



Alaska's Asians and Pacific Islanders

A look at the state's fastest-growing racial group

People of Asian and Pacific Islander descent form the fastest-growing racial group in Alaska, expanding by 60 percent between 2000 and 2010 — a gain of more than 17,000 people. (See Exhibit 1.)

Pacific Islanders by themselves grew at an even faster rate, more than doubling in population during the same 10-year span.

As of 2010, 6.4 percent of Alaskans reported Asian or Pacific Islander descent, the seventh-highest share among all states and above the national rate of 4.9 percent.

Varied backgrounds within group

“Asian and Pacific Islander” includes many distinct groups with varied languages, cultures, and circumstances of arrival in the United States. Exhibit 2 shows the regions from which they trace their ancestry. The massive geographic range, from Pakistan in the west to island archipelagos of the Pacific, is home to over half the world’s population, around half of spoken languages, and a massive array of cultural and ethnic groups.

Asian areas of origin include the Far East, Southeast Asia to Indonesia, and the Indian Subcontinent. Pacific Islanders originate in the numerous island chains that make up Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia in the Pacific Ocean.

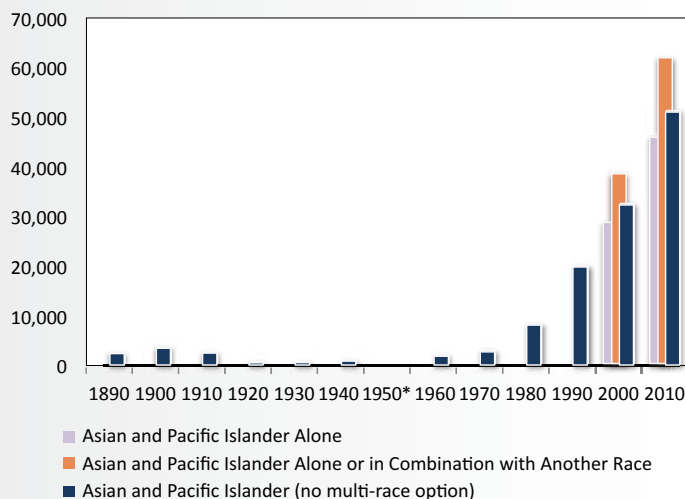
Working-age men in early years

The present day isn’t the first time a substantial portion of Alaska residents were Asian or Pacific Islander. In 1890, the group represented 7.1 percent of Alaska’s population, a higher percentage than any other U.S. state or territory at the time.

These early residents were mainly working-age Chinese or Japanese men who lived primarily in cannery towns. Through the Klondike Gold Rush era, the number of Asian and Pacific Islanders stayed fairly high, around a couple thousand people, despite decreasing percentage-wise as more whites moved in. After World War I, though, the group’s population declined with the territory’s total population.

