



Education Factsheet

Asian Americans are the country's fastest-growing racial group. But often Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AA and NHPI) communities are analyzed as a monolithic group, and their disparities are not accounted for in demographic data. In terms of education, this lack of information on ethnic groups results in difficulties in ensuring that schools and universities meet the needs of AA and NHPIs. Furthermore, the persistent myth of AAs and NHPIs as the highly successful, well-educated "model minority" ignores the reality that the education system is failing many of our students.

This factsheet focuses on the priority issues of NCAPA's education work. For more information on our stance on education issues, visit the NCAPA Policy Platform on NCAPA's website, www.ncapaonline.org.

Data Disaggregation:

- Asian American students are among English Language Learners (ELL) who struggle in school. For example, only 32 percent of students from Vietnamese-speaking households in the New Orleans area say there are teachers or school staff who speak their parents' native language.
- Local education agencies and higher learning institutions that collect disaggregated data on AA and NHPI student ethnicities do not report this data to the state and federal government (with the exception of the Hawaii Department of Education).
- The overly broad "two or more races" category by the U.S. Department of Education oversimplifies AA and NHPI students' ethnic origins, resulting in vast undercounts, particularly of Native Hawaiian students. If the federal government mandated deeper data collection and the U.S. Department of Education updated its data guidance, this information could then be used for myriad purposes, including targeting resources to close achievement gaps.

- The U.S. Department of Education’s practice of counting the Hispanic/Latino category over any other race within the “two or more races” category makes disaggregating information about AAs and NHPIs even more challenging.
- The U.S. Department of Education should require collecting of information of AA and NHPI subgroups. One strategy is to follow the race and ethnicity categories used by the Census Bureau as a baseline, which are: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Fijian, Tongan, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani and Cambodian.
- Any reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act should require disaggregation of the broad AA and NHPI categories.

Reauthorization of Higher Education Act:

- Higher education institutions need to increase capacity to serve low-income and underrepresented AA and NHPI students in order to make a college education more attainable for all. Consider only 7.5 percent of Hmong and 9.2 percent of Cambodians (ages 25 or older) hold a bachelor’s degree, compared to 24 percent of the overall education.
- The Strengthening Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) program provides higher education grants to colleges and universities that serve high populations of AA and NHPI students from low-income communities, who are also first-generation college students. This funding helps colleges and universities improve services to serve the unique needs of these student populations.
- AANAPISI and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) are currently restricted from applying for funding from multiple provisions under the Higher Education Act. For example, the law states, “No Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution that receives funds under this section shall concurrently receive funds under any other provision of this part, part B, or Title V.” However, a 2009 analysis by the Congressional Research Service indicates that 40 Hispanic-serving institutions and two predominantly black institutions are also AANAPISI-eligible institutions. While these institutions serve large proportions of Hispanic/Asian American/African American students, they may only apply for grant funding under one program. To strengthen the capacity for institutions to serve diverse student bodies, the restriction on applying for concurrent funding should be lifted.
- Only 78 institutions have been designated for the AANAPISI program – which represents only 50.9 percent of eligible institutions.

Sources: Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund; Congressional Research Service; National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education; Southeast Asia Resource Action Center; U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Education, and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders