

2021 State of the Employee Resource Group Report



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Introduction

For the second annual State of the Employee Resource Group (ERG), we have used the results of our 2021 ERG Lead Compensation Survey to expand the conversation.

The goal: give a voice to organizations that employ diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) committees and ERGs as part of their culture. We want to create transparency rather than relying on gimmicky mission statements like “We value diversity.” Instead, we are asking organizations to show us behind the scenes: Do they pay people for their time and efforts? How much? Who is invited to the meetings? What are the employer’s expectations?

That level of transparency is the purpose of our survey and the resulting report. Although we present statistics and draw some conclusions, the intent is not statistical analysis but rather widespread knowledge sharing. In the future, we’ll use our accumulated data sets for more extensive statistical conclusions. Throughout this report, we have noted external statistics, survey quotes, and spotlights from a variety of organizations about their ERG practices.

Who responded to this survey:



- **30%** work in organizations sized from 251-500
- **27%** work in Human Resources
- **25%** participate in an ERG as an identifier and as a lead in that group (i.e. those who identified as Black participated in Black ERGs; those who identified as women participated in a women's ERG)
- **26%** are currently in a DEI role
- **13%** work in organizations of 5,000+ people
- **12%** manage people
- **11%** work in organizations with under 100 people
- **9%** participate in ERGs as an ally and a lead in a group

There is still a lot of variability across organizations when it comes to ERG compensation practices, so it's challenging to identify common trends. Included in the sections below are lingering questions from the survey — questions that are important to highlight because it is clear there are no 'right' answers at the moment. Organizations are still learning and experimenting with what to do in relation to DEI committees and ERGs. We hope that this report will serve as a resource for companies as they develop their ERG group processes and continue to make their organizations equitable.

Thank you,

The Rise Journey Team



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Analysis Methodology

The Rise Journey conducts an annual survey of the Human Resources (HR) community to understand the landscape of ERGs and whether or not companies compensate their leads. Our 2021 survey had 166 participants across various industries and company sizes. Industries included technology, finance, e-commerce, retail, and professional services across nonprofit and for-profit organizations, start-ups, and multinational companies. Our goal was to provide qualitative and quantitative data about ERG compensation and other best practices and give a voice to organizations that care about or are interested in this topic.

Where possible in this report, we share year-over-year comparison data. Because certain questions were updated with more answer choices, we combined groups when necessary to enable comparisons and to provide trending data.

The survey data was analyzed by reviewing the percentages of survey respondents to each question. For questions that had only one answer choice, each percentage represents the total survey respondents who provided that answer as a proportion of the total respondents who answered the question. For questions that had “select all that apply,” each percentage represents the number of respondents who selected that answer choice as a proportion of total answer choices that were selected by all respondents. Every question on the survey was optional and some survey respondents did not respond to every question. This is why the n size for each

question differs. We formatted the survey as such so respondents could skip questions that did not apply to them or their organization.

Because our survey respondents span a variety of industries and organizational sizes, we recognize that this is not a large sample that is representative of the entire population. We understand that there may be voluntary response bias as there was an open call for participants to respond to this survey. We hope to expand our survey sample in the future, and we want to emphasize that our aim is to provide qualitative research on what current practices are in the future. Our hope is that this data provides examples and transparency when it comes to ERG compensation and budgeting practices. We do not draw any statistical conclusions in this report, but we do provide commentary based on our observations of the data, comments, and trends we have observed working with our clients.

Reporting Size of Organizations

	2021	2022
1-10	0%	1%
11-50	4%	6%
51-100	18%	4%
101-250	11%	19%
251-500	21%	28%
501-1,000	46%	10%
1,000-5,000	0%	19%
>5000	0%	12%

Importance of ERGs

ERGs are valuable drivers of company culture. They create a sense of belonging for groups of employees who may have been marginalized (in the past or currently) and provide a safe space for employees to acclimate to organizational culture while finding community. The purpose of ERGs is to provide resources and serve as a point of connection for groups of

employees and the company as a whole. These sentiments are best shared through qualitative survey comments, which are shared throughout this report as visual quotes.

Now more than ever, organizations need to develop and support ERGs to build communities that help sustain, grow, and support our employees.

ERGs initiate important conversations around DEI and work hard to create an environment of belonging for our people of ALL diverse backgrounds. Providing a safe space to talk openly about experiences and challenges is one way they ensure every person finds places they belong at Bowery.

Our ERGs have provided the opportunity for both education and celebration in creative ways - through film nights, walking tours of different neighborhoods, tarot card readings with our LGBTQ+ group Rainbowery, listening sessions, fireside chats with members of the community mark important holidays, the list goes on. In the next 6 months, we're discussing ways to leverage our ERGs as a resource for business decisions and we plan to explore intersectionality across our ERGs.

Bowery Farming

What is Performative Behavior?

Carmen Morris, experienced DEI professional, writes, “when performative allyship embeds itself into organizational culture, particularly at leadership and managerial levels, it sends the signal that it is right to show affinity towards [racial, gender, etc.] equality, but that it is not important enough to do much, if anything about it.”¹ Performative behavior, culture, and allyship in organizations can include, but is not limited to:

- ⊕ Professing support for marginalized groups without taking real action to support these groups
- ⊕ Leadership rhetoric supporting DEI, particularly in the area of racial equality, but still having policies that harm or discriminate in their workplaces
- ⊕ “Performative activism is surface-level activism done for personal gain rather than genuine devotion to a cause”²

An example of performative behavior is when organizations participate in “pink washing” or “rainbow washing” which often happens during Pride month. Logos change to reflect the pride flag(s) and sponsorship of Pride events, donations, etc. while internal policies are harmful to the community (e.g. working with clients who are openly transphobic, or not supporting their LGBTQIA+ staff). These shallow gestures are often more damaging as they reduce trust and feel exploitative.

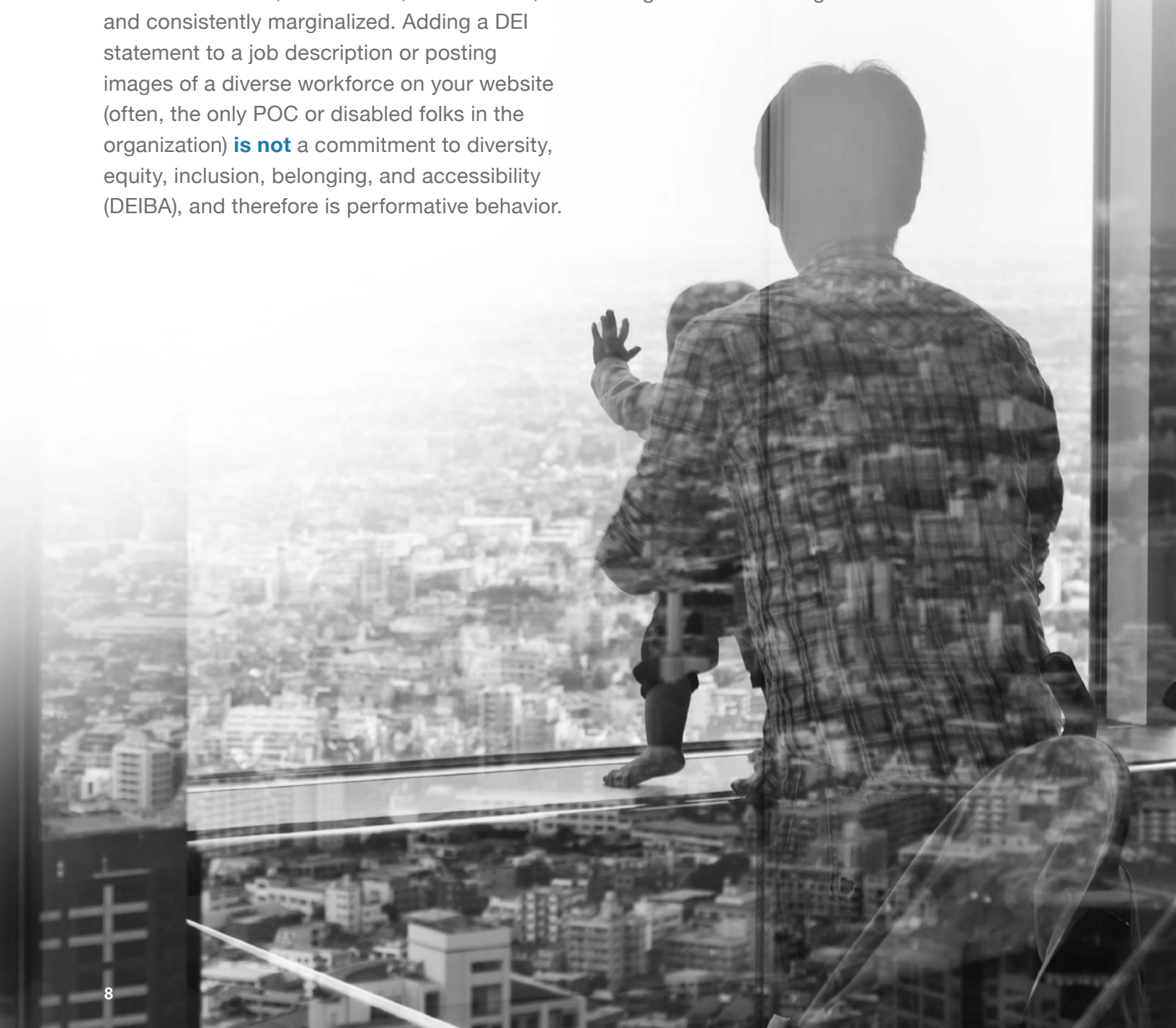
Recommendations to something something Performative Behavior

