

# National Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

## History

National Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month began as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week, first observed in 1979 under President Jimmy Carter, who noted the “enormous contributions to the sciences, arts, industry, government and commerce” made by Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush expanded the celebration to cover the whole month of May. May was chosen by the organizers in recognition of May 7, 1843, the date the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States, and in recognition of May 10, 1869, which marked the completion of the transcontinental railroad, which would not have been possible without the contributions of Chinese-Americans.

## [How Jeanie Jew’s Story Led to the Creation of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month](#)

## Who are Asians and Pacific Islanders?



The current population of Asia is **over 4.7 billion people**, based on the latest United Nations estimates. Asia population is equivalent to 60% of the total world population. According to the United Nations, there are 48 Asian countries that encompasses 5 regions.

### Central Asia

- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan

### East Asia

- China
- Japan
- South Korea
- North Korea
- Mongolia

### West Asia

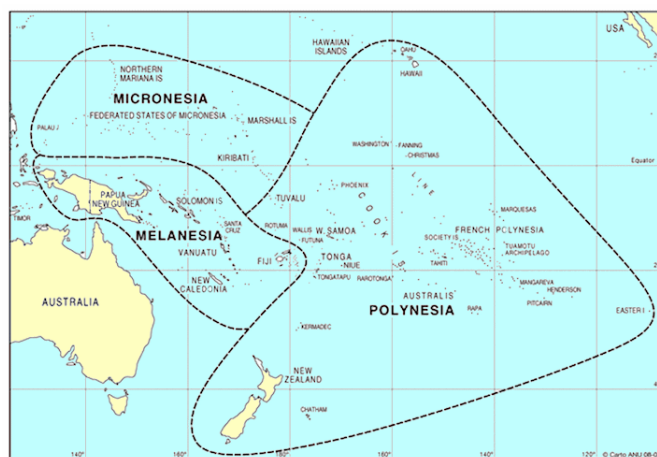
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Bahrain
- Cyprus
- Georgia
- Jordan
- Kuwait
- Iraq
- Israel
- Lebanon
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Syria
- State of Palestine
- Turkey
- United Arab Emirates
- Yemen

### South Asia

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- India
- Iran
- Maldives
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka

### Southeast Asia

- Brunei
- Cambodia
- Indonesia
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Timor-Leste
- Vietnam



Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) have a population of **about 2.3 million people**, spread across a unique and diverse region made up of hundreds of islands, and scattered over an area equivalent to 15 percent of the globe's surface. The 27 Pacific Islander nations and territories include:

### Melanesia

- Papua New Guinea
- Solomon Islands
- New Caledonia
- Vanuatu
- Fiji

### Polynesia

- Tuvalu
- Wallis and Futuna
- Tokelau
- Samoa
- American Samoa
- Tonga
- Niue
- Cook Islands
- French Polynesia
- Pitcairn

### Micronesia

- Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (14 islands including Saipan, Rota, and Tinian)
- Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Yap)
- Gilbert Islands
- Guam
- Nauru
- Republic of Palau
- Republic of Kiribati
- Republic of Marshall Islands

### Hawaiian Islands

*\* (United States Affiliation)*

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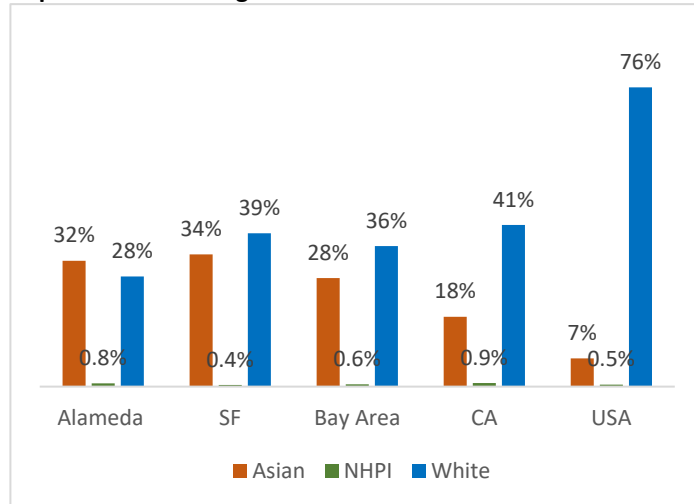
## Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the U.S.

Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders have a history in America that stretches back hundreds of years. The first record of Asians in North America dates to 1587, when Filipino sailors came to what is now California. The first Chinese people recorded in the United States were three sailors who came to Baltimore in 1785 as part of an interracial shipping crew. Asian Americans are defined as people from more than 20 countries in the East Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.

### U.S. Population: Asian Alone or in Combination with Other Races

According to the 2019 Census Bureau population estimate, there are 24 million Asian Americans (alone and in combination) and 1.6 million NHPIs (alone and in combination) living in the United States. Asian Americans account for 7.2% of the nation's population, whereas NHPIs make up about 0.5% of the population. Between 2010 and 2020, Asian alone grew by 35.5% and Asian in combination by 55.5%. NHPI alone grew by 27.8% and NHPI in combination grew by 30.8% since 2010.

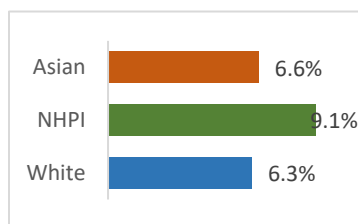
### Population Percentages



### Insurance Coverage

In 2019, 74.7% of Asians and 65.8% of NHPIs in comparison to 74.7% non-Hispanic whites used private health insurance. 25.6% of Asians and 34% of NHPIs in comparison to 34.3% of non-Hispanic whites relied on Medicaid or public health insurance.

