

imagine
all the
people

Jamaicans

CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor

2016

Jamaicans 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.



Jamaican restaurant in Dorchester, photo: Phillip Granberry

Jamaican-born coaches at Valeo soccer club located in Newton, Boston, Somerville, and Jamaica



Introduction

There have been three significant waves of Jamaican immigration to the United States since the beginning of the twentieth century. The first occurred between 1900 and 1924—when the National Origins Act severely restricted immigration to the U.S.¹ Caribbean immigration to the United States would plummet from 10,630 in 1924 to 321 the following year.²

The second wave picked up steam during World War II: starting in 1943, migrant workers were brought in to help with the U.S. war effort by working in agriculture. At first, a majority of migrants were directed to Florida, but many would relocate to other states. Many tobacco workers who were working in Connecticut chose to move to Boston and New York after their contracts expired in 1950 instead of returning to the Caribbean. Post-war migration to the United States was again reduced in 1952 with the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act, which upheld the quota system, and much of Caribbean emigration was rerouted to Great Britain.³

The third wave began with the 1965 passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which led to increased Caribbean immigration to the United States, especially as Great Britain had begun to block immigration in 1962. As a result, Jamaican immigration to the United States almost doubled from 1970 to 1980.⁴

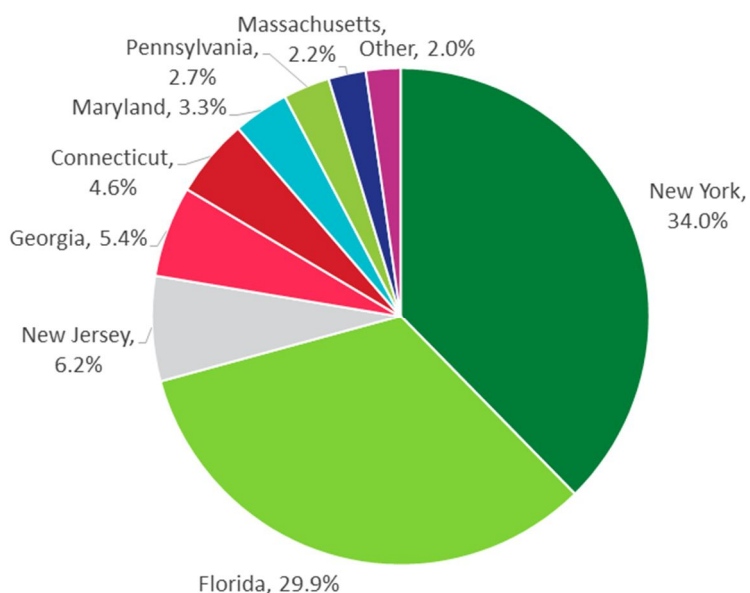
Estimates from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) show that 705,804 foreign-born individuals from Jamaica reside in the United States, which has been the leading destination for Jamaican emigrants. Other primary destinations include England and Canada. Over 60 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans in the United States reside in New York and Florida.

Massachusetts has the seventh largest Jamaican population in the United States. According to the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) there are an estimated 16,964 Jamaicans living in Massachusetts today. Other popular states for Jamaican migration are New Jersey, Georgia and Connecticut.



Boston College's Jamaica Magis service trip

Share of Foreign-Born Jamaican Population by State



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

Nearly 60% of foreign-born Jamaicans in Boston are between the ages of 35 and 64.

According to the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) 7,063 Jamaicans reside in Boston.⁵ Jamaica is the sixth largest country of origin for Boston's foreign-born population. Overall, Jamaicans in Boston constitute 4.4 percent of the city's total foreign-born residents.⁶ Dominicans and Chinese comprise the largest share of the city's foreign-born population, followed by Haitians, Salvadorans, and Vietnamese.

Boston's foreign-born Jamaicans, though scattered throughout the city, live mostly in the neighborhoods of Dorchester (38 percent), Mattapan (26 percent), and Hyde Park (17 percent). Other neighborhoods with smaller concentrations are Roxbury, Roslindale, and Jamaica Plain.⁷

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

Jamaican migration has historically been disproportionately female, and 53 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans in Boston are female. Almost 66 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans in Boston are either married (38 percent) or divorced/separated (18 percent) or widowed (10 percent). Approximately 60 percent of all foreign-born Jamaicans are between the ages of 35 and 64, and the median age of the population is 48 years. The majority of foreign-born Jamaicans (52 percent) are naturalized U.S. citizens.

