

FACT SHEET

The African Canadian Population in Ontario

While not all have arrived in Canada directly from their ancestral homelands in the continent of Africa, the term "African Canadian" is used to identify all Canadians of African descent, regardless of place of birth or cultural background.

A GROWING POPULATION

People of African descent have lived in Canada since the 1600s. The first Africans came to Canada as explorers. Later, others were enslaved and brought to Canada. Many came from the United States fleeing slavery and oppression, while the Black Loyalists who fought for the British in the American Revolutionary War were promised land and their freedom in Canada.

In the 1960s, Canada changed its immigration policies that were designed to limit the number of racialized people who immigrate to Canada. Since then, the African-descent population in Canada has grown considerably with immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean now comprising a large proportion of the African Canadian population.

The African Canadian population has a much younger age structure than the general Canadian population. In 2006, children under the age of 15 accounted for 28% of the African Canadian population, compared to 17% of the White population.¹

DIVERSITY

There is a great deal of ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity within the African Canadian population. There are populations in southwestern Ontario whose ancestors came to Canada via the Underground Railroad. There is also a large immigrant population, as well as those who are second and third generation Canadian.

43% of all African Canadians were born in Canada, with 9% being third generation or more.⁴

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Almost 60% of the African Canadian population lives in Ontario. While African Canadians live in communities throughout Ontario, the majority - 74% - live in the Toronto CMA (Census Metropolitan Area).

THE DATA

- There are 945,665 African Canadians, representing 3% of the country's population.²
- There are 539,205 African Canadians in Ontario, representing 4% of the provincial population.
- The African Canadian population grew by 65% between 1996 and 2011 (from 573,860 to 945,665) while the total population increased by 19%.
- Statistics Canada estimates that the African Canadian population will double by 2031.³
- Community organizations estimate that 10% of the African Canadian population is LGBTQ.

Ethnic Origins in Ontario

Jamaican	218,065
Trinidadian	51,340
Somali	33,970
Barbadian	23,385
Ghanaian	22,035
Nigerian	20,025
Ethiopian	17,320
Haitian	15,830

African Canadians by Municipality

City of Toronto	218,160
Peel Region	116,265
Ottawa	49,650
Durham Region	41,890
York Region	25,870
Hamilton	16,110
Windsor	10,575
London	9,255

1- Labour Program, Government of Canada. Designated Group Profiles.
http://www.labour.gc.ca/eng/standards_equality/eq/pubs_eq/eedr/2006/profiles/page08.shtml

2- Unless otherwise stated, all figures on this fact sheet are from Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey.

3- Statistics Canada. Projections of the Diversity of the Canadian Population. March 9, 2010.

4- Statistics Canada. Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada.
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm>