

imagine
all the
people

Haitians

CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor

2016

Haitians 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.



Introduction

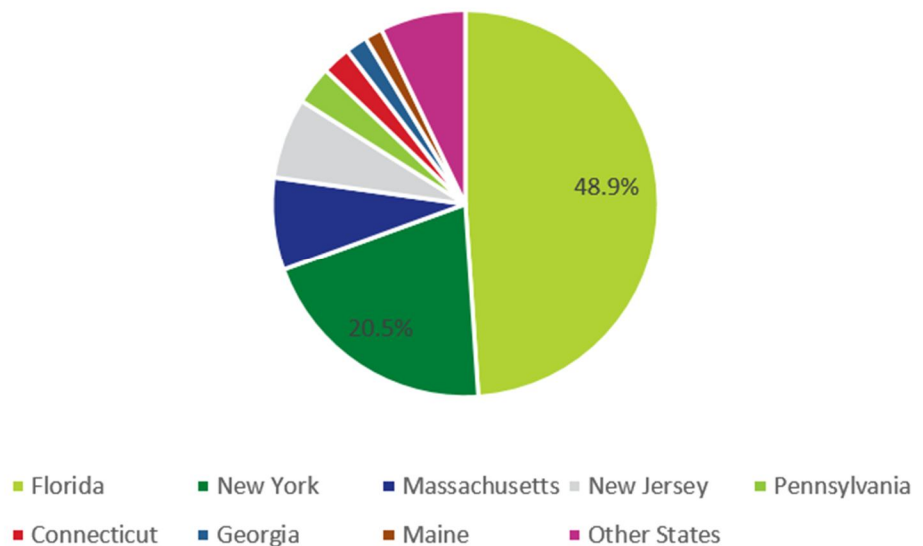
The Haitian community in Massachusetts goes back to the late 1950s and early 1960s when Haitians fleeing the dictatorial regime of François Duvalier (Papa Doc) migrated to Massachusetts. Haitian migration increased after the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship and the country became less stable.¹ The accompanying weakness in civil society only increased international migration. After a devastating earthquake with its epicenter near Port-au-Prince in January, 2010, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services granted Haitians Temporary Protected Status (TPS). TPS has been extended through July 22, 2017.²

Since the late 1990s, Haitians have become more visible in the political fabric of Massachusetts, organizing themselves in ad hoc committees that promote voter education and participation. As a result, two State Representatives and a State Senator of Haitian descent have been elected to the Massachusetts legislature since 2000, and more Haitians are actively pursuing elected office.

Population Share

Estimates from the 2014 American Community Survey³ (ACS) show that 628,003 foreign-born⁴ individuals from Haiti reside in the United States, which has been by and far the leading destination for Haitian emigrants. Other primary destinations include France, Canada, and Bahamas.⁵ Approximately half of all foreign-born Haitians in the United States reside in Florida.⁶ Massachusetts has the third largest Haitian population in the United States after Florida and New York with 8 percent of the U.S. foreign-born Haitian population. According to the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) 50,054 Haitians live in Massachusetts.⁷ Other popular states for Haitian migration include New Jersey and Pennsylvania.⁸

Share of Foreign-Born Haitian Population by State



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

Haitians in Boston

Haiti is the third largest country of origin among Boston's foreign-born population with an estimated 13,887 Haitians residing in the city in 2014.⁹ Overall, Haitians in Boston constitute 8 percent of the city's total foreign-born residents.¹⁰ The Dominican Republic and China are the only countries with larger foreign-born populations in Boston.

Boston's foreign-born Haitians, though scattered throughout the city, live primarily in the neighborhoods of Dorchester (30 percent), Hyde Park (23 percent), and Mattapan (20 percent). Other neighborhoods with smaller concentrations of Haitians are Roslindale, Roxbury and Jamaica Plain.¹¹

The U.S. Census Bureau's ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) allows for a detailed socio-economic analysis of specific populations. For smaller populations like foreign-born Haitians 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.

Haitian migration has historically been disproportionately female, and 54 percent of foreign-born Haitians in Boston are female. More than 59 percent of foreign-born Haitians in Boston are either married (39 percent) or divorced/separated (15 percent) or widowed (6 percent). Over 50 percent of all foreign-born Haitians are between the ages of 35-64, and the median age of the population is 43 years. The majority of foreign-born Haitians (52 percent) are not naturalized U.S. citizens. A smaller share of foreign-born Haitians have arrived in the United States after 2000 (38 percent) compared to all foreign-born residents (43 percent.)

