

# The Asian & Pacific Islander Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile



# Outline

- Introducing the Coalition of Communities of Color
- Introducing this research study
- The size of the API community
- Key findings on disparities
- Analysis
- Challenges with the data
- Additional key findings
- Community details and who struggles the most
- Recommendations
- Next Steps



# Coalition of Communities of Color

The Coalition's mission is:

- To address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities
- To organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity



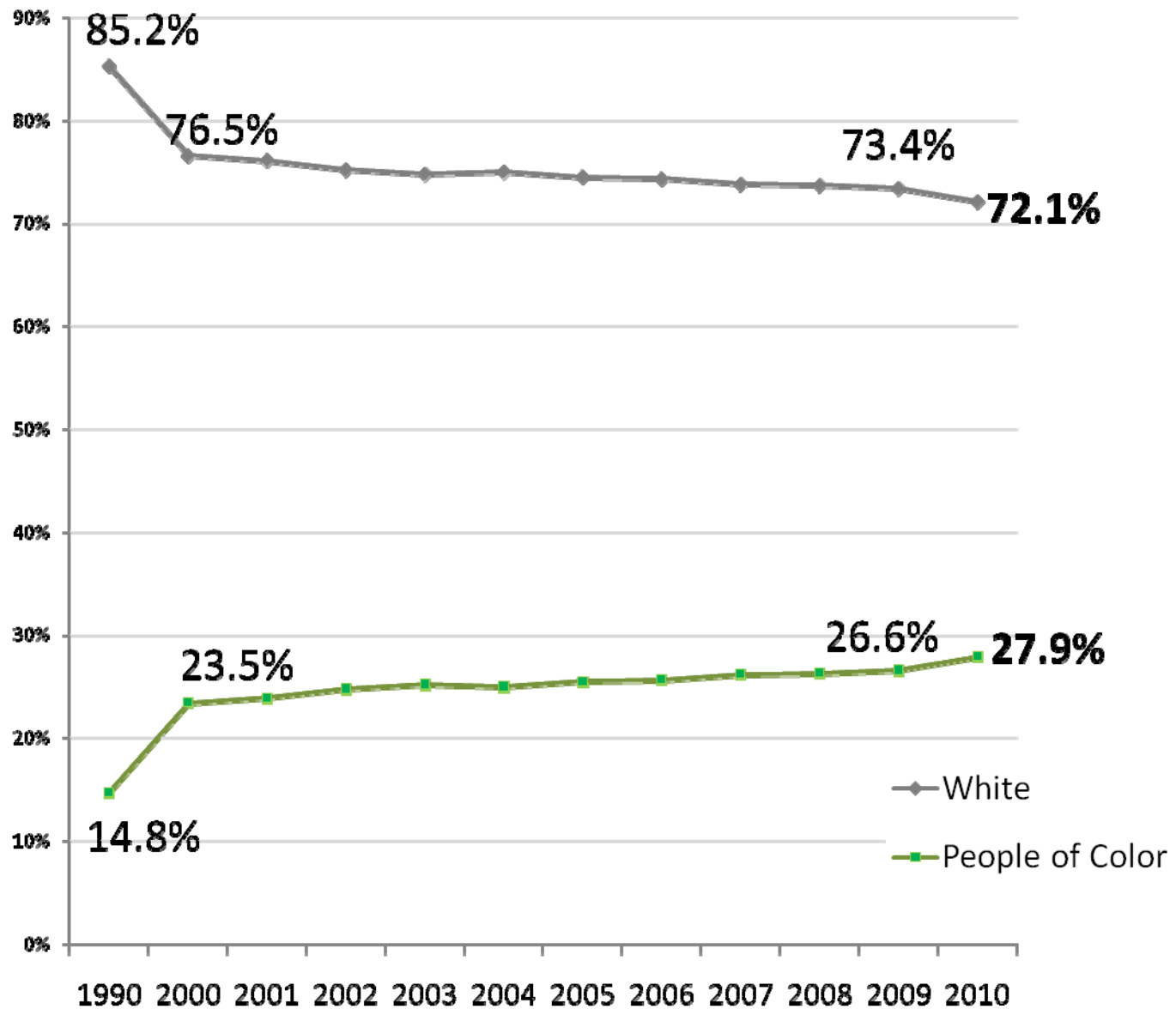
# Research Project: Community-based Participatory Research (2008-2012)

- Partnership between PSU's School of Social Work & the Coalition of Communities of Color
- Funding from:
  - Multnomah County
  - City of Portland
  - Northwest Health Foundation
  - Kaiser Community Foundation
  - United Way of the Columbia-Willamette
  - Coalition of Communities of Color (In-kind contributions)
  - Portland State University
- Total funds = \$550,000 over 5 years
- First report released in May 2010, and now six to profile each community in the Coalition

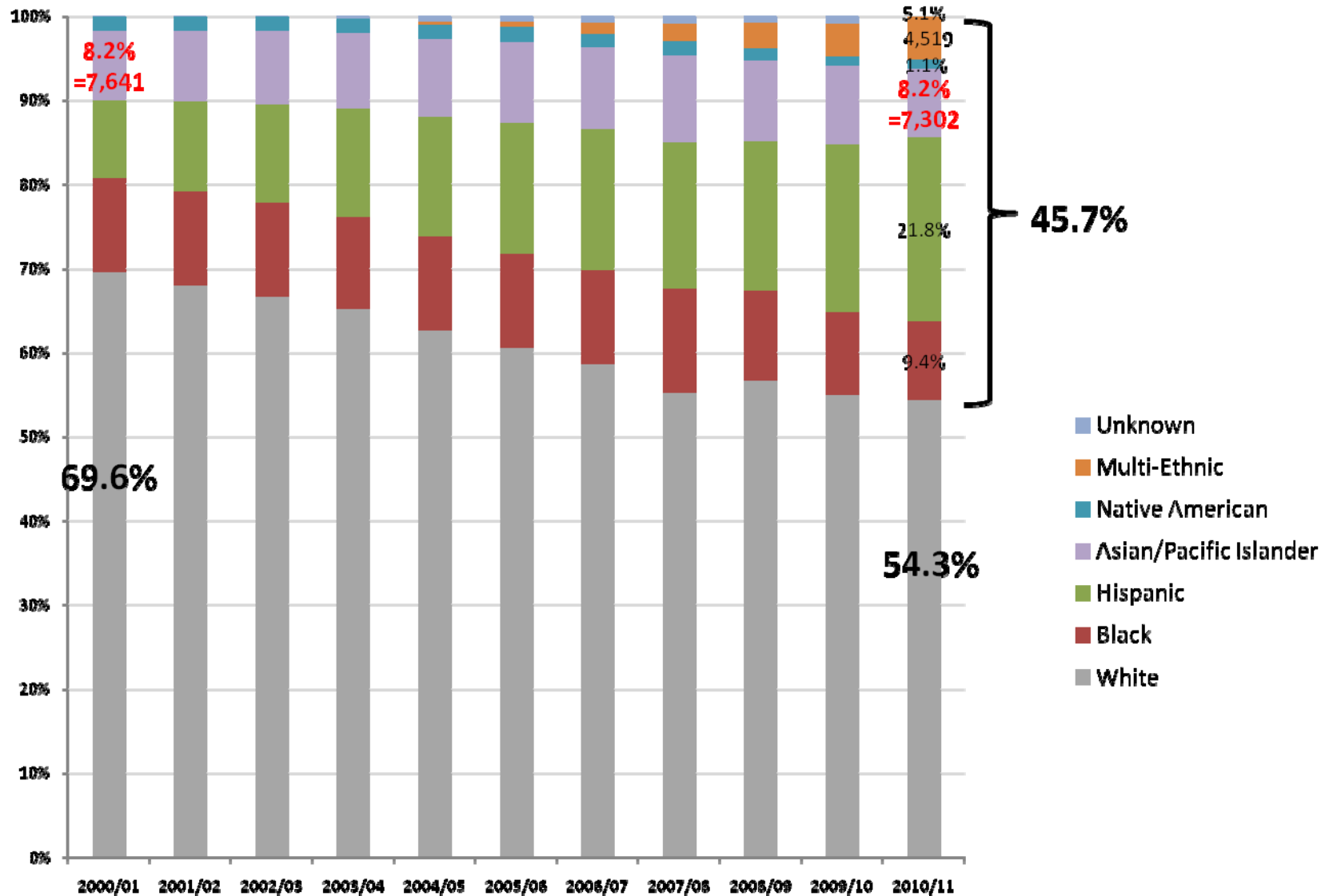
# Communities of Color Growing Quickly

- Portion of the County = 27.9%
- Among school-aged children = 45%
- Asian & Pacific Islander community
  - = 69,485 (conventional counts...9.45%)
  - = 74,000 (alternative counts... 10.06%)

## Population of Multnomah County



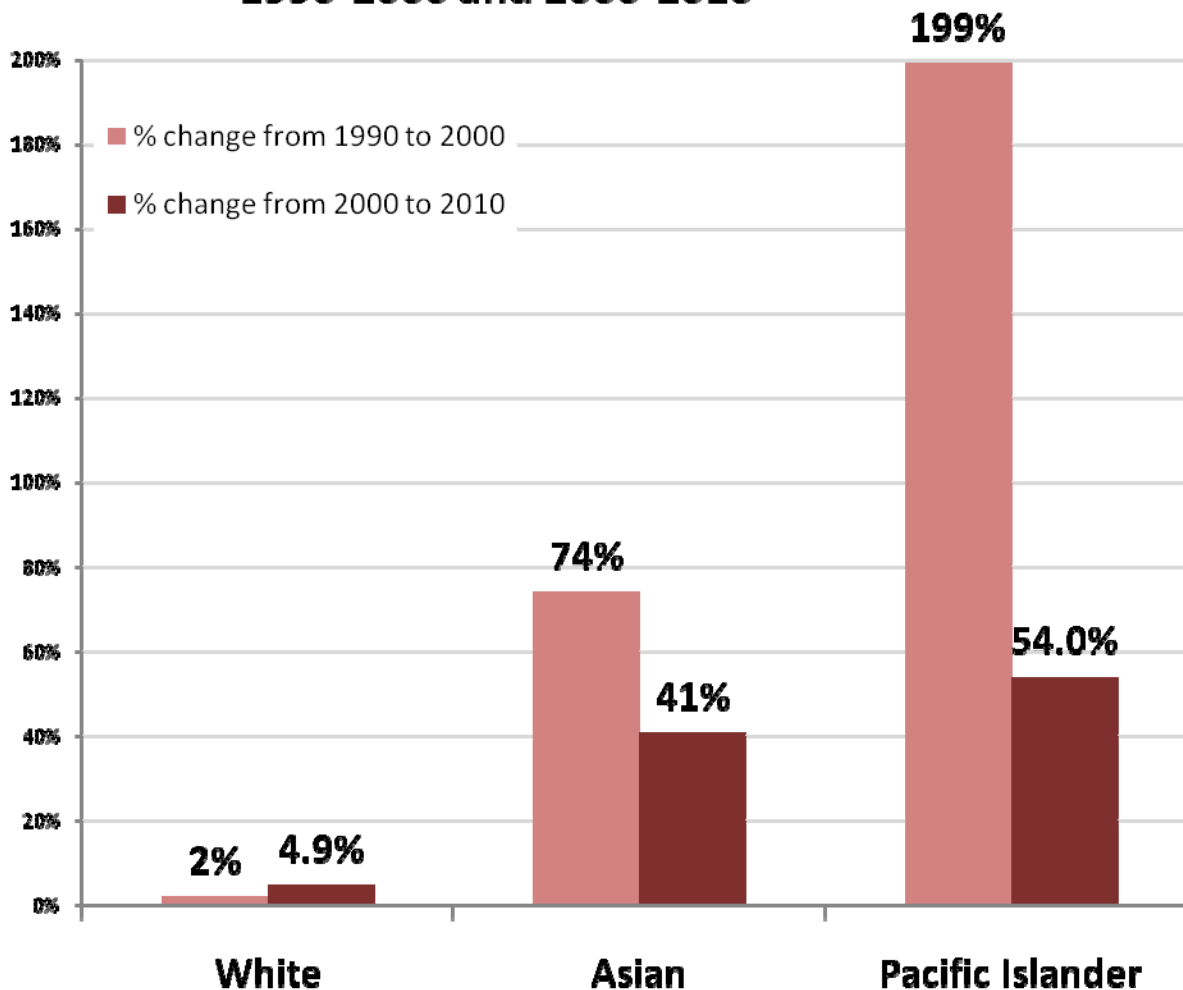
## Race/Ethnicity of Students in Public Schools, Multnomah County



