



**Asian American Federation
of New York**

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**POORER AND LESS EDUCATED THAN NEW YORK CITY AT LARGE,
CHINATOWN FACES DISTINCT CHALLENGES, CENSUS PROFILE SHOWS**

***Asian American Federation's Census Information Center
Offers Insight Into Neighborhood's Post-September 11th Needs***

NEW YORK – Residents of Manhattan's Chinatown, on the whole, are significantly poorer, less educated and less skilled in English than typical New York City residents, according to a census-based profile issued by the Asian American Federation of New York today.

The Federation, a nonprofit leadership organization, introduced the demographic portrait as the first in a series of Asian American neighborhood profiles prepared by its Census Information Center (CIC), a source of census data and analysis established in cooperation with the U.S. Census Bureau. The profile is available on the CIC's Web site at www.aafny.org/cic/.

In unprecedented detail, drawing on recently released Census Bureau information, the profile offers a comprehensive picture of one of the largest Asian American communities. Reflecting compilation and analysis of 2000 and 1990 census data, the document defines a unique set of population traits that made Chinatown particularly vulnerable to severe economic effects of the September 11, 2001 attacks and that have prolonged the neighborhood's recovery. A concluding section outlines implications and identifies needs to be addressed.

"Our Chinatown profile contrasts with the 'Model Minority' myth, which holds that all Asian Americans are able to achieve educational, social and financial success without public or private support," said Cao K. O, executive director of the Asian American Federation.

"In fact, our CIC team found that in relation to all of New York City, Chinatown's predominantly immigrant population of nearly 85,000 faces formidable social-development challenges. Indications include higher poverty rates, a lower percentage of high school graduates and a higher incidence of 'Limited English Proficiency' in Chinatown than city-wide. Comparisons with overall Manhattan data also portray Chinatown as a low-income neighborhood for the borough."

Among major points in the profile (referring to Census 2000 data unless stated otherwise):

Poverty was much more common in Chinatown than in New York City as a whole, and Chinatown poverty rates were even higher for children and senior citizens.

- Almost one-third of all Chinatown residents (31 percent, or 25,755 persons) lived below the poverty line as of the 2000 census, compared with 21 percent of all city residents.
- Approximately 40 percent (6,025) of Chinatown children lived in poverty, compared with 32 percent of all children in the city.
- About 35 percent (4,573) of Chinatown senior citizens lived below the poverty line, compared with 19 percent of senior citizens city-wide. It should be noted that from 1990 to 2000 in Chinatown, the total elderly population increased by 15 percent (by 1,759, from 11,530 to 13,289), and the number of elderly Asian Americans rose by 30 percent (by 2,027, from 6,854 to 8,881). (During the same decade, Chinatown's total population grew by 3 percent, while the total number of children decreased by 12 percent, and the number of Asian American children declined by 4 percent.)

Chinatown incomes were low in relation to incomes for Manhattan overall and for Asian Americans in Manhattan.

- According to the 2000 census, 45 percent (13,544) of all Chinatown households earned \$20,000 or less a year, compared with 25 percent of all Manhattan households.
- Nearly half (49 percent, or 8,481) of Asian American households in Chinatown earned less than \$20,000 a year, compared with 36 percent of Asian American households in Manhattan.

Chinatown adults generally had less formal schooling than average for New York City, and among Asian Americans in Chinatown, women tended to be less educated than men.

- Nearly 60 percent (35,721) of Chinatown adults (25 and older for this category) were not high school graduates, more than double the rate (28 percent) for New York City adults overall.
- Close to half (45 percent, or 27,303) of Chinatown adults had not completed ninth grade, triple the rate (15 percent) for adults city-wide.
- Along gender lines, 73 percent (14,209) of Asian American women in Chinatown did not have a high school diploma, compared with 66 percent (12,980) of their male counterparts.

“Limited English Proficiency” was widespread in Chinatown, surpassing overall New York City rates and applying to more than half of Chinatown senior citizens.

- Among adults of all ages, 42 percent (34,474) in Chinatown had Limited English Proficiency (speaking English “Not well” or “Not at all”), compared with 26 percent in all of New York City.
- Among adults age 18 to 64, rates of “limited” English skills were 43 percent (24,341) in Chinatown, compared with 27 percent in the city overall.
- Among elderly adults, 62 percent (8,233) in Chinatown spoke little or no English, compared with 49 percent city-wide.

The majority of Chinatown residents were immigrants (unlike in New York City overall); most Chinatown immigrants were recent arrivals; and Asian Americans comprised a majority of Chinatown’s immigrants and of the neighborhood’s total population.

- More than half (59 percent, or 50,141) of Chinatown’s residents were immigrants, compared with slightly more than one-third (36 percent) of New York City’s entire population.
- Nearly half (49 percent, or 21,904) of Chinatown’s immigrants came to the United States in the last decade, and almost three-quarters (74 percent, or 33,228) of the neighborhood’s foreign-born residents arrived in this country since 1980.
- Asian Americans comprised 89 percent (44,583) of Chinatown’s foreign-born population.
- Of Chinatown’s total population, 66 percent (55,864) were of Asian descent.
- Of Chinatown’s Asian American population, 96 percent (53,479) were Chinese American.

“Our Chinatown profile offers crucial insight for policy-makers, social planners and service providers seeking to improve the quality of life and revitalize the economy in the neighborhood,” O said. “Rebuilding and reinforcing Chinatown’s economic and social supports requires a thorough understanding and consideration of the community’s specific characteristics, needs and challenges.”

The Asian American Federation of New York is a nonprofit leadership organization that identifies and addresses the critical needs of Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area. The Federation, which began operations in 1990, supports 35 member agencies and other emerging health and human services organizations; coordinates service delivery; and directs comprehensive initiatives. In addition, the Federation analyzes issues, voices concerns, and advocates for responsive policies. The Federation also promotes strategic giving within the Asian American community, linking time, talents and financial resources with specific 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 Federation’s CIC provides census information, conducts data and policy analysis, and encourages census participation.