

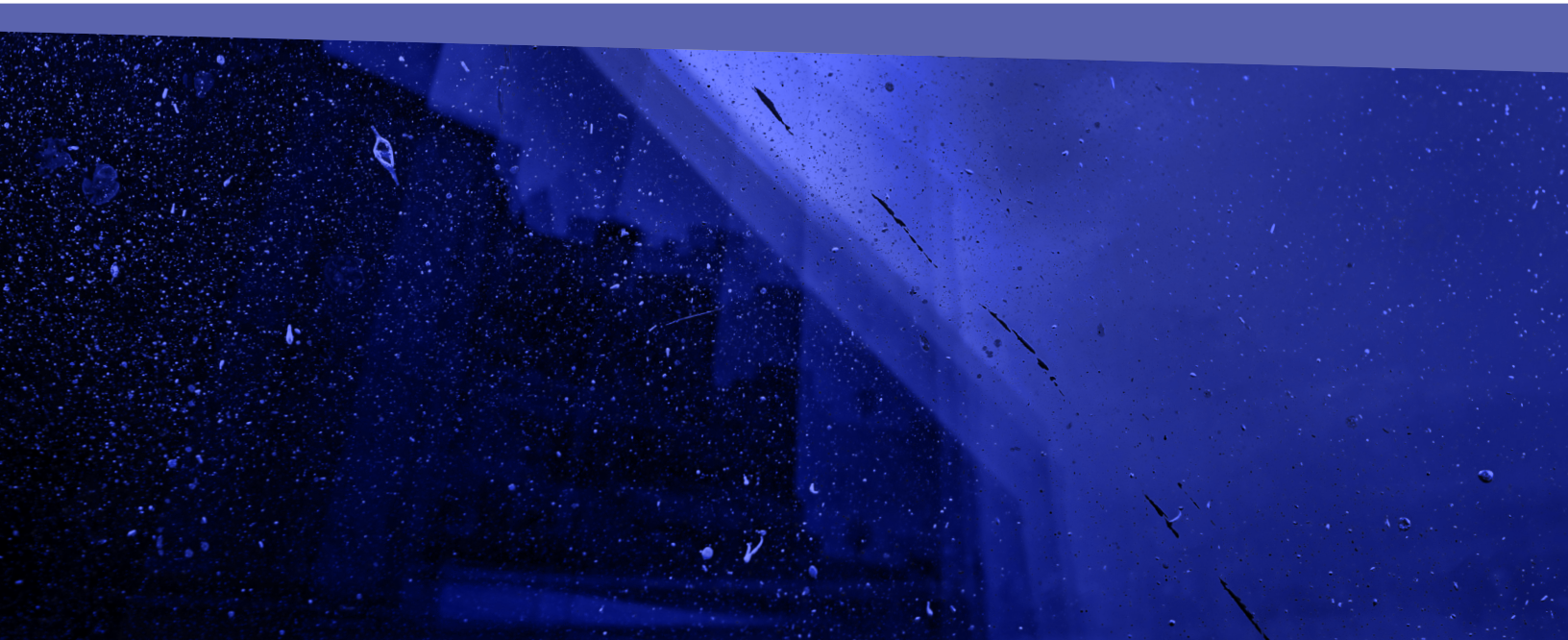


**DIVERSITY
ACTION
ALLIANCE**

2020 & 2021

RACE AND ETHNICITY IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS BENCHMARK REPORT

REPORT NO. 2 | 2020 AND 2021 | MAY 2023



AN OPEN LETTER TO COMMUNICATORS:

Over the last four years, the Diversity Action Alliance (DAA), with the partnership of our Board, Advisory Council, Signatories, and industry partners, has been diligently pursuing our ambitious vision of a more representative, equitable, just, and inclusive profession for communicators of color by 2025.

