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# ASIAN AMERICANS AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A Multi-Lingual Survey in Greater Boston

BY  
CAROLYN WONG AND ZITING KUANG



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We are grateful to the photographers credited in the report for granting permission to reproduce images of neighborhood efforts to assist households and local businesses during the pandemic. Some photos show community art and educational projects aimed to promote resiliency and solidarity among residents of diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds. The pictures portray grassroots projects that lifted the voices of Asian Americans and enabled cooperation to meet the challenge of job and income loss, health risk, illness, and anti-Asian racism, which were documented by our research.

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FRONT COVER: Van Nguyen (left) and Qui Nguyen (right) move bags of food, which include vegetables used in Vietnamese dishes, to the foyer of the Dorchester community organization, Vietnamese American Initiative for Development, or VietAID, for distribution. Photo by Sarah Betancourt / GBH News

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# OVERVIEW

*A sizeable proportion of Asian Americans with limited formal education and low household income were hit hard by financial loss, loss of work, and were very worried about paying for food and housing.*

This report on *Asian Americans and the Covid-19 Pandemic* describes lessons from a multilingual survey administered in Greater Boston during the Fall, Winter, and early Spring of 2020-21. The Institute for Asian American Studies (IAAS) at UMass Boston designed and administered the IAAS Covid-19 Survey on the health, economic, and social impacts of the pandemic for Asian Americans. The IAAS Covid-19 Survey was designed to fill significant gaps in data available from a previous Spring 2020 survey, *Living in Boston During Covid-19*, which was funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and administered by UMass Boston's Center for Survey Research (CSR) using its established Beacon methodology.<sup>1</sup> The CSR collaborated with the Boston Area Research Indicators Project at Northeastern University to conduct this NSF Beacon Survey.

The NSF Beacon Survey aimed to provide data on pandemic experiences of residents in the City of Boston as a whole. The city-wide estimates were based on answers from 1626 respondents to questions about effects on their own health, economic well-being, opinions on health-promotion practices, and other topics. Although the NSF respondents self-identified their race-ethnicity, the information collected on Asian Americans was not representative of their very diverse income backgrounds. For example, in Boston, the proportion of Asian Americans with annual household incomes less than \$30,000 is about 39 percent according to the population estimates of the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), but only about 26 percent of Asian Americans in the NSF Beacon Survey sample reported this lower level of household income. The survey was not administered in any Asian languages and all Asian Americans were grouped together without differentiation of ethnicity, such as Chinese, Vietnamese, Asian Indian/South Asian, or Cambodian.

In view of the limitations of the NSF Beacon Survey, the IAAS Covid-19 Survey sought to provide a more accurate and complete picture of Asian Americans

and their experiences with racism and anti-Asian incidents during the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> The IAAS Covid-19 Survey asked many of the same questions as the NSF Beacon Survey for comparability, while adding questions about experiences of anti-Asian racism or prejudice. The IAAS research team formed partnerships with community organizations to implement a purposive convenience sampling strategy which emphasized recruitment of Asian American respondents from hard-to-reach population segments, including individuals disadvantaged by low income and limited formal education. There were 192 individuals who identified as Asian or Asian Americans among the 199 persons who returned questionnaires. The largest ethnic subgroups consisted of individuals who self-identified as Chinese, Vietnamese, and Asian Indians/South Asians, reflecting their relatively large numbers compared to other ethnicities in the Asian American population of Greater Boston. The sampling strategy for the IAAS Covid-19 Survey was not designed to produce population estimates for Asian Americans living in Greater Boston. Rather, the research strategy aimed to reveal how the pandemic may have affected Asian Americans from contrasting economic and educational backgrounds in similar or different ways using information from both the NSF Beacon and IAAS Covid-19 Surveys. The IAAS Covid-19 Survey revealed three urgent and largely neglected needs of Asian Americans:

## **MAIN FINDINGS:**

- A sizeable proportion of Asian Americans with limited formal education and low household income were hit hard by financial loss, loss of work, and were very worried about paying for food and housing.
- Asian Americans experienced racial prejudice as some political elites encouraged blame and fear of Asians as foreigners. Acts of disrespect, physical distancing from Asian Americans because of fear of them, and racial threats exacerbated the harmful effects of social isolation faced by immigrants because of cultural and linguistic differences. During the pandemic, the need to remain at home and limit social interaction added to general worry about economic livelihood for this significant segment of Asian Americans with modest or limited resources. These combined challenges have been either underestimated or not addressed at all in prior surveys on the pandemic in Greater Boston.
- Health promotion requires sensitivity and responsiveness to local community needs, addressing limitations shaped by resources, and cultural understanding and practice. Responsive health promotion requires the building of partnerships between public agencies, health professionals,



and community-based organizations, researchers. In turn, the success of these collaborations depends on the collection and analysis of full and accurate health data on racial-ethnic minorities, including the segments of communities that are hardest to reach. Focusing on groups commonly under-represented in surveys, the IAAS Covid-19 Survey prioritized recruitment of Chinese, Vietnamese, and South Asians with limited income and English proficiency in Greater Boston. An important limitation due to inadequate resources is that Cambodians, Koreans, and Vietnamese with lower incomes and living outside of the City of Boston are not included.

In addition, there were a few notable patterns in survey responses to questions about the impact of the pandemic on Asian Americans' health and actions they took to reduce risk of exposure.

The self-reported rate of Covid-19 rate was about five percent of the Asian Americans in both the NSF Beacon and IAAS Covid-19 Survey samples. Asian Americans began to wear face masks soon after learning about the spread of the coronavirus, and before many others accepted this practice as

*In economically impoverished neighborhoods of Boston, Asian American residents lived at risk of exposure to the virus in multi-generational households. Meanwhile a wave of anti-Asian racism swept across many American cities.*



Lorraine See held a sign at the "Fight Anti-Asian Hate" event at Quincy City Hall Plaza, April 10, 2021. On that day in Boston, protestors also rallied in Boston's Dorchester and South End, where a march began and later culminated in Chinatown. Photo by John Tlumacki / Boston Globe Staff



Many residents of lower-income communities are exposed to extreme heat, a harmful effect of climate change which made them especially vulnerable to illness during the pandemic. Chinatown residents learned about strategies to build heat resiliency at a block party, organized by the Chinese Progressive Association in August, 2021. (Photo by Chinese Progressive Association.)

well. Asian Americans also seemed to be more accepting than others of an active governmental role in mandating or encouraging protective practices. Openness to wearing masks is likely influenced by immigrants' familiarity with mask-wearing and other actions people commonly take to protect themselves from viruses and environmental pollutants common in several Asian countries.

The questions about whether individuals were infected by the virus, when they began to wear masks, and attitudes toward the government's role were worded identically in both the IAAS Covid-19 and NSF Beacon Surveys, and very similar proportions of all Asian American respondents gave the same answers. When two or more surveys use different sampling methods to ask the same question and there are common response patterns, the similarity of findings strengthens the likelihood that those specific results can be generalized, although replication in larger samples would provide more formal scientific validation.

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# *I.* STUDY AIMS

The Institute for Asian American Studies (IAAS) at UMass Boston conducted a research study, *Asian American Experiences in the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Multi-Lingual Survey in Greater Boston*, during the Fall, Winter, and Spring of 2020-21. The purpose of this survey, which we refer to as the IAAS Covid-19 Survey, was to examine how Asian Americans lived during the first year of the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic. Public health agencies had recognized the pandemic as a global health threat in Spring '20. The virus spread so rapidly that worldwide fatalities caused by the coronavirus had reached a staggering 5.22 million by Fall '20, surpassing the number of persons lost to the Spanish influenza pandemic a century before. By the middle of February 2022, the Center for Disease Control reported over 900,000 deaths in the U.S. due to Covid-19 from information on death certificates. Added to this human toll are extensive job losses and social disruption from closure of schools, businesses, and other organizations. These hardships were worsened by prolonged suspension of vital social services, overburdening of medical facilities, and the need for people to stay physically distanced from others for health protection. Essential workers suffered more than others because public-facing jobs exposed them to the virus.

