



POSTSECONDARY TO PROSPERITY

CENTRAL SIERRA



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Central Sierra's population makes up less than 1 percent of the state population. Though the region spans seven counties, Central Sierra is home to only one public higher education institution (Columbia Community College). The region's high school graduation, A-G completion, and college-going rates are roughly 20 to 40 percent lower than the statewide average with Black and Latinx students having the largest percentage of high school graduates who do not enroll in college (80% and 71%, respectively). Bachelor's degree attainment rates across all racial and ethnic groups are 29 to 80 percent lower than the statewide average, with only 4 percent of Latinx residents earning a bachelor's degree.

The employment rate and homeownership rate surpass the statewide average for most racial and ethnic groups, but opportunity is inconsistent. Latinx residents have an employment rate of 95 percent, but only 51 percent earn a living wage, and 36 percent own a home.

Residents in this region are less likely to have health insurance compared to the statewide average, especially Pacific Islander and Black residents (44% and 30%, respectively). Eighty-two percent of communities in this region are in a grocery desert compared to the statewide average of 22 percent, and 65 percent are in a bank desert compared to the statewide average of 29 percent.

POPULATION

189,687

COUNTIES

Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, Tuolumne

ABOUT THE DATA¹

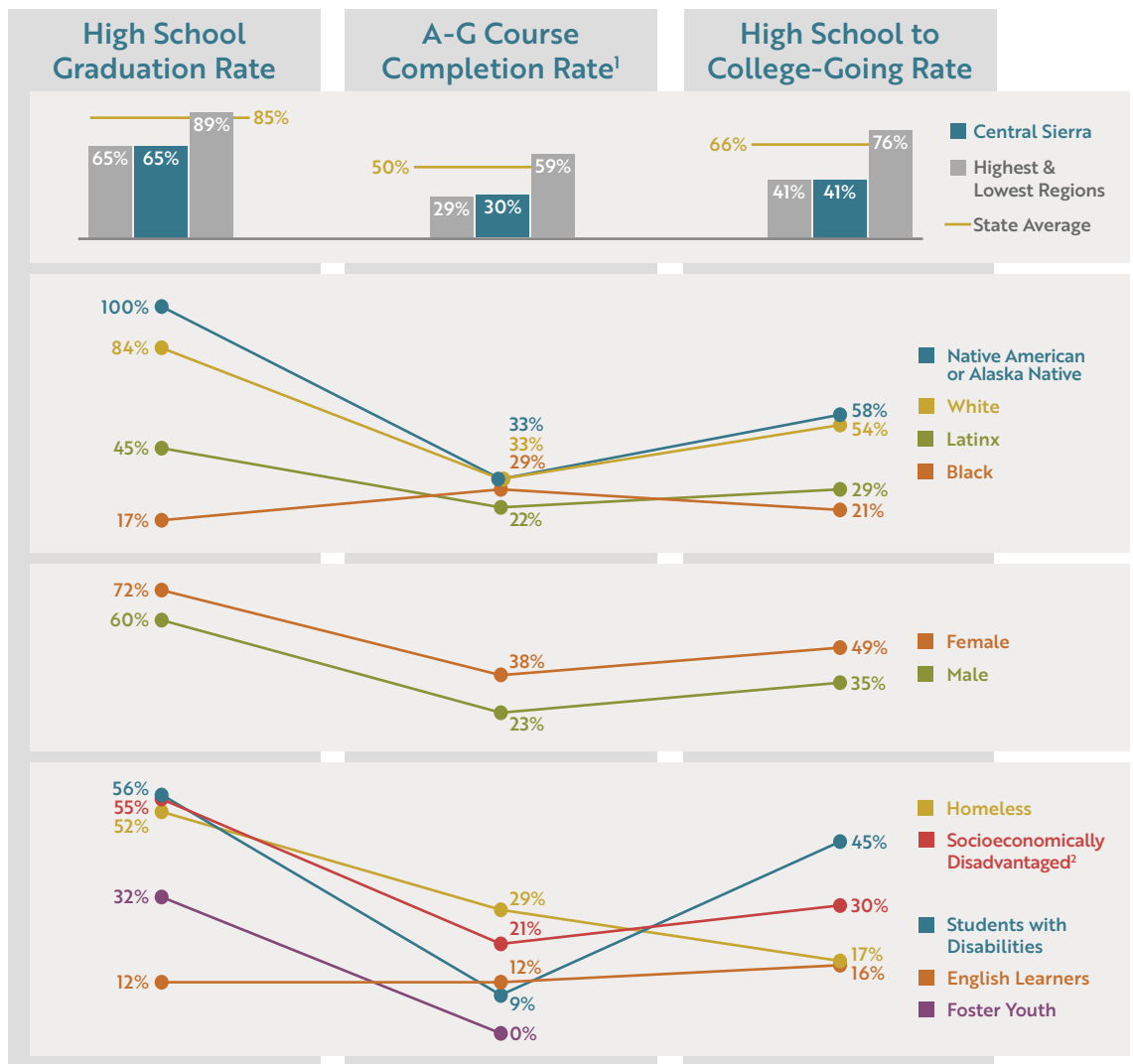
This factsheet uses 8 primary datasets (2017–2020)

1. Some metrics are based on very small sample sizes, which may not provide reliable estimates of the population. These results should be interpreted with caution. For more detailed information on how metrics are calculated, please refer to the [technical appendix on californiacompetes.org/p2p](https://californiacompetes.org/p2p).

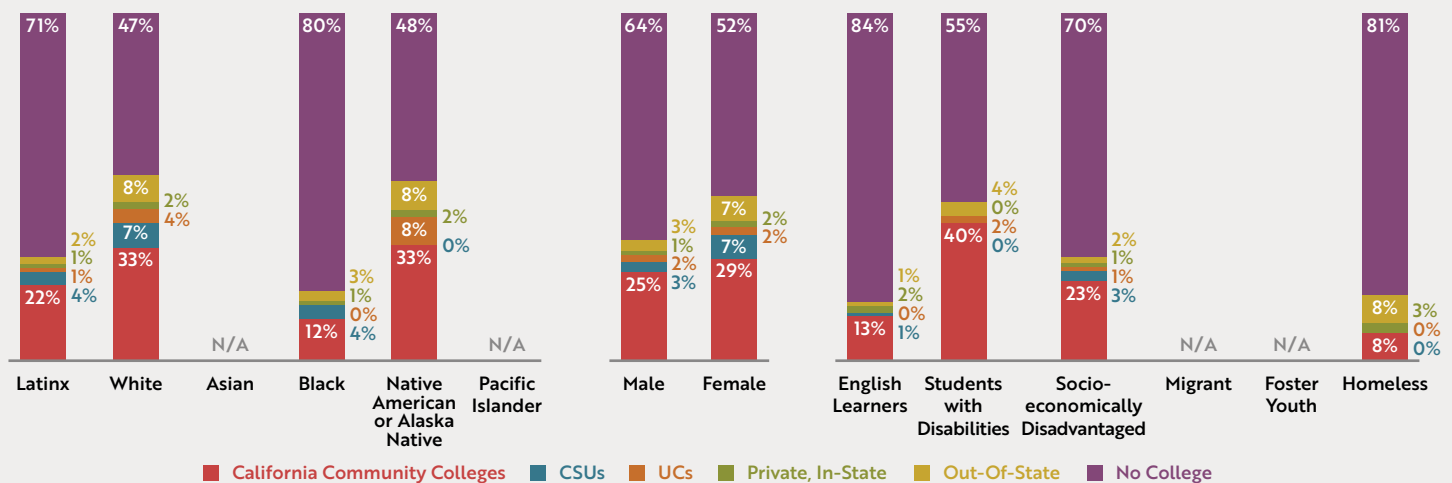
Substantial differences exist in higher education outcomes. College readiness and access are the first steps to college completion. Access to a college preparatory curriculum is not universal, and differences exist in who goes to college and where they go based on demographic characteristics, such as race and ethnicity. Homeless students, foster youth, English language learners, and students with disabilities also face tremendous barriers in accessing and succeeding in college.

Moreover, the postsecondary education system's focus on the traditional student's pathway (one who matriculates directly to college after high school) leaves limited opportunities for older adults interested in higher education to successfully complete a postsecondary credential.

The inequitable access to postsecondary education leads to significant differences in the region's educational attainment by race and ethnicity.



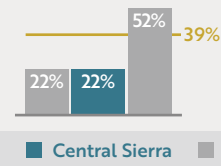
Where Do High School Students Go to College?



