

# African American/Black Social Issues Study

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# Objectives and Methodology

- The primary objective of this research is to assess the importance of key social issues facing the United States among African-Americans/Blacks (AA/B) who are aged 50 and older.
- Secondly, this research was done to gauge how optimistic African-Americans/ Blacks are about the direction the United States is moving in regard to these social issues.
- A 10-minute nationally representative telephone survey of 650 African-Americans/ Blacks who are 50 years of age and older was fielded in early February. Results were weighted to reflect the national demographics of the U.S. African-American/Black population.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Community Service Engagement and Importance

- On average, nearly four in ten (37%) respondents report volunteering in their community. Men, college graduates, and those with incomes of \$50,00 or more a year are significantly more likely than their counterparts to say they volunteer.
- Of those who volunteer, nearly nine in ten (86%) believe the community service in which they are involved is *extremely* or *very important*. Those employed full-time are significantly more likely than those who are retired to believe in the importance of their community service.
- For seven in ten (70%) respondents who are involved in community service, churches and faith-based organizations are—to a significant degree—where they typically learn about community service opportunities. Churches and faith-based organizations are significantly more important sources of community service opportunities for those who are employed part-time than for those who are employed full-time.
- One-fifth (19%) of respondents said they receive volunteer services provided in their community. Those living in rural areas are significantly more likely than those living in rural areas to report receiving such services.

# Importance of Social Issues

- A majority of African American/Black respondents ages 50+ consider all of the social issues we asked about as being important. *Access to high quality healthcare, having a financially secure retirement, and access to high quality healthcare information* are seen as most important and are notably more important than the other five issues.

Social Issues	% Top 2 Box (Extremely/Very)	% Top 3 Box (At Least somewhat)
Access to high quality healthcare	91.3	96.3
Having a financially secure retirement	90.5	95.6
Access to high quality healthcare information	88.5	95.8
Access to high quality education	85.4	93.3
Employment discrimination based on race	81.9	87.1
Access to better employment opportunities	77.3	87.3
Employment discrimination based on age	74.3	85.8
Access to technology	68.2	88.6

(Q5a. For each of the following social issues please tell me how important each one is to you. Let's start with (INSERT ISSUE), would you say it is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important?)

## Importance of Social Issues (Cont.)

- Notably, there are significant demographic differences in the *extremely* or *very important* ratings, such that *access to high quality health care* is more important to 50-59 year olds and 65-69 year olds than to those 75+, and it is more important to those who are married than to those who are divorced, widowed, or separated.
- Further, *employment discrimination based on age and race* were both more important to respondents younger than 75 years of age. They were also considered more important to those employed full- or part-time when compared to retired respondents.
- When respondents noted more than one issue as *extremely* or *very important*, they were asked which of the issues was the single most important one. *Access to high quality healthcare* was overwhelmingly viewed to be the single most important social issue—by one third (32%) of those who gave multiple responses.
- *Having a financially secure retirement* was considered the second most important issue (cited by 16% of those with multiple answers), while *access to high quality education* was the third most important issue (cited by 14% of those with multiple answers).



# Moving In The Right Direction on Social Issues

- Among those who rated each social issue as at least *somewhat important*, there is optimism that the U.S. is moving in the right direction on the issues, with more than four in ten respondents expressing optimism about each issue about which they were asked.

Social Issues	% Top 2 Box (Extremely/Very)	% Top 3 Box (At Least Somewhat)
Access to high quality healthcare	62.9	89.6
Access to high quality healthcare information	60.3	90.2
Access to technology	59.4	90.9
Access to high quality education	55.0	86.4
Having a financially secure retirement	48.2	81.5
Access to better employment opportunities	47.7	84.8
Employment discrimination based on race	45.0	81.5
Employment discrimination based on age	44.4	82.2

- Optimism is significantly higher for the first four items: *access to high quality healthcare* and *health care information*, *access to technology*, and *access to high quality education*.

Q5b. How optimistic are you that the U.S. is moving in the right direction regarding [INSERT ISSUE]....? Are you extremely optimistic, very optimistic, somewhat optimistic, or not at all optimistic? (Base=those who rated issues “somewhat important” or higher)

# Moving In The Right Direction on Social Issues (Cont.)

- But, optimism is lowest for employment-related issues, with *employment discrimination based on age* (44%) and *race* (45%), *access to better employment opportunities* (48%) and *having a financially secure retirement (a by-product of employment)* garnering lower optimism levels relative to health, technology and education-related issues .
- Not surprisingly, perhaps, there are demographic differences in levels of optimism. For example, when it comes to *access to high quality healthcare information*, respondents ages 70 and older are more optimistic than those 50-59 and those with incomes of less than \$50,000 are more optimistic than those with incomes of \$100,000 or more a year.
- Further, in terms of *employment discrimination based on age*, those with less than a college degree are more optimistic than college graduates, retired respondents are more optimistic than those employed full-time, and those with incomes of less than \$50,000 are more optimistic than those making \$100K+. And, for *employment discrimination based on race*, respondents with incomes of less than \$50,000 a year are more optimistic than those with incomes above that level.

# Moving In The Right Direction on Social Issues (Cont.)

- Additionally, when considering *access to high quality education*, those who did not graduate from college are more optimistic than college graduates, and those with incomes of less than \$50,000 a year are more optimistic than those making between \$50,000 and \$100,000 a year.
- Respondents ages 70 and older are more optimistic than respondents in all other age groups when it comes to considering *access to better employment opportunities*. Further, in terms of the same item, those who did not graduate from college are more optimistic than college graduates; those with incomes of less than \$50,000 a year are more optimistic than those with incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000; and those who are retired are more optimistic than their employed counterparts.
- Finally, when looking at optimism about *having a financially secure retirement*, respondents ages 75 and older are more optimistic than those ages 50-64 and those with incomes of less than \$50,000 a year are more optimistic than those with incomes above that level.

# Importance vs. Moving In The Right Direction on Social Issues

- When looking at the differences in how respondents rate issues in terms of importance compared to their optimism ratings, their “top 2 box” levels of optimism that the U.S. is moving in the right direction are significantly lower than their “top 2 box” levels of importance attributed to each of the social issues.

Social Issues	Top 2 Box Difference*
Access to high quality healthcare	-28.4
Having a financially secure retirement	-48.2
Access to high quality healthcare information	-28.2
Access to high quality education	-30.4
Employment discrimination based on race	-36.9
Access to better employment opportunities	-29.6
Employment discrimination based on age	-44.4
Access to technology	-8.8

\* Percentage point difference between the “top 2 box (extremely/very)” percentages for Importance – Optimism.

# APPENDICES

# Appendix 1: Survey Methodology

## About the Data In This Report

Results from the February 2014 African American/Black Social Issues Survey are based on telephone interviews conducted by Issues and Answers, Inc. under the direction of GrayMatters Marketing, LLC. The survey was conducted among a national sample of 650 African American/Black adults 50 years old and older living in the continental United States, from Jan. 30th to Feb. 10th, 2014. The phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International.

29,749 separate samples were used for data collection to obtain a representative sample based on census statistics. 25,000 listed landline numbers targeted to African Americans 50+ across the U.S were initially used for dialing. As younger groups were not obtained in proportion to the census population estimates, the original numbers were supplemented by a similar set of listed numbers targeted specifically for African Americans between the ages of 50 and 64. Each number was dialed four times on average when no contact was made. Numbers were grouped together randomly and these groups were dialed at alternate times on both weekdays and weekends. This process limits error and increases the probability that each potential respondent has to participate.

The sample size was designed to mitigate sampling error while balancing overall project goals. Statistical testing was performed at the 95% confidence level and a +/- 5% margin of error (in line with the “gold standards” of market research).

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to adjust for effects of the sample design and to compensate for patterns of nonresponse that might bias results. Weighting balances sample demographic distributions to match population parameters. In this study, weights were applied to respondents based on age in order to balance this demographic with the census statistics. Weighting was confined to a simple process of age balancing as other demographic figures fell out naturally (other than gender- which was controlled through quotas).

# Appendix 2: Annotated Questionnaire

<b>Q1. On average, how many hours a MONTH, if any, do you volunteer in your community? (n=650)</b>	
None	63%
1-4 hours	12%
5-9 hours	10%
10-19 hours	8%
20-29 hours	3%
30-39 hours	2%
40 hours or more	2%
<b>Q2. How important to you is the community service you do? (n=239/those who volunteer)</b>	
Extremely important	41%
Very important	46%
Somewhat important	11%
Not too important	2%
Not at all important	<1%
<b>Q3. Where do you typically learn about community service opportunities? (n=239/those who volunteer)</b>	
Through your employer	8%
Through your church or other faith-based organization	70%
From friends and family	29%
Media/television/newspapers	3%
Other: specify	18%
<b>Q4. Are you a recipient of volunteer services provided by your community, such as friendly visitors from your church or student doing yard clean-up, etc...? (n=650)</b>	
Yes	19%
No	81%

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire (Cont.)