During this public health crisis, a few news outlets accurately reported that many Asian American workers faced reduction of work hours or job loss in the hospitality, retail, and food service industries. Small businesses owned by Asian Americans were hit hard by loss of customers.<sup>3</sup> In some of the most economically impoverished neighborhoods of Boston, Asian American residents lived at risk of exposure to the virus in multi-generational households. Meanwhile, a wave of anti-Asian racism swept across many American cities and led to fear of racial harassment among many Asian Americans. The FBI reported a more than 73 percent increase in anti-Asian hate crimes in 2020, compared to a 13 percent increase in general hate crimes.<sup>4</sup> Despite the multi-faceted impacts of the pandemic and the racial prejudice Asian Americans experienced, only a few research studies brought to light how Asian Americans themselves perceived such a multi-faceted impact of the pandemic on their own daily lives.<sup>5</sup> To help fill in missing information that is vital to inform the public, the IAAS developed the IAAS Covid-19 Survey. It was administered in Asian American ethnic communities—primarily in Boston, Quincy, Malden, Everett, and Cambridge—during the Fall, Winter, and early Spring of 2021.



## PURPOSE:

The IAAS Covid-19 Survey collected detailed information about the health, social, and economic impacts of the pandemic on Asian Americans, a non-white, majority immigrant population composed of many ethnic groups. The survey included information on how Asian Americans experienced anti-Asian racism as prejudiced elites inflamed fear and blame of Asians for the pandemic itself. Accounting for ethnic and language differences among Asian Americans, the survey's sampling strategy focused on recruitment of individuals from three larger ethnic groups, Chinese and Vietnamese Americans, and South Asians. The South Asians are multi-ethnic category including people with origins in the southern region of Asia and of varied ethnic backgrounds. The IAAS sample included people from South Asians who identified their ethnicity as Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Pakistani, and Tibetan. To reach demographically diverse segments of these ethnic populations, the geographic area covered by the survey included but extended beyond the City of Boston to include Quincy, Malden, Everett, and Cambridge. A total of 199 persons completed questionnaires; among this total, 192 persons identified their race as Asian or Asian American.

The IAAS Covid-19 Survey built on its immediate predecessor, the Living in Boston During Covid-19 study or the "NSF Beacon Survey," which was conducted by UMass Boston's Center for Survey Research and Northeastern University's Boston Area Indicators' Project in the Spring of 2020. The NSF Beacon Survey asked a comprehensive set of questions about the health, financial, and social impact of the pandemic. It also asked about actions respondents took, such as getting tested

for Covid-19, wearing masks or social-distancing, and opinions about the government's role. The questionnaire was mailed to a randomly selected sample of households in each of Boston's 25 city neighborhoods. The sample included 1626 persons. One general limitation of this sample was its overrepresentation

*"From 1970 to 2016, Asians displaced blacks as the most economically divided racial or ethnic group in the U.S."*

—Pew Research Center

of persons from higher educational attainment levels.<sup>6</sup> This drawback of the NSF Beacon Survey is important because it tends to obscure the difficulties of a large segment of the Asian American population, which has one of the highest poverty rates in Boston. For example, the poverty rate among Chinese Americans is about 36 percent, and for Vietnamese Americans about 23 percent, compared to 19 percent for all Bostonians, according to 2019 estimates by the U.S. census bureau.<sup>7</sup>

To gain a fuller picture of Asian American social and health conditions, the IAAS Covid-19 Survey aimed to compensate for the NSF Beacon Survey's limitations by recruiting a larger proportion of lower-income persons and administering the survey not only in English, but also in Chinese and Vietnamese. The IAAS Covid-19 Survey, moreover, used convenience sampling to recruit hard-to-reach lower-income persons living in ethnic enclaves. The research team formed partnerships with community organizations and leaders trusted by many residents of these enclaves to advertise the survey on social media and email lists. The targets included Chinese American immigrants in Boston Chinatown and Bay Village, Quincy, and Malden, Vietnamese American immigrants in Dorchester, Everett, and Malden, South Asian immigrants in Cambridge, Everett, and Malden, and middle-income Asian Americans of various ethnicities, including persons working in professional occupations and accessible by internet outreach throughout Greater Boston.

By looking at the results of the two surveys together, it is possible to learn about the socio-economic diversity of the Asian American populations. In a report on income inequality, the Pew Research Center noted that:

“...from 1970 to 2016, the gap in the standard of living between Asians near the top and the bottom of the income ladder nearly doubled, and the distribution of income among Asians transformed from being one of the most equal to being the most unequal among America's major racial and ethnic groups... In this process, Asians displaced blacks as the most economically divided racial or ethnic group in the U.S.”<sup>8</sup>

Many studies show that people of minority racial-ethnic background and low socio-economic status are particularly vulnerable to infection by Covid-19, as well as hospitalization, confirmed diagnosis, and death from illness. Among factors associated with risk for infection and poor health outcomes are poverty, living in crowded housing, lack of health insurance, low levels of education and income, and work in occupations providing healthcare, social assistance, or transportation, and living in urban environments.<sup>9</sup> For Asian Americans, it is critical that social and public health surveys to inform readers not only about the segment of highly educated and economically advantaged Asian Americans, but also the large Asian American population with lower educational attainment and lower income. News accounts and popular movies and TV shows often tell the stories of the higher income Asian Americans. As a result, many people do not realize that poverty rates among Asian Americans are some of the highest among racial-ethnic groups in major U.S. cities.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE IAAS STUDY:**

There are several limitations of the IAAS Covid-19 Survey. The IAAS Covid-19 Survey collected a relatively small sample of respondents (199) and used a convenience sampling method rather than a probability method. Response rates for the IAAS sample cannot be computed because sample recruitment was by convenience with no way to record who may not have participated. The convenience sampling method was purposive in aiming to recruit hard-to-reach populations. As a result, the survey was not intended to provide a population estimate for Asian Americans as a whole or of any single ethnic group in Boston; rather, the sampling method was designed to investigate possible contrasts in responses between the lower and higher-income segments of the Asian American population and other potential differences, which were not evident in the earlier NSF Beacon study. Thus, the reader should not interpret any of the percentages of persons answering any single question as an estimate for Greater Boston of the true proportion of Asian Americans or persons of a specific ethnic background who would respond the same way.

There were some Asian American ethnic groups that are not included in the sample because of difficulties in recruiting them with resources available to the study. Most notably, there are only a small handful of respondents of Cambodian background, and as a result, they are classified in the “other Asian” category in subsequent reports of data findings. Similarly, there were relatively few Korean American respondents. The category reported as “South Asian” aggregated small samples of ethnic groups with origins in South Asia, including people of Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Pakistani, and Tibetan descent. As a result, the data do not reflect ethnic diversity of responses within the South Asian group.

Distribution of household supplies and food to South Asian residents in the Cambridge neighborhood, Spring 2020. (Photo courtesy of South Asian Worker Center.)



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## *II.* RESPONDENTS

### *A. Ethnicity, Age, Gender*

Several demographic features of Asian American respondents' background in the IAAS Covid-19 Survey and NSF Beacon Survey are summarized in Table 1 in the Appendix. The survey samples had a larger number of females than males in all racial-ethnic categories. There was a fairly diverse representation of age groups in both samples.

Table 1 is the first of several tables in the Appendix that show comparisons between data in the IAAS sample and the NSF sample. Some of the tables in the Appendix detail information displayed visually in charts later in this report; other tables in the Appendix provide supplementary information.<sup>10</sup>

### *B. Places of Residence*

Among the respondents of the IAAS Covid-19 Survey, 15.1 percent lived in Boston's Chinatown or Bay Village, 9.5 percent in Boston's Dorchester, 14.1 percent in Quincy, 12.6 percent in Malden, 9 percent in Everett, and 10.6 percent in Cambridge – totaling 71 percent of the respondents. The remaining 29 percent of respondents lived in other Boston neighborhoods or nearby towns.

Comparing educational attainment, the percentage of respondents with an 8th grade education or less was larger in the IAAS sample (12%) than in the NSF sample (5.5%), and the percentage of respondents with some high school or a high school diploma was larger in the IAAS sample (33%) than in the NSF sample (13.1%). Notably, about half of the respondents to the NSF Beacon Survey had higher education beyond a four-year college degree (50.3%), compared to the relatively small percentage in the IAAS sample (14.7%), although those with a four-year college degree was somewhat higher in the IAAS sample (26.7%), compared to the NSF sample (22.8%).

