

Boston Stories and Numbers

Personal stories meet data to reveal the heart of Boston.



City of Boston
Planning Department

BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS

1

RE-INTRODUCING THE BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS PROJECT

2

INTRODUCING THE UMASS BOSTON PROJECT

3

THE STORIES: KATHERYN, EILEEN, & MATHEUS

4

WHAT'S NEXT: DEBATE TEAM

BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS

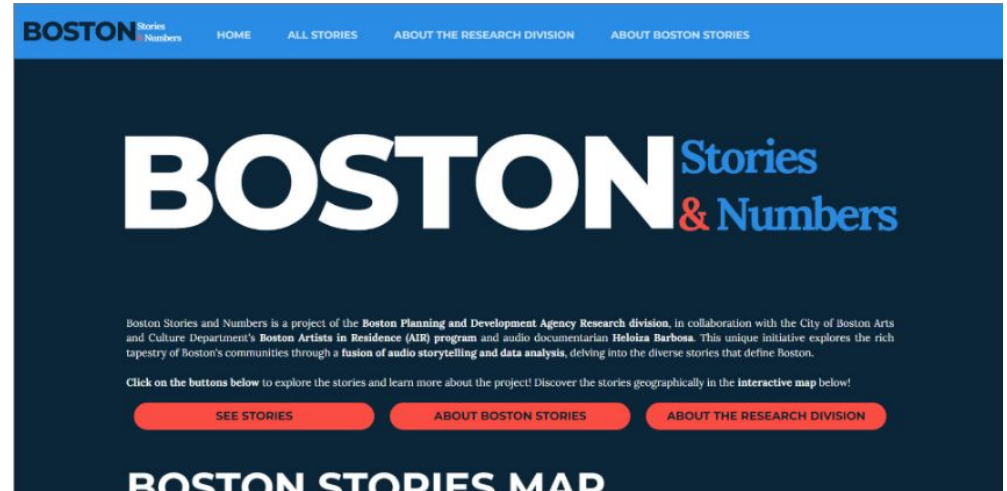
- 1 RE-INTRODUCING THE BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS PROJECT
- 2 INTRODUCING THE UMASS BOSTON PROJECT
- 3 THE STORIES: KATHERYN, EILEEN, & MATHEUS
- 4 WHAT'S NEXT: DEBATE TEAM

THE BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS PROJECT

A **collaboration** between audiocumentarian and Artist in Residence **Heloiza Barbosa** and the **Research Division** of the City of Boston Planning Department.

Brings together Bostonians' diverse **stories** with relevant demographic **data** in an interactive website for a holistic understanding of Boston's people and communities.

Listen to these stories & dive into the data on our website:



Visit: bostonplans.org/research/boston-stories-and-numbers

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & INSPIRATION

PRINCIPLES

- **Enhancing Interpretation**
 - Stories enhance our interpretation of complex ideas and give context to descriptive data analysis
- **Toward a better world**
 - Stories help us imagine a better world
- **Seeking empowerment**
 - Co-creation leads to empowerment of unknown narratives
- **Against extraction**
 - Not extraction of narratives but skills are built to produce audio-storytelling

DATA INSPIRATION

- **Diverse youth population**
 - Boston is a major city in the United States with a diverse younger population
- **Data needs a story**
 - Boston's young population has a story to tell that is often overlooked
- **Overlooked stories**
 - BPD Research Division produces many data analysis that, when place in a story context, enables real time insights

IN 2023, WE CO-CREATED 3 AUDIO-DOCUMENTARIES



For the full stories & data visit: bostonplans.org/research/boston-stories-and-numbers

BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS

1 RE-INTRODUCING THE BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS PROJECT

2 INTRODUCING THE UMASS BOSTON PROJECT

3 THE STORIES: KATHERYN, EILEEN, & MATHEUS

4 WHAT'S NEXT: DEBATE TEAM

EMERGING LATINO VOICES

Experiences Shaping Boston's Future

The 2024 Boston Stories and Numbers series delves into the experiences of Latino students at UMass Boston.

