



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).^{*1} 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).¹ Of the 662,417 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents, 176,000 were Native Hawaiian, 126,000 were Samoan, and 84,000 were Chamorro.¹ Among Asian American residents aged 25 or over, 57.8% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.¹ Among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents aged 25 or over, 19.1% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.¹ 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.¹

ENROLLMENT

- In Fall 2022, AAPI students made up 7.6% of all postsecondary enrollment.³
- 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.³
- 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.³
 - Graduate enrollment increased from 195,400 to 261,100, a 33.6% increase.³
- Disaggregating data shows a mixed result:
 - Asian American student enrollment increased from 1.19 million to 1.37 million between Fall 2012 and Fall 2022.³
 - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander enrollment decreased from 63,500 to 44,400 between Fall 2012 and Fall 2022.³
- AAPI students are much more likely to attend public versus private institutions of higher education.³
 - In Fall 2022, 73.9% of AAPI students attended public institutions:
 - 53.1% attended public four-year institutions.³
 - 20.8% attended public two-year institutions.³
- 20.7% of the Fall 2022 enrollment at Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) were AAPI students.³

* 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.⁴
 - 34% of AAPI students received a Pell Grant, compared to 40% of all students.⁴
 - 34% of Asian American students received a Pell Grant, while 39% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students received a Pell Grant.⁴
 - 26% of AAPI students received a federal student loan, compared to 35% of all students.⁴
 - 25% of Asian American students received a federal student loan, while 34% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students received a federal student loan.⁴
- Among AAPI students who received federal Title IV aid, the average amount received was \$8,959.⁴
 - The average Pell Grant amount for AAPI students was \$4,651.⁴
 - The average federal student loan amount for AAPI students was \$9,375.⁴

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.³
- 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.³
- Of the more than two million bachelor's degrees conferred in the 2021–22 academic year, 174,601 (8.7%) went to AAPI students.³

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 \$76,370.²
 - Asian American graduates reported an average gross income of \$91,282, while Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander graduates reported an average gross income of \$69,634.²
- Wealth accumulation can be measured differently from income.⁵ Ten years after graduating:
 - 53% of AAPI graduates reported owning a home, compared to 63% of all graduates.²
 - 82% of AAPI graduates had some form of a retirement account, compared to 87% of all graduates.²

DATA SOURCES

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

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

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

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

⁵ [Wealth Analysis FAQ](#). Urban Institute, 2021.