



Second Generation Immigrants in Massachusetts

August 26, 2022

August 16, 2022 - Mayor Michelle Wu participates in raising the Dominican Republic flag in City Hall Plaza. (Mayor's Office Photo by Mike Mejia)



**boston planning &
development agency**

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01

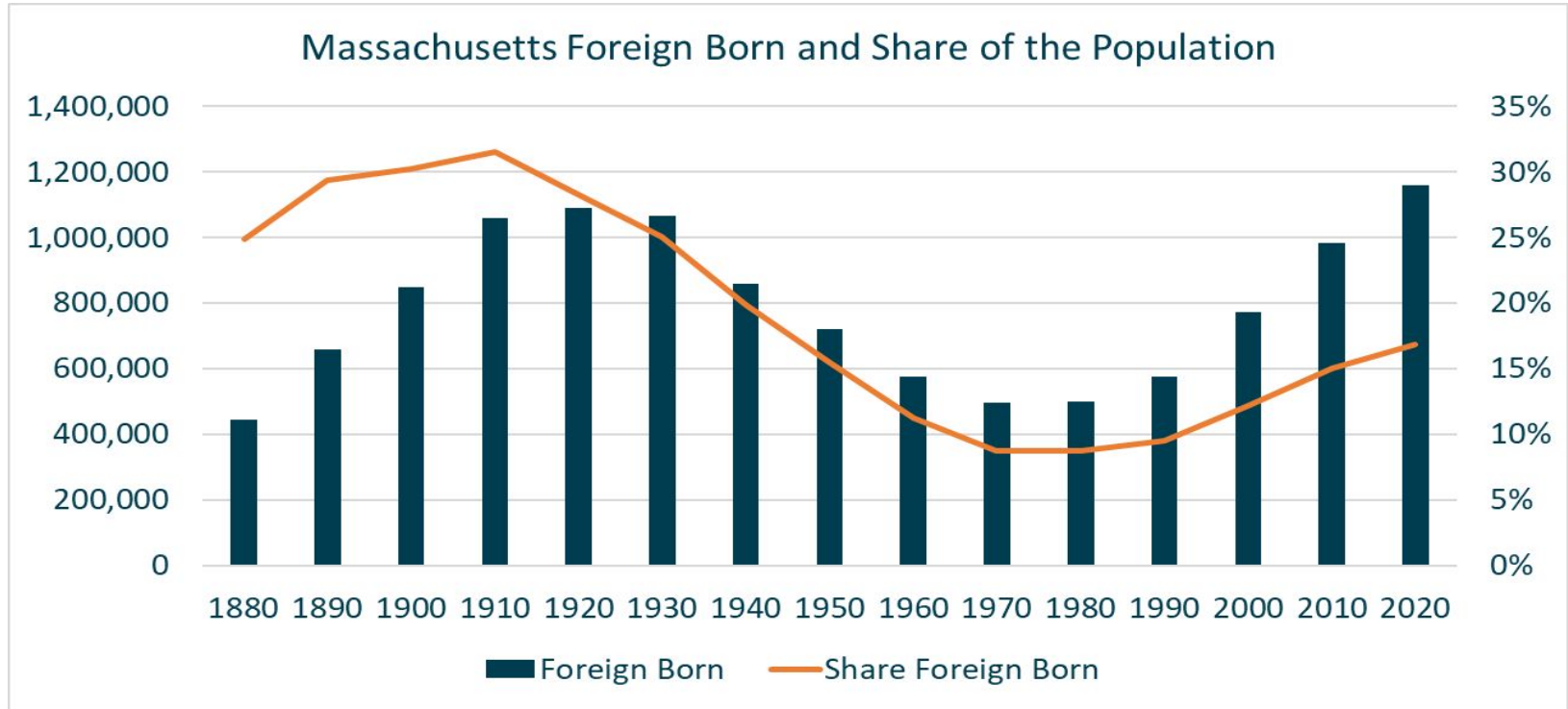
Background Information & Demographics



The foreign-born and second-generation populations in Massachusetts are influenced by U.S. immigration law and other global factors

- During an economic expansion, from 1880 to 1920, immigration, mainly from Europe, increased.
- After a world war and a global pandemic, a 1924 Immigration law greatly reduced immigration.
- In 1965, another immigration law increased migration and encouraged migration from all over the world.
- Thus, an older second-generation population is more likely to have a European origin, while younger second generation population is more diverse.

Even though more foreign born live in Massachusetts today than 100 years ago, their share is half of what it was

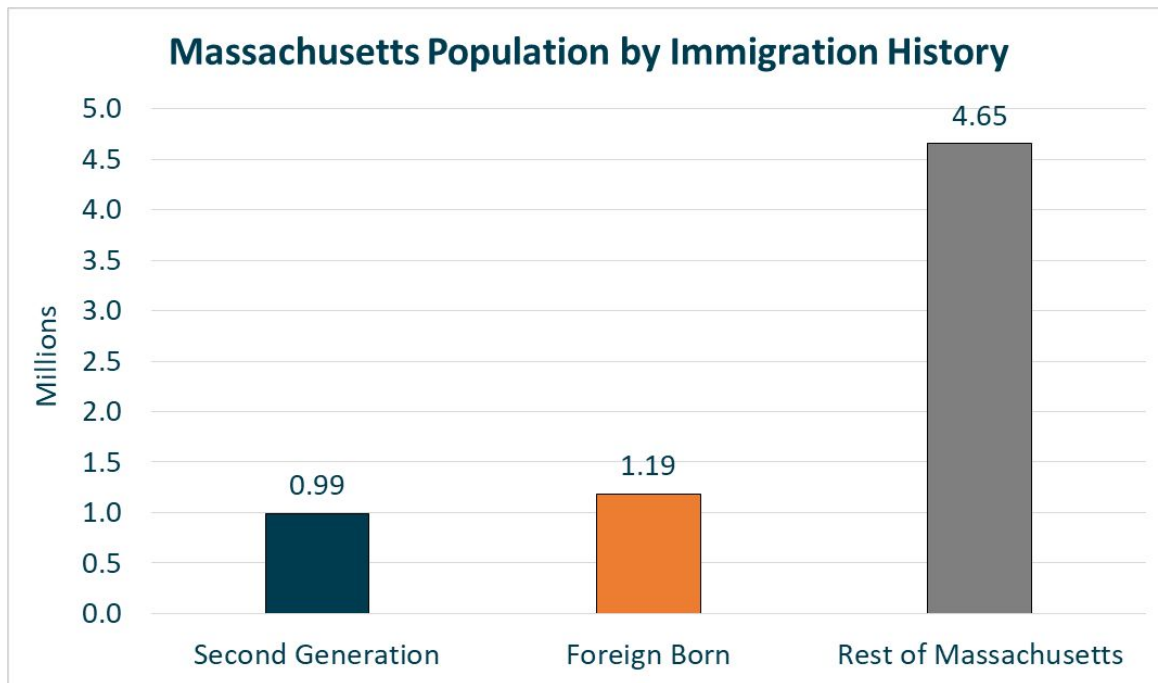


The foreign born, or first generation, were born outside of the United States.

