



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH
LOS ANGELES

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California
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Colleges

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles County - 2025



MAY 2025

Asian American and Pacific Islander Employment

Los Angeles County – 2025

This report was produced in honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH
LOS ANGELES

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OUR MISSION

Who We Are

The Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research are part of the Workforce and Economic Development Division. As grant-funded technical assistance providers, the nine Centers are located strategically across the state to study California's regional economies. Our work supports the community colleges by providing customized data on high growth, emerging, and economically-critical industries and occupations.

What We Do

The Centers produce reports and tools that provide a real-time picture of the labor market, where it is headed, and what programs and training are needed to meet future workforce demand. This research helps community colleges tailor their programs to support the state's dynamic and competitive workforce. Our work can also be applied to educational policy, faculty professional development, and work-based learning opportunities for students.

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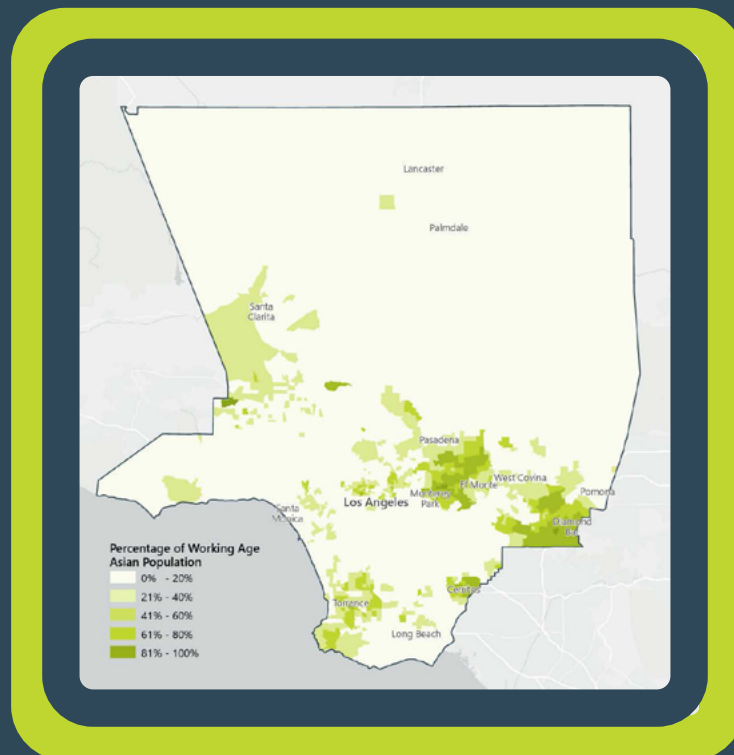
Asian American and Pacific Islander Employment in Los Angeles County

As we commemorate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, it's essential to acknowledge both the strengths of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations in the workforce and the persistent equity gaps in labor market, educational, and employment outcomes in Los Angeles County. Asian Americans make up 15.27% of the county's workforce, and Pacific Islanders, currently categorized as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander in government data, comprise 0.34%. Both groups play a significant role in contributing to and shaping the economic landscape.

According to census records, Los Angeles County is home to one of the largest AAPI populations in the United States, accounting for approximately 15% of the total population. Similarly, Asian workers comprise approximately 15% of the total labor market.

The San Gabriel Valley region shows higher concentrations of Asian workers, particularly in the cities of Alhambra, Arcadia, Cerritos, Diamond Bar, Monterey Park, Rosemead, San Gabriel, San Marino, Temple City, and Walnut. Figure 1 depicts the concentration of Asian workers throughout LA County.

Figure 1. Concentration of Working Age Asian Population in Los Angeles County¹



Data Source, U.S. Census Bureau, County of Los Angeles, map powered by Enterprise GIS, Esri

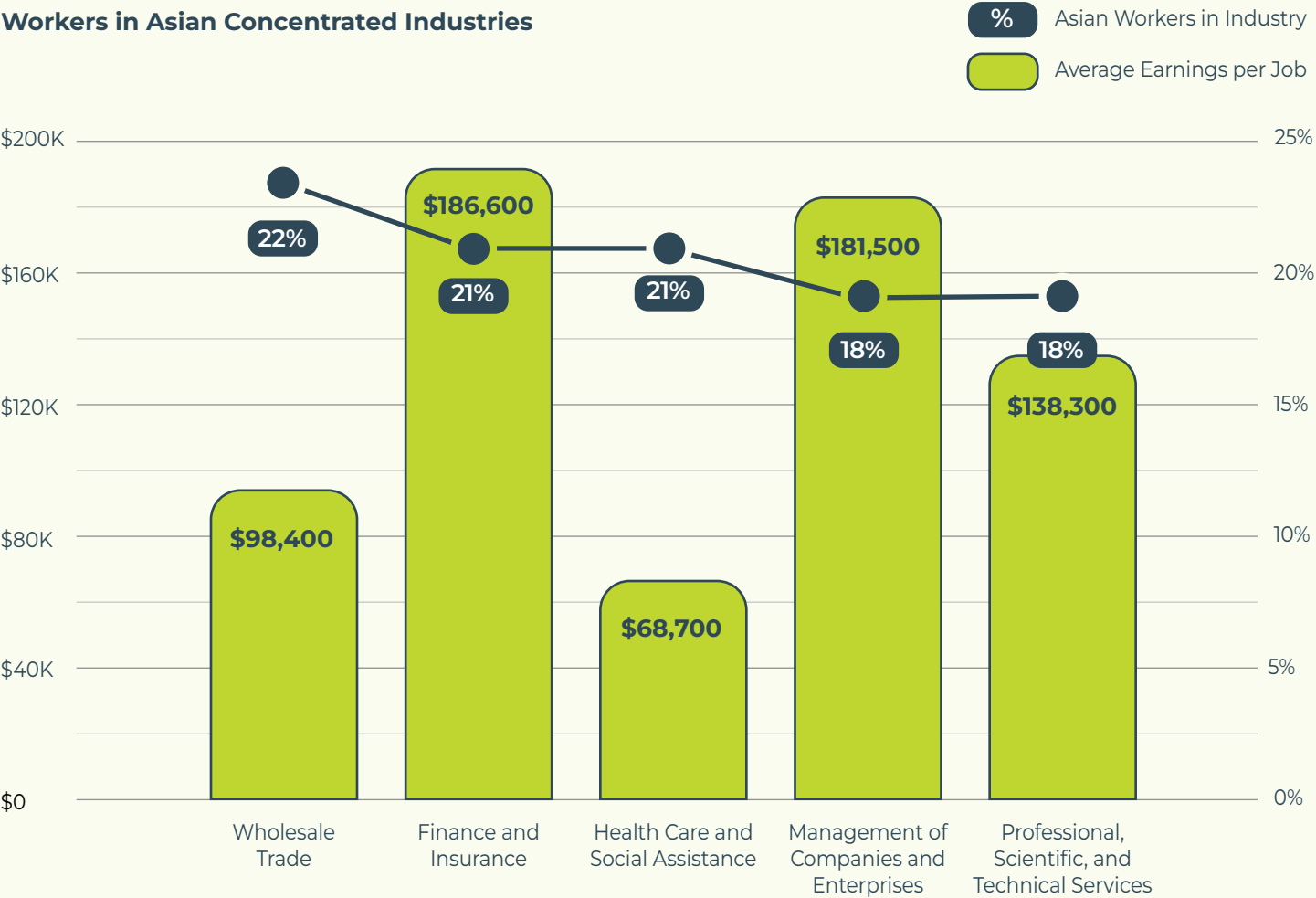
¹Percentage of Asian workers was calculated by dividing the Asian working-age population by the total working-age population at the census tract level, using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Industries

In Los Angeles County, the distribution of **Asian employment** across industries reveals significant differences. Figure 2 presents industries² with the highest representation of Asian workers, along with the average earnings per job in each industry. Three out of the five Asian concentrated industries (**Health Care and Social Assistance, Management of Companies and Enterprises, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services**) are projected to experience positive job growth through 2028, with the most significant growth (14%) anticipated in **Health Care and Social Assistance**. All Asian-concentrated industries, except for **Health Care and Social Assistance**, have higher earnings compared to the county average.

In Los Angeles County, the distribution of Asian employment across industries reveals significant differences.

Figure 2. Average Earnings per Job and Percentage of Asian Workers in Asian Concentrated Industries



Note: Average earnings per job rounded to nearest \$100.
Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun

²Total jobs falling below the 1st quartile (Q1, 115,047 jobs) were excluded to mitigate the influence of low-end variability and improve the robustness of the analysis.

Coincidentally, **Health Care and Social Assistance** encompasses the largest number of workers, comprising nearly **52%** of all jobs across the five industries with highest concentration of Asian workers (Table 1). This is followed by **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services**, which accounts for **23%** of the the total jobs among these industries. The percentage of Asian workers in each of these industries is also presented in the table below.

