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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas

Fitchburg

by Phillip Granberry, PhD, Trevor Mattos

July, 2017

THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY

Fitchburg

The Latino Population

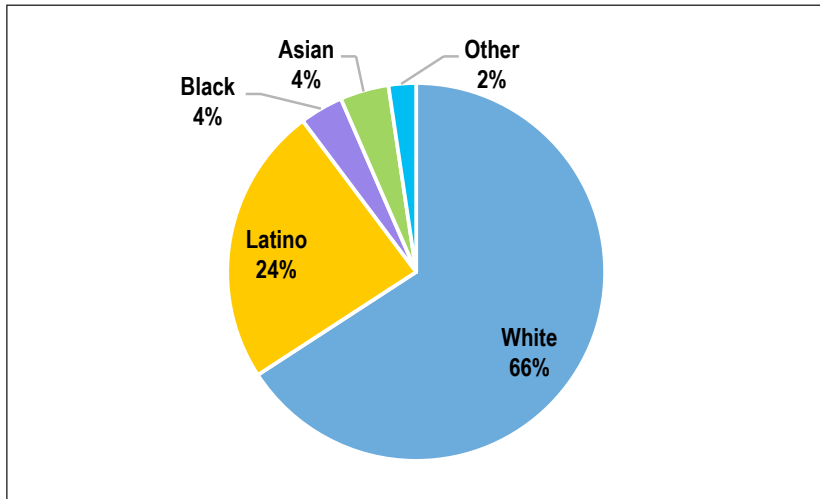
This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Fitchburg. It reflects a commitment by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy to provide periodic updates on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

The report on Fitchburg is part of a larger series that covers cities and towns in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a significant number of Latinos. Each report analyzes data from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. We obtained the data from the American Factfinder website in tabular form, and we transformed these data into figures presented in this report.

In this report, Latinos are compared to non-Latino whites, blacks, and Asians for selected characteristics. This report uses the designation of Latino for the universe of people who the Census identified as Hispanic or Latino. The US Census first identified individuals with an ethnicity category of Hispanic or Latino or not Hispanic or Latino. Then, the US Census allowed individuals to select a race. This analysis uses the term "Latino" to identify those that selected an ethnicity. The Census designation of black or African American alone is referenced as black. The category of Asian alone is referenced as Asian. A smaller other ethno-racial category is identified for the initial population estimate of Fitchburg and this consists those who identified with multiple race categories or some other race and the category of American Indian and Alaska Native alone. 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.

Fitchburg is a city of 40,462 residents, including 9,682 (24%) who identify as Latino or Hispanic. The white population makes up the majority (66%) of the city, while black and Asian groups each account for 4% of the population (Figure 1).

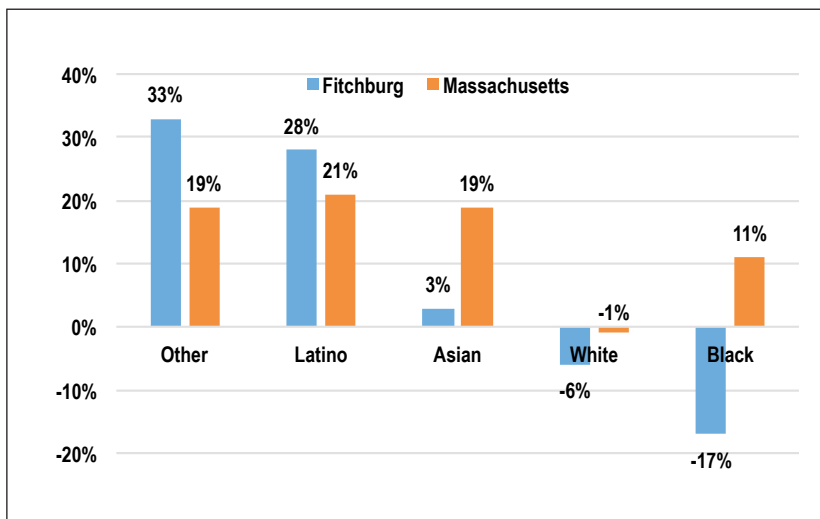
Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Fitchburg



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B03002

Since 2010, the size of the “other” group (which includes Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and other ethno-racial groups with particularly low shares of the population) has grown more quickly than the other major groups, at a rate of 33% between 2010 and 2015. Because this group is very small, the change amounted to an addition of only 236 residents. While the rate of growth in the Latino community is comparable (28%), the size of the group is much larger, and its numeric growth translates to an increase of 2,105 residents from 2010 to 2015. Both of these groups outpaced statewide growth during this period. Across the state, those in the “other” group grew by 19%, and Latinos grew by 21%. We observe substantial differences in demographic trends between Fitchburg and the state’s overall population. Fitchburg saw negligible growth in the Asian community, and shrinking white and black communities, while the state saw a 19% percent increase in the Asian group, a slight 1% decrease in the white population, and an 11% increase in black residents of the Commonwealth (Figure 2).

