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The Educational Attainment of the Nation's Young Black Men and Their Recent Labor Market Experiences: What Can Be Done to Improve Their Future Labor Market and Educational Prospects?

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Alexandria, Virginia

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Introduction

While the national economy has performed reasonably well over the past few years in creating additional wage and salary jobs and lowering the aggregate rate of unemployment, the labor market recovery has largely bypassed the nation's young adults (16-24), especially teens and out-of-school young adults who lack four year college degrees. Young out-of-school adult males (16-24) have been particularly hard hit, with their employment rates remaining well below those prevailing in 2000. Young Black males have experienced severe difficulties in finding any type of employment and those with no post-secondary schooling face a bleak economic future in the absence of substantive effective policy responses to their human capital problems. This paper is designed to provide a background for discussions at a Jobs for America's Graduates forthcoming national meeting with Black political leaders. It identifies the key labor market and educational challenges facing young Black males in recent years, compares findings for Black males with those of men in other race-ethnic groups, and reviews some of the available literature on what seems to work or not work in solving these problems.[1]

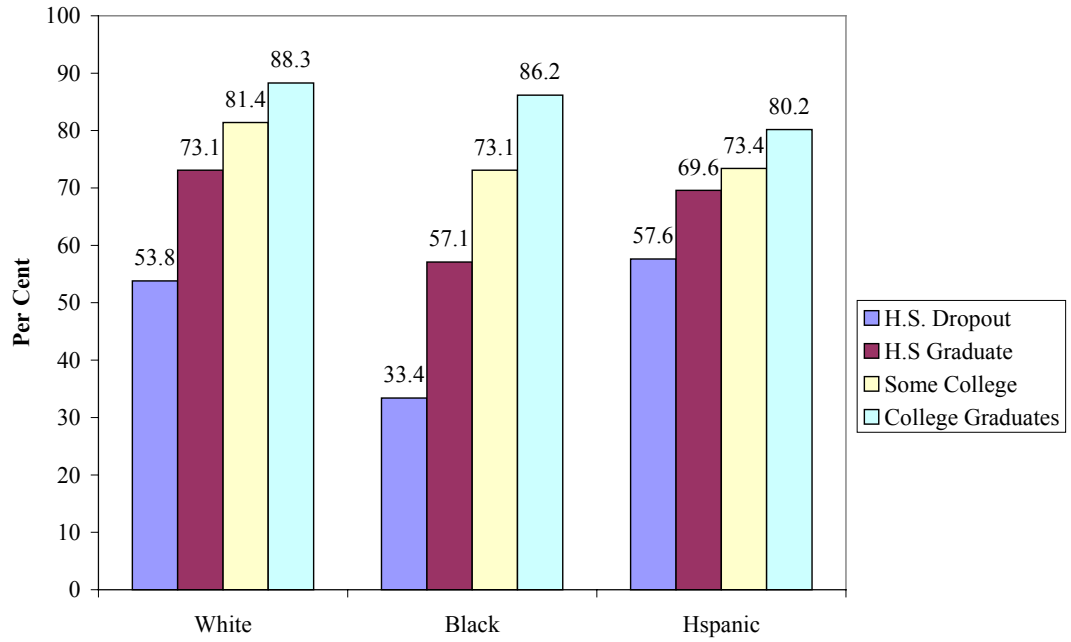
The Employment Rates of Young, Out-of-School Male Adults in the U.S.

Getting an early, successful start in the labor market improves the future employability and earnings of young men. Early work experience is a form of human capital investment that has a favorable future economic payoff for many types of work. The annual average employment rates in 2005 of out-of-school, 16-24 year old male adults in the U.S. by years of schooling and race-ethnic origin are displayed in Chart 1.[2] For males in each of the three race-ethnic groups (Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites), employment rates in 2005 increased steadily and strongly with their educational attainment. This was especially true for Black males, for whom employment rates rose from a low of 33% among high school dropouts to 57% among high school graduates and to a high of 86% among four year college graduates. The fact that only 1 of every 3 young Black male high school dropouts was able to obtain any type of job during an average month in 2005 should be viewed as particularly distressing since many of these young men will end up

[1] For a recent comprehensive report on the labor market problems of Black men and a review of alternative policies to boost the employment and earnings prospects of Black men in the U.S.,
See: Ronald B. Mincy (Editor), Black Males Left Behind, The Urban Institute Press, Washington, D.C., 2006.
[2] These employment estimates are based on the 2005 monthly CPS surveys for the entire U.S. The annual average data are unpublished estimates provided to the authors by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

being involved in criminal activities during their late teens and early 20s and then bear the severe economic consequences for convictions and incarcerations over the remainder of their working lives.[3]

Chart 1:
Employment/Population Ratios of Non-Enrolled 16-24 Year Old Males by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnic Group, U.S. 2005

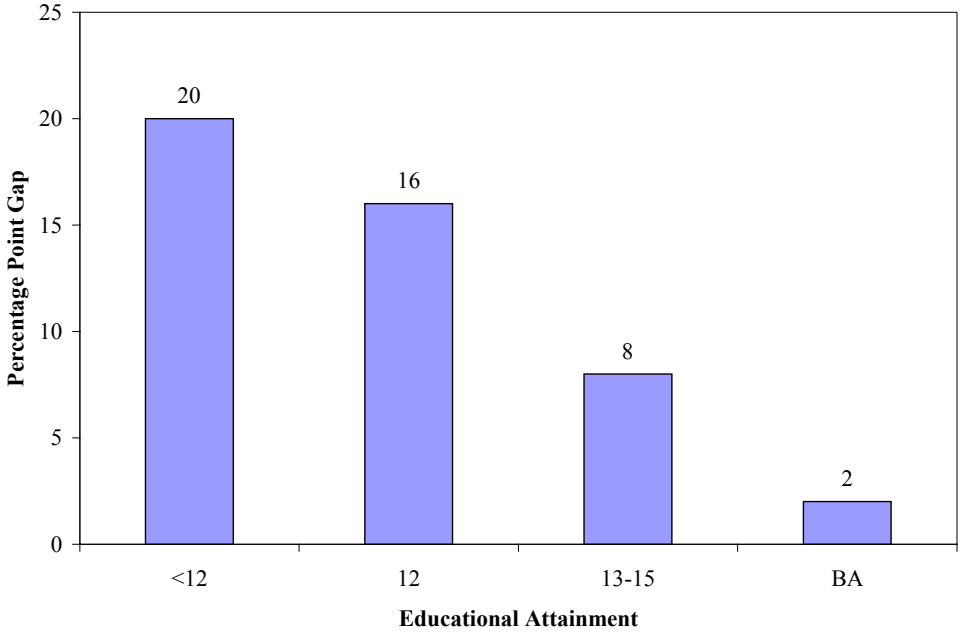


The optimistic side of Chart One lies in the finding that, contrary to recent views cited by several civil rights analysts, the labor market fortunes of young Black men improve considerably as they gain additional years of schooling, and the employment rate gaps between them and their White male counterparts narrow considerably as their educational attainment rises. The gap in E/P ratios between young White and Black males narrows from 20 percentage points among high school dropouts, to 16 percentage points among high school graduates, to 8 percentage points among those men completing 1-3 years of college, and to only two percentage points for four year college graduates (Chart Two). Also, it should be noted that Black male employment rates match or exceed those of Hispanic males when they have completed some post-secondary

[3] For evidence on the links between the criminal records and incarceration status of young adults and young Black men and their labor market experiences,
See: (i) Harry J. Holzer, Steven Raphael, and Michael A. Stoll, How Do Crime and Incarceration Affect the Employment Prospects of Less Educated Young Black Men? Center for the Study of Urban Poverty, University of California, Los Angeles, July 2002; (ii) Scott Davies and Julian Tanner, "The Long Arm of the Law: Effects of Labeling on Employment", The Sociological Quarterly, Volume 44, Number 3, pages 385-404.

schooling while they fall well short of the employment rates of Hispanic males for the less educated groups. Many Hispanic male dropouts are immigrants, often undocumented, who have displaced from employment poorly educated native, born male dropouts and high school graduates of all races, especially Blacks and Hispanics.

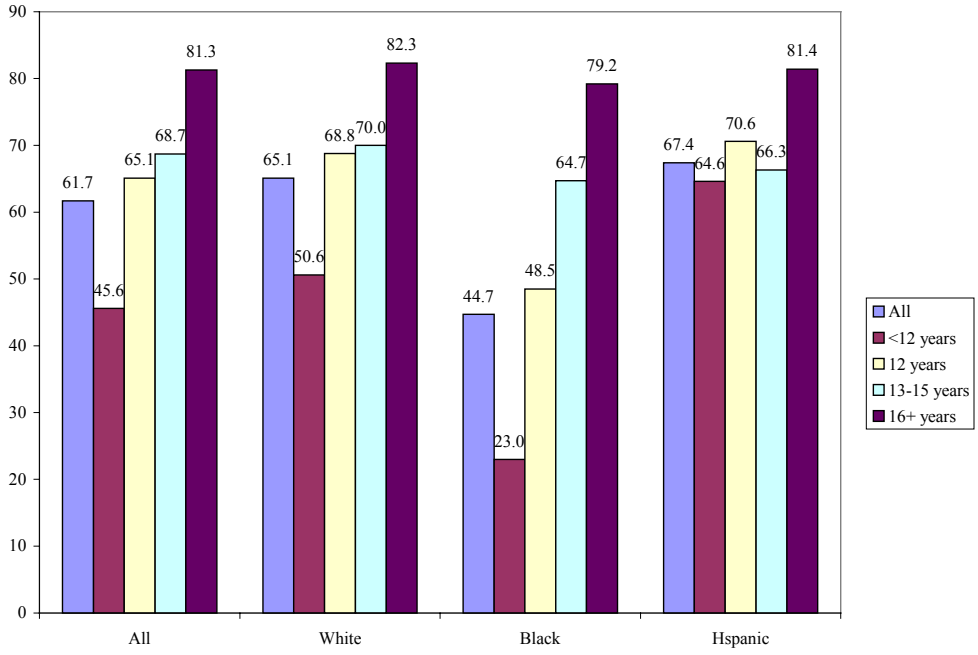
Chart 2:
The Gaps Between the Employment Rates of White and Black Out-of-School, 16-24 Year Olds by Educational Attainment, U.S.: 2005
(in Percentage Points)



The ability of young, out-of-school males to obtain full-time jobs also varies considerably by their educational attainment. Among young Black males, only 70% of employed high school dropouts were able to secure a full-time job (35 or more hours per week) versus 84% of high school graduates and 91% of Bachelor degree holders. The full-time employment/population ratios for young, Black out-of-school males ranged from a low of 23% for high school dropouts to 48% for high school graduates and to a high of nearly 80% for Black four year college graduates (Chart 3). Again, the gaps between the full-time employment population ratios of White and Black males varied considerably by educational attainment, ranging from 27 percentage points among high school dropouts to less than four percentage points among four year college graduates. There are many economic advantages associated with full-time employment, including higher hourly wages, considerably higher weekly earnings, more

opportunities for training on and off the job, a higher frequency of key employee benefits, especially health insurance and pensions, and higher future economic returns in the form of higher wages.

