

**imagine
all the
people**

Dominicans

CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor

2016

Dominicans 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.



David Ortiz of the Boston Red Sox—Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Advancement

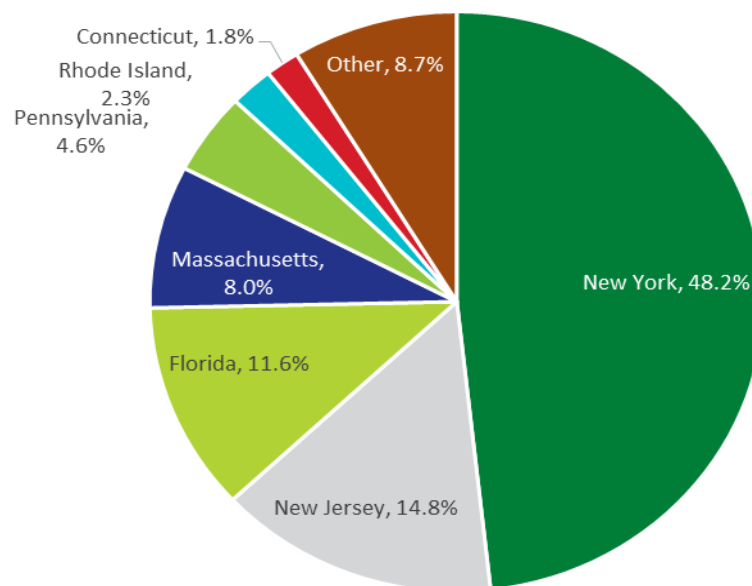
Introduction

The end of the Trujillo Era in 1961 marked a major turning point in the history of the Dominican Republic and unleashed waves of migration. Over the last five and a half decades, the Dominican Republic has seen continued domestic migration from rural to urban areas and increasing migration to other countries.¹

A stagnant economy that does not meet the needs of a rapidly growing population has fueled migration of Dominicans into the United States.² This need for emigration was matched by demand for unskilled labor in the United States, especially in the service sector.³ Today, however, family reunification is the largest mechanism for authorized Dominican migration to the United States, and few Dominicans come through employment visas.⁴ Estimates from the 2014 American Community Survey⁵ (ACS) show that 977,734 foreign-born⁶ individuals from the Dominican Republic reside in the United States, which has been by far the leading destination for Dominican emigrants. Other primary destinations include Spain, Italy, and Venezuela.⁷

Approximately 82 percent of all foreign-born Dominicans in the United States reside in the Northeast.⁸ Dominican migrants have formed deep-rooted, culturally-rich communities in New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Puerto Rico, with growing populations in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Connecticut. With 8 percent of the U.S. foreign-born Dominican population residing in Massachusetts, the state ranks fourth in its share of Dominican migrants.⁹

Share of Foreign-Born Dominican Population by State



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

Dominicans in Boston

Of the close to 80,500 foreign-born Dominicans residing in Massachusetts, 21,485 reside in Boston.¹⁰ The Dominican Republic is the largest country of origin for Boston's foreign-born population in 2014. Overall, Dominicans in Boston constitute 12.9 percent of the city's total foreign-born residents.¹¹ Chinese comprise the next largest share of the city's foreign-born population, followed by Haitians, Salvadorans, and Vietnamese.

Boston's foreign-born Dominicans, though scattered throughout the city, live mostly in the neighborhoods of Dorchester (24 percent), Roxbury (17 percent), Jamaica Plain (14 percent), and Roslindale (7 percent). Other neighborhoods with smaller concentrations are East Boston, Mattapan, and the South End.¹²

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

Dominican migration has historically been disproportionately female, and 61 percent of foreign-born Dominicans in Boston are female. More than 58 percent of foreign-born Dominicans in Boston are married (30 percent), 19 percent are divorced/separated, and 9 percent are widowed. Approximately 50 percent of all foreign-born Dominicans are between the ages of 35 and 64, and the median age of the population is 42 years. The majority of foreign-born Dominicans (54 percent) are not naturalized U.S. citizens. A smaller share of foreign-born Dominicans have arrived in the United States after 2000 (39 percent) compared to all foreign-born residents (43 percent).

