

# The Asian and Pacific Islander Population

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## The Asian and Pacific Islander population is growing rapidly.

In March 1994, the Asian and Pacific Islander population was estimated at 8.8 million, up from 7.3 million in the 1990 census.<sup>1</sup> In both 1994 and 1990, Asians and Pacific Islanders accounted for about 3 percent of America's population. Since 1990, the Asian and Pacific Islander population has grown about 4.5 percent per year. Immigration to the United States accounted for much of this growth (about 86 percent).

<sup>1</sup>The independent estimate of 8.8 million for the Asian and Pacific Islander population differs substantially from the March 1994 Current Population Survey (CPS) estimate of 7.4 million for this population. The CPS estimate, based on a sample, is subject to both sampling and non-sampling errors. It is not controlled to independent estimates for this population. Estimates may differ because of different data collection and estimation procedures and sampling error. However, distributions of characteristics for the Asian and Pacific Islander population in the March 1994 CPS appear reasonable when compared to the 1990 census distribution. When comparing data for the Asian and Pacific Islander population for previous years, caution should be used.

The balance was due to natural increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths). By the year 2000, this population is projected to reach 12.1 million and represent about 4 percent of the total population.

The Asian and Pacific Islander population is a heterogeneous group. Groups differ in their language, culture, and recency of immigration. Several Asian groups, such as Chinese and Japanese, have been in this country for generations; relatively few Pacific Islanders are foreign born. Hawaiians, of course, are native to this country.

NOTE: The following data are based on the March 1994 Current Population Survey unless otherwise noted.

## The Asian and Pacific Islander population resides mainly in metropolitan areas.

In 1994, the majority of Asians and Pacific Islanders (6 out of 10) resided in the West, where they represented 8 percent of the total population. Asians and Pacific Islanders were

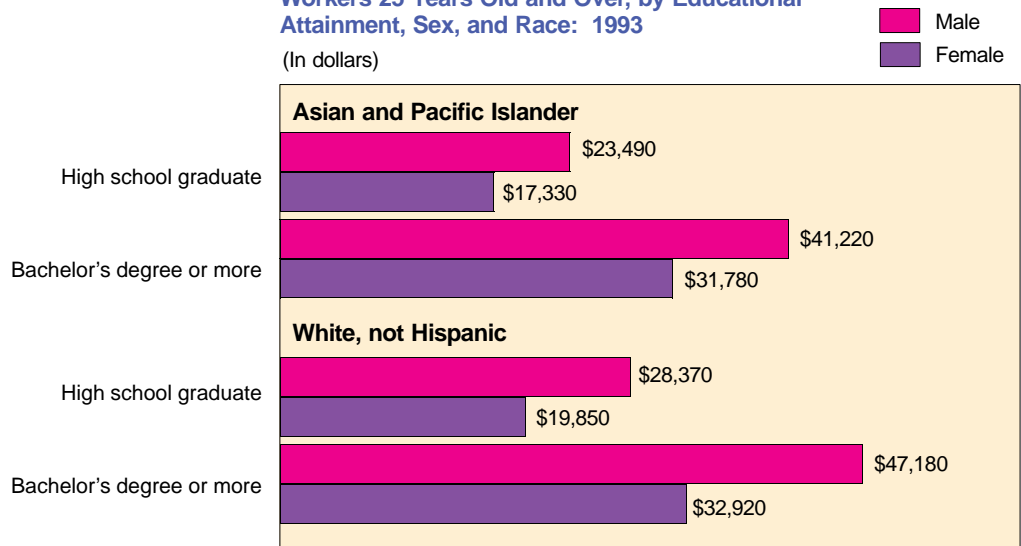
more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to reside in metropolitan areas (95 percent compared with 75 percent). Similar proportions of both populations (about 52 percent) resided in the suburbs of metropolitan areas, but Asians and Pacific Islanders were almost twice as likely to live in central cities (42 percent), compared with non-Hispanic Whites (23 percent). Asians and Pacific Islanders residing in central cities were less likely to be homeowners (41 percent) than renters (57 percent); in suburbs of metropolitan areas they were more likely to be owners (61 percent) than renters (38 percent).

