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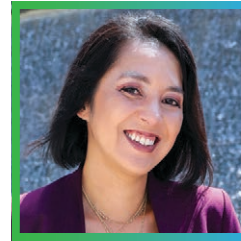
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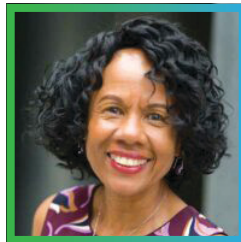
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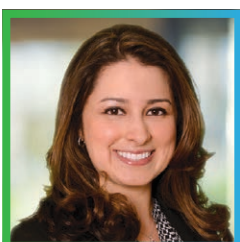
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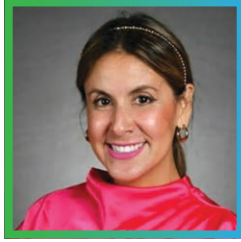
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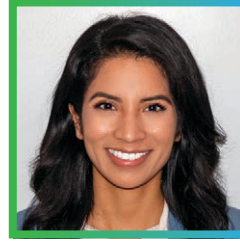
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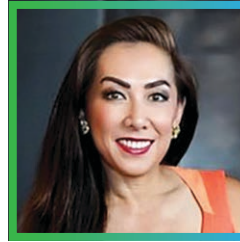
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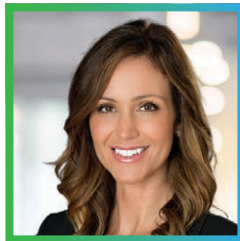
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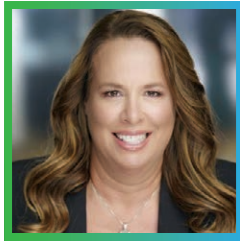
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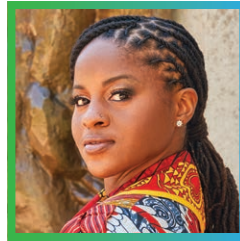
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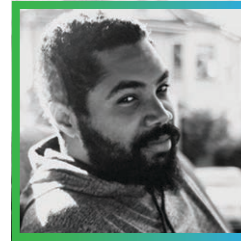
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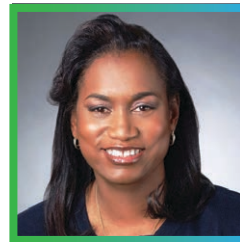
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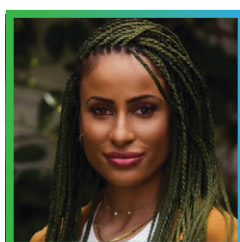
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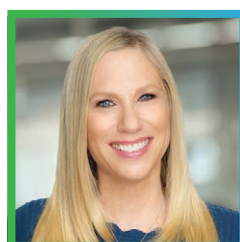
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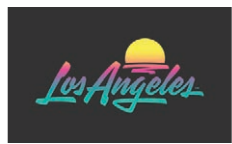
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Corporate and Educational Partnerships Advance DEI, Provide Mutual Benefits

In recent years, diversity, equity and inclusion have become key priorities for organizations large and small. As the workforce evolves, infrastructure companies like HNTB recognize the importance of fostering a more diverse and inclusive workplace environment. To advance equal opportunity and prepare the next generation, HNTB implemented programs to collaborate with educational institutions. In recent years, partnerships have provided mutual benefits with Los Angeles Trade-Technical College and the SPARK LA program that started eight years ago at Los Angeles Unified School District's Girls Academic Leadership Academy: Dr. Michelle King School for STEM.

Trade and technical colleges serve as beacons of opportunity, drawing students from diverse backgrounds, including underrepresented minority groups, women and individuals from underserved communities. Workplace diversity brings a variety of perspectives, experiences, and ideas, which can lead to innovation and creativity. A primary benefit of educational partnerships is the opportunity for companies to diversify the talent pipeline by recruiting talent from trade colleges. In this way, companies can build a more inclusive workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities they serve.

This not only enhances the company's reputation as a socially responsible organization but also improves employee engagement and overall performance. Forward-thinking companies that have already embraced DEI are poised to become industry leaders with the power to influence others to follow in their footsteps and create a more inclusive and equitable future workplace.

Conversely, for schools and colleges that establish collaborations with large firms, both the educational institution as well as its students can reap abundant long-term benefits. Students can have access to resources, professional development, improved job placement opportunities, real world experience, networking and specialized skill building. Corporate collaboration contributes to a more enriching educational experience for students and helps schools stay connected to the evolving needs of the industry.

HNTB/LATTC PARTNERSHIP EMPOWERS COLLEGE STUDENTS

Los Angeles Trade-Technical College advances diverse communities through pathways to academic, career and transfer success that empower students to achieve career technical certificates, associate degrees, transfer and employment. Established in 1925, the college offers more than 80 career-technical programs that move students into careers in two years or less. These programs give opportunities and a pathway for building successful careers to students from every walk of life.

