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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Waltham

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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Introduction

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

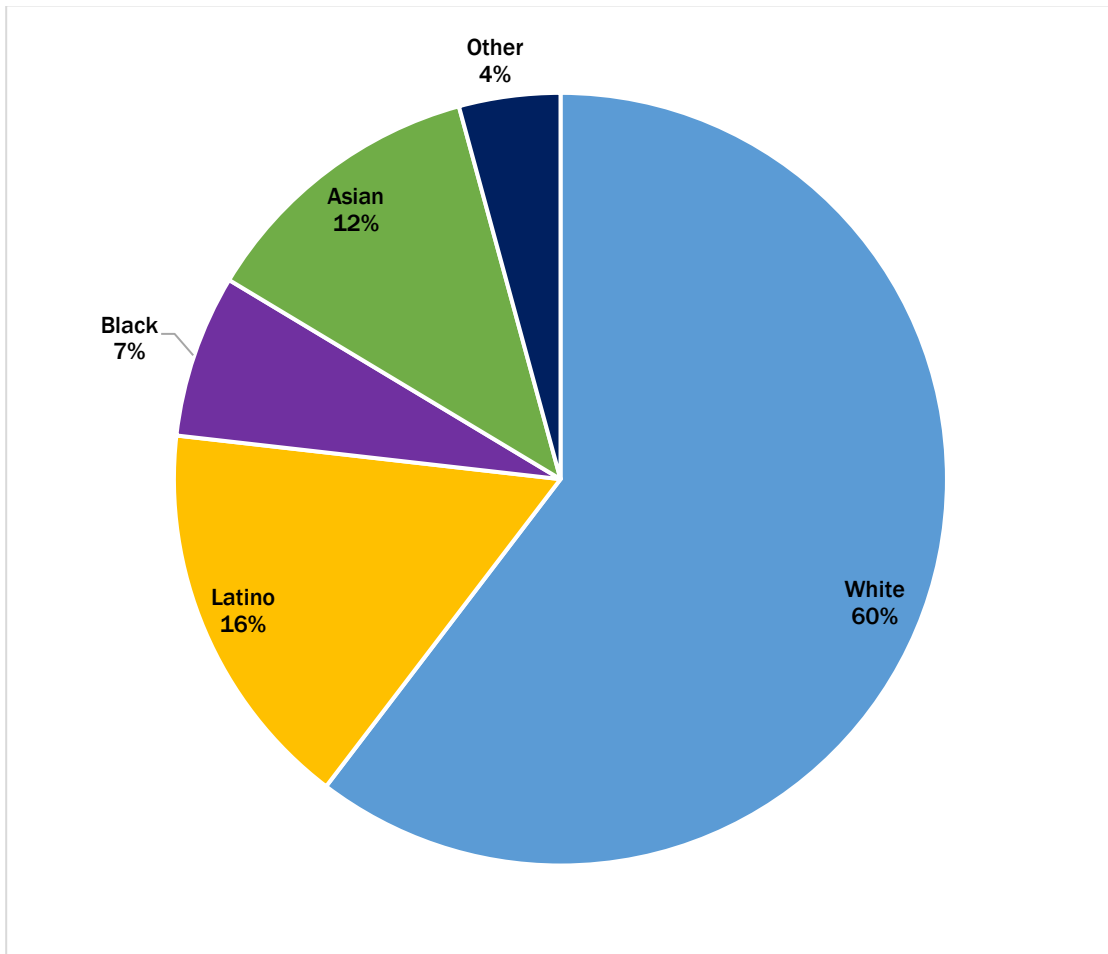
The Census Bureau identifies Latinos through a question that asks respondents to choose either “Hispanic or Latino” or “Not Hispanic or Latino.” Separately, it asks respondents to identify a race. This report uses the term “Latino” to include all those who selected “Hispanic or Latino” on the Census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

Waltham Overview

With a total population of 65,218, Waltham is home to an estimated 10,719 Latinos according to the 2020 Decennial Census. They represent about 16% of the city's population, a smaller share than for Whites (60%) but larger than for Asians (12%) and Blacks (7%) (Figure 1).

