Asian American Federation

Profile of New York City's Thai Americans

Introduction

Using data from 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) Selected Population Tables and the 2010 U.S. census, this profile outlines characteristics and trends among New York City's Thai American population.[1] It presents statistics on population size and changes, immigration, citizenship status, educational attainment, English ability, income, poverty, health insurance and housing. Comparisons with New York City's general population are provided for context.

New York City's Thai population was among the fastest growing Asian ethnic groups. Relative to all residents, Thais in New York City were more likely to be:

- working-age adults,
- better educated,
- limited English proficient,
- higher income, and
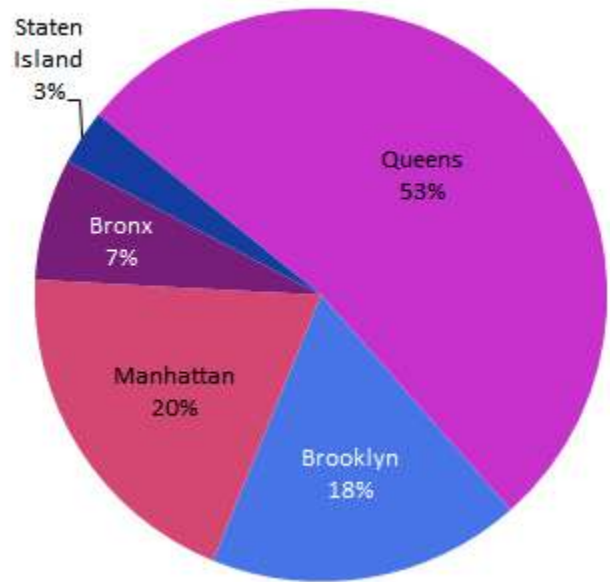- living in overcrowded housing.

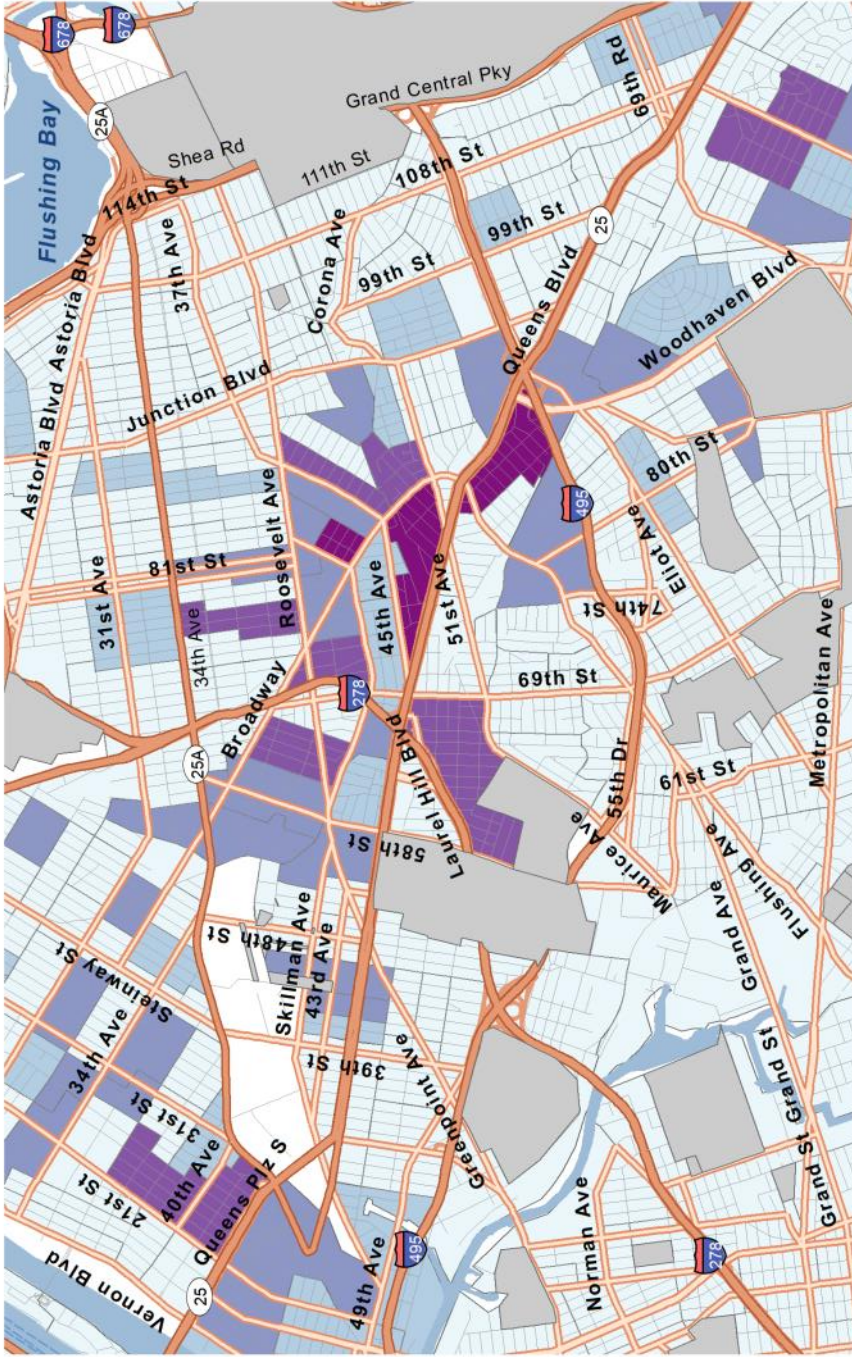| Facts on Thai Population in New York City	
Alone or in-Combination Population	8,215
Percent Change from 2010 to 2015	32%
Immigration and Citizenship	
Percent of Population Foreign Born	64%
Percent of Foreign Born Who are Citizens	55%
Educational Attainment for Adults Age 25 or Older	
Percent of Adults without High School Diploma	9%
Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's Degree	55%
Limited English Proficiency	
Percent of Population Age 5 or Older	43%
Income	
Median Household Income	$69,344
Median Family Income	$76,629
Per Capita Income	$34,507
Poverty	
Percent of Total Population Living in Poverty	16.4%
Percent of Children Living in Poverty	18.3%
Percent of Seniors Living in Poverty	16.6%