"Our college ensures that aspiring students have the opportunity and support to achieve their career goals and dreams in a truly inclusive college," said architecture professor Marcella Oliva, LATTC. "Our partnership with HNTB provides students with many valuable benefits, including curriculum relevance, access to resources, professional development

opportunities, real-world experience, networking and even job placement."

Similar to HNTB, DEI is ingrained at all levels of LATTC - from professors, students and employees to community and business partners. Architecture is an important industry that needs to augment diversity equity and inclusion and the CMU Architecture and Environmental Design Program at LATTC highlights that. The program offers transfer courses and provides assistance with job placement in various sectors, including architectural firms, urban planning and engineering offices, construction management firms, the construction manufacturing industry and government agencies. It provides opportunities where opportunities did not exist previously.

Fostering diversity, equity and inclusion involves revising the curriculum to incorporate diverse perspectives and cultures, ensuring accessible learning materials and environments, recruiting a diverse faculty and staff, offering financial support and mentorship programs, actively recruiting underrepresented students, and promoting an inclusive studio culture.

"This is an unprecedented environment that fosters diversity among faculty and staff, resulting in a rich tapestry of perspectives on the essence of architecture," added Oliva. "In addition to our valued relationship with HNTB, we have established collaborations with the Paul Williams Foundation (the first Black architect), NOMA, AIA Community Los Angeles, USGBC LA, World Economic Forum and the United Nation New Urban Agenda Sustainable Goals Certification, emphasizing social justice and environmental equity."

The Architecture and the Environmental Design program offers transfer courses and assistance with job placement in various sectors, including architectural firms, urban planning and engineering offices, construction management firms, the construction manufacturing industry, and government agencies. It provides opportunities where opportunities did not exist previously.

By fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment, students are empowered to actively engage in a diverse and socially responsible architectural profession, leading to heightened career fulfillment and meaningful contributions to society.

"Collaboration between corporate and educational partners is the cornerstone of



innovation and progress in the infrastructure industry," said Yoga Chandran, PhD, PE, GE, HNTB Los Angeles office leader and senior vice president. "By bridging the gap between academia and industry, we cultivate a skilled workforce, drive technological advancements, and build a sustainable future for generations to come."

HNTB/LAUSD PARTNERSHIP SHARES STEM CURRICULUM WITH FEMALE STUDENTS

HNTB Corporation teamed up with the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works eight years ago to support the first all-girls public STEM school within Los Angeles Unified School District and the state of California - Girls Academic Leadership Academy: Dr. Michelle King School for STEM. The collaborative partnership between the City of Los Angeles and HNTB continues to complement the school's focus on a STEM curriculum - science, technology, engineering, and math - to attract more female students to pursue degrees and professions where females traditionally are underrepresented.

"We are honored to play a key role in the education of young girls by sharing our passion for engineering, architecture and planning with meaningful, hands-on experiences through our SPARK LA program in Los Angeles," said Lilly Acuña, HNTB's SPARK LA program leader. "By engaging and inspiring students with opportunities that challenge them to think critically and build on their leadership skills, we are empowering young girls to become the next generation of STEM leaders."

The interactive program offers sessions related to transportation infrastructure, including bridge and airport design, transit planning,

cost and schedule, mobility and tunnelling. Each year, the sessions bring experts in various infrastructure fields into the discussion to guide students in hands-on projects to learn more about STEM careers and leadership in an open and engaging environment. Students in small teams develop projects that incorporate their learning. The course concludes with a field trip to Los Angeles City Hall and a presentation to the Board of Public Works.

"We recognized the current and future demand for architects, engineers and skilled trade professionals and implemented the SPARK LA program to ignite passion in middle and high school students toward careers in the built environment," said Chandran. "There is no greater need to develop this talent than in Southern California where infrastructure is well-funded and should be delivered locally."

MUTUAL BENEFITS ARE IMPACTFUL AND LONG-LASTING

The mutual benefits of large infrastructure firms partnering with educational institutions are vast and impactful. These collaborations not only provide a steady pipeline of skilled and diverse talent for the firms but also enrich the educational experience for students, preparing them for rewarding careers in the industry. By fostering strong partnerships, all parties contribute to innovation, knowledge sharing, and the development of cutting-edge solutions that address the evolving needs of the infrastructure sector. This symbiotic relationship not only strengthens the current workforce but also paves the way for a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future for the infrastructure industry, ensuring its continued growth and success in the years to come.

Learn more at [HNTB.com](https://www.hntb.com).

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Check Off the “Four C’s” of Leadership for a Women-Owned Business

As US women-owned businesses surge, those that succeed stay focused on core traits

By ALICE JUAREZ

Women-owned firms now account for nearly four in ten US businesses. They generate approximately \$2.7 trillion in annual revenue. They employ more than 12.2 million workers. And since 2019, women-owned businesses have multiplied at almost double the rate of those owned by men.

That’s not just me bragging. That’s according to The 2024 Impact of Women-Owned Businesses Report . Produced by Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP), Ventureer, and CoreWoman, the report also suggests that the potential impact of women-owned businesses could be even greater if the gaps between women of color and white-women-owned businesses, as well as between women and men, were closed. This report, first published in January and commissioned by Wells Fargo, unpacks data to determine what barriers women – particularly women of color – face.

Over my 32-year financial services career, I have witnessed this sea change of women leaders in the US economy and have identified key traits of the most-successful. Regardless of economic cycle or the nature of their businesses, I find these four habits consistently help women leaders navigate challenges and position their companies for success:

#1: CONNECTION

Strong professional and personal relationships are key. Making connections and building a solid personal and professional network increases confidence in seeking advice and counsel, as well as better enabling women leader to navigate changing markets and global competition.

Tip: During both robust and challenging economies, women can leverage their relationship-building skills to expand their networks further and develop stronger roots for their business.

#2: CAPACITY

Managing the wide range of responsibilities in today’s environment is challenging, especially when it comes to managing both work and family. While society has come a long way in supporting more balance in shared responsibilities of family and home with partners, women often continue to take on a disproportionate share of the load. In fact,

women continue to take on many additional responsibilities in their professional and personal lives, including community organizations and involvement with their children’s schools. But unless capacity and balance are respected, they’ll risk their long-term success.

Tip: Develop your team, build trust, and delegate during tough times. Don’t try to do it all yourself.

#3: COLLABORATION

Women leaders tend to collaborate and build a culture of partnership. This approach of working together builds an all-inclusive culture, allowing different perspectives to be heard and creating a valued, high-performing team. This environment nurtures development of new ideas and approaches to issues and challenges.

Tip: Find a voice outside your circle to challenge your thought process; you might discover a new perspective or better approach.

#4: COMMUNICATION:

Communicating effectively and sharing vision and strategy are among the most-critical paths to success of any organization – and often overlooked. Successful women business leaders exhibit skill in adapting their communication style to situation and audience, leading to more-effective conversations.

Tip: Communication during critical business times is key. Reach out to your stakeholders and share your voice directly.

While the economic landscape continues to evolve, women business leaders need to demonstrate confidence, enlisting trusted allies as they build their businesses. Challenging and dynamic times require leadership that builds and shapes a successful team. These four C’s of leadership are integral to success.



Alice Juarez is the Los Angeles Regional Executive for Wells Fargo Bank. Visit stories.wf.com to see women customers’ success stories from women-owned business leaders.

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‘Since 2019, women-owned businesses have multiplied at almost double the rate of those owned by men.’



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Easterseals Southern California (ESSC) is the largest provider of disability services in California and one of the largest in the country. ESSC's strength is in our diversity and inclusive culture. We are committed to making sure our leaders, staff, volunteers and partnerships are as diverse as the communities we serve. Easterseals, in action and advocacy, prioritizes equity, respect and belonging. With a staff of 2,500 professionals, the organization provides services to more than 19,000 people and their families throughout Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Imperial, Kern and Ventura counties.

Through programs and services tailored to meet the needs of individuals, ESSC supports full participation and inclusion within the local community. From early childhood programs for the critical first five years, to autism services, daily and independent living services for adults, senior services, employment

programs, veterans' services and more. Easterseals public education, policy and advocacy initiatives positively shape perceptions and address the urgent and evolving needs of the one-in-four Americans with disabilities today. Easterseals is empowering people with disabilities, families and communities to be full and equal participants in society.

ESSC's bold Vision and Impact Plan — which addresses the needs of the disability community, diverse in race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion and culture—defines how the organization supports people with disabilities now and in the future. The goal is to make Southern California the most inclusive place for people with disabilities to live, learn, work and play by 2030. In addition, ESSC has built a workplace and communities where everyone. As a result, ESSC has developed two initiatives to support those goals:

RISE (Respect, Inclusion, Self-awareness and Equity) focuses on building a diverse and inclusive workplace. Through this program, staff training opportunities support inclusion within the workplace and inclusion affecting the participants who receive ESSC's services. Trainings have included "Disability in the Black Community," "Subtle Acts of Exclusion," "Understanding Sexual Orientation

Easterseals public education, policy and advocacy initiatives positively shape perceptions and address the urgent and evolving needs of the one-in-four Americans with disabilities today. Easterseals is empowering people with disabilities, families and communities to be full and equal participants in society.

and Gender Identity" and "Awareness and Disability Training," to list a few. Staff also participated in Listening Circles, sharing and learning from each other's diverse experiences as individuals and as direct-care professionals. RISE extends to the organization's talent recruitment efforts with tailored outreach to hire staff representative of the populations the organization serves. In addition, RISE is launching employee resource groups, starting with an LGBTQIA+ group that support staff to connect and share experiences.

IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access) ensures ESSC's services are inclusive for the diverse populations the organization serves and advances health equity in our com-

munities. In particular, IDEA addresses the disparity in access to early autism diagnosis in communities of color and underserved communities by reaching out and providing free diagnostic services and referrals to therapy providers and by raising awareness in the community itself.

Long excluded and often overlooked, people with disabilities are supported by ESSC to thrive, be fully included and to have equity and access. ESSC continues on the path toward supporting staff, participants and their families to be partners in building a more inclusive community.

