



# Postsecondary National Policy Institute

## ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER (AAPI) STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students make up an incredibly diverse segment of the U.S. college population, but AAPI students are often left out of conversations about students of color and are seldom recognized in academic research. Collectively, the AAPI umbrella represents over 50 different ethnic groups that vary greatly in terms of languages, English proficiency, colonial history, immigration patterns, and socioeconomic and first-generation college-going status. According to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), of the approximately 22.9 million Asian Americans, the largest ethnic groups were Chinese (5.2 million), Asian Indian (4.6 million), Filipino (4.2 million), Vietnamese (2.2 million), Korean (1.9 million) and Japanese (1.5 million). Together these subgroups comprised approximately 61% of the Asian American population.

### ENROLLMENT/DEGREE ATTAINMENT

- In Fall 2019, the largest representation of AAPI students was at public four-year institutions, where they made up 8% of the student population.
  - AAPI students comprised 6% of students at private non-profit four-year institutions and 4% at four-year for-profit institutions.
  - AAPI students comprised 6% of students at public two-year institutions, 3% of students at private non-profit two-year institutions, and 4% at two-year for-profit institutions.
- In Fall 2019, Asian students accounted for 9% of graduate student enrollment at private non-profit institutions, 8% at public institutions, and 6% at private for-profit institutions.
- In 2019, the immediate college enrollment rate for Asian students (82%) was higher than the rates for White (69%), Hispanic (64%), and Black (57%) students.
- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, AAPI ethnic sub-groups have varying rates of degree attainment.
  - Twenty-one percent of Burmese, 18% of Laotian, 18% of Hmong, and 16% of Cambodian adults over the age of 24 have completed a bachelor's degree or higher.
  - Fifty-two percent of Japanese, 56% of Korean, and 74% of Asian Indian adults over the age of 24 have completed a bachelor's degree or higher.
- According to the 2019 ACS, 54.6% of adults 25 years of age or older who identified as Asian or Asian in combination with other sub-groups, had a bachelor's degree or higher level of education.

## SOURCES

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