

The Diverse Experiences of AANHPI Women at Work

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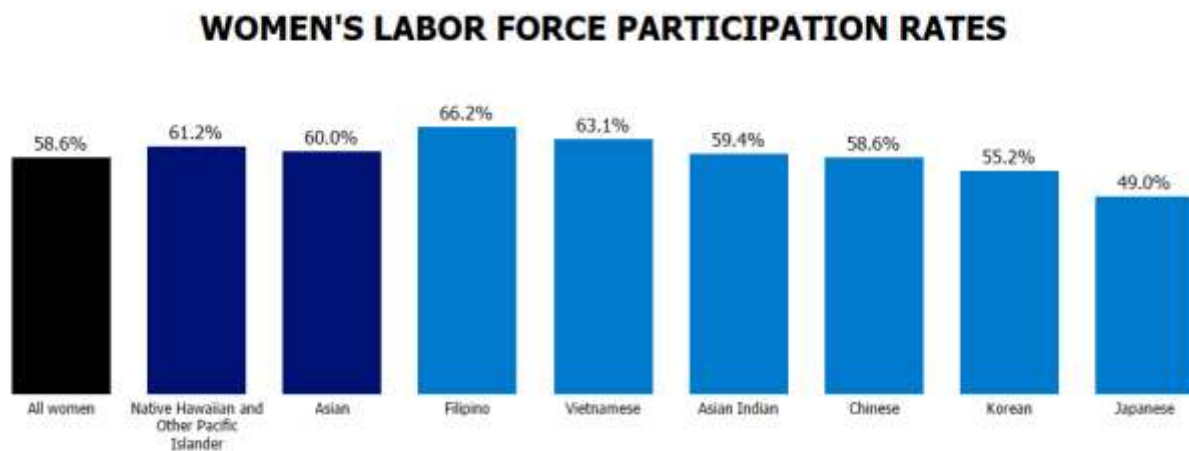
•By: [Hari Chon](#), [Gretchen Livingston](#)•May 21, 2021

While Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women are often referred to collectively, they are far from a monolithic group. Instead, the AANHPI population includes many groups with varying demographic profiles, histories and experiences in the U.S. Some have resided here for a century, while others have a much more recent immigrant experience. Some came to this country to attain a higher education, while others arrived as refugees with perhaps nothing but the clothes on their backs. Many live and work in California and Hawaii, while others are scattered across the nation.

At the Women's Bureau, we believe one way to help AANHPI communities is through data-driven storytelling. As we celebrate the cultural diversity of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders this May, here are some key statistics about the 8.5 million AANHPI women in the U.S., more than 5 million of whom are in the labor force.

1. Labor force participation rates vary significantly within AANHPI groups.

Two-thirds of Filipinas were in the labor force in 2019, compared with about half of Japanese American women, and 59% of all women.



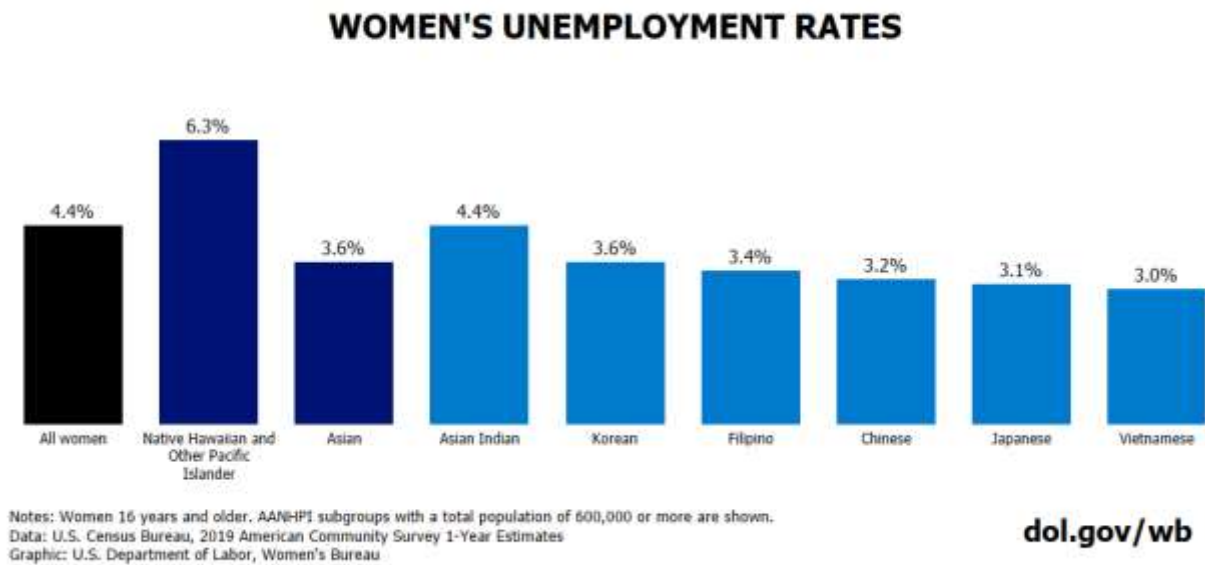
Notes: Women 16 years and older. AANHPI subgroups with a total population of 600,000 or more are shown.
Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Graphic: U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau

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[Plain text chart](#)

2. Unemployment rates also varied significantly.

Among AANHPI women in the labor force, the share that were unemployed was the highest among Pacific Islanders (6.3%). Unemployment rates were about half as high for Vietnamese, Japanese and Chinese women. In comparison, 4.4% of all U.S. women in the labor force were unemployed in 2019.

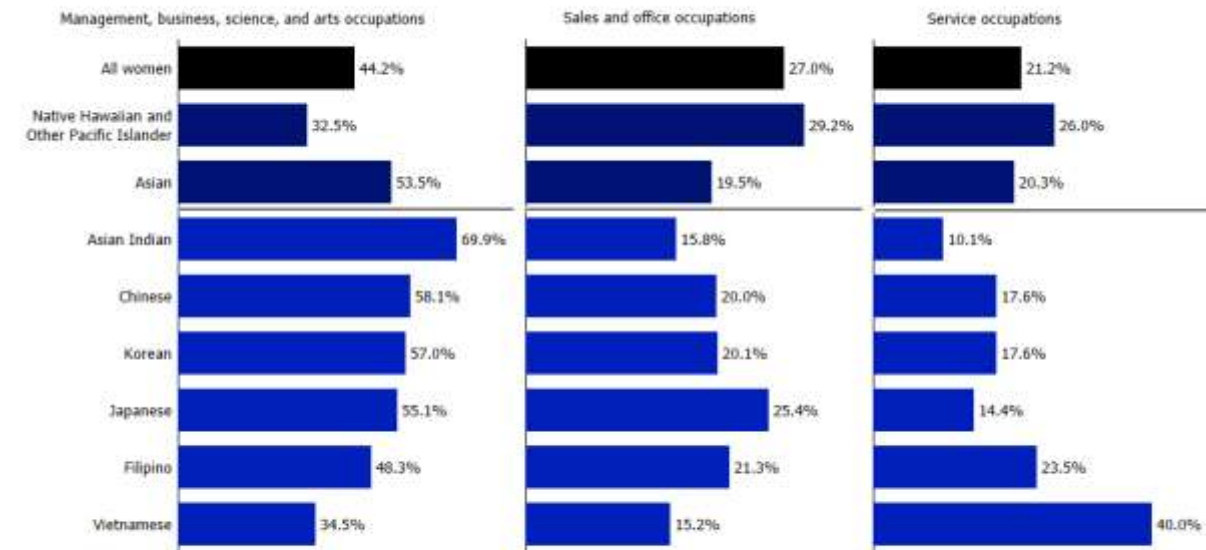


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3. The occupational profiles of AANHPI women in the U.S. varied dramatically.

While 70% of employed Asian Indian women work in management, business, science and the arts, the share of Pacific Islander women and Vietnamese American women who do so is only half as high. Meanwhile, relatively large shares of these two groups are employed in service and sales.

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION AMONG EMPLOYED WOMEN



Notes: Women 16 years and over. The three largest occupational groupings are shown due to space constraints. AANHPI subgroups with a total population of 600,000 or more are shown.

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Graphic: U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau

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4. Differences in occupational composition across subgroups likely explain dramatic earnings differences.

Indian American women, who were concentrated in managerial and professional occupations, have median annual earnings of about \$76,000. Pacific Islander and Vietnamese American women, who were concentrated in sales and service occupations, have the lowest median wages (\$38,900 and \$40,500, respectively). To put this in perspective, the median wage is \$43,200 for all women employed full time.