The urgency of *now* in the DAA tagline “**Lead Together, Act Now**” has not waned since the overwhelming rush to commitment in 2020, when over 100 communication organizations united to contribute to a baseline Benchmark Report from which we all endeavored to grow exponentially.

PR was seen as the perpetrator of performative messaging during the infamous “Black Box” social media trend, and communicators, at the helm of responding to a slew of reputation-damaging DEI crises, needed our own reputational reset. As counselors to our clients, executives, and all stakeholders, we needed then, and still need now, to be the informed authority on messaging that resonates with a disparate group of stakeholders. Moreover, we must also be the voice of reason, ensuring that there is no contradictory dichotomy in what we say versus what we **do**.

With this in mind, we committed to “ACT.” We could not be the authority without being the model and would start by tracking our diversity progress and utilizing the DAA’s resources to grow and retain BIPOC talent.

	Total Submissions	Number of Employees Accounted for in DAA Report	Participation Level
January 1, 2020	143	12,667	72%
January 1, 2021	95	15,754	38%
January 1, 2022	60	6,119	22%

Note: Submissions of sole proprietors, academic departments, and non-U.S. signatories were omitted from the final report

In 2021, despite a drop in participation, the data reflected more employees, and there were small wins in racial representation; we remained optimistic. Then to the final row. Last year, we collected our third round of data, which would not be statistically representative of our industry. The steep drop in participation is a data point and insight of its own.

DEI Fatigue combined with budget cuts, prudent preparations for a possible economic downturn, and other perceived competing priorities muted 2020's initial zeal. 2022's tepid participation yielded a dataset that pales in comparison to year one and is indicative of our societal landscape.

Still, we persevere. Compare the data from our 2020 benchmark report to the subsequent two years of data enclosed in this report. As we now enter our fourth year of race and ethnicity data collection for Public Relations and Communication, we ask communicators who are not signatories of the DAA to become one and those who are signatories to take this opportunity to Dig Deep.

With ambitions to win industry awards, gain new business, enter new markets, change perceptions and attitudes, and generally be the best at our craft, we do know what it takes to dig deep to achieve the impossible, like an underdog sports team setting their sights intentionally on the grueling effort to eke out a surprising win. Anything worth having is worth working for. In this defining moment, digging deep means overcoming DEI Fatigue with a second wind.

#DigDeep by:

1. Evolving from elementary, siloed, top-down, DEI conversations and actions.

We have exhausted discussing why DEI is essential and whether a problem exists. Conversations must start at the top but cannot stay there during action planning. Look for the stories deep in your organizations that illuminate the systemic issues not resolved by the current surface-level conversations and action plans. Acknowledge the fundamental notion that people of color in our industry, as members of the non-dominant race group, are at an inherent disadvantage having to conform to the dominant group's norms, which drives a natural imbalance in power and influence over organizational and industry culture and structure.

2. Being vigilant about DAA data submissions as of January 1, 2023

If you aren't your company's representative signatory (Agency CEO, CCO, top communicator), dig deep by testing your courageous conversation toolbox and asking your leaders if your organization has submitted its DAA data.

In our first year of benchmarking, we received data from over 70% of our signatories, and the community has grown significantly since then. Doubling down on this industry-wide commitment to measurement efforts will bolster the quality of our annual progress reports and enable us to hold ourselves accountable as an industry.

3. Joining or re-joining the DAA, deepening your investment and total commitment to meaningful change and impact.

Invest in the future of your organization and our industry by recommitting fully to your partnership with the DAA. We have resources, whether you're an individual contributor or representing an organization, so sign the commitment. Join the 300+ organizations and individuals who want to see our industry change for the better. Feel free to re-sign it if it's been a while or you have switched roles. If you join as an individual and notice your company is not a DAA Organizational Signatory, appeal to your leadership. This part isn't even that deep. Consider tip #3 the easiest.

If any community can influence meaningful change, it is us. We expertly wield the power of communication. As evolved business leaders, we know better than to think our words alone will make all the difference. Our arsenal of creative, informed techniques wins over stakeholders big and small. We are more than persuasive; we are influential.

