Chapter 8: Race and Ethnic Groups

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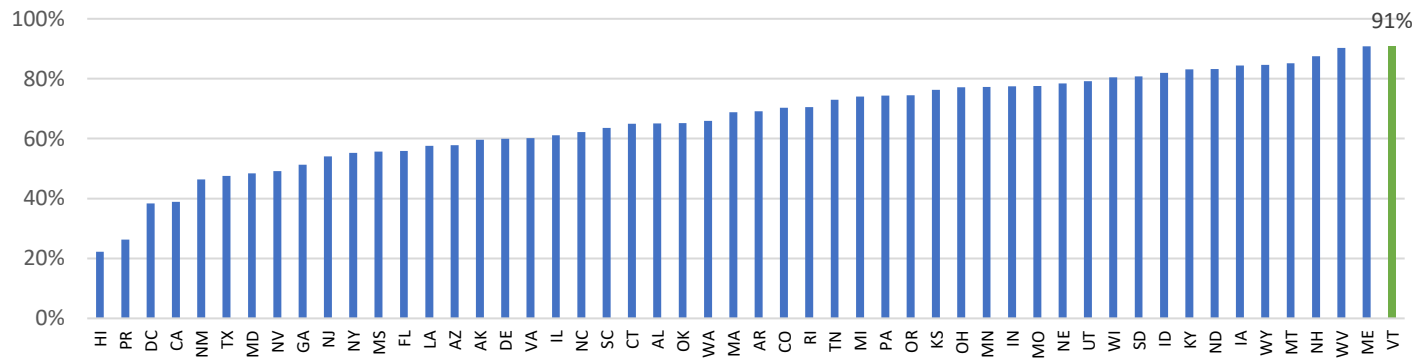
Population

Vermonters who identify as people of color or Hispanic comprise a small, but growing, portion of the state's households. Compared to white Vermonters, the number of people of color living in Vermont grew at a much faster pace between 2010 and 2020. The largest disparity in housing needs exist among Black or African American Vermonters who currently comprise about 1% of the state's population. Black and African American Vermonters are far less likely to own homes and more likely to experience homelessness than white Vermonters.

Vermont is the least racially diverse state in the United States, according to the latest Census Bureau estimates. Only Maine reaches about the same threshold as Vermont, at which over 90% of the population identifies only as white. About 1% of the Vermont population is Black, just under 2% are Asian, and about 4% of the state is multiracial. Smaller populations include Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and people who do not identify with any of these categories.

Figure 8-1 Percentage of population who are white alone, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates 2018-2022 (Table DP05)

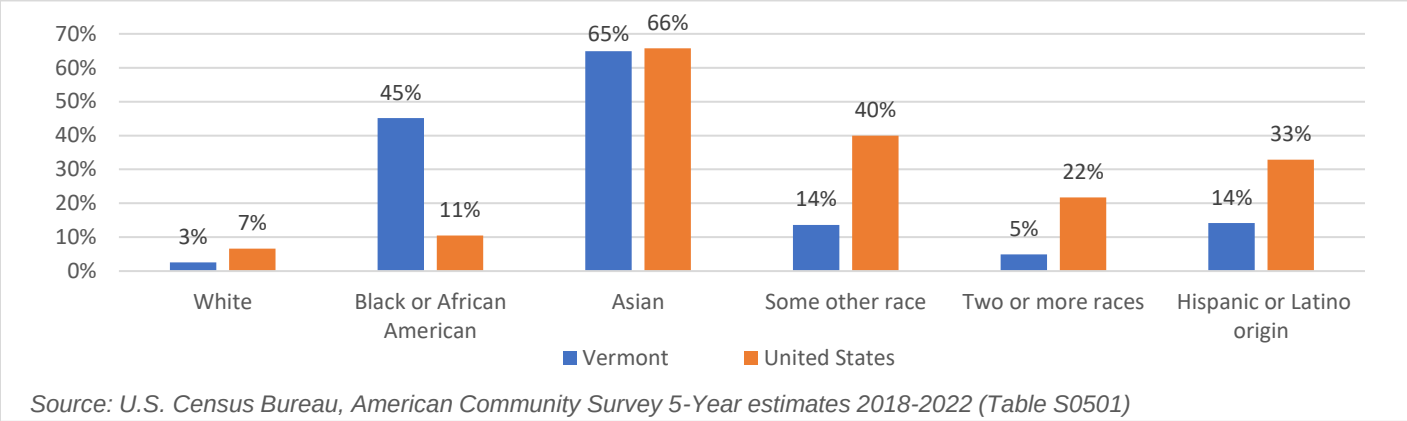
Per Census data, the Black, Asian, multiracial, and Hispanic populations of Vermont are all growing at a substantially higher rate than that of the white population. Only 2% of Vermonters identify as Hispanic or Latino, one of the lowest rates in the nation. However, over the past decade, the percentage of Vermonters that identify as people of color or Hispanic has been growing steadily.

