

ECONOMIC REVIEW

Native-born and Foreign-born Population Characteristics: FMN-PUMA Region



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This article explores characteristics of the native-born and foreign-born populations in the FMN-PUMA region. FMN-PUMA is comprised of three communities: Framingham, Marlborough, and Natick. MetroWest Economic Research Center (MERC) collected data from the 5-Year 2021 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS). The 2021 ACS groups local geographies by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA). The 2021 ACS provides aggregate data for the three communities of FMN-PUMA, and sorts individuals by nativity. According to this survey, FMN-PUMA was home to over 150,000 individuals. The majority of individuals were born in the United States, making up 74.2% of FMN-PUMA's population. Over one quarter of the individuals were born abroad, accounting for 25.8% of the FMN-PUMA population. In this article, individuals born in the United States are classified as native-born, and individuals born outside of the United States are considered foreign-born.

age groups made up 63.2% of the population, which was slightly less than the proportion of the largest foreign-born age group. When it came to the youngest and oldest age groups, there were notable differences between the native-born and foreign-born populations. For the youngest age group, over a quarter of the native-born population was between the ages of 0-18, while less than 10% of the foreign-born population was in the same age range. With the two oldest age groups, 30% of the native-born population was over 55, while 22.4% of the foreign-born population was over 55.*

FMN-PUMA AGE DISTRIBUTION
By Nativity

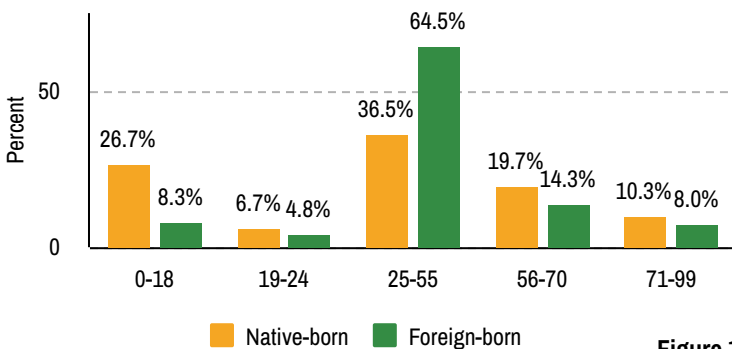


Figure 1

Figure 1 represents the age distribution of the native-born population in orange, and the foreign-born population in green. The majority of the foreign-born population was between the ages of 25 to 55. 64.5% of the foreign-born population was in this age group, around their prime working years. In comparison, the native-born population has a more even distribution. The largest age group was also 25 to 55 years old, making up 36.5% of the native-born population. This is 28 percentage points lower than the foreign-born population. The second largest age group was 0 to 18, comprising of 26.7% of the native-born population. Combined, the two largest native-born

FMN-PUMA MOST SPOKEN HOUSEHOLD LANGUAGE

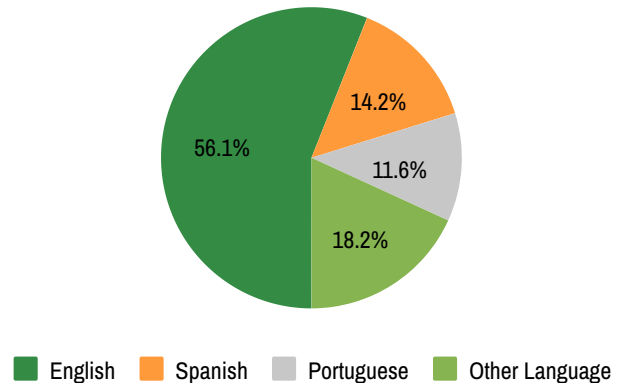


Figure 2

Figure 2 reflects the most spoken household languages in the FMN-PUMA region. The ACS data is based on the single most common language spoken in each household. If a household knows both English and Spanish, but speaks Spanish more at home, the individuals are considered only under the Spanish category in the data. Figure 2 considers the total population of FMN-PUMA, regardless of nativity. English was the most common household language, at 56.1%. Only slightly above half of all households used English as the most spoken language. Spanish was the next most common household language, at 14.2%, and Portuguese came third, at 11.6%. In FMN-PUMA, the main household language spoken was Spanish more often than Portuguese.

Figure 3 shows the most spoken household language for only the foreign-born population. When comparing the total population with only the foreign-born population, the most spoken languages differ.

SOURCE: ACS 5-Year Estimates Public Use Microdata Sample 2021
*Data may vary due to rounding.

