



Census Profile: New York City's Asian American Population

Asian American Federation of New York Census Information Center

Introduction

Using data from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. censuses, this profile outlines characteristics and trends in New York City's growing Asian American population. It covers growth rates, ethnic composition, immigration and citizenship status, educational attainment, English ability, poverty, income, and housing. Key variables are compared with those for New York City's total population.¹

New York City's Asian population saw tremendous increases in size and diversity from 1990 to 2000. In 2000, Asians had a higher rate of post-secondary education and higher household and family incomes but greater senior citizen poverty and lower per capita income than the general city population. Therefore, census data indicate that far from being a "model minority," Asian New Yorkers face a number of serious social and economic challenges.

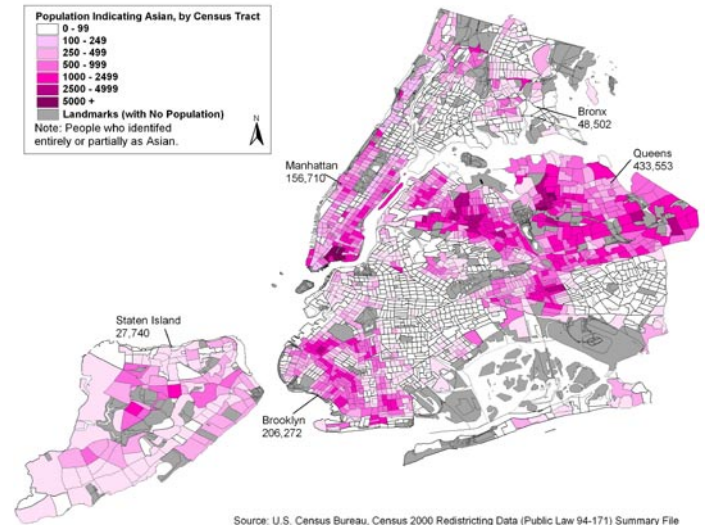
Population

Approximately 75 percent of the Asian population in New York State lived in New York City, where about 1 in 10 residents was Asian. The Asian population in New York City grew by 71 percent from 509,955 in 1990 to 872,777 in 2000.² The five largest Asian groups in the city in 2000 were Chinese³ (374,321), Indians⁴ (206,228), Koreans (90,208), Filipinos (62,058) and Pakistanis (34,310).⁵ From 1990 to 2000, Bangladeshis, Hmong, Sri Lankans, Malaysians, Pakistanis and Indians had growth rates of more than 100 percent.⁶ In the last decade, Chinese and Indians experienced the greatest numerical increases, adding 141,413 and 111,638 people, respectively.

New York City Asian Population Composition

Asian Group	1990		2000		
	Population	Asian Alone, One Asian Group	% Growth From 1990	Asian Alone or in Combination	% Growth From 1990
Bangladeshi	4,955	19,148	286.4%	28,269	470.5%
Cambodian	2,565	1,771	-31.0%	2,296	-10.5%
Chinese ³	232,908	357,243	53.4%	374,321	60.7%
Filipino	43,229	54,993	27.2%	62,058	43.6%
Hmong	6	8	33.3%	26	333.3%
Indian ⁴	94,590	170,899	80.7%	206,228	118.0%
Indonesian	1,443	2,263	56.8%	3,017	109.1%
Japanese	16,828	22,636	34.5%	26,419	57.0%
Korean	69,718	86,473	24.0%	90,208	29.4%
Laotian	366	234	-36.1%	316	-13.7%
Malaysian	845	1,368	61.9%	2,287	170.7%
Pakistani	13,501	24,099	78.5%	34,310	154.1%
Sri Lankan	811	2,033	150.7%	2,640	225.5%
Taiwanese	6,011	4,288	-28.7%	5,488	-8.7%
Thai	3,944	4,169	5.7%	5,002	26.8%
Vietnamese	8,400	11,334	34.9%	13,010	54.9%
Other Asian	9,835	24,088	144.9%		
Total	509,955	787,047	54.3%	872,777	71.1%

Distribution of the Asian Population in New York City



Immigration and Citizenship

At 76 percent (664,750), immigrants comprised the vast majority of the Asian population in New York City in 2000, compared with 36 percent of all city residents.

Most Asian immigrants (82 percent) in New York City came to the United States in the last 20 years, fueling recent population growth. Specifically, 48 percent (315,891) immigrated from 1990 to March 2000; 34 percent (227,038) came to this country from 1980 to 1989; and 18 percent (121,821) arrived before 1980.

Of the city's Asian immigrants counted in the 2000 census, 43 percent (286,496) were naturalized citizens, compared with 45 percent of all New York City immigrants. Asians in the city obtained citizenship faster than foreign-born New Yorkers as a whole. According to 2000 census data, 34 percent of foreign-born Asian New Yorkers became citizens within 20 years, exceeding the city-wide foreign-born residents' rate (31 percent).

Naturalization Rates of New York City Foreign-Born Populations

Population Group	Year Immigrated		
	Before 1979	1980 - 1989	1990 - 3/2000
Asian-Born Residents	84%	57%	17%
All Foreign-Born Residents	78%	49%	18%

Education

Asian American adults occupied two very different ends of the educational spectrum in 2000.⁷ Out of New York City's Asian adult population (586,460), 31 percent (178,967) did not have a high school diploma and 20 percent (117,920) had less than a ninth-grade education. These rates were higher than the overall New York City rates of 28 percent and 15 percent, respectively. At the other end of the scale, 50 percent (295,963) of Asians had some form of post-secondary education, compared with 48 percent of the general city population.

