



# POSTSECONDARY TO PROSPERITY



## IMPERIAL



More online at  
[californiacompetes.org/p2p](https://californiacompetes.org/p2p)

**T**his desert region makes up less than 1 percent of the state population. Imperial is home to one California Community College (Imperial Valley College). High school graduation and college-going rates surpass the state average, though Latinx and White high school graduates are the only racial/ethnic groups with enough individuals to report their college-going outcomes separately. Imperial's bachelor's degree attainment rate (18%) is roughly half the statewide average of 35 percent, with 17 percent of Latinx adults and 23 percent of White adults having completed a bachelor's or higher degree.

Employment rate and ability to earn a living wage fall below the statewide average. However, the number of residents who work overtime surpasses the statewide average by 12 percent. Compared to other racial and ethnic groups, Latinx and Native American or Alaska Native residents are less likely to be employed, earn a living wage, or have health insurance, though the region's health insurance rate as a whole matches the statewide average. Latinx residents are also least likely to own a home compared to other groups, though the region's home ownership rate surpasses the state average.

### POPULATION

182,844

### COUNTIES

Imperial

### ABOUT THE DATA<sup>1</sup>

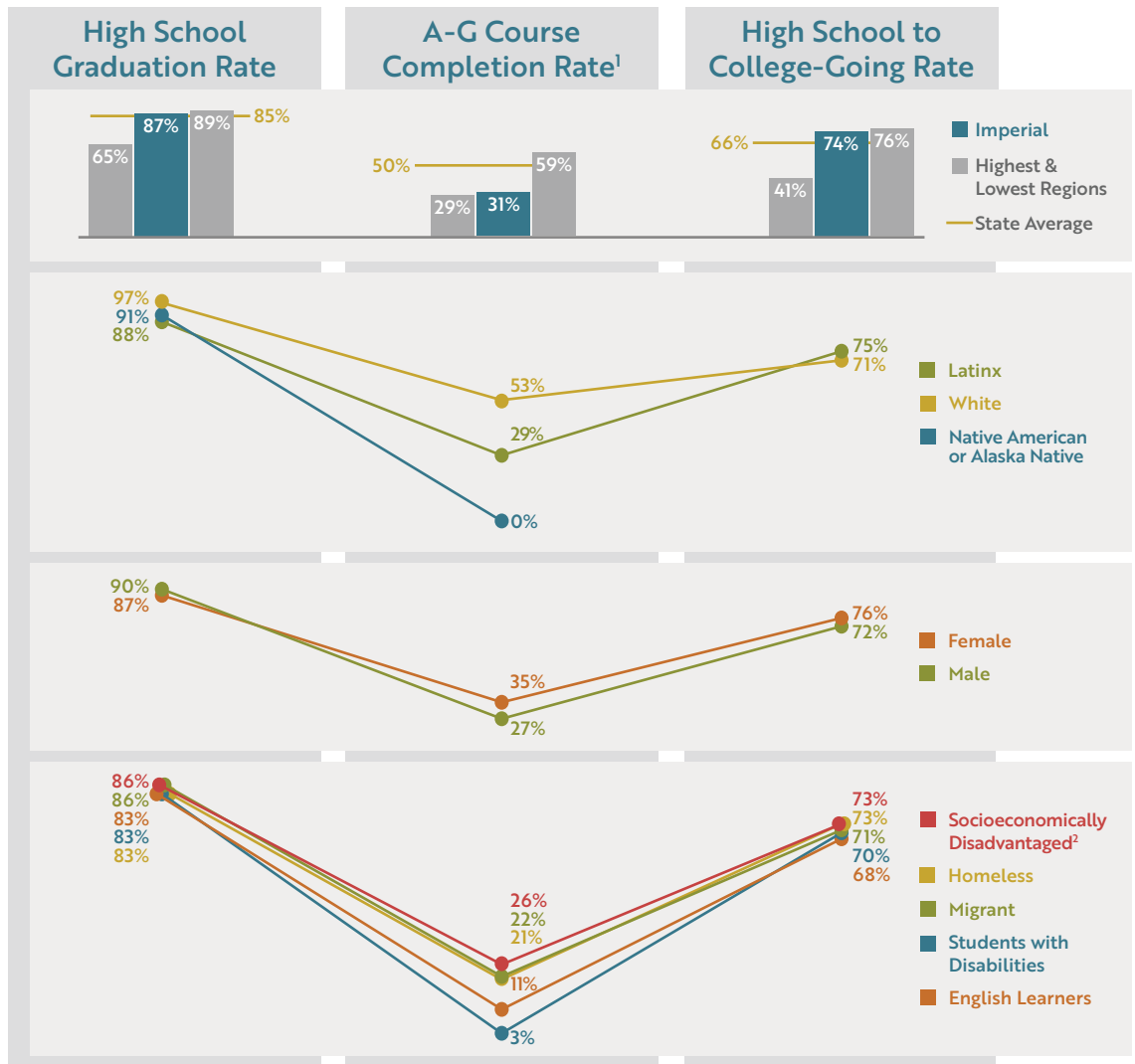
This factsheet uses 8 primary datasets (2017–2020)

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).

