



# VIBRANT INDEX

Summary Report 

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 AUGUST 2021

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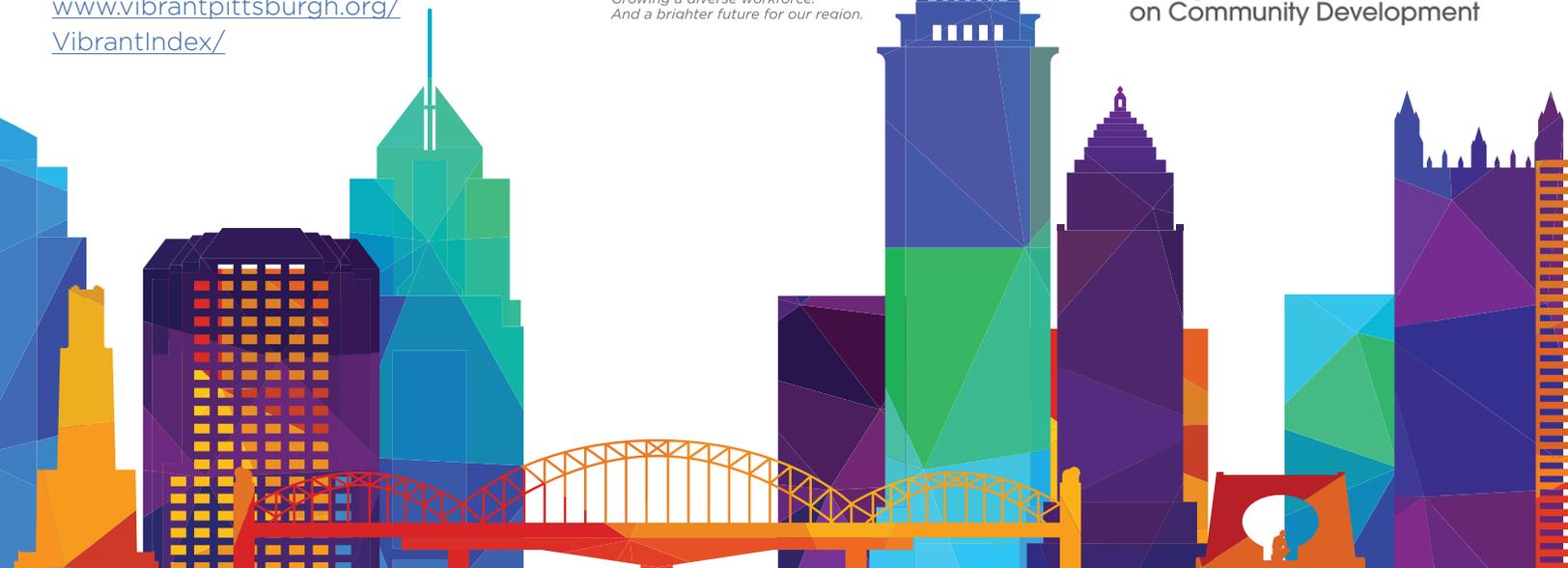
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The Vibrant Index project is a collaboration between Vibrant Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. For more information about the Vibrant Index, visit <http://www.vibrantpittsburgh.org/VibrantIndex/>

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## A NOTE FROM VIBRANT PITTSBURGH

Encompassing a global pandemic and a spotlight on systemic inequities, 2020 presented the business community with challenges that both rocked foundations and opened doors to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) opportunities. As organizations leaned into a new work landscape, Vibrant Pittsburgh asked: Are we responding to challenges with a focus on greater equity and inclusion? Are we continuing to broaden our perspectives? What is the impact of our DEI efforts? With systemic disparities center stage in our nation, a point of clarity emerged: We cannot continue to do things the way they have always been done.

We know this much to be true: Responding and reacting are quite different things. In 2020, Vibrant Pittsburgh called for continued and renewed commitment to this data initiative, asking organizations to reflect even more deeply on the quality of workplaces through the utilization of a diagnostic assessment tool that nearly doubled its questions. As we had hoped, our region's businesses responded, increasing participation by 56% as they shared in our effort to measure the best practices that make our region's workplaces more welcoming, inclusive, and equitable.

As we say at Vibrant Pittsburgh, we cannot change what we will not own. Strategic, sustained, and measurable focus on DEI gives the greater Pittsburgh region the resilience to respond to the journey ahead, whatever it may hold.

To the organizations that participated in the 2020 Vibrant Index: Thank you for your continued partnership in making Greater Pittsburgh a place of opportunity for all.



Lora McKnight  
*Chief Operating Officer and Vice President, Programs and Services*

## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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In a year challenged by a global pandemic and focused on the eradication of racial inequities, Vibrant Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Conference's continued partnership on the Vibrant Index became even more critical. Our shared efforts, and those of the participating employers, give us all a focus on what kind of region we aspire to be, and the important work we need to do to get there.

**Linda M. Topoleski**  
Vice President, Talent Strategy & Programs

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vibrant Index was established in 2019 to inspire organizations in the Pittsburgh region to utilize best practices in DEI. Each of the practices surveyed in the 2020 Vibrant Index Diagnostic are supported by research in the field of DEI.

The Vibrant Index Diagnostic process assists organizations in identifying their strengths, as well as areas for continual improvement. In May 2021, participating organizations received confidential feedback reports on data reflecting their practices in the 2020 calendar year, with scores compared to sample averages, organizational size cohort averages, high scores, as well as tips for adopting better practices in the future. Questions were scored using a proprietary process that adjusted scores based on the size of the organization, as well as other factors. In the summary report, we use raw (not adjusted) scores to look at all organizations as a group.

Participating organizations were encouraged to connect with Vibrant Pittsburgh to further explore strategies and practices to advance future DEI efforts.

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## KEY FINDINGS

**94% of respondents reported that developing an inclusive culture was a top priority for their DEI initiatives.**

Building an inclusive culture in the workplace is an excellent goal that will help with retention, as well as diverse talent attraction. The Pittsburgh region's ability to develop an inclusive regional culture will move the needle in terms of attracting workers to address the coming shortfall.

Other top goals commonly held by respondents include:

- Retention and development of talent: 88%
- Developing a talent pipeline: 82%
- Leveraging DEI to advance organizational objectives: 78%



## Leadership accountability is key to seeing DEI efforts come to fruition.

### 85% of respondents offered Employee Assistance Programs.

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a work-based intervention program designed to assist employees in resolving personal problems that may adversely affect the employee's performance. EAPs are an important support structure for employees, especially during challenging times. *Investing in employees' overall well-being, and the well-being of their families is a vital component when building an equitable and inclusive workplace.*

### 78% of respondents state explicitly that they do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

As of June 2020, the Supreme Court has affirmed that discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people in the workplace falls under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibiting employment discrimination. *However, a firm and explicit commitment against discrimination based on sexual orientation will help LGBTQIA+ employees, customers, and clients feel more welcome.*

### 76% of respondents have an internal advising body dedicated to diversity and inclusion.

While all employees are responsible for creating inclusive work cultures and all can be involved in workplace DEI initiatives, *an internal DEI advisory body with experience and expertise will drive this work forward.* Assigning specific responsibility for advancing organizational DEI objectives is an important visible commitment.

### Only 31% of respondents' senior executives have a specific DEI component as part of their individual performance evaluations.

While organizations are making strides in creating internal DEI initiatives, *leadership accountability is key to seeing DEI efforts come to fruition.*

#### A Note About Trends and Comparisons

Vibrant Pittsburgh is reluctant to identify trends in our data or to make year-to-year comparisons between the 2019 and 2020 data sets. The 2019 and 2020 Vibrant Index Diagnostic sample sets were not random, but self-selected, meaning that participants have all shown willingness and enthusiasm about DEI issues through their decision to participate in the Vibrant Index. Sample sets from 2020 and 2019 were vastly different, covering different industries, sectors, and organizational sizes. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on respondents' answers in several sections. Thus, the data presented here is not necessarily representative of all organizations in the Pittsburgh region and has been collected to provide a snapshot of DEI practices taking place in the Pittsburgh region.

## VIBRANT CHAMPIONS

Utilizing adjusted scores based on the size of the organization as well as other factors, companies that achieved at or above the 95th percentile on the 2020 Vibrant Index Diagnostic are considered “Vibrant Champions.” Use of the “Vibrant Champions” name is an exclusive benefit for the companies that scored at or above the 95th percentile on the Diagnostic.



An organizational designation of “Vibrant Champion” does not convey perfection. Vibrant Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development recognize that there is no “right way” to practice inclusion, and that some opportunities may be more feasible for some companies or industries than others. A score at or above the 95th percentile on the 2020 Vibrant Index Diagnostic simply means that a company adheres to many of the numerous diversity and inclusion practices featured in the Diagnostic.

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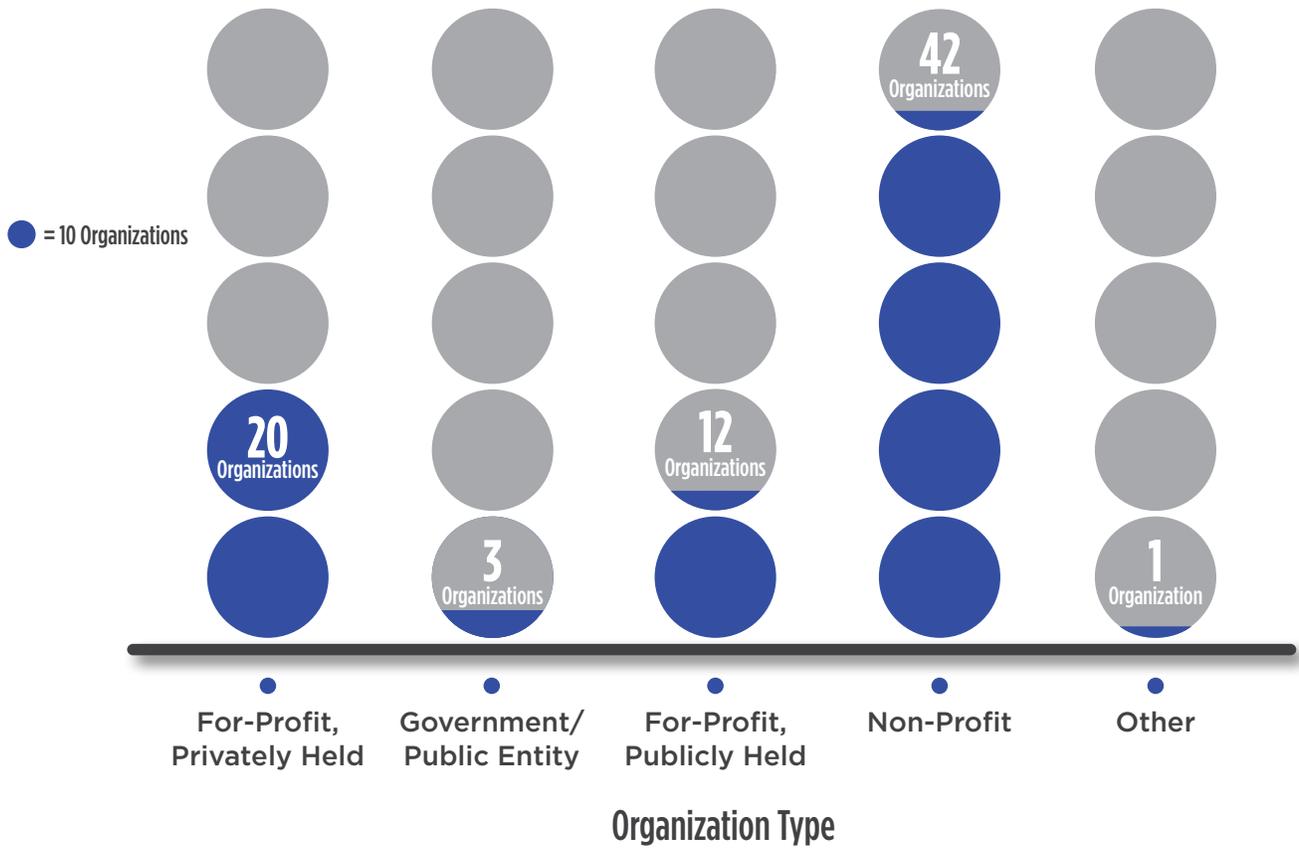
## ABOUT THE VIBRANT INDEX DIAGNOSTIC SAMPLE

The information presented in the 2020 Vibrant Index Summary Report is drawn from a voluntary Diagnostic made available to organizations in the greater Pittsburgh region. Organizations self-selected participation in the 2020 Vibrant Index Diagnostic; all questions answered were voluntary, with organizations able to opt out of answering any questions in the Diagnostic. As a result, the findings are not necessarily representative of the greater Pittsburgh region. Instead, the Diagnostic was designed to provide a snapshot of the best practices being utilized by employers in the region and offers groundwork for future study.

