

# Spotlight on the 50+ AAPI Population



*Survey research and analysis by AAPI Data*

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## Summary

The Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander population above the age of 50 is one of the fastest growing segments of an already rapidly growing racial group. However, gaps in civic engagement, education, and outreach persist for AAPI, particularly AAPI 50+. There is a lack of outreach for both voting and volunteerism, as well as a lack of outreach through popular mediums, such as ethnic media.

AAPI 50+ have consistent policy preferences—they are supportive of environmental protection and a social safety net, as well as affirmative action and increasing the minimum wage. Particular issue concerns for AAPI 50+ include age discrimination, persisting debt, fraud, and identity theft.

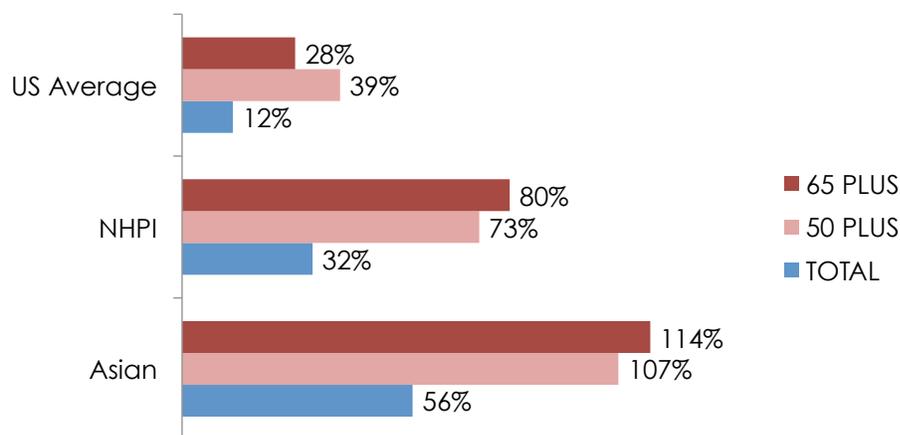
## Growth

The exponential growth of the of the AAPI population has translated into even more significant growth for the 50+ segment of the community. While the growth rate of the total U.S. population sits at 12%, the growth rate of the Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islander (NHPI) population is higher at 32%, and the growth rate of the Asian population is even stronger at 56%.

And while the rate of growth for the American 50+ population is rapidly increasing (39% growth between 2000 and 2013), the growth of the AANHPI population of 50+ residents has grown even faster. From 2000 to 2013, the NHPI population 50+ grew at 73%, and the population 65+ grew at 80%. The Asian population grew even faster, at 107% for those age 50 and older, and at 114% for the 65+ population.

Figure 1

Growth Rate of the Asian and NHPI population, 2000-2013



Source: American Community Survey and the U.S. Census

## Civic Engagement

Despite this substantial population growth, there is a lag in civic engagement for 50+ AAPI. This gap is particularly noticeable, given the overall high expectations of civic engagement among America’s seniors. Citizenship and voter registration are two hurdles for AAPI above the age of 50, as both lag behind 50+ populations of other racial groups.

The citizenship rates of Asian Americans and NHPIs are lower than the U.S. average, for both the overall AAPI population and those 50 plus. Overall, the Asian American population has a citizenship rate of 66%, a notably lower rate than the national average, at 91%, and especially lower than whites and African Americans, who have citizenship rates of 96% and 95%, respectively. These patterns make sense, given that Asian Americans are by far the most heavily foreign-born group in the United States (Ramakrishnan and Ahmad, “State of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders,” *Center for American Progress*, 2014).

While citizenship rates are a bit higher for AAPIs 50 plus, the numbers still lag behind other communities. Nationally, the 50 plus citizenship rate is at 95%, compared to 77% for Asian Americans 50+ and 90% for NHPIs 50+.

The 50+ white population, however, has a citizenship rate of 99%, and the 50+ African American population has a citizenship rate of 97%. Thus even though the AA and NHPI 50+ populations have citizenship rates greater than the overall rates for AAPIs, there are still some significant racial gaps in citizenship for this age demographic.

Figure 2  
Citizenship Rates Among Adults (2012)

	Overall	50 and over
U.S. Average	91%	95%
White	96%	99%
African American	95%	97%
Latino	66%	74%
<b>Asian American</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>NHPI</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>90%</b>

Source: Current Population Survey

## Outreach and Education

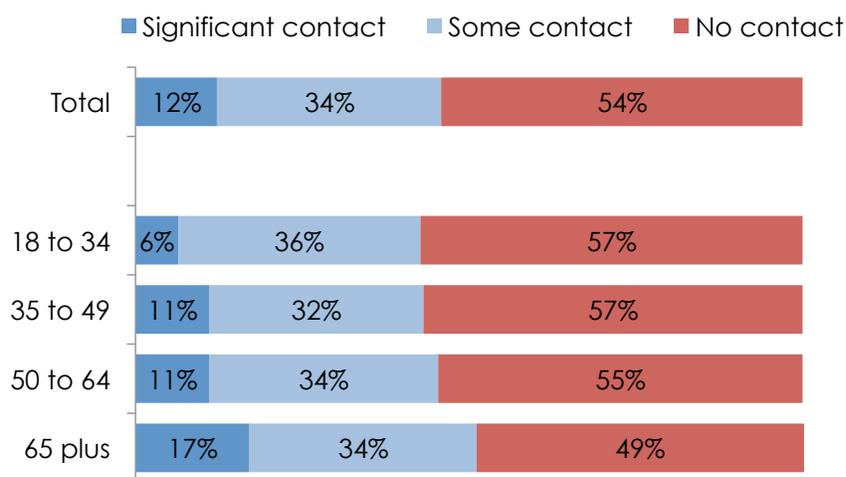
Overall, there are still significant swaths of the AAPI population that is not contacted by campaigns, political parties, or community organizations. On average, 46% of AAPIs are contacted by parties or organizations—either significant contact or even some contact. While AAPIs 18-34 have one of the lower rates of contact by any of these groups, AAPIs surveyed that are 65+ actually reported higher levels of contact overall, and especially higher rates of significant contact.

17% of AAPIs 65+ received significant contact from either political parties or community organizations, and 34% of the same population received some contact. In comparison, only 11% of AAPIs 50-64 received significant contact from these groups, and 34% of this population received some contact.

However, a majority of AAPIs overall are not being contacted by any group—54% of all AAPIs had no contact for the 2014 elections. 55% of AAPIs ages 50-64 had no contact whatsoever, and 49% of AAPIs 65+ received no contact.

Figure 3

Q: Thinking about the 2014 elections, have you been contacted by any of the following groups in the past year: a great deal, some, a little, or not at all? (The Democratic Party, The Republican Party, Community Organizations)



Source: 2014 APIAVote & AAAJ-AAJC Survey conducted by AAPI Data

There is a demonstrated need for further education and outreach in the AAPI community, including for those 50+. 67% of Asian Americans believe that politics is “too complicated,” which is higher than the national average at 54%. Broken down, Asian Americans between the

ages of 50 to 64 find politics the most “complicated,” at 70%, while 58% of those Asian Americans 65 plus find politics “too complicated.”

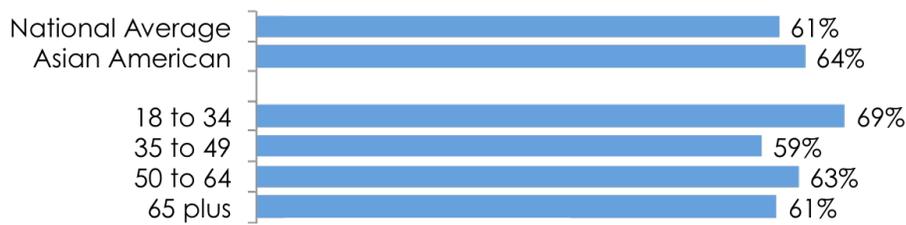
Figure 4  
Politics is “too complicated”



Source: 2014 APIAVote & AAAJ-AAJC Survey conducted by AAPI Data

Furthermore, the low levels of contact affect Asian Americans’ perceptions of politicians themselves as well—Asian Americans are more likely to believe politicians “don’t care,” at 64% compared to the national average of 61%. 63% of Asian Americans ages 50 to 64 believe politicians “don’t care,” while 61% of Asian Americans 65+ hold this view.