FMN-PUMA MOST SPOKEN HOUSEHOLD LANGUAGE

For the Foreign-born Population

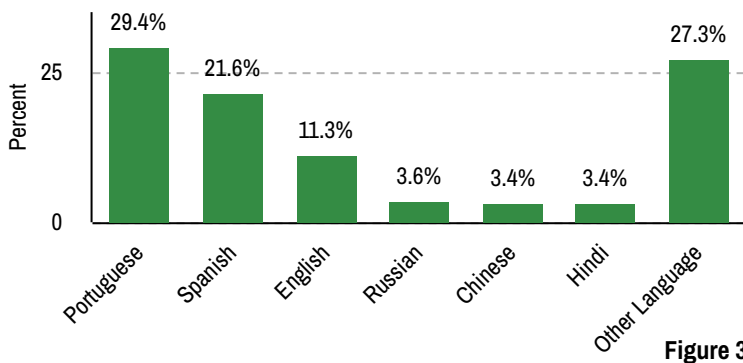


Figure 3

FMN-PUMA EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Age 25 and Over

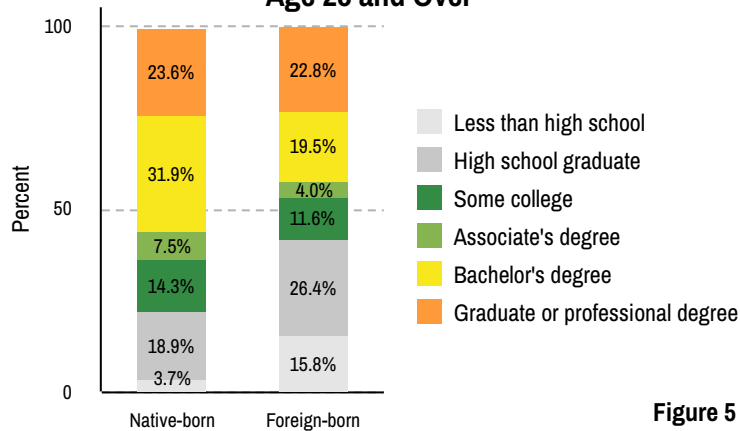


Figure 5

Within the total population, English was the most spoken household language. Spanish came second, and Portuguese was third. For the foreign-born population, the most common household language was Portuguese, at 29.4%. Spanish came second, at 21.6%. While Spanish was more widely spoken overall, many Spanish speakers were native-born, making Portuguese more common than Spanish among the foreign-born population. Within the foreign-born population, English was the third most spoken household language, at 11.3%. After the top three languages, the next most spoken household languages were Russian, Chinese, and Hindi. Combined, they made up 10.3% of the foreign-born population.*

Figure 5 displayed the distribution of educational achievement for the total FMN-PUMA population, sorted by nativity. The figure only includes individuals age 25 and over. At the lower levels of the education distribution, there was a large disparity between the two groups. While 3.7% of the native-born population did not have a high school degree, 15.8% of the foreign-born population did not have a high school degree. That was a 12.1 percentage point difference between the two groups.

For bachelor degrees, the difference was similar at a 12.5 percentage point gap between the groups. 31.9% of the native-born population had a bachelor's degree, compared with 19.5% of the foreign-born population. In comparing the percentage of populations with graduate or professional level degrees, the difference was negligible. 23.6% of the native-born population had a graduate or professional degree, compared with 22.8% of the foreign-born population. The difference at that level was less than 1 percentage point.

FMN-PUMA ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH

For the Foreign-born Population

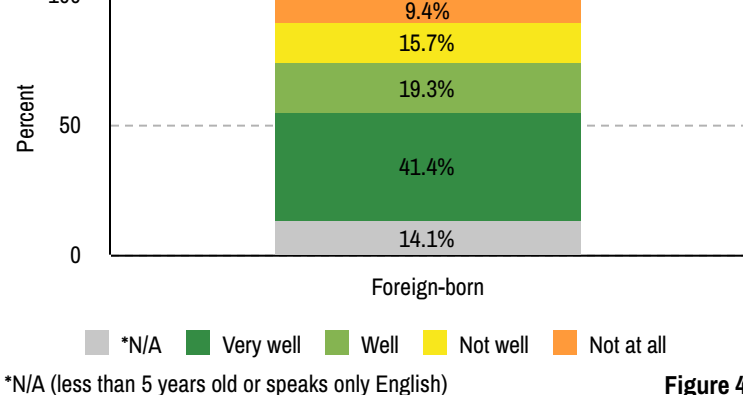


Figure 4

In summary, the native-born and foreign-born populations are distinct groups that make up significant proportions of FMN-PUMA. While the native-born population had a more even age distribution, about 64.5% of the foreign-born population was around prime working age. Within the total population, the most common household languages were English, Spanish, and Portuguese. 25.2% of the foreign-born population spoke English not well or not at all. Although there was a significant education gap for bachelor degrees and below, there was no significant difference for the professional and graduate degree level.

Figure 4 focuses on the foreign-born population of FMN-PUMA, and their ability to speak English. 14.1% of the foreign-born population either spoke only English, or was under 5 years old. On top of the 14.1%, 60.7% of the foreign-born population spoke English well or very well. 15.7% of the foreign-born population did not speak English well, and less than 10% of the foreign-born population did not speak English at all.