In its entirety, 78 organizations completed the Diagnostic representing a total of 118,098 employees in the Pittsburgh region. The total number of employees in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area is 1,049,471, meaning that the behaviors and policies of companies that participated in 2020 Vibrant Index impact is about 11% of the local working population.

Participating organizations represented a variety of industries and sizes, although nonprofits were overrepresented in this year’s participants, comprising about 54% of organizational participation. In Pennsylvania, approximately 15% of workers are employed by nonprofits.

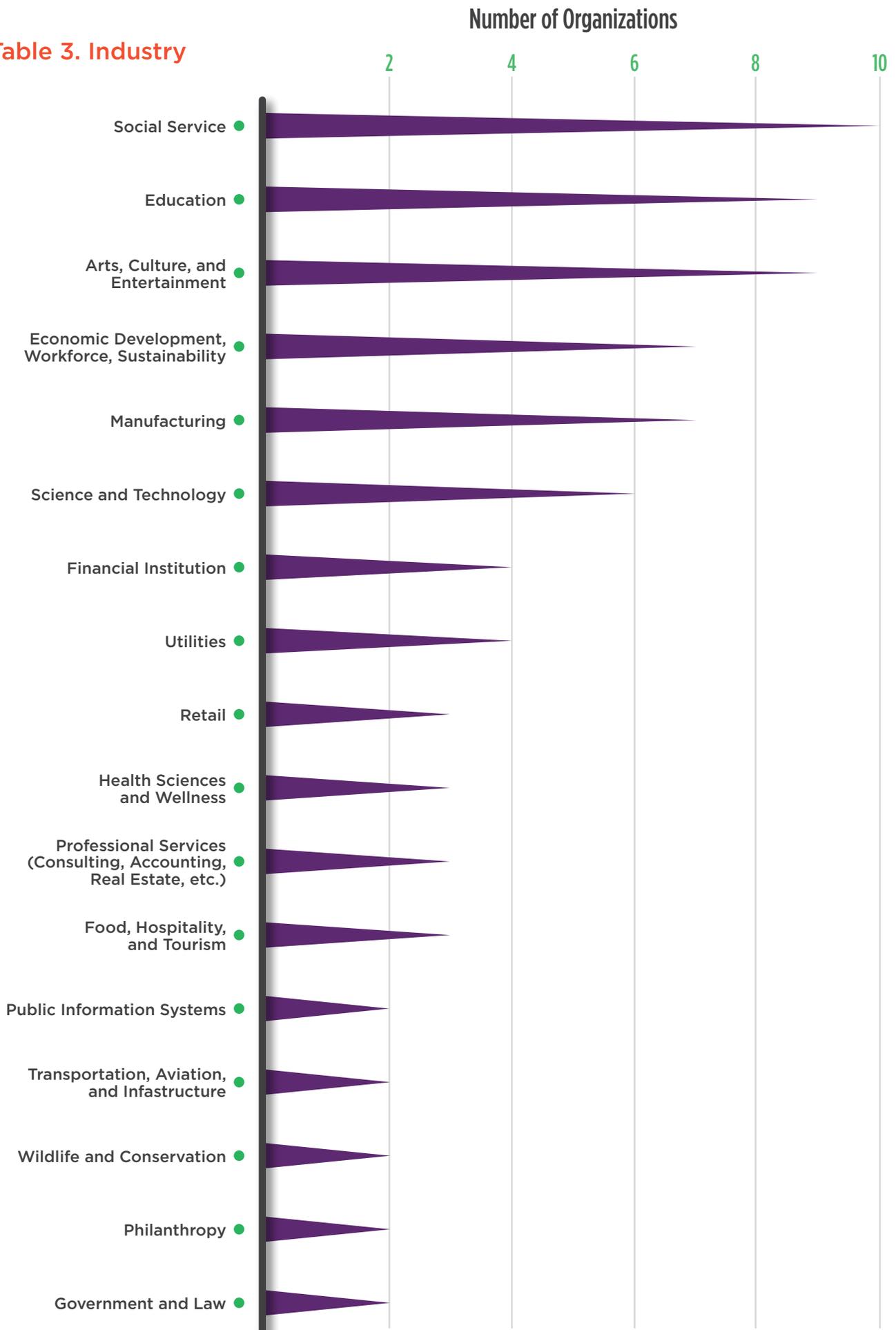
**Table 1. Organization Type**



**Table 2. Organization Size**



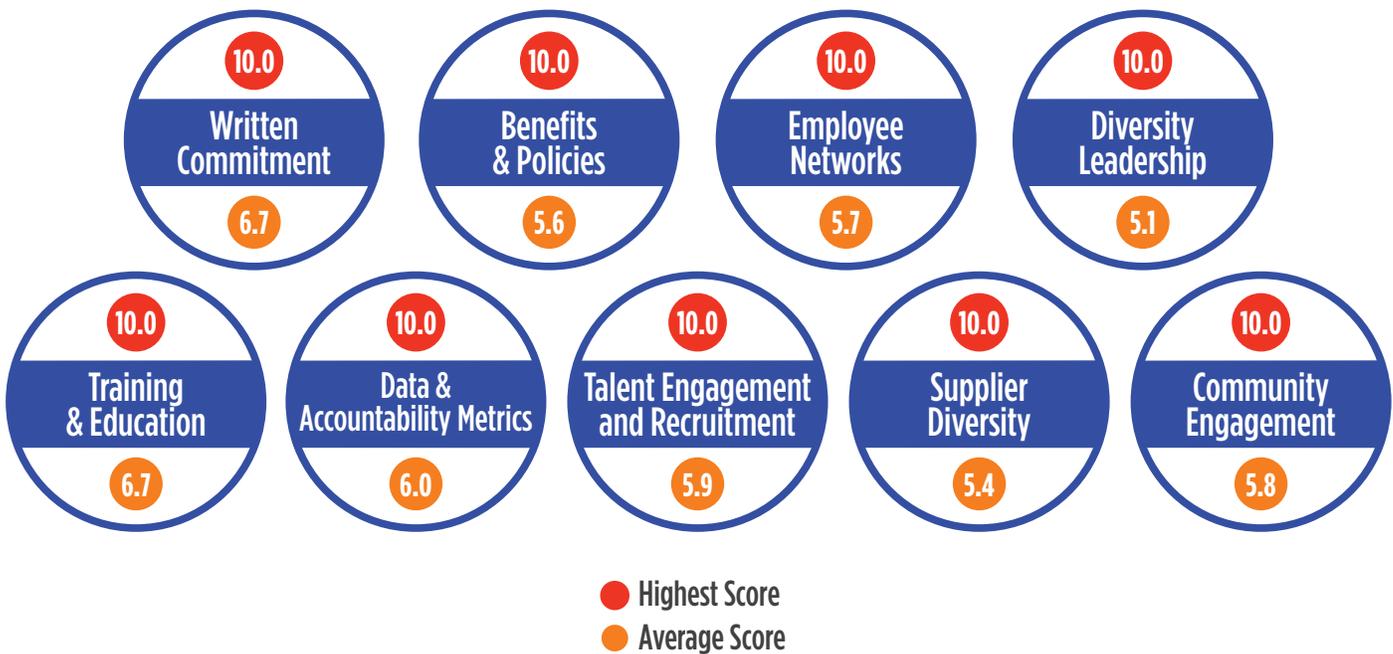
**Table 3. Industry**



## OVERVIEW

Participating organizations answered questions in 10 categories. The following table shows the average organizational score in each category, along with the highest score achieved in each category.

**Table 4. Average and High Scores by Category**



Category 10, Organizational Response to the Pandemic, Protests, and Sociopolitical Unrest, was not scored. The data gathered in this category is being used to identify promising practices that organizations put into place in 2020 to address both the COVID-19 pandemic and the highlighting of systemic inequities in the United States.

It is important to note that the Diagnostic categories are not comparable, having included and/or covered vastly different best practices, with different numbers of questions in each category.

**Investing in employees' overall well-being, and the well-being of their families is a vital component when building an equitable and inclusive workplace.**

## WRITTEN COMMITMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

The Written Commitment and Transparency category asked questions about an organization's public commitment to DEI, such as the signing of a diversity pledge or public dissemination and publication of a non-discrimination policy. A written public commitment shows customers, clients, potential employees, current employees, and the public that diversity, equity, and inclusion are organizational values. Transparent, public DEI commitments invite the public to hold an organization accountable and set the tone for an organization's culture and climate.

### **Diagnostic Question: Has the CEO, owner, or highest-ranking employee of your organization signed the CEO Action Pledge or similar public pledge to support DEI?**

About 35% of participating organizations' leaders had signed a public pledge to support DEI. Those who had signed pledges tended to have signed several pledges, including:

- *The CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion* pledge, an international effort spearheaded by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and a steering committee from some of the largest firms in the world. This pledge seeks to promote CEO engagement and action on diversity and inclusion issues. The *I Act On Diversity and Inclusion* pledge is for any individual to sign and includes different content than the CEO Action pledge.
- The *DEI P.A.C.E. Pledge* includes diversity and inclusion issues.
- Other pledges supported specific groups, such as the *Business Statement for Transgender Equality* and *Women on Boards 2020*. There are pledges that are centered around industry, like the *Urban Libraries Council Statement on Race and Social Equity*.

### **Diagnostic Question: Does your organization have a written non-discrimination policy?**

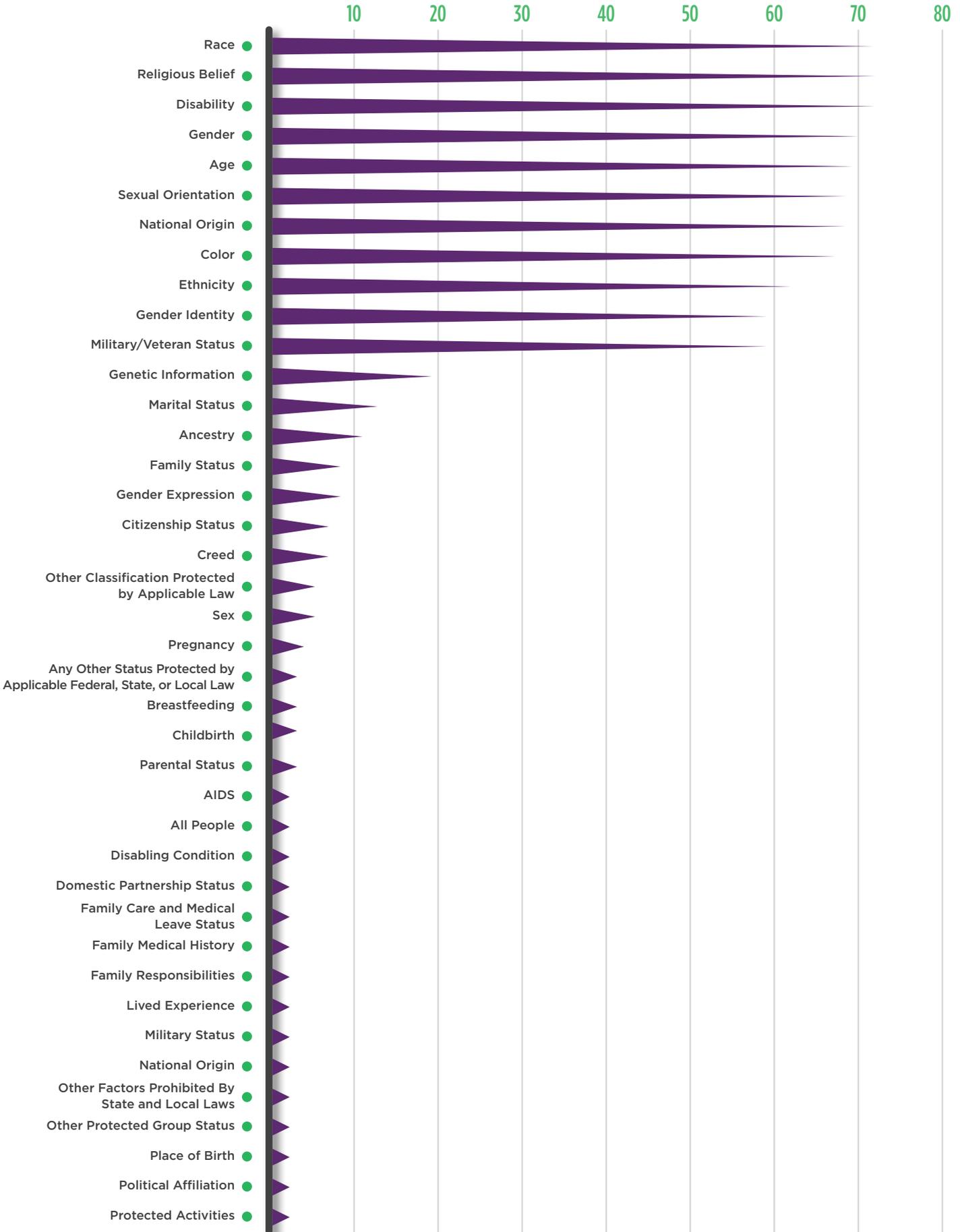
A written non-discrimination policy is often the first step in an organization's DEI journey. Federal laws protect certain groups against discrimination in employment and others against discrimination in public accommodations. Discrimination against someone on the basis of sex, race, age, disability, color, creed, national origin, religion, or genetic information is illegal, but the limits of those laws are unclear. While some consider LGBTQIA+ discrimination to be discrimination on the basis of sex, there is no federal law specifically protecting LGBTQIA+ people from discrimination in the workplace or in the provision of goods and services.