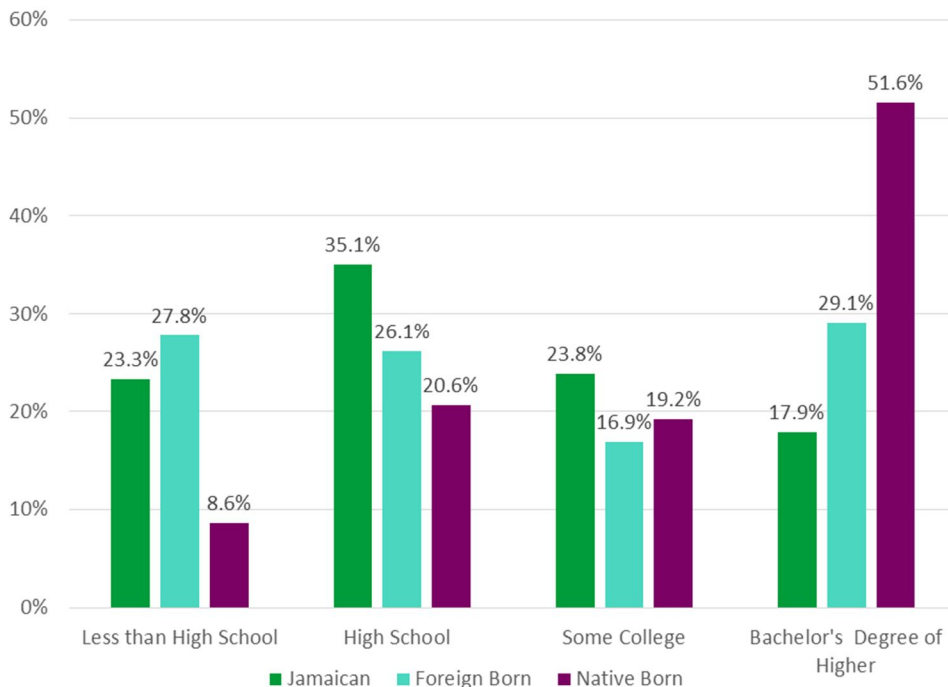
Educational Attainment

Approximately 23 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans in Boston ages 25 years or older have not completed high school. This share is higher than all foreign-born residents (28 percent) and over twice the share for the native-born population (9 percent). Approximately 35 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans have a high school diploma as their highest educational attainment.

While 41 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans 25 years or older have attended college, only 18 percent have completed at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 29 percent of the foreign-born population, and 52 percent of the native born. With respect to advanced degrees, only 5 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans living in Boston hold a graduate/professional degree or higher, compared with 14 percent of the foreign born and 22 percent of the native born.

35% of foreign-born Jamaicans have a high school education as their highest level of education.

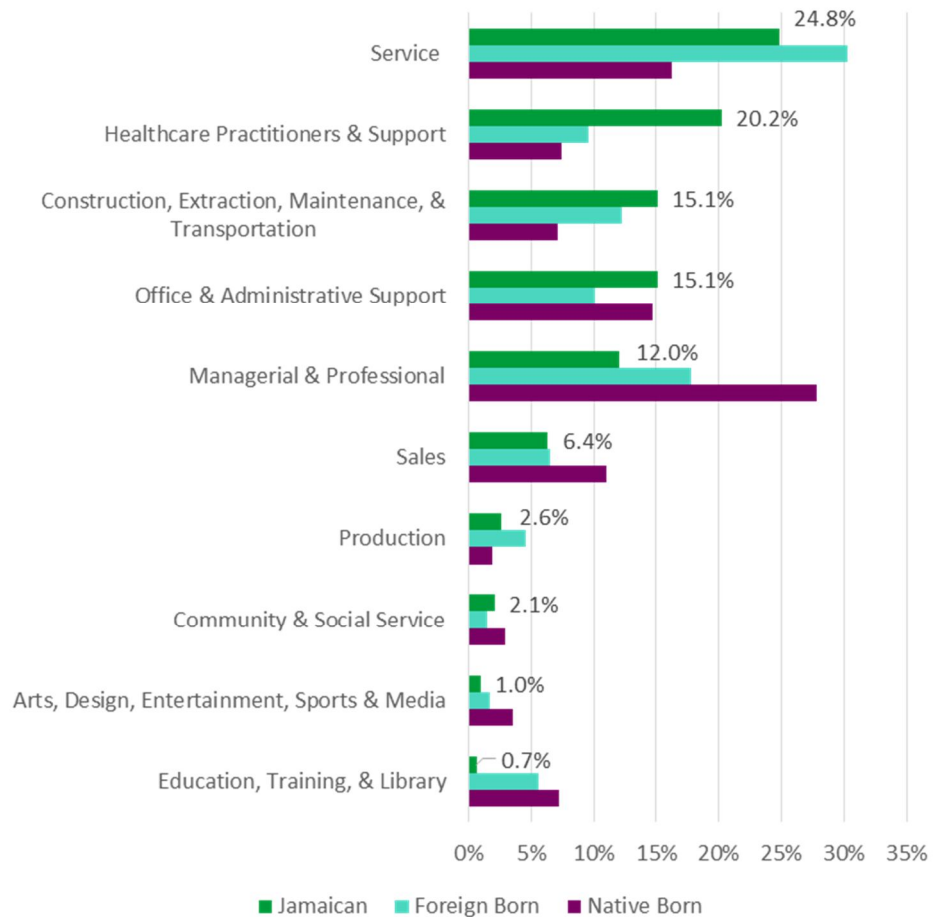
Educational Attainment of Boston Residents 25 Years and Older



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

Nearly 25 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans in the workforce are employed in service occupations.⁸ The next two largest occupational categories are health care practitioners & support (20 percent) and construction, extraction, maintenance, and transportation (15 percent). Foreign-born Jamaicans work in a more diverse set of occupations compared other foreign-born populations. However, similar to other foreign-born populations, Jamaicans are under-represented in managerial and professional occupations: 12 percent for Jamaicans compared with 18 percent for the total foreign-born population and 28 percent for the native born.

