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This book is the product of a year-long comprehensive project by researchers at UCLA's Urban Planning Program. We set out to provide community leaders and policy-makers much needed information on the economic needs of Asian Americans, and to formulate a framework for Community Economic Development (CED) in Asian American communities. We want this book to be more than just another policy or academic report. Our intent is to help empower Los Angeles' "invisible" Asian population, the over 124,000 who are part of the working poor, the unemployed or those dependent on welfare. The existence of this segment of the population dispels the "Model Minority" stereotype, which depicts Asians as having no economic needs or problems; nonetheless, community advocacy often focuses on middle-class and professional issues—the "glass ceiling," the procurement of government contracts and college admissions.

This book focuses on the specific needs of the poor and provides recommendations for public policy and community action. We hope to enlighten the discussion of the role of Asian American communities in urban revitalization and the "rebuilding" of Los Angeles by challenging some existing approaches to economic development. This book is just the beginning of a long-term plan to organize and empower low-income Asian communities through CED. For us, theory and practice must go hand-in-hand. As a group and as individuals, most of the researchers have been working to implement the recommendations in this book.

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