Table 1. Five Industries with Highest Asian Representation

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	% of Asian Workers
Wholesale Trade	204,504	22%
Finance and Insurance	141,986	21%
Health Care and Social Assistance	831,962	21%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	61,025	18%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	374,333	18%
Total	1,613,810	
Average		20%

Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun



Conversely, Figure 3 illustrates the industries³ with the lowest representation of Asian workers, as well as average annual earnings per job in each industry. Four out of five of these Asian underrepresented industries anticipate positive job growth through 2028, while one (**Retail Trade**) is expected to have negative job growth. Here, three of the five industries have average earnings below the county average.

Figure 3. Average Earnings per Job and Percentage of Asian Workers in Asian Underrepresented Industries³



Note: Average earnings per job rounded to nearest \$100.
Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun.

³Total jobs falling below ½ of the 1st quartile (Q1, 58,268 jobs) were excluded to mitigate the influence of low-end variability and improve the robustness of the analysis.

Furthermore, the two industries with the lowest average earnings, **Retail Trade** and **Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services**, account for nearly **62%** of the total workers across the five industries with lowest Asian representation (Table 2). The percentage of Asian workers in each industry is also presented in the table below.

Table 2. Five Industries with Lowest Asian Representation

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	% of Asian Workers
Retail Trade	431,850	13%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	115,047	13%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	136,419	10%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and remediation Services	319,440	9%
Construction	216,196	6%
Total	1,218,952	
Average		10%

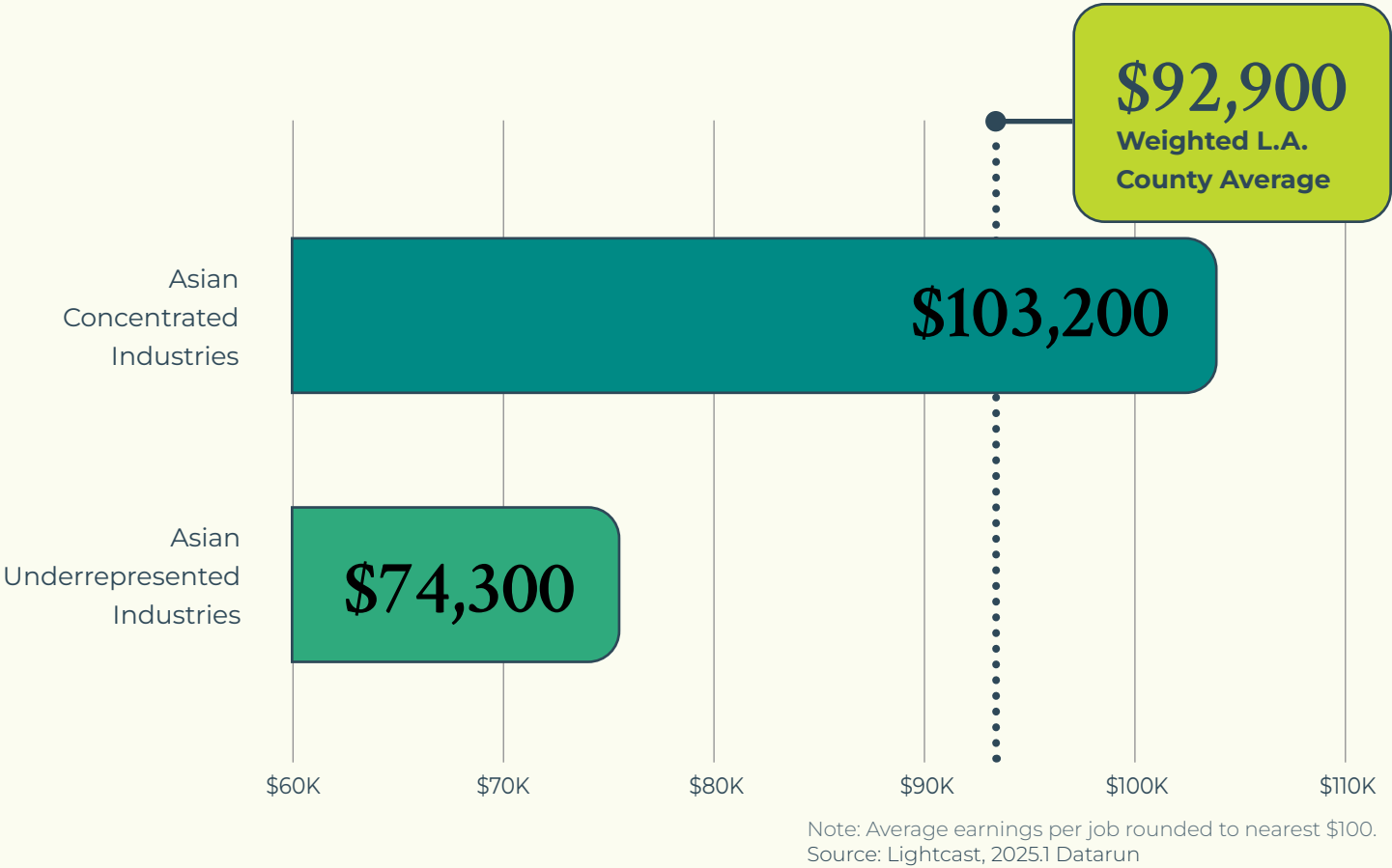
Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun



The weighted average earnings per job⁴ for industries with a high concentration of Asian workers is **\$10,300** higher than the overall average for L.A. County. In contrast, industries where Asian workers are underrepresented offer significantly lower than average earnings, at **\$18,600** below the average. This indicates a potential advantage in the labor market overall, with a difference in average earnings per job of nearly **\$28,900** between the concentrated and underrepresented groups of industries (Figure 4).

However, additional data would be needed to assess disparities within industries, as the specific roles held by different demographic groups could reveal a more nuanced picture. The current earnings data reflects industry-wide averages without distinguishing by demographics. For example, the health sector encompasses a diverse range of occupations, including nurses, physicians, and home health or personal care aides, which represent different segments of the workforce with varying earnings levels. Even within a single occupation, earnings can differ significantly. For instance, registered nurses earn about \$43,000 at the 10th percentile and up to \$171,000 at the 90th percentile.

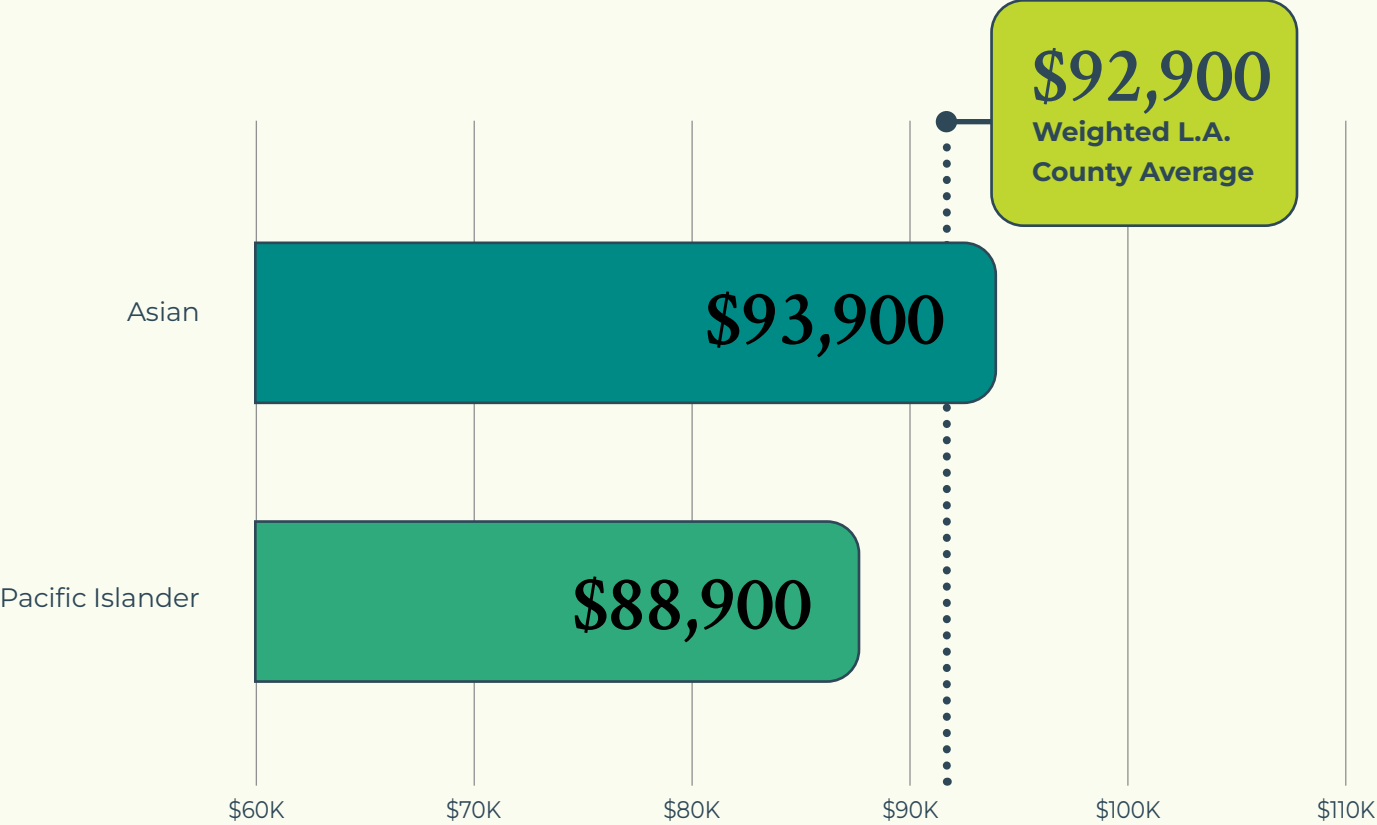
Figure 4. Weighted Average Earnings per Job Between Asian concentrated and underrepresented Industries in Los Angeles County