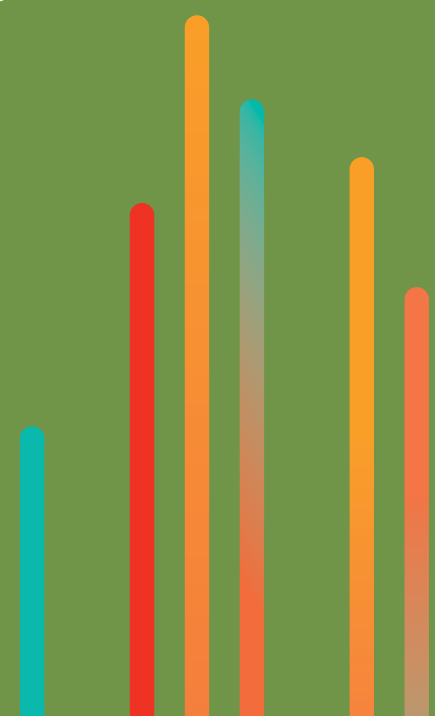
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Integrating a DEI Lens Into a Vital Nonprofit

FilmLA's DEI Advisory Committee works with a diversity of perspectives

By PAUL AUDLEY and DENISE GUTCHES

DEI is at the heart of our company ethos at FilmLA. FilmLA's DEI Advisory Committee is a dedicated and passionate employee group, whose purpose is to partner with organizational decision-makers to integrate a DEI lens into what FilmLA does, internally and externally, so that the organization is continually shaped by a diversity of perspectives and identities enabling everyone to thrive. The Committee also works to ensure that company culture is truly transformed through respectful, meaningful and actionable dialogue, in a way that is safe, transparent, and inclusive of all identities.

The Advisory Committee receives input and counsel from an internal Affinity Group which is a non-membership Group open to all team members at FilmLA. The Affinity Group is a platform for all employees to share ideas to elevate DEI within and outside of FilmLA in collaboration with the Advisory Committee.

DEI learning is at the forefront of FilmLA's DEI initiatives. The Advisory Committee is most proud of providing ongoing education opportunities on DEI and DEI topics. The purpose is to foster an environment of understanding, support, and empathy through learning about cultural differences with the intent of creating an environment where employees feel more confident in themselves and their interactions with colleagues.

This past year, the Advisory Committee expanded its reach by inviting guest speakers to present to the FilmLA team, offering unique opportunities to learn about DEI-related work within the entertainment industry. Two recent Affinity Group sessions at FilmLA are described here:

On October 11, 2023, in honor of Indigenous People's Day, the Advisory Committee invited guest speaker Jennifer Loren from the Cherokee Nation to present to our team. Jennifer is an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker and the senior director of Cherokee Film, which is part of the Cherokee Nation. Jennifer introduced Cherokee Film's portfolio which includes four branches: Cherokee Film Productions (the Nation shares its stories through Osiyo TV), Cherokee Film Studios (the Nation invests in

infrastructure by expanding its existing soundstage facility), Cherokee Film Commission (the Nation offers a \$1 million annual film incentive rebate) and Cherokee Film Institute (which creates educational and workforce opportunities).

The work of the four branches sustains more than 30 full-time employees. Jennifer shared how this new ecosystem creates a hub for film and media production, while creating job opportunities and sharing new diverse stories. FilmLA team members found this interview with Jennifer fascinating, as many of us were not aware of the involvement of the Cherokee Nation within the entertainment industry.

On March 6, 2024, the Advisory Committee invited Stan Washington and Chasen Washington from Pantheon Business Consulting to talk to the FilmLA team about the Stocker Street Creative Project. Pantheon Consulting is a Los Angeles-based boutique development consulting firm, dedicated to building sustainable economic impact within minority communities. Pantheon is the developer for this project along with Chicago-based 4S Bay Partners LLC. Stocker Street Creative is one of the most closely-watched new sound stage builds in Greater Los Angeles, one that

will feature 57,000 square feet of purpose-built studio space, community rooms, and restaurants. Stocker Street Creative will not only add necessary capacity for filmmaking and production, it will also be an incubator for emerging artists of color, a gathering place for the community-at-large, and a cultural hub for small and independent creators, writers, and filmmakers.

Several of our team members found this initiative personally important as longtime residents of the Baldwin Hills community.

If you are looking for ways to connect your organization's work to the needs of a wider community, we encourage you to organize a speaker series of your own. Beyond looking for relevant and impactful guests to feature at our Affinity Group sessions, FilmLA's Advisory Committee continues to focus on member education through monthly communications about important DEI subjects through its "small bite" email series, quarterly newsletters, and ongoing work to provide safe spaces to explore diverse perspectives and experiences.

Paul Audley is president; and Denise Gutches is chief financial & operating officer for FilmLA. Learn more at [FilmLA.com](https://www.filmLA.com).

