

March 2024



**Asian American
Perspectives**

New York City Safety Study

A report examining the safety of
Asian Americans in New York City



Executive Summary

Anti-Asian bias and attacks remain a major problem in New York City.



A WIDESPREAD EXPERIENCE

1 in every 2 Asian Americans in New York City have personally experienced hate because of their race or ethnicity in 2023.

Incidents include insults, harassments, threats, or a physical attack. Notably, 1 in 5 Asian Americans reported experiencing physical attacks or assaults in 2023.



FEAR & AVOIDANCE

3 out of 4 Asian Americans in New York reported changing habits and behaviors out of fear of being targeted for simply being Asian American.

Almost 1 in 2 (48%) said they avoided going out late at night and 41% avoided taking the subway or public transportation. Asian American women were especially likely to say they avoided going out late at night (53%) and taking public transportation. (45%).



FEELING UNSAFE

More than 70% said they felt unsafe in different public settings.

Including 1 in 2 (51%) who felt unsafe taking public transportation. For Asian American women specifically, 83% reported concern for public safety in New York City.



RESOURCES

To combat anti-Asian incidents, a large majority of Asian Americans strongly supported these resources:

- Better relations with police (67%)
- Mental health and legal services (62%)
- Senior services (60%)
- Youth activities (58%)
- Training on how to report incidents or safely intervene when witnessing an incident

A Major Problem in New York

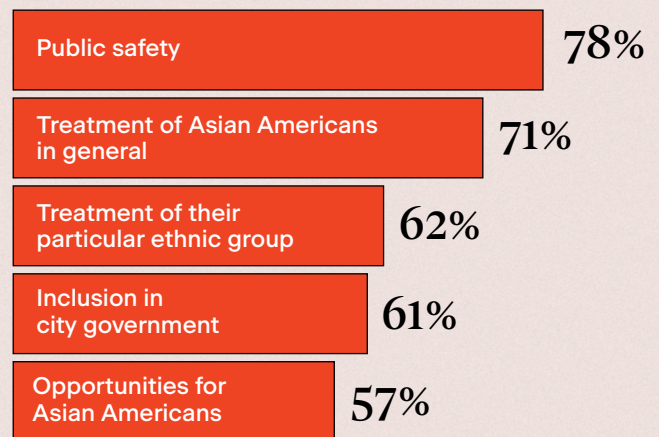
The top issue affecting Asian Americans in New York is public safety.

When asked about issues affecting Asian Americans in New York, 78% of Asian Americans New Yorkers said that “public safety” was either a “major problem” or “somewhat of a problem” that needed to be addressed.

71% said that the treatment of Asian Americans in general was either somewhat of a problem or a major problem and 62% said the same regarding the treatment of their particular ethnic group (e.g., Chinese Americans, Korean Americans).

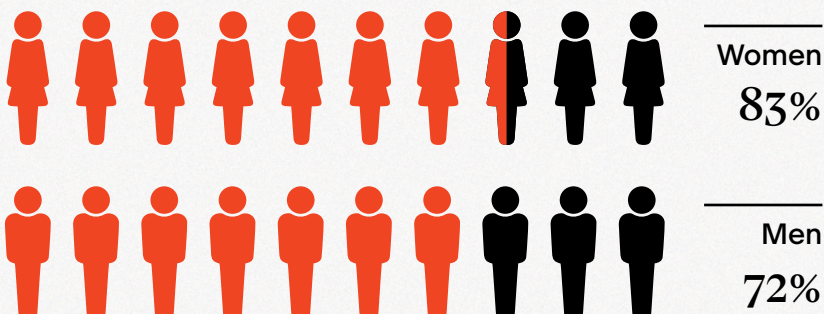
What issues affect Asian Americans the most in New York City?

Issues that are a “major problem” or “somewhat of a problem”



Asian American women are more likely to see public safety as a major problem.

Public safety is a top issue for New Yorkers. How do men and women view its importance?



