



**DIVERSITY
ACTION
ALLIANCE**

Diversity Action Alliance 2020

Race and Ethnicity in Public Relations and Communications

Benchmark Report

Report No. 1, Issue No. 1

Fiscal Year 2019 (As of January 1, 2020)

Published: July 2021

LETTER TO THE READER

We have received many requests for the contents of this historic benchmark report that you are about to read. The significance of this data summary is that 100+ strategic communications organizations in the U.S. contributed their raw race and ethnicity data, creating a starting point by which we will measure our progress collectively year over year.

This new accountability tool is just the beginning. What you will see in this report is not yet a measure of progress but a measure of where we started in 2019 (data as of January 1, 2020).

In truth, increased diversity in the U.S. is inevitable as the “browning” of this country is a [documented population shift](#), making it relatively easier to increase diversity within our organizations. Easy is, in fact, relative, as candidates will be looking for tangible measures of inclusion and equity before even considering an interview with a prospective employer.

This year is the first time a report with this level of detail has ever been published for communicators, by communicators. To be clear, it is not reflective of the entire field, but it does represent over 12,000 employees at organizations where steps have been taken to improve recruitment, retention, and representation at all levels in their respective organizations (Organizations who provided their data are included at the end of the report).

Later this year, we will publish an amended version of this report with more respondents and a progress report comparing these 2020 metrics to 2021. We would like to thank Dr. Tina McCorkindale and the Institute for Public Relations for spearheading and making this report possible. We know we have much work to do and will look to improve exponentially in the coming years.

We encourage you to compare your agency or department’s data with the aggregate numbers here and challenge yourselves to exceed them. Do better; do more. There is no spoiler alert here, but reflect on what you can do to improve the state of our industry within the walls of your own organization.

1. Make it personal.

Not just at work but in your personal life. Are you genuinely building connections and networks with people who are different from you outside of your workplace? At work, are you collaborating with, mentoring, hiring, promoting, and sponsoring colleagues who don't look like you? Are you using your platform as a communicator to promulgate the benefits of an ethnically diverse workforce? Are you committed to continuous learning and improvement on the topic? Don't wait for the enterprise to adopt certain norms; let your department be the prototype.

2. Build accountability tools.

Some of the strongest examples of inclusive leadership we have seen from our signatories include:

1. Building diversity KPIs into performance evaluation and bonus structures.
2. Using leaders' platform and influence to keep diversity top of mind.
3. Revising policy to outlast personnel turnovers.

3. Be specific.

Diversity can mean a lot of different things. When addressing diversity challenges at work, discuss them explicitly to avoid confusion, inaction, or misunderstanding. We have had no problem talking about gender equity and parity issues. Let's talk plainly (and respectfully) about race issues as well. Evaluate every gap on your team from wages to representation that exists for employees of color, and make a plan to close them.

Finally, we ask that if you are reading this report and your company has not signed the Diversity Action Alliance Commitment, please read and sign it [here](#), and encourage your leadership to sign on behalf of your agency or communications department. It is critical for the public relations and communications trade to get diversity demographics right. We are the brand builders and message crafters; we must be representative of the diverse America we seek to engage.

Sincerely,

Carmella Glover

President
Diversity Action Alliance

Dr. Denise Hill

Chair, Diversity Action Alliance
Associate Professor, Elon University School of Communication



ABOUT THE REPORT

The Diversity Action Alliance (DAA) is rooted in ACTION (Adopt best practices—Champion the cause—Track Progress). The purpose of the third component, “Track Progress” is to benchmark and track diversity numbers to improve recruitment, and retention within organizations. Those who sign the commitment agree to “share key representation metrics with the DAA for benchmarking and for anonymized reporting of the aggregate progress within the communications profession.”

This analysis is based on data reported as of January 1, 2020, by 122 qualified¹ organizations that are signatories of the DAA. This is not a representative sample of the public relations profession, nor is it a representative sample of the signatories. We will release a second issue of this report this fall once we receive all the data from the signatories. Additionally, this analysis focuses on racial and ethnic diversity per the mission of the DAA. The categories of analysis are based on the guidelines of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

The first section of this report is focused on racial/ethnic representation in organizations, segmented by position level and organization type. The second section of this report analyzes the racial/ethnic breakdown of those who were promoted between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019, segmented by position level and organization type. Finally, the third section of this report includes organizational work to do and will look to improve exponentially in the coming years.

¹ Academic departments within colleges and universities, PRSSA chapters, and independent practitioners have been removed from the overall analysis. Academic departments within colleges and universities will be published in a separate analysis.

PART ONE: REPRESENTATION

The following section reports on the racial/ethnic diversity of employees as of January 1, 2020.

OVERALL RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Across all organizations and position levels ($N = 12,667$) 78% of employees are White; 21% are racially/ethnically diverse. Below is the overall industry breakdown:

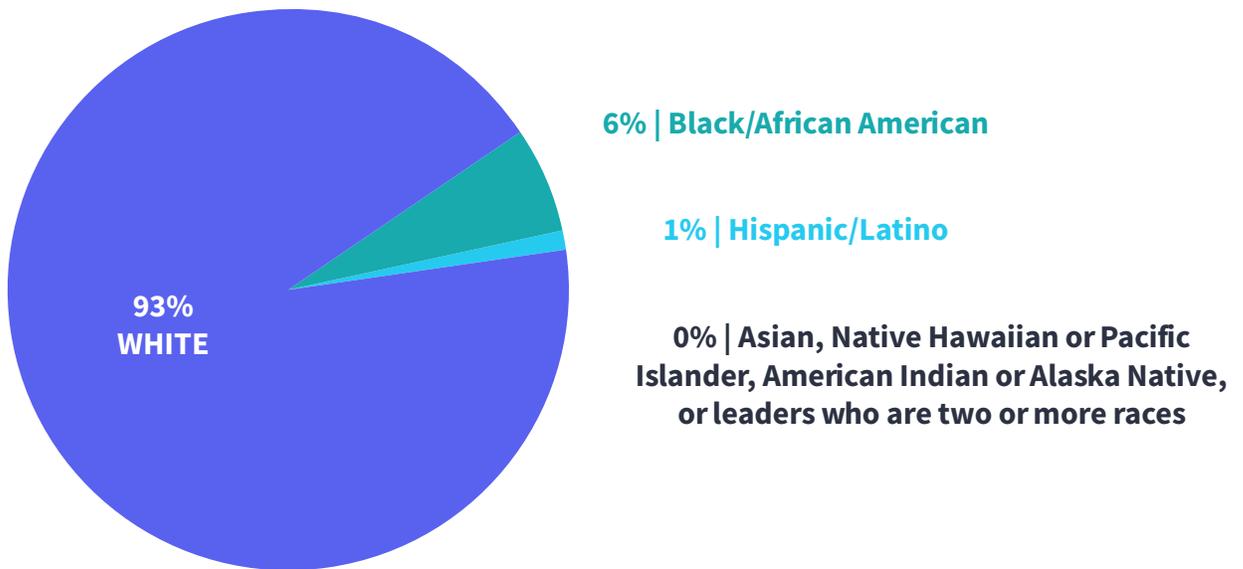


*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

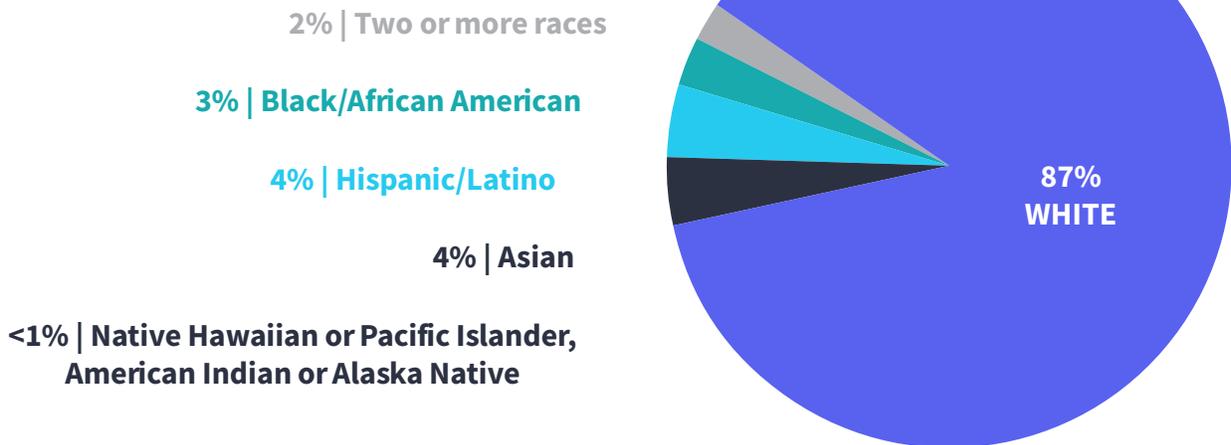
RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY BY POSITION LEVEL*

In terms of leadership, the lowest percentage of racial/ethnic diversity is at the executive and top levels of leadership. The percentages trend upward, increasing in diversity moving into the mid-level, entry-level and admin ranks. However, the increase is not significant enough to say that there is adequate racial/ethnic diversity. Ninety-three percent of top communications or agency leaders and 56% of administrative professionals within organizations are White.

Top Leaders (CCOs, agency CEOs, executive directors, etc.) (n = 125)²



Executives (n = 2,203)

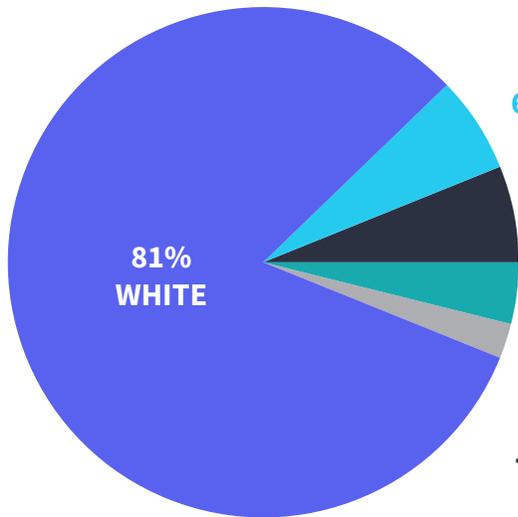


* For a description of the position levels, please visit the following site: <https://instituteforpr.org/daa-eeo1categories/#job>

**Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

²Three organizations reported having a multi-CEO model

Mid-level Employees (n = 5,019)



6% | Hispanic/Latino

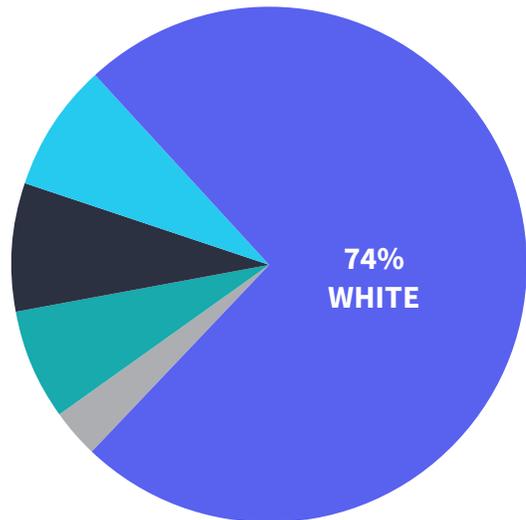
6% | Asian

4% | Black/African American

2% | Two or more races

<1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander,
American Indian or Alaska Native

Entry-level Employees (n = 4,550)



8% | Hispanic/Latino

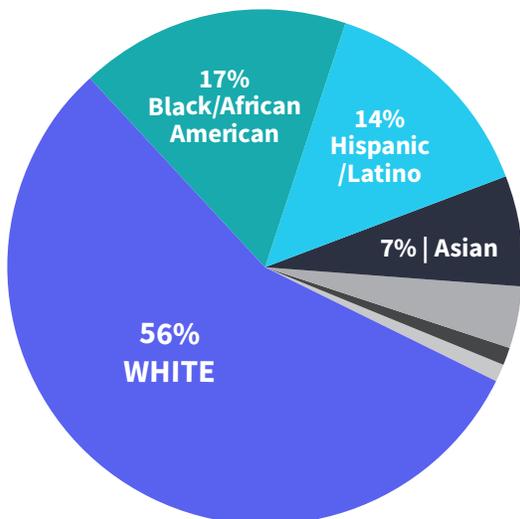
8% | Asian

7% | Black/African American

3% | Two or more races

<1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander,
American Indian or Alaska Native

Administrative Professionals (n = 770)



4% | Two or more races

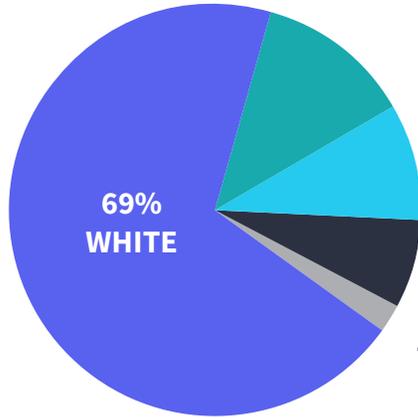
1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

