

# Summary of U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 County Characteristics Estimates for Massachusetts Counties

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**For Release June 23, 2016**

On June 23, 2016, the U.S. Census Bureau released its 2015 State and County Characteristics Estimates for Massachusetts, Puerto Rico, and the United States. These estimates break down the estimated 2015 county populations, released in March 2016, by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin.

The official U.S. Census Release can be found at:

<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2016/cb16-107.html>

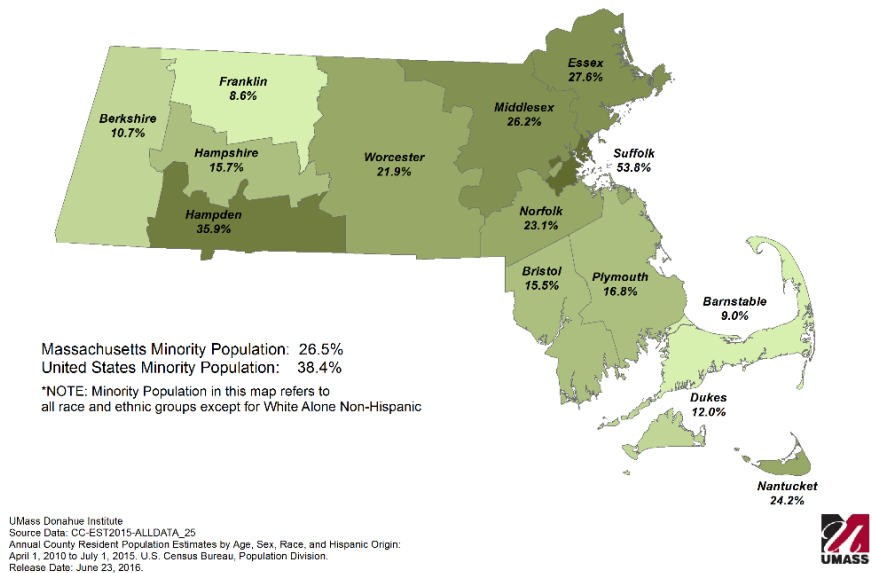
and detailed tables can be found at:

<http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

## **Race and Origin**

Estimates for Massachusetts follow the national trend, showing a population that is growing older and more racially and ethnically diverse. Even though Massachusetts is less diverse than the U.S. average—with a minority population of just 26.5% compared to 38.4% in the U.S.—the minority population in Massachusetts has been increasing at a faster rate than the U.S. average.<sup>1</sup> From 2010 to 2015, the minority population in the state increased by 3.4 percentage points—from 23.1% to 26.5%—compared to a 2.3 percentage point increase in the U.S. overall. All Massachusetts counties have experienced increasing diversity since 2010 by varying degrees around the state.

Estimated Percent of Minority Population By County, 2015



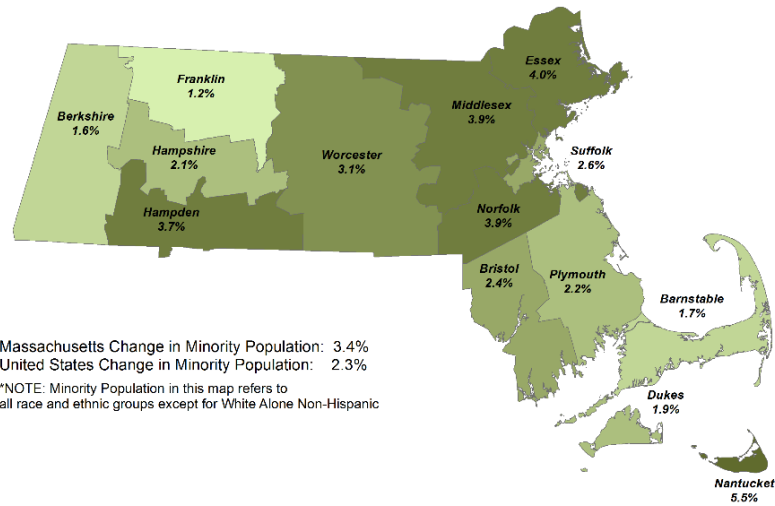
<sup>1</sup> “Minority population” is defined for the purposes of this report as the Hispanic and non-White/non-Hispanic population.