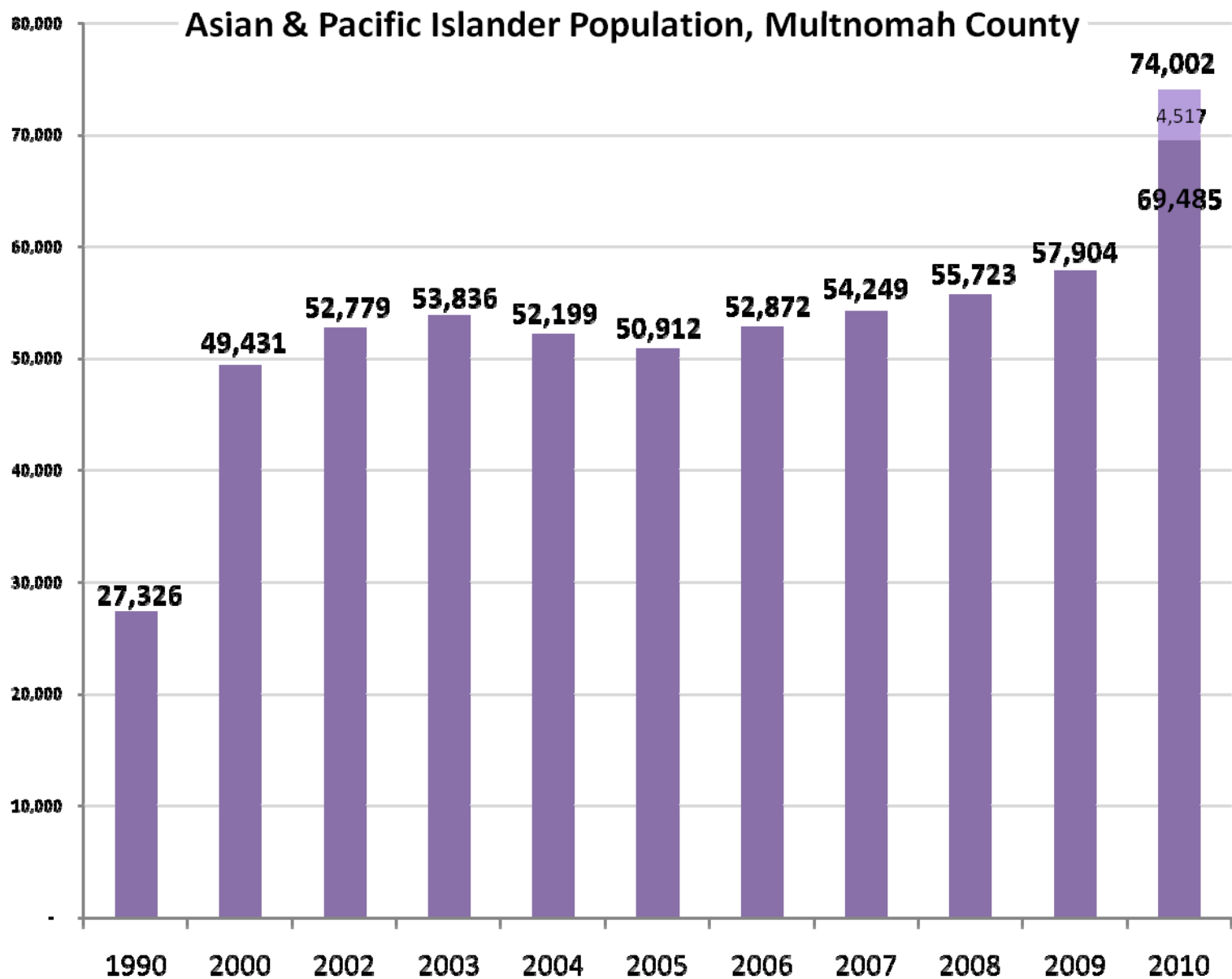
*Across Oregon, the population of people of color is 21.5% yet 33% of Oregon's public school students.*

# Growing quickly...

**Growth rates, Multnomah County  
1990-2000 and 2000-2010**







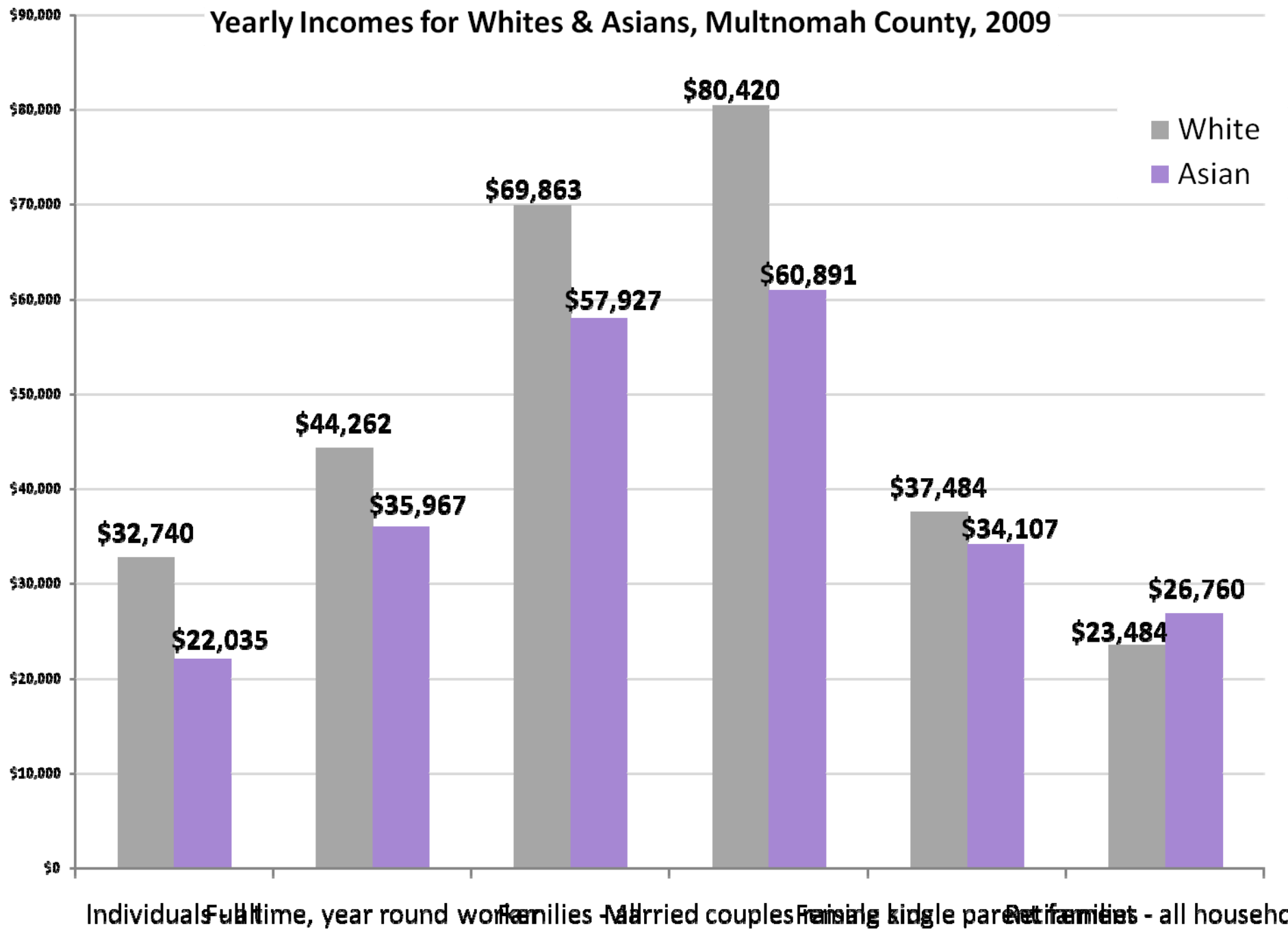
*Please note that the 2010 figure is "alone or in combination with other races" and is data previously unavailable for the API community.*

# Findings

- Significant disparities with Whites
  - Significant challenges in education
  - Unable to access better jobs in significant amounts
  - Can't bring home enough money
  - Very high poverty rates
  - Low asset levels in housing values
- With the magnitude shown here...

2009		Multnomah County	
		Whites	Asian
Educational Attainment			
	Less than high school	6.3%	20.5%
	Bachelor's degree	25.8%	23.8%
	Graduate/professional degree	16.1%	12.5%
Occupations			
	Management & professions	44.7%	36.4%
	Service	14.3%	20.0%
Incomes			
	Family median	\$71,296	\$57,807
	Full time year-round workers	\$44,262	\$35,967
	Married couples raising kids	\$81,636	\$63,931
	Female raising kids	\$37,485	\$28,270
	Per capita	\$32,740	\$22,035
Poverty rate			
	All families raising children	7.3%	13.0%
	Married couple families	3.3%	9.9%
	Female single parents	22.9%	25.1%
Housing value (median)		\$298,300	\$260,300

# Yearly Incomes for Whites & Asians, Multnomah County, 2009



# And yet, myth of parity exists

- Most believe that the Asian & Pacific Islander community has experiences that are equitable and even surpass Whites
- So too in the region as Portland Public Schools omits the API community from its Racial Equity Education Policy in 2011
- At the national level, parity in many areas has been reached...

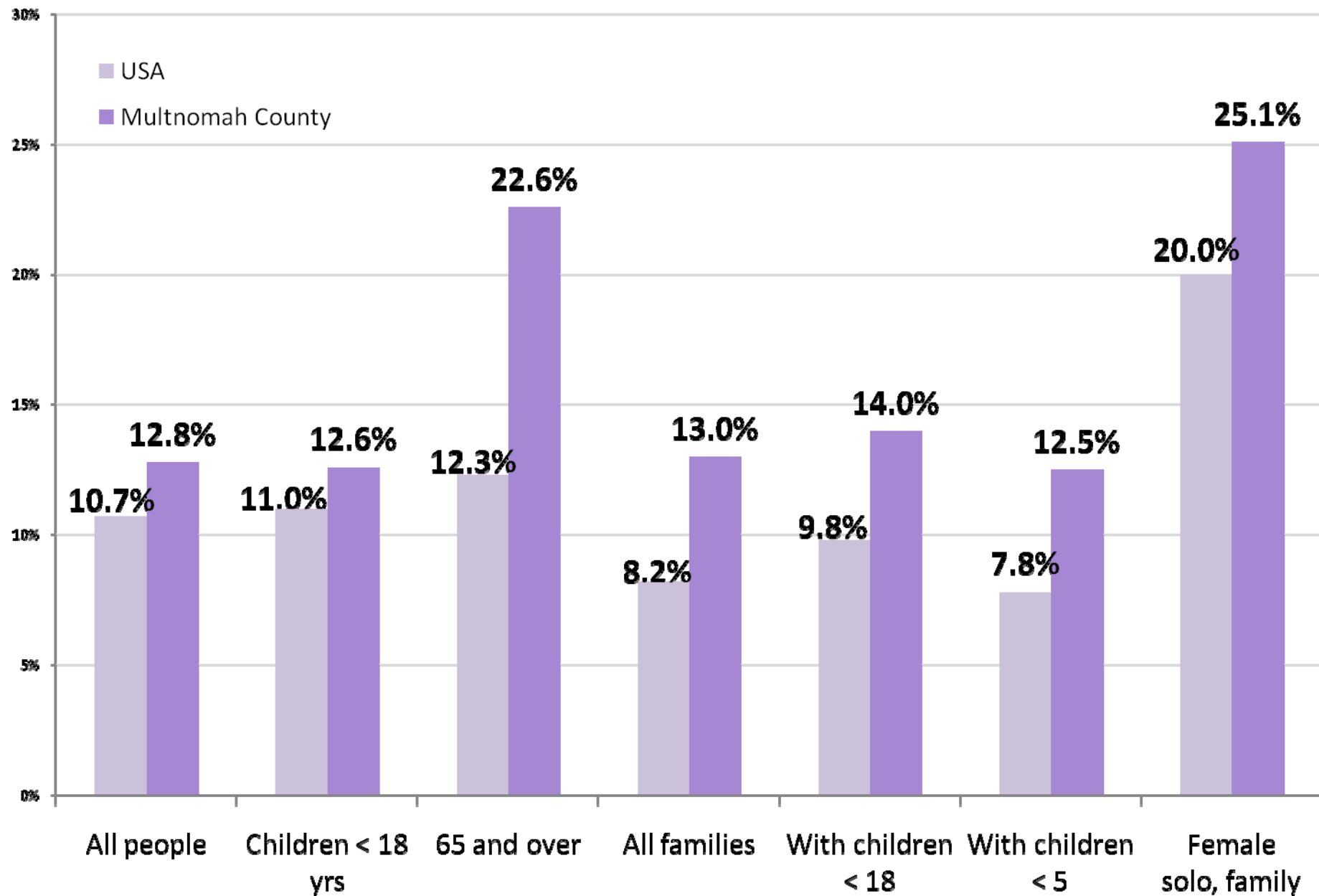
<b>USA (2009)</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Asian</b>
Occupation: Management or professional employment	39.0%	47.1%
Income: Median annual income (Full time, year round workers)	\$44,054	\$46,451
Education: Holds a university degree	30.9%	48.8%
Income Support: Gets food stamps/SNAP	6.0%	5.1%
Unemployment Rate (from August 2011)	7.9%	7.1%