**Q5. For each of the following social issues, please tell me how important it is to you. Let's start with ...would you say it is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?**

	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Not too	Not at all
Access to high quality health care	54%	37%	5%	2%	2%
Access to high quality health care information	49%	40%	7%	2%	2%
Employment discrimination based on age	38%	36%	12%	7%	8%
Employment discrimination based on race	50%	32%	5%	5%	8%
Access to technology	28%	40%	20%	6%	6%
Access to high quality education	47%	39%	8%	4%	3%
Access to better employment opportunities	41%	37%	10%	5%	8%
Having a financially secure retirement	51%	40%	5%	2%	3%



## Appendix 2: Questionnaire (Cont.)

**Q5a1. You mentioned that you feel...are extremely important. Which one of these issues is the most important to you? (n=376 /respondents who rated more than one issue as “extremely important”)**

Access to high quality health care	32%
Access to high quality health care information	9%
Employment discrimination based on age	4%
Employment discrimination based on race	10%
Access to technology	3%
Access to high quality education	13%
Access to better employment opportunities	6%
Having a financially secure retirement	15%
Don't know	8%

**Q5a2. You mentioned that you feel...are very important. Which one of these issues is most important to you? (n=109 / respondents who rated more than one issue as “very important”)**

Access to high quality health care	33%
Access to high quality health care information	6%
Employment discrimination based on age	7%
Employment discrimination based on race	6%
Access to technology	<1%
Access to high quality education	16%
Access to better employment opportunities	9%
Having a financially secure retirement	18%

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire (Cont.)

**Q5b1. How optimistic are you that the United States is moving in the right direction regarding...? Are you extremely optimistic, very optimistic, somewhat optimistic, not very optimistic, or not at all optimistic?**  
(Base=those who rated issues “somewhat important” or higher)

	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Not too	Not at all
Access to high quality health care (n=626)	25%	38%	27%	7%	4%
Access to high quality health care information (n=623)	24%	36%	30%	6%	4%
Employment discrimination based on age (n=558)	17%	28%	39%	12%	6%
Employment discrimination based on race (n=566)	18%	27%	37%	11%	7%
Access to technology (n=576)	23%	37%	32%	7%	3%
Access to high quality education (n=607)	21%	34%	31%	10%	4%
Access to better employment opportunities (n=568)	19%	29%	37%	9%	6%
Having a financially secure retirement (n=622)	21%	27%	33%	13%	6%

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire (Cont.)

<b>Q6. Would you describe where you live as urban, suburban, or rural? (n=650)</b>	
<b>Urban</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Suburban</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Rural</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Q7. Are you...? (n=650)</b>	
<b>Married, or living as married</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Single (never married)</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Divorced / widowed / separated</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Q8. Do you have any children less than 18 years of age living at home? (n=650)</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Refused</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Q9. Which of the following best describes the last level of education you completed? (n=650)</b>	
<b>Some high school or less</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>High school graduate</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Some college (did not graduate)</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>College graduate</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Post-graduate work</b>	<b>11%</b>

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire (Cont.)

<b>Q10. Are you currently...? (n=650)</b>	
<b>Employed, full-time (35 hours a week or more) for pay</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Employed, part-time (less than 35 hours a week) for pay</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Retired</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Homemaker</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Unemployed, looking for work</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Q11. What is your total annual household income? (n=650)</b>	
<b>Less than \$25,000</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>\$25,000 to under \$40,000</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>\$40,000 to under \$50,000</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>\$50,000 to under \$75,000</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>\$75,000 to under \$100,000</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>\$100,000 to under \$250,000</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>\$250,000 or more</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Don't know/ Refused</b>	<b>29%</b>

# Appendix 3: Basic Profile of The Sample

Total	Male	Female	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75+	Urban	Suburban	Rural
N = 650	262	388	169	117	141	64	73	87	334	232	84
100%	40.3%	59.7%	25.9%	17.9%	21.7%	9.8%	11.2%	13.4%	51.4%	35.7%	13.0%

Total	Married	Single	Div./Widow/Sep.	<Coll. Grad.	Coll. Grad.	Full-Time	Part-Time	Retired/Other	<\$50K	\$50K-\$100K	\$100K+
N = 650	257	155	238	464	186	158	39	453	312	111	41
100%	39.5%	23.9%	36.6%	71.4%	28.6%	24.4%	6.0%	69.7%	47.9%	17.1%	6.2%

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