

A Narrative Report of the Asian American Population and Asset-building Trends in **Oklahoma**

Prepared for the Ford Foundation's
Building Economic Security Over a Lifetime Initiative



UCLA

Asian American
Studies Center

Bridging Research with Community

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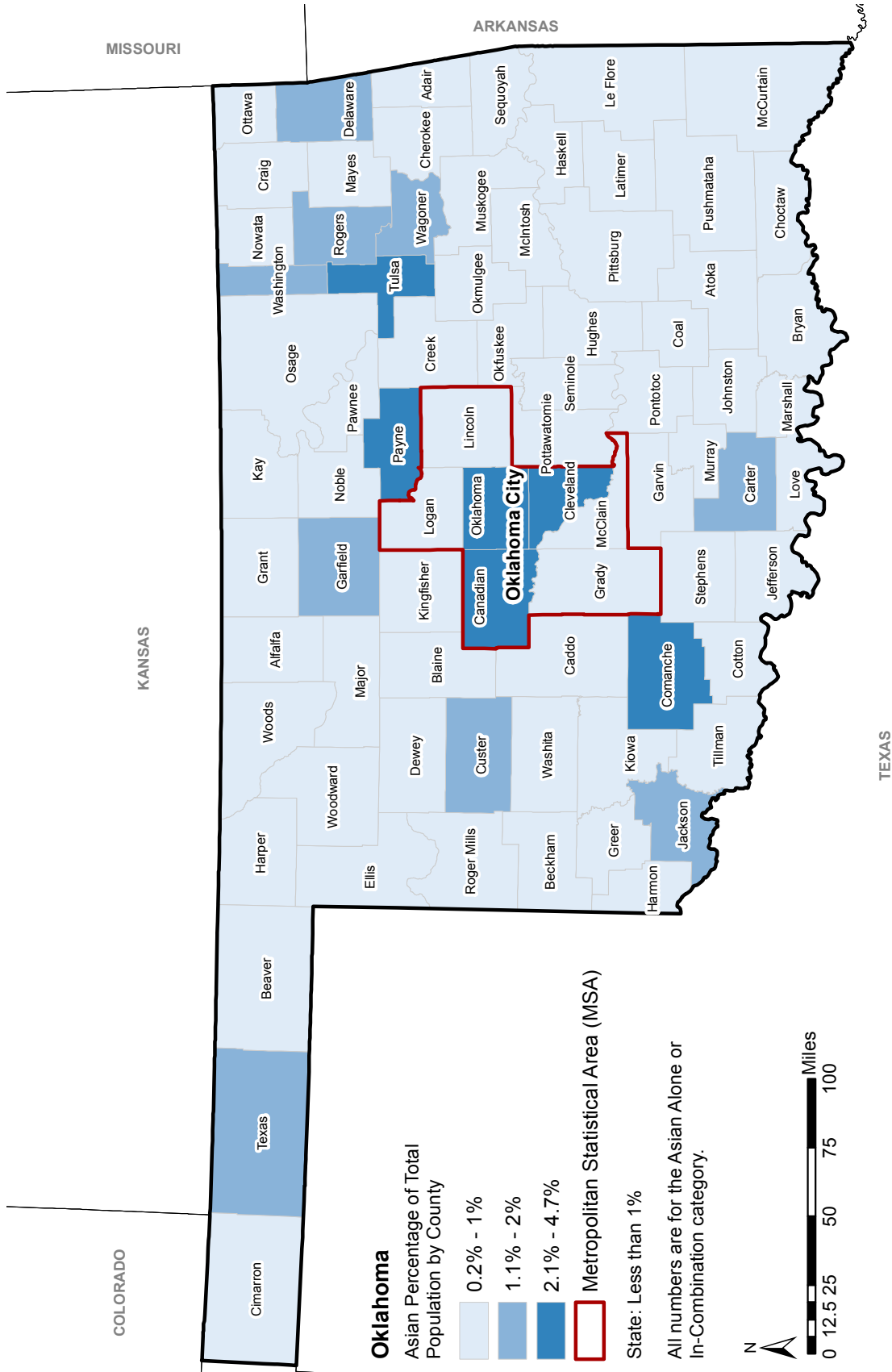
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The **Technical Report** with this demographic profile’s methodology, definitions, and detailed data charts and tables is available to download at: www.aasc.ucla.edu/besol.