Half of foreign-born Haitians in Boston are between the ages of 35 and 64.



Announcement of twice weekly non-stop flights from Boston to Port-au-Prince (Don Harney)

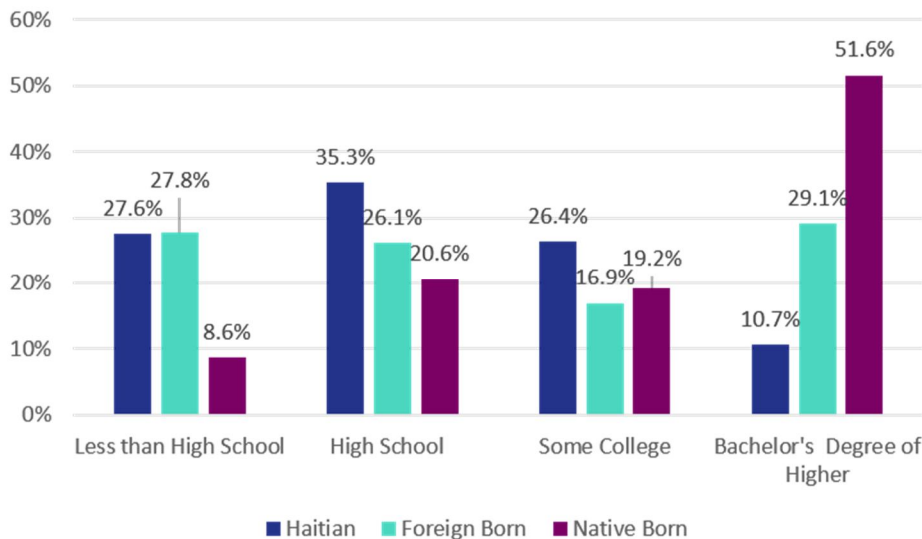
Educational Attainment

Approximately 28 percent of foreign-born Haitians in Boston ages 25 years or older have not completed high school. This share is similar all foreign-born residents but over three times the share for the native-born population (9 percent). Approximately 35 percent of foreign-born Haitians have a high school diploma as their highest educational attainment.

While 37 percent of foreign-born Haitians 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 Haitians living in Boston hold a graduate or professional degree, compared with 14 percent of all foreign born and 22 percent of the native born.

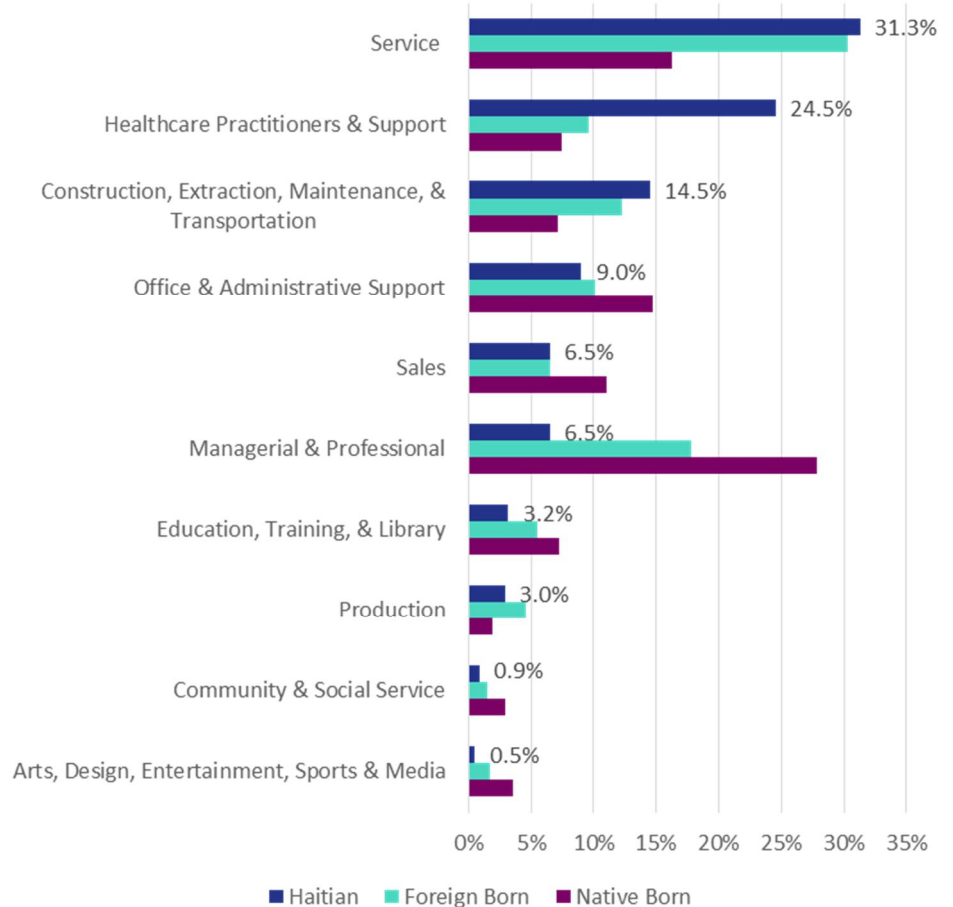
*35% of adult
Haitians completed
their education
with a high school
diploma.*