English Proficiency

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a major issue for New York City's Asian population.⁸ In 2000, 49 percent (401,214) of Asians spoke English "well," "not well," or "not at all," compared with the city-wide LEP incidence of 24 percent. By age, 51 percent (311,383) of Asian working-age adults (age 18 to 64) and 73 percent (45,831) of elderly Asians (age 65 and older) had English limitations, compared with 25 percent and 27 percent, respectively, of all city adults in those age groups.

About 25 percent of Asian senior citizens and children in NYC lived in poverty in 2000.

Poverty

The general Asian poverty rate as of Census 2000 was similar to that for the total city population but differed for children and elderly residents.⁹ Twenty percent (170,420) of all Asians lived below the poverty line, compared with the New York City rate of 21 percent. About one-fourth (24 percent, or 46,698) of Asian children lived in poverty – a lower rate than 30 percent for city children overall. Eighty percent (36,964) of Asian children in poverty lived in two-parent families, compared with 34 percent of all city children. The poverty rate for senior citizens, at 24 percent (14,803), was significantly higher than 18 percent for all elderly New Yorkers.

Income

Compared with the total New York City population, Asians had higher median household and family incomes but lower per capita income, according to the 2000 census.¹⁰ Asian median household income of \$40,978 and median family income of \$41,901 edged out city-wide figures of \$38,293 and \$41,887, respectively. However, Asian per capita income of \$18,416 was far below city-wide per capita income of \$22,402.

Housing

An important factor regarding household income is household size. Compared with the average New York City household size (2.59 people), Asians in 2000 had relatively large households (averaging 3.13 people). Larger households may have included multiple rent-payers, contributing to higher household incomes. Corresponding with overall New York City patterns, most Asian households in 2000 were rented. Two-thirds (66 percent) of Asian New Yorkers rented and 34 percent owned their homes, compared with 70 percent renters and 30 percent homeowners in the city overall.

Footnotes

¹ All numbers are from the Summary Files (SF) One, Two, Three and Four of the U.S. census and are for the Asian Alone or In-Combination category. However, SF One and SF Two data refer to information collected from a 100 percent U.S. population survey while SF Three and Four data represent a sample survey.

² This is using the Asian In-Combination tabulation. When compared with the Asian Alone category for the 1990 census, the population increased by 54 percent (787,047).

³ In 2000, Chinese population numbers did not include the Taiwanese population.

⁴ The U.S. Census Bureau uses "Asian Indian" to mean people indicating their race as Asian Indian, Bengalese, Bharat, Dravidian, East Indian or Goanese. This profile uses "Indian" for this population group, based on the population's preference.

⁵ Based on Asian Alone categories, the five largest Asian groups in New York City in 2000 were: Chinese (357,243), Indian (170,899), Korean (86,473), Filipino (54,993), and Pakistani (24,099).

⁶ Rate refers to the percentage growth of a particular variable. Rates and percentages for each section of this profile are derived from the data universe related to the topic at hand. Therefore, population tallies for one particular subject will not necessarily correspond with those for another topic.

⁷ For education tabulations, adults were defined as individuals age 25 and older.

⁸ "Limited English Proficiency," as used in the profile, refers to individuals who spoke English "well," "not well," or "not at all" as of Census 2000.

⁹ In the 2000 Census, families and individuals were classified as below the poverty line if their total family income or unrelated individual income was less than the poverty threshold specified for the applicable family size, age of householder, and number of related children younger than 18 present in 1999. For these thresholds, please see

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/threshld/thresh99.html>.

¹⁰ 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.

Technical Note

Race Categories

The 2000 census was the first decennial census in which respondents were allowed to mark more than one race. As a consequence, Census 2000 race information is far more complicated than such data from previous censuses. For example, 2000 data include results for single-race as well as multiple-race responses. "Asian Alone" corresponds to the respondents who reported exactly one Asian group and no other race category. "Alone" should be considered the minimum population size in any analysis that uses Census 2000 data. To be as inclusive as possible, this profile uses "Asian Alone or in Any Combination" numbers.

"Alone or in Any Combination" corresponds to the responses (not respondents) that included the selected Asian group, either alone or in any combination with other Asian groups or other race categories. If a respondent selected an Asian group and another racial group (e.g., Pakistani and black), that individual, while excluded from the "Asian Alone" count, was tallied in the "Alone or in Any Combination" count for the Asian group and the other racial group. Hence, some overlap in the "In Combination" numbers occurred. "Alone or in Any Combination" should be considered the maximum population size in any analysis that uses Census 2000 data.

About This Profile

This is one of a series of Asian American population profiles prepared by the Asian American Federation of New York Census Information Center (CIC) to increase understanding of the rapidly-growing and diverse Asian American population in the New York metropolitan area.

The Asian American Federation of New York, a nonprofit leadership organization that works collaboratively to meet the critical needs of Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area, was selected by the U.S. Census Bureau to operate the only CIC in the Northeast focused on serving the Asian American community. Established in 2000, the center provides census information, conducts data and policy analysis, and encourages census participation. For more information on the Federation, visit www.aafny.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

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

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