A robust non-discrimination policy is a sign that an organization is trying to create a safer place to work and to spend money. 73 out of 78 organizations in this sample had a written discrimination policy. Of those, 68 explicitly state that they do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, and 59 state that they do not discriminate on the basis of gender identity.

# Groups Specifically Mentioned In Non-Discrimination Policies

**Table 5. Written Policies**

Number of Organizations



40 organizations placed non-discrimination policies on their websites, where they are available to the public. This allows applicants to feel confident that they will not be discriminated against when applying to work with these employers or when obtaining goods or services.

**Vibrant Recommends:** Even if it is boilerplate language, organizations’ non-discrimination statements can include as many groups as possible, especially groups that are not already protected by law. Specify that the non-discrimination statement covers hiring, vendor selection, and the provision of goods and services. Post the statement prominently on the organization’s website, in working environments, and where current employees, customers, clients, and/or patients are likely to see it.

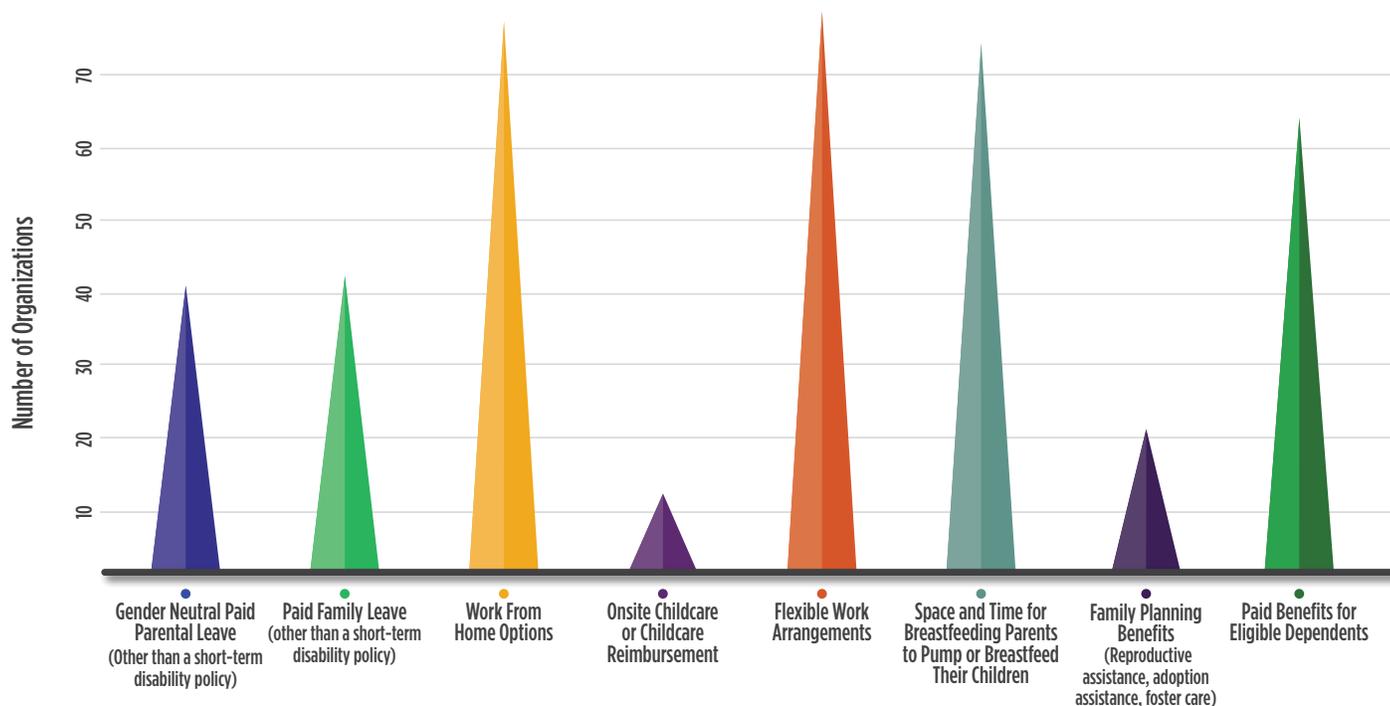
## BENEFITS AND POLICIES

This section looks at key benefits that have large impacts on underrepresented and marginalized populations. It is not intended to be comprehensive, but instead is indicative of the care that organizations take to make work life easier (or possible) for all employees. Benefits and policies are the tangible evidence of an organization’s commitment to creating a welcoming environment for a diverse workforce.

### Diagnostic Question: Which of the following family-friendly benefits does your organization offer to employees?

This question addresses a selection of benefits that have been shown to have a profound effect on the ability of people with children to thrive in the workplace. Supportive environments for employees with children can be a factor in retention, especially for women and single

**Table 6. Family-Friendly Benefits and Policies**



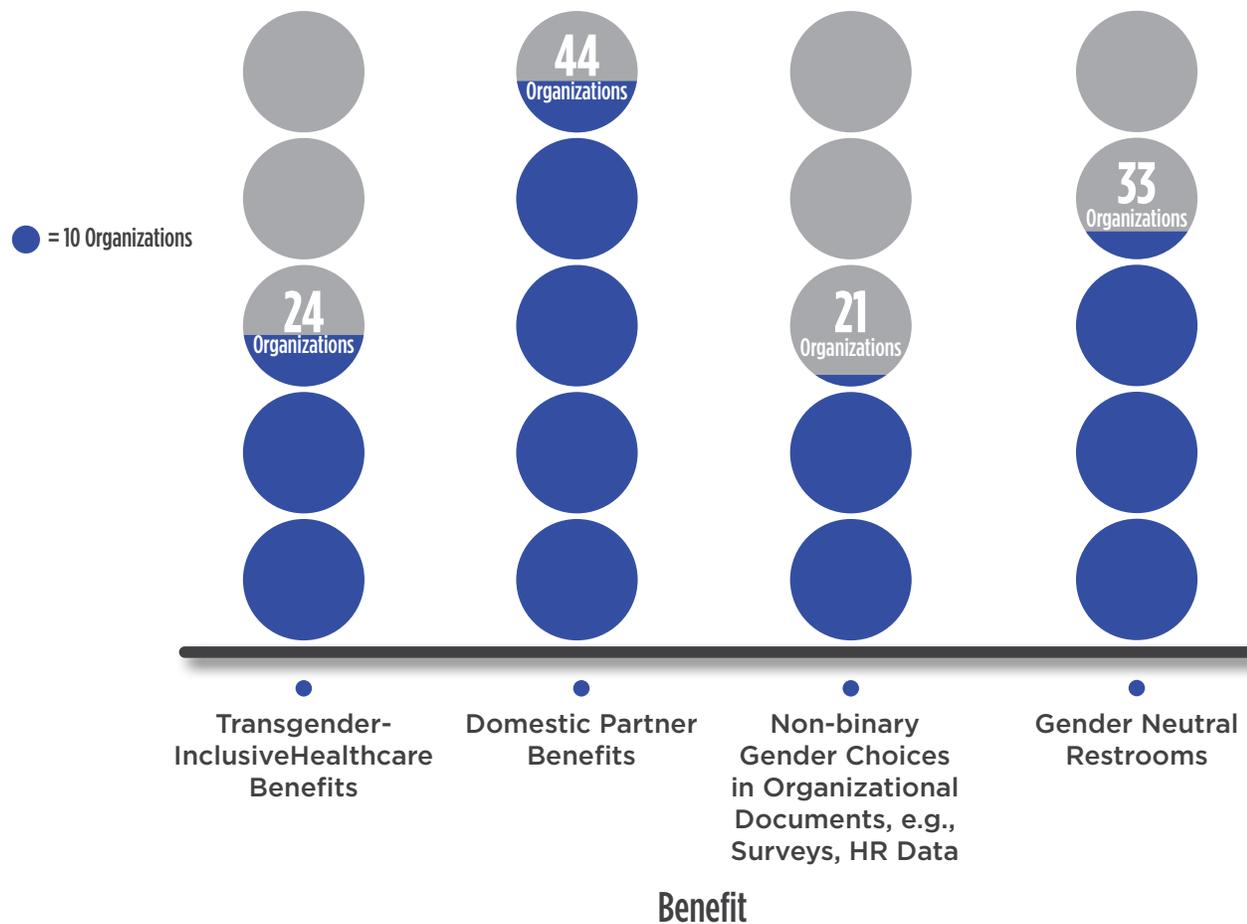
parents. Often organizational size is attributed as the main factor inhibiting an organization from providing basic benefits like paid insurance for dependent children or paid parental leave; however, the only family-friendly benefit that was out of reach for all small organizations (fewer than 250 employees) in our sample was onsite childcare or childcare reimbursement. One organization in 2020 covered emergency childcare, and another provided discounts for childcare. Nearly all organizations provided work from home options or flexible work arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic, and some will continue to do so.



**Vibrant Recommends:** Providing a variety of benefits that support parents is a wonderful way to support work-life balance and thus retain talent.

**Diagnostic Question: Which of the following benefits does your organization offer to LGBTQIA+ employees?**

**Table 7. LGBTQIA+ Benefits**



**Vibrant Recommends:** Transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits are often a default part of healthcare benefits provided to employees. By providing trans-inclusive healthcare, an organization can show transgender employees that their needs are important.

As more people identify as gender nonbinary, pronoun choices should be included on forms wherever gender data is collected to keep that data as accurate as possible.

Having at least one gender neutral bathroom for each floor of an organization’s building will benefit everyone.

### Other Benefits and Policies

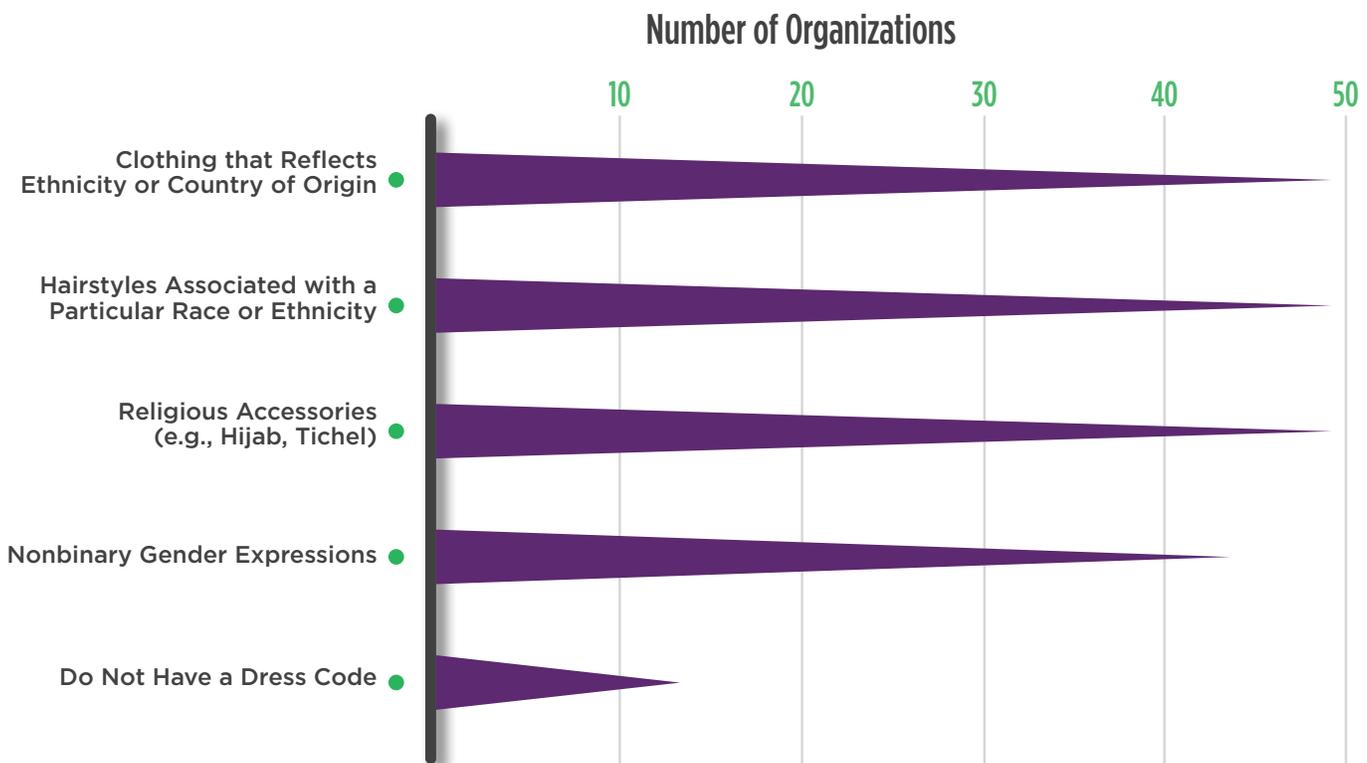
In 2020, stress was at an all-time high, and thus mental health became an important workplace consideration. 66 of the organizations who completed the Diagnostic had an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Wellness coaching, a wellness coach app, wellness community support, a wellness program, and a wellness subsidy were all benefits employers provided to help employees.



