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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Holyoke

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

August 2022

THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY



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08/05/2022

Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Holyoke

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Introduction

This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Holyoke. 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 Holyoke is part of a larger series that covers cities and towns with a population of at least 35,000 residents in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a significant Latino population. Each report analyzes data from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. We obtained the data from the Census Bureau in tabular form, and we transformed these data into figures presented in this report.

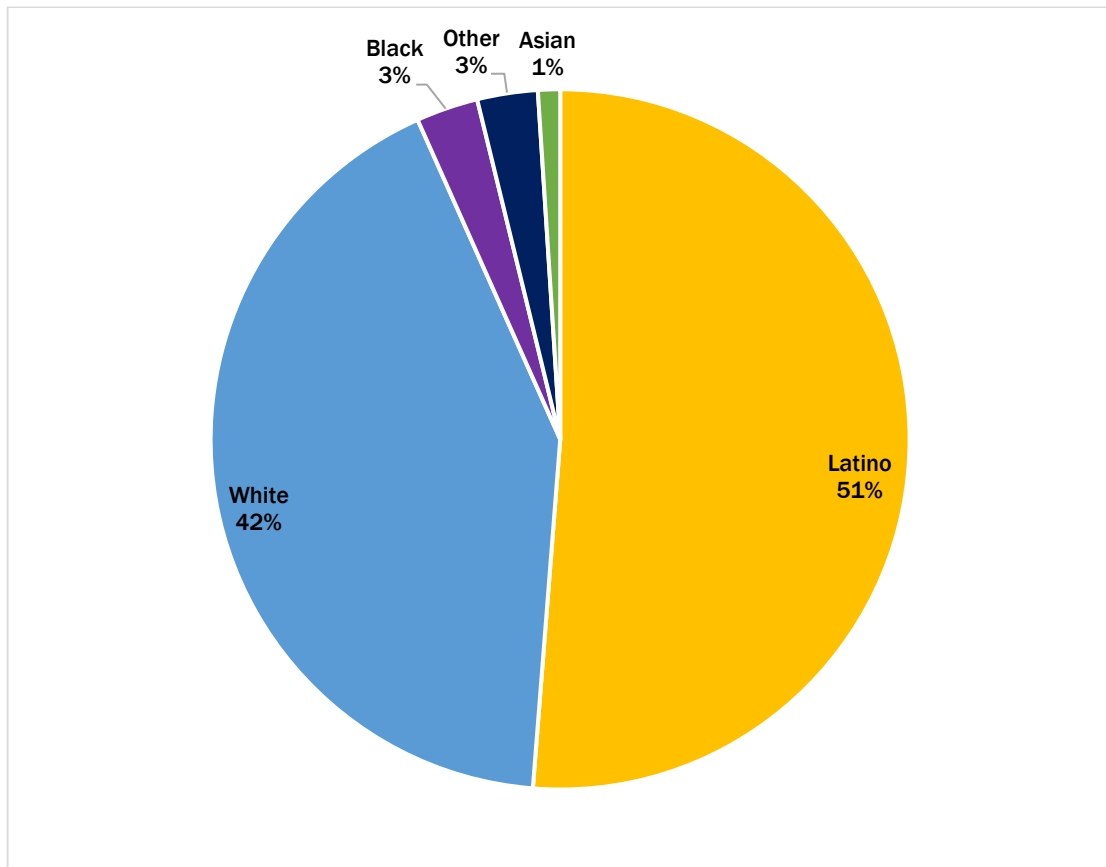
The Census Bureau identifies Latinos through a question that asks respondents to choose either "Hispanic or Latino" or "Not Hispanic or Latino." Separately, it asks respondents to identify a race. This report uses the term "Latino" to include all those who selected "Hispanic or Latino" on the Census or ACS form, regardless of racial designation. The report compares Latinos, thus defined, to Non-Latino Whites, Blacks, and Asians, based on individuals' racial identification. 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 Gastón Institute strives 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 Holyoke.

Holyoke Overview

The city of Holyoke's 38,238 residents include 19,597 Latinos, who make up 51% of the total population according to the 2020 Census. This Latino share is much higher than in the state of Massachusetts overall (13%). The second largest group in Holyoke is Whites, who compose 42% of the city's population. Ethno-racial groups with a smaller presence in Holyoke include Blacks (3%), and Asians (1%) (Figure 1).

