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Latinos in Massachusetts: Lynn

by Phillip Granberry, Ph.D., and
Vishakha Agarwal, MPP

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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Lynn

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Preface

Any study published by the University of Massachusetts, Boston's Mauricio Gaston Institute on the sociodemographic characteristics of people of color in Massachusetts communities is a much-celebrated occasion for local residents, community activists, politicians, and researchers. These reports are rigorous, and are highly regarded for their scientific integrity, trustworthiness, and objectivity. In this publication, the Gaston research team delves into the demographic characteristics of its Latino residents. This report describes their income, job characteristics, housing status, health insurance coverage, and academic performance. The picture is not encouraging. There is work ahead to do.

Lynn, the ninth largest city in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is located along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean about nine miles north of Boston. Puerto Ricans first arrived here in the 1960s to work in its factories. Dominicans then joined them becoming the largest foreign-born group in the 2010s. Central Americans are rapidly growing in importance in the city.

The report shows Latinos' dwindling condition in Lynn in terms of school achievement, home ownership, and employment. The study portrays a community that makes significant contributions (labor force, population growth) but gets little in return (home ownership). The research paints an enigmatic demographic portrait, prompting the following question: What would Lynn, Massachusetts's demographic composition have been in 2021 in the absence of the Latino community?

I am a proud Lynn resident and am chair of the board of directors of the Lynn Community Health Center. I am also a public health professional. As a Lynn resident, I am placing this report in the hands of the mayoral and city council candidates running for this year's elections. As board chair, the report equips me with the skills necessary to educate my fellow board members and the dedicated LCHC staff on the Center's goals and priorities to better match them with the needs of Lynn residents. As a public health practitioner, the report reminds me how much more work has to be done to address persistent health inequalities.

Fellow Lynners, health activists, community leaders, faith-based leaders, policymakers, advocates for social justice and equality, and health advocates, I urge you to accept this report wholeheartedly. These data will bolster your advocacy and provide the evidence you need to bolster your efforts. Without a question. The report's conclusions are essentially a rallying call. Latinos fall short in settings (e.g., school, housing, and work) whose intrinsic shortcomings exacerbate social and health

disparities. Once again, the Mauricio Gaston Institute provides a critical resource to advance advocacy efforts in the pursuit of equity.

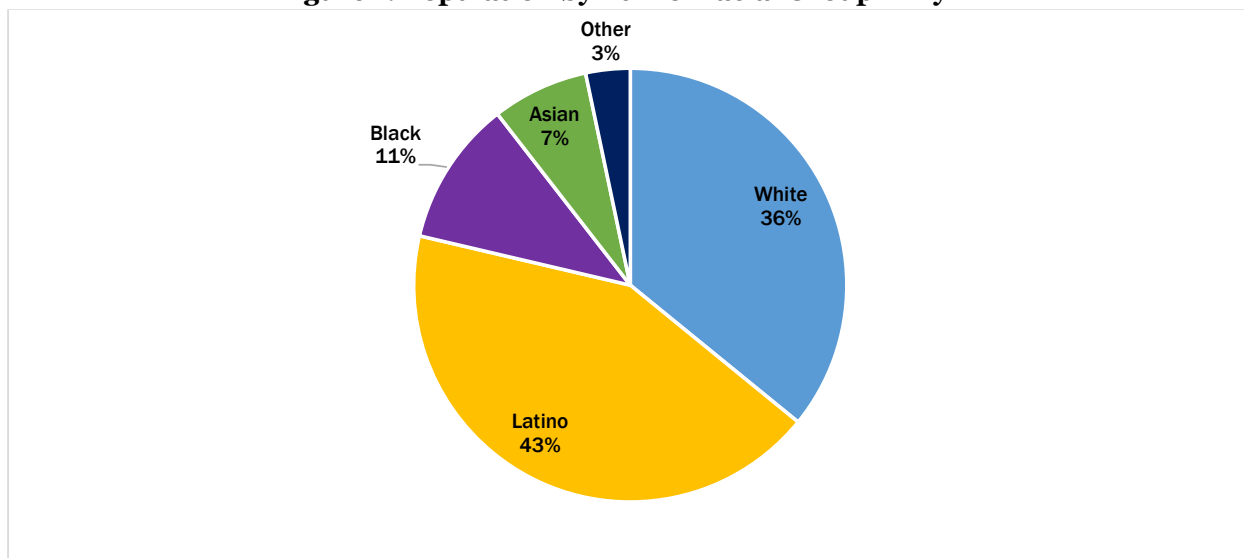
Rodolfo R Vega

Senior Consultant, JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc., Boston

Lynn Overview: The Latino Population

As the largest city in Essex County, Lynn's population in the 2015-2019 American Community Survey is 93,743. The city is home to an estimated 40,095 Latinos, who are the largest ethno-racial group and make up 43% of the city's population (Figure 1). Whites are the second largest population (36%), while the city has smaller Black (11%), Asian (7%), and Other (3%) populations.

