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Growth of Ethnic Groups and Food Stamps in Urban Areas of Massachusetts¹

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Massachusetts has the third highest population density of any state in the United States, after New Jersey and Rhode Island, with 871 people per square mile.

Individual SNAP recipients in the United States have increased 60% from January 2008 to March 2016; from 27.5 million in 2008 to 43.2 million in 2016. The highest number of SNAP recipients during this time was 47.9 million in March 2013⁴. Given the fact that a high percentage of residents in Massachusetts are living in urban areas, the overwhelming majority of SNAP recipients will also be found in these areas. Urban areas in the Commonwealth also have much higher concentrations of immigrant/ethnic groups. As an example, public school data for 19 cities in Massachusetts that are part of an integrated project to increase the consumption of locally-grown fresh produce in these communities found that 63.3% of the students were Latinos, African-Americans⁵ and Asians; non-Hispanic whites are 34.7% of the SNAP recipients (Table 1).

¹ Section taken from larger document prepared by Mangan and Barros

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⁴ USDA, June 26, 2016: <http://www.trivisonno.com/wp-content/uploads/Food-Stamps-Monthly.jpg>

⁵ African-Americans in these data also include people born in Africa; this population is growing in the Northeastern United States and they have different cuisines than African Americans.

Table 1. Public school total enrollment, number of students by race/ethnicity and as a percentage of total enrollment in target cities for USDA/FINI grant (2015-16).

Cities for project	City population ³	Public school pop. ^{1,2}	African American		Asian		Latino		Non-Hispanic White	
			% school district	Total school district	% school district	Total school district	% school district	Total school district	% school district	Total school district
Region 1 - Southeast										
Brockton	94,089	17,102	55.9	9,560	2.3	393	14.9	2,548	21.8	3,728
Fall River	88,697	10,123	7.4	749	4.3	435	23.5	2,379	57.9	5,861
Hyannis ⁴	14,089	4,914	7.1	349	2.4	118	10.3	506	74.9	3,681
New Bedford	95,078	12,681	11.3	1,433	0.9	114	36.5	4,629	44.8	5,681
Plymouth	56,468	7,634	1.8	137	1.3	99	3.7	282	89.1	6,801
Taunton	56,069	8,038	12.5	1,005	1.4	113	11.8	948	69.7	5,602
Region 2 - Eastern										
Boston ⁵	5,353	--	32.4	1,734	8.7	466	41.5	2,221	14.2	760
Region 3 - Northeast										
Chelsea	37,670	6,319	5.8	3,665	1.5	95	84.6	5,346	6.6	417
Lawrence	77,657	13,667	1.5	205	1.5	205	91.6	12,519	5.0	683
Lowell	108,861	14,152	7.3	1,033	29.1	4,118	30.7	4,345	29.3	4,147
Malden	60,509	6,570	20	1,314	23.2	1,524	21.9	1,439	30.7	2,017
Region 4 - Central										
Fitchburg	40,383	5,192	5.5	286	5.4	280	48.5	2,518	33.4	1,734
Framingham	68,318	8,478	6.3	534	5.6	478	25.8	2,187	58.8	4,985
Southbridge	16,719	2,186	1.5	33	1.4	31	50.5	1,104	44.5	973
Worcester	182,544	25,076	14.9	3,736	7.5	1,881	40.8	10,231	32.5	8,150
Region 5 - Western										
Springfield	153,703	25,479	19.4	4,943	2.5	637	64.5	16,434	12.3	3,134
Holyoke	40,249	5,366	2.9	156	0.8	43	79.3	4,255	15.7	842
Greenfield	17,456	1,641	1.2	20	1.8	30	15.7	258	76.1	1,248
Pittsfield	44,057	5,608	10.6	594	1.7	95	10.8	606	69.0	3,870
Total	1.3 mil.	180,226		31,486		11,155		74,755		64,314
% of total				17%		6%		40.3%		34.7%

¹Data from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - profiles.doe.mass.edu/ Data collected on February 12, 16

²Data does not include the following: Native American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multi-Race/ Non-Hispanic.

³US Census data

⁴Data listed for Barnstable Public Schools, a regional district for which Hyannis is a member

⁵Only neighborhoods "Dudley" and "Newmarket" will be involved in this project in Boston. An estimate for Race/ethnicity for these neighborhoods is used.