The reader can compare the breakdown of demographic categories reported for the IAAS Covid-19 Survey and NSF Beacon samples in Table 1. The data are from profiles of the Asian American population in Boston available from the American Community Survey (ACS) which is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. For that purpose, Table 1 includes the population estimates provided by the ACS for the same categories shown in rows of Tables 1 for gender, age, education. Similarly, Table 3 includes population estimates household income levels, which are discussed in the next section.

Because the profile of the Asian American population is for the City of Boston in Table 1, it can be compared directly with the NSF Beacon sample for Boston. Reliable ACS population estimates for the combined cities and towns comprising Greater Boston as represented in the IAAS Covid-19 Survey sample were not available. As noted earlier, these include not only Boston, but also Quincy, Malden, Everett, Cambridge, and a few other localities. ACS estimates for several cities and towns outside of Boston are shown in Appendix should be viewed with caution because of small ACS sample sizes for Asian Americans. Looking at the Boston data alone, it is nonetheless evident that the NSF Beacon sample under-represented segments of the Asian American population with low incomes. For example, in Boston, the proportion of Asian Americans with annual household incomes less than \$30,000 is 39.4 percent according to the population estimates of the ACS, but the comparable percentage was only 25.9 percent in the NSF sample of Asian Americans.

Elected officials, AAPI commissioners, and the Commission's staff join at a March 2020 rally before pandemic closings to denounce all forms of anti-Asian racism at the Massachusetts statehouse. (Getty Images)



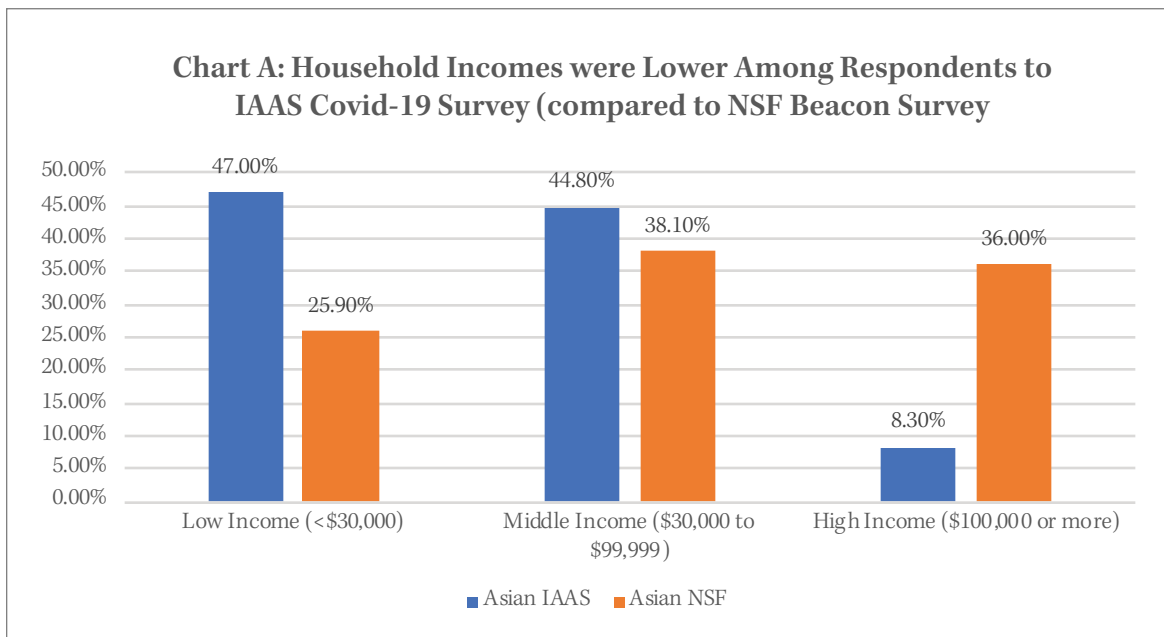


### *C. Educational Levels*

Educational levels for Asian American ethnic groups: In the IAAS Covid-19 Survey adding the last two rows of Table 1, the percentages of respondents who graduated with four years of college education or more than 4 years was about 33 % for Chinese, 32% for Vietnamese, and 47% for South Asians. As earlier noted, the convenience sampling method was not intended to match actual percentages of these subgroups in the Greater Boston population; in that respect, the IAAS sample is not representative of the population studied. Rather, the aim was to achieve a relatively sizeable portion of the sample in lower and higher educational brackets so that differences in health or other outcomes could be observed.

### *D. Household Income and Size*

Chart A shows percentages of survey respondents who reported household income less than \$30,000 per year. The proportion in the IAAS sample is much larger (47%) than in the NSF Beacon sample (25.9%), as earlier noted. Strikingly, in the NSF sample, 36 percent of respondents reported an income greater than \$100,000, compared to only 8.3 percent in the IAAS sample. Importantly, the percentage IAAS respondents with four or more adults living in the household was larger (19.9%) than among NSF respondents (9.7%), as shown in Table 17. In general, larger households faced risks of members spreading the virus among themselves; in addition, incomes reported as the household level, as in the NSF and IAAS surveys, do not indicate average per capita or individual-level incomes. In populations with larger households,

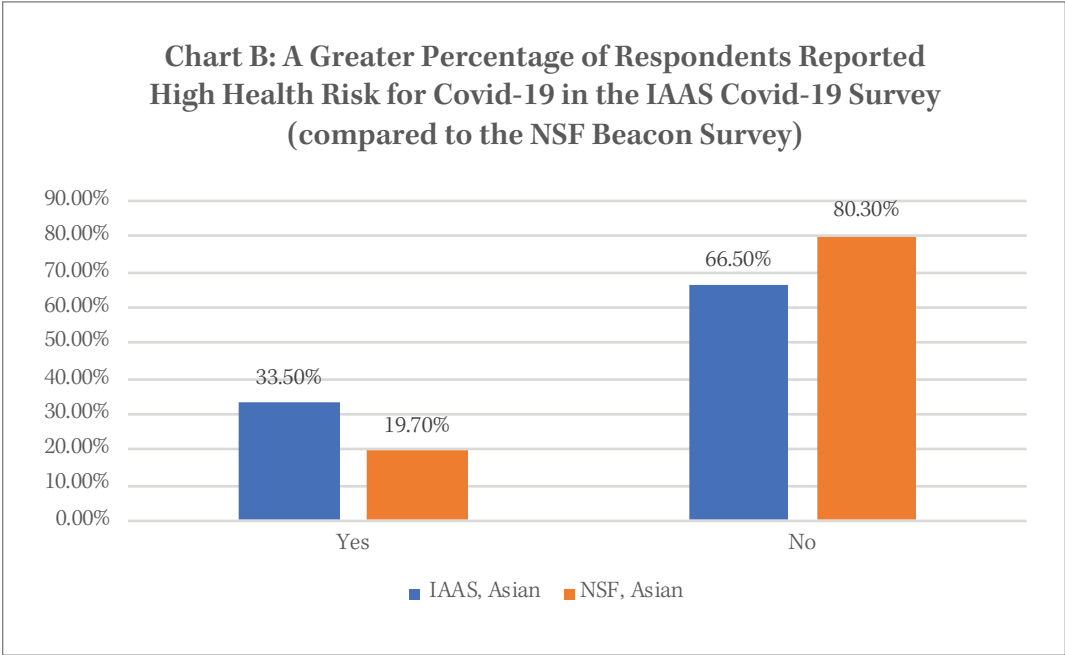


(Chart A. See Table 3 for more data)

including many lower-income and minority groups, families have less income to distribute among members than the household income level indicates alone. Neither survey gives a full picture of the Asian Americans in Boston, but together they are informative about differences in the pandemic’s impact on the lower and higher income brackets.