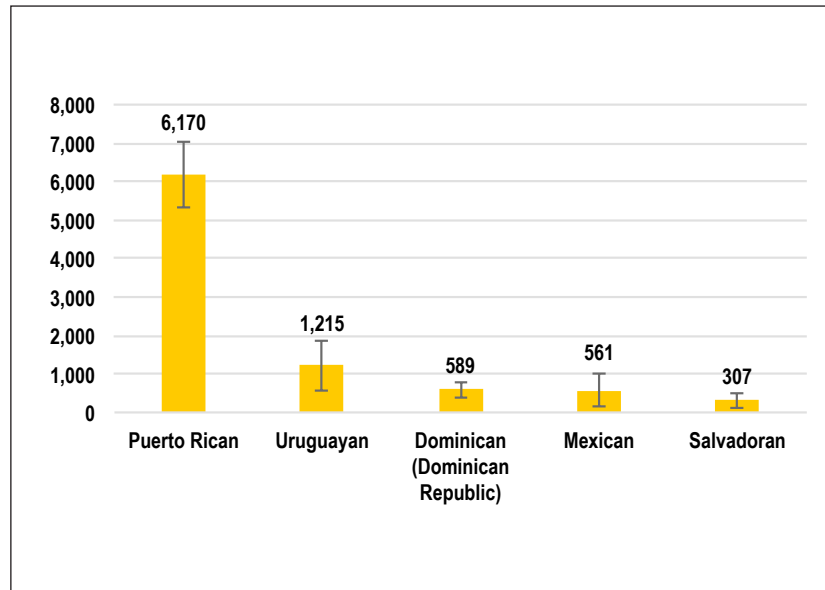
Figure 2: Population Change by Ethno-Racial Group from 2010 to 2015



Source: 2011–2015 & 2006–2010 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B03002

The Latino community in Fitchburg is majority Puerto Rican (Figure 3). There are 6,170 Puerto Ricans, compared to the second largest group, 1,215 Uruguayans. The next largest groups have origins in the Dominican Republic (589), Mexico (561), and El Salvador (307).

Figure 3: Ancestry of the Top Latino Subpopulations

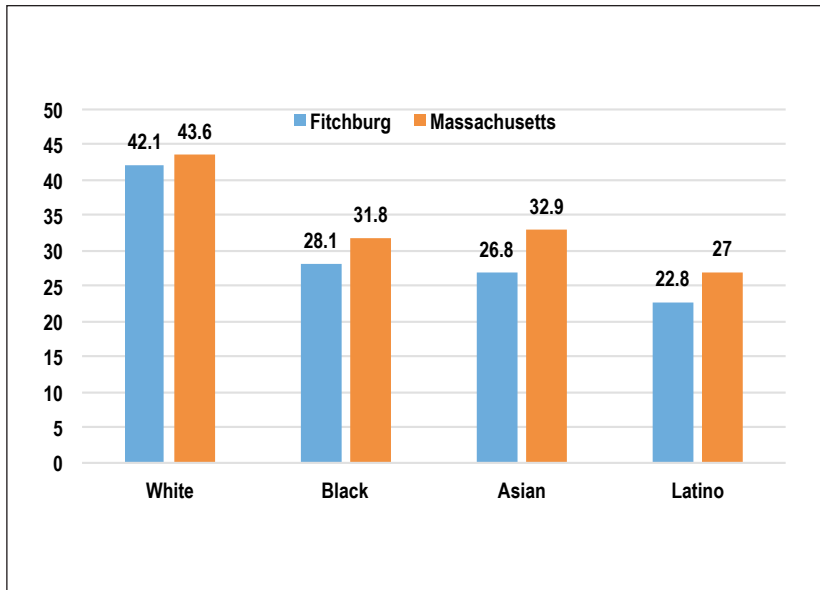


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year ACS Estimates – B03001

Median Age and Marital Status

The Latino population is the youngest major ethno-racial group in the city, with a median age of 22.8 years. This is barely half the median age of the white residents of Fitchburg, for whom the median age is 42.1 years. Black and Asian groups are also much younger than white residents, with median ages of 28.1 and 26.8 years, respectively. All groups tend to be somewhat younger in Fitchburg than they are statewide (Figure 4).

