

Massachusetts and Boston Statistics Resource Guide

[Library Databases](#)

[Selected Websites for
Massachusetts and Boston
Statistics](#)

[Print Resources on
Massachusetts and Boston](#)

This guide will suggest useful materials and websites for finding statistics and facts and maps related to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Boston area.

If you are interested in demographics and statistics for other regions, please consult our more extensive [Demography and Population Resource Guide](#). And for statistics related to other countries, you will find our [Country Resource Guide](#) most useful.

Library Databases

[LexisNexis Statistical](#)

This large database consists of statistical tables produced by the U.S. government, international intergovernmental organizations, professional and trade organizations, research organizations, state government agencies, and universities. It is the online equivalent to the *Index to International Statistics* from 1983 to present, the *Statistical Reference Index* from 1980 to present, and the *American Statistics Index* from 1973 to present. In some cases, only an abstract is available, but in many cases, the statistics themselves can be accessed. Although National/International in scope, this is still a good place to check for statistics related to Massachusetts, Boston, or New England. For further tips in using this Database, please see our [LexisNexis Statistical Resource Guide](#).

[TableBase](#)

This electronic resource is all about statistical tables. With the majority of materials coming from trade publications, the database is very much oriented towards business topics. Some data breaks down by state or region, so tables will have information on Boston or Massachusetts or New England, in some cases. Topics can cover anything from a ranking of automobile insurance companies who operate in Massachusetts to a national ranking of top voluntary non-profit hospitals (which, of course, lists several in the Boston area). Sawyer Library has a very limited contract for this database, so please remember to logoff (button at top of page) when you are finished with your research.

[Historical Statistics of the United States](#)

This online version of the "Millennial Edition" of a classic compendium of U.S. Statistics is the electronic equivalent of a five volume set--which Sawyer Library also owns--that provides U.S. statistics from colonial times to the near present. (End dates vary from table to table, but this resource is most useful for the deep historical data and is *not* the best source for current statistics.) HSUS covers topics like population, work and welfare, economic structure and performance, economic sectors, and governance and international relations. Want to find a table of "Population of Massachusetts, by age, sex, race, and ethnicity: 1764–1784"? You can find it here. And you can download tables in Excel or CSV (look for use and download options in the upper right of any table screen.) Sadly, searching the content of the online version can be frustrating, so keep in mind that for browsing, you might be better served by the [print version](#).

[Massachusetts Newsstand](#)

Sometimes, local newspaper articles are an excellent source for data, presented within the context of reportage on various topics and issues. This database, from ProQuest, provide fulltext coverage of Boston's two major newspapers, The Boston Globe [Full Text: 1987 (in some cases, 1980+) - current] and The Boston Herald [Full Text: 1991 - current]. And it also includes the following newspapers for two to 30 years: The Berkshire Eagle, BusinessWest (Chicopee), The Gazette (Haverhill), New England Business (Dublin), The North Adams Transcript, The Patriot Ledger (Quincy), The Plymouth County Business Review, The Sentinel & Enterprise (Fitchburg), The Standard Times (New Bedford), The Sun (Lowell), and The Telegram & Gazette of Worcester. Although most of the same newspapers can be found in [LexisNexis Academic](#), LNA is a much larger and more unwieldy database. So if you are only interested in Massachusetts coverage, *Massachusetts Newsstand* will probably be an easier option.

[STAT-USA](#)

This economic and business database, produced by the U.S. Department of Commerce, has lots of useful facts and data tucked away in it. Unfortunately, it also has one of the most awkward and un-user-friendly interfaces. The site consists of two separate databases. Of the two, the *State of the Nation* database covers U.S. topics--specifically, "current and historical economic and financial releases and economic data." You can either click on State of the Nation from the opening screen and browse the statistics listed, or (better choice), use the "Site Search" option at the top of the page. Just remember to limit your search to database category "SOTN" for domestic data, or you are liable to pull up something wildly off-target, like grain exports from the

Czech Republic. But even if you enter a relatively precise search, you are likely to get scores of hits, most of which will be useless. Sometimes, trying the "Alternative Search" (look for the hard to spot link) does work a bit better, however.

