Finding and Using Race and Ethnicity Data in Maine

Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous & Tribal Populations

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The primary source of race/ethnicity data is the U.S. Census Bureau

Programs within the Census Bureau with race/ethnicity data:

- Decennial census, population estimates program, American Community Survey, Current Population Survey, Economic Census, Annual Business Survey

- Other possible sources include state or local agencies/nonprofits, such as Maine Department of Education, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, or Catholic Charities Maine
  - Currently, much of this data is difficult to access and inconsistent; data governance should help with these challenges

Data Definitions

- Race and ethnicity data from the U.S. Census Bureau must adhere to 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards and are based on self-identification

- People may provide multiple responses to the race question on Census questionnaires if they identify as more than one race
  - When aggregate data are presented, frequently the categories reflect each race alone, for people who responded with a single race, and one category of "two or more races" that includes people who responded with two or more races
  - Sometimes data are given as a race "alone or in combination" - this would include people who reported a single race or that race along with at least one other race
  - Although not one of the OMB categories, the Census is allowed use of a "some other race" option

- Hispanic origin is considered separate from race in Census data – someone of Hispanic or Latino origin can be of any race

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Federal Race Guidelines

White	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa
Black or African American	A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa
American Indian or Alaska Native	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment
Asian	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands

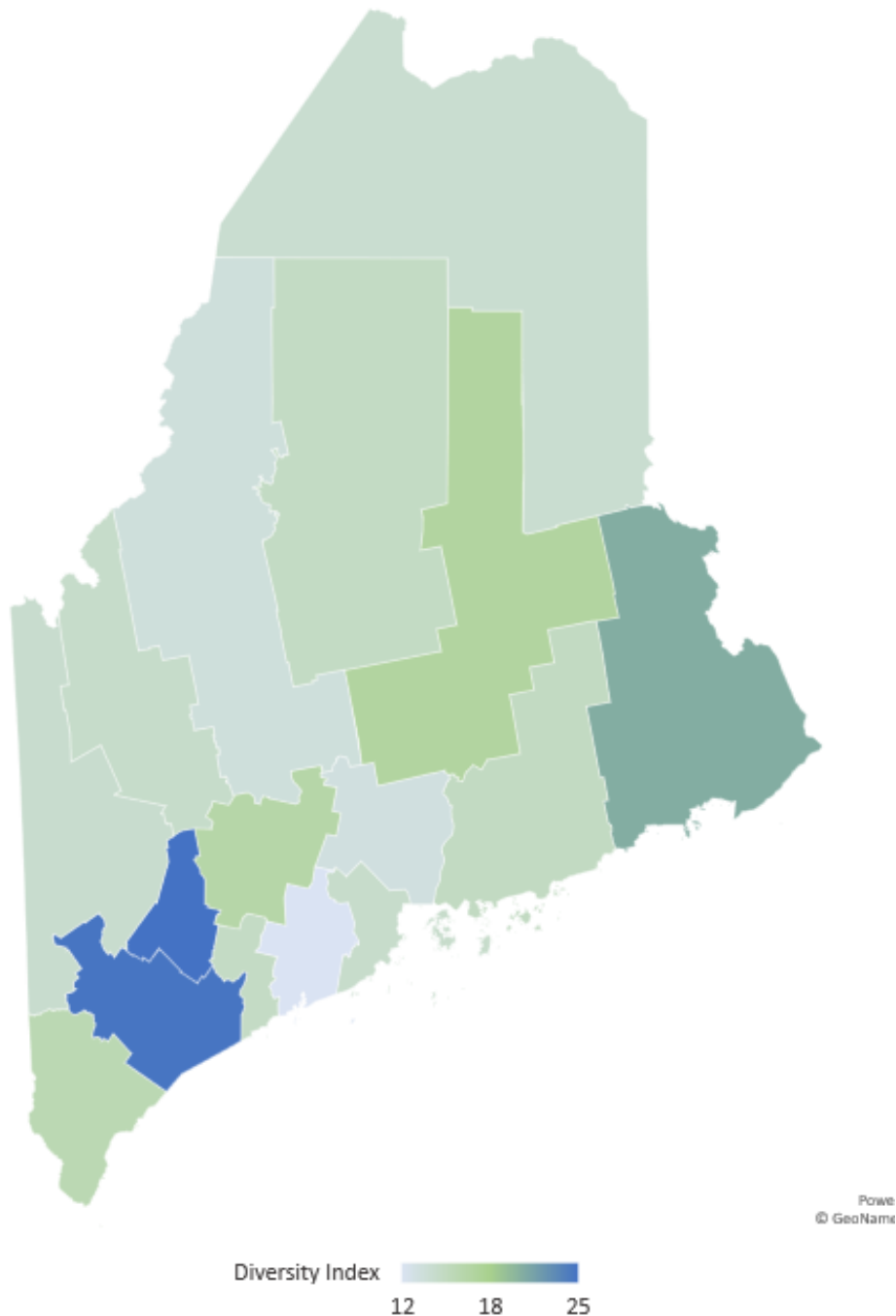Share of 2020 Maine Population by Race/Ethnicity

