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## Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Southbridge

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# Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas

## Southbridge

by Phillip Granberry, PhD, Trevor Mattos

July, 2017

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THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE  
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND PUBLIC POLICY

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# Southbridge

## The Latino Population

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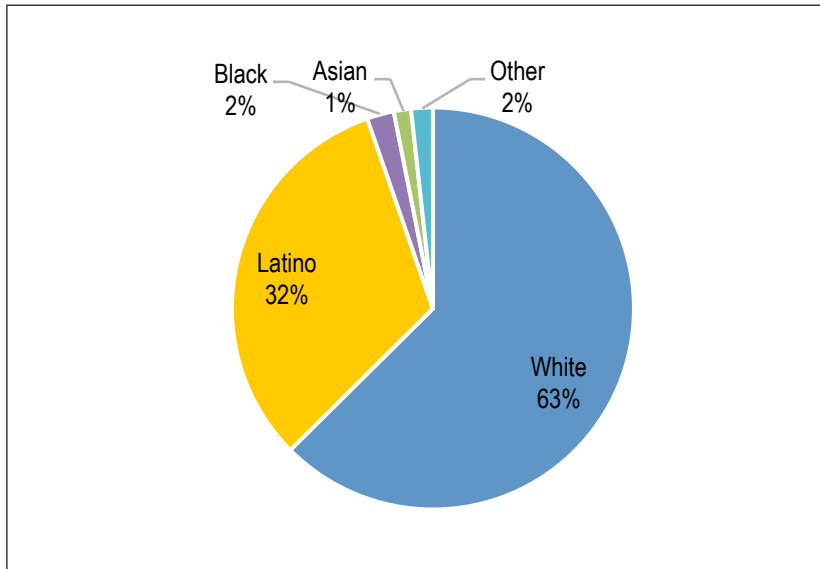
This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Southbridge. It reflects a commitment by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy to provide periodic updates on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

The report on Southbridge 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 Southbridge 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.

Southbridge is a town of 16,802 residents, of whom 5,399, or 32%, identify as Latino or Hispanic. There are nearly twice as many white residents, making up 63% of the town population, while black and Asian residents collectively account for only 3% of the town (Figure 1).

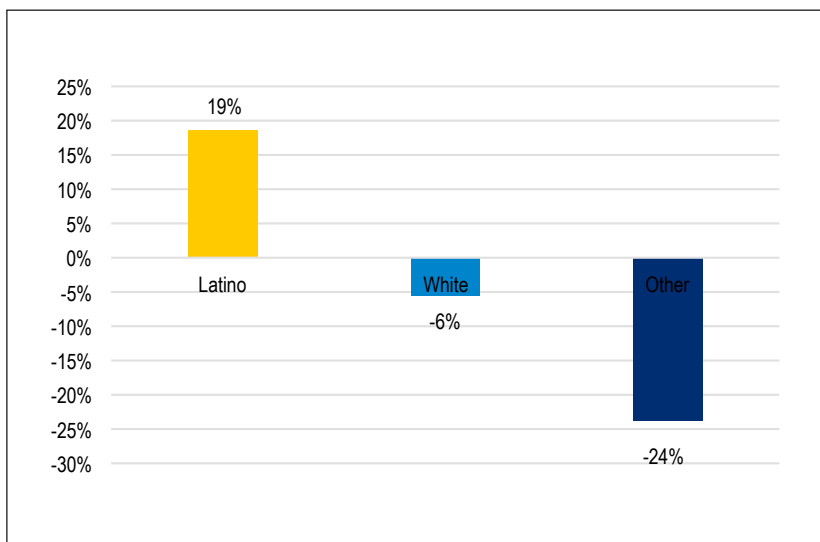
Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Southbridge



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

Between 2010 and 2015 the white population decreased, while the Latino population increased by 19%. Those identifying as Asian, black, and other ethno-racial groups make up a small share of the overall town population and decreased significantly. The reduction in Southbridge’s white population has outpaced the statewide trend somewhat. During the same time period, the state saw a reduction in white residents of 1%, compared to Southbridge’s 6% decrease. The 19% growth of the Latino population in Southbridge was very close to the statewide increase of 21%. Interestingly, despite having a sizeable Latino community, Southbridge has a very small foreign-born population, making up only 5% of town residents. By comparison, foreign-born residents of Massachusetts overall (roughly a million) make up 15% of the statewide population.