1% | American Indian or Alaska Native

*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY BY ORGANIZATION TYPE

Association/Nonprofit (9 organizations, 121 employees)



12% | Black/African American

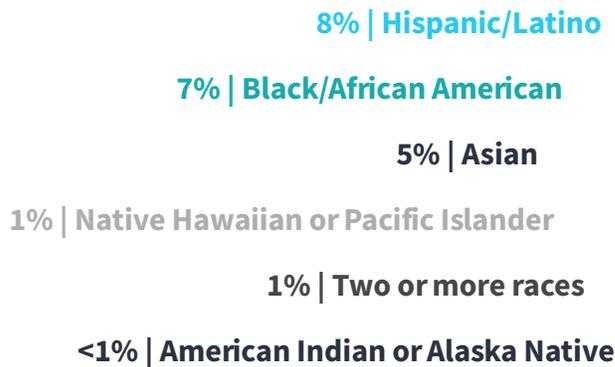
9% | Hispanic/Latino

7% | Asian

2% | Two or more races

<1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native

Corporation (26 organizations, 1,740 employees)



8% | Hispanic/Latino

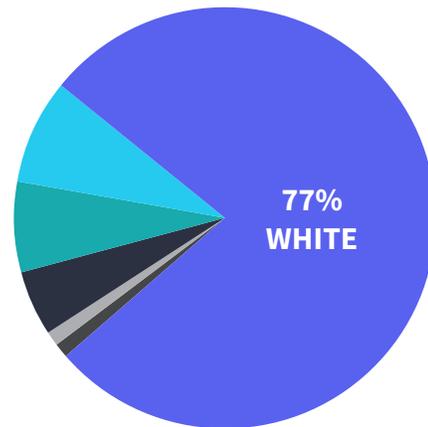
7% | Black/African American

5% | Asian

1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

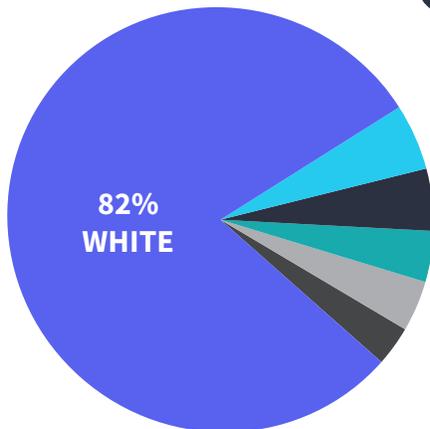
1% | Two or more races

<1% | American Indian or Alaska Native



77%
WHITE

Professional Services (13 organizations, 551 employees)



5% | Hispanic/Latino

5% | Asian

4% | Black/African American

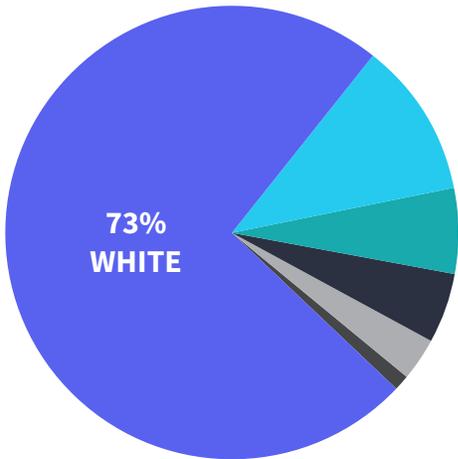
3% | Two or more races

<1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%



Boutique Agency (31 organizations, 790 employees)³



11% | Hispanic/Latino

6% | Black/African American

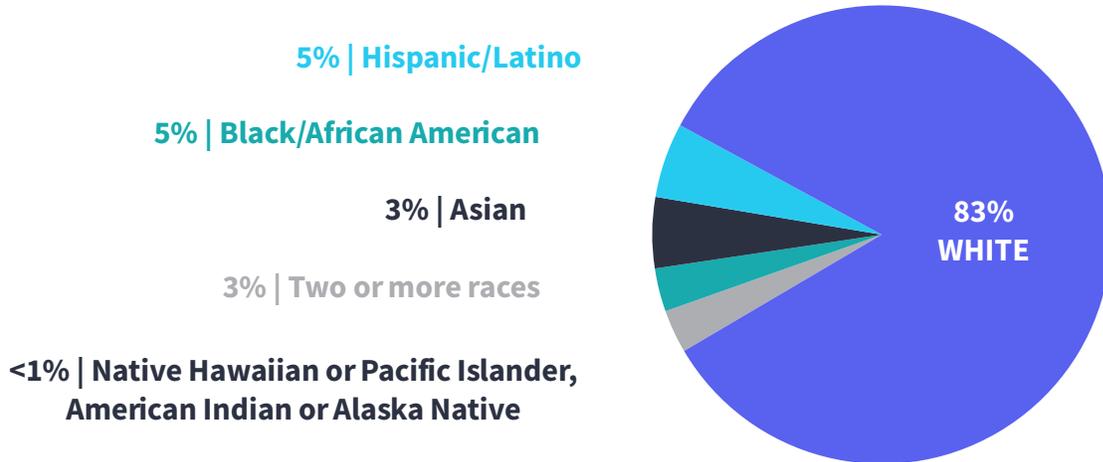
5% | Asian

3% | Two or more races

1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

0% | American Indian or Alaska Native

Small Agency (8 organizations, 956 employees)⁴



5% | Hispanic/Latino

5% | Black/African American

3% | Asian

3% | Two or more races

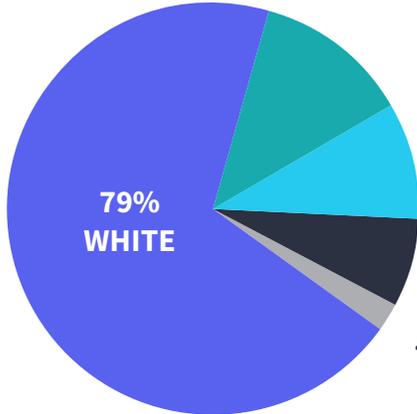
<1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native

