

# MAPPING INEQUITIES SNAPSHOT REPORT



Exploring the impact of social determinants  
on Black communities in Toronto



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ABOUT THE BLACK HEALTH ALLIANCE

Black Health Alliance centres Black communities in defining the challenges and barriers affecting our health and well-being. We provide a platform for Black people to establish a common voice around systemic problems, and we work to co-design and mobilize the tools, skills, partnerships, and investments needed to implement solutions that improve health outcomes across Canada.

We invest in the community through an approach that starts with listening to communities. We ensure every solution we co-create is built on a foundation of solid data, a shared vision, and a quick progression from idea to implementation — always with the goal of systems-level change.

## **AIM OF THIS REPORT**

It is widely understood in the field of public health that our health is predominantly shaped by our social and environmental conditions rather than by biology, genetics, and access to healthcare. Improving

structural and social determinants of health such as income, food security, housing, and early childhood development is an enormous challenge. We often lack the data to understand the full size and scale of these disparities.

This *Mapping Inequities Snapshot Report* aims to generate a deeper understanding of how the structural and social determinants of health impact Black communities in Toronto, and it explores implications and recommendations for addressing racial and geographical health disparities. Utilizing data from 2011–2021, this project aims to generate spatial insights into how income, housing, early childhood development, and food security impact Black communities in Toronto. By mapping, and analyzing existing data related to the health and well-being of Black populations, we aim to develop an evidence base that supports the co-creation of population-level health interventions and policies rooted in Black communities' needs and geographic differences.

# SNAPSHOT: DEMOGRAPHY



## BACKGROUND

Canada's Black population is diverse and accounts for about 4.3% of the total population (1,547,865 individuals as per the 2021 Census). Migration and births have contributed to the population's growth, which is projected to continue.

Ontario has the largest Black population in the country, but the Black population is growing the fastest in the Prairie provinces. While Ontario's Black population continues to grow, its share of the national Black population has declined.

In 2021, Ontario was home to 49.7% of Canada's Black residents, down from 52.4% in 2016 and 62.1% in 2001. As aforementioned, the Black population has grown the fastest in the Prairie provinces, where it has quadrupled in size from 39,955 in 1996 to 174,655 in 2016. Over the last 20 years, the Albertan Black population has grown fivefold, while Manitoba and Saskatchewan's Black populations have roughly tripled. As of 2021, the total Black population in Ontario was 768,740.



**Figure 1. 2011–21 Population Change by Age Cohort for the Black Visible Minority, City of Toronto**

CITY OF TORONTO	TOTAL POPULATION	TOTAL VISIBLE MINORITY	BLACK VISIBLE MINORITY
2011 NHS	2,576,025	1,264,395	218,170
2016 Census	2,691,665	1,385,850	239,840
2021 Census	2,761,280	1,537,305	265,005
% of City Pop (2011)	100.0%	49.1%	8.5%
% of City Pop (2016)	100.0%	51.5%	8.9%
% of City Pop (2021)	100.0%	55.7%	9.6%
2011-21 GROWTH/CHANGE RATE	7.2%	21.6%	21.5%
AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	0.7%	2.2%	2.1%

**Data Source:** Analysis of custom-run 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 2016 Census, and 2021 Census data provided by Statistics Canada

Reviewing demographic changes, such as changes in distribution and age, can play a significant role in resource and service distribution. Understanding the evolving needs of communities is crucial for effective allocation. The following maps can support evidence-based resources and service distribution for Black communities in Toronto.

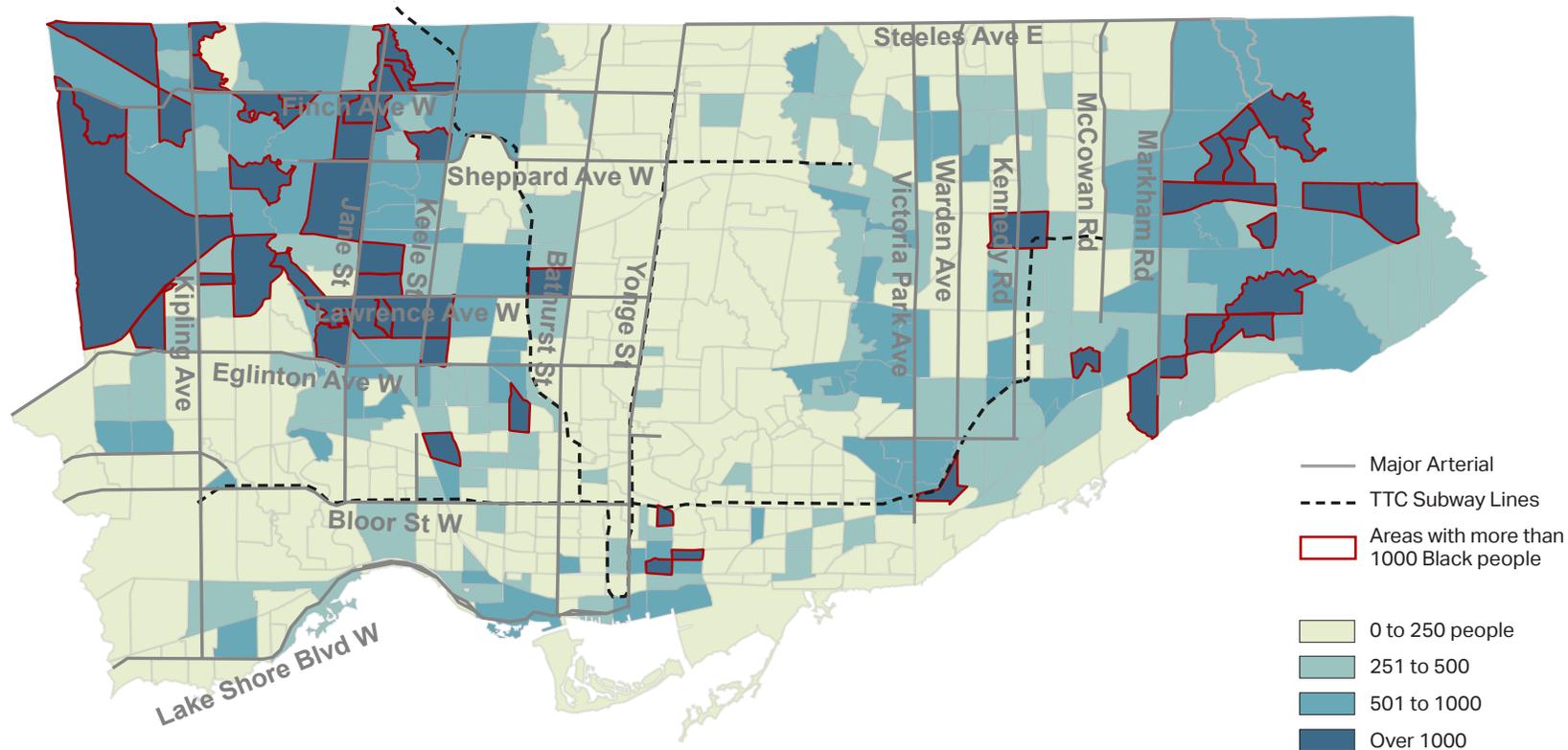


In 2011, there were three main regions where Black communities were concentrated in Toronto: Etobicoke North, North York, and Scarborough.

Etobicoke North neighbourhoods with significant Black communities included Humber West and Rexdale, while North York neighbourhoods with significant Black communities included Black

Creek, York University Heights, Downsview, Eglinton West, and Weston. The Scarborough neighbourhoods with significant Black communities were Malvern, Rouge, Centennial Scarborough, and West Hill.

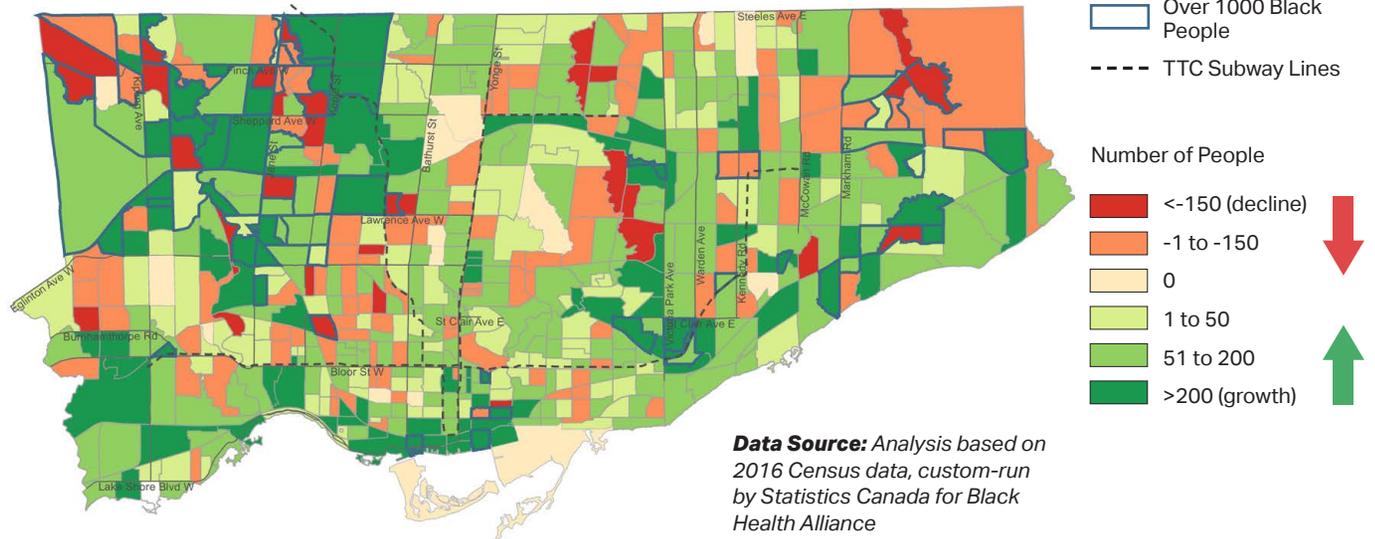
**Figure 2. 2011 Areas with Significant Black Populations**



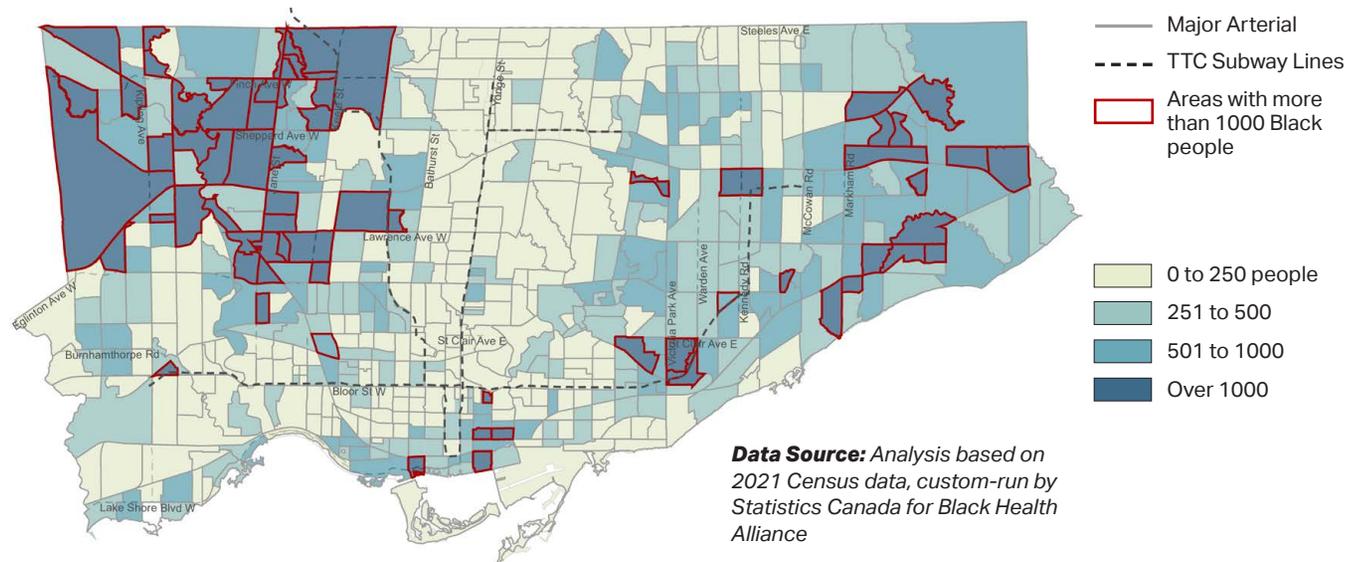
**Data Source:** Analysis based on 2011 National Household Survey data, custom-run by Statistics Canada for Black Health Alliance

**Figure 3. 2011-2021 Change in Black Visible Minority Population**

Over the last two census periods (in 2016 and 2021) Black communities have expanded significantly in additional areas — namely, along the northwest city boundary (Steeles Ave.). Additionally, parts of the downtown core showed an increase in the Black population — namely, South Parkdale, Liberty Village, Harbourfront-City Place, St. Lawrence-East Bayfront-The Islands, Regent Park, and North St. James Town.



**Figure 4. 2021 Areas with Significant Black Populations**

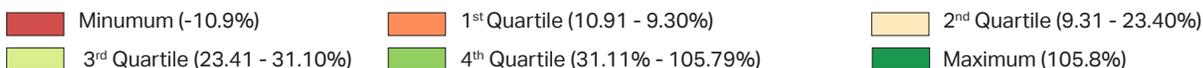


Data shows that the Black population in Toronto is aging. Black seniors 65 years and older experienced the highest rate of growth (51.0%) over the last 10 years, followed by the 55- to 64-year-old cohort. Between 2011 and 2021, Toronto's Black senior

population grew from 18,845 (roughly the same size as the 0–4 child cohort in 2011) to 28,450. On the other hand, the city saw a net decline of –10.9% of Black children aged 0–4 over the last decade (2011–2021).

**Figure 5. 2011–2021 Population Change by Age Cohort for the Black Visible Minority, City of Toronto**

AGE COHORTS	2011	2016	2021	2011-16	2011-16	2016-21	2016-21	2011-2021	2011-21
				CHANGE	% CHANGE	CHANGE	% CHANGE	CHANGE	% CHANGE
0 to 4 years	18,390	17,175	16,380	-1,215	-6.6%	-795	-4.6%	-2,010	-10.9%
5 to 9 years	17,620	18,735	17,890	1,115	6.3%	-845	-4.5%	270	1.5%
10 to 14 years	17,120	18,130	19,140	1,010	5.9%	1,010	5.6%	2,020	11.8%
15 to 19 years	18,125	18,890	18,465	765	4.2%	-425	-2.2%	340	1.9%
20 to 24 years	16,680	19,860	21,190	3,180	19.1%	1,330	6.7%	4,510	27.0%
25 to 29 years	16,610	18,890	22,910	2,280	13.7%	4,020	21.3%	6,300	37.9%
30 to 34 years	16,385	18,620	21,430	2,235	13.6%	2,810	15.1%	4,795	28.8%
35 to 44 years	31,800	32,895	38,190	1,095	3.4%	5,295	16.1%	6,390	20.1%
45 to 54 years	28,050	32,135	33,040	4,085	14.6%	905	2.8%	4,990	17.8%
55 to 64 years	18,545	20,970	27,920	2,425	13.1%	6,950	33.1%	9,375	50.6%
65 to 74 years	13,065	15,065	16,555	2,000	15.3%	1,490	9.9%	3,490	26.7%
75 years+	5,780	8,475	11,895	2,695	46.6%	3,420	40.4%	6,115	105.8%



**Data Source:** Analysis of custom-run 2011 National Household Survey, 2016 Census, and 2021 Census data provided by Statistics Canada

**CHILDREN  
AGED 0-4**

**10.9%**

decline over the  
last 10 years

**SENIORS  
AGED 75+**

**105.8%**

increase between  
2011 and 2021



We can learn a great deal from understanding the demography of Black communities in Toronto. The population has experienced a significant shift, with seniors doubling over the past 10 years and residential pocket areas expanding further into the northwest, northeast, and downtown east areas of the city. This information on population distribution

and demography provides valuable insight that enables healthcare professionals, policymakers, and researchers in Toronto to make informed decisions, allocate resources efficiently, and develop targeted interventions to improve the public health of Black communities.

# SNAPSHOT: INCOME



## BACKGROUND

Toronto is experiencing an unaffordability crisis, as living costs, including food, child care, and housing costs, have continued to rise over the last decade; these cost increases were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

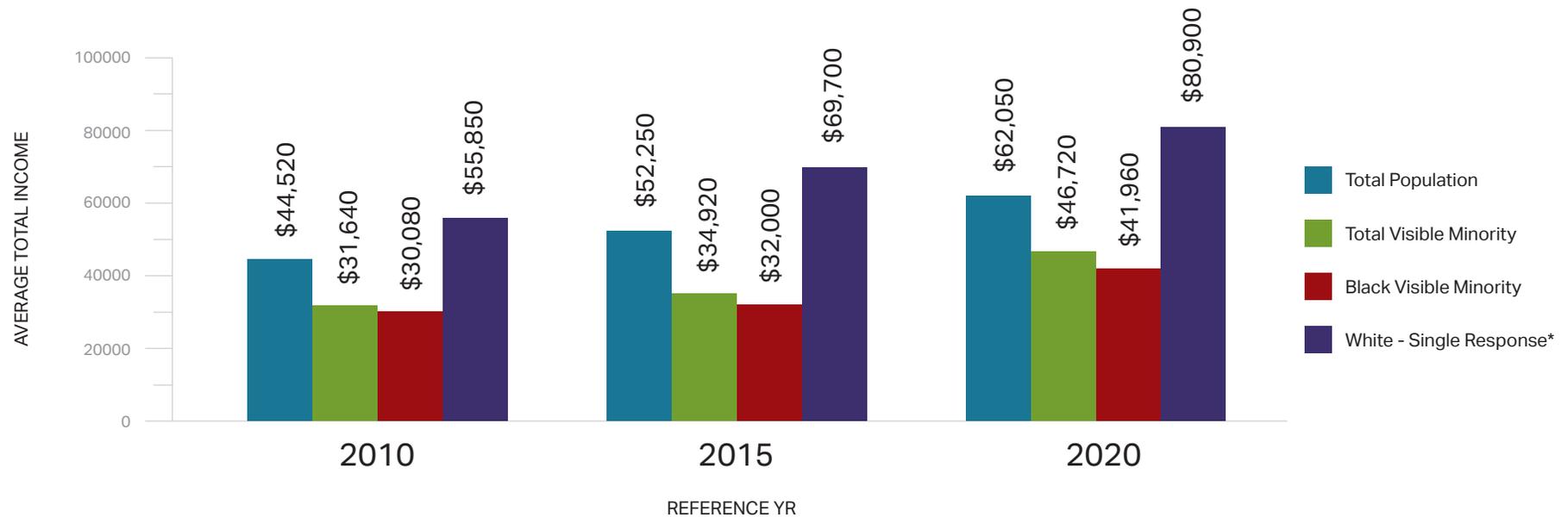
Income is one of the most important social determinants of health because it directly affects a person's access to education, employment, food, housing, and recreation, among other health determinants. Thus, income insecurity can lead to poorer mental and physical health outcomes.

Although all populations experienced significant increases in unemployment during the pandemic, the magnitude of these increases differed among racial groups. Over time, unemployment rates in Toronto have changed in the following ways:

- doubled from 6.5% in 2016 to 11.7% in 2021 among the white labour force (still lower than the city's average unemployment rate of 13.9%)
- increased from 13.2% in 2016 to 19.8% as of 2021 among the Black labour force



**Figure 6. Comparison of Average Total Income for Individuals (Personal Income) by Racial Group, City of Toronto**



**Data Source:** Analysis based on 2011 National Household Survey, 2016 Census, and 2021 Census data, custom-run by Statistics Canada for Black Health Alliance

The average total personal income for Black Torontonians was \$30,080 in 2011, \$32,000 in 2016, and \$41,960 as of 2021. The gap in annual average total income between Black Torontonians and other groups has widened (most significantly between the Black and white population, and to a lesser extent between the Black and Total Visible Minority population).



**The gap in average total income between Black Torontonians and other groups has widened.**

\*The white – single response population group reflects the majority of the white population in the city of Toronto (for a total of 1,150,830 persons in 2021). Persons that responded 'white' as part of a multiple response to the census population group question were comparatively few (107,910 persons in 2021 or less than 10% of white – single response population) and many in this category are also classified as “visible minorities” by Statistics Canada.

## POVERTY INDICATORS IN TORONTO

Though many Torontonians experienced financial and employment challenges during the pandemic (12.6% of the total population lived in poverty), the Black population, followed by the Total Visible Minority population, fared particularly poorly: in 2020, 16.1% of the Black population were living in poverty, followed by 15.2% of the Total Visible Minority population and 9.1% of the white population in the same year.

Many people struggling with income insecurity rely on social assistance programs, including the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW); however, these supports have failed to keep pace with Toronto's rising living costs, including housing and food costs. From October 2022 to October 2023, Statistics Canada found that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for rented accommodation increased by 9.4%.<sup>1</sup> Complicating matters, once an individual and/or their partner has an income that places them above the poverty line, their social assistance can be clawed back or reduced.



### 2020 SHARE OF PERSONS LIVING IN POVERTY

**16.1%**

of the **Black population**

**15.2%**

of the **Total Visible Minority population**

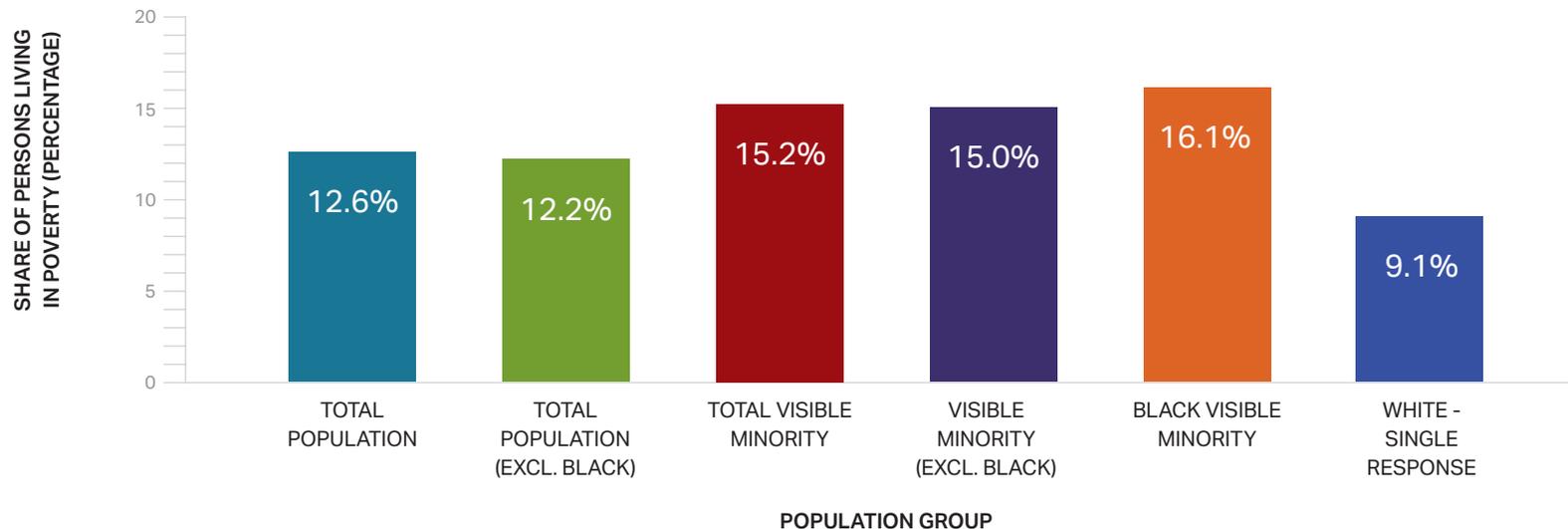
**9.1%**

of the **White population**

This section provides a picture of low income using both the Low-income measure, market income (LIM-MI) and the Market Basket Measure (MBM). Statistics Canada defines the **LIM-MI as a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted market income of households observed at the person level, where “adjusted” indicates that a household’s needs are taken into account.** Persons living in households that fall below the threshold of the LIM-MI are considered low income. On the other hand, Statistics Canada defines the

**Market Basket Measure (MBM) as based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living developed by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).** According to the MBM, a family is in low income if they have insufficient income to afford the cost of a predetermined basket of goods and services (food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and other necessities) appropriate to their family size and area of residence.

**Figure 7. 2021 Share of Persons Living in Poverty (Market Basket Measure) for Populations and Visible Minorities, City of Toronto**



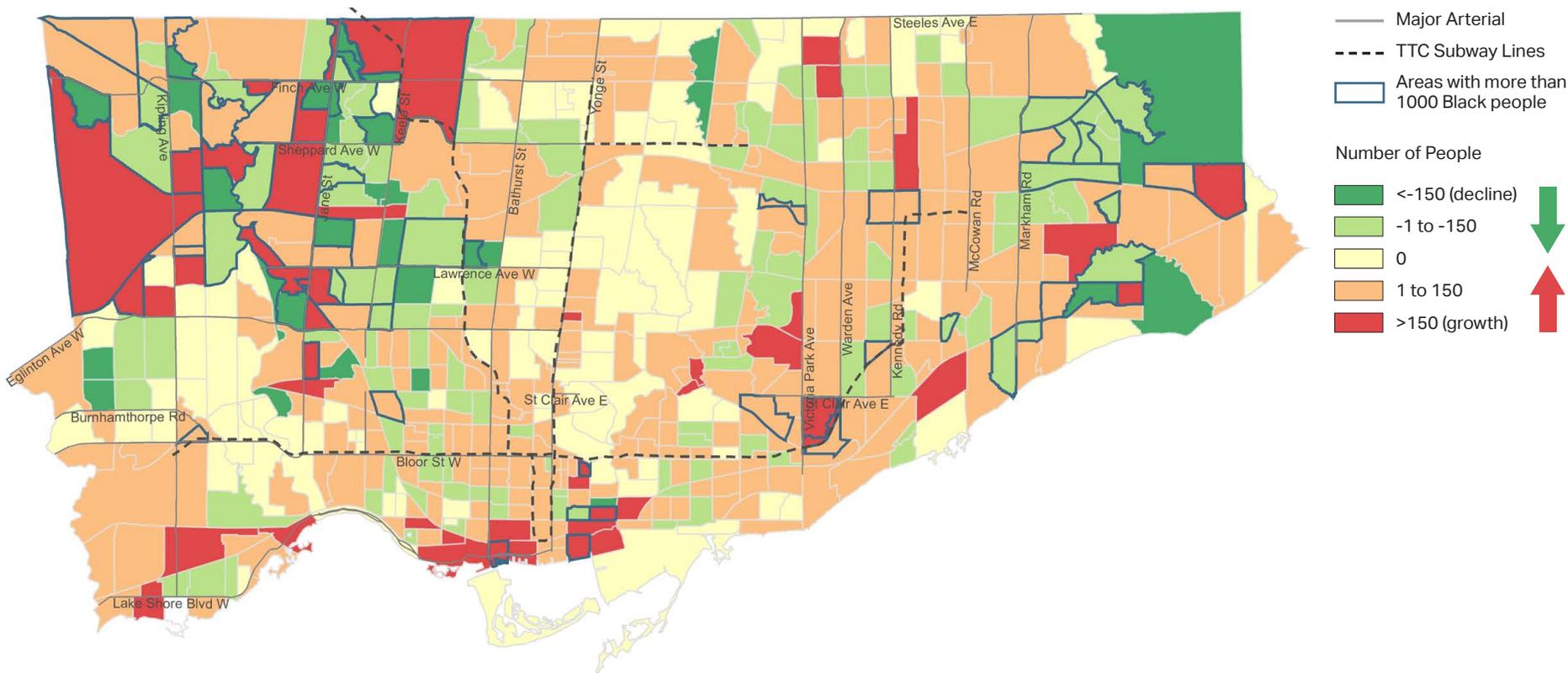
**Data Source:** Analysis of custom-run 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 2016 Census, and 2021 Census data provided by Statistics Canada

## CHANGES IN LOW-INCOME PREVALENCE OVER TIME

Over the last decade (2011–2021), the following communities have experienced the largest increases in the number of Black individuals with low income:

- **North:** York University Heights, Glenfield-Jane Heights, Oakdale-Beverley Heights
- **West:** West Humber-Clairville, Oakdale-Beverley Heights, Rexdale-Kipling, Weston-Mount Dennis, Mimico-Queensway, Humber Bay Shores
- **Downtown:** Rockcliffe-Smythe, Moss Park, Regent Park, Harbourfront-City Place, St. James Town
- **East:** Clairlea-Birchmount, West Rouge

**Figure 8. 2011–2021 Change in Low Income Prevalence Within Toronto’s Black Visible Minority (LIM-MI)**

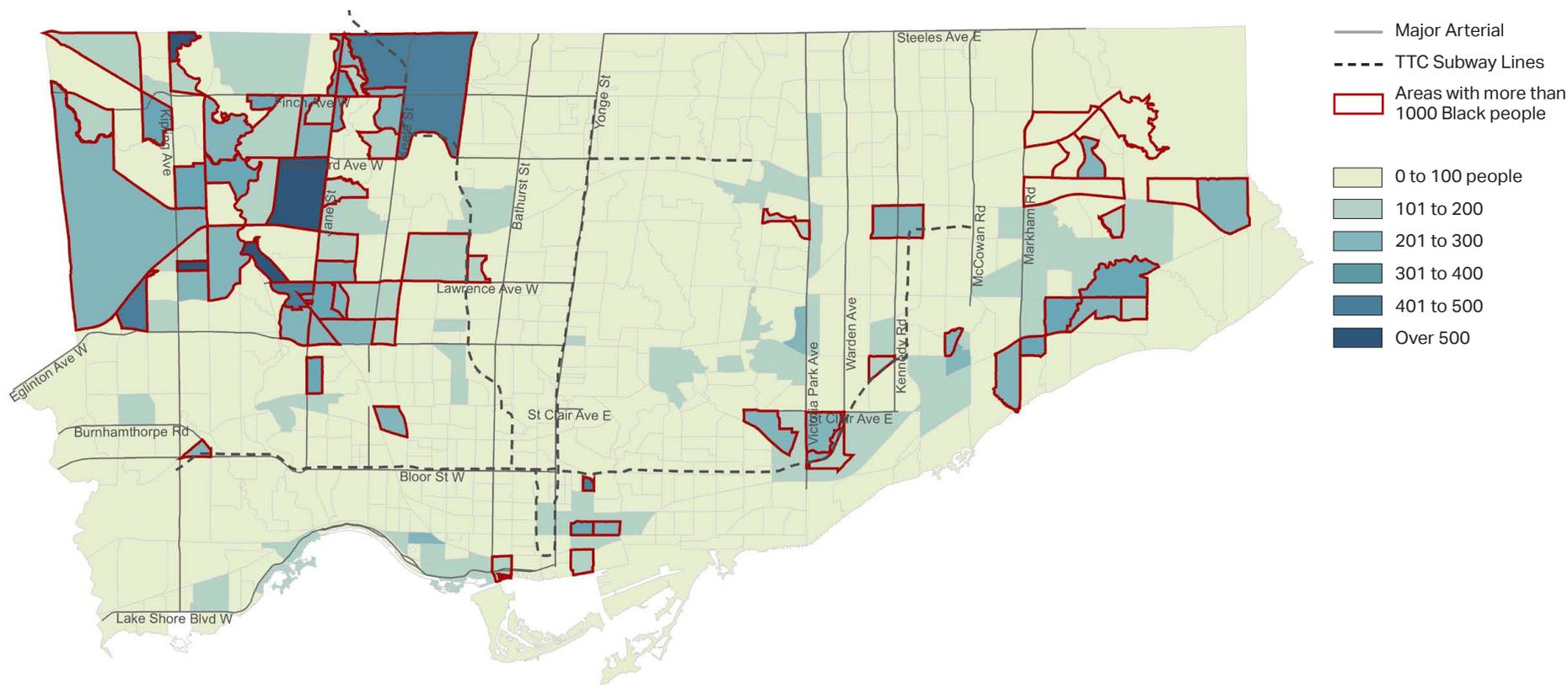


**Data Source:** Analysis based on 2011 National Household Survey and 2021 Census data, custom-run by Statistics Canada for Black Health Alliance

This map highlights the areas where the greatest number of Black individuals lived in extreme poverty in 2021. Overall, these areas—which included Oakdale-Beverley Heights, Weston-Mount Dennis, Kingsview Village-The Westway, and Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown—were far from the TTC

subway lines. Neighbourhood-specific poverty indicators, accessible transportation options, and demography can influence planning and the implementation of interventions and policies that address income insecurity for Black Torontonians.

**Figure 9. 2021 Black Population Living in Poverty (Market Basket Measure)**



**Data Source:** Analysis based on 2021 Census data, custom-run by Statistics Canada for Black Health Alliance

# IMPLICATIONS

- When compared to other racial groups, Black individuals' personal income is significantly lower. The unemployment rate for Black people is significantly higher than the average unemployment rate for all Torontonians. Personal income directly affects one's ability to access life necessities including adequate housing, healthy food, child care, employment, education, and transportation. The findings reveal systemic racism in Toronto's economic structures, hindering Black communities' access to employment opportunities and economic prosperity compared to other racial groups. Additionally, they underscore income inequality in Toronto, indicating barriers preventing Black individuals from achieving upward social mobility.
- Income inequities will likely persist without government intervention that mandates diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and addresses discrimination, particularly in the workplace and in schools.
- Over the last decade (2011–2021), the prevalence of low-income Black Torontonians has increased in areas with significant Black populations. Most of these areas were isolated to the western and eastern parts of the city, far from the main TTC subway lines, with several small areas downtown. In 2021, the areas where most Black populations lived in extreme poverty mirrored the areas where the prevalence of low-income Black Torontonians has increased. As such, there is an urgent need for comprehensive efforts to address systemic racism and promote economic equity, taking into account factors such as an area's proximity to TTC lines, access to transportation, and neighborhood cultural dynamics.



**There is an urgent need for comprehensive efforts to address systemic racism and promote economic equity.**

# SNAPSHOT: HOUSING AND SHELTER



## BACKGROUND

- Safe and secure housing is connected to health and well-being. Poor dwelling ventilation and exposure to toxic substances, including mold, is associated with asthma and other chronic respiratory symptoms, as well as neurological and hematologic illnesses. Asbestos exposure in below-standard housing can cause mesothelioma and lung cancer. Structural deficiencies in dwellings can lead to physical injury and pest and rodent infestation.
- The data presented indicates that between 2011–2021, Black communities' ability to access adequate, affordable, and suitable housing worsened rather than improved.



## HOUSING INDICATORS

Good housing meets the following requirements:

- **Adequacy:** the quality and condition of housing
  - Housing is deemed inadequate when major repairs are required. Major repairs—including defective plumbing or electrical wiring and structural repairs to ceilings, floors, or walls—are non-cosmetic and may pose health hazards.
- **Affordability:** how much of residents' income is needed
  - Housing is deemed unaffordable when a household spends more than 30% of its before-tax income on housing costs.

- **Suitability:** dwelling meets the needs of its residents
  - Unsuitable housing has a one-bedroom-or-more shortfall for the size and composition of the household. This is a measure of overcrowded conditions within a dwelling.