Occupations by Nativity

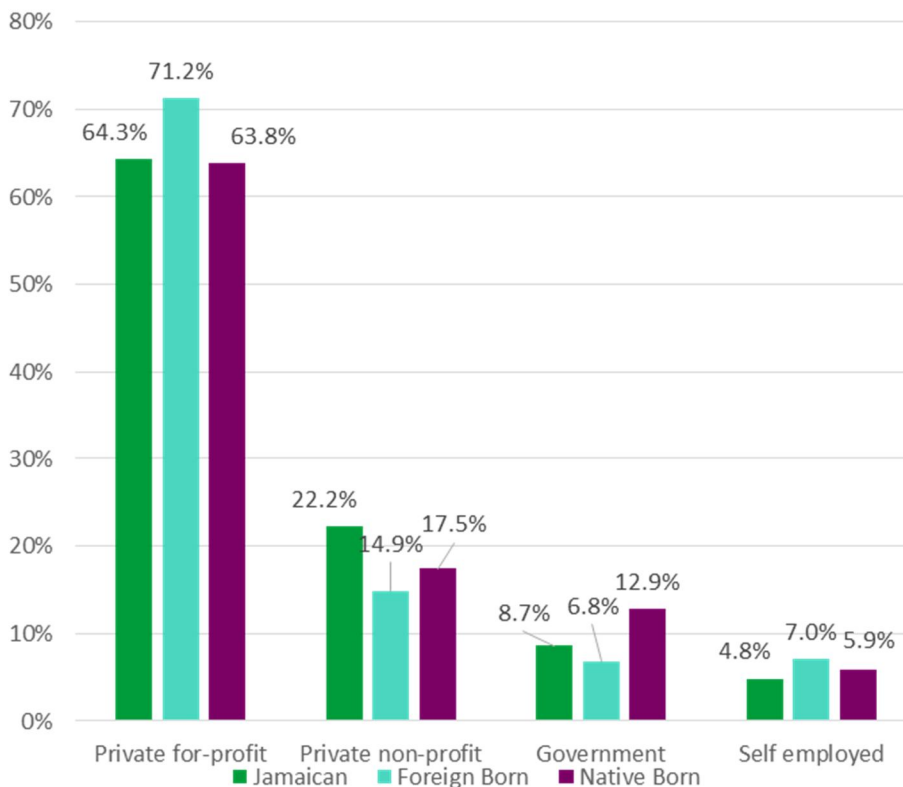


U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division Analysis

In total, 75 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans participate in the labor force compared with 68 percent of the total foreign-born population and 69 percent of the native-born population.⁹ Compared to other populations in Boston, Jamaicans are slightly less likely to be self-employed—4.8 percent--compared to 7 percent for the total foreign-born population and 5.9 percent for the native born.¹⁰ An estimated 64 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans work for private, for-profit companies, which is more similar to the native born than other foreign-born populations. An additional 22 percent work for private, nonprofit organizations, and 9 percent are employed in the public sector (local, state and federal government).

A greater share of Jamaicans are employed in private, non-profit organizations than other foreign-born and native-born populations.

Employment Type by Type of Employer



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

Economic Impact

Foreign-born Jamaicans contribute to the local economy through their labor and consumer spending. The total value of their economic contributions were estimated using a Regional Economic Model (REMI) that calculated the value of goods and services consumed on each dollar spent. Foreign-born Jamaicans in Boston generated total expenditures of \$129 million in 2013.¹¹ These annual expenditures contributed over \$77 million to the regional product and generated \$4.2 million in state and local taxes.¹² In total, these expenditures supported 560 jobs in the Massachusetts economy.¹³



WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2013



CHEAP EATS
DINING DEALS IN GREATER BOSTON

Spices the secret to jerk chicken, other Jamaican specialties

By Ellen Rhyne

When George H. Whitehead Jr. sold his first eatery to pursue a career in music management, he didn't realize how much people would miss his food. Between trips to Europe and Africa he toured with the reggae artists he represented, he returned to Boston to cook for friends. "They would say, 'Man, you need to come back, we miss your food!'"

Now Whitehead is back in the kitchen as chef-owner of Jerk Jamaican Fine Dining and Take-Out Restaurant in Dorchester, just off Coppens Square, the original location of adult-er Jamaicans' special life.

The New York native spent much of his childhood in Jamaica, where his parents are from. After a stint in the US Navy, he opened Island Style Jamaican Restaurants in Hyde Park in 2001, which he later relocated to Dorchester. "I always had a passion for the kitchen," he says. His grandmother, one of his early culinary influences, convinced him to develop his own signature version of jerk, a style of cooking and seasoning synonymous with the island nation. At his new place,




open since May, he is doing exactly that.

Jerk chicken, made here by Whitehead and assistant chef, Sam Jones, begins with a proprietary spice blend, the poultry is cooked in a wood-chip-infused hot smoker. The horrid bird (cleared into substantial chunks) is masterfully prepared. Pieces of white and dark meat are deeply savory, a little sweet, and sport the spicy flavors of Scotch bonnet peppers. "Just a pinch of heat," Whitehead says, say about his remaining ingredients.

The menu includes sandwiches (\$5 to \$7) layered with chicken, steak, pork, and a burger, all served on ocean bread. Despite its name, there's no chocolate in these fluffy white buns. Platters are the mainstay here, available in regular and large, featuring an entree and two sides. Prices vary according to whether you dine in or take out. If you eat in, dishes are \$13 or \$14 more per regular-size order, and you get a salad of romaine, tomatoes, and carrots in a regular-size tub or order of jerk chicken in \$9, the dine-in version is \$12, and no dish on the menu exceeds \$17.

