

Crime and Justice



The Colorado Lotus Project frames its work around seven areas to better understand the strengths and disparities faced by Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities. These include demographics, health, housing, income and economic opportunity, education, crime and justice, and democracy.

This fact sheet highlights data and community voices related to crime and justice, which covers a variety of topics, including representation in court and legal systems and experiences with crime, racism, and policing. Importantly, little reliable and accurate data exists within this domain, especially as it relates to hate crimes and sentencing. For example, underreporting is common due to mistrust of law enforcement, belief that reports won't be taken seriously, language barriers, and other issues.

Spotlights

1. AANHPI high schoolers experience forms of racism and discrimination at higher rates than Colorado high schoolers overall.

About 23% of South Asian high school students and 21% of East and Southeast Asian students reported seeing their family members being treated unfairly due to race or ethnicity. Overall, 9% of high school students in Colorado reported this same experience.¹

2. Limited access to interpreters, accurate and reliable data, and inconsistent language support in the legal system make navigating it more difficult for AANHPI defendants, often leading to disparities in sentencing.

"Not a lot of people can pay for an interpreter and an attorney. If we take a favorable plea agreement or judge-mandated deal, such as anger management classes, it's difficult for people to have access to these because these classes are in English only. Some jurisdictions will provide an interpreter for people to go to that class, but others don't." - *Key informant*

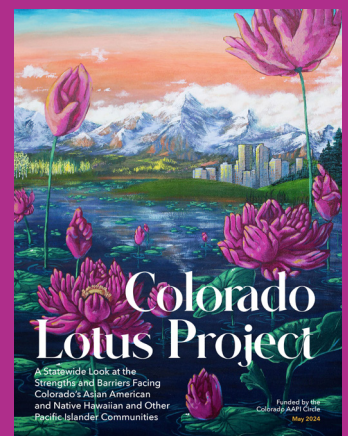
3. Lack of outreach, follow-up, and cultural responsiveness from local law enforcement has created mistrust for many in AANHPI communities.

Many focus group participants noted negative experiences with law enforcement. These issues ranged from feeling a lack of cultural responsiveness to feeling ignored and not receiving resolution related to reported crimes. "There is a preconceived notion that Polynesians are 'big and strong,' so there's a quick judgement to make sure [the police] are protecting themselves ... they go overboard to protect themselves without understanding what's really going on." - *Participant in the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-identifying focus group*

Colorado Lotus Project:

A Statewide Look at the Strengths and Barriers Facing AANHPI Coloradans

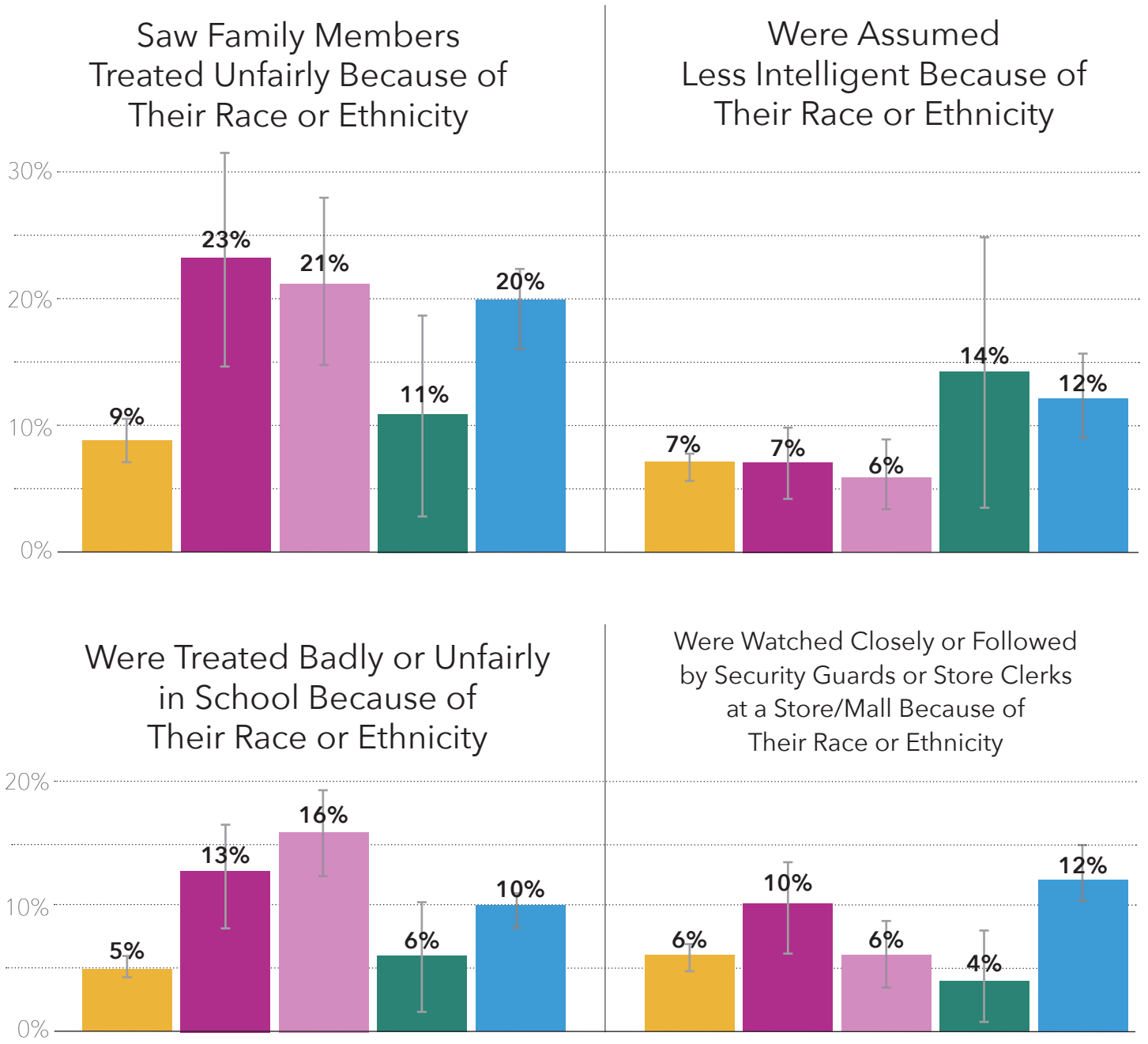
The Colorado Lotus Project is an effort to uplift the unique voices and experiences of Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (AANHPI) people living in Colorado, and to tear down the idea that the AANHPI community is a monolith. The goal of this work is to call attention to the need for better data and to achieve a more equitable allocation of resources.



For more data, a better understanding of the experiences of the people behind the numbers, and the methodology for reporting, read the full Colorado Lotus Project report colo.health/colotus

Percentage of Colorado High School Students Reporting They Have Experienced Racism, by Regional AANHPI Identity (2021)¹

- Colorado
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- South Asian
- East/Southeast Asian
- Multiracial



Note: Due to the way data are collected, Asian as an overall category is not reportable, and East and Southeast Asian cannot be separated. Gray lines represent confidence intervals, which show the degree of certainty of the data. There is 95% confidence that the true value lies between the range indicated by the interval.