

imagine

all the
people

Cape Verdeans

CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor

2016

Cape Verdeans in Boston

“*imagine all the people*” is a series of publications produced by the Boston Redevelopment Authority for the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Advancement. The series provides a comprehensive profile of Boston’s diverse immigrant communities and their numerous contributions to the city’s social, cultural and economic landscape. It is part of an ongoing effort to celebrate immigrants and gain insight into how they shape our city.



John Barros, son of Cape Verdean immigrants, is Boston Chief of Economic Development, Photo: Jeremiah Robinson. Below: Cape Verdean group for cancer awareness and support.

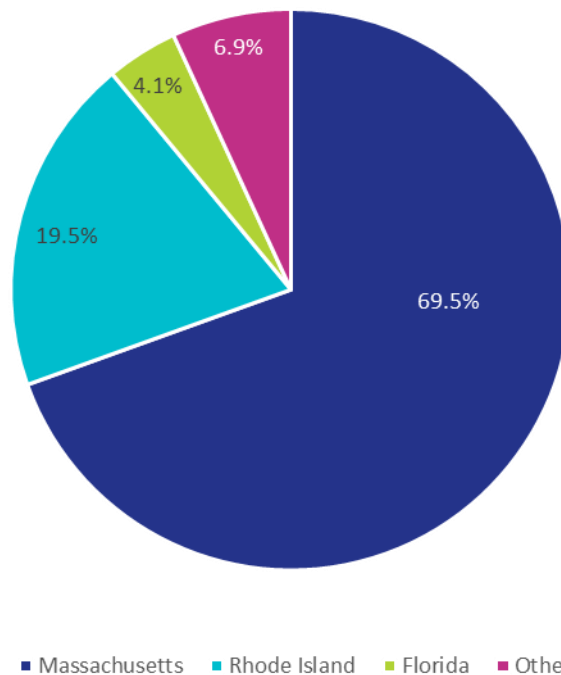


Introduction

Cape Verde is an archipelago of nine islands off the coast of West Africa. From their settlement by Portuguese sailors in the late 15th century until 1975, the islands were a Portuguese colony. Large-scale migration to Massachusetts and Rhode Island started in the 1800s, when Cape Verdeans migrated to New Bedford to work in the whaling industry. Cape Verdeans remained in the region and worked in the cranberry industry after the decline in whaling. The 1924 Nations of Origins Act restricted new Cape Verdean migration to Massachusetts, but the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act reduced this restriction, and Cape Verdean migration to Massachusetts increased. By 1975 when Cape Verde gained its independence, Cape Verdean migration to Boston started to grow.¹

Estimates from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) show that 37,145 foreign-born individuals from Cape Verde reside in the United States, which is a leading destination for Cape Verdean emigration along with Portugal. Other primary destinations include France, the Netherlands, Angola and Senegal.² Since the 19th century migration linked to the whaling industry, the majority of Cape Verdeans in the United States have lived in Massachusetts. In 2014, 25,013 Cape Verdeans lived in Massachusetts. Similar shares of foreign-born Cape Verdeans have arrived in the United States after 2000 (43 percent) compared to all foreign born (43 percent).

Share of Foreign-Born Cape Verdean Population by State



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis



Photo: CVC Unido

*1 in 5
Cape Verdeans in
the U.S. live in
Boston.*

According to the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS), 7,826 Cape Verdeans reside in Boston.³ Cape Verde is the seventh largest country of origin for Boston's foreign-born population. Overall, Cape Verdeans in Boston constitute 4.4 percent of the city's total foreign-born residents.⁴ Dominicans and Chinese comprise the largest share of the city's foreign-born population, followed by Haitians, Salvadorans, Vietnamese and Jamaicans.

Boston's foreign-born Cape Verdeans live primarily in the neighborhoods of Dorchester (68 percent), Roxbury (15 percent), and Mattapan (4 percent). Other neighborhoods with smaller shares are East Boston, the South End, and South Boston.⁵

The U.S. Census Bureau's ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) allows for the detailed socio-economic analysis of specific populations. For smaller populations like foreign-born Cape Verdeans in Boston, a 5-year sample is required to limit variation due to sampling error. The analysis that follows uses 2009-2013 ACS PUMS data.

Cape Verdean migration has historically been disproportionately female, and 63 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans in Boston are female. More than 62 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans in Boston are either married (41 percent) or divorced/separated (16 percent) or widowed (5 percent). Approximately 46 percent of all foreign-born Cape Verdeans are between the ages of 35-64, and the median age of the population is 41 years. The majority of foreign-born Cape Verdeans (56 percent) are naturalized U.S. citizens.

