

**Asian American Workforce Development Strategy**  
**Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians, Vietnamese**  
**and Chinatown Chinese**

**Evaluation Report**

**Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor**  
**March 26, 2007**

This project has been funded, either wholly or in part, with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration under Contract Number AF-12534-02-36. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.

**US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce**

1329 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036 • (202) 296-5221 • (202) 296-5225 fax

[www.uspaacc.com](http://www.uspaacc.com)

## Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	6
RESEARCH METHODS	7
RECENT IMMIGRATION AND THE ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION	11
Population Growth	11
Economic Status	13
Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians and Vietnamese	13
Impact of Welfare Reform	14
Chinatown Chinese	15
Reliance on Family	16
IMMIGRATION, ACCULTURATION AND THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM	16
Older Immigrant Generations	16
Younger Immigrant Generations	17
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS	17
i) Some One-Stops Are Not Set Up to Meet the Needs of the Target Groups	17
ii) A Personal Story	18
iii) Reception at One-Stops and CBOs	19
MAJOR FINDINGS	20
i) Various Perceptions of One-Stops	21
ii) Language and Cultural Barriers	22
iii) Relationship Between One-Stops and CBOs	24
A. Competition between One-Stops and CBOs	24
B. Difference in Skills and Operational Approach between One-Stops and CBOs	25
C. Cost Sharing Partnership	26
D. Collaboration between One-Stops and CBOs	27
iv) Outreach Efforts	29

RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR ONE-STOPS	30
i) Budget	30
ii) Additional Staff Hiring and Training	30
iii) Extend Office Hours and Improve Direction Signs	31
iv) Encourage Clients to Learn English	31
v) Closer Coordination between One-Stop and CBO Managements	32
vi) Proactive Community Outreach Efforts	33
vii) Awareness Campaign through Ethnic Media	34
viii) Uniform Data Collection and Management System	34
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT	35
An Initiative to Increase Utilization of One-Stop Career Centers by Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians, Vietnamese and Chinatown Chinese	35
Objective	36
Selection Process	36
How It Works	37
The Client	37
Incentives	39
Measurement of Success	39
CONCLUSION	39

## **Appendix**

Appendix A: U.S. Census Tables	43
Appendix B: One-Stop Career Centers Visited	49
Appendix C: Community-Based Organizations Visited	51
Appendix D: Profiles of the Target Groups	54
Appendix E: Summary of Response to Follow-Up Requests for information from One-Stops and CBOs Subsequent to Site Visit	67
Appendix F: Review of Relevant Literature and Related Studies	70
Appendix G: Bibliography	84

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by the US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce (USPAACC), pursuant to contract No. AF-12534-02-36 with KPMG for the U.S. Department of Labor. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of USPAACC and do not necessarily represent the official opinion or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The following individuals participated in part or all of the planning, preparation, research, site visits and documentation of the findings, best practices and recommendations:

### USPAACC Staff

Susan Au Allen, J.D., LL.M.  
Tatsuya Aoyagi  
Mary Giersdorf  
Kamalesh Racherla  
Sean Lu  
Jamie May Ly  
Morgan Motto  
Archie Williams

### External Experts and Consultants

Stephan Thernstrom, Ph.D.  
Ly L. Hom  
Daniel Rome Levine  
John Mitchell  
J. P. Torres  
Claire Tse  
Grant Ujifusa

The project was directed and guided by Susan Au Allen, National President & CEO of the US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce. She is responsible for managing the project and producing the final written report.

We are grateful to Professor Stephen Thernstrom of Harvard University for providing valuable guidance and editorial support.

We wish to thank the folks we visited at the One-Stop Career Centers and the Community-Based Organizations for their support and contributions to this project.

We also thank Brian Shea of KPMG for his guidance throughout the project.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 1998, Congress and the President signed into law the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). This law created a new workforce development system intended to help all members of the workforce to obtain the assistance and training they need to advance their careers. The centerpiece of WIA is the creation of One-Stop Career Centers (One-Stops) throughout the United States.

This study seeks to provide a better understanding of employment issues facing certain Asian American and Pacific Islander subpopulations in the United States today. The target groups for this study - Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians, Vietnamese, and the Chinatown Chinese - are immigrants and among the most economically vulnerable, with the highest levels of underemployment and unemployment in the nation. The groups need help in attaining self-sufficiency or advancing in the current labor market because the majority of them lack English proficiency, have low levels of education and rudimentary job skills, and often encounter cultural misunderstandings or biases in their interaction with the mainstream society.

The purpose of this study was to find out: 1) the extent to which local One-Stops serve the groups in their search for employment; 2) why some members of the groups do not make sufficient use of One-Stops; 3) whether there are strategies or best practices that could be learned from One-Stops which have successfully reached and served the groups; 4) the working relationship between One-Stops and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs); and 5) propose a demonstration project that could be used as a model to increase utilization of One-Stops by the groups.

This study revealed different levels of awareness and understanding of the services provided by the One-Stops visited; structural barriers that limited access by the groups to the employment and training services provided by the WIA; and other reasons for the groups' limited utilization of or reluctance to patronize One-Stops.

In the 75 site visits conducted by the interviewers, this study found that the most glaring obstacles to finding satisfactory employment and therefore attaining economic sufficiency and advancement by members of the groups are their lack of English proficiency, reading skills and cultural barriers that limit their understanding of American cultural norms of personal interaction. This limitation is their primary barrier to their access to One-Stop services.

This study recommends wider use of best practices already in place in some One-Stops visited that have been effective in reaching and serving the groups; additional means to strengthen the relationship between One-Stops and CBOs; the sharing of best practices among them to attract the groups to One-Stops; and more collaboration between One-Stops and CBOs. These activities could improve the groups' chance of finding employment, not only in their ethnic enclaves but also in the mainstream job market.

Throughout the interviews, a recurring theme was present – the Workforce Investment Act's internal incentive performance system has created a need for One-Stops and CBOs to “make the numbers” in order to meet the DOL's performance requirements on job placement and retention. That has the unintended consequence of limiting their ability to spend sufficient time to provide employment or training services to job seekers, such as members of the groups, who face multiple barriers to employment. The reason is their time and efforts might not result in job placement or retained placement. This in turn would pull down their overall performance rate on job placement and retention. In many cases, this could reduce their funding stream in the future. However, this issue has been the subject of previous studies and will not be covered in this report.

This report also recommends that One-Stops use a uniform and systematic process to collect relevant demographic data about their clients. The data will be used as the basis for quantitative and qualitative analyses. The analyses will help federal, state and local governments and One-Stops to evaluate how well the specific employment needs of the groups and other underserved segments of specific populations are met.

Finally, this report recommends a demonstration project that will strengthen the relationship between One-Stops and CBOs, thereby increasing the groups' awareness of access to and utilization of the One-Stop system, which could bring a higher rate of satisfactory employment and job retention.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Certain Asian American and Pacific Islander subpopulations are experiencing serious difficulty in finding satisfactory employment. This study seeks to find out why and evaluate whether the needs of the groups under study are met by a major program of the U.S. Department of Labor, the "One-Stop Career Centers." The Labor Department currently supports more than 1,850 comprehensive career centers, commonly known as "One-Stops" because they seek to make readily available under one roof all the information job seekers need; and 1,461 affiliate centers.

A preliminary survey of the groups that comprise the Asian American and Pacific Islander population in the United States quickly shows that it is composed of ethnic groups from over 60 countries of origin in the Far East, Southeast Asia, Indian subcontinent, Hawaii, Guam, Samoa and other Pacific Islands. That made it an impossibly large task to include them all in the study. Thus, this investigation focuses on the five Asian American groups with a population of over 50,000 nationwide that appear to have the most severe employment problems: Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians, Vietnamese, and Chinatown Chinese.

We recommend that Pacific Islanders should be the subject of another study.

The first four of the groups consist of refugees who fled Indochina in the wake of the Vietnam War and the violence and repression that followed its end. They are now popularly referred to as Southeast Asian refugees. The fifth group treated in this study is termed the Chinatown Chinese, whose situation bears little resemblance to that of the well-educated and affluent people who make up the more visible segment of the Chinese American population. These Chinese, mostly recent arrivals, continue to hold

insecure unskilled jobs in and around the Chinatowns of large cities. The foreign-born in the five groups typically speak little or no English, a grave handicap in their search for satisfactory employment.

In addition, although some in the Pacific Islander population have very similar employment problems, they have been citizens of the United States for all their lives; they are not political refugees like the four groups from the Vietnam War; nor are they economic immigrants like many of the Chinatown Chinese. Unlike Pacific Islanders, the five groups share a Confucius and Buddhist background and distinctive modes of social organization. They tend to display reticence in the presence of authority, they place high value on education, and social control within the group relies upon shame more than guilt.

Moreover, Pacific Islanders have enjoyed throughout their lives representation in the U.S. Congress through their Delegates – similar to residents in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands – with voting rights on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. On the Senate side, Senator Daniel Inouye has been a big champion of Pacific Islanders and particularly Hawaiian natives. The members of the five groups, who do not have the benefit of such substantial political help, are from the perspective of government programs the most disadvantaged.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The bulk of the evidence gathered in preparation of this report was obtained from site visits to cities where one or more of the groups have a substantial population.

Locations for the site visits were selected based on the population distribution of the groups: the Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Vietnamese, and Chinatown Chinese segments of the U.S. population, as measured by the U.S. Census (Appendix A: Table 1). In identifying the geographical locations for the study, consideration was also given to the levels of education (Appendix A: Table 2), English proficiency (Appendix A: Table 3), poverty (Appendix A: Table 4), and employment status (Appendix A: Table 5) of the groups. These elements have significant bearing on the groups' employment prospects



and possible utilization or non-utilization of the services provided by One-Stops and CBOs.

One-Stops in these metropolitan areas were identified and contacted. Because the most efficient means of connecting with the groups was through their ethnic Community-Based Organizations, the researchers also located CBOs in the same area. Site visit appointments were made with key personnel of One-Stops who manage and/or have day-to-day responsibility over the delivery of employment services to job seekers. Similar appointments were also made with persons in charge of the CBOs.

Over the course of 12 months, 75 sites were visited (Appendix B, One-Stop Career Centers Visited; and Appendix C, Community-Based Organizations Visited) covering nine states, 20 cities, and the District of Columbia. This report focuses mainly on the findings obtained from site visits in six states: California and Washington which have a high percentage of the population of all five groups; Massachusetts which has the highest percentage of the Cambodian population after California; Minnesota which has the highest percentage of the Hmong population after California; New York which has the highest percentage of the Chinese population; and Virginia which has the highest percentage of the Vietnamese population after California and Texas. Findings obtained from site visits in Texas, Pennsylvania, Illinois and the District of Columbia are incorporated in the discussions generally.

During the site visits, which lasted approximately one and a half to two hours each, information was gathered on organizational, operational, service and process, and funding matters. The central questions explored were:

- 1) The type of outreach efforts the One-Stops and CBOs directed at the groups residing within their service delivery area;
- 2) The nature and level of services the One-Stops and CBOs provide to limited English proficient (LEP) and low skilled job seekers; and
- 3) The working relationship between the One-Stops and CBOs in the same localities.

Interviewers probed for details on contacts and interactions between One-Stops and CBOs in their common interest in providing employment services to the groups.

Interviews with CBO staff also aimed to find out:

- 1) How well informed they were about the local One-Stops;
- 2) Their opinions on the extent to which the groups need One-Stop services;
- 3) Their recommendations on ways to increase the groups' utilization of One-Stop services;
- 4) Ways to increase collaborations between One-Stops and CBOs in order to better address the employment needs of the groups; and
- 5) Suggestions to improve the groups' prospects of finding and sustaining satisfactory employment.

Interviews were conducted by Asian Americans. After the site visits, follow-up telephone calls and emails were sent to One-Stops and CBOs visited on requests for information made during the site visits. CBOs that were visited but found to no longer provide employment services were not included in the follow up contacts. The information requested was related to:

- 1) The size of the population in the One-Stop and CBO service delivery area;
- 2) The size of the population of the group or groups living in the One-Stop and CBO service delivery area;
- 3) The number of people who used the services of the One-Stop and CBO in the most recent 12-month period for which there was a record;
- 4) The number of members of the group or groups who used the services of the One-Stop and CBO in the same period;
- 5) The number of members of the group or groups who used the training services of the One-Stop and CBO in the same period;
- 6) The number of members of the group or groups that were placed into employment in the same period by the One-Stop and CBO; and

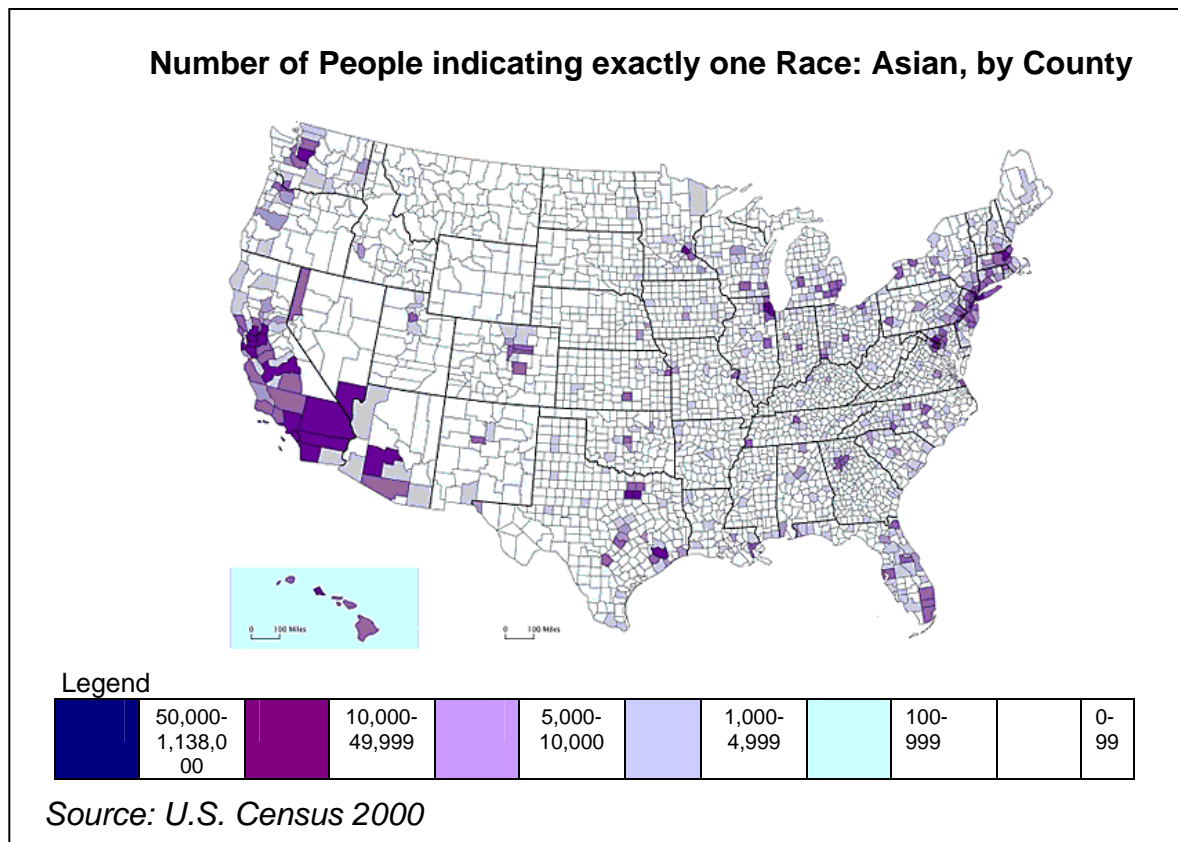
- 7) The number of members of the group or groups who remained employed six months, nine months, and 12 months after they were placed.

The groups tended to be very reserved in sharing cultural information with people outside their community, so preliminary research into their cultural background and immigration experiences in the United States was conducted to prepare for the site visits and interviews. This preparation helped the interviewers gain a better understanding of the groups' general behavioral patterns and attitudes toward the use of government-sponsored services. As discussed below, the groups' history and cultural background bear a great influence on the utilization or non-utilization of One-Stops by the groups. To this end, library and Internet sources provided researchers with an overall perspective on the varied and similar cultural orientation of each group before the interviewers embarked on the site visits and interviews.

The initial research plan was to gather extensive quantitative data that would allow for a systematic assessment of the level and degree of service that the One-Stops provided to the groups, and to examine local labor market data relevant to such an assessment. However, the crucial accurately defined data collected across all states was not available at the One-Stops in our sample so it was impossible to perform the systematic cost-benefit analysis originally planned by using consistent naming convention, breakdown structure and data type.

This study recommends that One-Stops extend their systematic data collection on the demographic and employment placement as well as retention rate of the job seekers in their respective service delivery area to include the social and ethnic backgrounds of the groups in this study before such a valuable assessment could be made.

## RECENT IMMIGRATION AND THE ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION



### Population growth

Before World War II, racial prejudice severely circumscribed Asian Americans' ability to advance in American society. Chinese immigration was sharply restricted by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, half a century before the nation moved to restrict immigration from Europe. A wave of Japanese immigration later in the nineteenth century again was cut off by law. Similar barriers to immigration were soon extended to cover the rest of Asia, and remained largely in place until the immigration reforms of 1965.