Chart 2:
Full-Time Employment/Population Ratios of Non-Enrolled 16-24 Year Old Men by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnic Group, U.S. 2005



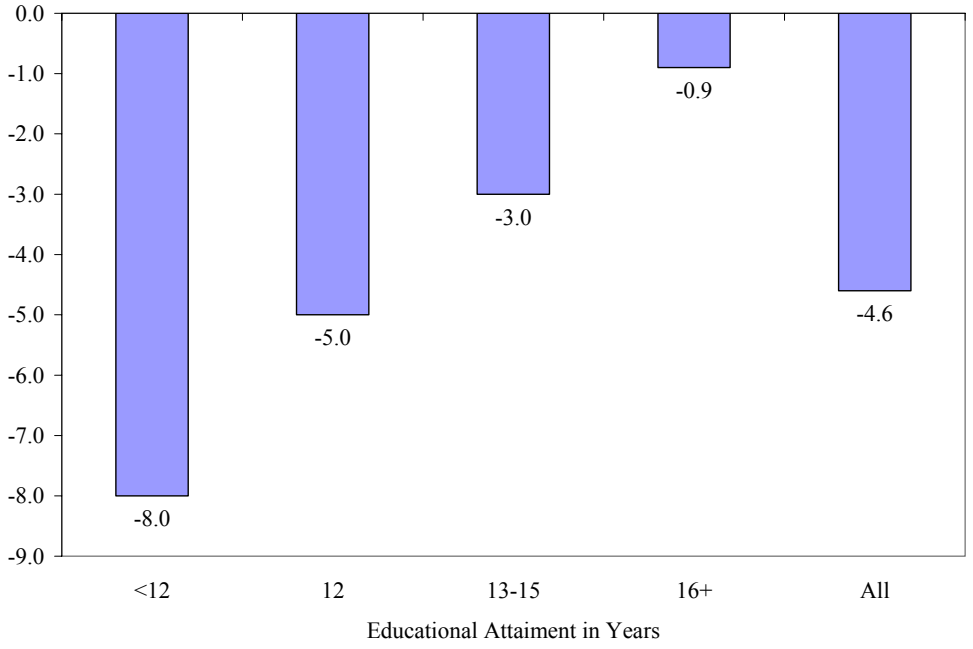
Since the end of the national labor market boom in 2000, the employment prospects of the nation's out of school 16-24 year old men have declined considerably, especially among those men without a bachelor's degree. An examination of the findings in Table 1 reveals that 16-24 year old out-of-school men in nearly all educational groups, except Black bachelor degree holders, experienced large declines in their employment rates over the 2000 to 2005 period. Members of all male race-ethnic groups saw their employment rates decline by 4 to 5 percentage points over this time period. Across all race-ethnic groups, employment rates fell most sharply among those males lacking a high school diploma followed by those with a high school diploma but no post-secondary schooling. The employment rate of all out-of-school 16-24 year old Black men during 2000 was nearly 59% (Table 1). By 2005, their employment rate had fallen by 4.6 percentage points to 54%. The size of the declines in the employment to population ratios of out-of-school, 16-24 year old Black men varied widely across educational attainment groups. Black

men with no high school diploma were the most adversely affected by the changing economic fortunes for young male adults, wiping out all of the gains of the 1990s. Their employment to population ratio declined by 8 percentage points between 2000 and 2005. This was the largest employment rate decline among all race-ethnic and educational attainment groups of 16-24 year old men in the country. Black high school graduates also saw their employment rate fall by 5 percentage points over this time period, but this decline was identical to that experienced by their Hispanic and White counterparts. Black males with a Bachelor's or higher degree came close to maintaining their employment rate over this five year period. Their E/P ratio fell by less than one percentage point (See Chart 4)

Table 1:
Comparisons of the 2000 and 2005 Employment/Population Ratios of 16-24 Year Old, Out of School Men by Race-Ethnic Group and Educational Attainment and Race-Ethnic Group
(Annual Averages in %)

	White			**Black**			**Hispanic**		
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)	(B)	(C)
Educational Attainment	2000	2005	Change	2000	2005	Change	2000	2005	Change
No high school diploma/GED	69.8	64.7	-5.1	41.0	33.0	-8.0	76.3	73.5	-2.8
H.S. graduate, no college	85.2	79.5	-5.7	62.8	57.8	-5.0	86.2	80.5	-5.7
1-3 years of college, including Associate's degree	90.0	84.6	-5.4	77.8	74.8	-3.0	87.6	78.5	-9.1
Bachelor's or higher degree	92.7	90.0	-2.7	88.4	87.5	-0.9	92.9	88.4	-4.5
All	82.2	77.4	-4.8	58.9	54.3	-4.6	81.1	77.1	-4.0

Chart 4:
Percentage Point Changes in the Employment to Population Ratios of Out-of-School 16-24 Black Men in the U.S. by Educational Attainment, 2000-2005



The Annual Earnings of Young Adults in the U.S. by Educational Attainment and Race-Ethnic Group

The most comprehensive measure of the labor market success of any given group of adults is their annual earnings from paid employment, including self-employment. The annual earnings of 20-29 year old men in the U.S. during 2004-2005, including those with no reported earnings, were estimated with the use of the 2005 American Community Surveys.[4] The estimates of annual earnings by educational attainment group and race-ethnic group are displayed in Table 2.[5] Our earnings measure is median annual earnings which represents the exact mid-point of the earnings distribution. The median annual earnings for all 20-29 year old men were $18,345. These earnings estimates ranged from a low of $13,200 for high school dropouts. to $18,300 for high school graduates, to nearly $30,600 for bachelor degree holders and to a high of $38,200 for those with a Master's or higher degree (Table 2, top row).

[4] The 2000 ACS interviews were conducted throughout the entire calendar year. Earnings data were reported for the 12 month period prior to the survey. The earnings reporting period, thus, could cover some months during 2004 and 2005.

[5] We have excluded findings for those men with 1-3 years of college from the table since a high fraction of them were enrolled in college at some time during the year. They are included in the totals for all young men.

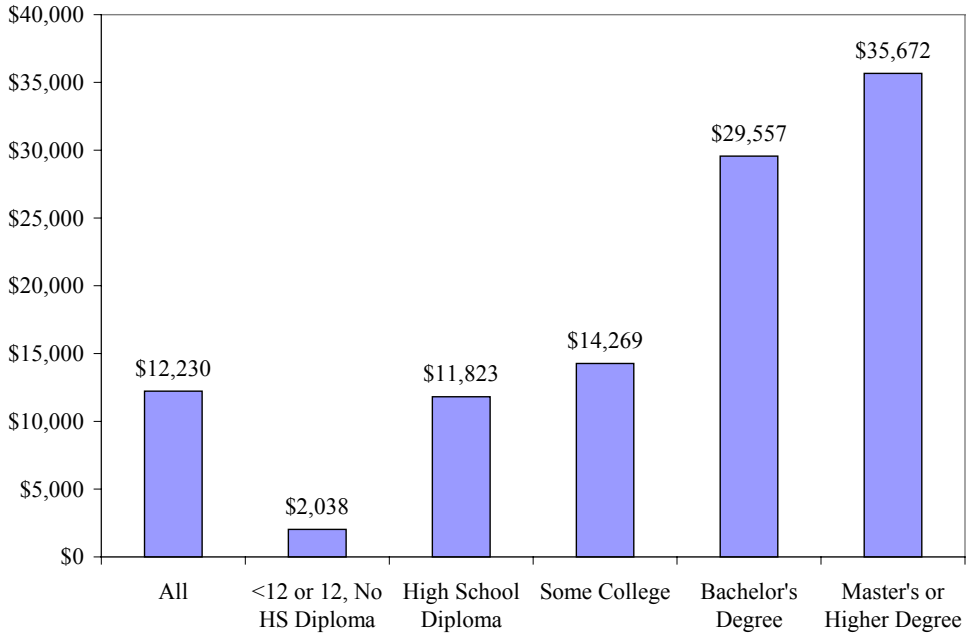
Table 2:
Median Annual Earnings of 20-29 Year Old Males in the U.S. by Educational Attainment and Race-Ethnic Group, 2004-2005
(Includes Zero Earners)

Race-Ethnic Origin	(A) <12 Years or 12 years, no Diploma	(B) H.S. Diploma/GED	(C) Bachelor's Degree	(D) Master's or Higher Degree	(E) All
All	13,249	18,345	30,576	38,220	18,345
Asian	11,923	12,230	24,461	36,691	14,269
Black	2,038	11,823	29,537	35,672	12,230
Hispanic	15,288	17,836	26,499	30,576	16,307
White, not Hispanic	14,269	20,384	30,576	38,79	20,384

Source: 2005 American Community Surveys, public use files, tabulations by authors.

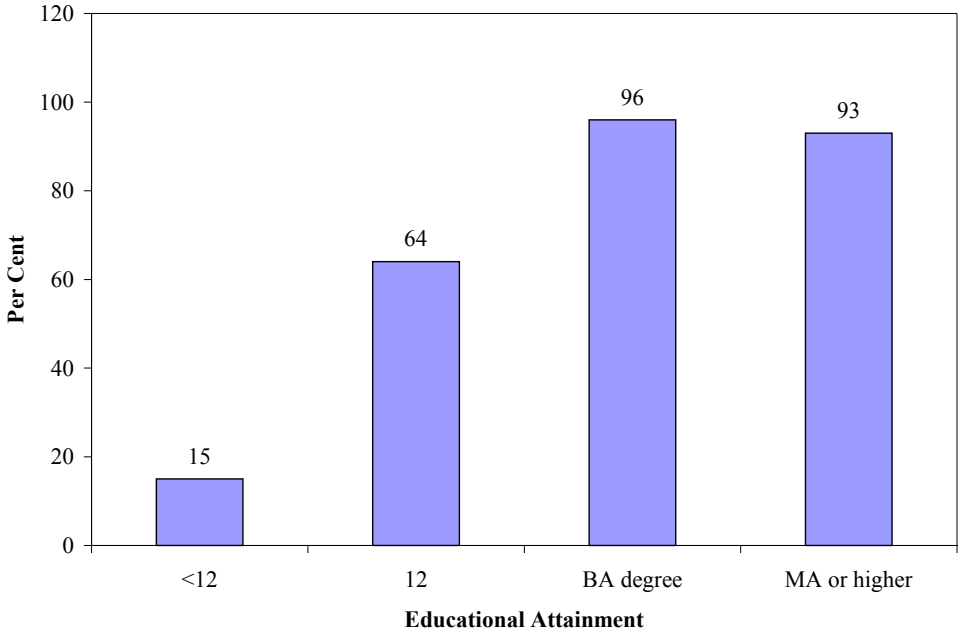
The median annual earnings of young Black men also were strongly linked to their educational attainment during 2004-2005 (Chart 5). Black men with no high school diploma/GED obtained median annual earnings of only $2,000, reflecting the fact that a very high fraction of Black male dropouts did not report any earnings whatsoever during the entire calendar year. The median earnings of Black male high school graduates were just under $12,000 while those with a Bachelor's degree were just under $30,000, and young Black men with a Master's or higher degree earned $35,600. The median earnings of those young Black men with a Bachelor's degree were 2.5 times as high as those of high school graduates and 14.5 times as high as those of high school dropouts.

