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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Medford

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

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THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Medford

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Introduction

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

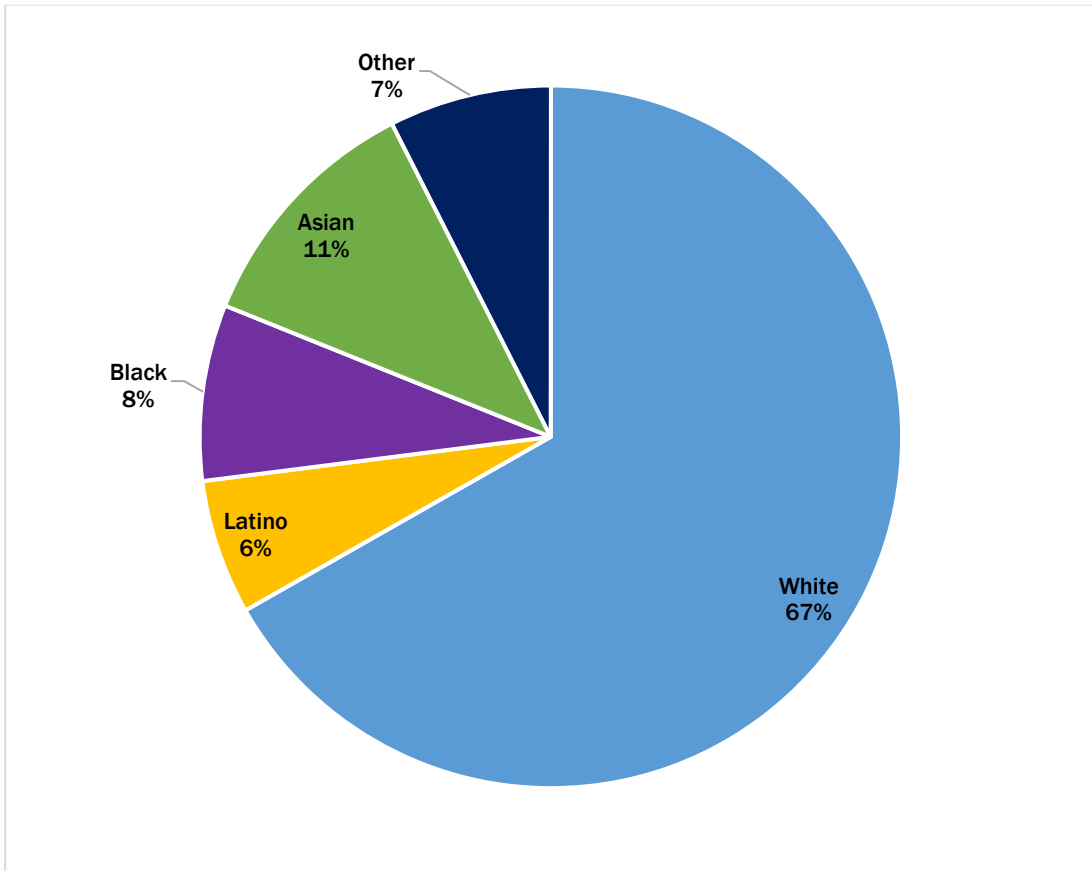
The Census Bureau identifies Latinos through a question that asks respondents to choose either "Hispanic or Latino" or "Not Hispanic or Latino." Separately, it asks respondents to identify a race. This report uses the term "Latino" to include all those who selected "Hispanic or Latino" on the Census 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 Medford.

Medford Overview

With a population of 59,659, Medford is home to an estimated 3,705 Latinos according to the 2020 Decennial Census. They represent 6% of the city’s population, a smaller share than for Whites (67%), Asians (11%), and Blacks (8%) and similar to the “Other” category (Figure 1). In addition, 1,335 foreign-born Brazilians live in Medford, and the Census Bureau classifies Brazilians in the “Other” category.