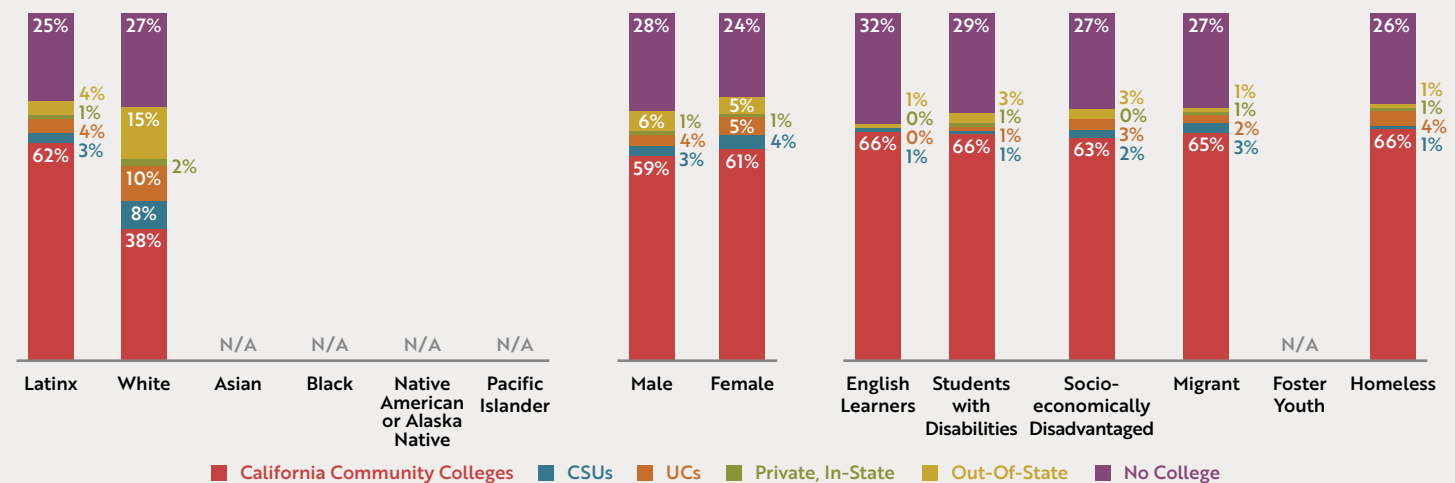
Substantial differences exist in higher education outcomes. College readiness and access are the first steps to college completion. Access to a college preparatory curriculum is not universal, and differences exist in who goes to college and where they go based on demographic characteristics, such as 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.



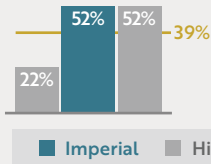
Where Do High School Students Go to College?



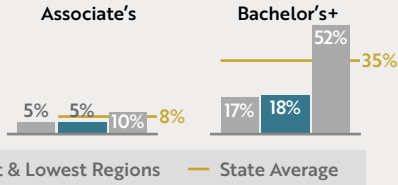
1. High school students must complete a set of courses known as "A-G" to be eligible for admission to the California State University and University of California.  
 2. Students who do not have a parent who graduated from high school, are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, or are foster, homeless,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



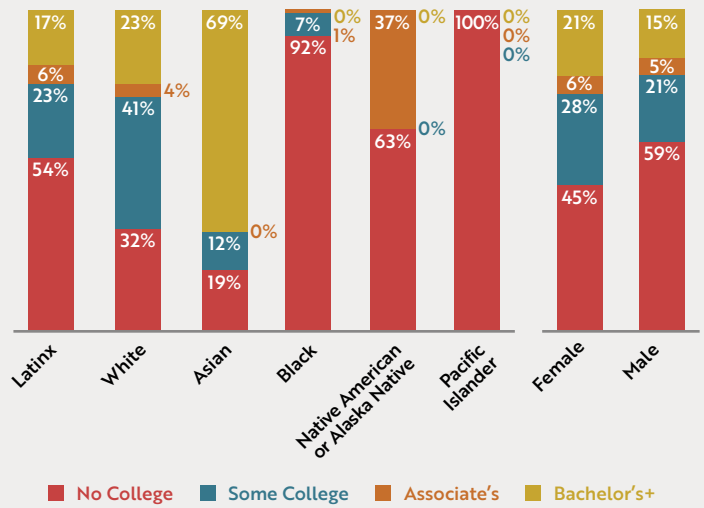
Adult (25+) Intent to Enroll



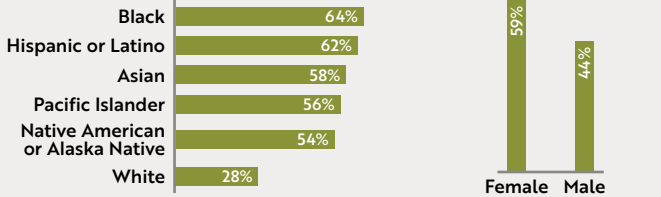
Highest Educational Attainment



What Is the Highest Level of Attainment?