Chart 5:
Median Annual Earnings of 20-29 Year Old Black Men in the U.S. During 2004
(Including 0 Earners)



Similar to our findings on employment rates and full-time employment rates for out-of-school 16-24 year old men, the relative size of the gaps between the annual earnings of 20-29 year old Black men and all men decline as the educational attainment of Black men improves (Chart 6). The median annual earnings of Black male dropouts were only equivalent to 15 per cent of those of their male counterparts in all race-ethnic groups while high school graduates matched 64 per cent of the earnings of all males, and Black bachelor degree holders obtained median annual earnings equal to 96% of those of all male bachelor degree holders.

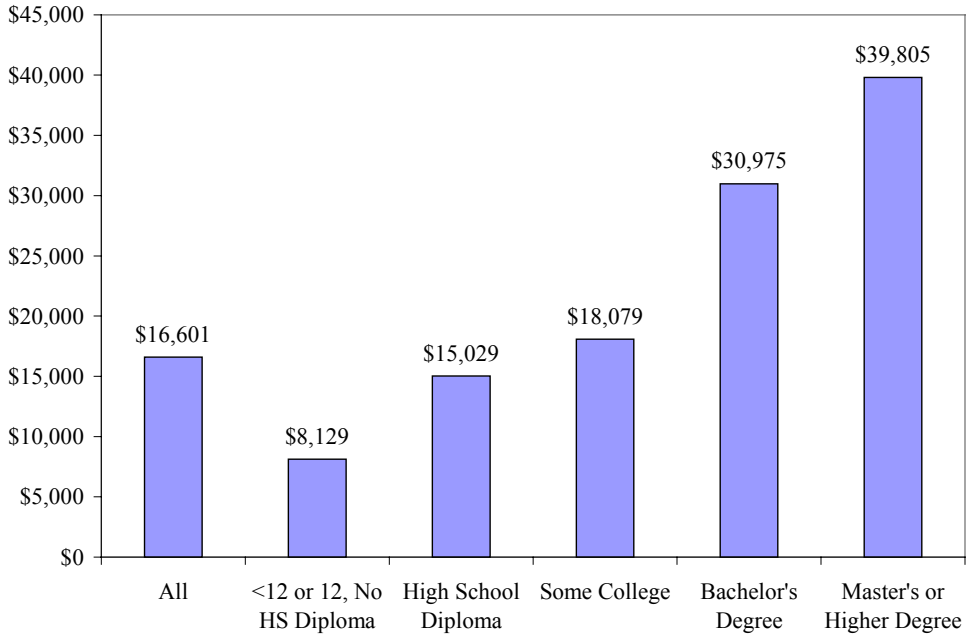
Chart 6:
The Ratio of the Median Annual Earnings of 20-29 Year Old Black Men to All Men by Educational Attainment, 2004-2005
(in %)



We also computed estimates of the mean annual earnings of young men. The mean earnings is the (weighted) arithmetic average of annual earnings, and it takes into account the values of earnings all along the distribution. Since males in the upper tail of the distribution often earn considerably more than the middle, the mean will be higher than the median especially for dropouts among whom many men reported zero earnings. Our estimates of the mean annual earnings of these Black men are displayed in Chart 7. The mean annual earnings of these men ranged from a low of $8,100 for high school dropouts to $15,000 for high school graduates to highs of just under $31,000 for bachelor degree holders and $40,000 for those with a Master's or higher degree. The mean annual earnings of young Black men with a high school diploma were $7,000 more or nearly twice as high as those of high school dropouts, and bachelor degree holders obtained mean annual earnings twice as high as those of high school graduates and nearly four times as high as those of high school dropouts. The considerably higher annual earnings of college educated Black men enable more of them to form independent households, to eventually marry, and to financially support their children. Over the past few decades, marriage rates of Black men (and other males) without high school diplomas have plummeted substantially, with an accompanying sharp increase in out-of-wedlock births and single parent

family formation among women with no post-secondary schooling. White males with no post-secondary schooling also have faced declining real annual earnings and have also married at considerably lower rates since the mid-1970s.[6] These developments have placed the current generation of children living in these single parent families at great risk of academic achievement deficits, school failure, child mal-treatment, involvement with the criminal justice system, and teen childbearing.[7]

Chart 7:
Mean Annual Earnings of 20-29 Year Old Black Men in the U.S. During 2004
(Including 0 Earners)



The Lifetime Earnings of Black Men by Their Educational Attainment

The earnings advantages of better educated young Black males do not dissipate as they age. In fact, the earnings differentials between more highly educated men and their less educated counterparts tend to widen as they age reflecting a combination of more hours of work and higher wages among better educated men. To illustrate the absolute size of the earnings advantages of all more highly educated men and Black men over their working lives, we

[6] For a review of trends in marriage rates among Massachusetts males by educational attainment over the 1980-2004 period.
See: (i) Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatiwada, Joseph McLaughlin, et al., The Labor Market, Income, Health and Fiscal Consequences of Dropping Out of High School in Massachusetts, Report Prepared for the Boston Youth Transitions Task Force, Boston, 2007; (ii) Ron Haskin, Black Males Left Behind….

[7] The annual earnings of Black men are strongly predicted by their academic achievement in their adolescent and late teen years, their parents' educational attainment, and the family structure in which they were raised.

estimated the mean lifetime earnings of all males and Black males in the nation from ages 18 through 64 based on the findings of the 2005 American Community Surveys.[8] These lifetime earnings were estimated by summing the mean annual earnings of each educational subgroup from each age 18 through 64, including those persons with no weeks of employment during the year. The calculations of these mean lifetime earnings are based on the assumption that the real annual earnings observed for men in each age group within each educational group in 2005 will be the same in the future. Given declines in the mean annual earnings of male high school dropouts and graduates over the past few decades, this set of assumptions might be too optimistic for these two groups of men.

The mean lifetime earnings for all males from ages 18 to 64 were $1.916 million (Table 3). The values of these mean lifetime earnings varied widely across the six educational subgroups, ranging from a low of $839,000 for mean with only a primary school education to $1.375 million for high school graduates to highs of $2.75 million for Bachelor degree holders and nearly $3.6 million for men with a Master's or higher degree.

Table 3:
The Mean Lifetime Earnings of All 18-64 Year Old Men and Black Men in the U.S. by Educational Attainment
(Cross Sectional 2005 Results, in Millions of Dollars)

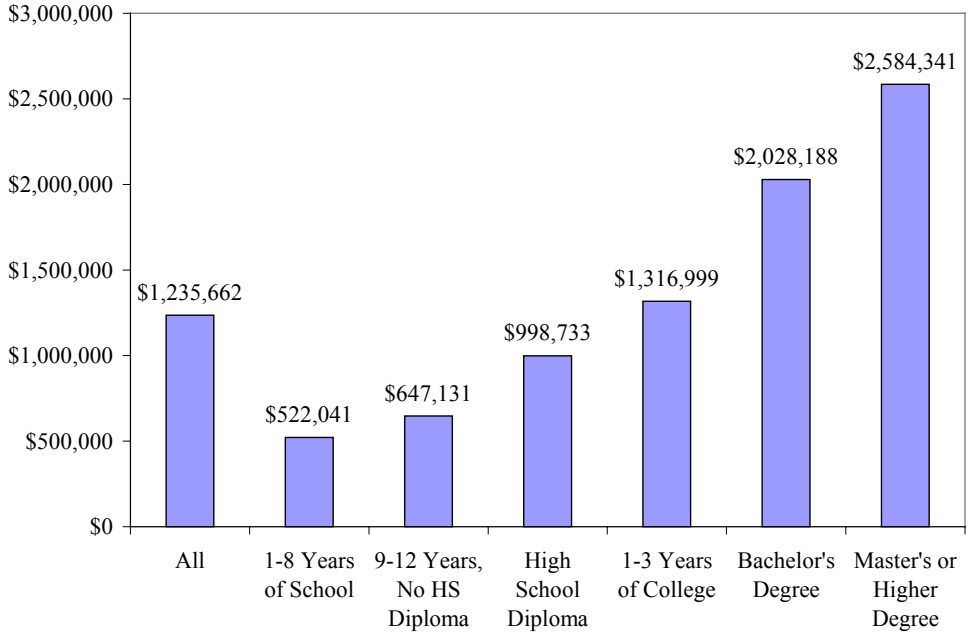
	(A)	(B)
Educational Attainment	All Men	Black Men
1-8 years	$.839	$.522
9-12 years, no diploma	$.984	$.647
H.S. diploma/GED	$1.375	$.999
13-15 years	$1,758	$1,317
Bachelor's degree	$2.752	$2,028
Master's or higher degree	$3.588	$2.584
All	$1.916	$1.236

The mean lifetime earnings of all Black men were about 36 per cent below those of all males, but they were characterized by a similar pattern by educational attainment with very large differences in earnings across educational groups. The mean lifetime earnings of Black male high school graduates exceeded those of high school dropouts by $352,000 while Black males

[8] These lifetime earnings estimates exclude the earnings of 18-22 year olds who were enrolled in school at the time of the ACS survey.

with a bachelor's degree were characterized by mean lifetime earnings of $2.028 million which exceeded the mean lifetime earnings of high school graduates by somewhat more than $1 million.

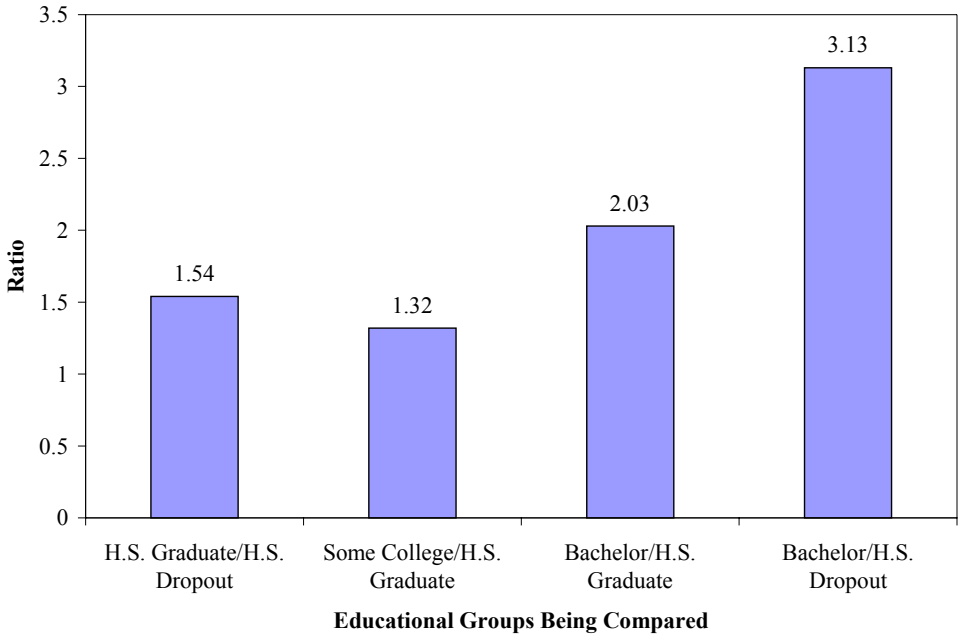
Chart 8:
Mean Expected Lifetime Earnings of 18-64 Year Old Black Men in the U.S., 2005
(Excluding 18-22 Year Old Students)



Educational Attainment and Low Income Status of Adult Males Over Their Lifetime

The relative size of the differences in mean lifetime earnings among Black males in different educational groups is quite considerable (Chart 9). The mean lifetime earnings of male high school graduates exceeded those of high school dropouts by 54 per cent, those men completing one or three years of college would receive mean lifetime earnings approximately one-third higher than those of high school graduates, and male bachelor degree recipients would obtain mean lifetime earnings twice as high as those of high school graduates and more than 3.1 times as high as those of high school dropouts. These extraordinarily large differences in lifetime earnings place these men in economic circumstances that are worlds apart. The typical Black male dropout will spend more than one-half of his adult life in a low income status, with a household income less than two times the poverty line, and will be highly dependent on government cash and in-kind transfers to support himself.