Figure 1: Population by Ethno-Racial Group in Lynn

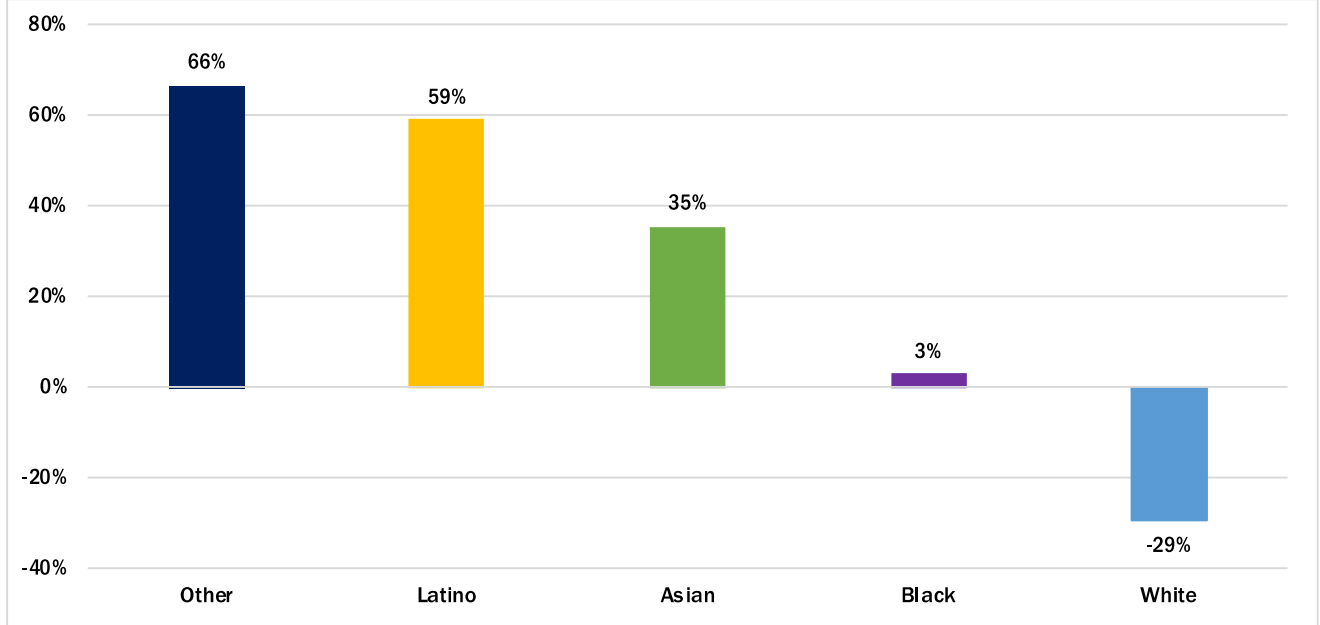


Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey – B03003

A striking feature of Lynn is the change in the composition of the population even though the population overall was increasing by only 5% from 2010 to 2019. The Latino population increased by 59%. This is higher than the statewide Latino growth of 38% during this same period. There is also a significant increase in the smaller Other population, while Asians increased by 35% and Blacks by 3%. The White population declined by 29%.

Lynn has long been a destination for international migrants, and today it has a greater concentration of foreign born (37%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (17%). Among Latinos in Lynn, 52% are foreign born and 35% are not citizens. Dominicans, Guatemalans, and Salvadorans are the largest foreign-born populations in the city.

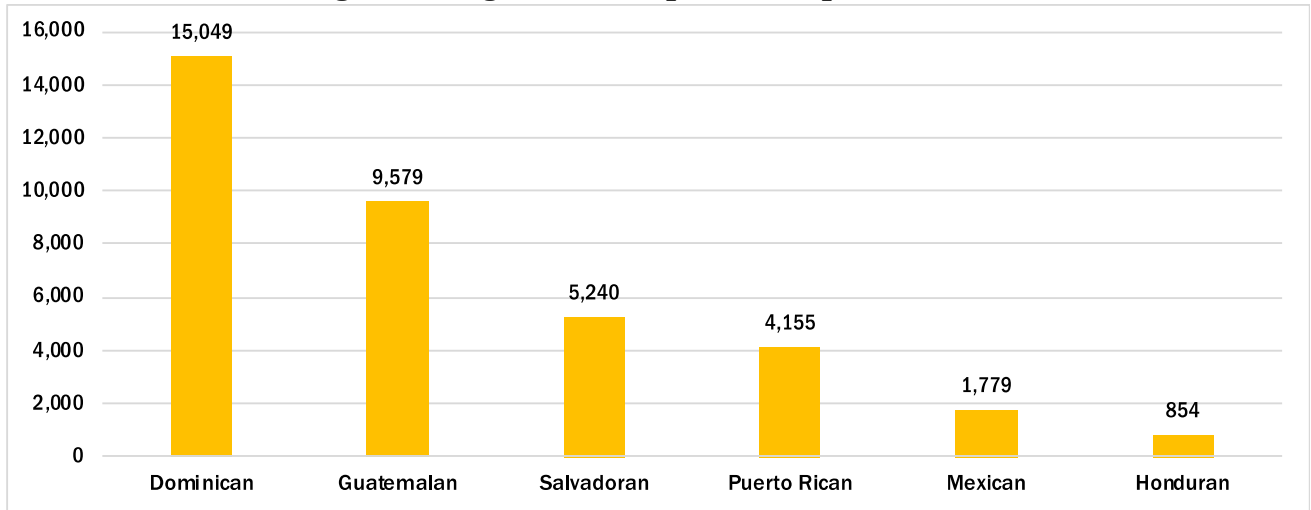
Figure 2: Population Change by Ethno-Racial Group from 2010 to 2019



Source: 2006-2010 & 2015-2019 American Community Surveys –B03003

When examining the origins of Latinos in the Lynn, it is important to note that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens; they are not included in foreign-born estimates in the preceding paragraph. As Figure 3 shows, the largest Latino subpopulation in the city is Dominicans (15,049), followed by Guatemalans, Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Hondurans.

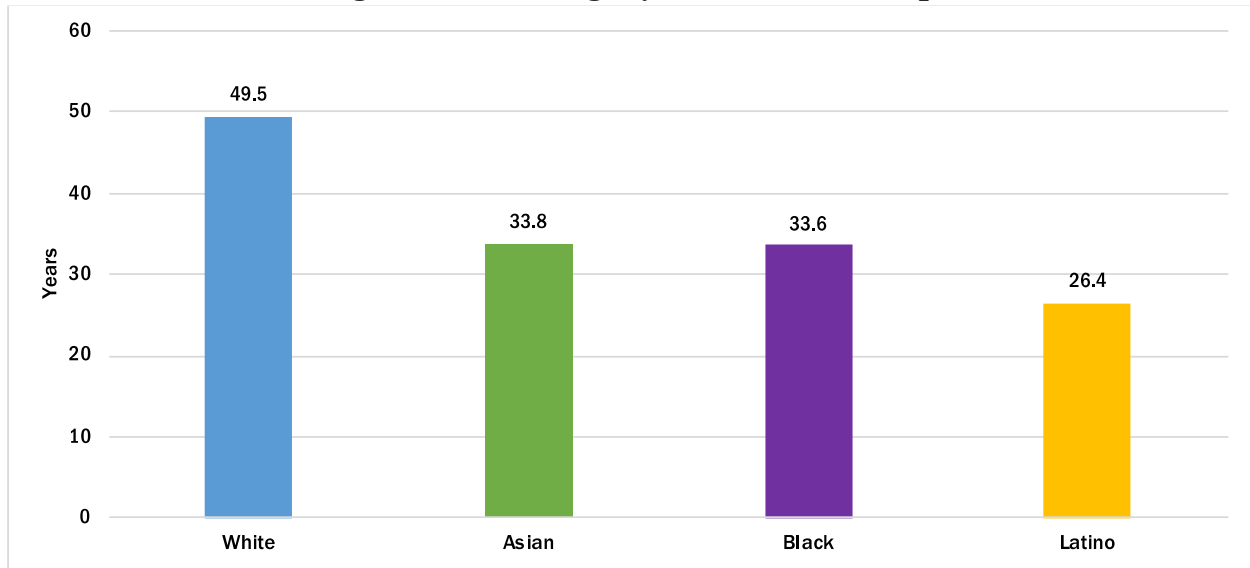
Figure 3: Origins of the Top Latino Populations



