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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Springfield

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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas Springfield

by Phillip Granberry, PhD, Trevor Mattos

July, 2017

THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY

Springfield

The Latino Population

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

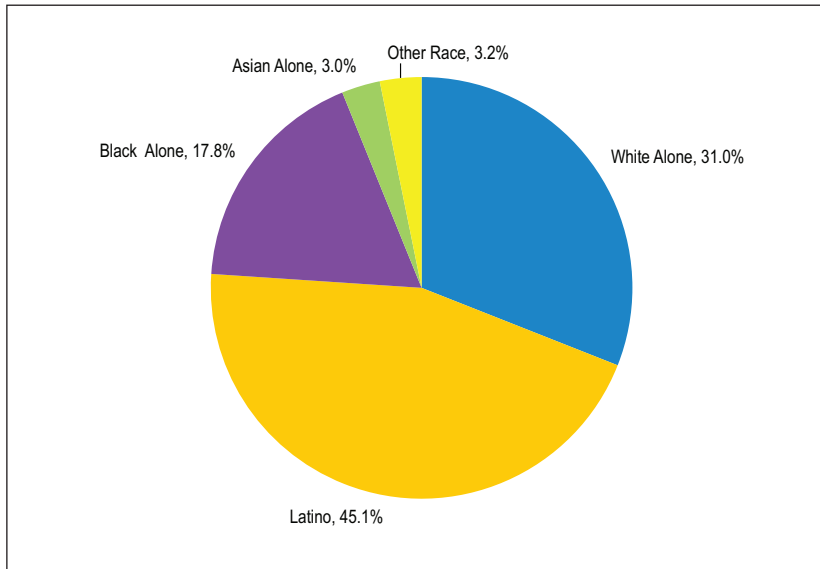
The report on Springfield is part of a larger series that covers other cities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This report analyzes Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data from the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data are analyzed by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), which consists of a minimum population of 100,000 and is the smallest geographic area publically available for individual-level analysis. Springfield is a large enough city that it constitutes a PUMA by itself. The PUMS ACS data thereby enables us to arrive at more detailed demographic and economic estimates of Springfield's Latino community.

Since ACS data are 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.

Springfield, the third largest city in Massachusetts, is home to an estimated 69,243 Latinos, who make up 45.1% of the city's population. Whites constitute the second largest ethno-racial group (31.0%), while blacks (17.8%) and Asians (3.0%) are the other ethno-racial group with a sizable presence (Figure 1).

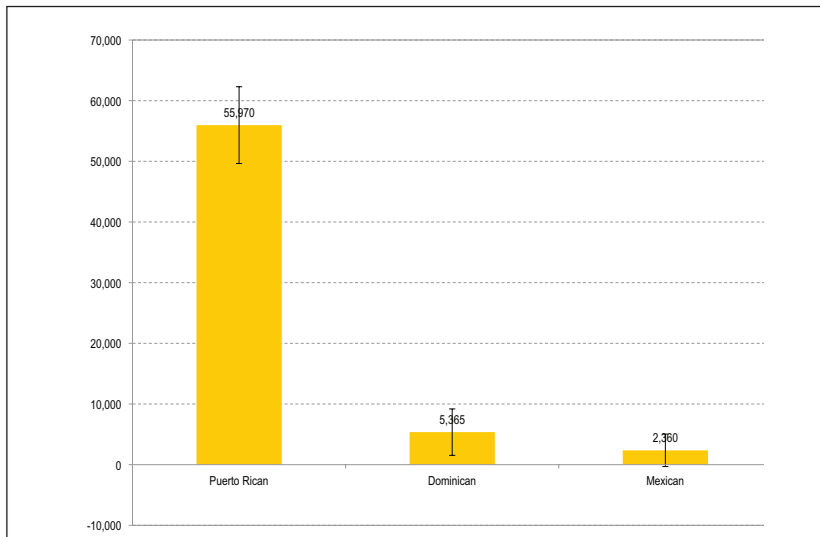
Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015,



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

The large Latino population is driven by the city’s high concentration of Puerto Ricans, who are U.S. citizens and who number 55,970. As a result, Springfield has a lower percentage of foreign-born residents (11.5%) than the state as a whole (16.2%). Dominicans (5,365) and Mexicans (2,360) are the other two large Latino populations in Springfield; these three groups make up 92.0% of the city’s Latino population.

Figure 2: Ancestry of the Top Latino Groups in 2015



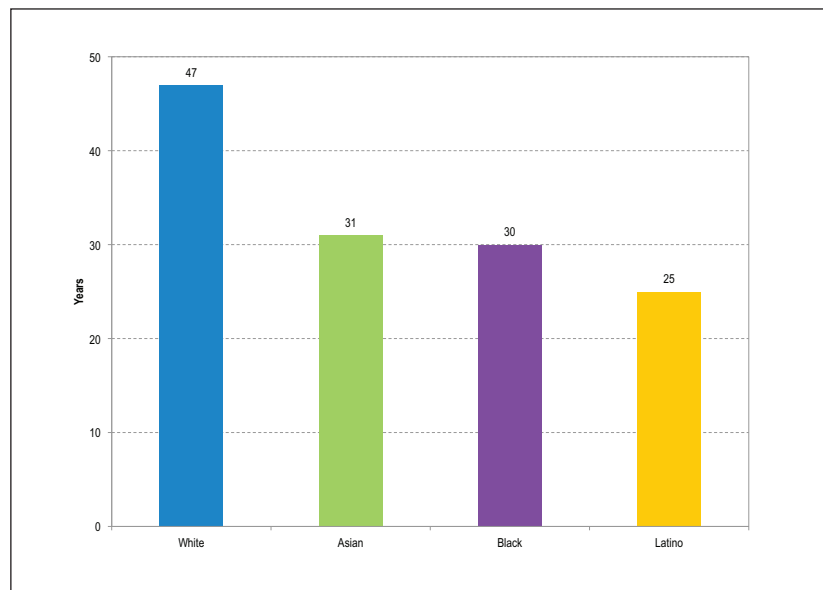
Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

The remainder of this report presents an overview that compares Latinos to whites, and blacks in this area for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics. The Asian population is too small to provide reliable information in many of these categories.

Median Age and Marital Status

Figure 3 highlights differences in median age between populations, drawing attention to the importance of Latinos in Springfield. Latinos have a median age (25 years) that is slightly younger than the statewide Latino average (27 years) and much younger than the median age of blacks (30 years), Asians (31 years), and whites (47 years) in Springfield. This suggests that Latinos have more families with young children and will require an investment in 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. Springfield's older population will require younger residents to keep this city's neighborhoods vibrant and maintain a productive workforce, and Latinos are poised to make this contribution.

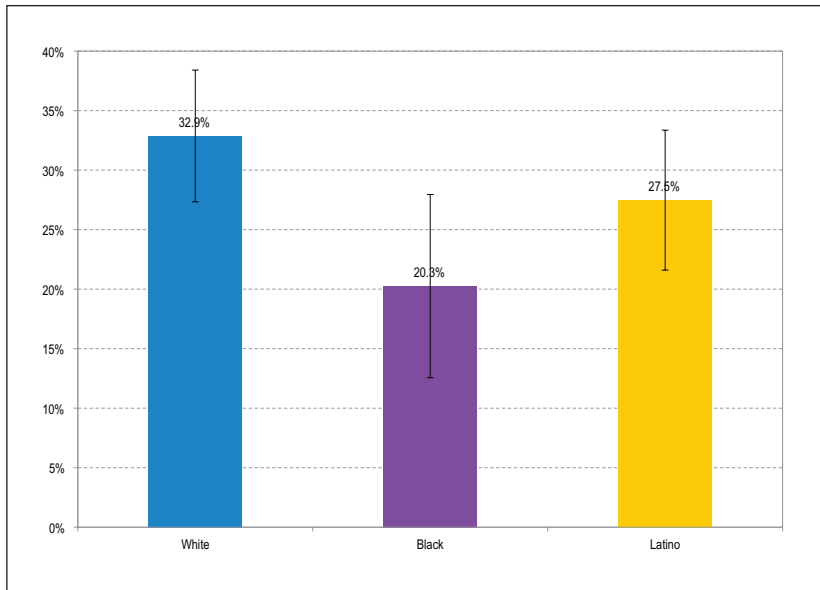
Figure 3: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

The youthfulness of Springfield's Latino population may influence its marital status. The Latino marriage rate shown in Figure 4, covering all persons' age 15 and older, is lower than for whites but higher than for blacks. Statewide, the Latino marriage rate is 34.1% in comparison to 27.5% in Springfield.