- + If any employee or outside person calls the organization out as being performative, delegate a committee to investigate if the claims have basis and what they would recommend for changes to resolve the performative behavior.
- + Review internal policies, practices, benefits, etc. with support from ERG leads, internal leaders, and potentially external support. Make sure that internal practices reflect what the organization is touting externally.
- + Structure ERGs in a way that allows them to have real impact on the organization. Do not give them free reign to do as they please, but rather create structure and implement them in a way that connects them to company decision makers.
- + Compensation ERG leads for the extra work they perform.

“Our ERG (for Black staff) contributed significantly in shaping our org’s new racial equity approach, and we have a seat at the table for many discussions at the organization.”

In the wake of 2020's social justice reckoning and the murder of George Floyd, many organizations were quick to create a social post about justice or donate to a cause. DEI committees and ERGs were given free rein in their communication and messaging efforts and were given financial resources, often for the first time. This urgent action transformed a number of organizations and communities as a result. However, little was done internally to support the work of employees who continue to feel overlooked, overworked, undervalued, and consistently marginalized. Adding a DEI statement to a job description or posting images of a diverse workforce on your website (often, the only POC or disabled folks in the organization) **is not** a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility (DEIBA), and therefore is performative behavior.

ERGs quickly become the lifeblood of organizations, especially when those organizations are struggling, going through culture or leadership shifts, and other general changes. As 2021 comes to a close, the "Great Resignation" is taking hold and elevating the contribution that ERGs have on recruitment, retention, and engagement. Organizations that ignore these contributions are likely to hear exit interview feedback around how the ERGs and culture weren't recognized even during tumultuous times.



DEI Committee vs. ERG

Some survey respondents noted that while they don't currently have ERGs, they were filling out the survey on behalf of their DEI committee. In general, DEI committees are a great first step before creating ERGs. They give employees the opportunity to explore what kind of commitment, budget, support, and leadership opportunities they receive in building out DEIBA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Accessibility)³ at their organization.

Similar to ERG leads, DEI committee members need sufficient budget and support structures from management and senior leadership. These individuals are putting in extra time and energy on top of their full-time jobs and they deserve to be compensated for their efforts.

These are some questions to ask when defining ERGs at your organization:

- ⊕ How are the ERG groups defined? Are they operating as safe spaces or as company educators? This distinction changes how or if the leads are compensated.
- ⊕ Do ERGs create goals? Are these goals used to determine compensation?

Transition from DEI Committee to ERG

In the qualitative comments, folks asked: "When is the time right to transition from a DEI committee to an ERG? Or should we have both groups?"

DEI Committees tend to be made up of a more diverse group from across the organization, not focused on a particular group, demographic, or community. They are often open to anyone looking to support DEI within an organization as it is most likely the most inclusive, representative body of employees. The work is often distributed, with one person taking a lead on a goal with support of other members acting as a subcommittee. Ultimately, this group works with leadership and others to align DEI work with overall organizational goals. DEI Committees and ERGs will always have some natural overlap and they may work together to achieve goals, but they should have different outcomes and success metrics. Large, mature organizations can maintain both ERGs and a DEI committee because these groups serve different purposes.

Organizations should consider forming ERGs when:

- ⊕ There is interest from employees to create one for a particular group, demographic, or community to support employees who belong to this group.
- ⊕ An organization is large and is looking for additional ways to support, grow, and engage employees.
- ⊕ There is a natural gathering of employees looking to do more within the DEI realm or support a specific type of individual, but they're not sure of what next steps to take.
- ⊕ There is a need to support growing psychological safety in the workplace.

“

The fact that we compensate our leaders shows we view Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (DIBs) efforts as meaningful and value-add.

”

Compensating ERG Leads

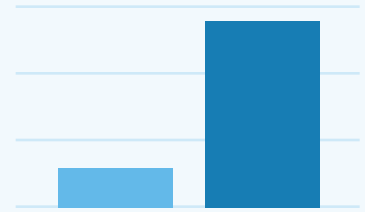
In 2020, **only 6% of survey respondents indicated that their organizations compensated their ERG leads** in some form. In 2021, **28% of respondents indicated that their organization compensated their ERG leads**, a noteworthy increase. More organizations are recognizing that leading an ERG and driving DEIBA initiatives is substantial work that should be valued and fairly compensated. While this trend is positive, the majority of organizations surveyed still indicated they are not currently compensating ERG leads.

The good news is that of those who said they do not compensate ERG leads, **48% indicated that their organization is currently discussing ways to compensate their leads**. This is **up 24%** from 2020.

In 2020, we asked a broader question of our survey respondents to learn how they compensated ERG leads. Similar to this year, we did not see any major correlation between company size and compensation.

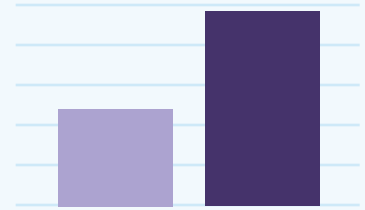
Currently Compensating

■ 6% in 2020
■ 28% in 2021



Considering Compensation

■ 24% in 2020
■ 48% in 2021



While fewer companies indicated they compensated ERG leads from the 2020 survey, here are a few examples of those that did:

- ⊕ A 251-500 employee company paid **\$2500 for a 6 to 12 month engagement**.
- ⊕ A 251-500 employee company paid **\$20 an hour**, based on the employee's current billing rate.
- ⊕ A 51-100 employee company paid a **\$1000 stipend**.
- ⊕ A 11-50 person company paid a **\$1500 quarterly bonus**.

Annual Compensation for One Lead by Company Size

	1-10	11-50	51-100	101-250	251-500	501-1000	1,001-5,000	5,000+
\$1 - \$500	100%	0%	0%	15%	5%	0%	7%	0%
\$501 - \$1,000	0%	0%	33%	8%	0%	0%	7%	0%
\$1,001 - \$1,500	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	13%
\$1,501 - \$5,000	0%	0%	0%	8%	5%	14%	7%	13%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%
We do not compensate leads	0%	75%	67%	69%	85%	71%	79%	75%

Forms of Compensation

In 2020, the majority of respondents indicated that when ERG leads were compensated, it was done with a mix of cash bonus and hourly compensation. We saw forms of non-monetary compensation. In 2021, we saw additional forms of non-monetary compensation like professional development, mentorship, swag, and covered travel expenses.

Determining the Compensation Amount

It is clear that there is a lot of confusion on how much to propose and budget for ERG Lead compensation.

Our advice: Start with what you can get. Every organization will have a different budget and flexibility. Getting the line item of 'ERG lead Compensation' into the budget means that, in future budget planning cycles, this number can increase based on previous successes. Don't let indecision stop you from getting leads paid, or fall victim to "analysis paralysis." This is a phenomenon that occurs when overanalyzing or overthinking blocks decision making, meaning that no solution or course of action is decided upon.

When determining compensation, explore the time requirements of the work. Are you planning to pay leads at a reasonable hourly rate? Or is the budget fixed such that the amount is minimal but serves as a starting point? We know that this

“ [ERGs help to create] safe spaces for individuals with shared social identities (and allies) to come together and build feelings of belonging. ”

work is important and valuable, but the fact is that only a minority of organizations are paying their ERG leads. If your organization is interested in standing out as a leader in the DEI and ERG space, you should compensate your leads.