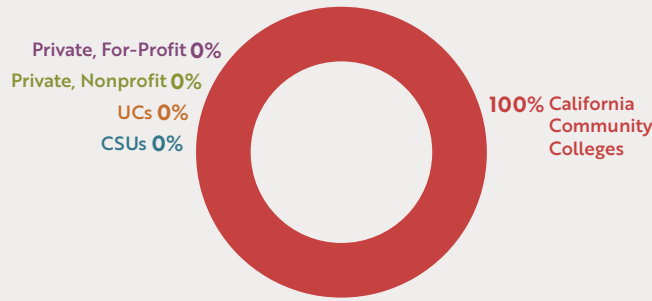


Which Adults (25+) Intend to Enroll in College?



ABOUT COLLEGES IN THIS REGION

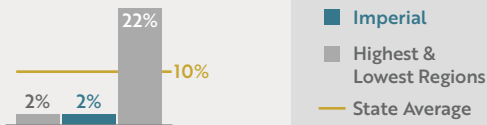
What Does Enrollment at Colleges in this Region Look Like?



Where Are Four-Year College Students?

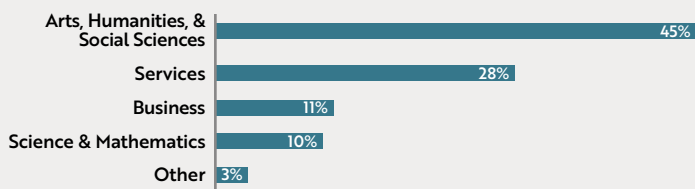
Imperial is one of two regions without public or private four-year colleges or universities. For this reason, none of the students attending college in this region are enrolled in a California State University campus, University of California campus, or other four-year institution. As shown on the previous page, some Imperial 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 Rate<sup>1</sup>

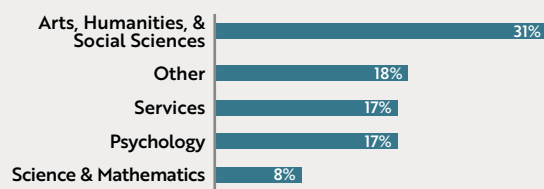


What Are the Most Commonly Completed Programs at Colleges in the Region?

Certificates



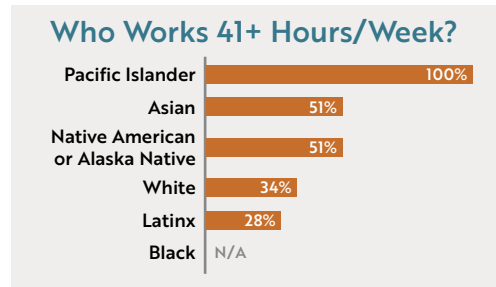
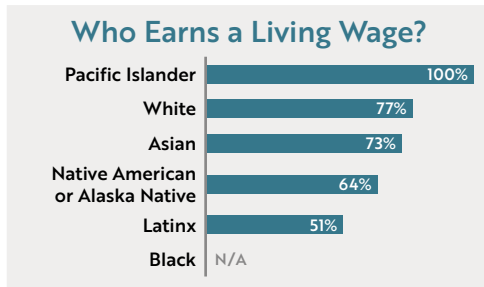
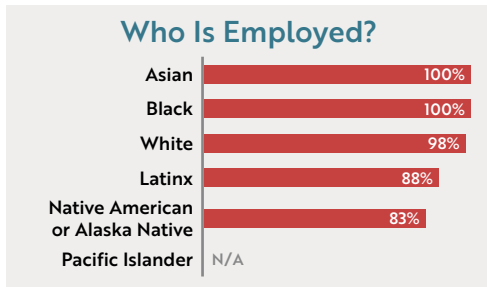
Associate's Degree



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.

