Timeline

Black History Month takes place in February to celebrate the history, culture, achievements and resilience of the Black community in the United States. The month of reflection and celebration recognizes the Black community’s contributions to U.S. history, despite the racism, violence and other systemic obstacles Black people have faced since the country was founded.

This Meeting in a Box is designed to be a valuable tool that you can share with your staff to enhance your team’s cultural competence skills and celebrate the contributions Black Americans have made to the U.S. as well as the entire world.

1837 - Nat Turner leads a slave rebellion in Virginia, resulting in more than 50 deaths. Turner is eventually captured after more than two months and hanged.

1837 - Dred Scott, an enslaved man, seeks freedom for himself and his wife, Harriet Robinson Scott. For four years, the couple lived in Illinois and Wisconsin territory, where slavery was legal. Scott and his wife said that freedom from slavery in these territories should not come back. They argued that slaves and their descendants should be considered free, as long as they were not property of any state. The case decided in 1857 was a landmark in the debate over slavery in the United States. The decision was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court and led to the Civil War.

1850 - The 15th Amendment is ratified, giving Black men the right to vote. The fight for equality continued, however, as states continued to institute literacy tests and voter suppression tactics.

1858 - The first civil rights law is passed, but it didn’t fully address the issues of segregation and discrimination.

1860 - The Civil War begins, with the Union and Confederate armies facing off. The war would last four years and result in more than 600,000 deaths.

1865 - The Civil War ends, with the Confederacy投降. The 14th Amendment is ratified, granting citizenship to all Black people and providing a legal basis for their freedom.

1870 - The 15th Amendment is ratified, granting Black men the right to vote. It was followed by the 19th Amendment in 1920, granting Black women the right to vote.

1900 - William H. Carney becomes the first Black man to receive the Medal of Honor for his service in the Civil War.

1905 - Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama. Her act of resistance leads to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, led in part by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the end of racial segregation on public transit in the city.

1915 - The Silent Film Mising the Titanic, also known as the Titanic, is released. It becomes one of the first worldwide hits.

1921 - The Tulsa Race Massacre, also known as the Oklahoma City Race Massacre, is one of the most devastating events in American history, with more than 300 people killed.

1938 - Marilyn Monroe, the first Black woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the U.N., is born in 1930. The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to the Black person who is the most outstanding in the field of non-violent action to promote world peace.

1947 - The Three Musketeers, a novel by Alexandre Dumas, is published to great acclaim. Dumas also authors The Count of Monte Cristo and The Three Musketeers.

1952 - The Civil Rights Act of 1957 is signed by President Eisenhower, giving the government more power to protect civil rights against discrimination.

1960 - The Civil Rights Act of 1960 is signed by President Johnson, giving the government more power to protect civil rights against discrimination.

1963 - Martin Luther King Jr. gives his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.

1965 - The Civil Rights Act of 1965 is signed by President Johnson, giving the government more power to protect civil rights against discrimination.

1973 - The Women's Rights Movement begins, with the creation of the National Organization for Women (NOW).

1980 - The National Foundation for Women is founded in Rochester, New York. The paper is one of the first nationwide Civil Rights organizations and the first Black organization to welcome women as equal partners.

1998 - The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is founded in New York City. The NAACP is one of the first organizations to address the needs of Black people in the United States.

2004 - President Bush signs the Civil Rights Act of 2004, giving the government more power to protect civil rights against discrimination.

2012 - The National Museum of African American History and Culture is founded in Washington, D.C. It is one of the first museums to address the needs of Black people in the United States.

2014 - President Obama signs the Civil Rights Act of 2014, giving the government more power to protect civil rights against discrimination.

2016 - Malcolm X, civil rights activist and former minister in the Nation of Islam, is assassinated in New York City.

2022 - Black History Month takes place in February to celebrate the history, culture, achievements and resilience of the Black community in the United States. The month of reflection and celebration recognizes the Black community’s contributions to U.S. history, despite the racism, violence and other systemic obstacles Black people have faced since the country was founded.
Timeline (1900s-2022)

Following the Civil Rights Movement, the next three decades saw Black Americans take their place on the stage, screen, playing field and halls of power. Today, more Black Americans are playing a major role in government and society than ever before, but a tremendous amount of work remains to be done.
Today, my daughter is standing with fewer voting rights than the moment she was born. Our very democracy is at stake.

A Growing Movement For Voting Rights

As we celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day this year, the struggle he fought so hard to end was highlighted once again by his granddaughter, Yolanda Renee King, as she delivered a speech at the National Cathedral, this time through the lens of voting rights.

“We’ve got to be the generation that defends and extends our most fundamental freedom, the right to cast a vote that counts,” said the 13-year-old.

Her speech comes on the heels of a year when voting rights were steadily under attack. A total of 19 states passed laws restricting access to voting in the wake of the 2020 election, led by Republicans who, a year later, still refuse to accept the legitimacy of the election and, instead, continue to perpetuate the narrative that it was stolen from former President Donald Trump.

But it isn’t just the access to voting itself that is under attack, according to Wendy Weiser, Director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice.

“We have seen a multiprong attack on the foundations of our electoral system and democracy,” she told NPR in December 2021. “We are seeing now also legislation that would enable partisans literally to sabotage election results; in some states, new bills that give partisans power over election administration, allow them to interfere in it, criminalizing aspects of it, meddling in ways that are really jarring and new.”

In recent years, there have been attempts at reducing polling locations in majority-Black districts; shortened timeframes to request absentee ballots, making it more difficult to vote early; tighter restrictions on drive-through voting and voter assistance; limits on the use of ballot drop boxes; and even a ban on government entities providing citizens with unsolicited absentee ballot applications.