*E. Health and Occupational Risk*

Chart B summarizes responses to a question about the respondents’ own assessment of their health risk from effects of the coronavirus. Among Asian

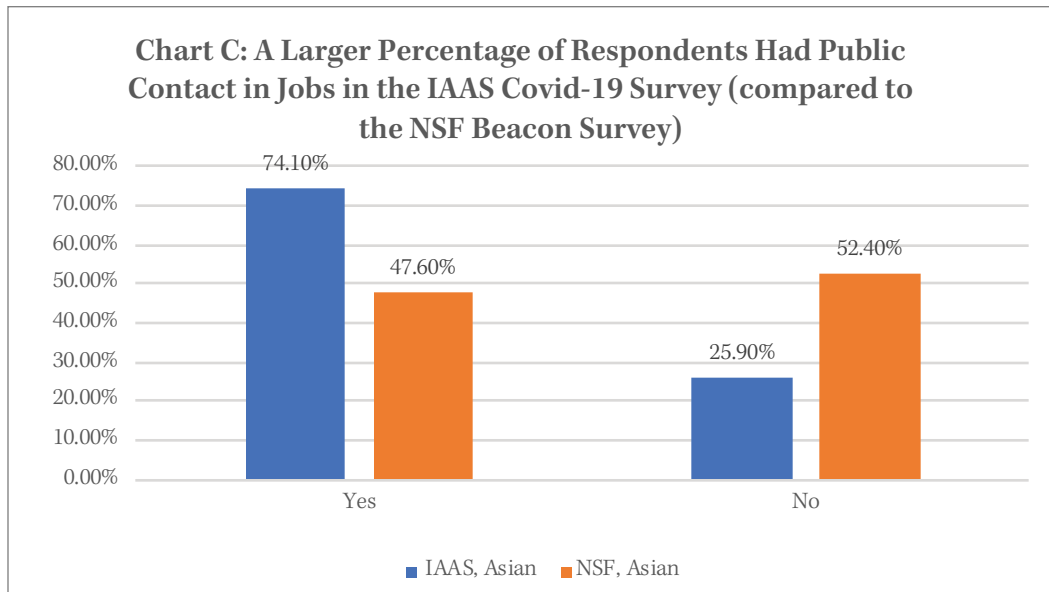


(Chart B. Question asked on survey: Do you have any health conditions that put you at higher than average risk from the effects of COVID-19? See Table 7 for more data)

Americans, 33.5 percent answered that their risk was at “higher” level in the IAAS sample, compared to 19.7 percent in the NSF sample. Compared to other racial groups in the NSF sample, the Asian Americans had the lowest percentage reporting this “higher” level of risk. In the IAAS sample, the percentage for Asian Americans was in a mid-range, less than Blacks, and more than Latinos and whites.

Chart C shows that the percentage of Asian Americans in the IAAS sample who reported that their work put them in contact with the public, which is one risk of exposure to the airborne virus, 74.1 percent replied “yes,” compared to 47.6 percent in the NSF sample. Compared to Blacks and Latinos, the percentage for Asian Americans in the IAAS sample answering yes to this question regarding contact with the public was somewhat higher.

The occupations of respondents to the IAAS Covid-19 Survey were quite varied. The largest percentages of respondents worked in: Food Preparation and Service (15.1%), Community and Social Service (15.6%), Homemaker (8%), Personal Care and Service (7%).<sup>11</sup>



(Chart C. Question asked on survey: Does your current work put you in contact with the public? See Table 8 for more data)



Suzanne Lee helps Linda Chieng at Hing Sing Bakery apply for assistance through a resiliency fund We Love Boston Chinatown. The Chinese Progressive Association, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, and Asian Community Development Corporation launched the new fund and campaign in Spring 2021. (Photo by Chinese Progressive Association.)

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### *III.* WHAT WERE THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19?

#### *A. Infected by Covid-19*

In the NSF Beacon Survey, a smaller percentage of Asian Americans (5.2%) compared to other racial-ethnic groups reported that they had been ill with Covid-19 (See Table 4). A comparable percentage of Asian Americans reported that they had Covid-19 in the IAAS Covid-19 Survey.

Compared to other racial ethnic groups, a smaller percentage of Asian Americans reported having been tested for Covid 19 (See Table 5). The reasons for these differences are not known. One of the questions in the IAAS Covid-19 Survey asked if respondents had wanted to get tested but were unable for various reasons, or did not want to get tested. There was no evidence that large percentage of Asian Americans wanted to be tested but were unable to for lack of information or access.

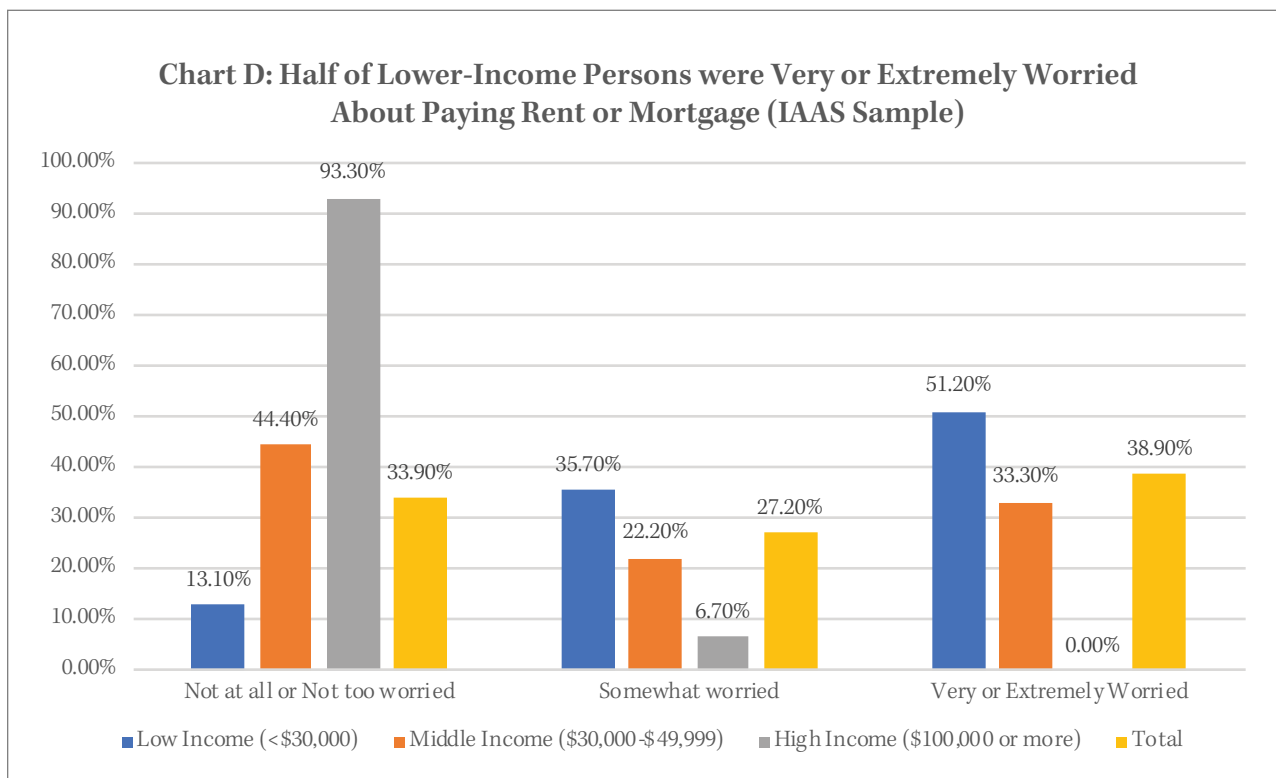
#### *B. Taking Protective Measures*

The practice of wearing masks for health reasons has long been common in parts of Asia, where masks provide some protection against air-borne viruses, automobile exhaust, coal dust, and cold air. In 2002, it was commonplace to see people in China wearing masks because they made them safer during the SARS pandemic.<sup>12</sup> For observers familiar with practices of mask-wearing among Asian Americans, it is not surprising that Asian survey respondents reported a relatively early start time to wearing masks in March 2020, sooner than other racial-ethnic groups (See Table 9). By April and May, the rates of mask-wearing among Asian Americans, Blacks, and whites were already converging as infections and death rose. A smaller proportion of Asian Americans reported that they began to wear masks for the first time in April and May, probably because they had started earlier. A population survey such as ours cannot evaluate the health benefits of early adoption of mask-wearing practices. We did not take measurements of infection rates before and after the wearing of masks or account for other factors, such as social distancing. Thus, we do not know if early adoption of mask-wearing was an influential factor that could help explain different rates of infection across different population groups. This comparative data does suggest that further

study could inform health policy makers on how to adapt future educational campaigns to the cultural attitudes of specific ethnic groups. It is also possible that related attitudes toward government policies or mandates are influenced by immigrant experiences in Asia or cultural factors. Asian Americans reported greater openness to governmental Covid-19 restrictions (See Table 10). In the NSF Beacon survey, for example, 32.6 percent of the Asian American respondents stated an opinion that government had “not gone far enough” in imposing restrictions to reduce the spread of the Covid-19, compared to 24.7 percent of Black, 29 percent of Latino, and 25.7 percent of white respondents (See Table 10). In the IAAS Covid-19 Survey, which recorded opinions in the later months of 2020 and early 2021, 50.8 percent of Asian Americans felt the government has “not gone far enough.”

