The Irish Population In Boston

March 17, 2023
01 Historical Population
By 1860, with 39% of the foreign-born population, the Irish were the largest
Historical Foreign-stock Irish Population in Boston

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Historical Irish Ancestry Population

Population of People in Boston with Irish Ancestry

02
Irish in the United States
Boston has the 10th largest population in the United States, and its 13% share is the largest of any of these cities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Only New Hampshire has an higher share of its population Irish in 2021 than Massachusetts.
However, Irish are the 3rd largest ancestry group in the United States.
Irish in Massachusetts live primarily in and around Boston

Population of Irish Ancestry in Massachusetts in 2021

Population
• 1 Dot = 100

Source: 2021 IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org
Irish Population in Boston
The Irish are the largest ancestry group in Boston

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis
South Boston 33%, Charlestown, West Roxbury and North End 26% have the largest Irish ancestry populations.
The Irish population in Boston stayed relatively constant between 2000 and 2010 but declined slightly in 2021.

“Native-born” Irish were typically born in the United States and have United States citizenship from birth. “Foreign-born” Irish were typically born in Ireland, but may be naturalized United States citizens.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2016-2010 & 2017-2021 American Community Surveys (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
More than half of the native-born Irish population is female

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
27% of the Irish population is 25 to 34

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
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Irish in Boston: Education
70% of Irish adults have completed at least a Bachelor’s degree, compared to 52% of adults in Boston as a whole.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
More than half of Irish young adults are not enrolled in school

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
37% of Boston Irish attend private schools

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
Irish in Boston: Labor Force
81% of female Irish in Boston are in the labor force

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
Irish are slightly more likely to work in government

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
Irish workers make up 16% of management occupations

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
41% of Irish workers earn $100,000 or more

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
Irish employees in Boston earn more than Irish business owners

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
26% of self-employed Irish in Boston work in professional, scientific, and technical services.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
In all age groups, Irish residents are more likely to have served in the military

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
Irish in Boston: Housing
51% of Irish residents in Boston live in a family household

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
29% of Irish residents in Boston live in single family housing

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
Nearly half of Irish homes are owner occupied

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
The share of Irish renters who are rent-burdened is lower than Boston as a whole

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey (PUMS); BPDA Research Division Analysis
Irish economic contributions to Boston are significant

- Irish, people born in Ireland or who identify as having Irish ancestry, make up 13.0% of Boston’s population (87,327 people).
- Irish living in Boston hold 53,022 jobs and own approximately 3,683 businesses.
- Irish in Boston earned over $5.5 billion in wage income in 2021.
- Irish’s consumer demand supported an additional 30,700 jobs and contributed $3.4 billion to Boston’s gross city product in 2021.
- Irish contributed $201.6 million in state income taxes and $70.1 million in state sales taxes in 2021.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI), PI+ Massachusetts Regions, BPDA Research Division