Even though many Filipinos began to arrive and

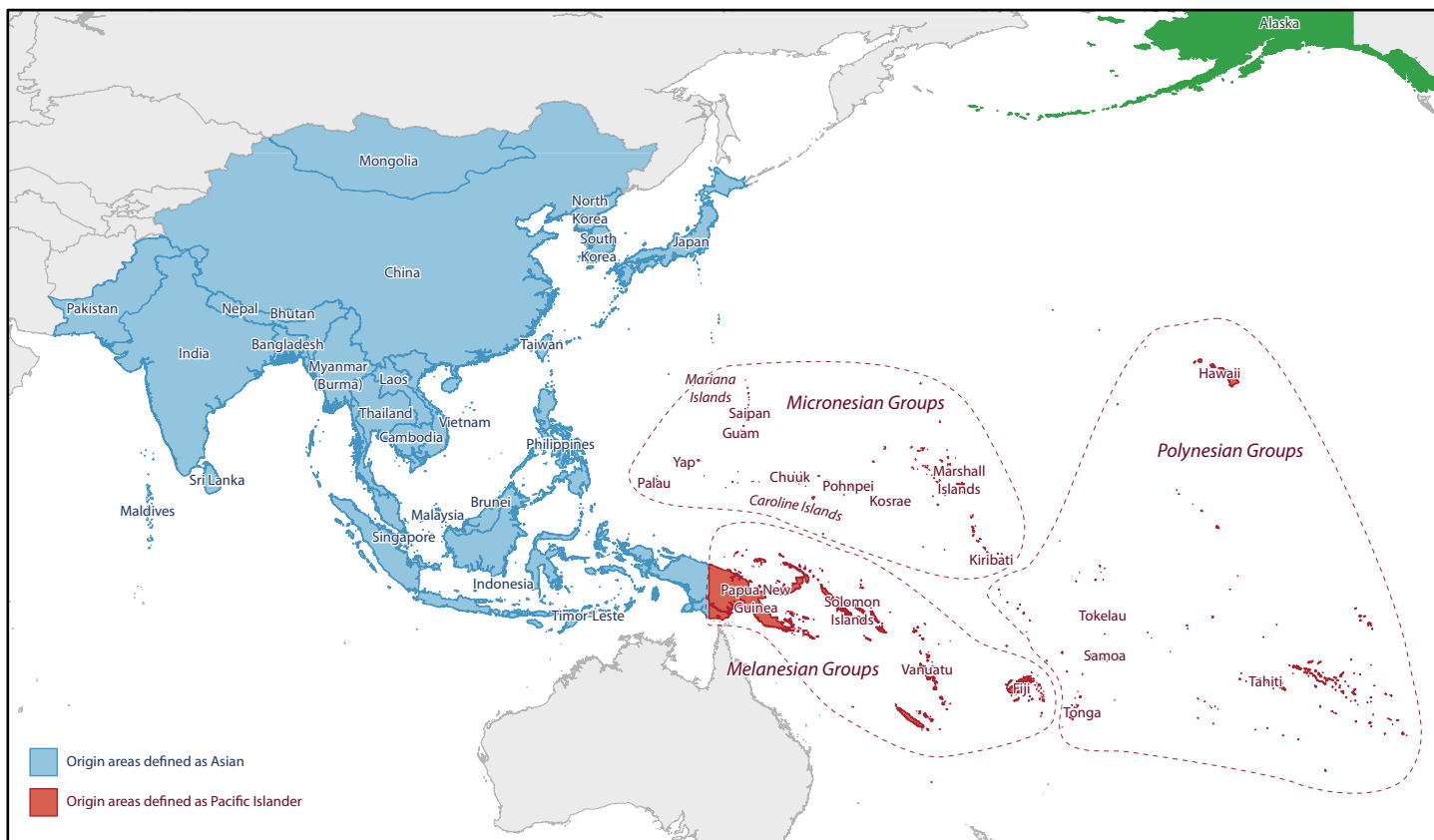
1 Rapid Population Growth Since '90 Asians and Pacific Islanders, Alaska



*The 1950 Alaska Census didn't tally Asians/Pacific Islanders.
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

2 Origins of Asians and Pacific Islanders

Diverse, massive geographic range includes over half the world's population



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

boost the numbers during the Great Depression, those of Asian and Pacific Islander descent made up less than 1 percent of the total population during most of Alaska's post-war territorial period.

Around 300 Alaskans of Japanese ancestry, more age- and gender-diverse than the workers of earlier generations, remained the territory's largest Asian and Pacific Islander segment for much of that time. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor and declaration of war on Japan, they suffered forced internment, mostly at Minidoka Camp in Idaho.

Changes to immigration law

Following statehood in 1959, conditions changed greatly for Asian and Pacific Islanders in Alaska as well as the U.S. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act ended the racial quota system, which had severely limited non-European immigration. This dovetailed with the 1968 discovery of the large oil field at Prudhoe Bay, ushering in the

modern Alaska economy and successive population growth.

This spurred a rapid growth period for the state's Asian and Pacific Islander population as well, and it continues today. The size of the overall group quadrupled twice over successive 20-year periods: 1960 to 1980 and again from 1980 to 2000. This increase was more permanent and diverse in ethnic, gender, and economic terms than the Asian and Pacific Islander migrations of earlier eras.

As a proportion of the total population, Asians and Pacific Islanders grew from less than 1 percent in 1970 to 2 percent in 1980, 3.5 percent in 1990, 4.5 percent in 2000, and finally 6.4 percent in 2010.