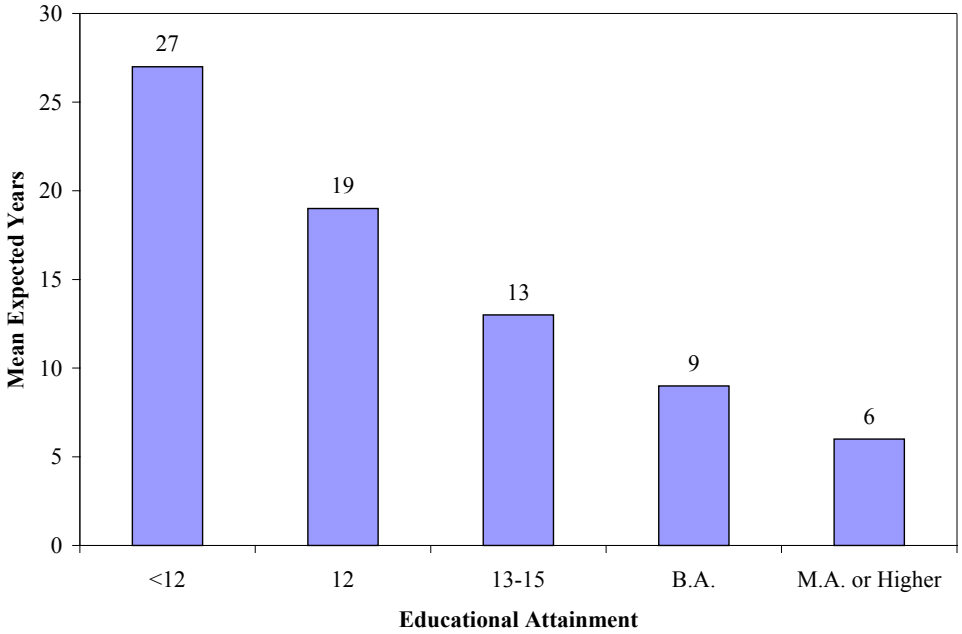
Chart 9:
The Relative Lifetime Earnings Ratios of Black Men in the U.S. In Selected Educational Groups (2005)



The high rates of joblessness and limited weekly earnings of Black male dropouts sharply reduce their annual earnings and, hence, their ability to achieve incomes above various adequacy thresholds. We have analyzed the 2005 American Community Surveys to identify the per cent of 18-64 year old Black males in five educational subgroups who lived in households that had annual incomes below two times the poverty line for a family of their given size and age composition. The threshold of twice the poverty line has been used by poverty and welfare reform researchers to represent a low income status.[9] The incidence of such low income problems among Black males in each educational group was calculated for each single age group from ages 18-64 and then summed across these 47 years. Findings are displayed in Chart 10.

[9] See: Garth Mangum, Stephen Mangum, and Andrew Sum, The Persistence of Poverty in the United States, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2003.

Chart 10:
Mean Expected Lifetime Years in a Low Income Status Among Black Men from Ages 18-64 by Educational Attainment: U.S.
(as of 2005)



From ages 18 to 64, a 47 year period, Black males without a high school diploma will spend 27 years or nearly 60% of their adult life in a low income status. Mean expected years in a low income status fell steadily with additional years of schooling. They were 19 for high school graduates, 13 years for those men completing one to three years of college, and only 9 and 6 years, respectively, for those who held a Bachelor's or a Master's/higher degree. A Black male high school dropout would, on average, spend three times as many years in a low income status as his counterparts who went on to obtain a Bachelor's degree.

The Federal/State Fiscal Contributions of Black Males by Years of Schooling Completed

Dropping out of high school can have dire economic consequences not only for the individuals dropping out, but also for the economy at large and for the fiscal position of local, state and federal governments. Given the lower average annual earnings of employed high school dropouts and their much higher rates of year-round joblessness in comparison to their better-educated peers, they can be expected to pay considerably fewer dollars in Social Security payroll taxes and state/federal income taxes than their better-educated peers in both the state and the

nation. High school dropouts are also less likely to own homes, and they pay less in property taxes at the local level when they do own their homes. High school dropouts also impose higher fiscal burdens on state and federal governments than persons with high school diplomas and post-secondary schooling because they are more likely to depend on government for both cash and non-cash transfer incomes, such as food stamps, rental subsidies, and Medicaid, to support themselves. To quantify the size of these tax payments to the state and federal government and the monetary value of the cash and in-kind transfers that they received, we analyzed data from the March 2005 Current Population Survey Supplements from the U.S. Census Bureau.[10] The March CPS household survey contains a work experience and income supplement that collects a wide array of data from households on their income sources during the previous calendar year as well as their receipt of a wide array of in-kind benefits, including food stamps, rental subsidies, energy assistance, federal and state earned income tax credits, energy assistance and Medicaid/Medicare benefits.

The Census Bureau imputes estimates of the likely amount of Social Security payroll taxes, federal retirement contributions, state income, and federal income taxes paid by each working-age individual based on their annual incomes, marital status, and family living arrangements. We have combined the estimated tax payments, the values of the cash transfer incomes (including federal and state earned income tax credits), and the monetary values of in-kind benefits to calculate the net fiscal impact of each non-enrolled, 16-64 year old Black male in the U.S. by their educational attainment level during calendar year 2004. Table 4 displays a listing of the tax items, cash transfers, and non-cash transfers included in our fiscal cost-benefit analysis for government. The fiscal analysis was undertaken for all 16-64 years old Black male adults who were not enrolled in school.

[10] Information on the design of the March CPS supplement questionnaire can be found on the U.S. Census Bureau's web site. See: www.census.gov, "2005 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC)."

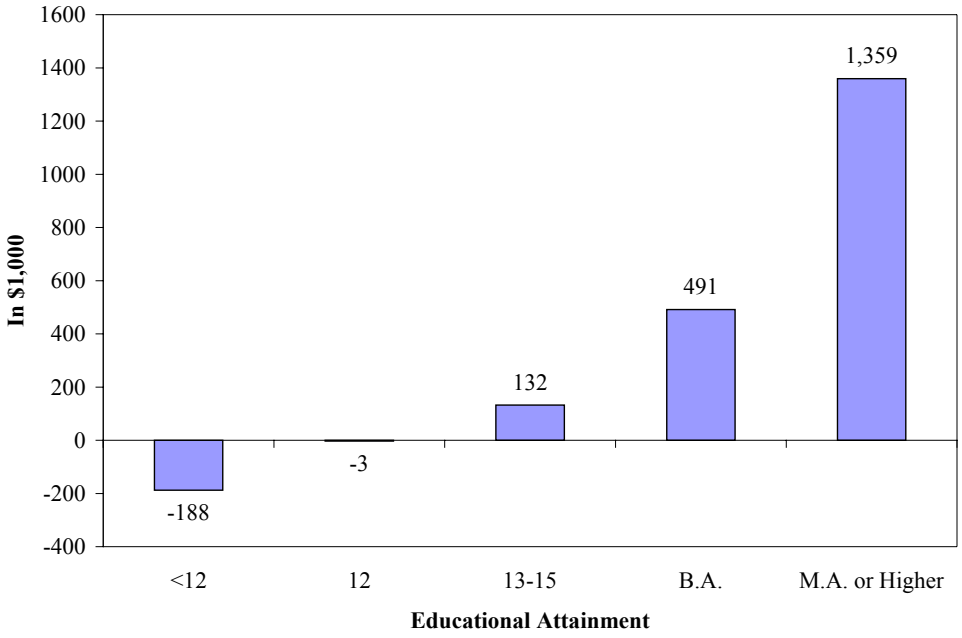
Table 4:
A Listing of the Cash Transfer, Non-Cash Transfer, and
Tax Items Used in Conducting the Fiscal Impact Analysis

Total Costs to Government		Total Benefits to Government
Cash Transfers	**Non-Cash Transfers**	**Tax Income**
Unemployment benefits	Earned Income Tax Credits	Federal income tax liability
Worker's compensation	Market value of food stamps	State income tax liability
Social Security payments	Market value of Medicare insurance	Federal retirement payroll deductions
Supplemental Social Income for the disabled and aged	Market value of Medicaid benefits	Social Security retirement payroll taxes
Public assistance income	Family market value of housing subsidies	
Veteran's payments	Family market value of school lunch subsidies	
Survivor's income benefits	Energy assistance payments	
Other disability income		

For five educational groups of these non-enrolled 16-64 year olds, we have estimated the value of the combined income and payroll taxes that they paid during the calendar year and the value of the cash and in-kind transfers that they received.[11] The net fiscal benefits to the federal and state government are equal to the difference between the annual taxes paid by an individual and the value of the cash and in-kind transfers that he received during calendar year 2004. Estimates of these net fiscal benefits were summed over the lifetime from ages 18 to 64 and are displayed in Chart 11. The average Black, male high school dropout will receive nearly $190,000 more cash and in-kind benefits than he will pay in payroll and income taxes over his worklife. The typical Black male high school graduate will achieve a near breakeven level, paying as much in taxes as he receives in benefits. The average Black male with a Bachelor's degree will pay nearly $500,000 more in taxes than he receives in cash and in-kind benefits, and those men with a Master's or higher degree will pay $1.35 million more in taxes than they receive in benefits. Clearly, there are huge fiscal dividends that can be reaped by increasing the number of Black men with college degrees in the future.

[11] Food stamps, rental subsidies, and energy assistance are received by the household rather than by an individual unless he/she is living alone. For each adult, we assigned him/her the value of these benefits received by the household in which he/she lived.

