

## Opinions and Experiences: Economic Mobility

Workers associate their discrimination experiences – or the possibility that they might experience discrimination in the future – with their ability to get ahead in the workplace. Four percent of workers who say discrimination is a not a problem in their workplaces also say that their race or ethnicity has made it harder for them to succeed at work, compared to 24% of workers who say discrimination is a problem. When asked if their race or ethnicity has had an impact on their success at work – asking if it has made it harder, easier, or not made much difference – one in three Black females (36%) and Asian-American males (29%) say their race or ethnicity has made success more difficult, compared to 2% of White females and 5% of White males (Table 67).<sup>26</sup> There are no differences by income on this measure (Table 68).

### Question:

*Has your race or ethnicity made it harder or easier for you to succeed at work, or has your race or ethnicity not made much difference?*

Total Sample	Asian-American Female Workers	Asian-American Male Workers	Black Female Workers	Black Male Workers	Latino Female Workers	Latino Male Workers	White Female Workers	White Male Workers
11%	22%	29%	36%	24%	19%	17%	2%	5%

Table 67: Race or Ethnicity Has Made it Harder to Succeed at Work, by Race and Ethnicity and Gender

### Question:

*Has your race or ethnicity made it harder or easier for you to succeed at work, or has your race or ethnicity not made much difference?*

Total Sample	Asian-American Workers <\$50K	Asian-American Workers \$50K+	Black Workers <\$50K	Black Workers \$50K+	Latino Workers <\$50K	Latino Workers \$50K+	White Workers <\$50K	White Workers \$50K+
11%	27%	25%	31%	30%	19%	17%	3%	3%

Table 68: Race or Ethnicity Has Made It Harder to Succeed at Work, by Race and Ethnicity and Income

When asked to explain why their race or ethnicity has made it harder to succeed at work, as seen in Table 69, 1 in 4 (28%) referred to racial and ethnic discrimination in general, and 1 in 10 referenced stereotypes (12%) and the need to work harder than other workers because of their identity/identities (12%). See Appendix F for explanations in workers' own words.

## Question:

### *Why do you think your race or ethnicity has made it harder to succeed at work?*

12%	Need to work harder than others; held to different standards because of identity(ies)
28%	Discrimination toward racial and ethnic minorities (direct)
12%	General racial/ethnic stereotypes (indirect)
7%	Institutionalized racism and/or discrimination
7%	Predominantly White space
3%	Lack of access to opportunities/overlooked or passed over
6%	Bias against cultural and/or language differences
4%	Reverse discrimination
16%	Other
1%	Gender discrimination
2%	Skipped

**Table 69: Coded Responses**

When asked about their current jobs, three in four U.S. workers say income is very important. As shown in Table 70, Black workers are more likely to say that education and training opportunities, and promotion opportunities, are very important (57% and 63%, respectively) compared to White workers (31% and 44%, respectively). Also, 4 in 10 workers say their relationship with colleagues is a very important aspect of their job. Across the categories, there are differences in opinions about economic mobility opportunities. Workers of color are more likely to say that access to education and training and promotion opportunities are very important, compared to White workers. Yet, of these workers who say education and promotion opportunities are at least somewhat important, a majority of workers of color say they are satisfied.

### **On the relationship between discrimination and mobility**

"Passed over for a lot of opportunities. Co-workers and I have discussed it. One co-worker had been trying to move up and the same thing happened to her. Experience, credentials do not matter. Your color, your background, your gender matter. I've been passed up on many promotional opportunities. Every time it was a male who got the position, even if less experienced."

- Black female teacher

**Question:*****How important to you are the following aspects of your job?***

	Asian-American Workers	Black Workers	Latino Workers	White Workers
Income	74%	77%	79%	76%
Access to promotion or advancement opportunities	54%	63%	57%	44%
Access to more education and training opportunities from employers	48%	57%	45%	31%
Feeling included or welcomed in the workplace	52%	55%	53%	47%
Doing work that is meaningful to you or makes a difference	51%	57%	53%	52%
Relationship with colleagues	44%	36%	43%	41%
Relationship with supervisors	54%	50%	57%	48%

**Table 70: Very Important Job Attributes, by Race and Ethnicity**

There are few meaningful differences between workers when asking about their satisfaction with these job attributes (Table 71).<sup>27</sup>

