Introduction
Using 2000 and 1990 U.S. census data, this profile outlines characteristics and trends among Brooklyn’s burgeoning Asian American population.\(^1\) It offers facts on population size and growth, immigration, citizenship status, educational attainment, English ability, income, poverty, and housing. Comparisons with Brooklyn’s total population provide context.\(^2\)

Brooklyn’s Asian population surged from 1990 to 2000. In relation to Brooklyn residents overall, in 2000, the borough’s Asian population had higher median household income. However, Asians also had lower per capita and median family incomes, less education, and greater degrees of Limited English Proficiency than the general Brooklyn population.

Population
From 1990 to 2000, Brooklyn’s Asian population expanded by 87 percent, from 110,496 to 206,272–surpassing increases of 7 percent for the borough overall and 71 percent for New York City’s total Asian population.

As of the last census, 24 percent of the city’s Asian population lived in Brooklyn, where Asians made up 8 percent of residents.

The five most populous Asian ethnic groups in Brooklyn in 2000 were Chinese\(^1\) (125,050), Indians\(^4\) (32,498), Pakistanis (14,221), Filipinos (7,918) and Koreans (6,816).\(^5\)

Asian groups in the borough with the biggest growth spurts percentage-wise from 1990 to 2000 were Bangladeshis (376 percent), Malaysians (218 percent), Pakistanis (187 percent), Sri Lankans (170 percent), and Japanese (157 percent). In raw numbers, from 1990 and 2000, Brooklyn’s Chinese and Indian populations saw the largest gains, of 57,183 and 16,857, respectively.

By age, 25 percent (51,894) of Brooklyn’s Asian residents were children (age 17 and younger), 68 percent (140,297) were working-age adults (age 18 to 64), and 7 percent (14,135) were senior citizens (age 65 and older). This distribution was similar to that for the entire borough population: 27 percent children, 62 percent working-age adults and 11 percent senior citizens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Group</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% Growth from 1990</th>
<th>Asian Alone or In Combination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian</td>
<td>15,641</td>
<td>25,404</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
<td>32,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td>3,795</td>
<td>189.0%</td>
<td>6,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>-35.3%</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese (w/o Taiwanese)</td>
<td>67,867</td>
<td>120,439</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
<td>125,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>5,776</td>
<td>6,534</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>7,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>1,192</td>
<td>2,355</td>
<td>97.6%</td>
<td>3,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>6,608</td>
<td>6,210</td>
<td>-6.0%</td>
<td>6,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-84.9%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>4,949</td>
<td>9,903</td>
<td>100.1%</td>
<td>14,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lankan</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>107.4%</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>-31.2%</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>-2.4%</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>2,708</td>
<td>3,410</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>4,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>2,514</td>
<td>6,083</td>
<td>142.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110,496</td>
<td>185,818</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>206,272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Immigration and Citizenship
Three-quarters (155,656) of Brooklyn’s Asian population in 2000 was foreign-born, nearly double 38 percent for the borough overall.

Most Asian immigrants in Brooklyn in 2000 had come to the United States in the last 20 years, feeding recent population growth. Specifically, 48 percent (74,625) immigrated from 1990 to March 2000; 37 percent (56,991) entered this country from 1980 to 1989; and 15 percent (24,040) came before 1980.

Of the borough’s Asian immigrants as of the last census, 45 percent (69,567) were naturalized citizens, compared with 47 percent of all Brooklyn immigrants. However, 37 percent of foreign-born Asian Brooklynites became citizens within 20 years, slightly exceeding 35 percent rate of immigrants throughout the borough.

Educational Attainment

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Over 40 percent of Asian Americans in Brooklyn do not have a high school diploma.

Of Brooklyn’s Asian adults, 642 percent (56,365) had not graduated from high school, compared with 31 percent of adults borough-wide. Also, 29 percent (39,068) of adult Asian Brooklynites had less than a ninth-grade education, compared with 16 percent of all adults in the borough.

At the high end of the educational range, 37 percent (49,327) of Asian adults in Brooklyn had some form of post-secondary education, compared with 42 percent of all borough adults.

More than 9 in 10 school-age Asian children in the borough (91 percent, or 40,180) attended New York City public schools, surpassing 78 percent of all borough children.

English Proficiency

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) was more than twice as prevalent among Brooklyn’s Asians as within the borough-wide population in 2000 – both overall and by age group.

More than half, or 58 percent (111,173), of the borough’s Asian population spoke English “well,” “not well” or “not at all,” overshadowing 24 percent of all Brooklynites. In terms of age, LEP was a reality for 61 percent (85,576) of Asian working-age adults and 80 percent (11,246) of Asian senior citizens, compared with 25 percent and 30 percent of corresponding borough-wide populations.

Income

Two opposite patterns characterized incomes of Asians in Brooklyn as of Census 2000.

On the one hand, Asian median household income of $34,982 surpassed $32,135 for the total Brooklyn population. On the other hand, Asian median family income ($34,693) and per capita income ($13,916) fell short of comparable borough-wide figures ($36,188 and $16,775).

Poverty

As of the 2000 census, the incidence of poverty among Asian Brooklynites exactly or nearly matched borough-wide rates overall and for children, but poverty was somewhat more prevalent for elderly Asians than for Brooklyn senior citizens as a whole.

Among all Asians in the borough, 26 percent (53,466) lived below the poverty line, compared with an overall Brooklyn poverty rate of 25 percent. By age bracket, 34 percent (17,332) of the borough’s Asian children, as well as the same share of all Brooklyn children, lived in poverty. (About 83 percent, or 14,453, of the borough’s Asian children in poverty lived in two-parent families, compared with 40 percent of all Brooklyn children in poverty.)

In a slight twist, 25 percent (3,477) of Brooklyn’s elderly Asians experienced poverty – a higher rate than 22 percent for senior citizens borough-wide.

Housing

Asian Brooklynites in 2000 tended to have much larger households (averaging 3.54 people) than the general borough population (2.75). Household size is a factor behind Asians’ higher-than-average household income but lower-than-average per capita income for
Distribution of the Asian American Population in Brooklyn

Population in 2000
- 0
- 1 - 99
- 100 - 249
- 250 - 499
- 500 - 999
- 1000 - 2499
- 2500 +
- Landmarks (With No Population)

In 2000, nearly 60 percent of Asian Americans in Brooklyn had limited English Proficiency.

Footnotes

1 All numbers are from the Summary Files (SF) One, Two, Three and Four of the U.S. census. However, SF One and SF Two refer to information collected from a 100 percent U.S. population survey whereas SF Three and Four data represent results from a sample survey of 1 in 6 Americans.
2 Rates and percentages for each data section are derived from the data universe related to the topic at hand. Therefore, population tallies for one particular topic will not necessarily correspond with those for another topic.
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 Brooklyn in 2000 were Chinese (120,439), Indians (25,404), Pakistanis (9,903), Filipinos (6,534) and Koreans (6,210).
6 For education tabulations, adults were defined as individuals age 25 and older.
7 Limited English Proficiency in this profile refers to individuals speaking English “well,” “not well” or “not at all.”
8 Household income refers to the income of all occupants of a housing unit. Family income refers 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.

About This Profile

This is one of a series of 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 to advance the civic voice and quality of life of Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area, was selected by the U.S. Census Bureau to operate the only Asian American-focused CIC in the Northeast. Established in 2000, the center provides census information, conducts data and policy analysis, and encourages census participation.

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 data manager, Asian American Federation of New York Census Information Center, at (212) 344-5878, ext. 19 or cic@aafny.org, or visit www.aafny.org/cic/.

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