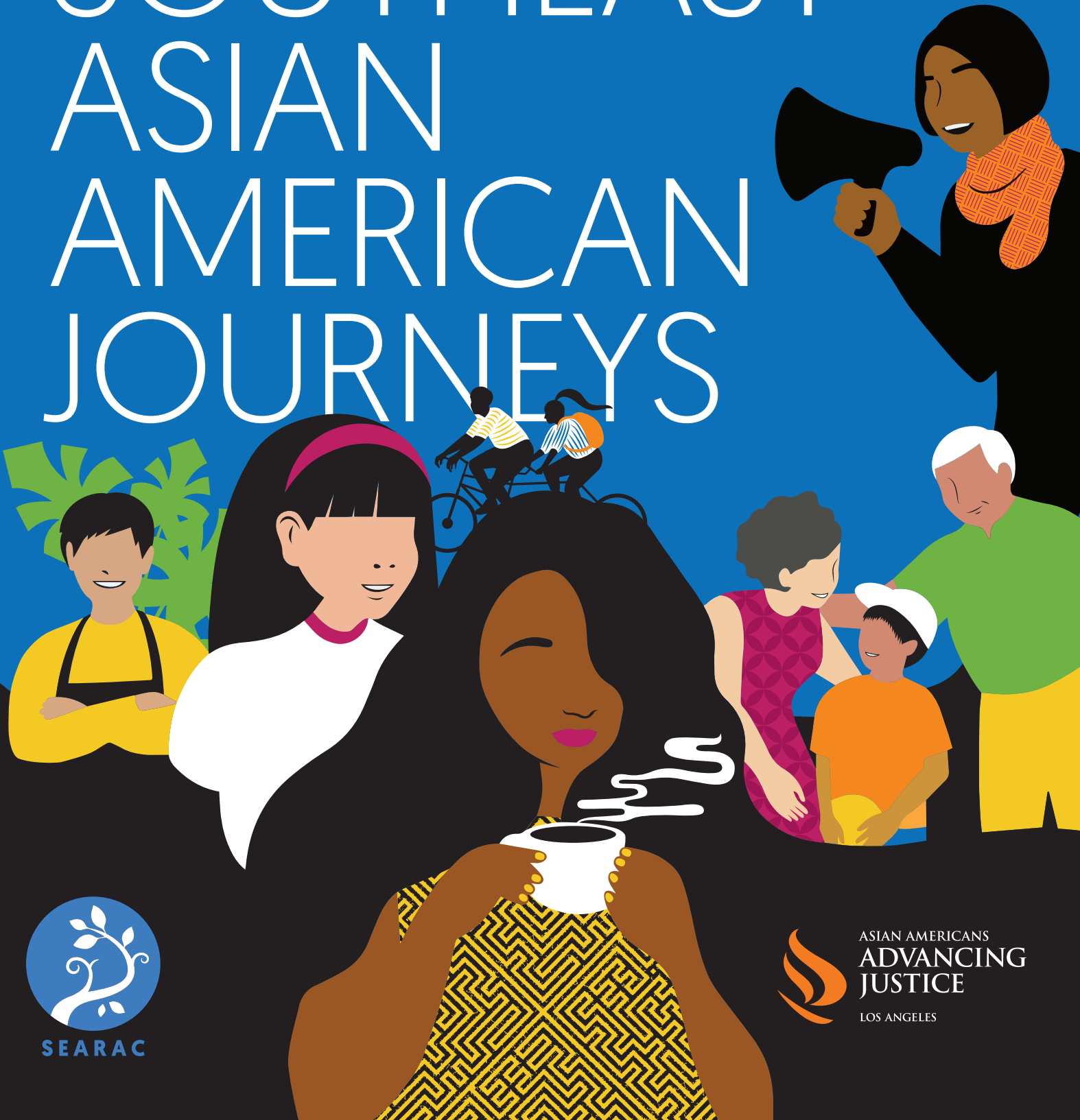


SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN JOURNEYS





The Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) is a national civil rights organization that empowers Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese American communities to create a socially just and equitable society. As representatives of the largest refugee community ever resettled in the United States, SEARAC stands together with other refugee communities, communities of color, and social justice movements in pursuit of social equity. Visit www.searac.org.



Founded in 1983 as the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles (Advancing Justice – LA) is the nation’s largest legal and civil rights organization for Asian Americans as well as Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI). Through direct services, impact litigation, policy advocacy, leadership development, and capacity building, Advancing Justice – LA focuses on the most vulnerable members of Asian American and NHPI communities while also building a strong voice for civil rights and social justice. Visit advancingjustice-la.org.

Our affiliates include Advancing Justice – AAJC (Washington, DC), Advancing Justice – Atlanta, Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus (San Francisco), and Advancing Justice – Chicago.

Please email any questions regarding the report to askdemographics@advancingjustice-la.org or searac@searac.org.

Photographs were taken by Berta Romero, Stephen Bobb Photography, and SEARAC, and contributed by many community members (see acknowledgments). Cover design and layout were provided by Christina Vang.



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INTRODUCTION

SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICANS comprise one of the newest communities to be added to the American narrative, and one of the newest communities to be added to the Asian American experience. While Chinese Americans can date their ancestry back to the early 1800s, the story of mass migration of Southeast Asians to the United States started in the 1970s in the aftermath of the U.S. occupation of Southeast Asia during the ruthless Khmer Rouge genocide, bombings in Laos, and Vietnam War. Together these wars claimed millions of lives between 1955 and 1975, including innocent men, women, and children. Among those harmed were the 2 million victims of the Khmer Rouge genocide, and the tens of thousands of people who were victims of the mass bombing of Laos—the most heavily bombed country per capita in world history. Millions more were affected by Agent Orange, a herbicide deployed in Southeast Asia that is now linked to certain cancers.

The relationship between the U.S. and the people of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam began decades before Southeast Asians arrived in America, as the U.S. government had been heavily involved in these countries to combat the spread of communism. Many Southeast Asians worked alongside the U.S. in these efforts to fight for democracy within their own countries. For example, Vietnamese refugees worked with the U.S. government during the Vietnam War as translators and civil servants; Khmer refugees assisted the U.S. military during its occupation of Cambodia; and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency recruited and trained Lao and Hmong soldiers to serve as guerrilla fighters in the Secret War in Laos. When the U.S. withdrew and these countries fell to communist powers,



the U.S. failed to implement promised contingency plans to protect those who had aided the U.S., leaving hundreds of thousands of people to fend for themselves as targets of political persecution. Even after the wars ended, violence and fear of persecution forced refugees to make treacherous escapes across borders and out onto the open sea to refugee camps, where they awaited resettlement. This eventually led to the largest mass resettlement of refugees in America’s history—over 1.1 million in a span of three decades.

THE EN MASSE RESETTLEMENT of Southeast Asian refugees started in 1975. Due to the lack of a unified national system of refugee resettlement at the time, Southeast Asians were resettled ad hoc and scattered across isolated areas in the U.S., where voluntary organizations—many sectarian ones—assisted the State Department with refugee resettlement. The U.S. volunteer organizations charged with resettling refugees were not provided clear instructions or expectations on how to assist Southeast Asian refugees, aside from greeting them upon arrival, matching them with sponsors, and in some cases, providing one-time cash assistance. Without an understanding of the unique needs and circumstances that these refugees had endured as a result of trauma from the war and its aftermath, they were treated as voluntary migrants who were expected to achieve economic self-sufficiency and independence very quickly.

To respond to these crises, founders of the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) advocated for the passage of the Refugee Resettlement Act of 1980 to increase refugee admissions from Southeast Asia; establish the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the country’s first national resettlement infrastructure; and create “mutual assistance associations,” or “MAAs.” MAAs were created to respond to the lack of understanding by many mainstream organizations of the needs of refugees. These organizations—led by communities who came from

these experiences—were provided federal funding to meet the cultural and language needs of their own refugee community. However, many challenges persisted as refugees were met with not just hostility and racism but also extreme blight. This left many refugees without long-term support in poverty-stricken neighborhoods plagued by gang violence, racial tension, and failing schools.

“Initially because the war in Vietnam was not popular in the U.S., when refugees came from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, they were met with hostility. They were not welcome at all. That was a big challenge for my work at SEARAC—how to convince the public opinion. Our major job was public education and advocacy to work with Congress and media to educate them about the issues, and why the U.S. should receive us as former allies of the U.S. We fought together.”

DR. LE XUAN KHOA

SEARAC’s second executive director

Growing from these traumatic experiences, Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) today comprise one of the quickest-growing communities within the larger Asian American community. SEAA are a vibrant, diverse, and growing community of refugees, the children of refugees, people sponsored by refugee families, and more recently arrived immigrants who have come to the U.S. on family-based and employment visas. Yet, even decades after initial resettlement, institutional inequities still impact SEAA communities as communities that have been sorely abandoned, ignored, or misunderstood.

Sadly, the American narrative has quickly excluded the refugee legacy that created these unique challenges for SEAA. **Instead of the U.S. upholding American responsibility for the world’s largest refugee crisis created by American political forces, the SEAA community has instead been replaced, overlooked, and masked behind the broader Asian American “model minority” myth that all Asian Americans are thriving compared to other communities of color.** As a result of this stereotype, tremendous socioeconomic challenges that affect the SEAA community remain hidden.

This stereotype is also reinforced by data policies that lump, or aggregate, all SEAA under the broader Asian American race category. Disaggregated data that allow us to see how specific ethnic groups are doing within the larger Asian American umbrella are critical to revealing barriers and uplifting necessary solutions to improve socioeconomic outcomes for this community.

The last three years under the Trump administration have resulted in some of the most blatant and hateful attacks on immigrant and refugee families across the country. These include escalated detention and deportation of community members who long ago served their sentences; limiting the ability of low-income families to access critical government services to feed and nourish their children; threatening health insurance coverage and health access to vulnerable community members; undermining education programs and services that promote equitable outcomes, college access, and

affordability; and attempting to weaken immigrant and refugee political power and access to resources by creating barriers to a complete count of entire communities through the census.

We have also seen a rising movement opposing the collection and reporting of disaggregated data led by a small fraction of conservative Chinese communities that are misinformed, misled, and used as tools by affirmative action opponents in the U.S. This vocal minority has been at the forefront of attempting to dismantle state-level data disaggregation policies while seeking to influence the national debate on affirmative action by appropriating civil rights messaging on education equity for unjust causes. Using the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) community as a wedge group to discredit equity-minded policies, such as data disaggregation and race conscious admissions policies, hurts not only SEAA but all students of color. Now is the time to combat fear and misinformation and highlight the incredible diversity of the AANHPI community with accurate details on the needs and assets in the SEAA community captured only through the collection and reporting of disaggregated data. Only by seeing our needs and challenges through accurate data can we advocate fully for not just our visibility but our community's civil rights as the largest community of refugees ever to be resettled in America. Armed with our community's data, we will build our community's self-determination from our legacy of refugee resilience to shape a new, multicultural, equitable democracy and America.

SEARAC AND ADVANCING JUSTICE—LA were founded on a legacy of advancing the civil rights and human dignity of Asian American communities. In order to carry out our respective missions in ways that do justice for the communities we serve, our advocacy must be informed by disaggregated data that highlight the unique needs, disparities, and assets

for each of the different ethnic groups that make up the AANHPI category. AANHPI are not a monolith. Together this community is made up of people of nearly 50 ethnicities who speak more than a hundred languages. However, when looking at data in aggregate, we are often labeled as the “model minority” and used as a wedge to undermine policies that promote the civil rights of other communities of color.

Given this context, *Southeast Asian American Journeys: A National Snapshot of Our Communities* is a resource to amplify the SEAA story through disaggregated data to highlight the pressing issues and resilience of this community today. For SEARAC, SEAA is a political identity that comes from the shared experience of people who came to the U.S. as refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam in the aftermath of the U.S. occupation in Southeast Asia. This report presents data that disaggregate Southeast Asian Americans from the Asian American category. However, due to data availability, disaggregation of data in this report is limited to Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese American as distinct ethnic groups, and the combination of these four ethnic groups as a distinct Southeast Asian American category. It seeks to dispel “model minority” myths by showing that many in our communities have invisible needs and require access to culturally and linguistically sensitive and appropriate services.

This report provides, in addition to general demographic data, data highlighting some critical issues facing SEAA, such as resettlement, immigration, education, health, economic justice/housing, and civic engagement. Although a large portion of the report features national data, it also highlights a few states with sizable populations of SEAA; therefore, California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Texas, and Washington are covered in greater depth in this report. We recognize this as a limitation of this report, given that the SEAA community is a growing community in other states

across the U.S., but it is our hope this preliminary information inspires further study in other states across the country. Much of the data come from the U.S. Census Bureau, including the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey. Because census data are limited, data from other sources are also used.

We hope that this report will serve as tool to empower communities to enact change—to call for policies that protect our community’s rights, to invest in the needs and resilience of our community, and to deepen partnerships across sectors to build equity for the SEAA community. While the topics covered here are not meant to be an exhaustive list of all issues that matter to the SEAA community, we believe they are an important first step to sharing the overall state of SEAA today with:

- **Policy makers, government officials, and government agencies**—to inform the creation of culturally relevant policy interventions that lead to equitable outcomes for SEAA families.
- **Foundations and donors**—to inform the need for long-term resources and investments to support a thriving SEAA community.
- **Service providers**—to inform the development and application of culturally sensitive services as well as intentional investment in building a workforce pathway composed of members from impacted SEAA communities.
- **Community members and the general public**—to inform community organizing, education, mobilization, and community building around a broader SEAA political identity.



THANK YOU

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE who contributed to this report, including coauthors SEARAC staff (Katrina Dizon Mariategue and Quyen Dinh) and Asian Americans Advancing Justice–Los Angeles staff (June Lim and Shelly Chen). This project is a result of countless hours of collaboration with many of our SEAA community partners, leaders, advocates, and service providers across the country who shared their time, expertise, and experiences to bring this report to life. We want to especially acknowledge our committee of stakeholders who helped to inform our data collection process, policy recommendations, and contributed their voices: Sina Sam, Sovanna Pou, Phitsamay Uy, Channapha Khamvongsa, Vattana Peong, Susana Sngiem, Jannette Diep, Lily Liemthongsamout, Tung Nguyen, Bao Vang, Quyen Vuong, Thu Quach, Pao Yang, and Ay Saechao. With deep gratitude, we also thank community members who shared their stories and photos for this report: Maly Phommavong, Phi Nguyen, Thanh Quach, Nghiep Ke Lam, Silong Chhun, the Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County, Sunny Chanthanouvong, KaYing Yang and countless others whose narratives in past SEARAC campaigns, reports, and training programs helped to uplift the data presented. Thank you for bringing the stories from your communities to shape this project. We also extend our gratitude to the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation for making this report possible. The statements and recommendations expressed in this report are solely the responsibility of the authors.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 2.5 million Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) live in the United States. *Southeast Asian American Journeys: A National Snapshot of Our Communities* serves as a resource for communities, organizations, policy makers, funders, corporations, and others wanting to understand and uplift the diverse and growing SEAA community. Some of the key findings include those described below.

SEAA ARE A RELATIVELY YOUNG AND GROWING COMMUNITY. At over 2.5 million, SEAA compose 14% of the entire Asian American population in the country, growing by 38% between 2000 and 2010 (nearly four times the national average of 10%). More than half live in California, Texas, and Minnesota. California remains home to the largest SEAA population with 36% of the community living there. Alaska, West Virginia, Nevada, Wyoming, and Arizona are the states with the fastest population growth for this community, ranging from 92% in Arizona to as high as 142% in Alaska. Additionally, SEAA are a generally young population. The median ages of all SEAA ethnic groups are lower than the average U.S. population's median age of 37.2.

Vietnamese and Hmong Americans have the highest and lowest median ages among SEAA of 34.1 and 20.5, respectively.

SEAA STILL STRUGGLE WITH SOCIOECONOMIC INSECURITY. ACROSS MULTIPLE MEASURES OF INCOME, SEAA fare worse than average. Nationwide, close to 1.1 million SEAA are low-income, including about 460,000 who live in poverty. All SEAA ethnic groups have lower per capita incomes than average, with Hmong Americans faring worse than all racial groups across multiple measures of income. Nearly 60% of Hmong Americans are low-income, and more than one of every four live in poverty. Because of this, SEAA also struggle with housing stability. Among SEAA ethnic groups, with the exception of Hmong Americans, renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing-related costs. Those with home mortgages are also more likely to be housing cost-burdened than average (32%). Vietnamese American mortgagors (45%) have the highest rate of being housing cost-burdened than all racial groups.

SEAA CONTINUE TO FACE CHALLENGES TO EQUITABLE EDUCATION OUTCOMES. SEAA have glaringly lower rates of educational attainment compared to Whites and Asian Americans as a whole across different levels of education, including high school graduation, college access, and college completion. Nearly 30% of SEAA have not completed high school or passed the GED, a rate more than double the national average (13%). Among SEAA ethnic groups, Cambodian Americans are the least likely to hold a high school diploma or GED. In addition, one-quarter of SEAA hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the one-

half of Asian Americans who do. Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (28%) have the highest rate of attaining a higher-education degree, whereas Laotian Americans (14%) have the lowest rate—the same as Latinos.

SEAA GREATLY BENEFITED FROM THE PASSAGE OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (ACA) AND CONTINUE TO BE HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON PUBLIC HEALTH INSURANCE FOR SURVIVAL.

Prior to 2010, SEAA experienced high levels of uninsured rates. Although the rate of uninsured continues to be high, the ACA considerably decreased the percentage of uninsured SEAA. The greatest percentage decreases were seen in Cambodian Americans (20% to 15%) and Laotian Americans (18% to 14%). Additionally, Hmong and Cambodian Americans are more likely to have public health insurance than the average population. Hmong Americans have public health insurance enrollment rates similar to African Americans (39% and 38%, respectively). Cambodian Americans, with 31% enrolled in public health insurance, have a rate similar to that of Latinos (33%). Unfortunately, despite growing access to health care, SEAA still battle with a significant number of physical health and mental health disparities due to the lack of services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

THE MIGRATION OF SEAA INTO THE UNITED STATES HAS CHANGED

largely from refugee admissions to family and employment-based visas. Nearly 60% of SEAA were born outside of the U.S. (a rate similar to that of Asian Americans as a whole), with 45% arriving before 1990, a rate higher than the nationwide average (35%). Until 1998, the large majority of applications for green cards among SEAA were for status changes from refugee to lawful permanent resident (LPR). Since the late 1990s the main pathways to enter the U.S. as an LPR have been through family and employment methods. Nearly

21,000 Southeast Asians immigrated to the U.S. in 2017, 95% percent of whom arrived via family-based lawful permanent resident status.

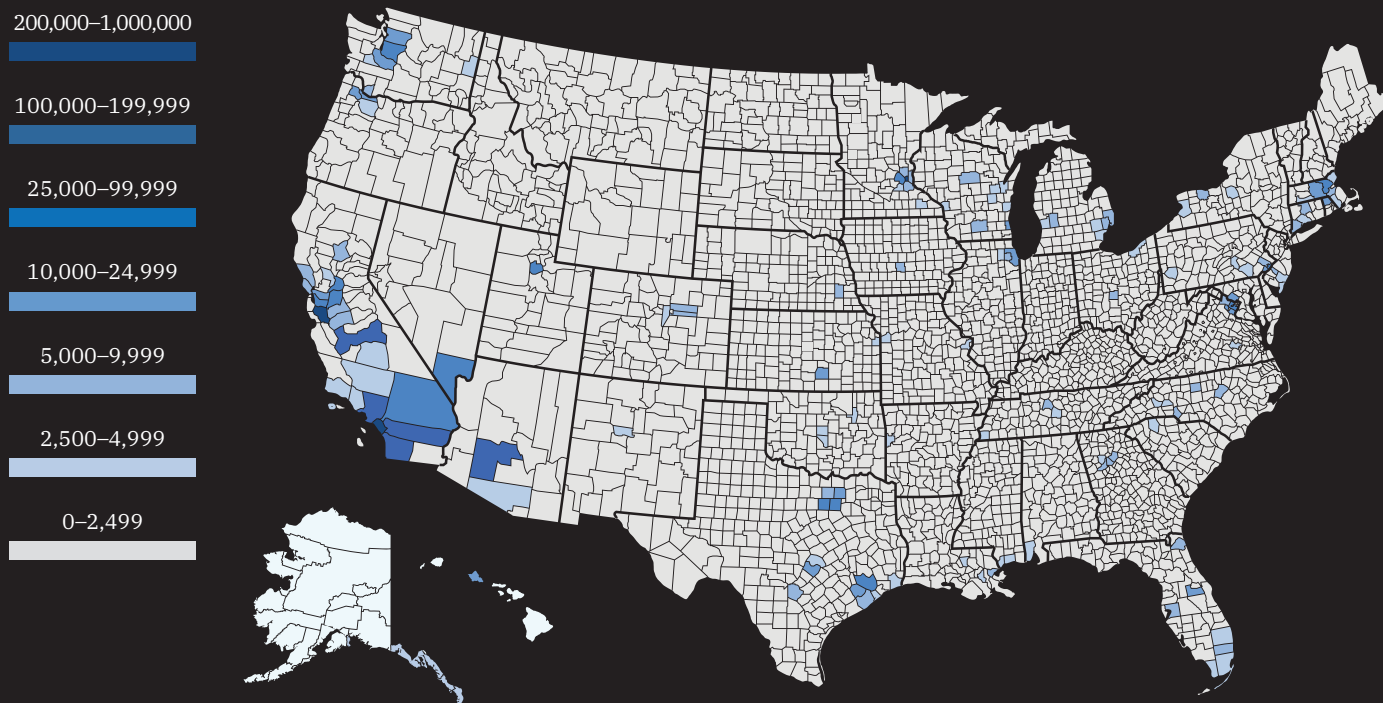
SEAA IMMIGRANTS CONTINUE TO BE IMPACTED

by mandatory detention and deportation policies passed decades ago. The inadequate support of SEAA refugees upon initial resettlement, coupled with the rise in mass incarceration and the growth of immigration detention and deportation in the U.S. have made this community uniquely vulnerable to the prison-to-deportation pathway. SEAA continue to feel the impact of punitive, short-sighted, one-size-fits-all policies created in 1996 that ignored how individuals have transformed their lives since serving their debt to society. Instead, these laws expanded the definition of deportable offenses such as “aggravated felonies” and made it mandatory for all immigrants, including LPRs, to be detained by the immigration system and eventually deported. The number of SEAA deported to Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam more than doubled between 2015–16 and 2017–18, with over 95% of deportations in fiscal year (FY) 2018 accounting for individuals repatriated to Cambodia and Vietnam. Additionally, nearly 75% of the deportations in FY 2018 were due to aggravated felony charges, many of which were for convictions from up to 20 years prior.

NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

SEAA by County

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1, Table PCT7.
Note: Alaska and Hawai'i are not to scale.



Over 2.5 million Southeast Asian Americans live in the United States.¹

SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICANS [SEAA] compose 14% of the Asian American population.²

THE SEAA POPULATION IN THE U.S. GREW BY 38% between 2000 and 2010, nearly four times the average rate (10%). Vietnamese and Hmong Americans are the fastest-growing SEAA ethnic groups with growth rates mirroring Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, Latino, and Asian Americans.³

OVER 50% OF SEAA live in California, Texas, and Minnesota. California remains home to the largest population of SEAA; 36% of SEAA reside there.⁴

THE MEDIAN AGE OF SEAA is below that of the average U.S. population of 37.2. Of the SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans have the highest median

age of 34.1, and Hmong Americans have the lowest median age of 20.5.⁵

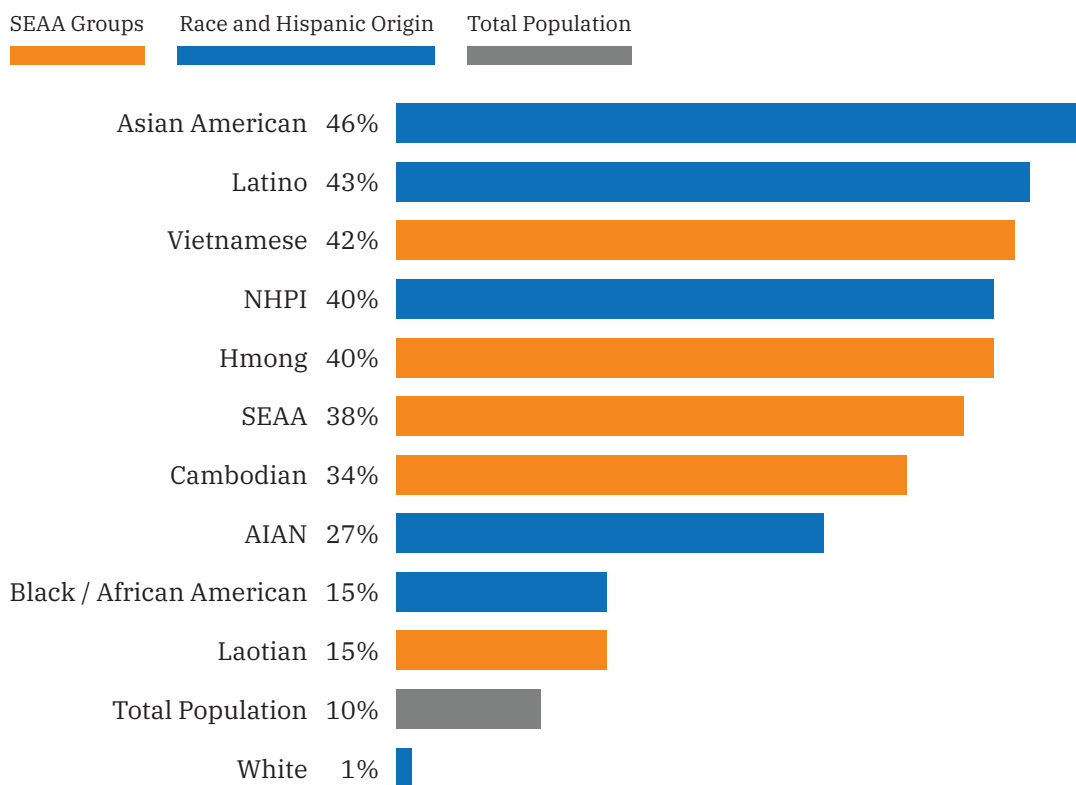
OVER 40% OF HMONG AMERICANS are under the age of 18—the highest proportion of youth compared to all racial groups and other SEAA ethnic groups. The proportion of Hmong American youth is double that of Whites.⁶

HMONG AMERICANS have high proportions of college-aged young adults (ages 18–24) compared to all racial groups and other SEAA ethnic groups. At 19% it is nearly double the average proportion and that of Vietnamese Americans, both 10%. Laotian and Cambodian Americans also have higher-than-average proportions of college-aged youth at 12% and 14%, respectively.⁷

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT & IMMIGRATION

Population Growth

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnicity, 2000–2010



U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF1, Tables P8, P9, and PCT007; 2010 Census SF1, Tables P5, P6, and PCT7. Note: Figures for each racial group include both single race and multiracial people, except for White, which is single race, non-Latino. Figures do not sum to total.

AIAN: Native American(s) or Alaska Native(s) **NHPI:** Native Hawaiian(s) and Pacific Islander(s) **SEAA:** Southeast Asian American(s)

States with Fastest-Growing SEAA Population

By Ethnic Group and by Top-Five States, 2010
(Ranked by Population)

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1, Table PCT7.

STATE	NUMBER	% GROWTH
Alaska	7,429	142%
West Virginia	1,246	138%
Nevada	16,831	122%
Wyoming	372	116%
Arizona	33,124	92%

States with Largest SEAA Populations

By Ethnic Group and by Top-Five States, 2010 (Ranked by Population)

Vietnamese American

STATE	NUMBER
California	647,589
Texas	227,968
Washington	75,843
Florida	65,772
Virginia	59,984

Hmong American

STATE	NUMBER
California	91,224
Minnesota	66,181
Wisconsin	49,240
North Carolina	10,864
Michigan	5,924

Cambodian American

STATE	NUMBER
California	102,317
Massachusetts	28,424
Washington	22,934
Texas	14,347
Pennsylvania	14,118

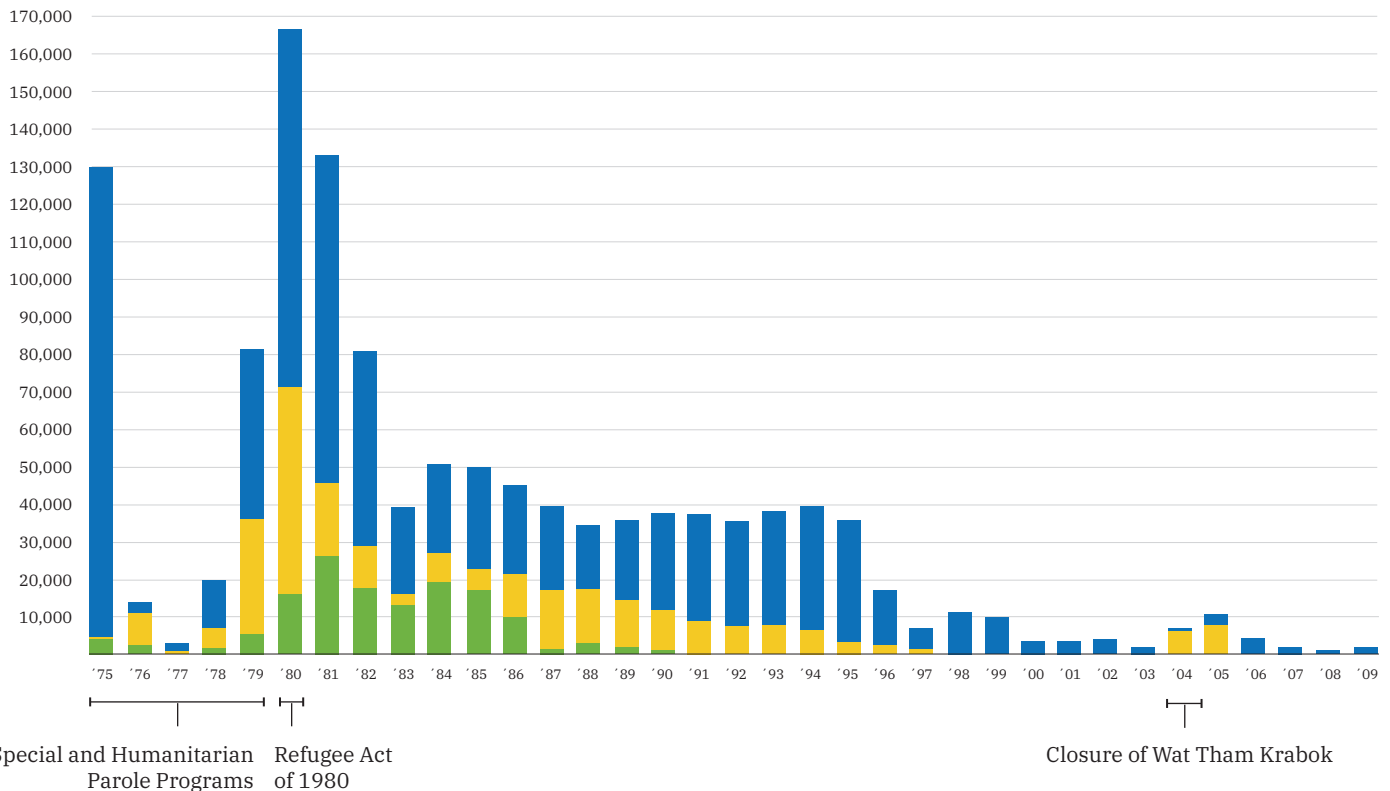
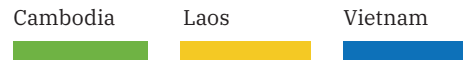
Laotian American

STATE	NUMBER
California	69,303
Texas	15,784
Minnesota	12,009
Washington	11,568
Tennessee	7,276

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1, Table PCT7.

SEAA Refugee Arrivals

By Country of Origin, United States 1975–2009



1975–1982 from U.S. Departments of State, Immigration and Naturalization Services, Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, and the Indochina Refugee Assistance Program, as cited by L. W. Gordon, 1987; 1980–2009 from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Annual Report to Congress, 1981 to 2010.

THE PATHWAY OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN (SEAA) arrival to the United States has been shaped by U.S. involvement in the political push factors in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. It is a trajectory that has transitioned from refugee resettlement to employment- and family-based immigration. Although there had been small numbers of immigrants from these countries prior, it was not until 1975 when the governments of these countries fell to communist powers that large waves of people arrived in the U.S. as refugees,⁸ or people who are unable or unwilling to return to their country because of or in fear of persecution.⁹ The initial wave of refugees to resettle in the U.S., the majority of whom were from Vietnam, arrived between April and December of 1975 under the special and humanitarian parole programs.