Chart 11:
Mean Lifetime Net Fiscal Benefits of Black Males from Ages 18-64 by Educational Attainment
(in $1,000 of Dollars)



The Incarceration Status of Young Black Men and Their Educational Attainment

Poor employment prospects for young men tend to be associated with their increased engagement in various forms of criminal activities.[12] Participation in criminal-related activities increases the likelihood of arrests, criminal convictions, and incarcerations among young men, which in turn have both short and long term adverse consequences on their employability and earnings. In addition to the adverse effects on ex-offenders themselves, Black youth who live in neighborhoods perceived by employers as high crime areas also may have their employment opportunities narrowed as a result of a form of statistical discrimination in the hiring and recruitment process.[13]

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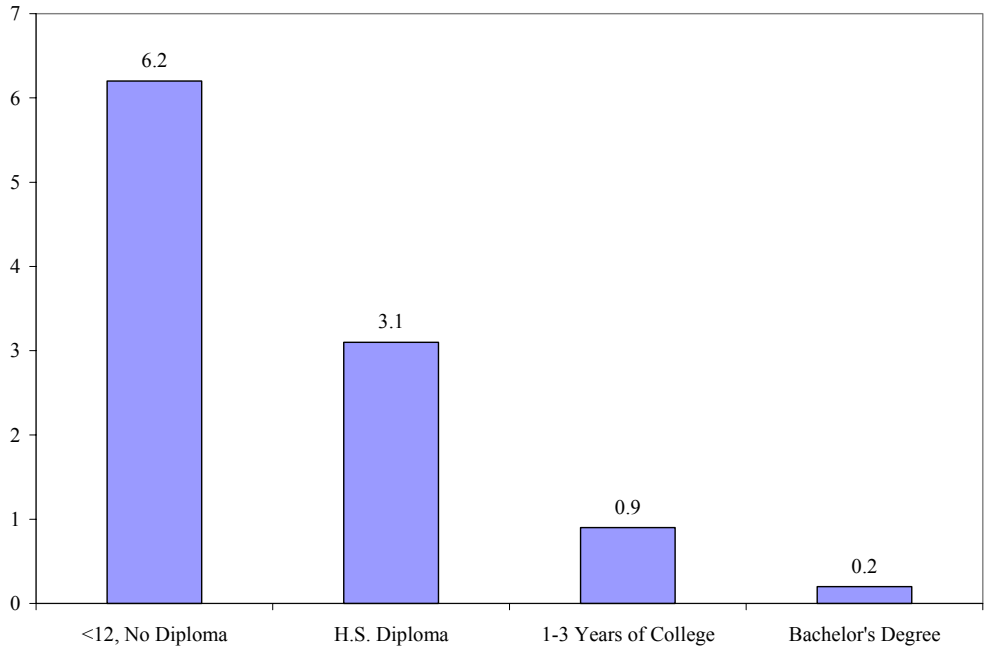
[12] See: (i) Richard B. Freeman, "Why Do So Many Young American Men Commit Crimes and What Might We Do About It?, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Winter 1996, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 25-42; (ii) Jeffrey Grogger, "Criminal Opportunities, Criminal Activities and Young Men's Labor Supply," Working Paper, Department of Economics, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1997; (iii) H. Naci Mocan and Daniel Rees, "Economic Conditions, Deterrence, and Juvenile Crime: Evidence From Micro Data", American Law and Economics Review, 2005, pp. 319-345.

[13] For a recent review of the labor market consequences of arrests and incarceration for Black males, see: (i) Harry J. Holzer, Steven Raphael, and Michael A. Stoll, "How Do Employer Perceptions of Crime and Incarceration Affect the Employment Prospects of Less Educated Young Black Men?" Black Males Left Behind, Urban Institute Press,

To identify the statistical links between the educational backgrounds of all young adults (18-24) and their incarceration status, we analyzed the public use data samples from the 2000 Census. Estimates of the institutionalization rates of all 18-24 year old males classified by their educational attainment at the time of the 2000 Census are presented in Chart 12 below.[14] Nationally, institutionalization rates of young male adults vary considerably by educational attainment, with high school dropouts being the most prone to be incarcerated in jail or prison. Slightly over 6% of all male high school dropouts 18 to 24 years of age were institutionalized at the time of the 2000 Census compared to 3% of high school graduates and only 2 of ever 1000 male bachelor degree holders. The incarceration rate of 18-24 year old male dropouts exceeded that of four-year college graduates by a multiple of 31.

Chart 12:
Institutionalization Rates of 18-24 Year Old Males by Level of Educational Attainment in the U.S., 2000
(in %)

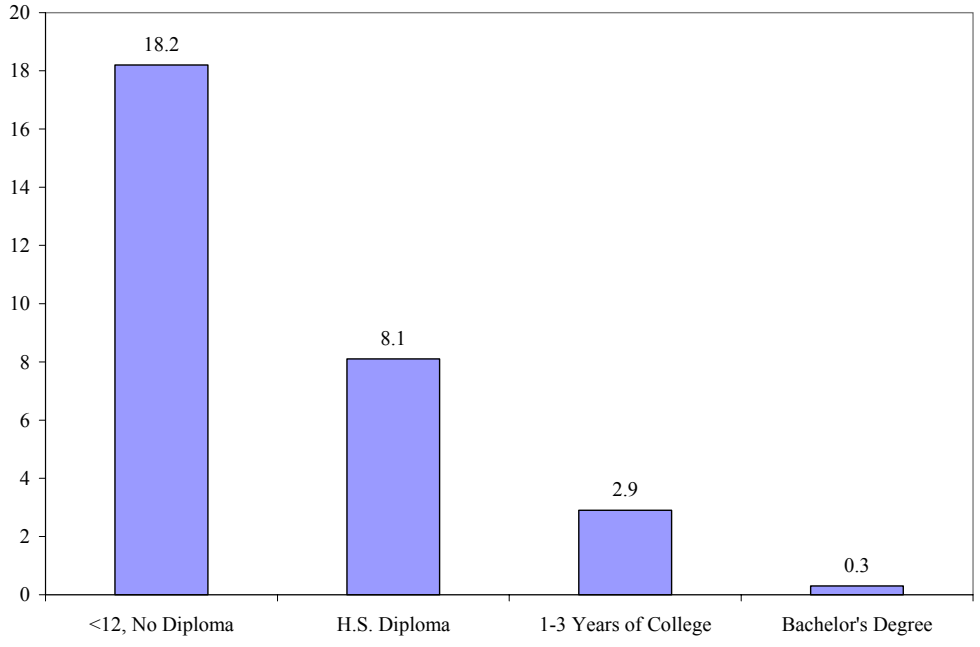


Washington D.C., 2006; (ii) Jeffrey Grogger, "The Effects of Arrests on the Employment and Earnings of Young Men," Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 110, No. 1, 1995, pp. 51-77.

[14] The vast majority of the 18-24 year olds who were institutionalized at the time of the 2000 Census were inmates of jails and prisons, including local, state, and federal prisons. A small number of the institutionalized were residents of mental institutions or long stay hospitals.

The institutionalization rates of young Black men also varied substantially by educational attainment (Chart 13). In each educational group, Black males were more likely to be incarcerated than all males in the 18-24 age group. Slightly over 18% of young Black male high school dropouts were institutionalized at the time of the 2000 Census, three times the national average for all young high school dropouts (Chart 12). Young black male high school graduates had an 8% institutionalization rate in 2000, approximately 10 percentage points lower than young black male high school dropouts, but still 2.7 times the national average for all young male high school graduates. Institutionalization rates for young black males with some college and bachelor's degrees were much lower than those of their less educated counterparts. A young Black, male high school dropout was 60 times more likely than a Bachelor degree holder to be incarcerated in 2000.

Chart 13:
Institutionalization Rates of Young Black Men (18-24) by Educational Attainment, U.S., 2000



There is a very pressing need for the nation to seek solutions to the employability problems of these male ex-offenders, especially less educated men who are at the greatest risk of recidivism and low earnings.[15] A number of alternative strategies have been implemented,

[15] For a review of alternative strategies for promoting the employability of ex-offenders, see: Peter Edelman, Harry J. Holzer, and Paul Offner, "Reconnecting Noncustodial Parents and Ex-Offenders," in Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men, Urban Institute Press, Washington, D.C., 2006.

including the Ready4Work Prisoner Reentry Initiative being evaluated by Public/ Private Ventures.[16] This program combines case management, mentoring, education, and job placement services to improve the immediate employment prospects of ex-offenders upon re-entry into civilian life.

The Large Gender Gaps in College Degree Attainment Among Young Black Adults

Over the past few decades, women have gained significant academic ground over men in college degree attainment at all levels.[17] Many more academic degrees are being awarded to women today than are being awarded to men. For example, during the 2003-2004 academic year, women earned 139 college degrees for every 100 degrees awarded to men. In 1990, women had earned only 114 degrees for every 100 degrees earned by men. The largest gender gap in degrees awarded exists at the associate's degree level where in 2003-04 women earned 156 degrees for every 100 degrees earned by men (Table 5). The gender gap was also quite sizable at the bachelor's degree level. For every 100 degrees awarded to men in 2003-04, women were awarded 135 bachelor's degrees.

Rising gender gaps in college degree attainment have occurred among members of each major race-ethnic group. There are, however, some important variations in the size of these gender disparities across race-ethnic groups. The largest gender gaps in the relative number of degrees conferred exist in the Black community. Black women are considerably more likely than Black men to graduate from college with a degree at each level of schooling. Moreover, the relative size of the gap between the number of post-secondary degrees conferred on Black women and men has increased over the past 25 years. In 1979, for every 100 associate's and bachelor's degrees received by Black men, 142 and 144 degrees, respectively, were conferred on Black women. At the master's degree level, 175 Black women were awarded a degree for every 100 Black men during the 1978-79 school year. In 2003-2004, for every 100 degrees awarded to

[16] For a review of the objectives, design features, and early outcomes from the Ready4Work program, see: Linda Jucovy, Just Out: Early Lessons From the Ready4Work Prisoner Reentry Initiative, Field Report Series, Public/ Private Ventures, February 2006.

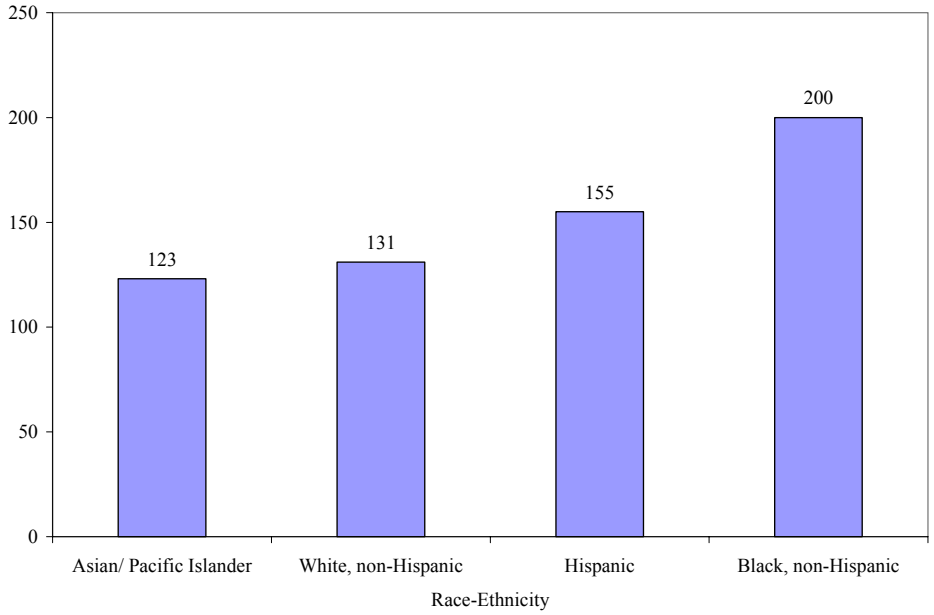
[17] For a review of changes in college degree attainment by gender,
See: Andrew Sum, Paul Harrington, and Neeta Fogg, The Growing Gender Gaps in Educational Attainment and Their Economic and Social Consequences, Paper Prepared by the Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University for The Business Roundtable, Washington, D.C., 2003.

Black men, Black women were awarded 216 associate degrees, 200 bachelor degrees, and 250 master's degrees. Not only were Black women earning many more college degrees than Black men, but the gender gaps became wider at each educational level. The much lower college degree attainment rates among Black men have important labor market, economic, social and fiscal consequences since the economic returns to college investments are very high for Black men. As was noted earlier, over their lifetime, Black male four year college graduates will obtain more than twice the mean earnings of Black high school graduates, an absolute difference of $1.030 million. Black males with college degrees and strong literacy/math skills also are far more likely to marry and live with their children and pay substantially more in taxes to state and national government than they receive in cash and in-kind benefits.