Educational Attainment of Boston Residents 25 Years and Older



Nearly one-third (31 percent) of foreign-born Haitians in the workforce are employed in service occupations.¹² The two next largest occupational categories are healthcare practitioners and support (25 percent) and construction, extraction, and maintenance (15 percent). Foreign-born Haitians are over-represented in service occupations when compared to all foreign born in Boston. Within service occupations, 10 percent of all foreign-born Haitians work in food preparation, 9 percent work in building and grounds, cleaning and maintenance occupations, and 8 percent work in personal care occupations. Conversely, foreign-born Haitians are significantly under-represented in managerial and professional occupations: 7 percent for Haitians compared with 18 percent for all foreign born and 28 percent for the native born.

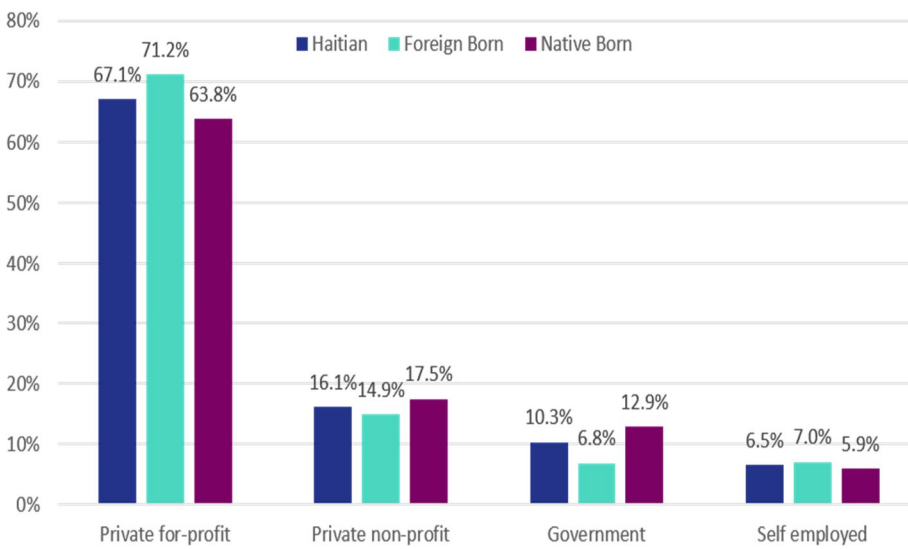
Occupations by Nativity



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

Compared to other foreign born in Boston, Haitian workers (excluding unpaid family workers) are slightly less likely to be self-employed--6.5 percent--compared to 7.1 percent for the total foreign-born population, but more likely than native-born population (5.9 percent).¹³ An estimated 67 percent of foreign-born Haitians work for private, for-profit companies. An additional 16 percent work for private, nonprofit organizations, and 10 percent are employed in the public sector (local, state and federal government).

Employment by Type of Employer



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

Collectively, Haitians contributed close to \$115 million to the regional economy in 2014.