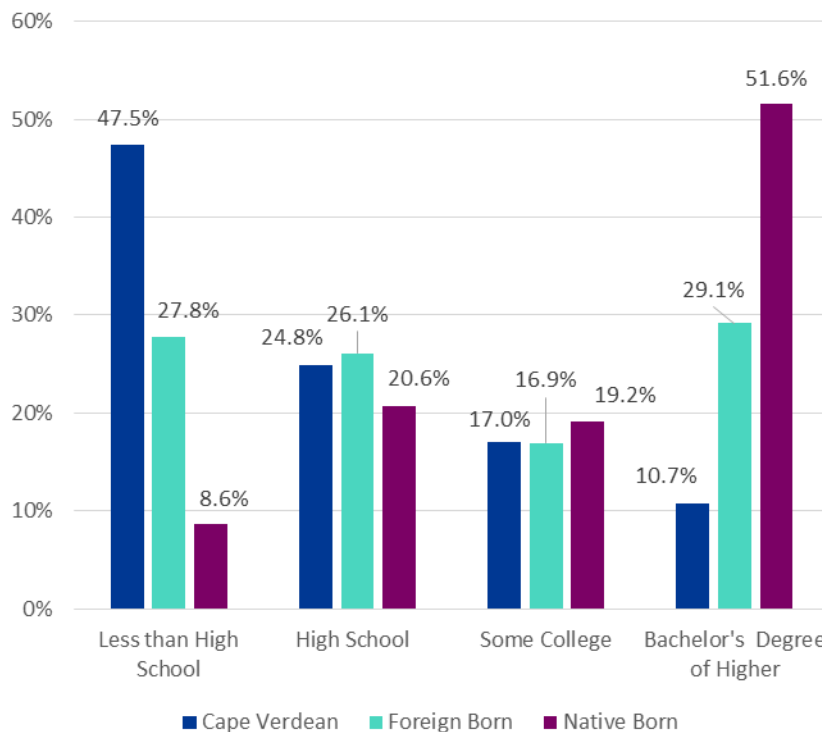
Educational Attainment

Approximately 48 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans in Boston ages 25 years or older have not completed high school. This share is higher than all foreign-born residents (28 percent) and over five times the share for the native-born population (9 percent). Approximately 25 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans have a high school diploma as their highest educational attainment.

While 28 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans 25 years or older have attended college, only 11 percent have completed at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 29 percent of the foreign-born population, and 52 percent of the native born. With respect to advanced degrees, only 2 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans living in Boston hold a graduate or professional degree, compared with 14 percent of the foreign-born and 22 percent of the native born.

Almost half of adult foreign-born Cape Verdeans have not completed high school.