# Comparison between Asians locally & nationally is disparate

- Two examples
  - Poverty rates
  - Incomes

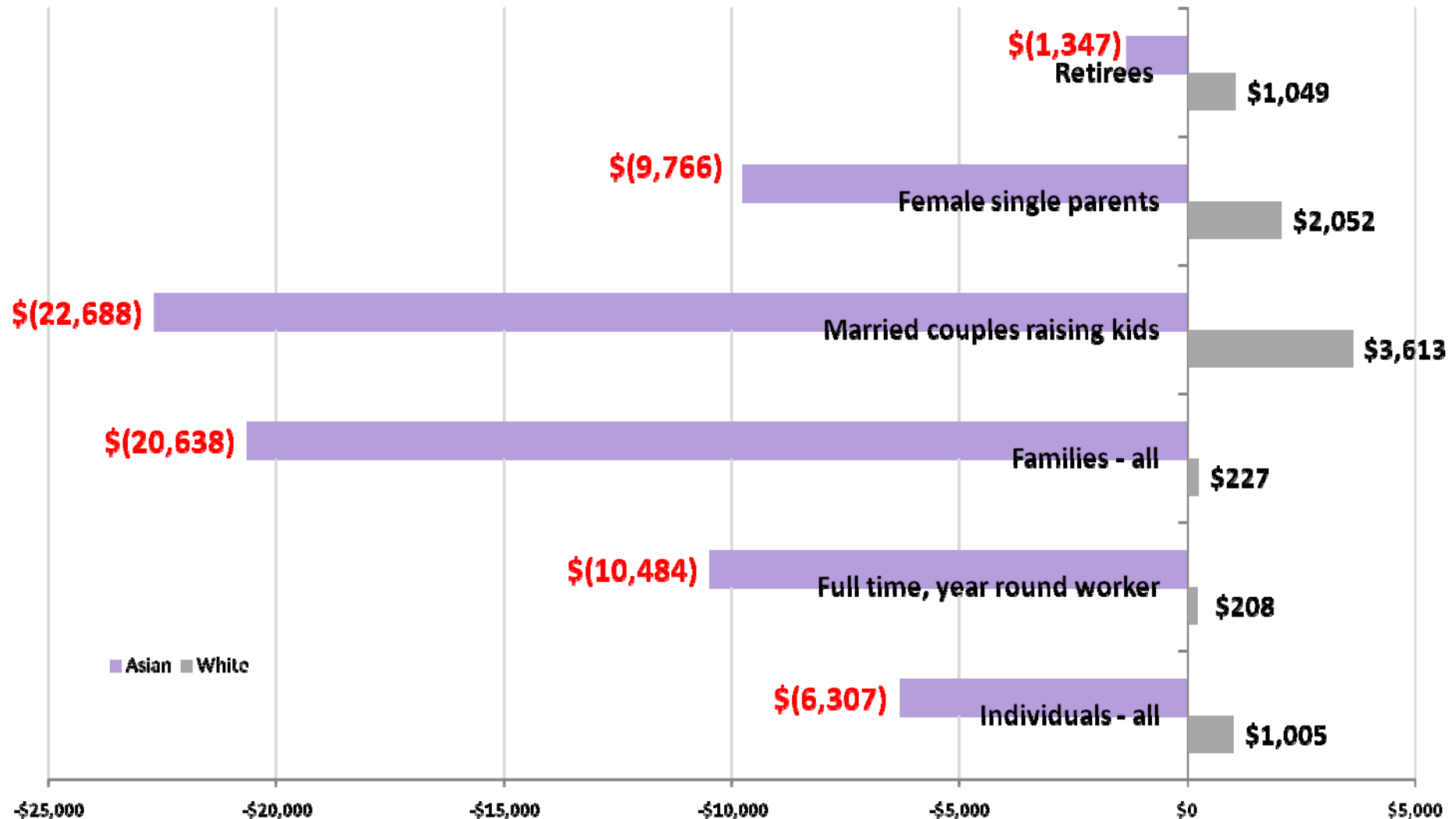


## Poverty Among Asians: Comparison of Local & National Levels, 2009





## Cost or Benefit of Living in Multnomah County, 2009 (comparing local annual incomes with USA incomes)



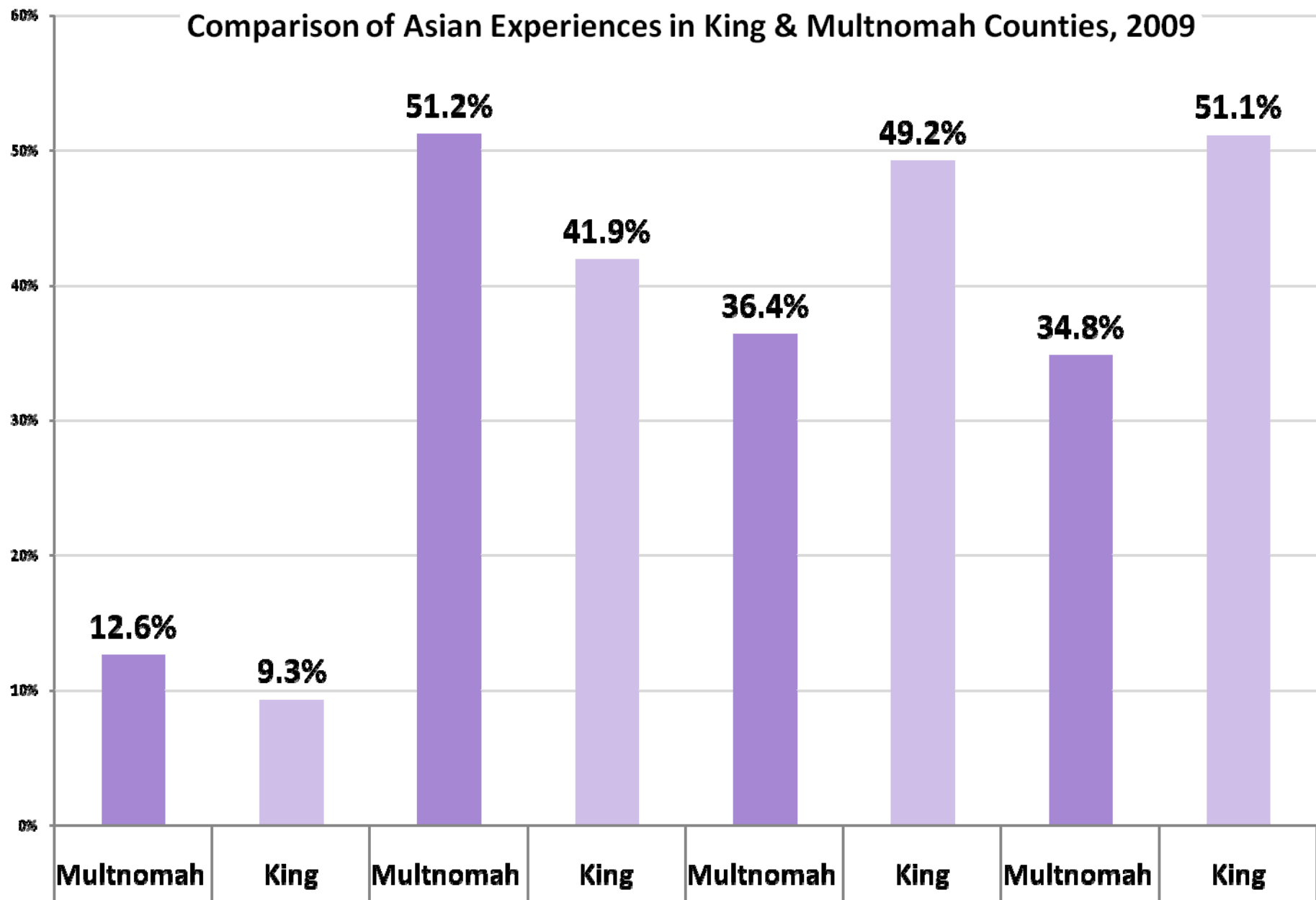
# Why doesn't parity exist here?

- Here are the possible explanations
  - This is really a “West Coast” dynamic born of the immigration patterns or histories that make the West Coast worse for Asians than for Whites
  - This is an issue of the composition of the local API community that perhaps has more recent immigrants, or more refugees that might struggle with gaining economic success
  - This is an issue of historic and institutional racism that renders this community, like other communities of color, suffering in a wide array of experiences
- We will investigate each in turn

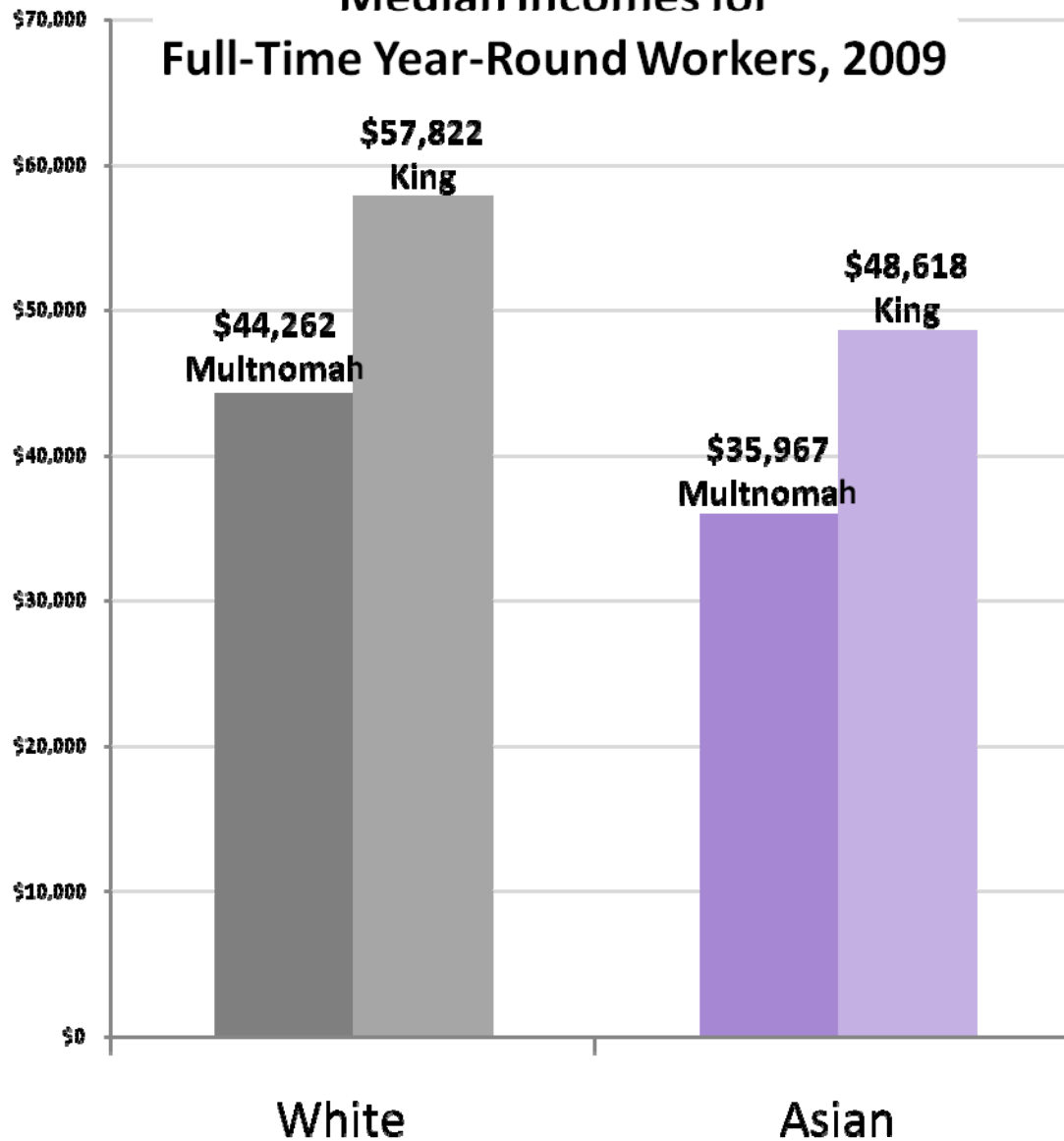
# Is this a West Coast dynamic?