**Below-standard housing refers to housing that falls short of at least one of the adequacy, affordability, and suitability housing standards.**

**Figure 10. 2021 Percentage of Black Populations' Housing Conditions, City of Toronto**

HOUSING INDICATORS									
BELOW-STANDARD HOUSING		INADEQUATE HOUSING		UNSUITABLE HOUSING		UNAFFORDABLE HOUSING		CORE HOUSING NEED*	
No. of persons	% of pop.	No. of persons	% of pop.	No. of persons	% of pop.	No. of persons	% of pop.	No. of persons	% of pop.
160,295	60.5%	29,695	11.2%	97,910	36.9%	70,000	26.4%	66,000	25.0%

\* Both Statistics Canada and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation determine a household to be in core housing need if its housing falls short of at least one of the three housing standards—adequacy, affordability, and suitability—and if the household would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that meets all three standards.

**Data Source:** Analysis of custom-run 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 2016 Census, and 2021 Census data provided by Statistics Canada



## STATUS OF HOUSING FOR BLACK RESIDENTS

- In 2021, the majority (72.5%) of Black residents in Toronto rented their homes. Less than a third owned the homes they lived in.
- Over a quarter of Black residents (26.4%) lived in unaffordable housing.
- More than a third (36.9%) of the Black population in Toronto lived in unsuitable housing, meaning that their living spaces were overcrowded.
- 15.8% of residents experiencing core housing need were Black, despite Black residents constituting only 9.6% of the city's population. This indicates an overrepresentation of Black communities among those in core housing need.

## SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

- Subsidized housing is housing that includes rent-g geared-to-income, social housing, public housing, government-assisted housing, non-profit housing, rent supplements, and housing allowances<sup>2</sup>. Often, people who live in subsidized housing meet the requirements for being low income in Toronto.
- A larger percentage of Black people in Toronto lived in subsidized housing than people of other races.
- The demographics of the 153,970 people living in subsidized housing in Toronto in 2021 were as follows:
  - 54,355 (35.3%) were Black
  - 57,167 (37.1%) were non-Black visible minorities
  - 42,455 (27.6%) were not a visible minority\*, including white and Indigenous people

While the actual number of non-Black visible minorities and non-visible minorities in subsidized housing has decreased since 2011, the number of Black people in subsidized housing has increased (despite modest fluctuations in the 2021 census year).

\*This term is used to describe Indigenous populations in Statistics Canada data and as such we are unable to distinguish between white and Indigenous populations in our analysis<sup>3</sup>



### 2021 TORONTONIANS LIVING IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

**35.3%**

were **Black**

**37.1%**

were **non-Black visible minorities**

**27.6%**

were **not a visible minority**

## BELOW-STANDARD HOUSING

- Black households were the most likely to live in below-standard housing compared to other groups. Below-standard housing is in poor physical condition, lacks a suitable number of bedrooms, and costs more than 30% of a household’s monthly income.
- In 2021, the demographics of people living in inadequate housing were as follows:
  - 26,695 (11.2%) were Black
  - 107,910 (37.12%) were non-Black visible minorities
  - 183,310 (6.6%) were not a visible minority
- The number of Black people living in below-standard housing nearly doubled between 2011 and 2021. In 2011, 38.1% of Black people in the city lived in below-standard housing; this percentage increased to 60.5% in 2021.
- In 2021, 66,215 Black individuals lived in core housing need, with no other options for affordable, up-to-standard housing in their area.

**Figure 11. Racial Background of Persons Living in Below-Standard Housing (Including Those in Core Housing Need) in the City of Toronto, 2011–2021**

CITY OF TORONTO	2011 BELOW STANDARD		2016 BELOW STANDARD		2021 BELOW STANDARD	
	NO. OF PERSONS	% OF POP.	NO. OF PERSONS	% OF POP.	NO. OF PERSONS	% OF POP.
Total Population	609,845	23.7%	1,303,260	48.4%	1,267,990	45.9%
Total Population (Excl. Black)	526,640	22.3%	1,151,220	47.0%	1,107,695	44.4%
Total Visible Minority	384,080	30.4%	825,425	59.6%	848,535	55.2%
Other Visible Minorities (Excl. Black)	300,875	28.8%	673,385	58.8%	688,240	54.1%
Black Visible Minority	83,205	38.1%	152,040	63.4%	160,295	60.5%
White - Single Response	214,710	16.8%	451,765	35.9%	385,280	33.5%

**Data Source:** Analysis of custom-run 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 2016 Census, and 2021 Census data provided by Statistics Canada

## MAPPING HOUSING INEQUITY

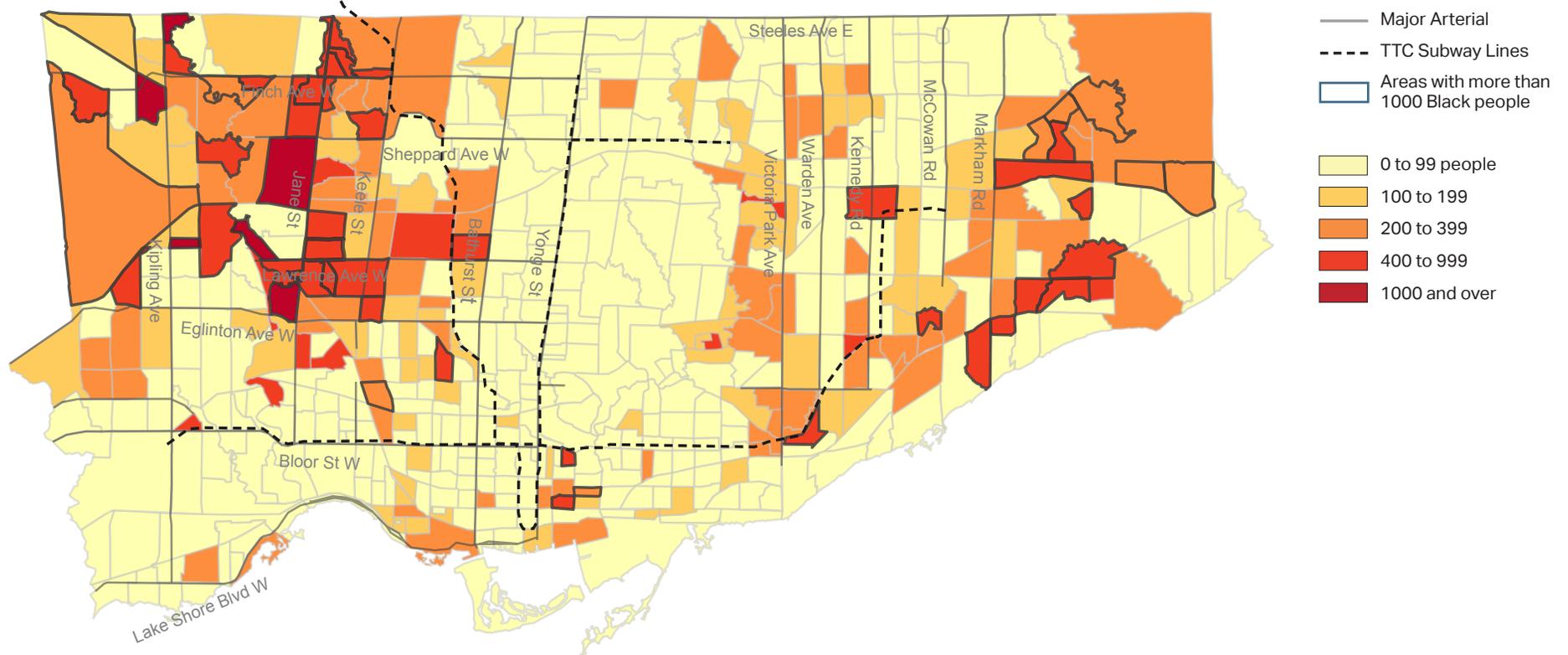
### 2011 Black Population Living in Below-Standard Housing

- Housing was below standard for Black folks in Etobicoke North, Black Creek, and Scarborough.
- Black communities may be at increased risk for evictions because areas with larger Black populations have twice the eviction rates.

Reasons for eviction can include landlord-tenant disputes, economic incentives for landlords to evict tenants, and discrimination, among others.<sup>4</sup>

- Black people made up a significant amount (31%) of non-white people experiencing homelessness. Black people make up about 14% of the non-white population, so they are overrepresented in evictions in comparison to their population size.

**Figure 12. 2011 Black Population Living in Below-Standard Housing**



**Data Source:** Analysis based on 2011 National Household Survey Data, custom-run by Statistics Canada for Black Health Alliance

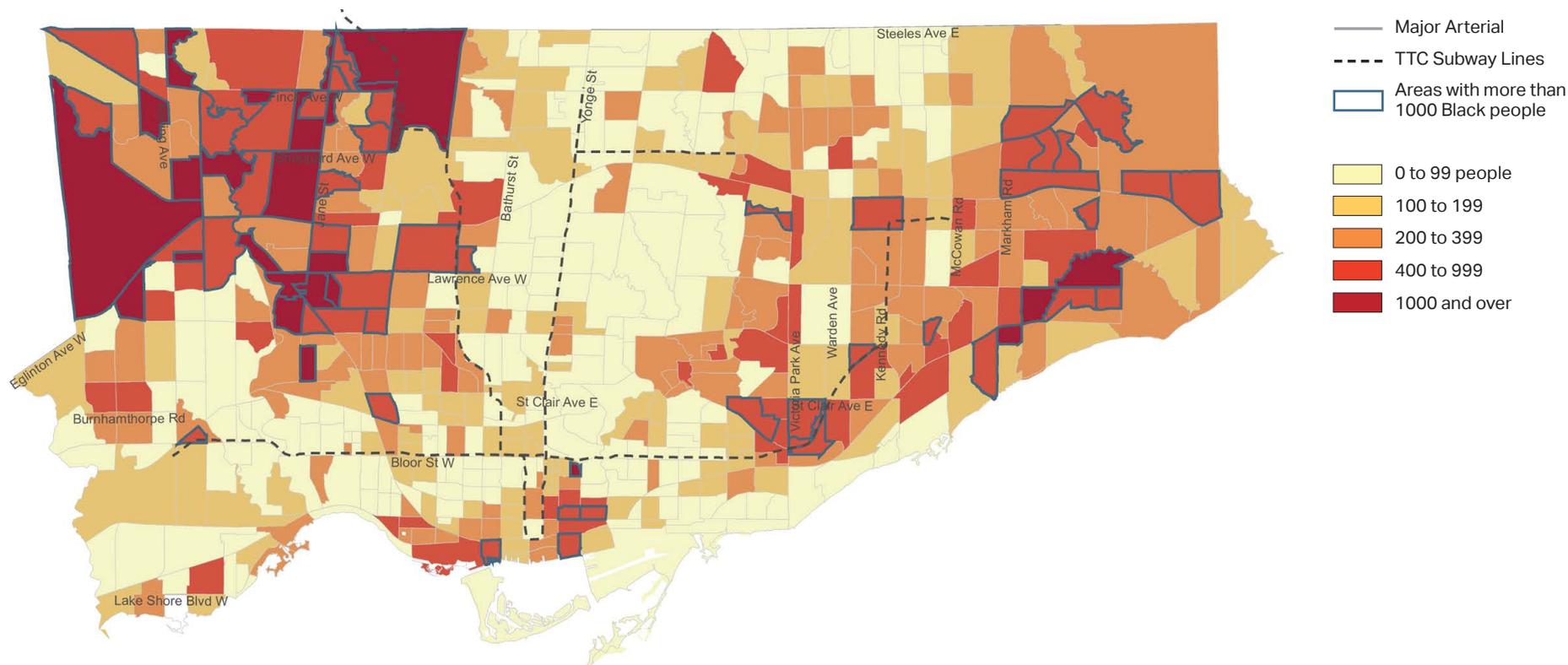
## 2021 Black Population Living in Below-Standard Housing

High amounts of Black people living in below-standard homes were found in the following Toronto neighbourhoods:

- **North:** York University Heights, Glenfield-Jane Heights, Oakdale-Beverley Heights
- **North-West:** West Humber-Clairville, Rexdale

- **South-West:** Mimico-Queensway, Humber Bay Shores
- **Downtown:** Rockcliffe-Smythe, Moss Park, Regent Park, Harbourfront-City Place, St. James Town
- **East:** Clairlea-Birchmount, West Rouge

**Figure 13. 2021 Black Population Living in Below-Standard Housing**



**Data Source:** Analysis based on 2021 National Household Survey Data, custom-run by Statistics Canada for Black Health Alliance

# IMPLICATIONS

- Black people in Toronto are more likely to live in housing that is in poor condition, unaffordable, and insufficient for the needs of their household. Black people were more likely to live in below-standard housing in 2021 than in 2011, demonstrating that housing for Black people has gotten worse instead of better over time.
- Black households are also at greater risk of poor housing security and are more likely to be evicted than other households.
- Considering that almost 73% of the Black population are renters, rental standards are important to the housing situation of Black residents. Black residents are more likely to live in subsidized housing, so conditions in housing provided by Toronto Community Housing also have a large impact on housing suitability.
- Black families are more likely to need support from the government to afford housing. There is a need for tailored and targeted initiatives aimed at securing affordable and suitable housing for Black Torontonians.