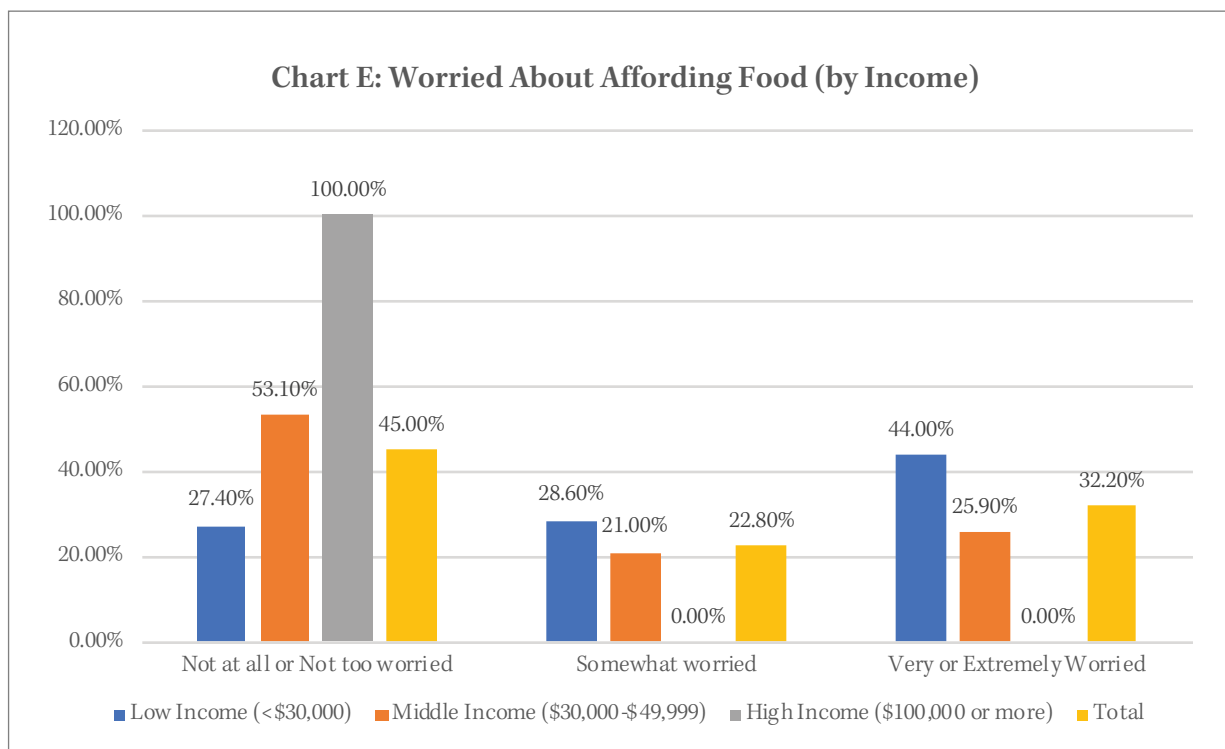
### ***C. Financial Impact for Lower-Income Households***

In the IAAS sample, Asian Americans with household incomes less than \$30,000 reported substantial worry about day to day living costs. More than half (51%) of persons with incomes under \$30,000 were very or extremely worried about their rent or mortgage (Chart D). In the same income category, 44 percent were very or extremely worried about food (Chart E). With a larger sample, it would have been possible to examine the interactive effects



(Chart D. Question asked in survey: How worried are you that you will not be able to make a rent or mortgage payment? See Table 13 for more data)





(Chart E. Question asked in survey: How worried are you that you will run out of food because of a lack of money or resources? See Table 14 for more data)

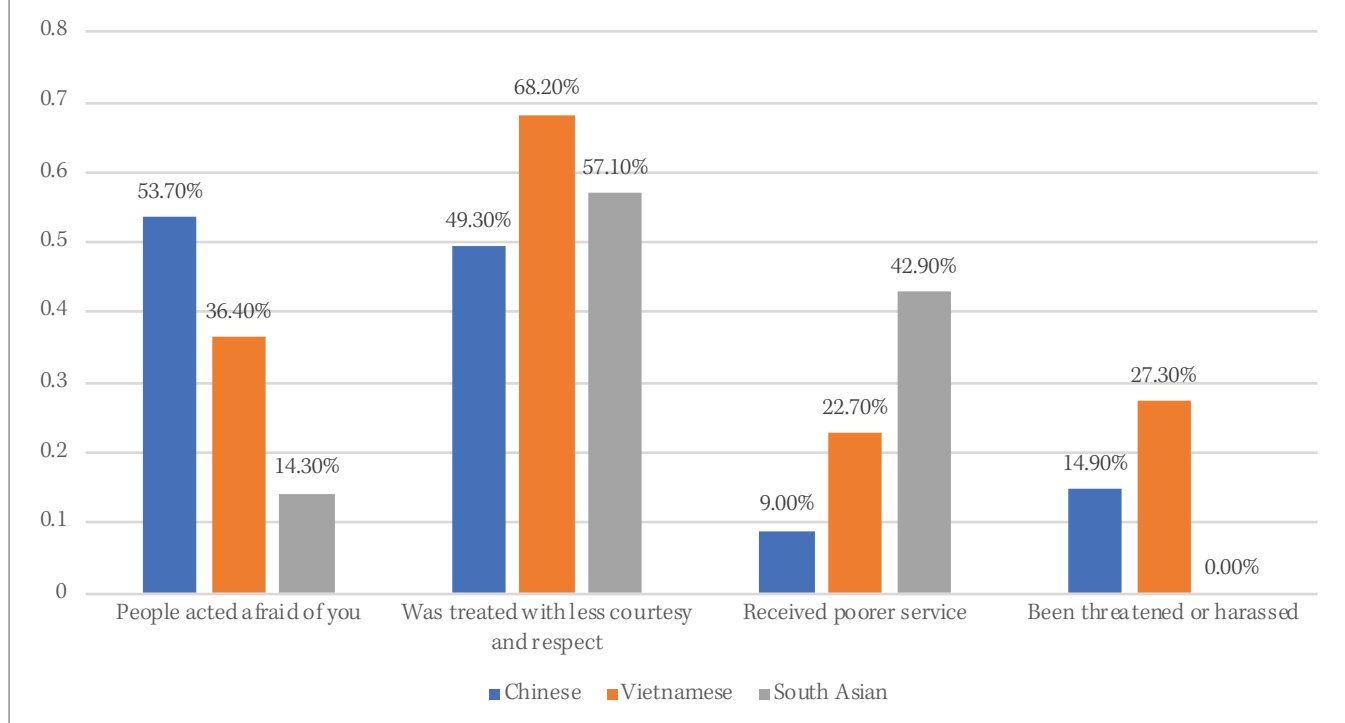
of two factors: ethnicity and income levels. However, the sub-samples of Chinese, Vietnamese, and South Asians were not large enough to break out subcategories of income categories within each ethnic group. As a result, the data for household income levels are pooled for all the ethnic groups comprising the Asian Americans in our sample.

### ***D. Racial Prejudice***

In national politics and discourse, former President Donald Trump and other prejudiced elites used racist rhetoric to inflame anti-Asian feelings and place blame the for mounting fatalities and illness on China. Racialized anti-Chinese prejudice and acts of discrimination extended to Asian Americans of diverse ethnicities. As a result, abusive anti-Asian verbal harassment became commonplace. Acts of physical violence against Asian Americans drew media attention in large cities, including New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Dall, Denver, and Louisville.<sup>13</sup> Less publicized instances have been documented in online databases and local or ethnic media.