*More than 20,000
foreign-born
Dominicans live in
Boston.*



Dominican Independence Day
Mayor's Office of Immigrant
Advancement

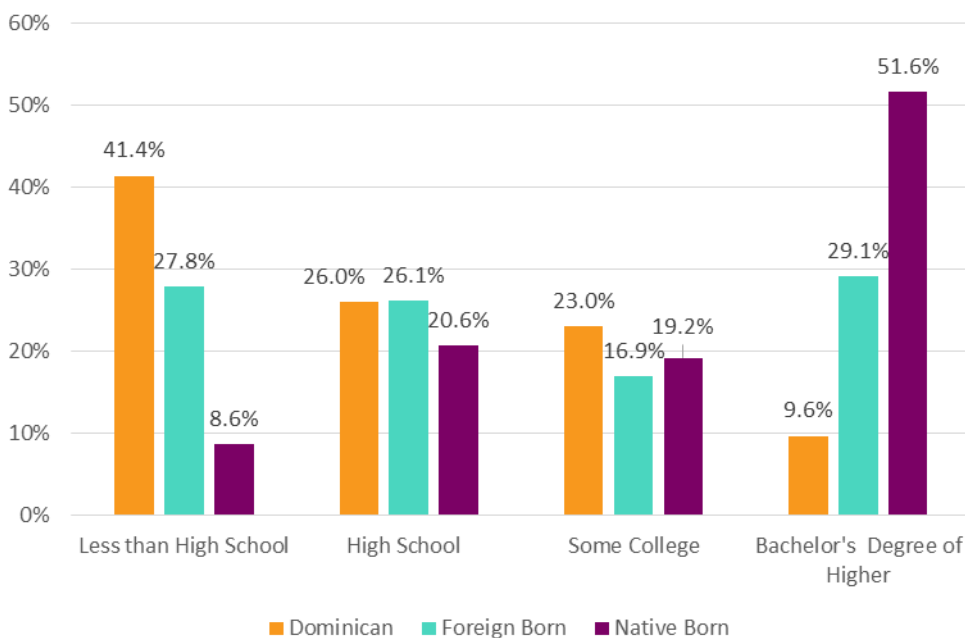
Educational Attainment

Approximately 41 percent of foreign-born Dominicans in Boston ages 25 years or older have not completed high school. Their share is higher than all foreign-born residents (28 percent) and over three times the share for the native-born population (10 percent). Approximately 26 percent of foreign-born Dominicans have a high school diploma as their highest educational attainment.

While 33 percent of foreign-born Dominicans 25 years or older have attended college, only 10 percent have completed at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 30 percent of the entire foreign-born population, and 52 percent of the native born. With respect to advanced degrees, only 2 percent of foreign-born Dominicans living in Boston hold a graduate or professional degree compared with 14 percent of all foreign born and 22 percent of the native born.

Forty-one percent of adult foreign-born Dominicans have not completed high school.

Educational Attainment of Boston Residents 25 Years and Older

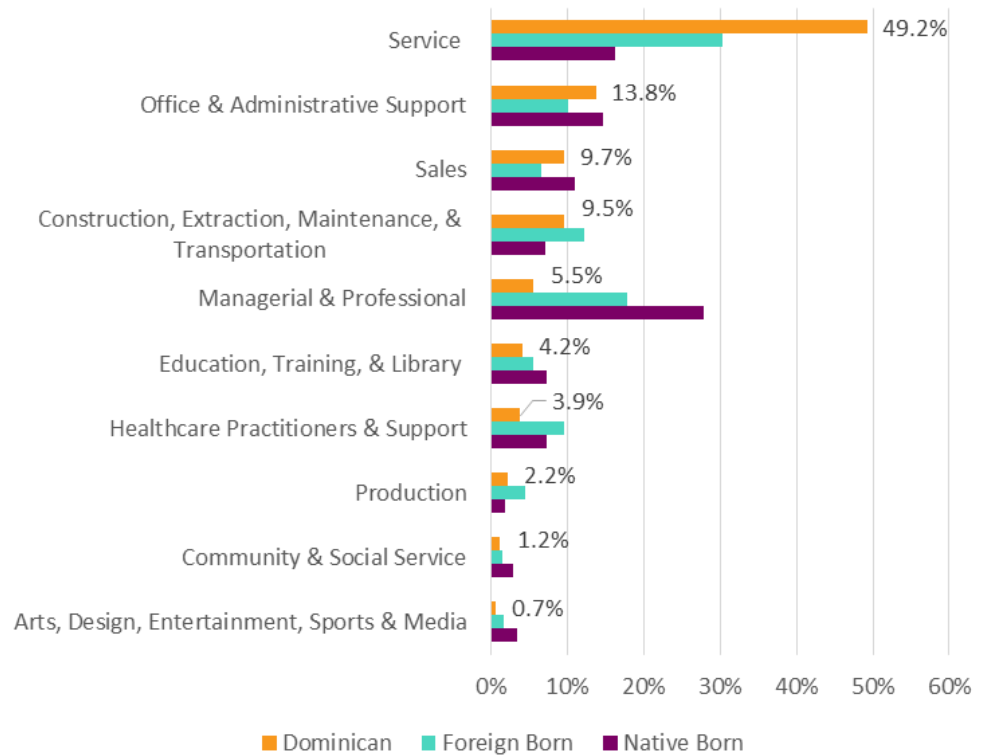


U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division Analysis

Occupations

Nearly half (49 percent) of foreign-born Dominicans in the workforce are employed in service occupations.¹³ The two next largest occupational categories are office and administrative support (14 percent) sales (10 percent). Foreign-born Dominicans are over-represented in service occupations when compared to all foreign born in Boston. Within service occupations, 28 percent of all foreign-born Dominicans work in building and grounds, cleaning and maintenance occupations. Conversely, foreign-born Dominicans are significantly under-represented in managerial and professional occupations: 5 percent for Dominicans compared with 17 percent for the total foreign-born population and 27 percent for the native born.