**Black people were more likely to live in below-standard housing in 2021 than in 2011, demonstrating that housing for Black people has gotten worse instead of better over time.**

# SNAPSHOT: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



## BACKGROUND

- Early childhood development refers to the growth and development of children from birth to 5 years old. Early childhood is an important period, as most brain connections and development happen before a child begins kindergarten.
- Children's experiences during this period can have permanent and long-term effects on their health and well-being.
- Access to good quality early child care can greatly benefit all children, especially those in low-income households.



The Government of Ontario measures individual child development in child care settings using the Early Development Instrument (EDI), which looks at 5 key areas:



**Ability to adapt socially**



**Physical health**



**Emotional maturity**



**Communication**



**Language**

Unfortunately, very little race-based data is collected in Ontario, making it difficult to understand the health and well-being of Black children in relation to their early development.



## EARLY DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS FOR CHILDREN IN TORONTO

To get an idea of the early childhood development of Black children in Toronto, Black Health Alliance mapped the results of the 2017–18 EDI onto neighbourhoods in the city. Figures 14 through 18 display the percentage of Toronto children in the at-risk and vulnerable categories across all five EDI domains during the 2017/18 school year at kindergarten.

The communication skills and general knowledge domain (Figure 14) shows the greatest share of vulnerable children in Etobicoke North and Scarborough, overlapping with areas where most Black children reside.

Figure 15, illustrating language and cognitive development, indicates the highest share of vulnerable children in Mount Olive–Silverstone–Jamestown, Humbermede, Elms–Old REXdale, Scarborough Village, and West Hill.

### 2017/2018 Early Development Indicators (EDIs) for Senior Kindergarten-aged Children Living in the Toronto

Figure 14. EDI: Communication Skills

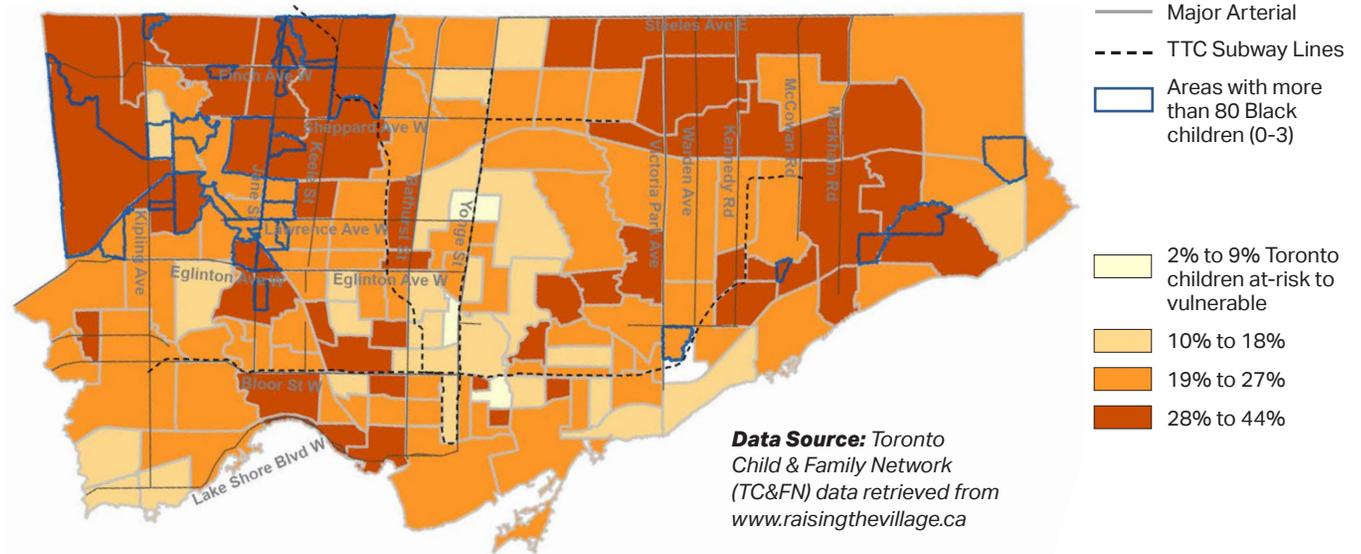
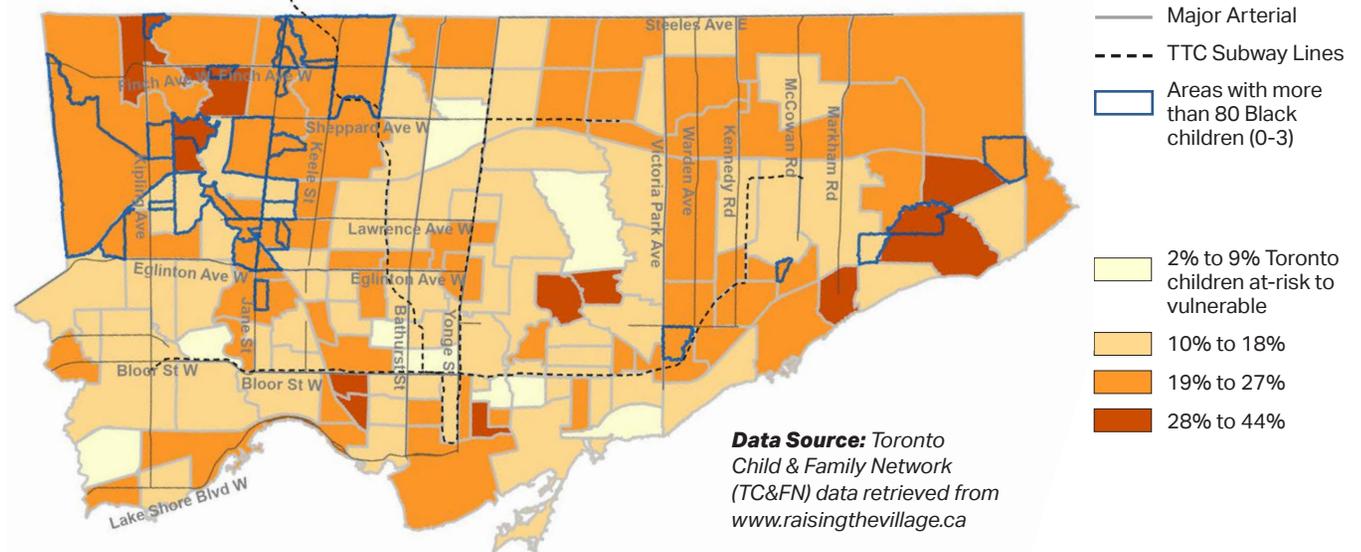


Figure 15. EDI: Language & Cognitive Development



## 2017/2018 Early Development Indicators (EDIs) for Senior Kindergarten-aged Children Living in the Toronto

Figure 16 shows the most vulnerable children in physical health and well-being are in Etobicoke North (Humber Summit) and Scarborough Southwest (Scarborough Village and West Hill).

Figures 17 and 18, for social competence and emotional maturity respectively, show more random patterns. Social competence vulnerabilities are highest in Humber Summit, Rexdale-Kipling, York University Heights, Black Creek, Glenfield-Jane Heights, Weston, Rustic, Mount Dennis, Scarborough Village, West Hill, and Morningside. Emotional maturity vulnerabilities are prominent in Glenfield-Jane Heights, Rustic, Rockcliffe-Smythe, Scarborough Village, West Hill, and Morningside.

