



→ THE PLUG PRESENTS

2022

# State of the Pledge

JUNE 2022

Revisiting tech organizations' statements to create a more equitable society for Black Americans through diversity recruitment efforts and investments.

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BLACKS IN TECHNOLOGY  
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# Letter from The Plug's CEO



We cannot manage what we do not measure.

Dear reader, I'll be brutally honest with you. In 2020, the 36 hours following the murder of George Floyd was the catalyst for one of the toughest data projects I'd ever imagine our team working on. In the wake of this tragedy, we scraped through Twitter and a plethora of companies' diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) reports. We were propelled to compile the series of messages and statements big tech and corporations were making in support of social justice. Thereby, spotlighting the very harsh realities of police brutality on Black men and the Black community at large.

Since then, our database and data visualization went viral across mass media and the tech ecosystem. Subsequently, our team has been tasked with providing an annual update on what happened after the hysteria.

Are companies making good on their commitments? Are we seeing a shift in the professional and managerial culture of these companies? Are more director-level positions, board roles, and even funding going to more Black people and people of color? These are the questions from Black professionals across the country, some hopeful and some pessimistic, about whether things are changing for the better or if the same constructs that define inequality remain.

Thus far, what we do understand about the data is that the journey to progress is a continuum.. And so is measuring accountability and providing transparent resources and tools to help Black tech ecosystems and big businesses understand where we stand. This goes beyond a press release and donations.

As it stands, what I do know for sure is I am beyond honored to continue this work of digging through the numbers, pressing stakeholders for direct answers, and publishing our findings year after year. More importantly, I am proud of the work of Tayler James, our Director of Research, who jumped into this project at the onset. Soon after her hiring in January of this year, we teamed up with Dennis Schultz at the Blacks In Technology, a long-time partner and supporter, to continue this important conversation.

I now ask you to use these numbers and insights as a baseline to keep moving us forward. We are counting on readers and influencers like you to keep us on track.

In the work,  
**Sherrell Dorsey**



# Letter from ← The Plug's Director of Research

Throughout my career, I've navigated in workspaces where I didn't always feel like I belonged. Like many other Black professionals, I felt the need to overcompensate in certain areas to prove my worth. To validate my HBCU degree. To break the generational stereotypes instilled in the minds of my colleagues. To continuously self-advocate for promotions and/or raises that I rightfully deserved, but was passed over for. In 2020, I felt a shift. Unfortunately, it took the virtual death of a Black man in broad daylight to begin opening the eyes of the rest of America. My goal in writing this inaugural report is to ensure Black professionals are seen, heard, and valued. It is important to look beyond the numbers and evaluate the systematic measures tech organizations are putting in place to ensure that the Black population is well represented and placed in positions of influence. It needs to be embedded as a core factor in the operational strategies of any business. That is my call to action for these companies. The face of our country is changing. Our world is shifting. I believe these companies must acknowledge and accept cultural differences by establishing space for diverse thinking. In addition, it is critical to ensure that all sectors within these organizations are fully represented, including leadership. Stand by your word. This is only the beginning.

Always forward,  
**Tayler J. James**

# → Letter from Blacks in Technology Foundation's Executive Director



In the wake of George Floyd's murder in the spring of 2020, the outpouring of concern for social justice in the African American community was far-reaching. Fueled by employees who demanded that their companies take a stance and help facilitate change, many organizations were compelled to confront not only the systemic injustices of the Black community since the reconstruction era, but also to look inward at their own culture. More specifically, they were forced to look closely at the pay inequity for Black workers, the hiring and retention practices they employed, and the executive leadership and board governance as it related to racial equity.

As a 25-year veteran of the IT industry, I was encouraged and pleasantly surprised to see statements from CEOs of major technology companies regarding their intent to help right the perceived wrongs of social and economic injustice. My initial exuberance for these proclaimed initiatives soon turned to concern. I began to question how funds would be allocated, how progress would be measured, and how organizations would be held accountable if they renege on their promises.

This report was commissioned to provide context to the promises made and add to the historical record an accounting of the actions taken since. The intent is to spotlight organizations that have made good on their commitments and provide visibility to the public for those who have not. The Blacks In Technology community has a vested interest in intangible, systemic change in the tech sector. We hope the findings in this report advance the mission of greater inclusivity in our industry.

Closing,  
**Dennis Schultz**

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# Introduction Introduction Introduction



Source: Pexels.com

In 2020 the world was turned upside down by the global Covid-19 pandemic. Black Americans faced two pandemics simultaneously, which ultimately put a spotlight on systematic racism, diversity, and inclusion within the workplace. On May 25, 2020, a Black man named George Floyd was killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis, MN. After his death, corporations all over the U.S pledged **over \$50B towards racial equity**. According to a tally of public promises compiled by The Plug, tech organizations such as Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Netflix, and Twitter, pledged huge commitments to be more inclusive of Blacks through recruitment efforts and **over \$4.56 billion in investments to Black organizations**.

*The Plug* documented those commitments made by the world's largest tech organizations in 2020 and two years later, in partnership with the **Blacks In Technology Foundation**, revisited those commitments to determine the progress made by those respective organizations.

As we explore the ways in which these companies have either upheld or abandoned their commitments to racial equity, it is vital to remember that at the heart of big data are real human beings. People's lived experiences and life stories are significant and necessary. Indeed, we all lead storied lives. Our daily interactions are informed by the stories we've been told and the stories we tell. To understand your work in relation to the people influenced by it you must hear these stories in tandem with the data.

## Key Findings

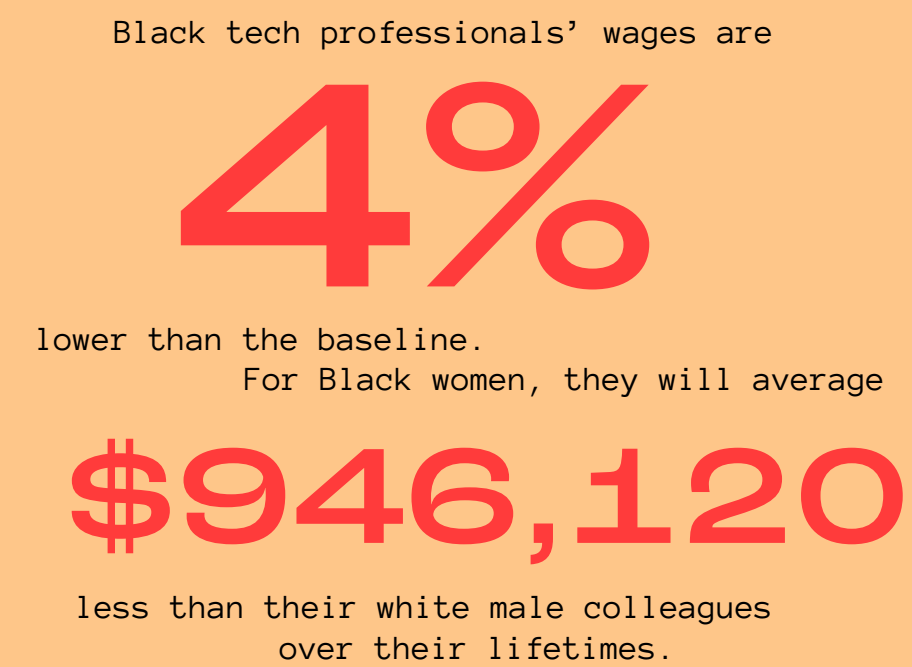
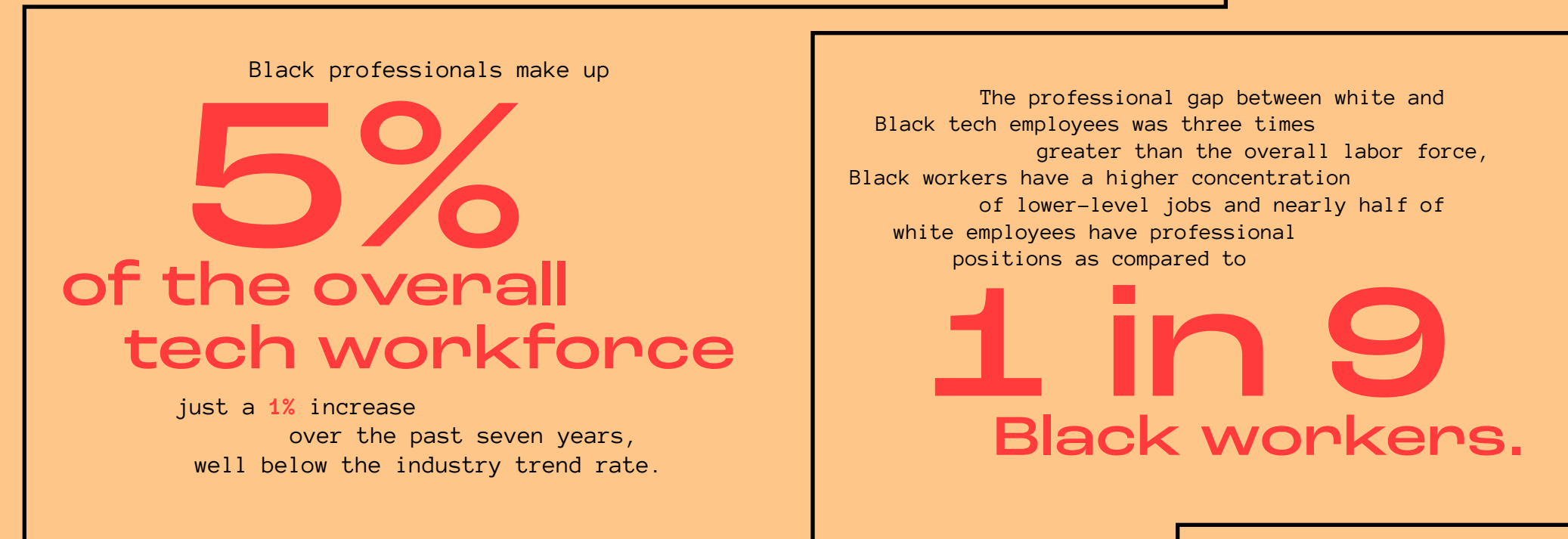
In recent years, large tech companies have faced criticism for the underrepresentation of marginalized communities, particularly Black professionals. Unquestionably, 2020 was a revelational year for companies to redesign their structural foundation. Notwithstanding the many challenges Black tech professionals and innovators face daily, we remain optimistic that the work to create a better environment is underway. Our goal here is to highlight organizations that are doing the work, and bring awareness to those who have opportunities for growth.

**“The vitriolic and negative energy that people have towards Black people in tech is draining. A lot of Black culture informs global culture, and we deserve to be acknowledged in every aspect of it. Black folks in tech deserve better.”**

Figure 1. Ashley (pseudonym), Twitter user and tech consultant.



**1.** While technology and innovation have become the fastest growing industry globally, Black professionals remain disproportionately represented within the space.



2. Minimal changes have occurred among the commitments made by tech corporations over the past two years due to a lack of universal tracking and accountability.

Financial commitments pledged by tech companies were marginal compared to the revenue generated in 2021. Top tech companies' financial pledges averaged only

**0.3%**  
of their 2021 revenue.

Additionally, there isn't a monitoring system established to track the allocation of financial commitments, causing questions about the legitimacy of those pledges.

Despite growing demands from stakeholders and consumers for transparency around the workforce demographic, many tech corporations are reluctant to share those insights. Out of **217 companies** we analyzed,

**27%**  
provided at least one diversity report between 2019–2021.

Many companies are under fire for the continuous racial misconduct

**Allegations, including racial stereotypes, micro-aggressions, and being unfairly passed over**

for promotions have resulted in voluntary resignations and lawsuits.



