

# Boston's Population - 2000

5. Major Findings of Census 2000 in Boston:  
City-Wide Results of Summary File 1 (SF1) Census Data  
Released June 2001 with Comparisons to 1990.



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## Summary of Significant Findings

### Population - Age and Race

- Boston's population increased by 14,858 to 589,141 – a 2.6% increase – joining New York City as the only two older northern and mid-western cities to show growth over two decades.
- Changes in racial patterns in the Boston population over the decade of the 1990s showed that Boston finally reached the “minority as majority” status. Minorities now comprise over 50 percent (50.5%) of total residents. Whites continued to decline as nearly 40,000 less were recorded in 2000 over 1990. The fastest growing racial groups were the Asians (+14,000 or +47 percent) and Hispanics (+23,000 or +37 percent). Within the Asians the largest growing groups were the Vietnamese, Chinese, Asian Indian, and Korean groups. Within the Hispanics the fastest growing groups were the Central and South American with a small but fast-growing Mexican community.
- Boston continues to be a city of young adults as shown in the Census data due to the large numbers of students and young adults living and working in the city. One out of every three persons in Boston (33.1%) is between 20 and 34 years old.
- Boston showed a growth in the baby-boomer population aged 35 to 54 years as that cohort aged and still showed a preference for city living, growing by 19.9%.
- The city saw a general decline in the elderly population, aged 65 and over, as that segment declined by nearly 5,000 people or 7.0%. However, the frail elderly, those over the age of 85 increased and those in the 75 to 85 year cohort remained about the same. It was the newly elderly aged 60 to 64 and 65 to 74 years that showed declines.
- Boston showed a general rise in children as the population aged less than 18 increased by over 6,700 persons or 6.1%. The gains in youth were centered in the population aged 5 to 18 as the increase in births from the early 1980s through the mid-1990s affected the total. The under age 5 age group showed a fall reflecting the drop-off of births in the mid- and late-1990s following growth in the previous fifteen years.

### Families and Households

- The trend toward fewer families – related people living together – and more non-families – single persons and roommates – continued in Boston in the 1990s. There was a trend toward more “non-traditional” families as the data showed more relatives and non-relatives other than the householder and spouse living in families.
- Overall, the total number of households rose. Single person households continued to grow. Families with children under 18 also grew although married couples with young children fell because of the continued trend toward single-parent families with children. Children over 18 living with their families showed an upward trend as college students commuted at a greater pace and as the cost of housing kept older children at home longer.
- Group quarters population continued to increase both for the institutionalized and non-institutionalized populations, the vast majority of which is the student dormitory population.
- Household size has only fallen by 2.5%, going from 2.37 persons to 2.31 despite the large growth in single person households. Average family size only edged marginally lower from 3.19 to 3.17 persons.

- The extremely hot housing market of 2000 is reflected in the vacancy rate at 4.9% and, when taking out seasonal or occasional units plus units being repaired or renovated, the rates are 3% for rental and 1% for owner units. This says that the vacancy rate was just a “frictional” rate or only allowing for the normal movement of people into and out of homes.
- The small growth in housing units built during the decade (1,072) shows that the builders’ response to a tightening housing market was minimal. The recession of 1988-1992 cooled down the market for housing and it did not heat up again until the late 1990s. The supply response did not occur until 1998-2000 and many of these units being built did not appear as completed yet on the Census address rolls until mid- or late-2000 and were likely not yet ready when the Census was taken.
- Building permit data for new housing units authorized showed 3,610 in the 1990s but this increase did not show in the Census for several reasons – 1,900 of these units were started in 1998 and 1999 and may not have yet been completed, demolitions and abandonment numbers are not available but definitely would have lowered the new supply numbers, and some of the total supply such as BHA projects at Mission Hill Extension and Orchard Park were not counted.
- Good news shows that the owner-occupied units continued its climb as the owner-occupied percentage went to 32.2% from 30.9% in 1990. Clearly the City’s efforts to increase homeownership are working.
- Household size has stabilized. The 2.37 average in 1990 only declined to 2.31 in 2000. Owner-occupied household size was declining from 2.64 to 2.51 because condominium units added have less persons per unit. Average household size of renter-occupied units fell marginally from 2.25 to 2.22 reflecting a tenant concern with housing cost and maybe larger immigrant population with larger households.

## Detailed Findings

### Population – Age and Sex

- Boston's total population grew by 2.6% in the 1990s coming on the heels of a 2.0% rise in the 1980s, marking an increase for the second consecutive decade, and showing that Boston's urban resurgence is real and growing stronger.