Educational Attainment of Boston Residents 25 Years and Older

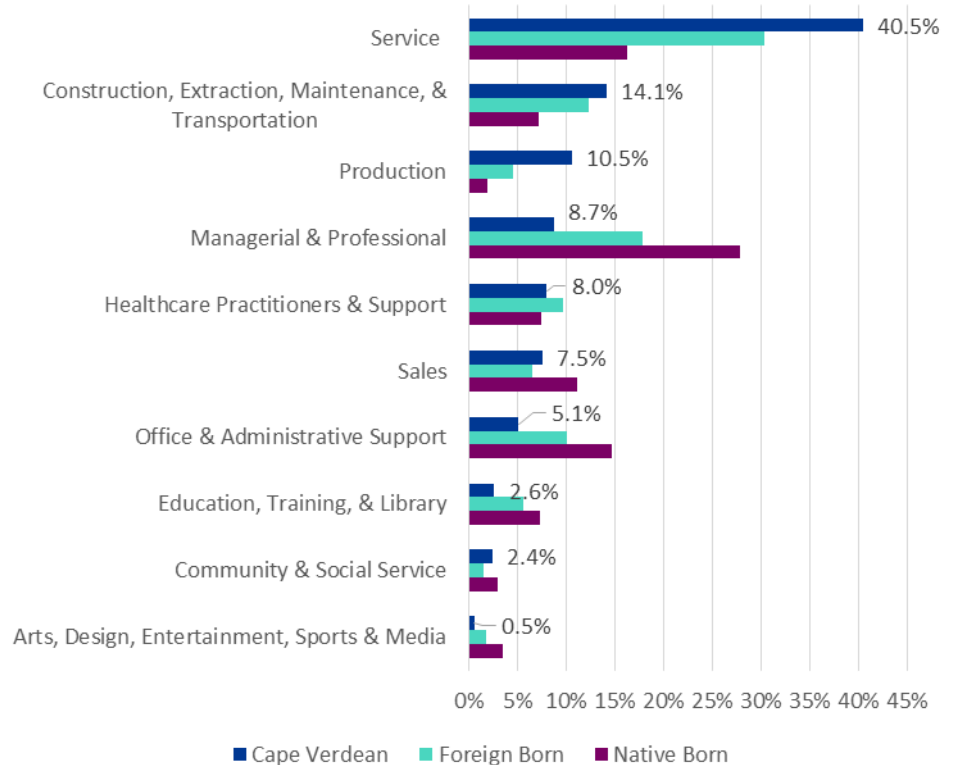


U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division Analysis

41 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans in the workforce are employed in service occupations.⁶ The next largest occupational categories are construction, extraction, maintenance, and transportation (14 percent) and production (11 percent).

Foreign-born Cape Verdeans are over-represented in service occupations even when compared to all foreign born in Boston. Within service occupations, 25 percent work in building and grounds, cleaning and maintenance occupations and 10 percent of all foreign-born Cape Verdeans work in food preparation. Conversely, foreign-born Cape Verdeans are significantly under-represented in managerial and professional occupations: 9 percent for Cape Verdeans compared with 18 percent for the total foreign-born population and 28 percent for the native born.

Occupations by Nativity



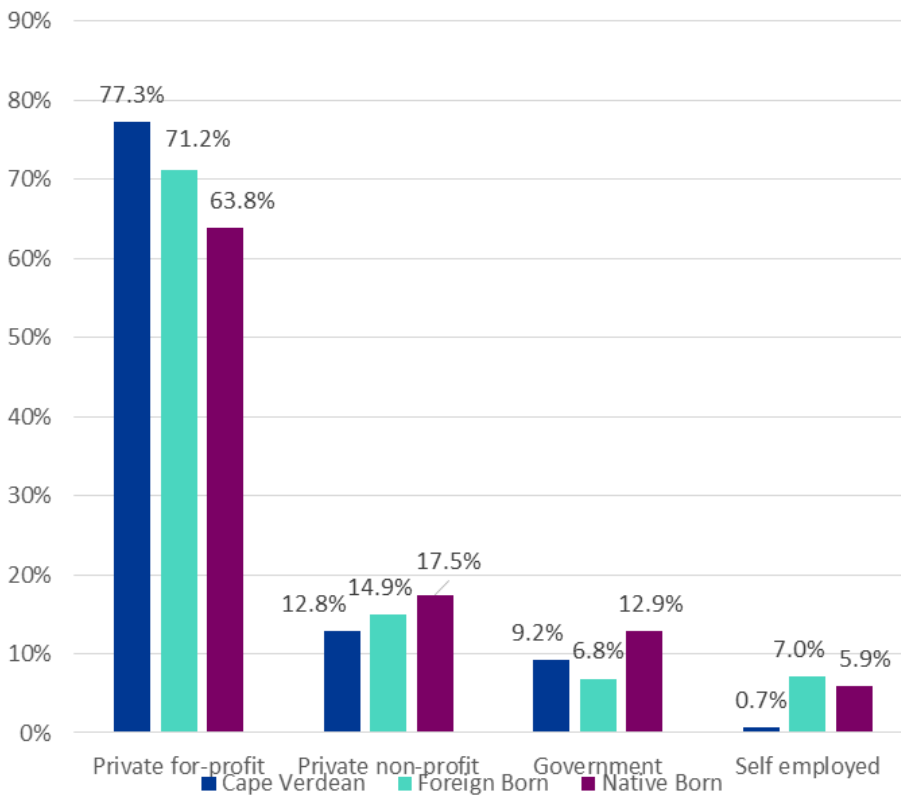
U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division Analysis

Type of Employment

In total, 72 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans participate in the labor force compared with 68 percent of the total foreign-born population and 69 percent of the native-born population.⁷ Excluding unpaid family members, Cape Verdeans are less likely to be self-employed compared to other populations in Boston —only 0.7 percent—compared to 7 percent for the total foreign-born population and 5.9 percent for the native born.⁸ An estimated 77 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans work for private, for-profit companies. An additional 13 percent work for private, nonprofit organizations, and 9 percent are employed in the public sector (local, state and federal government).

A greater share of Cape Verdeans are employed in private, for-profit organizations than overall foreign-born and native-born populations.

