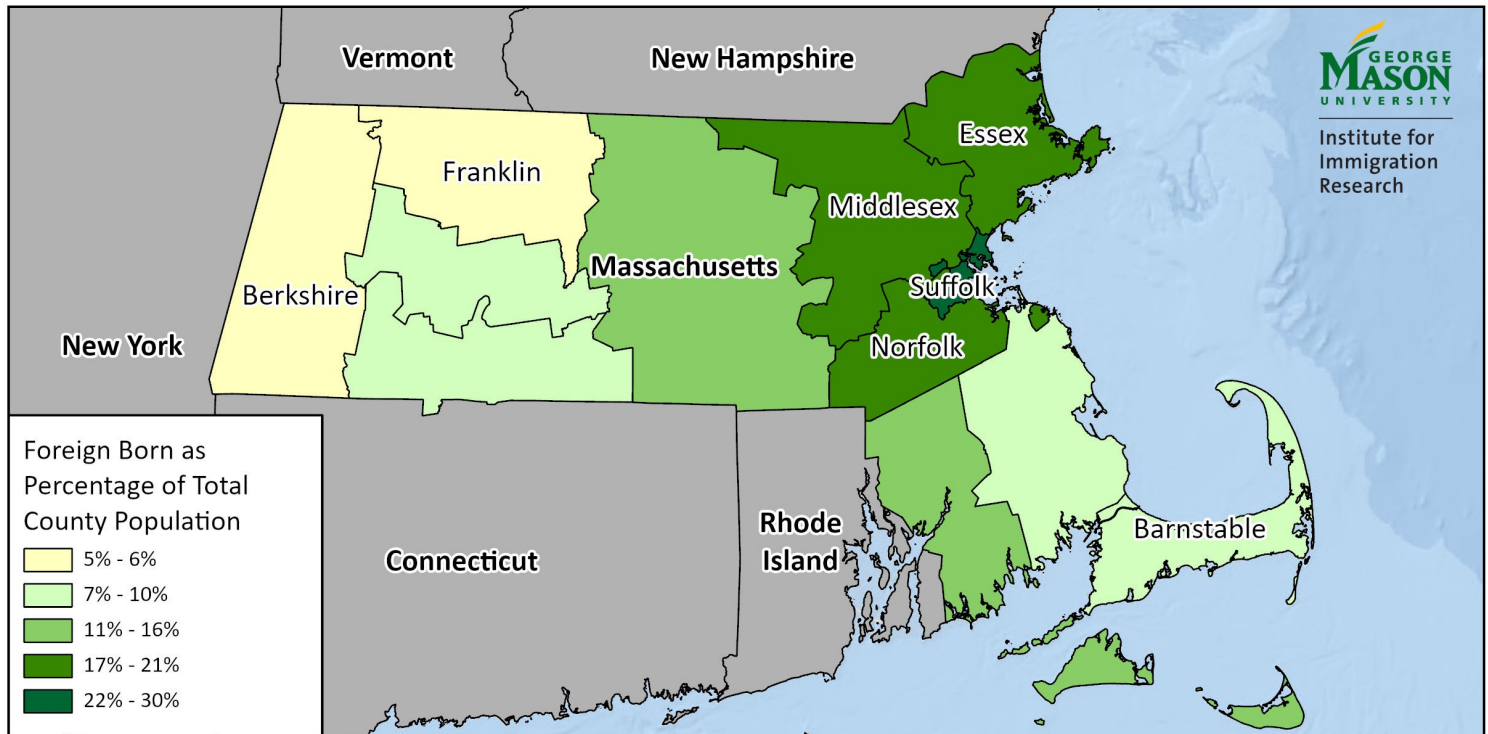


## Immigrants in Massachusetts

**Figure 1. Immigrants in Massachusetts by County**



**Note:** This data was prepared by the George Mason University Institute for Immigration Research (IIR). 2023. This data is displayed at the county level. Maps are based on IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 16.0. ACS 2016-2020 dataset. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. 2022.

### Distribution of Immigrants

Figure 1 illustrates that immigrants in Massachusetts are primarily concentrated around Boston in Suffolk County (30%), Middlesex County (21%), and Norfolk County (19%). These three counties, along with Essex County (17%), are among the top 5 percent of U.S. counties with the highest concentration of foreign-born individuals as a percentage of the population.

### 2020 NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- **44,411,751:** Estimated number of immigrants living in the United States (14% of the population)
- **1,171,225:** Estimated number of immigrants in Massachusetts (17% of the state's population)
- **7th:** Rank of Massachusetts among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in terms of immigrants as a percentage of the state's total population
- **20%:** Estimated increase in the number of immigrants in Massachusetts in the past 10 years (i.e. 2010-2020)
- **4,095:** Number of refugees resettled in Massachusetts between fiscal years 2016-2020 (2% of the refugee population settled in the United States in this time period)

All analysis in this fact sheet is based on source data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016-2020 distributed through IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org), unless otherwise noted.

