



# Knocking at the College Door

## Projections of High School Graduates

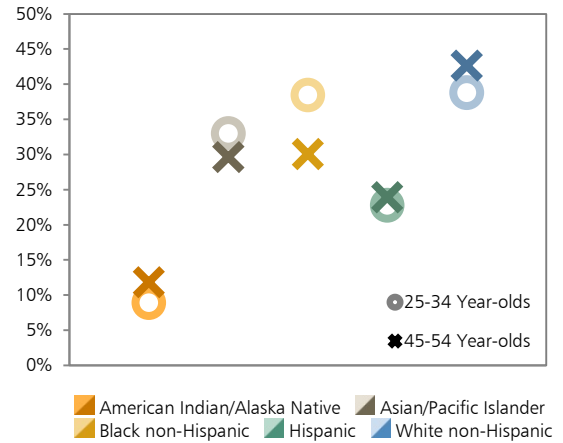
### ALASKA

National and regional trends mask important variation among states in the supply of high school graduates. This profile provides brief indicators for Alaska related to: current levels of educational attainment, our projections of high school graduates into the future, and two common barriers to student access and success – insufficient academic preparation and inadequate finances.

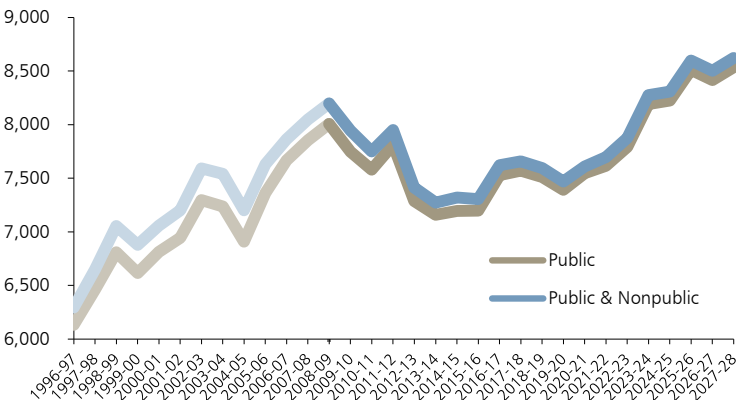
#### Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity<sup>1</sup>

Workforce projections indicate there will be a growing demand for well-educated labor, which means that younger adults need to be as well as or more educated than older adults given how much longer they will need to be employed. Data about the proportion of Alaskan adults ages 25-34 and 45-54 with postsecondary degrees between 2008 and 2010 indicate that overall, younger adults are less likely (33%) to have a postsecondary degree than older adults (37%), regardless of race/ethnicity.

- The exception is younger Black non-Hispanic Alaskans, who are more likely to possess a postsecondary degree than older Black non-Hispanics, and are also the most likely to have a degree among all non-Whites of either age group.
- The observed educational attainment gaps for Alaskan American Indians/Alaska Natives are particularly important in a state with relatively high proportions of these race/ethnicities among their high school graduates.



#### Production of High School Graduates



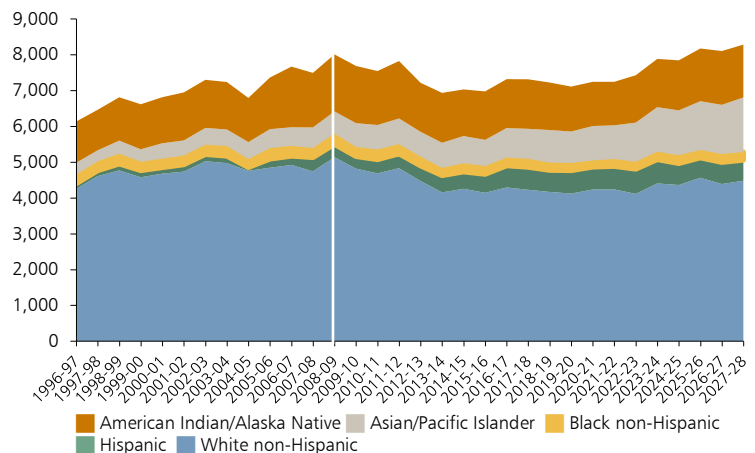
According to our projections, Alaska will have smaller graduating classes for most of the next decade compared to its high point of 8,200 in 2008-09, before slowly increasing to a new high of 8,600 by 2027-28.