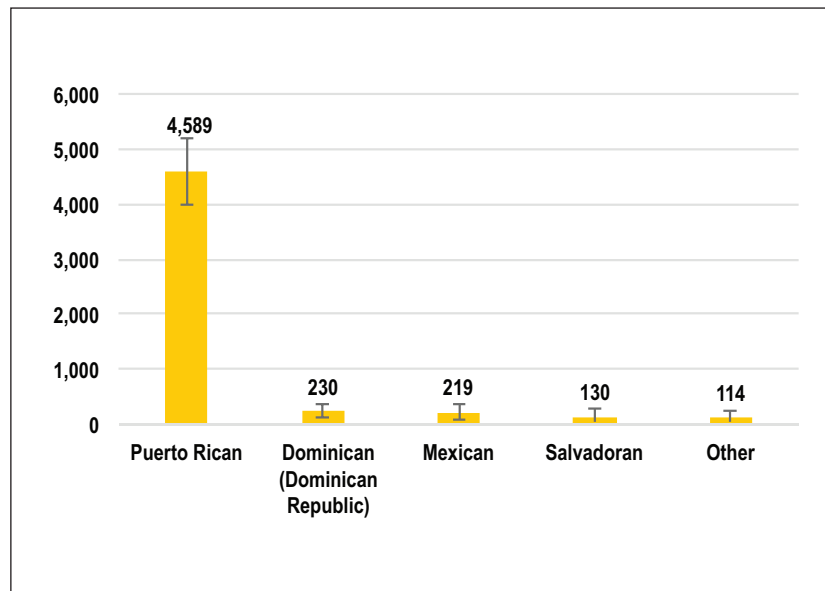
Figure 2: Population Change by Ethno-Racial Group from 2010 to 2015



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

The Latino community in Southbridge is predominantly made up of Puerto Rican residents. Of those with Puerto Rican ancestry, 51% were born in the continental United States and 49% were born on the island of Puerto Rico. Nevertheless, it should be noted that all Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens from birth, and so none of them are included in foreign-born estimates. Other Latino or Hispanic groups with a presence in Southbridge include residents with ancestry from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, El Salvador, and Other.

Figure 3: Ancestry of the Top Latino Subpopulations

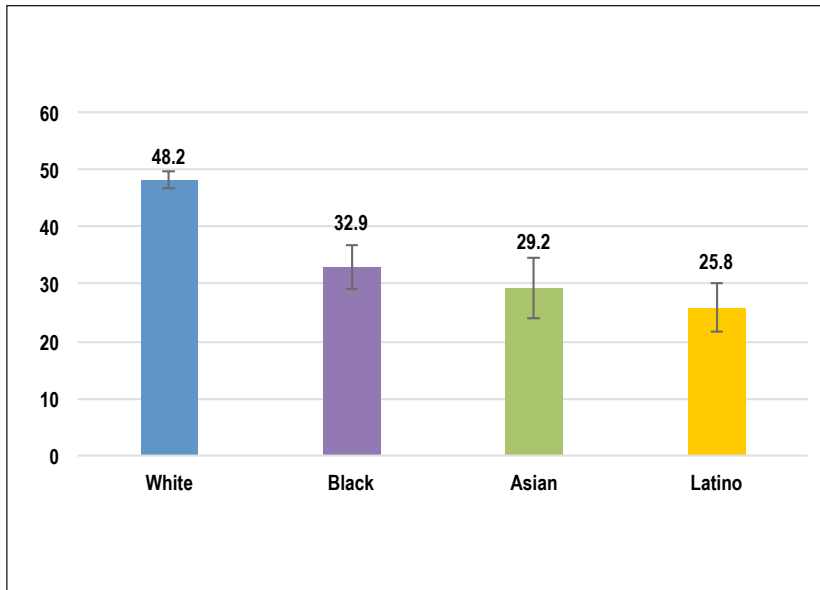


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year ACS Estimates – B03001

## Median Age and Marital Status

The Latino or Hispanic population in Southbridge is notably younger than the majority white population, with a median age that is nearly half that of white residents. The median age of blacks and Asians is also quite a bit younger than for white residents, though not as young as for Latinos (Figure 4). Across the state, Massachusetts’ Latino residents have a median age of 27, slightly older than those who reside in Southbridge.

