

# Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts, the United States, and Puerto Rico

## 2016

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This report compares the Puerto Rican populations in Massachusetts, the United States, and Puerto Rico to identify differences and similarities in demographics and economic status. It also illustrates the migration patterns of Puerto Ricans coming to Massachusetts.

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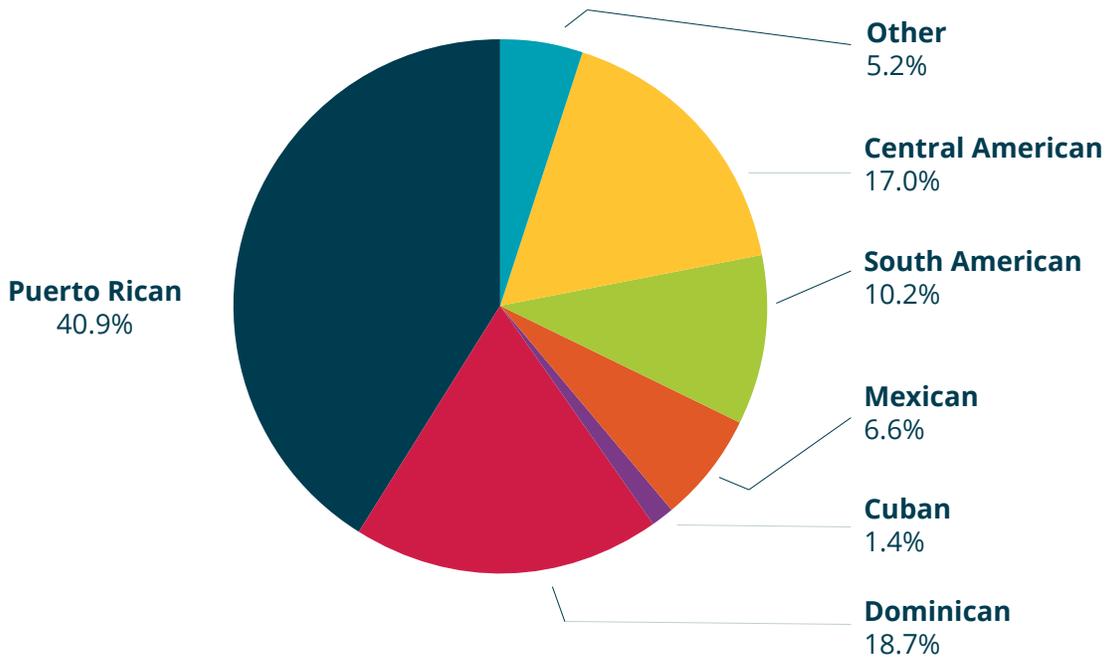
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# Population

In 2016, there were 5.45 million Puerto Ricans living in the United States, substantially more than those living in Puerto Rico (3.26 million).<sup>1</sup> Of the Puerto Ricans living in the United States, 319,042 live in Massachusetts, the fifth largest Puerto Rican population in the United States after New York, Florida, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The state's Puerto Rican population has grown by 60% since 2000, and 20% since 2010.

Puerto Ricans make up about 9.5 percent of the Latino population in the United States. Massachusetts has about four times that proportion, with Puerto Ricans making up 40.9 percent of the state's Latino population. However, with the increase in Latino groups such as Dominicans, there has been a steady decline in Puerto Ricans as a percentage of the Latino population in Massachusetts, decreasing from 46.5 percent in 2000 to 42.4 percent in 2010 and 40.9 percent in 2016.