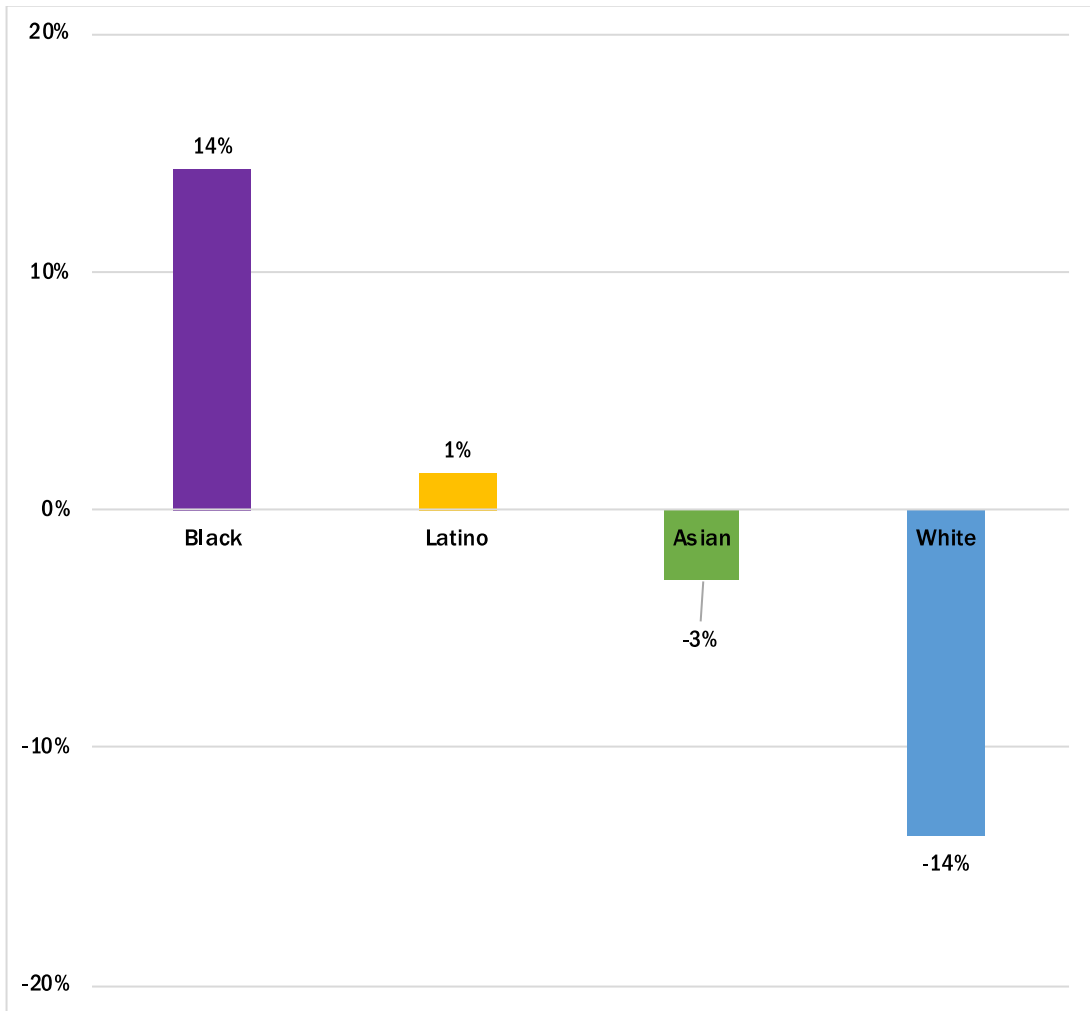
Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Holyoke



Source: 2020 U.S. Census

Between 2010 and 2020, Holyoke experienced a 4% population decline, and this change varied among the ethno-racial groups. Blacks experienced a 14% increase and Whites a 14% decrease, while Asians experienced a 3% decrease. The larger Latino population grew by only 1% (Figure 2). At the state level, the Latino population grew by 41% during the decade.

Figure 2: Population Change by Ethno-Racial Group from 2010 to 2020



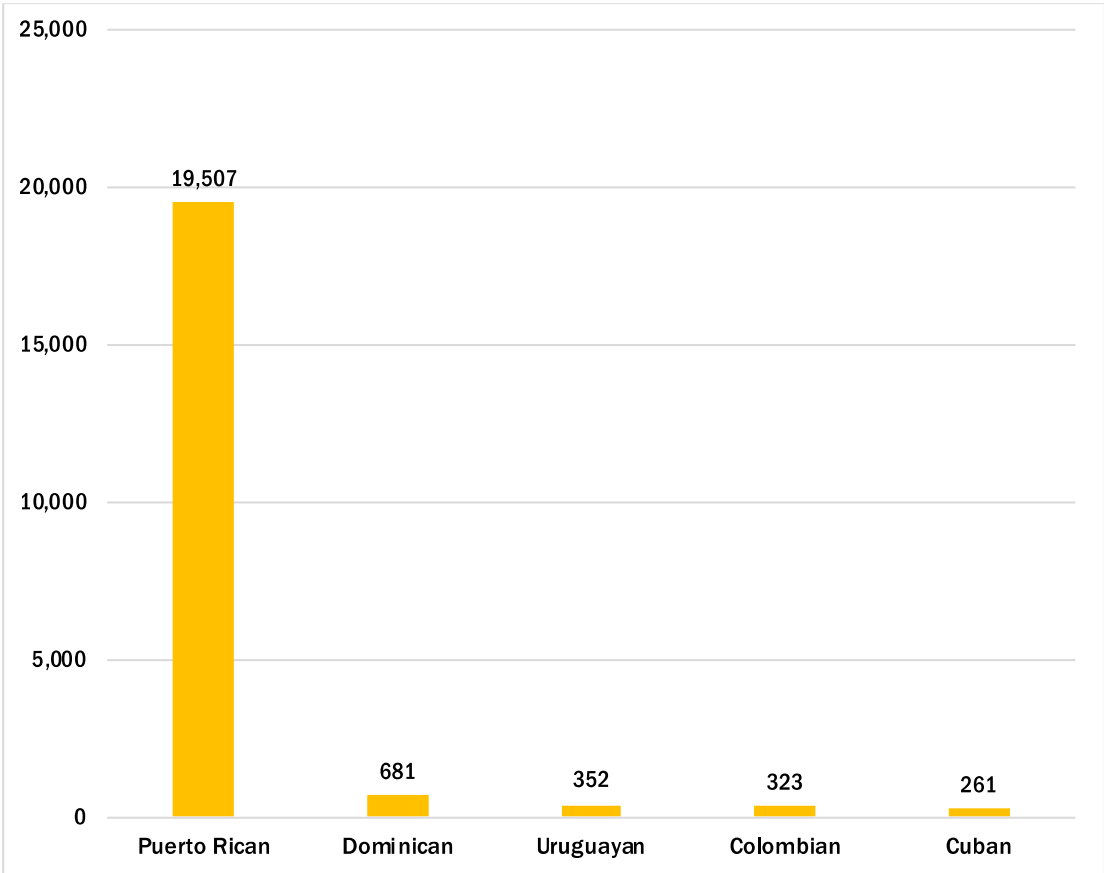
Source: 2010 & 2020 U.S. Censuses

The remainder of this profile uses 2016-2020 American Community Survey data in order to analyze the demographic and economic characteristics presented in this profile.

