

Focus on Asian & Pacific Island Workers

Washington's 2011 Workforce
Training Results for Asian and
Pacific Island Participants



December 2012

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
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Workforce Training Results for Asian and Pacific Island Participants

Washington's labor force is increasingly diverse—with an estimated one in four workers being an ethnic or racial minority. That diversity brings both opportunities and challenges. More than ever, workers need proven pathways to education and training, assistance in starting and advancing their careers, and help in breaking down barriers that keep them from fully participating in today's labor market.

When compared with the rest of Washington's workforce, Asians and Pacific Islanders are about 20 percent less likely to be unemployed (8 percent versus 10 percent). The median annual earnings of Asian/Pacific Islanders who are not in school are about 6 percent more than what the general population earns (\$34,260 versus \$32,245).¹

Asian/Pacific Islanders are diverse and represent dozens of different ethnicities, including Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Micronesian, Indian, Polynesian and Hawaiian. As a whole, the Asian/Pacific Islander labor force fares better than other racial and ethnic groups, but hidden inside this data are wide variations within different countries of origin, ages, and gender. There are Asian/Pacific Islanders who have lived in the United States for many generations, but also there are recent immigrants who have cultural and language barriers. Therefore some Asian/Pacific Islanders face more challenges and need more help than the aggregate numbers portray.

For more information about different groups within the Asian/Pacific Islander population, connect with the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (www.capaa.wa.gov).

This report takes a closer look at the state's Asian and Pacific Islander population, presenting data on educational attainment, wages and employment rates. In this report, we showcase how well Asian/Pacific Islanders fared after entering workforce development programs—from how many completed these programs, to the jobs they landed, and the money they earned.

Asian/Pacific Islander participation in workforce development programs

Asian/Pacific Islanders make up 7.7 percent of Washington's population. They are involved in workforce development programs at different rates. The percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth, Private Career Schools, Secondary Career and Technical Education, WIA Dislocated Worker, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs is similar to the percentage of participants in the general population.

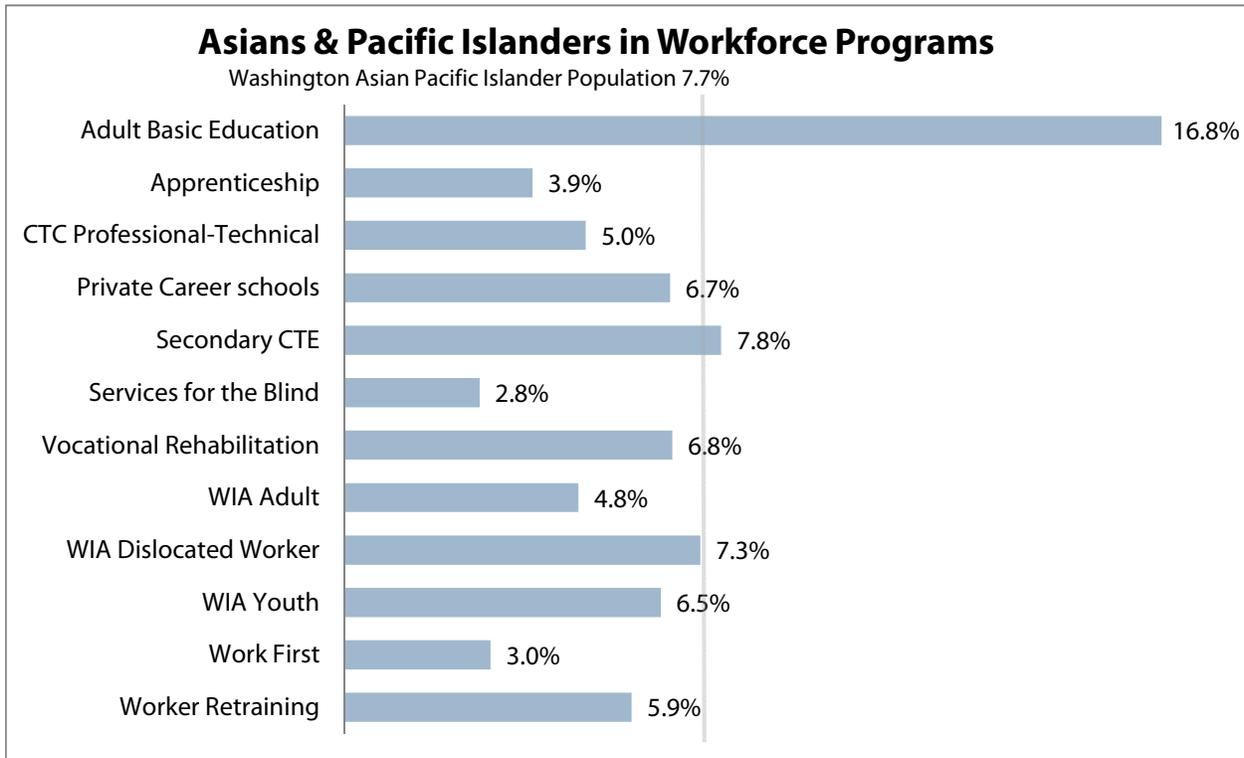
However, the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders in Work First, Community and Technical College (CTC) Professional/Technical, Services for the Blind, WIA Adult, and Apprenticeship programs is much lower than the percentage of participants in the general population.

¹ U.S Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2010.



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Adult Basic Education stands out as having a significantly higher percentage of Asian /Pacific Islanders. This stands to reason since Adult Basic Education includes English as a second language and just 40 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander households speak English as their primary language. Adult Basic Education also includes remediation in reading, writing and mathematics, and basic workplace skills.



