

EVERYONE WINS WHEN **EVERYONE IS COUNTED**



NATIVE HAWAIIANS & PACIFIC ISLANDERS COUNT!



Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPIs) have called California home since at least the early nineteenth century.

The founding and development of inland cities like Sacramento and communities close to ports, such as those in San Francisco, the greater Los Angeles area, and San Diego, were and continue to be bolstered and culturally invigorated by NHPI communities. Today, California has one of the largest populations of NHPI in the United States, second only to Hawaii. The NHPI population grew 29% between 2000 and 2010,¹ and over 300,000 NHPI call California home. The NHPI population is expected to grow 61 percent between 2010 and 2060.³

Diversity Masked by Aggregation

The racial category “NHPI” encompasses a diverse group, at least 20 distinct communities. While they share commonalities, they also carry their own distinct traditions and languages. The difficulty of addressing challenges faced by small populations like NHPI is further compounded when agencies and organizations rely on default labels—like the overly broad “Asian Pacific Islander” racial category—for collection and publication of data. Such labels mask significant disparities between NHPI and Asian Americans across key socioeconomic characteristics. Since 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)—the federal agency that provides standards for how race and ethnicity should be reported and collected—has required federal agencies to collect and report data on NHPI as a separate racial category.

In 2000, the Census Bureau began disaggregating NHPI data from Asian American data to comply with OMB 15, marking an important win for NHPI community leaders and advocates. However, many state and federal agencies continue the practice of aggregating Asian and Pacific Islander, resulting in ongoing invisibility. As the population grows and becomes more diverse, it is critical that NHPI data be collected and available to the public as distinct ethnic and racial groups separate from Asian Americans.

URGENT NEED FOR DATA

NHPIs face continued barriers in reaching equity in education or social services. NHPI youth face significant educational challenges, similar to other communities of color that are underrepresented in higher education. Data show that NHPI high school students statewide graduate at lower rates and are more likely to drop out. Among NHPI recent high school graduates, many are not prepared for higher education. About 35% of NHPI public school graduates in 2012–2013 completed the course work required for UC or CSU entrance.⁴

Additionally, NHPIs have one of the highest mortality rates statewide, yet many lack access to affordable and culturally-appropriate care. Many NHPI, particularly Fijian, Tongan, and Samoans, are limited English proficient. Culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach, education, and preventive services are key to ensuring the health and wellness of NHPI communities.

Pacific Islander (PI) immigrant communities face diverse and distinct immigration challenges that can affect their ability to access critical services. Many PIs come from islands that have unique political relationships with the U.S. due to colonization and militarization of their home islands. Complex relationships translate into a variety of statuses for PI immigrants (citizens, nationals, immigrants, or migrants). Nineteen-point-five percent NHPI are foreign-born—about one in 5 NHPI. Fijian (78%) and Tongan American (43%) populations are proportionally more foreign-born than average (27%).⁵

Across all issue areas, advocates have highlighted the need to identify, and target, the unique characteristics of this community, in order to understand and address these and many other issue areas. Census data have implications across all these issue areas for an entire decade, and accurate data are key to informing policy efforts to support advocacy for the NHPI community.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

As we prepare strategies for the 2020 Census, we call attention to the need for the State to develop culturally- and linguistically-relevant materials produced by and for NHPI communities, especially since the U.S. Census Bureau is not planning to provide any Pacific Islander language support.

Outreach to NHPI communities must be informed by trusted messengers, which will vary based on ethnic group and age. For example, in the Samoan community, religious leaders will play a critical role for outreach. Also, with a much younger population (about one in three NHPI are under age 18), successful outreach strategies will need to include developing social media content. Because the majority of NHPIs do not live in low response census tracts, contracts focused on population based outreach will be crucial to reaching California's NHPIs.

Who is considered “Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander?” This is sometimes divided into the more well-known categories like Polynesian, Melanesian, Micronesian. Note the list below is not exhaustive.

Chamorro Chuukese Fijian i-Kiribati Kosraean Mariana Islander Marshallese Native Hawaiian
Ni-Vauatu Palauan Papa New Guinean Pohnpeian Saipanese Samoan Solomon Islander
Tahitian Tokelauan Tongan Yapese

ENDNOTES

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SFI, Table P6
- 2 U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 Population Estimate, Table PEPASR5H
- 3 California Department of Finance, 2010–2060 Population Projections, Report P-1.
- 4 California Department of Education. 2012–2013. California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System. “Number of Graduates and Graduates Meeting UC/CSU Entrance Requirements.”
- 5 U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2010 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Public Use Microdata Sample.



For more information about the
Census Policy Advocacy Network,
please contact
CPAN@AdvanceProj.org or visit
AdvancementProjectCA.org/CPAN