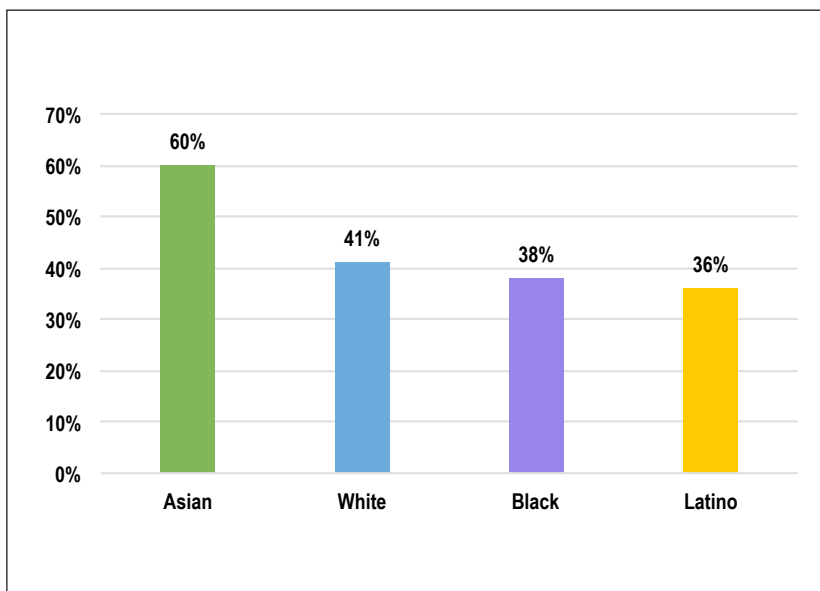
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year ACS Estimates – B01002

In Fitchburg, marriage rates are highest in the Asian community, where 60% of residents 15 and older are married (Figure 5). This is much higher than for whites (41%), blacks (38%), and Latinos (36%). Interestingly, the marriage rates for Asians, blacks, and Latinos are notably higher in Fitchburg than they are statewide. The opposite is true of the white community.

Figure 5: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 15+)

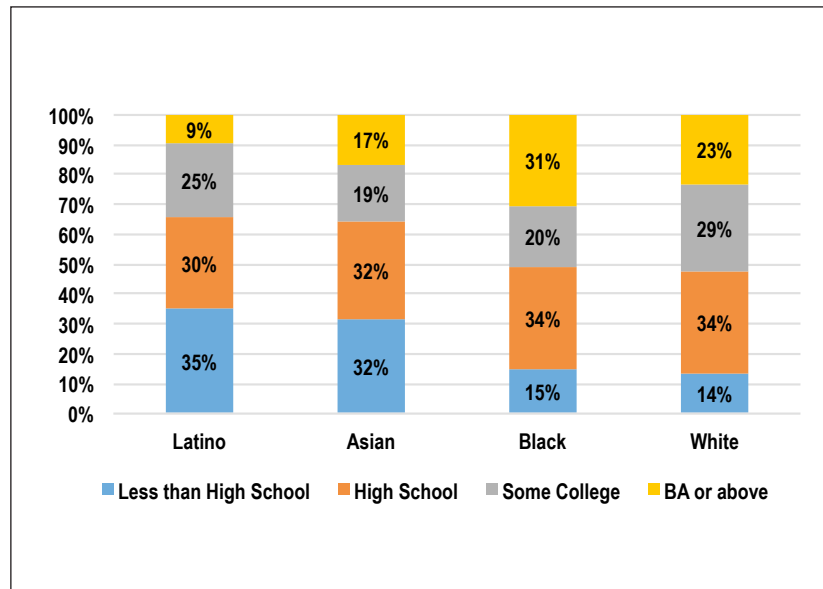


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B12002

Education

Educational attainment in Fitchburg is lower than it is across the state. Specifically, 40% of those ages 25 or older across the state hold at least a bachelor's degree, while in Fitchburg this figure is 21%. Latinos in Fitchburg have the lowest proportion of degree holders (9%), while blacks have the highest rate at 31% and whites and Asians are in between, at 23% and 17%, respectively.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group (Adults 25 Years and Older)

