

6-1-2015

# Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Somerville

Phillip Granberry

*University of Massachusetts Boston*, [phillip.granberry@umb.edu](mailto:phillip.granberry@umb.edu)

Mayara Fontes

*American Student Assistance*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston\\_pubs](http://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs)

 Part of the [Demography, Population, and Ecology Commons](#), and the [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Granberry, Phillip and Fontes, Mayara, "Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Somerville" (2015). *Gastón Institute Publications*. Paper 212.

[http://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston\\_pubs/212](http://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs/212)

This Research Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy Publications at ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gastón Institute Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. For more information, please contact [library.uasc@umb.edu](mailto:library.uasc@umb.edu).



# Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas Somerville

by Phillip Granberry and Mayara Fontes

June, 2015

---

THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE  
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND PUBLIC POLICY

---

# Somerville

This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Somerville. 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.

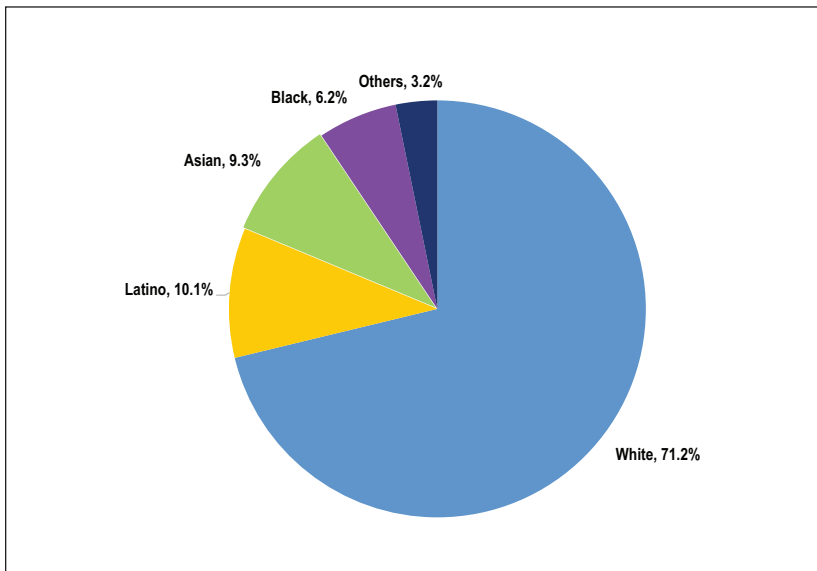
The report on Somerville is part of a larger series that covers cities and towns with a population between 35,000 and 100,000 residents in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a significant number of Latinos. Each report analyzes data from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census 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 identifies individuals with an ethnicity category of "Hispanic or Latino" or "Not Hispanic or Latino." Then the US Census allows individuals to select a race.) The Census designation of "Black or African American Alone" is referenced in this report as black. Likewise, the Census category of "Asian Alone" is referenced as Asian. A smaller "Other" ethno-racial category is identified for the initial population estimate of Somerville, consisting of those who identified with multiple race categories or some other race (including 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.

## THE LATINO POPULATION

As one of the most densely populated municipalities of the Commonwealth, Somerville is home to an estimated 7,742 Latinos. They represent about one-tenth (10.1%) of the city's population, a smaller share than for whites and Asians but greater than for blacks (Figure 1).

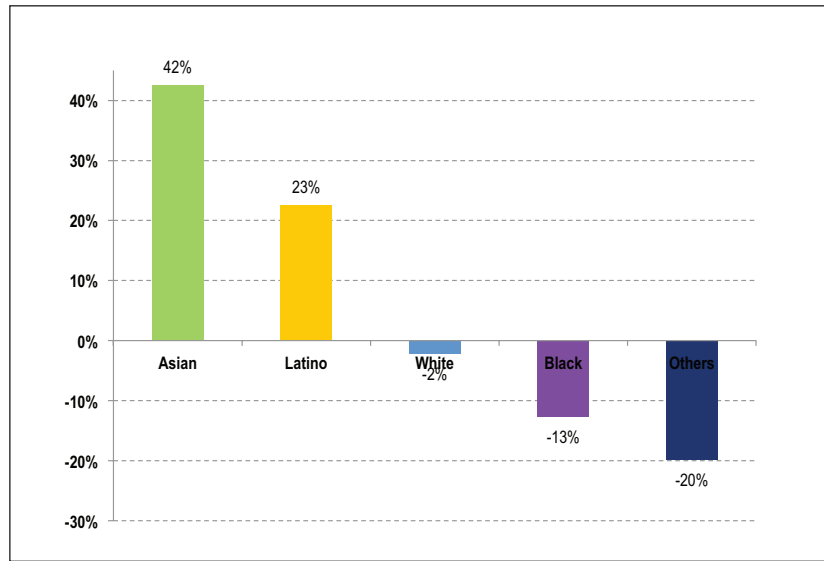
Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Somerville