Figure 1: Population Shares by Ethno-Racial Group in Medford



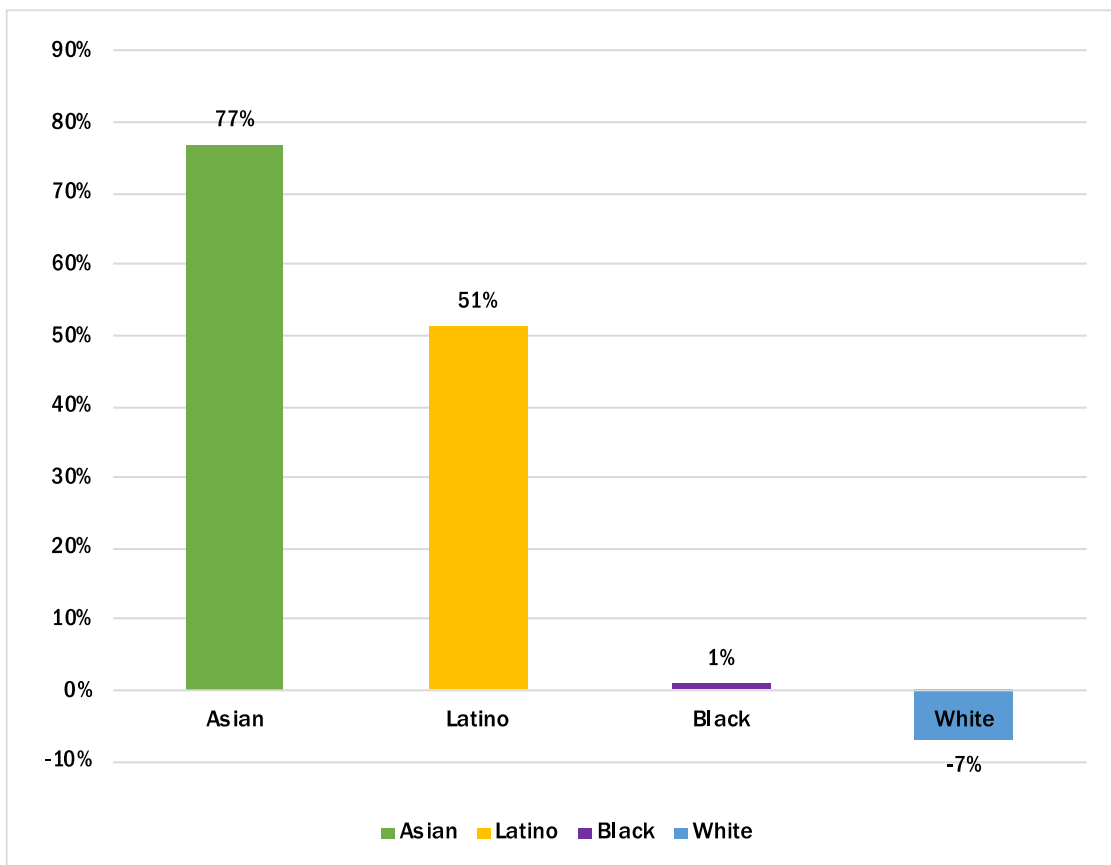
Source: 2020 U.S Census

A striking feature of Medford is the recent population growth among its non-White populations. From 2010 to 2020, Asians (77%) and Latinos (51%) experienced significant population growth in the city, while the Black population (1%) remained stable and Whites experienced a 7% population decline (Figure 2). The growth of the Latino population in Medford is steeper than that of Latinos statewide, who experienced an increase of 41% during this period.

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.

Medford has long been a destination for international migrants, and today it has a greater concentration of foreign-born (22%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (17%). This is the case among Latinos. In Medford, 33% of their population are foreign born, which is a slightly higher proportion than for Latinos statewide (32%).

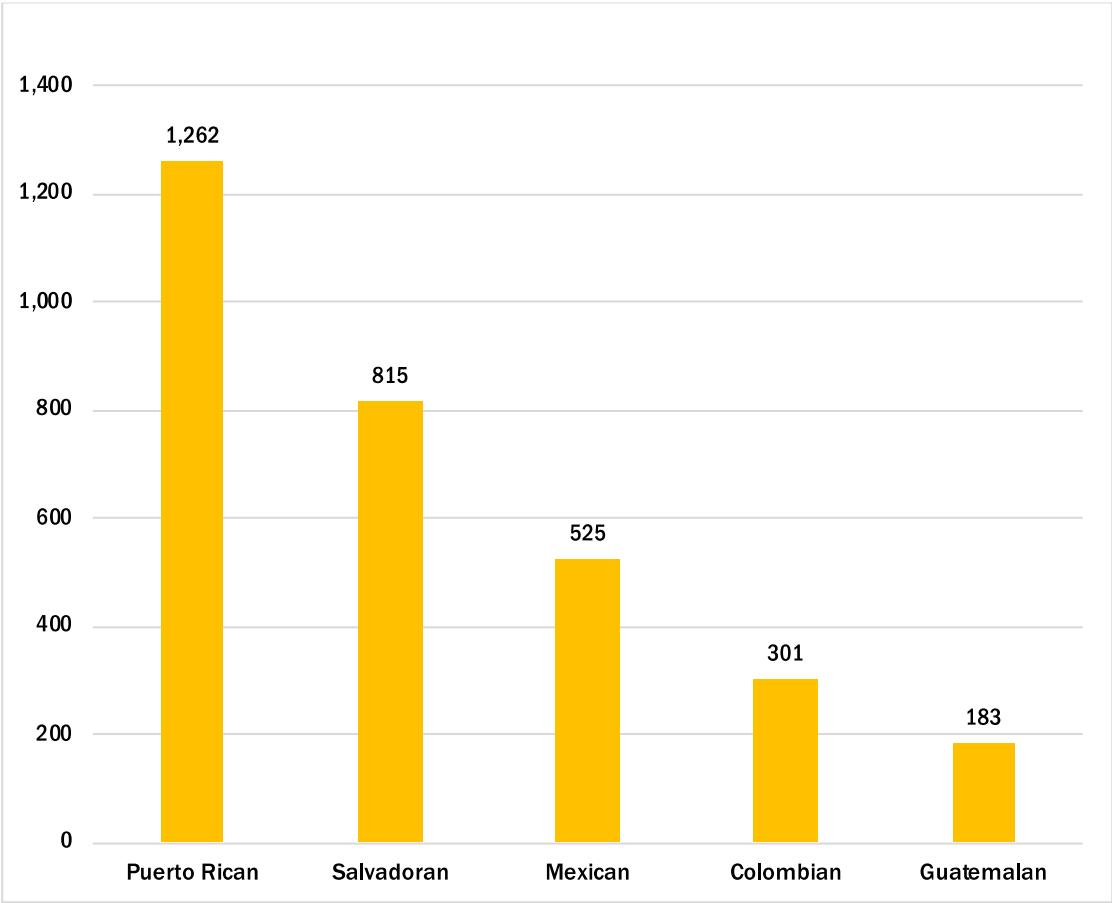
Figure 2: Population Change from 2010 to 2020 by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2010 & 2020 U. S. Censuses

When examining the origin of Latinos in the Medford, 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, Brazilians are not identified as Latino for the Census. Figure 3 shows the five largest Latino populations in Medford: Puerto Ricans (1,262), Salvadorans (815), Mexicans (525), Colombians (301), and Guatemalans (183). Statewide, the five largest Latino populations in Massachusetts in order of size are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, Mexicans, and Guatemalans.