In summary, as you reflect on the insights in this report, we ask that you show your continued dedication by enabling the DAA to dig deep into data insights, into the issues that are maintaining the status quo, and into our investment in the future of this profession.

“There's no turning back...we will win. We are winning because ours is a revolution of mind and heart.” - Cesar Chavez

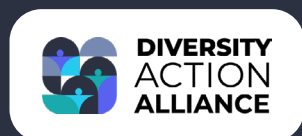
Sincerely,

Carmella Glover

President, Diversity Action Alliance

Charlene Wheeless

Chair, Diversity Action Alliance



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 DAA commitment agree to “share key representation metrics with the DAA for benchmarking and for anonymized reporting of the aggregate progress within the communication profession.”

This analysis is based on two years of data provided by 90 qualified organizations in 2020 and 56 in 2021 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. This analysis focuses only 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, 2020 and December 31, 2020, as well as January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021, segmented by position level. Finally, the third section of this report includes organizational demographics.

METHODOLOGY

The [Institute for Public Relations](#) manages the data collection process on behalf of the DAA. Signatories of the Diversity Action Alliance commitment provided their data confidentially in a secure data management platform for the breakdown of racial/ethnic diversity of their employees as well as the number who were promoted or advanced in the specific year. Data are aggregated so no individual companies can be identified. The data the DAA collects align with the EEOC except the DAA does not collect gender, and signatories identify the race/ethnicity of their top communicator/leader/agency CEO in a separate category.

Please note that sample sizes are smaller (90 organizations in 2020 and 56 organizations in 2021) than the first year of data collection in 2019 so caution is warranted in interpreting the data, especially the percentage increases or decreases when there is a small sample size. Association/nonprofit and products/services data are aggregated because there were fewer than 5 in these categories. Please note this is not representative of the industry, or even the signatories, so the data should be used as a guide.

Academic departments within colleges and universities, PRSSA chapters and independent practitioners have been removed from the overall analysis.

PART ONE: REPRESENTATION

OVERALL RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Of the DAA signatory data provided in 2020, 75% of employees in public relations and communication were white with 25% being racially diverse (N = 15,724). In 2021, diversity increased 8% across all organizations and position levels (N = 6,119). Seventy-three percent of employees were White in 2021 and 27% were racially/ethnically diverse. Below is the overall signatory breakdown:

	2020 (N=15,754)	2021 (N=6,119)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	75%	73%	-2.7%
Black or African American	6%	8%	+33.3%
Hispanic or Latino	7%	7%	0
Asian	8%	7%	-12.5%
Two or more races	3%	3%	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY BY POSITION LEVEL*

In terms of leadership, organizations are less racially/ethnically diverse at the executive and top levels of leadership and become increasingly diverse moving down the ladder into the mid-level, entry-level and admin ranks. Though the needle has moved in a positive direction toward more racial/ethnic diversity, the sample size is smaller compared to previous years.

In 2020, 93% of the top communication or agency leaders were white, which fell to 81% in 2021. Eighteen percent of executive and 25% of mid-level employees were racially/ethnically diverse in 2021. That percentage was even greater for entry-level (34% were racially/ethnically diverse) and administrative (42% were racially/ethnically diverse) positions.

Top Leaders (CCOs, agency CEOs, executive directors, etc.)