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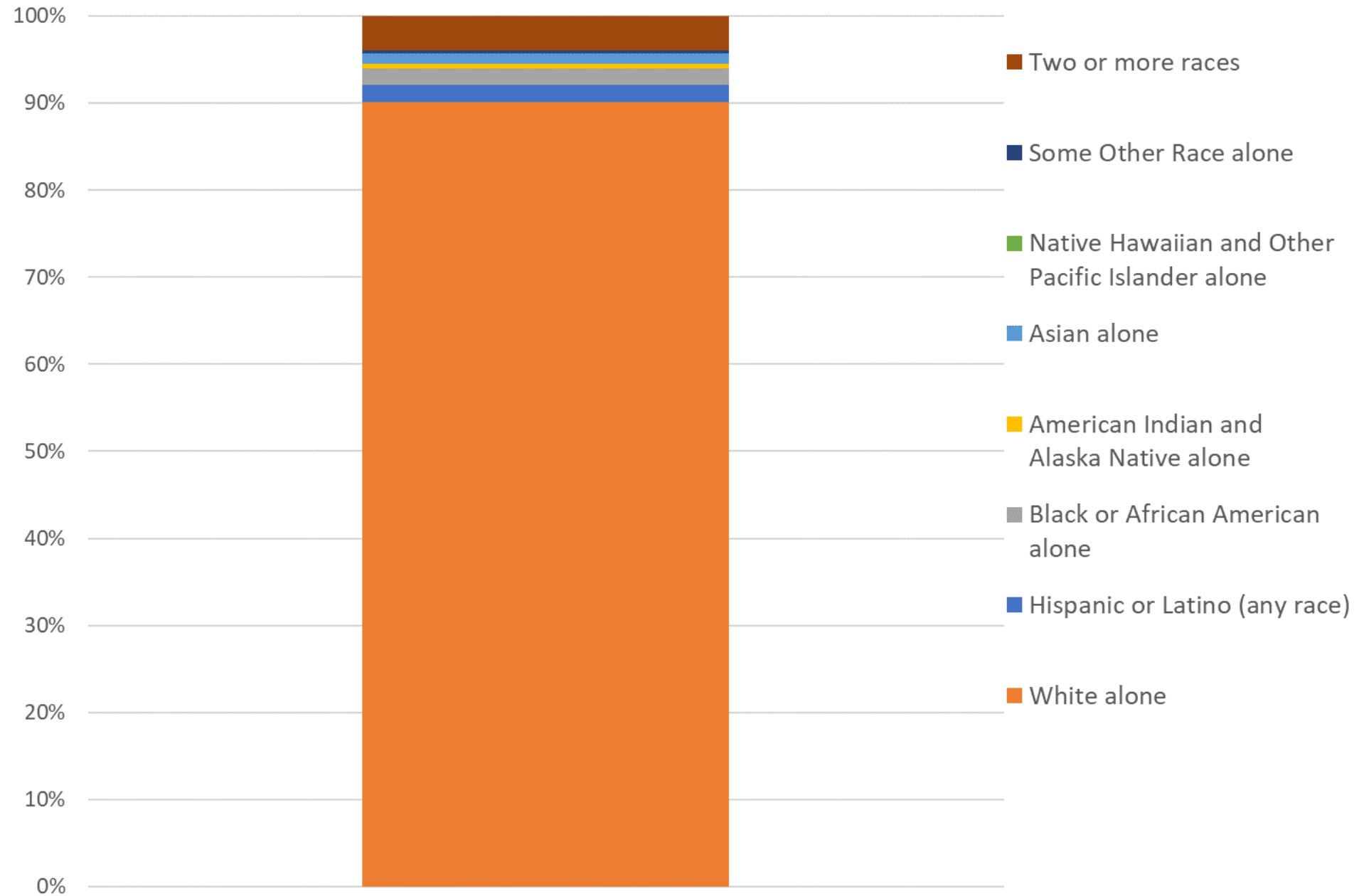
Change in Maine Population by Race, 2010-2020
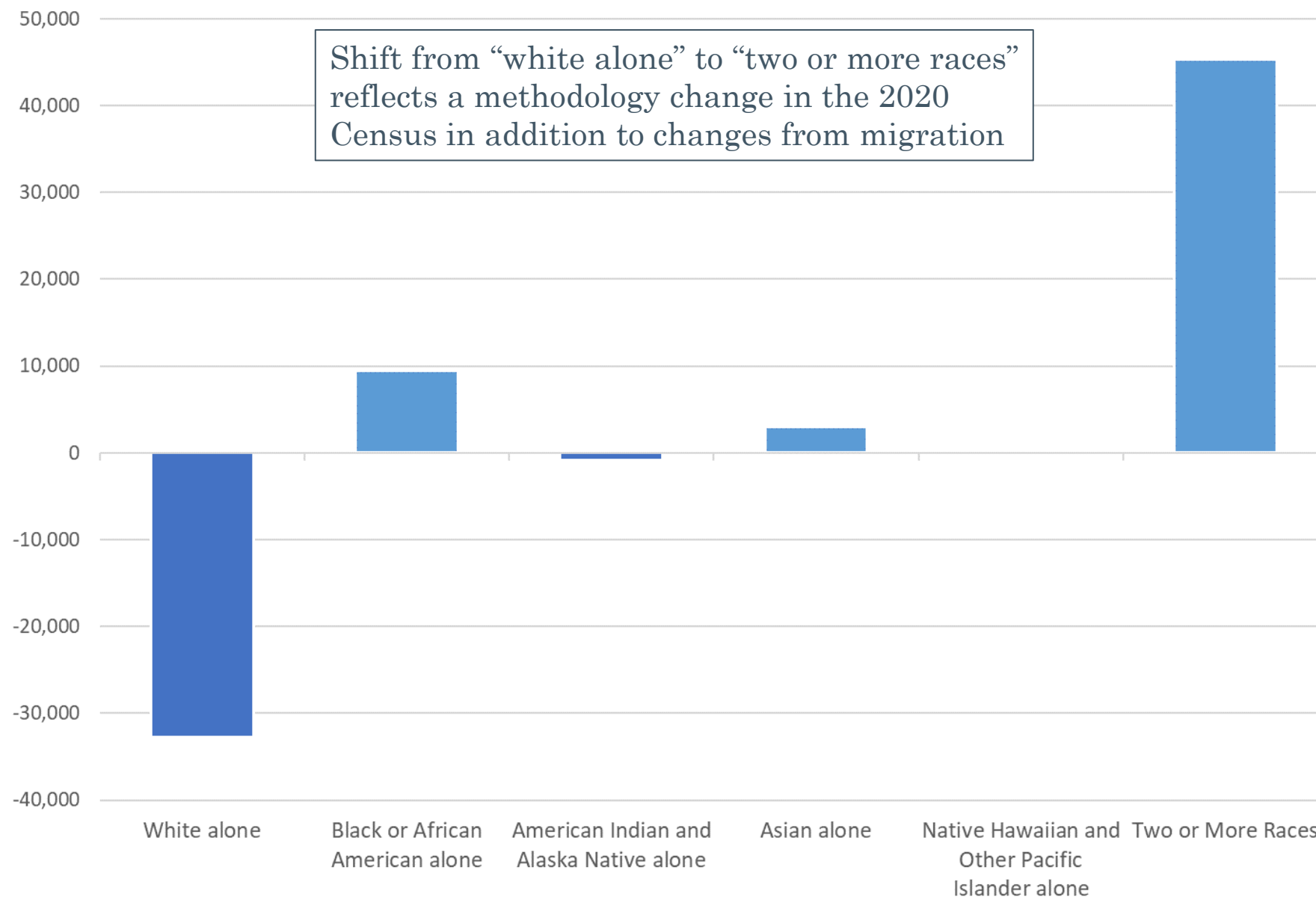
Shift from "white alone" to "two or more races" reflects