Source: 2015 5-Year ACS Data - DP05

A striking feature of Somerville is its recent population change. From 2000 to 2013, Asians (43%) and Latinos (23%) experienced population growth in the city, while whites and blacks, respectively, experienced 2% and 13% population declines (Figure 2). The growth of the Latino population in Somerville is smaller than that of Latinos statewide, who experienced an increase of 53%. Somerville has long been a destination for international migrants, and today it has a greater concentration of foreign-born (25%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (15%).

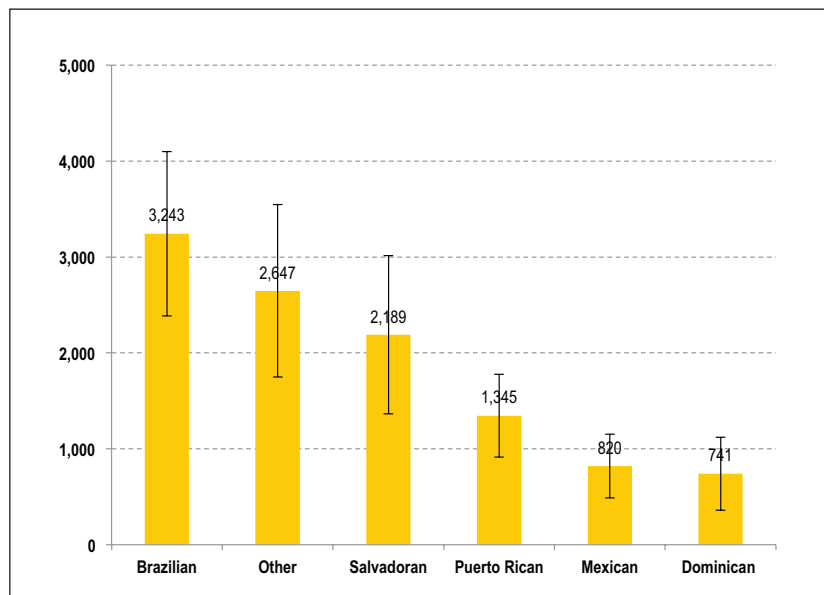
**Figure 2: Population Change by Ethno-Racial Group from 2000 to 2013**



Source: 2013 5-Year ACS - DP05 and 2000 Census Summary File 1 Data

When examining the ancestry of Latinos in the Somerville, it is important to note that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens; they are not included in foreign-born estimates in the preceding paragraph. In addition, not all Brazilians identify as Latino for the Census, and Figure 3 reports a larger number of Latinos than Figure 1. Brazilians, with a population of 3,234, constitute the largest Latino subpopulation in the city, followed by Salvadorans (2,189), Puerto Ricans (1,345), Mexicans (820), and Dominicans (741).

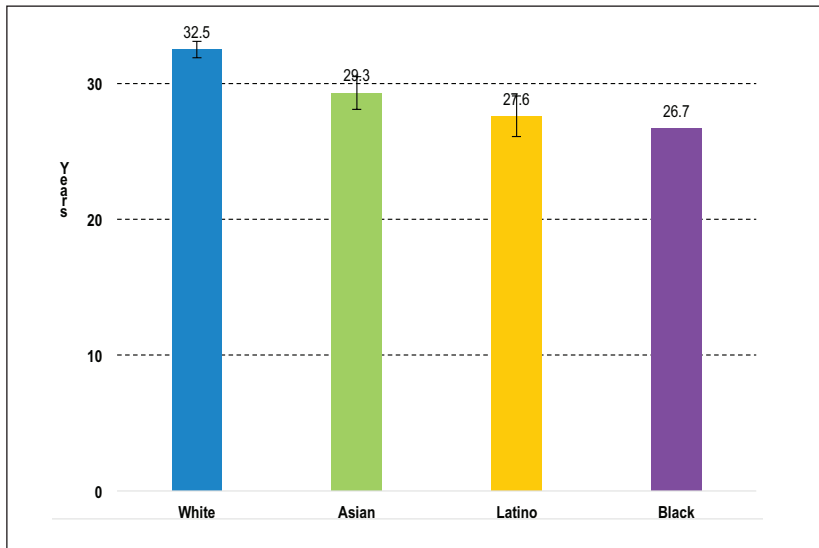
**Figure 3: Ancestry of the Top Latino Subpopulations**