	2020 (N=122)	2021 (N=67)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	93%	81%	-12.7%
Black or African American	2%	10%	+400%
Hispanic or Latino	2%	1%	-50%
Asian	0%	1%	+100%
Two or more races	2%	3%	+50%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	1%	+100%

Executives

	2020 (N=3,154)	2021 (N=1,396)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	79%	82%	+3.8%
Black or African American	4%	7%	+75%
Hispanic or Latino	4%	4%	0
Asian	11%	5%	-55%
Two or more races	2%	2%	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

Mid-level Employees

	2020 (N=5,496)	2021 (N=2,496)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	80%	75%	-6.3%
Black or African American	5%	7%	+40%
Hispanic or Latino	5%	7%	+40%
Asian	7%	7%	0
Two or more races	3%	3%	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Entry-level Employees

	2020 (N=6,448)	2021 (N=1,877)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	71%	66%	-7%
Black or African American	8%	10%	+25%
Hispanic or Latino	9%	10%	+11%
Asian	8%	10%	+25%
Two or more races	4%	4%	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Administrative Professionals

	2020 (N=534)	2021 (N=283)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	52%	58%	+11.5%
Black or African American	22%	14%	-36.4%
Hispanic or Latino	14%	14%	0
Asian	8%	9%	+12.5%
Two or more races	3%	4%	+37.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	1%	0

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY BY ORGANIZATION TYPE

Corporation

	2020 <i>16 organizations 821 employees</i>	2021 <i>10 organizations 595 employees</i>	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	75%	78%	+4.0%
Black or African American	7%	8%	+14.3%
Hispanic or Latino	13%	9%	-31%
Asian	3%	3%	0
Two or more races	1%	2%	+100%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Professional Services

	2020 <i>9 organizations 461 employees</i>	2021 <i>5 organizations 212 employees</i>	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	85%	82%	-3.5%
Black or African American	3%	5%	+66.7%
Hispanic or Latino	4%	7%	+75%
Asian	6%	4%	-33.3%
Two or more races	2%	2%	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%



Boutique Agency *(Less than \$9 million in annual revenue)*

	2020 <i>14 organizations 399 employees</i>	2021 <i>14 organizations 557 employees</i>	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	76%	71%	-6.6%
Black or African American	6%	11%	+83.3%
Hispanic or Latino	5%	8%	+60%
Asian	7%	8%	+14.3%
Two or more races	3%	2%	-33.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5%	1%	-80%
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Small Agency *(\$9 to \$19 million in annual revenue)*

	2020 <i>16 organizations 821 employees</i>	2021 <i>10 organizations 595 employees</i>	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	76%	72%	-5.3%
Black or African American	6%	10%	+66.7%
Hispanic or Latino	7%	8%	+14.3%
Asian	7%	7%	0
Two or more races	3%	2%	-33.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	-80%
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Midsize Agency *(\$20 million to \$50 million in annual revenue)*

	2020 <i>14 organizations 1,662 employees</i>	2021 <i>11 organizations 1,580 employees</i>	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	77%	71%	-7.8%
Black or African American	7%	9%	+28.6%
Hispanic or Latino	6%	7%	+16.7%
Asian	7%	9%	+28.6%
Two or more races	3%	4%	+33.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Large Agency *(More than \$50 million in annual revenue)*

	2020 <i>17 organizations 8,713 employees</i>	2021 <i>7 organizations 2,336 employees</i>	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	74%	74%	0%
Black or African American	6%	7%	+16.7%
Hispanic or Latino	7%	7%	0%
Asian	9%	8%	-11.1%
Two or more races	3%	4%	+33.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	<1%	0

Other *(this includes Products/Services to the PR industry and Association/Nonprofits)**

	2020 <i>6 organizations 230 employees</i>	2021 <i>4 organizations 146 employees</i>	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	58%	64%	+10.3%
Black or African American	15%	9%	-40%
Hispanic or Latino	8%	11%	+37.5%
Asian	12%	13%	+8.3%
Two or more races	4%	3%	-25%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%	0%	-100%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%	0

*The "other" category includes *products/services to the public relations industry* and *association/nonprofits*. In 2021, four of these organizations filled out the survey so due to the low sample size they were collapsed.



PART TWO: PROMOTION AND ADVANCEMENT

The following section of the report explores the racial/ethnic diversity of employees who were promoted between January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, as well as January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. 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 2020 + 2021

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

Overall

	2020 (N=3,914)	2021 (N=1,758)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	62%	75%	+21%
Black or African American	5%	6%	+20%
Hispanic or Latino	5%	7%	+40%
Asian	24%	7%	-70.8%
Two or more races	3%	4%	+33.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	0%	-100%
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	0

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF PROMOTED EMPLOYEES BY POSITION TYPE

Top Leaders *(CCOs, agency CEOs, executive directors, etc.)*

	2020 (N=10)	2021 (N=5)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	60%	40%	-33.3%
Black or African American	10%	20%	+100%
Hispanic or Latino	30%	20%	-33.3%
Asian	0%	0%	0
Two or more races	0%	0%	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%	0

Executives

	2020 (N=426)	2020 (N=270)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	80%	78%	-2.5%
Black or African American	7%	7%	0%
Hispanic or Latino	5%	6%	+20%
Asian	7%	6%	-14.3%
Two or more races	2%	2%	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%	0

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%



Mid-level Employees

	2020 (N=1,422)	2021 (N=800)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	65%	80%	+23.1%
Black or African American	3%	4%	+33.3%
Hispanic or Latino	3%	6%	+100%
Asian	25%	6%	-76%
Two or more races	3%	4%	+33.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	<1%	0

Entry-level Employees

	2020 (N=1,979)	2021 (N=638)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	58%	69%	+19%
Black or African American	5%	8%	+60%
Hispanic or Latino	6%	9%	+50%
Asian	26%	10%	-61.5%
Two or more races	3%	5%	-66.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	<1%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	0%	0

Administrative Professionals

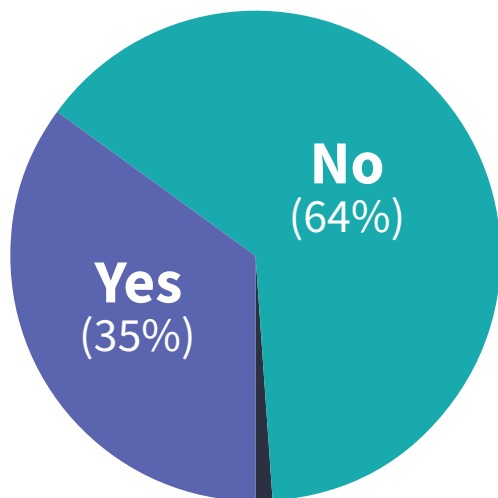
	2020 (N=77)	2021 (N=45)	% Change from 2020 to 2021
White	25%	67%	+168%
Black or African American	5%	11%	+120%
Hispanic or Latino	10%	4%	-60%
Asian	55%	11%	-80%
Two or more races	4%	7%	+75%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	0%	0

PART THREE: DEMOGRAPHICS

More than one-third of respondents in both 2020 and 2021 reported having Chief Diversity Officer (CDOs) or executives who primarily lead diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Regarding the person most responsible for DE&I initiatives, next to CDOs or an executive primarily responsible for DE&I, the President or CEO (20%) was the second most noted leader followed by CHROs (17%). In 2021, those two positions flipped as CHROs (24%) were noted as being more likely to be responsible than presidents or CEOs (19%).

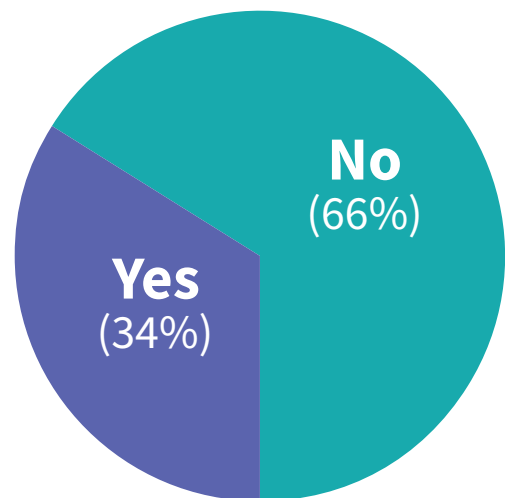
Does your organization have a Chief Diversity Officer?