Source: Pexels.com



3. On a positive note, tech companies have cultivated relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and have identified Black women to

Black women continue to steer change within the tech sector with

**several leadership and board appointments as well as the creation of accelerators.**

Several tech organizations have established relationships with HBCUs **by instituting initiatives to provide financial support and resources**

to generate a pipeline for prospective interns or employees post-graduation.

4. Looking beyond the numbers and surface pledges, tech companies need to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by among Blacks by institute structural changes.

Over

**73%**

of Americans feel key policies and practices are critical to moving the needle in advancing racial equity in the workplace.

Continue to close the gap within the Black educational system by providing resource and STEM exposure to underrepresented communities.

Join the conversation around legislation and donate resources to


**support bills that support the advancement of the Black population.**

“

**It's not just enough to hire Black people. Fighting systemic racism in tech means admitting that the default hiring tactic is to offer Black candidates the lowest offer possible. While paying [premium for] non-Black talent.**



Figure 2. Kendrick (pseudonym), Twitter user and university researcher.

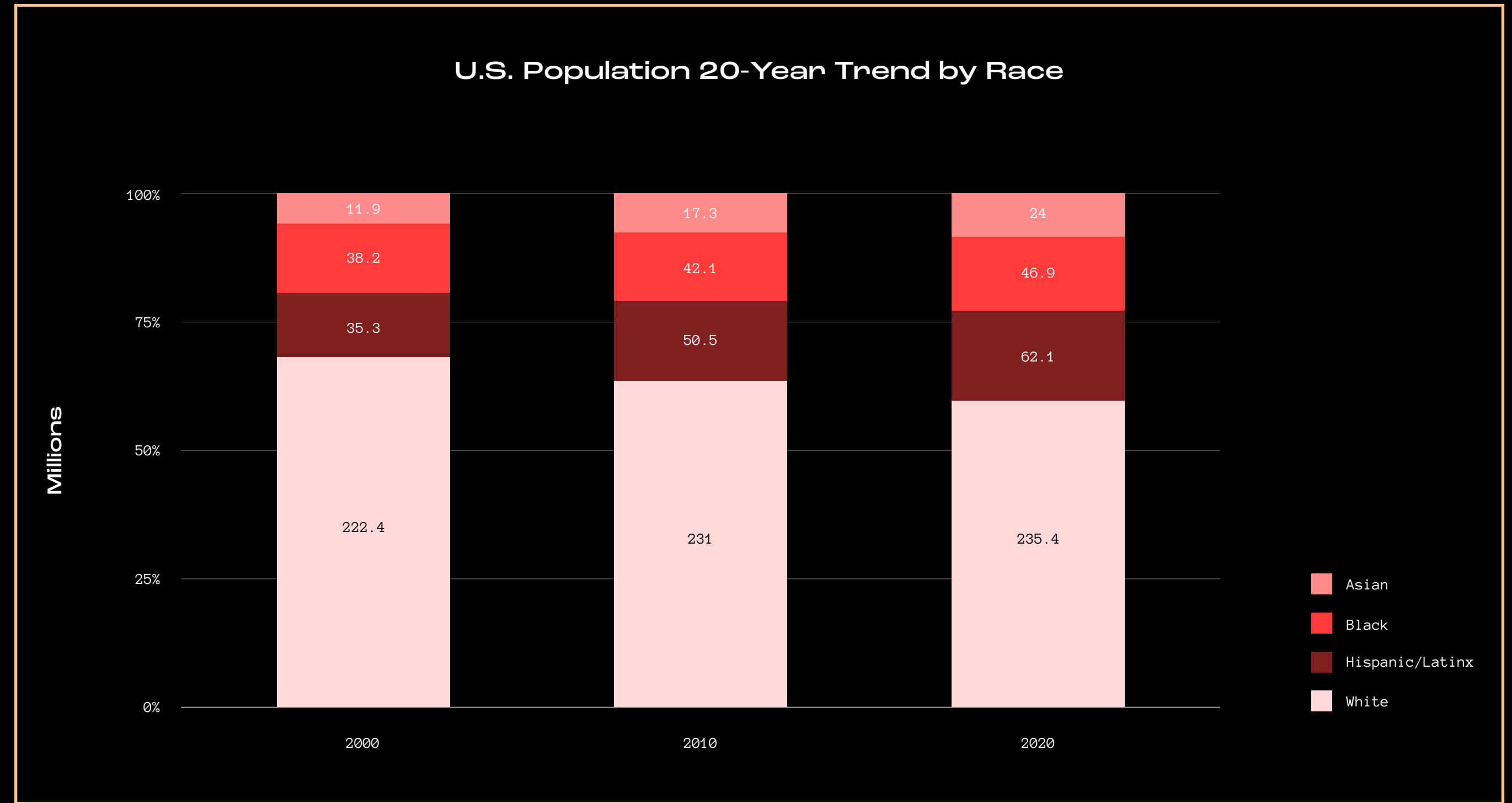


# State of the Black Tech Ecosystem: U.S. Population Overview

The last two decades have been pivotal for America's growing minority population. The U.S. Black population **grew by 22.8% and 11.4% since 2000 and 2010, respectively.** According to the U.S. 2020 Census Bureau, the Black/African American population accounted for over **46.9 million Americans**, making up **14.2%** of the U.S. population. However, this segmented group is expected to be much larger, due to the statistically significant undercounting of roughly **3.30%** during the last census collection wave, similar to the **2.06%** undercount in 2010. The Black population represents the third-largest race alone or in a combination group, behind white alone or in combination with another group (**235.4 million**) and the Hispanic or Latinx group (**62.1 million**). The Black population growth rate has surpassed the white population growth rate over the same period but is less than that of the Asian and Hispanic populations. Based on this U.S. Census data, it is projected that by the year of 2044, the U.S. will population shift and current minority groups will exceed 50%.

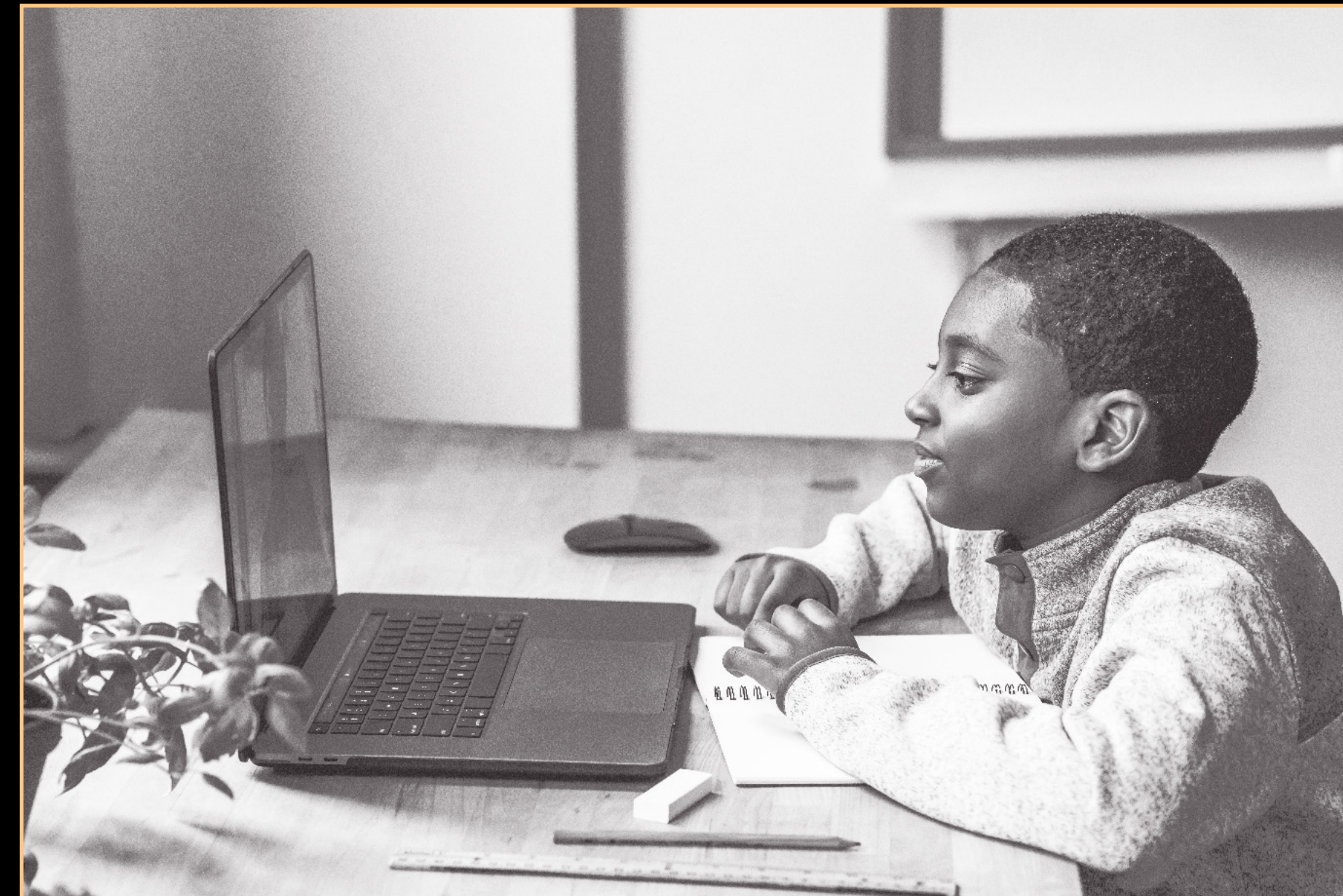
As the Black population continues to grow, there are significant shifts among the changing demographics, especially geographically. During most of the 20th century, there was a large concentration of signature settlement patterns resulting in the Great Migration from the southern to northern regions. Over the last few decades we've experienced a reversal shift. Progressional changes in economic status, cultural ties, and the emerging middle class drove Blacks to return to southern metropolitan cities such as **Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, and Raleigh**. Given the correlation between location and increased diversity, these cities have become hubs for large tech corporations and meccas among Black tech innovation spaces.

The technology and innovation sector is the fastest growing industry in the world, and STEM jobs are some of the most sought after in the country. **Over 5.3 million Americans work in the high tech sector.** The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment in computer and information technology occupations is projected to grow **13% (667,600 new jobs) from 2020 to 2030, which is faster than the average for all occupations.** A great emphasis on areas such as cloud computing, big data, and information security are expected to drive these employment gains. While the U.S. Black population has experienced significant increases over the past two decades, Black professionals remain underrepresented in the tech sector. Current trends indicate an uneven trajectory or even a regression among ethnic diversity, especially among Black professionals within the tech ecosystem. According to a recent report released by The Kapor Center, an organization aimed to make the technology ecosystem and entrepreneurship more diverse and inclusive, Black professionals represent **5% of the overall tech workforce.**