[GMID - Global Market Information Database](#)

This excellent (although not always easy to navigate) database suits its name. It provides a wide array of data and consumer and market research reports--particularly from a global viewpoint. This will do a better job of telling you about European tastes in beer than it will in providing analysis New England and Massachusetts. That said, there actually is some regional data here. If I do a text Search (look for the red button in the upper left banner) for Massachusetts, I actually get "Consumer Expenditure by Region" data for anything from clothing to housing to leisure and recreation. Other data covers household ownership of durable goods. Worth exploring for local business research.

Please Note: Statistics and other information are often available within articles--especially in research studies published by academic journals. These types of articles are searchable in many other databases to which Sawyer Library subscribes. According to your topic, it might be worth consulting any number of resources listed on our [Database by Subject](#) page.

Selected Websites for Massachusetts and Boston Statistics

[U.S. Census Bureau: Massachusetts QuickFacts](#)

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/25000.html>

Basic figures about the people of Massachusetts, with a column comparing them to the U.S. average. Look for the pop-open window near top to display county-specific info. There is, of course, lots of useful data on the Bay State at various Census webpages. So, you might start with Data Finders at the basic [Census Webpage](#), or use the [American FactFinder page](#) as a useful navigational tool. One specific site worth exploring is the [American Community Survey](#), which "is a new nationwide survey designed to provide communities a fresh look at how they are changing." The site is meant to be interactive, therefore you are meant to build a report, rather than go to static pages. But as an example, here is the results of a report run on [2005 Data for Massachusetts](#).

[Census 2000 Data for the State of Massachusetts](#)

<http://www.census.gov/census2000/states/ma.html>

This lengthy page contains many links to specific documents related to Massachusetts statistics culled from the 2000 census. Summary statistics of various types are at the top of the page, but keep scrolling and you will find many more specific reports like "Population for the 15 Largest Counties and Incorporated Places in Massachusetts: 1990 and 2000."

[USA Counties \(Census Bureau\)](#)

<http://censtats.census.gov/usa/usa.shtml>

Want to find information on specific counties? This recently launched/updated Census site can help, although you must build your search and data for yourself at the webpage. USA Counties features over 5,900 data items for the United States, States and counties from the Census Bureau and other Federal agencies, such as the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Social Security Administration. Topics include age, agriculture, ancestry, banking, building permits, business patterns, crime, earnings, education, elections, employment, government, health, households, housing, income, labor force, manufactures, population, poverty, retail trade, social programs, veterans, vital statistics, water use, and wholesale trade. To use this tool, first select State, then County, then in the third box the type of statistics you want. So, when I search *Massachusetts*, then *Suffolk County* (which is essentially Boston), then *Hispanic or Latino Population*, I get a variety of statistics from the 1980 through the 2000 census that can be saved as a text or .csv file. And if you click on the "compare" buttons to the right, you can compare that county to other counties in Massachusetts. For a more static version of County and City data, you might also want to consult the online version of [The County and City Databook: 2007](#).

[Commonwealth Communities](#)

http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=mg2terminal&L=3&L0=Home&L1=State%20Government&L2=Local%20Government&sid=massgov2&b=terminalcontent&f=cc_landing&csid=massgov2

This website says of itself: "Commonwealth Communities is your resource for finding information on the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts provided by state agencies and official city/town websites." Each Community page, which you can find alphabetically or by county, has links to information provided by state agencies. You can find public school and Community profiles, summaries of municipal finances, state legislators, regional offices for a variety of state agencies, and more. Also included are links to official city/town and public school websites, and other Community sites that provide substantial civic information.

[Boston.com / Real Estate: Community Profiles](#)

<http://www.boston.com/realestate/communities/>

From the Boston Globe's boston.com website comes this nice set of town and city profiles with overview, statistics, trends, and the ability to show one community's figures ranked in comparison to other municipalities in the Commonwealth.