**Table 1. Population - Age and Sex**

	1990	2000	Number Change	Percent Change
Total Population	574,283	589,141	14,858	2.6%
Male	275,972	283,588	7,616	2.8%
Female	298,311	305,553	7,242	2.4%
Age				
Under 5 Years	36,601	32,046	(4,555)	-12.4%
5 to 9 years	30,084	33,721	3,637	12.1%
10 to 14 years	26,626	32,552	5,926	22.3%
15 to 19 years	40,757	43,631	2,874	7.1%
20 to 24 years	76,213	70,084	(6,129)	-8.0%
25 to 34 years	132,364	124,762	(7,602)	-5.7%
35 to 44 years	78,159	86,420	8,261	10.6%
45 to 54 years	46,916	63,554	16,638	35.5%
55 to 59 years	19,638	22,746	3,108	15.8%
60 to 64 years	20,975	18,288	(2,687)	-12.8%
65 to 74 years	35,832	31,154	(4,678)	-13.1%
75 to 84 years	21,899	21,675	(224)	-1.0%
85 years and over	8,219	8,507	288	3.5%
Median age	30.3	31.1		
Under 18 years	109,833	116,559	6,726	6.1%
18 years and over	464,450	472,582	8,132	1.8%
Male	220,432	224,078	3,646	1.7%
Female	244,018	248,504	4,486	1.8%
21 years and over	424,670	432,815	8,145	1.9%
62 years and over	78,389	71,847	(6,542)	-8.3%
65 years and over	65,950	61,336	(4,614)	-7.0%
Male	24,052	23,435	(617)	-2.6%
Female	41,898	37,901	(3,997)	-9.5%

- Boston's baby boom age group, those born between 1946 and 1964 were aged 36 to 54 in the year 2000 and highlight the increase in Boston's age cohorts of 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 years of

age. In fact, these cohorts grew by 10.6% and by 35.5% during the decade while the cohort after, the 55 to 59 year old range also grew by 15.8%.

- Boston's X-Generation population, those following the baby boomers and born between 1965 and 1980, the so called "baby bust" era, were in the 20 to 24 and 25 to 34 age groupings and showed a predictable decline in population over the decade, falling by 6 to 8 percent.
- The mini "echo-boom" population, or the surge in children born between 1980 and 1995, shows up in population growth of the categories of 5 to 9, 10 to 14, and 15 to 19 years of age, charting rises of 12.1%, 22.3%, and 7.1% respectively. This is also reflected in the growth of children attending elementary and secondary schools.
- The newborn and preschooler population of 0-5 year-olds shows a decline of 12.4% as also reflected in the decline in birth numbers over the mid-1990s.
- Boston's elderly population generally shows a trend of declining population as the cohorts of 60 to 64, and 65 to 74 show losses, each of about 13%. The older seniors of 75 to 84 show an almost stable trend while the growth in the 85+ cohort or the frail elderly is evident at 3.5% which is also a national trend.
- Median age in Boston inched upwards slightly from 30.3 years in 1990 to 31.1 years in 2000. This occurred, despite the general decline in elderly and general rise in youth, because of the aging of the baby boom population to the 40s and 50s.
- The male population grew slightly faster than female population ( 2.8% vs. 2.4%), but females remained in the majority at 52% of the population compared to males at 48%. Among the elderly (65 years and older) however, females account for 62% of the population.

## Population - Race

- The White population declined by nearly 40,000 in Boston, a drop of 11.1 percent despite the 2.6 percent rise in overall population.
- Black or African-American population gained a small 1.5% with the addition of only 2,257 persons.

**Table 2. Population - Race**

	1990	2000	Number Change	Percent Change
<u>One Race</u>	NA	563,263	NA	NA
White	360,875	320,944	(39,931)	-11.1%
Black or African American	146,945	149,202	2,257	1.5%
American Indian & Alaskan Native	1,884	2,365	481	25.5%
Asian	30,181	44,284	14,103	46.7%
Asian Indian	1,962	4,442	2,480	126.4%
Chinese	16,701	19,638	2,937	17.6%
Filipino	1,025	1,405	380	37.1%
Japanese	1,784	2,384	600	33.6%
Korean	1,146	2,564	1,418	123.7%
Vietnamese	4,754	10,818	6,064	127.6%
Cambodian	1,002	528	(474)	-47.3%
Hmong	2	10	8	400.0%
Laotian	287	114	(173)	-60.3%
Thai	293	378	85	29.0%
Other Asian	1,225	1,377	152	12.4%
Bangaladeshi	NA	63	NA	NA
Indonesian	NA	198	NA	NA
Malaysian	NA	55	NA	NA
Pakistani	NA	267	NA	NA
Sri Lankan	NA	60	NA	NA
Other Specified	NA	91	NA	NA
Not Specified	NA	643	NA	NA
Two Asian Categories	NA	626	NA	NA
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	207	366	159	76.8%
<u>Some other race</u>	34,191	46,102	11,911	34.8%
Two or More Races	NA	25,878	NA	NA

- Asians in Boston grew by 14,103 or 46.7 percent in the decade. Largest absolute gains were shown by the Vietnamese, Chinese, and Asian Indians with 6,064, 2,937, and 2,480 persons gained while the greatest percentage gains were registered the Asian Indian, Vietnamese, and Korean groups with 126%, 128%, and 124% marks.
- The “some other race” group increased by 11,911 persons or 35 percent most likely because of the increase in Hispanics that have a tendency to answer this category.

