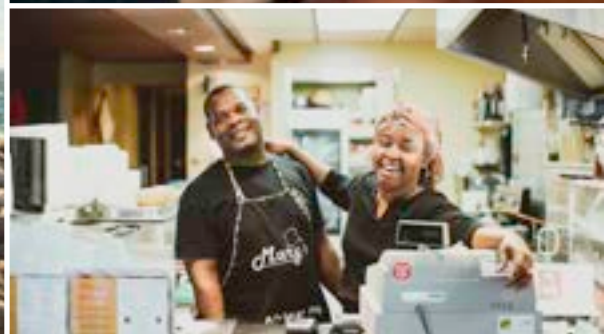


KNOWING OUR NUMBERS



# African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being

Index 2024



MAY 2024



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

## Advisory Council

**Dolly Williams** – Co-Chair – East Preston  
**Irvine Carvery** – Co-Chair - Africville  
**Viola Fraser** – North Preston Rec Centre  
**Sherry Bernard** – Lake Loon / Cherrybrook  
**Gina Jones-Wilson** – Upper Hammonds Plains  
**Patsy Crawford** – Beechville  
**Terry Dixon** – Africville  
**John Young** – Lucasville  
**Deborah Emmerson** – Lucasville  
**Tamar Brown** – HRM ANS Affairs Integration Office  
**Devon Parris** – ANS Community Action Program  
**Veronica Marsman** – Akoma  
**Trianda Loppie** – Akoma  
**Tammy Ewing** – Engage Nova Scotia  
**Rosella Fraser** – North Preston Community Rec Centre  
**Shelley Fashan** – Elder Council Connector  
**George Frempong** – Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute  
**Curtis Whiley** – Land Titles Initiative  
**Wayne Talbot** – Deputy Mayor City of Truro

**Dena Williams** – Halifax Partnership  
**Trayvone Clayton** – Halifax Partnership  
**Jenée Jarvis** – Halifax Partnership  
**Carolann Wright** – Halifax Partnership  
**Matthew Martell** – Black Business Initiative  
**Crystal Mulder** – Halifax Libraries

## Elder Council

**Cameron Brown** – Co-Chair - Caribbean  
**Melinda Daye** – Co-Chair - Halifax  
**Darlene Lawrence** – South Shore  
**Iona Duncan-States** – Halifax  
**Charles Sheppard** – Cape Breton  
**Chuck Smith** – South Shore  
**Craig Smith** – Halifax

## Youth Council

**Chelsea Slawter-Wright** – Co-Chair - Halifax  
**Shekara Grant** – Co-Chair - Halifax  
**Kjeld Conyers-Steede** – Caribbean  
**Joshua Lafond** – Caribbean  
**Mamadou Wade** – Halifax  
**Jasalynn Skeete** – HRM ANS Affairs Integration Office

## Road to Economic Prosperity Staff Team at Halifax Partnership

**Carolann Wright**, Director of Capacity Building & Strategic Initiatives African Nova Scotia Communities and Executive Director, Road to Economic Prosperity  
**Jenée Jarvis**, Governance & Capacity Building Liaison, Capacity Building and Strategic Initiatives  
**Dena Williams**, Event Coordinator, African Nova Scotian Communities  
**Trayvone Clayton**, Community Engagement Specialist, African Nova Scotian Communities

## HRM African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office

**Devon Parris**  
**Tamar Pryor Brown**  
**Jasalynn Skeete**

## Our Partners:







## **CONTENTS**

- 4** Messages
- 6** How to Read the Index
- 7** Introduction
- 8** Key Facts and Stats
- 10** Population
- 14** Labour
- 18** Income
- 24** Education
- 30** Housing
- 34** Well-Being
- 38** Community Insights and Recommendations



## MESSAGE FROM

# Irvine Carvery & Dolly Williams

Co-Chairs of the Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Council

**As we move this work forward, it is important that we do it collectively and collaboratively - For Us, By Us, and With Us. Engaging our community in developing the inaugural *African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index* (the *ANS Index*) is priority one.**

Community conversations and feedback on social and economic data presented during the 2022 and 2023 Road to Economic Prosperity (REP) Summits,

highlighted the need for a symposium where our community could get acquainted with the data and share insights and recommendations that could improve African Nova Scotian economic outcomes and prosperity.

The ANS Index Community Symposium held in April 2024 provided an opportunity for our community to dive deeper into the data and gain a greater understanding of areas in which Nova Scotia's Black population is making progress and where we fall behind in

areas such as education, employment, income, housing, and well-being.

Thank you to those who participated in the Index Symposium and to members of the community and our partners who have been involved in developing the ANS Prosperity and Well-being Index and implementing the ANS Road to Economic Prosperity Plan. Together, we are advancing the Black print for economic development.



## MESSAGE FROM

# Carolann Wright

Director of Capacity Building & Strategic Initiatives African Nova Scotia Communities,  
and Executive Director, Road to Economic Prosperity

**Our community and partners see this inaugural ANS Index as a pivotal starting point in providing an accurate baseline for a range of social and economic indicators for people of African descent in Nova Scotia - a measure of how far we have come and how far we have to go.**

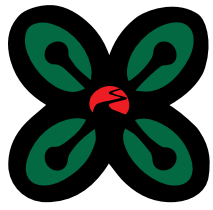
African Nova Scotians can only make progress if the community has an in-depth knowledge of existing data on the Black community, what informs the data, and where there are gaps.

The opportunity to review and discuss data as a community and to provide recommendations that could improve social and economic outcomes is new for the Black community.

This work is just the beginning of building trust with the community to increase African Nova Scotian participation in data collection and provides a starting point for future engagement with ANS communities on research and data initiatives. It will also provide opportunities to identify and measure key indicators that have not

been traditionally included in Statistics Canada data.

For our inaugural Index, the REP Research Working group identified areas of major interest to the ANS population and supported the research, while Halifax Partnership's economists provided the economic data and analysis. Thank you for your time, energy, and expertise provided to this critical and impactful work for the ANS community.



# How to read the ANS Index

The inaugural edition of the *African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index (ANS Index)* covers six broad areas: population, labour, income, education, housing, and well-being. Before getting into the details of this content, several methodological issues must be addressed.

There are very few publicly available datapoints for the African Nova Scotian (ANS) community. Statistics Canada does generate data for those who self-identify as Black in instruments like the Census and the Labour Force Survey. However, Census datapoints are available only every five years, with 2021 data being the most recent. While the results of the Labour Force Survey

are published monthly, the finest level of geography for which breakouts of the Black population are available is Atlantic Canada as a whole.

Furthermore, the population who self-identify as Black is not equivalent to the historic African Nova Scotian population, who have had a presence here for over 400 years. These statistics include recent newcomers who identify as Black but may or may not identify as part of the ANS community. For some Census datapoints we have access to cross-tabulations for those who self-identify as Black and as being “third generation Canadians or more” (persons who were born in Canada with both parents born in Canada).

For some statistics we use this cross-tabulation as an imperfect proxy for the historic African Nova Scotian population.

Census data are provided down to very fine levels of geography and some statistics are reported here for communities below the provincial level, such as Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Here, to ensure accurate comparisons with previous census years, we use Halifax Census Subdivisions figures.

Many of the datapoints used in this report are made available via the Community Data Program, which is acknowledged with gratitude.





# Introduction



The African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Plan (REPAP) is a collaborative plan developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community to advance economic development and community priorities.

One key implementation step of the Plan is to conduct research and analysis on ANS community-level statistics in order to understand how the community compares to the broader population on a variety of economic and social indicators and to track the trends in these indicators over time. Where gaps exist, it is important to recognize them, to assess whether they are improving or worsening over time, and to drive action towards closing them.

This inaugural *African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index* uses the most-recently available data to describe the status of the Black community in Nova Scotia across a range of topics – population, labour, income, education, housing, and well-being – and to track progress over time. Gaps also are identified between the Black population and the general Nova Scotian population. Additionally, by using a generational identifier from the Census, a proxy for the historic African Nova Scotian community, as distinct from the total Black Nova Scotian population, is created and assessed on several metrics.

Between 2016 and 2021 the Black Nova Scotian population grew more quickly than the Nova Scotian population overall. This growth was led by international migration, with Nigeria being the largest source country.

The Black population continues to lag the general population in the labour force participation rate, the employment rate, and the unemployment rate, but the gaps do appear to be narrowing.

A gap in average income remains, but this too is closing, especially for women. The historic ANS community has a lower average income than more recent Black arrivals in the province.

The share of Black adults without even a high school diploma has been dropping sharply while the share with a bachelor's degree or higher has jumped. Gaps in achievement rates between African Nova Scotian sixth graders and the general population remain. In the most recent evaluations, only 61%, 49%, and 53% of African Nova Scotian sixth graders were at or above expectations in reading, writing, and mathematics, respectively.

Compared to the overall Nova Scotian population, the Black Nova Scotian community has higher shares of households living in unaffordable housing (too expensive), inadequate

housing (too small for the number of people), and unsuitable housing (in need of major repairs). While 7.3% of Nova Scotian households live in core housing need, the share almost doubles to 13.2% for Black Nova Scotians. Black Nova Scotians also have a significantly lower rate of home ownership than the general population.

In Engage Nova Scotia's 2019 Quality of Life Survey, as compared to the averages across all survey respondents, African Nova Scotian respondents reported comparatively lower levels of life satisfaction, trust in others, self-assessed mental health, and financial security, but greater satisfaction with work-life balance.

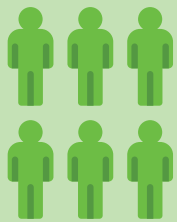
**We invite you to explore the data and insights included in this edition of the *African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index* and to share your feedback and ideas to improve social and economic indicators for the Black community.**

# KNOWING *our* NUMBERS

## KEY STATS AND FACTS



### POPULATION

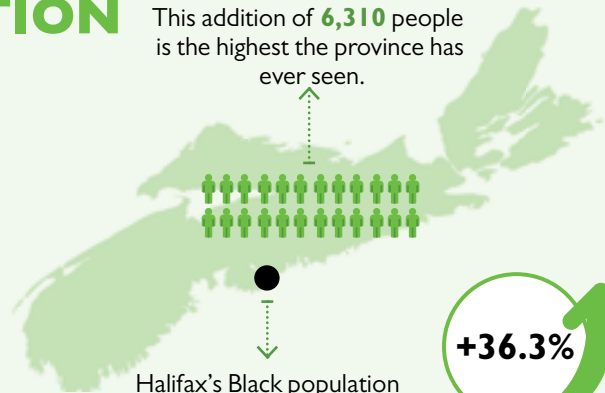


Nova Scotia's Black population was 28,220 in 2021, 72.9% of whom were in Halifax.

**+28.8%**  
2016 - 2021



This addition of **6,310** people is the highest the province has ever seen.



Halifax's Black population increased **5,475** people

**+36.3%**



The largest increase in Nova Scotia's Black population was seen for those aged **25 to 54 years**, growing by **2,745** people.

### IMMIGRATION



**20.4%**

In 2021, 20.4% of Nova Scotia's Black population were immigrants.



**56.4%**

**56.4%** of these immigrants arrived from 2016 to 2021

This is higher than the total Nova Scotia figure of **7.5%**.

### EMPLOYMENT

The age-adjusted unemployment rate for Black Nova Scotians remains above the figure for the overall population.

(Data from 2006-2021, 15 years)

#### Black Nova Scotian

2006 unemployment rate – 10.1%  
2011 unemployment rate – 11.5%  
2016 unemployment rate – 14.7%  
**2021 unemployment rate - 14.0%**

#### All Nova Scotians

2006 unemployment rate – 9.1%  
2011 unemployment rate – 10.0%  
2016 unemployment rate – 10.0%  
**2021 unemployment rate - 12.7%**

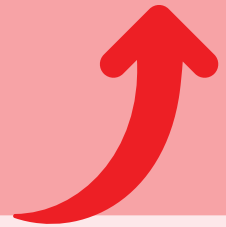


# EDUCATION

Educational outcomes have been improving for Black Nova Scotians over the past 15 years (2006-2021)



**Black Nova Scotians have the highest population share of adults (ages 25 to 64) with only a high school diploma 27.7%, compared to the minority population 16.8% and non-minorities 25.2%.**



**11.7%**

Black Nova Scotians still have a greater share of adults (ages 25 to 64) without formal educational attainment (11.7%) i.e., no diploma, certificate or degree from high school educational institution or higher when **compared to the minority population share 6.8%, and non-minority population share 10.3%.**

**6.4%**

of Black Nova Scotian adults (ages 25 to 64) have a trades or apprenticeship certificate or diploma.

**19.9%**

of Black Nova Scotian adults (ages 25 to 64) hold a college or non-university certificate or diploma, **in comparison to 25.9% of the non-minority population.**

**31.8%**

of Black Nova Scotian adults (ages 25 to 64) hold a university degree, **above the non-minority population share of 27.1%.**

## INCOME

**Both male and female Black Nova Scotians make less than their non-minority counterparts.**



**17.6% of Black Nova Scotians lived in poverty in 2020 according to the Market Basket Measure.** This was down from 35.1% in 2015.