**Vibrant Recommends:** Benefits and policies should reflect the needs of a diverse population. Consider utilizing employee pulse surveys to stay connected to employee needs.

**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization have dress code policy language that DOES NOT restrict or prohibit:**

**Table 8. Dress Code Policy Language**



**Diagnostic Question: Does your dress code policy include gender-specific language? (e.g., skirts for women, hair length requirements for men, etc.)**

**59** of the **78** organizations do not have gender-specific language in their dress code policies.



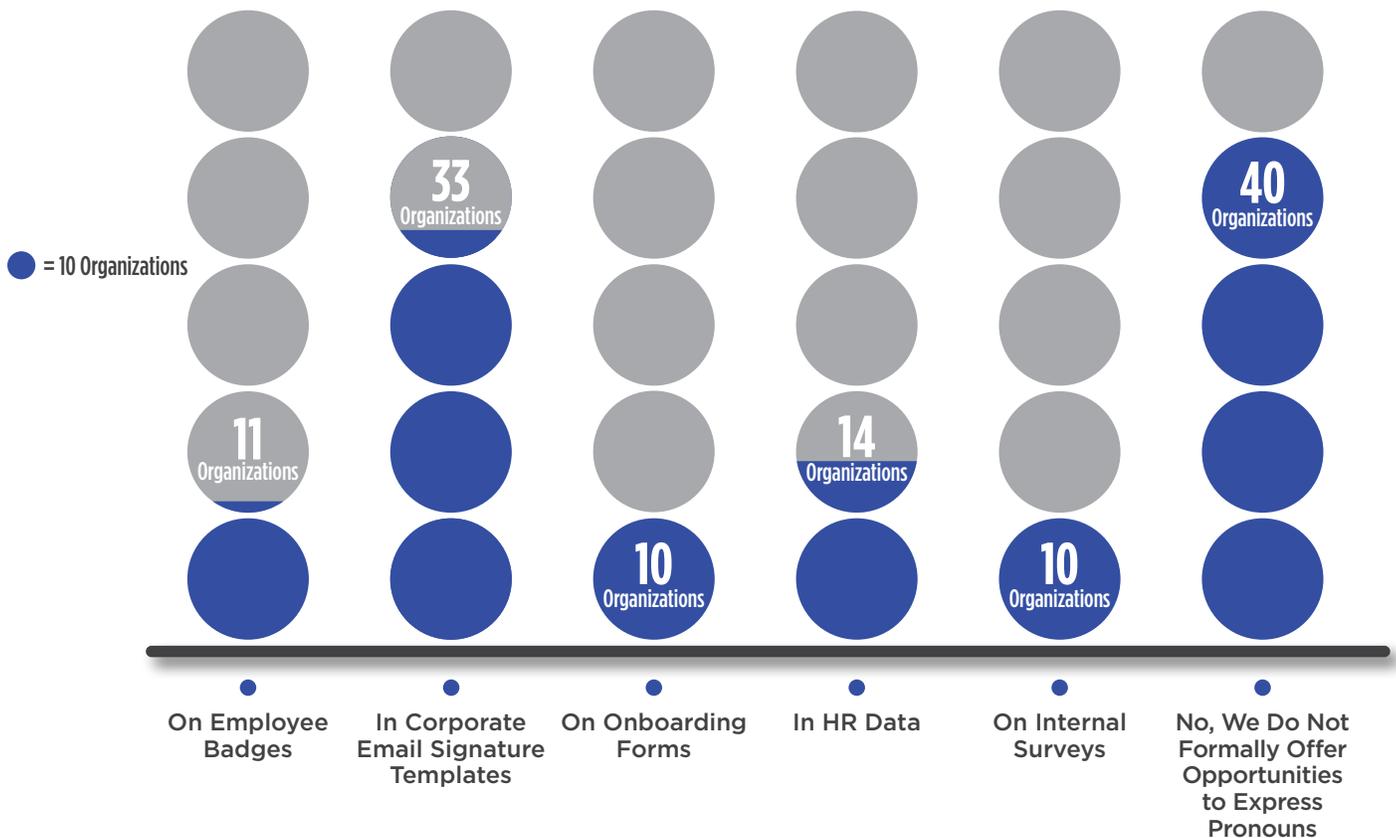
**Vibrant Recommends:** Review dress code policies to check that they are as inclusive as possible. Consult employees from minority groups about creating policies that are both professional and inclusive. Vibrant recommends that employees be able to bring their whole selves to work; this may include head coverings and hairstyles that are unique to an individual's culture.

## Diagnostic Question: Does your organization offer formal opportunities to express pronouns?

The concept of gender and how it is expressed has changed throughout history. Nonconforming people are more common than ever, and more trans and nonbinary people are open about how they identify themselves. Pronoun usage now includes more than he, she, or they. Inviting people to share their pronouns as a standard practice can help your organization avoid awkward or hurtful situations.

Organizations participating in the 2020 Diagnostic offered ways to express pronouns in addition to those surveyed. These included Slack channel profiles, Zoom meeting identifiers, online employee bios, and more. Several organizations indicated that they would be open to finding other ways for employees to make their pronouns known.

**Table 9. Opportunities to Express Pronouns**



### Opportunities to Express Pronouns

**Vibrant Recommends:** Encourage employees to make their pronouns known, either on badges, email signatures, or in other places where their names are listed. Offer multiple methods inviting employees (as well as customers and clients) to indicate their pronouns. These can include office signs, placards, badges, buttons, profiles, Zoom or Slack meeting identifiers, etc.

## EMPLOYEE NETWORKS

Vibrant Pittsburgh recommends Employee Resource Groups and Business Resource Groups (hereafter “EBRG”) as a way for employees to connect with networks that will help support and connect them to information, opportunities, and resources critical to engagement, advancement, and retention in the workplace. EBRGs provide organizations with critical insights into different communities and cultures to learn better ways to create more inclusive working environments. EBRGs are not appropriate for every organization, and the success of an EBRG is dependent upon a variety of factors, such as climate, size, and EBRG structure.

### Diagnostic Question: Does your organization have Employee Networks (i.e., BRGs, ERGs, Affinity Groups)?

In our sample, **29** organizations had official ERGs. All of these were among our largest employers.

### Diagnostic Question: Check all that apply regarding Employee Resource Groups or Employee Business Resource Groups (hereafter “EBRGs”) or similar at your organization:

**Table 10. ERG Structure, Activities and Behavior**

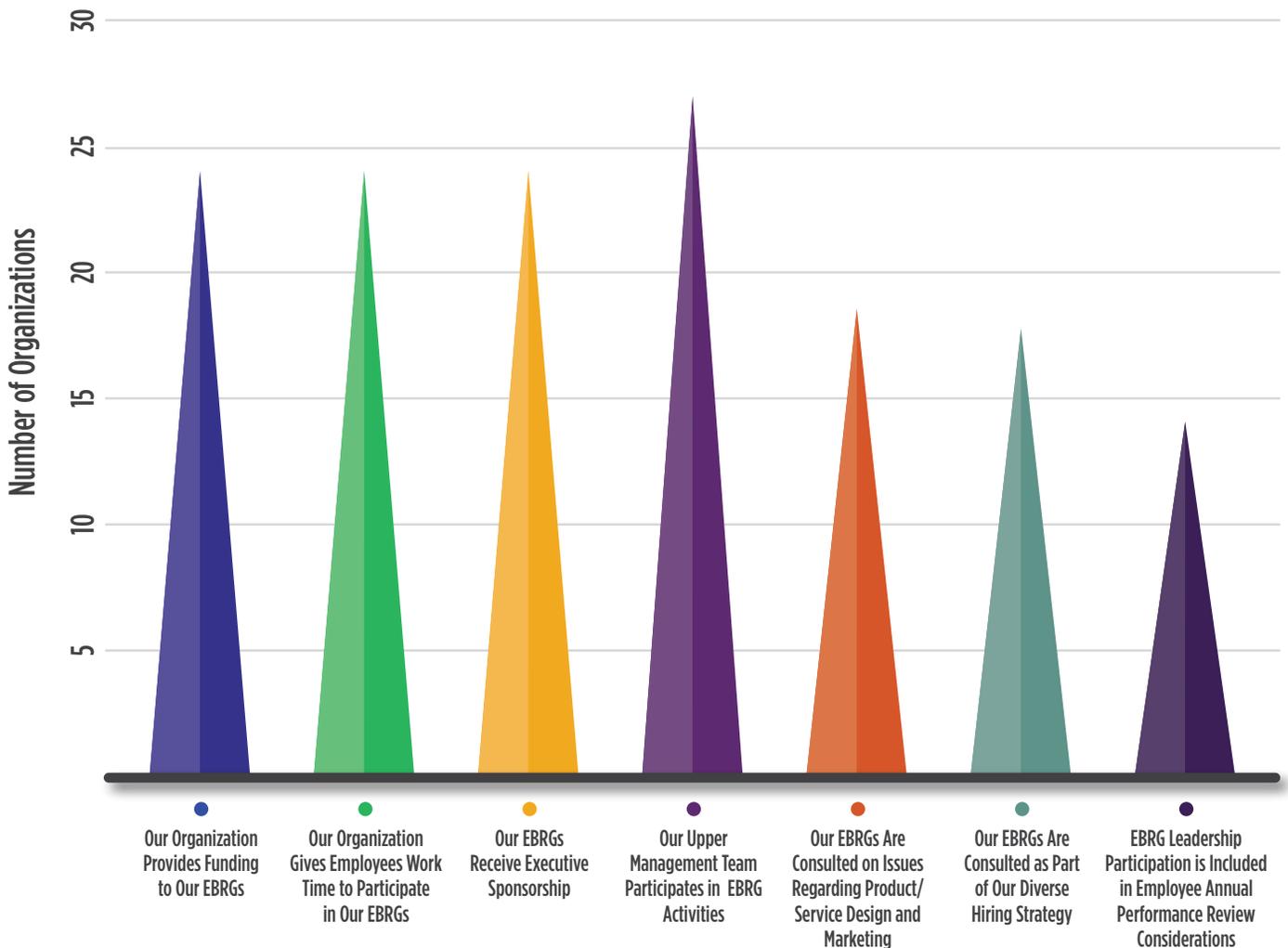
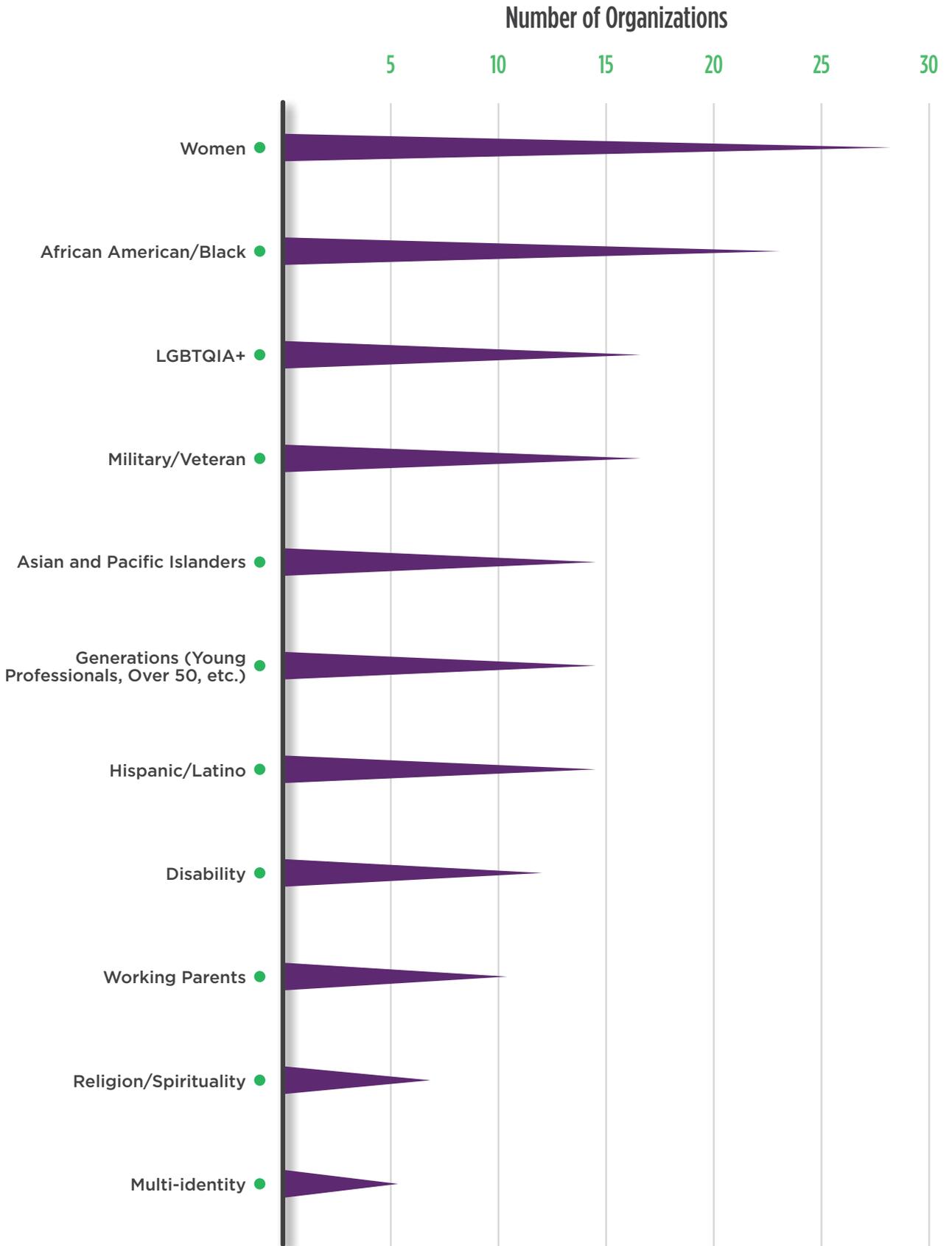
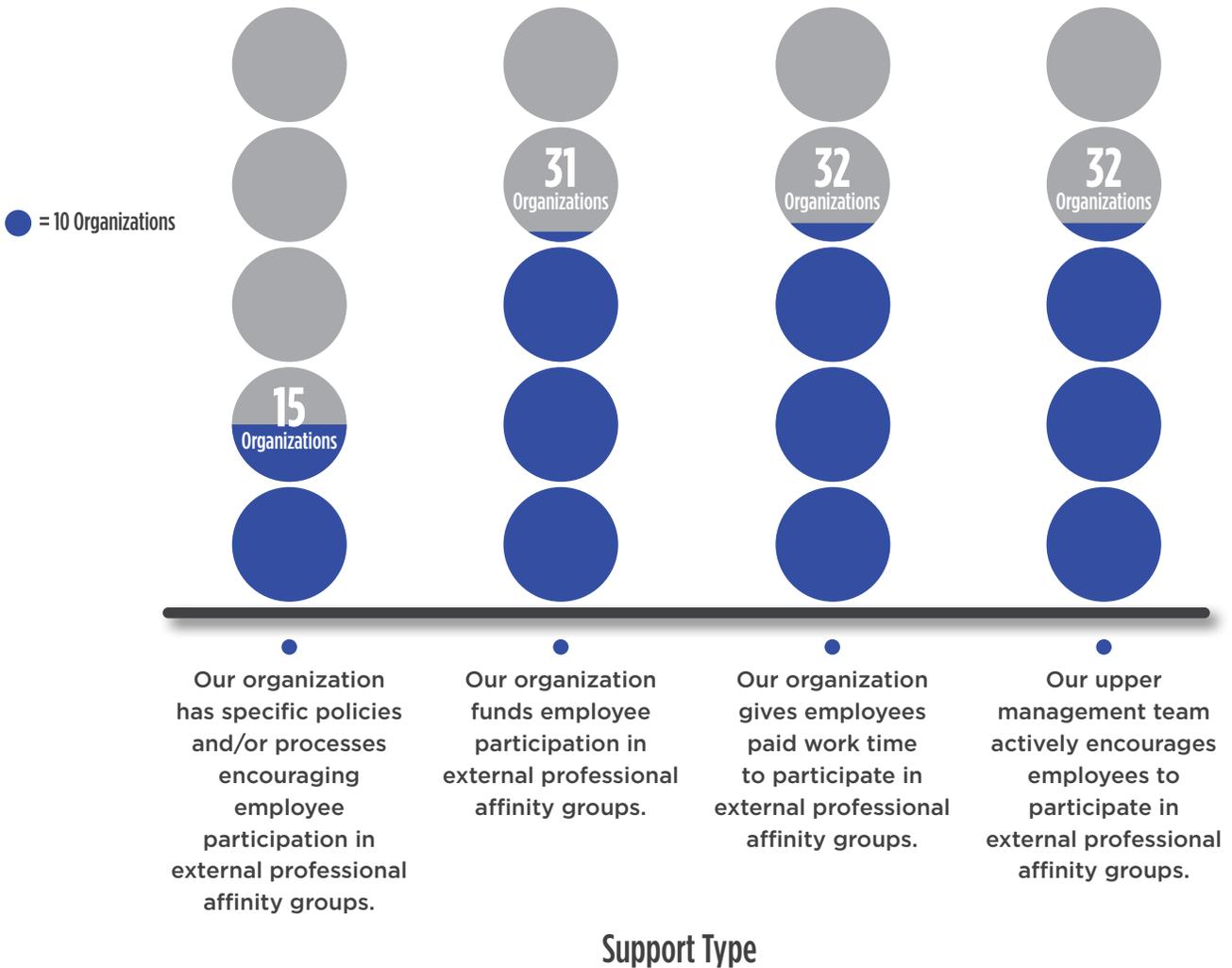