Alaska has highest concentration of Filipinos

The makeup of Alaska's Asian community differs considerably from the nation as a whole. Just over

3 Most in Alaska are Filipino, Polynesian Asian and Pacific Islander Alaskans by origin, 2010

	Race Alone				Race Alone or in Combination with One or More Other Races			
	Alaska		United States		Alaska		United States	
Total Asian Responses	37,193	100%	14,314,103	100%	52,356	100%	17,941,286	100%
Asian Indian	1,218	3%	2,843,391	20%	1,911	4%	3,183,063	18%
Bangladeshi	33	—	128,792	1%	39	—	147,300	1%
Bhutanese	35	—	15,290	—	42	—	19,439	—
Burmese	24	—	91,085	1%	30	—	100,200	1%
Cambodian	228	1%	231,616	2%	328	1%	276,667	2%
Chinese (except Taiwanese)	1,998	5%	3,137,061	22%	3,639	7%	3,794,673	21%
Filipino	19,394	52%	2,555,923	18%	25,424	49%	3,416,840	19%
Hmong	3,427	9%	247,595	2%	3,534	7%	260,073	1%
Indonesian	77	—	63,383	—	133	—	95,270	1%
Japanese	1,476	4%	763,325	5%	3,926	7%	1,304,286	7%
Korean	4,684	13%	1,423,784	10%	6,542	12%	1,706,822	10%
Laotian	1,684	5%	191,200	1%	2,121	4%	232,130	1%
Malaysian	16	—	16,138	—	46	—	26,179	—
Nepalese	88	—	51,907	—	114	—	59,490	—
Pakistani	139	—	363,699	3%	184	—	409,163	2%
Sri Lankan	34	—	38,596	—	49	—	45,381	—
Taiwanese	62	—	196,691	1%	88	—	230,382	1%
Thai	951	3%	166,620	1%	1,533	3%	237,583	1%
Vietnamese	960	3%	1,548,449	11%	1,446	3%	1,737,433	10%
Other Asian, Specified	29	—	20,636	—	88	—	35,151	—
Other Asian, Not Specified	636	2%	218,922	2%	1,139	2%	623,761	3%
Total Pacific Islander Responses	7,062	100%	523,930	100%	11,709	100%	1,271,942	100%
Polynesian	6,156	87%	311,331	59%	9,884	84%	783,727	62%
Native Hawaiian	949	13%	156,146	30%	3,006	26%	527,077	41%
Samoaan	4,663	66%	109,637	21%	5,953	51%	184,440	15%
Tongan	499	7%	41,219	8%	762	7%	57,183	4%
Other Polynesian	45	1%	4,329	1%	163	1%	15,027	1%
Micronesian	660	9%	143,596	27%	1,062	9%	214,893	17%
Guamanian or Chamorro	380	5%	88,310	17%	667	6%	147,798	12%
Marshallese	30	—	19,841	4%	49	—	22,434	2%
Other Micronesian	250	4%	35,445	7%	346	3%	44,661	4%
Melanesian	31	—	25,072	5%	47	—	33,143	3%
Fijian	29	—	24,629	5%	42	—	32,304	3%
Other Melanesian	2	—	443	—	5	—	839	—
Other Pacific Islander, not specified	215	3%	43,931	8%	716	6%	240,179	19%

Note: A dash means the value is less than 1 percent.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

half of Asian Alaskans track their background to the Philippines, in contrast to less than 20 percent nationwide. (See Exhibit 3.)

Several other groups are also represented in greater proportion in Alaska, including Koreans, Laotians, and Hmong.

People with Chinese (including Taiwanese), Asian Indian, and Vietnamese ancestry make up about 54 percent of the Asian population nationwide, but only 11 percent in Alaska. Among sizable Asian groups in Alaska as well as nationally, people of

Japanese descent are most likely to report being multiracial.