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - B03001

Median Age and Marital Status

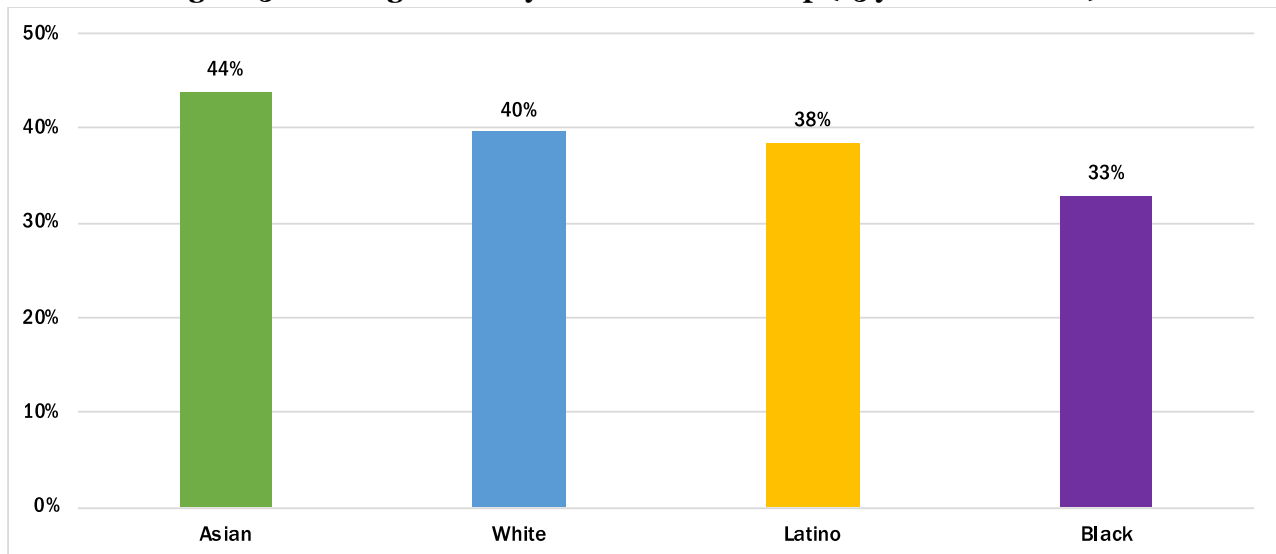
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - B01002

The median age of Lynn’s population is 34.5 years but varies by ethno-racial groups. Lynn’s Latino population, with a median age of 26.4 years, is younger than the statewide Latino median age of 28.1 years. As Figure 4 shows, Latinos in Lynn are much younger than Whites (49.5 years) but only slightly younger than Asians and Blacks.

Figure 5: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (15 years and older)



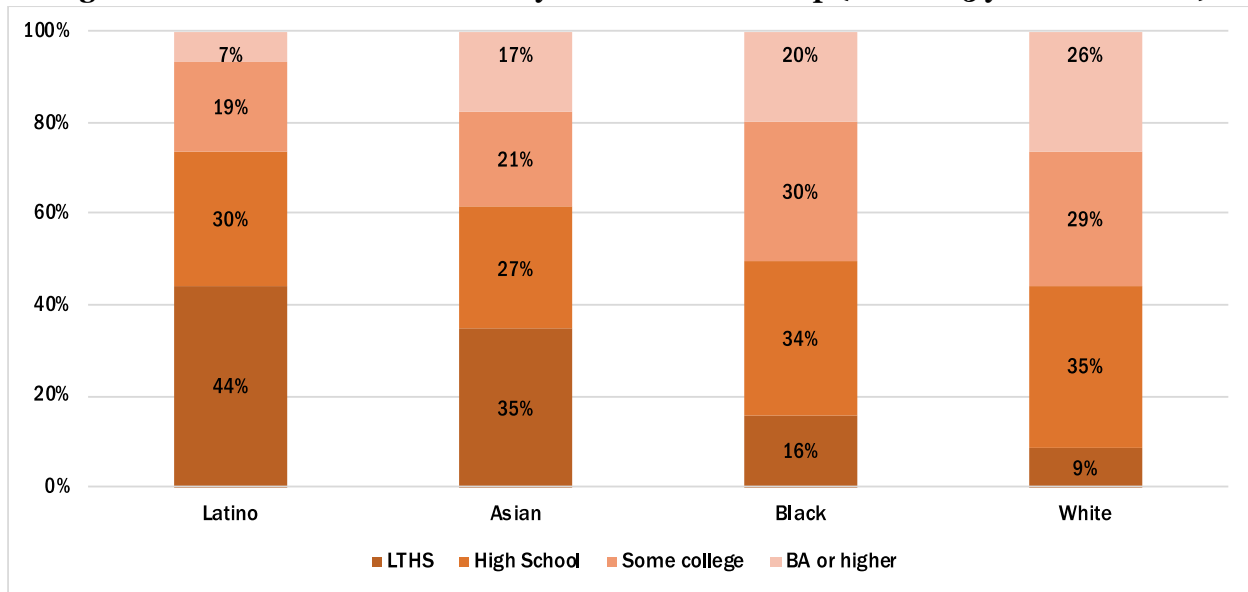
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - B12002

The marriage rate in Lynn for persons 15 years and over is 42%. As shown in Figure 5, the marriage rate for Latinos (38%) is lower than for all other ethno-racial groups in the city except Blacks. However, the Latino marriage rate in Lynn is higher than for Latinos statewide (32%).

