

Contributions of Boston's Foreign Born

- 1 Immigration: current and historical status
- 2 Immigrants spur population growth
- 3 Immigrants increase Boston's diversity
- 4 Immigrants contribute to Boston's economy
- 5 Conclusion



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Immigration is in the news, once again...

The U.S. Economy Is Surpassing Expectations. Immigration Is One Reason.

Immigrants aided the pandemic recovery and may be crucial to future needs. The challenge is processing newcomers and getting them where the jobs are.



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Finance and economics | Thousands are flying

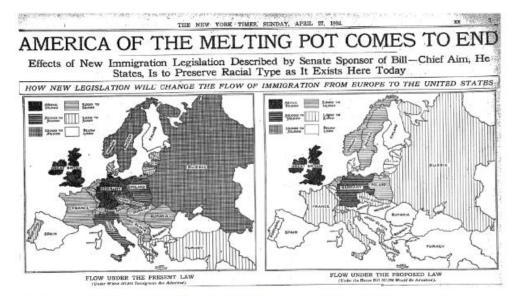
Immigration is surging, with big economic consequences

The West faces an unprecedented number of new arrivals





Immigration was also in the news 100 years ago



The top section of page 181 of The New York Times on April 27, 1924. TimesMachine

Source: New York Times, TimesMachine, 1920 and 1924.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW AND MAGAZINE, DECEMBER 19, 1920

The Rising Tide of Immigration



By INDREAL ROSS

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London Book

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THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW AND MAGAZINE, DECEMBER 19, 1920

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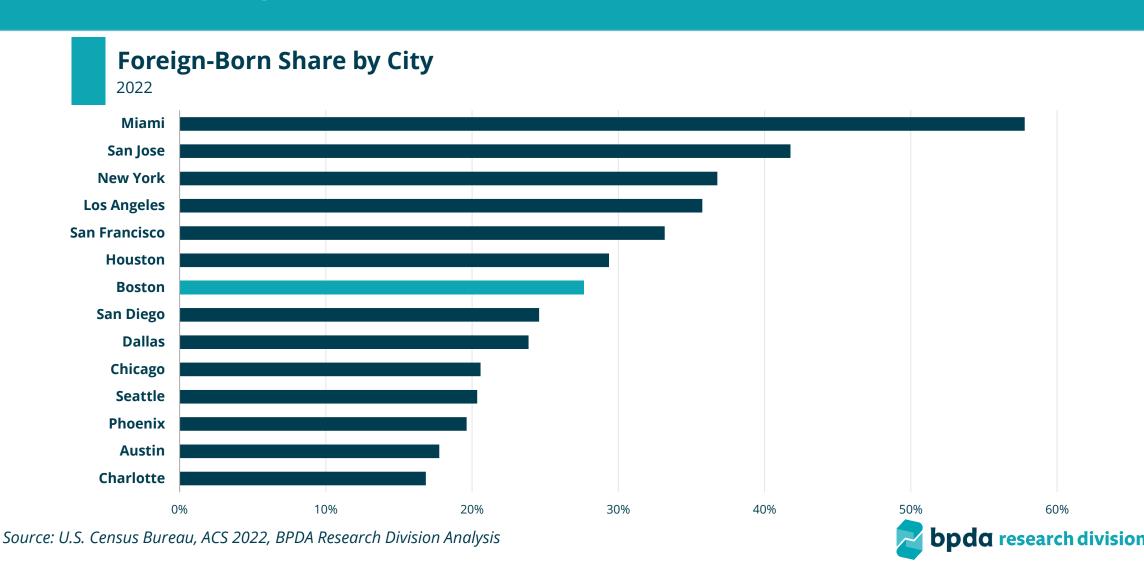
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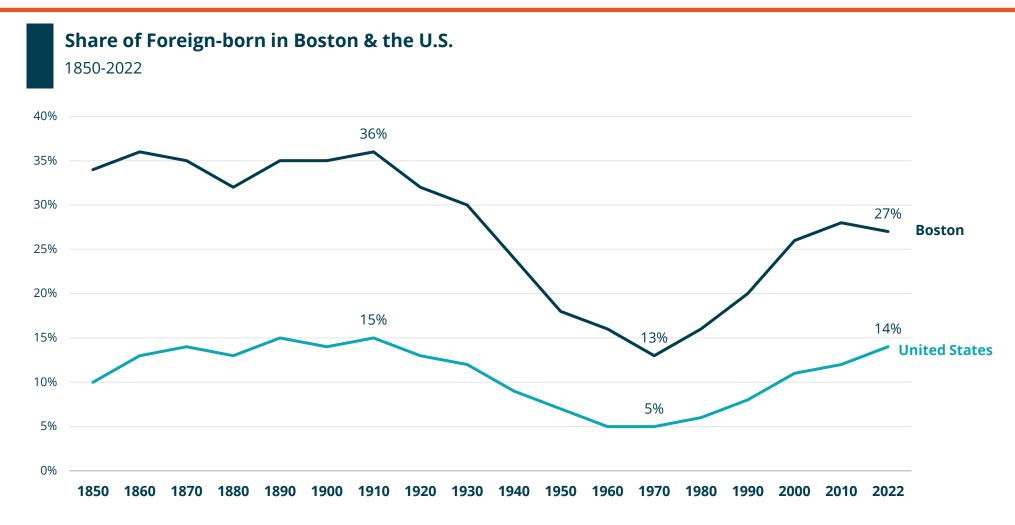
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Boston ranks 7th among 15 comparable cities in its foreign-born share



From 1850 to 1910, more than one third of Boston's population was foreign born





US immigration policy changed the quantity and origin of immigration

Three major changes to the law, 1924-1990

Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act) Lower cap on immigrants per year. Establish "national origins" quotas at 2% of population in 1890, which favored Western European immigrants

Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) • System of preferences for family reunification (75%), employment (20%) and refugees (5%): allowed increased immigration, especially from non-European countries

