



2012

Asian American Center for
Advancing Justice

A COMMUNITY OF CONTRASTS

Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and
Pacific Islanders in the Midwest

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN
LEGAL CENTER



ASIAN AMERICAN
JUSTICE CENTER

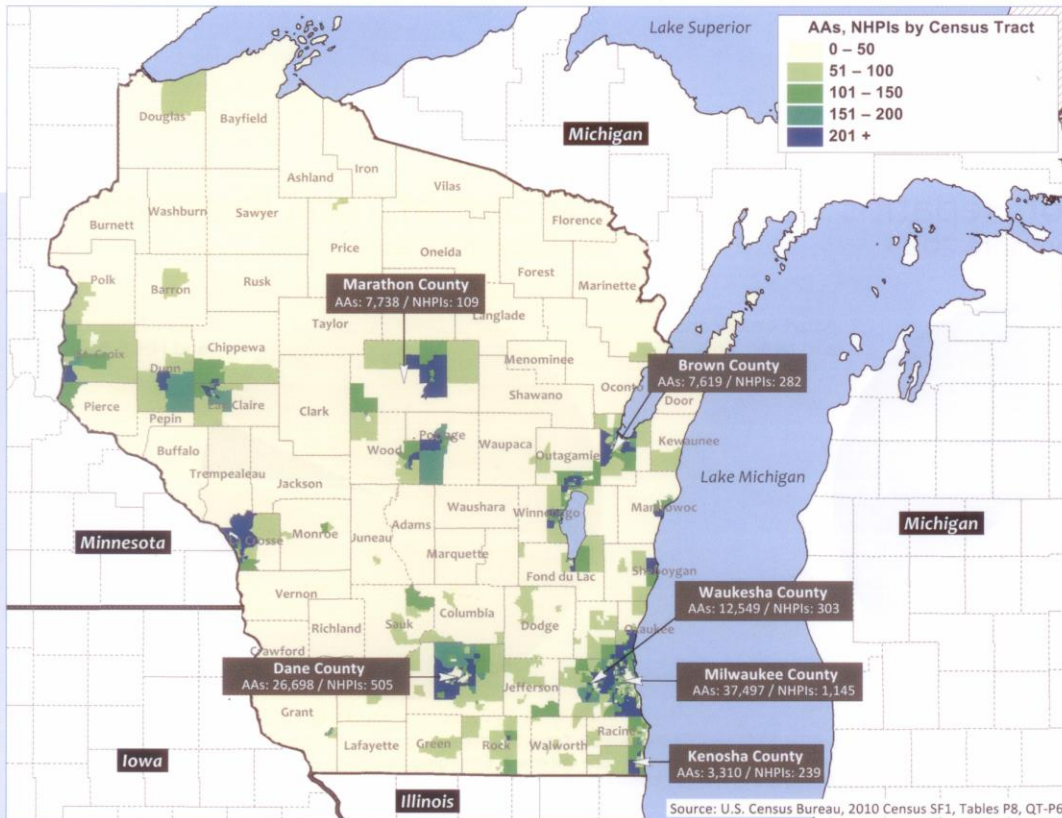
ASIAN AMERICAN
INSTITUTE

ASIAN
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MEMBERS OF
ASIAN AMERICAN CENTER
FOR ADVANCING JUSTICE

CHICAGO
CLEVELAND
DETROIT
TWIN CITIES
WISCONSIN





WISCONSIN INTRODUCTION

The Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) population in Wisconsin grew dramatically in the late 20th century as the state became home to large numbers of Southeast Asian refugees after the Vietnam War. With many resettlement agencies providing critical services to refugees, Wisconsin now has the third largest population of Hmong Americans in the United States, as well as prominent Vietnamese and Laotian American communities. There are currently nearly 152,000 Asian Americans and 5,000 NHPI statewide. Hmong Americans comprise approximately 32% of Wisconsin's Asian American population, with large numbers of Indian, Chinese, Filipino, and Korean Americans also living in the state. While there are sizable concentrations of Asian Americans in Milwaukee and Madison, there also large numbers in other parts of the state, including Waukesha, Marathon, and Brown Counties.

THERE ARE
NEARLY 152,000
ASIAN AMERICANS
LIVING IN THE STATE
OF WISCONSIN.

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Asian American Center for Advancing Justice

The Asian American Center for Advancing Justice (Advancing Justice) is a leading Asian American civil rights and social justice organization comprising four equal and independent affiliates: the Asian American Justice Center (AAJC), Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC), Asian American Institute (AAI), and Asian Law Caucus (ALC). Its mission is to promote a fair and equitable society for all by working for civil and human rights and empowering Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) and other underserved communities.

Each affiliate's staff has valuable expertise and deep experience. AAJC is one of the nation's leading experts on issues of importance to the Asian American community and has enacted a sweeping range of programs on critical national concerns. APALC is the nation's largest legal organization addressing the needs of Asian Americans and NHPI by advocating for civil rights, providing legal services and education, and building coalitions. AAI is the Midwest's leading pan-Asian organization dedicated to empowering the Asian American community through advocacy, research, education, and coalition building. ALC is the oldest legal organization in the country defending the civil rights of Asian American and NHPI communities and focuses on the needs of low-income, immigrant, and underserved communities.

While well known in their individual spheres for their work and expertise, the affiliates of Advancing Justice have come together to build a stronger, more cohesive regional and national civil and human rights infrastructure for the Asian American community. We use our resources to provide valuable information to the community, work to address more issues in more places, impact a greater number of public debates, and help the voices of Asian Americans, NHPI, and other marginalized and underserved communities be heard.