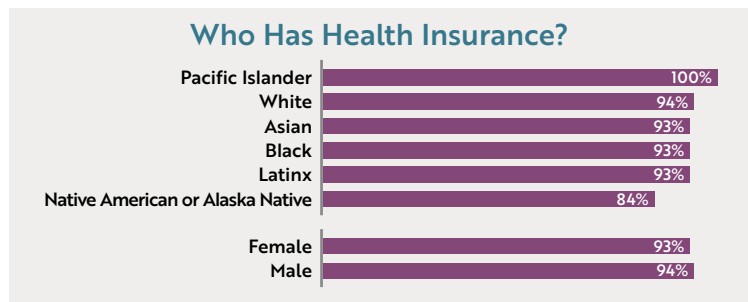
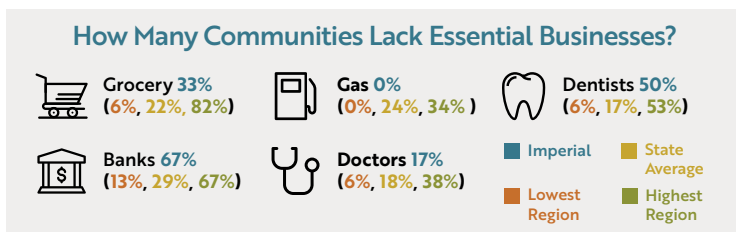
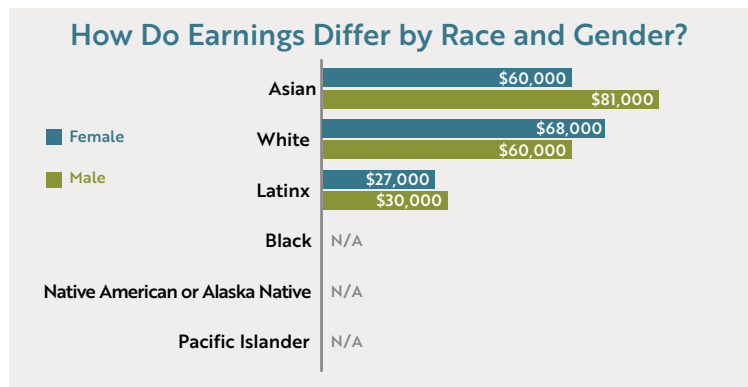
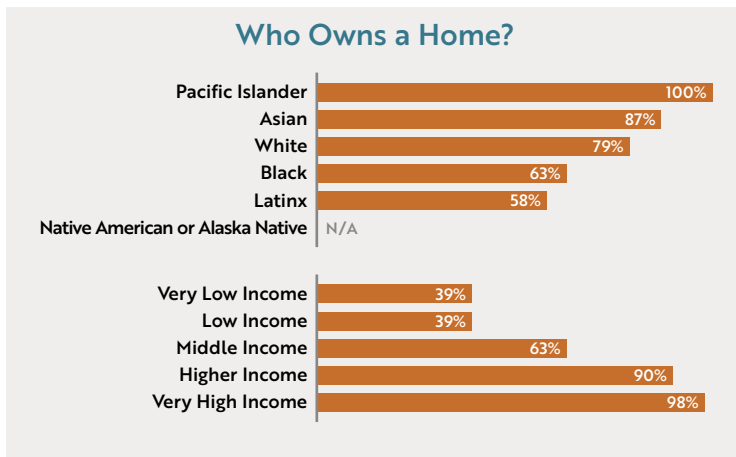
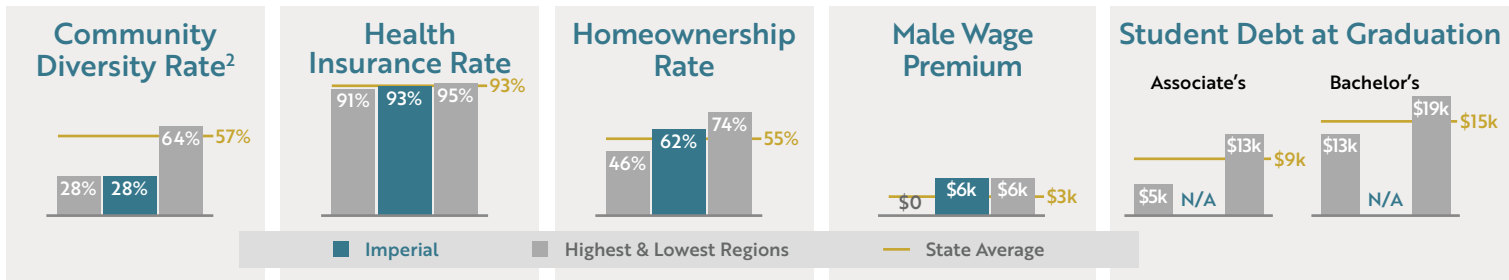


Gainful employment is critical for individual and community economic and social strength. Employment rates in the region are similar to the state average. However, racial and ethnic differences in employment exist with 83 percent of Native American and Alaska Native residents and 88 percent of Latinx residents being employed, compared to 98+ percent of other groups. Moreover, while access to employment is critical, earning a living wage is also important. Fifty-five percent of Imperial 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.