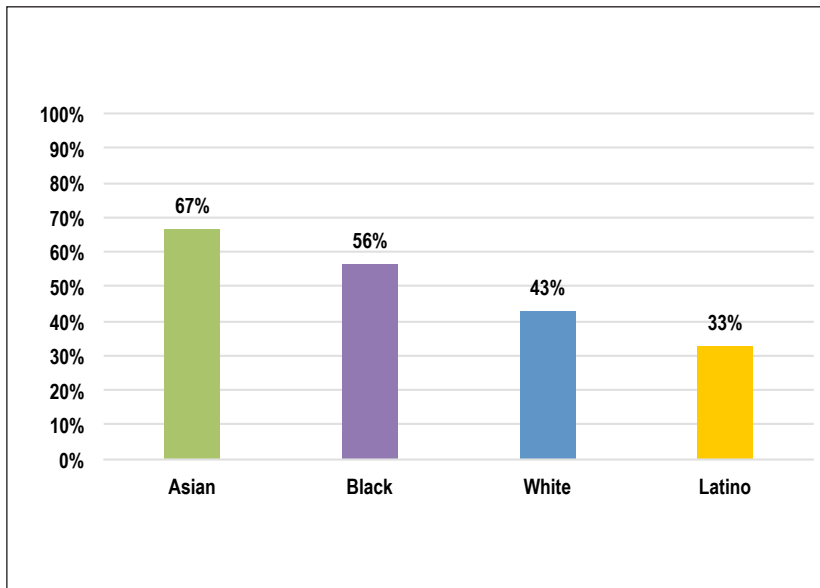
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



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

Marriage rates in Southbridge vary significantly across ethno-racial groups. The Latino community has the lowest marriage rate, at 33%. This figure, however, is very consistent with the statewide marriage rate for Latinos, which is 32% in Massachusetts. White Southbridge residents have a marriage rate of 43%, while black and Asian residents have significantly higher marriage rates, at 56% and 67%, respectively (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group

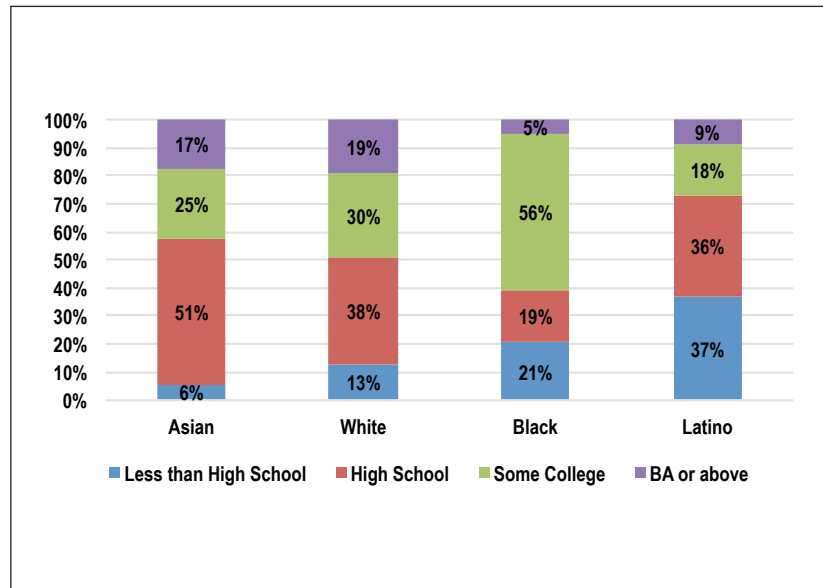


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B12002

## Education

Educational attainment in Southbridge is much lower than is observed statewide. The Massachusetts state population includes 1.8 million people, or 40% of the population 25 years and older, with a bachelor's degree or higher. In Southbridge, only 16% of this age group have obtained a four-year degree or more. Current data show that Latinos in Southbridge have the second to lowest higher educational attainment rates (9%), while only 5% of black residents have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. In comparison, the percentages for Asian and white residents of Southbridge are 17% and 19%, respectively. At the lowest levels of educational attainment, we observe a high concentration of Latinos: more than a third (37%) of Latinos 25 years and older have not completed high school. This figure compares to 21% of black residents, 13% of white residents, and 6% of Asian residents.