Feeling Unsafe

Asian Americans in New York felt most unsafe taking public transportation.

When asked if they had ever felt unsafe or uncomfortable in any of the following places because of their race or ethnicity, Asian American New Yorkers reported feeling unsafe on public transportation (51%), in their own neighborhoods (21%) and local markets (21%).

71%

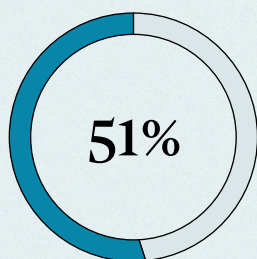
of Asian Americans in New York City said they felt unsafe or uncomfortable in at least 1 of the 8 places they were asked about.



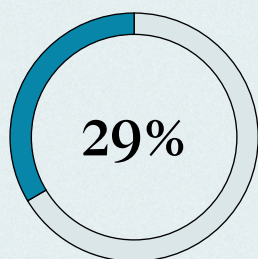
56%

of Asian American women and 61% of those born in the United States were especially likely to say they felt unsafe on public transportation.

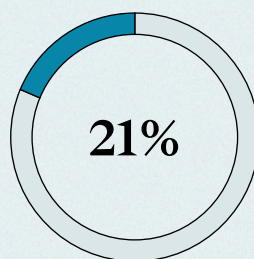
Have you ever felt unsafe or uncomfortable in any of these places because of your race/ethnicity?



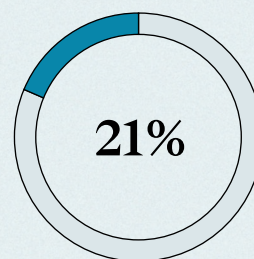
Public transportation



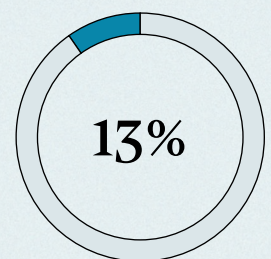
No, I have never felt unsafe



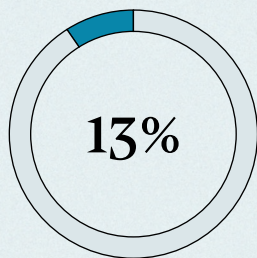
At a local market



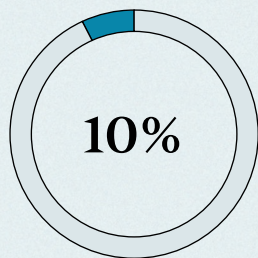
In my neighborhood



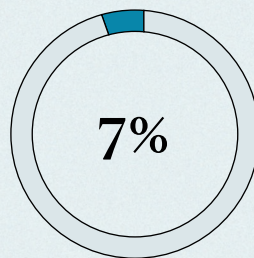
At my workplace



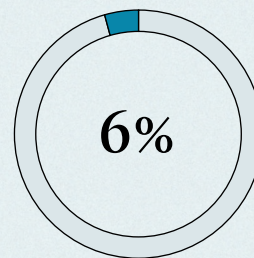
At a school, college, or university



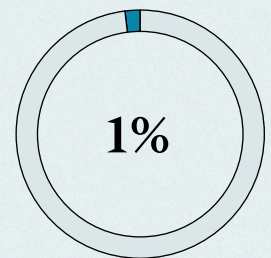
At a city or government building



In my place of worship



Where I vote



Other

Widespread Experience with Anti-Asian Incidents

More than 1 in 2 Asian Americans in New York have personally experienced hate because of their race or ethnicity.

