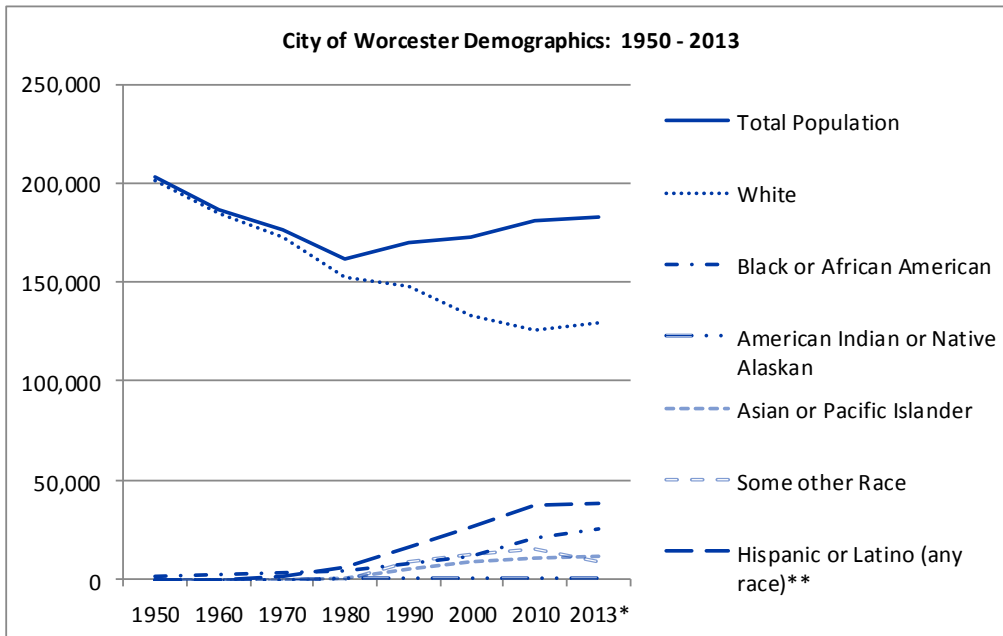




Bureau Brief—The Changing City—Starting a Conversation

As a Massachusetts “Gateway City,” Worcester has welcomed residents from diverse backgrounds for decades. Prior to 1950, most new residents were born in or descended from European countries. Since 1950, the city began to attract greater numbers of residents from South America, Africa, and Asia. How has the face of Worcester changed over the last few decades? How has civic life changed as a result of the influx of new cultures? Or has it?

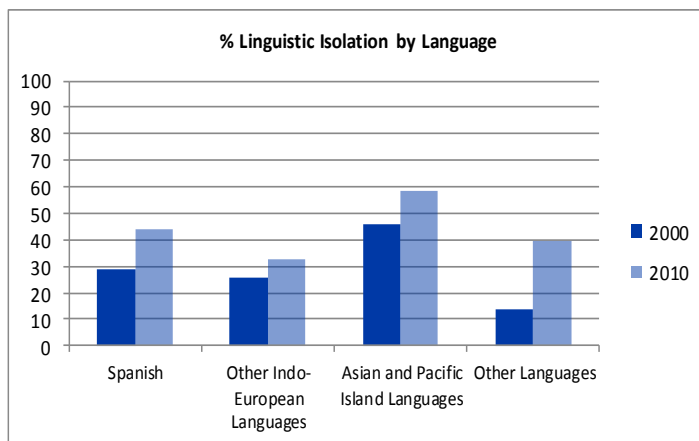
Demographic & Language Trends of the City of Worcester



* 2010 to 2013 does not represent a full decade. 2013 is based on the American Community Survey Estimate using sampling.

** Respondents that identify as Hispanic may also identify as one or more other racial groups. For a full explanation of U.S. Census Bureau definitions of race please see http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/meta/long_RHI525211.htm.

