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### Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Worcester

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# **Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas**

## **Worcester**

**by Phillip Granberry, PhD, Sarah Rustan, MA, and Faye Karp, MS**

**January, 2013**

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**THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE  
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND PUBLIC POLICY**

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# Worcester

This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Worcester. It reflects a commitment by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy to provide periodic updates on the growing Latino population in Massachusetts.

The report on Worcester is part of a larger series that covers fourteen other cities, or clusters of cities, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Each report analyzes data from the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data are analyzed by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), which consists of a minimum population of 100,000 and is the smallest geographic area publically available for individual-level analysis. Worcester is a large enough city that it constitutes a PUMA by itself. The ACS thereby enables us to arrive at a demographic and economic portrait of Worcester's Latino community.

Since ACS data is collected from a sample of the population, there is some variation associated with each population estimate. In the bar graphs in this report, the 'I' that accompanies each bar represents the confidence interval for that estimate; we expect that another sample would generate an estimate within this interval 95% of the time.

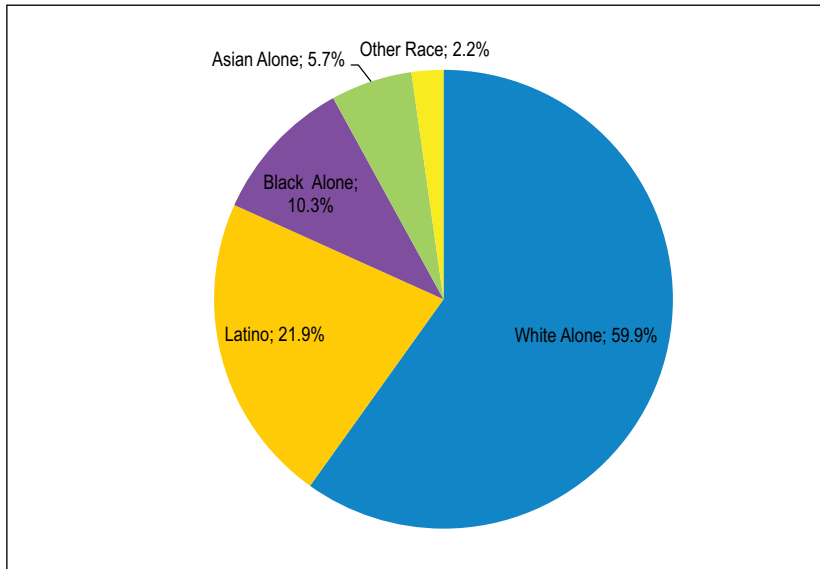
In this report, Latinos are compared to non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, and Asians for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics. The number of ethno-racial groups included in a particular analysis may vary; each ethno-racial group is included in the analysis only when the observed sample size is large enough to produce reliable population estimates.

Worcester is the second largest city in Massachusetts and is home to an estimated 39,621 Latinos, who make up 21.9% of the city's population. Whites constitute the largest ethno-racial group (59.9%), while blacks account for 10.3% and Asians 5.7% of the city's population (Figure 1).

