



# Knocking at the College Door

## Projections of High School Graduates

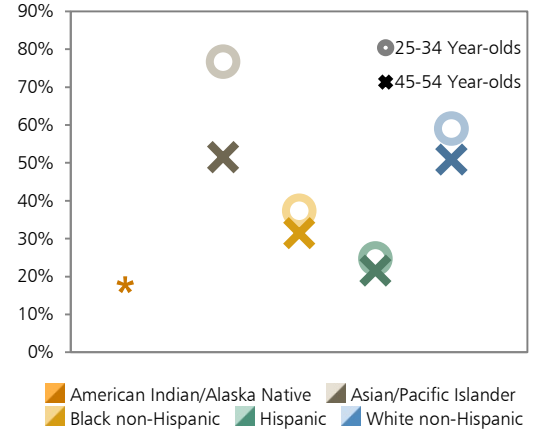
### MASSACHUSETTS

National and regional trends mask important variation among states in the supply of high school graduates. This profile provides brief indicators for Massachusetts 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>

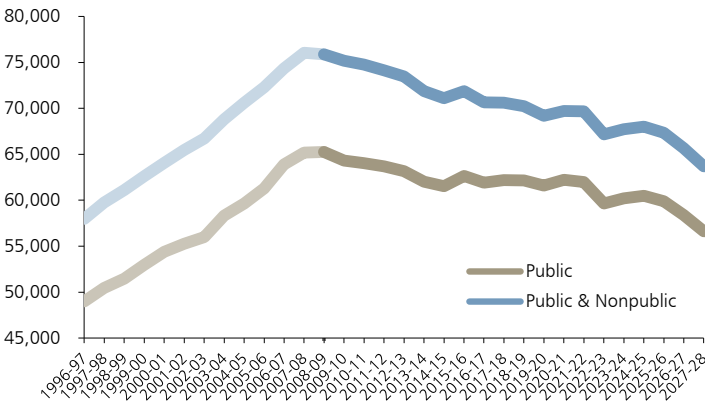
Workforce projections suggest a growing demand for well-educated labor, which means that younger adults need to be as well as or more educated than older adults given how much longer they will need to be employed. In Massachusetts between 2008 and 2010, about 54.3% of younger adults (aged 25-34) had earned postsecondary degrees, compared to 47.7% of older adults (aged 45-54). Massachusetts is already among the most-well educated in the nation and still improving on that, but large gaps between racial/ethnic groups will hold it back.

- Younger cohorts of all the state’s racial/ethnic groups are more likely to have a degree than their older counterparts, except for Hispanics whose rates are not different beyond the margins of error.
- Sizeable gaps exist between the degree attainment rates of younger groups by race/ethnicity. Asians/Pacific Islanders have the highest rate (76.7%), then White non-Hispanics (59.1%) and Black non-Hispanics (37%). Hispanics are easily the least well-educated at 24.7%.



\* No estimates are reported due to insufficient sample size or a coefficient of variation that exceeded 25% for at least one estimate.

#### Production of High School Graduates



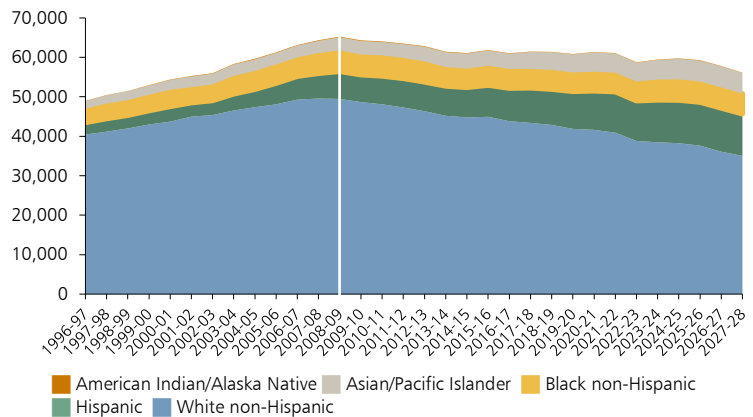
Beginning in 1996-97, Massachusetts set out on a period of rapid, uninterrupted increase in the size of the high school graduate class. The future looks a lot different, as graduates are projected to decrease steadily throughout the forecasted timeframe.

- Between 1996-97 and the peak year of 2007-08, the state added 18,082 more graduates, an increase of 31%. But between then and 2019-20, graduates are projected to fall by nearly 7,000 (9%).
- Nonpublic schools are also expected to see their production fall, down over 3,400 from its peak year of 2005-06 when they produced over 11,000, and they will decrease from about 15% of the total to about 11% over the same timeframe.

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

A precipitous drop in projected graduates from White non-Hispanic backgrounds is the main driving force behind the overall decline. Growth is projected for Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders, but insufficient to fully offset the White non-Hispanics’ lower numbers.