2020



Other (1%)

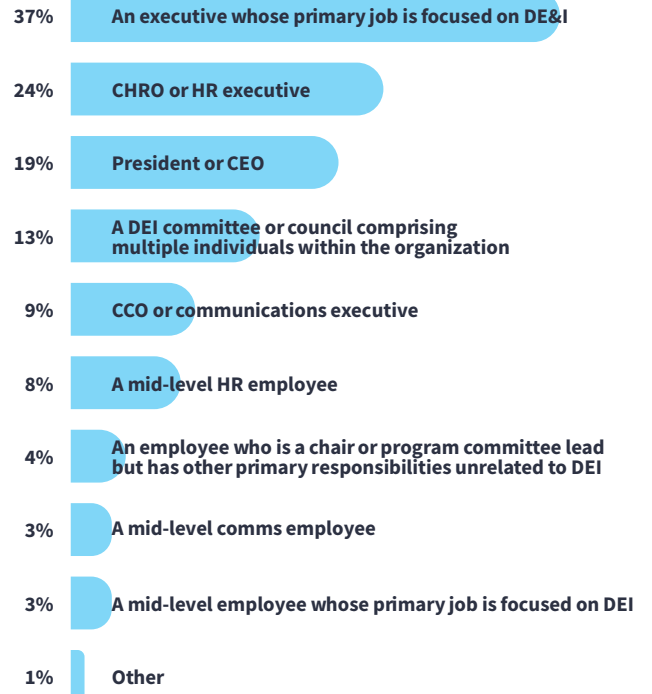
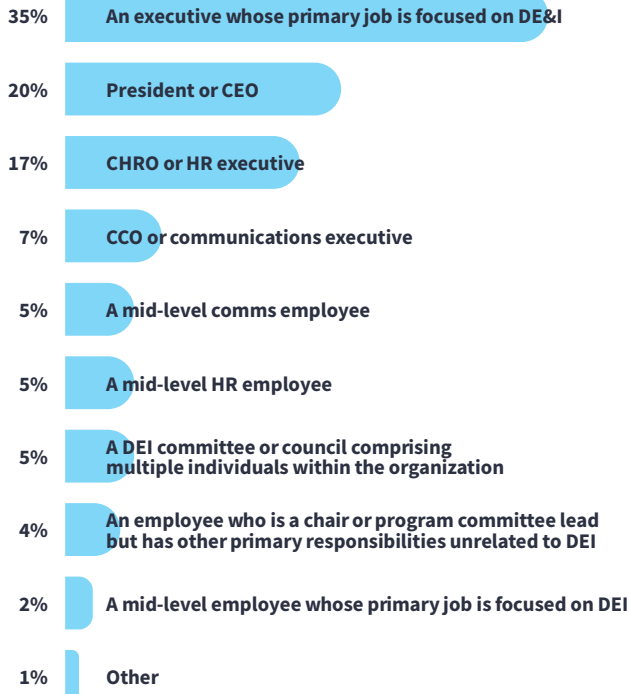
2021



Who is the individual responsible for leading diversity, equity, and inclusion in your organization?

2020

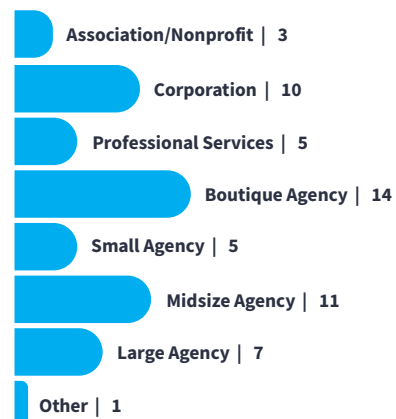
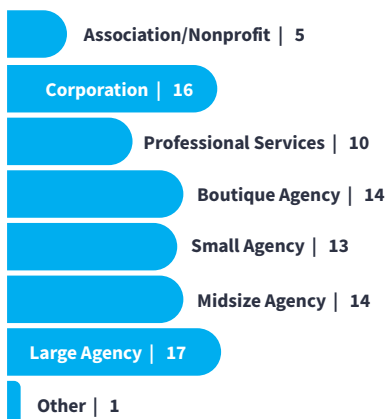
2021



