

Highway Safety in Black/African American Communities

ISSUES AND STRATEGIES



U.S. Department
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16. Abstract As traffic safety needs and problems differ across populations, so are the strategies required to address them. Efforts to improve traffic safety in the Black community have been handicapped, however, by a lack of information on communication strategies that would be helpful in determining and shaping effective interventions. The purpose of this study was to identify traffic safety needs of Black communities within the United States and to determine effective means of directing traffic safety messages to these populations. Based on the research, specific guidelines for conducting interventions targeted to the Black community were produced. Information was collected from officials and representatives from local agencies and organizations through one-on-one discussions and with focus groups with members of the general public in six targeted locations across the United States. The six study sites were Berkeley County, SC; Cook County, IL; Jackson County, MO; Middlesex County, NJ; Oktibbeha County, MS and Prince George's County, MD. Representatives from agencies and organizations identified the improper or nonuse of child safety seats as a major problem. Focus group participants ranked drinking and driving as the top or one of the top three problems. Aggressive /reckless driving and speeding were also given high priority by focus groups participants. When promoting traffic safety programs to Black populations, research participants recommended positive, realistic messages that portray truthful, ordinary Black people in believable situations. Families were identified as the most positive influences. Churches and schools were recognized as the most trusted and effective venues for reaching the Black community with traffic safety messages.					
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Our sincere thanks to AFYA, Inc., Kevin Raines, Judith Singletary and Rochelle Tillery-Larkin, Ph.D., for their contributions and assistance.

Note

This report uses “Black” to refer to the population that was the focus of this research. This was done in order to be inclusive of persons who identify with African descent and others who do not.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, the African-American population is projected to grow 13 percent from 2000 to 2010, compared to 9 percent for the total U.S. population.¹ While this projected growth may have a positive impact on the nation's diversity, it also foreshadows a significant increase in the number of deaths and injuries from traffic-related incidents, including motor vehicle crashes, among a population that is already statistically over-represented in this area.

Attempts to reach Black communities with messages designed to change behavior and attitudes about traffic and driving safety consistently have been hampered by a lack of access to culturally-relevant strategies and information that would be helpful in developing and communicating programs that hit home. For example, traffic safety professionals who seek to deliver relevant, credible messages and information through the most effective channel need to understand how concerns and priorities among the Black community may differ from those of the mainstream population. To make the effort to develop effective intervention programs even more challenging, communicators also must be prepared to apply different approaches to reach different audiences or subgroups within the African-American community itself, based on age, location, ethnic origin, economic and other factors.

In response to this challenge, NHTSA retained Cordy & Company Public Relations, along with subcontractors AFYA, Inc., and Kevin Raines, to identify traffic safety needs in the Black community, determine effective means of directing traffic safety messages to Black populations, and produce specific guidelines for conducting interventions targeted to the Black

community. This report provides that information in the form of research findings and recommendations that can be implemented as part of current or future programs.

Project Goals and General Approach

This study was designed to identify the traffic safety knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of residents in predominantly Black communities and to determine how best to promote highway safety to these communities. The study had four primary research objectives:

- to identify and interpret traffic safety issues of concern to the Black population, particularly where those concerns are unique to the Black community;
- to identify social norms and/or perceptions of traffic safety issues that might impact the effectiveness of programs and messages in the Black community;
- to identify specific types of messages and themes that resonate in or are rejected by the Black community; and
- to identify promising, as well as ineffective, means of delivering messages to the Black community.

Information was gathered from two sources: (1) 45 one-on-one discussions with local community leaders, key individuals who serve the community, local activists, and service providers in areas related to traffic safety; and (2) 48 focus groups with Black members of the public.

The lessons learned from this research were compiled into this report to meet the study's main objective: to provide an effective resource to guide the development of subsequent Federal, State,

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Projections Branch, 2000 Census data.

and local programs that target (and are sensitive to) the needs of the Black population.

Research Communities

The focus groups and discussions were held in six different communities in order to capture the diversity of opinions and perceptions of various market segments within the Black population. Therefore, the selection of research sites was a very important step in the process. It was important to identify six communities that, in combination, would provide a diverse but

representative sample of economic, demographic, and social environments.

The study team developed profiles of all 3,141 counties in the U.S. and developed an optimization algorithm to identify six counties that best represent the Black population. Data were gathered for 19 demographic and economic measures and were coded into a linear program optimization model to identify the most representative combination of six counties. Those counties are presented in a chart below.

Exhibit 1
6 U.S. Counties That Represent the Black Population

Berkeley County, SC	Cook County, IL	Jackson County, MO	Middlesex County, NJ	Oktibbeha County, MS	Prince George's County, MD
Rural outskirts of Charleston	Core county of Chicago	Core county of Kansas City	Central New Jersey, New York exurb	Rural east-central Mississippi	Suburb of Washington, D.C.
35,132	1,395,700	164,073	66,016	14,690	454,871
24.7	26.9	25.1	9.2	36.9	58.2
Midsized Southern community, high growth, manufacturing economy, high home ownership rates, low crime rates.	Large, diverse population in major urban megalopolis, above average incomes, service economy.	Low-income, high-crime core of midsized city. Typical "enclave," isolated Black urban community in West/Midwest.	Exurb of major Northeast megalopolis, low proportion of Black population, high income, few disparities in income and education between Blacks and other groups.	Small Southern town with a large Black presence, family-oriented, large income and education disparities between Blacks and other groups, high poverty rate.	Suburb of large Southern metro area, high income, concentrated Black population, standard State seat belt law in place.

Research Methodology

The field research conducted for this study consisted of two phases: (1) one-on-one discussions with key individuals and (2) focus groups in each community. One-on-one discussions were conducted first, followed by focus groups approximately two months later.

The study team, in cooperation with NHTSA staff, prepared lists of types of individuals or occupations who serve the Black community or participate in traffic safety efforts. The final list of discussion candidates included leaders in the following general categories:

- education;
- faith-based organizations;
- health care;
- traffic safety;
- media;
- law enforcement; and
- politics.

The study team conducted eight focus groups in each study site, which afforded some selectivity in segmenting focus groups. The team considered two types of segmentation, behavioral or demographic, and with input from NHTSA staff, elected to conduct demographic segmentations. Segmentations were therefore conducted by age and gender.

Based on project priorities, crash statistics and other research, the eight population segments selected for focus groups were as follows:

- parents with children under the age of 4;
- seniors (ages 60-79);
- female teens (16-19 years old);
- male teens (16-19 years old);
- female young adults (20-27 years old);
- male young adults (20-27 years old);
- female adults (28-44 years old); and
- male adults (28-44 years old).

Summary of Focus Group Findings and Implications for Program Development

Several key findings from the research stand out and are presented below along with their implications for program development.

Key Finding #1:

Drinking and driving and aggressive and reckless driving were consistently identified as significant traffic safety problems across all focus groups regardless of age, gender, or location. Although drinking and driving was regularly cited as a top area of concern, many participants felt that Black people are not the cause of the problem. Rather, participants cited White drivers as the ones who are drinking and driving. Also, participants used definitions of the term “drinking and driving” that varied widely.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

Messages to Black communities must show the relevance of drinking and driving as a behavioral issue rather than an outside risk. Messages must also clarify the definition of drinking and driving, and emphasize the risks.

Key Finding #2:

There was a strong belief at all sites that racial profiling is a serious problem and an ongoing practice of law enforcement. In particular, Black males felt that there is little that they can do to protect themselves from being victims of this practice. While most were able to separate the problem of racial profiling from the benefits of law enforcement, members of law enforcement were not seen as desirable leaders in local traffic safety efforts.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

Law enforcement agencies must address this issue before they can become valuable partners in developing traffic safety programs for Black communities. In light of concerns about racial profiling, program designers should be sensitive in their selection of messages and messengers.

Key Finding #3:

Seat belt use among Blacks is inconsistent, with part-time use prevalent regardless of the community and the age of the participant. Most respondents believed seat belts have a positive safety benefit. Most participants also said that they most frequently wear seat belts in situations that they view as risky, such as traveling long distances, in poor weather conditions, and when riding with young children. Interestingly, seat belt use was also commonly seen as a reflection on the ability of the driver; putting on a seat belt was often seen as a statement of no confidence in the driver's ability, whether the driver is oneself or another. There was little recognition of the unpredictable nature of some crashes and that they could occur in good and bad weather, on long or short trips, or due to another driver's error.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

Programs should emphasize the unpreventable and unpredictable risk involved when drivers do not buckle up, and the need to buckle up each and every time a person drives or rides in a vehicle.

Key Finding #4:

For younger participants, especially males, there was a strong relationship between driving and being "cool" (the term "cool" was used throughout the country). Often, young male participants said that when they drive or ride in a vehicle, they are "styling and profiling" in an attempt to look "cool." ("Styling and profiling" is an attempt to show off or to try to make an impression). Use of seat belts was not viewed as "cool" by the majority of young male participants.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

Reversing this perception among young Black males is important to increasing belt use, and may have a positive effect on seat belt use for their passengers, as well.

Key Finding #5:

If parents responded that they did not wear seat belts, they still wanted to ensure the safety of their children by placing them in child restraints. Nonuse of safety seats was generally attributed to either economic constraints or indifference to safety. For young men, child seats were generally not seen as a high priority, and warranted minimal investment of time and money. Awareness of booster seats was mixed, and most people had only a general knowledge of when a child should use a booster seat.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

More general education needs to be provided to clarify the proper use of safety seats and booster seats. Promoting the use of child safety seat checkups may have a high payoff as well. The value and need for safety seats needs to be emphasized to young fathers.

Key Finding #6:

Blacks have many of the same reasons for not wearing seat belts as the general population, such as discomfort, wrinkling clothes, and simply forgetting. However, most Blacks support seat belt laws, even if they do not consistently wear seat belts and believe that they are more likely to be pulled over for nonuse of seat belts than White drivers.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

The content of existing general messages needs to be shared with and tailored to Black audiences, using more culturally relevant themes, images, language, and media vehicles. In other words, how the message is delivered should be considered, but in many cases the message itself is equally relevant to Black or White target markets.

Key Finding #7:

Local health and medical providers, Black religious leaders, and families were most often identified as the most trusted groups to lead traffic safety efforts in the selected counties.

Churches and schools are trusted venues. However, no group or venue enjoyed unanimous support.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

These trusted sources should be incorporated into programs, while also recognizing that no single source is universally trusted and thus parallel messages with different messengers may be warranted. The use of religious leaders should be localized and incorporated into appropriate program elements. Program designers should consult with their local community contacts before selecting messengers.

Key Finding #8:

Blacks in the selected communities for this study were receptive to, and supportive of, positive, realistic messages. Messages should portray truthful, ordinary people in realistic situations. Participants strongly believe it is essential to have Blacks represented in messages and ads that target Black men, women, teens, or seniors.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

Messages and ads should portray ordinary people in believable situations. For the most part, participants were not interested in “blood and guts” images and scenes. Including Black people in the messages is important in attracting the attention of Black audiences.

Key Finding #9:

When compared to White communities, many participants believed that Black communities have significantly inferior street systems in design, construction, and maintenance.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

Messages should forthrightly portray infrastructure in keeping with the public’s perceptions, to ensure that messages are perceived as honest, “above board,” and well received.

Key Finding #10:

Participants are suspicious of safety statistics that do not match their perceptions of the Black community’s opinions or behavior.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

Minimize use of statistics in safety messages targeting Blacks, or make efforts in the message to reinforce the validity of the data as part of a social norming message.

Key Finding #11:

There was a high level of interest and concern about pedestrian issues. Participants had different opinions on issues such as jaywalking and the lack of sidewalks, depending on their geographic region. Participants consistently said that pedestrians wearing dark clothing, and walking along or across roads at night, present dangerous challenges for motorists.

Implications for Targeted Program Development:

Better education is needed in the area of pedestrian safety, especially how to cross streets. These educational efforts need to be targeted to the unique urban or rural environments in local areas, and designed with deference to the other program implications cited earlier with regard to message development and delivery.

When considering target audiences for program development, it is important to heed one participant’s statement that “there are two ways to change: by choice or by force.” This comment sums up the feelings of many, particularly older, participants about a resistance to forced change.

Many participants emphasized that messages should target changing the community’s mindset about the benefits of traffic safety, rather than forcing the changes through threats, presumably enforcement.

Key Comparisons Between Focus Groups and One-On-One Discussions

The following are key findings and comparisons of the focus groups and one-on-one discussions.

Major Traffic Safety Problems in Black Communities

There were significant differences in the way focus group participants and one-on-one participants ranked the major traffic safety problems affecting the Black communities in their respective counties. Across all focus groups, the majority of participants ranked drinking and driving as either the top, or one of the top, three problems. Aggressive driving and speeding were also given high priority.

The improper or non-use of child safety seats was the major problem listed in the one-on-one discussions. Contrary to the focus group findings, drinking and driving was rarely mentioned in the one-on-one discussions.

Trusted Messengers of Health and Safety Information

Focus group participants and participants in the one-on-one discussions differed on who they viewed as the most-trusted messengers of health and safety initiatives in the Black community. While the majority of one-on-one discussants in all counties listed elected and law enforcement officials as two of the most credible and trusted messengers, focus group participants reported just the opposite. Focus group participants reported that most in the Black community view both politicians and law enforcement officials with suspicion. In their opinions, both would be poor choices as spokespersons for a health and safety campaign.

However, similar to the focus group findings, the majority of one-on-one participants saw non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, churches and schools as trusted venues and effective at reaching the Black community with messages.

Perceptions in the Black Community About the Enforcement of Traffic Laws

As in the focus groups, the vast majority of participants in the one-on-one discussions reported racial profiling to be a major issue in the Black community. Similarly, both focus group and one-on-one participants said that Black males – particularly young Black males – are more likely to be victims of profiling than other groups.

Participants in both sets of research groups mentioned similar ways to eliminate racial profiling, such as increased diversity on police forces and more accountability for police officers.

Child Safety Seats/Restraints

Participants in the one-on-one discussions consistently listed the improper use and nonuse of child safety seats as a problem within the Black community. In fact, respondents in several counties said they believed people were not knowledgeable about the guidelines and laws that govern the use of child safety seats and restraints.

In the focus groups, the majority of participants who regularly transport children reported consistent use of child safety seats. In fact, many admitted that they were more diligent about using restraints for their children than about using seat belts for themselves.

Guidelines and Strategies for Program Development

Information collected and reviewed for this study suggested the following guidelines for designing and conducting traffic safety programs directed at Black populations:

- Messages may be most effective when directed to the following three target audiences: the “Hip-Hop” Generation, the Civil Rights Generation, and Black Males (of all ages).
- It is important to address obstacles that impede the communication of traffic safety messages. Three significant obstacles in Black communities are distrust of law enforcement, skepticism about statistics from predominantly White organizations, and the perceived inferiority of sidewalk and road conditions between Black and White communities.
- It is important to address informational needs. Those needs may include clarification of problem behavior, communication of associated risks and consequences, education about rules and regulations, and/or instruction on safety practices. Identified needs varied across program areas.
- Messages should be realistic, factual (although not laden with statistics), incorporate culturally relevant music, use trusted spokespersons and sources, and emphasize change by choice rather than change by force. It is important to pretest messages and gather feedback about appropriate spokespersons before implementing a full campaign.
- Possible channels of delivery include churches and other religious institutions, personal interaction, and mass media. However, the selection of an appropriate channel of delivery is contingent on a community’s character, culture, and resources.

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Chapter I INTRODUCTION

Overview

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, the African-American population is projected to grow 13 percent from 2000 to 2010, compared to 9 percent for the total U.S. population.¹ While this projected growth may have a positive impact on the nation's diversity, it also foreshadows a significant increase in the number of deaths and injuries from traffic-related incidents, including motor vehicle crashes, among a population that is already statistically over-represented in this area.

Attempts to reach Black communities with messages designed to change behavior and attitudes about traffic and driving safety consistently have been hampered by a lack of access to culturally-relevant strategies and information that would be helpful in developing and communicating programs that hit home. For example, traffic safety professionals who seek to deliver relevant, credible messages and information through the most effective channel need to understand how concerns and priorities among the Black community may differ from those of the mainstream population. To make the effort to develop effective intervention programs even more challenging, communicators also must be prepared to apply different approaches to reach different audiences or subgroups within the African-American community itself, based on age, location, ethnic origin, economic and other factors.

In response to this challenge, NHTSA retained Cordy & Company Public Relations, along with subcontractors AFYA, Inc., and Kevin Raines, to identify traffic safety needs in the Black community, to determine effective means of promoting traffic safety to Black populations, and to produce specific guidelines for conducting interventions

targeted to Black populations. This report provides that information in the form of research findings and recommendations that can be implemented as part of current or future programs.

Project Goals and General Approach

This study was designed to identify the traffic safety knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of residents in predominantly Black communities and to determine how best to promote highway safety to these communities. The study had four primary research objectives:

- to identify and interpret traffic safety issues of concern to the Black population, particularly where those concerns are unique to the Black community;
- to identify social norms and perceptions of traffic safety issues that might impact the effectiveness of programs and messages in the Black community;
- to identify specific types of messages and themes that resonate in or are rejected by the Black community; and
- to identify promising and ineffective means of delivering messages to the Black community.

Information was gathered from two sources: (1) 45 one-on-one discussions with local community leaders, activists, service providers, and other key people who serve the community; and (2) 48 focus groups with Black members of the public. The lessons learned from this research were compiled in this report to meet the study's main objective: *to provide a resource that can be used to guide the development of subsequent Federal, State, and local programs that are targeted to, or sensitive toward, the Black population.*

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Projections Branch, 2000 Census data.

With more than 30 million African Americans in the U.S., representing numerous opinions, perceptions, and experiences, no single message, program, or media vehicle will resonate with this community. Like any other demographic group, however, these diverse opinions can be reduced to manageable market segments. This study gathered opinions based on two levels of market segmentation:

■ **Geodemographic segmentation.** To some extent, individual perceptions are based on one's living environment. Messages, media, and programmatic needs may differ between urban and rural communities, blue-collar and

white-collar communities, low-income and high-income communities, and a number of other identifiers. This research has concentrated on six communities that typify the range of African American communities throughout the U.S.

■ **Traditional demographic segmentation.** Age, family status, gender, and other demographic identifiers also affect messages, media, and program needs within communities. Within each of the six communities, eight focus groups were conducted, each targeting a different traditional demographic market segment.

Chapter II

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This section of the report describes the methodological procedures used to conduct the research and includes three distinct subsections:

- the approach used to select the six research communities;
- demographic and economic profiles of the six communities; and
- the field research methodology, including the design and recruiting of the focus groups, the one-on-one discussion process, and other pertinent background information.

Site Selection Process

The reason for conducting the research in six different communities was to capture the diversity of opinions and perceptions of various market segments within the American Black population. Therefore, the selection of research sites was a very important step in the process. It was important to identify six communities that in combination would provide a diverse but representative sample of economic, demographic, and social environments. In light of this requirement, significant effort was expended to locate an optimal combination of communities.

The site selection process involved five distinct steps:

- STEP 1: Identify and classify available community-descriptive data;
- STEP 2: Identify data measures (and non quantitative measures) to be considered;
- STEP 3: Develop a sampling or optimization methodology to support the selection of the best combination of sites;

STEP 4: Select six sites using the processes and data developed in Steps 1 through 3; and

STEP 5: Manually review the six sites to ensure their reasonable fit with the goals of the research.

Step 1: Identify and Classify Available Data

The study team canvassed a number of data sources to identify measures that could be used to describe local communities. Upon beginning this process, two criteria were defined: the data must be comprehensive and consistently defined across the U.S.

This limited the search to Federal data sources, since the availability and consistency of State, local, and private data sources vary widely. Additionally, data sets varied by geographical level; different data (and less data) were available for cities and Zip Codes, compared to counties and States. Upon considering the amount of data available, along with practical issues such as the population pool needed to recruit for focus groups, it was determined that a county-level geography was most appropriate for the selection process. This geographic criterion offered the best tradeoff between small-area targeting and the size necessary to recruit a sufficient number of focus group participants.

County-level data were gathered from numerous sources, including the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Uniform Crime Reporting System, and private demographic sales organizations. State level data were collected from NHTSA sources.

Step 2: Identify Appropriate Data Measures for Site Selection

After gathering and identifying a large number of available data measures, the study team identified

19 particular measures that, in combination, provide a strong description of a county's particular demographic, economic, and social elements. These 19 measures are listed below.

Exhibit 2

County and state data measures used for site selection process

- Overall Black population (1999);
- Overall county population (1999);
- Black population as a proportion of overall county population (1999);
- Total minority population as a proportion of overall county population (1999);
- Median household income estimates for all races collectively (2000);
- Disparities in the proportions of Black and non-Black households with incomes of \$35,000 or more (1990);
- Proportion of residents ages 25 or older with a 2-year college degree or higher (2000);
- Disparities in the proportions of Black and non-Black persons ages 25 or older with a 2-year college degree or higher (1990);
- Home ownership rates for the overall population (2000);
- Overall population growth rate (1990–1999);
- Black population growth rate (1990–1999);
- Overall job growth (1989–1998);
- Total per capita crime rate (1997);
- Local economic sector concentrations of manufacturing, services, farm employment, and military (1998);
- Presence of standard or secondary seat belt law statewide (current)³;
- Statewide traffic fatality rates (1999—statewide data were used because of the instability of fatality rates on a year to year basis for smaller populations);
- Poverty rates for the overall population (1995);
- Percent of Black households with children (1990); and
- Geographic region.

Note: Some of these data represent the entire county, and others represent only the Black population within a county.

² Standard seat belt laws allow law enforcement officers to pull over drivers for seat belt violations even if no other violations are observed. Secondary seat belt laws allow law enforcement officers to address seat belt violations only if the driver has been stopped for another offense.

Step 3: Develop Algorithm to Select Sites

Using a mathematical modeling algorithm that incorporates the 19 data measures, the team set up a series of 22 rules that, if satisfied, would identify the “perfect” combination of counties. The team then developed and implemented a linear programming optimization model to identify the set of counties that came closest to meeting this ideal. For a detailed description of the 22 rules for selecting counties see Appendix A.

Step 4: Implement Optimization Model to Select Sites

The study team developed a linear programming model to optimize the site selection process. The linear programming model converted the rules into mathematical equations and defined an error term to quantify how close a particular combination of six communities came to satisfying all 22 rules.

As an additional factor, each rule was given a different weighting in the model, based on rankings assigned by the study team in consultation with NHTSA staff. Some rules were incontrovertible, such as the rule regarding diversity of community sizes. Other rules were given high importance, such as the rule regarding diversity of the Black proportion of the population and diversity of incomes. Other rules were given low importance, such as the diversity of home ownership rates.

The odds against a particular group of six counties perfectly satisfying all rules were astronomical, so the exercise concentrated on finding the combination that produced the smallest deviation from the theoretically “perfect” combination. Additionally, the mathematical model was so large, and the data sets so numerous, that standard linear programming software could not accommodate the model, so the study team used an iterative approach to eliminate candidate counties until the full model could be run. More information about this process can be obtained by contacting the study team.

Using this system, the study team identified a number of county combinations that came close to satisfying all constraints.

Step 5: Manually Review Identified Sites

The theoretically optimum set of counties, along with backup sites, was submitted to NHTSA headquarters and regional staff for review, and was also reviewed by all members of the study team. The sites were reviewed for any unique situations that might cause the research to be skewed (e.g., strong programs already in place to promote traffic safety issues in the Black community; the presence of unique, high profile institutions such as historically Black colleges or universities; or the presence of other features that would render a community atypical). Adjustments were made as necessary, and backup sites were selected where necessary.

Profiles of Selected Sites

The six sites selected were:

Berkeley County, SC is on the rural outskirts of Charleston, SC, with a population of 142,000, of whom 35,000 are Blacks. While the county is physically large, much of its north and west sections are undeveloped, with most of the population concentrated in the southern half of the county near Charleston and north along Interstate 26 and State Highway 52. The county has below-average income and education levels and above-average growth, with a concentration in manufacturing jobs. Berkeley County was selected because it is a midsized southern community with high growth, high home ownership rates, a manufacturing economy, and low crime rates.

Cook County, IL has a Black population of 1.4 million, densely situated in areas ranging from urban to suburban, but primarily metropolitan-based since it is the core county of the Chicago metropolitan area. Overall, Cook County has a racially diverse population. This location offers a diverse range of conditions according to the study

team's 17 key measurements, although incomes and educational levels for Blacks in this area generally rank near the national average. There also is a very strong base of Black leadership and community-based activism. Cook County, and Chicago in particular, was selected because of its large, diverse population in a major urban setting with a service economy. One out of every 25 Black people in the U.S. lives in Cook County.

Jackson County, MO is the core county for the Kansas City metropolitan area and is relatively representative of the Black presence in midsized cities. Of the total population of 650,000, approximately 25 percent are Black. The county has a strong lower middle class, with a larger than average proportion of low-income households, but a smaller than average proportion of households below the poverty threshold. The crime rate is particularly high. Blacks are only about half as likely to have a college degree as members of other races in the county, and only about half as likely to have above-average household incomes. Jackson County was selected because it is a good example of a low-income, high-crime, midsized metropolitan core. It is a typical "enclave" or isolated Black community in the western/midwestern U.S.

Middlesex County, NJ is an urban/suburban county with a Black population of approximately 66,000. New Jersey has 10 counties with Black populations within the 48,000 to 103,000 range, many of which are strikingly similar in their demographic and economic profiles. Each of these counties is characterized by above-average income and education levels and offers a diversified economy fueled primarily by manufacturing and service industries. Blacks tend not to be concentrated in urban areas, but are found in enclave communities among a primarily majority population. Middlesex County was selected because it is a high-income exurb of a major northeastern megalopolis with a low proportion of Blacks, yet with few disparities in income and education levels between Blacks and other groups.

Oktibbeha County, MS is a rural area where 14,690 Blacks reside among an overall population of nearly 40,000, in an environment typically known as "small-town America." This site was selected because of the relatively high number of minorities in the area; the general separation from a major metropolitan center; and the interesting mix of factors, including a high crime rate, a large proportion of jobs in the government sector, and a high number of households with children. The county is largely family-oriented, with significant income and education disparities between Blacks and other groups, and a high poverty rate. Because Blacks make up more than one-third of the county population, there is a high probability of strong community vitality, although largely "rural" in style and content. Oktibbeha is roughly prototypical of the rural and small-town counties that are home to approximately 5.8 million Blacks, the majority of whom live in the southern U.S.