[MassBenchmarks](#)

<http://www.massbenchmarks.org/statedata/statedata.htm>

MassBenchmarks is just the new name given to the Massachusetts State Data Center, which "is a program of the UMass Donahue Institute's Economic and Public Policy Research Unit and is housed at the Institute's offices on the UMass Amherst campus." The group puts out a quarterly publication to which you can subscribe. The best ready reference materials can be accessed through the links in the left frame to areas like "Indices" and "Regions." For example, here's the base page for information on the [Boston Metro Region](#). By the way, this is the official SDC (State Data Center) according to the U.S. Census. And it is also the Census BIDC (Business and

Industry Data Center) for the Commonwealth.

[Municipal Data and Financial Management](#)

<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=dortopic&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Local+Officials&L2=Municipal+Data+and+Financial+Management&sid=Ador>

Formerly known as the "Municipal Data Bank," this set of webpages is now sponsored by the Department of Revenue (DOR). Data includes "Data Bank Reports" which include municipal spreadsheets, and the "Cherry Sheets" of State aid to cities and towns. There are also "At a Glance Reports" which are Word documents that provide a "snap shot of the most recent data available for a single community."

[Neighborhoods: Boston Redevelopment Authority](#)

<http://www.ci.boston.ma.us/bra/neighborhoods/neighborhoods.asp>

The Boston Redevelopment Authority was established in the late 1950s with broad powers to "buy and sell property, the power to acquire property through eminent domain, and the power to grant tax concession. . .to encourage commercial and residential development." Their website includes useful links and information on Boston's many neighborhoods. These include recent "Publications" providing research and census data on specific areas of the city. Less useful is the official [City of Boston: Neighborhoods](#) website. Here, you can open the "drop down list" to select a section of Boston, but the information is very brief here and mostly includes directory listings of political representatives and essential services (like schools) in each area.

[Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston](#)

<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/rappaport/>

This public policy research institute, located at the Kennedy School of Harvard University, "works with universities, public agencies, and other organizations in the region to improve the governance of Greater Boston." Research is part of their mission, and they provide information, selected web links, and other materials from their webpage. Especially useful is their [Heart of the City website](#) which provides useful information on all of Boston's neighborhoods.

[Boston Indicators Project](#)

<http://www.tbf.org/indicatorsProject/>

The "Boston Indicators Project is a civic initiative coordinated by the Boston Foundation in partnership with the City of Boston/BRA and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.... Informed by the contributions of hundreds of participants and experts, the report provides high quality data and information in 10 categories: Civic Health; Cultural Life and the Arts; the Economy; Education; the Environment; Housing; Public Health; Public Safety; Technology; and Transportation. You'll also find special features and news updates." Reports for 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2004-2006 are available here, plus a Data Portal (mid-page) that links to other useful sources of information and statistics.

[MetroBoston DataCommon](#)

<http://www.metrobostondatacommon.org/>

Founded by [The Metropolitan Area Planning Council \(MAPC\)](#) and [The Boston Indicators Project](#) (see above), in conjunction with several other academic and foundation groups, the MetroBoston DataCommon is an online tool providing data about the region and each of its cities and towns. They self-identify as "a resource for all those wishing to better understand how the region and its communities are changing, and help residents, planners, city and town officials, educators, and journalists explore options and make informed decisions." Data is organized by topic, and also by geographic units like municipality and census tract.

[Boston Municipal Research Bureau: Facts About Boston](#)

<http://www.bmrb.org/facts.asp>

"The Research Bureau is a nonprofit, member-supported research organization established in 1932 to study Boston's fiscal, management and administrative problems. The group identifies itself as "independent and non-partisan," and does produce useful statistics and reports on Boston. This page provides a very brief snapshot of Boston, its people, and its city governance. Note the publication links in the left blue frame for more materials to explore. Also see print resources below for library holdings of some of the groups publications.

