 863-2277.

Source of Information: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (1995, 1996, 1997)