*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

³ Less than \$9 million in annual revenue

⁴ \$9 to \$19 million in annual revenue

Midsize Agency (20 organizations, 2,894 employees)⁵



5% | Black/African American

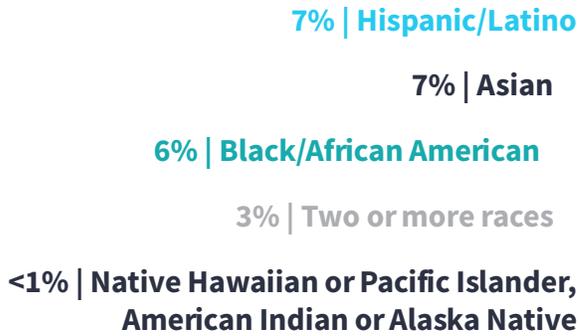
6% | Hispanic/Latino

6% | Asian

3% | Two or more races

<1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native

Large Agency (8 organizations, 5,233 employees)⁶



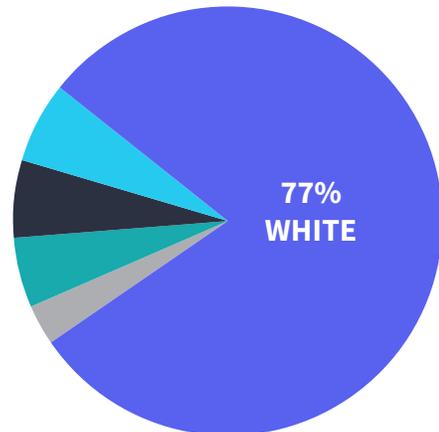
7% | Hispanic/Latino

7% | Asian

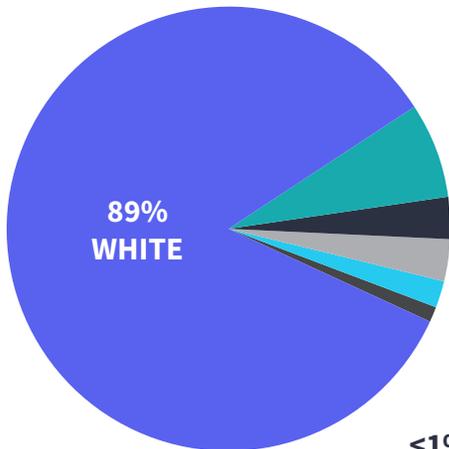
6% | Black/African American

3% | Two or more races

<1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native



Other (5 organizations, 382 employees)⁷



7% | Black/African American

3% | Asian

3% | Two or more races

2% | Hispanic/Latino

1% | American Indian or Alaska Native

<1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

⁵ \$20 million to \$50 million in annual revenue | ⁶ More than \$50 million in annual revenue

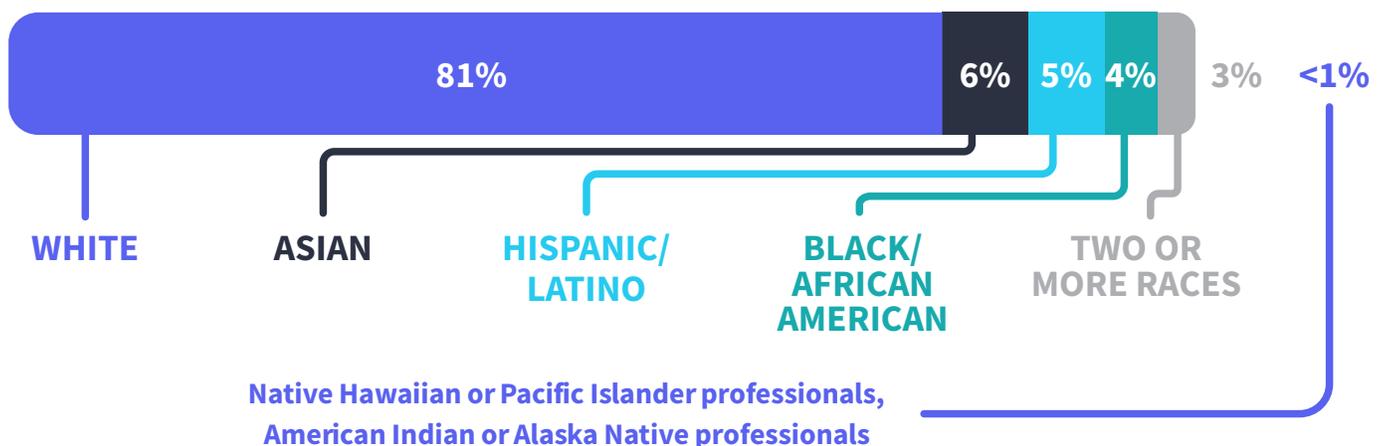
⁷ This also includes government agencies and colleges/universities non-academic communication departments

PART TWO: PROMOTION AND ADVANCEMENT

The following section of the report explores the racial/ethnic diversity of employees who were promoted between January 1, 2019, to December 1, 2019. Please note that some of the sample sizes of promotion numbers were small. The overall sample size for each component is provided.

OVERALL RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF PROMOTED EMPLOYEES IN 2019

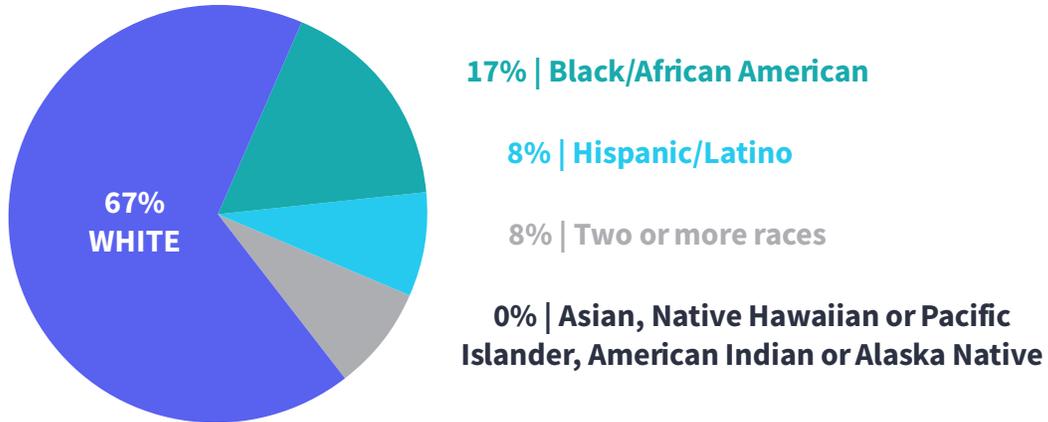
Regarding promotions across all organizations and job levels (n = 2,833), 81% of employees who were promoted were White; 19% were racially/ethnically diverse. Below is the overall industry breakdown:



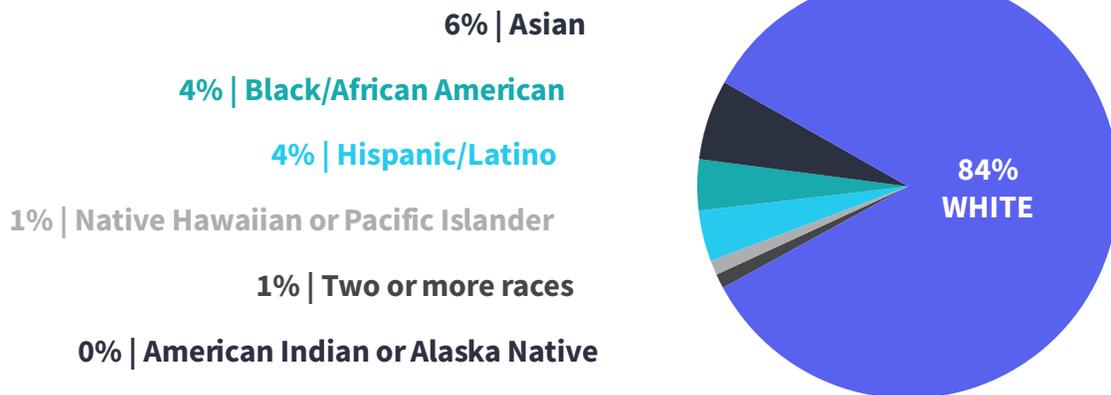
*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF PROMOTED EMPLOYEES IN 2019 BY POSITION TYPE

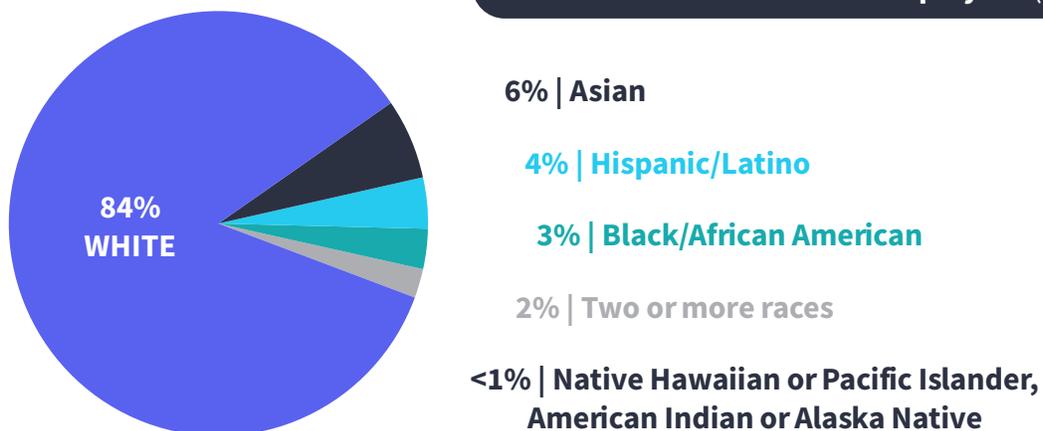
Promotions of Top Leaders (CCOs, agency CEOs, executive directors, etc.)⁸ (n = 12)⁹



Promotions of Executives (n = 359)



Promotions of Mid-level Employees (n = 1,109)

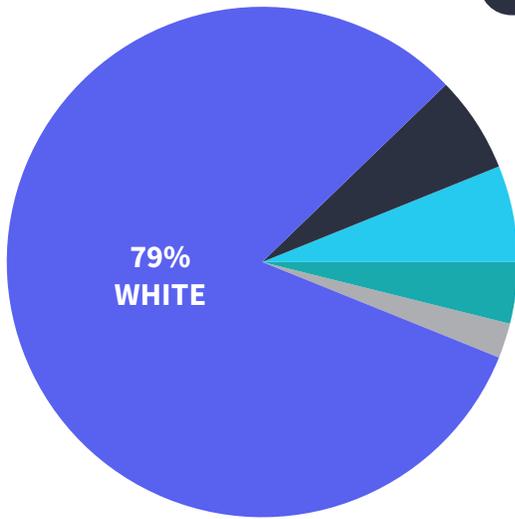


*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

⁸ Three organizations reported having a multi-CEO model

⁹ *Please note the sample size is only 12 so an 8% representation equals 1 person

Promotions of Entry-level Employees (n = 1,272)



7% | Asian

6% | Hispanic/Latino

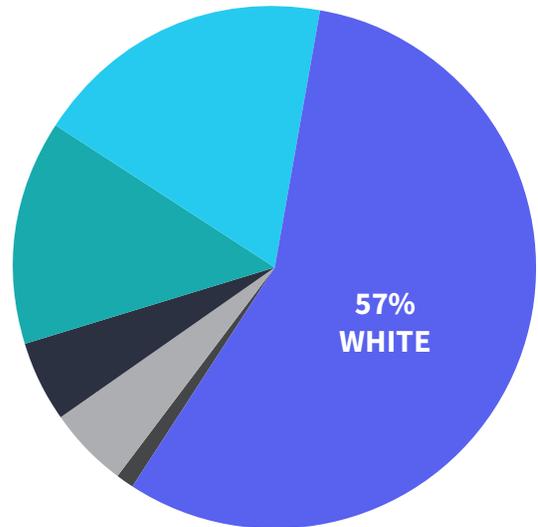
5% | Black/African American

3% | Two or more races

<1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Promotions of Administrative Professionals (n = 81)

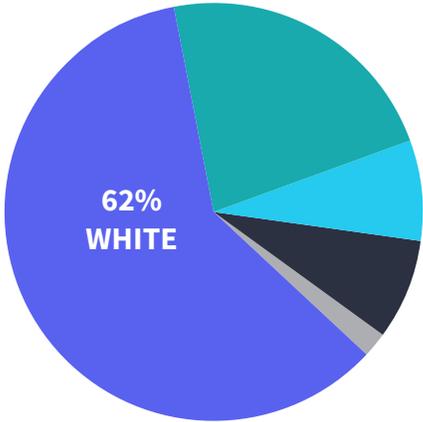
19% | Hispanic/Latino
14% | Black/African American
5% | Asian
5% | Two or more races
1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
0% | American Indian or Alaska Native



