

Race and Ethnicity in California: Demographics Report Series—No. 8 (April 2002)
Asians in California: 1990 to 2000

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Executive Summary

Across the country, the Asian population has grown over the past ten years. On the 2000 Census, 12.3 percent of California's population identified as Asian, as did 4.2 percent of the total population in the United States. The most recent decennial survey was the first one on which individuals were permitted to identify with more than one group. Hence, there are several ways in which data on the Asian population can be summarized—e.g., people who identified with one Asian group, more than one Asian group, or Asian in combination with other races. This report summarizes Census 2000 data on the Asian population in California, by county, region, and place within the state. It examines the prevalence of specific Asian groups and rates of change between 1990 and 2000.

Statewide in California, 10.9 percent of the population identified with one Asian group; an additional 1.4 percent identified with multiple Asian groups or as Asian in combination with other races; these numbers are smaller for the overall U.S., at 3.6 and 0.6 percent, respectively. Regionally in California, at the high end of the spectrum, 20.9 percent of people residing in the San Francisco Bay Area identified as Asian (whether with one Asian group, multiple Asian groups, or in combination with other races); at the low end, 1.3 percent of people living in the Eastern Mountain Counties region of the state identified as Asian.

The percentage of change in the regional population of people identified as Asian *alone* ranges from 10.0 in the Coastal Counties to 21.3 in the Sacramento Metropolitan Area, whereas the percent of change in the Asian population (using *alone or in combination* data from the 2000 Census) spans from 33.0 in the Central Valley region to 115.6 percent in the Eastern Mountain Counties.

Though California on a state-level has a larger percentage of Asians than in the U.S. overall, it experienced smaller rates of change (35.2 and 51.9 percent, depending on whether Asian *alone* or *alone or in combination* data are considered from the 2000 Census) in its Asian population between 1990 and 2000 than the country as a whole (48.3 and 72.2 percent, again, depending on which Asian identifications are counted); this is despite similar rates of change in the total population (13.8 percent for California, and 13.2 for the U.S.).

In California, five of the ten Asian groups included on both the 1990 and 2000 censuses had between 44.5 and 53.0 percent change in their populations over the past decade: Korean, Thai, Chinese, Filipino, and Hmong. Two groups that had higher rates of change were Vietnamese (72.7 percent) and Asian Indian (125.3 percent). And, three groups displayed smaller change percentages over the past ten years: Japanese (26.2), Cambodian (24.0), and Laotian (12.1).

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