a methodology change in the 2020 Census in addition to changes from migration
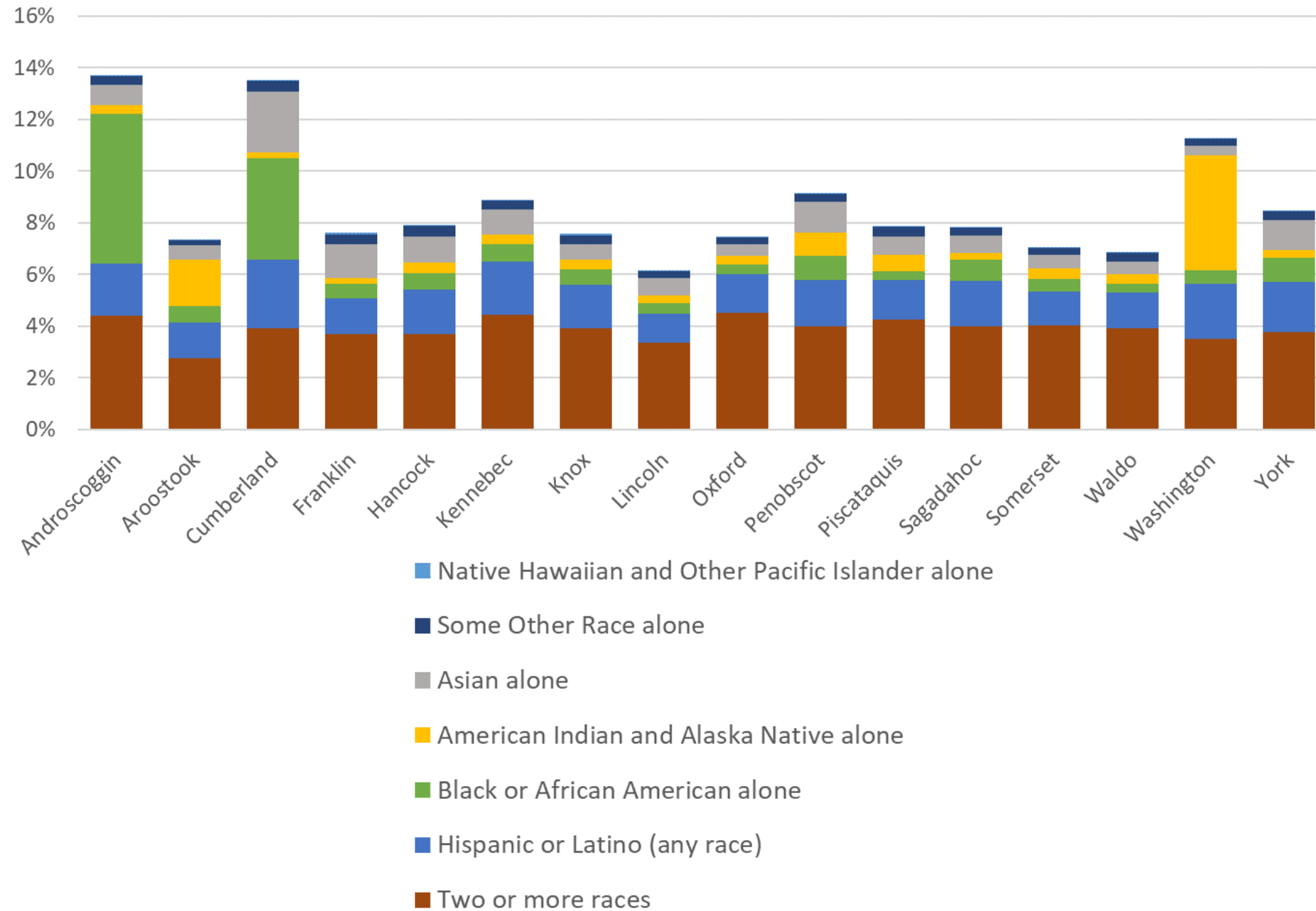
9.8% Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
Lowest percentage in U.S., but improved from 5.6% in 2010