Demographics (Population)

Population, Growth

by Top Five Counties, Wisconsin 2010, Ranked by Population

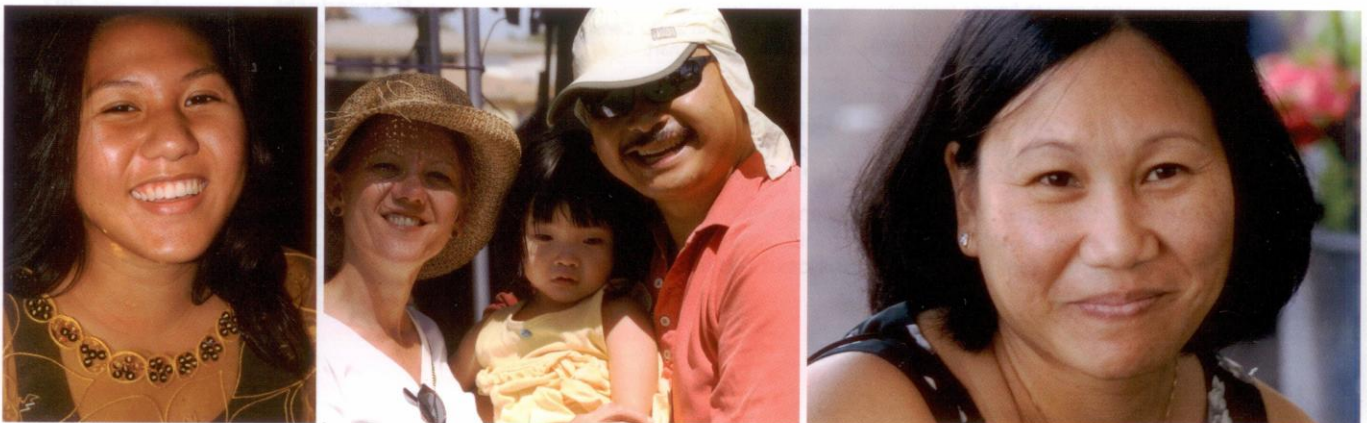
| Wisconsin Top Five Counties | Asian American | | | Wisconsin Top Five Counties | NHPI | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| | Number | % | % Growth 2000 to 2010 | | Number | % | % Growth 2000 to 2010 |
| Milwaukee County | 37,497 | 4% | 35% | Milwaukee County | 1,145 | 0.1% | 7% |
| Dane County | 26,698 | 6% | 60% | Dane County | 505 | 0.1% | 24% |
| Waukesha County | 12,549 | 3% | 100% | Waukesha County | 303 | 0.1% | 45% |
| Marathon County | 7,738 | 6% | 27% | Brown County | 282 | 0.1% | 45% |
| Brown County | 7,619 | 3% | 38% | Kenosha County | 239 | 0.1% | 87% |
| Total Population | 151,513 | 3% | 47% | Total Population | 5,117 | 0.1% | 19% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF1 Table QT-P6; 2010 Census SF1 Table QT-P6.

- There are nearly 152,000 Asian Americans and 5,000 Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) in Wisconsin.
- Asian Americans were one of the fastest growing groups between 2000 and 2010, their rate of population growth over the decade second only to Latinos statewide (47% versus 74%). NHPI grew 19% over the same period.¹⁴⁰
- While Milwaukee County is home to the largest Asian American and NHPI populations in Wisconsin, communities in other counties grew at faster rates. The Asian American population in Waukesha County doubled between 2000 and 2010, while the NHPI population in Kenosha County grew by 87%.
- Among racial groups statewide, NHPI are most likely to be multiracial; 64% are of more than one race. Native American and Alaskan Natives and Asian Americans are also disproportionately multiracial (37% and 15%, respectively).¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF1 Tables QT-P3 and QT-P6; 2010 Census SF1 Tables QT-P3 and QT-P6.

¹⁴¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1 Tables QT-P3 and QT-P6.

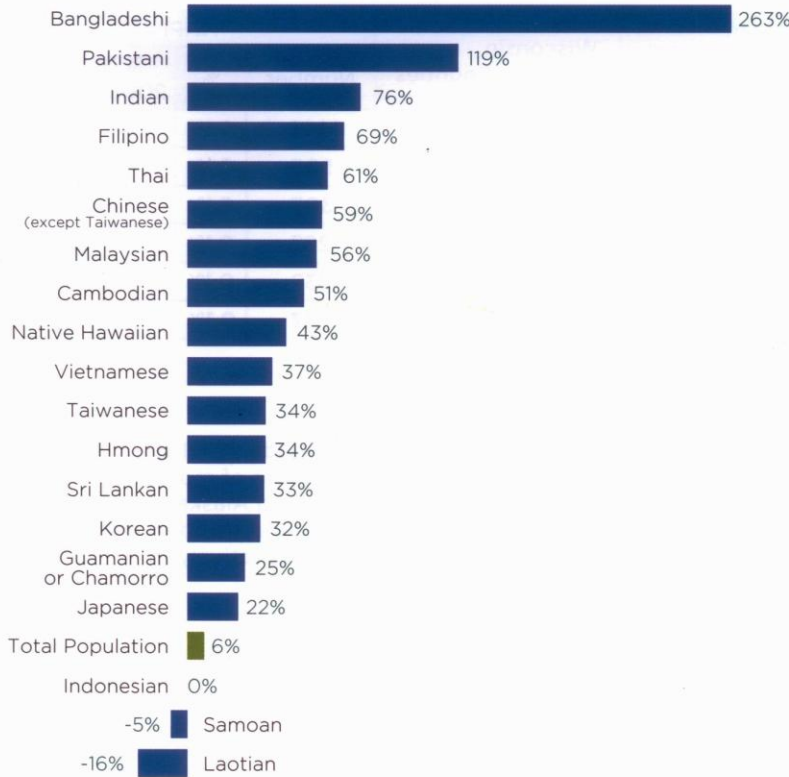


AIAN: Native American and Alaskan Natives
NHPI: Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander

Demographics (Ethnic Groups)

Population Growth

by Ethnic Group, Wisconsin 2000 to 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF1 Table QT-P7; 2010 Census SF1 Tables QT-P8 and QT-P9.

