

Income and Economic Opportunity



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 community voices related to income and economic opportunity and explores factors needed to thrive, such as income, livelihood, and entrepreneurship.

Spotlights

1. A variety of AANHPI people in Colorado report having incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

Over half (52.3%) of Burmese Coloradans report having incomes at or below 200% FPL. In 2023, 200% FPL for a single-person household was \$29,160.¹

2. A lack of recognition of foreign degrees, limited access to education, and language barriers are among the economic challenges many immigrants and refugees face in Colorado.

Community leaders and focus group members spoke of two key challenges experienced by immigrants and refugees. Employers in the U.S. may not accept or recognize certain certifications or degrees, making it difficult for those with training to find a suitable job. Immigrants and refugees who did not have educational opportunities before coming to the U.S. face education and language barriers.

3. Across the U.S. nearly 3 million Asian-owned businesses employ almost 5 million workers.² Entrepreneurship is an important aspect of income and economic opportunity for many AANHPI people in Colorado. Support for business owners is limited, however.

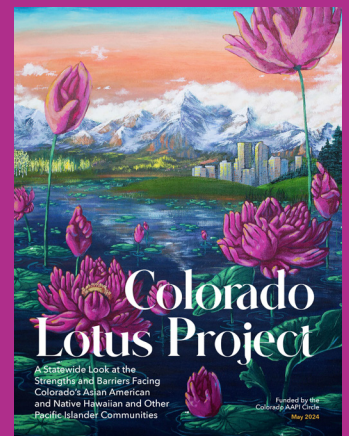
A focus group participant characterized the challenges faced by many business owners: "There's this generational wealth, which isn't just finances; it's also education/experience. Our challenge starting a business wasn't that it was difficult, but we didn't have the generational wealth to understand how to do it. In general, things like that are set up with the perception that we are all starting from the same starting line."

– Participant in the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-identifying focus group

Colorado Lotus Project:

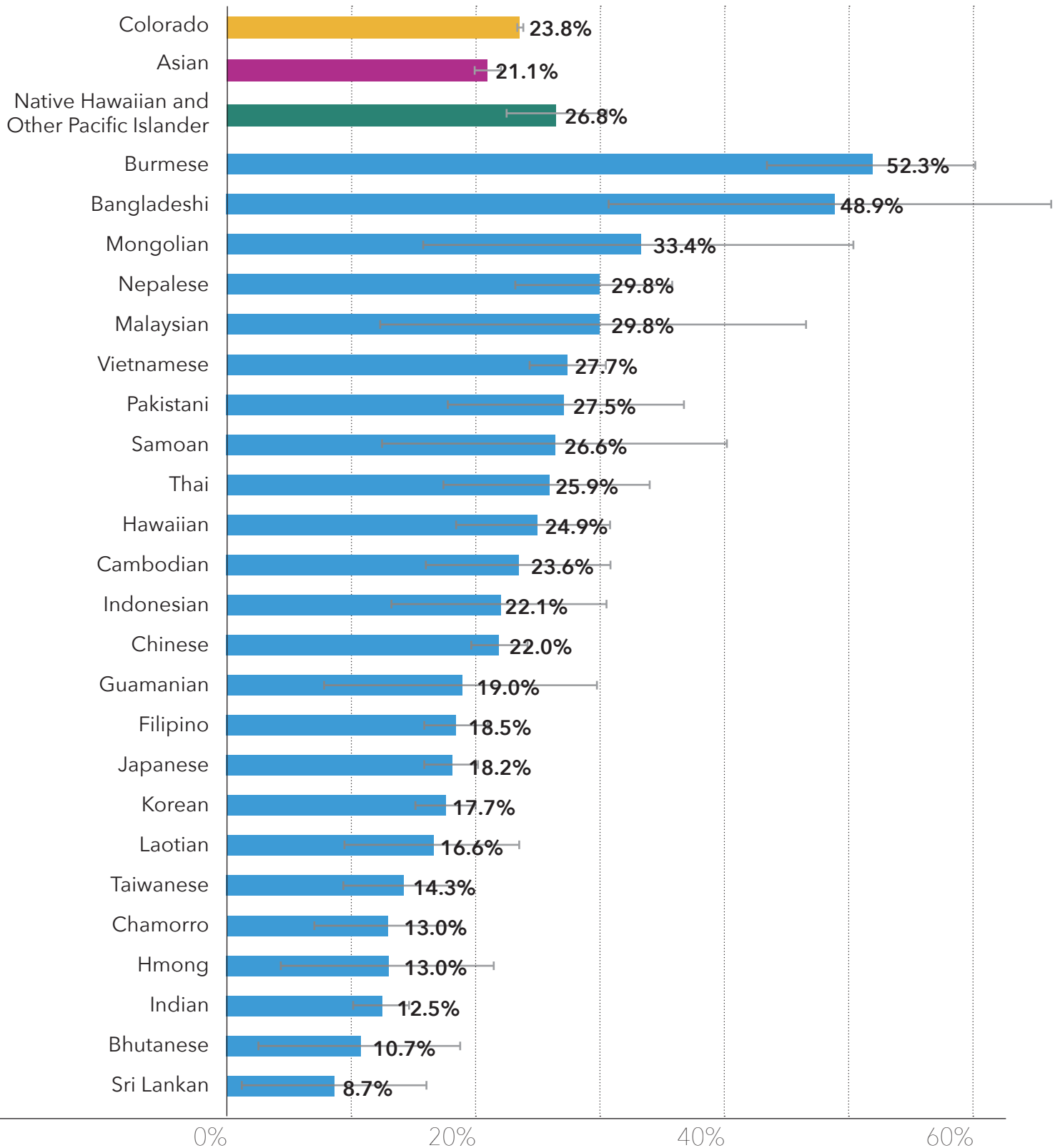
A Statewide Look at the Strengths and Barriers Facing AANHPI Coloradans

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 People in Colorado (All Ages) Earning Incomes at or Below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, by AANHPI Identity, 2021¹



Identities not included due to small sample sizes: Fijian, Marshallese, Okinawan, Tongan.

Note: This is a household-level metric in which all members of the household will have the same value, thus all ages are indicated. 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.

Sources

¹United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates. (2021)

²United States Census Bureau. Annual Business Survey and Nonemployer Statistics, 2019. (2019)