

# A socioeconomic portrait of Canada's Black population

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In Canada, the Black population is young, diverse and growing. In 2016, almost 1.2 million Black people lived in Canada, and more than 4 in 10 were born in the country. Given the challenges faced by many Black Canadians, examining the socioeconomic outcomes of this population is important.

Today, in conjunction with the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent and Black History Month, Statistics Canada is releasing two articles that shed light on the educational and labour market outcomes of Canada's Black population.

The first of these articles, "[Results from the 2016 Census: Education and labour market integration of Black youth in Canada](#)," published today in *Insights on Canadian Society*, focuses on the educational and labour market pathways of young Black people.

The second article, "[Canada's Black population: Education, labour and resilience](#)," provides a wide range of social and economic well-being indicators, including some on the resilience and perceptions of Black people.

Both products are the result of ongoing efforts by Statistics Canada to provide a statistical profile of the Black population in Canada.

## Black youth have higher educational aspirations than other youth, but lower levels of educational attainment

To better understand the educational pathways of the Black population, a cohort of young people was followed over a decade, from 2006 to 2016.

Results indicate that young Black people were as likely as other young Canadians from the same cohort to obtain a high school diploma, but were less likely to obtain a postsecondary degree—particularly among men.

For example, among Black boys aged 13 to 17 in 2006, just over half (51%) had a postsecondary degree 10 years later, when they were aged 23 to 27. This compared with almost two-thirds (62%) of other boys in the same age group.

Such differences were less pronounced among girls. Among Black girls aged 13 to 17 in 2006, over two-thirds (69%) had a postsecondary degree a decade later, compared with three-quarters (75%) of other girls in the same cohort.

These differences in educational attainment remained after taking a number of characteristics into account, such as parents' level of education, family income, family structure and immigration status.

That said, if young Black people achieve lower levels of education, it is not because their educational aspirations are lower. In 2016, nearly all Black youth aged 15 to 25 indicated that they wanted a university degree (94%), compared with 82% of other youth in the same age group.

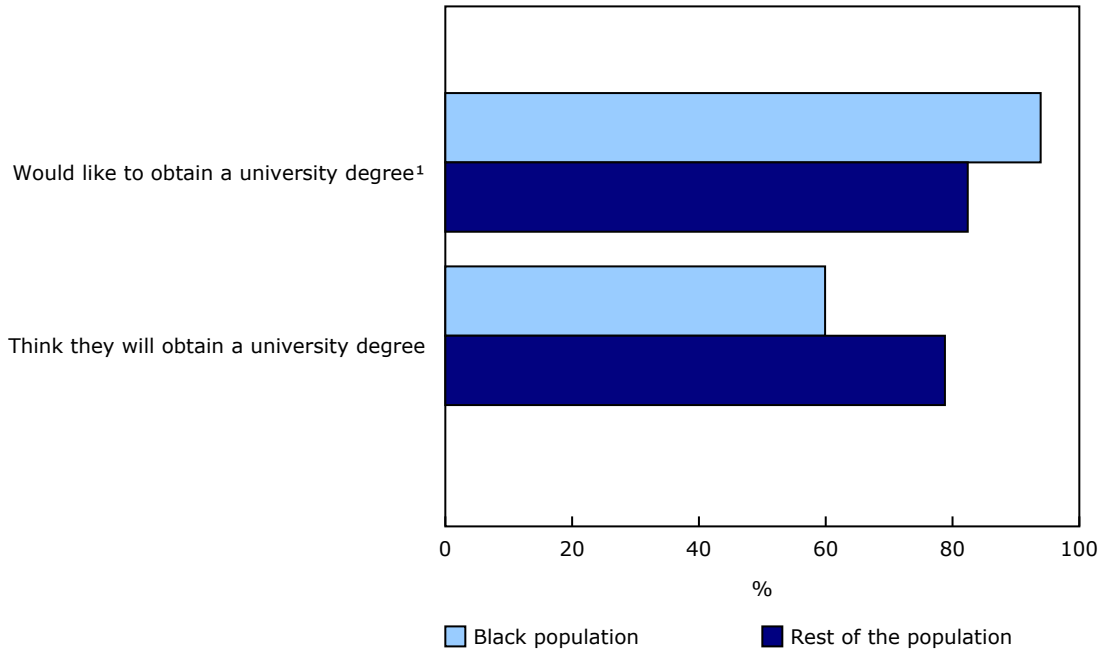


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**Chart 1**

**Level of educational attainment expectations and aspirations among the population aged 15 to 25 years, Canada, 2016**

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1. The value for the Black population is significantly different from that of the rest of the population ( $p < 0.05$ ).  
Source(s): Statistics Canada, General Social Survey (Canadians at work and home), 2016.

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This suggests that other unobserved factors are associated with the lower educational outcomes of Black youth.

### **Black adults are less likely to be employed than the rest of the adult population**

While educational attainment is an important factor for the success of young Canadians, labour market participation and annual earnings are important indicators of socioeconomic well-being for working-age adults.

There were significant differences in the employment and earnings of Black people relative to the rest of the adult population, and these differences have grown over time—despite gains in the educational attainment of Black people.

From 2001 to 2016, for example, the employment rate of Black women aged 25 to 59 remained at 71%, but increased from 72% to 75% among other women in the same age group.

Similarly, the gap in median annual wages increased between Black people and the rest of the working age population, largely because the wages of Black workers did not grow as quickly as those of other workers.

These gaps may be the result of differences in characteristics, such as job characteristics. These issues will be examined in more detail in a Statistics Canada study, to be published later in 2020.

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## Black people report higher levels of resilience

Despite the difficulties faced by the Black population in the labour market, Black people reported having significantly higher levels of resilience and optimism across a number of indicators when compared with the rest of the Canadian population.

For example, almost two-thirds (65%) of the Black population aged 15 and older felt that they always learned something after difficult experiences, compared with just under half (48%) for the rest of the population.

Furthermore, 44% of the Black population reported that they could "always" bounce back quickly after hard times, compared with one-third (33%) for the rest of the Canadian population.

The Black population also expressed a better outlook for the future, regardless of immigration status. Specifically, 76% of the Black immigrant population and 85% of the Black non-immigrant population felt that life opportunities would improve within the next five years. Within the rest of the population, these percentages were 57% and 46%, respectively.

### Note to readers

*The objective of this release is to summarize the findings of two articles released today that shed light on the socioeconomic conditions of the Black population in Canada.*

*In the first article, integrated data from the 2006 and 2016 censuses includes respondents who provided responses to both the 2006 and 2016 long form questionnaires of the Census of Population, making it possible to track changes in these respondents' characteristics over 10 years.*

*The second article uses data from the General Social Survey and the Census of Population to derive a comprehensive assessment of the socioeconomic wellbeing of the Black population and includes multidimensional indicators such as education, access to employment and income, family structures, and subjective perceptions.*

*This follows a February 2019 release that highlighted the diversity of the Black population and is part of a series of documents released in conjunction with the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent and Black History Month.*

### Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3901](#), [5178](#) and [5221](#).

The study "[Results from the 2016 Census: Education and labour market integration of Black youth in Canada](#)" is now available in *Insights on Canadian Society* ([75-006-X](#)), and the booklet "[Canada's Black population: Education, labour and resilience](#)" is now available in the *Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series* ([89-657-X](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinformedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinformedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).