Note: Population growth figures for Bhutanese, Burmese, Marshallese, and Nepalese Americans excluded because these groups were not reported in 2000 Census data. Also, groups with fewer than 100 in 2010 are not included in the chart.

- Hmong Americans are the largest Asian American ethnic group in Wisconsin, almost double the size of Indian Americans. Native Hawaiians are the largest NHPI ethnic group.
- Between 2000 and 2010, South Asians were among the fastest growing Asian American ethnic groups. Bangladeshi and Pakistani American populations doubled in size over the decade.

Population

by Ethnic Group, Wisconsin 2010

| Ethnic Group | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Hmong | 49,240 |
| Indian | 25,998 |
| Chinese (except Taiwanese) | 20,056 |
| Filipino | 13,158 |
| Korean | 10,949 |
| Vietnamese | 6,191 |
| Japanese | 5,967 |
| Laotian | 4,562 |
| Pakistani | 2,984 |
| Thai | 2,050 |
| Native Hawaiian | 1,638 |
| Cambodian | 1,294 |
| Burmese | 1,197 |
| Taiwanese | 1,036 |
| Guamanian or Chamorro | 716 |
| Indonesian | 629 |
| Nepalese | 500 |
| Samoan | 458 |
| Malaysian | 338 |
| Sri Lankan | 307 |
| Bangladeshi | 283 |
| Mongolian | 258 |
| Tongan | 55 |
| Fijian | 43 |
| Marshallese | 25 |
| Bhutanese | 2 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF1 Tables QT-P8, QT-P9; SF2 Table DP1.

Economic Contributions

Business Owners

By Race and Hispanic Origin, Wisconsin 2007, Ranked by Number of Businesses

| Race and Ethnic Group | All Businesses (Number) | Revenues (\$1,000) | Employees (Number) | Annual Payroll (\$1,000) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| White | 387,603 | \$213,765,832 | 1,199,579 | \$38,354,854 |
| African American | 11,276 | \$980,741 | 13,003 | \$227,492 |
| Asian American | 6,785 | \$2,330,310 | 15,808 | \$469,628 |
| Latino | 5,619 | \$2,421,160 | 10,901 | \$368,817 |
| AIAN | 2,641 | \$348,282 | 2,220 | \$59,032 |
| Total | 433,797 | \$562,795,472 | 2,449,996 | \$90,656,912 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 Survey of Business Owners Tables SB0700CSA01.

Note: NHPI data are not presented because data are suppressed. Race and ethnic categories do not sum to total because Latino (Hispanic) is treated as an ethnic category that overlaps with racial categories.

- Asian Americans owned nearly 6,800 businesses statewide in 2007.
- Asian American businesses in Wisconsin employ nearly 16,000 Americans, paying out almost \$470 million in payroll. These businesses employ more persons and distribute more payroll than businesses owned by any other racial group except Whites.
- Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) buying power doubled between 2000 and 2010, an increase that surpassed those of Native Americans, African Americans, and Whites over the same period.¹⁴²
- Asian American small businesses generate jobs for Wisconsin's economy. A majority of those employed in Asian American-owned businesses work in small businesses.¹⁴³
- Most Asian American-owned businesses are concentrated in three industries: retail trade; professional, scientific, and technical services; and health care and social assistance.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Note: Asian American and NHPI data are not available separately. All races include Hispanic Origin.

Source: Humphreys, Jeffrey M. 2010. "The Multicultural Economy 2010." *Selig Center for Economic Growth, The University of Georgia*.

¹⁴³ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 Survey of Business Owners, Tables SB0700CSA01, SB0700CSA10, and SB0700CSA11.

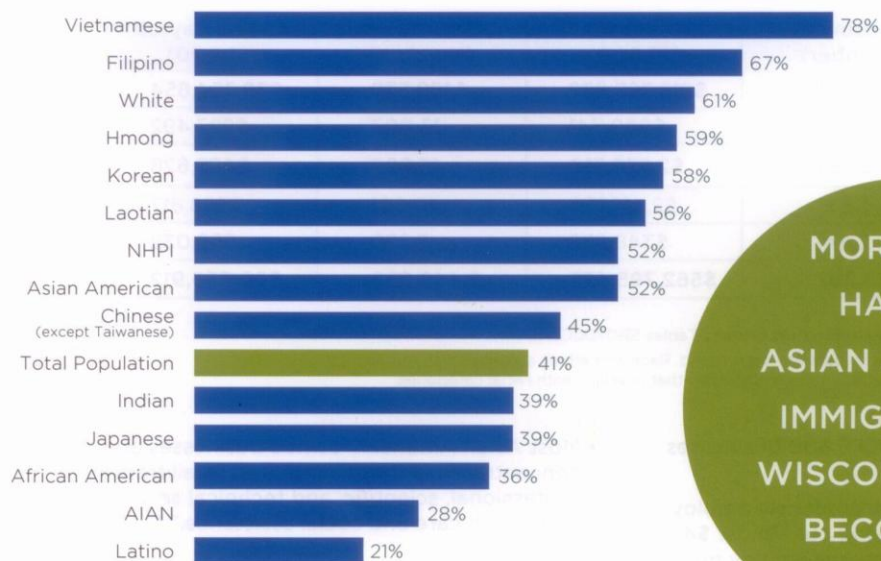
¹⁴⁴ Ibid., Table SB0700CSA01

WISCONSIN UNITED COALITION OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

Mutual assistance associations address the unique cultural needs of refugee populations, and provide a range of services, including translation and interpretation, case management, and support services in areas key to resettlement in a new country, such as housing, English language instruction, and job training. The Wisconsin United Coalition of Mutual Assistance Associations, Inc. is an umbrella association for 13 mutual assistance associations across the state. WUCMAA was incorporated in 1986 to mobilize resources and support state-wide programs that support refugees and their families in achieving self-sufficiency. WUCMAA continues to provide services and now also focuses on policy issues, resource development and mobilization, training and development, and advocacy.

Wisconsin Civic Engagement

Foreign Born Who Naturalized by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Wisconsin 2006-2010



MORE THAN
HALF OF
ASIAN AMERICAN
IMMIGRANTS IN
WISCONSIN HAVE
BECOME U.S.
CITIZENS.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table B05003.

- Among Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) immigrants in Wisconsin, more than half (52%) are U.S. citizens, a rate higher than that of the total foreign-born population statewide (41%).
- While 78% of Vietnamese and 67% of Filipino American immigrants are U.S. citizens, only 39% of Japanese American immigrants are.¹⁴⁵
- Almost 14,000 Asian immigrants who came to the United States between 1985 and 2005 are eligible to become citizens in Wisconsin. Most are from Thailand, China, Laos, and India. Over 96% are of voting age.¹⁴⁶

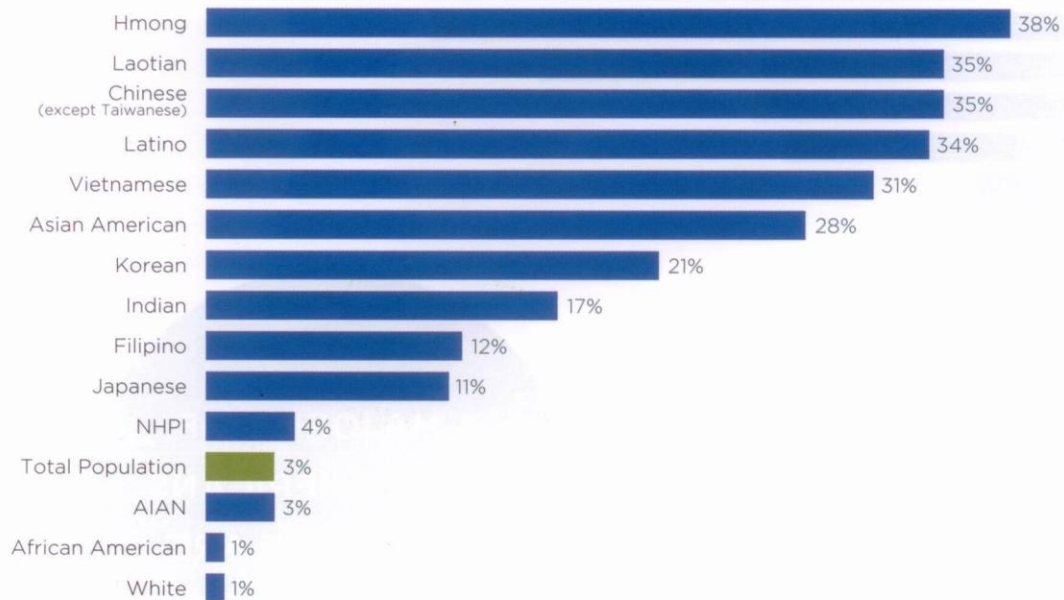
¹⁴⁵ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table B05003.

¹⁴⁶ Source: Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII), University of Southern California. 2011. LPR Status and Naturalization Data (raw data originally provided by the Office of Immigration Statistics, Citizenship and Immigration Services).
Note: A legal permanent resident is generally eligible to naturalize after holding that status for five years. However, additional criteria, such as "good moral character" and basic English literacy, must also be met. Data only includes top 13 Asian countries of origin.

Wisconsin Language

Percent of Population Who Is Limited English Proficient for Those 5 Years of Age and Older

by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Wisconsin 2006-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table B16004.

- Asian Americans are more likely than any other racial group in Wisconsin to speak a language other than English at home. Over three-fourths of Hmong, Laotian, and Indian Americans speak a language other than English at home.¹⁴⁹
- The top five Asian languages spoken in the state are Hmong, Chinese, Laotian, Korean, and Tagalog.¹⁵⁰
- More than 35,000 Asian Americans in Wisconsin are limited English proficient (LEP). The number of Filipino Americans who are LEP statewide nearly doubled between 2000 and 2010 (87%).¹⁵¹
- About 28% of Asian Americans statewide are LEP. Hmong, Laotian, and Chinese Americans have rates of limited English proficiency higher than any other racial or ethnic group.
- Asian American seniors have higher rates of limited English proficiency than Latino seniors (58% versus 41%). Nearly all Hmong American seniors in Wisconsin (93%) are LEP.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table B16004.

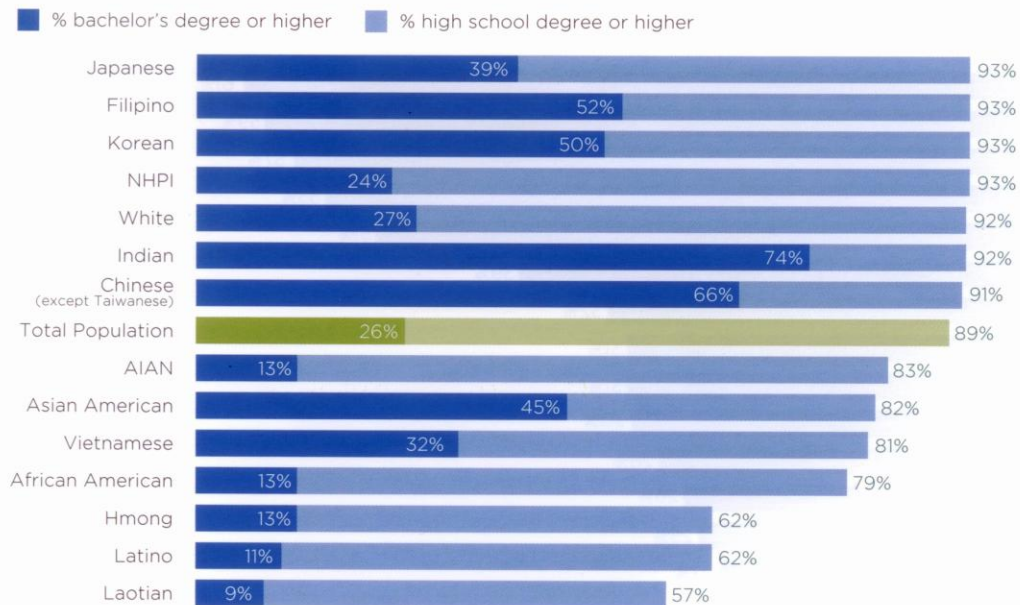
¹⁵⁰Ibid., Table B16001.

¹⁵¹Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 SF4 Table PCT38; 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table B16004.

¹⁵²Ibid.

Wisconsin Education

Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Wisconsin 2006-2010, Ranked by Percent Holding a High School Degree or Higher



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table B15002.

- Asian Americans in Wisconsin 25 years and older are less likely than Whites to hold a high school degree but more likely to have graduated from college.
- The educational attainment of Asian Americans 25 years and older varies widely among Asian American ethnic groups. Laotian and Hmong Americans have the lowest educational attainment and are less likely than African Americans to hold a high school diploma or GED.
- Hmong American women are much less likely than men to hold a high school degree, while Filipino American women are much less likely than men to hold a college degree.¹⁵³
- In Wisconsin K-12 public schools, the most commonly spoken Asian languages are Hmong, Mandarin, Lao, Vietnamese, and Korean. Telugu (India), Khmer, and Hindi were the fastest growing Asian languages spoken in schools between 2000 and 2010. Hmong is the most commonly spoken of any language.¹⁵⁴
- Three-quarters of Hmong American three- and four-year-olds are not enrolled in preschool, compared with 57% of White children.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Ibid., Table B15002.

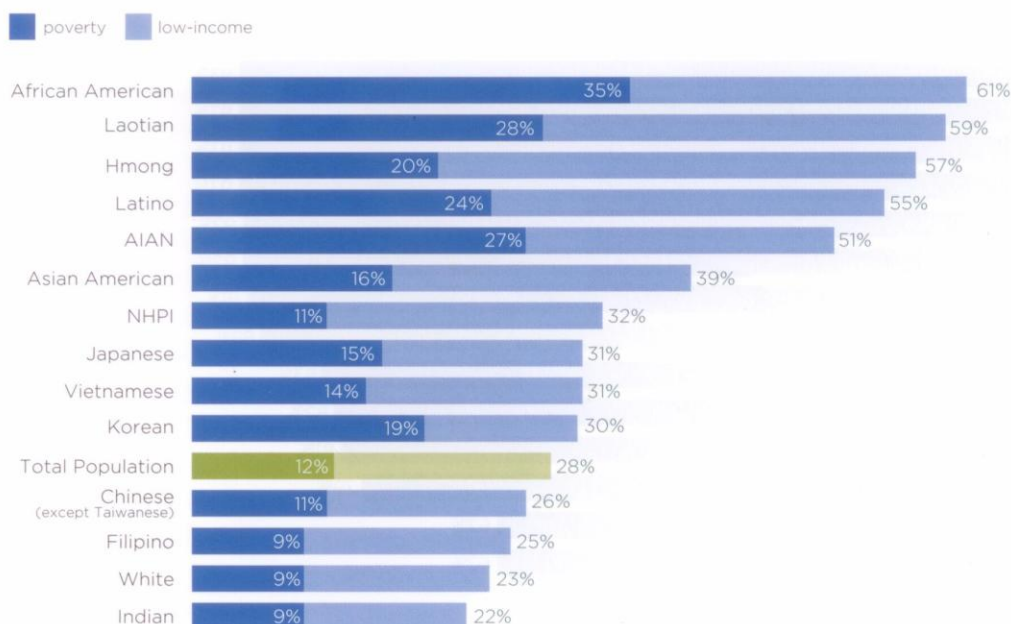
¹⁵⁴ Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2000 and 2010, Census of Limited-English Proficient Pupils in Wisconsin by Language.

¹⁵⁵ Note: Children who are three or four years old who are enrolled in school are categorized as preschool students. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table B14001.

Wisconsin Income

Poverty and Low-Income

by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Wisconsin 2006-2010,
Ranked by Percent Low-Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Tables B17001 and C17002.

- The number of Asian Americans in Wisconsin living in poverty grew by 24% between 2000 and 2010.¹⁵⁶
- Across multiple measures of income, Asian Americans statewide fare worse than Whites. A higher percentage of Asian Americans live in poverty (16% versus 9%)¹⁵⁷ and are low-income (39% versus 23%)¹⁵⁸ compared to Whites. Asian American per capita income also falls below that of Whites (\$20,928 versus \$28,841).¹⁵⁹
- Poverty rates vary considerably among Asian American ethnic groups. Approximately 28% of Laotian Americans live in poverty, a rate lower than African Americans (35%) but higher than Latinos (24%). About one in five Hmong and Korean Americans lives below the poverty line.¹⁶⁰
- About one in five Asian American seniors statewide lives in poverty, a rate much higher than the total senior population (8%). One in four Hmong American seniors is poor.¹⁶¹
- More than half of Laotian and Hmong Americans in Wisconsin are low-income. Laotian and Hmong Americans also have the lowest per capita incomes (\$10,957 and \$11,419, respectively) of any racial or ethnic group statewide.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 SF4 Table PCT142; 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table B17001.

¹⁵⁷ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table B17001.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., Table C17002.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., Table B19301.

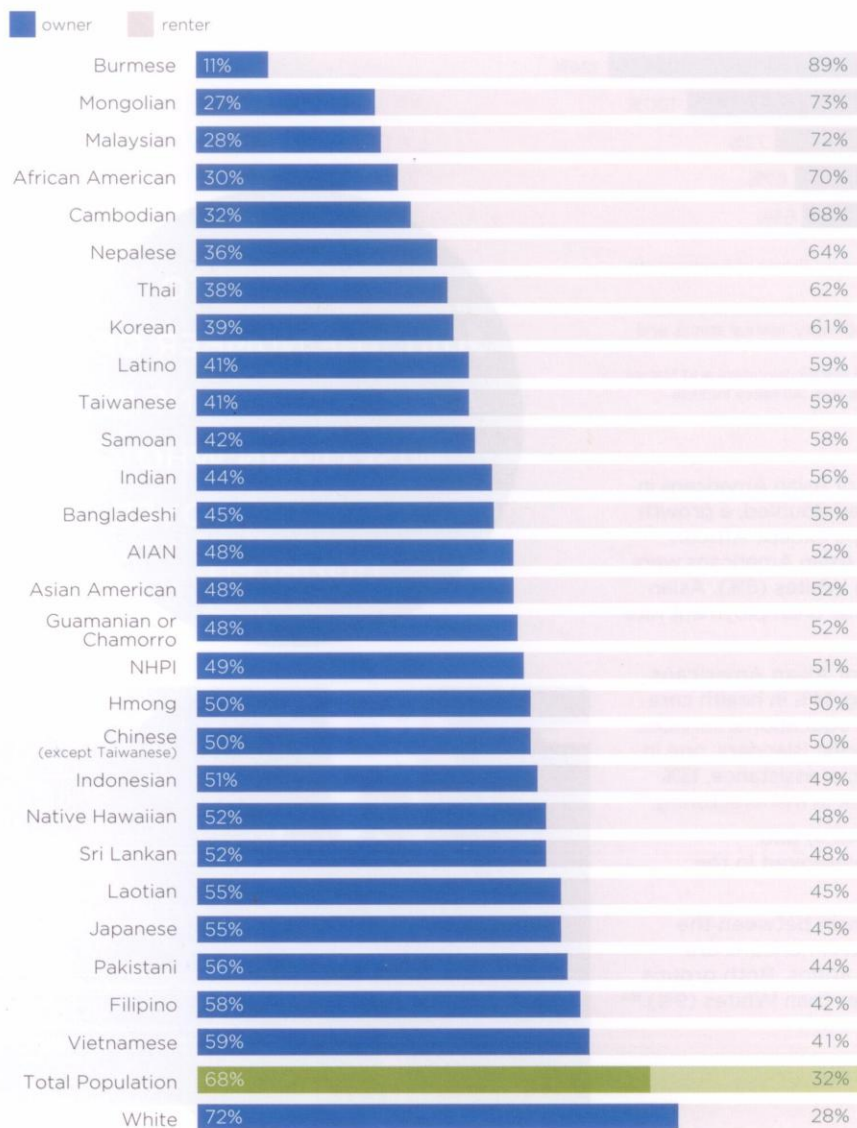
¹⁶⁰ Ibid., Table B17001.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., Table C17002.

¹⁶² Ibid., Table B19301.

Wisconsin Housing

Percent Homeowners vs. Renters by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Wisconsin 2010



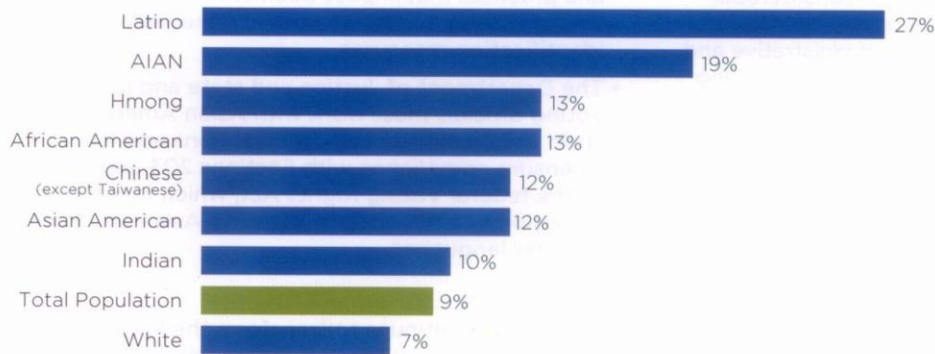
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2 Table HCT2.

- Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) in Wisconsin have below average rates of homeownership. Less than half of Asian Americans (48%) and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (49%) statewide own their homes, compared to 72% of Whites.
- Less than a third of Cambodian, Malaysian, Mongolian, and Burmese Americans statewide own their homes. Only 11% of Burmese Americans are homeowners.

- Asian Americans and Latinos have the highest average household sizes among racial groups in Wisconsin (3.29 and 3.43, respectively). The average size of Hmong and Burmese American households (4.97 and 4.64, respectively) is almost twice the average size of all households statewide (2.43).¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2 Table HCT5.

Percent Uninsured by Racial, Hispanic Origin, and Ethnic Group, Wisconsin 2008-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2010 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates Table S0201.

ACS 3-Year Estimates suppresses data for groups with populations fewer than 20,000; thus, data are not available for several Asian American and all Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander ethnic groups.

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for all racial groups in Wisconsin, including Asian Americans. Korean and Vietnamese Americans are the only Asian American ethnic groups more likely to die from cancer; 35% of Korean and 28% of Vietnamese American deaths statewide are attributable to the disease.
- Asian Americans in Wisconsin are more likely than other racial groups to die from suicide. Approximately 18% of Korean American deaths are attributable to suicide, the highest rate of any racial or ethnic group; suicide is the third leading cause of death among Korean Americans statewide. Suicide was the fourth leading cause of death among Hmong Americans; 4% of Hmong American deaths were suicide related.¹⁶⁶
- In 2005, Asian Americans made up 27% of hepatitis B virus infections statewide, a share greater than any other racial group.¹⁶⁷
- In 2008, Asian Americans comprised 34% of all tuberculosis cases, the highest share among racial groups.¹⁶⁸

- Asian Americans are least likely among racial groups to have had a cholesterol screening. Approximately 51% of Asian Americans have had the screening, compared to 74% of Whites.¹⁶⁹
- Pregnant Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) women are more likely than Whites to receive little or no prenatal care. Among Asian American and NHPI ethnic groups statewide, Hmong, Cambodian, and Laotian Americans have among the least access to prenatal care.¹⁷⁰
- In Wisconsin, Asian Americans are more likely than Whites to be uninsured (12% versus 7%, respectively). Among Asian American ethnic groups, Hmong Americans are the least likely to be insured; 13% of Hmong Americans statewide are uninsured, the same rate as African Americans.

¹⁶⁶ Source: Wisconsin Office of Health Informatics Vital Records.

¹⁶⁷ Source: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Hepatitis B Program, Division of Public Health.

¹⁶⁸ Source: NCHHSTP State Profiles, 2010. "Wisconsin - 2010 Profile." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.

¹⁶⁹ Source: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services. "Minority Health Report, 2001-2005."

¹⁷⁰ Source: Wisconsin Office of Health Informatics Vital Records.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

How can government agencies, community organizations, and others better serve Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities in the Midwest? Given considerable social and economic diversity among Asian Americans and NHPI, as well as the myriad of administrative and legislative differences among states, the following policy recommendations serve as a starting point for improving the delivery of services to two of the Midwest's fastest growing racial groups.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Asian American- and NHPI-owned businesses are creating jobs for Americans throughout the Midwest. Data from the Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners show that Asian American-owned firms in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, the Twin Cities, and Wisconsin employ more people and issue more in payroll than businesses owned by any other racial group except Whites. Disproportionate numbers of those firms are small businesses.

- Government entities established to support small businesses should provide high quality, language-appropriate training programs and services for Asian American and NHPI business owners.
- Banks and other private equity firms should work with Asian American- and NHPI-serving organizations to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services to Asian American and NHPI business owners.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Asian Americans and NHPI throughout the Midwest are becoming more politically engaged. Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey show that a majority of Asian American immigrants in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, the Twin Cities, and Wisconsin have become U.S. citizens, and data from its Current Population Survey show that Asian American voter registration in several Midwest states is increasing dramatically. Yet Asian Americans and NHPI have not realized their full potential to influence the public policies that impact their communities.

- Government, foundations, and corporations should promote civic engagement through greater investment in adult English language learning, civics courses, and naturalization assistance. The effectiveness of these programs should be improved by assessing how well resources are being deployed to Asian American and NHPI communities, and by partnering with community-based organizations and others who have demonstrated capacity to reach and serve them.
- Foundations, political parties, candidates, and other stakeholders should increase their investment in voter registration and mobilization efforts targeting Asian American and NHPI communities in the Midwest.

- Federal, state, and local agencies and elected officials should guarantee equal access to voting by vigorously enforcing voter protection laws and opposing policies and practices that impose additional barriers to voting, such as overly burdensome and unnecessary voter identification measures.
- The Department of Justice and state and local voting officials must work with Asian American and NHPI community-based organizations and leaders to ensure compliance with Sections 203 and 208 of the federal Voting Rights Act, which facilitate the provision of assistance to voters in Asian and Pacific Islander languages.

IMMIGRATION

Immigration continues to transform the Midwest. Asian American and NHPI communities are among the fastest growing in places like Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, the Twin Cities, and Wisconsin due in large part to immigration, with South Asians accounting for a disproportionate share of Asian American population growth. According to data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Asian Americans are proportionally more foreign born than any other racial group.

- Federal, state, and local governments and private foundations should reexamine whether adequate resources are being directed toward serving the needs of growing Asian American and NHPI communities, particularly South Asians, Southeast Asians, and NHPI.
- Congress and the President need to address every aspect of the broken immigration system, preferably through comprehensive reform. Congress should (1) provide a roadmap to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, including immigrant youth who have lived in the United States for much of their lives, and (2) reduce the backlogs for visas.
- Federal programs such as Secure Communities and state laws like Arizona's SB1070 and Indiana's SB590 must be replaced by policies and procedures that further public safety without persecuting immigrants who have not committed any crime.
- To improve access to legal representation in the immigration system, states should provide funding that increases the number of Asian American and NHPI community-based organizations in the Midwest with Bureau of Immigration Appeals (BIA) accreditation.

LANGUAGE

Asian Americans face language barriers that impact their ability to access critical services, like health care and police protection. According to data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, approximately 30% of Asian Americans in metropolitan areas throughout the Midwest are limited English proficient (LEP) and experience some difficulty communicating in English. With ongoing immigration, the number of LEP Asian Americans in the Midwest is increasing.

- Federal, state, and local agencies—and entities receiving government funding—should implement effective policies addressing the linguistic and cultural barriers Asian Americans and NHPI face in accessing social services, including health care, workforce development programs, after-school programs, and programs for seniors. This includes ensuring adequate funding to support the hiring of bilingual staff and translation of materials, as well as actively enforcing Title VI requirements and Executive Order 13166.
- Government should support public-private partnerships that work to address the demand for adult English language learning programs.

EDUCATION

Asian Americans in the Midwest are not “model minorities” in the educational arena. While some are well educated, many have not completed high school. According to data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Asian Americans are consistently less likely than Whites to hold a high school degree. Among Asian American ethnic groups, Southeast Asians have levels of educational attainment similar to Latinos and African Americans.

- Government, corporations, foundations, and other stakeholders should improve K-12 programs by better addressing the linguistic and cultural barriers students face.
- Government and school administrators should invest in bilingual curricula that embrace Asian and NHPI languages and cultures.
- Institutions of higher education should protect and promote affirmative action programs, particularly for underrepresented groups such as Southeast Asians and NHPI.

INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

Like others in the Midwest, Asian Americans and NHPI have been impacted by the recent economic crisis. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the number of unemployed Asian Americans has increased dramatically in states throughout the Midwest, while data from the Census Bureau show corresponding increases in the number of Asian Americans living in poverty. Some Asian American ethnic groups have poverty rates comparable to those of Latinos and African Americans.

- Federal, state, and local governments need to strengthen and expand access to culturally and linguistically accessible public assistance and unemployment benefits programs, particularly during times of recession when needs are especially acute.
- Federal, state, and local agencies need to ensure vigorous enforcement of labor laws and collective bargaining rights, including antidiscrimination provisions and protections against retaliation for workers who assert their rights. Enforcement must extend to workers regardless of immigration status and ensure that all workers are protected.
- Corporations, government agencies, academic institutions, law firms, and other employers should work with Asian American- and NHPI-serving organizations to implement equal opportunity and cultural sensitivity training programs to remove barriers to advancement in the workplace.
- Federal, state, and local agencies should include Asian Americans and NHPI in equal opportunity programs based on their underrepresentation in critical sectors. Asian Americans and NHPI face ongoing discrimination and should be included in minority contracting programs, allowing them to compete for government contracts and jobs on an equal footing.

HOUSING

Homeownership is a dream that has eluded many Asian Americans and NHPI in the Midwest. Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey indicate that Asian Americans have below average rates of homeownership in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, the Twin Cities, and Wisconsin. Approximately 17% of Asian Americans living in the Twin Cities who took out home loans between 2004 and 2008 experienced foreclosure, a rate much higher than average for the metropolitan area.

- Federal, state, and local agencies and private companies should expand affordable housing and homeownership opportunities for Asian American and NHPI families throughout the Midwest.
- Federal, state, and local government should vigorously enforce laws prohibiting fraud and predatory lending practices, which continue to harm immigrants and other vulnerable communities.
- As the foreclosure crisis continues, federal, state, and local government need to fund and expand housing counseling and consumer protection services, including those provided by community-based organizations and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

HEALTH

Asian Americans in the Midwest are disproportionately uninsured. According to data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Asian Americans throughout the region are less likely than Whites to have health insurance, with several Asian American ethnic groups among those least likely to be insured. In Illinois and Minnesota, data from the Centers for Disease Control show that Asian Americans are more likely than others to not have seen a doctor in the past year due to cost.

- Government agencies, community-based organizations, and those in the health industry should outreach to and educate Asian American and NHPI communities about the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act so they can benefit from the expanded availability of health insurance. Affordable health care coverage should be made available to all U.S. residents, regardless of immigration status.

- The federal government and courts should broadly interpret and fully enforce the antidiscrimination provisions of the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act.
- Those in the health care industry and federal, state, and local government need to ensure quality health care for persons who are not fluent in English by removing barriers to enrollment and providing services in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Data on growing Asian American and NHPI communities are critical to developing informed public policy. Because data on Asian Americans and NHPI as racial groups often masks social and economic diversity among ethnic groups, data disaggregated by ethnic group are particularly important to understanding and serving these communities.

- Research produced by both governmental and nongovernmental entities must include data on Asian Americans and NHPI both as racial groups and disaggregated by ethnic group.
- Survey research by both governmental and nongovernmental entities should oversample Asian Americans and NHPI by ethnic group and in small geographies, translate and administer survey instruments in Asian and Pacific Islander languages, and provide appropriate language assistance to respondents.