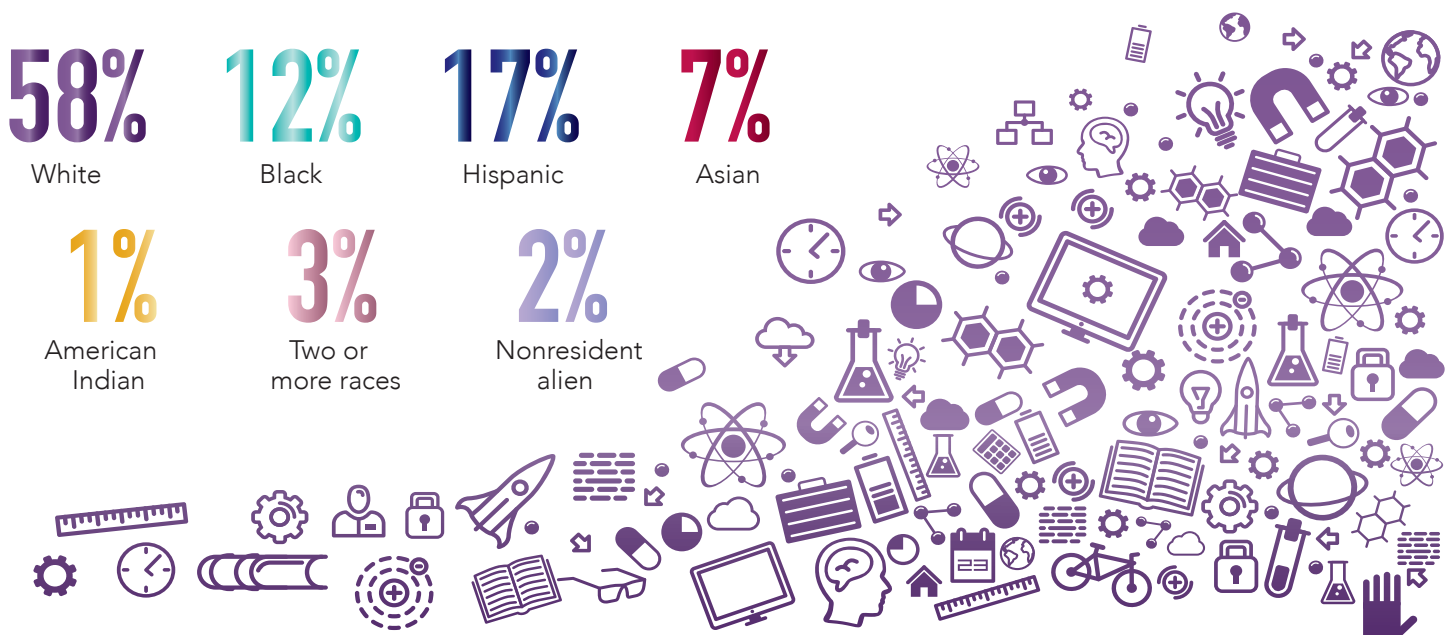


Lagging in STEM credentials

Minority students don't even comprise half of those who are earning STEM certificates and associate degrees.

Distribution of STEM certificates and associate degrees by race-ethnicity, 2016-17



Source: AACC analysis of U.S. Department of Education, “Digest of Education Statistics, Number and Percentage Distribution of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Degrees/Certificates Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity, Level of Degree/Certificate, and Sex of Students: 2016-17,” June 2019.



Nearly 60 percent (58 percent, or 92,937) of about 160,000 science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) certificates and associate degrees awarded in 2016-17 were to white students. Hispanic students comprised the second largest group (17 percent, or 27,258 credentials), followed by blacks/African-Americans (12 percent, or 19,837 credentials) and Asians (7 percent, or 10,631 credentials). Minority students have made some progress over the past decade in these fields, but with mixed results. Between the 2008-09 and 2016-17 academic years, Hispanic students’ share of attaining sub-baccalaureate STEM credentials rose from 13 percent to 17 percent, while the share for black/African-American students decreased from 14 percent to 12 percent. Many community colleges are working to increase diversity among students in STEM fields, including participation in programs such as the National Science Foundation’s Advanced Technological Education program and other initiatives.

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