Table 5:
Number of Associate's and Bachelor's Degrees Conferred on Women Per 100 Men During the 2003-2004 Academic Year by Race-Ethnic Origin, U.S.

	(A) Women	(B) Men	(C) Ratio of Women to Men
Asian			
Associate's	18,269	13,039	140
Bachelor's	47,711	38,727	123
Black			
Associate's	52,605	24,317	216
Bachelor's	82,337	41,127	200
Hispanic			
Associate's	42,253	26,071	162
Bachelor's	54,067	34,993	155
White			
Associate's	259,115	172,414	150
Bachelor's	549,235	418,664	131

Chart 14:
Number of Bachelor's Degrees Awarded To Women Per 100 Men by Race-Ethnicity, U.S., 2003-2004 Academic Year



The Links Between Educational Attainment and the Core Academic Skills of All and Black Adults in the U.S.

Improving the future educational attainment of Black males will require a substantial strengthening of their academic achievement, including core reading, writing, and especially math skills, and critical thinking skills. Evidence from national longitudinal surveys over the past two decades has revealed the critical links between the academic proficiencies of adolescents/young adults and their ultimate educational attainment. These relationships hold true for all adults, for Black adults, and for men and women.

Findings of the 1979 National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth for the 2004 follow-up survey (25 years later) reveal that the likelihood that a 37-44 year old held a bachelor's or higher degree was strongly linked to his or her performance on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), a subset of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The AFQT test measures vocabulary, reading comprehension, and math computation and reasoning skills. Slightly more than 26% of all adults 37-44 years of age held a bachelor's or higher degree in 2002. For both men and women and for each of the three major race-ethnic groups, the percent of 37-44 year olds with a bachelor's or higher degree rose steadily with their performance on the AFQT test. Over 75 percent of the adults scoring in the top decile of the AFQT test score

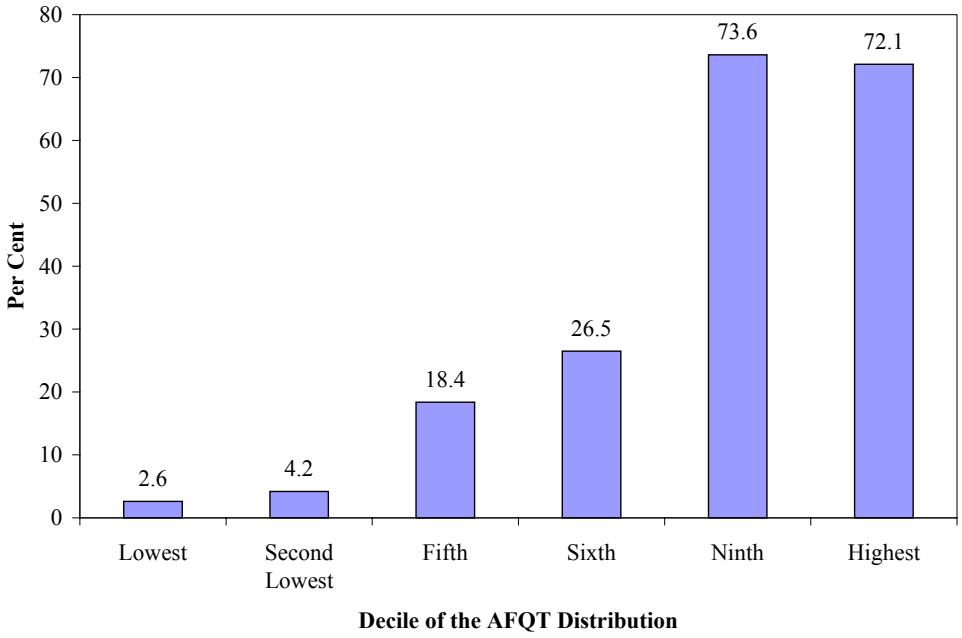
distribution earned a bachelor's or higher degree, nearly 3 times the national average. Only 1 to 2 per cent of adults in the first (lowest) decile of the AFQT score distribution had earned a four year college degree. The ratio of degree attainment between the top and bottom decile was 48 to 1. Thus, adults scoring in the top decile were 48 times more likely to earn a four year college degree than their counterparts in the lowest decile of the AFQT distribution. The college degree attainment ratio between the ninth and first deciles was 25 to 1. Young adults' scores on the AFQT when they were in their teens and early 20s were a powerful predictor of their likelihood of ultimately earning a bachelor's or higher degree.

Table 6:
Percent of 37-44 Year Olds that Have a Bachelor's or Higher Degree by Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Decile of the AFQT Distribution (2002)

Decile	All	Men	Women	White	Black	Hispanic
Total	26.5	25.87	27.2	30.25	14.92	14.6
First decile	1.6	1.7	1.4	0.0	2.6	0.8
Second decile	2.2	1.7	2.7	0.7	4.2	2.6
Third decile	4.3	4.0	4.7	2.7	8.3	5.3
Fourth decile	8.8	6.4	11.0	6.3	15.1	12.9
Fifth decile	8.8	9.8	8.1	7.0	18.4	10.0
Sixth decile	15.6	9.0	20.9	13.6	26.5	19.9
Seventh decile	21.7	18.2	24.8	20.8	36.2	22.2
Eighth decile	32.8	31.5	33.9	33.1	44.1	33.9
Ninth decile	51.4	45.1	58.1	50.3	73.6	62.5
Tenth decile	76.2	75.8	76.7	76.5	72.1	79.5

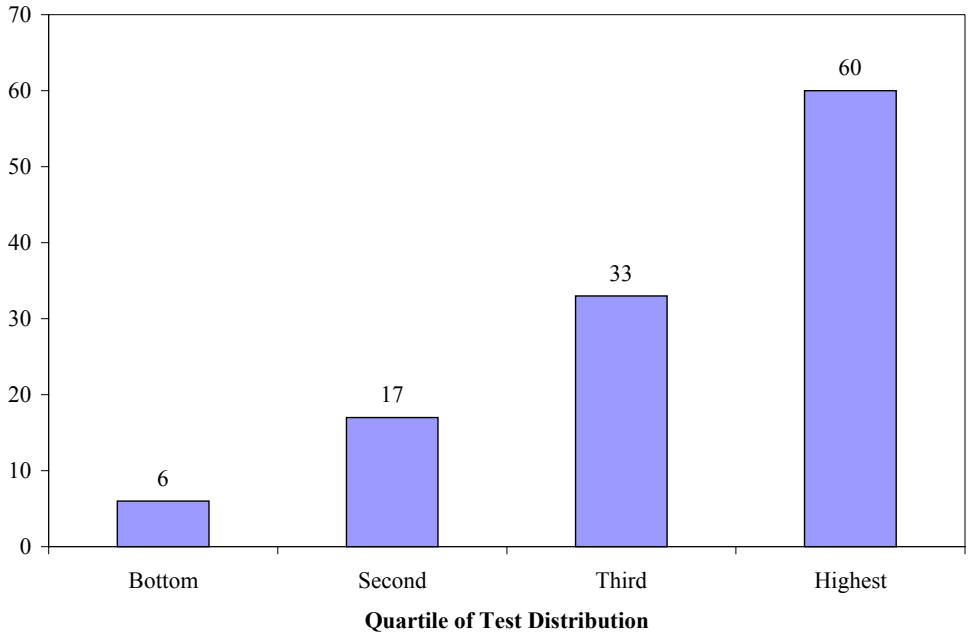
A similar strong link between AFQT scores and college degree attainment was observed for Black adults. Only 15% of Black adults between the ages of 37 and 44 had earned a bachelor's or higher degree compared to the national average of 27%. However, Black adults in AFQT deciles six through nine were more likely to earn a bachelor's or higher degree than the national pool of adults in these AFQT deciles. Even in the bottom deciles of the AFQT distribution, Black adults had higher rates of degree attainment than Whites and Hispanics. The bachelor's degree gap between White and Black adults was overwhelmingly due to a higher share of Black adults scoring in the lower deciles of the test score distribution. Black adults in the top two deciles were nearly 30 times as likely to obtain a Bachelor's degree as their peers in the bottom decile.

Chart 15:
The Per Cent of 37-44 Year Old Black Adults in 2002 with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree by Their Position in the AFQT Test Score Distribution in 1980



The 1988 National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) of a representative sample of the nation's eighth graders has tracked their educational performance over time. By the time of the 2000 followup survey, nearly 30 per cent of these eighth graders had obtained a Bachelor's degree, Asians were the most likely to obtain a degree (48%) followed by White, non-Hispanics (34%), Blacks (17%), Hispanics (15%), and American Indians (12%). The likelihood of a 1988 eighth grader obtaining a Bachelor's degree twelve years later (in 2000) was strongly linked to his/her position in the academic achievement test score distribution in eighth grade, a test of reading and math proficiency. Nearly 60% of the youth in the highest test score quartile had obtained a BA or higher degree versus only one-third of those in the third quarter and only 6 per cent of those in the bottom quartile (Chart 16).

Chart 16:
The Per Cent of 1988 Eighth Graders with a B.A. Degree by 2000 by Position in the Eight Graduate Test Distribution

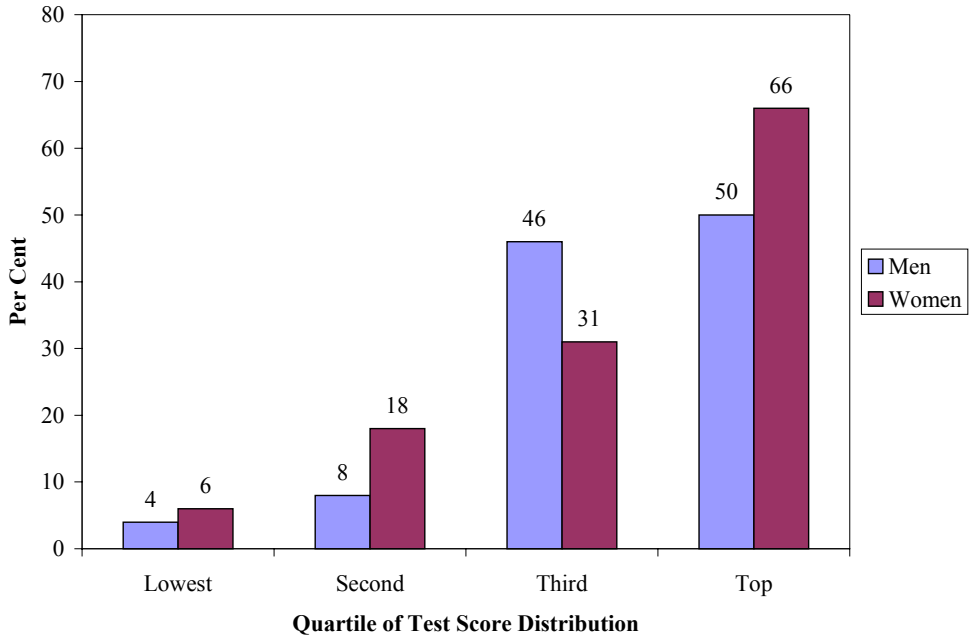


College degree attainment among Black eighth graders, both men and women, was also strongly associated with their position in the eighth grade test score distribution. By 2000, 21% of Black women had obtained a Bachelor's degree versus only 13% of the men (Table 7). However, nearly one half of the Black men in the upper half of the test score distribution had obtained a Bachelor's degree by 2000 versus only 8 per cent of their peers in the second quartile and 4 per cent of those in the lowest quartile of the eighth grade test distribution. Unfortunately, 47% of the Black men had eighth grade reading and math scores that placed them in the bottom quartile of the test score distribution. If Black males had been distributed across the four academic achievement test quartiles as all male eighth graders were, then their college degree attainment rate in 2000 would have been 27.2%, the same as that for all males. Reducing the large academic achievement test gap between Black and White males is critical to all future efforts to close the Black-White college degree attainment gap.