The adopted changes and many others that will find their way onto statehouse floors in 2022 are aimed at purging voter polls, creating entire agencies in service of voter-fraud witch hunts and stripping power away from election officials. In the wake of one of the most bizarre and vitriolic elections we may ever see, democracy itself is once again under attack.

Other members of the King family were hyper-focused this year on this issue for a reason. They urged lawmakers to pass the Voting Rights Act and use MLK Day as both a celebration and a rallying cry for activism, preserving the rights of thousands of people to participate in democracy.

“Today, my daughter is standing with fewer voting rights than the moment she was born,” Arndrea Waters King said. “Our very democracy is at stake.”

The year ahead will be fraught with many political battles and endless rhetoric. But if there is one ideal that cannot be lost, it is the power of the vote. In the words of Frederick Douglass: “The true and the easiest way is to make our government entirely consistent with itself and give every loyal citizen the elective franchise.”
A Century Of Struggle: How The Pandemic Has Highlighted The Stifling Of Black America

Prior to COVID-19, the world had not seen a global pandemic since the days of the influenza outbreak of 1918. The number of deaths in the U.S. from that pandemic was more than 675,000, a small percentage of the estimated 50-100 million people killed around the world.

What’s largely unknown about those deaths is the number of Black Americans who perished due to the virus. The available data is largely unreliable, but the loss of life has been significant despite suggestions that Blacks suffered fewer losses than whites due to segregated neighborhoods serving as a form of quarantine. In truth, the numbers more likely have been underreported.

While we have come a long way from white workers refusing to dig graves for deceased Black Americans, the number of people from the Black community dying from COVID-19 reminds us of how much work remains to be done when it comes to equity.

As of March 2021, the COVID Racial Data Tracker stopped collecting new data. But before it did, it highlighted a troubling trend: Black or African American people were dying at a rate 2.4 times that of white people. Black people accounted for approximately 22% of COVID-19 deaths in which race is known, despite making up just 13% of the U.S. population.

The reasons for this stem from a lack of access to care, higher risk of exposure at work, being more likely to live in crowded neighborhoods with higher poverty rates, a reliance on public transportation and higher levels of incarceration or homelessness.

For this reason, public health experts warned of the reality to come from the start of the pandemic in March 2020. Writing for the Washington Post, a pair of Harvard University public health experts said: “Epidemics emerge along the fissures of our society, reflecting not only the biology of the infectious agent but patterns of marginalization, exclusion and discrimination. If this becomes a widespread outbreak, such an epidemic would probably be most devastating for the poorest Americans and for communities of color, who already are dying at younger ages and higher rates from these common conditions.”

And yet, outreach into the community to educate and vaccinate the population has fallen behind. According to Bloomberg’s vaccine tracker, vaccination rates for Black and Hispanic Americans lags behind whites by 10 percentage points or more in almost half of the states around the country as of December 2021. The state that has done the best job closing the Black vaccination rate is Mississippi, which now has a higher vaccination rate for Blacks than whites.
Highlighting Social Inequity

COVID-19’s impact in underscoring the social inequity that Black Americans face has stretched far beyond the walls of healthcare facilities. The pandemic has also impacted the education system already struggling to provide quality education to children from underserved and marginalized communities.

As COVID-19 ran rampant through communities and schools shut down, kids began virtual learning, something many weren’t equipped to do at home. The digital divide showed the stark contrast between the resources and flexibility available to higher-income versus lower-income households. The transition to remote learning also revealed how segregated many school systems still are; according to a report from EdBuild, most American schools are still “racially concentrated.”

A report from UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge of U.S. notes that 40% of Black and Hispanic households with school-aged children have only limited access to the internet and are more likely to live in districts where schools are remote-only.

Under-resourced school systems need help closing the gap, but taxpayer dollars aren’t available for many of them due to the primary source of funding coming from property taxes.

According to EdBuild, predominantly white districts got $23 billion more in funding than non-white districts serving the same number of students.

Another factor is the disproportionate number of Black Americans performing essential jobs that can’t be done remotely. According to the Urban Institute, one-third of Black workers are in essential jobs that require them to work in close proximity to other people, compared to roughly a quarter of whites.

This concentration of sectors considered essential jobs is exacerbated further by the Black population’s higher rate of comorbidities. Consequently, what you have is a community that, a century on from the 1918 influenza pandemic, is still being marginalized, underserved and put at-risk at an alarming rate.

As we celebrate Black History Month and the strides Black Americans have made toward racial equality and equity, we should also acknowledge the harsh reality of how far there is to go.

While technology is a blessing during times like these, the crisis has highlighted that it has yet to become a basic right, despite being mandatory for participation in 21st-century society.
How do you think your organization can better support Black employees for long-term career growth?

- Is the business doing enough to engage with Black consumers?

- Where do you think there are areas of opportunity and improvement for the business around the progression of Black employees?
Available demographic, economic, employment and education data help us understand why achieving equality for Black people is not only right and just but also has profound business and cultural benefits. Interpreting these numbers can offer insight into the work we can do to address issues impacting Black communities. Here, we also include DiversityInc's exclusive data on Black leadership and employment in our Top 50.

**Demographics**

46.7M  
Estimated US Black/African American Population

60.7 M  
Projected Growth by the Year 2060

**Employment**

33.5 M  
Black Civilian Labor Forces, 2020

**Finances**

$61,937  
Median US Income

$44,511  
Black Median Income

$1.4 B  
Black Buying Power

$1.53B  
Buying power of US Black/African American Population

**Education**

Bar chart showing percentage of people with high school diploma and college degree by race/ethnicity:

- Black: 87.1%, 87.7%
- White: 90.4%, 81.0%
- Asian: 85.9%, 70.5%
- Native American: 72.6%
- Hispanic/Latino: 70.5%