Prince George's County, MD is a densely populated urban/suburban area in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Of its 780,000 residents, more than 450,000 are Black, thereby constituting a very concentrated Black community. It is a relatively high-income area, albeit with relatively slow economic growth, and has an above-average concentration of government workers. Blacks in Prince George's County tend to experience fewer disparities in income and education levels relative to other races than is seen in most areas of the country. The county has below-average crime levels and an above-average presence of families with children. Prince George's County was selected because it is a suburb of a large southern metropolitan area, with a high-income, highly concentrated Black population. In addition, Maryland has a standard seat belt law and is close to NHTSA headquarters, which facilitates project monitoring.

Exhibit 3
Black Population by Region and Sample County Statistics



Berkeley County, SC	Cook County, IL	Jackson County, MO	Middlesex County, NJ	Oktibbeha County, MS	Prince George's County, MD
Rural outskirts of Charleston	Core county of Chicago	Core county of Kansas City	Central New Jersey, New York exurb	Rural east-central Mississippi	Suburb of Washington, D.C.
35,132	1,395,700	164,073	66,016	14,690	454,871
24.7	26.9	25.1	9.2	36.9	58.2
Midsized Southern community, high growth, manufacturing economy, high home ownership rates, low crime rates.	Large, diverse population in major urban megalopolis, above average incomes, service economy.	Low-income, high-crime core of midsized city. Typical "enclave," isolated Black urban community in West/Midwest.	Exurb of major Northeast megalopolis, low proportion of Black population, high income, few disparities in income and education between Blacks and other groups.	Small Southern town with a large Black presence, family-oriented, large income and education disparities between Blacks and other groups, high poverty rate.	Suburb of large Southern metro area, high income, concentrated Black population, standard State seat belt law in place.

Full profiles of each selected county are presented in the following table:

Exhibit 4

Sample County Profiles

County Profiles	Berkeley County, SC	Cook County, IL	Jackson County, MO	Middlesex County, NJ	Oktibbeha County, MS	Prince George's County, MD
Residents ages 25 or older with college degree (2000) (%)	22.83 Well below average	33.40 Above average	30.09 Below average	36.89 Well above average	44.31 Top tier	35.61 Well above average
Median income (all residents) (2000) (\$)	38,046 Below average	47,283 Well above average	38,357 Below average	64,179 Top tier	29,498 Bottom tier	58,535 Top tier
Population in any minority group (1999) (%)	27.9 Above average	32.2 Above average	27.0 Below average	20.3 Well below average	40.6 Well above average	63.3 Top tier
Overall population (1999)	142,300 Well below average	5,192,326 Top tier	654,484 Above average	717,949 Above average	39,765 Bottom tier	781,781 Well above average
Population change (1990–1999) (%)	10.6 Well above average	1.7 Well below average	3.4 Below average	6.9 Above average	3.6 Below average	8.2 Above average
Black population (1999)	35,132 Well below average	1,395,700 Top tier	164,073 Above average	66,016 Below average	14,690 Bottom tier	454,871 Well above average
Change in Black population (1990–1999) (%)	12.8 Above average	5.1 Well below average	20.4 Well above average	18.2 Above average	11.4 Below average	22.8 Well above average
Black population (1999) (%)	24.7 Above average	26.9 Above average	25.1 Above average	9.2 Bottom tier	36.9 Well above average	58.2 Top tier
Jobs in service sector (1998) (%)	20.69 Bottom tier	35.11 Well above average	32.52 Above average	31.75 Below average	17.79 Bottom tier	30.60 Below average
Jobs in manufacturing sector (1998) (%)	18.07 Top tier	13.08 Above average	9.86 Below average	14.20 Well above average	11.95 Above average	3.29 Bottom tier
Jobs in military sector (1998) (%)	1.91 Top tier	0.37 Bottom tier	0.68 Above average	0.40 Bottom tier	1.30 Well above average	2.39 Top tier
Jobs in government sector (nonmilitary) (1998) (%)	16.32 Well above average	10.37 Well below average	12.77 Above average	11.08 Below average	38.35 Top tier	19.49 Top tier

County Profiles	Berkeley County, SC	Cook County, IL	Jackson County, MO	Middlesex County, NJ	Oktibbeha County, MS	Prince George's County, MD
Employment Growth (1989–1998) (%)	23.35 Well above average	5.77 Well below average	6.33 Well below average	11.73 Below average	17.97 Above average	7.28 Below average
Total reported crimes per 10,000 residents (1997)	72.5 Well below average	111.5 Below average	209.4 Top tier	68.8 Bottom tier	120.7 Above average	97.2 Below average
Ratio of Blacks with college degrees to other races with college degrees (1990)	0.604 Above average	0.559 Below average	0.582 Above average	0.822 Top tier	0.266 Bottom tier	0.729 Well above average
Ratio of households with incomes of \$35,000 or more – Black versus all other (1990)	0.509 Below average	0.580 Above average	0.555 Below average	0.849 Top tier	0.379 Bottom tier	0.900 Top tier
Proportion of all households below the poverty line (1996) (%)	14.1 Below average	14.7 Below average	14.9 Below average	5.8 Bottom tier	23.4 Top tier	8.1 Bottom tier
Black households with children (1990) (%)	48.56 Top tier	37.89 Well below average	39.74 Below average	39.16 Below average	49.28 Top tier	42.07 Above average
Housing units occupied by owners (1990) (%)	66.36 Well above average	53.16 Well below average	56.32 Below average	65.88 Well above average	56.71 Below average	57.67 Below average
Geographic region (as defined by U.S. Bureau of the Census)*	South	Midwest	Midwest	Northeast	South	South
Seat belt law in place	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Standard	Secondary	Standard
Crash fatality rate per 10,000 residents (State) (1999)	2.741 Top tier	1.200 Well below average	2.001 Well above average	0.893 Bottom tier	3.348 Top tier	1.141 Well below average

* Note: No counties were selected from the Western region because fewer than 10 percent of the population is Black.

Field Research Methodology

Upon selection of the sites and approval from both NHTSA headquarters and the relevant NHTSA regional offices, the field research began. The field research had two phases: one-on-one discussions with key individuals in each community, and focus groups in each community. The general process for conducting this research is presented in the following pages. The process is presented in approximate chronological order, although in many cases independent steps were conducted simultaneously.

Phase 1: One-on-one discussions with key individuals.

Step 1A: Identify categories of individuals who serve the community.

The study team, in cooperation with NHTSA staff, prepared lists of types of individuals or occupations who serve the Black community or participate in traffic safety efforts. The final list of discussion candidates included leaders in the following general categories:

- education;
- faith-based organizations;
- health care;
- traffic safety;
- media;
- law enforcement; and
- politics.

Within each category, subcategories were also identified.

Step 1B: Identify specific individuals in the six target communities.

Upon identifying the discussion candidate categories and finalizing the selection of sites, the study team investigated each community to identify a list of approximately 10 people who might have valuable insights into the research topic.

Step 1C: Prepare discussion guide.

The study team prepared a content guide for use as a template for discussions. A separate but similar guide was created for each type of

community leader or key individual to ensure that pertinent topics were covered. A draft guide was submitted to NHTSA for review and NHTSA comments were discussed and addressed to produce the final guide. See Appendix B for the One-on-One Discussion Guide Template.

Step 1D: Schedule meetings.

Each individual on the list produced during Step 1B was contacted by the study team, informed about the study and the study goals, and asked to participate in a discussion.

Step 1E: Conduct meetings.

Discussions were conducted onsite in each community by study team members; telephone discussions were also conducted in instances where the study team's travel schedule did not coincide with a local leader's availability.

As a means of ensuring proper coverage of the topic and the target community, every person who participated in one-on-one discussions was also asked to provide the names of other leaders or key individuals in the community. This assured the study team that key individuals were being recognized and canvassed.

During the travel to these meetings, certain logistical issues were also addressed when planning the upcoming focus groups. These tasks included checking potential focus group facilities, making contact with advertising media (for recruiting), and other specific tasks.

Phase 2: Conduct focus groups with the public.

Step 2A: Identify target groups.

The study team conducted eight focus groups in each study site, which afforded some selectivity in segmenting focus groups. The team considered two types of segmentation, behavioral or demographic, and with input from NHTSA staff elected to conduct demographic segmentations. Segmentations were therefore conducted by age and gender.

Based on project priorities, crash statistics and other research, the eight population segments selected for focus groups were as follows:

- parents with children under the age of 4;
- seniors (60–79 years old);
- female teens (16–19 years old);
- male teens (16–19 years old);
- female young adults (20–27 years old);
- male young adults (20–27 years old);
- female adults (28–44 years old); and
- male adults (28–44 years old).

Step 2B: Design focus group moderator’s guide.

As with the one-on-one discussion guide, the study team created a draft focus group moderator’s guide, which was finalized with the assistance and cooperation of NHTSA staff. (See Appendix C for the Focus Group Moderator’s Guide.) The guide was designed for a 2-hour focus group, with additional topics included in the event that a group ran short on time.

The focus group guide was highly consistent across groups but minor differences were included for specific groups. The parents group, in particular, was offered a more indepth discussion of child safety seats and booster seats, while teenagers were asked a question about learning to drive. In each group the moderator had latitude to stray from the guide in the event that an unexpected topic of interest was raised by the group.

Prior to conducting the focus groups, moderators met for an orientation session where issues relevant to the overall operation of the focus groups were discussed, including onsite preparations preceding the focus groups. A logistical checklist, described in Step 2E, was provided to each moderator to ensure smooth setup and execution of the groups.

Step 2C: Set up focus group logistics.

The study team located sites for focus group facilities, and made arrangements for refreshments, travel, props, and other items needed to conduct the groups. The team also set up a toll-

free telephone number so potential participants could call in to register or ask questions.

Facility selection was determined based on the following factors:

- location;
- access to public transportation;
- size and accommodations;
- accessibility for the handicapped;
- availability; and
- cost.

Formal focus group facilities were generally neither available nor necessary, therefore focus groups were often held in community centers or other locations known to local residents. The focus group locations were:

Berkeley County, SC	Moncks Corner AME Church, Moncks Corner Moncks Corner Baptist Church, Moncks Corner Cross Community Center, Cross
Cook County, IL	Sinai Community Center, Chicago Chicago Urban League, Chicago
Jackson County, MO	Bruce Watkins Cultural Heritage Center, Kansas City Kansas City Urban League, Kansas City
Middlesex County, NJ	Job Corps of Edison Tiny Tots Day Care Center (affiliated with Ebenezer Baptist Church), New Brunswick
Oktibbeha County, MS	Brickfire Project Community Center, Starkville Peter’s Rock Temple Church of God, Starkville
Prince George’s County, MD	Bowie State University, Bowie Olchak Market Research, Greenbelt Prince George’s Community College, Largo

In Prince George’s County, a formal focus group facility was used for selected focus groups to allow NHTSA staff to observe the groups.

Step 2D: Recruit focus group participants.

Focus group participants were recruited in one of two ways: (1) through announcements placed in key Black newspapers, distribution of flyers, and radio public service announcements (PSAs) in the designated communities; and (2) telephone recruitment using random resident listings.

Standardized notices containing information on the study, focus group composition, a deadline for responses, and contact information, including a toll-free number, were strategically placed in predominantly Black print and media outlets in the six sites. Individual flyers containing the same information were also widely distributed throughout the communities. In addition, team members worked directly with community organizations and institutions to identify focus group participants. These entities included churches, youth organizations, service providers, universities, and local branches of national Black organizations (NAACP and urban leagues).

After a potential candidate called the toll-free number, a study team member asked each person a series of questions from a screener designed by the team. Team members screened candidates and assigned successful candidates to one of the eight designated groups. The team sought to recruit 10 to 12 participants for each focus group so that an average of eight to 10 individuals would be available for each session (given the possibility of “no shows”). While driving status was not used as a criterion for inclusion or exclusion in the focus groups, the following items were used to screen participants (see Appendix D):

- age;
- gender;
- geographic representation (residence in the county was required); and
- availability during identified dates and times.

Step 2E: Prepare and execute onsite task list and equipment checklist.

Study team members developed a schedule for conducting focus groups, which followed a proposed 5-day timeline at each site. One day was designated for onsite arrival and preparation, and 4 days were allotted to conduct eight focus groups (two groups per evening) and to prepare summary reports of each session. These checklists ensured that the focus groups were conducted consistently and without error across all sites (see Appendix E for the Moderator’s Checklist).

The guide included, but was not limited to, the following information:

- an overview of the initiative, its purpose, and objectives;
- roles and responsibilities of the moderator;
- outline of the process, timeframe, etc.;
- materials and equipment to be used while conducting the focus group;
- questions and topics to be covered during the focus group;
- tips and techniques for handling certain situations;
- arrangements for site locations, such as recording equipment; and
- descriptions of types of field notes to be generated by the moderator.

Step 2F: Conduct focus groups.

A total of eight 2-hour focus groups were conducted in each community, with two sessions held each evening (6–8 p.m. and 8–10 p.m.). For each session, focus group participants were asked to register (by providing name and contact information on a log sheet) and were given a tent card to display their name. Each participant was then given three items, which they read and completed prior to the beginning of the focus group:

- A brief statement of questions and answers to read at their leisure, which answered some of the more common questions about the focus group, its purpose, and its processes.

- A form that asked their opinions about seat belt laws, standard seat belt laws, and what they believe their likelihood of being ticketed would be if they did not wear their seat belt. These questions were discussed in depth during the focus groups.
- A list of perceived driving risks. Participants were asked to rank the risks in terms of their danger to the community, in preparation for discussion during the focus group.

The above documents were presented to participants prior to the initiation of the focus group to conserve time in the group and to allow participants as much time as possible to complete the survey and the ranking exercise.

The moderator opened each session with introductions and a brief review of the study and focus group process. The moderator also

explained the audio recording and note taking process to the participants. Using the approved Focus Group Guide, the moderator initiated the focus group process. Focus group participants received refreshments, plus \$35 in cash upon completion of the focus group as compensation for their time.

At the completion of each focus group, the moderator team (comprised of one moderator and one note-taker) prepared a site summary report which included a demographic breakdown of participants by session; a review of the entire process, including procedures that worked and those that might need to be modified; and a preliminary summary of the findings. In order to conserve project resources, verbatim transcripts of the focus groups were not prepared. The data from the site reports was analyzed and key findings, patterns, and trends are presented in Chapter III.

Chapter III

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS IN BLACK COMMUNITIES

This part of the report discusses the findings of the 48 focus groups that were held in Illinois, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, and South Carolina. Eight focus groups were held in each of six communities, targeting senior citizens (ages 60–79); parents with children under the age of 4; male teenagers (ages 16–19), female teenagers (ages 16–19); male young adults (ages 20–27); female young adults (ages 20–27); male adults (ages 28–45); and female adults (ages 28–45).

Findings are segmented into two sections:

- the problem identification section, discussing perceptions of traffic safety issues, which served as a foundation for the later discussion of message content and theme; and
- the media and outreach section, discussing promising modes of delivering safety messages, along with promising themes and message content.

Problem Identification

Focus group participants were asked to share their opinions and perspectives on a wide range of issues related to traffic safety. These included:

- general driving practices;
- general driving issues;
- drinking and driving;
- pedestrian safety;
- seat belt usage;
- seat belt laws;
- law enforcement and racial profiling;
- child safety seats/restraints;
- local leadership and organizations;
- ads and media messages; and
- key factors to successful messages and programs.

In reviewing participant responses and perceptions, it is clear that there are far more similarities than differences among focus group participants, regardless of age, gender, or focus group location. However, significant differences were observed on selected issues. The following discussion summarizes the similarities and differences the study team identified from the focus group feedback.

General Driving Practices

The focus groups included a range of people, including both drivers and nondrivers. Most nondrivers rode with friends or family; however, in some locations, nondrivers relied heavily on public transportation and in others, nondrivers walked or rode bicycles. There was no distinct pattern of one's likelihood of being a regular driver by age or gender. The two suburban communities on the eastern seaboard, Prince George's County and Middlesex County, had lower proportions of drivers than did the other communities, which may be partially due to the availability of large mass transit systems in those areas.

General Driving Issues

Consensus Findings

At the beginning of each focus group, participants were given a list of common highway safety problems and asked to rank the problems based on how serious they were in the Black community (Appendix F). Across all communities and all groups, the majority of participants ranked drinking and driving quite high in terms of importance. In most groups and communities, the majority of participants also ranked aggressive and reckless driving as one of the top three problems in the Black community. One participant noted that reckless driving is often a function of drinking, anger, or other issues, thus illustrating the relationship between dangerous

driving behaviors. Speeding also was ranked as a significant problem.

Beyond the top three most important problems little consensus existed for the ranking of other problems.

The high profile of drinking and driving may be related to other issues, such as participants' definitions of the term "drinking and driving." This is discussed later in the report.

Respondents tended to be evenly split over whether traffic safety problems arise from a lack of knowledge of laws and safety issues, or whether they are a result of drivers knowing but ignoring laws and issues. No particular pattern by age, gender, or region was evident in these opinions.

Geography-Based Differences and Similarities

As stated above, there was general consensus on key issues. Some minor to moderate differences between specific communities existed.

For instance in Middlesex and Prince George's Counties, both east coast communities near metropolitan areas, participants ranked drinking and driving as important. In all of the Middlesex County groups, participants ranked drinking and driving as the greatest safety problem in their community. In Prince George's County, only one half of the focus groups ranked drinking and driving as the primary problem, though all of the Prince George's County focus groups ranked drinking and driving as one of the top three problems in the community. Prince George's County residents also consistently ranked aggressive and reckless driving, cell phone use, and nonuse of seat belts among the top three to five problems in the community. Middlesex County focus groups ranked speeding and aggressive/reckless driving, cell phone usage, nonuse of child seats and seat belts, and running stop lights as major problems.

The two small community sites tended to be similar in their concerns, in that the majority of participants in both Oktibbeha and Berkeley Counties ranked drinking and driving as the greatest problem. Participants in both communities also identified bad roads as a major problem, though road conditions were also mentioned in other communities.

"In Black communities, roads are poorly maintained and narrower."

—Teenage female, Oktibbeha County, MS

A potentially significant issue raised more than once in the Mississippi focus groups was that literacy may be an issue in understanding laws and issues, particularly among the senior population.

When comparing the urban communities of Jackson and Cook Counties, the similarities between the two were striking; in 15 of the 16 focus groups in those counties, participants stated that drinking and driving was one of the three most serious problems. Parents in Cook County were the only urban group not to include drinking and driving among the top three problems. Instead, they indicated that poorly trained drivers, running stoplights, and cell phone usage were the top three problems in the community.

Differences and Similarities by Age and Gender

In keeping with the overall findings that overwhelmingly showed drinking and driving to be the major safety concern, each age group cited drinking and driving as their consensus top concern. For most groups, aggressive or reckless driving was also a significant concern.

The following table shows the top-ranked safety concerns among each of the age/gender groups who participated in the focus groups.

Exhibit 5

Ranking of Safety Issues by Age and Gender

AGE/GENDER GROUP				
Rank of Safety Issue	Teenage Girls (16-19)	Young Adult Women (20-27)	Adult Women (28-44)	Parents of Children Under 4
Top Issue	Drinking and driving*	Drinking and driving*	Drinking and driving	Drinking and driving
Second Issue	Speeding*	Speeding*	Aggressive reckless driving	Aggressive/reckless driving
Third Issue	Aggressive/reckless driving*	Aggressive/reckless driving	(Nonuse of safety seats)	Nonuse of seat belts
Rank of Safety Issue	Teenage Boys (16-19)	Young Adult Men (20-27)	Adult Men (28-44)	Senior Citizens (60-79)
Top Issue	Drinking and driving	Drinking and driving	Drinking and driving	Drinking and driving
Second Issue		Aggressive/reckless driving	Cell phone use	Nonuse of seat belts
Third Issue		Seat belts and distractions	Aggressive/reckless driving	Aggressive/reckless driving

Notes:

1. Issues in parentheses were worthy of mention, but were not strong patterns.
2. Among teenage boys, fewer than three issues were mentioned with any strong patterns.
3. Issues with asterisks were mentioned in approximately equal proportions within an age group or target group.

Another general driving issue that was mentioned was the driving environment, specifically infrastructure such as road conditions, signage, and construction. Many participants cited the driving environment as being different (worse) in Black neighborhoods, which can create additional hazards for drivers and pedestrians. Adult Black men were most likely to hold this opinion, though all age groups mentioned it to some extent as an exacerbating factor in Black safety issues.

One other issue that arose was the concept of driving as a means to an end versus an activity in and of itself. For example, teenage boys tend to identify driving with status or “profiling.” (Profiling here refers to the presentation of an attractive image or “looking good,” i.e., “styling

and profiling,” as opposed to its use to describe selective enforcement.) This mindset appears to increase among men in the 20–27 age group, who often made statements about driving and related activities in terms of “being cool” and “showing off.” The phenomenon then declines among adult men. The same pattern is seen among women, but to a much lesser extent.

“I’m always running late for something; so I tend to speed.”

–Female teenager, Berkeley County, SC

“I do it [drive recklessly] just to see if I can do it.”

–Male teenager, Berkeley County, SC

“Some lights hold you too long, I get impatient and just run it.”

–Young adult male, Oktibbeha County, MS

“My car is like trained to go fast. I have to put my foot in it. I get it from my father.”

–Young adult female, Oktibbeha County, MS

“Some older people, when they get into their car are focused on safety.”

Some people who have no responsibility do not care about safety.

They choose not to be responsible.”

–Young adult female, Oktibbeha County, MS

“Teenagers who just get their license are doing everything correctly. Older people forget the rules and think that they know everything.”

–Teenage female, Prince George’s County, MD

“Teenagers drive fast. Senior citizens cannot see the signs and drive slow.”

–Teenage female, Prince George’s County, MD

Although men cited aggressive driving as a concern, they thought it was less of a concern compared to women who cited it. Women cited speeding as a high concern, particularly teenagers and younger women.

“Young Black men tend to feel overconfident in comparison to young female drivers who tend to...concentrate more on driving and obeying laws.”

–Parent, Prince George’s County, MD

“Black males feel they own the roads...they automatically feel that (women) can’t drive—so there is some disrespect that goes on.”

–Adult female, Prince George’s County, MD

Perspectives on Drinking and Driving

Consensus Findings

When asked to explain why people drink and drive, participants responded with two basic theories, which transcend regional or demographic boundaries. One theory focused on the perception of becoming drunk. Participants theorized that drunk drivers seldom thought of themselves as drunk, seldom thought that they had had too much to drink, or did not realize how their alcohol consumption would affect them. This tendency to underestimate the impact of alcohol consumption on driver behavior and safety was illustrated in comments from several groups. One teen male suggested that, “When you are drunk you are more focused because you know if you get pulled over it will be a problem.” A participant suggested that drinking and driving was “cool to do” and that people like to drive and don’t want others driving their cars. In summary, drunk drivers rarely thought they had consumed enough to impair their driving, and therefore felt they could “handle it.”

The second theory of why people drink and drive revolved more around planning or lack thereof, independent of the drinking issue. Drunk drivers were thought to be exercising poor judgment or planning ability, and did not think about transportation before (or while) they were drinking. One participant stated that drinking and driving is a matter of “not thinking ahead, just drinking.” Other participants mentioned that drunk drivers get behind the wheel because they have no other option for getting home. As one focus group participant explained, “when you get drunk you have to get home.” As a corollary to this issue, many participants cited “drinking and

walking” as a pedestrian hazard, implying that even when a drinker makes the appropriate decision not to drive, he or she still can present a traffic hazard if no alternative means of transportation are available.

Throughout the focus groups, participants agreed that penalties were not severe enough, which motivated drunk drivers to continue practicing risky behavior.

Numerous participants across a wide range of cities and target groups said that drinking and driving was “more of a White problem,” “not a problem in the Black community,” or other similar statements. A group of respondents stated that Blacks get arrested for public drunkenness, not drunk driving. Others felt it was not an “obvious problem” in the Black community. At the same time, drinking and driving has always been considered a major threat to driving safety. There appears to be a strong perception that this threat arises from the White community, whose drivers then pose a threat to the Black community. One exception to these thoughts appears to be among adult males, who stated that it was a Black problem as well.

“I have not seen a White guy yet without a beer.”

–Teenage male, Cook County, IL

“White people drinking tend to get more violent and reckless.”

–Young adult female, Middlesex County, NJ

“Most Black people get cited for public drunkenness, not drinking and driving.”

–Adult female, Oktibbeha County, MS

One complicating factor in assessing drinking and driving as a hazard is the actual definition of the term. “Drinking and driving” means different things to different people. There was no consistency in the way focus groups defined drinking and driving.

Overall, drinking and driving was assigned one of two definitions, with no strong pattern by age, gender, or region. The first definition is essentially that “drunk driving” is driving when one is not capable of controlling the vehicle in a safe manner. The second definition, less common but still oft-mentioned, is essentially “drinking while in the act of driving.” This second definition implies that a person who gets intoxicated before entering a vehicle is not “drinking and driving” so long as he or she does not actually drink in the vehicle.

[What does drinking and driving mean?]

“It sounds like it means, don’t drink while in your vehicle.”

–Adult female, Cook County, IL

“Drinking in the car while driving.”

–Young adult male, Jackson County, MO

“If you drink even one drink and then drive.”

–Young adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

“Driving when you have higher than the legal amount in your system.”

–Teenage female, Oktibbeha County, MS

“Physically driving with alcohol being consumed.”

–Adult female, Jackson County, MO

“You are at home drinking and get in your car to go to the liquor store to get some more liquor.”

–Teenage female, Prince George’s County, MD

“When you drink and the alcohol has exceeded the legal limit and then you drive.”

–Young adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

“Falling over drunk and driving.”

–Young adult female, Prince George’s County, MD

Geography-Based Differences and Similarities

All participants believed that drinking and driving was a problem, but the reasons for this behavior were attributed to a variety of factors including peer pressure (Oktibbeha, Cook, and Middlesex Counties); habit and addiction (Cook County); people having a “don’t care” attitude (Jackson, Oktibbeha, and Berkeley Counties); and people seeing themselves as invincible (Jackson and Cook Counties). Other reasons for this risky behavior include the belief that drunk drivers still have control over their behavior (Berkeley County); poor judgment and bad decisions (Prince George’s and Cook Counties); and thinking that it’s cool (Prince George’s County). Oktibbeha County participants stated that drinking and driving is much more obvious on campus (Mississippi State University), although nonstudents also practice this risky behavior. Participants in all communities also stated that the laws are not enforced to the degree that they should be and are not strong enough.

“You know, they always say when whiskey’s in, thinking’s out.”

– Senior citizen, Berkeley County, NC

“The people who drink and drive around here can handle it.”

– Teenage male, Oktibbeha County, MS

Many participants in urban and suburban areas cited a preponderance of liquor stores in low-income areas, and expressed a concern that alcohol was too prevalent in the neighborhoods. For example, Jackson County residents noted the prevalence of liquor stores on every corner. One group suggested that there are “too many liquor stores, open too many hours, [and that it is] too easy for young people to get liquor.” A Middlesex

County group echoed this sentiment stating that there are “too many liquor stores in Black communities.” This issue was not a concern in the smaller communities.

“White neighborhoods don’t have liquor stores on every corner like the Black community.”

–Adult male, Jackson County, MO

“[Drinking and driving] could be a problem, but never really noticed cause people live really close in the neighborhood.”

–Adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

A minority of participants in the Oktibbeha County focus groups made negative comments about alcohol consumption in general. This was the only geographic area where such an opinion was professed. While some residents in small southern communities may hold this opinion, it does not appear to be prevalent or accepted enough to be a useful tool for safety programs.

“I wish they would stop selling beer, period. Beer is no good for anyone. No alcohol”

–Young adult female, Oktibbeha County, MS

Differences and Similarities by Age and Gender

Teens stood out from adults when asked about drinking and driving. As a general observation, teens tended to provide excuses rather than simple explanations for drunk driving behavior. For example, one group said that it is “easy for teens to get alcohol.” Some teens played down the behavior, though most ranked it very high as a safety issue.

“Even though I am only 17, I drink like most old men. I can drink and handle it.”

–Teenage male, Cook County, IL

More teens than older drivers stated that drunk drivers had no other transportation option and therefore had to drive home after drinking. The perception of limited transportation was raised as a factor in this group more than others.

“I have a lot of friends who like to drink and get in the car. That is why I do not want to ride with them.”

—Teenage male, Oktibbeha County, MS

There was little variation in the perceptions of males and females regarding reasons for drunk driving. Both agreed that the laws and penalties are not severe enough. One focus group member stated that there is “too much drinking and driving” and that “people get away with it.” Additional reasons for the behavior included “it’s not just an alcohol problem, but a drug problem too,” people are not being responsible, and people just want to relax.

“I think driving while high happens a lot too. But when you drive while you are high (drugs) you tend to be more alert and more paranoid. Can’t be much of a problem ‘cause you never hear of it.”

—Young adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

Women more commonly called for stiffer enforcement as an answer to drunk driving. A group of Cook County female residents suggested increased penalties, including increased fines and enforcement, “will stop the problem.”

“This is what you pay your taxes for. They could utilize this money for enforcement.”

—Adult female, Cook County, IL

Pedestrian Safety Issues

Consensus Findings

When asked to discuss pedestrian issues, there was a high level of interest and concern in all communities and among all groups. Therefore,

the first consensus finding is that this is an issue of universal interest. All other observations should be viewed from this perspective.

While jaywalking was not identified in all communities, it is a common pedestrian safety issue raised by a significant number of focus group participants. Most groups reported that pedestrians put themselves at risk by crossing outside of designated pedestrian walkways, walking against traffic lights, and walking without regard to drivers. Oftentimes, participants agreed that pedestrians taunt drivers by “strolling” across the street with a perceived attitude that dares the driver to hit them. Most participants also agreed that drivers put pedestrians at risk since they often ignore the pedestrian’s right-of-way.

“Some drivers stop at lights and go up past the white line. You do not know if they are going to stop or not.”

—Teenage female, Prince George’s County, MD

“We hit a pedestrian, an older woman, who was crossing the street just as the light was changing. She walked out from in front of a bus and we couldn’t see her. Whose fault was it?”

—Young adult female, Oktibbeha County, MS

“(Pedestrians)...may not know what the driver is going to do because drivers are confused themselves!”

—Young adult female, Prince George’s County, MD

In all six communities, participants stated that their community lacks adequate crosswalks, traffic lights, pedestrian walkways, or sidewalks, which manifested different types of problems in different communities. All groups also noted that White neighborhoods seemed to have sufficient (or at least better) pedestrian safety crosswalks, signs, speed bumps, and traffic lights.

“Middlesex is in the Stone Age as far as [pedestrian] road signage.”

—Adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

“There are not as many signs and crosswalks in the Black communities. I have driven all around the city [and Black communities have inferior infrastructure].”

—Young adult male, Cook County, IL

According to participants, neither drivers nor pedestrians have a thorough understanding of pedestrian rules of the road. Perhaps the most commonly cited error was pedestrians wearing dark clothing when walking at night.

“Kids walk in a group and won’t get out of the way.”

—Adult male, Oktibbeha County, MS

“Pedestrians wear dark clothing and walk at night—I honestly don’t think people know that it’s dangerous.”

—Young adult female, Middlesex County, NJ

Geography-Based Differences and Similarities

In comparing the communities, it is clear that there were more similarities than differences. The most obvious difference in pedestrian safety, however, was that participants in small community sites (Oktibbeha and Berkeley Counties) perceived a higher number of pedestrians who walked in the roads. These communities seem to have fewer traffic lights, sidewalks, and crosswalks within large subdivisions. One Oktibbeha County focus group participant commented, “you’re walking on the road or in the ditch.” The group went on to say that there were no crosswalks in town except near the college campus. Participants in Berkeley County often reported that a lack of sidewalks, accompanied by roadside drainage ditches or tall

grass, forced pedestrians to walk on the side of the road. Participants in these two communities also stated that jaywalking is a problem, as is pedestrians’ knowledge of traffic safety laws. Pedestrians are also unaware of their responsibility for their own safety (e.g., wearing clothing that increases visibility and walking on the appropriate side of the street or road).

“They do not maintain the roads in the Black community. It endangers the drivers and the pedestrians are on the road.”

—Adult female, Oktibbeha County, MS

“I walk in the ditch, it’s safer.”

—Senior citizen, Oktibbeha County, MS

Urban participants (Cook and Jackson Counties) also noted that there are not enough crosswalks for pedestrians to safely cross the street in a convenient manner. Residents of Prince George’s County said that crosswalks were too distant and led to jaywalking. A Cook County group suggested that jaywalking was often done out of choice, but also out of necessity due to inadequate crosswalks and stop signs. Jackson County participants stated that pedestrians do not use the available crosswalks and should be more responsible for their actions. Cook County participants agreed that pedestrians put themselves at risk. Suburban (Prince George’s and Middlesex Counties) participants also identified jaywalking as a major problem. Other focus group participants noted that pedestrians “think they have bumpers” and tend to walk out into the street at any time because they believe that they have the right-of-way and drivers must stop for them, even if they (the pedestrians) are breaking the law.

“KC is designed with boulevards and thoroughfares with high speed limits, which isn’t pedestrian friendly.”

—Senior citizen, Jackson County, MO

Differences and Similarities by Age and Gender

All age and gender groups agreed that crosswalks, speed bumps, better timing of traffic lights, and more stop signs would increase pedestrian safety in the Black community. In addition, most groups agreed that pedestrians' knowledge regarding pedestrian safety laws (e.g., jaywalking) is lacking. The groups also agreed that pedestrians are more inclined to put themselves at risk, as opposed to drivers putting them at risk.

"They [pedestrians] are just stupid. Cannot wait to get to the other side of the street. Walking out in between parked cars."

—Teenage male, Cook County, IL

There was agreement among men and women that education and training are needed in the area of pedestrian right of way rules for adults and children. Women in the "young mother" age range tended to be more concerned about children as pedestrians than other groups, although adult men also frequently voiced concern on this issue.

"People don't understand the need...to slow down and look out for kids."

—Parent, Prince George's County, MD

"We need to educate school kids better about how to cross the streets."

—Adult male, Cook County, IL

Seat Belt Usage*Consensus Findings*

In each of the six communities, a substantial number of participants said they did not use seat belts on a full-time basis. Reasons most commonly cited for not using seat belts included wrinkling clothes, uncomfortable fit (particularly among women), driving only a short distance,

and simply forgetting. Many also frequently reported that they often did not think about seat belts unless spurred on by some outside event, such as seeing a police car. A few participants made cultural statements such as, "Black people have not been taught the value of seat belts."

"When I got my first car, I asked what it was (seat belt). It's not the first thing I think of when getting into the car."

—Young adult male, Jackson County, MO

"They probably think that it is nerdy. Do not want to wrinkle their clothes. Black people like to profile. Boys have their seat back so far and so low that the seat belt will not work."

—Female teenager, Cook County, IL

"A seat belt won't be the thing to save my life; I've been in a wreck and I can take it; I'm kind of big, I can take it; I'll be okay."

—Teenage male, Jackson County, MO

"I do not think that I am an unsafe driver just because I do not wear a seat belt and speed sometimes."

—Adult female, Oktibbeha County, MS

"My daughter says that they are uncomfortable and she can't stand to be buckled down and uncomfortable."

—Senior citizen, Oktibbeha County, MS

"It is very constricting and there are a lot of entertainment activities in the cars (DVDs, CDs). I need to be able to reach everything."

—Young adult male, Cook County, IL

*“I never wear my seat belt in the car.
It is uncomfortable.”*

–Teenage female, Prince George’s County, MD

Part-time usage was common, and many participants said that they make a decision to use or not use their seat belts on a trip-by-trip basis. These drivers, who were not limited to particular geographic areas or population groups, are aware of the safety benefits of seat belts, but decide to wear a belt based on the perceived risks of a particular trip. This decision was often based on factors such as the perceived skill of the driver when one was a passenger, the distance traveled, or a route that required highway travel. Another risk, enforcement, was often addressed only if a police car was spotted.

“If you’re around a lot of people who don’t wear it—you don’t want to look like the only person who does or vice-versa.”

–Adult female, Prince George’s County, MD

“I live in the country and I don’t need a seat belt because there’s no traffic.”

–Teenage female, Oktibbeha County, MS

“When I’m in a high police territory, I make sure that I wear my seat belt.”

–Teenage male, Jackson County, MO

“I don’t like anything around my neck... But if I see the police, I will put it on.”

–Young adult female, Prince George’s County, MD

“I tend to be hardheaded, I have been in several accidents but still don’t wear a seat belt unless I am riding with someone that is driving crazy.”

–Young adult female, Jackson County, MO

In most groups, stories about seat belts trapping people in cars, or “friends of friends” who would have been trapped if they had been wearing their seat belts during a crash, were common. A small proportion of people thought that seat belts have a negative safety benefit. Most people view seat belts as a tradeoff of risks, but most also recognize that the benefits far outweigh the risks. Participants who always wear seat belts do so because they believe wearing seat belts saves lives, people who wear them have a better chance of surviving a crash, and wearing them is a habit they started when they were younger.

“I depend on the airbag. The seat belt can keep me in if I need to get out.”

–Adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

“Habit—just always have worn one.”

–Adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

“2 out of 10 chance that you’ll be worse off without a seat belt.”

–Adult male, Oktibbeha County, MS

“I am used to wearing my seat belt all the time so I do not know why others do not.”

–Teenage female, Prince George’s County, MD

A significant exercise during the focus groups involved testing participants’ reactions to NHTSA survey findings that the U.S. Black population is supportive of seat belt laws, even standard laws that allow drivers to be pulled over solely for nonuse of seat belts. When considering these findings, many participants viewed research with skepticism if the findings were not intuitive. Many participants stated that they did not believe the NHTSA survey results when the information did not match their perceptions.

Geography-Based Differences and Similarities

The reasons that people do or do not wear seat belts were similar regardless of the community being surveyed.

In comparing communities, Oktibbeha and Berkeley Counties, the two small communities in the study, ranked highest in percentage of focus group participants who claimed to always wear seat belts (49 percent of the total respondents). Even so, a Berkeley County group stated that there is no need to wear a seat belt in rural areas with low traffic volume. The small communities were followed by the urban communities, Jackson and Cook Counties (45 percent of the participants), and then the suburban communities, Prince George's and Middlesex Counties (42 percent of participants). However, these statistics are drawn from very small, non-random samples, and therefore offer only suggestions that perhaps seat belt use in the Black population does not have the strong urban/rural split that is seen in the general population. A quantitative research study would be necessary to determine if this pattern is valid.

Differences and Similarities by Age and Gender

In every age group, a significant proportion of participants were not full-time seat belt users. However, the reasons for not wearing belts full-time varied by age and gender.

First and foremost, seat belts are "not cool" to younger drivers. The term "not cool" was used consistently by most groups of 20–27-year-olds, particularly males, when describing seat belts.

"People are trying to 'style.'"

–Young adult male, Cook County, IL

"Most young Black people in this area are not going to wear it because it doesn't look cool."

–Young adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

"Young Black guys are too cool."

–Young adult female, Prince George's County, MD

The "cool" term was also used among teens (especially girls, but also boys) and young women, and was even found occasionally in the

adult groups. One group of teen males collectively said, "It's nerdy to wear a seat belt." A focus group of young women (ages 20–27) noted that young Black men don't wear seat belts because "they are too cool and lean back too far." Nonetheless, the core of the "seat belts are not cool" camp appears to be 20–27-year-old men.

"Young drivers don't think seat belts are cool."

–Young adult female, Jackson County, MO

"Not cool. Mostly boys think this."

–Teenage female, Oktibbeha County, MS

Adult drivers were more likely to state traditional reasons (e.g., personal safety) for being full-time seat belt users, and also more likely to report that they had increased their seat belt use in response to a crash in the past. This may be due in part to the fact that adults have a longer driving history than younger drivers, hence a greater chance to experience a crash that produced a change in behavior. However, senior drivers did not report the same change-causing experience. Several people also reported that their seat belt decisions depended on who is in the vehicle with them, either driving or as a passenger.

"I wear it only when certain people are in the car."

–Young adult female, Oktibbeha County, MS

"If I ride in some of my relatives' (uncles, aunts, etc.) cars, I do not wear it because they are real good drivers. I wear it when I drive."

–Teenage female, Prince George's County, MD

Senior drivers did, on the other hand, profess a strong aversion to "being forced" to do something, whether it is wearing seat belts or anything else. While it was not confirmed that this attitude made senior drivers less likely to respond to enforcement as a means of

encouraging seat belt use, this group, more than any other, rebelled against authority solely because they didn't want to be told what to do.

"If they are Black males like me, they don't like someone telling them what to do."

—Senior citizen, Oktibbeha County, MS

The difference between males and females in terms of seat belt usage was dramatic. More than twice as many females in the focus groups wore seat belts as males, whether full-time or intermittently. Oftentimes, females were motivated by their children and admitted that because they have children, they want to be safe and "around to raise them." Interestingly, females who never or rarely wore seat belts always used child safety seats for their children and buckled up when their children mentioned it or reminded them. In terms of those participants who never wear seat belts, men accounted for a higher number than women.

"When we get in the car, my wife immediately puts on a seat belt,

I'm not sure if that has something to do with my driving."

—Senior citizen, Oktibbeha County, MS

One unique finding expressed in numerous groups was that many Black men like to lean to the side while driving as an expression of personal style. However, "leaning" was not generally deemed to be unsafe or the cause of unsafe behavior. Wearing seat belts hinder one's ability to do that and are therefore shunned. In fact some Black males said that seat belts are another means for society to confine and keep the Black male down.

"People who lean back in (their) seats can't wear their seat belts."

—Young adult female, Prince George's County, MD

"Sometimes you just like to sit differently [leaning back] and the belts hurt where they hit the body."

—Young adult male, Oktibbeha County, MS

Support for Seat Belt Laws

When participants arrived for the focus groups, they were asked to answer three questions that were included in a national NHTSA telephone survey. Those three questions, along with the findings from the national survey, are provided below. During the focus groups, participants were asked to share their responses to the three questions, and were then told about the national survey findings. They were then given the opportunity to comment on those findings.

Exhibit 6

Survey Questions and National Findings

1. How do you feel about laws that require drivers and front seat passengers to wear seat belts?

- I favor these laws a lot.
- I favor these laws some.
- I do not favor these laws at all.

(National Statistics: Blacks are more likely to support the laws than the general public – 94 percent versus 87 percent. Of Blacks, 72 percent favor them a lot and 21 percent favor them some. Nationally, 67 percent of the U.S. population favors them a lot, and 20 percent favor them some.)

Some States have standard seat belt laws, where law enforcement officers are allowed to pull over a driver for not wearing a seat belt, and other States have secondary seat belt laws. Secondary laws allow officers to issue tickets for not wearing seat belts, but they cannot pull a car over for that reason alone. They can only issue the ticket after stopping the car for another reason.

2. In your opinion, should police be allowed to stop a vehicle if they observe a seat belt violation when no other traffic laws are being broken?

- Yes No

(National statistics: Blacks are more likely to support such laws than the general public – 68 percent versus 61 percent.)

3. Assume that you do not wear your seat belt at all while driving over the next six months. How likely do you think you will be to receive a ticket for not wearing a seat belt very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or very unlikely?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

(National statistics: Blacks are more likely to believe that they will be ticketed than the general public – 54 percent versus 43 percent.)

Consensus Findings

Nearly all participants were aware their State had a seat belt law. In keeping with the latest NHTSA national survey results, the vast majority of focus group participants supported seat belt laws in general, and a smaller majority supported a standard law.

Most participants were surprised when shown the survey results that indicated strong national support in the Black population for seat belt laws even though the survey findings matched their personal opinions. Many found this fact so surprising that they questioned the survey findings.

“I’m surprised [at Black support for seat belt laws] because most Blacks I know don’t wear seat belts.”

–Adult male, Oktibbeha County, MS

“People are not truthful on surveys.”

–Adult female, Cook County, IL

“I have a problem with being stopped and ticketed when not wearing a seat belt. I’m doing no harm when I am not wearing a seat belt, I am driving safely but I get a ticket.”

–Young adult male, Jackson County, MO

“I don’t believe the answers; none of my friends would agree with those responses; Black people are only giving you the answers that they think you want rather than what they actually do.”

–Senior citizen, Oktibbeha County, MS

Many participants were not surprised that Black respondents to the national survey were more likely to expect to get a ticket if they didn’t wear their seat belt. This was attributed to the belief that Black drivers are more likely to be pulled over by law enforcement officials if all else is equal.

“People are more concerned about safety than profiling.”

–Young adult male, Cook County, IL

“Another tool for White policemen to use unfairly against Blacks.”

–Senior citizen, Jackson County, MO

Geography-Based Differences and Similarities

In all communities, participants strongly supported seat belt laws, and supported standard laws to a lesser extent. Most participants in each community were surprised at the support nationally for standard laws by the Black population.

“Sometimes people on a national basis think of Blacks as not favoring any laws. I am surprised.”

–Teenage female, Prince George’s County, MD

Most participants at each site also felt that Black drivers are more likely than Whites to be ticketed if they do not wear their seat belt, and were not surprised to learn that the NHTSA survey showed that same perception nationally. Geographic differences emerged when participants were asked why Blacks support seat belt laws when they feel that they are more likely to be ticketed than Whites. While responses varied, responses in Prince George’s, Jackson, and Middlesex Counties were more likely to include statements that the two issues were independent of each other. As one young man in Prince George’s County stated, support of the law and racial profiling “are two separate issues.” In Berkeley, Oktibbeha, and Cook Counties, respondents were more likely to question the survey itself, either in terms of its execution or the veracity of the responses. One young woman in Cook County speculated that “no one tells the truth on surveys,” a sentiment paralleled by a teenage girl in Berkeley County who stated, “those surveys must be done with rich Black people.”

“Blacks are law-abiding and believe in law enforcement. We’re just more subject to profiling.”

—Adult female, Jackson County, MO

[First participant] “It is kind of like me. I support the law but I do not wear my seat belt all of the time.” [Second participant]

“If you do not obey the law, why would you support the law?” [First participant] “I think that it would benefit us. There are a lot of laws that you support, but you don’t have to face them every day.”

—Two young adult females, Oktibbeha County, MS

Differences and Similarities by Age and Gender

While some opinions transcended age and gender, others showed strong patterns. To varying degrees, all age and gender groups showed strong support for seat belt laws in general, and a majority supported standard laws.

With regard to the apparent contradiction that Blacks support seat belt laws, while also believing that they are more likely than other groups to be pulled over for seat belt violations, adults tended to state that awareness and respect for laws should not be lessened by racial profiling. In other words, they were able to separate the conceptual issue of the law from the practical issue of being pulled over.

“We as African Americans know we get stopped more, yet we are optimistic that the judicial system will work for us.”

—Adult female, Prince George’s County, MD

“Surprised, thought it [support of seat belt laws] would be higher. I would think people who would be against it would be the ones up to no good.”

—Parent, Middlesex County, NJ

In contrast, younger drivers and teenagers who were surprised by the survey findings were more likely than adults to criticize the survey itself, speculating that Blacks know what the desired answer is on a survey and offer it regardless of their true opinions. Women, and particularly teenage girls, were skeptical about surveys in general from a methodological standpoint. Similarly, seniors were more likely to question the scope of the national surveys that show widespread Black support of seat belt laws. In particular, they raised the issue of how data was collected and who participated in the national surveys.

“It was all mothers being surveyed.”

—Teenage female, Cook County, IL

“I think it was fake. Probably sounded like a nice thing to say.”

—Teenage male, Cook County, IL

Enforcement and Racial Profiling

Consensus Findings

An overwhelming majority of participants agreed that racial profiling is a major problem in their community. In addition, it was clear to participants that traffic safety and enforcement of traffic safety laws have little to do with the reasons that people are stopped. A majority stated that Black males are stopped more often than females, and that young Black males are most likely to be stopped.

“Black people can only just obey the law and hope to not get stopped.”

—Young adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

Some participants stated that Black drivers are almost guaranteed to be stopped when driving through predominantly White neighborhoods, merely by being present there. Many others stated that, in White neighborhoods, skin color (black or brown), combined with driving a “nice” vehicle, almost always leads to minority males being stopped by the police. Fewer than five focus group participants in the entire study did not

believe that racial profiling was a problem in their community.

“Even though we are in favor of laws, there is a definite mistrust of the habits of law enforcement officers and their ability to treat Black people fairly. Black children must live by a different code of conduct while driving compared to White children.”

—Adult female, Jackson County, MO

Even so, when asked if police should enforce seat belt laws, an overwhelming majority responded positively. Participants stated that they strongly support frequent and fair enforcement of traffic safety laws, and most participants were able to conceptually separate the issue of enforcement from the issue of profiling or harassment. When asked what could be done to eliminate racial profiling, participants suggested increased diversity in police forces, better screening of candidates for police forces, and more accountability for police officers.

“Sometimes the Black cop will be that way too. It is not just the White cops.”

—Teenage male, Oktibbeha County, MS

While almost all participants, male and female, agreed that males are more likely to be stopped than females, some women stated that “profiling is an issue for women too.” Another common perception was that police equate Blacks riding in “nice” cars to dealing drugs or otherwise target Blacks (especially young men) who drive “nice” cars.

Geography-Based Differences and Similarities

In Jackson, Cook, Berkeley, and Oktibbeha Counties, more participants noted that racial profiling occurs in White communities. On the other hand, Prince George’s and Middlesex County participants did not distinguish between neighborhoods when they discussed racial

profiling. This may be due to the fact that there are fewer White communities in areas where the majority of the population is Black (i.e., Prince George’s County), and fewer Black communities in areas where Blacks constitute a small proportion of the population (i.e., Middlesex County). This is not intended to claim that racial profiling is more or less prevalent in these types of communities, but rather that geography is less of a basis for profiling.

In each of the six communities, the majority of participants favored enforcement of traffic safety laws, yet believe that they would be ticketed more often. When asked to explain this contradiction, participants in all communities stated that Blacks generally are law-abiding people

and tend to support laws written to protect them and the general public. Blacks were also realistic and had experienced or witnessed racial profiling in both Black and non-Black communities.

“If a young Black man is driving a nice car—police think he must be selling drugs so it’s okay to stop [him].”

—Senior citizen, Oktibbeha County, MS

“I think there is some bias there, especially since PG County has high incomes for Blacks. Police officers believe that, ‘Oh you people think you’re doing so great, well do I have something for you!’

—Parent, Prince George’s County, MD

Differences and Similarities By Age and Gender

As in all other groups, seniors agreed that racial profiling is a problem, but no one in this age group stated that they had first-hand experience. This is compared to a large number of teens (ages 16–19), young adults (ages 20–27), and adults (ages 28–44) who did have personal experiences with profiling. One group of males (ages 28–44) commented, “profiling occurs, just obey the law and be respectful.”

By far, more males than females are victims of racial profiling, according to participants. Regardless of age, all males stated that racial profiling is a major problem in the Black community and that they are at higher risk of being stopped because of their gender, particularly so if they are driving a “nice” car. They also noted that they tend to drive much more cautiously in White neighborhoods and, if possible, they avoid driving in White communities. On the other hand, females are less likely to have personal experience with racial profiling (although they are not immune), and they frequently reported seeing young Black males being stopped, or had friends and family members who were stopped by police for no apparent reason.

“Young Black men with a nice car—they are going to get pulled over.”

—Young adult female, Middlesex County, NJ

“Police don’t believe that guys can afford a nice car.”

—Teenage female, Oktibbeha County, MS

“They get the boys more than girls.”

—Teenage female, Berkeley County, SC

Child Safety Seats/Restraints

Consensus Findings

About one-third of the participants regularly transport children and the majority use child safety seats. Even if parents do not always use seat belts themselves, they tend to be much more diligent about restraining their children.

Participants unanimously agreed that ensuring child safety in the car is the primary reason that they use child safety seats. Even though using child restraints is the law, participants generally are more concerned about child safety than complying with the law. The most frequently cited reason why parents do not use child safety seats was affordability, i.e., parents cannot afford

them, though many participants stated that “not caring” or “neglect” may be a reason for some households. Other reasons stated are that seats are uncomfortable for children; the child can be trapped in the seat if there is a crash; and seats require too much space in the car, particularly for large families. While some parents complained that they could not see their child when using a car seat (presumably a rear-facing seat), one significant advantage was the fact that the child could be kept from moving around in the car.