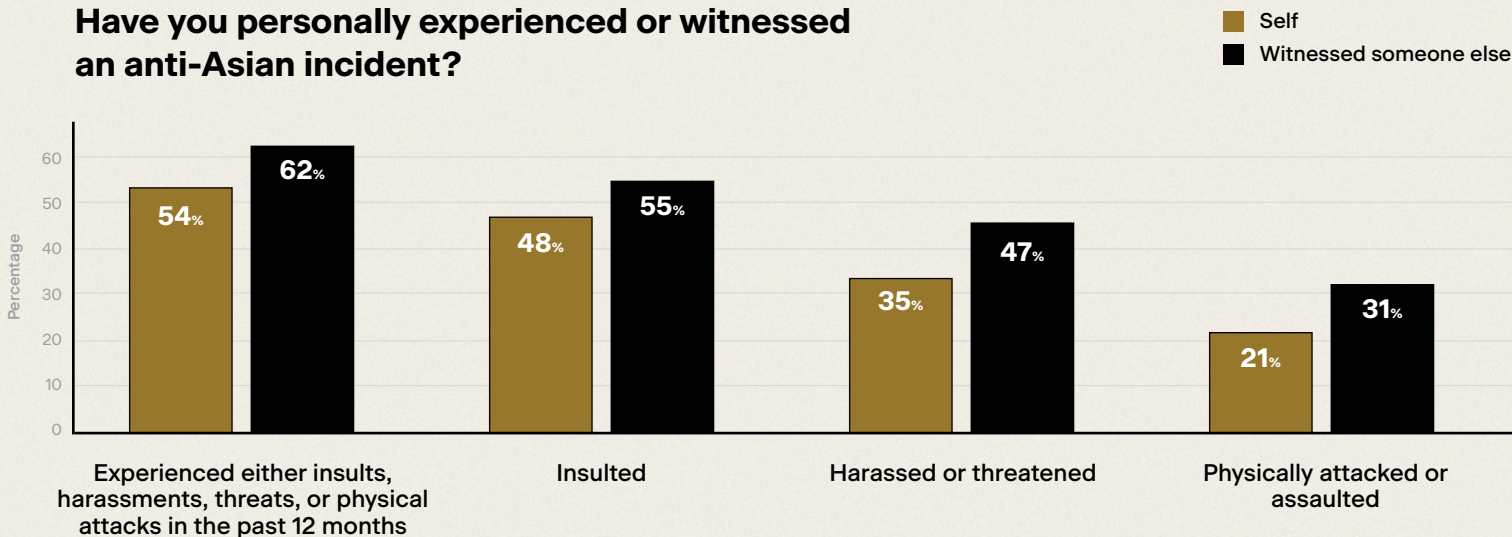
Respondents were asked whether they personally experienced or witnessed someone else experiencing an anti-Asian incident, specifically—being insulted or called a bad name; being harassed or threatened; and/or being physical assaulted or attacked because of their race/ethnicity.

In total, 54% of Asian Americans had personally experienced either insults,

harassments, threats, or physical attacks in New York in the past 12 months.

Nearly one in two (48%) said they were insulted or called a bad name; about one in three (35%) said they had been harassed or threatened because of their race or ethnicity; roughly one in five (21%) said they had been a victim of a physical attack or assault.

Have you personally experienced or witnessed an anti-Asian incident?



More than half (62%) of Asian Americans in New York City witnessed someone else experience a hate incident because of their race or ethnicity.

More than half (55%) said they had seen another Asian American insulted or called a

bad name; nearly half (47%) said they had ; seen another Asian American harassed or threatened; and nearly one in three (31%) said they had seen another Asian American physically attacked or assaulted because of their race or ethnicity.

Gaps in Reporting

Those who witnessed a hate incident were more likely to report than those who experienced one.

Survey participants who said they experienced or witnessed anti-Asian hate were asked if they reported the incident and, if so, to whom they reported*.

Among Asian Americans who experienced a hate incident in New York, just less than half (46%) reported this experience to anyone at all.

When shared, most often it was with a friend or family member (61%), followed by local or federal law enforcement agencies (54%, with 29% going to NYPD).

Respondents also shared with a co-worker, supervisor, or someone else at work (20%), followed by a community based organization (20%).

*After reported

Among those who witnessed anti-Asian incidents, 43% reported what they saw to someone. These reports were mostly likely to be to a friend or family member (50%).