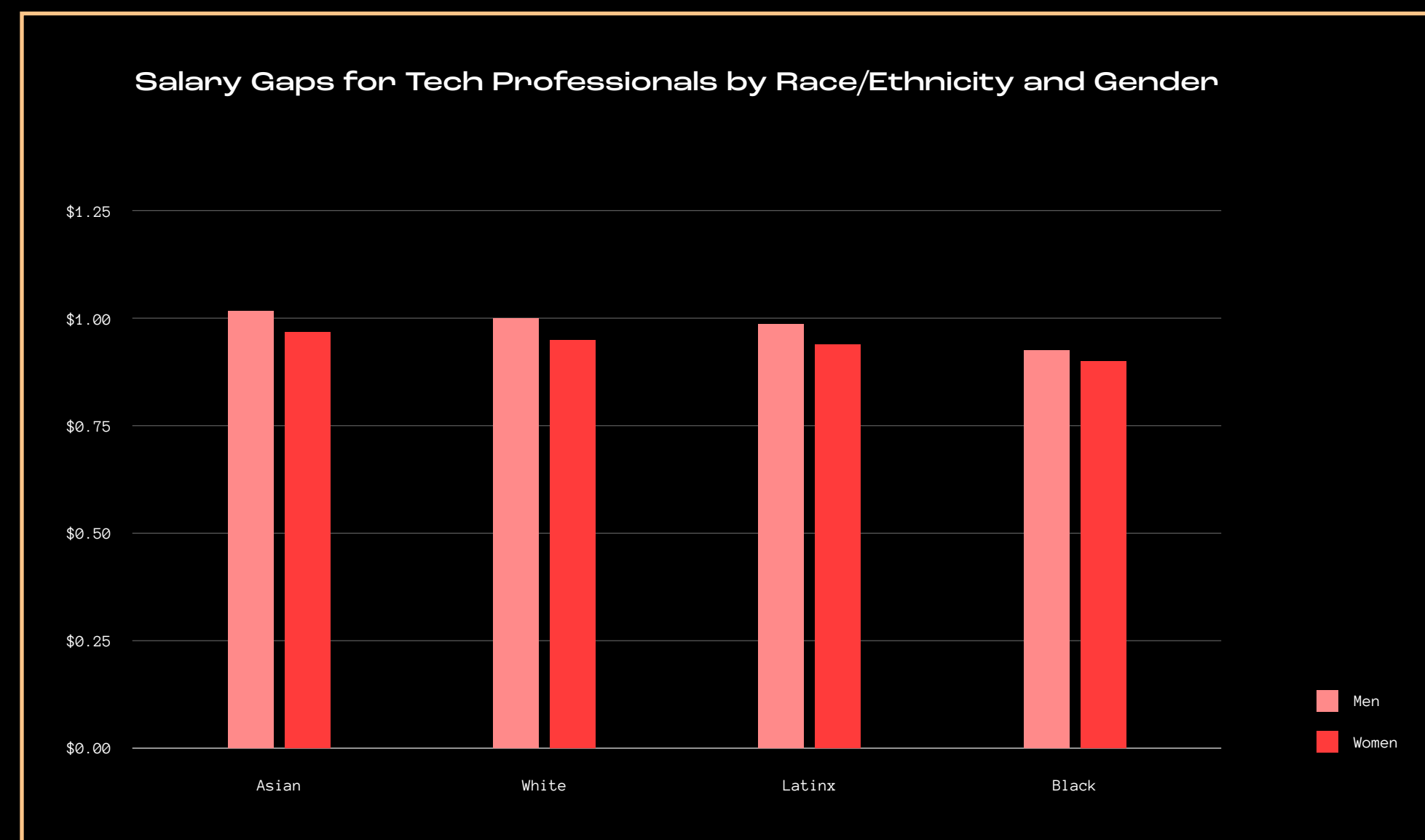


The proportion of Black professionals in technical roles at large tech companies increased just **1% over the past seven years, between 2014 and 2021.** Black professionals occupy **3.7% of tech roles, 4% of executive positions, and hold 4.4% of board seats.** Black and Hispanic workers have a disproportionate share of lower-level jobs in big tech; nearly half of white employees have professional positions as compared to **1 in 9 Black workers.** The professional gap between white and Black employees in tech was three times greater than what is seen in the overall labor force, according to an analysis conducted by USA Today. In addition, the wage gap creates comprehensive power imbalances. The median annual wage for STEM-related occupations was \$97,430 as of May 2021, which was higher than **the median annual wage for all occupations of \$45,760.** Pay inequality disproportionately hits Black professionals, particularly Black women, significantly. According to a report conducted by Hired.com, Black tech professionals experienced wages that are **4% lower than the baseline.** On average, Black women will earn **\$946,120 less than their white male colleagues** over their lifetimes.

Additionally, these systematic matters drill down even deeper as there is a lack of resources provided for Black students at the K-12 education level. According to The Code.org Advocacy Coalition, there is limited access to high-level science courses nationwide. Only 51% of public high schools offer at least one foundational computer science course. 48% of schools in urban areas and 49% of schools in rural areas offer foundational computer science, compared to 61% of schools in suburban areas. Also, in schools with over 75% of the students eligible for free and reduced-price meals (FRL), only 41% of schools offer foundational computer science, compared to 57% in schools with less than 25% of the students eligible for FRL. Additionally, only 16% of Black high school students are enrolled in computer science courses. Jobs for the Future (JFF), a non-profit dedicated to the driving transformation of the American workforce and education systems to achieve equitable economic advancement for all, recently released a report examining the increasing opportunities for Black learners and workers within technology careers. JFF's Vice President, Michael Collins, believes these obstacles are "systemic," starting from youth. In a press release he stated, "To disrupt historic patterns of occupational segregation in technology, we cannot ignore the systemic barriers to access and advancement that begin in K-12 schools and persist in communities and in the workplace. The most successful models are not only helping Black talent build skills and secure employment, but also making long-term investments in mentorship, social capital, and networks that enable Black professionals to access and sustain careers in technology."



Source: Pexels.com



Source: Hired.com (2020). The 2020 State of Wage Inequality.

Furthermore, the gap in higher education among science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) related programs is especially large for Black students. Black students make up approximately 12.7% (2.1M) of the U.S. undergraduate population, down roughly 16% over the past decade. The related number of Black adults obtaining postsecondary degrees has more than doubled since 2000; however, only 7% of the people who earn STEM bachelor's degrees were Black. Black students tend to switch majors or leave college in higher numbers. While numbers are low among Black STEM graduates, HBCUs are responsible for graduating 25% of Black STEM majors and 10% of the 8,120 Black computer science majors.

With limited exposure and accessibility to resources, the long-term effects of creating a strong pipeline to STEM continue to create a barrier among the Black population, resulting in the stagnant growth in the field.

# 2020 Tech Company Statements



Source: Pexel.com

The season of protests that ensued George Floyd’s tragic death prompted **executives and organizations from hundreds of tech and innovation corporations to pledge over 500 commitments** towards creating a more equitable society, including but not limited to financial investments to Black innovators, donations to Black organizations, diversifying their supplier networks and implementing new Inclusion & Diversity hiring and promotion processes.

## Financial Commitments, Investments & Donations

Tech corporations, with a combined valuation of over **\$4 billion**, pledged billions of dollars in financial support through grants and loans over the next decade to the Black community, in order to increase internal diversity and recruitment efforts and support Black innovators and civil rights organizations such as Black Lives Matter, Campaign Zero, Color of Change, NAACP and National Urban League. Two years after Floyd's death, many are wondering if these tech companies kept their promises. The issue with these financial commitments is twofold.

- The financial commitments pledged are marginal compared to the revenue generated by these organizations. We compared financial commitments from 20 of the top tech companies to their 2021 generated revenue, which brought in nearly **\$2 trillion** of revenue cumulatively. The pledges amount to over **\$2.5 billion**; however, this value averaged only **0.3% of their 2021 revenue**. Per average daily revenue generated, it would take 14 of 20 companies less than 24 hours and 5 companies between 1-4 days to generate the donation amounts in terms of revenue. As an outlier, PayPal, which had the highest donation percentage (2.1%) compared to revenue generated, would take roughly 8 days to generate its substantial **\$535 million commitment**. Below is a breakdown of revenue generated vs financial pledges by some of the largest tech organizations.
- The second issue is a **lack of accountability as there isn't a single entity or external tracking system established to monitor the fulfillment of the promised funds**. We are relying on (and trusting) the tech corporations and/or organizational recipients to "self-audit" and provide transparency by publicly sharing the statuses and allocations of the funds.

Company	2021 Revenue	2020 Financial Pledge	# of Days to Make Pledge Amount
Amazon	\$469.8B	\$10.0M	0.01
Apple	\$378.4B	\$100.0M	0.10
Alphabet/Google	\$257.6B	\$418.0M	0.59
Robinhood	\$232.4B	\$10.0M	0.02
Microsoft	\$168.0B	\$772.5M	1.68
Meta/Facebook	\$117.9B	\$347.0M	1.07
Intel	\$79.0B	\$1.0M	0.00
Twitter	\$53.8B	\$3.0M	0.02
SoftBank	\$50.8B	\$100.0M	0.72
Netflix	\$27.9B	\$100.0M	1.31
Salesforce	\$26.5B	\$1.0M	0.01
PayPal	\$25.4B	\$535.0M	7.70
Sony	\$9.5B	\$100.0M	3.84
AirBNB	\$6.0B	\$500.0K	0.03
Uber	\$5.8B	\$1.0M	0.06
Shopify	\$4.6B	\$1.0M	0.08
Peloton	\$4.0B	\$500.0K	0.05
Pinterest	\$2.6B	\$1.5M	0.21
Verizon	\$1.8B	\$10.0M	2.01
Slack	\$902.6M	\$100.0K	0.04

Note: The table above is filtered based on 2021 revenue generated. The companies listed operate on different fiscal calendar dates.

Source: Multiple data sources are used to retrieve financial data.

The Plug's research team made contact and gained insight on the progress made from several tech companies during the development of this report.

→ Amazon

On its website, Amazon released in a statement that the company, in partnership with its Black Employee Network, **exceeded its \$10 million financial commitment, and donated \$27 million, with the help of an employee donation matching program.** The donations went to organizations dedicated to creating social justice and improvement to the lives of Black Americans through the combatant of systematic racism, and educational and economic expansion within the black community. The organization didn't identify which organizations the funds were released to.

→ Alphabet/Google/YouTube

In 2020, amidst great social and political upheaval for racial justice, world-renowned tech companies took center stage to announce efforts for better practices that would reflect equality and diversity in the workplace. Monetary output was one of the most common types of contributions. As one of the largest tech companies on the planet, Google committed to offering up **\$418 million** to underrepresented communities around the world.

Since the onset of their new commitments, they've hired close to **4,700 minorities across Atlanta, Chicago, New York City and Washington, D.C. offices.** Last year, they had the highest ever year-over-year increase in women hires in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, thanks to targeted campus outreach and the establishment of a DEI recruiting team in the region.

In February of this year, Google held their first-ever Black Men of Google Summit--a half-day program to build connections around shared experiences--which hosted over **2,000 Black attendees.** And in early March, **more than 20,000 women and allies** gathered virtually for an International Women's Day Summit, aimed at recognizing resilience and deepening community for women at Google. Although they recognize that the work for racial equity in the workplace will never truly end, they do understand that they must remain committed in the months and years to come.



→ PayPal

PayPal's \$535 million commitment announced in June 2020 was the organization's largest social impact investment to date, according to a PayPal spokesperson. The pledge was designed to provide immediate assistance to Black businesses and set the foundation for sustained investments in economic equality and social justice. The commitment, which has now been 100% fulfilled, included short-term, medium-term, and long-term investments, all with the same purpose of helping Black and underserved businesses and communities. The funds have been

→ **Empowerment Grants:** In partnership with the Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO), PayPal distributed \$15 million in grants to nearly 1,400 Black-owned small businesses in 2020 and 2021 to support them as they navigated the unprecedented challenges of the COVID pandemic. Grant awardee businesses had a 99% survival rating one year later, based on a survey conducted by the organization.

