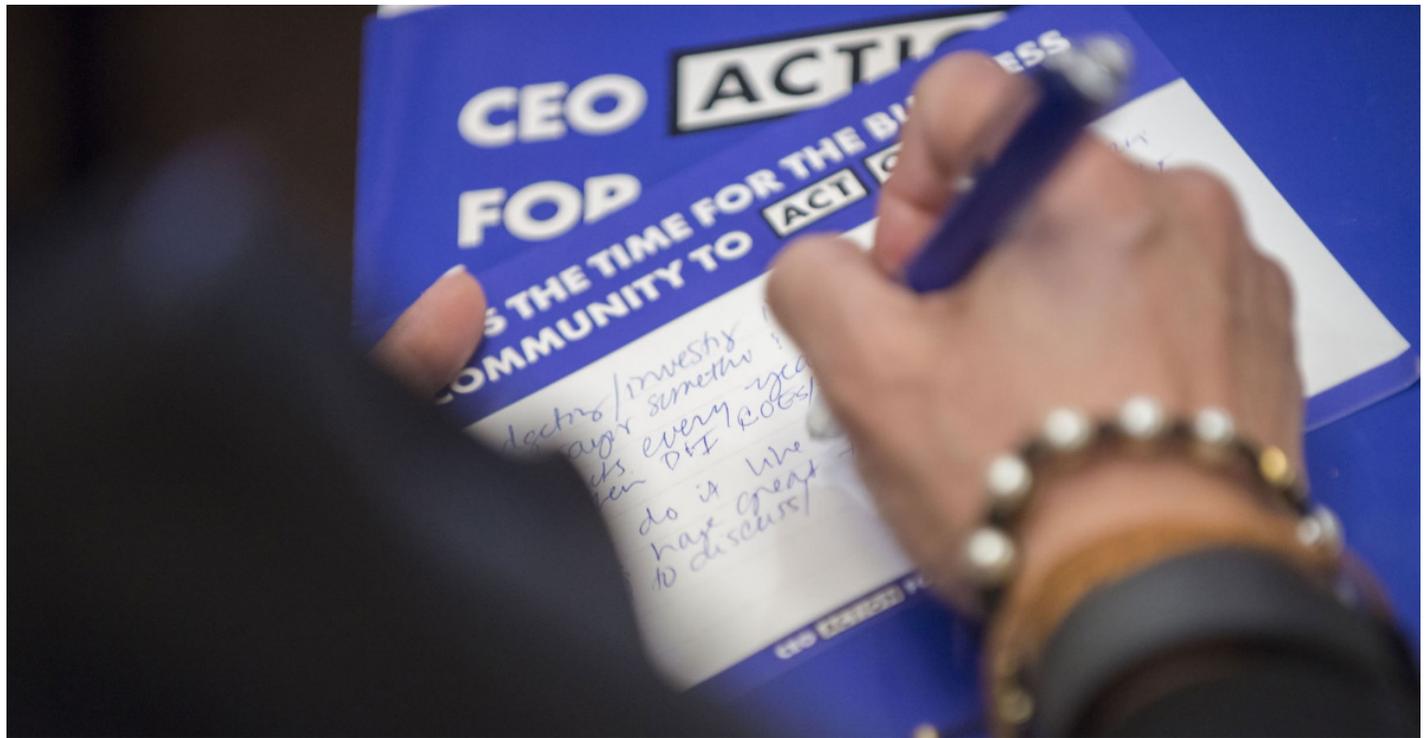


Coronavirus Research (/coronavirus)



📅 February 26, 2021 | Eric Davis - Creative Director & Senior Editor, i4cp

ARE COMPANIES FOLLOWING THROUGH ON THEIR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PLEDGES?

The turmoil that sparked last summer's social justice and racial equity demonstrations shook political and social foundations. It also compelled corporate leaders to make unprecedented promises to address systemic inequities in the workplace and beyond—a survey fielded last June by the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) showed that approximately 90% of the 216 organizations polled planned to act on racial inequities in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and all that transpired in the summer of 2020.