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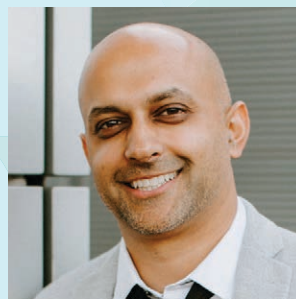
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Shaping and Encouraging Future Leaders to Make a Difference in the World

Ensuring diverse representation at every level of leadership

By EMILY McMENAMIN

In today's ever-changing world, diversity, equity, and inclusion are not just buzzwords; they are a necessity. That's why Think Together is committed to providing students with exposure to a variety of perspectives and experiences, and more equitable opportunities for their future.

At Think Together, we partner with schools to change the odds for kids through expanded education, enrichment, school improvement, and support throughout students' educational journeys. By surrounding students with caring leaders from their communities, we're not just teaching lessons; we're cultivating cultural competency, agency, and essential interpersonal skills for their future success in college and career.

Think Together's impact goes beyond the classroom. When students see leaders who reflect the diversity of their communities, they're inspired to dream bigger and reach

higher. At Think Together, we're not just shaping minds; we're shaping and encouraging future leaders who will make a difference in the world.

Within our organization, the dynamic structure of Think Together provides a natural career progression, from part-time entry-level positions to full-time leadership roles. This creates an authentic pipeline of diverse leaders, who understand the full nature of our organization's mission and bring a deeper knowledge of the students we serve. Many of our current executives traveled this career path and Think Together is stronger because of it.

Think Together is dedicated to ensuring diverse representation at every level of leadership, from our senior management positions to our board of directors. Because when diverse voices are at the table, everyone benefits.

But we don't stop there. We're not just serving communities; we're part of them. Through meaningful engagement and strong relationships, we're tailoring our programs and services to meet the unique needs of every community we serve.

At Think Together, we're not just changing



the odds; we're transforming futures.

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Emily McMEnamin is the communications manager at Think Together. Learn more at thinktogether.org.

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Advancing Health Equity and Addressing Cancer Disparities in Los Angeles

By ROSA NAVAS

For 110 years, the American Cancer Society has been a leader in the fight against cancer. And although cancer is a disease that affects everyone, it does not affect everyone equally. Many barriers can impact a person's ability to prevent, find, treat, and survive cancer. We believe all people should have a fair and just opportunity to live a longer, healthier life free from cancer. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical to achieving our mission, and reducing cancer disparities. Health is not always "one size fits all," and we must be intentional, thoughtful, and inclusive if we are to have long-lasting impact. The pandemic created new challenges, including 9.5 million missed cancer screenings, which indirectly caused an increase in cancer deaths. For communities of color, the disparities were even more exacerbated.

In 2017, ACS launched the Health Equity Ambassador program, which mobilizes a volunteer workforce of trained ambassadors to help historically marginalized communities prevent and find cancer early. To date, the program has

trained more than 2,400 health equity ambassadors and reached 550,000 people nationwide.

In 2023, ACS launched the groundbreaking Diversity in Cancer Research program, which aims to increase diversity in the cancer workforce by providing training and support to students who are underrepresented in the health-science field.

This year, ACS is excited to collaborate on two initiatives to help make an impact in the health equity space here in Los Angeles: The Health Equity Ambassador program – Los Angeles, and the ACS Los Angeles Inaugural Moonshot Summit and campaign.

The Health Equity Ambassador program in Los Angeles will focus on reducing cancer equity gaps in the Latino, Indigenous, and Native American communities right here in our city.

Rallying around the White House reignited Cancer Moonshot – an initiative to reduce the cancer death rate by half over the next 25 years and improve the experience of people touched by cancer. The American Cancer Society Los Angeles Inaugural Moonshot campaign is a commitment to our local communities in advancing health equity in cancer research, clinical trials,

and access to care.

Under the leadership of ACS staff, committee members and inaugural committee chair, Dom Parero, Chief Marketing Officer at UCLA Health, the Moonshot campaign will launch with a Summit and Awards Luncheon at the UCLA Luskin Conference Center on March 22nd. The summit will include Access to Care and Innovation panels, and celebrate visionaries and compassionate leaders across corporations, healthcare partners, biomed and biotech industries, all working together to increase diversity in everything from researchers to clinical trials.

The first of its kind event will award two newly created recognitions: the Trailblazer in Cancer and the Trailblazer on the Horizon awards. Established to recognize outstanding leaders and those who are starting in their careers who demonstrates a passion for health equity in cancer care. We are proud to announce the inaugural recipients of these awards:

- **Trailblazer in Cancer:** Joan August, member of the American Cancer Society Los Angeles Board of Directors and CEO's Against Cancer. Joan has served as the Chair of the Board for

the Los Angeles market and serving as a leader in healthcare for over 30 years in Los Angeles, currently as the Vice President of Cedars Sinai Cancer.

- **Trailblazer on the Horizon:** Santos Vasquez, a sophomore at the University of Southern California majoring in Biological Sciences and on the pre-medical track. He is part of USC's first cohort of Diversity in Cancer Research interns and is excited to take classes in immunology and genetics. He hopes to one day bring healthcare aid to disenfranchised communities.

