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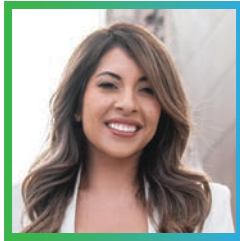
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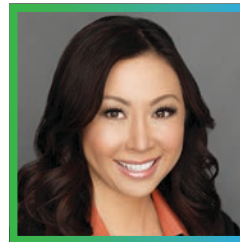
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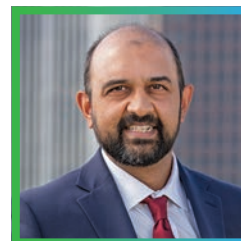
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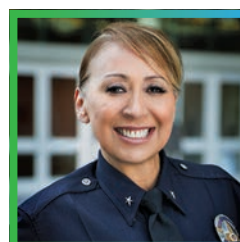
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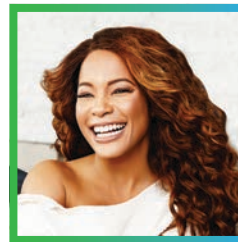
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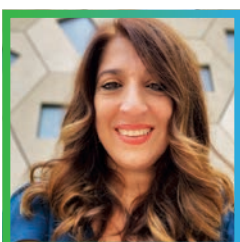
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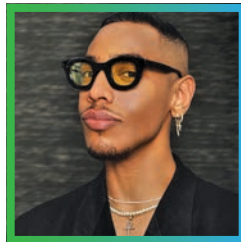
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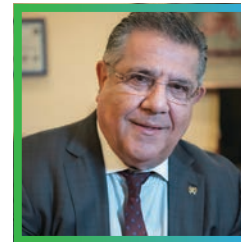
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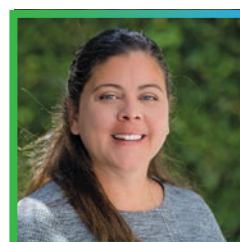
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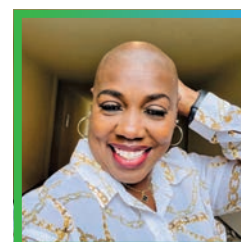
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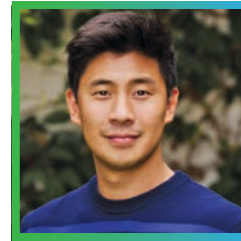
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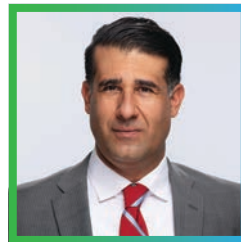
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Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

By YOGA CHANDRAN, PhD, PE, GE

In the transportation industry, we recognize that achieving success in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is a long-term and evolving process. It starts with encompassing fundamental workplace changes that require open mind-

DEI SPOTLIGHT

edness, plan development and adoption of new norms, along with ongoing reviews to confirm we are on track towards a fully sustainable DEI culture.

As organizations, agencies, community partners and others implement and strengthen DEI initiatives, we can clearly see that progress is being made and HNTB is committed to moving forward daily to be a better corporate citizen. As we reflect on our programs, we are learning from prominent transportation organizations and incorporating best practices to move us towards a fully equitable future.



Wiggins

Under the leadership of CEO Stephanie Wiggins, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is an outstanding DEI leader whose goal is a community that thrives because everyone has access to their destination and feels welcomed. Their approach ensures DEI

is part of Metro's DNA and a model for public agencies throughout the country.

Metro Transit's Equity & Inclusion department cultivates leaders who make the community stronger by offering services that are accessible, providing a welcoming experience and respecting the individual value of employees, customers, and community members. The team champions Equity & Inclusion by promoting activities to make employees feel valued, respected as their unique selves, and supported in their work.

Metro developed its Equity Platform framework in 2018 to guide the implementation of equity within the agency. In 2020, the Office of Equity and Race (OER) was launched to create tools, programs, and internal groups to increase "equity fluency" within Metro, and to ensure its work supports equitable results for the community. The objective is to use equity as the guiding principle as Metro partners with marginalized communities at the center of its work.

The OER team leads Metro's efforts to center equity in its decision-making and continues to make great strides in understanding and implementing initiatives in support of DEI in transportation.

They reach out to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to better understand local concerns and needs from those who live and work in their communities and are considered trusted leaders. With their support, Metro is reaching a much deeper level of understanding than if they followed traditional outreach efforts.

Monthly, the Metro Board of Directors are informed of any equity issues that may be associated with a Board Action. A separate section



HNTB SPARK LA Program, Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins (center, red jacket) and board chair Hilda Solis (green jacket).

is included in Board items that demonstrates staff has applied an equity lens to any item that might affect the communities it serves.

An early adopter of President Biden's "Justice 40" initiative, Metro continues to go above and beyond its guidelines with educational and community involvement. They believe all students, regardless of their circumstances, deserve an equal chance to pursue their career dreams.

Metro recently participated in HNTB's annual SPARK LA educational outreach program that supports a STEM curriculum aimed to attract more students to pursue degrees and professions in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, highlighting transportation and infrastructure opportunities with Metro and others. SPARK started seven years ago at LAUSD's Girls Academic Leadership Academy and now includes Schurr High School in Montebello.

During the free four-week after school program at Schurr High School last year, CEO Wiggins along with board chair Hilda Solis made a personal visit during one of the sessions. The eagerness and enthusiasm of the students to learn impressed her, which resulted in Metro's decision to expand its GoPass Fareless Transit program that offers unlimited free rides to K-12 and community college students in participating districts on LA Metro and 13 other LA County transit agencies.



Hadnett

"We are pleased that the successful Metro's GoPass pilot program is celebrating more than 10 million free transit rides to students in the last eight months," said Art Hadnett, HNTB senior vice president and regional growth officer. "Congratulations to CEO Wiggins for surpassing a goal she set in her 2022 State of the Agency Address by giving the benefit of equitable transit to our future young professionals."

Metro is representative of the decisive actions local transportation agencies are taking to utilize their capital programs to open opportunities to deliver DEI. At the state level, the largest infrastructure program in California history is likewise embedding a DEI platform into the CAHSR program.



Kelly

Brian P. Kelly, chief executive officer of the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority), has been a champion for DEI, serving as a true pioneer in the transportation industry. Under Kelly's leadership, more than half of the Authority's total workforce is female – as well as most of the executive team, many of whom are appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom.

Kelly established the DEI Task Force and Advisory Group whose objective is to ensure the Authority is a diverse organization, incorporating DEI efforts into all aspects of its operations and strategic communications. These efforts embrace hiring, procurements, human resources, and program delivery processes.

Together with regional partners and Labor, the Authority established the Workforce Training Center in the City of Selma, offering pre-apprenticeship and hands-on construction training for veterans, at-risk young adults, minority and low-income populations so they can work on the nation's first high-speed rail project. As of today, more than one hundred graduates have access to a better future.

The Authority's student outreach program "I Will Ride" received the prestigious Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award from the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Sacramento chapter. This annual award recognizes a transportation organization that has contributed significantly to promoting diversity, inclusion and multi-cultural awareness. The Authority is dedi-

As organizations, agencies, community partners and others implement and strengthen DEI initiatives, we can clearly see that progress is being made and HNTB is committed to moving forward daily to be a better corporate citizen.

cated to connecting students to information and career opportunities on the nation's first high-speed rail system currently under construction.

"California high-speed rail is about providing safe, efficient and sustainable transportation for the next generation," said Authority CEO Brian Kelly. "We are proud to lead the industry in providing opportunities for students and educators to take on these jobs in the future of transportation."

At the local, state and federal levels, we are taking action and successfully implementing meaningful programs that are making measurable progress related to DEI. By working collaboratively, sharing experiences, and reflecting on areas for improvement, we will continue to make strides to achieve a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment that will provide sustainable benefits for everyone well into the future. DEI is a process, requiring all of us to make sustained efforts to grow and develop programs that are truly long-term investments for our society and culture.

Yoga Chandran, PhD, PE, GE serves as HNTB senior vice president and Los Angeles office leader based in the firm's downtown Los Angeles office. Learn more at [HNTB.com](https://www.hntb.com).

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*Diversity & LGBTQ Scorecards, The American Lawyer/National Law Journal, 2022

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Turning Roadblocks Into Building Blocks for Women-Owned Businesses

By ALICE JUAREZ

Today there are nearly 13 million women-owned businesses, which represents 42% of all US businesses. According to American Express' '2019 State of Women Owned Small Businesses Report,' these businesses employ 9.4 million workers and earn \$1.9 trillion in revenue. Over the past five years, the number of women owned small businesses increased by

DEI SPOTLIGHT

21% while comparatively, all new businesses increased only 9%. Despite their successes, women entrepreneurs still face many challenges to obtaining funding for their enterprise and building a support network to ensure their business stands out and is positioned for success. As these business owners navigate these challenges - as well as ongoing difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic - here are some steps that can help to turn these roadblocks into building blocks for their success:

CONTINUE TO EXPLORE FUNDING OPTIONS

Women-owned small businesses have been more heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, with 71 percent reporting a loss in revenues or sales according to a Wells Fargo/Gallup study completed last year. As business owners continue to feel the impact of these unprecedented times, there are many assistance options to help businesses and non-profits continue their road to recovery. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is a great starting point to learn about available federal resources and programs. Traditional lending products such as 7(a) loans, 504 loans and SBA express loans can provide access to capital, as well as specific relief programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). There are also many free resources and tools to help educate women business-owners on other credit and financing options. Additionally, when choosing a lender, consider



financial institutions that have demonstrated a commitment and track record of working with minority and women-owned businesses, as well as a lender who may have implemented programs focused on women-owned businesses.

