Assessing the
ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATION IN PENNSYLVANIA

SEPTEMBER 2018
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PREFACE

This report and the corresponding work comes as an outcome of Governor Tom Wolf’s Advisory Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs’ Jobs That Pay Committee. The mission of the Jobs That Pay Committee is to “identify workforce, education, and economic development strategies that help increase access of all members of the AAPI community to family sustaining middle class jobs in Pennsylvania. Strategies adopted by this sub-committee will individually and collectively help ensure at least 60 percent of AAPI community members have some postsecondary education by 2025, a minimum requirement for jobs of the future (that pay) in the commonwealth.” Committee members, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education and others as identified in the table below, worked tirelessly to compile this comprehensive report, the first in the history of the commonwealth.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Collectively, the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population represents a large and growing community in Pennsylvania. However, it also embodies a diverse community of people from 29 ethnic subgroups who live throughout the Commonwealth. AAPI advocates in the state are seeking improvements to data collection and sampling practices in order to better represent the diversity found within Pennsylvania’s AAPI community. Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education has sought to address this need by producing this report focusing on Pennsylvania’s AAPI population. Through this report, data-driven content and information can be used to inform key stakeholders about the trends and attributes of the AAPI community in the Commonwealth.

Purpose

On April 9, 2018, the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs held a learning session at the Dixon University Center, which focused on defining the environmental landscape of Pennsylvania’s AAPI population. One of the outcomes of the session was the decision to produce this report. This report contains a set of demographic, socioeconomic, and workforce information focused on the AAPI population in Pennsylvania. The intentions of this report are fourfold:

- First, it provides a baseline reporting structure to evaluate the AAPI population at the state level and sub-region level within Pennsylvania, which can be repeated in the future.
- Second, it identifies socio-economic and demographic characteristics within Pennsylvania’s AAPI community that can be used to conduct comparative analysis.
- Third, it provides a data-driven analysis and discussion of trends in Pennsylvania’s labor market, including analysis of industry and occupational employment.
- Finally, this report creates the foundation to identify discrepancies or inconsistencies within Pennsylvania’s AAPI population and offers recommendations and strategies to address any issues.
Data sources and limitations

A recent report by BeamData notes:¹

Most data on South Asian population subgroups remains aggregated or largely missing at local levels, with the exception of data on Asian Indians. In larger metropolitan areas, such as New York and San Francisco disaggregated data is available because of larger South Asian populations. However, in growing cities such as Pittsburgh, data and information remains scattered and incomplete.

A lack of disaggregated data on South Asian populations exacerbates cultural misconceptions (i.e. Model Minority stereotype) and limits the community’s access to basic resources. The story of South Asian history is a complicated mix that deals with economic, social and ethnic differences within the group as well as a story of adjustment to new cities.

Multiple data sources were analyzed and compared for this report including the U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and data from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Throughout this report, the data specifically from the US Census’ American Community Survey (ACS) was used to show the sub-group breakouts of the AAPI population in Pennsylvania. The ACS is the only data source that allows for a detailed analysis of the AAPI population because of the detailed race variable. The data from NCES, BLS, and PDE only report race data at an aggregated level.

Due to small sample sizes, certain detailed races were grouped together in order to provide more robust estimates for this analysis. Furthermore, the most recent 5-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) file (2012-2016) was used to increase the sample size of the AAPI population. As such, the 5-year file prohibits the ability to produce a comparative time-series analysis of the AAPI sub-groups. The data presented using the 5-year 2012-2016 PUMS file should be interpreted as a single point-in-time estimate.

The AAPI sub-groups are presented in Table 1. Furthermore, throughout the report these groups are presented individually, as well as collectively as AAPI total and compared to the rest of Pennsylvania’s population- which comprises all of Pennsylvania’s residents except those who identified as Asian American and Pacific Islander.

### TABLE 1: AAPI sub-groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-group</th>
<th>ACS detailed race code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>East Asian</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guamanian or Chamorro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshallese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Asian</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutanese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepalese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lankan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southeast Asian</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All other Asian</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All combinations of Asian races only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. PENNSYLVANIA’S GROWING ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATION

Pennsylvania’s population of 12.8 million people ranks 5th in the United States. However, population growth in the state has been slow; since 2012, the Commonwealth’s population has grown by less than 1 percent, adding a net 20,700 new residents between 2012 and 2016. In fact, without the growth of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population, the Commonwealth’s population would have declined.  