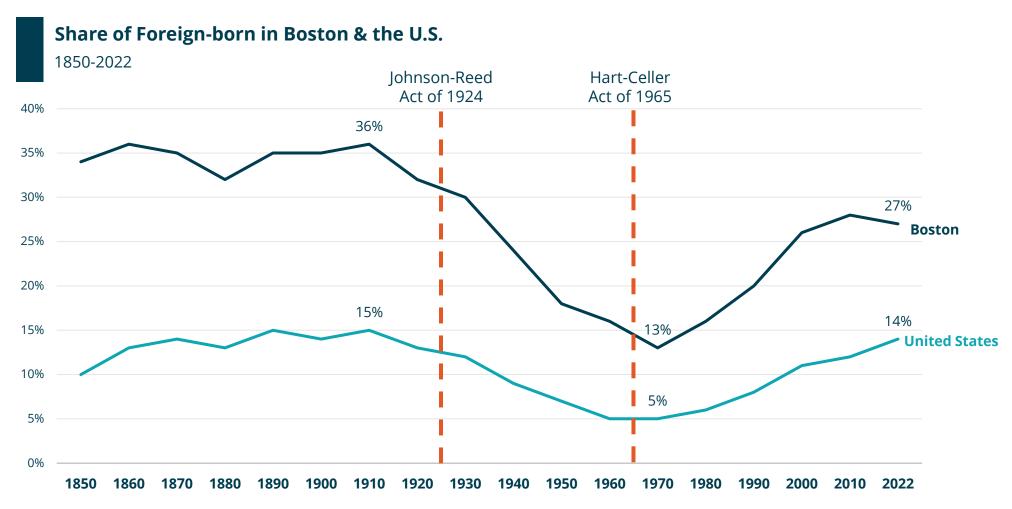
Immigration Act of 1990

• Implemented the H-1B visa program for skilled temporary workers, some provisions for converting to permanent status, and a diversity lottery

Source: Immigration History, Migration Policy Institute.



The foreign-born share fell after the 1924 immigration restrictions and rebounded after 1965

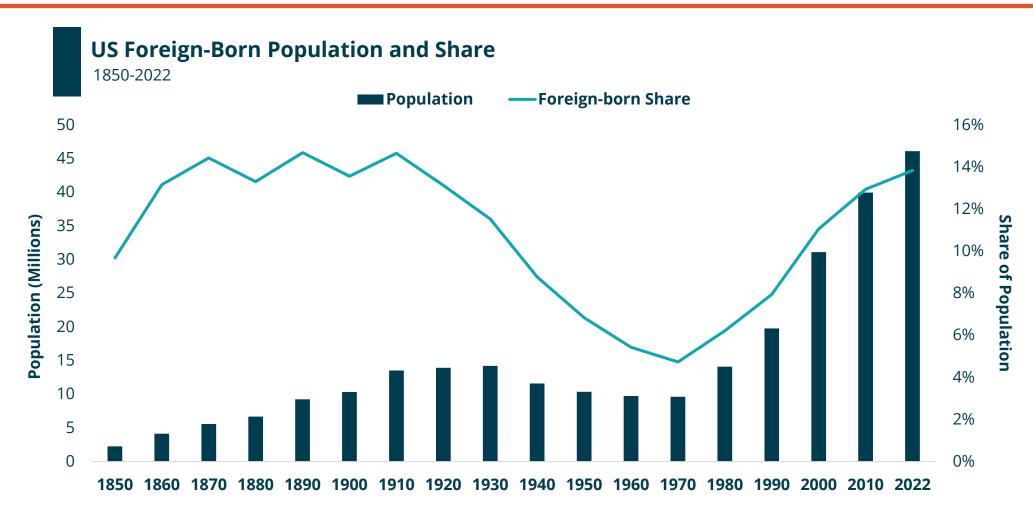


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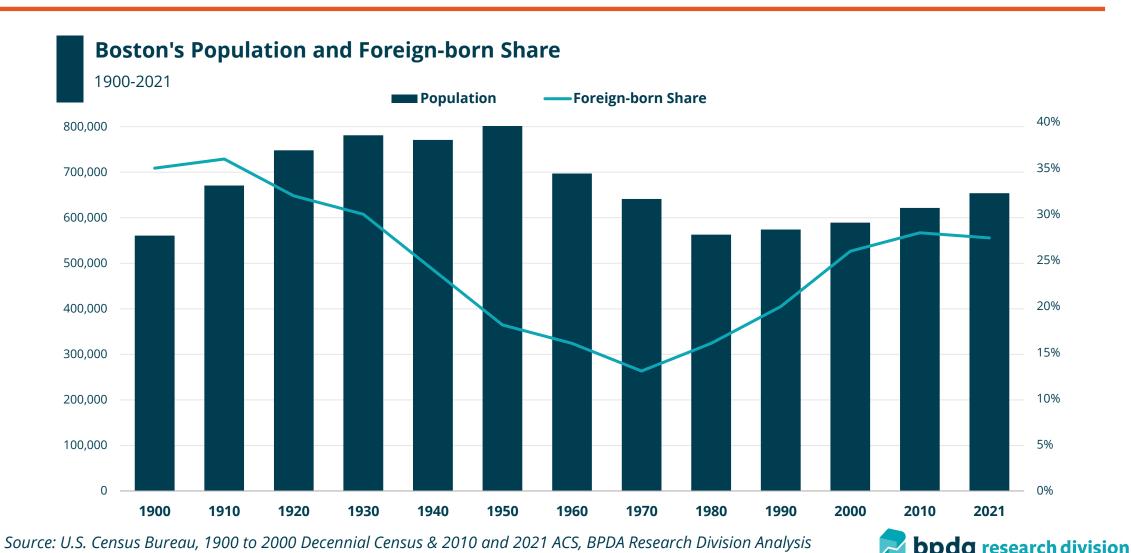