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

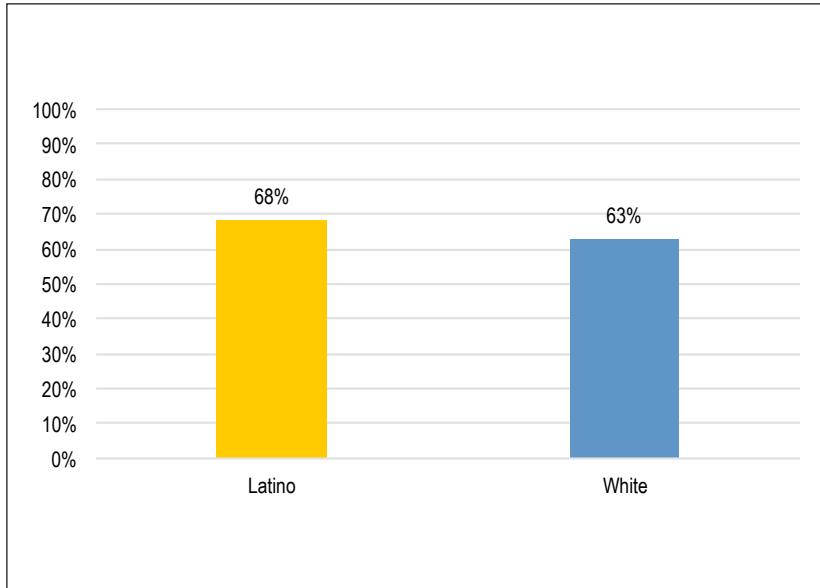


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C15002

## Labor Force Participation

Latino labor force participation in Southbridge is consistent with the statewide participation rate for this group (66% for Massachusetts, 67% for Southbridge). In Figure 7, Latinos have a higher labor force participation rate (68%) than whites (63%). Blacks and Asian are not reported due to their smaller populations and high margin of errors.

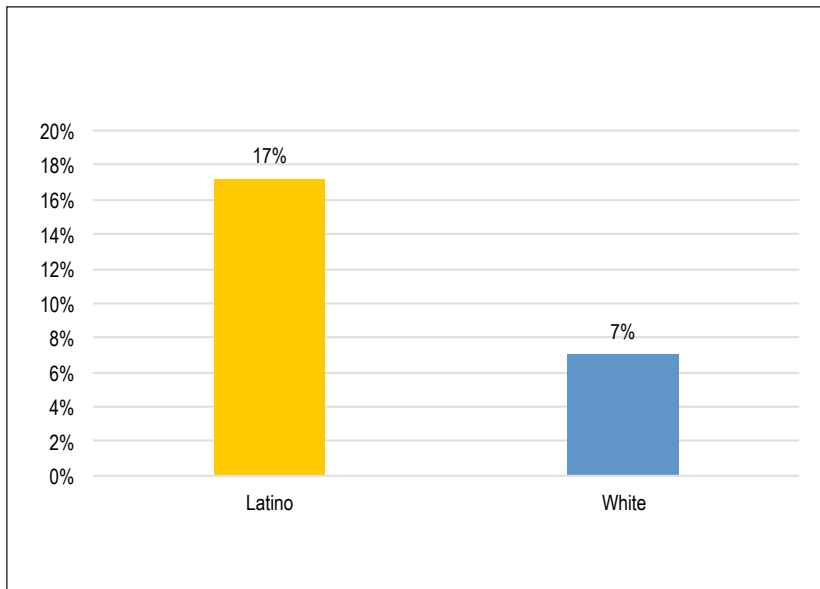
**Figure 7: Labor Force Participation among Individuals 16 years and Older by Ethno-Racial Group**



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

Unemployment for Latino residents of Southbridge (17%) is significantly higher than statewide unemployment for Latinos (12%). The white unemployment rate in Southbridge is 7% (Figure 8). Blacks and Asian are not reported due to their smaller populations and high margin of errors.

