



# Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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## Pennsylvania Celebrates Black History Month

PENN STATE HARRISBURG – Pennsylvania has a rich and intriguing African American history. As early as 1688, the first written protest against slavery in the American colonies came from German Quakers in Germantown near Philadelphia. By the 1770s, abolitionism was a full-scale movement in Pennsylvania. However, it was not until 1926 that American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week, which in 1976 – the nation's bicentennial - expanded to Black History Month.

According to the 2010 Census, the United States was home to nearly 39 million residents who were black or African American. Blacks accounted 12.6 percent of the total U.S. population in 2010. In Pennsylvania, more than 1.3 million residents identified themselves as black or African American in 2010, which represented 10.8 percent of Commonwealth's total population. The percent of blacks in Pennsylvania ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> among the states and the District of Columbia (see Table 1.) As of April 1, 2010, Philadelphia County had the sixth largest population of blacks or African Americans of all counties nationally with a population of 661,839.

Table 1. Black Population as Percent of the Total Population, 2010				
Rank	State	Total Population	Black Population	Black, Percent
-	United States	308,745,538	38,929,319	12.6%
1	District of Columbia	601,723	305,125	50.7%
2	Mississippi	2,967,297	1,098,385	37.0%
3	Louisiana	4,533,372	1,452,396	32.0%
4	Georgia	9,687,653	2,950,435	30.5%
5	Maryland	5,773,552	1,700,298	29.4%
<b>22</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>12,702,379</b>	<b>1,377,689</b>	<b>10.8%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File-1

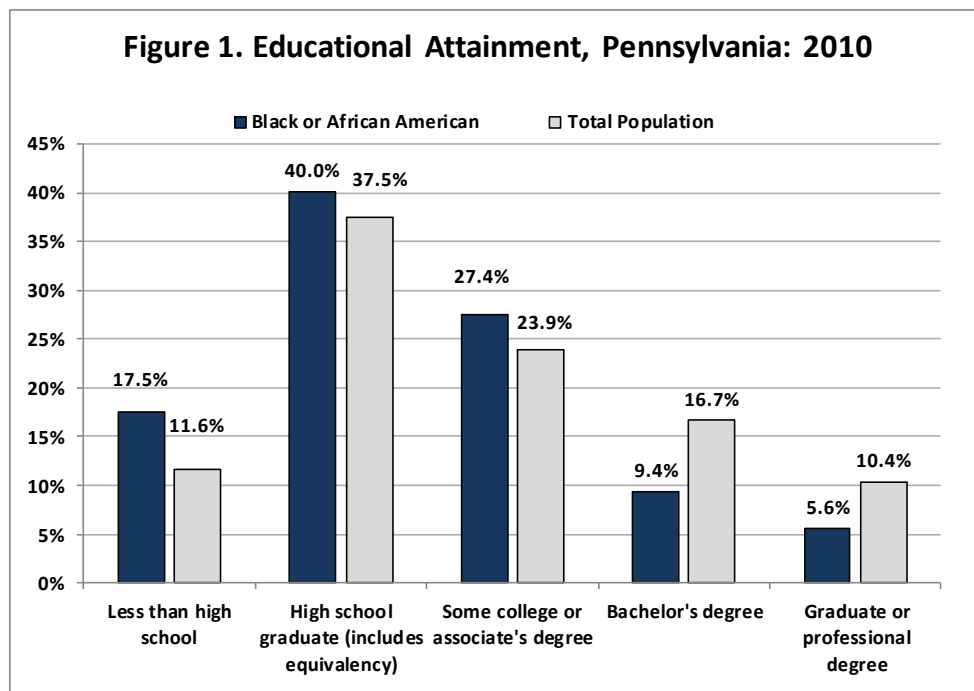
### Income and Poverty

The black or African American population had significantly lower income and higher poverty levels in 2010 compared to the overall population. African Americans had a median family income of \$37,693 in Pennsylvania. The median family income for the overall population was \$61,890

(\$65,328 for the white population). One-fourth (25.1 percent) of black or African American families had an income below the poverty level in Pennsylvania in 2010. Black female householders with related children had the highest rate of poverty at 45.2 percent. The poverty rate for all families was 9.3 percent while the rate for white families was even lower at 7.0 percent. Individually, African Americans had a poverty rate of 28.4 percent, well above the overall population (13.4 percent) or the white population (10.6 percent). Among African American individuals, children under 5 years of age had the highest poverty rate (42.0 percent).

### Education

The percent of African Americans attaining higher levels of education has risen since 2000; however, they were still less likely than the overall population to get advanced degrees in 2010 (see Figure 1.). In 2010, 9.4 percent of African Americans age 25 or older in Pennsylvania had a bachelor's degree, up from 7.7 percent in 2000. The percent of African Americans attaining a bachelor's degree remains below the percent for the total population (16.7 percent). In 2010, 40.0 percent of African Americans age 25 or older in Pennsylvania were a high school graduate or equivalent. This is higher than for the overall population (37.5 percent). The percent of African Americans receiving graduate degrees also increased from 4.3 percent in 2000 to 5.6 percent in 2010. This is still lower than the percent for the total population (10.4 percent).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey

### Marital Status

More than half (54.3 percent) of the African American population 15 and over in Pennsylvania have never been married. This is a much higher rate than for those who have never been married in the overall population (32.7 percent) and also higher the national rate for African Americans (48.3 percent). African Americans also married later in life than the overall population. The average age

at first marriage for the black population was 30.8 for males and 30.3 for females, slightly higher than the age at first marriage for the total population (29.3 for males, 27.5 for females).

### **Housing Tenure**

A larger percentage of African American householders in Pennsylvania resided in an owner-occupied housing unit than black householders nationally in 2010 (45.9 percent compared to 44.3 percent). In Pennsylvania, African American householders were more likely to live in a renter-occupied unit compared to overall householders (54.1 percent versus 30.4 percent). The percentage of African American householders who owned their home increased 6.2 percent between 2000 and 2010, while the percent that lived in a renter-occupied unit increased 23.0 percent over the last decade.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's expert in demographics and Census datasets. To request custom American Community Survey data tables or maps, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1; 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

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.**