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# More Millennials Living With Family Despite Improved Job Market

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
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## About This Report

This report presents the trends in the living arrangements, household formation and salient labor market outcomes of 18- to 34-year-olds since 2007. The labor market recovery has generally been more robust for better-educated young adults, and the report provides trends broken down by education. The analysis is based on the Current Population Survey. This survey is explicitly designed to measure labor force outcomes. It also is one of the major government surveys on household formation and living arrangements. Conducted monthly, it provides the most up-to-date information, as well as a variety of housing and labor market indicators.

The report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Richard Fry, senior economist, analyzed the data and wrote the report. Kim Parker, director of social trends research, and Claudia Deane, vice president of research, provided editorial guidance. Michael Keegan and Peter Bell provided additional graphic support. Number-checking was done by Eileen Patten, research analyst. The report was copy edited by Molly Rohal. Michael Suh provided Web support. Find related reports online at <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/>.

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## A Note on Terminology

An adult is “living independently” of family if the adult resides in a household headed by the adult, his or her spouse or unmarried partner, or some other person not related to the adult. Young adults living in a household headed by their parent, an aunt or uncle, a sibling or another relative are not considered to be living independently.

An adult is classified as college-educated if the adult reports that the highest degree completed is at least a bachelor’s degree. Respondents whose highest education is an associate’s degree or “some college but no degree” are not included as “college-educated.”

Millennials in this report are defined as adults who were born in 1981 or later years. In 2015, Millennials are ages 18-34. This report is an analysis of adults ages 18-34 across all years; it is not an analysis of the Millennial generation as it has aged. The analysis of 18- to 34-year-olds in the years 2000-2014 includes both Millennials and Gen Xers (born in 1965-1980). For example, in 2007 adults ages 18-26 were part of the Millennial generation, and adults ages 27-34 were part of Generation X.

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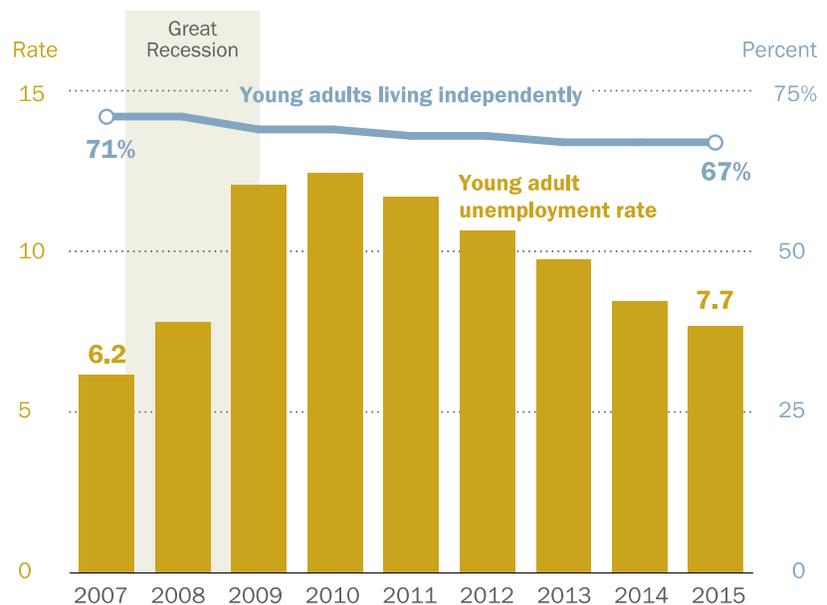
# More Millennials Living With Family Despite Improved Job Market

BY *Richard Fry*

Five years into the economic recovery, things are looking up for young adults in the U.S. labor market. Unemployment is down, full-time work is up and wages have modestly rebounded. But, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, these improvements in the labor market have not led to more Millennials living apart from their families. In fact, the nation's 18- to 34-year-olds are less likely to be living independently of their families and establishing their own households today than they were in the depths of the Great Recession.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of sheer numbers, there are more young adults today than there were when the recession hit – the 18- to 34-year-old population has grown by nearly 3 million since 2007. But the number heading their own households has not increased. In the first third of 2015 about 42.2 million 18- to 34-year-olds lived independently of their families. In 2007, before the recession began, about 42.7 million adults in that age group lived independently.<sup>2</sup>

## Labor Market Has Improved for Young Adults, Yet Living Independently of Family Has Declined



Note: Living independently means heading one's own household or living in a household headed by a spouse, unmarried partner or other non-relative. Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds; excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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<sup>1</sup> In 2015, adults ages 18-34 are all Millennials. In earlier years, 18- to 34-year-olds include Millennials and some Gen Xers. See "Notes on Terminology" for more details.

<sup>2</sup> These counts are based on an analysis that excludes 18- to 24-year-old full-time college students. If these students are not excluded, 45.1 million Millennials lived independently in the first third of 2015, as did 45.1 million 18- to 34-year-olds in 2007.

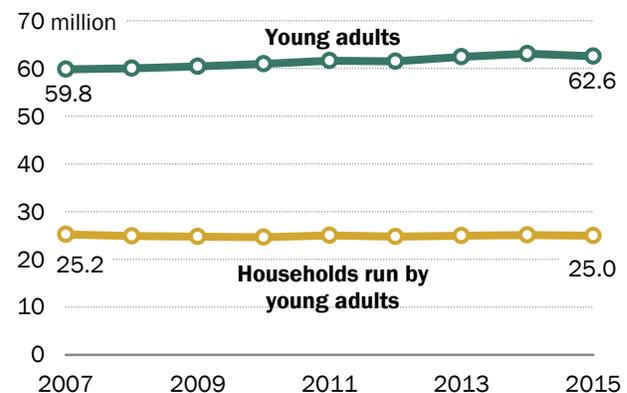
The declining numbers reflect a decrease in the rate of independent living during the recovery. In 2010, 69% of 18- to 34-year-olds lived independently. As of the first four months of this year, only 67% of Millennials were living independently. Over the same time period, the share of young adults living in their parents' homes has increased from 24% to 26%.

Meanwhile, the national unemployment rate for adults ages 18 to 34 declined to 7.7% in the first third of 2015, a significant recovery from the 12.4% who were unemployed in 2010. Other standard benchmarks also demonstrate that nationally the young adult labor market has strengthened. Both job-holding and full-time employment have increased since 2010. In addition, median weekly earnings among young adult workers are up marginally: \$574 through the first four months of this year, up from their 2012 low of \$547.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of these positive economic trends and the growth in the 18- to 34-year-old population, there has been no uptick in the number of young adults establishing their own households. In fact, the number of young adults heading their own households is no higher in 2015 (25 million) than it was before the recession began in 2007 (25.2 million). This may have important consequences for the nation's housing market recovery, as the growing young adult population has not fueled demand for housing units and the furnishings, telecom and cable installations and other ancillary purchases that accompany newly formed households.

The decline in independent living since the recovery began is apparent among both better-educated young adults and their less-educated counterparts. For example, today 86% of college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds live independently of their families. In 2010, 88% of this demographic lived independently. A similar 2 percentage point slide in independent living is apparent among 25- to 34-year-olds with no education beyond high school. This suggests that trends in young adult living arrangements are not being driven by labor

### More Young Adults, but no More Young Adult Households Than Before the Recession



Note: Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds; excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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<sup>3</sup> Weekly earnings are expressed in 2014 dollars.

market fortunes, as college-educated young adults have experienced a stronger labor market recovery than less-educated young adults.

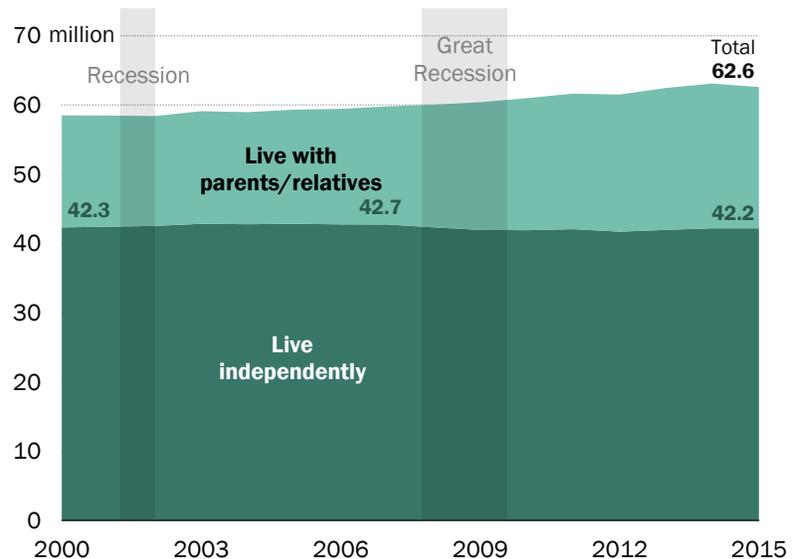
Trends in living arrangements also show no significant gender differences during the recovery. However, in 2015, 63% of Millennial men lived independently of family, compared with 72% of Millennial women. But a similar gender difference existed during the Great Recession, and both young men and young women are less likely to live independently today than they were five years ago.