Background

This Oklahoma profile is part of a set of demographic profiles developed to generate critical socioeconomic quantitative information and statistics on Asian Americans for state and regional asset building coalitions that are part of the Ford Foundation's Building Economic Security over a Lifetime Initiative. The profiles provide data at the state level and the major Metropolitan Statistical Areas with significant Asian American populations in: California, Illinois, Texas, Oklahoma, and the Southeast Region (Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi), from the 2007-2009 3-Year American Community Survey (ACS) sample, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census data sets (subject to the availability of data).¹

Moreover, a separate intensive case study report was produced on the East San Gabriel Valley, in Los Angeles County, a neighborhood that has a mix of large population concentrations of Asian Americans and Non-Hispanic Whites. The report examines the impact of the foreclosure crisis on Asian American asset building, in particular the gains and losses through homeownership. Similar to other racial groups, homeownership makes up a large share of assets, and any changes may indirectly help us understand overall declines in net worth for racial minorities. The East San Gabriel Valley case study analysis utilized data from Los Angeles County assessor's office (parcel data), American Community Survey (PUMS sample), DataQuick (purchases, defaults, and foreclosures), and Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (lending information).

This report begins with a state level analysis comparing the total population by major racial and ethnic groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Non-Hispanic Whites (subject to data availability). A comparative analysis with American Indians/Alaskan Natives at the state level was only conducted for the Oklahoma demographic profile. The profiles then include a Metropolitan Statistical Area level analysis comparing demographic trends for the total population, total Asian population, and by Asian ethnic subgroups (subject to data availability).² The report provides detailed data on the following characteristics: Population, Nativity, Language, Education, Economic Status (income, poverty, and other public and private income sources), and Housing Trends (homeownership, home property values, and housing burden).

For more information on this demographic profile's methodology, definitions, and detailed data charts and tables, please see Technical Report at: www.aasc.ucla.edu/besol.

Introduction

The Asian American population is a diverse one, with many ethnic, cultural, language and religious subgroups, each with its unique history and experience. This report provides a snapshot of demographic and socioeconomic trends in Oklahoma. In particular, this profile looks at the challenges, issues, and opportunities facing Asian Americans as they relate to higher education, homeownership, and asset building.

Data were analyzed for Asian subgroups in Oklahoma and the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA or metro area). In Oklahoma City, data were not available for specific Asian subgroups for Oklahoma City due to their small population size.

¹ The ACS 3-Year estimate provides detailed Asian ethnic subgroup data if the subgroup has an estimated population of 20,000 or more.

² For 2010 national demographic information, see the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice, "A Community of Contrasts: Asian Americans in the United States 2011" at: http://www.advancingjustice.org/pdf/Community_of_Contrast.pdf For 2000 Census data with the most comprehensive look at the demographic and cultural changes sweeping the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, see the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, "New Face of Asian Pacific America" at: <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/tocs/newface.asp>

Population

The Asian American population was growing in Oklahoma. Among Asian subgroups, Southeast and South Asians experienced the most population growth in the last decade.

From 2000 to 2010, the Asian American population in Oklahoma increased 44% from 60,000 to over 87,000. The three Asian ethnic subgroups with the largest percent population growth were Hmong (482%), Pakistani (98%), and Sri Lankans (76%). In 2010, the four largest subgroups were Vietnamese, Asian Indians, Filipinos and Chinese.³

>>> **Oklahoma City:** The Asian American population increased 37% from 33,000 to 45,000 from 2000 to 2010. The subgroups with the largest percent population growth were Hmong (197%), Pakistanis (138%), and Sri Lankans (86%). By 2010, the three largest subgroups were Vietnamese, Asian Indians, and Chinese.

Nativity

In Oklahoma, the majority of Asians were foreign-born.

Sixty-nine percent of Asians in Oklahoma were foreign-born, much higher than that of the total population (5%) and Latinos (37%).

>>> The trend was similar for **Oklahoma City**. Over half (57%) of the Asian population was foreign-born, higher than the proportion for all other major racial and ethnic subgroups. Comparatively, 41% of Latinos are foreign-born. Seven percent of the total population was foreign-born.

