

MONITORING POVERTY AND WELL-BEING IN NYC

Portrait of Disadvantage Among Asian Americans in New York City in 2022

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The Poverty Tracker is a study of poverty and well-being in New York City conducted in partnership with Columbia University. Surveys with New Yorkers for over a decade have provided a dynamic view of poverty in New York City, with the Columbia team checking in with more than 3,000 households multiple times a year for up to six years.

For this year's Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month, we have drawn on the Poverty Tracker's Asian American sample to highlight the economic well-being of this population in New York City. Given that Asian Americans are often underrepresented in large-scale surveys, this is an important opportunity to share data on how Asian New Yorkers have been faring across several key outcomes.

While the Poverty Tracker provides rich and detailed data on the economic well-being of New Yorkers over time, it does have important limitations. First, the Poverty Tracker does not have a large enough sample of NHPI respondents to provide accurate and reliable estimates of poverty and other aspects of well-being for this group. Second, Asian Americans are not a monolithic group: New York City's population of Asian Americans is incredibly diverse and spans the languages and cultural traditions of more than 40 countries of origin. An ideal dataset would have sufficient responses to be able to represent this diversity of experiences among Asian subgroups and NHPI New Yorkers, and it is important to acknowledge this limitation of the Poverty Tracker data. Our hope with this fact sheet is that despite the study's limitations, we can nonetheless highlight the unique experiences of Asian American New Yorkers with respect to poverty, economic well-being, and experiences of discrimination.

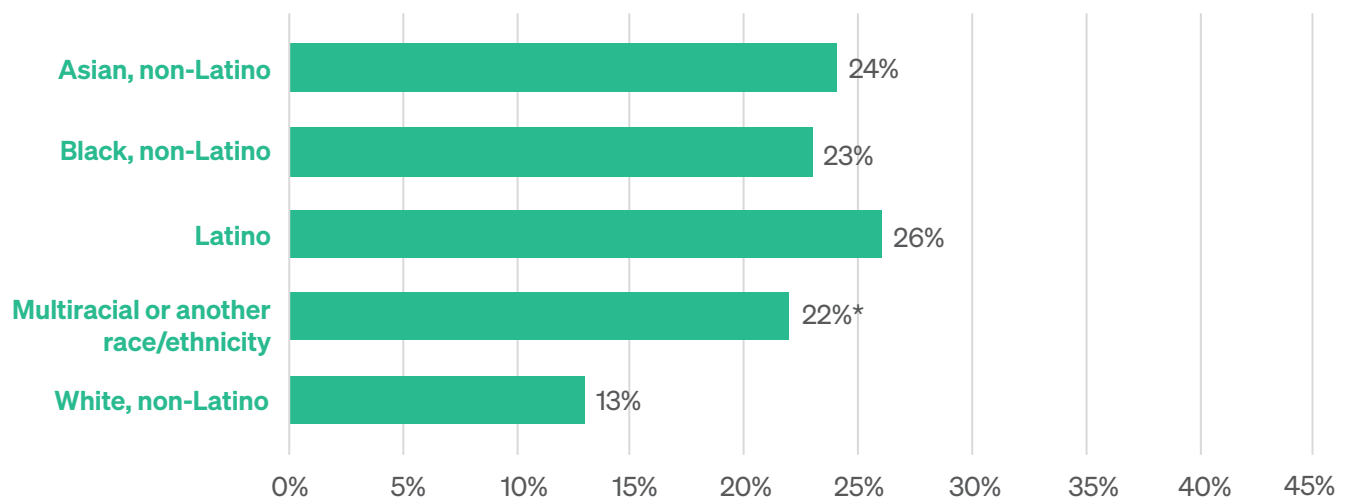
EXPERIENCES OF POVERTY

Nearly 1 in 4 Asian New Yorkers live in poverty, a figure that is nearly twice the poverty rate of white New Yorkers (24% vs. 13%).

Asian Americans in New York City experience high rates of poverty alongside other communities of color, and many fail to appreciate this fact given pervasive racial stereotypes about Asian Americans as a “model minority.”¹

Figure 1

Adult Poverty Rates by Race/Ethnicity (2022)²



*Interpret with caution due to sample size constraints.

Segments of the Asian American community also face unique barriers to accessing jobs, services, and public assistance given higher rates of being foreign-born and having limited English proficiency. These barriers are reflected in our data.

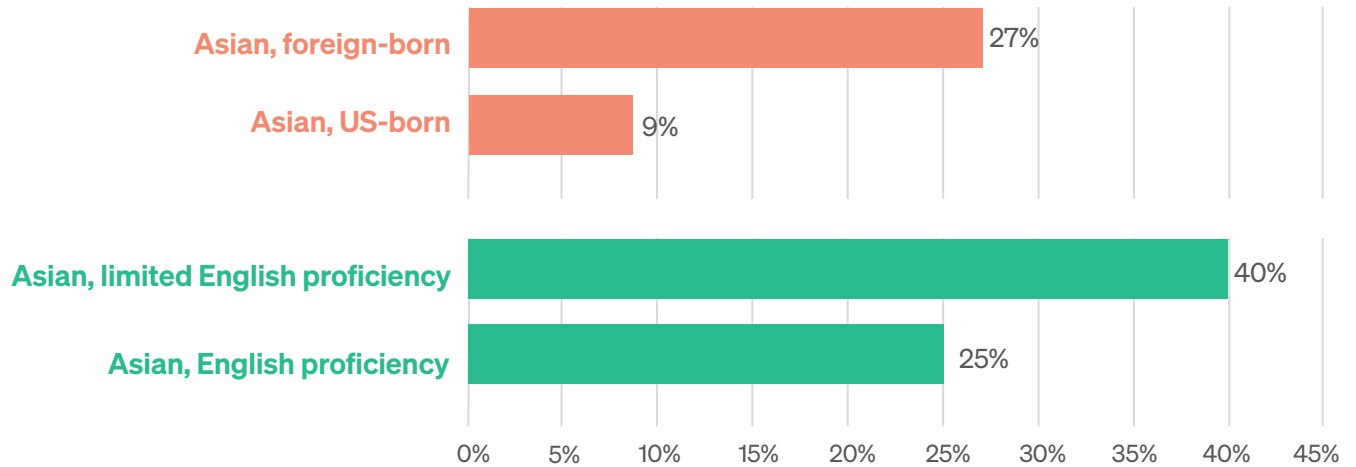
Foreign-born Asian New Yorkers are nearly three times more likely than U.S.-born Asian New Yorkers to be in poverty (27% vs. 9%). In addition, 40% of Asian New Yorkers with limited English proficiency are in poverty, 15 percentage points higher than those with English proficiency.

¹ Yi, Kwon, Sacks, and Trinh-Shevrin (2016). Commentary: persistence and health-related consequences of the model minority stereotype for Asian Americans. *Ethnicity & disease*, 26(1), 133.

² Note: Poverty rates by race/ethnicity, age, and foreign-born status are drawn from annual Poverty Tracker data, using the study's second through fifth cohorts and a three-year average of 2018, 2019, and 2022 data. Poverty rates by limited English proficiency are drawn from the 2022 annual Poverty Tracker data, using the study's fourth and fifth cohorts.

Figure 2

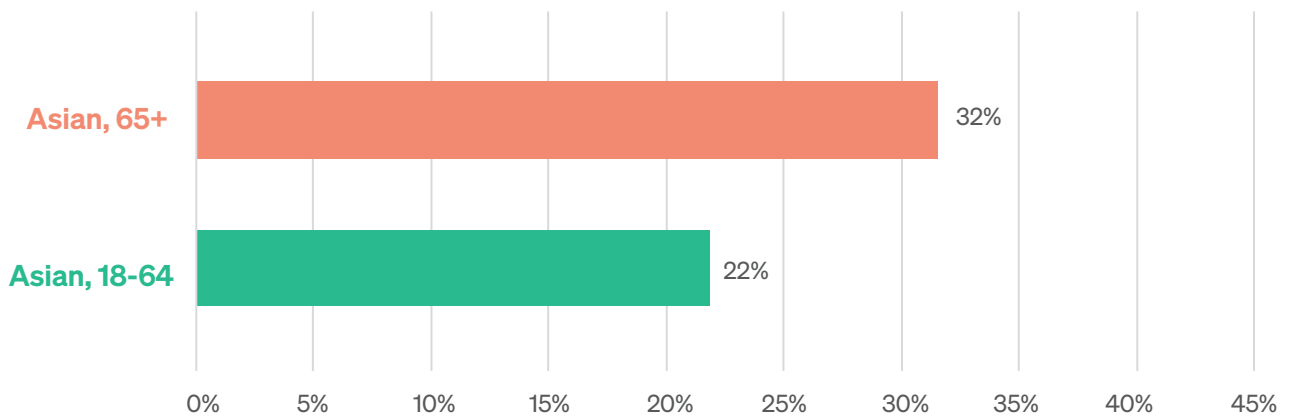
Poverty Rates Among Asian Adults by English Proficiency and Foreign-Born Status (2022)



In recent years, a renewed focus has also been placed on the struggles faced by Asian seniors in New York City in particular, with community organizations often overstretched to meet the needs of this population due to higher rates of social isolation and limited English proficiency.³ Nearly one in three (32%) Asian seniors live in poverty in New York City.

Figure 3

Poverty Rates Among Asian Adults by Age (2022)



³ Asian American Federation (2022). *Alone and Afraid: The Outsized Impact of COVID-19 on Asian Seniors*. Access [here](#).

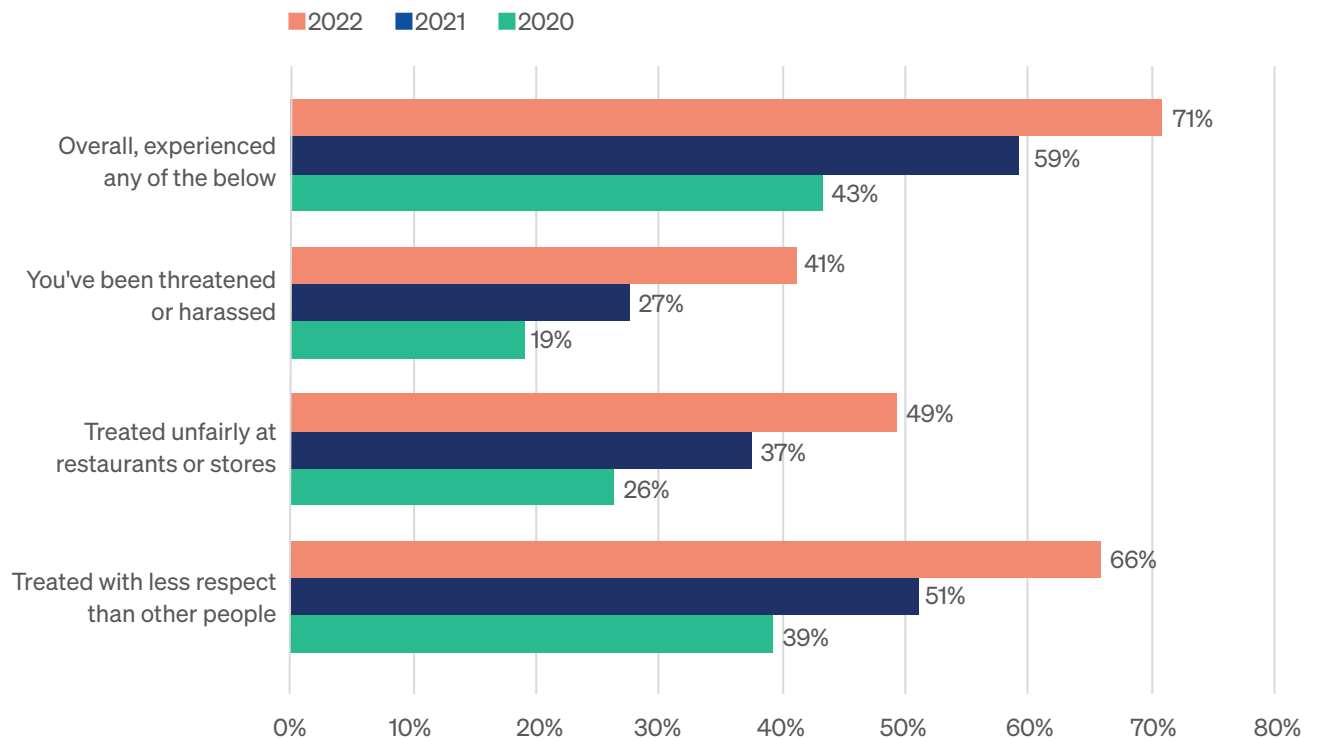
EXPERIENCES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

High rates of poverty are in no way the only challenge faced by Asian New Yorkers. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a sharp surge in anti-Asian sentiment, discrimination, and hate crimes across the U.S., resulting in harmful impacts to the physical, emotional, and economic well-being of Asian Americans.⁴ The Poverty Tracker study has allowed us to better document and understand the everyday discrimination experiences among Asian New Yorkers since 2020, and our data reveals sobering results.

In 2022, nearly three in four (71%) Asian New Yorkers in our sample reported discrimination experiences in their everyday lives, representing an increase from 43% in 2020. A substantial increase in discrimination experiences was observed from 2020 to 2022 when it came to “being treated with less respect” (increase of 27 percentage points), “being treated unfairly at restaurants or stores” (increase of 23 percentage points), and “being threatened or harassed” (increase of 22 percentage points).

Figure 4

Everyday Discrimination Experiences Among Asian New Yorkers (2020 – 2022)⁵



⁴Yellow Horse, Jeung, and Matriano (2022). Stop AAPI hate national report. 3/19/20 – 12/31/21. [Access here.](#)

⁵Findings on experiences with discrimination are drawn from the Poverty Tracker's fourth and fifth cohorts.

CONCLUSION

From this brief snapshot, it is clear that Asian New Yorkers face high poverty rates and racial discrimination across a number of dimensions. Indeed, poverty rates for Asian New Yorkers are nearly twice those of white New Yorkers, and high rates of limited English proficiency and foreign-born status among the population can create additional barriers for accessing public programs, services, and employment. In addition, experiences with racial discrimination can further exacerbate these barriers and result in harmful effects on the economic, psychological, and physical wellbeing of Asian New Yorkers. In the future, additional research on material hardship rates and health problems faced by Asian New Yorkers, for example, can provide a fuller picture of how this population is faring in the city. In the meantime, however, it is clear that the model minority framing does not truly capture the needs and experiences of Asian Americans in New York City.