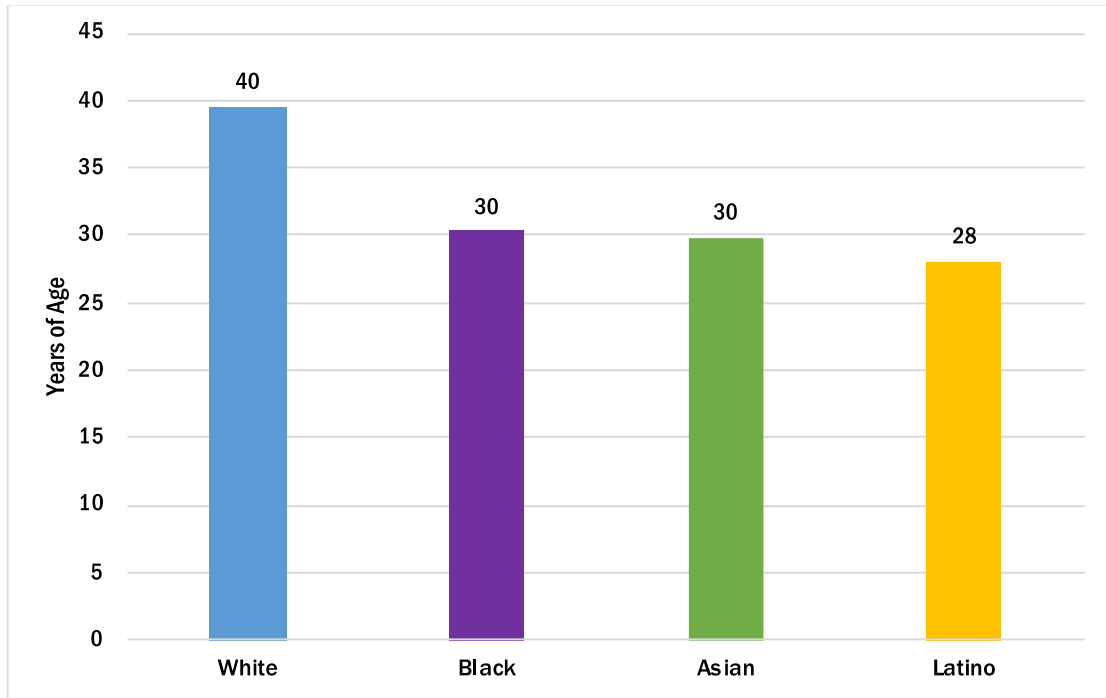
Figure 3: Origin of the Top Latino Populations



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

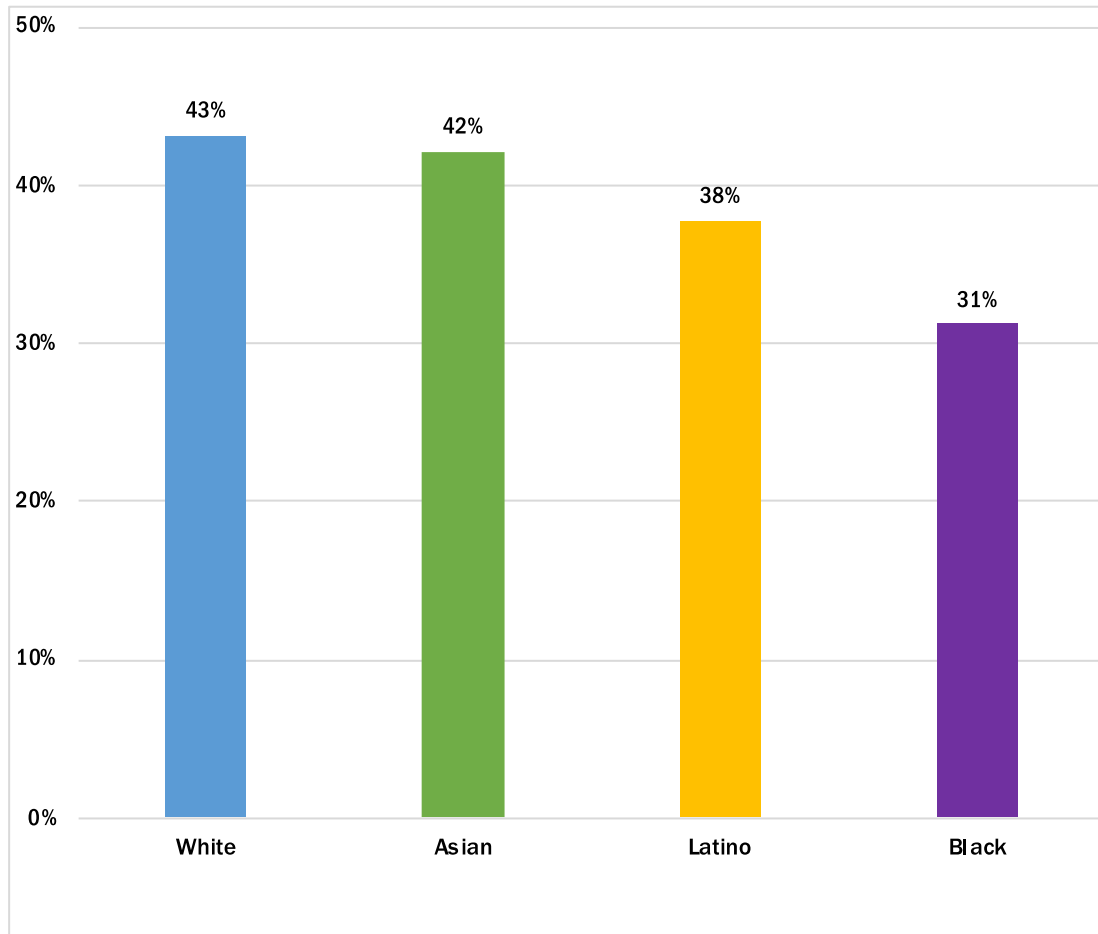
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The median age of Medford’s Latino population, 28 years, is slightly younger than the statewide Latino median age of 29 years. As Figure 4 shows, Latinos in Medford are similar to Blacks (30 years) and Asians (30 years) but much younger than the city’s larger White population (40 years).