Source: 2013 ACS 5-Year Data B04001 and B03001

## MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

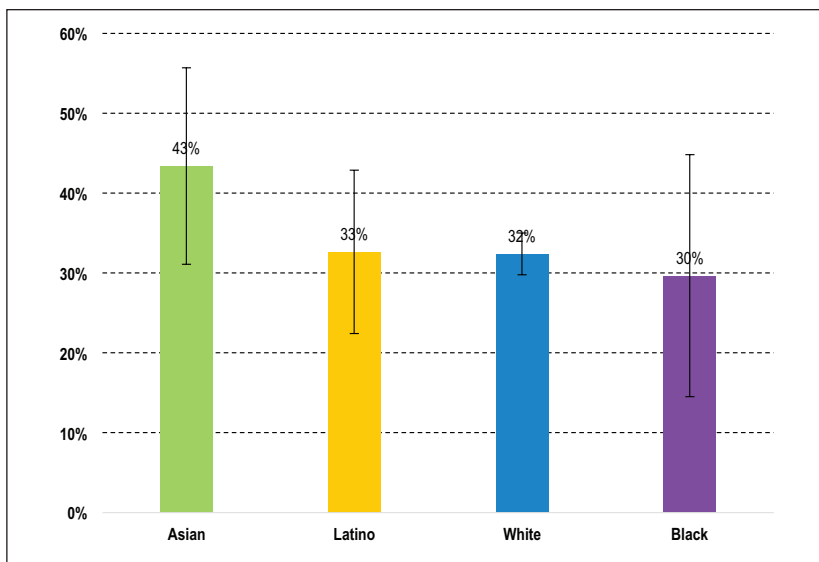
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2013 ACS 5-Year Data - B01002

Somerville Latinos, with a median age of 27.6 years, are slightly older on average than the statewide Latino median age of 26.9 years. They are also slightly older than Somerville's black population (26.7). However, Latinos in the city are much younger than Somerville's larger white population (32.5 years).

Figure 5: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



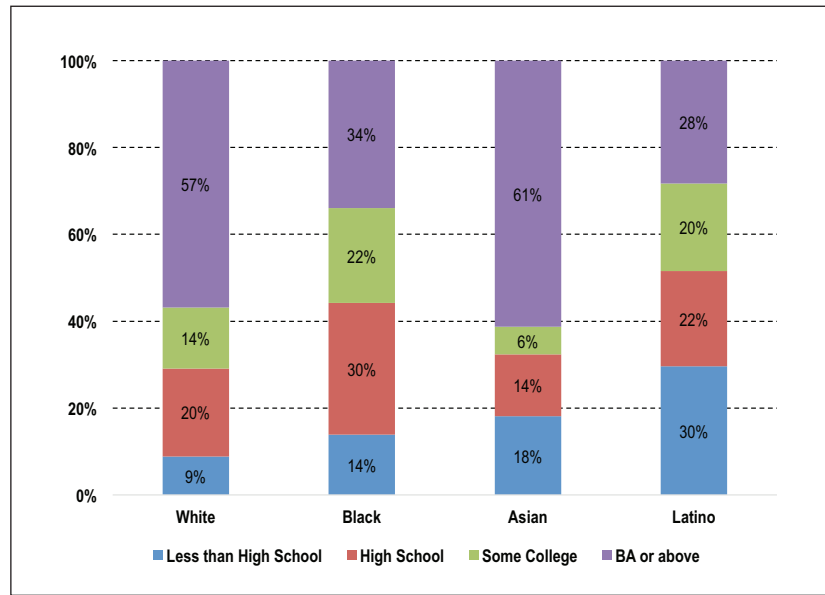
Source: 2013 ACS 3-Year Data - B12002

The marriage rate for persons 15 years and older in Somerville is 32%, which is much lower than the statewide rate of 49%. The Latino marriage rate of 32% in Somerville is lower than for Asians (42%), but slightly higher than for blacks (31%) and whites (31%), and slightly lower than the statewide Latino rate of 33%.