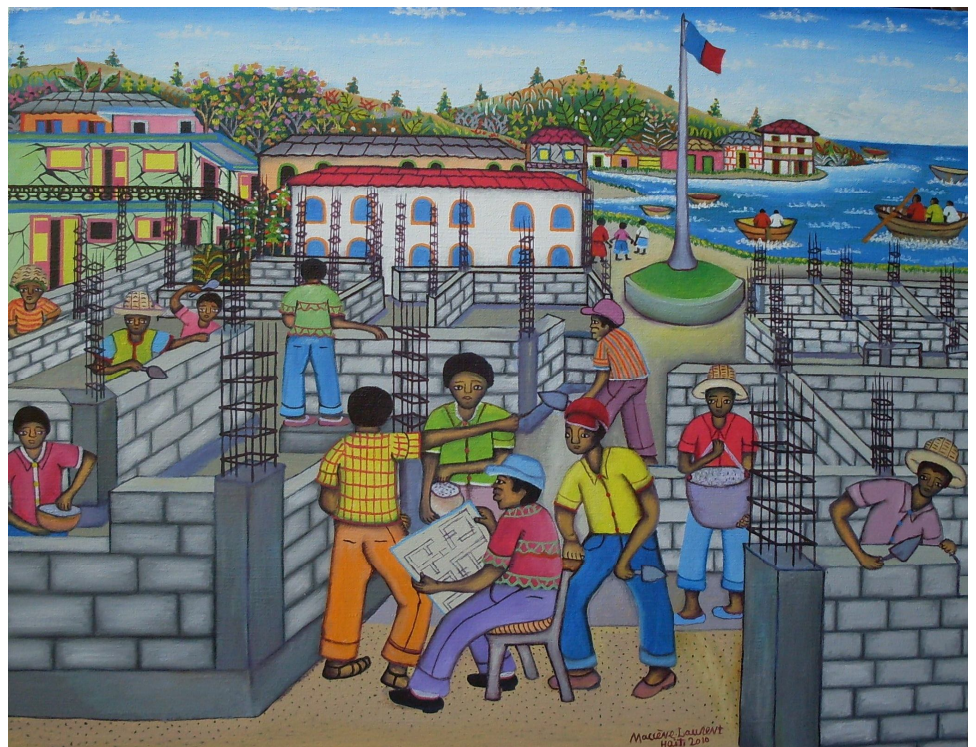


Haitian-American Unity Parade in Mattapan, Jeremiah Robinson / Mayor's Office

Economic Impact

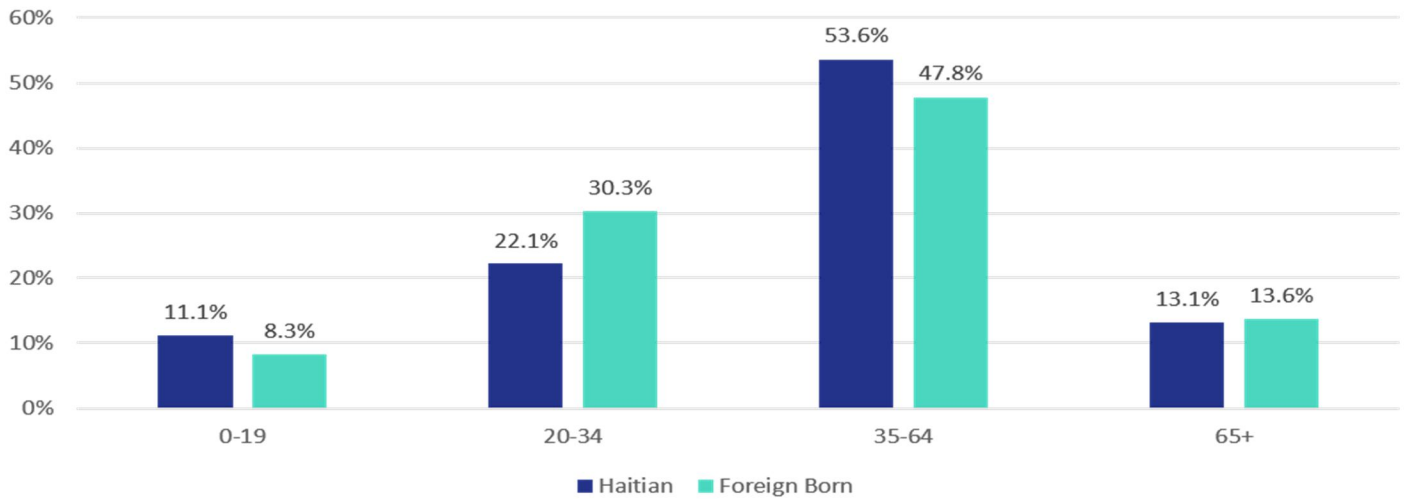
Foreign-born Haitians contribute to the local economy through their labor and consumer spending. The total value of their economic contributions was estimated using a Regional Economic Model (REM) that calculated the value of goods and services consumed on each dollar spent. Foreign-born Haitians in Boston generated total expenditures of \$191 million in 2014.¹⁴ These annual expenditures contributed over \$115 million to the regional product and generated \$6.3 million in state and local taxes.¹⁵ In total, these expenditures supported 830 jobs in the Massachusetts economy.¹⁶