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



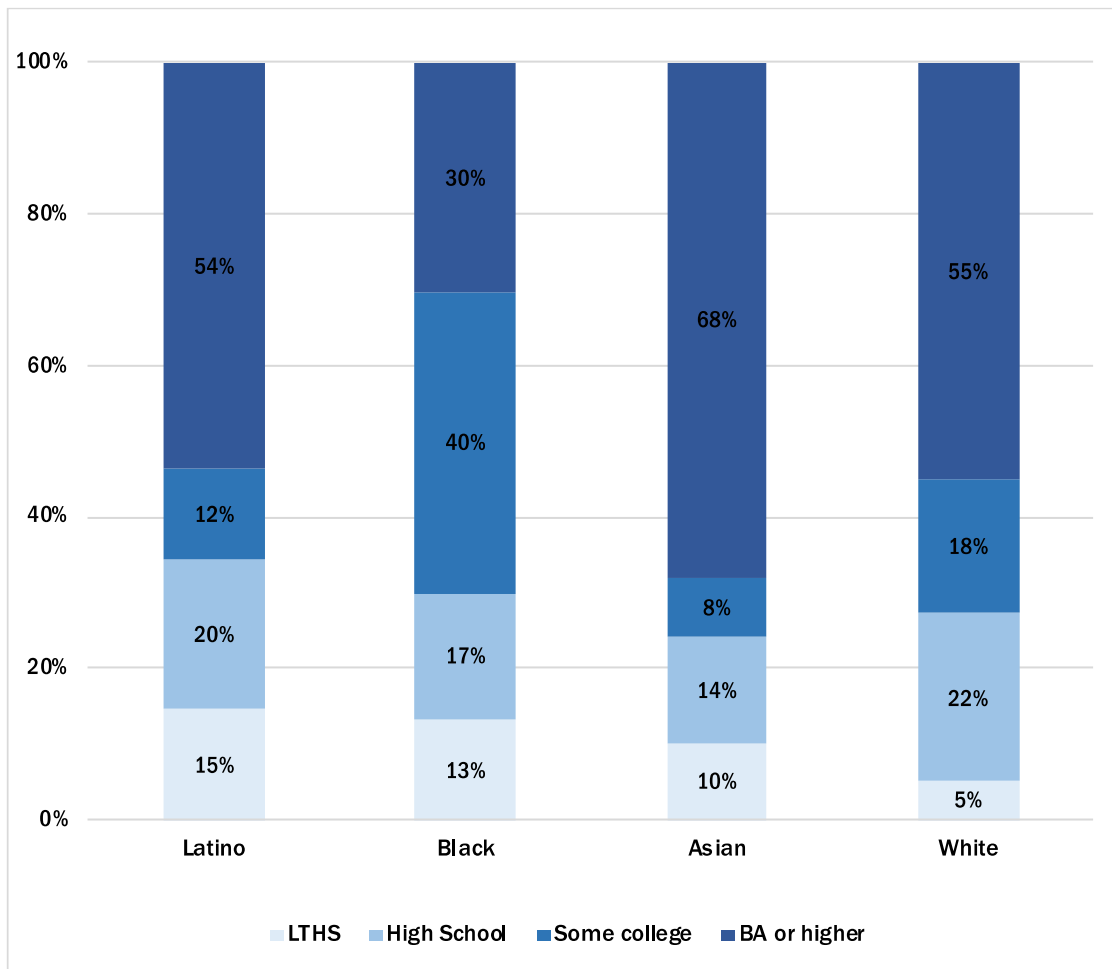
Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The marriage rate in Massachusetts for persons 15 and over is 48%, while the rate in Medford is 42%. As shown in Figure 5, the marriage rate among Latinos (38%) is lower than among Whites (43%) and Asians (42%), but higher than among Blacks (31%). However, the Latino marriage rate in Medford is higher than for Latinos statewide (33%).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment in Medford is higher than in Massachusetts as a whole, with 55% of Medford's population age 25 and older having at least a Bachelor's degree compared to 45% statewide. Likewise, 54% of Medford Latinos have at least a Bachelor's degree: 54%, compared to the statewide Latino rate of only 21%. As Figure 6 shows, the corresponding proportions for other groups in Medford are 68% for Asians, 55% for Whites, and 30% for Blacks. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos in Medford have the highest share of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 15%, compared to 13% for Blacks, 10% for Asians, and 5% for Whites.