- Alaska is projected to graduate 3% to 7% fewer graduates in most years through 2020-21.
- After this, Alaska slowly begins to produce more graduates each year, so that by 2027-28 its graduating class is about 5% higher than 2008-09.
- Nonpublic high school graduates are only 1% to 2% of the total in any year, 190 graduates in 2008-09, decreasing to 90 graduates by 2027-28.

#### Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

Decreasing numbers of White non-Hispanic graduates are the primary reason for smaller graduating classes in Alaska over the next decade.

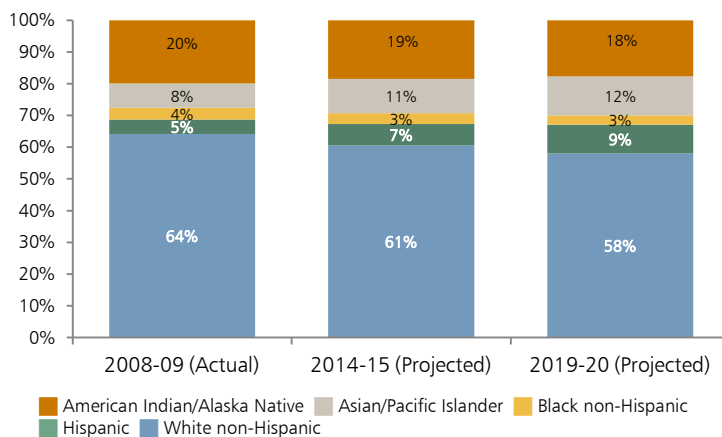
- White non-Hispanic graduates consistently decline, from a high point of 5,100 in 2008-09, to an average of 4,100 for most years through 2022-23, concluding with small regains to 4,500 by 2027-28.
- Asians/Pacific Islanders account for the largest growth among other racial/ethnic groups, doubling from 620 in 2008-09 to 1,200 by 2023-24, and increasing thereafter.
- While they only account for 5% to 9% of graduates in any year, there will be approximately twice as many Hispanic graduates in the last several projected years.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives and Black non-Hispanics are projected to have relatively stable numbers for most years.



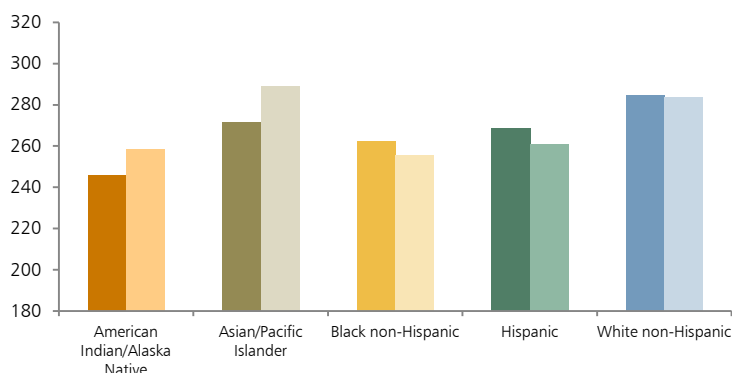
## Composition of Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

Alaska's graduating classes are projected to grow increasingly diverse due to declines in White non-Hispanic graduates and increasing numbers of non-White graduates.

- Non-Whites accounted for 36% of public high school graduates in 2008-09. By 2019-20, 42% will be non-White, and by 2027-28 they will be 46% of the total.
- American Indian/Alaska Natives are the largest proportion of non-White graduates, at between 18% and 20% in any given year, reflecting relatively stable numbers in each year.
- Shares of Asians/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics both grow throughout the years projected, with Asians/Pacific Islanders rising, in particular.