## EDUCATION

The overall educational attainment in Somerville is high, with 54% of residents age 25 or older having a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 40% statewide. Latinos have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 28%, compared to 34% for blacks, 57% for whites, and 61% for Asians. The statewide rate for Latinos is 17%. At the other end of the educational scale, Figure 6 also shows that Latinos have the highest percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 30%, compared to 18% for Asians, 14% for blacks, and 9% for whites. (The statewide rate for Latinos is 33%).

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

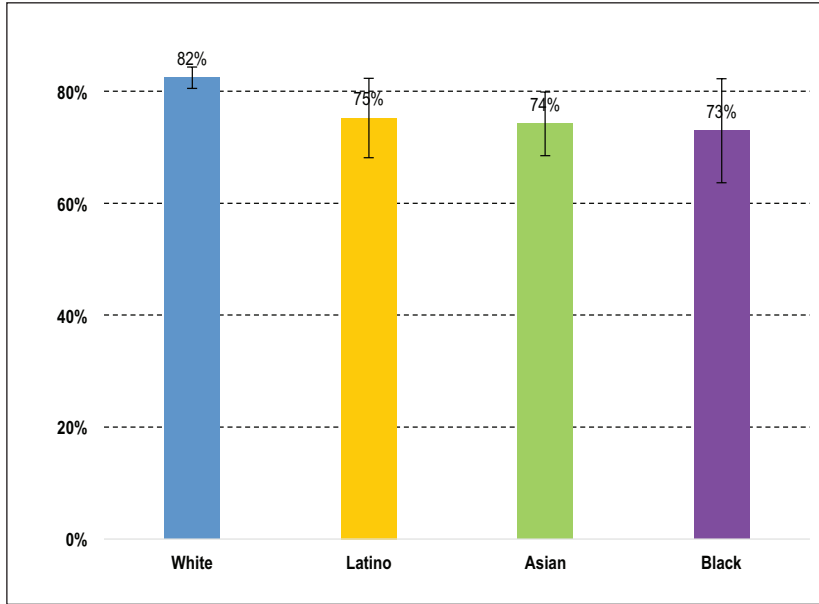


Source: 2013 3-Year ACS Data - B15002

## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Latinos have a higher labor force participation rate in Somerville (75%) than Latinos statewide (66%). As Figure 7 shows, whites have the highest labor force participation in the city (82%), with Asians and blacks trailing Latinos very closely.

**Figure 7: Labor Force Participation among Individuals 16 to 64 Years of Age by Ethno-Racial Group**

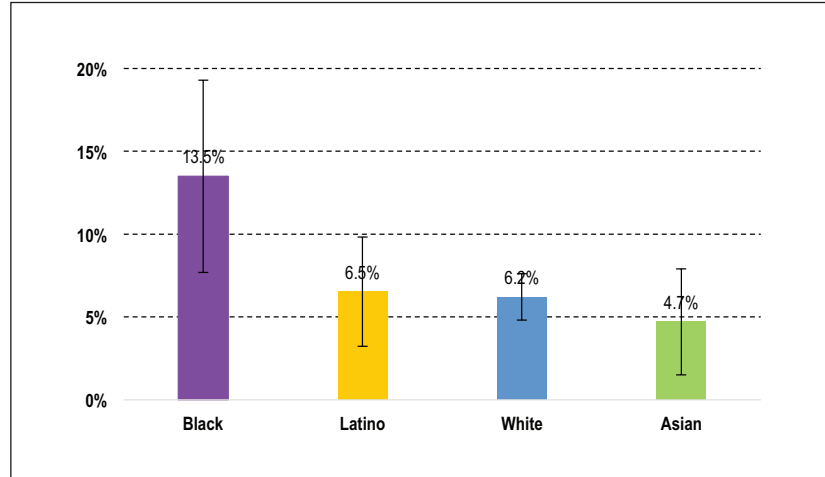


Source: 2013 ACS 3-Year Data - C23002

The overall unemployment rate in Somerville during this period was a low 6.2%, compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 7.8%. The Latino unemployment rate in Somerville of 6.5 % is the second highest of any ethno-racial group in the city. However, Latinos in Somerville who participate in the labor force fare better than Latinos statewide, who during this period experienced a 13.9% unemployment rate.