In recognition of Black History Month, i4cp revisited how well those promises are being kept by surveying on the status of the actions so many organizations pledged eight months ago to pursue. The current survey also asks who is tasked in the 169 responding organizations with driving diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals and accountability.

The good news is that the energy following Black Lives Matter marches in the U.S. for George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, and others seems to have transcended the moment and continued as a movement. Many organizations show steady focus and commitment to DEI-related actions, including a sizable percentage (41%) that *added an executive role with express responsibility for DEI strategy* (i.e., Chief Diversity Officers)—with another 10% planning to do so soon.

The bad news is that while organizations are still prioritizing equity pledges and working towards systemic change, some high-impact actions have taken a backseat to other priorities, such as the continued challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Internal actions

Overall, organizations are doing well with implementing the internal actions promised during the eight-month interlude between the two i4cp surveys. The percentages of those *emphasizing DEI as cultural values, sponsoring employee-led listening sessions and dialogues, forming standing DEI action teams, providing additional EAP resource for underrepresented groups, and bringing in external consultants to lead discussions about race* are in line with or surpassing what was reported in June 2020.

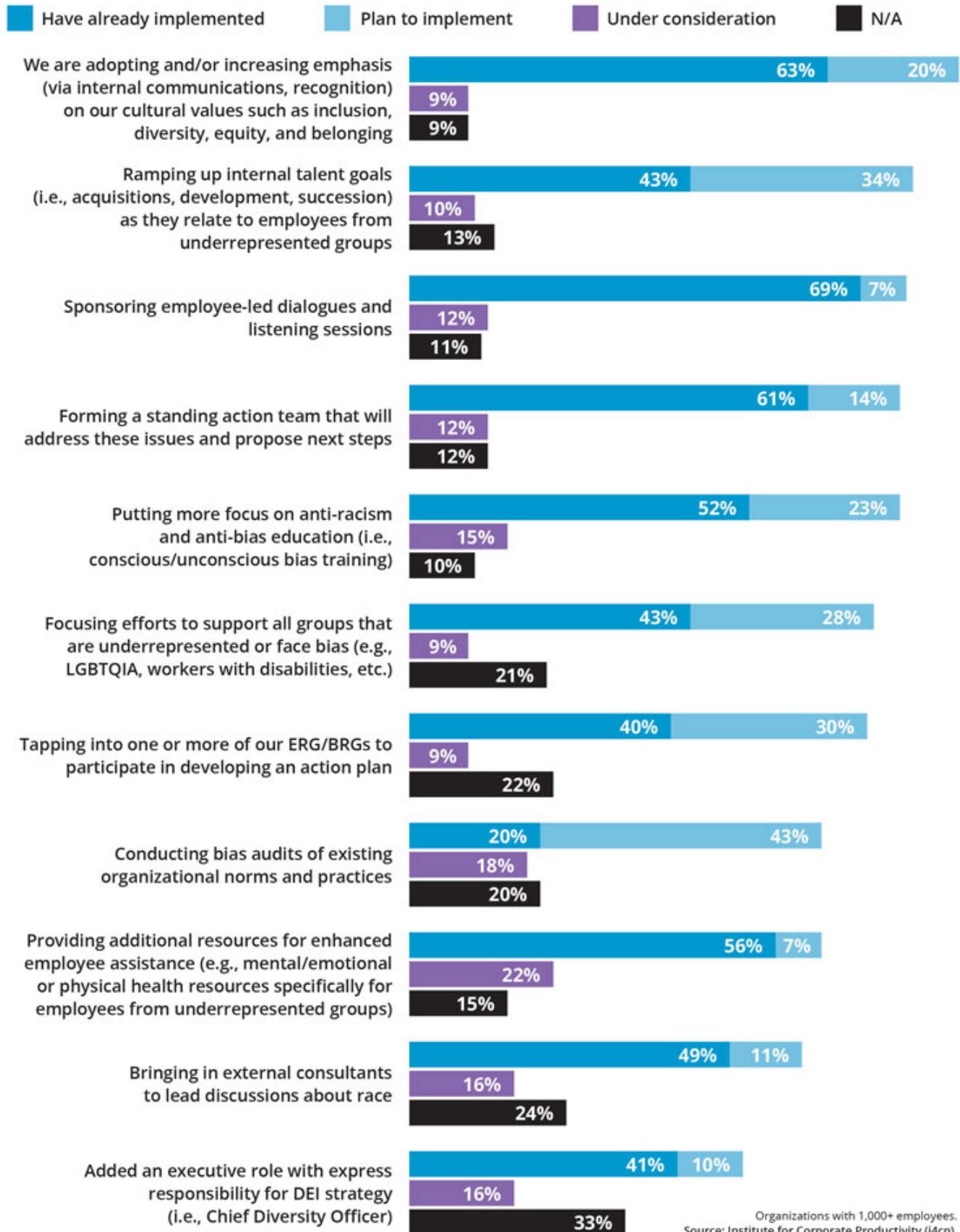
Other actions that the previous survey didn't ask about—such as the aforementioned addition of a CDO and the *ramping up of internal talent goals for underrepresented groups*—are also encouraging signs that momentum on racial equity efforts will continue. This goes hand-in-hand with the strengthening of accountability for DEI, such as the recently announced **goal at McDonald's of 35% diversity at senior management levels by 2025** (<https://www.benefitspro.com/2021/02/22/mcdonalds-to-tie-executive-pay-to-diversity/?slreturn=20210124143743>) that's tied to 15% of executive pay bonuses.