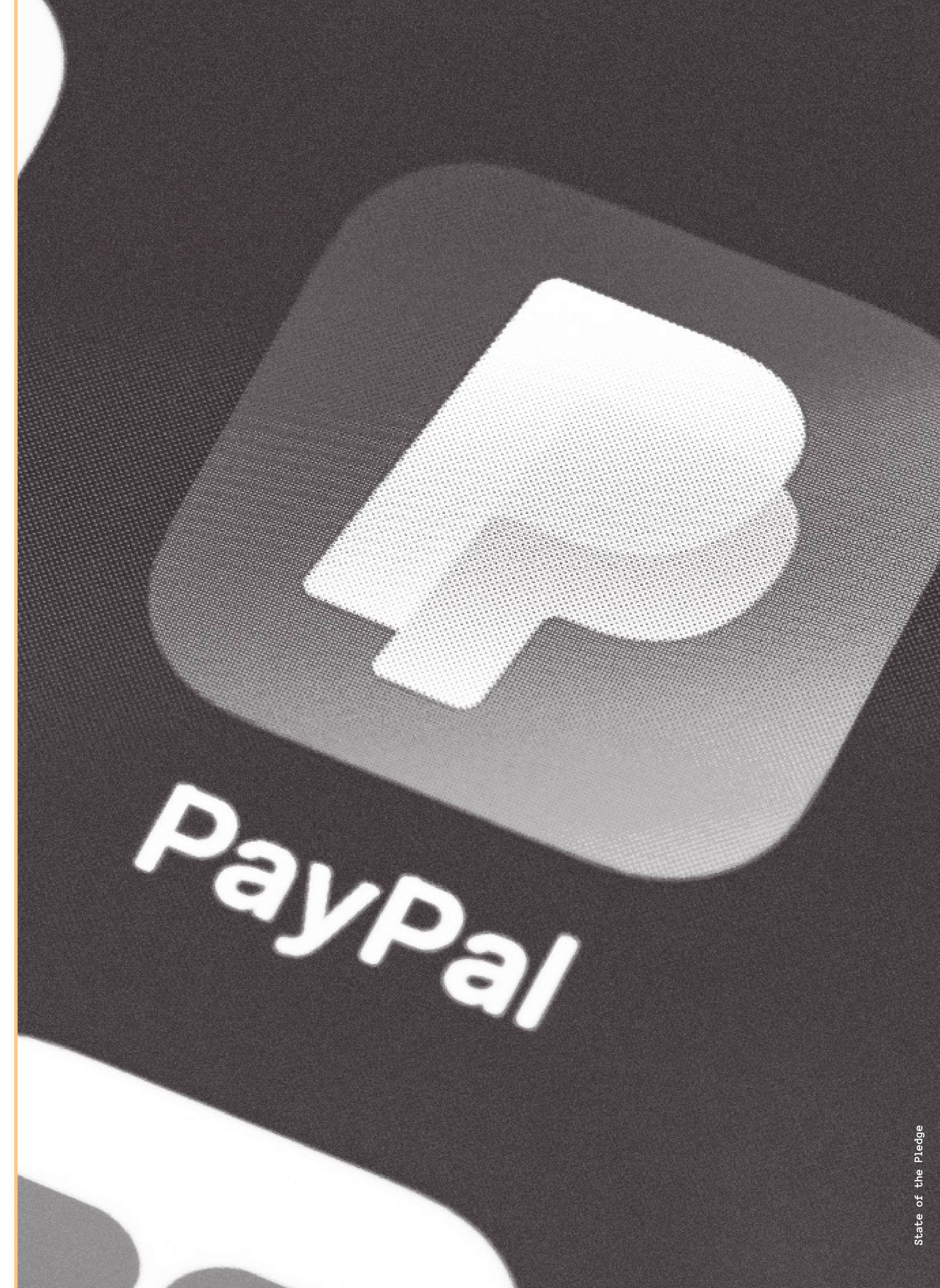
→ **\$5M Nonprofit Partner Grants:** PayPal committed \$5 million in grants to 20 leading nonprofits across the U.S. – both national and local in scope – that strengthened and empowered Black-owned businesses and provided on-the-ground support. The outcomes of the businesses

- 90% of businesses survived/stayed in business
- 73% of businesses maintained or grew their workforce
- 52% of businesses experienced revenue gains
- 39% were able to transition to digital commerce

→ **Economic Opportunity Fund:** PayPal established a \$500 million Economic Opportunity Fund for Black and Latinx-led venture funds and depository holdings in minority-owned banks and credit unions. Banks/Credit Unions/Investment Funds recipients include:

→ **PayPal DIE&B Commitment:** PayPal committed \$15M to enhance diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging (DIE&B) programming at PayPal and fund research and advocacy on issues related to racial equity. The organization entered into three multi-year agreements with CodeHouse, INROADS, and the National Association of Black Accountants to develop and hire Black and diverse talent. Additionally, PayPal partnered with the Congressional Black Caucus Institute and two HBCUs, Dillard University and Wiley College, to release a report identifying specific financial needs and product gaps of the Black community. Furthermore, they created a policy and thought leadership partnership with Reimagine Main Street and the Black, Hispanic, and Asian Chambers of Commerce to develop research on underserved small business owners and the challenges they face. Lastly, PayPal partnered with state and local leaders on entrepreneurship and racial equity through the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Sola Impact Fund	Interlace Ventures
Blackrock Impact Opportunity Fund	Kapor Capital
Siebert Williams Clear	MaC Venture Capital
Vision Impact Fund	Noemis Ventures
Optus Bank	Seae Ventures
LISC Black Economic Development Fund	SV LATAM Capital
Hope Credit Union	LAT VC
OneUnited Bank	Roble Ventures
Self-Help Federal Credit Union	Bright VC
CNote's Wisdom Fund and various smaller institutions through a CNote Promise Account	Chingona Ventures
Venture Funds recipients include	Fearless Fund
Aperture Venture Capital	Harlem Capital
Collab Capital	Precursor Ventures
	Slauson & Co.
	VamosVentures
	Zeal Capital Partners and one additional fund.







Beyond the \$535 million commitment, **PayPal instituted several initiatives to support the Black community through resources and exposure**, including hosting events featuring diverse brands and creatives, providing free or discounted rides for vaccines through the Vaccine Access Fund in partnership with Uber and Walgreens and becoming a founding member of the Southern Communities Initiative – a consortium of companies partnering with community development financial institutions, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other leading community organizations.

In addition to the financial commitment, **PayPal installed several internal programs to establish long-term DIE&B strategy in 2020 and 2021**. In 2020, PayPal launched DIE&B Roundtables consisting of cross-functional leaders, that bring a wide-range of perspectives and backgrounds, surface feedback, identify potential opportunities and to help accelerate the organization’s DIE&B goals. In addition, PayPal provided quarterly dashboards for business-specific insights on key metrics related to the intersection of our employee lifecycle and DIE&B strategy, including trends on employee mobility by ethnicity and gender. In 2021, PayPal installed diverse hiring policies and partnered with organizations to focus on considerations of diverse talent for internships and positions with diverse interview panels. PayPal welcomed and mentored over 25 students from three HBCUs through the inaugural cohort of the CodeHouse Scholars Initiative summer academy in 2021. Lastly, **PayPal achieved 100% pay equity for Black, Latinx and Asian employees in the U.S. as compared to white peers. These initiatives addressed the importance of equity and belonging in conjunction with diversity and inclusion.**

## → Salesforce

In the wake of much social controversy centered on racial injustice in 2020, Salesforce formed a Racial Equality and Justice Task Force to help drive systemic change in its workplace across four aggressive key pillars: People, Purchasing, Philanthropy and Policy. Since the task force launched, Salesforce has made progress in its initial goals for building out an inclusive future for underrepresented groups in the tech world. A spokesperson from Salesforce states: ***“It’s not just about the hiring targets, but also about the experience. Our vision is simple – to become the most inclusive workplace possible.”***

According to a recent report released by The Kapor Center, Black professionals occupy **3.7% in technical roles at large tech companies**, despite making up **13% of the overall labor force**. When asked what measures Salesforce have put in place to mirror the U.S. Black work population within their employee group, their source responded: “We know that representation is connected to more than just hiring; it requires focus on experiences and systemic change. So, we’re working to create access, advocacy, and community. One opportunity area that came into focus for us last year was how Black women experience the workplace. Informed by external research and deep listening to our employees, we created

a cross-functional group to devise a strategy and introduced our Black Women Experience initiative to address the unique, multi-layered, and intersectional challenges that often confront this community.”

Salesforce rolled out a companywide training to help leaders address microaggressions and bias. They scaled their Equality Mentorship Program, as well as their URM Leadership Development Program to develop and mentor URM leaders. “We’re certainly not at a point yet where we can say we’re a model for diversity and inclusion,” the source pointed out, “but we’re starting to see some progress.”

In the company’s most recent equality update, we learn that 50.7% of their U.S. employees are now made up of underrepresented groups. In addition to this, URM, Black and Latinx hiring has more than doubled since 2020, with help from new changes and innovations in their diversity recruiting team, equitable referral processes and refined hiring systems. **They’ve also increased their spend with minority-owned businesses by more than 25% in 2021 and have invested more than \$100 million in Black and URM-led companies since 2020.** While their efforts to activate change across the board have been fruitful, many may argue there’s still much work



Source: Pexel.com

## → Slack

According to a company spokesperson, Slack’s CEO and co-Founder, Stewart Butterfield, and his wife, CEO and co-founder of Away, Jen Rubio, personally **donated \$700,000 plus matched \$300,000 to Black organizations such as, Black Lives Matter, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the Bail Project.** Additionally, they matched up to a year’s worth. Slack was acquired by Salesforce in July 2021, and reports diversity data under Salesforce’s Annual Equality Update, which includes the Racial Equality and Justice (REJ) Task Force.

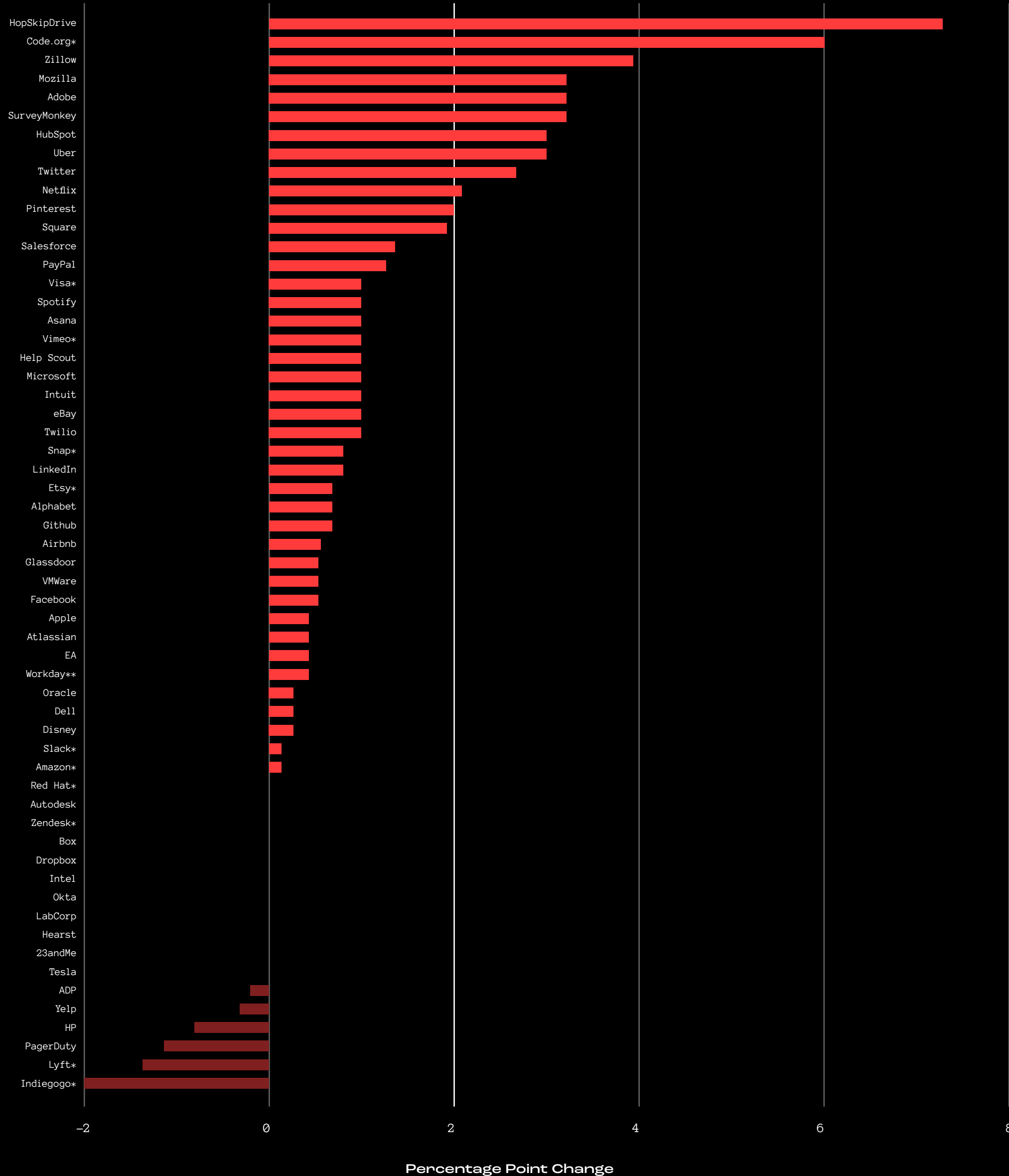
## Recruitment and Diversity & Inclusion Commitments

The tech industry has been criticized for its lack of diversity for Black professionals. Despite important gains and efforts that large tech corporations have made to identify and address the diversity gaps within the space, minimal improvements have been experienced among the overall composition of Black tech professionals over the last decade. Embedded systematic racism has made it difficult for Black professionals to advance. Tech companies that issued public pledges in 2020, **had an average of 20% fewer Black employees than those that didn't issue commitments.** Also, these same companies issued layoffs in key functional sectors like marketing and diversity, according to Fast Company.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission requires all private sector employers with 100 or more employees, and federal contractors with 50 or more employees meeting certain criteria, to submit demographic workforce data through its EEO-1 Component 1 annual report, the federally mandated annual report which discloses workforce diversity data on gender, race, and ethnicity among companies. Since 2020, **external stakeholders, investors and consumers have called for corporations to disclose their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts** through the EEO-1 report. This data helps to provide a standardized way of reporting intersectional diversity data and sheds light and add color to the inclusion efforts among organizations. Unfortunately, federal officials will not release those records to the general public without companies' permission, due to privacy protections in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. According to a survey conducted by The Harris Poll, **73% of Americans want companies to publicly report.** The survey also showed that 84% agreed that companies "often hide behind public declarations of support for stakeholders but don't walk the walk." Even with calls to some of the country's most influential tech brands by stakeholders and consumers, many companies, not all, still refuse to disclose data about their workforce demographic insights.



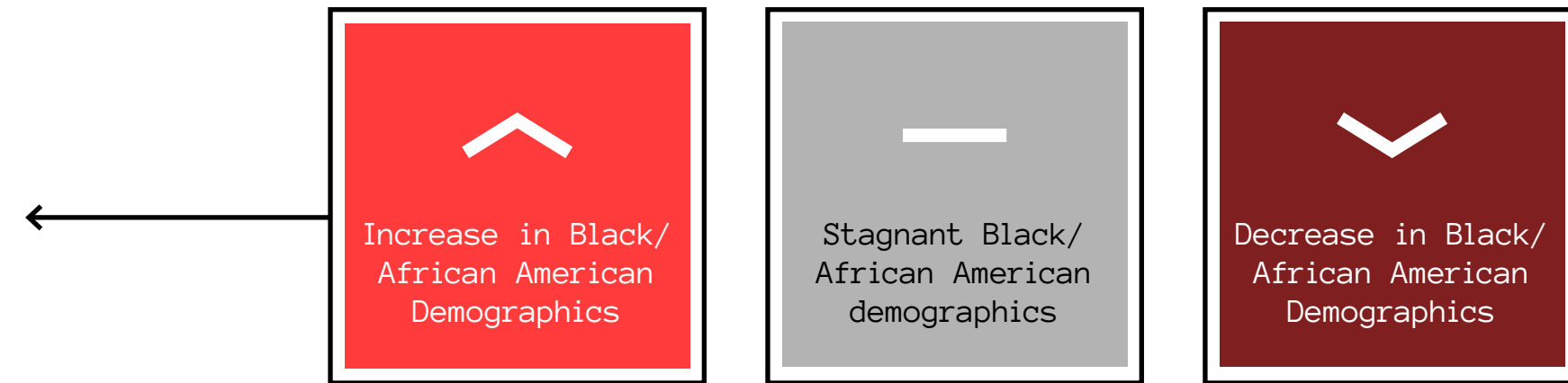
### Overall Black Workforce Population Percentage Point Changes



# Current State of Tech Companies

## Progression among Diverse Workspaces

Included in many commitments, companies have pledged to be more transparent regarding their workforce diversity, including publicly providing specific demographic insights and detailing plans to better reflect the U.S. diversity composition. We examined pledges from 217 companies where their DEI efforts were sourced from public disclosures based on a collection of keywords, including EEO-1, transparency, diversity, inclusion, sustainability, and report. Of those companies, **56%** don't have diversity data publicly accessible and have declined or failed to respond to our request to gain insight; **18%** have issued only one diversity report within the last two years, creating limitations for extracting trends; and **1%** issued diversity reports, grouping all BIPOC employees instead of breaking them out by race.



We collected 2019–2021 diversity data for **58 companies**. These organizations were grouped into three categories, based on year-over-year changes experienced with the Black/African American employee populations:

Analysis of these tech companies determined that 32 companies experienced compositional gains of (0.5 percentage points or more) in the Black employee population. Of note, HopSkipDrive led the charge with a **7 percentage point increase in Black employees**. 22 organizations remained stagnant (between 0.4 and -0.4 percentage change), and four organizations experienced declines (-0.5 percentage points or less).

Note: The graph above is filtered based on percentage point changes year over year. The companies listed operate on different fiscal calendar dates. \* indicates 2019–2020 comparisons, \*\* indicates 2019 & 2021 comparisons. Data reflects U.S.-only.  
Source: Multiple data sources are used to retrieve diversity data.

## Black Professionals Expanding in DEI and Leadership Roles

Since the events that occurred in 2020, DEI became the new “buzzword” in corporate America, and we observed changes within leadership roles. DEI leaders were in high demand as companies frantically evaluated their pledges, causing an increase of leadership appointments among corporations to improve internal efforts. Oftentimes, the role of creating awareness around diversity, equity, and inclusiveness falls under the load of the marginalized groups. **Diversity roles increased 71% from 2015 to 2020**; “Head of diversity” titles jumped 104%. Companies with internal DEI teams were 22% more likely to be seen as “an industry-leading company with high-caliber talent” and 12% more likely to be seen as an “inclusive workplace for people of diverse backgrounds.”

Although we’ve experienced significant increases, the U.S. is still behind other countries, with 0.73 diversity and inclusion employees for every 10,000, compared with the U.K.’s 1.93 and Australia’s 1.04, according to LinkedIn. Diversity leaders appointed during the height of the pandemic and racial unrest faced many challenges, including the ambitious commitments their companies made prior to their appointments. Many employees have expressed the desire to see DEI as more than a buzzword but rather as true systematic changes that alter the cultures within their internal organizational structures. Additionally, **technology industry boards added 178 new outside directors in 2021. Within the 178 new appointments, roughly 19% (34) were Black directors, increasing the overall share from 3% to 4.4% in 2021.** As we continue to observe the internal efforts among tech companies, we will monitor if structural changes and inclusivity actually occurs or will DEI go down as another corporate catchphrase.



Source: Pexels.com

## Black Women Leading in Tech

McKinsey & Company conducted a report, highlighting the representation of women of color. **Black women in tech specifically, make up only 1.7%, and fall off at every level of the corporate pipeline, leaving women of color severely underrepresented at the top relative to their white colleagues and men of color.** Given that they face bias on a regular basis at work, it should come as no surprise that Black women are relatively pessimistic about their company's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Black women are twice as likely as women overall to say their company has not followed through on its commitments to racial equity, and less than half of Black women feel that DEI is an important priority at their company. Black women face disproportionately high barriers in the workplace as it relates to racism and sexism, and they are often penalized when they speak up. In fact, **32% of Black women who have reportedly spoken out against bias and discrimination in the workplace have faced some level of retaliation.** *"I think Black women are often given the tight rope assignments, or the hard work,"* Leslie Pitterson, Microsoft's Head of Communication for Business Development Strategy and Ventures, stated to Chief. *"And I think one of the things that exacerbates that pressure is that it plays into this strong Black woman stereotype. So, you have managers who think I'm giving you a growth assignment, but really it's typecasting."* Earlier in her career, Pitterson was often confused by praise and recognition from her boss to take on difficult tasks or requests to work late. As she became more established in her career, she realized that.



Source: Pexel.com

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Managers, especially non-Black managers in the workplace, have to have a sense of awareness of these tropes associated with Black women, especially the strong Black woman trope, because if they aren't aware of it and it is used in discriminatory ways at work, then they often become defensive. And that really misses the point,' Pitterson says. She adds that, 'putting Black women on this track where it's like the way upward for you' is dangerous, and it can easily impact the pipeline of Black women entering leadership. 'We don't often think about what this does to the psyche of the person going through that and basically being told that, 'The only way you can achieve what you're seeing your peers achieve with far less effort is to really sacrifice your own wellbeing,' Pitterson says. She warns that 'if we continue to make this the chosen path for leadership for Black women then we're not going to have Black women in leadership, because they can and are choosing themselves.'

Even as they navigate an incredibly difficult experience, Black women are pushing their companies to do better. Black women are more likely than any other group of employees, including men of color and women of other races and ethnicities, to spend a substantial amount of time on DEI work that falls outside their formal job responsibilities. They are more likely to speak out against bias and discrimination at work—and more likely to experience retaliation for doing so. And they are more likely than any other group of employees to step up as mentors and sponsors to other women of color. Many Black women say they do this work because they feel it wouldn't get done otherwise—which speaks to the urgent need for employees with more privilege to show up as allies.

Over the past two years light has been shed on the lack of Black women in leadership positions and specific tech areas but sparked ideation in ways to be more inclusive. **Black women have led the charge in the transformation of inclusion within the industry.** Several were appointed to C-Suite and Board positions at tech corporations, including Amazon, Etsy, and Microsoft, while others have piloted accelerators that create spaces for other professionals to gain exposure, resources, and thrive as they expand in the industry. Below we've highlighted a few Black women that are paving the way for the future in tech.

→ **Marla Blow**, Chief Operating Officer of the Skoll Foundation, was appointed to Etsy's Board of Directors and a member of the Board's Audit Committee in 2021. Blow came with a vast range of financial and regulation experience. Josh Silverman, Etsy's Chief Executive Officer, spoke highly of Blow in a press release, stating that she has a passion for and advocates creative entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic empowerment. Blow stated,



I have long believed that the companies of tomorrow are those that are able to drive sustained growth while advancing pressing social issues, and Etsy serves as a model for building economic inclusion. I look forward to working with Josh and the rest of the Etsy team as they nurture their communities, execute on their strategy, and provide a truly differentiated e-commerce experience.

Blow also sits on the Board of Directors of Square Financial Services, an independent subsidiary of Square, Inc.

→ In 2021 Amazon hired a former Twitter executive, **Candi Castleberry Singleton**, as Vice President of Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Castleberry Singleton is charged with driving Amazon to meet diversity goals laid out earlier that year. Among those goals is doubling the number of Black leaders at the company, and **increasing women in senior tech roles by 30%.**



If we get this right, together we can create a greater sense of inclusion not only within Amazon, but for Amazon customers around the world,

stated Castleberry in a company release.

→ Similar to most sectors in STEM, cybersecurity is a White male-dominated field. According to Forbes, **women represent nearly 14% of the information security ranks, and Blacks make up 3% of the U.S. information security analysts' roles.** At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, **Talya Parker**, an HBCU grad (Florida A&M University) and cybersecurity professional, took on the challenge to create an open dialogue by curating a series of Facebook Lives with other Black women working in information security. During those live series, the women discussed their journeys into the cyber and privacy space and the challenges they face as Black women in a male-dominated industry. In 2021, Parker established Black Girls in Cyber Foundation to increase industry awareness around diversity and help create a pipeline into cybersecurity, privacy, and STEM for women of color. The organization offers support through mentorship, scholarship, training, events, and community outreach. The organization has quickly gained recognition and support from notable organizations in the industry.