“When Our Brushes Shook”
Haitian Art Exhibit
Boston City Hall

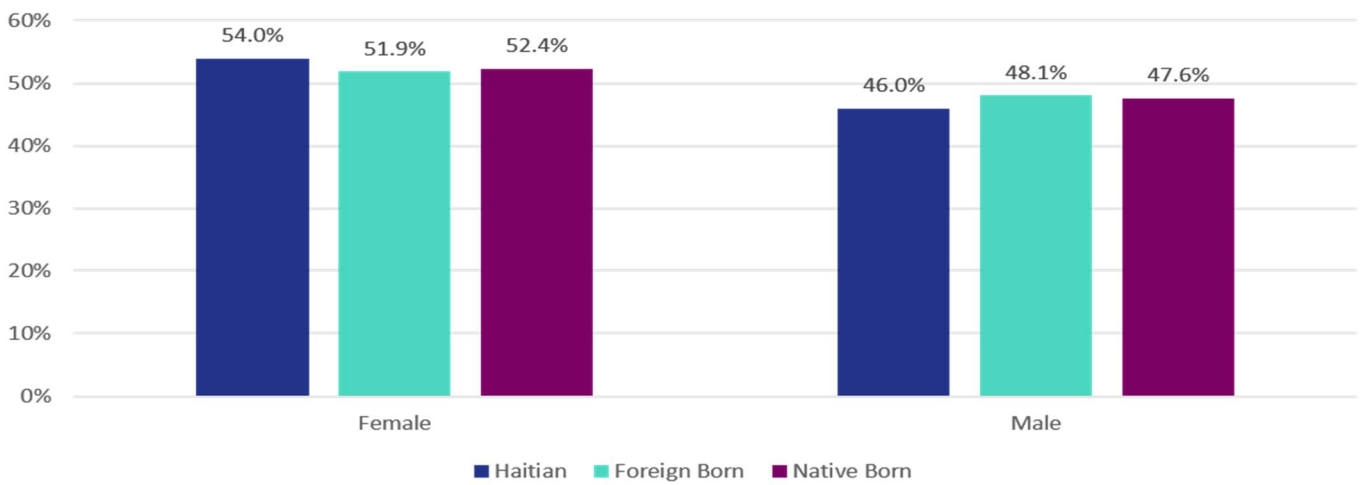


Imagine all the people: Haitians

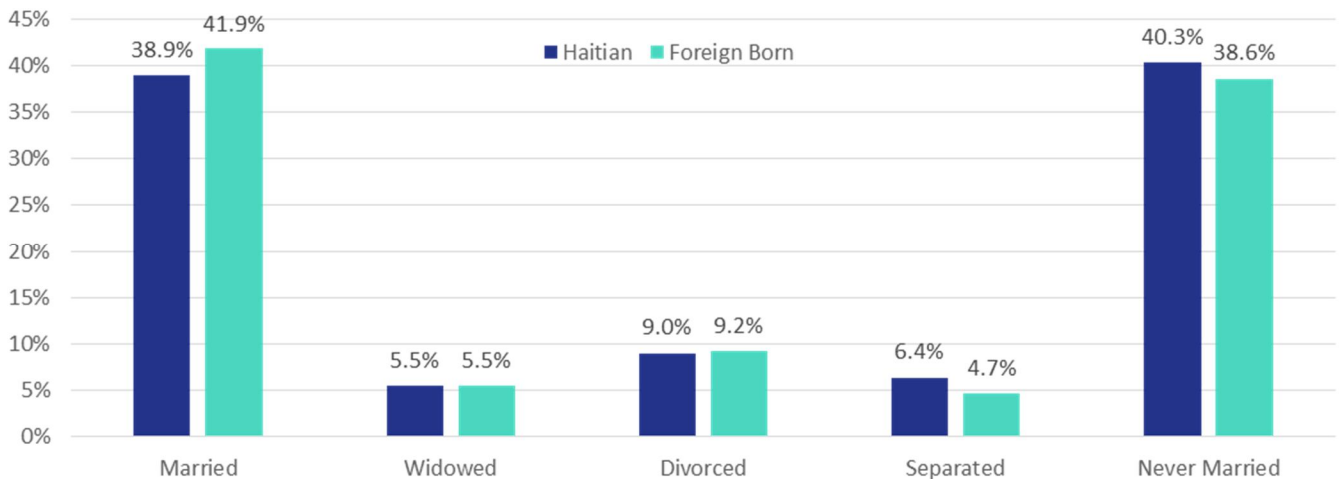
Age



Gender

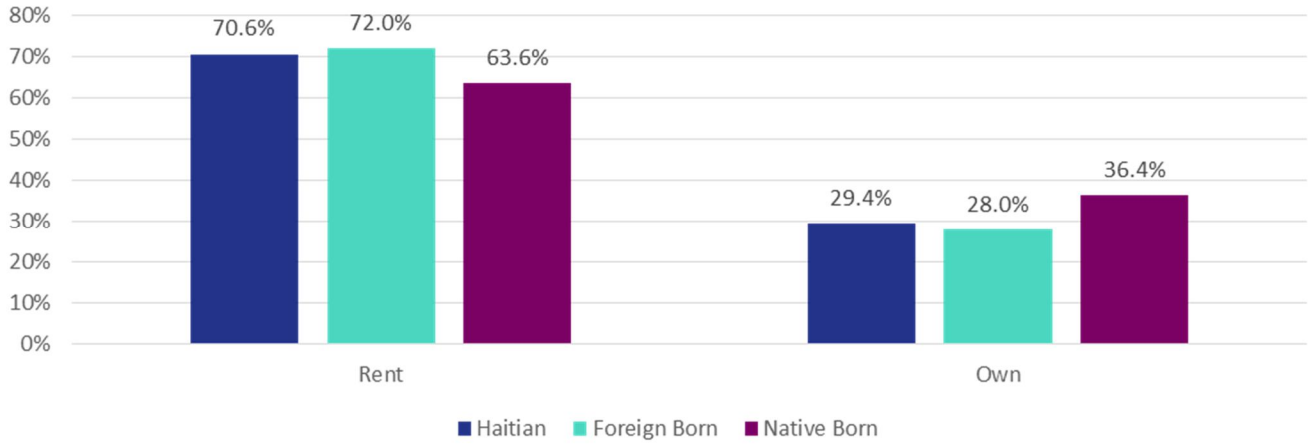


Marital Status

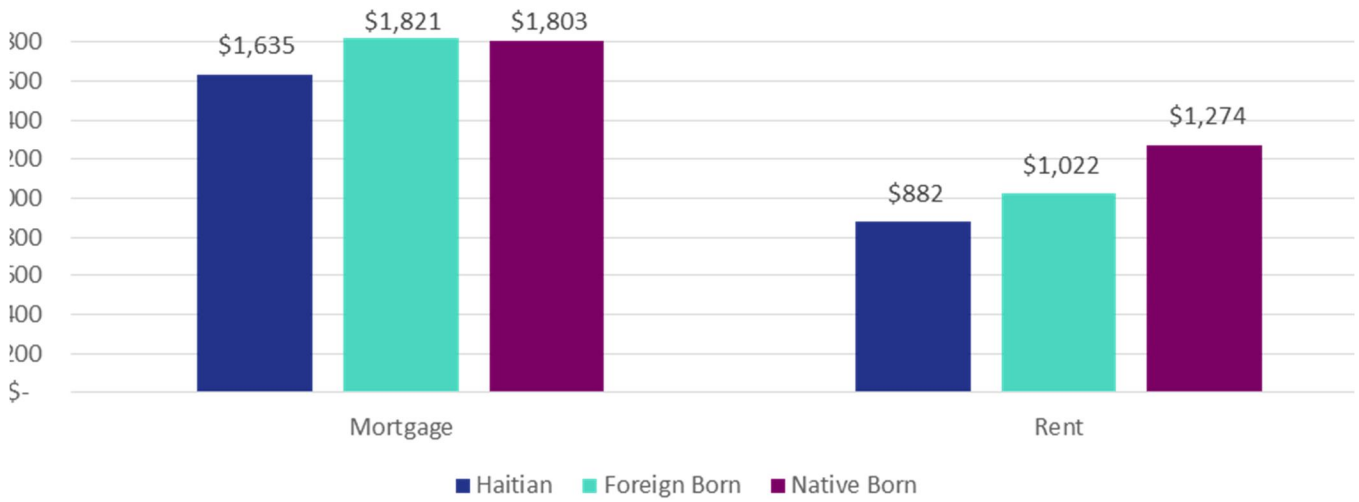