- We did a comparison with King County (home to Seattle)
  - On every measure, conditions facing our largest grouping of the community (Asians) fare much worse
    - Child poverty
    - Rent burden
    - Access to the best professions
    - University degree
    - Incomes

Comparison of Asian Experiences in King & Multnomah Counties, 2009



## Median Incomes for Full-Time Year-Round Workers, 2009



# Thus not unique to West Coast

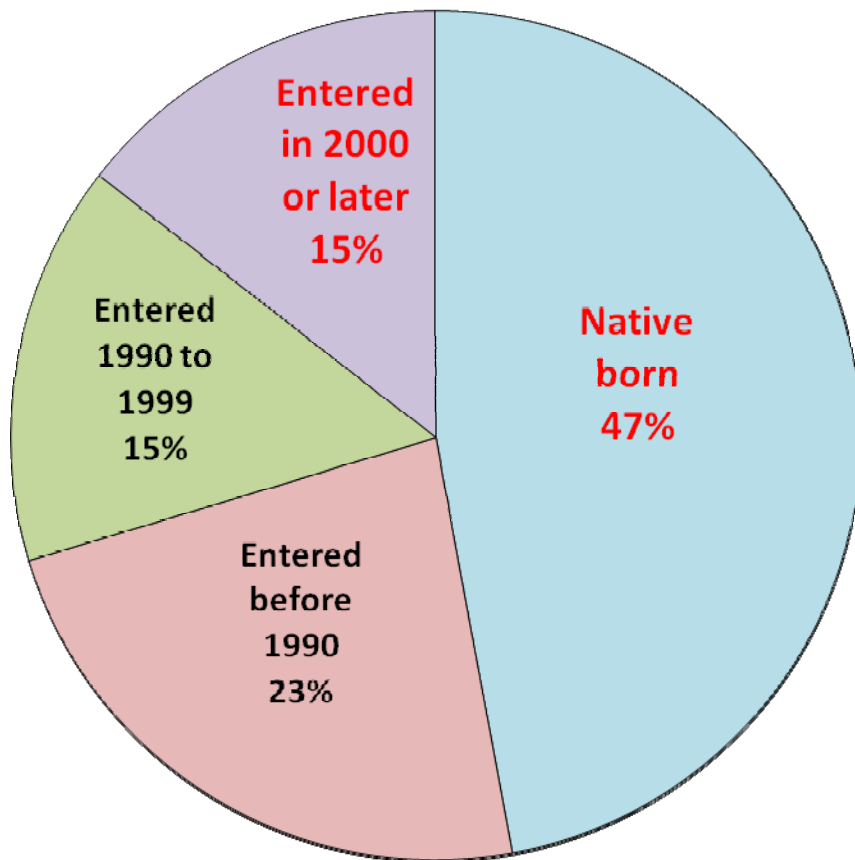
- If it was a West Coast dynamic, conditions would be equally bad for the API community in both areas



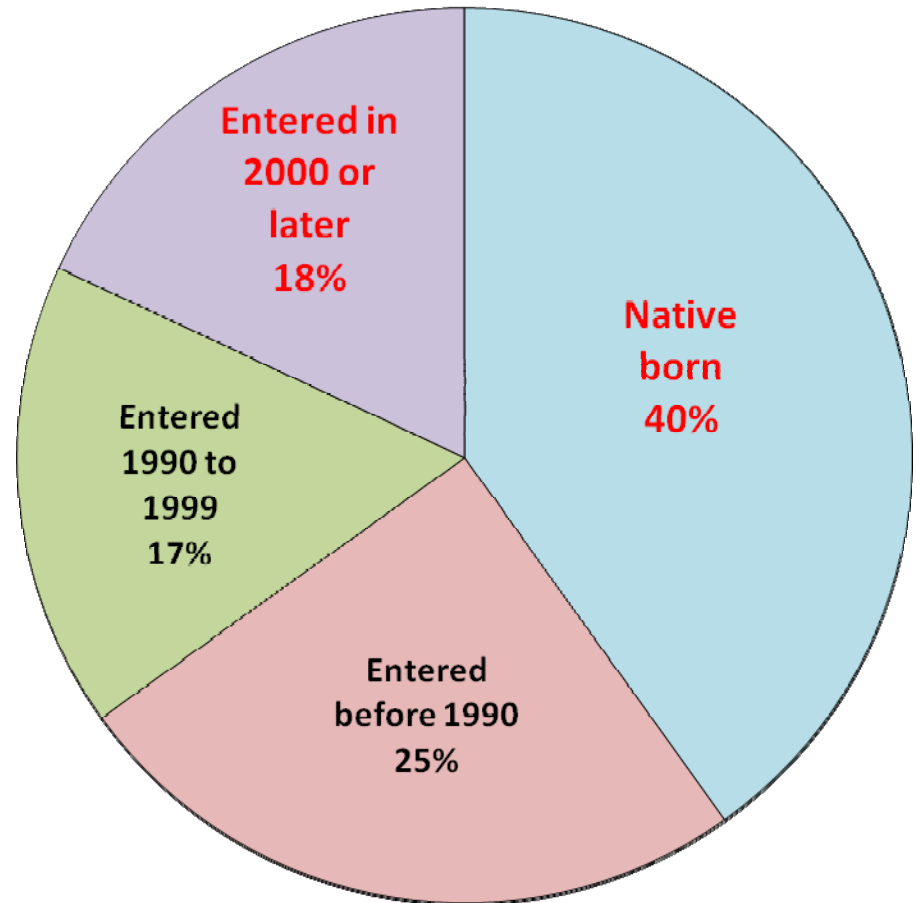
# Looking at Composition

- Worse performance typically associated with
  - High number of new arrivals
  - Lower number of those born in the USA
- What happens here?
  - See the next slide...

**Profile of Entry into the USA,  
Asians in Multnomah County, 2009**



**Profile of Entry into the USA,  
Asians in the USA, 2009**



***Alternate pattern than anticipated exists here***



# What can we interpret?

- Our arrival patterns should poise us to be better off than national averages
  - Thus not an issue related to longevity in the country
- Let's look at another dimension of composition... proportion of the community that are refugees

# Are disparities the result of more refugees?

% of Asian community in USA & Multnomah County from Refugee-Generating Countries		
	USA	Multnomah County
Vietnamese	11%	27%
Cambodian	2%	3%
Hmong	1%	1%
Laotian	1%	7%
Sri Lankan	0%	0%
Burmese	0%	0%
Bangladeshi	1%	0%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>38%</b>

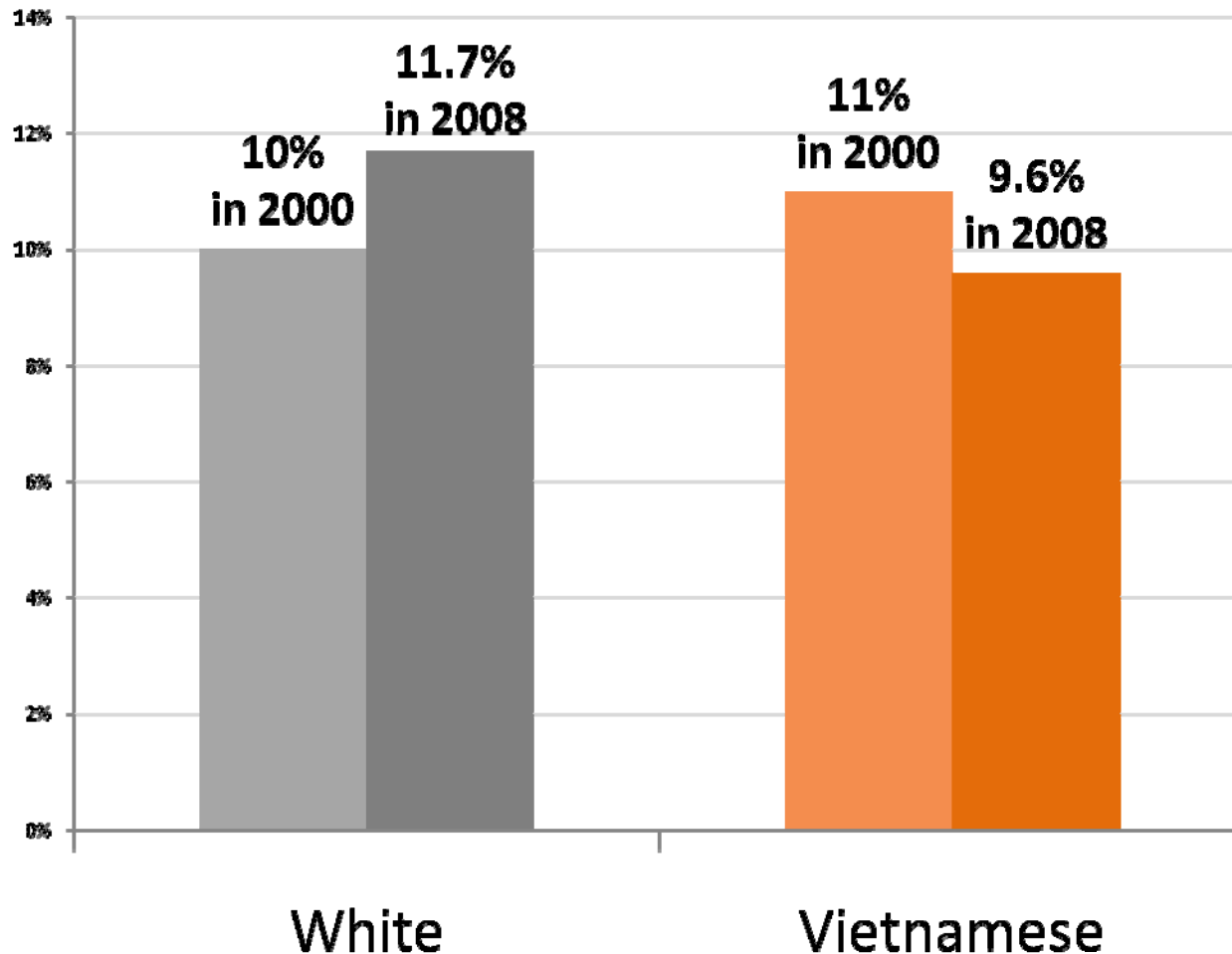
 Biggest difference

# So, initially, this might explain the disparities

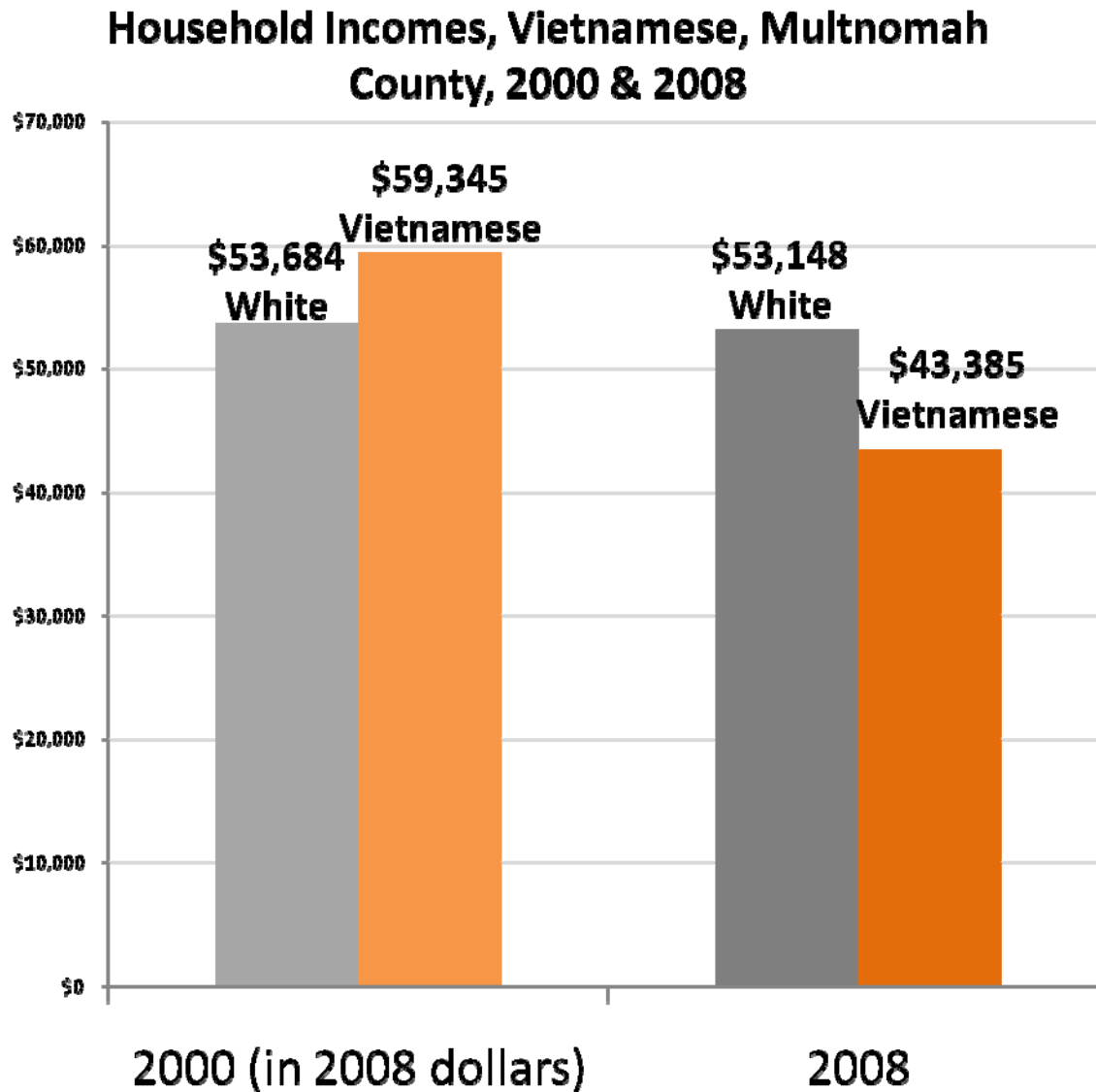
- Given that the Vietnamese population is the major cause of the different profile, let's look at...
  - How do the Vietnamese compare with Whites here?
  - How does the community fare with the Vietnamese across the USA?