Figure 5  
Politicians “don’t care”

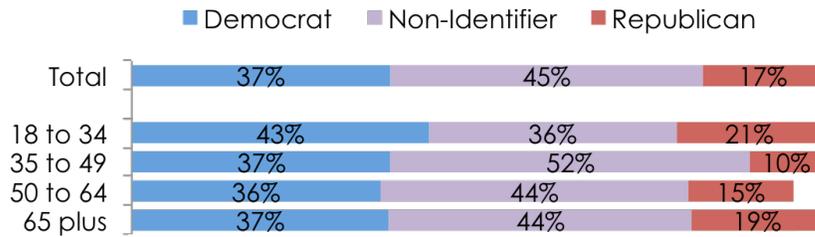


Source: 2014 APIAVote & AAAJ-AAJC Survey conducted by AAPI Data

This lack of outreach, education, and contact manifests in significant ways, such as in the low party identification among Asian Americans. Overall, 45% of Asian Americans do not identify with either of the two major political parties, while 44% of Asian Americans 50+ are non-identifiers.

Yet despite this high percentage of non-identification, Asian Americans typically lean more towards the Democratic Party than the Republican Party. 37% of Asian Americans identify as Democrat, compared to 17% Republican. These partisan identifications are strongest among Asian American youth between the ages of 18 and 34, and weaker among older generations.

Figure 6  
 Low Party Identification among Asian Americans



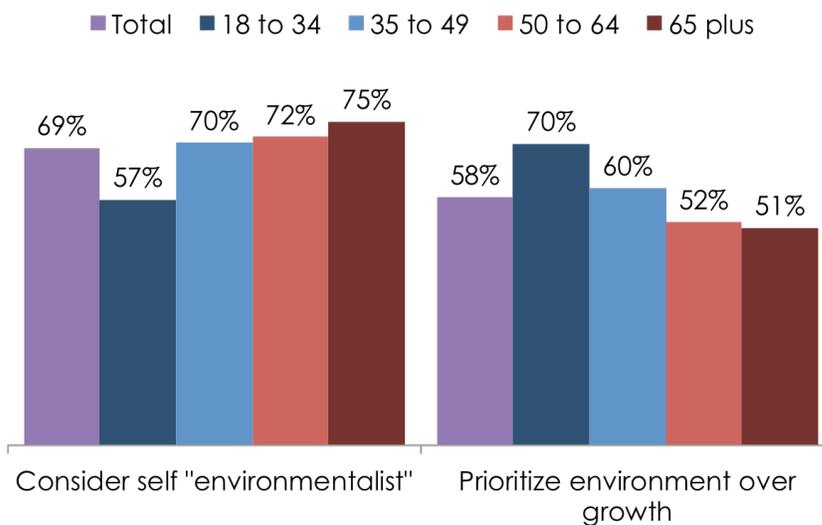
Source: 2014 APIAVote & AAPI-AAJC Survey conducted by AAPI Data

## Issues

The policy preferences of Asian Americans and NHPs are broad ranging and touch on a variety of issues. Particularly among the 50+ populations, AAPIs tend to be broadly supportive of environmental protections, a social safety net, and raising the minimum wage. 50+ AAPIs are also supportive of affirmative action, and concerned about issues such as age discrimination, debt, and fraud, to name a few.

Asian Americans generally consider themselves “environmentalists,” with that number higher for those 50+. While 57% of Asian Americans 18 to 34 consider themselves environmentalists, that number increases to 72% for those 50 to 64, and increases yet again for those 65+ to 75%.