Figure 8-2 Race and ethnicity of Vermonters, 2022

	Population	% of Vermont population	Foreign-born population	% Foreign-born
White	588,046	90.9%	15,358	3%
Black or African American	6,320	1.0%	2,851	45%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,296	0.2%	-	-
Asian	11,711	1.7%	7,594	65%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	59	0.0%	-	-
Some Other Race	4,147	0.6%	565	14%
Two or More Races	35,485	5.5%	1,750	5%
Hispanic or Latino	14,770	2.3%	2,089	14%
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022 (Table DP05)				

Foreign-Born Vermonters

Figure 8-3 Percentage of racial group who are foreign born, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year estimates 2018-2022 (Table S0501)

Approximately 28,468 Vermonters identify as being foreign-born. Vermont has a smaller percentage of foreign-born residents than the United States, with 4% of the Vermont population being born elsewhere, compared to 14% in the country at large. Foreign-born Vermonters were less likely to own their home than Vermonters born in the United States. The overall homeownership rate among Vermont households is 71%. However, among households headed by someone who is foreign-born, the rate is 62%.[125]

People who identify as Asian had the greatest likelihood of the major race and ethnic groups of being born outside of the U.S. Black or African Americans living in Vermont are more than three times as likely to be immigrants as Black or African Americans living in the U.S. as a whole. Over 40% of all Vermonters who identify as Black or African American are immigrants compared to only 10% nationwide. This is likely due to the growing communities from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, in Chittenden County.

Projected Households

Census data on the number of household heads belonging to each race and ethnicity demonstrates that Vermont is becoming more racially diverse. While the number of white householders is expected to rise by 7%, the number of Black householders is expected to rise by 78%, the number of Asian householders by 84%, and the number of Hispanic households by 73%. For this reason, it will be important for policymakers to be increasingly conscious of housing discrimination and economic disparities that result from racial bias.

Figure 8-4 Projected Vermont households by race and ethnicity of householder, 2025 and 2029

	2010 (actual)	2020 (actual)	2025 (projected)	2029 (projected)
White alone	248,163	250,739	263,966	267,504
Black or African American alone	1,594	2,484	3,207	4,430
Asian alone	2,077	3,224	4,359	5,934
Some Other Race alone*	554	1,746	2,291	4,786
American Indian and Alaska Native alone*	912	981		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone*	48	94		
Two or more races	3,094	12,622	17,531	30,618
Hispanic householder	2,571	4,636	6,423	8,026

