

MadREP: Releases 2021 Workplace Diversity & Inclusion Survey findings

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Building on the success of its groundbreaking Workplace Diversity & Inclusion Surveys from 2015 through 2020, MadREP launched its 6th survey in early 2021.

Madison, WI – Madison, WI – The Madison Region Economic Partnership President (MadREP) today announced the results of their 2021 Workplace Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Survey. This is the sixth year MadREP has partnered with the UW-River Falls Survey Research Center (SRC) to administer the project.

The survey was sent to a random sample of 1,895 employers (drawn from 5,634 organizations with 10 or more employees) between February – March 2021 and received 270 responses, for a confidence interval of plus/minus 5.8%.

"In terms of representation of women and people of color in various roles in organizations in the MadREP region, 2021 was generally a continuation of positive trends," said Gene Dalhoff, MadREP Vice President of Talent and Education. "People of color and women continue to hold larger proportions of boards of directors, the total workforce and top leadership positions," he added.

In 2021, higher proportions of organizations reported having staff with diversity and inclusion responsibilities, having written diversity goals and a written statement, and allowing employees to voluntarily self-identify gender preferences and disabilities. Diversity practices appear to be more similar across the counties in the MadREP region and across organizations of different employment sizes than they have been in the past. Overall, the 2021 equity and inclusion survey results were relatively positive in terms of representation of women and people of color in the MadREP area workforce:

- Representation of women and people of color on boards of directors were at or near all-time highs relative to previous surveys.
- The proportion of people of color in the overall workforce slightly exceeds their proportion of the total population and women were a majority of the total workforce.
- The proportion of both women and people of color in top leadership positions has increased over time since 2016, with the percentage of women in top leadership positions having increased by an average of 2.5% each year from 2016-2021.
- The proportion of organizations with a staff position responsible for diversity and inclusion efforts reached an all-time high in 2021.
- The 2021 results do not indicate that women and people of color suffered disproportionately from layoffs associated with the economic downturn of 2020-21.
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Additionally, survey results indicate that the gender and racial/ethnic diversity of boards of directors in the MadREP area expanded or at least did not decline substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 results also do not indicate that women and people of color suffered disproportionately from layoffs associated with the economic downturn of 2020-21.

"In summation," said MadREP CEO Jason M. Fields, "the 2021 results generally continued positive trends seen since 2016. However, we must remember that there is still more work for us to do as a region to embrace diversity and inclusion as a means of economic development. MadREP will continue its work to promote equitable growth for all our region's citizens."

As with the earlier editions, this year's survey was used to capture quantitative and qualitative data about workforce demographics, supplier diversity programs, and community engagement while providing companies with a vehicle to self-assess strengths and opportunities relative to diversity in their workforce. The results of the annual Workplace D&I Survey play an important role in informing the content of the annual Madison Region Economic Development & Diversity Summit, an event created and co-hosted by MadREP and the Urban League of Greater Madison. This year's event will take place virtually on Tuesday, November 30 and Wednesday December 1.

The inclusion of a diverse workforce is seen by MadREP as essential to the sustained economic growth of the region and assessing the progress of diversity and inclusion efforts by Madison Region employers is a vital to growing the Madison Region economy. The [full report](#) is available on MadREP's website.

About Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP)

MadREP is the economic development agency for the eight-county Madison Region, founded by business and community leaders to create a dynamic environment where people and businesses prosper. MadREP and its partners aim to proactively and strategically position the region to take advantage of economic and business development opportunities. Learn more at madisonregion.org.