



# MEETING IN A BOX:

## A Look Back at 2022

As the year comes to a close, we here at DiversityInc want to thank our readers and look back at some of the stories we shared this year as part of our monthly Meeting in a Box offering.

It has been a year in which the word diversity itself has come under attack and has been used as fuel in spreading divisive rhetoric. The push toward equity and inclusion continues, but in a year where *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned, the LGBTQ+ community demonized and systems of discrimination held firmly in place, it's as clear as ever that we have more work to do as we move toward 2023.

Whether that work is done as individuals or organizations in the community, or as teams within our organization, this Meeting in a Box is designed to look back at 2022 and set the table for the year to come.

With a majority of new entrants into the workforce being non-white, it's important that employers understand and recognize the challenges people from those communities face. This edition includes many of the stories from our Meetings in a Box that are heritage and community focused.

It can be used as a tool to drive discussions around DEI initiatives, organizational goals and establishing new priorities for Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).

## Suffering in Silence

Mental health is a topic that has had a stigma attached to it for several generations. For some cultures, that stigma is more severe than others and in the case of the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, perceptions of mental health practices are changing between generations.

But even as younger members of the AAPI community seek mental health resources, they face challenges from a care system that doesn't understand AAPI cultures and misunderstandings perpetuated by the "model minority" myth.

In our AAPI Heritage Month Meeting in a Box, we took a closer look at the mental health crisis unfolding in the AAPI community due to incorrect diagnoses, a lack of culturally relevant and sensitive treatment, and taboos and fears around treatment of mental health conditions.

[Read more](#)

## The Complexity of Afro-Latino Identity in the United States

Afro-Latinos experience an ethnic intersectionality that is unique to cultures that have suffered the consequences of colonialism. Roughly 6 million adults, or 12% of the Latino population in the United States, identify as Afro-Latino and are navigating a world where both colorism and racism effect their everyday experiences.

How Afro-Latinos see themselves and whether they feel our society around them recognizes their identity is an ever-evolving equation. In our Hispanic Heritage Month Meeting in a Box, we explored some of the complexities that make up the reality of Afro-Latinos in the United States and what sort of education is needed to help people better understand the nuances of the African diaspora and their experiences in the Americas and Caribbean.

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## Grooming a Narrative

Over the past year, we've seen many attacks on the LGBTQ+ community in forms of physical violence, identity politics and rhetoric and more. And with the signing of Florida's "Don't Say Gay Bill" and other anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, conservative pundits have taken to labeling anyone who disagrees with them as "groomers," a term that's rooted in fear and used as a propaganda tool similar to how "thug" has been used to create fear of various ethnic groups.

The term "groomer" refers to psychological manipulation and coercion used by sexual predators to abuse their victims without getting caught and is being used to describe people who are helping kids understand sexual and personal identity in a different way than what's been taught to previous generations. This mischaracterization is a clear attempt to create fear and anger of the LGBTQ+ community and its supporters.

We looked at how this trend of using "groomer" is just the latest chapter in a long history of using rhetoric to attack the LGBTQ+ community and how hate and politics infiltrate our language.

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## A Century of Struggle – How the Pandemic Highlighted the Stifling of Black America

The COVID-19 pandemic marked the first global pandemic since 1918, where more than 50-100 million people around the world died from influenza. What's often underreported is the number of Black Americans who died during that time despite claims that less Black Americans died due to segregated neighborhoods serving as a form of quarantine.

While the U.S. has come a long way from white workers refusing to dig graves for Black Americans, the loss of life in the Black community due to COVID-19 is a reminder of the work that needs to be done when it comes to equity.

While the COVID Racial Data Tracker stopped collecting new data in March 2021, it showed a troubling trend: Black or African American people were dying at a rate 2.4 times that of white people because of a lack of access to care, higher risk of exposure at work, higher poverty rates and more.

That's not the only inequity that was brought about by the pandemic: as schools started closing and going to remote learning, it also shed light on the digital divide that exists in America. Reports show that Black and Hispanic households with school-aged children have limited access to internet and were more likely to live in districts where schools were remote-only.

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## COVID19 and the Future of Native Languages

Many Native American cultures have experienced a forced assimilation into American culture, which has made it hard for them to keep their languages alive. The COVID-19 pandemic has made that more challenging since elders are the ones who pass along native languages and are at greater risk for infection. To help save native languages, a more significant state response with additional resources and support for Native American communities is needed. To stop the spread of COVID and help those who have it, more access to medical services and vaccinations is needed in Native communities.

While it's been said that there's hesitancy among communities of color in getting the vaccine, that's simply not the case with Native American communities. A study published by the Urban Indian Health Institute indicated that 75% of Native Americans were willing to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, compared to just 56% of the broader U.S. population at that time. Despite this, roughly 45% of the Native American population in the U.S. remains unvaccinated.

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## Women See Gains in Employment in 2021

After the wave of women who exited the workforce in 2020 due to the pandemic and demands placed disproportionately on women at home, more than a million women reentered the workforce in 2021.

Progression back into the workplace wasn't equal among demographics, however, with Black women experiencing a shakier pandemic recovery than other groups. This year, we dug into the numbers and what it was going to take in 2022 to help women find their way back into the workplace in our Women's History Month Meeting in a Box.

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## Achieving Success and Support for Neurodivergent Employees

For all the talk about disability awareness, data from the National Organization on Disability (NOD) shows that people with disabilities continue to be prioritized less than other diversity segments when it comes to recruiting and professional development.

For many people with disabilities, their workplace experience does not match what companies build their employer brand on for all other groups. Neurodiversity continues to be something companies struggle to understand in a way that allows them to get the most from those employees.

In our National Disability Employment Awareness Month Meeting in a Box, we explored how companies can make neurodiversity a tenet of their DEI strategy and examined some success stories from organizations that have done just that.

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