Upon enactment of the Refugee Act of 1980, the number of refugees from Southeast Asia increased exponentially. Until the late 1980s Southeast Asian refugees composed more than half of all persons seeking refuge in the U.S. The numbers of refugees from Southeast Asia entering under this status has decreased since the mid-1990s. The closing of the final temporary shelter, the Buddhist monastery at Wat Tham Krabok in 2004, led to the final wave of Hmong refugees to resettle in the U.S. in 2004 and 2005. The narrative of Southeast Asians’ arrival in the U.S. has since shifted from one primarily of refugee resettlement to one of family- and employment-based immigration.

SEAA STORIES OF RESETTLEMENT AND RESILIENCE



SUNNY CHANTHANOUVUONG was born in Pakse, Laos. In 1981, he fled Laos and went to Thailand with his sister, younger brother, and niece just as Thailand was in the process of closing the refugee camp they were trying to reach. After a few months, they were reunited with their parents and lived in Napho Refugee Camp for the next few years.

As a teenager, Sunny remembers the crowded conditions, poor quality and sparse food rations, and grueling labor to run the camp. He would spend hours in line retrieving water, getting wood for a fire, standing outside in the middle of the night as a guard, and studying English in hopes of making it to the United States. The food was whatever might be leftover from the market—heavily salted fish and poorly cooked rice. Women were at high risk of sexual assault from guards, so many young women, including Sunny’s sister, got married in the camps

in an attempt to avoid the guards. Sunny said that all of his life was defined by the camp—“We are like chickens in a box. They put a border around it, [and] you have to stay in the refugee camp. So we only know inside the camp.... When I heard we were going to America, I didn’t know what it was like—I just knew that we need[ed] to get away from this terrible place.”

Sunny’s family resettled in Minnesota in June 1984. Although in vast ways an improvement from Napho, Sunny still struggled to adjust. He had to attend high school with significantly limited English proficiency, and his family missed the Laos community, language, and businesses that they could lean on. In school, he remembers rereading the same text over and over again. But over time, the community grew to support one another, and Sunny, years later, is hopeful for the next generation and the opportunities they might receive.

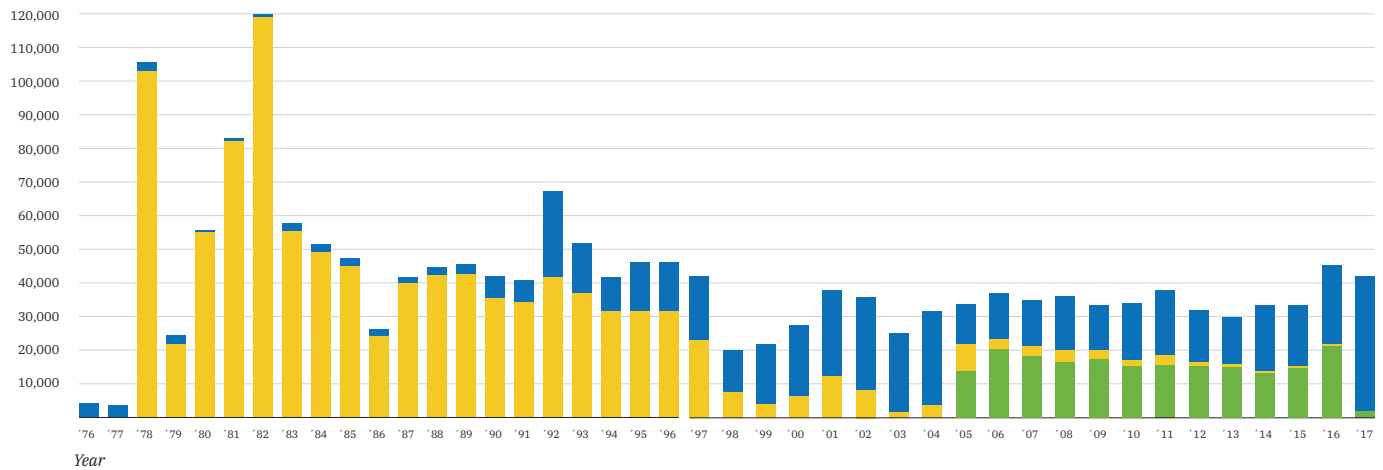
DAVID ROS was born in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, one year before it fell to the Khmer Rouge. Because of his family’s connection to the military—his grandfather was a lieutenant colonel before the war—his father was killed and his mother was tortured and beaten. In 1978, David and his family escaped to Thailand, where they arrived at a refugee camp after surviving bombs, fires, and dead bodies along their dangerous escape. David and his family eventually resettled in the U.S. Similar to many refugees, growing up in the U.S. was not easy for David. He struggled with posttraumatic stress disorder, poor education, and limited English language proficiency in a community vulnerable to poverty, crime, and violence. He felt isolated for much of his childhood, moving often and growing up in rural areas, but in Lowell he met other Cambodians he could relate to. As a teenager, he and his friends watched out for one other amidst neighborhood violence and discrimination that targeted the growing number of Southeast Asian Americans in the city.



SEAA Lawful Permanent Resident Applicants



By Broad Class of Admission, United States 1976–2017



2002–2017 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2003–2018; 1978–2001 U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1979–2001; 1976–1977 U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1977–1978.

- Refugees can apply for lawful permanent resident (LPR) status after residing in the U.S. for at least one year; however, they are able to remain in the U.S. indefinitely without changing their status to permanent resident.¹⁰
- Until 1998, the large majority of LPR applications among SEAA were for status changes from refugee to LPR. Since the late 1990s the main pathways to enter the U.S. as an LPR have been through family and employment methods.¹¹
- Nearly 21,000 Southeast Asians immigrated to the U.S. in 2017, 95% percent of whom arrived via family-based LPR status. Employment-based immigration was not as large of an admissions class as it had been in the preceding 11 years.¹²

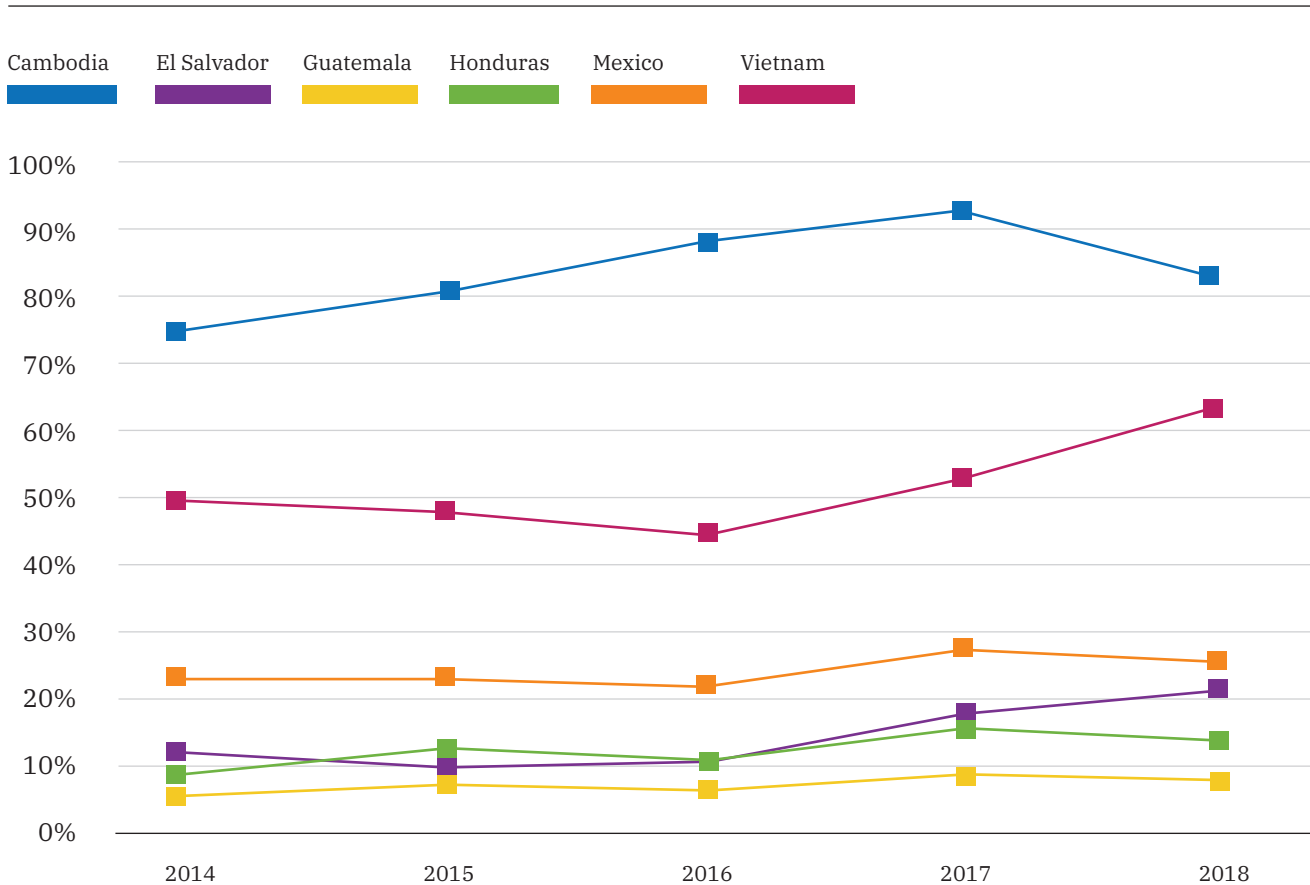


“Since 1998, at least 16,000 Southeast Asian Americans have received final orders of deportation despite many arriving to the U.S. with refugee status and obtaining a green card. Due to stringent immigration policies enacted in 1996, [those in] Southeast Asian American communities are three to four times more likely to be deported for old convictions compared with other immigrant communities.”

Excerpt from *Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders behind Bars: Exposing the School to Prison to Deportation Pipeline*

Immigration and Customs Enforcement Removals

By Percentage of Removals Due to Aggravated Felonies and Country of Birth, 2014–2018



Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Syracuse University, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Removals.

- The number of SEAA deported to Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam more than doubled between 2015–16 and 2017–18.¹³ Over 95% of the 223 deportations to these countries in fiscal year (FY) 2018 were to Cambodia and Vietnam.¹⁴
- Nearly 75% of the deportations in FY 2018 were due to aggravated felony charges,¹⁵ many of which were for convictions from up to 20 years prior.
- Deportations due to aggravated felonies disproportionately affect Cambodian and Vietnamese immigrants in comparison to those from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, or El Salvador—the top countries to which immigrants are deported from the U.S.¹⁶



“Access to language means access to justice. We witness our community navigate health, education, and social service institutions without the necessary resources and support to thrive. Governmental agencies have not prioritized our community and failed to build the capacity within our community to support Southeast Asians with limited English proficiency.”

CHANDA WOMACK

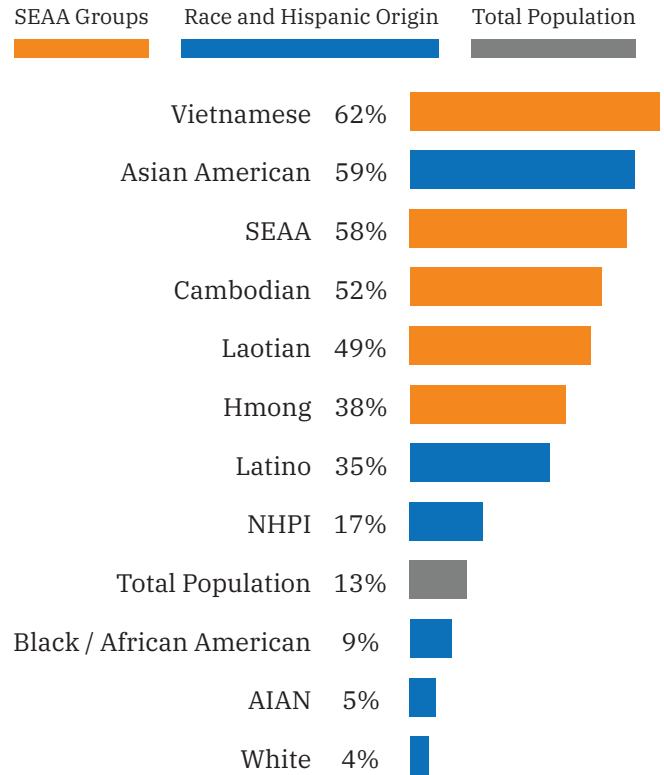
Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE)

Foreign-Born

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2011–2015

- Nearly 60% of SEAA were born outside of the U.S., a rate similar to that of Asian Americans as a whole.
- Among SEAA, Vietnamese Americans have the largest proportion of foreign-born and Hmong Americans have the smallest.
- Forty-five percent of foreign-born SEAA arrived before 1990, a higher rate than average (35%).
- Nearly three-quarters of Hmong Americans arrived before 1990.¹⁷

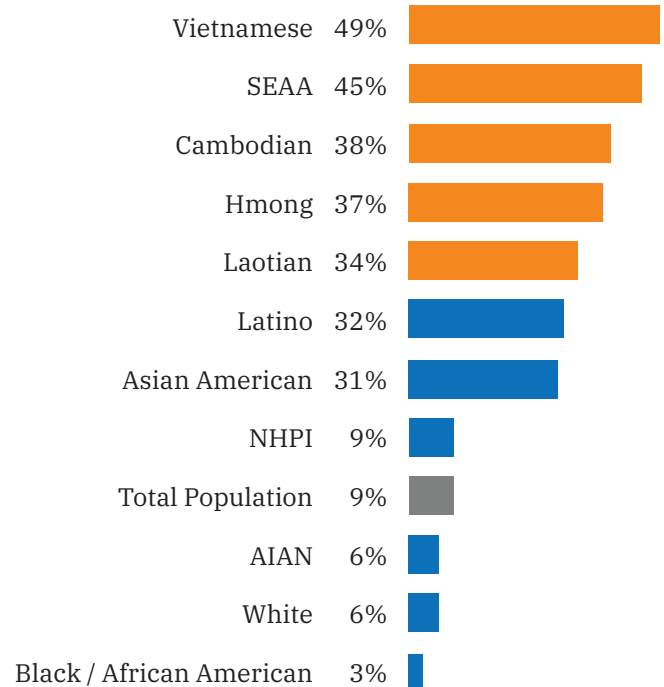
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.



Limited English Proficiency*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2011–2015

- Nearly 90% of SEAA speak a language other than English at home, a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and other racial groups.¹⁸
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Hmong Americans (95%) are most likely and Laotian Americans (87%) are least likely to speak a language other than English. These rates are more than four times the average (21%).¹⁹
- Forty-five percent of SEAA are limited English proficient (LEP), a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and other racial groups.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (49%) have the highest LEP rate and Laotian Americans (34%) have the lowest. This rate is similar to, but still higher than, that of Asian Americans as a whole (31%) and Latinos (32%).



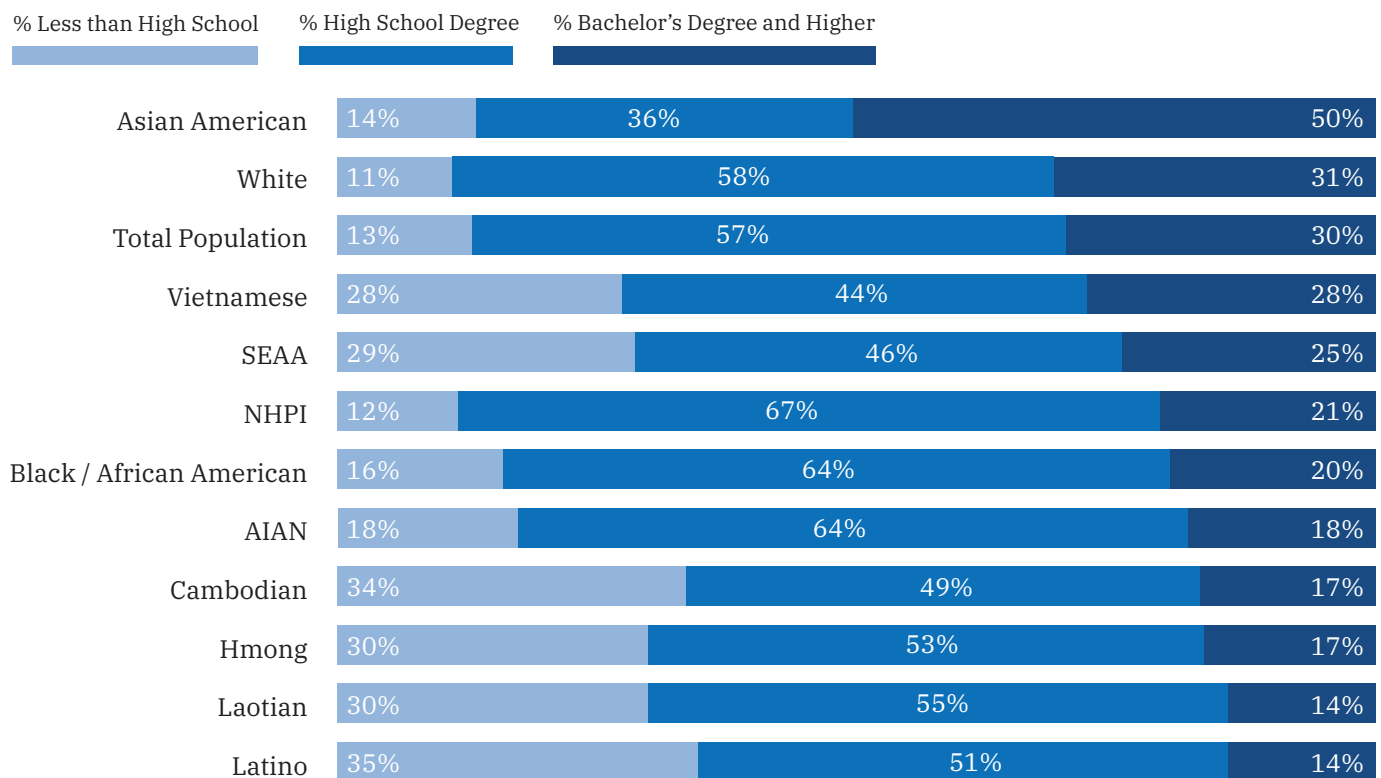
*For the population 5 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B16004.

EDUCATION

Educational Attainment*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, California 2011–2015 (Ranked by Percent Bachelor’s Degree and Higher)



*For the population 25 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.

The percentage of Cambodian Americans who hold a bachelor’s degree or higher is half the percentage of Cambodian Americans who did not complete high school.

A larger proportion of Southeast Asian Americans have not completed high school than have earned at least a bachelor's degree.

- Nearly 30% of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) have not completed high school or passed the GED, a rate more than double the national average (13%).
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Cambodian Americans are the least likely to have completed high school.
- There are gender disparities in educational attainment rates across the SEAA ethnic groups. A larger proportion of females than males have not completed high school, a difference that ranges from 6% among Laotian Americans to 11% among Cambodian Americans. Although a slightly higher percentage of Vietnamese and Cambodian American males hold a higher-education degree, the opposite is true among Laotian and Hmong Americans, for whom females have a slightly higher percentage of obtaining a higher-education degree.²⁰
- Ten percent of Hmong Americans hold an associate's degree, a rate higher than all other SEAA ethnic groups and other racial groups.²¹
- One-quarter of SEAA hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the one-half of Asian Americans who do.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (28%) have the highest rate of attaining a higher-education degree, whereas Laotian Americans (14%) have the lowest—the same rate as Latinos.²²
- There are 123 Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions across the U.S.²³

“I am the daughter of Cambodian refugees. Growing up, five of us lived in a tiny apartment in Chinatown. Gang violence was common. Poverty was evident. And yet, I always had a sense of hope because I could see what world was possible through my amazing public schools and libraries. I knew that if I studied hard, I could become whatever I wanted to be. And if many of my peers studied hard, the circumstances of our community could improve.”

JENNIFER TANG,

SEARAC LAT 2019 participant, Monterey Park, California

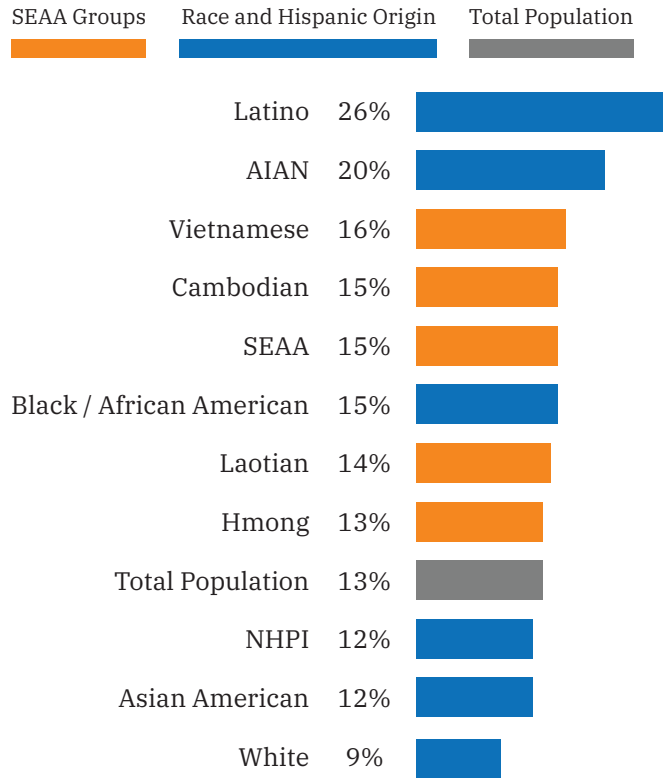
HEALTH

Uninsured

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2011–2015

- Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) are less likely to have health insurance than the average population and Asian Americans as a whole.²⁴
- The percentage of uninsured has decreased across all racial and SEAA ethnic groups since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The largest percentage decreases were seen in Cambodian Americans (20% to 15%) and Laotian Americans (18% to 14%).²⁵

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001.

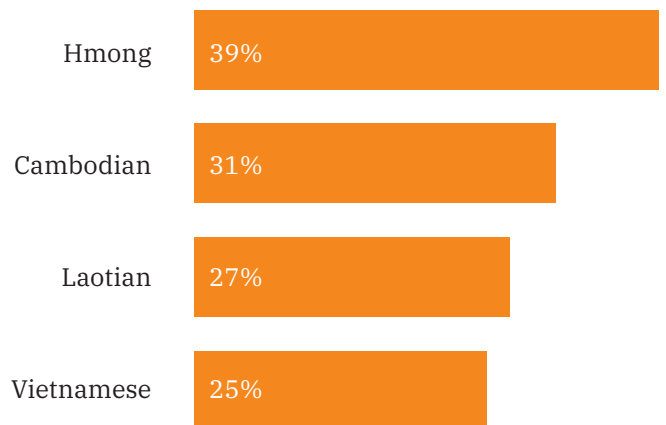


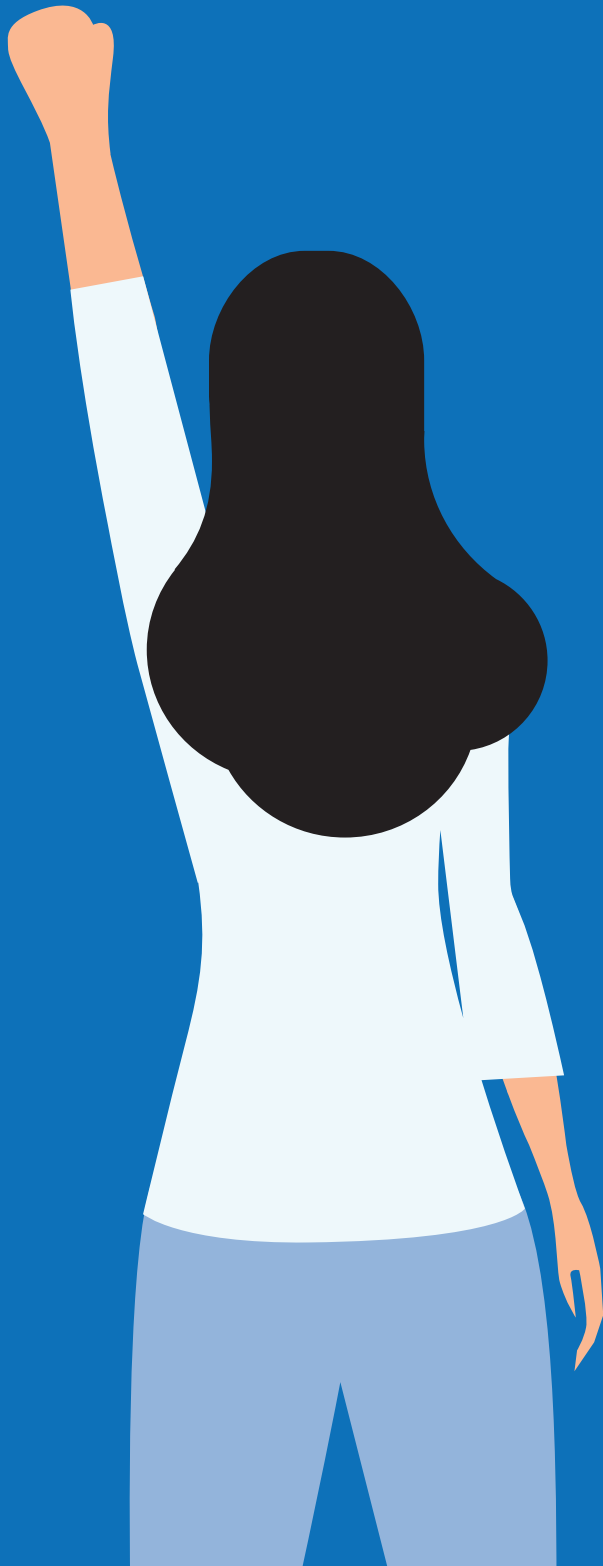
Public Health Insurance

By SEAA Ethnic Group, United States 2011–2015

Hmong and Cambodian Americans are more likely to have public health insurance than the average population. Hmong Americans have public health insurance enrollment rates similar to African Americans (39% and 38%, respectively). Cambodian Americans, with 31% enrolled in public health insurance, have rates similar to that of Latinos (33%).²⁶

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27003.





“Please protect access to affordable health coverage. The Medicaid expansion helped my family take care of my dad’s medical bills when he was in and out of the hospital after being diagnosed with liver cancer. The experience itself was traumatizing enough, and we are thankful that with his Medi-Cal and Medicare benefits, we did not have to worry about having enough money to see him live the rest of his days with dignity. My dad was able to transition on comfortably.”

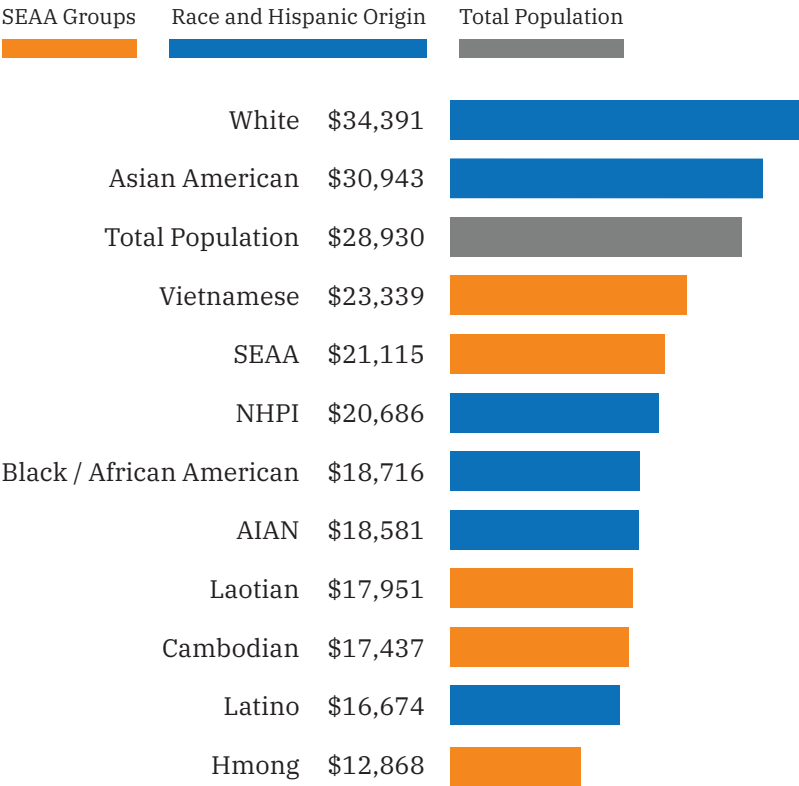
SEAA RESPONDENT

from *Southeast Asian Americans Speak Out to Protect the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid Expansion*

ECONOMIC JUSTICE & HOUSING

Per Capita Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2011–2015



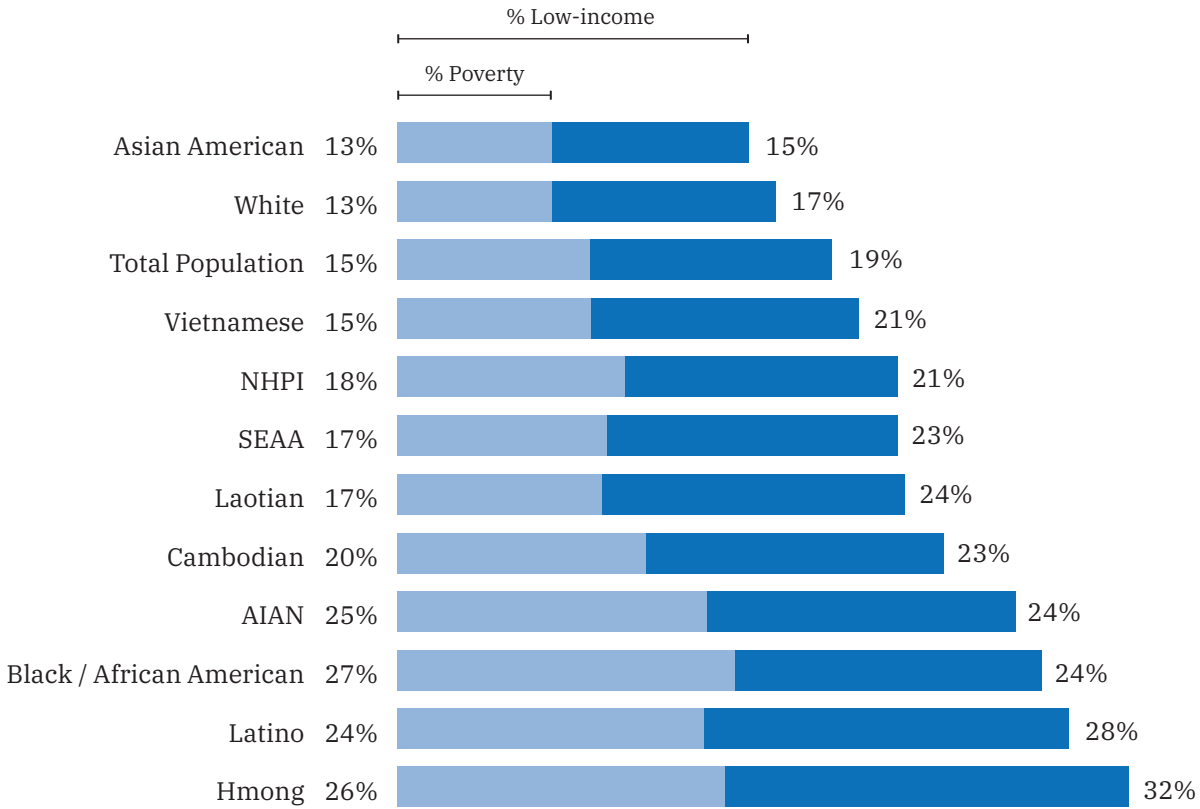
- Across multiple measures of income, Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) fare worse than average. A greater proportion of SEAA are low-income, and they have a lower per capita income.
- Close to 1.1 million SEAA are low-income, including about 460,000 who live in poverty.²⁷
- All SEAA ethnic groups have lower per capita incomes than average.
- Hmong Americans fare worse than all racial groups across multiple measures of income. Nearly 60% of Hmong Americans are low-income and more than one of every four live in poverty.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B19313 and B01003.

Fifty-eight percent of Hmong Americans are low-income. That is more than double the percentage of Asian Americans who are low-income. This percentage is higher than all racial groups in the United States.

Poverty & Low-Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2011–2015 (Ranked by Percent Low-Income)



U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002.