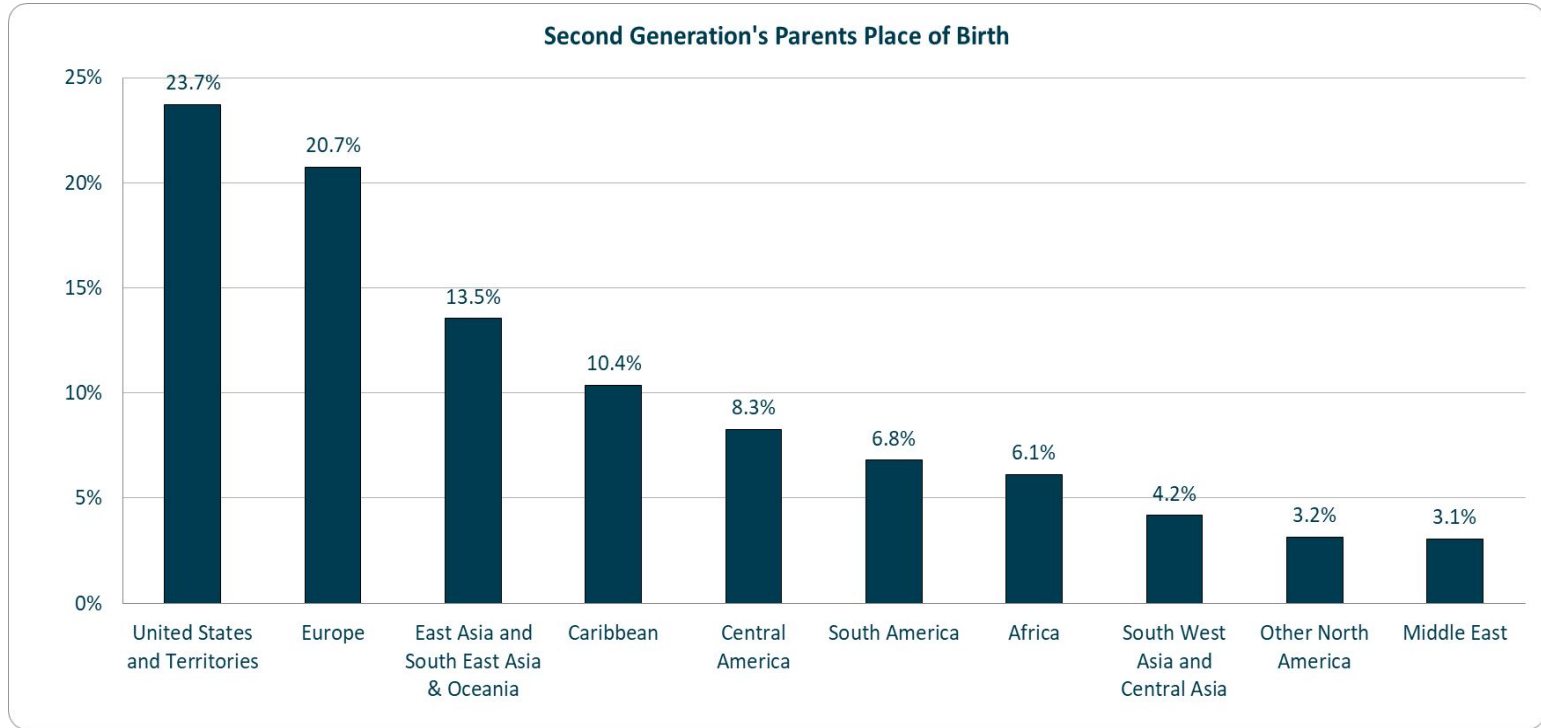
The second generation were generally born in the United States but have at least one foreign-born parent.

Residents in third or subsequent generations (Rest of Massachusetts) are native born and have native-born parents.

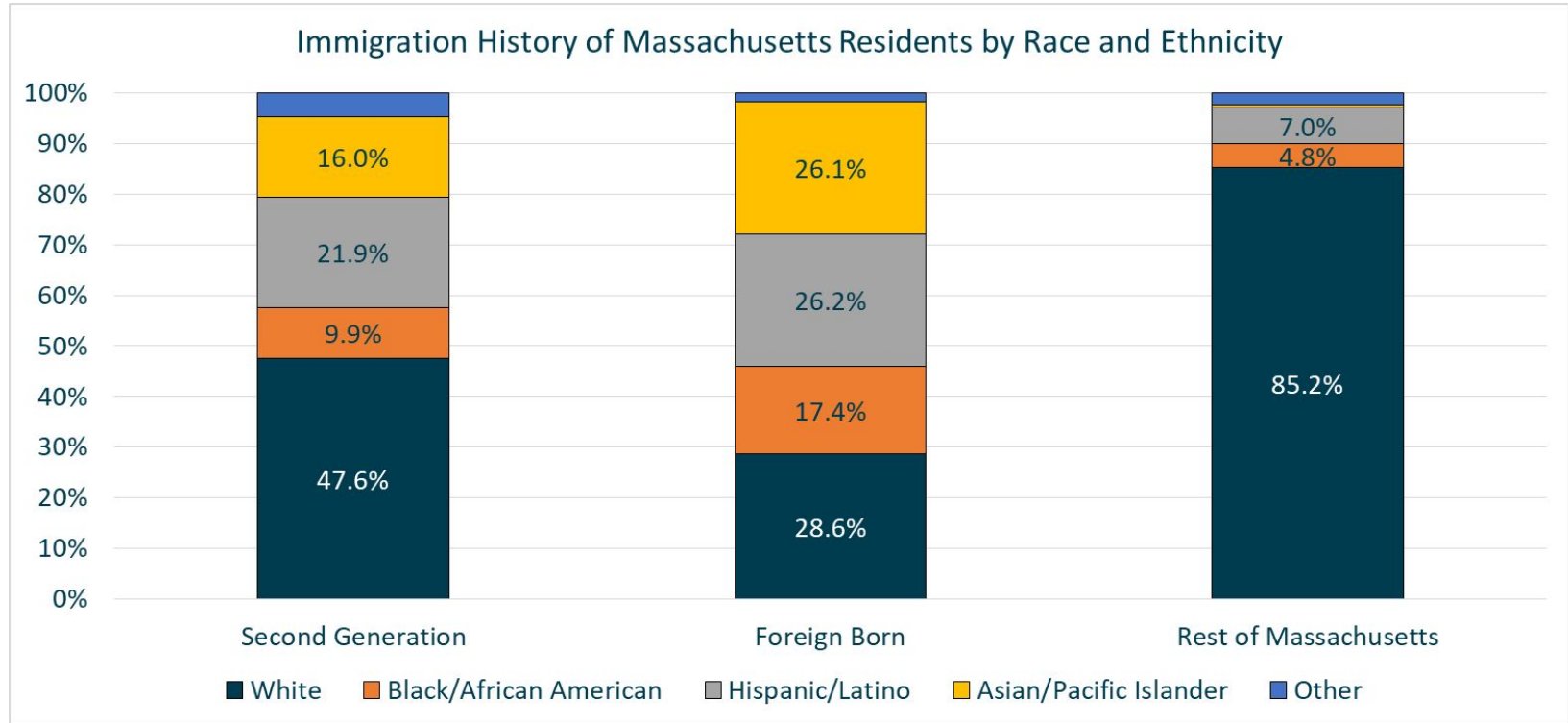
14.5% of the
Massachusetts
population is
second generation



- Nearly a quarter of the 2nd generation have one U.S.-born parent.
- 20% of the 2nd generation (over 40% of those aged 50+) have a parent born in Europe.