Figure 1: Thai Population by Borough

Population

From 2010 to 2015, the Thai alone or in combination population in New York City increased by 32 percent from 6,234 to 8,215 – faster than the city's overall 4 percent increase and the 13 percent growth of the total Asian population. The Thai alone population increased by 35 percent from 4,845 in 2010 to 6,674 in 2015.
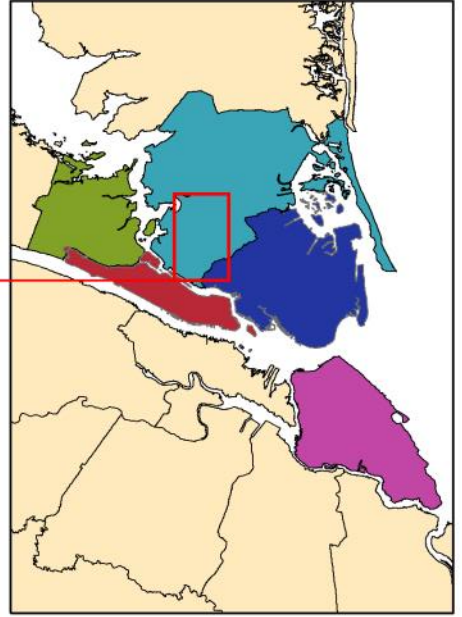
New York City was home to 57 percent of New York State's Thai residents. The majority (53 percent) of Thai New Yorkers lived in Queens (Figure 1). The remainder lived mostly in Manhattan and Brooklyn. The neighborhoods with the largest Thai populations included Astoria, Elmhurst, Forest Hills and Woodside in Queens.

