

# Salvadorans

in  
Boston



Banda El Salvador at the 2013 Rose Parade in Pasadena, California. Photo by Prayitno Photography, retrieved from flickr.com/photos/prayitnophotography (Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic).

## The Boston Planning & Development Agency

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### Data Notes

Unless otherwise noted data for this report come from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

"Latino" includes people who 1. self-describe their ethnicity as "Hispanic or Latino", or 2. were born in Brazil, or 3. self-describe their ancestry as Brazilian.

In the 1980s when Salvadoran population started rapidly increasing in the United States, it was related to people being displaced by a decade-long civil war. The U.S. Justice Department did not grant refugee status to Salvadorans, and many entered the country without visas. In response to these displaced persons fleeing from political violence and human rights violations in countries like El Salvador, and their having no legal immigration status in The United States, a collaboration of religious and immigrant organizations worked with cities like Cambridge to become “sanctuary cities.”

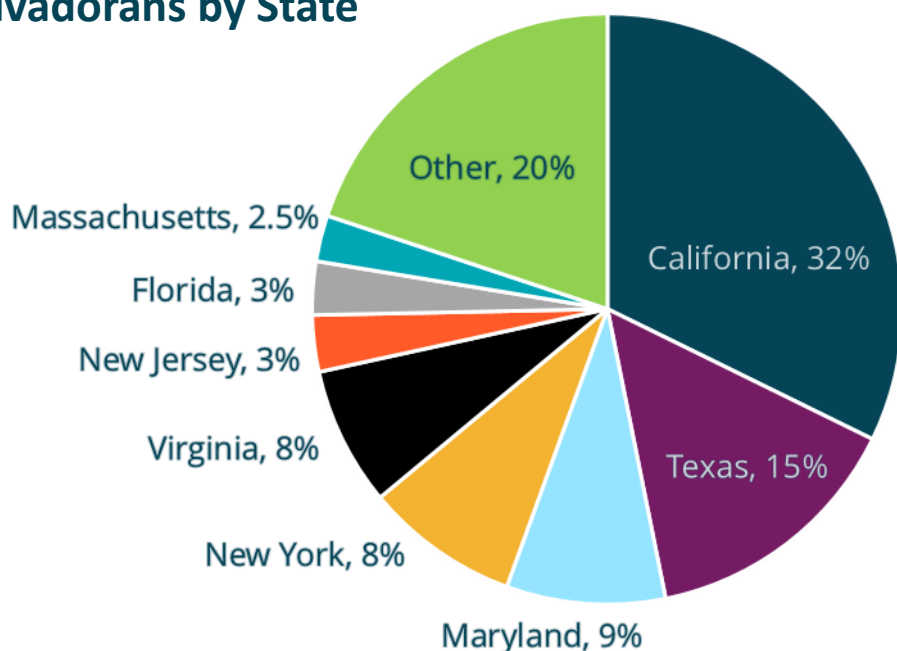
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**Even though Los Angeles was the primary destination for Salvadorans during the Salvadoran civil war, sanctuary initiatives help explain the migration of Salvadorans to other parts of the country like Massachusetts.**

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In 2015, 2.2 million people with Salvadoran origin lived in the United States.<sup>1</sup> With an estimated 54,631 Salvadorans residing in Massachusetts, the state accounts for 2.5 percent of all Salvadorans in the country. Massachusetts has the eighth largest Salvadoran population. California (32.2 percent) and Texas (14.6 percent) are states with the largest Salvadoran populations. In the Northeast, New York (8.4 percent) and New Jersey (3.1 percent) have larger Salvadoran populations. Boston is home to 27 percent of the state’s Salvadoran population.

