

REFINE

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

REPORT

Prepared by Dr. LaDrea Ingram
on behalf of Grace Mar Training,
and Employment, LLC

**GRACE MAR TRAINING &
EMPLOYMENT, LLC**

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INTRODUCTION

According to the US Census Bureau, 17.4 million or 1 and 4 Black children live in a single parent household. Similarly, African Americans children are 60% more likely to live in a home without their biological father. It is important to note that family living arrangements impacts overall health and the educational outcomes of Black children. For example, children living in single family homes have lower academic achievement, greater risk for poverty, poor mental health outcomes and higher incarceration rates. The challenges of fatherhood involvement in African American communities are not limited to residential and non-residential fatherhood factors. There is a long history of discriminatory and systemic barriers that has disproportionately affected African American fatherhood involvement. Thus, to address the challenges of fatherhood involvement in African American communities, it is important to develop evidence-based programs that are specifically designed to support and empower African American fathers.

Developing an evidence-based program involves a five-step process: gathering evidence and assessing needs, program design and development, program implementation and delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainability. The first step begins with conducting a comprehensive needs assessment to identify goals, gaps, and program objectives through input from stakeholders and existing literature. The second step focuses on developing a program framework that uses evidence to design instructional strategies, assessment methods and learning objectives to help support the identified goals. The third step involves ensuring the program's effective delivery through the training of facilitators with regular professional development to maintain sufficient knowledge to operate the program. The fourth step relies on data collection and analysis to assess the program's effectiveness and inform program adjustments to ensure optimal impact. Finally, the fifth step ensures that the program remains sustainable over time by conducting an annual review to assess effectiveness based on feedback from stakeholders. This report focuses specifically on the first two steps of creating an evidence-based fatherhood program tailored to address historical and systemic barriers for African American fathers. By following these steps, Grace Mar's has developed an evidence-based programs designed to positively impact the lives of African American fathers, families, and communities.

EXECUTING AN EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Phase 1 Gathering Evidence and Assessing Needs: Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that includes input from teachers, students and community members to identify program objectives, goals, and gaps. Align the program with teaching standards and goals for the school or district.

Phase 2 Program Design and Development: Based on the needs assessment, develop a program framework that includes learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment methods that support student achievement of the identified goals. This phase helps to determine the scope, sequence, and pacing of the program.

Phase 3 Program Implementation and Delivery: Trained facilitators deliver the program. Facilitators should receive regular professional development to ensure that they are knowledgeable in the program's objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment methods. They should have access to supplemental resources for teaching and assessment.

Step 4 Monitoring and Evaluation: Collect and analyze evidence of the effectiveness of the program. Use ongoing assessment data and feedback to adjust content, instruction, and assessment methods to improve student success.

Step 5: Sustainability: The program must be sustainable over time. An annual review should be conducted where the effectiveness of the program is evaluated with input from stakeholders.



Methodology

Dr. Ingram and a team of four graduate student scholars conducted a needs assessment to describe the basic features of men in the African American community. To do so, the research team utilized a mixed-methods approach that included both secondary data analysis and primary data collection through listening sessions and a systematic review of the literature.

The secondary data review consisted of simple summaries and graphics to demonstrate the results of the review. To analyze the primary data collected through listening sessions, a document was created of all participant responses, highlight quotes constituting emergent themes. Action phrases were used to capture the emergent themes, and a table of the list of emergent themes was created to organize the list of emergent themes by categories. Two researchers engaged in the process of collectively analyzing data for emergent themes. After the categories were created, the researchers quantified responses for further analysis, which included participant voices that were captured through direct quotes to illustrate emergent themes.

For additional evidence gathering, the team conducted a detailed systematic review of the literature, which aided in the development of the needs assessment report, including developing the listening session material. Finally, the secondary data analysis, primary data collection, and literature review were merged to provide a detailed overview of recommendations for an intervention for African American fathers.

Review Process	Data Type
Governmental Data Sources	Secondary Data
Systematic Literature Review	Secondary Data
Listenings Sessions	Primary Data

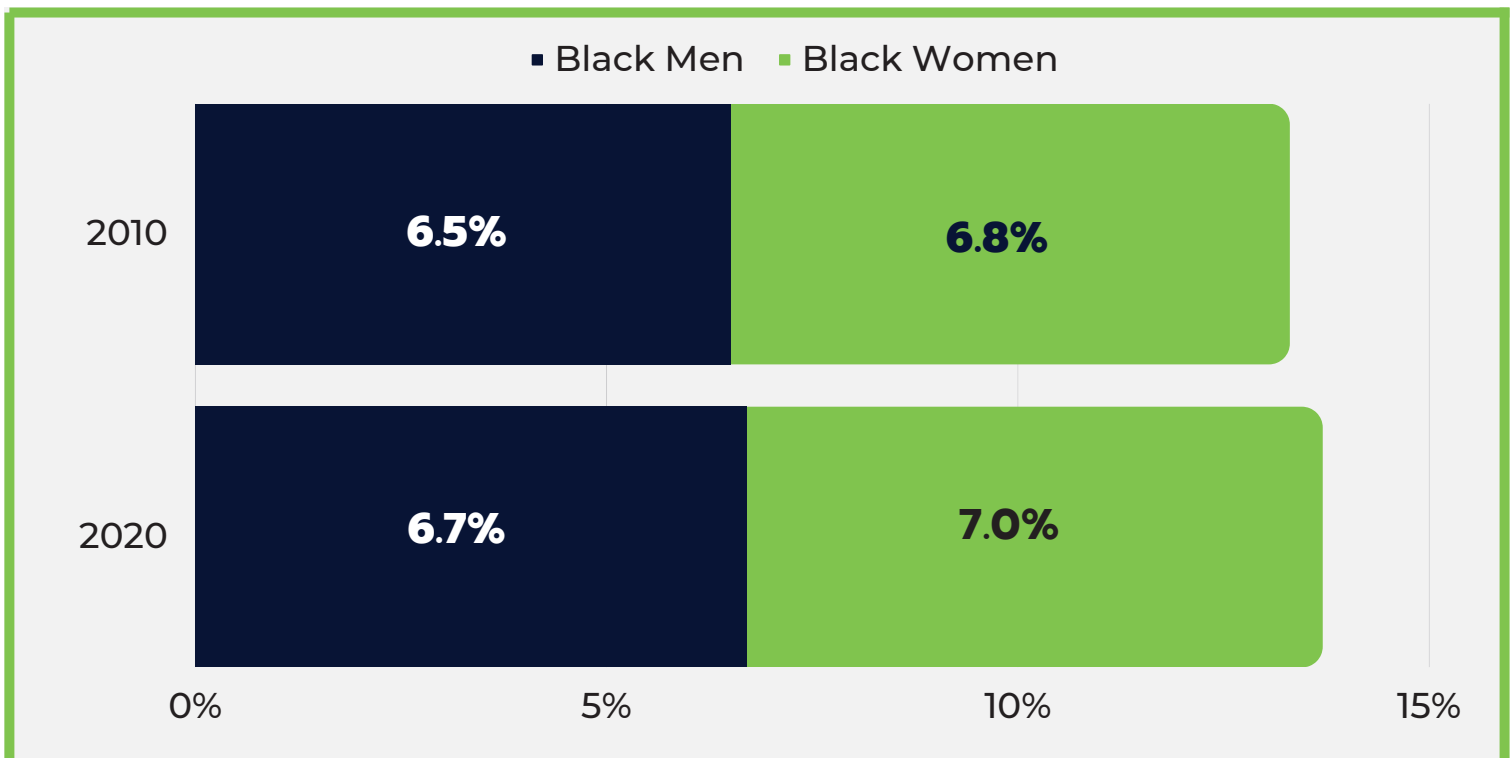


PHASE 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

Describes general demographics of African American fathers to include marital status, education, work status and other demographic characteristics.

INCREASE IN POPULATION GROWING NEEDS

According to the United States Census (2010, 2020), the Black or African American percentage of population grew from 13.3% (41.2 million) in 2010 to 13.7% (45.5 million) in 2020. As the US Census demographic questions improve, race and ethnicity definitions have expanded. For example, the below data highlights (Black alone), but recent data looks at a combination of races (i.e. mixed races). The Black or African American in combination population grew by 88.7% since 2010.



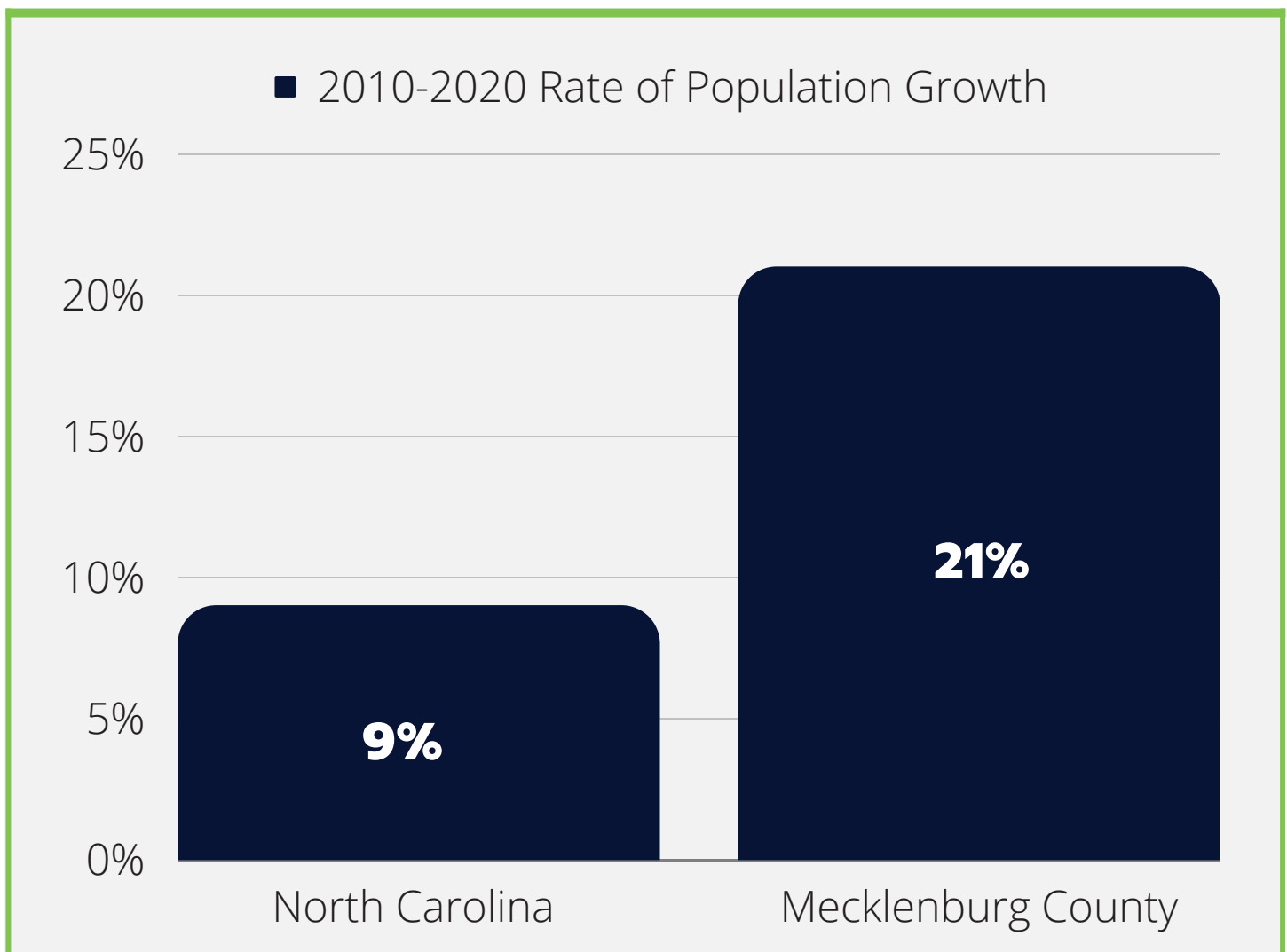
Important Notes:

In 2010 African American or Black men made up 6.5% of the population as compared to 6.8% in 2020. African American or Black women accounted for 6.8% percent of population in 2010 as compared to 7% in 2020

INCREASE IN POPULATION

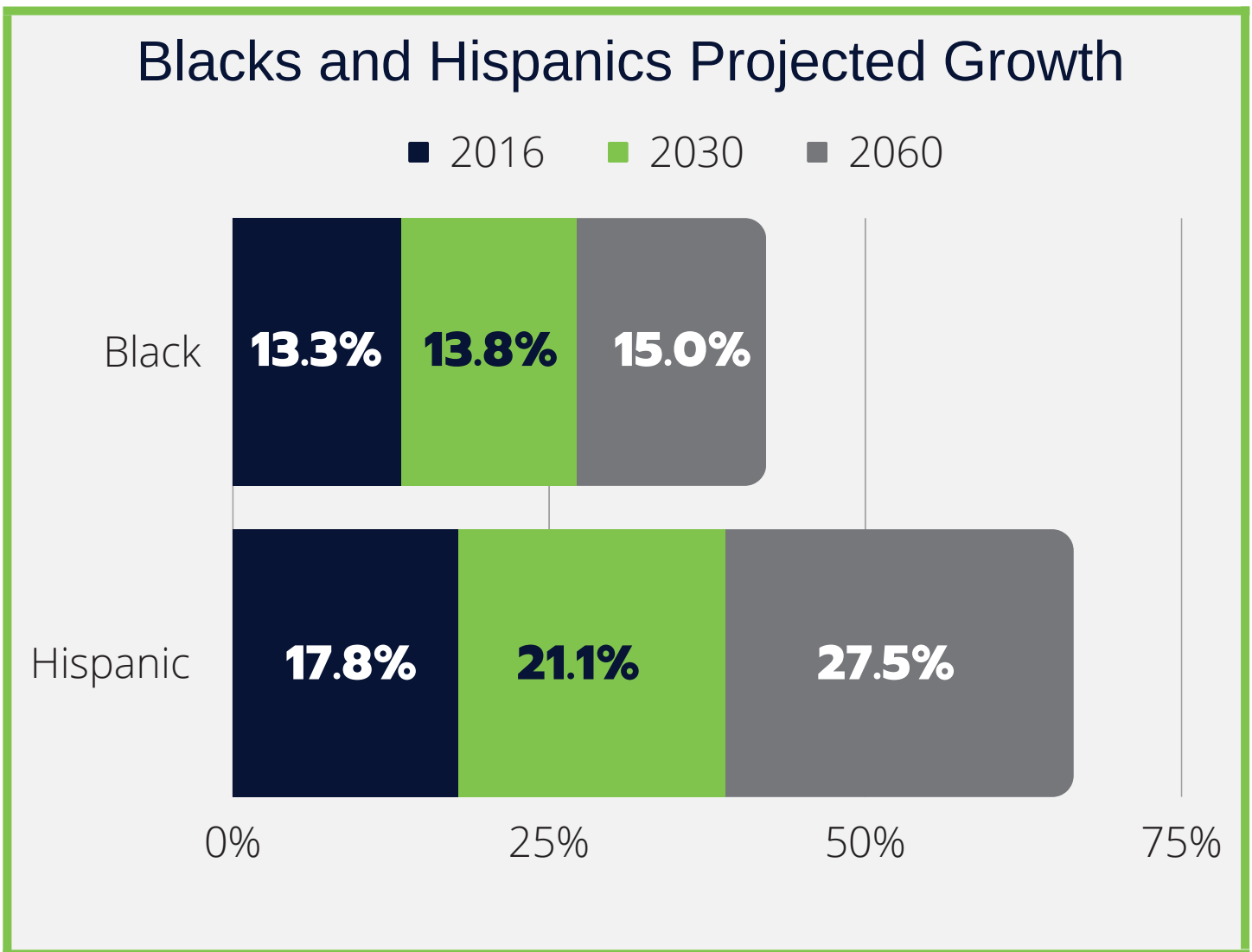
NC GROWTH RATES

North Carolina had a 9% population growth between 2010-2020, with one of the largest growth rates in Mecklenburg County (21%). North Carolina went from a population size of 9,535,483 to 10,439,388 over 10 years. Similarly, Mecklenburg County grew from 919,628 to 1,115,482 populations size from 2010-2020.