Since the 1970s, the foreign-born population and share has increased in the US

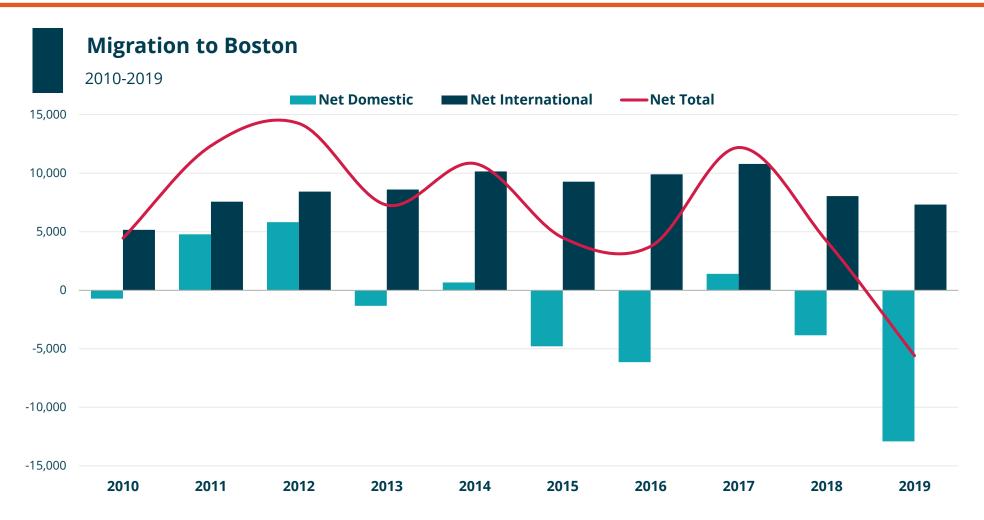




Increased immigration after 1970 helped Boston's population recover

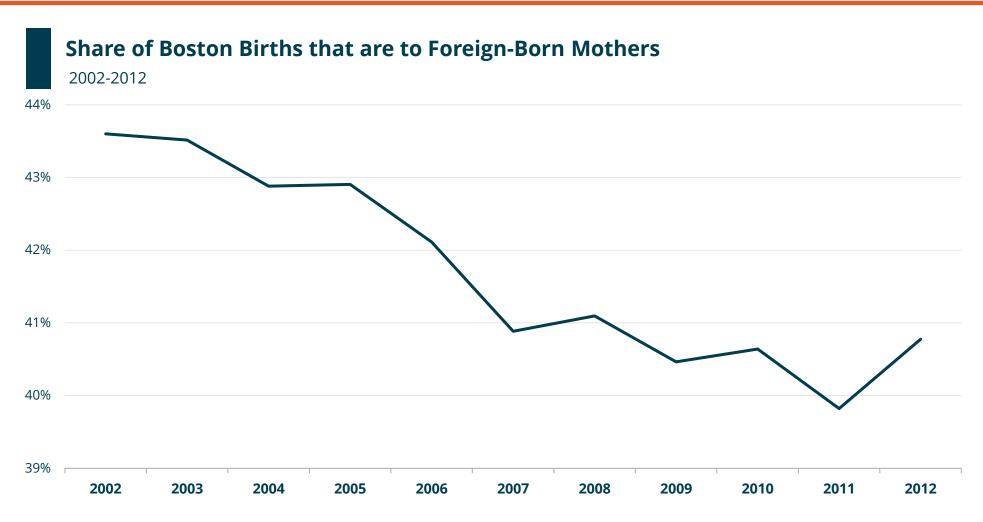


In the last decade domestic migration to Boston decreased, but international migration remained steady



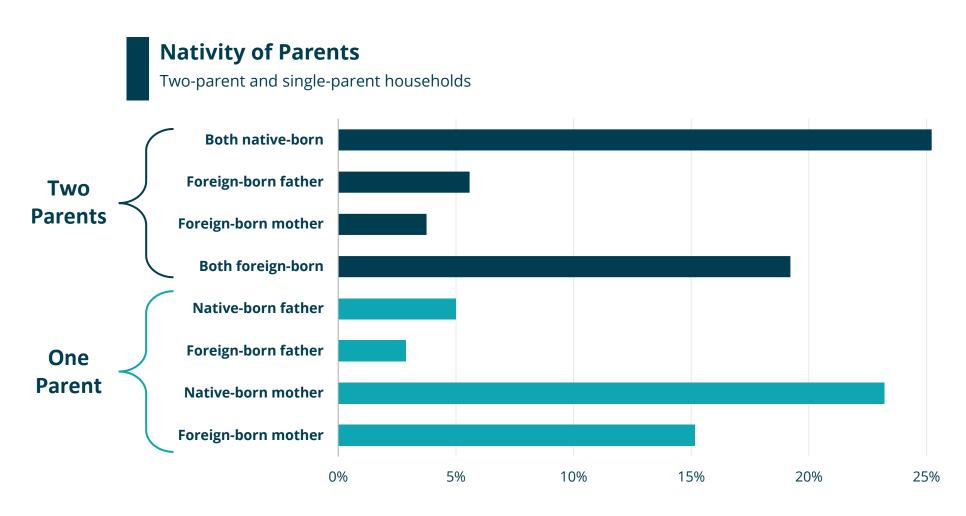


40-45% of Births in Boston were to Foreign-born Mothers Between 2002 and 2012



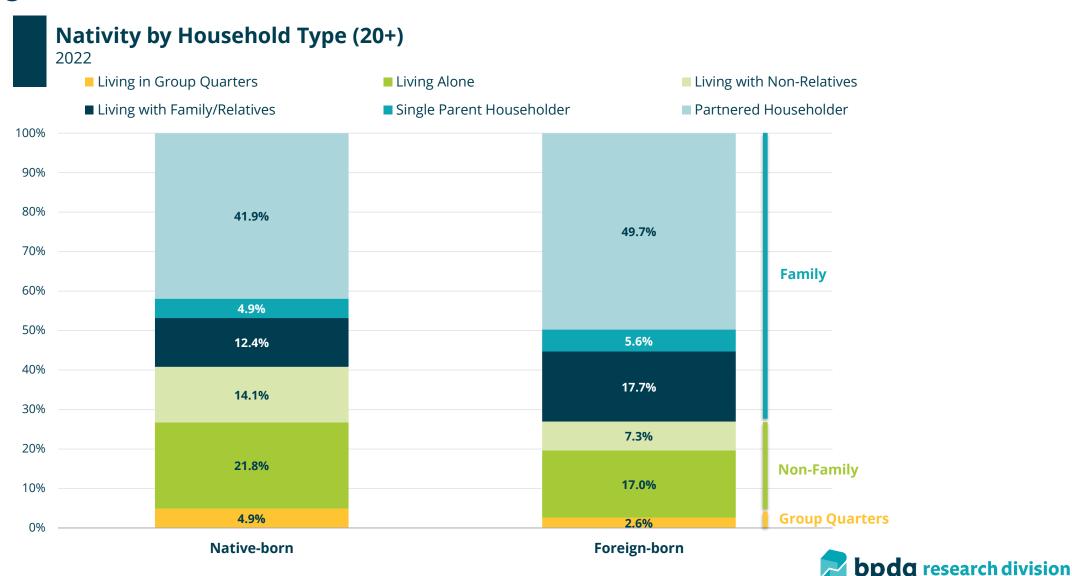


Only ~5% of Boston's children are foreign born, but 47% have at least 1 foreign-born parent