**1st generation Black Nova Scotians had the highest rate of poverty in 2020 at 23.8%, followed by 3rd generation at 15.0% and 2nd generation at 14.3%.**

### More key stats:

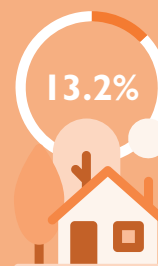
The average after-tax income in 2020 for Black Nova Scotian females was \$2,360 lower than the average for non-visible minority females. For males the difference was much higher at \$10,120. On average, Black males made \$1,080 more than Black females. On average, a Black Nova Scotian will have only 85 cents in income for every dollar of income for a non-visible minority Nova Scotian. The average Black Nova Scotian with a bachelor's degree or higher made only 79.2% of the income of the average Nova Scotian with a bachelor's degree or higher in 2020.

## HOUSING

**At the national, provincial, and Halifax levels, the share of the Black population living in core housing need in 2021 was greater than the corresponding figure for the overall population.**

In 2021, **15.4%** of Black Nova Scotians lived in homes that were not suitable for the size of their households, **17.2%** lived in homes that were unaffordable, and **11.2%** lived in homes that were inadequate and in need of major repairs.

In 2021, **45.8%** of the Black Nova Scotian population owned their homes, versus **67.8%** for the overall population.

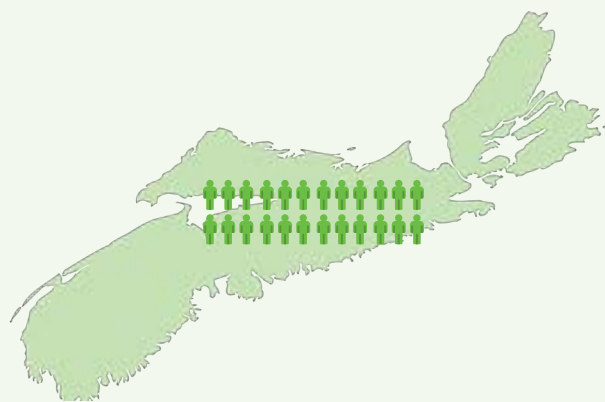


**13.2%**

The share of the Black Nova Scotian population living in core housing need in 2021 was 13.2%.

KNOWING OUR NUMBERS

# Population



# Population



Statistics Canada survey instruments like the Census and the Labour Force Survey ask respondents to self-identify across a range of criteria. The basis of this Population section is to identify those Nova Scotians who self-identify as Black. This captures individuals with many generations of family rooted in Nova Scotia – the historic African Nova Scotian community – as well as individuals who migrated here from other parts of Canada or from abroad, perhaps recently or perhaps many years ago. As noted in the introduction, the set of people who self-identify as both Black and as “third generation or more” Canadians is used in some instances as a quantifiable proxy for the historic African Nova Scotian community.

According to the 2021 Census, there were 28,220 Nova Scotians who self-identified as Black, which represented 3.0% of the provincial population.

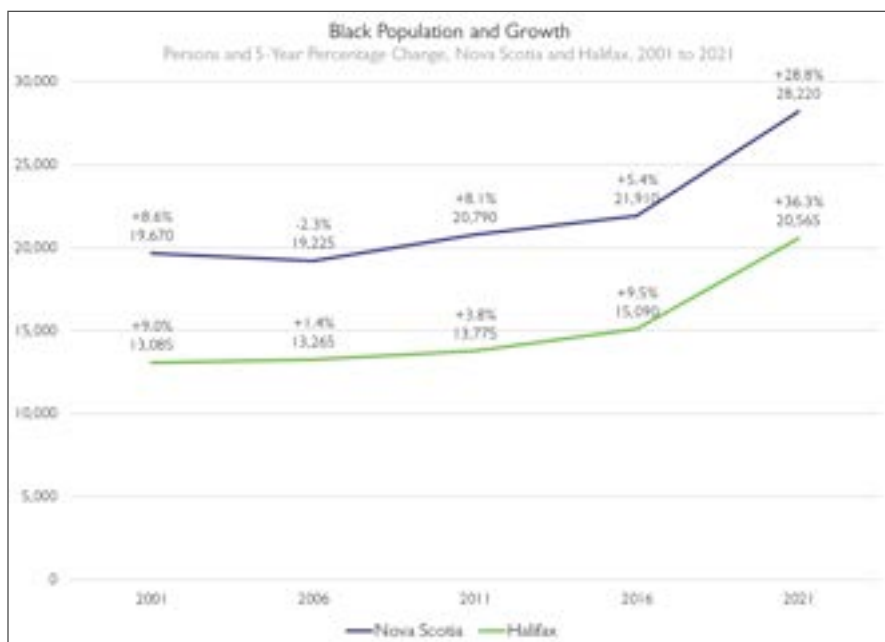
Among the ten groups constituting Statistics Canada’s visible minorities category, the Black population was the largest. The second-largest group was Nova Scotia’s South Asian population at 21,655, or 2.3% of the provincial population.

Black population growth set new records in 2021, at the national, provincial (Nova Scotia), and municipal (Halifax) levels, both in terms of people added and the rate of growth. Nova Scotia’s Black population grew 28.8% (+6,310 people) between 2016 and

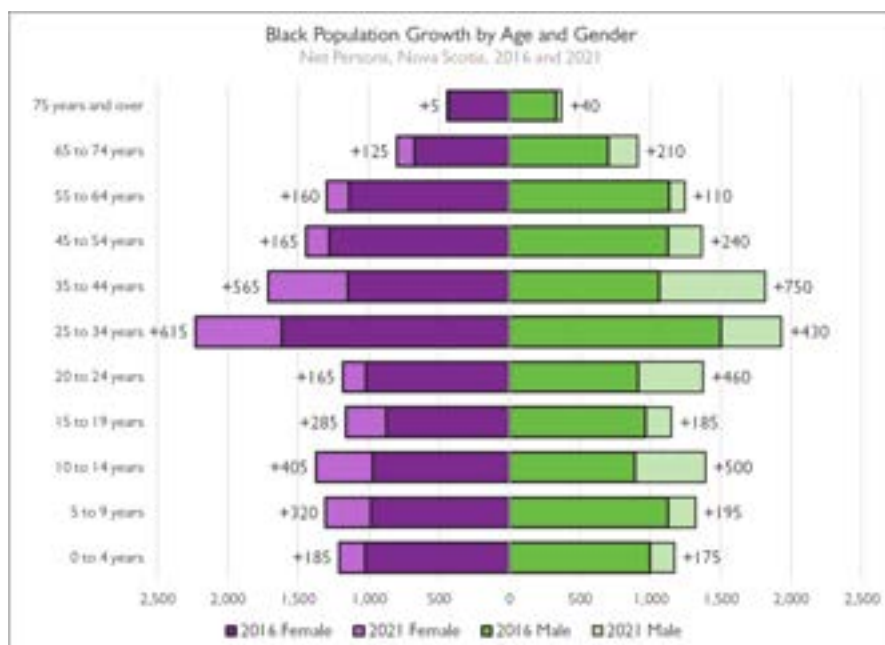
2021. Over the same period the overall provincial population grew by only 5.2%.

The growth rate of the Black population was even larger for Canada (+29.1%) and for Halifax (+36.3%), adding 349,325 and 5,475 people, respectively. In 2021, 1.8% of Canada’s Black population resided in Nova Scotia, while 72.9% of Nova Scotia’s Black population resided in Halifax.

Since 1996, there was only one Census year, 2006, when Nova Scotia’s Black population saw a decline, falling 2.3% below the 2001 level, a decrease of 445 people.



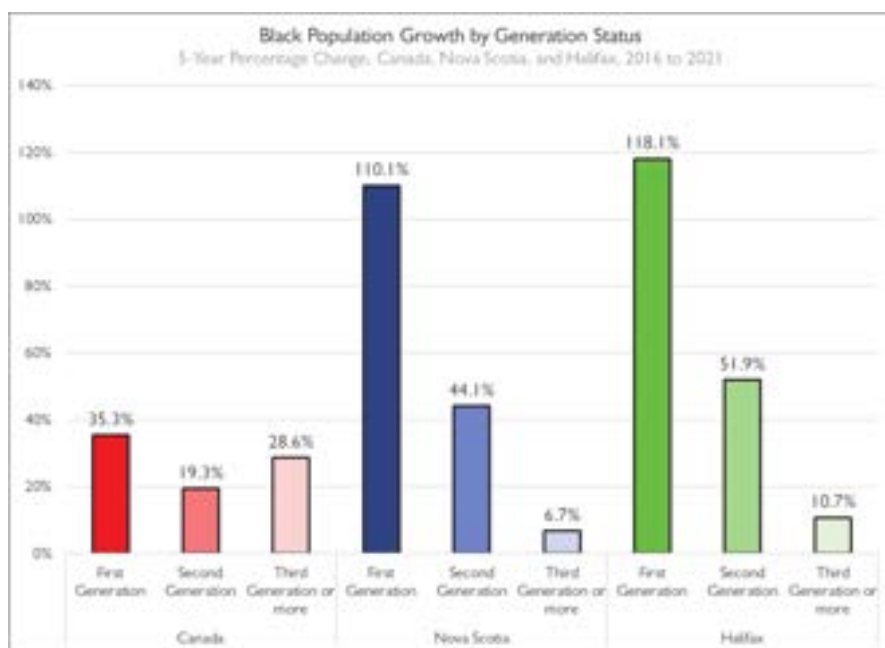
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

As the Black population grew from 2016 to 2021, the ratio of males to females has remained at essentially 50-50. Between 2016 and 2021 males and females both saw similar growth patterns across age ranges. The male and female groups both added the most people in the 20 to 44 years age range with 1,640 and 1,345 new people each. This is promising news for the economy in general when many employers report difficulty filling jobs, as it indicates an increase in the number of people in prime working age.

The Census recorded 250 more males and 130 more females in 2021 than in 2016 who were 65 years or older, whereas the population under the age of 10 years grew by 370 for males and 505 for females.

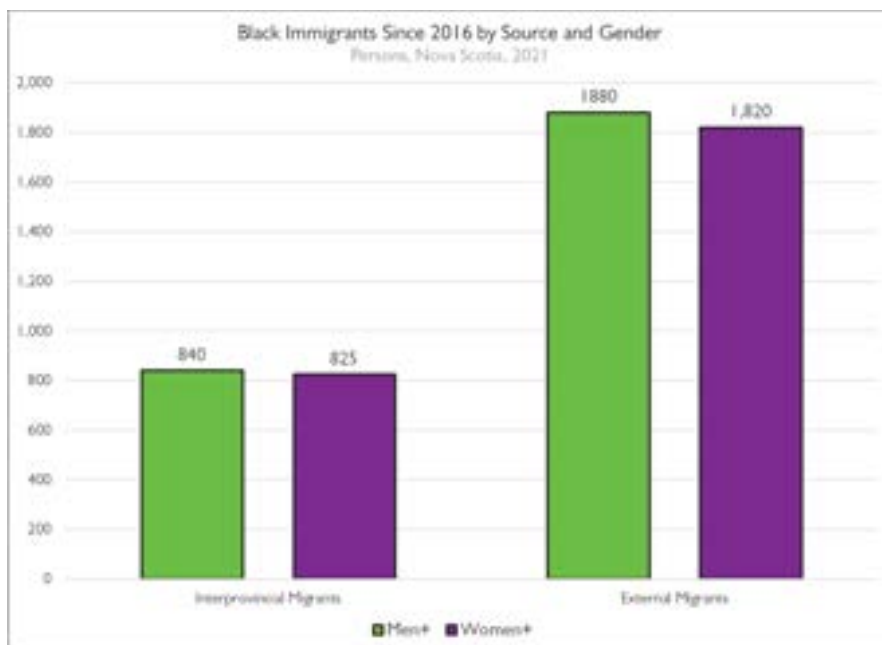


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

Statistics Canada uses the classification “generation status” to derive information on the diversity of Canada’s population and to study how the children of immigrants are integrated into Canadian society. “First generation” includes persons who were born outside Canada and mainly consists of people who are immigrants; “second generation” includes persons born in Canada but who had at least one parent born outside Canada; and “third generation” includes people who were born in Canada with both parents also born in Canada.

From 2016 to 2021, the largest growth by far occurred in the first generation (immigrant) Black population in Nova Scotia. Over that time frame the share of the Black population composed of first-generation Canadians grew from 17% to 28%, while the share of third generation+ Canadians among Nova Scotia’s Black population declined from 72% to 59%.





Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

From 2016 to 2021, 3,700 Black individuals moved to Nova Scotia from somewhere outside Canada (external migrants). This is twice the number who moved to Nova Scotia from another province (interprovincial migrants).

Among these migrants, both external and interprovincial, the split between men and women is very close to 50-50.

**Black Immigrants Since 2016 by Source Country**  
Persons, Nova Scotia, 2021

Country of Origin	Total	Men+	Women+
Nigeria	1,440	705	735
Other places of birth in Africa	450	255	200
Jamaica	310	160	150
Other places of birth in Americas	195	105	85
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	160	85	80
Sudan	150	105	45
United States of America	95	55	45
Ethiopia	95	60	45
United Kingdom	85	55	30
South Africa, Republic of	65	20	45
Côte d'Ivoire	40	15	25
Somalia	40	25	15
Eritrea	35	30	-
Cameroon	20	-	15
Ireland	15	10	10
Burundi	15	10	-
Egypt	15	10	-

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

Since 2016, Nigeria has been the country of origin for most Black immigrants at 1,440, representing 44.7% of the total.