Unlike other cities and towns with a large Latino population, Holyoke does not have a large share of foreign-born residents (6%). This share is lower than the Commonwealth's share (17%). Latinos shape this trend. In Holyoke, 5% of Latinos are foreign born, which is significantly lower than their statewide share (32%). This trend is related to the 19,507 Puerto Ricans in Holyoke who are citizens. No other Latino group reaches 1,000 residents (Figure 3). The next largest groups are

Dominicans (681), Uruguayan (352), Colombians (323), and Cubans (261). The five largest Latino populations in Massachusetts statewide, in order of size, are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, Mexicans, and Guatemalans.

Figure 3: Origin of the Top Latino Populations

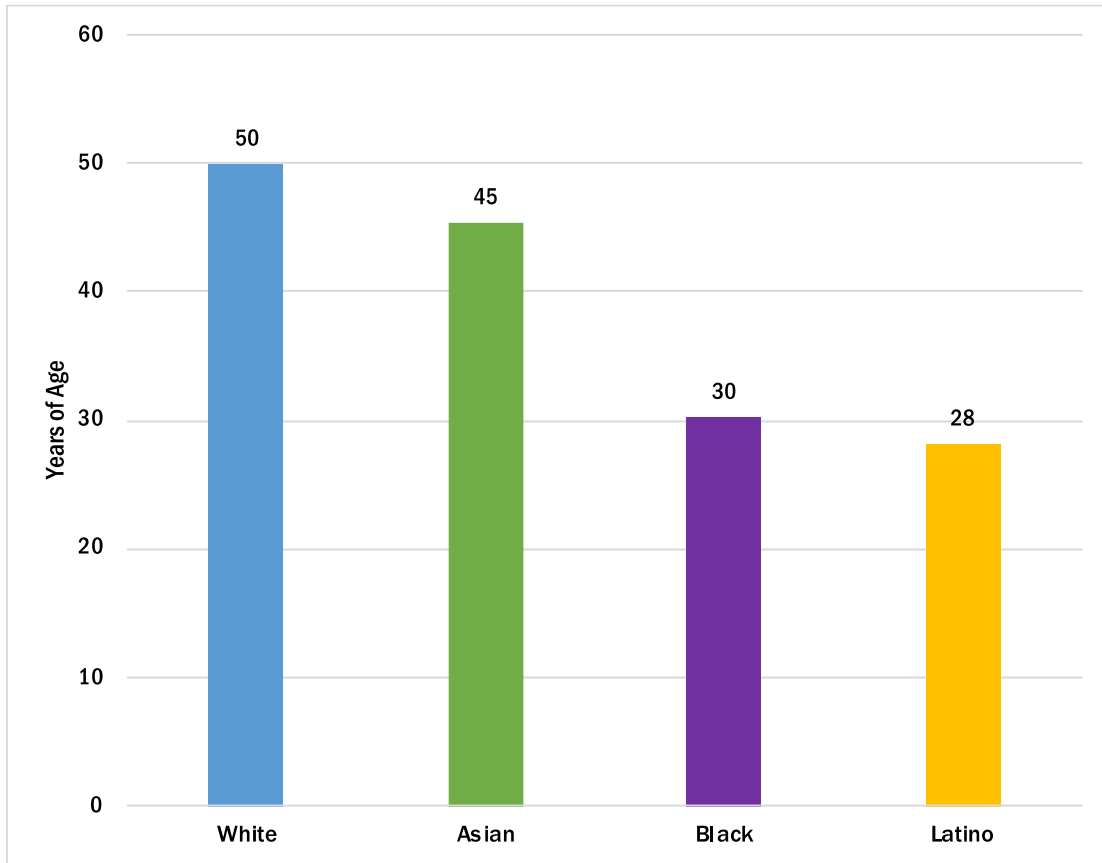


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Median Age and Marital Status

As in the rest of the state, Whites in Holyoke have the highest median age (50 years). Latinos’ median age is 28 years, close to the statewide Latino median of 29 years. Asians’ and Blacks’ median ages are 45 and 30 years respectively (Figure 4).