**FIGURE 1** Latino Population in Massachusetts 2016

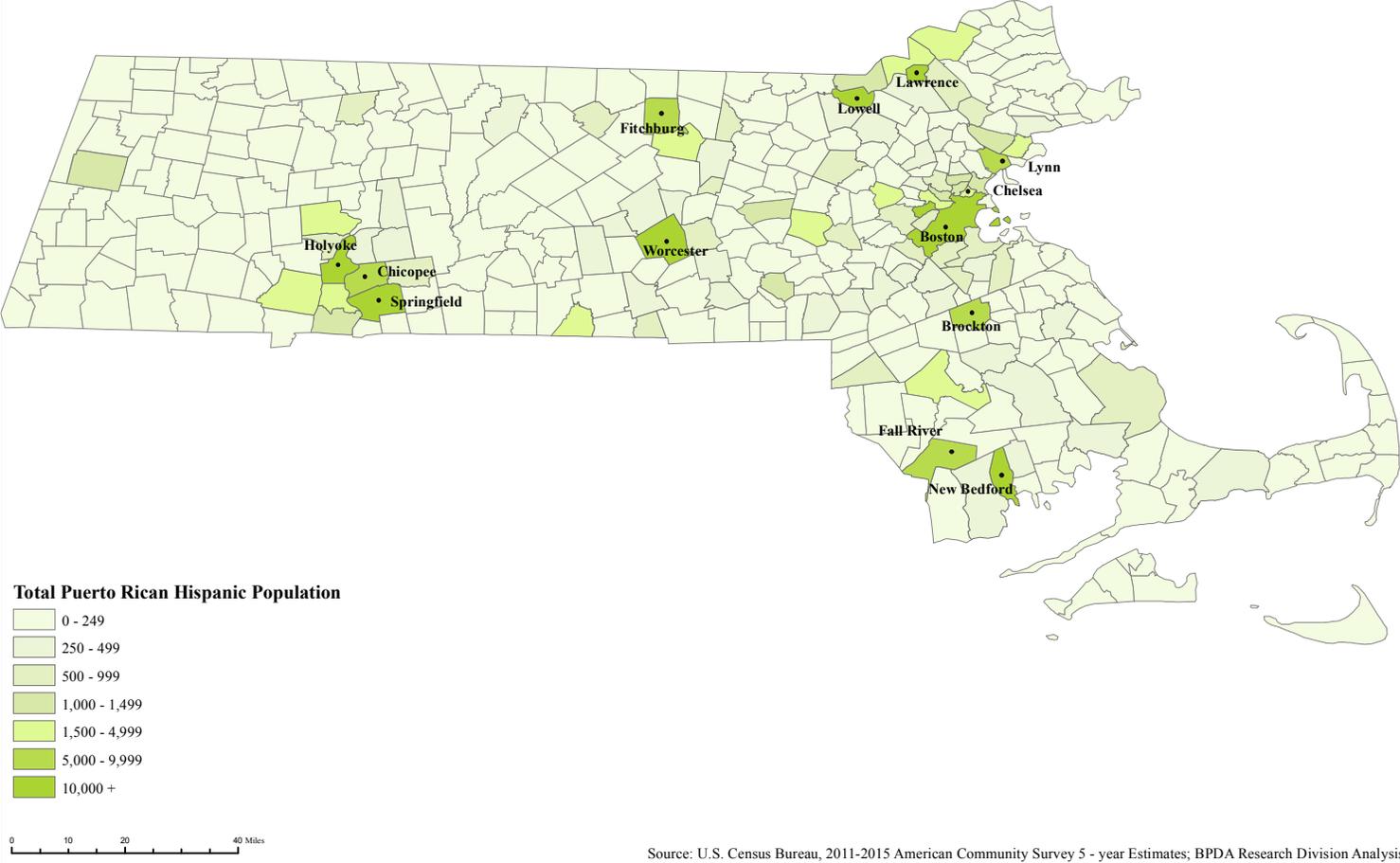


<sup>1</sup>This report looks at people who identified themselves as Puerto Rican Hispanic. Data are from the U.S. Census 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census and 2016 1-year American Community Survey.

# Puerto Rican Population by County in Massachusetts

Hampden County has the largest Puerto Rican population in Massachusetts with 90,000 Puerto Rican residents, 20 percent of the county's population. Worcester, Suffolk, and Essex Counties each have approximately 40,000 Puerto Rican residents. The cities with the largest Puerto Rican populations are Springfield (54,141), Boston (34,280), and Worcester (22,588). Puerto Ricans make up 28 percent of Latinos in Boston, and 5.1 percent of Boston's total population.