“Other places of birth in Africa,” which represents places not specified, makes up 450 people (14.0%).

Jamaica comes in third place as the home country of 310 immigrants (9.6%).

KNOWING OUR NUMBERS

# Labour



Credit: Discover Halifax  
Photographer: Riley Smith

# Labour



Participation and outcomes in the labour force are important economic metrics for any community. This section explores participation, employment, and unemployment statistics for Black Nova Scotians, as well as data related to the occupations they hold and the industries in which they work.

It is helpful to first define a few relevant metrics.

The labour force is defined as the combination of those age 15 and older who are either employed or unemployed. The unemployed in turn are defined as those without a job but who are actively seeking work. Thus, retired people and full-time students, for example, are not counted in the unemployment figure or in the labour force.

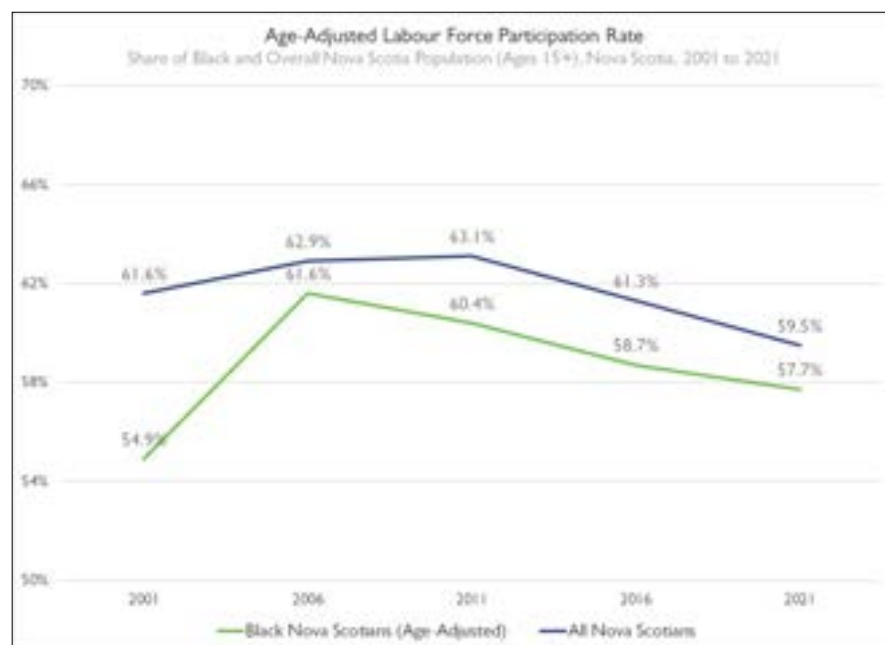
The labour force participation rate is calculated by dividing the population age 15 and over by the labour force. It answers the question: what share of the adult population is either working or looking for work?

When comparing the labour force participation rate across different population groups, it is important to take age into account. A group with a relatively high number of seniors, for example, will naturally have a lower labour force participation rate than another group that is composed largely of young adults in their 20s and 30s. To make comparisons across populations more meaningful, age adjustments<sup>1</sup>

can be made to the data. Because of differences in the age profiles of the Black Nova Scotian population and the overall Nova Scotian population, age adjustments have been made to the data here in calculating the labour force participation rate, the employment rate (the share of the population age 15 and over that is employed), and the unemployment rate (the share of the labour force that is unemployed).

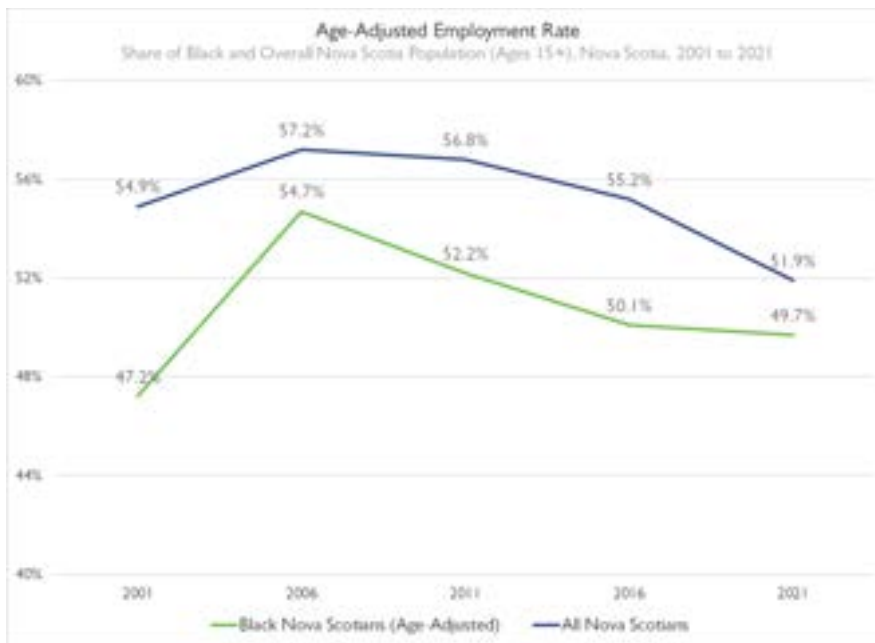
The labour force participation rate for Black Nova Scotians has consistently fallen below the rate for the overall population. After peaking in 2006 at

61.6%, the Black rate fell to 57.7% in 2021, a decline of 3.9 percentage points. It is important to note, however, that when the Census data were collected in May 2021, Nova Scotia was going through another wave of COVID-19 leading to widespread lockdowns. Labour data from the 2021 Census therefore should be interpreted with caution. The decline in the labour force participation rate, though, is not unique to the Black population. The overall Nova Scotian rate also fell 3.4 percentage points since 2006 as the population share of those in retirement age rose.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

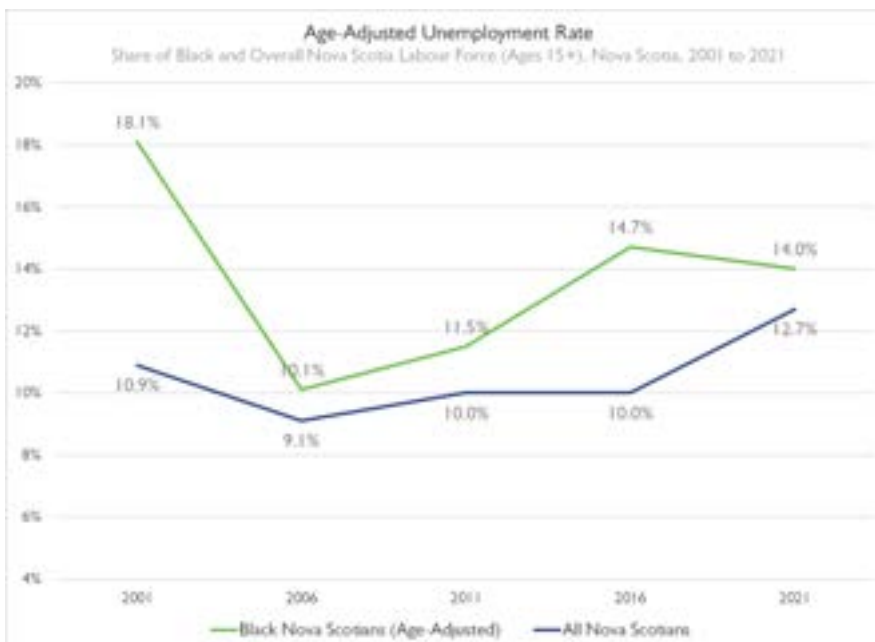
<sup>1</sup>Szafran, Robert. (2002). "Age-adjusted labor force participation rates," 1960-2045. *Monthly Labor Review*. 125. 25-38. 10.2307/41845407.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

With declining participation rates, it is not surprising to see that employment rates also have been falling for both the Black and overall Nova Scotian populations since 2006. The Black employment rate remains lower than the overall rate, but the gap between the two has never been smaller than recorded in 2021, with a difference of 2.2 percentage points. On the one hand, it is a massive improvement since 2001 when the gap was 7.7 percentage points, but on the other hand, the Black employment rate has fallen below the 50% level for the first time since 2001.

As with the labour force participation rate, the declining employment rate for the Black population is not a unique trend, with the rate for the overall population dropping to its lowest level ever at 51.9%. Again, caution must be applied in interpreting these employment data points gathered during a pandemic-related shutdown in May 2021.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

The Black unemployment rate also has consistently been worse than the unemployment rate for the overall population.

However, in 2021, while the overall unemployment rate increased by 2.7 percentage points from 2016, the Black unemployment rate actually decreased by 0.7 percentage points.

The 2021 gap between the Black and overall unemployment rates also narrowed to its lowest level, 1.3



Most Common Occupations Black Employed Persons, Nova Scotia, 2020		
Occupation - National Occupation Classification (NOC)	Black Employees	Share of Black Total
33102 Nurse aides, orderlies, and patient service associates	610	4.4%
64100 Retail salespersons and visual merchandisers	590	4.3%
65310 Light duty cleaners	545	3.9%
65201 Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations	505	3.6%
64409 Other customer and information services representatives	495	3.6%
65100 Cashiers	465	3.4%
42201 Social and community service workers	380	2.7%
75110 Construction trades helpers and labourers	275	2.0%
65102 Store shelf stockers, clerks, and order fillers	265	1.9%
75101 Material handlers	210	1.5%
Other Occupations	9,500	68.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

This table shows the top-ten occupations reported by Black Nova Scotians in the 2021 Census. It is no surprise that, just like for overall Nova Scotians, Black Nova Scotians mostly held occupations in the service sector. Across more than 500 occupations, six

of the top-ten occupations for Black Nova Scotians also are in the top ten for the overall population, and the remaining four all fall within the top 25. Another interesting exercise, though, is to calculate how many Black Nova Scotians would work in a particular

occupation if the prevalence rate of that occupation was the same as for the overall population. For example, 2.1% of the general population are nurses. Applying this rate to the Black Nova Scotian population we would expect to see 293 Black nurses. In fact, however, there were only 190, a “deficit” of 103. In contrast, Black Nova Scotians are overrepresented in the (presumably lower paying) occupation of nurse aides by 294 positions.

Other occupations overrepresented by Black Nova Scotians include generally lower-paying positions like cleaners, customer service representatives, and food counter attendants, while underrepresentation occurs in more senior positions such as retail and wholesale managers and secure unionized occupations like elementary school teachers.

Most Common Industries Black Employed Persons, Nova Scotia, 2020		
Industry - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	Black Employees	Share of Black Total
6231-6239 Nursing and residential care facilities	655	5.7%
7225 Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places	645	5.6%
6111 Elementary and secondary schools	625	5.4%
6221-6223 Hospitals	620	5.4%
4451 Grocery stores	425	3.7%
6113 Universities	425	3.7%
9112-9119 Other federal government public administration	405	3.5%
9121-9129 Provincial and territorial public administration	375	3.2%
5617 Services to buildings and dwellings	300	2.6%
6241 Individual and family services	285	2.5%
Other Industries	6,825	58.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

Turning to industries rather than occupations, the largest numbers of Black employees are also found in the services industries.

For instance, the most common occupation is “Nurse aides, orderlies, and patient service associates,” and the industry with the highest number of Black employees is “Nursing and residential care facilities.”

KNOWING OUR NUMBERS

# Income



# Income



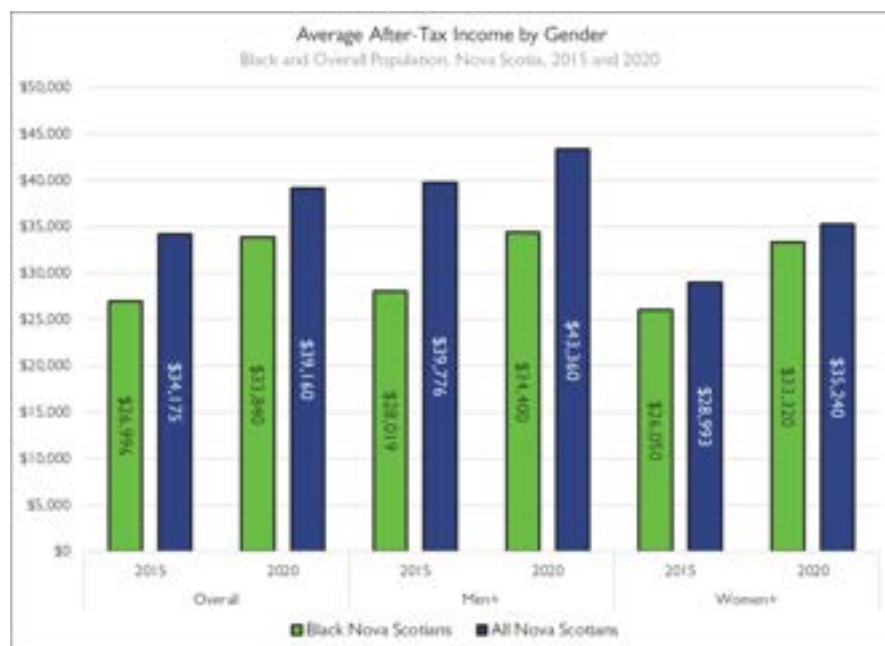
The previous section examined trends, comparisons, and gaps in labour market outcomes. This section goes a step deeper by delving into income statistics.

