

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2025:

Black workers, unions and racial equity



Unions are a powerful force for racial and economic justice, benefiting both Black workers and society as a whole. Here's why unions matter:

Union advantage for Black workers ([Centre for Future Work, 2024](#))

- Union membership increases annual income for Black and racialized workers by over **\$3,000**.
- Racialized women see a **14.2%** wage increase when unionized, compared to **1.9%** for racialized men.

ORGANIZING FOR JUSTICE

Black workers are the most likely racialized group to be covered by a union contract. Despite this, Black workers still face significant barriers at work and the second-largest racialized wage gap due to concentration in lower-wage industries and limited access to, or exclusion from, higher-wage sectors. ([Centre for Future Work, 2024](#))

This Black History Month and beyond, we're organizing for justice for Black workers.

Here's a snapshot of the issues we're working to address:

Systemic Barriers to Employment

- Canadian-born Black workers are more likely to work in jobs below their education level or have part-time/seasonal work compared to non-racialized workers with Canadian-born parents. ([Statistics Canada, 2023](#))
- Black workers earn less and are less likely to have full-time, year-round work compared to non-racialized third-generation or more workers. ([Statistics Canada, 2021 Census](#))

Income Inequality and Poverty

([Statistics Canada, 2021](#))

In 2020, **15%** of Black individuals lived in low-income conditions, compared to **10.3%** of the non-racialized population

Poverty rates in 2020 among Black individuals:

Immigrants: **16.3%**

Third generation or more: **15.8%**

Second generation: **12.4%**

Black populations have higher poverty rates across all generations. The third-generation poverty rate (**12.1%**) is double that of non-racialized counterparts (**6%**).

Gender and Racial Wage Gaps

Black workers face the second-largest wage gap, earning **17% less** than non-racialized workers. ([Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019](#))

Black university graduates earn **80 cents** for every dollar earned by white graduates with the same credentials. ([BCG & CivicAction, 2020](#))

Black men **earn less** than non-racialized third-generation or more men. ([Statistics Canada, 2021 Census](#))

Black women earn **8.4% less** than Black men on average. ([Centre for Future Work, 2024](#))

Black men and women have **higher labour force participation** but also **higher unemployment** and **larger wage gaps** than average for racialized workers. ([Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019](#))

Workplace Racism and Discrimination

([York University, Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2023](#))

- **96%** of Black Canadians see racism as a workplace issue; **78%** view it as serious or very serious.
- **48%** of Black workers reported workplace discrimination or unfair treatment, compared to **39%** of other racialized groups and **41%** of non-racialized workers.
- Black workers see **workplaces as epicenters** of racial discrimination and unfairness.

TAKE ACTION

This Black History Month, we're organizing for racial justice by:

- **Addressing workplace inequities**
- **Supporting Black leadership in unions**
- **Combating systemic anti-Black racism**
- **Promoting union organizing among Black workers**

Unions are a proven path to a better future for Black workers. By strengthening unions and focusing on racial equity, we can create a more just and fair society for all.