Profile of New York City’s Chinese Americans: 2005-2007

Asian American Federation Census Information Center

Introduction

Using data from the Census Bureau’s 2005-2007 American Community Survey (ACS) and Census 2000, this profile outlines characteristics and trends in New York City’s Chinese American population. It presents data on growth rates, immigration, citizenship status, educational attainment, English ability, poverty, income, and housing. Key variables will be placed in context with New York City’s total population.

New York City’s Chinese population remained the largest Asian ethnic group in the city. Compared with all New York City residents, Chinese New Yorkers had less education, lower English skills, lower incomes, and higher poverty rates overall and for seniors.

Chinese New Yorker Statistics at a Glance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Alone or in-Combination Population in 2005-2007 466,146</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population in Queens as a Percentage of NYC Pop. 39%</td>
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<td>Population in Brooklyn 34%</td>
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<td>Population in Manhattan 22%</td>
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<td>Population in Staten Island 3%</td>
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<td>Population in the Bronx 2%</td>
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<td>Alone or in-Combination Population in 2000 374,321</td>
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<td>Percent Change from 2000 17%</td>
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<th>Immigration and Citizenship</th>
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<td>Foreign-Born Percentage of Total Population 72%</td>
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<td>Citizenship Percentage of Foreign-Born 57%</td>
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<td>Percentage of Adults With Some College Education 42%</td>
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<th>Limited English Proficiency (Speaks English “Well,” “Not Well” or “Not at All”)</th>
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<td>Percentage of Total Population 60%</td>
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<th>Income</th>
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<td>Median Household Income $45,185</td>
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<td>Median Family Income $47,077</td>
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<td>Per Capita Income $22,270</td>
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<th>Poverty</th>
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<td>Percentage of Children Living in Poverty 23.1%</td>
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Population

According to the most recent ACS data, New York City was home to 84 percent of New York State’s Chinese residents, which is a slight decrease from 85 percent in Census 2000. About 5.4 percent of all New York City residents were Chinese, up from 4.7 percent during Census 2000. The Chinese population in New York City grew by 19 percent from 374,321 in 2000 to 446,146 in the most recent estimate. The City’s total population grew only by 3 percent over the same period. Chinese, the largest Asian group in the city, comprised 45 percent of the Asian population, compared to 43 percent in 2000.

By borough, 39 percent of Chinese New Yorkers lived in Queens, 34 percent in Brooklyn, 22 percent in Manhattan, 3 percent in Staten Island, and 2 percent in the Bronx. In 2000, the distribution of the Chinese population was similar with the largest share (38 percent) of Chinese in Queens, followed by Brooklyn (33 percent); Manhattan (24 percent); Staten Island (2 percent); and the Bronx (2 percent). The map on page 3 shows the distribution of Chinese by ACS Public Use Microdata Areas, which are based on New York City Community Districts. Neighborhoods with large Chinese populations included Chinatown in Manhattan; Bensonhurst and Sunset Park in Brooklyn; and Elmhurst and Flushing in Queens.

Chinese in New York City were slightly more likely to be working age adults (age 18 to 64) than the general population. Only 20 percent were children (under 18 years of age) and 12 percent were seniors (age 65 or older), compared to 23 percent and 12 percent for all New Yorkers, respectively. The percent of Chinese seniors rose from 10 percent in 2000, while the percent of Chinese children fell from 21 percent. The age distribution for all New Yorkers remained unchanged from 2000.
Immigration and Citizenship
Over the same time period, the Chinese immigrant population grew from 281,800 to 319,260, an increase of 13 percent, compared to 19 percent growth for the citywide Chinese population. As a consequence, the percent of Chinese New Yorkers who were immigrants fell from 75 percent in 2000 to 72 percent in the most recent data. Contrast this decrease with the small increase in the share of immigrants from 36 percent to 37 percent among all New York City residents.

Most Chinese immigrants (52 percent) in New York City came to live in the United States in 1990 or later, almost the same percentage as immigrants in general (53 percent).

Of the city’s Chinese immigrants surveyed in the ACS, 57 percent were naturalized citizens, compared with 51 percent of all New York City immigrants.

Education
Chinese in New York City had less schooling than the city’s general population. Out of New York City’s Chinese adult population, 33 percent did not have a high school diploma, higher than the overall New York City rate of 21 percent. Both of these percentages fell from 2000 levels, which were 42 percent for Chinese and 28 percent overall. Additionally, 22 percent of Chinese adults had less than a ninth-grade education compared with 10 percent of adults in general. In 2000, these percentages were 31 percent and 15 percent, respectively.

At the other end of the spectrum, 42 percent of Chinese had some form of post-secondary education, compared with 51 percent citywide. These represent slight increases from 2000, which were 39 percent and 48 percent, respectively.

English Proficiency
Limited English proficiency (LEP) is a major issue for New York City’s Chinese population. According to the ACS, 60 percent of Chinese spoke English “well,” “not well,” or “not at all,” compared with the citywide LEP incidence of 23 percent. In 2000, the Chinese LEP rate was slightly higher at 63 percent while the rate citywide was 24 percent. More than half (65 percent) of working-age Chinese adults and 90 percent of elderly Chinese had English limitations, compared with 25 percent and 33 percent, respectively, of all city adults in those age groups.

Almost one in three Chinese seniors lived in poverty.

Poverty
While the overall poverty rate and child poverty rate decreased from 2000 for both Chinese and the general population, the elder poverty rates for both groups rose over the same time period. Overall, 19.6 percent of Chinese lived below the poverty line, comparable to the citywide rate of 18.9 percent. In 2000, those poverty rates were higher at 22 and 21 percent, respectively. Among children, 23.1 percent of Chinese lived in poverty – a lower rate than 27.8 percent for all children. In 2000, those rates were higher at 27 percent and 30 percent, respectively. The 31.3 percent poverty rate for Chinese seniors was significantly higher than 19.0 percent for all elderly New Yorkers. In 2000, those rates were lower at 27 percent and 18 percent respectively.

Income
Compared with the general population, Chinese in New York City had lower median household, median family and per capita incomes. Chinese median household income of $45,185 was lower than the citywide figure of $47,581. Median family income for Chinese of $47,077 was below the $52,913 median income for families in general. Chinese per capita income of $22,270 was far below citywide per capita income of $28,610.

Housing
Compared with the average New York City household size (2.67 people), Chinese had larger households (averaging 3.17 people). Chinese households were more likely to live in crowded conditions. While 8 percent of households in general had more than one occupant per room, almost 14 percent of Chinese households had more than one occupant per room.

Corresponding with overall New York City patterns, most Chinese households rented. Fifty-four percent of Chinese New Yorkers rented, compared with 66
Chinese Americans in New York City by Community Districts

Legend
- Surrounding Areas
- NYC Landmarks

Population of Chinese Alone
- 44 - 2,613
- 2,614 - 6,975
- 6,976 - 16,450
- 16,451 - 30,974
- 30,975 - 60,284

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Produced by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center
Sources: 2005-2007 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Set, U.S. Census Bureau
percent for the city overall. Since Census 2000, homeownership has risen in New York City, from 42 percent to 46 percent among Chinese and from 30 percent to 34 percent in the general population.

One in three Chinese adults did not have a high school diploma or equivalent.

Chinese households in New York City also were slightly more likely to devote a large share of their income to housing expenses than households in general. Among homeowners, just over 42 percent of Chinese households paid thirty percent or more of their household income to owner costs, compared with 40 percent of all households that owned.\textsuperscript{10} For renters, 52 percent of Chinese households spent more than thirty percent of their household income on rent and utilities, compared with 49 percent of all households that rented.

Footnotes
\textsuperscript{1} Data sources used in this brief were the 2005-2007 American Community Survey (ACS) Special Population Profile and the Census 2000 and are for the Chinese Alone or in Any Combination category, unless otherwise noted. The 2005-2007 ACS represents a three-year period estimates and represents the best available data on small populations as of January 2009. Chinese population numbers do not include the Taiwanese population, except where noted.
\textsuperscript{2} Data based on Chinese Alone category.
\textsuperscript{3} Data based on Chinese Alone category and includes Taiwanese.
\textsuperscript{4} Data based on Chinese Alone category and includes Taiwanese.
\textsuperscript{5} “Limited English Proficiency” refers to individuals who reported speaking English “well,” “not well,” or “not at all”.
\textsuperscript{6} Data based on Chinese Alone category and includes Taiwanese.
\textsuperscript{7} Families and individuals were classified as below the poverty line if their total family income or unrelated individual income over the last 12 months was less than the poverty threshold specified for the applicable family size, age of householder, and number of related children younger than 18 present for the year and month the data was collected. For these thresholds, please see http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2007/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf.
\textsuperscript{8} Household income refers to the income of all occupants of a housing unit. Family income referred to the earnings of a group of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.
\textsuperscript{9} The commonly accepted definition of crowded housing is more than one occupant per room.
\textsuperscript{10} Selected monthly owner costs are the sum of payments for mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, or similar debts on the property; real estate taxes; fire, hazard, and flood insurance on the property; utilities; and fuels. It also includes, where appropriate, the monthly condominium fee for condominiums and mobile home costs.

Technical Notes

Race Categories
Beginning with the Census 2000, the Census Bureau collects data in which respondents were allowed to mark more than one race. For example, 2000 data include results for single-race as well as multiple-race responses. “Chinese Alone” corresponds to the respondents who reported only Chinese and no other race category. “Alone” should be considered the minimum population size in any analysis that uses Census Bureau data.

To be as inclusive as possible, this profile uses “Chinese Alone or in Any Combination” numbers where possible. “Alone or in Any Combination” corresponds to the responses (not respondents) that included Chinese, either alone or in any combination with other Asian groups or other race categories. If a respondent selected Chinese and another racial group (e.g., Chinese and black), that individual, while excluded from the “Asian Alone” count, was tallied in the “Alone or in Any Combination” count for Chinese and the other racial group. Hence, some overlap in the “In Any Combination” numbers occurred. “Alone or in Any Combination” should be considered the maximum population size in any analysis that uses Census Bureau data.

American Community Survey
As part of the redesign of the decennial census, the Census Bureau has implemented the American Community Survey (ACS) as the replacement for the Decennial Census Long Form. Instead of collecting Long Form data (demographic, housing, social, and economic information) once every ten years, the ACS will eventually supply communities at the local level with new data every year. In order to obtain sufficiently large number of samples for small populations, the ACS will make use of the concept of period estimates. For Census tracts, five-year period estimates will be updated annually starting in 2010. For communities with 20,000 or more people, annual three-year period estimates will be released at the end of each year beginning with 2008. Populations with 65,000 or more people will receive annual single-year estimates starting in 2006.

About This Profile
This is one of a series of Asian American population profiles prepared by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center (CIC) to increase understanding of the rapidly-growing and diverse Asian American population in the New York metropolitan area. For more on the Federation, visit www.aafederation.org.

Data citations from this profile should include the following acknowledgment: “Data derived from analysis by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center.”

For more information regarding this profile, please contact the Asian American Federation Census Information Center at (212) 344-5878 x19 or howard.shih@aafederation.org, or visit www.aafny.org/cic/.

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