Language

Asian Americans were more likely to have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) than the total population and had a similar rate as Latinos. Foreign-born Asians had a slightly lower proportion of persons who reported that they did not speak English very well compared to the total foreign-born population. This may be because the total foreign-born population includes Latinos and Asians, two groups that have rapidly grown due to immigration and have high LEP rates. Native-born Asian Americans had a higher proportion of those who did not speak English very well compared to the total native-born population.

Asian Americans had LEP at a higher rate (36%) than the total population (4%) in Oklahoma. Foreign-born Asians had a lower rate of persons who reported that they did not speak English very well (46%) than the total foreign-born population (54%). However, the native-born Asian American population had a higher rate of persons who did not speak English very well than the total native-born population (10% versus 1%). Similar to Asian Americans, Latinos had a LEP rate of 36%. A large majority (72%) of foreign-born Latinos and 9% of native-born Latinos reported that they did not speak English very well, the highest of all of the major racial and ethnic groups.

>>> Thirty percent of Asian Americans had LEP compared to 5% for the total population in **Oklahoma City**.

Education

Asian Americans were more likely to have earned at least a high school diploma compared to all other major racial and ethnic groups.

³ Population data include 19 Asian ethnic subgroups (and Other Asian, specified and Other Asian, not specified). Other indicators did not have data available for all 19 subgroups. For ethnic subgroups with a small population in the base year, a small change in population absolute number can result in a large percentage change. All population size figures for the Chinese subgroup exclude Taiwanese.

In Oklahoma, 17% of Asian Americans over the age of 25 had less than a high school diploma compared to 15% for the total population, and 12% for Non-Hispanic Whites.

>>> This trend also occurred in the **Oklahoma City** metropolitan area. Fifteen percent of Asian Americans had less than a high school diploma compared to 13% for the total population and 10% for Non-Hispanic Whites.

Asian Americans were more likely to earn a Bachelor's degree compared to all other major racial and ethnic groups.

Nearly a quarter of Asian Americans over the age of 25 had a Bachelor's degree, which was larger than the proportion for the statewide population (15%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (16%).

>>> Similarly, Asian Americans in **Oklahoma City** had a larger proportion of the population with a Bachelor's degree (25%) compared to the total population (18%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (20%).

Asian Americans were more likely to earn a graduate or professional degree compared to all other major racial and ethnic groups.

Eighteen percent of Asian Americans over the age of 25 had a graduate or professional degree, much higher than the proportion for the total population (7%), and Non-Hispanic Whites (8%).

>>> In **Oklahoma City**, 17% of Asian Americans had a graduate or professional degree compared to just 9% for the total population, and 10% for Non-Hispanic Whites.

Economic Status

In Oklahoma, Asian Americans had higher median household incomes than all populations and Non-Hispanic Whites. Per capita, Asian Americans generally earned less than Non-Hispanic Whites. This may be due to Asian Americans' larger average household sizes.⁴

Asian Americans in Oklahoma had higher median household incomes (\$47,000) than the total households (\$42,000) and Non-Hispanic Whites (\$46,000). Statewide, Asian Americans had a smaller proportion of Very Low-Income households (21%) compared to total households (24%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (22%). Per capita, Asian Americans earned about the same as the total population (\$23,000), but less than Non-Hispanic Whites (\$26,000). Asian Americans (2.8) on average had larger household sizes when compared to total households (2.5) and Non-Hispanic Whites (2.4).

>>> Unlike the state, Asian Americans in **Oklahoma City** had lower median household income (\$45,000) when compared to the total households (\$46,000) and Non-Hispanic Whites (\$51,000). Asian Americans also had lower per capita income at \$20,000 compared to total households (\$25,000) and Non-Hispanic Whites (\$29,000). Asian Americans had a larger household size (2.8) when compared to the total households (2.5) and Non-Hispanic Whites (2.4).

Asian Americans had a higher poverty rate than Non-Hispanic Whites. There was no discernible trend in cash public assistance.

The poverty rate for Asian Americans in Oklahoma was on par with that of the total population at 16%, but was higher when compared to Non-Hispanic Whites (13%). The percent of Asian American population receiving cash public assistance was similar to total households and Non-Hispanic Whites at 3%.

⁴Household size plays a significant factor in estimating wealth because household incomes are calculated by the income generated by all members of a household. If a household has multiple wage-earners contributing to the overall household income, the likelihood is greater for that household income to be larger. Analytically, per capita income is a more realistic measure of wealth than household income.