## Notes

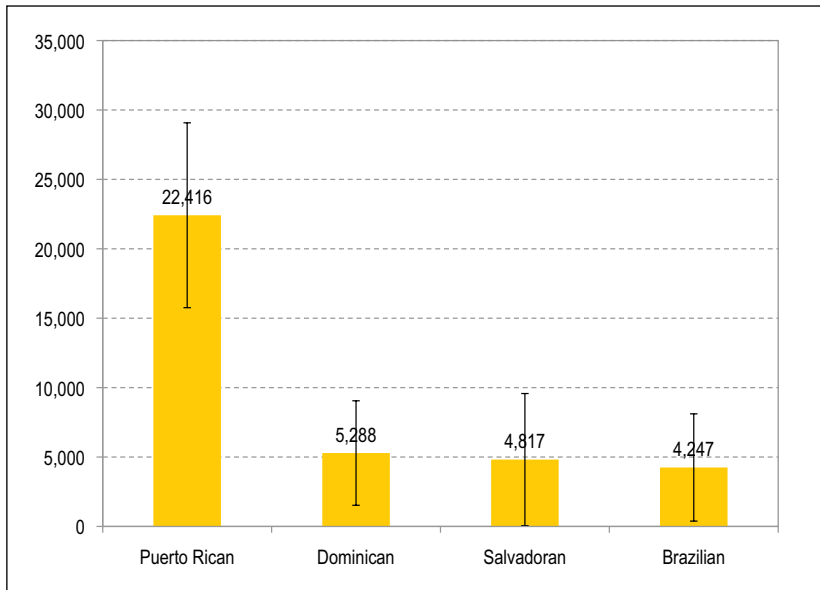
<sup>1</sup> This report uses the census designations of Hispanic or Latino origin and ancestry based on migration from Latin America to estimate the number of Latinos. Thus, Brazilians are included in the category "Latino," though most Brazilians self-report in the ACS using a racial category (e.g., white, black), rather than identifying with the term "Latino."

**Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



The Latino population in Worcester is diverse in its origin but driven by Puerto Ricans, who number 22,416. Dominicans (5,288), Salvadorans (4,817), and Brazilians (4,247) are the other sizable Latino subpopulations; these four groups make up 92.8% of the area's Latino population. Although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, other Latino groups help give Worcester a proportionately greater foreign-born population (19.7%) than the state as a whole (14.9%).

**Figure 2: Ancestry of the Top Latino Groups in 2010**

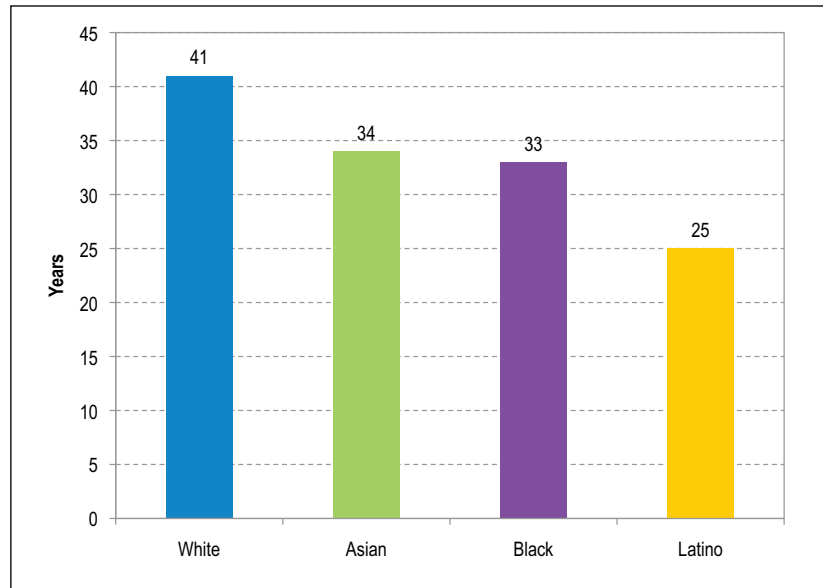


The rest of this report presents an overview that compares Latinos to whites, blacks, and Asians in this area for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics.

## MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

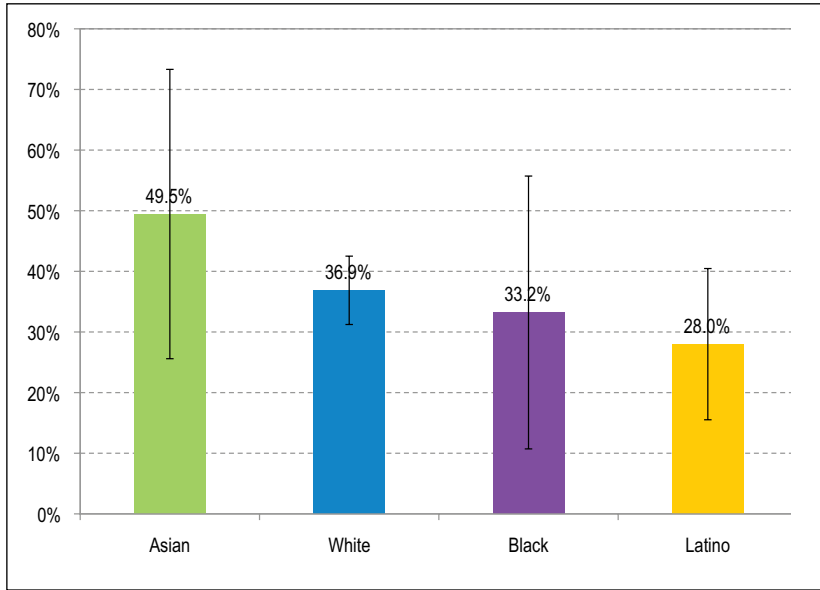
Figure 3 showing draws attention to the importance of Latinos in Worcester. Latinos have a much younger median age (25 years) than whites (41 years). This suggests that Latinos have more families with young children and will require an investment in the education of their youth; however, these younger Latinos will contribute economically, socially, and politically in later years as an older white population ages and retires. This older population will require younger residents to keep Worcester's neighborhoods vibrant and maintain a productive workforce, and Latinos are poised to make this contribution.

**Figure 3: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



The youthfulness of Worcester's Latino population may influence its marital status. Figure 4 shows that the 28.0% marriage rate for Latinos (for persons age 16 and older) is lower than for other ethno-racial groups in the city. It is also lower than the statewide Latino marriage rate of 35.4%.

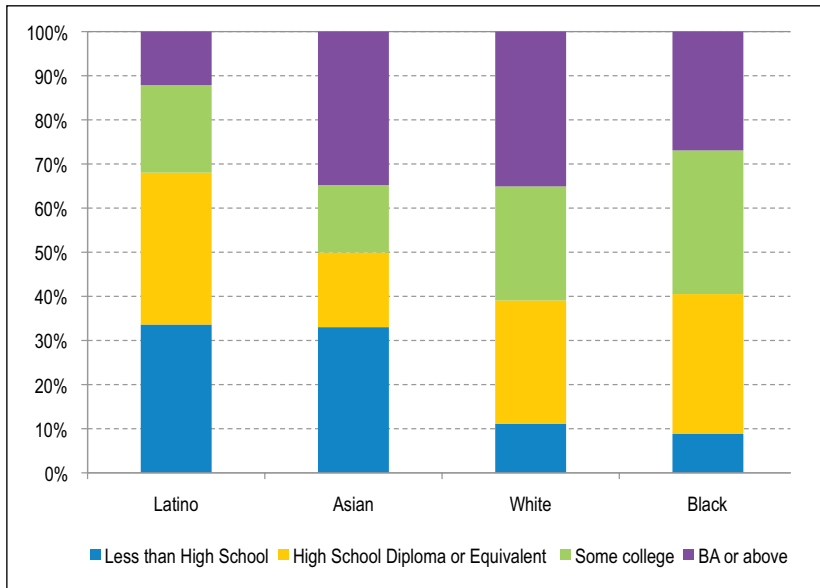
**Figure 4: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