⁴As there is high variance in the number of jobs in each industry, the weighted average earnings per job across industries is used instead of median average earnings across industries. The weighted average earnings per job is calculated with the formula: Average (Average Earnings Per Job x 2023 Jobs in Industry for all five Asian Concentrated/Underrepresented Industries)/Total 2023 Jobs for all five Asian Concentrated and Underrepresented Industries.

Industries with the highest and lowest Pacific Islander concentrations could not be identified due to the county’s small number of Pacific Islander workers. Average earnings per job across all industries⁵ was examined to identify potential differences between those with AAPI heritage. Across industries in Los Angeles County, Asian workers have weighted average earnings per job consistent with the county average. However, Pacific Islander workers have average earnings per job across industries below the county average, highlighting the continuing challenges Pacific Islanders face in overcoming wealth disparities (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Weighted Average Earnings per Job Between Asian concentrated and Pacific Islander concentrated Industries in Los Angeles County



Note: Average earnings per job rounded to nearest \$100.
Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun

⁵Only industries with ≥1000 Asian workers and ≥100.pacific Islander workers were included in the analysis to avoid inaccuracies due to small sample size.

Tables 3-5 provide a detailed breakdown of the three largest industries by employment in L.A. County. **Health Care and Social Assistance** is both the county's largest industry, supporting **831,962** workers, and the second most Asian concentrated industry. Asian representation exceeds the overall 15% industry average in 13 of the 18 four-digit industry categories, highlighting the sector's significant role in driving Asian employment. Notably, the largest sub-industry, **Individual and Family Services**, is also the lowest-paid, earning an average of only **\$33,851** per year.

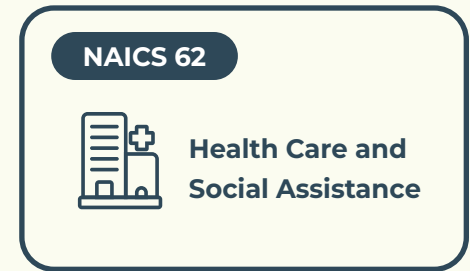


Table 3. NAICS 62: Health Care and Social Assistance

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	Asian Workers	% of Asian Workers	LQ	2023 Average Earnings Per Job	2023 - 2028 % Change
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	110,641	34,784	31%	0.74	\$119,835	2.1%
Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse) Hospitals	8,672	2,711	31%	1.10	\$124,027	38.6%
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	49,082	14,964	30%	1.13	\$66,811	10.8%
Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories	10,838	2,712	25%	1.08	\$91,132	-1.4%
Outpatient Care Centers	69,022	16,115	23%	1.97	\$111,866	19.6%
Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	19,174	4,414	22%	0.66	\$56,003	15.0%
Home Health Care Services	42,728	9,852	22%	0.83	\$44,994	23.9%
Offices of Physicians	65,880	13,934	21%	0.73	\$125,924	-2.3%
Offices of Dentists	36,912	7,721	21%	1.13	\$71,715	5.8%
Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Hospitals	2,786	524	18%	0.72	\$80,088	-2.0%
Offices of Other Health Practitioners	45,187	8,289	18%	1.14	\$59,157	17.8%
Individual and Family Services	287,444	51,318	17%	3.01	\$33,851	22.7%
Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	8,135	1,362	16%	0.69	\$75,766	3.3%
Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Facilities	20,315	2,738	13%	1.04	\$60,716	12.2%
Other Residential Care Facilities	4,021	428	10%	0.82	\$62,809	-4.1%
Child Day Care Services	32,968	3,233	10%	0.89	\$41,611	-1.6%
Community Food and Housing, and Emergency and Other Relief Services	8,966	661	7%	1.31	\$76,980	18.6%
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	9,192	558	7%	1.04	\$52,488	-10.0%
Total	831,962	176,319				
Average			21%	1.11	\$75,321	9.4%

Note: LQ is also known as Employment Concentration, which is a way of quantifying how concentrated a characteristic of a particular region is compared to the national average.

Government is the second-largest industry in the county, with Asian workers comprising **14 %** of its workforce. While most job categories within this industry offer earnings well above the county average, one category (Federal Government, Military) does not and is also projected to experience negative job growth.



Table 4. NAICS 90: Government

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	Asian Workers	% of Asian Workers	LQ	2023 Average Earnings Per Job	2023 - 2028 % Change
Education and Hospitals (Local Government)	78,510	17,189	22%	0.83	\$139,276	7.4%
Education and Hospitals (State Government)	48,913	10,368	21%	0.53	\$143,866	0.6%
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	16,821	2,725	16%	0.25	\$129,921	4.1%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	199,998	29,873	15%	1.15	\$155,573	5.3%
Federal Government, Civilian	252,064	26,926	11%	0.96	\$106,292	0.9%
Federal Government, Military	15,272	1,360	9%	0.27	\$35,522	-4.8%
Total	611,578	88,443				
Average			14%		\$118,408	2.3%

Note: LQ is also known as Employment Concentration, which quantifies how concentrated a characteristic of a particular region is compared to the national average. These characteristics could be an industry's or occupation's share of employment, resident demographics, online profiles, or job postings.
Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun

Accommodation and Food Services, the third-largest industry, has a **14%** Asian workforce. While most of the job categories within this sector fall at or below the average concentration of Asian workers across industries, one category, **gambling industries**, is markedly higher, at 54%.

NAICS 72



Accommodation
and Food Services

Table 5. NAICS 72: Accommodation and Food Services

Industry (4-Digit NAICS)	Total Jobs	Asian Workers	% of Asian Workers	LQ	2023 Average Earnings Per Job	2023 - 2028 % Change
Gambling Industries	7,014	3,388	54%	1.80	\$63,314	-14.5%
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	362,658	53,501	15%	1.08	\$37,107	5.3%
Rooming and Boarding Houses, Dormitories, and Workers' Camps	285	37	14%	0.63	\$40,844	-30.0%
Special Food Services	34,037	4,863	14%	1.22	\$42,819	14.7%
Traveler Accommodation	45,025	6,295	13%	0.82	\$61,036	12.7%
Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	9,453	579	6%	0.73	\$35,278	11.3%
RV (Recreational Vehicle) Parks and Recreational Camps	701	31	4%	0.30	\$48,596	9.4%
Total	459,172	68,694				
Average			14%	0.94	\$46,999	1.3%