### Salvadorans by State



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

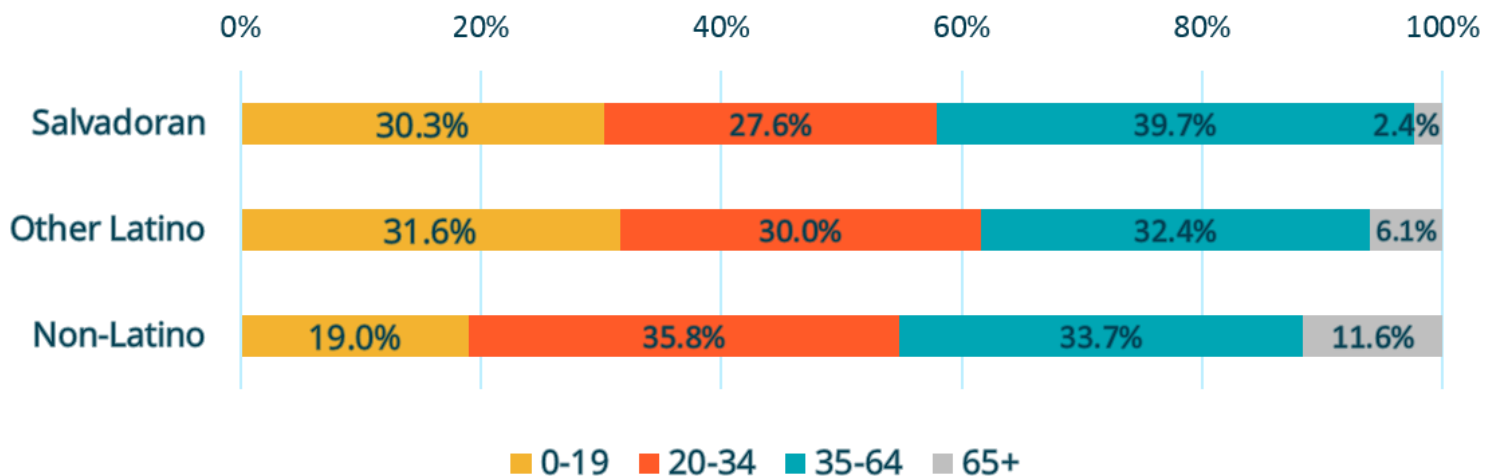
# Salvadorans in Boston



According to the 2010 Census, Boston had 10,850 Salvadoran residents, up from 6,067 in the 2000 Census. The American Community Survey reports that Boston's Salvadoran population had grown by 2015 to 14,980 (+/-3,846).<sup>2</sup> Accounting for 11 percent of all Latinos in Boston, Salvadorans are the third largest Latino population in the city. Other large Latino populations include Puerto Ricans (28 percent), Dominicans (24 percent), Colombians (6 percent), and Mexicans (5 percent). Salvadorans are concentrated in East Boston (87 percent), and smaller shares live in Dorchester (6 percent), and Roxbury (2 percent).<sup>3</sup>

Salvadorans' median age is 30 years, older than other Latinos (27) but younger than non-Latinos (32). Unlike other groups, Salvadorans are predominately male (55 percent). A larger share of adult Salvadorans are married—36 percent. The majority of Salvadorans are foreign born (70.7 percent), and 62.3 percent are not U. S. citizens. Almost 97 percent of Salvadorans speak Spanish at home and only 28 percent speak English very well. A somewhat higher share of younger Salvadorans under age 35 speak English very well (46 percent).

## Age Distribution



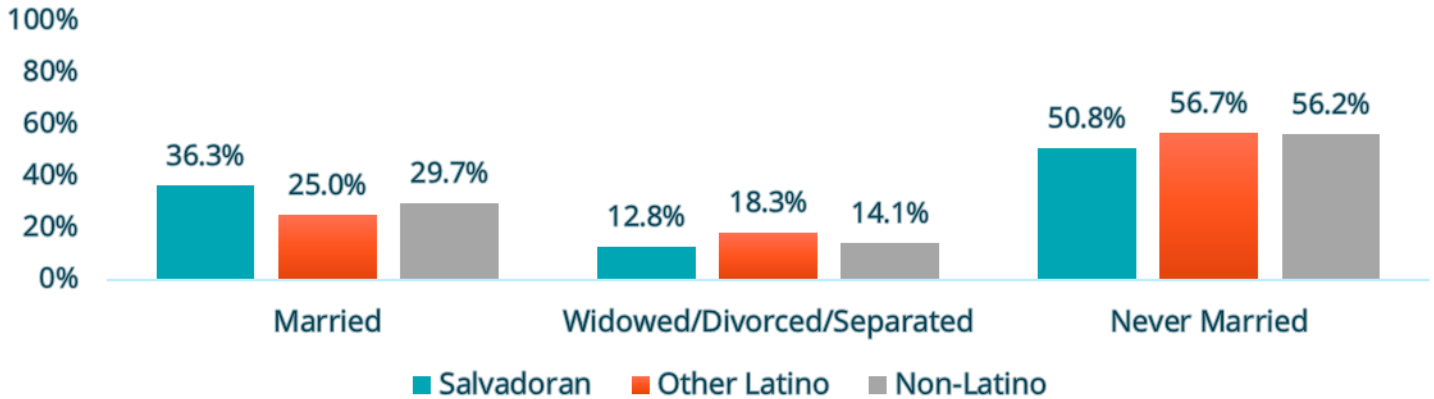
<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

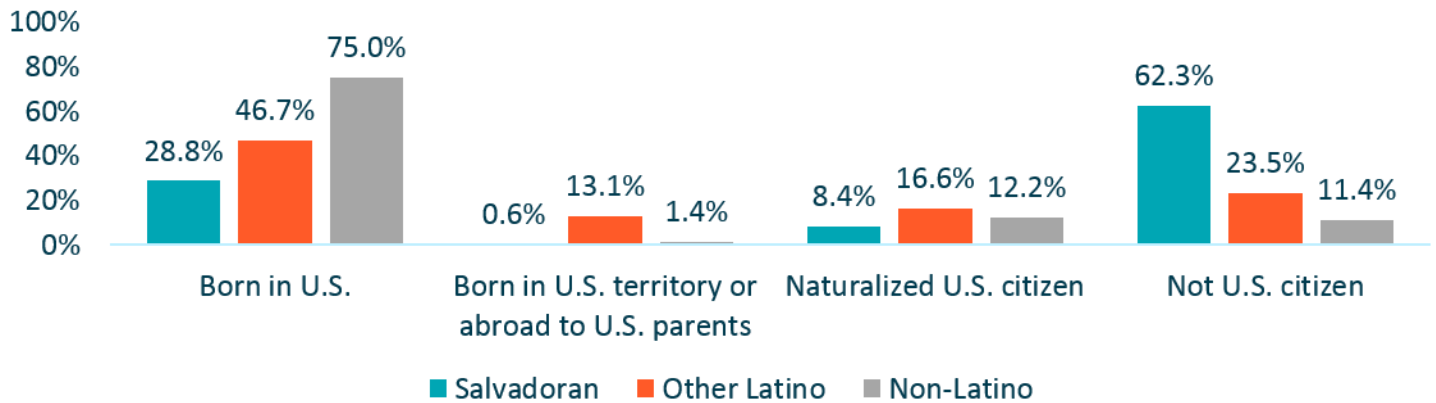
# 11% of Boston's Latinos are Salvadoran