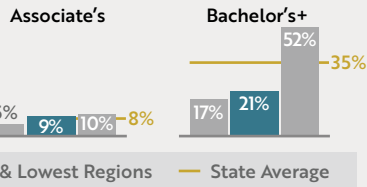
1. High school students must complete a set of courses known as "A-G" to be eligible for admission to the California State University and University of California.
 2. Students who do not have a parent who graduated from high school, are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, or are foster, homeless, or migrant youth.



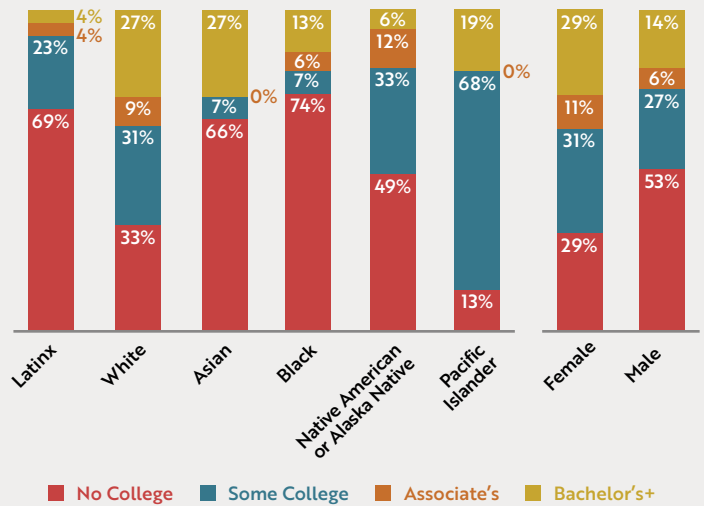
Adult (25+) Intent to Enroll



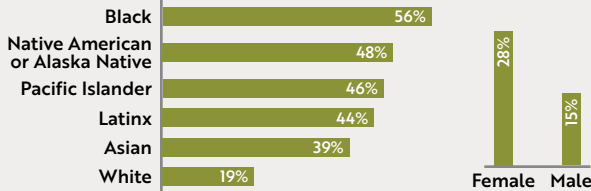
Highest Educational Attainment



What Is the Highest Level of Attainment?

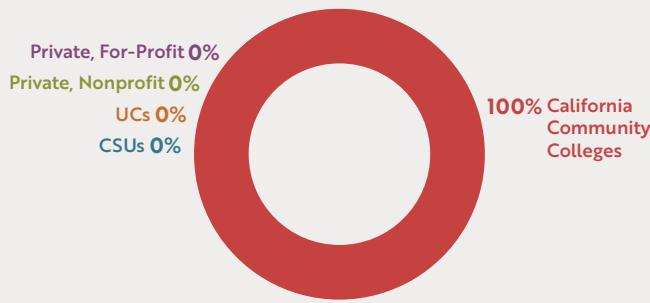


Which Adults (25+) Intend to Enroll in College?



ABOUT COLLEGES IN THIS REGION

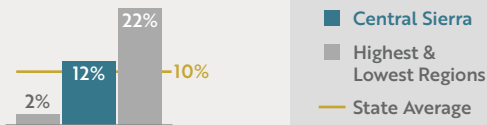
What Does Enrollment at Colleges in this Region Look Like?



Where Are Four-Year College Students?

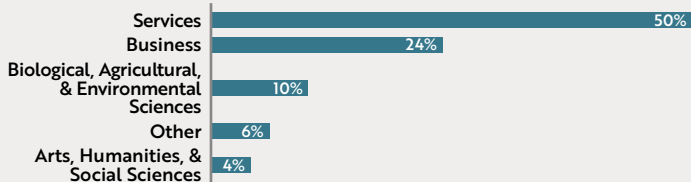
Central Sierra is one of two regions without public or private four-year colleges or universities. For this reason, none of the students attending college in this region are enrolled in a California State University campus, University of California campus, or other four-year institution. As shown on the previous page, some Central Sierra residents do enroll in four-year institutions in other regions after graduating from high school, but attending college far from home is not an option for all students, especially older students who are more likely to be tied to family and work responsibilities. Residents of this region seeking bachelor's degrees might be able to commute to four-year institutions in neighboring regions or enroll online, but these options may not work well for all prospective students. In addition, research shows that most students enroll in colleges close to home and that areas with no four-year institutions have lower levels of educational attainment.