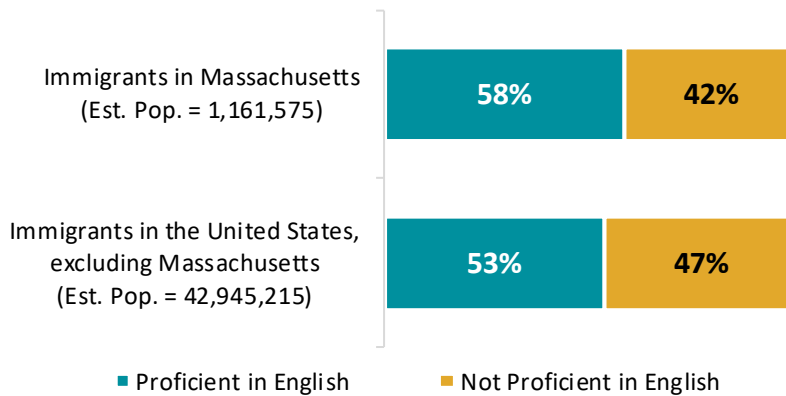
Please note that percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding of the individual percentages.

Please note that the terms "immigrant" and "foreign born" are used interchangeably throughout this fact sheet. Foreign born refers to individuals who are not a U.S. citizen at birth or who were born outside the U.S., Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories and whose parents are not U.S. citizens. The foreign born may include naturalized U.S. citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, temporary residents, refugees and asylees, and others. Additionally, native born includes those who are U.S. citizens at birth, those born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or other U.S. territories, and those born abroad to a parent who is a U.S. citizen.

## Immigrants in Massachusetts

**Figure 2. English Proficiency Among Immigrants**

Age 5+

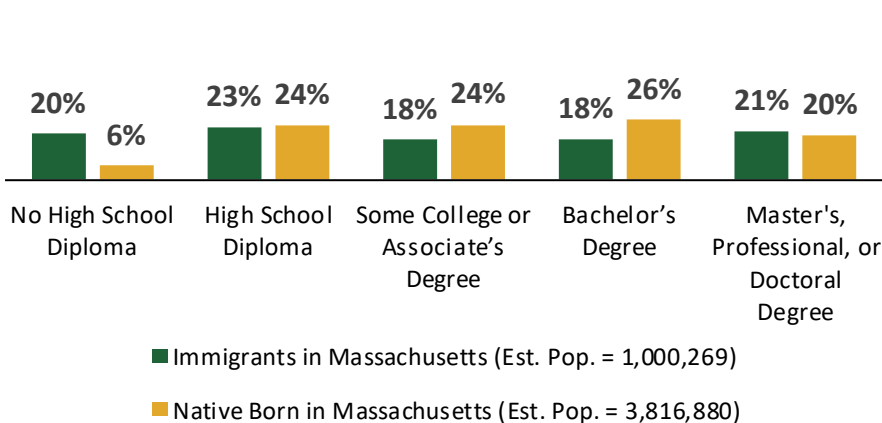


### English Proficiency

Figure 2 shows that a higher percentage of immigrants in Massachusetts are proficient in English (58%) compared to immigrants in the rest of the United States (53%). One reason for this might be that 80 percent of the immigrants in Massachusetts have at least a high school diploma (as shown in Figure 3 below); in the rest of the country, this number is lower at 73 percent.

**Figure 3. Educational Attainment**

Age 25+



### Educational Attainment

Across the United States, 27 percent of immigrants do not have a high school diploma. While a lower rate of immigrants in Massachusetts do not have a high school diploma (20%) compared to the national average, the percent of native-born individuals without a high school diploma in the state is much lower (6%). As illustrated in Figure 3, this notable discrepancy between foreign and native born in the state is reflected in all other educational levels, except the Master's, Professional, or Doctoral Degree tier, where both groups reach parity (21% to 20%). This pattern suggests that the socioeconomic disparity among immigrants might be more pronounced than the one among the native born.

**Figure 4. Occupation**

In the Labor Force, Employed, Ages 16-65

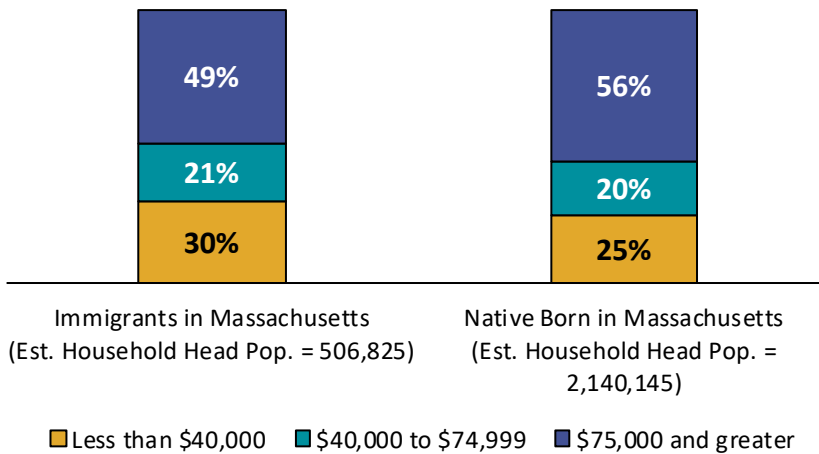
Immigrants in Massachusetts		Native Born in Massachusetts	
Service Occupations	24%	Management, Business, and Financial Occupations	20%
Management, Business, and Financial Occupations	15%	Service Occupations	15%
Computer, Engineering, and Science Occupations	14%	Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media Occupations	14%
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media Occupations	9%	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	11%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	7%	Sales and Related Occupations	10%
8 Other Occupational Groups	33%	8 Other Occupational Groups	30%
<b>Estimated Population</b>	<b>701,601</b>	<b>Estimated Population</b>	<b>2,696,593</b>