Occupations by Nativity



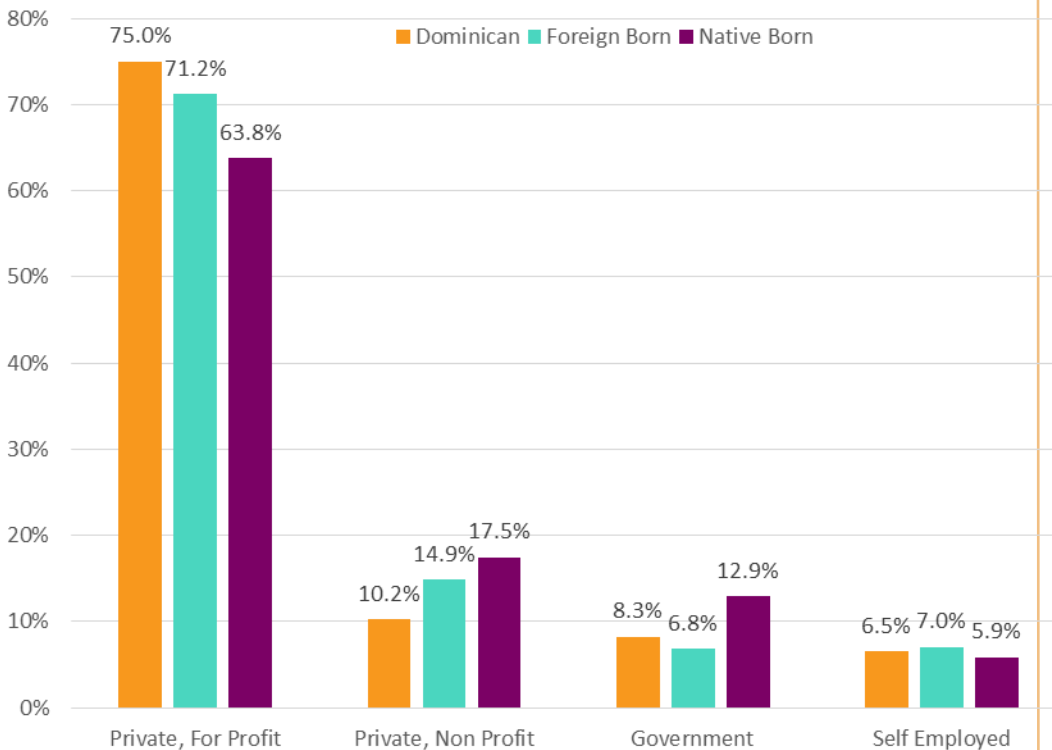
U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division Analysis

Employment

In total, 69 percent of foreign-born Dominicans participate in the labor force compared with 68 percent of the total foreign-born population and 69 percent of the native-born population.¹⁴ Compared to other foreign born in Boston (excluding unpaid family members), Dominicans 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 the native-born population (5.9 percent).¹⁵ An estimated 75 percent of foreign-born Dominicans work for private, for-profit companies. An additional 10 percent work for private, non-profit organizations, and 8 percent are employed in the public sector (local, state and federal government).

Foreign-born Dominican employment in the private-for-profit sector is higher than for other foreign born.

