

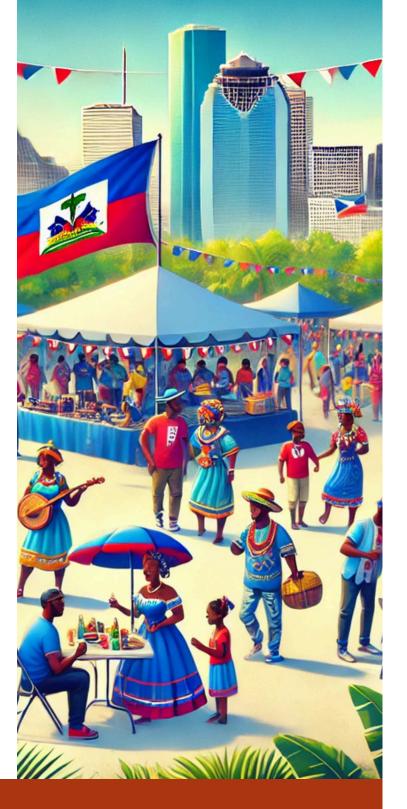
COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS & ASSET ASSESSMENT IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH HAITIAN RESIDENTS OF HARRIS COUNTY

COMMUNITY VISIONING

Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) Phase 2



"OUR DATA. OUR VOICE"



ABOUT THE RESEARCH

There is little to no information collected or shared about the health of residents of Haitian ethnicity across public health data systems in the United States (U.S.), despite the increasing number of Haitians living in the U.S. The lack of public health data on Haitian residents in Harris County represents a key challenge for understanding current health needs and informing policies, public health strategies, and resource allocation to support and advance the health and quality of life of our Haitian neighbors. Furthermore, when a demographic group is absent from the data, they are often overlooked by policymakers and resource allocators.

In addressing the lack of data on health of Haitians in Harris county, a group of Haitian residents, community leaders, and community health researchers has come together with the aim of conducting among the first community health assessments of Haitian residents in Harris County. The proposed one-year rapid community assessment study aims to identify primary health needs among Haitian residents. Guided by Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP), Environmental Asset Assessment, and Intervention Mapping (IM). Our mixed methods research approach will include data collected via key informant interviews, focus groups with community members, and a community health assessment survey to pinpoint the unique health challenges, barriers, and needs of this growing community.

As a first step, and in following the MAPP process, we conducted two visioning sessions with Haitian residents with the aim of informing a guiding vision for this assessment and for health and quality of life for Haitian residents in Harris County. This report provides a summary of key themes identified via our visioning workshops held February 22 and March 1, 2025.



HEALTH DISPARITIES

The Haitian community experiences significant and persistent health disparities, including higher rates of chronic conditions and lower access to preventive care. These disparities are often overlooked in broader public health initiatives and deserve focused attention.

REPLICABLE

This study can serve as a replicable framework that can inform future assessments in other Texas cities with significant Haitian populations, or even be adapted to other underserved minority groups facing similar structural barriers.

BARRIERS

Haitian immigrants face distinctive challenges, particularly linguistic barriers that differ from those encountered by other Black immigrant populations. Many Haitians primarily speak Haitian Creole, which limits access to health information, social services, and economic opportunities.

COMMUNITY BUY-IN

A crucial component of the needs assessment is active community involvement. The Haitian community in Houston has expressed strong interest and support for this project, which will ensure meaningful participation and culturally relevant findings.

EVENT SUMMARY MARCH 2025



HOUSTON HAITIAN COMMUNITY DEFINE HEALTH

MARCH 2025

Using the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) framework, Phase 2, Visioning, marked a significant milestone in the project. On February 22 and March 1, 2025, two powerful gatherings brought together Haitian residents of Harris County to define and envision a healthier community, which will guide the rest of the health assessment process.