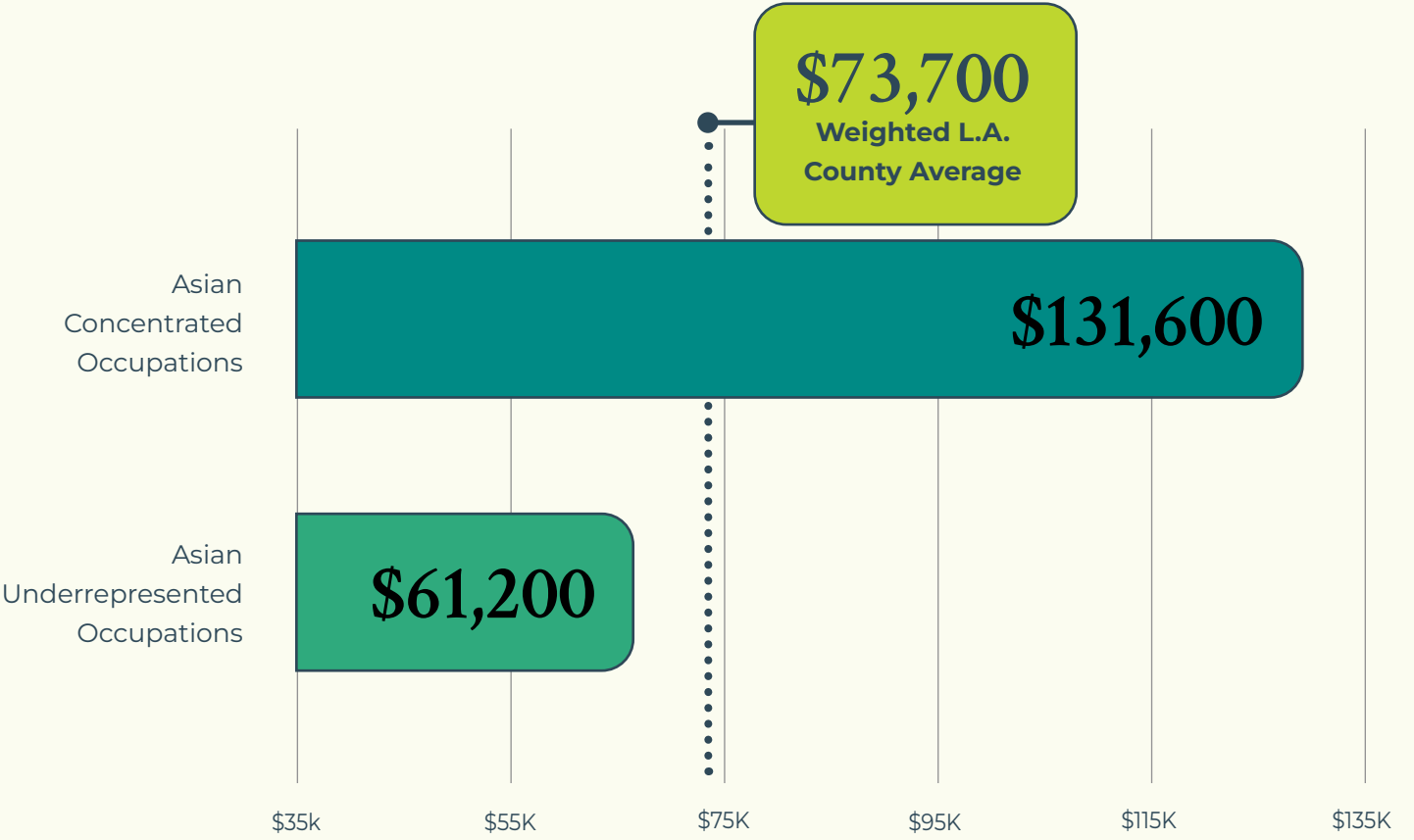
Note: LQ is also known as Employment Concentration, which quantifies how concentrated a characteristic of a particular region is compared to the national average. These characteristics could be an industry's or occupation's share of employment, resident demographics, online profiles, or job postings.
Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun

Occupations

A similar, but more noticeable pattern emerges when comparing occupations. The weighted average annual earnings for Asian concentrated occupations are approximately **\$70,400 higher** than those for Asian underrepresented occupations (Figure 6). Examining the disparity through median salaries provides additional insight by accounting for skewed income distributions that can distort average earnings.

A similar, but more noticeable pattern emerges when comparing occupations.

Figure 6. Weighted Average Annual Earnings⁶ Between Asian concentrated and underrepresented Occupations in Los Angeles County



Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun

⁶Occupational earnings differ from Industry earnings. Industry earnings include wages and salaries and supplements (such as pensions), while occupational earnings only include wages and salaries.

The medial median salary for occupations with high concentrations of Asian workers is **\$139,900**, compared to **\$45,200** for Asian underrepresented occupations, delineating a **\$94,700** gap. This difference in earnings is expected considering that **Asian concentrated occupations** generally require higher educational attainment. Table 6 presents the occupations with the **highest percentage** of Asian workers, average annual earnings, resilience to automation, and educational requirements.



Table 6. Asian Concentrated Occupations

Occupation	% Asian Workers	Median Annual Earnings	Automation Resilience	Educational Requirements
Manicurists and Pedicurists	77%	\$34,700	(2.2)	Postsecondary nondegree award
Gambling Dealers	61%	\$32,700	(10.9)	High school diploma or equivalent
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	59%	\$125,400	21.4	Doctoral or professional degree
Software Developers	57%	\$154,300	19.8	Bachelor's degree
Skincare Specialists	55%	\$35,900	6.3	Postsecondary nondegree award
Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	54%	\$114,400	19.8	Bachelor's degree
Emergency Medicine Physicians	53%	\$223,400	11.1	Doctoral or professional degree
Family Medicine Physicians	52%	\$176,000	14.8	Doctoral or professional degree
Pharmacists	51%	\$154,700	10.9	Doctoral or professional degree
Physicians, All Other	51%	\$181,100	11.1	Doctoral or professional degree
Medial Median		\$ 139,900		
Average		57%	10.2	

Note: Median Annual Earnings are rounded to the nearest \$100
Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun.

Table 7 details the occupations with the **lowest percentage** of Asian workers. Seven out of the ten Asian concentrated occupations require a bachelor's degree, with five of these requiring a doctoral or professional degree for entry. In contrast, only one of the Asian underrepresented occupations requires a bachelor's degree, while six have no formal educational credential requirement.



When examining resistance to automation, which refers to the likelihood that a job could be replaced by automated technologies such as robotics, it appears that many of the occupations with high Asian representation are more resilient to automation than those that are underrepresented. It is notable that many of the concentrated occupations are in the medical field, while the underrepresented occupations are related to construction fields. Importantly, automation resistance scores do not currently incorporate any potential risk of replacement by newer generative AI, or other AI related technologies.

Table 7. Asian Underrepresented Occupations

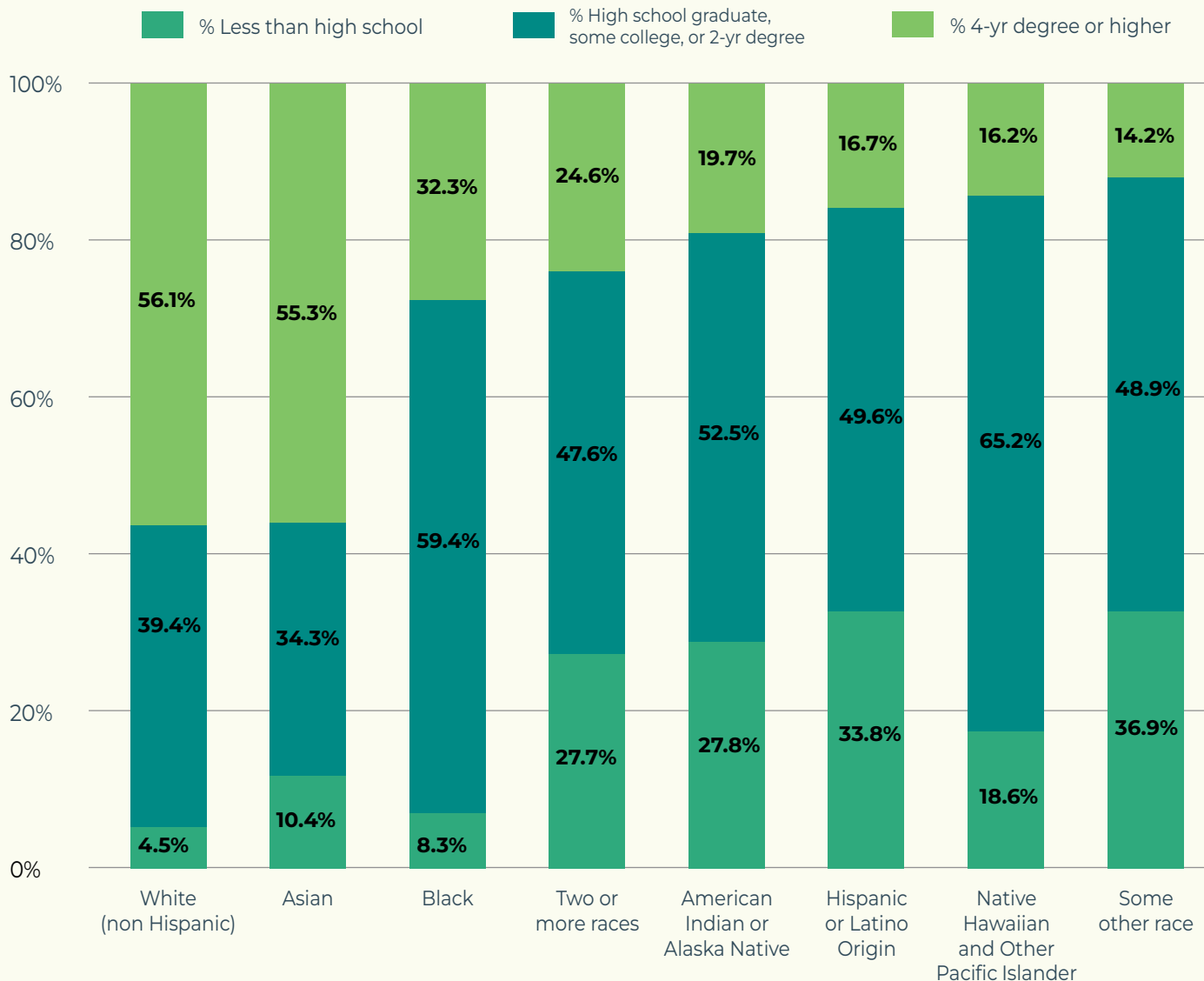
Occupation	% Asian Workers	Median Annual Earnings	Automation Resilience	Educational Requirements
Bartenders	7%	\$34,700	(21.3)	No formal educational credential
Actors	7%	\$47,600	(12.5)	Some college, no degree
Producers and Directors	7%	\$102,700	10.9	Bachelor's degree
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6%	\$38,200	(24.5)	No formal educational credential
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6%	\$37,400	(22.5)	No formal educational credential
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	6%	\$80,700	6.0	High school diploma or equivalent
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	5%	\$44,500	(19.5)	No formal educational credential
Construction Laborers	4%	\$45,900	(31.9)	No formal educational credential
Carpenters	4%	\$56,000	(25.9)	High school diploma or equivalent
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	3%	\$38,700	(29.1)	No formal educational credential
Medial Median		\$45,200		
Average		5.5%	(17.03)	

Note: Median Annual Earnings are rounded to the nearest \$100
Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 Datarun.