Table 7:
Per Cent of 1988 Black Eighth Graders Who Obtained a Bachelor's Degree by 2000 by Their Rank in the Eighth Grade Test Score Distribution, All and by Gender

Achievement Test Score Quartile	(A) All	(B) Men	(C) Women
Lowest	4.8	3.7	6.3
Second	12.4	8.0	18.4
Third	38.1	46.4	31.5
Highest	58.5	50.1	65.7
All	16.8	13.4	21.0
Highest/Lowest	12*	14*	10*

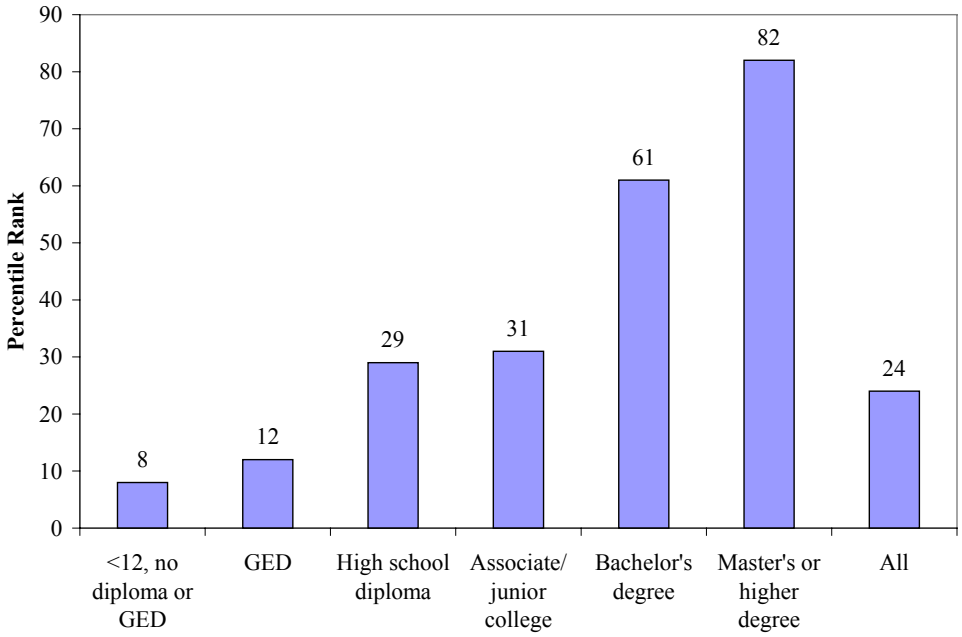
Chart 17:
Per Cent of 1988 Black Male and Female Eighth Graders Who Obtained a Bachelor's Degree by 2000 by Position in the Academic Achievement Test Score Distribution in Eighth Grade



The importance of a strong base of core academic skills for educational success among Black youth is again documented by findings from the new National Longitudinal Survey of Youth that began with a national sample of youth ages 12 to 17 in 1997 and 1998. The sample of respondents was administered the ASVAB test in 1997. Their scores on the math/reading/ vocabulary sections of the test were identified, and the scores were ranked from lowest to highest

to identify the percentile cutoff points along the distribution. Findings of the 2004 NLSY followup survey were used to identify the educational attainment of Black youth who were 19-25 years old at the time of the 2004 survey. The median ASVAB scores in reading/math of Black youth in each educational attainment subgroup were estimated. Findings are displayed in Chart 18.

Chart 18:
Median 1997 ASVAB Math/Reading Score Percentile of 19-25 Year Old, Black, non-Hispanic Youth, by Level of Educational Attainment in 2004



The median test score percentile for all Black youth was only a 24. Those young Black men and women who left high school without a diploma had a median percentile rank of only 8, which falls in the bottom decile of the distribution versus 29 for a high school graduate, 61 for a Bachelor degree holder, and an 82 for those with a Master's or higher degree. The gap between the median percentile rankings of high school graduates with no college and a high school dropout was 21 points while the gap between Bachelor degree holders and high school graduates was 32 points, which was equivalent to a full standard deviation. The very limited academic achievement of Black high school dropouts and GED holders will place them at severe risk of joblessness, low earnings, and poverty/low income problems throughout their entire adult lives.

Implications of Above Findings for Future Educational and Workforce Development Policies and Programs for Young Black Men

The above findings on the educational deficits of young Black men and the labor market plight of poorly educated Black males have a number of important implications for future educational and workforce development policy at the national, state, and local levels.

First, to improve the early labor market success of young Black men, sustained and comprehensive efforts must be made to increase their exposure to the labor market during the high school years. Black high school students in the U.S., both male and female, are far less likely to work than their White peers, and their employment rates have declined over the past six years.[18] In 2005, only 1 of every 7 Black high school students (16-21 years old) were employed during a typical month, and the likelihood of their working improved with the level of their family's income. Black high school students from poor and low income families are the least likely to work. The lack of any substantive work experience during the high school years increases their difficulties in transitioning from high school to the world-of-work upon graduation, especially for those youth who do not enroll full-time in college in the fall immediately following graduation.

National and state labor market research as well as followup findings from national JAG surveys and Boston Private Industry Council followup surveys of each year's high school graduating class consistently reveal that the more youth work in high school, the higher are their employment rates and earnings in the first year following graduation.[19] National longitudinal research has shown that Black men who work more steadily in high school (even up to 30 hours per week) are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college than their peers with no work experience or very limited work experience.[20]

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[18] For a review of employment rates among U.S. high school students from the mid 1980s through 1999,
See: Andrew Sum, Neeta Fogg, and Garth Mangum, Confronting the Youth Demographic Challenge, Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 2000.

[19] Some longitudinal research finds that the amount of work experience during the senior year of high school has significant positive effects on earnings seven to ten years after graduation from high school.
See: Christopher Ruhm, "The Extent and Consequences of High School Employment," Journal of Labor Research, Summer 1995, pp. 293-303.

[20] See: Lynn C. Burbidge, Joseph Pleck, Freya Somenstein, and Leighton Yu, "Early Employment and Its Effect on Education and Wages," Paper Presented to the Eighteenth Annual Research Conference, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Pittsburgh, November 1, 1996.

The major challenge is to design and fund programs capable of substantially expanding job opportunities for Black and other high school students during the school year and the summer months. Recent national youth employment demonstrations, including the Youth Opportunity Grant programs that were funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, have not shown much success in raising in-school employment opportunities for residents of high poverty neighborhoods although they were operating in a labor market environment that was highly non-supportive of teen hiring activities. The last large scale successful demonstration program to create large numbers of summer job opportunities for in-school students was the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Program of 1978-1980. Summer job opportunities for teens have shrunk to a new forty-year low due in part to the elimination of the Summer Youth Employment Program previously funded under the Job Training Partnership act, which provided 600,000 to 700,000 jobs for primarily economically disadvantaged teens during the summer months, a high fraction of whom were Black.[21] Some city mayors, including Boston's Mayor Thomas Menino, have taken an active leadership role in promoting the employment of high school students by the private sector during the summer months with a fairly high degree of success. More such political leadership is needed at the city, state, and national level with at least an equal emphasis on expanding in-school job opportunities for Black men and other teens. There are important economic advantages from year-round employment for teens. A new set of employer tax credits for hiring high school youth, especially those from minority and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, should be passed by the U.S. Congress and supported by the Bush Administration. Putting more high school students to work in jobs with work-based learning opportunities should be a major priority for the national government this year.

Second, expanded efforts to improve the transition from high school to the world-of-work among high school students not expected to automatically enroll in four year colleges and universities upon graduation should be promoted at all levels of government. The Career Academies Programs that are designed to provide high school students with academic and

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[21] For a recent review of the summer job market for the nation's teens,
See: (i) Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatiwada, and Joe McLaughlin, The 2006 Summer Job Market for the Nation's Teens: Who Got the Jobs and Who Didn't and Why We Should Care, Prepared for Jobs for America's Graduates and the Alternative Schools Network, September 2006. (ii) Andrew Sum, Joseph McLaughlin and Ishwar Khatiwada, The Summer Teen Job Market in 2005 and the Predicted Outlook for 2006: Implications of Summer Employment for Jobs for America's Graduates Programs, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Boston, April 2006.

vocational training in specific occupational clusters with close ties to employers have had some documented success in improving the annual earnings of participants, especially males, in the first four to five years following graduation from high school.[22] The impact evaluations of the Career Academy programs by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) of New York City have not found any positive educational impacts (e.g., higher graduation rates from high school or college enrollment rates) from participation in such programs, but male participants obtained significantly higher annual earnings than the control group four to five years after high school graduation. An even longer term impact evaluation of this program is being undertaken by MDRC.

A few other programs to boost the transition at-risk high school seniors from high school to the world-of-work and post-secondary schooling also have yielded positive findings for Black participants, especially those from low income backgrounds. Impact evaluations of the Jobs for America's Graduates' Senior Year Program involving comparison groups of seniors from the same geographic areas in which local JAG programs operated have revealed very favorable impacts on employment rates and full-time job opportunities for those Black and low income graduates who were not enrolled in college in the first year following their expected date of graduation. Both male and female low income Blacks and Hispanics appear to obtain large employment benefits from participation in these school-to-career programs. By boosting employment opportunities for participants during the junior and senior years of high school, school-to-career programs in Boston public high schools, including Pro-Tech programs, have strengthened the ability of participants to obtain employment in the early spring of the first year following graduation.

Third, unfortunately, employment and training programs for out-of-school youth, especially low income youth, have a much more mixed record of performance.[23] The national Job Corps program has been found to significantly improve the chances that participants will

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[22] See: James Kemple, Career Academies: Impacts on Labor Market Outcomes and Educational Attainment, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York, City, 2004.