Our mission is to engage marginalized populations to shape patient support policies, programs, and services while addressing barriers to quality preventive care, screening, cancer treatment, and survivorship. We're proud to have staff, volunteers, partners, and funders who are deeply committed to diversity, inclusion, and health equity. It has never been more important to the work we do.

For more information, please contact rosa.navas@cancer.org.



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More C-Suite Executives Commit to Inclusion, Equity and Diversity

Littler, an employment and labor law practice representing management, has released its Inclusion, Equity and Diversity (IE&D) C-Suite Survey Report, completed by more than 320 C-suite executives across the United States.

The survey finds that despite an increasingly challenging environment for diversity-related initiatives, many employers have deepened their commitment to IE&D, though there is room for growth in actions taken to support such programs.

EMPLOYERS REMAIN COMMITTED TO IE&D AMID COMPLEXITIES

The majority of the executives surveyed (57%) say their organizations have expanded their IE&D commitments and level of activity over the past year, even while nearly the same proportion (59%) believe backlash toward corporate diversity programs has increased since the US Supreme Court's decisions to roll back affirmative action college admissions policies in June 2023.

More than a third of organizations (36%) have maintained their IE&D efforts, while just

1% reported a significant decrease.

"We're seeing many employers maintain — or even double down on — their commitment to IE&D, even as backlash spikes," said Jeanine Conley Daves, Littler shareholder and member of the firm's IE&D Consulting Practice. "Demonstrating that IE&D is part of their core values, many organizations are taking the prudent step of auditing and assessing their current initiatives, rather than eliminating them amid the challenges in today's political and legal environment."

Reflecting specifically on the impact of the Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action, 91% of C-suite leaders say the rulings have not lessened their prioritization of IE&D. More than two-thirds (69%) say the rulings have not even changed their approach to IE&D in any way.

CLOS AND CDOS DIFFER ON KEY IE&D ISSUES

The survey also revealed notable differences in perspectives between Chief Legal Officers (CLOs) and Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs) on IE&D programs and approaches, demonstrat-

ing how the outlooks are changing as such initiatives face new legal and political challenges. Responses from CEOs indicate that their views often fall somewhere between those of their C-suite colleagues.

For instance, only 41% of CDOs said their organizations had not changed their IE&D approach in any way as a result of the court's decisions, compared to 69% of respondents overall. Discrepancies also emerged in the specific actions taken to support IE&D programs, with a lower percentage of CDOs — in comparison to their CLO counterparts — saying their organizations offer diversity fellowship programs, provide IE&D-related incentives to executives and define metrics for IE&D progress.

Reversing the trend, 61% of CLOs say their organizations are increasing efforts around social justice initiatives, compared to just 11% of CDOs.

The lack of alignment in the C-suite suggests an opportunity for increased communication across roles to minimize legal risks and allow for the effective implementation of IE&D programs.

IE&D PROGRAMS ARE MATURING AS STEPS REMAIN

Even as organizations maintain or increase their IE&D commitments, 35% of executives do not feel that their organizations have clear plans and goals in place.

The survey found that many organizations have been slower to implement legally thorny IE&D goals, such as defining benchmarks and metrics (a step taken by 34% of respondents) and providing incentives to executives to advance diversity priorities (23%). Higher percentages of C-suite executives say their organizations have opted for more established initiatives, such as providing training and professional development opportunities to diverse employees (58%).

That said, many organizations have made strides in recruiting and promoting diverse employees following increased pressure on companies to address racial inequality. More than half (55%) say their organizations are elevating diverse employees into leadership positions.

Learn more at littler.com.

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Study Reveals Most US Workers ‘Cover’ Identities

Late last year, Deloitte’s DEI Institute in collaboration with the Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at NYU School of Law released its 2023 study, “Uncovering Culture,” exploring how U.S. workers “cover,” or downplay known disfavored identities to fit into mainstream corporate cultures. According to the study, 60% of respondents have covered at work within the last 12 months, nearly the same percentage (61%) of respondents who reported covering at work 10 years ago in the first covering study. Among the top reasons workers cite for covering are so that others don’t think less of them, to avoid negative stereotypes, and to be seen as competent and/or valuable, highlighting ongoing fears of discrimination and unconscious bias in the workplace.

Covering can be defined along four axes: appearance-based (modifying aspects of self-presentation to fit in); affiliation-based (minimizing behaviors widely associated with one’s identity); advocacy-based (not defending or promoting the interests of one’s group); and association-based (avoiding contact with other group members). The latest research confirms that much like in 2013, workers continue to cover in these ways at work, along a broad spectrum of identities, such as age, religion, race/ethnicity and mental health status.

The “Uncovering Culture” study comes ten years after Deloitte collaborated with Kenji Yoshino on the “Uncovering Talent” study. The new study explores a wide range of demographics and firmographics to highlight why it is important for leaders to help disrupt covering culture — an environment in which workers feel that they would be penalized if they were to display greater authenticity. The study also offers three tangible actions that leaders can take to build a culture of greater authenticity and achieve better workforce outcomes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Covering in the workplace remains a widespread practice across demographics and is most prevalent among individuals with multiple marginalized identities

- Among workers with five or more marginalized identities (identities relegated to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group) 71% report covering at work, as compared to 56% of workers with one-two marginalized identities.

