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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Lowell

Phillip Granberry

University of Massachusetts Boston, phillip.granberry@umb.edu

Trevor Mattos

University of Massachusetts Boston

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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas

Lowell

by Phillip Granberry, PhD, Trevor Mattos

July, 2017

**THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY**



Lowell

The Latino Population

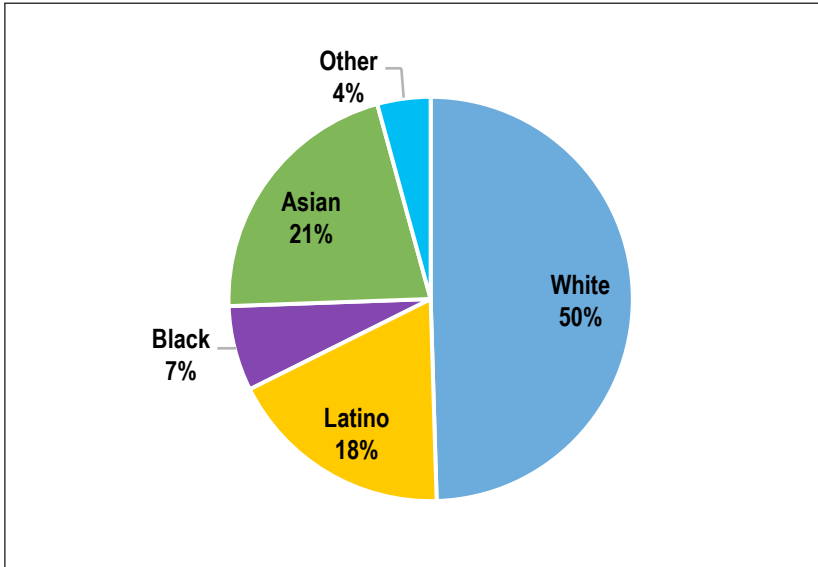
This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Lowell. It reflects a commitment by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy to provide periodic updates on the growing Latino population in Massachusetts.

The report on Lowell is part of a larger series that covers cities and towns in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a significant number of Latinos. Each report analyzes data from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. We obtained the data from the American Factfinder website in tabular form, and we transformed these data into figures presented in this report.

In this report, Latinos are compared to non-Latino whites, blacks, and Asians for selected characteristics. This report uses the designation of Latino for the universe of people who the Census identified as Hispanic or Latino. The US Census first identified individuals with an ethnicity category of Hispanic or Latino or not Hispanic or Latino. Then, the US Census allowed individuals to select a race. This analysis uses the term "Latino" to identify those that selected an ethnicity. The Census designation of black or African American alone is referenced as black. The category of Asian alone is referenced as Asian. A smaller other ethno-racial category is identified for the initial population estimate of Lowell and this consists those who identified with multiple race categories or some other race and the category of American Indian and Alaska Native alone. 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.

Lowell is a city of 109,349 residents, which includes a sizeable Latino community of 19,805, amounting to 18% of the city's population. (Across the state, Latino residents make up only 11% of the population.) Still, they are outnumbered in Lowell by non-Latino whites (50% of the residents) and Asians (21%). Blacks and "other" groups compose 7% and 4%, respectively (Figure 1).

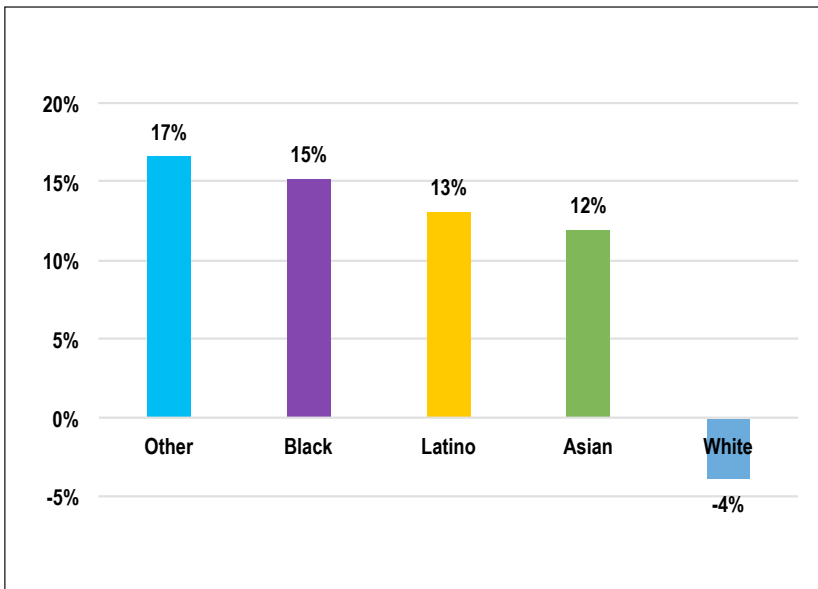
Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Lowell