Curried goat (\$10.50 to \$14.50), bone-in chunks of meat braised in soft yellow curry, are tender and full of fla-

JERK JAMAICAN FINE DINING AND TAKE-OUT RESTAURANT
121 Broadway St., Dorchester, 617-566-7906, www.jerkdining.com. All major cards accepted. Wheelchair accessible. Prices: Snaps, salads, sandwiches \$5-\$18. Platters with two sides \$9-\$17. Beverages \$1-\$4. Hours: Mon-Sat 11 a.m.-10 p.m. What to order: jerk chicken, curried goat, collard greens, rice and peas, fried plantains, sorrel punch.

Chief owner George H. Whitehead Jr. serves (clockwise from top left) slow-braised oxtail with algae, cheese and fried plantains, jerk chicken, rice and peas, and collard greens, and sorrel punch, a drink made from flowers.

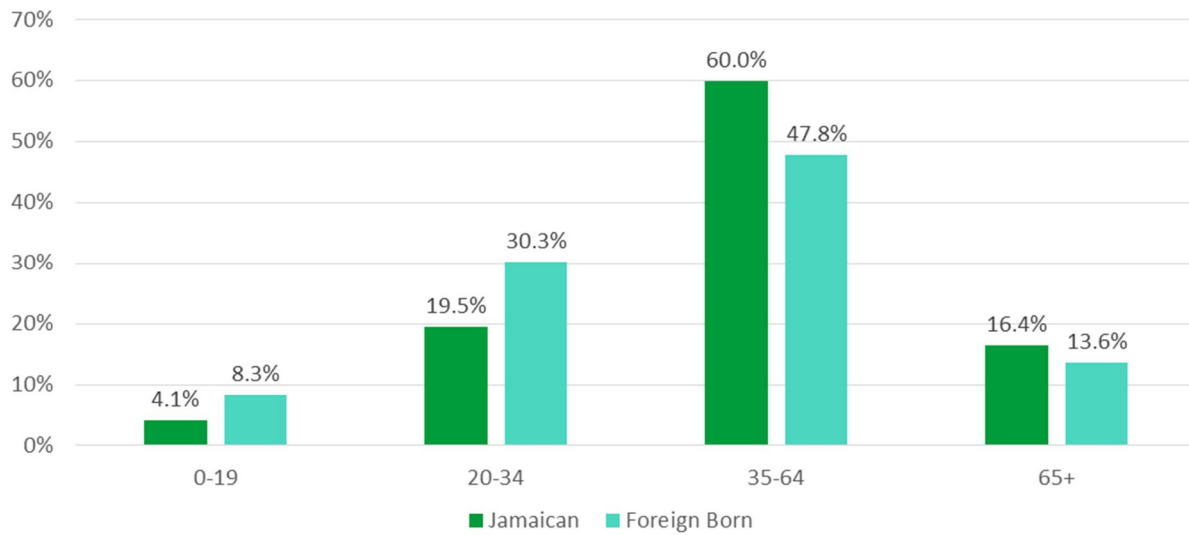
The atmosphere is relaxed inside. A regular table is reserved for the local Jamaica, and soon the conversation turns to the old-fashioned chatting. Banton like this must be music to the chef's ears.

Ellen Rhyne can be reached at ellenrhyne@boston.com.

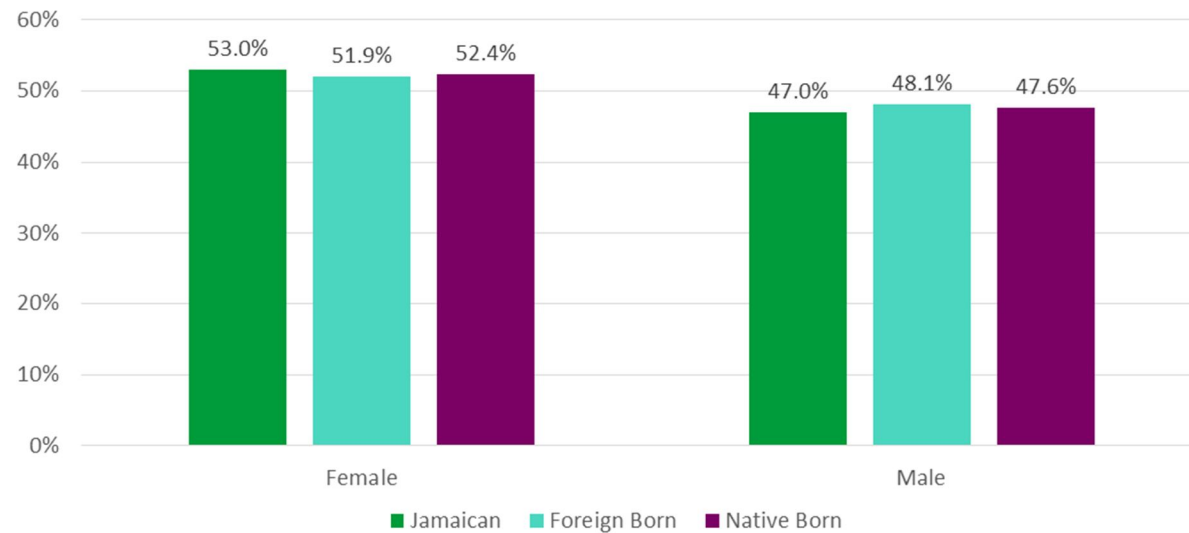
Jerk
Jamaican Fine Dining and Take Out Restaurant
Featured In: The Boston Globe July 29, 2013