White alone | Black or African American alone | American Indian and Alaska Native alone | Asian alone | Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone | Two or More Races

Diversity Index in Maine, 2020: All Ages
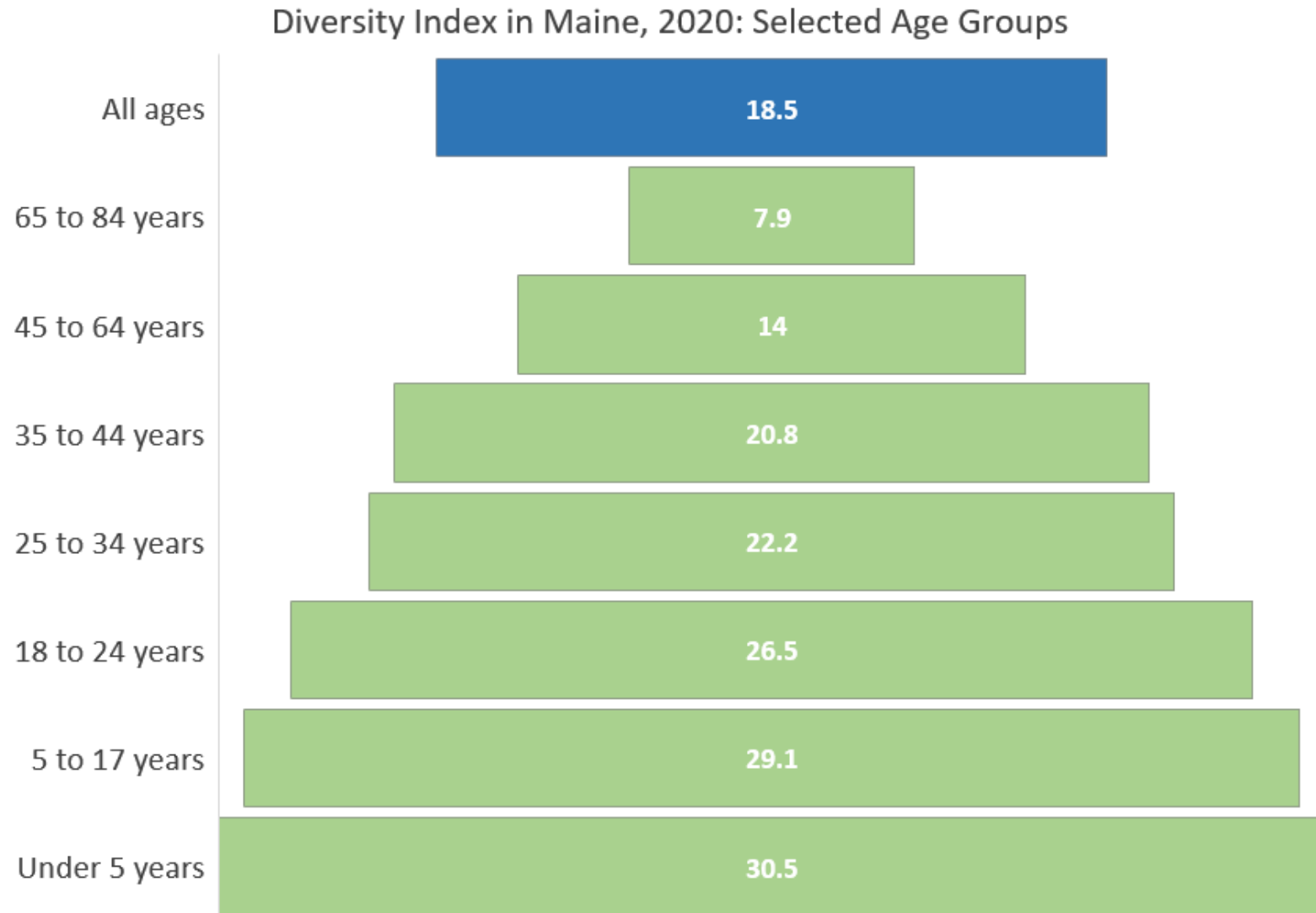

Diversity Index
12   18   25

The diversity index tells us the chance that two people selected at random will be from different race or ethnicity groups

- In 2020, Maine ranked as the least diverse state in the U.S.
  - ME index = 18.5%
  - U.S. index = 61.1%

- But there is regional variation: Cumberland, Androscoggin, and Washington counties are more diverse
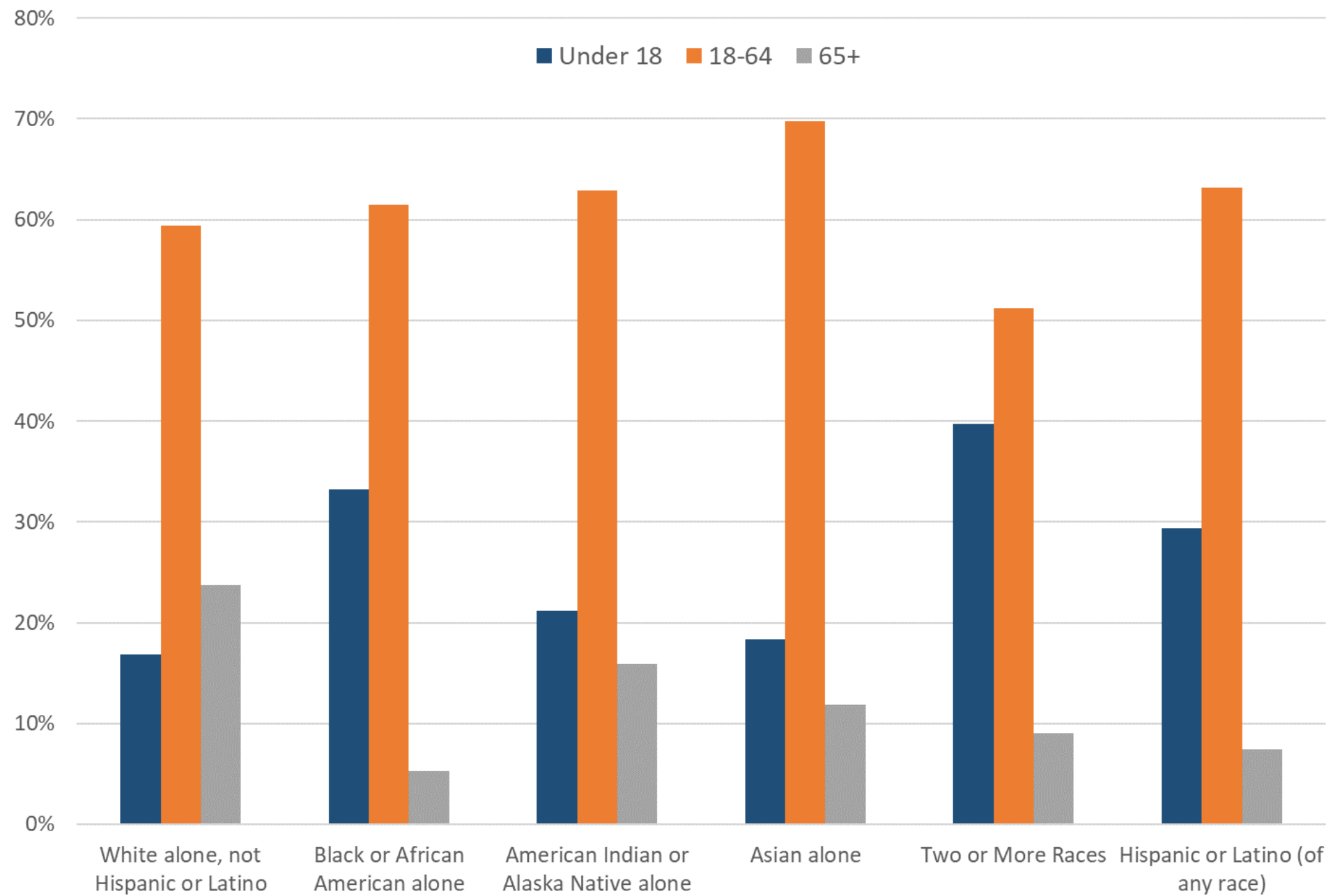
Share of 2020 Population by Race/Ethnicity Excluding White Alone