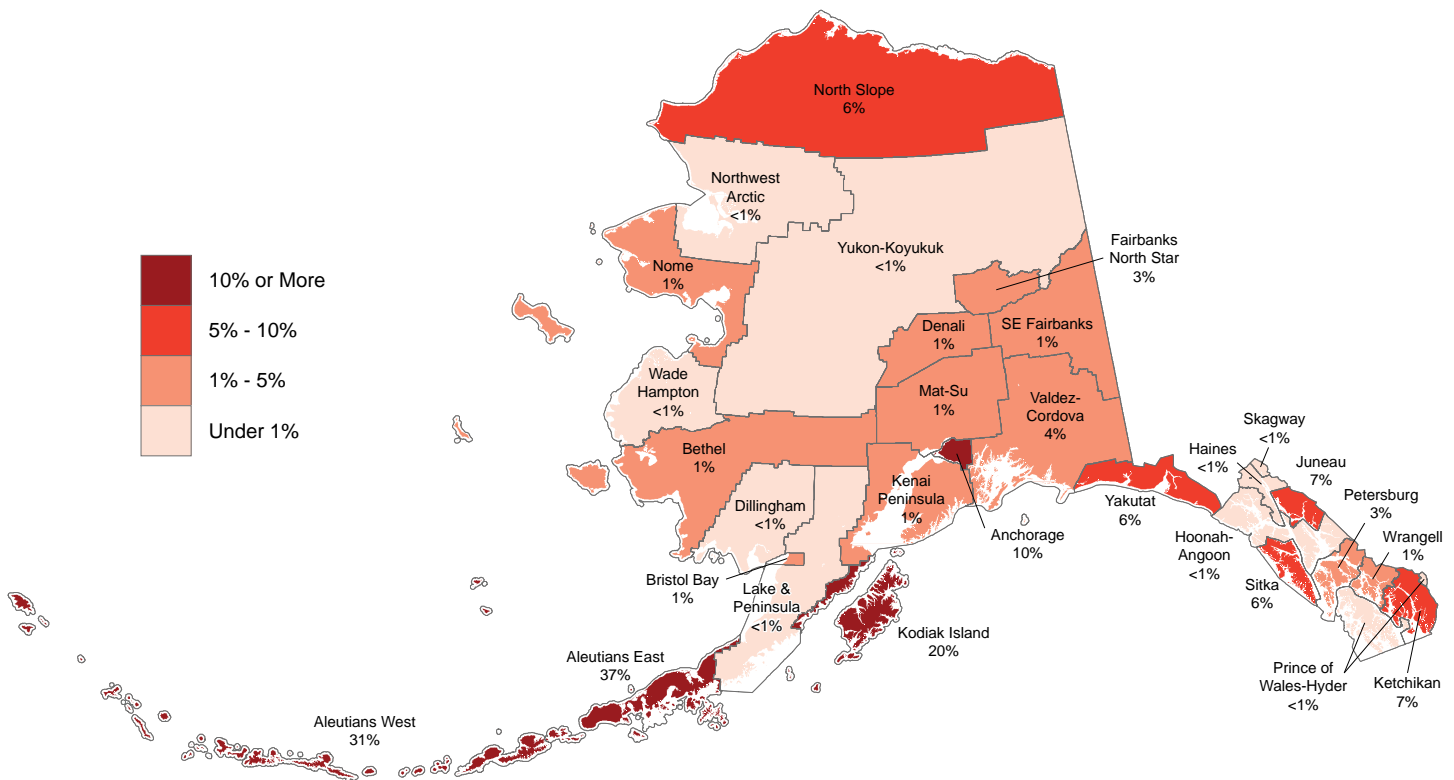
Pacific Islanders mostly Samoan

Pacific Islanders include all people of Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian descent. Polynesians — about 59 percent of Pacific Islanders nationwide — make up about 87 percent of the group within Alaska.

A majority (66 percent) of Pacific Islanders in the state have roots in Samoa, a larger proportion

4 Asians, Pacific Islanders Concentrated in Cities, Aleutians, North Slope

Populations by region, Alaska, 2010



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

of Samoans than any other state. Native Hawaiians, who make up 30 percent of Pacific Islanders nationwide, are about 13 percent of the group in Alaska. Few Alaskans have Melanesian roots, and 9 percent of Pacific Islanders are Micronesians, most of whom have origins on the island of Guam.

Nationally, Pacific Islanders are the most likely of any race group to report being multiracial, at 56 percent. In Alaska, one-third of Pacific Islanders report multi-race heritage, also the highest of any group.