The Massachusetts counties with the greatest percentage of minority populations in 2015 were Suffolk (53.8%), Hampden (35.9%), and Essex (27.6%). The counties with the lowest percentage of minority populations were Franklin (8.6%), Barnstable (9.0%), and Berkshire (10.7%).

The largest increases of minority populations as a percentage of the total population since 2010 (by percentage point gain) were seen in Nantucket, Essex, and Norfolk County. Franklin, Berkshire, and Barnstable County showed the least amount of increase and also represent the only three Massachusetts counties that have lost population since the April 2010 Census count. (See Appendix B for details for all Massachusetts counties.)

The counties with the highest estimated percentage of Hispanic residents in Massachusetts in 2015 were Hampden (24%), Suffolk (22.1%), and Essex (19.2%); those with the smallest were Barnstable (2.8%), Dukes (3.4%), and Plymouth (3.8%). The overall Hispanic population in Massachusetts in 2015 was 11.2% compared to 17.6% in the U.S. overall.

Estimated Change in Minority Population as a Percentage of Total County Population, 2010-2015



Massachusetts Change in Minority Population: 3.4%  
 United States Change in Minority Population: 2.3%  
 \*NOTE: Minority Population in this map refers to all race and ethnic groups except for White Alone Non-Hispanic

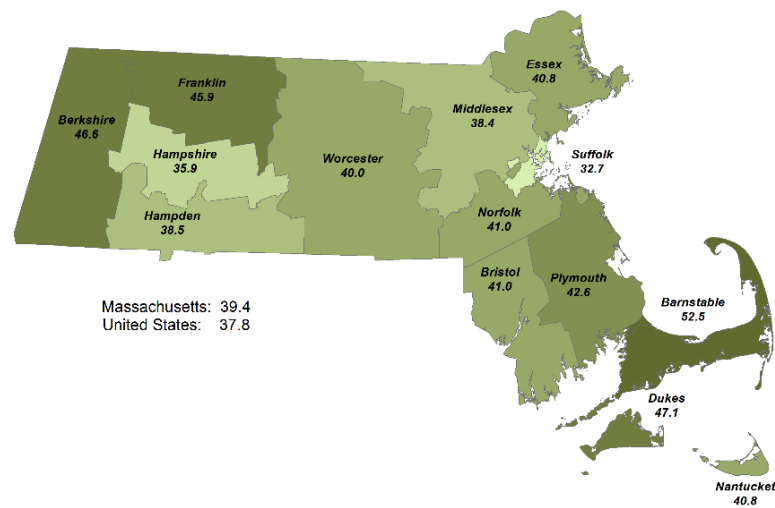
UMass Donahue Institute  
 Source Data: CC-EST2015-ALLDATA\_25  
 Annual County Resident Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin  
 April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.  
 Release Date: June 23, 2016.



## Age

Massachusetts is older than the U.S. as a whole, with an estimated median age of 39.4 years in 2015, compared to a median age of 37.8 in the U.S. overall. As of 2015, 10 out of 14 Massachusetts counties—over two-thirds—have a median age over 40. Counties with the highest median age are Barnstable (52.5 years), Dukes (47.1 years), and Berkshire (46.6 years), while the counties with the youngest median ages are Suffolk (32.7 years), Hampshire (35.9 years), and Middlesex (38.4 years). See Appendix C to this report for additional detail.