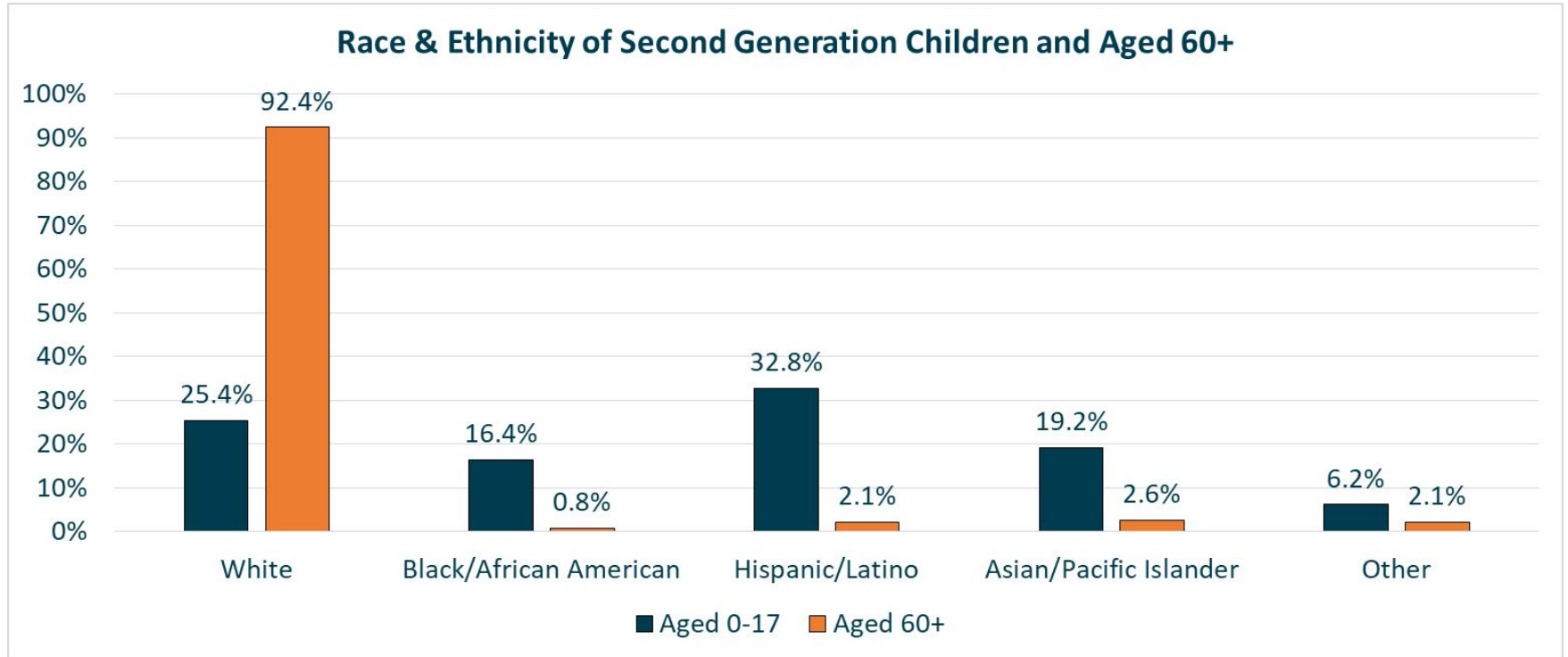


Immigration has created more racial/ethnic diversity in Massachusetts



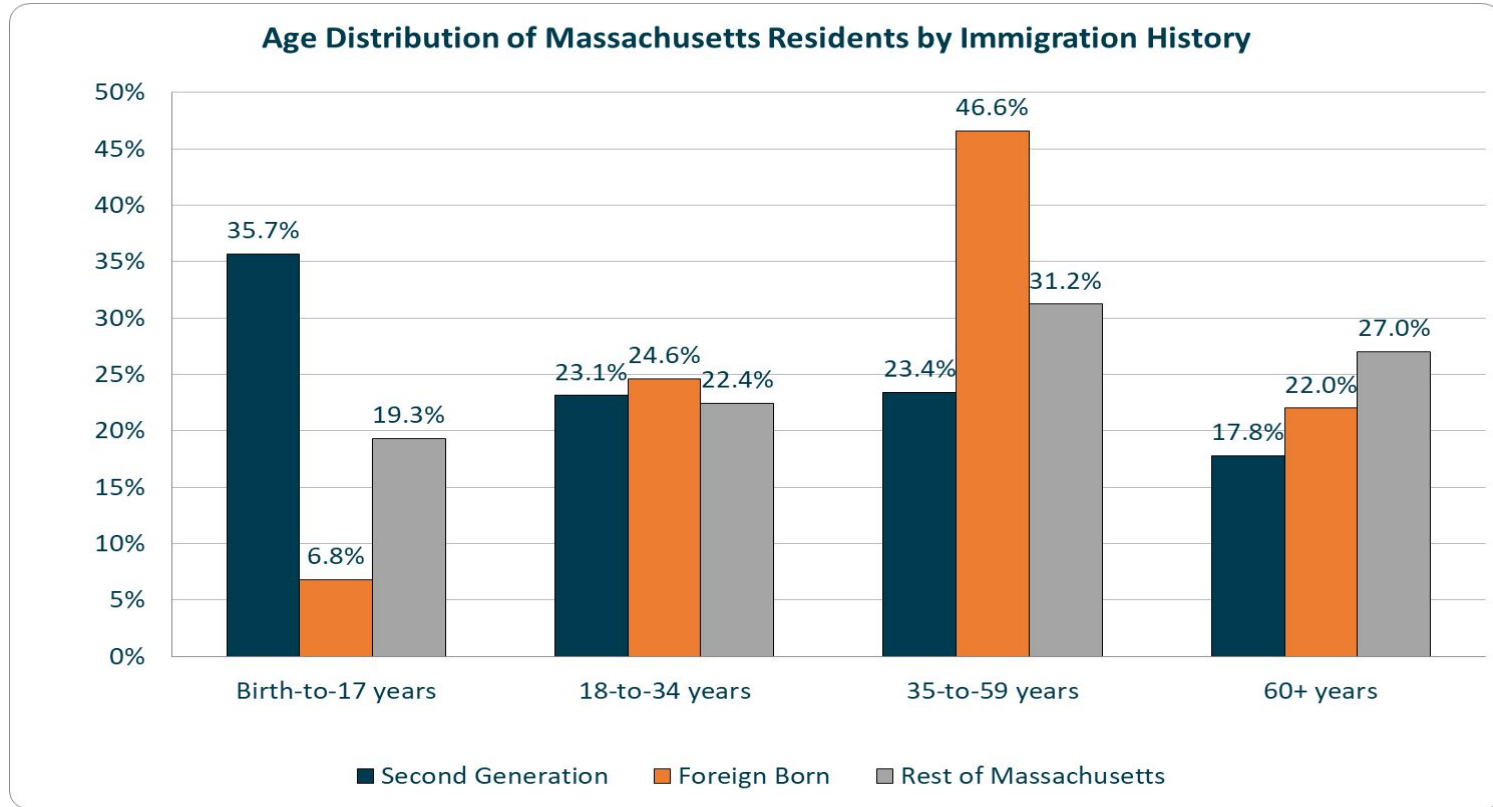
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Recent waves of immigration from across the world have led to a diverse population of 2nd generation children



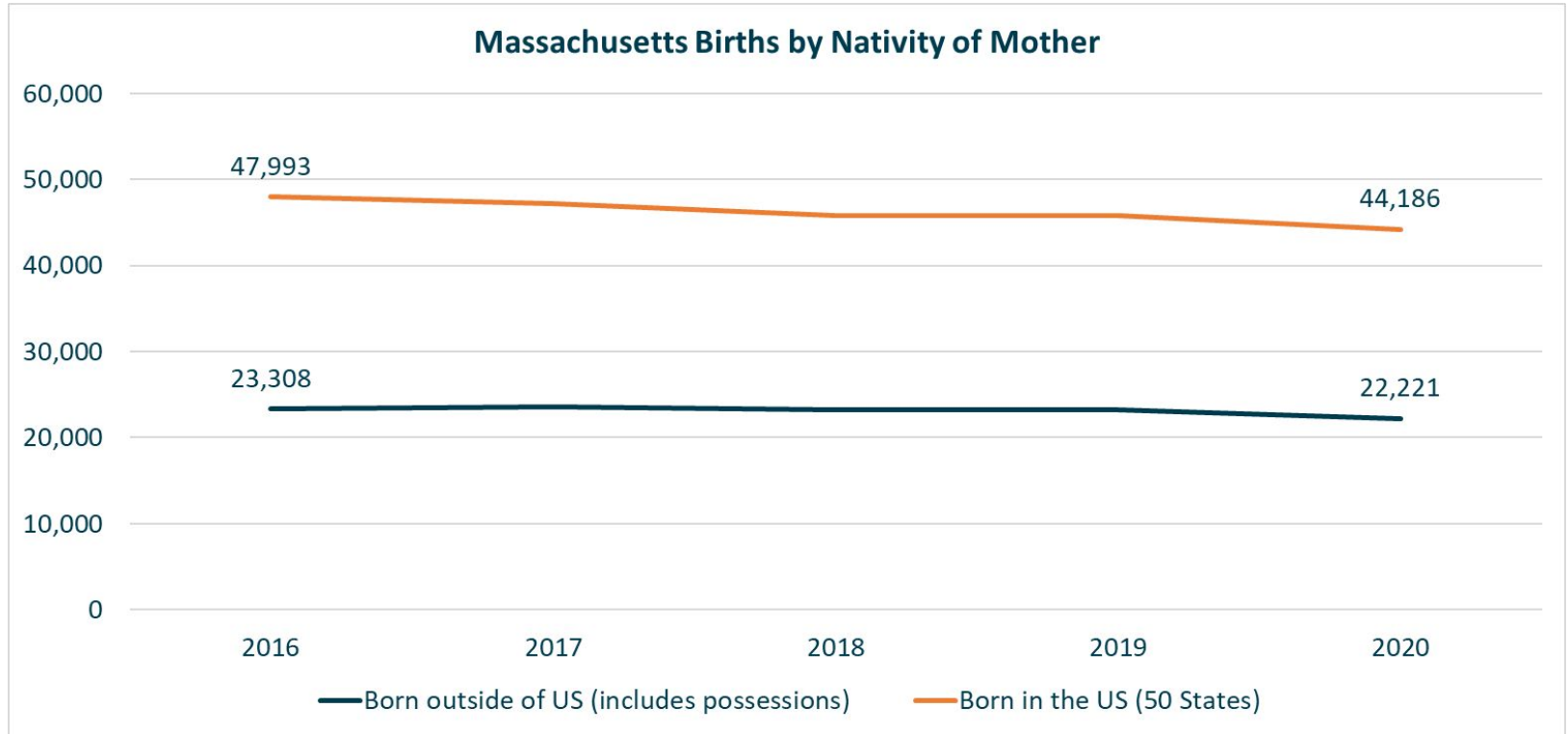
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