Cybersecurity is one of those fields where various perspectives are needed because when you think about cyber crimes the hackers are a very diverse group of people.

Parker stated. Since its inception, the organization has **accepted 20 Black women from various fields into two cohorts**, with several landing jobs or becoming CompTIA certified before the completion of the program.



Marla Blow, courtesy of Cole Burston/Bloomberg



Talya Parker, courtesy of BGIC



Bonita Stewart, courtesy Operation Collective

→ In May 2021, **Danielle Rose** became the first Black woman CEO of SMASH, a STEM-intensive program for underrepresented students of color. In a Fast Company op-ed written by Rose, she discussed the challenges she faced while breaking into tech, including micro and macro aggressions from former team leads. *“Being Black, a woman, and an engineer, I found myself shadowed by skepticism in every space I occupied, from high school to the present day. In meetings, my managers would not make eye contact with me when I spoke. My ideas seemed to land only when regurgitated by white male counterparts. My white male managers questioned whether I was paid too much because they thought my clothes were too fashionable. A senior executive told me that I seemed to be a better fit working at ‘one of those fancy boutiques on Rodeo Drive.’ With two Bachelor of Science degrees in mathematics and mechanical engineering and a master’s degree in mechanical engineering from the third top engineering school in the country, I cannot say I ever contemplated working at Gucci. All these slights told me I didn’t belong as I was, the authentic and costume-free me.”* Additionally, Rose spoke about experiences with other Black professionals who attempted to minimize her. She used all of those experiences to assess her own biases and to create advocacy and allyship through mentorship for others. She is leveraging her position to equip students for the barriers they will face as they enter into STEM.

→ **Merline Saintil**, another HBCU grad (Florida A&M University), has over 20 years of experience as a business and technology leader, holding executive positions for organizations such as Intuit Inc, PayPal, and Yahoo. Additionally, she has served on several boards and received accolades including but not limited to “Most Powerful Women Engineers in the World by Business Insider magazine”, “Women of Influence 2017 by Silicon Valley Business Journal” and earned a Lifetime Achievement Award from Girls in Tech. During the height of the pandemic, Saintil was offered additional board appointments. Instead of saying, “No, thank you”, she recommended other women of the same caliber but needed visibility in order to land an opportunity for board placement. Saintil, in partnership with her long-time friend and colleague Robin Washington, established Black Women on Boards (BWOB), an organization that prepares and provides opportunities for talented Black female executives. In 2021, **Black women held 231 out of 5,500 seats (4%) at S&P 500 companies, over a 25% increase over 2020**, according to Bloomberg. “Organically, a process was born. I knew I wanted to create a system that would use that process to prepare, place, and propel successful Black women into board positions,” Saintil stated on their website. Since its inception, over 150 Black women globally have joined BWOB’s accelerator.

→ In 2021, PagerDuty appointed **Bonita Stewart** to its Board of Directors. Stewart, who serves as VP of Global Partnerships at Google, is an HBCU grad (Howard University) and has extensive experience in developing specialized initiatives to help break barriers, including the Howard West powered by Google, a computer science immersion program for HBCU students. “Bonita is a fantastic culture fit with our board and brings tremendous at-scale leadership experience to the PagerDuty. Her experience building market presence and partner ecosystems, and scaling larger global operations make me proud to add her to our board,” said Jennifer Tejada, PagerDuty CEO. “A trailblazer in the industry, her decision to join our board is also an endorsement of our efforts to build a diverse business and create equal opportunity in tech and beyond.” Additionally, Stewart served on the Board of Directors for Pluralsight and Decker Outdoor Corporation and was named a Woman to Watch in Tech by Crain’s.





Source: Pexel.com

## Tech Companies Working Backwards

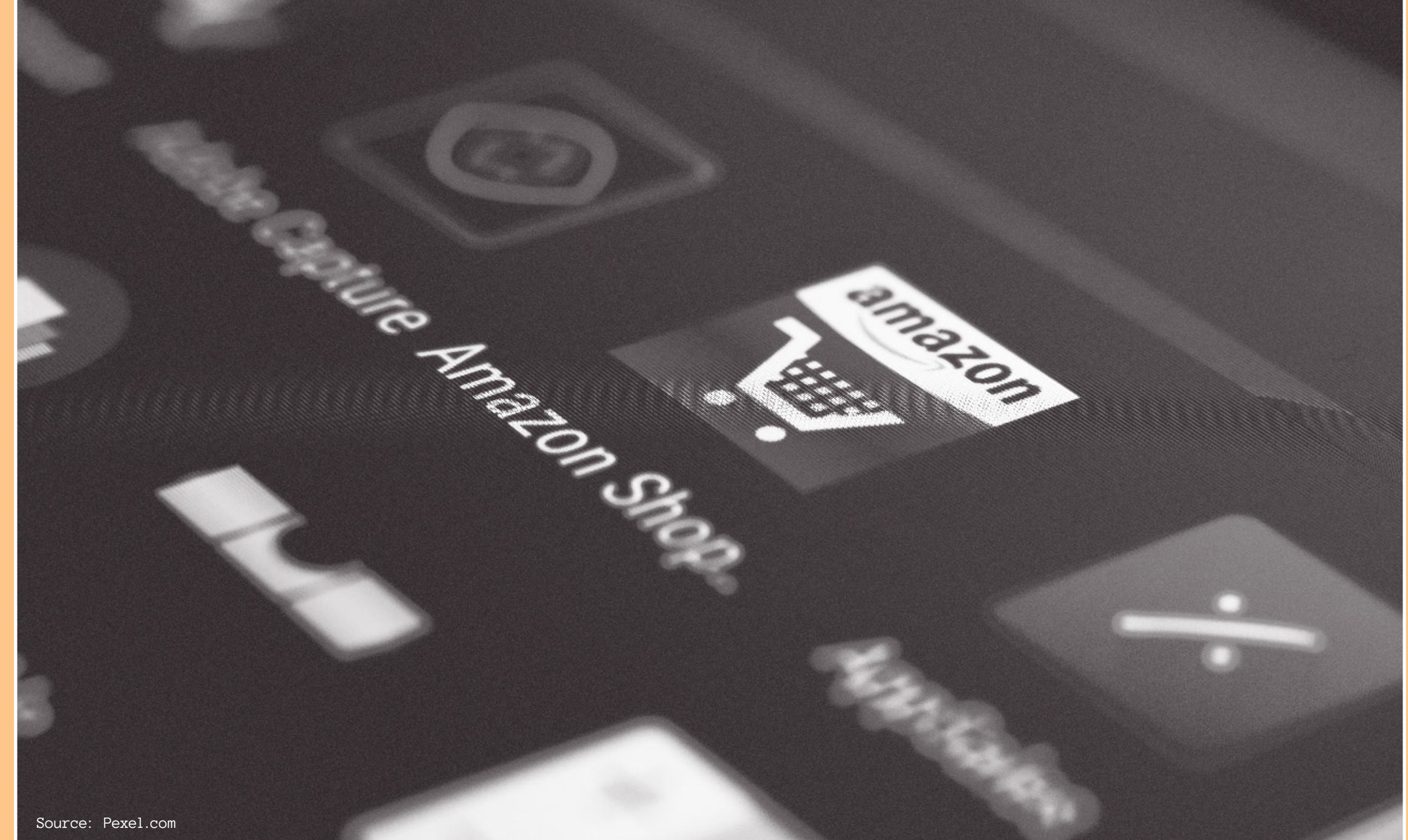
Often Black professionals feel they've faced stereotypes and have been unfairly passed over for promotions, which ultimately resulted in voluntary resignations and lawsuits. All women are more likely than men to face microaggressions at work. But for Black women, these experiences are more frequent and reflect a wider range of biases. For example, compared to white women, Black women are more than three times as likely to hear people express surprise at their language skills or other abilities—and we see a similar pattern for other common microaggressions.

- Five days after George Floyd's murder, Alphabet and Google's CEO, Sundar Pichai, issued a statement via Twitter to announce changes to Google and YouTube's homepages in solidarity with the Black community and in memory of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery. Days later, Pichai issued an internal statement to employees, expressing support for Black Lives Matter, pledging **\$12 million to organizations working to address racial inequities, and supporting Black creators by instituting policies and stringent bans against hate speech and harassment.** Since then, the company has been issued racial discrimination lawsuits by two former Black employees. Former Google employee, April Curley, filed a lawsuit after being terminated by the tech giant for vocally opposing and calling for reform of the barriers and double standards Google imposed on Black employees and applicants. In her complaint, Curley stated, "Google's centralized leadership, which is nearly devoid of Black representation, holds biased and stereotypical views about the abilities and potential of Black professionals. Google hires few Black employees and steers those few Black employees into lower-level roles, pays them less, and denies them advancement and leadership roles because of their race." The second lawsuit accused the company of hiring minority job seekers with rosy promises and then assigning them jobs with lower pay. Additionally, Google and YouTube have been accused of blocking advertisers from using dozens of social and racial justice terms on their platforms, including Black Lives Matter.

→ **Amazon**, the world's largest online retailer, has been under scrutiny for alleged racial discrimination claims. In 2021, the organization faced at least six lawsuits by employees, including two Black women, claiming both racial and gender biases suffered by women who worked in corporate or warehouse management roles. One of the plaintiffs alleged in her suit that the organization hired Black individuals into lower positions, and were slower to promote them compared to their white colleagues, according to Reuters.

→ **Netflix** experienced significant subscriber gains during the first year of the pandemic, adding over 8 million subscribers during three out of four quarters of 2020. Additionally, **Netflix increased its U.S. staff diversity, with Black employees representing 10.7% of the workforce share and 13% of leadership positions.** While subscriber growth rates were accelerated due to the shutdown, the rates eventually stabilized as the world reopened. Earlier this month, it was reported that the streaming service, under a new fan-focused website, Tundum, laid off a team of recently hired women of color. The site launched in late December of 2021 with little to no promotion. "They went very out of their way to hire high-level journalists of color who have quite a bit of name recognition and a lot of experience and talent. In some ways, they were just buying clout to lend credibility to their gambit," a team member informed NPR, hours after learning about being let go. The team had no notice prior to the layoffs and was only offered two weeks of severance pay.

→ **Tesla** has also been at the forefront of several discrimination allegations and lawsuits among Black employees. In May 2021, an arbitrator ordered Tesla to pay over **\$1 million** over similar allegations made by another former factory worker. That employee alleged that co-workers called him a racial slur and supervisors ignored his complaints. Later in the year, Tesla paid nearly **\$137 million to a former Black worker who said he suffered racial abuse at the electric carmaker's San Francisco Bay Area factory.** Following both lawsuits, Tesla's shareholder, Calvert Research & Management, presented and won a resolution that would require the company to disclose detailed data about the demographics of its workforce. Although there have been calls from investors and consumers to disclose workforce demographic information and submit their EEO-1 forms, Tesla has refused to share documents that provide granular details about the diverse workforce at every level of the organization, according to Bloomberg.



Source: Pexels.com



Source: Pexels.com



Source: Pexels.com

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I'm scared of what he [Elon Musk] is going to do to the platform and who he is going to be in favor of, because I truly feel he is going to pick a side. I don't know how our hiring practices will be now internally at Twitter. Is he going to start hiring who feels the way he does. Will that become the new standard?



Figure 3. Tiffany (pseudonym), Twitter employee and user.