Employment Type by Type of Employer



U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division

Economic Impact

Foreign-born Cape Verdeans contribute to the local economy through their labor and consumer spending. The total value of their economic contributions were estimated using a Regional Economic Model (REMI) that calculated the value of goods and services consumed on each dollar spent. Foreign-born Cape Verdeans in Boston generated total expenditures of \$137 million in 2014.⁹ These annual expenditures contributed over \$82 million to the regional product and generated \$4.5 million in state and local taxes.¹⁰ In total, these expenditures supported 590 jobs in the Massachusetts economy.¹¹



Cape Verdean restaurant in Dorchester, Phillip Granberry



Cape Verdean Community (CVC) Unido

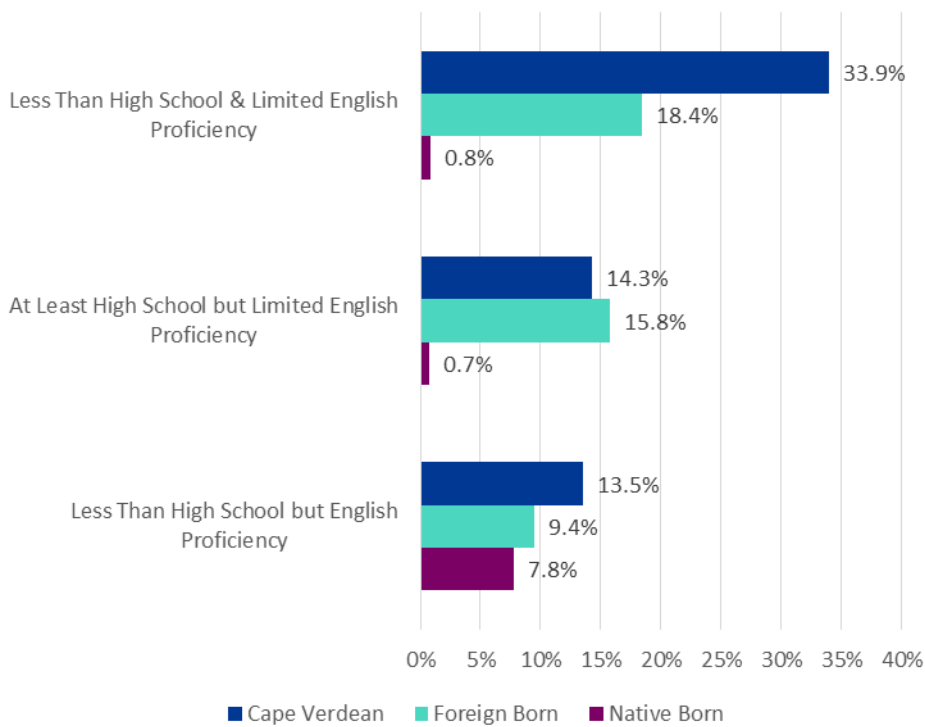
Standard of Living

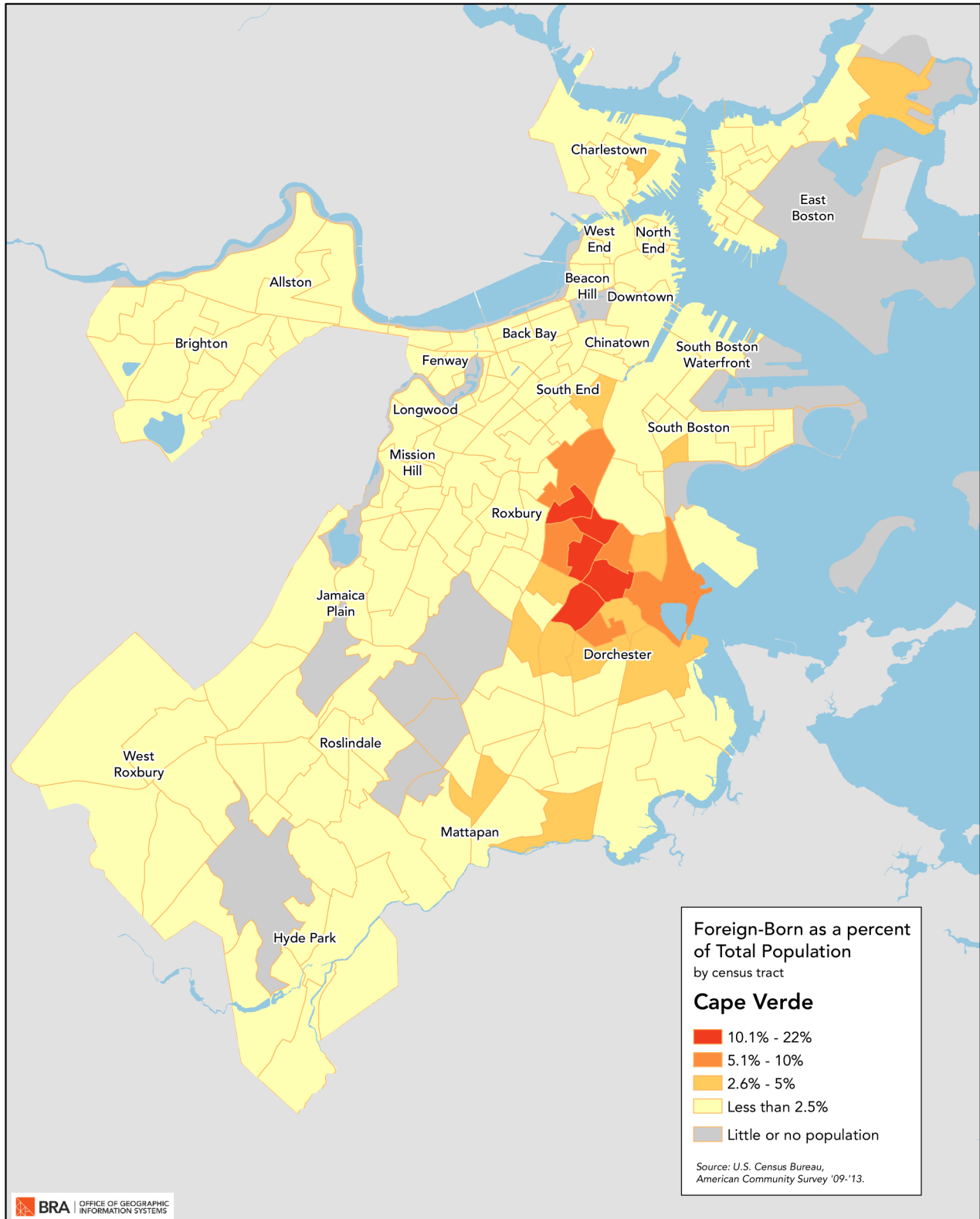