We recommend compensating at minimum for 5 hours a week, at \$15/hour, with a quarterly payout plan as shown below. This pay rate, while not even a living wage⁴, is the lowest hourly rate that should be reasonably paid for this work. Quarterly payouts are familiar to most finance and payroll teams and should be a light lift from an administrative perspective.

Like any compensation discussion, having a regular review cadence is important. To support HR and finance metrics, we suggest keeping this compensation discussion on the same schedule as the regular performance review or budgeting cycle.

Questions all those involved in the compensation process should ask:

- ⊕ What are the factors that determine the payment amount? What criteria or formula is used?
- ⊕ How often is compensation paid?
- ⊕ What is the fair value of this work and its ROI (Return on Investment)? Is it greater than \$15/hour?

Every organization will have a different structure for their ERGs. Begin with an internal survey to find out what work is currently being done, how long it takes to complete, and what agenda/action items/initiatives have been identified by the group.

If your organization is unable or unwilling to compensate in a monetary capacity, consider compensating with professional

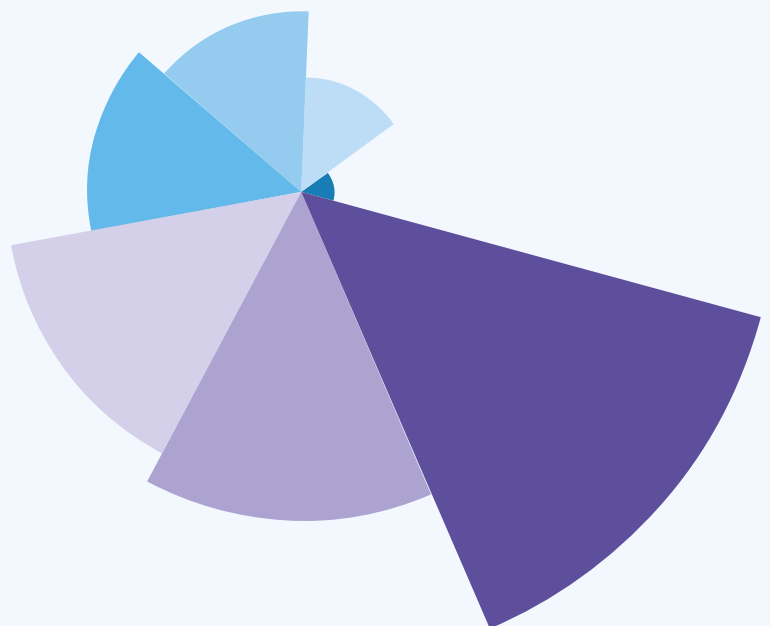
Starting Point: \$15 an hour breakdown

	Hours per Week	Hours per Year	Annual Bonus	Quarterly Payout
1 Lead	5	260	\$3,900	\$975
8 Leads	40	2080	\$31,200	\$7,800

development, mentorship, or other forms of compensation. While non-monetary benefits are helpful, remember that ERG leads are often Underrepresented Minorities (URMs) who typically make less money compared to their similarly situated counterparts⁵. Other compensation methods besides cash are better than no compensation, but they don't directly help these employees grow wealth or support them outside of the office.

2021: How do you compensate ERG Leads?

- **29%** Professional Development Opportunities
- **20%** Annual Stipend
- **18%** Spot Bonus (Not Guaranteed)
- **13%** Mentorship Opportunities
- **11%** Company Swag
- **7%** Gift Cards
- **2%** Cost-related Travel



Compensation Key Takeaways

Of the organizations still considering whether or not to compensate their leads:

77% have between 1 and 5 ERGs in their organization



16% are considering annual stipends



16% are considering professional development opportunities as a form of compensation



Of the organizations that do not currently compensate ERG leads in any form:

63% give their ERGs a budget to use during the year



Of the organizations compensating ERG leads:

15% of leads were compensated \$1,500 or less



8% said leads were compensated between \$1,500 to \$5,000



3% said leads were compensated more than \$5000



When deciding on a dollar amount

21% indicated they will consider compensating between \$1 to \$1,000



4% indicated they will consider compensating between \$5,000 to \$10,000



It's clear that most organizations are not paying significant sums of money to their ERG leads.

In both 2020 and 2021, there was no correlation between the size of the organization and the compensation amount.

Measuring ERG Lead Success

Whether or not you compensate your ERG leads, it's vital that they have defined goals and their efforts are measured. These goals and metrics don't have to be enormous but they do need to be clearly communicated. All success metrics should be connected to the ERG's purpose and important organizational criteria (e.g., core values, competencies, etc). Individual leads or co-leads should be assessed on their contributions to building and supporting an effective team while the entire ERG should be held accountable for achieving their objectives.

Additionally, it's important to define the limit for what an ERG can or should do. Organizations should consider how much time will need to be allocated to this work so that success for an ERG lead doesn't mean sacrificing that employee's full-time role.

Setting goals can be as simple as:

- ⊕ Holding a certain number of internal events a year
- ⊕ Helping maintain a metric in an engagement survey (e.g., "I am comfortable talking about my background and cultural experiences with my colleagues" or People from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to succeed at [COMPANY])
- ⊕ Providing support groups or events during times of stress, need, or external traumatic events
- ⊕ Supporting the build out of DEI or ERG onboarding or training
- ⊕ Researching resources to support the recruitment team's efforts to have more top-of-funnel diversity
- ⊕ Partnering with tech and product teams on new product or client offerings
- ⊕ Auditing internal or external communications that focus on DEI (e.g. EEOC statement on job descriptions; donations or other CSR activities; social media posts about events like Black History Month or Hispanic Heritage Month).

“ ERGs have been instrumental in our company culture by creating a safe space, furthering the conversations around equity, educating our teams, and branding our company for recruitment and sales opportunities. ”

Promotions & Internal Mobility

Evaluating employees based on their ERG leadership supports internal promotions, growth, and building the capacities of those leads to progress in their careers. This is particularly true if an organization has developed leadership competencies. Because these roles are often held by URMs, evaluating their performance is key to grow these employees into management and higher level positions, increasing the diversity at all levels of the organization.

When organizations prioritize the talent and leadership capabilities of ERG leads, they will reap the benefits of increased employee engagement and retention metrics, as well as overall organizational performance.

If an organization is actively diversifying its recruitment pipeline but isn't also developing their ERG leads, they are missing a significant opportunity to promote and benefit from their internal talent.

We have suggested a suggested structure for ERG groups, including leadership roles. By organizing and honing in on different responsibilities for a board (lead, operations, community engagement) which allows for better divvying of responsibilities. How many events did the group host (community agent)? Were meetings run efficiently (operations)? Was the company informed of all activities (lead)? *Note this is a suggested structure that allows for flexibility and feedback from board members to ensure the goals align with the work.

Bolt

ERG Lead Performance Review

It's important to integrate ERG-specific questions to best evaluate ERG leads in the performance review process. Bring in the perspectives and voices of the people the ERG lead supports will allow managers and company leadership to understand how the employee is performing.

During both their day-to-day and the review cycle, whoever leads DEIBA efforts in your organization should be evaluating the employee's performance as a lead. They should have the closest view of the employee's performance and how they can improve. If an organization doesn't have someone in charge of DEIBA, the review of the ERG lead's

performance would fall to their manager. The work of ERG leads should be discussed in talent review processes and considered during salary and promotion negotiations.

Be sure to develop a review process that takes a comprehensive view of the person's performance.

While their role and ERG position are separate, management and HR should recognize the leadership qualities and other skills that individuals are developing. Cross-functional organization and leadership skills will naturally improve that employee's performance in other areas.

Example 'ERG Lead' Performance Review Template:

- ✦ How did this person actively participate in helping the ERG reach its goals?
- ✦ What new skills did this person gain or improve upon because of their work as an ERG lead?
- ✦ What are some examples of how this person contributed to the culture of the ERG?
- ✦ What skills or areas of improvement can this person work on as part of their ERG leadership?



Currently LGBTQ employee journey mapping is going on. The local Pride chapter had been asked to present on topics such as pronouns and gender. Currently we are working on a benefits presentation.