The most recent income data discussed here are for the year 2020 as reported in the 2021 Census. It is important to keep in mind the anomalous effects that income assistance programs like the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) may have had on average income in 2020.

Average after-tax income for Black Nova Scotians increased by \$6,844 between 2015 and 2020, a larger increase than the average growth of \$4,985 for Nova Scotians overall. However, the average figure for the Black population remains \$5,320 lower than the Nova Scotian average.

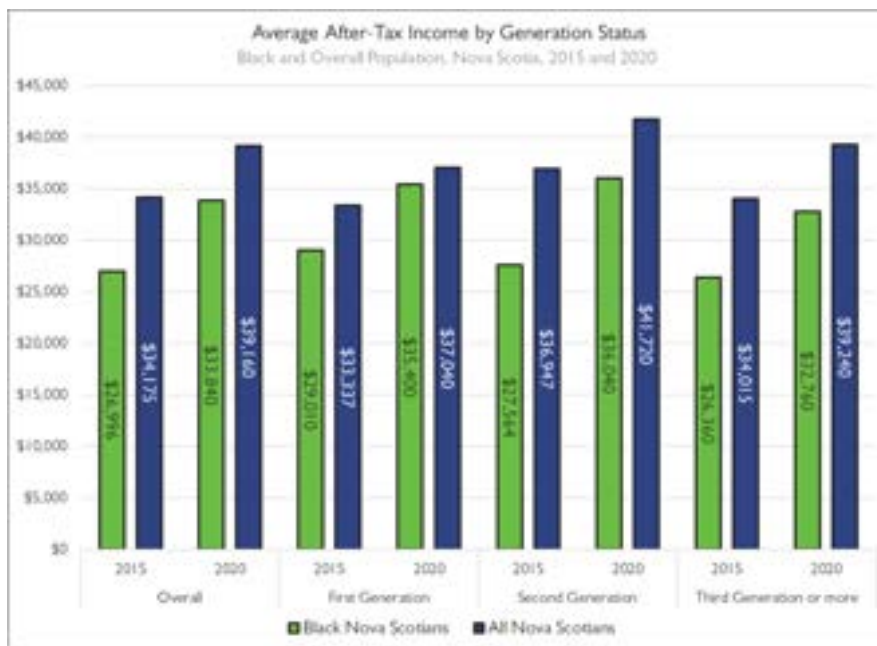
Breaking these figures down by gender<sup>2</sup>, the average after-tax income for Black men and Black women increased by \$6,381 and \$7,270, respectively, over 2015, but remained lower than

the overall averages in Nova Scotia. In 2020, the gap in average after-tax income between Black women and women in the overall population was \$1,920, while the average for Black men was \$8,960 below men in the overall provincial population.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

<sup>2</sup>Here the term “men” refers to the Statistics Canada category “men+” which includes men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons. Similarly, the term “women” here refers to the Statistics Canada category “women+” which includes women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

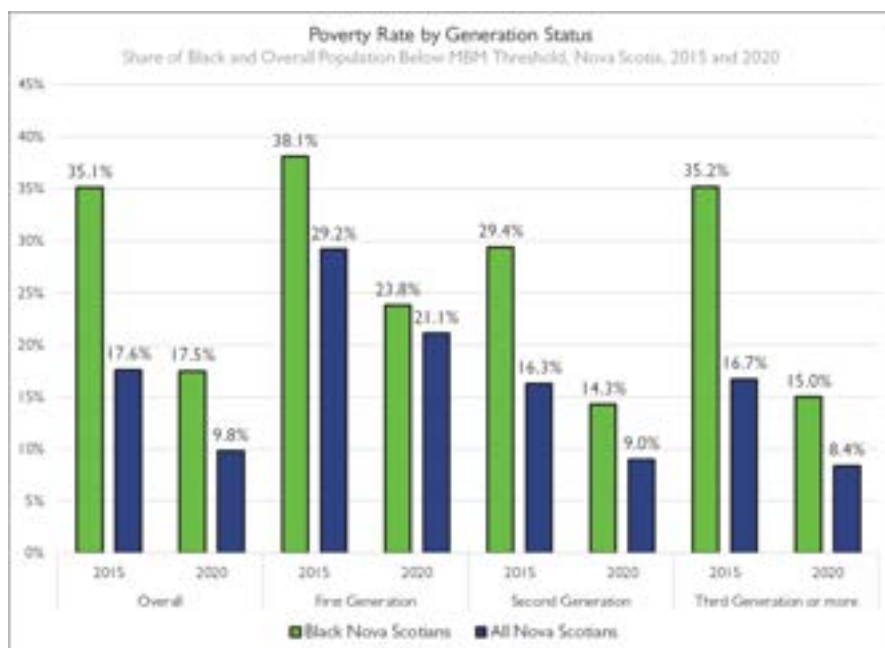
When generational breakouts are calculated, some interesting findings appear.

Within the Black population, those who were third generation or more in Canada, the proxy for the historic African Nova Scotian community, had the lowest average income in 2020 (\$32,760) across the three generational groups. The highest average income belonged to second generation Black Nova Scotians at \$36,040, followed

closely by the first-generation group at \$35,400. In 2015, first generation Black Nova Scotians had the highest average income across the three groups.

Comparing each Black generational group to its counterpart in the overall population, the smallest gap was between the first-generation groups where the average income for the Black population was \$1,640. The largest gap was for the third-generation group at \$6,480.





Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

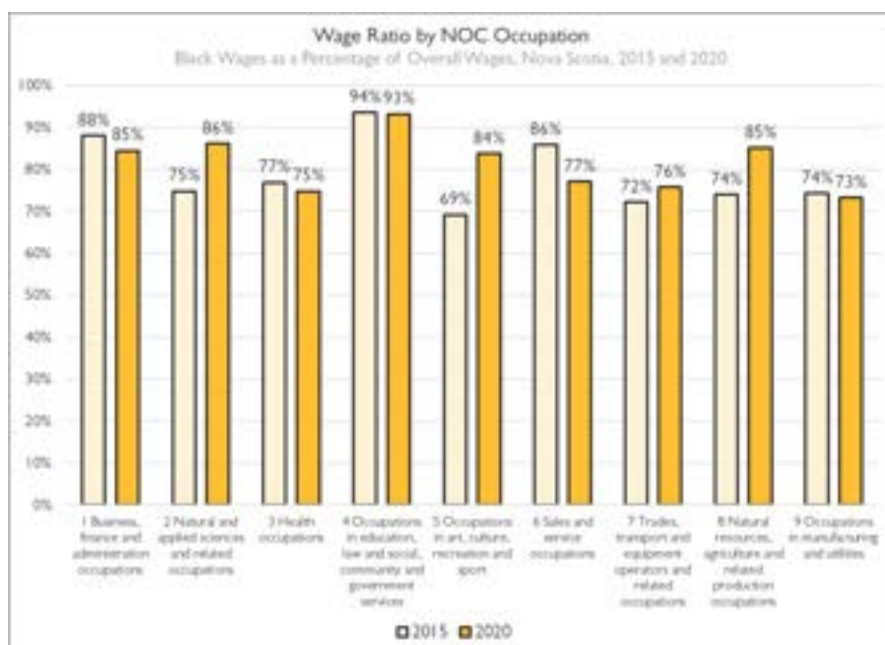
Between 2015 and 2020 there was a sharp drop in the poverty rate for both the Black Nova Scotian population and the overall population. Note again, though, that 2020 statistics were impacted by substantial income support provided by governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Calculated using the Market Basket Measure (MBM<sup>3</sup>), the official measure of poverty in Canada, the Black poverty rate in Nova Scotia was basically halved from 35.1% in 2015 to 17.5% in 2020.

Similar declines were observed across Black generation groups. The second-generation Black population, who had the highest average after-tax income also had the lowest poverty rate at 14.3%. The third-generation Black population saw the largest decline in poverty rates, decreasing by 20.2 percentage points.

Black poverty rates, however, remain higher at every generation compared to overall Nova Scotians.

<sup>3</sup>The Market Basket Measure (MBM) refers to Canada's official measure of poverty based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living developed by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). The MBM thresholds represent the costs of specified qualities and quantities of food, clothing, shelter, transportation and other necessities for a reference family of two adults and two children. The square root of economic family size is the equivalence scale used to adjust the MBM thresholds for other family sizes. This adjustment for different family sizes reflects the fact that an economic family's needs increase, but at a decreasing rate, as the number of members increases.



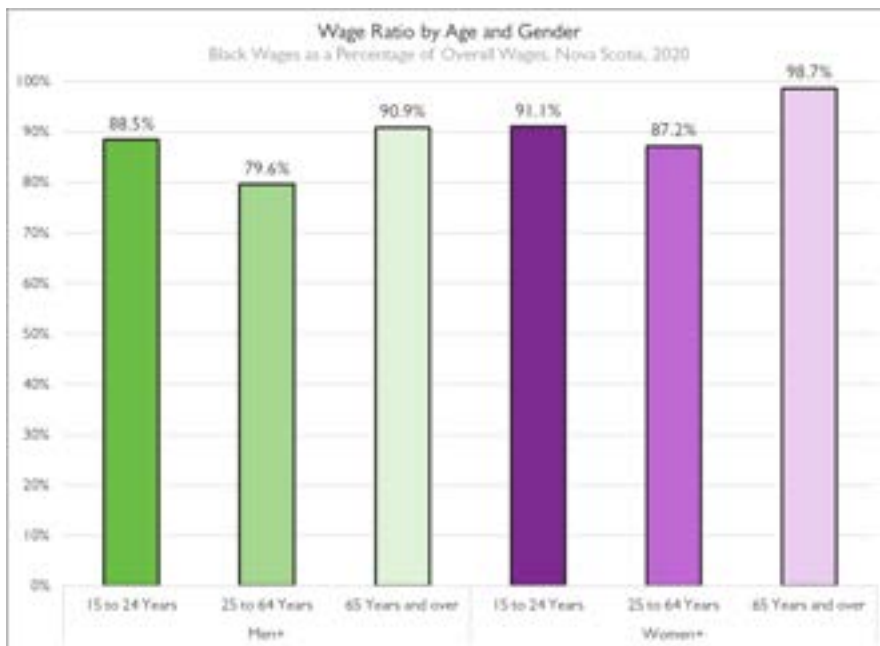
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

Another interesting comparison is the wage ratio between Black Nova Scotians and the overall Nova Scotian population across different types of occupations. Beyond repeating the general warning about interpreting 2020 income data cautiously given the impacts of the pandemic, two additional caveats must be noted. First, these data do not account for differences in factors like age, professional experience, and education. Second, these comparisons are made across very broad occupational categories and do not account for the possibility that, say, the “Health occupations” category for one comparator group contains many (highly paid) brain surgeons and few (less well paid) orderlies, while the other comparator group contains many orderlies and few brain surgeons.

Across all occupational groups, in both 2015 and 2020, the average Black Nova Scotian worker earned less than the overall average for all Nova Scotians

in that occupation. The smallest gap in 2020 was in the education, law, and social, community, and government services group (NOC-4) at 93.2%. Put another way, for every dollar earned by the average worker in this occupational group across the overall Nova Scotian population, the average Black Nova Scotian worker earned 93.2 cents. The largest difference was for those in occupations in manufacturing and utilities (NOC-9), where a Black worker made 73.3 cents for every dollar an average Nova Scotian made.

The ratio of Black Nova Scotian wages to overall Nova Scotian wages improved in four occupational categories from 2015 to 2020, with the largest increase at 14.6 percentage points in art, culture, recreation, and sport occupations. The ratio fell in five occupational categories with the biggest drop coming in sales and service occupations at 8.8 percentage points.



Similar to the previous chart that examines wage differences across occupational categories, this one explores wage ratios by gender and age.

Here again employment income is lower for Black Nova Scotian individuals across all age and gender group categories. The largest difference here is seen between men aged 25 to 64 years, where the average Black worker in 2020 made just under 80 cents for every dollar earned by an average Nova Scotian. The smallest gap is seen for women 65 years and over.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)



KNOWING OUR NUMBERS

# Education



Credit: East Preston Empowerment Academy



# Education



Education is critical to employment and income outcomes. This section examines educational attainment by Black Nova Scotian adults, educational performance by Black Nova Scotian students, and comparative income and employment outcomes for Black Nova Scotians and the overall Nova Scotian population when controlling for education levels.