Approximately 20 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans have achieved a middle class standard of living, compared with 45 percent of Boston's native-born population, and 29 percent of all foreign-born. A family income four times the poverty line is used as a proxy for a middle-class standard of living. The actual income needed to achieve this standard depends on the size and composition of the family. For a two-person family in 2014, a middle class income would be at least \$62,920.¹² In contrast, 18 percent of foreign-born Cape Verdeans live below the federal poverty level compared to 20 percent for the city's total population.

Low educational attainment and lack of English proficiency may contribute to Cape Verdeans' low standard of living. While 18 percent of Boston's adult foreign-born population lack a high school diploma and have limited English proficiency, the share among Cape Verdean-born adults is 34 percent.¹³

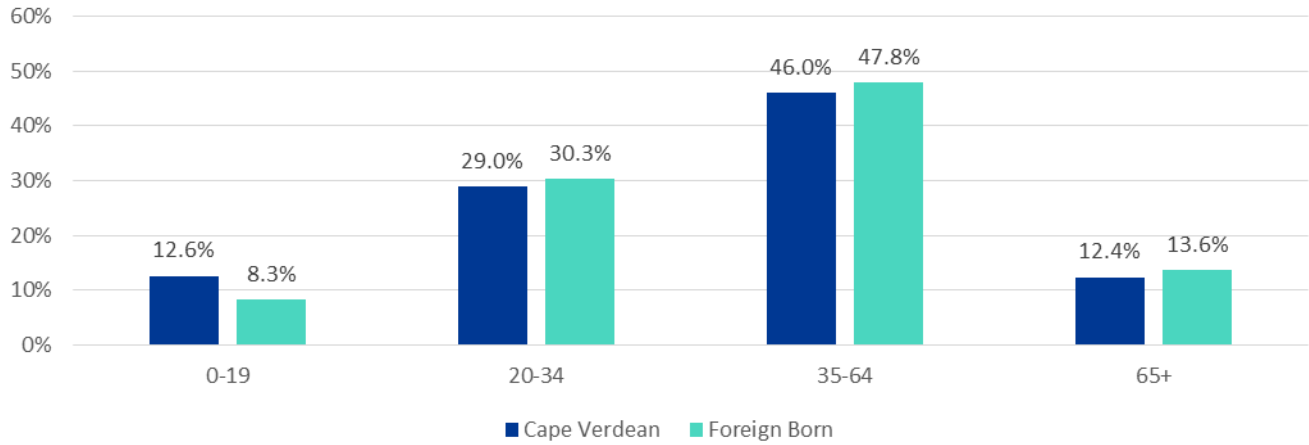
Over half of adult Cape Verdeans lack either a high school diploma or English proficiency.

Educational Attainment and English Proficiency Population age 25 and older

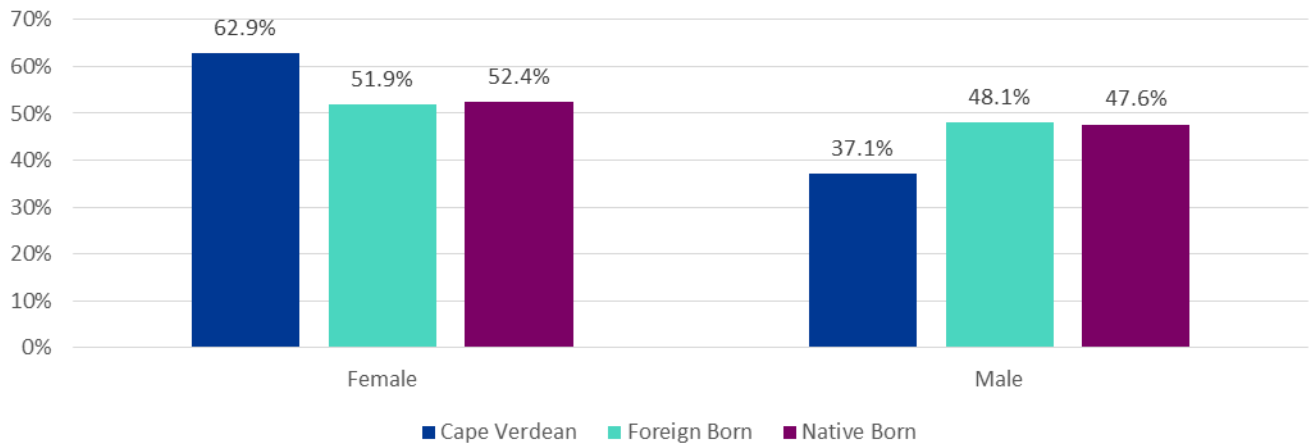




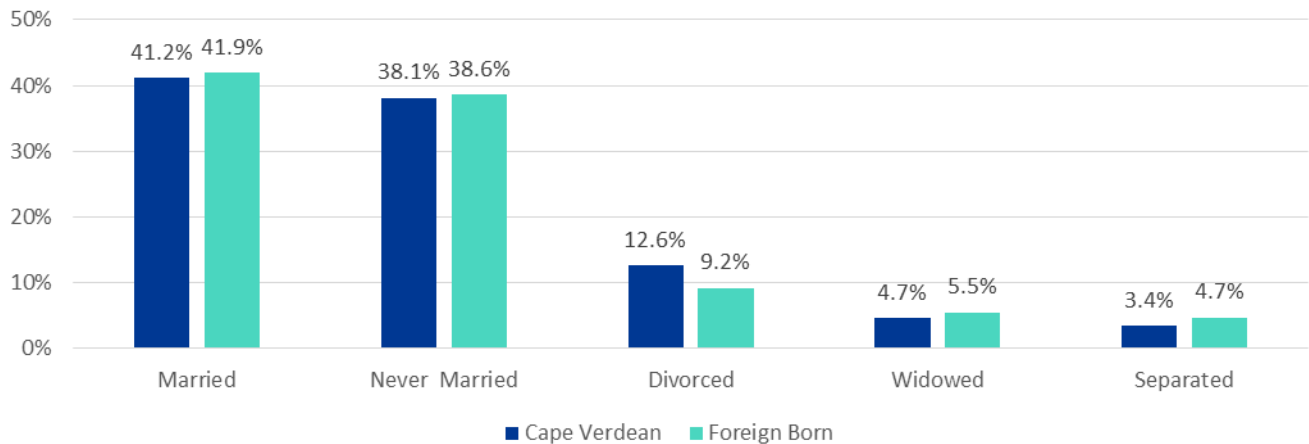
Age



Gender

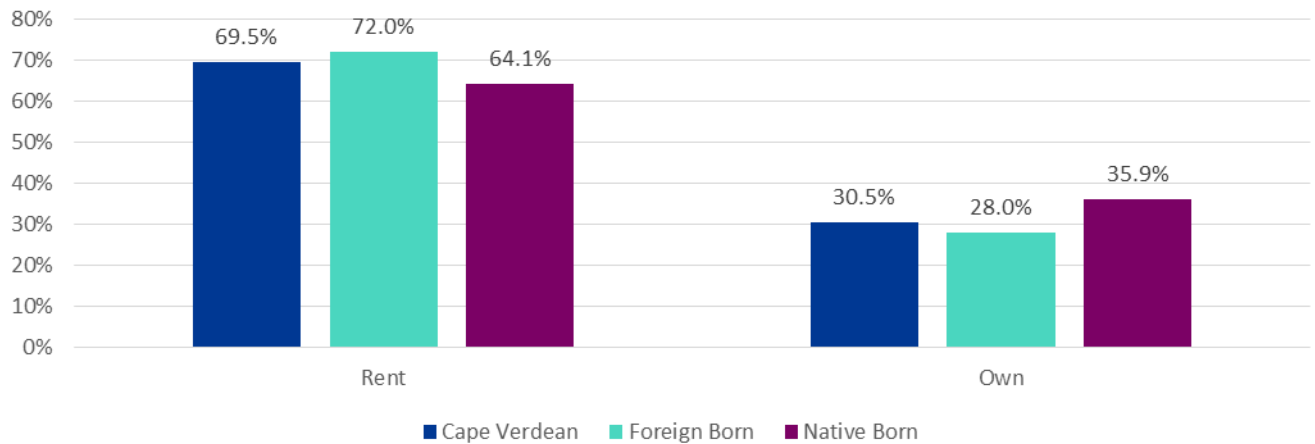


Marital Status