## EDUCATION

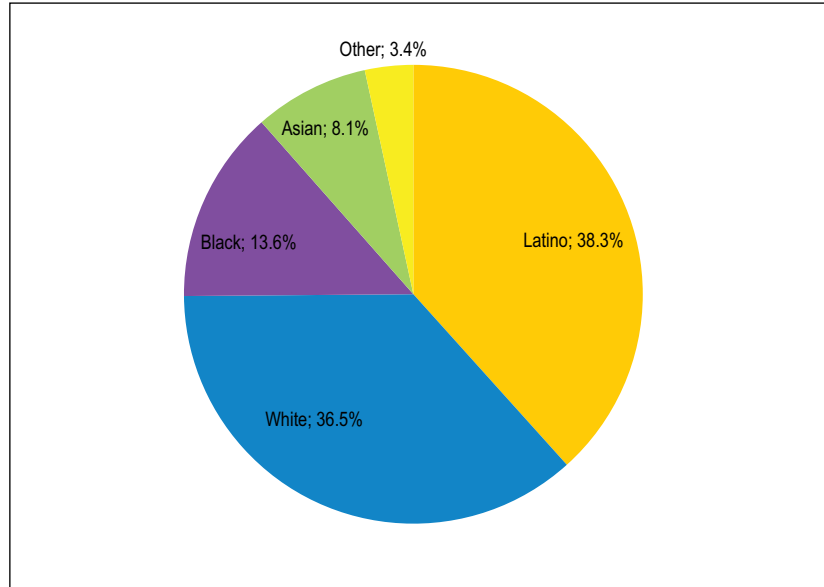
Figure 5 highlights the fact that Latinos have the highest percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 33.6%, compared to 33.0% for Asians, 11.1% for whites, and 8.8% for blacks. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos in Worcester have by far the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 12.1%, compared to 34.8% for Asians, 35.1% for whites, and 26.9% for blacks.

**Figure 5: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010 (Adults 25 Years and Older)**



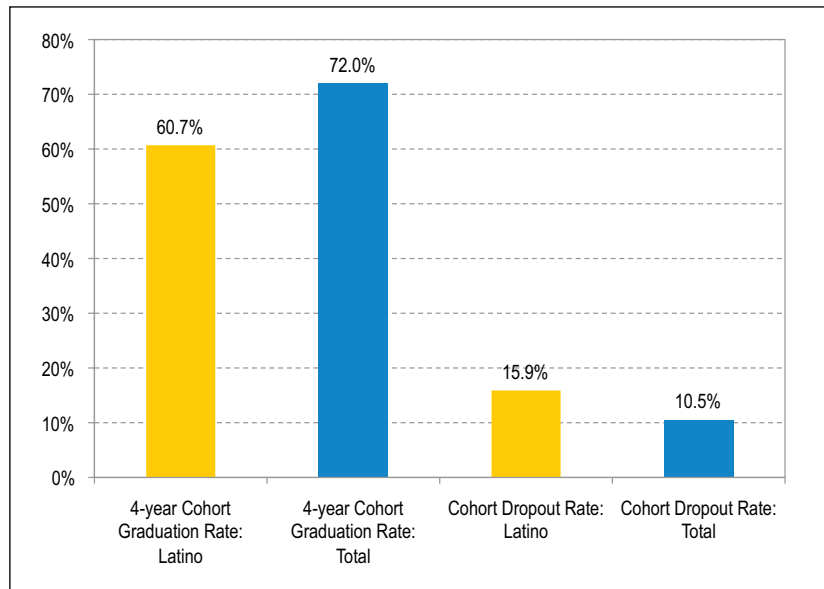
Figures 6A and 6B provide information on Latinos in Worcester Public Schools, using data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Latinos, representing 38.3% of total student enrollment in the 2010–2011 school year, are the largest ethno-racial group in the district. Over the past decade, as total student enrollment has declined, the number of Latinos and their share of total student enrollment have increased.

**Figure 6A: Snapshot of Worcester Public Schools by Ethno-Racial Group, School Year 2010–2011**



Latinos in Worcester Public Schools lag behind the total population in academic success. About three-fifths of Latino students (60.7%) graduated from high school in four years compared to 72.0% for the total student population. Similarly, 15.9% of Latinos who entered their freshman year in the 2006–2007 school year dropped out of high school and did not return or get a GED, compared to 10.5% of the total population.

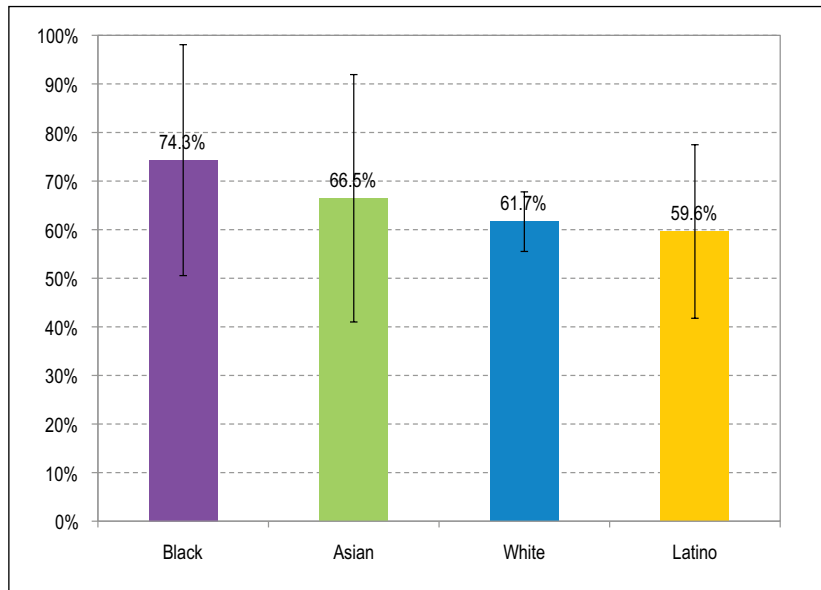
**Figure 6B: Snapshot of Worcester Public Schools by Outcomes, Academic Year 2010–2011**



## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Figure 7 shows that Latinos have a labor force participation rate (59.6%) that is less than blacks (74.3%), Asians (66.5%), and whites (61.7%). The Latino labor force participation rate for Worcester is lower than among Latinos across the state, who have an overall participation rate of 68.1%. This low rate may be influenced by the large number of Latino families with young children that is suggested by Figure 3.

**Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



Even though Latinos have lower labor force participation in Worcester, Figure 8 tells a more positive story for those Latinos who are in the labor force. The unemployment rate among Latinos in 2010 was 11.1%, which was lower than for blacks (14.5%), and even whites (11.5%) in Worcester. This is also lower than the statewide Latino unemployment rate of 15.2% in 2010.

**Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**

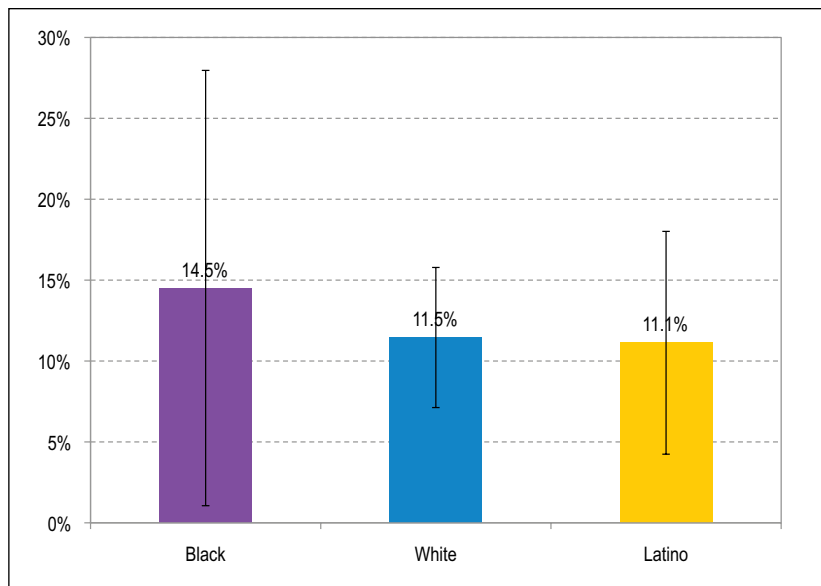
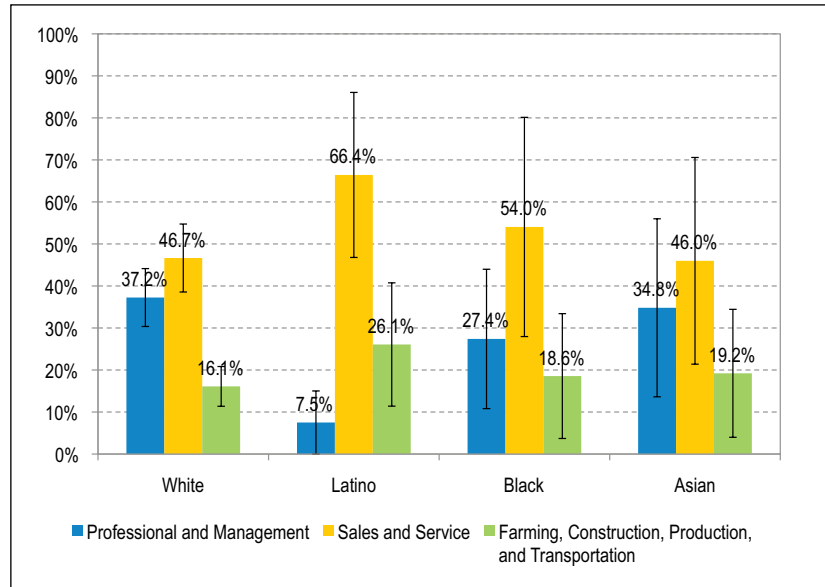




Figure 9 suggests that Latinos serve as complements in Worcester’s labor market to other ethno-racial groups whose members have higher educational attainment. Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs (professional and managerial). Correspondingly, Latinos are overrepresented in the service sector and in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs (farming, construction, production, and transportation).

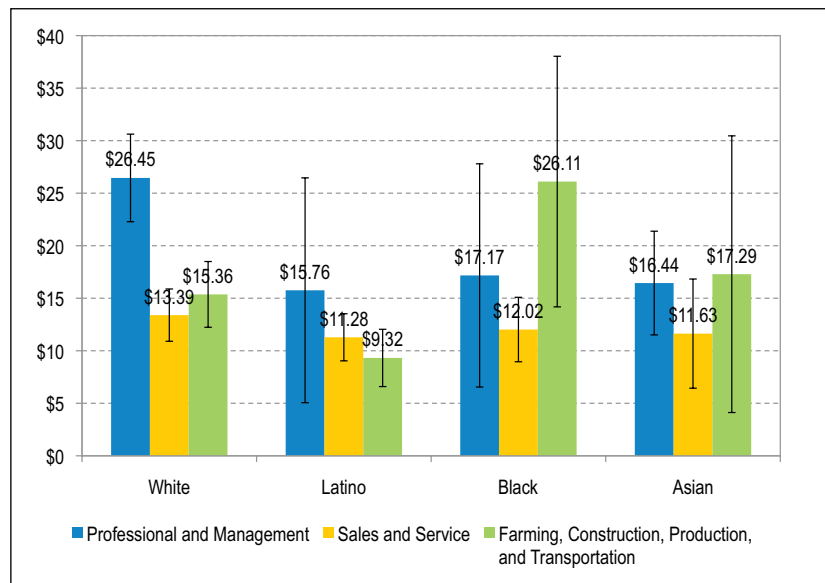
**Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



## EARNINGS

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, we see that Latinos appear to be receiving wages below those of other ethno-racial groups. As Figure 10 shows, they earn less than all other ethno-racial groups for their white-collar, service-sector, and blue-collar employment.