Average Household Size

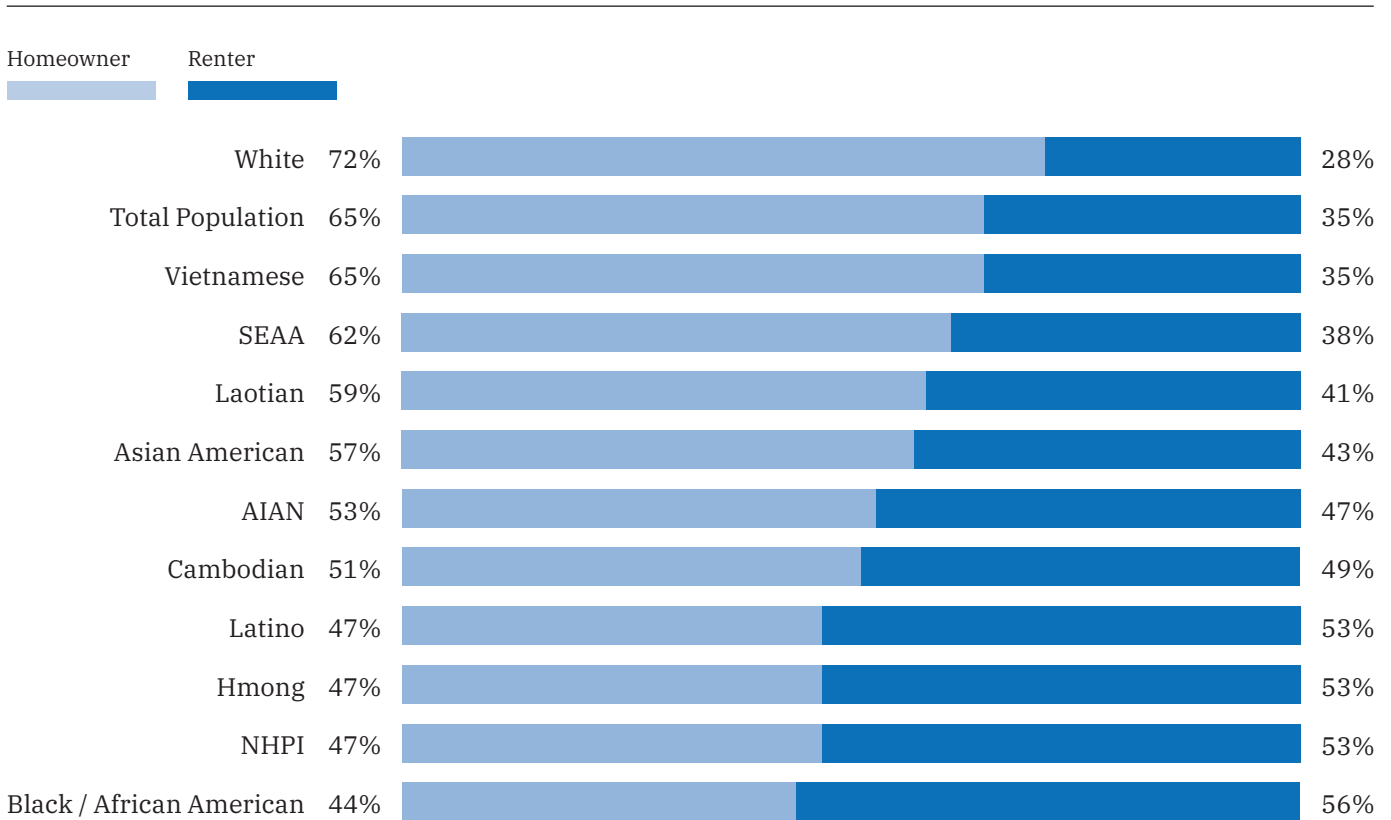
By Housing Tenure & Ethnic Group, United States 2010

HOUSING TENURE	HMONG	CAMBODIAN	LAOTIAN	VIETNAMESE	TOTAL POPULATION
Owner	5.8	4.8	4.5	4.0	2.7
Renter	4.4	3.7	3.5	3.0	2.5

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04.

Homeowners and Renters

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2010

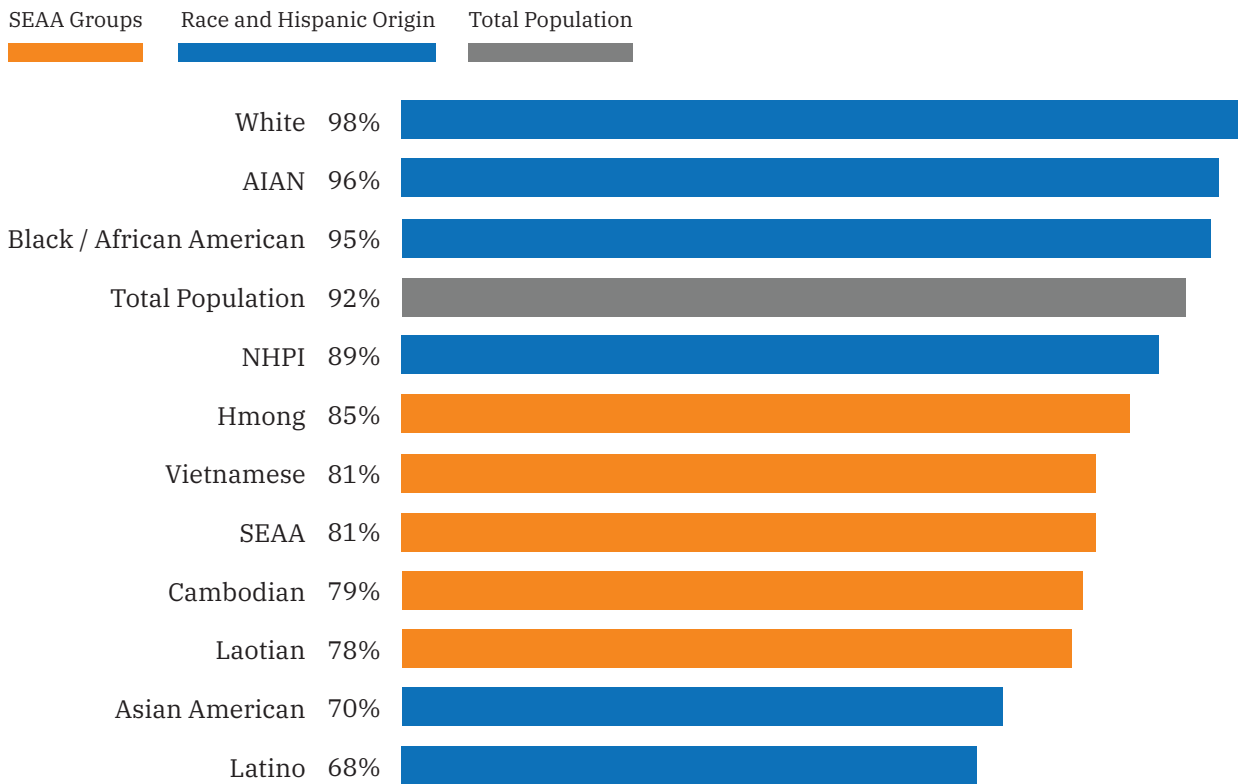


U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2, Table HCT2.

- All SEAA ethnic groups have lower-than-average rates of homeownership, with the exception of Vietnamese Americans (65%), who are at the average rate.
- Vietnamese (65%), Laotian (59%), and Cambodian Americans (51%) are more likely to own than rent their homes.
- Among all SEAA ethnic groups, with the exception of Hmong Americans, renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing.²⁸
- SEAA mortgagors (43%) are more likely to be housing cost-burdened than average (32%). Vietnamese American mortgagors (45%) have the highest rate of all racial groups of being housing cost-burdened.²⁹
- Regardless of housing tenure, SEAA ethnic groups have larger mean household sizes than average. SEAA household sizes are larger than Asian American households as a whole.³⁰

Citizen Voting-Age Population

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2011–2015



U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.

- Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA, 81%) have lower-than-average (92%) proportions of voting-age populations who are citizens.
- All SEAA ethnic groups have higher rates of citizen voting-age populations than Asian Americans as a whole and Latinos.

“But, for me, no matter what position or career I’m doing, I will always make time for social justice work. I’m going to be there for my community and fight back, and tell my story, and make people aware of the problems in my community.”

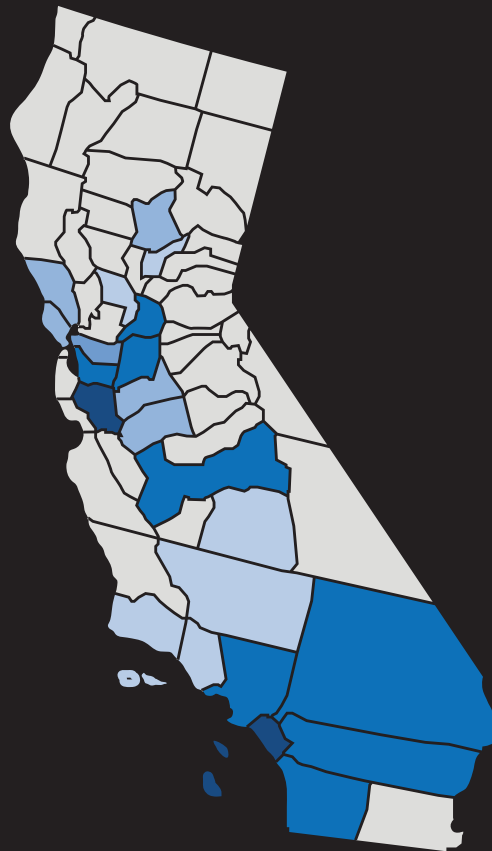
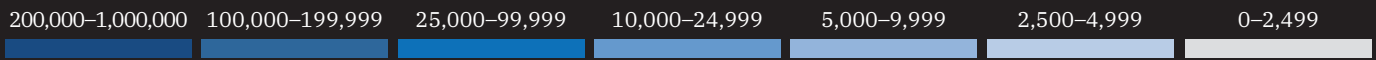
STEPHANIE SIM

excerpt from *Dreams Detained in Her Words: The Effects of Detention and Deportation on Women and Families*.

CALIFORNIA

SEAA Demographics by County

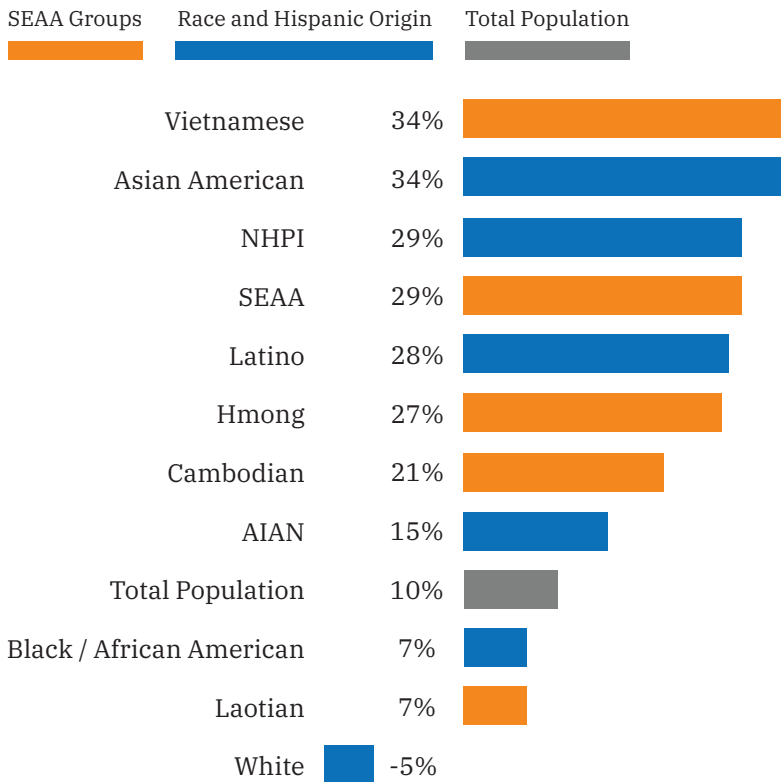
U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1, Table PCT7.



OVER 910,000 SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICANS (SEAA) LIVE IN CALIFORNIA. It is home to the largest population of SEAA.³¹ Although Southeast Asian refugees settled in every U.S. state from 1983 to 2007, refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos initially resettled in California more than in any other state.³² Camp Pendleton in California was one of the bases to process the first group of refugees in 1975. Additionally, over half of refugees who were initially resettled elsewhere in the U.S. moved across state lines, often to California, for family, community, and climate.³³ The Cambodian community in Long Beach began in the 1950s and 1960s prior to SEAA resettlement, when Cambodian students attended California State University, Long Beach, as part of an exchange program. It then continued to grow as refugees resettled in California.³⁴ A large Hmong community was established in the Central Valley in the early 1980s when Hmong leadership settled there to build a community and in hopes of agricultural opportunities.³⁵

Population Growth

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2000 to 2010



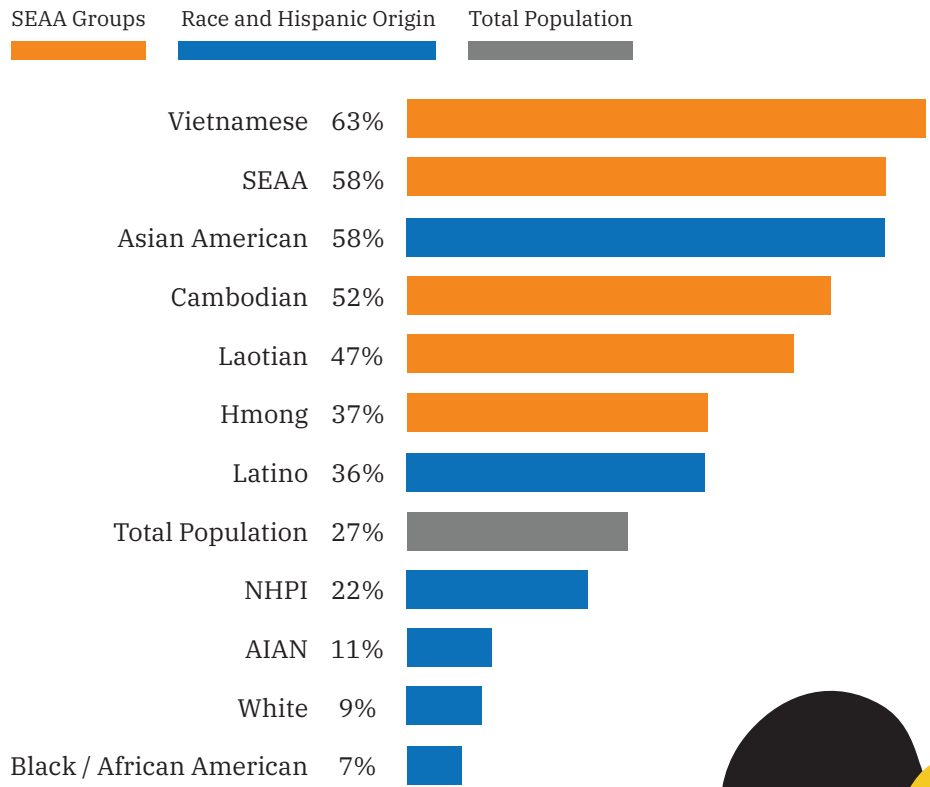
- The Southeast Asian American (SEAA) population in California is growing more than average. The rate of growth among Laotian Americans is slightly slower than average at 7%—the same as Blacks or African Americans.
- The median age of Californians is 35.2. Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese American is the only group with a median age higher than average at 35.7. Hmong Americans have the lowest median age of 20.6.³⁶
- Nearly half of Hmong Americans in California are under the age of 18—the highest proportion of youth compared to all racial groups and other SEAA ethnic groups. The proportion of the Hmong American youth population is more than double that of Whites.³⁷
- Hmong (19%), Cambodian (15%), and Laotian Americans (14%) have the highest proportions of college-aged young adults (ages 18–24).³⁸

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF1, Tables P8, P9, and PCT007; 2010 Census SF1, Tables P5, P6, and PCT7.

AIAN: Native American(s) or Alaska Native(s) **NHPI:** Native Hawaiian(s) and Pacific Islander(s) **SEAA:** Southeast Asian American(s)

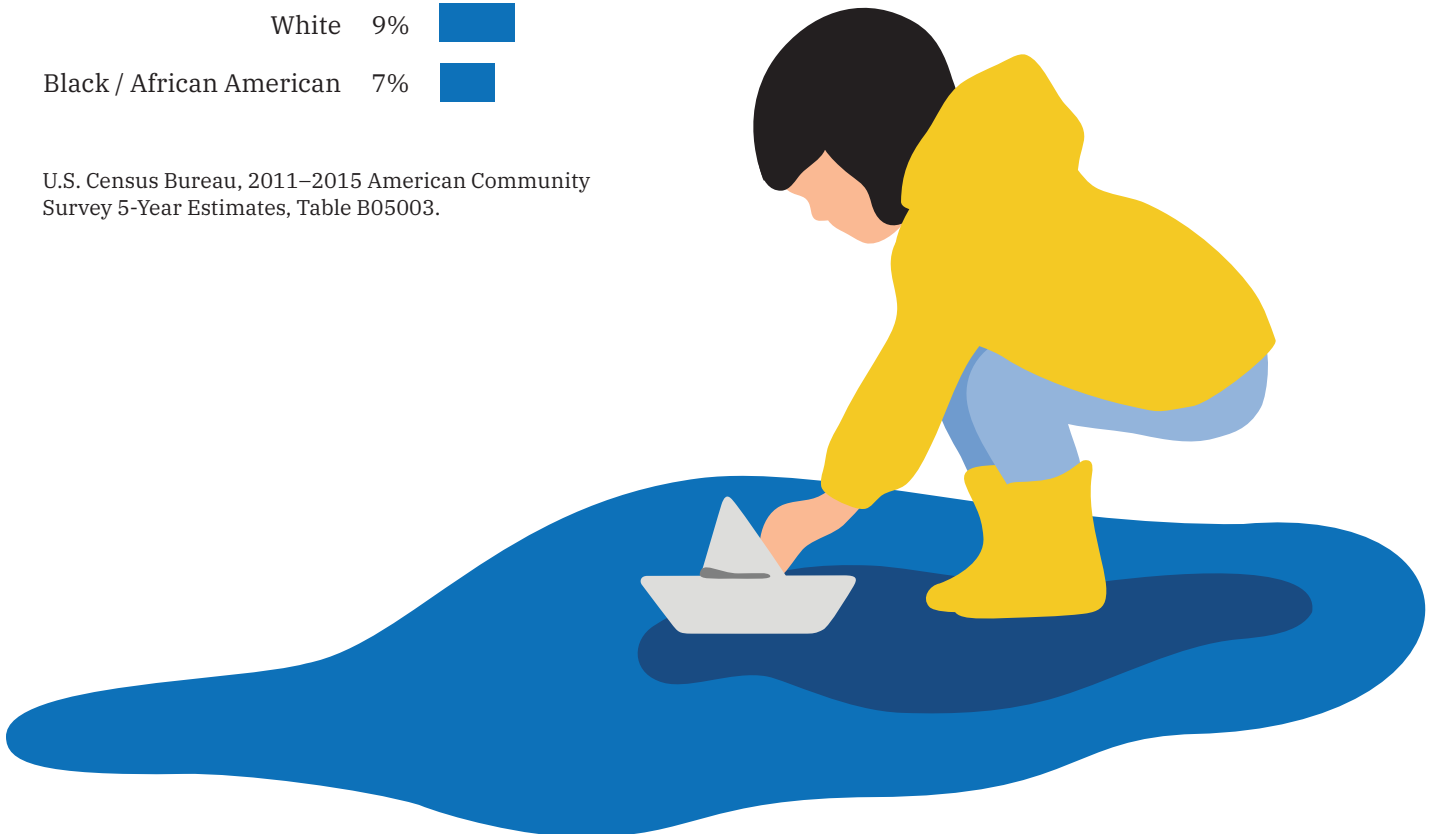
Foreign-Born

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2011–2015



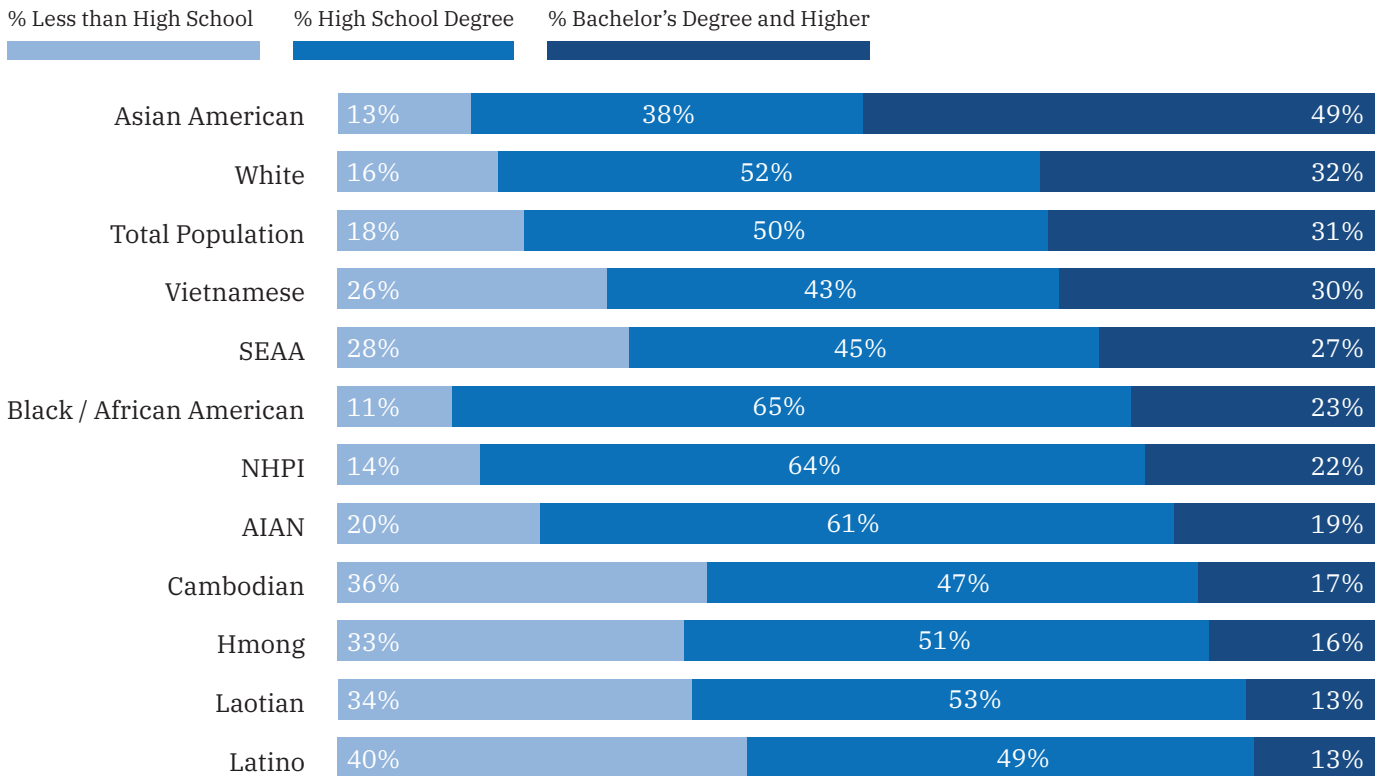
- The percentage of foreign-born SEAA in California is larger than average.
- The proportion of Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong Americans born outside the United States is higher than that of Latinos.
- Sixty-three percent of Vietnamese Americans in California are foreign-born—a rate higher than all racial groups and other SEAA.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.



Educational Attainment*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, California 2011–2015 (Ranked by Percent Bachelor’s Degree and Higher)



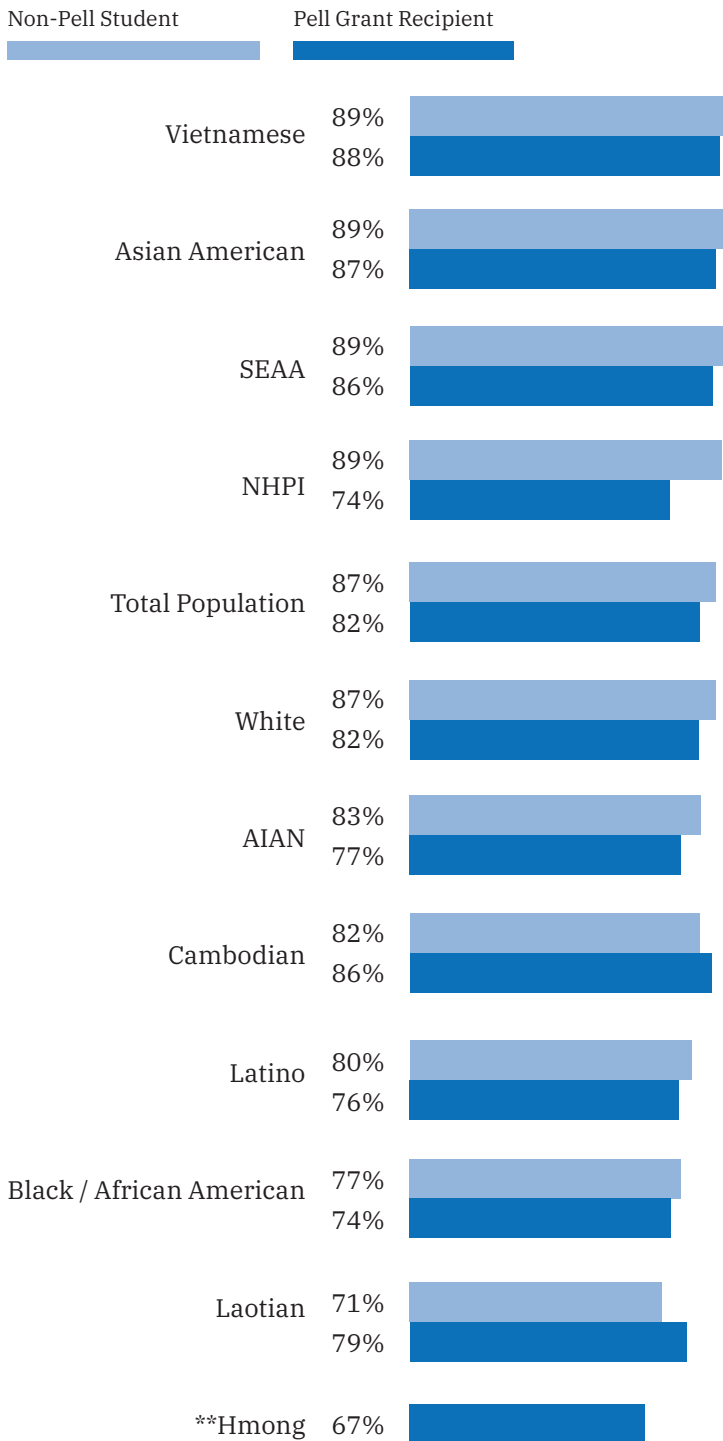
*For the population 25 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.

- Nearly 30% of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) in California have not completed high school or passed the GED, a rate more than double that of Asian Americans as a whole.
- Of SEAA ethnic groups, Cambodian Americans are least likely to hold a high school diploma.
- There are gender disparities in educational attainment across SEAA ethnic groups. Females are less likely to have completed high school than males, a difference that ranges from 5% among Laotian Americans to 10% among Hmong Americans.³⁹
- Slightly higher proportions of Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian American females than males have obtained a higher-education degree.⁴⁰
- Twenty-seven percent of SEAA hold a higher-education degree compared to 49% of Asian Americans as a whole.
- Hmong SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (30%) have the largest proportion of higher-education degree holders, and Laotian Americans (13%) have the smallest.
- Fifty-two of the 132 Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions are in California.⁴¹

UC Six-Year Graduation Rates*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, 2016 (Ranked by Percent Non-Pell Graduation Rates)



- The number of SEAA enrolled in the University of California system has increased by 16% from 2013 to 2018.
- Eighty-eight percent of SEAA who enter the University of California (UC) system as freshmen graduate within six years.⁴²
- Whereas 30% of UC students are Pell Grant recipients, over 50% of SEAA are. Four in five Hmong American students in the UC system receive Pell Grants.
- Cambodian and Laotian American Pell Grant recipients are more likely to graduate from a UC University than non-Pell Grant students.

“If nobody before you graduated, they can’t give you that support to graduate.”

CAMBODIAN YOUNG MAN

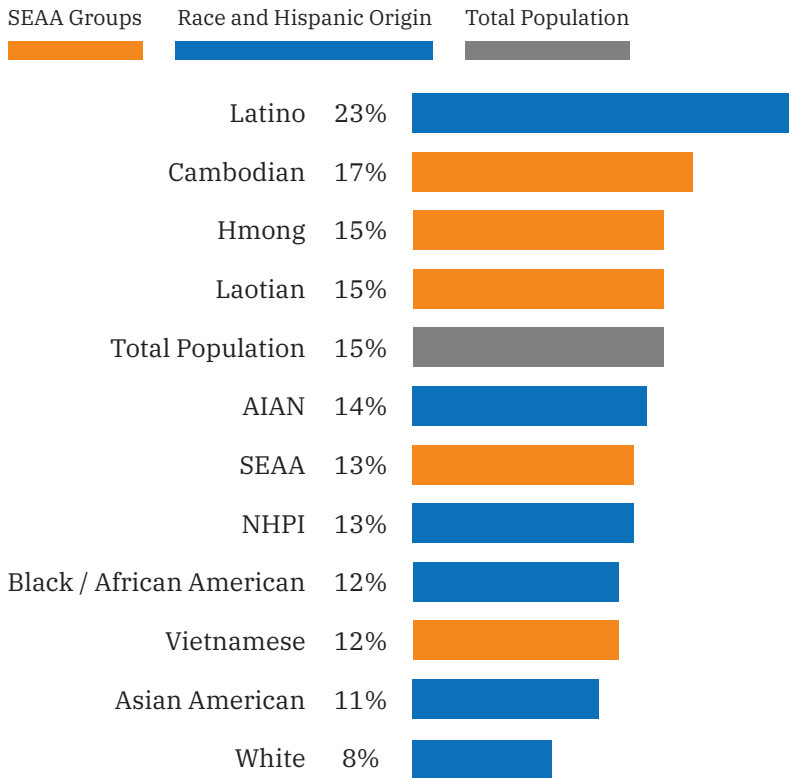
from *Can You See Me? School Culture and Climate for California’s AAPI Youth*

*Undergraduate students who entered the University of California as freshmen in 2010 and graduated by 2016

**Non-Pell Student data are not available

Uninsured

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, California 2011–2015



- Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) in California are less likely to be insured than average and Asian Americans as a whole.
- The percentage of uninsured has decreased since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The largest decreases among SEAA were among Cambodian Americans (21% to 15%) and Laotian Americans (18% to 14%).⁴³
- SEAA (33%) are more likely to have public health insurance than average (29%). Almost half of Hmong Americans are enrolled in public health insurance—a rate higher than all racial groups and other SEAA ethnic groups.⁴⁴

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001.

“I am a survivor of Cambodian genocide. I have mental [health] problems, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, asthma, and stomach problems. My overall health is not great because of these health problems, but I am thankful to have health coverage. If not, I wouldn’t be alive now.”

SEAA RESPONDENT

from *Southeast Asian Americans Speak Out to Protect the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid Expansion*

Leading Causes of Death

By Ethnic Group, California 2017

ETHNIC GROUP	NUMBER 1 CAUSE		NUMBER 2 CAUSE		NUMBER 3 CAUSE	
Cambodian	Cancer	22%	Heart disease	19%	Other	19%
Hmong	Other	22%	Heart disease	17%	Cancer	15%
Laotian	Cancer	23%	Other	20%	Heart disease	18%
Vietnamese	Cancer	28%	Heart disease	18%	Other	17%

California Department of Public Health, Tabulated California Vital Records Data, 2017.