As part of an undergraduate research and leadership seminar, the four authors of this year's audio documentaries tell engaging stories of their struggles in their journey to Boston from Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and rural Mississippi.

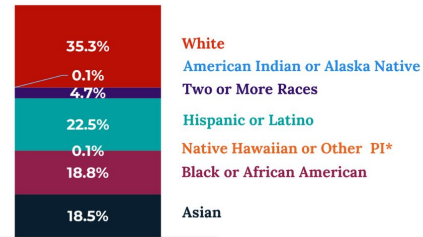
They invite us into their distinctive experiences while simultaneously telling how they overcome hardships to contribute to a more just world they strive to create.

Listen to these stories in full & dive into the data on our website:

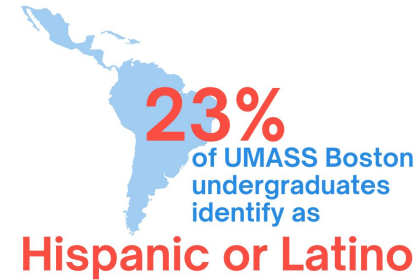
bostonplans.org/research/boston-stories-and-numbers

UMass Boston Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity

Fall 2023



UMass Boston Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning



Fall 2023 Quick Facts Report, UMass Boston Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning.

BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS

- 1 RE-INTRODUCING THE BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS PROJECT
- 2 INTRODUCING THE UMASS BOSTON PROJECT
- 3 THE STORIES: KATHERYN, EILEEN, & MATHEUS
- 4 WHAT'S NEXT: DEBATE TEAM

KATHERYN'S STORY *What Is Community? How Do We Find One?*



Katheryn Gravenhost, a junior economics major at UMass Boston, reveals the rocky road she traveled from her native Colombia to Massachusetts.

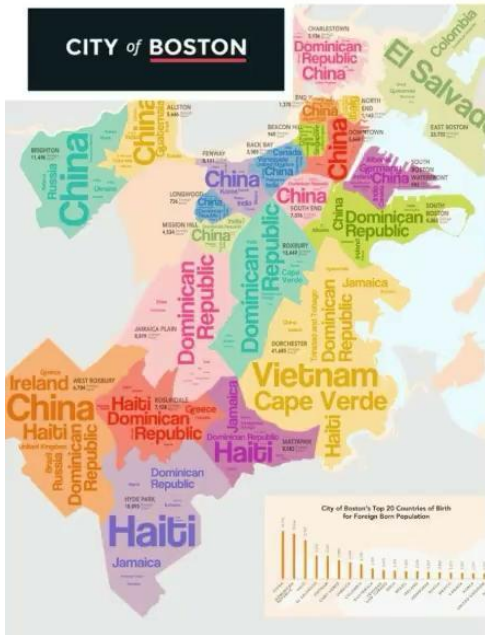
Katheryn's journey begins in Valledupar, Colombia, where her mother, a painter, dreamed that education would unlock a brighter future for her daughter. But when the dream of higher education became unreachable in Colombia, Katheryn was sent to live with her aunt and cousins in Lynn, Massachusetts.

Now a student at UMass Boston, Katheryn struggles with the loneliness of being in a new country and longs for a sense of belonging. In this story, Katheryn reflects on the importance of community, speaking with her aunt and cousins about how their lives have been shaped by it. Together, they explore profound questions: What is community? How do we know when we belong? What does it take to build and sustain it?