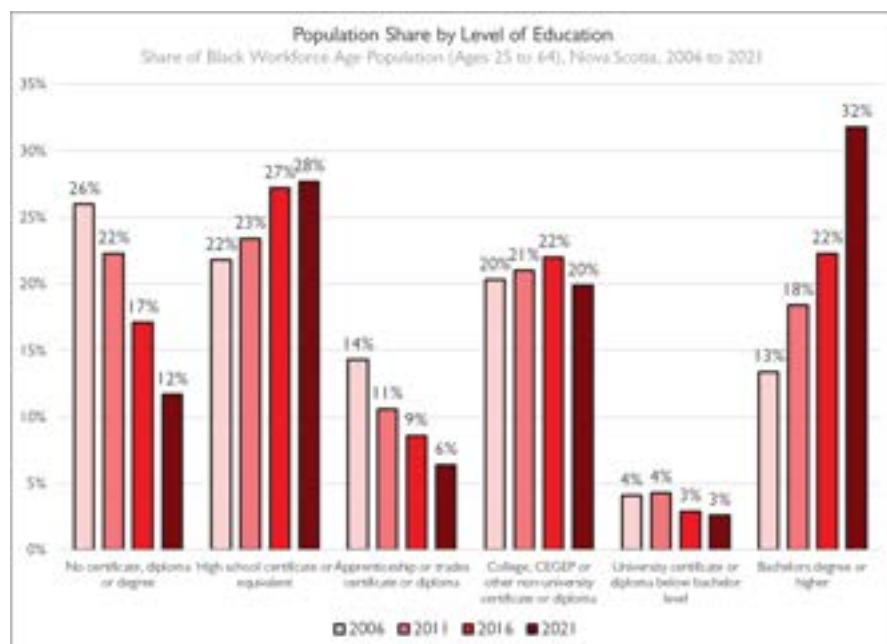
The share of Black Nova Scotian adults (ages 25 to 64) with some form of education credential has increased steadily over the last four Census cycles, increasing to 88.3% in 2021 from 74.0% in 2006.

Further positive news comes in the 31.8% of Black Nova Scotian adults (ages 25 to 64) with a bachelor's degree or higher in 2021, an increase of 18.4 percentage points over 2006.

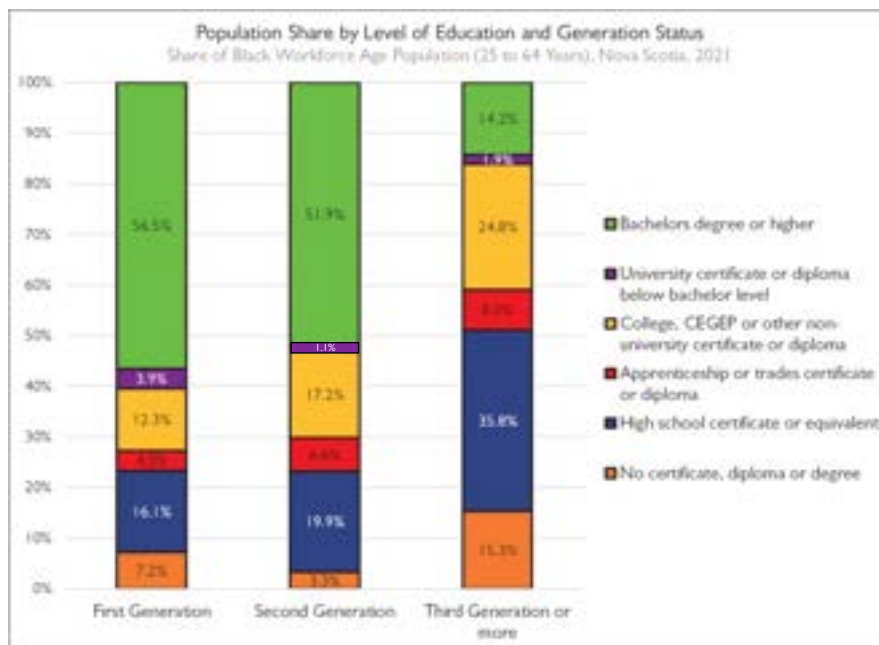
The share of Black Nova Scotian adults (ages 25 to 64) with an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma continued to drop, reaching 6.4% in 2021.

Although the overall trend is similar for the overall Nova Scotian population, the changes in shares have been more pronounced for the Black population.

For instance, the share of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased for both the Black and the overall Nova Scotian population. However, the share has increased by 9.5 percentage points for Black adults between 2016 and 2021, but by only 3.0 percentage points for adults across the province. Similarly, while the share of adults with no education has declined by 5.4 percentage points for the Black population, the decline was only 2.2 percentage points for adults in the overall population.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

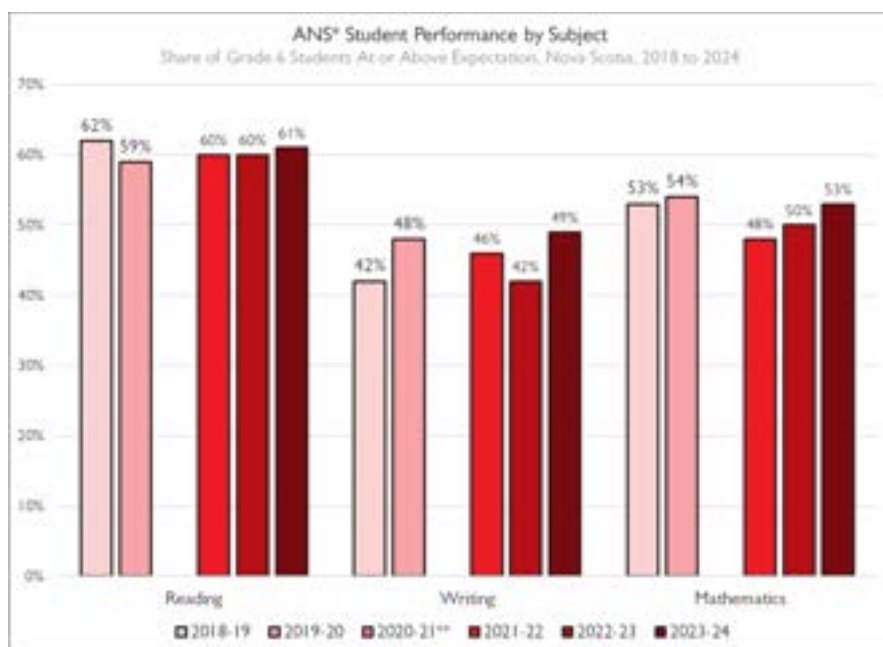


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

Educational attainment statistics are quite different for Black Nova Scotian adults (ages 25 to 64) across generational categories. At 15.3% and 35.8%, the shares with no certificate, diploma, or degree and with a high school certificate only, respectively, are markedly higher for third generation Black Nova Scotians, the proxy for the historic African Nova Scotian population. Similarly, the third-generation group has a far smaller share with a bachelor's degree or higher at 14.2%, whereas the share is over

50% for both the first- and second-generation groups. The high shares of first- and second-generation Black populations with a university degree may reflect the arrival of highly educated Black immigrants in recent years.

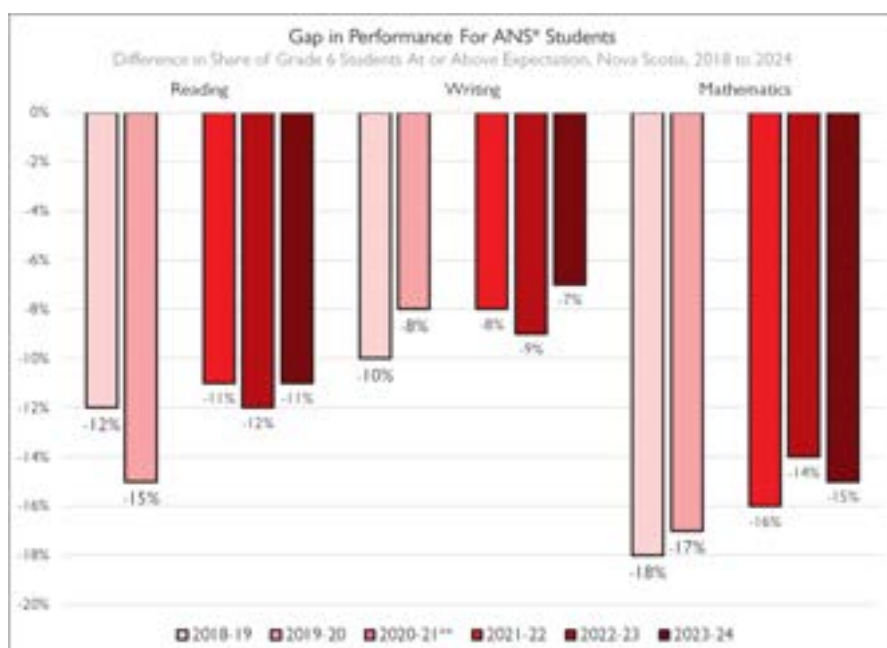
Third generation Black Nova Scotian adults (ages 25 to 64) also have higher population shares with college and trades certificates as compared to similar first- and second-generation populations.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various) \*Students self-identified as having “African heritage” or being of “African descent.” \*\*No assessments were conducted in the academic year 2020-21 due to COVID-19. Source: Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS), Nova Scotia Disaggregated Assessment Results

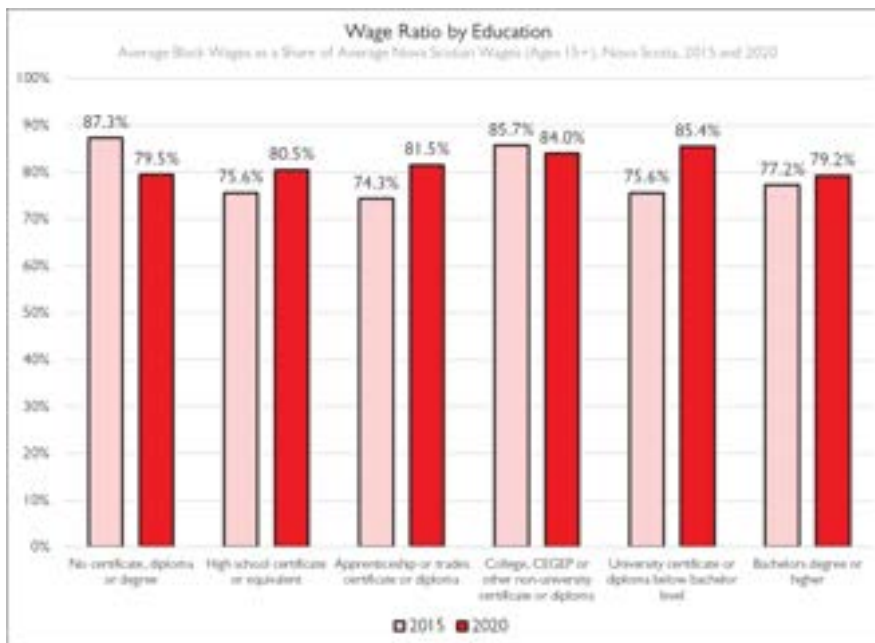
Another key education indicator is how well current students are faring in the P-12 system. The provincial government publishes annual results for grade six students, including breakouts for students who self-identified in 2022-23 or 2023-24 as having “African heritage” or who self-identified as being of “African descent” in prior years. (No testing occurred in 2020-21 due to the pandemic.)

Only 61% of African Nova Scotian grade six students were assessed as being at or above expectations in reading, with even lower figures for writing (49%) and mathematics (53%). Across the five years of data there is no discernible trend for any of these subjects.



\*Students self-identified as having “African heritage” or being of “African descent.” \*\*No assessments were conducted in the academic year 2020-21 due to COVID-19. Source: Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS), Nova Scotia Disaggregated Assessment Results

These data also can be presented as gaps in comparison to results for the grade six students overall in the province. The gap in the share of students at or above expectation between ANS students and the overall Nova Scotian student population has narrowed in some subjects and widened in others. Between 2022-23 and 2023-24, the gaps widened in mathematics by one percentage point each but narrowed in reading and writing by one and two percentage points, respectively. The largest gap across all subjects remained in mathematics where the share of students at or above expectation is 15 percentage points lower for ANS students compared to Nova Scotia students overall. However, this gap appears to be gradually narrowing over time.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

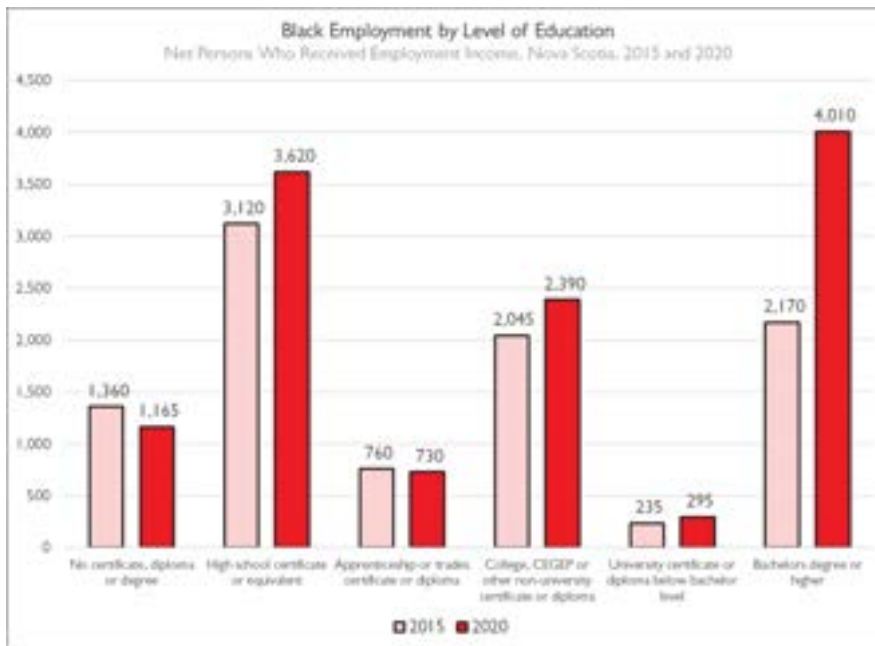
Similar to the earlier wage ratio comparisons by occupation, age, and gender, the chart above compares wages earned by the average Black Nova Scotian and the average Nova Scotian overall for different levels of educational attainment. Note that these comparisons do not account for other variables like age and work experience, nor do they differentiate among degrees (e.g., a PhD in computer science versus an MA in political science versus a general BA) or trades (e.g., electrician versus hairdresser).

In 2020, the Black population made less than the average Nova Scotian at

every educational attainment level. The largest difference was seen for those at the highest education level, where the average Black Nova Scotian with a bachelor's degree or higher made 79.2 cents for every dollar the average Nova Scotian made.

The gap between the Black and overall populations closed between 2015 and 2020 in four of the six educational categories and was only slightly larger in one. There was a substantial widening of the gap, however, in the sixth category, those with no certificate, diploma, or degree.



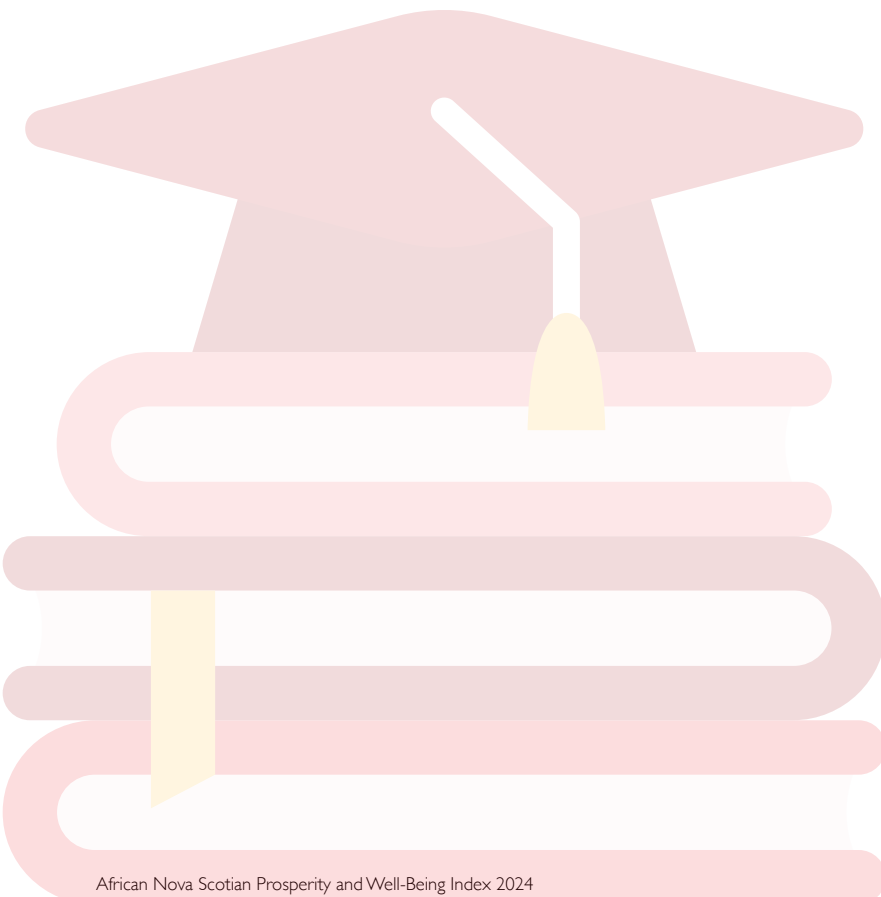


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (Various)

The number of Black Nova Scotians receiving employment income in 2021 as measured by the Census was up by approximately 2,530 (+26%) over 2016. Additionally, it is important to remember that these data points reflect employment status reported in May 2021 when Nova Scotia was in the midst of a COVID-19 lockdown.

This chart, which breaks out employment by level of education, shows that declines occurred in positions filled by people with lower levels of education, which would include those working in public-facing industries temporarily shut down by COVID-19 restrictions such as food, accommodations, and retail workers.

A very positive sign is the 85% increase in the number of Black Nova Scotian workers with a bachelor's degree or higher.



KNOWING OUR NUMBERS

# Housing



# Housing



This section focuses on the status of Black Nova Scotians regarding the concept of core housing need and its subcomponents. Information on the split between homeowners and renters in the Black Nova Scotian population is provided as well.

## As defined by Statistics Canada:

*“Core housing need refers to whether a private household’s housing falls below at least one of the indicator thresholds for housing adequacy, affordability, or suitability, and would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (attains all three housing indicator thresholds).”<sup>3</sup>*

## The subcomponents of core housing need are defined as follows:

**Affordability:** Affordable housing costs less than 30% of before-tax income. For renters, shelter costs include, as applicable, rent and payments for electricity, fuel, water, and other municipal services.

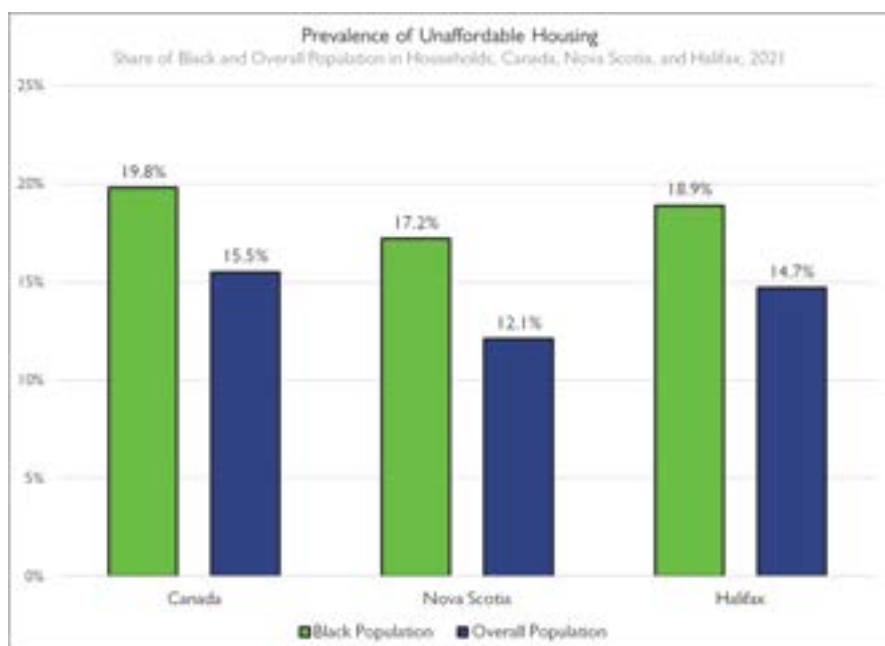
**Adequacy:** Adequate housing does not require any major repairs, according to residents. Major repairs include those to defective plumbing or electrical wiring, or structural repairs to walls, floors, or ceilings.

**Suitability:** Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households,

according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS)<sup>5</sup> requirements.

The next series of charts examines each of these subcomponents and then the prevalence of core housing need.

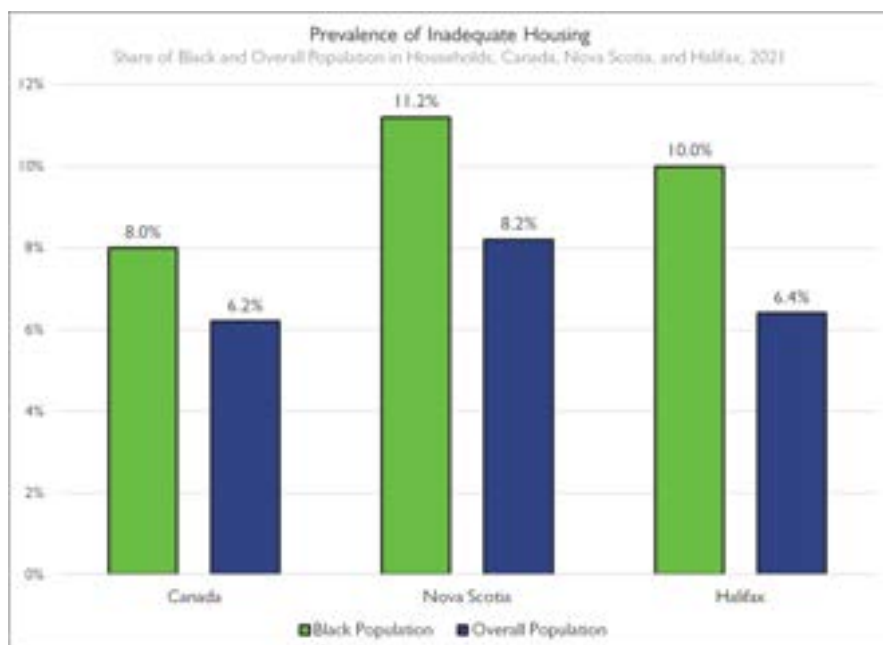
In 2021, 17.2% of Black Nova Scotians lived in unaffordable housing, meaning they spent 30% or more of their income on shelter costs. This share is 5.1 percentage points higher than the figure for the overall Nova Scotian population. The share of the Black population living in unaffordable housing is higher in Halifax at 18.9%, and even higher for Canada as a whole at 19.8%.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

<sup>3</sup>Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022056-eng.htm>

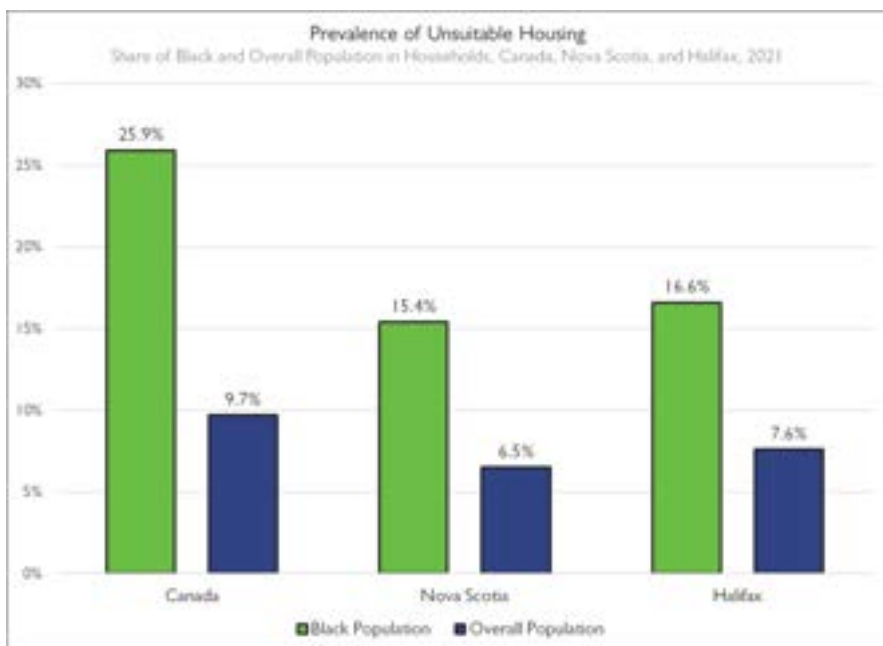
<sup>4</sup>Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/professionals/industry-innovation-and-leadership/industry-expertise/affordable-housing/provincial-territorial-agreements/investment-in-affordable-housing/national-occupancy-standard>



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

Turning to housing inadequacy, meaning that the home is in need of major repairs, we see that the share for the Black Nova Scotian population at 11.2% is three percentage points higher than the share for the overall Nova Scotian population.

The share of Black Nova Scotians living in inadequate housing in Halifax is lower at 10.0% and lower still across Canada as a whole at 8.0%.

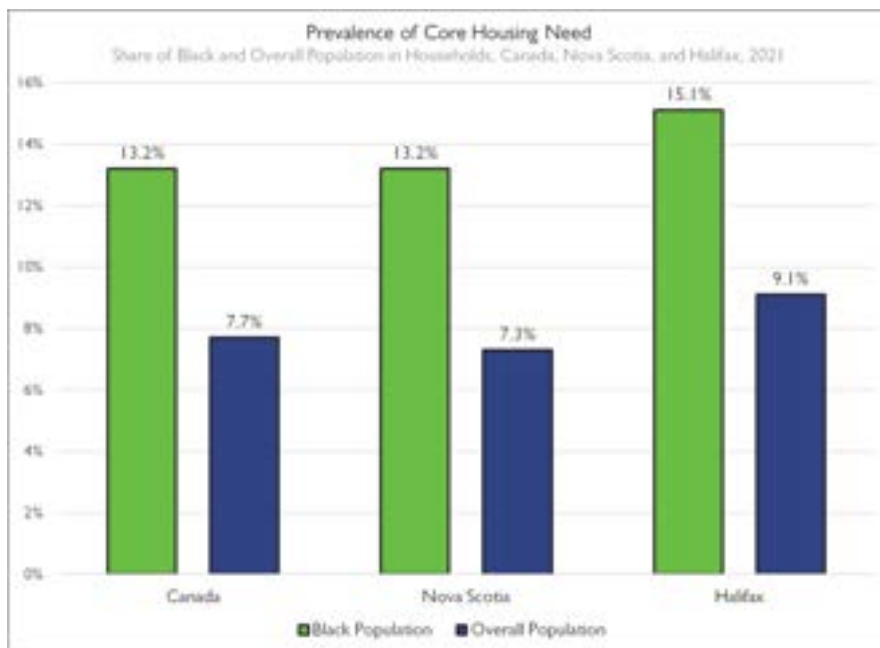


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

In Nova Scotia, in Halifax, and across Canada, the share of the Black population living in unsuitable housing – homes too small for the size of their family – is more than double the share for the overall population.