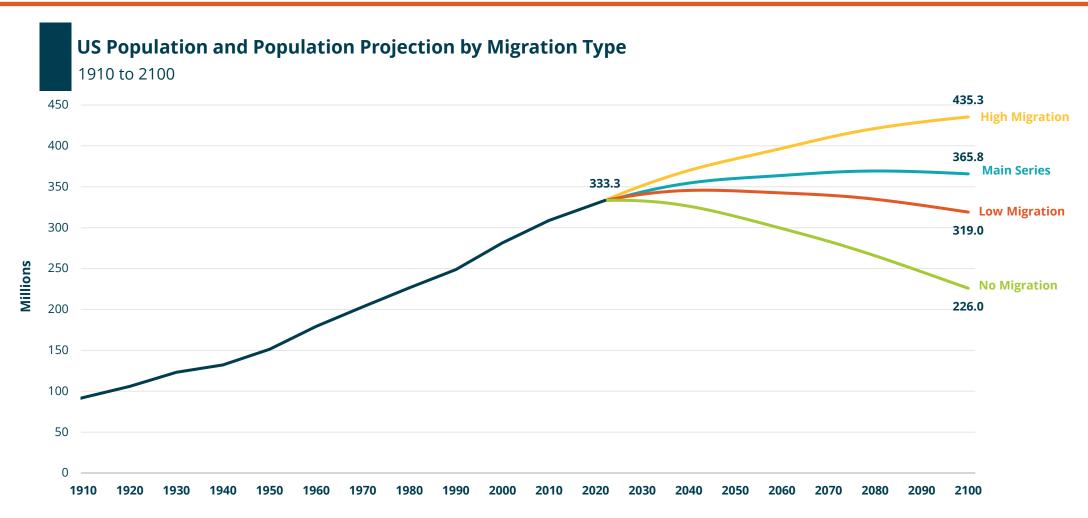




The foreign born are more likely to live in family households

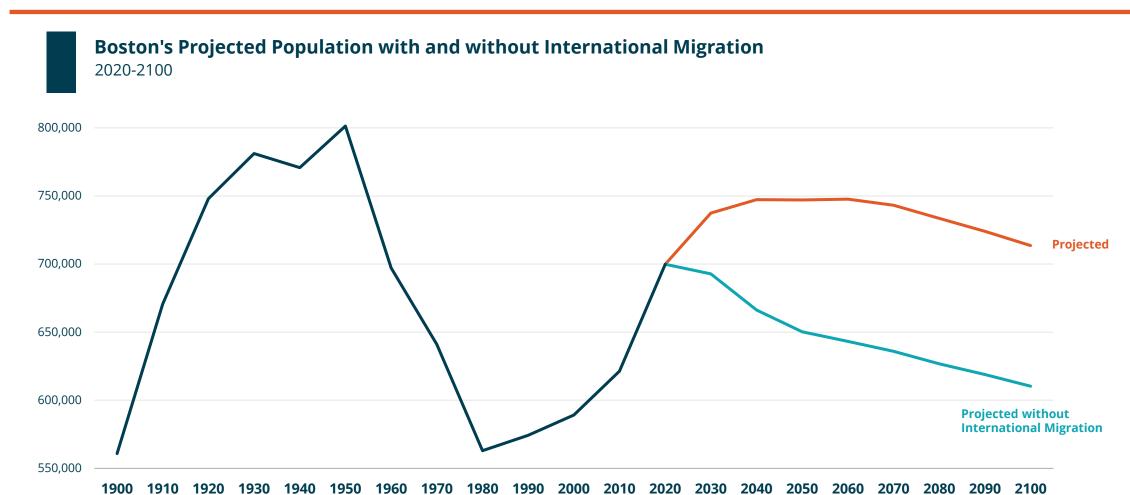


Without immigration the US population is projected to decline almost immediately





Without any international migration, Boston's population in 2050 would be 13% lower than otherwise projected



