Unemployment in Boston

Boston Redevelopment Authority
Research Division
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BOSTON
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Produced by the BRA Research Division:

Alvaro Lima – Director
Mark Melnik – Deputy Director
Kelly Dowd – Research Manager
Kevin Kang – Research Associate
Nicoya Borella – Research Assistant

Interns:
Chandana Cherukupalli
Gregory Watts

The staff listed above reflect the Research Division staff at the time of this report's original release.

City of Boston
Office of the Mayor
Martin J. Walsh

General Overview

- 9.6% of Boston's population is unemployed.[1]
- Unemployment rates are higher within the following subgroups:
  - Racial minorities
    - Black/African American population (13.5%)
    - Hispanic population (11.4%)
    - Asian population (10.7%)
  - Men (10.6%)
  - Recent immigrants (20.8%)
  - Individuals who did not graduate from high school (16.1%)
  - Individuals with a disability (19.7%)
- Excluding the Harbor Islands, unemployment rates are highest in Mattapan (17.3%), Roxbury (16.8%) and Dorchester (16.2%).
- In terms of marital status, Bostonians who are married have the lowest unemployment rates, at 6.7%.

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[1] All unemployment data is for Boston's population age 16 and over. Additionally, this report uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS) because it is the only way to cross unemployment with other characteristics (such as age, race, sex, etc.). Therefore, the unemployment rate in this report is different than the rate produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The unemployment rate calculated using ACS data is typically higher than the unemployment rate calculated by the BLS.

Unemployment in Boston

DEMOGRAPHICS

Overall Population

- 9.6% of Boston's population is unemployed.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Neighborhoods

- Excluding the Boston Harbor Islands, Boston's neighborhoods with the highest unemployment rates are Mattapan (17.3%), Roxbury (16.8%) and Dorchester (16.2%).
    - With 27.8%, Dorchester has the highest share of Boston's unemployed residents.
- The neighborhoods with the lowest unemployment rates are North End (2.6%), South Boston Waterfront (3.2%) and Back Bay (3.2%). (A detailed chart with neighborhood unemployment rates is included in Appendix 1.)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Race and Ethnicity[2]

- Unemployment rates are higher for Boston's Black/African American, Hispanic and Asian populations, and lower among Boston's White population. Unemployment rates according to race are:
    - Black/African American population: 13.5%
    - Hispanic population: 11.4%
    - Asian population: 10.7%
    - White population: 7.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BRA Research Division Analysis

Sex

- The unemployment rate among men is higher than the unemployment rate among women, at 10.6% and 8.6% respectively.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

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[2] The Black/African American, Asian and White populations are all non-Hispanic.

Marital Status

- Bostonians who were never married or are divorced have higher unemployment rates, both at 11%.
- Those who are currently married have the lowest unemployment rates, at 6.7%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Age

- People age 16-19 have the highest unemployment rate, at 25.5%. However, 93.7% of this population is enrolled in school.
- The unemployment rate among those aged 20-24 is 11% and the labor force participation rate among this age group is 64.6%.
- Unemployment is lowest during the 25-34 and 55-64 age groups, at 7.4% and 7.8% respectively.
  - The labor force participation rate for the 25-34 age group is 87.2%, the highest among all age groups. For the 55-64 age group, it is 66.4%.
- One-third of Boston's unemployed population is between the ages of 35 and 54. The unemployment rate among this age group is 9.7%. Their labor force participation rate is 83.0%.
- The unemployment rate increases again for those 65 and over, at 8.3%. However, only about 18.7% of this population is in the labor force.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey and 2012 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BRA Research Division Analysis

Nativity

- The unemployment rates among native-born and foreign-born Bostonians are the same, both at 9.6%.
- However, the unemployment rate is higher among foreign-born, non-U.S. citizens, at 11.7%.
- Additionally, the foreign-born population who have moved to the U.S. since 2010 have a very high unemployment rate, at 20.8%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Language

- The unemployment rate among those who speak English only is 8.9%.

- In general, unemployment rates are higher among people who do not speak English at home, except for those who speak Chinese. The unemployment rates according to languages spoken at home are:
  - Chinese: 6.2%
  - French/French Creole: 11.6%
  - Portuguese: 11.9%
  - Vietnamese: 13.3%
  - Spanish: 13.5%
- Among Boston's foreign-born population, the unemployment rates for those who are English Proficient (EP) and Limited English Proficient (LEP)[3] are similar, at 7.4% and 7.9% respectively.
  - However, those who are LEP are less likely to be in the labor force than those who are EP.
    - 91.2% of Boston's foreign-born, English proficient population is in the labor force.
    - Only 63.4% of Boston's foreign-born, Limited English Proficient population is in the labor force.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BRA Research Division Analysis

Educational Attainment

- Overall, unemployment rates decrease as educational attainment increases. It is highest for those who did not graduate from high school and lowest for those with a Bachelor's degree or above.
- Unemployment rates according to educational attainment are:[4]
  - Less than a high school diploma: 16.1%
  - High school graduate and equivalency: 13.1%
  - Some college or Associate's degree: 10.9%
  - Bachelor's degree or higher: 4.4%
- Additionally, people age 16-19 who appear to have dropped out of high school have a very high unemployment rate of 43.8%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

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[3] Those who are English Proficient (EP) speak English only, very well, or well. Those who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) do not speak English well or at all.
[4] Among Boston's 25 and older population.

