



At a Glance: Asian Americans in Massachusetts

- ✓ There are almost 340,000 Asian Americans in Massachusetts, comprising 5 percent of the state’s population and 8 percent of the population of Boston.
- ✓ Massachusetts’ Asian American voting population more than doubled from about 138,000 in 2004 to 324,000 in 2008.
- ✓ Only one third of AAPI citizens in Massachusetts are registered to vote.
- ✓ AAPI voters can make a significant impact in local and national elections, and the number of AAPI elected officials is on the rise.

A Growing Asian American Population

- ✓ From 2004 to 2008, Massachusetts’ Asian American population grew from 138,000 to 324,000.
- ✓ Two out of every three Asian Americans in Massachusetts are citizens.
- ✓ Only one third of AAPI citizens in Massachusetts are registered to vote.

Counties with Highest Asian American Population

County	# of Eligible Voters	# of Eligible Asian American Voters	Asian American Voters as % of Total County Voters
Middlesex	1,025,000	57,700	5.6%
Norfolk	470,000	25,300	5.4%
Suffolk	474,000	28,900	6%
Worcester	557,000	11,500	2%
Essex	510,000	10,700	2%

Voting in 2008

- ✓ In 2004, 78% of registered AAPI voters actually voted. In 2008, that number jumped to 93%.
- ✓ According to an exit poll survey conducted by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), 38% of 2008 Asian American voter respondents were first-time voters.
- ✓ Moreover, only 16% of Asian American voters spoke English as a native language.
- ✓ 42% of respondents were limited English proficient.
- ✓ *Despite the added challenges, AAPIs made a significant impact in 2008 by turning out such a high percent of registered voters.*

Socioeconomic Challenges

- ✓ In MA, about 7% of families live under the poverty line. For Cambodian families, 23% live in poverty, 17% of Vietnamese families live in poverty, and 10% of Chinese live in poverty.
- ✓ Almost 1 out of 3 Vietnamese living in Massachusetts over the age of 25 has less than a high school diploma.
- ✓ Of the male and female Cambodians 16 and older, almost half are employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations, compared to 5% statewide.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

- ✓ 30% of households that speak an Asian language in Massachusetts are linguistically isolated.
- ✓ In Boston, 63% of Chinese Americans and 54% of Vietnamese Americans are limited English proficient.

Voting Challenges Due to Limited English Proficiency

- ✓ In their 2008 exit poll, AALDEF found that 45% of Chinese Americans in Boston preferred voting with assistance. 39% of Boston Chinese Americans used translated materials.
- ✓ Even though almost one third of Lowell’s population is Cambodian American and almost half of Khmer-speakers are Limited English Proficient, no translated materials were available to them in 2008.
- ✓ Asian language assistance on a statewide level is necessary to support localities with growing AAPI populations.

¹2008 American Community Survey; all other data from AALDEF report, “Asian America Access to Democracy in the 2008 Elections,” Asian American Justice Center report, “Communities of Contrast,” and Asian Pacific American Legal Center.