Making the Case to Pay ERG Leads

Asking for budgetary support for any program requires an analytical approach and a clear understanding of the ROI for the organization. It's now common to see headlines about how diverse organizations perform better, and [the business case for ERGs⁶](#) becomes clearer. That said, we caution drawing a direct connection between diversity and business returns. As an article from the Harvard Business Review notes: "Increasing diversity does not, by itself, increase effectiveness; what matters is how an organization harnesses diversity, and whether it's willing to reshape its power structure...When diversity initiatives promise financial gains but fail to deliver, people are likely to withdraw their support for them."⁷

Leading an ERG is a commitment of time, effort, and emotional energy. We believe that any individual who performs a role to the benefit of the company, even if it's outside their job description, deserves to be fairly compensated. If these ERG leaders are not

compensated or recognized, there's a high risk of burnout, resentment, and disengagement, not only from the group's leads, but from the ERG's members and other employees in the organization. ERG leadership also builds general leadership skills that can be transferred to an employee's regular job duties and helps deepen the connection between the employee and the company at large. **Compensating ERG leads is a way to plan for long term success and to further develop your organization's culture. The business case isn't about what happens today but their impact on tomorrow.**

It's important to consider how companies are currently approaching this compensation question. We are hearing that some companies will not allow additional compensation because these employees are already being paid for their "regular" jobs, but we are not getting the whole story. We want to hear from you: if your company's senior leaders have changed their ERG lead compensation practices, what provoked this change? Understanding these shifts will help us, and leaders in the wider community, have the conversation at their own companies.



Questions to Answer Before Compensating ERG Leads

The following questions are the minimum that an organization should ask, answer, and document before beginning to compensate ERG leads:

- ⊕ How frequently are ERG leads paid out: Annually, Quarterly, Monthly? Should they be paid out on the same bonus cycle other employees in the organization are on?
- ⊕ Who gets compensated? Is there a tiered structure or does everyone receive the same amount of compensation?
- ⊕ Is compensation based on individual ERG lead performance? Based on completion of ERG-specific goals? Or for general active participation as an ERG lead?
- ⊕ If there are leads and co-leads, are they compensated equally? If not, what are the differences in expectations between the two roles?
- ⊕ Will there be ERG lead “term limits” to give others that opportunity?

TIP: When preparing the business case for paying leads, be sure to do the following:

- + **Know your audience.** Frame your findings and data in a way that they can understand and relate to. This isn't about numbers on a page, but why these numbers matter to your specific stakeholders. Find out what kind of language they use, and make sure to use that as well. Do they toss around acronyms like ROI and YoY? Be sure to use familiar language.
- + **Develop a multi-dimensional recommendation.** You're not just proposing that ERG leads get paid, you're proposing a change in culture and perception of DEI within the organization. Be clear about what problem you're solving and your proposed solution. Does your proposal make sense given the data? What is the action plan — who will take ownership in bringing the solution to life? What metrics will be used to measure success? Be sure to think about what is trackable right now and what metrics could be used in the future.
- + **Tell the stakeholders a story.** This isn't a run of the mill problem you're solving, but rather a problem that has had a meaningful impact on all of your stakeholders. Bring problems and concerns to life; make them real and tangible. Who does this problem affect? What is the impact? Why should your stakeholders care about it and push for change? What does it mean for this group in 5 years? 10?
- + **Use data and visualizations as backup.** This might be the most difficult part of convincing leadership to pay leads — how can you prove the return on investment? What data do you have now vs. what data will you need to collect in the future? Data and data visuals should be clear and in support of your solution. Keep things simple and pay attention to details. Some often-used data is around retention, engagement survey questions, pulse survey questions, or exit interviews.

ERG Budgets and Structure

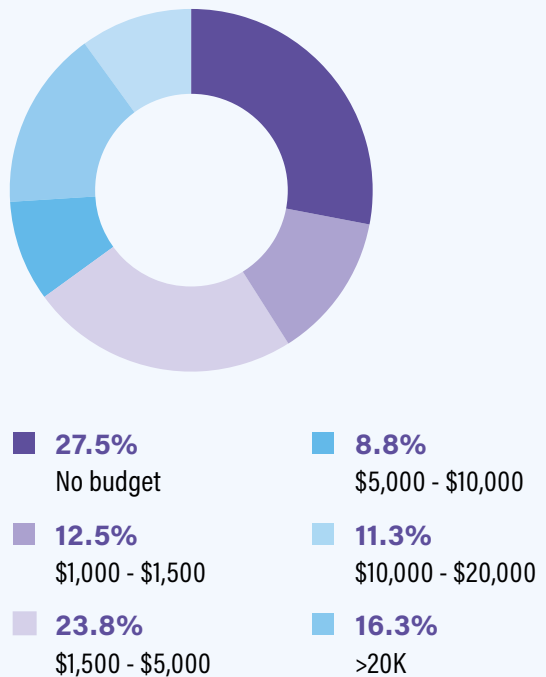
This year, it was interesting to see a downward trend in organizations allocating budgets to their ERGs. When asked about ERG budget, **only 69% of respondents said that their ERGs are given a budget to use during the year, down from 90%** in 2020. This is a complex result that may have many causes. We recognize that our data is not robust enough to make a statistically significant conclusion. We can make some educated guesses however.

One reason for this could be that ERGs may be a new addition to some of the organizations who participated in this year’s survey; therefore budgets have not yet been developed for these types of initiatives. It’s possible that a sampling bias in 2020 led to surveying individuals who were highly motivated in the DEI space, or from similarly motivated companies. As our sample size increases, we may see the percentage of companies considering ERG budgets and compensation continue to drop. The true number of companies considering these budget measures may be much lower than we realize.

In 2020, **37% of respondents indicated that their ERG budgets were within \$1,500 to \$10,000. In 2021, this went down to 32%**. Again, this is likely a function of the novelty of ERGs in certain organizations.

In both 2020 and 2021, there was no correlation between the size of the organization and the budget given to ERGs. One might have assumed that larger organizations would report higher

2021 ERG Budgets (Actual or Estimates)



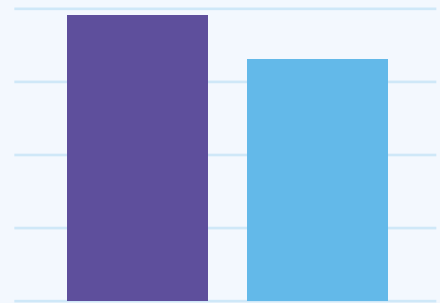
ERG budgets; however, when we look at the breakdown of respondents by company size and ERG budget, we see that there are a few small to midsize companies that reported large ERG budgets. Because this question included data from 70 total organizations, we caution against using this to draw broader conclusions about company size and budget. However, it is helpful to see that organizations of all sizes are allocating a variety of budgets to support ERGs. It isn’t just the larger, more established companies that are doing this. Small to midsize companies are also seeing the value of ERGs and dedicating budgets to this practice.

ERG Budget Key Takeaways

- ⊕ **ERG budgets should not include ERG lead compensation.** This type of compensation should be a separate line item from the overall ERG budget. Don't make the budget a zero-sum game.
- ⊕ Compared to last year, there are more organizations reporting on either extreme of the budget range — smaller budgets of \$0 to \$1K and larger budgets of \$10K+.
- ⊕ Organizations with smaller budgets (\$0 to \$5K) tended to report between 1 to 5 ERGs. This is only an observation and not indicative of a trend.