Education

Educational attainment in Lynn is lower than in the Commonwealth as a whole. In Massachusetts 44% of the population age 25 and older have a bachelor’s degree or higher compared 19% in Lynn. As Figure 6 shows, Latinos have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor’s degree: 7%, compared to 17% for Asians, 20% for Blacks, and 26.5% for Whites. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have the highest percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 44%, compared to 9% for Whites, 16% for Blacks, and 35% for Asians. The statewide rate for Latinos lacking a high school diploma is 27%.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group (Adults 25 years and older)

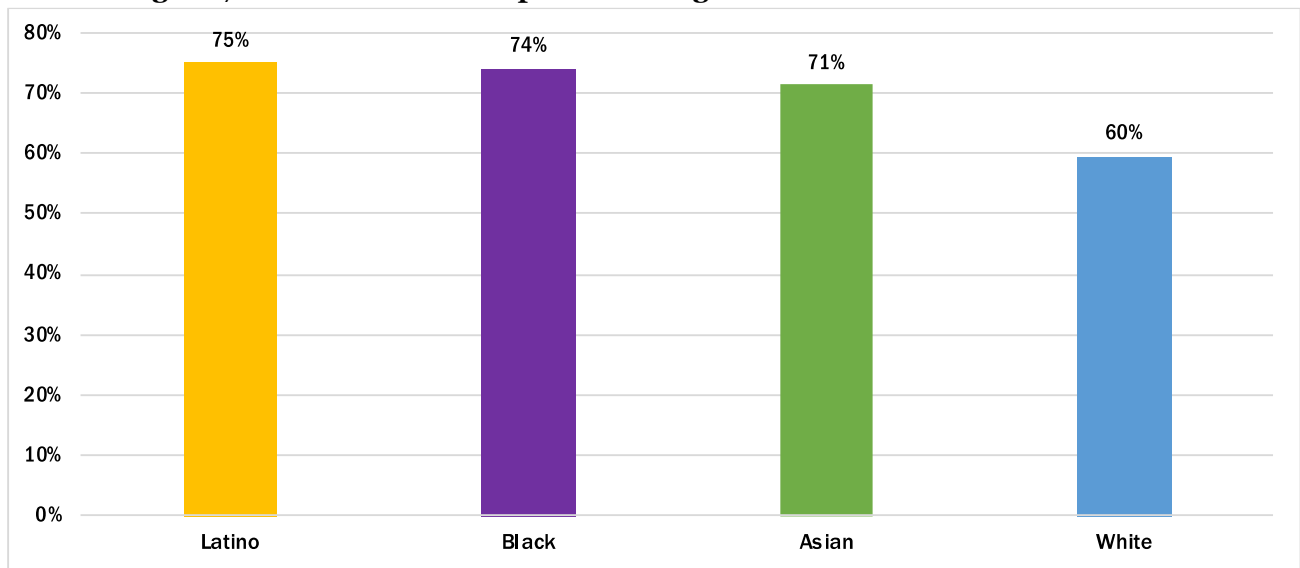


Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - B15002

Labor Force Participation

Latinos have a higher labor force participation rate in Lynn (75%), similar to Blacks (74%) and Asians (71%) but much higher than Whites (60%). Latino labor force participation in Lynn is higher than for Latinos statewide (67%).

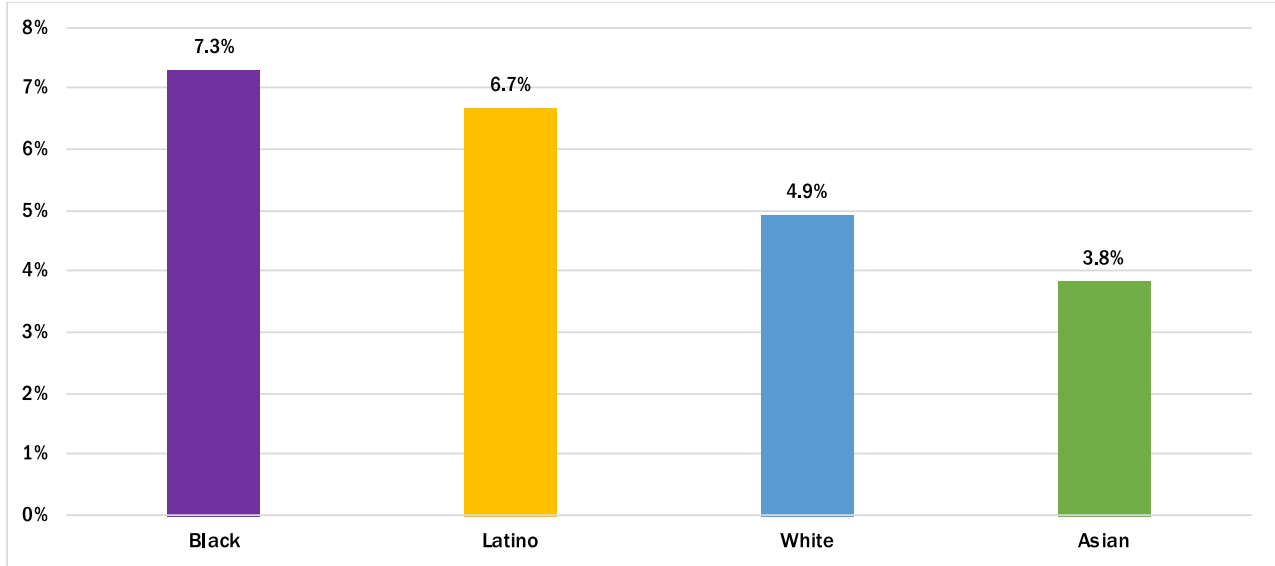
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation among Individuals 16 Years and Older



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - C23002

The overall unemployment rate in Lynn during this period was 4.0%, higher than the statewide unemployment rate of 3.2%. The Latino unemployment rate in Lynn of 6.7% is higher than for Whites (4.9%) and Asians (3.8%) but lower than for Blacks (7.3%). When Latinos in Lynn participate in the labor force, they fare even less well than Latinos statewide, who during this period experienced a 6.0% unemployment rate.