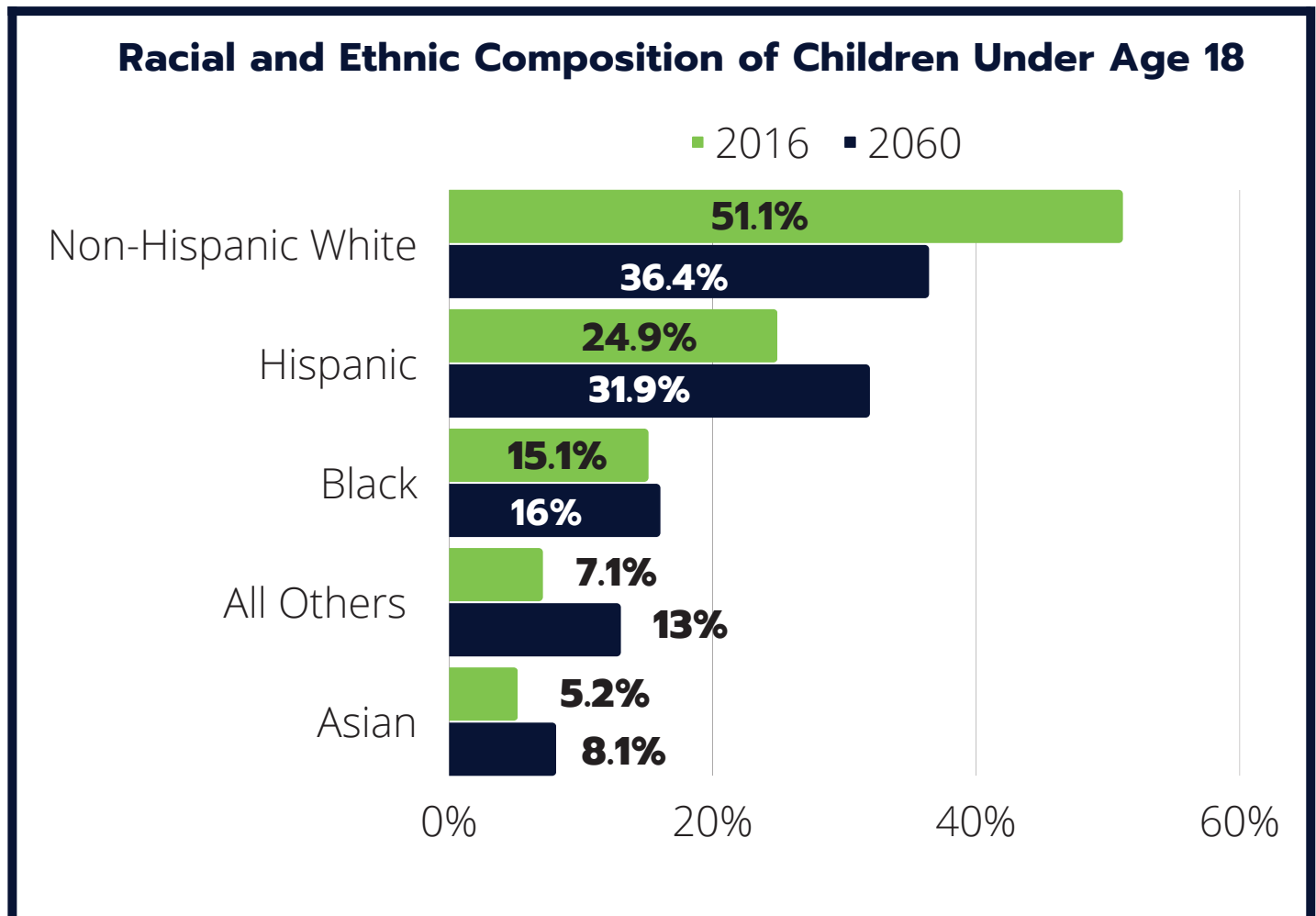


INCREASE IN POPULATION PROJECTED GROWTH RATES

African Americans are expected to have a 41% growth rate between 2016-2060. The Hispanic population is projected to grow by 93.5% between 2016-2060. According to the U.S. Census the minority population will become the majority by 2060. The non-Hispanic White population is projected to shrink by nearly 19 million people by 2060.



INCREASE IN POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY RACE

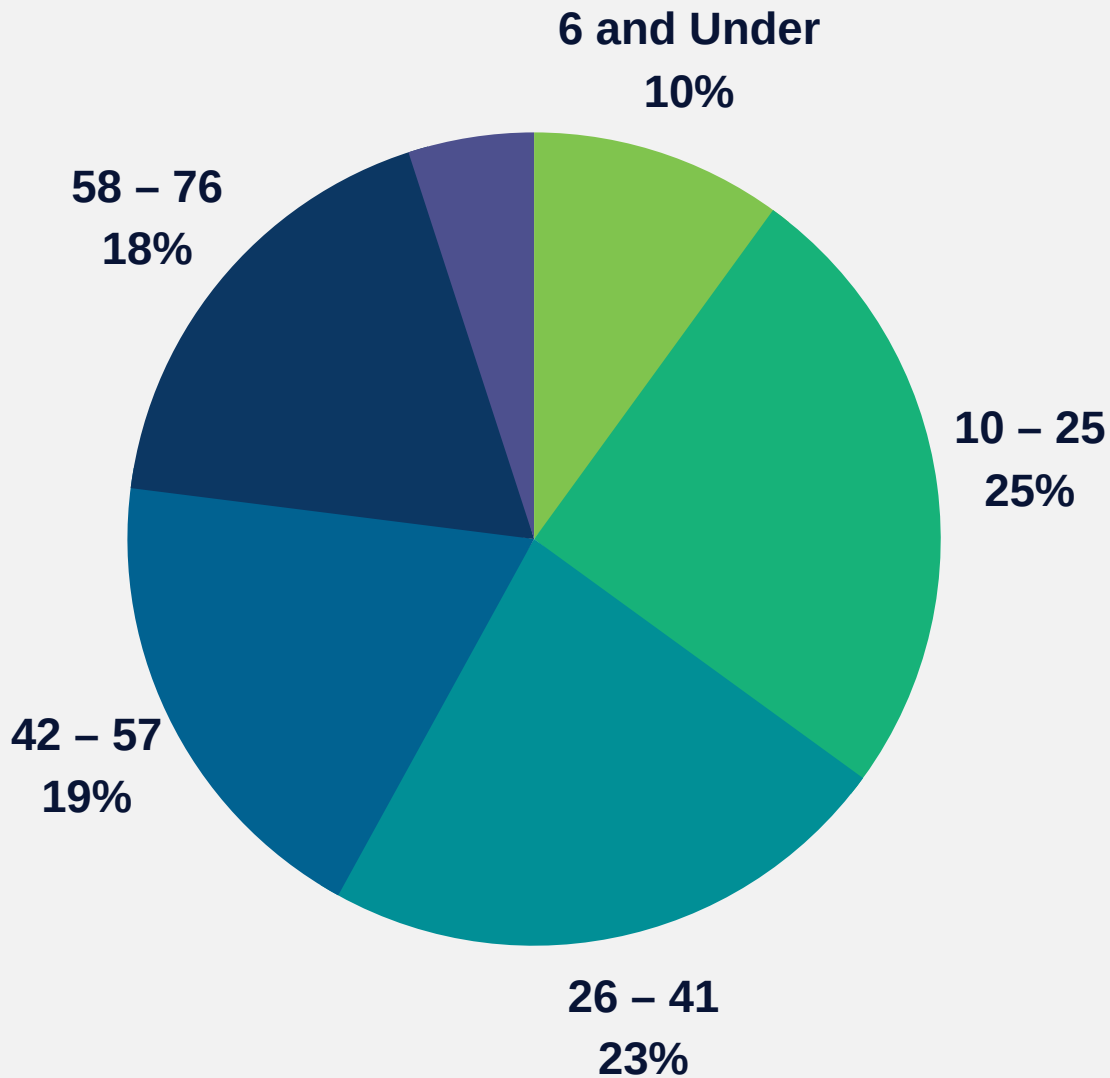


Important Notes:

The US Census projects that children who are non-Hispanic White will decrease from one-half to about one-third by 2060. The largest projected growth rate of children under age 18 by race are Hispanics. Black children under the age of 18 will be second largest minority group in the United States.

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTING

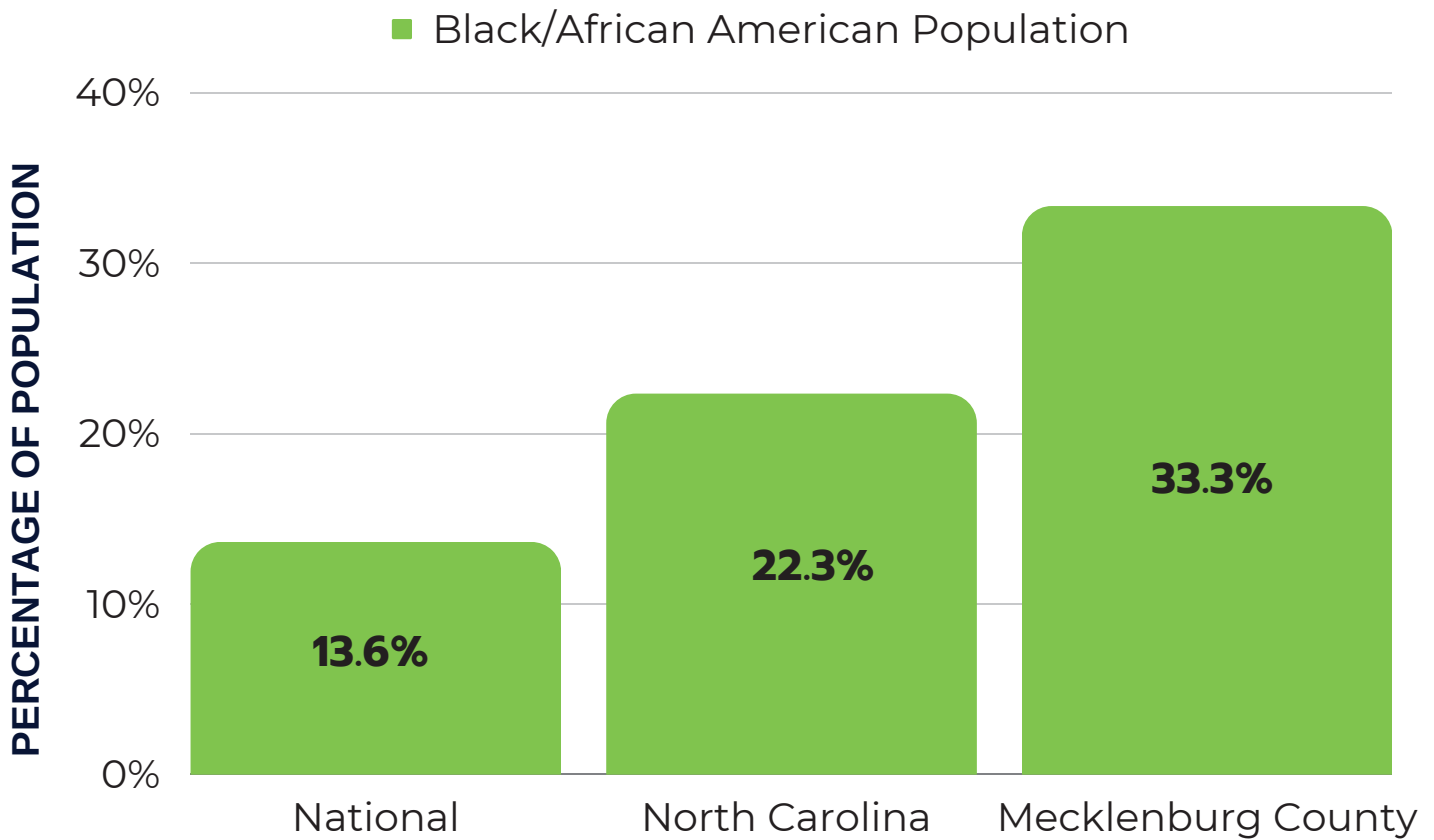
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BLACK POPULATION



Important Notes:

One quarter (25%) of the U.S. Black population were born between the ages of 7 to 22 in 2019. About 10% of the Black population are 6 and under. Together, 35% of the Black population are 22 or younger. The second largest age group that makes up 23% of black population are between the ages of 26 and 41.

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTING NATIONAL & STATE COMPARISONS



There are roughly 2.2 million African Americans living in North Carolina. About 6% of the U.S. African American population live in North Carolina. African American's make up over 30% of population in Mecklenburg County. The data suggest that within North Carolina, Mecklenburg county has the highest percentage of the African American population.



DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTING

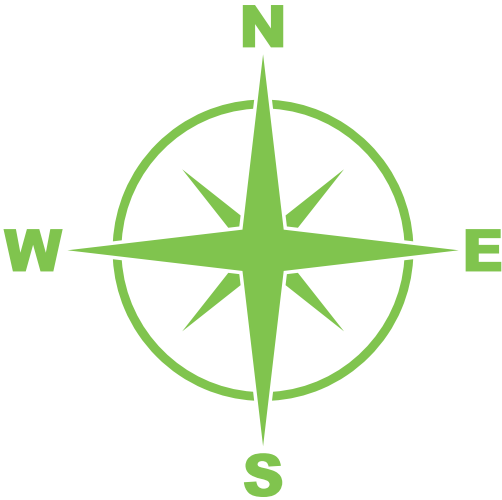
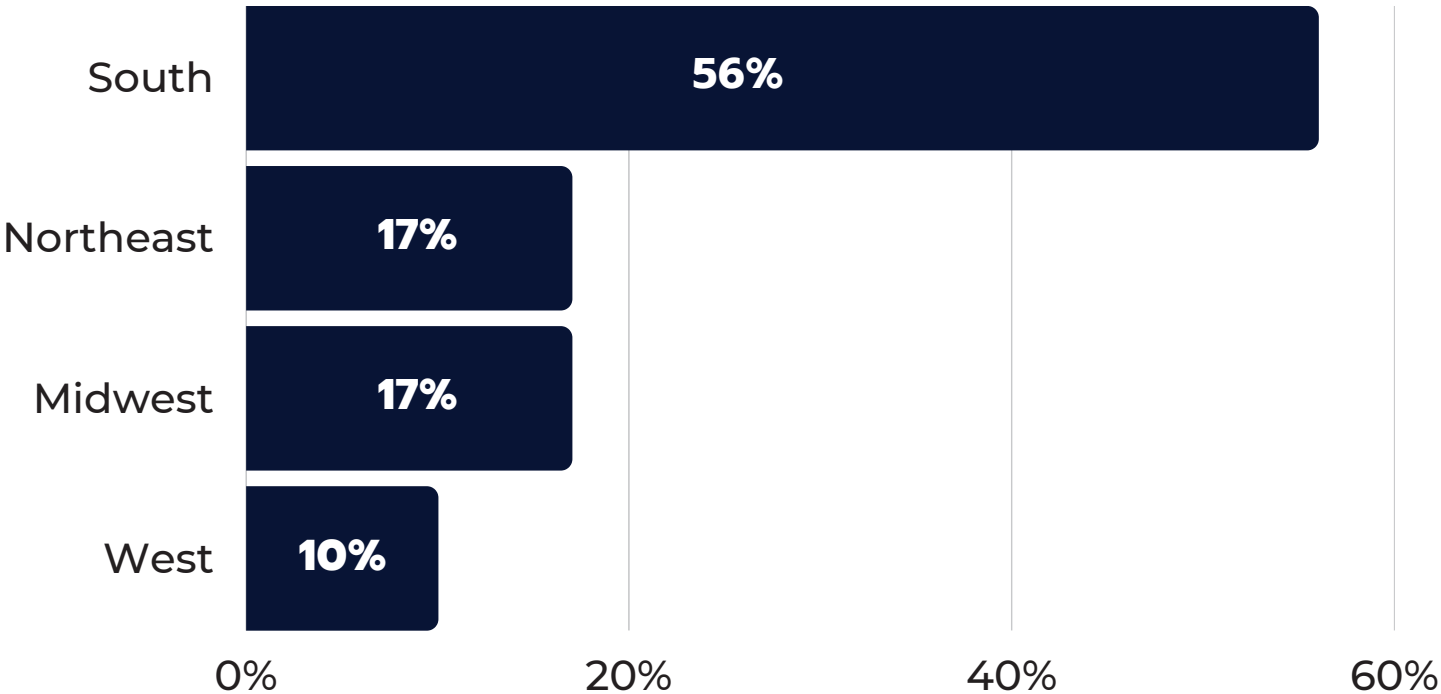
Below are the top 10 states with the largest African American population. North Carolina has the fifth largest African American population.

1	Texas
2	Georgia
3	Florida
4	New York
5	North Carolina
6	California
7	Maryland
8	Illinois
9	Virginia
10	Louisiana

REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

PERCENTAGE OF U.S. BLACK POPULATION

Blacks/African Americans are the second largest minority population in the United States. In 2019, the majority of blacks lived in the U.S. South (56% percent of the black U.S. population).



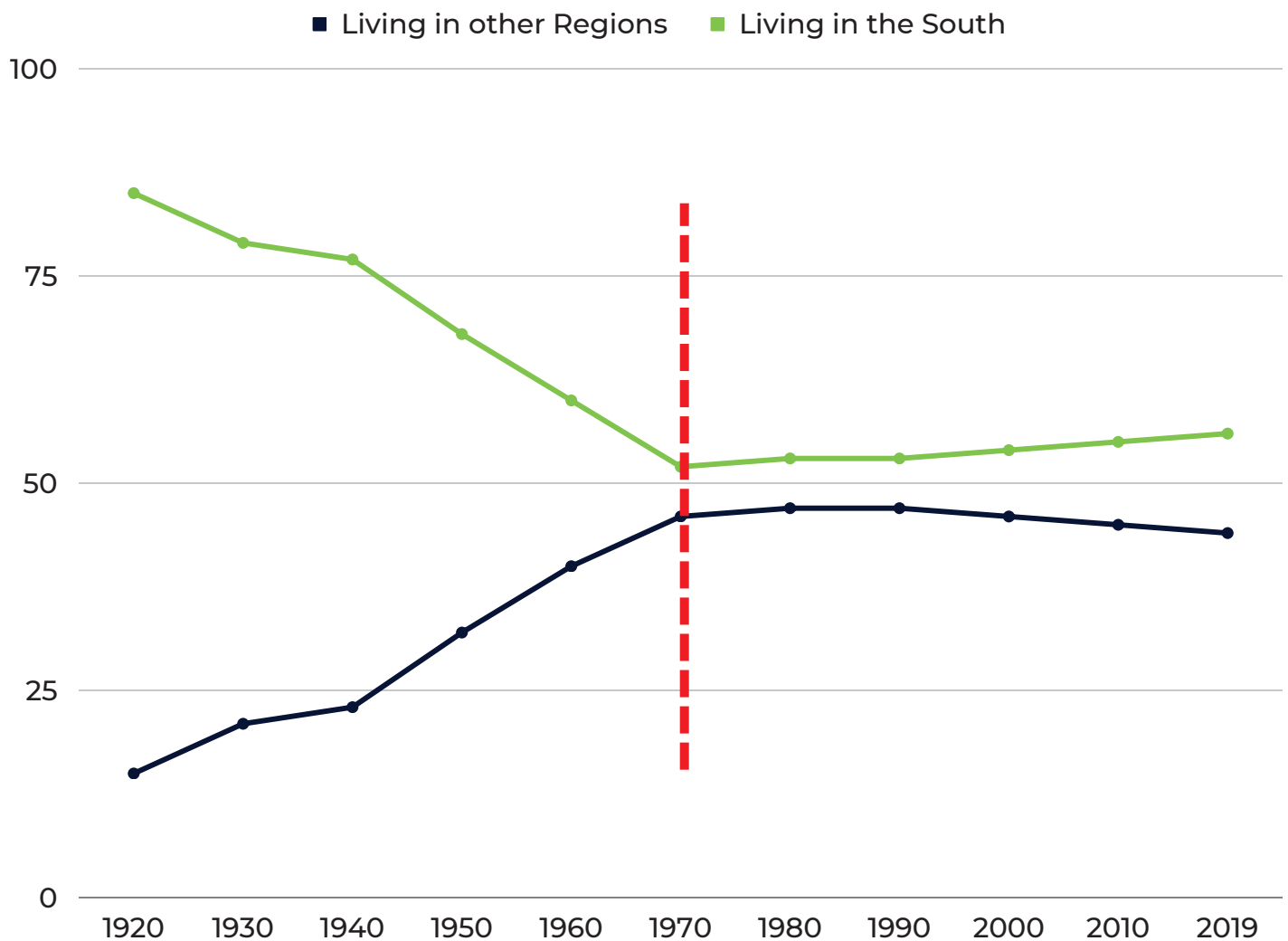
Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2019 American Community Survey

DEMOGRAPHICS

MIGRATION PATTERNS OF BLACK POPULATION

The Pew Research Center (2019) highlights the shares and migration patterns of the Black population who live in the South. The data table demonstrates a 4 percentage point increase in the proportion of the Black population who live in the South between 1970 (52%) and 2019 (56%).

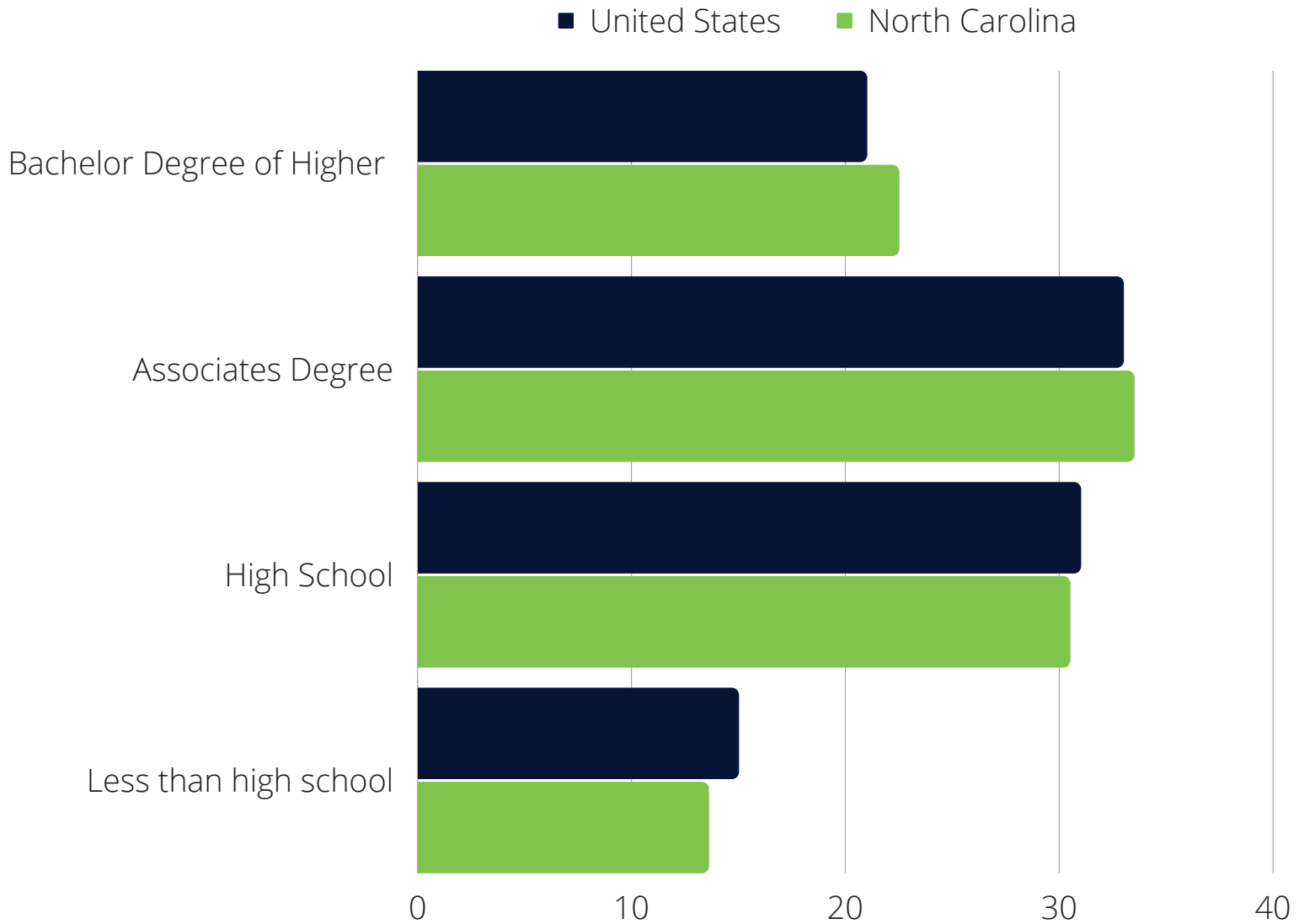
1920-2019 Black Population Living in the South



Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2019 American Community Survey

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTING

Black African American Educational Attainment



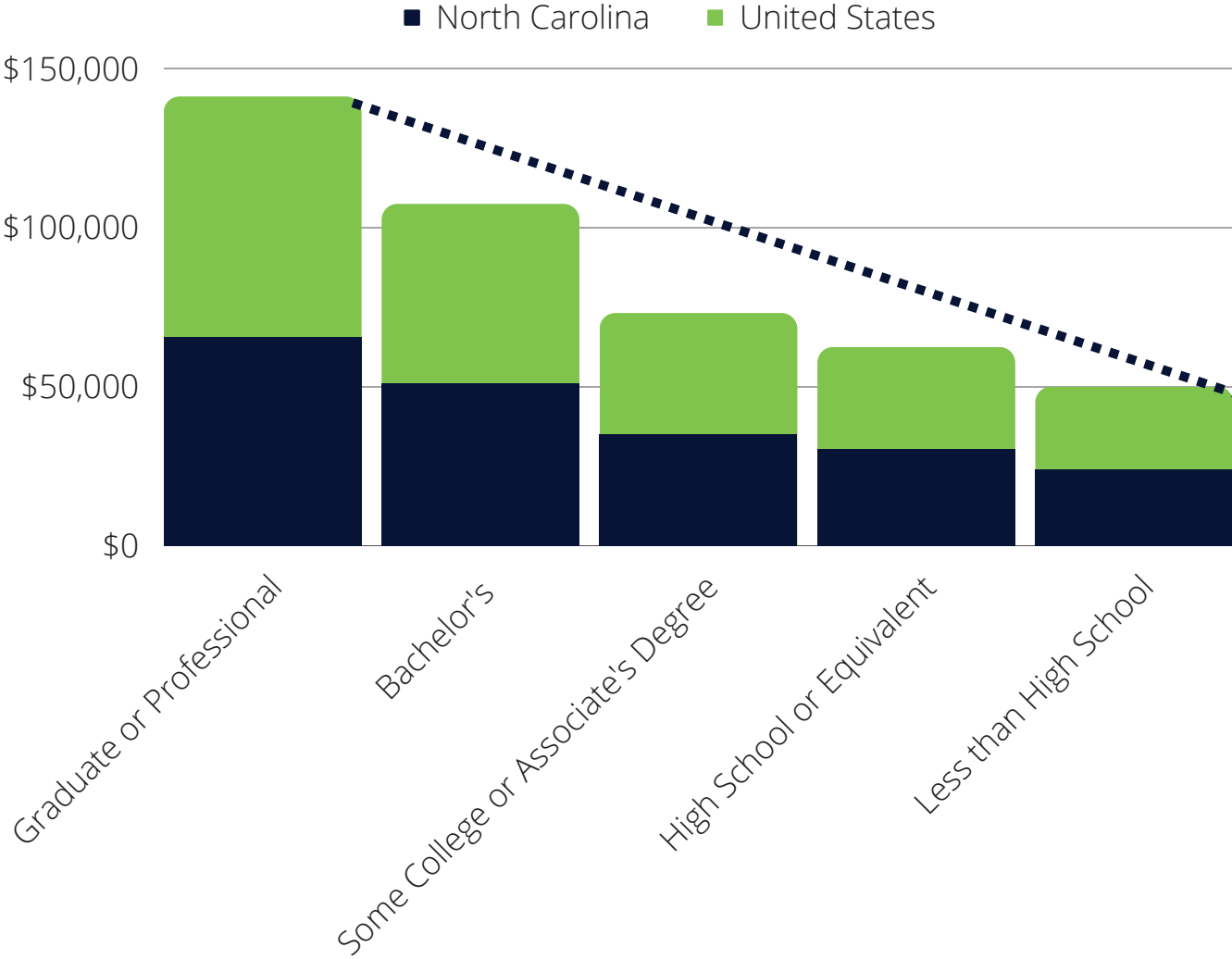
Important Notes:

African Americans in North Carolina have a higher level of educational attainment than the U.S. national average. About 22.5% of African Americans in North Carolina have a Bachelors degree or higher as compared to 21% of the U.S. population.

