

Boston's Racial Groups

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City of Boston
Office of the Mayor
Martin J. Walsh



Racial Groups in Boston

Summary of Findings

- The Hispanic and Asian populations in Boston have grown significantly.
- In 2010, Boston was 47.0% White, 22.4% Black/African-American, 17.5% Hispanic, and 8.9% Asian.
- 43.8% of Hispanics and 69.5% of Asians in Boston are foreign-born.
- Roughly 32% of Asians and just over 25% of Hispanics self-identify as speaking English “not well” or “not at all”.
- 43.2% of Boston’s White population lives alone while the Hispanic and Black/African-American populations are more likely to live in family households.
- Asians in Boston have a significantly higher marriage rate than the other racial groups.
- Only about 33% of Black/African-American and Hispanic households with own children under 18 are headed by a husband and wife.
- The White and Asian populations in Boston are concentrated in the 18-34 age range and about 25% of Asians and Whites are currently enrolled in college or graduate school.
- The White population in Boston has significantly higher incomes and lower rates of poverty and unemployment than the other groups. They are also more likely to have a college degree and own a home.
- 26.9% of Asians have less than a high school diploma and 31.8% live in poverty. However, 23.5% have a graduate or professional degree and 19.2% of Asian households earn over \$100,000 a year.

Sources:

- *2000 and 2010 US Census*
- *2009 - 2011 American Community Survey*
- *2011 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample*
- *2007 Survey of Business Owners*

Characteristics of Racial Groups in Boston

Population

- For the second consecutive Census, Boston is made up of a majority of Hispanic and non-White racial groups.
- Boston's population of White and Black/African-Americans has remained about the same since 2000.
- There has been significant growth in Boston's Asian and Hispanic populations over the last several decades. Since 1990, the Asian and Hispanic populations have grown by 85% and 74%, respectively. Since 2000, the Asian population has grown almost 25%, while the Hispanic population has grown nearly 27%.

Population Figures	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Boston's population	100%	47.0%	22.4%	17.5%	8.9%
Percentage change since 2000	4.8%	-0.4%	-1.6%	26.8%	24.6%

Source: 2000 and 2010 US Census, BRA Research Division Analysis

Age Distribution

- The White and Asian populations of Boston are concentrated in the 18-34 age range.
- There are higher concentrations of children within the Black/African American and Hispanic communities. This is unsurprising, as 76% of Boston Public School students are Black/African-American and Hispanic.

Age Distribution	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Under 18	16.8%	8.2%	24.9%	28.9%	13.0%
18-34	40.2%	47.6%	26.8%	34.6%	46.6%
35-64	33.0%	32.1%	37.8%	31.5%	30.3%
65 and over	10.1%	12.1%	10.4%	5.0%	10.1%

Source: 2010 US Census, BRA Research Division Analysis

Immigration

- Boston is a “Gateway City” and over a quarter of the population is foreign born.
 - Roughly 45% of these foreign-born residents are naturalized citizens.
- While 47% of Boston is non-Hispanic White, 19.1% of the foreign-born population is non-Hispanic White.
- 28.7% of the foreign-born population in Boston is Hispanic and 23.5% is Asian.
- Almost 44% of Hispanics in Boston are foreign-born with 34.3% who are naturalized citizens.

Foreign-born Population	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Foreign-born	26.4%	10.6%	27.8%	43.8%	69.5%
Foreign-born who are naturalized citizens	45.4%	49.8%	51.3%	34.3%	48.0%

Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

English Ability

- Roughly 32% of Asians and just over 25% of Hispanics in Boston self-identify as speaking English “not well” or “not at all”.

English Ability	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
English only	63.5%	82.8%	76.8%	15.0%	17.4%
Very well	19.4%	9.2%	14.7%	43.0%	34.2%
Well	7.2%	2.4%	5.2%	17.0%	16.2%
Not well	6.8%	1.8%	2.8%	17.8%	19.6%
Not at all	3.0%	0.7%	0.6%	7.3%	12.6%

Source: 2011 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, BRA Research Division Analysis

Note: Analysis includes Boston residents over age 5.