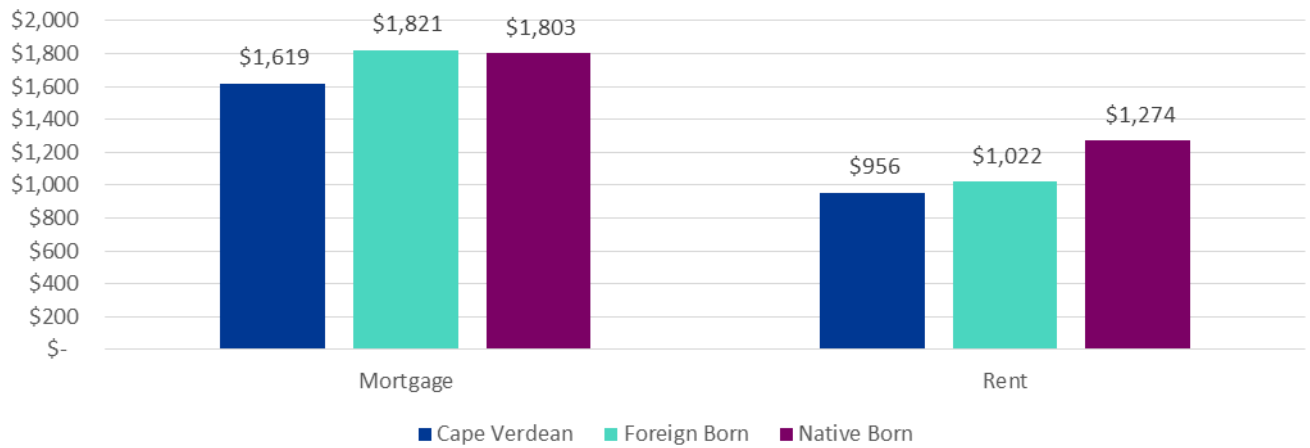


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division Analysis

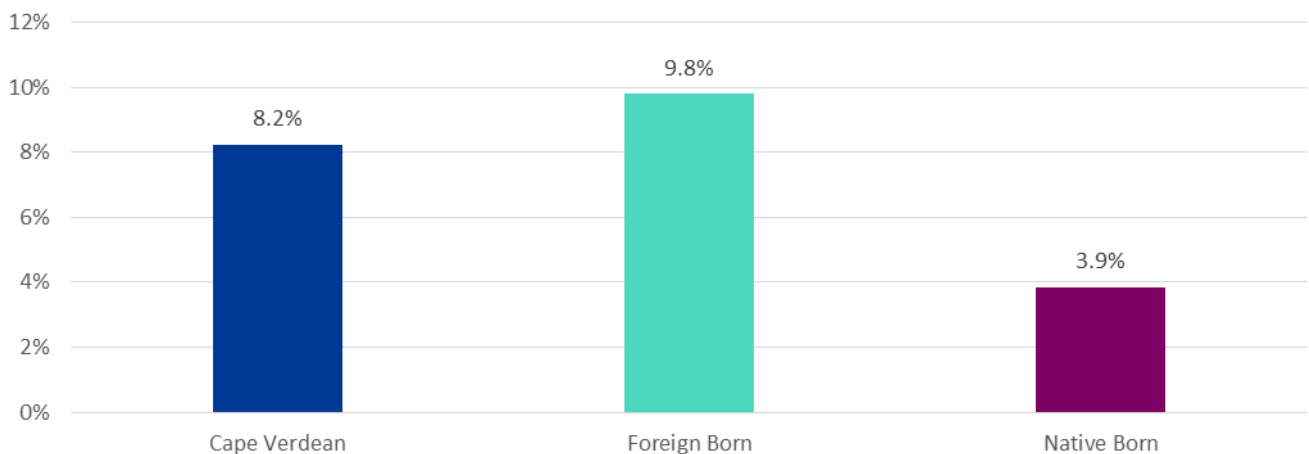
Housing Tenure*



Housing Costs*



Medical Uninsurance



*Housing data are based on householder's nativity.