>>> In **Oklahoma City**, Asian Americans had a smaller poverty rate (13%) when compared to the total population (15%), but higher than Non-Hispanic Whites (11%). The proportion of population who received cash public assistance was similar for Asians, total households, and Non-Hispanic Whites at 3%.

Compared to all other major racial and ethnic groups, fewer Asian American households had Social Security and retirement income.

In Oklahoma State, Asian Americans had a lower proportion of households with Social Security income (12%) compared to total households (29%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (31%). Asian Americans had a lower proportion of households with retirement income (6%) compared to total households (17%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (19%).

>>> Asian Americans in **Oklahoma City** had a lower proportion of households with Social Security income (11%) compared to total households (25%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (28%). Asian Americans also had a lower proportion of households with retirement income (7%) compared to total households (18%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (20%).

Housing Trends

Asian Americans had a lower homeownership rate, but higher median home values. Asian American households had higher proportions of housing costs burden compared to other major racial and ethnic groups.⁵

Asian Americans in Oklahoma had a lower homeownership rate (60%) than the total households (67%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (72%). However, the median home value for those who did own homes was much higher (\$154,000) than the total households (\$105,000) and Non-Hispanic Whites (\$110,000). Asian Americans were also more likely to have a higher rate of housing burdened homeowners (38%) than the total homeowners (26%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (24%).

>>> The homeownership rate for Asian Americans in **Oklahoma City** (60%) was less than that of the total households (66%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (71%). The median home value for those who own homes was higher (\$144,000) than that of the total households (\$122,000) and Non-Hispanic Whites (\$127,000). Asian Americans as a whole had a higher rate of housing burden (40%) than the total homeowners (26%) and Non-Hispanic Whites (24%).

Conclusion

As pensions decline, health and educational costs rise, home values and savings accounts shrink, and benefits under Social Security continue to be severely threatened and limited, asset-building strategies are needed now more than ever to close the racial wealth gap. In the aftermath of the Great Recession and foreclosure crisis, the goal of this report was to provide critical socioeconomic quantitative information and statistics on Asian Americans that would be useful for the state and regional asset-building coalitions in: 1) Developing their policy agenda, 2) Assisting with outreach by identifying where Asian American populations are concentrated residentially and geographically, which can perhaps lead to the strengthening of coalition efforts, and 3) Understanding cultural and linguistic barriers unique to Asian Americans, especially the Asian ethnic subgroups that are most in need. The quantitative data is meant to be used in relation with other sources of knowledge (qualitative, historical, voices from community leaders etc.) in order to offer fuller and more nuanced explanations. It is vital that we use multiple frameworks (research, organizing,

⁵ Homeowners paying 30% or more of household income on selected monthly housing costs are considered "cost burdened." Selected monthly owner costs are the sum of debt payments (e.g. mortgage or home equity loans), real estate taxes, insurance, utility, fuel, and condominium fees.

advocacy, etc.) as we think about how to improve access and knowledge of asset-building programs and practices for underserved communities of color and end the widening racial wealth divide.

Much of the literature on poverty indicates that Southeast Asians (primarily Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, and Cambodian immigrants) are amongst those that have the highest disparities in higher education, housing burden, and wealth in the United States. Under the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975, the majority of Southeast Asian refugees who fled their homelands in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Vietnam and Cambodia were placed in federal welfare programs as a temporary and “adaptive” measure. They are now entering a fourth consecutive decade of welfare dependency, contrary to government officials’ predictions of a seamless transition into American labor markets (Tang, 2000). Due to data limitations, this report only provides population data for Asian ethnic subgroups. Socioeconomic data by Asian ethnicity was not available due to their small population size. However, data was readily available for Southeast Asians and other disadvantaged Asian American subgroups in California, Illinois, and Texas.