## No Recovery in Young Adult Living Arrangements

The latest available census data indicate that there has been no significant increase in the number of young adults living independently of their families since the economic recovery officially began.

As of the first four months of 2015, 42.2 million Millennials lived independently of their families. This is no different than the 41.9 million 18- to 34-year-olds who were living independently in 2010 and just below the 42.7 million young adults who lived independently in 2007.<sup>4</sup>

### Despite Recovery, Fewer Young Adults Live Independently Than Before the Great Recession



Note: Living independently means heading one's own household or living in a household headed by a spouse, unmarried partner or other non-relative. Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds; excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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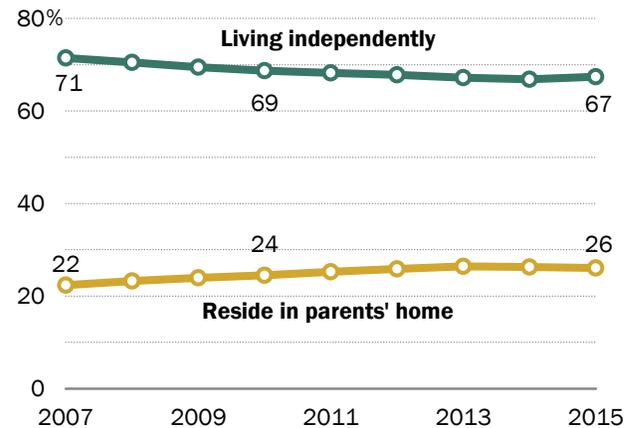
<sup>4</sup> [Bitler and Hoynes](#) also examine the prevalence of young adults' living independently. Their measure is slightly narrower than the one used in this report. They consider any young adult living with an adult family member as not living independently. In our analysis, the young adult living with family would be independent if he or she is living in the young adult's dwelling, that is, if the young adult is the head of the household. The young adult is classified as not living independently only if the young adult is living in the family member's home.

Over this same period the young adult population has swelled in size; today there are nearly 3 million more adults ages 18 to 34 than there were in 2007. Over the course of the recession and recovery the share of young adults living independently has also declined. In the first third of 2015, 67% of Millennials were living independently, compared with 69% of 18- to 34-year-olds living apart from family in 2010 and 71% in 2007.

Most of the decline in independent living since 2007 can be attributed to more young adults living in their parents' homes. In the first third of 2015, 26% of Millennials lived with their parents. At the beginning of the recovery in 2010, 24% of young adults were living with parents, and in 2007 only 22% were.

## Independent Living Has Not Recovered, as More Young Adults Live in Parents' Home

Share of young adults in each arrangement



Note: Living independently means heading one's own household or living in a household headed by a spouse, unmarried partner or other non-relative. Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds; excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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### About the Data

Findings in this report are based on the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS). Conducted jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the CPS is the source for the monthly national unemployment rate. The particular CPS data product analyzed is the Merged Outgoing Rotation Group files (MORG files). Each year's MORG file includes respondents interviewed each month and provides an annual average. One advantage of the MORG is that it has a substantially larger sample size than a basic monthly CPS. The file has about three times the sample size of a basic monthly file, or about 320,000 respondents ages 16 and older. Furthermore, all respondents in the MORG have detailed information on their hourly or weekly earnings and usual weekly hours. A basic monthly file only has this information for a quarter of the respondents. The MORG files were obtained from the National Bureau of Economic Research website. Helpful documentation is available at <http://www.nber.org/morg/docs/cpsx.pdf>.

As discussed further in the [Appendix](#), the information for calendar year 2015 is based on a file using the January, February, March and April 2015 basic monthly CPS files, which is referred to as the first third of 2015. Due to seasonality issues, the first third of 2015 may not be strictly comparable to the complete MORG files.

The share of young adults who are living in “doubled-up” households has also increased in recent years. [A doubled-up household is one in which there is an extra adult](#) who is not the spouse or unmarried partner of the household head. Young adults living in doubled-up arrangements are of two types. Young adults not living independently are doubled-up because the young adult constitutes the extra adult. In addition, young adults living independently may also be doubled-up if they live with a roommate(s).

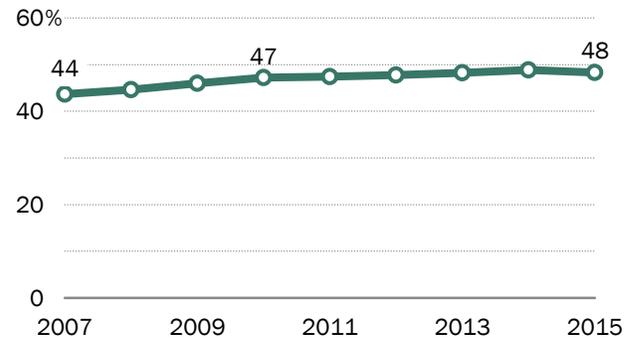
In the first four months of 2015, 48% of Millennials were doubled-up; in 2010, 47% of 18- to 34-year-olds were living in this type of household.