In 2015, working-age adults (age 18 to 64) were a larger share of New York City's Thai population, comprising 73 percent of the group, compared with 66 percent for all city residents. Children (under 18 years of age) and
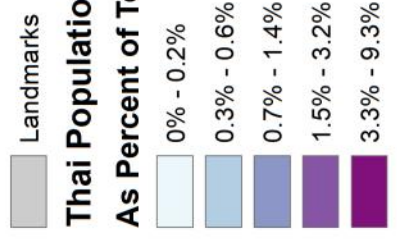
Legend

Landmarks

Thai Population

As Percent of Total Population

- 0% - 0.2%
- 0.3% - 0.6%
- 0.7% - 1.4%
- 1.5% - 3.2%
- 3.3% - 9.3%

Thai Population in Astoria, Elmhurst, Forest Hills, and Woodside, Queens Borough

Flushing Bay

Grand Central Pky

Shea Rd

111th St

108th St

114th St

37th Ave

Corona Ave

99th St

99th St

Queens Blvd

69th Rd

Astoria Blvd

Astoria Blvd

Junction Blvd

Woodhaven Blvd

31st Ave

34th Ave

81st St

Roosevelt Ave

45th Ave

51st Ave

80th St

Eliot Ave

74th St

Broadway

Laurel Hill Blvd

69th St

58th St

Skillman Ave

43rd Ave

Maurice Ave

55th Dr

61st St

Metropolitan Ave

39th St

48th St

Steinway St

34th Ave

31st St

40th Ave

21st St

Queens Plz S

Vernon Blvd

49th Ave

Greenpoint Ave

Norman Ave

Flushing Ave

Grand Ave

Grand St

Grand St

seniors (age 65 or older) each constituted 15 and 11 percent of the city's Thai population, compared with 21 percent and 13 percent, respectively, of the citywide population in those age groups.

Immigration and Citizenship

The majority (64 percent) of New York City's Thais in 2015 were foreign-born, compared to 37 percent of all city residents. Thai immigrants in New York City were more likely to be recent arrivals with 15 percent arriving in 2010 or later, higher than the 10 percent of all immigrant New Yorkers. Of all the city's foreign-born Thai residents, 55 percent were naturalized citizens, slightly higher than the 53 percent of all foreign-born New Yorkers.

Education

Thais in 2015 had more schooling than the city's general population. Of the city's 6,171 Thai adults, 9 percent had not graduated from high school, comparatively lower than 20 percent of adults citywide.[2] Also, 6 percent of Thai adults in New York City had less than a ninth-grade education – lower than the 10 percent for all adult New Yorkers.

At the high end of the educational spectrum, three-quarters (75 percent) of Thai adults in New York City had

Figure 2: Limited English Proficiency Rates

some sort of post-secondary education, compared with slightly over half (56 percent) of all city adults. More than half (55 percent) of Thai adults in New York City had a bachelor's degree or higher, higher than one-third (36 percent) of all city adults.

English Proficiency

New York City's Thai residents had a higher incidence of limited English proficiency (LEP) than New Yorkers as a whole in 2015.[3] Over two-fifths (43 percent) of the city's total Thai population spoke English well, not well or not at all – almost double the 23 percent rate for New Yorkers overall (Figure 2). Thai seniors in particular had LEP rates which were more than twice as high as their age-group peers in the general population.

Income

Thai New Yorkers had higher incomes compared to New York City residents overall for all income gauges.[4] The median income for Thai households was $69,344, greater than the $53,373 median for households citywide. Median family income was $76,629 for Thai and $59,285 for all families. Additionally, Thai per capita income was $34,507 – slightly higher than $33,078 citywide.
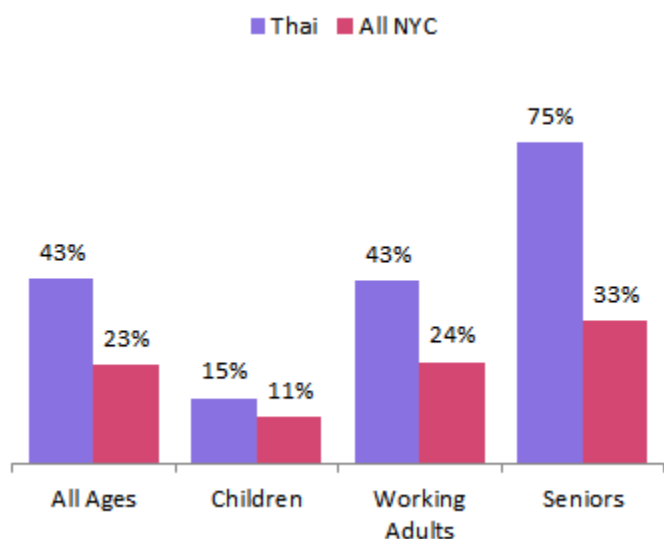
Poverty