- Additionally, Musk has made headlines in the recent months after he reached an agreement to acquire the social platform Twitter, for **\$44 billion**. Musk, often referring to himself as a “free speech absolutist,” outlined his plans for the platform in a series of tweets, including his overarching reason for buying the company to reinforce “free speech.” “By ‘free speech,’ I simply mean that which matches the law. I am against censorship that goes far beyond the law. If people want less free speech, they will ask the government to pass laws to that effect,” Musk stated. Several Black Twitter employees expressed concern during a Twitter Room discussion hosted a day after the announcement by The Plug. One employee stated her fear for the platform and company overall. Weeks after the deal was announced, Musk stated that he would reverse the platform’s ban on former U.S. president, Donald Trump, once the acquisition is finalized. The former president was banned from the social platform shortly after the Jan. 6th riot at the U.S. Capitol by his supporters.
- **TikTok**, owned by Chinese tech giant ByteDance, gained notoriety at the top of the pandemic, exceeding over 1 billion monthly users at the end of 2021. The video-sharing platform has been viewed as a source for discovering new hacks, gaining laughs, and learning dance trends. During the 2020 summer protests, Black creators accused the organization of suppressing Black Lives Matter content through changes in algorithm, causing them to experience severe declines in viewer engagement. TikTok’s Black community went on strike due to white influencers profiting from uncredited choreography. Additionally, the platform flagged hashtags, such as “Black Lives Matter ” and “Black success” as “inappropriate” but allowed “white supremacy” and “white success” hashtags to remain. The organization stated the banned phrases were flagged due to a hate speech detection error and the issue was resolved. TikTok hosted a virtual meet and greet with Nicki Minaj earlier this year in honor of Black History Month. The company received backlash for allegedly providing non-Black attendees opportunities over Black creators. According to NBC News, the limited time given to ask Minaj questions was “dominated: by non-Black voices. A spokesperson from TikTok acknowledged the incident and the strained relationship with Black creators. “We fell short of providing the experience we intended, and we are profoundly sorry for the negative impact caused by our missteps. #BlackTikTok, we hear you, we value you and we will do better,” the spokesperson stated.

# → Future of Blacks in Tech: The Condition of STEM Education among the Black Student Population



Source: Pexels.com

Before the pandemic, it was conveyed that nearly half of Americans who did not have internet access or desktop/laptop computers identified as Black/African Americans or Hispanic. Although the digital divide has been acknowledged in previous years, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the issue. The coronavirus pandemic brought on many challenges that required students, educators, and administrators to create innovative ways so that educational standards and basic needs were met. In the earlier phases of the pandemic, it was reported that **over 4.4 million households did not have reliable or consistent internet access.** Although most data shows that there has been an increase in broadband or tech access for students, the most recent data shows that there are still potentially 12 million students without either broadband or capable device

access. While some legislators and tech companies (Salesforce, Loom, Audible, Apple, etc.) have provided free WiFi in many areas, those who live in rural communities and/or live in underserved areas still face many challenges regarding internet access. In 2021, it was reported that Procter & Gamble created a mega partnership with other companies such as Dell, Walmart, and Comcast to invest over **\$25 million dollars** in helping to reduce the digital divide for all students by providing the necessary tools such as laptops, devices (smartphones), calculators, and hotspot buses.

While President Biden and the Biden-Harris administration gave **\$65 billion** in the infrastructure bill and established the Affordable Connectivity Program, which provides high speed internet access to eligible

households, the systemic root causes of the digital divide have not been entirely addressed or rectified. Many activists believe that reducing/closing this digital gap will require simultaneous and holistic practices/policies/interventions. This could include making broadband affordable as it was reported in a 2019 Pew Research Survey, that 50% of respondents believed the cost of broadband was the reason why they did not have service. As there has been a correlation between internet access and socioeconomic status (SES), another recommendation often conveyed is digital literacy training, which could help students of all ages (including senior citizens) as well as those who may not have access to any type of device.



Source: Pexel.com

As technology and science continue to evolve in sophistication and capability, the demand for STEM graduates can be projected to increase as well. Diversifying the field of technology allows companies the capability to address the ever-evolving needs and demands of all their clientele. Although the research conveys that Massachusetts has the highest college graduation rates, it is North Carolina, specifically North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NCA&T) that produces the most Black STEM grads. Furthermore, a gap in the literature was discovered which entailed the lack of evidence in conveying STEM grads stratified by race per state. The filling of this gap can be vital in understanding the impact population density may have on the Black STEM ecosystem. However, it is well supported and documented that the **top 10 STEM HBCUs** are:

- NCA&T**
- Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU)
- Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University (AAMU)
- Howard University
- Jackson State University (JSU)
- Alabama State University (ASU)
- Norfolk State University (NSU)
- Prairie View Agricultural & Mechanical University (PVAMU)
- Morgan State University
- Fort Valley State University (FVSU)

HBCUs were founded to create space in higher education for Black educators, and students due to the systemic racial injustices. The nation’s first HBCU was founded nearly 185 years ago at Cheyney University of Pennsylvania. **Since 1837, the number of HBCUs has expanded to 107 institutions of higher learning.** With 107 HBCUs producing not only 25 percent of STEM graduates but being the origin type of institution for 30 percent of Black degrees in STEM, there still seems to be a significant racial/ethnic disparity in the STEM field (UNCF,n.d.). Specifically, in technology and computer science, it was reported that in 2020 although **“HBCUs represent just 3% of U.S. Colleges, they were responsible for graduating 10% of Black computer science majors”** (Donastorg, 2022). The lack of diversity in technology is not solely a matter of unfound or lack of talent/skills but unofficial gatekeeping practices showcased through a lack of support via funding, recruitment, pipelines, and partnerships. Understanding that HBCUs alone cannot reduce either the digital divide and/or the racial/ethnic disparity in tech, many companies such as Google, Apple, Spotify, Propel, etc. have pledged and prioritized having all levels of their workforce reflect the diverse demographics of America.

## Tech Corporations Efforts to Support HBCUs

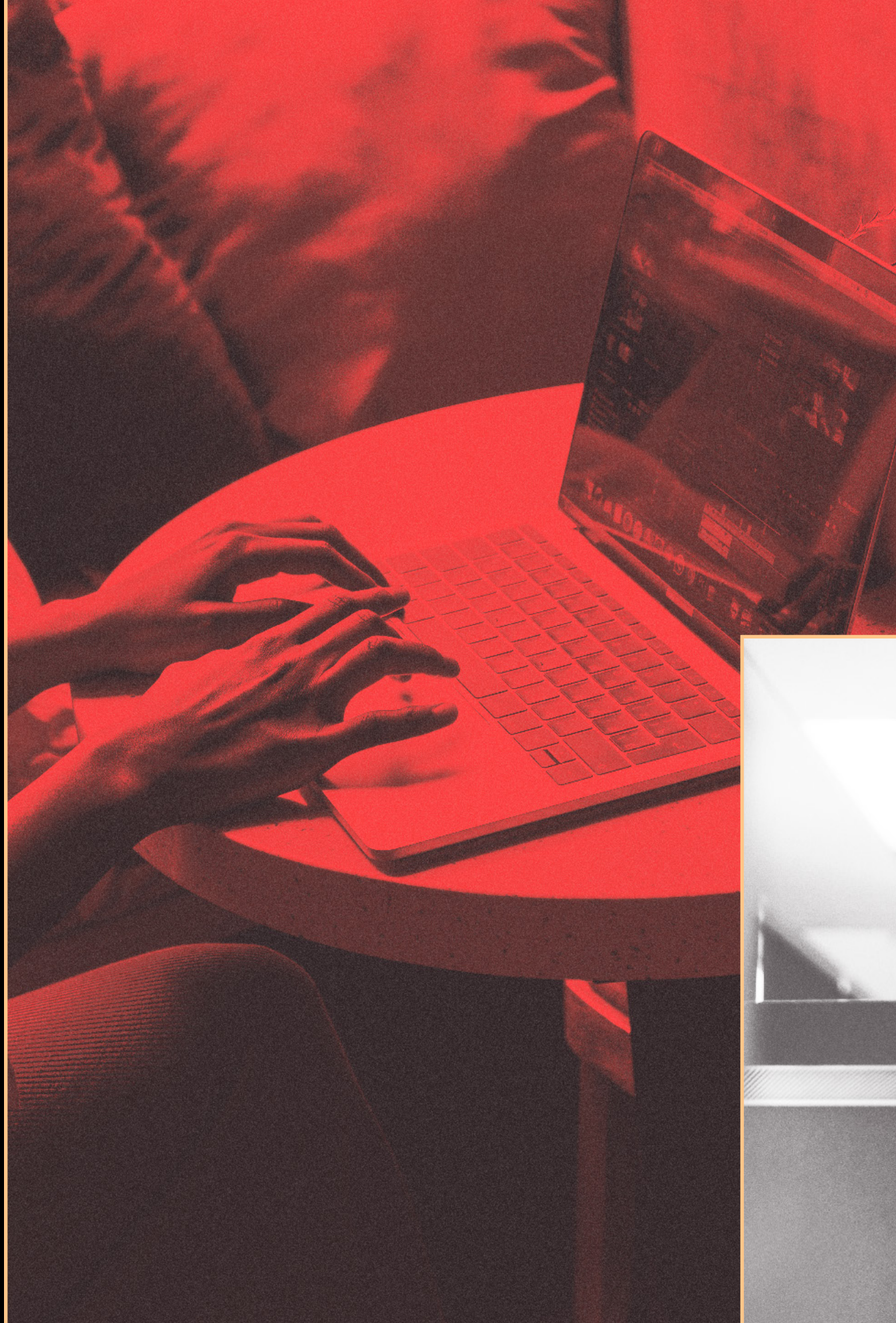
Several organizations have instituted initiatives to support and build relationships with HBCUs. These efforts have created financial support, and resources to generate a pipeline for prospective interns or employees, post-graduation.

In January 2021, Microsoft partnered with HBCU Connect and hosted a recruitment fair for the Core Services Engineering and Operations (CSEO) division. At this recruitment fair, they discussed the culture at Microsoft, the successful characteristics they deemed important for their employees, especially engineers, and what they are working on to decrease the digital divide as well as machine learning/artificial intelligence. In addition to the recruitment fair, Microsoft has started strengthening the pipeline and influencing STEM subjects earlier in Black/African American high school students with their Technology Education and Literacy in Schools (TEAL) program.

- Last year, **Netflix expanded its Netflix Pathways Boot Camp to include more HBCUs.** With the goal to increase diversity in tech and computer science, this semester's boot camp is used to introduce or strengthen skills in data science, java engineering, and/or UX/UI.
- **IBM has partnered with American Association of Blacks in Higher Education (AABHE), 100 Black Men of America, Inc., Advancing Minorities' Interest in Engineering (AMIE), and the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) to expand the IBM Global University Program.** This program aims to introduce HBCU students to artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, cloud computing, procurement, design thinking, and quantum computing.
- **VMware has partnered with 9 HBCUs to expand their efforts in making not only their company but technology more diverse.** In this partnership, these HBCUs get direct engagement and recruitment.
- In addition to their 2020 pledge of **investing \$535 million into Black/African-American communities and businesses,** PayPal partnered with the Congressional Black Caucus Institute (CBCI), Dillard University, and Wiley College. Their research examined how America's history of racism, discrimination, prejudice, and oppression-based policies/practices shaped the intersecting and often overlapping social determinants, such as education, access to healthcare services, socioeconomic status (SES), banking, housing, etc. Consequently, influencing the racial financial health gap. Additionally, their research conveyed that while these racist-based and discriminatory policies/practices are considered illegal or unconstitutional, they are: **1. still occurring in different phenomenons** and **2. are transgenerational.**



Source: Pexels.com



Source: Pexel.com



Source: Pexel.com

- **Dreamworks Animation offers a paid 8-week immersive fellowship to 15 students who attend an HBCU.** This fellowship offers professional development as well as the ability to strengthen the skills of the candidate to be successful at DreamWorks or in any setting. In addition to the hard and soft skills development, the HBCU students are able to network with DreamWorks officials for advice. The final component of this fellowship consists of an interview and application to work at DreamWorks.
  