Respondents who witnessed an incident were somewhat more likely to report what they saw to local or federal law enforcement agencies (69%, with 37% to NYPD).

Who is more likely to report to NYPD or law enforcement? Those who experienced it first hand or witnessed it?

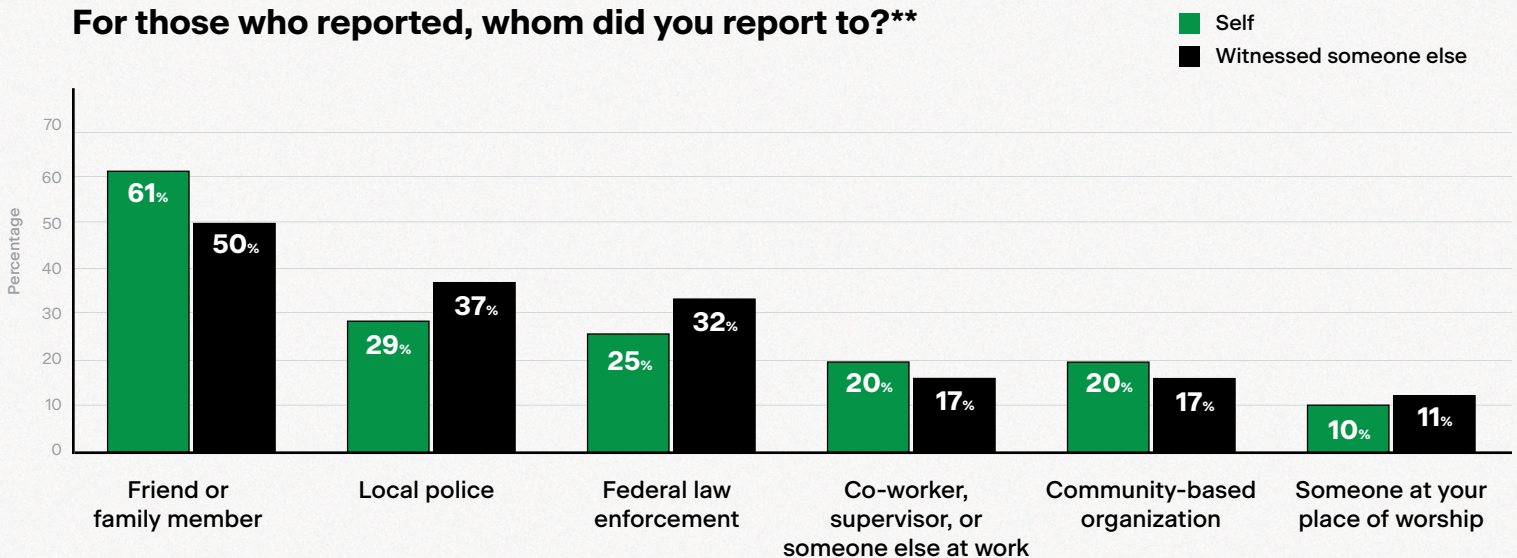
54%

Reported a hate incident if they experienced it.

69%

Reported a hate incident if they witnessed it.

For those who reported, whom did you report to?**



Barriers to Reporting

The biggest barrier to reporting a hate incident for those who experienced or witnessed one was the same: neither wanted to bring attention to themselves.

All respondents who either experienced anti-Asian incidents first-hand or witnessed them second-hand who did not report it were asked about **why** they did not report.

The most common response was reluctance to bring additional attention to themselves (42%).

Other reasons for not reporting included not knowing that this was something New Yorkers could report (29%), not knowing how to report such incidents (27%), and not feeling comfortable reporting the incident to law enforcement or other officials (26%).

Barriers to report for those who witnessed a hate incident



Barriers to report for those who experienced a hate incident



Like those who experienced the attacks first-hand, non-reporting witnesses cited many similar reasons for not reporting.