Children of Cape Verdean Origin

The 2009-2013 American Community Survey estimates 3,504 children in Boston are of Cape Verdean origin.¹⁴ Children of Cape Verdean origin in Boston are predominately native born – 81 percent. However, 72 percent of Cape Verdean children lived with foreign-born parent(s). In comparison, 40 percent of all Boston’s children lived with foreign-born parent(s).

Of Cape Verdean children ages 5 to 17 with only foreign-born parent(s), about 19 percent speak only English at home, compared to 22 percent for all children with foreign-born parent(s). However, Cape Verdean children do not appear to be learning English as well as other foreign-born children; 66 percent of Cape Verdean children with foreign-born parent(s) speak English very well. This percentage is less than for all children with foreign-born parent(s), of whom 76 percent speak English very well.

Cape Verdean children with foreign-born parent(s) are more likely to live poverty. Approximately, 34 percent of Cape Verdean children with foreign-born parent(s) compared to 29 percent of all children in Boston are below the federal poverty level in 2014 (\$23,850 for a 4-person household).



CVC Unido photo

Conclusion

Massachusetts is the leading destination of Cape Verdeans who migrate to the United States. This small Atlantic archipelago nation is the source of the sixth largest foreign-born population in Boston. Foreign-born Cape Verdeans actively contribute to the economy, culture, and civic life of their new home. Even though foreign-born Cape Verdeans have lower levels of educational attainment, they have high labor force participation. However, many of these jobs are in low-wage food preparation or cleaning and maintenance occupations. Even with occupational segregation, Cape Verdeans are slightly less likely to live below the federal poverty level than others in the city.



Photo: CVC Unido

¹ Carling, Jørgen, Cape Verde: Towards the End of Emigration? Migration Policy Institute (2002).

² Migração em Cabo Verde: Perfil Nacional 2009. Estimates of Cape Verdean emigration vary widely--between 200,000 and 500,000—and thus so does their national distribution. The size of the migrant population varies, but both the United States and Portugal are considered leading destinations of Cape Verdean migration.

³ The ACS's American Fact Finder website reports that there are an estimated 7,826 foreign-born Cape Verdeans in Boston. However, ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data for Boston reports a lower estimate of 7,727. Both are population estimates, and contain a margin of error due to sampling technique. Lower survey response rates due to language or documentation issues may result in an undercount of the population. For more information on American Fact Finder please see: http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

⁴ 2014 American Community Survey, PUMS data, BRA Research Analysis (2016).

⁵ 2009-2013 American Community Survey, American Factfinder, BRA Research Analysis (2016).

⁶ This analysis organizes occupations into 12 categories. Managerial and Professional contains categories of Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations, Business Operations Specialists, Financial Specialists, Computer and Mathematical Occupations, Architecture and Engineering Occupations, Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations, and Legal Occupations. Healthcare Practitioners & Support contains the categories of Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations and Healthcare Support Occupations. Service Occupations contains the categories of Protective Service Occupations, Food Preparation and Serving Occupations, Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations, and Personal Care and Service Occupations. Construction, Extraction, Maintenance, and Transportation contains the categories of Construction and Extraction Occupations, Extraction Workers, Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations. Other categories consisting of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry, Military Specific, and long-term unemployed are excluded.

⁷ Labor force participation: Defined as the share of the working-age population that is either currently employed or seeking work. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016.

⁸ There is no agreement among researchers regarding the reasons for variations in the self-employment rates among different immigrant groups. Reasons cited include human and financial capital of individual immigrants, high rates of solidarity and social capital in some immigrant communities, as well as the opportunity structure encountered by immigrant entrepreneurs.

End Notes

⁹ BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹⁰ BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹¹ BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹² Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically. U.S. Census Bureau (2016).

¹³ Limited English Proficiency includes foreign-born adults who do not speak English well or at all.

¹⁴ The U.S. Census defines origin as "the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States.



In November 2014, Officer John Teixeira became the BPD's 1st Cape Verdean-born officer to attain the rank of sergeant — BPD photographer Marc Vaillancourt



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Martin J. Walsh, Mayor



MAYOR'S OFFICE
FOR IMMIGRANT
ADVANCEMENT

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston



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