

## THE CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY

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# Foundation Support Stagnates for Asian-American Causes

By Caroline Preston

Foundation giving to Asian-American causes has not kept pace with the rapid growth in the number of Asian-Americans in the United States, says a new report.

Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders now number 12 million, or 4.5 percent of the nation's population — a 70-percent increase over the past decade.

But from 1990 to 2002 national foundations donated an average of just 0.4 percent of grant dollars to help Asian-Americans, according to the report by Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy.

"Funding has stayed the same," says Stefanie Ritoper, a co-author of the study, which looked at the giving patterns of 20 large, national foundations that have operated for at least two decades. "That's surprising given the increase in foundation assets and the growing needs in Asian-American communities."

### 'Model Minority' Factor

One factor behind the sluggish giving may be the Asian-American community's reputation as a "model minority" — a group that has thrived in the United States.

"This population tends to get glossed over because of the 'model minority' label," says Albert Yee, a program officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, one of the grant makers surveyed.

"There are some segments of the population that are doing well, but there are also many segments that are struggling with issues of immigration status, language barriers, access to services, education differences, and poverty."

The report also found some disparities in grant allocation.

Charities led by Asian-Americans, for example, seemed to have a more difficult time winning big grants than did organizations with broader missions. Groups run by Asian-Americans received just 32 percent of grants of \$500,000 or more that went to Asian-American issues, the report said.

Foundations gave little to help Asian-Americans recover from disasters, despite the impact of both the 2001 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina on some Asian-American neighborhoods in New York and the Gulf Coast. Out of the \$37.6-million that the 20 grant makers in the study donated to Asian-American causes in 2002, for example, just \$2.2-million went to help people affected by the terrorist attacks.

"In times of disaster, Asian-American and Pacific Islander communities often turn to people who are culturally sensitive, speak their language, and are familiar with their issues," says Ms. Ritoper, who is California program associate for the National Gender and Equity Campaign at Asian American/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy. "The one-size-fits-all approach used in past disasters hasn't helped out Asian-American communities."

Foundations have also overlooked some geographic trends in their giving to Asian-American causes, the

report says.

While California and New York — the two states with the biggest Asian populations — won the most grant dollars, other states with large numbers of Asian-Americans received far less money. Hawaii, the state with the third-largest number of Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, won just \$5.3-million over the 13-year period, while New Jersey, home to more than half a million Asians, received just one grant of \$30,000.

The report, "Growing Opportunities: Will Funding Follow the Rise in Foundation Assets and Growth of AAPI Populations?," is available for download on the organization's [Web site](#).

Copies may also be obtained by contacting the organization at [membership@aapip.org](mailto:membership@aapip.org).

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