



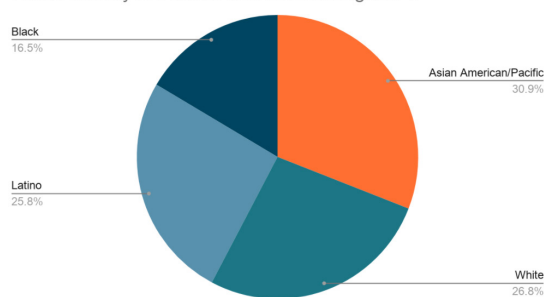
## MASSACHUSETTS IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE ADVOCACY COALITION: Immigrant Children, Youth, and Families in Massachusetts

Children of immigrants- those who are age 18 or under with one or more foreign-born parent- are the fastest growing immigrant demographic in our state, comprising 31% of Massachusetts' population ages 0-18. Investments in education, especially in early education, and social safety net programs for this population are investments into a bright future for the Commonwealth.

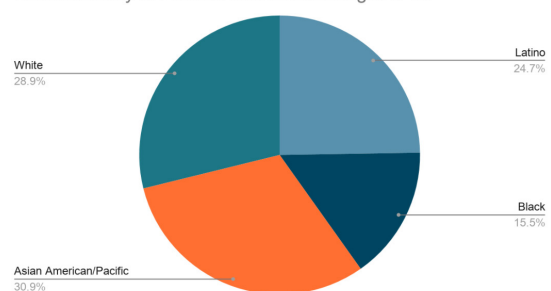
### WHO ARE YOUNG CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS IN MASSACHUSETTS?

- 138,322 children under 6 have at least one immigrant parent.
- 31% of children under 6 years old are born in the U.S. and are therefore U.S. citizens.

Race/Ethnicity of Parents with Children Ages 0-4



Race/Ethnicity of Parents with Children Ages 5-10



### Who are children in Massachusetts?

- 285,511 children in Massachusetts ages 6-17 have at least one immigrant parent. <sup>1</sup>
- Roughly 26% of these children were born in the US and are US citizens.
- 25% of children's families in Massachusetts speak at least one language other than English at home.

### Barriers

Foreign-born parents tend to be employed at similar rates as native parents but are much more likely to be low-income or more likely to be "working poor".

- 13% of immigrant parents with children under 18 have incomes below 100% of the federal poverty line compared to 8% of children in US-born families. <sup>2</sup>
- 19% of parents with children under 18 had incomes 100-199% of the federal poverty line compared to 9% of children with US born parents.
- Education and Limited English Proficiency can impact immigrant families with 13% of immigrant parents are LEP and have no high school diploma.
- 32% of immigrant parents with children under 18 had a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

### Language access

- 18% of immigrant parents reported speaking English not well or not at all. <sup>3</sup>

## COVID-19 IMPACT ON PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS OLD

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted barriers such as job losses, childcare, transportation, digital access, as well as language barriers and lower levels of education that disproportionately affect the immigrant community.

### How are immigrant families doing economically?

- Undocumented immigrant families have been excluded from stimulus checks
- Undocuemented immigrants are barred from accessing unemployment benefits
- Many fear that if they seek assistance it will affect undocumented relatives or risk their own status down the line.
- Economic insecurities are linked to adverse childhood experiences that can have a negative impact on their social-emotional development, learning, and health

### COVID-19 Job losses

- A fifth of the Massachusetts labor force is foreign-born with immigrants supporting the state’s healthcare, science, service industries among many others
- Unemployment rates rose with their peak in April 2020
- Working-age immigrant women have been affected most by pandemic-related job losses <sup>4</sup>. This can be attributed to dual roles of caretaking and working.
- Women with children ages 5-17 faced a higher unemployment rate than women without children <sup>5</sup>

### Education can be a key factor in economic well-being

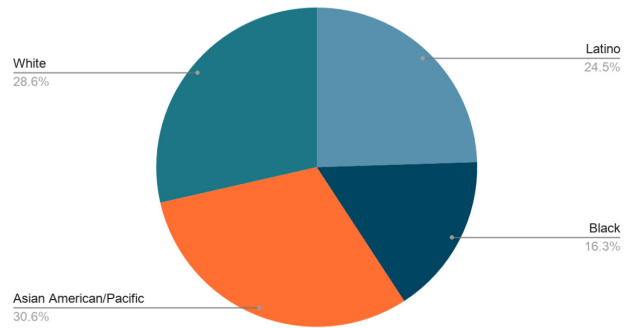
- 55% of parents with young children ages 0-4 hold a Bachelor’s Degree or higher
- 19% have a high school diploma/equivalent
- 46% have some college or an Associate’s degree

## HOW CAN MASSACHUSETTS BETTER SUPPORT IMMIGRANT FAMILIES?

### Childcare

- Leverage funding resources such as Child Care Development Funds to support access to adult education and English Classes (ESOL) for immigrant and/or LEP parents. ESOL and adult education should be recognized as viable service needs for parents served by early education and K-12 systems.
- Increase funding for programs that provide accessible, high-quality childcare like preschool expansion grants that operate early education and childcare centers in partnerships with community-based organizations. These programs increase availability of high-quality, accessible child care and are a great opportunity for municipalities to collaborate with organizations that are experienced with providing services to the community.

Race/Ethnicity of Parents with Children Under 18





## Language Access

- Support legislation like the Language Access and Inclusion Act that would build capacity in state agencies, including the Department of Early Education and Care and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, to provide critical information and services and expand language access capacity at the departmental level, and ensure more oversight of implementation measures related to language access
- Local education agencies should invest in qualified interpreters and language support staff to ease the burden on multilingual teachers who are often asked to interpret as a last-minute solution

## Two-Generation Approaches

- Increase investments in home-visiting models that are proven to be effective with immigrant and DLL families such as the literacy-focused Parent-Child +
- Upskilling programs and training courses should consider building in supports for childcare and transportation.
- Develop and scale approaches that can teach skills to immigrant parents (e.g. digital literacy, English language) while also building capacity to support their child's learning and development.

## Digital Accessibility

- Require that local education agencies collect and report information about digital accessibility through enrollment and intake forms
- Support state initiatives like the Broadband Equity Commission that further examines the impact of the digital divide and identifies interventions like public Wi-Fi and expanded digital training

## Transportation

- Expand transportation services to areas where low-income families live by investing in our public transportation systems.
- Support legislation like the Work and Family Mobility Act that would allow access to eligible drivers regardless of immigration status and make driving safer for everyone in the Commonwealth.

**Original factsheet written by Marion Davis in 2020 .**

**Updated by Samira Schreiber in May 2021.**

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<sup>1</sup> MPI State Demographics Data (2018). State Immigration Data Profiles- Massachusetts. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state-demographics/MA>

<sup>2</sup> Data tabulated by the Migration Policy Institute based on U.S. Census Bureau. (2014-2018). American Community Survey Data.

<sup>3</sup> Data tabulated by the Migration Policy Institute based on U.S. Census Bureau. (2014-2018). American Community Survey Data.

<sup>4</sup> Gelatt, J., Bataolva, J., & Capps, R./MPI Economic Effects of COVID-19 (2020). <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/early-readout-economic-effects-covid-19-crisis-immigrant-women>

<sup>5</sup> Gelatt, J., Bataolva, J., & Capps, R./MPI Economic Effects of COVID-19 (2020). <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/early-readout-economic-effects-covid-19-crisis-immigrant-women>