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTING

BLACK ECONOMICS

Earnings Based on Education



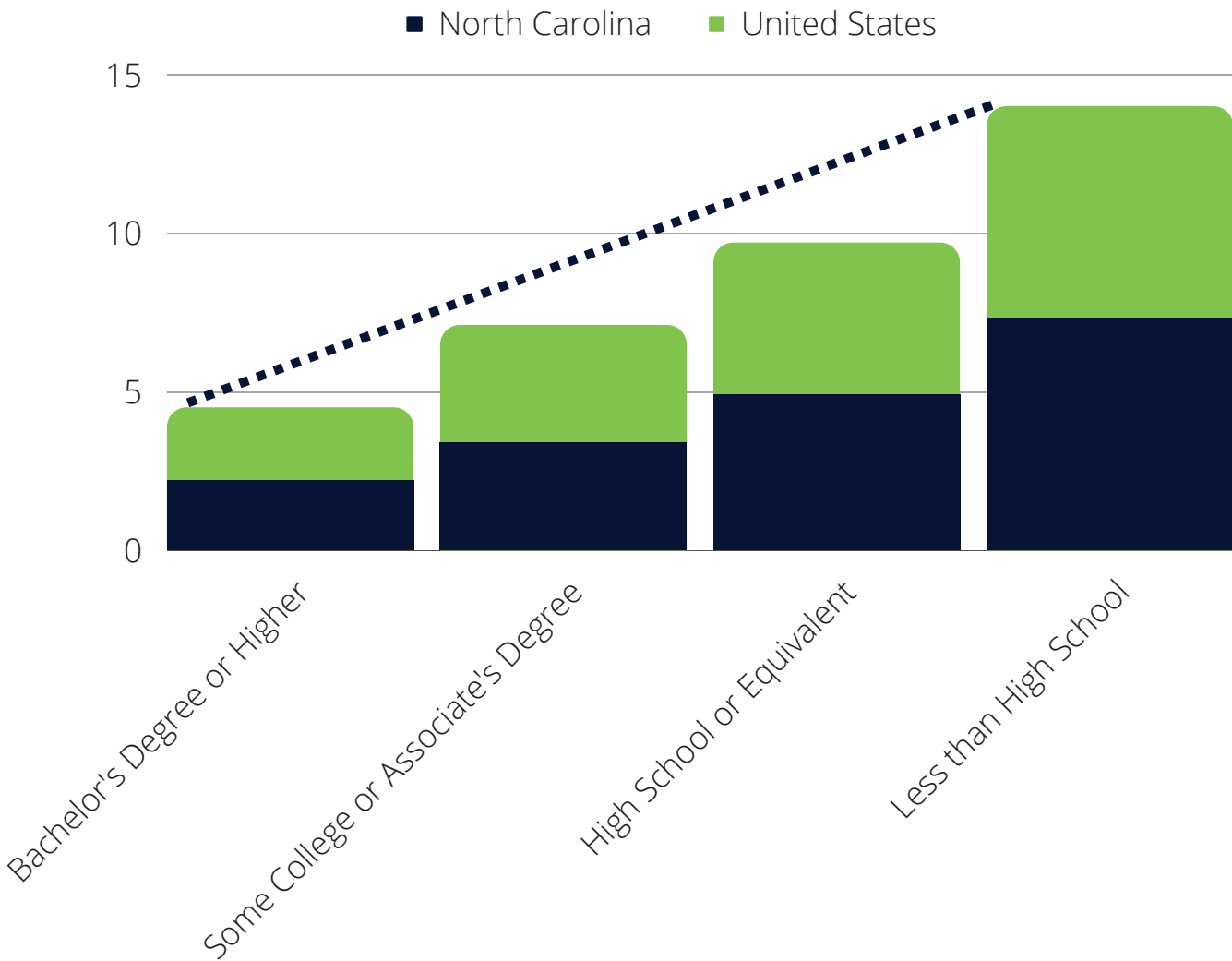
Earnings are linked to education attainment. African Americans with a graduate degree have higher earnings.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 and the North Carolina data calculated by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond from ACS data

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTING

BLACK ECONOMICS

Unemployment Rate and Education



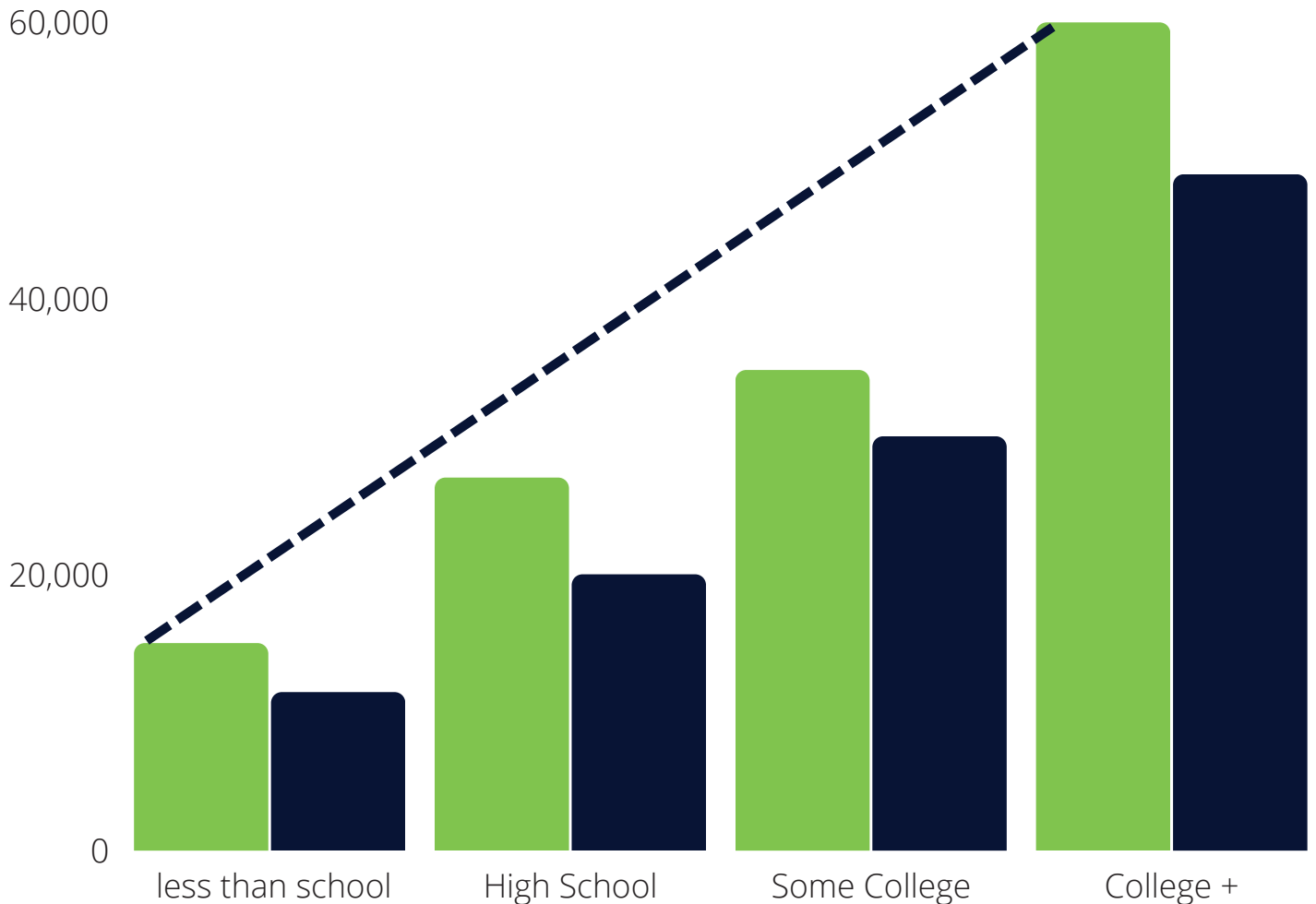
Blacks with less than a high school diploma have the highest rates of unemployment (7.3% in NC and 6.7% in the U.S.)

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016 and the North Carolina data calculated by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond from ACS data

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTING BLACK ECONOMICS

Economic Disparities

■ Non Hispanic White ■ Black

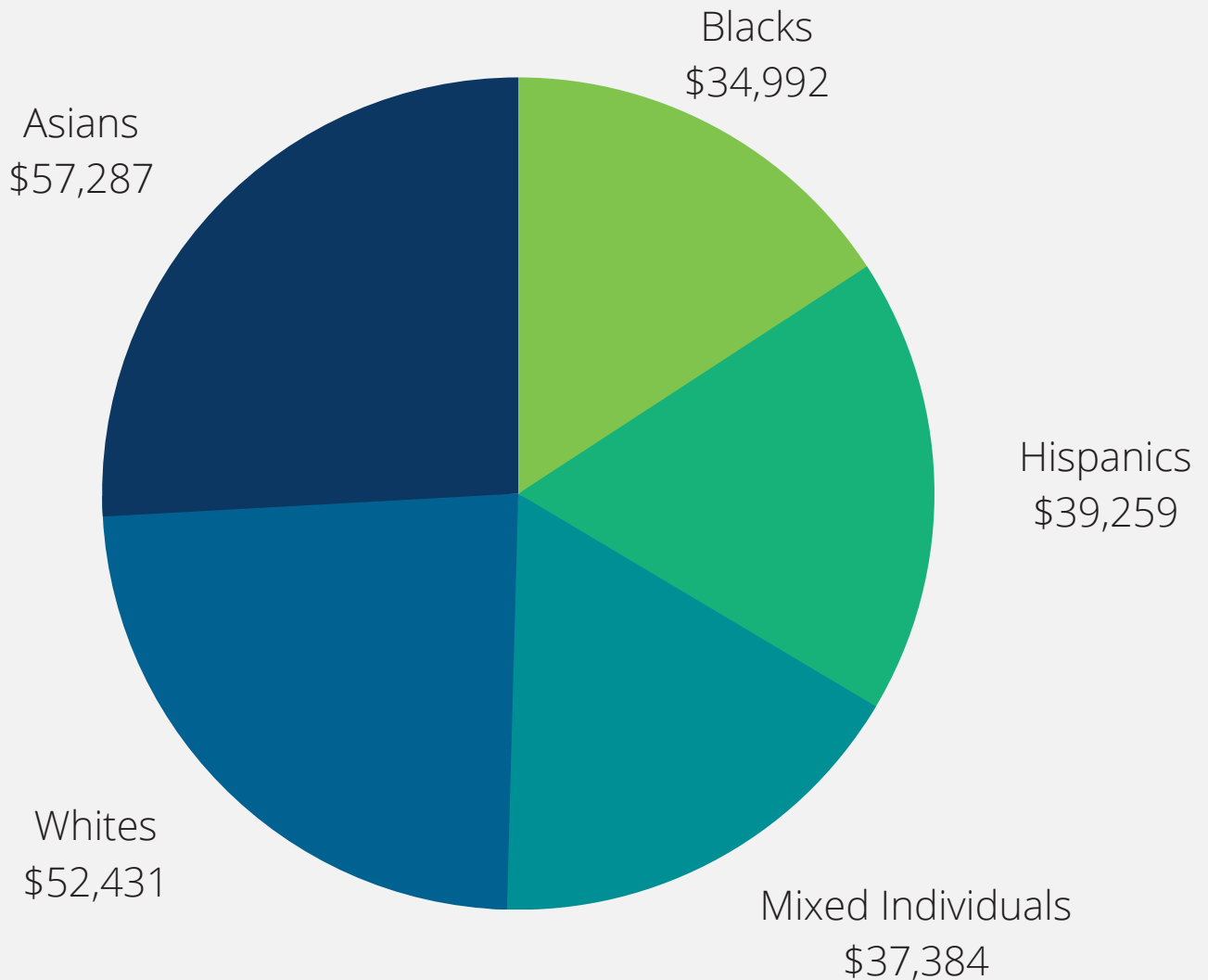


The largest salary gap disparity based on educational attainment is in income for Blacks with a college degree. Non-Hispanic Whites make \$19,000 more than Blacks with a college education.

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTING

BLACK ECONOMICS CHARLOTTE, NC

Disproportionate Income Across Racial Groups



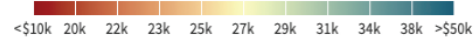
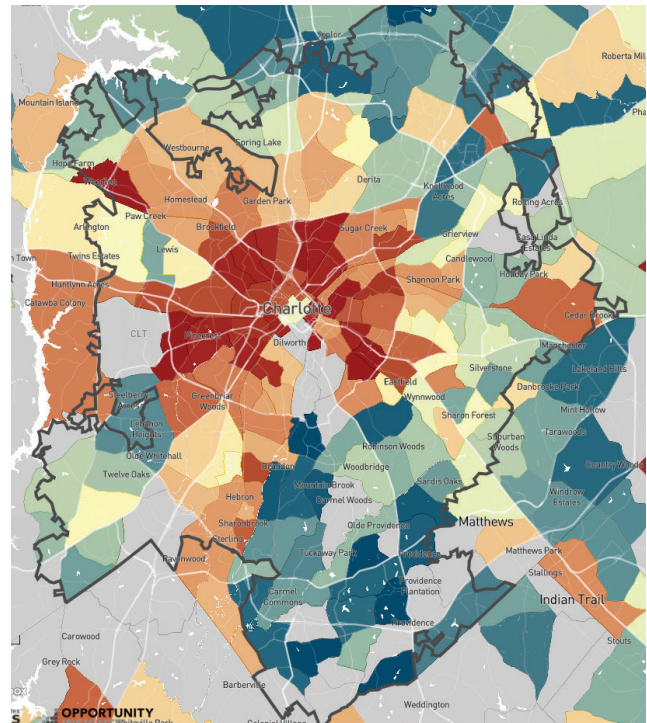
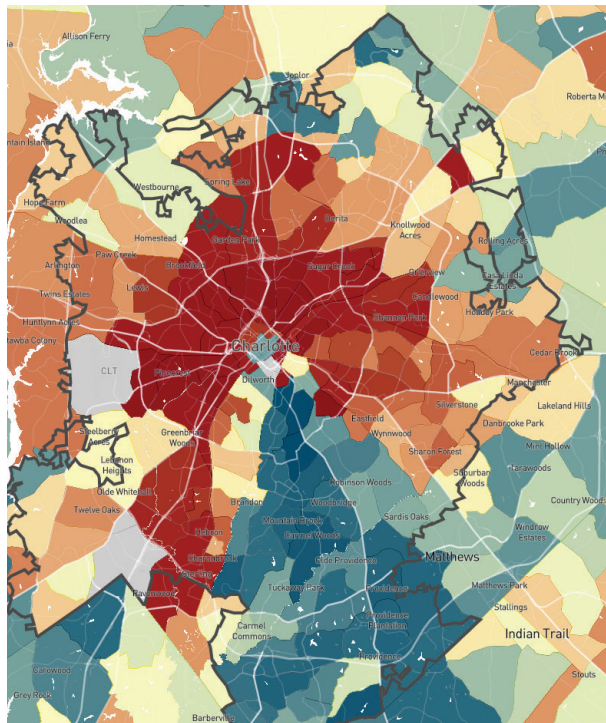
Things to Consider:

There are racial disparities in average wages in Charlotte, NC. According to the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance, when examining workers employed at least one year across all industries, average wages for Blacks (\$34,992), Hispanics (\$39,259), and mixed individuals (\$37,384) are significantly lower than whites (\$52,431) and Asians (\$57,286)

Source: Charlotte Regional Business Alliance. Economic Disparities Report

Charlotte Household Income

The median household income in Charlotte is \$65,359 with 11.9% of the population living in poverty. Of the 11.9% living in poverty, 19.8% identify as African American.



