

## **Income of Black Women in Canada Executive Summary**

**December 2005**

- The terms “African Canadian” and “Black” women are used inter-changeably throughout this report.
- African Canadians have a long history in this country dating back to the earliest period of French settlement in the 1600s. The largest migration of Blacks to Canada came after the reform of immigration policy in the 1960s.
- African Canadians are now the third largest visible minority in Canada. In 2001, there were 662,000 representing nearly 2% of the population.
- Black women are on average younger than all Canadian women—44% being under twenty-five compared to 30% of Canadian women, and only 6% being sixty-five or older compared to 14% of Canadian women.
- Black women are in double jeopardy in terms of income. Being Black, they belong to a minority whose income is among the lowest in Canada. Being women, they have less income than Black men.
- The average income of Black women in 2000 was \$20,029. The average income of Canadians was \$29,769.<sup>1</sup>
- The average wage of Black women is 79% of what Black men earn and only 57% of what all Canadian men earn.
- Over thirty-four percent (34.5%) of Black women in families are poor. Over fifty-two percent (52.7%) of unattached Black women are poor. This compares to 13.7% of all women in families and 41.9% of all unattached women.
- Low income among Black women cannot be explained by education. Their education level is comparable to other women and men.
- Part of the reason for lower income is the higher unemployment rate among Black women—63% higher than all women.

---

<sup>1</sup> Average income refers to average annual income.

- Another possible reason for lower income among Black women is immigrant status. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of Black women are immigrants compared to twenty-two percent (22%) of Canadian women.
- While income data from the 2001 Census make it possible to examine gender differences, they do not permit a direct comparison between income and race. According to some scholars, however, racism is as important as gender in determining Black women's experiences in education and employment.
- Three recent reports in Nova Scotia—by the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) on Education, the Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Racism, Violence and Health Project—highlight the linkage between racism, education and employment.
- In response to income inequality and poverty among women, the CASW urges increased support to encourage access to higher education and work experience, as well as improvements in the effectiveness of government transfers to meet women's needs.
- With respect to the experience of African Canadian women, the CASW also recommends continued support for programs to address the needs of Black learners; support of, and education about, the need for employment equity; and support for anti-racist workplace education.

*For more information or to obtain a copy of this report contact:*

*Canadian Association of Social Workers*

*383 Parkdale Ave, Suite 402*

*Ottawa, Ontario*

*K1Y 4R4*

*Telephone: (613)729-6668*

*E-mail: [casw@casw-acts.ca](mailto:casw@casw-acts.ca)*

*Although the term minority is used throughout this document, the preferred term is “racially visible” person.*