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division Analysis

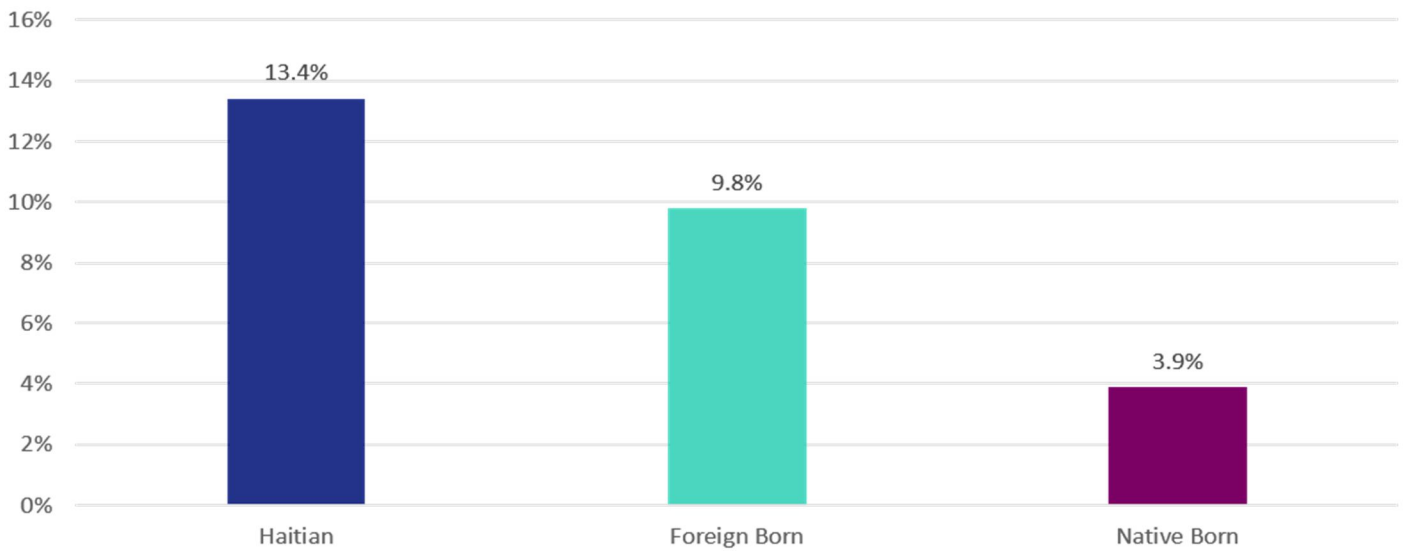
Housing Tenure*



Housing Costs*



Medical Uninsurance



*Housing data are based on the householder's country of origin.

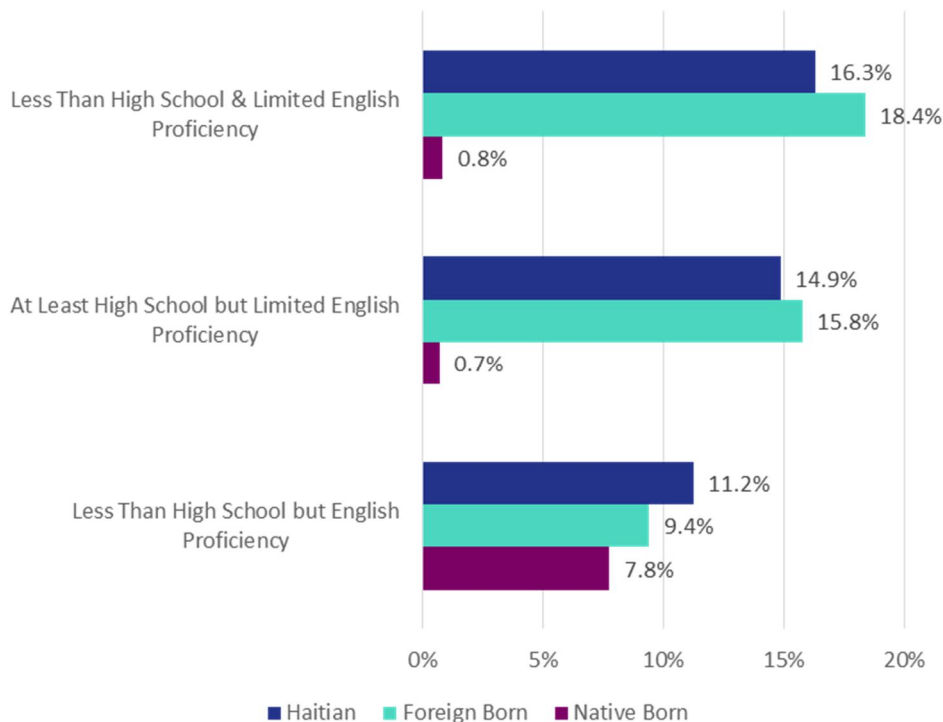
Standard of Living

Approximately 19 percent of foreign-born Haitians 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 \$62,920.¹⁷ In contrast, 18 percent of foreign-born Haitians live below the federal poverty level compared to 20 percent for the city’s population.

