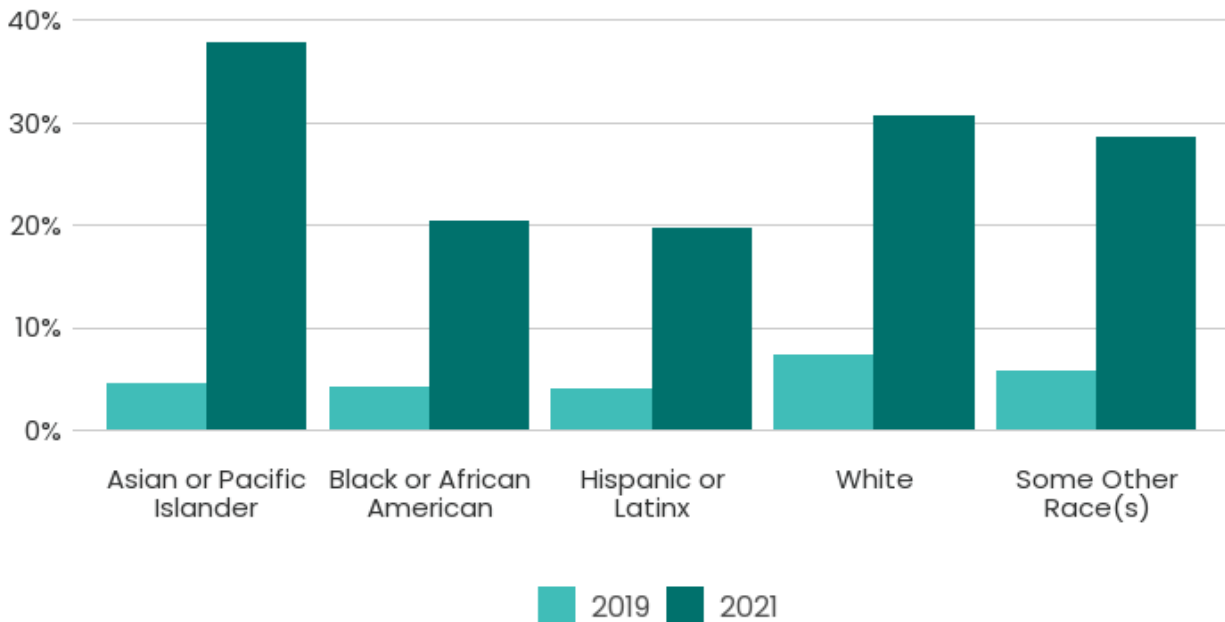


Telework Behaviors of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders



In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a titanic shift in the way that large segments of people worked. Three years on, we now have solid data to analyze how the pandemic changed telework behavior. As it's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) month, let's look at how AAPI residents in the central Puget Sound region adapted to work from home opportunities.

Share of Teleworkers by Race and Ethnicity



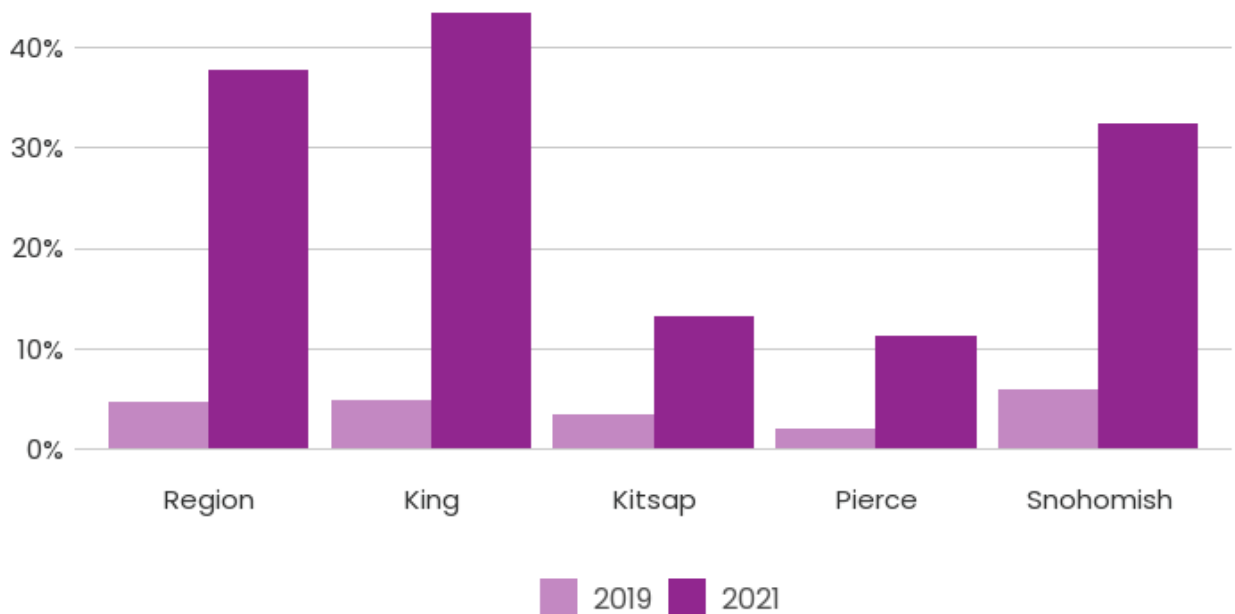
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 and 2021 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Data in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties

As a collective, central Puget Sound residents of Asian and Pacific Islander descent had the greatest share of workers who reported usually working from home, compared to all other racial and ethnic groups. Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Census data from 2021 shows that 38% of AAPI workers in our region were primarily working from home one year after the start of the pandemic.

