IMMIGRATION HISTORY

The first known immigrant to the US arrived in 1884. The first large wave began in 1903-1905, when about 7,000 Koreans were recruited to Hawaii as plantation laborers.

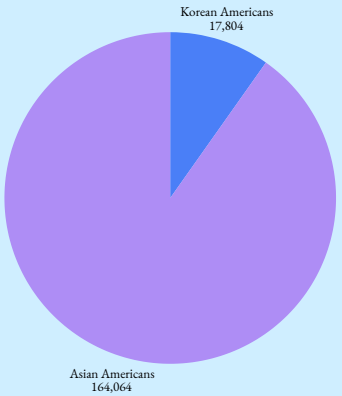
1910–1945: There was limited migration during Japanese colonial rule; arrivals were mostly students, political exiles, and Christian converts.

1945-1965: There were post-World War II and Korean War arrivals, including Korean women who married American soldiers and Korean orphans adopted by American families.

Post 1965: *The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965* abolished national origin quotas, increasing the number of professionals, families, and entrepreneur immigrants to US.

The Korean population in the US has grown from about 1.1 million in 2000 to 1.6 million in 2024

Korean Americans comprise 10.9% of the Asian population in Montgomery County, making them the third largest Asian subgroup in the county.



ABOUT AAHI

The mission of the Asian American Health Initiative (AAHI), part of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, is to improve the health and wellness of Asian American communities in Montgomery County by applying equity, community engagement, and data-driven approaches.

Asian American Health Initiative,
1401 Rockville Pike, 3rd Floor, Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: 240-777-4517
Email: AAHI@montgomerycountymd.gov
Website: aahiinfo.org

Link to learn more about the organizations serving Korean Americans in Montgomery County
aahiinfo.org/aapiorganizations/

Data sources available upon request from AAHI

Asian American Health Initiative
Together To Build A Healthy Community

Asian American Health Initiative
Together To Build A Healthy Community

WHO ARE... KOREAN AMERICANS?

An exploration into the Korean American community of Montgomery County, Maryland:

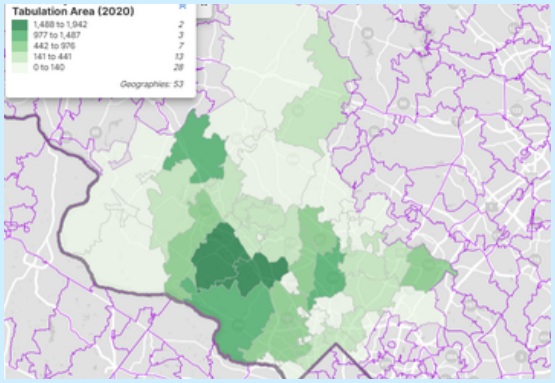
- Immigration History
- Demographics
- Health Status and Disparities
- Barriers to Care

Korean Americans in Montgomery County

30%

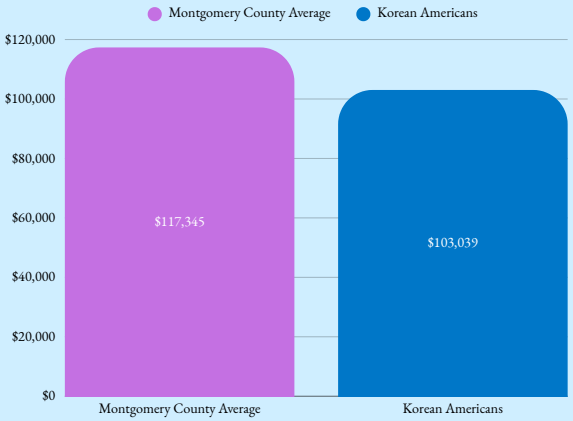
Korean American households speak English less than “very well”.

Korean Americans in Montgomery County by Zip Code



- 4.6% of Korean Americans in the county are uninsured.

Median Household Income



- 4.4% of Korean American familes are living in poverty.

Health Status and Disparities

Cancer screenings (breast, cervical, colorectal) are underutilized among Korean Americans

Korean Americans have the highest suicide rate among all races, with a mortality rate averaging around 3%. Korean Americans exhibited a suicide rate around 14 deaths per 100,000

The prevalence of diabetes among non-obese Korean Americans are significantly higher than among their Non-Hispanic White peers.

Older adults experience higher rates of preventable hospitalizations.

Leading causes of death among Korean Americans in the US:

1. Cancer
2. Heart disease
3. Stroke (Cerebrovascular disease)
4. Alzheimer’s disease
5. Accidents

Barriers to Care

Language Barriers

Cultural stigma around mental health

Limited culturally responsive care

Lack of insurance and fear of costs

Holistic view of health and illness