The 48% of Millennials who were doubled-up in 2015 includes 33% who were living in a household headed by a parent or other adult relative and 16% who were living in households headed by a non-relative or heading their own households with an extra adult (which may or may not include a family member).

Accompanying the growth in doubling-up has been a lack of growth in the number of households established by young adults. In the first third of 2015, 25 million Millennials headed their own households, no greater than the 25.2 million households headed by young adults in 2007. This has happened at the same time that the absolute number of 18- to 34-year-olds has increased from 59.8 to 62.6 million. In terms of the share of young adults running their own households, 40% do so in 2015, down from 42% in 2007.

## More Young Adults Are “Doubled-up”

*In household with an extra adult*



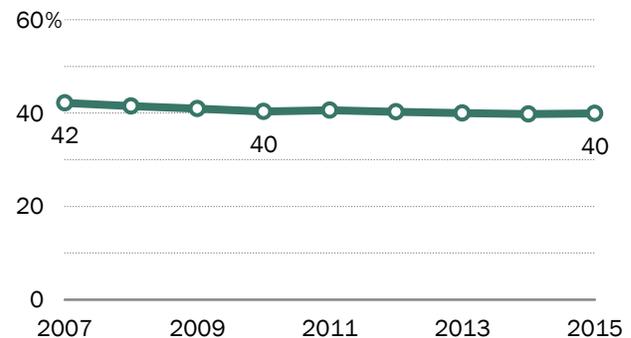
Note: “Doubled up” means living with one or more adults who is not your spouse or unmarried partner; those living with parents or other relatives are considered “doubled up.” Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds; excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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## Young Adult Household Formation Has Not Recovered

*Young adults running households*



Note: Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds; excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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The decline in the rate at which young adults are forming households from 2007 to 2015 has had a negative impact on the demand for the nation's housing and, in turn, residential construction. Because of the recession, there are substantially fewer households than would have been predicted based on population growth; using CPS data through 2011 an economist estimated that the shortfall in the number of young adult households accounted for almost three-quarters of the total 2.6 million shortfall in households throughout the economy.<sup>5</sup> In other words, young adults have been a key demographic in the nation's housing bust. Four years later, the rate at which they are forming households is no higher than it was in 2011.

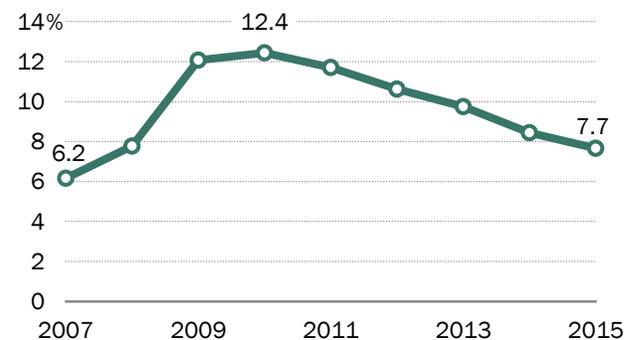
## Young Adults and the Labor Market Since the Great Recession

The decline in independent living during the recovery has occurred in the context of a substantial, albeit incomplete, recovery of the labor market for young adults.<sup>6</sup> On an annual basis, unemployment among 18- to 34-year-olds peaked at 12.4% in 2010. As of the first third of 2015, unemployment among young adults in this age group was 7.7%, nearly 40% below the peak. However, it was still above the 6.2% unemployment rate in 2007, before the Great Recession.

The unemployment rate only applies to those who are in the labor force and actively seeking work, thus excluding those who may have dropped out because they lost hope of finding a job. But other measures also indicate significant improvements in labor market outcomes for young adults, although the gains may be short of complete recovery.<sup>7</sup>

### Young Adult Unemployment Has Declined Markedly Since 2010

*Unemployment rate*



Note: Unemployment rate refers to the share of the labor force seeking work. Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds; excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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<sup>5</sup> Timothy Dunne, "[Household Formation and the Great Recession](#)," Federal Bank of Cleveland Economic Commentary, Aug. 23, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. November 2014. "[In the Shadow of the Great Recession: Experiences and Perspectives of Young Workers](#)."