**Total Puerto Rican Hispanic Population by County Subdivision in Massachusetts, 2015**



# Puerto Rican Population by County in Massachusetts, continued

TABLE 1

**Puerto Rican Population by County and Selected Cities and Towns**  
2011-2015 5-year data

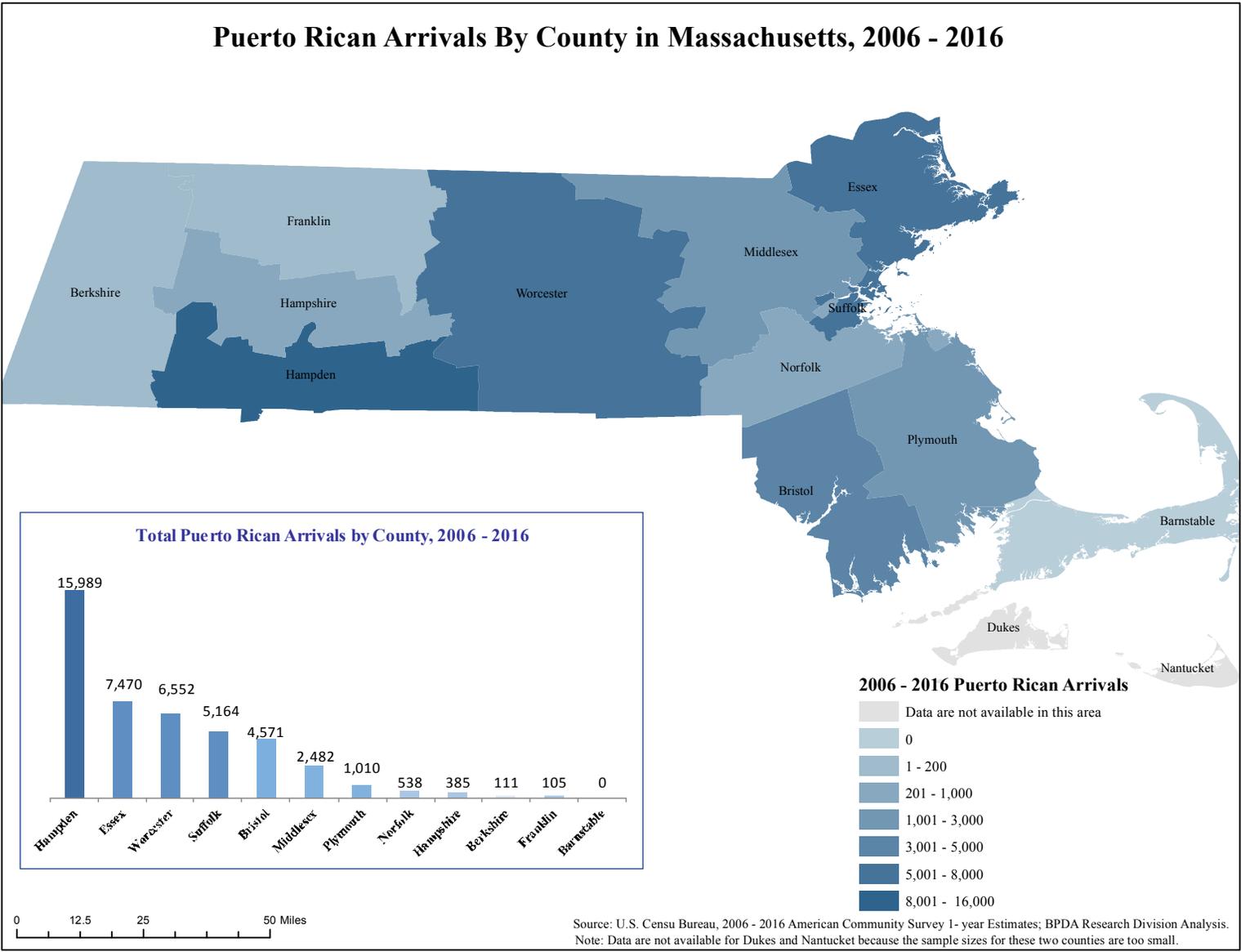
County/City	Puerto Rican Population	% of Latino Population	% of Total Population
Hampden County	90,002	84.6%	19.2%
<i>Springfield</i>	54,141	83.4%	35.2%
<i>Holyoke</i>	18,497	92.7%	45.9%
<i>Chicopee</i>	8,852	89.7%	15.8%
Worcester County	46,625	56.3%	5.7%
<i>Worcester</i>	22,588	59.3%	12.3%
<i>Fitchburg</i>	6,170	63.7%	15.2%
Suffolk County	40,228	24.8%	5.3%
<i>Boston</i>	34,280	28.0%	5.3%
<i>Chelsea</i>	4,495	18.6%	12.0%
Essex County	38,821	28.0%	5.1%
<i>Lawrence</i>	18,549	30.8%	23.5%
<i>Lynn</i>	5,234	16.1%	5.7%
Middlesex County	33,131	29.1%	2.1%
<i>Lowell</i>	12,281	64.3%	11.2%
Bristol County	22,312	59.8%	4.0%
<i>New Bedford</i>	10,689	61.5%	11.3%
<i>Fall River</i>	5,762	72.0%	6.5%
Plymouth County	8,698	48.9%	1.7%
<i>Brockton</i>	5,479	56.1%	5.8%
Norfolk County	8,320	31.5%	1.2%
Hampshire County	3,971	48.0%	2.5%
Berkshire County	1,792	35.3%	1.4%
Barnstable County	1,540	27.7%	0.7%
Franklin County	1,391	54.0%	2.0%
Nantucket County	184	17.1%	1.7%
Dukes County	74	55.6%	0.4%
<b>Massachusetts Total</b>	<b>297,089</b>	<b>42.0%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 5-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Migration from Puerto Rico to the U.S. and Massachusetts

Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens and may move freely throughout the United States. In the eleven years from 2006 to 2016, 728,486 Puerto Rican Hispanics left the island to live in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Of these migrants, 6 percent or 44,377 settled in Massachusetts. Of the recent Puerto Rican migrants to Massachusetts, 36 percent came to Hampden County, 17 percent moved to Essex County, 15 percent settled in Worcester County, and 12 percent arrived in Suffolk County.

## Puerto Rican Arrivals By County in Massachusetts, 2006 - 2016



<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 to 2016 1-year American Community Surveys, BPDA Research Division Analysis

## Age

The Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts are younger than Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico, with a median age of only 26, compared to the median age of 40 in Puerto Rico. About 35 percent of Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts are children, whereas only 21 percent are children in Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico, 18.9 percent of the population is elderly, more than triple the rate in Massachusetts (5.7 percent). Relatedly, 17.2 percent of households in Puerto Rico receive retirement income, compared to 3.6 percent of Puerto Rican households in Massachusetts. Puerto Rican children and elders in Massachusetts have high rates of poverty (over 41 percent). In Puerto Rico, poverty is especially high among children (57 percent). Elders in Puerto Rico are somewhat less likely to be poor and have mean retirement income similar to those in Massachusetts.

**Age**  
**2016**

<b>Puerto Ricans</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>United States</b>	<b>Puerto Rico</b>
Median age (years)	26	30	40
less than 5	9.7%	8.7%	4.8%
5 to 17	25.2%	22.4%	16.0%
18 to 24	12.8%	11.4%	10.2%
25 to 44	28.8%	28.5%	25.0%
45 to 64	17.8%	20.6%	25.2%
65+	5.7%	8.4%	18.9%
<i>Poverty Rate</i>			
Under 18 years	41.4%	29.9%	56.5%
18 to 64 years	29.3%	20.4%	40.9%
65 years and older	41.7%	21.7%	38.2%
Households with retirement income	3.6%	11.0%	17.2%
Mean retirement income (dollars)	\$16,745	\$21,351	\$16,578

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

## English Proficiency

In Massachusetts, 67 percent of Puerto Ricans speak a language other than English at home. Of the Puerto Ricans speaking another language, almost all of them speak Spanish. About 21.7 percent said they speak English less than "very well," a slightly higher percentage than Puerto Ricans in the U.S. (17.2 percent).

**TABLE 3** Language and English Proficiency  
2016

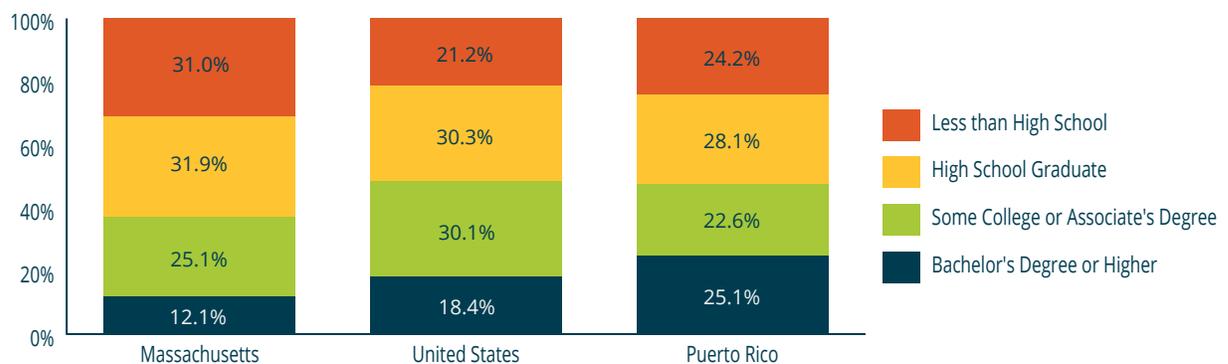
Puerto Ricans	Massachusetts	United States	Puerto Rico
<i>Population 5 years and over</i>			
Language other than English at home	67.2%	59.5%	94.4%
Speak English less than "very well"	21.7%	17.2%	76.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