Comparing to 2019 data, we see the percentage of AAPI workers who teleworked increased by more than eight times. Meanwhile, the share of teleworkers for all other racial and ethnic groups increased by around four times, resulting in about 30% or less who primarily worked from home. In 2021, an estimated 136,000 AAPI residents usually teleworked in the central Puget Sound region.

However, as we've previously [reported](#), the AAPI community is not monolithic, and the experiences of AAPI residents in the central Puget Sound region are diverse. Different factors may relate to who does and does not telework. Parsing this data by county provides a stark reminder of that.

Share of AAPI Teleworkers by County



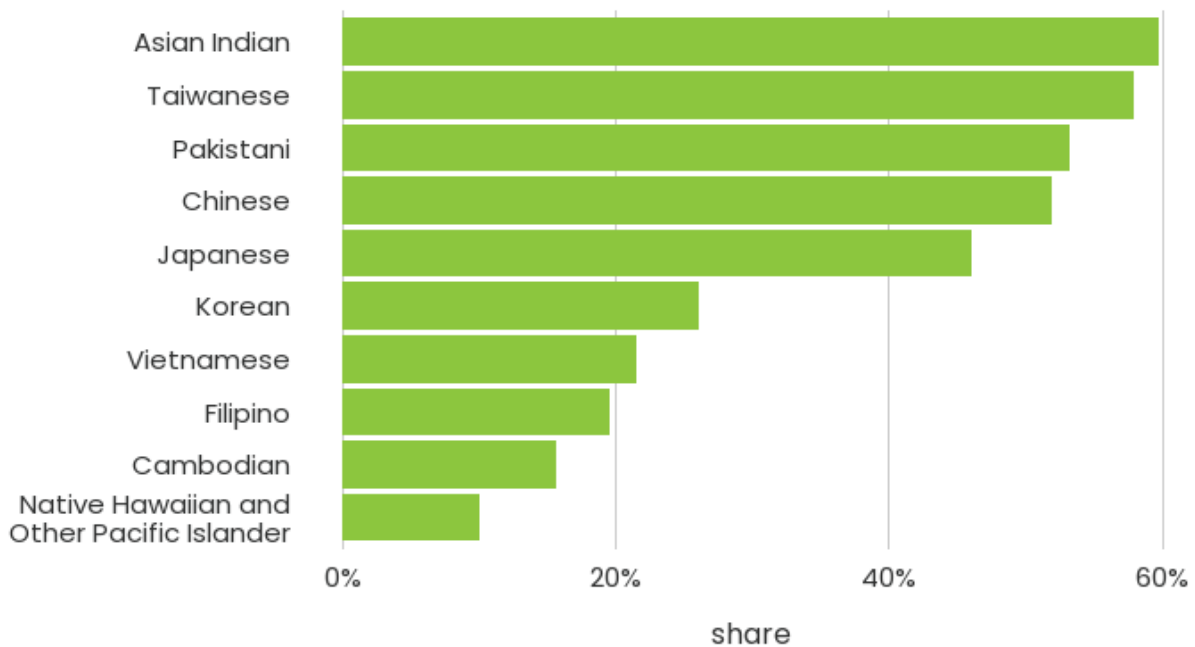
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 and 2021 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Data in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties

AAPI workers in the region's four counties have large divergences with respect to their telework behavior, according to the same Census data. In 2021, AAPI workers who lived in King and Snohomish counties had the highest telework rates, at 43% and 32%, respectively. Compared to 2019, this represents a nine-fold increase for AAPI workers in

King County and a five-fold increase for those in Snohomish. On the other hand, AAPI workers who lived in Kitsap and Pierce counties were teleworking at a little more than 10% in 2021. This was still a very significant increase from 2019 but telework in the AAPI community is still far less common than in the other two counties.

Differences among various groups within the AAPI community can also be seen in the PUMS data. Among the central Puget Sound region’s 10 largest AAPI groups by population, five groups reported 2021 telework rates at nearly 50% or more, and five groups reported nearly 25% or less.

Share of Teleworkers for 10 Most Populous AAPI Groups



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2021 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Data in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties

Notably, around half or more of the workers who identified as Asian Indian, Taiwanese, Pakistani, Chinese, or Japanese in the central Puget Sound region usually teleworked in 2021. In comparison, roughly a quarter or less of those who identified as Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino, Cambodian, or Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander did the same. Similar patterns emerged in the data when we examined telework and place of birth.

The differences highlighted above are likely, in part, due to how immigration and history has shaped different AAPI populations in this region. There is a diversity of backgrounds and circumstances, including refugees escaping very challenging situations, immigrants with highly specialized and sought-after skills, and families with

multiple generations of history in the region. Different communities under the AAPI umbrella may face different barriers and have different employment opportunities, only some of which may include the option to work virtually. PSRC has explored these disparities in its [Opportunity Mapping](#) work and showed that access to jobs, education, housing, transportation, and healthy environments varies across the region. A side-by-side look at the Opportunity Map with [a map in our previous work](#) showing where different AAPI communities are concentrated suggests there may be a relationship between AAPI telework rates and access to opportunities.

Understanding the differences between AAPI groups is important. PSRC acknowledges the challenges faced by different AAPI subgroups living around the four-county region. The ability to telework has ramifications in public health, transportation need, and other important outcomes.

When planning for racial equity, we need to consider the diversity of where people live and where they come from and look beneath the surface of regional medians and averages. This consideration allows PSRC to identify inequity otherwise concealed by broader trends.

[Download the data used in this Trend.](#)