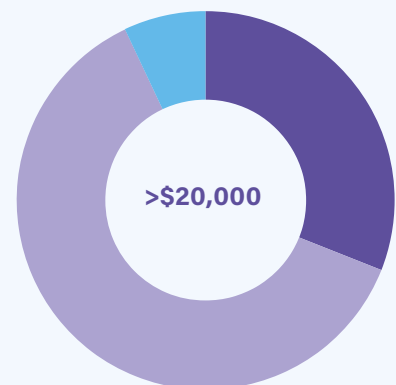
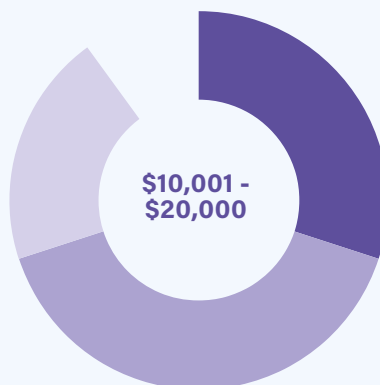
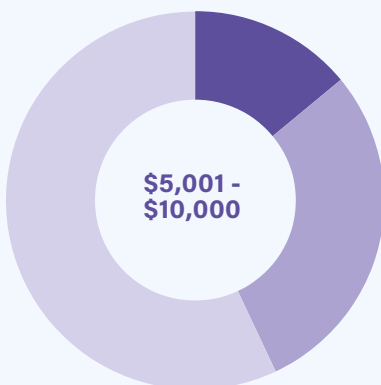
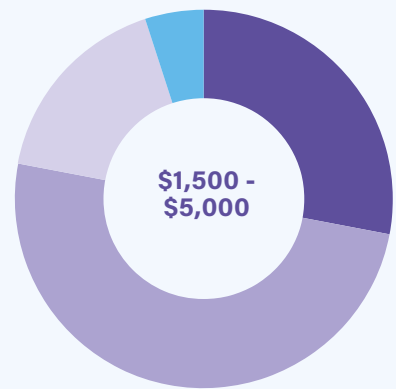
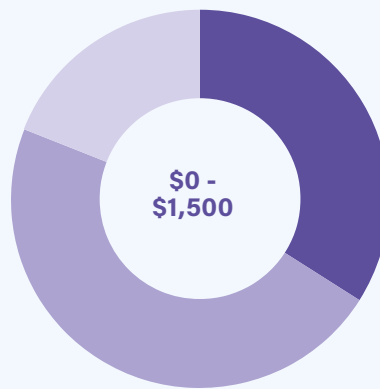
Organizations Reporting ERG Budgets of Under \$10,000

- 37% in 2020
- 32% in 2021



Percent of Organizations by Number of ERGs Reported & Budget Size

- 1-2 ERGs
- 3-5 ERGs
- 6-10 ERGs
- >10 ERGs



Potential ERG Roles

Member Roles

These roles and definitions were shared with us by the Additional Contributors listed at the conclusion of this document. This is not a comprehensive list and roles may vary from ERG to ERG and from organization to organization.

Ally/Member: Those who want to learn more about or be a part of the ERG community. Members attend ERG meetings, engage with events, serve as champions for diversity and inclusion, and communicate initiatives more broadly at the organization. Allies may not identify with the affinity of a specific ERG but they are active advocates for the group and amplify the voices of members.

Ambassador: Ambassadors are active members of the ERG who execute on the initiatives agreed upon by the group. Ambassadors can take on various leadership roles within the group, such as programming & events lead, meeting facilitator, or treasurer. Ambassadors amplify events and programming for their own ERG and support other groups.

Communications Lead: This role is focused on both internal and external (to the ERG) communications. They work with other Communication ERG leads to create clear, thoughtful documentation to be shared with the rest of the organization on a regular basis.

Community Lead: This role is responsible for fostering community within the group. This person supports the Events lead in planning social events, handles crisis situations if/when they arise, and generally acts as a community manager for the ERG.

ERG Lead: The leader of the ERG helps define the group's charter and set the group's goals. The leader is an active participant in the DEI leadership group, with some of their responsibilities including attending meetings, surfacing issues, and keeping the broader DEI leadership committee informed of upcoming initiatives. They are a conduit for ERG member feedback and can call on their networks inside and outside of the organization to open doors to partnerships, resources, and connections for the members.

Events/Programming Lead: The events or programming lead is responsible for planning events for the ERG, gathering feedback on those events, communicating expenses with the treasurer, and reporting on the goals and success metrics.

Leadership Or Executive Sponsor: A member of the highest level of leaders or executives at the launch of the ERG. The sponsor amplifies the collective voice of their respective ERG and helps drive cultural change within the organization. The sponsor attends major events and encourages engagement and participation from all employees. They contribute to the overall strategic direction and success of an ERG. The sponsor may be part of the affinity group or an ally.

Treasurer: The treasurer is responsible for tracking group expenses and reporting expenses, often on a quarterly basis.

ERG Types

A quarter of the organizations surveyed had 1 to 2 ERGs. Just over 50% had 3 to 6 ERGs. The rest, a little over 20%, had 7 to 15 ERGs. In terms of most popular ERGs, the top three are:

- ➔ LGBTQIA+
- ➔ Women
- ➔ Black & African American

During the 2020 survey, we asked respondents to share the types of ERGs at their organization. This year, we provided a robust list of types of ERGs (including a write in option). The emergence of new ERGs could be due to the challenges presented by the pandemic, as we are seeing the need for community now more than ever. Many folks have been physically isolated from their communities or experienced a spike in discrimination and violence during 2020 (i.e., the AAPI community).

Organizations are beginning to recognize the various, often intersecting, identities of their employees and recognizing the unique needs of each of these identities. We must increasingly find ways to bring people together across differences, honoring this diversity while highlighting the ways in which, when we choose, we can be united.

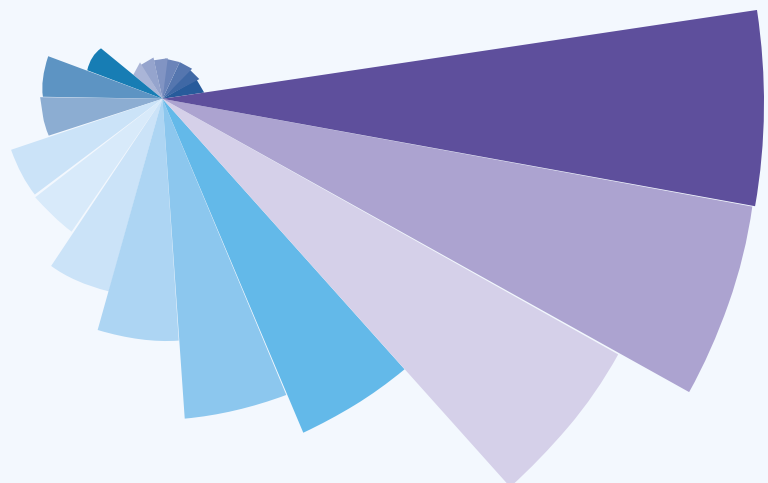
New ERG categories that were not mentioned in the 2020 survey:

- ➔ 4.2% had a disability ERG
- ➔ 2.8% had a Neurodiversity & Neuro Atypical ERG
- ➔ 0.8% had an Indigenous & Native American ERG
- ➔ 0.8% had an Immigrants ERG
- ➔ 0.8% had a South Asian ERG
- ➔ 0.6% had a Middle Eastern and North African (MENA)
- ➔ 0.3% had an Age 50+

Here is the full list of the types of ERGs that surveyed organizations have:

LGBTQIA+	14.6%
Women	14.6%
Black & African American	13.2%
Asian/Asian Pacific Islander (API)	9.2%
Latinx / Hispanic	8.4%
Parents	6.2%
BIPOC	4.5%
Disability	4.2%
Veterans & Military Spouses	3.9%
Women in ENG	3.1%
Neurodiversity & Neuro Atypical	2.8%
Caretakers (children and adults)	2.5%
Jewish	1.1%

Indigenous & Native American	0.8%
Int'l/People working outside of the US	0.8%
Immigrants	0.8%
South Asian	0.8%
Middle Eastern & North African (MENA)	0.6%
Age 50+	0.3%



Identifier-Only Vs. Ally-Friendly Events

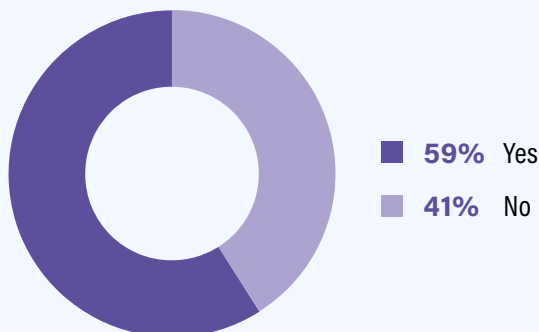
For meetings and events, 89% of the ERGs encourage allies to attend events or meetings and 59% have identifier-only meetings.

Having both identifier (or in group) meetings and ally friendly events are important. There are times where identifier conversations, facilitations, or support is needed — where bringing in folks who don't identify can be a

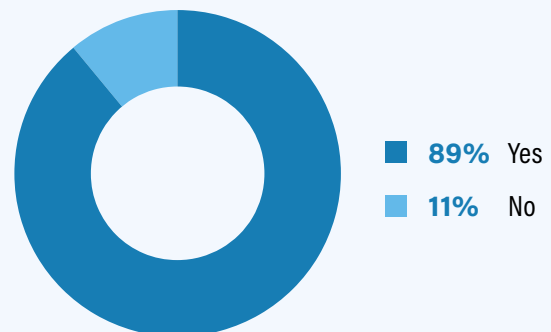
hindrance to mental, emotional, physiological, and sometimes physical safety. The majority of the time, including allies is a vital part of growth and community. Including allies is important for building cultural competency. Research shows the best way to reduce bias is to get to know someone who is from a different background than you. Bringing allies into ERG spaces helps to build empathy, understanding, and to create a more harmonious working environment.

Identifier-only vs. Ally-Friendly Gatherings	
Identifier-only	Ally-friendly
Someone doesn't feel safe describing a difficult experience in front of someone who does not come from the same background.	Group discussion on behavioral norms in the workplaces
After a traumatic event that happens to a specific demographic group and employees who identify would like to process as a group.	Monthly or quarterly recurring meetings for all to learn about initiatives, progress, and any updates from the ERG
In addition to an ally-friendly recurring meeting, one for identifiers-only to have a space that is wholly their own.	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), volunteering, mentoring, and other work that is done with or for the community.

Does Your ERG Have Identifier-Only Meetings or Events?



Does Your Erg Have Events Or Meetings Where Allies Are Encouraged To Attend?



Getting Started

Begin by defining the purpose of the group and building out the basic structure. It's important to build in more processes than you may feel is necessary at the start. It's much easier to remove inefficient practices than it is to adopt new practices. Check out this ERG Charter Document [template](#)⁸ for inspiration.

TIP: When developing ERG structures, be sure to:

- ✦ Create clear responsibilities and goals for each role, and make sure that individuals who will step into the roles know what is expected of them prior to accepting the position.
- ✦ Ensure that there are clear working hours or dedicated time to do ERG work. This might be part of their standard workday, or it might be expected after work hours. Whatever your organization decides, make it clear and plainly communicated to all. One person stated that “for our D&I Core Committee they are able to spend 5% of their work time on D&I projects.”
- ✦ Build out communications and policies around the role. Make sure all managers and leadership within the company know what to expect if one of their reports becomes an ERG lead.
- ✦ Clearly articulate how ERG leadership can lead to other leadership roles within the organization. What strengths and growth areas are you looking for in those leaders? What kind of training and support is offered for those stepping into these roles?
- ✦ Determine a budget for the ERGs, whether as a collective or for individual ERGs. Ensure a regularly scheduled budget review to assess spending and provide an opportunity for ERG leaders to advocate for higher funding.
- ✦ Devise clear, actionable, and attainable goals for the group. Dividing the goals into categories can help the groups to divide and conquer the work that is needed to achieve the goal. Later in this report, we share potential pillars and categories. As an example, if there is an Internal Culture pillar, there might be an Events sub-category. This could include hosting a speaker for the next ERG meeting or having an ERG member serve on a speaking panel at the next company town hall.

How can ERG leads structure their time?

There is no “right” way for ERG leads to structure their time but leads should have dedicated time that is protected for ERG work that is clearly communicated to their managers and teams. It can be a challenge for many organizations to provide time for ERG participation during a busy workday. Danielle Curtis at Donors Choose noted: “As a lead, I would dedicate about 1 day/month all together for maintaining and pushing the group forwards in a regular time. During high programming times, like Black History Month, that would balloon up to 5-7 days/month. This time in general consisted of meetings with my co-lead, Slack channel maintenance, coffee chats with new members.”

If you are asking your ERGs to complete additional work, host meetings or conversations, or make progress on goals, giving them dedicated time in the work-week is vital. Encourage ERG leads to focus their time as best they can, allowing them to prioritize any time-sensitive goals and stay true to their overarching purpose. Ensure that your leads have support from the Leadership or the Executive Sponsor and the opportunity to receive guidance from senior leaders to advise them.

Setting ERG Expectations

Compensating ERG leads is best practice and it’s important to support that practice by managing the expectations of your organization’s leadership team. While it’s normal for leadership teams to expect accountability in exchange for this compensation, they may not know how much time and effort are required of this work, or understand what realistic outcomes look like.

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you set expectations for your ERGs:

- ⊕ **Are we focused on outcomes or time worked?** It should be obvious that the work of ERG leads takes time, but leads should not be expected to spend a “minimum” amount of time working on their groups. Instead, focus on outcomes such as number of events held, number of members, member growth rate, and so on.
- ⊕ **Do we have defined responsibilities for leadership roles?** Make sure that each position has a defined list of responsibilities. This makes it much easier to determine who is or isn’t fulfilling their duties. It also makes it easier to understand the impact of individual roles and functions within the group.

“ ERGs have been a support for identifiers, especially during the pandemic. Some have taken a greater role in educating the larger staff on issues that are important to them and others have started internal conversations about collecting statistics and initiatives to help diversify our team. ”

ERG Goals and Focus Areas

As you build out ERGs, ensure that their goals and focus areas are structured with relevant metrics to measure success.

Four Pillars

Core areas of focus or responsibilities:

- ⊕ Tech, Product, and Consumer
- ⊕ Brand and Recruitment
- ⊕ Internal Culture
- ⊕ Learning and Development

Tech, Product, and Consumer

Bringing in ERGs to support the technical, product, and consumer side of a business can create new audiences, customers, and expand revenue potential.

- ⊕ In a recent case study from Pepsi⁹, they share the impact from bringing in their LGBTQIA+ ERG on branding and marketing of a new product. This ERG consulted on packaging, supported internal articles and communications, and coordinated logistics of product launch at the parade with employee volunteers.

“

We are just at the beginning of our ERG journey. My hope is that they will play the role of establishing that we are all responsible for our workplace culture. I hope to use ERGs as a way to ensure we are building company practices through an inclusive lens [for] HR programs, policies, and company rituals.

”

- ⊕ A leader at the ecommerce company Bolt shared: *“We opened an online swag store so that both employees and any/all shoppers can purchase Bolt swag. The first item in the store was a hoodie, which had both a Women’s and Men’s sizes to purchase. Our ERG lead for BoltQ (our LGBTQ+ Affinity Group) noticed that the sizing for both genders was the same, and that it was in fact a unisex hoodie that we had separated out into Women’s/Men’s on the site. The lead talked with the teams who created the swag store to gather more info, then suggested to just have 1 unisex option instead, which ended up adding significantly more value than separating out the sizing!”*

Brand and Recruitment

One way to integrate ERGs into an organization's brand is to have representatives provide input and feedback when rebranding, updating values, or when changing any significant change to the way the organization looks, feels, and operates. This is both useful and a powerful way for them to be represented as a vital part of the organization.

In a case study of Covestro's ERGs, they shared: "the ERGs share ideas with recruiters and the Covestro recruiting team now partners with multiple ERGs to attend job fairs, ensuring that the recruiters are seeking diversity across all dimensions of identity at all job fairs."

Internal Culture

Internal Culture isn't limited to celebrations and happy-hours. It should focus on providing equitable support, offerings, HR policy-making and updating, and more. This can be a very expansive category. The below recommendations will help accelerate your organization's internal culture:

- ➔ Support celebration and education around culturally-significant months (e.g. Black History Month, Women's History Month, Pride, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), etc.). An example initiative we've seen is a Parent's ERG partner with the Black Culture ERG and receive funding to allow any employee to purchase children's books about race for a child in their life. The available books are from a curated list about race and racism.
- ➔ Create resource guides explaining the significance of the celebrations.
- ➔ Work with HR to create resource documents explaining available benefits such as sabbatical, parental or medical leave, or therapy reimbursements.
- ➔ Gather accessibility requirements and create a documentation process for requests and accommodations.
- ➔ Expand HR policies such as parental leave, pay for service members on active duty, adoption assistance, and more.

Our DEI Committee has built: An Unconscious Bias Interview Guide that all employees are required to read prior to any recruitment process; A PR & Social Crisis Communications Plan; A Decision Checklist to ensure DEI is taken in to consideration with every program/policy/organizational change; A DEI Dictionary; A DEI Onboarding program for new hires to better understand why DEI is important at our organization.

Learning and Development

Learning and Development (L&D) is a vital part of internal culture and employee development. Strategic engagement at the intersection of L&D and ERGs is a powerful tool to increase employee belonging and retention. Not all organizations have someone dedicated to a L&D role, so it's often supported or supplemented by ERGs. Here are some examples of positive L&D initiatives:

- ➔ Mentorship programs pairing senior ERG members with junior employees.
- ➔ Build out all-company programming and organize events/speaker sessions.
- ➔ Partner with external support organizations so support education events and curriculum. A leader at Bolt noted: "Affinity groups have started to partner with The Rise Journey to sponsor Lunch & Learns that contribute to L&D in the form of topics specific to the ERG interests; for example, they led a Pride Month session around Resilience in the LGBTQIA+ Community and a Hispanic Heritage Month educational session. These contribute to a different type of L&D, allowing for sessions to be led from the lens of ERGs, rather than a more classic session on management or company culture."