The foreign born are disproportionately 35-59 years and more likely to have children



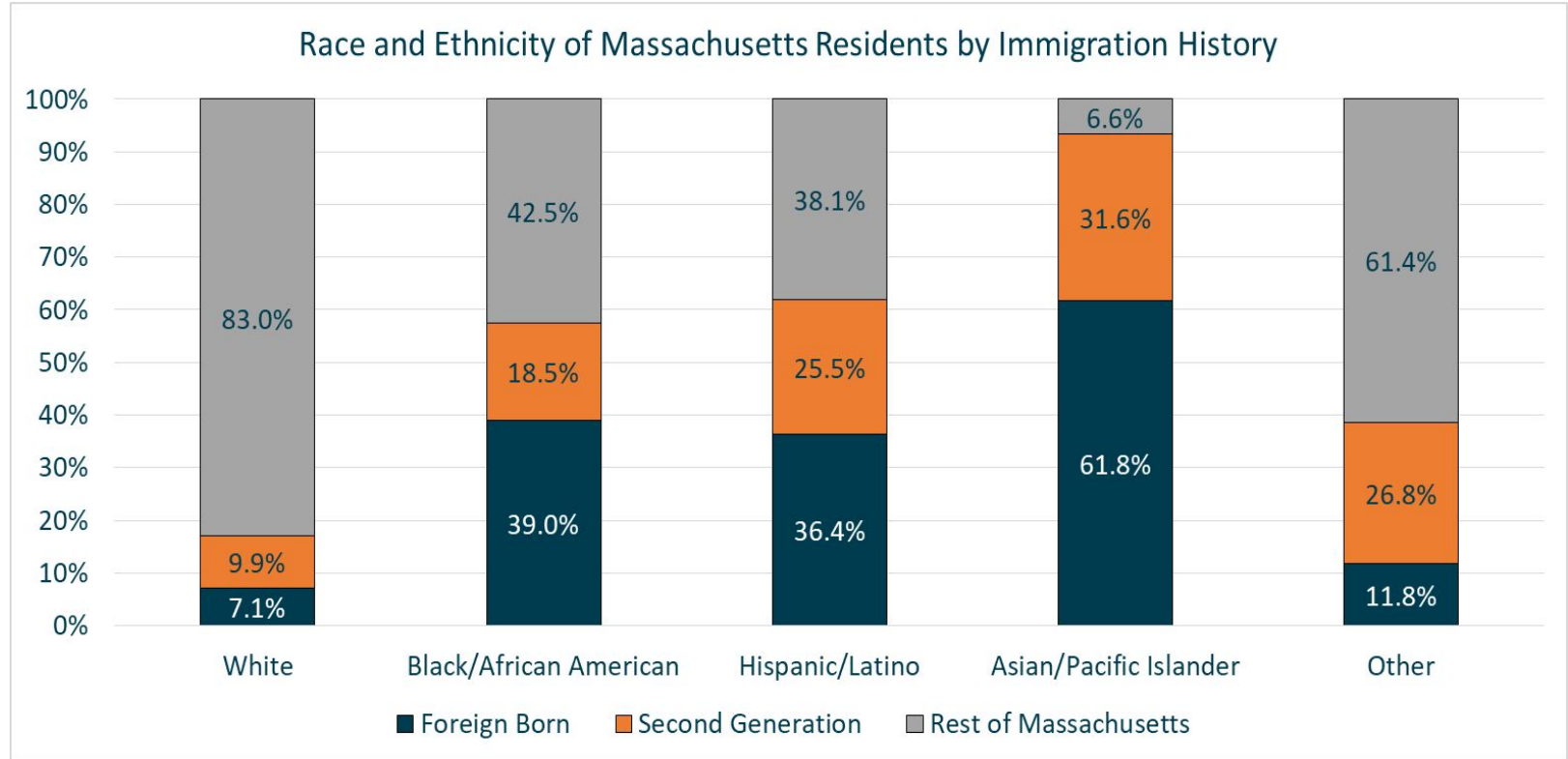
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Even though foreign-born women make up 22% of the population of childbearing years, they give birth to 33% of the children



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics., BPDA Research Division Analysis

A quarter of Massachusetts Hispanic residents and almost a third of Asian residents are second generation immigrants



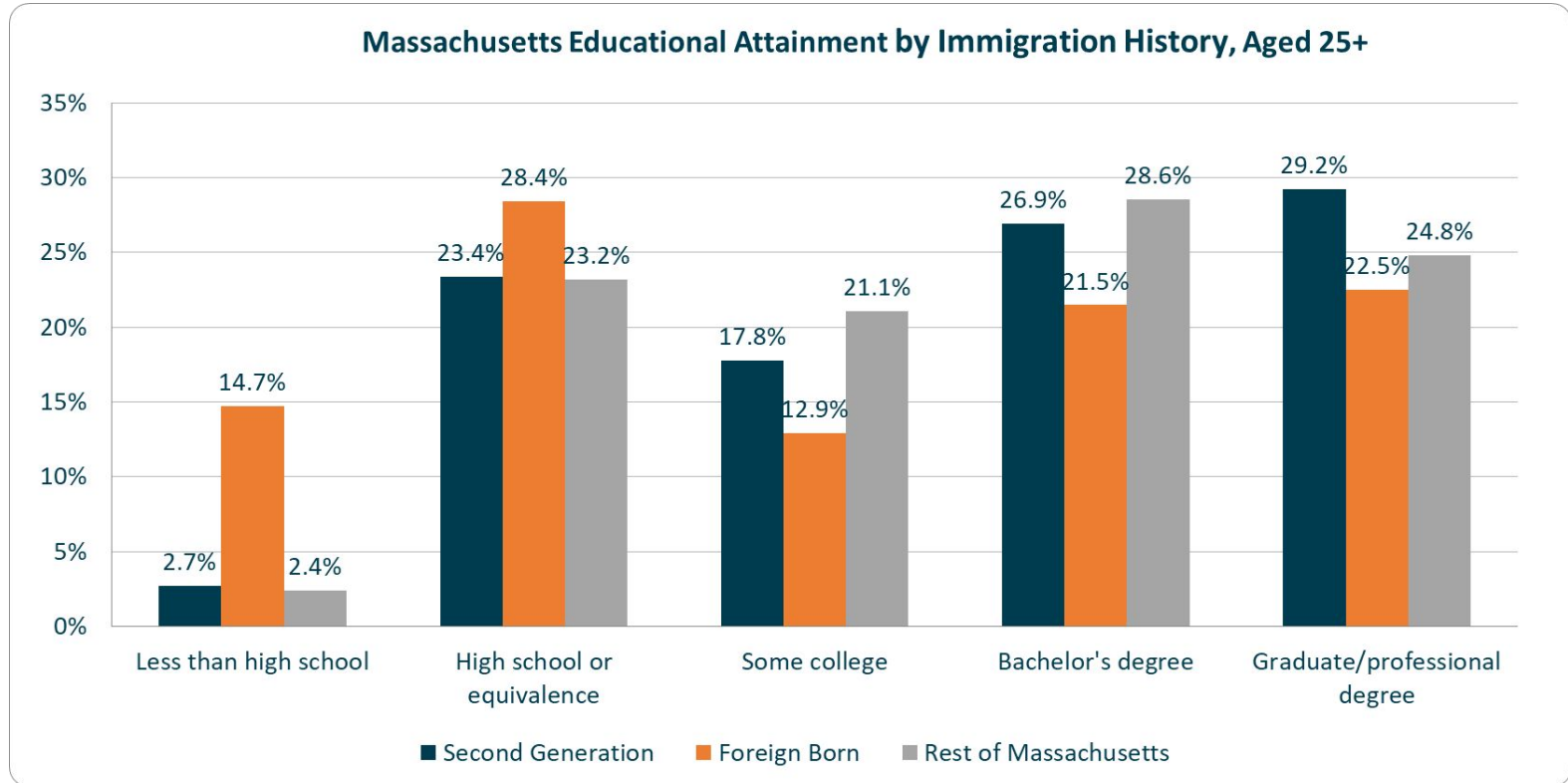
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

