



**BREAST CANCER EDUCATION TOOLKIT FOR USE WITH  
BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES**

**SECTION ONE**

**Who is the Audience?**



# SECTION ONE: WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

## PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION

Whether you are planning a single outreach or educational event, or thinking about your organization's entire outreach and education program, it is critical to understand your audience. Understanding your audience will help you determine the type of outreach and education that will be most successful.

The purpose of this section is to support you in understanding more about your audience, particularly the Black and African American population in the U.S. This section will also help you to learn more about your specific community and some of the issues that are important to special audiences within this community, such as men, women under the age of 40, older women and Black immigrants.

## Learning Objectives

After reading this section, you should be able to:

- Describe the diverse nature of Black and African American populations living in the U.S.,
- Identify resources to help you learn more about the community you serve and potential partners,
- Name ways you can find partners serving your community, and
- Discuss the issues important for special audiences like women under the age of 40, older women, men and Black immigrants.

## SPECIAL FEATURES OF THIS TOOLKIT

Throughout this Toolkit, you will find definitions, tips or ideas and resources that you can use to build your own knowledge and to improve your outreach and education program. Icons/pictures are used to identify each feature. The icons are:

Definition



Tip or Idea



Resource



Each time you see an underlined resource, click on it to go to a page containing links to relevant resources and educational materials.

## Completing the Program Planning Square

Use this section of the Toolkit to help you identify your audience. To do this, you will need to consider:

- Preferences for hearing or reading information
- Whether both women and men will be part of the audience
- Whether there will be Black immigrants in the audience, and if there will be language barriers that need to be addressed
- Ages of the audience members

This information can help you understand your audience and understand what issues may be important to them. As you read through the other sections of this Toolkit, you will learn that understanding your audience will also help you to tailor your message and identify the most appropriate *Educational Materials* for your audience.

## Which audiences can this Toolkit reach?

The information contained within the Toolkit is meant to be used to serve any person living in the U.S. who self-identifies as Black or African American. The term *African American* is most commonly used to describe those of Sub-Saharan African ancestry who were born in the U.S. The term *Black* can be used to describe a wider audience. This audience may include the following:

- Those who identify as Black or African American in combination with one or more other races (biracial/multiracial)
- Caribbean-Americans of West Indian/Caribbean descent, including new and recent immigrants (e.g., Haitian, Jamaican; sometimes referred to as Afro-Caribbean)
- New or recent immigrants to America from Africa (sometimes referred to as Black Africans)
- Black Hispanics, who have both Sub-Saharan African ancestry and Latin American ethnic background (e.g., Dominican, Puerto Rican)



You will see the term “your audience” used throughout this Toolkit. How you define your audience will vary based on the type of education or event you are planning. Audience can include:

- Individuals in one-to-one conversations
- Groups of people that attend an event or presentation
- Your entire target population

Because this Toolkit is intended to help you plan for both a single event or an organization’s outreach and education program, the term “audience” will be used throughout the Toolkit for both purposes.

Race/Ethnicity	Total Population Living in U.S. <sup>1, 2,10</sup>	Percent of U.S. Population
Black or African American	41.1M	13.4
Black or African American in combination with another race (biracial or multiracial)	5.8M	.08
Caribbean-born	3,731,000	1.2
African-born	1,607,000	Less than 1.0
Black Hispanic	1,243,471	Less than 1.0

It is important to note that this audience definition is broad, but is meant to be inclusive of all people who identify with the Black or African American community in the U.S. For that reason, it is important for you to fully understand your intended audience. Understanding your audience will keep you from offending those who do not call themselves Black or African American, but will allow you to be as inclusive as possible. If you're unsure of the person's cultural identity, ask him or her. When conducting outreach or education through another venue (e.g., health clinic, church, etc.), you can ask the point person or host at that organization for information about the cultural identity of the population they serve.

When applicable, information specific to bi/multiracial, Caribbean-Americans, Black Hispanics and immigrant communities will be noted.

### ***A Note About the Use of “Black and African American” Versus “African American”***

Throughout the Toolkit, you will see the audience referred to most often as “Black and African American.” Susan G. Komen® wants to be inclusive of all people that identify themselves as either Black or African American. Some research and citations being used focus only on African Americans or those born in the U.S. In those instances, you will see the term “African American” used for the audience.