- While 56% of White respondents report covering, incidence of covering is higher for other racial or ethnic cohorts (66% of Asian, 65% of Black, and 62% of Hispanic/Latinx workers).¹ When looking at the intersection

of race and gender, the instances of covering increase, with 86% of Asian women and 80% of Black women saying they cover at work, compared to 55% of Asian men and 43% of Black men.

- Black workers with disabilities reported covering at an astonishingly high rate of 93% (compared to 60% of White workers with disabilities), and all Black LGBTQIA+ workers surveyed reported covering.

Younger generations tend to cover more in the workplace than workers over 50

- When looking at generational breakdowns, 66% of millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and 65% of Gen Z (born after 1996) say they cover at work, compared to 56% of Gen X (born between 1965 and 1980) and 49% of baby boomers (born before 1964).

Covering demands in the workplace — whether explicit or implicit — have adverse effects on professional well-being

- 60% of workers say that covering at work negatively impacts their overall well-being and makes them feel “emotionally drained.”

- 58% of workers say they feel the need to mirror behaviors and/or appearances of others [with favored identities] to be perceived as more

professional.

Greater workforce and leadership diversity, as well as modeling “uncovering” in the workplace can help disrupt cover culture

- 40% of workers believe their team leaders expect them to cover, and only 35% of respondents took the risk of uncovering an identity in the past 12 months that they otherwise felt a demand to cover.

- Nearly 90% of workers say that actions taken by their organization have helped reduce their need to cover, citing greater work flexibility, diverse teams, and teammates who uncover as examples that have helped them in the past. This finding highlights the opportunity for organizations to disrupt covering culture and lead the charge on fostering a work environment that encourages greater authenticity.

- To foster a culture of uncovering at work, survey respondents recommend driving greater diversity in the organization; seeing leaders and teammates who model uncovering and encourage others to follow suit; and increasing open, honest communication and active allyship in the workplace.

See additional resources and best practices in the full report: deloitte.com/us/uncovering.



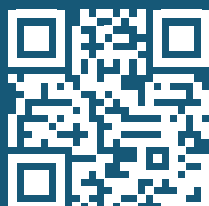
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Boards are More Diverse but Pace of Growth is Slowing

Corporate boards have become significantly more diverse over the past five years, according to a new report from The Conference Board and ESGAUGE. The share of female directors in the S&P 500 increased from 23% in 2018 to 32% in 2023, while the reported share of racially/ethnically diverse directors grew from 20% in 2018 to 25% in 2023.

As the report points out, however, the reported growth in both racial and gender diversity has slowed in the past year. The share of reported female directors increased by one percentage point, from 31% in 2022 to 32% in 2023. And the share of reported racially/ethnically diverse directors remained virtually unchanged, rising from 24% in 2022 to 25% in 2023.

The report identifies a key factor in the slowdown: The 2023 class of new corporate directors is less diverse in terms of race and gender than the 2022 class. The 2023 class of new directors was 38% female, compared to 43% in 2022. The percentage of racially/ethnically diverse directors among new board members saw an even steeper decline, dropping from 45% in 2022 to 36% in 2023.

The actual levels of racial/ethnic diversity may be higher than the reported levels, given the reluctance of some directors to self-identify as being part of a demographic group.

“Companies that may be underreporting diversity should have discussions at the board level about the benefits of providing more complete disclosure, given that an absence of diversity can open the door to shareholder activism and broader criticism of the company,” said Paul Washington, executive director of The Conference Board ESG Center.

The report addresses the current state of diversity in boardrooms and provides insights on how to maximize the benefits of a diverse board. It was produced in collaboration with data analytics firm ESGAUGE, along with Debevoise & Plimpton; KPMG; Russell Reynolds Associates; and the John L. Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance. Additional insights include:

DIRECTOR GENDER

The percentage of female directors continues to rise, albeit slowly:

- S&P 500: The share grew from 23% in 2018 to 31% in 2022 to 32% in 2023.
- Russell 3000: The share grew from 17% in 2018 to 27% in 2022 to 28% in 2023.

A majority of Russell 3000 companies now have three or more female directors:

- Russell 3000: 54% now have three or more female directors, compared to 18% in 2018.
- S&P 500: 86% now have three or more

female directors, up from 47% in 2018.

The percentage of new directors who are female fell in 2023:

- S&P 500: The share of new female directors decreased from 43% in 2022 to 38% in 2023.
- Russell 3000: The share decreased from 42% to 39%.

“While the reported growth in gender diversity is slowing, the share of female representation on corporate boards has increased meaningfully in the past five years by approximately 10 percentage points in both the S&P 500 and the Russell 3000, demonstrating that companies can, through focused attention, significantly enhance diversity in the boardroom,” said Merel Spierings, author of the report and senior researcher at The Conference Board.