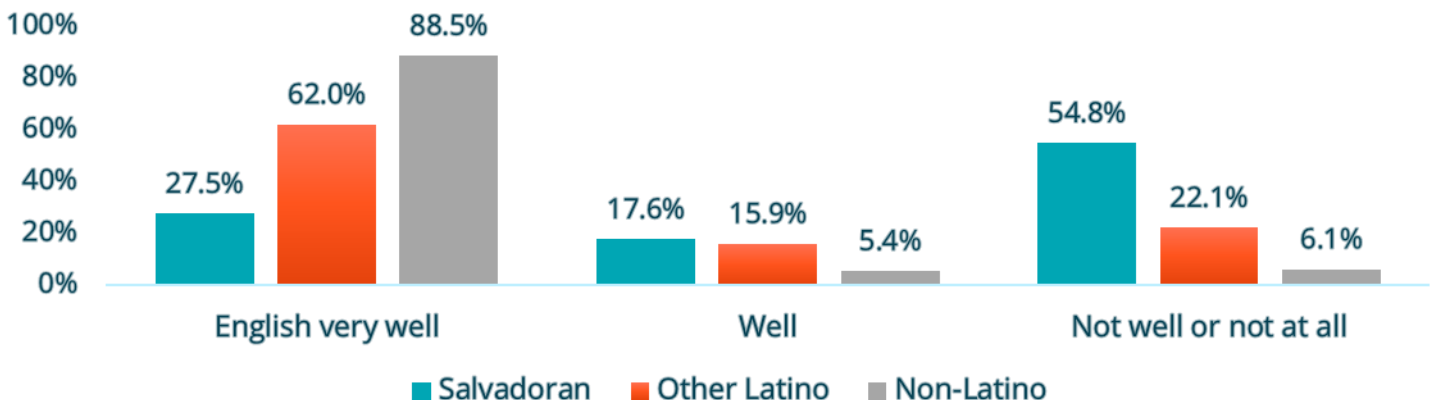
## Marital Status (ages 15 and older)



## Citizenship

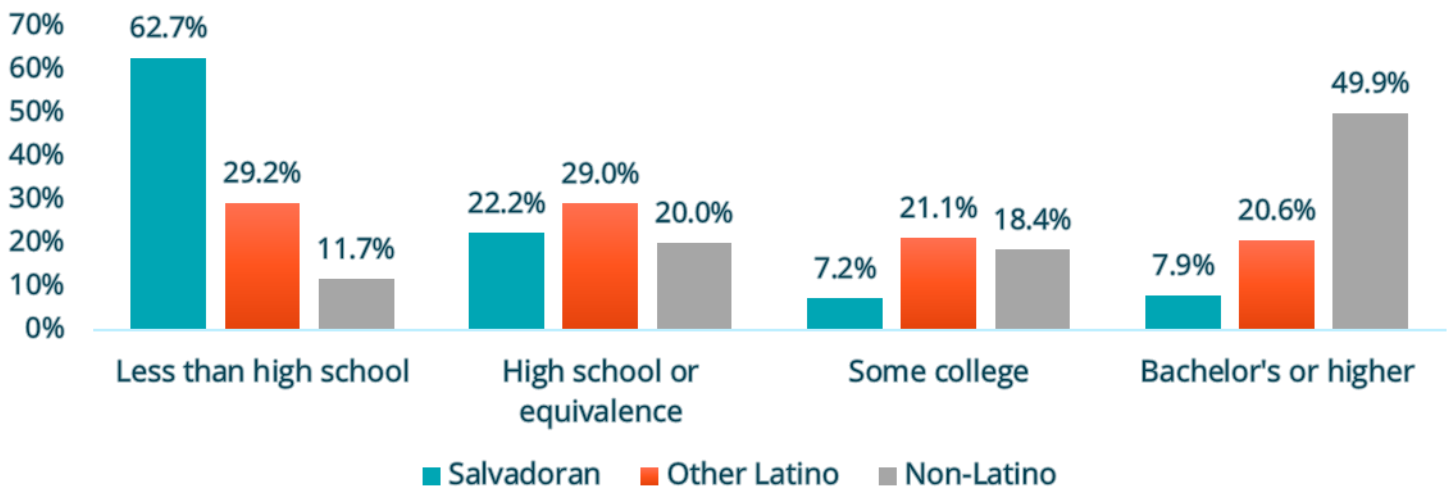


## English Proficiency (ages 5 and older)





## Educational Attainment (ages 25 and older)



**Educational Attainment** | Salvadorans have a low level of educational attainment. Approximately two thirds of adult Salvadorans have not completed high school, and only 8 percent have a Bachelor's degree or higher.

**School Enrollment** | Salvadorans make up 3 percent of Boston residents enrolled in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade, but less than a third of a percent of Boston residents enrolled in college or university.