Estimated Median Age in Massachusetts by County, 2015



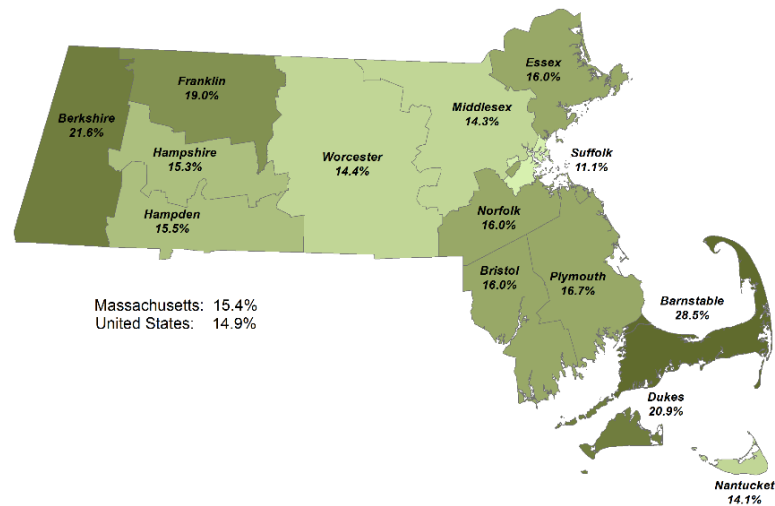
Massachusetts: 39.4  
 United States: 37.8

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It is not surprising that Barnstable, Dukes, and Berkshire County, given their high median ages, also have the highest percentages of population aged 65 and older in the state at 28.5%, 20.9%, and 21.6% respectively. Counties with the lowest percentages of persons 65 and older include Suffolk (11.1%), Nantucket (14.1%), and Middlesex (14.3%). Overall, Massachusetts has a higher percentage of population aged 65 and older (15.4%) than the U.S. as a whole (14.9%).

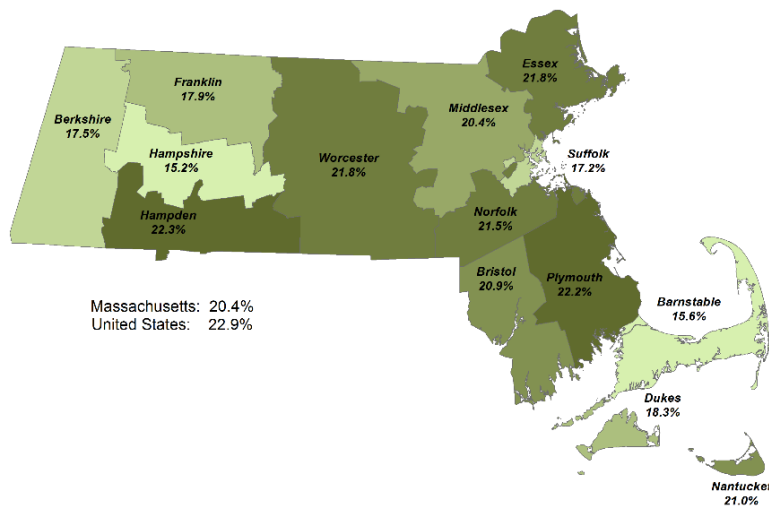
Estimated Percent of County Population Years 65 and Older, 2015



UMass Donahue Institute  
 Source Data: CC-EST2015-ALLDATA\_25  
 Annual County Resident Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin:  
 April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.  
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Estimated Percent of County Population Under 18 Years of Age, 2015



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 Source Data: CC-EST2015-ALLDATA\_25  
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At the other end of the age-spectrum, counties with the highest percentage of children under 18 years of age include Hampden (22.3%), Plymouth (22.2%), Essex (21.8%), and Worcester (21.8%). Hampshire County is somewhat of an exception, with the second lowest median age in the state (35.9) but also the smallest percentage of children under 18 in the state (15.2%). In this case a large percentage of college-aged students is pulling the median age down. Overall, Massachusetts has a smaller percentage of children under 18 (20.4%) compared to the U.S. as a whole (22.9%).



## Trends in Aging

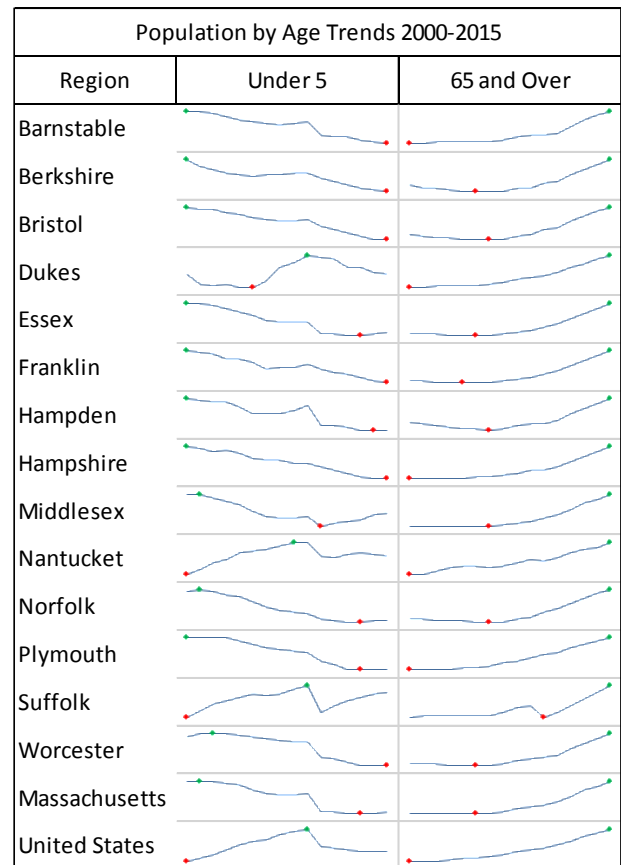
The aging population in Massachusetts, as with the U.S. as a whole, is reflected in the long-term population trends among age cohorts. Since 2000, the percentage of persons over 65 in each county has increased while the percentage of children under 5 has decreased, on average. The trend lines below show how the percentages of these age groups have changed since 2000, by county and for Massachusetts and the U.S. The highest points in the time series are represented by green dots and the lowest by red.

When comparing the percentage of the Hispanic population by county against the median age by county, we see that Massachusetts follows the national trend where a higher percentage of Hispanic population generally relates to a lower median age. Estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau for the nation show that the median age of the Hispanic population (28.8 years) is much lower than non-Hispanic populations (40.3 years). Likewise in Massachusetts, the median age of the Hispanic population is 27.7 compared to 41.5 for the Non-Hispanic population.

At the county level, we see that Barnstable and Dukes County are the two oldest in Massachusetts in terms of median age and are also the two counties with the lowest percentage of Hispanic population. On the other hand, the “youngest” county, Suffolk, has the second highest percentage of Hispanic population in Massachusetts.

The new Census Bureau data (see Table PEPASR6H) also show that half (50.3%) of the nation’s children younger than five belonged to a minority population in 2015, 25.8% of which identified as Hispanic. In Massachusetts that same year, 40.3% of children younger than five belonged to a minority population and 19.8% were Hispanic. To get a sense of how race and ethnicity relate to age in Massachusetts compare the *Estimated Percent Minority Population by County* and the *Estimated Percent of County Population under 5* maps accompanying this report.

For more details on selected Massachusetts characteristics data and trends, please refer to the appendices to this document. You may also view the complete datasets by visiting the U.S. Census Bureau’s Estimates page at: <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>



**Attachments to this report include:**

Appendix A1: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Race and Hispanic Origin for Counties in Massachusetts and Massachusetts and U.S. Totals, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015

Appendix A2: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Race and Hispanic Origin for Counties in Massachusetts April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015 as a Percentage of the County Population

Appendix B: Trends in Minority Population Growth in Massachusetts Counties: Estimated Percentage of Non-Hispanic White Alone Population Compared to Minority Population by County, 2010-2015

Appendix C: Comparison of Selected Age Groups in Massachusetts Counties: Estimated Population and Percent of Population, 2015

Appendix D1: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Selected Age Groups for Massachusetts Counties and Massachusetts and U.S. Totals, 2010-2015

Appendix D2: Trends in Selected Age Groups as a Percentage of Population for Massachusetts Counties: and Massachusetts and U.S. Totals, 2010-2015

Map 1: Estimated Percent of Minority Population by Massachusetts County, 2015

Map 2: Estimated Change in Percent Minority as a Percentage of Total County Population, 2010-2015

Map 3: Estimated Median Age by Massachusetts County, 2015

Map 4: Estimated Percent of County Population Under 5, 2015

Map 5: Estimated Percent of County Population over 65, 2015

Map 6: Estimated Percent of County Population 18-64, 2015

Map 7: Estimated Percent of County Population under 18, 2015

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