



# Unfulfilled Expectations of Recent College and High School Graduates in the United States

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## Education and Employment Status of Young Workers in the United States

- U.S. ranks 15th in proportion of adults with postsecondary degrees among OECD nations in 2009
- U.S. ranks 8th in proportion of adults with high school degrees among OECD nations in 2009
- 72% of young people who begin high school graduate

## Education and Employment Status of Young Workers in the United States (cont.)

- 50% of young people who begin college obtain a BA/BS degree
- Unemployment rate for 16- to 19-year-olds in January 2013:

Overall: 20.8%

Black or African American: 37.8%

Hispanic or Latino: 26.5%

## Recent High School and College Graduates Struggled to Find Full-time Jobs During the Recession Era

Employment Status	College	High School
Unemployed and looking for work	6%	30%
Unemployed and not looking for work	5%	14%
Working part time, not looking for full-time work	6%	8%
Working part time, looking for full-time work	6%	15%
Employed full time	51%	27%
Attending graduate school, not employed	6%	-
Attending graduate school, employed part time or full time	14%	-
Military	3%	2%
Self-employed	0%	3%
Volunteer	3%	1%

## Recent High School Graduates, 2006 to 2011

- Only 27% were employed in full-time jobs
- Twice the level of unemployment 10 years ago
- Median hourly wage was \$9.25 — \$2.00 above federal minimum wage
  - Wages of high school graduates declined by 11% in 10 years

## Recent High School Graduates, 2006 to 2011 (cont.)

- Of those who were working:
  - 75% in temporary jobs
  - 60% in part-time jobs
  - One in ten received health care and retirement benefits
- Most believe they will need additional education, but 40% reported they could not afford to attend college

## Recent College Graduates, 2006 to 2011

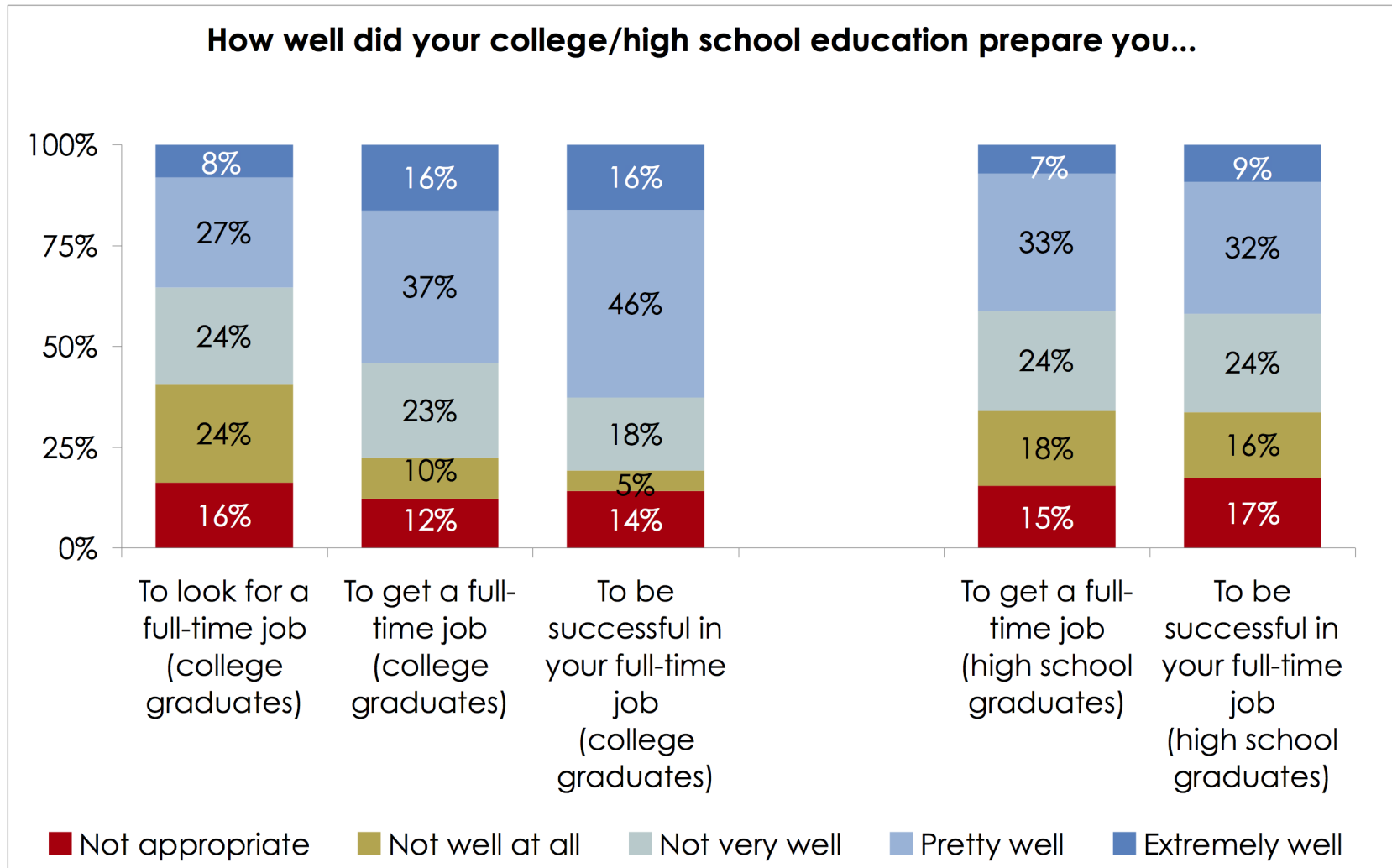
- Only half of recent college graduates were employed full time
  - 15% worked part time
  - 20% in graduate school
- Combined unemployment and underemployment rate is the highest level in more than a decade
- Median earnings: \$30,000 before recession; \$27,000 thereafter
  - Wages of college graduates declined by 5.4% in the past decade