*Among the Asian Americans surveyed, more than half with low incomes were very or extremely worried about their rent or mortgage. And 44 percent were very or extremely worried about food.*

**Chart F: Anti-Asian Prejudice and Violence Took Different Forms**



(Chart F. Respondents answered “yes” to the question: Since COVID-19, have any of the following things happened to you because your racial background is Asian or Asian American? See Table 11 for more data)

For Asian Americans, fear from being racially targeted and blamed for the pandemic heightened worries about illness and the distress from prolonged quarantine isolation, and closings of businesses and places of work. Audiey C. Kao, editor of the American Medical Association’s Journal of Ethics wrote:

*“Imagine being confined and feeling trapped in your own house or apartment for months on end. Now consider living this way for a reason other than a pandemic: your hesitancy and trepidation about walking out the door is because some hate you enough to harm you, just because of how you look.”*

—Audiey C. Kao

“Imagine being confined and feeling trapped in your own house or apartment for months on end, afraid to leave the relative safety of your home because contact with other people could possibly bring you harm ... Fear, anxiety, depression, and even anger become your quarantine companions. During this past year, most of us can wholly grasp and empathize with this state of pandemic being.

Now consider living this way for a reason other than a pandemic: your hesitancy and trepidation about walking out the

door is because some hate you enough to harm you ... just because of how you look ... This inescapable torment is the current reality for many Asians, Asian Americans, and Asian-appearing people in this country.”<sup>14</sup>

The IAAS Covid-19 Survey asked respondents about their own experiences of racial prejudice and discrimination in Greater Boston. As shown in Chart F, more than half (54%) of Chinese and more than a third (36%) of Vietnamese respondents indicated that people acted afraid of them because of their racial background. Large percentages of all Asian American ethnicities reported that people disrespected or were less courteous to them because of their racial background, including Chinese (49%), Vietnamese (68%), and South Asians (57%). The largest ethnic category of respondents who had felt threatened or harassed because of their race was the Vietnamese (27%) and second largest was the Chinese (15%). The largest ethnic category who reported receiving poorer service because of their race was the South Asians (43%).

*Of those surveyed, about 43 percent of South Asians said they had received poorer service.*

*About 27 percent of Vietnamese American respondents indicated that they were threatened or harassed because of their racial background.*

Among those surveyed, 68.2 percent of the Vietnamese Americans, 49.3 percent of the Chinese Americans, and 57.1 percent of the South Asians said that they were treated with less courtesy and respect because of their racial background. Responding to questions about other forms of prejudice, 42.9 percent of South Asians said they had received poorer service, and 27.3 percent of Vietnamese American respondents were threatened or harassed because of their racial background. As earlier noted, these percentages do not represent estimates for the actual ethnic populations in Greater Boston but are proportions within the convenience survey sample.

Asian Americans have felt the brunt of racism in the U.S. for centuries. Anti-Asian racism not only worsened the immediate impact of the pandemic but stirred up pain, anger, fear, and division that are more deeply rooted in societal inequities and prejudiced attitudes. Threats and experiences of harassment are not simply random instances of discourteous social behavior, but aggressive acts targeted towards a group of people on account of their race. It is especially concerning that nearly a quarter of Vietnamese survey participants reported that they received threats and harassment, a higher proportion than other ethnic groups. The reasons for this finding warrant further study. Anti-Asian rhetoric pointed to the “China virus”. Chinese

Americans and Asian Americans of other ethnicities were lumped together as a racial group in a groundswell of racially hostile feelings stirred up by prejudiced elites. The Vietnamese who replied to the IAAS Covid-19 survey may have been disproportionately exposed to racist threats because their occupations and places of residence were not as varied as other ethnic groups in the IAAS sample. As noted earlier, the estimates for ethnic groups, including a small sample of Vietnamese Americans, are not meant to be representative of the ethnic populations in Greater Boston. The authors are not aware of evidence in other reports that the Vietnamese were targeted more than Chinese or South Asians in the U.S. population at large. Nonetheless, the survey indicates that instances of racial prejudice were frequent.

Experiences of racial prejudice and discrimination were shared between Asian Americans in the IAAS Covid-19 Survey regardless of household income. For example, in Table 12, among people with household incomes less than \$30,000, 48 percent reported people acting afraid of them, which was similar to the percent of persons in the middle-income bracket (\$30,000 to \$99,000 household income) at about 46.4 percent and somewhat less than the percent of persons in the upper-income bracket (greater than \$99,000) who reported this experience at 50 percent. However, the upper-income category is unstable because the number of persons reporting incomes at that level is extremely small in the sample.

Taken together, the patterns indicate that prejudice Asian Americans experienced racism across income levels. The IAAS Covid-19 Survey did not ask about the mental health impacts of racial discrimination. There is a need for more detailed information about the scope and impact of prejudice during the pandemic. The fear of venturing out into unfriendly environments and encountering racial prejudice adds to the mental stress of living in linguistically isolated communities in pandemic times.

*Among those surveyed, about 68 percent of the Vietnamese Americans, 49 percent of the Chinese Americans, and 57 percent of the South Asians said that they were treated with less courtesy and respect because of their racial background.*

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## *IV.* SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The IAAS Covid-19 Survey adds vital information not available in previous reports on the pandemic's impact on Asian American communities in Greater Boston. Many Asian Americans in Greater Boston live in poverty or at low-income levels. They are among the most vulnerable residents of this metropolitan area to the devastating health and economic harms of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, but their presence among Greater Boston's multi-ethnic population and hardships are largely invisible in public discourse about the pandemic's impact. The IAAS Covid-19 Survey helps bring to light how the pandemic affected this sector, including their significant loss of income and worries about health risk and paying bills, which for the lower-income sector were at rates comparable to other racial-ethnic minorities in Boston in the NSF Beacon sample. Moreover, a significant proportion of the IAAS Covid-19 Survey respondents faced Covid-19 occupational risk, lived in households with four or more adults, and believed that their pre-existing health status put them at Covid-19 risk as well.

In an alarming spate of racist rhetoric spread by influential political leaders and opinion-leaders, Asian Americans were blamed for the pandemic and even cast as personifications of the virus itself. For members of the Asian American communities of Greater Boston, it will not be surprising that nearly half of our survey respondents reported that people acted afraid of them because of their race. Over a quarter of the Vietnamese Americans who participated in the survey reported being threatened or harassed because of their race, and over 40 percent of the South Asian respondents reported receiving poorer service because of their race. We recommend that Massachusetts lawmakers and agencies responsible for public health, economic and social services, and racial equity take the following urgent steps:



1. Increase funding for mental health services and research to inform its delivery with focused attention on the effects of anti-Asian racism and the effects of the pandemic on the well-being in Asian American communities in Massachusetts.
2. Increase funding for emergency aid and social-economic research on effective means to help lower-income workers and small businesses in Asian American communities recover from the pandemic
3. Expansion of social service provision with equitable access for Asian Americans with limited English proficiency, economic means, and face social isolation heightened by anti-Asian racism, which impedes participation in civic life, communication with social service providers, or contact government agencies.
4. Support for social and public health research on the impact of the pandemic in low-income Asian American communities not reached in this survey, especially the Cambodian American communities in Lowell and Lawrence, and Vietnamese Americans and other Asian Americans in Worcester.
5. Investment for data collection efforts in multiple languages and to obtain larger representative samples of Asian Americans, including Southeast Asian Americans in Boston, Malden, and Quincy.



When Wah Lum Kung Fu & Taichi Academy in Malden closed during the pandemic, the owner Sifu Mai Du inspired creation of a mural by local artists and youth directed by Shaina Lu to honor unity and solidarity. Diana Jeong, vice president of the Greater Malden Asian American Coalition board, recalls how “the bright colors and the location of the kung fu school allowed everyone to pause and reflect.” (Photo courtesy of Diana Jeong.)



The Quincy Asian Resources Inc, or QARI, distributed food to community residents. QARI also partnered with South Shore Health to bring vaccines to the community. (Photo by Quincy Asian Resources, Inc.)

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Center for Survey Research at UMass Boston developed and used the Beacon methodology in a series of panel studies of Bostonians in 25 neighborhoods.

<sup>2</sup> Yellow Horse, Aggie, Russell Jeung, Richard Lim, Boaz Tang, Megan Im, Lauryn Higashiyama, Layla Schweng, and Mikayla Chen. “Stop AAPI Hate National Report.” Stop AAPI Hate, 2021. <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Stop-AAPI-Hate-National-Report-Final.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> “Velázquez, Chu, Meng Bill Would Assist Small Businesses Harmed by Coronavirus.” Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez | Representing the 7th District of New York, March 20, 2020. Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez. <https://velazquez.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/velazquez-chu-meng-bill-would-assist-small-businesses-harmed-coronavirus>; Mar, Don, and Paul Ong. “COVID-19’s Employment Disruptions to Asian Americans.” AAPI Nexus: Policy, Practice and Community 17, no. 1 & 2 (December 3, 2020). <http://www.aapinexus.org/2020/12/03/covid-19s-employment-disruptions-to-asian-americans/>.