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B03002

Population growth in Lowell has occurred across all major ethno-racial groups except non-Latino whites. Between 2010 and 2015, the “other” group grew faster (17%), followed by black, Latino, and Asian residents, who each grew between 10% and 15%. Across the state, Latinos grew by 21%, which is significantly more quickly than among Latinos in Lowell. Alternatively, the white resident population contracted by 4% during this period (Figure 2).

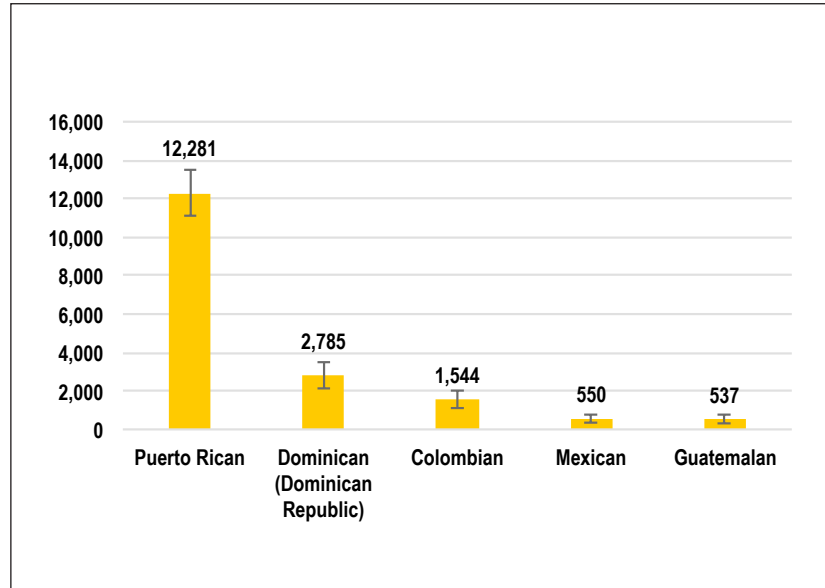
Figure 2: Population Change by Ethno-Racial Group from 2010 to 2015



Source: 2011–2015 & 2006–2010 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B03002

The largest Latino subgroup in Lowell is the Puerto Rican community, which includes 12,281 residents. Additionally, there are two other subgroups that number more than 1,000 residents – the 2,785 Dominicans (Dominican Republic), and the 1,544 Colombians. The fourth and fifth largest Latino subgroups are Mexicans, who number 550, and Guatemalans, who number 537 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ancestry of the Top Latino or Hispanic Subpopulations