The AAPI population is an important and growing community in Pennsylvania, adding nearly 54,400 residents to Pennsylvania between 2012 and 2016. With a growth rate of 14.6 percent during this period, the AAPI population grew faster than Pennsylvania’s population overall. This population growth also exceeded that of the US overall as well as the US AAPI population which had population growth rates of 3.0 percent and 11.7 percent, respectively. The AAPI community represents about 3.3 percent of Pennsylvania’s population, compared to 5.4 percent nationally. In 2016, we estimate Pennsylvania’s AAPI population to be 427,461, as displayed in Figure 1, along with the growth since 2012.

FIG. 1: Population growth of Pennsylvania’s AAPI community, 2012 to 2016

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS annual estimates 2012-2016

Note that this statement is not claiming that all other non-AAPI population subgroups declined over the indicated time period. Rather, the comparison is between the AAPI population (alone) and all other non-AAPI populations (combined).
AAPI sub-groups

The AAPI population in Pennsylvania embodies a diverse community of people from 29 ethnic sub-groups. The East Asian population represent the largest sub-group, followed by South Asian, Southeast Asian, All other Asian, and Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander. Figure 2 displays the share and population of each respective AAPI sub-group in the state. Although aggregated sub-groups were needed to examine the socioeconomic and labor market variables discussed later in the report, Figure 3 shows the largest detailed AAPI races in Pennsylvania, as reported in the ACS.

FIG. 2: Pennsylvania’s AAPI subgroup population shares

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016

FIG. 3: Pennsylvania’s AAPI population by detailed race

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
Language

Language barriers can present hurdles when reaching out to Pennsylvania’s AAPI community. In fact, about 299,600 people (78.1 percent of the AAPI population aged 5+) in Pennsylvania’s AAPI community speak a language other than English at home.\(^3\) This compares to the rest of Pennsylvania, which indicates only 8.5 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home. While this does not indicate that the AAPI does not have the ability to speak English, it does reflect the preferences of the AAPI community. This factor is particularly important when considering government forms and surveys and could increase response rates if more language options are offered.

When considering the ability to speak English, nearly 68,000 people (17.8 percent of the AAPI population aged 5+) in the AAPI community cannot speak English well or speak any English. In fact, the AAPI community accounts for nearly 1 in 3 of those residents in Pennsylvania who cannot speak English well or at all.

**FIG. 4: Share of Pennsylvania’s AAPI population speaking a foreign language at home**

- Cannot speak English well or at all
- Language other than English spoken at home

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016

\(^3\) The rate calculation excludes the population of children under the age of 5.
Pennsylvania regions

About two-thirds of Pennsylvania’s AAPI population (276,242 residents) live in the Southeast region. The Central and Southwest regions are also notable areas for the AAPI community, with approximately 55,000 AAPI residents in each respective region. The concentration of the AAPI population in these regions is reflective of broader population trends in the US, in which urban areas have been growing at a faster rate relative to more rural areas. This is also echoed in the smaller AAPI populations living in the more rural regions of Northwest and Northeast Pennsylvania.

FIG. 5: Pennsylvania’s AAPI regional populations

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016

Mobility status

Migration from outside of the US is one of the ways in which the AAPI community is growing in Pennsylvania. In fact, on average 4.6 percent of the AAPI community moved to Pennsylvania from outside of the US from 2012 to 2016, and an additional 14.4 percent moved to Pennsylvania from another state or territory within the US. In total, the AAPI community in Pennsylvania indicated a higher mobility rate compared to the rest of the state’s residents.

4 The remaining 81.0 percent of the AAPI community has been living in Pennsylvania for more than one year.
5 The domestic mobility rate indicates a resident moved from their home from within the US or Puerto Rico in the past year. This would include both movers from outside of and inside of Pennsylvania.
FIG. 6: Pennsylvania's AAPI mobility rates

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
3. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section provides further information about the demographic and socioeconomic composition of Pennsylvania’s AAPI community relative to the rest of Pennsylvania in order to better understand the distinctions of the sub-groups. Analysis of key socioeconomic indicators—such as age, unemployment, poverty, and disability status—provides insight into the segment of the population that may be considered economically disadvantaged. Areas with high proportions of economically disadvantaged communities may require additional considerations in government support.