Figure 4: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015 (Ages 15 and older)

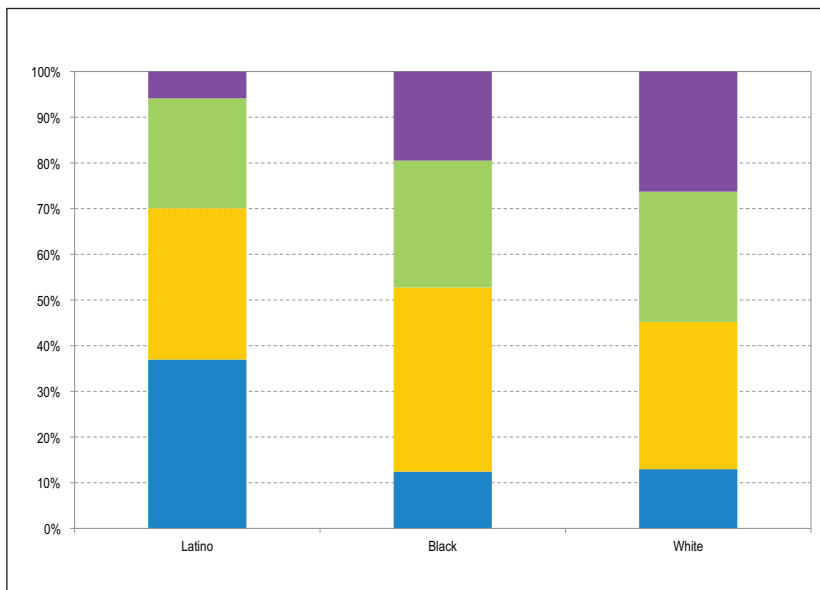


Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

Education

Figure 5 highlights the fact that Latinos have a high percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 37.0%, compared to 13.0% for whites and 12.4% for blacks. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 5.9%, compared to 19.5% for blacks, and 26.3% for whites.

Figure 5: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015 (Adults 25 Years and Older)