Considering the degree requirements, seven Asian concentrated occupations have average annual earnings far above the L.A. County average. The other three occupations, however, have earnings far below the average earnings for L.A. County. Conversely, only two Asian underrepresented occupations have average annual earnings above the county average. These findings highlight the importance of access to well-paying, sustainable career paths through educational advancement.

Education plays a key role in shaping access to higher paying occupations, particularly in industries where a college degree is a needed. Examining educational attainment by ethnicity offers important context (Figure 7). Census data shows that **55.3% of Asians** aged 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 36.5% of the general population. This level of attainment is significantly higher than that of all other racial and ethnic groups, except White (non-Hispanic), whose attainment rate is slightly higher at 56.1%.

Figure 7. Educational Attainment by Ethnicity⁷



Data Source: US Census 2023, <https://data.census.gov/>

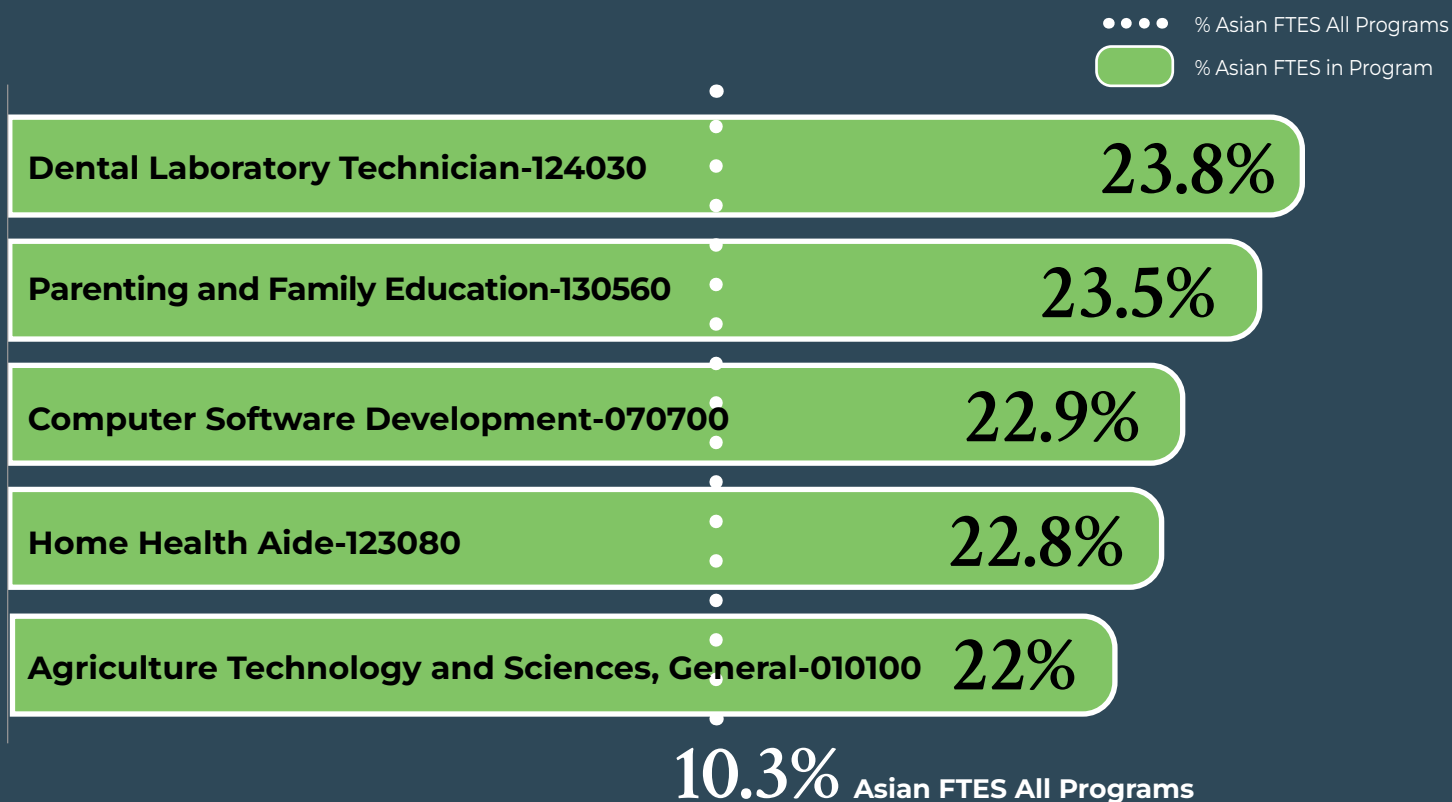
Due to the modest population of Pacific Islander workers in Los Angeles County, it is not possible to identify Pacific Islander concentrated and underrepresented occupations due to insufficient data. However, based on the average annual earnings across industries for Pacific Islanders in Los Angeles County (refer to Figure 5 in the Industries section), it is expected that both Pacific Islander concentrated and underrepresented occupations would have median annual earnings below the county average.

⁷Author's calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau educational attainment data by ethnicity. Since the demographic dataset only disaggregated by total demographic population, "high school graduate or higher," and "bachelor's degree or higher," current categories were derived by subtraction, percentages calculated.

California Community College Career & Technical Education (CTE) Programs

The California Community College system provides equitable and accessible educational opportunities for students by preparing them to continue their educational journey at four-year institutions or gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to join the workforce immediately. Career Technical Education (CTE) programs are educational pathways that combine academic instruction with hands-on training in specific occupations. Figures 8-10 show the programs with the most substantial representation among the 19 community colleges in Los Angeles County for Asian, Filipino⁸, and Pacific Islander students, respectively.⁹ Asian students in CTE programs are spread amongst healthcare, education, and technology (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Community College CTE Programs with Highest Percentage of Asian Full-time Enrolled Student (FTES)¹⁰ Representation in Los Angeles County (2023-24)



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) [Data Mart](#)

⁸Under the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information System, AAPI ethnicity is categorized as Asian, Filipino, and Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native.