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

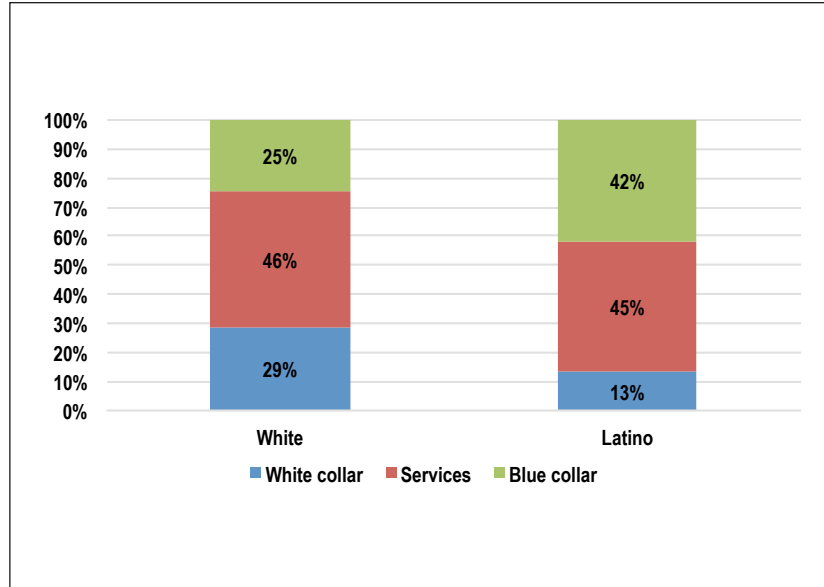


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C23002



Among those who are employed, the data show that Latino workers are less represented in white collar managerial or professional positions. White workers have a higher share of these positions. Correspondingly, Latino are more concentrated in service and blue collar jobs than whites. (Figure 9).

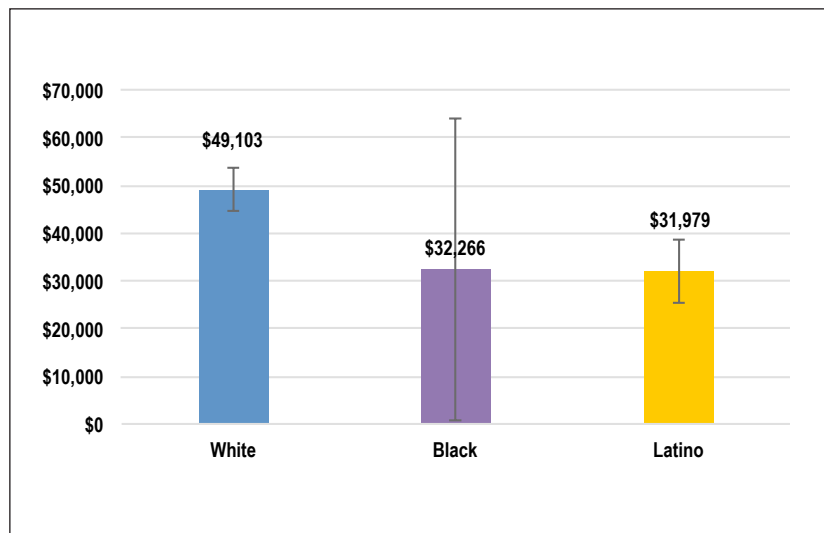
Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group