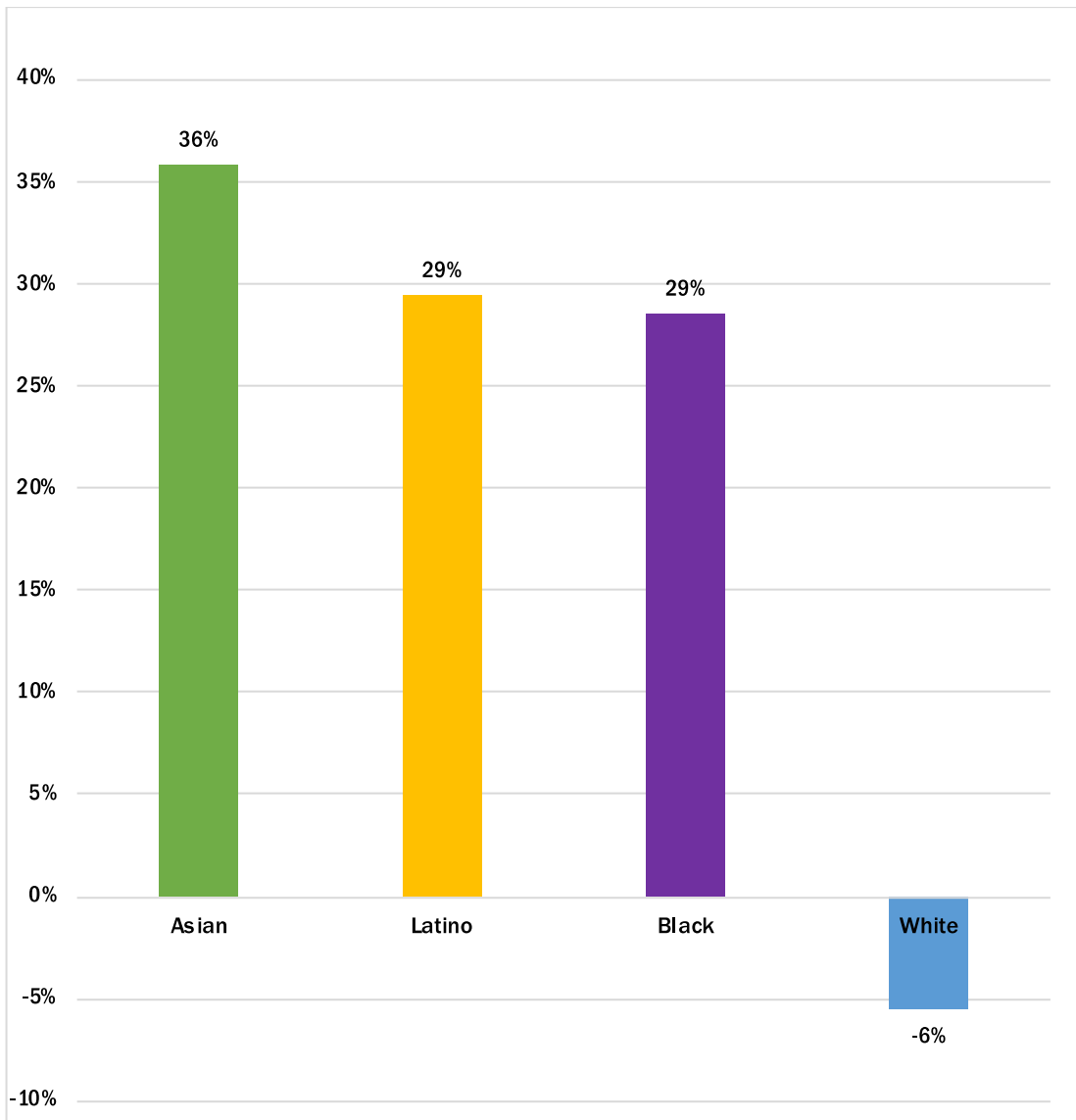
Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Waltham



Source: 2020 U.S Census

A striking feature of Waltham is its recent population change. From 2010 to 2020, Asians (36%), Latinos (29%), and Blacks (29%) experienced population growth in the city, while Whites experienced a 6% population decline (Figure 2). This decline in the White population is consistent with the statewide trend. The growth of the Latino population in Waltham was less than that of Latinos statewide, who experienced an increase of 41%.

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



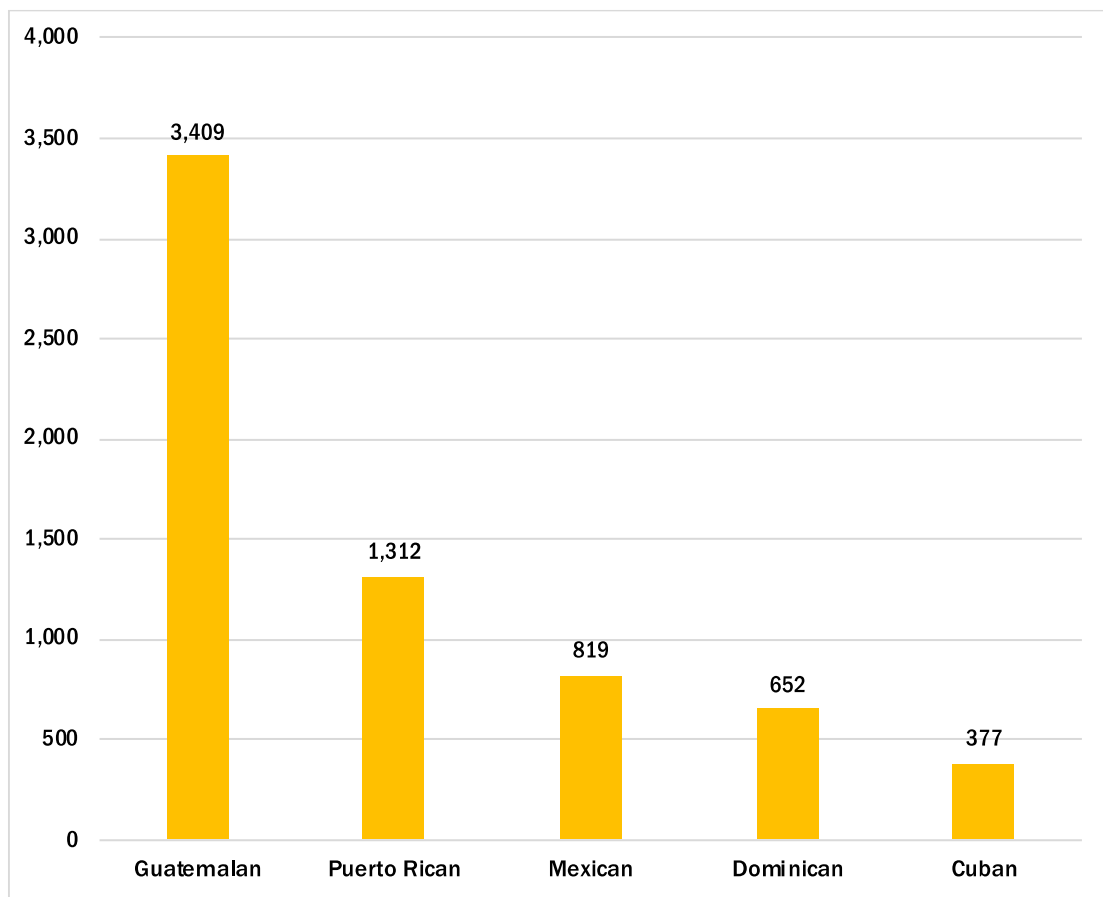
Source: 2010 & 2020 U. S. Censuses

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.