KATHERYN'S STORY *What Is Community? How Do We Find One?*

Boston Stories and Numbers

An audio documentary series

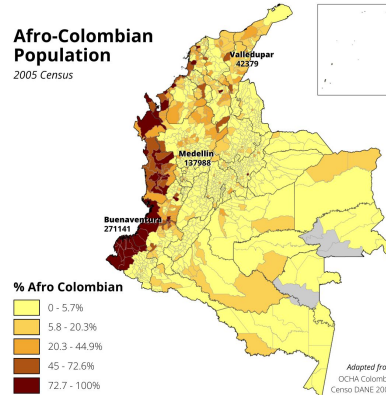


City of Boston
Planning Department

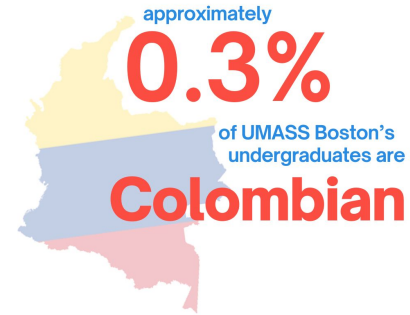
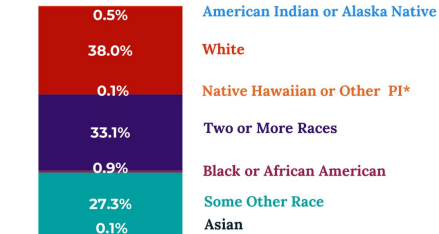
HELOIZA BARBOSA
Audio-documentarian
Artist-in-Residence

Afro-Colombian Population

2005 Census



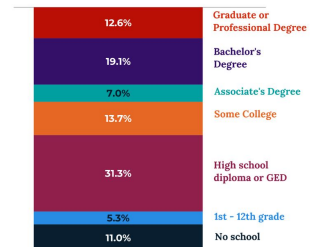
Colombians in Massachusetts by Race



UMass Boston Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning

Educational Attainment of Colombians in Massachusetts

For Adults 25 Years or Older



EILEEN'S STORY

From Braceros to H-2B Visa - A Flawed Pathway



Eileen, a junior psychology major at UMASS Boston, brings to life her experience in rural Mississippi, where she grew up in a mixed-legal-status family, with unauthorized immigrant parents.

Eileen carries the weight of memory, the soft threads of a story woven in Laurel, Mississippi—a story the world forgets, but she cannot.

Through her voice, we will see the flaws of the H-2A and H-2B guest workers visas*, to the promises that American contractors made, and the lives they broke. She unearths the truth of her father's journey, one of many who crossed borders to fill the spaces and work the jobs others would not.

Her research blooms with empathy, revealing the quiet resilience of workers who have fed and built this country for centuries.

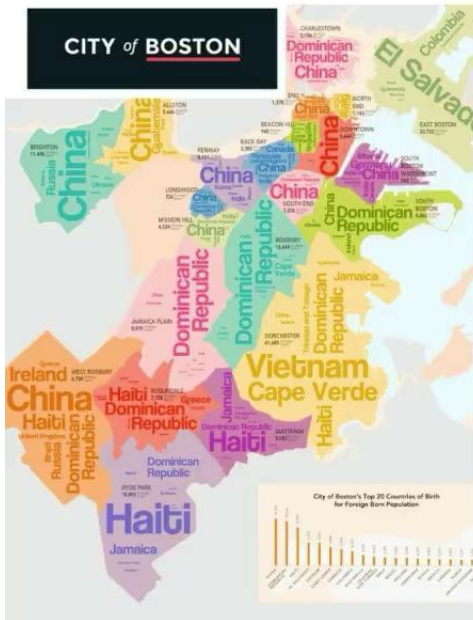
*The H-2A program allows U.S. employers who meet specific regulatory requirements to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary agricultural jobs. The H-2B program allows U.S. to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary nonagricultural jobs. When these visas expire, a person becomes unauthorized to reside in the United States. Non-immigrant guestworkers face more challenges from employment regulations than others in the labor market. Labor market policies do not always adequately protect foreign-born workers even though many people in the United States benefit from the product of foreign-born labor.