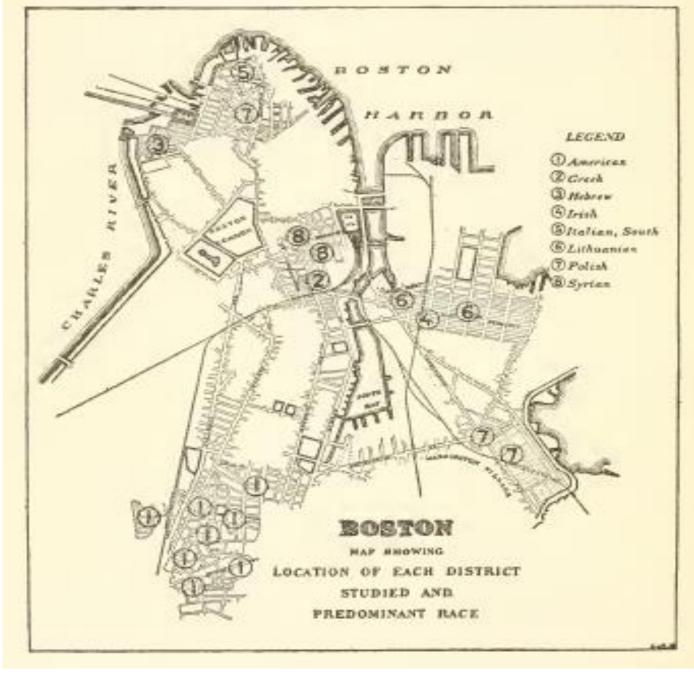
Contributions of Boston's Foreign-Born

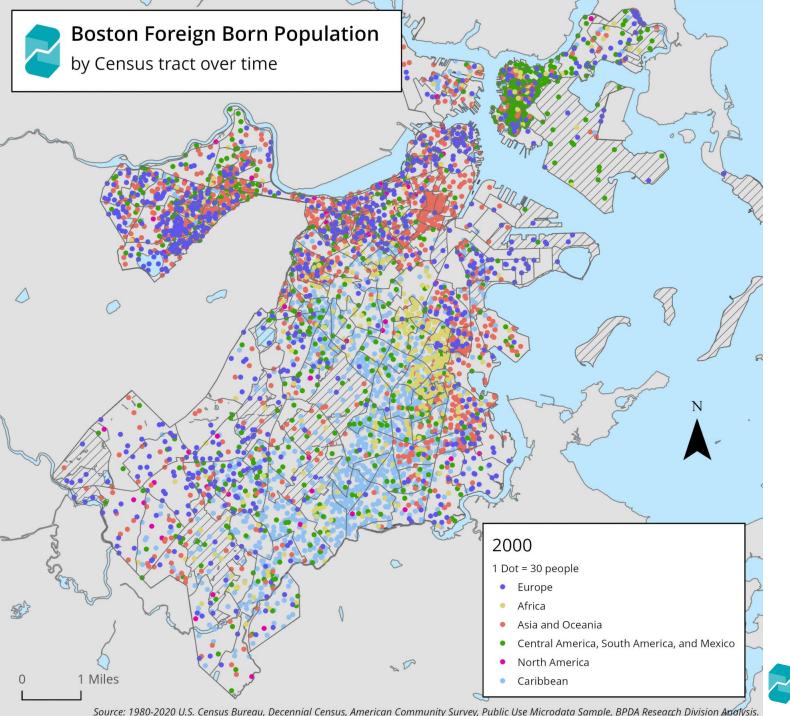
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1911 map shows clusters of immigrants from:

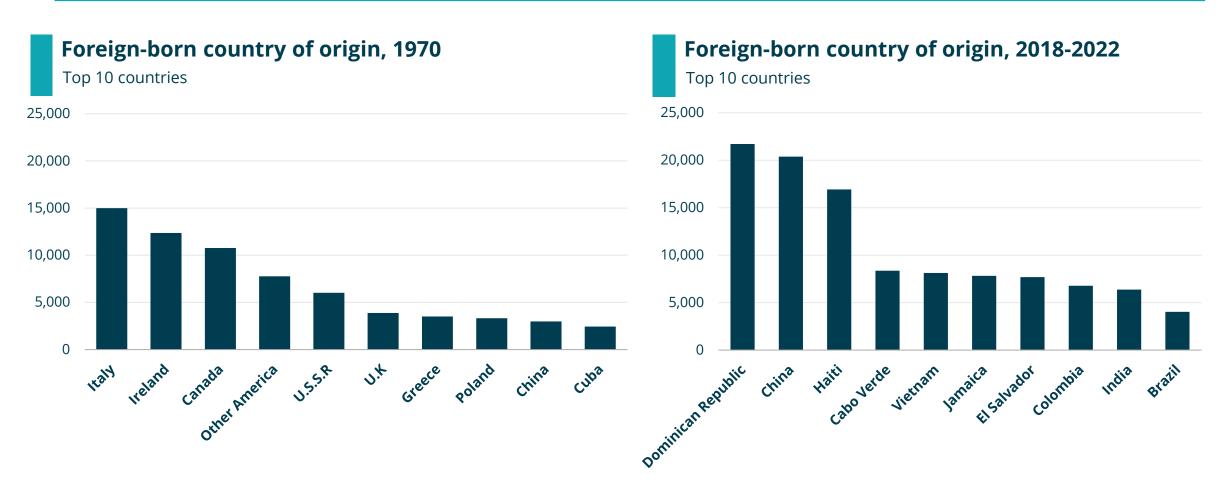
- Greece (2)
- Ireland (4)
- Italy (5)
- Lithuania (6)
- Poland (7)
- Syria (8)







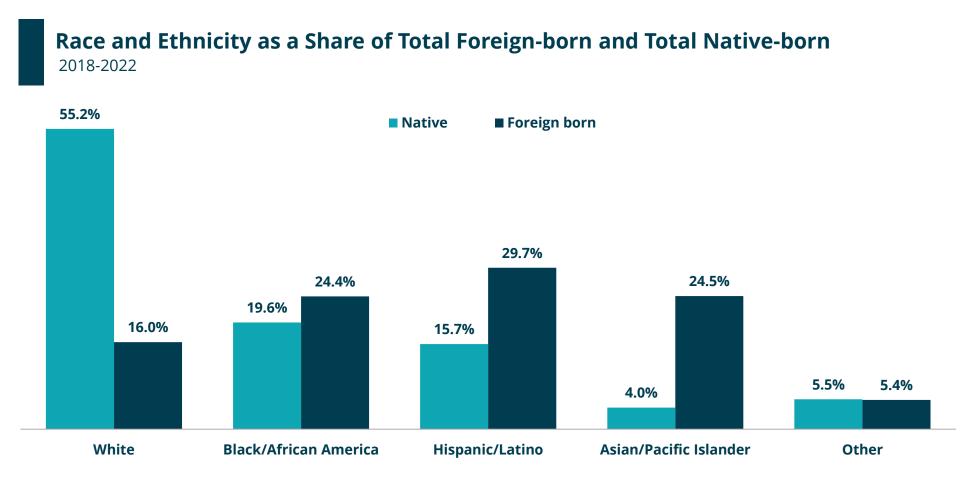
The foreign-born population of Boston in 1970 was smaller and predominantly European – Today's foreign-born population reflects changes to immigration policy







The foreign-born today are more likely to be Hispanic, Asian and Black/African American, reflecting origins in the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, and Asia

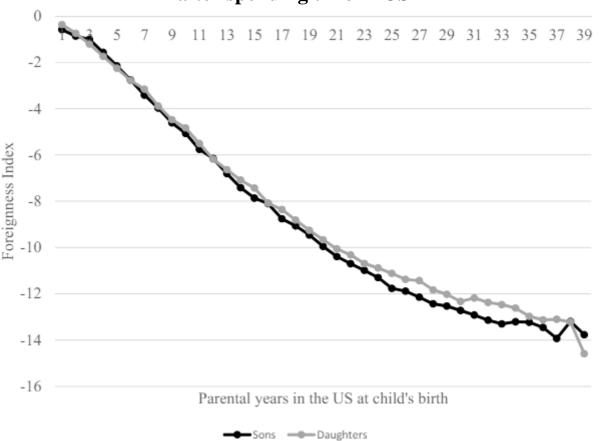




Assimilation:

Immigrants choose less foreign names for their children as they spend more time in the US

Figure: Immigrants selected less foreign names for children after spending time in US



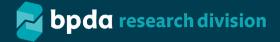
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Name based assimilation is faster the more culturally distant the parents are from the native-born population

Source: Abramitzky et al., National Bureau of Economic Research, 2020.