Like many cities around the United States, Worcester’s population is increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. In Worcester, many of these new residents are also new residents of the United States. In 2000, 25,097 Worcester residents were born in a foreign country. By 2010, that number had increased to 35,304. Although the overall population of Worcester has decreased by 10.7% since 1950, the number of non-white residents has increased. Whites represented 94% of the population in 1980. By 2013, whites represented 71% of the population. Hispanics are the fastest growing population group representing 21% of the population in 2013.



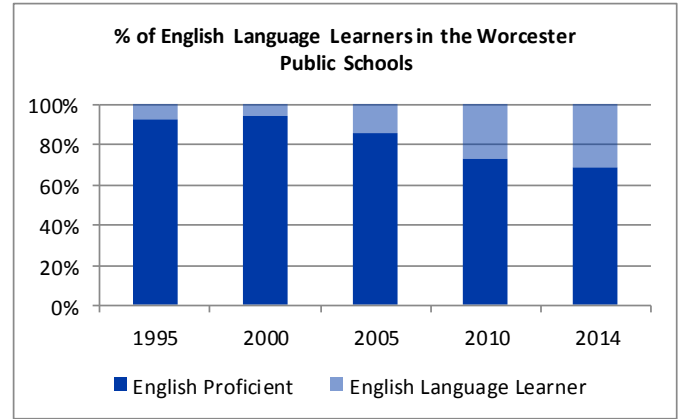
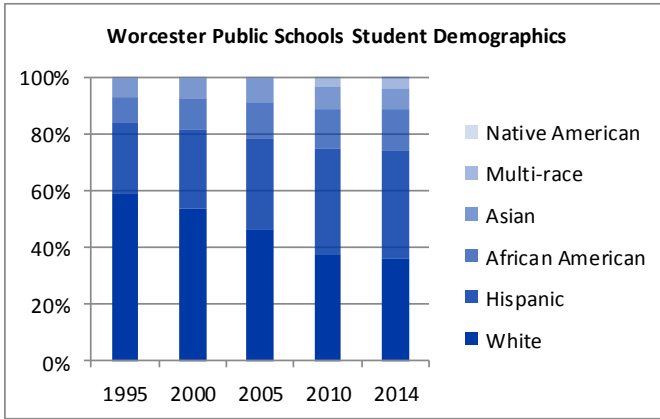
Immigrants often bring new languages. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, while 80% of Worcester residents over the age of five speak English well, many immigrant families are considered “linguistically isolated.” In a linguistically isolated household, all members of the household 14-years old and over have at least some difficulty speaking English. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of linguistically isolated households increased for all languages spoken in Worcester.

Research in the Public Interest

Demographic & Language Trends of the Worcester Public Schools

The Worcester Public Schools (WPS) is far more diverse than the city as a whole. In the last two decades, the non-white population of the WPS has increased by nearly 50%. According to the WPS, Worcester students speak 92 languages. A number of these students are in linguistically isolated households. An English Language Learner (ELL) is a student whose first language is not English and who is unable to perform ordinary classroom work in English. ELL students make up 31.7% of WPS students. Currently, a majority of students in six district schools are ELL.

Research in the Public Interest



Race	1995		2000		2005		2010*		2014*	
	Worcester	State	Worcester	State	Worcester	State	Worcester	State	Worcester	State
African American	9.2	8	10.3	8.6	12.6	8.9	13.8	8.2	14.5	8.7
Asian	6.7	3.7	7.6	4.3	8.4	4.8	8.1	5.3	7.7	6.1
Hispanic	24.9	9	27.9	10.2	31.8	11.8	37.3	14.8	38	17
Native American	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2
White	58.9	79.1	53.6	76.6	46.5	74.2	37.5	69.1	35.8	64.9

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: www.doe.mass.edu. *Does not include multi-race responses.

Questions to Consider:

- As a Gateway City, Worcester experiences regular changes in population composition. Are Worcester's political and civic institutions changing with the City's cultural changes?
- If not, should Worcester actively work to engage under-represented groups in elected offices, employment, public and private boards and commissions, and other leadership opportunities?
- Where are the opportunities for participation in the political and civic life of Worcester?
- What are the barriers to participation in the political and civic life of Worcester?

Bureau Brief

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