

D’Nyah Jefferson - Philmore

PITCH #1:

TOPIC: ISSUES IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Title: How SNAP Supports Black Communities in Washington, D.C.

Background Info:

According to the *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or better known as SNAP, was created in 1964 under President Lyndon B. Johnson and is the largest anti-hunger program in the country, serving around 41.7 million Americans each month. This program helps low-income families afford groceries and meet basic nutritional needs.

In November 2025, a federal government shutdown disrupted funding for the SNAP, creating uncertainty for millions of families who depend on those monthly benefits. Because SNAP is federally funded, the shutdown caused delays and confusion nationwide about when and how much assistance families would receive. For households already living paycheck to paycheck, even a temporary disruption made it harder to afford groceries.

In addition, food insecurity continues to affect Black households because of systemic issues like lower wages, underemployment and generational economic disparities. When benefits are reduced or delayed, these communities feel the impact more. At the same time, grocery prices have remained high, making it even harder for families to stretch their assistance from month to month.

Why is this story relevant:

Food access is more than just receiving government assistance; it’s about how families can survive when the cost of living continues to rise. SNAP, which is run by the United States Department of Agriculture, helps millions of Americans afford groceries each month. However, there is still a question of whether current SNAP benefits are enough as food prices continue to increase.

Living in Washington, D.C., where many Black residents and Black college students depend on SNAP, makes this issue very local. When benefits are reduced or delayed, some families may have to ration food, buy cheaper groceries or find other ways to make their food last through the month.

In late 2025, the government shutdown disrupted SNAP funding, which caused delays and uncertainty for many families who rely on the program. Even though benefits later continued, the disruption showed how policy changes can directly affect people’s everyday lives. This story matters because it focuses on how people are actually impacted and how communities adjust when food assistance is changed. Food is one of the most important things we need to survive, and for some people, having help or someone to depend on for food can make a big difference.

Potential Interviews:

I plan to interview a representative or employee who works with SNAP and understands how the program supports families. I want to learn how SNAP benefits are distributed and how the program helps people who depend on food assistance.

I also want to interview a college student who is newly independent and uses SNAP benefits to help pay for groceries while balancing school expenses. Since I live in Washington, D.C., I would like to speak with a student who does not attend Howard University to show a wider community perspective. I want to understand how students manage food costs while also paying for school and other living expenses.

Finally, I want to interview someone who has depended on SNAP for most of their life and was impacted when the 2025 federal government shutdown disrupted benefits from the program. The shutdown affected funding for SNAP through the United States Department of Agriculture and caused delays or uncertainty for many families. I want to hear what people did if they did not have a backup plan when food assistance was reduced or delayed.

Supporting Elements:

B-roll will include footage of grocery stores and people shopping for food in Washington, D.C., to show how residents access food. I will capture shots of people selecting basic grocery items, checking prices, and using food budgeting strategies throughout the month. Additional b-roll may include students walking on or near campus, since some college students depend on SNAP benefits.

If possible, I will also include visuals that help explain SNAP, which is managed by the United States Department of Agriculture, and how food assistance supports families. The footage will help show how food costs and assistance programs affect everyday life.

Research Sources:

<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2025/what-is-snap-and-why-does-it-matter>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students>

<https://dhs.dc.gov/service/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

PITCH #2

TOPIC: ISSUES IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Title: Mental Health Support in Black Communities

Background Info:

Mental health is an important issue in Black communities, but it is sometimes not talked about because of stigma, lack of access to care, and limited mental health resources. According to the *National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)*, Black adults in the United States are more likely to experience stress, sadness, or feel overwhelmed by daily life.

Research also shows that Black adults living in poverty are more likely to experience serious psychological stress compared to those who are more financially stable. Even though many people need help, only about one in three Black adults with mental illness receives treatment. Barriers such as cost, stigma and limited access to mental health professionals can make it harder for people to get the support they need.

This story is important because mental health is often not discussed openly in some Black communities. Living in Washington, D.C., I want to explore how community members think about mental health and learn more about the resources available to support emotional well-being.

Why is this story relevant:

Living in Washington, D.C. makes this issue very local because many Black residents experience stress from daily life. Black communities sometimes face barriers to mental health care because of stigma, cost, or limited access to culturally aware therapists. Resources like Healing Through Therapy show how community-focused care can help people feel more comfortable seeking help.

Healing Through Therapy, LLC, located in Washington, D.C., provides cultural understanding and mental health care and are examples of resources that help support emotional well-being. This Black-owned and woman-owned virtual practice helps people work through stress, trauma, anxiety and life challenges.

Mental health support is important because emotional well-being affects how people live, work, and interact with others. Increasing access to therapy and mental health resources can help communities manage stress and promote healing. Mental health care is something many people depend on, and having supportive services available can make a big difference in people's lives.