**Labor Force Participation** | A higher share of adult Salvadorans (79 percent) participate in the labor force than other Latinos (66 percent) and non-Latinos (68 percent). Labor force participation is higher for Salvadoran men than women (84 percent vs. 73 percent).

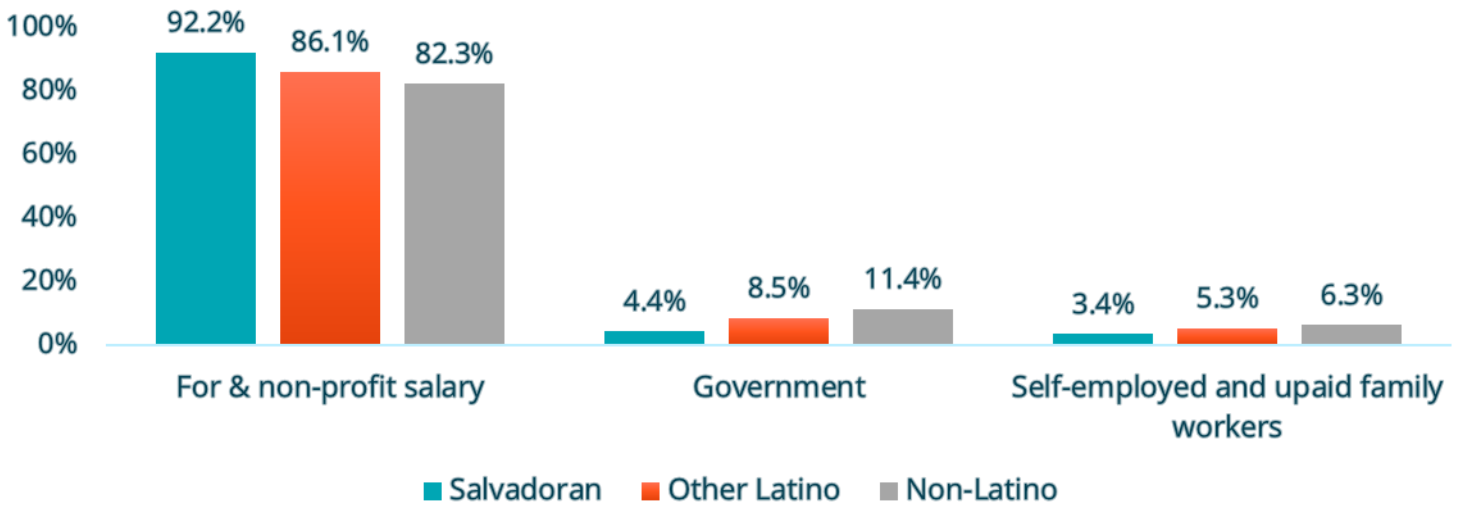
**Employment** | Over 92 percent of employed Salvadorans work in private sector payroll jobs, with only 3 percent being self-employed. Nearly 55 percent of employed Salvadorans work in service occupations, and only 5 percent work in managerial and professional occupations.

**Commute** | A larger share of Salvadorans (35 percent) work outside of Suffolk County than other Latinos (29 percent) and non-Latinos (33 percent). Salvadorans are much more likely to travel to work on public transportation—59 percent compared to 42 percent for other Latinos and 32 percent for non-Latinos.

