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United States Census

Measuring America

30-Year-Olds: Then and Now

1975	2015
71%	32%

In 1975, nearly 3 in 4 30-year-olds had ever married, had a child, were not enrolled in school, and lived on their own. In 2015, just 1 in 3 30-year-olds have these characteristics.

Characteristics of Young Adults* (percent of 30-year-olds)

Not enrolled in school

1975 99%

2015 92%

Living on their own

1975 90%

2015 70%

Ever married

1975 89%

2015 57%

Lives with a child

1975 76%

2015 47%

Today, more 30-year-olds have earned at least a high school diploma and are in the labor force, while fewer are earning moderate income or homeowners.

Selected Socioeconomic Characteristics of Young Adults** (percent of 30-year-olds)

At least a high school diploma

1975 80%

2015 90%

In the labor force

1975 71%

2015 81%

Moderate income

1975 71%

2015 55%

Homeowner

1975 56%

2015 33%

* Enrollment status is independent of labor force participation. In 1975, we can only identify whether the young adult lives with a child under 18, and not necessarily whether they are the parent of the child.

** A moderate income is defined as a household income between 66 percent and 200 percent of the national median household income. Women who were out of the labor force because they reported taking care of home or family were still counted as having all four socioeconomic characteristics, as long as they met the other three characteristics (diploma, income, and homeownership). To be a homeowner, the 30-year-old must be the householder or spouse of the householder who owns or is buying their home (i.e., not renting).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1975 and 2015.

United States Census Bureau

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