



ATL ACTION FOR RACIAL EQUITY

ASSESSMENT REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**METRO
ATLANTA**
CHAMBER



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EQUITY**

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Executive Summary

The Metro Atlanta Chamber's (MAC) ATL Action for Racial Equity initiative leverages the power of our region's business community to advance racial equity through collective impact. This is a critical, multi-year, multi-step effort to address the pervasive effects of systemic racism in the community and workplace.

ATL Action for Racial Equity was designed to equip metro Atlanta businesses with a roadmap for implementing best practices in their organization's unique racial equity journeys. The initiative developed a strategic list of actions and playbooks across four key areas: Corporate Policies, Inclusive Economic Development, Education, and Workforce Development.

As of 2023, 262 companies pledged to participate in the initiative. And since its inception in 2021, MAC committed to tracking committed companies' progress and sharing lessons learned as we collaboratively work to make metro Atlanta a more vibrant, equitable, and inclusive region. The inaugural ATL Action for Racial Equity Assessment was conducted in 2021 to survey committed companies and gain insights about their individual racial equity journeys. The third annual Assessment was conducted in 2023, building on the findings from the 2021 and 2022 Assessments, all of which informed the 2024 Report.

Despite a nationwide period of changes and challenges in the DEI space, these Assessments point to steady progress as organizations in the metro Atlanta region continue to prioritize equity and opportunity. Bright spots outlined in this report include strong movement along the stages of companies' racial equity journeys and increased percentages of Black leadership and representation across all categories.

ATL Action for Racial Equity Assessment

The 2023 ATL Action for Racial Equity Assessment survey had several key objectives, which were:

- To identify strengths, opportunities, and considerations for the metro Atlanta business community to implement as they address racial inequities in their organizations;
- To assess changes and progress in the metro Atlanta business community in addressing racial inequities since the inaugural survey in 2021;
- To assess differences in survey findings by industry type, business ownership, and business size; and
- To engage key stakeholders as a means of ensuring the survey findings and considerations are salient and will lead to action and adoption.

2023 Assessment Survey Respondent Demographics

The 2023 Assessment survey was administered electronically to 262 committed companies, with 72 organizations responding to the survey, a decrease in participation from the 2022 Assessment (119 out of 250 committed companies participated in the 2022 Assessment)¹. Potential reasons for this decrease in participation are explored in the Participation and Demographics section of the full Report.

¹ The decrease in respondents is roughly in line with the 2021 response rates. The potential reasons for the decrease in participation are explained within the report under the Participation and Demographics section.

- **Type of Organization:** In 2023, a majority of respondents (66%) indicated that they represented for-profit organizations, with a large minority (29%) indicating that they represented non-profit organizations. Government entities and other organizations were represented by less than 3% of respondents.
- **Size of Organization:** A large percentage of respondents (44%) indicated that they represented organizations with more than 1,000 employees. Of the remainder of respondents, the largest percentage (41%) indicated that they represented organizations with fewer than 200 employees.
- **Industry Type:** The three most strongly represented industry types were Business Products and Services (22%), Financial Services (19%), and Other Services (12%). In total, these industries represented a little more than half of the respondents.
- **Stage of Racial Equity Journey:** There was a salient difference between the Thinking and Progressive stages of organizations' Racial Equity Journey in the 2023 respondent sample. Organizations in the Thinking stage decreased from 11% to 1%, while organizations in the Progressive stage increased from 26% to 42%. This potentially indicates that organizations in general are progressing through the stages.²
- **Headquarters Location:** Survey respondents provide services in regions across the globe; 72% reported that their global/corporate headquarters are physically located in metro Atlanta, while 79% reported that their national/regional headquarters are in metro Atlanta.

Key Areas of Strength and Opportunities for Growth

ATL Action for Racial Equity has 20 key performance indicators within its four focus areas to identify strengths and opportunities for growth among the metro Atlanta business community. Key findings and high-level considerations from the 2023 Assessment survey on the strengths and areas of opportunity for each focus area are presented below.