Table 11. EBRG Identity Representation



**Diagnostic Question: Check all that apply regarding participation in external professional affinity groups at your organization:**

**Table 12. External Professional Affinity Groups**



**Vibrant Recommends:** EBRGs may be out of reach for smaller companies, but minority employees may benefit from reaching out to other smaller companies and forming groups within the same industry. Larger companies can leverage their EBRGs, involving them in the creation of inclusive policies, product and service development, and recruitment. EBRGs can be a tremendous resource.

Funding organizational EBRG efforts gives affinity groups the resources to make an impact both internally and externally in the region.

Employees that are leading EBRG efforts at an organization should be compensated for their time and effort. EBRG leadership should be factored into performance management and employee evaluations.

## LEADERSHIP

DEI work requires the support of an organization's leadership. 36 of the participating organizations' boards had a committee dedicated to the organization's DEI strategy. Eight more intended to institute a DEI committee within the next year. Chief Diversity Officers and dedicated diversity specialists may only be possible for larger companies, but 65 out of 78 of our organizations had dedicated employees working on diversity issues.

### **Diagnostic Question: Does your organization's Board of Directors have a committee or other leadership body focused on DEI?**

**36** of participating organizations' boards had a committee dedicated to the organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy.



**Vibrant Recommends:** A board-led committee on DEI will keep DEI issues a priority and add accountability to the process.

### **Diagnostic Question: Does your Board keep track of data regarding board members' demographics as they relate to underrepresented groups?**

**45** of the **78** participating organizations' boards keep track of data regarding board members' demographics as they relate to underrepresented groups.



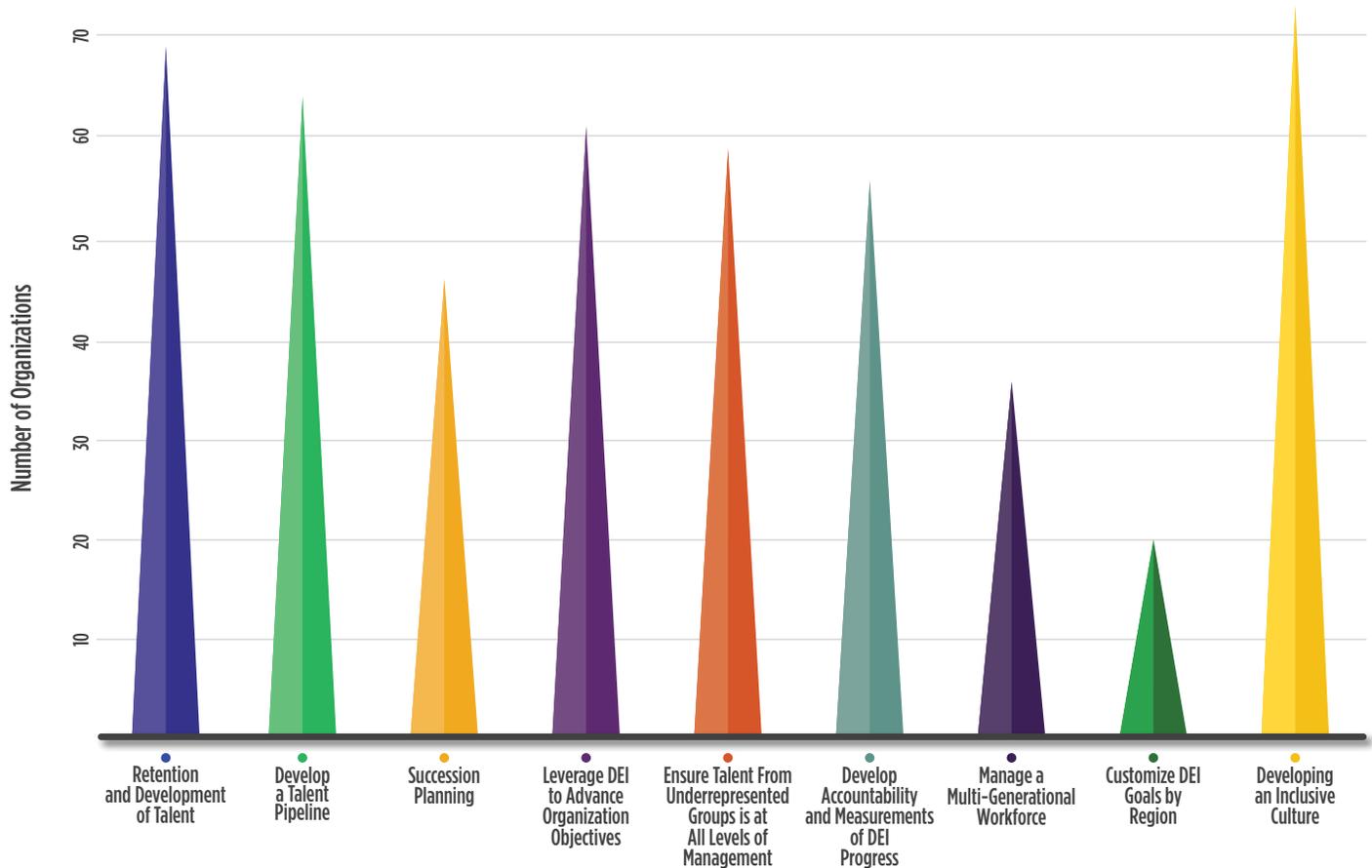
**Vibrant Recommends:** Consider the representation of marginalized identities when recruiting board members.

**Chief Diversity Officers and dedicated diversity specialists may only be possible for larger companies, but 65 out of 78 of our organizations had dedicated employees working on diversity issues.**

## Diagnostic Question: Which of the following items are viewed as a top priority for your DEI initiatives?

This question was not part of participants' scores, but was used to gather information about their goals within DEI. Overwhelmingly, participants placed high importance on developing an inclusive culture, which will work to attract and retain diversified talent.

