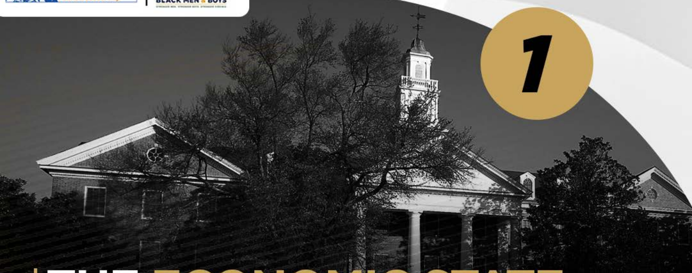
JOHN MERCER LANGSTON INSTITUTE for African American Political Leadership

VABMB VIRGINIA ALLIANCE FOR BLACK MEN & BOYS



1

THE ECONOMIC STATE OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Published by the John Mercer Langston Institute for African American Political Leadership in conjunction with the Virginia Alliance for Black Men and Boys.

SOURCE:
The Economic State of Black Men and Boys in the United States (John Mercer Langston Institute for African American Political Leadership, 2026). Analysis of publicly available data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics, and other federal datasets.

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2

THE ECONOMIC STATE OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS

THE REPORT IN EIGHT NUMBERS

22.7 Million
Black men and boys in the United States, 2025.

6.6%
BBlack unemployment rate in June 2026—the highest among the four racial and ethnic groups presented in the BLS monthly summary table. All genders, age 16+.

$1,039
Median usual weekly earnings for Black men working full time, 2025.

26%
Black men's share of total HBCU fall enrollment in 2022, down from approximately 38% in 1976.

$2,200
Median transaction-account balance among households with a Black householder.

43%
Homeownership rate among households with a Black householder, compared with 73% among households with a White householder.

↓1.7 Percentage Points
Decline in Black men's employment-to-population ratio, from 60.5% in Q1 2025 to 58.8% in Q1 2026.

30%
SShare of unemployed Black men who had been out of work for 27 weeks or longer in the May 2026 analysis.

SOURCE:
U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Economic Policy Institute; American Institute for Boys and Men analysis of IPEDS data; National Community Reinvestment Coalition analysis of federal data. See the full report for definitions and citations.

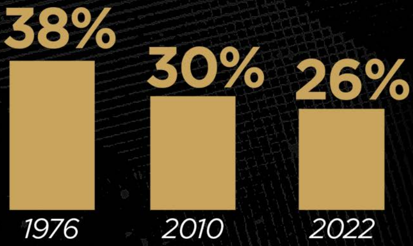
READ THE FULL REPORT TO LEARN MORE.

EDUCATION

BLACK MEN ARE DISAPPEARING FROM COLLEGE CAMPUSES

1976-2022

Black Men as a Share of HBCU Enrollment



↓22%

Black male postsecondary enrollment declined approximately 22% nationally between 2010 and 2022.

26%

26% Black men represented approximately 26% of total HBCU fall enrollment in 2022, down from approximately 38% in 1976.

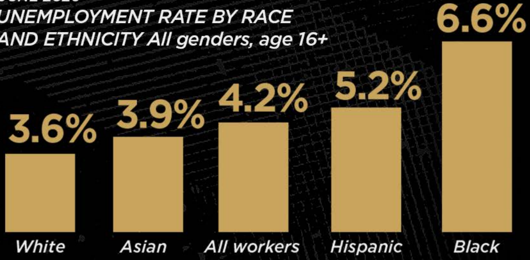
READ THE FULL REPORT TO LEARN MORE.

SOURCE:
American Institute for Boys and Men, "HBCUs at a Crossroads," 2024, analysis of IPEDS data.

EMPLOYMENT

BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT REMAINS THE HIGHEST AMONG THE FOUR GROUPS REPORTED BY BLS

JUNE 2026
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY All genders, age 16+



6.6%

The Black unemployment rate remained the highest among the four racial and ethnic groups presented in the BLS monthly summary table.

↓1.7 Percentage Points

Black men's employment-to-population ratio declined from 60.5% in Q1 2025 to 58.8% in Q1 2026. In the cited EPI analysis, Black men were the only race-by-gender group examined to experience a substantial decline.

READ THE FULL REPORT TO LEARN MORE.

SOURCE:
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2026 Employment Situation; Economic Policy Institute analysis of CPS microdata, Q1 2025–Q1 2026.

EARNINGS
THE PAY GAP PERSISTS

$1,039

Median weekly earnings for Black men.

Black Men

Black men earn approximately 77¢ for every $1 earned by White men.

SOURCE:
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 2025 annual averages for full-time wage and salary workers..

READ THE FULL REPORT TO LEARN MORE.

BUILDING WEALTH REMAINS A CHALLENGE

$2,200

Median transaction account balance for Black households.

43%

Black homeownership rate.

Limited Household Wealth

Limited household wealth makes it difficult for families to withstand prolonged unemployment.

SOURCE:
National Community Reinvestment Coalition, 2026 Racial Wealth Snapshot Series, compiling Federal Reserve 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances data.

READ THE FULL REPORT TO LEARN MORE.

INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY

EVEN SUCCESS DOESN'T PROTECT THE NEXT GENERATION

Black Boys

Black boys raised in high-income families still face far greater downward mobility than White boys raised in similarly affluent homes.

Parental Wealth

Parental wealth alone does not close the gap.

SOURCE:
TChetty, Hendren, Jones, and Porter, "Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States," Quarterly Journal of Economics, 2020.

READ THE FULL REPORT TO LEARN MORE.

WHY THIS REPORT EXISTS ?

"BLACK MEN AND BOYS DESERVE TO BE SEEN IN THE DATA—NOT FOLDED INTO IT."

For decades, the economic condition of Black Americans has often been reported as a single number.

That average hides the unique realities of Black men and boys.

This report exists to make those realities visible, measurable, and impossible to ignore.

READ THE FULL REPORT TO LEARN MORE.

SOURCE:
The Economic State of Black Men and Boys in the United States, John Mercer Langston Institute, 2026.

SUCCESS IS POSSIBLE

The report highlights institutions already making progress:

- *ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY*
- *MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY*
- *MISSISSIPPI'S LITERACY TURNAROUND*

Solutions exist. Now it's time to scale them.

SOURCE:
The Economic State of Black Men and Boys in the United States (John Mercer Langston Institute for African American Political Leadership, 2026). Analysis of publicly available data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics, and other federal datasets.

READ THE FULL REPORT TO LEARN MORE.

6 ACTIONS WE MUST TAKE

1. Make enrollment and persistence a measured institutional responsibility
2. Build the on-ramp earlier — mentorship, mental health, and career support
3. Invest in evidence-aligned literacy instruction
4. Diversify the sectoral base of employment opportunities
5. Reach the long-term unemployed directly
6. Act now at the state, local, and institutional level

SOURCE:
The Economic State of Black Men and Boys in the United States (John Mercer Langston Institute for African American Political Leadership, 2026). Analysis of publicly available data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics, and other federal datasets.

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The Report

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https://www.vsu.edu/sola/departments/political-science/political-science/john-mercer-langston-institute.php

WHAT GETS MEASURED GETS ADDRESSED.

"NOBODY IS COMING TO SAVE US."

What this requires now is not another study—it is institutions willing to be measured against it.

Read the Report.
Start the Conversation.
Lead the Change.

bitly

John Mercer Langston Institute for African American Political Leadership
Virginia State University.