

# US black-white inequality in 6 stark charts

By [Tami Luhby](#), CNN Wed June 3, 2020

(CNN) — The [nationwide protests](#) following the death of a black man, [George Floyd, at the hands of white police officers](#) has once again shone a spotlight on the long-standing racial divide in the US.

This, along with the coronavirus pandemic that has [disproportionately killed black Americans](#), has drawn renewed attention to the persistent inequities in wealth, health and opportunity between blacks and whites despite economic prosperity of recent years.

## 'Going to Public School'

W. Kamau Bell explores inequities in public education through two very different school districts near Cleveland, Ohio. Watch ["United Shades of America"](#) Sunday at 10 p.m. ET.

Those disparities exist because of a long history of policies that excluded and exploited black Americans, said Valerie Wilson, director of the program on race, ethnicity and the economy at the Economic Policy Institute, a left-leaning group.

"Racial inequality has become so normalized in this society," she said. "It's what we expect to see. That's the way it's been for so long."

The numbers are staggering.

## Wealth

The typical non-Hispanic black household has accumulated only about one-tenth [the wealth](#) of a typical non-Hispanic white family. That gap stems in part from lower rates of home ownership and smaller inheritances among blacks.

The difference is wider now than it was at the start of the century, according to an analysis by the Brookings Institution. And wealth is all the more important these days since it serves as a safety net during economic downturns.

**White - \$188,200 – Black - \$24,100**

**Note: Figures are for non-Hispanic White families and non-Hispanic Black families**

**Source: [Federal Reserve Survey of Consumer Finances, 2019](#)**

## Income

Another reason why it's more difficult for black families to save and build wealth is because they typically earn less than whites.

Since 2000, the wage gap between blacks and non-Hispanic whites has grown significantly, even when educational attainment is factored in, according to a report by the Economic Policy Institute. Black workers' wages grew slowly from 2000 until last year, when they finally exceeded 2000 and 2007 levels across the earnings spectrum.

[Median household income](#) among blacks is also lower than it is for non-Hispanic whites.

**White\* - \$76,057 – Black - \$45,438**

**\* Non-Hispanic White**

**Source: [US Census Bureau, 2019](#)**

## **Unemployment**

One area that has improved is the gap in unemployment rates. For decades, the jobless rate for blacks was typically more than twice that for whites, but the gap narrowed to its [smallest differential](#) on record last year – that is, until the coronavirus outbreak. In February, the rates stood at 3.1% for whites and a near record low of 5.8% for blacks.

The economic downturn triggered by the pandemic has actually narrowed the gap even more since [unemployment has spiked](#) so dramatically across all races. Also, black Americans make up a disproportionate share of essential employees, including those who work in public transit, trucking, warehouse and postal service, health care and grocery, convenience and drug stores, according to a Center for Economic and Policy Research report – which has meant many people have kept their jobs, but at the risk of falling ill.

In April, the unemployment rate for black workers soared to 16.7%, the highest since early 2010, but it was a record 14.2% for white workers. Typically, in recessions, the unemployment rate gap widens.

**14.2% - White - 16.7% -Black**

**Source: US Department of Labor, April 2020**

## **Poverty**

The nation's poverty rate of 11.8% in 2018 was significantly lower for the first time since 2007, before the Great Recession, according to the most recent Census Bureau data.

The poverty rate for blacks was 20.8%, compared to 8.1% for non-Hispanic whites. Both have trended downward during the economic revival of recent years.

**White\* - 7.3% - Black - 18.8%**

**\*Non-Hispanic White**

**Source: [US Census Bureau, 2019](#)**

## **Health care**

The current pandemic has also laid bare the inequities in the nation's health care system. One reason why black Americans have been [hit harder](#) is because they are less likely to have [health insurance](#).

This holds true even among the employed. Black workers are 60% more likely to be uninsured than white workers, the Economic Policy Institute found.

**White\*Black5.4%9.7%**

**\* Non-Hispanic whites**

**Source: US Census Bureau, 2018**

## **Coronavirus**

Along with a lack of coverage, black Americans have higher rates of chronic illnesses, including diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.

All these conditions contribute to making the [coronavirus pandemic all the more deadly for blacks](#) than for non-Hispanic whites, who account for more than 60% of the population, but only about 53% of the deaths from the virus.

**13% - of population - - 23% - of Covid-19 deaths**

**Source: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as of May 28, 2020**