**Table 13. DEI Initiatives**



**Vibrant Recommends:** Create, implement, and assess DEI priorities annually, based on organizational and local needs.

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

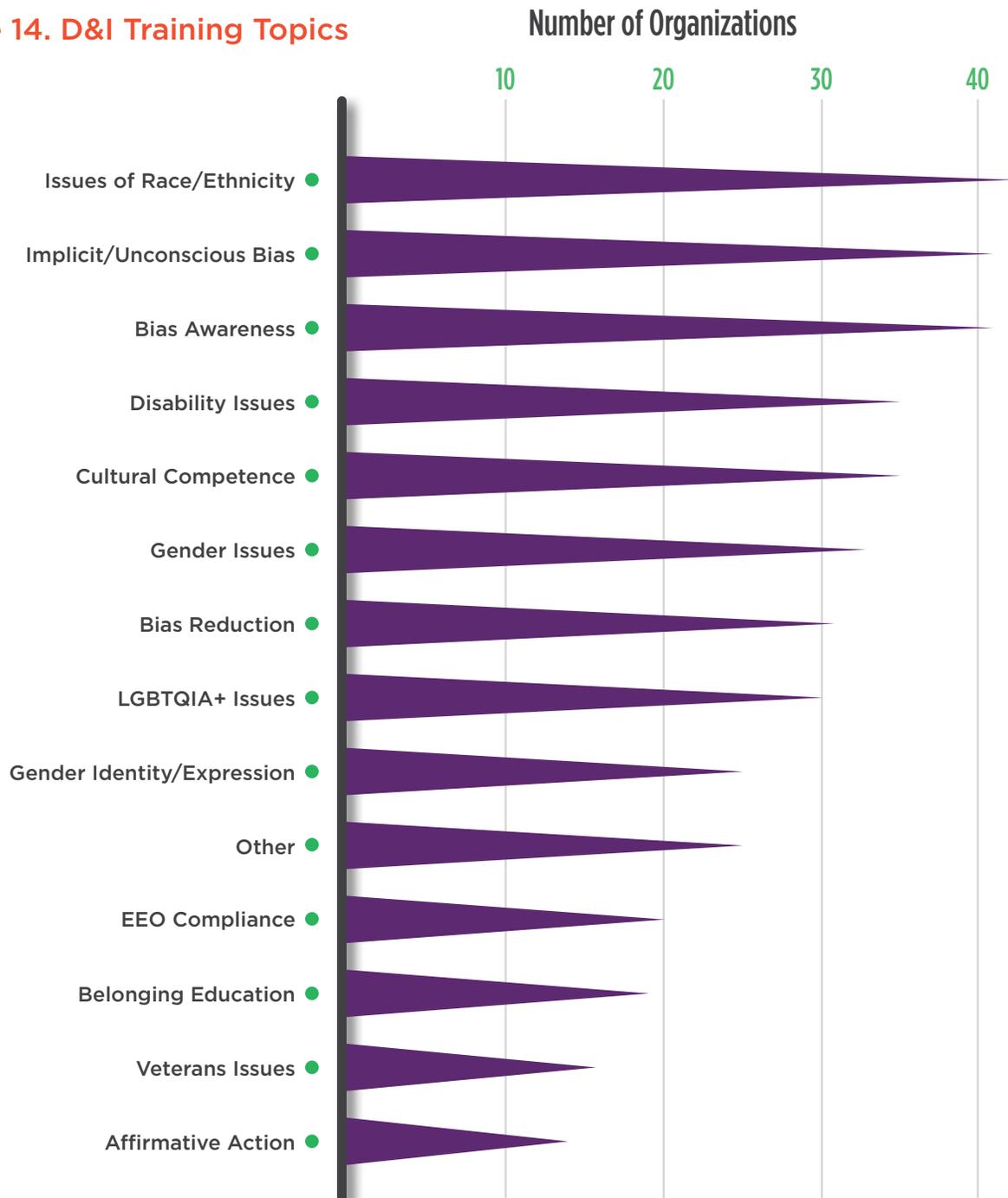
DEI topics are essential pieces of an organization's professional development and training program. Discussing DEI topics on an ongoing basis keeps an organization's employees up-to-date on terms, practices, and challenges. To cultivate a welcoming climate, DEI training is necessary for all employees, but it is crucial for hiring teams and managers, whose decisions can cascade and have effects on the entire organization. Most of our participating organizations had diversity and inclusion-related training within the last year. For some, the training was a one-time offering during the onboarding process. Organizations offered a vast number of topics for training.

**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization include information about DEI in New Hire Orientation materials?**

55 organizations include information about DEI in New Hire Orientation materials.

**Diagnostic Question: Which of the following topics did your organization provide training on within the last year?**

**Table 14. D&I Training Topics**



**Vibrant Recommends:** Training on DEI topics should be ongoing and offered to employees at every level of the organization as part of the overarching talent development strategy. Training on the needs of diverse groups is critical for any employee involved in people management, hiring, or public-facing roles.

**Diagnostic Question: How are your DEI training programs delivered?**

**Table 15. DEI Training Program Delivery**



**Vibrant Recommends:** Webinars were the most popular way of delivering DEI-related training in 2020, likely due to the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual learning opportunities are convenient and can allow for greater participation, even as employees return to the office.

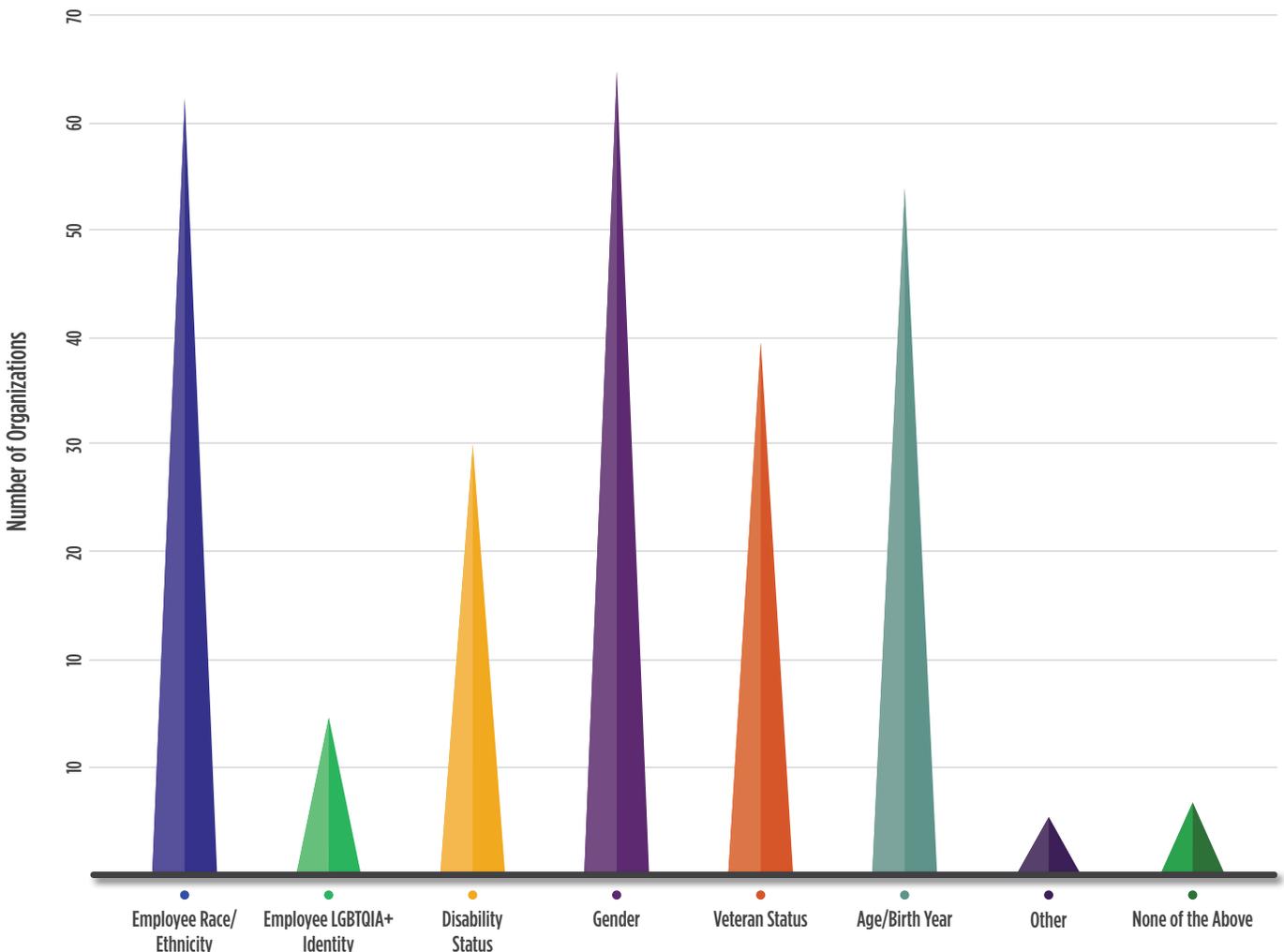
## ACCOUNTABILITY METRICS

Collecting and analyzing demographic data, along with compensation, role, and engagement can help organizations detect trends and identify areas in which employees from marginalized groups may be experiencing problems. When we take care to analyze systems, we can make sure they do not disenfranchise people from underrepresented groups.

Most respondent organizations gathered data about the race/ethnicity and gender of their employees, as well as role/level within the organization. About half of participants looked at demographic data and compensation.

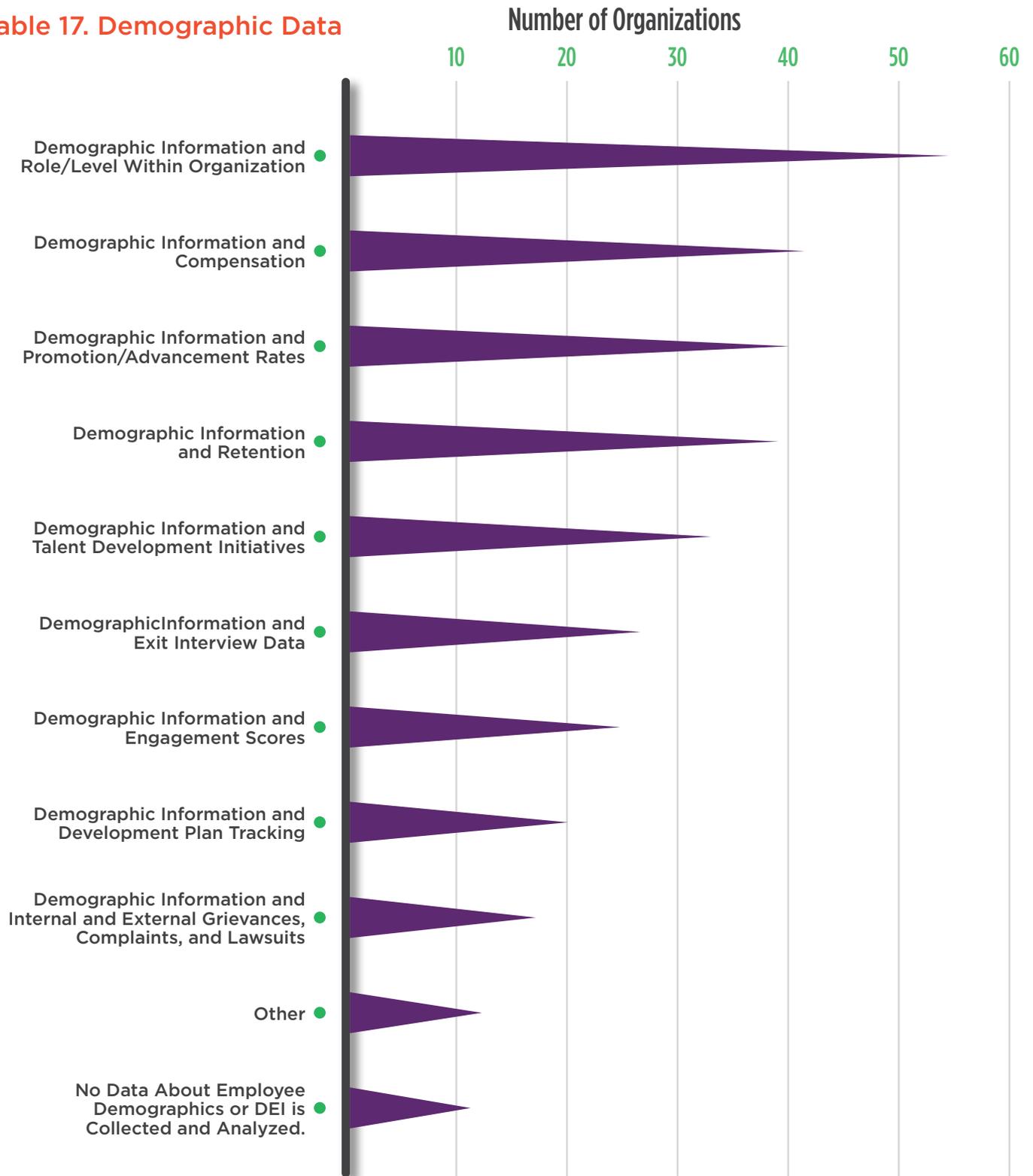
**Diagnostic Question: Which of the following data are gathered and analyzed at your organization?**