Online Enrollment Rate¹

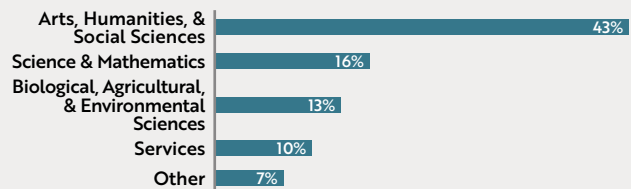


What Are the Most Commonly Completed Programs at Colleges in the Region?

Certificates



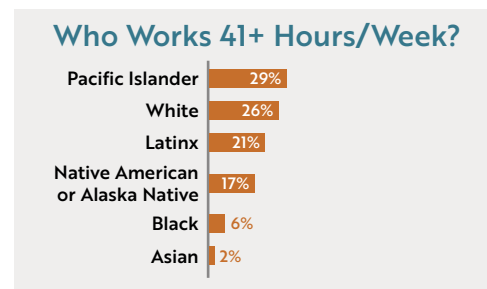
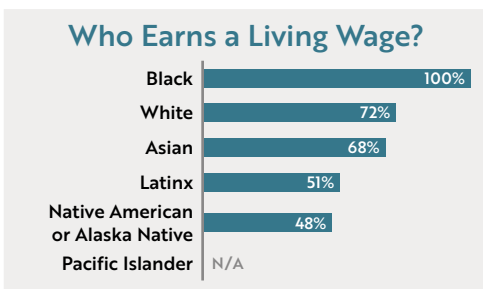
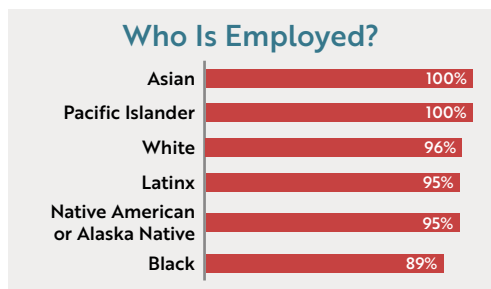
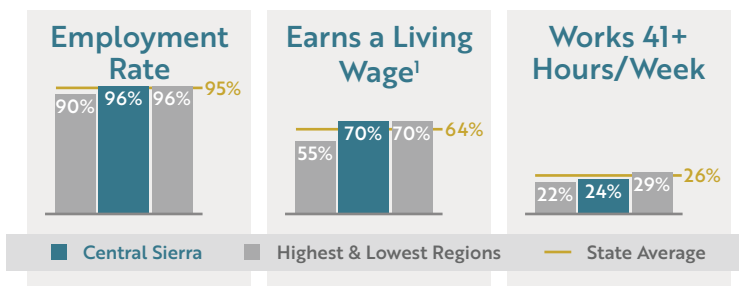
Associate's Degree



1. The percentage of college students enrolled in the fall term at colleges in the region who are enrolled exclusively in online courses. Note that these students may live in other regions, states, or countries.