02

Education and Employment

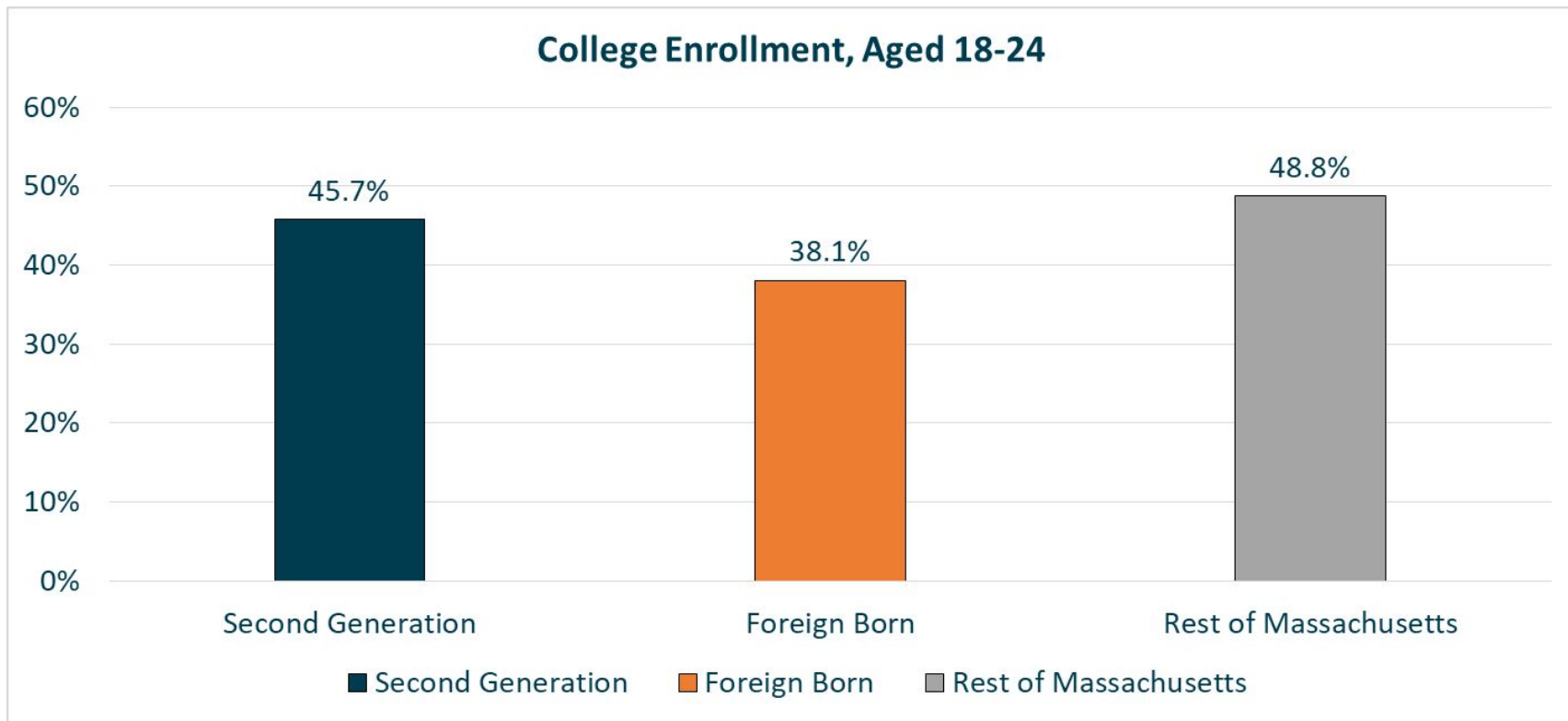


2nd generation immigrants have high levels of education: 29% of those aged 25+ have a graduate/professional degree



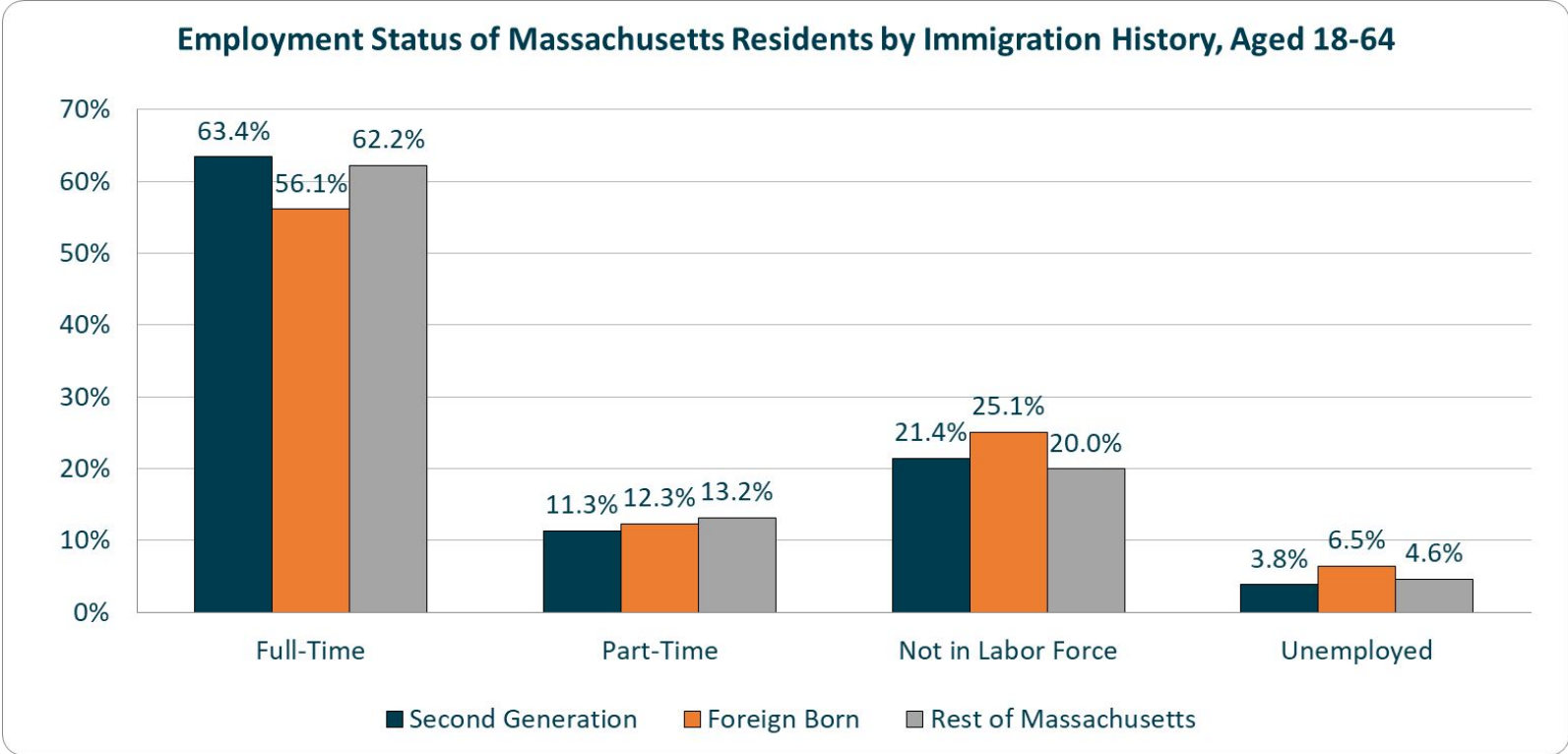
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Among 18-24 year olds, 2nd generation immigrants have similar rates of college enrollment to the rest of Massachusetts