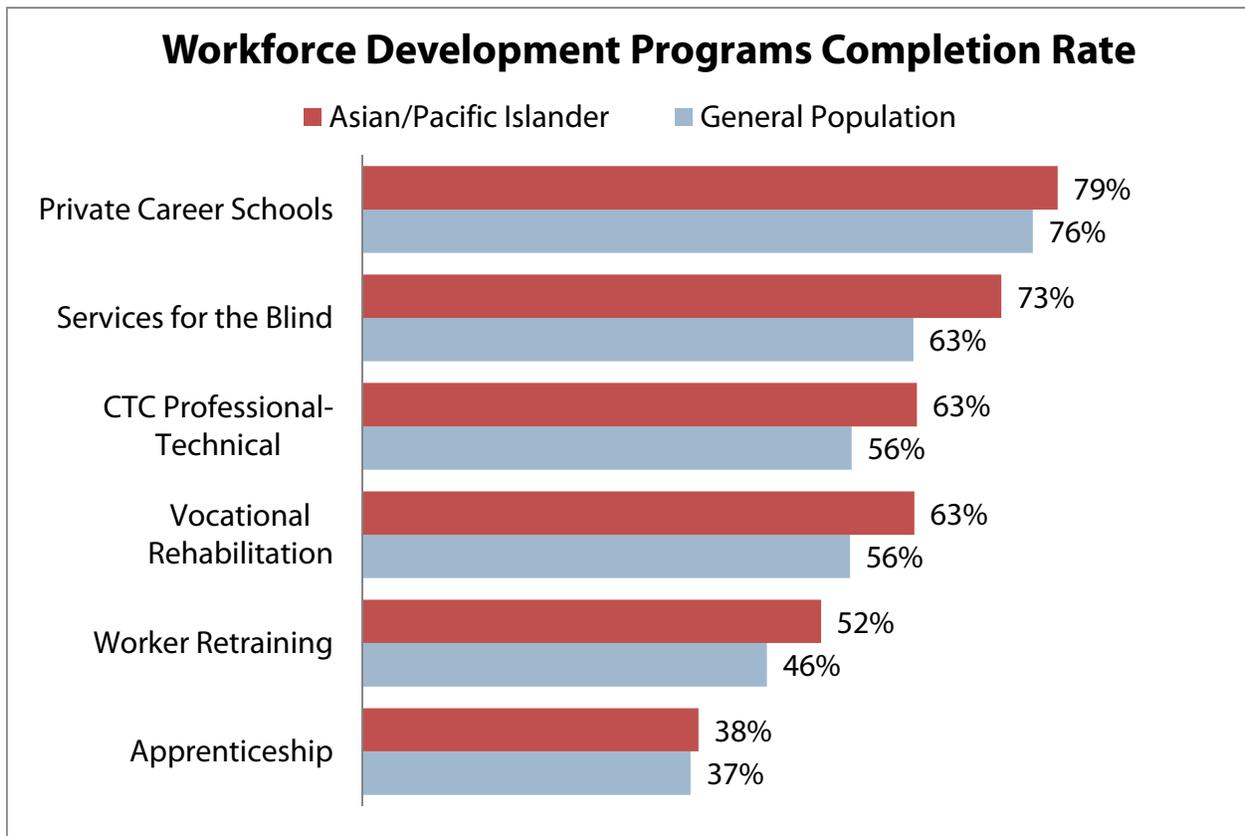
2011 Workforce Training Results. State Asians and Pacific Islander population estimate of 7.7 percent is from the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey.



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Completion rates among Asians/Pacific Islanders

Asians and Pacific Islanders in all workforce development programs were more likely to complete them than the general population. The highest completion rate for both Asians/Pacific Islanders and the general population was in Private Career Schools, which include programs that are generally shorter in duration than other workforce development programs. Notably, Asian/Pacific Islanders finished programs with Services for the Blind at a higher rate than the general population (73 versus 63 percent).



2011 Workforce Training Results



Employment rates of Asians and Pacific Islanders after exiting a workforce development program

Some 54 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders who were involved with a workforce development program had reported employment² after leaving a program. This employment rate is the same as for Hispanics who participated in a workforce program (also 54 percent) and higher than for African American program participants (44 percent). The general population had an employment rate of 50 percent after participating in a workforce program.

In particular, Asians and Pacific Islanders were more likely to be working after leaving 10 of the 12 workforce training programs than the general population. The two exceptions were Secondary CTE and WIA Youth.³ Asian/Pacific Islanders were most likely to be working after exiting the WIA Dislocated Worker and WIA Adult programs. They were least likely to be working after exiting the WorkFirst program, although Asian/Pacific Islanders were employed at a slightly higher rate than the general population.

Employment Rate of Workforce Program Participants		
Workforce Program	General Population	Asian/Pacific Islander
Adult Basic Education	46%	52%
Apprenticeship	61%	69%
CTC Professional-Technical	61%	65%
Private Career Schools	60%	64%
Secondary CTE	49%	40%
Services for the Blind	45%	36%
Vocational Rehabilitation	46%	53%
WIA Adult	65%	72%
WIA Dislocated Worker	71%	75%
WIA Youth	45%	44%
Work First	37%	39%
Worker Retraining	58%	60%
Total	50%	54%
Workforce Training Results, 2011. Information based on participant employment 7-9 months after exiting program, based on matches with employment/wage records. Includes employment reported in state employment records. Figure does not include all out of state employment or self-employment; understates total employment by about 10 percent.		

² It includes employment reported in state employment records. Figure does not include all out of state employment or self-employment and thus understates total employment by about 10 percent.

³ The small number involved in Services for the Blind was too low to be significant.



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Wages and earnings of Asians and Pacific Islanders after involvement in workforce development programs

Asians and Pacific Islanders earned higher median hourly wages than the general population after exiting four programs: Adult Basic Education, CTC Professional-Technical, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Dislocated Worker, and Services for the Blind. The largest difference in wages was in Services for the Blind; however the number of Asian/Pacific Islanders in that program is relatively small.

Hourly wages

Asian/Pacific Islanders had lower median hourly wages than the general population after exiting Apprenticeship, Vocational Rehabilitation, and WIA Adult Programs, with the largest difference found in Apprenticeship programs where Asian/Pacific Islanders' median hourly wage was \$19.12 compared to the general population's \$24.73.

Annual earnings

However, Asian/Pacific Islanders had higher median annualized earnings than the general population when averaging earnings across all workforce programs. The exceptions were Apprenticeship, Secondary CTE, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Despite sometimes lower median annual wages, it appears Asian/Pacific Islanders were employed more steadily than the general population, allowing them to work more hours and earn more on an annual basis.