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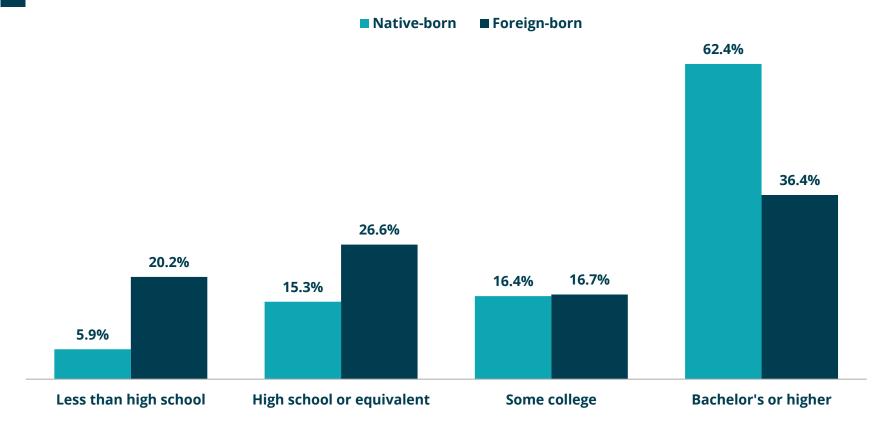
Foreign born work in Boston through different arrangements

- Visas for temporary work include:
 - F1 student visas, H-1B for highly-skilled workers, H-2B for low-skilled nonagricultural workers and J-1 for exchange visitors
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS) allows residents of countries designated by USCIS permission to work
- Refugees, asylees have permission to work; parole grants temporary permission to work
- Green-card holders can work permanently
- Naturalized citizens can work permanently
 - About 55% of foreign born in Boston are naturalized citizens (ACS, 2022)
- Many foreign born also work as unauthorized workers



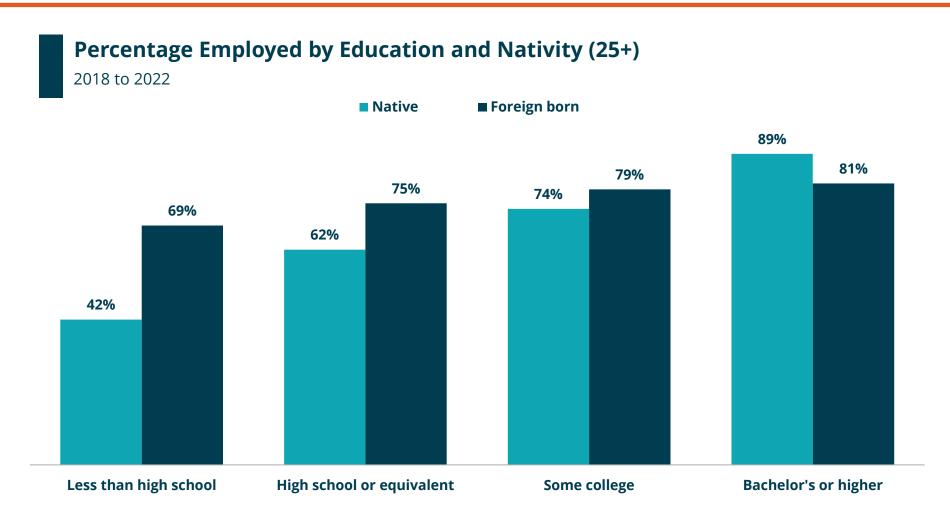
U.S. immigration policy favors those with higher levels of education, but nearly half of Boston's foreign born residents aged 25+ have a high school education or less

Share of Foreign-born and Native-born by Educational Attainment (25+) 2018-2022



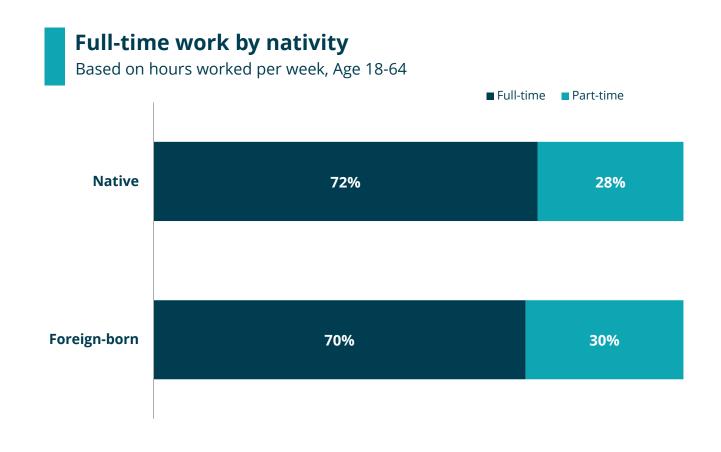


Foreign-born Boston residents are more likely to be employed at all levels at most educational levels