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

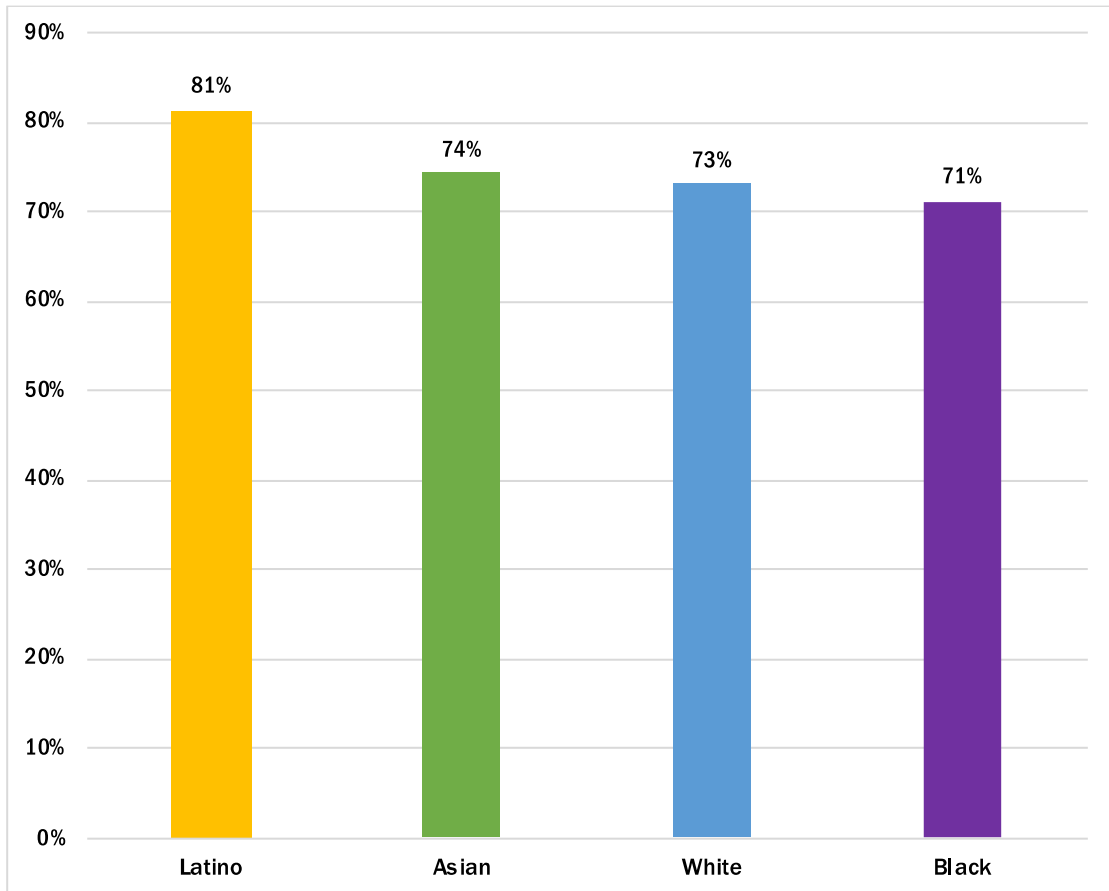


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The labor force participation rate in Medford is 73%, which is higher than for the Commonwealth (67%). Latinos in Medford have a higher labor force participation rate (81%) than Latinos statewide (69%). Their rate in Medford is also higher than that of Asians (74%), Whites (73%), and Blacks (71%), as shown in Figure 7.

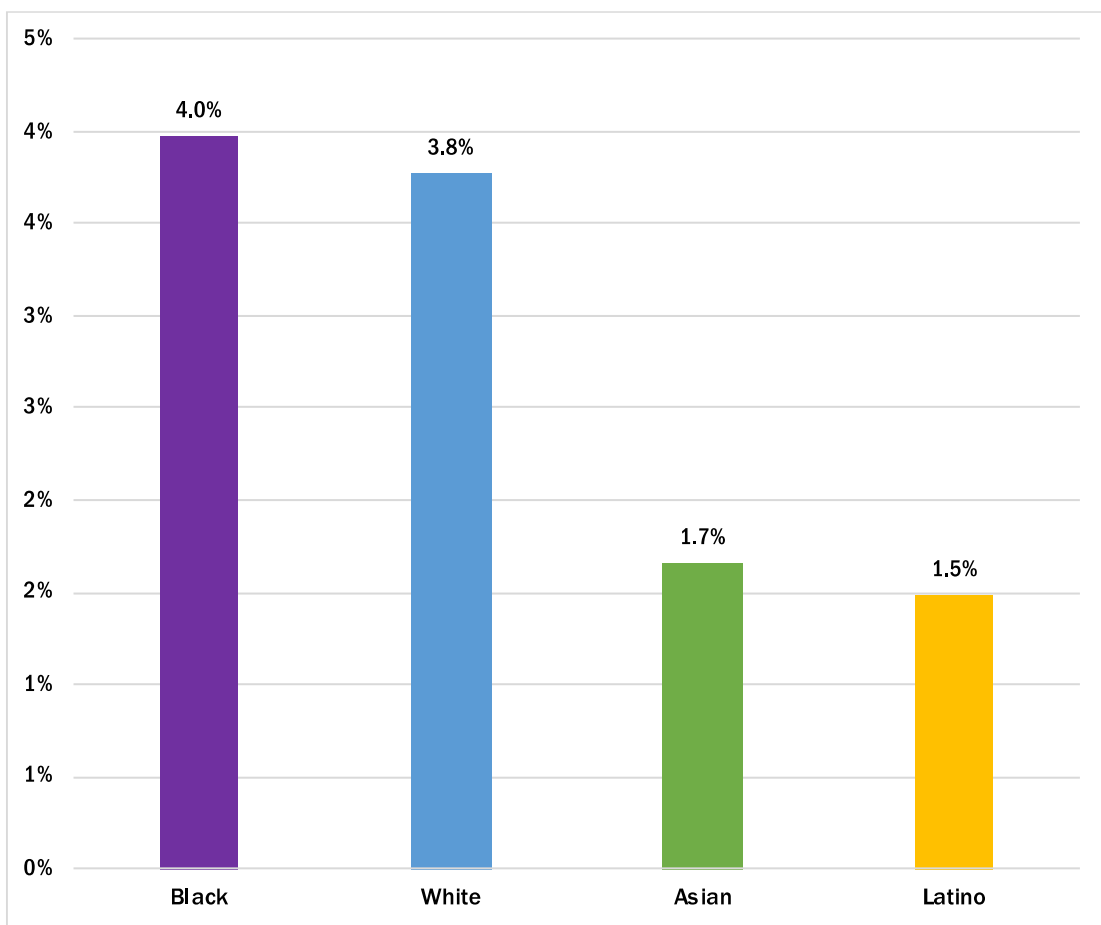
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16 and older)