During each session, participants collectively defined what constitutes the Haitian community in Houston—identifying key characteristics, locations, and cultural hubs such as churches and restaurants. The conversation then shifted to core community values, where attendees engaged in a gallery walk and a dotmocracy voting process to highlight the most integral principles that should guide the Haitian health assessment project

EVENT SUMMARY MARCH 2025

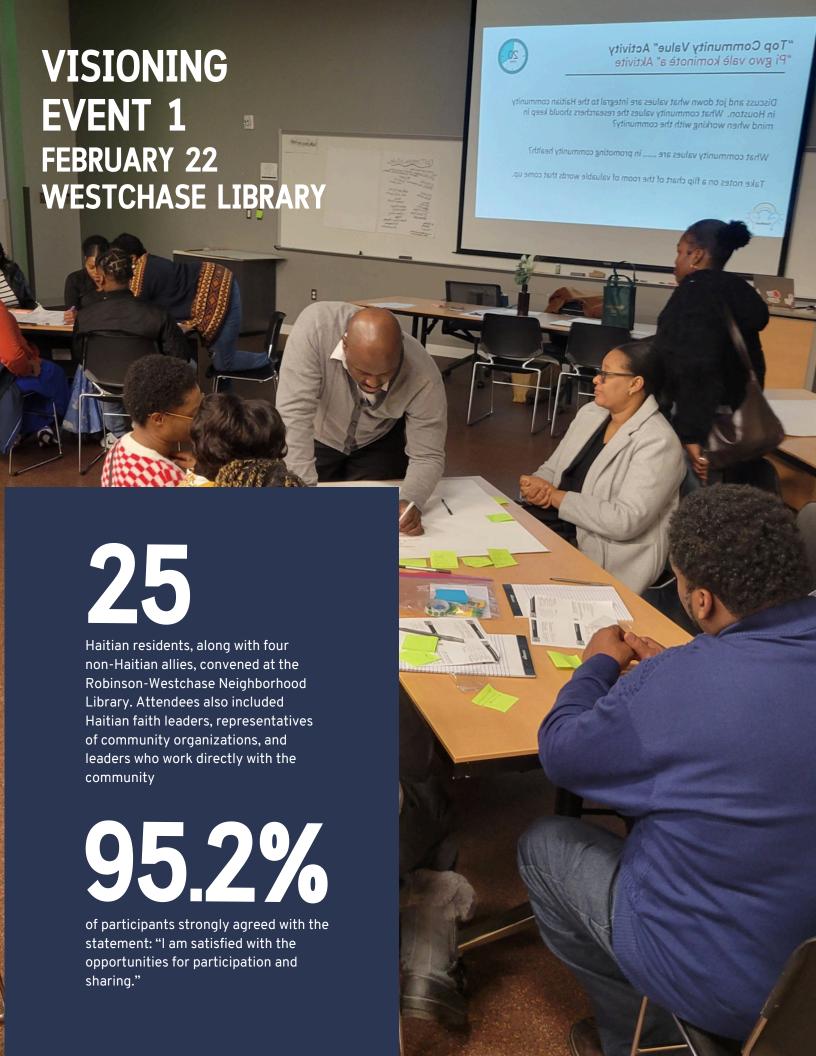
The Haitian community may be physically dispersed throughout Harris County, but they remain deeply connected through shared culture, ideas, and beliefs. By understanding the community's vision, health issues can be prioritized based on their alignment with the desired future state. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes that represent the collective voice and priorities of the community.

These statements will be adopted and kept alive through the remainder of the MAPP process via materials, such as brochures, leaflets, and reports.

The research team, along with the community planning group, continues to prioritize building trust and setting a precedent for collaboration in the upcoming phases of this assessment.



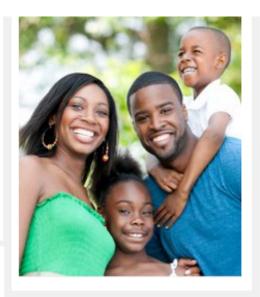
Planning Group From Left to Right: Andrew Springer, Voltaire Archelus, Dorothy Dupuy, Roldyne Dolce, Thalia Micah, Katia Jean Baptiste. Not Pictured: Nikki Dolce (Houston Haitians United)

















HOUSTON HAITIANS INCLUDE...

We are a is a diverse group that includes Christians, Voodoo practitioners, and those with no religious affiliation, reflecting a wide range of beliefs and spiritual identities. We are a group living across the globe as part of the Haitian diaspora yet, still connected to Haiti

The community is rich in talent, including professionals such as **doctors**, **nurses**, **engineers**, **and pastors** who contribute across various sectors. We also share an entrepreneurial spirit, with many **business owners and DJs** playing key roles in cultural and economic life.