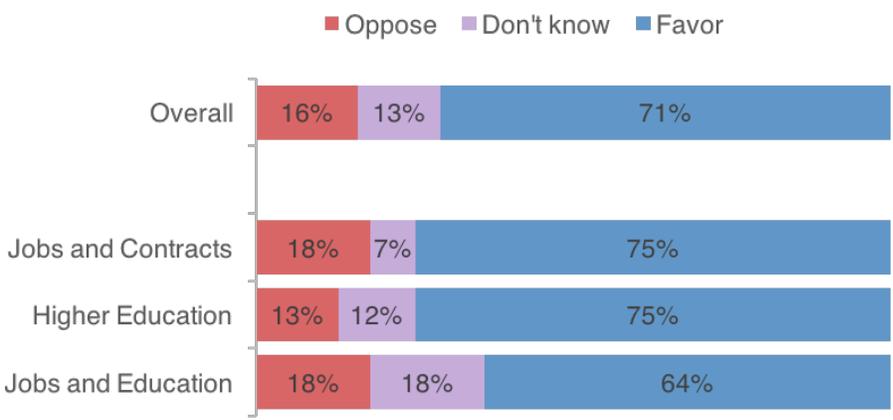
Figure 7  
 Environmental Protection among Asian Americans



Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey

On the issue of affirmative action, support was still consistent across ethnicities and conditions—whether for jobs and contracts or in higher education, Asian Americans were largely in favor of affirmative action, including the 50+ population. 71% of Asian Americans 50+ are in favor of affirmative action, while 16% oppose.

Figure 8  
Views on Affirmative Action among 50+ Asian Americans



Source: 2014 APIAVote & AAAJ-AAJC Survey conducted by AAPI Data

Asian Americans also largely support raising the federal minimum wage, at 72% overall for all Asian Americans. This number is lower for Asian Americans 50+, however, dropping to 70% in favor of raising the minimum wage compared to younger age groups.

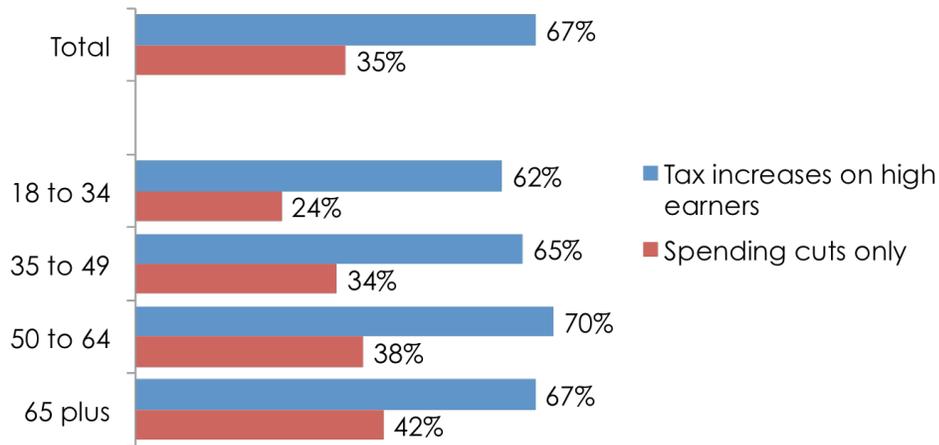
Figure 9  
Support for Raising the Federal Minimum Wage



Source: 2014 APIAVote & AAAJ-AAJC Survey conducted by AAPI Data

On the topic of reducing the deficit, Asian Americans across age groups support increasing taxes on high earners, with the most support coming from Asian Americans between the ages of 50 and 64, at 70%. More Asian Americans 50+ support spending cuts to reduce the deficit, at 38% for those 50 to 64 and 42% 65+. Still, a much greater share of Asian Americans 50+ and 65+ support tax increases as a preferred way to reduce the deficit, rather than to cut taxes.