Waltham has long been a destination for international migrants, and today it has a greater concentration of foreign-born (27%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (17%). This is especially the case among Latinos. In Waltham, 48% of the Latino population is foreign born, which is higher than the Latino statewide share (32%).

When examining the origin of Latinos in the Waltham, it is important to note that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens; they are not included in foreign-born estimates above. As Figure 3 shows, the largest Latino subpopulation in the city consists of Guatemalans (3,409), followed by Puerto Ricans (1,312), Mexicans (819), Dominicans (652), and Cubans (377). Statewide, the five largest Latino populations in Massachusetts in order of size are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, Mexicans, and Guatemalans.

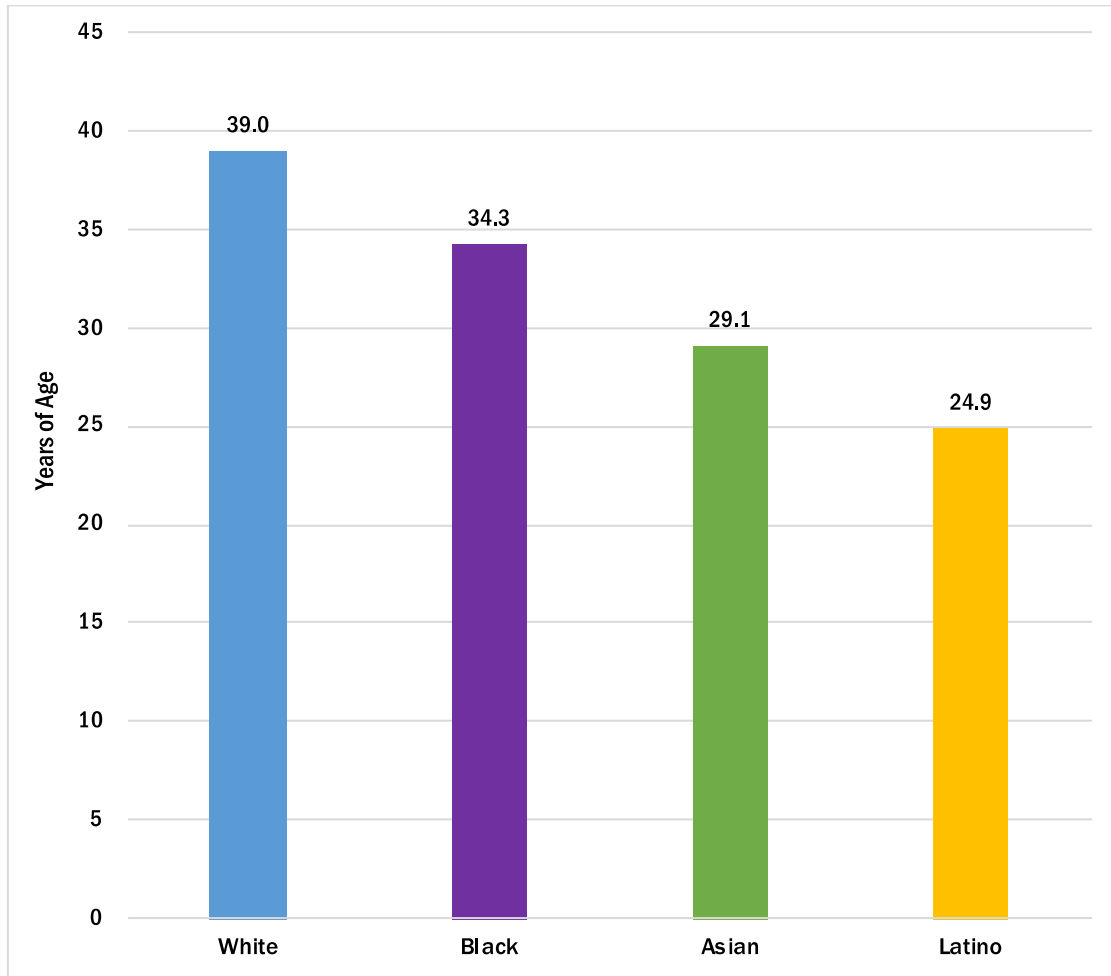
Figure 3: Origin of the Top Latino Populations



