

Conclusion

Significant percentages of Asian-American, Black, and Latino workers say that they think discrimination based on race and ethnicity is happening in private sector and government workplaces. According to survey respondents, discrimination at work because of race or ethnicity is happening in their current workplaces, but also occurred in past workplaces. Workers of color also report that they have witnessed or heard about these situations, even if the discrimination was not against them personally. While most workers say the discrimination they experienced was intentional, others say that unconscious bias had an impact.

Overall, workers are most likely to say that there are workers who get better treatment than others because of race or ethnicity in general. While surveys can measure prevalence of various experiences, most workers either recall a specific experience or expect that they will not (or have never) experience worse treatment in their workplace, compared to other workers, because of their race or ethnicity. The most frequent discrimination situation reported is that some workers get better treatment than others because of race or ethnicity (a general descriptor that encompasses a wide range of experiences and situations). However, respondents are more likely to report that they have experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in a previous job, than in their current job. And majorities say they consider these situations discrimination.

Black females are more likely to say, than all other races and ethnicities and gender identities, that discrimination at work is a problem. Workers tell stories about witnessing these situations and their own personal experience with discrimination and economic mobility captured by the survey, open-ended responses, and interviews. Workers associate diversity with discrimination and mobility; that is, they describe situations where discrimination experiences have affected their ability to succeed in the workplace and get ahead.

U.S. workers are largely in agreement that it is necessary to have laws to protect against discrimination in hiring and promotions in workplaces, and that the diversity of a company should reflect the diversity of the community wherein a workplace is located. Workers of color are more likely to say, compared to White workers, that government should help or require employers maintain a certain level of diversity in the workplace, and that unions are needed to help increase equity for workers of color in workplaces .

Black workers are more likely to say that race and ethnicity, in addition to qualifications, should be taken into account when hiring to increase diversity, and are more likely to say that people of color should get preference in hiring or promotions because of past discrimination. In addition, workers who think racial and ethnic discrimination is a problem in workplaces today are more likely to say they expect government to play a role in diversity, equity, inclusion, and discrimination issues in the workplace, compared to workers who think discrimination is not a problem. A majority of workers say that their current workplaces value racial and ethnic diversity, and agree that they want to work for a company that values diversity. Black workers are more likely to say they want to work for a company that values diversity, rather than reporting that their current workplaces do value it.

Majorities of workers also say they want to work for companies that actively speak out against racial and ethnic discrimination. However, fewer Black and Asian-American workers say they work in places where that is actually the case. Most workers say that diversity, equity, inclusion, or discrimination policies and programs make their current workplaces better; help increase equity, diversity, and inclusion; and reduce discrimination, with little or no differentiation between these descriptors or among workers. Fewer workers say the policies do enough or go too far.

In the post-survey interviews, several important ideas related to diversity, equity, discrimination, and mobility emerged, including:

- The role that racial and ethnic discrimination having to do with customers affects frontline workers.
- **The impact of hybrid or remote work: workers of color indicated that they believe they experienced fewer situations of unfair treatment/discrimination when they are working remotely, compared to working in person.**
- How workers associate discrimination with limiting their mobility in the workplace – some earned raises but sought promotions. A raise and a promotion are viewed distinctly by some workers – who have received regular pay increases but never had a promotion – and attribute it to racial and ethnic discrimination.

Questions for Future Research and Work

As U.S. workers acknowledge that there **is** a problem of racial and ethnic discrimination in workplaces today – regardless of their race or ethnicity – what needs to be done now, and by who, to address it? Employers can consider:

- Addressing the role that unconscious bias plays in perceived discrimination experiences at work;
- Investing in more robust reporting pathways for incidents of discrimination;
- Improving recruiting practices that result in hiring more employees from local communities;
- Demonstrating that the organization values diversity and speaking out against racial and ethnic discrimination;
- Effectively communicating the value of diversity, equity, and non-discrimination in the workplace;
- Reimagining the role of human resources and diversity, equity, and inclusion executives, managers, and frontline staff;
- Exploring best practices for labor unions, advocacy groups, and employers to work proactively and more collaboratively to develop more substantiable pathways toward addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion issues in the workplace;

- ▶ Learning from a methodological standpoint about the various definitions and terms used in the survey, and how they affect perspectives and reported experiences about discrimination in the workplace;
- ▶ Chronicling the mental health impact on employees related to discrimination and bias in the workplace; and
- ▶ Encouraging more research on the loss of productivity and pursuit of excellence due to discrimination in the workplace.