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The overall unemployment rate in Medford during this period was 3.4% compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 5.1%. And as Figure 8 shows, the Latino unemployment rate in Medford of 1.5% is the lowest of all ethno-racial group in the city. Latinos in Medford who participate in the labor force fare better than Latinos statewide, who during this period experienced an 8.3% unemployment rate.

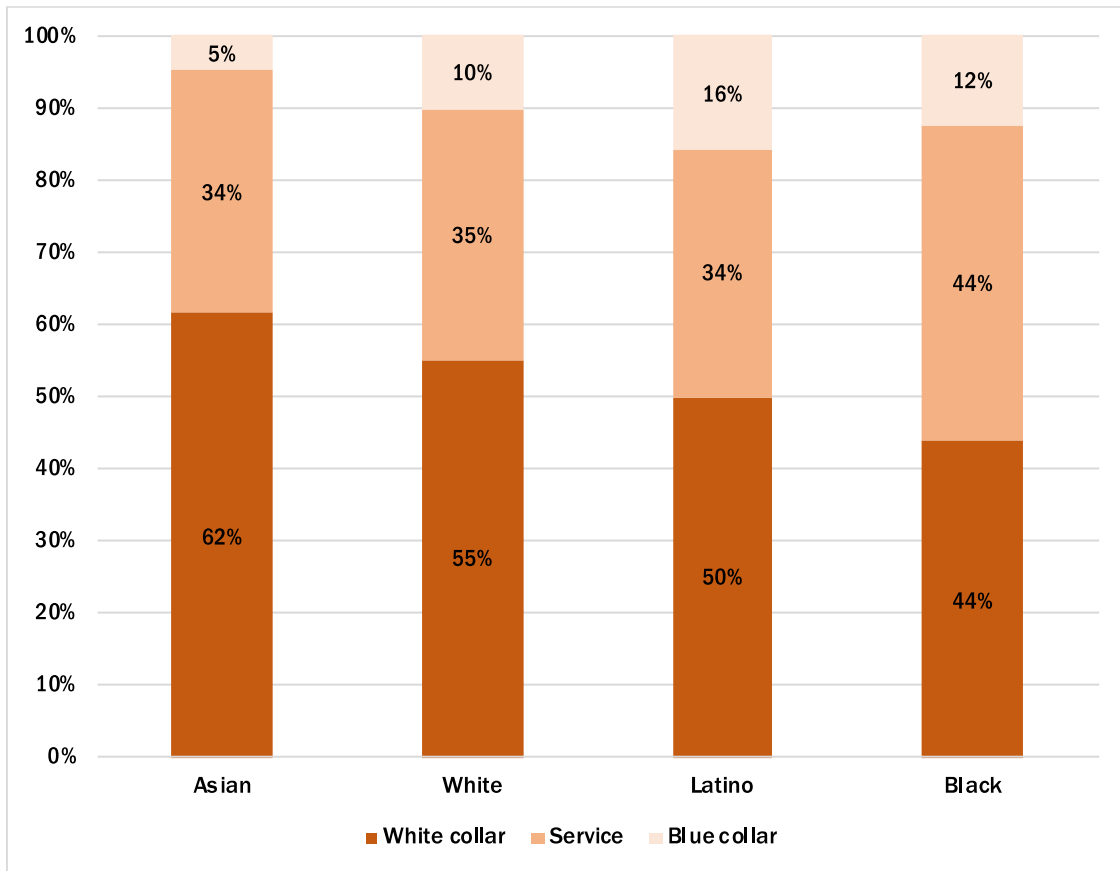
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16 and older)



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Figure 9 highlights that many Latinos work in white-collar jobs. Latinos are overrepresented in management, business, science, and arts occupations (50%). As a result, they are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs with only 16% working in in natural resources, construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving occupations. Smaller shares of Latinos work in sales and service occupations (34%). 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)