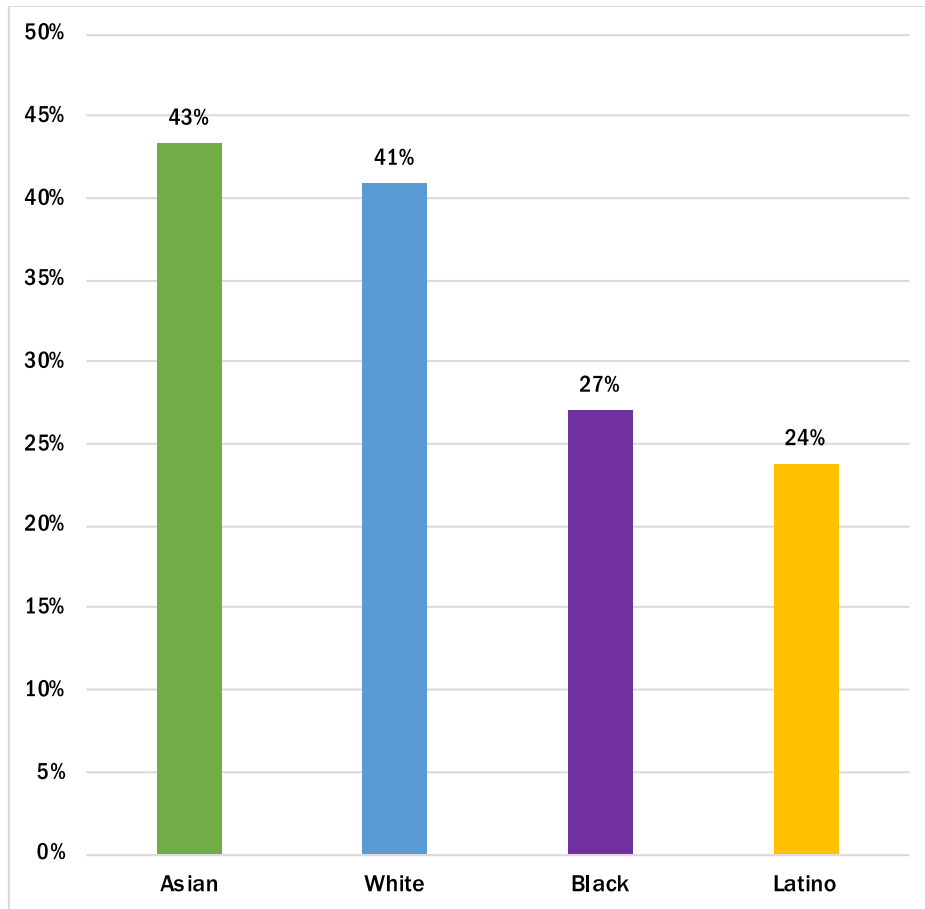
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The overall marriage rate in Massachusetts for persons 15 and over is 48%, while in Holyoke it is 34%. In Holyoke, marriage rates are lowest among Latinos (24%) and highest among Asians (43%). The marriage rate for Whites (41%) is close to that of Asians, while the rate for Blacks (27%) is a bit higher than that for Latinos (Figure 5). Across the state, Latinos’ marriage rate is 33%.

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

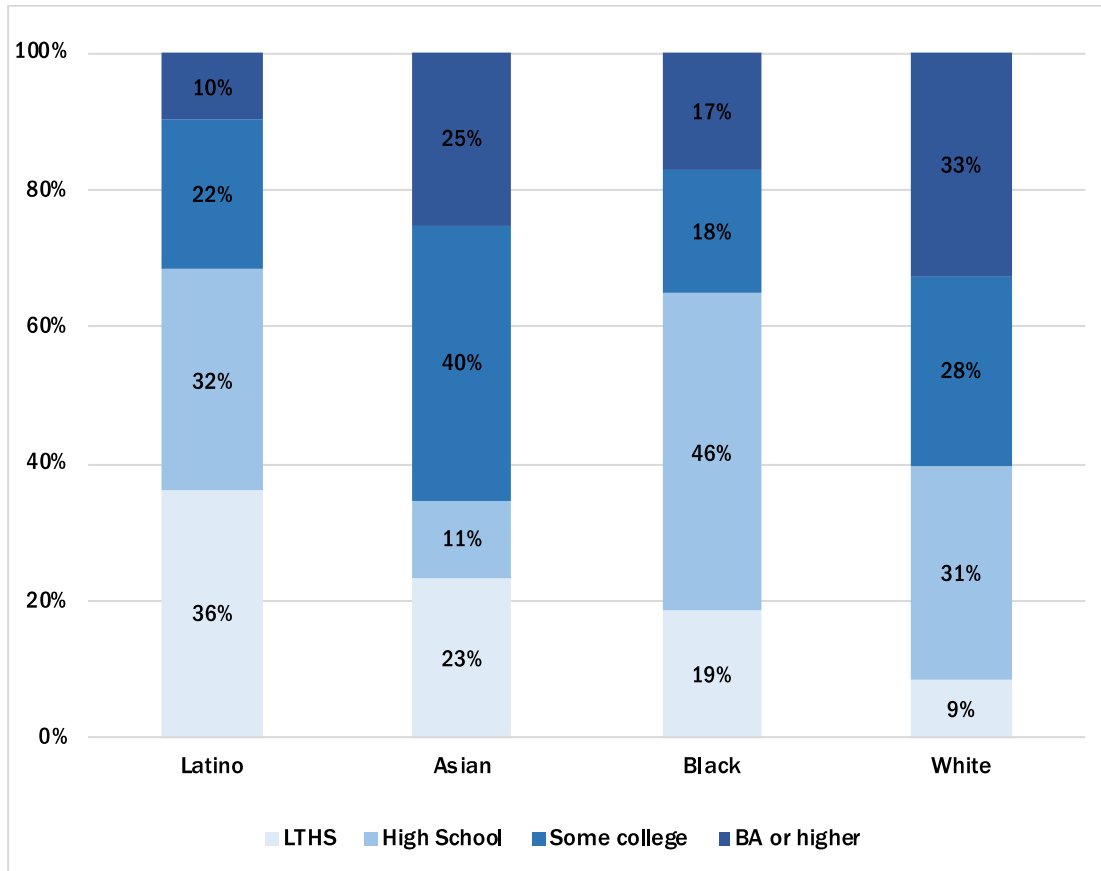


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Educational Attainment

In Holyoke, as in various other post-industrial cities and towns with challenging economic conditions, the human capital base is lacking, particularly among Latinos and Blacks. Latinos in Holyoke have the highest shares of those who did not complete high school (36%), and the lowest shares of those with at least a Bachelor’s degree (10%). This latter figure contrasts with a higher educational attainment for Latinos across the Commonwealth, which is 21%. Whites in Holyoke have the lowest share of residents who did not complete high school (9%), and the second highest share of those with at least a Bachelor’s degree (33%). Blacks also have a large share who did not complete high school (19%), and a smaller share of those with at least a Bachelor’s degree (17%) (Figure 6).

