

Utah Disability Diversity: Asian American Communities

Utah's Multicultural
Disability Network



Image Credit: Hanifa Abdul Hameed for Vox

Central Asia Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

West Asia (Middle East) Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

East Asia China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, and Tibet. Also includes Okinawans.

South Asia Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Southeast Asia Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, The Philippines (also regarded as Pacific Islanders), Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, East Timor, Thailand, and Vietnam. Also includes Hmong and Mien people.

Where are Asian people from?

(Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-based Violence)



Utah's Asian Population

(U.S. Census, 2020)



The Asian population in Utah grew by

50.3%

40,289 people from 2010-2019,

making it the **fastest growing minority group** in the state.

2010
2019

(Davidson, 2020)

80,436

Utahans consider themselves to be Asian.

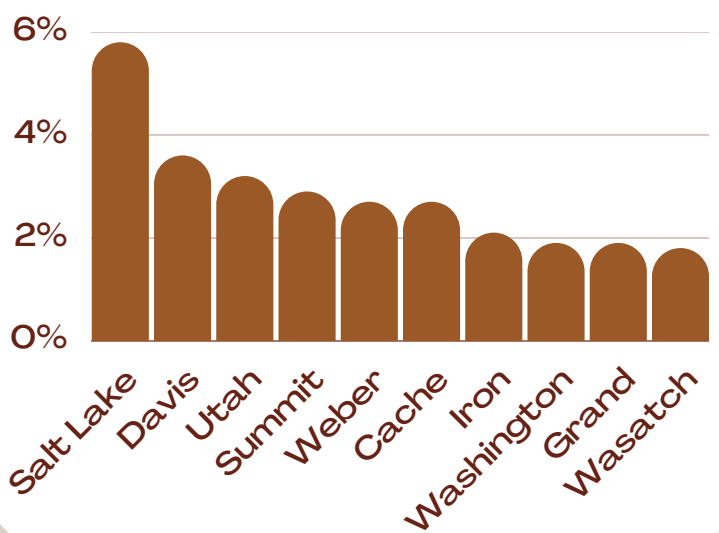
That's 2.5% of the state's population.



(U.S. Census, 2020)

Top 10 Counties in Utah

by Asian percentage of population



One Japanese American mother's perspective on disability services:

"It is amazing to me, coming from Japan. We are not even supposed to question our professor. That's how we are raised. We will not even question our parents or talk back to them. Now, we are supposed to speak up for our child! It is hard, even someone like me who has lived here so many years. We are afraid because we don't feel safe. It's like the professionals will cut us off because if we make them mad then they won't see our child anymore."

(Jegatheeson, 2010)

6 Values common to many Asians that impact education and disability issues:



Group orientation: Belief in equality and resistance to singling people out, even if to provide extra support.



Strong family ties: Traditionally, extended families live together. Decisions are often made as family, largely based on the father's opinions.



Emphasis on education: This value holds for all, whether there is a disability or not.



Respect for authority: Any authority figure or older person is not questioned.



Humility: It can be difficult to receive praise or share knowledge unprompted.



Belief in religion or karma: This can be the main reason for underrepresentation in special education classes. Families can fail to acknowledge disabilities that are not outwardly visible and blame developmentally inappropriate behaviors on bad parenting rather than acknowledging possible disabilities..

(Bui & Turnbull, 2003)

12.4%

of Asian Utahans reported having a disability.

Pacific Islander:	22.7%
White:	23.3%
Black:	27.3%
American Indian/ Native Alaskan:	37.7%

(Utah Department of Health, 2021)

The importance of these Asian cultural values may vary for first- vs. second-generation individuals.

For references, visit ceiutah.com/muldinet-utah



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