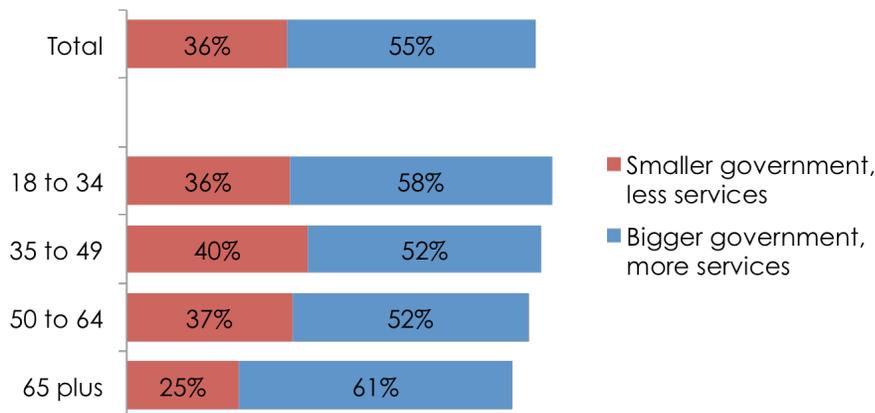
Figure 10  
Methods to Reduce Deficit



Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey

Asian Americans are also more supportive of bigger government and more services than less government and less services. Overall 55%, bigger government and more services, which is even greater among Asian Americans 65+, at 61%. In contrast, 25% of Asian Americans 65+ want to see a smaller government with less services.

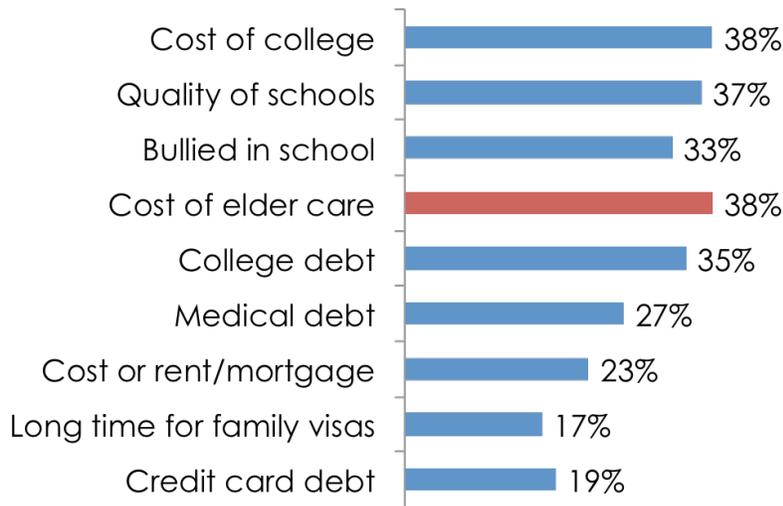
Figure 11  
Size of Government



Source: 2012 Pew Asian American Survey

Issues that Asian American seniors view as “very serious” problems foremost include cost of college, at 38% of Asian Americans 50+ naming this a very serious problem, and the cost of elder care, also at 38%.

Figure 12  
 “Very Serious” Problems for Asian Americans 50+



Source: 2012 National Asian American Survey

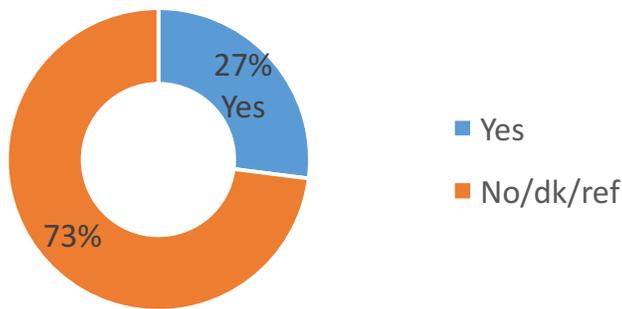
Two issues particularly pertinent to Asian Americans 50+ include consumer fraud and identity theft. 61% of Asian Americans 50+ see identity theft as a problem that they are extremely or very worried about, and 27% have encountered or know someone who encountered fraud in the last five years.