Imagine all the people: Jamaica

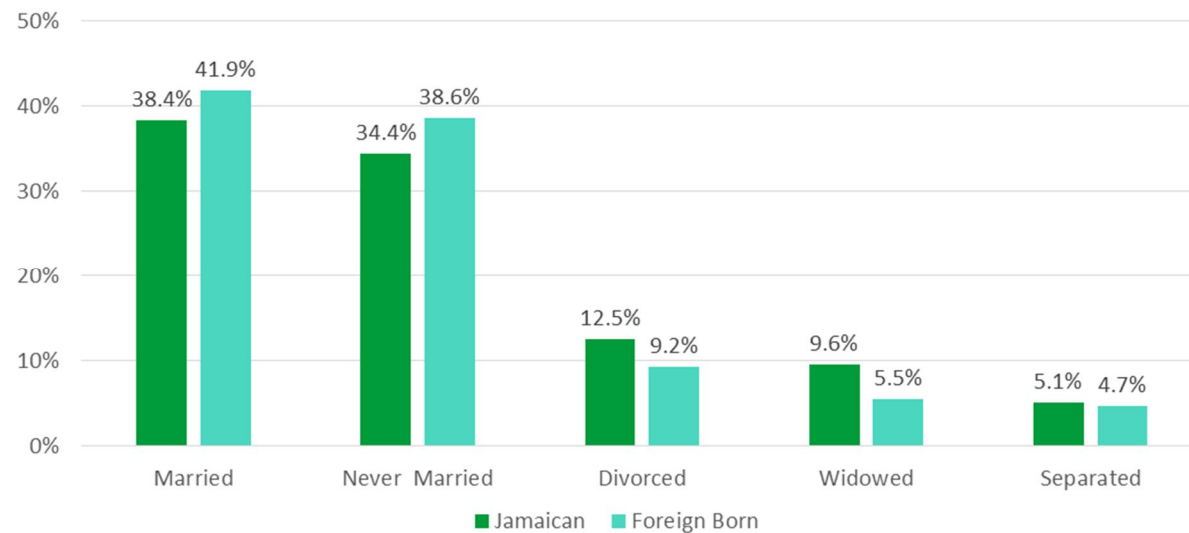
Age



Gender

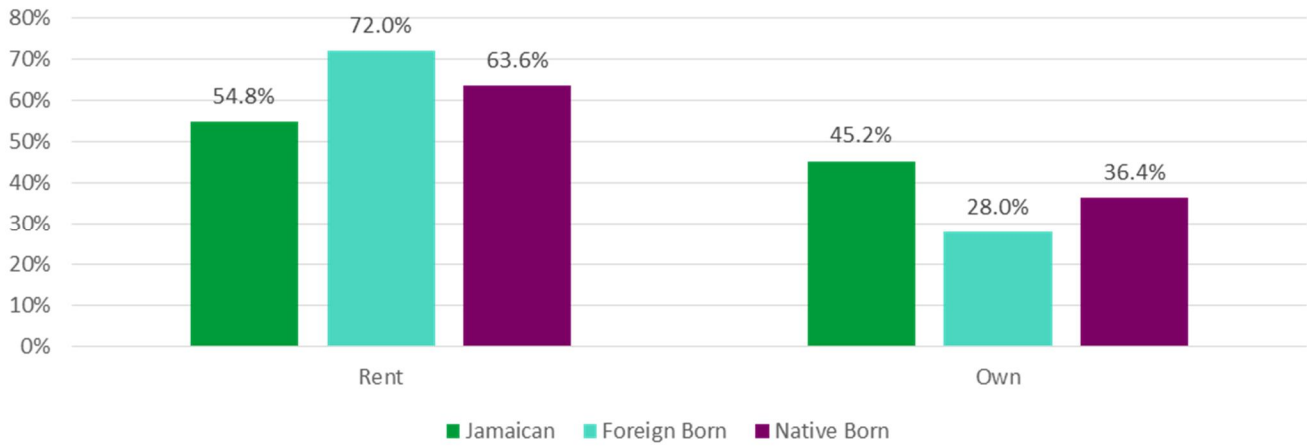


Marital Status

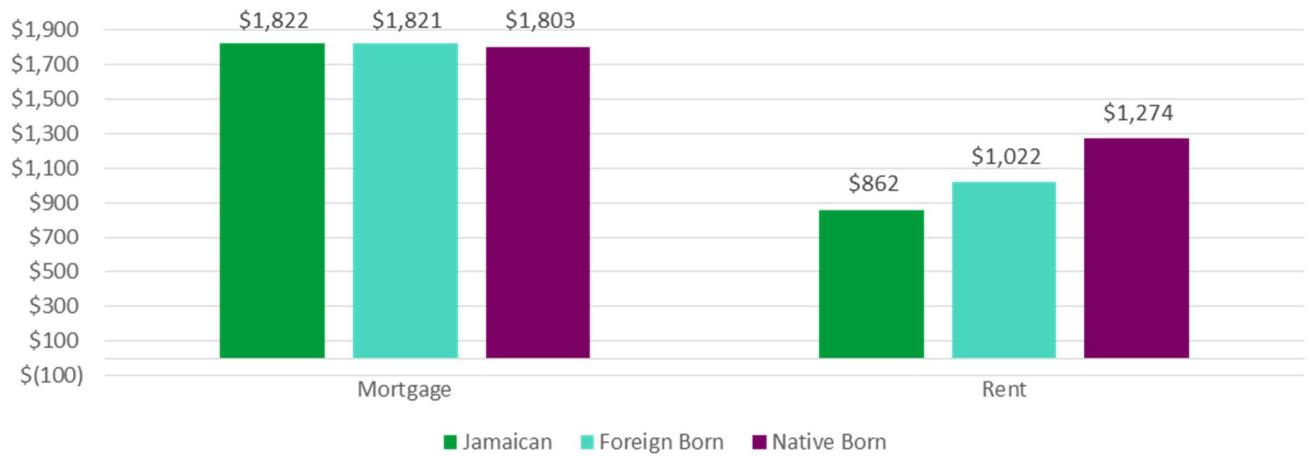


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, PUMS, BRA Research Division Analysis

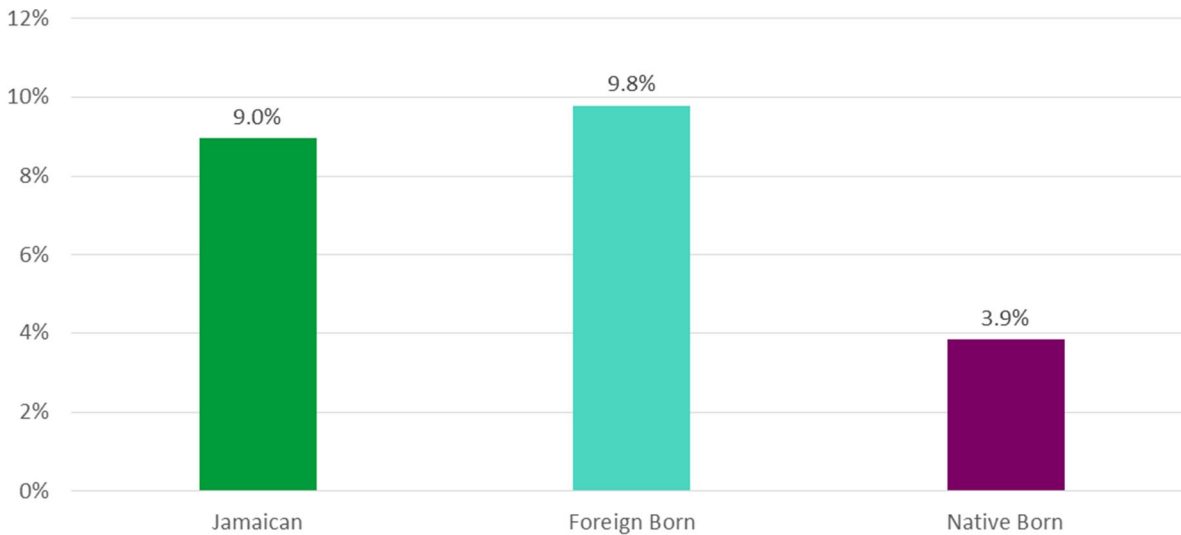
Housing Tenure*



Housing Costs*



Medical Uninsurance



*Housing data are based on the householder's nativity.