[23] For reviews of past performance of these programs,
See: (i) Andrew Sum, Garth Mangum, and Robert Taggart, Indicators: The Journal of Social Health, Winter 2002-2003, pp. 50-84; (ii) Peter Edlman, Harry J. Holzer, Paul Offner, Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men…; (iii) Hillard Pouncy, "Toward A Fruitful Policy Discourse About Less Educated Young Men," in Black Males Left Behind (Editor: Ronald B. Mincy), The Urban Institute Press, Washington, D.C., 2006, pp. 293-310.

obtain GEDs and modestly increase their literacy (prose) and quantitative skills.[24] The impact of Job Corps participation on the longer-term earnings of participants, however, has been found to be quite mixed with highly divergent results produced by direct surveys versus administrative data bases on employment and earnings, such as Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records and Social Security Administration earnings records. Direct surveys of Job Corps participants and control group members yield favorable employment and earnings impacts and benefit-cost ratios while impact estimates based on the unemployment insurance and Social Security wage records have found no positive earnings impacts and unfavorable benefit-cost ratios.[25]

Other education and employment programs for out-of-school disadvantaged youth[26] include YouthBuild, which provides a combination of education, GED preparation, work experience, and leadership opportunities for primarily young high school dropouts, including a high fraction of Black men in its larger central city sites.[27] Outcome evaluations of YouthBuild show some success in generating positive employment and educational outcomes for participants, but there are no available impact evaluations using control or comparison groups to identify the degree to which program services produced employment and earnings gains for participants. Urban and rural conservation corps programs also serve out-of-school young men, including a relatively high fraction (50%) who lack high school diplomas or GEDs at the time of their entry into the program.[28] An impact evaluation of a subset of National Service Corps

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[24] See: (i) Steven Glazerman, Peter Z. Schochet, and John Burghardt, National Job Corps Study: The Impacts of Job Corps on Participants' Literacy Skills, Mathematica Policy Research Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, July 2000; (ii) Peter Sch0chet, John Burghardt, and Steven Glazerman, National Job Corps Study: The Short-Term Impacts of Job Corps on Participants' Employment and Related Outcomes, Final Report, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Washington, D.C. 2001.

[25] See: (i) Sheena McConnell and Steven Glazerman, National Job Corps Study: The Benefits and Costs of Job Corps, Report Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration by Mathematica Policy Research Inc., Princeton, 2002; (ii) Peter Schochet, National Job Corps Study: Impact Findings Using Administrative Earnings Records, Mathematica Policy Research Inc., Princeton, 2002.

[26] For another review of the potential benefits of alternative employment and training programs for disadvantaged youth,
See: Peter Edelman, Harry J. Holzer, and Paul Offner, Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men, Urban Institute Press, Washington, D.C., 2006.

[27] Three quarters of past YouthBuild participants were male and 56% were African-American. For a review of YouthBuild program design, operations, outcomes, and program principles,
See: Dorothy Stoneman and Fatina Marouti, "YouthBuild", in Making Connections: Youth Program Strategies for a Generation of Challenge, (Editor: Marion Pines), Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1999.

[28] See: Kathleen Seltz, "Youth Service and Conservative Corps" in Making Connections: Youth Program Strategies for A Generation of Challenge, (Editor: Marion Pines), pp. 29-41.

programs by Abt Associates found favorable short-term employment and earnings impacts for participants, especially for Black men.[29]

Fourth, reinforced efforts need to be made to reduce the high incidence of school dropout problems among Black men. Both nationally and within most states Black males together with Hispanic males are the most likely to leave high school without receiving a regular diploma. National estimates of four year, on-time graduation rates for Black men in large urban school districts reveal that only a slight majority (52%) of Black freshmen will graduate four years later. In Massachusetts, recent findings from the Massachusetts Department of Education reveal that only 58% of Black male 9th graders in the state's public high schools graduated on time in Massachusetts within four years, the second lowest on-time graduation rate in the state.[30] Black men are nearly 40% more likely than Black women to drop out of high school. Both short and long run labor market prospects for these Black male dropouts are quite bleak. They will be employed less frequently and earn substantially less than their peers with high school diplomas and Associate degrees over their working lives, will be involved far more frequently with the criminal justice system, be far less likely to marry and provide financial and emotional support for their children, will pay considerably fewer tax dollars, and receive far more in cash and in-kind transfers than their better educated peers. The fiscal burdens of male dropouts of all races, but especially Black males, are large and growing.

A wide variety of demonstration programs across the country have been implemented to reduce the incidence of high school dropout problems and boost the academic proficiency of high school students; however, few of them have been carefully and rigorously evaluated. Two model programs with some documented success in improving educational outcomes for low income and Black high school students are the Quantum Opportunities Program (QUOP) and the Talent Development High School Model. The initial QUOP demonstration program was a multi-year effort focused on 14-15 year olds living in families who received cash public assistance income in five sites across the United States.[31] The pilot effort was funded by the Ford

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[29] See: JoAnn Jastrzab, John Blomquist, Julie Mesker and Larry Orr, "Youth Corps: Promising Strategies for Young People and Their Communities", Studies in Workforce Development and Income Security, Abt Associates, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1997.

[30] See: Massachusetts Department of Education, Four Year Graduation Rates of Public High School Students, Class of 2005, Malden, 2007.

[31] For a review of the design features of the QUOP demonstration program and initial impacts from the more recent replication effort by the U.S. Department of Labor,

Foundation and operated by Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America (OIC). Findings of a five year impact evaluation of the program revealed significant gains for participants in both academic and functional skills, higher high school graduation rates, higher enrollment rates in two year and four year colleges, and less involvement with the criminal justice system. The replication of the QUOP demonstration by the U.S. Department of Labor was seriously flawed by the provision of very limited financial incentives for participants and case managers. The early findings of the impact evaluation of the replication have revealed some modest positive impacts on high school graduation rates and initial post-secondary educational enrollment rates, but not on academic performance during high school. The initial design of the QUOP program with strong financial incentives for both participants and case managers is worthy of further replication and testing.

A more recent demonstration effort to bolster academic performance, school behaviors, and high school graduation rates is the Talent Development High School Model being tested in five low performing high schools in the city of Philadelphia.[32] The model starts with the placement of ninth graders in a Success Academy in which the students receive instruction by teams of teachers in "small learning communities" that provide double the normal exposure to English and math instruction. After ninth grade, students are assigned to Career Academies that provide continued support in instruction in English and mathematics as well as exposure to courses in science and career pathways. Impact evaluations based on matched comparison high schools have revealed significant gains in attendance in the first year of high school, course credits earned over the first three years, especially in English and math, progress in being promoted to the next grades of high school, and some preliminary evidence of improvements in on-time high school graduation rates.[33] The gains in course credits in math and English, improved rates of grade promotion, and significant increases in math performance on

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See: (i) Andrew Hahn, et al., Findings of An Impact Evaluation of the Quantum Opportunities Program (QUOP), Heller School of Social Welfare, Brandeis University, Waltham, 1996; (ii) Benjamin Lattimore, "The Quantum Opportunities Program," in Making Connections: Youth Program Strategies for a Generation of Challenge, pp. 73-94; (iii) Allan Schirm, Nuria Rodriguez-Planas, Myles Maxfield, et al., The Quantum Opportunities Demonstration: Short-Term Impacts, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, 2003.

[32] See: James Kemple, Corinne M. Herlihy, Thomas J. Smith, Making Progress Toward Graduation: Evidence from the Talent Development High School Model, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York City, 2005.

[33] Graduation data were only available for two of the high schools involved with the program for two cohorts. The Year 1 cohort achieved an 8 percentage point higher on-time graduation rate that was significant at the .10 level while the Year 2 cohort achieved a 7 percentage point positive impact that was not quite significant the .10 level. See: James J. Kemple, et al., Making Progress Toward Graduation, "Table 9", pp. 75-77.

standardized tests are promising. These improvements in academic course taking, passing, and math proficiencies should facilitate their transition into and persistence in college.

Fifth, additional efforts need to be made to increase the enrollment in and persistence of Black males in both two and four year colleges and universities. National evidence on the persistence and degree attainment of Black males who initially enroll in two year public colleges is quite disappointing. Longitudinal data tracking a 1995-96 national sample of beginning post-secondary students in two and four year colleges revealed that only 23 per cent of first-time freshmen in two year public institutions had obtained either an Associate's degree or a Bachelor's degree within five years.[34] Among Black males, only 11 per cent had obtained an Associate's or Bachelor's degree at the end of five years, however, another 14 per cent were still enrolled in college at the end of this five year period.

A number of recent efforts have been undertaken to strengthen college persistence and graduation among low income students in community colleges. One of these national demonstration efforts is known as the Opening Doors Demonstration, which is being operated at six community colleges across the country and being evaluated by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.[35] One of the program sites is located within the Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, New York. The Opening Doors program at this college assigns approximately 25 incoming students to small learning communities in which they jointly take three classes including English that are linked to each other in terms of curriculum content, joint assignments, and scheduling. The participants also are eligible to receive tutoring, expanded counseling and support services, and financial assistance in purchasing books.[36]

Preliminary, first year evidence from an on-going impact evaluation of this program for students who enrolled in the Fall of 2003 has indicated some positive impacts in taking and obtaining credit in development English classes and student development classes and total number of courses passed. All of the favorable impacts took place in the first semester of the

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[34] Laura Horn, Rachael Berger, and Dennis Carroll, College Persistence on the Rise? Changes in Five-Year Degree Completion and Postsecondary Persistence Rates Between 1994 and 2000, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Washington, D.C., 2004.

[35] Dan Bloom and Colleen Sommo, Opening Doors, Building Learning Communities: Early Results from the Opening Doors Demonstration at Kingsborough Community College, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York City, 2005.

[36] Approximately 40 per cent of the study group, including control group members, were Black, non-Hispanic and 40 per cent of the combined sample were men. The fraction of males among Black members was not reported. See: Dan Bloom and Colleen Sommo, Ibid, Table 3.

program. The second semester impacts were not statistically significant.[37] The impact evaluation is still continuing. Preliminary findings for the Louisiana site also appear to be favorable in terms of course credits earned during the first year.

Sixth, the educational deficits of young Black men are closely linked to their weak academic achievement test scores. Findings from national longitudinal surveys that included testing of young adults over the past two decades (NLS 79, NLS 88, and NLS 97) reveal that the average Black male high school dropout scores in the bottom decile of the basic skills distribution in reading and math. The below average academic achievement test scores of Black male high school graduates also place severe constraints on their ability to successfully complete any years of post-secondary schooling and limit their earnings potential in their adult years. The formal education and basic academic skills of Black men have powerful impacts on their earnings as young adults in their 20s and 30s, and the size of these earnings advantages widen over time. There is a critical need to expanded academic enrichment efforts for Black men in every possible setting: at work, in high school and college, in workforce development programs, and in their communities and homes. The search for proven, effective approaches to boosting their academic proficiencies must be ongoing, and findings of successful efforts should be widely disseminated.

Overcoming the educational and labor market problems of the nation's young Black men will require coordinated initiatives on a wide array of fronts. There is no one single solution to this interrelated set of problems. The academic achievement skill deficits, educational deficits, and employability/earnings problems of young Black men are closely intertwined. Limited academic achievement (reading, math, writing) reduces their educational attainment, and both increase their difficulties in obtaining skilled employment and access to training opportunities both on and off the job. In the U.S., employer investments in the training of their workforce are closely linked to the literacy/numeracy proficiencies and education that workers bring with them to the job.[38] Cumulative work experience, training, education, and academic achievement will determine the earnings potential of these young Black men over their entire working lives. There is a critical need for immediate, comprehensive, and sustained investments in these young men to

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[37] The enrollment rate of the treatment group in either Kingsborough Community College or another educational institution in the City University of New York was not significantly higher one year after initial enrollment.

[38] See: Andrew Sum, Irwin Kirsch, and Kentaro Yamamoto, Pathways to Labor Market Success: The Literacy Proficiency of U.S. Adults, Policy Information Center, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, 2004

improve their future labor market prospects, their ability to form and maintain families and to support their children, and to contribute to the fiscal well-being of state and national governments. All of society can reap the rewards from efficient human capital investment in these young men. It is not sufficient to simply advocate for such investments, but we need to work to guarantee that they are carried out. As James reminds us in Chapter One, Verses 22, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only".