- Heart disease, cancer, and stroke are the top three causes of death in California.⁴⁵
- Cancer and heart disease are the leading causes of death for SEAA in California. Agent Orange, a toxic herbicide deployed in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, is a potential contributing factor to these cancer health concerns for SEAs today.
- One-quarter of deaths among SEAA are due to cancer. Eighteen percent of deaths among SEAA are from heart disease.
- Strokes are the fourth-leading cause of death across all SEAA ethnic groups.⁴⁶

Community Spotlight

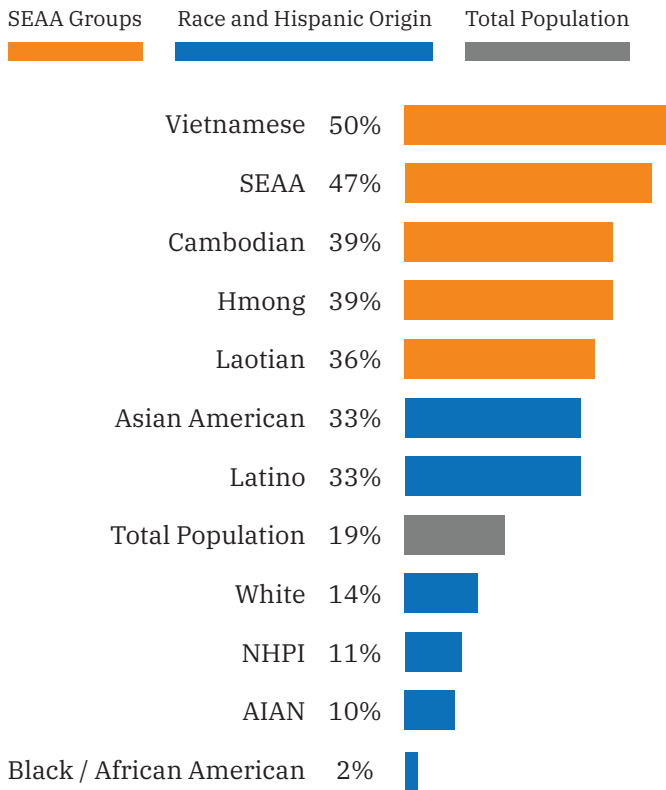
All of Maly’s family suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and their sponsor didn’t have the capacity to help and support them. Her father never talked about his work as a prominent government official or the extent of his involvement with the CIA back home in Laos. Her father felt alienated and struggled with severe PTSD after many years at a reeducation camp. He would patrol the house with guns at night and put deadbolts on the door so that they couldn’t get in or out. He exhibited aggressive behaviors and was verbally abusive, especially when he was intoxicated. Maly recounts that her family became dysfunctional and incohesive, where every member was trying to figure out in their own ways how to live in the United States.

MALY PHOMMAVONG

Sacramento, CA

Limited English Proficiency*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, California 2011–2015



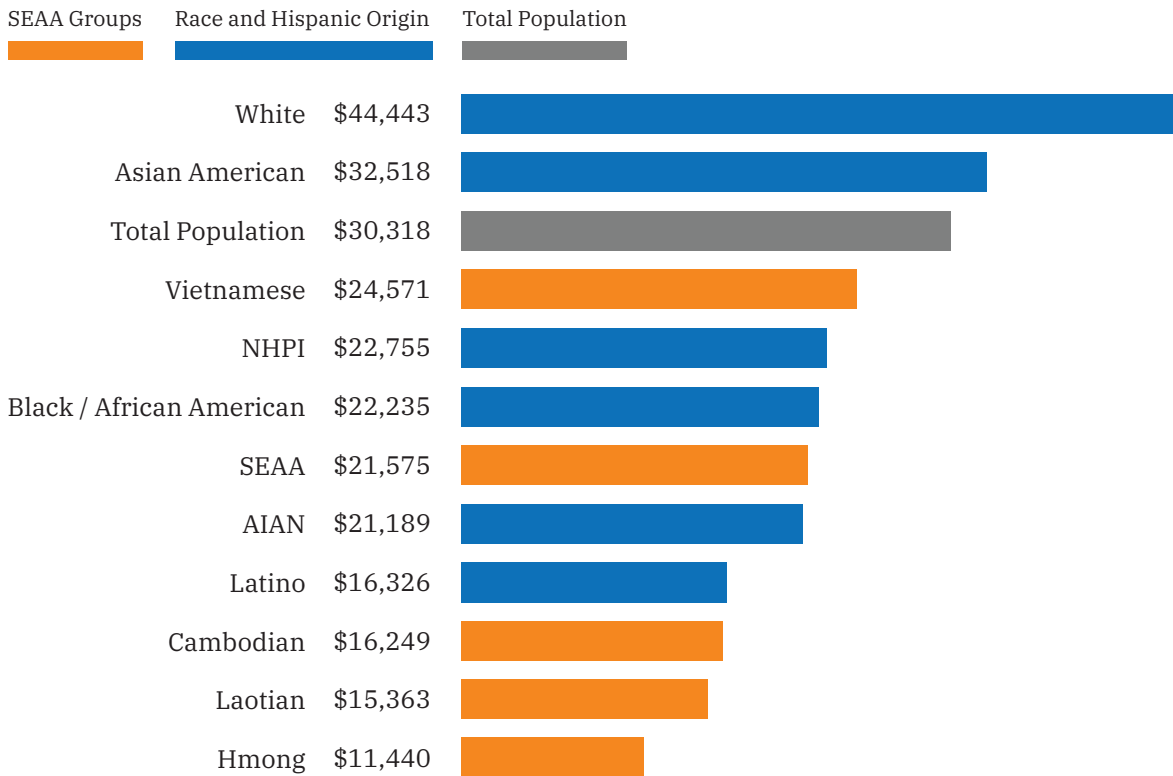
- Over 90% of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) in California speak a language other than English at home, a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and other racial groups.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Hmong Americans have the highest rates and Cambodian Americans have the lowest rates of speaking a language other than English, at 94% and 90%, respectively. These rates are more than double that of the average population (43%).
- Forty-seven percent of SEAA are limited English proficient (LEP), a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and other racial groups.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans have the highest rate of LEP (50%); Laotian Americans have the lowest rate of LEP (36%). This rate is similar to, but higher than, those of Asian Americans as a whole and Latinos.
- After Spanish, Vietnamese is the second-most spoken language other than English by students in California; Hmong is the 17th.
- In the 2017–18 school year, 145 schools in California had at least 15% of enrolled students who spoke Vietnamese at home, which required these schools to provide parental notifications translated in Vietnamese.

*For the population 5 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B16004.

Per Capita Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, California 2011–2015



U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B19313 and B01003.

- Across multiple measures of income, Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) fare worse than average. A greater proportion of SEAA are low-income, and SEAA have a lower per capita income.
- Over 400,000 SEAA are low-income, over 190,000 of whom live in poverty.⁴⁷
- Although lower than average, the per capita income of Vietnamese Americans in California is higher than Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, Blacks or African Americans, AIAN, Latinos, and other SEAA ethnic groups. The proportions of Vietnamese Americans who are low-income and in poverty are the same as average.
- Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong Americans have the lowest per capita income in California compared to all the racial groups.
- Sixty percent of Hmong Americans in California are low-income, and more than one in every three live in poverty.

“Immigrants and refugees are not coming into America and taking all of the government benefits. We are positively contributing to the workforce, business sector, and economy. But we also understand that there are additional barriers and challenges that we face and have to overcome.”

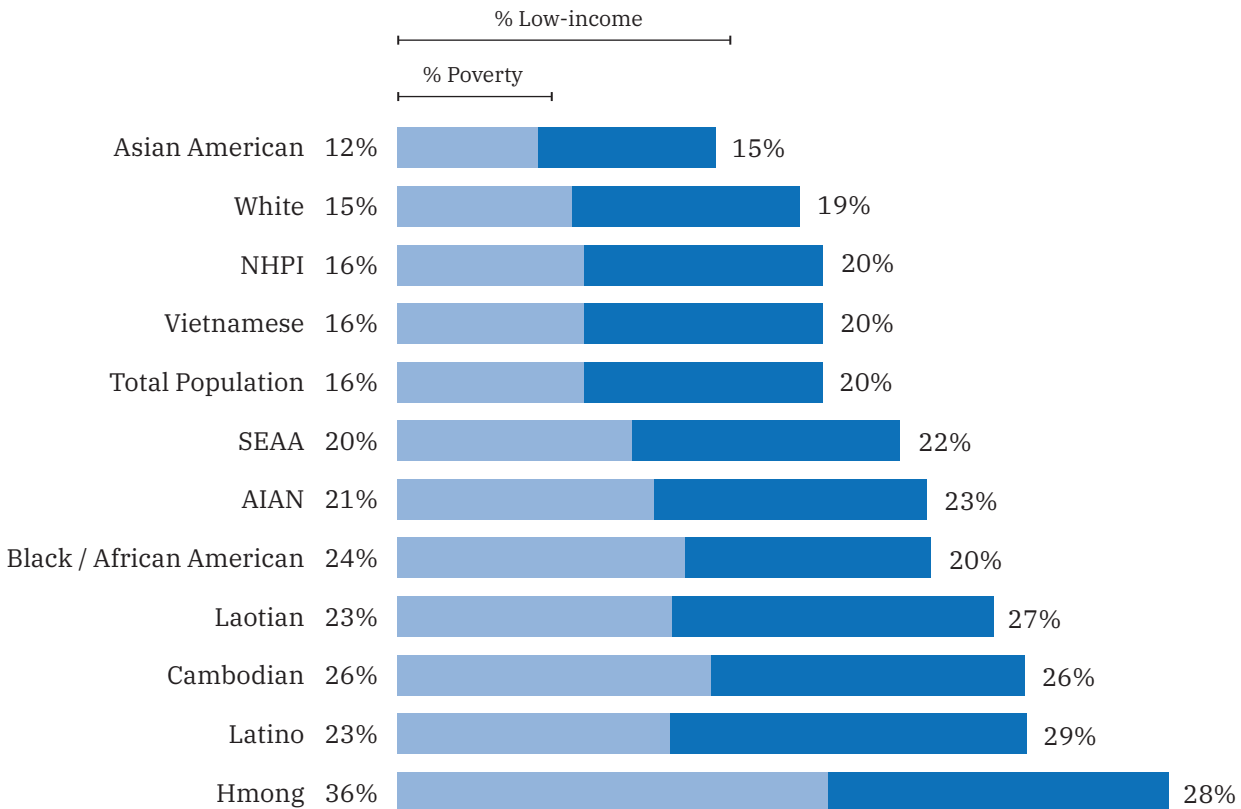
VATTANA PEONG

The Cambodian Family Center of Santa Ana

CALIFORNIA ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND HOUSING

Poverty & Low-Income

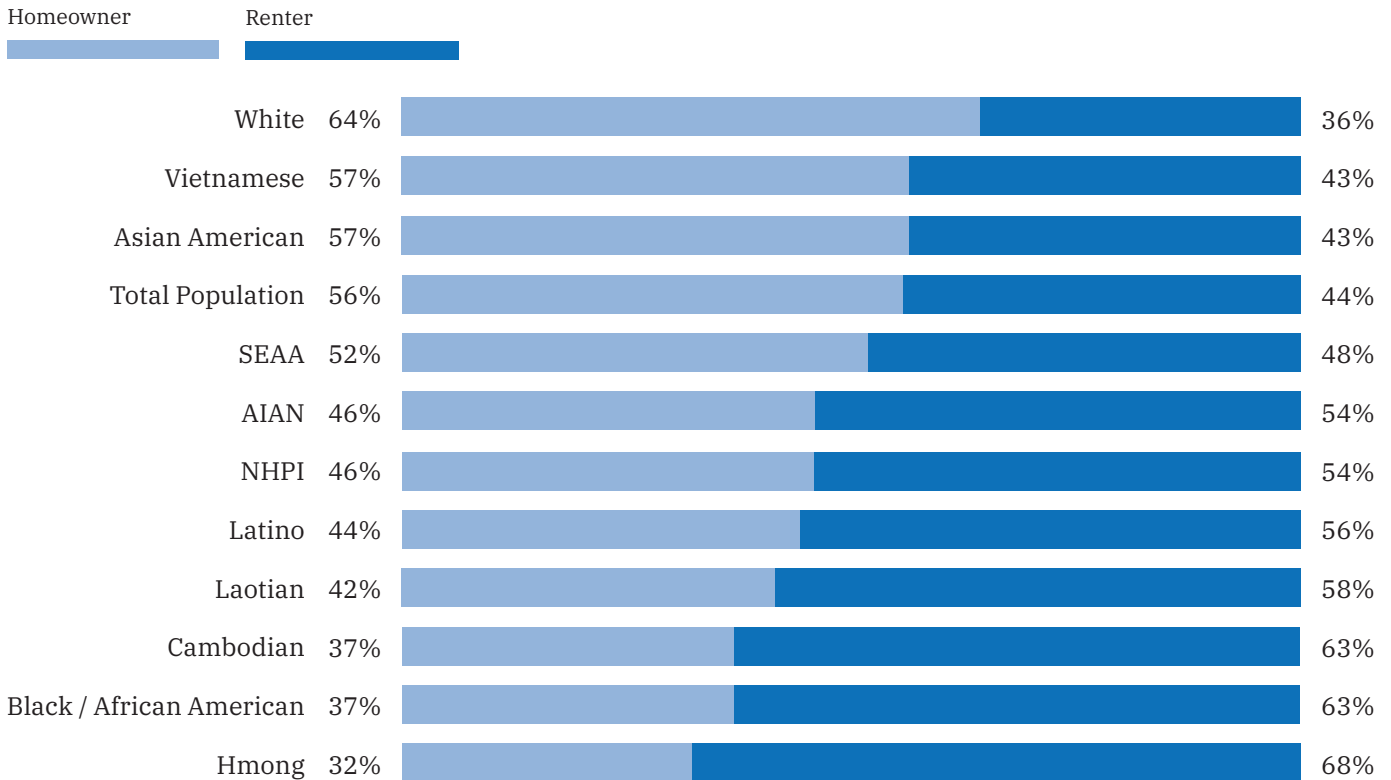
By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, California 2011–2015 (Ranked by Percent Low-Income)



U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002.

Homeowners and Renters

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, California 2010



U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2, Table HCT2.

- SEAA ethnic groups have lower-than-average rates of homeownership, with the exception of Vietnamese Americans, whose rate is slightly above average.
- There are more Hmong, Laotian, and Cambodian Americans who rent than own their homes in California.
- Across SEAA ethnic groups and all racial groups in California, renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing.⁴⁸
- Among mortgagors, all SEAA ethnic groups have a higher rate of being housing cost-burdened than the average (43%). Half of Cambodian American mortgagors in California are housing cost-burdened; this rate is slightly higher than Latinos (59%) and Vietnamese Americans (48%). Among SEAA mortgagors, Hmong Americans have the lowest relative rate of being housing cost-burdened at 44%.⁴⁹
- Regardless of housing tenure, SEAA ethnic groups have larger mean household sizes than the average household size in California. SEAA households are larger than the average Asian American household.⁵⁰

Average Household Size

By Housing Tenure & Ethnic Group, California 2011–2015

HOUSING TENURE	HMONG	LAOTIAN	CAMBODIAN	VIETNAMESE	TOTAL POPULATION
Owner	6.4	5.3	5.0	4.1	3.0
Renter	5.1	4.0	3.9	3.2	2.9

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04.



Community Spotlight

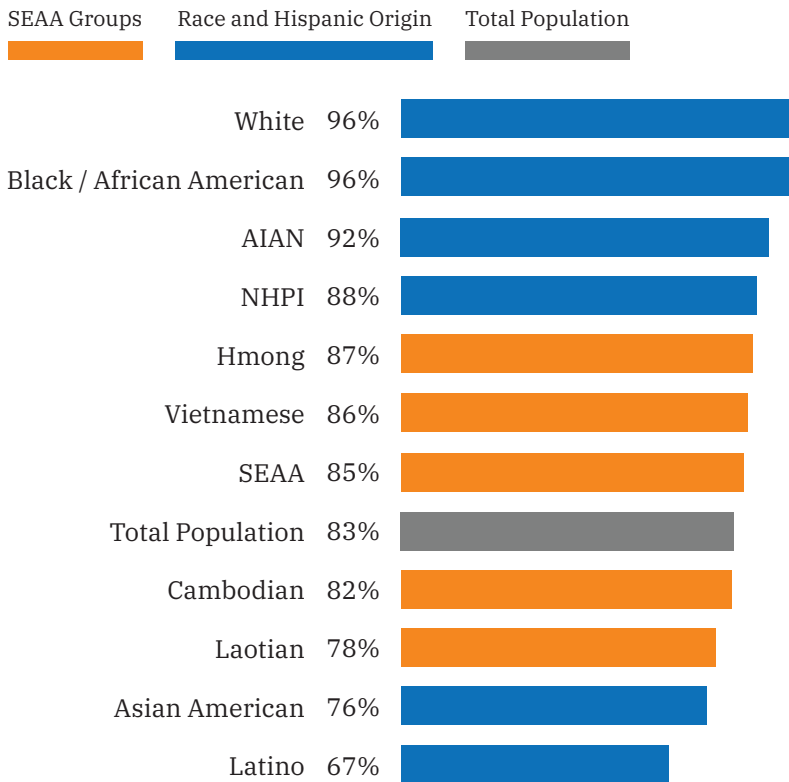
“When I came to this country in 1981 with my dad, sister, and two younger brothers, we lived in a two-bedroom apartment and were considered the poorest of the poor. Nowadays, you see families of four crowding into one-bedroom apartments or even one room in the house; the living room becomes a bedroom. We hear of our clients paying \$1,200 a month to rent out a garage to avoid living on the streets, or just renting rooms in homes. The housing crisis in San Jose has gotten so bad and impacts all aspects of life—nutrition, education, livelihood, and even the ability of our community to fill out the census without fear.”

QUYEN VUONG

International Children Assistance Network (ICAN)

Citizen Voting-Age Population

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, California 2011–2015



- Hmong (87%) and Vietnamese Americans (86%) have slightly higher-than-average (83%) proportions of citizen-voting age population (CVAP); Cambodian Americans have a slightly less-than-average proportion.
- All Southeast Asian American (SEAA) ethnic groups have higher rates of citizen voting-age populations than Asian Americans as a whole and Latinos.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.

“I need to help mobilize and uplift the Lao community—we need to understand ourselves, and community of Southeast Asians as a whole. We work hard at it because we have so much baggage growing up, but I want to help develop a different perspective—we need to move past that now, the narrative of victimization.”

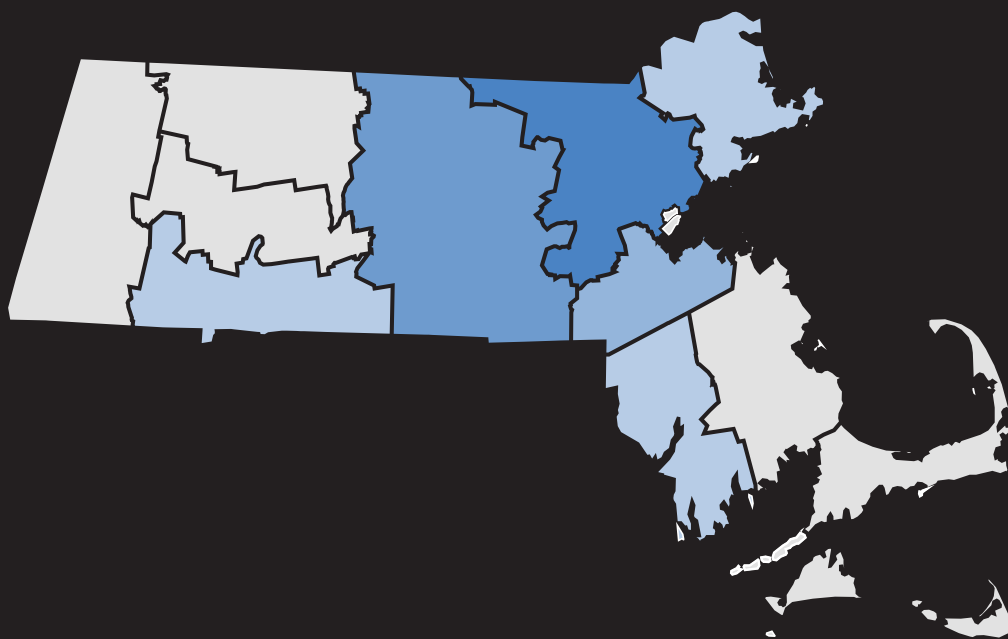
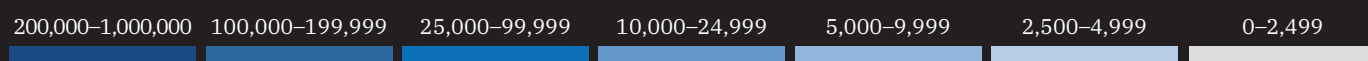
MALY PHOMMAVONG

Sacramento, CA

MASSACHUSETTS

SEAA Demographics by County

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1, Table PCT7.

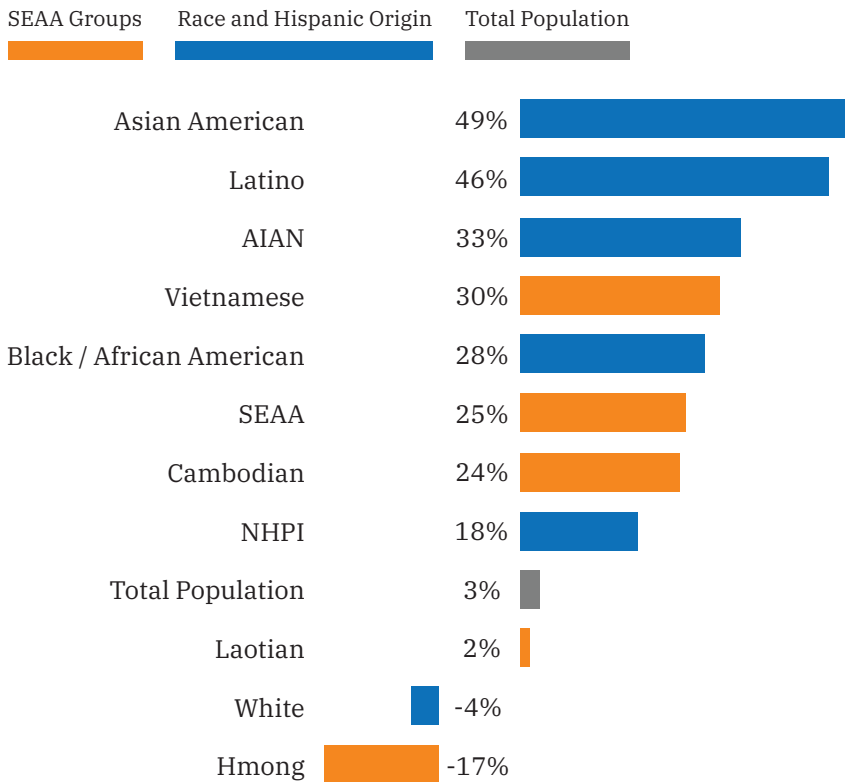


THE FIFTH LARGEST POPULATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICANS (SEAA) IS IN MASSACHUSETTS. It is home to a growing SEAA community—the population grew by 25% from 2000 to 2010. The state is home to the second-largest population of Cambodian Americans. Thirty-five percent of SEAA in Massachusetts reside in Middlesex County—primarily in the city of Lowell, with the second-most populous SEAA concentration in Boston. The large majority of SEAA in Lowell is Cambodian American, whereas in Boston the large majority is Vietnamese American. Many Cambodian and other Southeast Asian refugees arrived in Lowell, Massachusetts, because it served as a resettlement hub for refugees. Several agencies including the Indochinese Refugees Foundation, the American Council for Nationalities Service, the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (MAA), the Laotian MAA, the Vietnamese MAA, and the International Institute of Lowell assisted refugees in resettling in their new country. As the Cambodian community began to grow in Lowell, families sponsored other refugee families so they could resettle in Lowell. In addition, people who had initially resettled elsewhere moved to Lowell to be with friends, family, and community. The University of Massachusetts Lowell houses a Southeast Asian Digital Archive of materials from SEAA communities in the greater Lowell area. This archive serves to preserve and share the resilience and diversity of the SEAA experience in refugee resettlement and building community.⁵¹

MASSACHUSETTS DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Growth

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2000 to 2010



- The median age of people living in Massachusetts is 39.1. The median ages across all the Southeast Asian American (SEAA) ethnic groups are lower than the average. Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans have the highest median age at 32.3, and Hmong Americans have the lowest at 22.
- SEAA are proportionately younger than average. Whereas 22% of the population in Massachusetts is less than 18 years old, 30% of the SEAA population is.
- SEAA (13%) have a higher percentage of college-aged young adults (ages 18–24) than average (10%).

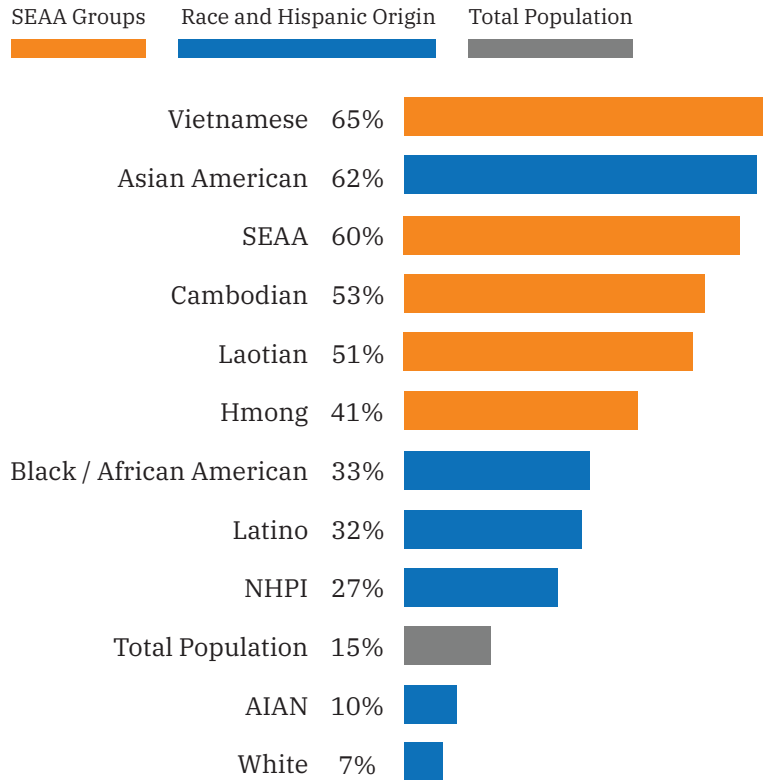
U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF1, Tables P8, P9, and PCT007; 2010 Census SF1, Tables P5, P6, and PCT7.

AIAN: Native American(s) or Alaska Native(s) **NHPI:** Native Hawaiian(s) and Pacific Islander(s) **SEAA:** Southeast Asian American(s)

MASSACHUSETTS DEMOGRAPHICS

Foreign-Born

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2011–2015



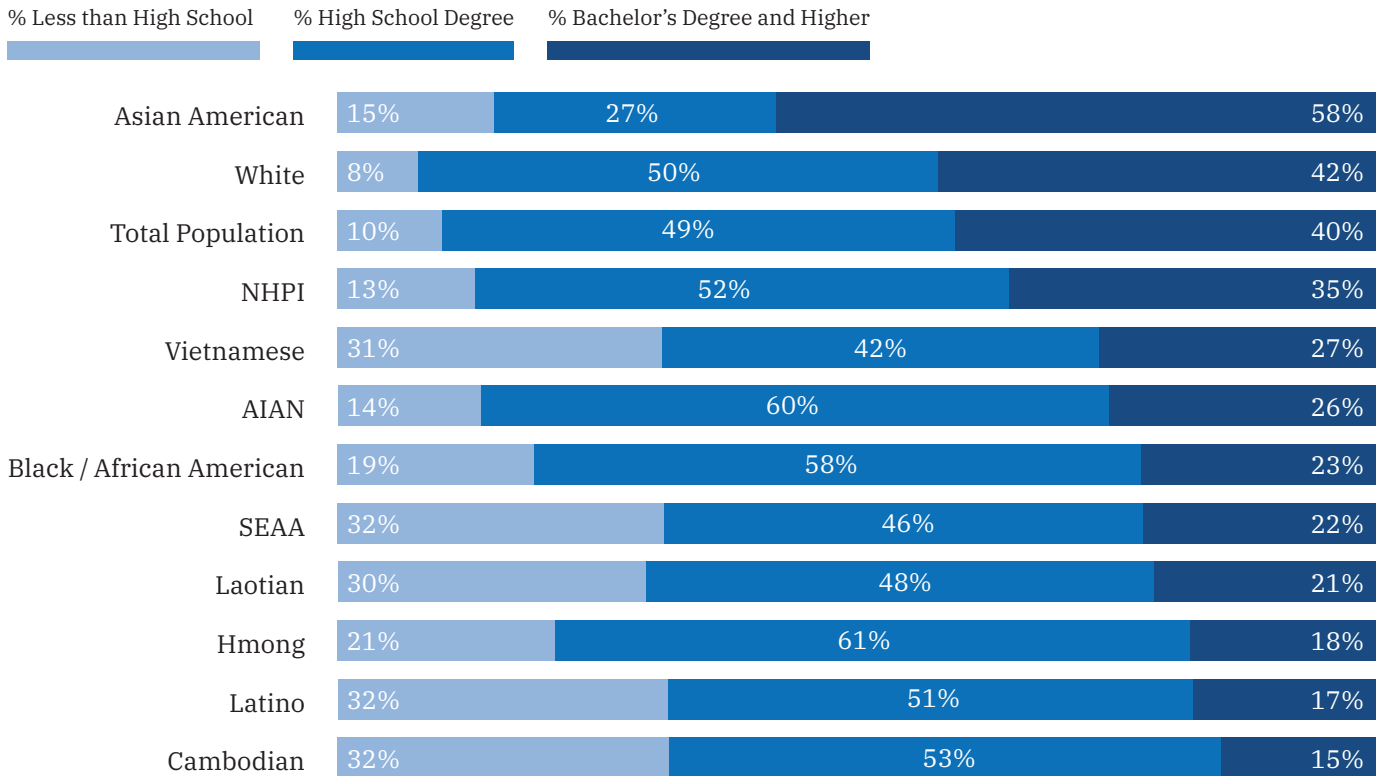
- The proportion of foreign-born SEAA is four times that of the Massachusetts average.
- Among those born outside of the United States, the rate is highest among SEAA ethnic groups and Asian Americans as a whole.
- Among SEAA, Hmong Americans have the smallest proportion of foreign-born at 41%—the only SEAA ethnic group in Massachusetts for which less than half of the population is foreign-born.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.

MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATION

Educational Attainment*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2011–2015 (by Percent Bachelor’s Degree and Higher)



*For the population 25 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.

- Over 30% of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) in Massachusetts have not completed high school or completed the GED, more than double the rate of Asian Americans as a whole.
- There are gender disparities in educational attainment among SEAA. A larger proportion of females than males have not completed high school, and a smaller proportion of females than males hold higher-education degrees.⁵²
- Twenty-two percent of SEAA hold a bachelor’s degree or higher—fewer than half of the 58% of Asian Americans as a whole who do.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (27%) have the highest rate of attaining a higher-education degree.
- There are two Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions in Massachusetts.⁵³

We need to be actively thinking about creative spaces and after-school programs that encourage participation from refugee parents in preparing their children for college. More importantly, we need to address language access. Without the ability to read documents or understand robocalls, parents are further barred from being informed on their child’s educational attainment and success.”

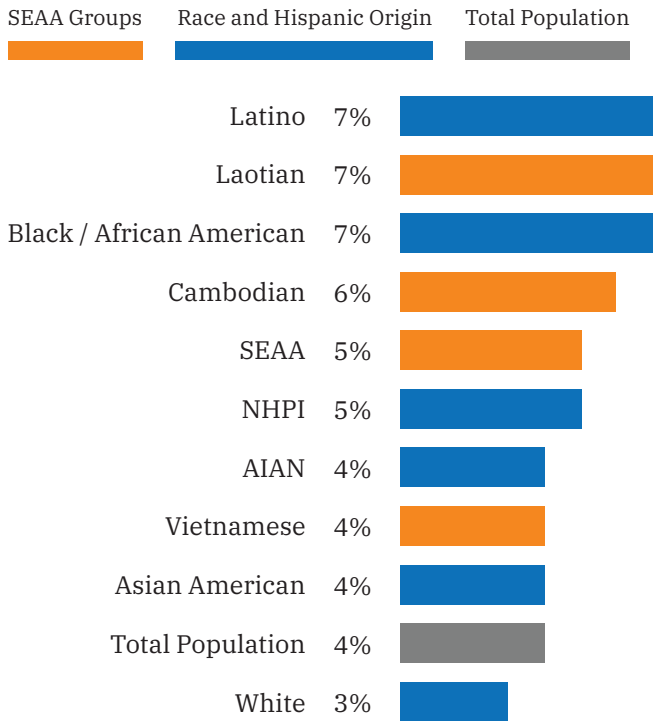
SOVANNA POUV

Executive Director of Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association



Uninsured

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2011–2015

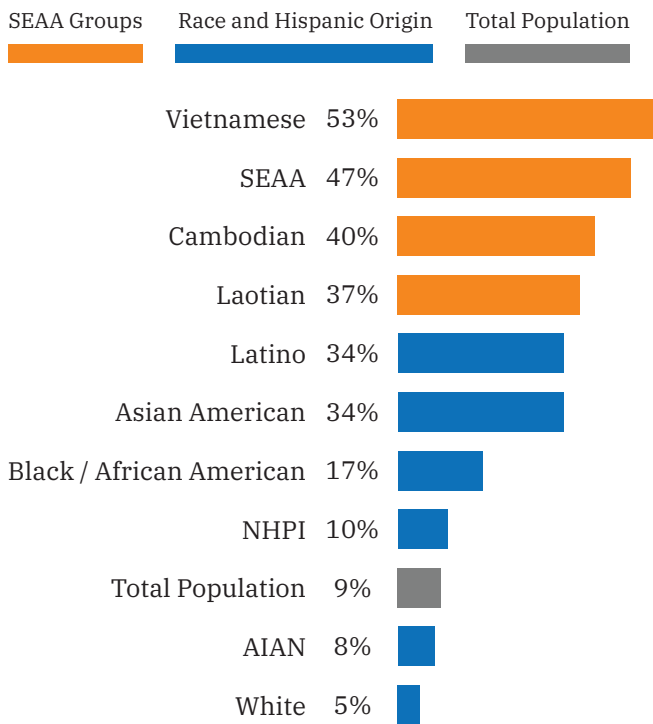


- Laotian and Cambodian Americans in Massachusetts are less likely to have health insurance than the average.
- Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) (40%) are more likely to have public health insurance than the average (30%).⁵⁴
- The rate of public health insurance enrollment is higher among SEAA than Asian Americans as a whole (24%), who have a lower-than-average rate.⁵⁵

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001.