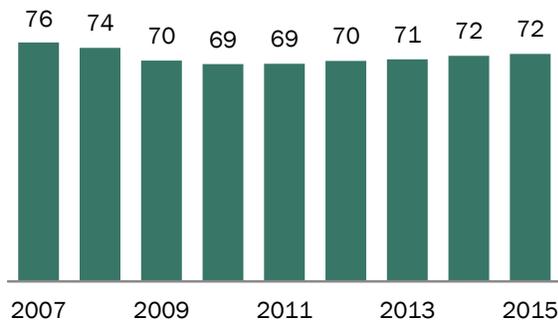
<sup>7</sup> [Furman](#) examines several broader alternative measures of unemployment among young adults, and these also display a substantial recovery since unemployment peaked.

The share of young adults who are employed has increased from 69% in 2010 to 72% today. In addition, the share of young adult workers employed full-time has increased. In 2009, only 70% of 18- to 34-year-old employees worked full-time, the lowest share during the recession. By the first third of 2015, that share had risen to 74%.

Some evidence suggests that the earnings of young adults have begun to rebound. The median weekly earnings of young adult workers peaked at \$592 in 2008 (all dollar figures are adjusted for inflation).<sup>8</sup> After bottoming out at \$547 in 2012, median weekly earnings are estimated at \$574 in the first third of 2015.

### Share of Young Adults With Jobs Has Begun to Recover

Employment to population ratio (%)



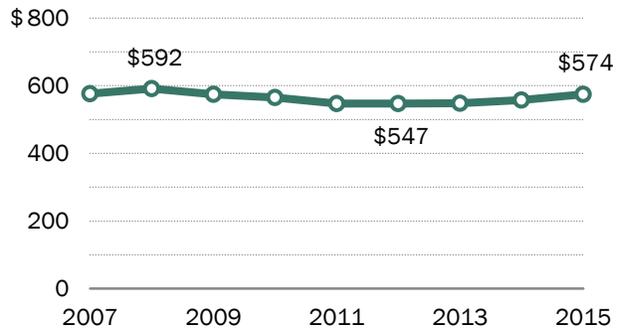
Note: Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds; excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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### For Young Adult Workers, Weekly Earnings Have Increased Modestly Since 2012

Median weekly earnings (in 2014 \$)



Note: Estimated earnings per week excluding the self-employed. Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds; excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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<sup>8</sup> The earnings figures are based on estimated earnings. For workers paid by the week, this reflects usual weekly earnings. For workers paid by the hour, this is computed by multiplying hourly earnings by usual weekly hours.

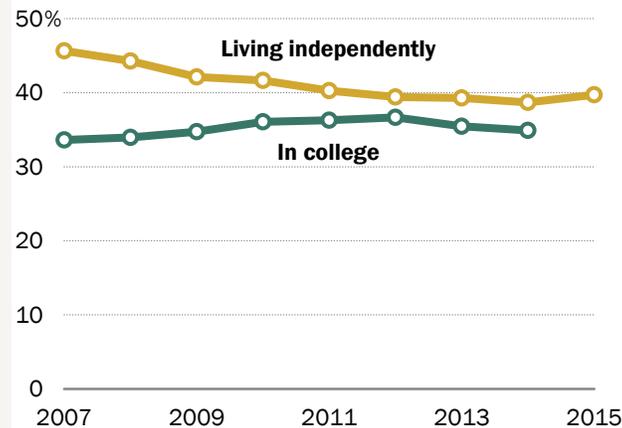
## Independent Living and the College Enrollment Decline

One of the silver linings of the Great Recession was that it drove an [increasing share of young adults toward higher education](#). Some enrolled in college to ride out the economic storm, while others went back to school to gain additional skills and make themselves more marketable. By 2012, 37% of 18- to 24-year-olds were enrolled in college, a substantial increase over the 34% enrolled in 2007. And as college enrollment rose, fewer 18- to 24-year-olds lived independently. By 2012, only 39% of 18- to 24-year-olds (not including full-time students) lived independently, down substantially from the 46% share living independently in 2007.

College-going peaked in 2012. By 2014, 35% of 18- to 24-year-olds were pursuing college, down 2 percentage points from the peak. But contrary to expectations, the college enrollment decline has not stimulated an increase in independent living. Today, most younger Millennials do not live independently of family. By the first third of 2015 only 40% of 18- to 24-year-olds were living apart from their families.

### Independent Living Has Not Increased as College Enrollment Has Declined

18- to 24-year-olds



Note: "In college" includes both full- and part-time students. Living independently means heading one's own household or living in a household headed by a spouse, unmarried partner or other non-relative (analysis excludes full-time college students).