IDENTIFY YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

Having a support system to lean on is a huge asset for any business owner, but it's especially important for women. While COVID has created many unique challenges to in person networking and meeting face-to-face, it's important as ever to seek virtual ways to get involved with organizations dedicated to supporting women business owners. For example, the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) and the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) have chapters and regional partners across the country that offer peer-to-peer professional development

programs for members. These organizations are dedicated to helping women find the right financial tools to successfully run and grow their businesses. Another great resource for women business owners is SCORE, which offers online newsletters and webinars in addition to an extensive database of female mentors.

Business owners should also consider the immense value of having an assigned relationship manager at their primary bank. According to a recent Barlow survey, 70% of small businesses who interact with a dedicated Account Officer are very satisfied with their bank compared to those who don't.

BE YOU AND SET MEASURABLE GOALS

Every business owner needs to consider market saturation and how to make their particular offerings stand out and get noticed. When thinking about starting a business and establishing goals, women business owners should consider both their personal and business objectives, and see where they align. What's motivating you to establish your business and what makes your business unique? One of the most important things women entrepreneurs can do to stand out is to be their authentic selves, while planning and setting measurable goals along the way. One way to organize is to get ideas down on paper by creating a written business plan to shape your strategy. It will also be important to check-out competitive intelligence tools that can help you map your business against competitors and inform your path forward. Your business

Women-owned small businesses have been more heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, with 71 percent reporting a loss in revenues or sales according to a Wells Fargo/Gallup study completed last year.



plan should reflect changes in your business, the industry or the market. With COVID-19 impacts, it is equally important to incorporate the changing needs of customers and economic conditions in order to keep your plan current and respond to the ever-changing environment.

No matter which sources you choose to fund your business, build a network, and establish a plan, remember that knowledge is power. By taking the time to arm yourself appropriately, you can confidently navigate potential roadblocks and pave the path for your business success.

Alice Juarez is Wells Fargo's branch banking region director for the Los Angeles region. Learn more at [wellsfargo.com](https://www.wellsfargo.com).



Barnes & Thornburg congratulates its own Melanie Mawema on being a finalist for the Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Community Impact Award. Melanie is our champion every day – and we applaud her for her commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion in the workplace and her community.

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Boost Your DE&I with Belonging

By LOIS M. SHELTON, Ph.D.

“Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance; belonging is knowing all the songs.”
-LaFawn Davis, Indeed, Inc.

More than another buzzword; belonging is a sense of acceptance and security. It's a core element of workplace well-being that will be critical as long as groups of humans conduct business. Accordingly, belonging bolsters the bottom line.

DEI SPOTLIGHT

According to Harvard Business Review, high belonging increases job performance by 56%, lowers turnover by 50%, and reduces sick days by 75%, which can translate into savings of over \$52 million annually for a 10,000-person company.

Since nearly 40% of Americans feel physically and emotionally isolated in the workplace as noted by the Center for Talent Innovation, fostering greater belonging in organizations has the potential to supercharge the benefits from DE&I initiatives. That's because belonging is intimately linked with one of our most basic human needs – the desire for connection.

Belonging can be spread throughout the workplace by promoting three of its key elements – affirmation, voice, and agency. Team leaders at all levels with key tools can be equipped to become champions and the organization can be populated throughout with persons experienced in working in teams and in diverse environments.

AFFIRMATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has shown that recognizing and supporting individuals, their cultures and their backgrounds allows them to bring their whole authentic selves and their entire set of capabilities and knowledge to the workplace. Leaders can begin by using inclusive language and celebrating the self-identities of their team members. This initial affirmation can be reinforced in many ways including establishing and prioritizing connections with team members and encouraging peers to check in on their fellow team members.

VOICE

Ensuring that all team members, particularly those from underrepresented groups, can freely express their ideas and critiques provides the double bonus of not only creating a sense of belonging but also of expanding the creativity and problem-solving capability of the team as a whole. Taking simple steps such as asking for input, sanctioning interruptions during discussions, and calling on members who are struggling to join the conversation and be heard can substantially increase the flow of ideas and enhance team productivity. Leaders can privately consult with their more reticent members to encourage them to speak up and to devise strategies to maximize their contributions. Author, historian, and Pulitzer Prize winner Louis Terkel emphasizes that leaders can enhance the voice of members of underrepresented groups by seeking out ways to become allies.

AGENCY

Empowering team members enables them to



take on the mission of the organization as their own and encourages them to unleash their full potential. As the Annie E. Casey Foundation points out, leaders can give their team members the emotional and psychological wings they need to fly by studiously avoiding micromanagement and stepping in as a resource when needed. Leaders should also be prepared to give all team members, including those from underrepresented groups, the permission to fail without dire consequences.

These key elements can be implemented as follows:

- **Voluntary training with relevant rewards.** Team participants and employees are more likely to view belonging and DE&I coaching as useful and constructive when they are allowed to opt in and to earn meaningful rewards for doing so. Rewards can be designed to meet any budget and can take a variety of forms such as gift cards, comp time and/or special recognition, and extra pay.
- **Incorporating belonging and DE&I goals into criteria for advancement.** Include belonging and DE&I progress in benchmarks for choice assignments, pay raises and promotions. Institutionalizing these criteria helps ensure that individuals who move into leadership positions are mindful of the importance of DE&I. Plus, these criteria make voluntary DE&I training even more attractive and helps reduce the likelihood that large numbers of employees will opt out. Individuals striving to growing with your organization will see that the path to greater influence and responsibility lies in understanding and effectively implementing DE&I.
- **Hiring persons experienced in diverse environments.** The presence of leaders, peers and subordinates with the ability to make a

variety of persons from a variety of backgrounds belong is an informal yet important form of support. As they model belonging-focused team leading, committee participation or division-level advancement day by day, others can observe and learn from them.

As a leader in educating diverse populations, the Nazarian College of Business and Economics at CSUN is an excellent source of these experienced role models. Employers consistently applaud the leadership and teamwork skills of Nazarian college graduates, especially in diverse contexts, as well as their superb business training.

The Nazarian College ranks among the top 5% of business schools by virtue of its AACSB accreditation, and has been regularly awarded top accolades from the Princeton Review, US News & World Report, CEO Magazine, Money Magazine and other esteemed agencies over the past six years. With over 7,000 majors and 400 minors, the College offers one of the 10 largest undergraduate business programs in the nation and top-ranked graduate business programs. As part of CSUN, which is a certified Hispanic, Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander serving University, the Nazarian College student body boasts ethnicities, races, and nationalities from around the world as well as members of all socio-economic strata.

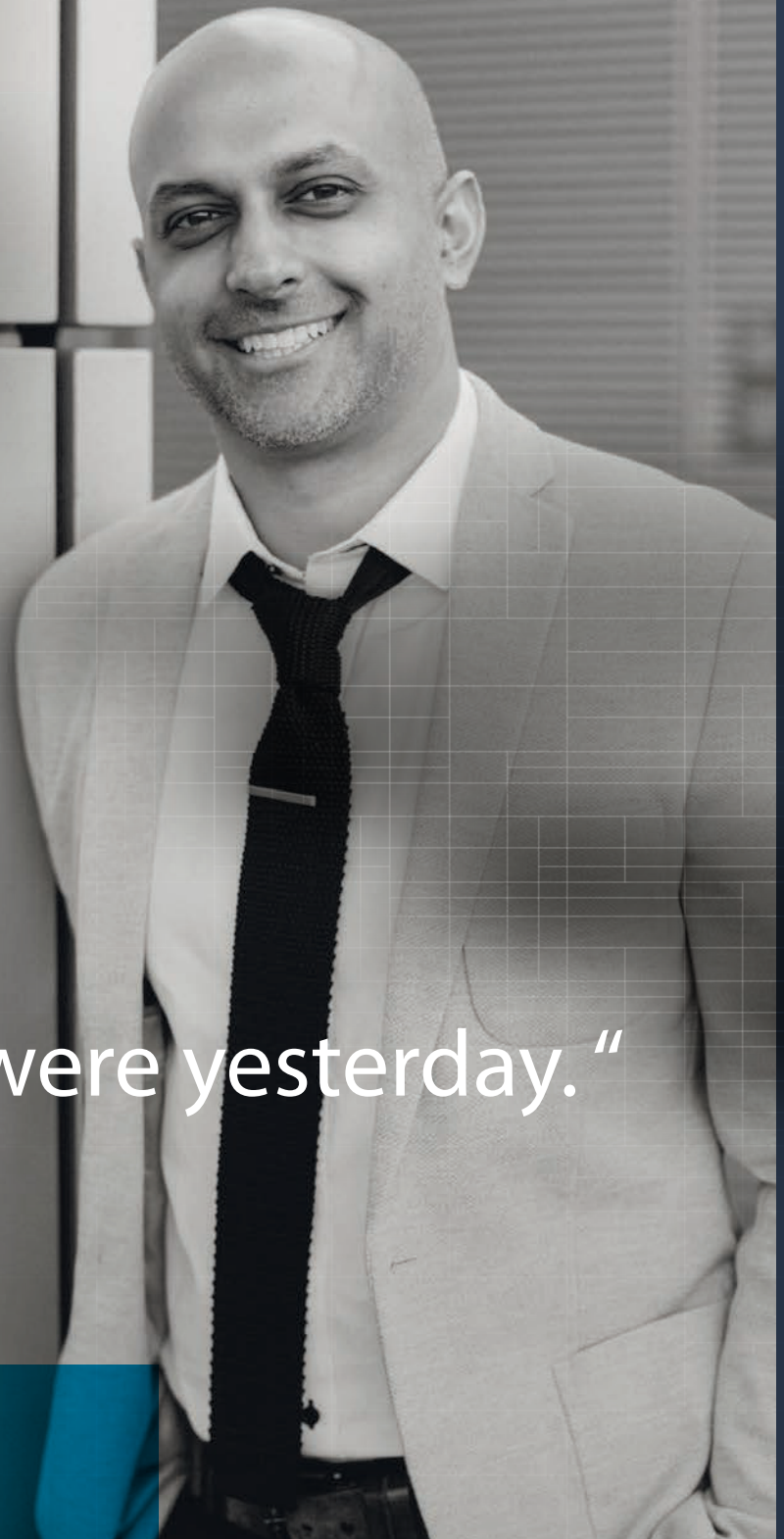
A curriculum steeped in collaboration and teamwork ensures that Nazarian College graduates at both the undergraduate and Master's levels are experienced in working with persons from a variety of backgrounds to achieve demanding, time-sensitive goals. This active, team-based learning also occurs outside the classroom via engagement with practitioners, and hands-on experiences through consulting projects, internships, competitions, interna-

Since nearly 40% of Americans feel physically and emotionally isolated in the workplace as noted by the Center for Talent Innovation, fostering greater belonging in organizations has the potential to supercharge the benefits from DE&I initiatives.

tional excursions, and incubator/accelerator programs. This pragmatic yet rigorous approach gives Nazarian College students both the theoretical know-what and the practical know-how to maximize the effectiveness of your organizational initiatives.