Gender

Similar to the overall population of Pennsylvania, the gender breakout of the AAPI population indicates slightly more females than males. Figure 6 illustrates that females comprise approximately 52 percent of Pennsylvania’s AAPI population and 51 percent of the rest of Pennsylvania’s population. Notably, the East Asian and Southeast Asian populations suggest a higher than average share of females, at 55 percent.

**FIG. 6:** Pennsylvania’s AAPI population by gender

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
Age

The age breakout of the AAPI population indicates a relatively young population, with over half under the age of 35. At the other end of the age spectrum, the AAPI population has a much smaller share of people over the age of 55 relative to the rest of Pennsylvania. This will have implications for the future population growth of the state, as indicated by the share of people in the prime childbearing age, which is much higher in the AAPI community compared to the rest of Pennsylvania. Additionally, Pennsylvania’s aging population will impact the workforce and available labor supply over the next decade. Figure 7 displays the age distribution of each respective population, in broad age groups.

FIG. 7: Pennsylvania’s AAPI population by age group

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
Unemployment

Pennsylvania’s unemployment rate has trended closely with the national unemployment rate since the end of the Great Recession. This suggests that opportunities for dislocated workers on average are roughly the same, compared to the rest of the nation. Figure 8 highlights the downward trend in unemployment rates in the US and Pennsylvania from 2012 to 2016, based on data from the BLS Current Population Survey and Local Area Unemployment Statistics.


Based on the 5-year ACS PUMS data, the AAPI community has experienced slightly better outcomes in the labor market relative to the rest of Pennsylvania, with an unemployment rate of 6.1 percent. However, there is notable variation within the AAPI population groups; East Asians exhibited the lowest unemployment rate at 5.3 percent, while the Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander population faced an unemployment rate that exceeded the Commonwealth’s, at 9.7 percent. Figure 9 shows the average unemployment rates in Pennsylvania’s AAPI population as well as the rest of Pennsylvania. Note that the unemployment rates presented in Figure 9 are based on the 5-year ACS PUMS file.
In Pennsylvania, the poverty rate trended downward since 2012, and the poverty rate has remained below the U.S. average. Given the lower poverty rate compared with the nation, there is an underlying assumption that the compensation associated with the jobs in Pennsylvania may be higher than the national average. Figure 10 compares the poverty rates of the US and Pennsylvania from 2012 to 2016.

**FIG. 9: Pennsylvania’s AAPI unemployment rates**

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016

**Poverty**

**FIG. 10: US and Pennsylvania poverty rates, 2012 to 2016**

Source: U.S. Census – Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

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6 Poverty estimates are based on U.S. Census Bureau’s Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates. Calculations comprise the total number of individuals in the geography, divided by the number of individuals that are classified as being in poverty.
Taking a deeper dive into the AAPI community, it becomes apparent that significant differences exist between the various groups. With the exception of the South Asian population, all other groups within the AAPI community indicate poverty rates that exceed the rest of the state. Alarmingly, the poverty rate for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders is over twice that of the AAPI community and the state overall. Figure 10 compares the poverty rates of the AAPI community in Pennsylvania.

**FIG. 11: Pennsylvania’s AAPI poverty rates**

![Poverty Rates Chart](image)

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016

When unemployment and poverty are evaluated together, a low unemployment rate, coupled with a high poverty rate, suggests an underlying cause that is contributing to marginally increased poverty rates. This cause may be associated with the quality of new jobs that have emerged since the recession, which have done little to abate high poverty rates in the AAPI community, despite the low levels of unemployment.
Disability Status

In Pennsylvania, over 1.8 million people, or nearly 15 percent of the population has a disability. In the AAPI community, the rate is less than half that of the rest of Pennsylvania, at 6.8 percent. Similar to the rates of unemployment and poverty, there is notable variation within the AAPI population groups; South Asians exhibited the lowest disability rate at 5.6 percent, while the Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander population indicated the highest disability rate at 18.8 percent. Figure 12 shows the average disability rates in Pennsylvania’s AAPI population as well as the rest of Pennsylvania.

FIG. 12: Pennsylvania’s AAPI disability rates

![Diagram of Pennsylvania’s AAPI disability rates]

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016

Health insurance coverage

When looking at health insurance coverage in Pennsylvania, it is reassuring to see that about 90 percent of the Commonwealth’s citizens are covered. Nevertheless, efforts should be made to ensure that the entire population can have access to such an important program. Looking at the health insurance coverage rates of the AAPI community, it is apparent that some groups are lagging behind the state overall. Specifically, the Southeast Asian population’s coverage rate is lower than all other groups.