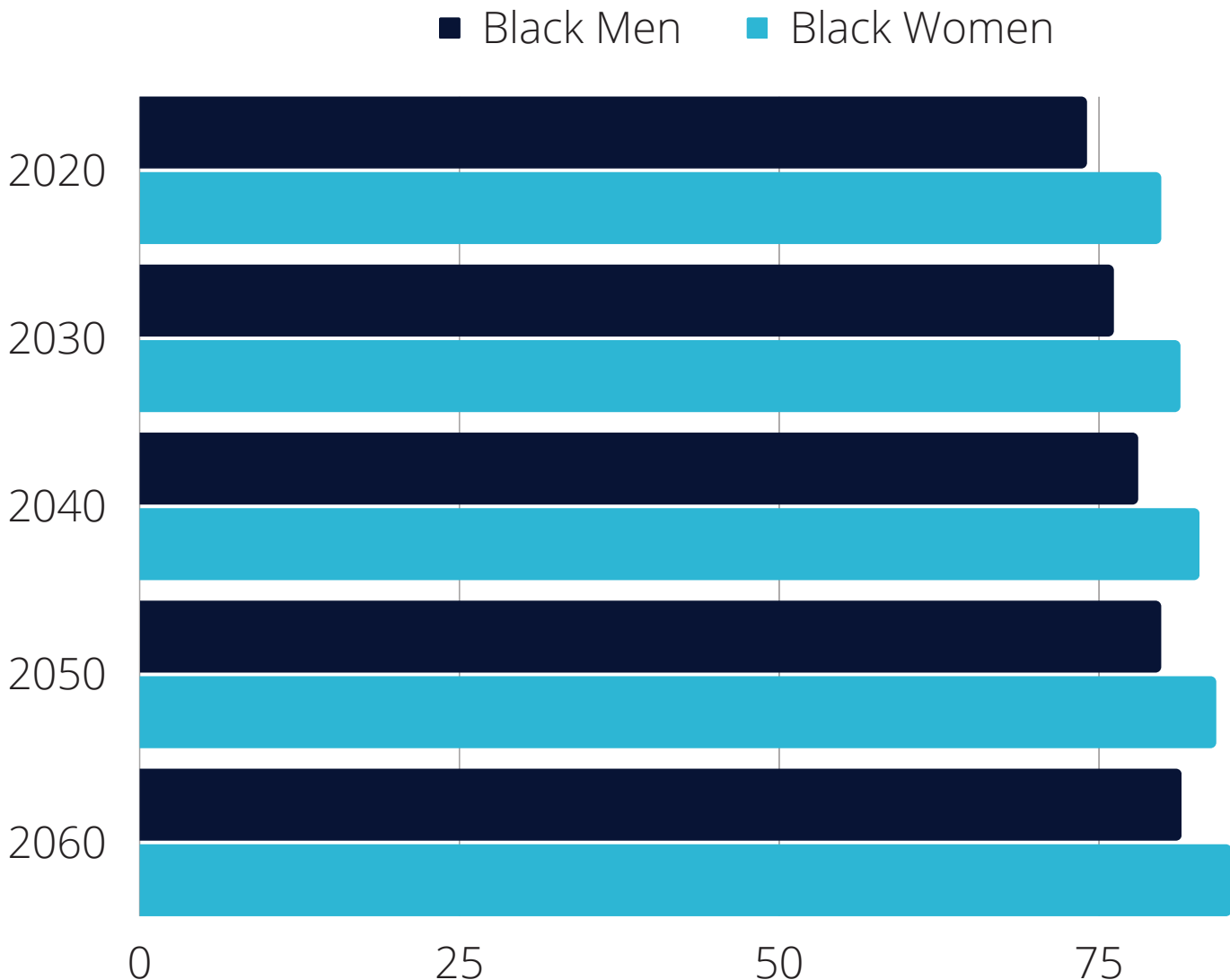
The map of Charlotte on the right represents the household income including all races. The map on the left represents the household income for only those who identify as African American. This demonstrates that black individuals in Charlotte have a lower household income compared to the average of all races. It is important to consider intergenerational poverty in Charlotte, NC.



PHASE 1: HEALTH STATUS

Describes the health status of African American men including life expectancy rates, leading causes of death, and mental health outcomes.

Life Expectancy Rates Blacks in the United States



According to Office of Minority Health and Health Equity projections, over the next four decades, it is projected that Black women's life expectancy is roughly 5 years longer than Black men. Life expectancies at birth for blacks are 77.0 years, with 79.8 years for women, and 74.0 years for men. For non-Hispanic whites the projected life expectancies are 80.6 years, with 82.7 years for women, and 78.4 years for men.

Source: Office of Minority Health & Health Equity (OMHHE)

2012 – 2016 Leading Causes of Premature Death and Average Years of Life Lost.

Mecklenburg County

Cause of Death	Average Year of Life Lost Per Death
Cancer	18.3 years
Diseases of Heart	4.9 Years
Alzheimer's disease	9.1 Years
Stroke	13.9 Years
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	13.4 Years
Suicide	36.8 Years
Homicide	47.9 Years

10 Leading Causes of Death Black Men in United States

Rank	Cause of Death	%
1	Diseases of the heart	23.7%
2	Cancer	20.2%
3	Unintentional injuries	7.9%
4	Homicide	5.0%
5	Stroke	4.9%
6	Diabetes	4.3%
7	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	3.2%
8	Kidney disease	2.6%
9	Septicemia	1.7%
10	Hypertension	1.6%

Source: Office of Minority Health & Health Equity (OMHHE)

10 Leading Causes of Death Black Men in North Carolina

Rank	Cause of Death	%
1	Cancer	21%
2	Diseases of the heart	20.8%
3	Cerebrovascular diseases	5.2%
4	Diabetes	5.0%
5	All other unintentional injuries	4.8%
6	Homicide	3.9%
7	Kidney disease	3.4%
8	Motor vehicle injuries	3.1%
9	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	3.0%
10	Septicemia	1.9%

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina

10 Leading Causes of Death Black Men in Mecklenburg County

Rank	Cause of Death	%
1	Cancer	21%
2	Diseases of the heart	18.4%
3	Homicide	6.1%
4	Diabetes	5.3%
5	All other unintentional injuries	5.1%
6	Cerebrovascular diseases	5.1%
7	Kidney disease	3.4%
8	Motor vehicle injuries	3.2%
9	Alzheimer's disease	2.7%
10	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	2.7%

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina

NC Black Men & Mental Health

Due to the numerous challenges and barriers African Americans face in America including discrimination, historical trauma, and systemic racism, the mental health of fathers and youth is adversely affected. Therefore, mental health must be prioritized while reducing barriers to care such as medical mistrust, access to quality care, and addressing mental health stigma.

Black Men 18 and Older

Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?

1-2 Days	3-7 Days	8-29 Days	30 Days
6.1%	9.9%	8.7%	5.1%

Addressing mental health reduces an individual's risk of depression and anxiety, improves clearer thinking, improves physical health, and improves relationships, thus increasing the probability of stronger connections between fathers and their children.



PHASE 1: STRUCTURAL & SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

Describes the structural and systemic barriers of fatherhood. Using a social ecological model, fatherhood identify development and fatherhood involvement is explored.

Fatherhood Identity Development

Who Am I As Father?

Identity development is shaped by individual values and beliefs and how these two entities connect to their commitment, self-confidence, sense of dependence, and relationships. Erikson (1980) suggests this process as the fundamental organizing principle that is ongoing throughout a person's life. The most critical period of identity development happens during adolescence when cognitive development of the "sense of self" is framed. Exposure to role models helps form a continuous self-image as other aspects of self develops over time (Erikson, 1980).

Historical Trauma and Racism

When developing a fatherhood identity, exploring the historical and racial trauma unique to African American fathers is critical. African American fathers have experienced slavery, oppressive policies such as Jim Crow Laws, and drug policies leading to mass incarceration. Systemic oppression has increased the risk for African Americans to have a lower level of education, lower socioeconomic status, higher risk of poverty, higher risk of racism and discrimination, higher risk of incarceration, and a higher risk of physical and mental health outcomes (Chung et al., 2014). In addition, these barriers are often intergenerational, causing generations of African American children to grow up in fatherless homes. Many young men have limited exposure to a positive fatherhood role model, which is why fatherhood interventions are needed to assist in breaking this cycle.

Cultural Process of Partnering

Racial Socialization in Fatherhood Identity Development

Socioecological Lens of Fatherhood

The Social Ecological Model acknowledges the multidimensional levels influencing fatherhood involvement. These dimensions include the societal, community, relationship, and individual level. In addition to viewing the impacts from each separately, it is important to understand how these multidimensional factors intersect.

Individual

- Income
- Education Attainment
- Mental Health Status
- Personal Traits
- Behavior Patterns
- Individual Strengths

Relationship

- Social Network
- Martial Status
- Father involvement
- Mother involvement
- Friendships

Community

- Neighborhood Characteristics
- Violence in community
- Social environment (school, workplace, neighborhoods, and places of worship)

Societal

- Cultural belief systems
- Societal norms
- Social policies that promote inequality

Fatherhood Involvement

Residential V Non Residential

African American fathers have the highest rates of nonresidential family arrangements. According to the National Survey of Family Growth, nonresidential Black fathers are more involved in their children's daily activities than their white and Hispanic counterparts. More recently, Ellerbe et al. (2018) found that nonresidential fathers saw their children more days per month, engaged more frequently in father-child activities, showed higher shared responsibility, and showed better co-parenting with mothers than their White and Hispanic counterparts.

It is worth noting that despite such involvement, there are risk factors associated with children living in single-parent homes. These risk factors are likely related to social drivers such as economic, health, policy, and other social-ecological factors impacting fatherhood involvement. Thus, acknowledging nonresidential fathers' social and systemic barriers is essential to consider in future intervention development.



North Carolina Incarceration

"People of color, notably African American men, are imprisoned at disproportionate rates and tend to face harsher punishment for similar crimes as their white counterparts. There are enormous health, social, and economic consequences of incarceration for both the imprisoned person, their families, and our communities."
(Healthy North Carolina, 2030)



In North Carolina, African Americans are incarcerated at 6 times the rates of white Americans, and this has a significant impact on fatherhood in the African American community, specifically reunification challenges post incarceration.

Outcomes of Fatherlessness

Data Source: Modern Gentlemen Statistics

350% Adolescent daughters are 350% more likely to become pregnant.

Increased rates of suicide in high school students.



Predictor of future behavior problems.

Juveniles from fatherless homes are 279% more likely to carry guns and participate in drug trafficking.

279%



Lower educational levels.

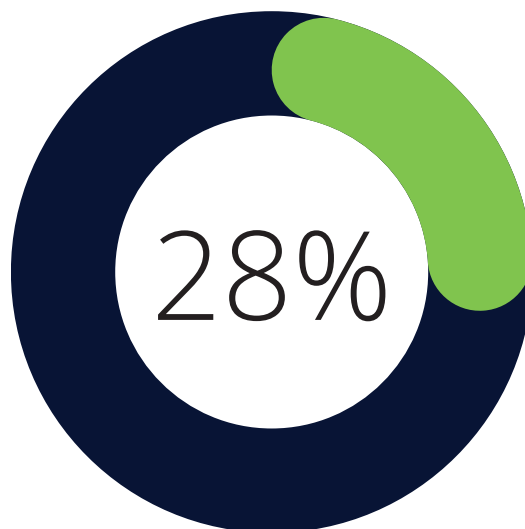
BLACK MOTHER HOUSEHOLDS

Black Single Mother Households



Data Source: Statista Research Department. Number of black single mothers U.S. 2020.

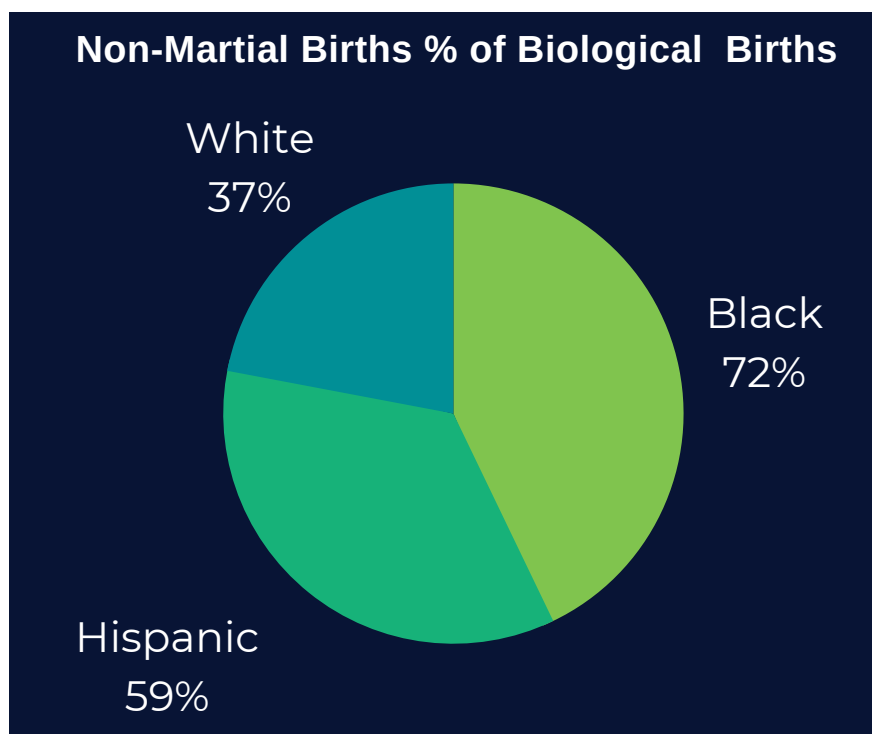
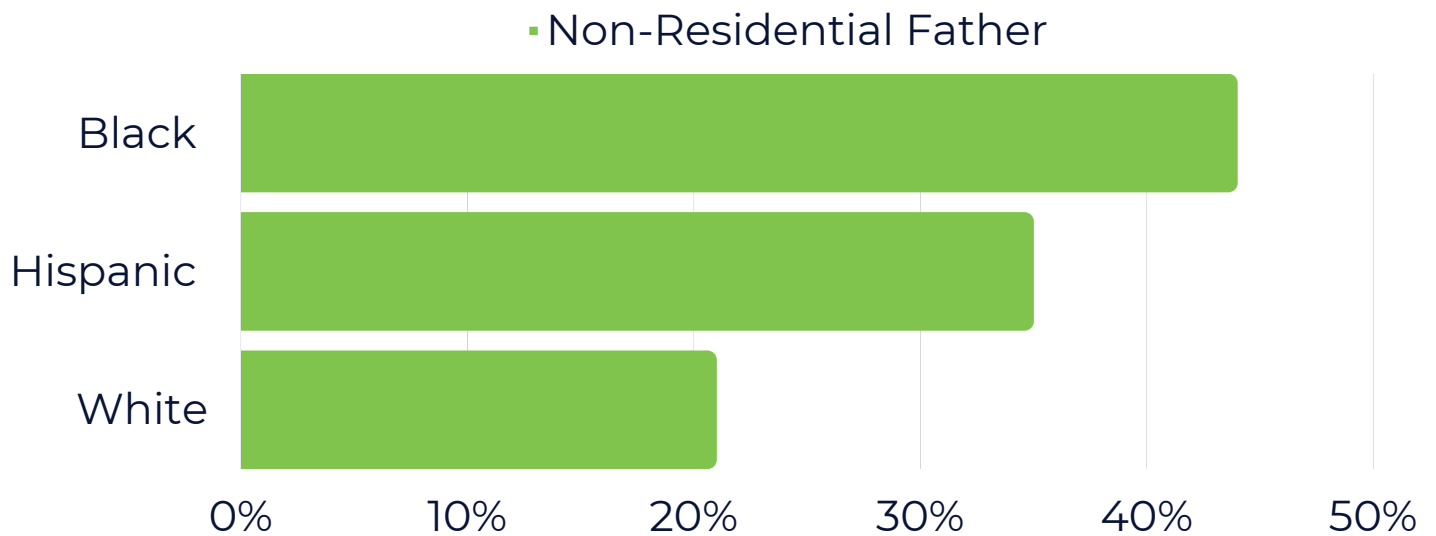
Of the 4.3 million single Black mothers, 28.1% live below the federal poverty line.