# Good news...

**Poverty Rates for Vietnamese Individuals,  
Multnomah County, 2000 & 2008**

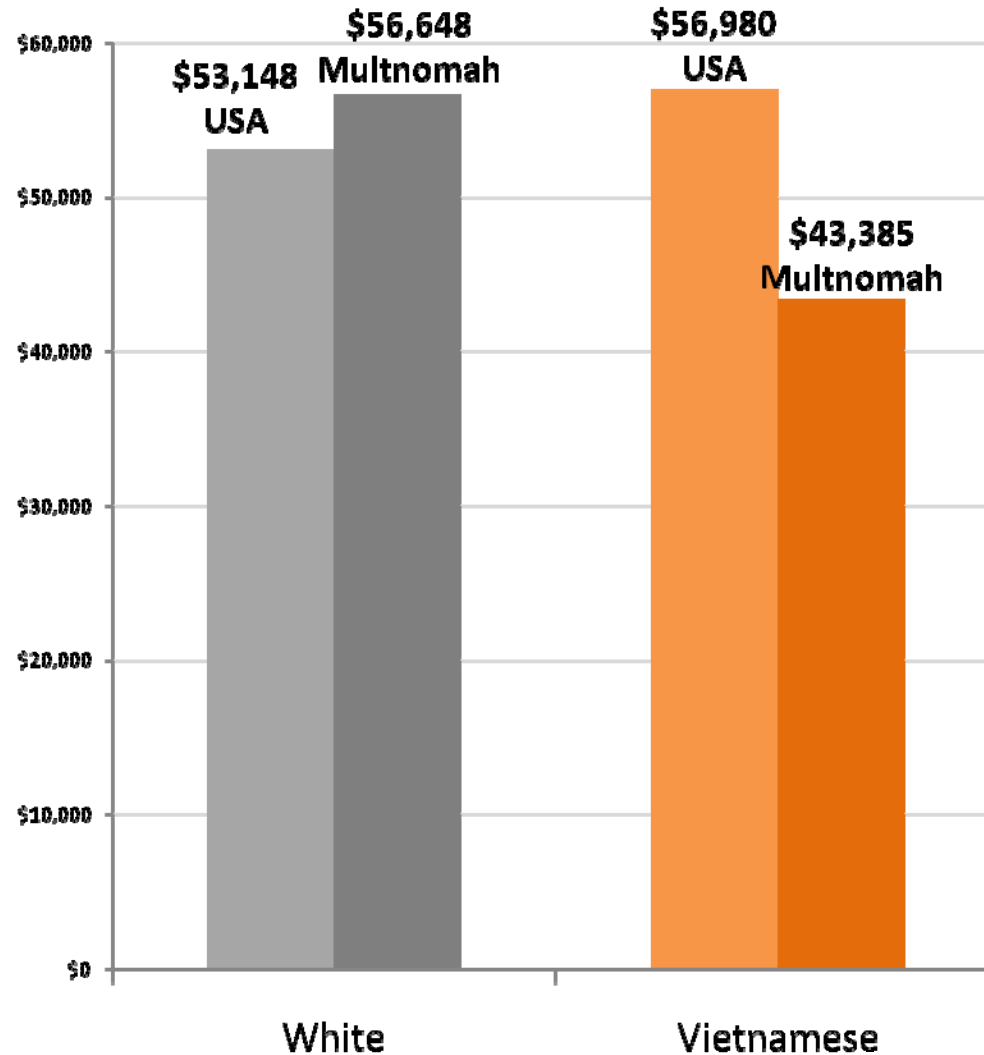


# But... incomes are deteriorating



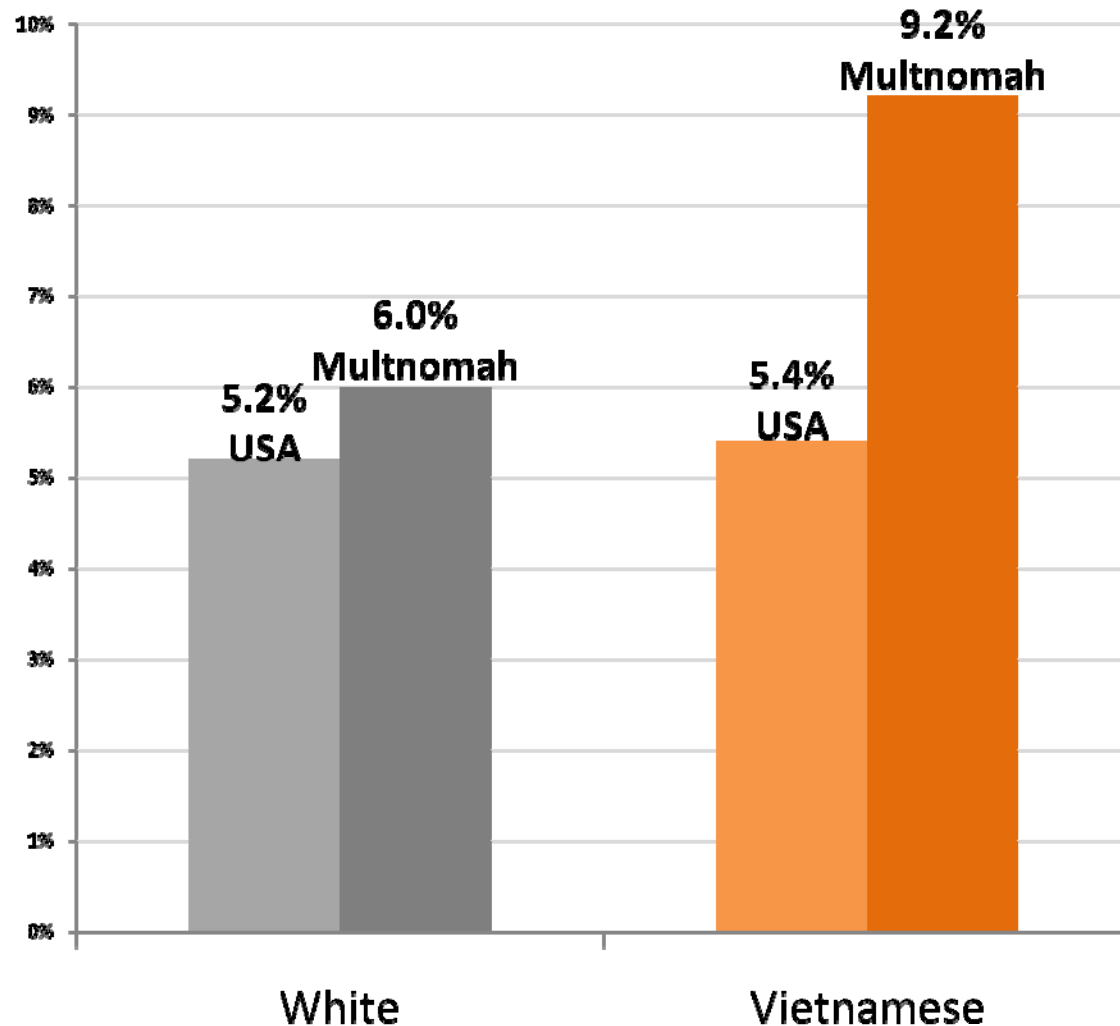
# Most distressing is comparison with USA

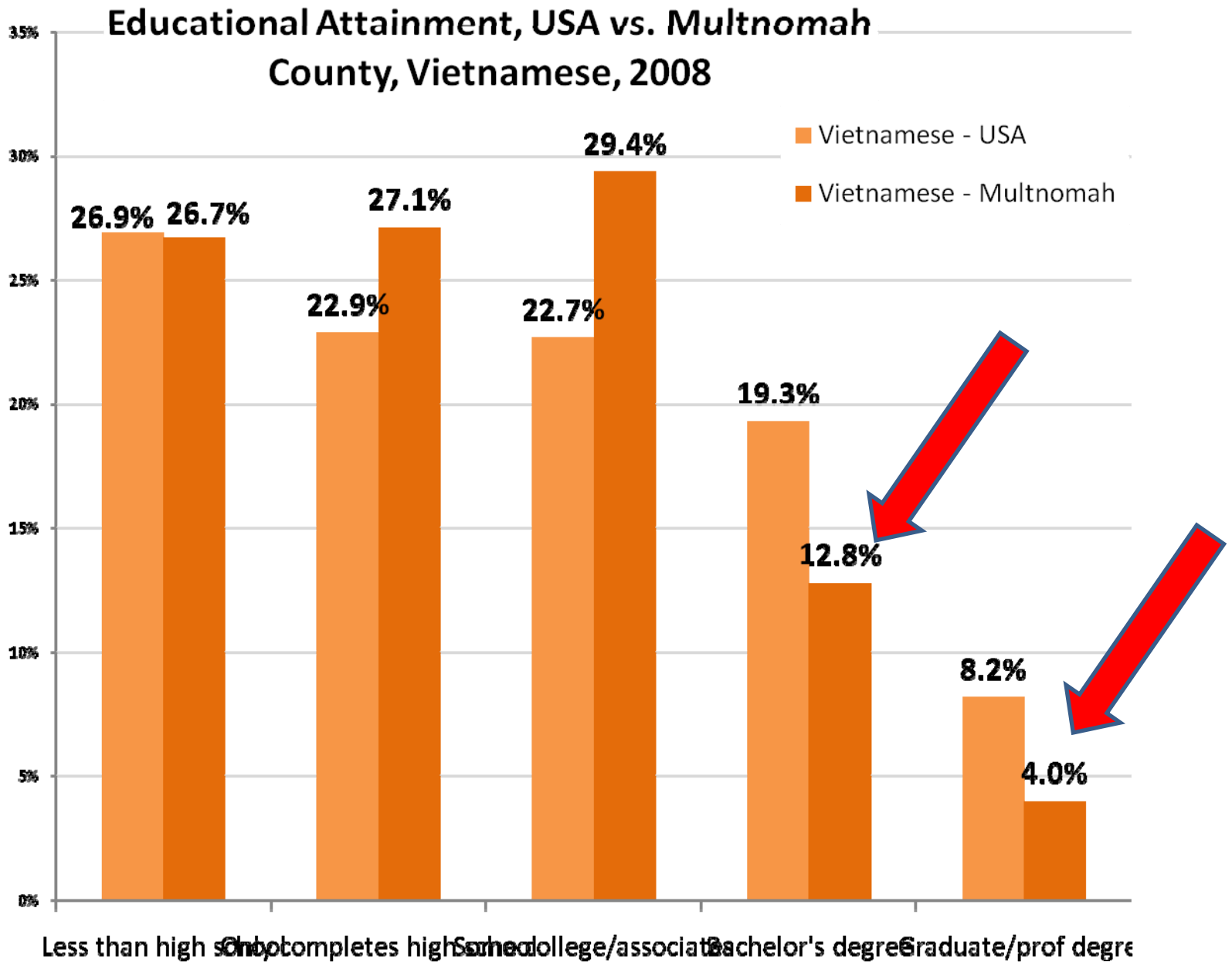
Household Incomes, USA & Multnomah  
County, Vietnamese, 2008



# Again, distressing comparison with USA

**Unemployment Rates, Comparison USA & Multnomah, Vietnamese & White, 2008**







# Conclusions in Vietnamese Community

- If refugee composition explained for the disparities, we would not expect a difference between the USA and local Vietnamese
  - Rather we would have simply seen an equivalently distressed experience for the Vietnamese wherever one lived
- BUT we observed a much more distressed local experience
  - Suggests it is not the composition that is bringing disparities forward, but rather the local conditions facing both refugees and others in the API community
  - And we see deteriorating in the local Vietnamese experience since 2000, even in comparison with USA averages
    - So again, something locally inequitable is occurring

# Our conclusion?

- That pronounced disparities in this region are the result of local conditions related to institutional racism and the corollary of White privilege
- We have ruled out every other plausible explanation thus defer to the remaining explanation
  - This has been a repeated experience across other communities of color
  - It is highly unlikely the API community is protected from this harmful dynamic

