



Asian American Federation
of New York

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**ASIAN AMERICANS PLAY VITAL, VARIED ROLES IN NEW YORK-AREA ECONOMY
AND FACE CONTRASTING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, ASIAN AMERICAN FEDERATION REPORTS**

**Analysis Shows Asians Have Higher Employment but Earn Less Than General Population,
Are Less Likely To Own Homes but Have Higher-Valued Homes**

**Federation Calls for Improving Asian Economic Opportunities,
Sets Community Briefing for Monday, Nov. 14**

NEW YORK – Asian Americans in the New York Metropolitan Area make major and diverse contributions to the region's economy while facing contrasting economic conditions.

On the one hand, Asians are well-represented in such high-income professions as scientists, doctors and computer specialists. Asians are more likely to hold jobs and slightly more apt to participate in the work force than the general population. Asian-owned homes overall also have higher value than homes region-wide.

On the other hand, large portions of the Asian population hold essential but low-paying jobs in such as clothing factories, restaurants, and laundries or drive taxis. Asians as a whole have lower earnings, family and per capita income, and home-ownership rates than the region-wide population.

In addition, economic experiences vary widely among Asians, and some population segments have needs.

These are key findings of the most extensive analysis to date of economic traits of Asians in the New York area, released today by the Asian American Federation of New York, a nonprofit leadership organization. The report, titled *Economic Characteristics of Asian Americans in the New York Metropolitan Area*, is at www.aafny.org, where the executive summary is available for download and the full report may be ordered.

The Federation will hold a community briefing, including a presentation and a panel discussion, on its findings Monday, Nov. 14, from 6 to 8 p.m. on the 14th Floor of the Citigroup Center, at 153 E. 53rd St. (between Lexington and Third avenues). Media representatives are welcome.

Funded by the Citigroup Foundation, AT&T Foundation and C.J. Huang Foundation, the Federation's report takes an unprecedented in-depth look at work, income and housing characteristics of the regional Asian population, based on analysis of 2000 census data. The Federation's Census Information Center, affiliated with the U.S. Census Bureau, prepared the report to inform local employment practices and policy-making affecting Asians – an underexamined and often-overlooked population despite being the fastest-growing racial group in the region.

"Our analysis demonstrates that Asian Americans are a vital part of the fabric of the New York area's economy, filling a range of roles in apparel manufacturing, finance, food service, health care, personal services, science and technology" said Cao K. O, executive director of the Asian American Federation. "Asian Americans contribute to the region's economic competitiveness and add to the smooth operation of the economy."

Continuing, O said: "While many Asian Americans are doing well financially, we found that certain population groups need additional attention. Conditions meriting further investigation include severe poverty for Asian American senior citizens and immigrants; large shares of Pakistani, Chinese and Korean Americans in low-paying jobs; high unemployment for elderly Indian and Filipino Americans; and low work-force participation, in some cases with high unemployment, for Pakistani, Indian and Japanese American women."

O said the report indicates needs for:

- Greater economic opportunities for Asians.
- Policies to stimulate Asian small-business growth.
- Efforts to identify and reduce barriers to Asian home ownership.

Among the report's findings for Asians overall, related to Census 2000 data:

- Asians participated in the regional labor force at a rate of 64 percent – slightly exceeding 62 percent for the general population. Work-force participation means holding a job or actively seeking employment.
- The Asian unemployment rate was 5.7 percent – lower than 6.7 percent for the population in general.
- Asians had lower median earnings, median family income and per capita income but higher median household income than the general population. Higher household income for Asians apparently relates to their larger average household size, suggesting additional earners in many Asian homes.
- The overall Asian poverty rate of 14 percent surpassed 13 percent for the region in general. In addition, more than one-fifth (21 percent) of Asians age 75 or older were impoverished, compared with 12 percent of all regional residents in that age group. Also, 16 percent of all Asian immigrants and 20 percent of Asians who were not U.S. citizens lived in poverty.
- Asians were well-represented in such high-paying professions as scientists, physicians and surgeons, computer specialists, and accountants and auditors. The population was active in the health-care; professional, scientific and technical services; and financial and insurance sectors.
- Asians tended to be concentrated in low-paying manufacturing and service jobs, commonly employed as textile, apparel and furnishings workers; motor-vehicle operators; cooks and food-preparation workers; and personal- and laundry-service workers. Asian workers in poverty were most apt to be textile, apparel and furnishings workers; cashiers; or cooks and food-preparation workers.
- Only 44 percent of Asians owned their homes, compared with 53 percent of the general population. Two-thirds of Asian homeowners lived in single-family houses, compared with three-quarters of all homeowners.
- For Asians who owned homes, median housing values were higher than for the entire homeowner population. More than 60 percent of Asians owning single-family houses lived in homes valued at \$200,000 or more, compared with just over half of all single-family homeowners. Asian homeowners also were more likely to have mortgages and tended to have higher mortgage payments than homeowners region-wide.

The report takes a closer look at economic traits of the region's six largest Asian ethnic groups. Key ethnic-specific findings, pertaining to 2000 census data, include the following:

- Median family incomes ranged from \$44,889 for Pakistanis to \$84,876 for Japanese.
- Poverty rates varied from about 4 percent for Filipinos to roughly 21 percent for Pakistanis.
- In general, Filipinos, Japanese and Indians had higher economic status than Asians as a whole, while Chinese, Koreans and Pakistanis fared worse than the overall Asian population.
- Each ethnic group had certain occupational characteristics. Filipinos had a strong presence among registered nurses, physicians and surgeons, and other health-care workers. Indians were well-represented among doctors and computer specialists. Many Japanese were top executives. The apparel-manufacturing and food-services industries were disproportionately dependent on Chinese workers. Driving motor vehicles other than buses and trucks was the most common occupation for Pakistanis. Koreans were most apt to be engaged in sales or personal and laundry services.
- Koreans and Pakistanis were more likely to be self-employed than members of the other largest Asian groups and the general population.
- Pakistani, Indian and Japanese women were less apt to participate in the work force, or, for the first two population segments, hold jobs, than men of their ethnic group, Asian women overall or women in general.
- Proportions of Japanese, Koreans and Pakistanis who owned their homes ranged from one-fourth to one-third, while home-ownership rates for the other largest Asian ethnic groups were closer or equal to the 53 percent rate for the general population.

The Asian American Federation of New York is a nonprofit leadership organization that works to advance the civic voice and quality of life of Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area. Established in 1990, the Federation supports and collaborates with 37 member agencies to strengthen community services, promotes strategic philanthropy within the Asian American community, and conducts research and advocacy concerning critical 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.

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