**Table 16. Employee Data Collected and Analyzed**



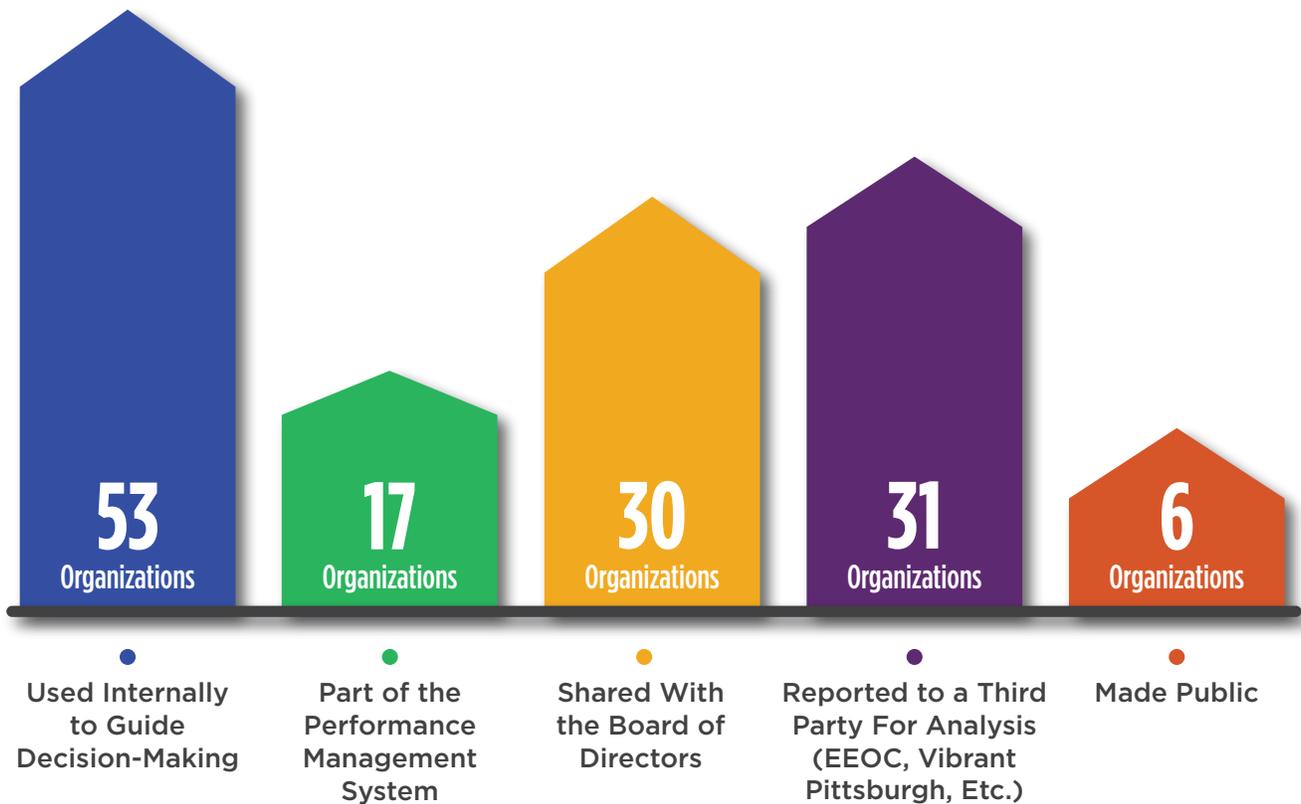
**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization analyze demographic data in any of the following ways?**

**Table 17. Demographic Data**



Diagnostic Question: This data is \_\_\_\_\_.

Table 18. Employee Data Usage



**Vibrant Recommends:** Organizations that are not yet ready to develop formal DEI goals or to make attraction, retention, and elevation data public can begin tracking data to identify areas where inequity may be occurring. Are employees receiving equal pay for equal work? Are women and minorities promoted at the same rates? Do retention issues exist for women and other underrepresented groups?

**Most respondent organizations gathered data about the race/ethnicity and gender of their employees, as well as role/level within the organization. About half of participants looked at demographic data and compensation.**

## TALENT ENGAGEMENT AND RECRUITMENT

Talent engagement and recruitment are the first steps in having a diverse workforce, but efforts must go beyond getting top diverse talent in the door. Retaining a diversity of talent within an organization requires intentional and strategic action to ensure that biases are mitigated and that all employees receive cultivation toward success. Proactive efforts to find and keep diverse candidates will pay large dividends for organizations and the Pittsburgh region.

### **Diagnostic Question: Does your organization have a targeted recruitment strategy to increase hires from underrepresented groups?**

**48** of the **78** organizations that participated in the Diagnostic reported having a targeted recruitment strategy to increase hires from underrepresented groups.

### **Diagnostic Question: Does your organization recruit at conventions and events organized around minority groups (such as the National Society of Black Engineers or Prospanica)?**

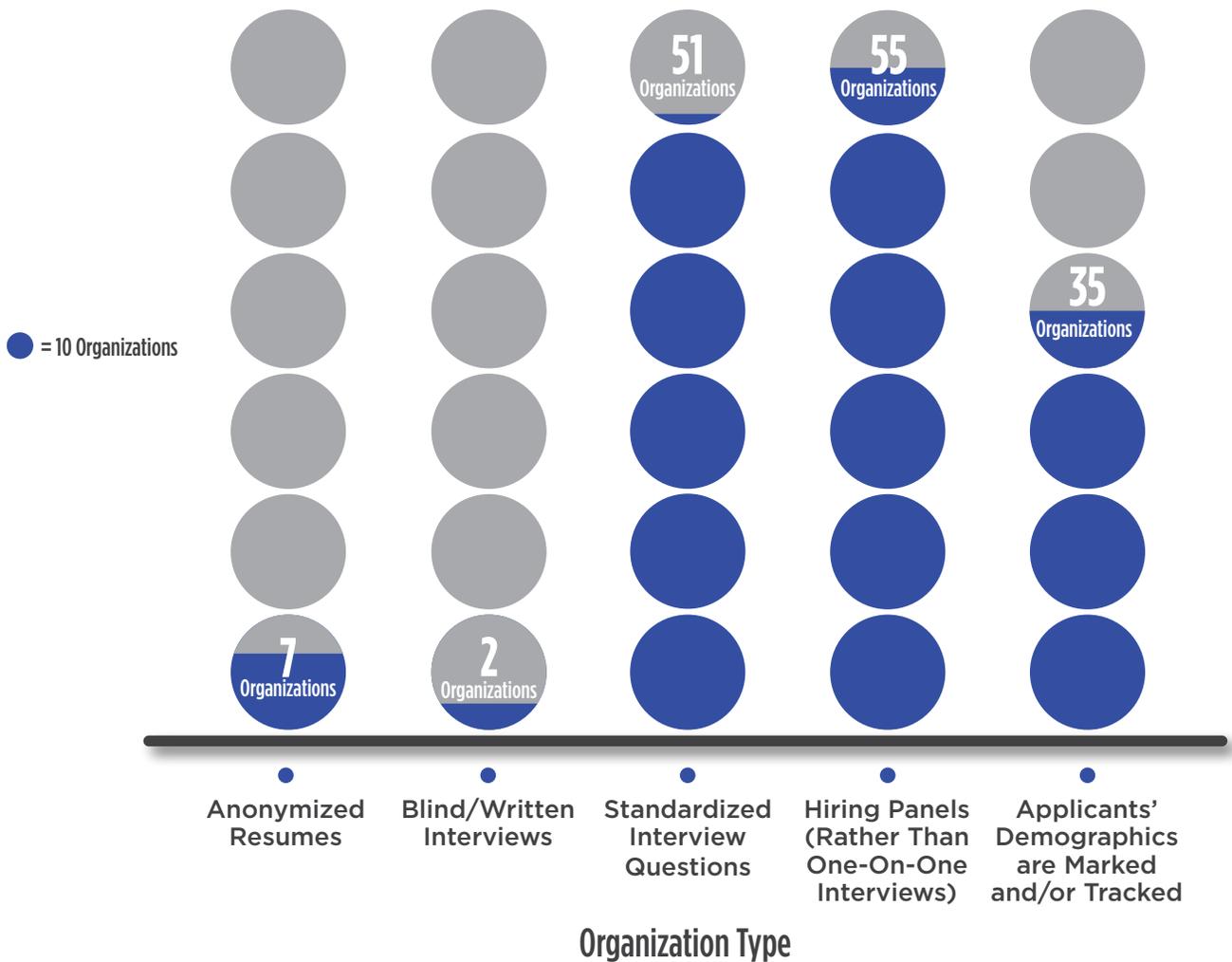
**29** of the participants recruited at conventions and/or events organized around underrepresented groups; **15** additional participants planned to do so within the next year.

**Vibrant Recommends:** Strategic and targeted efforts are recommended to increase the diversity of an organization's talent pipeline in an authentic way. Contact Gina Winstead at [ginaw@vibrantpittsburgh.org](mailto:ginaw@vibrantpittsburgh.org) for more information about diversifying your talent pool.



**Diagnostic Question: Which of the following practices has your organization implemented as part of the job application process?**

**Table 19. Job Application Practices**



**Vibrant Recommends:** There are many techniques for reducing bias in the hiring process; anonymizing resumes, standardizing interview questions, and utilizing hiring panels are all ways to check bias in organizational processes.

**Diagnostic Question: Do you track the career progression of underrepresented employees as part of a retention strategy?**

24 participants tracked the career progression of underrepresented employees as part of a retention strategy.

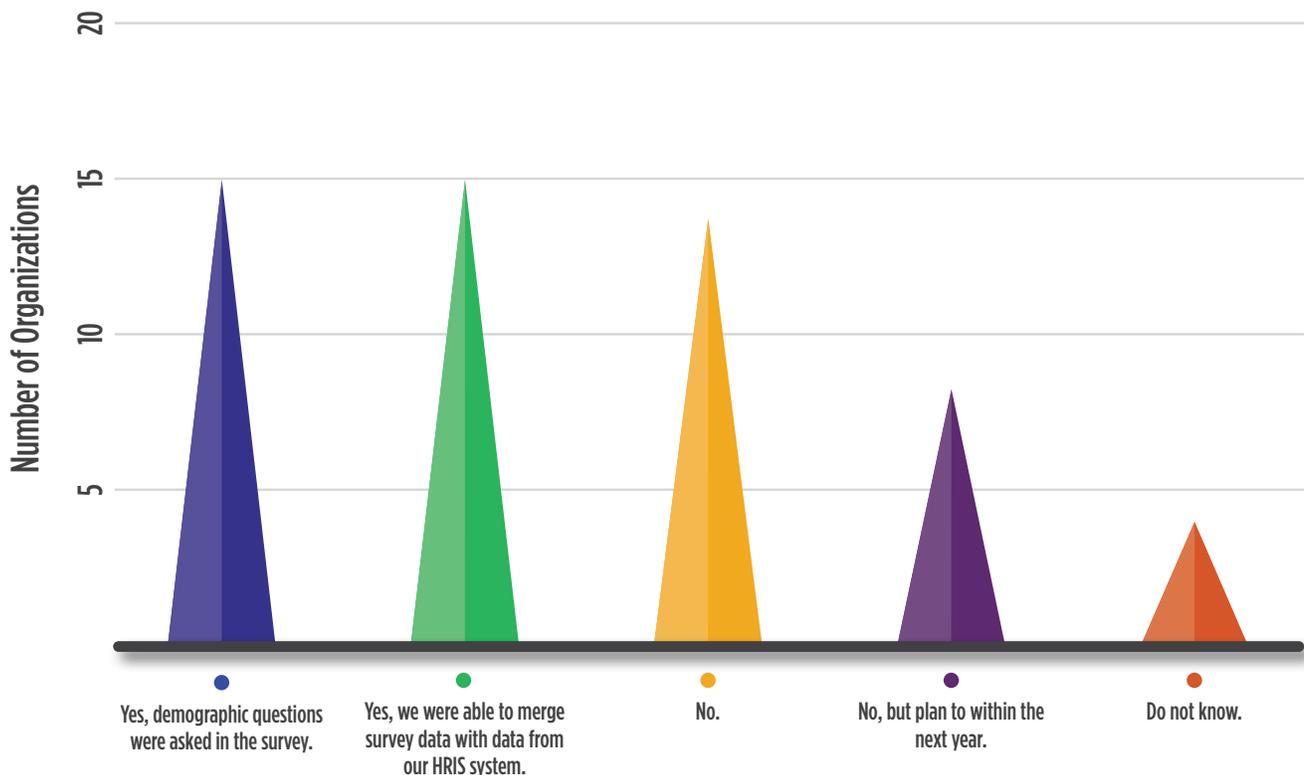
**Vibrant Recommends:** Tracking the career progression of underrepresented employees can be part of an effective retention strategy and can ensure that all employees are given an equal chance to thrive in your organization.

### Diagnostic Question: Did your organization administer an employee engagement survey in the last year?

41 participants administered employee engagement surveys in the last year.

### Diagnostic Question: If YES, does your employee engagement survey provide a way for your organization to access engagement results by demographics (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, disability, and veteran status)?

Table 20. Employee Engagement Survey



**Vibrant Recommends:** If it is possible to conduct anonymous surveys measuring employee engagement and DEI climate at your organization, do so. Smaller organizations may require other techniques to determine if employees from underrepresented groups feel welcome and engaged.