# Challenges with the Data

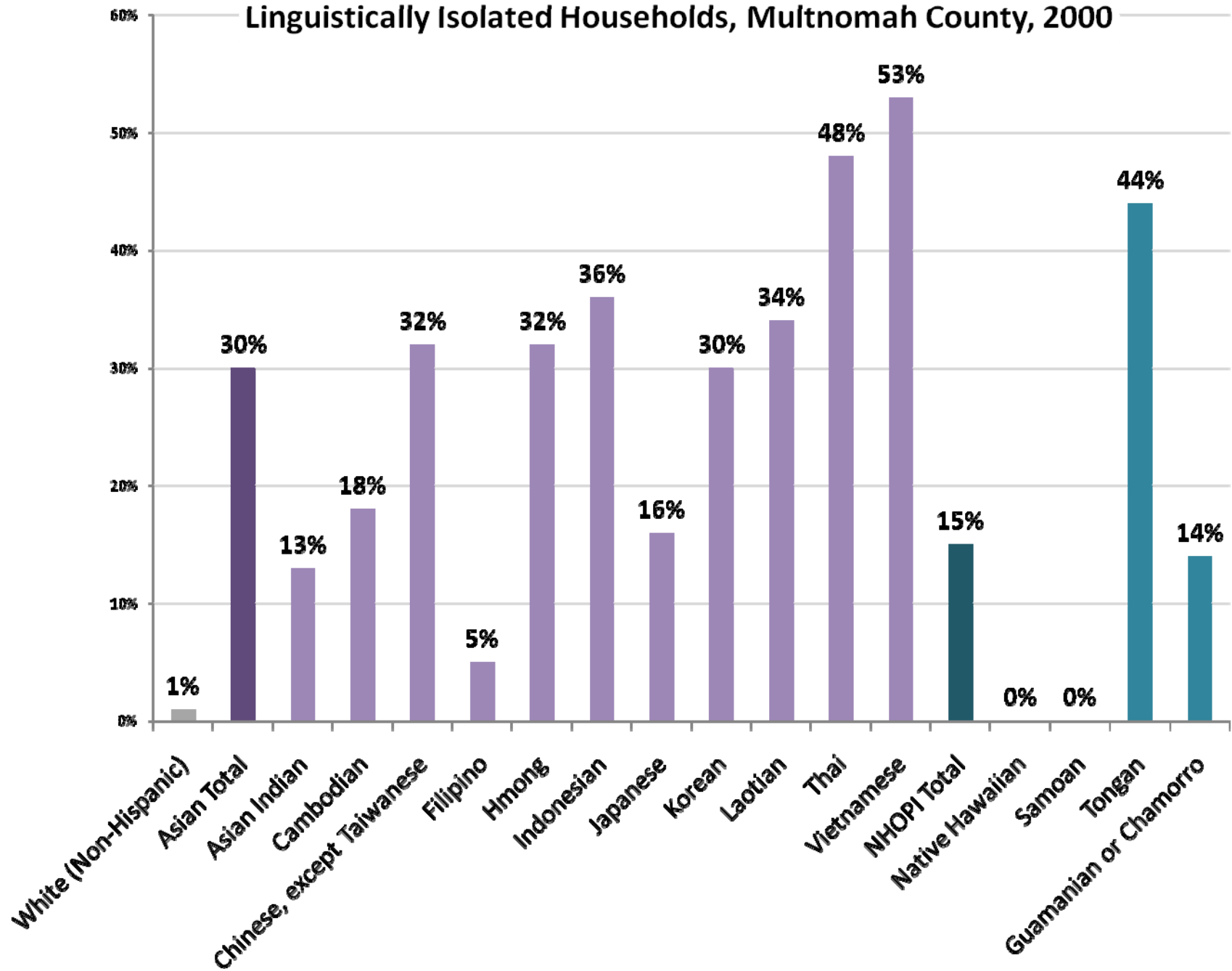
- Most experiences not available by community
  - Census Bureau dropped the long form for Census 2010
    - Means the 2000 data that was available won't be available again
  - Seeking to “oversample” in American Community Survey so that we can disaggregate API community
- Racial Identification
  - Only Asian or Pacific Islander is asked
    - Data not disaggregated by community
- Refugee identification – not asked
- Service-level data
  - Need to disaggregate
    - At the very least by API identity
    - Ideally, by all community identities
- Pronounced undercounts
- Growing “multiracial” identifier used
  - Please encourage an API identifier to be used

# Additional Key Findings

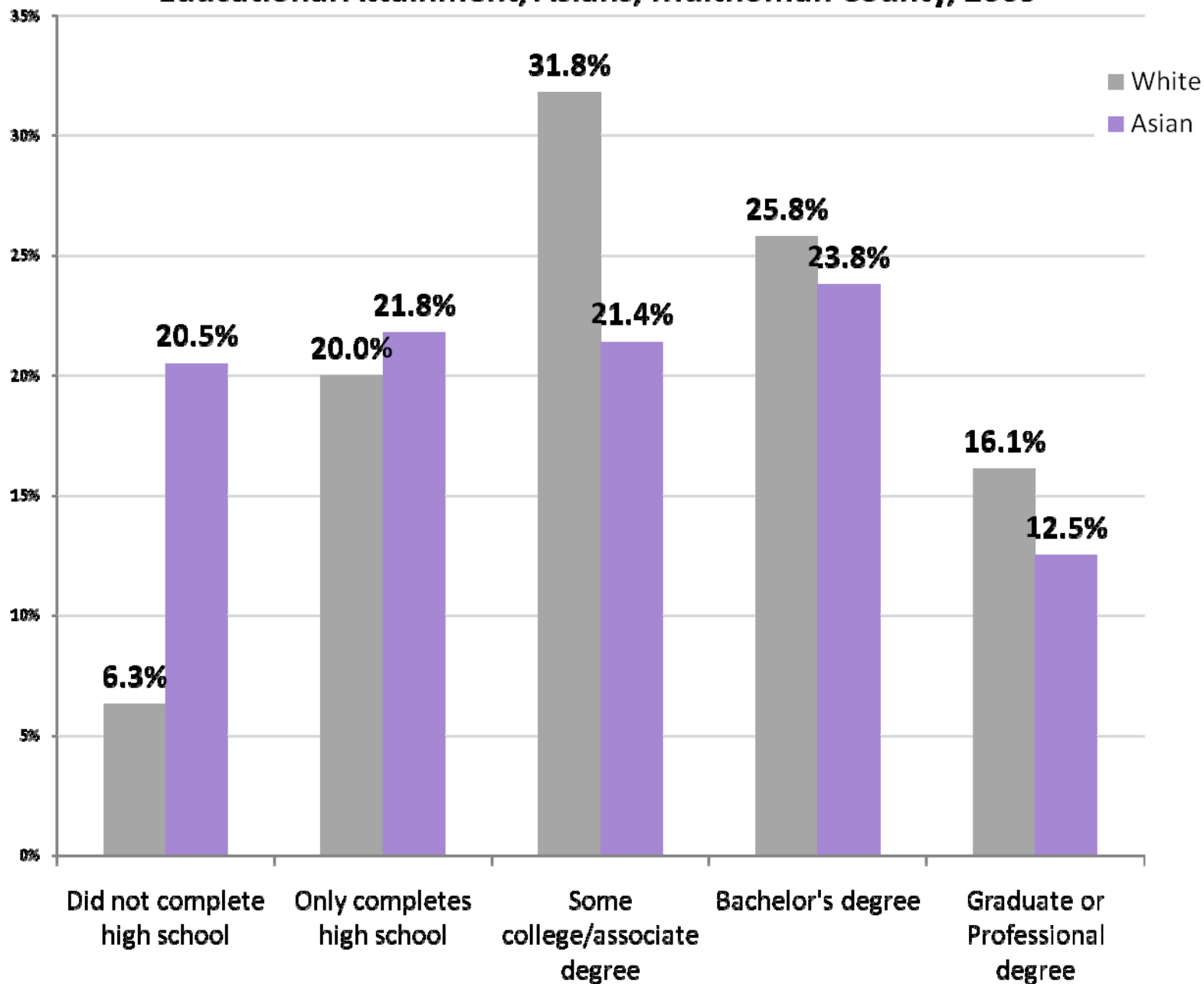
- Language isolation
- Education
  - Strengths & challenges
  - Disaggregated findings
- Health
- Civic Engagement
- Civil Service Employment (City of Portland)
- Funding by Foundations
- Communities that are struggling the most
  - Language, economic, homeownership and education



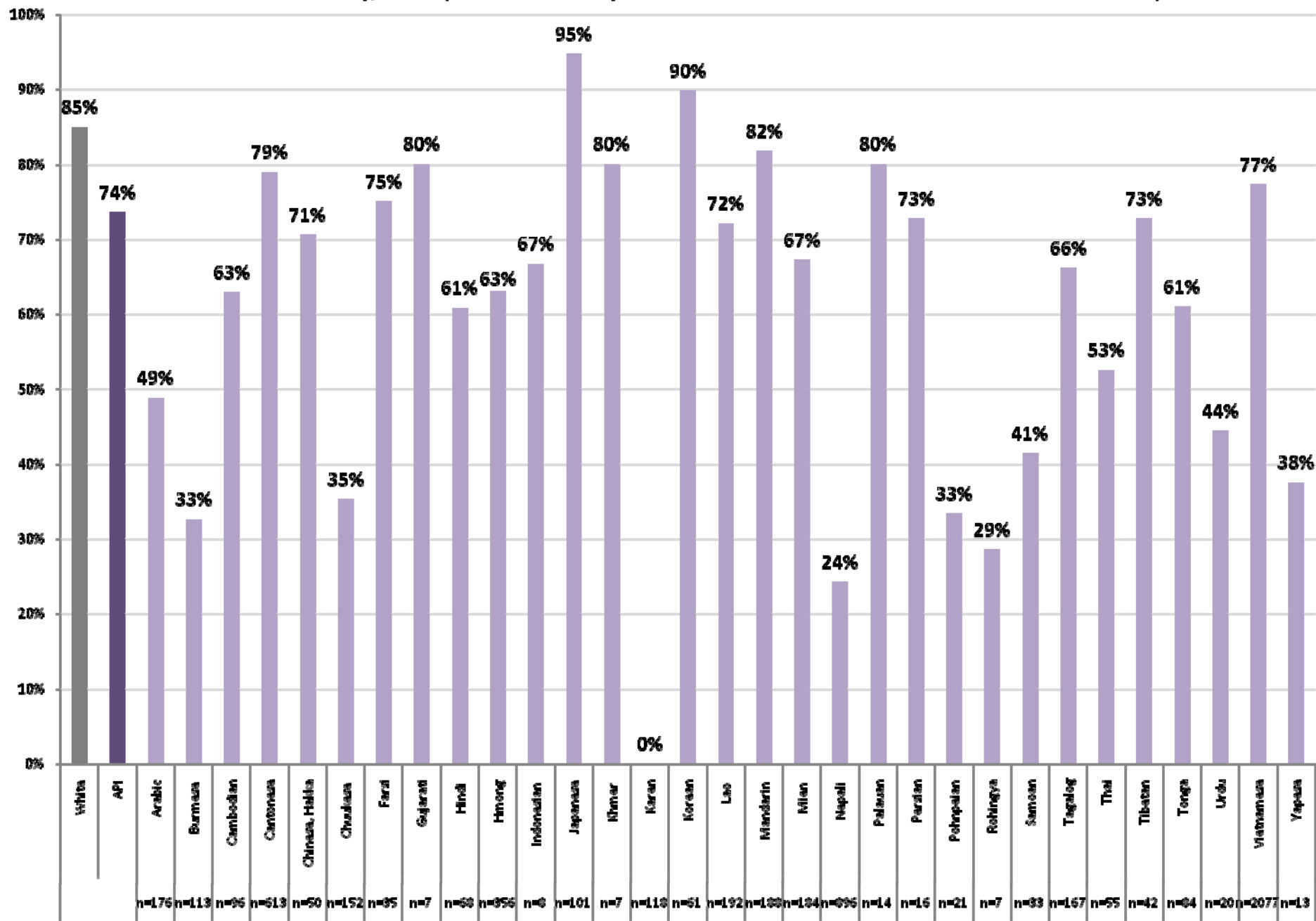
Linguistically Isolated Households, Multnomah County, 2000



**Educational Attainment, Asians, Multnomah County, 2009**



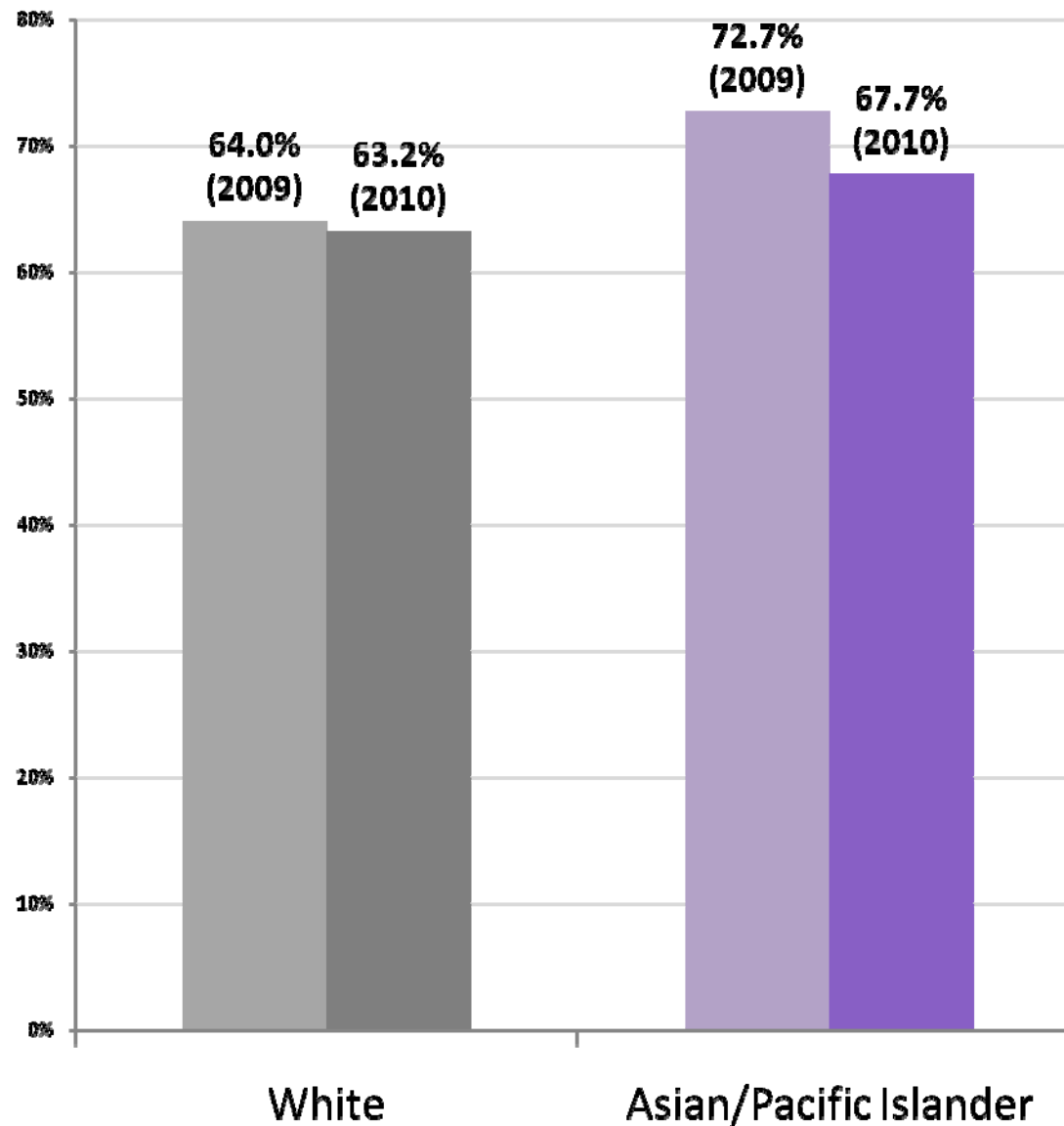
**Academic Achievement, Reading & Literature, API Community by Language,  
Multnomah County, 2011 (as measured by those students who meet or exceed benchmarks)**