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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## Independent Living and Labor Market Recovery by Education

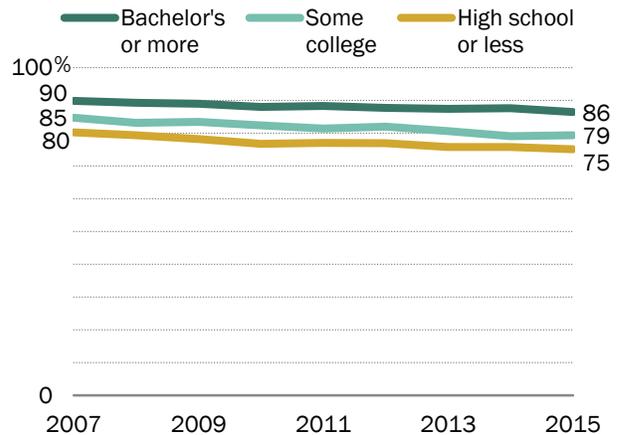
For young adults, [a college education provided a partial life raft](#) during the recession and has proven beneficial during the recovery as well. College-educated young adults have been quicker to regain the ground they lost in terms of job-holding and wages. But this hasn't led them to venture out on their own and establish their own households. The downward trend in independent living among young adults has occurred across groups with different levels of educational attainment.

That said, college-educated young adults remain more likely than those without a college degree to live independently of their parents. As of the first third of 2015, 86% of college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds lived independently of family, compared with 75% of 25- to 34-year-olds with no more than a high school education.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, even among the highly educated, the share living on their own has trended downward during the recovery. Nine-in-ten young adults with at least a bachelor's degree were living independently in 2007, before the recession hit.

Recent research using credit report data has indicated that student loan debt and difficulties paying off debt deter independent living among young adults.<sup>10</sup> Both the likelihood of borrowing for education and the amounts borrowed tend to increase with the young adult's education. Young adults with no education beyond high school presumably have minimal student debt burdens. The very similar decline in independent living across education groups suggests that additional factors beyond education debt are impacting the decisions to co-reside with family.

### Decline in Independent Living Has Occurred Among Highly Educated and Less Educated

*25- to 34-year-olds living independently*



Note: Living independently means heading one's own household or living in a household headed by a spouse, unmarried partner or other non-relative.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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<sup>9</sup> The analysis by completed education is confined to 25- to 34-year-olds. College-educated young adults on average are older than their peers who have not finished college. Both living arrangements and labor market outcomes vary with age. We can minimize the impact of age by focusing just on 25- to 34-year-olds.

<sup>10</sup> [Dettling and Hsu \(2014\)](#), and [Bleemer, et. al. \(2015\)](#).

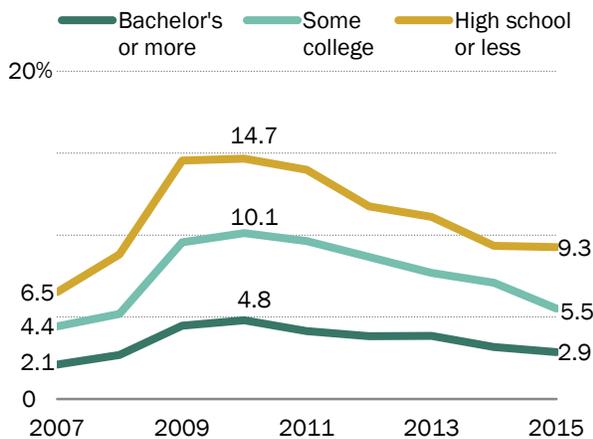
College-educated adults continue to be more likely than their less-educated counterparts to establish their own households. Some 51% of 25- to 34-year-olds with at least a bachelor's degree run a household, compared with only 43% of their peers with no education beyond high school. However, relative to 2007, household formation rates have fallen regardless of education level. In 2007, 54% of bachelor's degree holders and 46% of those with a high school education or less were heads of households.

Turning to the labor market, if recovery is judged on the basis of return to the labor market outcomes of 2007, before the Great Recession began, then better-educated young adults have fared significantly better than their less-educated counterparts.

As of the first third of 2015, the unemployment rate of 25- to 34-year-olds remained significantly above 2007 levels for each education group. For college-educated Millennials the unemployment rate was about 2.9%, compared with 2.1% of young adults ages 25-34 before the recession began. By comparison, unemployment for 25- to 34-year-olds with no education beyond high school stood at 9.3% in the first third of 2015, still 2.7 percentage points higher than the unemployment rate for this group in 2007.

