

Asian and Pacific Islander Americans: A Profile

In March 1991, the Asian and Pacific Islander population in the United States was just over 7 million — about 3 percent of America's total. This isn't a homogeneous group — this population includes groups who differ in their language, culture, and recency of immigration.

Most (95 percent) were Asian — Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese, for instance. About 5 percent were Pacific Islanders — Hawaiians, Samoans and Guamanians, for example. Several of the Asian groups, such as Chinese and Japanese, have been in this country for generations. Relatively few of the Pacific Islanders are foreign-born; of course, Hawaiians are native to the United States.

This Brief uses data collected by the March 1991 Current Population Survey to present a demographic and economic portrait of the Asian and Pacific Islander population as a whole. Comparisons are made with the White population. The design and size of the survey only allowed the collection and presentation of

data for the total Asian and Pacific Islander population. The 1990 census provides extensive information on the individual groups.

Geographic Distribution

In 1991, about 6 in 10 Asians and Pacific Islanders lived in the West, where they represented 8 percent of the total population. Regardless of region, few Asians and Pacific Islanders (6 percent) lived outside metropolitan areas. Nearly all lived in suburbs (49 percent) or central cities (45 percent).

Age Structure

The Asian and Pacific Islander population was younger than the White population in 1991, with a median age of 30 years.

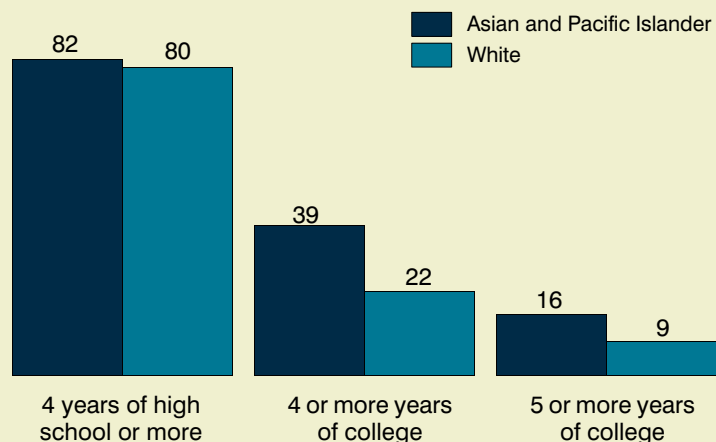
This reflects the age structure of the two groups: 30 percent of the Asian and Pacific Islander population was under 18 years of age and 7 percent was 65 years and over; in contrast, 25 percent of the White population was under 18 years and 13 percent was at least 65 years old.

Families

Seventy-eight percent of Asian and Pacific Islander households contained families. Married-couple families accounted for 80 percent of all Asian and Pacific Islander families, slightly less than the 83 percent of White families; and a larger proportion of Asian (7 percent) than White (4 percent) families were maintained by a man with no spouse present.

Educational Attainment

Percent of persons 25 years and over, by level of educational attainment and race: 1991



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Seventy-four percent of Asian and Pacific Islander families consisted of three or more persons. Their children under 18 years were more likely to be living with two parents than those in White families (84 versus 80 percent).

Education

In 1991, 82 percent of all Asians and Pacific Islanders 25 years and over had completed 4 years of high school or more and 39 percent had completed 4 or more years of college. The corresponding proportions were smaller for Whites (see graph on front). Analyses of past census data show that the educational attainment of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States has been high. These studies also show great variation in educational attainment among Asian and Pacific Islander groups.

Income

In 1990, Asian and Pacific Islander families' median income was \$42,250. How did different family types compare? Married-couple families had a median family income of \$46,500. The median income of male householder families (\$41,740) didn't statistically differ from that of married-couple families. Asian and Pacific Islander families maintained by females with no spouse present had median family incomes less than one-half (49 percent) that of married-couple families (\$22,590 compared with \$46,500).

As the graph shows, the income of Asian and Pacific Islander families was higher on average than that of White families. Yet, Asians and Pacific Islanders had lower per capita income than Whites (\$13,420 versus \$15,260). The fact that Asian and Pacific Islander families contained more earners — 19 percent had 3 or more earners, compared with 14 percent of White families — likely contrib-

utes to their higher family income.

Poverty

In 1990, 11 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander families lived in poverty, somewhat higher than the 8 percent of White families. A larger proportion of all poor Asian and Pacific Islander families were maintained by married-couples (64 percent) than by females with no spouse present (26 percent). The poverty rate for Asian and Pacific Islander married-couple families was 9 percent compared with 5 percent for Whites.

More information:

The Asian and Pacific Islander Population in the United States: March 1991 and 1990. Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 459. For sale by U.S. Government Printing Office. Stock No. 803-005-00060-5. \$7.

Detailed demographic and economic information on the Asian and Pacific Islander population as a whole for small geographic entities is available from the 1990 census in *Summary*

Tape File 3; data are contained on computer tape, CD-ROM, and in printed reports. *Summary Tape File 4*, available on computer tape, contains comparable data for individual Asian and Pacific Islander groups. Contact Customer Services (301-763-4100) for more information.

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This Brief is one of a series that presents information of current policy interest. It may include data from businesses, households, or other sources. All statistics are subject to sampling variability, as well as survey design flaws, respondent classification errors, and data processing mistakes. The Census Bureau has taken steps to minimize errors, and analytical statements have been tested and meet statistical standards. However, because of methodological differences, use caution when comparing these data with data from other sources.