Facilitated Discussions

ERGs and ERG leads can play a pivotal role in helping their organization process real-world events and in-office issues. This is handled differently for each group, determined by how they were structured. If designed as sources of community and belonging for a specific community, ERGs will largely lead that work internally for their community.

If they are meant to be sources of inclusion

and advocacy, they are likely empowered to lead this work across the organization.

Often these discussions relate to real-world, and often inaccessible, topics which can produce difficult conversations. For this reason, it takes a specialized skill set to facilitate well. Those leading these discussions should be given room to learn, grow, and make mistakes. ERG leads should not be expected to lead these conversations unless they've received proper training and support.

If people within the organization aren't prepared to lead these discussions, we recommend external support to facilitate sensitive conversations. Skilled professionals can also support the development of individuals to begin handling facilitation internally.

Ideally, the organization's communications and marketing teams will work together with ERG leadership on communications. ERGs can play an instrumental role in internal and external communications, supporting messaging that reflects employee and community-specific sentiments. ERGs shouldn't be developing an organization's content, but serve in an advisory and review role.

TIP: ERG Leads and Crisis Protocol:

What happens when an external crisis or “real life” emergency happens? Does your organization have crisis protocol for communication, support, mental health, and resources? Many ERG leads ultimately assume the role of supporting their respective groups, even if they’re unfamiliar with best practices or the wider organization doesn’t have clear guidance for internal leaders. In these cases, consider the below steps:

- + Prepare in advance by asking ERG leads to review the company communications plans before a crisis. This allows the ERG to be helpful without putting too much burden on the ERG lead to own the process during a potentially challenging time.
- + Ask ERG leads about additional ways they may want to contribute during an internal or external crisis, or a traumatizing event. Support, beyond communications, might look different to each community..
- + Set clear boundaries - ERG leads should be responsible for communications within their groups, but the company is responsible for all-team and external communication.
- + And in the event of such a crisis, first seek to understand if ERG leads are personally affected by the situation. Once they’ve received support, they can in turn assist their community groups and support the organization’s wider efforts.



Human Resources and ERGs

HR and DEI have a strong connection because they both focus on the people, processes, and culture at the core of an organization. It is, however, important to distinguish that DEI is not a subset of HR. A diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization is not the sole responsibility of HR — it is the duty of every single employee within the company. It is a foundational element of business that is a part of an organization's fabric. It's core to how they operate, both internally and externally.

HR is a critical partner to DEI because of their overlapping resources and information, including People data, hiring data, retention data, attrition data, benefits information, and policies and programming. It's imperative for HR to view their work through a DEI lens. Although the HR function is influential in DEI effectiveness and outcomes, all company efforts and employees play a role in embedding DEI as part of its cultural norms. Oversight, but not control, is key.

Should ERG leads be given HR or related training?

ERG leads often become a shoulder to cry on, a voice of reason, and a de facto human resources business partner to their ERG. As such, the company should provide training and resources to ERG leads who may not have an HR background. It's important for this training to include the identification of legal issues or other circumstances when HR should be consulted. One of the core responsibilities of an ERG lead is to be an advocate for their constituents which often requires additional support.

What should an ERG lead do if they become aware of a serious issue with an employee?

An employee issue is any situation that deserves intervention from HR or from leadership. The process of resolving an employee issue, and what chain of command to follow, will vary from ERG to ERG. Processes for sharing group sentiments and needs, while maintaining the individual's privacy, are imperative. An ERG lead's role is to ensure that each member has a safe space to share. **The ERG lead should not be required to report each incident to HR**, but instead encourage the individual to report such issues. For harassment or other legal issues, we recommend establishing an internal ombuds office. Based on the latest industry research, it's a better solution than the traditional HR investigation.

The Bigger Picture

Although The Rise Journey advocates for paying ERG leads in organizations that choose to develop these groups internally, there are other perspectives to consider. Mona Eshaiker, LMFT, a Rise advisor, explains:

“While I do agree that ERGs are valuable drivers of company culture and create a sense of belonging for marginalized employees, the widespread structure of these groups can also be problematic.

ERGs are largely led and organized by the marginalized employees themselves. This is a tremendous undertaking, both time and energy, when the employees are still expected to execute their normal job duties. Many times, their accomplishments within ERGs are not taken into consideration during performance reviews or worse yet, may be seen as a detriment to their position since participation in ERGs can take the place of other extracurricular opportunities within the workplace. With little or no compensation for their efforts, this can further alienate marginalized employees and contribute to a feeling of devaluation.

ERG organizers are also often responsible for holding safe spaces for other employees, which takes an enormous amount of emotional energy to navigate. Furthermore, if there is any pushback from other employees, it is usually the ERG organizers who have to manage it, even if they are personally affected by the comments.

To avoid this dilemma, companies should not insist that ERG leads perform these duties even if they are compensated. Instead, I recommend companies hire a 3rd party to host initiatives and events that normally would fall on the ERG organizers. This would ensure everyone in the company gets the equal benefit of these activities without the burden of labor being on the minorities who, at times, may need it the most.”



Considering the Various Incentives of Compensation?

A few respondents voiced the concern that paying leads would lead to unnecessary competition, becoming an incentive for employees to do the work for the wrong reasons, or make it difficult to measure genuine interest in these leadership positions.

While these are valid concerns to explore, existing ERG leads have already contributed, and are currently contributing to, a tremendous amount of work product to the organization without compensation. The people who gravitate to this work and take on lead roles have historically been marginalized, paid less for their full time roles, and are doing this work now to support their communities. They do so because they wish someone had played this role for them as they advanced in their own careers.

ERG, and other DEI leadership, is significant work—responsibilities in addition to one's primary job. All work should be valued and compensated accordingly.

The majority of ERG leads are not paid. For those that are paid, the average compensation according to this report is \$2,136¹⁰ annually. This is insignificant when most leads are working a minimum of 1-5 hours a week. Amidst the COVID crisis and with burnout plaguing many employees, it's unlikely individual leaders are incentivized to do this work because of nominal pay—instead, they are incentivized because of the work's importance and impact.

Compensation should be formal and standardized, supported by specific goals with associated metrics and ongoing commitment from leadership at all levels. This is critical work that supports both the individual employee and overall organizational culture. **As with any contribution to the organization's bottom line, this work should be widely recognized, valued, and fairly compensated.**



Conclusion: The Future of ERGs

At The Rise Journey, we advocate for any work — especially work that is not listed in an employee’s job description — be compensated, respecting an individual’s time, effort, and energy. While there is no single “hard and fast” rule for ERG compensation best practices, it’s important that leaders recognize the impact that ERGs and their leads have on their organization. The work of ERGs supports organizational success which, on the business side, leads to higher profits, sales, and revenue, and on the human side leads to more engagement, higher productivity, and better retention.

Take Action

Talk to your leadership team about ERG compensation. Even if you don’t work in Human Resources or participate in ERGs, being an ally means taking action.

Engage in ERG Culture

This doesn’t mean you have to go to every ERG event or speak in every meeting. It means showing up when support is vital. It means asking questions to your leadership about ERG impact. It means acting as an ally in ways that feel authentic to you. Be a part of a culture that asks tough questions because the answers are important.

Keep the Momentum Going

Many voices contributed to this report. Thank you to all of the individuals who filled out this survey — both this and last year. Your words, insights, questions, and comments are integrated into this document, allowing for a more complete picture of the current state of ERGs. Your voices are important. This is just the beginning of understanding and recognizing the impact of ERGs and the people who lead them.

It Takes A Community

In addition to The Rise Journey team, the following community leaders and subject matter experts contributed their time, voice, and support to bring life into this report.