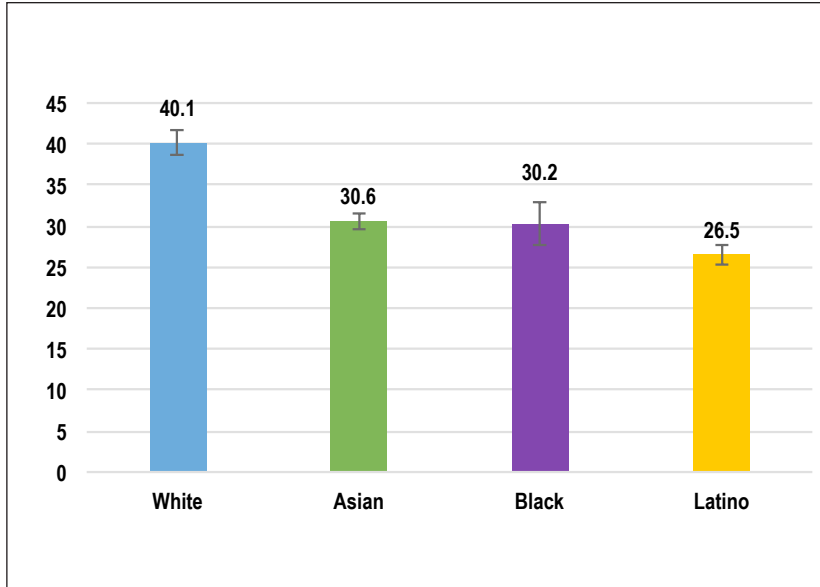


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year ACS Estimates – B03001

Median Age and Marital Status

Consistent with statewide trends, white residents in Lowell are quite a bit older than other groups. While the median age for white residents is 40.1 years, the median age for all other groups are about 30 years or younger. The Latino community of Lowell is the youngest major ethno-racial group in the city, with a median age of 26.5 years. This nearly matches the statewide median age for Latinos, which is 27 years.

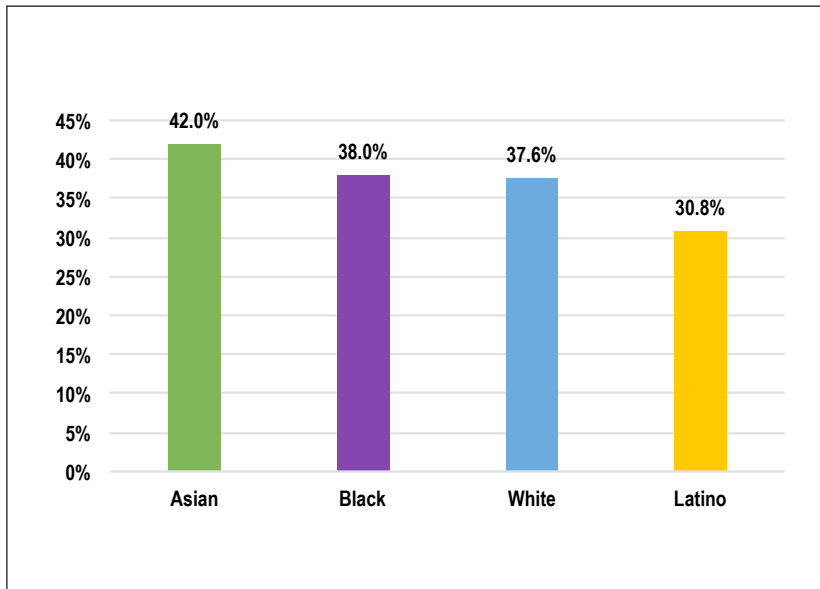
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year ACS Estimates – B01002

Marriage rates in Lowell are highest for Asians (42%) lowest for Latinos (30.8%). This does not look very different from the statewide marriage rate for Latinos, which is 32%. For both blacks and whites in Lowell, the marriage rate is about 38% (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group

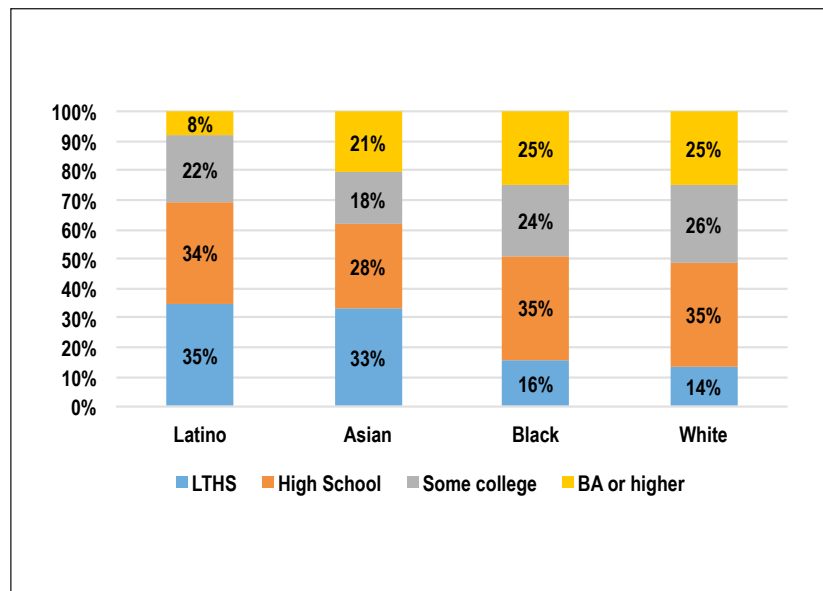


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B12002

Education

As in many similar post-industrial cities throughout Massachusetts, the supply of human capital poses a serious challenge to municipal leadership, community development, and industrial recruitment. In Lowell, a third of both Latino and Asian residents have not completed high school. Comparatively, the density of residents who failed to complete high school in black and white communities is about 15%, or half of what it is for Latinos and Asians. At the top of the educational attainment distribution, we observe that Latino residents of Lowell have the lowest proportion of degree holders, at 8%. This compares to higher educational attainment rates above 20% for all other major ethno-racial groups (Figure 6). At the state level, 17% of Latinos hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group (Adults 25 Years and Older)