## Recent College Graduates, 2006 to 2011 (cont.)

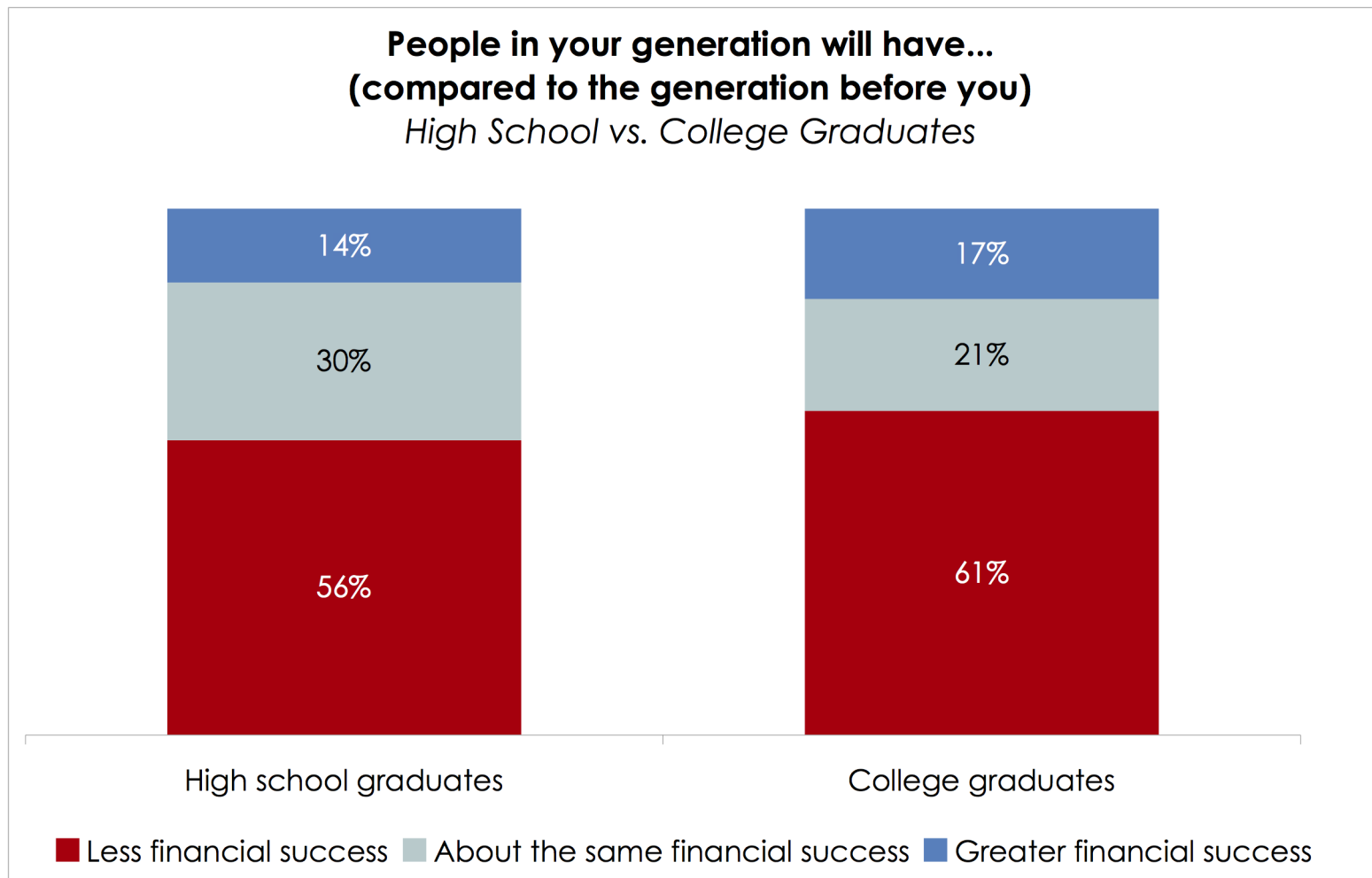
- 40% are working in jobs that do not require a college degree
- More than 75% worked full- or part-time jobs during college years
- Average student debt: \$20,000 — more for those who attend private colleges
- Most of those enrolled in graduate school are borrowing additional funds



# Young Graduates are Not Sure they are Well Prepared for Work



# Young Graduates Doubt they will do Better than the Previous Generation



## Potential Policy Directions

- Increase completion rate — degree attainment
- Integrate academic, financial, and career information and advice
  - Transparency

## Potential Policy Directions (cont.)

- Prepare high school and college students for jobs and careers
  - Increase internships and cooperative education programs
- Greater alignment between educational preparation and employers' needs
- Better preparation of students in core competencies

## Sources

- National surveys of recent high school and college graduates, 2006 to 2011, conducted by the Heldrich Center.
- C. Van Horn, C. Zukin, and C. Stone, *Chasing the American Dream: Recent College Graduates and the Great Recession* (New Brunswick, NJ: Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University, 2012).
- C. Van Horn, C. Zukin, M. Szeltner, and C. Stone, *Left Out. Forgotten? Recent High School Graduates and the Great Recession* (New Brunswick, NJ: Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University, 2012).
- C. Van Horn, *Working Scared (Or Not at All): The Lost Decade, Great Recession, and Restoring the Shattered American Dream* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013).

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