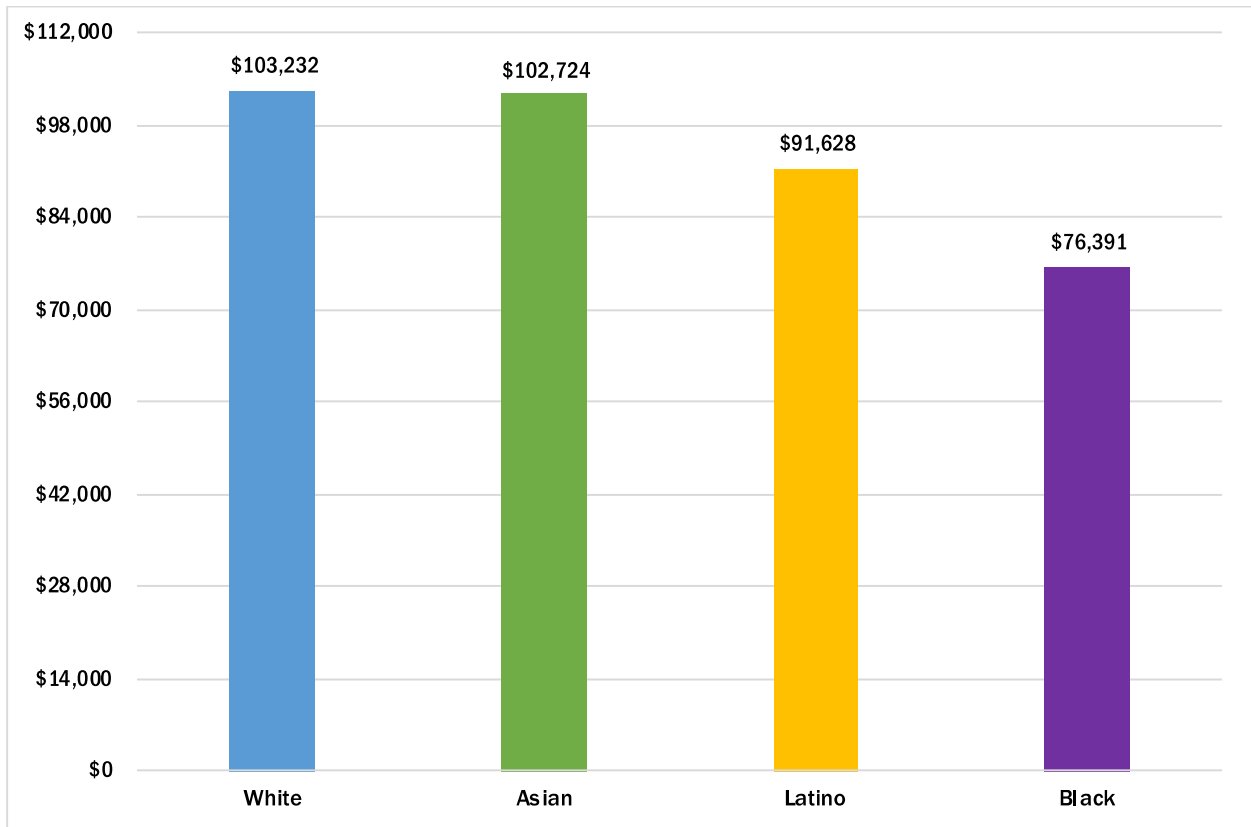


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Medford's median household income of \$101,168 is higher than the statewide median income of \$84,385. Latinos in Figure 10 have lower median household income (\$91,628) than all other ethno-racial groups in the city except Blacks (\$76,391). Whites (\$103,232) and Asians (\$102,724) have higher median household income. However, Latinos in Medford are more economically successful than Latinos in other parts of the Commonwealth, as the statewide Latino median household income is only \$48,450.