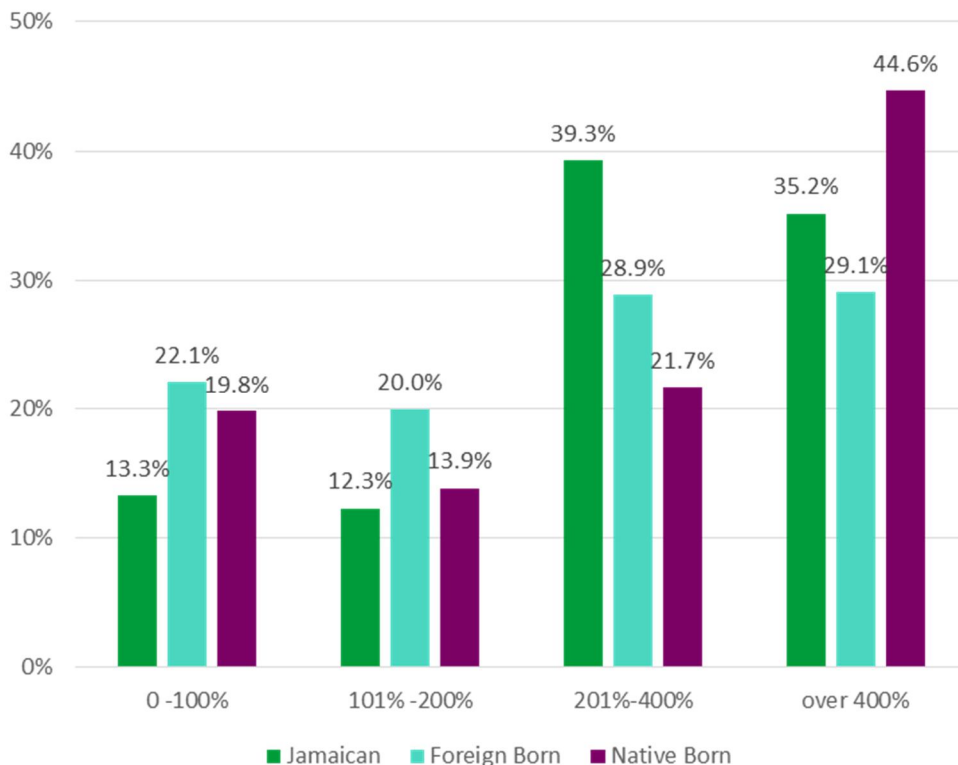
Standard of Living

Approximately 35 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans 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 line 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 \$62,920.¹⁴ In contrast, 13 percent of foreign-born Jamaicans live below the federal poverty level compared to 20 percent for the city's native-born population.