Most common was a reluctance to bring additional attention to themselves (36%), followed by not knowing how to report such incidents (30%) and not feeling comfortable reporting to law enforcement or other officials (30%), and/or not knowing that this was something New Yorkers could report (28%).



High Levels of Fear and Avoidance

3 out of 4 respondents have adopted at least 1 avoidance behavior to avoid hate victimization.

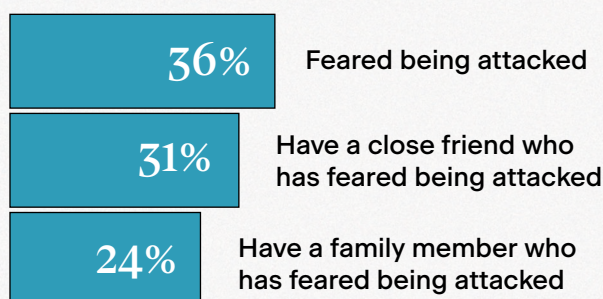
The survey also seeks to understand how anti-Asian incidents impact the daily lives of Asian Americans.

36% of survey respondents feared being verbally or physically attacked because of their race. 31% had a close friend who feared being attacked, and 24% had a family member who had feared being attacked due to their race.

As a result of this fear, 3 out of 4 Asian Americans in New York said they had adopted at least 1 ‘avoidance’ behavior specifically to avoid hate victimization.

Almost 1 in 2 said they avoided going out late at night and 41% avoided taking the subway or public transportation.

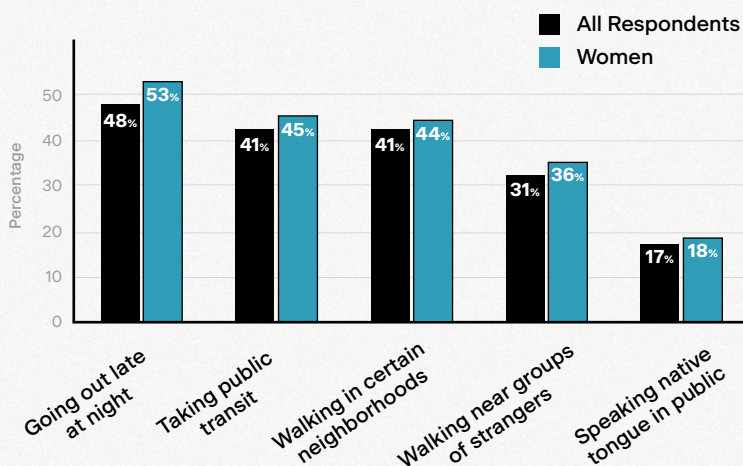
How prevalent is fear of anti-Asian hate or bias amongst Asian Americans in New York City?



How many Asian Americans in New York have adopted at least one avoidance behavior to avoid hate victimization?



What avoidance behavior did Asian Americans in New York adopt to avoid hate victimization?



Asian American women were especially likely to say they avoided going out late at night (53%) and taking public transportation (45%).

Younger Asian Americans were also generally more likely to say they adapted their behavior to avoid being a target of an anti-Asian incident.

Resources to Combat Anti-Asian Incidents

What resources are necessary to help New York's AANHPI community feel safe in their city?

Participants were asked their views on the necessity of five different kinds of resources to combat anti-Asian incidents in their neighborhood: mental health services; senior services (e.g., classes in English, citizenship classes, community services); legal services (such as pro bono legal aid); youth activities (such as classes or programs in Asian American history, leadership, advocacy); and better relations with police.

Overall, a large majority felt that all five of these resources were either extremely or very necessary.