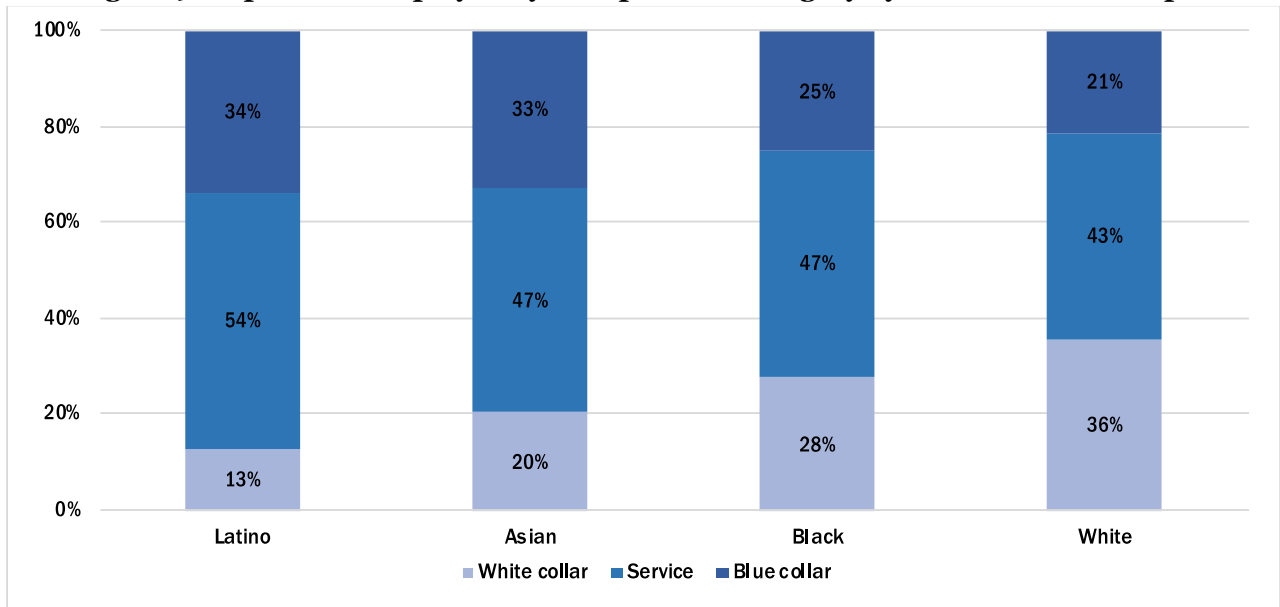
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - C23002

Figure 9 highlights that Latinos work in traditionally low-wage jobs. Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs, with only 13% working in these management, business, science, and arts occupations. Correspondingly, they are overrepresented in the service sector, with 54% working in services and sales occupations, and in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs, with 34% working in natural resources, construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving occupations. Statewide 26% of Latinos work in white collar jobs, 49% work in service jobs, and 25% work in blue collar jobs.

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

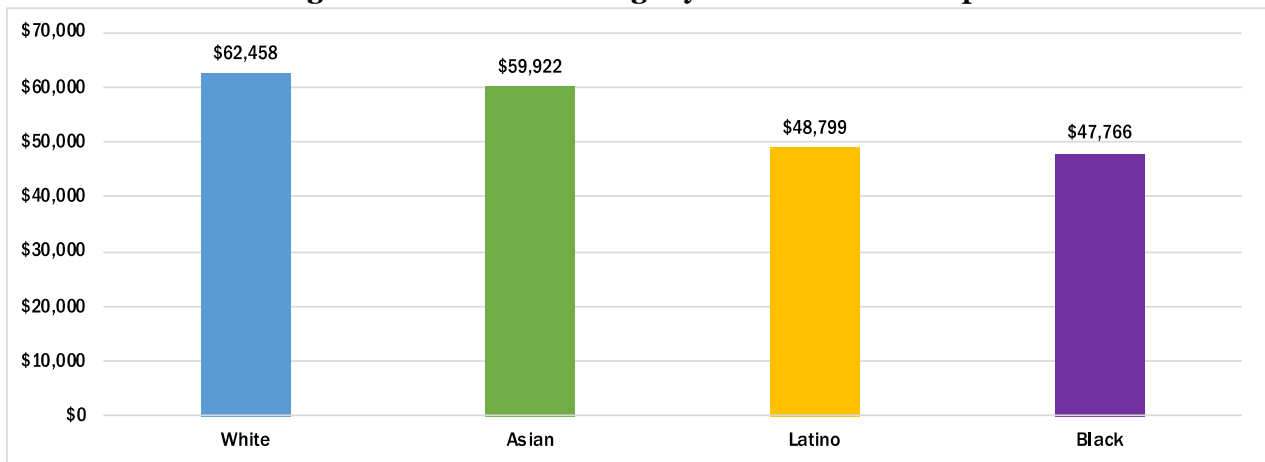


Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - B24010

Income

Lynn’s median income is \$56,181, which is considerably lower than the statewide median income of \$81,215. Latinos in Figure 10 have a median household income of \$48,799, which is approximately \$13,600 less than White households. However, Latinos in Lynn are slightly more economically successful than Latinos in other parts of the Commonwealth, as the statewide Latino median income is \$44,885.

