



Asian American Federation
Of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 20, 2004

CONTACT: Andrew Yan, 212-344-5878, x19
Carol Peng, 212-344-5878, x22

NEW JERSEY'S ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION IS NATION'S FIFTH-LARGEST AFTER NEARLY DOUBLING IN A DECADE, ASIAN AMERICAN FEDERATION REPORTS

***Census Profile Shows State's Asian Americans Have More Education,
Higher Household and Family Incomes, and Lower General and Child Poverty,
But Less English Ability, Lower Per Capita Income, and Higher Elderly Poverty Than Overall Population***

Gov. McGreevey Praises Federation, Calls Portrait "Invaluable" for Boosting Understanding

NEW YORK – New Jersey's Asian American population nearly doubled from 1990 to 2000, making it the fifth-largest Asian population in a U.S. state, according to a census profile released today by the Asian American Federation of New York. The document reports that due mainly to immigration, the number of Asian Americans in New Jersey jumped by 95 percent, from 270,839 to 527,594, in the last decade.

Available at www.aafny.org, the profile of New Jersey's Asian American population is the latest in a series of demographic portraits from the Asian American Federation, a nonprofit leadership organization committed to improving the quality of life of Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area. Designed to broaden understanding of Asian American populations, the profiles are based on examination of census data by the Federation's Census Information Center (CIC), the only such center established in cooperation with the U.S. Census Bureau to provide census data and analysis on Asian Americans in the tri-state area.

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for your hard work, which has provided our state with a marker portrait of the Garden State's growing Asian community," New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey wrote in a letter to the Federation. "The information you have provided will undoubtedly prove invaluable in our efforts at obtaining a greater understanding of the Asian community."

"Our census profile depicts common characteristics as well as striking diversity among the more than half a million Asian Americans living in New Jersey in 2000," said Cao K. O, executive director of the Asian American Federation. "The Federation's analysis revealed a population as notable for its differences as its similarities, and we urge those serving the needs of Asian Americans in New Jersey to take both into account."

O added: "Despite financial success for many New Jersey's Asian Americans, as a whole and in particular counties, census figures do not support popular perceptions that all or most Asians in the state are wealthy and have lived in the United States for a long time. In 2000, Asians in New Jersey tended to have more education, higher household and family incomes, and lower general and child poverty rates than the total statewide population, but they also had less command of English, lower per capita income, and a higher elderly poverty rate. Most of New Jersey's Asian residents are recent immigrants, and we found pockets of poverty and other signs of lower socioeconomic status, especially among Asian senior citizens and residents of Hudson and Atlantic counties."

Key facts in the Federation's profile include the following (referring to 2000 census data unless stated otherwise):

Geographic Distribution:

- Asian Americans comprised 6 percent of New Jersey's total population but represented much larger proportions of residents in counties near New York City where the Asian population was concentrated.
- More than half of the state's Asian American population lived in three counties: Middlesex, with 21 percent (109,722) of Asian New Jerseyans; Bergen, with 19 percent (100,389); and Hudson, with 12 percent (62,670).
- New Jersey cities with the largest Asian American populations were Jersey City (with 42,374 Asian Americans), Edison (29,230), Fort Lee (11,269), East Brunswick (7,857), and Palisades Park (7,299).
- Palisades Park had the largest percentage of Asian Americans in relation to its total population (43 percent), followed by Plainsboro Center (37 percent), Society Hill (35 percent), Fort Lee (32 percent), and Princeton Meadows (30 percent).

