

Bay Area Demographics - 2000

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The San Francisco Bay Area has undergone a major change in its ethnic and racial composition since 1970, the most significant change being a drop in the White, non-Hispanic population and the rapid growth in the Asian American population.

Table I -Bay Area population by “race/ethnicity ” 1970--2000

	1970	1980	1990	2000
White,non-Hispanic	77%	69%	61%	59%
Black	7%	9%	9%	8%
Latino/Hispanic	11%	12%	15%	20%
Asian American	4%	9%	15%	20%

The region is moving toward becoming majority “minority ” in its population and the Asian American and Latino/Hispanic groups will soon make up close to half of the regional population. The demographic situation for Asian Americans in the Bay Area follows national patterns in certain respects but is significantly different in other ways. The shared aspects include rapid growth,dispersion,and suburbanization,as reflected in the following table:

Table II -AA Population 1980 -2000 by number and percent of county population
(figures rounded)

	1980	1990	2000	%growth 1980-99
Alameda	85,900 (8%)	192,600 (14%)	326,900 (23%)	281%
Contra Costa	30,600 (5%)	77,000 (9%)	121,000 (13%)	295%
Marin	5,100 (2%)	9,400 (4%)	14,300 (6%)	281%
Napa	2,100 (2%)	3,600 (3%)	4,800 (4%)	129%
San Francisco	147,400 (22%)	210,900 (29%)	253,500 (33%)	72%
San Mateo	56,300 (10%)	109,300 (16%)	156,600 (22%)	178%
Santa Clara	99,800 (8%)	261,500 (18%)	462,300 (27%)	383%
Solano	17,400 (7%)	43,400 (13%)	60,700 (15%)	249%
Sonoma	4,600 (2%)	10,800 (3%)	19,000 (4%)	313%
TOTAL BAY AREA	449,600 (9%)	917,400 (15%)	1,419,100 (21%)	316%

In looking at these figures, notice both the rapid growth and the fact that the most rapid growth is in suburban areas. Most Asian Americans in the Bay Area live in suburban circumstances, as is also true nationally. Likewise, as is also true nationally, Asian Americans are becoming more dispersed throughout the region, while still maintaining important concentrations in particular locales. San Francisco still maintains itself as the Asian American center of the Bay Area in terms of the high proportion of Asian Americans in the city (at least 33% of the county population) but has been passed by both Alameda and Santa Clara counties in terms of total numbers of Asian Americans. Indeed, Santa Clara county has the highest numbers of all specific Asian American groups except Chinese Americans and Laotian Americans, for whom the largest numbers are found in San Francisco and Contra Costa county respectively.

Table III - Year 2000 population for major AA groups in the Region (San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose Metropolitan Area - basically the nine Bay Area counties)

Chinese Am	519,511	Korean Am	65,218
Filipino Am	379,196	Laotian Am.	14,376**
South Asian Am	168,716	Cambodian Am	13,209
Vietnamese Am	158,141	Indonesian Am	4,222
Japanese Am	106,427	Thai Am	6,455

**Hmong included in this figure but unclear if figure includes Iu Mien, so Laos origin population may be higher than indicated.

Notice that South Asians are now the third largest AA group in the larger Bay Area region. Demographic information on other Asian American groups is less complete. The Asian American population of the region is quite diverse, including significant numbers of Iu Mien, Cham, Hmong, Thai Dan and other smaller groups from Southeast Asia as well as a small but growing population of persons of Burmese and Malaysian origins, although a significant number of these are ethnic Chinese and may be reflected in the larger Chinese American figures. There is also a significant Pacific Islander population in the region, especially Samoan, Fijian, Hawaiian, and Guamese/Chamorro.

Population growth patterns for particular Asian American groups in the Bay Area are generally high, with the exception of Japanese Americans for whom growth has been slower due to the relatively low levels of immigration from Japan in the period since 1970. Taking the five counties with the largest numbers of Asian Americans, the following group specific patterns are to be seen as of 2000.

Table IV -Population growth for Chinese,Filipino,Japanese,Vietnamese,Korean Americans,and South Asians in the five counties of major AA population (San Francisco,Alameda, San Mateo,Santa Clara,and Contra Costa)

	1970	1980	1990	2000	%growth
Chinese Am	95,000			519,511	446% in 30 years
Japanese Am	47,800			106,427	122% in 30 years
Filipino Am	50,500			379,196	650% in 30 years
Vietnamese Am	na	22,600		158,414	601% in 20 years
Korean Am	na	16,900		65,218	286% in 20 years
South Asians	na	na	50,538	137,325	72% in 10 years

All groups grew most rapidly in the in the more suburban counties of Santa Clara and Contra Costa.

In many respects,the Bay Area is a unique situation for Asian Americans. In no other region of the United States,except Hawaii,do Asian Americans comprise such a high proportion of the regional and local population as is the case in the Bay Area. In 2001,it is safe to assume that one out of every five people in the Bay Area is an Asian American and in many locales that figure is higher. There are more Asia Americans in the Bay Area than in any of the other forty nine states except California itself,in fact approximately one out every seven Asian Americans in the United States lives in the Bay Area. Among major American cities,San Francisco,with an Asian American population that now exceeds 33%,is far and away the most heavily Asian American on the mainland,being surpassed only by Honolulu,which has an Asian American population of 66%. While other regions,like metropolitan New York and Los Angles,have very large numbers of Asia Americans,in no others do Asia Americans have such a strong and visible presence as in the Bay Area. Consequently,Asian American life in this region may,at times,be quite different that in other regions of the county. It is possible to grow up,go to school,work,socialize in large, primarily Asian American environments in the Bay Area. This is far less less likely elsewhere. Being an Asian American here is to be part of a crowd,rather than being a member of a small minority community.

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