

IMMIGRANTS AND EDUCATION

Hans Johnson

► Many working-age immigrants have little formal education ...

In 2009, 36% of immigrants ages 25 to 64 in California had not graduated from high school, compared to 31% of immigrants in the United States and 8% of U.S.-born California residents. An additional 19% of immigrants in California had finished high school but never went on to college. Immigrants dominate the sector of adults in California with less than a high school education, accounting for 73% of this low-education population.

► ... but large numbers of working-age immigrants are college graduates.

At the other end of the spectrum, 28% of immigrants have bachelor's degrees, compared to 30% of U.S.-born natives. In California, 25% of immigrants have attained bachelor's or more advanced degrees, compared to 34% of U.S.-born residents in the state. Thirty-one percent of California residents with graduate degrees are foreign-born.

► Today's immigrants are more highly educated than in the past.

In 1970, 17% of recently arrived immigrants ages 25 to 64 had graduated from college and 33% had minimal formal education (middle school or less). In 2009, 35% of recently arrived immigrants had college degrees and only 20% had minimal educational attainment. The share of college graduates among U.S.-born Californians has also increased over time, from 15% in 1970 to 34% in 2009.

► Immigrants from Asia tend to be highly educated.

Immigrants from Southwest Asia and India in particular have the highest levels of education; 64% have attained bachelor's or more advanced degrees, compared to 56% of East Asian immigrants, the next-most-educated group. Of the countries from which 100,000-plus people have migrated to California, the proportion of with at least a bachelor's degree is highest for India (75%), Taiwan (71%), and China (57%).

► Immigrants from Latin America tend to be less educated.

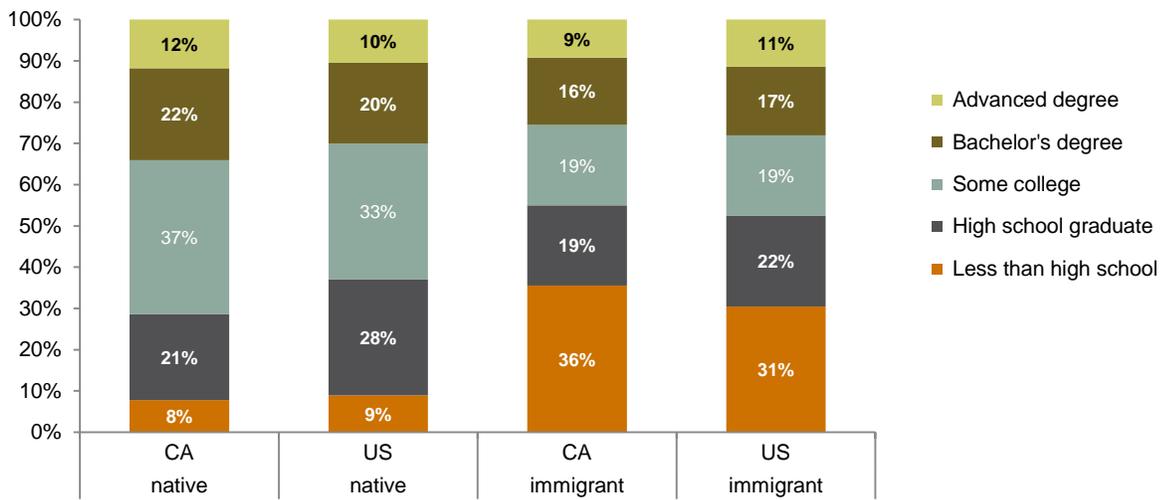
In California, only 7% of immigrants from Latin America have college degrees; 77% have high school diplomas or less. Since immigrants from Mexico make up 79% of immigrants from this region, they dominate the group's demographic statistics. Only 5% of California's Mexican immigrants graduated from four-year colleges, and 82% have a high school education or less. Even so, only the Philippines, India, and China send more college graduates to California than Mexico.

► Strong educational progress occurs across generations.

The children and grandchildren of immigrants in California and the nation as a whole tend to be much better educated than their parents. Among first-generation immigrants age 57 to 66, 36% have not graduated from high school, compared to only 8% of second-generation descendants in their children's age cohort (30–39). After the second generation, the proportion of Californians age 30 to 39 without high school diplomas drops to 6%.

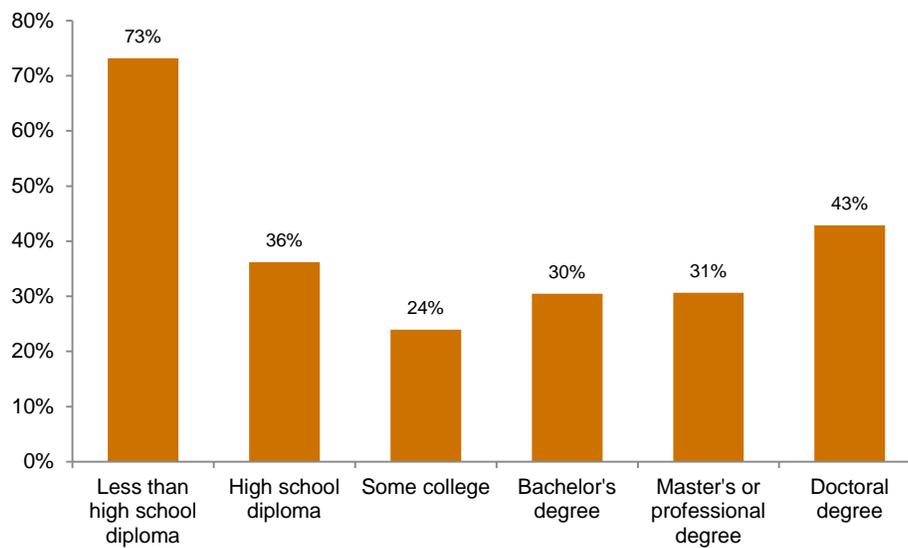


Educational attainment of U.S.-born and foreign born residents, 2009



Source: .2009 American Community Survey, adults ages 25 and over.

Immigrant share of all adults in California by educational attainment, 2009



Source: 2009 American Community Survey, adults ages 25 and over.

Sources: American Community Surveys; Decennial Censuses; Current Population Surveys.

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