



Knocking at the College Door

Projections of High School Graduates

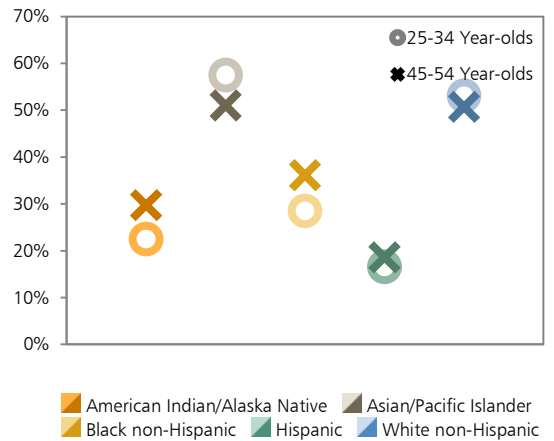
COLORADO

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

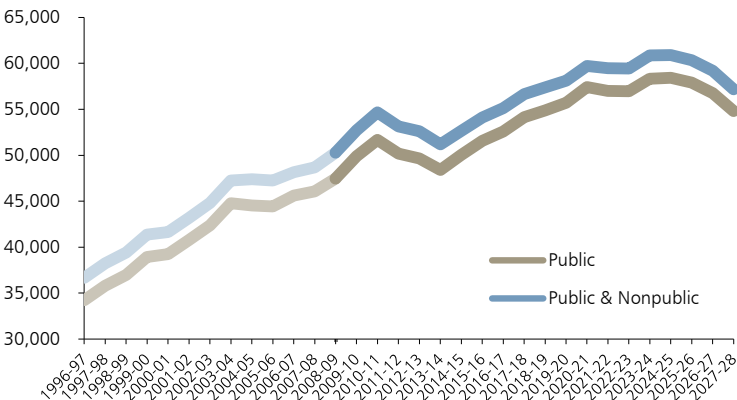
Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity¹

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.

- Overall in Colorado between 2008 and 2010, younger adults (ages 25-34) were slightly less likely than older adults (ages 45-54) to have a postsecondary degree; about 43% and 45%, respectively.
- Rates of postsecondary degree attainment were lowest among Hispanics of both age groups, 17% for younger and 19% for older Hispanics.
- The largest gaps between younger and older adults were among Black non-Hispanics and American Indians/Alaska Natives; 7% to 8% fewer young adults of these race/ethnicities had postsecondary degrees than their older counterparts.



Production of High School Graduates



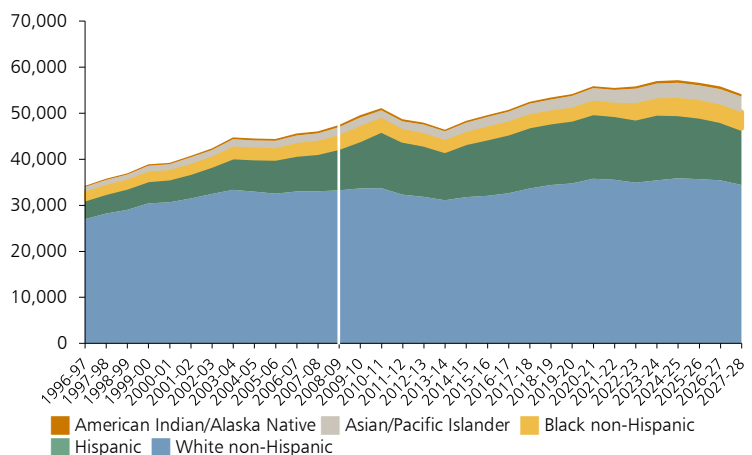
According to our projections, Colorado’s graduating class peaked at about 54,700 in 2010-11.

- Colorado is projected to experience a brief period of decline through 2013-14, down to about 51,200 graduates. After this, projections indicate that Colorado will experience relatively consistent increases in high school graduates for most of the remaining projected years. By 2024-25, Colorado will produce about 61,000 public and nonpublic graduates, a 20 percent increase over 2008-09.
- Nonpublic high school graduates account for 4% to 6% of total graduates in any given year, declining from highs of about 3,000 around 2011-12, to 2,400 by 2027-28.

Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

Colorado will experience increasing diversity in its public high school graduating classes throughout the years projected:

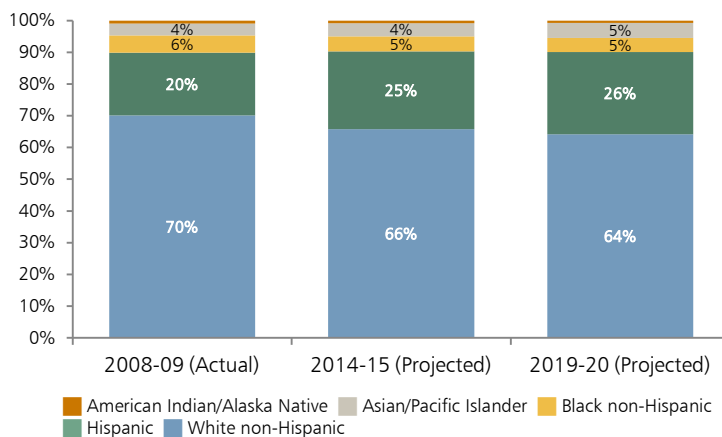
- White non-Hispanic graduate production will be relatively stable, with average annual changes of about 1%, ranging between 32,000 and 36,000.
- Hispanic graduates will increase rapidly from about 9,400 in 2008-09 to around 14,000 for several years between 2019-20 and 2024-25, before dropping back slightly to 12,300 by 2027-28.
- Black non-Hispanic graduates will also increase, from 2,600 in 2008-09 to 3,500 by 2027-28; Asian/Pacific Islanders, from 1,700 in 2008-09 to 3,400 by 2027-28.
- The number of American Indian/Alaska Native graduates will range from 400 to 500 in most years.



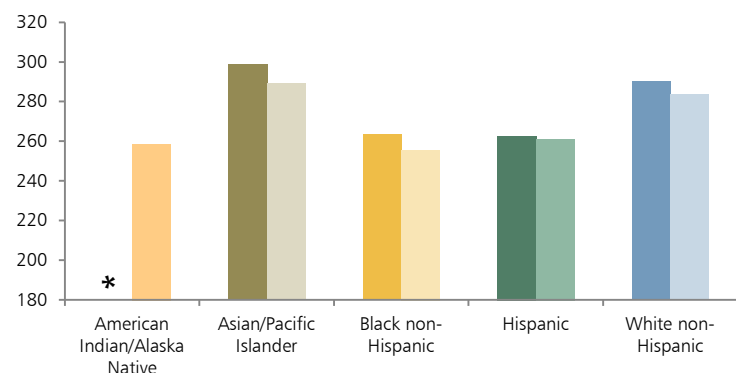
Composition of Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

Our projections indicate that Colorado's public graduating classes will become increasingly diverse, with non-White graduates accounting for 30% of public high school graduates in 2008-09, growing to 36% by 2016-17, and remaining at that level through the end of the projected period.

- White non-Hispanic graduates will decrease from 70% of the total in 2008-09 to 64% by 2016-17 and most years thereafter.
- Hispanic graduates gain in share of the total from 20% in 2008-09, to 36% by 2016-17 and most years thereafter.
- Black non-Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander graduates, while small in number in comparison to Hispanics and White non-Hispanics, will also show small share shifts.



Composite Math and Reading Scores by Race/Ethnicity²



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.

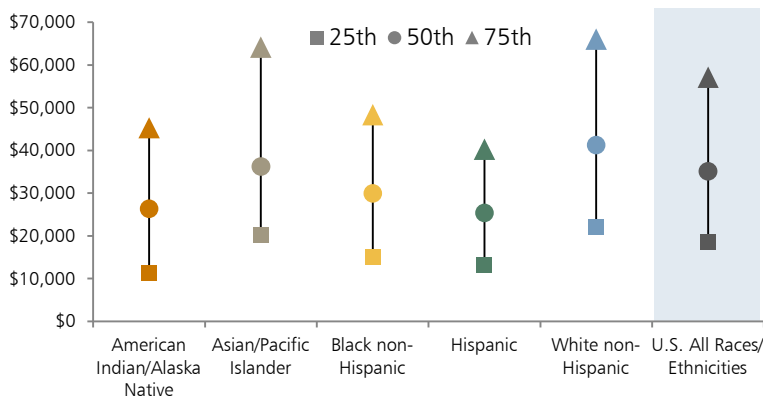
- The average composite math and reading score across race/ethnicities for Colorado 8th graders in 2011 ranged from 263 for Hispanics and Black non-Hispanics, to 290 for White non-Hispanics and 299 for Asian/Pacific Islanders; no score was available for American Indian/Alaska Natives.
- The average score for eighth graders of each race/ethnicity was generally about the national average.

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

Annual Income by Race/Ethnicity³

A second major barrier is access to the financial resources needed to pay for college. Among working-age adults (25-64) in Colorado from 2006 to 2010:

- The statewide median income was \$37,344 compared with \$35,147 for the nation.
- Hispanics were the least well off financially among all races/ethnicities a median income of \$25,399, just over 70% of the statewide median, with one in four Hispanics earning \$13,180 or less.
- Other non-Whites in Colorado had median incomes notably less than the statewide median, particularly American Indians/Alaska Natives (\$26,360) and Black non-Hispanics (\$29,938).



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>.

¹Source: 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.

²Source: 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.

³Source: 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](#).