The Nazarian College, and its students, faculty, staff, and alumni stand ready to partner with you to help you capture lasting gains from belonging, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through our expertise in training and developing diverse individuals and teams, we aim to partner with Los Angeles businesses in leveraging the vast assortment of people, cultures and ideas in the larger metropolitan area and make Los Angeles a leader in harnessing the power of diverse perspectives, skills and thinking.

Lois M. Shelton, Ph.D. is a Justin G. Longenecker fellow, USASBE; co-editor, IJEBR; and professor, Nazarian College, CSUN. Learn more at csun.edu/nazarian.



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Exploring Early and Dedicated DEI Program Success

By PAUL AUDLEY and DENISE GUTCHES

As the not-for-profit film office for the City and County of Los Angeles, engaged for more than 28 years facilitating on-location filming in Greater Los Angeles, FilmLA has cultivated a workforce of extreme dedication.

While FilmLA employees have long given their workplace culture high marks and describe their experience like “being part of a family,” our leaders have remained committed to enhancing our workplace culture. And our employees expect the same.

Our employees expect company leaders to champion workforce diversity, foster a sense of employee inclusion and belonging, and to create and maintain equitable employee access to opportunities for professional development.

Realizing that valuing these things is not enough, FilmLA sought to create a dedicated structure to support these goals. Three years ago we committed to initiate and become co-executive sponsors of a formal DEI program at FilmLA.

Like many business leaders for whom this

work is still new, we spent a great deal of time listening, learning, and engaging with expert facilitators.

Here, with gratitude for the support of our FilmLA colleagues, we’d like to share some reflections on what made our early efforts successful.

ENGAGE EXPERTS EARLY

We were fortunate to identify and engage expert help in building a formal DEI program. To date, three consultants have provided guidance to us as executive sponsors, to our HR department, and to the members of our employee-driven DEI Task Force, DEI Advisory Committee and DEI Affinity Group.

We are assisted on an ongoing basis by Candice Gottlieb-Clark and Suman Kapur of Dynamic Team Solutions. In addition to supporting us through periods of change management, they are our partners in creating an integrated platform for DEI work internally and for the communities we serve.

Access to these experts, and the benefit of their experience working with for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, has been indispensable. Being trained facilitators and experts in mediation techniques, Dynamic Team Solutions has helped us engage our employees in socially and culturally complex conversations requiring

Like many business leaders for whom this work is still new, we spent a great deal of time listening, learning, and engaging with expert facilitators.

great sensitivity in workplace settings.

LEAD FROM ALL LEVELS

Like many not-for-profit organizations, we have both a long-term Mission and an immediate Strategic Plan to inform our practices. FilmLA’s Board of Directors, by establishing “Relentless Focus on Team” as a strategic business objective, helped make clear what that involves from a DEI perspective.

FilmLA’s current Strategic Plan invokes in every FilmLA leader a responsibility to help “create a culture that supports and sustains Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the forefront of the work we do.”

Expressions of this DEI value are visible

today in changes to our hybrid work environment, our HR policies, and the composition and leadership structure of employee work teams. Our DEI Advisory and Affinity Groups are also an essential part of our internal accountability structure, and today members of these groups are viewed as advisors and subject matter experts among their business colleagues and peers.

SEEKING SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

Leaning into our commitment to DEI is not always obvious or easy. Complexities abound, and developing the skills and structure to manage it requires sustained attention and intention.

Our success thus far has been driven by a permanent, employee-designed structure which is fully supported by executive leadership. Continued communication, activity, celebrations and learning opportunities are solidifying a DEI DNA at FilmLA.

We believe strongly that maintaining a focus on DEI is the right thing to do for our community and our employees. We also predict that organizations in all industries will find it essential for long-term success in business.

Paul Audley is president of FilmLA and Denise Gutches is chief financial & operating officer with FilmLA. Learn more at filmLA.com.



Children’s Bureau

DEI Awards Nominee

**Non-Profit Organization of the Year & Executive of the Year
2023 Diversity, Equity Symposium & Inclusion Awards**

As the 2022 Los Angeles Business Journal Top DEI Nonprofit, Children’s Bureau of Southern California continues to elevate its efforts and investment in nurturing and sustaining a diverse, equitable and inclusive working and learning environment that creates an authentic culture of true belonging for all employees. Congratulations to our **People Support Services Team** for spearheading this dynamic educational and conversational experience that contributes to moving forward the mission of preventing child abuse.

Thank you, Los Angeles Business Journal, for this stellar recognition.



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Creating a World Where Health Care Works Better for Everyone

By ROSE MADRIAGA

At Optum, we're not just imagining a world where health care works better for everyone. We're creating it. Our care model puts our patients at the center because we know they are unique, and their care should be too. We start by listening to patients and

DEI SPOTLIGHT

tailor care for their individual needs. We know that the right care at the right time is important – and our doctors work with personalized care teams who connect patients to our vast network of specialists and the services they need.

As the largest multi-payer, value-based care organization in the country, we have the resources to focus on the overall well-being of each patient with an emphasis on affordability and accessibility, while widening our lens to care for the whole person, not just an illness. Our whole-person focus means we also speak

the language of our patients and strive to understand their culture. It's how we provide the kind of holistic care that reduces health disparities, helps all of us to do our best work, and gives patients a sense of belonging and purpose.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) extends beyond company culture and workplace well-being, it is embedded in how we do business — both internally, as a part of the decision-making process among our leadership and team members; and externally, to benefit the patients we care for and the communities we serve. Through this inclusive decision-making process, Optum has laid the foundation to support an organizational culture focused on DEI, resulting in the alignment of organizational priorities and a three-year roadmap to achieve desired outcomes with business impact. Additionally, our California region has adopted the following health equity policy statement: “We are committed to health equity and treating every patient, family and community we serve with care and respect. We stand against racism and any form of bias that

leads to unequal health outcomes.” This statement will be adopted across the Optum enterprise nationally. The statement is visible to more than 2 million patients who visit our 125 clinics across California, reinforcing our commitment to health equity and demonstrating to all patients they are welcome and belong.

To support Optum's whole-person approach to care, it's important that we provide education to team members that focus on bias and inclusivity. Optum developed the first-of-its-kind, continuing education-eligible training on LGBTQ+ health equity, with a goal to improve the care experience and drive quality for the LGBTQ+ community. The training, which is accessible at no cost to all clinicians externally, consists of two learning modules: Caring for the LGBTQ+ Community: An Introduction; and Across the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Spectrum: A Call to Action. To date, more than 10,000 employees and clinicians have taken the training, putting their learning into action, and resulting in a more positive experience for LGBTQ+ patients.

While we've achieved measurable success, we've also renewed our commitment to DEI by actively engaging a collective group of changemakers for their thought partnership as we think about how to improve patient experience and achieve health equity. We understand that everyone plays a crucial role in helping to cultivate a company culture that reflects the communities we serve and integrates DEI strategies that fuels improvements to the health care system. Our DEI journey is about enacting that change, and our objective is to derive actionable solutions that will impact Optum, our communities, and most importantly, the patients we care for every day.

Rose Madriaga is director of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for Optum - Pacific West. She is on a mission to help create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and healthcare system. She oversees the strategy and execution of the DEI and Health Equity programs, creating alignment nationally and across multiple care delivery organizations to serve over two million patients. Learn more at [Optum.com](https://www.optum.com).



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Diversity Doesn't Just Happen

By CHRISTINA MILLER, Ph.D.

Mental Health America of Los Angeles (MHALA) is one of Los Angeles County's largest and most comprehensive social service agencies. We provide integrated mental health, medical care, employment, housing, wellness, and education services to adults and transition-age youth, with a special program for Veterans. Headquartered in Long Beach, we are located in 24 sites across LA County.

MHALA is honored to be nominated for the Los Angeles Business Journal's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) awards. This honor is important to us because DEI is at the core of who we are as an agency and what we are trying to do today.

More than 72% of the individuals we serve, or "members," are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). About 77% of MHALA's staff are now BIPOC and LGBTQ+.

Many of our staff also have "lived experience," either through their own experiences or through their families, including homelessness, poverty, substance use, or mental or physical

health challenges.

One thing we learned from the pandemic is that mental health is not a binary phenomenon where people are either mentally ill or they aren't. Everyone has "mental health" that can fluctuate based on what they are experiencing.

When I joined MHALA as a new CEO five years ago, I interviewed staff across the agency and asked for their views on what was working, what wasn't, and where they would like the agency to go. Many staff expressed that they wanted the leadership of the organization to reflect the diversity that already existed within the staff and the members we serve.

I had observed that there were a number of BIPOC staff members who were contributing a great deal to the organization, and efforts were put in place to identify and recognize the greatest contributors from within MHALA.

The impact has been excellent. We now have a leadership team (managers and above) that is 64% BIPOC.

In recent years, we have also prioritized our efforts to ensure that our agency has a diverse Board of Directors by reaching out to individuals from a broad range of backgrounds. Our current Board of Directors is 50% BIPOC (20% LatinX, 20% Black and 10% Asian), and 20% are immigrants. In addition, the Executive

Our staff and leadership diversity has a profoundly positive impact on the people that we serve. The broad experiences and cultural backgrounds of our staff help them in understanding and responding to our members.

Committee of the Board is 50% BIPOC.

Our staff and leadership diversity has a profoundly positive impact on the people that we serve. The broad experiences and cultural backgrounds of our staff help them in understanding and responding to our members.

Individuals from different cultural backgrounds often have varying perspectives on mental health, physical health, and what it means to accept help. By having a staff that is reflective of the various backgrounds and experiences of our members, we can provide culturally sensitive and competent care that better con-

nects our members to the services they need.

Individuals seeking our services may feel more seen and heard when connected to a provider that is reflective of their own background — whether that's a shared lived experience such as homelessness or a mental health challenge, or someone who speaks their native language.

But the impact of our diversity doesn't stop there. It feeds the core culture of our organization, which celebrates differences and values work-life balance and staff wellbeing. At a time when many similar organizations are experiencing immense turnover, MHALA has had a low turnover rate. Staff report that they want to stay at MHALA not only because the agency does valuable work, but also because MHALA cares about them.

Diversity in our organization fosters feelings of acceptance and safety. When an organization becomes diverse at all levels, staff feel freer to be who they are and to express their ideas and concerns more openly. Morale and staff commitment to the organization increase. People do their best work when they can bring their authentic selves to their jobs.

Christina Miller, Ph.D. is president and CEO of Mental Health America of Los Angeles. Learn more at mhala.org.

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Providing Tools and Resources to Advance Diverse Communities

Ori-gen was founded by The J. Morey Company, Inc. Insurance Agents & Brokers and Alliance 360° Insurance Solutions – two like-minded companies that joined together to achieve the common goal of sustaining legacy businesses, by underscoring

where they came from in order to create a new future. Ori-gen advances diverse communities by providing tools and resources to businesses looking to continue their legacies for future generations. The company currently consists of ten locations throughout California and Hawaii, and holds insurance licenses in all 50 states. Ori-gen offers over 40 direct carrier appointments across all lines of insurance among its 15 legacy agency partners to date.

With 126,000 insurance brokers in the nation, and over 3,500 are diverse-owned, Ori-gen is proud to be a diverse group of ethnicities, genders, races and ages, serving a variety of clients ranging from small minori-

ty-owned businesses to large municipalities. As a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Ori-gen embraces its heritage and DE&I initiatives and assists its clients with MBE, WBE, and DBE certifications that are now recognized at the federal and Fortune 500 levels. More recently, Ori-gen has grown beyond property & casualty and employee benefits, to now include retirement services and consulting services.

Ori-gen considers itself not in the Insurance business, but in the business of DE&I. Beyond recruiting diverse talent by percentage margins, it is of equal importance to perpetuate the impacts that have already been made by Ori-gen legacy partners such as Noguchi & Associates, Alliance 360° Insurance Solutions, The J. Morey Company, and others.

As one of the largest minority-owned independent insurance agencies in the country, it is the organization's collective goal to dismantle systemic barriers and to serve underserved and underutilized communities. Ori-gen is a company that has diversity embedded into the fabric of the organization and was founded on three pillars: diversity, legacy, and communi-



Ori-gen executive team (L-R): Joshua Morey, chairperson; Terri Seki, chief human resources officer; Kevin Fukuyama, president; Nori Nishida, chief executive officer.

ty. Rooted in building and sustaining legacy businesses while helping diverse communities flourish, the company places full focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity not only internally but also when selecting partners to collaborate with.

Together, Ori-gen and its partners uplift each other and invest in a new generation of insurance professionals that looks drastically different from its predecessors.

Learn more at ori-gen.com.



Congratulations

We celebrate Child Care Resource Center on their nomination for the Los Angeles Business Journal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Nonprofit Organization of the Year!

CCRC supports and inspires diversity, equity, and inclusion in both the workplace and in the communities that we serve.

DEI is integrated into services for children, families, child care providers and staff including:

- Offering interpretation services and translated information for families
- Creating a safe and inclusive classroom setting
- Launching a 2023-2025 DEI Strategic plan agency-wide to hold us accountable for our equity efforts
- Implementing large scale community Play Days to offer children and families resources that encourage healthy living, early education and family well-being





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Cultivating Well-Being for a Diverse Community

As part of its mission to cultivate child, family, and community well-being, Child Care Resource Center works to reach and connect with a diverse population of people in ways that respect their unique cultures. Because culturally appropriate communication is critical to developing trust among those it serves, CCRC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion division actively educates and informs staff on these important issues and supports agency-wide DEI efforts in the community.

DEI SPOTLIGHT

CCRC was founded in 1976 by a group of women in the San Fernando Valley who wanted to find a way for families to access affordable child care. Since then, the agency has expanded throughout northern Los Angeles County and the entirety of San Bernardino County. The agency now employs over 1,000 staff.

Understanding the way race and culture affect families is key to effectively serving those who live in CCRC's service area. In LA County, the population is 49% Latino and 9% Black; in San Bernardino County, the population is 51% Latino and 8% Black. Likewise, CCRC's staff is comprised of over 65% Latino, 8%

Black, and 4% Asian. CCRC actively works to maintain a staff that is representative of the 50,000 children, families, and providers it serves. One of the agency's highest priorities is the enrollment of families in subsidized child care, which is available to a family of four earning up to \$7,900 per month. To effectively reach families of all racial identities and backgrounds, the agency provides information and direct support in several different languages and through meetings with diverse staff.

In the community, CCRC integrates DEI into services provided for children, families, and child care providers including interpretation services and translated information for families, safe and inclusive classroom settings, bias training for staff, teachers and providers, and community events that provide culturally appropriate resources. Through these opportunities for children and families, CCRC staff incorporate diverse representations and awareness through books, videos, art, and toys, along with interactions and attitude of staff.

CCRC participated in last year's Los Angeles Business Journal panel, where DEI issues in child care, early learning and family resources were discussed. For this award, CCRC's entry outlined the agency's DEI strategic plan, including staff engagement opportunities, and

their DEI Division's work to advance these issues and work toward equitable outcomes.

"What I love about DEI work, is that it takes the commitment of all our leaders to truly make a change," said CCRC DEI director Sarah Toutant. "Being nominated for this award is a testament to our collective commitment as an agency to be intentional, use our voices to advocate for equity, and pave the way for a future that is inclusive and just. I am excited for the future of DEI work at CCRC."

CCRC's establishment of an anti-racist task force in June 2020 and the development of a DEI Division in January 2022 is part of its promise to uplift and empower all members of its staff and community. Now known as the DEI council, the task force conducted a racial climate survey and hosted programs and events, including the development of five employee networks designed to empower staff to connect with other staff of shared backgrounds and cultures. Internally, CCRC has provided DEI educational books to all employees, hosted a company-wide DEI panel as well as monthly events, began creating a DEI committee on its Board, provided DEI education and resources to external providers, and created customized DEI action plans for its many different divisions.

'Being nominated for this award is a testament to our collective commitment as an agency to be intentional, use our voices to advocate for equity, and pave the way for a future that is inclusive and just. I am excited for the future of DEI work at CCRC.'

As a civic leader in the national space, the agency presented best equity-minded practices at the National Black Childhood Development Institute in Washington DC.

The agency's DEI division has outlined various community engagement efforts and will continue developing programs that support the identities of families and child care providers.

Learn more at ccrcca.org.

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Profile of a Visionary DEI Leader

Quentin Strode, the president and CEO of NEW Community Investments, is a visionary leader who for decades has truly embraced diversity, equity, and inclusion.

DEI SPOTLIGHT

Throughout his career, Strode has applied DE&I principles to support internal and external business decisions achieving tangible business results and positively impacting disadvantaged communities of color.

As regional president and top producing banker at Bank of America and U.S. Bank, Strode drove record sales, revenue, and expanded market share by understanding his clients' financial challenges and providing solutions. He has also strategized, led, and executed corporate social responsibility initiatives that made great in-roads for LA's low-income communities and beyond. With his keen business sense and respectful approach to all people, he has especially earned the trust of the Black and Brown communities of LA.

During his banking tenure, Strode was also exceptional in supporting internal DE&I efforts. For example, to promote DE&I at U.S. Bank, he established the 1st organization-wide DE&I Strategy for its 60,000 employees, increasing visibility and advancement especially for its well-qualified diverse colleagues. This DE&I Strategy contributed to enhancing U.S. Bank's diverse talent pipeline ensuring equitable career advancement and bank competitiveness.

After realizing goals few bankers are able to achieve, Strode went on to help establish NEW Community Investments (NCI) as the financial arm for the nonprofit New Economics or Women (NEW) to further support capacity building for LA's disenfranchised small businesses of color. Strode took the helm as CEO dedicating to offering equitable financial solutions to help women and minority entrepreneurs in underserved communities bridge the capital access gap and build long-term wealth.

Leveraging his extensive banking experience and financial network, and in tandem with the parent nonprofit NEW, Strode scaled up his support for LA's underrepresented small business communities by establishing new centers and programs to provide comprehensive support. Despite COVID restrictions, Strode was instrumental in launching two business centers with government partners such as the US Small Business Administration (SBA), State of California, and Los Angeles City. He also partnered with USC and other local universities to create college-level incubator programs even writing a technical assistance curriculum which was adopted for SBA's PLUM (Partnership for Lending in Underserved Markets) Initiative. He also founded the local South LA CDFI consortium to boost lending opportunities, and launched alternate financing solution platforms. But what made all of this happen was his vision, leadership and strategically employing DE&I principles into his business decisions.