## Education

Puerto Ricans aged 25 and older in Massachusetts are more likely than Puerto Ricans in the rest of the U.S. and in Puerto Rico to have not finished high school. About 25 percent of Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico have a Bachelor's degree or higher; only about 12 percent have a Bachelor's degree or higher in Massachusetts.

**FIGURE 2** Puerto Rican Educational Attainment, 25 Years or Older  
2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

## Housing

Owner-occupied housing is uncommon for Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts. 68.6 percent of Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico and 36.9 percent of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. live in owner-occupied housing. In contrast, only 19.4 percent of Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts live in owner-occupied housing. In Massachusetts, 60.5 percent of Puerto Rican renters and 33.2 percent of owners experience housing burden (spending 30 percent or more of their monthly household income on housing costs). Median gross rent in Puerto Rico is nearly half the cost of rent in Massachusetts.

**TABLE 4**  
**Housing**  
**2016**

Puerto Ricans	Massachusetts	United States	Puerto Rico
% in owner-occupied housing	19.4%	36.9%	68.6%
Monthly owner costs are 30% or more of household income in the past 12 months	33.2%	34.9%	42.1%
<i>Owner-occupied housing units</i>			
Median value (dollars)	\$224,500	\$200,400	\$110,800
Median monthly owner costs with a mortgage (dollars)	\$1,645	\$1,559	\$840
Monthly renter costs are 30% or more of household income in the past 12 months	60.5%	56.3%	21.5%
<i>Renter-occupied housing units</i>			
Median gross rent	\$818	\$978	\$450

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

## Vehicles

Households in Puerto Rico are more likely to have access to a vehicle and a higher percentage of individuals commute to work by car.

**TABLE 5**  
**Access to Vehicles and Commuting Patterns**  
**2016**

Puerto Ricans	Massachusetts	United States	Puerto Rico
% of households without a vehicle	31.1%	21.7%	16.4%
% who commute by car	77.9%	78.7%	91.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Employment

In Massachusetts, approximately 58 percent of Puerto Ricans aged 16 and over participate in the labor force, compared to only 44 percent in Puerto Rico. The most common occupations in Massachusetts are sales, office, and service occupations. Almost 90 percent of employed Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts work for private companies. Government employment is much more common in Puerto Rico - 22 percent of workers. Almost 6 percent of the civilian adult Puerto Ricans in the United States have served in the U.S. military.

**TABLE 6** Employment and Occupations, age 16 and older  
2016

Puerto Ricans	Massachusetts	United States	Puerto Rico
<i>Employment Status</i>			
In labor force	58.3%	62.2%	44.1%
<i>Occupation of civilian employed population</i>			
Management, business, science and arts occupations	23.9%	28.6%	32.1%
Service occupations	26.1%	23.0%	19.5%
Sales and office occupations	26.3%	27.1%	28.4%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	5.6%	7.6%	9.4%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	18.1%	13.8%	10.6%
<i>Class of worker: civilian employed population</i>			
Private wage and salary workers	87.8%	82.4%	69.3%
Government workers	9.4%	14.0%	21.9%
Self-employed workers	2.8%	3.6%	8.8%
<i>Veteran Status of civilian population aged 18+</i>			
Civilian veteran	2.0%	5.8%	2.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Earnings

Puerto Rican households in Massachusetts have a median household income of \$27,000, higher than in Puerto Rico, but lower than in other parts of the United States. Almost 55 percent of Puerto Rican families in Massachusetts are headed by a single woman, a higher rate than in Puerto Rico or for Puerto Ricans in the rest of the United States. Mean earnings are almost \$20,000 higher per year for Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts (\$55,831) than in Puerto Rico (\$36,767). Per capita income is also higher in Massachusetts.

