

# District of Columbia State Data Center Monthly Brief

May 2008

## Asian-American 2006

In 1978, a joint congressional resolution established Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two important milestones in Asian/Pacific American history: the arrival in the United States of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and contributions of Chinese workers to the building of the transcontinental railroad, completed on May 10, 1869. In 1992, Congress expanded the 10-day observance to a month long celebration. Per a 1997 Office of Management and Budget directive, the Asian or Pacific Islander racial category was separated into two different categories: "Asian", and "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander." This report focuses on the demographic characteristics of Asians in the United States (Asian-Americans) and in the District of Columbia in 2006, using data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. Asians-Americans are defined as people who originate from places like India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam

### Asian-Americans Nationally

The Census Bureau estimated that there were 14.7 million people residing in the United States in July 2006 who said they were Asian, or Asian in combination with one or more other races. This group comprised 5 percent of the total population. The Asian population in the U.S. has grown 3 percent between 2005 and 2006, the highest growth rate of any group during that time period. Numerically, this

increase totaled over 400,000 people. Chinese-Americans are the largest Asian group (3.6 million), followed by Filipinos (2.9 million), Asian Indians (2.7 million), Vietnamese (1.6 million), Koreans (1.5 million) and Japanese (1.2 million). California had the largest Asian population (5 million) in 2006.

According to the Census Bureau, the number of U.S. residents in 2050 who will identify themselves as Asians is projected at 33.4 million. They would comprise 8 percent of the total population by that year. This represents an increase of 213 percent between 2000 and 2050 in the population of people who identify themselves as Asian. This compares with a 49 percent increase in the population as a whole over the same period of time.

### Education

Forty-nine percent of Asians, age 25 and older, have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. This compares to 27 percent for all people age 25 and older nationally. Asians have the highest proportion of college graduates of any race or ethnic group in the country. Eighty-six percent of Asians, age 25 and older, are high school graduates; 20 percent have an advanced degree (e.g., Master's, Ph.D., M.D. or J.D.). The Asian population comprises many groups who differ in languages spoken, culture and length of residence in the United States. This is reflected in the demographic characteristics of these groups. For instance, 69 percent of Asian Indians, age 25 and older, had a bachelor's degree or more education and 36 percent had a graduate or professional

**ASIAN-AMERICAN 2006** *cont. on page 2*

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**ASIAN-AMERICAN 2006** from page 1

degree; the corresponding numbers for Vietnamese-American were 26 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

**Income, Poverty and Health Insurance**

The median household income for Asians in 2006 was \$64,238, the highest among all race groups. However, median household income differed greatly by Asian group. For example, while the median household income in 2006 for Asian Indians was \$78,315; for Vietnamese-Americans, it was \$52,299, an increase of 6 percent and 3 percent, respectively from 2005 to 2006.

The poverty rate for Asian in 2006 was 10.3 percent, statistically unchanged from 2005. Asian without health insurance coverage also decreased from 2005 to 2006. While 17.2 percent of Asians were without health insurance coverage in 2005, this number decreased to 15.5 percent in 2006.

**Businesses**

The number of businesses owned by Asian-Americans was 1.1 million in 2002, up 24 percent from 1997, according to the most current data available from the American Community Survey. Their receipts totaled over \$326 billion in 2002, up 8 percent from 1997. They employed 2.2 million people in 2002. An estimated 319,468 Asian-owned businesses had paid employees; and their receipts totaled \$291 billion. There were 49,636 Asian-owned firms with receipts of \$1 million or more. In 2002, one-third of Asian firms operated in professional, scientific, and

technical services. One-third of Asian businesses were home-based. The highest numbers of Asian-owned firms are located in New York, Los Angeles, Honolulu and San Francisco.

**Jobs**

In 2006, 47 percent of civilian employed single-race Asians 16 and older worked in management, professional and related occupations. Additionally, 23 percent worked in sales and office occupations, 16 percent in service occupations and 10 percent worked in production, transportation and material moving occupations.

**Languages**

There were 2.5 million people age 5 and older who spoke Chinese at home in 2006. After Spanish, Chinese was the most widely spoken non-English language in the country. Tagalog, Vietnamese and Korean also have more than 1 million speakers each.

**Asians in the District of Columbia**

The 2006 American Community Survey (ACS) showed that there were 19,827 persons living in the District of Columbia that listed their race as Asian alone. This group comprised 3 percent of the District's population. Of this number 8,738 (44 percent) were males and 11,079 (56 percent) were females. Eleven percent of the Asian population were less than 18 years old, 81 percent were 18 to 64 years old and 8 percent were 65 years and older.

The leading countries of origin for Asians in the District in 2006 were India (5,430), China (5,261), Philippines (2,652), Vietnam (2,083), and Korea (1,327). Asian population in the District has grown by 26 percent between 2000 and 2006. Figure 1 displays annual estimate of Asian population between 2000 and 2006.

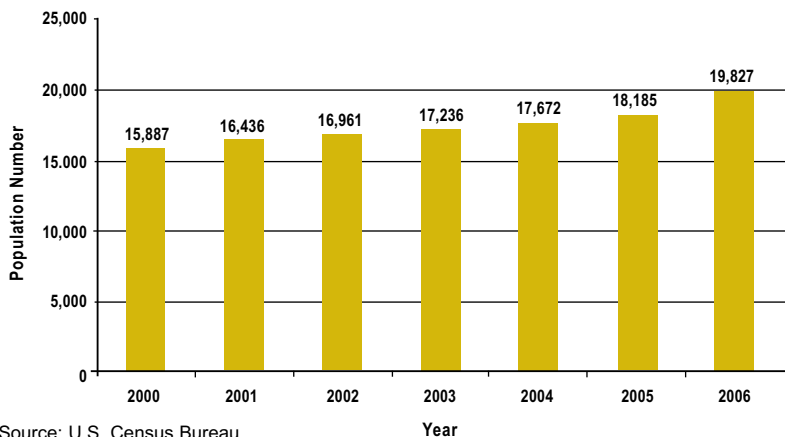
Thirty-six percent of Asians in the District owned and occupied their houses in 2006. Sixty-nine percent of Asian households were non-family households with most householders living alone. Married-couple families made up 26 percent of all Asian households.

The median household income for Asians in 2006 was \$67,137. Fifty-five percent of Asian households made over \$60,000 in 2006 while 15 percent made less than \$20,000.

In 2006, 11 percent of Asians in the District, age 25 and older, had less than high school diploma, 13 percent were high school graduates, 7 percent completed some college coursework or an Associate's degree and 69 percent had a Bachelor's degree or higher level of education.

Forty-nine percent of Asians took public transportation to work, 23 percent drove alone or carpooled, 21 percent walked, while the other 7 percent either took a taxicab, rode their motorcycle or bicycle, or worked at home.

**Fig. 1: Annual Estimate of Asian Population for the District of Columbia 2000-2006**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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