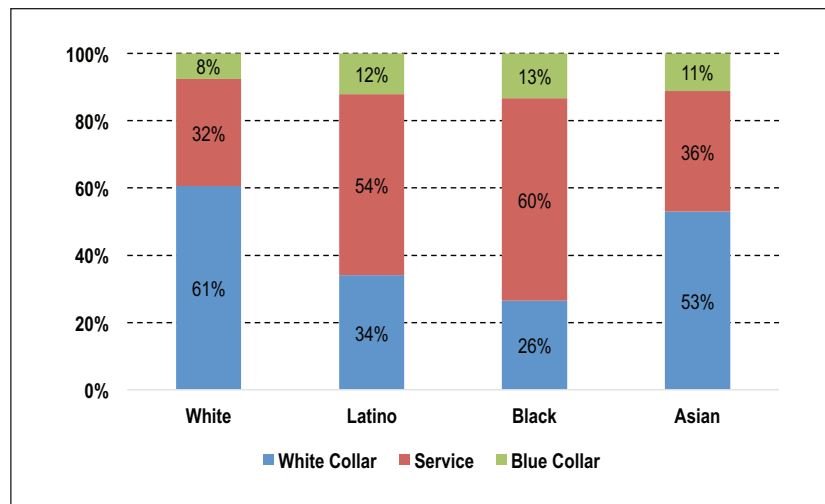
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2013 ACS 3-Year Data - C23002

Figure 9 highlights the fact that Latinos work in traditionally low-wage jobs. Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs with only 34% working in these management, business, science, and arts occupations (compared to 61% for whites and 53% for Asians). Over half (54%) of the employed Latinos are in service and sales occupations, compared with 36% for Asians and only 32% for whites. The discrepancy is even greater for blacks, of whom only 26% are in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs and 60% in sales and service.

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

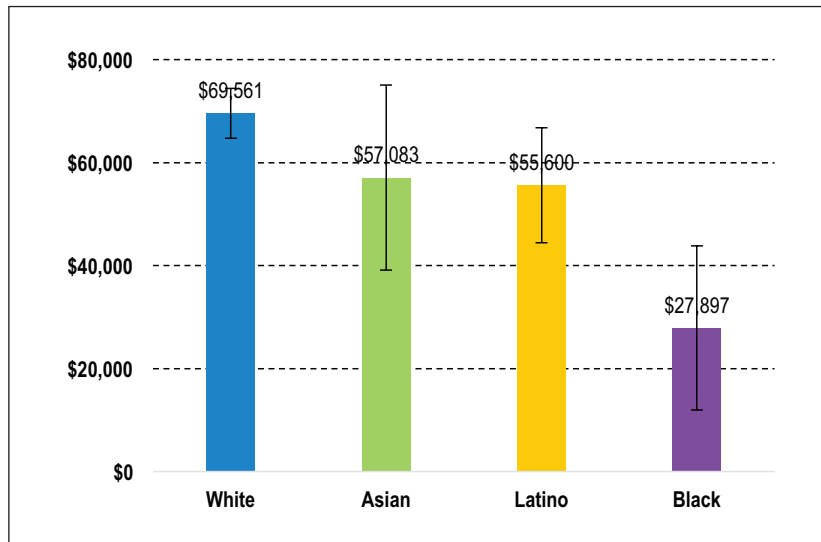


Source: 2013 ACS 3-Year Data - C24010

## EARNINGS

Somerville's median income is \$ 65,110, which is similar to the statewide median income of \$66,135. Latinos in Figure 10 have the second lowest median income (\$55,600) of any ethno-racial group in the city. However, Latinos in Somerville are more economically successful than Latinos in other parts of the Commonwealth, as the statewide Latino median income is \$34,726.