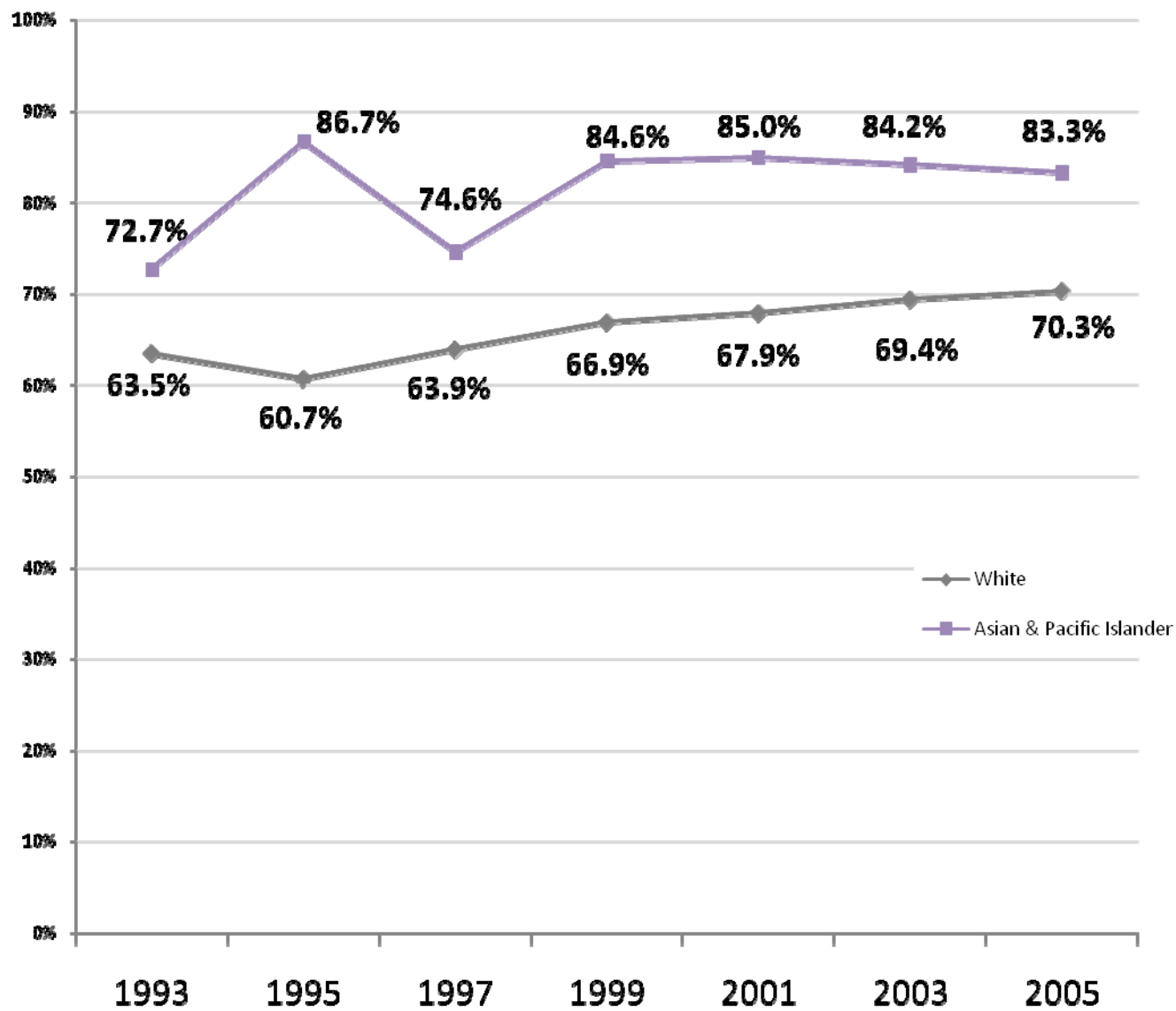
2011 Ranking	Language-Based Community	Mean Score for Reading & Math
1	Karen	5%
2	Pohnpeian (Micronesia)	17%
3	Nepali	25%
4	Chuukese (Micronesia)	28%
5	Rohingya (Burma)	29%
6	Burmese	31%
7	Yapese (Micronesia)	31%
8	Samoan	32%
9	Arabic (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, Syria, Libya...)	46%
10	Hindi (India)	53%
11	Urdu (India & Pakistan)	53%
12	Tonga	54%
13	Thai	54%
14	Tagalog (Philippines)	56%
15	Palauan (Palau & Guam)	57%
16	Cambodian	57%
17	Lao	60%
18	Mien (China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand)	65%
19	Indonesian	67%
20	Chinese, Hakka	67%
21	Farsi (Iran, Afghanistan)	70%
22	Persian (Iran, Afghanistan)	70%
23	Tibetan	74%
24	Vietnamese	75%
25	Japanese	81%
26	Cantonese	82%
27	Gujarati (India, Pakistan, Africa)	82%
28	Mandarin	83%
29	Korean	89%
30	Khmer (Cambodia)	90%



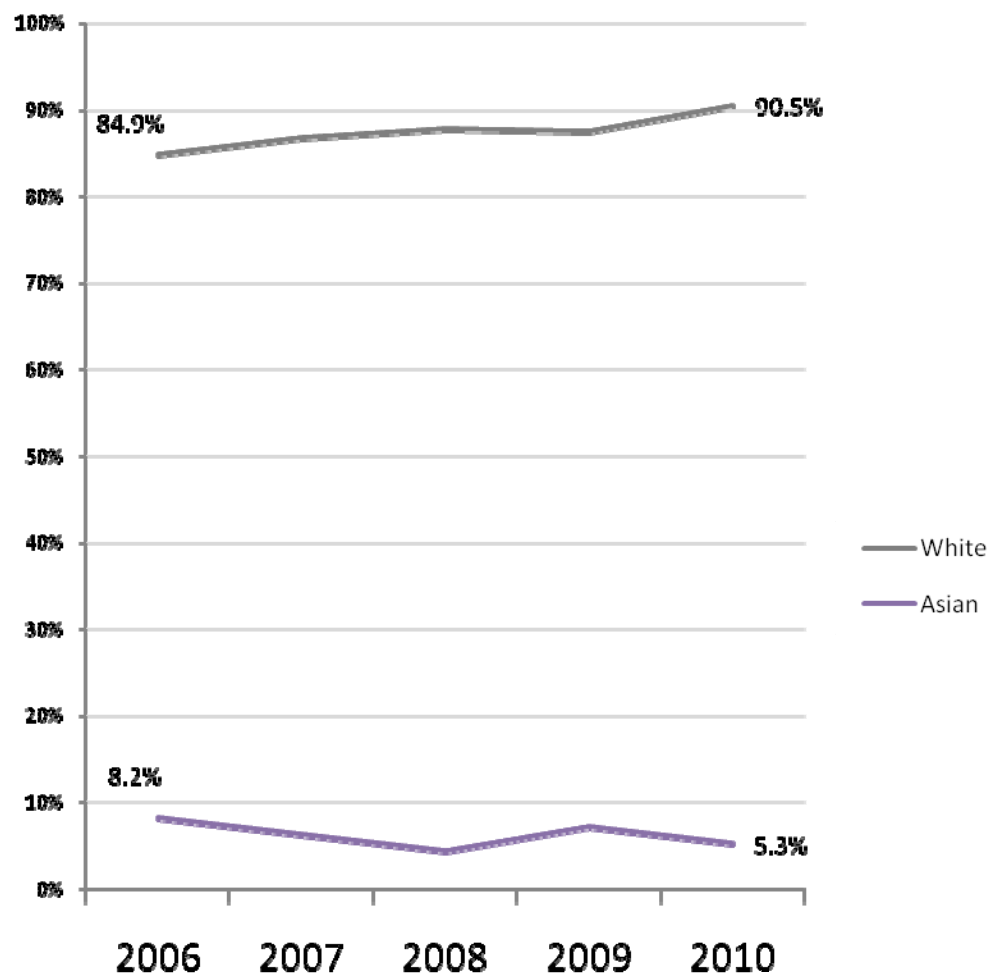
**Cohort Graduation Rates,  
Asian & Pacific Islanders,  
Multnomah County, 2009 & 2010**



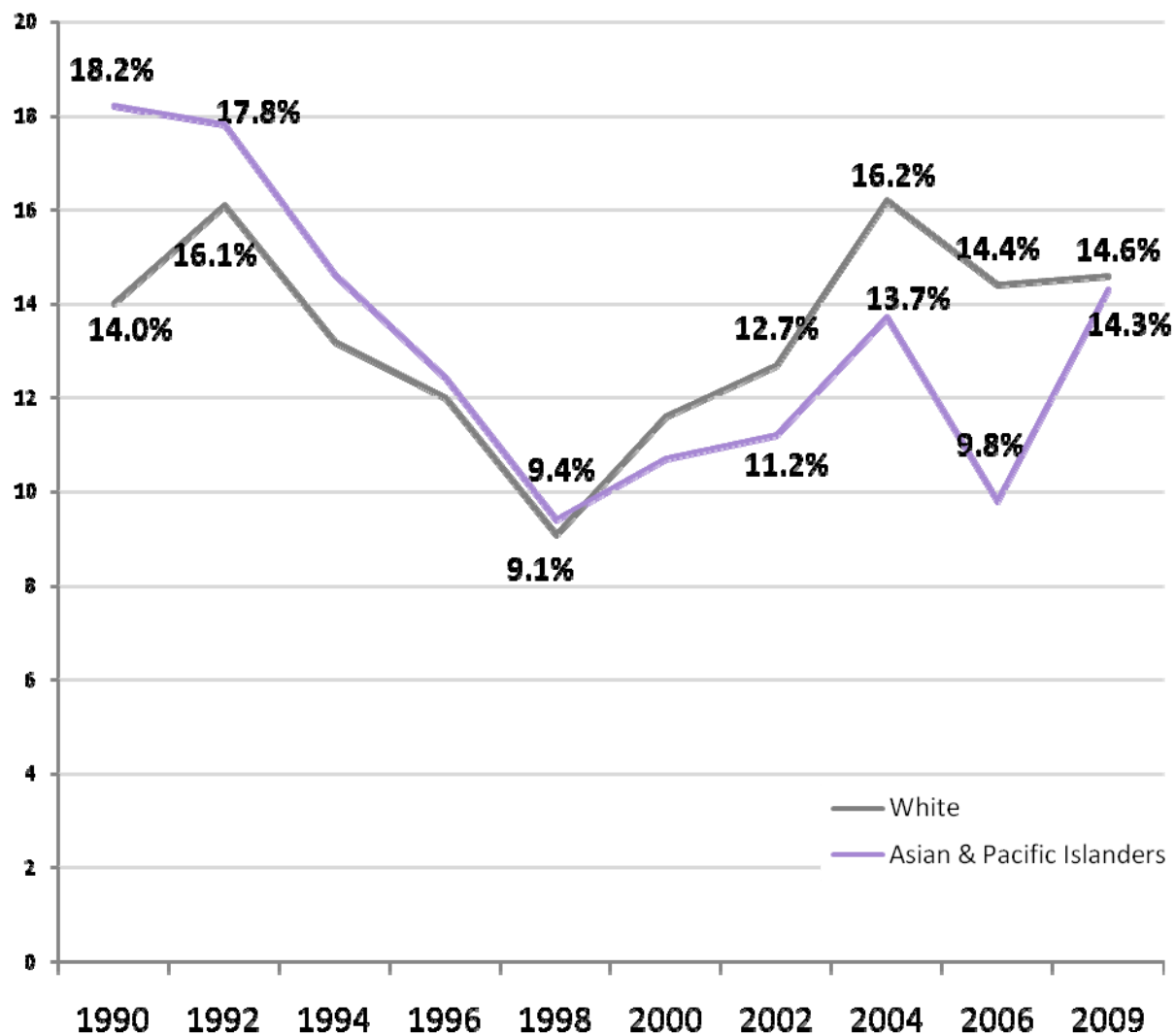
## High School Graduates Entering College, Oregon