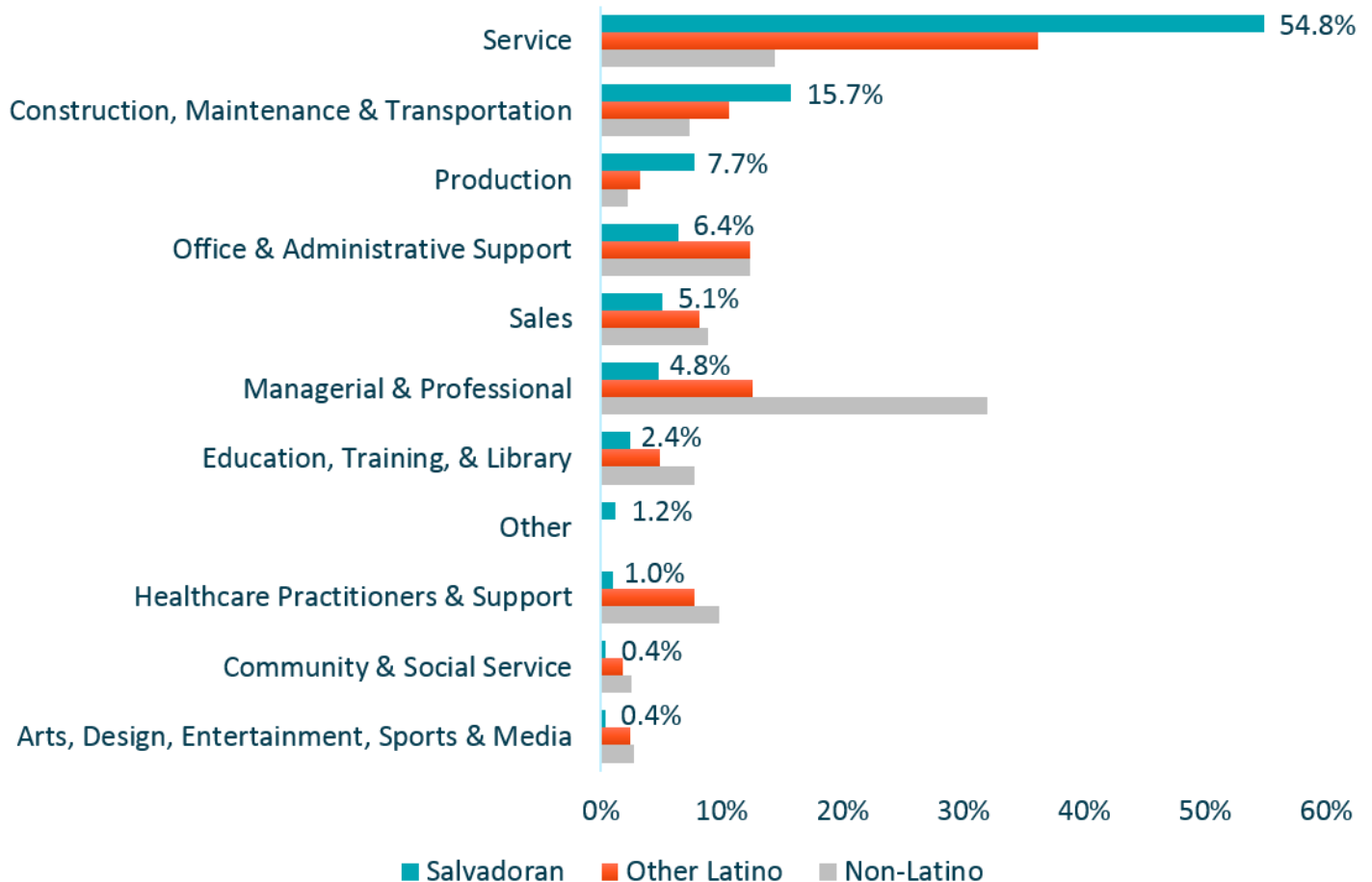


# 72% of Salvadorans are employed

## Employment Type (ages 16 and older)



## Occupations of Employed Workers



# Standard of Living

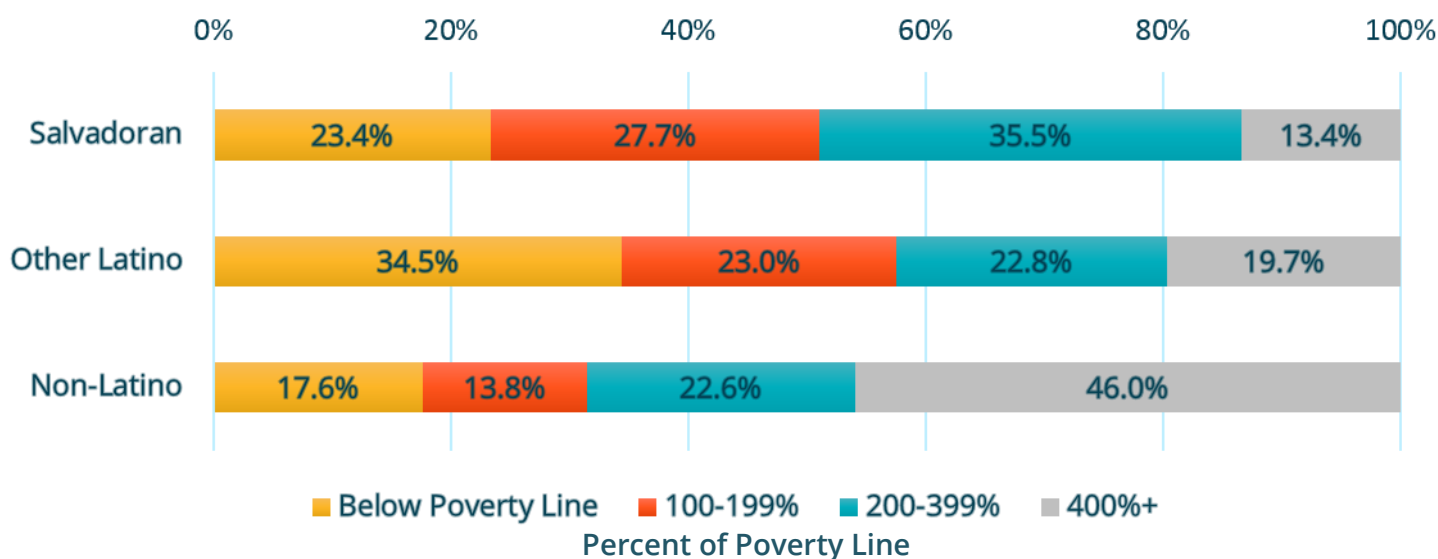


Despite their low levels of educational attainment and English proficiency a lower share of Salvadorans live below the Census poverty line than other Latinos. However, only 13 percent of Salvadorans have achieved a middle class standard of living, compared to 20 percent for other Latinos and 46 percent for non-Latinos. 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 family composition. For a two-person family in 2015, the poverty line is \$15,391, and a middle class income would need to be at least \$61,564. The median household income for Salvadoran-headed households is \$54,728. Despite median incomes that may be considered lower middle class and their high share of payroll employment, 14 percent of Salvadorans lack health insurance.