Household Structure

- 43.2% of Boston’s White population lives alone.
- The proportion of family households is significantly higher among Boston’s minority racial groups, including nearly 67% of Hispanic households and 62.1% of Black/African-American households.
- About one third of Black/African-American and Hispanic family households are headed by a single mother.

Households in Boston	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Total households	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Householder living alone	37.1%	43.2%	32.0%	23.6%	35.3%
Other non-family households	16.9%	23.1%	5.8%	9.5%	16.6%
Family households	46.0%	33.6%	62.1%	66.9%	48.1%
Husband-wife family	25.5%	25.3%	21.9%	25.3%	36.5%
Female householder, no husband present	16.3%	6.0%	34.2%	33.6%	7.9%
Male householder, no wife present	4.1%	2.3%	6.1%	8.0%	3.7%

Source: 2010 US Census, BRA Research Division Analysis

Households with Children

- White and Asian households are less likely to have children than Black/African-American and Hispanic households.
- Of those households with children, about 3/4 of White and Asian households are headed by a husband and wife.
- Conversely, only about one-third of the Black/African-American and Hispanic households with children under 18 are headed by a husband and wife.
- The majority of Black/African-American and Hispanic households with children under 18 are headed by single mothers.

Households with Children Under 18	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
With own children under 18	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100%
Husband-wife family	49.1%	76.3%	31.4%	34.7%	78.7%
Female householder, no husband present	44.1%	19.0%	61.1%	56.9%	16.8%
Male householder, no wife present	6.8%	4.7%	7.5%	8.4%	4.5%
Households w/ children as % of total households	20.4%	10.7%	31.8%	40.5%	18.7%

Source: 2010 US Census, BRA Research Division Analysis

Marital Status

- Asians in Boston have significantly higher marriage rates than other racial groups.

Marital Status	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Now married	28.6%	28.9%	25.4%	25.3%	41.9%
Widowed, divorced, or separated	14.5%	12.5%	19.3%	17.9%	9.3%
Never married	56.8%	58.7%	55.3%	56.8%	48.8%

Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Note: Population over age 15.

Educational Attainment

- Generally, Boston is a well-educated city. Over 43% of the population age 25 or older has a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 28% of the US.
- Nearly 62% of the White population has a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 18.4% of Black/African-Americans and 16.9% of Hispanics.
- There are significant differences in college enrollment by race as well. More than 25% of the Asian population and 20% of the White population in Boston are currently enrolled in college or graduate school. Comparatively, just over 10% of the Black/African-American and Hispanic populations in Boston are currently enrolled in college or graduate school.

Educational Attainment	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Less than high school diploma	15.2%	5.2%	19.3%	35.0%	26.9%
High school graduate (includes GED)	22.8%	17.6%	33.0%	28.8%	16.1%
Some college or associate's degree	18.8%	15.4%	29.3%	19.3%	10.3%
Bachelor's degree	24.0%	33.8%	12.3%	10.0%	23.2%
Graduate or professional degree	19.1%	28.0%	6.1%	6.9%	23.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	43.1%	61.8%	18.4%	16.9%	46.7%
Currently enrolled in college or graduate school	17.7%	22.3%	10.1%	10.4%	27.7%

Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Note: Educational Attainment is for the population 25 years and over. The percentage of the population currently enrolled in college will be included in the educational attainment data if the person is 25 or older. Therefore, the enrollment data should not be added to the educational attainment data.

Home Ownership

- The White population in Boston has the highest home ownership rate at 42%, while the Hispanic population has the lowest home ownership rate at 16.6%.

Household Housing Tenure	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Owner-occupied housing	33.9%	42.0%	29.2%	16.6%	24.7%
Renter-occupied housing	66.1%	58.0%	70.8%	83.4%	75.3%

Source: 2010 Census, BRA Research Division Analysis

Car Ownership

- Over 36% of households in Boston do not have a car.
- Both Hispanic and Asian households are less likely to have a car than the average Boston resident.