Data Source: Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, October 8). America's families and living arrangements:

Black Father's Living Arrangements

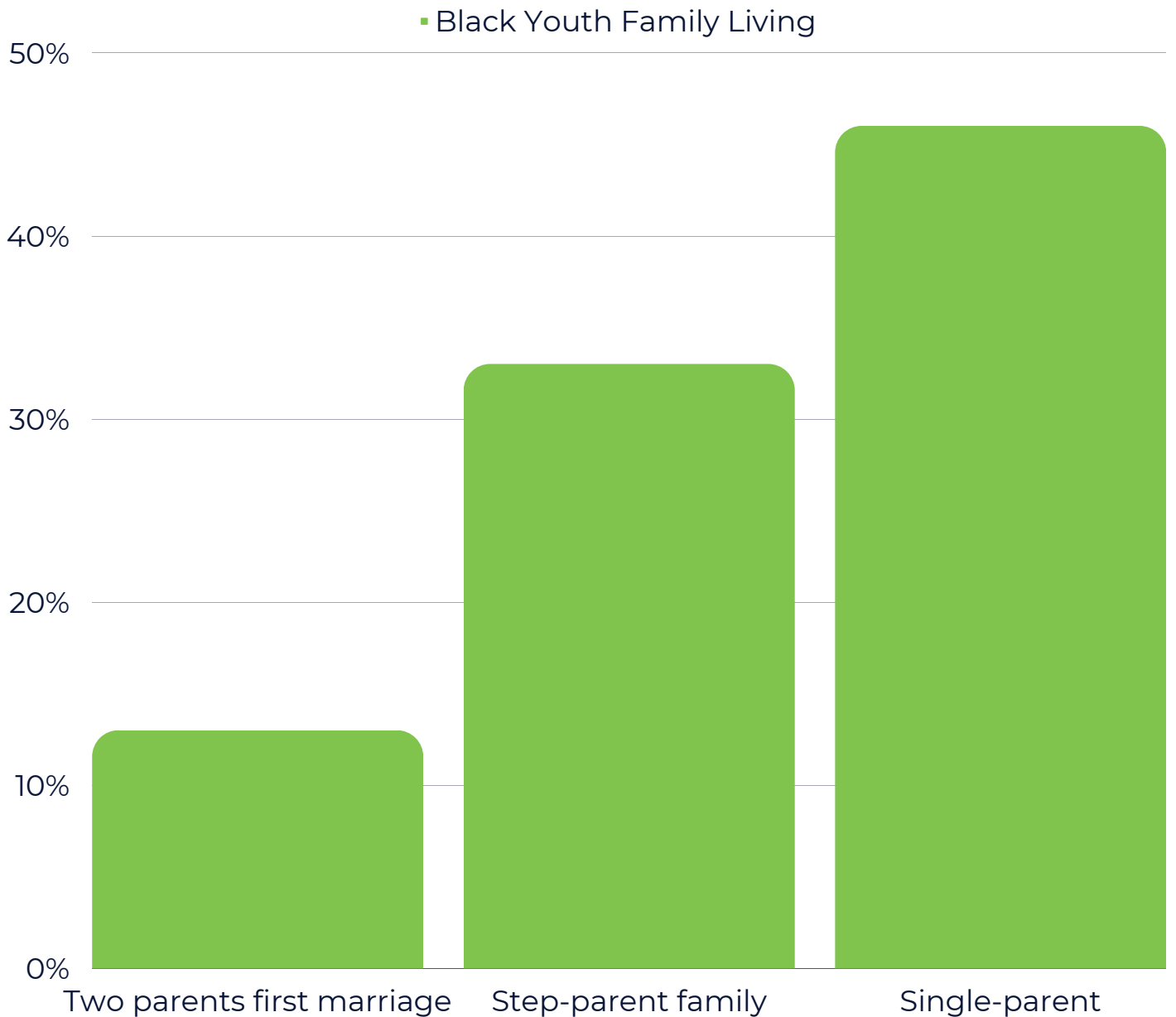
Fathers' living arrangements have been found to impact overall fatherhood involvement in their children's day to day activities. Data collected from the National Family Growth survey suggest a strong correlation between race, ethnicity, marital status and residential fathers. The data indicates that Black fathers are more likely to live apart from their children and have non marital births.



Roughly 44% of African men are non residential fathers, while 72% have non-martial births. Non-residential fathers were more likely to have lower levels of educational attainment and 39% making less that \$30,000 per year.

FAMILY LIVING STRUCTURE

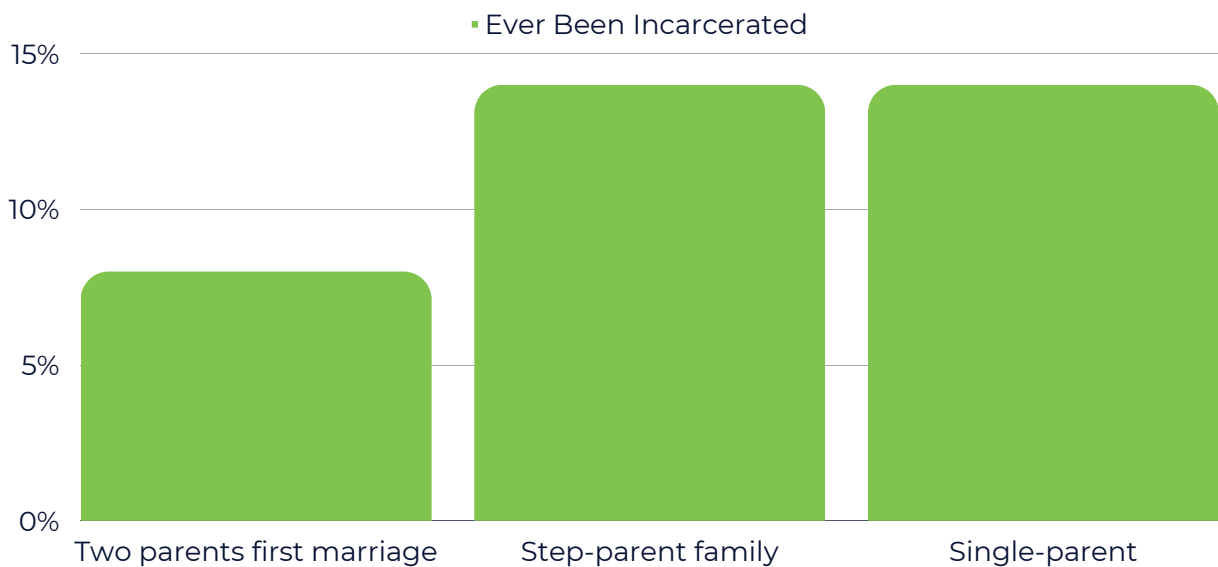
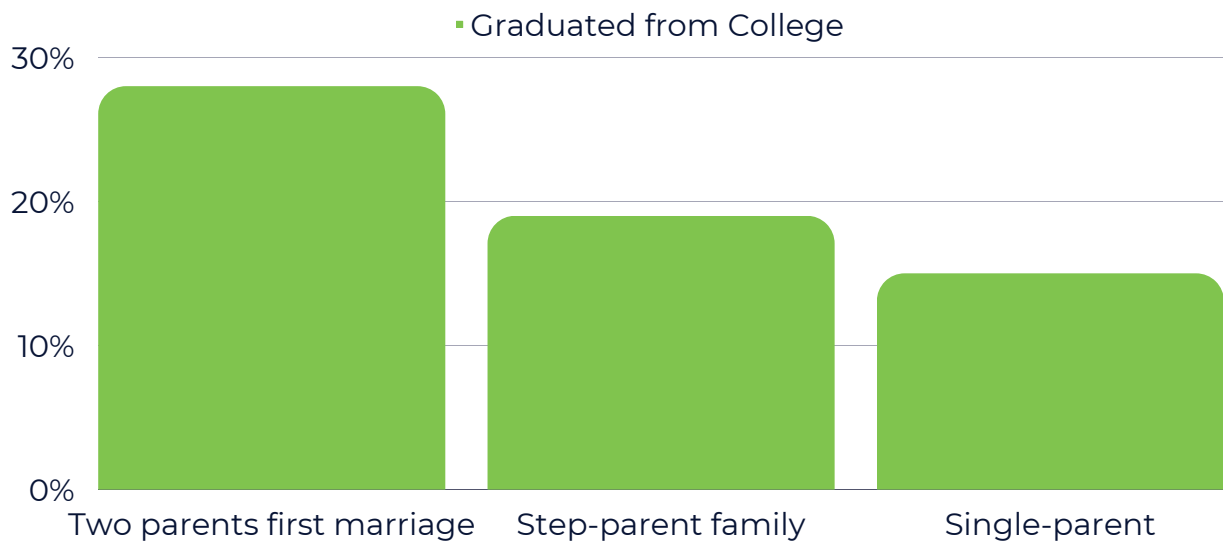
The below data provides an overview of African American youth under the age of 18, and their family living arrangements. Of note, roughly 46% of Black youth live in single parent homes,



Data Source: American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2015-2019 as cited by the Institute for Family Studies (IFS)

SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

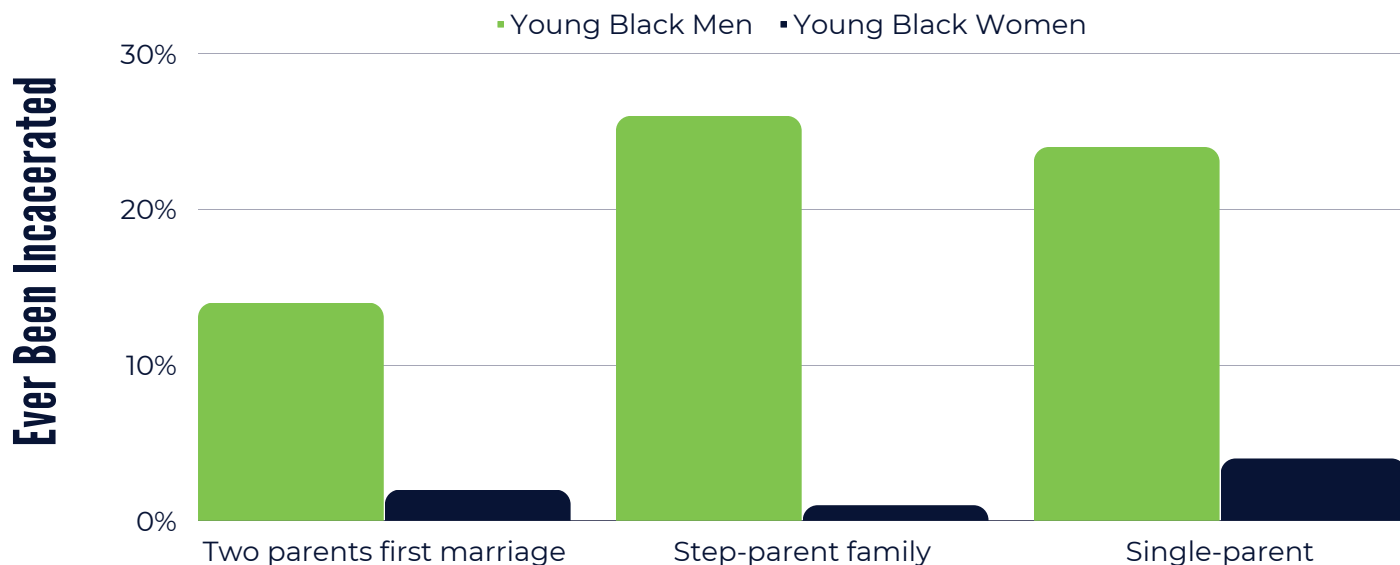
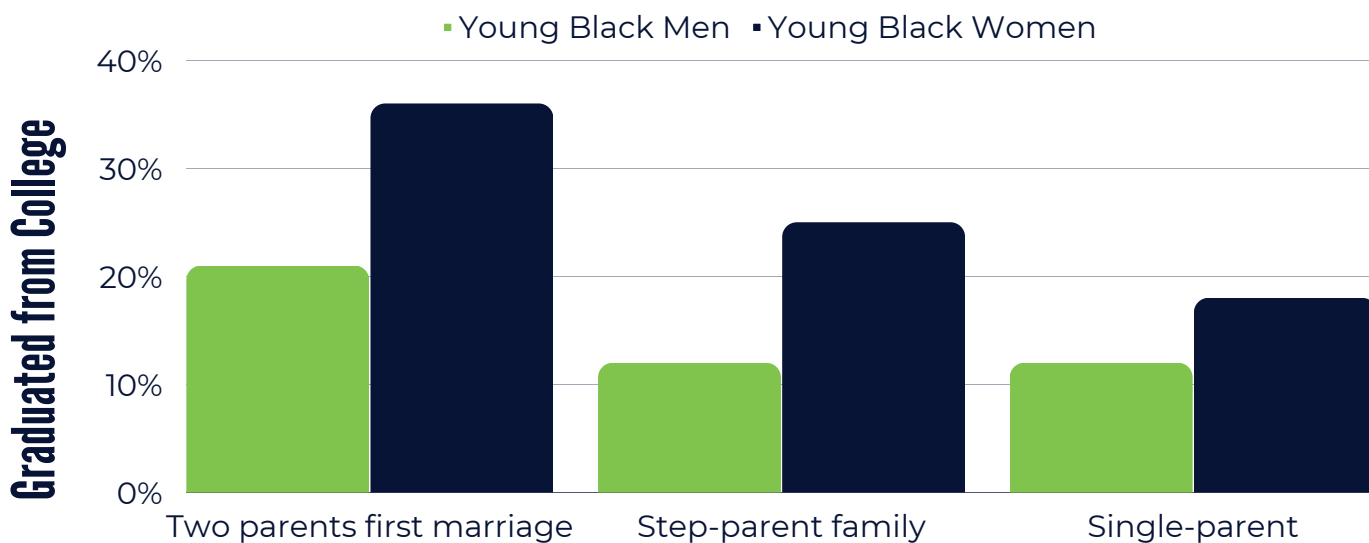
The below data provides an overview of African American young adults education and incarceration rates by age 28 based on their family living arrangements. African young adults that live in single parent homes are less likely to graduate from college, and more likely to have been incarcerated at some point in their life.



