



**Asian American Federation**  
of New York

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Feb. 24, 2005

**CONTACT:** Anna Lee, 212-344-5878, x26 or [anna@aafny.org](mailto:anna@aafny.org)  
Carol Peng, 212-344-5878, x22 or [carol@aafny.org](mailto:carol@aafny.org)

## **CENSUS ANALYSIS HIGHLIGHTS POVERTY, GROWTH, AND LIMITED EDUCATION AND ENGLISH SKILLS OF NEW YORK CITY'S ELDERLY ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION**

### **Asian American Federation Calls for Improvements in Job Opportunities, English Classes, Retirement Income, Housing, Health Care and Health Insurance**

**NEW YORK** – The Asian American Federation of New York, a nonprofit leadership organization, today issued a census-based profile detailing characteristics of New York City's Asian American senior citizens.

Drawn from recently-released and older U.S. Census Bureau data, the demographic portrait shows that elderly Asian Americans in New York City generally were poorer, less educated and less familiar with English than the city's Asian Americans and elderly New Yorkers overall in 2000. In addition, the profile notes that the number of Asian American senior citizens in the city nearly doubled from 1990 to 2000.

Citing these facts, the Federation called for heightened attention to serving Asian American seniors' unmet needs.

"Prevalent poverty, limited education, daunting language barriers and rapid growth make New York City's elderly Asian Americans particularly vulnerable," said Cao K. O, executive director of the Asian American Federation. "We urge service providers and policy-makers to help close critical gaps in social and health support systems to improve life for Asian American senior citizens. Steps include increasing appropriate and accessible job and training opportunities, English instruction, retirement protections, housing stock, health-care options and health insurance."

Available at [www.aafny.org](http://www.aafny.org), the profile of elderly Asian Americans is one of a series of population portraits prepared by the Federation's federally-designated Census Information Center (CIC). The Starr Foundation is supporting this profile, and the Citigroup Foundation and the C.J. Huang Foundation have funded the profile series.

Among key facts in the profile of seniors (regarding 2000 census data and New York City residents if not specified):

- Almost 1 in 4 elderly Asians (24 percent) lived in poverty – compared with 18 percent of all senior citizens.
- Per capita income for Asians age 65 and older was \$17,261 – less than half of the comparable figure for all Asians (\$37,524) and far below \$30,694 for all senior citizens.
- Some 94 percent of elderly Asians were immigrants, the majority of whom had come to this country since 1980.
- About 3 out of 5 Asian senior citizens (59 percent) had not completed high school, and close to half of elderly Asians (45 percent) had not finished ninth grade.
- Almost three-quarters of elderly Asians (73 percent) had limited English-speaking skills.
- From 1990 to 2000, the number of Asian senior citizens grew by 91 percent, from 33,214 to 63,312.

In light of such statistics, the Federation recommended:

- Expansion of suitable employment and job-training opportunities for elderly Asians able to work.
- An increase in population-tailored English classes for Asian senior citizens.
- Improved retirement-income provisions for elderly Asians, especially those not eligible for Social Security.
- A larger supply of affordable and physically accessible housing in Asian senior citizens' home communities.
- More home-health aides, assisted living, nursing homes and end-of-life care geared to elderly Asians' needs.
- Reasonably-priced, easily-obtainable health insurance for all Asian senior citizens.

The Asian American Federation of New York is a nonprofit leadership organization that works collaboratively to improve human services and the quality of life for Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area. Established in 1990, the Federation supports 35 member agencies and other community-based Asian American service and advocacy organizations; promotes strategic philanthropy within the Asian American community; and conducts research and advocacy concerning critical community issues.

The Federation's Census Information Center (CIC) is the only such U.S. Census Bureau-designated center in the Northeast that focuses on serving Asian Americans. Opened in 2000, the center provides census information, conducts data and policy analysis, and promotes census participation.