7 People who chose not to answer the disability status question were excluded from the calculations.
This may be partly explained by the high rates of self-employment, as discussed later in Section 5 of this report. Self-employed persons face a greater burden relative to wage and salary employees when searching for health insurance. Benefits such as health insurance and 401k’s are typically offered as part of employment compensation packages for wage and salary employees. Health insurance coverage is particularly important for young families with children, who are relatively more reliant on health care services. Figure 13 shows the health insurance coverage rates in Pennsylvania’s AAPI sub-groups as well as the rest of Pennsylvania.

FIG. 13: Pennsylvania’s AAPI health insurance coverage rates

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
4. EDUCATION AND ENROLLMENTS

The levels of educational attainment of a population indicate several important characteristics in an economy. Areas with highly educated workers earn higher wages, are more productive and can typically adjust more quickly to changing economic conditions. Additionally, an educated workforce is less likely to be unemployed, require social assistance, and more likely to lead a healthier lifestyle—aspects that bolster value in an economy.8,9

Educational attainment

A view of the AAPI community’s education attainment indicates that more than half (57 percent) of those over 25 years old have earned a college degree (Associate’s degree or higher). This share greatly exceeds the rest of Pennsylvania, of which only 37 percent have earned a college degree.

FIG. 14: Educational attainment of Pennsylvania’s AAPI age 25+ population

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016

**Enrollment status**

For the under 25 population, school enrollment is a strong indicator of future educational success. Currently, 78 percent of the AAPI population is enrolled in either primary, secondary, or postsecondary education. This exceeds the rest of Pennsylvania’s population, of which only 69 percent are currently enrolled. Notably, the All other Asian and Rest of Pennsylvania under 25 populations not enrolled in any schooling is 10 percentage points higher compared to the AAPI population overall. Figure 15 compares the enrollment status of the under 25 population in Pennsylvania.

**FIG. 15: Enrollment status of Pennsylvania’s AAPI under age 25 population**

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
The performance of Pennsylvania’s economy and its labor market have significant impacts on the socioeconomic measures discussed above. Greater participation in the labor market can help to reduce the burden on government programs such as unemployment insurance and can help reduce poverty. Importantly, a strong labor market can help retain recent graduates from postsecondary institutions within Pennsylvania, who will help to shape the future of the Commonwealth. Two important measures of labor force activity include the labor force participation rate (LFPR) and the employment to population ratio (E/P ratio). Labor force participation is calculated by dividing the number of employed plus unemployed persons by the population, which in this case we examine the 25 to 64 prime working age group. Similarly, the employment to population ratio is simply the number of employed persons divided by the population, again using the 25 to 64 prime working age group.

Overall, Pennsylvania’s AAPI population has a similar share of employed persons in the prime working age population compared to the rest of the state. However, this is largely due to the high E/P ratio in the South Asian population, the only AAPI group to exceed the rest of Pennsylvania’s rate. Similarly, the labor force participation rate of Pennsylvania’s AAPI prime working age population is close to the rest of the state. However, the rate is bolstered by higher rates within the South Asian population.

**FIG. 16:** Pennsylvania’s AAPI E/P ratio and labor force participation rate, ages 25-64

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E/P Ratio</th>
<th>LFPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Asian</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asian</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian/</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAPI Total</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of PA</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
Industry employment

The industries where workers are employed provides a strong indicator of average pay as well as the challenges faced in an ever-changing economy. The AAPI community exhibits noticeable differences in industry employment when compared to the rest of Pennsylvania. In particular, compared to Pennsylvania’s non-AAPI employed population, all groups within the AAPI employed population have larger shares of employment in wholesale and retail trade; transportation, warehousing, and utilities; and public administration. Additionally, all groups within the AAPI employed population have smaller shares of employment in manufacturing and education, healthcare, and social assistance.

These industry differences can partly explain the differences in unemployment and poverty within the AAPI community compared to the rest of Pennsylvania. For example, the wholesale and retail trade sector pays lower wages, on average, than the manufacturing sector, which may partially explain the higher poverty rates in the AAPI community. But employment in Pennsylvania’s manufacturing sector has been in decline for some time, partly explaining the higher unemployment rates faced by the rest of Pennsylvania population compared to the AAPI community overall.