## Composite Math and Reading Scores by Race/Ethnicity<sup>2</sup>



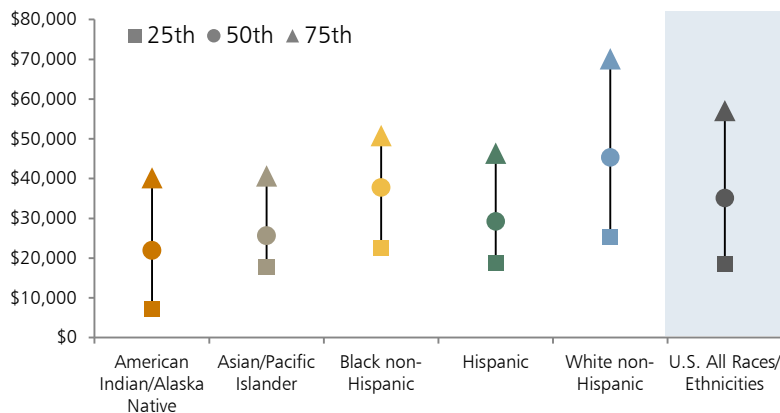
Note: Alaska in darker shades; U.S. in lighter shades.

Academic preparation is a major factor in college access and success, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides some measure of differences by race/ethnicity. The average composite math and reading score across races/ethnicities for Alaskan 8<sup>th</sup> graders in 2011 ranged from 246 to 286. The average Alaskan White non-Hispanic 8<sup>th</sup> grader scored 285, about the same as the national average. Black non-Hispanic and Hispanic 8<sup>th</sup> graders also scored close to the national average, 262 and 269, respectively.

American Indian/Alaska Natives had the lowest composite scores among 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Alaska (246). Asian/Pacific Islanders had higher average scores (272) than other non-Whites, but lag the national average as do American Indian/Alaska Natives.

## Annual Income by Race/Ethnicity<sup>3</sup>

A second major barrier is access to the financial resources needed to pay for college. Among working-age adults (25-64) in Alaska from 2006 to 2010, the statewide median income was \$39,188, compared with \$35,147 for the nation. American Indians/Alaska Natives were the least well off financially among all races/ethnicities with a median income of \$21,967, just over half of the statewide median; three-quarters of American Indian/Alaska Natives earned \$40,220 or less; and one in four earned about \$7,300 or less. The median income of Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics was also less than the statewide median income, at about \$25,700 and \$29,300, respectively.



Projections of high school graduates are from WICHE, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, 2012. 1996-97 to 2008-09 are actual reported graduates and 2009-10 to 2027-28 are projections. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems supplied the data used in the first and last figures. State-level estimates for those figures are only reported for a racial/ethnic group when the coefficients of variation for all estimates do not exceed 25% and sample size is 50 or greater. Readers should understand that estimates for small samples can be imprecise due to large standard errors. WICHE provides relevant data tables at <http://wiche.edu/knocking-8th/technicalNotes>.

<sup>1</sup>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-10 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File. Average annual percent of population aged 25-34 and 45-54 with an Associate's degree or higher in 2008-10.

<sup>2</sup>Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2009 and 2011 Mathematics and Reading Assessments, generated using the NAEP Data Explorer. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>. Notes: Composite scores are the average of the Math and Reading scores for 8<sup>th</sup> graders tested in 2011, scale of 0 to 500; scores for 12<sup>th</sup> graders taking NAEP were not available for this state.

<sup>3</sup>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-10 American Community Survey Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample File. Note: Percentiles for wage/salary income were calculated for persons age 25-64 with positive earnings; unemployed persons with \$0 income were also included. Figures are in 2010 dollars. Native Hawaiians are included in Asian/Pacific Islander.

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Visit <http://wiche.edu/knocking> to obtain the full publication and download these projections as [graphs](#) or [data files](#).