



# Postsecondary National Policy Institute

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

### CENSUS OVERVIEW

In 2024, 22 million (6.5%) of the U.S. population identified as Asian American or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AAPI).<sup>1</sup> Of the approximately 21.3 million Asian Americans, the largest ethnic groups were Asian Indian (5.1 million), Chinese (4.8 million), Filipino (3.3 million), Vietnamese (2 million), Korean (1.6 million), and Japanese (752,000).<sup>1</sup> Of the 652,000 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents, 181,000 were Native Hawaiian, 124,000 were Samoan, and 84,000 were Chamorro.<sup>1</sup> In 2024, 59.1% of Asian American residents aged 25 or over had earned a bachelor's degree or higher, up from 51.5% in 2014.<sup>1</sup> Among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents aged 25 or over, 19.4% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher as of 2024, up from 15.3% in 2014.<sup>1</sup>

### ENROLLMENT

- In Fall 2024, AAPI students made up 7.4% of all postsecondary enrollment.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2022, 60.8% of the Asian American 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>
- Between Fall 2014 and Fall 2024, AAPI student enrollment increased from 1.17 million to 1.45 million, a 23.9% increase:
  - Undergraduate enrollment increased from 995,000 to 1.19 million, a 19.6% increase.<sup>4</sup>
  - Graduate enrollment increased from 175,500 to 261,100, a 48.8% increase.<sup>4</sup>
- Disaggregating data shows mixed results:
  - Asian American student enrollment increased from 1.12 million to 1.41 million between Fall 2014 and Fall 2024.<sup>4</sup>
  - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander enrollment decreased from 50,400 to 42,500 between Fall 2014 and Fall 2024.<sup>4</sup>
- AAPI students are much more likely to attend public versus private institutions of higher education.<sup>3</sup>
  - In Fall 2023, 74% of AAPI students attended public institutions:
    - 53.5% attended public four-year institutions.<sup>3</sup>
    - 20.5% of AAPI students 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

- In 2019-20, 47% of AAPI students received some form of federal Title IV financial aid, compared to 55% of all students.<sup>5</sup>
  - 34% of AAPI students received a Pell Grant, compared to 40% of all students.<sup>5</sup>
    - 34% of Asian American students received a Pell Grant, compared with 39% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students.<sup>5</sup>
  - 26% of AAPI students received a federal student loan, compared to 35% of all students.<sup>5</sup>
    - 25% of Asian American students received a federal student loan, compared with 34% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students.<sup>5</sup>
- Among AAPI students who received federal Title IV aid, the average amount received was \$8,959.<sup>5</sup>
  - The average Pell Grant amount for AAPI students was \$4,651.<sup>5</sup>
  - The average federal student loan amount for AAPI students was \$9,375.<sup>5</sup>

## COMPLETION/DEGREE ATTAINMENT

- 78% of first-time, full-time Asian American students attending four-year institutions beginning in 2015 graduated within six years, compared to 51.6% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students and 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 American students and 27.8% of Pacific Islander students graduated within three years, compared to 34.1% of all students.<sup>3</sup>
- Of the nearly two million bachelor's degrees conferred in 2023-24, 181,375 (9.3%) went to AAPI students.<sup>4</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>6</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 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, January 2026.

<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, December 2025.

<sup>4</sup> [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#). National Center for Education Statistics, January 2026.

<sup>5</sup> [National Postsecondary Student Aid Study](#). National Center for Education Statistics, November 2023.

<sup>6</sup> [Wealth Analysis FAQ](#). Urban Institute, 2021.