Employment by Type of Employer



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

Economic Impact

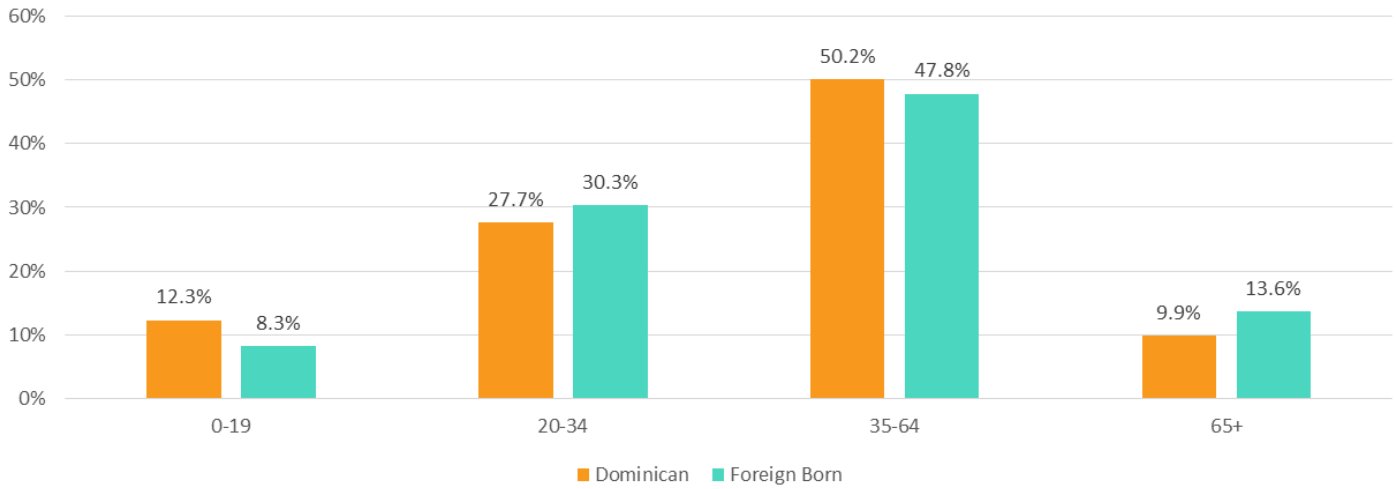
Economic Impact

Foreign-born Dominicans 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 (REMI) that calculated the value of goods and services consumed on each dollar spent. Foreign-born Dominicans in Boston generated total expenditures of \$206 million in 2014.¹⁶ These annual expenditures contributed over \$152 million to the regional product and generated \$7 million in state and local taxes.¹⁷ In total, these expenditures supported 1,100 jobs in the Massachusetts economy.¹⁸