“[An advantage of car seats is] I don’t have to keep checking in the rear view to find them.”

—Parent, Berkeley County, SC

“Kids don’t like it—hollering and screaming. They get out of them. The driver just can’t take all that noise.”

—Parent, Berkeley County, SC

“Some lower income people of any race can’t afford seats. I see kids all the time who are not in seats. It may be lack of education.”

—Young adult male, Cook County, IL

“Don’t waste money on all those things.”

—Young adult female, Berkeley County, SC

*“Some Black parents are still riding around the road holding their children.”
“Or the kids are standing up in the seat.”*

—Two adult males, Oktibbeha County, MS

“People, especially Black parents, believe if kids are in the back seat they are safe, even if they’re not in a car seat...They assume because they are in the back seat they are safe.”

—Parent, Prince George’s County, MD

Most participants knew that a child's height and weight determine which safety seat is appropriate for the child, though most did not know specific figures (this was not unreasonable since most were not parents of children of an age where it was necessary to know specifics). Many parents had rules of thumb for the progression of a child from a safety seat to a seatbelt. For example, one parent said that when the child can kick the back of the front seat, that child does not need a safety seat. Many others said that when the child is "too big" for a safety seat, it needs to be replaced. Other parents mentioned weight requirements in general, but not specific thresholds.

"[It's time to switch seats] when they weigh over 60 pounds or when their legs touch the back of the front seat."

—Adult female, Jackson County, MO

As a final area of commonality, Black parents overwhelmingly rely on the instructions and guidelines provided with the safety seat for guidance on selection and installation. Few, if any, received other outside help, which might present problems for those who purchased second-hand seats or obtained "hand-me-downs."

"[People learn about installing car seats] on the box. A lot of them do not know because they do not purchase them new."

—Parent, Oktibbeha County, MS

Although participants had heard of booster seats, few knew who should use them, how they are installed, and why they need to be used. Most knew that booster seats are used to enhance safety, but many also questioned the extent to which safety is enhanced.

"[Booster seats are not safe because] They are too open."

—Young adult female, Middlesex County, NJ

Participants suggested a wide range of sites to inspect booster and safety seats to ensure proper installation. These suggestions included local health departments, community centers, stores where child seats are purchased, police and fire stations, and motor vehicle departments. While the participants were suspicious of police officers in terms of law enforcement, they trusted them to check child safety seats.

Geography-Based Differences and Similarities

Many issues regarding child safety seats drew a similar response across all six focus group communities, as described in the consensus findings above. The primary difference was in the locations suggested for child seat checkup events. In Oktibbeha County, participants most often suggested motor vehicle departments, car dealerships, and police stations. Jackson County was the only county where participants routinely suggested schools and churches as good sites for child seat checks. The suburban participants suggested that retail stores (e.g., Kmart, Toys "R" Us) are good sites to check on the installation of child safety seats. One could infer from these findings that different types of communities have different key geographic focal points or centers of activity.

(Following the completion of focus groups in Berkeley and Cook Counties, the focus group guide was changed and from that point forward, participants were asked about child seat inspection sites. Participants from Berkeley and Cook Counties did not contribute information to this question.)

Fewer participants from Prince George's and Middlesex Counties than in the other study sites stated that they did not use child safety seats, and participants from both of these communities noted that information on child safety seats (size, appropriateness of seats, installation instructions) could be obtained from TV and the Internet. In the small community sites, it appeared that participants have generally heard about booster seats, but they are unsure when to use them and what benefits they serve.

Differences and Similarities by Age and Gender

All participant groups, regardless of age or gender, supported using child safety seats. The perceived advantages in all cases surpassed the perceived disadvantages.

The major difference among age groups appeared to be exposure, since safety seats were familiar to all groups. Seniors appeared less likely than other age groups to transport children in motor vehicles, although those who were grandparents and transport grandchildren knew about child safety seats and used them all the time. While all groups were aware of safety seats, teens across the communities had limited knowledge of booster seats. Adults and young adults (ages 20–44) were the most consistent group to transport children in motor vehicles and to use safety seats, and were most aware of the details of child safety seats.

Females, much more often than males, stated that they routinely use child safety seats. Males tended to know much less about booster seats than females and were less sure about which safety seats were the most appropriate, after infant seats.

“They use them when they are babies, but when the kids get old they don’t upgrade or get the next type.”

—Adult male, Middlesex County, NJ

“I require my grandchildren to use seat belts and generally don’t see the use of child seats after the age of 3, rarely see booster seats in our neighborhoods.”

—Senior citizen, Jackson County, MO

In terms of sites for child safety seat checks, females and males suggested similar sites with very little variance, including police and fire stations, day care centers (or locations with a lot of children), vehicle inspection stations, and motor vehicle departments. Teens were the only

group that identified drive-through restaurants as possible sites for seat checks.

Teens were also more inclined to state that people do not use safety seats because they do not have (or want to take) the time to install the seats properly.

Men in the 20–27 age group appeared to be significantly less interested in safety seat issues than any other group. Comments from men in this age category included “buying the cheapest seat you can find,” “picking up whatever you can get,” and other comments that indicated a low level of interest. In terms of checkpoints, all participants wanted the checkpoints to be held in easily accessible places. Males in the 20–27 age group often wanted checkpoints to be in destination locations; in other words, they were generally not willing to go out of their way to have safety seats checked.

[How do people obtain car seats?] “Go to Wal-Mart and grab the cheapest one that they see.”

—Young adult male, Oktibbeha County, MS

Media And Outreach Opportunities

Local Leadership and Organizations

Consensus Findings

The participants were asked to identify:

- Who would be effective in leading traffic safety efforts in the community;
- Who most influences people in their age group in the community;
- Who is trusted and who is not; and
- Which organizations and groups they interact with on a continuing basis that would be effective in delivering traffic safety messages.

A majority of participants stated that nonprofit organizations, churches, and schools are the most effective in leading traffic safety efforts in the community. The most trusted in leading traffic

safety efforts were doctors, hospitals, and churches. Politicians and law enforcement were least trusted in the community. When asked for an explanation of their choices, most participants felt that politicians have their own agenda. In terms of law enforcement, the majority perceived the police to be insincere in their efforts to help the community and perceived some law enforcement officers as needing to be policed themselves. Although churches were considered to be trusted entities within the community, religious leaders were consistently found in both negative and positive categories when being considered for spokesperson roles. Therefore, the decision to use a religious leader should be made on the local level after consideration of the religious leader's reputation in the target audience. Any spokesperson should be selected with care and due consideration of the opinions of the local Black community. Churches and schools were most frequently named across all groups as consistent gathering places that could be used for delivering highway and traffic safety messages.

Geography-Based Differences and Similarities

In Oktibbeha and Berkeley Counties, participants consistently said that religious leaders are a positive influence. At these sites, participants named schools, religious organizations, and hospitals as good organizations to lead community efforts. Participants in Prince George's and Middlesex Counties identified peers, the media, and parents as positive influences. Prince George's and Middlesex County participants also named schools, religious organizations, and hospitals as positive community organizations. Likewise, participants in Jackson and Cook Counties named the media and parents as positive influences and commented that churches and schools were good groups to lead a traffic safety effort in the community.

“Doctors and hospitals have had the training, so people would believe them.”

—Senior citizen, Oktibbeha County, MS

“Around here, people want you to ‘show me,’ they just don’t want to take anybody’s word.”

—Young adult male, Berkeley County, SC

“Schools are good because they reach kids while they are young to help them develop good habits. They have a captive audience.”

—Young adult female, Cook County, IL

Differences and Similarities by Age and Gender

The most striking difference existed in who most influences their age groups in the community. Teens (ages 16–19) named media, celebrities, and school antidrug programs as most influential; young adults (ages 20–27) named the media, family, and church; and adults (ages 28–44) most often named family.

“Parents and peers would be effective.”

—Adult male, Cook County, IL

“I’m influenced by television, friends, older brothers and sisters and family members other than my parents.”

—Teenage male, Prince George’s County, MD

“Health care professionals are really good and local hospitals and paramedics because they are the first line of defense. They see all the accidents and victims.”

—Adult female, Berkeley County, SC

Similarly, both males and females stated that school, church, and family were the strongest influences in the community. Male focus group participants stated that local law enforcement was not viewed as a positive influence in the community; females were not as consistent in this opinion as males. (This negative opinion of law

enforcement was also highlighted earlier). Approximately 99 percent of the focus group participants viewed racial profiling as a problem in their community.

When asked about local leaders and organizations to lead community efforts, both males and females stated that they would rely on their church leaders and nonprofit groups (i.e., MADD, NAACP, etc.) rather than politicians. Coaches were cited as positive influences by male participants. Many male teenagers said they respect and will listen to what their coaches tell them.

Ads and Media Messages

Consensus Findings

Participants were asked to identify (a) ads and messages that work well in the Black community and to explain why they work; (b) ads and messages that were viewed negatively by the Black community and to explain what was wrong with them; (c) traffic safety messages that were memorable; and (d) messages with which Blacks identify.

Ads and messages that work well in the Black community and why they work

In general, participants said that ads with real-life situations and ordinary people tend to work best in reaching Black audiences because they are believable and usually they have a connection to the Black community. They are considered to be more trustworthy or credible.

“To deal with Black people, you have to make it relevant to us.”

—Adult male, Berkeley County, SC

Ads that have music, rhythm, catchy tunes, and slogans also work well. Historically, music has been a staple part of Black culture across all ages and socioeconomic levels. Overall, the anti-smoking and the HIV/safe sex ads were viewed as effective examples.

Ads and messages that were viewed negatively and why

In general, participants did not like ads and messages that try to be too Black, too ethnic, or too urban. Many of the participants, particularly older ones, were resistant to messages that emphasize forced change. Many participants emphasized that messages should target changing the community’s mindset about the benefits of traffic safety, rather than forcing the changes. As participants in Berkeley and Oktibbeha Counties advised: the key to a successful outcome is providing education to help people make the right choices.

“Should be more sensitive to your background and not make generalizations about people.”

—Young adult female, Berkeley County, SC

“The Toyota SUV thing. I did not like the reference to Blacks and gold teeth. It’s a stereotype and insulting.”

—Adult male, Cook County, IL

“Ads that always show Black people dancing around. They just show White people eating. We have to rap and sing when we go out. Why can’t we just eat?”

—Teenage female, Cook County, IL

Traffic safety messages that are memorable

The commercial featuring the crash-test dummies overshadowed any other traffic safety message that participants could recall. Likewise, traffic safety messages showing videos of drunk driving victims ranked high among the participants. When asked if they had seen or heard any traffic safety messages directed toward the Black population, participants said the messages they have seen have been general and are not specific to the Black community.

Messages with which Blacks identify

A significant number of participants noted that Blacks identify with ads that are realistic and truthful, and which feature ordinary Black people. If celebrities are used, participants thought those messages would be more effective if they are delivered by local celebrities or celebrities who have been personally affected by an issue. Participants made no distinction between radio, television, and billboard ads. However, ads with too many facts and statistics do not work in the Black community. Some of the male participants said that they are suspicious of traffic safety statistics.

“Be honest and show the truth. If you are saying that 94% of Blacks support traffic safety, show me how this is true.”

—Adult male, Prince George’s County, MD

“I don’t believe the answers [on the traffic safety survey]; none of my friends would agree with those responses. Black people are only giving you the answers they think you want rather than what they actually do.”

—Senior citizen, Oktibbeha County, MS

Geography-, Gender-, and Age-based Differences and Similarities

No geographical, gender, or age differences were found regarding the effectiveness of fact-based messages and messages that contain music. However, a geographical difference in opinion was found for the most frequently identified characters in positive ads and messages. In all counties except Prince George’s County, Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson were considered to be good influences in the Black community on issues such as sports and HIV/AIDS awareness. Prince George’s County emphasized family, parents, peers, doctors, and paramedics as stronger influences than celebrities. Teens preferred using

celebrities in advertisements. In addition, some of the most memorable advertisements across all geographical, gender, and age groups included athletic shoes, crash-test dummies, safe-sex campaigns, HIV/AIDS campaigns, drinking and driving, and anti-smoking ads (particularly the TRUTH campaign ads sponsored by the American Legacy Foundation). Participants did not differ on the choice of preferred media for advertising; billboard, radio, and television ads were all identified as viable delivery options.

Key Factors to Successful Messages and Programs

Consensus Findings

Participants were asked to identify factors that are most important when trying to reach and influence the Black population with traffic safety programs. The majority of participants stated that using positive role models and reality-based commercials would catch the attention of Black viewers. They felt that the community could identify more with people who are role models. Participants emphasized that role models do not need to be celebrities; however, if the celebrity is regularly identified with an issue and regularly participates in community activities, he or she might be more effective than a celebrity who did not. A parent in Berkeley County, SC said,

“Watching videos—some of my students think nothing is going to happen to them; because when the stars get in trouble, they get off [are not punished]. So my students think it is ok to get in trouble.”

According to participants, reality-based commercials demonstrate that traffic crashes and fatalities can happen to anyone, without needing supporting statistics.

Geography-Based Differences and Similarities

Similarly, all of the communities stressed the importance of fact-based messages. Each

community, however, provided additional key factors to successful messages. At two small community sites (Oktibbeha and Berkeley), participants consistently said that the key to a successful message was to provide education, regardless of the target audience. Participants in the two suburban counties (Prince George's and Middlesex) stressed that ads should use reputable people who are trusted in the community. Participants in the two urban counties, Jackson and Cook, stated that music and social gatherings might be used successfully to get the community's attention.

"The cigarette truth ads were pretty good; it was the hard honest truth about ammonia and stuff in cigarettes."

—Adult male, Berkeley County, SC

"Commercials about the basketball star killed by drunk driving has a big impact."

—Teenage male, Jackson County, MO

"Friends being killed in accidents or Derrick Thomas killed in his SUV are powerful."

—Young adult female, Jackson County, MO

Differences and Similarities by Age and Gender

Teens (ages 16–19) stated that young people should be used to deliver messages. Young adults between the ages of 20 and 27 felt that reality-based commercials were most effective, and adults (ages 28–44) most often identified

educational commercials as most important. Across focus groups, there were varying opinions of what constituted a successful message, and opinions varied with each age group. With increasing age, participants felt that rather than focusing on who is in the ad, greater emphasis should be placed on the content.

"Music, particularly rap artists, have a major influence on young people."

—Teenage female, Middlesex County, NJ

"Continual education. Consistent education and then there is no excuse for not knowing."

—Parent, Prince George's County, MD

Similarly, both males and females stated reality-based messaging is important. Male focus groups, however, also stated that they want to be entertained to hold their attention. Females emphasized the educational aspect of the ad as most important.

"Nike creates images of the way I like to see things be."

—Teenage female, Jackson County, MO

"People are more impressed by what you do—not what you say."

—Adult Male, Prince George's County, MD

Chapter IV

PERSPECTIVES OF NEEDS FROM AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND ACTIVISTS SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY

As mentioned in the Introduction, the study team gathered information from two sources: (1) one-on-one discussions with local community leaders and traffic safety practitioners; and (2) focus groups with residents of the local population.

The purpose of the one-on-one discussions was to gather information on the following topics:

- How the agencies and organizations engage the black community;
- Methods that the agencies and organizations have found to be effective in working with the Black community;
- Types of messages and requests towards which the agencies/organizations have found the Black community responsive;
- Perspectives of the highway safety needs of the Black community, and how they fit with other needs;
- Perceived opportunities for promoting highway safety in the Black community.

Study team members obtained names of individuals to participate in the one-on-one discussions from NHTSA regional staff representatives and by identifying local organizations and individuals integral to local traffic safety or the Black community. The study team made every effort to ensure that the lists of identified community members and agencies/organizations were representative of the following community sectors:

- civic, voluntary, and fraternal organizations;
- faith-based organizations;
- young adult and youth-serving agencies;
- health and human services providers;
- community-based organizations;
- local businesses;
- educational institutions and organizations;
- professional associations;
- consumer groups;
- policy and advocacy groups;
- parent groups;
- neighborhood associations; and
- local media.

(It should be noted that the study team member who conducted the one-on-one discussions within a specific site was also part of the team to conduct the subsequent focus group sessions. This approach assured consistency in the information-gathering process and allowed the team member to become more knowledgeable about the dynamics and characteristics of a specific region or site.)

The discussion guides used were industry specific and included the following discussion topics:

- importance of outreach in the Black community and successful and unsuccessful outreach strategies;
- resistance or barriers encountered in outreach to Black communities;
- trusted messengers of health and safety information in the Black community/ leaders in promoting health and safety information in the Black community;
- perceptions in the Black community about the enforcement of traffic laws;
- degree of awareness/knowledge in the Black community about traffic safety issues;
- major driver, passenger, and pedestrian-related traffic safety problems within the Black community and contributing factors;

- effective and ineffective channels of communication; and
- specific cultural issues to consider when working in the Black community.

These discussion guides were tailored to the 13 community sectors listed on the previous page. Following is a summary, by topic area, from each of the six communities:

Importance of Outreach in the Black Community Berkeley County, SC. Most respondents felt that community outreach was critical to the effective promotion of programs or initiatives in Black communities, especially in the county's rural areas.

One of the most successful types of outreach cited was participation in church-sponsored events.

“Church is an excellent way to reach females, who make most of those kinds of decisions (health and safety-related) in the household.”

“Ninety percent of that (outreach) takes place on Sundays in the churches around here.”

“Churches are important—especially in the rural areas—and it's important to get the leaders involved.”

Other successful outreach strategies mentioned included door-to-door promotions, visits to local eating and drinking establishments, and attending local sporting events. Unsuccessful strategies included collaborations with organizations or individuals the community does not trust and partnerships with too few organizations.

Cook County, IL. Outreach was also found to be important in reaching the Black community in

Cook County. Here, the majority of respondents felt that participating in a few select, key events would be an effective outreach strategy. The Bud Billiken Parade was cited as an example of a successful outreach effort and was described this way by several respondents:

“It is a well planned, well-publicized, and well-attended event.”

“It presents a good opportunity to communicate with large segments of Chicago's Black community.”

In the opinions of several respondents, the “sense of community” in Cook County has dissipated since many of the public housing complexes have been torn down. In their opinions, strategies that do not unite communities would prove unsuccessful.

Jackson County, MO. Most respondents felt that outreach is important to promote programs in Jackson County. A few felt that participating in events where there are opportunities for dialogue and one-on-one communication has been a particularly effective strategy.

“When approaching a neighborhood, we ask ‘are you interested’ not ‘we are going to do this.’”

“The most successful strategy is one-on-one and meeting face-to-face with individuals. The Chamber of Commerce knows the business community and the neighborhood groups know the community residents.”

Also, the success of various outreach activities depends on the message and the target groups. Respondents noted that churches and schools are ideal venues for holding events.

“Give-a-ways and freebies are important tools for outreach. We call them ‘wiz wiz, bang bangs.’”

Middlesex County, NJ. According to most respondents, organized events such as health fairs and community festivals are excellent venues to reaching the Black community.

“It guarantees you an audience, especially if it’s popular. Plus, you don’t have to spend as much time planning and organizing.”

Many suggested school events, particularly events that include children and extended family members, as an excellent strategy.

“Schools are good. I have found if you involve the children, then the parents are likely to support it.”

Oktibbeha, MS. Community outreach was seen as important to making inroads in the Black communities in and around Oktibbeha County. Gaining access to key audiences through elementary and secondary schools, Mississippi State University, local Red Cross chapters, and the county hospital was noted as an effective strategy. These organizations were also recognized as very involved in the community.

“They are involved in health and safety anyway, like CPR training, some driver’s education and health fairs. Mississippi State also has extension sites all over the community.”

Prince George’s County, MD. Most respondents had some experience with outreach and they shared successful strategies and offered recommendations. Frequent suggestions included: working

through existing events; partnering with organizations; starting small and building a presence over time; and in the faith community, taking time to locate the right church for outreach efforts.

“Some of the churches that are the most active in the community are the largest with 3,000–5,000 members, and have multiple layers. You have to get to engage the pastor first and then have him put you in touch with the right person in that church to make sure you get and stay involved.”

“One thing you need to always remember, if the pastor doesn’t want it to happen, it’s not going to happen.”

Resistance or Barriers Encountered in Outreach to Black Communities

Berkeley County, SC. Many respondents commented that the Black community in Berkeley County is divided along income and geographic lines. Because of this, some encountered problems reaching rural, less-educated, lower-income residents and described them as less trusting and more resistant to new ideas, programs, or activities.

“Many out in the rural areas are not forgiving of the past, and even current disparities that exist. It keeps going on...it’s a generational thing.”

“The rural areas are unique. You definitely see a split down racial lines. Blacks in the rural parts tend to be less educated and they are not as quick to get involved in a program where they can’t see an immediate benefit.”

“Sometimes there is a lack of motivation from those less educated about general issues that affect them. Unfortunately, most only respond when a crisis happens and they need some type intervention.”

When asked what resistance or barriers they faced in their outreach efforts to the Black community, the majority of respondents reported that many in the community did not trust “outsiders.” As one respondent explained,

“The Black community has been hoodwinked a lot...you must show that you are in it for the long haul and that you are committed.”

According to these respondents, the more urban, higher-income residents were more likely to be receptive to and show interest in new information.

Cook County, IL. Most respondents described local Black community members as generally having a strong distrust of law enforcement, government entities, Whites, and people outside their communities. As a result, many had encountered problems initiating programs.

Jackson County, MO. The majority of respondents did not indicate that they had experienced any resistance or barriers in their outreach to Black communities. Some felt, however, that a general lack of trust in the system and authority was a barrier. In their opinions, many citizens are leery of government and government agencies.

“We find that sometimes it’s an ‘us versus them’ mentality and that can work against a program.”

“A barrier to success is when you do not ask permission to work within the community; when you don’t get them to buy in.”

Middlesex County, NJ. The majority of respondents overwhelmingly cited the busy work and personal schedules of many in the Black community in Middlesex County as a barrier to outreach, and many felt this to be true across income and education levels. Some went on to add that busy schedules, along with long commuting times, make it difficult to be effective in outreach.

Another common theme was that economic status and lack of education often contribute to difficulties in reaching some in the Black community.

“The wealthier and more educated will pay closer attention to what you are saying whether or not it impacts them directly.”

“This area is very diverse. There is a large socioeconomic band. New Brunswick is very urban; Plainsboro is middle class and suburban. You have to make adjustments when addressing folks or your message will fall on deaf ears.”

Oktibbeha County, MS. The majority of respondents did not indicate that they had experienced any resistance or barriers in their outreach efforts to Black communities, but several respondents did stress the importance of contacting key opinion leaders before attempting a project of any significant size. Suggestions included Ava Moore, a local businesswoman who at that time was leading the county’s race relations team; Roy Perkins, a local lawyer and alderman; and Dr. Mfanya Tryman, then director of the local NAACP and professor at Mississippi State University.

Prince George's County, MD. As in Middlesex County, the majority of respondents cited the busy work and personal schedules of many in the Black community as a barrier to outreach.

Similarly, many felt this held true across income and education levels and, in this particular county, geographic location.

"There are a lot of two-income households here and people driving themselves and children to multiple places in the evening."

"After work and school activities really compete for people's time. That's why partnering is so important."

Trusted Messengers of Health and Safety Information

Berkeley County, SC. In some cases, respondents differentiated between those who would be trusted messengers in the county's rural communities and those who would have more credibility in urban areas. In rural areas, ministers, nonprofit organizations, and social service agencies were most often mentioned as trusted messengers of information.

"For the Black community, especially in the rural areas, trust is key. Whoever is before the people has to build trust first and have the backing of people who are recognized and 'homegrown.'"

"In the rural areas, where people tend not to be as educated, it is really important to use messengers that can break through their defensive attitudes."

In the urban communities, community leaders (many of whom are elected officials), ministers,

and Black police officers were noted as trusted messengers of health and safety information.

"Many of our police officers are from the community and people have grown up with them. They can read the community well and know how to get things done."

Several respondents mentioned the NAACP as a trusted messenger because of their work on several issues important to the Black community, as well as their success with the Confederate Flag issue.

Representatives from faith, health, community and political organizations also were asked what local or national health programs or organizations they felt were effective at reaching the Black community. Respondents named national pharmaceutical companies, along with the local and national organizations that target Blacks with cancer and hypertension prevention messages.

Cook County, IL. The majority of respondents reported that celebrities, local personalities (radio personalities, not TV anchors), political leaders, and ministers were all trusted messengers of health and safety information in the Black community. However, some reported that police officers, other law enforcement officials, or government agencies would not be good choices.

"Members of the Black community have a strong distrust of law enforcement."

"People tend to be cynical about government entities in this county."

Jackson County, MO. Leaders from community-based organizations, local sports and entertainment personalities, and religious and political figures were cited as trusted messengers. Not all agreed that health care professionals would be good messengers.

“This county is less progressive in dealing with health and safety issues. You really need leaders people know and recognize to promote a change in behavior.”

Names mentioned as trusted messengers included retired Lt. Colonel Jim Nunn from the organization Move-Up; local personality, Buck O’Neil; religious leader Emmanuel Cleaver, and any football player with the Kansas City Chiefs.

In fact, several respondents mentioned the sobering effect of the tragic death of Kansas City Chiefs player Derek Thomas. He was killed in a vehicular crash and was not wearing a seat belt.

“He was visible and popular in the community. There have been buckle-up campaigns in his name since his death.”

Several national and local organizations were viewed as leaders in promoting health and safety information in the Black community, including Truman Medical, American Family Insurance, First Guard (a Black-owned HMO), and Emerging Market Manager (a business run by two women who sponsor health fairs, immunization drives, and other health and health-related activities).

Middlesex County, NJ. As in other counties, respondents believed that Black opinion leaders, religious leaders, and Black elected officials are all trusted messengers of health and safety information.

“A collaboration of individuals from these groups who are interested in health and safety would be a good idea.”

The NAACP was one organization specifically mentioned by several respondents:

“The local NAACP does a good job tailoring messages and disseminating information.”