Anchorage the hub for both

Alaska's largest city is the center of both the Asian and Pacific Islander populations in Alaska. Around 65 percent live within the Anchorage municipality, which is home to 41 percent of Alaska's total population. This is an increase from 1990, when the group's share in Anchorage was 55 percent.

Pacific Islanders separately are even more concentrated in Anchorage, with 80 percent living in the municipality. Including those who are multi-racial, Pacific Islanders compose a greater share of Anchorage (3 percent) than any other county or equivalent in the United States, outside of Hawaii.

When grouped together as 10 percent of Anchorage's population, Asians and Pacific Islanders are the municipality's largest racial minority. Anchorage neighborhoods with particularly large Asian and Pacific Islander communities include Government Hill, Mountain View, and Midtown.

Other parts of the state with substantial Asian and Pacific Islander populations include the Aleutians and Kodiak Island Borough. (See Exhibits 4 and 5.) In the Aleutians, the group makes up over 30 percent of the population, mainly due to the seafood processing industry. This is a large jump from 1990, when they represented 12 percent of the region.

5 Asian and Pacific Islander Populations by Area

Alaska boroughs and census areas, 2010

Area Name	Total Population	Race Alone		Race Alone or in Combination with One or More Other Races	
		Asian	Pacific Islander	Asian	Pacific Islander
Alaska	710,231	38,135	7,409	50,402	11,154
Aleutians East Borough	3,141	1,130	19	1,179	28
Aleutians West Census Area	5,561	1,606	103	1,743	148
Anchorage, Municipality	291,826	23,580	5,901	30,047	8,053
Bethel Census Area	17,013	160	27	249	58
Bristol Bay Borough	997	8	3	35	20
Denali Borough	1,826	19	1	41	1
Dillingham Census Area	4,847	32	6	87	27
Fairbanks North Star Borough	97,581	2,591	396	4,159	776
Haines Borough	2,508	14	0	42	3
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	2,150	12	1	39	4
Juneau, City and Borough	31,275	1,919	218	2,850	416
Kenai Peninsula Borough	55,400	631	119	1,159	297
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	13,477	943	27	1,183	72
Kodiak Island Borough	13,592	2,660	87	2,927	168
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,631	6	5	23	9
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	88,995	1,096	221	2,110	568
Nome Census Area	9,492	96	9	153	19
North Slope Borough	9,430	425	104	514	155
Northwest Arctic Borough	7,523	42	12	78	27
Petersburg Census Area	3,815	100	7	197	18
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	5,559	21	21	112	44
Sitka, City and Borough	8,881	529	30	718	78
Skagway, Municipality	968	5	1	22	2
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	7,029	64	18	113	29
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	9,636	354	54	451	78
Wade Hampton Census Area	7,459	18	0	27	11
Wrangell, City and Borough	2,369	33	1	56	15
Yakutat, City and Borough	662	27	12	43	22
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	5,588	14	6	45	8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Kodiak Island Borough also has a substantial Asian and Pacific Islander community, which has doubled in the last two decades to 20 percent of the population.

Several other boroughs have Asian and Pacific Islander populations close to the state average, including Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka, Yakutat, and the North Slope.

Growth from births, migration

The rapid growth of Alaska's Asian population is largely due to migration. Though natural increase (births minus deaths) is substantial — particularly when including those who indicate they're multi-racial — migration accounts for over 50 percent of

annual growth, based on analysis of change between the 2000 and 2010 censuses.

In addition to direct gains from migration, a large share of migrants are in their child-rearing years, ages 20 to 40, which means their household sizes are significantly higher than the stage average: 4.44 for Pacific Islander householders and 3.41 for Asians versus 2.65 statewide.

Natural increase is the largest contributor to contemporary population growth for the Pacific Islander population, which is much younger on average. Among Pacific Islander Alaskans, over half of the population is under age 25.

Roughly two-thirds of annual growth for Alaska's single-race Pacific Islander population is due to natural increase, and that ratio increases to three-quarters when adding those who identify with an additional race.

Many youth are multiracial

A large share of Asian and Pacific Islander youth in Alaska are multi-racial — for ages 0 to 4 in the 2010 Census, multi-race youth represent

nearly half the population for both groups. (See Exhibit 6).

This pattern is the same for the nation as a whole, and is due to more interracial relationships in recent decades as well as increasing identification with more than one race among young people.

In the 2010 Census, 24 percent of the state's Asian population and 33 percent of Pacific Islanders were multiracial. Statewide, 7 percent of Alaskans reported more than one race.

Many were born in the U.S.

Place of birth is a useful gauge for migration, and like all racial groups in the state except Alaska

Natives, a high percentage of Asians and Pacific Islanders were born elsewhere.

According to recent (2007-2011) data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, approximately 13 percent of Alaska's single-race Asian residents were born in the state, and 33 percent are native to the U.S., including its territories. Among Pacific Islanders, 22 percent were born in Alaska and roughly 90 percent were born in the United States. Including those with more than one race adds considerably to those percentages.

For comparison, 29 percent of Alaska's white (alone) population was born in the state, and 96 percent were born in the U.S.

More Asian women than men

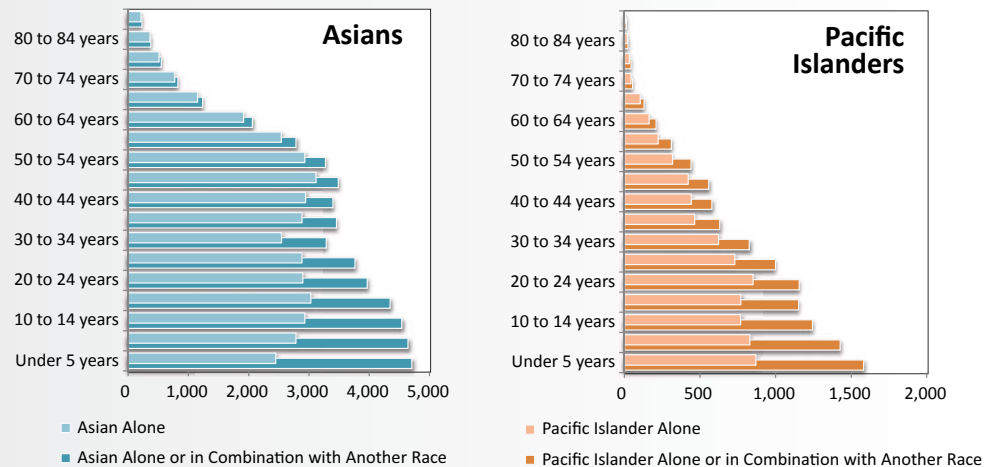
One characteristic that stands out over the past few decades in Alaska and nationally is that around ages 20 to 25, Asian women consistently begin to outnumber men. This fact is at least partly attributable to U.S. immigration policy that favors family reunification — this includes women moving from many parts of Asia for international marriages and a higher ratio of female-to-male senior citizens who reunite with younger family members in the U.S.

Ratios of male-to-female migrants vary greatly by the sending nation, but Alaska's pattern of Asian immigration yields roughly the same imbalance toward women as the nation as a whole. The 2010 Census shows that including multi-race respondents, Alaska has 0.92 Asian men for every Asian woman, the same as the U.S.

The Pacific Islander male-to-female ratio, including multi-race, is 1.04 in Alaska and 1.00 nationally. Alaska's overall male-to-female ratio is 1.09, and for the U.S. it's 0.97.

When migration isn't a major factor, relatively youthful populations will have higher male-to-female ratios, and those with many older people will have lower ratios due to shorter life expect-

6 Younger Populations Alaska's Asians and Pacific Islanders, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

About these classifications

Following current guidelines from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and used by the U.S. Census Bureau, "Asian" refers to a person having origins in any of the original people of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Asian population includes people who indicated their race(s) as "Asian" or reported entries such as "Asian Indian," "Chinese," "Filipino," "Korean," "Japanese," and "Vietnamese" or provided other detailed Asian responses." (2010 Census Briefs.)

"Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander" refers to a person having origins in any of the original inhabitants of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population includes people who marked the "Native Hawaiian" checkbox, the "Guamanian or Chamorro" checkbox, the "Samoan" checkbox, or the "Other Pacific Islander" checkbox. It also includes people who reported entries such as Pacific Islander; Polynesian entries such as Tahitian, Tongan, and Tokelauan; Micronesian entries such as Marshallese, Palauan, and Chuukese; and Melanesian entries, such as Fijian, Guinean, and Solomon Islander." In this article, "Pacific Islander" is used for "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander." (2010 Census Briefs.)

The guidelines used by the Census Bureau to categorize race have changed over the decades, and this affects comparability of data from different years. Since the 2000 Census, Asians and Pacific Islanders have been tabulated separately, and respondents may select more than one race. As a result, data from the 1990 and previous censuses are not directly comparable to 2000 and 2010 counts.

7 The Asian and Pacific Islander Workforce

Alaska and the U.S., percentages by occupation type, 2006 to 2010

	Alaska			United States		
	Total Workforce	Asian (Alone)	Pacific Islander (Alone)	Total Workforce	Asian (Alone)	Pacific Islander (Alone)
Total workers (margins of error in parentheses)	332,126 (±12,150)	20,698 (±911)	2,787 (±301)	141,833,331 (±112,056)	7,025,357 (±11,825)	223,785 (±3,089)
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	35% (0)	17% (±2)	11% (±4)	35% (0)	48% (0)	23% (±1)
Management, business, and financial occupations	14% (0)	6% (±1)	3% (±2)	14% (0)	16% (0)	10% (0)
Management occupations	10% (0)	4% (±1)	3% (±2)	10% (0)	9% (0)	6% (0)
Business and financial operations occupations	4% (0)	3% (±1)	0% (±6)	5% (0)	7% (0)	3% (0)
Computer, engineering, and science occupations	5% (0)	3% (±1)	1% (±4)	5% (0)	14% (0)	3% (0)
Computer and mathematical occupations	1% (0)	1% (±1)	0% (±4)	2% (0)	8% (0)	2% (0)
Architecture and engineering occupations	2% (0)	2% (±1)	1% (±4)	2% (0)	4% (0)	1% (0)
Life, physical, and social science occupations	2% (0)	1% (0)	0% (±4)	1% (0)	2% (0)	1% (0)
Education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations:	11% (0)	4% (±1)	6% (±4)	11% (0)	9% (0)	7% (0)
Community and social service occupations	2% (0)	1% (0)	5% (±3)	2% (0)	1% (0)	2% (0)
Legal occupations	1% (0)	0% (0)	0% (±6)	1% (0)	1% (0)	0% (0)
Education, training, and library occupations	6% (0)	2% (±1)	1% (±1)	6% (0)	5% (0)	4% (0)
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	2% (0)	1% (0)	0% (±4)	2% (0)	2% (0)	1% (0)
Health care practitioners and technical occupations:	5% (0)	3% (±1)	1% (±4)	5% (0)	9% (0)	3% (0)
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical occupations	3% (0)	2% (±1)	0% (±6)	4% (0)	7% (0)	2% (0)
Health technologists and technicians	1% (0)	1% (0)	1% (±4)	2% (0)	2% (0)	1% (0)
Service occupations	17% (0)	28% (±2)	26% (±7)	17% (0)	16% (0)	23% (±1)
Health care support occupations	2% (0)	3% (±1)	3% (±3)	2% (0)	2% (0)	3% (0)
Protective service occupations	2% (0)	1% (0)	2% (±4)	2% (0)	1% (0)	4% (0)
Fire fighting and prevention, and other protective service workers including supervisors	1% (0)	0% (0)	1% (±4)	1% (0)	1% (0)	3% (0)
Law enforcement workers including supervisors	1% (0)	0% (±1)	1% (±4)	1% (0)	0% (0)	1% (0)
Food preparation and serving related occupations	5% (0)	10% (±2)	5% (±3)	5% (0)	6% (0)	7% (0)
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	4% (0)	8% (±1)	6% (±4)	4% (0)	2% (0)	5% (0)
Personal care and service occupations	4% (0)	6% (±1)	9% (±4)	3% (0)	5% (0)	4% (0)
Sales and office occupations	24% (±1)	27% (±2)	27% (±7)	25% (0)	22% (0)	28% (±1)
Sales and related occupations	9% (0)	10% (±2)	8% (±4)	11% (0)	11% (0)	10% (±1)
Office and administrative support occupations	15% (0)	17% (±2)	19% (±7)	14% (0)	11% (0)	18% (±1)
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	13% (0)	4% (±1)	8% (±6)	10% (0)	4% (0)	11% (±1)
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	1% (0)	1% (0)	0% (±6)	1% (0)	0% (0)	1% (0)
Construction and extraction occupations	8% (0)	2% (±1)	3% (±4)	6% (0)	1% (0)	6% (0)
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4% (0)	2% (±1)	5% (±5)	3% (0)	2% (0)	4% (0)
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	11% (0)	24% (±3)	28% (±8)	12% (0)	10% (0)	15% (±1)
Production occupations	5% (0)	17% (±2)	8% (±5)	6% (0)	7% (0)	6% (0)
Transportation occupations	4% (0)	2% (±1)	4% (±3)	4% (0)	2% (0)	5% (0)
Material moving occupations	3% (0)	5% (±1)	16% (±6)	3% (0)	1% (0)	4% (0)

Notes: Margins of error are given in parentheses.

2006 to 2010 ACS data are the latest available with detailed occupational groupings by race.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey; and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section



Income and Poverty Level among Asians and Pacific Islanders

Alaska and the United States, 2007 to 2011

	Alaska			United States		
	Total (all races)	Asian (Alone)	Pacific Islander (Alone)	Total (all races)	Asian (Alone)	Pacific Islander (Alone)
Median household income	\$69,014 (±793)	\$64,794 (±3,580)	\$58,362 (±4,425)	\$52,762 (±99)	\$70,815 (±281)	\$56,406 (±1,405)
Per capita income	\$31,944 (±423)	\$23,199 (±935)	\$15,370 (±1,401)	\$27,915 (±80)	\$30,883 (±171)	\$20,336 (±373)
Percent of population below the poverty level	10% (0)	10% (±2)	18% (±7)	14% (0)	12% (0)	18% (±1)

Notes: Margins of error are given in parentheses.

Median household income by race is based on the race of the head of household.

Poverty thresholds are set by the U.S. Census Bureau and vary by family size and composition.

Incomes are in 2011 inflation-adjusted dollars.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

tancies for men.

High workforce participation

Alaska's labor force participation rate is higher than the Lower 48's — 72 percent compared to 65 — and this holds true for the Asian and Pacific Islander populations. Approximately 75 percent of Asian (alone) Alaskans age 16 or older were in the labor force as of 2007-2011, compared to 66 percent of Asians nationwide. For Pacific Islander Alaskans, the participation rate was 71 percent, compared to 69 percent nationwide.

Part of the reason for Alaska's higher labor force participation rate is its smaller share of population age 65 or older. Based on the same survey, Alaska unemployment rates were around 5 percent for the Asian population and 9 percent for Pacific Islanders.

Different jobs than down south

The jobs Asian and Pacific Islander Alaskans work differ somewhat from the state's total workforce as well as their national counterparts. (See Exhibit 7.)

Nationally, about half of Asian Americans are employed in management, business, science, and

arts. The number is much smaller in Alaska (17 percent), and employment is spread through other industries. About 17 percent of Asian Alaskans are in production occupations, which include food processing. Other jobs common in the Asian community include office and administrative support, food preparation and serving, and sales and related occupations.

Two job categories stand out for Pacific Islanders. About one in five hold office and administrative support positions, roughly equivalent to the national rate. These jobs are mostly filled by women. Approximately 16 percent of Pacific Islander Alaskans work in material moving occupations, and in this case a large share is male — well above the 4 percent national rate for Pacific Islanders in this field.

While the U.S. Asian and Pacific Islander populations have higher median household incomes than the nationwide average, household income among Asians and Pacific Islanders in Alaska tends to be lower than average. (See Exhibit 8). This is due in part to their distinct mix of occupations.

Per capita income is significantly lower for Pacific Islanders in Alaska, largely because such a big part of its population hasn't reached working ages yet. (See Exhibit 6.)