Figure 10: Median Earnings by Ethno-Racial Group

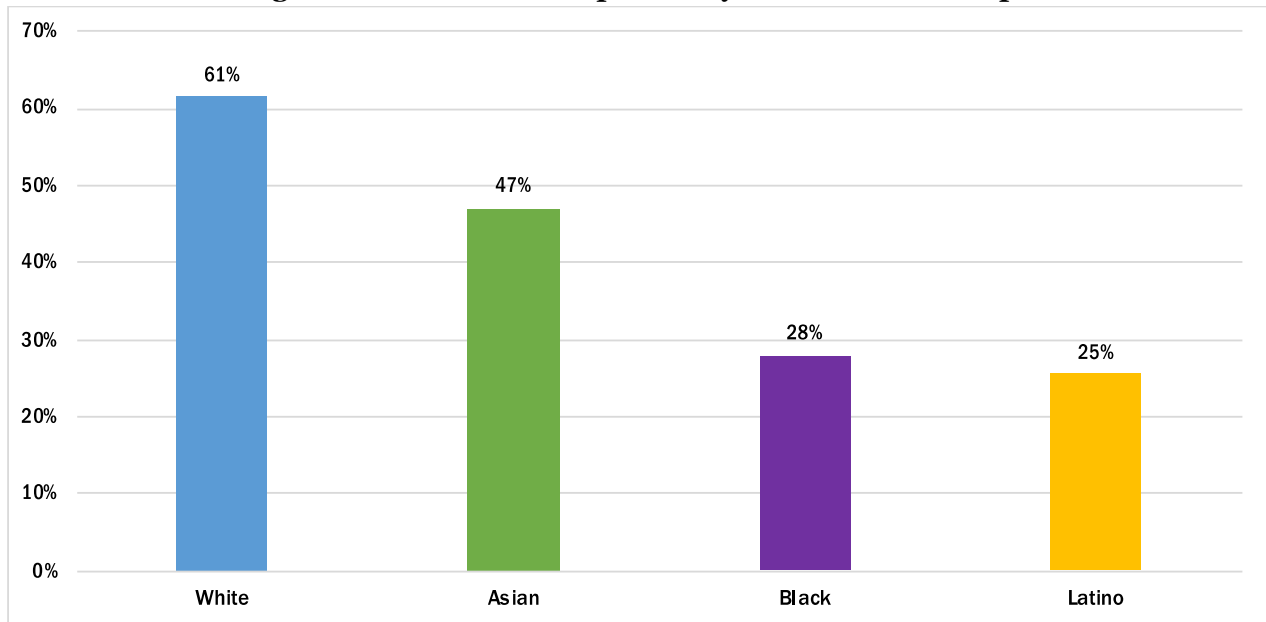


Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - S1903

Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

The final measures of Latino participation in Lynn are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Lynn has a lower homeownership rate (50%) than the statewide rate (62%) as measured by occupied housing units. As shown in Figure 11, Latinos have a 25% homeownership rate, which is slightly lower than the 26% rate for Latinos statewide but lower than all other ethno-racial groups in the city.

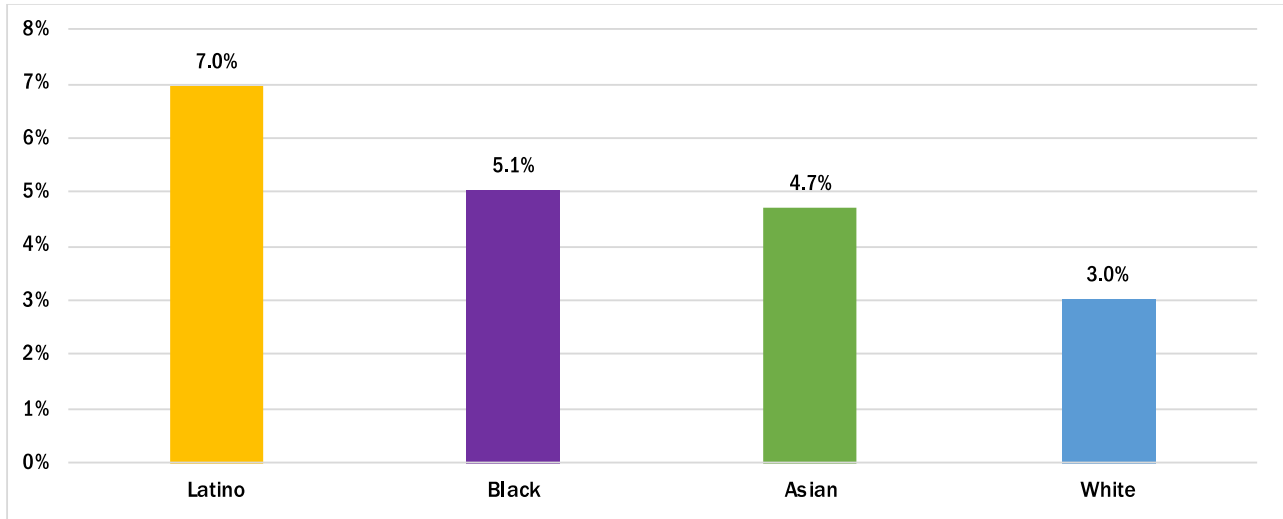
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - B25003

Lynn's overall rate of medical uninsurance (5.0%) is higher than the statewide average of 2.8%. Figure 12 shows that Lynn's Latinos have a 7.0% uninsurance rate. This is higher than for all other ethno-racial groups. Statewide, the medical uninsurance rate among Latinos is 5.3%.

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group

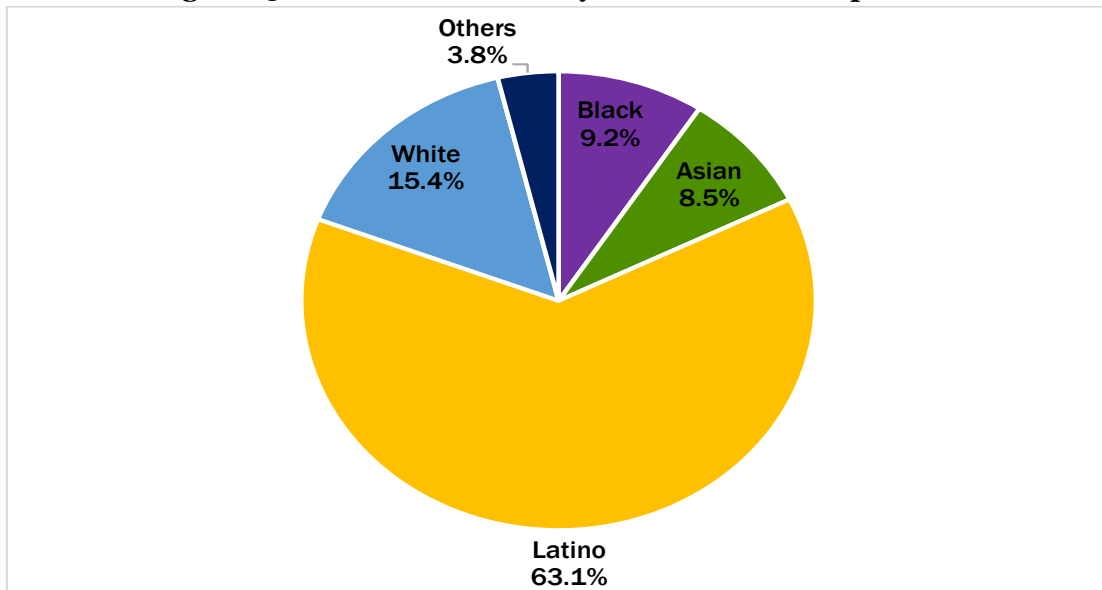


Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey - B27001

Spotlight on Lynn Public Schools

Lynn Public Schools is the focus of this next section. Lynn Public Schools enrolled 15,751 students in School Year 2018-2019. Latinos make up 63% of the school population, far higher than Latinos’ share (20.8%) of the statewide school population. As shown in Figure 13, the next largest ethno-racial groups that make up the school population are Whites (15.4%), Blacks (9.2%), and Asians (8.5%). These data are from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

