

**INTERVIEW FOR CT EXPLORED MAGAZINE  
PUERTO RICAN MIGRATION TO WILLIMANTIC**

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1. What are your thoughts about the effect Puerto Rican migration had on the community of Willimantic today?

Puerto Rican migration has had a significant positive impact on the community of Willimantic. Latino culture in general, and Puerto Rican culture in particular, is reflected in local restaurants, markets and stores, in numerous places of worship, in the music you hear throughout town, and especially in community events like the monthly (May through September) Third Thursday Street festival to the annual July 4 Boom Box Parade. Puerto Rican-owned businesses have created countless local jobs throughout the area, and Willimantic may be one of the most diverse and inclusive communities of its size in all of Connecticut. The Latino community has an enormous presence here and has made a huge impact on the intangible qualities that give Willimantic its overall vibe that is part eclectic, part quirky, and a lot of fun. Willimantic is a community that clearly marches to its own unique beat!

2. How would it be different if there had never been migration from Puerto Rico?

Because of its location along the Willimantic River, it seems that it was Willimantic's destiny to develop as a mill town, unlike most of its neighboring towns that were established around agriculture. Without question, it was the lure of jobs that brought Puerto Ricans to Willimantic, not only to work in the mills, but also to fill other industrial jobs in town. Over time, that migration was significant.

According to ZipAtlas.com, Willimantic has the second highest percentage of Latinos of any town in Connecticut, with about 1/3 of the





