

Highlights of [GAO-07-925](#), a report to congressional requesters

HIGHER EDUCATION

Information Sharing Could Help Institutions Identify and Address Challenges That Some Asian American and Pacific Islander Students Face

Why GAO Did This Study

As a group, Asian American and Pacific Islanders represent about 5 percent of the U.S. population and hold about 8 percent of the college degrees. To better understand the educational attainment and average incomes of the subgroups that comprise this population, the Committee asked: 1) What are Asian American and Pacific Islander subgroups' educational attainment and household income levels? (2) What challenges, if any, Asian American and Pacific Islander students face in pursuing and completing their postsecondary education? and (3) What federal and institutional resources do institutions with large Asian American and Pacific Islander student enrollment use to address the particular needs of these students? GAO analyzed data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Education (Education) and spoke with officials and Asian American and Pacific Islander students at eight postsecondary institutions.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Education facilitate sharing of information among postsecondary institutions that serve Asian American and Pacific Islanders about strategies that foster low-income postsecondary student recruitment, retention, and graduation and about strategies to reach out to low-income students beginning in high school. Education officials generally agreed with our recommendation.

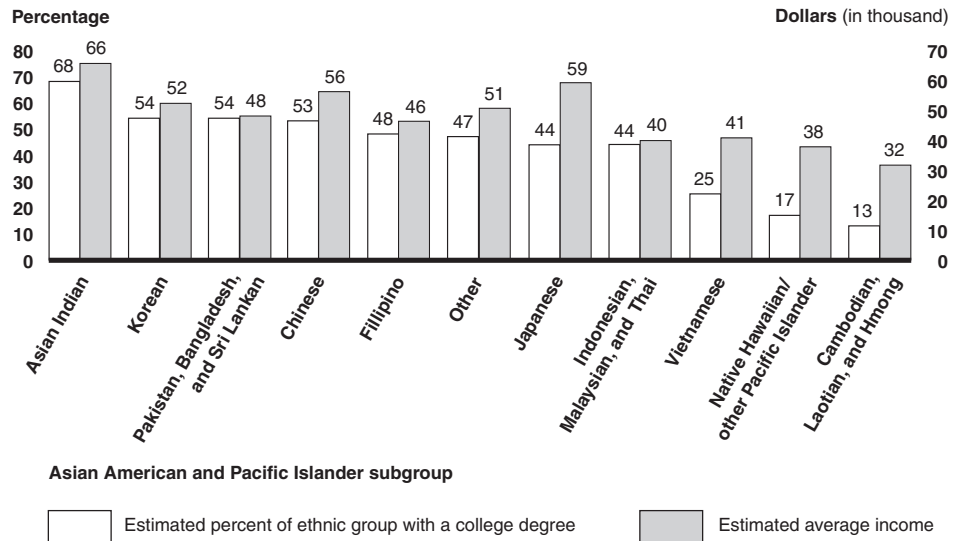
www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-925.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact George Scott at (202) 512-7215 or scottg@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

As a group, Asian American and Pacific Islanders have attained high levels of education and income, but differences among Asian American and Pacific Islander subgroups exist. For example, a greater percentage of Asian Indians and Chinese in the United States had college degrees than Vietnamese, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders and Indochinese—Cambodians, Laotians, and Hmong. Asian Indians had the highest and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders and Indochinese had the lowest average income among employed Asian American and Pacific Islander subgroups. Data limitations, including challenges linking data sources, prevented GAO from fully exploring the reasons for the differences among subgroups.

Education and Average Income, by Asian American and Pacific Islander Subgroup (2005)



Source: GAO analysis of ACS data.

Asian American and Pacific Islander subgroups—while in high school—face a range of challenges that may affect their ability to persist in college. According to GAO's analysis of Education's data, Asian American and Pacific Islander subgroups differ in their levels of academic preparedness, ability to pay for college, and their need to balance academic, employment, and family obligations.

The postsecondary institutions that GAO visited used both federal grants and their own resources to address the needs of Asian American and Pacific Islander students. The schools used federal aid to institutions to provide tutoring services and to supplement Pell Grants for selected students. The schools also applied their own funds to provide a range of services, including outreach to high school students, scholarships, tutoring, and financial aid application and tuition assistance. School officials told GAO that they could benefit from learning about programs and strategies other schools might be using to assist high school and college students.