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

## Earnings

Figure 10: Median Earnings by Ethno-Racial Group



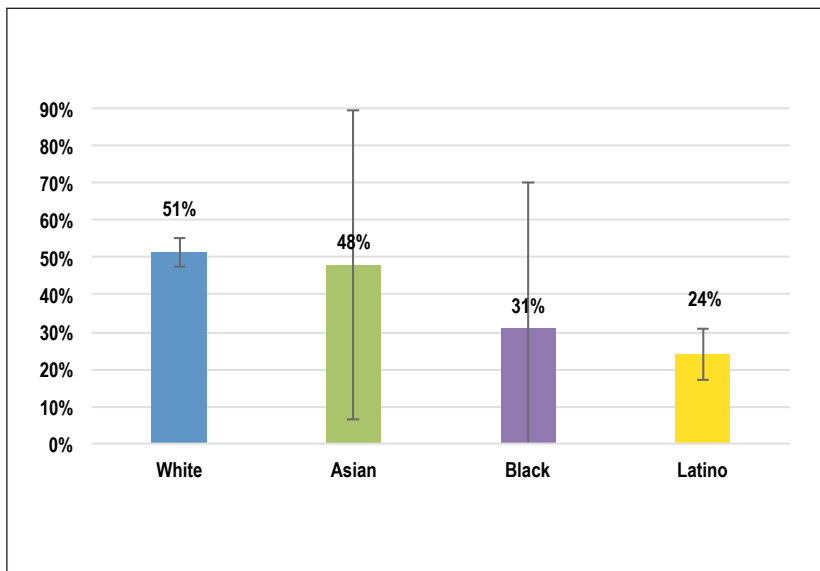
Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B19013

The median household income in Southbridge – \$43,870 – is only about 64% of the statewide median income of \$68,563. Though income data for the Asian community is not currently available, differences in the other groups are important to observe. Median income for the white community is nearly fifty thousand dollars, while both Latino and black residents have median incomes near thirty thousand dollars. Statewide, median income for Latinos is \$36,171, indicating that, on average, Latinos do not fare quite as well economically in Southbridge as in the Commonwealth as a whole.

## Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

Southbridge’s homeownership rate (44%) is much lower than the statewide rate of 62%. For the Latino community in Southbridge, the homeownership rate is 24% (the same as for Latinos statewide). This is the lowest ownership rate among the ethno-racial groups in Southbridge considered for this analysis. White residents have the highest homeownership rate (51%), followed by Asians (48%), and then blacks (31%).

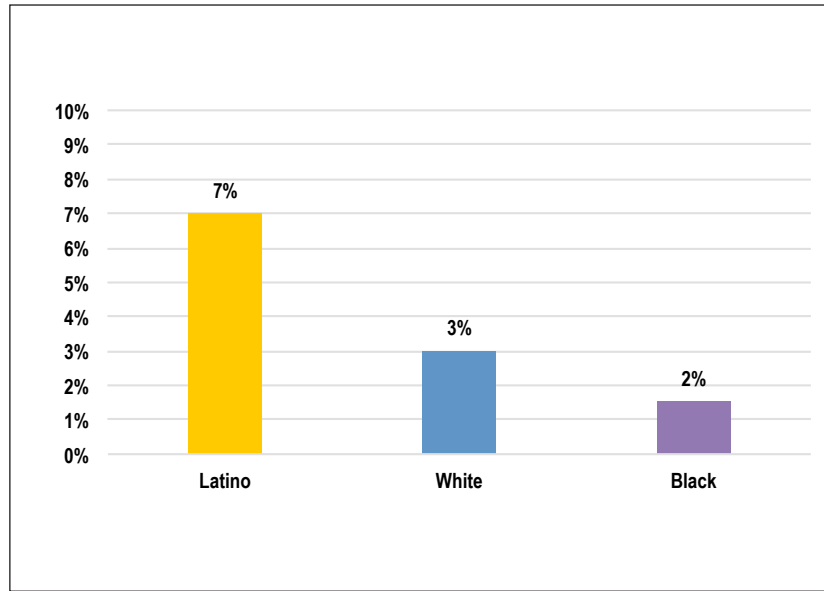
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



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

The proportion of residents who lack medical insurance in Southbridge is very similar to the statewide figure (4% of Massachusetts residents, 5% of Southbridge residents). However, among residents of Southbridge, uninsured residents are more highly concentrated in the Latino community than any other. The Latino uninsurance rate is 7%, while only 3% of white residents and 2% of black residents lack medical insurance (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.