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

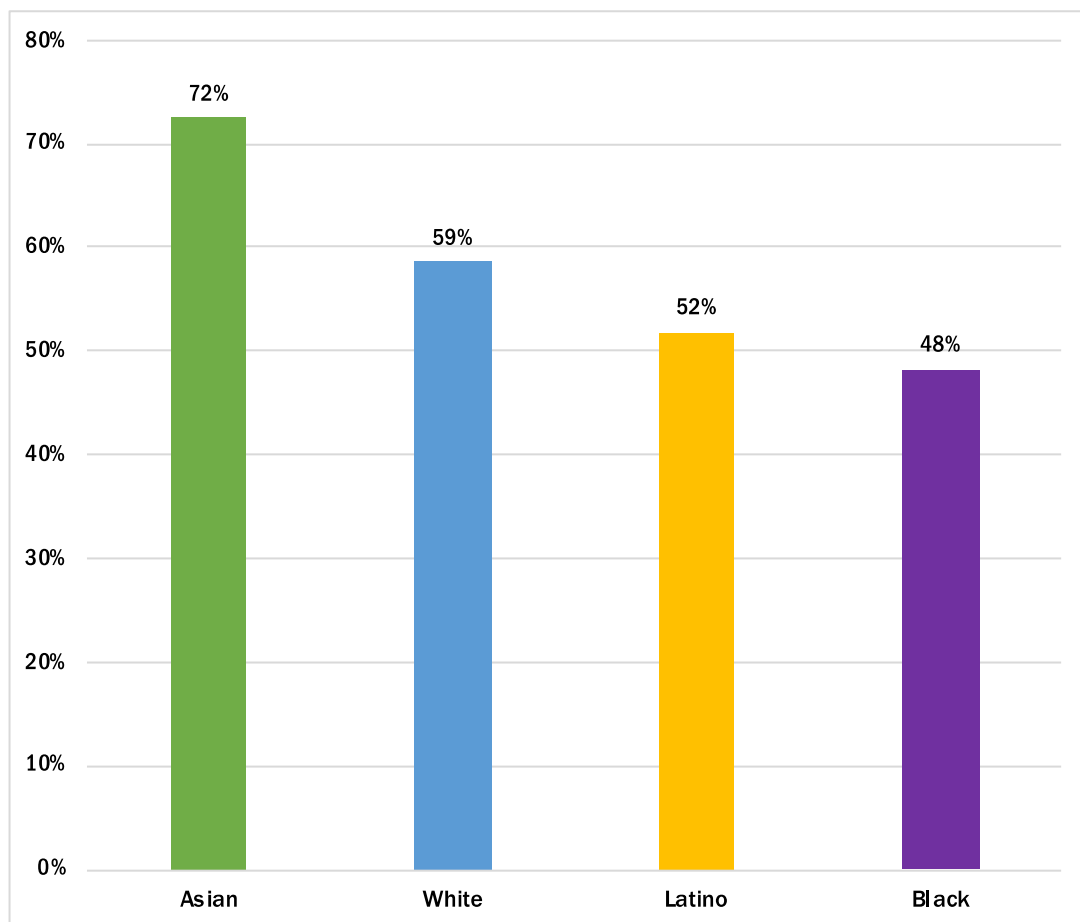


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Labor Force Participation

Holyoke’s labor force participation rate of 55% is lower than the 67% statewide rate for Massachusetts. Similarly, while Latinos across the state, Latinos participate in the labor force at a rate of 69%, those in Holyoke participate at a rate of 52%. Only Blacks in Holyoke have a lower labor force participation rate (48%). Asians have the highest labor force participation rate at 72% followed by Whites at 59% (Figure 7).

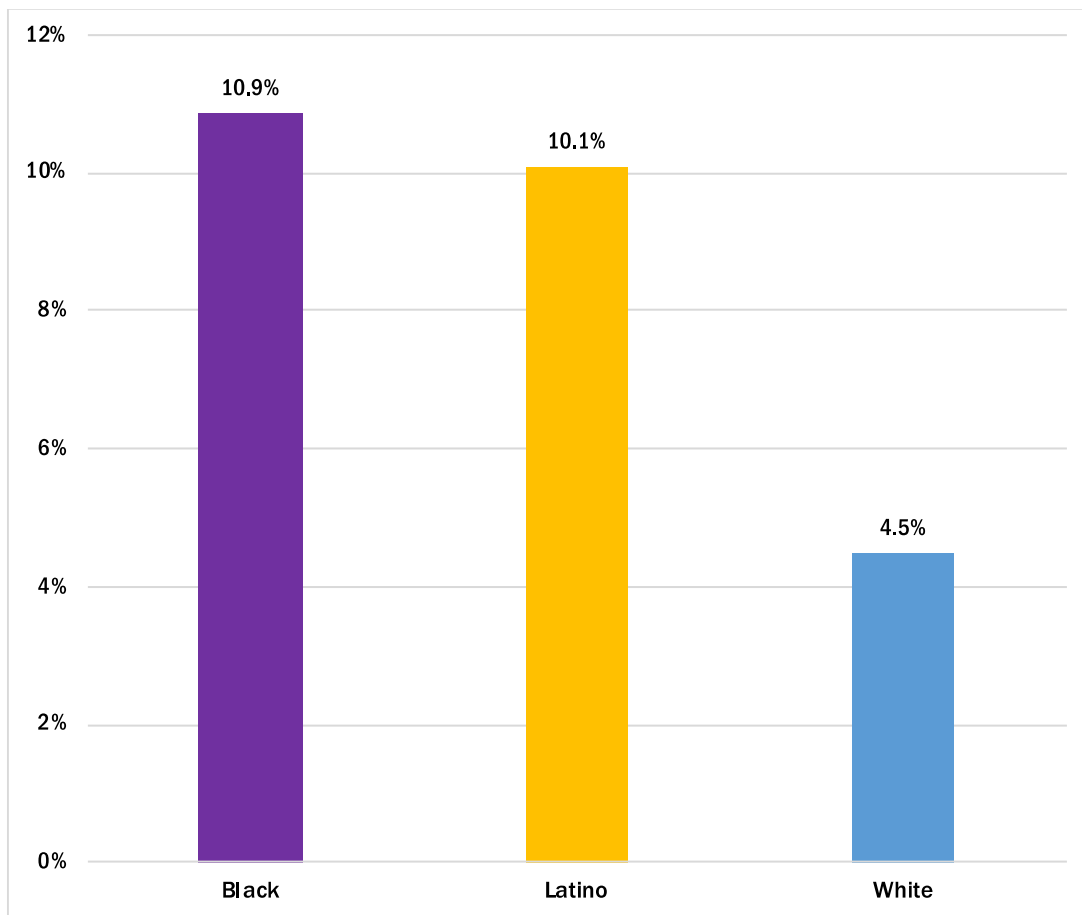
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16 and older)