Salvadorans are more likely to own their home own home (23 percent), than other Latinos (16 percent) but less likely than non-Latinos (37 percent).<sup>4</sup> More than 52 percent of Salvadoran-headed households are housing burdened and who pay more than 30 percent of their income in housing costs, a similar housing burden rate to other Latinos. Almost 63 percent of Salvadoran households own a car, a higher share than other Latinos (57 percent).

Most Salvadoran households are families (80 percent) and the average household size is 3.9, much large than the average for non-Latinos, 2.1.

## Poverty Rates



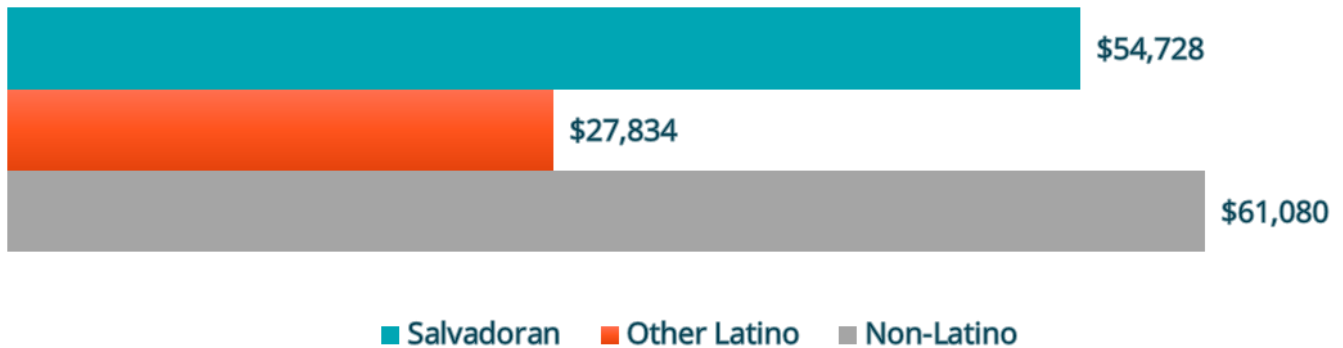
<sup>4</sup> The ACS excludes households that are vacant, being bought, occupied without rent payment, have no household income or are group quarters when reporting owner/renter costs as a percentage of household income. Therefore, the sum of housing-burdened and non-housing-burdened households may not add exactly to the total number of homeowners/renters.



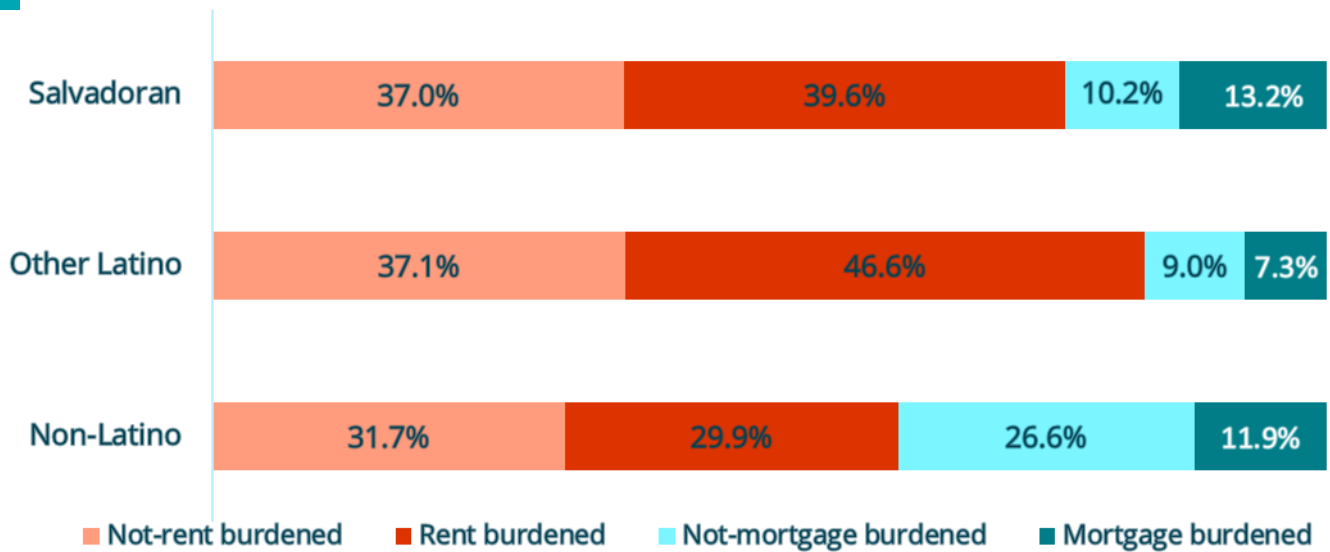
# 23% of Salvadorans in Boston live in poverty