Potential Interviews:

I plan to interview a therapist or representative from Healing Through Therapy LLC, a Black-owned and woman-owned therapy practice serving the Washington, D.C. area. This interview will help explain the

importance of culturally understanding mental health care and how therapy supports healing in Black communities.

I also plan to interview someone in Washington, D.C., who has received therapy services from Healing Through Therapy LLC. I want to learn how therapy has impacted their life, how it helped them manage stress or emotional challenges, and how the experience supported their healing.

Finally, I plan to interview a Black resident in Washington, D.C. who has not accessed mental health services and may be experiencing challenges due to financial, personal, or other barriers. I want to understand why they have not sought therapy, what challenges they face, and how mental health resources could better support people in the community.

Supporting Elements:

Footage will include scenes of daily life in Washington, D.C. to show the environment where community members experience stress and manage everyday responsibilities.

I will also include footage of the Black woman-owned therapy practice Healing Through Therapy LLC to show available mental health resources in the community. Visuals may include the building, virtual therapy promotion material, or settings that represent therapy and healing spaces.

Lastly, I will include footage of interviews that will focus on a therapist from Healing Through Therapy, a Black D.C. resident who has experienced therapy services and a Black resident who has not accessed mental health care due to financial, personal, or other barriers. I will show footage of how they live their everyday lives and the challenges they face.

Research Sources:

<https://growtherapy.com/therapists/washington-dc/black-african-american>

<https://www.nami.org/community-and-culture/black-african-american/>

PITCH #3:

TOPIC: ISSUES IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Title: Could Black History Be Erased? Community Concerns in D.C

Background Info:

According to the [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#), the museum opened to the public on September 24, 2016. The museum, located in Washington, D.C., serves as a space where Black history is shared with the public. It makes sure that these important historical moments are not forgotten.

Black history spaces are important because they help younger generations learn about their heritage and identity. In recent years, there have been conversations about how cultural institutions are funded and preserved. Some community members feel that protecting Black history museums and cultural landmarks is important because losing access to these spaces can feel like losing parts of memory and identity.

In addition, there has been public conversation and concern on social media about the possibility of removing or defunding Black cultural spaces, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture. While no official steps have been taken to remove the museum, the discussion of cutting funding for cultural institutions has caused fear in many Black communities. For some, it feels similar to how the Black Lives Matter mural in Washington, D.C., was removed after national attention shifted. When landmarks or institutions that represent Black history are taken down or threatened, it can feel like an attempt to silence or minimize those experiences. That is why many people continue to advocate for the protection and preservation of Black historical spaces, because once they are gone, restoring that sense of visibility is much harder to bring back.

Why is this story relevant:

This story is important because for a lot of people, it doesn't just feel like a debate about exhibits; it's personal. When the Black Lives Matter Plaza mural was removed in D.C., many community members felt like something meaningful was taken away. So now, when there's talk about removing or defunding Black history spaces, it naturally raises bigger questions, like whether institutions such as the National Museum of African American History and Culture could face similar pressure in the future.

For many Black residents, these spaces represent validation. They represent proof that our history matters and deserves to be seen in the nation's capital. When conversations come up about limiting or reshaping how that history is told, it can feel like an attempt to water it down or slowly erase it.

This matters because history isn't just information on a wall. It's a family story. It's generational trauma. It's pride. If the visibility of Black history starts to feel temporary or conditional, that sends a message to the people connected to it. That's why community voices are so important in this conversation, because for them, it's about protecting their story.

Potential Interviews:

I plan to interview a representative from the National Museum of African American History and Culture. This interview will help explain the museum's mission, how decisions about exhibits are made and what protections are in place to preserve Black history at the national level.

I also plan to interview a Black resident in Washington, D.C., who frequently visits Black cultural institutions or feels personally connected to these spaces. I want to understand what these historical sites mean to them, how they felt about the removal of Black Lives Matter Plaza and whether current conversations about Black history spaces raise concern for them.

Supporting Elements:

The Footage will include scenes of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., showing the building exterior, visitors entering and leaving, and people interacting with museum exhibits to highlight the importance of preserving Black history spaces.

I will also include a B-roll of Black cultural landmarks and community areas in Washington, D.C. to help show the connection between history, identity and the people who are impacted by these spaces.

Lastly, I will include footage from interviews with a historian or representative from the National Museum of African American History and Culture, a Black D.C. resident who feels connected to Black historical spaces, and a policy expert or community advocate discussing the future of Black history preservation. I will also show visuals of everyday life in Washington, D.C. to help connect the story to the community.

Research Sources:

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABJLFe4sFS8>