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Unemployment in Holyoke during this period was 7.1%, compared to 3.4% across the state. Unemployment in Holyoke is much higher among Blacks (10.9%) and Latinos (10.1%) than among Whites (4.5%). Asian unemployment is not reported in Figure 8 because of its smaller sample size. Across the state, Latino unemployment is 8.3%.

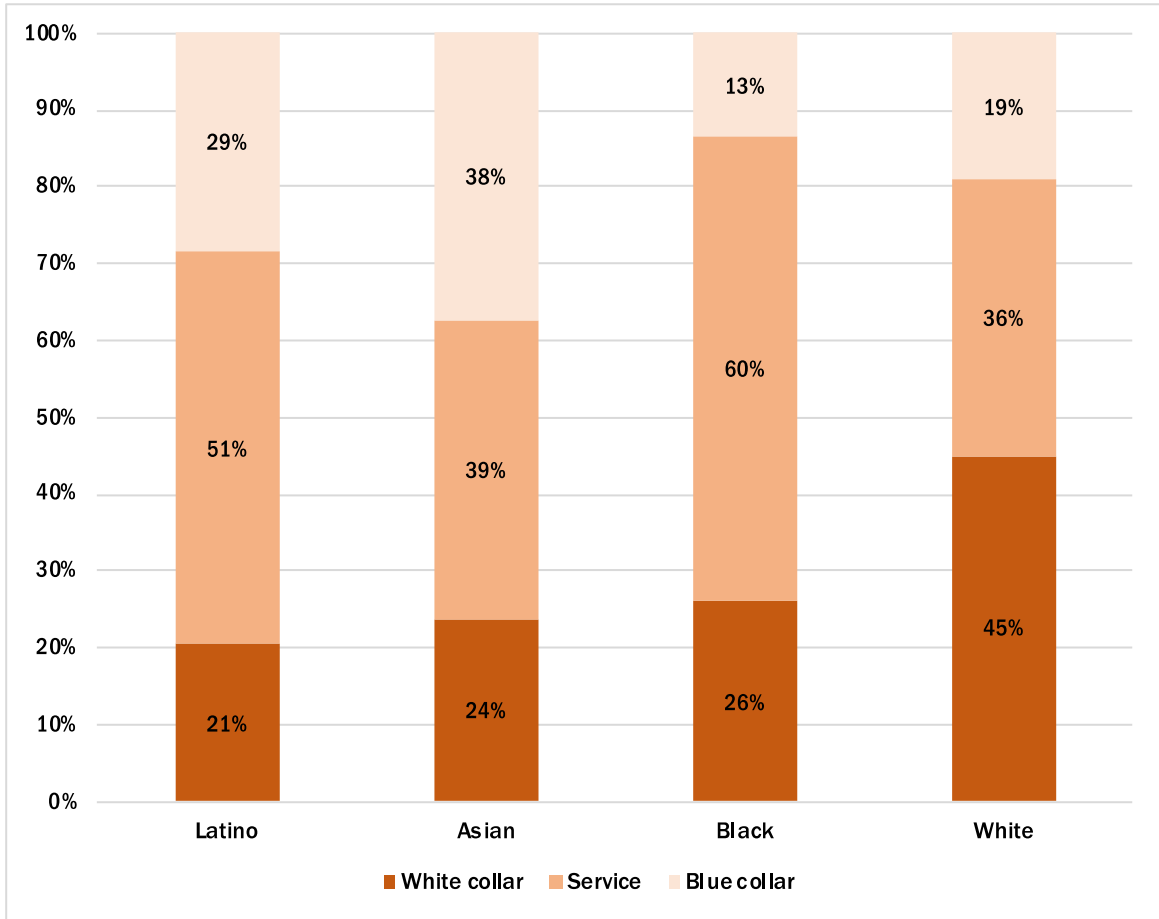
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16 and older)



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Figure 9 highlights that Latinos work in traditionally low-wage jobs. Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs with only 21% working in these management, business, science, and arts occupations. Correspondingly, they are overrepresented in the service sector (51% work in services and sales occupations) and in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs (29% work in natural resources, construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving occupations). For Latinos across the state, this distribution is 28% white-collar, 47% service, and 25% blue-collar.

Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Categories by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16 and older)

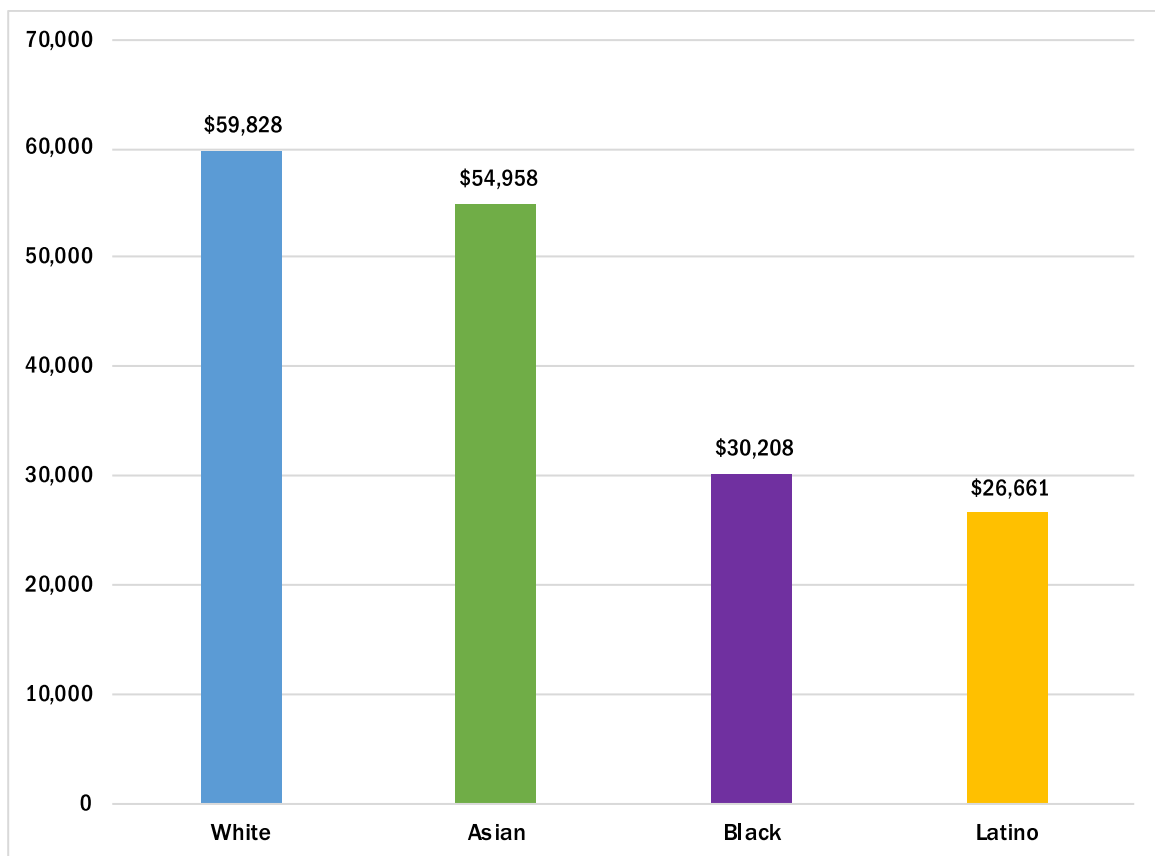


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Median household income in Holyoke (\$42,537) is barely half of what it is across the state (\$84,385). For Latino households specifically, median income is \$26,661 in Holyoke compared to \$48,450 at the state level. Among other groups in Holyoke, incomes are highest for Whites (\$59,828) and Asians (\$54,958), while the median for Blacks (\$30,218) is also above the Latino median (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Median Household Income by Ethno-Racial Group in 2020