- In 2021, **EA games partnered with the National Football League (NFL) to host a competition for HBCU students to compete; the prizes were not only cash prizes but also the chance to win an “experienceship” with EA Games.** In this experienceship, the 16 winners are granted access to their west coast headquarters for professional development, job shadowing, and speaker series to influence them to pursue the field of gaming, animation, and machine learning.
  
- **Adobe has pledged to assist 50 students who attend an HBCU in their HBCUs Ignite Scholarship.** This scholarship program aims to close the gaps in the digital divide as well as increase diversity in tech by providing students who have an interest in computer science, data analysis, design, and finance. To fuel their desire and passion to work at Adobe or anywhere else, this scholarship program provides career readiness techniques/tactics, digital tools, financial assistance, networking, job shadowing, and training.

## DEI Focused Apprenticeship Programs

Acknowledging the effects of inequitable gaps in education, and resources on self-efficacy and academic performance, companies have prioritized not only introducing opportunities through apprenticeships for undergraduate students but high school students, especially those in underserved areas or those that attend Title I schools.

→ Snapchat has partnered with Black Entertainment Television (BET) to create the Get Schooled organization that aims to provide the tools and services that many students may not have. In a survey they conducted, they found that **20% of high school students had never been on a college campus**. Partnering with Snapchat, this initiative utilizes both social media and technology to not only assess their needs but support them throughout the college application process. By providing access and information about HBCUs through hosting HBCU college tours, students can understand that college is possible.

→ Zillow has partnered with the **United Negro College Fund (UNCF)**, and **Black Tech Ventures** to host a **Housing Hackathon**. This apprenticeship aims to increase diversity in the tech world by creating a pipeline for those early in their careers. This apprenticeship allows HBCU students the opportunity to not only strengthen both soft and hard skills but allows them to apply their skills, and solutions in real-time to focus on housing issues. This apprenticeship provides development, networking, and team-building experience.



Source: Pexel.com



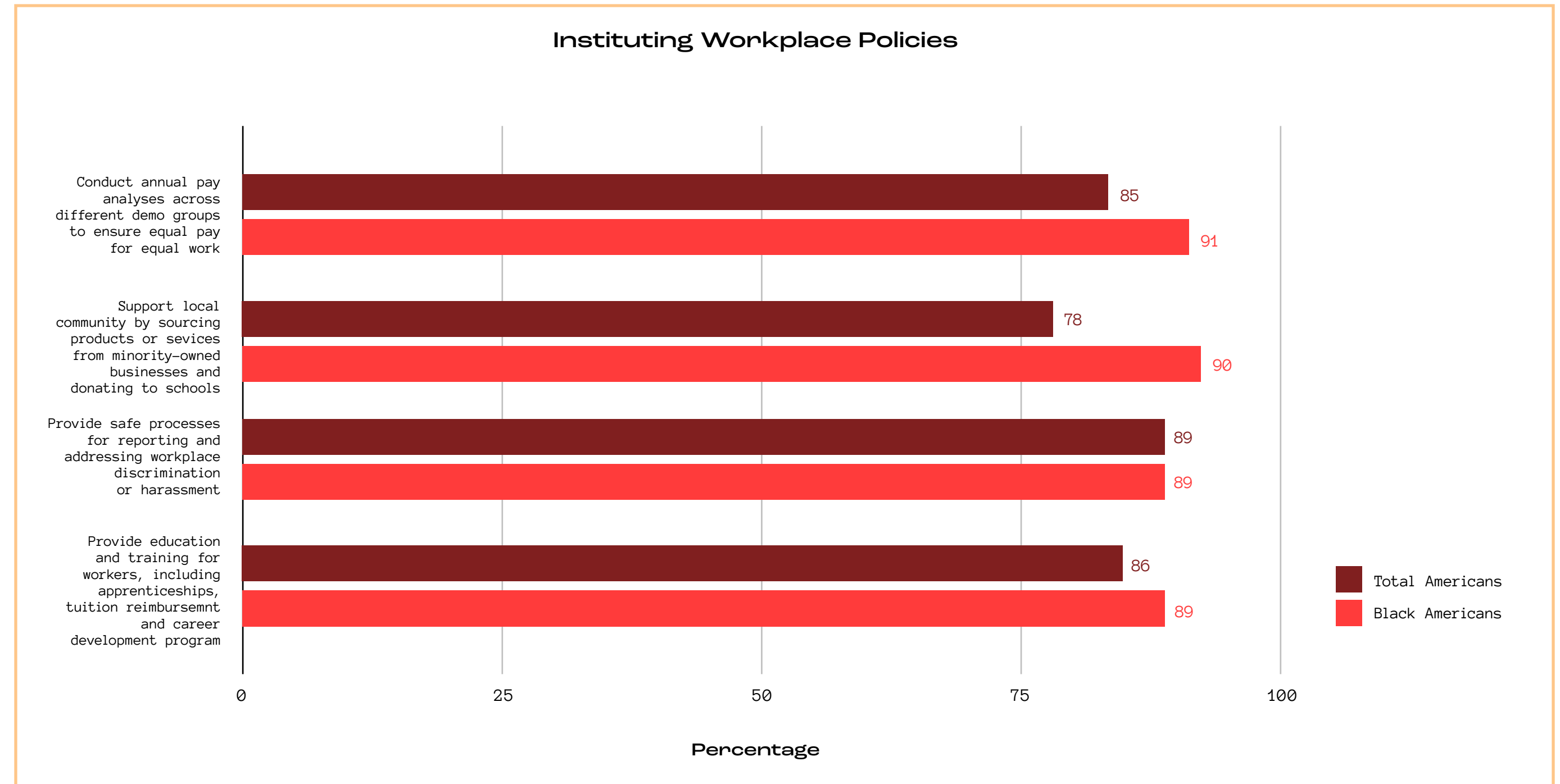
# → State of the Pledge: Future of Work for Blacks in Tech and Innovation

There is still much work to be done to ensure the Black community is represented and provided with advancement opportunities within the tech space. Below are a few recommendations on ways tech companies can continue to make progress:

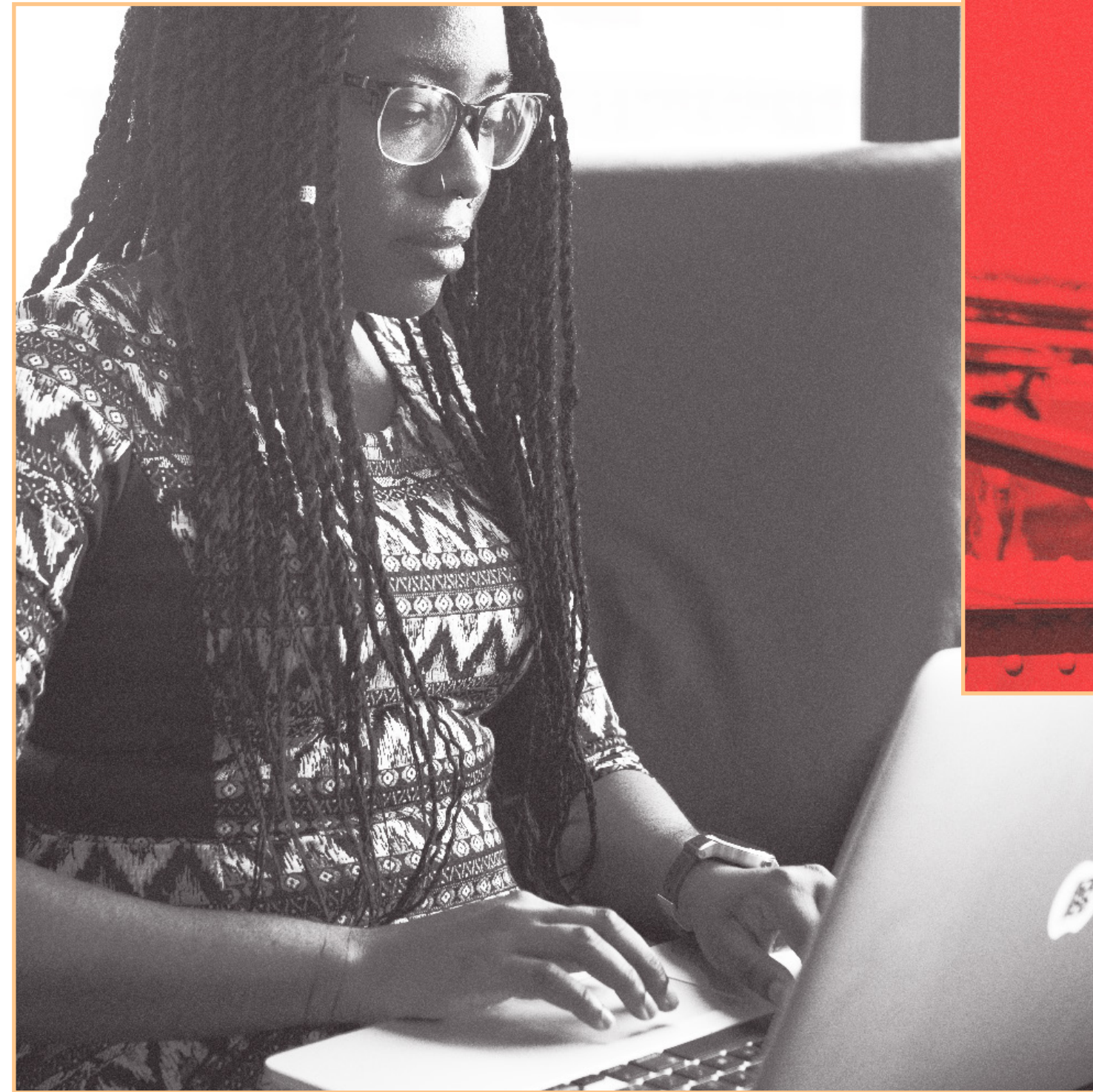


Source: Pexel.com

1. Prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts among Blacks. Focus your attention on eliminating hiring and promotion biases, as well as the pay gap impacting Black employees. Looking beyond the numbers, there needs to be a paradigm shift within the systematic functions of the tech sector. Simple diversity pledges will not make organizations more inclusive. Survey your Black employee workforce to identify and understand the challenges they are facing and create strategies to improve your workforce. **Over 73% of Americans feel key policies and practices are critical to moving the needle in advancing racial equity in the workplace—instituting a range of corporate diversity, equity, and inclusion policies and actions.** Areas of improvement include but are not limited to the workplace policies listed in the following chart:



2. Expanding the Black tech pipeline by connecting with HBCUs and providing resources, including but not limited to laptops, software, and books. Additionally, expand your outreach even further by building relationships with school districts to ensure Black students have exposure to STEM-related materials.



Source: Pexel.com



Source: Pexel.com

3. Connect with organizations like Congressional Caucus on Black Innovation, to join conversations around legislation and donate resources to support bills including voter suppression and the George Floyd Justice and Policing Act.

# Endnotes

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2. All financial commitments' data is as of December 2020.
3. Within the quotes, some identifying details may have been altered and/or withheld to protect the speaker's anonymity.

## About The Plug

The Plug is a subscription-based digital news and insights platform covering the Black innovation economy. We believe in the power of data and diversity to bring the startup and tech community full-scale. Our newsletter seeks to set a standard for the expansion and depth of diverse and inclusive entrepreneurship, startup environments, and technological progress. We believe in quality journalism and reporting to bring underserved and under-covered entrepreneurs and their companies to the forefront of tech's evolution. We help our readers connect to important tech stories that cover ground beyond the usual cast of characters. We open our coverage and analysis in and beyond Silicon Valley to track the hustlers making moves across the world.

## About Blacks In Tech Foundation

Our goal and mission is to “stomp the divide” between Black tech workers and to fundamentally influence and effect change on an industry that has historically not sought parity with respect to Black workers. Our intent is to level the playing field through training, education, networking, and mentorship with the support of allies, partners, sponsors, and most importantly our global members.