**TABLE 7** **Income and Earnings**  
2016

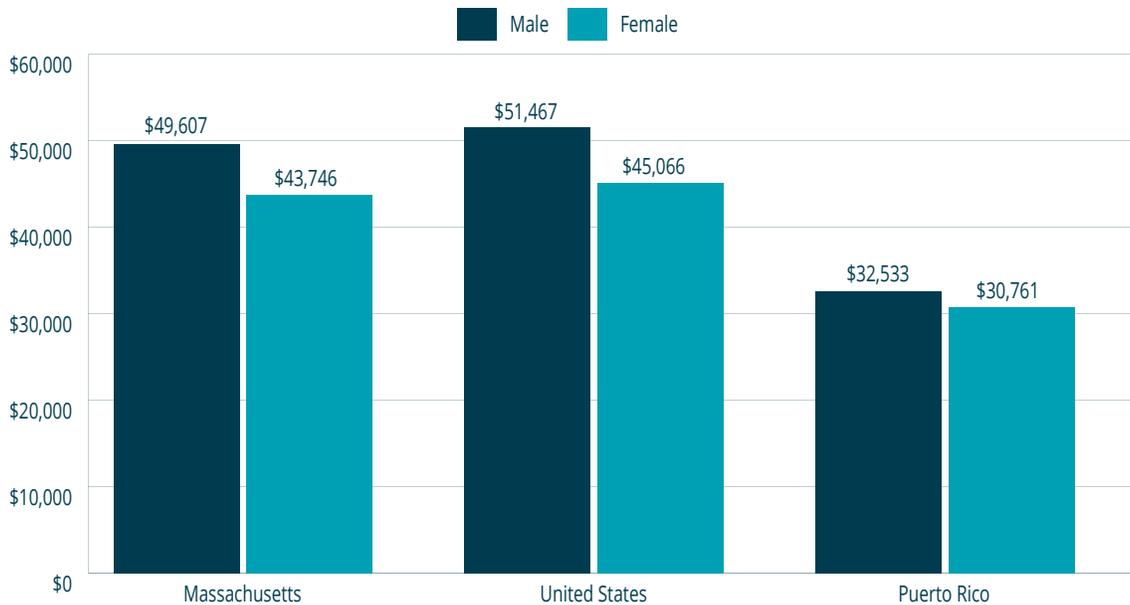
<b>Puerto Ricans</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>United States</b>	<b>Puerto Rico</b>
<i>Income in the past 12 months</i>			
All households	99,687	1,689,910	1,145,943
Median household income (dollars)	\$27,088	\$42,856	\$19,977
Households with earnings	68.5%	77.3%	54.7%
Mean earnings (dollars)	\$55,831	\$65,943	\$36,797
All families	65,951	1,141,840	795,472
Median family income (dollars)	\$31,814	\$49,439	\$24,171
Married-couple families	34.6%	54.4%	55.5%
Median family income (dollars)	\$63,791	\$72,365	\$31,643
Female householder, no spouse present	54.6%	35.4%	34.8%
Median family income (dollars)	\$22,325	\$27,061	\$14,678
Total Puerto Rican population	319,042	5,450,472	3,263,755
Per capita income (dollars)	\$15,679	\$19,939	\$11,671

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

## Earnings, continued

Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts who work full-time, full-year make about the same as Puerto Ricans in the rest of the U.S. and substantially more than those in Puerto Rico. The gap in mean earnings between males and females is smaller in Puerto Rico than in the U.S. and Massachusetts.

**FIGURE 3** Mean Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Puerto Rican Workers  
2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

## Health Insurance

Less than 4 percent of Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts lack health insurance coverage, and the majority are covered by public health insurance.

**TABLE 8** Health Insurance  
2016

Puerto Ricans	Massachusetts	United States	Puerto Rico
<i>Civilian noninstitutionalized population</i>			
% with private health insurance	37.0%	54.3%	39.2%
% with public coverage	65.6%	45.2%	62.0%
% no health insurance coverage	3.8%	7.7%	5.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Poverty

In Massachusetts, 31.3 percent of Puerto Rican families live in poverty. Families in Puerto Rico experience higher poverty rates (39 percent), but Puerto Rican families elsewhere in the U.S. have lower rates of poverty (20 percent). Families with children headed by single mothers have the highest rates of poverty among Puerto Ricans in Massachusetts: 47 percent. Among Puerto Rican individuals, 34.2 percent experience poverty in Massachusetts, compared to 23.5 percent in the United States and 43.6 percent in Puerto Rico.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Poverty Rates**  
**2016**