<sup>4</sup> “FBI Releases Updated 2020 Hate Crime Statistics.” Federal Bureau of Investigation, October 25, 2021. FBI National Press Office. <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-releases-updated-2020-hate-crime-statistics>.

<sup>5</sup> Hahm, Hyeouk Chris, Casey D. Xavier Hall, Kana Tsurudome Garcia, Anna Cavallino, Yoonsook Ha, Yvette C. Cozier, and Cindy Liu. “Experiences of COVID-19-Related Anti-Asian Discrimination and Affective Reactions in a Multiple Race Sample of U.S. Young Adults.” BMC Public Health 21, no. 1 (August 18, 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11559-1>.

<sup>6</sup> The Center for Survey Research’s published reports on the NSF Beacon Survey used a weighting method to provide estimates of responses for Asian Americans and other racial-ethnic groups. However, the estimates for Asian Americans are not reliable because they were assigned the weighting factor for all “Other” races, rather than a weight for Asian Americans as a distinct group. The reports may be found at <https://www.umb.edu/csr>

<sup>7</sup> See detailed information from U.S. census data compiled by the Institute for Asian American Studies at <https://www.umb.edu/iaas/census>

<sup>8</sup> Kochhar, Rakesh, and Anthony Cilluffo. “Income Inequality in the U.S. Is Rising Most Rapidly among Asians.” Pew Research Center’s Social & Demographic Trends Project. Pew Research Center, July 12, 2018. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/07/12/income-inequality-in-the-u-s-is-rising-most-rapidly-among-asians/>

<sup>9</sup> Khanijahani, Ahmad, Shabnam Iezadi, Kamal Gholipour, Saber Azami-Aghdash, and Deniz Naghibi. “A Systematic Review of Racial/Ethnic and Socioeconomic Disparities in Covid-19.” International Journal for Equity in Health 20, no. 1 (November 24, 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-021-01582-4>.

<sup>10</sup> A full list of tables is shown at the beginning of the Appendix. Some of the tabular data is discussed in the report but not shown in charts, such as number of adults living in households; other tables are provided only for background reference, such as on respondent’s evaluation of their own health.

<sup>11</sup> More details on occupations of sample respondents are available on request to the authors.

<sup>12</sup> Flaskerud, Jacquelyn H. “Masks, Politics, Culture and Health.” Issues in Mental Health Nursing 41, no. 9 (July 9, 2020): 846–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01612840.2020.1779883>.

<sup>13</sup> Yellow Horse et al., “Stop AAPI Hate National Report.”

<sup>14</sup> Kiao, Audiey C. “Invisibility of Anti-Asian Racism.” AMA Journal of Ethics 23, no. 7 (July 1, 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1001/amajethics.2021.507>.

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# APPENDIX

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**Table 1: Age, Gender, Education: Asian Americans in IAAS and NSF Beacon Samples**

		Asian		
		IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	ACS (Boston)
Age	18 to 34	34.40%	47.90%	49.30%
	35 to 44	21.40%	16.00%	14.30%
	45 to 64	27.10%	21.50%	22.10%
	65 or older	17.20%	14.60%	14.30%
	Total	100% (n=192)	100% (n=144)	100% (n=60,136)
Gender	Male	26.80%	40.10%	45.50%
	Female	73.20%	59.90%	54.50%
	Total	100% (n=190)	100% (n=147)	100% (n=60,136)
Education	8th grade or less	12.00%	5.50%	14.60%
	Some HS	7.30%	4.80%	3.90%
	HS grad or GED	25.70%	8.30%	13.90%
	Some college or 2yr	13.60%	8.30%	10.60%
	4yr college graduate	26.70%	22.80%	23.50%
	More than 4yr college grad.	14.70%	50.30%	33.40%
	Total	100% (n=191)	100% (n=145)	100%

The total counts are of Asian Americans. Among 199 persons who completed the questionnaire, 192 respondents identified as Asian or Asian American; 7 identified with other race-ethnicities.

**Table 2: Age, Gender, Education: Ethnic Groups in IAAS Sample**

		Asian Ethnicity				
		Chinese	Vietnamese	South Asian	Other	Total
Age groups	18-34	25.30%	41.90%	46.20%	26.30%	32.6% (n=60)
	35-49	29.50%	29.00%	35.90%	52.60%	33.2% (n=61)
	50-64	20.00%	9.70%	15.40%	15.80%	16.8% (n=31)
	65+	25.30%	19.40%	2.60%	5.30%	17.4% (n=32)
	Total	100% (n=95)	100% (n=31)	100% (n=39)	100% (n=19)	100% (n=184)
Gender	Male	25.30%	22.60%	41.00%	15.80%	27.2% (n=50)
	Female	73.70%	77.40%	59.00%	84.20%	72.3% (n=133)
	Other	1.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.5% (n=1)
Education	Total	100% (n=95)	100% (n=31)	100% (n=39)	100% (n=19)	100% (n=184)
	8th grade or less	10.50%	25.80%	13.20%	0.00%	12.6% (n=23)
	Some HS	10.50%	3.20%	7.90%	0.00%	7.7% (n=14)
	HS grad or GED	30.50%	32.30%	18.40%	5.30%	25.7% (n=47)
	Some college or 2yr	15.80%	6.50%	13.20%	5.30%	12.6% (n=23)
	4yr college graduate	21.10%	22.60%	34.20%	47.40%	26.8% (n=49)
	More than 4yr college grad.	11.60%	9.70%	13.20%	42.10%	14.8% (n=27)
	Total	100% (n=95)	100% (n=31)	100% (n=38)	100% (n=19)	100% (n=183)

The total counts are of Asian Americans. Among 199 persons who completed the questionnaire, 192 respondents identified as Asian or Asian American; 7 identified with other race-ethnicities.



**Table 3: Household Income**

Which category comes closest to your household income, before taxes, last year?

		Asian						
		IAAS	NSF	ACS (Boston)	ACS (Quincy)	ACS (Cambridge)	ACS (Malden)	ACS (Everett)
INCOME	Low Income (<\$30,000)	47.00%	25.90%	39.40%	23.40%	16.70%	28.40%	17.30%
	Middle Income (\$30,000 to \$99,999)	44.80%	38.10%	29.20%	41.00%	34.60%	41.10%	57.10%
	High Income (\$100,000 or more)	8.30%	36.00%	31.40%	35.50%	48.70%	30.50%	25.60%
Total		100.0% (n=181)	100.0% (n=139)	100% (n=27,079)	100% (n=9150)	100% (n=6810)	100% (n=5029)	100% (n=1102)

**Table 4: Had COVID-19**

Do you think that you have had the COVID-19 coronavirus?

	IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	NSF, Black	NSF, Latino	NSF, White
Yes	5.20%	5.20%	10.20%	12.20%	9.80%
No	80.10%	69.60%	67.40%	67.70%	68.10%
Not sure	14.70%	25.20%	22.50%	20.10%	22.10%
Total	100.0% (n=191)	100.0% (n=135)	100.0% (n=187)	100.0% (n=164)	100.0% (n=1028)

**Table 5: Testing for COVID-19**

Have you been tested for the COVID 19 coronavirus?

	IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	NSF, Black	NSF, Latino	NSF, White
Yes	36.80%	19.30%	33.00%	35.20%	25.60%
No	63.20%	80.70%	67.00%	64.80%	74.40%
Total	100.0% (n=190)	100.0% (n=135)	100.0% (n=185)	100.0% (n=162)	100.0% (n=1028)

**Table 6: Overall Health**

In general, how would you rate your overall health?

	IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	NSF, Black	NSF, Latino	NSF, White
Poor	3.60%	0.00%	3.20%	1.80%	1.20%
Fair	12.00%	4.40%	17.70%	10.40%	4.40%
Good	33.90%	28.70%	27.40%	24.50%	17.90%
Very good	33.90%	39.70%	36.60%	38.00%	42.60%
Excellent	16.70%	27.20%	15.10%	25.20%	33.90%
Total	100.0% (n=192)	100.0% (n=136)	100.0% (n=186)	100.0% (n=163)	100.0% (n=1028)

**Table 7: Health Conditions**

Do you have any health conditions that put you at higher than average risk from the effects of COVID-19?					
	IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	NSF, Black	NSF, Latino	NSF, White
Yes	33.50%	19.70%	50.30%	28.40%	29.30%
No	66.50%	80.30%	49.70%	71.60%	70.70%
Total	100.0% (n=191)	100.0% (n=137)	100.0% (n=185)	100.0% (n=162)	100.0% (n=1028)

**Table 8: Contact with the Public for Work**

Does your current work put in you contact with the public?					
	IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	NSF, Black	NSF, Latino	NSF, White
Yes	74.10%	47.60%	65.50%	67.70%	49.70%
No	25.90%	52.40%	34.50%	32.30%	50.30%
Total	100.0% (n=85)	100.0% (n=42)	100.0% (n=55)	100.0% (n=62)	100.0% (n=308)

**Table 9: When They Started Wearing Face Masks**

Thinking about the time of the COVID-19 shutdown that started in March 2020, when did you start wearing a face mask or covering when you went outside your home?

	IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	NSF, Black	NSF, Latino	NSF, White
Early	71.10%	68.10%	60.80%	66.00%	58.60%
Mid	22.60%	23.70%	29.30%	27.70%	32.90%
Late	6.30%	8.10%	9.90%	6.30%	8.50%
Total	100.0% (n=190)	100.0% (n=135)	100.0% (n=181)	100.0% (n=159)	100.0% (n=1023)

**Table 10: Opinions on COVID-19 Restrictions**

Overall, thinking about restrictions that have been put in place in your neighborhood to prevent the COVID-19 coronavirus from spreading, do you think these restrictions have...

	IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	NSF, Black	NSF, Latino	NSF, White
Not gone far enough	50.80%	32.60%	24.70%	29.00%	25.70%
Been about right	41.40%	64.40%	72.50%	64.20%	68.40%
Gone too far	7.90%	3.00%	2.70%	6.80%	6.00%
Total	100.0% (n=191)	100.0% (n=135)	100.0% (n=182)	100.0% (n=162)	100.0% (n=1025)

**Table 11: Anti-Asian Experiences**

Please think about how things have been going for you since COVID-19 started in March 2020. Since COVID-19, have any of the following things happened to you because your racial background is Asian or Asian American?

		Asian Ethnicity				
		Chinese	Vietnamese	South Asian	Other	Total
People acted afraid of you	Yes	53.70%	36.40%	14.30%	44.40%	44.6% (n=50)
	No	46.30%	63.60%	85.70%	55.60%	55.4% (n=62)
Was treated with less courtesy and respect	Yes	49.30%	68.20%	57.10%	77.80%	56.3% (n=63)
	No	50.70%	31.80%	42.90%	22.20%	43.8% (n=49)
Received poorer service	Yes	9.00%	22.70%	42.90%	11.10%	16.1% (n=18)
	No	91.00%	77.30%	57.10%	88.90%	83.9% (n=94)
Been threatened or harassed	Yes	14.90%	27.30%	0.00%	33.30%	17.0% (n=19)
	No	85.10%	72.70%	100.00%	66.70%	83.0% (n=93)
Total		n=67	n=22	n=14	n=9	n=112

**Table 12: Anti-Asian Experiences: People Acting Afraid of You (Income-Based)**

Please think about how things have been going for you since COVID-19 started in March 2020. Since COVID-19, have any of the following things happened to you because your racial background is Asian or Asian American?

		IAAS Asian Income			
		Low Income (<\$30,000)	Middle Income (\$30,000 to \$99,999)	High Income (\$100,000 or more)	Total
People acted afraid of you	Yes	48.00%	46.40%	50.00%	47.3% (n=53)
	No	52.00%	53.60%	50.00%	52.7% (n=59)
	Total	100.0% (n=50)	100.0% (n=56)	100.0% (n=6)	100.0% (n=112)

**Table 13: Worried About Rent/Mortgage**

How worried are you that you will not be able to make a rent or mortgage payment?

	IAAS Asian Income			
	Low Income (<\$30,000)	Middle Income (\$30,000-\$49,999)	High Income (\$100,000 or more)	Total
Not at all or Not too worried	13.10%	44.40%	93.30%	33.90%
Somewhat worried	35.70%	22.20%	6.70%	27.20%
Very or Extremely Worried	51.20%	33.30%	0.00%	38.90%
Total	100.0% (n=84)	100.0% (n=81)	100.0% (n=15)	100.0% (n=180)

**Table 14: Worried About Affording Food**

How worried are you that you will run out of food because of a lack of money or resources?

	IAAS Asian Income			
	Low Income (<\$30,000)	Middle Income (\$30,000-\$49,999)	High Income (\$100,000 or more)	Total
Not at all or Not too worried	27.40%	53.10%	100.00%	45.00%
Somewhat worried	28.60%	21.00%	0.00%	22.80%
Very or Extremely Worried	44.00%	25.90%	0.00%	32.20%
Total	100.0% (n=84)	100.0% (n=81)	100.0% (n=15)	100.0% (n=180)

**Table 15: Work Hours**

Were your work hours reduced because of the pandemic?

	Asian Ethnicity				
	Chinese	Vietnamese	South Asian	Other	Total
Yes	52.60%	63.30%	62.10%	36.80%	54.50%
No	47.40%	36.70%	37.90%	63.20%	45.50%
Total	100.0% (n=78)	100.0% (n=30)	100.0% (n=29)	100.0% (n=19)	100.0% (n=156)

**Table 16: Children Living in Household**

How many children 17 or younger, if any, usually live in your home with you?

	IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	NSF, Black	NSF, Latino	NSF, White
0	55.00%	77.40%	70.20%	62.00%	86.70%
1	18.30%	10.90%	17.60%	17.20%	6.60%
2	20.40%	9.50%	6.40%	12.30%	5.30%
3	3.70%	1.50%	3.20%	6.70%	1.10%
4+	2.60%	0.70%	2.70%	1.80%	0.30%
Total	100.0% (n=191)	100.0% (n=137)	100.0% (n=188)	100.0% (n=163)	100.0% (n=1031)

**Table 17: Adults Living in Household**

Including you, how many adults 18 years of age or older usually live or stay in your home?

	IAAS, Asian	NSF, Asian	NSF, Black	NSF, Latino	NSF, White
1	26.10%	37.30%	49.70%	31.20%	41.40%
2	43.20%	44.00%	31.30%	42.00%	45.70%
3	10.80%	9.00%	11.70%	13.40%	8.00%
4+	19.90%	9.70%	7.30%	13.40%	4.80%
Total	100.0% (n=176)	100.0% (n=134)	100.0% (n=179)	100.0% (n=157)	100.0% (n=1019)

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# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Carolyn Wong, PhD, is a Research Associate at the Institute for Asian American Studies at UMass Boston. Her recent publications include *Voting Together: Intergenerational Politics and Civic Engagement Among Hmong Americans*, articles on educating Boston Chinatown residents about air pollution; and a report on increased risk for problem gambling among residents and workers in Chinatown as a result of casino expansion. A political scientist, Wong studies the politics of social equality, participatory democracy, and health communication in Asian American communities.

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Ziting Kuang received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology at UMass Boston, where she has worked as a research assistant at the Institute for Asian American Studies. She will begin graduate studies in the Master of Arts Program in Mental Health Counseling at Boston College in Fall 2022. Kuang immigrated from Hong Kong as a teenager. She plans to serve clients of diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds in Greater Boston, including Chinatown, where she resides with her family.



## INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

*University of Massachusetts Boston*

The Institute for Asian American Studies (IAAS) at the University of Massachusetts Boston conducts community-based research on Asian American issues; provides data and analysis about Asian Americans to policymakers, service providers, educators and students, foundations, the media, and community groups; and contributes to the success of Asian American students and the enrichment of Asian American studies on campus.

100 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MA 02125-3393  
(617) 287-5650  
[WWW.UMB.EDU/IAAS](http://WWW.UMB.EDU/IAAS)  
[ASIANAMINST@UMB.EDU](mailto:ASIANAMINST@UMB.EDU)