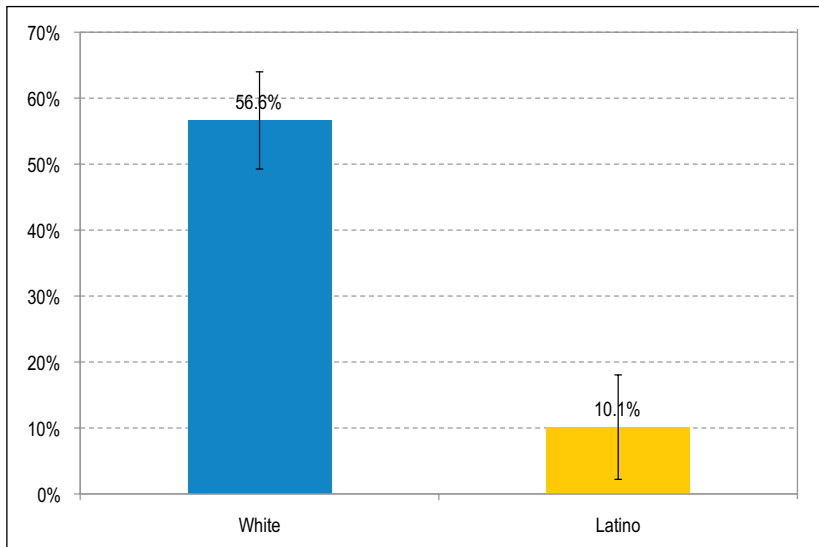
**Figure 10: Hourly Wages by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



## HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

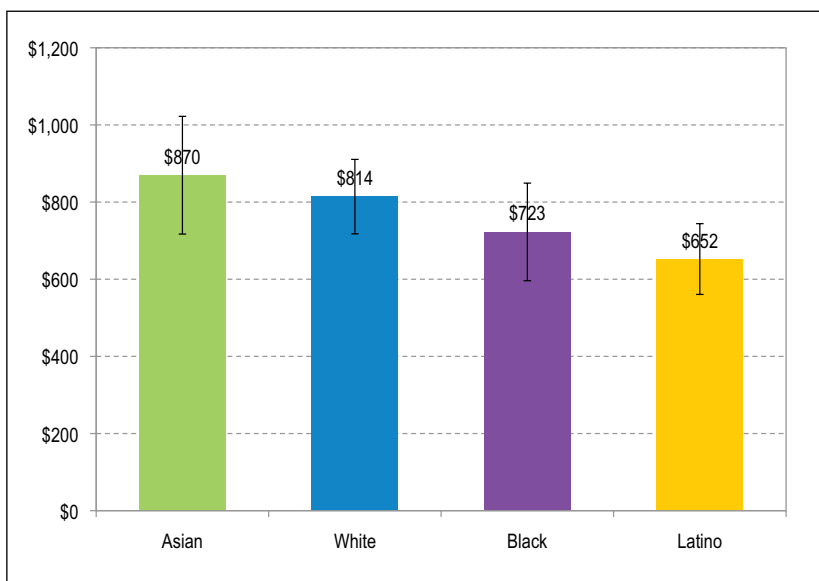
The final measures of Latino participation in Worcester are intended to identify how well Latinos in the city are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Latinos traditionally have low homeownership rates across the country. Figure 11 shows that this trend holds true, where their 10.1% homeownership rate is lower than any other ethno-racial group. This 10.1% rate is also significantly lower than the state's Latino average of 25.7%. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 89.9% of Latinos in Worcester are renters.

**Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



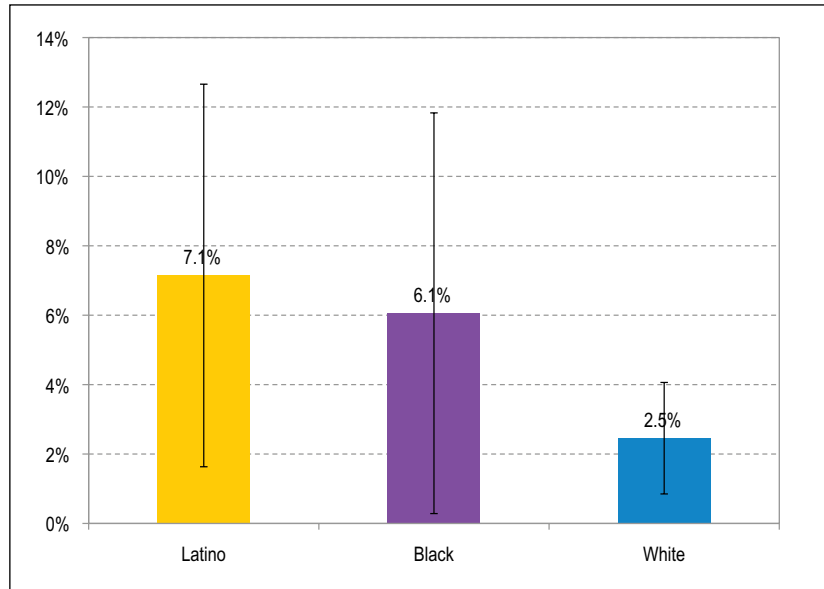
With low levels of homeownership, Latinos in Worcester are more dependent on the local rental markets. Monthly rents paid by Latino renters (\$652) are lower than those of all other ethno-racial groups.

**Figure 12: Rental Costs by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



The percentage of Latinos in this area who lack medical insurance (7.1%) is higher than 6.1% of uninsured blacks and 2.5% of uninsured whites. The statewide Latino uninsurance rate is 11.6%, and Latinos in Worcester appear to have more access to medical insurance than Latinos in other parts of the state.

**Figure 13: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



The **Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston** conducts research on and for the Latino population in New England. Our goal is to generate the information and analysis necessary to develop more inclusive public policy and to improve Latino participation in the policy making process. In an effort to present vital information about Latinos to diverse audiences, the Gastón Institute has produced this series of demographic profiles for selected Massachusetts areas based on an analysis of 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Our descriptive analysis uses both household- and individual-level ACS data to estimate population size and characteristics in order to compare Latinos to other ethno-racial groups. Technically, these groups are designated as non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, and non-Latino Asians though they are often referenced simply as “white,” “black,” and

“Asian” in these profiles. Although many Brazilians do not self-identify as Latino or Hispanic, the ‘Latino’ category does include the Brazilian population in this report series.

The Gastón Institute plans to update this series of demographic profiles for selected Massachusetts areas every five years upon release of American Community Survey data. A similar report series examining Latino populations at the city level is planned for the 2015 Gastón Institute public policy conference. In addition, demographic profiles highlighting Latino sub-groups will be produced on an ongoing basis.

One of the goals of the Gastón Institute is to be responsive to the needs of the Latino and policy communities through the research we undertake. Please feel free to contact us with suggestions or requests for specific information.

## About the Authors

**Phillip Granberry** is a social demographer who specializes in immigrants in the US. He worked with various community-based organizations assisting recently arrived U.S. immigrants before earning a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Boston. He has published several articles on the accumulation and use of social capital among Mexican migrants and the impact of welfare and immigration policy reform on Latinos in Massachusetts. Currently a Research Associate for the Gastón Institute, he also teaches courses on international migration and urban affairs for the UMass Boston Economics Department.

**Faye Karp** specializes in conducting research that helps organizations improve programs serving low-income, Latino, and English Language Learner youth. She holds an MS in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Boston. As a Research Associate and Project Manager at the Gastón Institute, she worked with the Boston Public Schools Office of English Language Learners to develop policy guidelines for the district’s Two-Way Bilingual programs.

**Sarah Rustan** is a PhD candidate in Law and Public Policy at Northeastern University, with previous degrees in architecture (BA) and cultural management (MA). Her professional background includes broad experience in the nonprofit sector including research, development, and management, and her dissertation explores the role that nonprofit arts organizations play in community development and social organization. She currently serves as a Research Associate and Data Analyst for the Gastón Institute.

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