Individuals representing faith, health, community and political organizations were also asked what local or national health programs or organizations they felt were particularly effective at reaching the Black community. Programs promoting diabetes awareness and cancer prevention programs were mentioned as good examples of tailoring messages to the Black community.

Oktibbeha County, MS. The most trusted messengers of health and safety initiatives in this county include educators (active and retired), the clergy, health care providers, political figures, and the police. Law enforcement officials have a good reputation here and are generally well respected.

Prince George’s County, MD. The majority of respondents in this county said that fire department officials, well-known local opinion leaders, and health care professionals—“especially to the more educated”—are trusted messengers of health and safety information. One respondent noted that young people typically react positively toward local professional athletes and entertainers. Several pointed out that:

“In this community, familiarity and comfort level is important! Even if you use people credible in the health and safety field, people have to recognize them.”

Names mentioned frequently included County Executive Wayne Curry and County Council President Dorothy Bailey.

The county health department, the larger local hospitals, and the MADD and DARE programs were all programs mentioned frequently as effective at reaching the Black community with messages.

Perceptions in the Black Community About the Enforcement of Traffic Laws

Berkeley County, SC. All respondents agreed that the Black community perceives disparities in the enforcement of traffic laws. The majority believed that Black residents in rural parts of the county have more problems with racial profiling than their counterparts in urban areas.

“Black people know that they are more likely to get stopped in the affluent, White areas of the county. You can’t even get the police to leave the city limits and enforce the laws in the rural parts of the county.”

Some noted that police agencies in urban areas tend to be more aware of racial profiling. They are also better educated and trained, and therefore, more sensitive to this issue.

Suggestions for improvement included the following:

“Community leaders need to do a better job talking with police agencies and holding them accountable for their actions.”

“Perceptions are being addressed by having officers keep logs of every person stopped. But the problem is that there is vague communication from the top. There should be more reporting back to the community on the status of programs in place to eliminate profiling.”

Cook County, IL. The majority of respondents reported that most Blacks are concerned about being stopped while driving by the police and feel they are more likely to be stopped than White

drivers. The majority said that racial profiling is a problem and a growing issue in this county.

Jackson County, MO. For most respondents, racial profiling was seen as an important issue and problem in the Black community. Most stated that there was a perception that disparities exist in enforcing traffic laws. In fact, one of the respondents said that he was responsible for the enactment of the first piece of State legislation to address racial profiling.

“Folks have preconceived, negative notions about cops because of the profiling issue. And unfortunately many have not had a positive first experience.”

Some felt that the Black community does not have confidence in the process.

“Even though we have community policing and cops on bikes, there is still a need to talk more openly and frequently with community residents. This issue needs to be acknowledged as a problem.”

Middlesex County, NJ. All respondents agreed that there is a perception in the Black community that disparities exist in the enforcement of traffic laws. One respondent said she felt Black drivers were more cautious because of this problem, and had a personal story.

“I was stopped three times in a month when I first moved to a White area of the county. I know Black kids who are afraid to visit other kids who live in White areas.”

An elected official pointed out that New Jersey was one of the first States to expose racial profiling as a serious problem. Still, in his opinion:

“It is a hypersensitive issue. There is a high desire for community policing, but as a result, police have been more aggressive than need be.”

Suggestions for improvements included:

“Police forces need to be more diverse.”

“There should be emphasis placed on telling young people what the problems are and teaching them how to communicate with police officers when stopped.”

“There needs to be more open and honest discussions, maybe through town meetings and forums.”

“Microphones and video cameras mounted in cars would be great!”

Oktibbeha County, MS. Although some respondents agreed that many Black residents believe they are stopped more often than White residents, other respondents disagreed and said it was not a major issue.

Prince George’s County, MD. There was unanimous agreement among the Black respondents that the Black community feels there are disparities in the enforcement of traffic laws.

“Young Black men who fit a certain ‘profile’ are often stopped for no reason. Officers seem to make snap judgments.”

“Cops erroneously label Blacks as one thing or another.”

Some said that Black residents actually fear being stopped and that they believe Black motorists are cautious because of this.

“As an African American male, I know that I am more likely to be stopped. I spend a lot of time focused on that while I’m driving because I know it is dangerous to get entangled with the law.”

White respondents, on the other hand, did not view it as a major issue.

“I know that racial profiling is a huge problem elsewhere, but not here.”

Recommendations for improvements included:

“More education for young people on how certain behaviors might be perceived.”

“Law enforcement should develop more partnerships around this issue.”

Degree of Awareness/Knowledge in the Black Community of Traffic Safety Issues—Driver, Passenger, and Pedestrian

Berkeley County, SC. Most respondents agreed that while there is a high level of awareness of traffic safety issues in the Black community, the levels of knowledge vary. Several noted that overall, there is less education about traffic safety laws and enforcement in the rural communities.

“Because of the problems in the rural communities with poor upkeep of the roads and the problems that causes for pedestrians, traffic safety issues are a priority. But I would say there are some knowledge problems too.”

“Most people seem to be clear on most driver-related issues, but others are clueless.”

“People think they know the laws, but they really don’t. There are a lot of knowledge problems around pedestrian issues.”

Although access to child safety seats was not reported as a problem, the majority of respondents stated that improper use and nonuse of child safety seats was an issue for some.

“I hear a lot of parents complain about kids not wanting to be in the car seats and how the crying drives them crazy. So they take them out or they don’t restrain them at all.”

“Hand-me-down safety seats are a problem, especially out in the country. Many are damaged and too old to be used.”

Respondents also reported that in rural communities, where there tends to be less enforcement, adult seat belts are often used for small children. Many adults buckle multiple children in one seat belt if there are not enough seat belts to go around.

Cook County, IL. The majority of respondents said that both awareness and knowledge of traffic safety issues in the Black community are low, especially among lower income groups.

“With lower income groups, traffic safety does not come up; it is not on anyone’s agenda.”

“The awareness of traffic safety issues in the Black community is generally low. The younger generation may be a little more knowledgeable, due to the influence of schools and the media, such as Nickelodeon, BET, and MTV. But for the most part, awareness is low.”

The majority of respondents believed there to be knowledge problems around requirements for, and proper use of, child safety seats.

“I really don’t think that the message that children are always safer in the back has gotten through.”

Jackson County, MO. In Jackson County, respondents felt that both awareness and knowledge of traffic safety issues is weak.

“People do not seem to know enough about the correct way car seats are supposed to fit into the car.”

“In general, I think folks don’t practice what they know.”

“Pedestrians seem totally oblivious to the laws and rules.”

Regarding the issue of child safety seats, a few respondents mentioned an initiative called the Car Seat Diversion Program, which has helped increase awareness and knowledge.

Middlesex County, NJ. The majority of respondents described the level of awareness about traffic safety issues as “low” to “moderate.”

“People just don’t think about it and don’t see the immediate applicability.”

“Other transportation issues are more pressing, such as congestion, more bus service and the need for a sophisticated subway system.”

However, one respondent said she felt it was high because of the racial profiling issue.

Some respondents saw a knowledge gap with respect to child safety seats and attributed this to confusion about age, height, and weight requirements.

“There definitely needs to be more spot checks for safety seats.”

Oktibbeha County, MS. Most discussants reported that there is little awareness and knowledge of traffic safety issues in the Black community.

“No organizations have really taken on the traffic safety issue, except for some small, temporary initiatives.”

However, some stated that people have recently become more aware and knowledgeable about seat belt laws because of increased enforcement.

Prince George’s County, MD. Respondents felt that both awareness and knowledge of traffic safety issues are generally high among Blacks.

“I think knowledge is high because there are so many traffic problems and tragedies. It’s not far from anyone’s mind.”

“Awareness is high because Blacks tend to be profiled and everyone knows it’s a problem in the county.”

However, some participants reported that knowledge problems exist with respect to pedestrian-related safety and safety seat use.

“Safety seats are difficult to use and that creates problems.”

“There needs to be more spot checks for safety seat use.”

Major Driver-, Passenger-, and Pedestrian-Related Traffic Safety Problems

Berkeley County, SC. Participants cited road conditions, driving without a license or insurance, dangerous walking conditions for pedestrians, and early-model cars without proper restraints as important problems.

The factors most often mentioned as contributing to these problems included the tremendous amount of growth and redevelopment in the area; trucking on rural roads, which causes deterioration; lack of formal driver education; and lack of enforcement in rural areas.

“Lack of enforcement prompts some to drive without a license, insurance, and cars that are just plain unsafe.”

“There are no sidewalks. There is nowhere for people to walk and it causes the roads to deteriorate faster.”

“There is not enough driver education for young people. Kids drive younger here because they have to learn to operate farm equipment. They end up learning to drive from friends or older siblings who may not be the best teachers.”

Cook County, IL. Respondents cited improper use of child safety seats, small children seated in the front seat, lack of seat belt use, and driving while under the influence.

Jackson County, MO. Participants cited the lack of restraints, particularly on school buses, the lack of speed bumps and crosswalks, speeding, distracted drivers, high-speed police chases, road conditions, and the lack of crossing guards at schools.

There was no consensus on what factors contributed most to these problems.

Middlesex County, NJ. Respondents cited traffic congestion and related problems, aggressive driving, speeding, and the improper use and nonuse of child restraints.

Factors contributing to these problems included problems with the mass transit system; young people who are inexperienced drivers; "...congestion causes aggressive driving and speeding"; and the loss of school-sponsored driver education courses.

Oktibbeha County, MS. Respondents cited driving while under the influence, speeding, disobeying helmet laws, the improper use or nonuse of child safety seats, and frequent farming or heavy equipment accidents.

Participants reported the following as factors that contribute to these problems: economic concerns regarding purchasing helmets and child safety seats; young drivers "drag racing" down rural roads; and drivers with excessive numbers of passengers (especially children) and not enough restraints.

Prince George's County, MD. Respondents cited aggressive driving, speeding, inattentive drivers, and inexperienced drivers.

Factors contributing to these problems included the abuse of drugs and alcohol, "the demise of

driver education programs in public schools," traffic congestion leading to "road rage," and cell phone use.

Effective and Ineffective Channels of Communication

Berkeley County, SC. According to the vast majority of respondents, "word of mouth" and face-to-face communication are the most effective channels. Many respondents also felt that flyers and direct mailings were effective. Newspapers were almost always cited as the most ineffective channel of communication.

*"Word of mouth is very effective—
especially from the pulpit."*

*"Face-to-face dialogue is the most effective.
A lot of people don't read the newspaper."*

Cook County, IL. Television, radio, and newspapers were viewed as the most effective channels of communication in the Black community. However, it was reported that a large segment of the county's Black community does not read the major newspapers. Many said that the smaller, local newspapers are more popular and are seen as more credible sources of information.

Jackson County, MO. For most respondents, "word-of-mouth" is the most effective channel of communication, with newspapers being the least effective. Seniors can most effectively be reached through the churches and neighborhood associations, and young people through the schools. Festivals and fairs were seen as effective, especially when reinforced with follow-up brochures and flyers.

Middlesex County, NJ. In this county, there was no consensus on the most or least effective channel of communication. Newspapers, radio, television, and schools were all mentioned as

being effective. Several respondents felt that “word of mouth” would probably be ineffective, given the busy work, school, and personal schedules of most families.

Oktibbeha County, MS. Local TV stations were described as being very effective channels of communication, providing news, community concern programs, and bulletin boards. Churches and “word of mouth” were also mentioned as good channels. Radio was viewed as being almost as effective as local television.

Prince George’s County, MD. The majority of respondents felt that radio was the most effective channel of communication. Local newspapers were also mentioned as a preferred channel. Mainstream newspapers, however, were felt to be the most ineffective channel.

Specific Cultural Issues to Consider When Working in the Black Community

Berkeley County, SC. The cultural issue most frequently mentioned was the close relationship between family members in the Black community. Respondents said that Blacks in this county tend to feel very “rooted” in their communities, since many families have lived on and owned the same land for generations. Although the “inherent” trusting nature of most in the Black community was heralded by most respondents, many were quick to add that Blacks had become less trusting due to broken promises made by elected officials and large companies in the area.

Cook County, IL. Respondents noted that members of the Black community have a strong distrust of law enforcement and are cynical about government entities. In general, the community is distrustful of Whites and others from outside the immediate community.

Jackson County, MO. One socioeconomic factor raised was the mobility of Black families in Jackson County. Since they are often renters, they move around a lot. Neighborhood safety issues, such as feeling safe when going out in the evening, were also mentioned. And as in other sites, the busy lives of most families was mentioned by many respondents. Families in Jackson County are not unlike their counterparts in other urban areas of the country in that there is little time for weekend and evening activities, and outside interests often compete with work, family, and other priorities.

Middlesex County, NJ. The most common theme was the busy nature of most Black households in the county, with inordinate amounts of time spent in cars commuting between work, home, and outside activities.

One respondent commented that Blacks in Middlesex County are very sensitive to the racial disparities that they believe exist. They have experience with racial profiling in driving situations, as well as housing and employment problems.

Oktibbeha County, MS. Many Black residents reportedly believe that the police stop them more often than Whites. While some discussants agreed with this statement, others said it is not an issue.

Prince George’s County, MD. While no cultural issues specific to the Black community were commonly mentioned, some respondents did comment on the differences in perspectives of Blacks living “inside” and “outside” the Beltway. These people felt that Blacks living “inside,” or in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, were more aware of the “hottest” issues covered in the mainstream media than their counterparts living further away from the District of Columbia.

Chapter V

KEY COMPARISONS BETWEEN FOCUS GROUPS AND ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSIONS

The following are key findings and comparisons of the focus groups and one-on-one discussions.

■ Major Traffic Safety Problems

There were significant differences in the way focus group participants and one-on-one participants ranked the major traffic safety problems affecting the Black communities in their respective counties. Across all focus groups, the majority of participants ranked drinking and driving as either the top, or one of the top, three problems. Aggressive driving and speeding were also given high priority.

The improper or non-use of child safety seats was the major problem listed in the one-on-one discussions. Contrary to the focus group findings, drinking and driving was rarely mentioned in the one-on-one discussions.

■ Trusted Messengers of Health and Safety Information

Focus group participants and participants in the one-on-one discussions differed on who they viewed as the most-trusted messengers of health and safety information in the Black community. While the majority of one-on-one participants in all counties listed elected and law enforcement officials as two of the most credible and trusted messengers, focus group participants reported just the opposite. Focus group participants reported that most in the Black community view politicians and law enforcement officials with suspicion and that they would be poor choices as spokespersons for a health and safety campaign.

However, similar to the focus group findings, the majority of one-on-one participants saw non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, churches and schools as trusted venues and effective at reaching the Black community with messages.

■ Perceptions About the Enforcement of Traffic Laws

As in the focus groups, the vast majority of participants in the one-on-one discussions reported racial profiling to be a major issue in the Black community. Similarly, both focus group and one-on-one participants said that Black males – particularly young Black males – are more likely to be victims of racial profiling than other groups.

Participants in both sets of research groups mentioned similar ways to eliminate racial profiling, such as increased diversity on police forces and more accountability for police officers.

■ Child Safety Seats

Participants in the one-on-one discussions consistently listed the improper use and nonuse of child safety seats as a problem within the Black community. In fact, respondents in several counties said they believed people were not knowledgeable about the guidelines and laws that govern the use of child safety seats and restraints.

In the focus groups, the majority of participants who regularly transport children reported consistent use of child safety seats. In fact, many admitted that they were more diligent about using restraints for their children than about using seat belts for themselves.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY OF THE TOP 11 FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A large amount of information was collected during the focus groups and the one-on-one discussions and is presented in the full report. However, several key findings from the research stand out and are presented below along with their implications for program development.

Key Finding #1

Drinking and driving and aggressive and reckless driving were consistently identified as significant traffic safety problems across all focus groups regardless of age, gender, or location. Although drinking and driving was regularly cited as a top area of concern, many participants felt that Black people are not the cause of the problem. Rather, participants cited White drivers as the ones who are drinking and driving. Also, participants used definitions of the term “drinking and driving” that varied widely.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

Messages to Black communities must show the relevance of drinking and driving as a behavioral issue rather than an outside risk. Messages must also clarify the definition of drinking and driving, and emphasize the risks.

Key Finding #2

There was a strong belief at all sites that racial profiling is a serious problem and an ongoing practice of law enforcement. In particular, Black males felt that there was little that they can do to protect themselves from being victims of this practice. While most were able to separate the problem of racial profiling from the benefits of law enforcement, members of law enforcement were not seen as desirable leaders in local traffic safety efforts.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

Law enforcement agencies must address this issue before they can become valuable partners in developing traffic safety programs for Black communities. In light of concerns about racial profiling, program designers should be sensitive in their selection of messages and messengers.

Key Finding #3

Seat belt use among Blacks is inconsistent, with part-time use prevalent regardless of the community and the age of the participant. Most respondents believed seat belts have a positive safety benefit. Most participants also said that they most frequently wear seat belts in situations that they view as risky, such as traveling long distances, in poor weather conditions, and when riding with young children. Interestingly, seat belt use was also commonly seen as a reflection on the ability of the driver; putting on a seat belt was often seen as a statement of no confidence in the driver’s ability, whether the driver is oneself or another. There was little recognition of the unpredictable nature of some crashes and that they could occur in good and bad weather, on long or short trips, or due to another driver’s error.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

Programs should emphasize the unpreventable and unpredictable risk involved when drivers do not buckle up, and the need to buckle up each and every time a person drives or rides in a vehicle.

Key Finding #4

For younger participants, especially males, there was a strong relationship between driving and being “cool” (the term “cool” was used throughout the country.) Often, young male participants said that when they drive or ride in a vehicle, they are “styling and profiling” in an attempt to look “cool.” (“Styling and profiling” is an attempt to show off or to try to make an impression). Use of seat belts was not viewed as “cool” by the majority of young male participants.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

Reversing this perception among young Black males is important to increasing belt use, and may have a positive effect on seat belt use for their passengers, as well.

Key Finding #5

If parents responded that they did not wear seat belts, they still wanted to ensure the safety of their children by placing them in child restraints. Nonuse of safety seats was generally attributed to either economic constraints or indifference to safety. For young men, child seats were generally not seen as a high priority, and warranted minimal investment of time and money. Awareness of booster seats was mixed, and most people had only a general knowledge of when a child should use a booster seat.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

More general education needs to be provided to clarify the proper use of safety seats and booster seats. Promoting the use of child safety seat checkups may have a high payoff as well. The value and need for safety seats needs to be emphasized to young fathers.

Key Finding #6

Blacks have many of the same reasons for not wearing seat belts as the general population, such as discomfort, wrinkling clothes, and simply forgetting. However, most Blacks support seat belt laws, even if they don’t consistently wear seat belts and believe that they are more likely to be pulled over for nonuse of seat belts than White drivers.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

The content of existing general messages needs to be shared with and tailored to Black audiences, using more culturally relevant themes, images, language, and media vehicles. In other words, how the message is delivered should be considered, but in many cases the message itself is equally relevant to Black or White target markets.

Key Finding #7

Local health and medical providers, Black religious leaders, and families were most often identified as the most trusted groups to lead traffic safety efforts in the selected counties. Churches and schools are trusted venues. However, no group or venue enjoyed unanimous support.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

These trusted sources should be incorporated into programs, while also recognizing that no single source is universally trusted and thus parallel messages with different messengers may be warranted. The use of religious leaders should be localized and incorporated into appropriate program elements. Program designers should consult with their local community contacts before selecting messengers.

Key Finding #8

Blacks in the selected communities for this study were receptive to, and supportive of, positive, realistic messages. Messages should portray truthful, ordinary people in realistic situations. Participants strongly believe it is essential to have Blacks represented in messages and ads that target Black men, women, teens, or seniors.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

Messages and ads should portray ordinary people in believable situations. For the most part, participants were not interested in “blood and guts” images and scenes. Including Black people in the messages is important in attracting the attention of Black audiences.

Key Finding #9

When compared to White communities, many participants believed that Black communities have significantly inferior street systems in design, construction, and maintenance.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

Messages should forthrightly portray infrastructure in keeping with the public’s perceptions, to ensure that messages are perceived as honest, “above board,” and well received.

Key Finding #10

Participants are suspicious of safety statistics that do not match their perceptions of the Black community’s opinions or behavior.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

Minimize use of statistics in safety messages targeting Blacks, or make efforts in the message to reinforce the validity of the data as part of a social norming message.

Key Finding #11

There was a high level of interest and concern about pedestrian issues. Participants had different opinions on issues such as jaywalking and the lack of sidewalks, depending on their geographic region. Participants consistently said that pedestrians wearing dark clothing, and walking along or across roads at night, present dangerous challenges for motorists.

Implications for Targeted Program Development

Better education is needed in the area of pedestrian safety, especially how to cross streets. These educational efforts need to be targeted to the unique urban or rural environments in local areas, and designed with deference to the other program implications cited earlier with regard to message development and delivery.

Conclusion

When considering target audiences for program development, it is important to heed one participant’s statement that “there are two ways to change: by choice or by force.” This comment sums up the feelings of many, particularly older, participants about a resistance to forced change. Many participants emphasized that messages should target changing the community’s mindset about the benefits of traffic safety, rather than forcing the changes through threats, presumably enforcement.

Chapter VII

GUIDELINES AND STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

This chapter serves as a standalone reference tool for people who wish to design and conduct traffic safety programs directed at Black populations in their communities. The guidelines outlined here incorporate best practices, operational guidance and strategic information gleaned from literature reviews, the project team's focus group sessions and one-on-one discussions with community leaders in six locations throughout the United States. Also included are recommendations from the *Blue Ribbon Panel to Increase Seat Belt Use Among African Americans: A Report To The Nation*, released in Fall 2000. Established by former Secretary of Transportation, the Honorable Rodney Slater, this prestigious panel identified issues and approaches for addressing seat belt use in African-American communities. The work of the Blue Ribbon Panel is introduced here in order to note the consistencies between the results of this research project and the Panel's recommendations, and to present the research results so that they build on the guidance provided by the Panel.

Specifically, you may use this chapter to help develop programs and messages designed to:

- enhance awareness of highway safety issues and concerns;
- encourage modification of behaviors that may compromise safety;
- explore the specific channels of communication most likely to reach these audiences; and
- include cultural relevance aimed at Black populations.

Key Target Groups

Black communities are not homogeneous. The diversity within African American communities makes it essential to create targeted communications to elicit effective responses to

traffic and highway safety messages. Based on a literature review of major segments of the Black population and focus group research findings, messages may be most effective when directed to the following three target audiences:

- The "Hip-Hop" Generation;
- The Civil Rights Generation; and
- Black Males (of all ages).

While other target groups exist, these three main groups were selected because they offer a sufficient market size to warrant broad-scale media message development. Markets for particular behaviors or other smaller target groups also may be worthwhile to pursue. Since the research for this project was qualitative, the sizes of particular markets were not calculated, though it would be a relatively straightforward process to calculate size for demographically defined groups such as those above.

Demographic definitions such as age and gender were used to identify and recruit participants for the focus groups. During the focus group sessions, information about participants' lifestyles, media patterns and attitudes toward traffic safety issues was collected. Therefore, the major target markets discussed in this section present both demographic and psychographic information to enhance State and local efforts to communicate with Black communities. Overlaps exist among the various groups; and individuals may be found in several market segments, particularly if they are male. Also recognize that these three segments are not exhaustive of all segments of Black communities. Therefore, additional research within a local community should be conducted to thoroughly understand specific Black audiences. Nonetheless, the market segmentation provided here is a starting point for research and communication planning targeting Black communities.

The Hip-Hop Generation

The “Hip-Hop” Generation can best be described as individuals between the ages of 15 and 35 (born between 1965 and 1986) who identify closely with the language, clothing, music, poetry, attitudes, and behaviors of “hip-hop” culture in the U.S.⁴ “Hip-Hop” is defined as the culture from which rap music emerged in the 1970s. It has since developed into a lifestyle with its own language, style of dress, music, and mindset, and has expanded beyond urban centers like New York City and Los Angeles into rural and suburban communities. *The Source*, the leading publication targeting the Hip-Hop Generation, explains that the term is limited to Black Americans, while the term “Hip-Hop Nation” refers to anyone, regardless of race, nationality or ethnicity, who relates to the hip-hop culture. Today, some in this generation tend to consider leisure activities and entertainment as a higher priority than economic and political empowerment.⁵

According to Christopher Tyson, Harvard University Fellow and business consultant, what distinguishes the Hip-Hop Generation from the Civil Rights Generation is that the former are the first Black Americans born and reared in a legally desegregated and voluntarily integrated country.⁶ Although the Hip-Hop Generation has been exposed to working- and middle-class realities, the development of their culture, in some respects, has been based on a backlash against the middle-class values of African Americans. Many urban youth in the 1970s and early 1980s felt disenchanting with the fading promises of the Civil Rights Movement and the abandonment by middle-class Black Americans of then-decaying urban communities.

This generation respects the opinions of their immediate peers, hip-hop artists, and others who

are directly involved with issues or causes directly affecting their lifestyles.

The Civil Rights Generation

The Civil Rights Generation typically includes Black Americans who tend to associate with the economic, political, and social struggles for equality in America. This group holds traditional middle-class values. Members of the Civil Rights Generation tend to join more traditional organizations within the Black community such as Black fraternities and sororities, the NAACP, Urban League chapters, and other national Black professional, civic, and social organizations. Members of this generation hold economic, political, and social advancement as core values and believe in a strong work ethic. This generation has a solid voting history, is politically astute, uses traditional channels of communication, including the Black press, and prefer to see positive media images that incorporate family, wealth, education, and achievements. Members of this group hold strong traditional family values and have firm roots in the Black church.

The core of the Civil Rights Generation typically includes people born before 1964. However, the Civil Rights Generation also includes a younger group, which transcends geographic, social, and economic levels.

Black Males

The final key target group comprises Black males of all ages. They have different views on traffic safety issues than females. For example, racial profiling affects them to a greater extent than it does their female counterparts. Black male audiences tend to be more skeptical of preachy messages and mainstream delivery mechanisms. This group generally requires a culturally relevant approach that sends clear messages that recognize and reflect male beliefs, behaviors, and interests.