Figure 16. EDI: Physical Health & Well-being

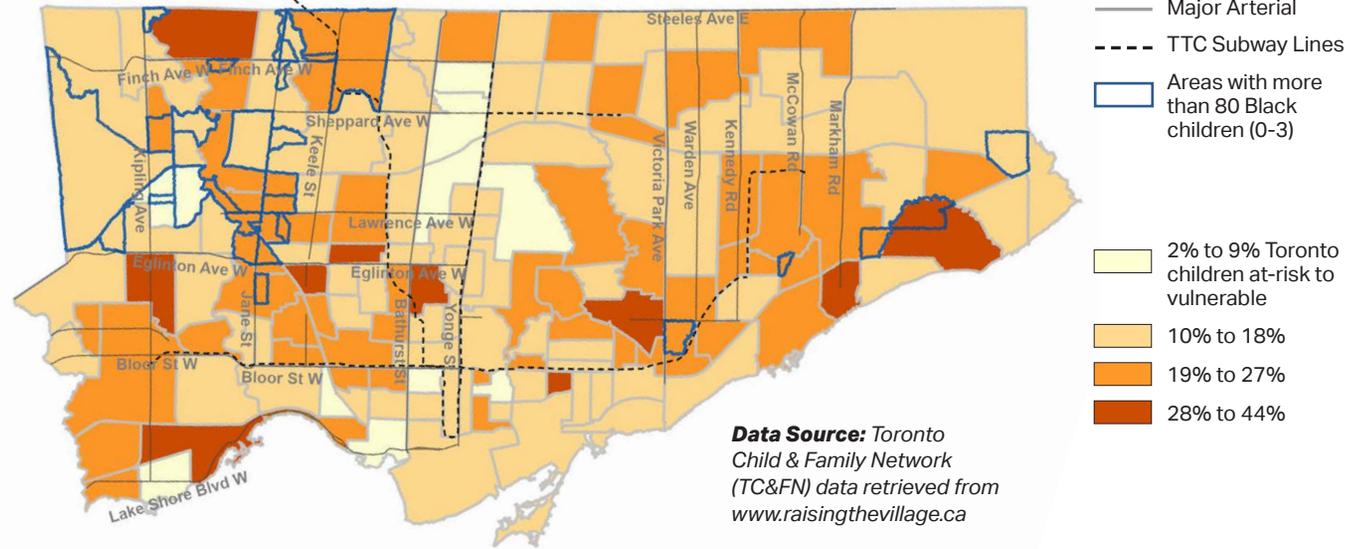


Figure 17. EDI: Social Competence

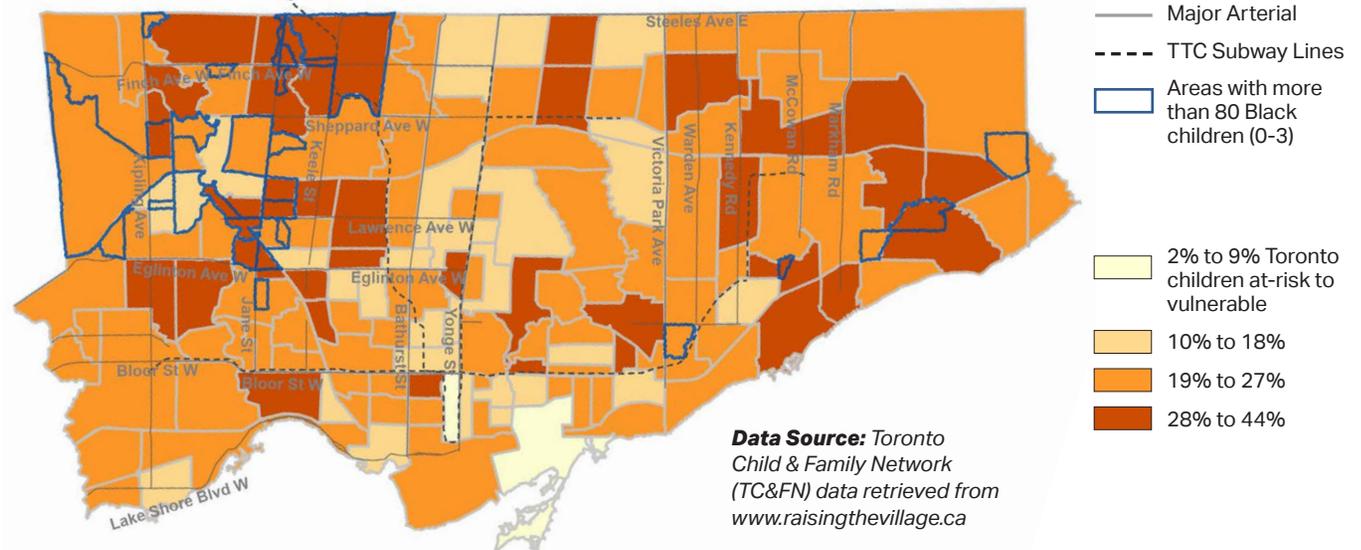


Figure 19 illustrates the rate of children on-track developmentally at the end of the 2017/18 school year relative to the city average.



**There is significant work to be done within a Canadian context to better understand the connections between race, early child development, and developmental health.**

## 2017/2018 Early Development Indicators (EDIs) for Senior Kindergarten-aged Children Living in the Toronto

Figure 18. EDI: Emotional Maturity

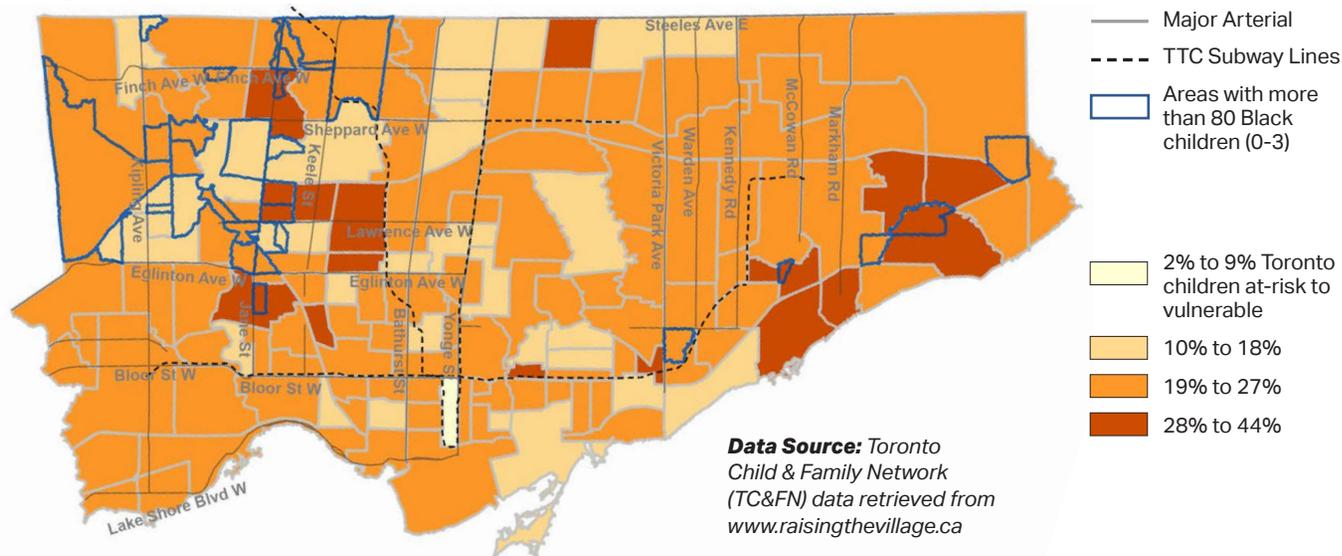
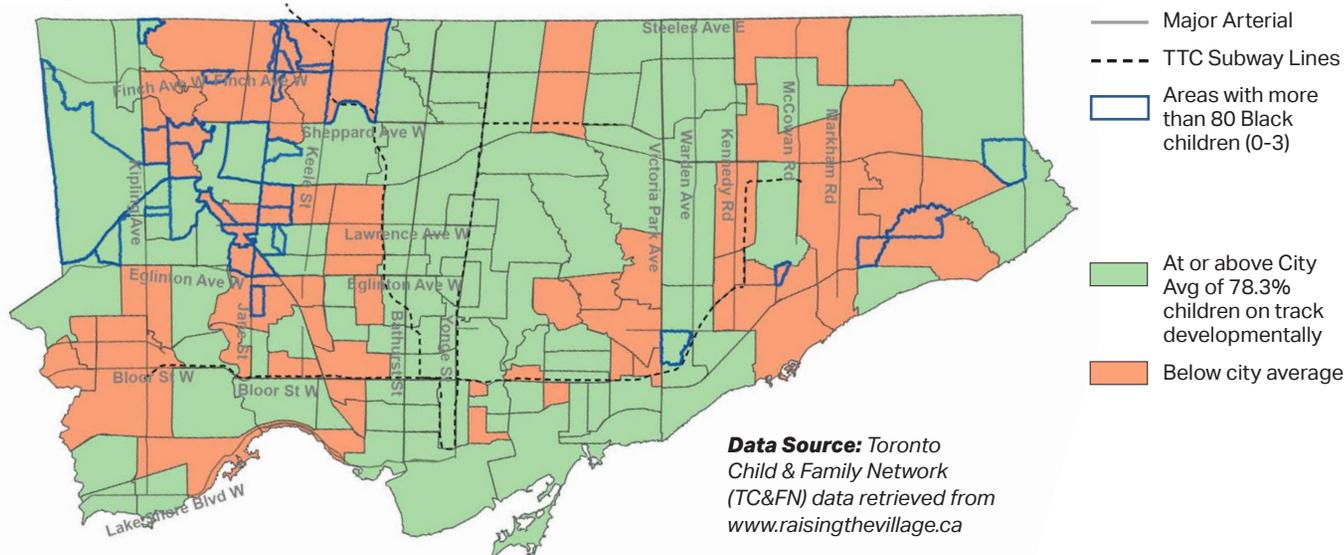


Figure 19. EDI: All Domains



## THE STATE OF CHILD CARE IN TORONTO

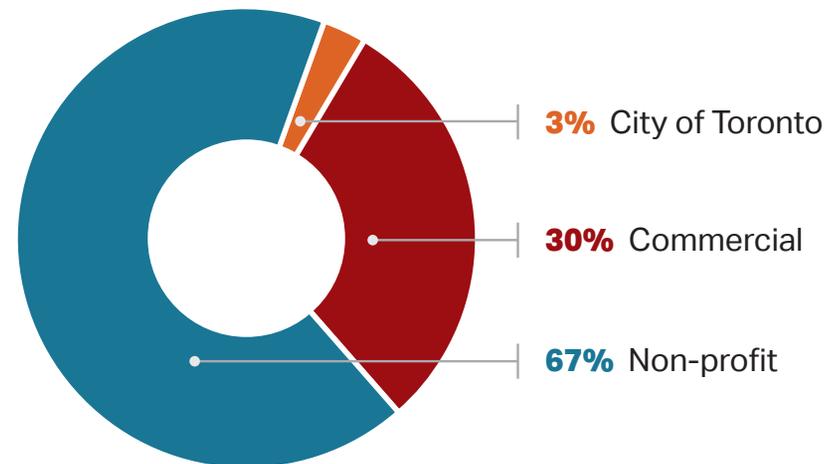
In Toronto, child care is provided through a mix of publicly and privately funded licensed child care services.

The following services are provided in Toronto:

- Non-profit-operated child care
- Commercial or private child care
- Public child care delivered by Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services (TELCCS), school boards, or post-secondary institutions

Non-profit and private child care services do not require Early Childhood Educator (ECE) licenses, which may result in lower-quality child care that does not meet EDI standards.

Figure 20. Share of Licensed Child Care Centres in Toronto



**Data Source:** 2021 report to the City's Auditor General, *A Review of Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services: Their Unique Contribution to Toronto's Equity, Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Goals*



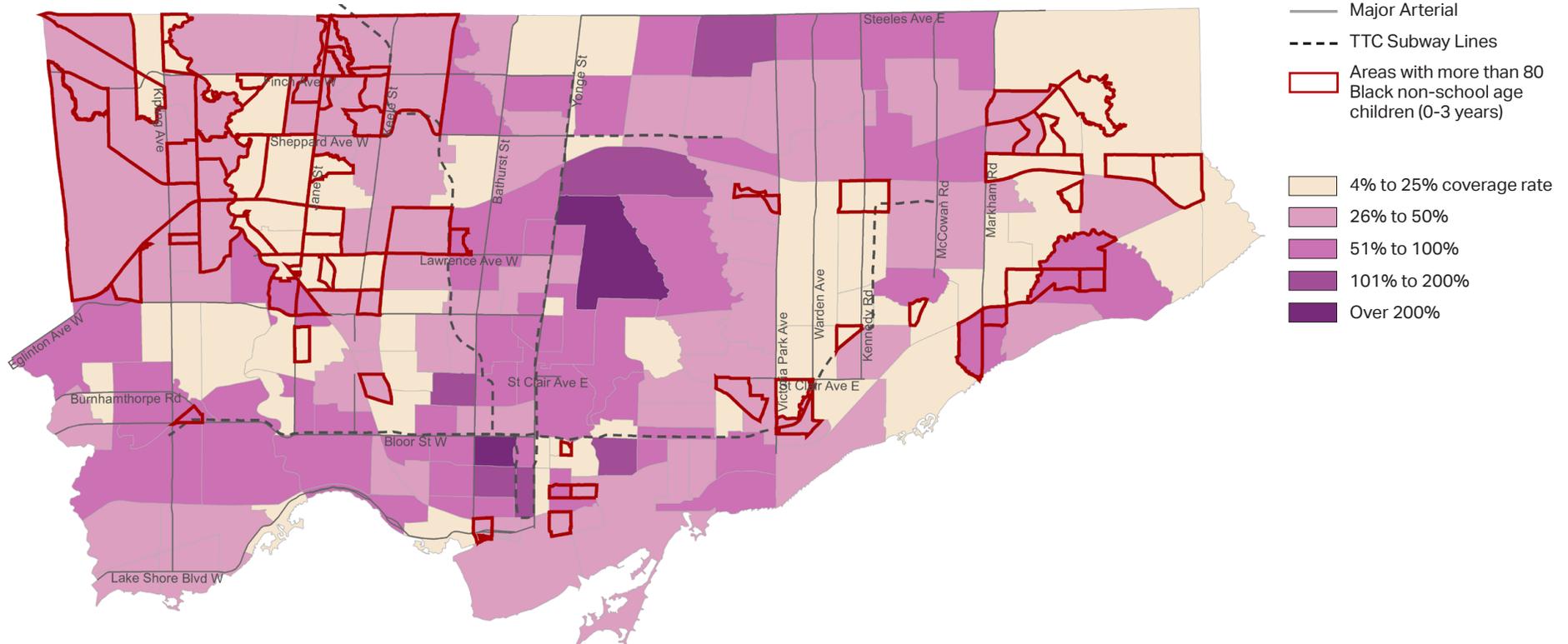
## LICENSED CHILD CARE COVERAGE FOR BLACK FAMILIES IN TORONTO

Black families are more likely to have a harder time getting licensed child care in Toronto. Most areas with high numbers of Black children aged 0–3 had the least access to licensed child care spaces for non-school-aged children.