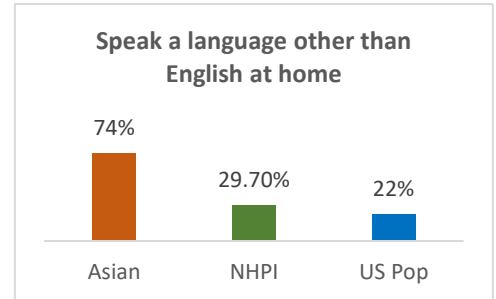
### Rate of Uninsured



Insurance varied by Asian subgroups. Private insurance coverage rates: 65.7% for Cambodian, 78.8 percent for Filipino, 73.3% for Chinese, 62.0% for Hmong. Medicaid or public health insurance coverage rates: 31.8% for Vietnamese, 26.2% for Filipino, 27.0% for Chinese, 35.9% for Hmong.

### Rates of Limited English Proficiency

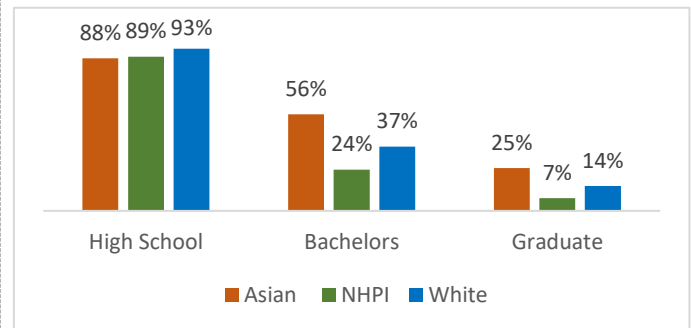
30.9% of Asian Americans are not fluent in English. In 2019, 73.5% of Asian Americans and 29.7% of NHPIs spoke a language other than English at home.



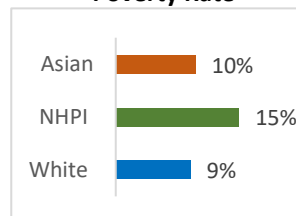
The percentage who "do not speak English very well" varies among Asian American groups: 48.2% of Vietnamese, 42% of Chinese, 19.8% of Filipinos, 17.7% of Asian Indians are not fluent in English.

### Education

In 2019, 87.8% of all Asians and 88.7% of NHPIs graduated high school compared to 93.3% of non-Hispanic whites. 55.6% of Asians and 23.8% of NHPIs earned at least a Bachelors, compared to 36.9% of whites. 24.7% of Asians and 7.4% of NHPIs held a graduate degree, compared to 14.3% of whites.



### Poverty Rate



### Median Annual Income

Asian \$93,759  
NHPI \$66,695  
White \$71,664


Poverty rate varies widely within Asian pop with 5.8% for Filipinos compared to 14% for Hmong.

Sources: [US Census](#) and [HHS Office of Minority Health](#)

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## HEALTH DISPARITIES

Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (NHPIs) compared to Non-Hispanic Whites in the U.S.



<p><b>TUBERCULOSIS</b> <b>33x</b> More common among Asians</p>	<p><b>MENTAL HEALTH</b> <b>60%</b> Less likely to receive mental health treatment</p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">Asian Pacific American Heritage Month</a></p> <p><a href="#">Asian &amp; Pacific Islander American Health Forum</a></p> <p><a href="#">CDC: Asian &amp; Pacific Islander Health</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Association of Asian American Professionals</a></p> <p><a href="#">Papa Ola Lokahi</a></p> <p><a href="#">U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health Resource Center</a></p> <p><a href="#">Pew Research Center – Asian Americans</a></p> <p><a href="#">U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Population Affairs</a></p> <p><b>UCSF BCH Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association</a></p> <p><a href="#">Asian American Research Center on Health (ARCH)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Asian Health Institute</a></p> <p><a href="#">Asian Pacific American Systemwide Alliance (APASA)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Asian Heart and Vascular Center</a></p> <p><a href="#">United Filipinx Association (UFA)</a></p>
<p><b>37x</b> More common among NHPIs</p>	<p><b>ASTHMA</b> <b>30%</b> more likely to have asthma for NHPIs</p>	
<p><b>LIVER CANCER</b> <b>60%</b> more likely to die of liver cancer</p>	<p><b>OBSESITY</b> <b>80%</b> more likely to be obese for NHPIs</p>	
<p><b>8x</b> More likely develop liver cancer for American Samoan men</p>	<p><b>DIABETES</b> <b>40%</b> more likely to be diabetic for Asians</p>	
<p><b>HEPATITIS</b> <b>2x</b> More likely to suffer from Hep A</p>	<p><b>2.5x</b> More likely to be diabetic for NHPIs</p>	
<p><b>8x</b> more likely to die from Hep B</p>	<p><b>60%</b> More likely to have end-stage renal disease for Asians</p>	
<p><b>INFANT MORTALITY</b> <b>40%</b> More likely to die from maternal complications for Asian infants</p>		
<p><b>4.6x</b> More likely to receive late or no prenatal care for NHPIs</p>		
<p>Sources: <a href="#">HHS Office of Minority Health</a>, <a href="#">Punky Aloha</a></p>		