Limited English Proficiency*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2011–2015



- Over 90% of SEAA speak a language other than English at home, a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and other racial groups.⁵⁶
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Hmong Americans (97%) have the highest and Cambodian Americans (79%) the lowest rates of speaking a non-English language. These rates are more than seven times that of the average population (11%).⁵⁷
- Forty-seven percent of SEAA are limited English proficient, a rate higher than all racial groups.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (53%) have the highest limited English proficiency rate; Laotian Americans (37%) have the lowest. This rate is similar to, but higher than, that of Asian Americans and Latinos (both 34%).
- Vietnamese is the seventh- and Khmer is the eighth-most commonly spoken language at home among English language learner students in Massachusetts.⁵⁸

*For the population 5 years and older
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey

5-Year Estimates, Table B16004.

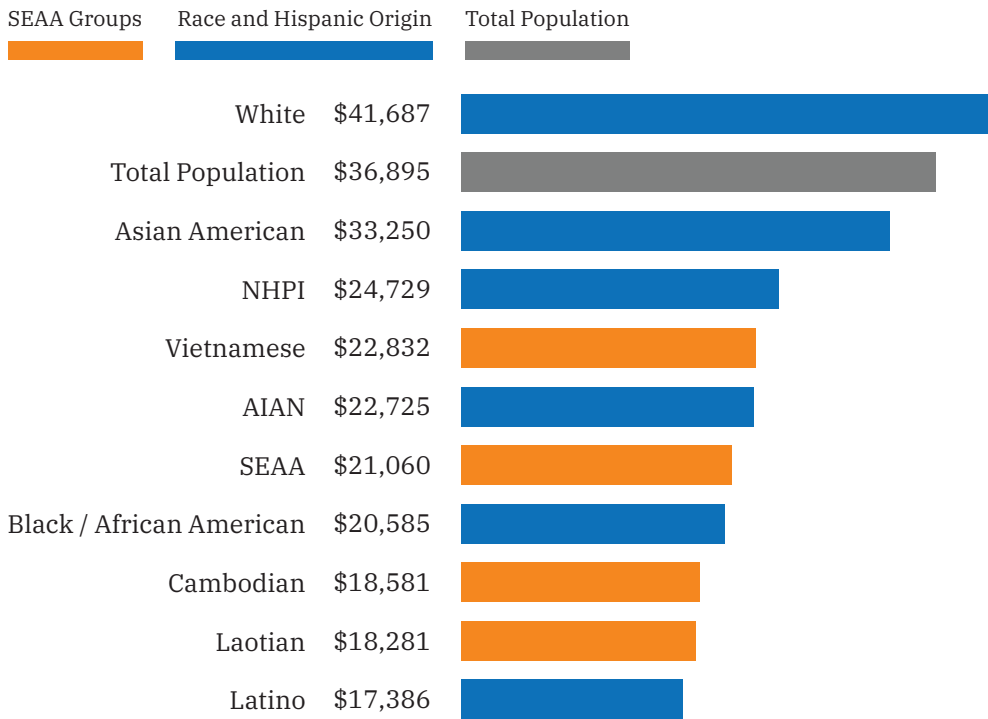
“Younger individuals with limited English language proficiency do not feel supported in navigating educational, social, and political institutions. We have created a space for younger individuals who speak Khmer to have an intentional space to converse and to feel empowered by their native tongue.”

SOVANNA POUV

Executive Director of Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA)

Per Capita Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2011–2015

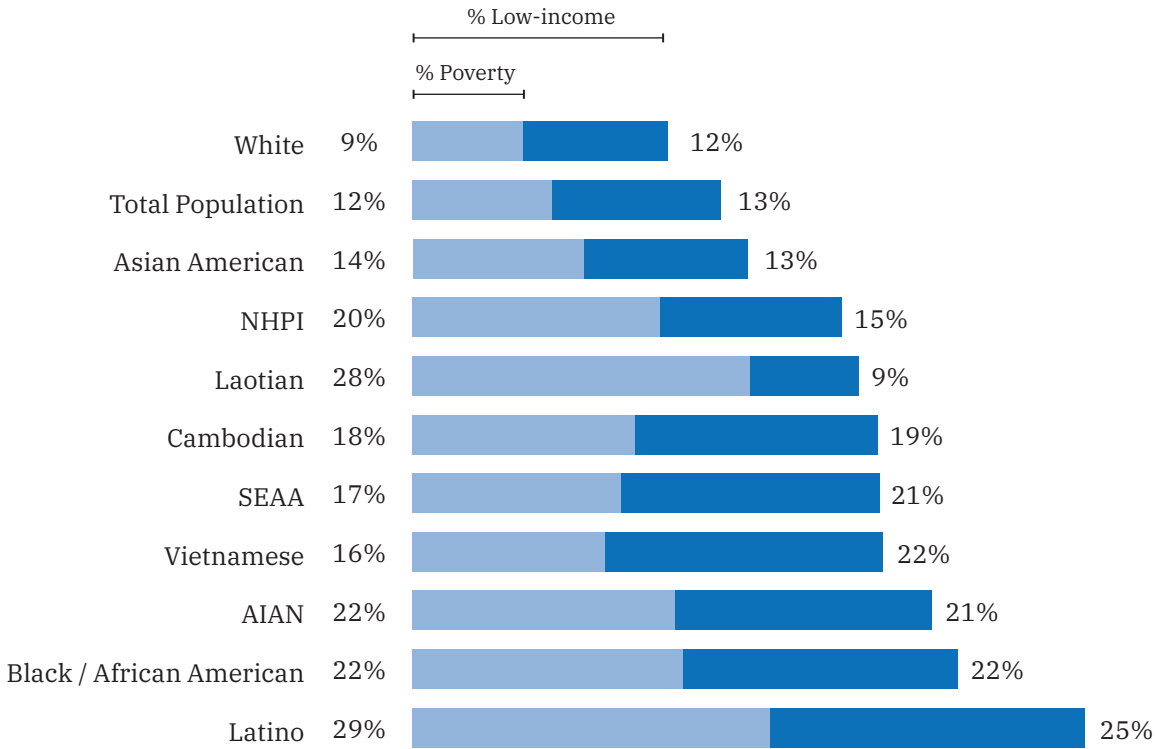


U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B19313 and B01003.

- Across multiple measures of income, Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) fare worse than average. A larger-than-average proportion of SEAA are low-income, and they have a lower-than-average per capita income.
- SEAA have lower per capita income than Asian Americans at large, NHPI, and AIAN. Cambodian and Laotian Americans have lower per capita income than Blacks or African Americans.
- Nearly 40% of SEAA are low-income. Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (38%) have the highest proportion low-income and Laotian Americans (28%) have the highest rate of households living in poverty, similar to that of Latinos.

Poverty & Low-Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2011–2015 (Ranked by Percent Low-Income)



U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002.

Average Household Size

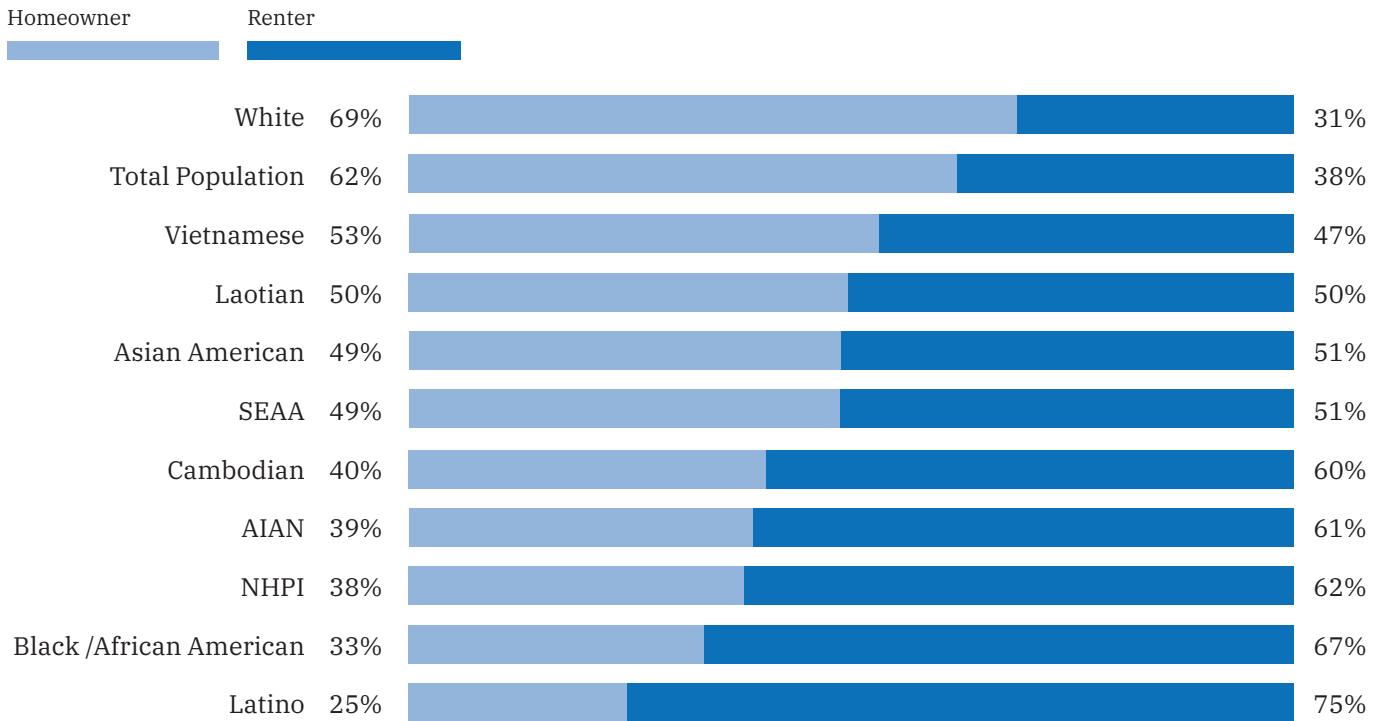
By Housing Tenure & Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2011–2015

HOUSING TENURE	CAMBODIAN	HMONG	LAOTIAN	VIETNAMESE	TOTAL POPULATION
Owner	5.2	5.6	5.2	4.1	2.7
Renter	3.6	3.5	3.1	2.9	2.3

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04.

Homeowners and Renters

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2010

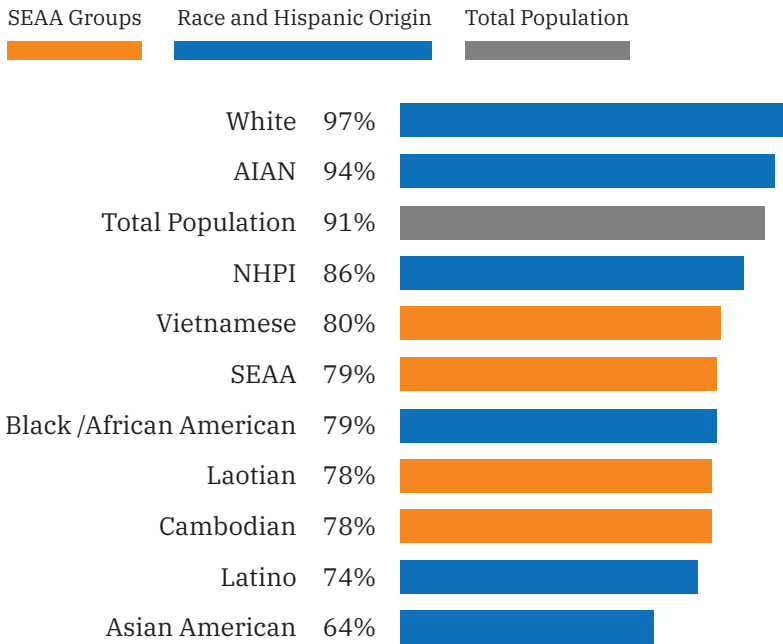


U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2, Table HCT2.

- SEAA in Massachusetts have lower-than-average rates of homeownership.
- At least half of Laotian and Vietnamese Americans own their homes, whereas fewer than half of Hmong and Cambodian Americans own their homes.
- Vietnamese, Laotian, and Hmong American renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing.⁵⁹
- Among mortgagors, SEAA have a higher rate of being housing cost-burdened than average (48% versus 34%). This is similar to that of Blacks or African Americans and NHPI (both 48%), and slightly higher than Latinos and AIAN (both 46%). The rate for Asian Americans as a whole is 36%, slightly higher than average.⁶⁰
- Regardless of housing tenure, SEAA ethnic groups have larger mean household sizes than the average household in Massachusetts. Mean household sizes across SEAA ethnic groups are larger than those of all racial groups.⁶¹

Citizen Voting-Age Population

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Massachusetts 2011–2015



- All Southeast Asian American (SEAA) ethnic groups have higher proportions of citizen voting-age populations (CVAP) than Asian Americans as a whole and Latinos.
- Laotian and Cambodian Americans have citizen voting-age population proportions of 78%.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.

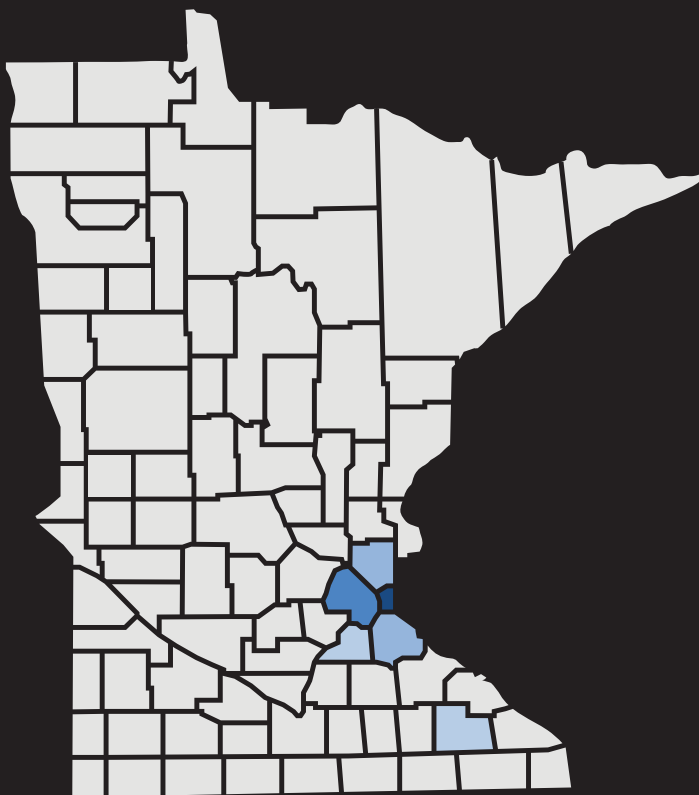
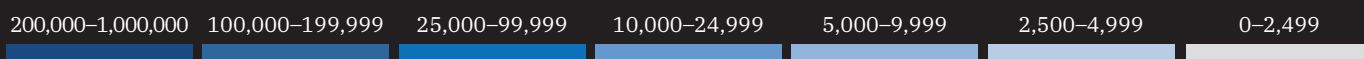
“Our immigrant narrative is part of United States history. If the U.S. hadn’t dropped those bombs, I wouldn’t be a refugee here. Having gone to the U.S. and being educated here, we don’t really know our history. It’s still a predominantly white history that’s being told, and it doesn’t make us feel like we’re part of the U.S. It’s part of our Southeast Asian history. As an adult, I try to work to remove the bombs that were dropped 25 years. But it’s also part of our American identity to hold the U.S. government accountable for what’s happening today. As an American citizen, I don’t want to [contribute to] another bombing.”

PHITSAMAY SYCHITKOKHONG

MINNESOTA

SEAA Demographics by County

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1, Table PCT7.

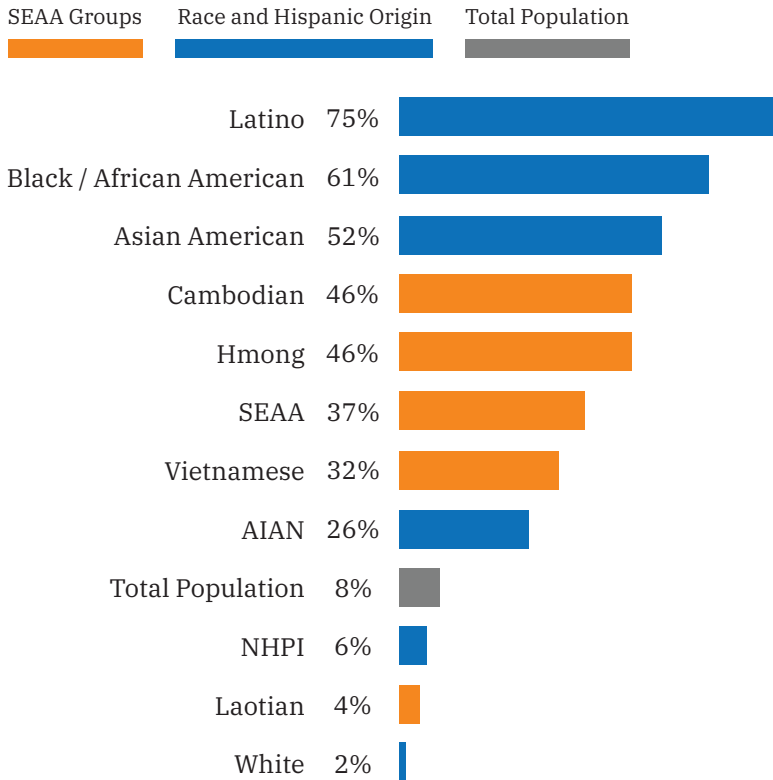


MINNESOTA IS HOME TO THE THIRD-LARGEST POPULATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICANS (SEAA), about 115,000. The second-largest population of Hmong Americans resides in this state. Ramsey County has the largest concentration of SEAA, 81% of whom live in St. Paul.⁶² There is also a large community of SEAA in Hennepin County. Among the nonprofit organizations that the State Department contracted with to assist with resettlement efforts in the Midwest, many were religious organizations such as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and the U.S. Catholic Conference that used a church congregation sponsorship model. They welcomed refugee families to the state.⁶³ Once families started resettling in the Midwest, they started sponsoring other refugee families, thus building community and social networks. Hmong families moved to the Midwest for long-term economic options, and to be with other Hmong families to preserve their culture and clan obligations.⁶⁴ Today there is a vibrant Hmong community in Minnesota, including Hmong elected officials, five of whom won seats in the state legislature in 2018.

MINNESOTA DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Growth

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Minnesota 2000 to 2010



- The Southeast Asian American (SEAA) population in Minnesota is growing faster than average. The rate of growth among Laotian Americans (4%) is slower than average.
- The median age of Minnesotans is 37.4 years. The median ages across SEAA ethnic groups are lower than average. Hmong Americans have the lowest median age of 20.1 years.
- Forty-four percent of Hmong Americans in Minnesota are under the age of 18—the highest proportion of youth compared to all racial groups and other SEAA ethnic groups. The proportion of Hmong Americans who are less than 18 years old is more than double that of Whites.⁶⁵
- SEAA (15%) have a larger proportion of college-aged young adults (ages 18–24) than average (9%) and all racial groups.⁶⁷

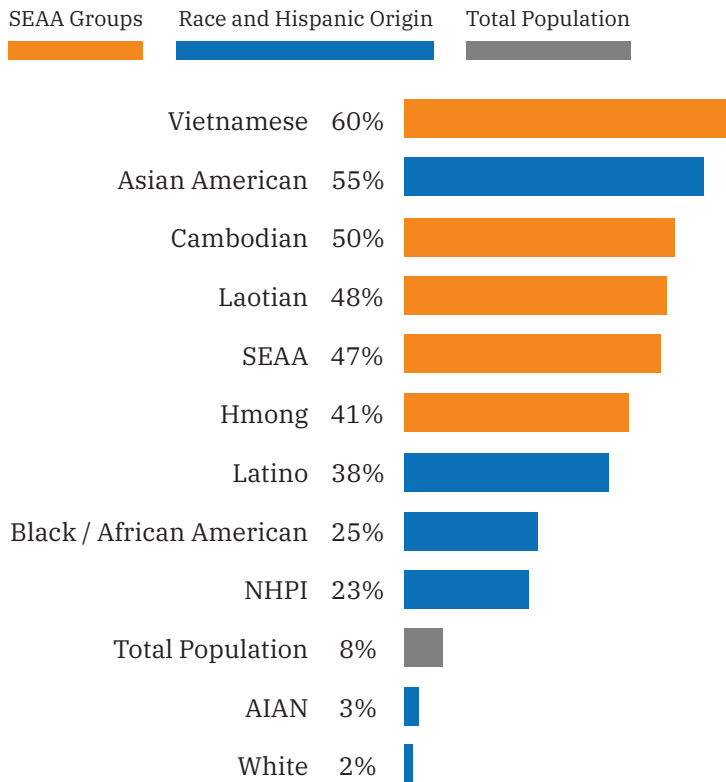
U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF1, Tables P8, P9, and PCT007; 2010 Census SF1, Tables P5, P6, and PCT7.

AIAN: Native American(s) or Alaska Native(s) **NHPI:** Native Hawaiian(s) and Pacific Islander(s) **SEAA:** Southeast Asian American(s)

MINNESOTA DEMOGRAPHICS

Foreign-Born

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Minnesota 2011–2015



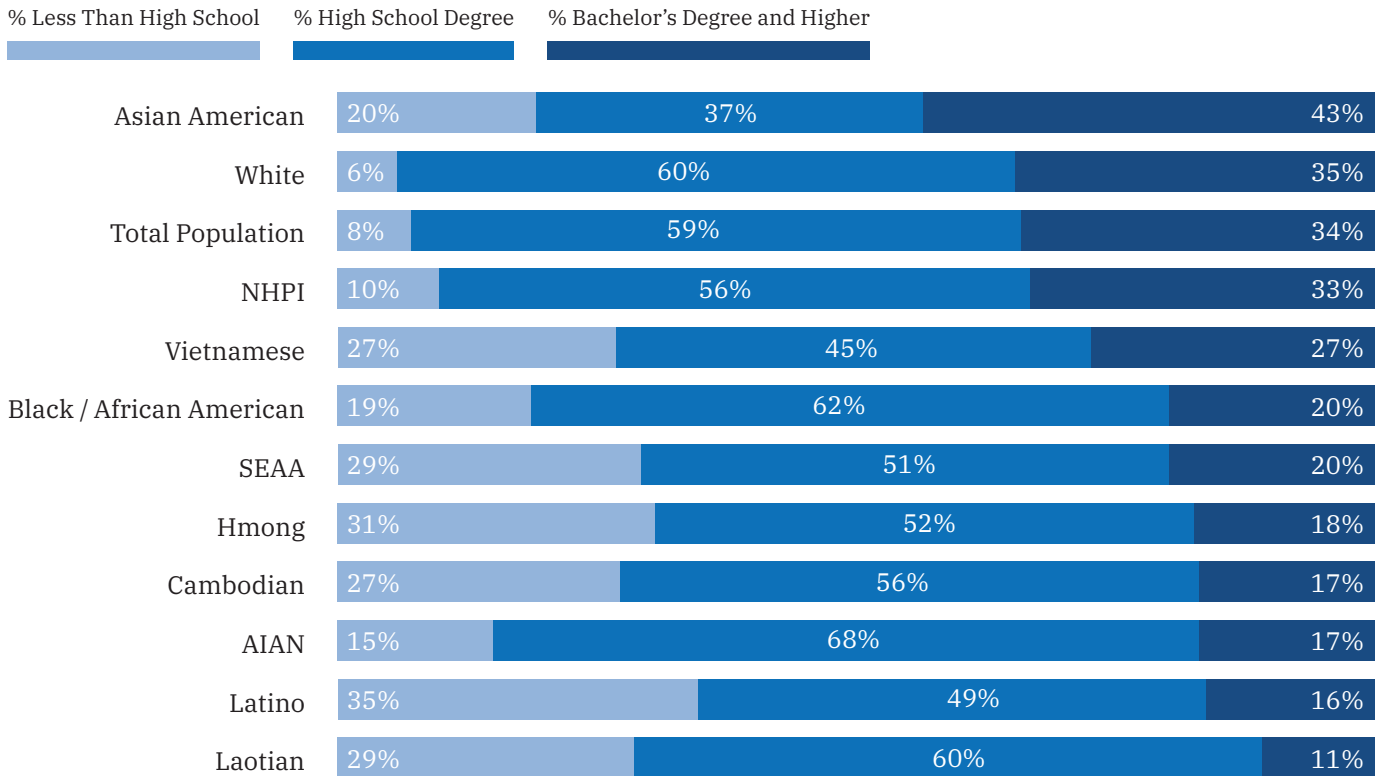
- The proportion of foreign-born SEAA is nearly six times the average in Minnesota.
- Among those born outside of the United States the rate is highest among SEAA ethnic groups and Asian Americans as a whole.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (60%) are most likely to be foreign-born and Hmong Americans (41%) are least likely.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.

MINNESOTA EDUCATION

Educational Attainment*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, United States 2011–2015 (by Percent Bachelor’s Degree and Higher)



*For the population 25 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.

- Nearly 30% of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) in Minnesota have neither completed high school nor passed the GED.
- A larger proportion of SEAA females (35%) than males (23%) have not completed high school.⁶⁸
- Twenty percent of SEAA hold a bachelor’s degree or higher— a rate less than half of the 43% of Asian Americans as a whole who do.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans have the highest rate of holding a higher-education degree (27%). Fewer than 20% of Hmong, Cambodian, and Laotian Americans have obtained a higher-education degree.
- There are five Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions in Minnesota, all of which are public colleges.⁶⁹

“My commitment to educational advocacy is shaped by my personal experience as a low-income, immigrant Southeast Asian student in the U.S public school system and my professional experiences as a teacher and youth facilitator. As a high school student, I experienced firsthand a lack of a culturally inclusive education and witnessed an unequal distribution of resources between my high school and the wealthier, predominantly white high school just across the bridge. Yet, I did not have the language to name what I was experiencing.”

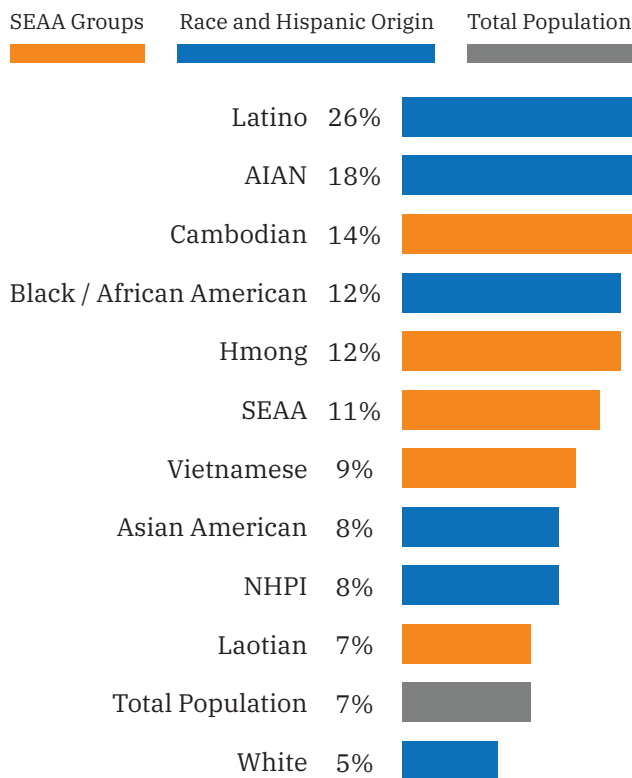
NGAN NGUYEN

SEARAC LAT 2019 participant, Bloomington, Minnesota

MINNESOTA HEALTH

Uninsured

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Minnesota 2011–2015

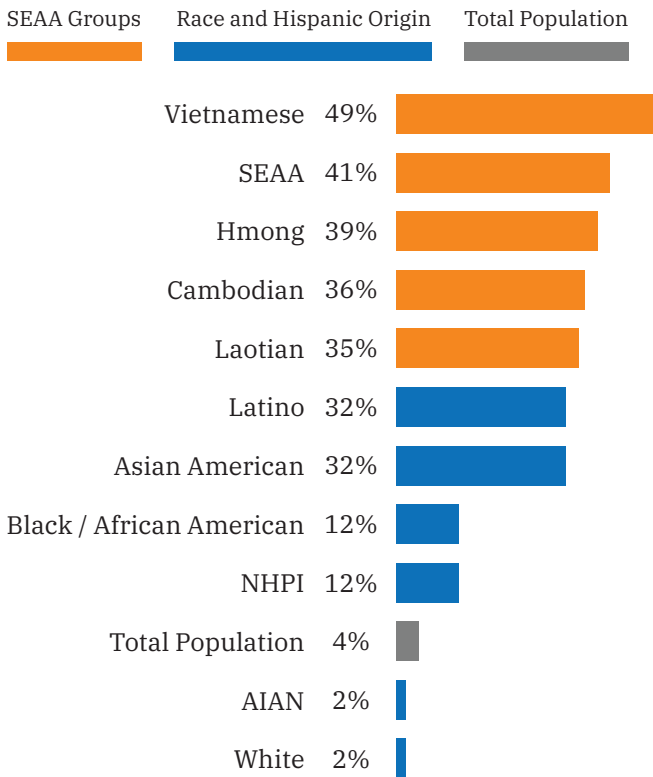


- All communities of color in Minnesota have higher rates of uninsured than Whites.
- Of the Southeast Asian American (SEAA) ethnic groups, Cambodian Americans (14%) have the highest proportion of uninsured and Laotian Americans (7%) have the lowest—the same as the average population in Minnesota.
- SEAA (32%) are more likely to have public health insurance than average (25%) and Asian Americans as a whole (24%).⁷⁰

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001.

Limited English Proficiency*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Minnesota 2011–2015



- Over 90% of SEAA in Minnesota speak a language other than English at home, a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and all racial groups.⁷¹
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Hmong Americans (97%) have the highest and Cambodian Americans (79%) have the lowest rates of speaking a non-English language. These rates are more than seven times that of the average population (11%).⁷²
- Forty-one percent of SEAA are limited English proficient (LEP), a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and all racial groups.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (49%) have the highest rate of LEP; Laotian Americans (35%) have the lowest. This rate is similar to, but higher than, that of Asian Americans as a whole and Latinos.
- Thirty-seven percent of students in Minnesota who speak a language other than English at home speak a Southeast Asian language. Hmong is the third-most commonly spoken language at home and Vietnamese is the fifth.⁷³

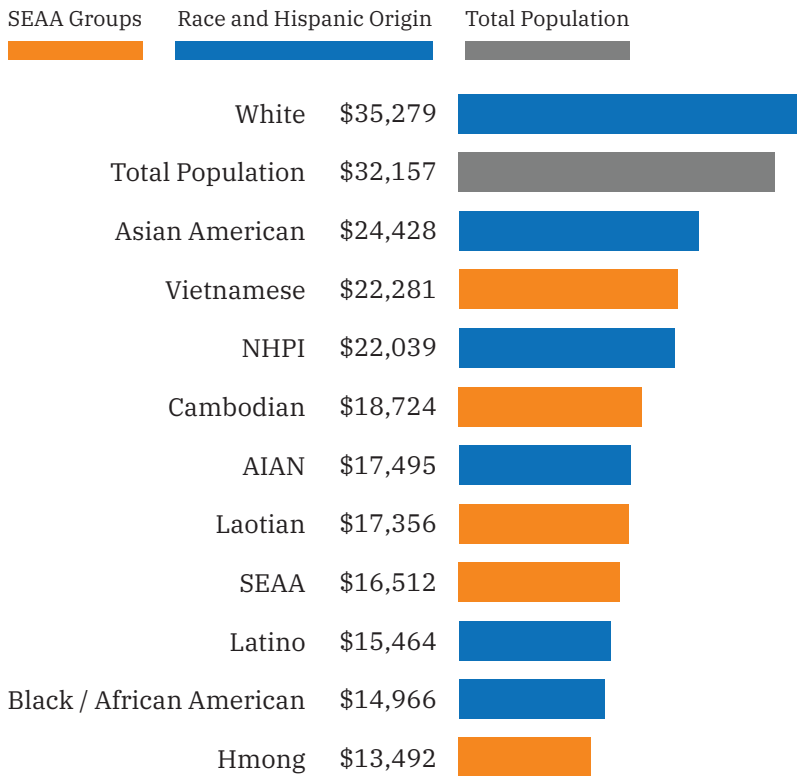
*For the population 5 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B16004.