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

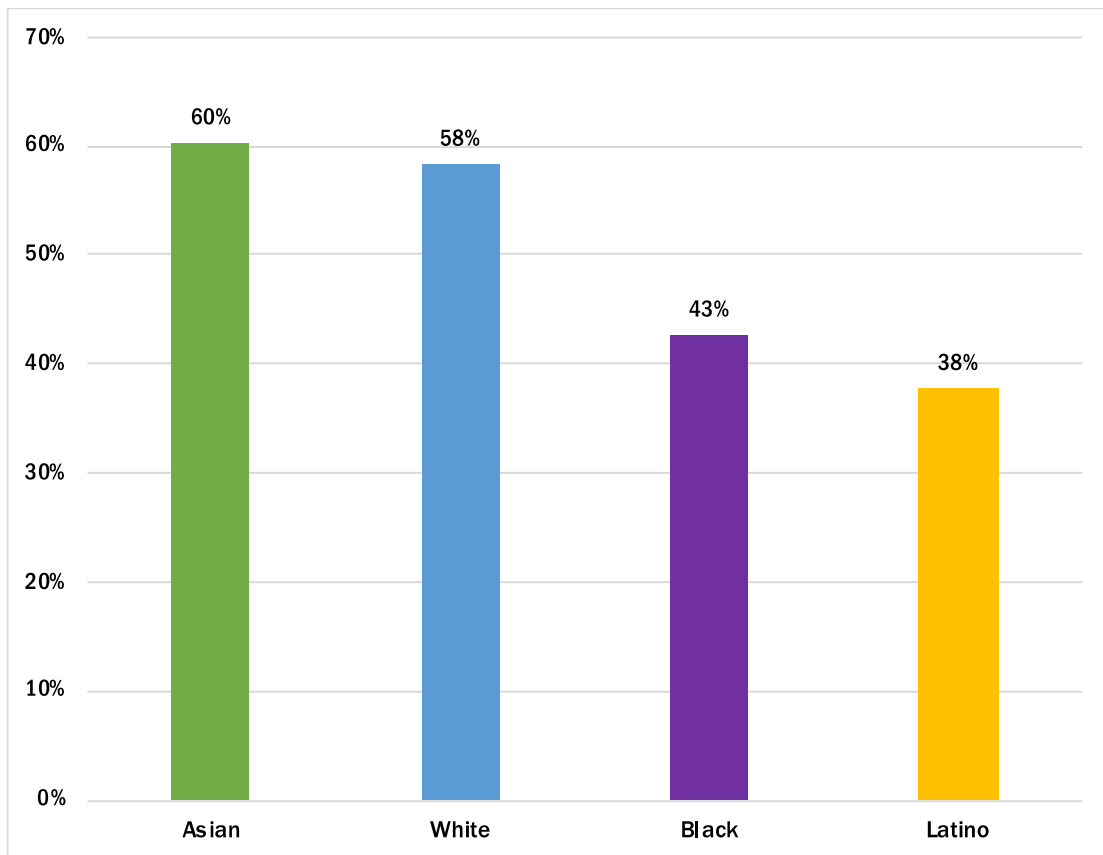


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

HOUSING OCCUPANCY AND MEDICAL UNINSURANCE

The final measures of Latino participation in Medford are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Medford has a lower homeownership rate (56%) than the statewide rate (63%) as measured by occupied housing units. Latinos in Figure 11 have the lowest homeownership level of any ethno-racial group in the city at 38%, though this is higher than the 28% of Latinos statewide who are homeowners.

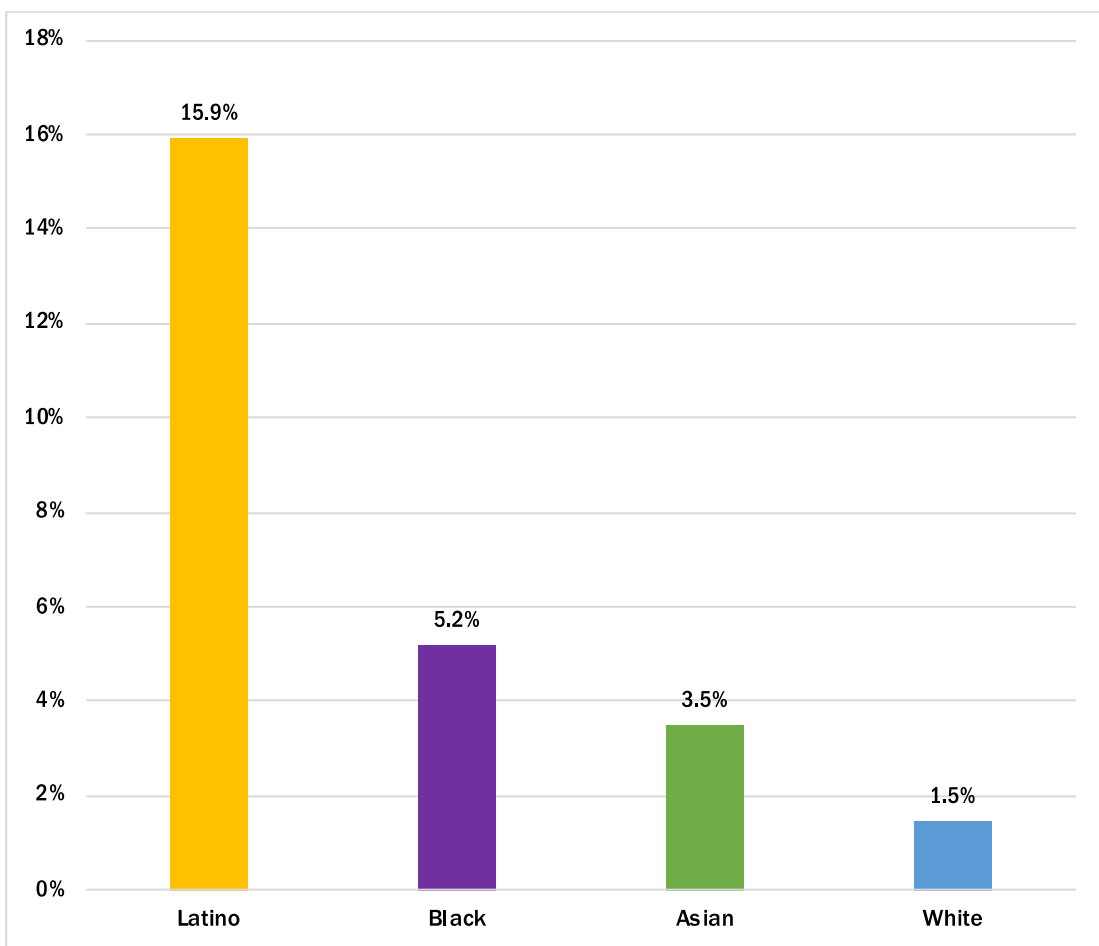
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Medford has a similar rate of medical uninsurance (3.1%) to the statewide average of 2.7%. Figure 12 shows that Latinos have the highest rate of medical uninsurance in Medford at 15.9%, which is higher than the rate for Latinos statewide (5.6%). Some of this might be attributed to its higher concentration of foreign-born residents, who have the highest rates of uninsurance.

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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