Legend:
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone
- Some Other Race alone
- Asian alone
- American Indian and Alaska Native alone
- Black or African American alone
- Hispanic or Latino (any race)
- Two or more races

X-axis categories: Androscoggin, Aroostook, Cumberland, Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Sagadahoc, Somerset, Waldo, Washington, York

Younger generations in Maine are significantly more diverse than the state as a whole

Diversity Index in Maine, 2020: Selected Age Groups

Age Group	Diversity Index
All ages	18.5
65 to 84 years	7.9
45 to 64 years	14
35 to 44 years	20.8
25 to 34 years	22.2
18 to 24 years	26.5
5 to 17 years	29.1
Under 5 years	30.5

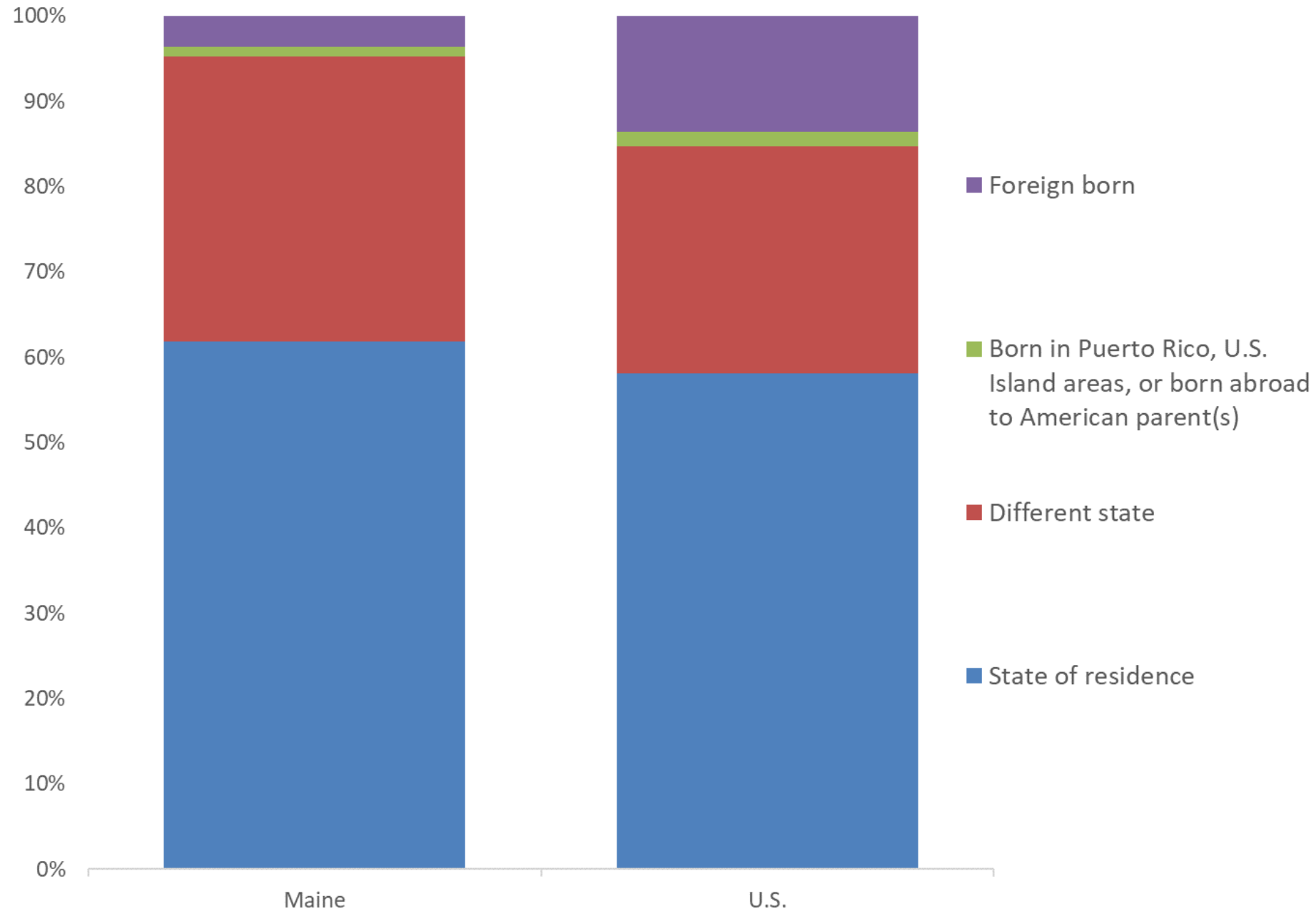Percent of 2022 Maine Population by Age and Race/Ethnicity