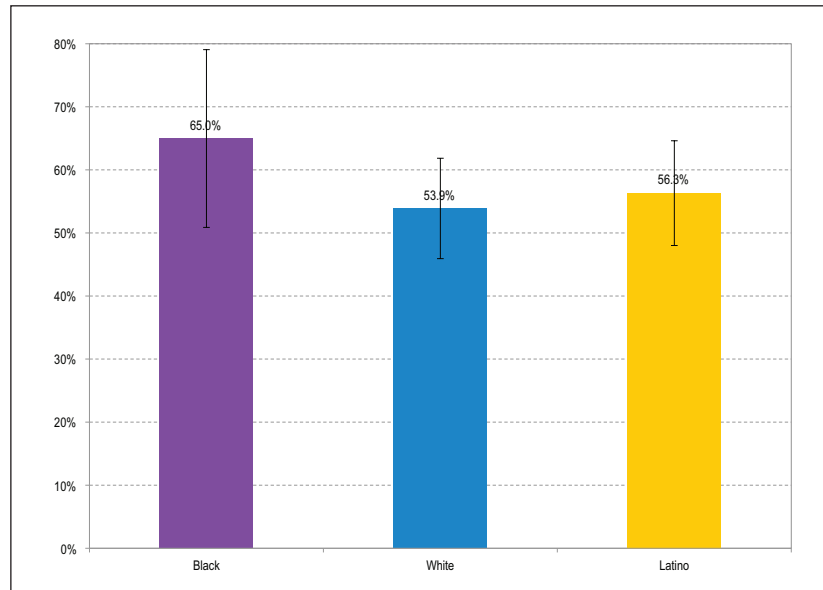


Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

Labor Force Participation

Figure 7 shows that Latinos have a lower labor force participation rate (56.3%) than blacks (65.0%) but higher than whites (53.9%). This labor force participation rate is substantially lower than the statewide Latino average of 69.9%, and slightly lower than the overall Springfield labor force participation rate of 57.7%. This low participation in Springfield could be related to the lower median age of Latinos shown by Figure 3 and educational attainment shown by Figure 5, suggesting they have more families with young children, which typically aligns with lower labor force participation rates due to caretaking needs.

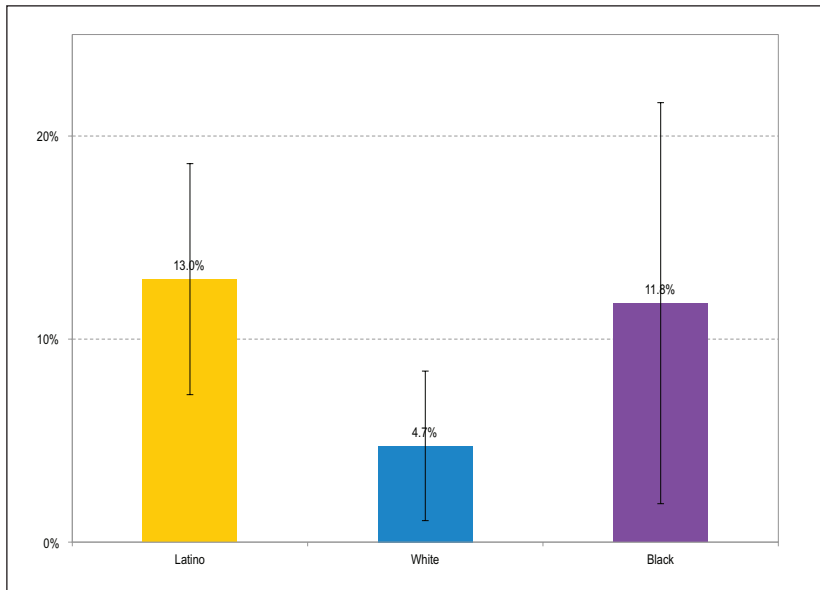
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

The previous labor force participation information suggests that Latinos in Springfield are struggling to participate in the city's economy. Figure 8 tells a similar and even less positive story for those Latinos who are in the work force. The unemployment rate among Latinos in 2015 was 13.0%, which was more than double that of whites and higher than the statewide Latino unemployment rate of 8.2%.

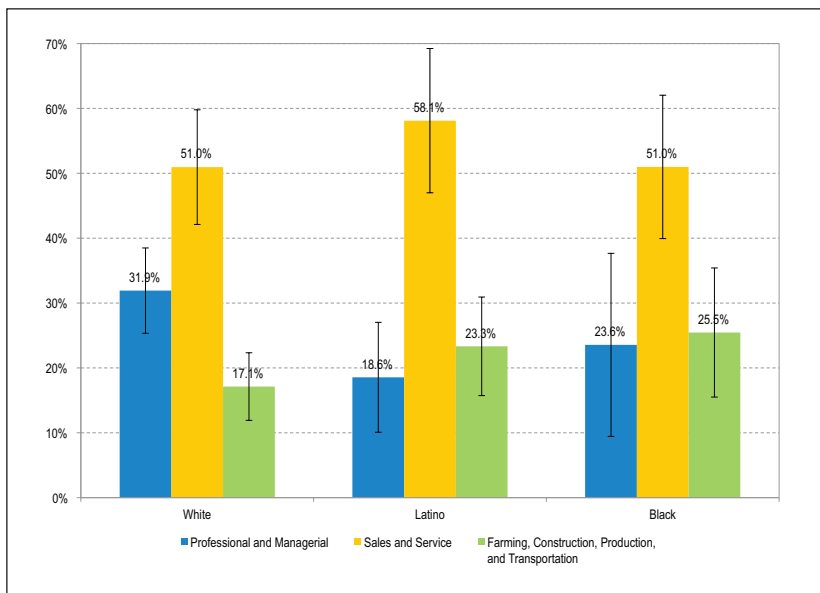
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

Figure 9 suggests that Latinos serve as complements to other ethno-racial groups in the Springfield labor market whose members have higher educational attainment. Latinos are overrepresented in sales and service occupations. Correspondingly, Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs (professional and managerial).

Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015

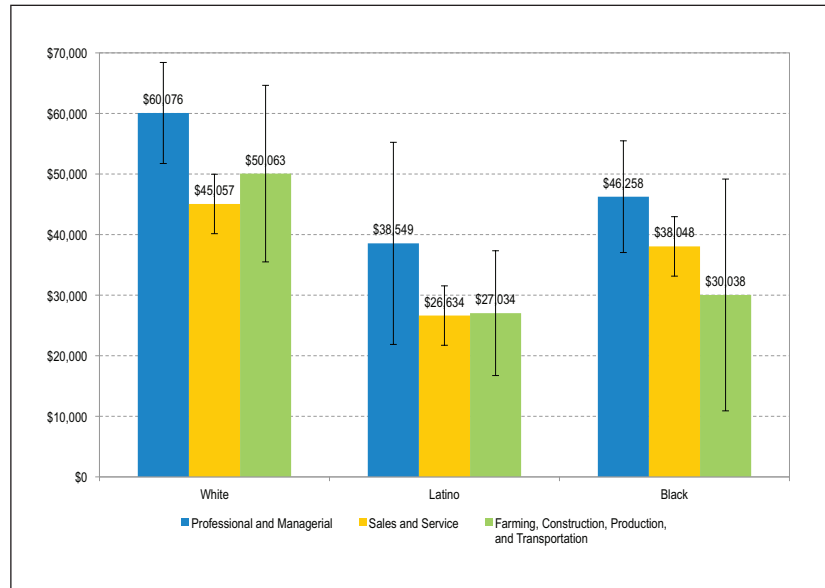


Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

Earnings

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, we see that Latinos in Springfield are receiving lower wages than other ethno-racial group (Figure 10). They earn less than blacks and whites for their blue-collar work. Similarly, they earn less than both blacks and whites for their white-collar employment.

Figure 10: Median Income by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015