An example of DE&I in action with business results is NEW's Women Business Center. Strode worked with SBA and GO-Biz California to launch the center in April 2020. Mindful of



Strode

Strode understands that creating a company culture rich in DE&I is key to moving the organization forward.

the target clientele, Strode chose and trusted a Latina small business expert to run the center, giving her full autonomy to develop and administer technical assistance programs. As a result, the center has become one of the top producing women's business centers in California for the last two years. Another example of DE&I resulting in good business is the Kiva partnership. Strode launched Kiva LA in March 2022 selecting one of his African American woman executives with contract program experience to lead efforts. As a result, despite being one of the newest Kiva hubs, Kiva LA is currently the #1 producing hub in the US with more than 60% women and 90% minority borrowers. Another example is NCI's proprietary crowdfunding platform called Impresario. As part of Strode's roadmap to support disadvantaged women, women of color, and veteran entrepreneurs, Impresario was launched late Summer 2022. Strode made a deliberate effort to have this platform led by a team of diverse managers to ensure client's unique campaign needs were met. This platform has already attracted 40+ clients of which 75% are women and 70% are minority borrowers.

Strode understands that creating a company culture rich in DE&I is key to moving the organization forward and to better serve clients and their communities. Strode fully appreciates the unique talents and skillsets his diverse team members brings to the table and takes an inclusive approach in providing them with full autonomy in making important decisions. This creates individual and team engagement, and brings successful business outcomes, strengthening the impact of the organization.

Strode is a true champion for DE&I who shows exemplary leadership in creating an inclusive environment that enables diversity and equity to thrive.

Learn more about NEW Community Investments at new-nci.com.

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Why it Matters

By JAY CATLIN

AMS Fulfillment is proud to be a Certified B Corporation. Since our inception in 2002, AMS has had a set of core values putting people above profit.

DEI SPOTLIGHT

In recent years, diversity, equity, and inclusion have garnered centerstage in business. To AMS, DE&I has always been an active practice. We have actively recruited our employees from underserved communities, in terms of their race, gender, sexual preference, judicial background, and presence of disabilities. Our workforce mirrors the community in which we do business or the community for which we serve.

For AMS, DE&I starts at the leadership level. Our leadership team is comprised of 50.3% females. Female executives provide a unique skill set to any organization. From more diverse problem-solving skills to increased organizational collaboration, female leaders are integral to AMS' success. At our C-level, 25% are women – which is higher than the national average.

AMS takes pride in our workforce equity. With our low turnover rate and high employee engagement, we have achieved a workforce family atmosphere, where all employees are committed to the company's success and individual success. AMS invests in our people and our community. We actively recruit from organizations that address underrepresented communities such as PleasantView Industries, Desert Haven, New Horizons, the Department of Rehabilitation, Bridge to Home, and the Carousal Ranch.

Not only do we provide a safe work environment, but we are also committed to our employees, whether they want to advance their careers through our internal Learning Center Classes such as Excel and ESL or support them in social causes.

As an organization, AMS Fulfillment encourages our employees to grow. As of 2022, over 43% of our employees have taken the I Want to be a Leader course, and over 20% have taken the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion course. We actively foster a learning environment.

But learning isn't just for our employees. Even though we have a low employee turnover rate, it doesn't mean that AMS can't learn too. We actively conduct exit interviews and employee engagement surveys – thoroughly

reading the employee feedback. We want to know who is falling through the cracks in our organization. Equity is not letting success stories marginalize the quieter, struggling voices in our organization – it's about embracing them and ensuring an inclusive environment.

Inclusion is not ever having anyone be the last kid in the gym to be picked for a team. Instead, it is the feeling you get in the morning when you wake up and look forward to going to work because your leadership and associates respect you, value your contributions, and count on you to be a part of the team.

AMS Fulfillment has ten core values that guide all our decisions – from hiring to vendors to clients and our community. These core values are our guiding light:

- Integrity • Accountability • Teamwork
- Reliability • Continuous Improvement
- Honesty • Innovation • Respect
- Equal Rights for All
- Respect for the Environment

AMS Fulfillment knows that diverse organizations bring a more comprehensive range of ideas and experiences to problem-solving, help companies connect with a broader range of audiences in a culturally competent way, and demonstrate a commitment to disrupting the

structural inequities that have historically created barriers for women, people of color, people with disabilities, and individuals involved with the justice system in the workplace.

By creating opportunities for everyone we strengthen our company and our communities. By welcoming people from different backgrounds and with different abilities, we improve our performance and leverage diversity in our organization.

As a B Corporation, AMS is committed to putting people over profit. We are part of a global movement that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through the years, AMS has demonstrated transparency in our business, achieved a high social and environmental performance, and proven we are leaders in the movement for economic system changes. We are proud to share this distinction with companies such as REI, The Body Shop, Allbirds, and Patagonia.

As AMS Fulfillment embraces our next decades in business, we are committed to making our employees' lives, our community, and our business better. Our driving force is Purpose over Profit.

Jay Catlin is CEO at AMS Fulfillment. Learn more at amsfulfillment.com.

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Erin Ricardez & Sheree Harrison

on being nominated for the Los Angeles Business Journal's

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Erin Ricardez, Director of Human Resources | Sheree Harrison, Director of Development & Communications & National Leader, BIPOC Employee Resources Group

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Moving Beyond Performance: DEI as a Daily Practice

By JULEE BROOKS and ANDRÉS DE LA PEZA

DEI SPOTLIGHT

Efforts to advance the workplace to be more reflective of our society are more prevalent now than ever before. Organizations around the country have committed to DEI (or JEDI which adds Justice to the umbrella) in

various ways, often resulting in the creation of committees, commitment/values-statements, or designated roles or departments to ensure the various perspectives of employees are considered and incorporated into organizational actions and decision-making. These moves are most visible and illustrate a great philosophical commitment to JEDI.

But as the goal of JEDI is to create a sense of safety – physically, emotionally, and socially – for all employees, how staff are treated, how they are seen, and how they are made to feel on a daily basis, more accurately defines our level of commitment. In short, JEDI is a PRACTICE.

Therefore, a commitment to JEDI is a collective responsibility that becomes part of an organization’s DNA so it can weather natural

shifts, changes, and transitions over time.

Woodcraft Rangers was founded in LA in 1922 as a response to youth agencies that were segregated by gender, race, religion, or income. As a result, Woodcraft opened its doors so all youth regardless of these identifiers, would have a place where they belonged. JEDI principles were an inherent element of Woodcraft’s foundation and continue to serve as North Star as it enters its second century of community service.

Today, Woodcraft Rangers conducts decision-making at all levels through a JEDI lens, a commitment that is a daily practice and is persistent within all its staff. We acknowledge that some of this work can be unique to an organization’s specific context, but we also believe there are some general guiding principles that are universal good practices.

Here are a few actions that Woodcraft Rangers has taken to establish a foundation of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion:

- **We consider experience and skills over education pedigree.** It’s now well-documented that college attainment rates vary widely by zip code with communities of color trailing their white counterparts by a significant margin. Furthermore, 57 percent of Native Americans and 52 percent of Hispanic students were enrolled in community colleges (highereducation.org).

So if we required four-year degrees or were romanced by “elite” institutions, we would be inherently drawing from a shallow pool of candidates.

- **We support employees in their long-term goals even beyond when they will work for us.** Our employees are given access to an internal program that offers guidance for career and college planning within and beyond the organization. We also offer paid academies for employees interested in becoming site supervisors and regional managers. Investing in employee life success contributes to a sense of security and belonging. We know our employees have goals beyond their time as our employee and we believe that when we honor the person before the job, we create lifetime fans of our agency, regardless of their tenure.

- **We continually evaluate – and fix – pay disparities.** Woodcraft conducts compensation audits to ensure parity within and across departments. We also proactively increase comparable positions when elevating others without any request from those employees, recognizing that some individuals may feel less confident to advocate for themselves.

- **We let go of yesterday’s rules.** Relaxing dress codes lessens financial burden and removes stress for employees who don’t feel

comfortable in a three-piece suit (most of us). Offering flexible work schedules and self-determined hybrid options allow employees to balance caregiver roles and can create safe spaces for neurodiverse staff. Allowing cameras off in routine internal meetings may mean people can focus on outcomes rather than worrying about appearances. Set clear goals and monitor them, but realize that norms evolve, and performance is not dependent on them.

This work is a constant process of learning and growth and when challenge ultimately occurs, our teams must be prepared to respond. Leadership must be aware of the realities and intersections their staff have and are experiencing, and must create accountability for people, spaces, and behaviors that infringe upon any person’s safety, whether intentional or not.

JEDI requires practice and this means acknowledging that it must be responsive; it will grow weaker or stronger depending on our attention to it. At Woodcraft Rangers we believe that when our attention to JEDI is high, everyone benefits.

Julee Brooks is CEO and Andrés De La Peza is director of strategy and partner relations for Woodcraft Rangers. Learn more at woodcraftangers.org.

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Businesses Need a Plan for Recruiting Gen Z Workers

As US job openings continue to reach historic highs, companies urgently need Gen Z workers. And according to a new study, the businesses that win them—and keep them—will be the companies that put a laser-like focus on understanding what matters most to them.

The Conference Board report explores the most important motivations of Gen Z, a cohort that is expected to represent nearly a third of the workforce by 2025.

Based on interviews with more than 100 Gen Zers, they place the biggest premium on five critical values: adequate compensation, control, safety and wellness, growth, and purpose. While these objectives are important to all generations of employees, for Gen Zers, they are imperatives.

The report also explores what makes Gen Z—those born in 1997 or later—a force to be reckoned with. Unlike previous generations, their comfort with evolving technology and using social media to amplify their concerns makes them unique. Also influencing their views, Gen Zers completed their education remotely and started their careers during especially turbulent times—the COVID-19 pandemic, extraordinary economic uncertainty, geopolitical turmoil, and deep societal unrest.