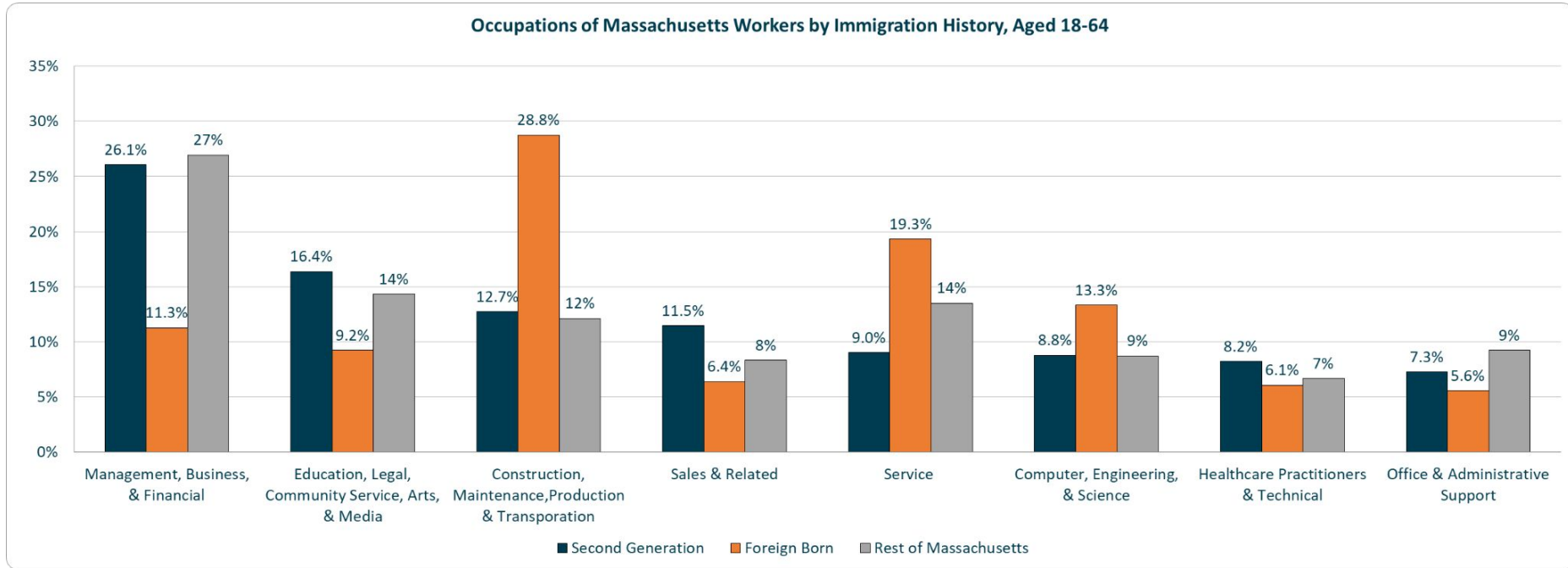
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Second generation immigrants have similar employment structure to the rest of Massachusetts



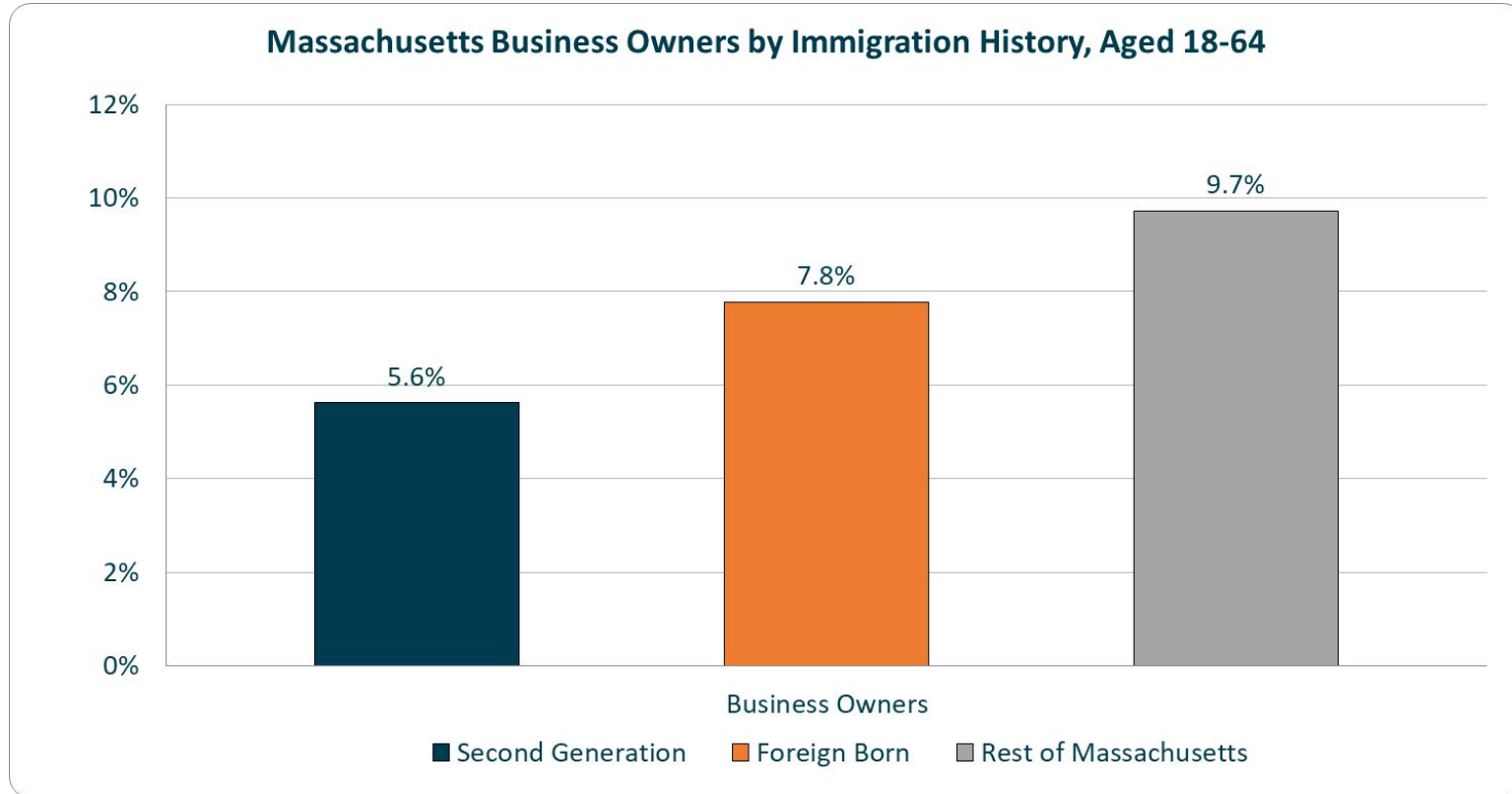
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Second generation immigrants work in similar occupations to the rest of Massachusetts workers



Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

2nd generation immigrants are less likely to be business owners than either the foreign born or the rest of Massachusetts workers



