

*Race and Ethnicity in California: Demographics Report Series—No. 11 (October 2002)*  
**Race and Educational Attainment in California: Census 2000 Profiles**

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## **Executive Summary**

Attainment of high levels of education are highly predictive of economic well-being, and have varied over time between racial groups in the United States, serving as a key component of differences in socioeconomic status. Using Census 2000 data, this report summarizes rates of educational attainment based on high school diploma, bachelor's degree, and graduate/professional degree attainment across major ethnic and racial groups in California, presenting data at the county and regional levels for the state's adult population age 25 and older. To note changes in educational attainment over the past decade, data from the 1990 census are also included.

In 2000, 77 percent of California's adult population age 25 and older had completed high school (or the equivalent), 27 percent of the population had earned a Bachelor's degree, and 10 percent had earned a graduate or professional degree. While the national rate of high school completion is slightly higher (80 percent), rates of Bachelor's and graduate/professional degree attainment are lower (24 percent and 9 percent, respectively).

Educational attainment rates data broken down for each race population in the state indicate differing levels of diploma and degree attainment. In general, Whites and Asians/Pacific Islanders have the highest educational attainment rates (particularly at the Bachelor's degree and graduate/professional degree levels), Latinos and individuals identified as Some Other Race have the lowest rates, and Blacks, American Indians, and people identified with *Two or More Races* have rates in between; this same pattern holds at the national level.

Over the past decade, between 1990 and 2000, rates of high school diploma, Bachelor's degree, and graduate/professional degree attainment increased for all race groups with the exception of American Indians who experienced a decline of 5.4 percent in the rate of high school completion. In comparison, Whites experienced the largest rate of growth in high school completion, 10.7 percent, between 1990 and 2000, and all other race groups experienced growth between 2.8 and 6.6 percent. With regard to rates of Bachelor's and graduate/professional degree attainment, Whites experienced the largest growth (33.0 percent and 29.7 percent, respectively), followed by Asians/Pacific Islanders (19.7, 27.4), and Blacks (16.0, 20.5); and, Latinos (9.1, 8.4) and American Indians (3.0, 1.6) experienced the smallest change in these rates.

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