### Occupation

As detailed in Figure 4, immigrants in Massachusetts are more likely to work in Service Occupations compared to the native born (24% to 15%). Also, immigrants have higher participation in Computer, Engineering, and Science Occupations (14%) compared to the native born (8%). On the other hand, the native born are more likely to work in Sales and Related Occupations (10%) compared to immigrants (6%).

## Immigrants in Massachusetts

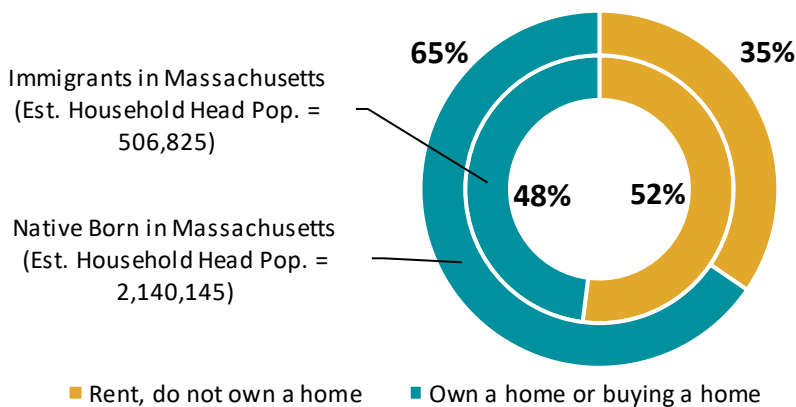
**Figure 5. Household Income**  
Head of Household, Age 15+



### Household Income

The educational attainment of immigrants in Massachusetts (see Figure 3) might influence their household income. In Figure 5, it is evident that native-born headed households in Massachusetts earn a significantly higher median income (\$86,061) compared to immigrant-headed households (\$72,158). This marks a 19 percent disparity in median income between the two groups.

**Figure 6. Home Ownership**  
Head of Household



### Home Ownership

The native born in Massachusetts exhibit a significantly higher rate of homeownership compared to immigrants. Figure 6 depicts a notable contrast, with 65 percent of the native born owning homes, while only 48 percent of immigrants do so. This disparity might stem from the marked difference in median household income (referenced in Figure 5), in which the native born in Massachusetts earn considerably more than their immigrant counterparts. Additionally, limited access to family assets or affordable mortgage rates due to shorter credit histories and uncertain settlement decisions with regards to legal status among immigrants could also contribute to this gap.

For factsheets that examine populations at the household level, please note that a household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit. A native-born U.S. citizen household is defined as a household which is headed by a native-born U.S. citizen, regardless of the immigration status of the spouse. Conversely, an immigrant-headed household is defined as a household which is headed by a foreign-born individual, regardless of the immigration status of the spouse. For fact sheets that examine total household income, please note that the total annual income of all members in the household is included in the analysis.

Refugee data was retrieved from RPC [Refugee Processing Center Refugee Arrivals by State and Nationality]. <https://www.wrapsnet.org/archives/>.

IIR fact sheets are created following standard definitions established by the U.S. Census Bureau. Please consult <https://www.census.gov/topics/> for clarification as to important distinctions such as those between industry and occupation.

**Maíra Arantes Rodrigues led statistical analysis and interpretation for this factsheet; Kellie S Wilkerson provided fact checking and review; Sandip Sureka and Michelle S. Dromgold-Sermen provided editorial support.**

## Immigrants in Massachusetts



## Institute for Immigration Research

### **Immigration Data on Demand (iDod)**

The goal of iDod is to connect people with customized data about immigrants in particular regions or sectors of interest. This data provides insights into the vital contributions immigrants make to the economy and society.

### **The Institute for Immigration Research (IIR)**

The IIR's mission is to produce valid, reliable, and objective multidisciplinary research on immigrants and immigration to the United States and to disseminate this information through peer-reviewed academic journals, as well as in print and digital formats that make this research easily accessible to policy-makers, the media, the business community, and the general public. The Institute for Immigration Research is a joint venture between George Mason University and the Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, MA.

[www.iir.gmu.edu](http://www.iir.gmu.edu)

4400 University Drive, MSN 1D7

Fairfax, VA 22030

703.993.5833