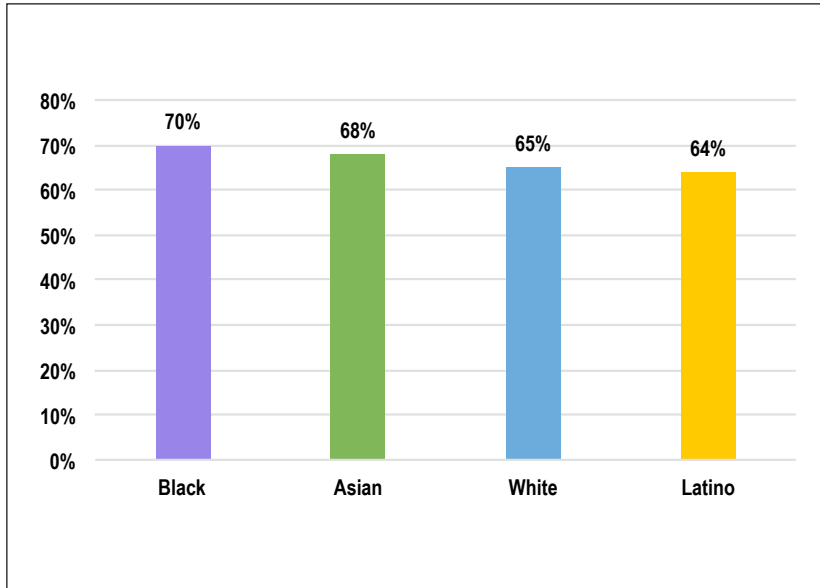


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C15002

Labor Force Participation

Latino labor force participation in Fitchburg (64%) is lower than for all other major ethno-racial groups in the city, and is also lower than the statewide participation rate for Latinos (67%). Black residents have the highest labor force participation rate in Fitchburg, at 70%, followed by Asians and whites who participate at rates of 68% and 65%, respectively (Figure 7).

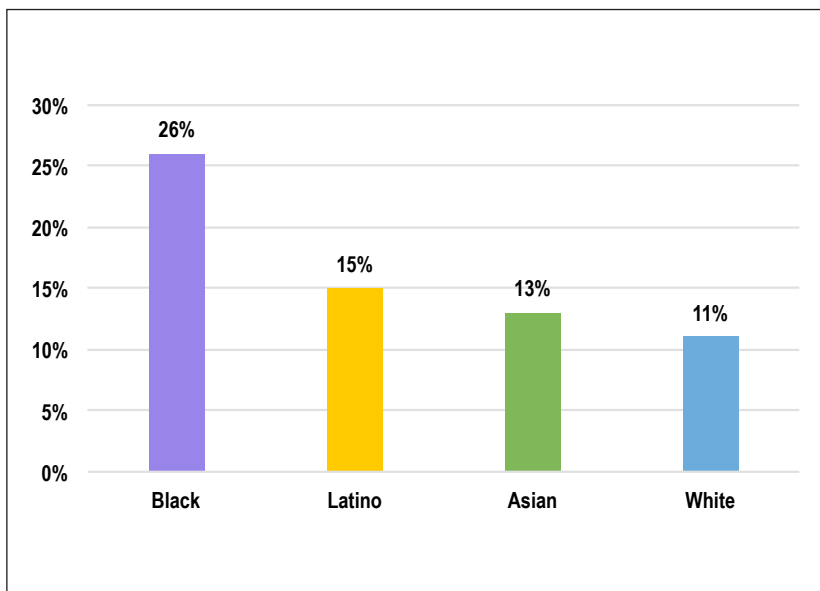
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation among Individuals 16 Years and Older by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C23002

Unemployment rates in Fitchburg are quite high across all groups. Statewide, the Latino unemployment rate is 12%, while in Fitchburg it is 15%. Blacks face by far the highest unemployment rate, with 26%. Asians and whites have the lowest unemployment rates in Fitchburg (13% and 11% respectively), though they are still near double what would be consistent with full employment.