Median Hourly Wages / Annualized Earnings After Workforce Program Participation				
	General Population		Asian/Pacific Islander	
	Median Wage	Annualized Earnings	Median Wage	Annualized Earnings
Adult Basic Education	\$10.67	\$16,109	\$10.75	\$17,949
Apprenticeship	\$24.73	\$38,210	\$19.12	\$34,991
CTC Professional-Technical	\$14.54	\$24,490	\$15.66	\$27,982
Private Career Schools	\$13.53	\$20,861	\$13.45	\$22,164
Secondary CTE	\$9.87	\$8,645	\$10.02	\$7,628
Services for the Blind	\$12.32	\$20,555	\$18.98	\$32,953
Vocational Rehabilitation	\$10.67	\$11,702	\$10.16	\$10,091
WIA Adult	\$12.76	\$21,082	\$12.02	\$24,121
WIA Dislocated Worker	\$15.87	\$28,857	\$16.99	\$34,559
WIA Youth	\$9.62	\$9,991	\$9.51	\$10,288
Work First	\$10.10	\$12,225	\$9.98	\$13,701
Worker Retraining	\$15.38	\$26,157	\$15.33	\$28,105
Combined Programs	\$12.07	\$17,652	\$11.90	\$19,061

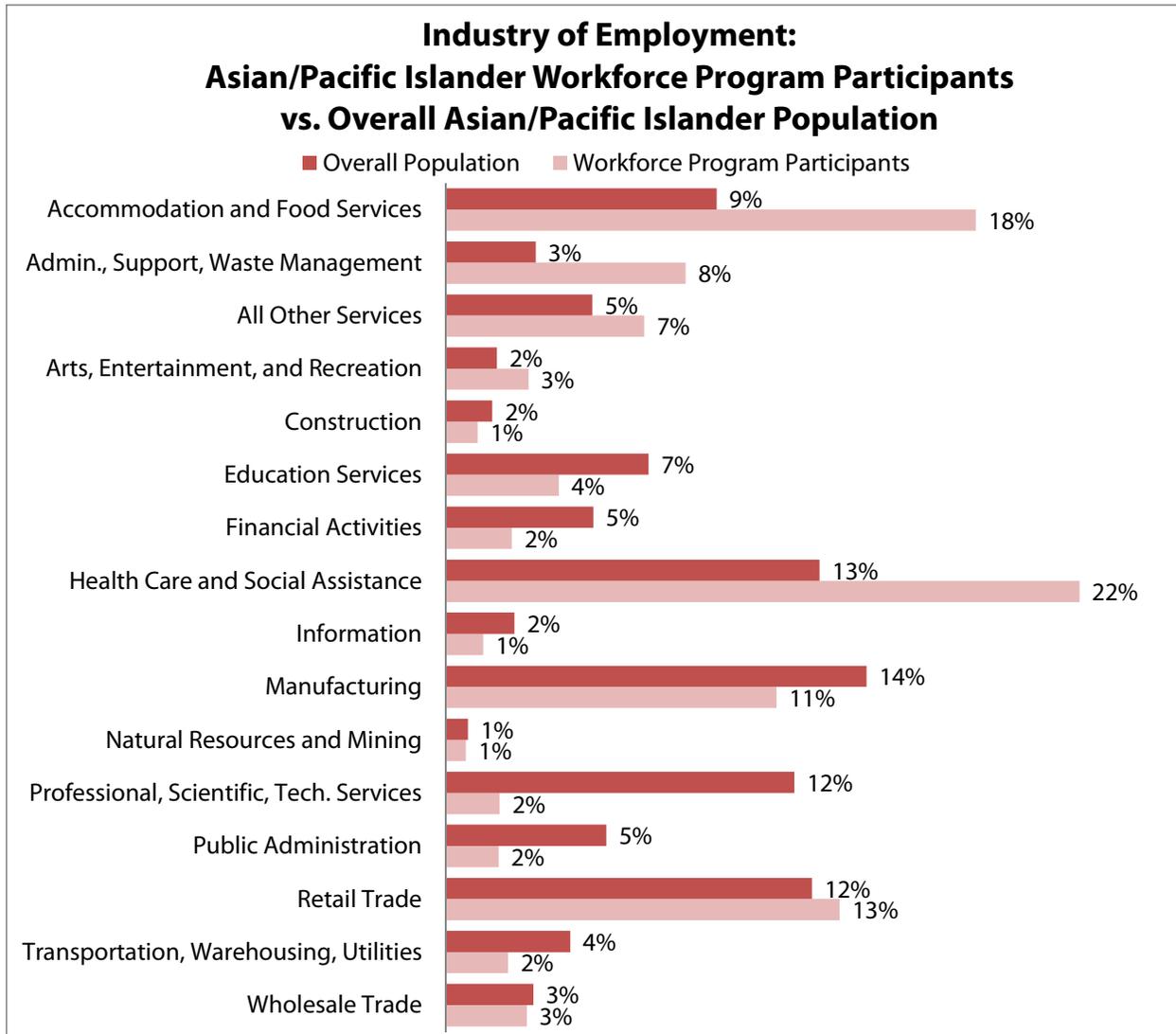
Workforce Training Results 2011. Wage and Earnings data are from the third quarter after participation and are inflation adjusted to first quarter 2009 dollars.



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Where Asians/Pacific Islanders work after exiting a workforce development program

Asians and Pacific Islanders who were employed in the third quarter after participating in a workforce development program were most likely to be working in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry, followed by Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade. They were least likely to be employed in the Agricultural, Natural Resources and Mining industry. The chart below shows the industries where Asian/Pacific Islanders who participated in a workforce program went to work vs. Asian/Pacific Islanders who did not participate in a workforce program.