Figure 13  
 How worried are you about potentially fraudulent or deceptive practices in each category? (% Extremely or Very Worried)



Source: 2013 AARP NYC Survey

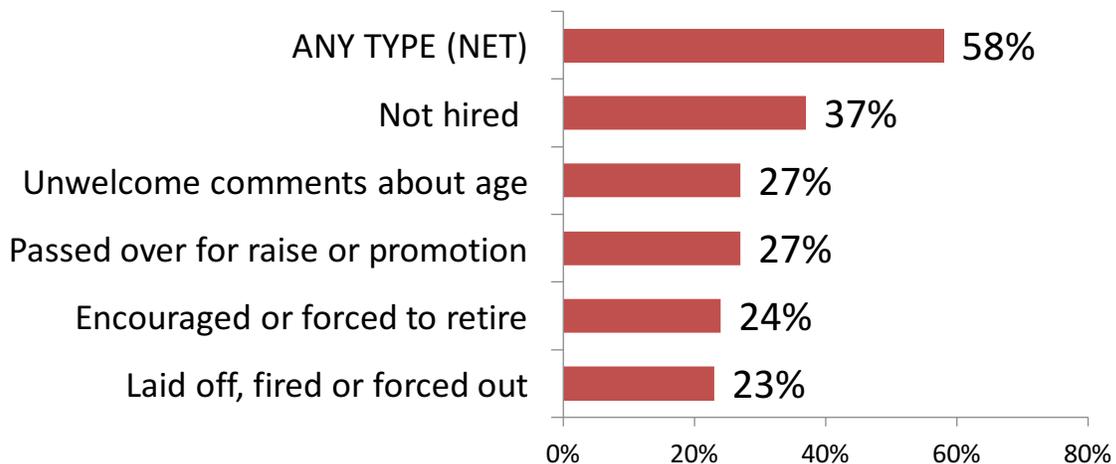
Figure 14  
 In Past 5 Years Have You or Someone You Know Encountered a Scam or Fraud?



Source: 2013 AARP NYC Survey

Finally, age discrimination in the workplace remains a concern for 50+ Asian Americans. 58% of Asian Americans 50+ in an AARP New York City Survey report some form of workplace age discrimination. Out of the 37% that report they were not hired due to age discrimination, women are most likely to report discriminatory hiring, at 43% of Asian American women 50+ surveyed.

Figure 15  
 Types of Workplace Age Discrimination Since Turning 50



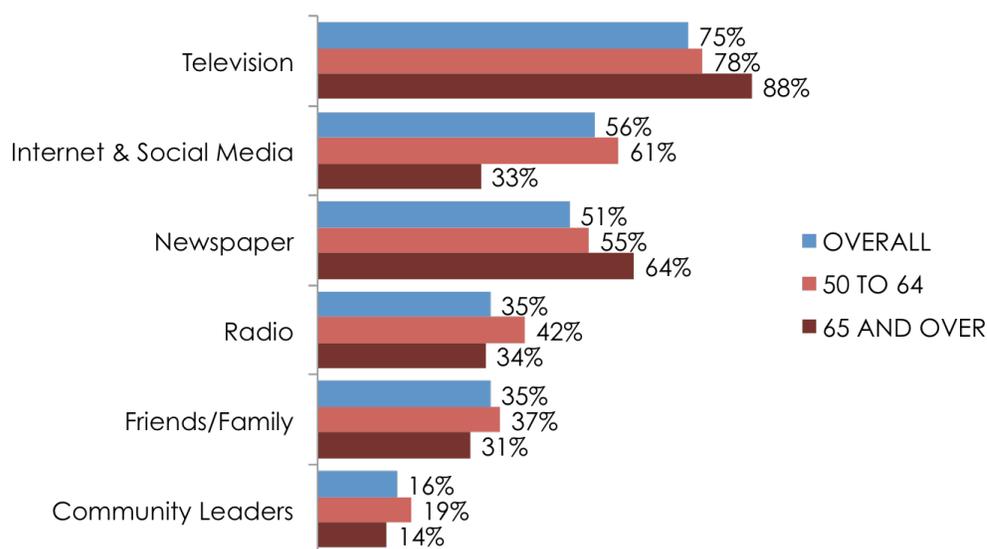
Source: 2013 AARP NYC Survey

## Ethnic Media

Information sources on politics for 50+ Asian Americans heavily depend on the media, particularly television and newspapers. Overall, Asian Americans get information on politics predominantly from television, with 75% of Asian Americans using this source, and the internet, which 56% of Asian Americans use.