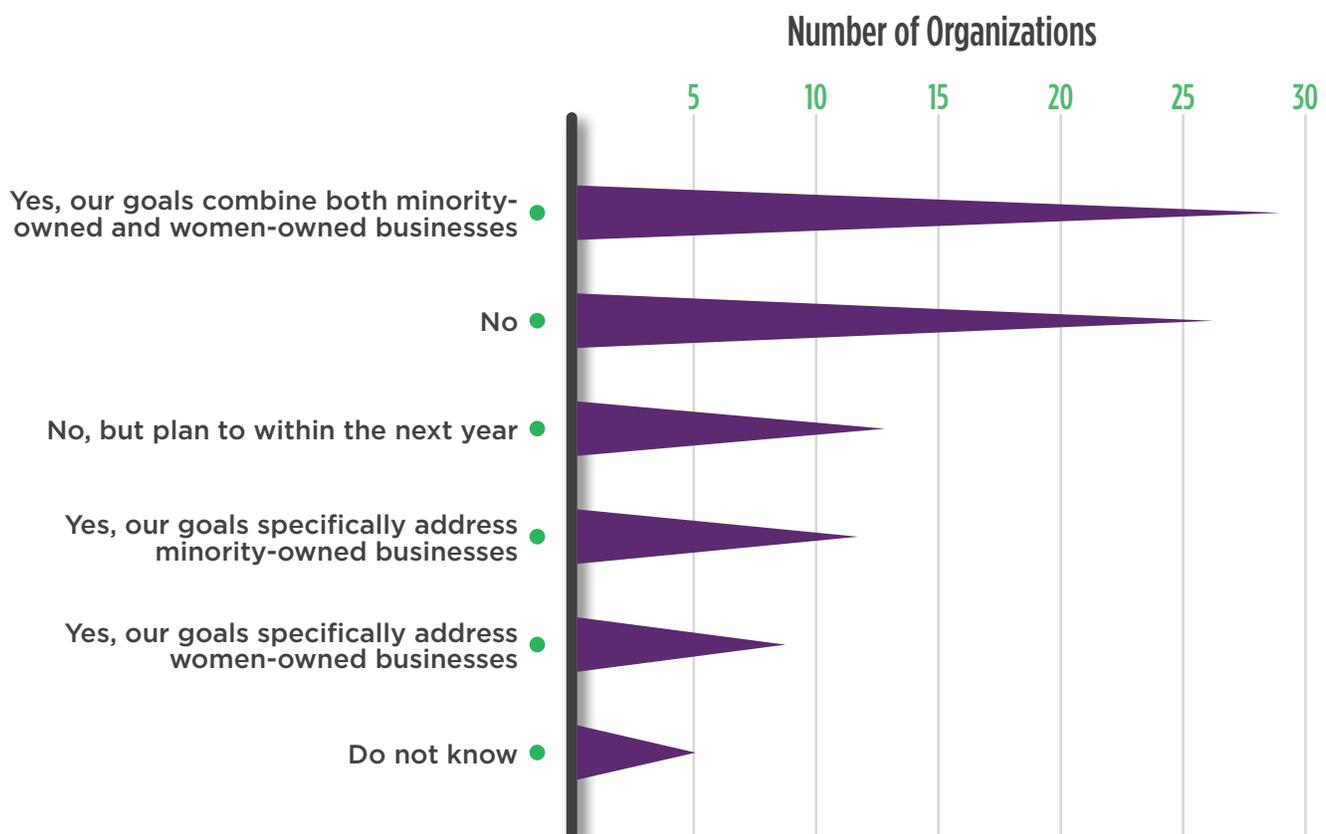
## SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

Organizations seeking to engage minority and women-owned suppliers can disrupt bias, equalize the playing field, and build wealth networks in marginalized communities. By collecting data on the diversity of their suppliers, an organization can gain awareness of spending patterns and redirect resources accordingly.

Of the organizations that participated in the Diagnostic, 37 organizations collect and analyze diversity of suppliers, 29 have an official supplier diversity plan, and 30 organizations track spending in terms of supplier diversity.

**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization have a supplier diversity plan with goals specific to minority-owned businesses AND women-owned businesses?**

**Table 21. Supplier Diversity Plan Goals**



**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization collect and analyze data around the diversity of your suppliers?**

**37** participants collect and analyze data around the diversity of organizational suppliers.

**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization track spending in terms of supplier diversity?**

**30** participants track spending in terms of supplier diversity.

**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization have a membership with an organization whose sole purpose is to advance supplier diversity, e.g., the Eastern Minority Supplier Development Council (EMSDC)?**

**24** participants have memberships with organizations whose sole purpose is advancing supplier diversity.

**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization offer a professional or business development program for your suppliers from underrepresented groups?**

**7** participants offer professional or business development programs for suppliers from underrepresented groups.



**Vibrant Recommends:** Organizations interested in moving the supplier diversity needle can begin by tracking information about suppliers and consultants to gather data on supplier spending going to women-owned and minority-owned businesses. Women-owned and minority-owned businesses should be tracked separately to ensure data accuracy. The Eastern Minority Supplier Development Council has resources to help your organization find women-owned and minority-owned suppliers.



## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Participation in community initiatives and events creates a regional culture that celebrates a diversity of experiences. Organizations in the 2020 Diagnostic were involved in a variety of diverse community projects, organizations, and initiatives, in Pittsburgh as well as other locations, on local and on national levels. Partnering organizations in this work included ethnic, cultural, religious, and nonprofit groups. Because many events were canceled due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, organizations had difficulty participating in and/or sponsoring public events.

**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization invest in community projects, organizations, or initiatives that support underrepresented communities?**

**62** participants invest in community projects, organizations, or initiatives that support underrepresented communities.

**Diagnostic Question: Does your organization participate in or sponsor public events supporting underrepresented populations and communities, such as parades or cultural festivals?**

**40** participant organizations participate in or sponsor public events supporting underrepresented populations and communities.

## Does your organization offer and/or sponsor any education programs targeting the development of underrepresented groups within the broader community?

47 participants offer and/or sponsor education programs targeting the development of underrepresented groups within the broader community.



**Vibrant Recommends:** Make organizational investments in community projects and initiatives public. Participate in or sponsor events that celebrate a diverse Pittsburgh. Community outreach helps people from underrepresented groups learn about your field, your organization, and your employment opportunities.

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## 2020: ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC, PROTESTS, AND SOCIOPOLITICAL UNREST

This section of the 2020 Diagnostic was not scored but was used to gather information about how local organizations rose to the challenges specific to the global COVID-19 pandemic and the protests/sociopolitical unrest that took place in response to the systemic inequities in the nation.

The employers who participated in the 2020 Diagnostic offered a wide range of services in the turmoil of 2020. These included a focus on employee wellness and psychological wellbeing, reminders of organizational commitment to fight racism, as well as surveys, discussions, town halls, and meetings to discuss current events.

### Diagnostic Question: Has your organization reassessed talent sourcing methods to virtually attract underrepresented talent for non-location-based employment?

25 participants reassessed talent sourcing methods to virtually attract underrepresented talent for non-location-based employment.

### Diagnostic Question: Did your organization issue a pulse survey/employee engagement survey related to the pandemic or protests/sociopolitical unrest of 2020?

26 participants issued pulse surveys/employee engagement surveys related to the COVID-19 pandemic or the protests and sociopolitical unrest of 2020.

### Diagnostic Question: Did your organization reiterate its nondiscrimination policies in 2020?

47 organizations reiterated nondiscrimination policies in 2020.

**Diagnostic Question: Did your organization offer opportunities for employees to express personal challenges related to the pandemic?**

**Table 22. Opportunities to Express Personal Challenges Related to the Pandemic**



**Diagnostic Question: Did your organization offer meetings to employees to express personal challenges related to the sociopolitical unrest in the nation in 2020?**

**Table 23. Opportunities to Express Personal Challenges Related to Sociopolitical Unrest**



**Diagnostic Question: Did your organization offer resources regarding systemic inequities and the 2020 protests/demonstrations?**

**38** participants offered resources regarding systemic inequities and the 2020 protests/demonstrations.

**Diagnostic Question: Has your organization offered any wellbeing support for employees related to the pandemic or the protests/sociopolitical unrest in 2020?**

**69** participants offered wellbeing support for employees related to the COVID-19 pandemic or the protests/sociopolitical unrest in 2020.

**Diagnostic Question: Were your organization's disciplinary action policies regarding inappropriate conduct in the workplace as it relates to hate speech, harassment, and discrimination reviewed and/or updated in 2020?**

**39** participants reviewed and/or updated organizational disciplinary action policies regarding inappropriate conduct in the workplace as it relates to hate speech, harassment, and discrimination.

**If DEI, respect, and belonging are core values of an organization, ask whether the decisions made during the pandemic show a clear commitment to those values.**

## CALL TO ACTION 2021: A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Historically, crises like economic recessions and pandemics expose what is already broken or in the process of breaking in a society. As we reflect on the past 18 months, we must acknowledge a universal unmasking of disparities and inequities that have been preventing all our region's residents from reaching their fullest potential: a lack of workplace equity, with subsequently insufficient retention, elevation, and attraction of diverse talent due to historical and systemic disparities.



Sabrina Saunders Mosby

Soon, the region will have returned to a semblance of normal. The realities of the pandemic are already giving way to broader considerations for how, where, and when we all work together. We can and must look back and investigate what was learned.

We learned first-hand the richness of diversity layered into our most valuable resource - our people. We began the process of unlocking the power of that diversity to make our people engaged and more productive. As a region, we must ensure that this diversity is better measured and encouraged. To that end, this year's Vibrant Index:

- Expanded, revised, refined, and improved our beta instrument used in year one
- Increased the number of organizational participants by 56%
- Grew the Diagnostic tool from 42 questions to 83 questions to dive deeper

Vibrant Pittsburgh is committed to providing the best snapshot of regional organizations that participate in the Vibrant Index and utilize its promising practices. As data is gathered every year with the newly refined Diagnostic instrument, and as sample sizes increase, the challenges in showing year-over-year data will decrease. **For the Vibrant Index to truly show the strides being made in our region, all dedicated organizations must participate fully in the Vibrant Index initiative, utilizing the Diagnostic annually and committing to tackle this work to improve our region.**

To that end, I issue my 2021 Call to Action to our region:

**Many organizations issued public pledges to support DEI. More organizations should share the action steps, plans, and measures put in place to uphold their public statements, therefore holding themselves accountable.**

**Non-discrimination policies should be intentional and should be expanded to mention all marginalized or historically underrepresented groups.** Diversity, equity, and inclusion are about more than just hiring to elevate differences throughout the workforce. Organizations need non-discrimination policies in their workplaces that reflect organizational commitment to treating everyone equally.

**The business community should quickly provide more formal opportunities to express pronouns.** As more companies invest in LGBTQIA+ inclusion and gender-inclusive workplaces, pronouns have become a significant focal point. From pronouns listed on email signatures and business cards to pronoun buttons worn by retail employees, offering opportunities to express pronouns lets employees know that they are welcome to bring their whole self to work.

**Organizations interested in improving morale, retention, cultures of belonging and attracting a diversity of talent should provide more employee networks.** Employee and business resource groups (EBRGs) have historically been organized around a shared identity or affinity, such as race, gender, age, or mental health, and they serve as a haven of belonging, offering a space for underrepresented employees to find one another, staving off isolation, and providing a reprieve from the daily aggressions they have endured at work. EBRGs bring many benefits to organizations and this past year has elevated the need for and the importance of such networks.

**Organizations committed to building cultures of inclusion should implement a leadership body focused on DEI.** Ideally, everyone in your organization “owns” DEI initiatives. But realistically, someone, or a group of people, needs to provide oversight and track progress. A DEI leadership body, led by top organizational leadership, should represent diverse perspectives, and be empowered to institute organization-wide change.

**Organizations should track the career progression of underrepresented employees as part of a retention strategy.** Employees usually feel more engaged when they believe that their employer is concerned about their growth and provides avenues to reach individual career goals while fulfilling the company’s mission. A clear career development path provides diverse employees with an ongoing mechanism to enhance their skills and knowledge that can not only lead to mastery of their current jobs, but also elevation throughout the company and overall retention.

**The ways in which organizations handled the employee experience during the tumult of 2020 provide a window into organizational values.** An additional category was added to the 2020 Diagnostic, “2020: Organizational Response to the Pandemic, Protests and Sociopolitical Unrest.” This category was not scored but provided an opportunity to gather data about the ways in which organizations addressed the crises that occurred in 2020. If DEI, respect, and belonging are core values of an organization, ask whether organizational decisions made during the pandemic show a clear commitment to those values.

**When our country faces acts of injustice, organizations should provide clear support to employees and reevaluate DEI policies.** Employees, customers, and business partners are already paying attention to how companies responded to the pandemic and will remember how organizational responses aligned with an organization’s stated values. When gaps are found between intention and impact, seek to implement strategies to provide additional support and investment.

**The past year has shown that a focus on diversity, or increasing representation of people from various backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, is only part of the equation; inclusion, making space and amplifying the voices of everyone in the workplace, is equally important.** Today’s workforce is one of the most diverse in our nation’s history. In the workplace, the definition of “diversity” is both expanding upon quantifiable demographic traits like race, ethnicity, and gender, and also recognizing the importance of the intersection of identities on the employee experience.

For our region to contend in the competitive race for diverse talent, we must shift our approach. A focus on equity in the workplace must be magnified and our region’s businesses must operate with a deeper level of transparency, leadership that represents a variety of experiences, advancement that leaves no one behind, and other equality-centering practices. I look forward to continuing to work alongside our region’s businesses as an inclusion partner and catalyst for equitable change.

Yours in the work,



Sabrina Saunders Mosby  
President & CEO  
Vibrant Pittsburgh



**vibrant**  
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*Growing a diverse workforce.  
And a brighter future for our region.*

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