The community is **multigenerational**, made up of **Haiti-born immigrants**, **American-born citizens** (first, second, and third generation), and Haitians who have relocated from other U.S. states. Families often include children of Haitians as well as individuals who have married into the Haitian community. It also includes those of Haitian descent born or raised in countries across the diaspora, such as South America, Canada, France, and the Bahamas.

The community includes those with a shared culture, language, and history. Many have been affected by socioeconomic, physical and mental health challenges. These shared experiences help foster solidarity across generations and borders.

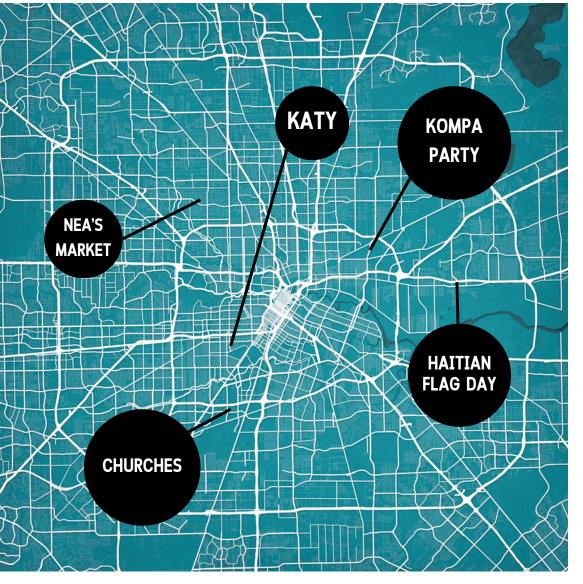
SESSION 1: WHO WE ARE

At the start of the visioning event, participants worked in small groups to discuss what "the community" means in the context of achieving health equity through the MAPP process. At each table, they answered questions like "How do you define the community?", "Who is in our community?", and "Where are the places we can find Haitians?" They wrote their responses on sticky notes and added them to a flip chart to share with the larger group.



SESSION 1: SELF-DESCRIPTION

The Houston Haitian community describes itself as geographically divided. They use the term "nou gaye" to capture the sense of being dispersed, yet always connected. They take immense pride in their culture and history, holding onto deep-rooted traditions and values. This pride is not just ideological but also comes from the way they've overcome numerous challenges throughout history. Other descriptors include Disciplined, Hardworking, Supportive, Overcomers, and Intelligent. Additionally, the community is multilingual, with many speaking Haitian Creole, French, English, Spanish, and Portuguese, reflecting the community's diverse.



Community Events

- Funerals
- · kid's birthday party
- Weddings
- · House parties

Cultural Events

- Haitian Flag Day (May 18)
- · Independence Day (Jan 1)

Houston Neighborhood

- Cypress
- Bissonnet
- Katy
- NW Houston
- North Houston (towards Spring)
- SW Houston
- Beechnut
- Conroe

Meeting Places

- Churches
- Universities
- Houston Haitians United
- Restaurants
- Sports
- Parks
- Supermarkets (incl. Walmart, Fiesta, HEB, Neas Market)
- School (incl. Night school)
- Clubs
- Workplaces (incl. Hospitals)
- General, non-Haitian specific spaces

SESSION 1: HAITIAN NETWORK & OUTREACH During the visioning process, participants highlighted several common meeting places where Haitians in Harris County regularly connect, including community gatherings and cultural events that serve as important touchpoints for social bonding and cultural expression. These places, while sometimes formal, also extended to more unexpected locations scattered across the region. As one participant noted, "You find Haitians in the least likely places... heard Haitian Kreyol in the post office on the west side of Houston," reflecting the often dispersed yet vibrant presence of the Haitian community throughout the area.

Guiding Research Principles

Guiding principles in research are fundamental ethical guidelines that ensure research is conducted responsibly and ethically. These values were chosen and voted on by the community as integral.

These included: Herbal/Holistic Medicine, Spirituality/Faith, and Culture



Community Values

Herbal /Holistic Medicine	Spirituality/ Faith	Culture	Love
Financial Freedom	Education	Family	Politics
Leadership	Respect	Recreation	Trust

Community Vision

A Healthy Future Ahead

The community collaboratively defined a clear vision for a healthy Haitian community. They were encouraged to dream big and describe what it would look and feel like for the community to truly thrive, without worrying about time, resources, or funding. The following are their vision to guide future efforts.