Vehicles by Household	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
None	36.5%	33.1%	36.9%	42.7%	46.4%
1 or more	63.5%	66.9%	63.1%	57.3%	53.6%

Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Employment Status

- There are substantial differences in unemployment rates by race in Boston.
- Both White and Asian unemployment is relatively low at 6.6% and 11.8% respectively.
- Hispanic unemployment is 16.3% and Black/African-American unemployment is 21.3%.
- Asians in Boston have the lowest labor force participation rate.

Employment Status	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
In labor force	68.7%	71.0%	67.2%	69.5%	58.4%
Employed	88.0%	93.4%	78.7%	83.7%	88.2%
Unemployed	11.9%	6.6%	21.3%	16.3%	11.8%
Not in labor force	31.3%	29.0%	32.8%	30.5%	41.6%

Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Note: Population over age 16.

Occupations

- The Hispanic population is highest employed in the service related occupations, while the remaining racial groups are highest employed in management, business, science, and art occupations.

Occupations	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Management, business, science, and arts	46.3%	57.9%	31.0%	21.3%	51.8%
Service	21.7%	14.0%	29.1%	41.1%	20.6%
Sales and office	21.8%	21.3%	25.0%	22.0%	15.7%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	4.1%	3.5%	4.2%	6.9%	3.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving	6.1%	3.3%	10.7%	8.7%	8.9%

Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Note: Civilian employed population over age 16.

Business Ownership

- Business ownership is somewhat low among Boston's minority racial groups. While White residents make up 47% of the total population, they own 79% of privately-owned businesses.

Business Ownership	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Boston firms by race/ethnicity of owner	100.0%	79.0%	15.8%	7.8%	8.6%

Source: 2007 Survey of Business Owners, BRA Research Division Analysis

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% because Hispanics and multi-racial business owners may be double-counted within the other racial groups. For example, individuals who are "white Hispanic" would be classified in both categories.

Income

- Household, family, and per capita income are much higher for the White population than for the minority racial groups and the City of Boston.
- The Asian population has the highest per capita income among the racial minority groups.

Income in Past 12 Months	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Median household income	\$51,230	\$68,162	\$37,974	\$30,019	\$37,027
Median family income	\$59,975	\$102,756	\$46,227	\$34,570	\$45,990
Per capita income	\$32,852	\$47,459	\$20,260	\$16,199	\$24,959

Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Poverty

- There are significant differences in poverty rates by race in Boston.
- Less than 6% of White families are in poverty in Boston, compared to over 21% of Black/African-American, 38% of Hispanic, and 22% of Asian families.
- Across all racial groups, poverty rates are much lower for married couple families.
- There is almost no poverty in White, married-couple family households.
- Poverty rates are extremely high in single, female-headed households. This is particularly the case in Hispanic and Asian households, where the poverty rate approaches 50%.

Poverty Rates	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
Families	16.3%	5.8%	21.2%	38.2%	22.3%
Individuals	22.1%	15.2%	25.2%	31.7%	31.8%
Married-couple families	5.9%	2.4%	7.8%	10.9%	15.3%
Single, female householders	33.6%	20.9%	30.6%	45.1%	48.5%

Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Income Distribution

- Among White households in Boston, roughly 34% of households make over \$100,000.
- Among Black/African-American households, 43.4% make \$25,000-74,999 a year.
- Close to 38% of Black/African-American households earn less than \$25,000, compared to just over 29% of Boston households overall.
- Of Hispanic households in Boston, 43.7% earn under \$25,000 a year.
- Among Asian households, 39.7% earn under \$25,000 a year, and 19.2% of Asian households make over \$100,000 a year.

Household Income	Boston	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic	Asian
\$0-9,999	13.1%	8.7%	17.2%	20.3%	21.3%
\$10,000-24,999	16.2%	12.4%	20.4%	23.4%	18.4%
\$25,000-49,999	19.3%	16.0%	28.9%	24.0%	17.5%
\$50,000-74,999	15.3%	16.4%	14.5%	12.6%	13.7%
\$75,000-99,999	11.3%	12.6%	10.0%	8.8%	10.1%
\$100,000-149,999	12.6%	15.8%	8.9%	7.1%	9.8%
\$150,000+	12.2%	18.1%	4.5%	3.8%	9.4%

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis