



**Asian American Federation
of New York**

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**CENSUS STUDY SHOWS SEVERE POVERTY
AMONG NEW YORK CITY'S ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN**

***Asian American Federation Says City Budget Cuts Would Worsen Situation;
Calls on Government and Community Leaders to Protect Children's Interests***

NEW YORK – An analysis of new census data reveals severe levels of poverty among Asian American children living in New York City, the Asian American Federation of New York said today.

The public policy leadership organization announced its findings as Asian Americans – the fastest-growing population group in New York City – are struggling to recoup September 11th-related economic losses and as proposed city budget cuts threaten vital services for poor Asian American children.

Nearly 1 in 4 Asian American children in New York City lives in poverty, the Federation's federally designated Census Information Center [www.aafny.org/cic/] concluded from recently-released Census 2000 poverty and income information.

The Federation found that 24 percent of Asian American children, or 46,698 youngsters, fell below the poverty threshold of \$17,063 in annual income for a family of four. This poverty incidence significantly surpasses that for non-Hispanic white children in the city (16 percent), all U.S. children (17 percent), and Asian American children nationwide (14 percent).

What's more, the Federation's analysis charted much higher Asian American child poverty levels for certain ethnic groups and for certain boroughs and neighborhoods than overall figures might indicate.

"We are very concerned about the significant poverty rates among Asian American children in New York City – particularly in light of population and economic trends," said Cao K. O, Executive Director of the Asian American Federation of New York. "The rapid growth of the city's Asian American community magnifies the implications of our findings. In addition, as New York's Asian American families continue to recover from the September 11th aftermath, proposed city budget cuts endanger social services, health and education programs that have begun to help poor children break out of poverty cycles."

Providing perspective, O said: "New York City agencies historically have underserved Asian American children, due in part to a shortage of culturally and linguistically relevant services, as well as limited outreach efforts targeting Asian American communities. Contrary to the 'Model Minority' myth that all Asian Americans are self-sufficient high achievers, New York City's predominantly-immigrant Asian American population needs programs to help children and parents overcome cultural and language barriers, to support employment, and to care for latchkey children."

O noted that a few city programs have started offering Asian American children and families opportunities to improve their circumstances. However, he said pending funding reductions would erode these gains.

"In these tough economic times, New Yorkers need to work together to protect our city's vulnerable children," O said. "The Federation is calling on policy-makers to consider the effects of curtailing programs and to spare programs that are working. We're also encouraging community leaders, as well as private funders, to help find new ways to meet Asian American children's needs."

In addition to overall figures, the Federation's census study produced these more detailed findings:

- **Certain Asian American ethnic groups are exceptionally poor.** Groups with the largest percentages of children in poverty are Vietnamese (40 percent), Bangladeshi (39 percent) and Pakistani (34 percent). The Chinese (27 percent) and Indian (23 percent) communities rank fourth and fifth for child poverty although they are New York City's largest and second-largest Asian American populations, respectively.
- **Asian American child-poverty levels vary with geography and range higher than the overall 24-percent rate.** The highest percentages of poor Asian American children live in Brooklyn (with a 34 percent child-poverty rate), Manhattan (30 percent) and the Bronx (29 percent). Although Queens is home to the largest number of poor Asian American children (18,685), it has the fourth-highest incidence of child poverty (18 percent). On a neighborhood level, Astoria in Queens has an Asian American child-poverty rate of 26 percent, while 40 percent of Chinese American children in Manhattan's Chinatown are poor.
- **More than 3 out of 4 (77 percent) of New York City's poor Asian American children live with two parents.** In contrast, only 37 percent of all of the city's impoverished children reside in two-parent families. This discrepancy highlights the fact that Asian American children come from two-parent working poor families, who are part of a population with less money per person compared to other groups. The Asian American per capita income in the city is only \$18,416, while the per capita income for New York City's population as a whole is \$22,402, and the figure for non-Hispanic whites is \$36,800. The breadth of this economic disparity is amplified, given that, relative to other racial groups, New York City Asian Americans have the highest percentage (61 percent) of working-age people in the labor force.

"The Federation's findings are a compelling reminder that the Asian American community is not homogenous," said Jessica Lee, Executive Director of the New York City-based Coalition for Asian American Children and Families. "Our children's needs often vary between ethnic groups and boroughs. Policy-makers and service providers should use these statistics to develop more targeted outreach and services."

The Asian American Federation of New York is a not-for-profit organization that provides public policy and community service leadership to identify and meet the critical needs of Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area. The New York City-based Federation serves the Asian American community by analyzing issues, voicing common concerns, advocating for responsive policies, offering financial and management assistance, coordinating service delivery, and creating unified, community-wide initiatives. The Federation, which began operations in 1990, has a membership of 36 community agencies that provide health and human services to diverse populations.

In August 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau designated the Asian American Federation as one of 57 Census Information Centers in the country and the only such center in the New York metropolitan area focused on Asian American communities. As an official repository of Census Bureau data, the Federation receives a variety of Census Bureau information and services; analyzes census data; and distributes census information to and about New York City's Asian American population.

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