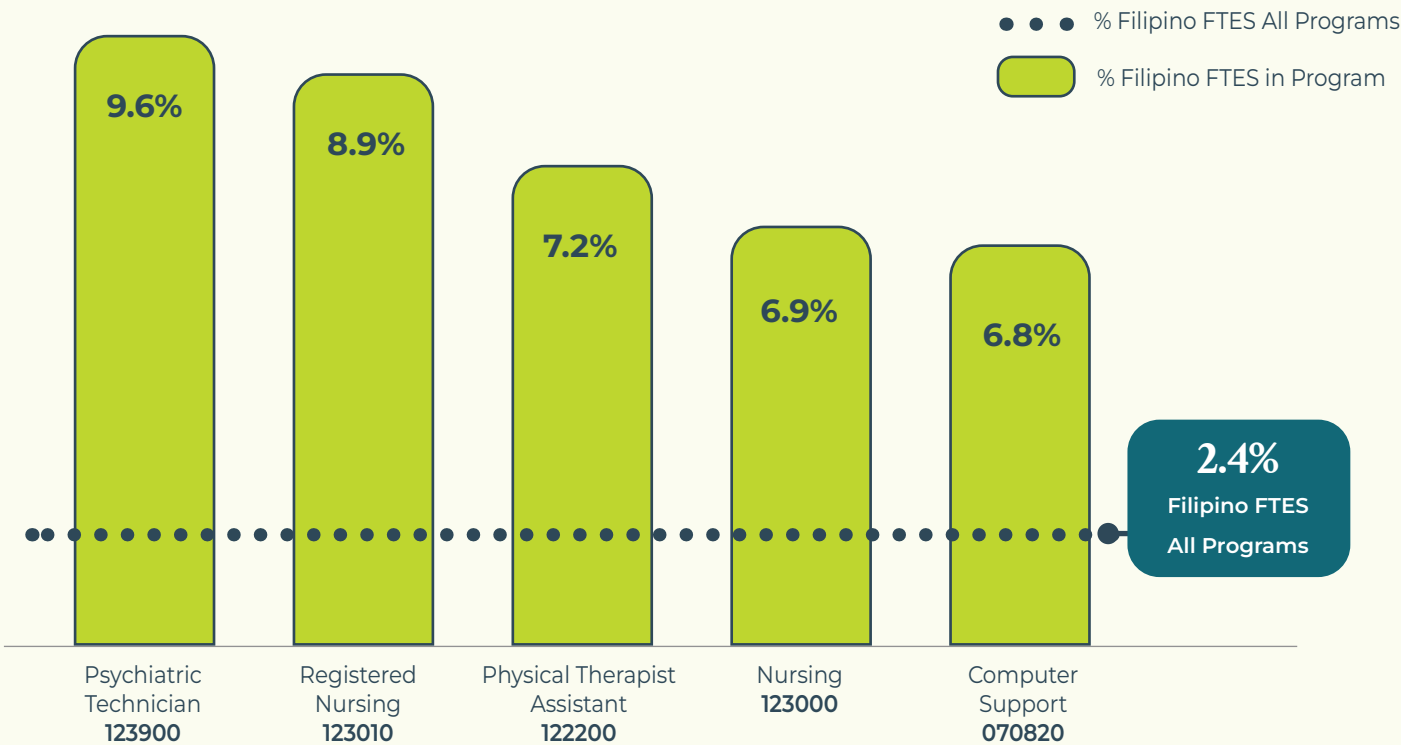
⁹To ensure sample size adequacy, only programs with more than 22.4 Total FTES (1st Quartile Median) were included in the analysis.

¹⁰ The FTES value is calculated by summing the "Total Hours" (refer to [SXD4](#) in CCCC MIS Data Element Dictionary) in all the enrollment records reported to CCCC MIS during the requested time period, then dividing by 525.

The most popular programs for Filipino students are centered around health, with four out of five programs falling under the healthcare sector (Figure 9).

The most popular programs for Filipino students are centered around health.

Figure 9. Community College CTE Programs with Highest Percentage of Filipino Full-time Enrolled Student (FTES)¹¹ Representation in Los Angeles County (2023-24)



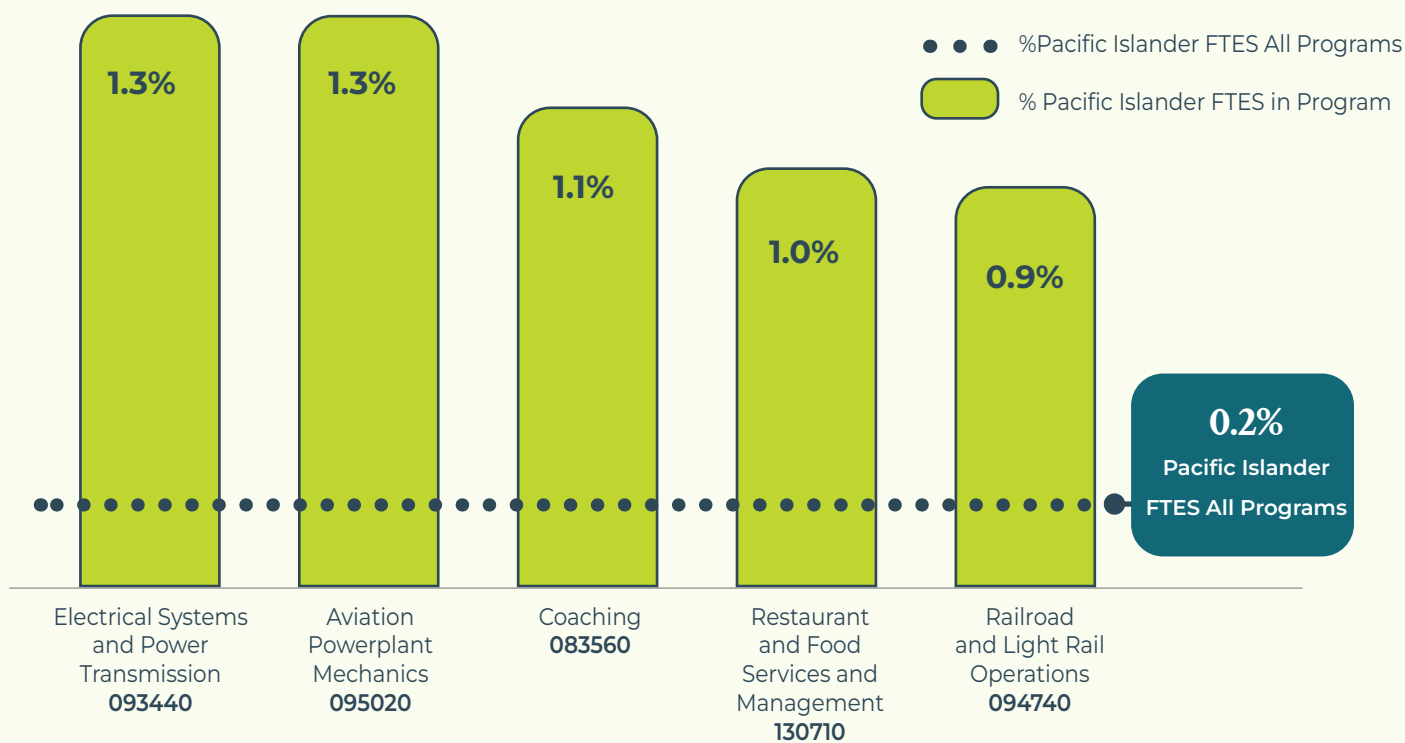
Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) [Data Mart](#)

¹¹The FTES value is calculated by summing the “Total Hours” (refer to [SXD4](#) in CCCCCO MIS Data Element Dictionary) in all the enrollment records reported to CCCCCO MIS during the requested time period, then dividing by 525.

Figure 10 shows the most popular CTE programs amongst Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native students.

The most popular CTE programs amongst Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native students.

Figure 10. Community College CTE Programs with Highest Percentage of Pacific Islander Full-time Enrolled Student (FTES)¹² Representation in Los Angeles County (2023-24)



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) [Data Mart](#)

¹²The FTES value is calculated by summing the "Total Hours" (refer to [SXD4](#) in CCCC MIS Data Element Dictionary) in all the enrollment records reported to CCCC MIS during the requested time period, then dividing by 525.

Strong Workforce Program (SWP) Outcomes

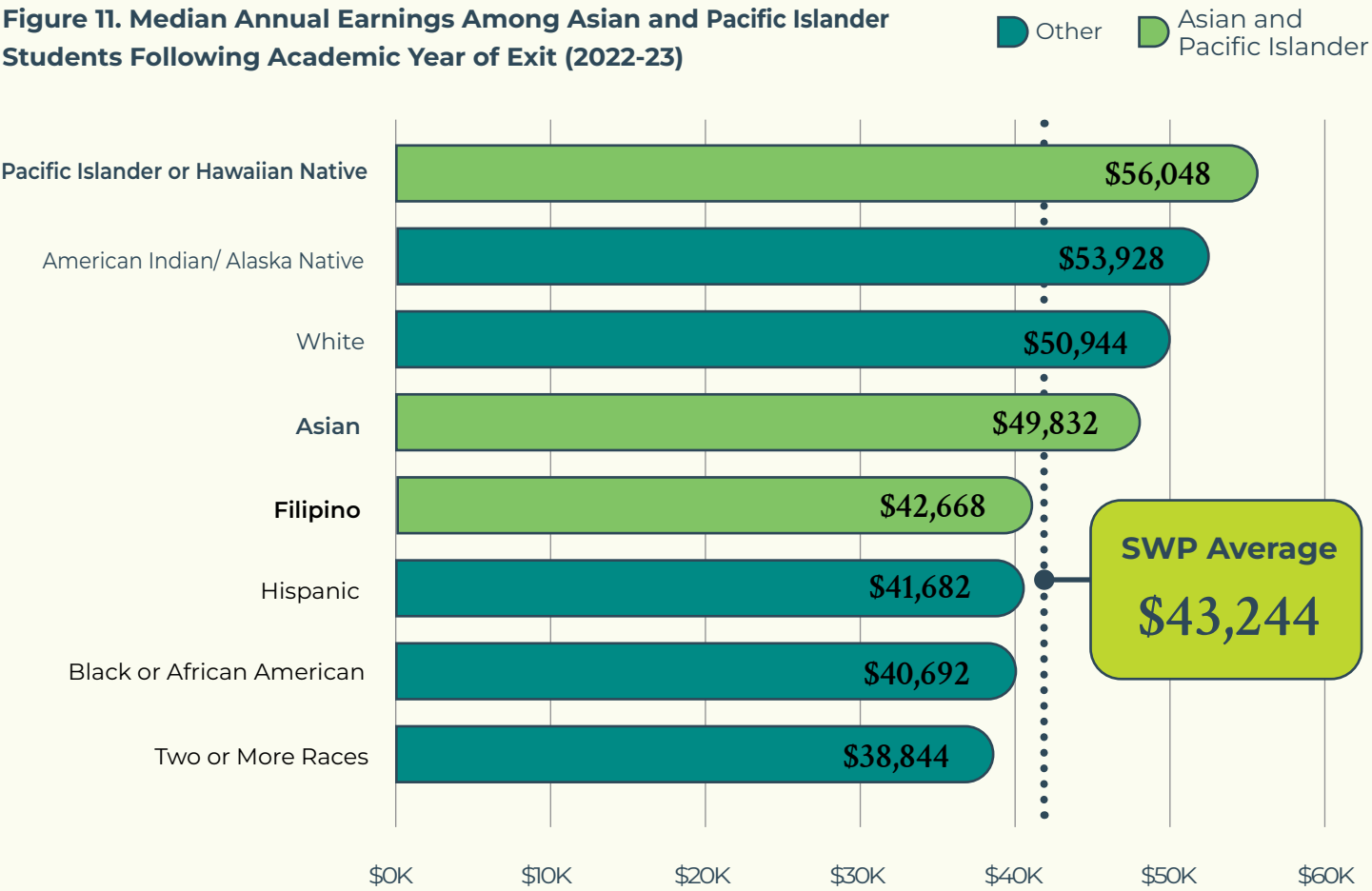
Strong Workforce Program (SWP) students comprise those enrolled in a Career Technical Education (CTE) program assigned to a vocational industry sector at a California Community College.

Median Annual Earnings

Asian and Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native students (n = 2,287) in CTE programs who exited the community college system and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution had higher than average annual earnings following the academic year of exit, while Filipino students had lower than average annual earnings following their year of exit. (Figure 11)



Figure 11. Median Annual Earnings Among Asian and Pacific Islander Students Following Academic Year of Exit (2022-23)



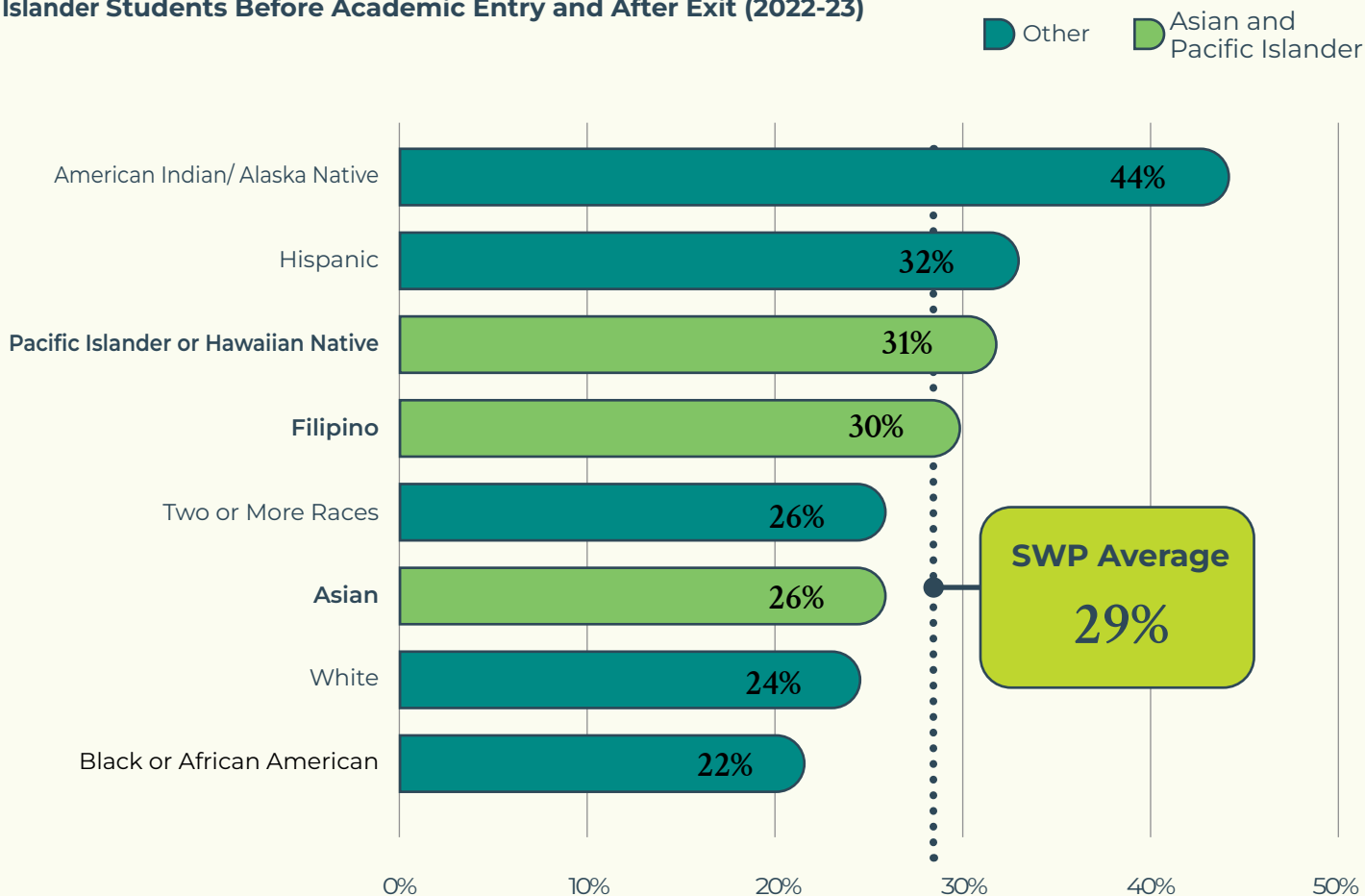
Source: [Data Vista](#)

Median Change in Earnings

Figure 12 shows the change in earnings, defined as the difference between a student’s income before entering and after exiting the California Community College system. Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native and Filipino students had above average change in earnings after attending college, while Asian students experienced lower than average change in earnings.



Figure 12. Median Change in Earnings Among Asian and Pacific Islander Students Before Academic Entry and After Exit (2022-23)



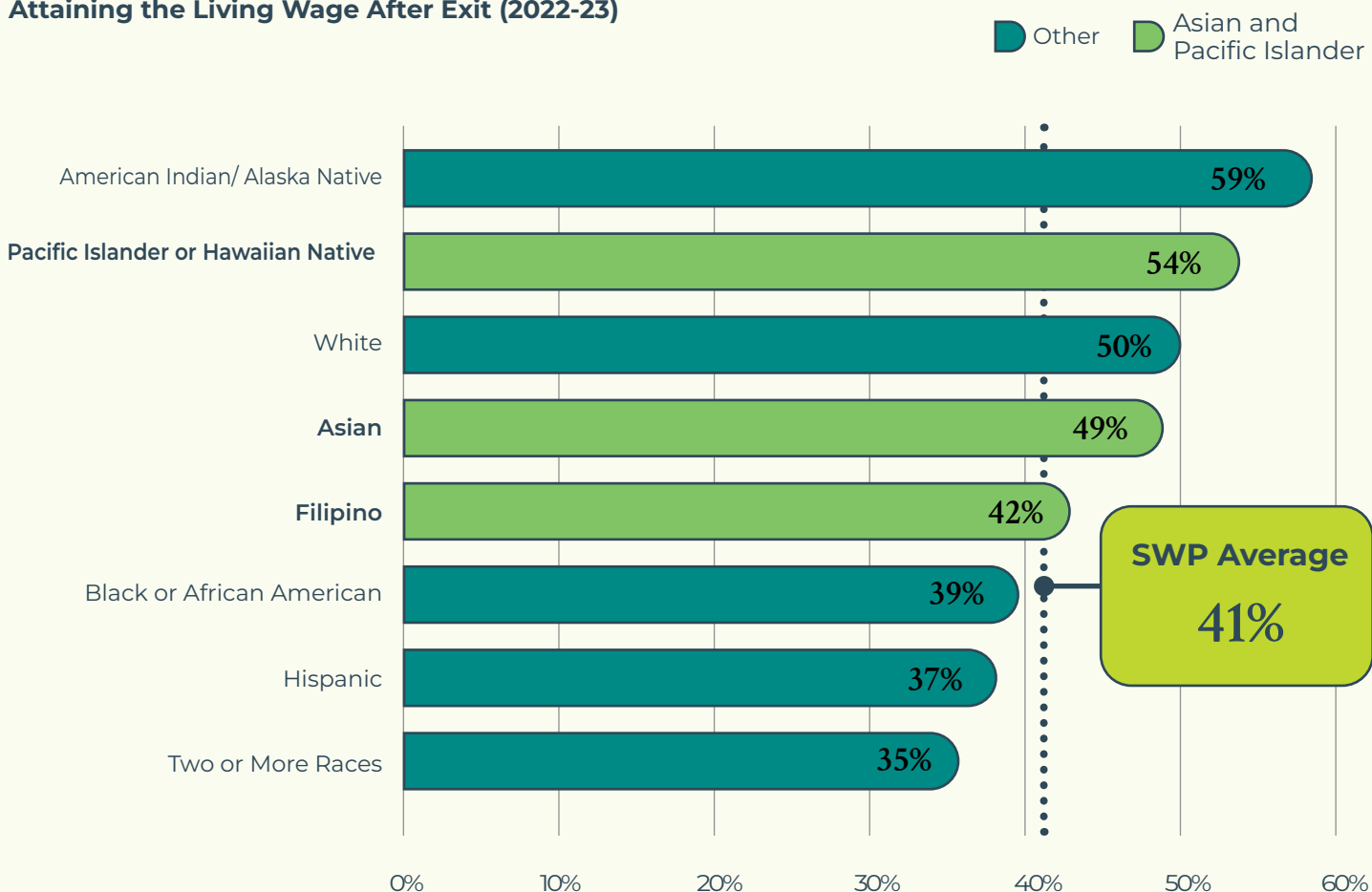
Source: [Data Vista](#)