*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF PROMOTED EMPLOYEES IN 2019 BY ORGANIZATION TYPE

Promotions at Associations/Nonprofits (13 employees)¹⁰



23% | Black/African American

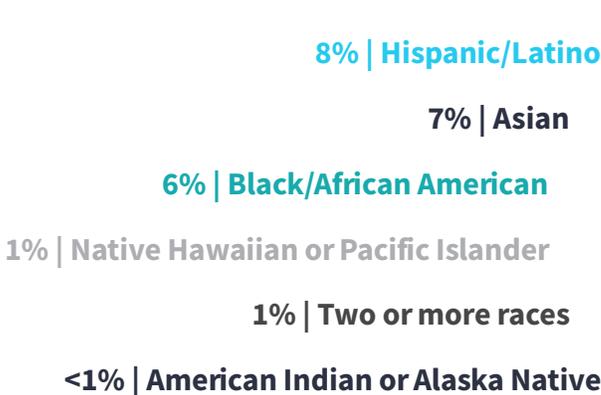
8% | Hispanic/Latino

8% | Asian

2% | Two or more races

0% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native

Promotions at Corporations (290 employees)



8% | Hispanic/Latino

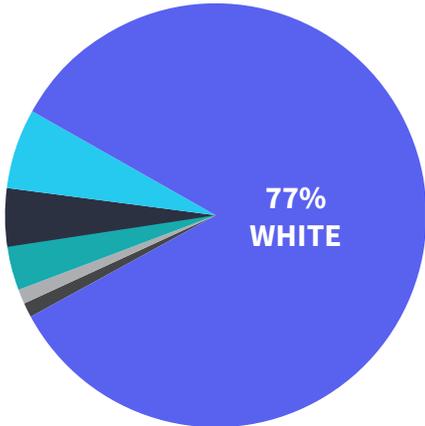
7% | Asian

6% | Black/African American

1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

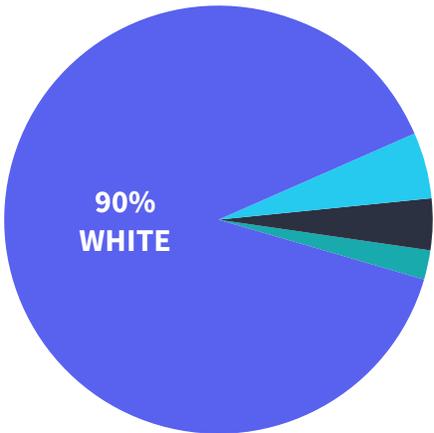
1% | Two or more races

<1% | American Indian or Alaska Native



77%
WHITE

Promotions in Professional Services (106 employees)



5% | Hispanic/Latino

4% | Asian

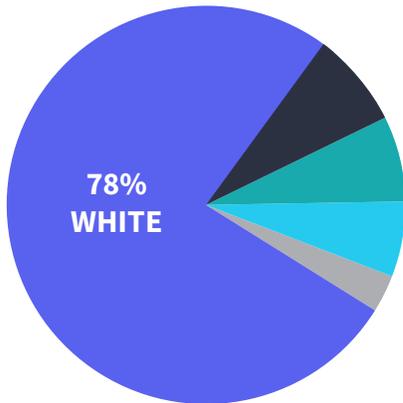
2% | Black/African American

0% | No American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or two or more races

¹⁰Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

¹⁰Please note the sample size is only 13 so an 8% representation equals 1 person

Promotions at Boutique Agencies (181 employees)¹¹



7% | Asian

7% | Black/African American

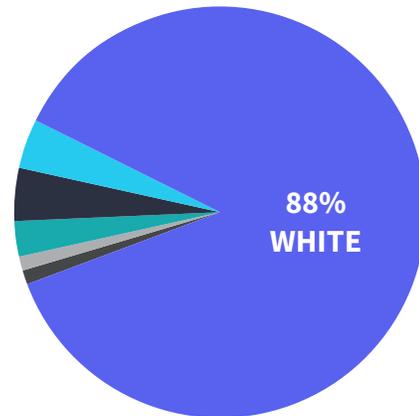
6% | Hispanic/Latino

3% | Two or more races

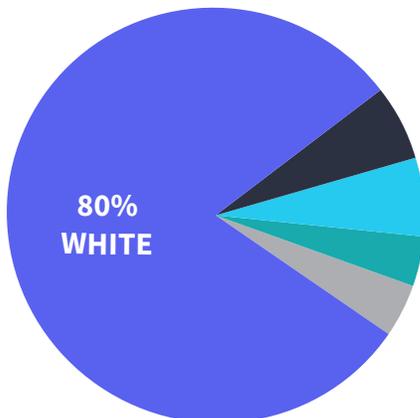
0% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native

Promotions at Small Agencies (349 employees)¹²

4% | Hispanic/Latino
 4% | Asian
 3% | Black/African American
 1% | Two or more races
 1% | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 0% | American Indian or Alaska Native



Promotions at Midsize Agencies (672 employees)¹³



6% | Asian

6% | Hispanic/Latino

4% | Black/African American

4% | Two or more races

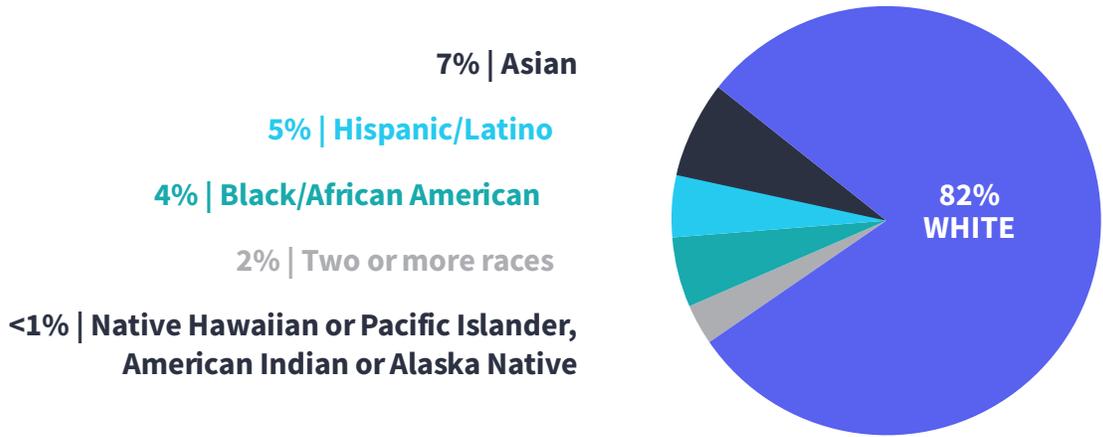
0% | No American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

