



Information Brief

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Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are one of the fastest growing minority groups in the U.S. The U.S. Census Bureau projects this group to grow from approximately 9.5 million in 1997 to more than 35 million, 9 percent of the U.S. population, by the year 2050—proportionately more than any other minority group in the country.

Table 1: Resident Population Estimates by Race

	July 1, 1997*	July 1, 2000**	July 1, 2050**
All Races	267,784 (100%)	275,306 (100%)	403,686 (100%)
White	194,746 (72.7%)	196,669 (71.4%)	212,990 (52.8%)
Hispanic	29,182 (10.9%)	32,478 (11.8%)	98,228 (24.3%)
Black	32,339 (12.1%)	33,490 (12.2%)	53,466 (13.2%)
AAPI	9,537 (3.6%)	10,619 (3.9%)	35,759 (8.9%)
American Indian	1,979 (0.7%)	2,047 (0.7%)	3,241 (0.8%)

(Numbers in thousands)

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Profiles of General Demographic Characteristics 2000. Populations Estimates Program. May, 2001

** Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Projections of the Resident Population by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Nativity: Middle Series, 2050 to 2070. Populations Projections Program. January 13, 2000

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are a very heterogeneous group comprised of many different ethnicities, languages, cultures, and persons of all socioeconomic classes, including new immigrants and persons whose families have been here for generations. The major Asian groups are Chinese (24%), Filipino (18%), Asian Indian (16%), Vietnamese (11%), Korean (10%), Japanese (8%) and other Asian groups (13%) including Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, and Tongan. The major Pacific Islander groups are Native Hawaiian (35%), Samoan (23%), Guamanian or Chamorro (15%), and other Pacific Island groups (27%) (Pi, 2001; U.S. Census Bureau, 2001).

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Mission:
 To increase employment opportunities for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders with disabilities nationwide.

Based at:
 University of Hawaii at Manoa, Center on Disability Studies

In collaboration with:
 Hawaii Centers for Independent Living
 Hawaii Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division

Funded by:
 U.S. Department of Education
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Prevalence of Disabilities

U.S. Census Bureau estimates of prevalence of disabilities among the U.S. population indicates that as of November, 1997, 13 percent of the AAPI population, nearly 1.2 million residents, have some type of disability. Based on the Census Bureau population projections in table 1, this translates to approximately 4.6 million AAPIs with disabilities residing throughout the country by the year 2050.

Table 2: Prevalence of Disability Estimates by Race

	Total Population*	With Disability (All Severities)	With Disability (Severe)	With Disability (Needs Assistance)
All Races	267,665 (100%)	52,596 (19.7%)	32,970 (12.3%)	10,076 (3.8%)
White	193,234 (72.2%)	39,478 (20.4%)	23,627 (12.2%)	7,413 (3.8%)
Hispanic	30,086 (11.2%)	4,151 (13.8%)	2,906 (9.7%)	820 (2.7%)
Black	34,369 (12.8%)	7,338 (21.3%)	5,382 (15.7%)	1,495 (4.4%)
AAPI	9,159 (3.4%)	1,192 (13.0%)	776 (8.5%)	223 (2.4%)

(Numbers in thousands)

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Americans with Disabilities: 1997 – Table 1. Prevalence of Disability by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin. Survey of Income and Program Participation. November, 1997.

The low percentage of AAPIs with disabilities depicted in table 2 may reflect a cultural contrast to the individualistic orientation of the mainstream culture in the U.S. According to Hampton (2000), AAPIs tend to rely on their family members or relatives for support before seeking professional help and tend to distrust and, therefore, not to seek assistance from authority establishments such as state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

Disabilities and Employment

Nearly 28 million Americans between the ages of 21 to 64 have some type of disability, yet only half are employed. Those who are employed have annual salaries that average only 77.6 percent of the average annual salaries of all U.S. residents 21-64. In addition, only one-third of Americans with severe disabilities are employed and their annual salaries average only 61.6 percent of the average annual salary for U.S. workers 21-64.

Table 3: Resident Employment and Earnings Estimates

	U.S. Residents 21 to 64*	U.S. Residents 21 to 64 Without Disability	U.S. Residents 21 to 64 With Disability	U.S. Residents 21 to 64 With Disability (Severe)
Total	152,886 (100%)	125,165 (81.9%)	27,721 (18.1%)	17,318 (11.3%)
Employed	119,616 (78.2%)	105,694 (84.4%)	13,922 (50.2%)	5,393 (31.1%)
Earnings (Mean)	\$30,155 (100%)	\$31,045 (103.4%)	\$23,402 (77.6%)	\$18,582 (61.6%)

(Numbers in thousands)

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Employment and Annual Rate of Earnings of Individuals 21 to 64 Years Old: Tables B1-B5. Survey of Income and Program Participation. November, 1997.

Though specific employment and earnings data for AAPIs is not available from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (2002) states that people with disabilities from culturally diverse backgrounds experience twice the discrimination experienced by non-disabled people in the minority community. While 80 percent of people without disabilities are employed, the 2000 National Organization on Disability/Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities states that only 30 percent of working-age people with disabilities are employed full or part-time. In addition, two out of three unemployed people with disabilities would prefer to be working (The Western Laws Center for Disability Rights, 2001).

Additional information regarding AAPIs and disability can be found in the following web sites:

www.census.gov/pjpopulation/www/cen2000/briefs.html

www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/

www.ntac.hawaii.edu

References

Hampton, N.Z. (2000). Meeting the unique needs of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders with disabilities: A challenge to rehabilitation counselors in the 21st century. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 31 (1), 40-46

Pi, E.H., (2001). Asians and Pacific Islanders with disabilities. *White Paper—Pacific regional conference on Asians and Pacific Islanders with disabilities. 1-15*. California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons.

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The Western Laws Center for Disability Rights, (2001). Statistics About People With Disabilities and Employment. Available at <http://wlcdr.everybody.org/annuonce/2001-08-30/3.mason>

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The information in this brief can be provided in accessible format upon request.