⁴ Kitwana, Bakari. 2002. *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis of American Culture*. Basic Books. And Lee Hubbard’s article, “Speaking on the Hip Hop Generation” published on www.africana.com

⁵ For more information about the Hip-Hop generation see www.urbanthinktank.org, www.davyd.com and www.rap.about.com

Diversity Within the Targeted Groups

Since diversity exists within each of the major target groups, respondents felt that a message's appeal can be increased by addressing specific gender, age, or geographic differences. Each program or message developed should be tested to ensure that it will be well received by the intended audience. In certain instances, the three target audiences may be reached by using the same strategies; however, in others, carefully targeted communication is necessary to effect behavioral, attitudinal, and awareness changes in Black people.

Obstacles to Effective Message Reception

During the research, focus group and one-on-one discussion participants consistently emphasized obstacles to the effectiveness of any highway or traffic safety messages. In addition to normal target marketing issues (discussed later) three significant concerns were:

- distrust of law enforcement, particularly for issues such as "driving while Black;"
- the reliability of statistics and findings from research commissioned by government and other predominantly White organizations; and
- the perceived inferiority of sidewalk and road conditions between Black and White communities.

Since these perceptions may impede the effectiveness of many safety messages, respondents felt it would be essential to address these issues forthrightly to ensure that messages are well received. Therefore, these issues must be considered atop normal marketing strategies when attempting to communicate with the Black population. It is important to talk with the local community to determine the extent to which these obstacles exist.

Address Obstacles

It is important to address obstacles that impede the communication of traffic safety messages. The

obstacles include racial profiling, the quality of roads and sidewalks, and the distrust of statistics.

The *Blue Ribbon Panel to Increase Seat Belt Use Among African Americans: A Report To The Nation* also addresses these obstacles. Selected recommendations from the Panel are included below. (See Appendix G for a complete list of the Panel's recommendations.)

Although most participants in the focus groups and one-on-one discussions said they could separate racial profiling concerns from issues of traffic and highway safety, the tension generated by racial profiling, or "driving while Black," creates mistrust between the public and law enforcement. Therefore, racial profiling should be recognized as a significant issue when developing traffic safety messages and policies.

- To address the issue of "driving while Black," focus group participants suggested increased diversity on police forces, better screening of candidates, and greater accountability of law enforcement. In other words, policy solutions were seen as more effective than marketing solutions. However, dissemination of information about these policies would be necessary, as stated in Recommendations 5 and 6 of the Blue Ribbon Panel Report (see Appendix G).
- To improve the perceived credibility of research and statistics, participants in the one-on-one discussions said it is essential to demonstrate that all research used or cited in safety messages is credible and has been prepared by people who are culturally sensitive. This is similar to Recommendation 4 of the Blue Ribbon Panel Report. In addition, focus group and one-on-one participants said that potential solutions to this issue might include a greater knowledge of, and reliance on, research organizations that have good reputations within the Black community; less use of statistics; and statistical information presented in a clear, simple and relevant manner making it easier for the audience to understand and accept.

- To address the strong consensus finding from the focus group participants that their driving environment differs from that of White drivers in local communities, the participants and one-on-one discussants recommended creating messages that at least acknowledge and recognize those differences.
- To address all three major obstacles cited above, research participants and the Blue Ribbon Panel suggested opening communication among community partners, organizations, and government agencies wishing to deliver traffic safety messages to Black communities. These actions can help develop relationships and maintain contacts with key Black constituents. This recommendation was important because many of the one-on-one discussion participants said that people were often unaware of resources available from government agencies and other groups regarding highway and traffic safety.

Key Informational Needs

This section presents the key informational needs emphasized by focus group and one-on-one discussion participants. The participants also discussed additional safety issues that may be targeted to Black communities. All of these issues are listed in order of their cited importance to Black communities in general. While the previous section described obstacles to effective message reception, this section describes specific message content and information that may be worthy of emphasis. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has more detailed information available about these issues. Again, additional localized research is necessary to understand how the local Black community perceives these informational needs.

Drinking and Driving

All focus groups, regardless of age, gender, or location, listed drinking and driving as a major concern in the Black community. Reasons given for drinking and driving are that most people

do not know their tolerance level and think they can drive safely when under the influence.

The key issues that require clarification or emphasis for Black target markets are the links between drinking and impaired driving. Drinking in its own right was an overarching concern. Many participants said drinking is a concern because “there is an abundance of liquor stores in Black communities.” One participant said, “There is a liquor store on every corner in (urban) Black neighborhoods.” However, linkages between drinking and impaired driving were not always acknowledged. Participants felt that messages and campaigns should:

- ***Demonstrate relevance in black communities.*** While drinking and driving is regularly cited as a top concern, many participants did not perceive the Black population to be part of the problem, or commented, “it’s more of a White issue.” This implies that a key initial task for reaching many in the Black community is to create awareness that drinking and driving is an issue of concern in the Black community. A key challenge in disseminating this information will be to persuade an audience that is skeptical of statistical information.
- ***Clarify the definition of drinking and driving.*** One complicating factor in assessing the risk of drinking and driving is the actual definition of the term. “Drinking and driving” tended to be assigned one of two definitions, with no strong pattern by age, gender, or region. The first definition is essentially that of “drunk driving,” or driving when one is not capable of controlling the vehicle in a safe manner. The second definition, although less common, is essentially “drinking while in the act of driving,” even if the person has only one drink. This second definition also implies that a person who gets intoxicated before entering a vehicle is not “drinking and driving”, as long as he/she does not actually drink in the vehicle. Perhaps use of labels such as “drunk driving” and “driving while under the influence” may provide further clarification.

- **Emphasize the risks of drinking and driving.** During the focus groups, two main points emerged regarding drinking and driving. One was that drunk drivers seldom thought of themselves as drunk, seldom felt that they had consumed too much, or didn't realize how their alcohol consumption would affect them. Drunk drivers rarely thought they had consumed enough alcohol to impair their driving and, therefore, felt they could "handle it." The second point was that drunk drivers often get behind the wheel because they have no other way of getting home. After all, "You have to get home somehow," stated a focus group participant. As a corollary, many participants also cited "drinking and walking" as a pedestrian hazard.

Based on these findings, many of the same message themes targeted to the general population about the risks of impaired driving can also be targeted to the Black population, albeit with deference to the other recommendations in this report.

Aggressive and Reckless Driving

Many participants cited aggression as a major reason for reckless driving. Anger and frustration over traffic congestion and loss of time while sitting in stalled traffic, and job-related and personal stress, also contribute to aggressive behavior behind the wheel.

- **Define Aggressive and Reckless Driving and Its Consequences**

Although aggressive and reckless driving appears as a major issue regardless of gender and age (with the exception of teenage boys), few focus group participants could define what was meant by the behaviors and their effect on public safety. They suggested that reality-based messages such as spokesperson testimonials and the use of crashed vehicles at public venues might effectively illustrate the impact of such behavior.

Speeding

Many groups tend to view speeding with resignation, with teenage boys in particular having a cavalier attitude about speeding. However,

speeding was also viewed as a significant concern among focus group participants, separate from aggressive or reckless driving.

A common perception in the focus groups was that "it just happens." Speeding was most often attributed to Americans' fast-paced lifestyles. This belief may explain the nonchalance about speeding since a change in lifestyle would be required in order to change this behavior. Communities can help reframe such thinking, if they:

- **Promote better understanding and knowledge of the law.** Participants fell into two groups with regard to strategies for reducing speeding (and the breaking of all traffic laws). About half of respondents (with no strong pattern by age, gender, or location) felt that speeding and other breaches of traffic law were due more to a lack of understanding or knowledge of the law. For that group, education is key to improving such behavior.
- **Enforce the speed limit laws.** The other half of respondents felt that most lawbreakers understand traffic laws, but just choose to ignore them. This group felt that speed limits need to be more strictly enforced, particularly around schools and in neighborhoods and other areas where children are present.
- **Explain the consequences and risks.** The consequences and costs of speeding, such as higher insurance rates and injury and fatality rates, must be emphasized, specifically to younger adult males. This message may be more effective in Black communities if combined with information about increased risks in areas where sidewalks are narrow or non-existent, or in areas with substandard infrastructure.

Pedestrian Safety

A general concern across all of the focus groups was for pedestrian safety. Focus group participants cited poor sidewalk conditions, the absence of speed bumps, road construction, vehicular speeding, aggressive driving, alcohol consumption, lack of crosswalks, and poor signage as pedestrian safety concerns.

- **Discourage jaywalking.** All focus groups reported that pedestrians put themselves at risk by crossing outside of designated pedestrian walkways, walking against traffic lights, and walking without regard for drivers. Oftentimes, participants agreed that pedestrians taunt drivers by strolling across streets with a perceived attitude that dares drivers to hit them. Messages should encourage pedestrians to use designated crossing areas.
- **Clarify pedestrian rules of the road.** According to focus group participants, neither drivers nor pedestrians have an understanding of pedestrian laws and ordinances. Better education is needed to explain these laws and ordinances. Additionally, some attention may need to be given to pedestrian “guidelines” in situations where the environment or infrastructure may not be ideal. For example, education about proper ways to walk along roads without sidewalks may be useful in some areas, or guidelines about stepping into crosswalks where visibility may be obstructed by parked cars.

Proper use of child safety seats

Although not listed among the top three concerns by the focus groups, some participants felt that the use of child safety seats needs to be addressed.

Focus group participants said that even if parents do not wear seat belts, they tend to want to ensure that their children are safe and will place their children in child restraints when driving. Non-use of safety seats was generally attributed to either economic constraints or indifference to safety, as opposed to lack of awareness. On the other hand, awareness of booster seats was mixed, with most people having only a general knowledge of when a child should use one. Apparently, more education needs to be provided on child safety seats and booster seats in order to change thinking, with mothers considered the target audience for the messages.

- **Promote understanding of the proper use of child safety seats.** In smaller communities, the majority of respondents in the one-on-one discussions reported that proper use of child safety seats is a problem. Many respondents noted that there is less education and enforcement in rural communities. In other areas, some respondents felt there was confusion about age, height, and weight requirements. Likewise, teens in the focus groups said that people do not use safety seats because they do not have, or want to take, the time to properly install them or to secure a child in one.
- **Emphasize the necessity of safety seats regardless of the price.** Cost was a major reason cited by many participants when asked why others in their community do not use safety seats for their children. Education efforts should emphasize that the decision to purchase a safety seat is not a choice, but rather is necessary to ensure the safety of the child. One consideration is offering and promoting free or low cost safety seats to parents.
- **Encourage the participation of young fathers.** Men in the 20–27 age group appear to be significantly less interested in safety seat issues than any other group. Comments from men in this age group included “buying the cheapest seat you can find,” “picking up whatever you can get,” and other comments that indicate a low level of interest. They also indicated that they were less likely to drive “out of their way” to attend a child seat checkup or obtain other technical assistance on safety seats. Since men in the 20-27 age group are demographically highly likely to be fathers of infants and toddlers, this group should be a major target for education efforts.
- **Clarify the proper use of booster seats.** Although participants had heard of booster seats, relatively few knew who should ride in them, how they are installed, and why and when they should be used. Most knew that booster seats are used to enhance safety, but

many also questioned the extent to which this occurs, given the visual appearance of booster seats as merely a height booster. Most participants felt that a child's height and weight determine which safety seat or booster seat is appropriate for the child, though most did not know specific figures (not unreasonable since most were not parents of children of an age where it was necessary to know specifics.) Many parents had rules of thumb for the progression from a safety seat to a booster seat. For example, one parent said that "when the child can kick the back of the front seat, that child doesn't need a safety seat" or it should be replaced. Others mentioned weight requirements in general, but not specific thresholds, indicating a possible need for more details on the subject.

- **Promote the use of child safety and booster seat inspection stations.** Parents in the focus groups said they rarely sought or received outside help with child safety seats and booster seats; instead, they overwhelmingly relied on the instructions and guidelines provided with the safety seat for guidance on selection and installation. Participants suggested that it would be helpful to have a wider range of easily accessible sites to properly inspect and install all safety seats. Such sites included "institutions" such as local health departments, community centers, police and fire stations, and motor vehicle departments, and "convenience locations" where seats are purchased (e.g., mass merchandisers), or temporary events at daily destinations. It appeared that younger men preferred installation stations at destination locations, since they were often unwilling to go out of their way to have safety seats checked.

Interestingly, while participants are suspicious of their law enforcement role, police officers are trusted to check child safety seats. Participants also indicated a desire for more Black technicians to install the seats.

Use of Seat Belts

Seat belt use among Blacks is inconsistent, with part-time use prevalent regardless of the community and the age of the participant. Most people believe that seat belts have a positive safety benefit, but often weigh that benefit against the perceived risks of each individual trip. Based on focus group results, the primary messages should:

- **Emphasize the need to buckle up at all times.** Most participants who were part-time belt users said that they most frequently wear seat belts in situations they view as risky, such as traveling long distances, in poor weather conditions, and riding with young children. On perceived "low risk" trips, reasons for not wearing a belt included comfort, "lack of need," or social reasons (see below). There was little recognition of the fact that some crashes cannot be avoided and can occur in good weather and on short trips. For the most part, messages targeted to the general population are also relevant to the Black population with regard to these issues, so long as the message delivery is targeted properly.
- **Attempt to reverse the "cool" aspects of not buckling up.** For younger participants, especially males, there was a strong relationship between driving and being "cool" (the term "cool" was used throughout the country). Often, young male participants said that when they drive or ride around, they are "styling and profiling", which makes buckling up not "cool." ("Styling and profiling" is an attempt to show off while driving). Reversing this perception among young Black males in particular is a key to increase seat belt use, and can also have an impact on their passengers.
- **Eliminate the social element of decisions to buckle up or not buckle up.** Related to the social element, many participants cited interpersonal reasons to buckle up or not buckle up, particularly when passengers in vehicles driven by others. Some participants said they would buckle up when they are drivers, but not when

they are passengers. One reason given was that passengers do not want to offend the driver. One participant said, "Drivers tease me when I buckle up and they ask, 'Don't you think I am a good driver?'" Others made the decision to buckle up based on whether they felt that the driver was skilled or unskilled. Education efforts in this area can focus on the fact that not all crashes are due to the actions or mistakes of the driver.

- ***Continue dispelling the myth that wearing a seat belt can do more harm than good.*** As with other demographic groups, the "trapped in your car" stories and other second-hand seat belt danger stories exist in the Black population. While most participants recognized the benefits of seat belt use, some male focus group participants said that seat belts made them feel "locked in," as if they are imprisoned or overly restrained. Many participants felt that wearing a seat belt might cause whiplash during a crash. Some felt that you might actually be trapped and unable to get out of the car. The conclusion was that many participants felt that they were making a tradeoff of risks and benefits when wearing a seat belt, even if the benefits usually were perceived as greater. The key message should be that seat belts save lives and should be worn at all times.

Guidelines for Message Development

Previous sections discussed obstacles to be considered and content to be addressed when targeting messages to the Black community. This section provides general suggestions that may help to develop the tone of messages so they will resonate within Black communities, regardless of the market segment within the community. Communities across the country are different therefore it is important to pretest the message and gather feedback about the spokesperson before implementing a full campaign.

Messages Should Emphasize Change by Choice Rather Than Change by Force

Enforcement-related messages may have value in messages targeted to the Black community, but also carry significant risks. Many participants, particularly older people, had strong feelings of resistance to forced change, and racial profiling issues also increase sensitivity. While the message of enforcement may be appropriate for some audiences (Black women, for example, strongly endorsed using enforcement as a tool against drunk driving), educational themes or other less punitive messages were generally viewed more positively.

Messages can emphasize influence by example as an alternative approach. The stated desire to influence others may be likened to the cultural slogan, "Each One, Teach One." The sentiment shared by several participants was that if one person feels responsible for others (parents, children, or peers), he or she can set a positive example.

Messages Should Be Realistic

Focus group participants and opinion leaders in the selected communities recommended positive, realistic messages. These messages should portray truthful, ordinary people in believable situations. Participants felt strongly that it is essential to feature Blacks in future messages and ads that target African Americans. Participants said they were not interested in "blood and guts" images and themes. If celebrities were used, participants said that messages would be more effective if they were delivered by local celebrities, or those who had been personally affected by the issue. Some of the ad campaigns cited as being successful across all geographical, gender, and age groups were those addressing traffic safety using the crash-test dummies, safe sex, HIV/AIDS, drinking and driving, and anti-smoking ads. The crash-test dummies campaign, which combines realism with humor, was particularly popular with focus group participants.

Messages Should Be Factual, but not Rely Heavily on Statistics

Focus group participants said that ads with too many facts and statistics might not work in the Black community. Some of the male participants said they were suspicious that statistics of Black traffic fatalities and failure to use safety belts were untrue or misleading. Younger females simply did not find statistics (presented without a humanistic context) to be compelling. Distrust of the government is also tied to ineffective use of statistics. Conversely, some of the most memorable ads discussed by the focus groups showed actual crashes and victims, without the showing of blood or other potentially gory details. Participants in the study want honesty, truthfulness, and relevance.

Messages Should Incorporate Culturally Relevant Music

Culturally relevant music tends to get the attention of Black audiences because it is a staple part of Black culture across all ages, genders, and socioeconomic levels. However, diversity exists within the Black community concerning genres of music, so care must be taken in selecting music that appeals to each target group. (This is an area of strong age segmentation.)

Use Trusted Spokespeople and Sources

Focus group participants also expressed preferences in the types of people and organizations used to deliver transportation safety messages. Across all three key target groups, the following individuals and organizations consistently ranked high as trusted messengers and sources:

■ *Families*

All age groups said that the family unit has the most influence in the Black community. Mothers, in particular, tend to be the strongest influencers within the family.

■ *Churches*

When asked which organizations and/or professions were the most trusted in the Black community to deliver traffic safety messages, most participants indicated the church and its

religious leaders. One specific reason for this is that people in the Black community tend to have more direct contact with their church than with any other entity.

■ *Medical Professionals*

The individual professionals most often mentioned in all six focus group sites as credible spokespeople were doctors, nurses, and paramedics. These professionals see the effects of crashes everyday and have first-hand knowledge of the injury and fatality rates. Similarly, hospitals were listed as being among the most trusted entities to deliver safety messages, particularly in smaller communities where hospitals are more recognized as local institutions.

■ *Schools*

Schools were selected as trustworthy sources for safety information, particularly to reach youth and teens.

Although law enforcement officials and politicians were thought to be the least trusted messengers, they are often critical to the success of highway traffic safety programs. Law enforcement officials and politicians can thus be useful “behind the scenes” providing local information and resources. Some of the one-on-one discussants and focus group participants in the small communities said that certain individual law enforcement officers and politicians in their communities could be considered as spokespersons because they had earned respect and trust from the Black community. One-on-one and focus group participants who did not identify these groups as possible spokespersons said that politicians and law enforcement officials could become credible spokespersons and gain respect and trust if their relationships with the community are improved.

Although churches were considered positive influences, religious leaders were consistently placed in both positive and negative categories when being considered for spokesperson roles. According to the findings of this study, the

decision to use a religious leader should be made at the local level. Talking with representatives from the target community will better ensure the selection of the most effective spokesperson.

Channels of Delivery

The focus group participants cited several possible channels of delivery to effectively reach key target groups within the Black community. It is important to note however, that the selection of an appropriate channel of delivery is contingent upon a community's character, culture, and resources.

Also, selecting more than one channel of delivery can assist in the effective delivery of messages. Among these were:

- **Churches and other religious institutions.** Churches were mentioned as major channels of message delivery, in that they play a vital political and social role within the community. Churches can disseminate messages and mobilize the community around every major issue affecting the congregation. Some churches, however must see the religious relevance of any message given to their congregation.
- **Personal interaction.** Personal interaction was cited across all focus groups as another way to disseminate messages. The most effective types of personal interaction included participating in church-sponsored and school events; visits to local restaurants, barbershops, and beauty salons; and attending local sporting events.
- **Mass media.** Radio and television were cited as the preferred sources of mass media information across all focus groups. Radio and television are particularly promising because market segmentation by race is fairly strong in many cases, which means that messages can be efficiently targeted to the Black population. Larger communities may be more effective at targeting the Black community, though, since they design and deliver messages on a local (i.e., metro area) level, whereas smaller communities may not receive locally targeted information via television or radio.

- **Radio.** Radio was identified as an effective source of information across all focus groups. One Prince George's County participant said radio is especially good because "we spend so much time on the road in this area."
- **Television.** Younger participants are avid viewers of music video channels, including MTV and BET, and hip-hop or other youth-oriented talk shows. Television market segmentation is well documented, and it is a relatively straightforward process to target to specific markets.
- **Newspapers.** Across all focus groups, community-based and ethnic newspapers were distinguished from mainstream publications. Daily general market newspapers were considered ineffective sources of information for the Black community, while Black-oriented papers often have strong readership. However, small communities may not have Black-oriented newspapers and so may not be able to utilize this market channel.
- **Billboards.** Focus group participants mentioned strategically-placed outdoor advertising as another viable option to reach the Black community. Similarly, brochures and posters strategically placed may serve as viable communication channels.

F. Implementation

The implementation of a communications program targeting Black communities may also benefit from public relations professionals for assistance. Black public relations professionals tend to have more experience in creating and implementing effective campaigns to this target demographic group. Non-profit organizations may want to consider asking a local public relations professional to provide pro bono or voluntary assistance. Resources to locate local public relations professionals include the Public Relations Society of America (www.prsa.org), the National Black Public Relations Society (www.nbprs.org), the International Association of Business Communicators (www.iabc.org), or the National Association of Black Journalists (www.nabj.org).

Appendix A

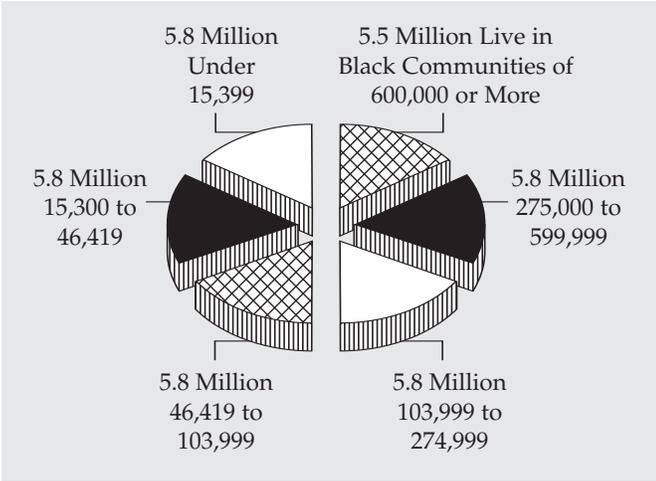
22 RULES FOR SELECTING COUNTIES**Rule 1**

Each selected county will represent one of six size standards.

If the Black population of the U.S. is classified into (roughly) six equal groups based on the size of the Black population where they live, the following breakdown emerges (please note that all population figures in this section refer to the Black population, not total population):

- 15.9 percent (5.5 million) live in just six major metropolitan counties: Cook County, IL (Chicago), Los Angeles County, CA, Kings County, NY (New York City), Wayne County, MI (Detroit), Harris County, TX (Houston), and Philadelphia County, PA. The Black populations range from 1.4 million in Cook County, IL to 620,000 in Philadelphia County.
- 16.7 percent (5.8 million) live in the next fifteen largest counties (ranked by Black population). These include four additional counties in the New York City area, three counties in the Baltimore–D.C. area, two each in the Atlanta and Miami areas, and four independent counties corresponding to the core counties of Dallas, Memphis, Cleveland, and New Orleans. The largest of these counties has 505,000 Black residents and the smallest has 277,000.
- 17.2 percent (6.0 million) live in the next group of 39 metropolitan-area counties across the country. The largest of these counties is Alameda County, CA (Oakland), with 268,000 Black residents, and the smallest is Guilford County, NC (Greensboro) with 104,000 Black residents. Examples of other counties in this category include Richmond, VA, Charleston County, SC, Jefferson, KY (Louisville), Erie, NY (Buffalo), and Jackson, MO (Kansas City).
- 16.7 percent (5.8 million) live in the fourth-largest group of 79 small urban and suburban counties. The largest of these is Caddo Parish, LA (Shreveport), which has 103,000 Black residents, and the smallest is Lafayette Parish, LA (approximately 20 miles west of Baton Rouge), which has 46,423 Black residents. Examples of other counties in this category include Montgomery, PA (Philadelphia metro), Orange, CA (Anaheim and Santa Ana), Spartanburg, SC (in the northern part of the State), Pierce, WA (Tacoma), Monmouth, NJ (in the central part of the State), and Chesapeake, VA.
- 16.7 percent (5.8 million) live in 227 “small city” counties. The largest of these is Galveston County, TX, with 46,407 Black residents and the smallest is Mississippi County, AR (20 miles north of Memphis, TN) with 15,326 Black residents. Other examples in this category include Dane, WI (Madison), Colleton, SC (a suburb of Charleston), Ascension Parish, LA (southeast of Baton Rouge), Glynn County, GA (on the Atlantic coast), Craven, NC (also on the Atlantic coast), Gloucester, NJ (a suburban county of Philadelphia), and Stark, OH (Canton).
- 16.7 percent (5.8 million) live in the other 2,800 counties throughout the U.S. About 1,000 of these counties have fewer than 100 Black residents, and 153 counties have Black populations of more than 10,000 but less than 15,300. The largest of these counties is Copiah County, MS (south of Jackson), which has 15,274 Black residents. Other examples of counties with more than 10,000 Black residents include Chester, SC, Walton, GA, Lafourche Parish, LA, Meriwether, GA, Liberty, TX, and Kaufman, TX. These counties are typically not associated with metropolitan areas, but are classic “small-town America.”

Exhibit A-1
Six U.S. Black Population Groups by Community Size



Rule 1 therefore required that one selected site fall into each of the above size categories.

Rule 2
The six counties will, in combination, reflect the geographic distribution of the Black population across the U.S.

A regional approach was used to maximize flexibility. The U.S. Bureau of the Census defines U.S. regions as follows:

- Northeast Region: CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, and VT.
- South Region: AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WV.
- Midwest: IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, and WI.
- West: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, and WY.

The Black populations of each region are:

Exhibit A-2
U.S. Black Population by Region

Region	Black Population	% of Total
Northeast	6,371,000	18.3%
Midwest	6,409,000	18.4%
South	18,679,000	53.6%
West	3,377,000	9.7%
Total	34,836,000	100.0%

Based on these data, an initial rule was defined to require that three of the six study sites be located in the south, and one each be located in the other three regions. In light of other factors, the rule was later relaxed so that a community in the western region was not required.

