2022

FP-22-02 Non-Marriage Among College-Educated Adults, 2005-2019

Adrianne R. Brown
*Bowling Green State University*, adrbrow@bgsu.edu

Wendy D. Manning
*Bowling Green State University*, wmannin@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles)

Part of the Family, Life Course, and Society Commons

**Repository Citation**
[https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles/271](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles/271)

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.
Non-Marriage Among College-Educated Adults, 2005-2019

There is a well-documented educational gradient in marriage, with smaller shares never-married among the highly educated than among the less educated (FP-22-01). However, the population of college-educated individuals has increased, and there is growing heterogeneity among this population. In turn, there is likely heterogeneity in the marriage experience among those with a bachelor’s degree. This profile uses the American Community Survey (ACS) to examine the share of adults aged 35-39 with a bachelor’s degree or more by race/ethnicity and gender and, among this group, the share never-married by race/ethnicity and gender in 2005 and 2019. We focus on those aged 35-39 because this age bracket is above the median age at first marriage (the age in which at least 50% of people were married) in 2019 for college-educated men and women (FP-21-12) and is above the average age of those enrolled in higher education in the U.S. (Fishman et al., 2017).

College Education Among 35-39-Year-Olds

- Between 2005 and 2019, the share of adults aged 35-39 who held at least a bachelor’s degree increased for both men and women in all four of the racial/ethnic categories examined, but the magnitude of increase varied across groups.
  - In 2005, larger shares of Asian, White, and Black men were college-educated compared to women.
  - By 2019, this pattern was reversed for Whites and Blacks, such that larger shares of White and Black women were college-educated compared to men.
  - In 2019, equal shares of Asian men and women held a bachelor’s degree or higher.
  - Throughout the period, the share of Hispanic women who were college-educated was larger than that of Hispanic men.
- There was an overall race/ethnic pattern in the share college-educated that persisted throughout the period, with Asians having the largest share with at least a bachelor’s degree, followed by Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics.

Figure 1. Share of Adults Aged 35-39 with a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher by Race and Gender, 2005-2019

Source: NCFMR calculations of the American Community Survey 1-year estimates, 2005-2019
Non-Marriage Among College-Educated Men and Women

- Race/ethnic differentials in marriage among the college educated were greater among women than men.
  - In 2019, among college-educated men, one-third of Black men had never married (34%), followed by over a quarter of Hispanic men (27%) and two-fifths of White men (21%). The smallest share was among Asian men (19%) (Figure 2).
  - In 2019, the share of college-educated women who had never married was highest among Black women (41%), followed by Hispanic women (23%) and White women (17%). The smallest share was among Asian women at 14% (Figure 3).

- The share of college-educated men and women who had never married increased between 2005 and 2019, and the increase occurred for Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White men and women.
  - Among men, the increase was largest among Black men and smallest among Asian and White men.
  - Among women, the increase in the share never-married was greatest among Black women and smallest among Asian and White women.

- In both 2005 and 2019, the share of college-educated men aged 35-39 who had never married was higher than the share never-married among women for White, Hispanic, and Asian adults. In contrast, among college-educated Black adults, the share of never-married was greater among women than men.

Source: NCFMR calculations of the American Community Survey 1-year estimates, 2005-2019

Data Source:

References:

Suggested Citation:

This project is supported with assistance from Bowling Green State University. From 2007 to 2013, support was also provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the state or federal government.