Using a sub-sample of white males from the NLSY79, we show that individuals from poorer families exhibit higher marginal returns to education relative to their wealthier counterparts. This finding suggests that higher marginal costs, rather than inability to benefit from education, prevent these individuals from continuing their education. Our results are robust to OLS, IV and fixed-effects specifications that have been employed in the literature. We also show that the poor group is heterogeneous; it contains a group of individuals whose cognitive abilities are comparable to those of the most gifted rich, as well as a group of individuals who demonstrate non-cognitive problems and low cognitive abilities. These results suggest that policies aiming to increase educational attainment among the poor should differ depending on the target group.