

2017 DIVERSITY & INCLUSION YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SURVEY

When it comes to shouting up our community, we want a full-throated endorsement. But right now, Black young professionals (YPs) are far less likely than their peers—men and women of all other races—to recommend Greater Omaha as a place to live and work. What disparities are fueling this lack of enthusiasm and what can we do about them?

To gain a better understanding and a foothold on solutions, the Greater Omaha Chamber and the Urban League of Nebraska partnered with University of Nebraska Omaha evaluation program to take the pulse of Greater Omaha's young professionals, conducting an online survey and in-person focus groups between January and March 2017.

Everyone considered in the analysis was 20–40 years old and currently living in Greater Omaha.

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

Almost Twice as Likely to be Female



* .4% Transgender, 1.2% Prefer not to answer

Many had children



Half were Married



Half were Homeowners



Had a Bachelor's Degree or Above

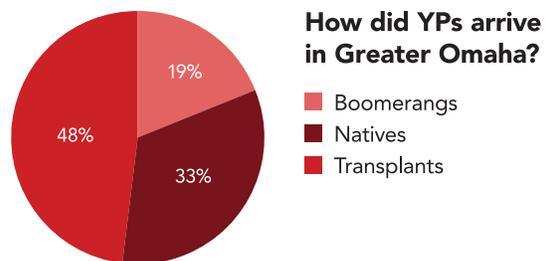
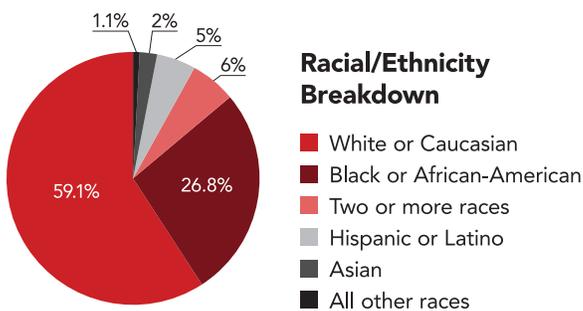


THEMES EMERGED

In compiling the results of the online survey and focus groups, two main themes emerged that highlight differences between the experiences of Black young professionals and all other YPs:

- Access to Opportunities
- Connectedness

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



Black YPs were more likely to be Boomerangs or Natives than other YPs.

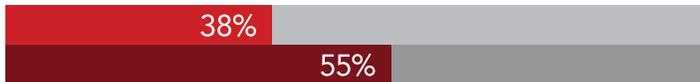
KEY FINDINGS

A majority of Black YPs are not satisfied in the workplace and believe there are not equal opportunities for them.

Job Satisfaction



Satisfaction with Compensation



Equal Opportunities for Hiring



Equal Opportunity for Promotion and Advancement



Workplace Diversity & Inclusivity

- 53% of all YPs felt their workplace was not diverse.
- Only 67% of Black YPs felt their workplace was inclusive and welcoming, compared to 79% of all other races.

Black YPs aspire to own a business.

While feelings emerged around dissatisfaction in the traditional workplace, Black YP respondents overwhelmingly reported a higher aspiration to own a small business than their peers.

Aspire to Own a Small Business



KEY

- Black YPs
- Other Races

“ A lot of times when they hire at [organization] they talk about hiring people that our culture fits but really that turns into hiring people just like us [white]. ”

– Black YP Focus Group Participant

“ The Diversity & Inclusion initiative has not changed the way we talk about race. It’s just like a box we can check off to say it’s been done. It’s like, ‘This is what everyone is saying we should do, so now we’ve done it. Ok, let’s get back to work.’ ”

– Black YP Focus Group Participant

“ Omaha has very little for African Americans of all ages and even less for young African Americans. Music, culture, job opportunities are non-existent. I go to Kansas City for most of my entertainment. Swim Trials, CWS, etc. are fine, but they do nothing for the young African American and their desire to stay. Swimming and Baseball are largely white sports. Both my kids left Omaha because of cultural deficiencies and lack of job opportunities. ”

– Survey Respondent

Fewer Black YPs have a professional mentor.

A common theme throughout the findings was the benefit of having – and the disadvantage of not having – a professional network.

Have a Professional Mentor



Open-ended responses consistently summarized this point:

“ Omaha is a family town, social circles are tight, and advancement seems to be about who you know, not what you know. ”

– Survey Respondent

“ Not having a professional mentor is like not having an example of what’s possible here. ”

– Survey Respondent

Black YPs feel less connected to the community.

The majority of Black YP respondents revealed that feeling a sense of community is essential in order to call a place home, yet the group perceives a strong lack of access and resources to feel connected.

I agree that...

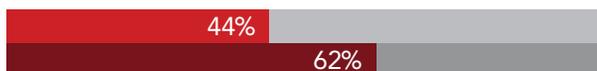
I can get what I need in Greater Omaha



Greater Omaha helps me fulfill my needs



I feel connected to Greater Omaha



I feel like a member of Greater Omaha



Other questions provided insight into disparities in satisfaction with social elements of the community.

The largest disparities exist in the aspects of local arts and culture and friendliness of neighbors, which were important to all YPs.

- A 24% disparity existed between groups with just 51% of Black YPs satisfied with the local arts and music scene compared to 75% of all other races.
- 57% Black YP respondents were satisfied with the friendliness of their neighbors compared to 80% of other YPs, a difference of 23%.
- Nearly all YPs rated public schools as important, but 22% fewer Black YPs were satisfied with the current state of Greater Omaha’s public schools.

Black YPs are less inclined to stay.

Greater Omaha has successfully attracted YPs – almost half of the survey respondents were transplants. However, retention remains a challenge, especially considering racial disparities.

Would choose to live somewhere other than Greater Omaha



Anticipate Living in Greater Omaha in the next five years



Over a quarter of all respondents described a lack of diversity, isolation and racism as reasons for not choosing Omaha.

When asked why respondents would not choose Greater Omaha, 469 open-ended responses were collected.

Among the variety of responses provided, 127 reflected sentiments that Omaha does not have diverse residents, feelings of isolation or specific references to discrimination.

“ I would choose to live somewhere else because my children cannot be what they do not see. My child would not have the ability to see Black doctors, lawyers, CEOs, community leaders, etc. Why would I choose to raise a family in this environment when there are other cities that do not struggle with this representation? ”

– Survey Respondent

TIMELINE OF ACTION



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HISTORY & METHODOLOGY

The project was motivated by a 2015 YP survey, conducted by the Greater Omaha Chamber, that found Black and African-American YPs were 5 to 6 times less likely to recommend Omaha than any other race.

To delve deeper into the issue and gain a better understanding of racial disparities among YPs in Greater Omaha, the Greater Omaha Chamber and the Urban League of Nebraska worked with an independent University of Nebraska Omaha evaluation program, Support for the Training and Evaluation of Programs (STEPS).

A task force (comprised of Chamber and Urban League staff + volunteers from both organization's YP groups) met with UNO STEPs to write and design the survey questions. The groups then utilized a convenience sample method to collect responses from young professionals via social media, email and group outreach.

- The online survey was open January through March 2017 and collected 675 responses which fit within the selected parameters for age and location.
- Directly following the close of the survey, UNO STEPs conducted focus groups on specific topics with select Black YPs.
- Then, they analyzed the survey and focus group responses to find the significant differences of experiences between Black YPs and YPs of all other races.

Working with STEPs provided a participatory, evidence-based approach to this effort that was grounded in communication and collaboration between partner organizations. All organizations were inspired to act on key issues to ultimately impact the attraction and retention of all YPs in the region.