Since the dramatic liberalization of U.S. immigration law in 1965, the foreign-born population of the nation has grown explosively. The latest available data for 2003 indicated that people born in another country made up 11.9 percent of the total

population of the United States.<sup>1</sup> Today nearly, one out of every eight Americans is an immigrant and in the largest cities, the fraction is much higher—for example 40 percent in Los Angeles and 36 percent in both New York and San Francisco.<sup>2</sup>

Fully one quarter of the current immigrant population consists of people born in Asia. They tend to enter the United States through "gateway cities," most notably Los Angeles and New York, and significant numbers continue to cluster at such entry points for many years after they arrive.

There are 12.5 million Asian Americans in the United States. Immigrants from China and their descendants constitute the largest Asian subgroup of 2.8 million people, making up 24 percent of the total Asian population, followed by 2.2 million Asian Indians, 2.1 million Filipinos, 1.2 million Vietnamese, 1.2 million Koreans, and 800,000 Japanese. According to the Census Bureau's 2004 *American Community Survey*, these six groups constitute 80 percent of the Asian American population in the United States, (Appendix A, Table 6). Over half of the Asian population lives in the West.<sup>3</sup> The three great Asian urban strongholds are New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Three of the five groups under study have very small populations in the United States. The 2004 Census counted 195,208 Cambodians, 163,733 Hmong, and 226,661 Laotians. All together, they constitute a little more than half a million in a nation of close to 286 million people. The population of these three groups together, however, increased by 43 percent during the 1990s, because of continuing immigration and

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2006*, 41.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2006*, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Much of the information summarized here, unless otherwise indicated, is 2000 Census data conveniently assembled in U.S. Census Bureau, *We the People: Asians in the United States*, Census 2000 Special Reports, CENSR-17, 2004. For developments since 2000, relevant information from the ongoing Current Population Survey is available at < <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/api.html>>. Other useful sources are *The Demographic and Economic Facts*, published by the Cato Institute, and the National U.S. Immigration Forum, *A Fiscal Portrait of the Newest Americans: Executive Summary by National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences*, and [USimmigrationforum.org](http://USimmigrationforum.org) (Immigrants and the Economy).

above-average birth rates.<sup>4</sup> The fourth group examined here, the Vietnamese, totaled 1,267,510 people. It is impossible to estimate precise numbers for the fifth group, the "Chinatown" Chinese, because official statistical data does not distinguish them from the total Chinese American population. Based on discussions with the CBOs, the number is likely to be in the low hundreds of thousands.

### **Economic Status**

In recent decades, Asian Americans have been strikingly successful in the United States. Even before the doors were thrown wide open to newcomers from Asia in the 1960s, Chinese and Japanese already living in the United States had made impressive advances despite the employment and housing discrimination they encountered. Many excelled in school and eventually displayed strong entrepreneurial talents. Most of the Asian immigrants entering the country after 1965 were well educated with occupational skills that were in demand in the United States. Most Asian groups ranked above the general U.S. population in their educational attainments, occupational levels, and incomes.

Although the Asian American success story is indeed impressive, averages for a large population often conceal considerable variation within it. In considering Asian Americans as a group, it should be noted that some Asian national-origin groups fall well below both the Asian American average and the average for the nation as a whole.

### **Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians and Vietnamese**

The Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians and Vietnamese trail the national average by most measures of socio-economic status, although there is variation among the groups. All of them have higher disability rates than the general population, low rates of English proficiency, and are more likely to be dependent on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other public financial assistance. Hmongs were three times as likely to lack a

---

<sup>4</sup> 1990 figures for all Asian groups can be found in U.S. Census Bureau, Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States, 1990 Census of the Population, 1990 CP-3-5, Table 1.

high school diploma as the average American in 2000, and the proportion with a college degree was only a quarter of that for the nation as a whole (Appendix A: Table 2). The 1999 median income of Hmongs living in the United States was \$32,384, less than half that of Asian Indians. In addition, the proportion of Hmongs with incomes below the poverty line was 37.8 percent, triple the national average and several points higher than the 29.8 percent for African Americans. Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese were somewhat better off financially than the Hmongs, but all groups tend to have very limited education, low incomes, and high poverty rates (Appendix A: Tables 2, 3 and 4).

This study is particularly relevant to the generations of the groups over 45 years old who came as adult refugees, the children of single-parent homes where the mother is the head of the household and recent immigrants sponsored into the United States by their refugee relatives. They are the Americans with limited English proficiency and low job skills and are the workers that the WIA is intended to help.

### **Impact of Welfare Reform**

Since Welfare Reform became law, all immigrants are barred from SSI and Food Stamp programs until they achieve citizenship or complete 40 quarters equaling 10 years of work. 2006 is a critical year for these groups of refugee immigrants. If they have been in the United States for more than seven years, have not attained U.S. citizenship status through naturalization, and have been receiving SSI, they are no longer eligible for welfare. Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians and Vietnamese who have been receiving these benefits will have to work for 40 quarters (equaling 10 years) or pass their citizenship examination before they are eligible to receive benefits. Under these conditions, a substantial number of them will have to work to support themselves. While these groups could rely on their traditional methods of job search through referrals by relatives and friends, they could also utilize the job services at One-Stops and CBOs and should be encouraged to do so.

On the other hand, CBO managers stated that the younger generations of Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian and Vietnamese Americans, despite their rough beginnings since

arriving in the United States after the Vietnam War, are also quickly making progress in education and entering the workforce on their own efforts. Between 1990 and 2000, Hmong Americans aged 25 and above holding bachelor's degree more than doubled, increasing from 3 percent to over 7 percent. Forty-four percent Cambodian, 38 percent Hmong, 38 percent Laotian, and 58 percent Vietnamese Americans are enrolled in school, compared to the national average of 36 percent overall.<sup>5</sup> They are the younger generations who came to this country as children or were born here, and a bright future is within their reach.

### **Chinatown Chinese**

Three fourths of Chinatown Chinese in San Francisco are U.S. citizens. However, 35,576 of the Chinese population aged 25 and older, almost 35 percent of their total population in the city, has less than a high school education, compared to 19 percent for the San Francisco population. About one out of three working age adults are limited English proficient, and the median household income is about \$10,000, one-third the median income of the city.<sup>6</sup>

In the Chinatowns of the gateway cities, the job markets are becoming increasingly competitive because of the continuing influx of new immigrants who are ready to work in low-skilled jobs without the need to speak English. They work in restaurants, garment and furnishing factories, warehouses and retail stores where the hours are long, the pay is low, and the benefits are fewer than jobs in the mainstream. As a result, many Chinatown Chinese are willing to work outside Chinatown for jobs with better benefits if there is access to public transportation. One-Stops and CBOs located in New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and Philadelphia where the established Chinatowns are located can play an important role in helping this group of job seekers to find other employment opportunities.

---

<sup>5</sup> Max Niedzwiecki, "Not the Model Minority: 2000 Census Reveals Achievement Gaps, Signs of Hope for Americans from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam," *Asian Fortune*, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> *Chinatown Introduction: A Tale of Four Cities*, San Francisco Chronicle, 2000.



For more information about the background, geographic concentration, and barriers to the groups' prospect for satisfactory employment, see Appendix D.

### **Reliance on Family**

Immigrant communities have historically been known to “take care of their own,” including helping each other find jobs. CBO interviewees in Chinatown confirmed that family members often give financial support to their newly arrived family members, immediate or extended. Once the members begin working, often in multiple jobs, they will pay back the monies originally borrowed from their sponsoring family member as quickly as possible. Moreover, immigrants also have a propensity to start small businesses and rely on family labor.

The existence of these closely-knit networks explains why immigrants tend to rely on relatives and word of mouth instead of the government, to find employment. In addition, many among the groups under study retain a lingering fear and distrust of strangers and the government because of their experiences in their former homelands in Cambodia, Hmong, Laos, Vietnam or China. That also deters them from using the government-sponsored One-Stop system.

## **IMMIGRATION, ACCULTURATION AND UTILIZATION OF THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM**

The site visits revealed that variations of behavioral acculturation have a considerable influence on the groups' access to One-Stop services. Acculturation occurs when a newcomer absorbs the cultural norms, values, beliefs, and behavior patterns of the host society.

### **Older Immigrant Generations**

A large majority of the older generations who came to this country as refugees in their early twenties or older, and the Chinatown Chinese who came as adults for economic reasons, speak no English and have rudimentary job skills. Moreover, their non-verbal

communication styles, views on hierarchies (responsibilities, duties, and privileges of family or group members), interpersonal relationships, time, privacy, and speech patterns also set them apart from the mainstream society. They have fully implanted into their being the cultural norms of the country they came from, have difficulty adapting, and resist the radically different culture they find here

### **Younger Immigrant Generations**

Many among the younger generation who are growing up in single-parent (usually female-headed) households and are trapped in the welfare culture also find acculturation difficult. They should be brought into the school system and after-school programs so that they can be encouraged and guided in their adaptation and acculturation. That could prevent another generation of limited English proficient, low skilled and culturally challenged Americans with limited employment opportunities.

While some of the groups' younger generations who were born here or came to the United States as a child practice their ethnic culture at home, their school life requires them to acculturate to fit in. As a result, they acquire a command of the English language, learn cultural practices that are attuned to the American way of life, and are less resistant to utilizing mainstream services such as One-Stops. It is also noted that their tendency to search for jobs online at home, in school and libraries, etc., also explains why they do not go to One-Stops in search of employment.

Outreach efforts by One-Stops to the younger generations may yield a higher return on investment of time, resource, and energy. However, it will take a much more intensive program to bring the reluctant older generations to the One-Stop employment services because they prefer to navigate within their own cultural environment.

### **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

#### **i) Some One-Stops Are Not Set Up to Meet the Needs of the Target Groups**

Many of the One-Stops visited seem to be organized to help dislocated workers who have at least a work history or some job skills, and who have lost their jobs because of

technological change and outsourcing. For example, the One-Stops in Seattle, Washington, helped the subcontractors who were laid off by Boeing to find new employment. In their current structure, One-Stops are well suited to serve the English-speaking college graduate, but not his Cambodian mother who has limited English proficiency, is computer illiterate, and has limited job skills. For the younger and educated generations, they do not experience these structural barriers because they could handle One-Stops' self-directed job search and referral services: log onto a computer, search, and leave with the online information. The mother, however, needs a human being to hold her hand. She needs personal interface with the employer. She needs someone who knows her and the employer. A One-Stop system that greets her with a computer, and that is subject to the performance-driven WIA system, unfortunately, is not a user-friendly system to her, is intimidating to her, and does not help her. This problem exists despite the intention of WIA programs to provide employment and vocational training to individuals with low skill levels and build self-sufficiency for those who otherwise have to rely on government assistance, private charity, or family support.

## **ii) A Personal Story**

An interview was conducted at the Fujian Association of New York in Chinatown in New York City. A 50-year-old Chinese woman sold her small restaurant and went to a One-Stop in search of a job. She did not know how to use the computer and was not assertive. She was told to sit and wait. After waiting for half a day, a One-Stop employee told her to return the next day. She was looking for help to find a job with an employer who could use her skills outside Chinatown. She spoke some English and had management experience, having managed her own restaurant. She never returned to the One-Stop; instead, she went back to Chinatown.

This anecdote demonstrates the barriers facing job seekers who have limited English proficiency, are not educated, are computer illiterate, and culturally alien to the mainstream way of life, but would nonetheless travel across town to seek the services

of a One-Stop for employment assistance, as the 50-year-old woman did in this true story.

### **iii) Reception at One-Stops and CBOs**

The One-stops and CBOs visited are located within the One-Stop service delivery areas with a substantial population of one or more of the groups under study. They are:

- Cambodians in Lowell (MA) and Long Beach (CA)
- Laotians in Lynn (MA), Oakland and Fresno (CA), and Houston (TX)
- Hmongs in St. Paul and Minneapolis (MN)
- Vietnamese in Houston (TX), Westminster (CA), Alexandria, Falls Church and Arlington (VA)
- Chinatown Chinese in Los Angeles, Santa Ana and San Francisco (CA), New York (NY), Philadelphia (PA), and Chicago (IL)
- Cambodian, Laotians, Vietnamese and Chinatown Chinese in Seattle (WA)

Foot traffic in most of these One-Stops ranged from slow to moderate, with many of the computers available for use. The CBOs visited appeared to be a little busier, but not much. Key personnel in the majority of them were prepared to meet with the interviewers. They were cordial and willing to share general information about their organizational structure, their funding sources, the types of service they provide, and the procedures a job seeker should follow upon entering their offices. Two of the 25 One-Stops and one of the 50 CBOs visited had some of the information requested readily available.

The other One-Stops indicated that they would try to provide some of the information later. Subsequent to the site visits, a survey was sent to the One-Stops and CBOs to follow up on information requested during the visits (see pages 9 and 10). A summary of the responses received from both One-Stops and CBOs is provided in Appendix E.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to determine the efficacy of One-Stops in serving the disadvantaged Asian American segments (specifically the Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Vietnamese, and Chinatown Chinese subgroups) of the United States population. These individuals have limited job skills and are the intended beneficiaries of the WIA, which provides them with employment and training services, encourages self-sufficiency and reduces reliance on financial assistance from family, government assistance, or private charities.

This study found that two structural barriers, limited English proficiency and computer literacy at the core services level, are the major handicaps to finding satisfactory employment by the groups. Cultural barrier is a third impediment. Furthermore, the performance standards under which One-Stops are measured have the unintended consequences of deterring One-Stops from adequately serving the five groups by spending the time necessary, usually longer than other job seekers who do not have similar barriers, to prepare and assist them in their search for employment.

Some of the One-Stops visited have limited knowledge of the group or groups who live in their service delivery area, and conversely, members of the group or groups have little or no knowledge of the One-Stops in their locality and the services they offer.

In most cases, although the relationship between the One-Stop and the CBO in the same localities appear cordial, there is an underlying competition between the parties as both seek clients (job seekers) who are easy to place. CBOs stated that the One-Stops have the funds to provide employment and training services but do not use a proportionate share of the funds to serve members of the group or groups under study. One-Stops, on the other hand, have observed that when CBOs are invited to reply to requests for proposals to provide employment services, they either do not respond or once awarded the grant or contract to provide the services, do not have the experience

or capacity to manage and implement the grant or contract in compliance with government requirements.

**i) Various Perceptions of One-Stops**

There are varying perceptions of One-Stop services and their clientele. For example, many of the Cambodians in Lowell, Massachusetts, believe that One-Stops are designed for educated, white-collar job seekers. Conversely, many of the Chinese in Los Angeles view One-Stops as only serving the chronically unemployed and job seekers with low levels of education and skills. At one extreme, many Chinese in Philadelphia's Chinatown believe that One-Stops are for drug addicts or ex-convicts – which leads them to avoid One-Stops for fear of being mistaken for drug users or criminals. Even an educated 45-year-old Laotian in Fresno, California, thought that the One-Stop caters only to people familiar with the computer, and that he would look awkward there because he does not know how to use a computer and look equally bad if he had to take someone with him to the One-Stop to help him. This would be, according to him, especially embarrassing when the person helping him is younger than him.

After learning that One-Stops serve all American workers, some Chinese workers with limited English proficiency living in New York, San Francisco and Philadelphia expressed a willingness to work outside their ethnic enclaves if public transportation is available and if potential employers would offer health benefits, paid vacations, better working hours, and retirement benefits. Meanwhile, the more ambitious workers have begun to look for jobs in the mainstream market, even jobs that pay minimum wage, in order to receive the benefits that are unavailable through their current employment. CBO managers in the One-Stops visited advised that the workers would utilize One-Stops if they know about them and if they know how the system could help them.

Other job seekers have no confidence that One-Stops would and could help them, particularly the older workers who do not speak English and have limited skills. They want to remain in their community where they have worked since their arrival in the

United States and are resigned to working several jobs at the same time to keep up with their expenses.

## **ii) Language and Cultural Barriers**

The One-Stops visited do well by job seekers who are proficient in English and computer literate. However, this is not the case for those who have limited English language skills and are not familiar with computers. The core services offered by One-Stops – self-directed job search and referral – do not meet the needs of the majority of the groups under study for the reasons described above. This situation is compounded by the lack of cultural assimilation by the immigrant groups who have chosen to live in tight ethnic enclaves, thereby limiting their exposure to the American way of life.

The executive director of a Cambodian CBO in Long Beach, California, analogized One-Stops to schools and hospitals. He shared that all three institutions need to have staff at the front line who are capable linguistically, culturally, and ready to receive and help the people who walk through their doors looking for help. “When the clients know that there is no one who understands them and could communicate with them, they will not show up,” said another executive director of a multi-ethnic CBO in California.

Many of the One-Stops visited do not have linguistically and culturally competent staff that could spend the time to receive, guide, and work with members of the groups. While some of the One-Stops, such as in Fresno, California, and St. Paul, Minnesota, have taken steps recently to improve access and service by hiring Asians to reach out to the groups, the groups are cautious and waiting to see the sustainability of the One-Stops’ recent efforts with skepticism.

In larger cities, One-Stops have maintained linguistically and culturally competent staff for a number of years (Oakland for two years; San Francisco, Los Angeles and Santa Ana for unknown lengths of time). However, the level of utilization by the groups does not appear to be commensurate with the size of the groups’ population in the service area. Moreover, according to the executive director of a CBO in Long Beach, California,

the mere presence of a staff member who is linguistically competent or is of the groups' ethnicity, does not necessarily mean that the needed services are delivered. This is illustrated by the case of a Vietnamese CBO staff member meeting with a Chinese job seeker where neither understands the other, or in the case of a young Cambodian case worker who is fluent in English but not in the Cambodian language or culture and who does not understand the mindset of his client, a proud Cambodian older male looking for help to find employment. In both situations, the mere presence of an Asian staff member, without more, did not work.

The older generation of refugees from Southeast Asia prefer one-on-one meetings with job service counselors to navigate through the One-Stop system, starting with the computer. Without the in-language counselor, he would not go to the One-Stop himself, said a manager of a CBO in Fresno, California.

The executive director of a Chinese CBO in San Francisco stated that they would be willing to send their staff who speak Chinese to their local One-Stop on a regular basis to work with Chinese job seekers, but had not been able to do so because of staff shortage. Thus, while some CBOs are willing to help the One-Stops to work with job seekers from their ethnic groups, the lack of resources prevents progress.

The manager of a CBO in Seattle, Washington, remarked that language and cultural barriers are not unique to the groups under study. Russians, Croatians, Somalis, etc., also face the same problem. The difference is that the Southeast Asians from the Vietnam War era have an average of only two and a half to three years of schooling, and more of them are concentrated in ethnic enclaves in which it is possible to function without knowing or ever learning any English. Therefore, it takes them longer to acculturate and assimilate into the mainstream work force. On the other hand, most of the Russians, Croatians and Somalis came with an education; they could acculturate and assimilate more quickly.



The problems of language and cultural differences will increase in the years to come because of the continuing arrival of refugee groups and family- and employer-sponsored immigrant groups into the United States. More than ever, there is a greater diversity of refugees and immigrants in the United States. That over 70 different language groups are enrolled in the Seattle area public schools tells the story.

Finally, another manager of a One-Stop in Fresno, California, recognized that it would be impossible to create a challenge-free employment service system. However, they could make it more user-friendly for the groups. To that end, they have reached out to one of the more established One-Stops in their service area to discuss possible collaboration.

### **iii) Relationship between One-Stops and CBOs**

Most medium to large-sized CBOs are aware of the One-Stops in their area. Only a few, however, have regular communication or programmatic connections with the One-Stops. The smaller CBOs know very little about One-Stops, and a few CBOs did not know that a One-Stop was located in their area. The executive director of a CBO in Lowell, Massachusetts, commented that many Cambodians in Lowell have not heard about the One-Stop, which is a few blocks away from their main market place.

#### **A. Competition between One-Stops and CBOs**

The relationships between the One-Stops and the CBOs visited in the same area are cordial yet detached. There is an underlying competition between the parties for the same clients as both parties provide employment referral and placement services, and both are required to demonstrate effective performance to their funders by making successful job placements. For that reason, both have a tendency to look for and work with job seekers who could be placed quickly, i.e., those who have less barriers to employment such as limited language, computer, and job skills, as well as cultural competency.

The CBOs shared that One-Stops, in order to meet or increase their performance, keep the most job-ready clients at the One-Stops, and send the hard or impossible to place clients to the CBOs – those with multiple barriers to employment (language, computer, skills and cultural) and those who need hand-holding. The CBOs were quite emphatic that they are also required by their funders to meet performance expectations, although the standards under which they are measured may not be as high or as strict as those of the WIA.

## **B. Difference in Skills and Operational Approach between One-Stops and CBOs**

There are differences in cultural orientation, cultural competence and therefore operational approach between the One-Stops and the CBOs. The CBOs visited tended to have in-language staff who are culturally competent and ready to work with the groups under study. This is not the case with most of the One-Stops visited and that poses a handicap in their ability to serve this group of potential clients when they walk into their doors.

A job counselor at a One-Stop in New York city, New York, opined that most Chinese in New York Chinatown could not fill out an English employment application form and need bilingual help; that the non-Chinese-speaking staff had told the Chinese job seekers that if they could not use the computer, no one would want to work with them; and that there were occasions when the Chinese job seekers were informed that if they could not complete their application form in English themselves, they were not qualified to get a job through the One-Stop.

A CBO manager in Seattle, Washington, said that even if a job seeker speaks English, it does not mean he writes English and would need help to fill in an application form. Once again, this means the need for one-on-one bilingual service.

### **C. Cost Sharing Partnership**

Cost sharing partnership is a sensitive subject between the One-Stops and the CBOs. Unlike the One-Stops, the CBOs do not have access to WIA funds and other federal funds to help to defray overhead costs - hire the staff and pay for part of the rent at the One-Stop in order to be a One-Stop partner. The CBOs cannot afford and do not want to pay for the cost of the rent at the One-Stops' offices. This is especially difficult in large metropolitan areas where the One-Stops are located and where real estate prices are high. This prevents the CBOs from becoming a true One-Stop partner. As a result, the two parties do not co-locate as partners, cannot work closer together, and cannot supplement each other's assets – knowledge of the job market, access to information on job openings, relationship with employers, technology, language skills, cultural competency, access to the labor market, and other capabilities. Therefore, they have not been able to work in partnership together for the benefits of the groups under study.

The executive director of a CBO in Fresno, California, commented that although Laotians and Hmongs constitute 20 percent of the population in Fresno, the One-Stop in the area had not made adequate efforts to include and invite the CBO to participate in providing employment and training services to the Laotians and Hmongs in the area. Therefore, WIA or other federal funds assigned to the One-Stop to provide these services did not reach the groups.

A CBO manager in Arlington, Virginia, stated that job seekers who need help the most need the human touch, and that self-directed services should be viewed as complements to, instead of substitutes for, staff-assisted services. The CBOs are concerned that the One-Stops channel their resources to serve job seekers who could "self-direct" through online searches, without providing adequate services to the groups who need to talk to a human being in their search for employment.

On the other hand, a One-Stop manager opined that when they have issued requests for proposals for employment services to the CBOs in their service delivery area, very few responded. On the occasion when the CBO responded and was awarded the

contract or grant to do the work, the CBO did not know how to comply with the requirements of using federal funds.

The small CBOs with small budgets also believe that they could perform as well as or better than the One-Stops because of their language capability, their cultural competence, their willingness to walk the extra mile to assist the difficult-to-place clients (most of whom came from the same or similar ethnic and immigration backgrounds as the CBO staff), and their lower overhead.

The CBOs are willing to help the One-Stops reach members of the groups. However, with their small budget, limited staff and lack of resources, they cannot assist the One-Stops *gratis*. They would like the One-Stops to help to defray some of their expenses should they be asked to render assistance to the One-Stops to reach out to and serve the groups, instead of doing the work, *pro bono*, for the One-Stops.

In other words, the CBOs are willing to work with the One-Stops if there is a reciprocal interest by the One-Stops to meet them halfway. Some CBOs offered to provide a desk at their location for culturally and linguistically competent One-Stop staff to meet members of the groups in their ethnic community on a regular basis, and to help with interpretation between One-Stop staff and job seekers. What the CBOs need is funds to cover their cost of rendering these services.

Finally, a One-Stop manager in Falls Church, Virginia, agreed that a cost sharing agreement between operators of the WIA system and other service providers, without collaboration, meant nothing. It is clear that closer collaboration between the CBOs and the One-Stops is important to the success of One-Stop services in these communities of job seekers.

#### **D. Collaboration between One-Stops and CBOs**

Some One-Stops are working with CBOs to find ways to improve their mutual working relationship and to take advantage of each other's strengths. The One-Stops have

greater technical resources and more leads to job openings. The CBOs are familiar with the groups under study, speak their languages, are attuned to their cultures, and in some cases, have established relationships with local and ethnic employers who would hire workers without English proficiency. To this end, one of the One-Stops in Fresno, California, is having talks with a CBO about strengthening their partnership to extend the One-Stop's technical infrastructure to select CBOs by setting up a computer lab that would connect them to the CBOs. This CBO, which has Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian and Vietnamese staff members, has access to refugee funds, can provide handholding services, and has an employee working at a One-Stop.

Another One-Stop in Lowell, Massachusetts, offered to connect their job listing system to a computer at the Cambodian CBO in their service area so the CBO could have access to job opportunities posted online with the One-Stop. The executive director of the CBO welcomed the idea, "We want to teach job seekers to learn to fish, no matter which pond to fish from." This computer connection will allow Cambodians to find jobs listed with the One-Stop on the computer at the CBO's site. There, they could also receive help from CBO staff who speak their language and understand their culture.

Most of the CBOs recognized that the lack of regular, effective and meaningful communication between the two parties, the lack of a clear understanding of their respective roles, as well as the competition for the same quality clients in order to make their job placement numbers, have created a chasm between the One Stops and the CBOs. The CBOs also recognized that they should educate their own staff and the groups about One-Stops - what they do and how to work with them. They know they need to change their negative views about One-Stops and work more closely together with the One-Stops in their area so job seekers in their community could be matched with employers with whom the One-Stop has developed relationships.

Finally, two One-Stop managers shared that even if there is bilingual and competent staff, cost sharing and collaboration, there would still be able workers who would not enter the job market despite the One-Stop system, therefore affecting the employment

rates. It is the belief held by some of the unemployed refugees from Asia and Eastern Europe that they have come to the United States as refugees because of a war in which the United States was involved. Thus, they are entitled to financial support from the U.S. government in the form of welfare. They have developed a life of dependency and will not make any efforts to learn English and obtain an education or vocational training so that they can be self-sufficient. They would claim their lack of English proficiency as the reason for not being employed. Some work off the books while collecting welfare at the same time. This, the One-Stop managers and counselors shared, is beyond what One-Stops and CBOs can do.

#### **iv) Outreach Efforts**

The comments most frequently heard about One-Stops from CBOs and members of the groups in the service delivery areas were: 1) They have never heard of the One-Stop; 2) They do not know what One-Stops do; or 3) They have very limited knowledge of One-Stops, or do not know anybody who has been there or has used its services.

An executive director of a Vietnamese CBO analogized One-Stops to “the mainstream agency that wants to make a cake but gave us a square. But the Vietnamese can only make a round cake so you can’t fit in.” She stated that in order to provide services to people of different backgrounds, it is essential for a system to be flexible and adaptive to the needs of the clients. Currently, the system is too rigid.

Some One-Stops do not have a working relationship with the ethnic communities in their service delivery area. Many of the One-Stops visited acknowledged this fact, and recognized that they need to reach out to the groups’ community, create sustained awareness, instill more knowledge about their services that are available to the community, and build trust in them. Some One-Stops in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, have hired Asian staff in the last two years to work at the centers. From time to time, they attend community events, disseminate information, and find occasions to speak about the One-Stops. However, the resulting impact of these changes is still unknown. Much more could be done through radio, television, printed

media, and job fairs, as well as through support of community activities and participation in them.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR ONE-STOPS**

### **i) Budget**

It appears that insufficient resources are currently devoted to reach this community of Americans who lack English proficiency. This study recommends that One-Stop budgets include the hiring and training of additional staff to address the needs of the underserved community including the groups under study.

### **ii) Additional Staff Hiring and Training**

To ensure that the groups adequately receive the employment and training services offered by One-Stops, language proficiency and cultural support must be part of the One-Stops' operations. Additional bilingual or multi-lingual staff should be recruited in a number proportional to and commensurate with the need of the community, and in accordance to the funds available to the One-Stops in the service delivery areas. Culturally competent staff who could connect with the groups and local business community should also be hired. In addition, service at One-Stops should be user-friendly, taking into consideration the multiple barriers (i.e., knowledge of the computer and the English language) the groups face.

#### Strategy:

- Train staff in cultural competency.
- Train staff not to treat job seekers as “case numbers” but as human beings who need help.
- Train staff to help members of the target groups to plan their career, not to treat their present job opportunity as the beginning and the end, and encourage them to “upgrade” their skills.
- Utilize CBO's knowledge of and access to the community and seek their help in writing job descriptions for staff positions that have direct contact with the groups. Set up a triage call center with on-call interpreters to interpret for One-

Stop staff and clients. This will address job seekers' problem with feeling alienated, avoid the need to turn job seekers away because of the lack of language staff, and streamline the referral process so the clients can receive immediate help.

### **iii) Extend Office Hour and Improve Direction Signs**

Many job seekers hold menial jobs at ethnic enclaves and some work at home taking care of children during the hours of 9 am to 5 pm. Others have difficulty reading English door or direction signs and would either get lost or discouraged while looking for the One-Stop offices.

#### Strategy:

- Extend the hours of operation beyond regular business hours and open on Saturdays to accommodate job seekers who work irregular hours.
- Place clearly marked in-language signs in public areas.

### **iv) Encourage Clients to Learn English**

Language is the greatest handicap that prevents most of the groups from finding more secure and better paying jobs. At the initial meeting with job seekers, One-Stop staff should talk about the job seeker's career plan and counsel the job seeker not to think of the immediate job as the end, but the beginning of better jobs in the United States for themselves and/or their children. They should be motivated to learn English and counseled emphatically that English proficiency is essential to securing upward mobility and economic stability for them and/or their children.

#### Strategy:

- Explain to job seekers the importance of learning English to improve their options for employment opportunities, future upward mobility, and economic status, not just tell them to learn English.
- Inculcate the idea that "education is key" to getting better jobs other than menial jobs or being paid off the books.



- Encourage employers to give employees time off to take English language classes at the work site. For employers who have a stake in retaining good employees, encourage them to bring a teacher to the work site to teach a group of employees. This would save the employees from traveling from work or home to English classes, save time and prevent absence from class.
- Utilize ESL classes as the occasion to talk about employment and other job-related plans and opportunities.

#### **v) Closer Coordination between One-Stop and CBO Managements**

To build constructive and mutually beneficial working relationships where both parties utilize their respective assets to compliment each other's operation, the leadership of One-Stops and CBOs should find ways to work together on a frequent and regular basis and to create a collegial relationship based on trust.

##### Strategy:

- Form a Community Advisory Council (CAC) chaired by One-Stop top management and invite CBO leaders, community and opinion leaders, and employers to the CAC. The CAC should meet on a quarterly basis to discuss and explore job opportunities, staffing forecast and needs, and other employment-related matters that concern the communities represented on the CAC.
- Establish a direct line of communication between the leadership of One-Stops and CBOs for mutual consultation between CAC quarterly meetings.
- Give CBOs direct access to the One-Stops' online job listings.
- Encourage CBOs to organize field trips to One-Stops so potential employees could have first hand knowledge of how to get to and use the services of One-Stops.
- Find new ways for One-Stops to collaborate with CBOs other than to co-locate. Co-locating may not work for all because it may require the alignment of budget and goals, which are driven by the revenue of the individual organizations.
- Ask for and be receptive to input, feedback and recommendations from people

working on the front line. They know what works and what does not work. Keep the opinion box open and encourage constructive suggestions.

#### **vi) Proactive Community Outreach Efforts**

Show the community that One-Stops are interested in working with them. This message should come from top management so the sincerity will not be in doubt. Take an active, not passive or reactive, role in building the relationship with the community with whom the One-Stop wish to do business. Treat the job seeker/employee community with the same attention and care as the business/employer community.

##### Strategy:

- Host meetings at One-Stop facilities to introduce One-Stop management and staff as well as “What Does One-Stop Do for You” to the local community.
- Connect to the CBOs virtually through technology so CBOs could perform handholding services for the groups, with direct access to information about job opportunities listed in the Job Services system.
- Set up a schedule to accommodate particular ethnic groups on specific days to make sure that there will be a person on duty who could speak to them.
- Send staff into the community to meet the people, speak at libraries and community meetings, and attend special holiday celebrations and other important ethnic events such as the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month celebrations in May. Take advantage of these occasions to reach out to potential clients and build trust with the community.
- Seek the help of CBOs to plan, organize and implement an effective outreach program. Invite CBO experts to assist in writing job descriptions for staff positions that require regular contacts with the groups.
- Strengthen One-Stops’ relationships with local employers through programs such as job fairs organized in cooperation with CBOs. In addition to inviting employers to participate as exhibitors, hold one-on-one meetings between employers and pre-registered job seekers. CBOs could facilitate introductions and offer insights on how to reach the groups for successful, well-attended

events.

- Encourage the formation and regular meetings of Job Clubs where employment orientation and expectations are shared among job seekers.
- Establish a nationwide system of central data repository where best practices could be shared and accessed by all One-Stop and CBO staff.

#### **vii) Awareness Campaign through Ethnic Media**

Undertake an aggressive educational campaign to correct misconceptions about One-Stops and publicize successful placement stories in the community. Tailor information and marketing materials to include culturally sensitive messages to the groups.

##### Strategy:

- Place in-language advertisements in local ethnic newspapers, radios, TV and public service announcements (PSAs) to inform the community of the benefits of using One-Stops.
- Contribute feature articles, op-eds, and news items to ethnic newspapers to inform a wider public on One-Stop services, and issue reports on successful placements or other newsworthy stories.
- Conduct radio interviews about One-Stops services and success stories, and enlist the help of public television to disseminate information about One-Stops, the services they provide, business hours, locations, driving directions and instructions for taking public transportation.

#### **viii) Uniform Data Collection and Management System**

Establish a uniform and systematic process that One-Stops should use to collect relevant demographic data about the clients they serve. This will be used as the basis for quantitative and qualitative analyses. The analyses will help federal, state and local governments, and One-Stops to evaluate how well the specific employment needs of these specific groups and other underserved segments of specific populations are met. The relevant data should include the demographics of the people using One-Stops, the specific services sought, the desired outcome, and the actual outcome.

Strategy:

- Create a uniform national data collection system that will include consistent naming convention, accurately defined data and breakdown structure relating to the different racial and ethnic groups, age, etc., and a uniform case management process for proper quantitative and qualitative evaluation across all states.
- Collaborate with a national network of One-Stops to implement the uniform data collection and case management system.

## **DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

### **An Initiative to Increase Utilization of One-Stop Career Centers by Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians, Vietnamese and Chinatown Chinese**

The current process by which the One-Stops and CBOs serve the most vulnerable, underemployed and unemployed segment of the five Asian American groups, namely the Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians, Vietnamese and Chinatown Chinese, does not seem to attract the number of job seekers proportionate to the size of their unemployment. This initiative seeks to impress upon both the One-Stops and CBOs that heightened collaboration is the best way to address the employment needs of the five groups that were studied.

One-Stops have assets that CBOs do not have: an infrastructure with management, technology and trained professionals, and access to mainstream employers.

Likewise, CBOs have assets that One-Stops lack: familiarity with the ethnic community in which they reside and competence in the languages and cultures of the community they serve. In addition, some of their employees have personal experience in or connections with people who have experienced the plight of having no or limited English speaking ability, low levels of education and little skills – which are barriers the groups face in their search for employment in the mainstream job market.

These two sets of assets could be combined to forge an efficient and effective system of services that would bring positive results to the underserved Asian Americans. It will be

cost-effective for the U.S. Department of Labor and rewarding for both the One-Stops and CBOs.

### **Objective**

The goal of this initiative is to make sure that One-Stop job services are made available to the groups by pulling together the resources and expertise of a One-Stop and a CBO from the same service delivery area. They will work together as a team for a year.

There will be five pairs of One-Stops and CBOs.

The One-Stops will use its resources to develop relationships with employers as well as obtain job listings from them. With their management and professional skills, supported by their technological infrastructure, One-Stops will maintain a highly up-to-date posting of open job opportunities and timely removal of filled positions, strengthen existing employer-customer relationships and develop new ones.

The CBOs will be responsible for reaching out to the groups on behalf of the One-Stops and serve as the first point-of-contact for job seekers who wish to access the One-Stops to find employment, assess the qualifications and job readiness of job seekers, and coordinate with the One-Stops on any matters relating to job services. The CBOs will be compensated for its services according to a value scale.

### **Selection Process**

The initiative will select five major cities across the country where there is a substantial population of the underserved segments of the five groups. For example, Cambodians in Lowell, Massachusetts; Hmong in St. Paul, Minnesota; Laotians in Fresno, California; Vietnamese in Houston, Texas; and Chinatown Chinese in Los Angeles, California.

From each of these groups, a CBO will be selected from the One-Stop's service area based on the following criteria: 1) a demonstrated record of service to the community; 2) experience in providing employment services; 3) experience in contract management; 4) sound financial standing; and 5) a sustained leadership who is invested in the community. Each CBO will be matched with the One-Stop from its service area.

## **How It Works**

The One-Stop and CBO will be connected via a computer system where information could be shared between the two organizations. In addition, the CBO will have direct access to job postings whenever necessary to help a job seeker search for jobs.

The CBO will designate a staff member who will be responsible for job services and who will have direct and regular contact with his or her counterpart at the One-Stop.

As a grassroots organization, the CBO knows where its constituents are and will be responsible for marketing the One-Stop's services to the community. It will be the "front office" for the One-Stop, the place where members of the groups could call and visit to inquire about job opportunities, etc.

In addition to language competency, the CBO has the knowledge and the motivation to address the job seeker in his or her comfort zone. Their business hours are flexible – a clear benefit to the job seekers whose work schedule prevents them from calling or visiting between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm. In addition, CBOs are conveniently located in areas easily accessible by job seekers so transportation should not be an issue.

A uniform assessment intake form<sup>7</sup> using conventional terminology and breakdown structure will be used and archived for demographic data collection purposes. A scoring system will also be implemented to measure the placement and retention rate, intensive training referrals, and other factors.

## **The Client**

This initiative will benefit the groups because the process will be streamlined. It will eliminate confusion and frustration, and bring the human touch back to the One-Stop

---

<sup>7</sup> Note: The CBO will have the One-Stop's assessment form printed in the language of the group in such a way that the answers to the form will match the English version of the same form used at the One-Stop. This will save translation costs, simplify the process and make it understandable even to staff members who do not speak the language.

job search experience. It ensures that the job seeker is initially received and introduced to the One-Stop system within his or her comfort zone.

This is how it will work:

Job seeker would call or visit the CBO. If the job seeker calls the CBO, his or her call will be automatically transferred to a virtual centralized In-Language Call Center where he or she will have a choice of interpreters if necessary (available for 10 hours a day to cover the East and West Coast time zones) to help him or her. The job seeker will be assessed by phone to determine his or her immediate needs and then referred to a CBO for an appointment for further assessment, training or job placement.

If the job seeker prefers to visit the CBO in person, the job seeker will be assigned to a staff member who, depending on the job seeker's qualifications, will guide him or her through the assessment and job application process. This may also be followed by a session on the CBO's computer system that is linked to the One-Stop. Here, the job seeker will be able to see, with the help of the CBO staff if necessary, what jobs are available, what he or she needs to do and how to accomplish his or her goals. The job seeker may also be able to virtually meet and chat with a One-Stop staff member using a designated videophone either alone or with the assistance of CBO staff. It could be a three-way decision-making process, involving the job seeker, the CBO staff and the One-Stop staff.

The goal is to meet job seekers in their environment, extend a helping hand and build trust, not only with the CBO, but also with the One-Stop where they will eventually go. More importantly, once appropriate trust and comfort levels are achieved, the CBO or One-Stop could encourage the job seeker to return either to the CBO or directly to the One-Stop if he or she has overcome the fear or discomfort of going to a One-Stop alone. The job seeker will also be encouraged to return after a period to discuss plans to upgrade his or her skills.

After the CBO has assessed the job seeker's needs and job readiness (whether to have a job immediately, take ESL classes, or undertake other types of training), the job seeker will complete the assessment form (on paper or online).

The CBO staff member will then contact the One-Stop and refer the job seeker to them.

It should be noted that this scenario is for demonstration only. There will be details to work out but they should not be complicated.

### **The Incentives**

The CBOs will be compensated for their services by the number of job seekers they successfully place or refer to the One-Stop.

In addition, a national Award will be presented by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor at the end of the demonstration period to the best performer pursuant to criteria to be determined.

### **Measurement of Success**

At the end of this demonstration project, the performance of each of the five demonstration sites will be measured and compared with each other. Their results will also be compared with other One-Stops in the same location. The same indicators will be applied (language, cultural competency, etc.) to measure the success of this project.

### **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study is to find out the extent to which One-Stops, established under WIA, serve five economically disadvantaged Asian American groups, namely, Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians, Vietnamese and Chinatown Chinese, in their search for employment; why some members of the groups do not make sufficient use of One-Stops; whether there are strategies or best practices that could be learned from One-Stops which have successfully reached and served the groups; the working relationship between One-Stops and CBOs; and propose a demonstration project that could be



used as a model to increase utilization of One-Stops by the groups.

Based on the 25 One-Stops visited, this study has found no evidence to suggest any hard utilization of One-Stop services by the five economically disadvantaged groups. The pattern or patterns of utilization by the groups could not be determined for the following reasons: 1) the data was not available; or 2) no uniform and systematic process exists for One-Stops across all states to collect demographic information about their clients, specifically the subpopulations within the Asian American population, using consistent naming convention, accurately defined data and breakdown structure. As a result, the only way to gather the data was through empirical observations and interviews during 75 site visits to One-Stops and CBOs in nine states, 20 cities and the District of Columbia.

From the 25 site visits to One-Stops, this study has found nearly non-existent utilization of One-Stops by the five groups. The WIA's internal performance system has created a need for One-Stops to meet certain job placement and retention requirements. That need has limited their ability to spend sufficient time to provide employment and training services to job seekers with multiple barriers such as computer illiteracy, lack of English skills, low job skills, and who are culturally alien to the mainstream marketplace.

This study also found that most of the One-Stops visited do not have linguistically and culturally competent staff to meet and work with job seekers from the groups studied. There are, however, a couple of One-Stops which have taken steps to hire staff who could speak the language of one or more of the groups studied and have offered to work with the CBOs in their service delivery area to connect the CBOs to the One-Stop's job listings online. However, more is required for the One-Stops to increase utilization of their services by the groups.

A One-Stop in Los Angeles, California, seems to reach a larger number of Chinese job seekers because it is located in Chinatown and has Chinese-speaking staff. The proximity of the One-Stop to the areas where the Chinese job seekers work and live

seems to be a factor for the higher utilization of their services.

This study has also discovered a strained relationship between One-Stops and the CBOs located in the same service delivery areas because of competing interests for funds and for job seeker clients with English proficiency and work experience that enable the One-Stops to make employment placements.

This study recommends more collaboration between the One-Stops and the CBOs so they can share their respective strengths. The One-Stops have superior technical resources and greater access to job openings. The CBOs have a familiarity of the groups, speak their languages, are attuned to their cultures, and have more established relationships with local and ethnic employers who would hire workers without English proficiency.

This study also makes eight recommendations for One-Stops to act on that could increase awareness of their services among and build trust with the groups in order to improve utilization of the One-Stops. However, the proposed demonstration project, presented in this report, could be a more effective method for reaching the groups and helping them obtain satisfactory employment. If this demonstration project works, it could be replicated with other ethnic groups, including the Pacific Islanders and new immigrants with limited English proficiency. Ultimately, the U.S. Department of Labor may consider expanding and applying this practice on a national basis.

**Asian American Workforce Development Strategy  
Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians, Vietnamese  
and Chinatown Chinese**

**Evaluation Report**

**APPENDIX**

**March 26, 2007**

## Appendix A: U.S. Census Tables

Table 1. Populations of Cambodians, Hmong, Laotians, Vietnamese and Chinese

Population	Cambodian	Hmong	Laotian	Vietnamese	Chinese
U.S. Total	206,052	186,310	198,203	1,267,510*	2,903,618*
#1 Density	Westminster-Orange County-Oakland, CA (CMSA)	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN (MSA)**	San Francisco-Stockton-Oakland-San Jose, CA (CMSA)**	Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA (CMSA)	San Francisco, CA
	70,232	40,707	11,545	233,573	153,931
#2 Density	Lowell-Greater Boston-Worcester-Lawrence, MA (CMSA)	Fresno, CA (MSA)	Sacramento-Yolo, CA (CMSA)	San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA (CMSA)	New York-Manhattan, NY
	19,696	22,456	9,814	146,613	79,634
#3 Density	Seattle, WA (MSA)	Sacramento-Yolo, CA (CMSA)	Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA (CMSA)	Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX (CMSA)	Los Angeles
	13,899	16,621	7,626	63,924	65,804
#4 Density	Greater Philadelphia, PA (CMSA)	Milwaukee-Racine, WI (MSA)	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN (MSA)	Dallas-Fort Worth, TX (CMSA)	Philadelphia, PA
	8,531	8,078	7,576	47,090	15,046

Source:

\*U.S. Census 2004 American Community Survey  
U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 1

The numbers by detailed Asian ethnic groups do not add to the total population. This is because the detailed Asian ethnic groups are tallies of the number of Asian responses rather than the number of Asian respondents.

Legend:

**MSA** Metropolitan Statistical Area

**CMSA** Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area

**Table 2. Educational Attainment by Ethnicity and City**

Education Levels Census Figures [ Percent of Local Population]	Total Population 25 years old and over	Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma	High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	Bachelors Degree
CAMBODIAN - Minneapolis, MN	2,093	705 [33.7 Percent]	218 [10.4 Percent]	487 [23.3 Percent]	159 [7.6 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Philadelphia, PA	2,961	1,393 [47.0 Percent]	609 [20.6 Percent]	459 [15.5 Percent]	125 [4.2 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Lowell, MA	4,305	1,639 [38.1 Percent]	933 [21.7 Percent]	905 [21.0 Percent]	103 [2.4 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Long Beach, CA	8,053	3,840 [47.7 Percent]	1,039 [12.9 Percent]	1,093 [13.6 Percent]	402 [5.0 Percent]
HMONG - Fresno, CA	6,267	4148 [66.2 Percent]	365 [5.8 Percent]	565 [9.0 Percent]	299 [4.8 Percent]
HMONG - Minneapolis, MN	3,040	1,650 [54.3 Percent]	307 [10.1 Percent]	510 [16.8 Percent]	133 [4.4 Percent]
HMONG - St. Paul, MN	8,360	4,006 [47.9 Percent]	742 [8.9 Percent]	1,671 [20.0 Percent]	439 [5.3 Percent]
HMONG - Sacramento, CA	3,645	2,085 [57.2 Percent]	313 [8.6 Percent]	558 [15.3 Percent]	102 [2.8 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Seattle, WA	1,338	602 [45.0 Percent]	204 [15.2 Percent]	309 [23.1 Percent]	29 [2.2 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Minneapolis, MN	3,455	922 [26.7 Percent]	522 [15.1 Percent]	1,018 [29.5 Percent]	325 [9.4 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Fresno, CA	2,352	1,477 [62.8 Percent]	314 [13.4 Percent]	223 [9.5 Percent]	45 [1.9 Percent]
LAOTIAN - San Diego, CA	3,308	1,057 [32.0 Percent]	567 [17.1 Percent]	703 [21.3 Percent]	253 [7.6 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – San Diego, CA	17,778	3,838 [21.6 Percent]	3,606 [20.3 Percent]	2,740 [15.4 Percent]	2,640 [14.8 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – San Jose, CA	48,769	7,666 [15.7 Percent]	8,978 [18.4 Percent]	8,428 [17.3 Percent]	7,366 [15.1 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – Garden Grove, CA	22,759	3,991 [17.5 Percent]	4,971 [21.8 Percent]	4,659 [20.5 Percent]	2,429 [10.7 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – Houston, TX	21,101	3,701 [17.5 Percent]	4,682 [22.2 Percent]	4,143 [19.6 Percent]	3,189 [15.1 Percent]
CHINESE – New York, NY	254,068	67,833 [26.7 Percent]	39,319 [15.5 Percent]	46,595 [18.3 Percent]	43,171 [18.3 Percent]
CHINESE – San Francisco, CA	114,849	30,993 [27.0 Percent]	14,601 [12.7 Percent]	17,369 [15.1 Percent]	21,672 [15.1 Percent]
CHINESE – Los Angeles, CA	43,869	9,763 [22.3 Percent]	4,366 [10.0 Percent]	5,101 [11.6 Percent]	10,421 [11.6 Percent]
CHINESE – San Jose, CA	36,597	3,092 [8.4 Percent]	2,311 [6.3 Percent]	3,557 [9.7 Percent]	11,196 [30.6 Percent]

Source: U.S. Census 2000 American Fact finder Fact Sheet

**Table 3. English Spoken at Home by Ethnicity and City**

English Proficiency Levels Census Figures [ Percent of Local Population]	Total Population 5 years old and over	English Only	Asian & Pacific Island Language	Speaks English less than "very well"
CAMBODIAN - Minneapolis, MN	3,771	335 [8.9 Percent]	3,412 [90.5 Percent]	2,036 [54.0 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Philadelphia, PA	5,822	378 [6.5 Percent]	5,435 [93.4 Percent]	3,365 [57.8 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Lowell, MA	8,610	485 [5.6 Percent]	8,120 [94.3 Percent]	4,496 [52.2 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Long Beach, CA	16,377	1,115 [6.8 Percent]	15,035 [91.9 Percent]	9,293 [56.7 Percent]
HMONG - Fresno, CA	18,052	897 [5.0 Percent]	17,149 [95.0 Percent]	11,338 [62.8 Percent]
HMONG - Minneapolis, MN	8,935	291 [3.3 Percent]	8,622 [96.5 Percent]	5,501 [61.6 Percent]
HMONG - St. Paul, MN	22,119	674 [3.0 Percent]	21,424 [96.9 Percent]	13,453 [60.8 Percent]
HMONG - Sacramento, CA	10,549	522 [4.9 Percent]	10,027 [95.1 Percent]	6,557 [62.2 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Minneapolis, MN	6,139	412 [6.7 Percent]	5,714 [93.1 Percent]	3,205 [52.2 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Stockton, CA	2,676	228 [8.5 Percent]	2,441 [91.2 Percent]	1,608 [60.1 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Fresno, CA	5,069	451 [8.9 Percent]	4,564 [90.0 Percent]	3006 [59.3 Percent]
LAOTIAN - San Diego, CA	5,570	365 [6.9 Percent]	5,167 [92.8 Percent]	2,992 [53.7 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – San Diego, CA	26,768	1,494 [5.6 Percent]	25,155 [94.0 Percent]	17,001 [63.5 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – San Jose, CA	70,203	3,210 [4.6 Percent]	66,731 [95.1 Percent]	46,825 [66.7 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – Garden Grove, CA	32,393	1,132 [4.6 Percent]	31,168 [96.2 Percent]	23,655 [73.0 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – Houston, TX	29,697	1,222 [4.1 Percent]	28,322 [95.4 Percent]	19,148 [64.5 Percent]
CHINESE – New York, NY	343,053	26,851 [7.8 Percent]	313,812 [91.5 Percent]	219,642 [64.0 Percent]
CHINESE – San Francisco, CA	148,975	18,049 [12.1 Percent]	130,361 [87.5 Percent]	88,845 [59.6 Percent]
CHINESE – Los Angeles, CA	61,150	9,939 [16.3 Percent]	50,315 [82.3 Percent]	30,328 [49.6 Percent]
CHINESE – San Jose, CA	49,191	5,331 [10.8 Percent]	43,620 [88.7 Percent]	25,884 [52.6 Percent]

Source: U.S. Census 2000 American Factfinder Fact Sheet

**Table 4. Poverty Level by Ethnicity and City**

Below Poverty Level Status in 1999 Census Figures [ Percent of Local Population]	Individuals Total	Individuals - 18 Years and Over	Individuals - 65 Years and Over	Families Total	Families with Related Children under 18 years
CAMBODIAN - Seattle, WA	1,016 [40.8 Percent]	486 [32.4 Percent]	44 [37.3 Percent]	224 [42.2 Percent]	218 [52.7 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Philadelphia, PA	3,188 [50.2 Percent]	1,559 [43.1 Percent]	58 [24.7 Percent]	570 [45.1 Percent]	528 [48.0 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Lowell, MA	17,066 [16.8 Percent]	10,487 [14.2 Percent]	1,420 [14.0 Percent]	3,299 [13.6 Percent]	2,730 [19.2 Percent]
CAMBODIAN- Long Beach, CA	8,326 [47.2 Percent]	4,078 [40.3 Percent]	246 [30.1 Percent]	1,589 [45.2 Percent]	1,496 [49.8 Percent]
HMONG - Fresno, CA	12,302 [60.6 Percent]	4,398 [51.2 Percent]	196 [34.6 Percent]	1,617 [57.6 Percent]	1,552 [59.8 Percent]
HMONG - Minneapolis, MN	3,991 [39.1 Percent]	1,356 [31.8 Percent]	61 [37.2 Percent]	562 [37.8 Percent]	553 [38.8 Percent]
HMONG - St. Paul, MN	9,006 [35.5 Percent]	3,449 [30.6 Percent]	246 [32.7 Percent]	1,377 [34.8 Percent]	1,285 [35.3 Percent]
HMONG- Sacramento, CA	5,557 [46.1 Percent]	2011 [38.8 Percent]	113 [35.3 Percent]	713 [44.4 Percent]	688 [47.2 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Minneapolis, MN	1,026 [15.2 Percent]	413 [9.9 Percent]	35 [20.8 Percent]	165 [12.7 Percent]	149 [13.9 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Stockton, CA	56,783 [23.9 Percent]	31,269 [19.4 Percent]	2,835 [11.9 Percent]	10,695 [18.9 Percent]	9,429 [26.0 Percent]
LAOTIAN –Fresno, CA	109,703 [26.2 Percent]	59,086 [21.0 Percent]	3,990 [10.7 Percent]	20,325 [20.5 Percent]	17,755 [28.2 Percent]
LAOTIAN –San Diego, CA	172,527 [14.6 Percent]	114,481 [12.8 Percent]	9,415 [7.6 Percent]	29,943 [10.6 Percent]	24,012 [15.9 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – Seattle, WA	2,563 [22.9 Percent]	1,616 [19.9 Percent]	300 [47.2 Percent]	559 [22.4 Percent]	405 [25.4 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – San Jose, CA	9,381 [12.4 Percent]	5,845 [10.5 Percent]	457 [9.4 Percent]	1,767 [11 Percent]	1,454 [13.6 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – Garden Grove	6,363 [18.3 Percent]	4,054 [15.8 Percent]	330 [14.6 Percent]	1,208 [16.6 Percent]	994 [20.8 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – Houston, TX	5,438 [17.2 Percent]	3,744 [15.5 Percent]	600 [29.7 Percent]	1,226 [16.3 Percent]	806 [19.0 Percent]
CHINESE (overall) – Seattle, WA	2,427 [13.3 Percent]	2,175 [14.1 Percent]	639 [25.0 Percent]	467 [10.4 Percent]	160 [8.5 Percent]
CHINESE – New York, NY	79,389 [22.1 Percent]	59,236 [20.7 Percent]	10,039 [26.9 Percent]	17,186 [19.7 Percent]	11,118 [24.7 Percent]
CHINESE – San Francisco, CA	15,431 [10.0 Percent]	12,462 [9.8 Percent]	3,551 [12.6 Percent]	2,936 [8.1 Percent]	1,584 [9.7 Percent]
CHINESE – Los Angeles, CA	12,917 [21.2 Percent]	10,376 [3.8 Percent]	1,500 [16.2 Percent]	2,107 [15.6 Percent]	1,223 [20.9 Percent]

Source: U.S. Census 2000, American Factfinder Fact Sheet

**Table 5. Employment Status: Level of Unemployment/Employment for Cambodians, Hmong, Laotians, Vietnamese and Chinese**

Employment Levels Census Figures [ Percent of Local Population]	Total Population 16 years old and over	In Labor Force	Employed, Civilian Labor Force	Unemployed, Civilian Labor Force	Not in the Labor Force
CAMBODIAN - Lowell, MA	5,775	3,403 [58.9 Percent]	3,032 [52.5 Percent]	371 [6.4 Percent]	2,372 [41.1 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Long Beach, CA	11,233	4,423 [39.4 Percent]	3,826 [34.1 Percent]	597 [5.3 Percent]	6,810 [60.6 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Philadelphia, PA	3,981	1,689 [42.4 Percent]	1,442 [36.2 Percent]	247 [6.2 Percent]	2,292 [57.6 Percent]
CAMBODIAN - Seattle, WA	1,648	934 [56.7 Percent]	788 [47.8 Percent]	146 [8.9 Percent]	714 [43.3 Percent]
HMONG - Fresno, CA	9,979	4,134 [41.3 Percent]	3,584 [35.9 Percent]	545 [5.5 Percent]	5,845 [58.6 Percent]
HMONG - Minneapolis, MN	4,765	2,232 [48.7 Percent]	2,050 [43.0 Percent]	272 [5.7 Percent]	2,443 [51.3 Percent]
HMONG - St. Paul, MN	12,862	6,469 [50.3 Percent]	5,895 [45.8 Percent]	564 [4.4 Percent]	6,393 [49.7 Percent]
HMONG - Sacramento, CA	5,596	2,791 [46.9 Percent]	2,372 [39.8 Percent]	419 [7.0 Percent]	3,165 [53.1 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Stockton, CA	172,996	101,850 [58.9 Percent]	89,165 [51.5 Percent]	12,593 [7.3 Percent]	71,146 [41.1 Percent]
LAOTIAN – Sacramento, CA	307,682	184,829 [60.1 Percent]	169,787 [55.2 Percent]	14,543 [4.7 Percent]	122,853 [39.9 Percent]
LAOTIAN - San Diego, CA	959,432	630,124 [65.7 Percent]	557,382 [58.1 Percent]	36,358 [3.8 Percent]	329,308 [34.3 Percent]
LAOTIAN - Fresno, CA	301,154	180,070 [59.8 Percent]	159,776 [53.1 Percent]	20,100 [6.7 Percent]	121,084 [40.2 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – San Jose, CA	58,258	35,357 [60.7 Percent]	33,644 [57.8 Percent]	1,705 [2.9 Percent]	22,901 [39.3 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – Garden Grove, CA	26,801	15,031 [56.1 Percent]	13,912 [51.9 Percent]	1,119 [4.2 Percent]	11,770 [43.9 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – San Diego, CA	21,941	12,956 [59.1 Percent]	11,944 [54.4 Percent]	780 [3.6 Percent]	8,985 [41.0 Percent]
VIETNAMESE – Houston, TX	25,157	15,936 [63.3 Percent]	14,988 [59.6 Percent]	948 [3.8 Percent]	9,221 [36.7 Percent]
CHINESE – New York, NY	297,755	177,520 [59.6 Percent]	166,137 [55.8 Percent]	11,322 [3.8 Percent]	120,235 [40.4 Percent]
CHINESE – San Francisco, CA	130,537	76,635 [58.7 Percent]	73,564 [56.4 Percent]	3,071 [2.4 Percent]	53,902 [41.3 Percent]
CHINESE – Los Angeles, CA	54,993	30,838 [56.1 Percent]	28,881 [52.5 Percent]	1,946 [3.5 Percent]	24,155 [43.9 Percent]
CHINESE – San Jose, CA	41,569	27,258 [65.6 Percent]	26,587 [64.0 Percent]	671 [1.6 Percent]	14,311 [34.4 Percent]

Source: U.S. Census 2000 American Factfinder Fact Sheet



**Table 6. Asian American Populations**

	2000	2004
Total U.S. Population	281,421,906	285,691,501
Total Asian Pacific Islander Population	10,242,998	12,097,281
1. Chinese, except Taiwanese	2,314,537	2,829,627
2. Filipino	1,850,314	2,148,227
3. Asian Indian	1,678,765	2,245,239
4. Korean	1,076,872	1,251,092
5. Vietnamese	1,122,528	1,267,510
6. Japanese	796,700	832,039
7. Cambodian	171,937	195,208
8. Pakistani	153,533	208,852
9. Taiwanese	118,048	70,771
10. Laotian	168,707	226,661
11. Hmong	169,428	163,733
12. Thai	112,989	130,548
13. Indonesian	39,757	52,267
14. Bangladeshi	41,280	50,473
15. Sri Lankan	20,145	22,339
16. Malaysian	10,690	11,458
17. Other Asian, not specified	14,6870	250,666
18. Other specified Asian	2,6310	140,571

Source: U.S. Census 2004 American Community Survey

U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 1

The numbers by detailed Asian ethnic groups do not add to the total population. This is because the detailed Asian ethnic groups are tallies of the number of Asian responses rather than the number of Asian respondents.

## Appendix B: One-Stop Career Centers (One-Stops) Visited

	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>LWIA</b>
1	Fresno Area Workforce Investment Corporation	Fresno	CA	Fresno County
2	Fresno Area Workforce Investment Corporation	Fresno	CA	Fresno County
3	Fresno County WIB Workforce Connection	Fresno	CA	Fresno County
4	Fresno County WIB Workforce Connection	Fresno	CA	Fresno County
5	Fresno County WIB Workforce Connection	Fresno	CA	Fresno County
6	Fresno County WIB Workforce Connection	Fresno	CA	Fresno County
7	Long Beach Career Transition Center	Long Beach	CA	Long Beach (City)
8	Chinatown WorkSource Center (Operated by Chinatown Service Center)	Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles (City)
9	Chinatown WorkSource Center	Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles (City)
10	Chinatown WorkSource Center (Operated by Chinatown Service Center)	Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles (City)
11	Westlake WorkSource Center (Operated by PACE)	Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles (City)
12	Westlake WorkSource Center (Operated by PACE)	Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles (City)
13	Oakland Career Center	Oakland	CA	Oakland (City)
14	Oakland Career Center (Oakland Private Industry Council. Inc.)	Oakland	CA	Oakland (City)
15	Oakland Career Center	Oakland	CA	Oakland (City)
16	Oakland Career Center (Oakland Private Industry Council. Inc.)	Oakland	CA	Oakland (City)
17	Oakland Career Center (Oakland Private Industry Council. Inc.)	Oakland	CA	Oakland (City)
18	One Stop San Francisco	San Francisco	CA	San Francisco City & County
19	One Stop San Francisco (Private Industry Council of San Francisco)	San Francisco	CA	San Francisco City & County
20	Santa Ana W-O-R-K center	Santa Ana	CA	Santa Ana City
21	Santa Ana W-O-R-K center	Santa Ana	CA	Santa Ana City
22	City of Westminster	Westminster	CA	Orange County
23	Orange County One-Stop Center – Westminster	Westminster	CA	Orange County
24	Orange County One-Stop Center – Westminster	Westminster	CA	Orange County

25	Orange County One-Stop Center – Westminster	Westminster	CA	Orange County
26	Chicago Workforce Center at Pilsen	Chicago	IL	Chicago MOWD Area 9
27	Career Center of Lowell	Lowell	MA	Greater Lowell
28	Career Center of Lowell	Lowell	MA	Greater Lowell
29	Northshore Career Center of Lynn	Lynn	MA	Southern Essex
30	Minneapolis North Workforce Center	Minneapolis	MN	Minneapolis City
31	State of Minnesota	St. Paul	MN	Ramsey County
32	Minnesota Workforce Center - St. Paul-Midway	St. Paul	MN	Ramsey County
33	Minnesota Workforce Center - St. Paul-Midway	St. Paul	MN	Ramsey County
34	State of New York Department of Labor	New York	NY	New York City
35	NYS Department of Labor Workforce	New York	NY	New York City
36	NYS Dept of Labor Business Services	New York	NY	New York City
37	Pennsylvania CareerLink Olney (within Korean Community Development Center)	Philadelphia	PA	Philadelphia City
38	City of Alexandria - JobLink	Alexandria	VA	Alexandria City
39	City of Alexandria - JobLink	Alexandria	VA	Alexandria City
40	Arlington Employment Center	Arlington	VA	Arlington/Alexandria Area #12
41	Falls Church SkillSource Center	Falls Church	VA	Northern Virginia Area #11
42	WorkSource Renton	Renton	WA	Seattle/King County
43	Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council	Seattle	WA	Seattle/King County
44	South Seattle Community College	Seattle	WA	Seattle/King County
45	U.S. Department of Labor	Seattle	WA	Seattle/King County
46	U.S. Department of Labor	Seattle	WA	Seattle/King County
47	Washington State Employment Security Dept.	Seattle	WA	Seattle/King County
49	WorkSource Affiliate Rainier	Seattle	WA	Seattle/King County
50	WorkSource Affiliate Rainier	Seattle	WA	Seattle/King County
51	WorkSource Affiliate Rainier	Seattle	WA	Seattle/King County

LWIA: Local Workforce Investment Area, formerly known as Service Delivery Area (SDA)  
 (Source: U.S. Department of Labor LEP Special Tabulation of Census 2000 Data on Limited English Proficient Adults)

## Appendix C: Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) Visited

	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>STATE</b>
1	AJOB (Asian for Job Opportunities in the Bay Area)	Berkeley	CA
2	Fresno Center for New Americans	Fresno	CA
3	Fresno Center for New Americans	Fresno	CA
4	Fresno Center for New Americans	Fresno	CA
5	Fresno Center for New Americans	Fresno	CA
6	Fresno Center for New Americans	Fresno	CA
7	Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, Inc.	Fresno	CA
8	Lao Family Community of Fresno, Inc.	Fresno	CA
9	Lao Family Community of Fresno, Inc.	Fresno	CA
10	Lao Family Community of Fresno, Inc.	Fresno	CA
11	Lao Family Community of Fresno, Inc.	Fresno	CA
12	Cambodian Association of America	Long Beach	CA
13	Cambodian Association of America	Long Beach	CA
14	County of Los Angeles	Long Beach	CA
15	Mount Carmel Cambodian Center	Long Beach	CA
16	United Cambodian Community Inc.	Long Beach	CA
17	Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment	Los Angeles	CA
18	Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment	Los Angeles	CA
19	Ensemble Workforce Solutions	Los Angeles	CA
20	Lao Family Community, Inc.	Oakland	CA
21	Charity Culture Center	San Francisco	CA
22	Charity Culture Center	San Francisco	CA
23	Chinese for Affirmative Action	San Francisco	CA
24	Chinese New Comers Service Center	San Francisco	CA
25	Self Help for the Elderly	San Francisco	CA
26	Self Help for the Elderly	San Francisco	CA
27	Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center	Santa Ana	CA
28	Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center	Santa Ana	CA

29	The Cambodian Family	Santa Ana	CA
30	Vietnamese Community of Orange County	Santa Ana	CA
31	Southeast Asia Resource Action Center	Washington	DC
32	Vietnamese American Community Service Center	Washington	DC
33	Chinese American Service League	Chicago	IL
34	Chinese American Service League	Chicago	IL
35	Chinese American Service League	Chicago	IL
36	Chinese Mutual Aid Association	Chicago	IL
37	Chinese Mutual Aid Association	Chicago	IL
38	Chinese Mutual Aid Association	Chicago	IL
39		Lowell	MA
40	Cambodian American League of Lowell	Lowell	MA
41	Cambodian Art	Lowell	MA
42	Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Greater Lowell	Lowell	MA
43	Lao Family Mutual Association of Lowell	Lowell	MA
44	Lowell Community Charter School	Lowell	MA
45	Lowell Community Health Center	Lowell	MA
46	Lowell Community Health Center	Lowell	MA
47	Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women	Minneapolis	MN
48	Center for Asian Pacific Islanders (CAPI)	Minneapolis	MN
49	Center for Asian Pacific Islanders (CAPI)	Minneapolis	MN
50	Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association	Minneapolis	MN
51	Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association	Minneapolis	MN
52	Lao Advancement/ Lao Cultural Center Building	Minneapolis	MN
53	Lao Advancement/ Lao Cultural Center Building	Minneapolis	MN
54	Lao Center of Minnesota	Minneapolis	MN
55	Southeast Asian Community Council	Minneapolis	MN
56	Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans	St. Paul	MN
57	Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans	St. Paul	MN
58	Hmong American Partnership	St. Paul	MN
59	Hmong American Partnership	St. Paul	MN
60	Hmong Cultural & Resource Center	St. Paul	MN
61	Hmong Cultural & Resource Center	St. Paul	MN
62	Lao Family Community of Minnesota	St. Paul	MN

63	Asian American Federation of New York	New York	NY
64	Chinese-American Planning Council	New York	NY
65	Mikco Building Material Inc.	New York	NY
66	Fujian Association of Philadelphia	Philadelphia	PA
67	Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation	Philadelphia	PA
68	Boat People SOS	Houston	TX
69	Lao American Association	Houston	TX
70	Social & Cultural RDI	Houston	TX
71	VN TeamWork	Houston	TX
72	Business Development Assistance Group	Falls Church	VA
73	Vietnamese Resettlement Association	Falls Church	VA
74	Asian Counseling and Referral service	Seattle	WA
75	Center for Career Alternatives	Seattle	WA
76	Chinese Information & Service Center	Seattle	WA
77	Chinese Information & Service Center	Seattle	WA
78	International Rescue Committee	Seattle	WA
79	Lao Community Service Office	Seattle	WA
80	National Asian Pacific Center on Aging	Seattle	WA
81	Nonprofit Assistance Center Refugees Planning Committee	Seattle	WA
82	Nonprofit Assistance Center Refugees Planning Committee	Seattle	WA
83	Seattle Goodwill	Seattle	WA
84	Seattle Goodwill	Seattle	WA

## Appendix D: Profiles of the Target Groups

The top nine cities with the most Asian American populations are New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Honolulu, San Diego, Chicago, Houston, and Fremont. The target groups are also concentrated in small ethnic communities surrounded by these large metropolitan cities where the pace is much faster.

All four Southeast Asian refugee groups (Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese) trail the average on most measures of socio-economic progress, though there is substantial variation among the groups. On educational attainment, Hmongs fare worst with Vietnamese achieving the best. All groups have higher disability rates than the general population, especially among adults. While all groups show low rates of English proficiency, Laotians and Cambodians have the highest. On employment, Cambodians are roughly equal to the general population, all other groups are lower. All were found to be less likely to work at home and more likely to work in fields such as production, transportation, manufacturing and food service. Hmongs collect the highest amounts of public assistance dollars through SSI and other public assistance income.

The five target groups have the tendency to focus on the depth of relationships to build trust, work hard for the benefit of the group as a whole instead of the individual, save face, and respect for elders and authority. Four of the five groups include an overwhelming amount of refugees who harbor personal fears of government-based programs and facilities. They have come from countries where democracy was not valued but rejected. They may need more cultural understanding and encouragement to utilize government programs. Of course, some members of the target groups have taken advantage of government programs and are now faced with changes in the system brought on by welfare reform.

These normative behaviors may have contributed to or detracted from their potential utilization of government-sponsored services offered by One Stops.

The Cambodians, Hmongs, Laotians, and Vietnamese have certain issues in common. Some of these issues are also shared by the older Chinatown Chinese:

- The lack of English proficiency at the basic level to communicate with their employer and the literacy level needed to read job application forms and safety bulletins at work.
- Low educational levels that relegates them to menial jobs; for example, older workers are limited to piece-work.
- Younger generations are expected to serve as interpreters for their parents in their interactions in the mainstream society, i.e., banking, hospital visits, legal transactions, etc. This is often a source of resentment for the younger generations who feel burdened and pulled back while they try to build a successful life.
- Being stereotyped with incorrect assumptions that as Vietnam War refugees, they are all without skills. This negative view has created barriers to their access to job opportunities.

Each group also has its own unique history and background which contribute to their underemployment and unemployment in the United States.

## **Cambodians**

About 90 percent of the population of Cambodia is made up of the Khmer people, who also lived in Thailand and southern Vietnam. Like the Hmongs, they were refugees from the killing and repression that afflicted much of South Asia after the fall of South Vietnam to the Communists. The Khmer are an agricultural people, who traditionally practiced rice farming in the low land areas of Cambodia. Respect for elders is a central principle of the Khmer culture. Hospitality to guests is also vital; if offered the only chair in a room, one should accept the gesture rather than refuse. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, tends to be indirect. Consequently, eye-contact and direct



“no” answers tend to be avoided, often a source of difficulty in an American culture which celebrates individualism, frankness, and bluntness.

The Cambodians tend to be tribal. As a result, they show a strong tendency to migrate to where other Cambodian communities are established in the United States. The Cambodians who survived the “killing fields” were the fittest physically. As farmers they had very little education, had little exposure to urban society and urban life, let alone a Western, capitalistic society.

Three-quarters of the Cambodian immigrants in the United States in 2000 entered the country during the 1980s. According to the *American Community Survey 2004* published by the U.S. Census, the Cambodian population reached 195,208. They live throughout the United States, with the largest concentration in Orange County, California, and Boston-Worcester-Lowell-Lawrence, Massachusetts (Appendix A: Table 1). Their low educational attainment and low levels of English proficiency, have led to high levels of poverty (Appendix A: Tables 2, 3, 4). This finding was confirmed during site visits at One-Stops and CBOs. Older Cambodians show the tendency to stay in the already established communities. As the American-born generations increase in numbers over time, they are becoming more dispersed as they move to education and job opportunities offered outside their community. Their poverty, however, limits their initial opportunity to move. The younger generations recognize the importance of education and work very hard to achieve academic credentials that would allow them to enter the economic mainstream.

In Lowell, Massachusetts, children that do well have parents who are educated. However, 40 percent of the children are raised by single moms so they grow up with no male role model. There are two distinct generations. Eighty to eighty-five percent of the first generation does menial physical work. The second generation is producing lawyers and nurses who depend heavily on public institutions to educate their children.

The 10 cities with the highest Cambodian population are:

1. Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA
2. Boston-Lowell-Worcester-Lawrence, MA
3. Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, WA
4. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA
5. Stockton-Lodi, CA
6. Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA/DE
7. Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI
8. Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV
9. San Diego, CA
10. Fresno, CA

Cambodians face additional issues that could pose barriers to employment:

- Within their refugee community, very few leaders emerge who can serve as role models and who can help to introduce them to the mainstream social way of life. Those who are capable and possess the political acumen and education usually leave the community and do not maintain active connections with the group.
- As a result of living through the trauma of the Vietnam War, many Cambodians suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which severely impacts their ability to be productive. According to a study reported in the *Journal of American Medical Association*, August 3, 2005, researchers went to Long Beach, California, the largest Cambodian community in the United States, and knocked on doors to get a representative sample of the community. Eighty-seven percent of the people approached agreed to be interviewed, said Grant Marshall, author of the report and a senior behavioral scientist at the Rand Corporation. Native Khmer speakers conducted face-to-face interviews with 490 randomly selected Cambodian adults aged 35 to 75. All those interviewed had lived in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror and had been exposed to trauma before immigrating to the United States. Almost all (99 percent) said they had nearly starved to death, 96

percent were enslaved into forced labor, and 90 percent had a family member or friend murdered. A majority (70 percent) reported being exposed to violence after arriving in the United States, and 54 percent said they had been tortured before leaving Cambodia. Cases of PTSD and depression tended to overlap, with 42 percent of respondents reporting both. The more trauma they had endured, the worse their symptoms, the study found. People who were older, poor, unemployed, retired or disabled and who spoke English poorly were more likely to have PTSD and major depression. Despite the high prevalence of PTSD and depression, there were low rates of alcohol use disorder, possibly a result of cultural factors, the researchers said. Almost 62 percent of Cambodians surveyed suffered from PTSD, and 51 percent suffered from depression in the past year. This was 6 to 17 times higher than the national average for adults.

## Hmongs

The Hmongs who live in the United States lived predominantly agrarian and nomadic lives in the hills of Laos. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Hmongs were major players in a “Secret War” against Communist forces in the Vietnam War. They paid a terrible price for the valiant role into which the United States thrust them. Approximately 10,000 Hmong soldiers died during the conflict as American allies, the equivalent of hundreds of thousands in a population the size of the United States. Regrettably, few Americans are aware of this story of Hmong valor. After 1975, with the Communist triumph in Vietnam, the Hmongs began to come to the United States as refugees. Some 15 percent of the foreign-born Hmongs counted in the 2000 Census arrived in the late 1970s, 46 percent in the 1980s, and 39 percent in the 1990s. The *American Community Survey 2004* reported that the Hmong population reached 163,733. They were largely concentrated in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California.

Hmong refugees in the United States struggle with learning and adjusting to American culture. Prior to their arrival in the United States, these predominantly hill tribe people

had limited exposure to modern civilization. The oldest Hmong refugees in the United States are in the over-sixty age bracket. Many of the older Hmong do not want or wish to learn the English language. They had no schooling or reading skills prior to coming to the United States and believe they are too old to learn. The seniors encourage the younger generation to learn English and “fit in” with their new environment, though there are also traditionalists who would like the younger generation to stay with the Hmong language and to avoid being influenced by too much contact with American culture.

The 10 cities with the largest Hmong populations are:

1. Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN
2. Fresno, CA
3. Sacramento, CA
4. Milwaukee-Racine, WI
5. Merced, CA
6. Stockton-Lodi, CA
7. Appleton-Oshkosh-Neenah, WI
8. Wausau, WI
9. Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir, NC
10. Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI

Hmong face certain issues that are barriers to employment:

- In their traditional culture, Hmong men are the income earners and Hmong women are the housekeepers. In the U.S., Hmong women are able to generate income because of the skills they possess in handicraft and domestic work, despite the lack of an education. In many cases, Hmong women can earn more than their men. In the U.S, women are regarded as men’s equal, and women have substantial earning power. American realities clash sharply with the traditional patriarchal Hmong culture and have caused instances of domestic violence.
- The younger generation clashes with their elders over the younger generation’s rejection of the silent and subservient ways their elders interact

with outsiders. Some observers view this difference of opinion as a reason why some Hmong youth join gangs.

- It is Hmong custom to have very large extended families living together under one roof. This often clashes with the preferences and conditions set by landlords and zoning restrictions. This custom also leads to Hmongs living in areas where there are fewer job opportunities.
- Very early marriage is a Hmong tradition, with brides aged 14 to 16 often married to men much senior to them. Hmong teenage brides are usually pressured to drop out of school, limiting their future job prospects.
- As a result of living through the trauma of the Vietnam War, many suffer from PTSD, which severely impacts their ability to be productive.

## **Laotians**

The communist Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) was created in December, 1975. About 10 percent of the Lao population fled the country as a result. Many of them managed to resettle in other countries, including the United States. A significant number of Laotians were resettled in the United States between 1975 and 1985. They initially established tight-knit communities in rural areas in California, Iowa, Minnesota, Texas and Washington; this was true as well for the Hmong, Mien, Tai Dam, and ethnic Chinese from Laos. The best documented Laotians are the Hmongs, who are from the highlands of Laos, and the Laotians from the lowlands of Laos. The *American Community Survey 2004* reported that the Laotian population reached 226,661. They speak several different languages at home, follow many different religions, are dispersed throughout the United States, and fill niches at every point along the socioeconomic scale.

The combination of their refugee experience and their family and clan-oriented social system has resulted in the emergence of rural or semi-rural communities in several U.S. states. Some of the first books written about Laotians in the United States identified them as a very traditional, mutual assistance social structure, where the work and lives

of community members are highly integrated. This is not the case today. A willingness to move outside the Laotian communities has also opened doors to upward economic mobility for the younger generations. Many younger Laotians work in cities and towns, while the elders of the community remain in more traditional rural lives. Laotians who remain in their ethnic communities tend to work in agriculture. They like the flexibility in work arrangements and the family can stay together to work on the farm, as was the case in Laos.

It was difficult to find a large concentration of Laotians in the United States because this group has gradually dispersed around the country over time.

The 10 cities with the largest Laotian populations are:

1. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA
2. Sacramento-Yoko, CA
3. Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA
4. Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN
5. San Diego, CA
6. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX
7. Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, WA
8. Fresno, CA
9. Portland-Salem, OR
10. Boston-Worcester-Lawrence, MA

Laotians face several issues that could restrict their employment opportunities:

- Laotians put emphasis on attaining work proficiency instead of educational certification. This frustrates the younger generations who are caught between their aspirations for careers requiring advanced educations and loyalty to the family.
- There is a general lack of knowledge of the Laotian people in the United States, and many employers are not interested in hiring people who they do not understand and with whom they are unable to communicate.

- They are reluctant to seek government help such as One-Stop services after graduating from refugee status; this may be the result of their attitude toward the government that they left behind in Southeast Asia, or a lack of understanding and knowledge about accessing government services. On the other hand, some hold onto government support in the forms of SSI, food stamps, housing vouchers, etc.

## **Vietnamese**

The first substantial group of Vietnamese to arrive in the United States consisted of refugees who were airlifted out after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Many of them were educated, urban professionals, and were already fluent in English upon arrival. Those who followed tended to be less educated people with fewer skills in demand in the American economy. It was a much larger migration than the Hmongs and Cambodians, and has continued strongly in recent years. Nearly half of the foreign-born Vietnamese in 2000 had been resident in the United States for a decade or less. The Vietnamese were known as “Boat People” because they fled communist Vietnam in small boats, first to refugee camps elsewhere in Asia and then to the United States. Now, Vietnamese who wish to come to the United States have good prospects of getting a visa if they can make the case for their status as political prisoners, if they are the offspring of American soldiers from the Vietnam War era, or are relatives of Vietnamese Americans, by applying to enter the country under an orderly system.

However, for the older generation, life in America is still a daily struggle against poverty and various problems: mental health, social isolation, discrimination, language barrier, lack of job opportunities, and violence. Their lack of education contributed to most of the older uneducated Vietnamese being able to find only low-paying, entry-level jobs and living in poor neighborhoods. Many continue to show symptoms of psychological disorders because of their experiences during the Vietnamese War. The younger generations, who came as children or were born in the United States, have higher levels

of academic achievement and are able to find highly skilled employment in the mainstream.

Vietnamese have been the most successful among the Southeast Asian refugees in starting their own businesses as well as in building a future for their core and extended families. Younger Vietnamese are developing strong leaders to raise their political visibility and win representation in the mainstream society. Many are entering into the high technology fields and succeeding. The *American Community Survey 2004* reported that the Vietnamese population reached 1,267,510.

The 10 cities with the highest Vietnamese population are:

1. Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA
2. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA
3. Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX
4. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX
5. Washington, DC/VA/MD/WV
6. Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, WA
7. San Diego, CA
8. Boston-Worcester-Lawrence, MA
9. Philadelphia, PA-Wilmington, DE-Atlantic City, NJ
10. Atlanta, GA

Some of the barriers to job placement for the Vietnamese are:

- Many have to overcome stereotypes that they are Vietnam-era refugees without skills and living a life of government dependency. However, this perception is changing as a result of their skills in high technology.
- Reluctance to seek government help to find jobs, career counseling, skills training, etc., after graduating from refugee status five years after they entered the United States. Others hold onto government support in SSI, food stamps, housing vouchers, etc.



- As a result of living through the trauma of the Vietnam War, they suffer from PTSD which severely impacts their ability to be productive. PTSD, it is estimated, afflicts 10 percent of Vietnamese immigrants, and some argue that the true figure is even higher.<sup>8</sup>

## **Chinatown Chinese**

The four groups discussed above were not present in significant numbers in the United States until the tragic events in Southeast Asia in the 1970s. Substantial Chinese immigration to this country, by contrast, began in the middle of the nineteenth century with the California Gold Rush. Economic distress, labor market uncertainty and capitalist exploitation on the West Coast provoked anti-Chinese sentiment and racist fears of the Chinese who were called "the Yellow Peril." That eventually led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which put an end to large-scale immigration from China for the next several decades.

The Exclusion Act was lifted during World War II, and in 1965 the entire discriminatory national origins quota system in the immigration law was abandoned. Immigration from China rose dramatically as a result. In the past quarter century, nearly a million newcomers from China have arrived in the United States. The decline in anti-Asian sentiments and the energy and drive of the immigrants themselves resulted in dramatic upward socioeconomic mobility for the group as a whole. Chinese Americans today are twice as likely to be college graduates as the typical American, hold a substantial share of professional and managerial jobs, and have family incomes a fifth above the national average. The *American Community Survey 2004* reported that the Chinese (except Taiwanese) population has reached 2,829,627 (Appendix A, Table 6).

But the group this report terms the "Chinatown Chinese" has not enjoyed the success of the overall Chinese American population. They are a subset of immigrants who lack

---

<sup>8</sup> E. Hauff and P. Vaglum, "Chronic Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Vietnamese Refugees. A Prospective Community Study of Prevalence, Course, Psychopathology, and Stressors," *J Nerv Ment Dis* 1994; 182(2): 85-90; J.D. Kinzie *et. al.*, "The Prevalence of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Its Clinical Significance Among Southeast Asian Refugees," *Am J Psychiatry* 1990; 147(7): 913-917.

education, job skills, and a command of English. Concentrated in and around the Chinatowns of our large cities, they work in the garment industry, restaurants, laundries, warehouse, and groceries. Their wages tend to be substandard, and they suffer from frequent unemployment and high rates of poverty.

Many of the Chinese who came to the United States in the last ten to 20 years are from mainland China. A large number came from Fujian province; they have low levels of education, little skills and do not know the English language. Some came to the United States with a visa and overstayed. Others entered illegally across the southern border. They are not eligible for One-Stop services. However, if they acquire legal status through marriage to a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, an employer-sponsored immigration petition, or in rare cases through a political asylum application, then they become eligible for One-Stop and other government services. The lack of English proficiency and job skills and their natural desire to work and live among people who came from the same country keep them in Chinatown, a home away from home. However, in the last few years, more have become willing to go outside Chinatown to find jobs that offer better benefits: health insurance, better pay, regular and shorter working hours, holidays, vacations, and retirement.

The 10 cities with the largest Chinatown Chinese populations are<sup>9</sup>:

1. New York City, NY
2. San Francisco, CA
3. San Jose, CA
4. Los Angeles, CA
5. Honolulu, HI
6. Oakland, CA
7. San Diego, CA
8. Chicago, IL
9. Seattle, WA
10. Boston, MA

---

<sup>9</sup> 2004 American Community Survey, U.S. Census

Barriers to job placement that particularly affect the Chinatown Chinese are:

- The older generations have rudimentary English skills below conversational levels and there is a lack of urgency to learn English because they have survived despite their lack of English skills.
- The misconception of many potential mainstream employers that the Chinatown Chinese are not willing to work outside Chinatown, and the consequent lack of offers of job opportunities to them. Interviews with the Chinatown Chinese during this study suggest that they will travel to work outside Chinatown when they have access to public transportation, and when the job offers better pay and benefits than what they could get in Chinatown.
- Younger generations, the product of American public schools, are receiving an education and will relocate to work in areas outside the Chinatown districts so they are generally not available to help the family businesses that remain in Chinatown. This leads business owners in Chinatown to hire outside the family, i.e., the Chinatown Chinese.

## Appendix E: Summary of Response to Follow-Up Requests for information from One-Stops and CBOs Subsequent to Site Visit

### California

**1) Chinese New Comers Services Center, San Francisco, CA (CBO)**

San Francisco has an Asian population of 238,133.

An estimated 1,200 Chinese visited the Center, 150 were placed.

**2) One-Stop San Francisco, San Francisco, CA**

2,391 Chinese visited the center, representing 8.76 percent of its clients.

**3) Fresno Area Workforce Investment Corporation, Fresno, CA**

Fresno city has a population of 427,224. Of that, 5,482 were Laotians (1.3 percent).

98 Asian clients exited the employment program. Among them, 10 were Laotians (1.1 percent), 58 were employed.

They have staff members who speak Spanish, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Cantonese (a Chinese dialect), Hindi, Punjabi, Thai, French, Russian, and Ukrainian.

They use the AT&T Translation Service for languages they do not have local staff to handle.

Four of their locations have staff members who speak an Asian language: 9 Hmong, 1 Lao, and 2 Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese dialects), 2 Tagalong (Filipino), 1 Visayan, and 1 Japanese.

WIA requires documents to be translated into any language spoken by more than 10 percent of the local population.

Executive Order 13166 also requires assistance to be given to limited English clients to the best of the One-Stop's ability.

**4) Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, Inc., Fresno, CA (CBO)**

200 Asians used their job training services.

An estimated 100 Asians were placed.

**5) Orange County One-Stop Center (operated by Coastline Community College), Westminster, CA**

2,802 people used their core unregistered, core registered, intensive and training services. Among them, 472 were Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese clients (17 percent).

An estimated 227 Asians used their services.

179 Asians used their job training services.

163 Asians were placed.

141 Asians who were placed were retained after 9 months.

**6) Westlake WorkSource Center (operated by Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment), Los Angeles, CA**

In 2005, 36 Asians went to the Center for help.

26 were placed.

In 2006, as of June, 45 Asians went to the Center for help.

39 were placed.

**7) WorkSource California (operated by Chinatown Service Center), Los Angeles, CA**

55 Asians went to the Center for help.

56 percent were Chinese, 28 percent were Vietnamese, and 5 percent were Cambodia.

**Massachusetts**

**Career Center of Lowell, Lowell, MA**

In 2005, 1,460 Asians went to the Center for help, representing 15.5 percent of the population served.

In 2006, 1,152 Asians went to the Center for help, representing 13.7 percent of the population served.

## **Minnesota**

### **Hmong American Partnerships, St. Paul, Minnesota (CBO)**

1,859 Hmongs went to the center for employment services.

Among them, 786 were placed, and 753 were retained after 12 months.

## **Virginia**

### **Falls Church SkillSource Center, Falls Church, VA**

1,719 Asians went to the Center for help.

40 were placed (2.3 percent).

## **Washington**

### **1) Renton WorkSource, Seattle, WA**

1,040 Asians went to the center for help.

187 were placed.

### **2) Workforce Development Council/Affiliate Rainier, Seattle, W**

In 2006 as of June, 749 Asians went to the center for help.

18 were placed.

## APPENDIX F: Review of Relevant Literature and Related Studies

**Asian Californians**, Sucheng Chan, Materials for Today's Learning Inc, 1991:

The rapid growth of the Asian-ancestry population in the United States and most dramatically in California in the last two decades has aroused national concern and curiosity. Asians began coming to the U.S. in significant numbers in the 1850s, and from the start they were treated like perpetual foreigners, segregated, paid low wages, and excluded from the host society. Today, even when most Americans agree that tolerance should be shown toward people who speak languages other than English and who possess different cultural and physical characteristics, many still look upon Asian Americans with suspicion. While praising them as "model minorities" that other non-white groups should emulate, some Euro-Americans nonetheless resent them for working "too hard," living too frugally, and showing an almost frightening desire to succeed.

Very little is dedicated to the Indochinese refugees in "Asian Californians". There is considerable historical background on the Chinese, Japanese, Filipinas, Koreans and Asian Indians. The Indochinese refugee relocated to the United States is covered in only one chapter. Upon arrival the refugees were screened for security clearance, given medical examinations and identification numbers. They also registered with one of the volunteer agencies or Volags. The role of Volags which were the United States Catholic Conference, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the International Rescue Committee, the United Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, World Church Service, the Tolstoy Foundation, the American Fun for Czechoslovak Refugees, the American Council for Nationalities Services and Traveler's Aid-International Social Services. The Volags received a grant of \$500 for each refugee they aided, and were allowed 45 days to find a sponsor for the refugee. Sponsors had to provide food, clothing and shelter to the refugee until the refugee could fend for themselves. Sponsors were also to help their refugee find jobs, enroll their children in school and ease their entry into American society. Infrastructure was put in place to provide English instruction, employment counseling and mental health services to refugees – to helping refugees find gainful employment as quickly as possible. Resettlement of the first wave of refugees was

largely successful. Almost 40 Percent of the refugees were Catholic and the United States Catholic Conference played a major role in the resettlement process. However, the second wave of refugees that started arriving in 1978 was largely poorer, uneducated, less urbanized, and more ethnically diverse and were Buddhists or animists. Over time, when resettlement efforts were decentralized, each state with a sizable refugee population set up mechanisms to serve the refugees needs. "Time expired" refugees became eligible for welfare on the same basis as U.S. citizens and other programs became available to facilitate resettling of refugees.

There is no mention or statistical reference of the type of jobs refugees were placed in, the length of time it took to place a refugee, or the length of service once a refugee is placed. It is the author's opinion that these refugees quickly make themselves productive once they set foot in the United States as they have come to stay. .

**Asian Americans: An Interpretive History**, Sucheng Chan, Twayne Publishers, 1991:

The history of Asians in America began with early emigration of the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, the Filipinas and Asian Indias to the United States and the Hawaiian islands in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. From 1965 onwards, Asian immigrants from Philippines, South Korea and refugees from Indochina (Cambodians, Laotians and Vietnamese) continued to the Americas. An influx of almost a million refugees since 1975 (approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  from Vietnam and the rest from Cambodia and Laos) swelled the populace of Asian ancestry in America.

Asians came to America primarily to earn a living. Euro-Americans felt threatened by the Asian competition and found ways like discriminatory legislation and taxes, boycotts and unions to bar non-whites to low-status menial work. Although the status of Asians in America has improved over the last 40 years issues still exists – violence against persons of Asian ancestry including physical assault, harassment, vandalism, and anti-Asian racial slurs.

Demographically, approximately 50 Percent of Asian Americans are concentrated in metropolitan areas, a higher than white population percentage hold low-status low-income occupations (service workers, laborers, farm laborers and private household workers), are unevenly distributed in the economy – Asian Americans were



concentrated in occupations that didn't pay as well as other jobs in the same industries, under representation in unemployment statistics (many prefer low paying jobs to public assistance) and employment and pay rates that do not commensurate with education levels.

**Family Tightrope: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans**, Nazli Kibria, Princeton University Press, 1993:

While the media has generally portrayed Vietnamese Americans as an American immigrant success story, the author finds, "In reality, the economic 'progress' of Vietnamese Americans has been extremely uneven."

The author says job options for Vietnamese Americans (VAs) in the U.S. are limited because of their minority ethnic status and lack of job experience and skills appropriate to the U.S. labor market.

In Vietnam most had worked in the military or small business and trading. She says these are experiences and credentials not easily marketed in the U.S. Because of this, most of the subjects she interviewed were employed in low-level service sector positions, such as cleaning and waitressing.

Many VAs, she says, choose to work in "informal" jobs where they don't have to report taxes, such as in the garment and small-scale food preparation business. In most cases, these industries were owned by Chinese Americans and Korean Americans who actively recruited Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian refugees for these jobs.

This book finds that, like other immigrant groups, Vietnamese Americans (VAs) pool resources within family groups. For VAs, the author calls the phenomenon "patchworking" because it "better conveys the uneven and unplanned quality of members' contributions to the household economy." For those households with entrepreneurial experience in Vietnam this "patchworking" was oriented many times toward investment in a small business.

Because many VAs are classified as political refugees, the resettlement system provided by federal and local governments is quite helpful, says the author. "The availability of resources through this system," she writes, "is one aspect of the economic

experience of VAs that clearly distinguishes them from historical and contemporary immigrant groups in the U.S. who do not hold political refugee status.”

The author found that VAs in no way saw these government aid programs as a “permanent crutch,” but as a temporary resource that could be “patchworked” into the household economy.”

**Forbidden Workers: Illegal Chinese Immigrants and American Labor**, Peter Kwong, W.W. Norton & Co., 1997:

This book just touches on our subject area and points out that there is a strong desire for publicly funded training programs among Chinese immigrants who have “long been trapped in ethnic ghettos and limited to employment in the restaurant and garment trades.”

The author also criticizes construction unions for not hiring minorities, even when they had prior construction experience in their native countries.

He cites the sad case of the Chinatown Planning Council (CPC) in New York City that received a federal grant to start a job training program for construction workers. Once the 40 workers showed up for training, CPC staff put them to work as menial laborers in renovating CPC’s own office space for \$5 an hour.

The author argues strongly for unionization of Chinese immigrants in the secondary labor market as a solution to their problems.

**From Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia: A Refugee Experience in the United States**, Jeremy Hein, Twayne Publishers, 1995:

This book points out that even though the first wave of Vietnamese refugees in 1975 had higher class status and had professional and managerial skills (bank and factory owners, generals, judges) they still had “great difficulty” finding employment in the U.S., which was partially the result of the severe recession in the U.S. economy during the mid-1970s. The author states that eventually most did find work, but rarely in occupations commensurate with their prior experience.

Almost 40 percent of **all** the refugees (from the three countries this book covers) were farmers or fishers before arriving in the U.S. and when they got here the vast

majority went into low-paying blue collar industrial jobs, “an experience similar to that among European immigrants and rural Americans during the 19<sup>th</sup> century,” states the author.

Refugees from Vietnam tended to come from urban areas and be literate in their native language. They were predominantly employed in sales and clerical work. “These characteristics suggest that Vietnamese refugees experience little social dislocation when entering the American workplace.”

Lowland Laotians and Cambodians were more likely to have lived in small cities and towns and rural areas. One quarter to one third was illiterate in the native language.

“In contrast to the Vietnamese,” writes the author, “entering the American workplace is likely to be more traumatic for Laotians and Cambodians,” who have to transition from farming to low skill service work such as working in a hotel laundry.

The author concludes, “For some Vietnamese, many Cambodians and Laotians, and almost all Hmong, the transition from work in agriculture or fishing to work in factories and service jobs is a profound shock.”

**Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States**, Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston III, the Russell Sage Foundation, 1998:

This book gives scant coverage to the subject, but does have a couple interesting points. It says that Vietnamese young people (age 18-24) that came to the U.S. in 1980 and had high poverty rates and poor English skills “showed significant progress” after 10 years in this country, especially in the area of poverty. High rates of unemployment tended to persist.

It says that “whereas more than 30 percent of the 1975 arrivals (most of whom came from South Vietnam’s privileged class) had had professional occupations in Vietnam, only about 7 percent were in similar occupations within the first 27 months after arrival.

The book states that as the number of refugees soared, U.S. government officials increasingly stressed job training programs and programs to help refugees make contact with employers. “Some observers were critical of this type of job-oriented refugee training. These critics maintained that the U.S. refugee education program was

characterized by condescension, official paranoia concerning welfare dependency and an eagerness to push refugees into minimum wage jobs.”

**Hmong Means Free, Life in Laos and America**, Sucheng Chan, Temple University Press, 1994:

A collection of families' stories and their lives first in Laos then in the United States. The history of the Hmong people is also recounted to present a clearer picture of their social make-up. Consistent in the five families' stories were the hardship and oppression the older generations experienced: Feudal China, Laotian civil war (highlands vs. lowlands), French occupation, Japanese occupation and U.S. involvement. There were very few old people that made the journey to the United States. Many men folk and seniors had been killed in the war and those that did make their way to the United States often took a backseat to life. Many were not inclined to learn a new language, a new culture and a new skill to gain employment. They simply retreated looking to the family and encouraging the young to do the learning for them.

The Hmong people who found their way to the United States as refugees were predominantly uneducated, illiterate and extremely poor farmers who mostly lived off the land. Their entry into the United States freed them of the hard life in Laos. Hmong refugees learned to work and support themselves over time, seldom taking welfare for extended periods. Welfare was “a helping hand” and as soon as a job was found and kept, there was no need to stay on welfare. This was what their church missionaries taught.

The adult and mature Hmong refugees made little attempt to learn English as it was too difficult, depending mostly on their children to communicate. Despite the communication barrier, the first generation Hmong people in the United States are willing workers. Many took menial jobs in factories or labor intensive work. Also common among the Hmong community was to move often (as they did in the highlands) to different areas in the United States, to be with friends or family and to find suitable Hmong mates within the community.

The Hmong people remain very insular, keeping to their own community and maintaining the Clan atmosphere as much possible. Families live close together and

defer to an elder usually the shaman and continue to have ritual healings and rites. Hmong women continue to be married off young to older husbands.

Although everything about the United States is confusing and strange, the consistent theme in their stories is their thankfulness to be living in a country that is free and to know their future generations will not have to endure the suffering, agony and fear they themselves have experienced.

**New Pioneers in the Heartland: Hmong Life**, Jo Ann Koltyk, Allyn and Bacon, 1998:

This book examines life in a Hmong community in Wausau, Wisconsin, in the northwest part of state. The author found that 60 percent of Hmong were receiving some form of public assistance and English language and job training. State and federal programs were also assisting Hmong in the resettlement process.

The common perception is that Hmong have few prospects for success in the U.S. because they lack education and job skills and become trapped in a cycle of poverty and welfare.

Indeed, the majority of Hmong came to the U.S. with little or no education, training or job skills. One unemployed Hmong man the author interviewed said, "What can I do? I have been here 10 years and cannot get a job...that pays any money to feed my family. Every job in America wants a person to have a certificate of some kind to prove they can do the job...No one will hire me."

Hmong do engage in entrepreneurial activities which they learned during war years and relocation to U.S. "They do not lack experience with capitalism," writes the author. "Their experience with cash cropping and trading and small business enterprises during relocation and while in refugee camps may very well have set the tone for their adaptive strategies in the U.S."

The author cites annual studies of the Hmong conducted by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, an agency created by the Refugee Act of 1980, to see how this group has been faring in terms of employment and welfare dependence.

The studies found that in states where welfare benefits were minimal, dependency rates and unemployment rates were lower than in states that had generous benefits.

Studies found that most Hmong 45 years and older were unemployed due to age, health and inability to learn English. A large majority between 16 and 34 were unemployed because they were in school or pursuing training.

The author found that employment was affected by which type of group sponsored Hmong refugees. Those who were sponsored by Americans were more likely to participate in the labor force than those sponsored by relatives who had come before or sponsors from the same ethnic group.

“Ethnic sponsors imparted a general attitude that welfare receipt was a normal and expected part of the first few years of resettlement,” writes the author.

Hmong pool economic resources among extended family to improve their level of economic well being. The author says many Hmong have entry level light manufacturing jobs in factories which require minimal English skills, such as electronic assembly, machine operation, food processing. Those who are in semi-skilled jobs like metal fabrication, carpentry and industrial sewing have relied on prior experience they gained in these fields in Laos.

Some are seasonal farm laborers. Many extended families pool wage and non-wage income, such as SSI and AFDC.

The author says the Hmong Mutual Association is active and plays a pivotal role in providing info. about jobs, training programs and placement. It works closely with local employers to set up training programs. Programs are also in place at local technical colleges.

The author also cites a successful “Vocational Language Cluster Training” program that has been set up a various companies who hire refugees. The program gives language assistance to employees for on the job training and classroom time.

The author found some Hmong men and women who had been in the U.S. seven to ten years and had good command of English were doing marketing activities like selling Avon, Amway, Mary Kay and other types of products to other Hmong groups.

Traditionally, Hmong have no history as traders and the “Hmong household unit and village was basically a self sufficient unit.” They grew enough rice and corn to feed a family and raised pigs, chicken and other livestock. Needs were fulfilled by trading items along family lines.

Many Hmong women act as traders and peddlers of goods in the U.S. Everything from traditional needlework, embroidery thread, cloth, herbs and medicines, to jewelry was sold primarily within Hmong community.

### **Refugees as Immigrants: Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese in America,**

David W. Haines, Rowman & Littlefield, 1989:

This book analyzes data from several surveys that were taken of refugees from Southeast Asia between 1975 and 1985. The editor defines Southeast Asians as comprising the following five distinct ethnic populations: ethnic Chinese (mostly from Vietnam), Hmong, Khmer, Lao and Vietnamese.

The book's data suggests that Vietnamese are the best educated, most fluent English speakers and the men were the most experienced in professional/technical jobs prior to the exodus.

Hmong are the most rural and least educated. The Khmer and the Lao are somewhere between these two groups, each coming from countries with significant urban rural populations. Both of these later groups have "significant proportions of both white collar and farming/fishing occupations," writes the book's editor. Many Cambodians suffer lingering psychological problems from the ravages of the Pol Pot regime and subsequent Vietnamese invasion in 1978.

Chapter 3 recounts a survey of 349 Vietnamese refugees to nine U.S. cities between 1978 and 1981. It found 68 percent of Vietnamese were employed. The most common occupations were semi-skilled employees or machine operators. It also found that psychological distress decreased significantly after refugees were in this country for three years. The study's authors also found a strong correlation between assimilation and income level. The more assimilated to American attitudes and behaviors, the higher their salaries.

The survey described in Chapter 4 interviewed 555 Vietnamese who were living in three major urban areas in 1980 and were Vietnamese nationals between the years 1975 and 1979. It finds that those Vietnamese who had completed their education in their homeland and were able to speak at least some English were more likely to be in the American labor force for an extended period of time and have higher hourly wages.

The survey found that refugees usually got their first jobs in the U.S. through some sort of personal contact or on their own initiative. Direct employment obtained through official or voluntary agencies was rare.

First jobs for men frequently were in service occupations such as assembly, repair or installation of electrical and electronic equipment. Women frequently were in jobs involving the fabrication of textile goods. Average wages for men were \$3.66 an hour and \$2.97 for women.

Almost all of the refugees expressed satisfaction with services (job, housing, education, etc.) they had received to help them acclimate to American life.

Chapter 5 recounts a survey of 1,777 Vietnamese adults living in Illinois and was taken in 1979. About half of those interviewed who were employed said they had jobs as laborers and earned less than \$700 a month. “The generally low occupational statuses of the refugees reflected a substantial downward change from their former statuses in their home countries,” writes the author.

The only point worth mentioning about the study described in Chapter 6 of Indochinese refugees in San Diego between 1975 and 1981 is that it found Cambodian refugees had a harder time finding employment than other ethnic groups. The study does not explain why that might be, but one can assume it is a result of psychological trauma from the Pol Pot regime.

Chapter 7, two 1984 surveys of over 5,500 Vietnamese, Chinese and Lao refugees who lived in five American cities and arrived between 1978 and 1982, found that “the level of English fluency upon arrival in the United States was the most powerful predictor of later economic standing.”

Chapter 8 covers a study of Indochinese refugees in San Diego between 1975 and 1983 and finds, “the majority were employed in manufacturing work, such as electronic assembly line work, to which many are channeled by refugee job training programs – even though the vast majority find their jobs informally (through self, family or friends) rather than through formal or semiformal agencies or sponsors.”

The study also found that over half the Hmong and Khmer respondents reported stress related disturbances and were more likely to suffer from depression.



**Remapping Asian American History**, Sucheng Chan, ed., Altamira Press, 2003:

This book discusses new frameworks such as transnationalism, the political contexts of international migrations, and a multi-polar approach to the study of contemporary U.S. race relations. Collectively, the 10 essays in this volume challenge some long-held assumptions about Asian-American communities and point to new directions in Asian American historiography.

Only one chapter in this collection covers the Indochinese refugees, “Politics and the Indochinese Refugee Exodus, 1975-1997) Sucheng Chan provides background overview of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam and the changing political climate in these countries which saw an exodus of its people relocating in more than four waves beginning 1946-1948, 1954-1955, 1975, 1975-1976, 1978-1980 and 1989.

**Survivors: Cambodian Refugees in the United States**, Sucheng Chan, University of Illinois Press, 2004:

The author spends much of the book writing about Cambodia’s history, but does devote one chapter to Cambodians’ struggle for economic survival once arriving in the U.S.

She cites a 1978 survey of 627 Cambodian refugees who arrived in the U.S. between 1975 and 1981. Among those in the labor force, 58.2 percent said they had looked for work by answering ads, 55.4 percent said they had used employment agencies, 54.8 percent had contacted potential employers directly and 40 percent had relied on relatives and friends. The total exceeds 100 percent because respondents could choose more than one answer.

The study also found that among those who had held white collar jobs in Cambodia, 71 percent worked in blue-collar jobs in the U.S.

The author says the worst of Southeast Asian refugees in the 1980 census were the Khmer, the lowland Lao and the Hmong, all three of whom had high percentages living below the poverty line. Most of the Cambodians had only attended one to six years of elementary school.

The author covers the small Cambodian middle class in the U.S., most of whom were scions of the royal family, high level government officials, diplomats and military

officers in their native country. Most of them are now professionals and businesspeople who are, at best, middle class by American standards.

Another segment of this middle class is made up of former professionals who could not meet the licensing or certification requirements in the U.S and started their own small businesses.

The author points out that since many Cambodians never learned English they are unable hold jobs that require even minimal use of the language. "It is therefore understandable," writes the author, "from the point of view of a caseworker that helps refugees (such as this) fill out application forms for public assistance is the most expedient thing for voluntary agencies to do. Certainly it takes far less effort than finding an effective way to teach [them] English or train [them] for a job [they] can handle."

**The Boat People and Achievement in America**, Caplan, Whitmore, Choy, the University of Michigan Press, 1989:

This book examines the economic progress of the so-called second wave of refugees from Indochina (Vietnamese, Chinese from Vietnam and Lao) starting in 1978.

These refugees, report the authors, have less education, poorer English proficiency and lower job skills than the refugees who fled starting in 1975. The U.S was in the grips of a deep recession at this time, but these refugees took low-level jobs others wouldn't, and proved to be reliable, hard-working employees.

Many cleaned office buildings, for instance, and they were extremely dependable. If one was sick, a relative would show up in their place. But advancement out of low-paying jobs was difficult because of poor language and a lack of job skills.

The authors say these refugees share the same values as many mainstream middle-class Americans that stress the importance of education and achievement through hard work.

This group of refugees, say the authors, show less severe signs of the trauma and disruption they experienced in their homelands than the first wave of refugees from Indochina.

Levels of "decreased working efficiency" are not as pronounced with this group. Conclude the authors, "We do not believe that serious mental health problems are a

distinguishing feature of the refugee community – at least not for the post-1978 arrivals we studied.” The authors attribute this to the fact that these refugees arrived into an existing Indochinese community in the U.S. that was already established and they, therefore, felt more anchored.

The Chinese Vietnamese came from an urban background and had medium educational levels. The Lao refugees were more rural, less educated and more agriculturally oriented. The Vietnamese refugees were urban and not likely to be farmers.

The authors found that unemployment dropped sharply for those in the U.S. three years or more. While they found jobs, they were poor paying and prospects for income and job improvements were not good. Most earned no more than \$5.35 per hour. The way this group improved its economic standing was by having multiple members of a household working. The authors found that the “overwhelming majority” held “low-status, dead end” jobs on the periphery of the economy.

Over time, though, the authors say they achieved some steady progress toward reaching measures that approach those of other U.S. minority groups, “but with trajectories that indicate the likelihood of continued economic independence.”

In conclusion, the authors credit the refugees’ Buddhist and Confucian values and traditions as providing a source of motivation and guidance as they make their way in a new country.

They write, “Despite personal hardship and trauma, they have endured without being irreparably scarred. We do not find overriding demoralization, lamenting of fate and indulgence in self pity. Instead we find an aspiring, upbeat people who have made some rather remarkable economic and educational achievements.”

### **The Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience: I Begin My Life All Over,**

Lilian Faderman with Ghia Xiong, Beacon Press, 1998:

A collection of experiences from adults who escaped through the jungles of Laos to the American-born teenager of refugee-immigrants parents. Their stories are told according to their age group.

The older set – first generation refugee-immigrants' stories carry much of the same theme of isolation, confusion, hope for a more comfortable future and finally, contentment. Many are comfortable withdrawing from interaction with the host society after their children are grown.

- not understanding traffic patterns and the need to cross roads at appropriate intersections
- not understanding basements of apartment buildings cannot be used to raise poultry (chicken)
- The middle generation – immigrants arriving on American soil at pre-adolescent age
- The younger – second generation, or immigrants that arrive in the United States at an extremely young age experience frustration, futility in making their traditional home-life and societal life fit.

## Appendix G: Bibliography

- Asian American Federation of New York. *Economic Characteristics Of Asian Americans in the New York Metropolitan Area*. New York: 2005.
- Caplan, Nathan and Marcella Trautmann, John K. Whitmore. *The Boat People and Achievement in America: A Study of Economic and Educational Success*. Ann Arbor, MI: U of Michigan P, 1989.
- Chan, Sucheng. *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History (Twayne's Immigrant Heritage of America Series)*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991.
- Chan, Sucheng. "Asian American struggles for civil, political, economic, and social rights." *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* 1 Jan. 2002: 56.
- Chan, Sucheng. *Asian Californians*. Sparks, NV: Materials for Today's Learning, 1991.
- Chan, Sucheng. *Hmong Means Free: Life Laos and America (Asian American History and Culture)*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1994.
- Chan, Suchen, ed. and Kim, Audrey U. *Not Just Victims: Conversations With Cambodian Community Leaders in the United States*. Champagne: U of Illinois P, 2003.
- Chan, Sucheng. *Remapping Asian American History (Critical Perspectives on Asian Pacific Americans Series)*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003.
- Chan, Sucheng. *Survivors: Cambodian Refugees in the United States (Asian American Experience)*. Champagne: U of Illinois P, 2004.
- "Chinese immigrants Keep US Well Fed". *Taipei Times* (9 Oct. 2005). 03 March 2006. <<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1503169/posts>>.
- Faderman, Lillian. *I Begin My Life All Over: The Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1999.
- Haines, David W. *Refugees as Immigrants*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1989.
- Hall, Bruce Edward. *The Tea Than Burns*. New York: The Free Press, 1998.
- Hein, Jeremy. *From Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia: A Refugee Experience in the United States (Twayne's Immigrant Heritage of America)*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1999.

- Kibria, Nazli. *Family Tightrope*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.
- Kinkead, Gwen. *Chinatown: A Portrait of a Closed Society*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.
- Koltyk, Jo Ann and Nancy Foner. *New Pioneers in the Heartland: Hmong Life in Wisconsin*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1997.
- Kwong, Peter. *Forbidden Workers: Illegal Chinese Immigrants and American Labor*. New York: New Press, 1999.
- Kwong, Peter. *The New Chinatown*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1987.
- Lai, Eric and Dennis Arguelles, ed. "The New Fact of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity and Change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." *AsianWeek with UCLA's Asian American Studies Center Press* 2003: 283.
- Learn About Hmong*. 2004. Hmong Cultural and Resource Center. 03 March 2006. <[http://www.learnabouthmong.com/default.asp?active\\_page\\_id=94](http://www.learnabouthmong.com/default.asp?active_page_id=94)>.
- Logue, Susan. "Cultural Center Plays Key Role in Minnesota's Hmong Community." *Voice of America* (03 May 2005). 03 March 2006. <<http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2005-05/2005-05-03-voa59.cfm>>.
- Louie, Andrea. *Chineseness Across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2004.
- Moore, Stephen. *A Fiscal Portrait of the Newest Americans*. Washington, D.C: Cato Institute, 1998.
- National Association of Workforce Boards. *Discussions with Board Directors & Chairs: Setting the Stage for Workforce Board Success*. Arlington, VA: 2000.
- Ng, Franklin. *Adaptation, Acculturation and Transnational Ties Among Asian Americans (Asians in America: The Peoples of East, Southeast, and South Asia in American Life and Culture)*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1998.
- Ong, Aihwa. *Buddha Is Hiding : Refugees, Citizenship, the New America (California Series in Public Anthropology)*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003.
- Presto, Suzanne. "Cambodian Immigrants Make Impact on City in US Northeast." *Voice of America* (04 May 2005). 03 March 2006. <<http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2005-05/2005-05-04-voa72.cfm>>.
- Simon, Julian L. *Immigration: The Demographic and Economic Facts*. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute and the National Immigration Forum, 1995.

“Southeast Asian American Statistical Profile.” *Southeast Asia Resource Action Center* (May 2004). 03 March 2006. <<http://www.searac.org/seastatprofilemay04.pdf>>

Thao, Paoze. *Hmong Education at the Crossroads*. New York: UP of America, 1999.

“The Diverse Face of Asians and Pacific Islanders in California, Asian & Pacific Islander Demographic Profile.” Feb. 2005. *Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California* (03 March 2006). <[http://apalc.org/demographics/wp-content/uploads/2006/03/CA\\_Report\\_04\\_5 Percent20 Percent281 Percent29 Percent20sept Percent2030 Percent2005.pdf](http://apalc.org/demographics/wp-content/uploads/2006/03/CA_Report_04_5%20Percent20%281%20Percent29%20sept%2030%202005.pdf)>.

Uhlig, Keith. “Refugees get crash course in U.S. culture.” *Gannett Wisconsin Newspaper* (26 July 2004). 03 March 2006. <[http://www.wisinfo.com/thailand/thai\\_17056170.shtml](http://www.wisinfo.com/thailand/thai_17056170.shtml)>.

Uhlig, Keith. “Refugees prize children’s chances for better education: Schooling in America driving force for many Hmong leaving camp.” *Gannett Wisconsin Newspaper* (26 July 2004). 03 March 2006. <[http://www.wisinfo.com/thailand/thai\\_17056171.shtml](http://www.wisinfo.com/thailand/thai_17056171.shtml)>.

U.S. Census Bureau. *We the People: Asians in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: 2004.

U.S. Department of Labor. *Workforce Investment Act of 1998*. Washington, D.C.: 1998.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Food Stamp Employment and Training Program: Better Data Needed to Understand Who Is Served and What the Program Achieves* GAO-03-388. Washington, D.C.: 2003.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. *High-Skill Training: Grants from H-1B Visa Fees Meet Specific Workforce Needs, but at Varying Skill Levels* GAO-02-881. Washington, D.C.: 2002.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Privatization: Lessons Learned by State and Local Governments* GAO/GGD-97-48. Washington, D.C.: 1997.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Older Workers: Employment Assistance Focuses on Subsidized Jobs and Job Search, but Revised Performance Measures Could Improve Access to Other Services* GAO-03-350. Washington, D.C.: 2003.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: Better Guidance and Revised Funding\ Formula Would Enhance Dislocated Worker Program* GAO-02-274. Washington, D.C.: 2002.

- U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: Better Guidance Needed to Address Concerns Over New Requirements* GAO-02-72. Washington, D.C.: 2001.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: Improvements Needed in Performance Measures to Provide a More Accurate Picture of WIZ's Effectiveness* GAO-02-275. Washington, D.C.: 2002.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: Issues Related to Allocation Formulas for Youth, Adults, and Dislocated Workers* GAO-03-636. Washington, D.C.: 2003.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: One-Stop Centers Implemented Strategies to Strengthen Services and Partnerships, but More Research and Information Sharing is Needed* GAO-03-725. Washington, D.C.: 2003.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: States and Localities Increasingly Coordinate Services for TANF Clients, but Better Information Needed on Effective Approaches* GAO-02-696. Washington, D.C.: 2002.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: States' Spending Is on Track, but Better Guidance Would Improve Financial Reporting* GAO-03-239. Washington, D.C.: 2002.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: Youth Provisions Promote New Service Strategies, but Additional Guidance Would Enhance Program Development* GAO-02-413. Washington, D.C.: 2002.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Training: Employed Worker Programs Focus on Business Needs, but Revised Performance Measures Could Improve Access for Some Workers* GAO-03-353. Washington, D.C.: 2003.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Veterans' Employment and Training Service: Proposed Performance Measurement System Improved, But Further Changes Needed* GAO-01-580. Washington, D.C.: 2001.
- Zhou, Min and Carl L., III Bankston. *Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999.