

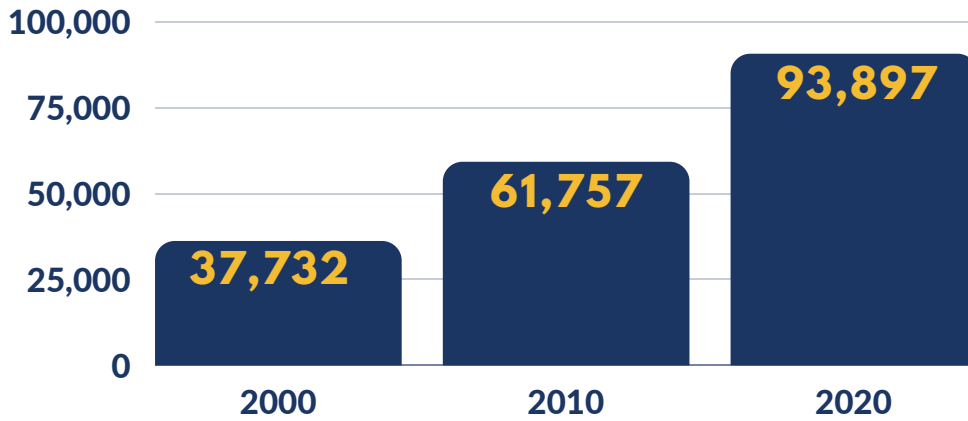
Asian American and Pacific Islanders in South Carolina

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Diversity and Geographical Dispersion

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SC's Asian American Population, 2000 to 2020*



Overview

Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are the third largest minority ethnic group in South Carolina. However, due to cultural, national, and linguistic differences, the pan-ethnic label "AAPI" obscures more than it reveals. This brief examines data on national origins and geographical dispersal amongst the AAPI community in South Carolina.

Dramatic and Uneven Growth

South Carolina's AAPI population has experienced dramatic growth over the past two decades, increasing more than **148%** from 2000 to 2020! More impressively, AAPI growth accounted for **6.5%** of the 493,000 new residents South Carolina added over the past ten years.

Due to this growth, the Commission for Minority Affairs has accommodated AAPI interests by adding a new Asian American and Pacific Islander program area catered to those communities' needs. Research shows that there is no monolithic "AAPI" racial category, but that the state's AAPI population is culturally, linguistically, and historically diverse.

The state's largest AAPI groups are Indians, Chinese, Filipinos, Vietnamese, and Koreans. Furthermore, the 2019 American Community Survey registered at least **24 distinct AAPI national and regional identities** in the state.

Furthermore, over the past 19 years, the state's fastest growing AAPI communities were Cambodians (550%), Pakistanis (395%), Hmong (335%), Thai (246%), Indians (199%), and Chinese (189%).

Geographical Dispersion

Every county in the state had more than 10 AAPI residents according to the 2020 Decennial Census. However, **the top ten counties in 2020 accounted for 79.5% of the entire AAPI population.** Of the top six counties in 2020, only York county saw its share of the total AAPI increase, around **4.2 percentage points** from 2010.

For example, in 2019 **73.9% of Indians** resided in Greenville, Richland, Lexington, York, Spartanburg, and Charleston Counties. However, **only 54% of the Chinese** population resided in the same counties! The Chinese population was much more dispersed.

Asian American and Pacific Islanders accounted for

1.8%

of South Carolina's Total Population in 2020*



And comprised more than

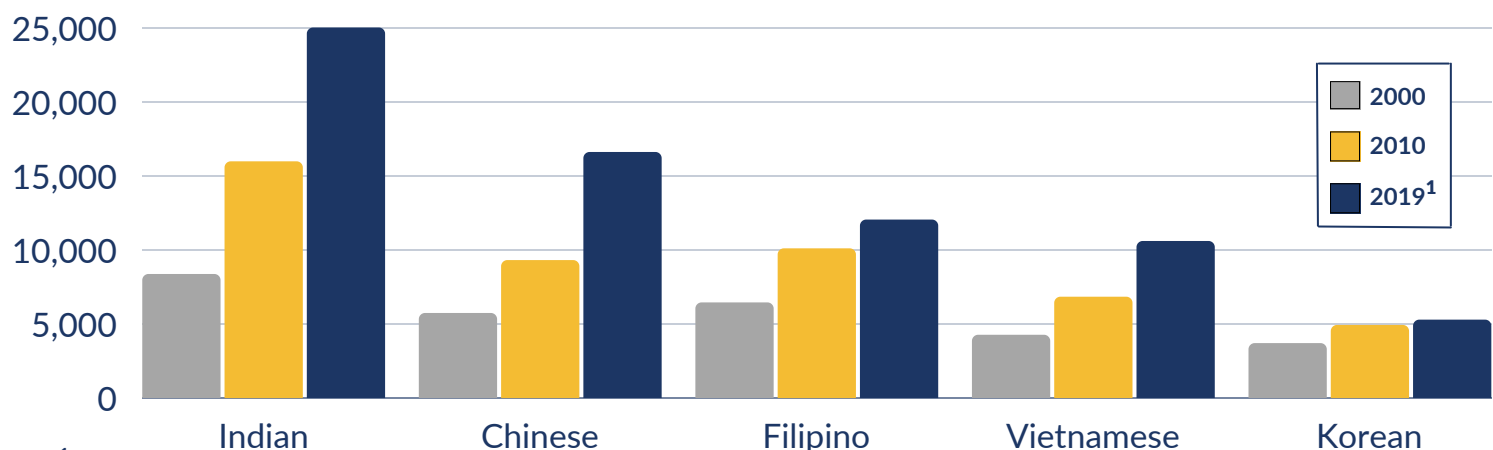
2%

of the population in

York, Richland, Spartanburg, Greenville, Berkeley, Lexington, Pickens, and Dorchester Counties



Population Growth for SC's Five Largest AAPI Subgroups, 2000-2019



¹Margins of error (at 95% Confidence Interval) for 2019 data: ±4,762 Indians, ±4,079 Chinese, ±3,186 Filipinos, ±1,586 Koreans, ±3,987 Vietnamese.

Around **63.5% of Filipinos** resided in **six counties**, with a majority (35.5%) living in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties. For **Koreans**, around **37.2%** reside in Richland or Lexington Counties. Around **70.6% of Vietnamese**, resided in **six counties**, with Greenville, Richland, and Horry Counties accounting for 49% of the total.

Some of the smaller AAPI groups tend to be concentrated in only one or two urban areas. For example, **76.4% of Cambodians**, **62.2% of Hmong**, and **55% of Laotians** reside in **Spartanburg County**. While **Thai** and **Pakistanis** are **more evenly spread** across Greenville, York, Richland, Lexington, and Charleston Counties.

Outreach and Messaging

State agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, and other service-providers should take into consideration the vast diversity of the state's AAPI communities when deve-

loping service outreach plans. Multi-cultural and multi-lingual strategies aimed at shoring up the concerns and wellbeing of these residents should be considered, particularly when addressing needs related to COVID-19, natural disasters, and other critical need situations. Data and formal connections with respective voices and community leaders constitute vital first steps to be taken in extending outreach to these groups. Likewise, sustained work in communities and a demonstrable commitment to deepening relationships go a long way in enhancing resiliency and preparedness, while fostering core social competencies that would make South Carolina an attractive destination for all.

AAPI Residents by Census Tract, 2020 Decennial Census