### Unemployment Has Declined From Recession Peak for all Education Groups

25- to 34-year-old unemployment rate



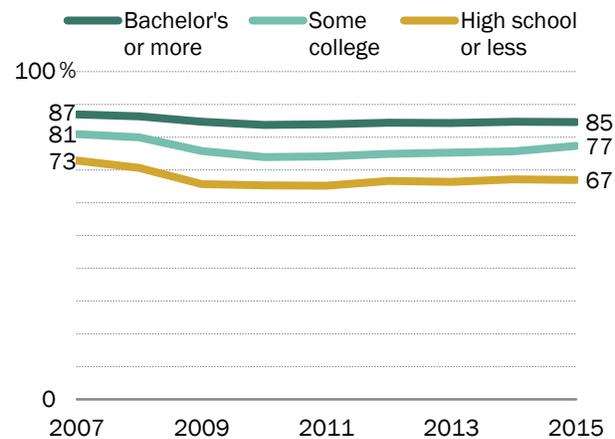
Note: Unemployment rate refers to the share of the labor force seeking work.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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### Employment Has Declined the Least for the College-Educated

25- to 34-year-old employment to population ratio



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

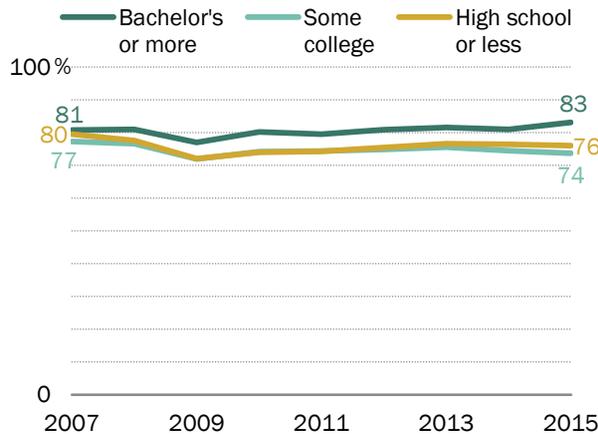
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The better fortunes for college-educated young adults are more apparent in job-holding. As of the first third of 2015, 85% of college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds were employed. In 2007, 87% of this group had jobs. Their less-educated peers experienced greater employment declines during the recession, and their employment rates remain substantially below their 2007 levels. For example, among young adults with no education beyond high school, 67% had jobs in the first third of 2015 compared with 73% in 2007.

In 2015, 83% of college-educated 25- to 34-year-old workers were employed full time, higher than the 81% of this group that was employed full time in 2007. In contrast, the likelihood of full-time work has not fully recovered for young workers without a bachelor's degree. In 2015, 74% of young workers with some college experience but not a bachelor's degree were employed full time; before the recession, 77% of these workers had a full-time job.

**Likelihood of Full-Time Employment Has Fully Recovered for the College-Educated**      **Earnings Have Nearly Recovered for the College-Educated**

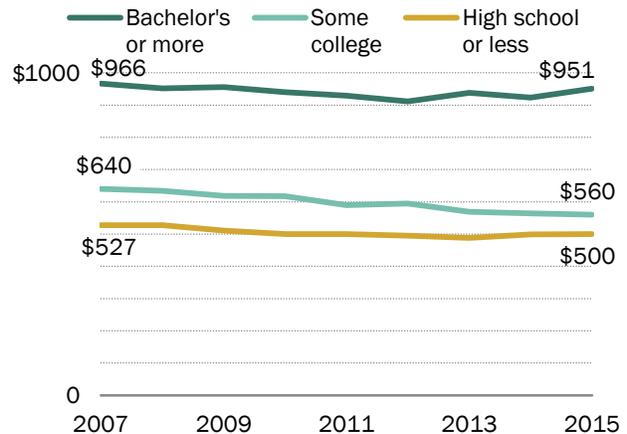
Full-time employment among employed 25- to 34-year-olds



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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25- to 34-year-old median weekly earnings (in 2014 \$)



Note: Estimated earnings per week excluding the self employed.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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Finally, the weekly earnings of college-educated young adults have nearly recovered. In 2015, the earnings of these workers (\$951/week) were almost back to the 2007 level (\$966/week). Less-educated workers have seen a more modest recovery in their earnings. For example, for young adults with no education beyond high school, earnings were \$500 per week in the first third of 2015, still 5% below their 2007 level (\$527/week).

In the labor market, the outcomes of college-educated young adults have made the greatest rebound from the ravages of the Great Recession. But, living arrangements seem to have come unhinged from cyclical labor market conditions as all young adults have become less likely to live independently as the recovery has progressed.

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## Appendix on Data Source

The analysis is based on the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS). Collected by the Census Bureau, the CPS is the basis for the national unemployment rate estimate released each month. Designed to be a labor force survey, the questionnaire also collects detailed demographic information on about 130,000 respondents each month.