The 2024 ATL Action for Racial Equity Assessment full report will provide further insights into the strengths and growth opportunities for metro Atlanta businesses to advance racial equity within their organizations and in the region. The full report also shares actionable considerations for committed companies in metro Atlanta across each key focus area.



Key Focus Area #1: Corporate Policies

Strengths

- Organizations exhibit prioritization of diversity and leadership roles with a designated DEI leader.
 - 82% of respondents reported having a designated DEI leader in 2023, over 71% in 2022.

² Please note that we do not have organizational level data to confirm that this represents the developmental trajectory of individual organizations. Rather, this is a broad estimation that there was a general trend in how organizations were progressing.

- 72% of organizations have Black leaders represented in the C-Suite, and 76% have Black leaders on the Board. This is similar to 2022 when 69% of organizations reported Black C-Suite leaders and 72% reported Black Board representation.
- Organizations continue to invest in policies focused on racial equity in organizational aspects such as hiring and promotion.

Opportunities

- Even though there was an overall increase in designated DEI leaders from last year, there is still room to grow in terms of corporate policies that promote racial equity, such as increasing the percentage of organizations with Black leadership going forward. Survey findings, for example, indicated that the number of organizations with a significant portion of their C-Suite and Board members that identify as Black remained at 12% and 11%, respectively.
- There is room for improvement in organizations partnering with HBCUs, in implementing increased tracking practices among Black talent in hiring, retention, and promotion rates, and in implementing practices to improve the retention rate of Black talent.
- Although 78% of organizations have created a DEI strategy, there is room for growth in establishing formal DEI performance objectives.



Key Focus Area #2: Inclusive Economic Development

Strengths

- Some organizations have established supplier diversity programs to promote racial equity..
 - Roughly 37% of respondents have a formal supplier diversity program, and 11% have established a supplier diversity program in the last 12 months.
 - Notably, of organizations that have a supplier diversity program (n = 26), 79% have had their program for 5 years or more, indicating that this metric may be sustainable for some organizations.

Opportunities

- 53% of organizations do not currently have a formal supplier diversity program.
- Although tracking the indicators of inclusive economic development was reported at a higher rate on this year's survey compared to 2022, there is still room for improvement.
 - Only 26% of respondents track the year-over-year (YoY) growth rates of underrepresented suppliers.
 - Only 24% monitor supplier diversity metrics for Black-owned businesses, and just 6% track underrepresented suppliers by revenue class.





Key Focus Area #3: Education

Strengths

- At least half of the respondents reported that their organization is involved with education-related initiatives such as advisory boards.
- Two-thirds of respondents said their organization has engaged in or encouraged employees to volunteer as mentors with organizations focused on Black youth.
- 45% of respondents offer experiential opportunities for students in metro Atlanta who may otherwise lack access to career experiences.

Opportunities

- More organizations could work towards adopting recommendations from the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) Business Toolkit.
- Organizations have room to grow in their efforts focused on investment in early education, such as supporting early education and benefits conferences and workshops, contributing to local metro Atlanta childcare facilities, and speaking publicly about business investment in early education programs.
- Opportunities exist for organizations to invest in or sponsor career learning and access for metro Atlanta families.



Key Focus Area #4: Workforce Development

Strengths

- 86% of respondents reported that they are dedicated to paying a livable wage for their location in metro Atlanta.
- 84% of respondents reported providing several benefits (paid parental leave, unemployment, retirement, and FSA) to full-time employees.
- 72% of respondents reported increasing access to employment through specific organizational procedures (flexible work environment, skills-based hiring, and removing employment screening barriers) within the last year.
- Organizations also reported that they have invested in workforce development for their current talent through mentorship, career pathway development, cross-training, and other initiatives.

Opportunities

- Organizations have room to improve policies related to benefits for part-time employees to support their families.
- Organizations have more opportunities available to increase access to employment through



efforts like providing commuter, childcare, and housing assistance benefits.

- Nearly half of organizations (42%) reported that they had not taken any actions to advocate at the local, state, or federal levels for greater public investment in these types of efforts.
- Organizations have opportunities to improve their investment in future talent through efforts such as partnering with education providers, implementing apprenticeships, and sharing hiring and retention data.