The following areas had a significant number of Black children (0-3) and the least access to licensed child care spaces:

- Pelmo Park-Humberlea (8% coverage rate)
- Rockcliffe-Smythe (11%)
- Weston (15%)
- Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown (17%)

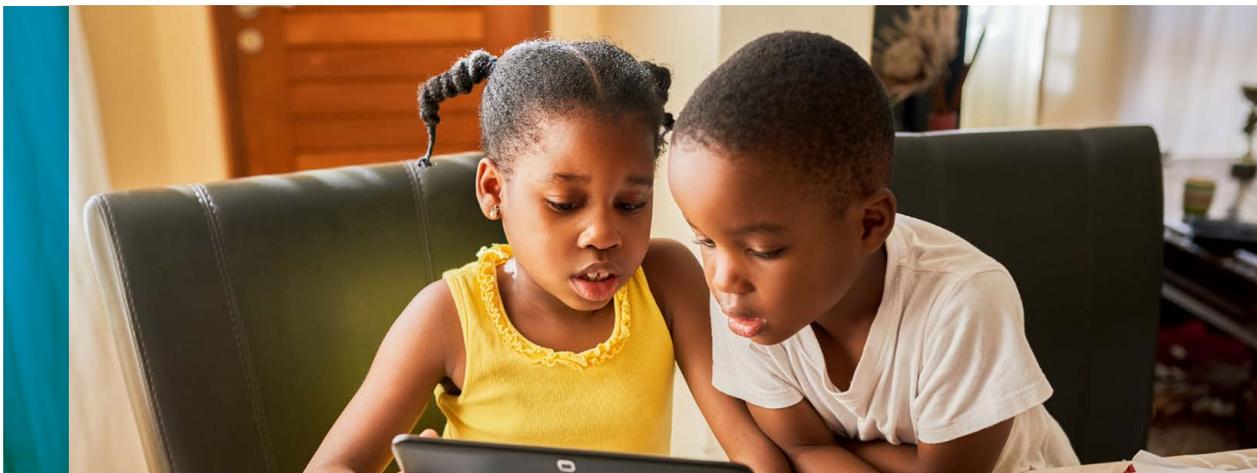
**Figure 21. 2022 Licensed Child Care Service Levels (Infant to Preschool) for Non-School-Aged Children (Age 0–3), City of Toronto**



**Data Source:** Analysis based on licensed child care centre locations, provided by Toronto Children’s Services in August 2022

# IMPLICATIONS

- In 2022, there have been no improvements in access to child care spaces in Toronto, and very little is known about which types of services Black children are more likely to access
- Areas with higher numbers of Black children are least likely to be served by licensed child care
- Non-licensed child care meets an existing need for child care but may not provide the highest quality of care, which affects its ability to meet EDI standards
- The Canadian federal government is introducing \$10/day child care to increase access, but Black families may not be able to benefit from this service due to a lack of accessible child care centres with availability (to be accessible, child care centres with availability should be within a 10-minute walk from a family's home)
- We know very little about the health and well-being of young Black children, and more data collection is needed to understand their needs
- 91% of youth in Toronto receive some form of subsidization for child care, which highlights how important child care subsidies are to families



# SNAPSHOT: FOOD SECURITY



## BACKGROUND

Food insecurity is defined as inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.

Food insecurity can lead to the following issues:



**malnutrition**



**chronic and physical health complications**



**adverse mental health**



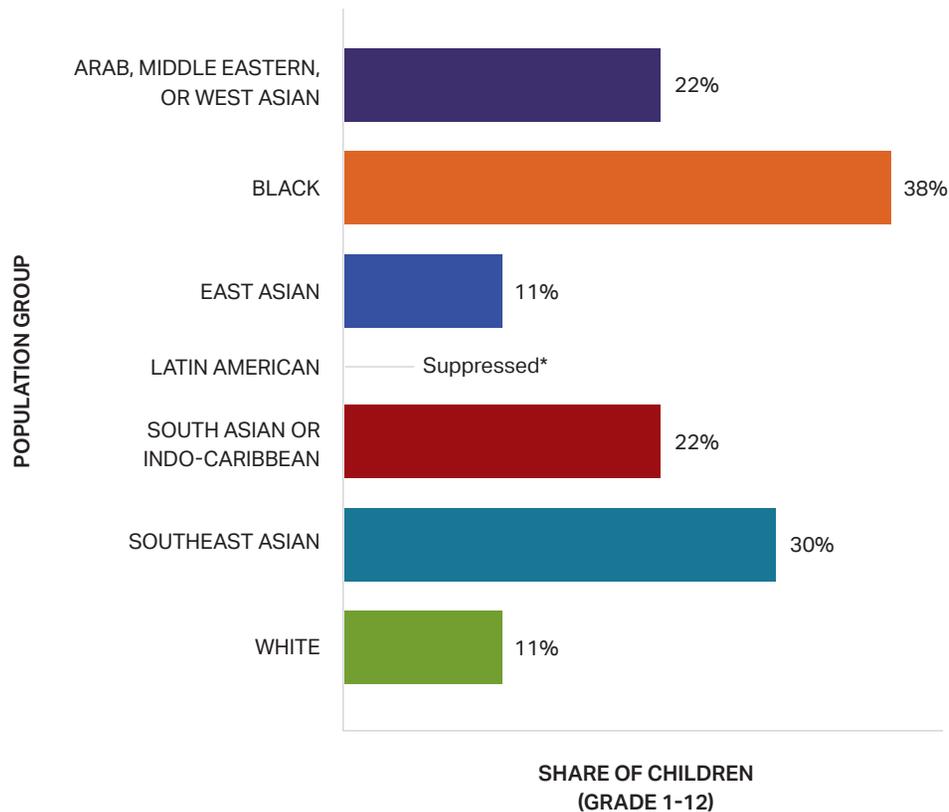
**greater susceptibility to infectious and non-communicable diseases**

Data from Toronto Public Health demonstrates that Black Canadians represent the largest share of food-insecure households.

Race-based data regarding food security by neighbourhood and/or census tracts were not readily available at the time of this report. As a result, multiple data sources were pulled from to map food security indicators (i.e., household spending on groceries and walk time to supportive food economy) onto relevant neighbourhoods.



**Figure 22. Share of Children (Grade 1–12) Living in Households Experiencing Food Insecurity in the Last 12 Months, City of Toronto (2019)**



**Data Source:** Based on TPH Epidemiology and Data Analytics team assessment of 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth (CHSCY)

\*Result unavailable due to small sample size



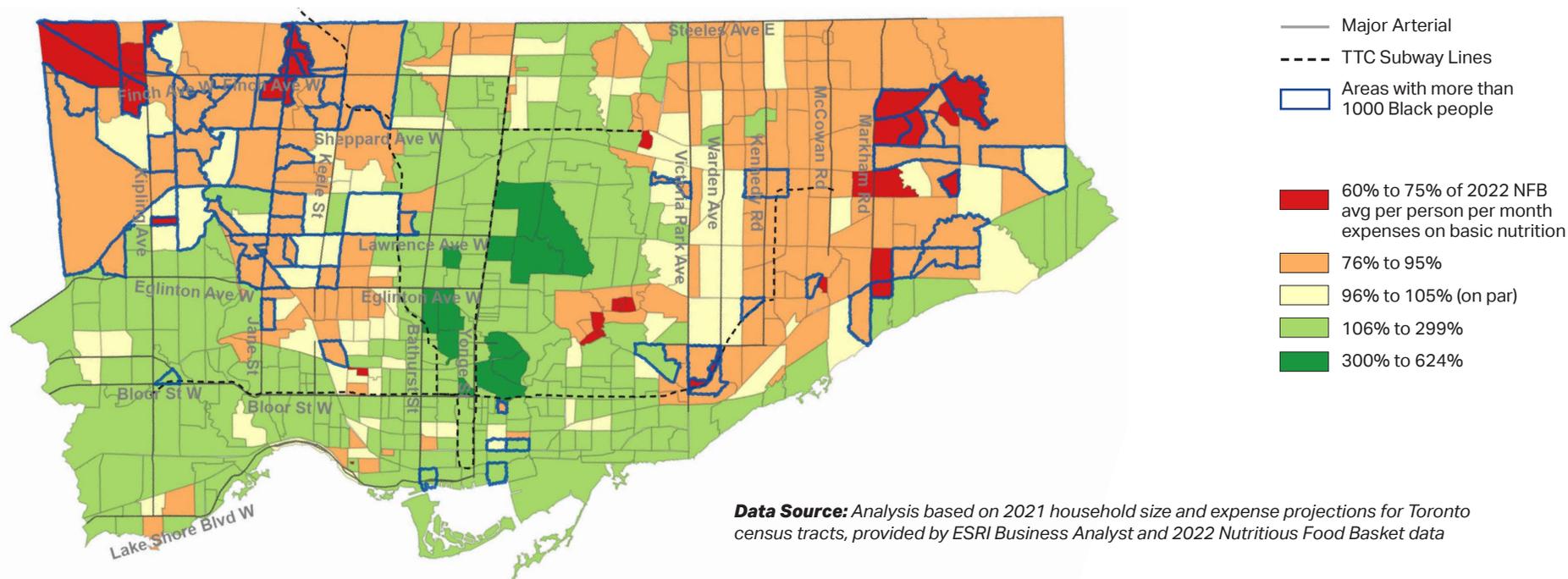
## HOUSEHOLD SPENDING ON GROCERIES

Most Black Torontonians live in the northwest and northeastern parts of the city, including in the following areas:

- Black Creek
- Humbermede
- Elms-Old Rexdale
- Weston
- Beechborough-Greenbrook
- West Hill
- Glenfield-Jane Heights
- Brookhaven-Amesbury

The following map illustrates census tracts for which average household spending per person on grocery food each month was below (95% or less), on par with (between 96% to 105%), or above (106% or greater) the 2021 Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) baseline measure; the NFB is a metric used to monitor the cost and affordability of healthy eating and measure Canada's official poverty line. The map illustrates this data in relation to those census tracts that have significant Black populations (>1000 persons). These areas, marked in red, have the lowest average monthly grocery expenses, which puts the households within them at risk of food affordability and insecurity challenges.