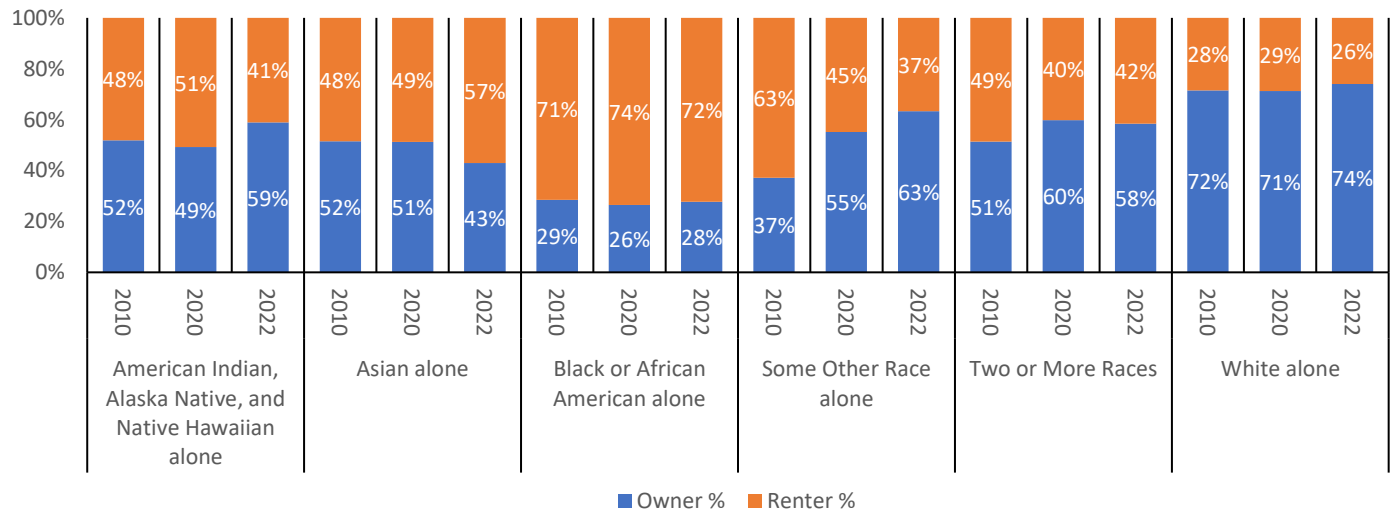
*Source: 2010 and 2020 are from U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census. 2025 and 2029 assume average VT household growth rate in 2019-2022 of 1.8%. *The small number of these households required aggregation in projections for 2025 and 2029.*

[125] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year estimates 2018-2022 (Table S0501)

Homeownership Rate Disparities

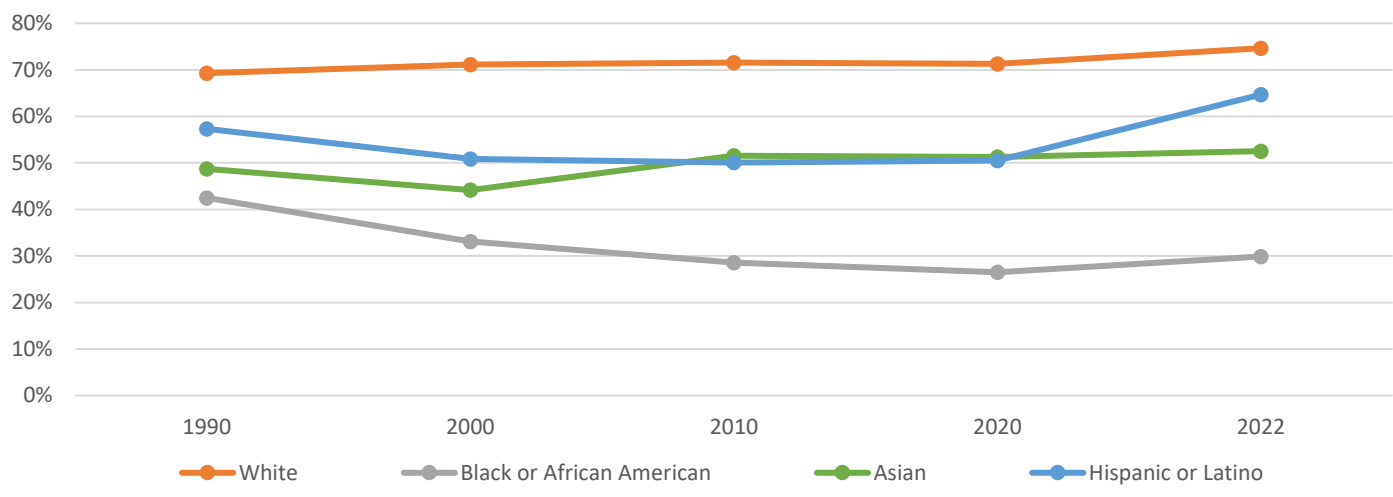
Nationally, the gap in homeownership between white and Black households stands at 30%, a rate even larger than that in 1960.[126] This is true in Vermont as well, where white Vermonters are more likely to own their own home than BIPOC Vermonters. The difference is most stark between white and Black Vermonters; only 26% of white households live in rented housing, compared to 72% of Black households. Similar, but less drastic discrepancies in housing tenure are reflected in the American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, multiracial, and Hispanic populations.