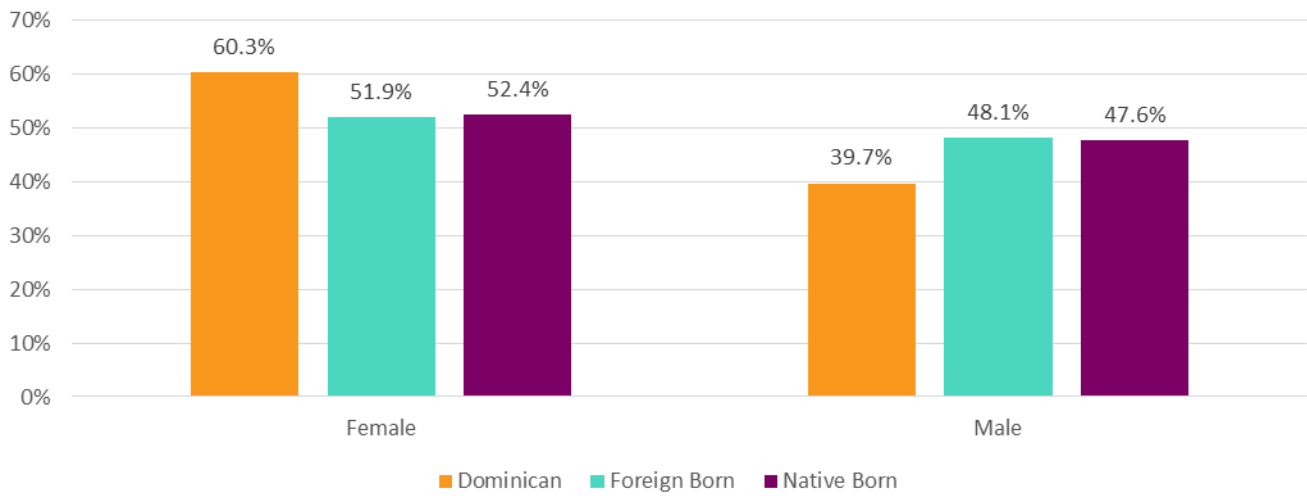


Imagine all the people: Dominicans

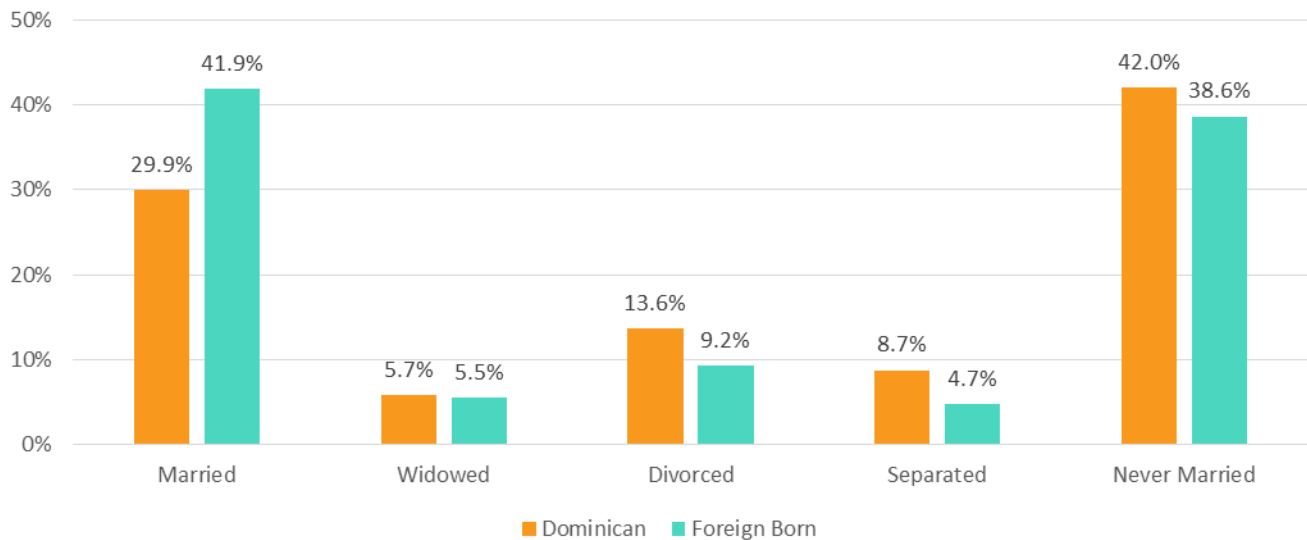
Age



Gender

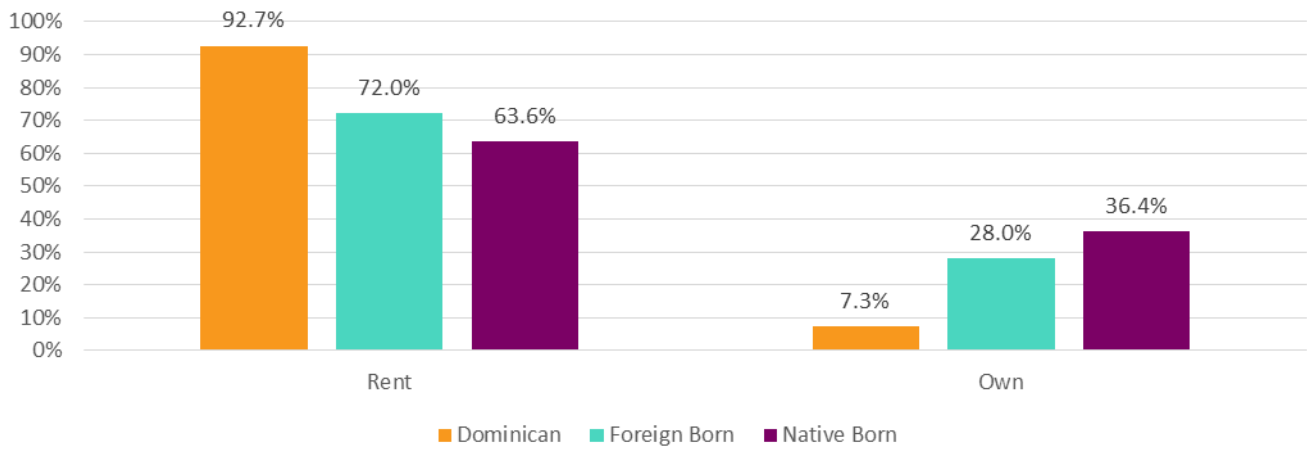


Marital Status

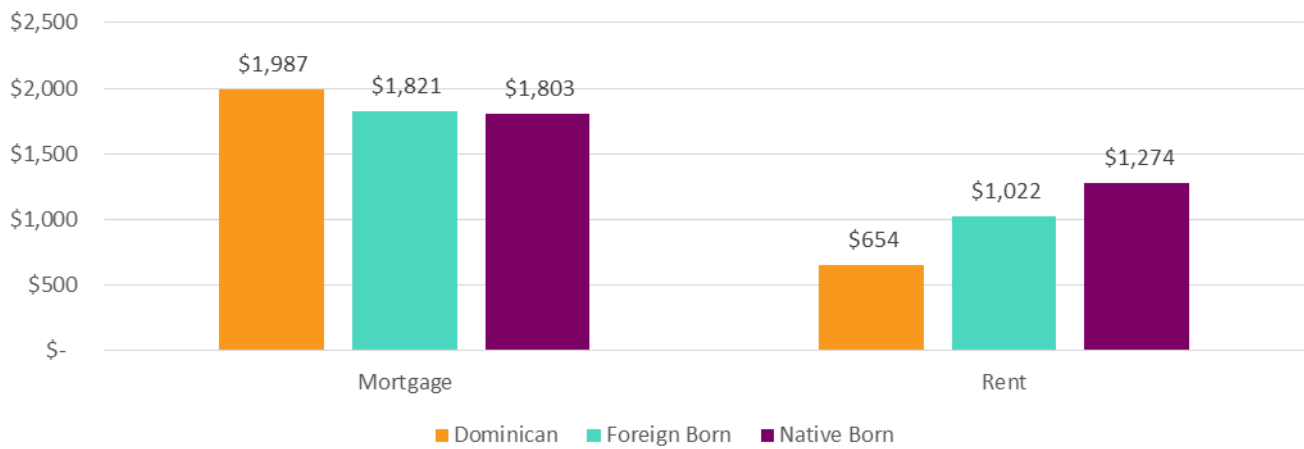


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division Analysis

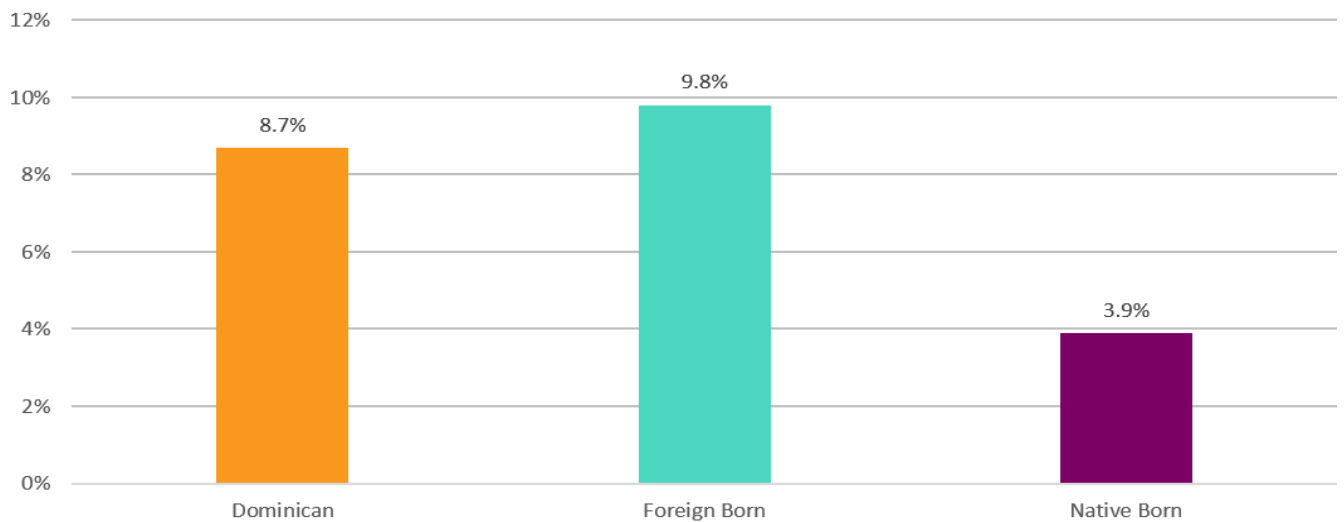
Housing Tenure*



