

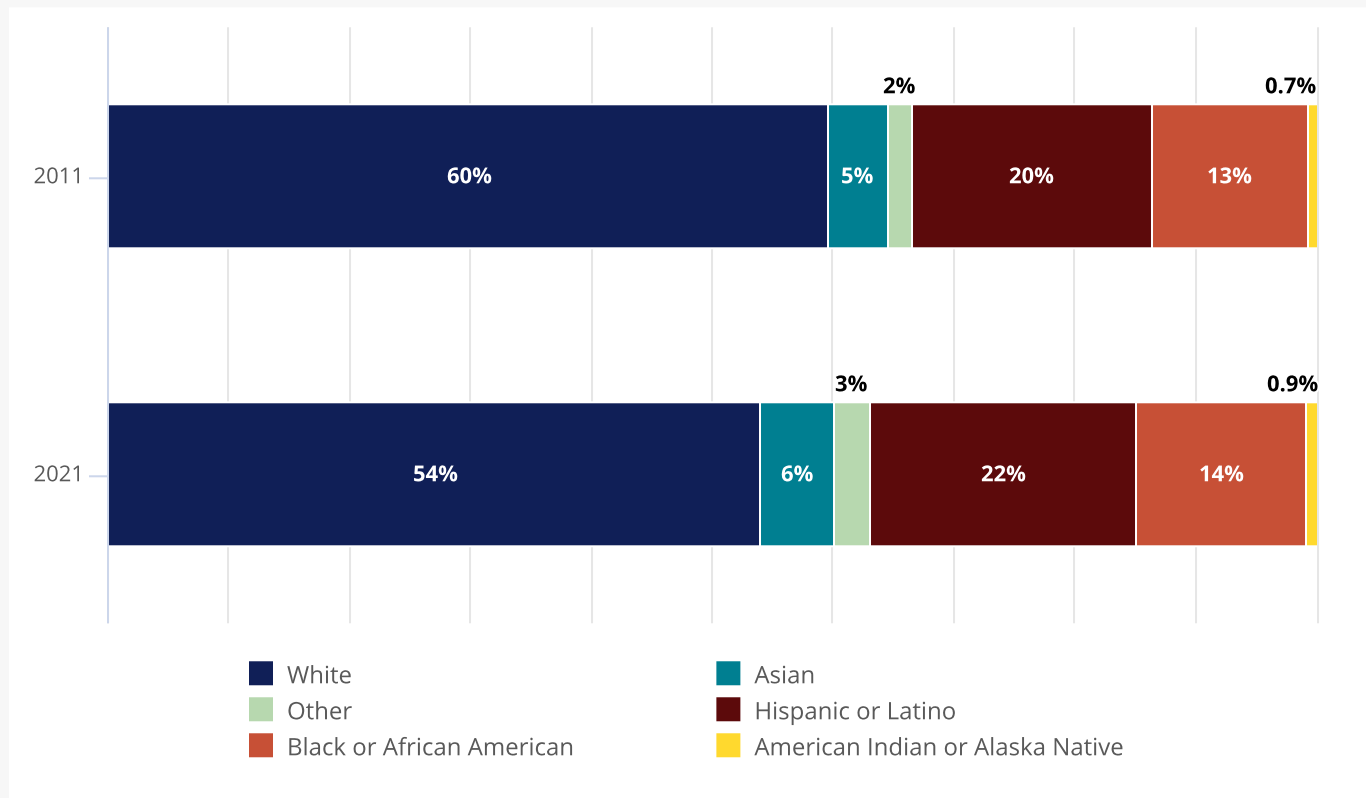
## SIDEBAR

**The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. College-Age Population**

Data from the Census Bureau show that the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. college-age population changed from 2011 to 2021 (figure 7-B). Underrepresented minorities collectively accounted for a larger share of the 18- to 34-year-old population in 2021 than 2011, and this increase occurred primarily among Hispanic individuals. The proportion of the U.S. college-age population that is Hispanic increased from 20% in 2011 to 22% in 2021, but the proportions of this population that are Black or that are American Indian or Alaska Native were similar.

**Figure 7-B**

U.S. population ages 18–34, by race and ethnicity: 2011 and 2021

**Note(s):**

Population data includes the civilian noninstitutionalized population as well as individuals in the armed forces living off post or with their families on post. Hispanic or Latino may be any race; race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Other includes Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander and more than one race.

**Source(s):**

Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

The growth in the share of S&E degrees earned by underrepresented minorities (figure 7-5) in the last decade may be driven at least in part by the increasing share of these groups among the U.S. college-age population. If the rate of increase in S&E degrees earned by members of a historically underrepresented group is not commensurate with their simultaneous growth in the college-age population, then their degree of underrepresentation in S&E is not necessarily diminishing. For example, if the Hispanic share of S&E degrees increased by 1% over the same time period that the Hispanic share of college-age individuals increased by 10%, then Hispanic individuals would have become proportionately less represented among S&E degree recipients.