Low educational attainment and lack of English proficiency may contribute to Haitians’ low standard of living. About 31 percent of Haitian adults ages 25 and over have limited English proficiency compared to 34 percent of all foreign born.¹⁸ About 42 percent of foreign-born Haitians lack a high school diploma or English proficiency or both.

18% of foreign-born Haitians live in poverty, compared to 20% of the total population.

Educational Attainment and English Proficiency Population 25 Years or Older



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Children of Haitian Origin

The 2009-2013 American Community Survey estimates 6,085 children in Boston are of Haitian origin.¹⁹ Children of Haitian origin in Boston are predominately native born – 98 percent, but 83 percent of Haitian children live with only foreign-born parent(s). In comparison, 40 percent of all Boston’s children live with only foreign-born parent(s).

Of Haitian children ages 5 to 17 with only foreign-born parent(s), 25 percent speak only English at home, compared to 22 percent for all children with foreign-born parent(s). Haitian children learn English at a slightly lower rate - 72 percent of Haitian children with foreign-born parent(s) speak English very well, less than for all children with foreign-born parent(s), of whom 76 percent speak English very well.

However, Haitian children with foreign-born parent(s) are less likely to live poverty. 21 percent of Haitian children with foreign-born parent(s) and 29 percent of all children in Boston are below the federal poverty level (\$23,850 for a 4-person household in 2014). The nativity of a parent is also related to medical insurance coverage, 4 percent of Haitian children with foreign born parent(s) are uninsured, compared to 2 percent of all children in Boston.



Senator Linda Dorcena Forry and members of the Haitian Community remember the Haitian Earthquake 6th anniversary at the State House. (Mayor’s Office Photo by Isabel Leon)

Conclusion

Massachusetts is a leading destination for Haitians who migrate to the United States. Foreign-born Haitians in Boston actively contribute to the economy, culture, and political life of their new home. Even though foreign-born Haitians have lower shares of their population with a Bachelor's degree or higher, they have high labor force participation. With their concentration of employment in the service sector, they serve a vital role in the Boston labor market.



Haitian Flag Raising—Boston City Hall Plaza

¹Nwosu, C., Batalova, J., *Haitian Immigrants in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute (2015).

²United States Immigration and Citizenship Services. <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status/temporary-protected-status-designated-country-haiti>

³The ACS is a yearly survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau intended to allow communities to see how they are changing in the years between decennial censuses. The ACS is based on a sample of the population. While the data in this document are reported as specific numbers and percentages, all results from the ACS are subject to sampling error. For more information on the ACS, please see: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/index.html>

⁴The "foreign-born" population includes all people who are born outside the U.S., naturalized citizens, and non-U.S. citizens. The "native-born" population includes all people born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Island Areas and persons born abroad by American parents. Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) Research Division, (2015).

⁵Nwosu, C., Batalova, J., *Haitian Immigrants in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute, Migration Policy Institute (2015).

⁶U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis. (2016)

⁷U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis (2016).

⁸U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis .

⁹The ACS's American Fact Finder website reports that there are an estimated 13,887 foreign-born Haitians in Boston in 2014. However, ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data for Boston reports a slightly lower estimate of 13,376. Lower survey response rates due to language or documentation issues may result in an undercount of the population. Both are population estimates, and contain a margin of error due to sampling technique. For more information on American Fact Finder please see: <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>.

¹⁰U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BRA Research Division Analysis (2016).

¹¹U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis (2016).

End Notes

¹²This 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. The Other Occupations consists of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry and Military Specific and long-term unemployed are excluded.

¹³There 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.

¹⁴BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹⁵BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹⁶BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹⁷ 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).

¹⁸Limited English Proficiency includes foreign-born adults who do not speak English well or at all.

¹⁹The 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.



CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor



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FOR IMMIGRANT
ADVANCEMENT

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston



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