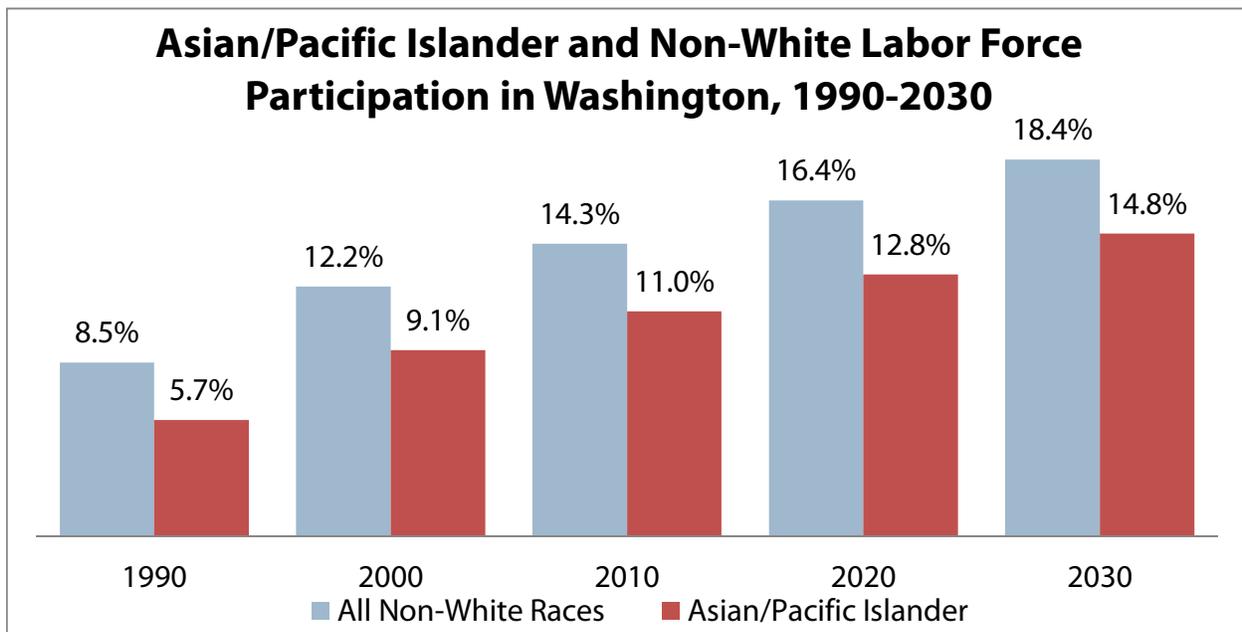
Workforce Training Results, 2011. Information is based on participant employment seven to nine months after exiting a program. Population estimates from U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey.



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Asian/Pacific Islander proportion of population is higher in Washington than rest of U.S.

In 1998, the Asian and Pacific Islander population in Washington stood at 6.1 percent. More than a decade later, in 2010, it was 7.7 percent. Nationally, Asian and Pacific Islanders account for about 4.5 percent of the population.⁴ In Washington, Asian and Pacific Islander labor force participation is higher than their portion of the general population. So in 2010, 11 percent of Washington's labor force was made up Asians and Pacific Islanders, more than 3 percentage points higher than their share of the state's population. By 2030, Asians and Pacific Islanders are projected to make up nearly 15 percent of Washington's labor force⁵ as compared to their overall percentage of the population, projected at 9.7 percent.⁶



Office of Financial Management Long-Term Economic and Labor Force Forecast for Washington, March 2012, Table 2-5. Note: This comparison includes Asians and Pacific Islanders in the overall non-white labor force as compared to their specific percentage of this total.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau's American Population Survey, 2010.

⁵ Labor force projections are from the state's Office of Financial Management and do not completely align with racial and ethnic categories from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Population Survey.

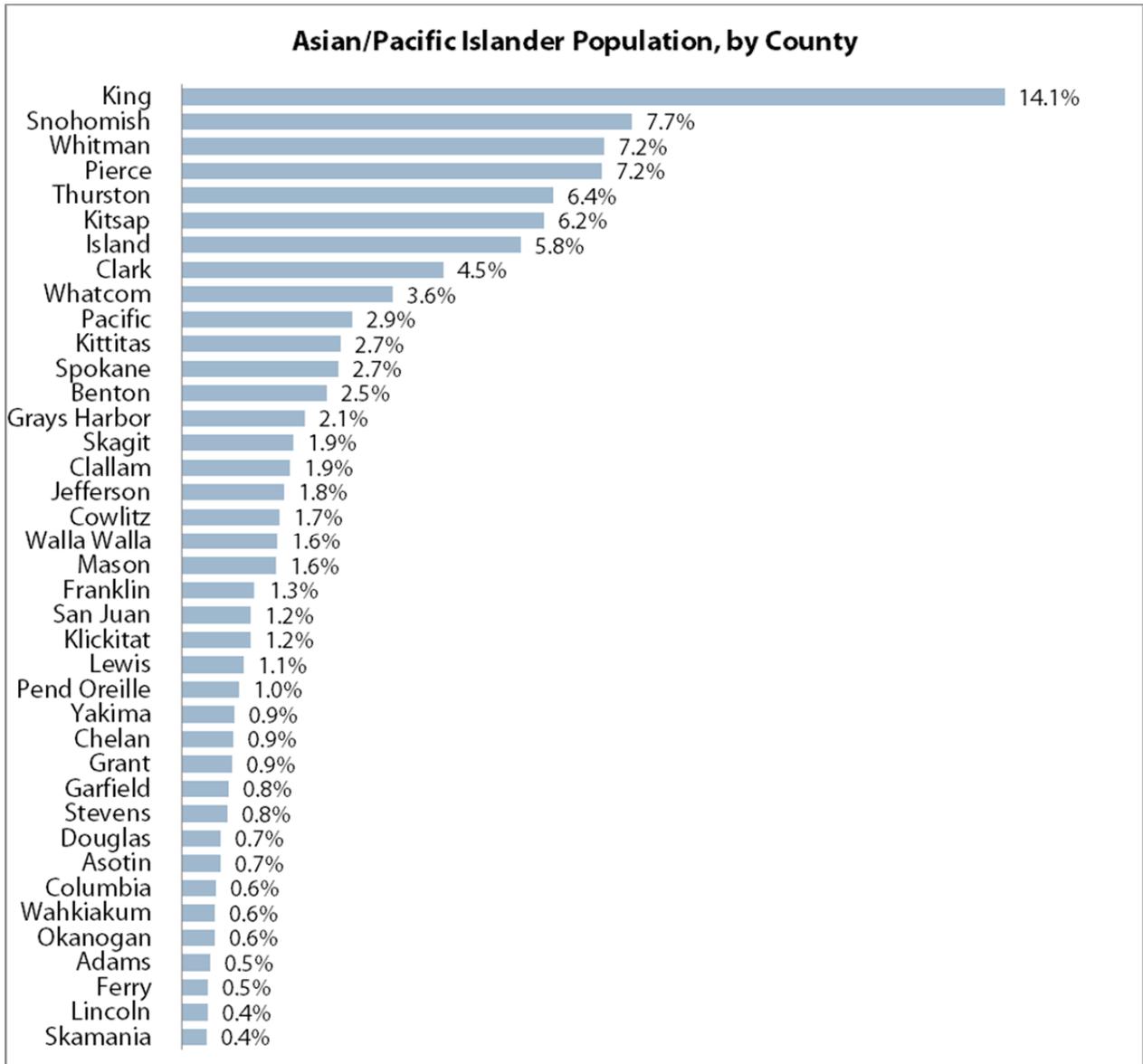
⁶ Office of Financial Management population projection.