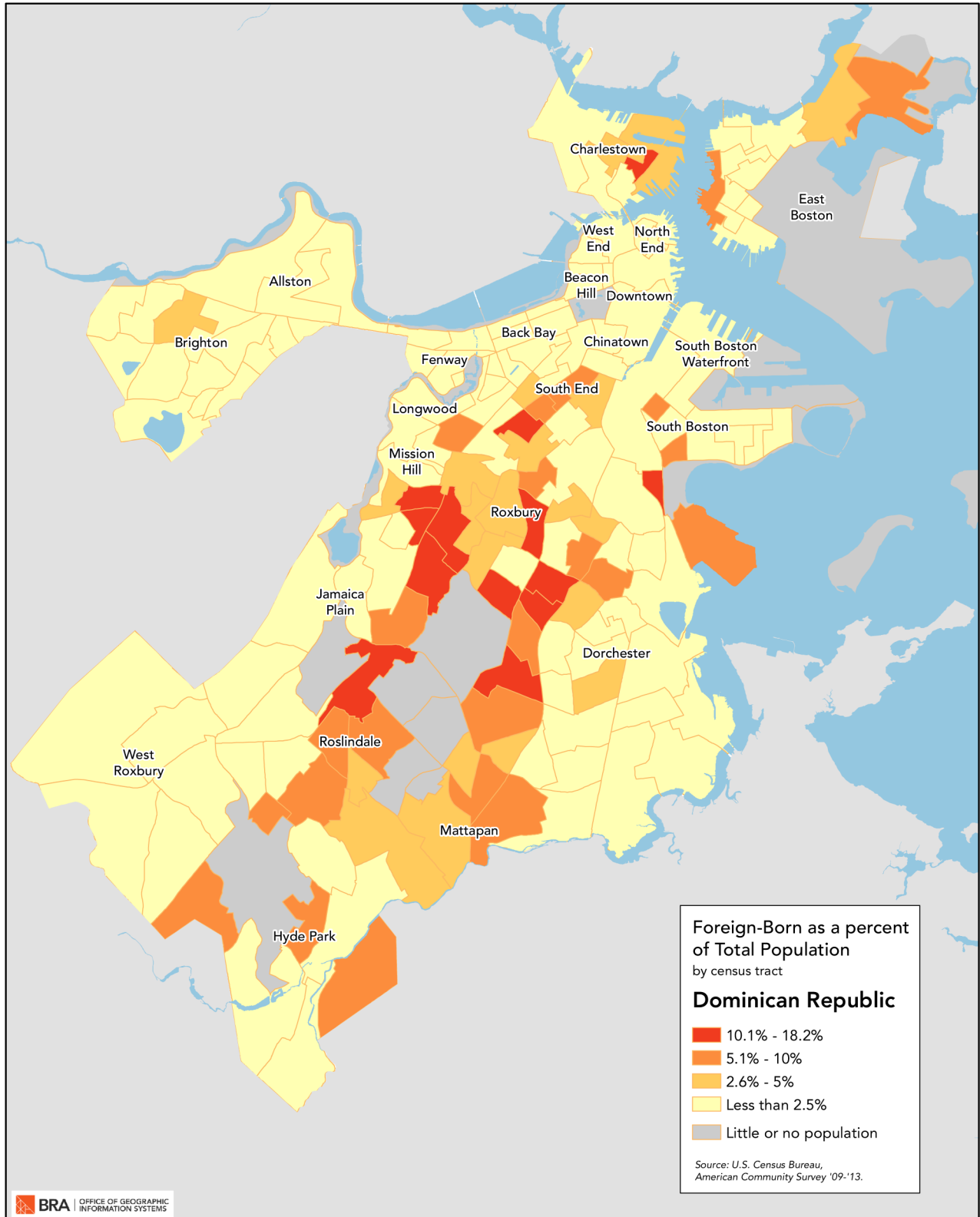
Housing Costs*



Medical Uninsurance



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



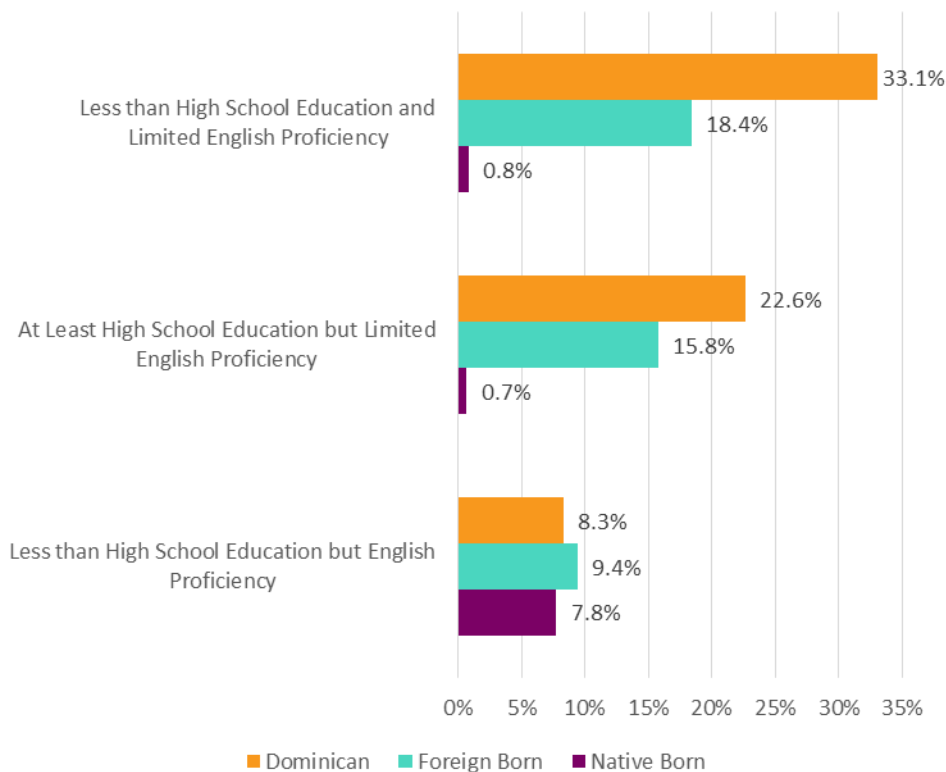
Standard of Living

Approximately 11 percent of foreign-born Dominicans 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 level 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.

Low educational attainment and lack of English proficiency may contribute to Dominicans' low standard of living. While 18 percent of Boston's adult foreign-born population lack a high school diploma and have limited English proficiency, the share among Dominican-born adults is 33 percent.¹⁹ About 64 percent of foreign-born Dominicans lack a high school diploma or English proficiency or both.