Emerging Latino Voices

EILEEN'S STORY *From Braceros to H-2B Visa - A Flawed Pathway*

Boston Stories and Numbers

An audio documentary series



City of Boston
Planning Department



HELOIZA BARBOSA
Audio-documentarian
Artist-in-Residence

For the full story & data visit: bostonplans.org/research/boston-stories-and-numbers

In Mississippi,
Agriculture, forestry, & fishing
employers account for



17%
of H-2B petitions but

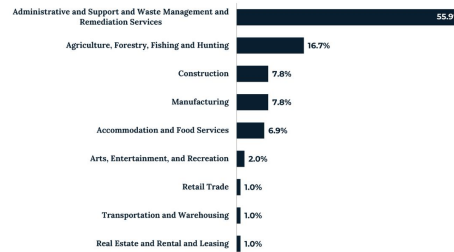
76%
of H-2B violations



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services H-2B Employer Data Hub FY2015-2025,
U.S. Department of Labor, WHD Action Data 1990-2024.

H-2B Visa Employers by Industry

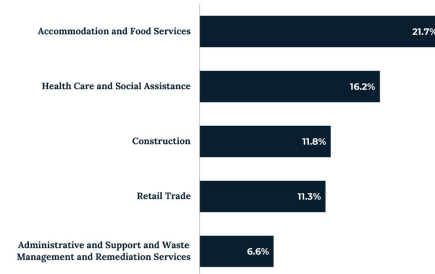
Mississippi, FY2015-2025



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services H-2B Employer Data Hub,
City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis

Top 5 Mississippi Industries by FLSA* Violations

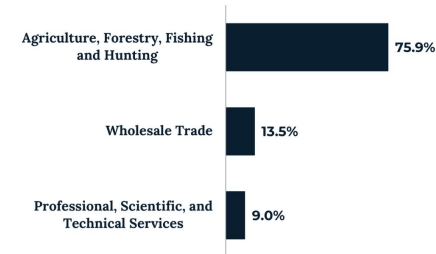
As a Percentage of All MS industries' FLSA violations (1990-2024)



*FLSA: Fair Labor Standards Act
U.S. Department of Labor, WHD Action Data,
City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis

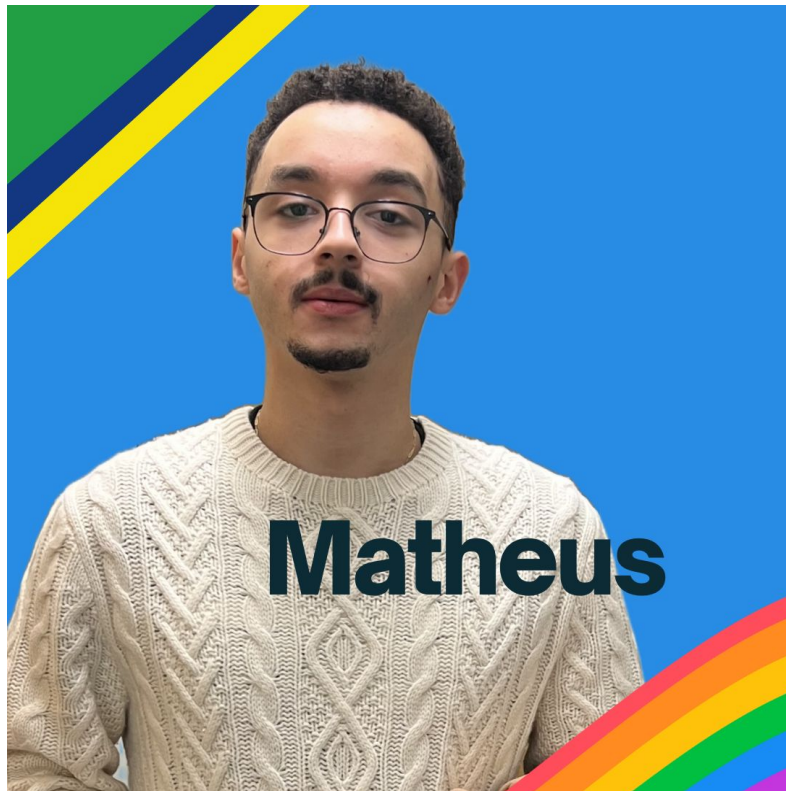
H-2B Violations by Industry

As a Percentage of All MS industries' H-2B violations (1990-2024)



U.S. Department of Labor, WHD Action Data,
City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis

MATHEUS'S STORY *Love is Love is Love*



Matheus, a junior pre-law major at UMass Boston, shares a heartfelt and courageous story of navigating life as a gay youth in Brazil.