Additional Contributors

Zainab Albedawi	<i>L&D Lead at Bolt</i>
Aimee Moyer	<i>Partner Marketing at Bolt</i>
Danielle Curtis	<i>Customer Support Manager at Donors Choose</i>
Toby Egbuna	<i>CEO at Chezie</i>
Natan Fischer	<i>CEO at SingleSprout</i>
Jasmine Francis	<i>Senior Director, People and Culture at Thinx</i>
Jessalin Lam	<i>VP Member Development and Diversity at IAB</i>
Devin McElhenny	<i>Director of Diversity, L&D at Bowery Farming</i>
Teryn Stewart	<i>People Operations at Bolt</i>

About The Rise Journey

The Rise Journey partners with organizations to create a positive impact for employees, leaders, constituents, and their communities through the creation and implementation of sustainable and impact-driven solutions. Our work is built on a foundation of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility (DEIBA). Founded in 2017, The Rise Journey's mission is to provide high-value, metrics-driven support to facilitate organizational change based on inclusion and social impact. We are a woman-owned business and our team and advisors span regions, nationalities, race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, immigrant background, and other areas of diversity.

Book 30 minutes of coaching on how to make ERGs a success at your organization:

Part of this work is to encourage all organizations to feel empowered to develop their ERG program. Our co-founder, Jes Osrow, SHRM-SCP is offering 30-minute ERG-focused coaching sessions.

[Click here to book your free session!](#)

Some of our ERG specific offerings include:

- ➔ Development and group structuring
- ➔ Facilitation and coaching
- ➔ Assessments and consulting
- ➔ Education, cultural, and training offerings
- ➔ Offsites including: ERG Goals Planning, ERG & DEI Committee Strategy, and ERG Leadership Training & Strategy Offsite
- ➔ 1:1 Coaching for committee members and ERG lead to reflect on current skill sets, clarify goals, identify gaps for improvement
- ➔ Small Group Coaching for ERG leads or committee members for increased goal attainment, collaborative work, or upskilling DEI skills



Learn More & Connect With Us!

Glossary

Accessibility

Those who need extra support can ask and receive it without fear of inaction, retribution, or bias. Individuals have access to the resources necessary to meaningfully contribute. Measuring the manners and ways in which information and opportunities are shared, including:

- ⊕ Visibility of non-centered groups (Black/Multiracial, people of color, women, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+, parents)
- ⊕ Accessibility (hearing, visual, physical accommodations, mental health days/supports)
- ⊕ Font size, spacing, readability, hearing support, sign language

Anti-Racism

The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Acknowledging and understanding the root causes and systemic nature of racism and working to eradicate it through habitual choices. While DEI is very present and forward-looking, anti-racism requires understanding the historical past and how that past contributes to current inequities and thus, being positioned to eradicate those inequities through that lens. Begin, Inquire, Grow: a framework for the individual mindset during the anti-racist journey. The stages of progress include: a beginner's mindset, an inquiry mindset, a growth mindset.

Belonging

Individuals can engage their fullest selves at work (not “putting on a show” or code-switching), comfortable expressing needs and expectations. Feeling accepted for who they are and for their contributions. Feel a sense of security and support. Measuring the extent to which stakeholders show up and share who they are because the organization is diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

BIPOC or Black, Indigenous, People of Color

POC is widely used as an umbrella term for all people of color whereas BIPOC is often used to acknowledge that not all people of color face equal levels of injustice. They say BIPOC is significant in recognizing that Black and Indigenous people are severely impacted by systemic racial injustices.

“[ERGs] contribute by providing feedback and insights into our business model, support with community engagement, highlighting and raising awareness on important dates and events, and provide professional development opportunities.”

Diversity

The different identifiers and demographics of individuals such as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, ability and disability, religious beliefs, national origin, and political beliefs. This is about metrics. Measuring presence in areas that matter.

Examples:

- ⊕ numbers/percentages of various groups at each level of the organization (particularly among leadership)
- ⊕ numbers/percentages of groups that participate in making key decisions (either by virtue of presence on leadership or committees/task forces that advise on key decisions)
- ⊕ numbers in recruiting, who participates in recruiting efforts (from the crafting of job descriptions, to who reviews resumes, who conducts interviews, etc.)

As a reminder, here is a short list of additional ways to consider the various perspectives brought by individuals to a group, team, or organization: Race/Ethnicity; Social Class; Political Beliefs; Gender Identity; Socioeconomic Background; Language(s) Spoken/Native Languages; Sexual Orientation; Ability and Disability; Parent/Caretaker; Age; Religious Beliefs; Military Status; Neurodiversity; National Origin; Geographic Culture

Understanding and measuring diversity at an organization can be approached in many ways, but when similar employees are grouped together by function (e.g., the marketing department), level (e.g., all managers or directors), or region (e.g., Europe, North America), the value derived from diversity is constrained. This “clumping” of employees limits the impact of diversity across the

organization directly impacting an individual’s sense of belonging. In the case of like-groups as described, an organizational view of diversity serves as only a cursory step toward broader organizational goals toward DEIBA, and requires diligence in developing cross-team connections and company-wide initiatives.

Equity

Opportunity, power, and resources are accessible for all by meeting people where they are and providing support to bridge the privilege gap. Acting on a complex combination of interrelated elements including social and racial justice, systemic oppression, and historical subjugation of minority groups. Measuring practices that provide clear, explicit access to the opportunities that matter (formal and informal):

Inclusion

Individuals are respected, appreciated, and valued. No one is “othered.” Related to social norms and behaviors that make people feel welcomed in the workplace. This is about impact. Measuring how people are treated with respect to work/equitable practices, but also in “micro-moments” and day-to-day interactions.

Microaggressions

A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority). The psychologist and Columbia University professor Derald W. Sue defines the term as such: “The everyday slights, indignities, put downs and insults that people of color, women, LGBTIA+ populations or those who are marginalized experience in their day-to-day interactions with people.”

Ombudsman

An official appointed to investigate individuals' complaints against maladministration, especially that of public authorities.

Person of Color or POC

Primarily used to describe any person who is not considered "white." This is a broad term, and not very descriptive.

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is trust between members of a group where perceived mistakes will be met with understanding. Employees are able to voice ideas, opinions, and concerns without fear of judgement or shame. The term was established by Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson, who defined it as "a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking."¹¹ Psychological safety is foundational to a successful team, as it fosters diversity of thought, innovation, and an overall sense of belonging.

Tokenism

The policy or practice of making only a symbolic effort (as to desegregate). Tokenism is the act of making surface-level tweaks to issues of marginalization that are performative and lack in veritable efforts to reduce inequality. Diversity (or attempts at the appearance of diversity) without equity and inclusion. Checking a box, without concern for practices that truly incorporate them and treat them equitably. It's an experience that isolates someone as an "only" in an environment (or relatively few) and increases risk of stereotyping. To combat tokenism, the goal is to have more representation of particular groups, but of course, an organization has to start somewhere—so even if there is a small number, it must be attached to equity, inclusion, belonging, and access.

URM or Underrepresented Minorities

The definition of Underrepresented minority is far from being crystal clear. Underrepresented Minority can be defined as a group whose percentage of the population in a given group is lower than their percentage of the population in the country.¹²

Voluntary Response Bias

In survey sampling, voluntary response bias occurs when sample members are self-selected volunteers, as in voluntary samples. An example would be call-in radio shows that solicit audience participation in surveys on controversial topics (abortion, affirmative action, gun control, etc.). The resulting sample tends to over represent individuals who have strong opinions.

Additional Reading and Resources

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Footnotes

- 1 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carmenmorris/2020/11/26/performative-allyship-what-are-the-signs-and-why-leaders-get-exposed>
- 2 <https://sixmilepost.com/8210/opinion/dont-be-performative-be-proactive/>
- 3 <https://www.therisejourney.com/we-rise-a-blog/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-arent-enough-make-room-for-belonging-and-accessibility>
- 4 <https://fortune.com/2021/09/06/minimum-wage-15-an-hour-living-wage-labor-day>
- 5 <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/fair-pay/african-american-women-wage-gap.pdf>
- 6 <https://www.chezie.co/employers/erg-toolkit#business-case>
- 7 <https://hbr.org/2020/11/getting-serious-about-diversity-enough-already-with-the-business-case>
- 8 <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gDjin0ni04sbizUDu3mD0b85HXXzmBCp/edit?rtpof=true&sd=true>
- 9 https://outandequal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CASE-STUDY-Doritos-Rainbows-Case-Study_Out-Equal-October-2016-FINAL.pdf
- 10 This number was calculated as an estimated average by assuming everyone compensated on the high end of the range, which was \$3090. Then if everyone compensated on the low end, and found the average to be \$1180. Taking an average of both of those we get \$2136.
- 11 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999>
- 12 <https://agsci.psu.edu/diversity/awareness/definitions>