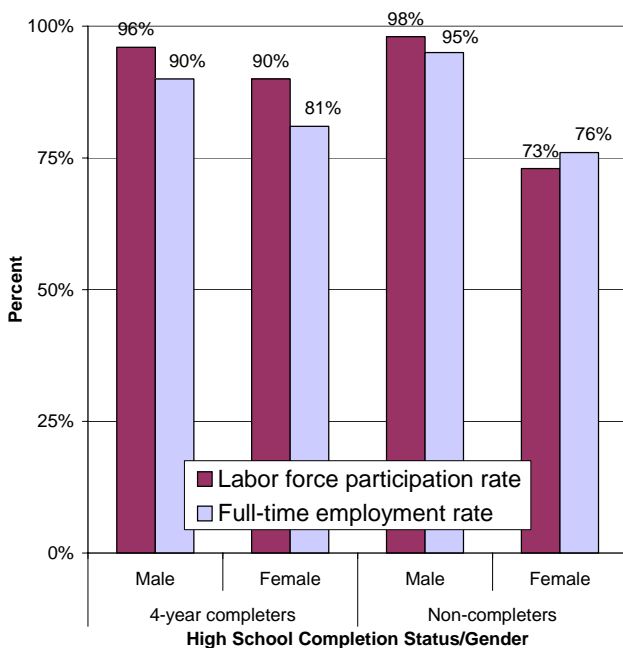


# Economic Consequences of Failure to Complete High School Far More Severe for Women

In an October 2006 Issue Brief—*Economic Outcomes of High School Completers and Non-completers 8 Years Later*—the National Center for Education Statistics reports some alarming data about the disproportionately severe economic consequences for women who fail to finish high school.

**Chart 1. Labor Force Participation and Full-Time Employment for 4-Year High School Completers and Non-Completers, by Gender, 2000**



The report compares several groups defined by their high school completion status: those who completed high school in four years, those who took four to six years, and non-completers. For purposes of this report, only the first and last of these groups are compared. The groups are further divided by gender.

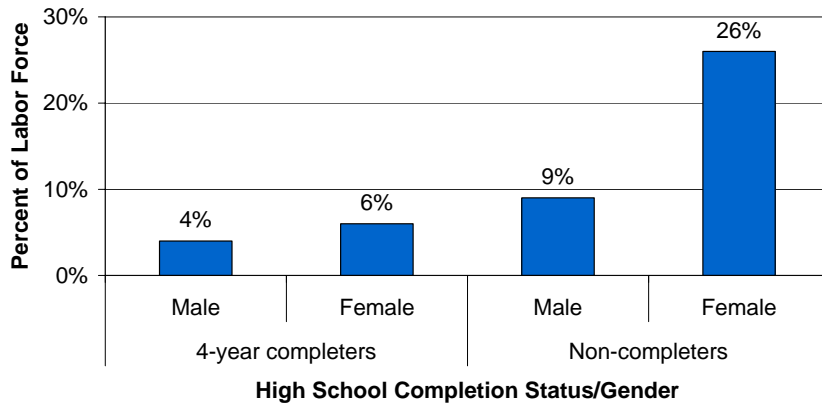
### Labor Force Participation & Full-Time Employment

Women who did not complete high school were far more likely than their male counterparts not to be in the labor force and to be unemployed, if they were in the labor force. Almost all men who did not complete high school were in the labor force (98%) and working full-time (95%). Of women in similar circumstances, only three out of four were in the labor force (73%) and working full-time (76%).



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**Chart 2. Unemployment Rate for 4-Year High School Completers and Non-Completers, 2000**



### Unemployment Rate

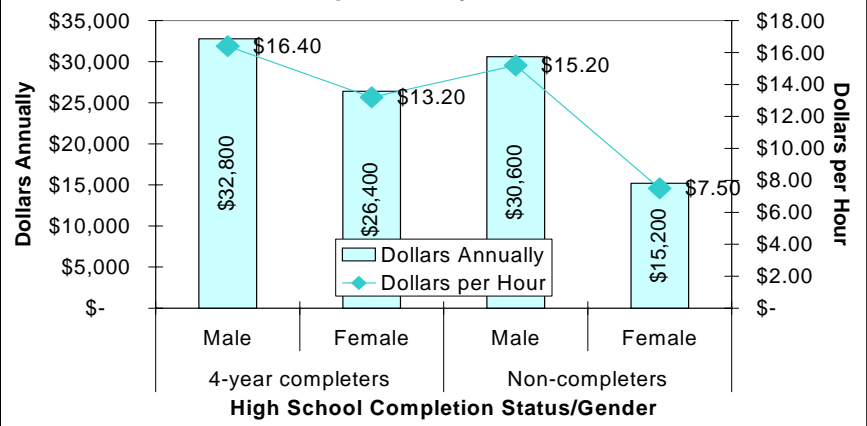
The most severe economic consequence for women of failing to complete high school is the disproportionate risk of unemployment. (Unemployment rates include only those who are actively seeking work.) A woman who had failed to finish high school was almost three times as likely as a man in similar circumstances to be unemployed (26% vs. 9%), and more than four times as likely as a woman who did finish high school (26% vs. 6%).

### Earnings

The severity of the economic consequences for women of failing to complete high school is further demonstrated by its impact on their earning power. On average, women without high school diplomas earned half as much as men with no more education (\$15,200 vs. \$30,600 annually; \$7.50 vs. \$15.20 per hour).

Thus, it seems that dropout prevention and GED programs aimed at increasing the high school completion rate are sound investments that pay off economically as well as educationally. Women without a high school diploma are disadvantaged far more than their male counterparts. And such disadvantages not only

**Chart 3. Average Annual Earnings & Wage Rate for 4-Year High School Completers & Non-Completers, by Gender, 2000**



limit their own economic well-being, but put their children at risk of suffering the same disadvantages.

The Colorado Department of Education supports at-risk prevention initiatives and community-based adult education and family literacy programs that help to improve the odds that women and girls will complete high school on schedule or as soon as possible.

Source: *Economic Outcomes of High School Completers and Non-completers 8 Years Later*, Issue Brief (NCES 2007-019), National Center for Education Statistics, October 2006. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007019.pdf>.