For 50+ Asian Americans, however, dependence on television and newspapers increases. 78% of those between the ages of 50 to 64 watch television as a source for political information, and 55% include newspapers as a source. For 65+ Asian Americans, reliance on television increases to 88%, internet use as an information source drops to 33%, and newspaper consumption increases to 64%.

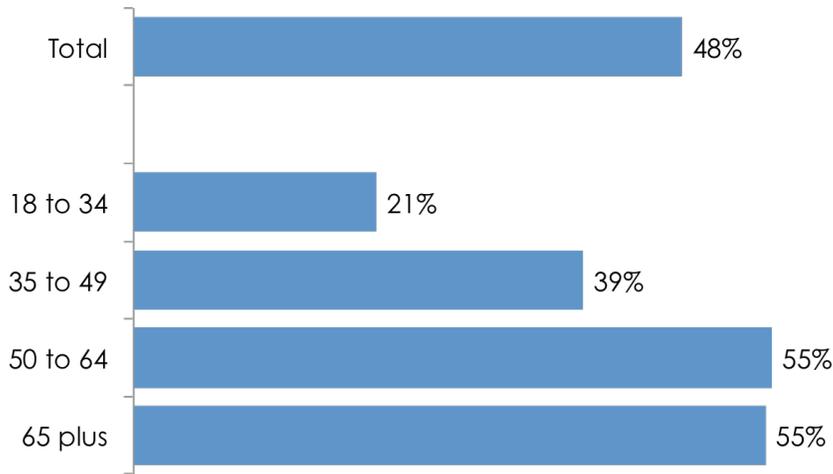
Figure 16  
Information Sources for Asian Americans



Source: 2014 APIAVote & AAAJ-AAJC Survey conducted by AAPI Data

The role of ethnic media as an information source is particularly pronounced for 50+ Asian Americans. 48% of Asian Americans consume ethnic media, whether it is television, newspapers, radio, or online. Use of ethnic media as an information source is notably higher among 50+ Asian Americans, with 55% of that age group consuming any form of ethnic media, compared to 21% of Asian Americans 18 to 34.

Figure 17  
Any Ethnic Media Consumption



Source: 2014 APIAVote & AAAJ-AAJC Survey conducted by AAPI Data

## Methodology

Data from the 2014 APIAVote & AAAJ-AAJC Survey was conducted by AAPI Data, based on telephone interviews conducted between August 14, 2014 to September 11, 2014, of 1,337 registered voters who identify as Asian American. Sampling was targeted towards the six largest national origin groups that together account for more than 75% of the Asian American adult citizen population.

Interviews were conducted in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, and Vietnamese, and included landlines and mobile phones. 45 percent of the interviews were conducted in an Asian language.

The sample sizes by ethnicity are as follows, along with an estimation of the maximum margin of error associated with each sample size (in parentheses):

Total: 1,337 (+/- 2.7%)  
Asian Indian: 230 (+/- 6.5%)  
Chinese: 230 (+/- 6.5%)  
Filipino: 210 (+/- 6.8%)  
Japanese: 212 (+/- 6.8%)  
Korean: 224 (+/- 6.5%)  
Vietnamese: 231 (+/- 6.5%)

Sampling error from the size of this sample is only one type of error possible in surveys like the 2014 APIAVote & Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC survey. Findings may also be

subject to variation from question wording, question order, and the time and date when the survey was conducted. The findings in this report are weighted statistically to account for any demographic differences of interest between the sample and population parameters for analyses of the national Asian American population, as well as for subgroups of the population, on the following dimensions: size of group within a state, educational attainment, gender and nativity.