MINNESOTA ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND HOUSING

Per Capita Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Minnesota 2011–2015



- In Minnesota, all racial minority groups and Southeast Asian American (SEAA) ethnic groups have lower-than-average per capita incomes and higher-than-average rates of households that are low-income and living in poverty.
- The per capita incomes for Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong Americans are less than \$20,000.
- Hmong Americans have the lowest per capita income compared to all racial groups and other SEAA ethnic groups. 56% of Hmong Americans are low-income and 23% live in poverty—rates similar to Latinos.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B19313 and B01003.

MINNESOTA ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND HOUSING

Average Household Size

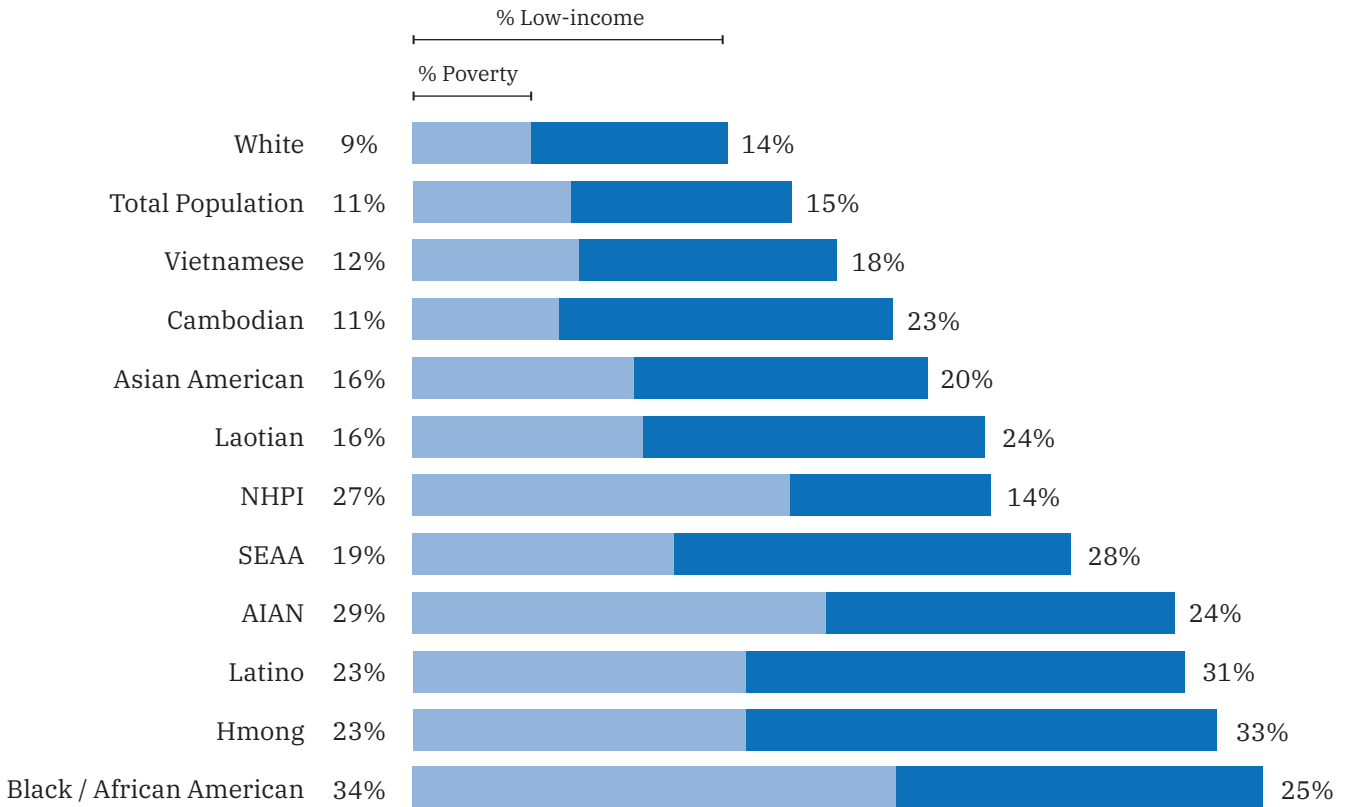
By Housing Tenure & Ethnic Group, Minnesota 2011–2015

HOUSING TENURE	HMONG	CAMBODIAN	LAOTIAN	VIETNAMESE	TOTAL POPULATION
Owner	5.7	4.9	4.6	4.0	2.6
Renter	4.1	3.3	3.0	2.8	2.2

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04.

Poverty & Low-Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Minnesota 2011–2015 (Ranked by Percent Low-Income)



U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002.

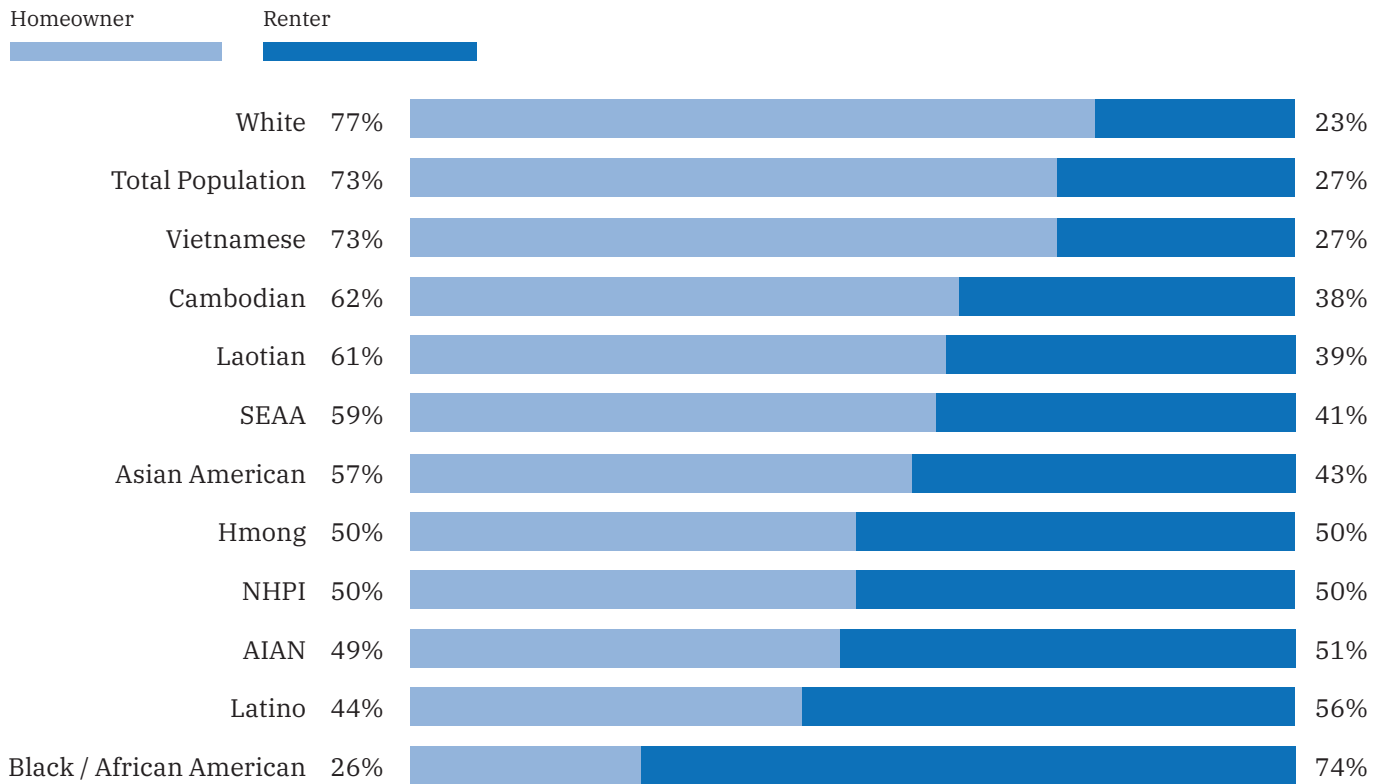
“Southeast Asian American families typically pool their savings when it comes to purchasing a home, making the cost less burdensome. Therefore, homeownership data alone doesn’t tell the full picture. It is by no means a sole indicator of economic growth.”

KAYING YANG

Coalition of Asian American Leaders, Minnesota

Homeowners and Renters

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Minnesota 2010

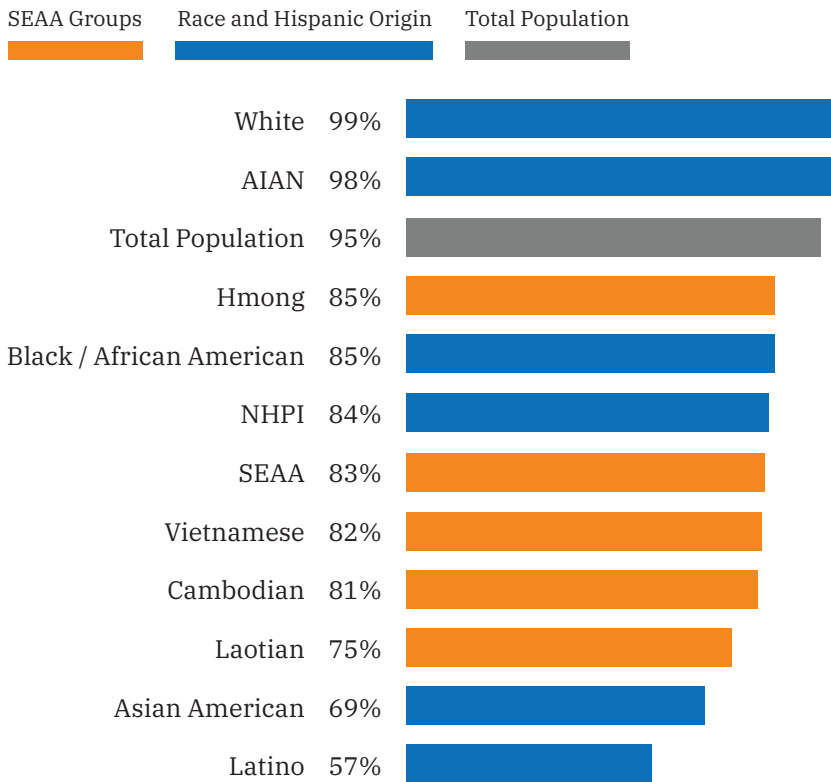


U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2, Table HCT2.

- SEAA have lower-than-average rates of homeownership in Minnesota (59% and 73%, respectively).
- One-half of Hmong Americans own a home. This is the lowest rate of homeownership among SEAA ethnic groups in Minnesota.
- Among mortgagors, SEAA (31%) are more likely to be housing cost-burdened than average (26%). This rate is lower than that of Blacks or African Americans (39%), AIAN (34%), and Latinos (34%) but higher than that of Asian Americans as a whole (27%).⁷⁴
- Regardless of housing tenure, SEAA ethnic groups have larger mean household sizes than the average Minnesotan household. SEAA households are larger than Asian American households as a whole. Among SEAA, Hmong Americans have the largest mean household sizes and Vietnamese Americans have the smallest.⁷⁵

Citizen Voting-Age Population

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Minnesota 2011–2015



- The proportion of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) (83%) who are of citizen voting-age population (CVAP) is lower than average (95%).
- All SEAA ethnic groups have higher rates of CVAP than Asian Americans as a whole and Latinos.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.

Community Spotlight

In 2017, three families in Minnesota successfully fought the odds of mandatory deportation through civic engagement and community organizing. Today, the #ReleaseMN8 continues to educate and mobilize the community by encouraging active participation in the political process.

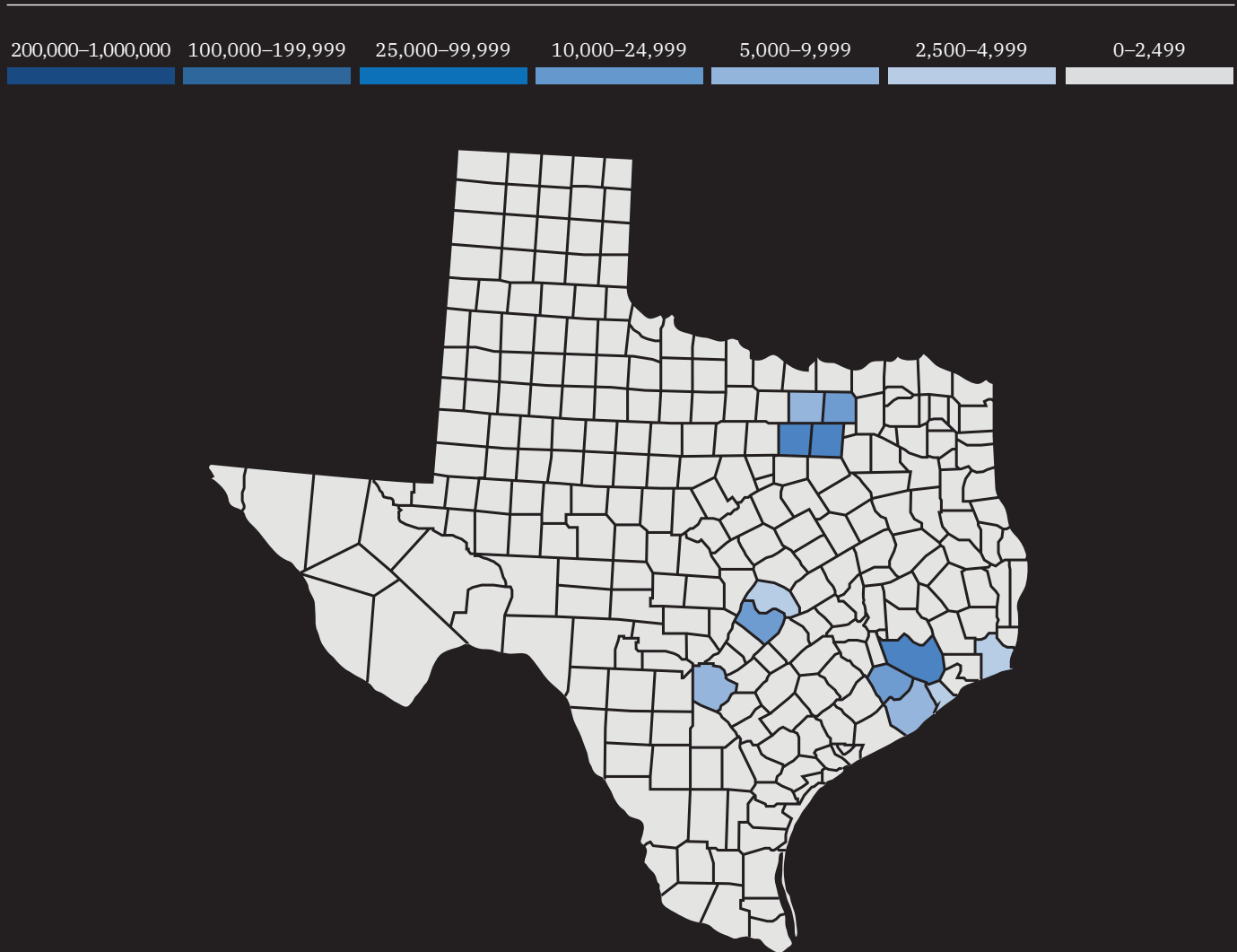
“Our campaign was founded by the love we had for our families and for our community. We believe all families have the right to be together, and we want to remain engaged in this movement to support other families who are at risk of being ripped apart.”

JENNY SREY
RELEASEMN8

TEXAS

SEAA Demographics by County

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1, Table PCT7.

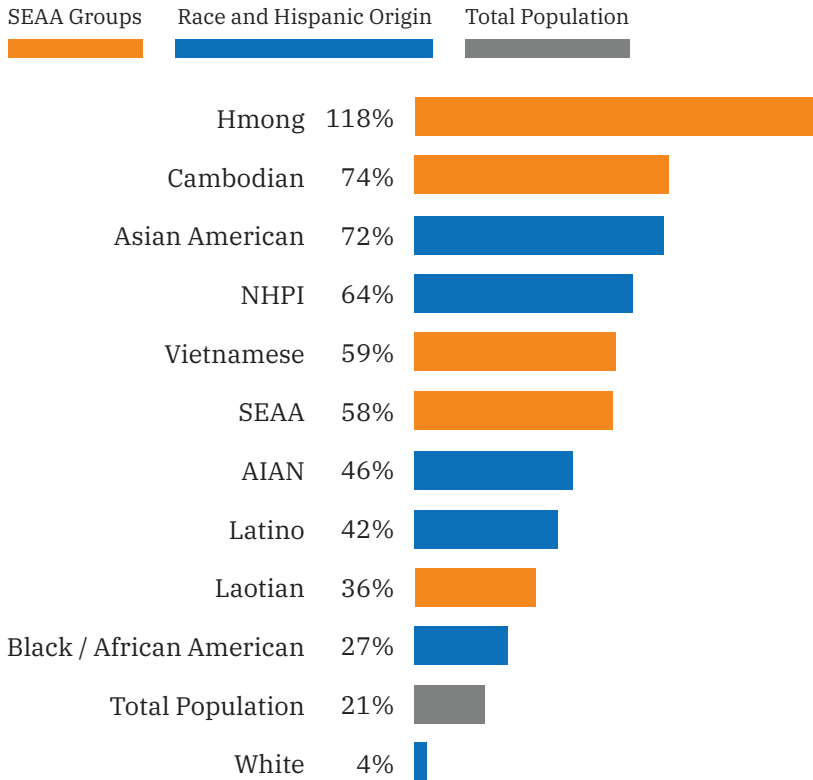


TEXAS HAS THE SECOND-LARGEST POPULATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICANS (SEAA). In the late 1970s, when a large number of SEAA refugees were resettling in the U.S., the U.S. was experiencing a severe recession. The first Vietnamese refugees to resettle in Texas came for employment opportunities. They became targets of intense racial conflict led by the Ku Klux Klan over economic opportunities in fishing and shrimping in the Texas Gulf Coast. Despite the violence and harassment, the Vietnamese refugees could not be chased away.⁷⁶ Now there are nearly 260,000 SEAA who reside in Texas, and it continues to be a growing community. The second-largest population of Laotian Americans and Vietnamese Americans resides in the state. The largest concentration of SEAA in Texas is in Houston, where 20% of SEAA reside, the large majority of whom are Vietnamese Americans.⁷⁷

TEXAS DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Growth

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Texas 2000 to 2010



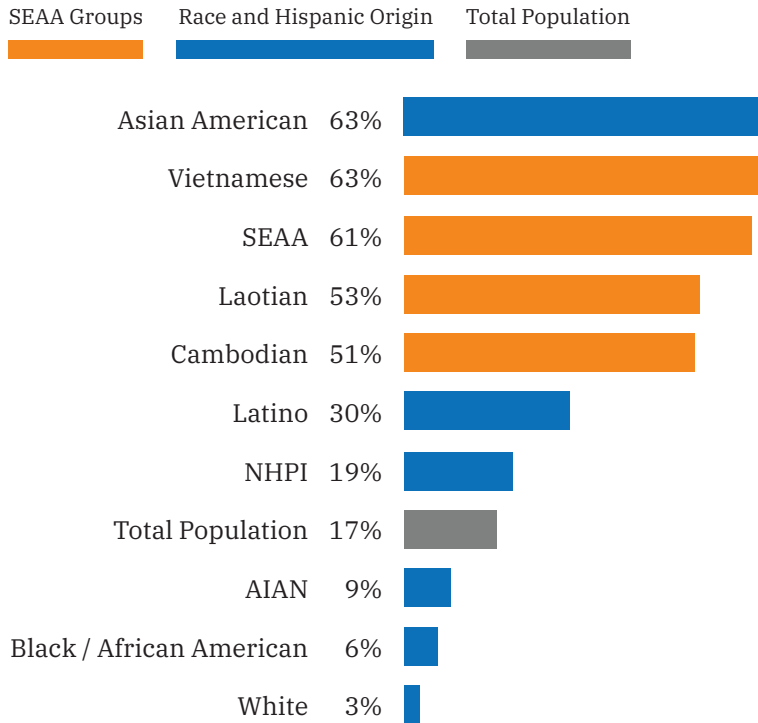
- The Southeast Asian American (SEAA) population in Texas is growing more than two times the average.
- The median age of Texans is 33.6. Vietnamese Americans have a median age similar to the average (33.9). Other SEAA ethnic groups have lower-than-average median ages, among which Hmong Americans have the lowest median age of 23.8.⁷⁸
- Hmong Americans (36%) have the highest proportion of youth (less than 18 years old) compared to all racial groups and other SEAA ethnic groups.⁷⁹

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF1, Tables P8, P9, and PCT007; 2010 Census SF1, Tables P5, P6, and PCT7.

AIAN: Native American(s) or Alaska Native(s) **NHPI:** Native Hawaiian(s) and Pacific Islander(s) **SEAA:** Southeast Asian American(s)

Foreign-Born

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Texas 2011–2015



- The percentage of foreign-born SEAA in Texas is more than three times the average.
- The proportion of foreign-born SEAA is higher than that of Latinos.
- Sixty-three percent of Vietnamese Americans in Texas were born outside the United States, a rate higher than other SEAA ethnic groups and equivalent to that of Asian Americans as a whole.

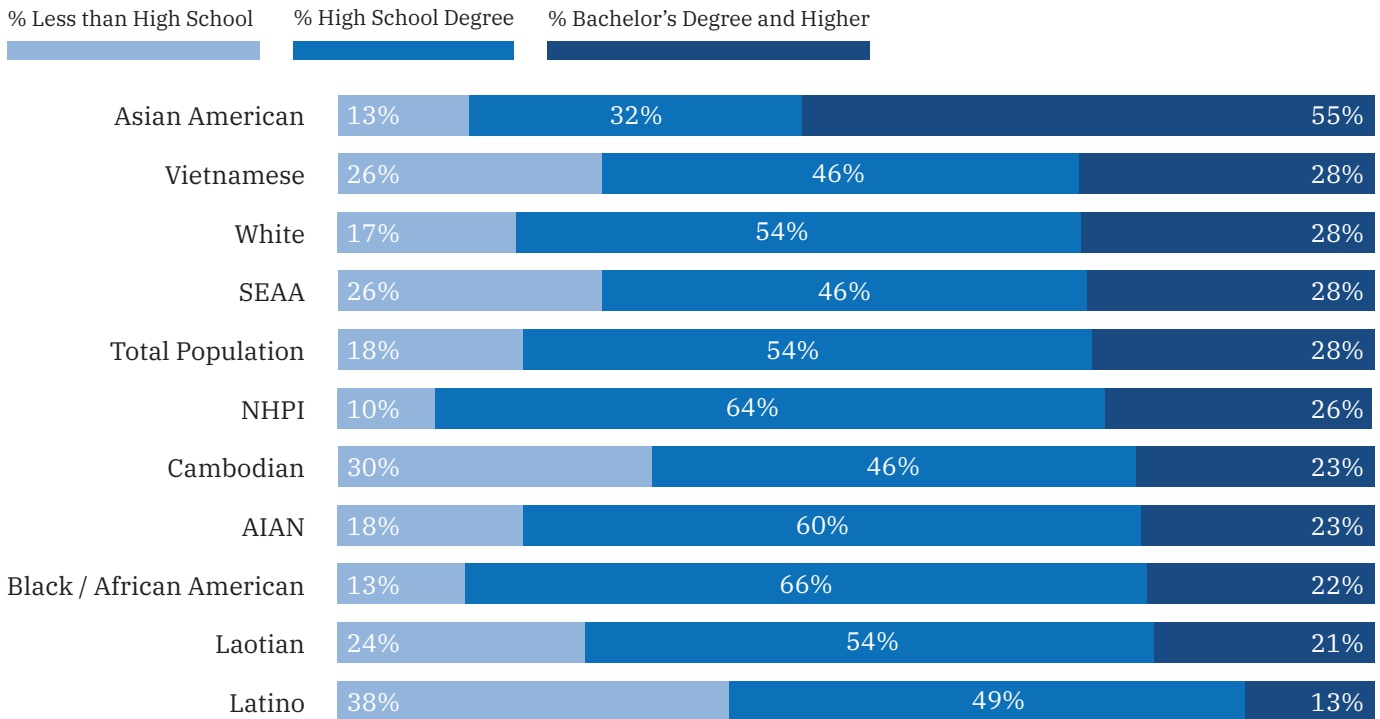
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.



TEXAS EDUCATION

Educational Attainment*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Texas 2011–2015 (Ranked by Percent Bachelor’s Degree and Higher)



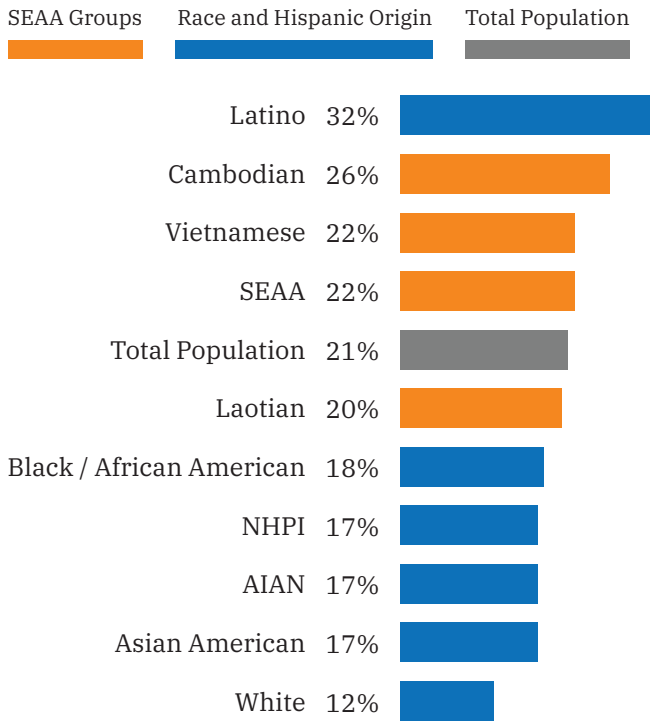
*For the population 25 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.

- Over one-quarter of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) in Texas have neither completed high school nor passed their GED.
- There are gender disparities in educational attainment among SEAA. A larger proportion of SEAA females (29%) than males (22%) have not completed high school or passed the GED.⁸⁰ A greater percentage of males (30%) than females (26%) hold a higher-education degree.
- Twenty-eight percent of SEAA hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, slightly more than half the rate of Asian Americans as a whole.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans have the highest rate of attaining a higher-education degree at 28%—the average rate.
- There are seven Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions in Texas, six of which are public colleges.⁸¹

Uninsured

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Texas 2011–2015



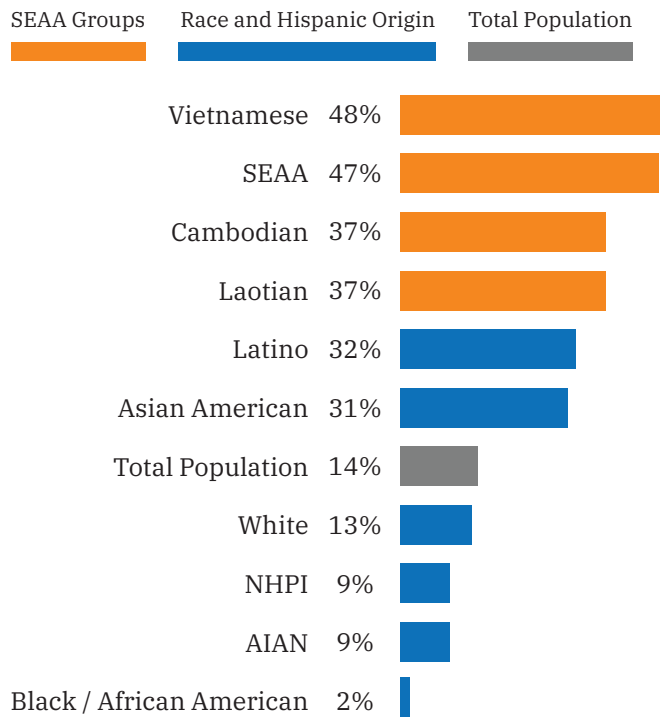
- Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) (22%) in Texas have a slightly higher rate of uninsured than average (21%).
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Cambodian Americans (26%) have the highest and Hmong Americans (9%) have the lowest proportion of uninsured.
- Nineteen percent of SEAA have public health insurance. Although this rate is lower than average (25%), it is higher than Asian Americans as a whole (13%).⁸²

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001.

TEXAS LANGUAGE

Limited English Proficiency*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Texas
2011–2015



*For the population 5 years and older

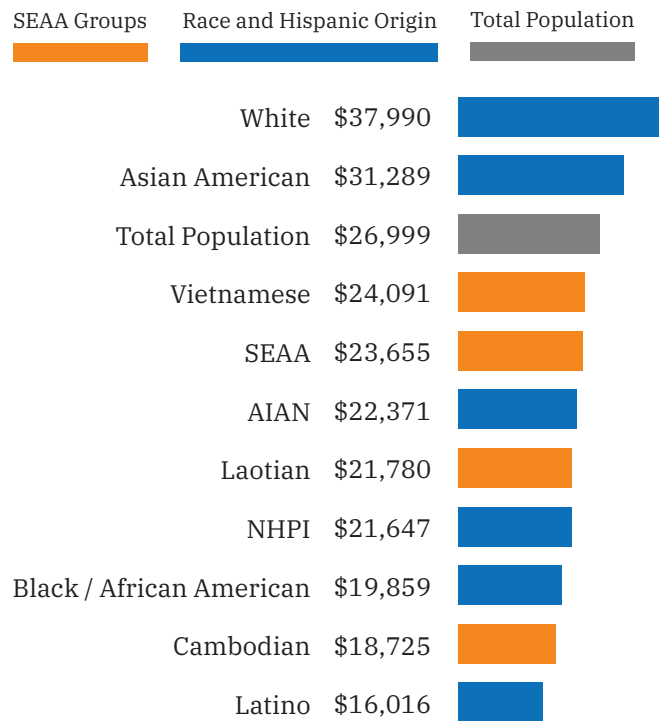
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates, Table B16004.

- Ninety percent of SEAA in Texas speak a language other than English, a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and other racial groups. It is more than 2.5 times the average rate (35%).⁸³
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (90%) have the highest rate of speaking a language other than English.⁸⁴
- Forty-seven percent of SEAA are limited English proficient, a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and other racial groups.

TEXAS ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND HOUSING

Per Capita Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Texas
2011–2015

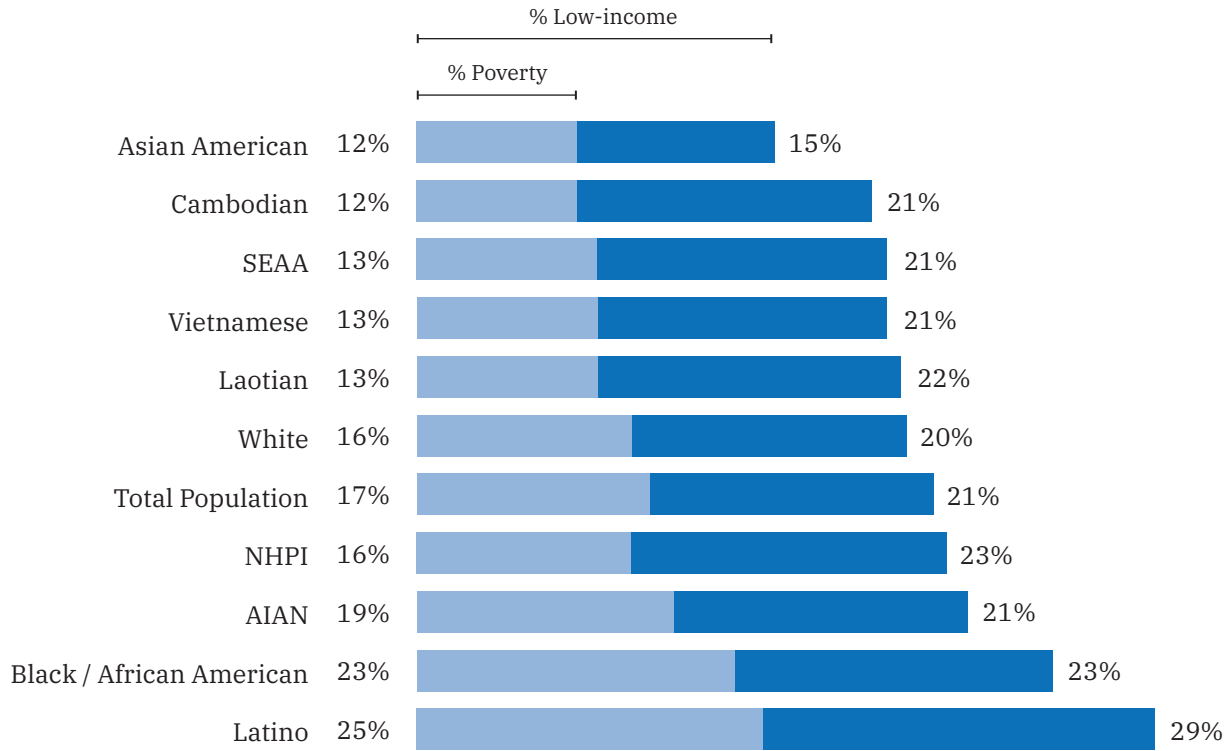


U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates, Tables B19313 and B01003.