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

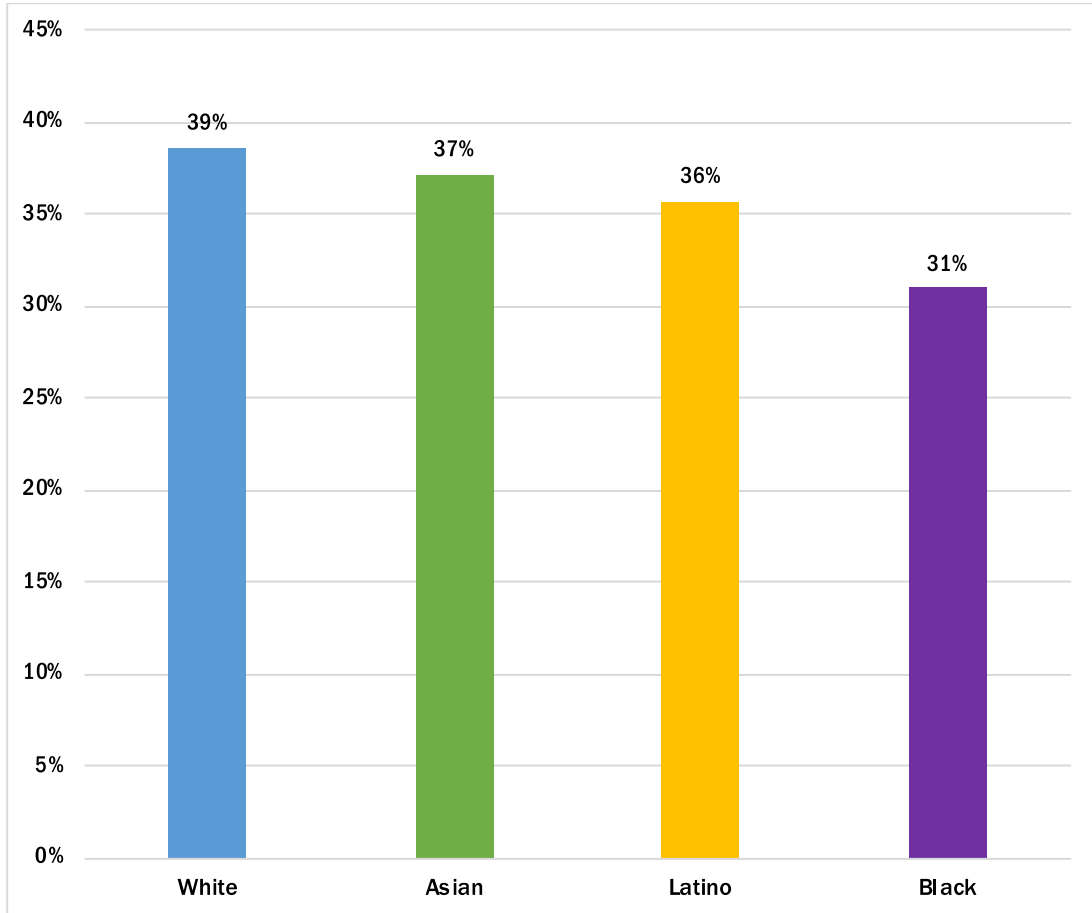
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The median age in Waltham is 34 years, which is younger than the Commonwealth’s overall median of 40 years. Likewise, Waltham’s Latino population, with a median age of 25 years, is younger than the statewide Latino median age of 29 years. As Figure 4 shows, Latinos as a group in Waltham are much younger than Whites (39 years), Blacks (34 years), and Asians (29 years).

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



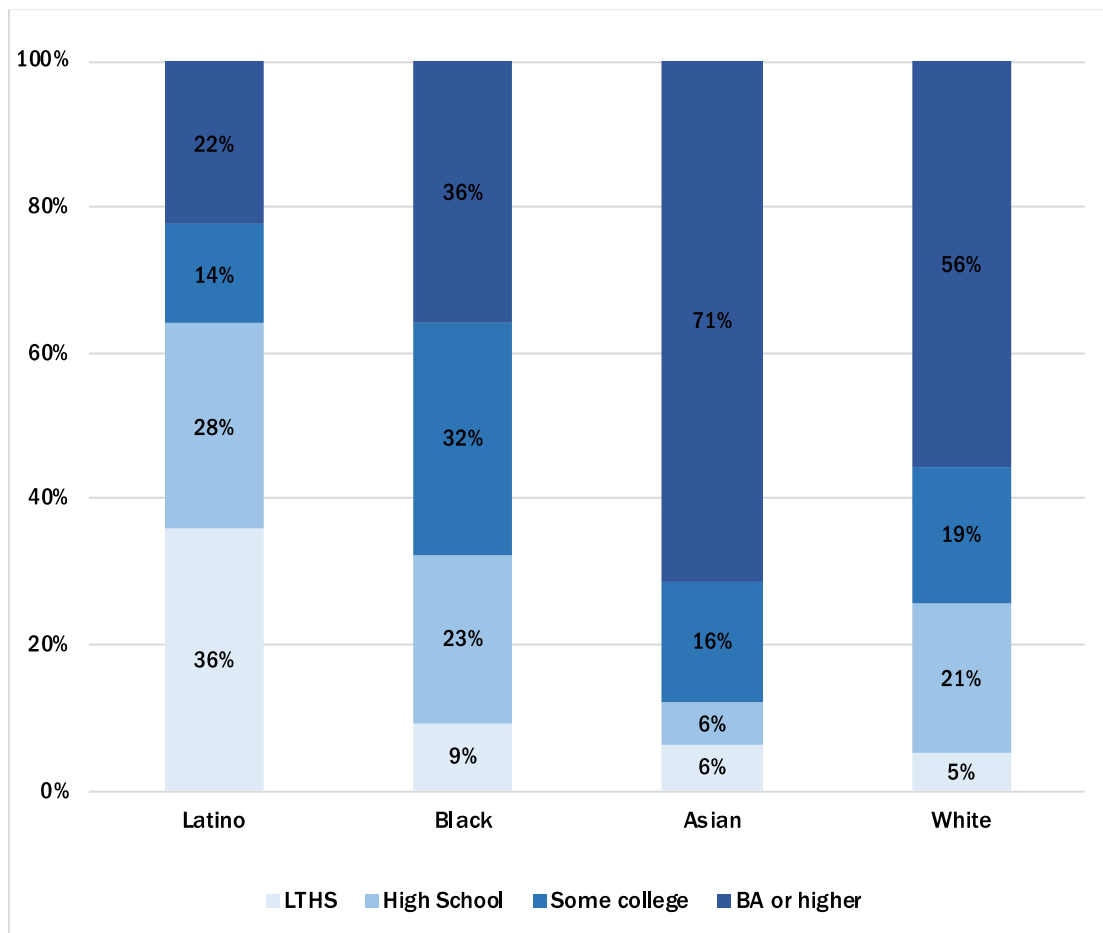
Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The marriage rate in Waltham for persons 15 and over is 39%, which is lower than the statewide rate of 48%. As shown in Figure 5, the marriage rate for Latinos (36%) is lower than for Asians (37%) and Whites (39%). However, the Latino marriage rate in Waltham is higher than for Latinos statewide (33%).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The overall educational attainment in Waltham is high, with 53% of residents age 25 and older having a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 45% statewide. Among Waltham's Latinos, however, the proportion of those with at least a Bachelor's degree (22%) is almost exactly the same as for Latinos statewide (21%). As Figure 6 shows, Latinos have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a Bachelor's degree at 22%, compared to 36% for Blacks, 56% for Whites, and 71% for Asians. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have the highest percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma at 36%, compared to 9% for Blacks, 6% for Asians, and 5% for Whites.