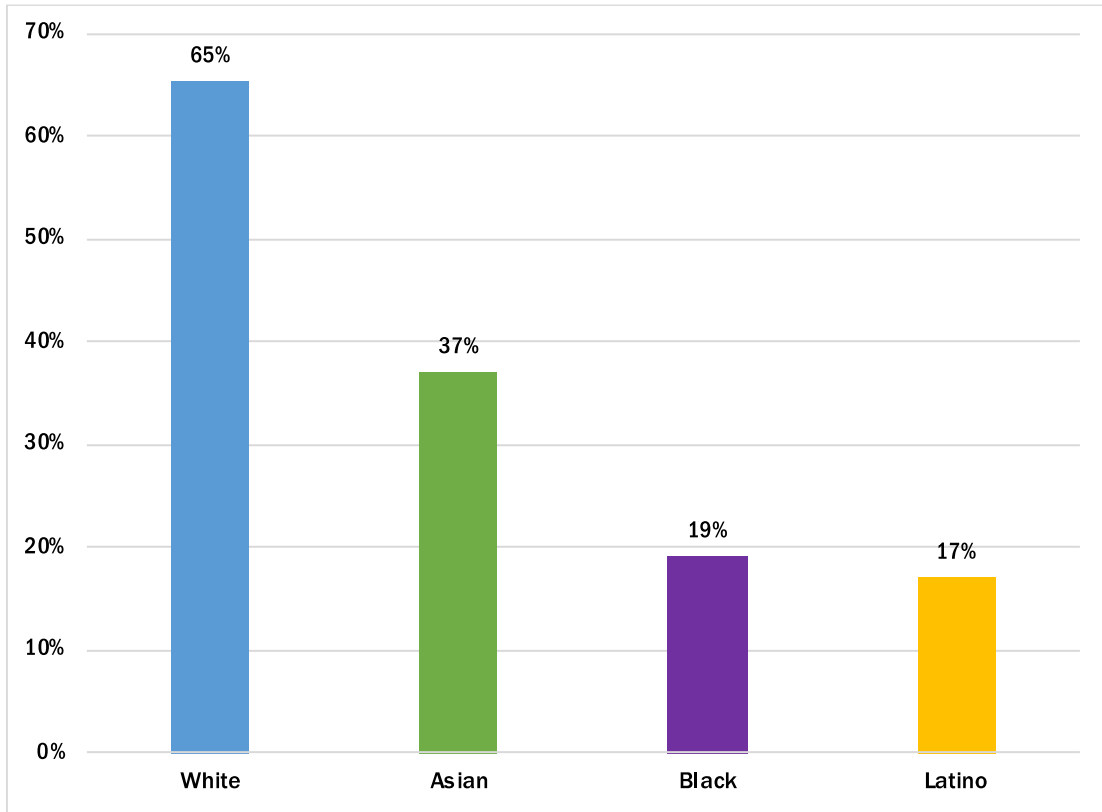


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Housing Occupancy and Medical Uninsurance

The final measures of Latino participation in Holyoke are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. As in many other cities and towns across the Commonwealth, homeownership rates in Holyoke vary significantly. Latinos have the lowest homeownership rate, 17% (Figure 11) and this is lower than their statewide rate of 28%. At the high end of the distribution, Whites in Holyoke have a homeownership rate of 65%, nearly four times the Latino rate. Asian and Black residents have ownership rates that fall between those of Whites and Latinos, with Asians owning at a rate of 37% and Blacks, 19%.

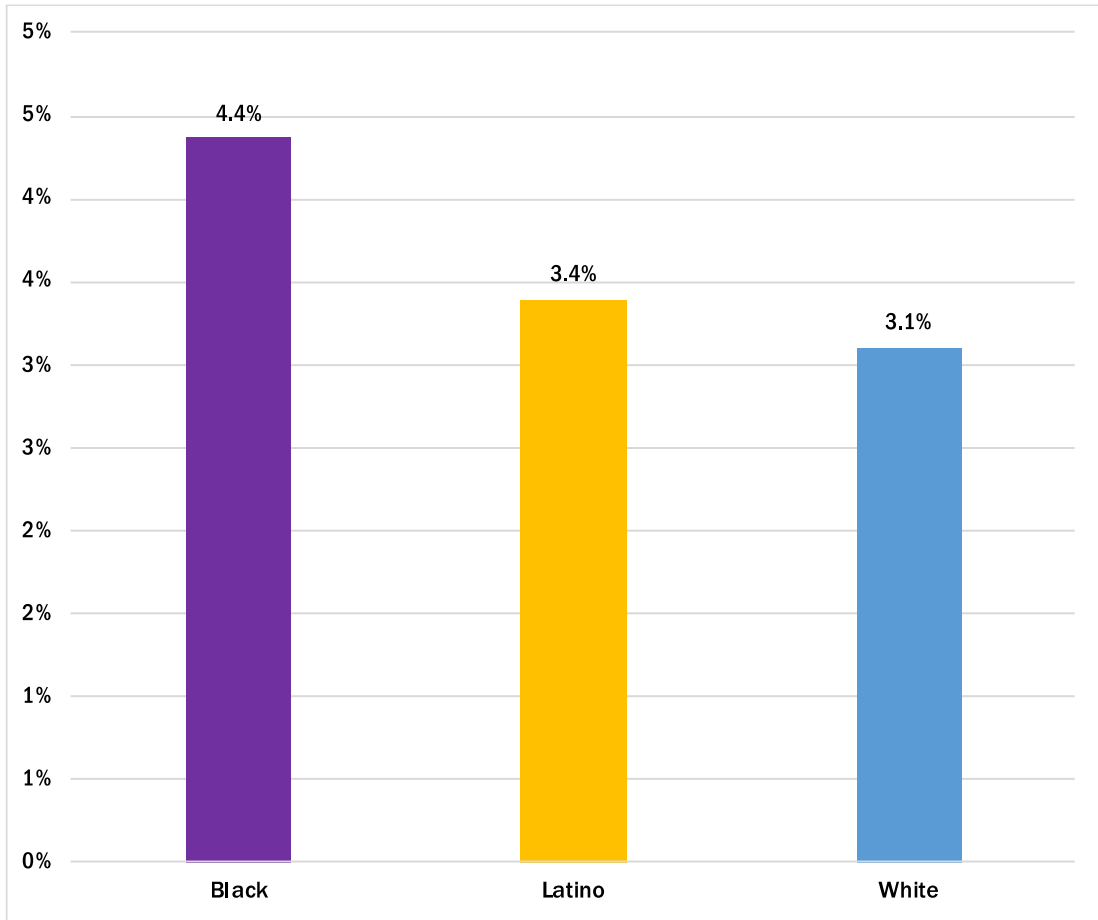
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Holyoke has a slightly higher rate of medical uninsurance (3.3%) than the statewide average of 2.7%. Figure 12 shows that Blacks have the highest rate of medical uninsurance in Holyoke at 4.4%, followed by Latinos (3.4%) and Whites (3.1%). Asian medical uninsurance is not reported in Figure 12 because of its smaller sample size. Statewide the Latino uninsurance rate is 5.6%.

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

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 recently earned a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the McCormack Graduate School at UMass Boston. Vishakha's research focuses on students' everyday classroom experiences, violent school discipline, and student engagement. Her dissertation takes an ethnographic approach and examines how interactions between teachers and students and among peers impacts students' learning outcomes and, shapes their perceptions of self and sense of school belonging.



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