Data Source: American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2015-2019 as cited by the Institute for Family Studies (IFS)

GENDER DIFFERENCES

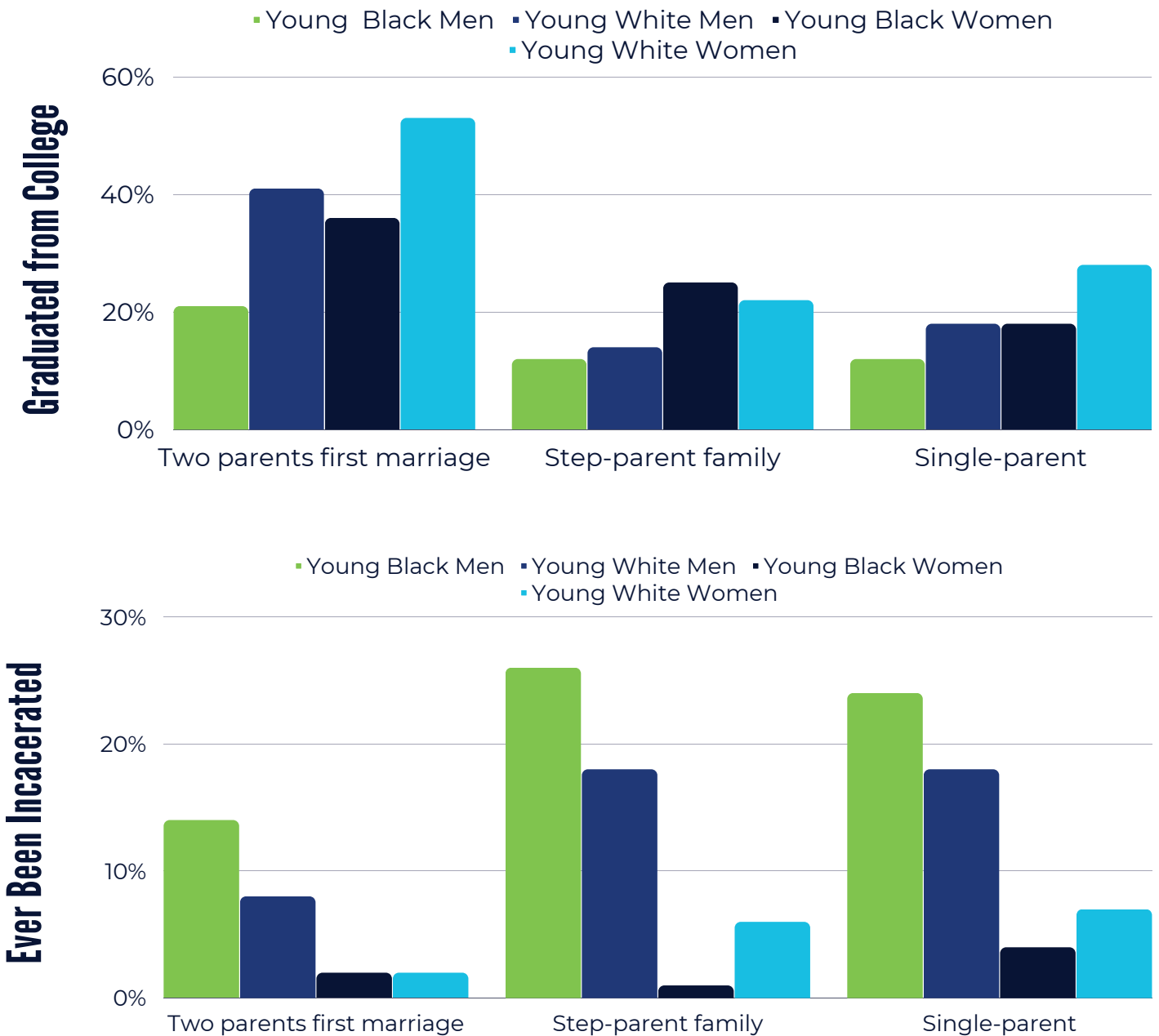
The below data provides overview of African American gender differences between young adults education and incarceration rates by age 28 and family living arrangements. Young women have more positive outcome across family living arrangements.



Data Source: American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2015-2019 as cited by the Institute for Family Studies (IFS)

RACIAL DIFFERENCES

The below data provides overview of racial and gender differences among African American and White American young adults education and incarceration rates by age 28 and family living arrangements.



Data Source: American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2015-2019 as cited by the Institute for Family Studies (IFS)



PHASE 1: LISTENING SESSION REVIEW AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

*Grace Mar Training and Employment, LLC,
Empowering Fathers Program Participants*

GRACE MAR LISTENING SESSION DEVELOPMENT

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GRACE MAR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT, LLC, DR. INGRAM AND OTHER GRACE MAR CONSULTANTS DEVELOPED A FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS FOR MEN CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN GRACE MAR FATHERHOOD PROGRAM. THE TEAM DISCUSSED THE FATHERS' OBSERVATIONAL NEEDS, THE LITERATURE REVIEW, AND THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN A TEAM MEETING. THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE GROUP NEEDS ARE CHALLENGES THE FATHERS IN THE PROGRAM FACE, INCLUDING:

- THE INTERSECTION OF RACE AND IDENTITY AS A FATHER.
- CHALLENGES OF REUNIFICATION FOR FATHERS WHO HAVE BEEN INCARCERATED OR ABSENT FROM THEIR CHILD'S LIFE.
 - THIS CAN INCLUDE COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR PARTNERS AND ISSUES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION.
- A LACK OF MOTIVATION AND INCENTIVE TO BE IN THEIR CHILD'S LIFE DUE TO SOCIETAL OR ECONOMIC PRESSURES THEY FEEL THEY CANNOT LIVE UP TO.
- THE TITLE OF PROVIDER IS TIED INTO AFRICAN AMERICAN FATHERS' VIEW OF THEMSELVES, AND THIS CAN LEAD TO FEELINGS OF GUILT AND SHAME THAT FURTHER OSTRACIZE THEM FROM THEIR FAMILY.
- INVOLVEMENT IS LINKED WITH FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND RESEARCH SHOWS THAT FATHERS FEEL LIKE THEY MUST HAVE SOME MEANS TO PROVIDE TO BE INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S LIFE.

THE INITIAL TEAM MEETING, THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA, AND A LITERATURE REVIEW WERE USED TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION QUESTIONS AND ELEVATED CONGRUENCY.

Community Based Exploration

Future Directions: The following are discussion topics for listening sessions based on existing literature and key stakeholder conversations.



Accessibility

Overcoming challenges of reunification and developing conflict resolution skills.



Professional Development

Higher employment rates for fathers are associated with higher rates of involvement.



Fatherhood Identity Development

Building and investing in developing a fatherhood identity in which fathers can identify and access their internal and external resources for fathering.



Legal System Education

Understanding civil rights and the legalities of being involved in their child's life.



Motivation

The father is willing and able to do the work in order to be involved with their children.



Parenting Skills

The father feels confident in their skills in order to be an involved and competent father. Focusing on developing self-efficacy.

Listening Session Overview Navigating Fatherhood

The voices of fathers within the Empowering Fathers program, despite their diversity, represent a singular experience shared among minority fathers. Their stories highlight a myriad of themes, including navigating societal aspects, crafting a narrative, and ensuring their children possess what they themselves lacked. A significant proportion of participants in the program have encountered personal struggles within fatherhood, with their perspective of fatherhood deeply influenced by the emotional or physical absence of their own fathers. These experiences frequently elicit feelings of guilt, inadequacy, and insecurity, limiting their capacity to become outstanding fathers. Fathers devoid of paternal role models are more likely to encounter challenges associated with providing emotional support, fostering healthy communication, implementing effective parenting techniques, and displaying model behavior. Such difficulties may impede the development of meaningful relationships, culminating in issues such as delinquency and poor academic performance. Studies have furthermore established that children from fatherless households are more prone to health-related concerns and less favorable socioeconomic conditions.

Listening Session Themes

ROOTED IDENTITIES: NAVIGATING RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN FATHERHOOD

Racism, discrimination, and social aspects of father identity development are the first recurring theme in all of the fathers' narratives. One of the fathers discussed the importance of being aware of the environment in order to combat racism and prejudice against black men who are intelligent. He emphasized the significance of navigating social situations when forming relationships, developing friendships, and writing stories. This theme is related to how each person's upbringing has shaped them and how knowing your roots can help you get through life's challenges.

LEGACY OF LOVE: OVERCOMING ADVERSITY AND PROVIDING STABILITY IN FATHERHOOD

The second theme that emerged was the importance of giving one's children stability, despite any challenges or unfavorable situations that may arise. One father in particular entered the program due to problems with child support payments, but he was determined not to stop being a father for them so as to prevent them from going through struggles like he had. This reveals much about his character and sheds light on how he sees his role in his children's lives as well as the kind of legacy he wants to leave them—one of stability and love rather than conflict and abandonment—in his wake. The fathers also talked about how they felt inadequate when they couldn't provide for their kids financially. Fatherhood identity was strongly correlated with financial support, and fathers were less likely to be present in their children's lives when they lacked that support. They believed that in order to interact with the kids, they needed to be wealthy. Fatherhood was frequently impeded by the link between a father's relationship with his children and his financial relationship. This may be related to systemic socialization that links the family and child support systems. Many of the fathers believed that the system was more inclined to advocate for mothers than for fathers.

LEARNING FROM THE LESSONS AROUND YOU

Thirdly, a father described how his upbringing had taught him to build on what he had been given. Before his dad passed away, he had given his son one last piece of advice: how to love a woman, which he wished he had taught him when he was younger. This emphasizes the value of picking up lessons from those around you. Whether or not it is initially understood what is being taught by elders, the fathers expressed the value of their advice. This also refers to the ability to learn from relationships other than those with fathers, which is especially important when there is no father present.

Another father, who also considered himself successful for never abusing drugs or adopting a destructive lifestyle, speaks about wanting better for his kids than what he experienced as a child. This clearly demonstrates his desire for his children's success, which includes giving them the tools or information they need to avoid falling victim to any of the systemic oppression prevalent in today's society.

LISTENING SESSION CONCLUSION

All empowering fathers had different experiences, but there were recurring themes in all of them: navigating social situations, building on what has been given to you, instilling values like loving women, and most importantly, wanting more for their children than what they themselves experienced as children. This common understanding among all of the fathers participating in the Empowering Fathers Program undoubtedly gives each storyteller's journey to becoming an empowered father strength—furthermore, the overarching theme of forgiving and showing grace to oneself while comprehending the development of fatherhood. The fathers' fatherhood journey was made easier and more peaceful when they talked about the expression of grace and seeing growth as a process. The development of fatherhood, grace, and forgiveness are all interrelated concepts. Being a good father necessitates forgiveness because it enables fathers to admit their faults and move on with love and compassion. This gave the fathers a chance to mourn their own shortcomings and losses while also hopefully having the chance to develop into their fatherly identities.



PHASE 2: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN

*Grace Mar Training and Employment, LLC,
REFINE Program Framework*

Grace Mar Training and Employment, LLC African American Fatherhood Program Guide

The Grace Mar REFINE framework

"REFINE Your Fatherhood: A Culturally Relevant and Proven Framework for Revolutionizing Your Role as a Dad with Grace Mar"

The acronym "REFINE" stands for Revolutionizing your role as a father through Empowerment, Focus, Improvement, Nurturing, and Engagement. This title provides a clear indication of the guide's focus on transforming fathers' roles through a step-by-step framework. The use of "Proven Framework" and "Complete Guide" implies a structured approach to fatherhood development and positions it as an evidenced-based guide for fathers striving to improve their parenting skills. With the mention of Grace Mar in the title, readers are assured of the quality and effectiveness of the resources offered by the company. The REFINE framework places emphasis on "Fatherhood Evolution," illustrating how personal development serves to shape fathers, allowing them to develop a stronger understanding of who they are and enhance their fatherhood identity. By gaining a deeper understanding of themselves, fathers are better equipped to develop and grow in their parenting roles, resulting in enriched relationships with their children.

Framework Development

According to the US Census Bureau, 17.4 million or 1 and 4 Black children live in a single parent household. Similarly, African American children are 60% more likely to live in a home without their biological father. It is important to note that family living arrangements impacts overall health and the educational outcomes of Black children. For example, children living in single family homes have lower academic achievement, greater risk for poverty, poor mental health outcomes and higher incarceration rates. The challenges of fatherhood involvement in African American communities are not limited to residential and non-residential fatherhood factors. There is a long history of discriminatory and systemic barriers that has disproportionately affected African American fatherhood involvement. Thus, to address the challenges of fatherhood involvement in African American communities, it is important to develop evidence-based programs that are specifically designed to support and empower African American fathers.

Developing an evidence-based program involves a five-step process: gathering evidence and assessing needs, program design and development, program implementation and delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainability. The first step begins with conducting a comprehensive needs assessment to identify goals, gaps, and program objectives through input from stakeholders and existing literature. The second step focuses on developing a program framework that uses evidence to design instructional strategies, assessment methods and learning objectives to help support the identified goals. The third step involves ensuring the program's effective delivery through the training of facilitators with regular professional development to maintain sufficient knowledge to operate the program. The fourth step relies on data collection and analysis to assess the program's effectiveness and inform program

adjustments to ensure optimal impact. Finally, the fifth step ensures that the program remains sustainable over time by conducting an annual review to assess effectiveness based on feedback from stakeholders. This report focuses specifically on the first two steps of creating an evidence-based fatherhood program tailored to address historical and systemic barriers for African American fathers. By following these steps, Grace Mar's has developed an evidence-based program designed to positively impact the lives of African American fathers, families, and communities.