- No data on multiple race population existed in 1990 so a comparison cannot be drawn with 2000 data. Nearly 26,000 persons answered that they were of two or more races in 2000.
- The Hispanic population grew by 23,134 persons or 37% over the decade.<sup>1</sup>
- A large percentage gain (89%) was shown in the Mexican category although in absolute terms Mexicans total only 4,126 persons.
- Puerto Ricans remained the largest Hispanic category in Boston at 27,442.

**Table 3. Population - Hispanic and Race**

	1990	2000	Number Change	Percent Change
Total Population, All Races	574,283	589,141	14,858	2.6%
Hispanic	61,955	85,089	23,134	37.3%
Mexican	2,179	4,126	1,947	89.4%
Puerto Rican	25,767	27,442	1,675	6.5%
Cuban	2,483	2,221	(262)	-10.6%
Dominican*	7,938	12,981	5,043	63.5%
Central American*	8,556	11,532	2,976	34.8%
Guatemalan	2,501	2,554	53	2.1%
Honduran	1,663	1,822	159	9.6%
Nicaraguan	218	247	29	13.3%
Panamanian	531	527	(4)	-0.8%
Salvadoran	3,178	5,333	2,155	67.8%
Other Central American	465	1,049	584	125.6%
South American*	5,157	7,004	1,847	35.8%
Columbian	2,374	4,065	1,691	71.2%
Ecuadorian	353	385	32	9.1%
Peruvian	879	759	(120)	-13.7%
Other South American	1,551	1,795	244	15.7%
Uruguayan	NA	54	NA	NA
Venezualen	NA	638	NA	NA
Argentinian	NA	421	NA	NA
Bolivian	NA	115	NA	NA
Chilean	NA	315	NA	NA
Paraguayan	NA	24	NA	NA
All Other	NA	228	NA	NA
Other Hispanic	7,852	19,783	11,931	151.9%
Not Hispanic	512,328	504,052	(8,276)	-1.6%
White alone, not Hispanic	338,734	291,561	(47,173)	-13.9%

<sup>1</sup> In Table 3, because the 1990 numbers for Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans are from the STF3 data and not the STF1 data, they do not correspond directly and totals may not add exactly.

- The greatest growth in Hispanic population occurred among the Central Americans (2,976 persons or 35%) and the South Americans (1,847 persons or 36%) as the Central American population reached 11,532 and the South American population reached 7,004.
- Despite these impressive gains in the Hispanic or Latino population groups it should still be pointed out that the large remaining category of “Other Hispanic” grew from 7,852 in 1990 to 19,783 in 2000. This category includes persons who did not designate a specific national origin and may mean that some of the above Hispanic categories are undercounted.

## Families and Households

- Total households grew by 11,064, a pace of 4.8%, somewhat faster than population reflecting a trend toward smaller household size.
- Population in households increased by 14,858 persons, or 2.6%, in the 1990s while population in group quarters rose by 2,228 persons, or 6.8%.
- The number of children in households showed a small 5.0% decline in the 1990s falling to 142,362 from 149,781 in 1990. This number was comprised of 100,177 children under 18 and 42,185 grown children residing at home, most likely young working adults and students.
- Other relatives in households also show an increase, going up by 4,619 or 12.7%.
- Non-relatives in Boston households are increasing at a fast pace, growing by 6,610 persons or 11% in the decade.
- The group quarters population grew in both the institutionalized (nursing homes, jails, mental hospitals, etc.) and the non-institutionalized (college dormitories, homeless shelters, religious quarters, etc.) segments. In sum, 35,077 persons live in group quarters.

**Table 4. Households - Relationships**

	1990	2000	Number Change	Percent Change
Total Households	228,464	239,528	11,064	4.8%
Total Population	574,283	589,141	14,858	2.6%
In households	541,434	554,064	12,630	2.3%
Householder	228,464	239,528	11,064	4.8%
Spouse	67,991	65,747	(2,244)	-3.3%
Child	149,781	142,362	(7,419)	-5.0%
Own child under 18 years	95,775	100,177	4,402	4.6%
Other relatives	36,491	41,110	4,619	12.7%
Other relatives under 18 years	11,001	13,170	2,169	19.7%
Nonrelatives	58,707	65,317	6,610	11.3%
Unmarried partner	10,919	14,719	3,800	34.8%
In group quarters	32,849	35,077	2,228	6.8%
Institutionalized population	8,356	8,481	125	1.5%
Non-institutionalized population	24,493	26,596	2,103	8.6%

- Family households (persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption living together) declined by 0.7% while non-family households (single persons or roommates) increased by 10.6%, continuing the trend in Boston toward non-family household formation.
- Family households with children actually increased by a small amount, moving up by 2,770 households, or 5.4%.

**Table 5. Households by Type**

	1990	2000	Number Change	Percent Change
Total Households	228,464	239,528	11,064	4.8%
Family households (families)	115,927	115,096	(831)	-0.7%
With own children under 18 years	51,540	54,310	2,770	5.4%
Married-couple family	67,991	65,747	(2,244)	-3.3%
With own children under 18 years	28,251	28,219	(32)	-0.1%
Female householder, no husband present	38,351	39,366	1,015	2.6%
With own children under 18 years	20,641	22,793	2,152	10.4%
Non-Family households	112,537	124,432	11,895	10.6%
Householder Living Alone	81,212	88,944	7,732	9.5%
Householder 65 years or older	23,297	21,796	(1,501)	-6.4%
Households with individuals under 18	57,570	61,428	3,858	6.7%
Households with individuals 65 years plus	48,085	45,350	(2,735)	-5.7%
Average household size	2.37	2.31	(0.06)	-2.5%
Average family size	3.19	3.17	(0.02)	-0.6%

- Married-couple families declined by 2,244 households or 3.3%, but married-couple families with young children remained steady.
- Female-headed households (with no husband) increased by 2.6%, however the percentage of those with young children grew by 2,152 or 10.4%.
- Boston continues to be home to many single-person households as the total grew to close to 90,000 persons in 2000, showing a gain of 7,732 or 9.5%. However, single-person elderly households declined by 6.4%, or 1,501 persons.
- Average household size continued its downward trend over the decades but only showed a 2.5% decline from 2.37 to 2.31; no doubt the large growth in single-person households contributed to this trend.
- Average family size remained almost exactly the same in 2000 as in 1999, showing a miniscule drop from 3.19 to 3.17.

## Housing

- Total housing units in Boston increased by only 1,072 units or 0.4% in the decade of the 1990s, reaching 251,935.
- Occupied units however increased by 11,064 units or 4.8% to 239,528 in the 1990s.
- The overall housing vacancy rate dropped from 8.9% in 1990 to 4.9% in 2000.

**Table 6. Housing Occupancy and Tenure**

	1990	2000	Number Change	Percent Change
Total Housing Units	250,863	251,935	1,072	0.4%
Occupied housing units	228,464	239,528	11,064	4.8%
Vacant housing units	22,399	12,407	(9,992)	-44.6%
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use	870	1,568	698	80.2%
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	2.6	1.0	(1.6)	-62.1%
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	7.8	3.0	(4.8)	-61.5%
Occupied housing units	228,464	239,528	11,064	4.8%
Owner-occupied housing units	70,544	77,226	6,682	9.5%
Percentage of occupied units	30.9	32.2	1.3	4.2%
Renter-occupied housing units	157,920	162,302	4,382	2.8%
Percentage of occupied units	69.1	67.8	(1.30)	-1.9%
Ave. household size of owner-occupied units	2.64	2.51	(0.13)	-4.9%
Ave. household size of renter-occupied units	2.25	2.22	(0.03)	-1.3%
Ave. household size of all units	2.37	2.20	(0.17)	-7.2%

- This increase in occupied units despite a minimal increase in total housing units was accomplished by the draw down in the number vacant units and therefore the vacancy rate in the 1990s.
- The year 2000 housing vacancy rate of 4.9% however (which seems large) was probably significantly affected by the number of units that were considered “seasonal, recreational, or occasional”, or were considered “all other vacant” (which includes caretaker units or units held off the market for reasons such as repair or renovation).
- Taking out the seasonally vacant and “all other” vacant units leaves the housing vacancy rate for owner-occupied units at only 1.0% in 2000, down from the 2.6% mark in 1990; less than 1,000 units were vacant for sale.
- Housing vacancy rates for renter-occupied units reached 3.0% in 2000, down from 7.8% in 1990; less than 3,800 units were vacant for rent, a “frictional” amount (i.e., only allowing for the normal movement of people into and out of homes.)

- Owner-occupied units grew by 6,682 units, or 9.5%, in the 1990s, largely due to a draw down in vacant units for sale.
- Renter occupied units grew by 4,382 units or 2.8% in the 1990s, also due to a lowering of the vacant supply.
- The average household size of owner-occupied units declined from 2.64 in 1990 to 2.51 in 2000, most likely due to smaller condominium units.
- The average household size of renter-occupied units declined minimally from 2.25 in 1990 to 2.22 in 2000.