Attaining a Living Wage

Among SWP students who exited college and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, Asian, Filipino, and Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native students (n = 1,493) had higher-than-average rates of living wage attainment compared with other ethnic groups (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Percentage of Asian and Pacific Islander Students Attaining the Living Wage After Exit (2022-23)



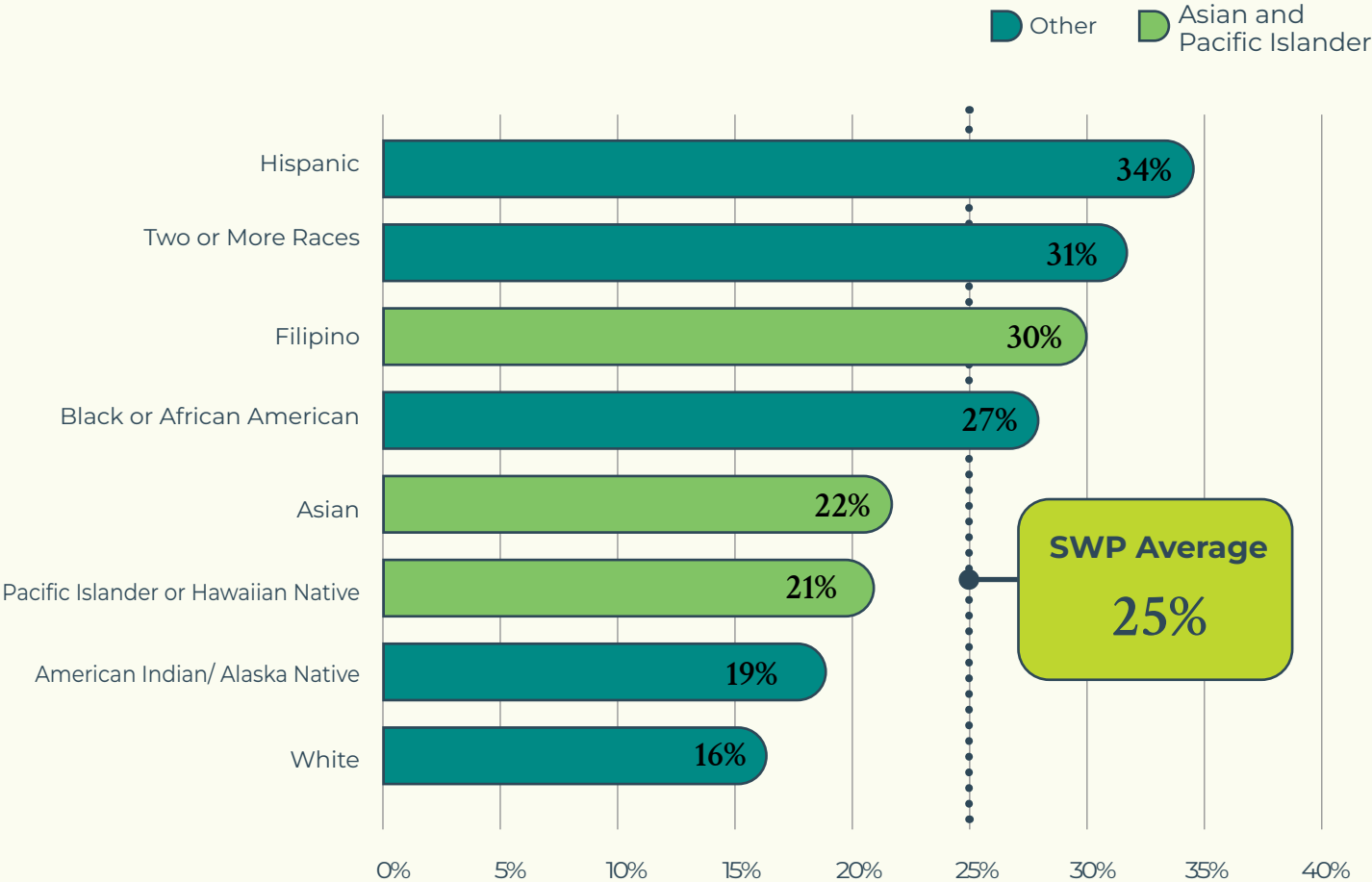
Source: [Data Vista](#)

Gaining Employment

CTE programs are instrumental in enabling unemployed individuals or those seeking career transitions to gain employment. These programs prepare students to immediately apply to high-demand jobs by equipping them with relevant skills, certifications, and real-world experience. Of all AAPI SWP students, Filipino students were most likely to gain employment after attending college (Figure 14). Asian and Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native had lower than average rates of gaining employment after exiting college.



Figure 14. Percentage of Asian and Pacific Islander Students Gaining Employment After Exit (2022-23)



Source: [Data Vista](#)

Conclusion

Findings from this report reveal both promising outcomes and persistent disparities for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) workers and students in the Los Angeles region. Overall, Asian workers are well-represented in industries and occupations that offer earnings above the county average, with particularly strong representation in sectors such as Finance and Insurance, and Management of Companies and Enterprises. Many of these occupations also require higher educational attainment, a strength reflected in the high percentage of Asians with a bachelor's degree or higher. These patterns suggest that, for certain segments of the AAPI population, notable equity strengths exist within the regional labor market.

While educational attainment is high among Asians, further support is needed to ensure equitable labor market outcomes across all AAPI subgroups.

However, disparities remain, especially for Pacific Islander workers, whose average earnings across industries fall below the county average. The lack of sufficient data, due to small population sizes, further limits our understanding of Pacific Islander workforce experiences, making targeted analysis and interventions more challenging. Indeed, a report by McKinsey & Company found substantial differences in outcomes between Asian American subgroups and noted that Asian Americans, as a whole, experience one of the highest rates of within-group income inequality among all ethnic groups.¹³ Within the broader labor market, a stark earnings gap is evident between concentrated and underrepresented occupations, with differences of nearly \$95,000 in median salaries. These disparities are closely linked to differences in educational access and credential requirements, underscoring the importance of educational pathways in achieving equitable outcomes.

The California Community College system plays a key role in expanding access to workforce opportunities for AAPI students through Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. Encouragingly, students in CTE programs from AAPI backgrounds showed stronger rates of living wage attainment than average. Yet, employment outcomes are mixed, with Filipino students outperforming the average in gaining employment after college, with both Asian and Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native students experiencing below the 25% average employment rate post-exit.

These findings reinforce the need to strengthen educational and workforce pipelines, especially for those in underrepresented and lower-wage occupations. While educational attainment is high among Asians, further support is needed to ensure equitable labor market outcomes across all AAPI subgroups. Addressing data limitations and improving access to high-growth and sustainable careers will be critical. By prioritizing high-demand occupations, expanding access to programs that lead to high paying careers, and investing in mentorship and targeted support, colleges and workforce partners can play a pivotal role in promoting upward mobility and reducing disparities.¹⁴ Policies that center equity and cultural understanding will help ensure that AAPI students and workers across the Los Angeles region have the opportunity to thrive in a competitive and evolving economy.

¹³Michael Chui, Kweilin Ellingrud, Ishanaa Rambachan, and Jackie Wong. Asian American workers: Diverse Outcomes and Hidden Challenges ([McKinsey & Company, 2022](#))

¹⁴[Equity in Priority Jobs and Programs: Los Angeles Region - Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research](#)



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