In other instances, we will note specific information that applies to populations that identify as Black, including immigrant populations. In those instances, we will identify the population(s) being described, based on who was included in the research that is cited.

## **Important and Useful Information About the Black and African American Population in the U.S.**

### ***How many Blacks and African Americans live in the U.S.?***

According to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau, more than 45 million people in the U.S. identify as Black or African American, including those of more than one race. Black and African American people represent 15.2 percent of the U.S. population<sup>3</sup>. The Black and African American population grew by combination population by 88.7 percent since 2010<sup>10</sup>. The growing African American population living in the U.S. means that culturally-responsive outreach and education is increasingly important to help them enter and remain in the Breast Cancer Continuum of Care.

Approximately 14 percent of the Black and African American population in 2009-2013 was born outside of the U.S. These immigrants are from countries such as Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Ghana<sup>5</sup>.

## Where do most Blacks and African Americans live?

Blacks and African Americans are most likely to live in the southern U.S.; about 55 percent of Blacks and African Americans live in the south, according to the U.S. Census Bureau<sup>3</sup>. Sixty percent live in the ten states with the largest Black and African Americans populations.

State	Population Size in Millions <sup>1</sup>
New York	3.3
Florida	3.2
Texas	3.2
Georgia	3.1
California	2.7
North Carolina	2.2
Illinois	2.0
Maryland	1.8
Virginia	1.7
Ohio	1.5

Eighty-six percent of African Americans live in an urban or suburban location. The cities that are home to more than 500,000 African Americans are, in order of population size: New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Houston<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, 14 percent of African Americans live in rural areas of the U.S., primarily in the southern states<sup>6</sup>.

## Identifying Resources and Partners in Your Community

Prior to getting started with a new outreach and education program, or to further refine your current program, study which specific populations reside in the community you serve. The *Getting to Know the Community You Serve* educator tips can assist you in understanding the specific populations that reside in the community and issues that are important to them. This resource also provides guidance on identifying potential partners in reaching your target community.



[\*Getting to Know the Community You Serve\*](#)

## Special Audiences

In addition to understanding the nature of the Black and African American population in your community, it is also helpful to know about the gender and age of your audience. This will allow you to tailor your talking points and the educational materials you offer, and provide breast health and breast cancer education that is most relevant for your audience. For example, screening mammograms are not generally recommended for most women under the age of 40. As a result, you might encourage these women to obtain a clinical breast exam if they have not had one in the past three years. The *Know Your Girls*<sup>TM</sup> campaign materials target young African American women and may be a good place to start to tailor to messages for this audience.

## NOTE

While the information contained in this Toolkit is not directed toward breast cancer survivors, some of it may be relevant and useful for them. You can also encourage any survivors in your audience to share the information given to them with their relatives and friends. Please see the *Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages* resources for a few talking points you can use when talking with breast cancer survivors.

Tailoring your talking points can help you engage your audience. This allows you to help them understand how breast cancer impacts them individually and what actions they can take to address breast cancer. Below is a chart listing things you might consider when talking with women under the age of 40, older women and men and Black immigrants.

You will find more detailed guidance for modifying your talking points for each of these audience members in the next section of the Toolkit and in the related resources listed below.

Special Audience	Talking Points Specific to the Audience
Women Under Age 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women under the age of 40 who are of average risk may not yet need a mammogram. If they are over the age of 20 and of average risk, they should be getting a clinical breast exam at least every three years.</li> <li>• The majority of women with breast cancer are diagnosed later in life; however Black and African American women are more likely than white women to develop breast cancer under the age of 40<sup>7</sup>.</li> <li>• Black and African American women diagnosed with breast cancer at a young age generally have a more aggressive form of the disease.</li> <li>• Younger women should talk with the older generations of their family, including their fathers' relatives, about the family health history. Family history of breast or ovarian cancer may indicate a genetic link to these diseases within the family. A genetic link increases the personal risk of developing breast cancer for those who inherited the genetic mutation.</li> <li>• Having a family history of these cancers does not necessarily mean that there is an inherited genetic mutation, but a family history should still be discussed with a health care provider. Please note, most women in the U.S. with breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease.</li> </ul> <p><i>See the educator resource <a href="#">“What Do Genes Have To Do With Breast Cancer”</a> and <a href="#">“Start Talking: The Importance of Family Health History”</a></i></p>
Older Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some women think that as they get older, they no longer need to get screened for breast cancer. However, risk of breast cancer increases with age, and mammography continues to be beneficial.</li> <li>• There is no agreement about when women should stop getting mammograms, largely because there are few studies. Generally, women in good health and who would benefit from treatment if diagnosed with breast cancer should continue to get mammograms<sup>8, 9</sup>.</li> <li>• Older women should talk with their doctor each year about the recommendation to get a mammogram.</li> <li>• Older women should talk with the younger members of their family about the family health history. This is especially true if there is a history of breast or ovarian cancer in the current or past generations of the family.</li> </ul>