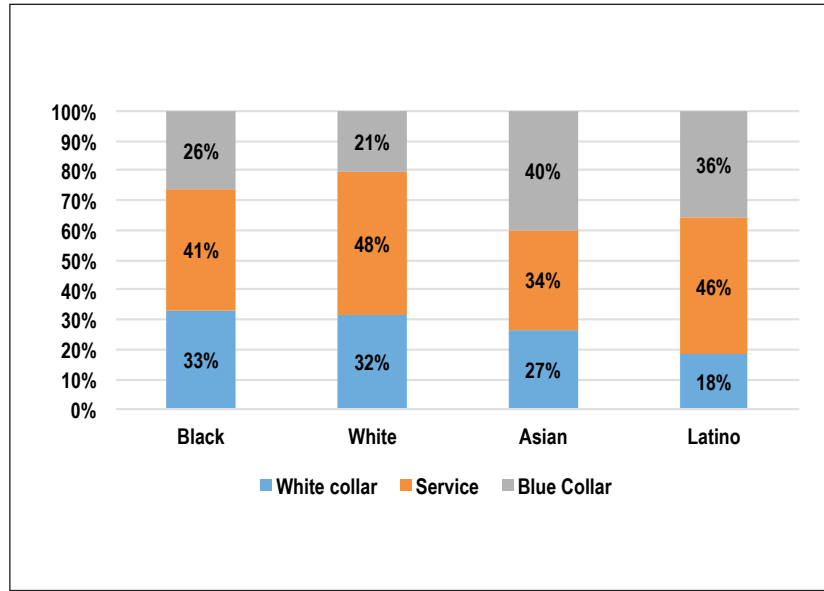
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16+)



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C23002

For those who are employed in Fitchburg, black and white workers are most represented in white collar positions. Latino residents have the lowest proportion working such jobs (18%). This is 5 percentage points lower than the statewide figure (23%) for Latinos. In the blue collar sector, Latinos and Asians are most represented, while black and white workers have lower shares in this area. These trends largely reflect educational attainment figures presented in Figure 6.

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

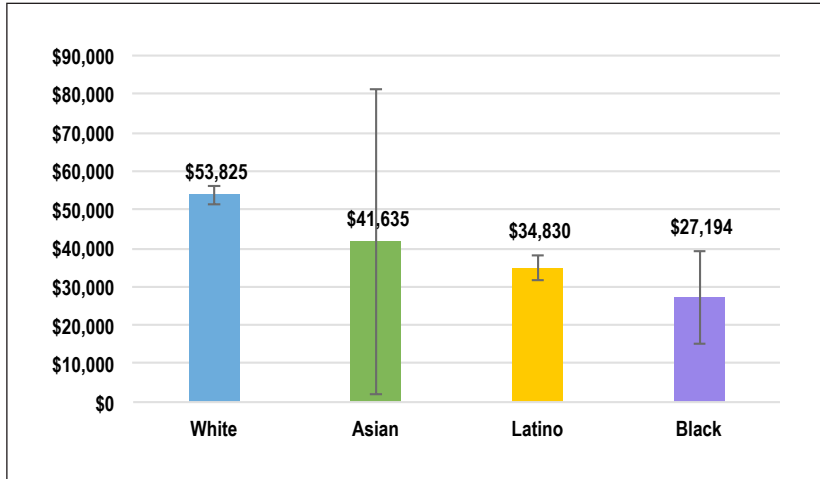


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C24010

Earnings

Fitchburg residents have a median household income of \$48,724, which is about 70% of the statewide median household income of \$68,563. Within Fitchburg, white residents earn the most (\$53,825), and black residents earn the least (\$27,194). Latinos earn more than black residents, but not as much as Asians. Nevertheless, Latino household income figures are fairly consistent between Fitchburg (\$34,830) and the state as a whole (\$36,171).