- Better relations with police (67%)
- Mental health services (62%)
- Legal services (62%)
- Senior services (60%)
- Youth activities (58%)

Resources needed to combat anti-Asian incidents

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



SENIOR SERVICES



LEGAL SERVICES

YOUTH ACTIVITIES



BETTER RELATIONS WITH POLICE

Importantly, when asked if they would like to receive information or trainings on how to report incidents, what to expect when reporting, and how to safely intervene as a witness to an anti-Asian hate incident:

64%

of respondents said 'Yes'

74%

of respondents who personally experienced an anti-Asian hate incident said they would like to receive more information or training



Conclusion

This survey brings into sharp focus the need to immediately address the unsafe reality of AAPI NYers, while continuing to drive towards longer term solutions that make the City safe for all residents.

A need for training and how to report

64% of respondents answered in the affirmative when asked if they would like to receive information or trainings on how to report hate incidents and how to safely intervene as a witness to an anti-Asian hate incident.

Preparedness is a key solution

Studies* have shown that bystander/upstander, self defense, and mutual protection trainings can increase physical safety while also allowing for the reduction of the types of avoidance behaviors practiced by survey respondents.

Find support with local organizations

These avoidance behaviors negatively impact AAPI NYers quality of life, while also having a negative economic impact on the City. Organizations that conduct safety-focused trainings should continue to partner with AANHPI community-based organizations and public agencies to make these trainings free, in-language, and culturally accessible to the communities that most need them.

A need for reporting accessibility

AAPI NYers are reluctant to report when they are attacked, or when they witness an attack, due to a desire to not call attention to themselves any further; not knowing what they could report; lack of understanding of how and to whom to report; and lack of comforting reporting to public law enforcement agencies.

Our community needs to be better equipped on how and where to report hate and bias incidents. These reporting mechanisms must be made more easily accessible for communities to report.

Greater government commitment

Law enforcement agencies, district attorneys' offices, and elected officials must invest in building better relationships with and increasing public understanding of the challenges that the AAPI community faces.

Given that the AAPI community in NYC is made up of over 50 ethnicities and speaks over 50 languages, public agencies have the responsibility to practice cultural competency and must be prepared to serve AAPI New Yorkers. The government must allocate resources to ensure that everyone is equipped with these skills/trainings.

* *Evaluation of Green Dot: An Active Bystander Intervention to Reduce Sexual Violence on College Campuses (2011)*

Impact of an Evidence-based Training For Educators on Bystander Intervention for the Prevention of Violence Against LGBTI+ Youth (2023)

Next Steps in Action

We hope that this type of data and research, combined with the interventions described above, can begin a paradigm shift for the nearly 2 million AAPIs who call New York City home today.

Survey Methodology

The Asian American Foundation commissioned BSP Research to conduct this survey with a representative sample of 1,000 Asian American residents of New York City aged 16 to 82. Survey participants were interviewed both online (70%) and by telephone (30%) between November 30 and December 19, 2023.

Interviews were conducted in English, Chinese, Korean, and Bangla, based on the language preferred by the survey respondent.

The overall sampling error for the survey is $\pm 3.1\%$. The marginal distributions reported above for items in the survey are weighted to be representative of the five borough New York City Asian American adult population. Post-stratification weights adjust for differences in sample composition by age, gender, education, ethnicity, and nativity.

Image Credits

p.4 Joshua Newton for Unsplash
p.7 Giodano Rossoni for Unsplash

In the longer term, The Asian American Foundation hopes to replicate this survey in other highly AAPI populated cities to ignite change around the country. This survey reflects a wider investment in our four pillars of work: Anti-Hate, Education, Narrative Change, and Representation & Resources, contributing towards our vision of a world where all Americans can thrive, free of hate, slander, and violence.

| Ethnicity | % |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Chinese | 40% |
| Indian | 17% |
| Korean | 7.3% |
| Bangladeshi | 6.8% |
| Japanese | 6.2% |
| Filipino | 5.9% |
| Pakistani | 4.6% |
| Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander | 3.1% |
| Vietnamese | 1.9% |
| Other Asian Americans | 6.6% |
| Borough | % |
| Queens | 42% |
| Brooklyn | 27% |
| Manhattan | 17% |
| Bronx | 11% |
| Staten Island | 3.4% |