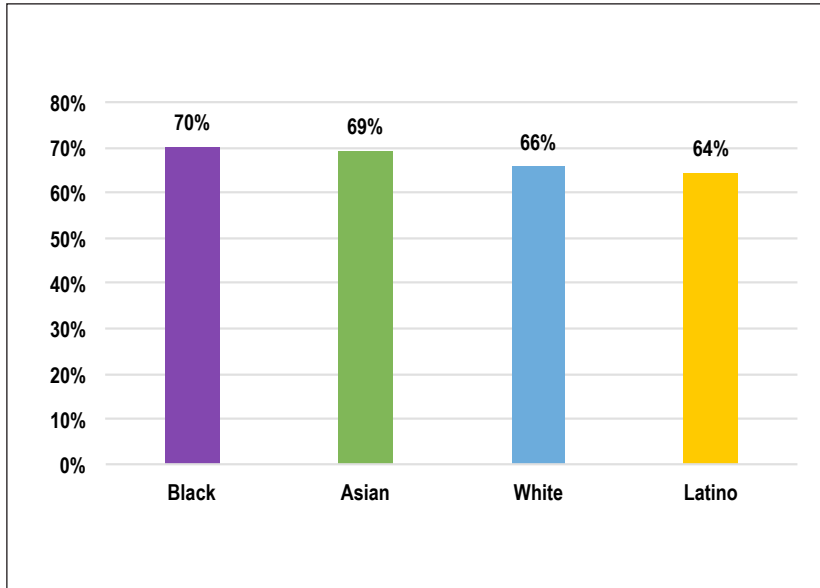


Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C15002

Labor Force Participation

Variation in labor force participation rates is not extreme, but nevertheless is an important indicator to consider. In Lowell, we see that black and Asian residents have the highest participation rates, at 70% and 69%, respectively. The participation rates for white and Latino residents are fairly comparable, at about 65%. Across the state, 67% of working age Latinos participate in the labor market.

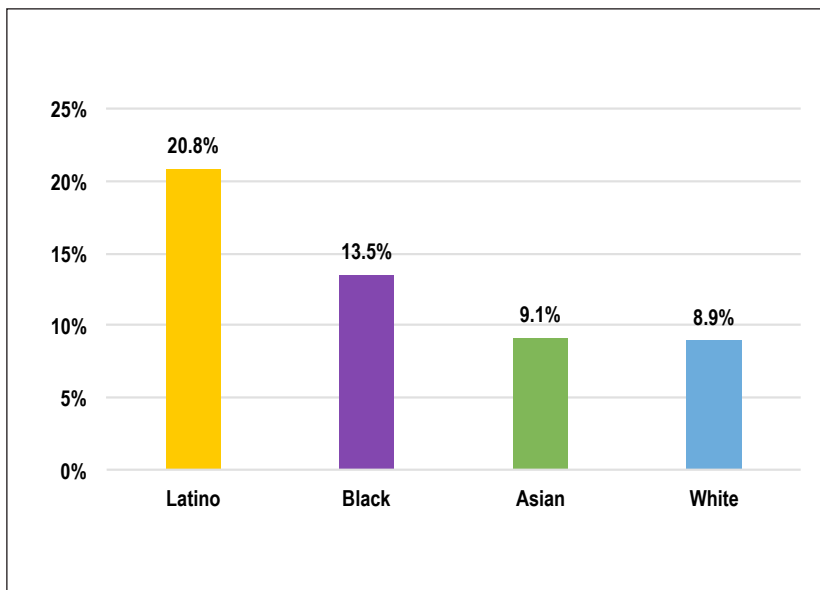
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation among Individuals 16 years and Older by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C23002

Unemployment in Lowell is a particularly acute challenge facing the Latino community, where 20.8% of those seeking work cannot find it. Statewide, 12% of Latinos are unemployed, and even this is roughly double the rate which is considered full employment. Given the large differences in unemployment rates across major ethno-racial groups in Lowell, this should be an area of further study and corresponding public policy or community development interventions. Black residents of Lowell have the second highest unemployment rate, at 13.5%, which is also quite high. Asian and white residents have nearly identical unemployment rates, around 9% (Figure 8).