64% of adult foreign-born Dominicans either lack a high school diploma or have limited English proficiency.

Educational Attainment and English Proficiency Population 25 Years or Older



Children of Dominican Origin

The 2009-2013 American Community Survey estimates 10,236 children in Boston as being of Dominican origin.²⁰ Children of Dominican origin in Boston are predominately native born – 84 percent. However, 82 percent of Dominican children live with foreign-born parent(s). In comparison, 40 percent of all Boston’s children live with a foreign-born parent(s).

Of Dominican children ages 5 to 17 with only foreign-born parent(s), only 8 percent speak only English at home, compared to 16 percent for non-Dominican children with foreign-born parent(s). However, Dominican children appear to be learning English as well as Spanish - 79 percent of Dominican children with foreign-born parent(s) speak English very well. This percentage is higher than for non-Dominican children with foreign-born parent(s), of whom 76 percent speak English very well.

Dominican children with foreign-born parent(s) are more likely to live in poverty. 47 percent of Dominican children with foreign-born parent(s) compared to 29 percent of all children in Boston are below the federal poverty level (\$23,850 in 2014 for a 4-person household). The nativity of a parent is also related to medical insurance coverage: 3 percent of Dominican children with foreign-born parent(s) are uninsured, compared to 2 percent of all children.



Rafael Baez received the Youth Action Award at the 2014 We are Boston Gala, Renato Castelo

Civic Engagement for the Community

The Dominican population is active in politics, both locally and abroad. Locally, organized groups mobilize Dominican voters for local, U.S. and Dominican elections. Dominican political participation is remarkable because legislation passed by the Dominican government in 1996 allows Dominicans, including children born abroad to Dominican parents, to have dual citizenship. Dominican migrants, including naturalized U.S. citizens, have the right to vote and even run for office in the Dominican Republic.²¹

Conclusion

Massachusetts is a leading destination for Dominicans who migrate to the United States. Foreign-born Dominicans in Boston actively contribute to the economy, culture, and civic life of their new home. Even though foreign-born Dominicans have lower levels of educational attainment, 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. However, foreign-born Dominicans and their children are more likely to live in poverty compared to other foreign born. In the years to come, hard work and continued civic engagement will allow Dominicans in Boston to improve their standard of living.



Annual Dominican Parade in Boston, Jeremiah Robinson, Mayor's Office

¹ Sagas, E., Molina, S., *Dominican Migration: Transnational Perspectives*, 2005, pp. 1-4.

² The total birth rate, number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with current age-specific fertility rates, was 7.6 in 1960 but has declined to 2.5 in 2014. World Bank, World Development Indicators.

³ In the early 1980s as many as 300,000 unauthorized Dominicans were estimated to be residing in the United States. Through the Immigration Reform Control Act of 1986 and other mechanisms many of these unauthorized migrants obtained legal status. Garcia, J., *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 487, 1986; Antonio U., Bean, F., and Cardenas G., "International Migration from the Dominican Republic: Findings from a National Survey," *International Migration Review*, 13(2):235-54, 1979. *Immigration and American Public Policy* (Sep., 1986), pp. 114-125.

⁴ Estimate of the unauthorized Dominican population in Metropolitan Boston in 2007 was 8.1 percent. Marcelli, E., et al. *Permanently Temporary? The Health and Socioeconomic Integration of Dominicans in Metropolitan Boston*, Center for Behavioral and Community Health Studies, 2009.

⁵ The 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>.

⁶ The "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, (2016).

⁷ Nwosu, C., Batalova, J., *Immigrants from the Dominican Republic in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute (2015).

⁸ 2014 American Community Survey, American Fact Finder, BRA Research Analysis (2016).

⁹ 2014 American Community Survey, American Fact Finder, BRA Research Analysis (2016).

¹⁰ The ACS's American Fact Finder website reports that there are an estimated 21,485 foreign-born Dominicans in Boston. However, ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data for Boston reports a slightly higher estimate of 22,806. Both are population estimates, and contain a margin of error due to sampling technique. Lower survey response rates due to language or documentation issues may result in an undercount of the population. For more information on American Fact Finder please see: http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

¹¹ 2014 American Community Survey, PUMS data, BRA Research Analysis (2016).

¹² 2009-2013 American Community Survey, American Factfinder, BRA Research Analysis (2016).

End Notes

¹³ This 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. Other categories consisting of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry, Military Specific, and long-term unemployed are excluded.

¹⁴ Labor force participation: Defined as the share of the working-age population that is either currently employed or seeking work. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014.

¹⁵ There 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.

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

¹⁷ BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹⁸ BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹⁹ Limited English Proficiency includes foreign-born adults who do not speak English well or at all.

²⁰ The 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.



Dominican Parade—Jeremiah Robinson



CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor



MAYOR'S OFFICE
FOR IMMIGRANT
ADVANCEMENT

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston



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