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 Population Estimates Program

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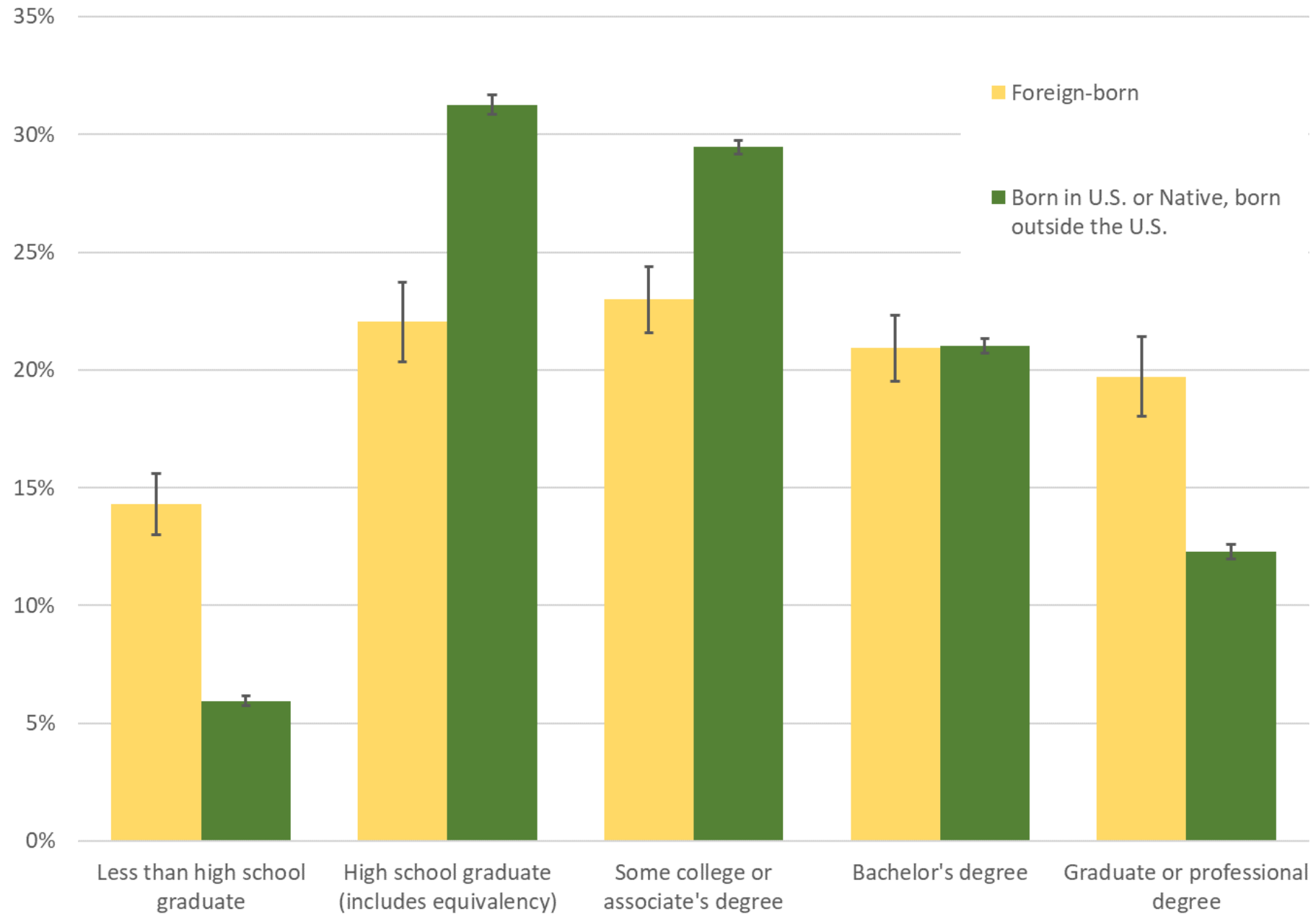Race and/or ethnicity is not the same as place of birth