Disabilities

- The unemployment rate for individuals with a disability is 19.7%.
- Not surprisingly, the poverty rate among this group is also high, at 35.9%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Veterans

- Veterans have a higher unemployment rate than nonveterans, at 13.5% and 9.1% respectively.
    - Boston's veteran unemployment rate is higher than the national and state veteran unemployment rates. The national unemployment rate among veterans is 6%. For Massachusetts, it is 7.4%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Presence of Children

- Among individuals with children, the unemployment rate is 13.9%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BRA Research Division Analysis

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Occupations

- The occupational groups with the highest unemployment rates are:[5]
    - Construction and Extraction (18.3%)
    - Production (16.1%)
    - Food Preparation and Serving Related (15.1%)
    - Installation, Maintenance and Repair (15.1%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BRA Research Division Analysis

Industries

- The industries with the highest unemployment rates are:[6]

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[5] Farming, Fishing and Forestry are excluded due to the small number of people working within this group in Boston.

[6] Mining, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting are excluded due to the small number of people within these industries in Boston.

- o Administrative Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services (19.4%)
- o Construction (15.0%)
- o Accommodation and Food Services (14.7%)
- o Manufacturing (11.6%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BRA Research Division Analysis

Income

- Not surprisingly, Boston's unemployed population has very low incomes. The majority, 67.7%, earn less than $10,000 per year.
- Overall, 90% of Boston's unemployed earn less than $30,000 per year.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BRA Research Division Analysis

Public Benefits

- Among individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income, the unemployment rate is 50.9%.
- The unemployment rate among those receiving Social Security is 16.6%.[7]

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BRA Research Division Analysis

Health Insurance Coverage

- The unemployment rate among those without health insurance coverage is high, at 21.7%.
- Among those *with* health insurance coverage, those with public coverage also have a high unemployment rate, at 22.1%.[8]

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

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[7] To learn about the difference between Social Security and Supplemental Security Income, visit the Social Security Administration's fact sheet on this topic at: http://www.ssa.gov/sf/FactSheets/aianssavsssifinalrev.pdf.

[8] According to the U.S. Census Bureau: "Private health insurance is a plan provided through an employer or union, a plan purchased by an individual from a private company, or TRICARE or other military health care. Public coverage includes the federal programs Medicare, Medicaid, and VA Health Care (provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs); the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); and local medical programs for indigents (this program is included only for the Pacific Islands). People who had no reported health coverage, or those whose only health coverage was Indian Health service (this program is included only in the American Community Survey), were considered uninsured."

Appendix 1: Unemployment rate by neighborhood

	Total 16+	Total in Civilian Labor Force	% in Labor Force	Total Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Harbor Islands	353	108	30.6%	62	**57.4%**
Mattapan	18,836	12,924	68.6%	2,239	**17.3%**
Roxbury	36,569	21,381	58.5%	3,596	**16.8%**
Dorchester	91,892	63,949	69.6%	10,356	**16.2%**
Longwood Medical Area	4,891	2,316	47.4%	306	**13.2%**
Hyde Park	27,605	19,990	72.4%	2,498	**12.5%**
East Boston	34,064	25,654	75.3%	2,724	**10.6%**
Fenway	32,580	17,284	53.1%	1,808	**10.5%**
Roslindale	22,461	16,221	72.2%	1,599	**9.9%**
Mission Hill	14,224	8,900	62.6%	809	**9.1%**
South End	26,983	19,201	71.2%	1,667	**8.7%**
Downtown	14,985	8,912	59.5%	751	**8.4%**
Allston	19,706	12,234	62.1%	1,013	**8.3%**
South Boston	28,120	21,068	74.9%	1,480	**7.0%**
Charlestown	14,027	10,478	74.7%	720	**6.9%**
Jamaica Plain	31,172	24,483	78.5%	1,662	**6.8%**
West End	4,846	3,133	64.7%	206	**6.6%**
West Roxbury	24,952	17,610	70.6%	1,107	**6.3%**
Brighton	44,079	29,716	67.4%	1,646	**5.5%**
Beacon Hill	8,533	7,032	82.4%	346	**4.9%**
Back Bay	16,076	11,061	68.8%	358	**3.2%**
South Boston Waterfront	2,072	1,642	79.2%	53	**3.2%**
North End	8,671	7,163	82.6%	183	**2.6%**
Boston*	**527,697**	**362,460**	**68.7%**	**37,189**	**10.3%**

Note: The Boston unemployment rate in this chart is 10.3%, which is different than the 9.6% unemployment rate cited earlier in this report. This is because this chart uses data from the 5-year ACS, which is the only option available for analyzing neighborhoods; whereas the remainder of the report uses the 1-year ACS.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis