

Young and Educated Adults in Southern Metros, 2000

The South contained 36 of the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas (500,000+ residents) in 2000. People between the ages of 25 and 34 accounted for 28.5 percent of the South’s metropolitan residents. Of these young people, almost 30 percent possessed college degrees.

These findings come from [Labor Supply Pressures and the 'Brian Drain': Signs from Census 2000](#), a recent analysis of Census 2000 data conducted by the [Brookings Institution’s Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy](#). The report analyzed characteristics of the labor force (adults age 25-64) in the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas. Special attention was focused on adults between the ages of 25-34 with a bachelor’s degree because such people are an essential part of the economy and are the group from which future leaders and entrepreneurs will emerge. These young and educated people contribute to what the scholar Richard Florida has termed “the creative class.”

Table 1 compares the South to other Census regions. The table shows that the South has the second-highest proportion of residents age 25-34. Yet the South still has the second-lowest percentage of residents age 25-34 with a college degree. This disparity results from two factors: 1) The South has become a magnet for immigrants, who tend to be young and less educated and 2) The South contains a large number of “old economy” metro areas.

	<i>South</i>	Midwest	Northeast	West
% residents age 25-34	28.5%	27.6%	26.8%	29.8%
% residents age 25-34 with a college degree	29.9%	32.4%	35.0%	27.9%
Young and educated residents as a % of all residents ages 25-64	8.5%	8.9%	9.4%	8.3%
# Metros	36	19	22	23
<small>Source: "Labor Supply Pressures and the 'Brian Drain': Signs from Census 2000." (www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/20040116_gottlieb.htm)</small>				

Table 2 provides metro-level data for each large Southern metro. Note the following:

- Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill NC has the South’s highest proportion of adults age 25-34 with a college degree (45.2 percent).
- Eleven Southern metros have proportions of educated young adults exceeding the national level of 29.2 percent. These metro areas tend to have, according to the Brookings report, “high populations, strong arts scenes, significant international immigration, and large numbers of high-tech jobs.”
- However, the remaining large Southern metro areas have lower proportions of educated young adults. Such metros tend to have large numbers of retirees (Sarasota-Bradenton FL), high immigrant populations (McAllen-Edinburgh-Mission TX) or many “old economy” sectors (Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point NC).
- Approximately 8.5 percent of the residents of large Southern metros were between the ages of 25 and 34 *and* possessed bachelor’s degrees. While this level exceeded the national figure, the South actually lagged behind the Northeast and Midwest in terms of the proportion of young and educated workers living there. This is because a lower percentage of Southerners between the ages of 25 and 34 have earned college degrees, compared to their counterparts in other regions of the nation.

**Table 2: Young and Educated Adults (25-34) in Southern Metros, Census 2000
(Metros Ranked by Educated Young as Proportion of All Residents Age 25-64)**

Metro	# Residents Age 25-64	# Residents Age 25-34	As Proportion of residents age 25-64	# Residents Age 25-34 with BA	As Proportion of Residents Age 25-34	Educated Young as Proportion of Residents Age 25-64
Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill NC	660,972	207,708	31.4%	93,791	45.2%	14.2%
Austin-San Marcos TX	678,157	227,910	33.6%	88,732	38.9%	13.1%
Washington DC	2,811,931	786,527	28.0%	349,002	44.4%	12.4%
Atlanta GA	2,318,884	722,617	31.2%	257,837	35.7%	11.1%
Dallas TX	1,914,824	608,621	31.8%	187,116	30.7%	9.8%
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill NC	831,378	249,160	30.0%	80,435	32.3%	9.7%
Nashville TN	676,835	193,581	28.6%	63,672	32.9%	9.4%
Columbia SC	287,691	80,203	27.9%	26,857	33.5%	9.3%
Richmond-Petersburg VA	544,604	142,419	26.2%	48,929	34.4%	9.0%
Birmingham AL	488,359	131,484	26.9%	41,402	31.5%	8.5%
Charleston-N.Charleston SC	289,972	79,543	27.4%	23,832	30.0%	8.2%
Baton Rouge LA	304,647	84,647	27.8%	24,383	28.8%	8.0%
Little Rock-North Little Rock AR	310,463	85,622	27.6%	24,023	28.1%	7.7%
Orlando FL	879,940	246,306	28.0%	67,465	27.4%	7.7%
Houston TX	2,236,132	668,640	29.9%	170,408	25.5%	7.6%
Fort Lauderdale FL	866,093	230,024	26.6%	63,326	27.5%	7.3%
Memphis TN	594,620	167,251	28.1%	42,976	25.7%	7.2%
Fort Worth-Arlington TX	914,858	266,675	29.1%	65,321	24.5%	7.1%
Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point NC	676,698	186,130	27.5%	47,911	25.7%	7.1%
Oklahoma City OK	560,897	152,816	27.2%	39,120	25.6%	7.0%
Louisville KY	553,597	143,248	25.9%	38,557	26.9%	7.0%
Knoxville TN	371,096	94,792	25.5%	25,191	26.6%	6.8%
Miami FL	1,191,472	333,423	28.0%	80,451	24.1%	6.8%
New Orleans LA	698,413	182,196	26.1%	46,595	25.6%	6.7%
Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News VA	819,959	228,059	27.8%	54,184	23.8%	6.6%
Tulsa OK	419,660	110,190	26.3%	27,276	24.8%	6.5%
West Palm Beach-Boca Raton FL	555,425	131,476	23.7%	35,300	26.8%	6.4%
San Antonio TX	808,415	230,780	28.5%	51,291	22.2%	6.3%
Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson SC	511,937	138,022	27.0%	31,663	22.9%	6.2%
Tampa-St.Petersburg-Clearwater FL	1,233,931	303,451	24.6%	74,341	24.5%	6.0%
Jacksonville FL	593,334	157,812	26.6%	35,435	22.5%	6.0%
Mobile AL	276,405	69,646	25.2%	15,347	22.0%	5.6%
El Paso TX	325,232	97,644	30.0%	15,308	15.7%	4.7%
Sarasota-Bradenton FL	281,352	57,915	20.6%	12,326	21.3%	4.4%
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission TX	248,857	83,667	33.6%	10,678	12.8%	4.3%
<i>Southern Metros</i>	27,737,040	7,880,205	28.4%	2,360,481	30.0%	8.5%
<i>100 Largest U.S. Metros</i>	-	-	27.3%	-	29.2%	8.0%

Source: The Brookings Institution. "Labor Supply Pressures and the 'Brain Drain': Signs from Census 2000." Washington, DC: Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. (www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/20040116_gottlieb.htm)

Articles of Interest

John Quintero. "NC's Deadlock" (opinion). *The News & Observer*. April 15, 2004. (<http://www.newsobserver.com/editorials/story/3513693p-3117243c.html>)

* An analysis of redistricting in North Carolina.

Kathleen Hunter. "States Wage Offensive to keep Military Bases Open." *Stateline.org*. May 6, 2004. (<http://www.stateline.org/stateline/?pa=story&sa=showStoryInfo&id=369967>)

* A summary of issues surrounding the closing of military bases.