

Fun Facts: African American (Black) History Month



What's the Age?

Roughly 34 - Median age of the African American population in 2019.

Educational Attainment

Of the Black or African American population 25 years and older...

- **About 1 out of 10** (13%) have less than a high school diploma.
- **About 3 out of 10** (32%) are high school graduates. (includes equivalency)
- **About 3 out of 10** (33%) have some college or associate's degree.
- **About 2 out of 10** (23%) have a bachelor's degree or higher.



Origin of African American History Month

American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week (then called "Negro History Week") nearly a century ago to spotlight the accomplishments of African Americans. It was first celebrated during the second week of February in 1926 to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass (February 14). In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded to a month. Since then, U.S. presidents have proclaimed February as National African American History Month.

Population of African Americans

About 13% or 44 million - The number of African Americans in the United States in 2019. These places have among the highest percentage of African American residents:

46%
District of
Columbia



38%
Mississippi



Occupations

Held by African Americans 16 years old and older:

- **About 3 out of 10** (32%) work in management, professional and related occupations.
- **About 2 out of 10** (24%) work in service occupations.
- **About 2 out of 10** (21%) work in sales and office occupations.
- **About 1 out of 10** (17%) work in production, transportation, and material moving occupations.



Birthplace Populations of Famous African Americans

- **Martin Luther King, Jr.** - Atlanta, Georgia (Pop. - **506,811**)
Scholar and minister who led the civil rights movement.
- **Kamala Harris** - Oakland, California (Pop. - **433,031**)
49th vice president of the United States and the first woman and person of African American heritage to hold this position.
- **Barack Obama** - Honolulu, Hawaii (Pop. - **345,064**)
44th president of the United States and the first African American commander-in-chief.
- **Gertrude Rush** - Navasota, Texas (Pop. - **7,998**)
First African American woman to pass the bar exam and was an enumerator for the 1910 Census.
- **Ruby Bridges** - Tylertown, Mississippi (Pop. - **1,428**)
First African American child to integrate an all-white public elementary school in the South.
- **George Washington Carver** - Diamond, Missouri (Pop. - **910**)
African American scientist and educator, famous for many inventions including a number of uses for the peanut.

Notes: All of the data on this page, except the birthplace populations, is for the Black or African American alone population. Data is rounded for educational attainment and occupations and may not equal 100%.

Sources: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Survey, 2019 Current Population, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Vintage 2019 Population Estimates as of July 1, 2019 and <https://www.biography.com/>.