Even though originally settled by the Spanish who imported African slaves, Jamaica was a British colony until 1962. As a result, Jamaicans speak English and language acquisition does not hinder their labor force participation. Along with their high labor force participation, this might account for their economic success compared to other foreign born.

Collectively, Jamaicans contributed close to \$77 million to the regional economy in 2013.

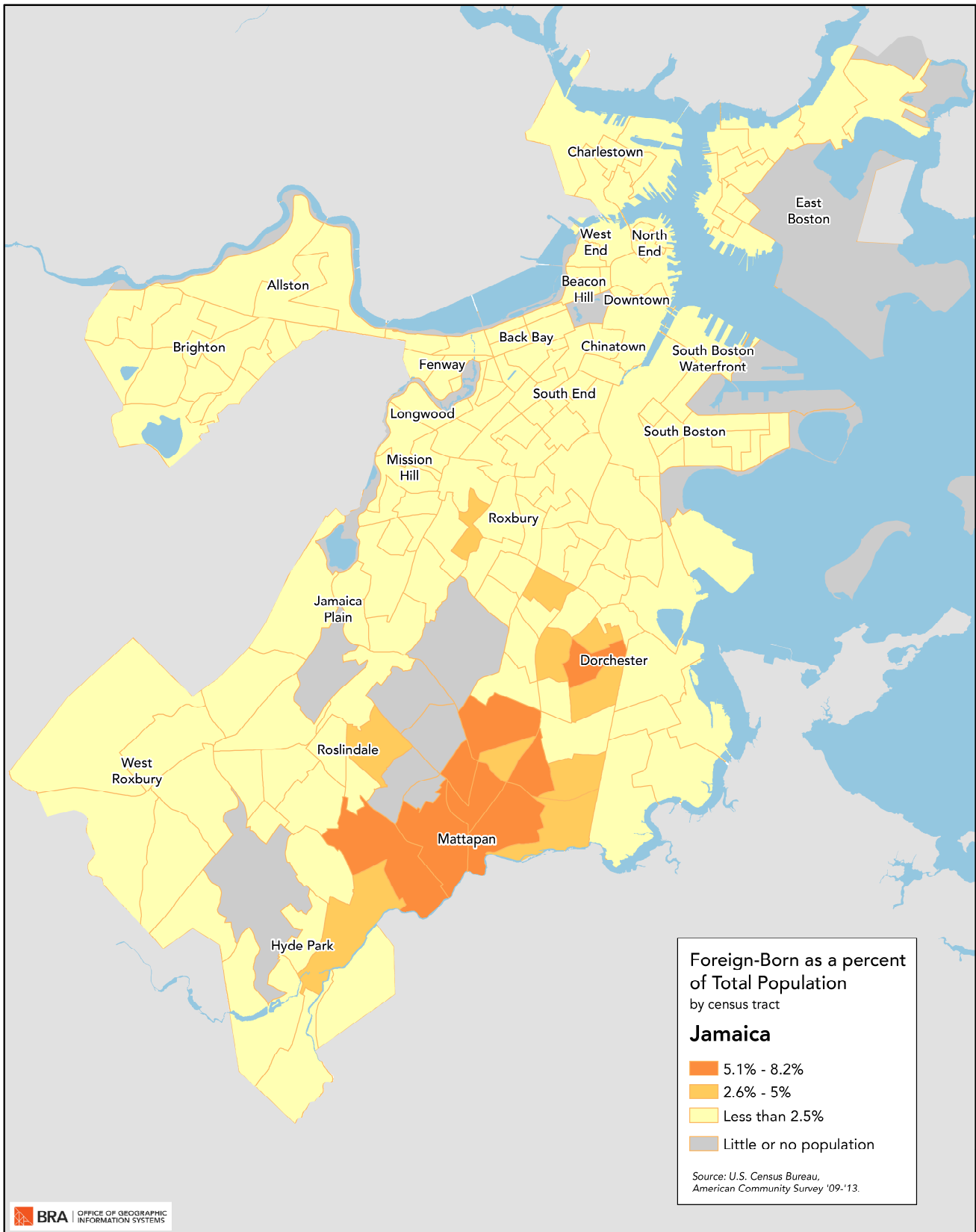
Household Income Compared to Poverty Threshold



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

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Children of Jamaican Origin

The 2009-2013 American Community Survey estimates 2,146 children in Boston are of Jamaican origin.¹⁵ Children of Jamaican origin in Boston are predominately native born – 92 percent. However, 49 percent of Jamaican children live with foreign-born parent(s). In comparison, 40 percent of all Boston’s children live with foreign-born parent(s).

Jamaican children with foreign-born parent(s) are less likely to live poverty. Slightly less than 15 percent of Jamaican children with foreign-born parent(s) compared to 28 percent of all children in Boston are below the federal poverty level (\$23,850 for a 4-person household in 2014).