WOMEN'S MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS



Notes: Women's annual median earnings are for full-time, year-round workers. Women 16 years and older. AANHPI subgroups with a total population of 600,000 or more are shown.
Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Graphic: U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau

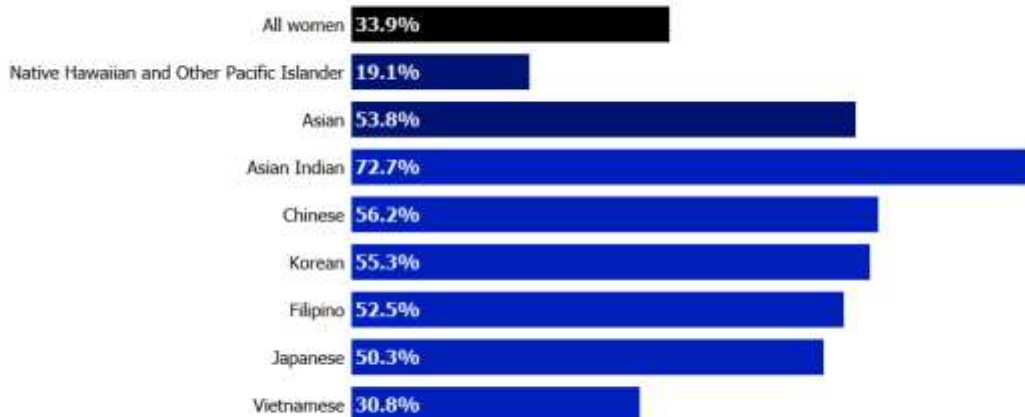
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5. Underlying many of these labor force differences are stark educational differences.

While almost three-fourths of Asian Indian women have earned at least a bachelor's degree, the same is true for only 31% of Vietnamese and 19% of Pacific Islander women. On the flip side, the share of women who *lack* a high school diploma ranges from 27% among Vietnamese American women to 5% among Japanese American women.

SHARE OF WOMEN WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR MORE



Note: Women 25 years and over. AANHPI subgroups with a total population of 600,000 or more are shown.
Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Graphic: U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau

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[Plain text chart](#)

Even looking only at the largest AANHPI groups in the U.S., we see tremendous diversity. Recognizing this diversity can help us develop more effective policies and programmatic interventions across these communities. Thinking of AANHPI women as one group masks their vastly different experiences in the U.S. labor force. Breaking down the data is one way we're helping AANHPI working women and making their voices heard.

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Technical note on Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders:

These analyses are based on the following single-race classifications:

Asian: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam. It includes people who indicate their race as "Asian Indian," "Chinese," "Filipino," "Korean," "Japanese," "Vietnamese" and "Other Asian" or provide other detailed Asian responses.

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands. It includes people who indicate their race as "Native Hawaiian," "Guamanian or Chamorro," "Samoan" and "Other Pacific Islander" or provide other detailed Pacific Islander responses.

Chart data:

Women's labor force participation rates	
<i>Race and ethnicity</i>	<i>LFP rate</i>
All women	58.6
Asian	60.0
Asian Indian	59.4
Chinese	58.6
Filipino	66.2
Japanese	49.0
Korean	55.2

Vietnamese	63.1
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	61.2

Notes: Women 16 years and older. AANHPI subgroups with a total population of 600,000 or more are shown. Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Chart data:

Women's unemployment rates	
Race and ethnicity	rate
All women	4.4
Asian	3.6
Asian Indian	4.4
Chinese	3.2
Filipino	3.4
Japanese	3.1
Korean	3.6
Vietnamese	3.0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	6.3

Notes: Women 16 years and over. AANHPI subgroups with a total population of 600,000 or more are shown. Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Chart data:

Occupational distribution among employed women

	Management, business, science, and arts occupations	Service occupations	Sales and office occupations
Race and ethnicity			
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	32.5	26.0	29.2

Vietnamese	34.5	40.0	15.2
All women	44.2	21.2	27.0
Filipino	48.3	23.5	21.3
Asian	53.5	20.3	19.5
Korean	57.0	17.6	20.1
Japanese	55.1	14.4	25.4
Chinese	58.1	17.6	20.0
Asian Indian	69.9	10.1	15.8

Notes: Women 16 years and over. The three largest occupational groupings are shown. AANHPI subgroups with a total population of 600,000 or more are shown. Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Chart data:

Women's median annual earnings	
<i>Race</i>	<i>Median earnings</i>
All women	\$43,215
Asian	\$56,001
Asian Indian	\$75,985
Chinese	\$62,488
Filipino	\$50,791
Japanese	\$60,035
Korean	\$60,014
Vietnamese	\$40,519
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	\$38,836

Notes: Women's annual median earnings are for full-time, year-round workers. Women 16 years and older. AANHPI subgroups with a total population of 600,000 or more are shown. Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Chart data:

Share of women with a bachelor's degree or more	
Race	Bachelor's degree or higher
All women	33.9
Asian	53.8
Asian Indian	72.7
Chinese	56.2
Filipino	52.5
Japanese	50.3
Korean	55.3
Vietnamese	30.8
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	19.1

Note: Women 25 years and over. AANHPI subgroups with a total population of 600,000 or more are shown. Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Tags:

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