Special Audience	Talking Points Specific to the Audience
Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breast cancer in men is rare, but it does happen. Only about one percent of breast cancer cases in the U.S. occur among men.</li> <li>• However, men often have women in their lives — mothers, aunts, sisters or partners — and can be affected by breast cancer through them.</li> <li>• Men can coach or support the women in their lives to get screened and find the breast care support they need.</li> </ul>
Black Immigrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black immigrants typically have a breast cancer incidence (new cases) rate similar to that of their birth countries.</li> </ul>

## Related Educator Resources

After reading this section, you may have more questions about talking with your audience about breast cancer. Below you will find a list of resources to support you in learning about your audience, understanding how breast cancer impacts the Black and African American community and communicating across cultures.



***Related Educator Resources***

Learning Topic/Question	Educator Resources
How do I learn more about the community my organization serves?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Getting to Know the Community You Serve</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tips for Developing a Good Reputation in Your Community</a></li> </ul>
How does breast cancer impact Black and African American communities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Barriers to Screening and Health Care</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Breast Cancer Among Black and African American Women</a></li> </ul>
What should I consider when talking with someone of a culture different from mine?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Applying Culturally-Responsive Communication in Black and African American Communities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Culturally-Responsive Communication with the Black Immigrant Community</a></li> </ul>
What should I know when talking to Black immigrant audiences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Health Care Perceptions and Barriers to Access Among Black Immigrant Populations</a></li> </ul>
Where can I find more information about tailoring my talking points for special audiences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Know Your Risk</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Get Screened</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Know What is Normal For You</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices</a></li> </ul>
What if there are children in my audience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Tips for Handling Children in the Audience</a></li> </ul>

## Summary of this Section

This section of the Toolkit should help you to think about the communities that you serve and consider questions like:

- What specific Black and African American populations reside in the community I serve?
- Where can I find resources to learn more about the community I serve?
- How can I find partners in serving my community?
- What issues are important for special audiences like women under the age of 40, older women, Black immigrants and men?

## IN THE NEXT SECTION

**In the next section of this Toolkit, you will learn more about the Key Messages and find information you can share with your audience about breast health and breast cancer. More specifically, you will find information about the following:**

- **Breast cancer and its impact on the Black and African American community**
- **Actions people can take related to the Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages**

**Resources on tailoring talking points for special audiences are also listed.**

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1 "The Black Population: 2020 (Report)," U.S. Census Bureau (2020).

2 "American Community Survey: 2010 (Report)," U.S. Census Bureau (2010).

3 "Black or African American Populations," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014).

4 U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Redistricting Data Summary File, Table PL1; and 2010 Census Redistricting Data Summary File, Table PL1.

5 Kent, M. "Immigration and America's Black Population," Population Bulletin 62, no. 4 (2007).

6 "Race and Ethnicity in Rural America," The Housing Assistance Council (2012).

7 "Cancer Facts & Figures for African American/Black people 2022-2024," American Cancer Society (2022).

8 "American Cancer Society Recommendations for Early Breast Cancer Detection in Women without Breast Cancer Symptoms," American Cancer Society, last modified 2013, <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/BreastCancer/MoreInformation/BreastCancerEarlyDetection/breast-cancer-early-detection-ac-s-recs>.

9 "Breast Cancer Screening in Older Women: American Geriatrics Society Clinical Practice Committee," J Am Geriatr Soc 48, no. 7 (2000):842-844.

10. "2020 Census Illuminates Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Country. U.S. Census Bureau (2020)."