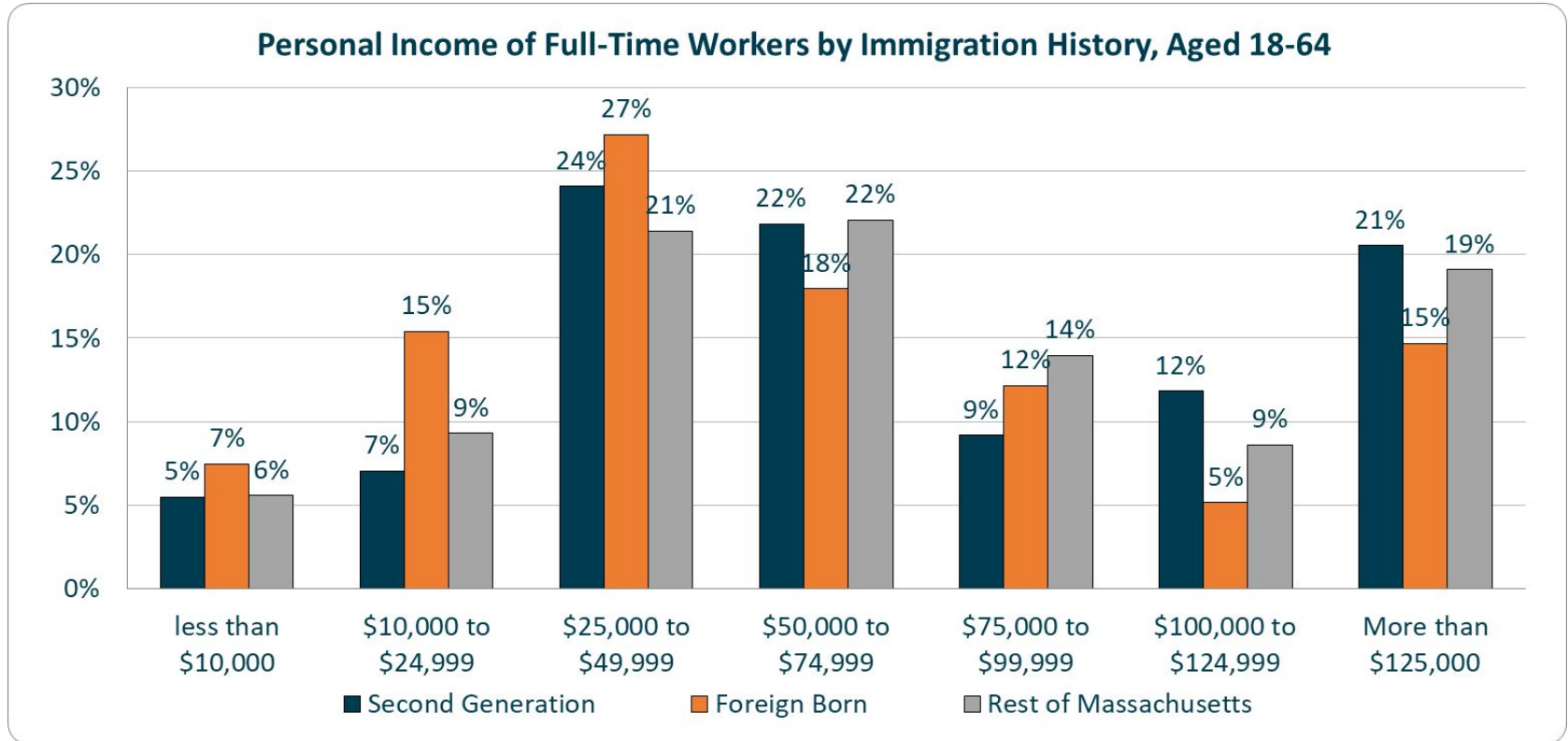
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

03

Income and Household Characteristics

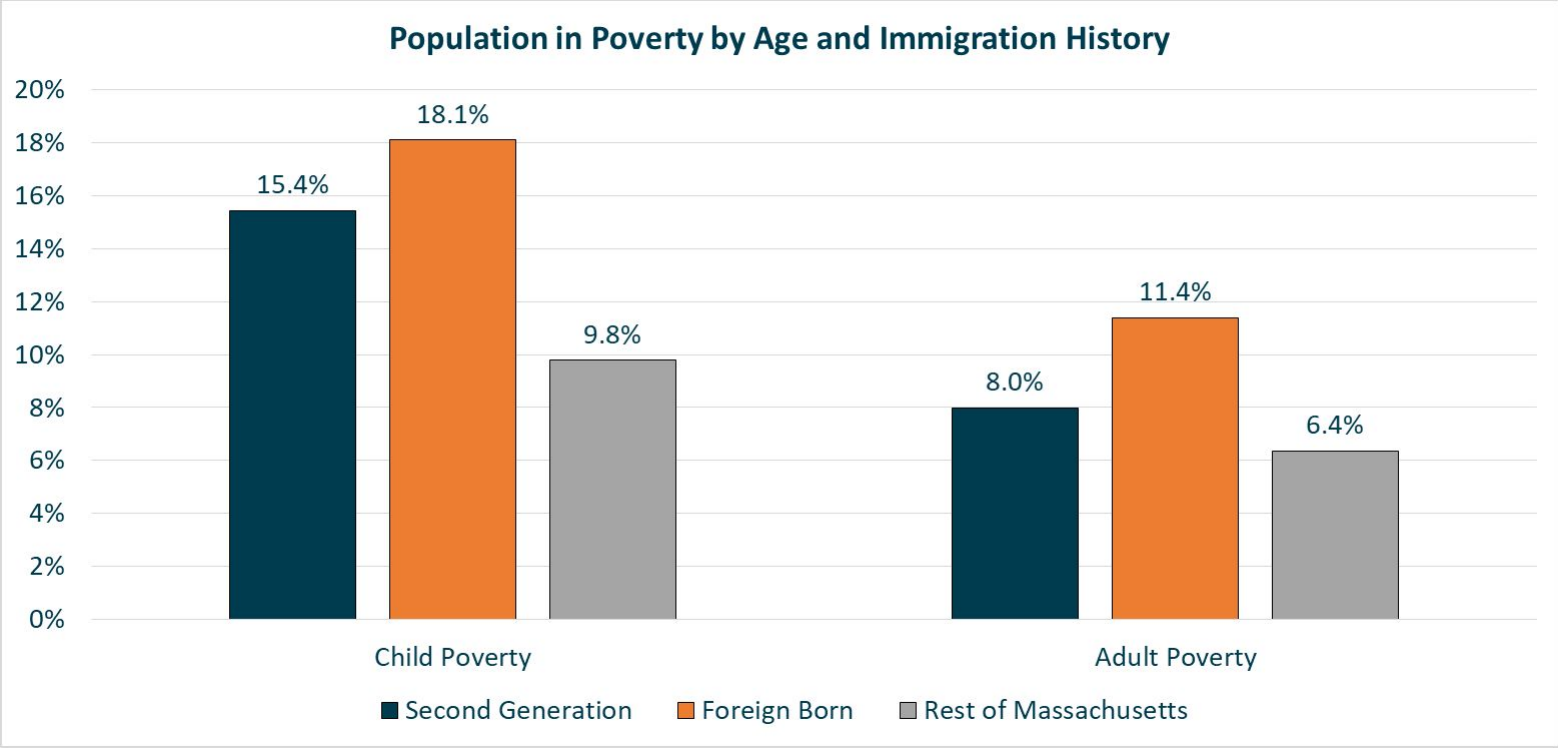


2nd generation immigrants are more likely to be high earners: 33% of 2nd generation full-time workers earn over \$100,000



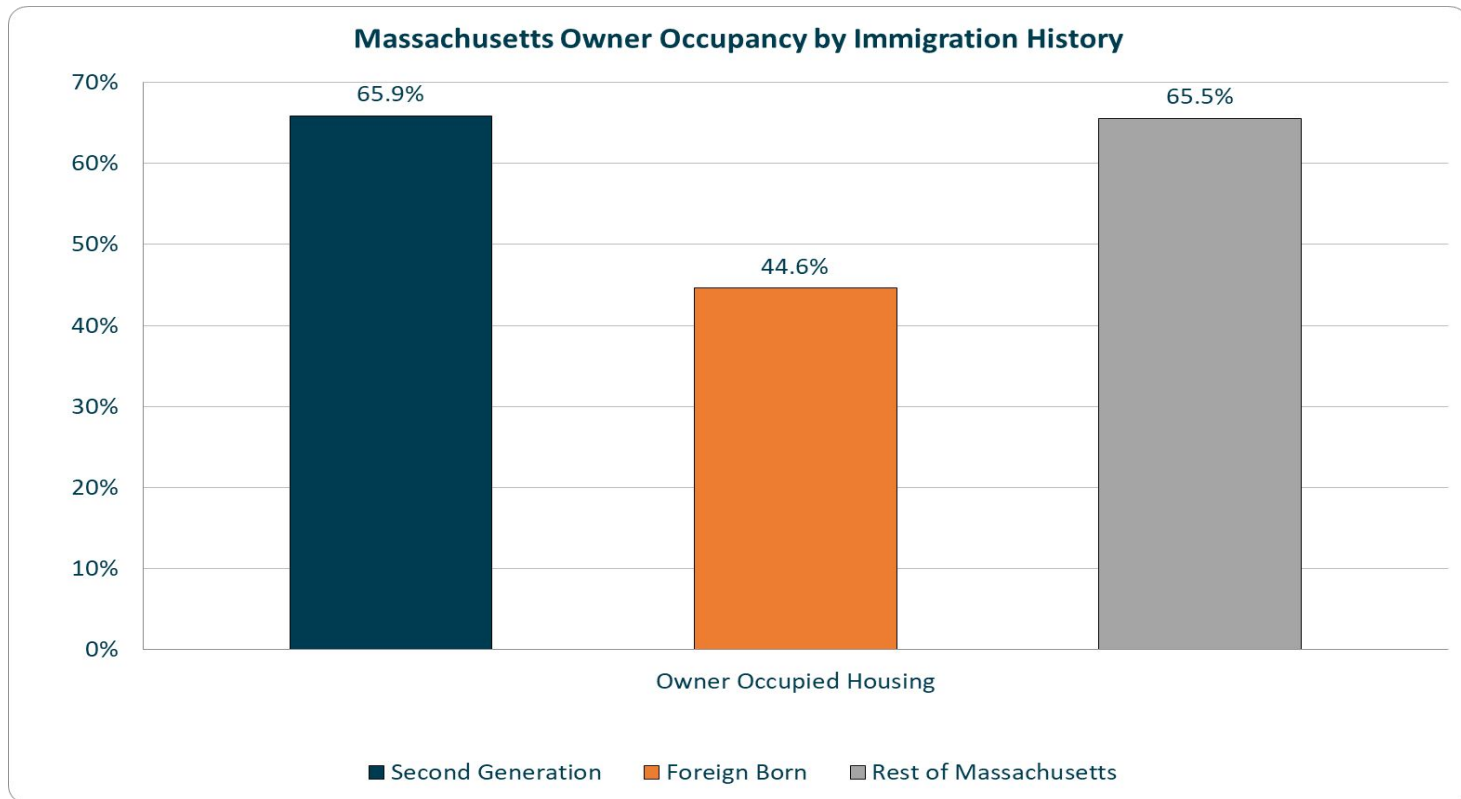
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Second generation residents have lower rates of poverty than the foreign born, but slightly higher poverty rates than the rest of Massachusetts



