



# Postsecondary National Policy Institute

## Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Students in Higher Education

### CENSUS OVERVIEW

In 2023 20.7 million (6.2%) of the U.S. population were Asian American or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AAPI).<sup>1</sup> Of the approximately 20.1 million Asian Americans, the largest ethnic groups were Asian Indian (4.7 million), Chinese (4.5 million), Filipino (3.1 million), Vietnamese (1.9 million), Korean (1.5 million), and Japanese (726,000).<sup>1</sup> Of the 662,417 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents, 176,000 were Native Hawaiian, 126,000 were Samoan, and 84,000 were Chamorro.<sup>1</sup> Among Asian American residents aged 25 or over, 57.8% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>1</sup> Among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents aged 25 or over, 19.1% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>1</sup> In 2013, the shares of bachelor's degree or higher recipients for Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders were 51.3% and 16.0%, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

### ENROLLMENT

- In Fall 2022, AAPI students made up 7.6% of all postsecondary enrollment.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2022, 60.8% of the Asian and 27.4% of the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 18–24-year-old population were enrolled in college compared to 39% of the overall U.S. population.<sup>3</sup>
- Since Fall 2012, AAPI student enrollment has increased from 1.26 million to 1.42 million, a 12.5% increase:
  - Undergraduate enrollment increased from 1.06 million to 1.16 million, an 8.6% increase.<sup>3</sup>
  - Graduate enrollment increased from 195,400 to 261,100, a 33.6% increase.<sup>3</sup>
- Disaggregating data shows a mixed result:
  - Asian American student enrollment increased from 1.19 million to 1.37 million between Fall 2012 and Fall 2022.<sup>3</sup>
  - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander enrollment decreased from 63,500 to 44,400 between Fall 2012 and Fall 2022.<sup>3</sup>
- AAPI students are much more likely to attend public versus private institutions of higher education.<sup>3</sup>
  - In Fall 2022, 73.9% of AAPI students attended public institutions:
    - 53.1% attended public four-year institutions.<sup>3</sup>
    - 20.8% attended public two-year institutions.<sup>3</sup>
- 20.7% of the Fall 2022 enrollment at Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) were AAPI students.<sup>3</sup>

\* 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. For federal data sources, AAPI includes Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations.

## FINANCIAL AID

- Forty-seven percent of AAPI students received some form of federal Title IV financial aid in the 2019-20 academic year, compared to 55% of all students.<sup>4</sup>
  - 34% of AAPI students received a Pell Grant, compared to 40% of all students.<sup>4</sup>
    - 34% of Asian American students received a Pell Grant, while 39% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students received a Pell Grant.<sup>4</sup>
  - 26% of AAPI students received a federal student loan, compared to 35% of all students.<sup>4</sup>
    - 25% of Asian American students received a federal student loan, while 34% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students received a federal student loan.<sup>4</sup>
- Among AAPI students who received federal Title IV aid, the average amount received was \$8,959.<sup>4</sup>
  - The average Pell Grant amount for AAPI students was \$4,651.<sup>4</sup>
  - The average federal student loan amount for AAPI students was \$9,375.<sup>4</sup>

## COMPLETION/DEGREE ATTAINMENT

- 78% of first-time, full-time Asian American students attending four-year institutions beginning in 2015 graduated within six years, while 51.6% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students graduated within six years, compared to 64.5% of all students.<sup>3</sup>
- At two-year institutions, among first-time, full-time students beginning in 2019, 44.1% of Asian students and 27.8% of Pacific Islander students graduated within three years, compared to 34.1% of all students.<sup>3</sup>
- Of the more than two million bachelor's degrees conferred in the 2021-22 academic year, 174,601 (8.7%) went to AAPI students.<sup>3</sup>

## EARNINGS AND WEALTH

- Ten years after receiving a bachelor's degree, AAPI graduates who reported having an income averaged a gross income of \$89,947, compared to the national average of \$76,370.<sup>2</sup>
  - Asian American graduates reported an average gross income of \$91,282, while Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander graduates reported an average gross income of \$69,634.<sup>2</sup>
- Wealth accumulation can be measured differently from income.<sup>5</sup> Ten years after graduating:
  - 53% of AAPI graduates reported owning a home, compared to 63% of all graduates.<sup>2</sup>
  - 82% of AAPI graduates had some form of a retirement account, compared to 87% of all graduates.<sup>2</sup>

## DATA SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> [American Community Survey & Current Population Survey](#). U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025.

<sup>2</sup> [Baccalaureate & Beyond Longitudinal Study](#). National Center for Education Statistics, November 2023.

<sup>3</sup> [Digest of Education Statistics](#). National Center for Education Statistics, April 2025.

<sup>4</sup> [National Postsecondary Student Aid Study](#). National Center for Education Statistics, November 2023.

<sup>5</sup> [Wealth Analysis FAQ](#). Urban Institute, 2021.