The 16.6% share for Halifax is slightly larger than the 15.4% share across Nova Scotia. Looking at the country as a whole, more than one-quarter of the Black population reported living in unsuitable housing in 2021.

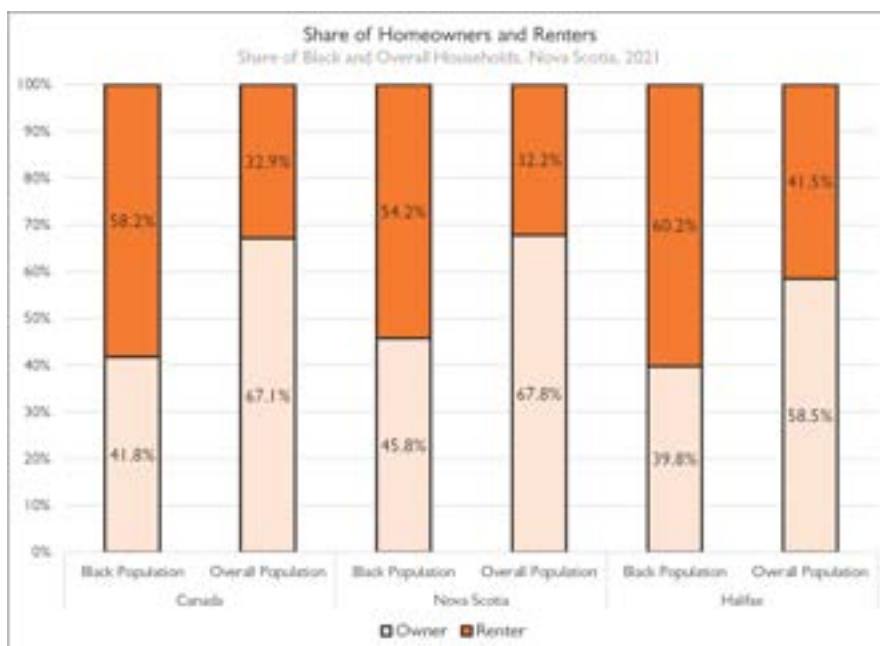




Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

In 2021, 13.2% of Black Nova Scotians lived in core housing need, the same share as for Black Canadians overall. In Halifax the figure was higher at 15.1%.

Across all three geographies, the share of the Black population living in core housing need was substantially higher than the share for the overall population.



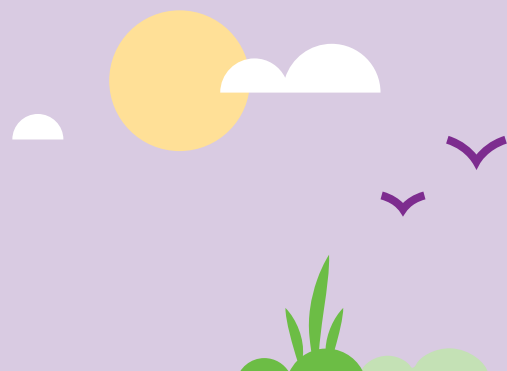
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (2021)

Home ownership is an important metric as it can improve access to credit, it provides an effective means to accumulate wealth and transfer it to future generations, and it may be associated with reduced housing precarity.

While more than two-thirds of Nova Scotian households overall own their homes, less than half (45.8%) of Black households in Nova Scotia are homeowners. The shares for Black home ownership are even lower across Canada as a whole (41.8%) and in Halifax (39.8%) and in both cases are well below the home ownership share for the overall population.

KNOWING OUR NUMBERS

# Well-being



# Well-Being



In addition to standard demographic and economic metrics for population, employment, and income, it is useful to assess other measures of satisfaction and quality of life.

In 2019, Engage Nova Scotia conducted its Quality-of-Life Survey. This survey had over 12,000 respondents from across Nova Scotia on a 230-question survey. It represents the largest data set of its kind in Canada. Engage Nova Scotia has graciously allowed their results to be incorporated here.

The survey contained several self-identification questions and allowed respondents to identify themselves as belonging to the African Nova Scotian community. Data also can be broken out between Halifax Regional

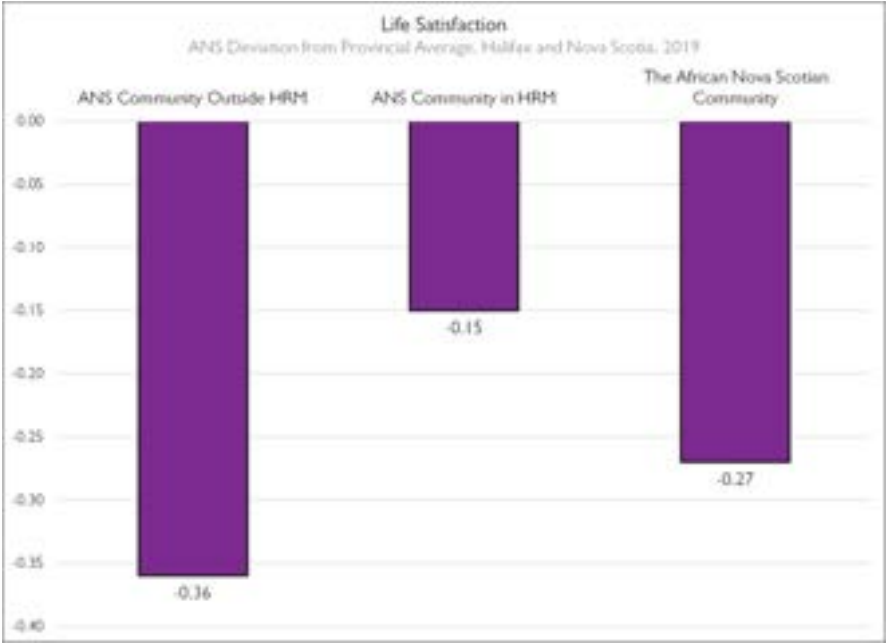
Municipality (HRM) and the rest of Nova Scotia.

The values in this section and its charts represent the variation, higher or lower, in the average answer of the ANS community to the provincial average. A negative score represents a more concerning finding for the experiences of the ANS community than for the province overall. Intuitively, a higher score represents better experiences, whether that be more enjoyment, less suffering, fewer barriers, or greater happiness, while a lower score represents worse typical experience.

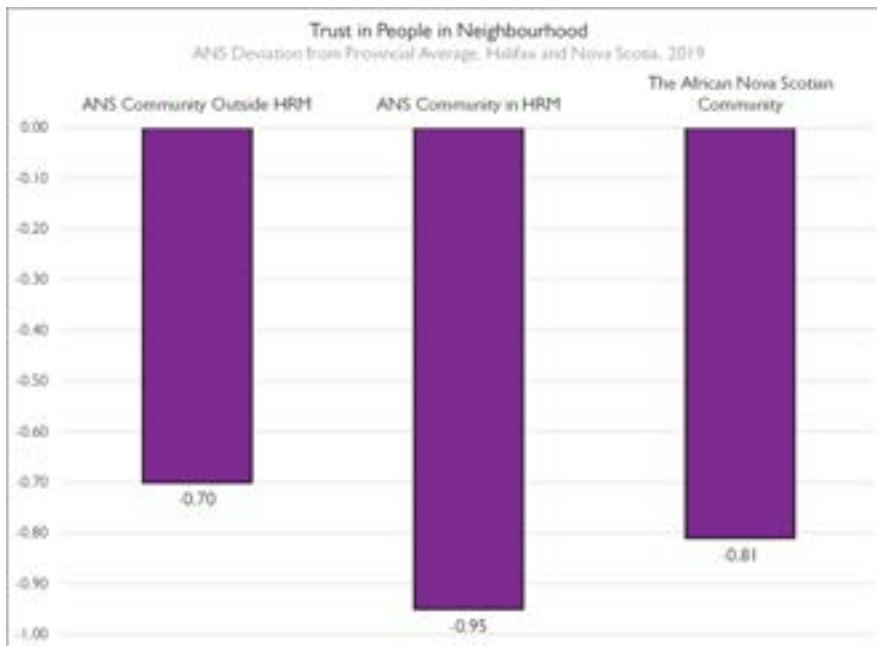
However, specific numbers represent the difference in the distribution of responses. For example, a score of -1.00 indicates that the ANS community

responded at roughly one standard deviation below the province as a whole.

One key question in Engage Nova Scotia's survey asked respondents, "how satisfied are you with your life in general?" Compared to those outside the community, those in the ANS community are approximately 8% less likely to report being satisfied with life. Looking at these scores for the ANS community in different parts of the province, the gap in reported life satisfaction between the ANS community and the overall population was larger outside of HRM than within HRM. That is, the ANS community within HRM generally reported better experiences than those community members in the rest of the province.



Survey Wording: "How satisfied are you with your life in general?"  
Source: Engage Nova Scotia, Quality of Life Survey (2019)

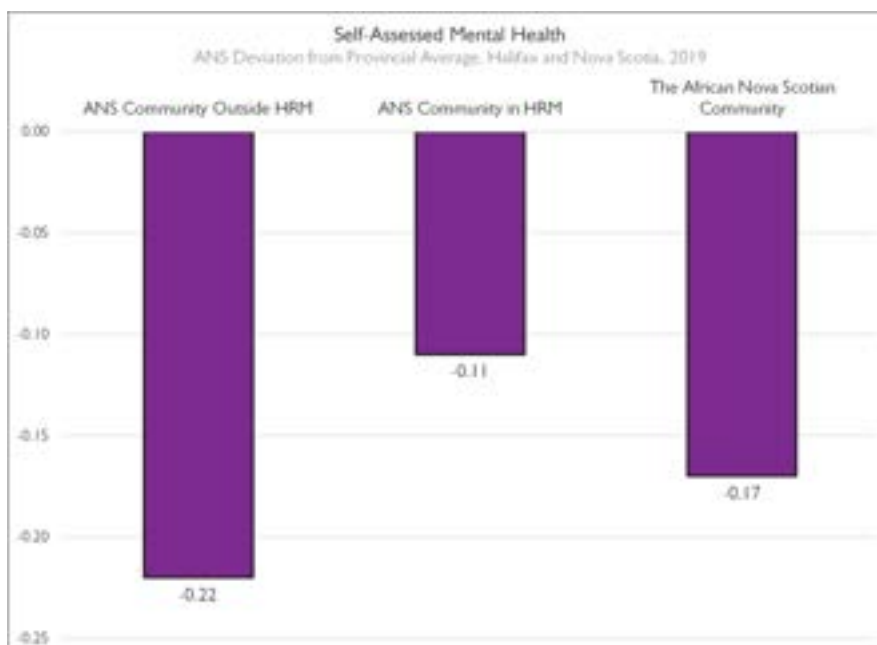


Another important quality of life factor is the degree to which people feel they can trust others.

Respondents from the ANS community reported lower levels of trust in others than did the overall provincial population.

The gap in trust levels was larger in HRM than outside HRM.

Survey Wording: "How much do you trust ... people in your neighbourhood?"  
Source: Engage Nova Scotia, Quality of Life Survey (2019)

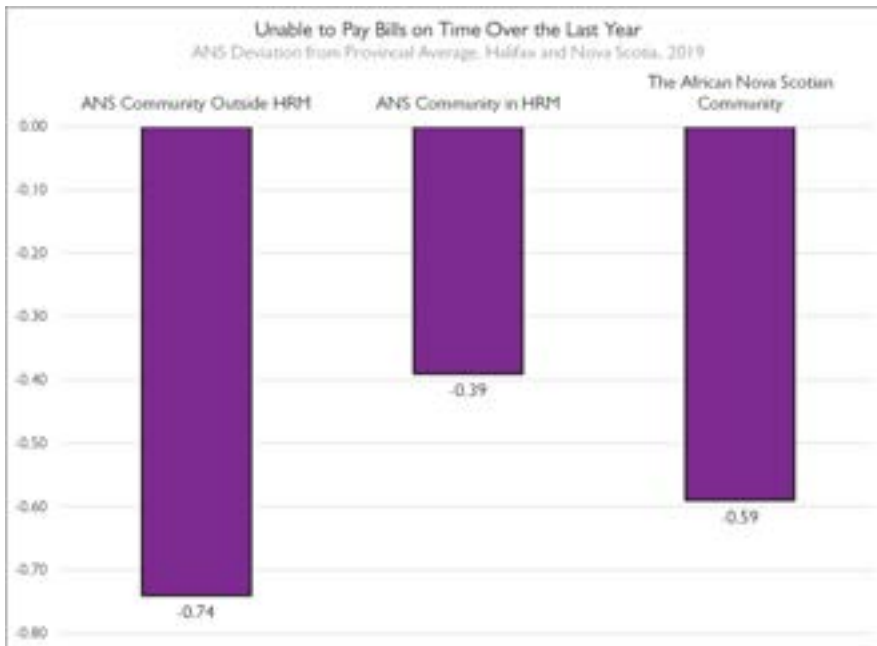


Asked to self-assess their mental health, respondents from the ANS community rated their mental health lower than the provincial average.