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

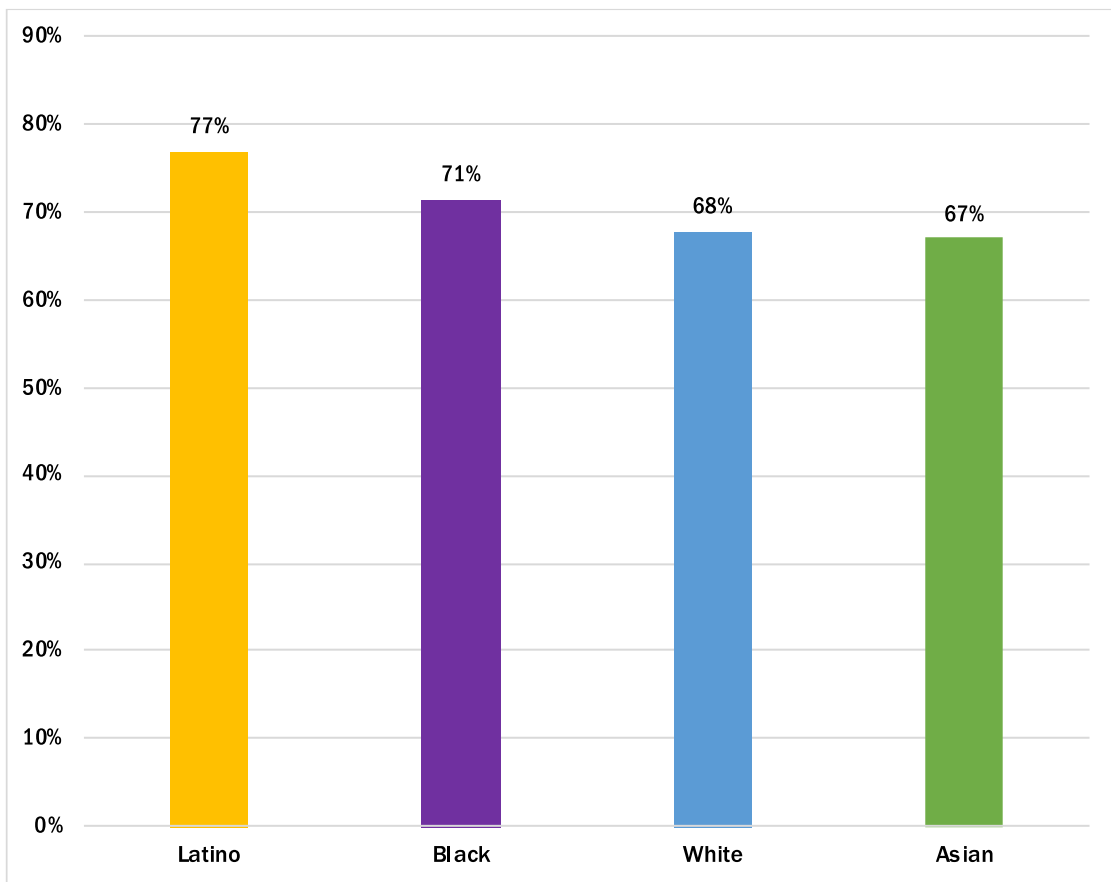


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The labor force participation in Waltham is 69%, which is higher than for the Commonwealth, 67%. Latinos have a higher labor force participation rate in Waltham (77%) than Latinos statewide (69%). As Figure 7 shows, they also have the highest rate in the city, followed by Blacks (71%), Whites (68%), and Asians (67%).

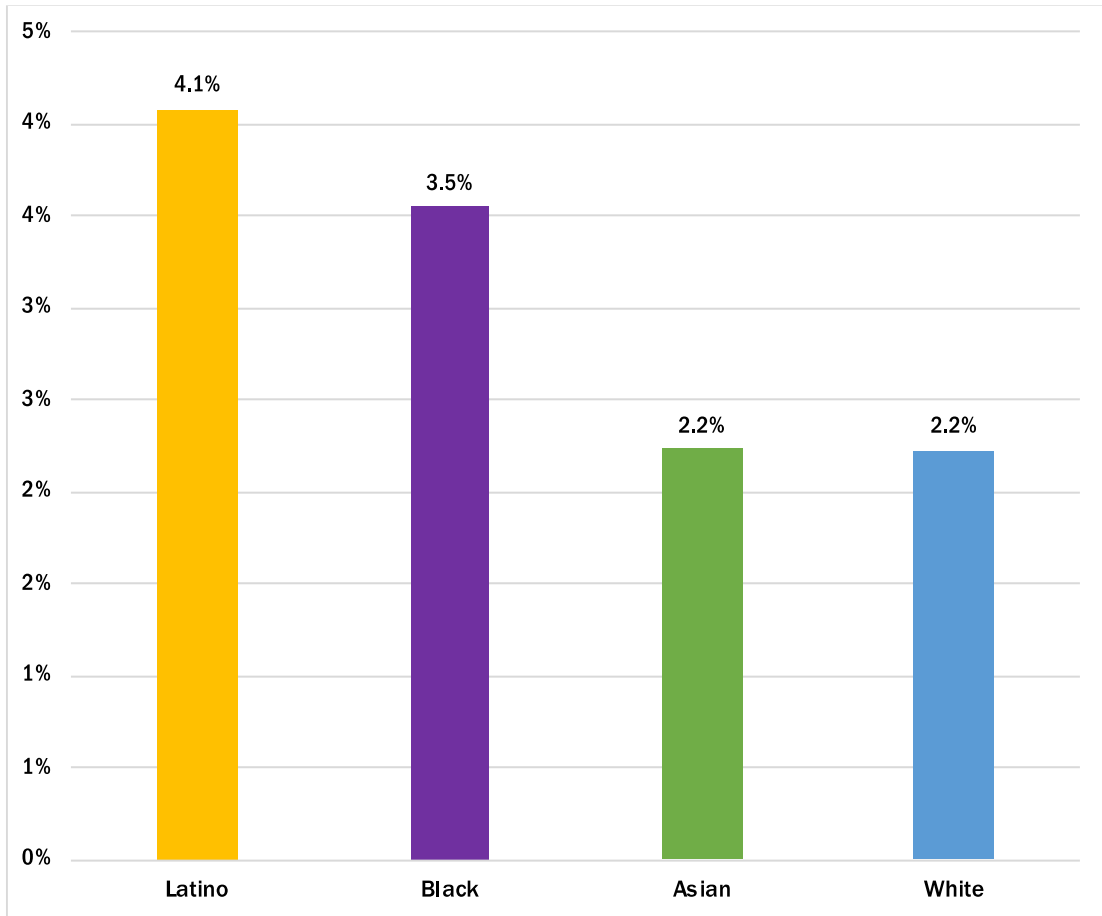
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16 and older)



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The overall unemployment rate in Waltham during this period was a low 2.6% compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 5.1%. The Latino unemployment rate in Waltham of 4.1% is the highest of any ethno-racial group in the city. When Latinos in Waltham participate in the labor force, they do much better than Latinos statewide, who during this period experienced a 8.3% unemployment rate.

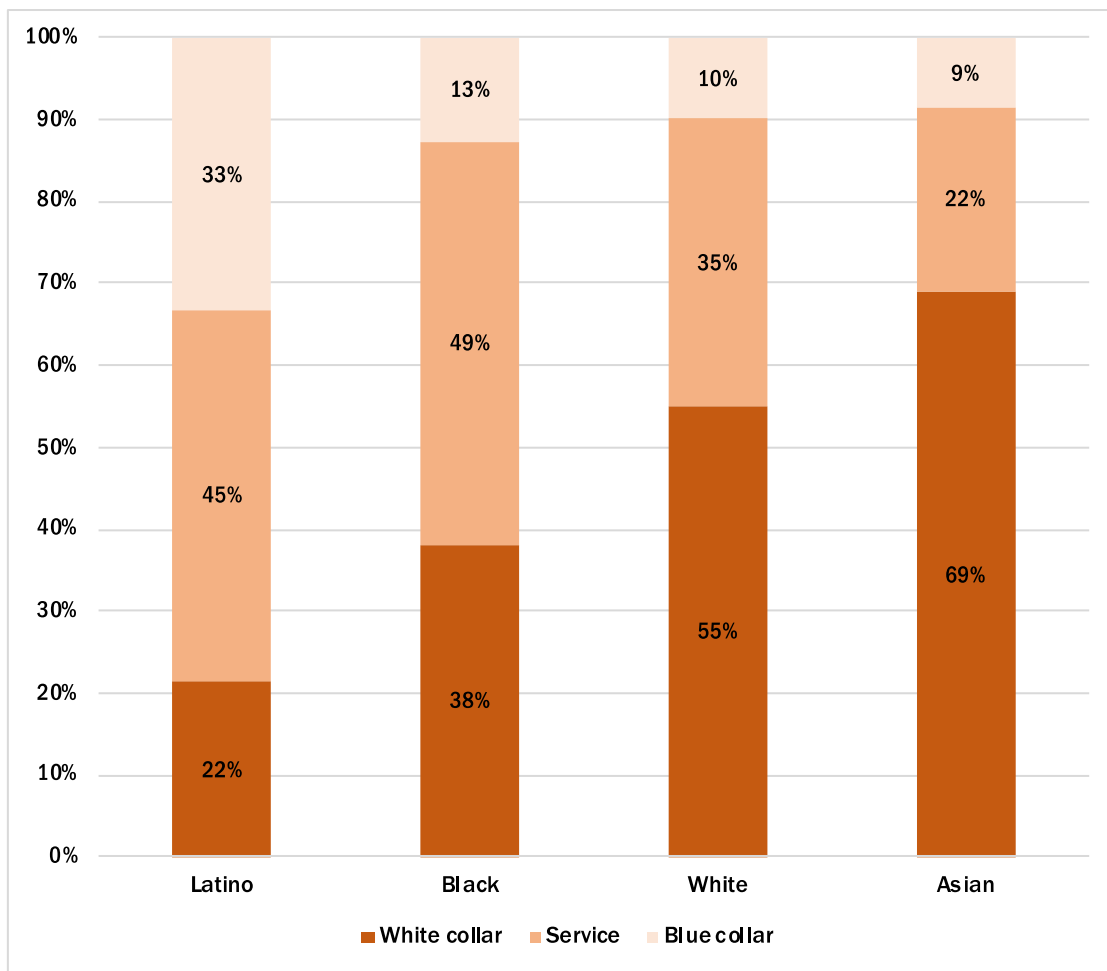
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Figure 9 highlights the fact that Latinos work in service sector jobs. Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs with 22% working in these management, business, science, and arts occupations (compared to 55% for Whites and 69% for Asians). Nearly half (45%) of the employed Latinos are in service and sales occupations, compared with 22% for Asians and 35% for Whites. Blacks have a similar occupational distribution to Latinos: 13% are in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs and 49% in sales and service. For Latinos across the state, this distribution is 28% white-collar, 47% service, and 25% blue-collar.