Rule 3
Rules 1 and 2 were combined to optimize the combinations of community size and region.

A review of the Black population by region and by community size revealed some strong patterns. For example, the South region contains 84 percent of the communities in the smallest-size category, but only one of the six communities in the largest-size category. The study team conducted a small optimization process, and determined the combination of community size and regions that should be selected in order to maximize population coverage.

Exhibit A-3 shows the Black population by community size and region. The optimized selection process produced rules that one site should fall into each of the six size/geography categories. Note that the categories selected also ensure compliance with Rules 1 and 2. (The rule requiring a western site was later relaxed.)

Exhibit A-3

Black Population by Size and Region

Population Category	Northeast	South	Midwest	West	Grand Total
600,000+	1,550,000	645,000	2,295,000	1,044,686	5,535,000
275,000-599,999	1,704,000	3,750,000	376,000	0	5,831,000
104,000-274,999	735,000	2,756,000	1,546,000	960,000	5,997,000
46,420-103,999	1,392,000	3,119,000	663,000	657,000	5,830,000
15,300-46,419	596,000	4,017,000	808,000	410,000	5,830,000
Less than 15,300	394,000	4,391,000	722,000	307,000	5,813,000
Total	6,371,000	18,679,000	6,409,000	3,377,000	34,836,000

Rule 4***The Black population of a selected county must be at least 10,000.***

This rule was put in place for practical purposes to ensure an adequate population pool from which to conduct focus groups. While this rule eliminated more than 80 percent of U.S. counties from consideration, it only eliminated about 11 percent of the Black population from consideration.

Rule 5***At least one site will be located within two hours' driving distance of Washington, DC.***

This rule was defined to enable NHTSA headquarters staff to cost-effectively monitor the focus group process in at least one community.

Rule 6 through 22***For each of the seventeen remaining data measures, the six sites shall represent a continuum of the data range across the U.S.***

For each of the seventeen remaining data measures, all U.S. counties were grouped into six separate and unique categories that reflect the

data. For example, the data measure regarding employment growth included six categories that ranged from rapid growth to very slow growth, while the data measure regarding the Black proportion of the population included six measures ranging from communities with large proportions of Black residents to communities with low proportions of Black residents.

A decision rule was set up as follows for each data measure: the six selected study sites should each fall into a different category for that specific data measure.

Category definition for each data measure was an important part of this process. Counties were placed in one of six categories for each data measure via the following process.

- The 3,141 counties in the U.S. were ranked from 1 to 3,141 according to their value for the particular data measure (for example, one of the data measures was the proportion of the local population that is Black, so the study team ranked all U.S. counties from the highest proportion of Black people in the population to lowest proportion of Black people in the population).
- The Black population figure was obtained for each county.

- Beginning at the top of the list, the study team added up the Black population of the highest-ranked counties, working down from the top-ranked county, until one-sixth of the U.S. Black population (approximately 5.8 million people) was accounted for. These counties at the top of the list were arbitrarily termed “top tier” counties and comprised one category.

Example

Developing Categories for the Data Measure “Percent of Population that is Black”

Macon County, Alabama, has the highest proportion of Black people in the nation at 86.7 percent, and Jefferson County, Mississippi, is second with 86.6 percent. Macon County’s 19,937 Black people were summed with Jefferson County’s 7,260 Black people, which were summed with the third-ranked county’s Black population, and so on until 5.8 million Black people were included. This occurred after 172 counties were summed, ending with Thomas County, Georgia (43.5 percent Black).

- Beginning where the “top tier” counties ended on the list and continuing down the list, the study team added up the Black population until another one-sixth of the U.S. Black population was accounted for. The counties in this second tier (termed “well above average”) comprised the second of the six categories.

Example (continued)

The county ranked below Thomas County, Georgia, was Greene County, North Carolina, where the Black population is 43.4 percent of the total population. Greene County’s 8,052 Black people were summed with the 97,916 Black people in Georgia’s Chatham County (also 43.4 percent Black), and so on, until 5.8 million Black people were included (one-sixth of the U.S. Black population). This occurred after 176 counties were summed, ending with Bulloch County, Georgia (31.4 percent Black).

- Beginning where the “well above average” counties ended on the list, the study team began adding up the Black population of the next-ranked counties, moving down the rankings until yet another one-sixth of the U.S. Black population was accounted for. This new group, termed “above average” comprised the third category.

Example (continued)

The county ranked below Bulloch County, Georgia, was Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana, where the Black population is 31.4 percent of the total population. Tangipahoa Parish’s 30,885 Black people were summed with the 63,547 Black people in Virginia’s Chesapeake City (31.3 percent Black), and so on, until 5.8 million Black people were included. This occurred after 141 counties were summed, ending with Chatham County, North Carolina (23.4 percent Black).

Note that LA has parishes instead of counties, and VA has both counties and independent cities that function as combined city/county governments.

- Beginning where the “above average” counties ended on the list, the study team continued adding up the Black population until another one-sixth of the U.S. Black population was accounted for. This new group, termed “below average” comprised the fourth category.

Example (continued)

The county ranked below Chatham County, North Carolina, was Hamilton County, Ohio, where the Black population is 23.4 percent of the total population. Hamilton County’s 196,403 Black people were summed with the 4,106 Black people in Virginia’s King George County (23.2 percent Black), and so on, until another 5.8 million Black people were included. This occurred after 131 counties were summed, ending with Lawrence County, Alabama (17.0 percent Black).

- Beginning where the “below average” counties ended on the list, the study team continued adding up the Black population until another one-sixth of the U.S. Black population was accounted for. This new group, termed “well below average” comprised the fifth category.

Example *(continued)*

The county ranked below Lawrence County, Alabama, was Mahoning County, Ohio, where the Black population is 17.0 percent of the total population. Mahoning County’s 42,912 Black people were summed with the 3,814 Black people in Texas’s San Jacinto County (16.9 percent Black), and so on, until another 5.8 million Black people were included. This occurred after 200 counties were summed, ending with Seminole County, Florida (10.2 percent Black).

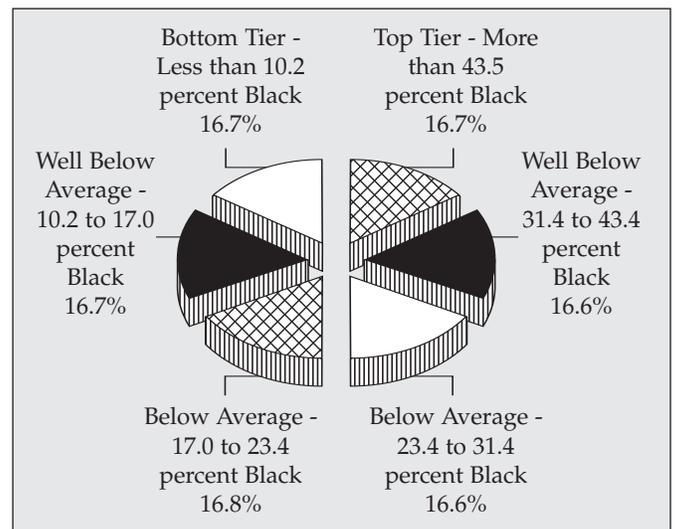
- Beginning where the “well below average” counties ended on the list, the study team grouped all remaining counties into the sixth and final category, termed “bottom tier.” According to the calculations in the previous steps, this category by default contained the final one-sixth of the U.S. Black population.

Example *(continued)*

The county ranked below Seminole County, Florida, was Indian River County, Florida, where the Black population is 10.2 percent of the total population. Indian River County’s 42,912 Black people were summed with the 3,176 Black people in Texas’s Hill County (10.2 percent Black), and so on, down to the county ranked 3,141st, which in sum included 5.8 million Black people. A total of 2,321 counties were included in this category. (1,013 counties have no estimated Black population, and thus a total proportion of zero percent.)

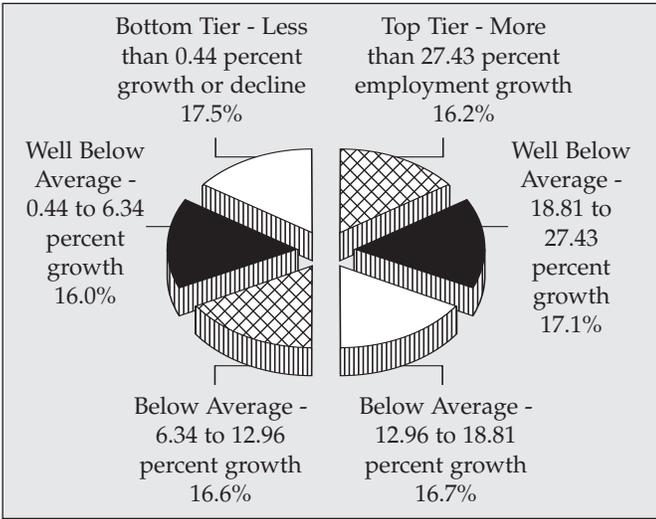
- The net result is that the Black population is divided into six equal population segments for each data measure. For the example shown, the following graph shows six segments of approximately equal size, one with high proportions of Black population, one with low proportions, and others at various gradations in between. One of the seventeen rules thus states that each of the six selected sites will fall into a separate category for this measure, ensuring a mix of communities in terms of the prevalence of the Black population in the community.

Exhibit A-4
Black Proportion of Population - Category Definition



This same process was used to categorize counties for each of the sixteen other data measures, and rules were set up to ensure a variety of communities for each of those other measures. One other example is shown below, in terms of local employment growth rates.

Exhibit A-5
Ten Year Local Employment Growth Rate - Category Definition



Note that a particular county will not always fall in the same tier for different data measures. For example, Macon County, Alabama is in the top tier in terms of the proportion of the population that is Black, but is in the bottom tier in terms of employment growth. Also, the terms “top tier” and “bottom tier” are arbitrary in terms of the model development; no judgments are necessary as to one end of the spectrum being more desirable for a community than the other end.

Appendix B

ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSION GUIDE TEMPLATE***Discussion Guide: General***

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to talk with me about issues related to traffic safety in the Black communities within (COUNTY NAME) County. As outlined in my letter and in our follow-up conversation, I am working on a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study to determine the best ways of promoting traffic safety to predominantly Black communities. As part of this study, I am talking with key individuals, organizations and agencies throughout the county — inside and outside the traffic safety industry — to identify effective approaches in providing safety and safety-related services to Black communities.

During our discussion today, I will cover several topic areas. In doing so, I'll ask about your experiences promoting your programs within the Black community. I'd like you to share the strategies you have used; what has worked and what hasn't; the most effective channels of communication; any challenges and barriers you may have faced, and certainly any lessons learned.

To ensure that we capture your answers completely, I plan to audiotape our talk, is this okay with you? If so, then let's proceed. (IF NOT, THEN BEGIN NOTETAKING.)

- Could you tell me a little about how your organization is structured for providing services, particularly services to the Black community?
- How does your organization interact with the Black community? (Probes: Do you work directly with community members; operate in partnership with other organizations; accomplish certain goals through contact with key community leaders?)
- What particular strategies does your organization use to reach the Black community? Which strategies have been most/least successful? Why or Why not? How did you measure their success?
- How important is community outreach in promoting educational initiatives in the Black community? What type of outreach do you feel is most effective? (Probes: events, such as health fairs; classes, forums or lectures.) What venue(s) would be most effective? (Probes: community centers; churches; schools or libraries; other) Why? (Probes: convenient; free parking; ample parking.)
- What channels of communication have you found to be most/least effective in your efforts to promote programs to the Black community? (Probes: newspapers; television; radio; word of mouth; flyers; direct mail into homes, etc.)
- Does your organization have any experience targeting specific groups? (Probe: racial/ethnic groups, age groups, gender, income levels?) If so, what approaches are used and have they been successful? Why or Why not? What would you do differently if you had the opportunity?
- Please describe any resistance or barriers that your organization has encountered in its outreach efforts to the Black community (Probes: poverty, feelings of confinement, childcare). What steps were taken to eliminate or lessen the resistance you encountered and were they successful? What would you do differently?
- Are there specific cultural characteristics that should be considered when working with the Black community? Are there socioeconomic characteristics or other factors that should be

- considered? If so, why are these factors important?
- In implementing a program or initiative, has your organization used intermediaries to reach the intended audience? (Probes: children to reach adults; wives to reach husbands, co-workers, etc.) Were they successful in helping the organization achieve its desired outcome? Why or why not?
 - From your experience, what approaches should be generally avoided when working with the Black community in (COUNTY NAME) County? In general, what approaches should be used?
 - Who are the most trusted-messengers of health and safety initiatives in the Black community (RANK)? (Probes: healthcare professionals, non-profit organizations, political leaders (national or local), local personalities.)
 - What local or national health and/or safety program or organization do you feel is particularly effective at reaching the Black community with its messages? Why do you feel they are so effective?
 - Are laws related to motor vehicle use, safety belts and safety seats generally well communicated to and understood by members of the Black community?
 - Are there strong traffic safety concerns within the Black community or does traffic safety get lost because of other needs? If so, please list those traffic safety concerns (RANK). If not, please identify the more pressing needs.
 - Within the Black community, what are the major (ASK SEPARATELY) driver/passenger/pedestrian-related safety problems? (RANK). What do you think is causing these problems? In which segments of the Black community (age group, gender, income level) do the greatest traffic safety problems occur?
 - Please characterize the degree of awareness in the Black community about traffic safety issues, in general. (Probe: Why do you feel this is the case?) What knowledge problems do you feel exist within the Black community with regard to (ASK SEPARATELY) driver/passenger/pedestrian-related safety? In what segments of the Black community (age group, gender, income level) do you feel these problems are most concentrated?
 - How would you describe perceptions or beliefs in the Black community concerning the enforcement of traffic laws? (IF NO REFERENCE TO RACIAL OR ETHNIC DISPARITIES IS MADE, ASK THE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS/PROBES.) To the best of your knowledge, does the community believe there are ethnic or racial disparities in the enforcement of traffic laws? (Probes: “driving while black,” racial profiling) Please explain. Are community concerns about this being addressed? If so, how? How would you recommend police agencies address such perceptions and concerns?
 - From your experience/In your opinion, is there more or less use of seat belts in the Black community compared to other communities? Why or Why not? What do you feel is needed to make the case that restraint use is a serious issue in the Black community?
 - Do you think Black parents generally use child safety seats? Why or Why not? What do you feel is needed to make the case that child restraint use is a serious issue in the Black community?
 - Is access to child safety seats a problem? If so, for whom? Has your office spearheaded or been involved in any child safety seat activities or promotions? Explain.
 - With regard to safety issues, what symbols, institutions, delivery systems and themes do you feel most/least resonate within the Black community? Why?

- How could the traffic safety community get (INDUSTRY NAME) more involved in its traffic safety efforts?

We are just about finished, so I'd like to conclude by asking the following:

- Can you recommend any state or local data sources with relevant statistics on traffic safety issues within the Black community?
- As part of our efforts to learn more from community members, we will be conducting several focus groups in (COUNTY NAME) county very soon. Has your organization conducted this type of research? If so, how did you recruit participants? What would be the most effective way to advertise for participants? Can you suggest a convenient facility?
- Is there anything you'd like to add or any questions you'd like to ask?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix C FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S GUIDE

All times are general guidelines. Each group will be different, depending on their particular interests and concerns.

Moderator: All topics in italics are “time fillers” to be asked only if all other topics have been exhausted.

Ground Rules (Allow One minute)

The rules are simple: I'll bring up a topic, and I want to get your thoughts and opinions. Sometimes I'll ask a question and we'll just go around the table and get everyone's thoughts, and other times I'll just wait for anyone to answer.

We want everyone to participate. If you're not talking, I'll eventually notice and ask you for your opinions. On the other hand, if you're the only one talking, please recognize that and give others a chance to participate. Feel free to respond to something that someone else says, and feel free to disagree, but please show respect for others, even if you disagree with their opinions.

Finally, I may cut you off if you're talking about something that's a little too far from our topics. There's no disrespect intended if I do this, but we have a lot to accomplish tonight so we need to stay focused.

IceBreaker/ Personal Intros (Allow 10 minutes)

First, let's briefly introduce ourselves. Let's go around the table, and I'd like each of you to tell us who you are, and offer a little information about

yourself: your first name, where you're from, what do you do for a living or where you go to school, or anything else that you want to share.

(Moderator: start with your own bio as a model in terms of content and time. Time your own intro to be about 30-45 seconds. As you go around the room, ask each person a short follow-up question to break the ice in terms of conversation and participation.)

Identification of Drivers Versus Non-Drivers (Allow 5 Minutes)

Okay, we're here to talk about transportation, so let's talk first about how you get around. I'd like to start out by asking all of you how you get around from place to place. Do you drive? Walk? Ride a bike or a motorcycle? Get driven by someone else? Take a bus? Or maybe some combination?

(Moderator: if someone doesn't mention driving, ask if they ever drive. If not, ask who usually drives when they're in a vehicle. Mentally note non-drivers from drivers.)

Driving and Riding Background (Allow 10 Minutes)

(For teens only – ask only at the end of the focus group if you're short on time.) What challenges did you face in learning to drive? These might be problems getting someone to teach you, getting access to a car, learning about driving laws and customs, learning the process of getting a license, or any other challenge. Tell us about how you learned to drive.

General Driving Issues (Allow 20 minutes)

You were given a list of common highway safety problems. We'd like to find out how much of a

problem you think these are in the local Black community. We'd like you to rank these problems with 1 being the most serious problem in the community and 16 being the least serious. (Choices will include drinking and driving, non-use of seat belts, aggressive/reckless driving, cell phone use while driving, distractions such as eating, putting on makeup, shaving, etc., poor training of new drivers, bad road conditions or design, bad weather for driving, poorly maintained vehicles, speeding, running stop lights or stop signs, crowded roads, unsafe pedestrian walkways or crossings, unsafe or unsuitable cyclist pathways or crossings, non-use of child safety seats, misuse of child safety seats, and one blank that they can use to write in another issue).

(Moderator: identify three or four issues that rate consistently high and add drinking and driving and seat belts regardless of where they fall.) Why do you think that people engage in those behaviors?

Do traffic safety issues differ between the Black community and the overall community? Would you have ranked your cards in a different order if I had asked you how much of a risk they are to the overall community instead of the Black community?

What knowledge problems do you feel exist within the Black community with regard to (ASK SEPARATELY) driver/passenger/pedestrian/other transportation-related safety? In what segments of the Black community (age group, gender, income level) do you feel these problems are most concentrated? Who should be targeted within the Black community on issues such as drinking and driving, seat belts, safety seats, aggressive reckless driving, and driver training?

(Moderator: ask this only if it's not satisfactorily covered in the previous three questions.) What would you say are the cultural factors that may cause traffic safety-related problems for Black people in this community? These can be passenger, pedestrian, bicyclist or driver safety problems.

Are traffic laws well known and understood in the local community?

Drinking and Driving (Allow 10 Minutes)

Now I'd like to hear your thoughts on some specific issues about traffic safety. First let's talk about drinking and driving.

What does the term 'drinking and driving' mean to you?

What do you think about the drinking and driving that occurs in this community? How would you suggest addressing it? Is it more of a problem in some segments of the Black community than others? Which segments?

Pedestrian Safety (Allow 10 Minutes)

Are there issues concerning pedestrian safety in this community? Do pedestrians tend to put themselves at risk? Do motorists tend to put pedestrians at risk? Are there problems with the road system that make it difficult for motorists and pedestrians to coexist?

How would you address pedestrian safety problems in this community? (Moderator: tell them not to talk about specific intersections. They can cite generalities about intersection design or construction, but should not focus on specific locales unless it's part of a broader theme.)

Seat Belt USE (Allow 15 minutes)

How often do you wear a seat belt when you drive? (Note to moderator: If non-drivers, ask "For those of you who don't drive, do you wear your seat belts when you're riding with someone else?")

(If not always) Why not? Are there some situations where you wear your seat belt? How do you make the decision to wear your belt or not wear it? For example, if you'll be driving part of

your trip in a situation where'd you normally wear your belt and part of your trip in a situation where you wouldn't, what do you do?

(If yes) Why do you always wear your seat belt? Do you remember when you made the decision to do that? Tell us about it.

Is there a tradeoff to wearing a seat belt? What's the downside? What are the odds that you'll be worse off in a crash if you're wearing a seat belt?

A significant percentage of Black people in the U.S. do not wear seat belts on a full-time basis. Why do you think this is true? Do you think that it's true in the local area? Why or why not? (Moderator: if asked, national use rates for Blacks are slightly lower than the national average.)

Seat Belt Laws (Allow 20 Minutes)

Is there a law about wearing your seat belt? If so, what is it? (Note to moderator: we need to find out the actual law beforehand.)

When you arrived, you were given a three-question survey to answer about seat belt laws. These questions were recently asked in a national survey of drivers. Let's talk about those questions now, so please make sure that you have your survey form handy.

First, let's go around the table and see what everyone's opinions were on these subjects. (Moderator: it might be helpful for this series to have the questions written on a flip chart, display board, or other display device. Read each question, and tally the responses on the chart.)

I told you that these three questions are taken from a recent national survey, and we'd like to get your perspective on what that survey found for the Black community. Here are the results from the national survey.

(Moderators: show answers from flip charts that are prepared in advance.) (Answer to first

question: Blacks are more likely to support the laws, 94 percent versus 87 percent. 72 percent of Blacks favor them a lot and 21 percent favor them some. Nationally, 67 percent favor them a lot, and 20 percent favor them some. We have some minor rounding error in these figures.) What do you think about these findings?

(Answer to second question: Blacks are more likely to support the laws, 68 percent versus 61 percent.) What do you think about these findings?

(Answer to third question: Blacks are more likely to believe that they'll be ticketed, 54 percent versus 43 percent) What do you think about these findings?

How do you explain the fact that Blacks are more likely to support seat belt laws but are also more likely to believe that they will be ticketed as a result of those laws?

Enforcement and Profiling

Do you consider racial profiling or "driving while Black" to be an issue? (Probe: Do you feel that Blacks are more likely to be targeted for general driving violations by being Black?)

We know that enforcement of traffic laws is an effective way to improve traffic safety. How do we deal with racial profiling while allowing police to enforce traffic safety laws?

Child Restraint Use (Allow 10 Minutes – more for parent groups)

Do we have any people in the group who transport children on a regular basis? If so, did/do you use child safety seats for your kids when they were young?

Around the country, over 80% of child safety seats are not installed properly. There are places all across the country where people can go to get these seats checked. Where would be a good place to have this type of checkpoint in this community?

Is it common for Black parents to use safety seats for their kids? Why do you think that some parents don't use safety seats in this community?

How do people know what type of seat is appropriate for their child?

When are kids ready to use seat belts instead of child-specific restraints?

What are the good and bad aspects of using safety seats each and every time a child is in a vehicle?

Has anyone here heard of booster seats? What are they? When should they be used? Do you use them (or have you used them)? Do you have any concerns about their safety?

Local Leadership and Organizations (Allow 15 Minutes)

I'm going to show you a list now of some of the types of people and professions who often lead traffic safety efforts in communities. (Show list on flip chart: local hospitals, doctors, nurses, paramedics, law enforcement agencies, schools, local non-profit organizations, religious leaders, coaches, political leaders). Do any of these strike you as particularly good or bad candidates to lead such efforts in this community? Is there anyone that you'd add to this list? (Moderator: identify patterns in responses when people present their selections. Probe the trust issue – are some organizations or professions more trusted by the Black community than others?)

What types of organizations, companies, or groups do you tend to have contact with on a continuing basis that might be effective in delivering traffic safety messages? These might be public agencies such as schools, community organizations such as churches or recreation leagues, or even private companies such as grocery stores.

Who do you think most influences people your age in this community? (Moderator: They can be general or specific, as long as we can generalize the findings to certain groups, occupations, etc. The answers may be prominent people or organizations, or they may be personal contacts such as 'my wife,' or 'my boss.' Explain this if the participants seem to be stuck on a particular theme.)

What community gatherings have you attended in the recent past that might be effective in delivering traffic safety messages? These can be school meetings, church services, county fairs, or any other event where a group of people got together. Were there a lot of Black people there?

Ads and Messages (Allow 10 Minutes)

In general, when you think about any marketing or advertising that you've seen, what do you think has worked particularly well in the Black community? Why do you think it has worked?

(Probes: These might include anti-smoking, anti-gang, affirmative action programs, traffic safety, or any other program aimed at increasing the health or vitality of the Black community.)

What hasn't worked and why?

Have you ever seen or heard any messages that specifically encourage traffic safety such as seat belt use, non-drinking and driving, or other issues through the media or through any kind of public gathering? Were they targeted toward the Black population or to any other group? Were they meaningful to you? What messages or types of messages might Black people identify with? In conclusion, what are the most important things to do when trying to reach and influence the Black population with traffic safety programs?

Appendix D

FOCUS GROUP SCREENER

Hello. My name is _____, and I'm calling from Cordy & Company, a marketing communications firm. We are conducting a study for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in your area about issues related to African Americans and traffic safety. We are inviting you to participate in focus groups that will be held during the week of _____. If you qualify to participate in the focus group study, you will be paid \$35.00 in cash as compensation for your time. At no time during the focus group discussion will you be asked for money. May I ask you a few questions to see if you're eligible for the study?

- () Yes **CONTINUE**
 () No **TERMINATE**

We need to make sure we include the opinions of a representative mix of people in the area, so I just need to ask you a few questions pertaining to your background.

1. Does anyone in your household work for any of the following companies?

- () Marketing or Public Relations
 () Advertising
 () Market Research
 () National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, TERMINATE

2. In the past 6 months, have you participated in market research study or interview where you were paid for your time and for providing your opinion?