Some actions, however, are still largely in the planning stage. For example, while 43% of those polled this month say their organizations have already increased their previous talent goals related to representation (i.e., acquisitions, development, succession), for 34% this is a

work in progress. Other initiatives that appear to be moving more slowly are *spreading the focus of inclusion and equity pledges to all underrepresented groups* and *tapping into ERGs/BRGs to develop action plans*.

One striking example of this is the number of organizations *conducting bias audits of existing organizational norms and practice*, an action that i4cp research has continuously shown to be highly impactful on addressing systemic inequities and is also considered a **next practice** (a practice with strong correlations to market performance, but which is not highly adopted yet). While this action has only been undertaken by 20% of organizations surveyed, 43% are planning to do so in the near term. For more on how to conduct a bias audit, see i4cp's member-only **bias audit checklists** (<https://www.i4cp.com/tools/bias-audit-checklists>).

What *internal* action(s) has your organization taken or planning to take to address racial inequities?



Organizations with 1,000+ employees.
Source: Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp).

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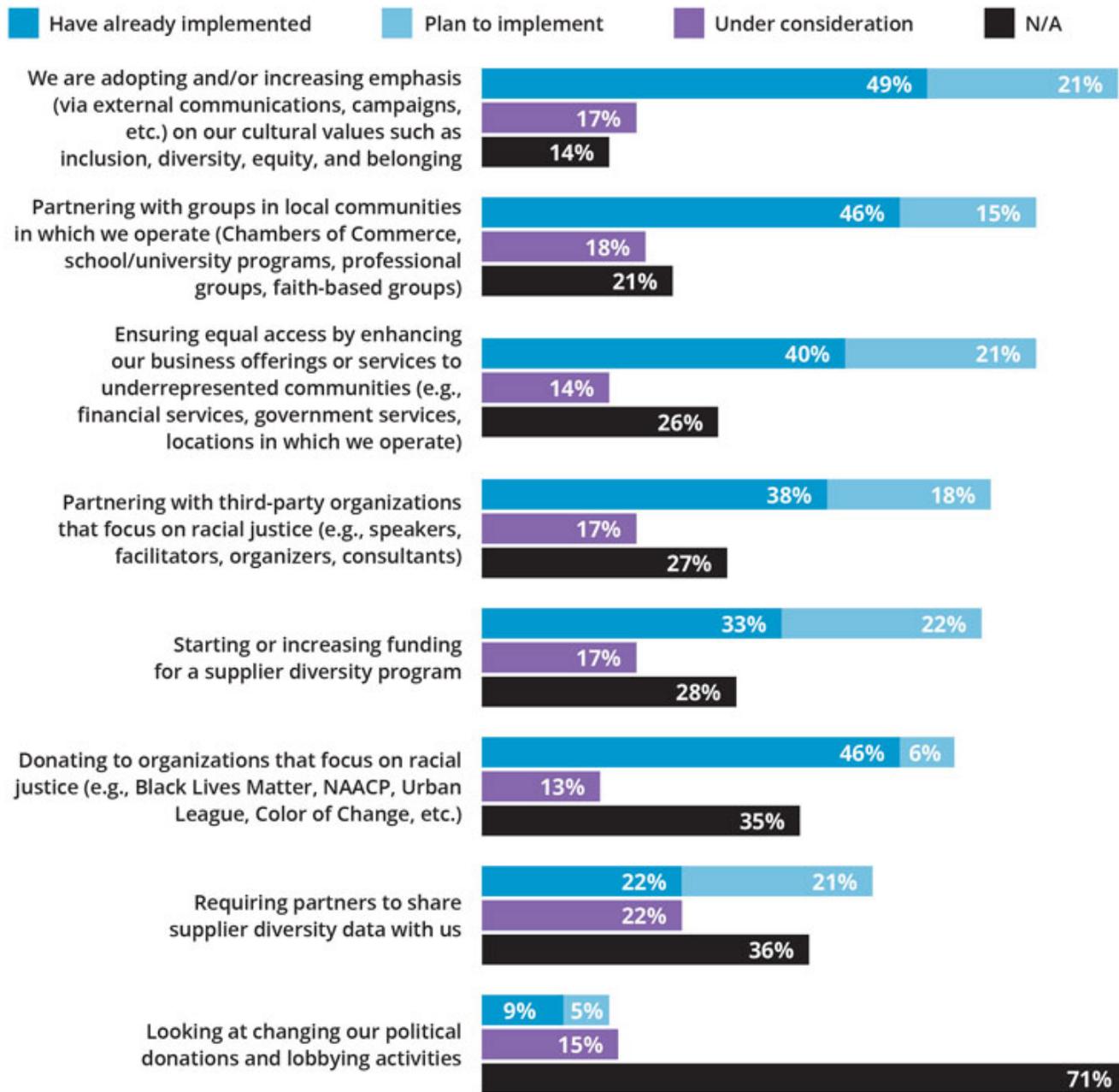
External actions

From *adopting or increasing emphasis on DEI values to auditing political donations and lobbying activities*, what's been implemented externally already surpasses what was reportedly in the works last June. That said, all actions below are still under the 50% mark for what's actual been accomplished, with many reporting that their organizations are still in the planning stage.

Notably, *ensuring equal access to business offerings or services to underrepresented communities*—a big driver of economic equity—has been implemented by 40%, with another 21% planning to soon.

Likewise, the current survey found that approximately 20% of respondents said that their organizations are still working on implementation of *starting or increasing funding for supplier diversity and requiring partners to share their supplier diversity data*. So, while all of the actions queried on are important to moving the needle on systemic racial issues, the three that have arguably the most impact are also the ones with the most work left to be done.

What *external* action(s) has your organization taken or planning to take to address racial inequities?



Organizations with 1,000+ employees. Source: Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp).