[Massachusetts Facts](#)

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cismaf/mafidx.htm>

The Citizen Information Service provides more than just economic data--although those types of statistics are here. (See, for example, the Part 5 economic statistics PDFs at the bottom of the opening page.) Moreover, "Massachusetts Facts" will inform you about Commonwealth history, politics, and a wide variety of factoids on Massachusetts. Ever wonder what the State folk song is? Look here. The [CIS Home Page](#) will also provide some basic maps in PDF form, as well as information useful to the political life of MA citizens.

[MassStats](#)

<http://massstats.detma.org/websaras/index.asp>

The Commonwealth-sponsored website advises you to "use MassStats to get to a wide variety of economic data for the state of Massachusetts and its local areas." Click the "Go" button on the opening screen, then select any of the buttons at the top of the frame for state tabular data (some of which is only a couple of months old) on topics like population, income, industry, occupation, and labor supply. To get town/area-specific data, first click/select your town in the "Geography" maps, and then click on one of the subject buttons to display the specific data. The interface is a bit awkward, but your patience can be rewarded with relatively current data.

[MassStats](#)

<http://www.massstats.com/>

Just to confuse matters, here is another site called MassStats. In this case it is a nice demographic mapping service that provides comparative state maps for a variety of statistical fields, including basic demographics, education, housing, crime, politics, health, and more. Note the pop-open window at the bottom of the opening screen that allows you to look for city-specific figures. Some statistics, like those at many other sites, are based on the 2000 Census. Others that come

from state agencies are sometimes more recent. [Note: In June 2007, this link was dead. However, I am retaining it for now, in case this is only temporary.]

[Official Website of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development \(EOHED\): Economic Analysis](#)

<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=ehedtopic&L=2&L0=Home&L1=Economic+Analysis&sid=Ehed>

With a mandate to promote business and economic development of the Commonwealth, the statistical materials made available by the EOHED understandably include "Key Industries" and the "Economic Data" about the state. Use the search box in the upper right to explore other areas of the EOHED pages.

[2002 Economic Census: Massachusetts](#)

http://www.census.gov/econ/census02/guide/02EC_MA.HTM

The federal Economic Census, which gathers statistics related to business enterprises, is conducted every five years (and is years in the making). The 2002 is finally available. Here is a page for Massachusetts. Look for the red arrow to the left that allow you to "drill down" for more detailed data. Want to see the earlier census? The [1997 Economic Census for Massachusetts](#) is also still available.

[Bureau of Labor Statistics: State at a Glance](#)

<http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.MA.htm>

Monthly data series of employment, unemployment and other labor force statistics specific to Massachusetts. Below main chart are links to statistics for specific metropolitan areas (like Boston). Another webpage from the BLS on the [New England Economy: Massachusetts](#) is also available.

[Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development \(DWD\): Economic Data](#)

<http://lmi2.detma.org/Lmi/LMIDataProg.asp>

Here are the current labor data series from the Commonwealth. The DWD also reproduces [Municipal Employment Data](#), and provides links to other State data sources--look for the links in the right frame for other "Economic Data" and "Information" Tools.

[Boston Public Library: Boston Statistics](#)

<http://www.bpl.org/research/govdocs/boststats.htm>

Not surprisingly, the Government Documents Department of the Boston Public Library tries to keep track of some Boston statistics, a few examples of which are linked from this page. Although not detailed, they go back as far as 1638 in some instances. The Gov Docs folks also have a separate page of links to [City of Boston Information](#) issued by local agencies. In addition, BPL has compiled a [State & Local Government Documents Database](#), that allows you to search for a topic in local documents (although you'd have to go to Copley main branch for Boston Public to consult the materials).

[NAEP State Profile: Massachusetts](#)

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/>

NAEP stands for "National Assessment of Educational Progress." Here is the State Profiles page in "The Nation's Report Card," an ongoing study of assessment results in basic education. Click on the map or open up the window list just above the map to select the "jurisdiction profile" for Massachusetts.