From an early age, Matheus faced discrimination and violence simply for being true to himself. As the hostility around him grew, Matheus made the difficult decision to leave his home and migrate to the United States, hoping for acceptance and a fresh start.

Yet, in the public schools of Massachusetts, he encountered the same cycles of bullying and rejection, leaving him feeling isolated and driving him into a deep depression. Withdrawn and disheartened, Matheus struggled to find his place—until he discovered a path forward through his education.

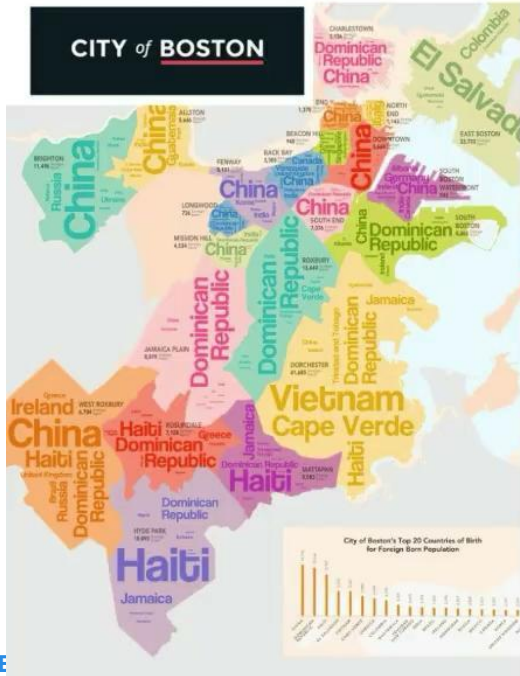
His story is a poignant reflection on resilience, self-discovery, and the transformative power of education in the face of profound challenges.

Emerging Latino Voices

MATHEUS'S STORY *Love is Love is Love*

Boston Stories and Numbers

An audio documentary series



City of Boston
Planning Department



HELOIZA BARBOSA
Audio-documentarian
Artist-in-Residence

47.5%
of gay/lesbian Boston residents
have experienced **one to three ACEs**

Adverse
Childhood
Experiences

compared to
32%
of heterosexual
Boston residents

Boston Public Health Commission,
Demographic Characteristics and Social Determinants of Health Among Boston's

1 in 4
gay/lesbian Boston residents

experience persistent **Anxiety**

compared to

1 in 5
heterosexual Boston residents

Boston Public Health Commission,
Demographic Characteristics and Social Determinants of Health Among Boston's Lesbian,

Massachusetts'
LGBTQ High School students face

3.5x

the risk of skipping school
because they felt unsafe

Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth 2020
Report and Recommendations

Massachusetts'
LGBTQ High School students face

1.7x the risk of bullying

+2x the risk of being threatened or injured with a weapon

at school



Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth 2020 Report and Recommendations

For the full story & data visit: bostonplans.org/research/boston-stories-and-numbers

BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS

- 1 RE-INTRODUCING THE BOSTON STORIES & NUMBERS PROJECT
- 2 INTRODUCING THE UMASS BOSTON PROJECT
- 3 THE STORIES: KATHERYN, EILEEN, & MATHEUS
- 4 WHAT'S NEXT: DEBATE TEAM

IN PRODUCTION: BOSTON DEBATES

Boston Debates Racial Wealth Gap: Middle School Students Across Boston

- “Boston Debates” will be a series of 5 episodes
- Each episode will correspond to the topic of the 4 tournaments of the debate season
 - Federal Jobs Guarantee
 - Affordable Housing
 - Universal Basic Income (UBI)
 - Baby Bond (project sponsored by Ayanna Pressley, House Representative MA-7)
- Cecilia and Phil will host

Astrid

THANK YOU!

For the full stories & data visit:
bostonplans.org/research/boston-stories-and-numbers



City of Boston
Planning Department