

# Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY

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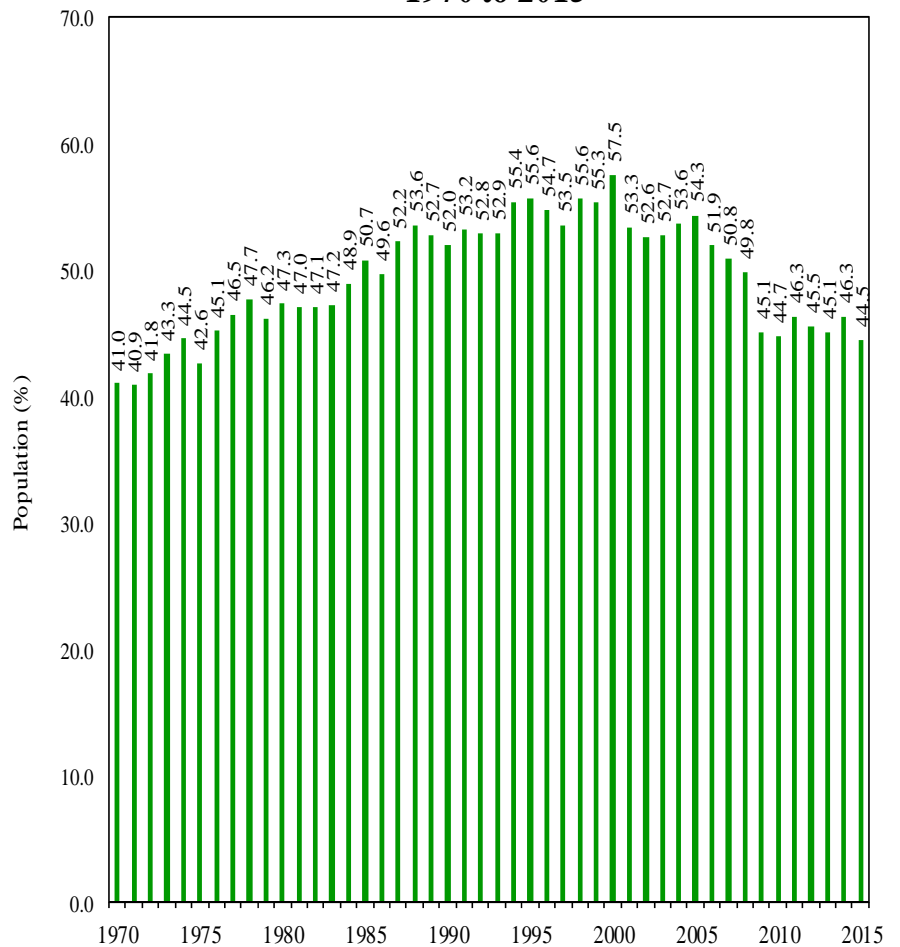
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## Labor Force Experience of Persons 16 to 24 Years Old 1970 to 2015

The transition from youthful dependence on parents for financial support to independent living and self-support occurs mainly during the years between the ages of 16 and 24 years. Students start working for income at age 16 and begin to learn the work rules of employers, to organize their time, and to manage their money. At ages 16 to 24 years 44.5% of college students are employed. Among those not enrolled in school, 55.0% of 16 to 19 year olds are employed, and by 20 to 24 years this rises to 74.4%. Schooling delays labor force assimilation as young people add education and training to strengthen their skills for the better paying jobs produced in a human capital economy that needs workers with talents developed in postsecondary education.

However, workforce participation among 16 to 24 year olds has been in general decline since the late 1970s, and especially since 2000. The share of the population working or looking for work (unemployed) has declined almost steadily from 67.6% in 1978 to 55.1% by 2015. The share that are unemployed and looking for work

Employed/Population Ratio for College Students Ages 16 to 24 Years  
1970 to 2015



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics