# DATA POINTS: ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER POVERTY
## May 1, 2012

**Asian American and Pacific Islander poor are increasing in numbers; are increasingly American born; and are concentrated in some of America's largest urban centers.**
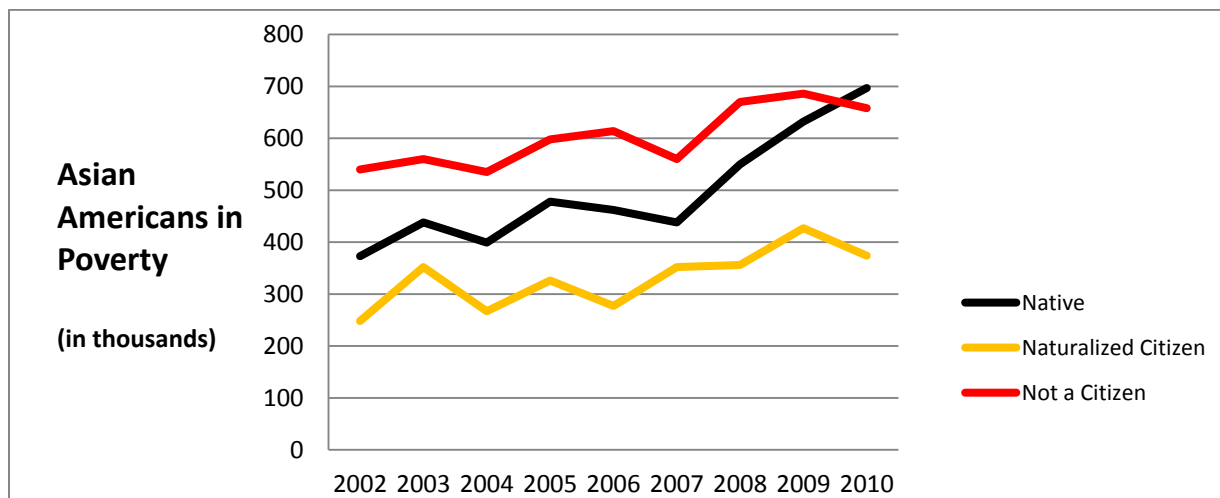
1.  *The Asian American and Pacific Islander poverty population is increasing.*

    The Census Bureau reports that in 2010, 12.1% of the total Asian American population lived in poverty compared to 9.9% of the non-Hispanic white population, 27.4% of African Americans and 26.6% of Hispanic Americans.  The rate of Asian American poverty was 10.2% in 2007.

    As a percentage of the total Asian American population, the rate of Asian American poverty has increased. But the relative *rate* of poverty does not tell the whole story.  Between 2002 and 2010, the Asian American poverty population increased in real terms from 1.16 million to 1.73 million, an increase of 46%.   Over the same period, Non-Hispanic White poverty population increased by 26% and African American poverty by 24%.  The size of the Hispanic poverty population also grew notably by 55% and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander poverty increased by 77%.   While other factors may also be at play, recent immigration of more affluent professionals appears to be masking increasing poverty within the overall rate of Asian American poverty.[a]

2.  *The composition of Asian American poverty is changing.*

    Asian American poverty appears to be increasingly home grown.  While poor Asian Americas are still primarily foreign born (as is the total population of Asian Americans), American born poverty is increasing at a faster rate:
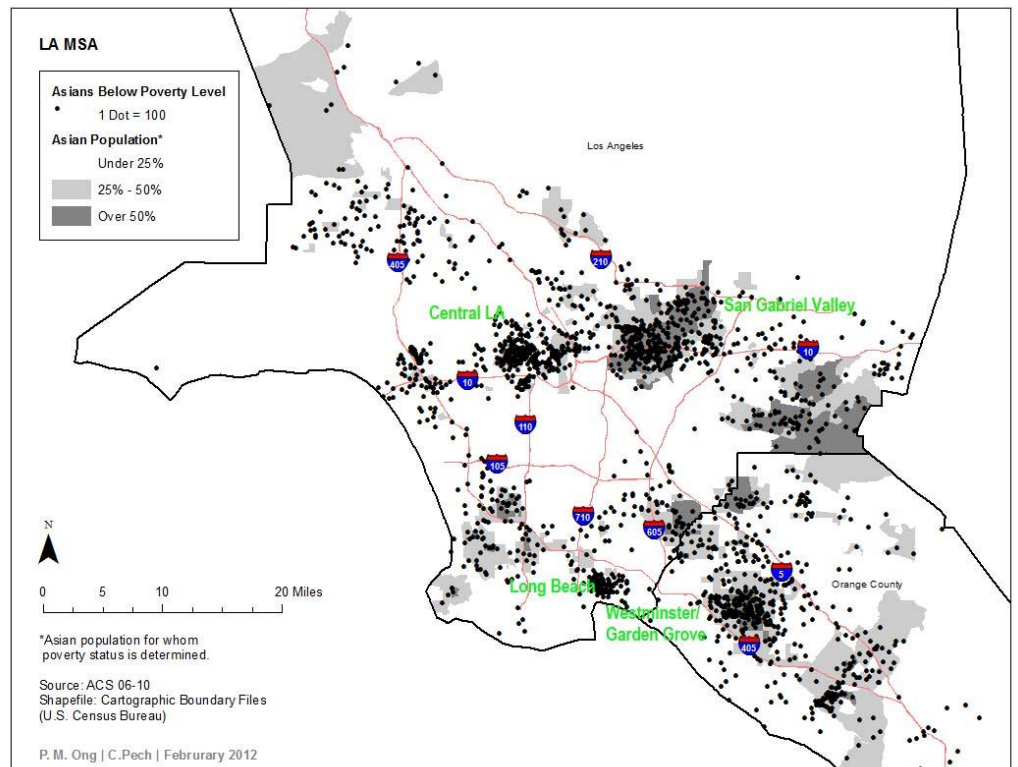


(Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey).

3. **Asian American populations are concentrated in large metro areas. Poor Asian Americans are also concentrated in these areas.**

   As William Frey at the Brookings Institute has noted, Asian Americans are more concentrated in large metropolitan areas than any other racial group. [b]   In our initial research, we have found that Asian American poor are similarly concentrated.  One third of all poor Asian Americans live in only three MSAs: Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco.   More than half of all Asian American poor  reside in just ten MSAs.

4. **Poor Asian Americans in the largest metropolitan areas remain relatively concentrated in both old and new ethnic centers.**

   With the participation of researchers at UCLA, CAPACD is in the process of mapping the location of lower income and poor AAs and PIs in metro areas.  The map of the Los Angeles region, the first map we have produced, shows Asian American poverty concentrated in poor or predominantly minority neighborhoods.  The clusters of poverty are located in Central LA (Koreatown, Filipino Town, Little Tokyo and Chinatown), San Gabriel Valley ('new Chinatown'), Long Beach (Little Phnom Penh), and Westminster/Garden Grove (including Little Saigon). [c]

Such patterns are consistent with patterns in other larger MSAs suggesting that lower income Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in urban areas are more likely to reside in 'communities of color,' i.e., alongside lower income African Americans, Latinos or AAPIs of other nationalities.  Hence, the interests and destinies of lower income AAPIs are closely tied to the policies and programs impacting other 'minority' communities.

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[a] Poverty data derived from the Current Population Survey.  Although only extending back to 2005, the American Community Survey shows similar trends for both Asian Americans and NHOPI populations.
[b] W. Frey (2012) "The New Metro Minority Map." The Brookings Institution.
[c] C. Pech & J. Ong (2012) "Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Populations in Los Angeles County." National CAPACD.