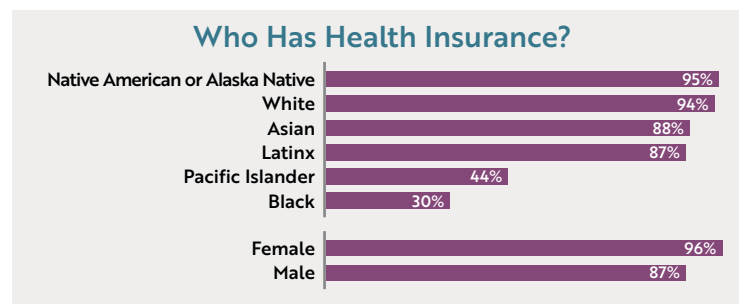
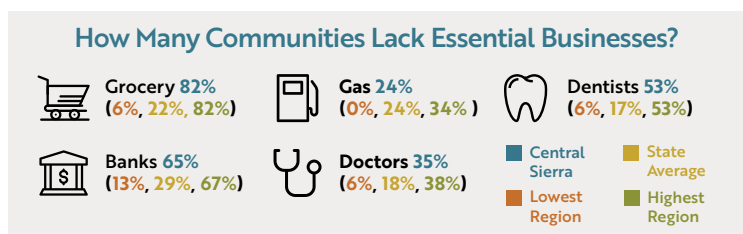
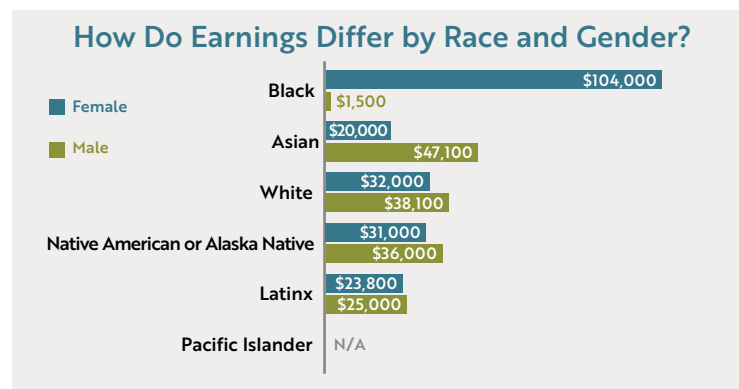
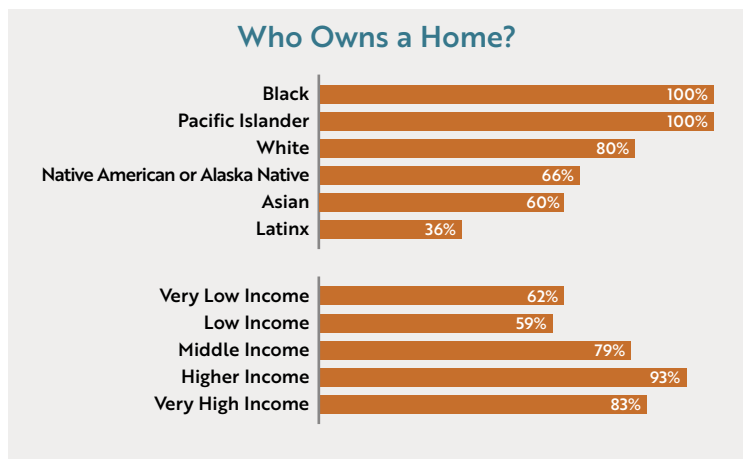
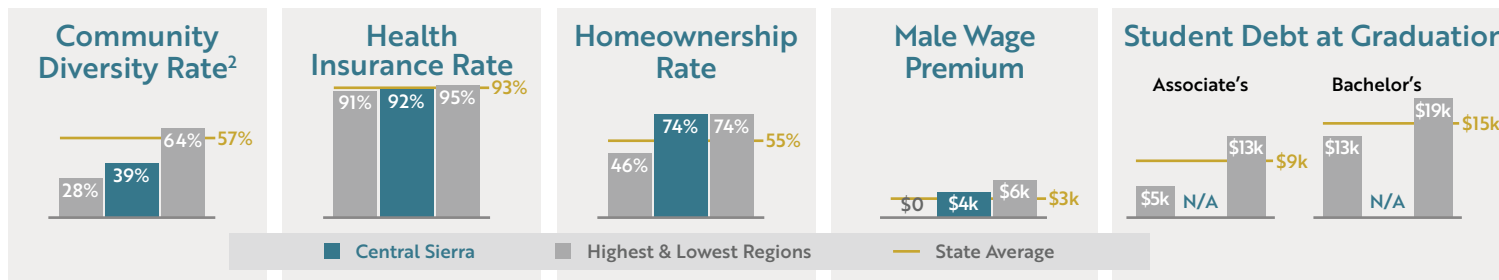


Gainful employment is critical for individual and community economic and social strength. Employment rates in the region are similar to the state average. However, racial and ethnic differences in employment exist with 89 percent of Black residents being employed, compared to 95+ percent of other groups. Moreover, while access to employment is critical, earning a living wage is also important. Seventy percent of Central Sierra residents earn a living wage compared to the state average of 64 percent.



PROSPERITY

Though it is impossible to quantify prosperity, markers like health insurance, homeownership, and economic development signify pathways to prosperity. Mechanisms that reflect stability, build wealth, promote health, and enrich culture shape a community's ability to thrive. Similarly, wage gaps and communities without critical businesses demonstrate areas that need additional attention for equitable outcomes.



1. Earning a living wage means household income is sufficient to meet basic needs, which are adjusted for family size and county-level cost of living.
 2. The community diversity rate estimates the probability that any two individuals selected at random would be of different races or ethnicities.

