



U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS



Career Outlook

Data on display

Education pays, 2021 May 2022

<https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/>

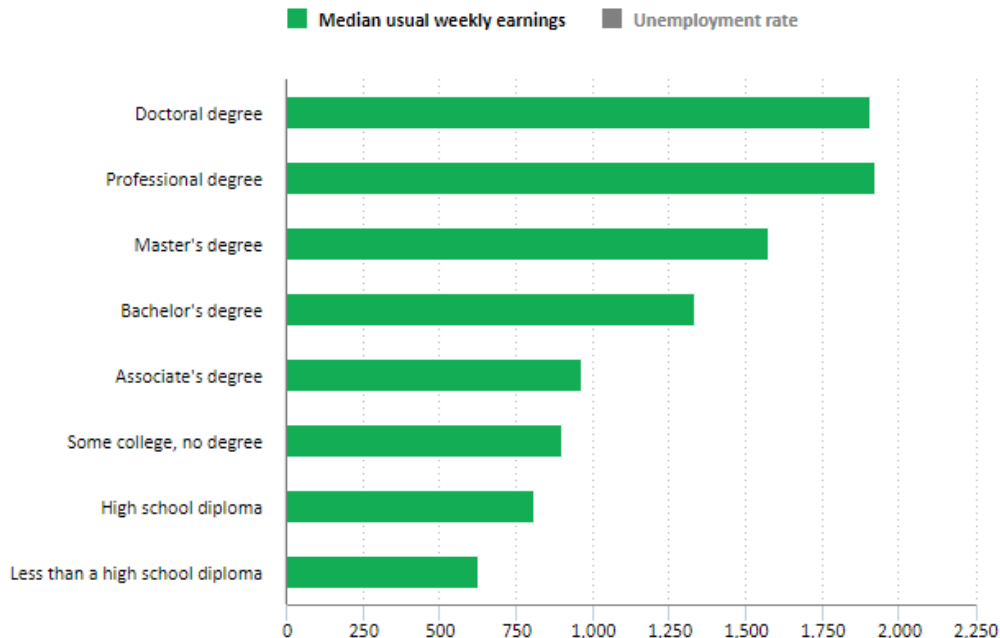
To see this chart in Spanish, visit [CareerOneStop](#).

As the U.S. labor market continues to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, one constant remains: Education boosts earnings and reduces unemployment.

The charts highlight differences in 2021 earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Current Population Survey (CPS). Workers age 25 and over who attained less than a high school diploma had the lowest median weekly earnings (\$626) and highest unemployment rate (8.3 percent) among those at all education levels. Workers with graduate degrees (master's, professional, and doctoral degrees) had the highest earnings and lowest unemployment rates.

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2021

Click legend items to change data display



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.



[View Chart Data](#)

At all education levels, unemployment rates were lower in 2021 compared with 2020 but still higher than in 2019, as businesses and consumers began to resume activities. Median weekly earnings rose at all levels of education from 2020 to 2021.

The Current Population Survey is a monthly survey that collects information about the labor force, including age, employment status, and other characteristics. Additional information on [earnings](#), [unemployment](#), and the effects of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) is available from the [CPS](#) program.

Visit the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) to learn about education requirements, pay, and more for hundreds of occupations. A tool on the homepage allows you to select occupations by factors such as entry-level education, median pay, and number of new jobs projected.