PHYSICAL COMMUNITY CENTER

A hub for cultural preservation and integration for new Houstonians, while also offering recreational programs for children and the elderly, including community gardens and pop-up restaurants



ORGANIC FARMING

A future with better, nutritious foods made accessible through intentional "food changes," including an apothecary for herbs and spaces for nutritional education and counseling



ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Formal training, traditional and generational knowledge transfer of culture, food, success stories, history, and life lessons, alongside ESL classes and financial education to support community growth



CHRONIC DISEASE EDUCATION, PREVENTION & INTERVENTION

The Haitian community will be empowered through chronic disease education and prevention efforts, such as diabetes care, that address culturally specific health needs and promote long-term wellness.



HAITIAN BUSINESSES/ INVESTMENTS

Haitian-centered organizational management to generate funding within the community, increasing local spending, and ultimately reducing financial stress among community members.



LOWER RATES OF CHRONIC DISEASES/HOSPITALIZATIONS

The Haitian community will experience lower rates of chronic diseases and hospitalizations, including conditions like hypertension, cancer, and diabetes.



PREVENTATIVE HEALTH EDUCATION & SCREENING

The Haitian community will gain increased access to preventative screening, such as blood pressure checks, glucose screenings, and mammography via culturally relevant, community-centered initiatives



MENTAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

The Haitian community will receive mental health improvement strategies that address chronic stress, mental illness, and other challenges, paving the way for better quality of life.



TRANSLATION SERVICES

With access to translation services, the Haitian community will be more empowered to navigate essential systems, communicate their needs effectively, and fully participate in civic and social life.



SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE

The Haitian community will thrive as a unified, empowered force by collaborating with other communities in Houston to create sustainable changes



REMAINING CONNECTED TO HAITI

The Haitian community will remain connected to Haiti in everything we do, carrying forward our culture, language, and spirit no matter where we are.

SAMPLE VISIONS FOR A FUTURE HEALTHY COMMUNITY

VISIONING EVENT PARTICIPANTS



"Our vision for a healthy community is a collaboration for chance which focuses on one person, a family, and community, as a whole"



"For our people to be well educated on the importance of regular check-ups and the breakdown of our foods. We will exercise, eat right and focus on mental health"



"A community health campaign that covers mental health strategies and chronic illnesses prevention... a community in health"



"A place where live together, mind together, we can understand and be understood by our providers to better our health"

EVENT FEEDBACK

"In all honestly, it was a great moment, and all the aspects went really well."

"One highlight was use of native language of the group (Haitians)"

"The meeting was informative. We should do something like this to connect the Haitian Community."

"I enjoy the last part; the brainstorming provided the opportunity for every participant to come up with their respective ideas"

"I am happy to participate because I had time to explain my idea on the situation to the Haitian community..."

"I enjoyed the food, liked how included everything was, and was super invested with the group brainstorming"

"I like how involved everyone was able to be. Also, like how there was fruits and veggies"

"I appreciated the approach, all that was discussed, the food, us speaking with each other, and our vision for the Haitian people"

"This was a great info session! I thoroughly enjoyed it."

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE RESEARCH TEAM!

Our team comprises of community health researchers from UTHealth School of Public Health and interprofessional members of the Haitian- American Community in Harris County who make up a "Planning Group". This approach aids in facilitating diverse perspectives, input, and community participation.



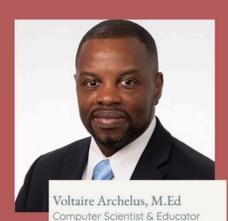


UTHealth School of Public Health





Dr. Thalia Micah Doctor of Aupuncture & Chinese Medicine, Planning Group Member



Planning Group Member





"Men anpil, Chay pa lou" Many hands make lightwork



WHAT NEXT?

Now that we have established the community's vision for health, we are preparing to transition into Phase Three of the MAPP process: the assessment phase. This stage will involve mixed methods data collection to understand the community's current health landscape. Our goal is to collect data through key informant interviews, focus groups with community members, and a community health assessment survey.

Connect With Us

Learn more about the "Community Health Needs & Asset Assessment in Partnership with Haitian Residents of Harris County" by visiting our website www.haitianhealthdata.com