## Asians and Pacific Islanders continue to have high educational attainment.

Educational attainment continues to be high for the Asian and Pacific Islander population as a whole. In 1994, nearly 9 out of 10 Asian and Pacific Islander males 25 years old and over, and 8 out of 10 comparable females had at least a high school diploma. High school graduation rates

Median Earnings of Year-Round, Full-Time Workers 25 Years Old and Over, by Educational Attainment, Sex, and Race: 1993

(In dollars)



vary widely among the Asian and Pacific Islander groups. The 1990 census, the latest date for which statistically reliable data for the subgroups are available, showed that among Asians the rates varied from 31 percent for Hmongs, who are among the most recent Asian immigrant groups, to 88 percent for Japanese, who have been in the country for several generations. Within the Pacific Islander group, the proportion with at least a high school diploma ranged from 64 percent for Tongans to 80 percent for Hawaiians.

In 1994, two-fifths of Asians and Pacific Islanders 25 years old and over held at least a bachelor's degree. Asian and Pacific Islander males and females (46 and 37 percent, respectively) were more than 1 1/2 times as likely to have a bachelor's degree than comparable non-Hispanic White males and females (28 and 21 percent, respectively). Among the specific Asian groups, Asian Indians had the highest proportion earning at least a bachelor's degree (58 percent) and Tongans, Cambodians, Laotians, and Hmongs the lowest (6 percent or less each) in the 1990 census.

**Asians and Pacific Islanders have larger families than non-Hispanic Whites.**

In 1994, the average number of persons per family for Asians and Pacific Islanders and non-Hispanic Whites was 3.8 and 3.1, respectively. Seventy-three percent of Asian and Pacific Islander families had three or more persons in 1994, compared with 55 percent of non-Hispanic White families. Twenty-two percent of all Asian and Pacific Islander families had five or more persons, compared with 12 percent of non-Hispanic White families.

Six in ten Asian and Pacific Islander families had related children under 18 years old, compared with almost half (49 percent) of non-Hispanic White families. In each group, about 80 percent of related children under 18 years old lived with two parents.

**Asian and Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic White families have comparable median family incomes.**

In 1993, the median income of Asian and Pacific Islander families (\$44,460) was similar to that of non-Hispanic White families (\$41,110). The

median income for Asian and Pacific Islander families maintained by women with no spouse present (\$28,920) was higher than that for comparable non-Hispanic White families (\$21,650). Male householder families with no spouse present had median family incomes that were not statistically different — \$23,130 for Asians and Pacific Islanders and \$30,170 for non-Hispanic Whites.

Asian and Pacific Islander married-couple families had a higher median income than comparable non-Hispanic White families (\$49,510 compared with \$45,240). Both the husband and wife worked in about 60 percent of all Asian and Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic White married-couple families. However, the husband was the only earner in 18 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander and in 15 percent of non-Hispanic White married-couple families. The 1990 census showed that 20 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander families, compared with 13 percent of non-Hispanic White families, had three or more earners.

**Asian and Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic White women college graduates who worked year-round, full-time in 1993 had similar earnings.**

In 1993, Asian and Pacific Islander males 25 years old and over who worked year-round, full-time had median earnings (\$31,560) higher than comparable females (\$25,430). Asian and Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic White females with at least a bachelor's degree had similar earnings (\$31,780 versus \$32,920), while comparably educated Asian and Pacific Islander males (\$41,220) earned about \$87 for every

\$100 of non-Hispanic White males' earnings (\$47,180).

**The poverty rate for Asian and Pacific Islander families varied by family type.**

Despite higher educational attainments and a similar median family income, the poverty rate for Asian and Pacific Islander families (14 percent) was higher than that for non-Hispanic White families (8 percent) in 1993. Only 16 percent of both poor Asian and Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic White families had a householder who worked year-round, full-time.

Twelve percent of Asian and Pacific Islander and 5 percent of non-Hispanic White married-couple families lived in poverty. There was no statistical difference in the poverty rates for Asian and Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic White female householder families with no spouse present, 19 and 25 percent, respectively.

In 1993, 15 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders were poor, compared with 10 percent of non-Hispanic Whites. Twenty-eight percent of all poor Asians and Pacific Islanders 15 years old and over worked, compared with 42 percent of poor non-Hispanic Whites.

**For Further Information**

See: 1990 CP-3-5, 1990 Census of Population, *Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States*.

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**Poverty Rates, by Type of Family and Race of Householder: 1993**