The particular CPS data files utilized are the annual merged outgoing rotation group or MORG files. Rather than interviewing a completely new sample of respondents each month, the Census Bureau reinterviews some households from previous months. The rotation pattern of the households results in about one-quarter of the households each month not being interviewed again in that same calendar year. These “outgoing” households form the outgoing rotation group. The yearly MORG file simply sandwiches each month’s outgoing rotation group together into one file to form the merged outgoing rotation group file.

A virtue of the MORG file is that it has a large sample of households. Each outgoing rotation group is a quarter of the monthly sample, so that twelve months combined together results in a sample three times that of a regular monthly sample. The MORG file excludes respondents under age 16, so a file will have around 320,000 respondents ages 16 and older. All the data are appropriately weighted so that it is nationally representative of the civilian non-institutionalized population ages 16 and older.

The unweighted sample sizes for the particular populations analyzed are shown in the table to the right.

Admittedly, the 2015 data are not directly comparable to the earlier years. 2015 is not finished, so the 2015 data are not a complete MORG file. But the first four months of 2015 CPS data are publicly available, and, in order to be

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### 18- to 34-Year-Olds Analyzed

*Unweighted sample sizes*

Year	All*	All	25- to 34-year-olds		
			High school or less	Some college	Bachelor's degree or more
2007	75,898	50,735	19,862	14,524	16,349
2008	75,801	50,616	19,397	14,432	16,787
2009	76,932	51,714	19,579	14,886	17,249
2010	77,347	52,593	19,524	15,247	17,822
2011	76,256	51,993	19,077	15,188	17,728
2012	74,969	51,486	18,252	15,023	18,211
2013	74,503	50,908	17,655	14,760	18,493
2014	75,126	51,409	17,632	15,003	18,774
2015	43,056	29,757	10,186	8,627	10,944

\* Excludes 18- to 24-year-old college students enrolled full time.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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as up-to-date as possible, we include this information. What is labelled 2015 is the first third of 2015, or the January through April 2015 basic monthly data. Specifically, the 2015 file is the entire April 2015 basic monthly CPS data plus the outgoing rotation groups from the January to March 2015 CPS data.

By using the January to March outgoing rotation groups, the 2015 file does not have any duplicates; that is, each person is interviewed only once.

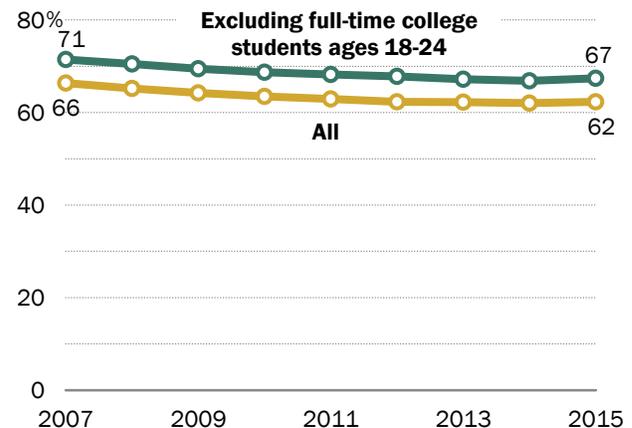
By using the entire April monthly data (and not just April's outgoing rotation group) the sample size increases. But the first four months are not equally weighted. April's behavior gets greater representation.

No attempt was made at seasonal adjustment. That is, for years before 2015, the figures represent the annual average. 2015's figures represent the first third of the year with an overemphasis on April's results.

Finally, in the Current Population Survey, unmarried college students residing in dormitories are treated in a noteworthy manner. These students are assigned as living in the home of their parent(s), rather than being classified as living in dormitories. As a result, the CPS will overestimate the proportion of young adults literally living in their parents' homes and not living independently. Recognizing this idiosyncrasy of the survey, the analysis excluded 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college full-time (the population most likely to be unmarried college students residing in dorms). This is not a perfect solution because some 18- to 24-year-old full-time [college students do indeed live with their parents](#) and not in dormitories. But we veered toward slightly underestimating the share of young adults living with their parents rather than overestimating it.

### Trend in Living Arrangements Similar Regardless of How College Students Are Handled

Share of young adults living independently



Note: Living independently means heading one's own household or living in a household headed by a spouse, unmarried partner or other non-relative. Young adults are 18- to 34-year-olds.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group data files and 2015 basic monthly CPS files (Jan.-Apr.)

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In 2015, if all 18- to 34-year-olds are analyzed, then 62% live independently. This estimate does not treat unmarried college students residing in dorms as living independently. Alternatively, if 18- to 24-year-old full-time college students are excluded, then 67% of young adults are estimated to live independently.

Most importantly for our purposes, the time trend in the data showing a decline in young adults living independently is virtually identical whether 18- to 24-year-old full-time college students are included or not.