Figure 10: Median Income by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013

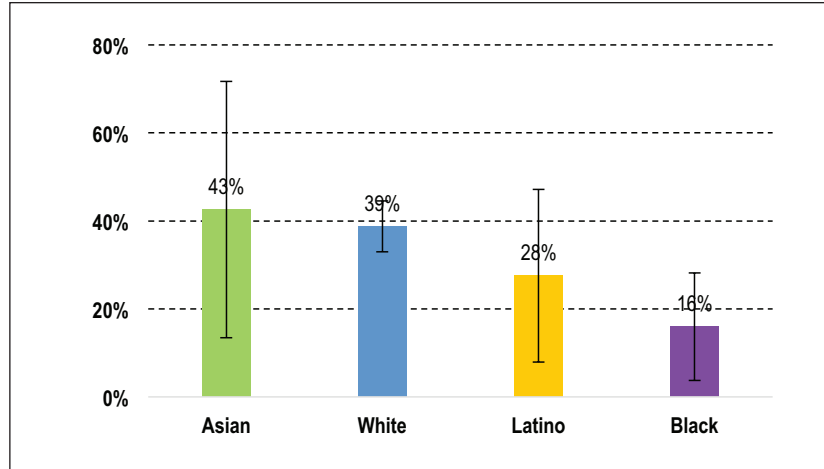


Source: 2013 ACS 3-Year Data - S1903

## HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL UNINSURANCE

The final measures of Latino participation in Somerville are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Somerville has a lower homeownership rate (41%) than the statewide rate (66%) as measured by occupied housing units. As shown in Figure 11, Latinos have a 28% homeowner rate, and this is higher than the 24% of Latinos statewide who are homeowners. However, Latino homeownership in the city is lower than for Asians and whites. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 72% of Latinos in Somerville are renters.

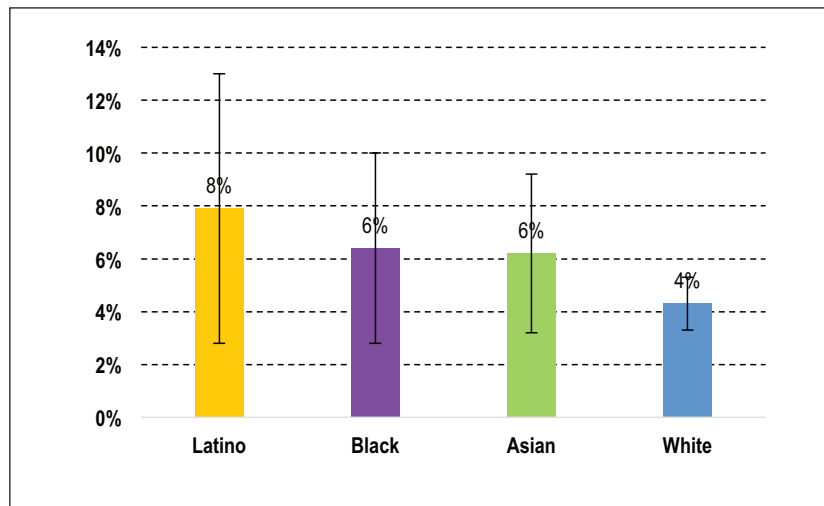
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2013 ACS 3-Year Data - B25003

Somerville has a higher rate of medical uninsurance (5%) than the statewide average of 4%. Some of this might be attributed to its higher concentration of foreign-born residents, who have the highest rates of uninsurance. Figure 12 shows that Latinos have the highest rates of medical uninsurance in Somerville: 8%, which is the same as the rate for Latinos statewide.

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2013 ACS 3-Year Data -B27001

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.

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 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.

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 2020 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 unauthorized immigration in the United States. 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 Mexican migrants and the impact of welfare and immigration policy reform on Latinos in Massachusetts. In addition to his teaching in the Economics Department, he is also an investigator for *Por Ahí Dicen*, a research project of the Center for Health Equity Intervention Research (CHEIR) that is evaluating the effectiveness of a Spanish language multi-media campaign in Springfield designed to increase Puerto Rican mother-child communication about sexuality and sexual health.

**Mayara Fontes** holds a M.A. in Applied Economics from University of Massachusetts Boston and is currently a Reporting Analyst at American Student Assistance. Her research interests include migration, health and human rights.