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Distribution of Asian/Pacific Islander population by county

Most of the Asian and Pacific Islander population is concentrated in Washington’s more populous regions, especially King, Snohomish and Pierce counties. In Eastern Washington, the largest concentration of Asians and Pacific Islanders is in Whitman County, home to Washington State University.



OFM population estimates by county and race, 2000-2010, Table 6-10

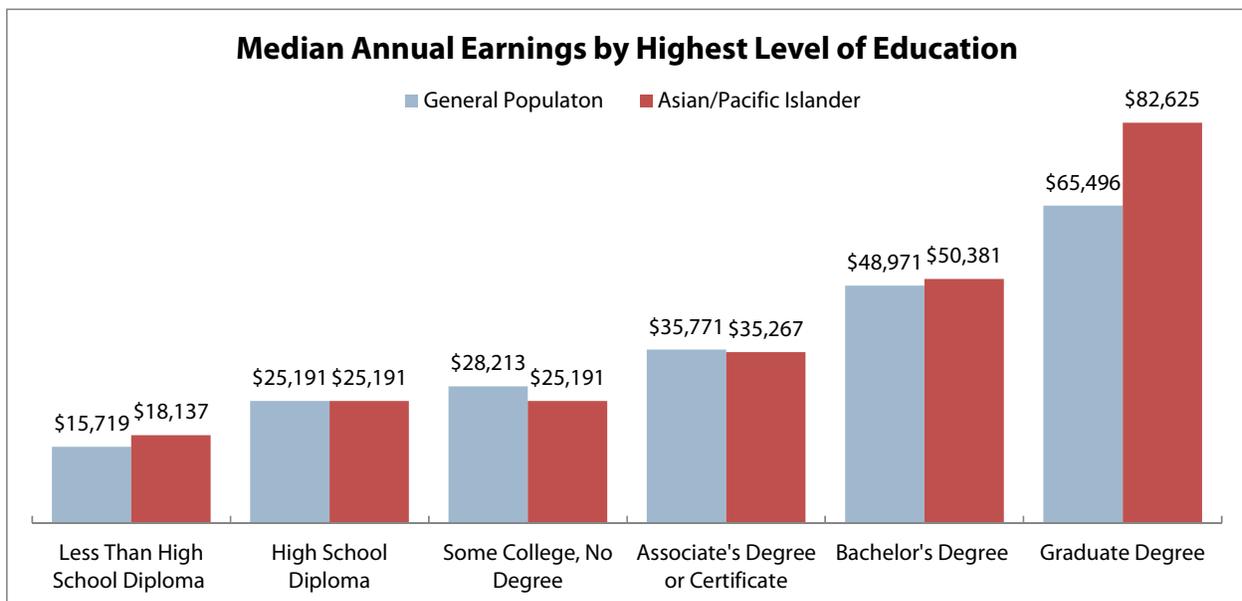


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Washington's Workforce

To get a more complete picture of minority education and employment trends, it's helpful to look at Washington's workforce as a whole. The following charts show links between education levels, earning power and career choices among the general population.

In general, the more highly educated a person is, the higher his or her wages and the more likely they will be employed. For example, Washington residents with post high school education, an associate's degree or vocational certificate boosted their pay by nearly 42 percent beyond what they would have earned with only a high school diploma. This median pay translates into \$10,500 more per year.



U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey.

The relationship between educational attainment and earning power holds true for Asian/Pacific Islanders. The earnings of Asian/Pacific Islanders are higher than the earnings for the general population at several educational levels. The two exceptions to this are Asian/Pacific Islanders with Some College, and those who obtain Associate's Degrees or Certificates, who earn slightly less than the general population. The largest difference in pay by education level is for Asian/Pacific Islanders with Graduate Degrees, who earn \$82,625 annually, some \$17,000 more than the general population.

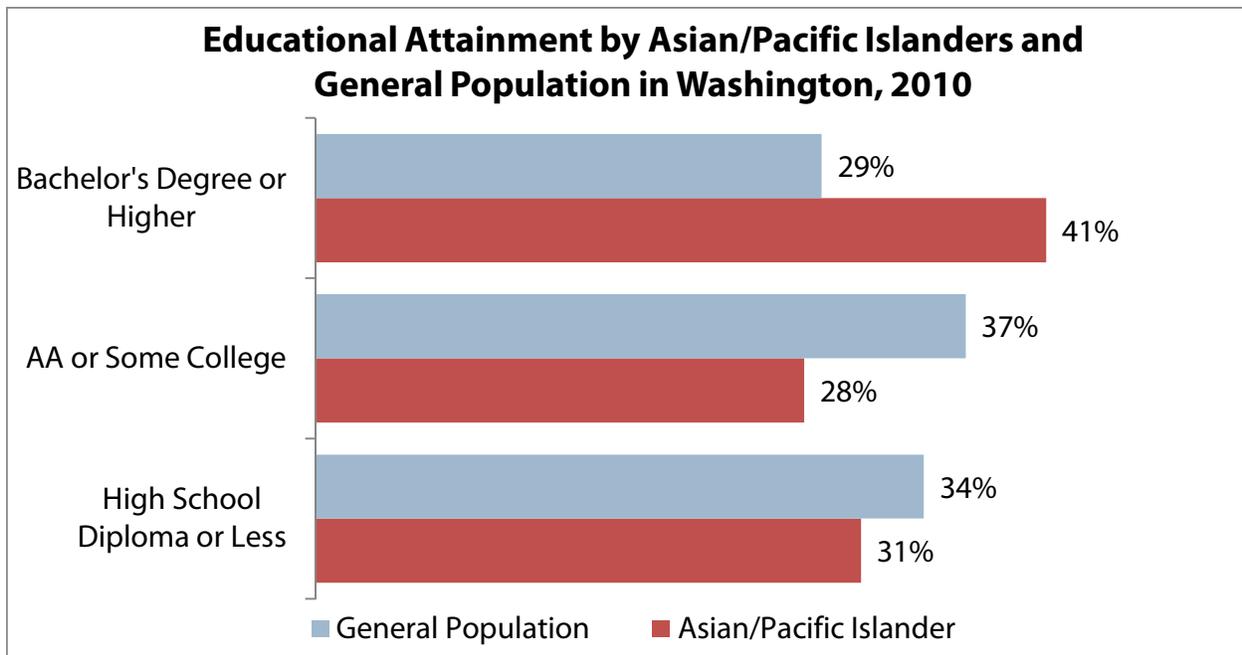


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Employment by education level

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, among the U.S. population, 14.9 percent of those with less than a high school diploma were unemployed in 2010 (compared to 14.6 percent in 2009 and 8.5 percent in 2008.) Meanwhile, 10.3 percent of high school graduates were unemployed in 2010, with unemployment rates dipping to 8.4 percent for those with some college or an associate's degree, and dropping further to 4.7 percent for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

In addition to earning more than the general population at many education levels, Asians and Pacific Islanders are more likely to have earned a bachelor's degree or higher as their highest educational credential.