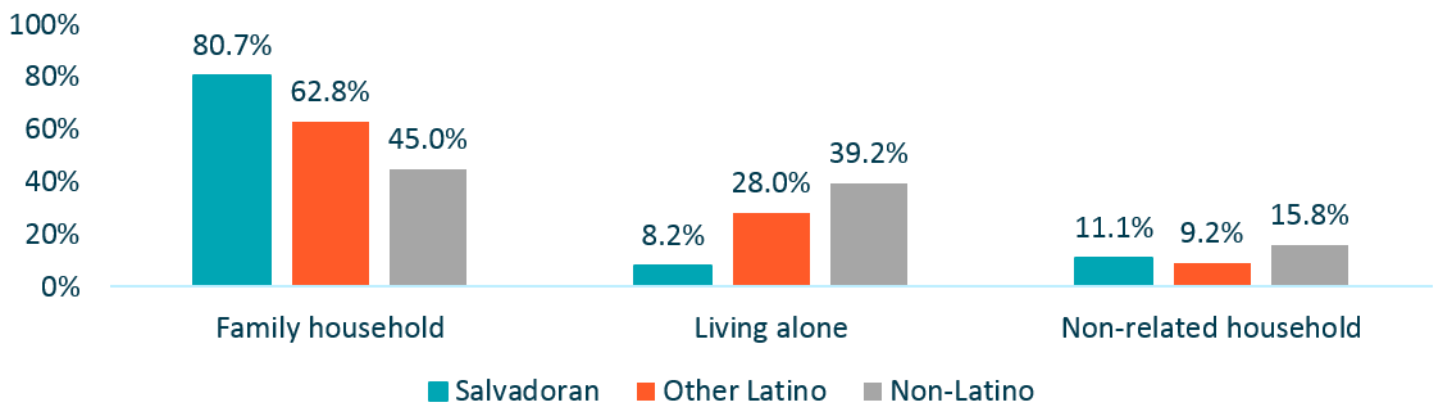
## Median Household Income



## Tenure and Housing Burden



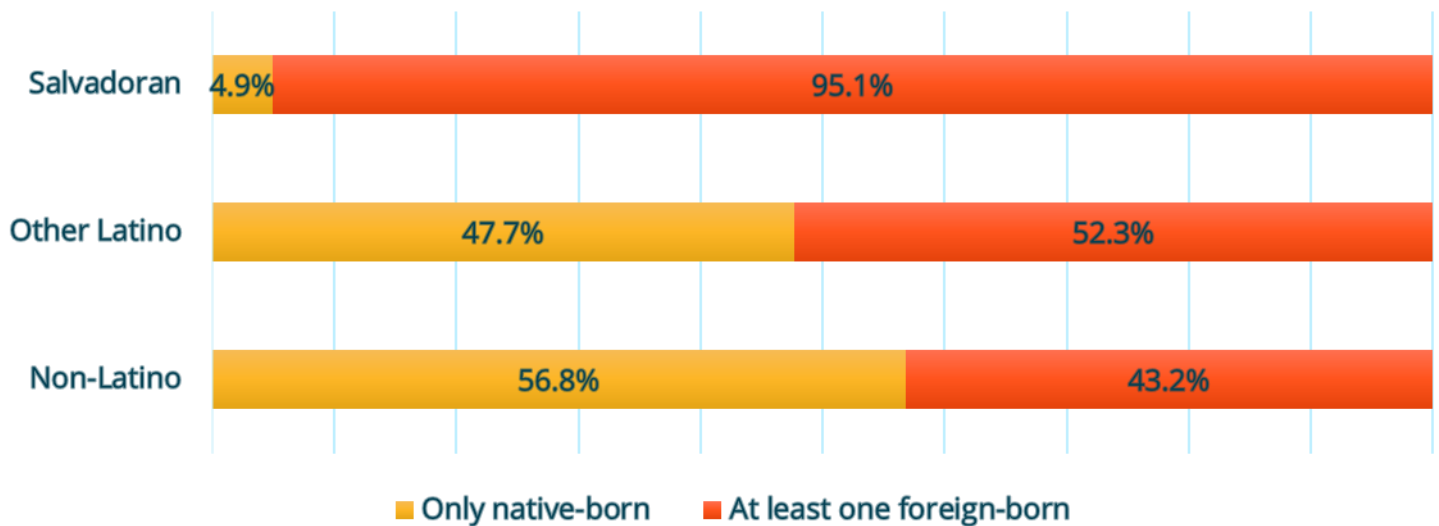
## Household Type



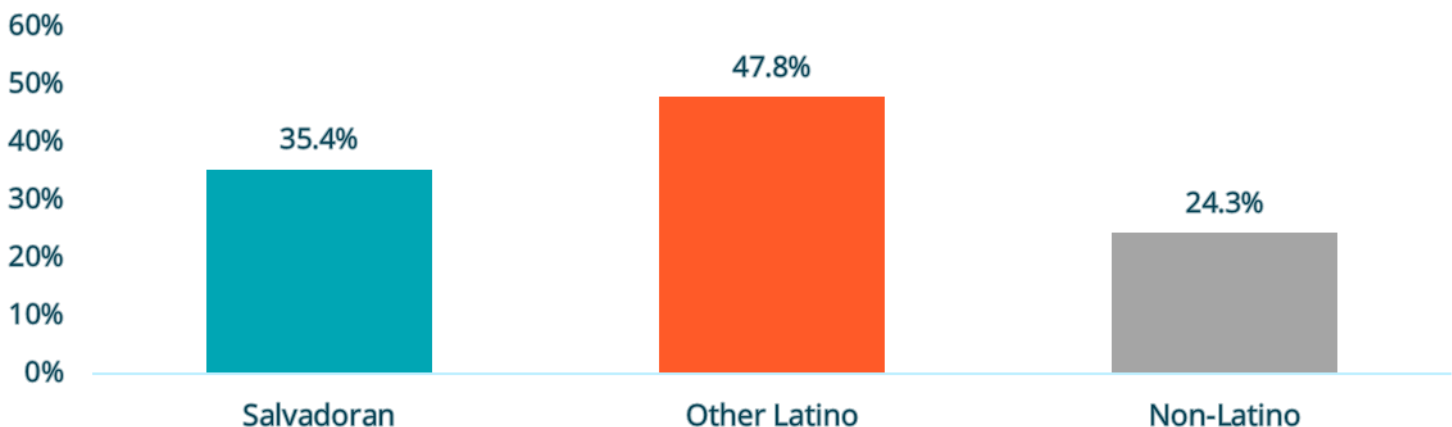
# Salvadoran Children

The 2011-2015 American Community Survey estimates 3,570 Salvadoran children reside in Boston. A high share of Salvadoran households include children—58 percent compared to 20 percent of non-Latino households. Even though 86 percent of Salvadoran children are native