Figure 10: Median Earnings by Ethno-Racial Group

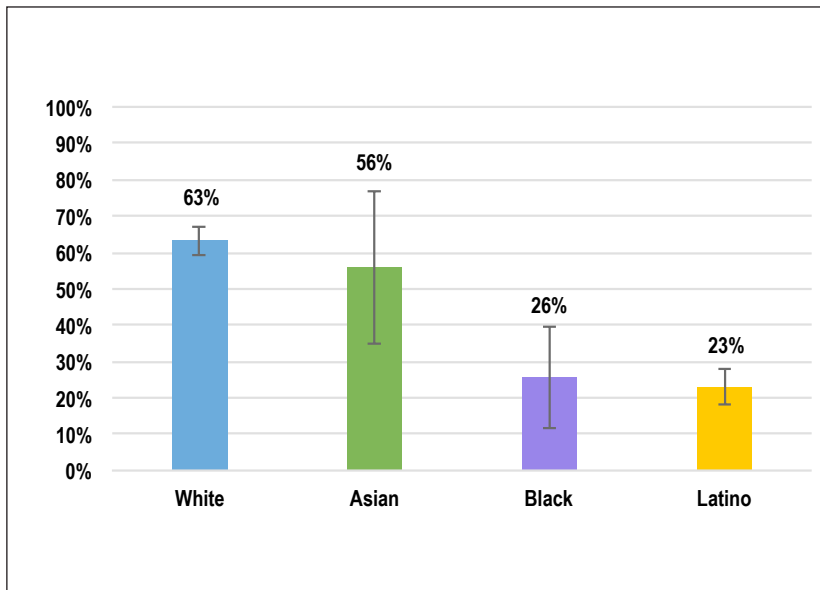


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B19013

Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

Fitchburg’s homeownership rate of 54% is significantly lower than the overall Massachusetts rate of 64%. Among Latinos, the homeownership rate is 23%, very close to the statewide Latino rate of 24%. Blacks in Fitchburg (26%) have almost as low a rate as Latinos, while the rates for whites (63%) and Asians (56%) are much higher (Figure 11).

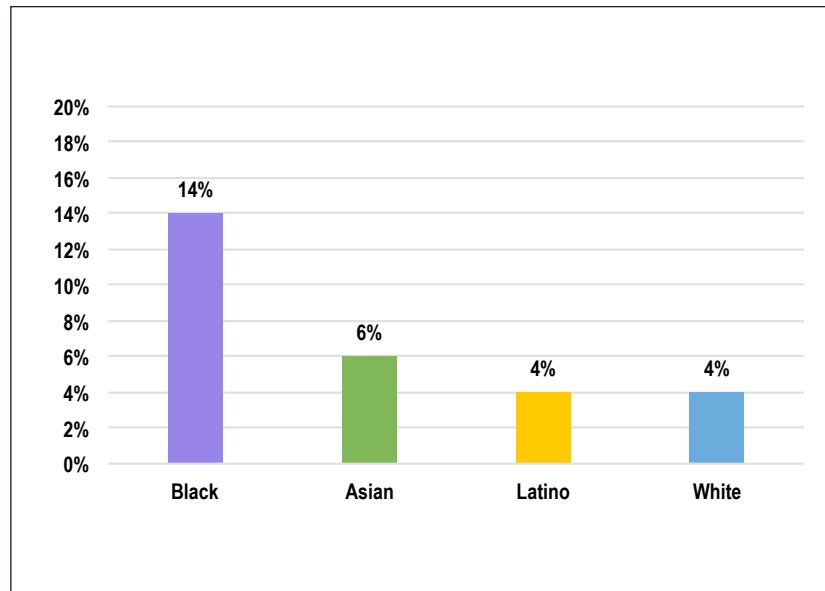
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B25003

The share of city residents who lack medical insurance in Fitchburg (4%) is slightly higher than the statewide rate (3.6%). In Fitchburg, uninsured residents are most concentrated in the black community (14%) – where the rate more than doubles that of all other major groups. Asians have the next highest uninsurance rate, 6%, followed by Latinos and whites, who each are uninsured at a rate of 4% (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C27001

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 American Community Survey (ACS) data. Demographic profiles highlighting Latino subgroups will be produced on an ongoing basis.

Our descriptive analysis uses ACS data to estimate population size and characteristics in order to compare Latinos to other ethno-racial groups. Technically, these groups are non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, and non-Latino Asians, though they are identified as “white,” “black”, and “Asian” in these profiles.

About the Authors

Phillip Granberry is a social demographer. He worked with various community-based organizations assisting recently arrived U.S. immigrants before earning a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Boston. He has published several articles on the accumulation and use of social capital among Latinos and the sexual health communication of Puerto Rican mothers with their children. In addition to his research and teaching in the Gastón Institute and Economics Department at UMass Boston, he is Senior Researcher in demography for the Boston Planning and Development Agency.

Because these estimates contain a “margin of error,” they may vary from one year’s report to another but still fall within this “margin of error.” Only when another estimate is outside of this margin of error can we identify a population change over time. Even with the limitation of this “margin of error,” these reports use the best demographic data of Latinos in the city and towns of Massachusetts.

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.

Trevor Mattos holds a M.P.P. in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and is currently a Graduate Research Assistant at the Gastón Institute, while pursuing a Master’s degree in Applied Economics at UMass Boston. His work primarily focuses on analysis of socio-demographic and economic conditions in Latino communities across Massachusetts.