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Studies Show Asian Americans Among Least Likely to Vote

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Appleton - A University of California-Los Angeles report titled Asian American College Students and Civic Engagement shows Asian-Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 are among the least likely to vote.

That same study indicates in 2004, just 35% of Asian-Americans cast a ballot compared to 47% of the overall youth population.

The National Asian American Survey last month shows of all Asian Americans, only 45% are considered likely voters. The Hmong are among the least likely to vote.

Kor Xiong, president of the Hmong Wisconsin Radio in Appleton, explains why.

"It's very hard for them to understand the process," particularly of the Hmong elders Xiong said.

He adds the Hmong are relatively new to the idea of voting. "Back to Laos, the voting process

happened, but with a limited access."

But in the United States voting is the right of any citizen, and Xiong says he's helping make sure his community is aware.

As a radio host, Xiong invites political candidates as guests on his shows. He personally drives people to the polls and campaign events and helps translate materials.

Appleton businesswoman Pachia Lor does the same for her parents, but her most important role is setting an example for her 18-year-old son.

"He was not really excited about it until my husband and I say, 'Hey, let's just go out and vote.'" says Lor.

And while voter turnout remains low for Asian-Americans, the Hmong believe more of them now than ever are politically engaged.



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