



# Knocking at the College Door

## Projections of High School Graduates

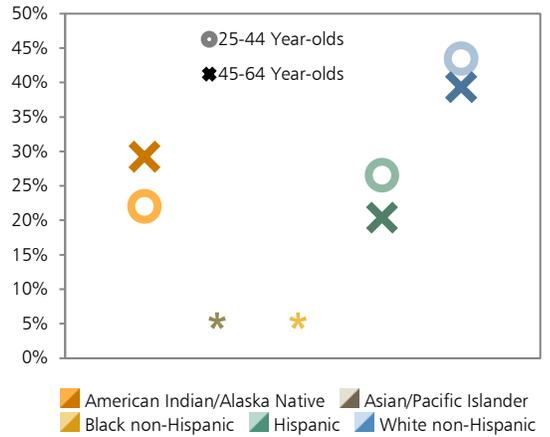
### MONTANA

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

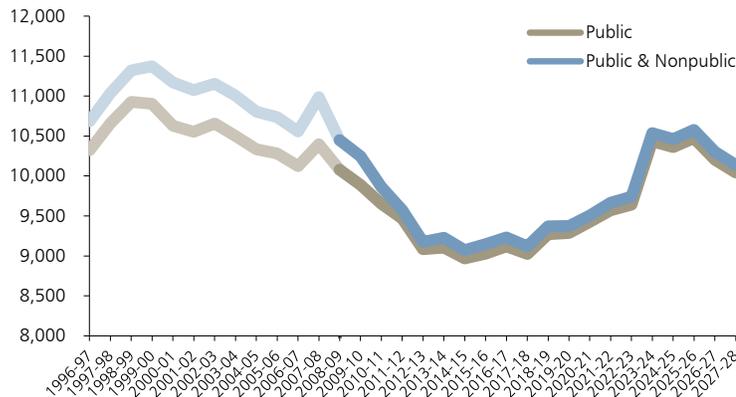
Workforce projections suggest a growing demand for well-educated labor, so younger adults need to be as well as or more educated than older adults given how much longer they will need to be employed. In Montana in 2011, almost 6% more younger adults (aged 25-44) had earned postsecondary degrees than older adults (aged 45-64), 42.3% and 36.6%, respectively.

Several of Montana’s minority populations are too small to be able to reliably discern the exact size of educational attainment gaps among all races/ethnicities. However, data from 2008 to 2010 indicate that younger White non-Hispanic adults are most likely to have postsecondary degrees, both compared to their older counterparts and all other groups for which data are available. Among the younger adults for whom data is available, younger American Indians/Alaska Natives are at the greatest disadvantage, with only 22% having a postsecondary degree. Younger Hispanic adults are more likely to have degrees than their older counterparts, but lag White non-Hispanics and the state average.



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

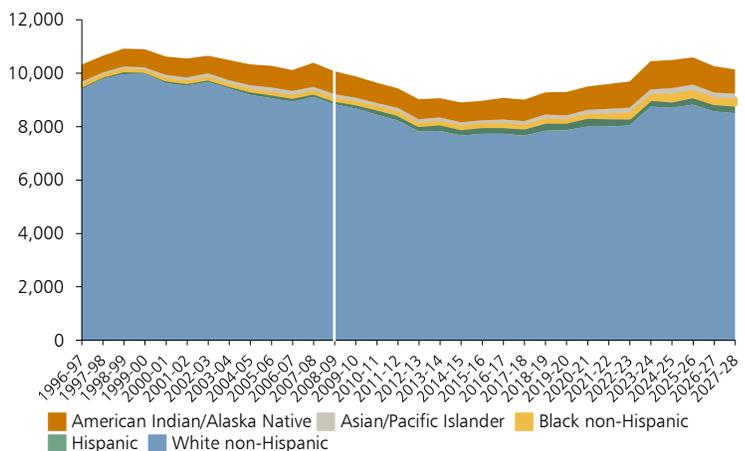
#### Production of High School Graduates



- Montana’s graduating classes have been in a slow decline since 1999-2000, having declined about 8% to about 10,500 graduates by 2008-09, the last reported year. Projections indicate that they will continue to decline and stay below 10,000 graduates through 2023-24. Despite some gains in the later years, graduates in Montana are not projected to return to the levels of the early 2000s during these projections.
- Nonpublic graduates were between 3% and 5% of Montana’s total (350 to 600 graduates) leading up to the projections period. They are projected to rapidly decrease in number and as a percent of the total, to 100 or less (1%) in any year, after 2019-20.