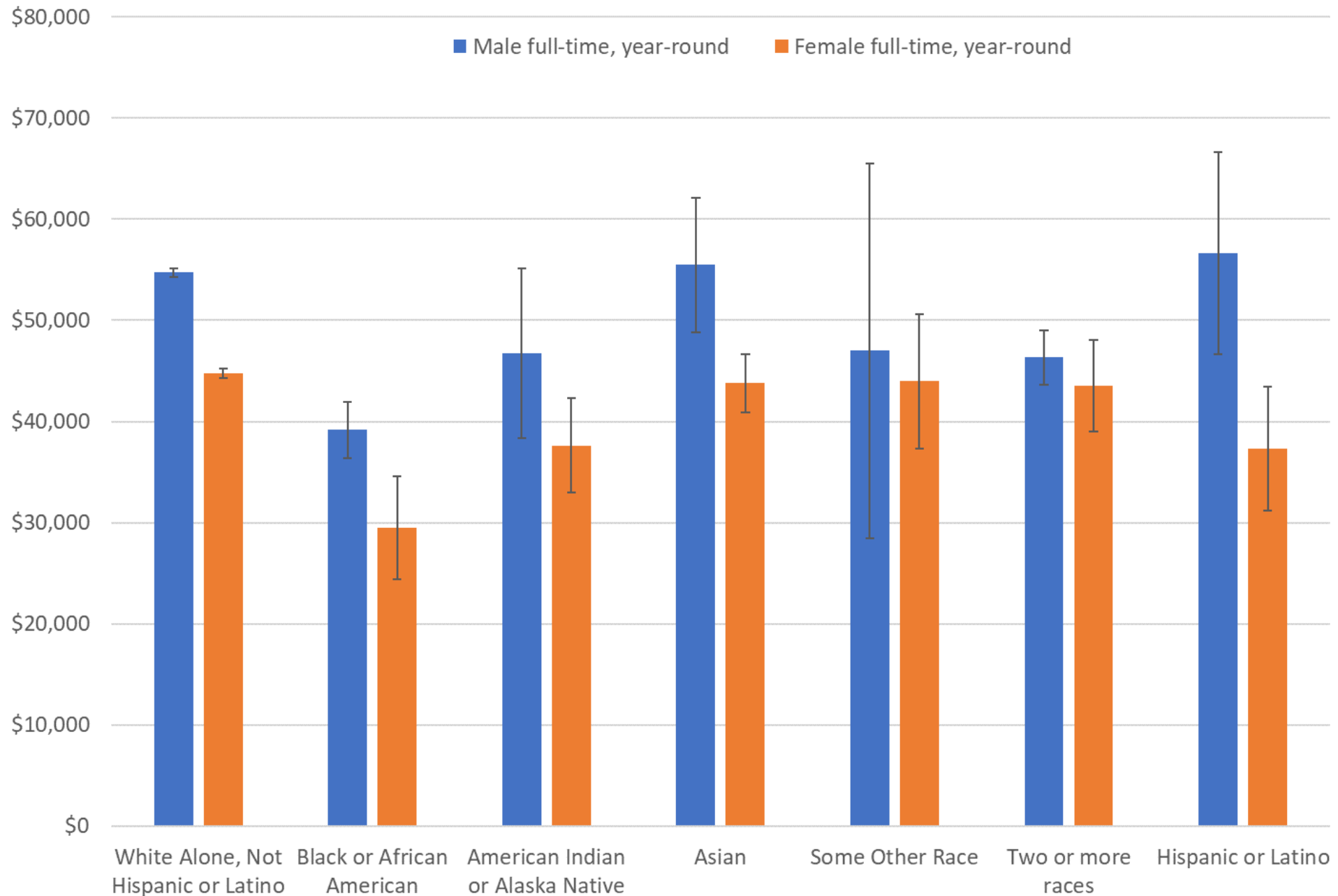Share of Maine Population by Region of Birth for Race/Ethnicity