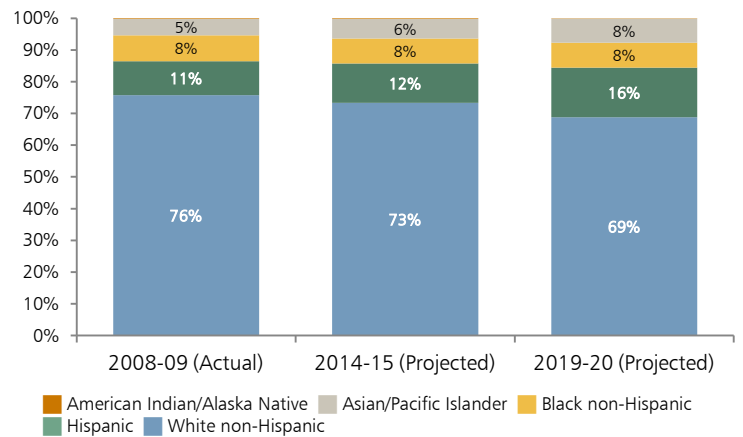
- Between 2008-09 and 2019-20, White non-Hispanics are expected to decrease 7,600, about 15%.
- Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders are growing at a nearly identical pace of 36% between 2008-09 and 2019-20, although Hispanics will add twice as many graduates over the period, about 2,500 to 1,250 for Asians/Pacific Islanders.



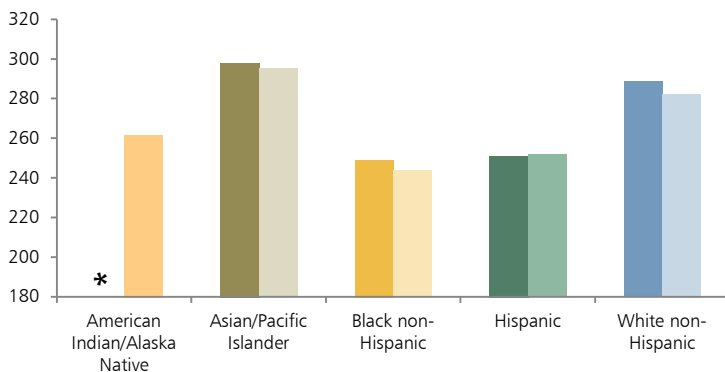
## Composition of Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

White non-Hispanics accounted for just over three-quarters of public high school graduates in 2008-09. But that share will drop as they decrease in number while Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders increase.

- By 2019-20, White non-Hispanics are expected to be only 69% of the graduating class.
- Hispanics' share is projected to rise by 5 percentage points to 16% by 2019-20 relative to 2008-09.
- Asians/Pacific Islanders' share will also rise, up about 50% to 8% over the same period.
- Not expected to see their number of graduates grow or shrink much, Black non-Hispanics are projected to remain about 8% of the graduating class.



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



Academic preparation is a major factor in access to and success in college. One indicator of readiness comes from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math and reading scores for twelfth graders in 2009.

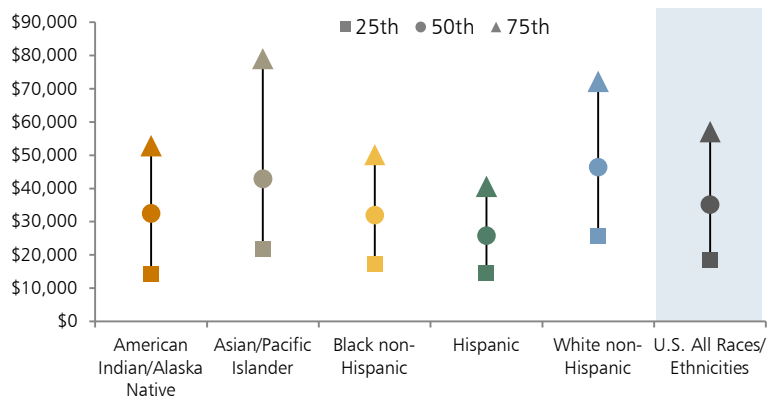
- Massachusetts's Black non-Hispanics and Hispanics posted composite scores lower by a wide margin than White non-Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders.
- With a composite score of 289, the state's White non-Hispanics outperformed their peers nationally. Scores for the other racial/ethnic groups, apart from American Indians/Alaska Natives for which state-level data were unavailable, were statistically equivalent to the scores of their peers nationally.

Note: Massachusetts in darker shades; U.S. in lighter shades. \*Reporting standards were not met and no score is available.

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

A second major barrier is access to the financial resources needed to pay for college. In Massachusetts from 2006 to 2010, the statewide median income for the working-age population (25-64) was \$42,768, compared with \$35,147 for the nation. The median income of White non-Hispanics was \$46,407, higher than any other racial/ethnic group in the state and 32% higher than the national median.

With a median income of about \$25,782, Hispanics typically earned less than members of other racial/ethnic groups. Only about a quarter of White non-Hispanics earned less. A quarter of Black non-Hispanics earned about \$18,000 or less; that figure was about \$15,000 for Hispanics.



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 12th graders tested in 2009; Math scores (0 to 300) were converted to fit the Reading scale of 0 to 500.

<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.

For more information email [knocking@wiche.edu](mailto:knocking@wiche.edu) or contact Peace Bransberger, Research Analyst, 303.541.0257, [pbransberger@wiche.edu](mailto:pbransberger@wiche.edu), or Brian Prescott, Director of Policy Research, 303.541.0255, [bprescott@wiche.edu](mailto:bprescott@wiche.edu).

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