

Statistical Brief

Blacks in America — 1992

The Black population in the United States numbered 31.4 million in March 1992, comprising 13 percent of the Nation's total. This Brief uses data collected by the March 1992 Current Population Survey (CPS) to explore the state of Blacks in America. It examines how their situation changed between March 1980 and 1992, as well as how their condition compares with that of the White population.

Population Growth

Between 1980 and 1992, the Black population increased an average of 1.4 percent per year, twice the annual growth rate of the White population (0.6 percent). The vast majority of this growth (84 percent) came from natural increase; the remainder came from immigration.

Geographic Distribution

Blacks are concentrated in the South. In 1992, more than one-half of Blacks, but less than one-third of Whites, lived there. In addition, Blacks were twice as likely as Whites to live in central cities (56 percent compared with 26 percent) and less likely to live in the suburbs (29 percent versus 51 percent).



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Education

Blacks are closing the high school diploma gap. Back in 1980, 51 percent of Blacks aged 25 and over had earned at least a high school diploma; the corresponding figure for Whites was 71 percent. Twelve years later, this gap had closed from 20 percentage points to 13 points (68 percent versus 81 percent).

However, the proportion of adults aged 25 and over with at least a bachelor's degree grew by equal percentages over the period for both groups — from 8 percent to 12 percent for Blacks, from 18 percent to 22 percent for Whites.

A college education, incidentally, does pay off. The median earnings in 1991 of year-round, full-time Black workers aged 25 and over who were high school graduates only was \$18,620. But

those with at least a bachelor's earned \$30,910.

Families

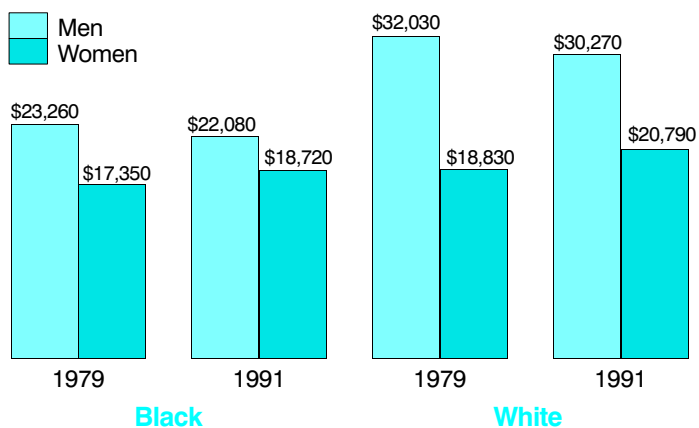
Proportionately fewer families today (both Black and White) contain a married couple. Such families comprised 56 percent of all Black families in 1980, but just 47 percent in 1992. The corresponding decline for Whites was smaller, from 86 percent to 82 percent.

Families maintained by women with no spouse present rose from 40 percent to 46 percent of Black families; the proportion maintained by men with no spouse rose from 4 percent to 7 percent.

As a result, just 36 percent of Black children and 77 percent of White children under 18 years old lived with both parents in 1992. The corresponding 1980 figures were 42 percent and 83 percent.

Median Earnings of Year-Round, Full-Time Workers, by Sex and Race: 1979 and 1991

(1991 dollars)



Jobs

In March 1992, Black men (aged 16 and over) were less likely than White men to be in the labor force (70 percent compared with 76 percent). However, the labor force participation rates for Black and White women (58 percent) did not differ. The unemployment rate for Blacks (14 percent) was more than double that for Whites (6 percent).

Proportionately fewer Black than White men worked in managerial and professional specialty jobs (14 percent versus 27 percent); relatively more Black men were operators, fabricators, and laborers (31 percent versus 19 percent) and held service jobs (19 percent compared with 9 percent). It was more common for Black than for White women to work in service jobs (28 percent versus 17 percent), less likely for them to work in managerial and professional specialty (20 percent versus 29 percent) and in technical, sales, and administrative support jobs (38 percent versus 45 percent).

Income

The median income for Black families was \$21,550 in 1991, 57 percent of the total for White families. After adjusting for inflation, family income for both groups was unchanged from 1979. But income *has* changed for different family types:

- Black married-couple families saw their real median income rise 8 percent over the period, to \$33,310 in 1991. Their income was 80 percent that of comparable White families in 1991, unchanged from 1979.
- Real median income for Black female householder families dropped 10 percent from 1979 to 1991. It stood at \$11,410 in 1991, 58 percent that of comparable White families. The ratio was unchanged from 1979.

Earnings

In 1991, the median earnings of year-round, full-time Black male workers was 73 percent that of comparable White males (\$22,080 versus \$30,270). Black female year-round, full-time workers earned 90 percent that of their White counterparts (\$18,720 compared with \$20,790). The Black-to-White earnings ratios didn't change between 1979 and 1991 for either sex. (See graph on front.)

Poverty

Between 1979 and 1991, poverty rates changed little for Black and White persons and families in general, but rates did change for certain groups. For instance, Black related children under 18 years old in families saw their poverty rate rise from 41 percent to 46 percent over the period. The table shows 1991 poverty rates for different groups.

Home Ownership

Black householders were much more likely in 1992 to rent than to own a home (56 percent versus 42 percent); the opposite was true for Whites — 31 percent were renters, 67 percent were owners.

More information:

The Black Population in the United States: March 1992. Current Population Reports, Series P20-471. For sale by U.S. Government Printing Office. Stock No. 803-005-00072-9. \$7. Extensive information on the Black population for small geographic entities is available from the 1990 census. Contact Customer Services (301-763-4100) for more information.

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This Brief is one of a series that presents information of current policy interest. It may include data from businesses, households, or other sources. All statistics are subject to sampling variability, as well as survey design flaws, respondent classification errors, and data processing mistakes. The Census Bureau has taken steps to minimize errors, and analytical statements have been tested and meet statistical standards. However, because of methodological differences, use caution when comparing these data with data from other sources.

Percent Below the Poverty Level: 1991

Persons	Black	White
All persons	33	11
Related children under age 18 in families	46	16
Aged 65 or over	34	10
Worked in 1991	15	6
50–52 weeks	7	3
49 weeks or less	29	12
Families		
All families	30	9
with children	39	14
Maintained by a married couple	11	5
with children	12	8
Maintained by a woman, no spouse present	51	28
with children	60	40
Maintained by a man, no spouse present	22	11
with children	32	16