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Asian-Americans Live Well in the Garden State

By [LISA FLEISHER](#)

Asian-Americans in New Jersey live longer, earn more and are better educated than other residents of the Garden State.

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Emile Wamsteker for The Wall Street Journal

Dr. Bhupendra Kapadia walks through the living room of his Warren home with a cup of Indian tea.





They have a life expectancy of 91.8 years in New Jersey, compared to 79.7 years for the state's general population, according to a study run by the Social Science Research Council, a New York City-based nonprofit. For the entire U.S., the average Asian-American lives 87.3 years.

Asian-Americans in New Jersey earn a median income of \$50,069, and completing an graduate or masters degree at more than 2.5 times the rate as the general America population. The study defined Asian-Americans as people originally from East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. In Jersey, 7.8% of the population is Asian, compared with 4.6% for the U.S., according to the 2009 Census.

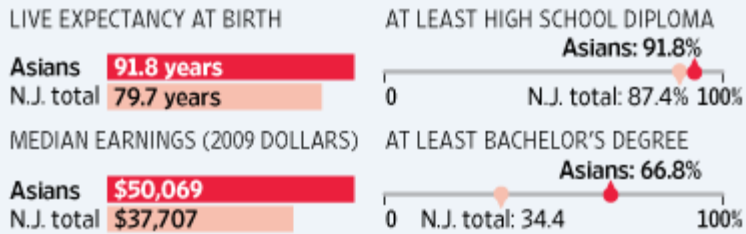
The state has become a magnet for well-paid, well-educated Asians because of its large pharmaceutical, chemical and communications industries, said Allan Punzalan Isaac, a professor at Rutgers University specializing in Asian- American cultural studies.

Sonia Lee, a gregarious real estate agent in Palisades Park, credited a plant-based diet along with fish, but little red meat, as helping extend life expectancy for Asian-Americans in the state. "It puts a lot of pressure on the kids, because then you have to take care of your parents longer," she quipped.

Kristen Lewis, co-author of the study, pegged New Jersey's rankings to its heavy spending on services such as education and preventative healthcare.

Ahead of the Pack

Asian Americans live better lives than other ethnic groups in New Jersey, according to a new analysis.



Source: American Human Development Project of the Social Science Research Council

The large Asian-American population is self-perpetuating. People immigrate to join friends and neighbors, creating a large support network for the ethnic group, including Asian churches, grocery stores and restaurants.

Bhupendra Kapadia moved away from New Jersey in the 1990s. But in 1996, after three years in Ogallala, Neb., the Indian-born surgeon was ready to move back to New Jersey.

In Nebraska, he had to drive more than three hours to Denver to eat at an Indian restaurant. But there's one right in his current hometown of Warren, N.J. He also is able to see his 85-year-old mother, who splits the year between India and New Jersey. His father lived to be 93.

New Jersey "offers everything you need in life: Good friends, good culture," said Mr. Kapadia, now 66 and retired. "Except for a little bit of cold weather, I enjoy everything else."

Mr. Kapadia's brother, Indravadan Kapadia, is president of the Indian Cultural Association of Central Jersey.

"We are family oriented people," Indravadan Kapadia said. "When your family's there, you're going to enjoy it more and have a better life."