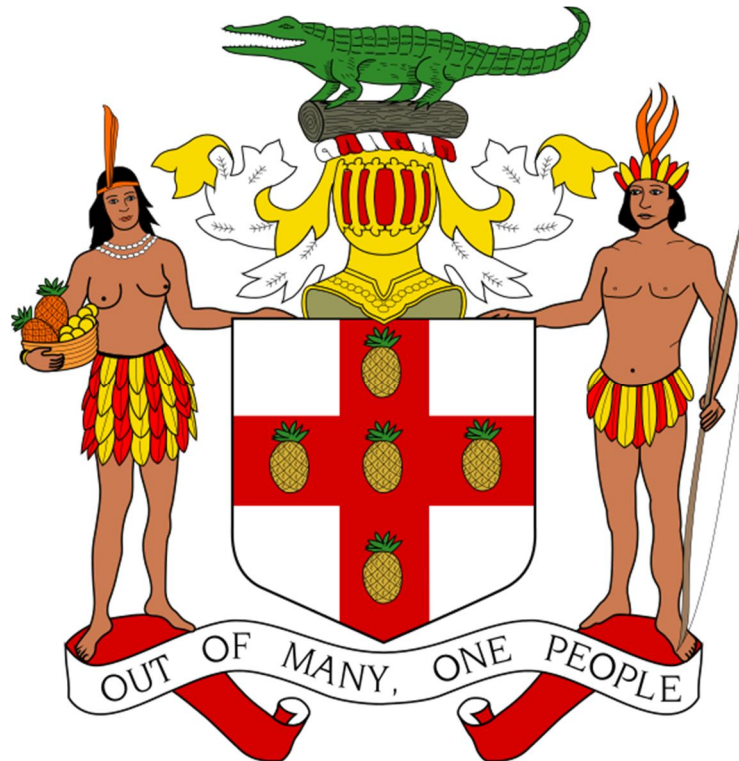


Jamaican-born Justin Masterson playing for the Boston Red Sox



Jamaican Associates, Inc. Boston pumpkin picking trip

Even though Massachusetts is not a leading destination for Jamaicans who migrate to the United States, they are the sixth largest foreign-born population in Boston. Foreign-born Jamaicans in Boston contribute to the economy, culture, and civic life of Boston. Foreign-born Jamaican labor force participation is greater than other foreign-born populations, and they are more likely to work in the non-profit sector. They have a smaller share of their population living below the federal poverty level than others in Boston



Jamaican Associates, Inc. Boston—2014 Jamaican Independence Day Gala

¹N. Samuel Murrel, "Jamaican Americans," *Countries and their Cultures*.

²"Caribbean Migration," *In Motion: The African-American Experience*. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

³"Caribbean Migration," *In Motion: The African-American Experience*. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

⁴Alex Glennie and Laura Chappell, "Jamaica: From Diverse Beginning to Diaspora in the Developed World," Migration Policy Institute (2010).

⁵The ACS's American Fact Finder website reports that there are an estimated 7,063 foreign-born Jamaicans in Boston. However, ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data for Boston reports a lower estimate of 5,938. Both are population estimates, and contain a margin of error due to sampling technique. Lower survey response rates due to 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>.

⁶U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey, PUMS data, BRA Research Analysis (2016).

⁷U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, American Factfinder, BRA Research Analysis (2016).

⁸This 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.

⁹Labor 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, 2016.

¹⁰ 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.

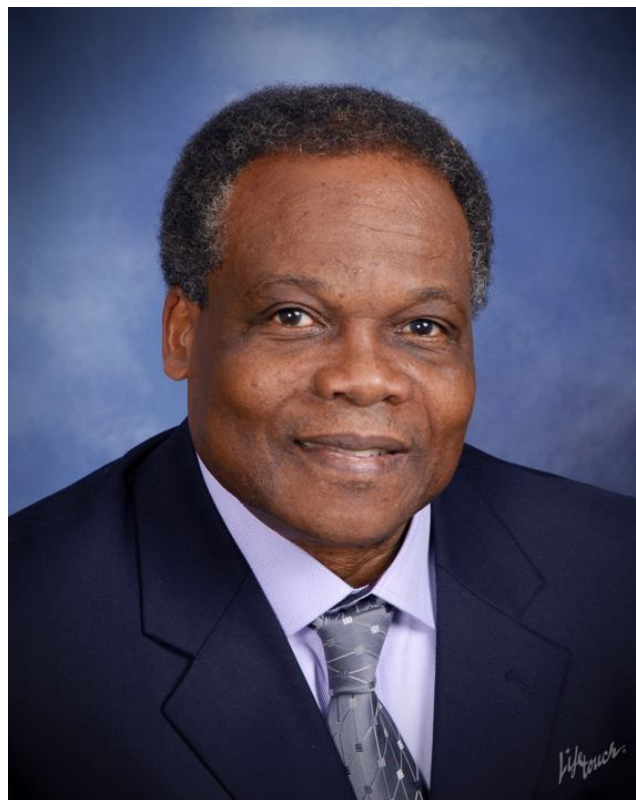
¹¹ BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹² BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹³ BRA Research Division Analysis, 2014, Regional Economic Model, Inc., REMI calculations.

¹⁴ Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically. U.S. Census Bureau (2016).

¹⁵ 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.



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Honorary Consul for Boston
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CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor



MAYOR'S OFFICE
FOR IMMIGRANT
ADVANCEMENT

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston



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