[State New Economy Index: Massachusetts](#)

<http://www.neweconomyindex.org/states/2002/massachusetts.html>

The Progressive Policy Institute produces this intriguing ranking of State economies, seeking to measure globalization, quality of jobs, innovation, digital readiness, and the like. The same group does a [Metropolitan New Economy Index](#) profile page on Boston.

[MassINC](#)

<http://www.massinc.org/>

The Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth – known as MassINC – is an independent, nonpartisan research and educational institute. MassINC says that they "bring together diverse perspectives – including those held by conservatives and liberals, business and labor, advocates and policy makers – to focus on the challenge of achieving the American Dream in Massachusetts." More analysis than statistically oriented, you can nonetheless pick up data in their various publications, which cover areas like Education & Workforce Development, Public Safety, Economy & Jobs, Growth & Development, Politics & Civic Life, Immigration & Demographics, Cost of Living, Health Care. MassINC also produces [Research Reports](#), which often contain statistical analysis. They also publish of the Massachusetts public policy magazine, [CommonWealth](#), to which we subscribe. Although the website wants you to be logged in or registered, for most research reports, if you click on a link to the right marked "Link to this page registration-free," you should be able to access the key findings or even the full reports. For other content, like the magazine, simply register as a member of the Suffolk community and you should gain access.

[MassGIS](#)

<http://www.state.ma.us/mgis/mapping.htm>

"A geographic information system (GIS) is a computer system capable of assembling, storing, manipulating, and displaying geographically referenced information (i.e. spatial data)." This website is the home of the major GIS for Massachusetts. Maps include color and black & white orthophotos, topographic maps, and very specific types of maps including coastal areas, environmental justice areas, legislative districts, and more. As of the summer of 2005, you have two ways to explore MassGIS data online; through a new OLIVER data-viewer, or through browser-based Mapping Applications. The site now also has a page of other recommended "[Cool Interactive Maps on the Web](#)."

[New England Economic Indicators Database](#)

<http://www.bos.frb.org/economic/nee/needata.htm>

"The New England Economic Indicators database contains comprehensive historical data for all

data published in Indicators as well as additional data. These data are available for the United States, New England as a whole, each of the six New England states, and, for some series, major New England metropolitan areas." Export data in .csv files. The Fed also recently launched a more interactive search called [Indicators Interactive](#). Both tools are affiliated with the monthly publication of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston called [New England Economic Indicators](#), which includes feature articles, as well as monthly statistics.

[NEEP: New England Economic Project](#)

<http://www.neepecon.org/>

NEEP is "a member-supported, non-profit organization dedicated to providing objective economic analyses and forecasts" about the New England states. They provide [Key Employment Data](#). And even their press releases can be worth checking out.

[Northeast Midwest Institute](#)

<http://www.nemw.org/>

Founded in the 1970s, "the Northeast-Midwest Institute is a Washington-based, private, non-profit, and non-partisan research organization dedicated to economic vitality, environmental quality, and regional equity for Northeast and Midwest states." Their website contains Economic Data and Research Reports. For example, here is a [State Profile of Massachusetts](#). Click on the link for the data type to see comparative statistics for all of the states covered.

[MAED: Massachusetts Alliance for Economic Development](#)

http://www.massecon.com/os.infores.i_population.asp

MAED does a fairly good job of providing links for a variety of Massachusetts statistics. This opening page leads you to population and demographic statistics. Other categories, listed to the left, include cost of living, crime, energy/utilities, housing, finance, and transportation. The only downside is that some of the links take you only to agency level (where you still have to hunt for statistics), or are from national sources that do not focus specifically on the Commonwealth.

Print Resources on Massachusetts and Boston

[Massachusetts Municipal Profiles](#)

REF HA431 .M37 (Latest at Reference Desk)

This useful annual includes town and city profiles for all the municipalities in the Bay State. Information includes Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics (including population projections five and ten years into the future). Very basic housing, taxations, municipal finance, and school figures are also provided. Sawyer Library owns backfile to 1988, so a time series can be built.