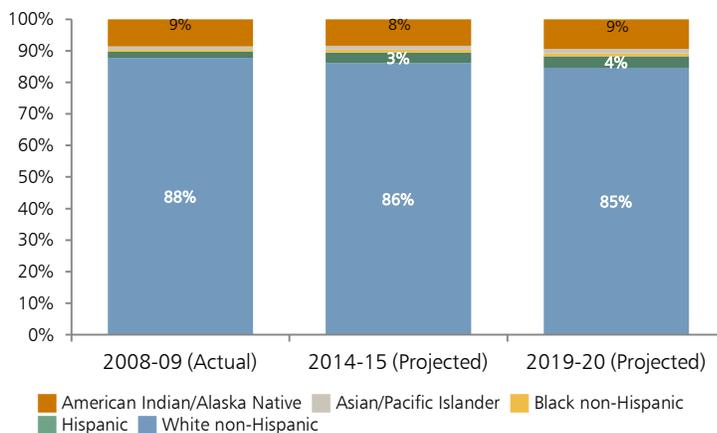
#### Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

- White non-Hispanics have been and will remain the large majority of public graduates in Montana, but they will decline in number. There were 8,840 in 2008-09, and they will decline by 11% (almost 1,000 graduates) in 2019-20 before returning to the mid-8,000s in the later projected years, but will not rise to previous highs.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives are the next largest group of graduates in Montana. Their numbers will remain steady for most projected years, but increase by about 20% in the later years.
- Hispanic graduates will gradually increase over the projected period, from 190 in 2008-09 to 340 in 2019-20, and will hold steady from then on. Black non-Hispanics will also increase, numbering from 65 to 240.

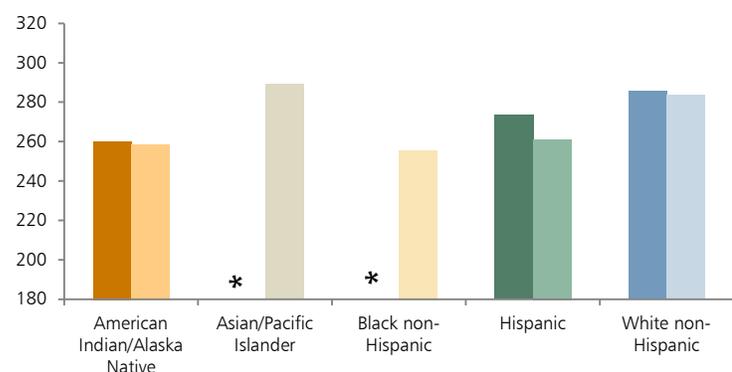


## Composition of Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

- White non-Hispanics were 88% of Montana’s public high school graduating class in 2008-09, and despite losing a few percentage points of the total, they are projected to be between 83% and 85% of the total in from 2019-20 onward.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives are projected to be between 8% and 10% throughout the timeframe.
- Hispanic graduates increase from 2% to 4% of the total from 2008-09 to 2019-20, and then drop back to 3% in the later projected years.
- Asians/Pacific Islanders and Black non-Hispanics both increase from 1% to 2% over the course of the projections.



## 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 eighth graders in 2011.

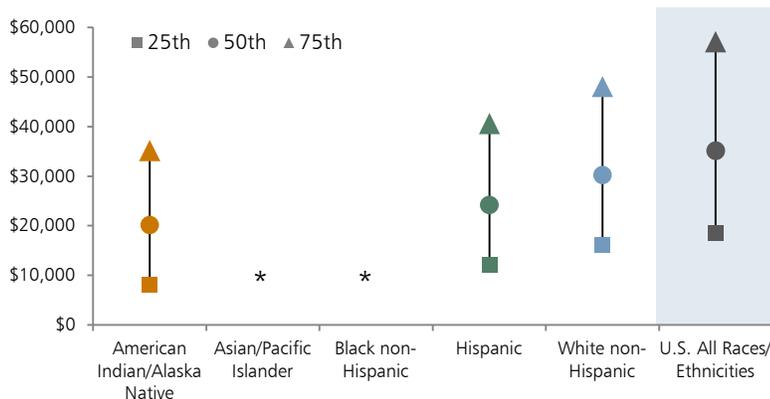
- There appears to be notably different performance between the two racial/ethnic groups with the most graduates in Montana: American Indian/Alaska Natives’ average composite score was 260 compared to 286 for White non-Hispanics. Hispanics scored 274.
- No state-level scores were available for Asians/Pacific Islanders or Black non-Hispanics in Montana.

Note: Montana 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. Precise estimates are difficult to come by for small populations, which makes comparisons between some groups difficult. But, the available data nonetheless suggest some differences by race/ethnicity. In Montana from 2006 to 2010:

- The statewide median income for the working-age population (ages 25-64) was \$29,655, compared to \$35,147 for the nation.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives typically took home about \$20,000, less than Hispanics’ median income, which was about \$24,000.



Projections of high school graduates are from WICHE, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections\** No estimates reported due to a coefficient of variation that exceeded 25% for at least one percentile estimate. 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 25-44 and 45-64 with an Associate’s degree or higher in 2008-10. 2011 figures from [www.higheredinfo.org](http://www.higheredinfo.org).

<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 8th graders tested in 2011, scale of 0 to 500; scores for 12th 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.

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](#).