The deviation from the average was greater in the ANS community outside HRM than it was in the community within HRM.

Survey Wording: "In general, would you say your mental health is..." [Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent]  
Source: Engage Nova Scotia, Quality of Life Survey (2019)





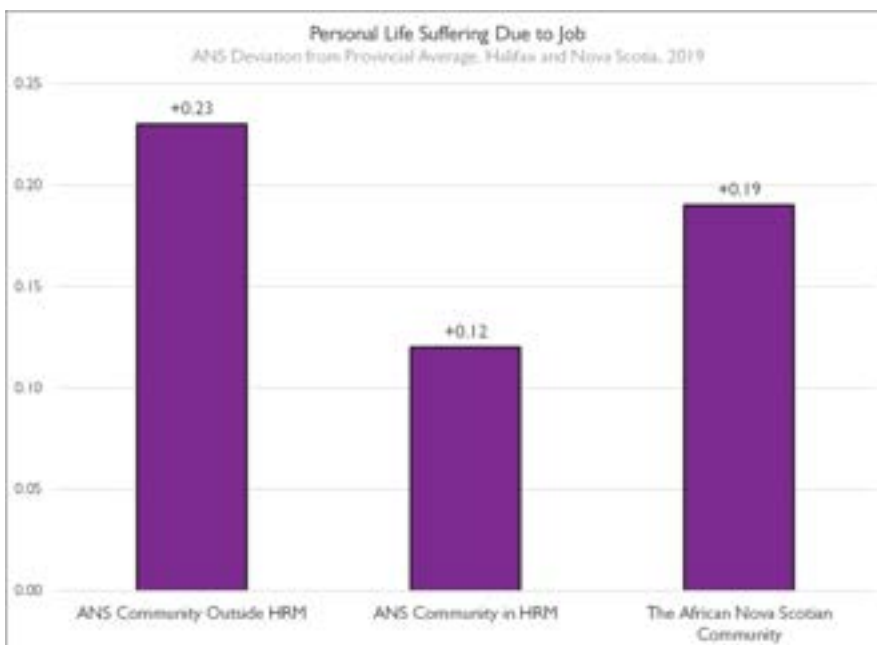
Survey Wording: “How often in past year: I could not pay my bills on time (e.g., water, power, phone, credit card)”

Source: Engage Nova Scotia, Quality of Life Survey (2019)

Financial pressures can be significant stressors that negatively impact quality of life.

Survey respondents were asked to rate their ability to pay their bills (e.g., water, power, phone, and credit cards) over the previous year.

Respondents from the ANS community had scores markedly lower than the overall population, especially in areas outside HRM.



Survey Wording: “My personal life suffers because of work”

Source: Engage Nova Scotia, Quality of Life Survey (2019)

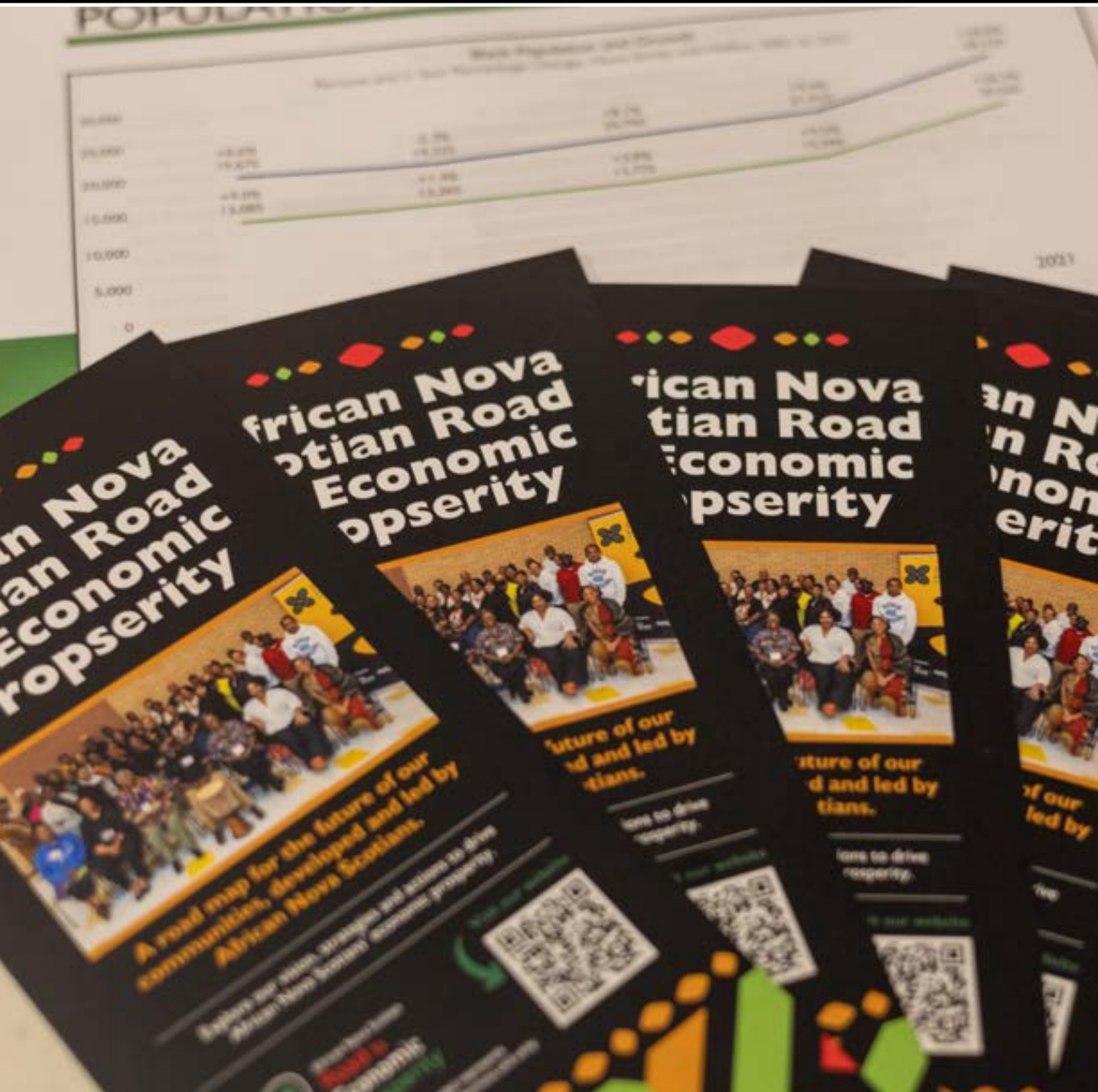
Finally, African Nova Scotian respondents reported better ratings than the overall population when asked to rate the degree to which their personal lives suffered because of work.

For this metric a higher, more positive rating represents a community or individual that is suffering less.

ANS respondents outside HRM reported a better rating than did ANS respondents within HRM.

KNOWING OUR NUMBERS

# Community Insights & Recommendations



# Improving African Nova Scotian Inclusion, Equity and Prosperity



In 2015-2024, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the International Decade for People of African Descent, aiming to eradicate anti-Black racism and social injustices and support the economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights of people of African descent. In Canada, the decade was officially recognized in 2018, coinciding with the launch of Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent, titled Count us In. This period exposed long standing economic disparities and prompted numerous initiatives in African Nova Scotian communities, notably the African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition, which the Road to Economic Prosperity acknowledges as a partner in this work.



During the decade, Nova Scotians participated in two Canada-wide censuses, in 2016 and 2021. Over this period, discourse within Black communities intensified on the need to collect and disseminate data on communities of African descent and set markers for progress. The African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index has been developed in response to these discussions.

We have witnessed marked improvements in key areas since the beginning of the decade. We believe that strategic investments in Black communities can lead to improved conditions and thriving populations, impacting our province and nation positively. Recognizing the importance of action and accountability, the African Nova Scotian community has developed recommendations to improve data on the ANS community and social and economic outcomes.

We call upon our partners in government and the community to review these recommendations and work together to make progress

toward implementation before the next census in 2026. Additionally, we recommend refining data collection methods to improve the Index over time. With the decade officially extended in Canada to 2028, there is recognition that much more needs

to be done, and we envision these recommendations as catalysts for change and progress. As we continue this work, we are excited to be part of a global movement for the advancement of people of African Descent everywhere.





# Community Insights and Recommendations



The recommendations included in the 2024 ANS Index were developed through community consultation at the ANS Index Community Symposium held in April 2024 at the Black Cultural Centre in Cherry Brook.

Directed primarily to municipal and provincial governments in Nova Scotia, public institutions and the ANS community, these recommendations aim to identify priority actions that will address gaps and improve collaboration between government and community in developing and implementing solutions.



## Data

The Road to Economic Prosperity recommends exploring and incorporating additional data sources to enhance the quality and depth of our data analytics and decision-making processes. By broadening our data sources, we can gain new insights, improve the accuracy of our analyses, and make more informed strategic decisions.

- 1. Universities and Community Groups:** Consider joint collaborations with universities and community groups to access relevant sector information.
- 2. Government and Public Data:** Explore public datasets and existing research for valuable information on demographics and social and economic indicators. Build data-availability in critical areas such as justice and health, in collaboration with the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute (ANSJI) and Health Association of African Canadians (HAAC).
- 3. Participatory Research:** Engage the ANS Community in participatory research processes to gather information while building trust. Support a province-wide campaign to increase African Nova Scotian participation in the Census and other data studies.
- 4. Collaboration with Statistics Canada:** Ensure data contains specific subsets for African Nova Scotians and people of African descent from the Caribbean and African countries.



# Education

5. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Facilitate annual meetings between all community groups, institutions, and government entities responsible for the progress of Black learners. Engage the African Canadian Services Division (ACSD) within the Department of Education to lead.
6. **Develop a Community Led Education Roundtable** that informs the community of changes, challenges, and opportunities in the education system, particularly for Black learners. Engage the Black Educators Association to lead.
7. **Review Existing Reports** related to the progress of Black learners and the education system, i.e., the BLAC report (1994) and Reality Check (2009). Coordinate with the ACSD and Black Educators Association (BEA) to address challenges and implementation.



# Income and Employment

8. **Reinstate Black Employment Partnership Committees/Black Workgroups<sup>6</sup>** to ensure employment issues in each Black community are identified from a local perspective, and training, procurement, and entrepreneurship initiatives are informed by and delivered in collaboration with community.
9. **Address Salary Wage Gaps:** Investigate and address salary wage gaps identified in the Index. Engage employers, government and community representatives and partners to develop and deliver solutions that will decrease wage gaps for African Nova Scotians.



# Housing and Land

10. **Support Black Housing Initiatives:** Support the work of the Black Housing Council and support the implementation of The Black Housing Strategy (2024) for African Nova Scotians. Ensure the leadership of the Black Housing Council is recognized in the broader national housing strategy. Establish funding for and ensure the success of community-led housing council models such as the Preston Area Housing Council.
11. **Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs):** Advocate for legislative approval of CBAs<sup>7</sup> by the Province of Nova Scotia, which enhance social, cultural, environmental, and economic opportunities for communities.

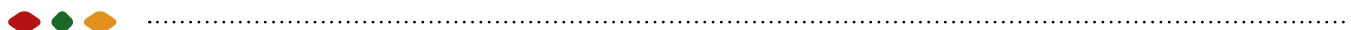


<sup>6</sup>Black Community Workgroups were established in the late 1990s and were dismantled in the mid-2000s. These structures identified employment issues at the community level and provided training and workforce attachment opportunities for African Nova Scotian communities.

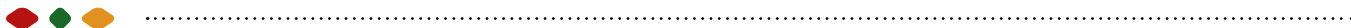
<sup>7</sup>A Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) is a legal contract between community groups and a real estate developer. In exchange for specific amenities or mitigations provided to the local community or neighbourhood, the community groups agree to publicly support the project or at least not oppose it. CBAs are strategic tools for community improvement, benefiting private sector developers and provincial/local governments. They can include commitments to hire directly from the community, contributions to a community land trust and local workforce training guarantees. These agreements enhance social, cultural, environmental, and economic opportunities for communities. Halifax Regional Council has requested from the Province of Nova Scotia that the power to develop, enter into and enforce Community Benefit Agreements be added to the HRM Charter.

# Population and Immigration

- 12. Meet with Statistics Canada** to ensure Caribbean and African communities are identified in the data.
- 13. Meet with Organizations Representing Nova Scotia's Caribbean and African communities** to ensure proper consultation is complete before moving forward with the next edition of the ANS Index.
- 14. Recognize African Nova Scotians as a Distinct People.** Descendants from the historic 52 land-based Black communities of Nova Scotia to be recognized by all orders of government as a distinct socio-cultural and ethno-cultural group of people.



These recommendations aim to drive positive change and foster equity and inclusivity within the African Nova Scotian community. We urge government and community leaders to consider and act upon them in their respective capacities.







African Nova Scotian

**Road to**  
**Economic**  
**Prosperity**

[ANSECONOMICPROSPERITY.COM](http://ANSECONOMICPROSPERITY.COM)