Basic Population Characteristics:

- Indian Americans were the largest Asian American ethnic group, with more than one-third (34 percent, or 180,957) of New Jersey's Asian population, followed by Chinese (19 percent, or 103,229); Filipinos (18 percent, or 95,063); Koreans (13 percent, or 68,900); and Japanese (4 percent, or 18,830).
- The state's Indian American population grew the most in numbers in the last decade, increasing by 101,517 (from 79,440 to 180,957). Bangladeshis saw the highest growth rate: 268 percent (from 791 to 2,910).
- The median age of Asian American New Jerseyans was 32.4 years – younger than 36.9 statewide.
- More than one-fourth (26 percent, or 136,663) of Asian Americans in New Jersey were children (age 17 or younger); 69 percent (361,628) were working-age adults (age 18 to 64); and 6 percent (29,303) were senior citizens (age 65 or older).
- Nearly three-quarters (72 percent, or 380,578) of New Jersey's Asian Americans were immigrants – compared with 18 percent of all state residents. Almost half (47 percent, or 179,987) of the state's foreign-born Asians came to the United States in 1990 or later, and 32 percent (122,060) immigrated from 1980 to 1989.

English and Education Levels:

- About 12 percent (60,519) of all Asian Americans and 41 percent (10,749) of elderly Asians in New Jersey spoke English “not well” or “not at all.” By contrast, 5 percent of all residents and 6 percent of all senior citizens statewide met this census definition of “Limited English Proficiency.” On a county level, the percentage of all Asians in this English-ability category ran as high as 19 percent (in Atlantic County).
- Roughly 12 percent (40,760) of New Jersey's Asian American adults did not have high school diplomas – compared with 18 percent of all adults statewide. County-wide proportions of Asian adults who were not high school graduates ranged from 6 percent in Somerset County to 30 percent in Atlantic County.
- More than three-quarters (76 percent, or 256,188) of Asian American adults in New Jersey had post-secondary education – exceeding more than half (53 percent) of the state's total adult population. Rates of Asian higher-education attainment varied from 50 percent in Atlantic County to 87 percent in Somerset County.

Poverty, Income and Housing Traits:

- Poverty rates for Asian Americans in general and Asian children (7 percent in both cases) were lower than comparable statewide rates (8 percent and 11 percent, respectively). On a county level, Asian poverty rates were as high as 11 percent in general (in Hudson County) and 13 percent for children (in Passaic County).
- About 10 percent (2,526) of elderly Asian New Jersey residents lived in poverty, surpassing the statewide rate of 8 percent.
- New Jersey's Asian American population had a median household income of \$71,079 and a median family income of \$76,820 – topping overall state figures of \$55,146 and \$65,370, respectively. Asian median household and family incomes were lowest in Cumberland County (\$48,438 and \$51,181, respectively) and highest in Somerset County (\$100,140 and \$105,573).
- Asian American New Jersey residents' per capita income, at \$26,697, was slightly lower than \$27,006 statewide. Asian per capita income ranged from \$17,679 in Atlantic County to \$35,946 in Somerset County.
- An average of 3.23 people lived in an Asian American household in New Jersey – far exceeding the statewide average of 2.68 people per household. This difference helps explain why Asians had a higher mean household income but lower per capita income than the statewide population.
- More than half (54 percent) of Asian American adults in New Jersey owned their homes, while about two-thirds (66 percent) of all New Jersey adults were homeowners. Asian home ownership varied from 34 percent in Hudson County to 83 percent in Sussex County.

The Asian American Federation of New York is a nonprofit leadership organization that works collaboratively to meet the critical needs of Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area. Operating since 1990, the Federation strengthens community-based health and social services capacity by supporting its 35 member agencies and other grassroots organizations; amplifies the Asian American civic voice by defining, analyzing, and advocating for policies to address key community issues; and encourages strategic, high-impact philanthropy within the Asian American community by increasing opportunities for connecting time, talent and financial resources with pressing community needs. For more information, visit www.aafny.org or call 212-344-5878.

The U.S. Census Bureau selected the Federation to operate the only Census Information Center (CIC) in the New York metropolitan area focused on serving the Asian American community. Established in 2000, the center provides census information, conducts data and policy analysis, and encourages census participation. The CIC is publishing a series of population profiles to increase understanding of the rapidly growing and diverse Asian American community. The Citigroup Foundation and the C.J. Huang Foundation have provided funding to support the profile series.