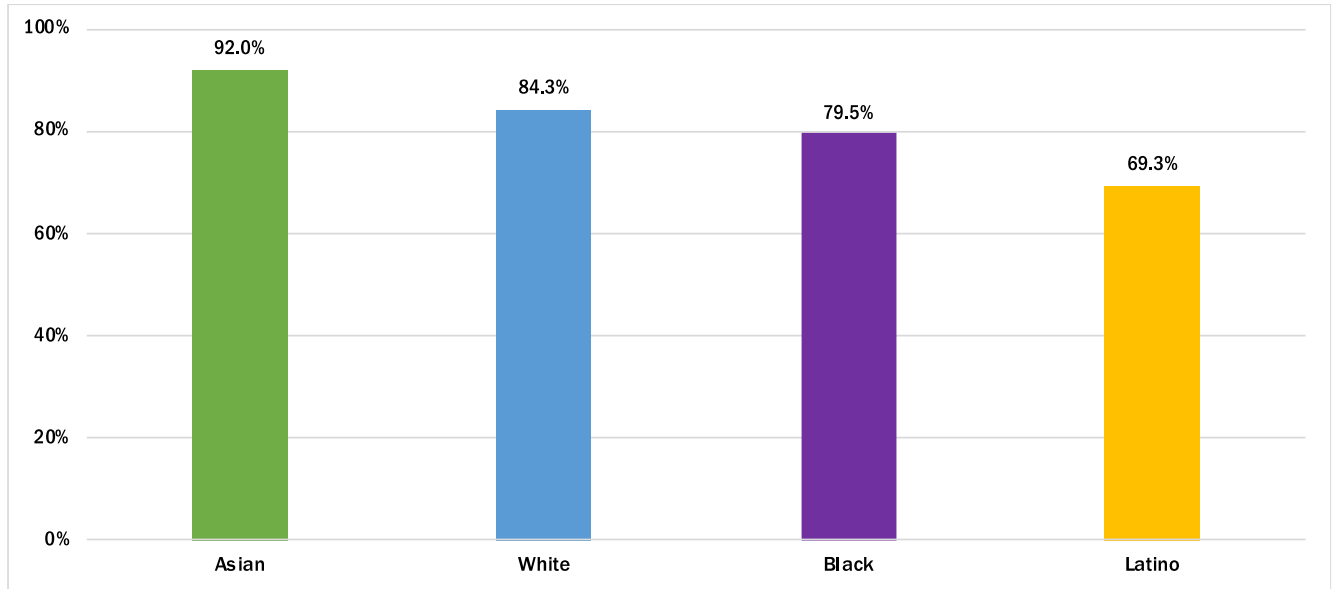
Figure 13: School Enrollment by Ethno-Racial Composition



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, SY 2018-2019

Lynn Public Schools' four-year high school graduation rate in School Year 2018-2019 is 75%, and this is lower than the state's rate of 88%. Latino students, as shown in Figure 14 have the lowest graduation rate in the Lynn Public Schools, 69%.

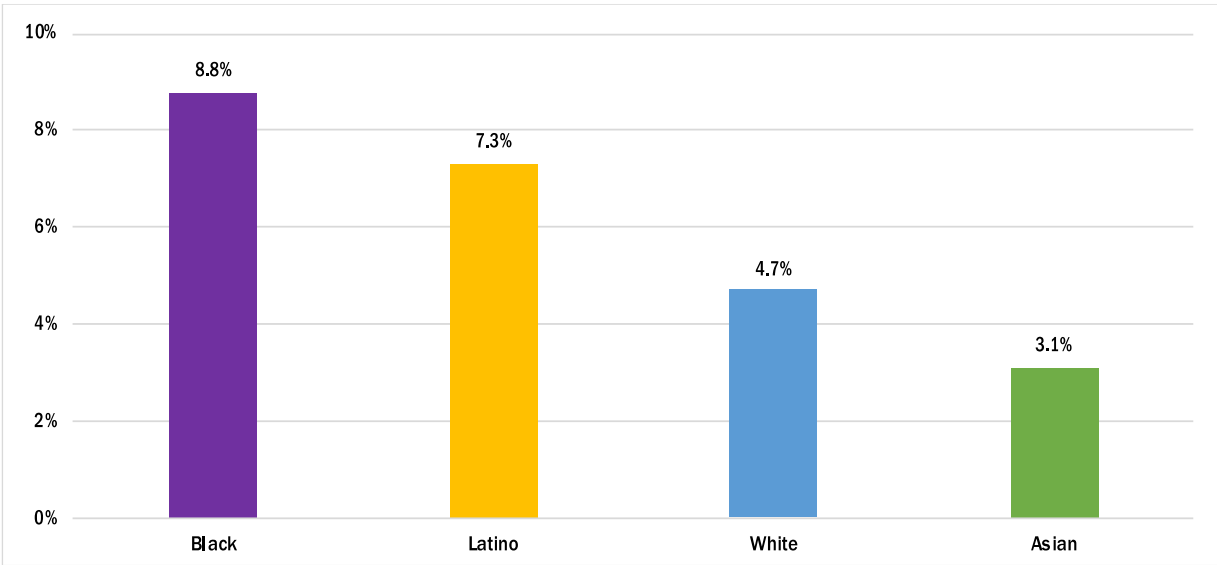
Figure 14: Four-Year Graduation Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, SY 2018-2019

Lynn Public Schools' out-of-school suspension rate is 6.8%, more than twice as high as the state's rate of 3.0%. In Lynn, Latino students have the second highest suspension rate in School Year 2018-2019, 7.3%, while Black students have the highest rate at 8.8% (Figure 15). The suspension rate for Black students is almost double the rate for their White counterparts.