- Across multiple measures of income, Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) fare worse than Asian Americans as a whole.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (\$24,091) have the highest per capita income and Cambodian Americans (\$18,725) have the lowest.
- Although SEAA have lower-than-average per capita income, SEAA (34%) are less likely than average (38%) to be low-income.

Poverty & Low-Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Texas 2011–2015 (Ranked by Percent Low-Income)



U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002.

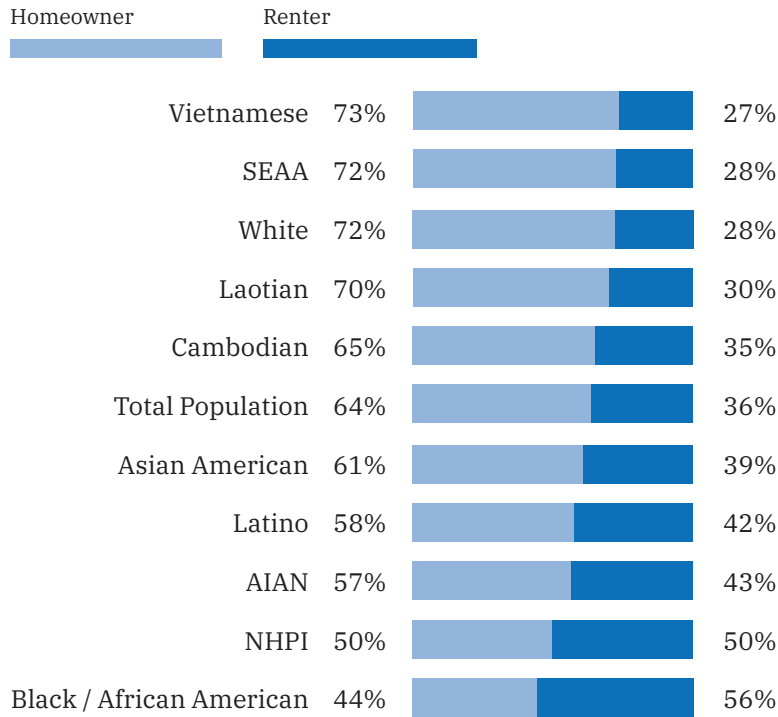
“While homeownership among Southeast Asian Americans, particularly the Vietnamese, may seem high compared to the average in Texas, this does not accurately depict a high quality of living for many in our community. Cheaper alternatives to quality housing such as mobile homes or dilapidated apartments-turned-condos where many in our community live are still classified under ‘homeownership data.’ While data is important, it must also be accompanied by our community’s lived experiences.”

JANNETTE DIEP

Boat People SOS

Homeowners and Renters

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Texas 2010



- SEAA (72%) have higher homeownership rates than average (64%) in Texas.
- Across all SEAA ethnic groups, more than half are homeowners.
- Among mortgagors, SEAA (36%) have a higher rate than average (28%) of being housing cost-burdened; this rate is higher than all racial groups.⁸⁵
- Regardless of housing tenure, SEAA ethnic groups have larger mean household sizes than average in Texas. SEAA households are larger than Asian American households as a whole. Among SEAA, Hmong Americans have the largest mean household sizes and Vietnamese Americans have the smallest.⁸⁶

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2, Table HCT2.

Average Household Size

By Housing Tenure & Ethnic Group, Texas 2011–2015

HOUSING TENURE	HMONG	CAMBODIAN	LAOTIAN	VIETNAMESE	TOTAL POPULATION
Owner	5.1	4.7	4.4	3.9	3.0
Renter	4.3	3.5	3.0	2.8	2.6

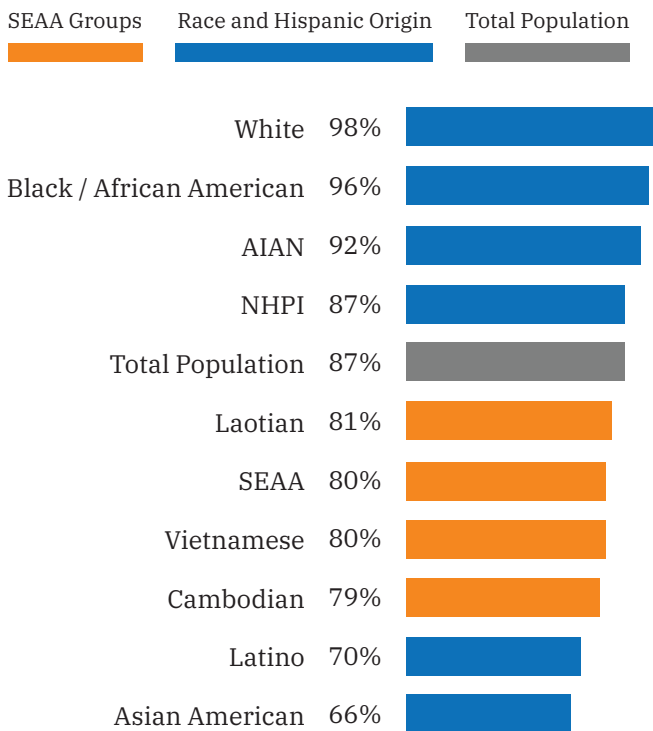
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04.



TEXAS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Citizen Voting-Age Population

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Texas 2011–2015



- In Texas, a smaller-than-average proportion of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) (80%) are of voting-age citizens.
- All SEAA ethnic groups have higher rates of citizen voting-age population than Asian Americans as a whole and Latinos.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.

Community Spotlight

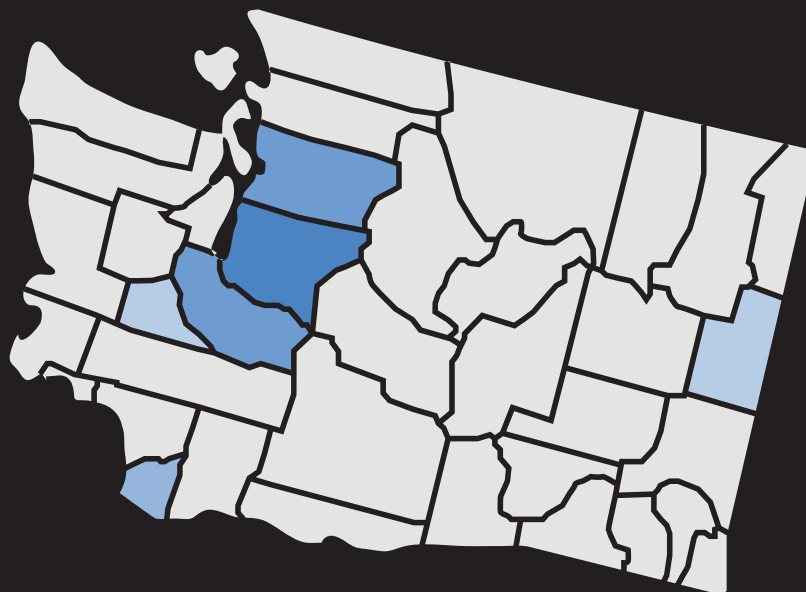
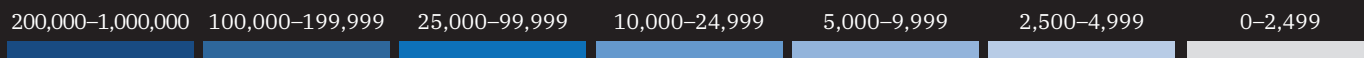
“Our goal is to transform victims into survivors and active citizens who reach out and help others like them achieve liberty and dignity.”

BOAT PEOPLE SOS, Houston

WASHINGTON

SEAA Demographics by County

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1, Table PCT7.



OVER 81,000 SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICANS (SEAA) LIVE IN WASHINGTON, a state that is home to the fourth-largest population of SEAA. Among SEAA ethnic groups, it is home to the third-largest population of Vietnamese and Cambodian Americans, and the fourth-largest population of Laotian Americans.⁸⁷ King County has the largest concentration of SEAA, at about 55% in the entire state. Within King County, a majority of SEAA live in Seattle. Additionally, a large population of SEAA reside in Tacoma. Washington is another coastal state, in addition to California, that drew SEAA refugee communities, particularly Vietnamese Americans. As in other states with larger populations of SEAA, families resettled in Washington because of family already residing there, support networks, and a growing sense of community.

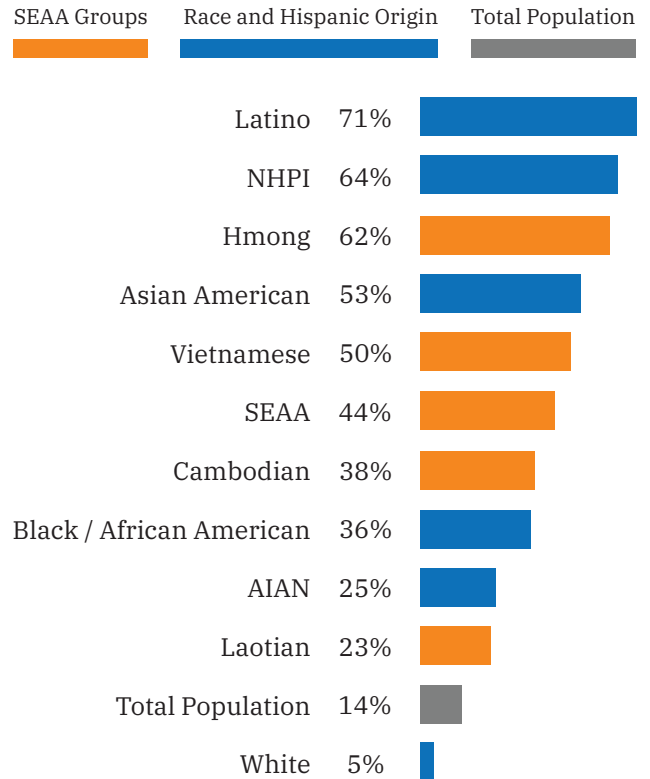
WASHINGTON DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Growth

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group,
Washington 2000 to 2010

- The Southeast Asian American (SEAA) (44%) population in Washington is growing at a rate more than three times the average (14%).⁸⁸
- The median age in Washington is 37.3. All SEAA ethnic groups have lower median ages than average. Hmong Americans have the lowest median age of 22.4.⁸⁹
- The proportion of SEAA (30%) youth is larger than average (24%).⁹⁰

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF1, Tables P8, P9, and PCT007; 2010 Census SF1, Tables P5, P6, and PCT7.

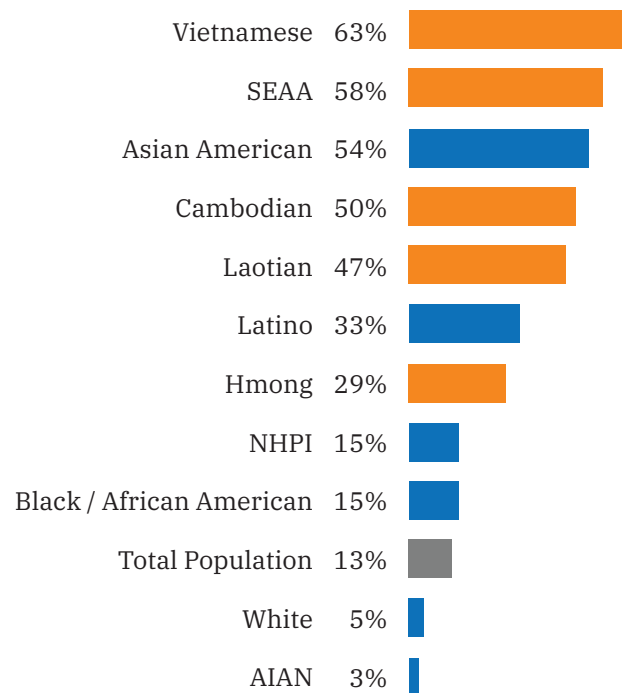


Foreign-Born

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group,
Washington 2011–2015

- The proportion of foreign-born SEAA (58%) in Washington is greater than four times the average (13%).
- Vietnamese (63%), Cambodian (50%), and Laotian Americans (47%) are more likely to be foreign-born than Latinos (33%).
- SEAA are more likely to be born outside of the United States than all racial groups.

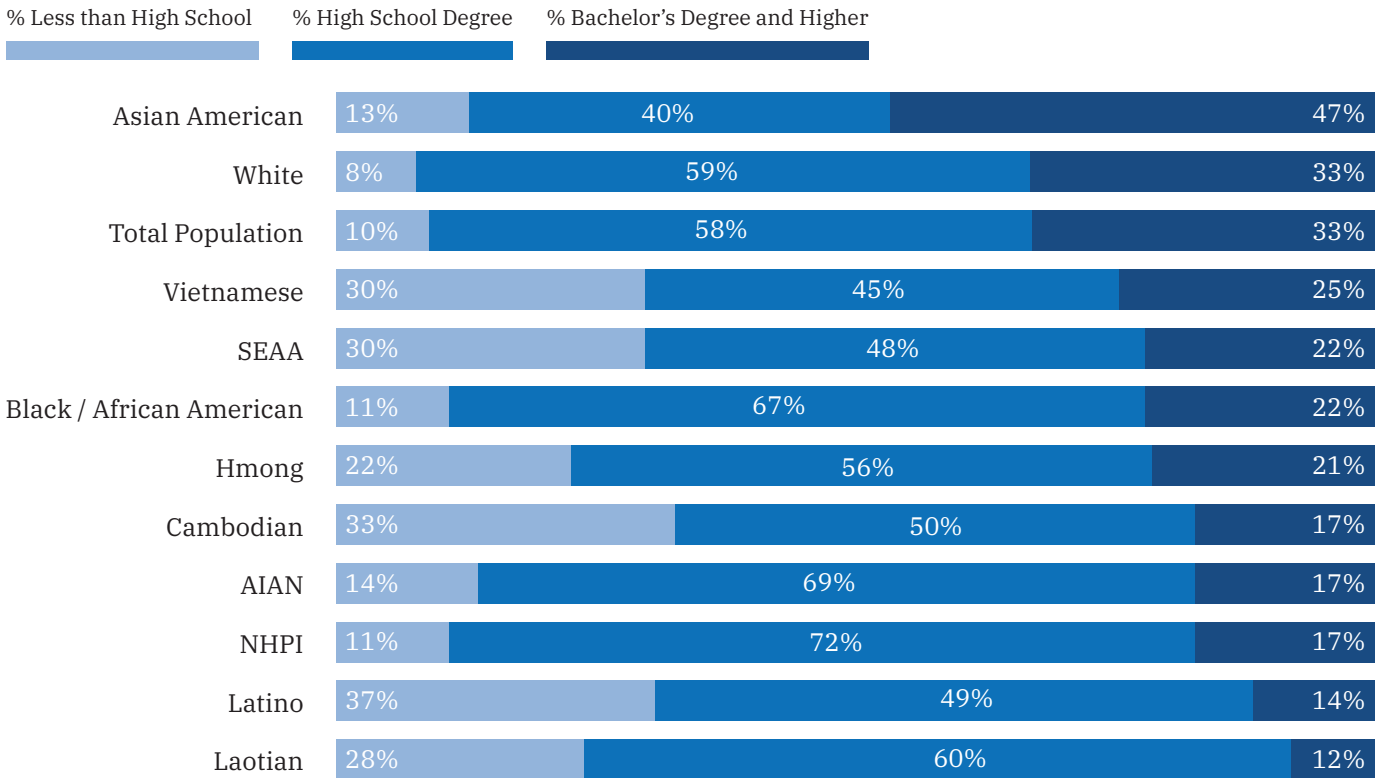
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.



AIAN: Native American(s) or Alaska Native(s) **NHPI:** Native Hawaiian(s) and Pacific Islander(s) **SEAA:** Southeast Asian American(s)

Educational Attainment*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Washington 2011–2015 (by Percent Bachelor’s Degree and Higher)



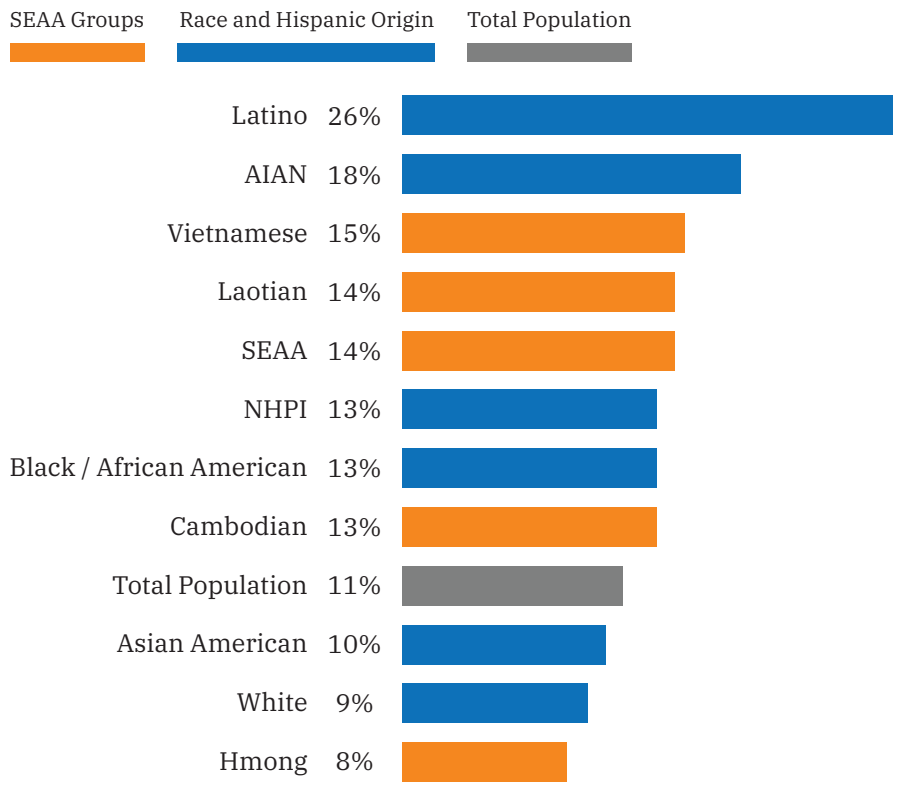
*For the population 25 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.

- Thirty percent of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) in Washington have neither completed high school nor passed the GED—a rate three times the average.
- A larger proportion of SEAA females (34%) than males (26%) have not completed high school, and a smaller proportion of females (20%) than males (24%) have a higher-education degree.⁹¹
- Twenty-two percent of SEAA have a higher-education degree—fewer than half of the 47% of Asian Americans as a whole.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (25%) have the highest rate of attaining a higher-education degree. Less than one-fourth of Hmong, Cambodian, and Laotian Americans have obtained a higher-education degree.
- There are 12 Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions in Washington, all but two of which are public colleges.⁹²

Uninsured

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Washington 2011–2015

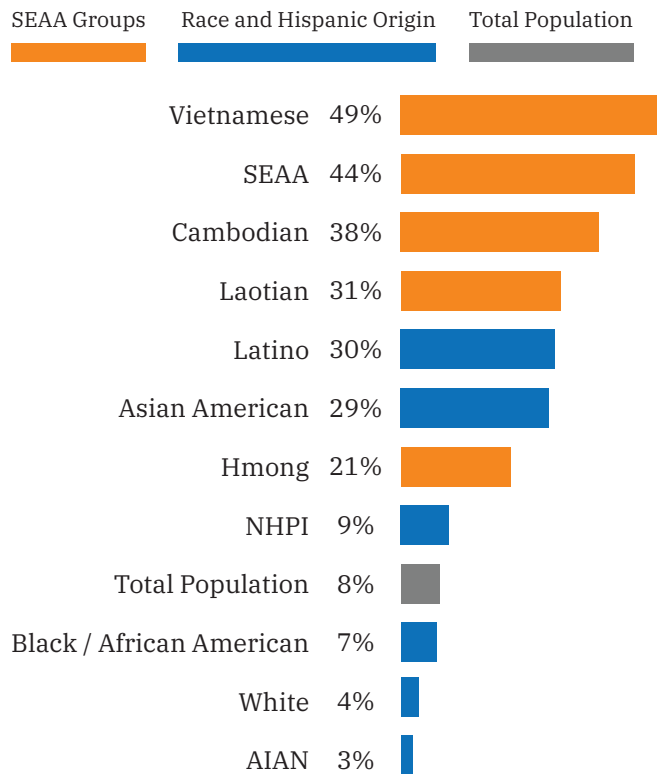


- Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) have higher-than-average rates of uninsured.
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans have the highest proportion of uninsured at 15%.
- SEAA (26%) are slightly less likely to have public health insurance than average (27%) but more likely than Asian Americans as a whole (18%).⁹³

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001.

Limited English Proficiency*

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Washington 2011–2015



- Nearly 90% of SEAA in Washington speak a language other than English, a rate higher than Asian Americans as a whole and other racial groups. This rate is more than four times the average of 19%.⁹⁴
- Among SEAA ethnic groups, Hmong Americans (95%) have the highest rate and Laotian Americans (84%) have the lowest rate of speaking a non-English language.⁹⁵
- Forty-four percent of SEAA are limited English proficient (LEP), a greater proportion than Asian Americans as a whole and other racial groups. Among SEAA ethnic groups, Vietnamese Americans (49%) have the highest and Hmong Americans (21%) have the lowest LEP rates.
- Vietnamese is the third-most frequently spoken primary language other than English by students in Washington. Cambodian, or Khmer, is the 13th-most commonly spoken language among students.⁹⁶

*For the population 5 years and older

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B16004.

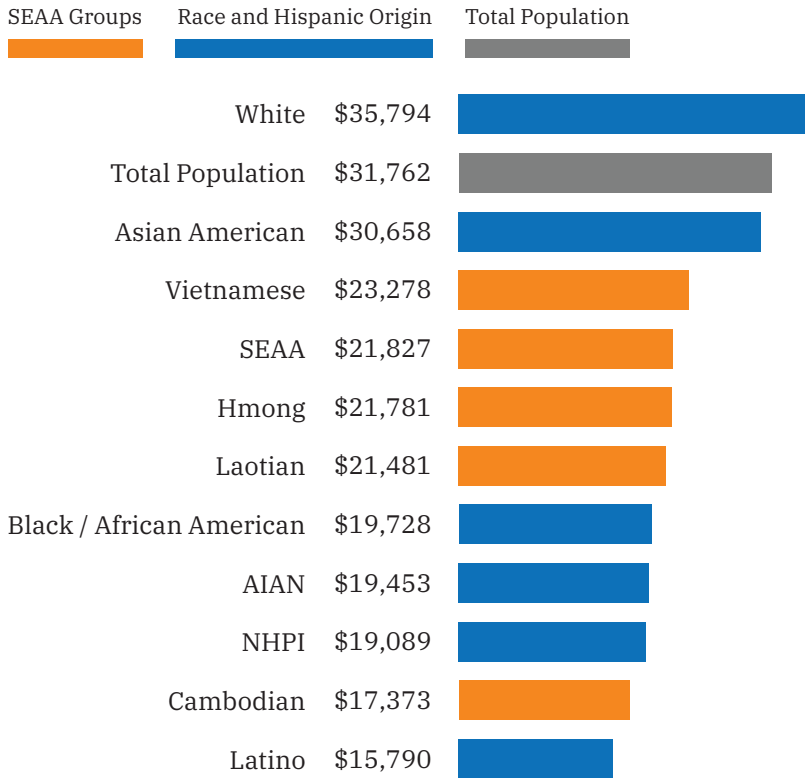
“Growing up I learned that Cambodians lacked access to health centers due to language barriers, unable to communicate with medical practitioners or understand the resources themselves....With such high rates of illiteracy and low rates of higher education and graduation, we are set apart from other more established communities who have the capacity to advocate and translate ways to get the health care they need.”

MOLICA PERRY

SEARAC LAT 2019 participant, Bothell, Washington

Per Capita Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Washington 2011–2015



- Across multiple measures of income, Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) fare worse than average. A greater proportion of SEAA are low-income, and they have a lower per capita income.
- All SEAA ethnic groups have lower-than-average per capita incomes.
- Cambodian Americans have lower per capita income than all other SEAA ethnic groups and racial groups, with the exception of Latinos.
- Thirty-seven percent of SEAA are low-income, of which 16% are living in poverty.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B19313 and B01003.

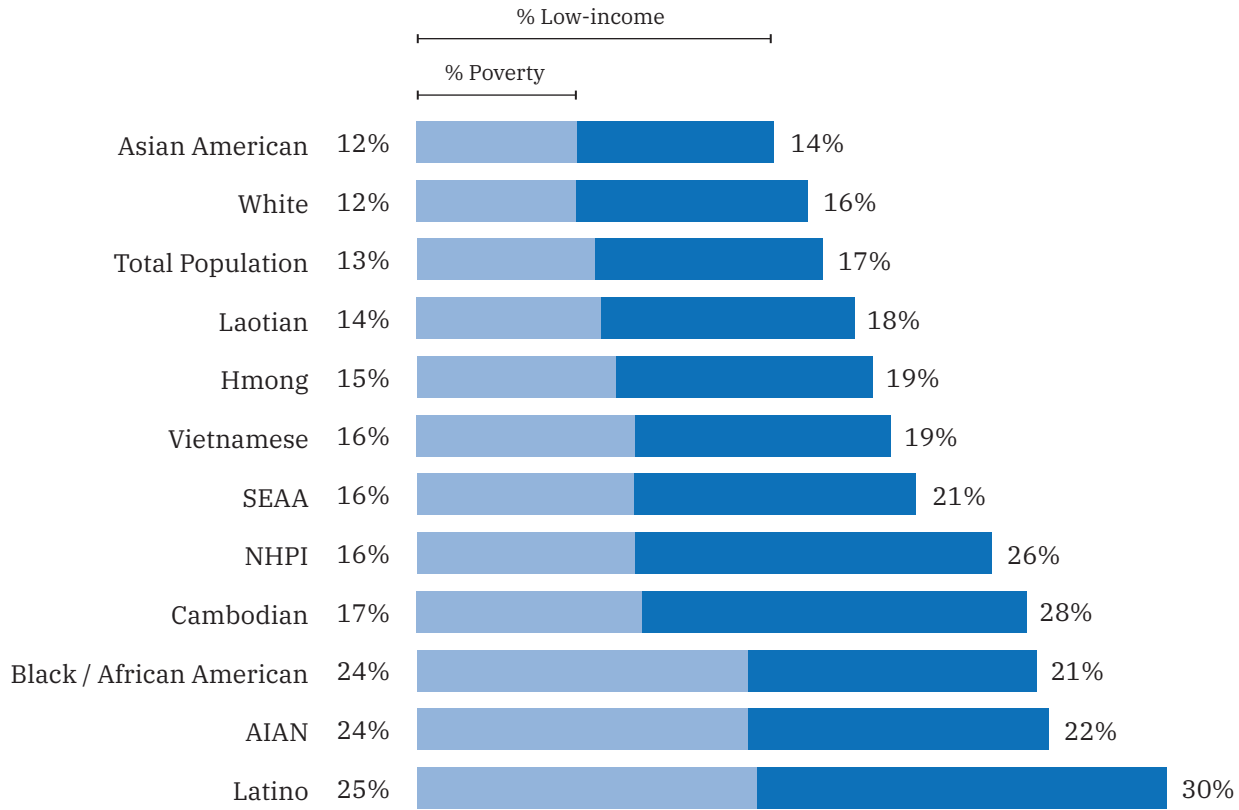
Community Spotlight

Silong’s parents struggled a lot with navigating resettlement and learning English, but thankfully they had a strong support system in Tacoma. Their family was sponsored by a church, and other aunts and uncles who had previously been resettled in Tacoma supported them. These family members were instrumental because they had laid the groundwork for how to navigate resettlement. They learned how to apply for housing assistance and other programs, and passed on the knowledge to Silong’s parents. He and his family attended English classes at Tacoma Community House—the first organization in Tacoma to provide and help the refugee community—and obtained their citizenship there too. And today he works at Tacoma Community House.

SILONG CHHUN, Khmer American Anti-Deportation Group (KhAAG), Tacoma, WA

Poverty & Low-Income

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Washington 2011–2015 (Ranked by Percent Low-Income)



U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002.

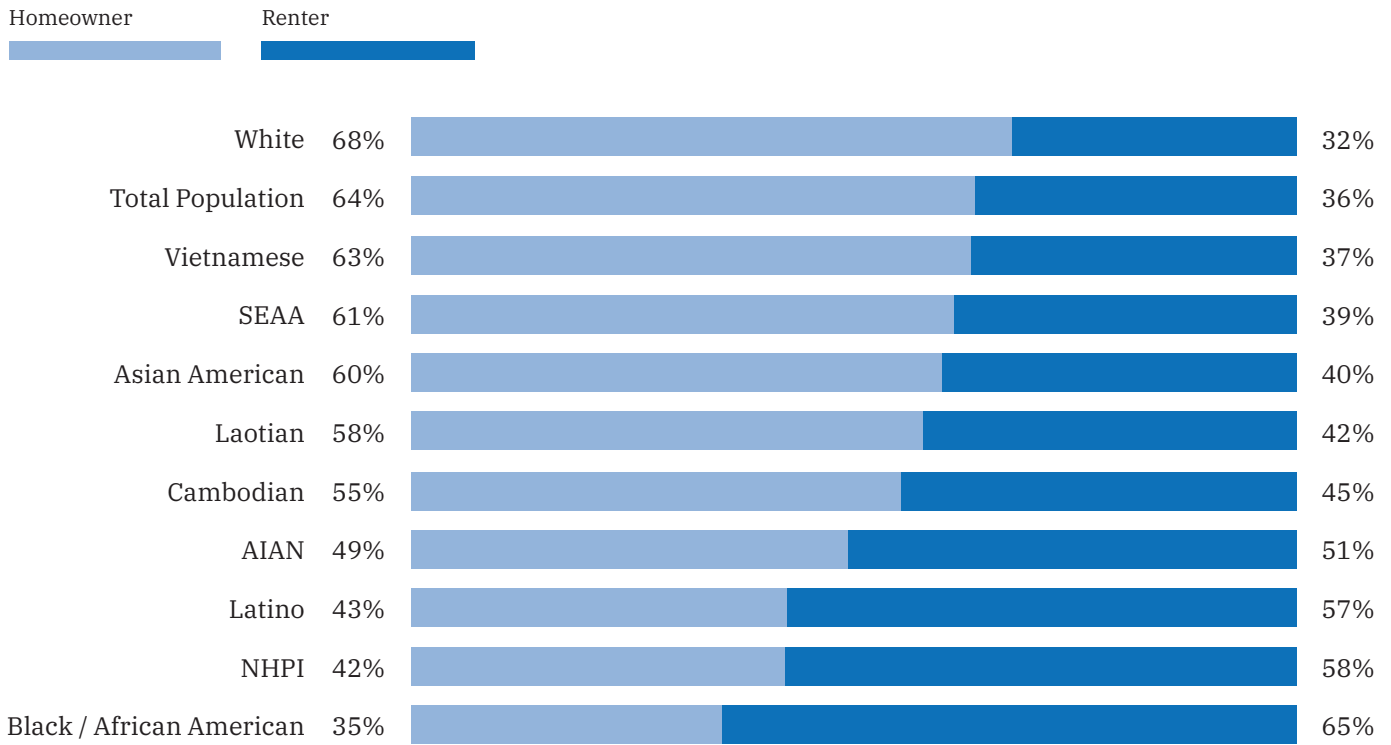
“My family and I have benefited from social and federal welfare programs (e.g., WIC, food stamps, subsidized housing, subsidized childcare, student aid) since our resettlement, practically my whole life.... They played a vital role in support of my family’s success, without which my son would not have been afforded the opportunities he has now.”