**Figure 23. 2021 Household Spending on Grocery Food (Per Person, Monthly) Compared to Basic Nutrition Costs for Toronto's Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) Calculator**



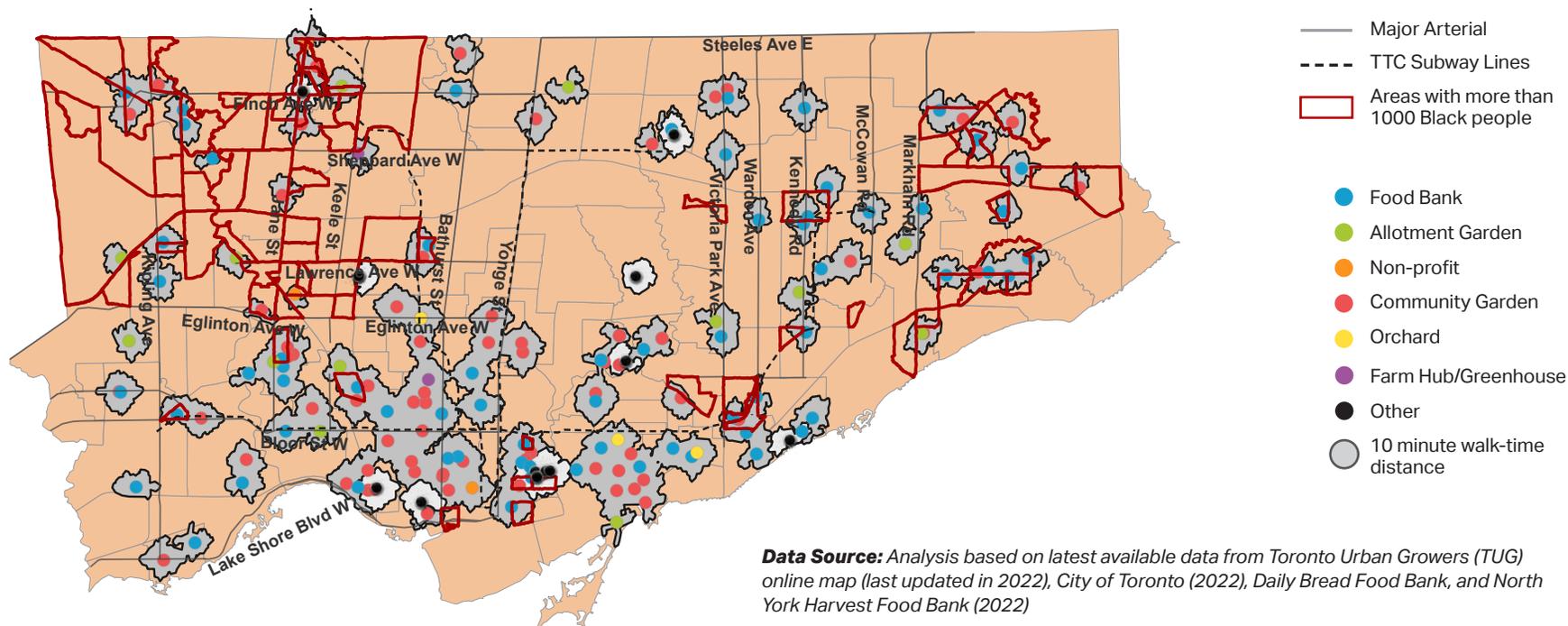
**Data Source:** Analysis based on 2021 household size and expense projections for Toronto census tracts, provided by ESRI Business Analyst and 2022 Nutritious Food Basket data

## ACCESS TO SUPPORTIVE FOOD ECONOMY

The northwest and northeastern regions of the city, where most Black Torontonians reside, tend to be less walkable than other regions of the city. This makes access to grocery stores and other essential resources less convenient, leading to higher transportation costs. Moreover, food banks and other food assets are limited in these areas, and they often lack culturally diverse and high-quality choices.

Significant Black communities are concentrated in the northwest region, which has low service coverage from food banks and minimal presence of urban agriculture, including community gardens, allotment gardens, and greenhouses. The map illustrates that the limited food banks and community gardens in these areas are not easily accessible to most residents, as they require a more than 10-minute walk. In contrast, the majority of the supportive food economy assets in Toronto are concentrated in the downtown core, with residents in the south-central region having the greatest ease of access within a 10-minute walk distance from food assets.

**Figure 24. 2022 10-Minute Walk Time Access to Toronto's Supportive Food Economy**



# IMPLICATIONS

- As food, housing, energy, transportation, and other living costs have risen steadily over the past decade, low-income Black Torontonians continue to struggle to make ends meet. With low and limited income and tight budget constraints, many Black households cannot afford to make fresh, healthy food choices, which are relatively more expensive than their less nutritious, processed alternatives.
- A wide range of growing spaces exist in Toronto, including community and allotment gardens on City-owned land and institutional grounds. However, challenges persist in identifying, accessing, and partnering with these spaces; creating lease agreements; and developing business plans. These obstacles affect all residents, including Black farmers, in terms of both knowledge and finances. Nonprofessional farmers and at-home gardeners face similar hurdles in pursuing their interest in growing food. Navigating systems, including municipal requirements and soil-testing studies, compounds these difficulties.
- A discrepancy exists between the need for supportive food economy assets and their availability. Many supportive food economy assets are placed in the downtown core, but this discovery doesn't suggest an oversupply of affordable food solutions downtown. Instead, the mapping reveals that compared to the northernmost part of the city, where food insecurity and the demand for affordable food are anticipated to be highest, there is a substantial disparity of affordable food resources and solutions.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

The data clearly indicates that Black Torontonians face negative outcomes related to income, housing, early childhood education, and food security. In some cases, the data has shown that these factors have worsened in the past decade. These social determinants of health have large consequences for the overall health and well-being of Black residents in the city, and action must be taken to address and improve said determinants.

Policymakers at all levels of government must establish clear targets around these indicators, and they must measure progress to stay informed about the current and future states of Black communities in the city. There is a need to improve income and employment opportunities, secure safe and affordable housing, ensure high-quality child care, and eliminate food insecurity. As Toronto continues to grow and accept more Black newcomers, a lack of focused effort may only serve to further the current inequities between Black and non-Black communities in the city. Now is the time to pay attention to these findings and make real, sustained efforts to address them.

To support these efforts, we have included the following recommendations for income, housing, early childhood development and food security:



## INCOME

Over the last decade, rental and home ownership costs have sharply increased; meanwhile, employment rates for Black Torontonians have decreased. Our income insecurity recommendations are as follows:

1. Increase advocacy and funding for existing Black-centred employment agencies and associations such as the CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals.
2. Expand TTC routes to the northwest and eastern areas of the city where the GIS maps show highest Black population density.
3. Increase the level of support offered by social assistance programs and income supplements, e.g., ODSP and OW, to align more closely with the higher costs of living in Toronto. Ensure that social assistance clawbacks in the event of spousal or personal income changes are minimized or controlled; this will encourage more financial independence for people who require ODSP or OW to make ends meet.

4. Form strong long-term partnerships with Black-centred social service and health agencies. These agencies can provide appropriate referrals and offer wraparound services, such as mental health support and food.
5. Improve access to and create new wraparound health and employment services, including primary care and free professional skill-building supports for Black populations. A community-based approach should be taken when planning and implementing these services to increase the likelihood of uptake, success, and longevity.



## HOUSING AND SHELTER

The data shows that the housing situation of Black people living in the city has worsened between 2011–2021. The number of Black community members living in inadequate, unsuitable, and unaffordable housing has increased between 2011–2021. To reverse this trend, our recommendations for housing and shelter are as follows:

1. Reinstate rent control in Ontario. Rent control was recently ended for housing first occupied after November 15th, 2018.
2. Increase systems-level housing investments in Black communities.
3. Improve income safety nets for Black communities, especially the amount of money provided by OW and ODSP.
4. Increase the amount of housing to meet city demand and lower overall housing costs (including rental costs).
5. Create specific housing programs for Black families experiencing homelessness.
6. Ensure that city housing standards are met in all rental units and all subsidized housing in the city.



## **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

Our findings indicate that in many areas of the city, there is a need to ensure that all Black families, caregivers, and communities have access to affordable, high-quality child care. Currently, there are areas of the city with large Black populations that remain underserved. To address this, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Increase overall access to child care to limit time spent on wait-lists.
2. Increase access to child care in areas with poor access. Ensure a less than 10-minute commute to child care for every family.
3. Build subsidized child care centres in underserved areas.
4. Continue to provide and increase child care subsidization to ensure that Black families can access care.
5. Conduct EDI assessments in all child care environments to ensure high standards of care.
6. Ensure that Black early childhood educators are hired and retained in child care.
7. Collect race-based information about the early development of Black infants and children.
8. Provide pathways for early identification and treatment of mental health and behaviour challenges in Black children.



## **FOOD SECURITY**

The data reveals that Black communities constitute the largest share of food-insecure households in Toronto. Although significant proportions of Black residents reside in the northeast and northwest areas of the city, essential food economy assets like food banks and community gardens are predominantly concentrated in the downtown core. As such, the following recommendations aim to address food insecurity:

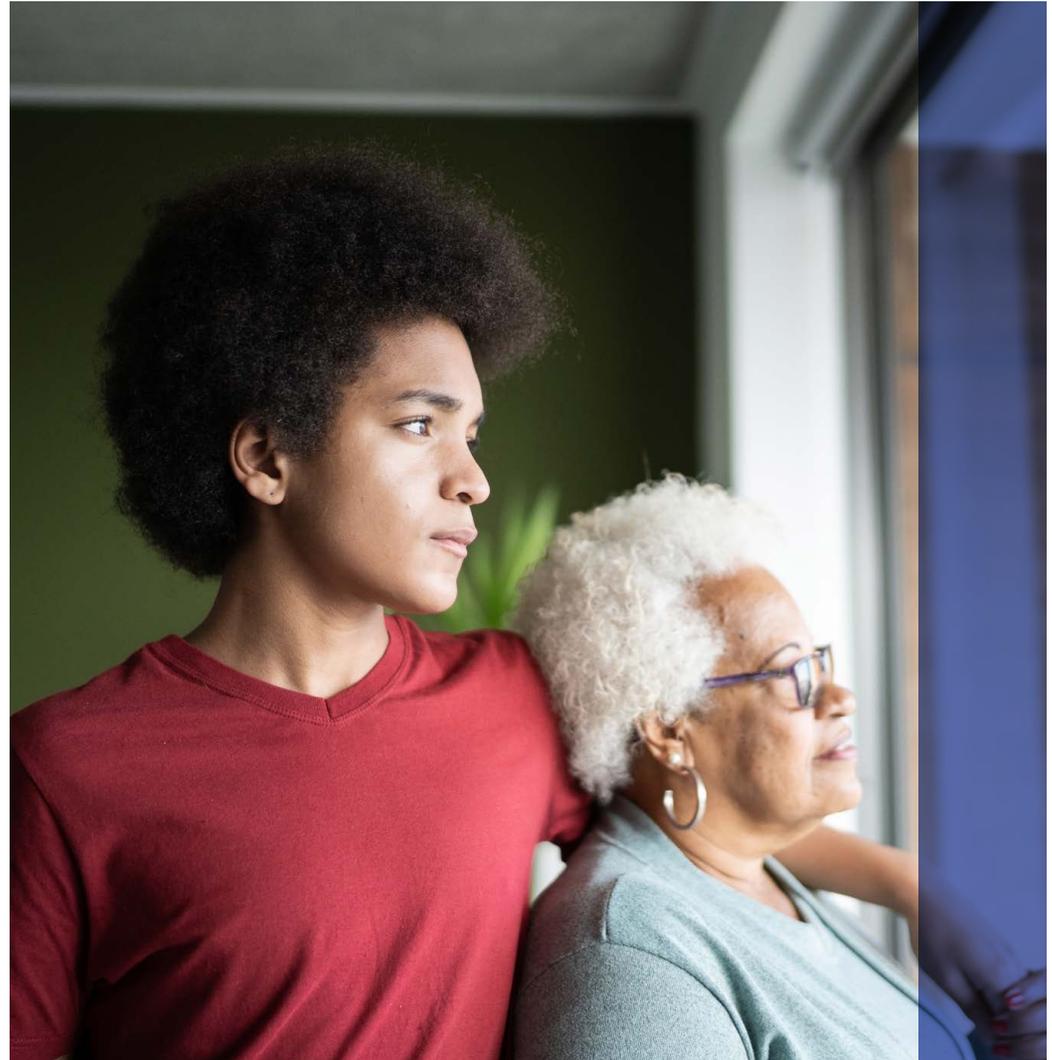
1. Invest in access to growing spaces and/or access to knowledge of urban agriculture.
2. Establish sustained supports, capacity building, and funding for Black-led, Black-serving, and Black-mandated food organizations to build and strengthen Black food security and sovereign community infrastructure.
3. Foster collaborations, such as social prescribing initiatives, between community food organizations and health and social service agencies to enhance food access, thereby promoting better population health and poverty alleviation.



# CONCLUSION

This report presents a visual representation of the disparities within Black communities in Toronto. These communities are situated in areas characterized by high rates of income inequality, housing precarity, food insecurity, and a deficiency of early childhood supports. These disparities serve as visible manifestations of structural anti-Black racism.

Many of these social determinants, such as the prevalence of substandard housing and unemployment rates, have only worsened over time for Black communities. There is an urgent need to acknowledge and rectify anti-Blackness across all social determinants of health.



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