- () Yes **TERMINATE**
 () No **CONTINUE**

3. What is your sex?

- () Male () Female

4. Which of the following categories includes your age?

- () Under 16 **TERMINATE**
 () 16-19 **CONTINUE GROUP 1 & 2**
 () 20-27 **CONTINUE GROUP 3 & 4**
 () 28-44 **CONTINUE GROUP 5 & 6**
 () 45-59 **TERMINATE**
 () 60-79 **CONTINUE GROUP 7**
 () 80 or Older **TERMINATE**

5. Do you have children? Yes _____ No _____ If so what ages _____

CONTINUE GROUP 8
(Parents of children under age 4)

Note: The target groups for the 8 focus group sessions are as follows:

- Male teens, age 16-19
- Female teens 16-19
- Young adult males 20-27
- Young adult females 20-27
- Adult males 28-44
- Adult females 28-44
- Senior citizens 60-79 (male and female)
- Parents of children under age 4

6. Which of the following ethnic categories best describes you?

- () White Caucasian **TERMINATE**
- () Black/African American **CONTINUE**
- () Hispanic **TERMINATE**
- () Asian **TERMINATE**
- () Native American **TERMINATE**
- () Other **TERMINATE**

7. Do you drive a motor vehicle more than once a month? Yes _____ No _____

If you terminate for anything other than being Black, it would be efficient to ask 'Is there anyone else in your household who meets the following criteria for eligibility in our groups and might be interested in getting paid for their opinions? We are looking for Black persons, age 16 – 44 or from 60 – 79 who drive more than once a month. We are also looking for any Black parent of children age 4 or under.'

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number: Day (_____) _____ Evening (_____) _____

To reach Cordy & Company, please call us at 1-866-CORDY- CO (1-800-267-3926).

Appendix E

MODERATOR'S CHECKLIST

Time Before Focus Groups Begin	Task
12 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Set up 800 number for callers (timing depends on phone company responsiveness) ■ Confirm sites, dates, time, ask about site catering policy
10 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify, obtain special services (e.g., child care, transcriptionist)
9 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify target population ■ Design newspaper ad, recruiting flyers ■ Design recruiting script ■ Set up reservation tracking system (name, location, group, phone number)
8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Submit ad to newspapers (The timing will depend to a great extent on the level and intensity of advertising efforts.) ■ Post recruiting flyers ■ Begin taking recruiting calls
7 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Design discussion guides ■ Make travel arrangements
4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monitor recruiting progress, augment recruiting via random calls/letters, larger ad, more geographic coverage if needed ■ Confirm equipment availability, test equipment
2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Set up catering, child care ■ Send out reminder letter with map to location
1 week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Confirm special services (child care, transcriptionist, etc.)
3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Compile equipment ■ Prepare sign-in sheets ■ Prepare name plates (table tents) ■ Gather incentive money and put in envelopes ■ Prepare outside signage for on-site directions
1 day (Day 0 of Onsite Schedule)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Call first-day attendees to confirm and remind
(Day 1 of Onsite Schedule)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Call second-day attendees to confirm and remind
(Day 2 of Onsite Schedule)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Call third-day attendees to confirm and remind
(Day 3 of Onsite Schedule)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Call fourth-day attendees to confirm and remind

Note that the schedule will be staggered for each site, since we won't be conducting focus groups in all six communities simultaneously. Therefore, 12 weeks before the focus groups at the first location may be 14 weeks before the focus groups at a subsequent location. We should discuss the optimum order of the groups among the six locations, too.

Onsite Schedule for Focus Group Team

Day	Time	Team Member 1 (Moderator)	Team Member 2 (Analyst)
Day 0 (Sunday)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Arrive in city ■ Do preliminary inspection of site ■ Scout out grocery store for supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Arrive in city ■ Do preliminary inspection of site
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Confirm that home office has made reminder calls 	
Day (Monday)	1 3:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Drop off analyst at site ■ Purchase non-perishable supplies for the week, perishable supplies for the day (See equipment list.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Arrange room configuration ■ Set up recording equipment, props
	4:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Set up check-in station (name tents, check-in list) ■ Post outside signage, adding specific directions as necessary ■ Order food/coordinate with caterer ■ Set up support services (cups, napkins, silverware, etc.) ■ Ensure that participant incentives are ready 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Test equipment ■ Meet, set up transcriptionist, child care, etc.
	5:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review discussion guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Check in participants
	5:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conduct Focus Group #1, distribute incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Take notes of group, monitor equipment
	7:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cleanup, set up food, support services for next group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Check in participants, review discussion guide
	8:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Take notes of group, monitor equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conduct Focus Group #2, distribute incentives
	10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cleanup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pack up equipment, label tapes

If we conduct focus groups of teenagers and their parents, it may be helpful to conduct focus groups of those two groups simultaneously, which would require an adjustment to this schedule, along with extra recording equipment.

Onsite Schedule for Focus Group Team (cont'd)

Day	Time	Team Member 1 (Moderator)	Team Member 2 (Analyst)
Day 2 (Tuesday)	1:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Write Summary Bullet Report of Focus Group #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Write Summary Bullet Report of Focus Group #1 ■ Fax or e-mail both reports to Raines, Cordy, Ayres
	3:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Drop off analyst at site ■ Check inventory of non-perishable supplies, pick up perishable supplies for the day (See equipment list.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Arrange room configuration ■ Set up recording equipment, props
	4:30 – 9:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repeat Day 1 schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repeat Day 1 schedule
Day 3 (Wednesday)	12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Check with Raines regarding Changes to discussion guide, topics of interest. ■ Make changes as necessary 	
	1:00 – 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repeat Day 2 schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repeat Day 2 schedule
Day 4 (Thursday)	1:00 – 10:00 or 11:00 – 7:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repeat Day 3 schedule, unless we're conducting a senior citizen focus group. In that case, push the schedule up two hours and conduct the seniors' group at 3:45 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repeat Day 3 schedule, unless we're conducting a senior citizen focus group. In that case, push the schedule up two hours and conduct the seniors' group at 3:45
Day 5 (Friday)	Morning (or late on Day 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Return home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Return home

Equipment List – Carry from Home Base to Site

- Video Camera and cables
- Omni directional microphone for camera
- Backup audio tape recorder
- Extra Batteries for microphone, tape recorder
- Enough videotape for 8 two-hour focus groups (may be purchased on site)
- Enough audiotapes for 8 two-hour focus groups (may be purchased on site)
- Two or three extension cords
- Sign-in sheets for each focus group
- Name tents for each focus group
- Notepads for taking notes
- Laptop computer for typing notes, e-mailing bullet summary reports
- Paper/electronic copies of discussion guides
- Contact information for site, caterer, transcriptionist
- Shopping list (see next page)
- Envelopes with incentive money
- On-site schedule (see previous page)
- Any paper/markers/props for focus group activities

Shopping List – Buy on site

Non-Perishables (Buy for entire week)

- Disposable cups
- Disposable plates
- Napkins
- Disposable silverware
- Sodas (1 to 1.25 per expected guest)
- Candy for light snacks

Perishables (Buy each day)

- Ice
- Brownies/cookies for heavy snacks

Appendix F

TRAFFIC SAFETY PROBLEMS

Please rank these problems with 1 being the most serious problem in the local Black Community and 16 being the least serious.

- _____ Drinking and driving
- _____ Non-use of seat belts
- _____ Aggressive/reckless driving
- _____ Cell phone use while driving
- _____ Distractions such as eating, putting on makeup, shaving, etc. while driving
- _____ Poor training of new drivers
- _____ Bad road conditions or design
- _____ Bad weather for driving
- _____ Poorly maintained vehicles
- _____ Speeding
- _____ Running stoplights or stop signs
- _____ Crowded roads
- _____ Unsafe pedestrian walkways or crossings
- _____ Unsafe or unsuitable cyclist pathways or crossings
- _____ Non-use of child safety seats
- _____ Misuse of child safety seat
- _____ Other issue _____

What state do you live in?

- _____ Illinois _____ Maryland _____ Mississippi
- _____ Missouri _____ New Jersey _____ South Carolina

To be completed by focus group moderator.

Group:

Appendix G

BLUE RIBBON PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS**Recommendation 1**

Increase dramatically the availability and accessibility of safety education, training, expertise, knowledge, special skills, credible research and information about health and traffic safety issues to African Americans and other ethnic minority populations.

Recommendation 2

Increase dramatically the credibility, visibility and attention focused on the issue of seat belt use among African Americans, with particular emphasis on young African America males, through the expression of credible, positive, culturally infused health and safety values in media messages and literature distributed to all segments of the African American community.

Recommendation 3

Increase and reinforce awareness in youth and educators of the nation's youth about health and traffic safety at the earliest possible age, and incorporate health and traffic safety into the educational curriculum for grades pre K through 12.

Recommendation 4

Create a program of research and evaluation that focuses on specific urban and rural African American populations with initiatives that include effective safety education, training, technical assistance and outreach programs. Such programs would seek to designate principal investigators and other leadership from Historically Black Colleges and Universities in a manner modeled by Meharry Medical College's work documented in the 1999 publication, *"Achieving a Credible Health and Safety Approach to Increasing Seat Belt Use Among African Americans."*

Recommendation 5

Improve cooperation between African American communities and public safety and health officers,

and provide enhanced community policing, training, management, staffing, technology and support in order to eliminate rogue behaviors in the enforcement of seat belt laws.

Recommendation 6

State agencies and legislatures should be provided a clear, uniform guide for structuring and enacting comprehensive seat belt laws, including the best elements of laws already enacted, and provisions, policies and procedures for the collection, compilation and analysis of data on traffic stops, particularly in conjunction with incidents of rogue behavior by law enforcement officials.

Recommendation 7

Create and distribute, through collaborative relationships, a credible and culturally infused comprehensive program of facts, safety education materials and examples of seat belt safety for use by community-based service and other organizations including churches, civil rights and volunteer organizations, schools, educators, parents and students.

Recommendation 8

Establish a program nation-wide that boldly and broadly disseminates, in a culturally infused manner, child safety seats and credible information about child safety seat use, correct child safety seat installation, and for credible and culturally infused child safety seat technician training.

Recommendation 9

Link insurers and the insured in cooperative incentive programs, partnerships and alliances that encourage and reward positive seat belt and child safety seat use.

Recommendation 10

A comprehensive coordinated strategy of education, communication, and training regarding seat

belt use and child safety seat installation and use should be developed and implemented for all new and used car dealers to implement for all of their customers, with particular emphasis on African American customers.

Strategy Recommendations

To save lives and reduce injuries through an Increase in Seat Belt Use Among African Americans

Education, Training and Communications

Recommendation 1

Increase dramatically the availability and accessibility of safety education, training, expertise, knowledge, special skills, credible research and information about health and traffic safety issues to African Americans and other ethnic minority populations.

Discussion

Issues:

- At present, the gathering of data about traffic safety issues pertinent to the African American community is uncoordinated and cannot be easily accessed either by knowledgeable and concerned parties, or by resource-challenged neighborhoods, cities and/or other local organizations and individuals wishing to initiate and enhance their health and safety improvement efforts.
- There does not seem to be an effective and efficient coordination among the federal government's traffic safety and health initiatives that are pertinent to African Americans, i.e. including, but not limited to, seat belt use, child safety belt use, driving while black or brown etc. This deficiency results in an inability of the average local organization, school, local government officials, and others to access comprehensive and practical information.
- There is no central source of public information, action plans, expertise, contact lists and options, and data that is readily and

easily accessible to and about African American organizations and individuals and health and safety matters.

- There are a handful of viable, credible examples of African American organizations and individuals adopting the seat belt and child safety seat challenge. The product of these efforts is not being referenced or broadly shared, nor are the acquired skills being transferred, leveraged or translated to be linguistically appropriate. The African American community shares a common perception that such efforts are being ignored.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- The four historically black medical colleges (Morehouse Medical College, Charles Drew Medical College, Howard University Medical College and Meharry Medical College), African American advocacy, civil rights and volunteer organizations, churches, schools, health care providers, parents and student organizations, youth groups, media and professional organizations, and local and national government agencies should be actively recruited to be incubators of health and safety leadership.
- An interagency secretariat can be designated to coordinate African American traffic safety issues within the federal government, and, in particular, within the United States Department of Transportation.
- Congressional legislation with appropriations and an executive order from the President may be appropriate to ensure implementation.

Health and Safety

Recommendation 2

Increase dramatically the credibility, visibility and attention focused on the issue of seat belt use among African Americans, with particular emphasis on young African American males, through the expression of credible, positive, culturally infused health and safety values in media messages and literature distributed to all segments of the African American community.

Discussion

Issues:

- The absence of credible positive messages contributes to the prevalent “don’t control me” and other selfdestructive behaviors and attitudes of teenagers and young adults.
- Media messages often convey distorted and selfdestructive values and images of African American males, particularly young African American males, which inhibit the potential success of positive messages about African American health and safety, and undermine positive personal health and safety behavior.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- In all communications, present a credible, recognizable and positive image of African American motorists working together and being primarily responsible for their own and others health and safety.
- Create a positive, productive health and safety image and presence in the media that is acknowledged, understood and identified with by young adults, youth and children.
- Create a positive reference for young African American males among law enforcement officials in order to eliminate “Driving While Black or Brown” incidents.
- Emphasize in communications the special needs of youth, unemployed, and under-served population.
- Create a national media task force to encourage youth to get involved, particularly with local initiatives, to increase seat belt use and to provide funding and other resources to encourage, nurture, support and sustain this effort.

Recommendation 3

Increase and reinforce awareness in youth and educators of the nation’s youth about health and traffic safety at the earliest possible age, and incorporate health and traffic safety into the educational curriculum for grades pre K through 12.

Discussion

Issues:

There is a lack of consistent, positive reinforcement of strong health and traffic safety messages in culturally infused and credible terms throughout the entire education experience: early childhood preschool preparation, elementary and secondary, higher education including advanced degree and post advanced degree programs. This is especially true for schools in urban and economically challenged areas, which suffer from limited resources and where:

- African American and other ethnic American children and parents are a disproportionate share of the early childhood preschool, elementary and secondary education school population.
- Education efforts directed at children are not credibly and consistently sustained and reinforced through both traditional and nontraditional message channels, including, entertainment and recreational industries; outdoor and other advertising; amusement parks, mascots, story books, cartoons, interactive driving simulation computer programs/games, screen savers, videotapes, health care/public safety professional on-site visits, sports and sports figures, music artists and music forms, other celebrities; and competitions, driver education points, scholarships, youth support programs, sports.
- Youth peer pressure should be harnessed to convey and reinforce positive messages of personal responsibility about health and traffic safety before youth begin to drive.
- Health and safety education efforts are marginalized because of a pervasive lack of access to preventive care and instruction and the necessary resources to enable implementation.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- Health care providers, educators, fire, emergency, law enforcement and safety officials, civil rights, religious and professional organizations, advocacy groups, grandparents,

student groups, schools, and federal, state and local agencies can get involved to support a comprehensive and collaborative health and safety youth education initiative. In particular, the resources, expertise and authority of the United States Departments of Education, Health and Human Services and Transportation are needed to provide leadership.

Research and Evaluation

Recommendation 4

Create a program of research and evaluation that focuses on specific urban and rural African American populations with initiatives that include effective safety education, training, technical assistance and outreach programs. Such programs would seek to designate principal investigators and other leadership from Historically Black Colleges and Universities in a manner modeled by Meharry Medical College's work documented in the 1999 publication, *"Achieving a Credible Health and Safety Approach to Increasing Seat Belt Use Among African Americans."*

Discussion

Issues:

- Data coordination appears to be nonexistent between the few existing separate African American health and traffic safety initiatives.
- Each new inquiry and outreach effort necessitates reinventing the wheel with no appreciable increase in efficiency or benefit.
- Key questions have not been researched and are unanswered such as: 1. What are the underlining factors and interrelationships that contribute to African Americans not wearing seat belts? 2. What is the impact of primary seat belt laws upon the African American Community?, 3. What is the full impact of child education about seat belt safety on efforts?
- The absence of reliable and consistent Focus Group input.
- The absence of credible African American clinical and other research input diminishes the credibility of all efforts.

- The absence of a central repository of data and information on health and traffic safety issues as they impact seat belt use and African Americans.
- Current efforts to gather, organize and provide such data by multiple federal agencies and other organizations are wellintentioned, but are too limited by budget priority, lack of credible cultural infusion and other factors to have both significant and sustained impact.
- There is an ocean of opportunity to leverage even the existing scarce research about African American seat belt and child safety seat use across other ethnic populations, with linguistically appropriate resources, and to correct a common misperception that the African American community is somehow separate and apart from the American Family as a whole.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- Provide answers to formidable questions prior to the issuance of new or revised policies.
- Compile a credible, actionable body of culturally infused health and safety behavior-related knowledge.
- Assure the transfer of all statistics, reporting and data to a common information repository located at Meharry Medical College.
- Establish multidisciplinary research protocol.
- Link the repository located at Meharry Medical College to credible culturally infused communitybased and other organizations.

Improving Public Compliance With Seat Belt Laws

Recommendation 5

Improve cooperation between African American communities and public safety and health officers, and provide enhanced community policing, training, management, staffing, technology and support in order to eliminate rogue behaviors in the enforcement of seat belt laws.

Discussion

Issues:

- Racial profiling or “Driving While Black or Brown” incidents damage the public trust necessary to enable public safety officials to succeed in saving lives and reducing injury, through influencing youth, young parents and others to comply with seat belt laws.
- Polarized attitudes and hostile law enforcement behaviors impede the adoption of primary seat belt laws and the use of seat belts.
- Public safety and law enforcement professionals are burdened by the stress of their professional responsibilities, while having little sense of support from the total community.
- African American and other ethnic American communities are extremely distrustful of providing law enforcement officials with more laws that have the appearance of providing legal excuses for rogue behaviors and practices, such as racial profiling.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- Training and management of law enforcement officials should focus on changing attitudes through cultural education and community policing initiatives, and reestablishing trust by increasing dialogue and mutual respect.
- Support for training of public safety and law enforcement officials should include: upgraded community policing and law enforcement techniques; community support efforts; more routine training and education, and management preparation and education.
- National public safety groups, law enforcement professional organizations, national health care provider groups, national advocacy groups, state, federal and local government agencies, can provide leadership in the effort to eliminate rogue behavior by law enforcement officials. Denial of federal funds to law enforcement and other agencies presenting a practice and pattern of rogue behavior is a

sanction worth evaluating. In particular, the authority, resources and expertise of the United States Departments of Justice and Treasury are needed to provide leadership.

Recommendation 6

State agencies and legislatures should be provided a clear, uniform guide for structuring and enacting comprehensive seat belt laws, including the best elements of laws already enacted, and provisions, policies and procedures for the collection, compilation and analysis of data on traffic stops, particularly in conjunction with incidents of rogue behavior by law enforcement officials.

Discussion

Issues:

- The perception that additional primary seat belt laws will be neither comprehensive nor fair in their enforcement in light of the current incidence of “racial profiling” experiences.
- The failure to implement provisions for the collection of local, county and state traffic stop data.
- The perception that legitimate concerns about “Driving while Black or Brown” have been brushed aside by the majority population helps to engender opposition to primary seat belt laws.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- Provide assistance and increase incentives to state legislatures interested in passing primary seat belt laws through a consistent and regularly updated nationwide review of proposed legislation, with recommendations that are based on fair and equitable existing laws.
- Actively seek the contribution and participation of local and national public safety groups, civil rights, religious, educational, student and professional organizations, health care providers, national advocacy groups and government agencies, among others in the

framing of solutions aimed at eliminating the perceptions that the enacted primary seat belt laws will increase the propensity for police to abuse the law, resulting in increased racial profiling incidents. In particular, the authority, resources and expertise of the United States Departments of Justice and Transportation are needed to provide leadership.

Programs That Support Community-Based Partnerships

Recommendation 7

Create and distribute, through collaborative relationships, a credible and culturally infused comprehensive program of facts, safety education materials and examples of seat belt safety for use by community-based service and other organizations including churches, civil rights and volunteer organizations, schools, educators, parents and students.

Discussion

Issues:

- Greater community appreciation for seat belt use policies and laws is lagging because of the unavailability of consistent, sustainable programs for education and program implementation.
- Credible information and usable programs on seat belt use are not now reaching those community, civil rights, volunteer, church, school and professional organizations, among others, that could create and communicate culturally infused values, images and messages about seat belt use.
- The public's awareness of the accomplishments and contributions of African Americans to the process of increasing seat belt use in local communities is deeply flawed.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- Local and national advocacy groups for African Americans and other ethnic minorities, civil rights, religious, educational, student, volunteer and professional organizations, and

local, state and federal agencies can contribute to the establishment and support of sustainable communitybased partnerships. In particular, the authority, resources and expertise of the United States Departments of Transportation, Health and Human Services, Treasury, Education and Justice are needed to provide leadership in fostering strategies to achieve the potential of the opportunities.

- Education programs that are distributed should share African American success stories, materials and contacts.

Recommendation 8

Establish a program nation-wide that boldly and broadly disseminates, in a culturally infused manner, child safety seats and credible information about child safety seat use, correct child safety seat installation, and for credible and culturally infused child safety seat technician training.

Discussion

Issues:

- The lack of access to affordable child safety seats and credible, culturally infused and accessible communications regarding programs created to provide information and instruction about correct child safety seat use and installation has created a high level of frustration and disappointment among national and local African American leadership and communitybased organizations.
- Intermediary nongovernment organizations currently involved in this issue, no matter how wellintended, are often perceived as lacking credibility, difficult to work with and ineffective by African American communitybased organizations and leadership.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- Diffuse the dependency on large, nonurban-based, nongovernment organizations through primary, direct, collaborative, culturally infused and credible linkages with national and local African American and other ethnic

American nongovernment organizations, civil rights, religious, educational, student, volunteer, professional and advocacy groups and academic institutions, among others.

- Enhance credibility, sensitivity and outreach efforts on the issues related to child safety seat use by communicating and working directly with African American and other ethnic American organizations and individuals.
- Local and national advocacy groups, civil rights, religious, educational, student, volunteer and professional organizations, safety organizations and federal agencies must be enlisted to provide leadership on providing access to affordable child safety seats, information, installation and training. In particular, the United States Departments of Transportation, Health and Human Services, Education, Justice, the General Services Administration and the General Accounting Office can provide leadership in prioritizing the establishment of credible culturally infused community-based partnerships and coalitions.

Recommendation 9

Link insurers and the insured in cooperative incentive programs, partnerships and alliances that encourage and reward positive seat belt and child safety seat use.

Discussion

Issues:

- Insurance companies have a vested interest in increasing use of seat belts and child safety seats, but they seem to be invisible or on the sidelines in urban communities.
- While insurance companies are concerned about health and traffic safety, a common perception exists in the African American community that despite individual companies undertaking separate safety education programs, the industry is not a full participant in generating and resourcing, with transparency, credible and culturally infused preventive programs.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- Encourage insurance companies to provide financial and other incentive rewards for achieving and maintaining seat belt and child safety seat use, along with a program of nonpolice related monitoring of use.
- Encourage insurance companies to work with the insured motorist in providing education on health and motor vehicle safety.
- Encourage insurance companies to provide financial rewards in claims resulting from motor vehicle crashes in which vehicle occupants were using seat belts.
- Insurance companies and brokers, automobile companies, auto safety equipment manufacturers, auto dealerships, auto parts retailers, state insurance boards, elected and appointed public officials, schools, parents, national advocacy groups and others can provide leadership in urging the insurance industry to significantly increase its participation as a stakeholder.

Recommendation 10

A comprehensive coordinated strategy of education, communication, and training regarding seat belt use and child safety seat installation and use should be developed and implemented for all new and used car dealers to implement for all of their customers, with particular emphasis on African American customers.

Discussion

Issues:

- Although automotive manufacturers, suppliers and dealers have a clear health and safety interest in increasing the use of seat belts and child safety seats, their commitment to reducing risks in this area rarely is communicated in a clear, consistent, culturally infused and credible manner to African American and other urbanbased ethnic communities.
- There is a common perception in the African American community that while individual

automobile companies initiate health and safety education and training programs, the industry, as a whole, treats African Americans with intolerance and clear disdain. This behavior from cells within the industry limits effective and credible communications on seat belt and child safety seat use.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- Encourage and provide incentives to new and used car dealers who communicate and provide education in health and safety in seat belt and child safety seat use.
- Implement measures to require used car dealers to participate in local and national child safety seat and seat belt use health and

safety educational and training initiatives because they sell a disproportionate number of cars to African American and other ethnic American customers.

- Automobile companies, suppliers, safety equipment manufacturers, used and new car dealers, advocacy groups, the insurance industry, local and national government agencies can provide leadership on seeking maximum seat belt use through the strategic participation of new and used car dealers. In particular, the authority, resources and expertise of the United States Department of Transportation, United States Department of Justice and United States Department of Commerce are needed to provide leadership.

Summary Conclusion

It is the Panel's position that, because seat belt use for African Americans is an urgent public health crisis, nothing should prevent America from reaching its goal of saving lives and reducing injuries through the increased use of seat belts and child safety seats. The crisis compels immediate strategic action.

The Panel has determined that the seat belt use issue is not and cannot be readily separated from the other health disparity and at-risk behaviors in the African American community; nor can seat belt use be detached from the context of historical issues of credibility and fairness that African Americans have suffered for centuries. Low seat belt use is a vast opportunity fraught with complexity, which involves enormous consequences for safety, health and justice in the African American community. Enormous resources, incentives and positive reinforcement are required.

The prospect of losing even one more life where seat belt or child safety seat use could have made a difference underscores the urgency of this crisis. The pain, agony and sense of loss that we all feel are reflected in the words of Blue Ribbon Panel member Reverend Wendell Anthony, Senior Minister, Fellowship Chapel and President, Detroit Chapter, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People:

"Babies are dying and mothers are crying. The African American community suffers a great deal because there is a lack of utilizing car seats and seat belts in general."

Therefore, the strategies described herein are collaborative and applicable to other ethnic American populations.

The Panel recommends that there be active monitoring of significant events coupled with a semi-annual assessment or measurement of the progress made in implementing all recommendations.

The Panel recognizes the Congressional Black Caucus' position on issues of equity, efficacy and transparency in the "fair share" allocation of federal governmental and nongovernmental funds to address seat belt safety, between African American institutions, other ethnic entities, and "mainstream" entities. Similarly, for historical accuracy and guidance, the panel recommends a review and report of how these types of funds have been distributed over the past five years and the plans for the allocation of these and similar funds for the years to come. Observing trends and patterns contributes to our nation's capacity to anticipate problems and adjust and to prepare better solutions to them.

The members of the Blue Ribbon Panel would like to thank its CoChairs for facilitating the opportunity to work on this critical task, and we hope that we have served our communities and our nation well in fulfilling the mandate handed to us.