“Many Gen Zers say adequate compensation isn’t enough to stay with a company—they need opportunities to learn and grow. Organizations must make sure these opportunities are not only available but are clearly communicated. Employees need to know they’ll be able to build and advance a career at the company—because for many of them, finding a new job is not difficult given the current labor shortage.”

The insights in the study reflect virtual focus groups and online polls with Gen Z workers—both hourly and knowledge workers—between November 2022 and January 2023.

To best attract, engage, and retain Gen Zers, companies should:

Reevaluate starting salaries and increase pay transparency.

- Gen Zers readily share salary information with one another both via social media and in person.
- Gen Zers view adequate compensation

as a matter of both respect and equity.

Give them as much flexibility as possible over where and when they work.

- For knowledge workers, this can mean the opportunity to work remotely at least some of the time.
- For hourly workers, it can mean having some say in the shifts assigned to them and knowing their shifts well in advance so that they can plan for personal commitments.
- Gen Zers still crave in-person interactions though. Consider flexible work environments supplemented with opportunities for

in-person interaction such as periodic in-person team meetings, team-bonding activities, and networking meetups.

“Many Gen Z knowledge workers finished their education and started their careers on virtual platforms during the pandemic. For them, hybrid work is the expectation,” said Robin Erickson, PhD, vice president of human capital at The Conference Board. “Business leaders should discuss the importance of schedule flexibility and hybrid work with the entire C-suite to ensure their buy in and update policies about where and when work is accomplished to optimize worker autonomy and control.”

Provide opportunities for development—both internal and external.

- In the wake of the Great Resignation, many Gen Zers noted that a lack of growth opportunities would be a reason to leave a job.
- Employees and managers should work together to create personalized career pathing plans and transparently discuss growth opportunities, both within the company and externally.
- Establish how each job contributes toward career advancement and how roles

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and responsibilities will evolve in the future.

- Offer workers opportunities and resources to develop skills that are not only relevant to their desired career advancement, but also support long-term employability in a shifting work landscape.
- Assign workers to projects that align with their professional interests and provide stretch assignments.
- Encourage workers to take risks by creating a failure-tolerant culture: analyze failures and celebrate small successes.
- Employers should also create opportunities for workers to network with senior staff, shadow high-level projects, and tackle independent projects.

“Many Gen Zers say adequate compensation isn’t enough to stay with a company—they need opportunities to learn and grow,” said Barbara Lombardo, PhD, distinguished principal research fellow and program director at The Conference Board. “Organizations must make sure these opportunities are not only available but are clearly communicated. Employees need to know they’ll be able to build and advance a career at the company—because for many of them, finding a new job is not difficult given the current labor shortage.”

Develop a culture of safety and wellness that genuinely supports employees while on the job and respects their boundaries

beyond the workplace.

- Gen Zers want their employers to help support their physical and psychological safety and their pursuit of mental and physical wellness.
 - For workers in customer-facing roles, this can mean support when faced with customer hostility, which has increased significantly since the onset of the pandemic.
 - Many expressed concerns about corporate cultures that expect them to sacrifice their personal life for their careers.
- Survey employees’ well-being to ascertain mental health wellness and seek feedback on established policies and benefits.

Ensure leaders are living the organization’s values in how they communicate with and treat employees.

- Organizational mission, values, and purpose are high priorities when choosing an employer for many Gen Zers, and many said they would leave a job if their employer’s values did not align with their own.
- Leaders and managers need to set expectations and help their employees understand the organizational impact and importance of the work they do.
- Allowing Gen Zers to take ownership of their tasks and giving them autonomy to make decisions will also help them feel invested in the outcome of their work.

Learn more at conference-board.org.



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Executive Vice President & Chief People Officer

Hanmi Bank congratulates Vivian Kim for being nominated as Executive of The Year finalists for the Los Angeles Business Journal Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Awards.





Most Employees Would Quit Over Lack of Company Commitment to DE&I

A full 81% of workers said they would leave their job if their employer lacked a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, while 54% said they would take a pay cut to improve DE&I at work

GoodHire, a leading provider of employment background screening services, recently released “Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Work: Do Americans Really Care?” The survey asked 3,000 US workers to share their opinions about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) at work. Results revealed positive feelings around DE&I efforts in the workplace as 75% of all respondents agreed that their employers prioritized making their workplace diverse, equitable, and inclusive, and 72% of workers were convinced that their

employers showed a commitment to hiring employees from diverse backgrounds with differing abilities and skill sets.

However, many employees feel more work needs to be done. In fact, 70% of employees in leadership positions want their organizations to invest more time and resources toward DE&I. The survey breaks down the results further, showing more men than women (57% vs. 48%) expressed a desire for their companies to make a stronger commitment to DE&I.

When it comes to issues and concerns around discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace, nearly half of those in leadership positions said they sometimes, often or quite often face these issues. On the other hand, 64% of all respondents said these things rarely or never occurred.

If the volatile jobs market over the last two years has taught us anything, it's that employees feel more empowered to express their dissatisfaction at work and will do so by quitting. When asked if employees would consider leaving their job if their employer exhibited a lack of commitment to DE&I in the workplace,



81% of all respondents said they would consider it, and 87% of respondents in leadership

positions echoed that sentiment.

GoodHire's survey also shows workers are serious about their dedication to DE&I, and value diversity over salary. 54% of respondents said they would consider taking a pay cut to ensure a more diverse and inclusive workplace, and 66% of respondents in leadership positions said the same.

“This show of goodwill by survey respondents tracks with what we witnessed early in the pandemic when many workers said they'd rather take a pay cut than see fellow employees lose their jobs. It's inspiring to know employees and leaders care about DE&I efforts more than one might have expected,” said Max Wesman, chief operating officer at GoodHire. “I'm hopeful this report will give organizations incentive to continue investing, or start investing, in DE&I programs that support hiring for a more diverse and inclusive workforce.”

GoodHire is owned and operated by Checkr. To learn more, or to obtain additional information about the survey results and analysis, visit goodhire.com.

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Leading Accounting Organizations Partner to Diversify the Accounting Profession

Pilot program from IMA, AAA, NABA, CalCPA, CAQ, and Gleim will reach out to Black students and professionals in California

In January, IMA (Institute of Management Accountants), AAA (American Accounting Association), NABA Inc. (formerly the National Association of Black Accountants), CalCPA (California Society of Certified Public Accountants), CAQ (Center for Audit Quality), and Gleim Exam Prep announced a partnership pilot program in California to encourage Black students to pursue accounting as a profession and Black professionals to consider sharing their experiences in the accounting classroom. The program will look to increase the number of Black and African American individuals who are fluent in accounting, the language of money, business, and wealth.

Under the partnership agreement, the six organizations will combine their resources for

outreach to Black students and to professionals for teaching roles in California. Pending the success of this pilot program, it can eventually expand to other demographic groups and geographies.

The program will comprise four exclusive tracks that will aid participants in their success — three student tracks: the CMA (Certified Management Accountant) track, which will map out a career in management accounting and ready participants to become CMAs; the CPA (Certified Public Accountant) track, which will map out a career in public and private accounting and ready participants to become CPAs; the leadership track to help participants become business leaders; and the faculty track, which will include faculty development from AAA and assist in the practitioner-to-faculty transition.

All of the tracks will include complimentary memberships to the respective relevant organizations in the partnership, along with resources and exposure to Black business leaders and faculty. Participants in the CMA and CPA tracks will receive access to Gleim

Exam Prep courses, a leader in the accounting exam prep space and trusted by candidates for more than 45 years.

The pilot program implements actionable solutions from the April 2022 Diversifying Global Accounting Talent: Actionable Solutions for Progress report from IMA, CalCPA, and IFAC (International Federation of Accountants), in which all other organizations in this pilot program partnership were involved, that are directed toward attracting diverse talent with various types of campaigns. This program responds to the key call to action found in the research: advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

IMA is one of the largest and most respected associations focused exclusively on advancing the management accounting profession. Globally, IMA supports the profession through research, the CMA and CSCA (Certified in Strategy and Competitive Analysis) programs, continuing education, networking, and advocacy of the highest ethical business practices. For every past, present and future CPA

and accountant, CalCPA is a members' club and professional education provider offering the leadership the CPA profession needs for change, and the knowledge professionals need for what's next.

NABA Inc. is a nonprofit membership association dedicated to bridging the opportunity gap for Black Business Leaders in accounting, finance, entrepreneurship, and related business professions.

The American Accounting Association is the largest community of accountants in academia. Founded in 1916, it has a rich and reputable history built on leading-edge research and publications. The diversity of our membership creates a fertile environment for collaboration and innovation.

The Center for Audit Quality (CAQ) is a nonpartisan public policy organization serving as the voice of U.S. public company auditors and matters related to the audits of public companies.

Gleim creates online self-study courses for accounting certification exams, including the CPA, CMA, CIA, and EA.

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Training Program Initiative Seeks to Increase Number of Women in Construction

Funds will help remove barriers to women, non-binary and underserved populations entering building and construction trades in California

Late last year, The California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and its Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS), on behalf of the Labor & Workforce Development Agency, announced the availability of \$25 million in funding to improve access to training and employment opportunities for women, non-binary and underserved populations within the building and construction trades. The Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeship (ERiCA) grant funds will be used to cover childcare costs and improve outreach.

“The money from this grant will help remove obstacles to entering this industry,” said DIR director Katie S. Hagen. “When we spoke with women in construction, they told us

childcare costs were one of the biggest barriers to working in the trade. We want to encourage organizations to utilize this funding to remove barriers, support parents and get creative in reaching out to these historically underserved groups in the construction trades.”

The grant aims to help organizations that are already working to assist women, non-binary and underserved communities to enter the construction trades. Community-based organizations, local education agencies, workforce boards, unions and other organizations that support equity in the construction industry are eligible to apply.

“In California, women and non-binary individuals make up only 3.5 percent of active apprentices in the building and construction trades,” said Labor Secretary Natalie Palugyai. “When we stop to think about why, it’s in large part because construction is widely viewed as a man’s job. We want to change that. By providing childcare supportive services and expanding our outreach to new and underserved populations, we will support access and equity in the construction industry, while also helping to

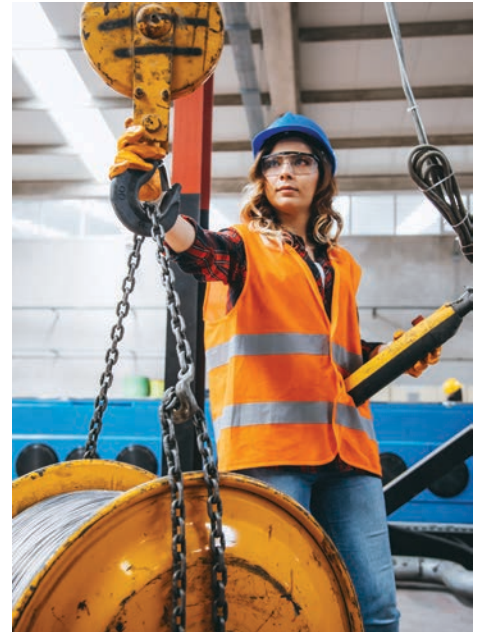
meet its urgent need for skilled workers.”

California has invested significantly in apprenticeship via the 2022-2023 state budget including an additional \$15 Million to augment the 2021-2022 investment of \$15 Million into a Women in Construction Priority Program at DIR.

The grant funds complement the recently released Advancing Apprenticeship in California: A Five-Point Action Plan to expand the state’s number of apprentices to a half-million by 2029 with equity at the center of that strategy.

The Department of Industrial Relations’ Division of Apprenticeship Standards consults with employers to develop a skilled workforce, by establishing innovative apprenticeship programs that offer training, to create viable career pathways for Californians.

The California Department of Industrial Relations, established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws.



Learn more at dir.ca.gov.

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and would like to congratulate all recipients on this recognition



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California State Bar Launches DEI Leadership Seal Program

In an effort to recognize California legal employers who take vital steps to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the State Bar of California announced earlier this month the launch of its new DEI Leadership Seal Program.

“Promoting diversity and inclusion in the legal profession is an important part of the State Bar’s mission,” said Leah Wilson, State Bar executive director. “Our latest Diversity Report Card showed us where DEI improvements in the legal profession are occurring and where far too many disparities still exist in California. The State Bar’s DEI Leadership Seal Program encourages real action that can move us toward the ultimate goal: a more inclusive legal profession that reflects the diversity of our state.”

The State Bar’s 2022 Diversity Report Card found that the demographics of California’s licensed attorneys do not reflect the diversity of the state’s population. To support greater DEI in the workplace, the State Bar published “Calls to Action” that legal employers and attorneys can implement. The DEI

Leadership Seal Program utilizes these Calls to Action as the centerpiece of this effort.

Legal employers who commit to meet at least five of the 10 stated DEI Leadership Seal Program Action Items will be recognized as participating employers. Participating employers will have one year after applying to the program to implement the Action Items. Employers that implement at least 5 of the 10 Action Items will be recognized as Bronze-level recipients on the State Bar’s DEI webpage, enabling them to carry the DEI Leadership Seal on their own materials and websites. Those that implement at least seven Action Items will receive Silver-level recognition. The highest level of recognition is Gold-level for those legal employers that implement at least nine Action Items.

Beyond overseeing the DEI Leadership Seal Program, the State Bar will also be an active participant, with a commitment to earn Gold Seal status. The State Bar will share its journey in obtaining Gold Seal status as an example for other employers.

“While the State Bar has actively worked to

‘Promoting diversity and inclusion in the legal profession is an important part of the State Bar’s mission. The State Bar’s DEI Leadership Seal Program encourages real action that can move us toward the ultimate goal: a more inclusive legal profession that reflects the diversity of our state.’

increase DEI throughout the organization for some time now, Board and staff leadership recognize that we can do more, and, more importantly, the State Bar can show others how to

follow our lead,” said Wilson. “The goal is to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal field, and for us that means nothing less than Leadership Gold Seal Status will suffice.”

The Board of Trustees Audit Committee will monitor and oversee the State Bar’s pursuit of Gold level status.

Participating legal providers could include an entire organization—such as a nonprofit legal aid provider or a local law firm—or a smaller unit or department within an organization, such as an in-house legal department of a corporation. A nationwide law firm can choose to implement the Action Items and receive the DEI Leadership Seal for their entire firm, or for only their California offices.

In future years, DEI Leadership Seal Action Items will change to encourage employers to commit to additional, more ambitious steps toward diversity, equity, and inclusion.

To be considered in the first cohort of DEI Leadership Seal recipients, interested parties must apply by March 31, 2023.

Learn more at calbar.ca.gov.



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Chief Human Resource Officers Have an Additional Focus: ESG

The events of the past three years—including a pandemic, social strife, and the Great Resignation—have upended the role of the chief human resource officer (CHRO). Now, CHROs are being called on to play a greater part in addressing the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) matters—both the risks and opportunities for companies.

Based on discussions with more than 100 human capital leaders at multi-national companies and regional powerhouses in Europe, Asia, and the US, a new report from The Conference Board reveals the increased pressure on companies to act on ESG issues, and the expanded role of human capital leaders in doing so. CHROs will need to—among other things in the ESG sphere—help shape the corporate voice on social issues, articulate the mission and purpose of their companies, and communicate the company’s people strategy to an increasingly broad set of stakeholders. This has become all the more urgent as companies prepare for upcoming US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) requirements to further disclose data on a company’s human

capital resources, measures, and progress against objectives.

Additionally, the report also explores the challenges CHROs must navigate to successfully lead remote and hybrid teams and to shape an organizational culture that both attracts and retains workers.

Insights from the report, “The CHRO’s Role in Navigating the Future of Work,” include:

CHROs will partner with C-suite colleagues and the board to help shape the company’s voice on social issues.

What to expect:

- As companies navigate the complexities of societal change and demands for transparency, CHROs will partner with C-suite colleagues and the board to help shape the corporate voice on social issues.
- The disclosure of human capital metrics and the shaping of the corporate narrative around people issues for a variety of stakeholders—both internally and externally—will become more critical.

- The ability to work closely with, and benefit from, board directors in their human capital management oversight role will be increasingly important.

How to prepare:

- CHROs should follow a consistent framework for their formal and informal communications with stakeholders on human capital management.

“The crises of the past few years have underscored why human capital management matters—it’s an essential part of the overall business strategy, including achieving a company’s ESG goals,” said Rebecca Ray, PhD, executive vice president of human capital at The Conference Board. “Board oversight of human capital management will continue to grow in importance. CHROs will need to ensure that directors understand the organization’s capability to execute the business strategy.”

The company’s mission and purpose should underpin not only company culture, but guide decisions about the work environment.

What to expect:

- There will be greater intention given to the overall purpose of business as well as strategies used to deliver on that purpose.
- Strong culture—where employees feel included, valued, and respected, as well as connected to something greater than themselves—will create a competitive advantage in both attracting and retaining talent.

How to prepare:

- Clearly articulate both the connection to mission and purpose, as well as new cultural norms for creating a respectful workplace.
- Develop a playbook on why an employee needs to follow a specific work model, including clear rationale explaining requirements to be in the office.
- Give employees options for flexibility based on personal needs. By offering flexibility, organizations can meet the diverse needs of their workforce and boost retention.

Technology and analytics will guide CHROs as they work toward business goals.



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What to expect:

- The HR function will have a broader impact on people across the organization (e.g., workforce diversity, predictive analytics) and a sharper focus on business outcomes.
 - CHROs will leverage technology to track and measure progress on metrics related to human capital.
- Roles within the HR function, such as HR generalists and specialty roles, will become more sophisticated as technology reduces administrative burdens.

How to prepare:

- CHROs will need to develop new and wider skill sets, including analytics, business acumen, and high-level strategic skills.
 - Leaders should show a greater connection between HR processes and business results: Increase efforts to map talent to value, prioritize strategic workforce planning, and leverage the use of technology and analytics to make better people decisions.
 - Beyond simply ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all workers and alignment with organizational values, evaluate and refine programs, policies, and actions to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging.
 - Clearly define roles and responsibilities, streamline processes, and leverage technology to reduce “friction” in processes for employees.
- CHROs will lead the organization toward a seamless hybrid culture, offering flexibility**



and upskilling.

- What to expect:**
- As work-from-anywhere models expand, there will be a premium on the development of tech skills and infrastructure that support flexible teams.
 - Workers will need support to be innovative, agile, and resilient.

How to prepare:

- CHROs will need to reimagine the phys-

- ical workspace, investing in and integrating technologies that promote productivity and collaboration.
- Ensure teams are empowered to make decisions about how work gets done to maximize efficient time use and foster agility.
 - Hire for specific skill sets, not specific roles, and make mining internal talent a priority.
 - Assess capabilities across the workforce and fill skill gaps by investing in upskilling and reskilling.

Through successive waves of “black swan” events, CHROs will need to rethink leadership development.

What to expect:

- Successful leaders will need to thrive in virtual and hybrid environments with blended teams.
- CHROs should articulate the core values and principles of the organization to all stakeholders, including the board, teams, customers, and suppliers.
- Leaders will be required to champion agile ways of working, drive digital innovation, and shape organizational culture and talent development.

How to prepare:

- Develop authenticity, empathy, and a growth mind-set, coupled with a mastery of HR-related skills such as performance management, coaching, and development.
- Increase the use of skill assessments and analytics to determine and revise criteria for advancement and succession planning.
- Leaders at all levels should be held accountable for turnover, engagement scores, DEI goals, and other key metrics tied to corporate values and purpose.