A comprehensive systemic review, a community listening session (empowering fathers program participants), and an analysis of available national data have enabled the development of a program guide to facilitate an empowerment program effectively. This guide provides the necessary tools and guidance to design, implement, and evaluate an empowerment program in the Black community. The program includes the following:

Mental Health Support Techniques: The curriculum will cover common mental health issues facing African American men, such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. You will learn about coping mechanisms, stress reduction techniques, and healthy habits that promote emotional and mental balance.

Culturally Relevant Intervention: Participants will explore the impact of cultural and historical, and systemic racism on mental health and well-being. You will learn about strategies for promoting mental health, resiliency, and personal growth that are culturally relevant to African American men.

Holistic Approaches to Improvement: The program will focus on socioeconomic factors that contribute to African American men's well-being and success. You will learn about holistic approaches to personal growth and development, such as emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being, and healthy habits and routines that promote balance.

Positive Identity: The curriculum will incorporate mentorship and role models to promote healthy racial identity. You will learn strategies for overcoming systemic racism, celebrating cultural heritage, and advocating for social justice.

Positive Reinforcement and Career Development: The program will encourage and recognize participants' achievements and contributions. Career counseling, job training, and entrepreneurship skills will be provided to help participants achieve personal and professional goals.

Legal Aid and Navigating the Legal System: Information on legal aid and navigation of the legal system will be provided. Participants will learn about their rights during arrest or trial procedures to obtain a fair outcome while minimizing risks associated with police brutality.

Community Resource Mapping: Participants will learn about community resources available to them to promote their well-being. The curriculum will focus on creating a network of resources tailored to the needs of African American men.

Engaging Instructional Materials: The curriculum includes comprehensive and engaging content such as videos, interactive quizzes, and exercises to reinforce key concepts. Participants will also engage in collaborative activities.

Peer Support: The program will facilitate a supportive environment where participants can share experiences with peers. Group activities and discussion forums will allow participants to motivate each other.

Healthy Communication: Participants will learn about healthy communication practices, including interpersonal skills that promote honest and respectful interactions with others in families, relationships, and workplaces.

Coaching or empowerment sessions: Empowerment sessions are better suited for individuals from stigma-bearing black communities who require mental health support than counseling sessions due to their focus on holistic and sustainable approaches. Research indicates that coaching and empowerment approaches provide a more effective approach to psychological well-being, with an emphasis on promoting personal development rather than only symptom removal. This is because episodes of distress in these communities are often linked to particular contexts and experienced through their own unique lens.

These approaches understand that psychological distress can be caused by a complex set of intersecting factors, such as systemic racism and social inequities, which can further add to feelings of helplessness. Therefore, leveraging coaching approaches with black community individuals offers the potential to empower them with a greater understanding of the underlying issues at hand. This ultimately increases self-awareness, helps cultivate a growth mindset, and provides a more comprehensive pathway toward personal development than traditional counseling sessions offer.

Below is a sample 12-week program plan that can be used to implement the key elements of recommended program design and REFINE framework.

Empowering Fathers: Build the Person to Build the Father, A 12-Week Program For African American Men's Empowerment. This 12-week program each encompassed 90-minute empowerment sessions/coaching. The program focuses on building the person before building a father because having a strong sense of self, being comfortable with one's identity, and developing resilience are essential components for fathers to build and sustain meaningful relationships with their children. By focusing on these aspects of personal growth, the program helps equip participants to be successful in both their roles as parents and individuals. Below are the key components of the curriculum.

Week 1: Introduction

Objective: To provide an overview of the program and its goals and objectives. **Goals:** To emphasize the importance of mental health, cultural relevance, peer support, healthy communication, and legal aid for African American men.

- Welcome and overview of the program
- Program goals and objectives
- Importance of mental health, cultural relevance, peer support, healthy communication, and legal aid for African American men
- Overview of holistic approaches to promote positive identity and healthy communication

Week 2–3: Mental Health Support Techniques

Objective: To identify common mental health issues facing African American men and provide strategies to minimize their impact. Goals: To encourage participants to learn about self-care and habits that can promote emotional and mental balance.

- Identify and discuss common mental health issues facing African American men
- Promote strategies for coping mechanisms and stress reduction techniques, including conversations on self-care and healthy habits that promote emotional and mental balance
- Acknowledge and discuss the impact of stigma and racism on mental health
- Discuss issues of childhood Trauma using culturally relevant measures such as the Philadelphia ACEs
- Healing - WRAP

Week 4–5: Culturally Relevant Intervention

Objective: To explore cultural determinants affecting African American men's mental health. Goals: To examine spiritual/cultural beliefs that can influence healing & understand how race affects resilience & personal development.

- Exploration of cultural and social determinants affecting African American men's mental health
- Examination of spiritual and cultural beliefs that can influence healing
- Understanding how race affects resilience and personal development
- Discussion of culturally relevant approaches to fostering mental health & resilience

Week 6–7: Holistic Approaches to Improvement

Objective: To identify socio-economic factors that contribute to African American men's well-being. Goals: To utilize a holistic approach to personal growth & development through focusing on life skills that integrate career pathways into personal goals.

- Identifying socio-economic factors that contribute to African American men's well being
- Holistic approach to personal growth & development; emotional, physical, spiritual wellbeing, healthy habits & routines that promote balance
- Focus on developing life skills that integrate a career pathway into personal goals

Week 8–9 : Positive Identity Development

Objectives: Acknowledge the impact systemic racism has on identity development; mental health while encouraging positive racial identity among participants. Goals: Celebrate and advocate for cultural heritage and social justice.

- Acknowledge the impact of systematic racism on identity development and mental health
- Encourage positive racial identity among participants
- Celebrating and advocating for cultural heritage and social justice

Week 10–11: Peer Support & Community Mapping

Objectives: Create a safe space in which individuals may receive support from one another while learning about available resources in communities through community mapping. Goals: Connect with local support organizations by developing collaborative partnerships.

- Group activities to create a safe space for individuals to receive support from one another
- Learning about available resources in communities through community mapping
- Connecting with local support organizations & developing collaborative partnerships

Week 12: Legal Aid and Legal System Navigation & Healthy Communication

Objectives: Learn about legal aid/navigation through the legal system as well as develop effective communication practices/interpersonal skills. Goals: Educate participants on rights during trial procedures and honest/respectful interactions w/ others in families, relationships, and workplaces.

- Learn about legal aid & navigation through the legal system
- Discuss rights during trial procedures to obtain fair outcomes while minimizing risks associated with lack of clarity of legal proceedings.
- Arming participants about how the legal system works can help them more efficiently navigate it.
- Developing healthy communication practices & interpersonal skills
- Encouraging honest and healthy conversations that build and foster healthy relationships

Recruitment Considerations

Recruiting individuals from stigma-bearing black communities for programs can often be challenging as they may face additional barriers such as language, cultural preferences and mistrust due to their past experiences with the healthcare system. To maximize successful recruitment, it will be important to implement a range of strategies that provide clear descriptions of the study objectives and what participants will involve in order to attract interested individuals.

Additionally, a significant amount of time should be spent on providing an inviting atmosphere by making sure all information is culturally sensitive. Programs should also provide tangible incentives for potential participants as this further emphasizes trustworthiness, as well as prioritize recruiting people who are familiar with the target community in order to ensure more effective communication and engagement. Finally, leveraging existing networks such as churches or other social entities within the community can also be beneficial for reaching potential participants more efficiently than using more traditional methods such as newspaper ads or flyers.

Research suggests that a combination of these strategies can promote successful recruitment and build stronger relationships between those that implement the program and members of black communities over time.

Program developers can leverage several strategies to improve retention among individuals from stigma-bearing black communities, with evidence suggesting that a combination of approaches can lead to more effective outcomes.

Retention Considerations

First, leveraging existing networks and relationships within the community by recruiting program facilitators who have personal connections or strong ties to the target audience is essential for building trust and improving engagement. Secondly, offering tangible incentives such as vouchers or scholarships can further emphasize the value of participation and reassure participants of their safety while participating in programs. Additionally, providing a range of activities that are tailored to different learning styles and interests helps ensure that everyone is engaged throughout the program duration. Finally, adapting programs based on feedback from participants over time allows developers to continuously refine their approach to make sure they're meeting the needs of their target audiences.

Developers should also consider ways to follow up with participants after program completion, such as providing refresher courses or support services if needed, as this reinforces the importance of the program and encourages continued engagement. These strategies offer the potential for longer-term retention rates for programs focused on stigma-bearing black communities and help foster an atmosphere of knowledge exchange with mutual respect between all parties involved.

Facilitators and Barriers

Facilitating an empowerment program in a stigma-bearing black community can present facilitators and barriers. Examples of facilitators include leveraging existing relationships with members of the community to build trust, offering tangible incentives for participation such as vouchers or scholarships, providing activities tailored to different learning styles and interests, and adapting programs based on feedback from participants over time.

Barriers that may be encountered when implementing an empowerment program in this setting include lack of adequate funding or resources, limited access to technology or other materials that may facilitate engagement, mistrust due to past experiences of systemic racism, cultural preferences which could reduce comfort levels of some individuals participating in the program, and cultural sensitivity concerns that can make understanding the objectives of the program more difficult. Finally, time constraints can serve as a barrier. This could range from limited availability of facilitators or participants due to competing commitments such as family obligations, work or educational responsibilities, or other activities.

Overall, it is important to understand both the facilitators and barriers to implementation when designing empowerment programs for any context. While not all challenges can be anticipated ahead of time, taking these considerations into account can help ensure effective design and implementation for achieving meaningful outcomes.

Empowering Fathers: Build the Person to Build the Father Logic Model

Inputs:

- Funding from supporting organizations
- Dedicated program staff and facilitators
- Access to community resources
- Program materials and exercises
- Program evaluation consultant

Activities:

- 12-week program consisting of 90-minute empowerment sessions and coaching
- Program covering mental health support techniques, culturally relevant interventions, holistic approaches to improvement, positive identity, positive reinforcement and career development, legal aid and navigating the legal system, community resource mapping, healthy communication, and coaching or empowerment sessions
- Incorporating mentorship and role models to promote healthy racial identity
- Providing a supportive environment for peer support and sharing of experiences
- Encouraging healthy communication practices
- Elevating participants' voices and experiences through community involvement and advocacy efforts

Outputs:

- % Participants have increased knowledge and understanding of mental health support techniques, including coping mechanisms for depression, anxiety, and PTSD.
- % Participants have increased understanding of the impact of cultural and systemic racism on their mental health and well-being and strategies for promoting resilience and growth.

- % Participants have increased knowledge of holistic approaches to personal growth and development, including emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.
- % Participants have increased positive racial identity and advocacy skills for social justice.
- % Participants have increased job training and entrepreneurial skills to achieve personal and professional goals.
- % Participants have greater understanding of their legal rights and can navigate the legal system confidently.
- % Participants have a network of community resources tailored to their needs.
- % Participants have increased understanding of healthy communication practices and improved interpersonal skills.
- % Participants have opportunities for community involvement and advocacy efforts, elevating their voices and experiences.

Outcomes:

- % Participants have improved mental health and well-being.
- % Participants have increased confidence and self-awareness.
- % Participants have improved relationships with their children and families.
- % Participants have improved career opportunities and financial stability.
- % Participants are better equipped to navigate systemic barriers and advocate for their communities.
- % Participants have a greater sense of community involvement and empowerment.

Program Evaluation:

- Conduct a survey, listening sessions, and semi-structured interviews to assess the program's effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

- Measure changes in participants' mental health and well-being, as well as their relationships with their children and families.
- Measure changes in participants' career opportunities and financial stability.
- Measure changes in participants' involvement in community advocacy efforts.
- Measure changes in participants' ability to navigate systemic barriers and advocate for their communities.
- Measure changes in participants' knowledge and understanding of mental health support techniques, including coping mechanisms for depression, anxiety, and PTSD.
- Use feedback to make improvements to the program and ensure continued success.



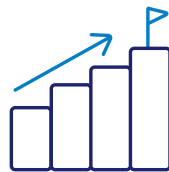
CONCLUDING STATEMENTS & ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS



Fatherhood Involvement Leads To More Successful



Socialization



**Emotional
Development**



**Academic
Trajectory**

Intergenerational Considerations



Dear Future Father:

Research suggest that fathering beliefs can be a key factor underlying how intergenerational factors influence fatherhood involvement (Cooper et al., 2019). Cooper et al. (2019) suggested that Fatherhood programs targeting African American fathers should address their unique ecologies (e.g., childhood family contexts, negative stereotype awareness) as potential barriers to fatherhood involvement. Considering efforts that reach across generations is an imperative.



Recommendation 1: Dyad Building

Breaking cycles of fatherless Black youth through dyad relationship building of the father-son relationships. The father-son relationship building brings a life course intergenerational perspective to intervention development.

RECOMMENDATION 2: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Economic barriers are a significant factor for absent fathers. Oftentimes, fathers may feel like they must carry the financial burden of their child in order to be involved in their life. Local resources must be utilized in order to break down employment barriers and provide opportunities for fathers to develop career tracks. A special focus on low-income non-residential fathers is also an apparent need.

Professional Development



**Career Counseling
Services**



**Financial Literacy
Training**



**Enrolling in
School/Higher
Education**

RECOMMENDATION 3: LEGAL SYSTEM ASSISTANCE

It is crucial that fathers can interact with the legal system and be properly equipped to handle their cases. There are barriers in place that disproportionately impact Black men. Assistance with Issues with parole or child custody hearings can also impact a fathers ability to be physically present.

Resources



[LawHelpNC.org](https://www.lawhelpnc.org)



[Pro Bono Lawyers](#)



[Resources for
Child Custody
& Reunification](#)

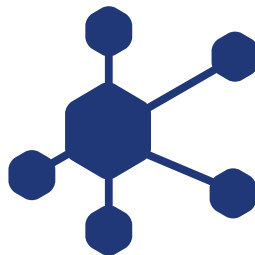
RECOMMENDATION 4: FATHERING SKILLS

- In order to feel confident about an experience, it is crucial to have the skills to be successful. For fathers to have an increased sense of engagement, it is important that they have the necessary fathering skills to show up and be present in the life of their children. Research shows that intervention courses led by peers are more effective, especially if the content is designed by people in the community
- In a study conducted by Julion et al. (2012) a group of African American men were engaged as a focus group where they expressed their interpersonal and personal lack of resources that contributed to their absence as fathers. This included limited financial resources, limited knowledge about the significance of their involvement, limited fathering skills, scarce resources and social support, incarceration rates, racism, and discrimination

Outcomes



Altruism



Network Building



**Amplifying
Voices**

Recommendation 5: Reunification of Fathers



Incarcerated fathers:

Developing reunification programs for fathers currently incarcerated and for fathers post incarceration.

Absent Fathers:

Building competency and reunification for fathers currently inactive or have lacked consistent presence in the child or children's life.