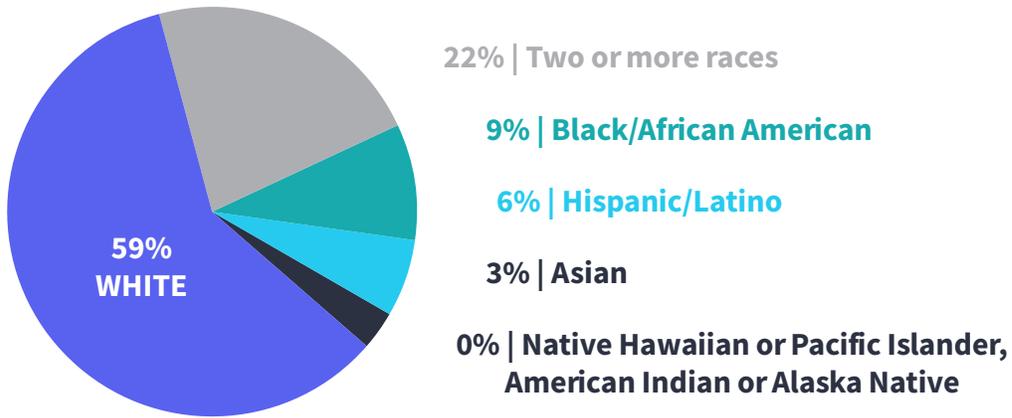
¹¹ Less than \$9 million in annual revenue | ¹² \$9 to \$19 million in annual revenue

¹³ \$20 million to \$50 million in annual revenue

Promotions at Large Agencies (1,190 employees)¹⁴



Promotions (Other) (32 employees)¹⁵



*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

¹⁴ More than \$50 million in annual revenue

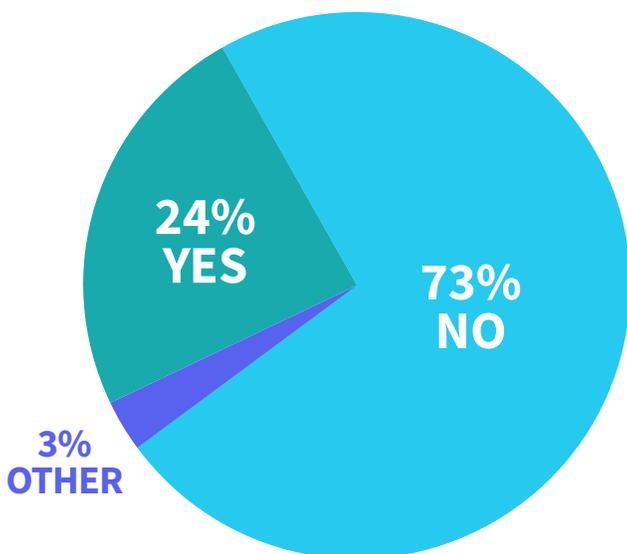
¹⁵ This also includes government agencies and college/university non-academic communication departments



PART THREE: DEMOGRAPHICS

We asked respondents if they had a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). Nearly one-quarter of respondents reported having CDOs or executives who lead diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

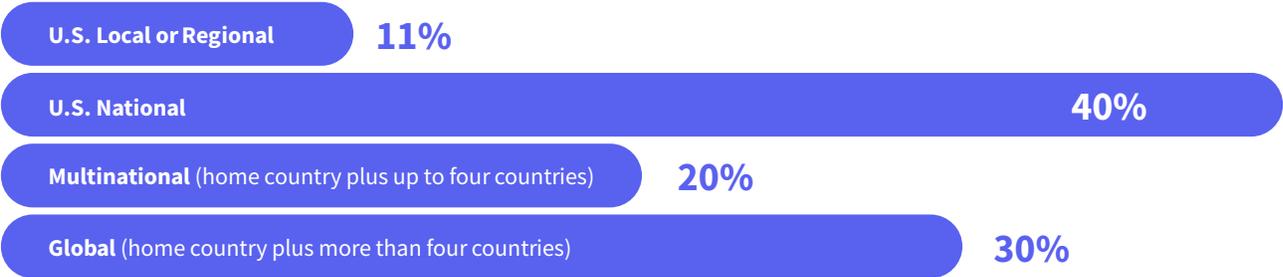
DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE A CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER?



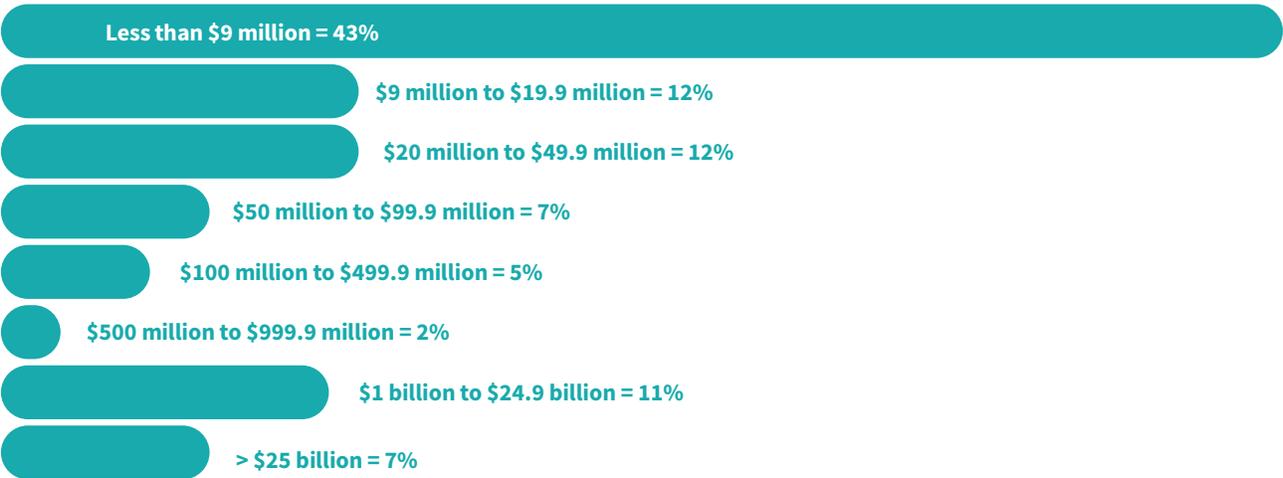
TYPE OF ORGANIZATION (IN FREQUENCIES)