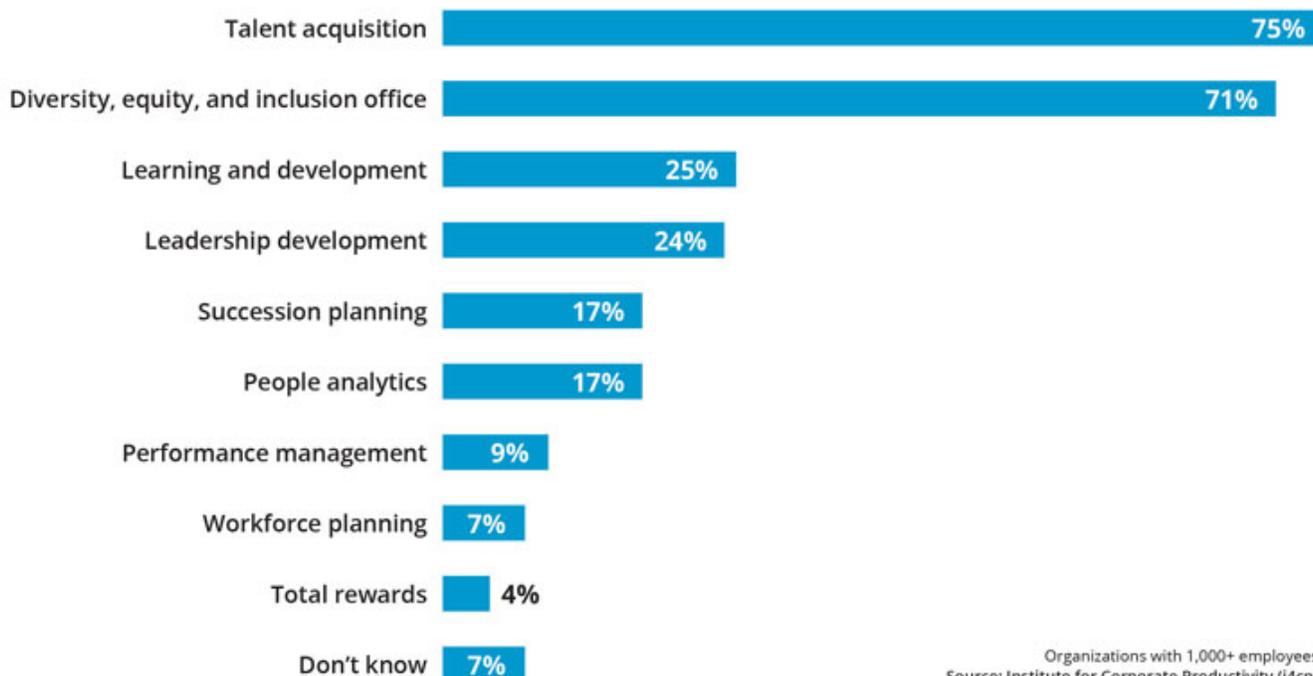
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Accountability

As for who is doing the work, talent acquisition (TA) is the function most heavily tasked with increasing diverse representation and advancing equity and inclusion goals, followed closely by the office of DEI (75% and 71% respectively). TA was also the top write-in when

respondents were asked about individuals or groups with DEI performance goals and accountability. The group most cited was HR (57%), followed by the senior leadership team (45%), and the CEO (41%).

What people functions are more heavily tasked in your organization's efforts to increase diversity representation and advance equity and inclusion goals? (select up to three)



(https://content.i4cp.com/images/image_uploads/0000/4936/FunctionsTaskWithDEIRep_1)

While greater proliferation of goals and accountability are a positive sign of organizational commitment to DEI, this raises concern that many believe they can solve their diversity issues by hiring alone or that DEI is the work of one group or individual to the exclusion of others.

In practice, diversity and TA professionals know that all people management functions play a role in retention and advancement of diverse talent, making the cascade of DEI goals and accountability into all people management functions imperative for true systemic change.

i4cp's **2021 Priorities and Predictions** (<https://www.i4cp.com/white-papers/2021-priorities-predictions>) report placed DEI as a solid focus for the year to come, driven by the turbulence of 2020, stakeholder demands, and rulings on human capital data disclosures.

These factors will continue to put pressure on organizations to stay the course, and will hopefully lead more to fulfill the promise of more diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplaces for all.

Eric Davis (<https://www.i4cp.com/contact>) is i4cp's Creative Director & Senior Editor

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