



Housing and Economic Justice Factsheet

While our country shows promising signs of a sustained economic recovery, many low-income Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (AA and NHPs) still face growing economic insecurity and barriers to upward mobility. Despite the general perception of AA and NHPs as an economically successful population, AA and NHPs in poverty grew faster than most other racial or ethnic groups from 2007 to 2011, increasing to over 2 million (a 38 percent increase) in just four years. Specifically, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders in poverty increased by 60 percent and Asian Americans in poverty increased by 37 percent, compared to a 27 percent increase in the general poverty population.

For more information on NCAPA's housing and economic justice priorities, please visit the NCAPA Policy Platform on NCAPA's website, www.ncapaonline.org.

Affordable Housing and Homeownership

- The housing and economic crisis continues to devastate AA and NHP households as foreclosures remain prevalent and communities face increasing barriers to accessing homeownership opportunities. Homeownership rates of Asian Americans (59 percent) and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (48 percent) continue to lag behind the total population (66 percent).
- AA and NHPs are concentrated in some of the hardest-hit areas like Nevada and California, which faced the steepest declines in home prices and a disproportionate number of foreclosures in the last few years. AA and NHP families lost an average of more than \$40,000 in home values during the foreclosure crisis and subsequent economic downturn.
- Poor AA and NHPs are disproportionately concentrated in metro areas with the highest housing costs. Almost 50 percent of all poor AA and NHPs (47 percent for poor AAs, 40 percent for poor NHPs) live in the 20 most expensive real estate markets in the country.
- Median gross rents for AA and NHPs are significantly higher than any other racial or ethnic group. According to the U.S. Census, the median gross rent in 2010 was \$1,058 per month for Asian Americans and \$1,011 for Native Hawaiians and Pacific

Islanders, with the national median for the total population of \$841 per month and no other major racial or ethnic group paying more than \$900 per month.

- Asian American homebuyers and renters face discrimination and adverse treatment when seeking a home as or more often than other communities of color. On average, Asian American homebuyers are told about 15.5 percent less homes and are shown 18.8 percent less homes than non-Hispanic white buyers. Similarly, prospective Asian American renters are told about 9.8 percent less homes and are shown 6.6 percent less units.

Financial Security and Asset Building

- From 2005 to 2011, median Asian American household net worth fell by 44 percent. In contrast, median non-Hispanic white household net worth declined by 19 percent. While Asian Americans still have a higher relative wealth standing compared to Hispanics and African Americans, the median Asian American household lost far more during the crisis, in absolute dollar terms, than households of any other racial or ethnic group.
- A high percentage of AA and NHPIs own bank accounts, indicating a strong desire to save. However, due to language barriers, far fewer are comfortable with complex banking concepts such as building credit, mortgages, and loan servicing, which hinders their ability to take full advantage of the financial system. With 40 percent of Asian Americans and 15 percent of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders speaking English less than very well, AA and NHPIs face language proficiency barriers that make it difficult to access services and programs that support their financial security. As a result, AA and NHPIs rely heavily on cash for everyday transactions, and often turn to friends and family members for financial advice. Unfortunately, this leaves many individuals vulnerable to additional fees and predatory practices.
- Most AA and NHPI small businesses are sole proprietorships and microenterprises with poor access to capital. AA and NHPI small business owners must often rely on personal assets as a source of support for their enterprises, whether through personal savings or through lines of credit secured by their home. Government programs, such as guaranteed loans which are meant to increase access to credit for minority communities, oftentimes end up benefitting the lending institutions more than the borrower when a default occurs.

Job Development and Security

- For many Asian Americans, self-employment continues to be an alternative to private sector employment. In 2010, 6.3 percent of Asian Americans were self-employed.
- The Asian American small business ownership rate is higher per capita than any other racial and ethnic group. While Asian Americans own 25.8 percent of all minority-owned businesses, they own more than half (50.9 percent) of all minority-owned businesses with employees. These small businesses often serve as the economic and cultural anchors for AA and NHPI communities.
- In 2010, the Asian American unemployment rate averaged 7.5 percent, more than doubling since the start of the recession in 2007. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders likewise increased from 4.8 percent in 2007 to 12 percent in 2010.

- Asian Americans have the highest rates of long-term unemployment of any racial/ethnic group. In 2011, 50.1 percent of the Asian American unemployed were unemployed long-term, up from 48.7 percent in 2010.
- AA and NHPs represent the fastest growing segment of the U.S. workforce. In 2011, AA and NHPs made up 5.1 percent of the labor force, including 7.5 million workers of Asian descent and nearly half a million Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.
- AA and NHPs represent the fastest growing group in organized labor. Of the 750,000 AA and NHP union members in the U.S., approximately two-thirds are immigrants.

Sources: Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance; Center for Economic and Policy Research; Economic Policy Institute; National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development; Pew Research Center; Southeast Asia Resource Action Center; U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), founded in 1996, is a coalition of 31 national Asian Pacific American organizations. Based in Washington D.C., NCAPA serves to represent the interests of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AA and NHP) communities and to provide a national voice on policy issues and priorities.