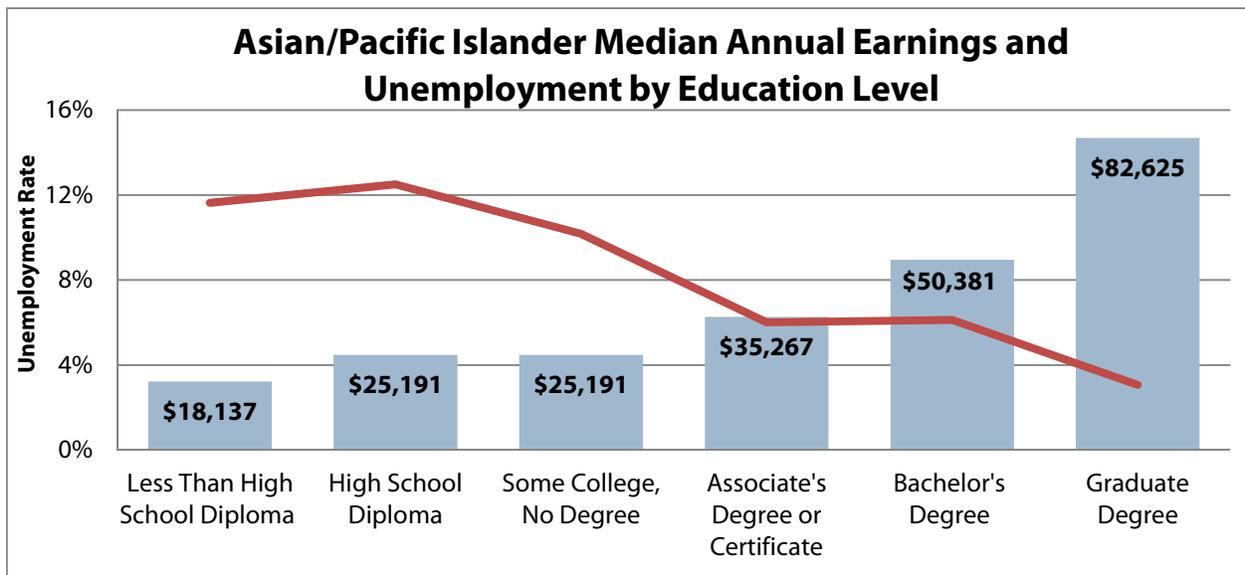
U.S. 2010 Census Bureau estimates from the American Community Survey ages 18 to 64.



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Education level impacts employment and wages

Education influences the ability of workers to find and keep jobs – with lower levels of education leading to higher unemployment rates. Meanwhile, higher levels of education lead to higher wages and greater employment security. Asian and Pacific Islander workers with an Associate’s Degree earn over \$10,000 more annually than workers with just a High School Diploma. Workers with a Bachelor’s Degree earn \$15,000 more than those with an Associate’s Degree. Similarly, unemployment rates were lower for more educated workers, ranging in 2010 from 3 percent for those with Graduate Degrees, to 12 percent for those with a high school diploma or less as their highest degree.



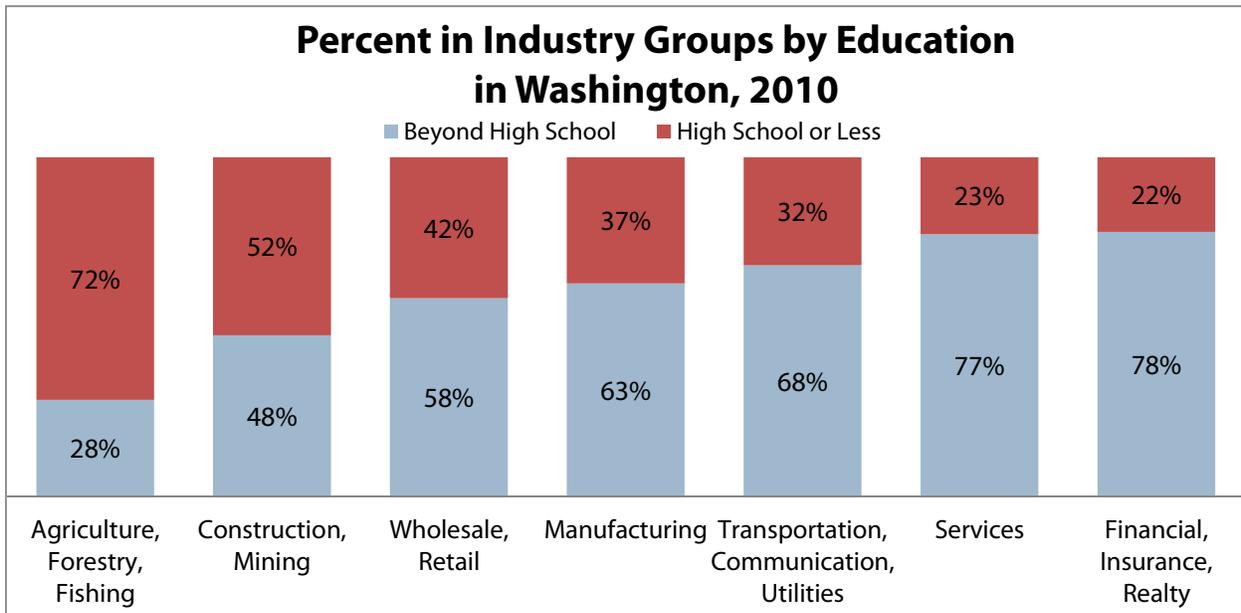
U.S. Census Bureau 2010 American Community Survey

A lack of education was an even bigger liability during the Great Recession, which hit full stride in 2009. In 2008, the overall employment rate stood at 8.5 percent for those lacking a high school diploma. Just a year later, in 2009, unemployment neared 15 percent for those who did not graduate from high school.



Washington Industry Groups

In Washington, those who have a high school education or less make up two thirds of the workforce in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry—one of the lowest paying of the seven industry categories. Those with some college, a vocational certificate, or an associate’s degree are most often employed in the wholesale/retail industries, with nearly 27 percent of individuals with those levels of education working in the industry within Washington as of 2010 (data not shown). Those with a bachelor’s degree or higher are primarily employed in the services industry, at over 60 percent in Washington as of 2010 (data not shown).

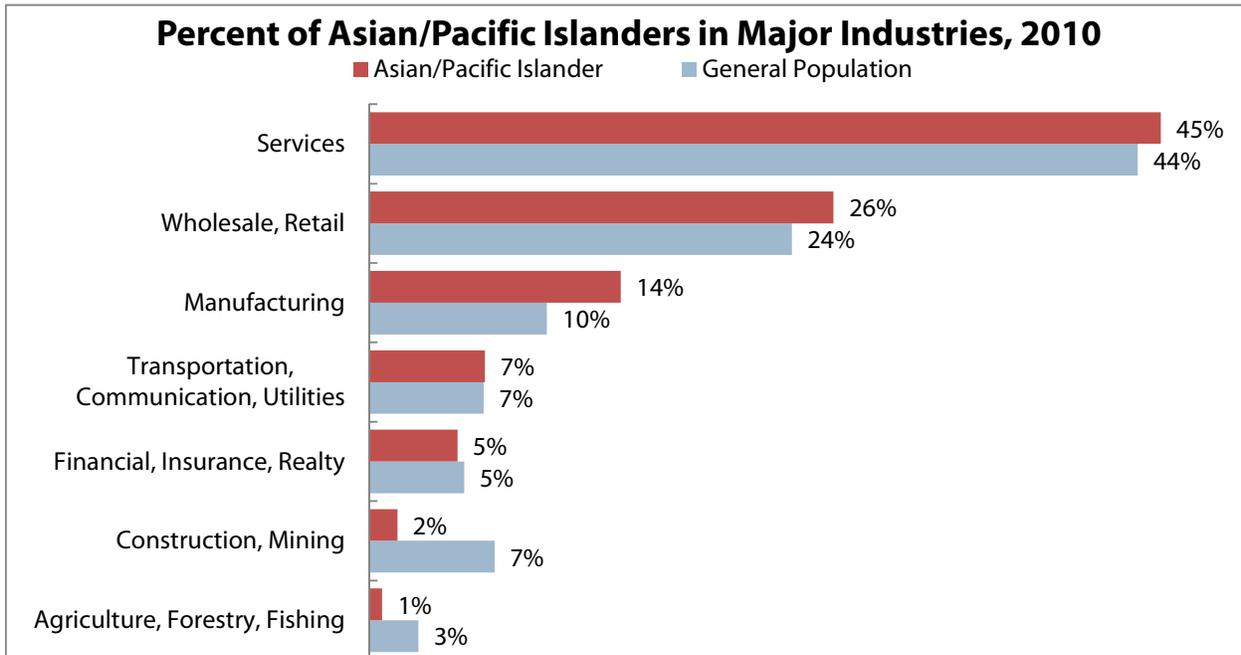


U.S. 2010 Census Bureau estimates from the American Community Survey

Asian/Pacific Islanders were more likely than the general population to work in the manufacturing and wholesale and retail trade industries. They were less likely to work in the construction, mining, and agriculture industries.



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U.S. 2010 Census Bureau estimates from the American Community Survey

Earnings among Asians/Pacific Islanders higher than general population

Asian/Pacific Islanders have higher annual earnings, averaging nearly \$3,000 more than the general population. However, they still earn less than whites.