born, 95 percent of them have at least one foreign-born parent. Salvadoran children are less likely to live in poverty than other Latinos, and over 99 percent of Salvadoran children in Boston have health insurance.

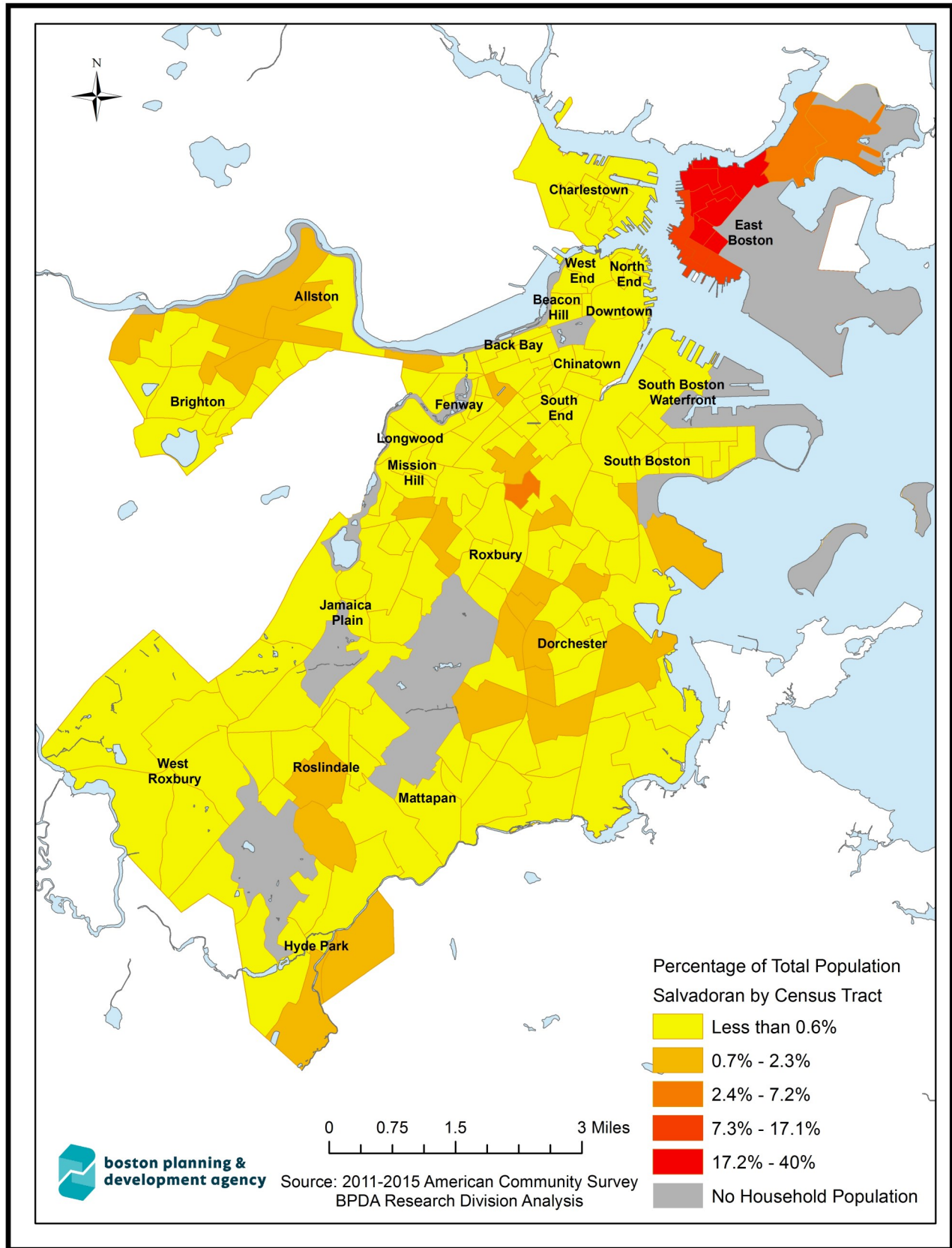
## Parent Nativity



## Child Poverty



# Map of Salvadorans in Boston



# Latinos in Boston

Puerto Ricans

Dominicans

**Salvadorans**

Colombians

Mexicans

Guatemalans

Brazilians



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