Figure 8-5 Homeownership rate by race, 2010-2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 5-Year Estimates (Tables B25003A-G) via HousingData.org

Figure 8-6 Homeownership rate by race, 1990-2022

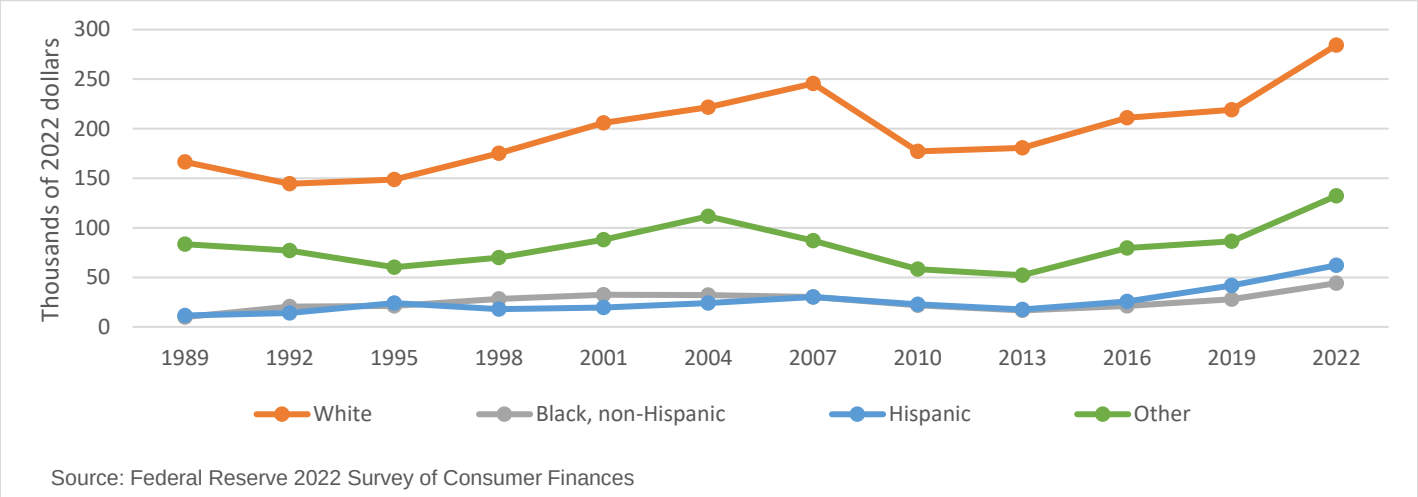


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and American Community Survey 1-year estimates

[126] Urban Institute, Reducing the Racial Homeownership Gap

The discrepancy in homeownership may be attributed largely to the discrepancy in generational wealth between white and non-white households. According to the Federal Reserve's 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances,[127] national median wealth for white households is about 600% that of Black households, with a very similar trend reflected for Hispanic households.