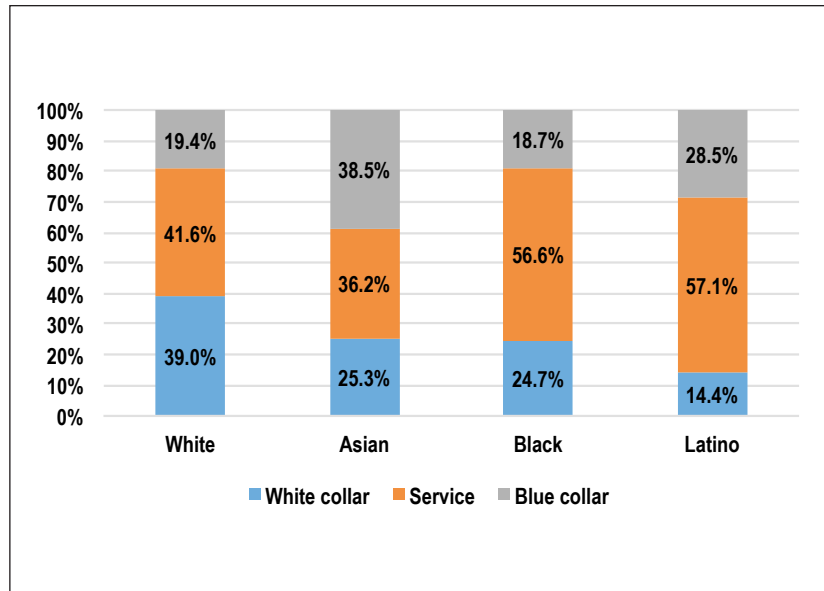
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16+)



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C2300

In Lowell, white workers are more likely than others to fill white collar positions. More than a third of whites currently work in white collar positions, compared to less than 15% of Latino workers in comparable roles. This contrasts with the state-wide proportion of Latino workers in white collar jobs, which is 23%. Roughly a quarter of both blacks and Asians in Lowell fill white collar jobs. Alternatively, we observe that more than half of black and Latino workers are in the service sector. Finally, blue collar workers are most concentrated in the Asian community (Figure 9).

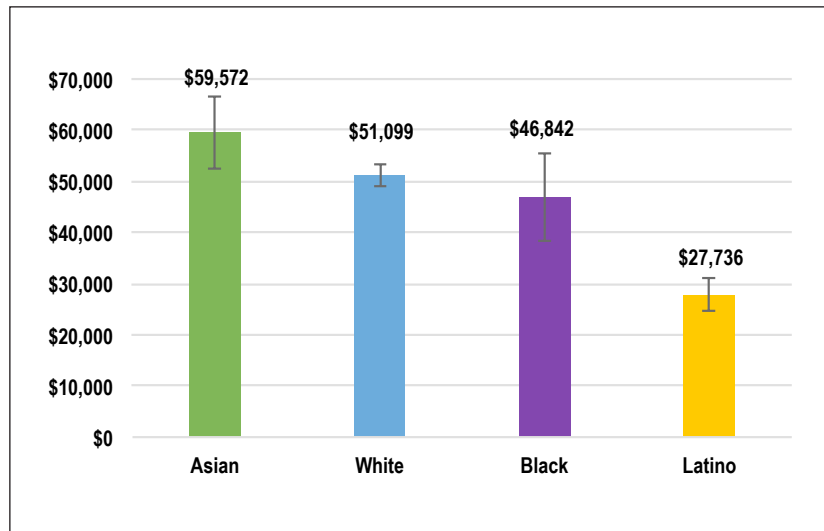
Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C24010

Earnings

Figure 10: Median Earnings by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