**FIG. 17:** Pennsylvania’s AAPI employed population by sector

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
Occupational employment

The types of jobs that workers are employed in can provide a robust indicator of average pay. Another important factor, when considering occupational employment and earnings, is the level of educational attainment required to become employed in a specific job. On average, higher paying occupations require higher levels of educational attainment. As a result, people without proper training or education will face barriers to entry into higher paying jobs and are more likely to be unemployed.

For example, management, business, science, and arts occupations pay higher wages, on average, compared to production, transportation, and material moving occupations. The AAPI community exhibits a larger share of employment within the former group, but variations within the community can help to explain the differences in poverty within the AAPI groups. Specifically, the largest occupation group that employs the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population is production, transportation, and material moving. As noted above, this group of occupations tends to have lower pay as reflected by the high poverty rate identified earlier in the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population.

FIG. 18: Pennsylvania’s AAPI employed population by major occupation group

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
Self-employment

In addition to differences in industry and occupational employment, the AAPI community also exhibits a higher share of self-employed workers\(^\text{10}\) compared to the rest of Pennsylvania. Past research has shown that immigrants in particular are more likely to be self-employed. This is due in part to a lack of social networks that enable them to integrate into local job markets, resulting in individuals starting their own businesses.

As noted earlier, benefits such as health insurance and 401k’s are typically offered as part of employment compensation packages for wage and salary employees but not for self-employed workers. This can cause a burden on self-employed workers, especially when considering the impact that access to retirement savings can have on poverty. Additionally, having to pay out-of-pocket for health insurance coverage can create further burdens on the self-employed by reducing disposable income.

**FIG. 19:** Pennsylvania’s AAPI self-employment rates within the age 25+ employed workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Self-employment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Asian</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asian</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other Asian</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAPI Total</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of PA</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016

\(^\text{10}\) Self-employed workers include both self-employed in own not incorporated and self-employed in own incorporated business.
Income

The variation in educational attainment and labor market status is evident when looking at the average income of the AAPI community. Overall, the AAPI 25+ employed population earns more, on average, than the rest of Pennsylvania. However, this is largely due to the high average earnings of the East Asian and South Asian population groups. As indicated by their higher poverty rates, both the Southeast Asian and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander workers earn about 10 percent less than the rest of Pennsylvania.

**FIG. 20**: Pennsylvania’s AAPI average earnings within the age 25+ employed workforce

![Graph showing average earnings by AAPI subgroups](image)

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016

Commute to work

The AAPI community is much more reliant on mass transit, biking, and walking to get to work compared to the rest of Pennsylvania. This can be partly explained by the geographic concentration of the AAPI community in the more urban areas of the state. Nearly 85 percent of the rest of Pennsylvania relies on a private vehicle to get to work compared to 77 percent in the AAPI community. As a result, transit policies that support mass transit are more likely to benefit the AAPI population. Figure 21 displays the share of Pennsylvania workers who commute to work without a private vehicle.
FIG. 21: Pennsylvania’s AAPI commute to work by transportation mode within the age 25+ employed workforce (excluding privately-owned vehicle)

Source: American Community Survey, PUMS 5-year estimate 2012-2016
6. CONCLUSION

Pennsylvania’s AAPI population is growing and thriving, but it still faces many hurdles. State programs should take note of the regional variation in the AAPI community. Additionally, these programs should be made aware of the languages spoken by the AAPI community; they are many and varied. Some strategic suggestions based on the findings of this report include:

- When designing any type of government-sponsored program, the primary language of residents should be offered in all communications to generate the highest participation and most effective results. For example, it is important for community groups to collaborate with the Census Bureau to ensure that language barriers do not lead to an incomplete count of the AAPI population in the upcoming 2020 Census, since so many other government programs rely heavily upon census data.

- The AAPI community is relatively young and will becoming increasingly important in Pennsylvania, which has an aging workforce. Policies to support young and growing families will be necessary to promote population and employment growth in the state.

- Although the educational attainment in the AAPI community is quite high, the variation within the groups indicates that some population segments might need additional educational support.

- The variation in educational attainment is evident in the labor market status and income of the AAPI community. Programs designed to help alleviate unemployment and poverty should consider the sub-groups facing high rates in both areas.

- Access to jobs is an important consideration when aiming to reduce unemployment and poverty. Transit policies that support mass transit are more likely to benefit the AAPI population.