The poverty rates for Thai residents in relation to the total New York City population were lower overall.[5] Among all Thai in the city, 16.4 percent lived below the poverty line, compared with the general New York City poverty rate of 20.6 percent. Among children, 18.3 percent of Thais in New York City experienced poverty, compared with 29.5 percent of all city children. For adults, 15.9 percent of working-age Thai adults and 16.6 percent of elderly Thais in the city lived in poverty, lower than 18.1 percent and 18.8 percent, respectively, for residents citywide in those age groups.

Health Insurance Coverage

Thai New Yorkers were more likely to be uninsured compared to the general population, with 19.0 percent

of Thais not covered by health insurance, compared with 12.4 percent of the general population. Among children, 3.9 percent of Thai children were uninsured, compared to 3.6 percent of all children. Thais were less likely to have public insurance with only 22.5 percent with public insurance coverage, compared to 40.3 percent of all New Yorkers.

Housing

Thai New Yorkers in 2015 had a smaller average household size than households in general (2.76 people versus 2.87 people). Thai households were more likely to be overcrowded than households in general, with 12 percent of Thai households and 9 percent of households in general having more than one occupant per room.

Thai households had similar rates of owning homes compared to New York City households in general. About a third (32 percent) of households owned their homes, compared with 32 percent homeowners in the city overall.

Endnotes

[1] Data sources used in this brief were 2011-2015 American Community Survey Selected Population Tables, and are for the Thai Alone or in Any Combination category, unless otherwise noted. Statistics from 2010 used 2006-2010 American Community Survey Selected Population Tables.
[2] For educational attainment, adults were defined as people age 25 or older.
[3] "Limited English Proficiency" refers to individuals age 5 years and older who reported speaking English well, not well, or not at all.
[4] Household income refers to the income of all occupants of a housing unit. Family income referred 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.
[5] Families and individuals were classified as below the poverty line if their total family income or unrelated individual income over the last 12 months was less than the poverty threshold specified for the applicable family size, age of householder, and number of related children younger than 18 present for the year and month the data was collected. For these thresholds, please see https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.htm

Technical Notes

Race Categories

Beginning with the Census 2000, the Census Bureau collects data in which respondents were allowed to mark more than one race. For example, 2000 data include results for single-race as well as multiple-race responses. "Thai Alone" corresponds to the respondents who reported only Asian Indian and no other race category. "Alone" should be considered the minimum population size in any analysis that uses Census Bureau data.

To be as inclusive as possible, this profile uses "Thai Alone or in Any Combination" numbers where possible. "Alone or in Any Combination" corresponds to the responses (not respondents) that included Thai, either alone or in any combination with other Asian groups or other race categories. If a respondent selected Thai and another racial group (e.g., Thai and black), that individual, while excluded from the "Thai Alone" count, was tallied in the "Alone or in Any Combination" count for Asian Indian and the other racial group. Hence, some overlap in the "In Any Combination" numbers occurred. "Alone or in Any Combination" should be considered the maximum population size in any analysis that uses Census Bureau data.

About This Profile

This is one of a series of Asian American population profiles prepared by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center (CIC) to increase understanding of the rapidly-growing and diverse Asian American population in the New York metropolitan area.

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 regarding this profile, please contact the Asian American Federation Census Information Center at (212) 344-5878 x219 or howard.shih@aafederation.org, or visit www.aafny.org/cic/.