

Compared with the educational attainment of the population in their country of origin, recent Asian immigrants also stand out as a select group. For example, about 27% of adults ages 25 to 64 in South Korea and 25% in Japan have a bachelor's degree or more.² In contrast, nearly 70% of comparably aged recent immigrants from these two countries have at least a bachelor's degree.

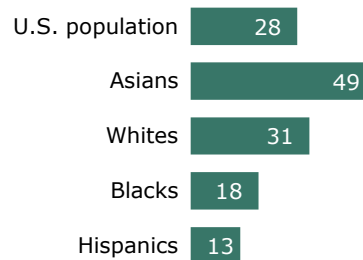
Recent Asian immigrants are also about three times as likely as recent immigrants from other parts of the world to receive their green cards—or permanent resident status—on the basis of employer rather than family sponsorship (though family reunification remains the most common legal gateway to the U.S. for Asian immigrants, as it is for all immigrants).

The modern immigration wave from Asia is nearly a half century old and has pushed the total population of Asian Americans—foreign born and U.S born, adults and children—to a record 18.2 million in 2011, or 5.8% of the total U.S. population, up from less than 1% in 1965.³ By comparison, non-Hispanic whites are 197.5 million and 63.3%, Hispanics 52.0 million and 16.7% and non-Hispanic blacks 38.3 million and 12.3%.

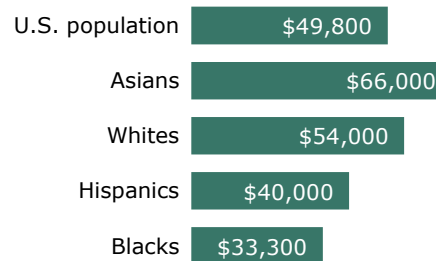
Asian Americans trace their roots to any of dozens of countries in the Far East, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Each country of origin subgroup has its own unique history, culture, language, religious beliefs, economic and demographic traits, social and political values, and pathways into America.

Asian Americans Lead Others In Education, Income

% with a bachelor's degree or more, among ages 25 and older, 2010



Median household income, 2010



Note: Asians include mixed-race Asian population, regardless of Hispanic origin. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Household income is based on householders ages 18 and older; race and ethnicity are based on those of household head.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2010 American Community Survey, Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS) files

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² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. Based on 2009 data.

³ This is the first official estimate of the size of the Asian-American population produced by the Census Bureau since the 2010 Census; it was released in May 2012. Throughout the remainder of this report, population counts are based on the 2010 Census, which counted 17.3 million Asian Americans. Totals for Asian Americans include Hispanics and those of mixed race; totals for whites and blacks include only single-race non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race.