DIRECTOR RACE/ETHNICITY

Disclosure of director race/ethnicity may be plateauing, especially in the S&P 500:

- S&P 500: The share of companies disclosing the aggregate level of racial/ethnic diversity on their boards inched up from 70% in 2022 to 72% in 2023.
- Russell 3000: The share rose from 36% in 2022 to 41% in 2023.

The reported levels of racial/ethnic diversi-

ty may have plateaued in the Russell 3000:

- S&P 500: The percentage of reported racially/ethnically diverse directors has barely increased, inching up from 20% in 2018 to 24% in 2022 to 25% in 2023.
- Russell 3000: Since 2018, the share has remained about the same at 21%.

The share of new non-White directors has decreased in both indexes:

- S&P 500: The share fell from 45% in 2022 to 36% in 2023.
- Russell 3000: The share fell from 43% to 35%.

The diversification of US corporate boards is also limited by low the level of turnover on corporate boards and the fact that approximately 65% to 70% of the US board-age population is non-Hispanic White.

“Directors with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds can bring new viewpoints into the boardroom that enrich boardroom conversations,” said Claudia Allen, senior advisor with the KPMG Board Leadership Center. “The plateauing of disclosure on director race and ethnicity suggests that in addition to considering the diversity of their board, directors also need to consider whether it is being fully disclosed.”

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

Gartner Survey Finds 49% of Supply Chain Organizations Have Formal DEI Objectives

Nearly half of supply chain organizations have formal DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) objectives with specific targets on management scorecards, according to a survey by Gartner, Inc. The amount of supply chain organizations with formal DEI objectives has risen markedly year-over-year, from 27% in 2022 to 49% in 2023.

“Supply chain organizations may have been expected to take a step back in pursuing DEI objectives in light of increased scrutiny and economic pressures,” said Dana Stiffler, distinguished VP analyst in Gartner’s Supply Chain Practice. “Our data instead showed strong gains, with a steep increase in representation of underrepresented races and ethnicities at every level of the supply chain. The key driver of these gains is an increase in accountability via formalized management goals.”

Gartner’s 2023 Supply Chain Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey polled 314 supply chain professionals from North America and Europe with active involvement in their organization’s DEI initiatives. The survey was conducted from September through October 2023, consisting of qualifying organizations with at least \$250 million in annual revenues.

The survey data revealed major DEI gains, including that the percentage of full-time employees of underrepresented race/ethnicity in the supply chain organizations evaluated increased from 32% to 48%. Compared to 2022’s survey sample, the average representation of talent of underrepresented races and ethnicities is 1.5 times what it was in the

2022 sample.

The data showed strong alignment between DEI and broader business objectives. Among those who have either formal or general DEI objectives, respondents provided the following reasons for having such goals:

- Attract new talent (68%)
- Engage and retain new employees (64%)
- Improve business performance (58%)
- Attract customers (48%)
- Reflect and support local communities (44%)
- Attract investors (40%)

“The recruitment focus of DEI initiatives is crucial, with a higher percentage of supply chain employees actively seeking a new job at

the highest rate since 2021,” said Stiffler. “The focus on engagement and retention is also well-placed with supply chain employees less likely than other professions to be highly engaged or have a high intent to stay. Their discretionary effort in mid-2023 was at its lowest point in the past two years.”

“SAY-DO GAP” CLOSING; ATTRITION REMAINS HIGH

Beyond formal objectives, a second reason pushing representation higher in 2023 was a greater emphasis on actual DEI initiatives within supply chain organizations. In 2022, while 75% of supply chain organizations reported that they focused on some dimension of diversity, only 40% reported working on spe-

cific DEI projects or initiatives. Gartner refers to this gap between intention and tangible action as the “say-do gap.”

“While nearly the same proportion of organizations focused on one or more aspects of DEI in 2023, we saw a much higher percentage of supply chain respondents working on specific DEI projects and initiatives with measurable outcomes, jumping from 40% to 73%,” said Stiffler. “In 2023, the ‘say-do gap’ was reduced to nearly half of what it was in 2021; the connection between tangible action and improved DEI outcomes seems increasingly clear.”

The top four DEI initiatives invested in were learning and development (L&D), benefits, employee engagement and recruitment. In terms of effectiveness, employee engagement and L&D led the list, which is a departure from previous surveys, where inclusive leadership and recruitment were most effective.

While top-line findings in the survey showed progress on diversity efforts, 43% of respondents reported that the attrition rates of underrepresented talent were somewhat or significantly higher compared to their majority workforce. The data suggests talent pipelines need to be assessed and strengthened further to maintain recent gains. Chief supply chain officers (CSCOs) seeking to reduce attrition must evaluate a number of potential root causes, including the desire among these employees to seek career changes, the most highly cited reason underrepresented talent left their roles in 2023.

Additional information is available at [gartner.com](https://www.gartner.com).

‘Supply chain organizations may have been expected to take a step back in pursuing DEI objectives in light of increased scrutiny and economic pressures. Our data instead showed strong gains, with a steep increase in representation of underrepresented races and ethnicities at every level of the supply chain. The key driver of these gains is an increase in accountability via formalized management goals.’