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Early 2026 Black Census Findings Reveal Deep Distrust of Federal Government and Public Institutions Among Likely Black Voters

Initial responses from 6,000 participants show just 3 percent trust the federal government, while 95 percent plan to vote

NATIONAL - Today, [Black Futures Lab](#) released early findings from the [2026 Black Census Project](#), providing one of the largest data sets of Black voters in a midterm year. The findings show what Black communities across the country are saying about the economic, political and social conditions shaping their lives ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.

The preliminary data - drawn from the first 6,000 respondents to the Black Census Project - offers an early snapshot of Black people's sentiments and concerns about the rising cost of living, level of trust in institutions, voting and political participation, and expectations for a government that meaningfully responds to their needs.

“Black political power is more than a turnout number on Election Day,” said Kristin Powell, Executive Director of Black Futures Lab. “It is built when Black people are heard, when our experiences and priorities shape public policy, and when elected leaders are accountable to our communities between elections. The Black Census Project creates the space and infrastructure to listen at scale and to turn what Black people are saying into action.”

At today’s virtual media briefing, “[More than Voting: Black Census and Black Electoral Power](#),” speakers examined the early data and what it suggests about the conditions Black communities are navigating as the country enters another consequential election cycle. The first 6,000 respondents to the 2026 Black Census Project represent Black people in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

“We are glad to partner with Black Futures Lab to listen, learn and amplify the hopes of children and young people in our community,” said Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, President and CEO of Children's Defense Fund. “Early Black Census Project responses concerning economic security and health reflect what we experience each day advocating for Black children who are more likely to live in poverty, experience hunger from SNAP cuts, and go without healthcare from the government slashing Medicaid. The highest use of any community’s power is to wield it on behalf of their children. We want children to grow up with dignity, hope, and joy. To accomplish this, we must vote, volunteer, and lift our voices to advance policies that prioritize young people.”

According to the early findings:

- Black voters remain highly engaged ahead of the midterms. Ninety-five percent of Black Census respondents say they intend to vote in 2026, with strong intent across every generation, including 95 percent of younger respondents under 30.
- The findings also point to a deep crisis of trust in public institutions. Just 3 percent of respondents reported trust in the federal government in 2026, while 22 percent said they trust Black elected officials. Trust in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and elected officials was also low across the board.
- Among respondents expressing little trust in government, 22 percent said they would abolish the Electoral College, an indication that many are looking beyond electoral participation alone and calling for structural changes that could make democracy more responsive and representative.

At the same time, respondents’ dreams reflect urgent, practical hopes for stability, health and economic security:

- 44 percent dream of becoming debt-free
- 41 percent dream of improving their physical health
- 25 percent dream of living in safe affordable housing
- 35 percent dream of earning more money
- 23 percent dream of owning a home

The findings come as Black Futures Lab undertakes the largest Black Census Project to date, with a goal of reaching 300,000 Black respondents nationwide by 2027. Launched in March 2026, the Black Census Project builds on Black Futures Lab's long-term work transforming Black communities into constituencies capable of changing how power operates at local, state and national levels.

"Black communities are navigating economic uncertainty, political attacks, and systems that too often disregard our needs and aspirations," said Natishia June, Deputy Executive Director of Black Futures Lab. "This Black Census is an opportunity for Black people to define the future we want, identify what it will take to get there, and demand that decision-makers meet the urgency of this moment."

Respondents span generations, with Baby Boomers making up 37 percent of the sample, followed by Generation X at 30 percent, Millennials at 23 percent, Generation Z at 8 percent, and members of the Silent Generation at 3 percent. Women made up nearly two-thirds (61%) of respondents, while Black men (35%) accounted for one third.

The 2026 Black Census Project is available at blackcensusproject.org.

About the Black Census Project

The Black Census Project is the largest survey of Black people in America, a powerful space for Black communities to dream, define, and demand the democracy we rightfully deserve. Now in its third iteration, the 2026 Black Census Project launches during a period when Black communities face escalating political attacks, economic instability, and systemic erasure. At this moment, Black people across this nation are rising up to build a future that values our humanity and brilliance, while continuing to lead the resistance with vision, setting the course for what freedom must look like for this generation and the next. This 2026 Black Census Project is a radical invitation to join Black Futures Lab as we stand on business to collect 300,000 responses that will transform collective imagination into actionable data that shapes policy, fuels

organizing, and reclaims narrative power. <https://blackcensusproject.org/>

About the Black Futures Lab

Black Futures Lab transforms Black communities into constituencies that change the way power operates—locally, statewide and nationally. The problems facing our communities are complex—the solutions require experimentation, innovation and political power. We deserve a government that represents us, policies that improve our lives, and politics that reflect our lives. <https://blackfutureslab.org/>