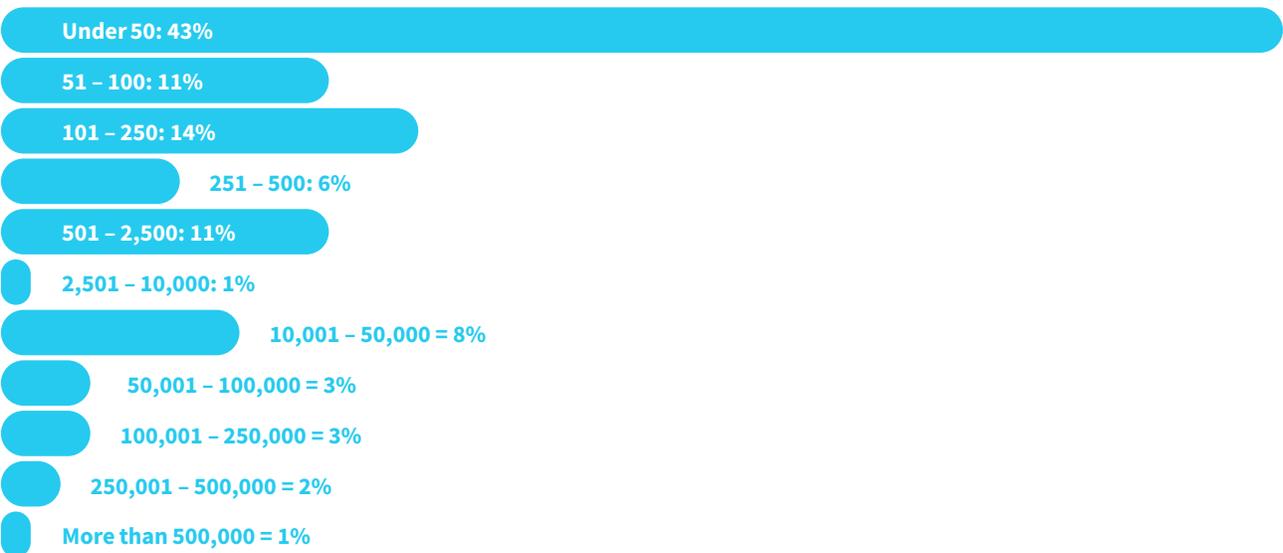
ORGANIZATION'S GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE



ANNUAL REVENUE



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN THE OVERALL ORGANIZATION



*Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

METHODOLOGY

Signatories of the Diversity Action Alliance commitment are required to provide their racial/ethnic representation and promotion data confidentially in a secure data management platform. The data the DAA collects aligns with the EEOC except we do not collect gender, and we ask signatories to put their top communicator/leader/agency CEO in a separate category. Data is cleaned, analyzed and presented in aggregate. To ensure confidentiality, organizations that have a low sample size are placed in the “other” category.

Academic departments within colleges and universities, PRSSA chapters, and independent practitioners have been removed from the overall analysis. Academic departments within colleges and universities will be published in a separate analysis.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION



The Diversity Action Alliance (DAA) is a coalition of Public Relations and Communications leaders joining forces to accelerate progress in the achievement of meaningful and tangible results in diversity, equity and inclusion across our profession. The DAA’s goal is to achieve continuous improvement for professionals of color as measured by recruitment, retention and representation at all levels. For more information about the Diversity Action Alliance, visit <https://www.diversityactionalliance.org/>

PRIMARY REPORT AUTHOR

Dr. Tina McCorkindale, APR
President and CEO
Institute for Public Relations
tina@instituteforpr.org

2020 DAA Survey Participants

Accenture	Fahlgren Mortine
Adfero	Finn Partners
Affect	Finsbury
AKCG - Public Relations Counselors	Flex
Allison+Partners	Furia Rubel Communications, Inc.
Allstate	Gagen MacDonald
APCO Worldwide	Gladstone Place Partners
Archetype	Glen Echo Group
AXIS	Glen M. Broom Center for Professional Development in Public Relations
Burson Cohn & Wolfe (BCW)	G&S Business Communications
Beehive Strategic Communication	Golin
Bliss Integrated Communication	Greentarget
Brilliant Ink	Hawthorne Strategies
Butler University	Hewlett Packard Enterprise
Calibrated Lens	Heyman Associates
Carmichael Lynch Relate	Hill+Knowlton Strategies
Chapa Consulting	HighNote Consulting, Inc
Cheer Partners	Highwire PR
Citizen Relations	Hotwire Global Communications
Clyde Group	Horizon Therapeutics
Conagra Brands	Hudson County Community College
Copperfield Advisory	Hunter Public Relations
Crosby	Idea Grove
C Plus C	INK Communications Co.
Curley Company	Institute for Public Relations
Current Global	International Association of Better Business Bureaus
Day One Agency	Ionis Pharmaceuticals
Development Counsellors International (DCI)	Integral Communications Group
Diffusion PR	JPA Health
Duke University	Kaplow Communications
Elon University	Ketchum
Enbridge	KPMG
Evoke KYNE	KWT Global
Exelon	Leverage Miami LLC
Experian	

L3Harris	Quad
LaForce NYC	Quinnipiac University
LaVoieHealthScience	Ragan Communications
LaunchSquad	Racepoint Global
Levi Strauss & Co	Red Havas
Liberty Global	Rogers and Cowan/PMK
Lippe Taylor	ROI Communication
Litzky PR	San Diego State University – School of Journalism & Media
Live Oak Communications - Elon University Student Agency	Studies
LIXIL	Southwest Airlines
M Booth	SSPR
Makovsky	Taft Communications
March Communications	Talkwalker, Inc.
Mars, Incorporated	Target Corp.
MSLGroup	Temple University PRSSA
MullenLowe PR	Tenneco
National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)	Tessi Consulting
North 6th Agency, Inc.	Teuwen Communications
Novant Health	The Gudz
NSF International	The Hoffman Agency
NW Consulting LLC	The Home Depot
Orangefiery	the10company
Padilla	The Jernstedt Company
Page	Tier One Partners
PAN Communications	University of Florida
Patino Associates	University of Tennessee, College of Communication and
Peppercomm	Information - Knoxville
PepsiCo	Vault Communications
Pitney Bowes	Walker Sands
Porter Novelli	Weber Shandwick
PR Council	WE Communications
Prosek Partners	Westinghouse Electric Company
PRowl PR	West Virginia University
Public Relations Society of America	W2O Group/Real Chemistry
Public Relations Student Society of America Lamar University	Zeno Group

Note: We will release a second iteration of the data in the second half of the year as some newer signatories still need to provide data. Additionally, some of the original signatories still need to provide their 2019 data.