Type of Organization (in frequencies)

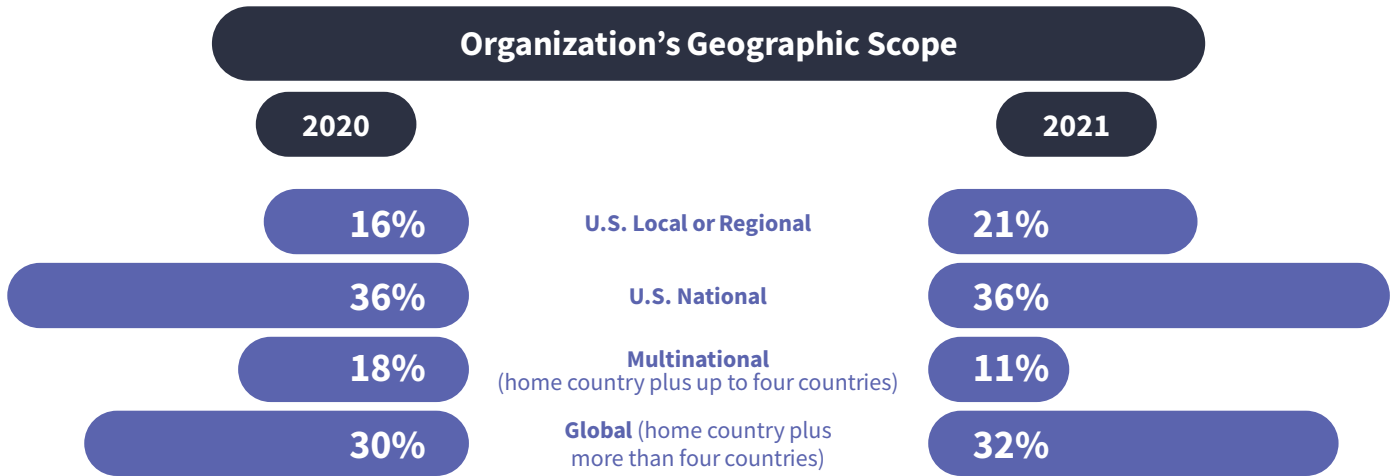
2020 (N=90)

2021 (N=56)

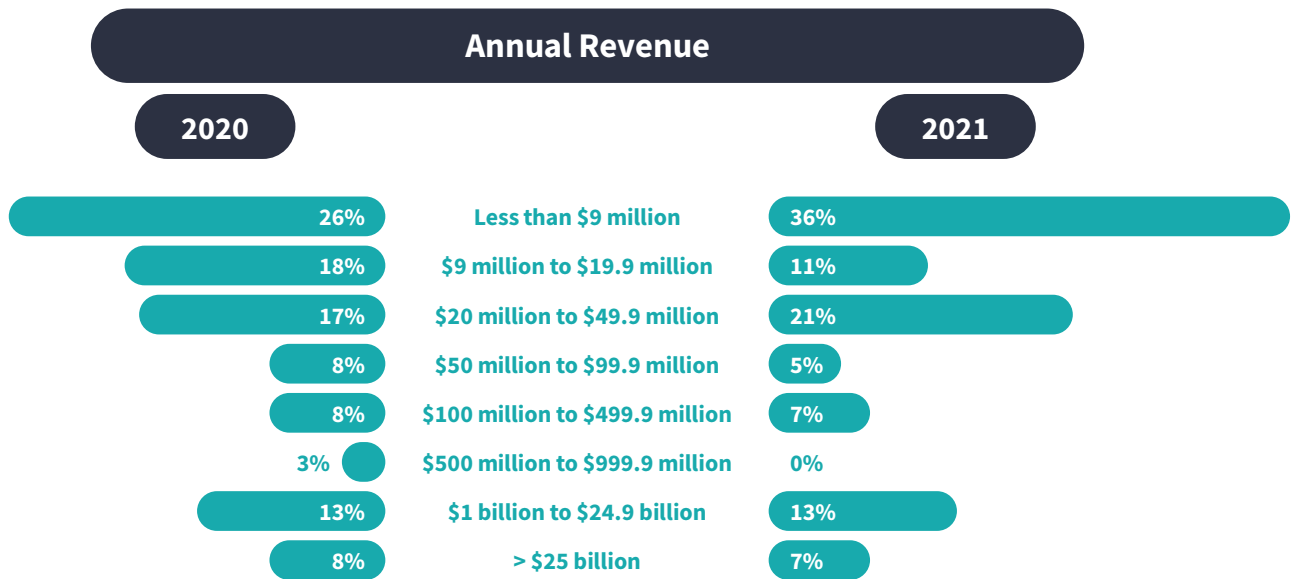


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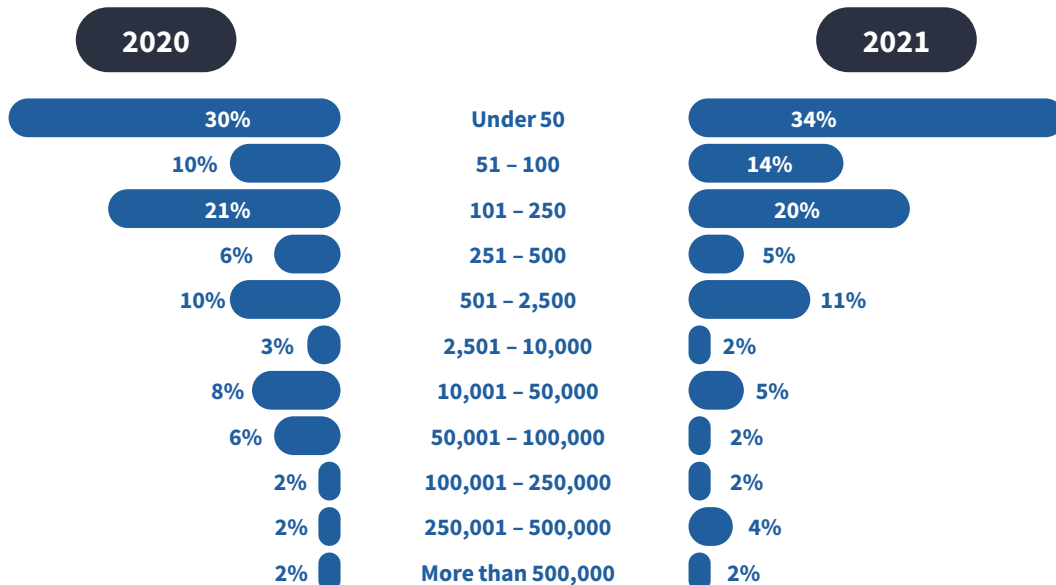
Organization's Geographic Scope



Annual Revenue



Number of Employees in the Overall Organization





ABOUT DIVERSITY ACTION ALLIANCE (DAA)

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/>



ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS (IPR)

The Institute for Public Relations is an independent, nonprofit research foundation dedicated to fostering greater use of research and research-based knowledge in corporate communication and the public relations practice. IPR is dedicated to the science beneath the art of public relations.™ IPR provides timely insights and applied intelligence that professionals can put to immediate use. All research, including a weekly research letter, is available for free at www.instituteforpr.org.

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