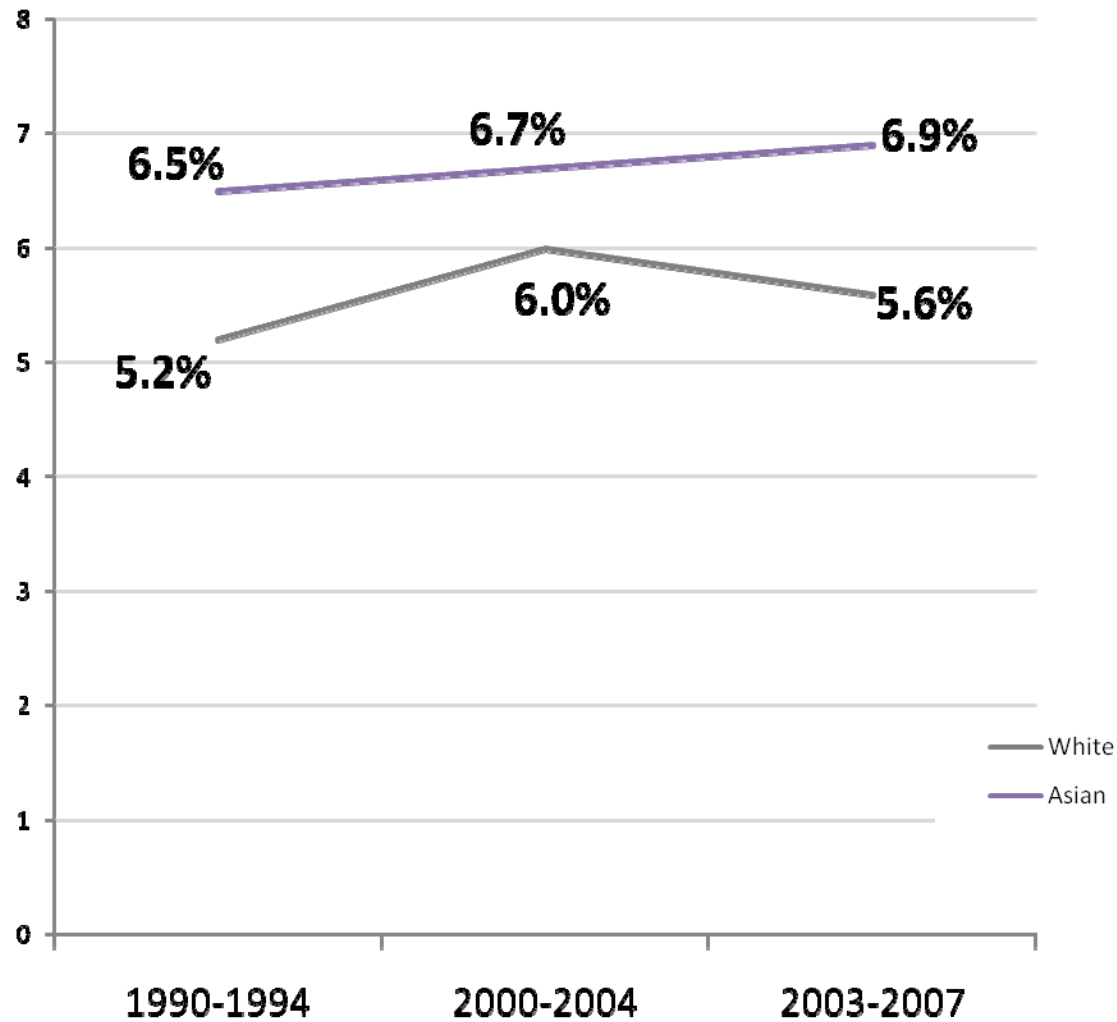
## Career Technical Degrees Awarded by Mount Hood Community College



## Oregonians Without Health Insurance, Asians & Pacific Islanders

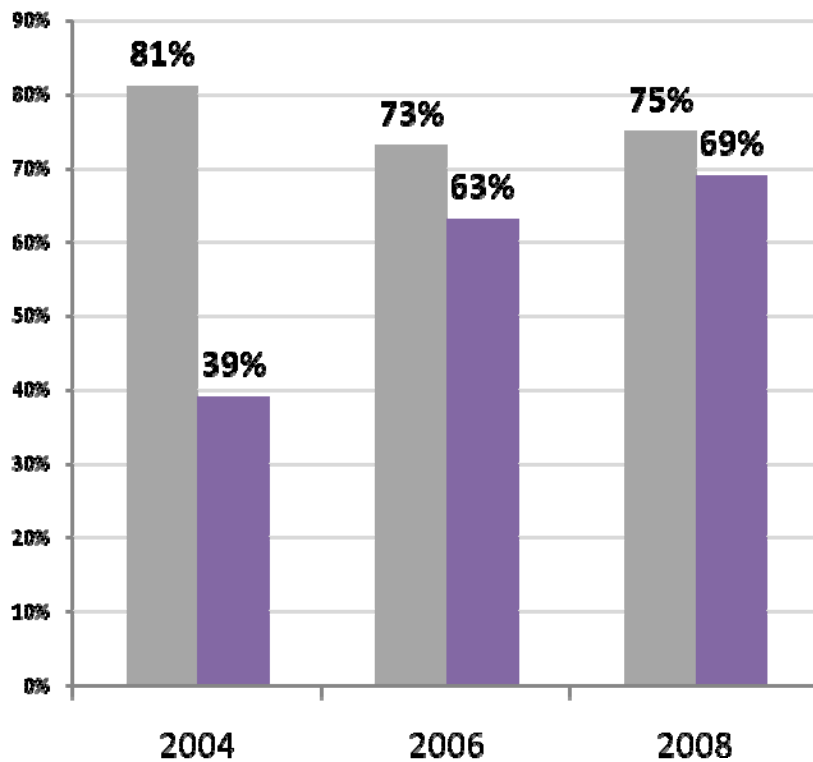


## Low Birth Weight Babies, Asian & Pacific Islanders Multnomah County

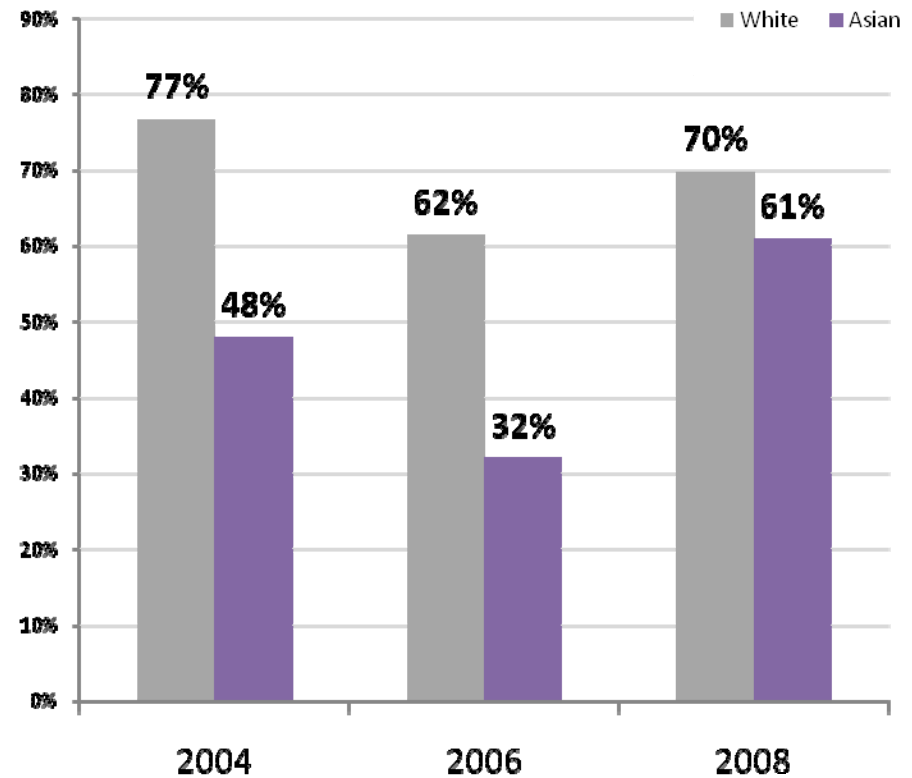


# Civic Engagement Steadily Improving

## Voter Registration in Oregon



## Voting Patterns in Oregon, 2004 to 2008



## City of Portland Full-Time Employment, 1999 and 2009



# Inequity in Access to Resources from Foundations

<b>2008, Oregon</b>	<b>Size of Population</b>	<b>Amount of Foundation Funding</b>
Whites	80.4%	90.4%
Asian & Pacific Islanders	4.9%	0.1%



# Establishing Priority Communities

- Six measures were used to determine these priority communities
  - Limited English, low income, size of community with less than high school, today's education level of not meeting standards and home ownership
- 14 priority communities have been identified through this research
  - Pacific Islander communities
    - Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Samoan and Tongan
  - Small & new refugee-based communities
    - Hmong, Karen, Rohingya, Burmese & Nepali Bhutanese
  - Older refugee-based communities
    - Cambodian and Laotian
  - More established immigrant communities
    - Asian Indian, Thai and Korean

	Speak English Less than Very Well	Poverty	Low Income	Education - less than high school	Education today: Does not meet standards	Does not own home
White	3%	12%	25% (2000)	7%	28%	38%
Asian Indian (n=3,509)	23%	12%	30%	30%	mean = 52%	44%
Burmese (n=792)					69%	
Cambodian (n=1,248)	47%	24%	48%	44%	43%	63%
Chuukese (n=152 children)					72%	
Hmong (n=1,674)	56%	3%	48%	46%	44%	59%
Karen (n=300 approx)					95%	
Korean (n=4,090)	33%	17%	30%	17%	11%	67%
Laotian (n=3,392)	53%	9%	34%	48%	40%	36%
Nepali (n=896 children)					75%	
Pohnpeian (n=21 children)					83%	
Rohingya (n=7 children)					71%	
Samoan (n=683)	15%	13%	35%	32%	68%	59%
Thai (n=1,110)	54%	35%	49%	14%	46%	77%
Tongan (n=551)	37%	14%	62%	10%	46%	72%

# Recommendations

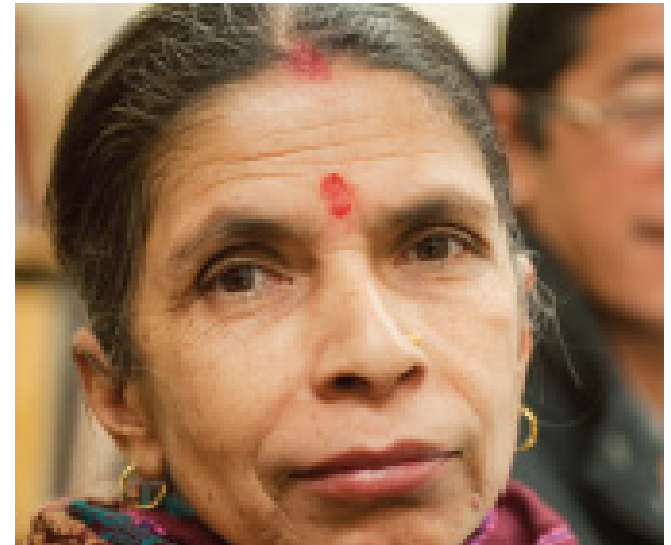


# Poverty Reduction

- Recognize foreign credentials & work experience
  - Robust, easy-to-access, low cost and convenient programs
- Expanded income supports for refugees
  - Beyond the 8-month limit for singles and TANF for families
- Improve funding for culturally-specific services
  - Recognize that culturally-specific services are the best way to reach and support communities of color
- Disallow mainstream organizations to promise to serve the community
  - Unless explicit partnership agreements exist with communities of color

# Social Inclusion and Language Training

- English as a Second Language
  - Improve local access, including convenient hours of service
  - Ensure programs are of the highest caliber
- Expand naturalization classes
  - US citizenship is an important avenue for social inclusion
  - Ensure delivery is through culturally-specific organizations
- API role in policy development
  - Social inclusion and the chance to influence government policy depend on being invited to policy-making tables
- Develop API leaders
  - To support serious involvement in policy development, political leadership and the civil service
- API stakeholders in creating & evaluating services and programs for API community members
  - Must be engaged early, often and with meaningful ability to influence the outcomes



# Education Equity

- Retain more API students
  - Use mentors
  - Dismantle institutional racism
- Ensure that ELL students have access to full academic course offerings & ensure that all ELL programs are in compliance with federal regulations.
- Pass the Tuition Equity bill in the Oregon legislature.



# Visibility for the Entire API Community

- Research and database reforms are essential to ensure that there is routine and accurate disaggregation of the API community by origin, by refugee status, and by length of time in the country



# ***Thank you!***

- The entire report will be available for free to download from
  - [www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org](http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org)
- Julia Meier, Director, Coalition of Communities of Color
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