[Profiles of Massachusetts](#)

REF HA431 .P76 (Latest at Reference Desk)

This new resource, from 2006, provides "History, Statistics, Demographics for all 575 populated places in Massachusetts, including Comparative Statistics & Rankings." The "Ancestry Rankings" can come in handy if they cover the ethnicity you are interested in. However, many specific ethnic groups are not covered.

[Demographic Guide to Massachusetts](#)

REF HA431 .M36 2003

Based on 2000 census information, this volume contains rankings and maps, area profiles, supplemental listings, and an appendix that provides historical county population figures back to 1790. The organization is more than a little awkward and the layout of the pages is sometimes confusing, but this can still be a useful source.

[Boston Facts & Figures](#)

REF HA730 .B67 (Most issues at Reference Desk)

This handy compendium of Boston statistics is only infrequently produced by the Boston Municipal Research Bureau. But it is one of the few sources of statistics by neighborhood (i.e., Roxbury, Back Bay). We have back copies to 1985. The latest produced was in 2002. We also, however, do keep a binder of smaller, but often more up-to-date, publications from the BMRB. These include the [Bureau Update](#) and the group's [Special Reports](#)--both of which are also available online.

[The Book of Lists](#)

REF HF3163.B6 B66 (Kept at Reference Desk)

Produced annually by the *Boston Business Journal*, this book ranks businesses, groups, and even individuals, throughout Boston and Massachusetts. Categories change from year to year, but cover wide-ranging topics like "Fastest Growing Public Companies" and "Most Expensive Zip Codes."

[Massachusetts Elections Statistics](#)

REF JK3193.E4

Want to know how many votes a particular candidate got in a specific town? This state publication tells all. Sawyer Library has backfile to 1992 under this title and earlier volumes published as [Elections Statistics: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts](#). Since the print volume is slow to be produced you might also want to consult the statistics available on this [Massachusetts Elections Division](#) page from the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

[Historical Atlas of Massachusetts](#)

REF G1230 .H5 1991 (Located at Reference Atlas Case)

The maps in this volume produced by the University of Massachusetts Press provide statistical illustrations of the changes in the Commonwealth from the colonial times to late 1980's. Photographs and valuable introductory analysis round out the historical picture.

[Encyclopedia of Massachusetts](#)

REF F64 .E53 1999

Although the name sounds promising, this two volume set is short on statistics. It does, however, give small histories of Massachusetts towns, and provides other information, like biographies of our former governors.

[Massachusetts at a Glance](#)

REF F64 .T34 2004

Like the above, more facts than figures. This "User's Guide to the Bay State" is organized in dictionary style and defines and describes many names and places in the Commonwealth.

[New England at a Glance: Profiles from the 1990 Census](#)

REF HA218 .K37 1993

Although, as the title indicates, the information in this volume is older, it does do a good job of providing basic town by town figures on New England municipalities. And this information can often be contrasted with 2000 census figures, which should be available on the web.

[Trends and Indicators in Higher Education](#)

REF L903.N4 T74 (Latest at Reference Desk)

Connection is the name of the "Journal of the New England Board of Higher Education." Every year the group produces a yearbook of statistics related to colleges and universities, not just in Massachusetts, but throughout New England.

[Worldmark Encyclopedia of the States](#)

Gale Virtual Reference Library e-book

This 7th edition (2007) electronic version of a two volume set looks at all the states in the Union. The listings are mostly descriptive, but do include tabular data. The chapter on Massachusetts is substantive, as it is some 22 pages long.

Please Note: Massachusetts is just one state in the nation, so our statistics are often presented within the context of national surveys. Examples of national sources that provide useful data on Massachusetts are [Statistical Abstract of the United States](#), [Book of the States](#), and [State Rankings](#). Likewise, [County and City Extra : Annual Metro, City, and County Data Book](#) would have useful data on the Boston area or (for example) Middlesex County. Consult a librarian for other suggestions related to your topic.