

Vietnamese Americans

LESSONS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Socioeconomic Status of Vietnamese Americans

Census data show that the socioeconomic status of the Vietnamese American population had significantly improved from 1980 to 1990. In this ten-year period:

- The proportion of college graduates among Vietnamese American adults age 25 and over was 17 percent, up from 13 percent;
- The labor force participation rate of Vietnamese Americans age 16 and over grew from 57 percent to 65 percent, equaling that of the general American population; and
- Ethnic entrepreneurship burgeoned to 7 percent as compared to 3 percent in 1980.

By 1990, the median household income of Vietnamese Americans stood at \$29,772, more than double what it had been the previous decade and almost equal to the \$30,056 median income of all American households.

Despite these improvements, census data also show significant socioeconomic disparities between Vietnamese Americans and their American counterparts. Although Vietnamese American household income are on par with all American households, the 1990 Census reported that more than one out of every five Vietnamese families contained three or more workers, significantly more than the all American families combined.

Moreover, the per capita income of the Vietnamese American population was \$11,027, compared to \$14,420 for all Americans and \$15,687 for white Americans. In percentage terms, the Vietnamese American per capita income was 31 percent and 42 percent less than those of the entire U.S. population and the white population, respectively.

In 1990, substantially more Vietnamese American families are struggling below the poverty line than average American families, 24 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

NOTE: FOR UPDATED INFORMATION BASED ON THE 2000 CENSUS, PLEASE VISIT WWW.CENSUS.GOV