**Question:*****Thinking about your main job...how satisfied are you with...?***

	Asian-American Workers	Black Workers	Latino Workers	White Workers
Income	29%	36%	32%	29%
Access to promotion or advancement opportunities	27%	34%	35%	24%
Access to more education and training opportunities from employer	25%	33%	32%	29%
Feeling included or welcomed in the workplace	36%	44%	43%	47%
Doing work that is meaningful to you or makes a difference	35%	45%	43%	39%
Relationship with colleagues	37%	39%	41%	42%
Relationship with supervisors	37%	39%	44%	44%

**Table 71: Ranking of Very Satisfied Job Attributes, by Race and Ethnicity**

The workers who indicated that they had opportunities for promotion at work were asked a series of questions about these advancement opportunities.<sup>28</sup> Of the four question items asked, there were no significant differences between workers of different races or ethnicities, other than, “I’ve never had a promotion at work, but want one.” While 78% of workers who say they have promotion or advancement opportunities in their job say there is a clear path or way for someone to get promoted (with no important differences by race or ethnicity, age and race/ethnicity, or income and race/ethnicity), nearly half of Black (47%), Latino (47%), and Asian-American (46%) workers say they’ve never had a promotion at work, but want one, compared to 27% of White workers (Table 72). There are no differences by income gender, or age on this measure.

### On the relationship between discrimination and mobility

“But I do see that the people that don’t probably have the experience, but they’re from a different race, have been promoted fairly fast. I wanna say, I think through the interactions and talking with those people, it just feels like they have some kind of privilege, while the people of color or people of different ethnicities and backgrounds have to put in like three times the work like they have to tell them, what do you do? How, what extra things have you done? The people who are not literally, in my opinion, doing a lot of that extra. But they promote them easily.”

- Black female working in corporate banking

### Question:

*How well do each of the following phrases describe your opportunities for promotion or advancement at work? I've never had a promotion at work, but want one.*

Total Sample	Asian-American Female Workers	Asian-American Male Workers	Black Female Workers	Black Male Workers	Latino Female Workers	Latino Male Workers	White Female Workers	White Male Workers
35%	42%	48%	49%	45%	45%	48%	31%	24%

Table 72: Want Promotion/Never Had One, by Race and Ethnicity and Gender

### On receiving raises, but not promotions

“There have been people that have started at that center in the less amount of time than me, and they’ve been promoted. They’re not as knowledgeable in different areas as I was, and they’ve been promoted. So I personally took it, as it has to do with my race, because what other reason could it be?”

- Black female working in a large distribution center

While few differences on these measures were observed by race or ethnicity, in addition, younger workers are more likely to report that they get regular promotions: 69% of Latino workers ages 18 to 44 say they get regular promotions or advance regularly, compared to 41% of Latino workers age 45 and over. This holds true for Black workers (65% vs. 51%).

There are also differences by gender and race/ethnicity when asking about these opportunities being limited for Latino workers: two in three Latino females (66%) compared to one in two Latino males (49%).

### **On how a “diversity” and “non-discrimination” culture in a worker of color’s current workplace is related to his satisfaction with mobility within the company**

“Because I think I feel comfortable. And you know, building my career with the company because I understand that there’s not those discriminations against the fact that well, I’m Hispanic. The other person may be Caucasian or Black, and you know the interviewer may be somebody who’s a different race than me. By the way, you know the best person who should get the job is going to get it, not because their races match each other, you know.”

- Latino male working for an insurance company

### **On the relationship between discrimination and productivity**

“Some days I’m not motivated to show up just sometimes with the current climate. Where is the effect that my attendance is like, do I really wanna go to work? I really don’t wanna go to work.”

- Black female retail pharmacist

### **On mobility in general, starting with postsecondary education**

“There is a very low margin for people going into higher education. You yourself have a higher expectation for yourself because you carrying the weight of others on your back. Even when I walk through the hospital now, there are patients who are Black/African American and they pat you on your back, they shake your hand, and say that they are proud of you.

The weight that they carry with you when you are trying to get to that point...A lot of us are doing this for our families – two, even three generations of our families, for our communities, for our entire ethnicity, for our entire group.

Carrying all of this in general is not the same weight that others have to carry.”

“The hardest part is over in terms of getting there, but there is still work to do.”

- Black male working in health care