



THE FUTURE OF RUNNING

Connecting with the next generation of racially diverse runners

NEW RESEARCH FROM [THE RUNNING INDUSTRY DIVERSITY COALITION](#)

Funded by 
new balance

FIGHTING FOR THE FREEDOM TO RUN.

“We’ve got to be as clear-headed about human beings as possible, because we are still each other’s only hope.” —James Baldwin, in A Rap on Race



Growing up as a Black kid in my Philadelphia neighborhood, I never saw runners. You ran because you were in danger or because you thought you were in danger. There were no school programs or resources for sports, our teachers didn't take gym class seriously, and my parents and grandparents didn't have time to think about running for fun or for health while fighting for our basic needs.

It wasn't until college that I started learning about—and experiencing—the benefits of running. Since then I've run every distance up to and including the 26.2-mile marathon. Running gave me the freedom to rise above some of the challenges from my upbringing and exposed me to endless opportunities for my health and career goals. Fast-forward to today: I have made a career in the running industry as the Executive Director of the Running Industry Diversity Coalition (RIDC), and I am the cofounder of a local running club started over a decade ago.

Despite my individual success, there are systems in place that prevent Black people and other people of color from participating in and advancing in the business of running. This includes systemic racism, implicit bias, discriminatory practices, and arbitrary barriers. The RIDC aims to change this, and it is with great pride that we announce new research that centers on the experiences of people of color across the entire running industry. In collaboration with Bentley University, these studies establish a baseline for measuring collective progress.

The report you're reading is one of three in a series. It provides particular insights about the status quo of the running industry today, as well as key questions and recommendations to make transformative change towards racial justice.

More than anything, these research studies are a call to action.

We need leaders and community members—of all identities, geographies, and positions of power—to not only speak up about the importance of achieving racial justice but to also use RIDC's research findings to make the running industry more accessible, inclusive, and safe for all runners. We need you to share what accountability looks like for you and your company to do this. We need you to ask critical questions about your current systems, engage in new learnings with your colleagues, and, most importantly, collaborate with the RIDC to build a running industry and culture that leaves no one behind.

We all deserve the #FreedomToRun, and it's our shared responsibility to fight for it.

Thank you to our research funders and partners—Altra, Brooks, New Balance, On, Patagonia, Salomon, Saucony, Smartwool, and Strava—for helping to make this work possible. Thank you to our research team and study participants, board members, and staff for helping the RIDC launch necessary research that will positively impact generations to come. And thank you, reader, for being on the path to progress with us.

In partnership,
Kiera Smalls
Executive Director, Running Industry Diversity Coalition

OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, THE RUNNING INDUSTRY DIVERSITY COALITION HAS DRIVEN AWARENESS, CONVERSATIONS, AND ACTION IN THE RUNNING INDUSTRY REGARDING ISSUES OF RACIAL DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION.

We know that achieving racial justice is a marathon, not a sprint, and we know that to affect real change we have to fully understand our starting line. As part of our five-year strategic plan, we partnered with Bentley University to produce quantitative and qualitative baseline measures for racial diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as it relates to running industry employment, accessibility, inclusion, and belonging. We are looking for progress, not perfection. Let's get into the data!

See other RIDC studies titled "Racial Diversity in Trail Running: Understanding the Underrepresented Experience" and "Racial Diversity And The Business of Running: Mapping a Path to Equitable Employment, Leadership, and Ownership".



IMPORTANT TERMS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS STUDY

Racial Justice ¹

A vision and transformation of society to eliminate racial hierarchies and advance collective liberation, where Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, in particular, have the dignity, resources, power, and self-determination to fully thrive.

BIPOC

When you see 'BIPOC' throughout RIDC materials, we are talking about Black, Indigenous, and people of color. We also use "people of color" as well.

TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE INFORMATION SOURCES:

SFIA

Stands for the Sports and Fitness Industry Association, a trade organization in the sporting goods and fitness industry. They work in partnership with Sports Marketing Surveys USA to supply premier sports and fitness industry research.

MRI Simmons

MRI Simmons is a joint venture between the two largest consumer survey companies in the US, MRI and Simmons Research. They are a premier provider of information on consumer behavior.

Global Runner Survey

An annual study, published by Running USA, designed to assess the demographics, lifestyle, perspectives, habits and preferences of the running population nationwide.

NCAA

Stands for the National Collegiate Athletic Association. It is the governing body for intercollegiate athletics. Its membership is comprised of approximately 1,000 colleges and universities in the United States, operating 102 athletics conferences across three divisions (Division I, II and III).

BEFORE YOU DIVE IN

- How aware are you of your own implicit biases?
- What is your understanding of racial identity and privilege, and the impact these have on the decisions you make?
- Where are you in your journey of understanding the role that racial equity plays in the current and future vitality of the running industry?



RIDC EMPLOYMENT AND PARTICIPATION STUDY OBJECTIVES



PHASE 1: PARTICIPATION

Source statistics to outline the current racial and ethnic composition of running participation in the US.

Analyze and compare the diversity of the US population to the current state of diversity within running participation.



PHASE 2: EMPLOYMENT

Source statistics to outline the current racial and ethnic composition of running industry employment, leadership, and ownership.

Analyze and compare the diversity of the US population to the current state of diversity within running participation and to the current state of diversity within running industry employment, leadership, and ownership.

Utilize statistics to:

- Measure and track progress with regard to racial and ethnic representation in running industry employment, leadership, and ownership
- Measure and track racial and ethnic representation in running participation
- Assist organizations in the running industry to create goals, build action plans, and measure progress over time

See the RIDC research report: [Racial Diversity and the Business of Running: Mapping a Path to Equitable Employment, Leadership, Ownership.](#)

THE FUTURE OF RUNNING: BIPOC RUNNERS ARE...

34%


of runners
age 11+¹

40%

of runners between
age 18-24¹

51%

of Americans
(by 2045)²



**THE FUTURE OF
RUNNING IS RACIALLY
DIVERSE. WE NEED TO
CREATE SPACE FOR
ALL OF US.**



**A SPACE WHERE EVERYONE IS
WELCOME, INCLUDED, AND
WILL THRIVE.**

THE FOLLOWING STUDY ASSESSES THE CURRENT STATE OF RACIAL DIVERSITY IN THE RUNNING INDUSTRY USING DATA SOURCES WIDELY USED BY INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

The Running Industry Diversity Coalition's goal is for these data sets to be compared, tracked, and reviewed together to provide a broader view of racial diversity and the participation of BIPOC runners within the sport.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

We recognize that the secondary data sourced for this study does not specifically capture Native American/Indigenous groups. We also recognize that the U.S. Census doesn't specifically use Native American/Indigenous terms.

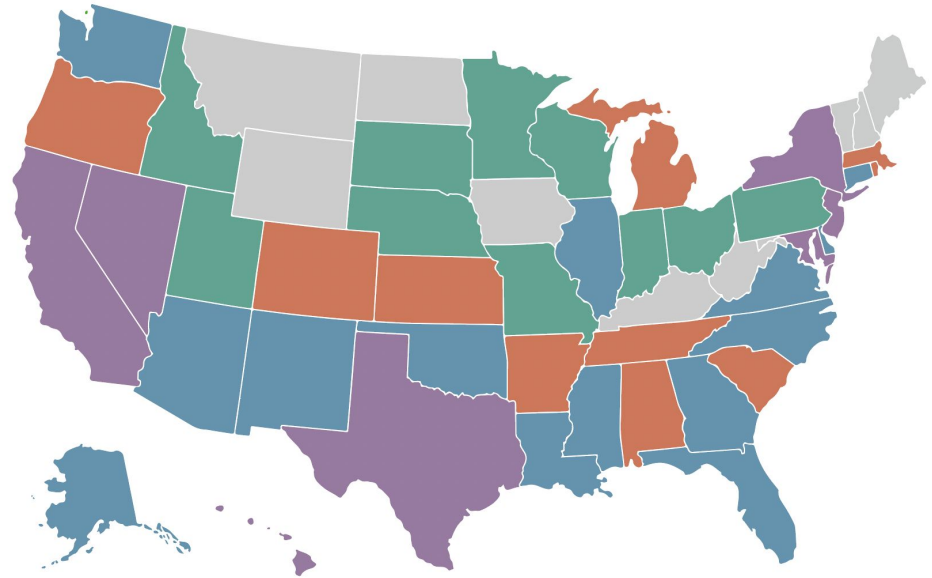
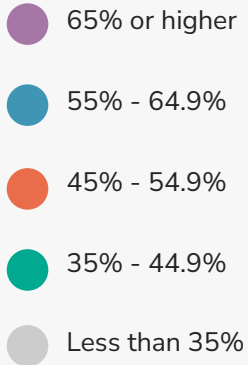
The U.S. Census defines American Indian or Alaska Native as "A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment".

We've received feedback that this is not enough, this is erasure and unacceptable. Considering these limitations in the U.S. Census tool, we are committed to representing Native American/Indigenous groups in our own primary research reporting.



DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

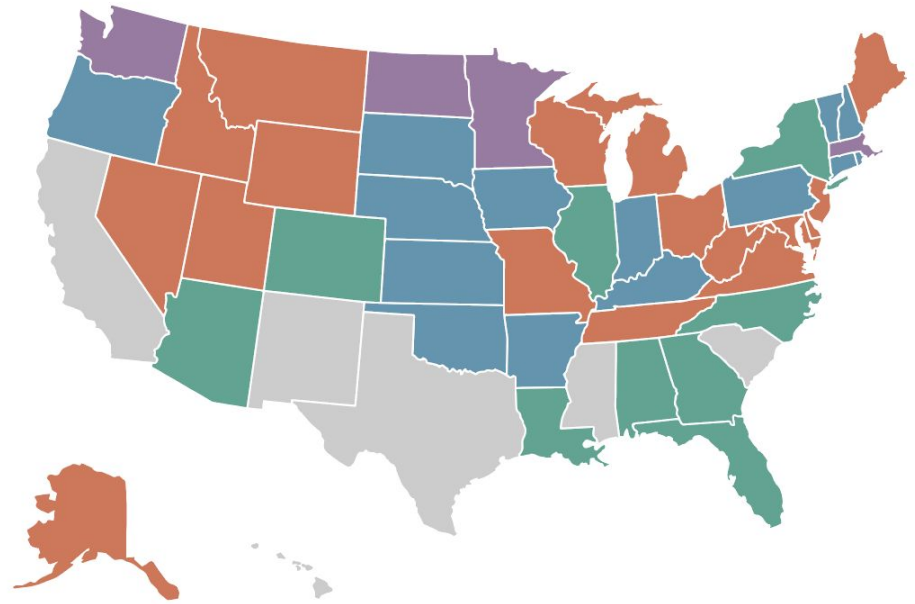
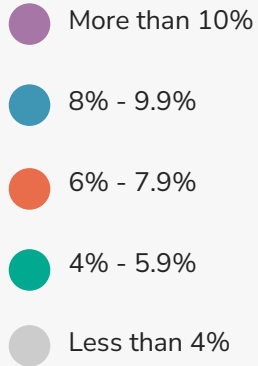
US DEMOGRAPHICS ARE CHANGING



2020 United States Diversity Index

Diversity Index: the probability that two people chosen at random will be different races

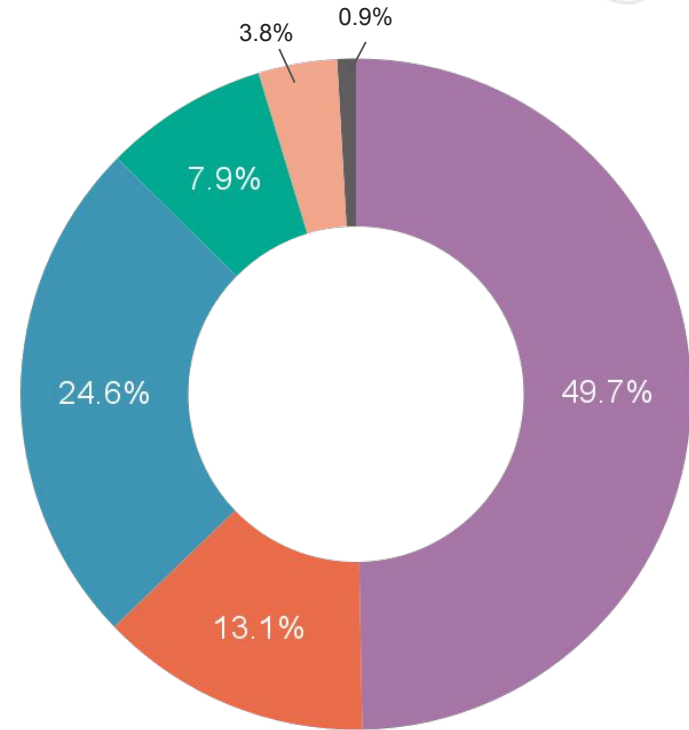
EVERY STATE IN THE COUNTRY IS BECOMING MORE RACIALLY DIVERSE



10 Year Historical Change (2010 - 2020) in United States Diversity Index

*Diversity Index: the probability that two people
chosen at random will be different races*

BY 2045, THE US WILL BE MAJORITY BIPOC



- White*
- Black*
- Hispanic
- Asian*
- Multiracial*
- Other

*Non-Hispanic members of the racial identity category

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE WILL CONTINUE TO GROW

Driven by growth in BIPOC identity groups and a decrease in the white population.