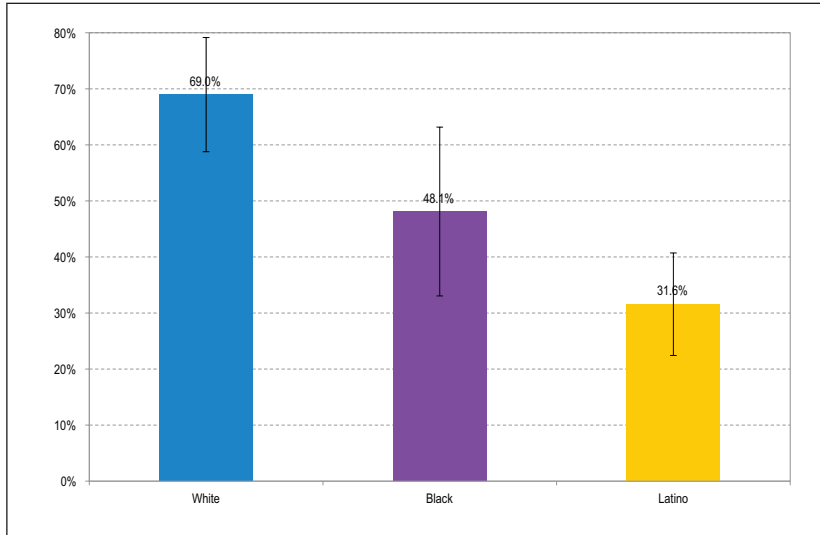


Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

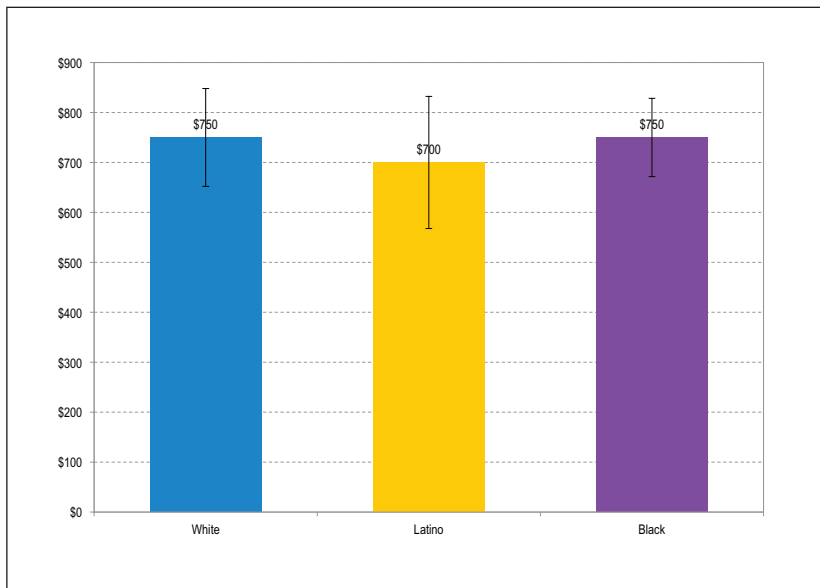
The final measures of Latino participation in Springfield are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Latinos traditionally have low homeownership rates across the country. Figure 11 shows that this trend holds true for Springfield, where Latinos' homeownership level (31.6%) is lower than for other ethno-racial groups in the city but is higher than the statewide Latino rate of 25.1%. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 69.4% of Latinos in Springfield are renters.

Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

Figure 12: Median Rental Costs by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015

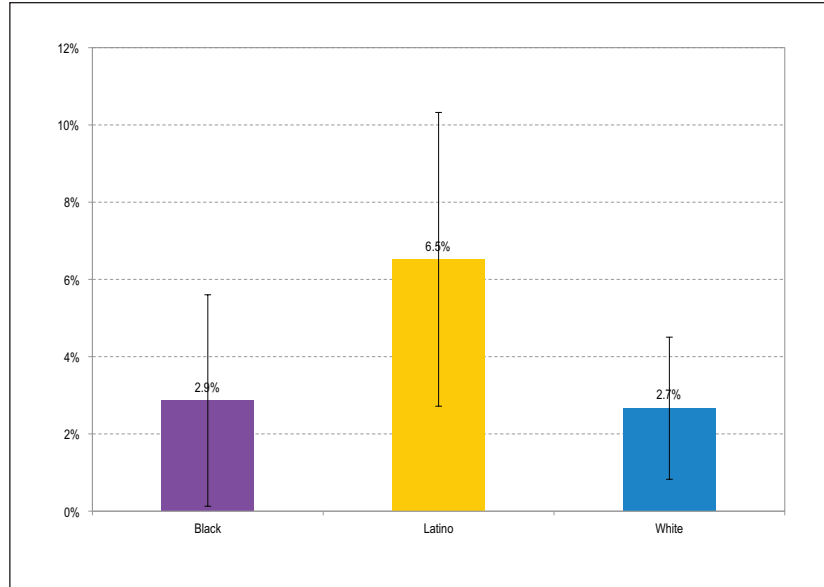


Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

With low levels of homeownership, Latinos in Springfield are more dependent on the local rental market. Monthly rents paid by Latino renters (\$700) are lower than those of black and white renters (\$750).

The percentage of Latinos in Springfield who lack medical insurance (6.5%) is higher than for blacks (2.9%) but higher than for whites (2.7%) in Springfield. Latinos have a lower uninsurance rate than Latinos statewide (7.5%). The greater percentages of Latinos in Springfield who are Puerto Rican and have access to public health insurance plans due to their citizenship may account for lower uninsurance rates in comparison to statewide.

Figure 13: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

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.