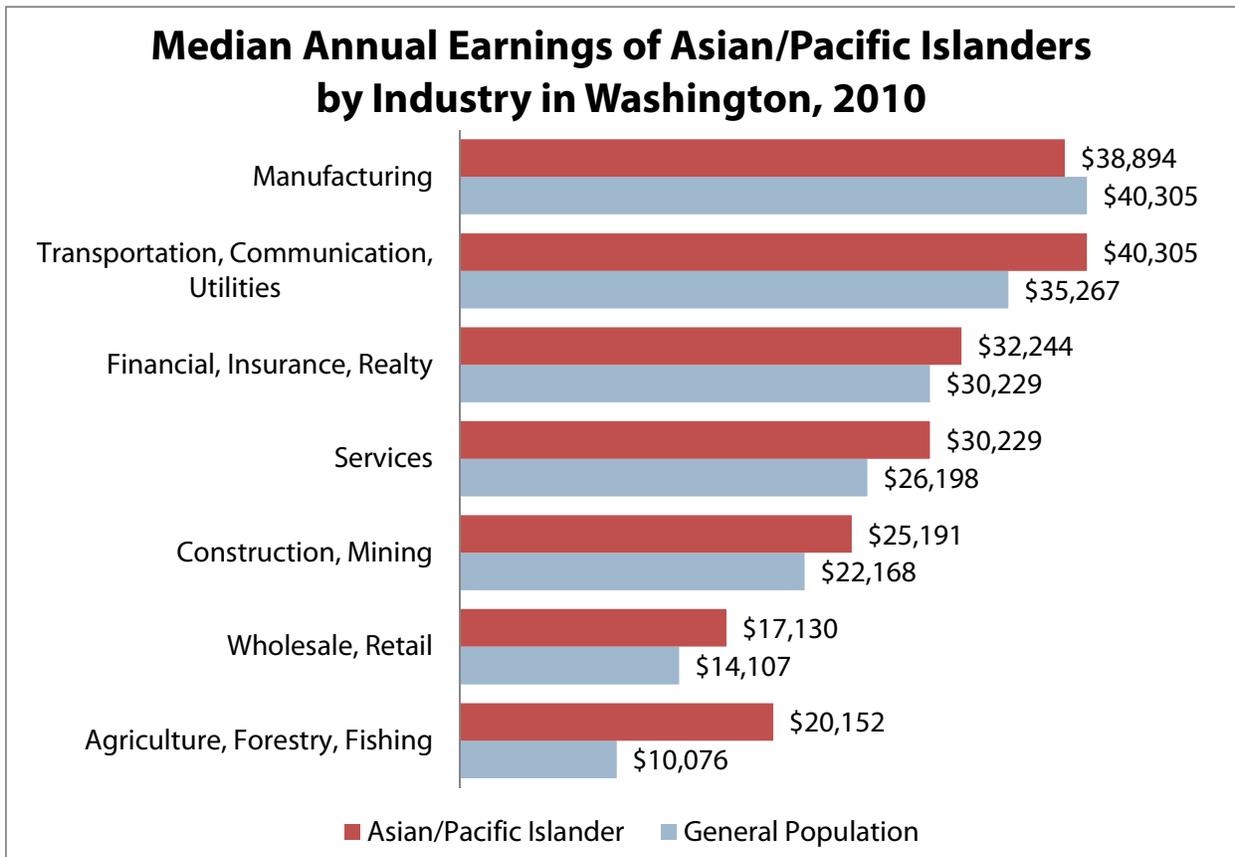


U.S. 2010 Census Bureau estimates from the American Community Survey 2010 ages 18 to 64, individuals not in school.



Median annual earnings by industry

The industrial sectors that offer the highest median annual earnings for Asian/Pacific Islanders in Washington are Transportation, Communication, Utilities along with Manufacturing. The lowest annual earnings are in wholesale and retail trade industry and agriculture, forestry and fishing. The largest earnings differential between Asian/Pacific Islanders and the general population is in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, where Asian/Pacific Islanders earn a quarter as much as the general population.

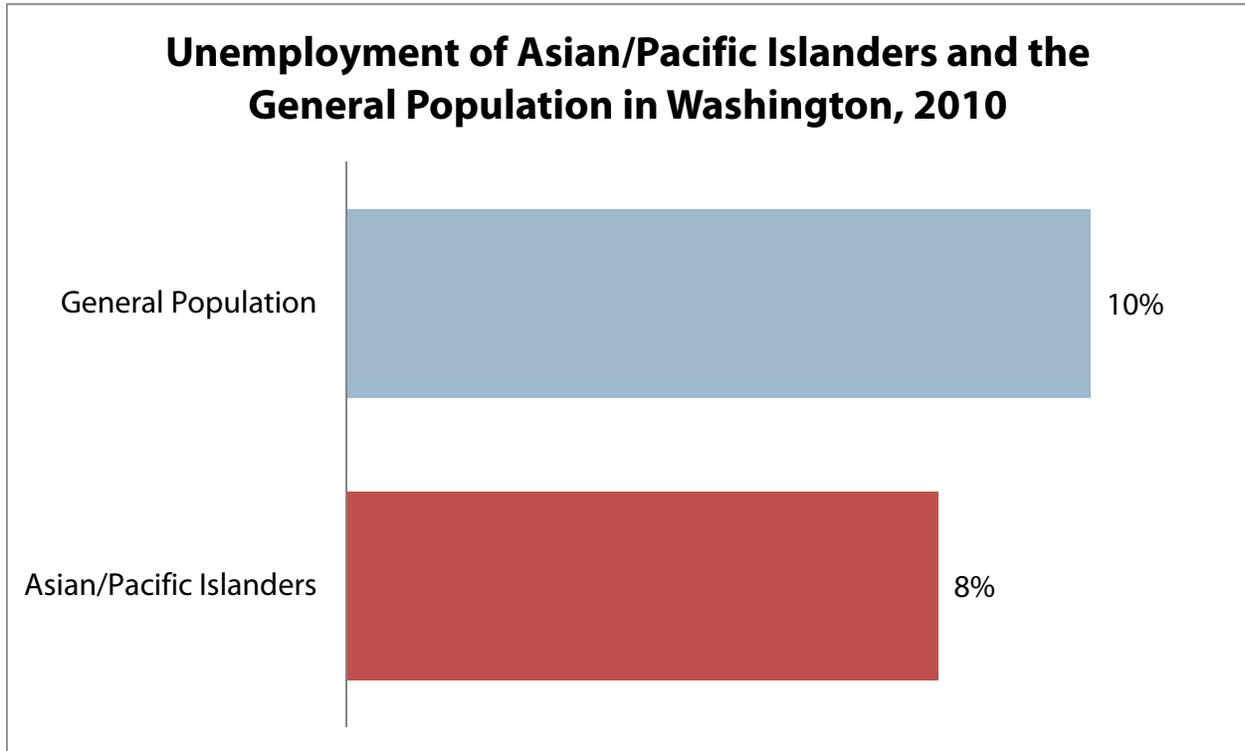


U.S. 2010 Census Bureau estimates from the American Community Survey 2010 ages 18 to 64.



Unemployment among Asians and Pacific Islanders

The unemployment rate of Asian/Pacific Islanders is about 2 percentage points lower than the general population, which equates to about 20 percent fewer unemployed than in the general population.



2010 U.S. Census Bureau estimates from the American Community Survey and is not the official unemployment rate for the state.



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Conclusion

Asians and Pacific Islanders comprise the second largest ethnic minority in Washington and their population is projected to steadily grow over the coming decades. Meanwhile, Asian and Pacific Islander labor force participation is growing at a faster pace, as they are projected to comprise nearly 15 percent of the labor force by 2030, a greater share than their portion of the general population, projected at 9.7 percent in that year.

Many Asian/Pacific Islanders work in professional occupations which pay more than most occupations, and they are more likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher as their highest educational credential.

Compared to other ethnic groups and the general population, Asian/Pacific Islanders have higher rates of educational attainment, earnings and employment. However, it is important to note the diversity within the Asian/Pacific Islander community, such that the overall numbers hide wide variations between ages, genders, and countries of origin. Some Asian and Pacific Islander subgroups face greater challenges in the labor market than the results presented in this report would suggest. Ensuring that all parts of this population are able to gain employment and advance their education and training is paramount.

One way to improve the employment prospects of many Asian and Pacific Islander subgroups is to ensure I-BEST programs are widely available. I-BEST is an adult program strategy for improving employment and earnings for English language learners. These programs serve an important role for Washington's Asians and Pacific Islanders, where just 40 percent of households speak English as the primary language.

This publication was produced by the Research Unit of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. For more information, contact Jon Agnone, jagnone@wtb.wa.gov.