SINA SAM

Khmer Anti-Deportation Advocacy Group (KhAAG), Tacoma, WA

Homeowners and Renters

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Washington 2010



U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2, Table HCT2.

- Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) (61%) in Washington have lower rates of homeownership than average (64%).
- Fifty-two percent of Hmong Americans own a home. This is the lowest rate of homeownership among SEAA ethnic groups in Washington.
- Homeownership rates among SEAA are higher than Latinos, NHPI, and Blacks or African Americans.
- Among mortgagors, SEAA (44%) have a higher rate of being housing cost-burdened than average (34%). This rate is higher than all racial groups.⁹⁷
- Regardless of housing tenure, SEAA ethnic groups have larger mean household sizes than the average household in Washington. Among SEAA, Hmong Americans have the largest mean household sizes and Vietnamese Americans have the smallest.⁹⁸

Average Household Size

By Housing Tenure & Ethnic Group, Washington 2011–2015

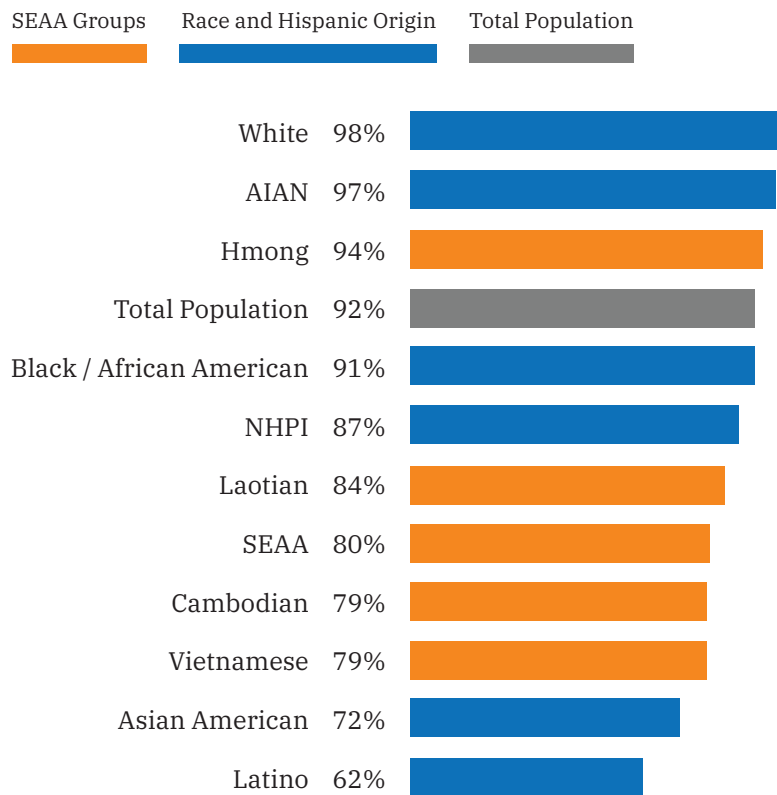
HOUSING TENURE	HMONG	LAOTIAN	CAMBODIAN	VIETNAMESE	TOTAL POPULATION
Owner	7.1	4.8	4.7	3.9	2.6
Renter	3.8	3.2	3.6	2.9	2.4

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04.

WASHINGTON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Citizen Voting-Age Population

By Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Washington 2011–2015



- Hmong Americans (94%) in Washington have a slightly higher-than-average citizen voting-age population (CVAP); their CVAP is higher than other Southeast Asian American (SEAA) ethnic groups and racial groups, with the exception of White and AIAN.
- All SEAA ethnic groups have higher rates of citizen voting-age population than Asian Americans as a whole and Latinos.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05003.

“We brought 140+ Southeast Asian students from refugee backgrounds across the state to Seattle for a day of cultural empowerment, civic engagement, and college access. We dismantled model minority [myths], held workshops on the history and diaspora of our people, gave students the power to tell their stories, ate real food provided by our community, and celebrated the resilience of our ancestors and ourselves. We’re giving students the knowledge and tools to become activists and leaders, to know how to fight for our community and have pride in themselves.”

DYLAN TRAN

Southeast Asian American Action and Visibility in Education (SAVE)



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Decades after initial resettlement in the United States, Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) still face unique barriers as a result of their refugee legacy. The following policy recommendations are provided by SEARAC and are limited only to the areas of data equity, education, health, and immigration. We acknowledge that these recommendations are by no means a complete list of all policy interventions needed to bring about equitable outcomes in our community, but we hope this is a solid first step toward initiating deeper discussions on solutions needed to address challenges SEAA face today.

“Our communities have grown in number since our initial resettlement into the country following the U.S. occupation in Southeast Asia decades ago, yet we continue to remain invisible. The census is a critical program that facilitates the collection of national disaggregated data, which is key to advocacy for policies that promote equity among SEAA. We hope [to] inspire the power and the potential that our community carries to fight for our own self-determination by participating in the 2020 Census.”

QUYEN DINH

Executive Director at SEARAC

Data Equity

The systemic barriers that SEAA face are only made known through the collection and reporting of disaggregated data on Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) subgroups. Without these data, our community’s needs are hidden under broader Asian American categories and, therefore, rendered invisible. Disaggregated data collection and reporting must be reflected in but not be limited to:

- Ensuring a full, fair, and accurate count of SEAA communities in the 2020 Census by supporting robust translation and outreach to hard-to-count SEAA communities where people live in poverty, are limited English proficient, and/or are fearful of being targeted for deportation due to their immigration status.
- Adopting the optimal question format recommended by the 2015 National Content Test for Census 2020 questions on race and further expanding categories to include Laotian and Iu-Mien to enhance the quality and utility of information collected on Asian groups.
- Encouraging state agencies, businesses, education institutions, researchers, community-based organizations, and philanthropy to prioritize the collection, availability, and publication of demographic data (e.g., gender, language, income, education) disaggregated by AANHPI subgroups, to properly understand the unique disparities within the AANHPI community.

“Bilingual programs, immigrant advocacy in schools, teachers who shared my API identity: these were all building blocks that helped me graduate from college and pursue a stable career. I became an educator because I want to help the American educational system fulfill its promise to children from low-income and immigrant communities.... I believe achieving educational equity is not just about education policy; it is about immigration policy, criminal justice reform, health care access, housing policy, the environment, economic development, etc. In my eyes, all policy is education policy because everything touches the lives of the students in my classroom, so as their teacher it is my responsibility to fight for them.”

JENNIFER TANG,

2019 LAT Participant

Education

Many SEAA students face cultural and linguistic challenges that make it difficult for them to graduate from high school and access postsecondary education. Barriers include a lack of language access support for students and parents, and a lack of high-quality, culturally relevant in-school and out-of-school support. SEAA also battle with lower-than-average English proficiency, which poses additional challenges to success in school. And because many SEAA students represent the first generation in their families to attend college, they often need additional support in preparing for a college-level curriculum, accessing appropriate resources on campus, and affording higher-education costs; yet, such comprehensive educational support is limited, making college completion a challenge. To enhance equitable education outcomes for SEAA students we need:

Culturally relevant K–12 support to increase high school completion through:

- Accessible ethnic studies curricula. Research shows that taking ethnic studies classes can increase school attendance, grade point average, and the number of earned school credits.
- Meaningful English language learner support, including educational programs for English learner students, professional development for educators to work with these students, and additional funding

to schools to better serve English learner students.

- Effective family engagement that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- Developing a pathway to increase the workforce of SEAA educators and counselors.

College access, affordability, and completion by supporting:

- Federal programs that help low-income and first-generation students prepare for and persist in college such as TRIO and GEAR UP. These programs should identify SEAA as eligible students and eliminate any barriers SEAA students face in accessing these programs.
- Federal and state financial assistance, such as the Federal Pell Grant Program and in-state tuition rates, that help low-income students pay for college.
- Robust and permanent funding for the Asian American Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) program, which helps institutions of higher education provide SEAA students with the support necessary to succeed in college and complete their degree.
- Race-conscious college admissions policies that look beyond test scores, which are strongly associated with a student’s socioeconomic status, to assess a student’s capacity to thrive in college.

“I was born to Vietnam War refugees. Living with shame, uncertainty, and broken promises took their toll on an entire people. Forty years later, many of our parents (Vietnam War refugees and victims of the Khmer Rouge genocide) are still living in poverty. Many of us are in prison.”

ZITSUE LEE

from *AAPIs behind Bars: Exposing the School to Prison Deportation Pipeline*

“I wished that the services I received had a culturally appropriate aspect. I shared about the trauma and hardships my parents and grandparents faced and how that has an impact on me. They have their issues, and they react harshly and sometimes violently towards my siblings and I. However, the therapist ignored that aspect and almost made me feel like the trauma my parents have doesn’t affect me.”

HMONG RESPONDENT

25–34 years old, female, straight, from SEARAC Mental Health Story Collection Campaign

School-to-Prison Pathway

While the scope of this report did not cover much on mass incarceration and criminal justice, we see these issues impacting the SEAA community, particularly the youth, in several different ways. We believe that restorative justice policies that dismantle the school-to-prison pathway is an intersectional issue that must be addressed by the following:

- Supporting investments in community youth programs that keep young people off the streets.
- Expanding culturally competent education programs and services both within prisons and upon reentry.
- Creating prison-to-jobs pathway and community integration programs for formerly incarcerated immigrants to allow for culturally sensitive support and healing to help diminish recidivism.

Physical & Mental Health

Many SEAA are limited English proficient and low-income and, as a result, many families struggle to access the care they need to treat urgent and chronic health conditions. The traumatic experiences of war, genocide, environmental exposures, and displacement have left many SEAA, including elders, with physical and mental health conditions that have gone untreated. This collective trauma and the stressors associated with relocation, language barriers, racism, discrimination, and cultural conflicts, continue to affect the emotional health of many SEAA refugees and their children. Due to cultural stigma, lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate care, and unavailability of disaggregated data on the health of the SEAA community, their struggles have been concealed and health disparities rendered invisible. Reducing physical and mental health disparities in the SEAA community requires:

- Culturally and linguistically appropriate care to improve overall wellness through increased access, utilization, and outcomes:
 - Increase funding and workforce to expand the number of care providers who serve our community’s unique needs.
 - Investment and utilization of both evidence-based practices and community-defined practices by partnering with community-based organizations to develop best practices in serving SEAA.

- Accessible and affordable health care coverage for all regardless of preexisting conditions, age, race, language proficiency, gender orientation, disability, and immigration status.
- Implement policies that require language access in health care for SEAA communities (e.g., policies that identify threshold languages in specific regions with higher density of SEAA).
- Addressing social determinants of health by securing access to healthy living conditions:
 - Increase access to poverty alleviation and food security programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, housing assistance, for all communities regardless of immigration status.

Immigration

SEAA community members have been particularly targeted for detention and deportation—challenges made worse by an increasingly harsh criminal justice system. Many SEAA post-incarceration must deal with the burden of being targeted for mandatory immigration detention and deportation. Additionally, newer immigrants face their own set of barriers in the broken system as well. Those seeking to naturalize and reunite with their loved ones through the family-based immigration system are facing years and sometimes decades-long wait times, crippling naturalization costs, and lack of language support for limited English proficient elders and community members. Humane immigration policies for fair immigration outcomes for SEAA include:

- Ending mandatory detention and automatic deportation for individuals who have been in contact with the criminal justice system by establishing due process protections for all immigrant communities, and by detangling

local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement.

- Promoting naturalization by increasing funding for education and outreach initiatives that target low-income, limited English proficient communities, and decreasing the residency and age requirements for translators during the naturalization process.
- Strengthening the family reunification system by reclassifying the spouses and minor children of lawful permanent residents as “immediate relatives,” a category not subject to annual numerical limits, and eliminating discrimination facing LGBT families.
- Establishing the right for immigrants who were previously deported to return to the United States, by eliminating reentry bars in the Immigration and Nationality Act, employing family unity standards for deportation waivers, and establishing an absolute right to reopen proceedings for individuals who were deported because of unlawful removal orders or because their conviction(s) was/were vacated.
- Supporting U.S. refugee and asylum policies that welcome and protect migrants coming to the country seeking refuge and a better life for themselves and their families.

GLOSSARY

AGGRAVATED FELONY⁹⁹: A list of specific crimes and categories of crimes. Noncitizens usually become ineligible to enter or remain in the U.S. for any reason or to qualify for almost all types of immigration benefits, including obtaining a green card or being naturalized to become a U.S. citizen if charged with this offense. They also become much more vulnerable to removal (deportation) from the U.S.

Criminal convictions in the past also count toward a decision about whether someone has committed an aggravated felony. The list, scope, and consequences of aggravated felonies have been vastly expanded over the years by Congress and by court decisions. In some circumstances, misdemeanors can count as aggravated felonies.

CITIZEN VOTING AGE POPULATION (CVAP): Citizens who are of eligible voting age (i.e., 18 years old and above in the U.S.).

HOUSING COST BURDEN: Households are considered to have a high burden when 30% or more of household income is spent on housing costs, which include rent and utilities.

LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENT (LPR): A person who has immigrated legally but is not an American citizen. This person has been admitted to the United States as an immigrant and issued an LPR card, commonly known as a “green card.” One is generally eligible to naturalize after holding LPR status for five years. Additional criteria, such as “good moral character,” knowledge of civics, and basic English, must also be met.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP): Persons who speak English less than “very well.”

LINGUISTIC ISOLATION: Defined as households that have no one age 14 and over who speaks English only or speaks English “very well.”

LOW-INCOME: Determined as people who fall below 200% of the income-to-poverty ratio, or an individual with income for the past 12 months who is less than twice the poverty threshold (e.g., the 2015 Census Bureau poverty threshold was \$24,036 for a family of four with two children under age 18).

PER CAPITA INCOME: The mean income computed for all individuals in a particular group in the past 12 months. It is derived by dividing the total income of a particular group by the total population of that group.

POVERTY: A measure of income relative to the federal poverty threshold (the poverty line). Adjusted for family size, the 2015 Census Bureau poverty threshold was \$24,036 for a family of four with two children under age 18.

REFUGEE: A person outside their country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

YOUTH: Persons under age 18.

NOTES

- ¹U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 SF 1, Table PCT7.
- ²U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 SF 1, Tables P6 and PCT7.
- ³U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 SF 1, Tables P8, PCT7, and QT-P6; 2010 Census SF1, Tables P5, PCT7 P6.
- ⁴U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 SF 1, Table PCT7.
- ⁵U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 SF2, Table DP-1.
- ⁶U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 SF2, Table DP-1.
- ⁷U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2, Table PCT3.
- ⁸Gordon, Linda W. 1987. "Southeast Asian Refugee Migration to the United States." *In Pacific Bridges: The New Immigration from Asia and the Pacific Islands*, edited by J. T. Fawcett and B. V. Carino, 153–73. New York: Center for Migration Studies.
- ⁹<https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/refugees-asylees>.
- ¹⁰U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2003.
- ¹¹U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2002–2017; U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1978–2001; U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1976–1977.
- ¹²Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2017.
- ¹³Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Syracuse University. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Removals, FY 2014–2018. Note: Years for the data are by fiscal years, which are from October to September. For example, FY 2018 is October 2017 to September 2018.
- ¹⁴Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Syracuse University. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Removals, FY 2014–2018.
- ¹⁵Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Syracuse University. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Removals, FY 2014–2018.
- ¹⁶Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Syracuse University. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Removals, FY 2014–2018.
- ¹⁷U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05005.
- ¹⁸U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B16002.
- ¹⁹U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B16002.
- ²⁰U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.
- ²¹U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.
- ²²U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.
- ²³Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions, MSI Directory.
- ²⁴U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001.
- ²⁵U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008–2010 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table S0201.
- ²⁶U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27003.
- ²⁷U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table C17002.
- ²⁸U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B25071.
- ²⁹U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B25091.
- ³⁰U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04.
- ³¹U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 SF 1, Table PCT7.
- ³²Report to Congress on the Refugee Resettlement Program, FY 2008.
- ³³Robinson, W. Courtland. 1995. *Terms of Refuge: The Indochinese Exodus and the International Response*. New York: Zed Books, Ltd.
- ³⁴2013 Report on the State of Cambodia Town. <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/research/pdfs/CambodiaTown.pdf>.
- ³⁵Robinson, W. Courtland. 1995. *Terms of Refuge: The Indochinese Exodus and the International Response*. New York: Zed Books, Ltd.
- ³⁶U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 SF2, Table DP-1.
- ³⁷U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 SF2, Table DP-1.
- ³⁸U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2, Table PCT3.
- ³⁹U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.
- ⁴⁰U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.
- ⁴¹Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions, MSI Directory.
- ⁴²University of California Information Center, Disaggregated Data, Undergraduate Graduation, June 2019.
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APPENDIX A: Population, Population Growth (Ranked by 2010 Southeast Asian American (SEAA) Population)

STATE	NUMBER IN 2010					PERCENT GROWTH 2010				
	SEAA	Cambodian	Hmong	Laotian	Vietnamese	SEAA	Cambodian	Hmong	Laotian	Vietnamese
CA	910,433	102,317	91,224	69,303	647,589	29%	21%	27%	7%	34%
TX	259,019	14,347	920	15,784	227,968	58%	74%	118%	36%	59%
MN	114,819	9,543	66,181	12,009	27,086	37%	46%	46%	4%	32%
WA	112,749	22,934	2,404	11,568	75,843	44%	38%	62%	23%	50%
MA	81,670	28,424	1,080	4,530	47,636	25%	24%	-17%	2%	30%
FL	79,399	6,267	1,208	6,152	65,772	79%	106%	641%	49%	77%
VA	71,458	7,306	188	3,980	59,984	46%	41%	242%	29%	48%
GA	64,948	5,423	3,623	6,638	49,264	57%	59%	124%	27%	58%
PA	63,024	14,118	1,021	3,280	44,605	35%	38%	21%	29%	34%
WI	61,287	1,294	49,240	4,562	6,191	29%	51%	34%	-16%	37%
NC	52,436	4,345	10,864	6,562	30,665	54%	62%	36%	4%	79%
NY	44,391	5,114	296	4,471	34,510	27%	37%	5%	20%	27%
OR	42,131	3,934	2,920	5,792	29,485	34%	24%	27%	12%	42%
IL	41,220	4,366	651	7,102	29,101	32%	24%	8%	19%	37%
CO	33,171	2,803	3,859	2,576	23,933	34%	52%	15%	1%	40%
AZ	33,124	2,635	229	2,388	27,872	92%	87%	536%	92%	92%
LA	32,888	735	49	1,902	30,202	19%	63%	113%	26%	18%
MD	31,238	3,137	76	1,420	26,605	48%	40%	407%	84%	47%
MI	30,979	2,219	5,924	3,380	19,456	16%	39%	-1%	-12%	28%
NJ	26,258	1,667	83	973	23,535	44%	92%	207%	55%	41%
OH	24,981	4,570	589	4,183	15,639	38%	45%	45%	28%	39%
KS	24,621	1,409	1,732	5,406	16,074	33%	57%	55%	38%	27%
OK	23,440	504	3,369	1,469	18,098	48%	53%	482%	21%	32%
TN	20,976	1,949	400	7,276	11,351	50%	49%	144%	53%	47%
MO	20,367	1,328	1,329	1,180	16,530	52%	51%	5012%	40%	42%
CT	18,301	3,308	225	3,964	10,804	26%	19%	38%	21%	31%
IA	16,878	1,057	534	5,744	9,543	23%	32%	76%	20%	22%
NV	16,831	1,630	254	2,581	12,366	122%	158%	117%	82%	128%
HI	16,678	705	87	2,620	13,266	30%	114%	295%	8%	32%
UT	15,281	2,328	426	3,189	9,338	35%	40%	124%	17%	39%
AR	13,289	230	2,143	4,614	6,302	72%	539%	6394%	42%	43%
SC	12,107	1,617	1,218	1,432	7,840	73%	151%	114%	38%	65%
RI	11,971	5,961	1,015	3,380	1,615	8%	13%	-9%	-4%	42%
AL	10,988	827	122	1,551	8,488	60%	39%	1009%	52%	62%
IN	10,878	1,019	218	1,466	8,175	44%	47%	27%	29%	48%
NE	10,238	243	188	1,130	8,677	27%	71%	74%	5%	28%
MS	8,358	302	50	285	7,721	41%	287%	456%	157%	35%
KY	7,361	910	71	567	5,813	54%	147%	318%	50%	45%
AK	7,101	328	3,534	2,121	1,446	132%	84%	1001%	40%	38%
NM	6,258	154	28	673	5,403	50%	117%	87%	47%	49%
NH	4,414	807	27	673	2,907	57%	115%	29%	31%	53%
ME	4,040	1,691	7	172	2,170	36%	30%	133%	58%	38%
ID	3,338	199	44	941	2,154	49%	131%	-2%	58%	43%
DE	2,012	113	3	208	1,688	90%	214%	200%	60%	89%
SD	1,732	125	94	511	1,002	53%	49%	124%	73%	42%
VT	1,445	117	1	121	1,206	12%	9%	-80%	22%	12%
WV	1,246	65	5	72	1,104	138%	333%	150%	80%	136%
ND	970	79	33	67	791	51%	58%	725%	148%	41%
MT	813	28	253	51	481	31%	133%	10%	-40%	64%
WY	372	39	8	42	283	116%	70%	—	100%	121%

APPENDIX B: Selected Population Characteristics

FOREIGN-BORN ACS 5-Year B05003	US	CA	MA	MN	TX	WA
Cambodian	52%	52%	53%	50%	51%	50%
Hmong	38%	37%	–	41%	–	29%
Laotian	49%	47%	51%	48%	53%	47%
Vietnamese	62%	63%	65%	60%	63%	63%
SEAA	58%	58%	60%	47%	61%	58%
AIAN	5%	11%	10%	3%	9%	3%
Asian American	59%	58%	62%	55%	63%	54%
Black or African American	9%	7%	33%	25%	6%	15%
Latino	35%	36%	32%	38%	30%	33%
NHPI	17%	22%	27%	23%	19%	15%
Total Population	13%	27%	15%	8%	17%	13%
White	4%	9%	7%	2%	3%	5%

UNINSURED ACS 5-Year B27001	US	CA	MA	MN	TX	WA
Cambodian	15%	17%	6%	14%	26%	13%
Hmong	13%	15%	–	12%	–	8%
Laotian	14%	15%	7%	7%	20%	14%
Vietnamese	16%	12%	4%	9%	22%	15%
SEAA	15%	13%	5%	11%	22%	14%
AIAN	20%	14%	4%	18%	17%	18%
Asian American	12%	11%	4%	8%	17%	10%
Black or African American	15%	12%	7%	12%	18%	13%
Latino	26%	23%	7%	26%	32%	26%
NHPI	12%	13%	5%	8%	17%	13%
Total Population	13%	15%	4%	7%	21%	11%
White	9%	8%	3%	5%	12%	9%

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ACS 5-Year B16004	US	CA	MA	MN	TX	WA
Cambodian	38%	39%	40%	36%	37%	38%
Hmong	37%	39%	–	39%	–	21%
Laotian	34%	36%	37%	35%	37%	31%
Vietnamese	49%	50%	53%	49%	48%	49%
SEAA	45%	47%	47%	41%	47%	44%
AIAN	6%	10%	8%	2%	9%	3%
Asian American	31%	33%	34%	32%	31%	29%
Black or African American	3%	2%	17%	12%	2%	7%
Latino	32%	33%	34%	32%	32%	30%
NHPI	9%	11%	10%	12%	9%	9%
Total Population	9%	19%	9%	4%	14%	8%
White	6%	14%	5%	2%	13%	4%

APPENDIX B: Selected Population Characteristics

HOMEOWNERSHIP Decennial SF2 HCT2	US	CA	MA	MN	TX	WA
Cambodian	51%	37%	40%	62%	65%	55%
Hmong	47%	32%	–	50%	–	–
Laotian	59%	42%	50%	61%	70%	58%
Vietnamese	65%	57%	53%	73%	73%	63%
SEAA	62%	52%	49%	59%	72%	61%
AIAN	53%	46%	39%	49%	57%	49%
Asian American	57%	57%	49%	57%	61%	60%
Black or African American	44%	37%	33%	26%	44%	35%
Latino	47%	44%	25%	44%	58%	43%
NHPI	47%	46%	38%	50%	50%	42%
Total Population	65%	56%	62%	73%	64%	64%
White	72%	64%	69%	77%	72%	68%

PER CAPITA INCOME ACS 5-Year B19301	US	CA	MA	MN	TX	WA
Cambodian	\$17,437	\$16,249	\$18,581	\$18,724	\$18,725	\$17,373
Hmong	\$12,868	\$11,440	–	\$13,492	–	\$21,781
Laotian	\$17,951	\$15,363	\$18,281	\$17,356	\$21,780	\$21,481
Vietnamese	\$23,339	\$24,571	\$22,832	\$22,281	\$24,091	\$23,278
SEAA	\$21,115	\$21,575	\$21,060	\$16,512	\$23,655	\$21,827
AIAN	\$18,581	\$21,189	\$22,725	\$17,495	\$22,371	\$19,453
Asian American	\$30,943	\$32,518	\$33,250	\$24,428	\$31,289	\$30,658
Black or African American	\$18,716	\$22,235	\$20,585	\$14,966	\$19,859	\$19,728
Latino	\$16,674	\$16,326	\$17,386	\$15,464	\$16,016	\$15,790
NHPI	\$20,686	\$22,755	\$24,729	\$22,039	\$21,647	\$19,089
Total Population	\$28,930	\$30,318	\$36,895	\$32,157	\$26,999	\$31,762
White	\$34,391	\$44,443	\$41,687	\$35,279	\$37,990	\$35,794

CITIZEN VOTING-AGE POPULATION ACS 5-Year B05003	US	CA	MA	MN	TX	WA
Cambodian	79%	82%	78%	81%	79%	79%
Hmong	85%	87%	–	85%	–	94%
Laotian	78%	78%	78%	75%	81%	84%
Vietnamese	81%	86%	80%	82%	80%	79%
SEAA	81%	85%	79%	83%	80%	80%
AIAN	96%	92%	94%	98%	92%	97%
Asian American	70%	76%	64%	69%	66%	72%
Black or African American	95%	96%	79%	85%	96%	91%
Latino	68%	67%	74%	57%	70%	62%
NHPI	89%	88%	86%	84%	87%	87%
Total Population	92%	83%	91%	95%	87%	92%
White	98%	96%	97%	99%	98%	98%

APPENDIX B: Selected Population Characteristics

EDUCATION ACS 5-Year B15002	US	CA	MA	MN	TX	WA
% LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL						
Cambodian	34%	36%	32%	27%	30%	33%
Hmong	30%	33%	–	31%	–	22%
Laotian	30%	34%	30%	29%	24%	28%
Vietnamese	28%	26%	31%	27%	26%	30%
SEAA	29%	28%	32%	29%	26%	30%
AIAN	18%	20%	14%	15%	18%	14%
Asian American	14%	13%	15%	20%	13%	13%
Black or African American	16%	11%	19%	19%	13%	11%
Latino	35%	40%	32%	35%	38%	37%
NHPI	12%	14%	13%	10%	10%	11%
Total Population	13%	18%	10%	8%	18%	10%
White	11%	16%	8%	6%	17%	8%
% BACHELOR'S DEGREE AND HIGHER						
Cambodian	17%	17%	15%	17%	23%	17%
Hmong	17%	16%	–	18%	–	21%
Laotian	14%	13%	21%	11%	21%	12%
Vietnamese	28%	30%	27%	27%	28%	25%
SEAA	25%	27%	22%	20%	28%	22%
AIAN	18%	19%	26%	17%	23%	17%
Asian American	50%	49%	58%	43%	55%	47%
Black or African American	20%	23%	23%	20%	22%	22%
Latino	14%	11%	17%	16%	13%	14%
NHPI	21%	22%	35%	33%	26%	17%
Total Population	30%	31%	40%	34%	28%	33%
White	31%	32%	42%	35%	28%	33%

APPENDIX B: Selected Population Characteristics

HOUSEHOLD SIZE ACS 5-Year DP04	US		CA		MA		MN		TX		WA	
	OWN	RENT	OWN	RENT	OWN	RENT	OWN	RENT	OWN	RENT	OWN	RENT
Cambodian	4.8	3.7	5.0	3.9	5.2	3.6	4.9	3.3	4.7	3.5	4.7	3.6
Hmong	5.8	4.4	6.4	5.1	5.6	3.5	5.7	4.1	5.1	4.3	7.1	3.8
Laotian	4.5	3.5	5.3	4.0	5.2	3.1	4.6	3.0	4.4	3.0	4.8	3.2
Vietnamese	4.0	3.0	4.1	3.2	4.1	2.9	4.0	2.8	3.9	2.8	3.9	2.9
AIAN	3.1	2.7	3.3	2.9	3.0	2.2	3.3	2.8	2.9	2.4	3.1	2.7
Asian American	3.7	2.8	3.6	2.9	3.7	2.6	4.4	3.0	3.7	2.6	3.6	2.7
Black or African American	3.0	2.7	3.2	2.7	3.6	2.8	4.2	2.9	3.0	2.6	3.7	2.8
Latino	3.9	3.5	4.2	3.9	4.0	3.0	4.6	3.6	3.8	3.3	4.2	3.7
NHPI	4.2	3.5	4.2	3.5	3.9	2.1	3.5	2.8	3.8	3.0	4.4	3.7
Total Population	2.7	2.5	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.3	2.6	2.2	3.0	2.6	2.6	2.4
White	2.5	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.6	2.0	2.5	1.9	2.5	2.1	2.4	2.1

POVERTY/LOW-INCOME ACS 5-Year C17002	US	CA	MA	MN	TX	WA
	% POVERTY					
Cambodian	20%	26%	18%	11%	12%	17%
Hmong	26%	36%	–	23%	–	15%
Laotian	17%	23%	28%	16%	13%	14%
Vietnamese	15%	16%	16%	12%	13%	16%
SEAA	17%	20%	17%	19%	13%	16%
AIAN	25%	21%	22%	29%	19%	24%
Asian American	13%	12%	14%	16%	12%	12%
Black or African American	27%	24%	22%	34%	23%	24%
Latino	24%	23%	29%	23%	25%	25%
NHPI	18%	16%	20%	27%	16%	16%
Total Population	15%	16%	12%	11%	17%	13%
White	13%	15%	9%	9%	16%	12%
% LOW-INCOME						
Cambodian	43%	52%	38%	34%	33%	45%
Hmong	58%	64%	–	56%	–	33%
Laotian	40%	49%	36%	40%	35%	32%
Vietnamese	36%	36%	38%	30%	35%	35%
SEAA	40%	42%	38%	46%	35%	37%
AIAN	49%	44%	42%	53%	40%	46%
Asian American	28%	26%	27%	36%	26%	26%
Black or African American	51%	44%	44%	59%	47%	45%
Latino	53%	52%	55%	54%	54%	55%
NHPI	39%	35%	35%	40%	39%	42%
Total Population	34%	36%	25%	27%	38%	30%
White	30%	33%	21%	22%	36%	27%

SOURCES OF DATA USED IN THIS REPORT

Most of the data included in this report are drawn from the United States Census Bureau, including the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census and American Community Survey (ACS) 2011–2015 Estimates. Other data in the report come from California Department of Public Health, California Department of Education, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Minnesota Department of Education, Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions, Office of Refugee Resettlement, State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse of Syracuse University, University of California Information Center, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Various reports are also cited.

MEASURING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS

Since 2000, the United States Census Bureau has allowed those responding to its questionnaires to report one or more racial or ethnic backgrounds. While this better reflects America’s diversity and improves data available on multiracial populations, it complicates the use of data on racial and ethnic groups. Data on race are generally available from the Census Bureau in two forms: for those of a single racial background (referred to as “alone”) with multiracial people captured in an independent category, and for those of either single or multiple racial backgrounds (referred to as “alone or in combination with one or more other races”). Similarly, data on ethnic groups are generally available as “alone” or “alone or in any combination.” In this report, population, population growth, and population characteristics by racial and ethnic group are measured for the “alone or in combination” population unless otherwise noted. Exceptions include the measurement of the White population, which is defined here as non-Latino White “alone” unless otherwise noted. Also, “Latino” is used consistently to refer to Hispanics or Latinos.

While the 2010 Census Summary File 1 includes counts of the population and housing units, some ethnic groups are suppressed in other Census Bureau products. For example, the 2010 Census Summary File 2 suppresses groups with fewer than 100 persons in a geography; the American Community Survey also suppresses groups due to sampling sizes. To help ensure that the housing characteristics presented in the report accurately reflect an ethnic group, for the 2010 Summary File 2 tables we include groups with 200 or more households and more than 100 persons in the geography. For the 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates from the American Community Survey, only groups with more than 1,000 people are included due to data stability.

Publications are available on the Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles website (www.advancingjustice-la.org/demographics) and the SEARAC website (<https://www.searac.org/resources-and-toolkits>), where they can be downloaded or printed free of charge.