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates
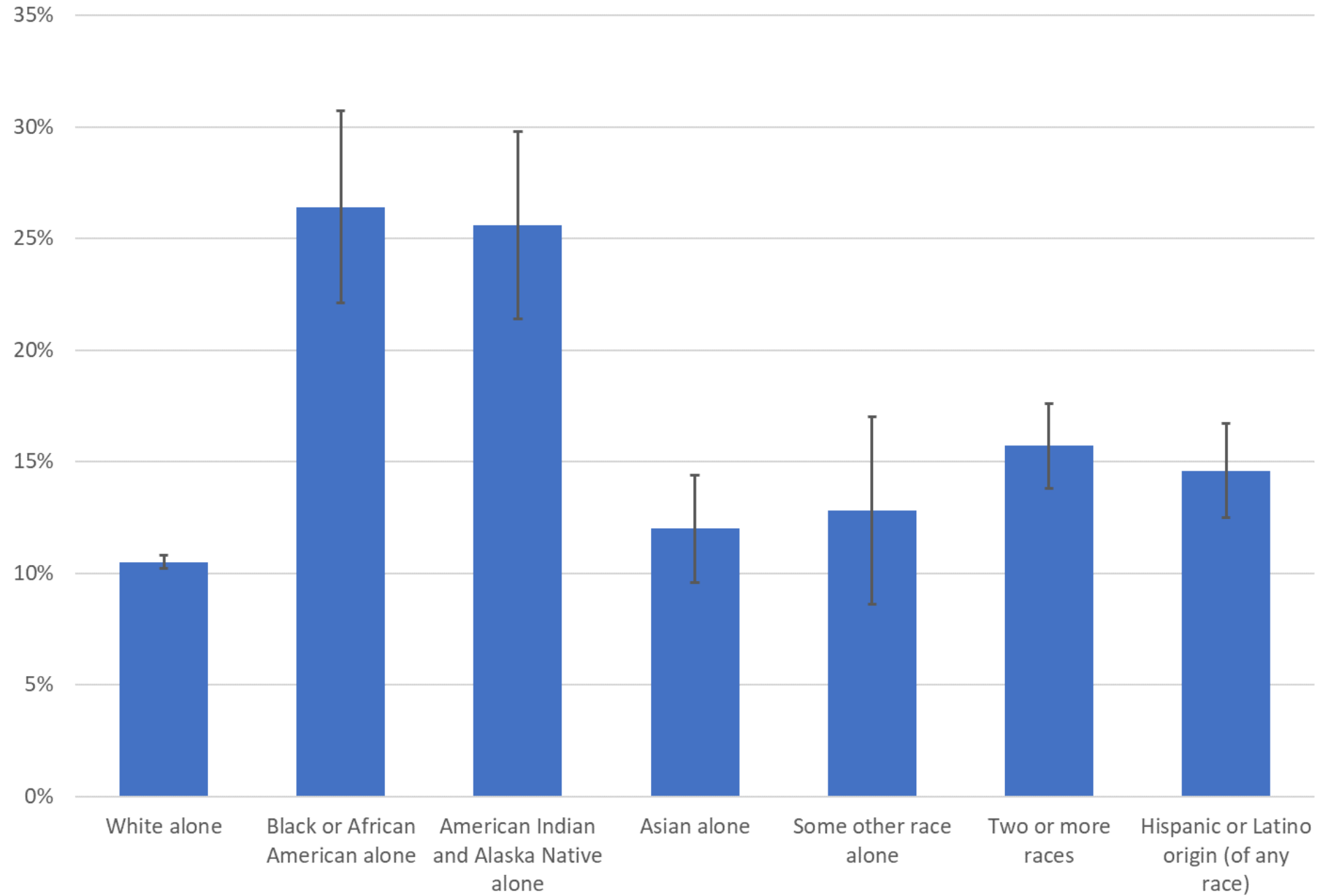
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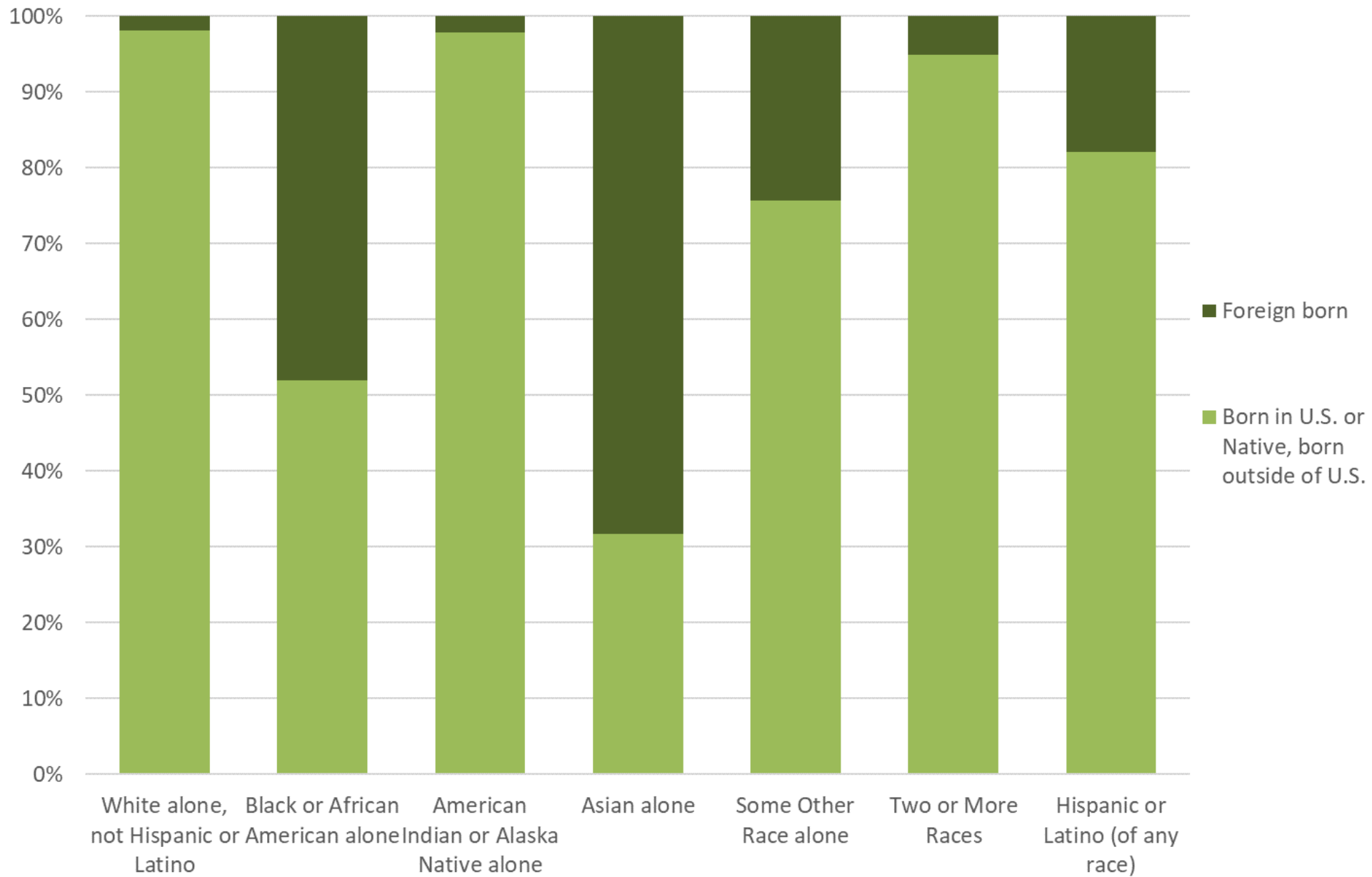
Place of Birth of Current Population

Educational Attainment of Maine Population Age 25+

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Median Earnings by Race/Ethnicity and Sex, Maine

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Percent of Population Below Poverty Level, Maine, by Race/Ethnicity

Challenges with the data and things to watch for

Availability and Reliability

For small population groups, data may not be available, or data might be unreliable (high margins of error)

This is especially challenging for small geographies or small racial/ethnic groups

Tip: if you're using American Community Survey data, 5-year estimates will give you better results than 1-year estimates

For many reasons, several populations tend to be undercounted in the decennial census, which is the benchmark for nearly all population data

- Results from the 2020 Census show <u>national</u> undercounts of:
  - Black or African American population,
  - the American Indian or Alaska Native population living on a reservation,
  - the Hispanic or Latino population, and
  - people who reported being of Some Other Race

  - As well as children, especially age 0-4, and renters

Differential privacy

The Census Bureau has changed its privacy protection method to Differential Privacy. Instead of other methods formerly used, such as swapping, this method uses an algorithm to randomly inject error into data, making it harder for computers to identify personal data.

Almost all data from the 2020 Decennial Census is subject to Differential Privacy, and several different algorithms are being used depending on the data. Much of it can still be considered reliable, while other data points should be used with caution. Differential privacy is rolling out to additional census products in the future.

Red, Yellow, Green Guide published at:

https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/census-information

(scroll down to 2020 Census Results section)

Upcoming OMB definition change

Proposed changes still in development include
- Combined race and ethnicity question
- Adding Middle Eastern or North African as a category

Upside: would better align with how individuals think of their own race/ethnicity

Downside: would make comparisons to years using previous definition extremely difficult; may lose some detail currently available around ethnicity

Contact Information

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