Similar to American Indians, Blacks or African Americans, and Latinos, the majority of Asian Americans (especially the foreign-born) carry their net worth in their home equity, such that the loss of this asset is particularly devastating to their financial security. A study by the UCLA Asian American Studies Center revealed how Asian Americans made considerable economic progress with whites through the rapid appreciation of home values from 2000 to 2005 (Patraporn, Ong, and Houston, 2009). The average value of homes for Asian Americans increased by 73 percent, compared to only 60 percent for whites nationwide (Patraporn, Ong, and Houston, 2009). However, many of these gains were lost during the housing market meltdown. A Pew report indicated the net worth of Asian Americans is estimated to have fallen by 54 percent in the four year period from 2005 to 2009 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011). This massive decimation of wealth is largely due to Asian Americans residing in Arizona, California, Florida, and Nevada—four of the five states with the steepest declines in home prices in 2005 (Michigan is fifth). As communities of color have less wealth and home equity, it will be more difficult to afford a college education, which leads to better jobs that are needed to start saving and building wealth.

Currently, the majority of research articles and policy briefs on asset-building and wealth report aggregate socioeconomic data on Asian Americans, which often claim Asian Americans are doing well because of high educational attainment rates or high incomes. However, the lumping of all Asian American ethnic groups under the aggregate “Asian” category masks a high degree of variation in social and economic status across these subgroups. Thus, it is important to examine demographic trends below the surface, in order to serve real disadvantaged groups that are being completely neglected by mainstream asset-building and financial institutions. Although, Asian ethnic subgroup data was not available for Oklahoma City the report highlights the following key findings for Asian Americans:

Population Growth: In Oklahoma, the fastest growing Asian subgroups were Hmong (482%), Pakistani (98%) and Sri Lankans (76%). In Oklahoma City, the three groups with the greatest percent population growth were Hmong (197%), Pakistanis (138%), and Sri Lankans (86%).

Citizenship & Language: Over half of Asians are foreign-born and have high rates of Limited English Proficiency.

Education: Asian Americans had a higher percentage than the total population for the following educational attainment levels: 1) Earned at least a high school diploma, 2) Bachelor’s degree, and 3) Graduate or professional degree. Unfortunately, detailed data was not available for Asian subgroups such as Southeast Asians. In the existing Asian American Studies and Education literature, Southeast Asians have a high proportion of those with less than a high school diploma.

Income: Household size plays a significant factor in estimating wealth because household incomes are calculated by the income generated by all members of a household. If a household has multiple wage-earners contributing to the overall household income, the likelihood is greater for that household income to be larger. Analytically, per capita income is a more realistic measure of wealth than household

income. Asian American households tended to have higher median household incomes than other major racial and ethnic groups. In contrast, Asian Americans generally earned less per capita income than Non-Hispanic Whites.

Poverty: The poverty rates for Asian Americans were the same as the total population, but higher than Non-Hispanic Whites. Asian Americans received cash assistance at the same rate as the total population.

Social Security and Retirement Income: Asian Americans had lower proportions of households with Social Security and retirement income compared to other major racial and ethnic groups. This underutilization of Social Security and retirement programs may be due to language barriers and foreign-born status. As immigrants, there is a greater likelihood that they are unfamiliar, unaware or ineligible for Social Security and retirement programs because of cultural barriers. Many times, even if an Asian immigrant is deemed eligible for a benefit or service, being able to “navigate the system” is a huge hurdle for many in order to actually obtain the benefit or service.

Housing: Asian Americans generally had lower homeownership rates compared to Non-Hispanic Whites and the total population, but higher home values compared to other major racial and ethnic groups. In addition, Asian Americans had higher housing costs burden than Non-Hispanic Whites and the total population. This may be due to the high self-employment rates of Asian Americans, which prevent them from accessing conventional mortgage lending products. As a result, they must often find non-traditional or alternative mortgage credit products with higher loan rates or amounts (Asian Real Estate Association of America, 2012).

In conclusion, in order to be effective in strengthening asset-building opportunities for communities of color, it is critical to provide cultural and linguistically appropriate materials, services, and education, in particular to underserved immigrant populations. Moreover, future research must collect data on smaller Asian ethnic group populations, in which no data is available because of data suppression practices associated with confidentiality requirements when the sample sizes are too small. A few foundations, such as the Ford Foundation, have responded to addressing these needs, but much more can be done in terms of technical assistance, outreach, advocacy, data collection, capturing voices and stories at the local level, in order to offer fuller and more nuanced explanations and close the racial wealth gap.

The **Technical Report** with this demographic profile’s methodology, definitions, and detailed data charts and tables is available to download at: www.aasc.ucla.edu/besol.

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