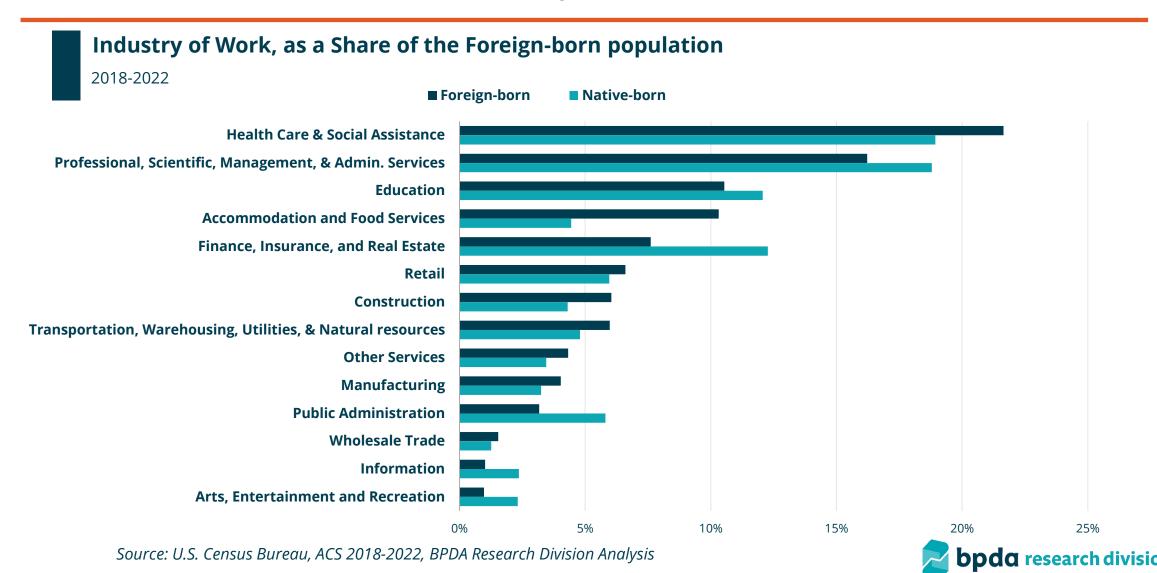


Foreign-born Boston residents are slightly more likely to work full-time (35 hours or more)

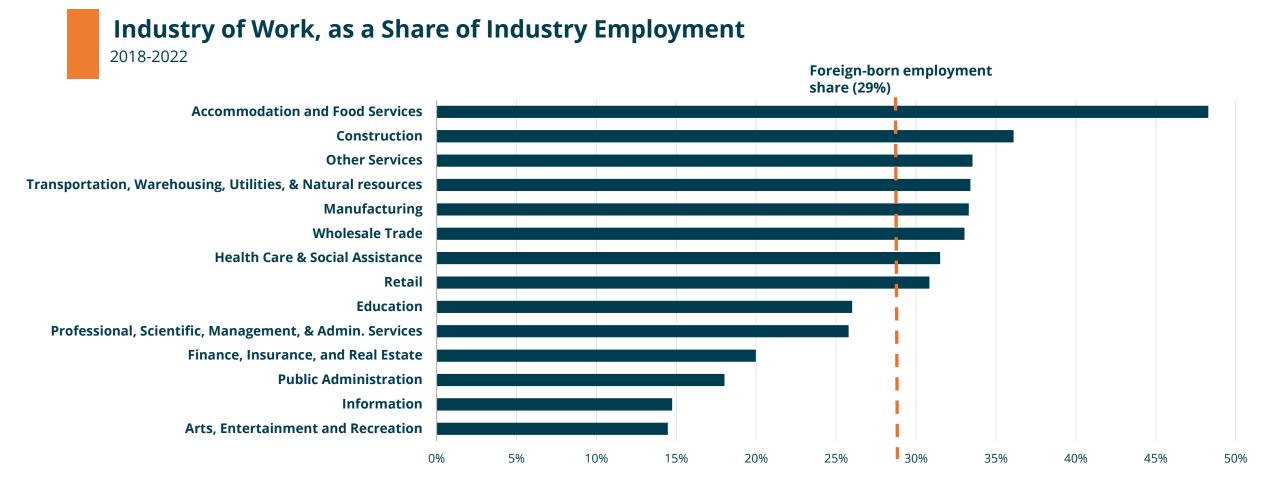




Most foreign born work in health care and social assistance, followed by the professional, scientific, management and administrative service industry

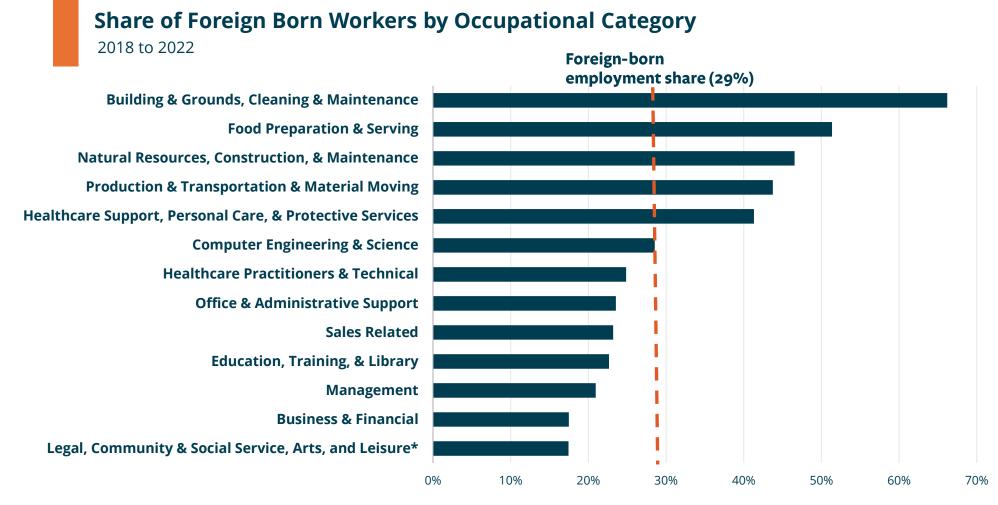


Foreign-born workers comprise almost half of the employees in accommodation and food services





Foreign-born workers are over-represented in some blue collar and service occupations