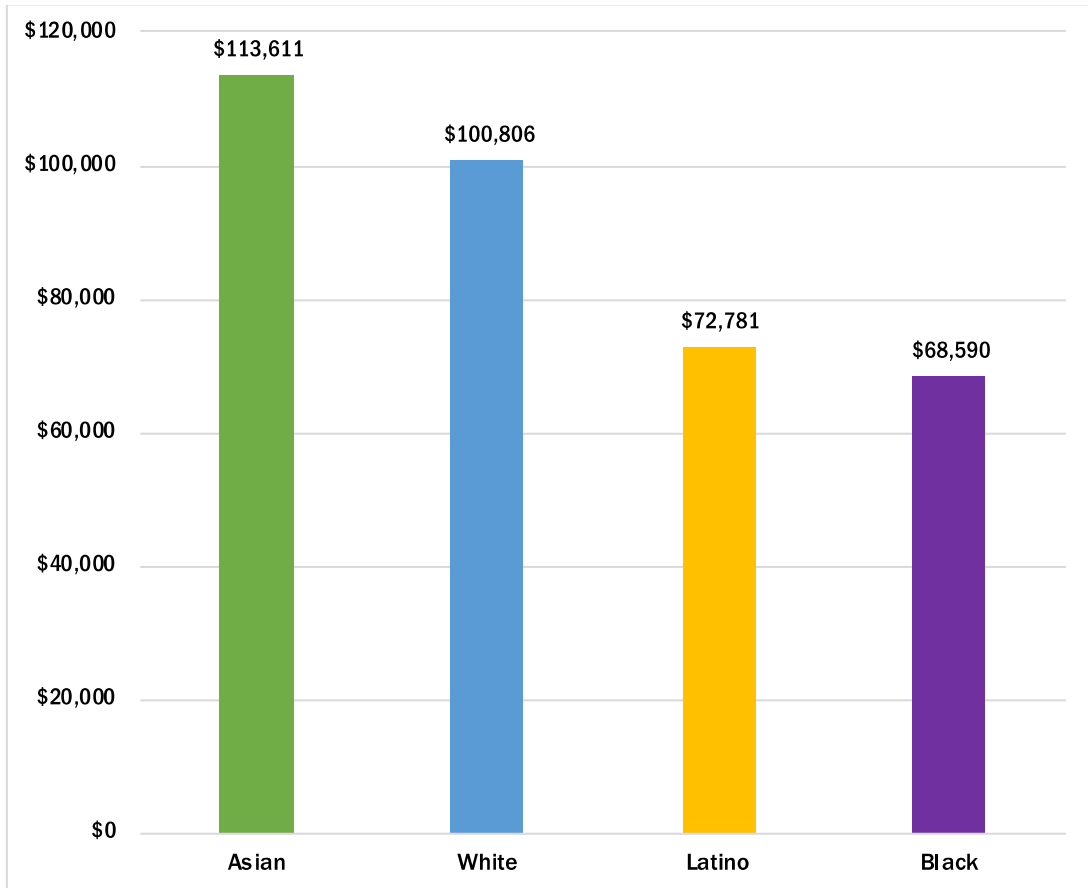
Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

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



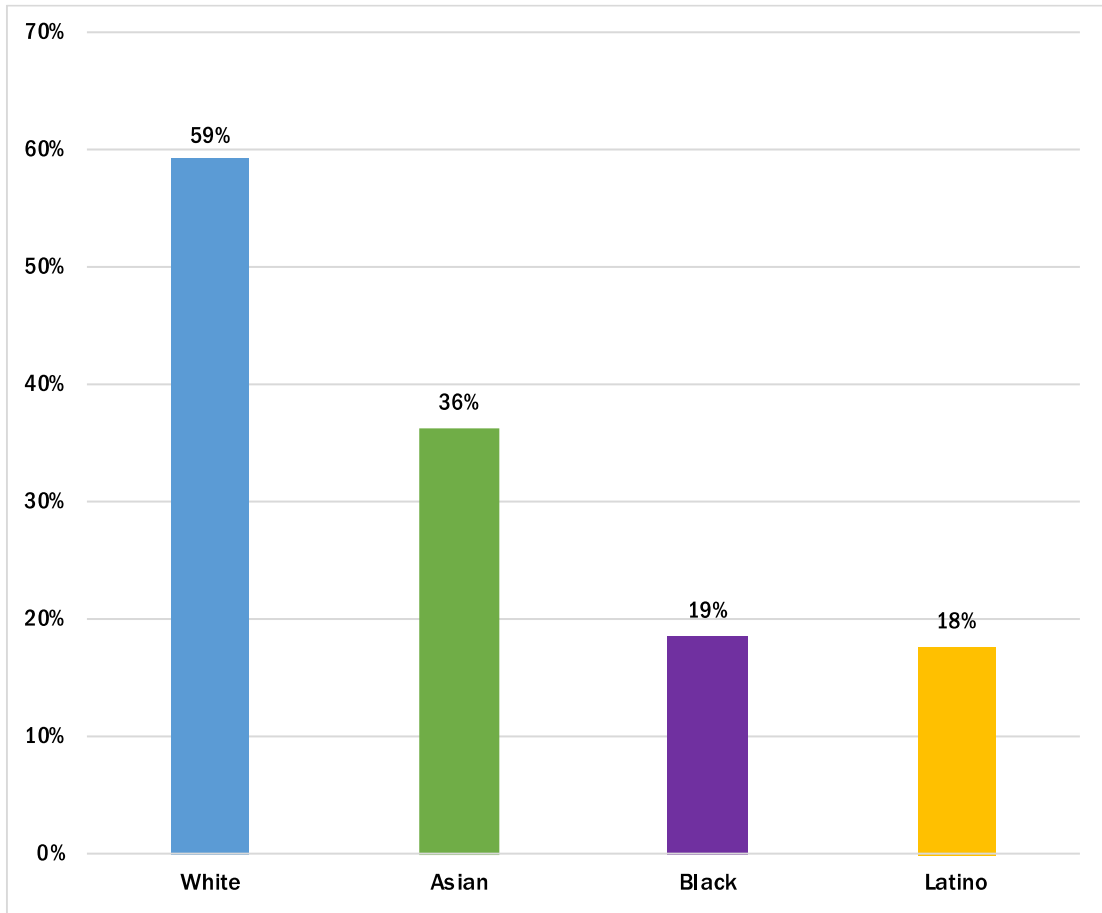
Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Waltham’s median income is \$95,851, which is greater than the statewide median income of \$84,385. Latinos in Figure 10 have the second lowest median income (\$72,781) of any ethno-racial group in the city. However, Latinos in Waltham are much more economically successful than Latinos in other parts of the Commonwealth, as the statewide Latino median household income is \$48,450.

HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL UNINSURANCE

The final measures of Latino participation in Waltham are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Waltham has a lower homeownership rate (50%) than the statewide rate (63%) as measured by occupied housing units. Latinos have an 18% homeownership rate, compared to 28% for Latinos statewide. The Latino homeownership rate in the city is lower than for Whites (59%), Asians (36%), and Blacks (19%).

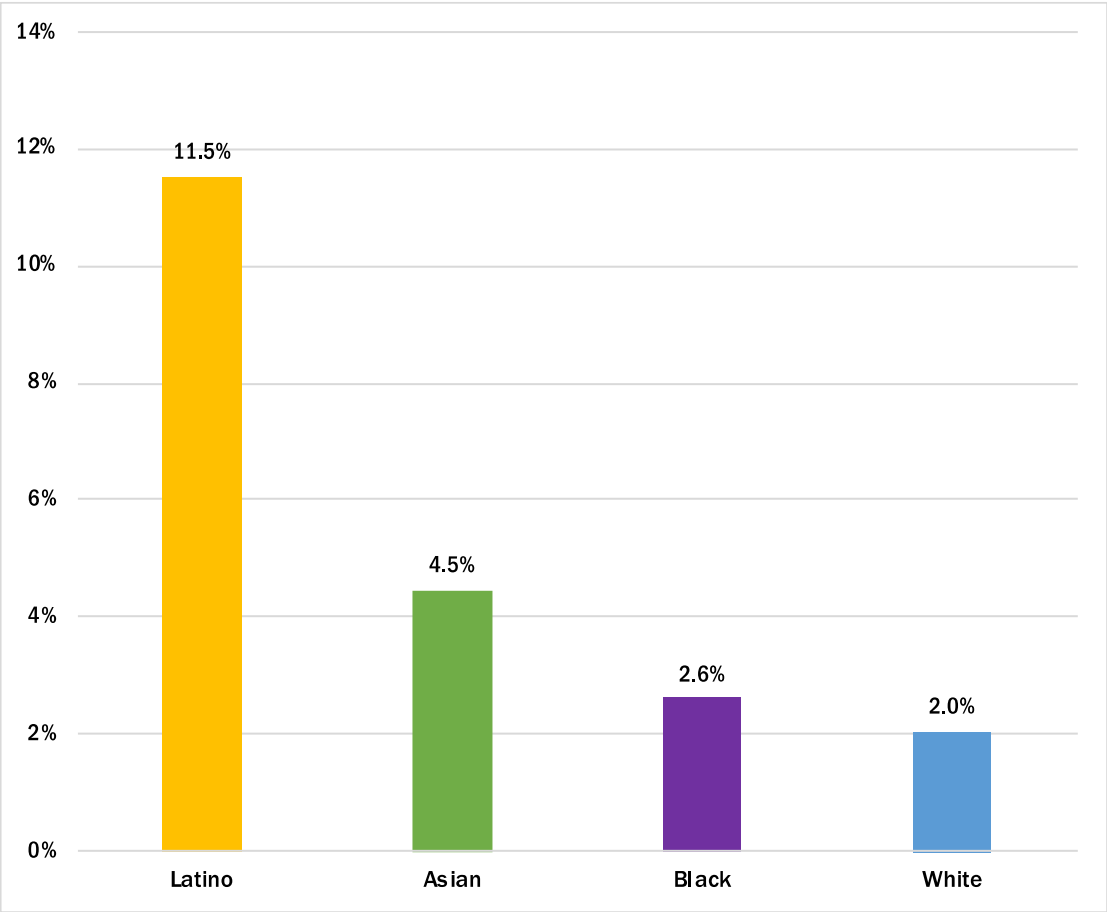
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Waltham’s overall rate of medical uninsurance (3.7%) is higher than for the state, 2.7%. However, Figure 12 shows that Waltham’s Latinos have by far the city’s highest rate, at 11.5%. The Latino statewide rate of medical uninsurance is 5.6%. Foreign-born residents have higher rates of uninsurance, and the higher proportion of foreign-born in Waltham could account for this increase.

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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