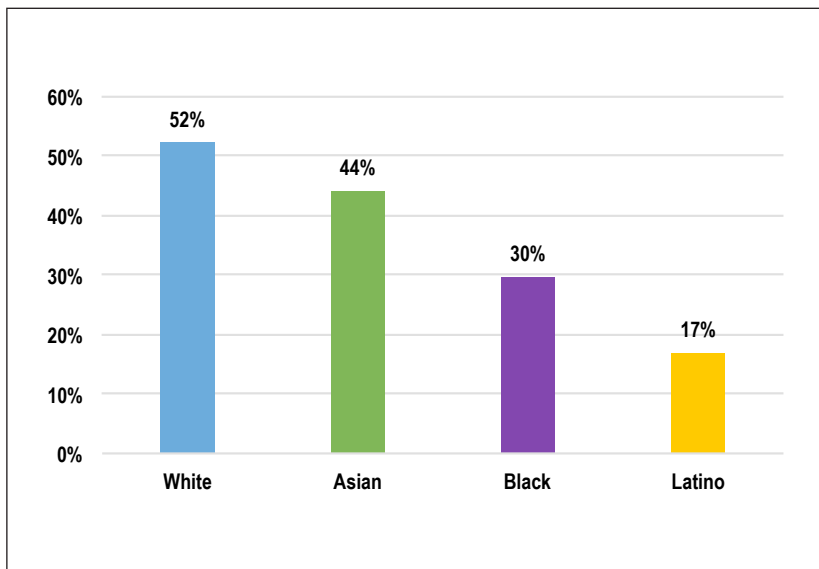
Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B19013

In the city of Lowell, median household income is more than \$20,000 less than it is across the Commonwealth. That is, household income in Lowell is \$48,002, while throughout the state it is measured at \$68,563. Within Lowell, Asian households have the highest income, \$59,572, and Latino households have the lowest income, \$27,736 – a difference of more than \$30,000. In the middle of the distribution, white households take home just over \$50,000, and black household income is approaching \$47,000 per year. For Latinos statewide, the median household income is \$36,171, indicating that this group fares better, on average, across the state, than in Lowell.

Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

Homeownership in Lowell varies quite a bit across groups. White residents have the highest homeownership rate, at 52%, while Latinos have the lowest ownership rate, at 17%. This rate for Latinos is also lower than the statewide Latino ownership rate of 24%. Asian residents of Lowell have the second highest homeownership rate, 44%, while black residents have the second lowest rate, 30% (Figure 11).

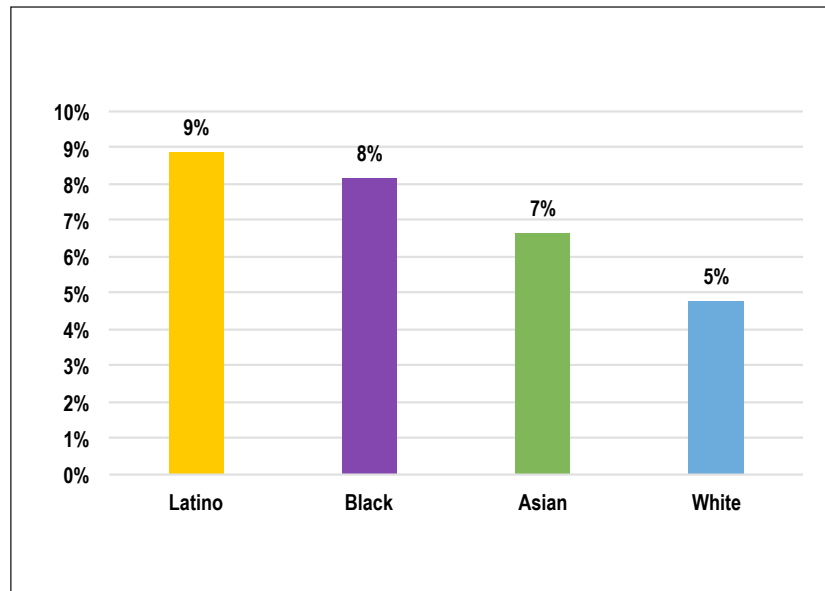
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B25003

Health insurance coverage in Lowell varies across groups, though not to the degree that other indicators do in Lowell. The uninsured are most concentrated in the Latino community, with an uninsured rate of 9%. This is much higher than the Latino uninsurance rate statewide, which is 3.6%. The lowest uninsurance rate in Lowell is among white residents (5%). Black residents' uninsurance rate is 8%, while that of Asian residents is 7% (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C27001

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.