Information for this article was provided by the Conference Board, a member-driven think tank that delivers trusted insights for what’s ahead.

Learn more at [conference-board.org](https://www.conference-board.org).

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NABB Launches Certification and Scorecard

BBE Certification and Scorecard to be piloted in historic Black towns, and cities with Black mayors, then on national scale

The National Alliance for Black Business (NABB), co-founded by the National Business League (NBL) and National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC), in partnership with the World Conference of Mayors (WCM) and the Historic Black Towns and Settlements Alliance (HBTSA) earlier this year announced the nation's first-ever Black Business Enterprise (BBE) certification and scorecard program at the WCM Black Business Breakfast and Press Conference presented by Comerica Bank.

The landmark BBE certification and scorecard program, designed and trademarked by the NBL, will certify businesses that are at least 51% Black-owned to be eligible for mainstream public, private, and philanthropic contracting and procurement opportunities.

The BBE certification was created to address the fact that today, 59 years after the 1964 Civil Rights Act, less than 1% of the nation's

3.2 million Black-Owned Businesses are certified as U.S. Minority Businesses according to a 2021 report published by the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC). Of 3.2 million Black-owned companies, only 5,881 Black businesses have an MBE certification.

Uncertified minority-owned companies are ineligible for U.S. government procurement equity programs, freezing them out of more than \$100 billion in minority-designated U.S. government contracts according to data released by the White House. Also, less than 1% of Black-Owned Businesses are certified with any federal, public, private or minority certification programs in the U.S., since the 1968 expansion of the Civil Rights Act.

The BBE certification is accompanied by the BBE scorecard, a groundbreaking digital accountability tool that will help organizations measure, publish, and improve participation and spend ratios with Black business, led by national Black business organizations. The scorecard will hold all sectors and industries accountable, including the 1,100 private U.S. corporations that pledged an estimated total of \$200 billion to Black equity efforts after George Floyd's murder in 2020, with those promises still mostly unfulfilled, according to a

2020 McKinsey & Company report.

"The BBE certification and scorecard are designed to offer Black-led solutions after decades of economic equity programs have failed Black people," said Dr. Ken L. Harris, president and CEO of the NBL and co-founder of the NABB. "The Black community can no longer depend on non-Black-led certification programs and non-Black-led business organizations that, in large part, have failed to produce the results necessary to change the economic conditions of Black people in America. Booker T. Washington had it right at the turn of the 20th century. It is time for the Black community to take ownership of their economic destiny, we are looking for ROI, a return on inclusion."

Although the U.S. Civil Rights Act was a response to Black civil unrest, data shows that Black people have not economically benefited from these initiatives as much as other disadvantaged groups. Federal Reserve Data shows the wealth gap between Black and White communities has not materially changed since the years immediately following the U.S. Civil War and is unchanged since 1968 with the expansion of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

In 2021, White Americans had seven times the wealth of Black Americans, the widest wealth gap of any other minority group in the

U.S., according to the Economic Policy Institute.

The BBE certification will address the barriers to certification unique to the Black business community and engage Black-owned businesses through established Black commerce channels, which broader diversity and minority certifications have failed to do.

"The illusion of inclusion is no longer an acceptable business model. Today, we unveil a powerful tool to clear the smoke and mirrors from minority business data and keep score on our own Black economic progress," said Charles H. DeBow, III, president and CEO of the NBCC and co-founder of NABB. "NABB will be the organization of the future that delivers measurable results to the Black community."

The NABB will introduce the pilot BBE certification and scorecard program to several historically Black municipalities and cities with Black mayors, before launching the initiative on a national scale.

"The BBE certification and scorecard are perfect examples of Black self-determination—it's a powerful thing to measure and validate your own progress," said Johnny Ford, president and founder of the WCM and the HBTSA and the first Black mayor of Tuskegee, Alabama.



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Pharmacy and Health Organizations Team to Ensure DEI in Healthcare

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) and six other health-care organizations have released a joint position statement encouraging racial diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in all areas of healthcare, including regulatory boards, the workforce, education, and patient care.

Ensuring DEI among healthcare leadership is key to enhancing professional opportunities and health outcomes for people of all backgrounds. Leaders and practitioners must understand the issues that affect the population they serve in order to effectively serve them.

The path to leadership within the health-care field presents a disproportionate number of obstacles for racial and ethnic minority populations – challenges that begin during the early education years and extend into the professional years. Action is needed to identify and remove obstacles that limit access to leadership and professional roles for members of racial and ethnic minority groups. To make real impact, appropriate changes in policies and practices must be implemented to support

DEI goals.

To encourage further action throughout the healthcare community, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), ASHP, and the organizations that have signed on to this statement have outlined the following recommendations for enhancing DEI at all levels of healthcare:

- 1. Implement and support policies and programs** that eliminate financial barriers that inhibit students who are Black, Indigenous, or members of other racial minority groups from entering and participating in health care professional opportunities, such as pursuing degrees.
- 2. Incorporate DEI concepts** addressing social determinants of health, unconscious bias, antiracism, health disparities, and cultural competence into healthcare professional curricula, as well as in continuing professional education requirements.
- 3. Develop policies** that facilitate mentorship programs for students and new professionals who are Black, Indigenous, or members of other racial minority groups.

4. Implement programs to educate learners from pre-college students through new professionals about their opportunities to work in health care fields and serve on state regulatory boards with the goal of increasing racial and ethnic DEI.

5. Review state laws, rules, and policies that address the regulation of healthcare disciplines for the presence of racial disparities, bias, and barriers with the goal of eliminating structural racism.

6. Collect and document data measuring the representation of Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color on health care regulatory boards and in the workforce, as well as members' attitudes about DEI topics. Measure and document all such information over time to show trends.

7. Review, measure, and document data on potential racial and ethnic disparities in the reporting of complaints and disciplinary actions handled by healthcare regulatory boards.

8. Partner with healthcare and regulatory organizations established to address DEI

issues in order to strengthen the work already happening.

Seeking input, insights, and perspectives from a variety of individuals and groups, NABP will continue to convene with stakeholders and work groups to evaluate the current diversity and inclusion climate within the profession, propose recommendations for change, and provide resources. By combining and collaborating DEI efforts with other organizations' initiatives to amend policies and practices, NABP and other agents of change can create a stronger healthcare community devoted to protecting public health.

The development of this policy statement was supported by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), and Office of Minority Health (OMH) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$601,400 with 100% of the project funded by HHS/OASH/OMH.

Learn more at ASHP.org.



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Restaurant Industry Releases DEI Research

The National Restaurant Association recently released a landmark diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) report measuring the awareness and perceived effectiveness of DEI practices among employers and employees in the restaurant industry. The research, conducted in collaboration between the National Restaurant Association, the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF), the Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance (MFHA), and Cornell University Nolan School of Hotel Administration, found an association between the impact of DEI strategies and foodservice workers' job satisfaction. The study also highlighted differences between a company's perceptions about its DEI effectiveness and its employees' experiences. Ultimately, the report reinforces the critical importance of effective DEI policies in driving employee engagement and retention within the restaurant industry.

To support the development of effective DEI programs across the industry, MFHA created ELEVATE – A Menu for Change. The framework provides restaurant operators with proactive business strategies and plans for building a more diverse, inclusive, and engaged workforce.

"This research highlights the opportunity for companies to elevate their DEI game," said

Gerry Fernandez, president and founder of the Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance. "We have this incredible opportunity to listen, learn, and act to improve our DEI practices. Committing to and investing in these changes can increase retention of current restaurant industry employees and enhance the overall perception of working in the restaurant industry. Our mission is to open doors of opportunity for people from all backgrounds and we are eager to help do whatever it takes to ensure our industry is the gold standard for diversity, equity, and inclusion."

KEY FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

Employer reporting of employee demographics over-estimates the number of historically marginalized communities in the restaurant industry, especially at the mid- and upper levels of management, compared with how employees self-report.

When asked about the current profile of diversity in the foodservice industry, individuals typically reported differently than the enterprise. This suggests businesses may perceive an environment of diversity that is different than what is experienced by employees. If left unchecked, this has the potential to minimize the experience of historically marginalized

communities; limit an organization's ability to recognize the need for a more diverse workforce and change recruiting policies accordingly; and create an environment for turnover. Key findings include:

- Enterprise-level reporting of gender demographics is different than individual employee reporting. Enterprises underreport the percentage of female employees and overreport the representation of non-binary/non-conforming employees compared with how employees self-report (55% of individuals identify as female, enterprises report 35%; 1% of individuals identify as non-binary/non-conforming, enterprises report 18%).
- A greater percentage of individual employees self-identify as Hispanic, Black/African American, and other races than enterprises report.
- Enterprises reported a higher representation of people with disabilities than individuals indicated; 16% of individual employees self-reported having a disability, while enterprises report 34%.

Employee and employer perceptions of current DEI initiatives differed on the effectiveness and awareness of the policies.

Enterprises generally believe they have created work environments that support DEI, yet

awareness of those policies is often weak among current employees, and even more so among former employees. This can lead employees to believe that DEI is not a strategic priority, which can ultimately lead to a lack of job satisfaction and higher turnover. Key findings include:

- 92% of enterprises report having dedicated DEI initiatives, however there is limited awareness of those policies among employees. For example, 78% of enterprises reported having employee diversity training or awareness events, while only 48% of current employees and 34% former employees reported receiving this training.
- 73% of enterprises believe that a diverse workforce improves a company's innovation, yet 54% of enterprises believe that money spent on diversity programs is not having a noticeable impact.
- 58% of enterprises believe that they provide adequate DEI training.
- 30% of current employees and 14% of former employees believe the diversity programs in place at their restaurants have a positive impact on the workplace.

Find more information about the DEI Report on the Restaurant Industry 2022 and ELEVATE – A Menu for Change framework at restaurant.org.

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