



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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Pennsylvania to Celebrate Black History Month in February

MIDDLETOWN, Pa –To recall and celebrate the positive contributions made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week on Feb. 12, 1926. For many years, the second week of February was set aside for this celebration to coincide with the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and African-American abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass. In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month.

As of July 1, 2003, there were an estimated 37.1 million U.S. residents who were either black or African American, which represents 12.8 percent of the total U.S. population. There were an estimated 1.3 million Pennsylvania residents who were black or African American as of July 1, 2003, which represents 10.3 percent of the total population of Pennsylvania. As of April 1, 2000 (Census Day), Philadelphia County has the fifth largest population of blacks or African Americans of any county nationally with a population of 655,824.

Significant dates in Black History in Pennsylvania:

February 18, 1688: The Quakers of Germantown, Pennsylvania, passed the first formal antislavery resolution.

April 12, 1787: Richard Allen and Absalom Jones organized the Free African Society, a mutual self-help group in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

June 10, 1794: Richard Allen founded the Bethel African Methodist Church in Philadelphia.

Significant data for blacks or African Americans in Pennsylvania from the 2003 American Community Survey:

- **Education**
38.0, the percent of blacks age 25 and over with a high school diploma in 2003
10.0, the percent of blacks age 25 with a bachelor's degree or higher in 2003

27,252, the number of blacks age 25 and over with an advanced degree in 2003 (e.g., master's, Ph.D., M.D. or J.D.)

- **Serving Our Nation**

795,771, the estimated number of black military veterans in Pennsylvania in 2003

- **Income and Poverty**

\$27,673, the annual median income in 2003 of households with householders who reported only black or black in combination with one or more other races

27.0, the poverty rate in 2003 for those reporting being black, regardless of whether they reported any other race or races

- **Families**

283,026, the estimated number of black families in 2003; of these, 37 percent are married-couple families

3.25, the average family size of black families in 2003

5.0, the percent of black children who live in their grandparents' household, the highest rate for any race or ethnic group

53.0, the percent of black householders who own their own home

The PaSDC can provide detailed statistics on the black or African American population and the other race and ethnic populations in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710, or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.