2018–2060 Projected Change

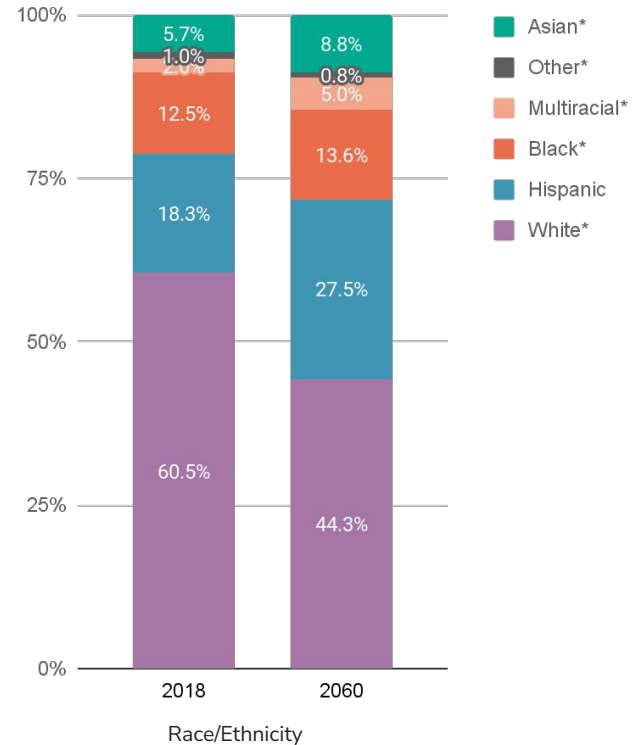
Multiracial: **+176%**

Asian: **+93%**

Hispanic: **+86%**

Black: **+34%**

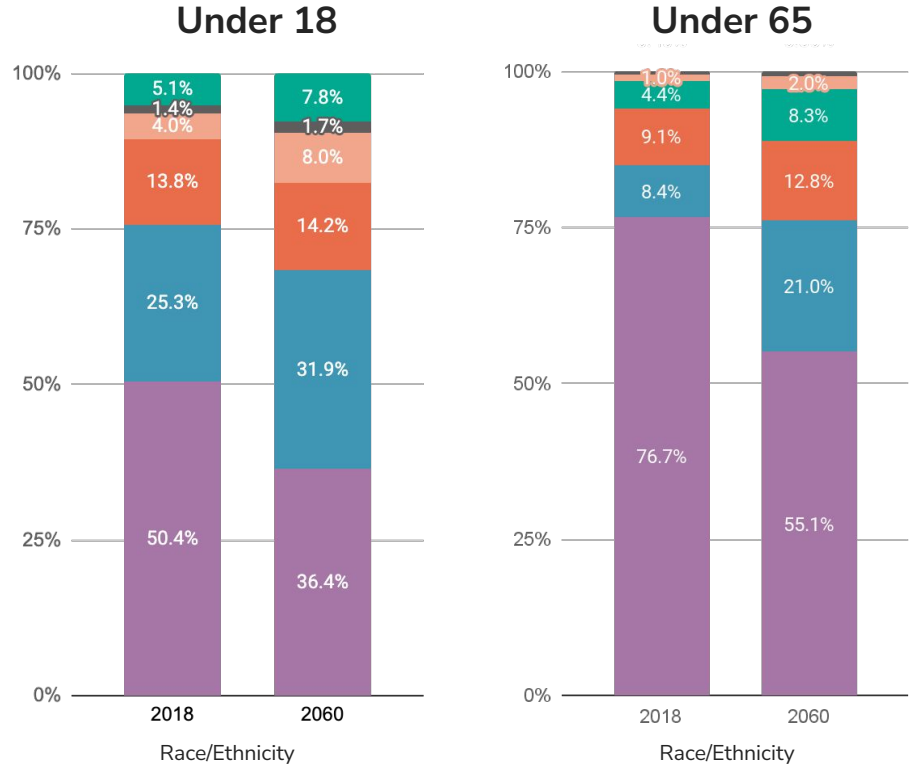
Total Population



*Non-Hispanic members of the racial identity category

GROWTH WILL BE DRIVEN BY BIPOC YOUTH

- White*
- Black*
- Hispanic
- Asian*
- Multiracial*
- Other*



US Racial/Ethnic Profiles, 2018 and 2060

**Non-Hispanic members of the racial identity category*

HISPANIC YOUTH ARE DRIVING GROWTH

The representation of Hispanic runners as a percent of total runners in each of the youngest two age brackets outpaces the overall representation of Hispanic runners as a percent of total overall runners; and the older the runner, the more likely they are to be white.

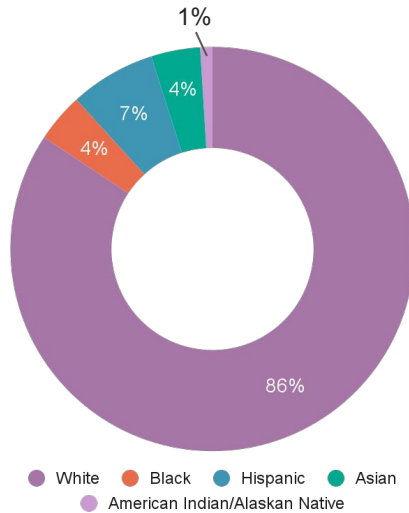
	11-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	TOTAL
AFRICAN AMERICAN/BLACK	11.50%	12.90%	11.20%	10.90%	10.40%	11.30%	9.50%	11.40%
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	6.70%	7.80%	9.60%	9.40%	7.00%	5.30%	5.20%	8.20%
CAUCASIAN/WHITE, NON-HISPANIC	66.20%	59.70%	64.40%	67.90%	72.20%	73.90%	76.60%	66.30%
HISPANIC	14.60%	18.40%	13.90%	11.00%	8.60%	7.70%	7.20%	13.10%
OTHER	0.80%	1.30%	1.00%	0.70%	1.80%	1.90%	1.50%	1.10%



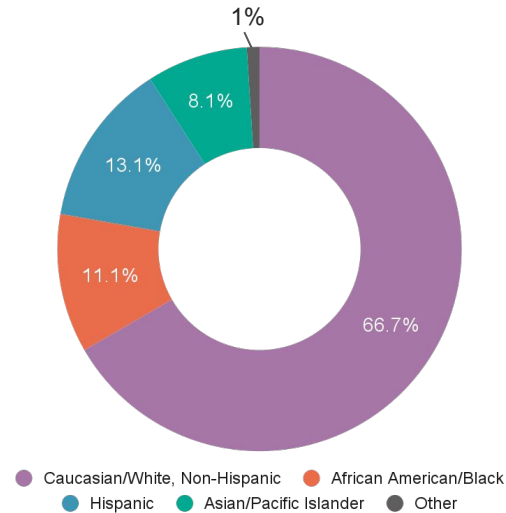
RUNNING & JOGGING PARTICIPATION

CURRENT DATA SOURCES SHOW HUGE DIFFERENCES IN RACIAL/ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF RUNNING PARTICIPATION

Data captured at races, in stores, events and running clubs shows a FAR less racially diverse population of runners



GLOBAL RUNNER SURVEY¹



SFIA²

DATA SOURCE METHODOLOGY

The methodologies for the two data sources on the previous page are detailed below.

Global Runner Survey Methodology ¹

Initially launched in 2007, the Survey is distributed electronically on an annual basis to race directors, media, running retailers, brands and vendors, running clubs and others who have an interest or do business within the running industry. Beginning with the 2020 Global Runner Survey, the results will be named for the year the survey was conducted. The research for the results contained herein was conducted among North American respondents from November to December 2020.

Field Dates: November–December 2020

4,500+ runners responded

Sample: Reflective of convenience random sample. Results reflective of core runners: Active adult participants who tend to enter running events and train year-round.

SFIA Methodology ²

All participation statistics are from a nationwide study conducted during the 2020 calendar year by Sports Marketing Surveys USA (SMS). Under the guidance of the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and seven other sports industry associations that make up the Physical Activity Council (PAC), the participation study was designed and launched by Digital Research (DRI). All other data is attributable to the SFIA/SMS research partnership.

During 2020, a total of 18,000 online interviews were carried out with a nationwide sample of individuals from U.S. proprietary online panels representative of the U.S. population for people ages six and older. Strict quotas associated with gender, age, income, region, and ethnicity were followed to ensure a balanced sample.

The 2020 participation survey sample size of 18,000 completed interviews provides a high degree of statistical accuracy. All surveys are subject to some level of standard error - that is, the degree to which the results might differ from those obtained by a complete census of every person in the U.S. A sport with a participation rate of five percent has a confidence interval of plus or minus 0.32 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

A weighting technique was used to balance the data to reflect the total U.S. population ages six and above. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, ethnicity, household size, region, and population density. The total population figure used was 303,971,652 people age six and older.

46,417,000

total U.S. running/
jogging participants*

*Ages 11+; variation in totals exists due to rounding.

Total Caucasian/White, non-Hispanic runners are
66.3% or 30,757,000

TOTAL BIPOC U.S. RUNNING / JOGGING PARTICIPANTS

RACE/ETHNICITY	SFIA 2020 %	PARTICIPANTS*
African American/Black	11.4%	5,272,000
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.2%	3,786,000
Hispanic	13.1%	6,080,000
Other	1.1%	522,000

TOTAL ≈ 34% 16M

The average runner spends

\$1,795

per year on running gear and races



\$299

on running shoes



\$199

on running apparel



\$119

on running technology



\$435

on race registration fees



\$604

on travel for races

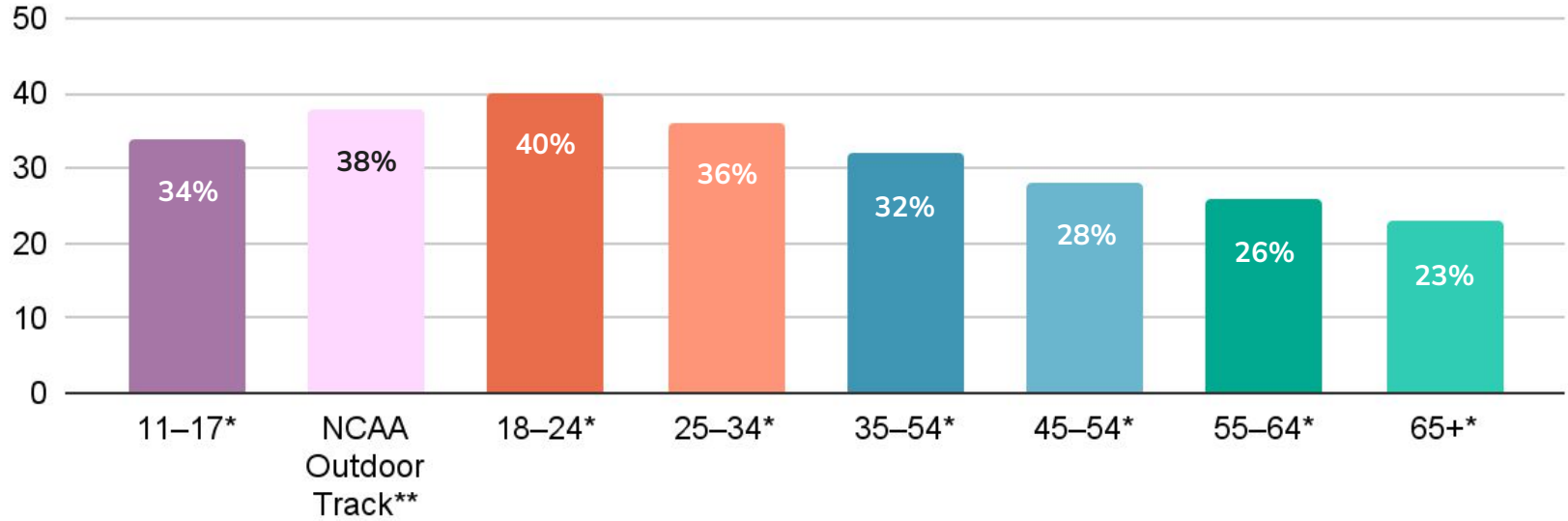


\$139

on medical needs

What does the average runner expenditure mean for the **buying power** of runners of color? (hint: it's significant)

RUNNING PARTICIPATION MIRRORS U.S. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS



THE PERCENTAGE OF BIPOC RUNNERS PEAKS AT AGE 18-24

THE FOLLOWING TWO SLIDES ANALYZE RUNNING PARTICIPATION BY RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY GROUP, BY U.S. REGION

The first of the two slides highlights areas where running participation is under-indexed for specific racial/ethnic identity groups in specific regions.

The second of the two slides highlights areas where running participation is over-indexed for specific racial/ethnic identity groups in specific regions.

The indices below were created to aid the analysis. Using an index to measure changes in data allows you to calculate the percentage change between the points in the index without the need to know the actual data numbers.

ETHNICITY INDEX

(Ethnicity % of Total in Region / Ethnicity % of Total Overall) * 100

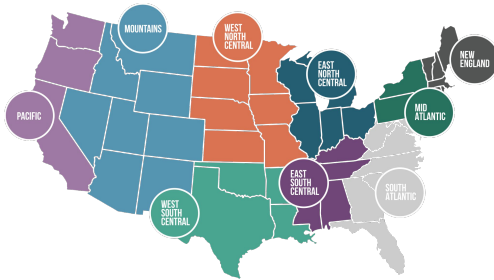
AGE COHORT INDEX

(Age Cohort % of Total in Region / Age Cohort % of Total Overall) * 100

GEOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE BIPOC RUNNING PARTICIPATION

How to read the ethnicity index and age cohort index below:

Cells with numbers below 100 indicate that running participation for that particular racial/ethnic identity group or age group is under-indexed compared to total U.S. running participation for that racial/ethnic identity group or age group.



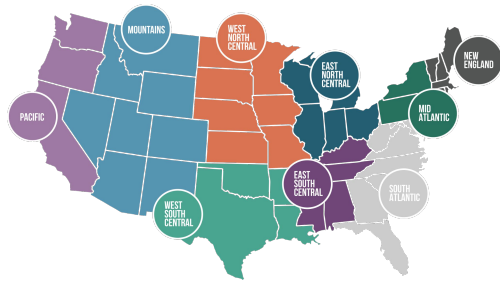
Index from Total US		Pacific	Mountains	West North Central	West South Central	East North Central	East South Central	South Atlantic	Mid Atlantic	New England
Total US Distribution		17.0%	7.0%	5.8%	11.0%	14.7%	5.4%	20.7%	13.6%	4.3%
Ratio: Core/Casual		1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.2
Ethnicity Index	Caucasian/White, non-Hispanic	78	107	126	83	118	106	94	108	121
	African American/Black	48	51	47	150	82	178	160	88	30
	Asian/Pacific Islander	232	77	55	85	63	43	66	103	72
	Hispanic	171	113	52	155	50	41	97	69	72
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age Cohort Index	11 to 17	104	96	116	103	98	109	102	98	60
	18 to 24	86	93	95	120	105	102	96	103	105
	25 to 34	109	113	102	90	90	113	101	93	102
	35 to 44	102	87	110	104	105	85	99	100	91
	45 to 54	93	113	78	94	110	85	99	104	130
	55 to 64	92	100	97	81	107	111	101	109	114
	65+	108	79	78	74	77	67	111	138	156

This data represents pathways to increase running participation across the country.

GEOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITIES TO INCLUDE BIPOC INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ALREADY RUNNING/JOGGING

How to read the ethnicity index and age cohort index below:

Cells with numbers above 100 indicate that running participation for that particular racial/ethnic identity group or age group is over-indexed compared to total U.S. running participation for that racial/ethnic identity group or age group.



Index from Total US		Pacific	Mountains	West North Central	West South Central	East North Central	East South Central	South Atlantic	Mid Atlantic	New England
Total US Distribution		17.0%	7.0%	5.8%	11.0%	14.7%	5.4%	20.7%	13.6%	4.3%
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	25 to 34	109	113	102	90	90	113	101	93	102
	35 to 44	102	87	110	104	105	85	99	100	91
	45 to 54	93	113	78	94	110	85	99	104	130
	55 to 64	92	100	97	81	107	111	101	109	114
	65+	108	79	78	74	77	67	111	138	156

This data represents key opportunities to be more inclusive to individuals who are already running and jogging.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Now that you've read all that data... what's next? We have some things for you to consider.

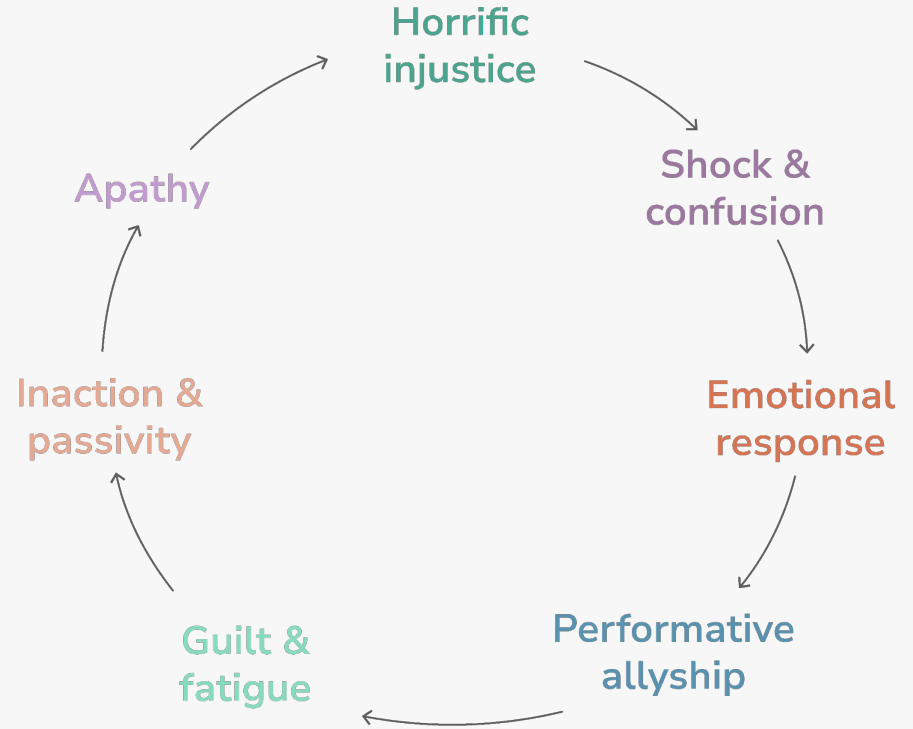
- If your organization is sourcing data about running participation (or a related topic), make sure you understand the methodology the study uses to see if it accurately captures the racial identities of those who are out running and jogging.
- Reflect on what your organization can do to create space for the nearly 16 million BIPOC runners and joggers who are currently out running.
- Center, listen to, and learn from voices that have been historically left out of conversations in the running industry. This is not only a critical step for inclusivity, it helps the running industry stay relevant as the US population becomes more racially diverse.



THE CYCLE OF INACTION

This cycle has been repeated **throughout history** in response to horrific injustice. The running industry can – and must – break the cycle.

The running industry is at risk of falling into the back half of the cycle. With intentional action, we can avoid that.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUR TEAMS

How are you preparing for the **changing demographic** landscape in the U.S.? What programs or opportunities can we create to **support BIPOC youth runners**?

How would the running industry positively change if racial and ethnic representation in **running participation mirrored BIPOC representation** in the U.S.?

How can we continue to grow awareness of the various spaces and privileges from which BIPOC have been **historically excluded**?

How can we better engage regions across the U.S. where **people of color have thus far been underserved** by the running industry?

How can you **incorporate cultural context into decision making** as you envision expanding the running community that you serve?

How do we **keep BIPOC youth engaged** as they age and shift how they spend their time?

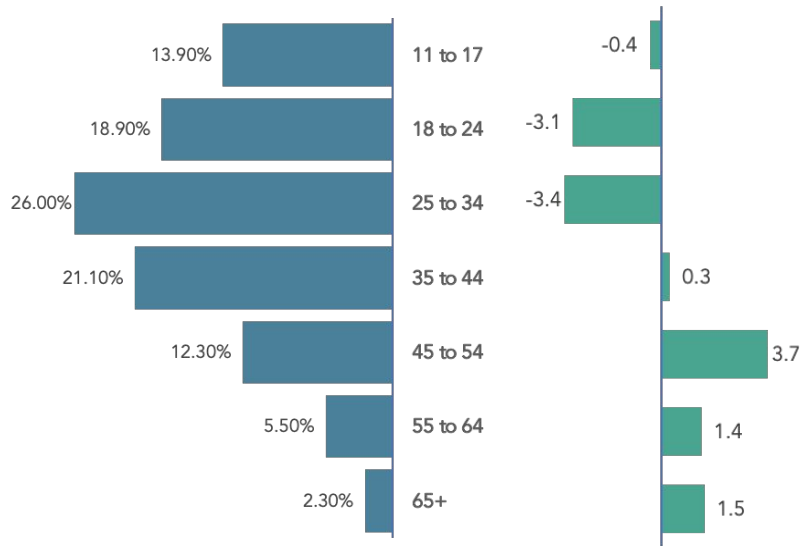


APPENDIX

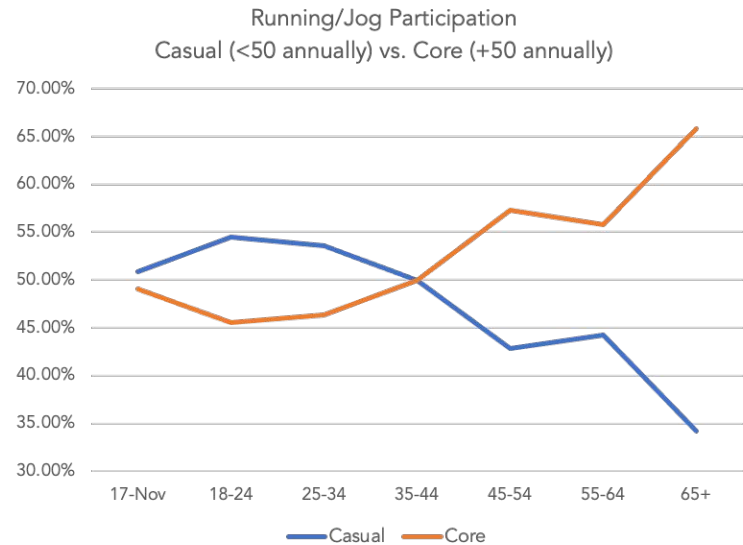
BETWEEN AGES 35-44, RUNNERS SWITCH FROM CASUAL TO CORE

Casual = Run/jog <50 times a year **Core** = Run/jog >50 times a year

Distribution by Age Cohort | Point Change Casual vs. Core



Casual vs. Core by Age Cohort



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The RIDC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, would like to express our gratitude to everyone who made this research possible. Your investments in this project have advanced our knowledge and understanding of the impacts on the running communities we serve. This research is the beginning of envisioning something better – a more inclusive and racially diverse running industry.

Thank you to New Balance for their leadership, and for providing the generous funding that helped us to see what's possible.

We are extremely grateful to each and every participant in this study. Your willingness to share your experiences and insights, be vulnerable, and meaningfully engage with us is a significant contribution to not only the RIDC but is deeply impactful for the running industry. The RIDC would also like to recognize the dedication, expertise, and work of the research team:

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Shelle Santana: Professor, Bentley University

Fikayo Babatunde: Consultant, RIDC

Jenna Klein Jonsson: Partner, Blaze Partners

In addition, we would also like to acknowledge the following who help the RIDC make continuous progress:

Staff: Abigail Sharpless, Betsy Rathwell, Kiera Smalls, and a host of volunteers and consultants.

Board of Directors: Chris Lampen-Crowell, Glendean Hamilton, Jason Faustino, John Benedict, Kathy Dalby, Sergio Avila, Shannon Woods, Song Anh Nguyen, and Tom Carleo. Former members: Alison Mariella Désir, Martha Garcia, Robyn Goby, and Verna Volker.

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THANK YOU





ABOUT THE RIDC

The RIDC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that unites the running industry by providing resources, measuring progress, and holding the industry accountable to equitable employment, leadership, and ownership positions and improving the inclusion, visibility, and access for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC).

[Learn more at **RUNNINGDIVERSITY.COM**](https://www.runningdiversity.com)