

# Key Findings.

The Status of Black Women in the United States identifies a number of key findings:



**Black women vote at comparatively high rates and had a higher voting rate than all other groups of men and women during the last two presidential elections.**

**Black women remain underrepresented at every level of federal and state political office in the United States.**

In 2014, Black women composed 6.4 percent of the United States population, but as of August 2016 held only 3.4 percent of seats in the United States Congress and no seats in the U.S. Senate. In state legislatures, Black women held just 3.5 percent of seats. Only two Black women in the country held a position in statewide executive elected office.

**More than six in ten (62.2 percent) Black women are in the workforce,**

making them one of the two racial/ethnic groups of women with the highest labor force participation rate among women and the only group of women with a higher labor force participation rate than their male counterparts.

**Black women's median annual earnings (\$34,000 for those who work full-time, year-round) lag behind most women's and men's earnings in the United States.**

Between 2004 and 2014, Black women's real median annual earnings declined by 5.0 percent (Table 2.2). As of 2014, Black women who worked full-time, year-round had median annual earnings that were 64.6 percent of White men's (\$53,000). In Louisiana, the state with the largest gap in earnings between Black women and White men, Black women earned less than half of White men's earnings (46.3 percent).

**About 28 percent of employed Black women work in service occupations,**

the occupational group with the lowest wages. Jobs in this broad occupational group often lack important benefits such as paid sick days.

**Black families depend on Black women's earnings.**

Eight out of ten (80.6 percent) Black mothers are breadwinners, who are either the sole earner or earn at least 40 percent of household income.

**Quality child care is unaffordable for many Black women.**

In all but two states in the country, the average costs of child care exceed 20 percent of Black women's median annual earnings.

**While health insurance coverage rates have increased substantially due to the implementation of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), 16.5 percent of nonelderly Black women in the United States still lacked coverage as of 2014.**

Many of the states that place in the bottom third in the country in terms of Black women's health insurance coverage are states in which Medicaid expansion has not been adopted since the implementation of the ACA.

**Between 2004 and 2014, the share of Black women with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 23.9 percent, making Black women the group of women with the second-largest improvement in attainment of higher education during the decade.**

In 2014, about 22 percent of Black women aged 25 and older had bachelor's degrees or higher. Black women had higher levels of education than Black men (17 percent), but lower levels of education than Asian/Pacific Islander men and women, men and women of another race or two or more races, and White men and women.

**The number of businesses owned by Black women increased by 178 percent between 2002 and 2012, the largest increase among all racial and ethnic groups of women and men.**

In 2012, Black women owned 15.4 percent of all women-owned businesses in the United States, a larger share than their share of the female population (12.7 percent). In the District of Columbia, Mississippi, and Georgia, Black women own more than 40 percent of all women-owned businesses. Yet, nationwide, businesses owned by Black women had the lowest average sales per firm among all racial and ethnic groups of women and men, at \$27,753.

**Black women experience poverty at higher rates than Black men and women from all other racial/ethnic groups except Native American women.**

A quarter of Black women in the United States live in poverty (24.6 percent), compared with 18.9 percent of Black men and 10.8 percent of White women, who have the lowest poverty rate among women.

**Black women's average annual heart disease mortality rate declined by 38.5 percent between 1999 and 2013,**

although at 177.7 per 100,000 it remains the highest rate among the largest racial and ethnic groups of women.

**Black women have the second highest lung cancer mortality rate among the largest racial and ethnic groups of women (35.7 per 100,000),**

behind White women (39.9 per 100,000), while having the highest breast cancer mortality rate among all racial and ethnic groups of women (30.2 per 100,000).

**Black women's average incidence of AIDS is five times higher than any other racial and ethnic group of women.**

However, incidence of AIDS among Black women decreased by 45.1 percent between 2000 and 2013.

**Black women experience intimate partner violence at higher rates than women overall.**

More than 40 percent of Black women experience physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetimes (41.2 percent), compared with 31.5 percent of all women.

**From a young age, Black girls are disciplined at higher rates than all other groups of girls within public schools.**

Black girls composed 45 percent of girls suspended from K-12 schools between 2011 and 2012.

**Black women of all ages were twice as likely to be imprisoned as White women in 2014 (109 per 100,000 Black women were imprisoned in state and federal prisons compared with 53 per 100,000 White women).**

Among young women, the disparity is especially pronounced: Black women aged 18-19 are four times as likely to be imprisoned as White women of the same age (32 per 100,000 compared with 8 per 100,000).