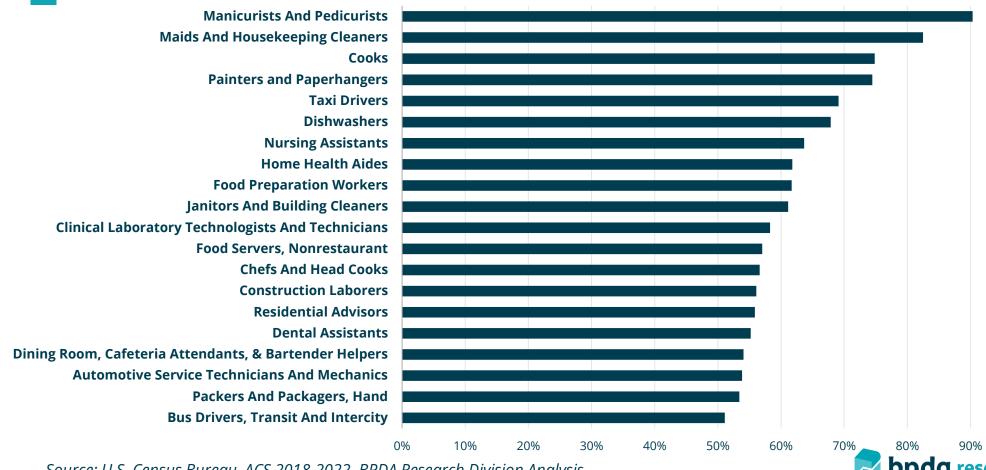




The occupation with the highest share of foreign-born workers is Manicurists and Pedicurists with 90%

Occupations with More than 50% Foreign-Born Workers

2018-2022



Workers with college degrees are often hired through the H-1B visa



• These are temporary working visas for 3 years, can be renewed for a total work time of 6 years.

 Employees must have at least a Bachelor's degree, and work duties must be complex and specialized.

• Annual cap nationally: 65,000+ for BA and an extra 20,000 for graduate degrees.

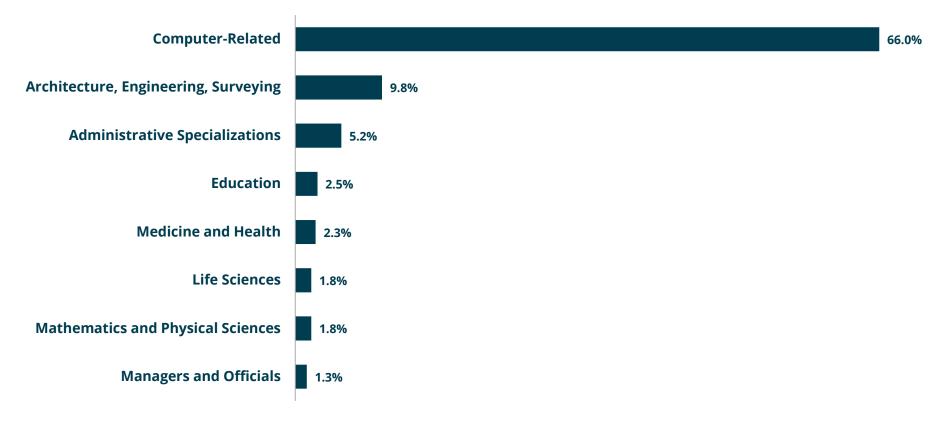


Two-thirds of H1-B holders nationally work in computerrelated occupations



Major Occupational Groups of Approved H1-B Beneficiaries

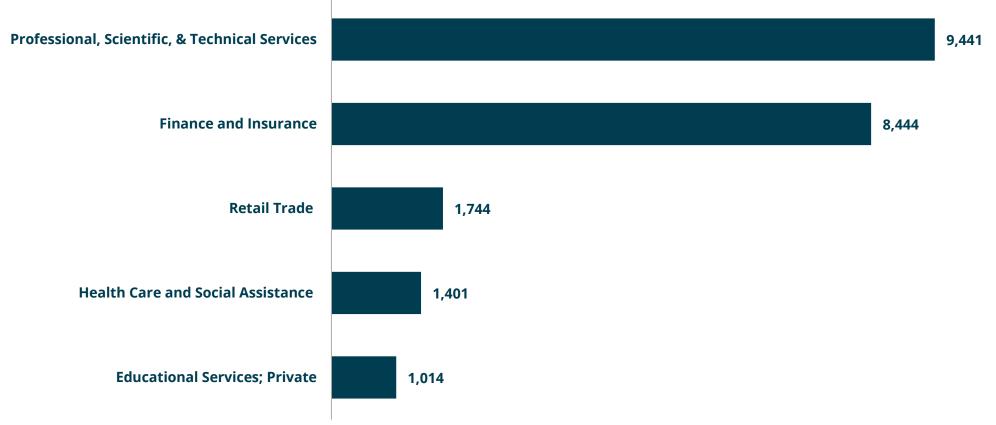
FY 2022





Boston employers sponsored petitions for ~25,000 H-1B visa workers between 2020-2022, concentrated in Finance and Insurance and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services



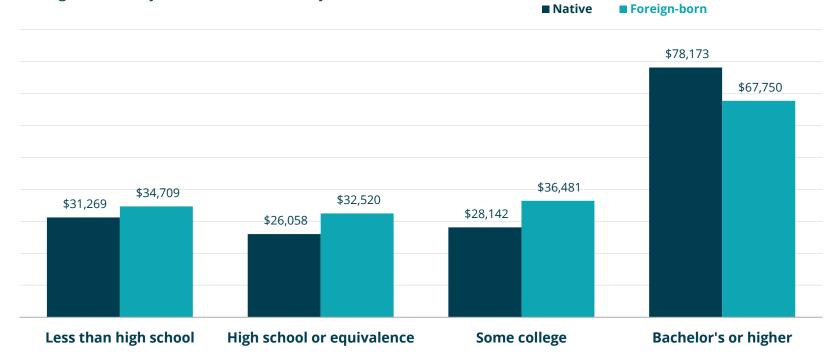




By educational level, foreign-born workers earn more, except among those with a Bachelor's degree or higher

Median personal earnings

Workers aged 18-64, by education and nativity, constant dollars, annual



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2022, BPDA Research Division Analysis



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Conclusions

Contributions of Boston's Foreign-Born



Immigrants have historic importance in Boston

Boston's share of immigrants is about twice the national average.

Demographic Contributions

As native birth rates decline, foreign-born contribute to population growth, as in the 1970s.

Economic Contributions

The foreign-born work in key industries that would be hard hit without their contributions.



Want to learn more?

Some resources (links):



Office of Immigrant Advancement

BPDA Diversity Index Tool

BPDA Boston by the Numbers 2020