Figure 8-7 National net worth by race and ethnicity, 1989-2022

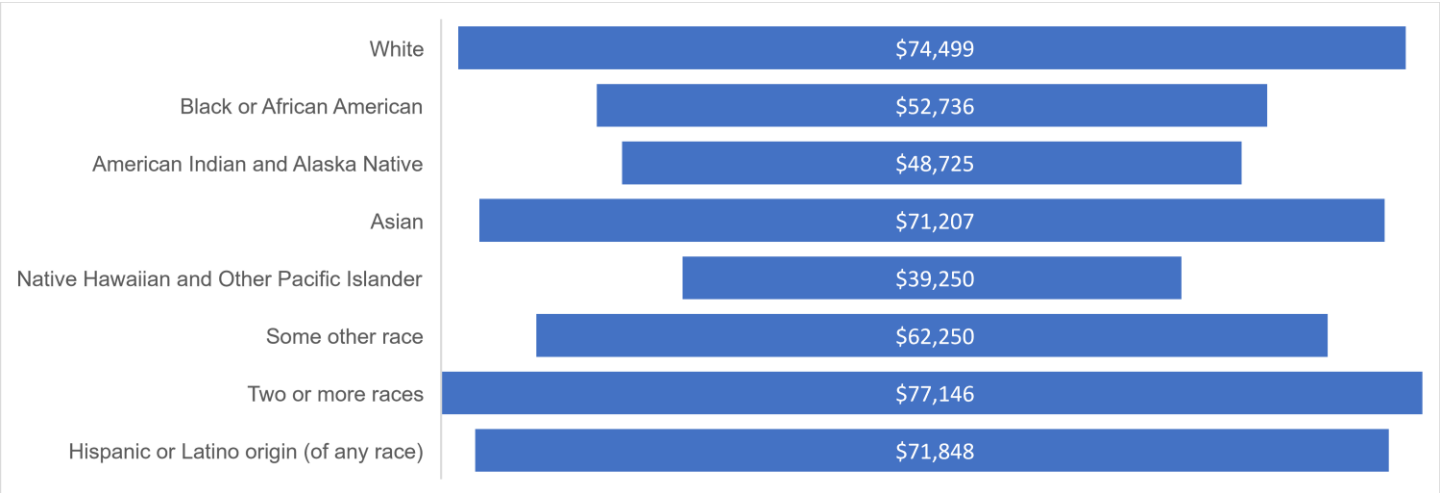


Source: Federal Reserve 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances

In addition to the disparity in wealth, BIPOC Vermonters may continue to face housing and lending discrimination, despite the significant protections that have been established against such practices, including the federal Fair Housing Act and the state omnibus, Act 182[128].

Vermonters of color also tend to have lower incomes. The median income for Black Vermonters in 2022 was only 70% of the median income of the white population.

Figure 8-8 Median household income, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022 (Table S1903)

[127] Federal Reserve, 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances
[128] State of Vermont, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, November 2022

Homelessness Disparities

Black, Hispanic and Native American Vermonters are disproportionately likely to experience homelessness, according to the most recent data available. While Black Vermonters represent 1.2% of the state population, they comprised 7.7% of the people experiencing homelessness as of the 2023 Vermont Point-In-Time count of people experiencing homelessness. The disparity for Black residents is greater in Vermont than it is on the national level.[129] Similar disparities existed for Hispanic Vermonters and Native American Vermonters who were disproportionately likely to experience homelessness.

Figure 8-9 Homeless population compared to overall population by race, 2022

	Vermont Population	% of total population	Homeless Population	% of homeless population
Asian	10,824	1.7%	36	1.0%
Black	8,000	1.2%	266	7.7%
Hispanic	13,793	2.1%	154	4.5%
Native American	1,336	0.2%	83	2.4%
Two or More Races	25,809	3.9%	69	2.0%
White	594,131	90.9%	2,835	82.3%
Total	653,893		3,443	

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2022 5-year Estimates, Table DP05; 2023 HUD Point In Time Count

[129] National Alliance to End Homelessness, Racial Inequalities in Homelessness, by the Numbers, June 1, 2020