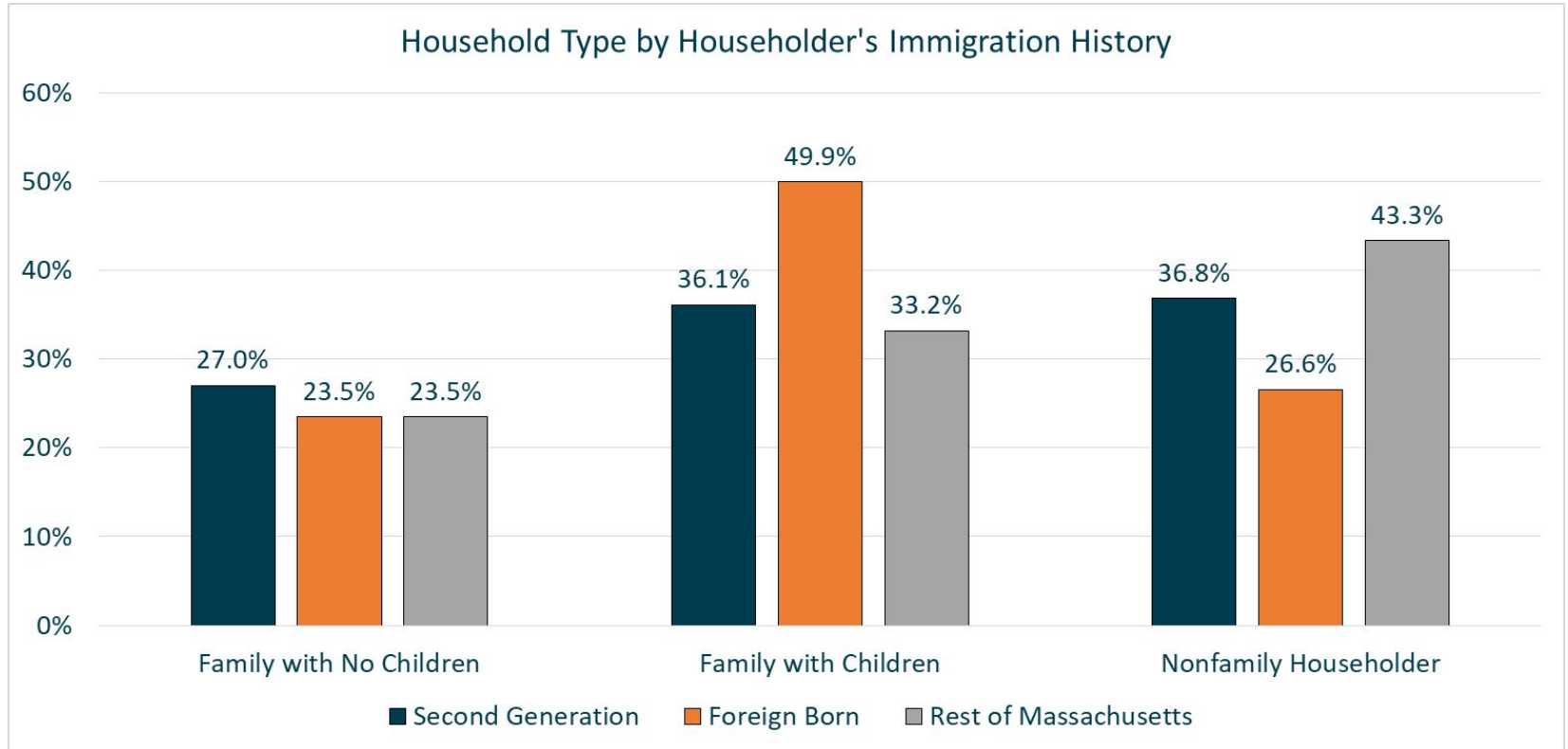
Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

A similar share of second generation householders are homeowners compared to the rest of Massachusetts



Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Second generation households are less likely to have children than foreign-born households

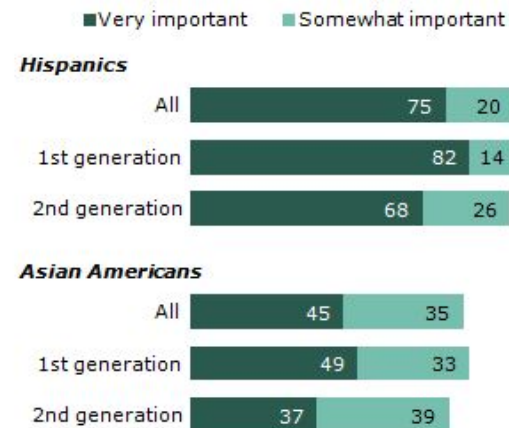


Source: 2021 Current Population Survey (IPUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Nationally 50% of 2nd generation Hispanics and only 18% of 2nd generation Asians speak their ancestral language very well.

Importance of Maintaining Ancestral Language

How important is it to you that future generations of ... living in the United States be able to speak <your ancestral language>? (%)



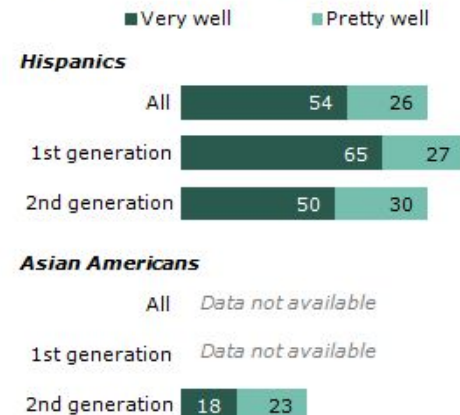
Notes: Based on all adults. Hispanics asked about being able to speak Spanish. Question wording for Asian Americans varied depending on respondent background; see the topline in Appendix 3 for details.

Source: 2011 National Survey of Latinos Q70, 2012 Asian-American Survey Q67

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Ability to Speak Ancestral Language

% who can carry on a conversation in <ancestral language>, both understanding and speaking ...



Notes: Based on all Hispanic adults and all second-generation Asian-American adults. Hispanics were asked about proficiency in Spanish. Question wording for Asian Americans varied depending on respondent background; see the topline in Appendix 3 for details. Responses of "Just a little," "Not at all" and "Don't know/Refused" not shown.

Source: 2012 National Survey of Latinos Q36, 2012 Asian-American Survey Q81

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Conclusion

Immigrants and their children (the 2nd generation) have been the primary source of population growth and increasing racial/ethnic diversity in Massachusetts over the past 50 years after the 1965 immigration policy reform.

As adults, 2nd generation residents, in aggregate, have educational attainment, employment, income and homeownership similar to or higher than that of other Massachusetts residents. Additional research may reveal disparities in the economic mobility of different subgroups of second generation immigrants.

Further reading:

Second Generation Americans: A Portrait of the Adult Children of Immigrants

<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2013/02/07/second-generation-americans/>

“Why So Many Children of Immigrants Rise to the Top”

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/07/11/opinion/immigrants-success-america.html?searchResultPosition=4>