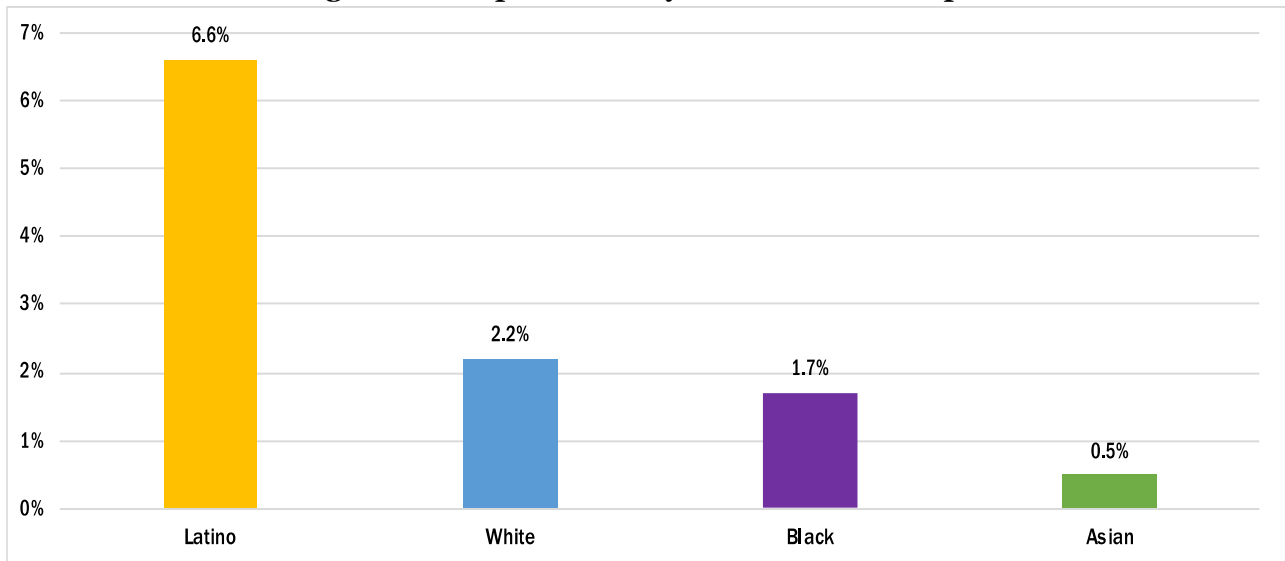
Figure 15: Out-of-School Suspensions by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, SY 2018-2019

Lynn Public Schools' dropout rate is 4.7%, and this is higher than the state's rate of 1.8%. Latino students had the highest dropout rate in School Year 2018-2019, 6.6%, while Asian students had the lowest dropout rate of 0.5% (Figure 16).

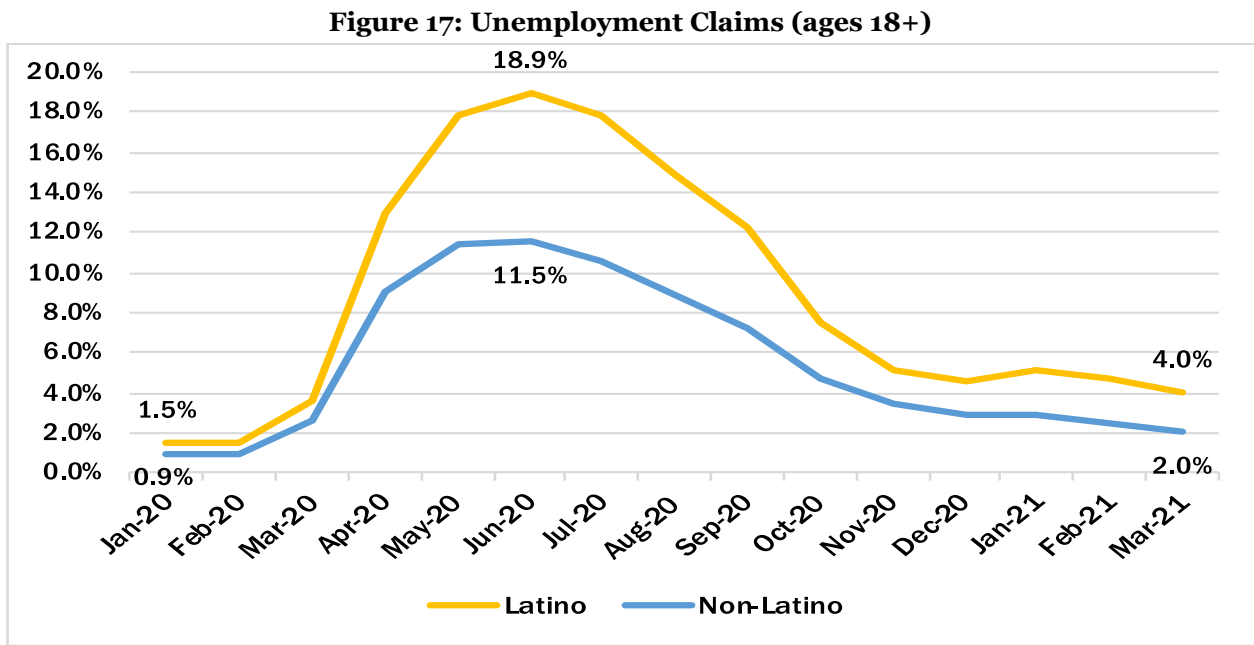
Figure 16: Dropout Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, SY 2018-2019

Impact of COVID-19

Starting in March 2020, when COVID-19 hit Lynn, unemployment claims rapidly increased, from a low point of 1.5% for Latinos in early 2020. In June 2020, both Latinos and non-Latinos filed high numbers of unemployment claims, their rates rising to 18.9% and 11.5%, respectively. (These percentages are calculated by dividing the number of reported claims by the population age 18 and older.) From that peak, there was a mostly steady decline in the unemployment claims among both groups, standing in March 2021 at 4.0% for Latinos and 2.0% for non-Latinos.



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development

About the Gastón Institute

Established in 1989, the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy was created by the Massachusetts Legislature in response to a need for improved understanding about the Latino experience in the commonwealth. Now in its 30th year, the Gastón Institute continues its mission of informing the public and policymakers about issues vital to the state's growing Latino community and providing information and analysis necessary for effective Latino participation in public policy development. To learn more about the Gastón Institute, visit www.umb.edu/gastoninstitute.

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 worked with various community-based organizations assisting recently arrived U.S. immigrants before earning a Ph.D. in Public Policy from UMass 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.

Vishakha Agarwal is a Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy in the McCormack Graduate School at UMass Boston. Vishakha's research focuses on children's everyday classroom experiences, well-being, and education. Her dissertation examines how interactions between teachers and students and among students impact students' classroom experiences and, in turn, informs their subjectivity. She also holds a Bachelor's of Science (Research) in Economics from Shiv Nadar University, India, and a Master's of Science in Public Policy from UMass Boston.



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