



DiversityInc

MEETING IN A BOX

Black History Month

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.

1831 - Nat Turner leads the largest slave rebellion prior to the Civil War in Southampton County, Virginia. Rebelling slaves kill more than 50 people. Turner survives in hiding for more than two months after the rebellion is stomped out.

1857 - Dred Scott, an enslaved man, sues for freedom for himself and his wife, Harriet Robinson Scott. For four years, the couple lived in Illinois and Wisconsin territory, where slavery was illegal, and laws said that slaveholders from other states gave up their rights to own enslaved people if they visited for an extended period of time. The case, Dred Scott v. Sandford, became a nearly decade-long fight through several courts before reaching the Supreme Court. The Court ruled 7–2 against Scott, saying that no Black person could claim citizenship in the U.S. The decision helped stoke the fire for the Civil War in 1861.

1898 - The National Afro American Council is founded in Rochester, NY. It is one of the first nationwide Civil Rights organizations and the first Black organization to welcome women as equal members.



1921 - The Tulsa Race Massacre, also known as the Black Wall Street Massacre, takes place as mobs of white people attack the economically thriving Black neighborhood in the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Hundreds of people were killed, and thousands were left homeless, leaving a devastating mark on Black wealth in the U.S.



1950 - Ralph J. Bunche becomes the first Black person to win the Nobel Peace Prize for his work with the U.N. in the 1940s to mediate the Arab-Israeli conflict in Palestine.

1955 - Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama. Her arrest leads to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, led in part by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1957 The Little Rock Nine integrates Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas.

1962 - Astronaut John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit Earth. Behind this achievement are thousands of people – including a group of Black women who were “human computers” calculating the precise math behind the landing: NASA’s first African American supervisor Dorothy Vaughan, mathematician Katherine Johnson and aeronautical engineer Mary Jackson.

1964 - President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, giving the government more power to protect citizens against race, religion, sex or national-origin discrimination.

Bahamian-American actor Sidney Poitier becomes the first Black man to win the Academy Award for Best Actor for his role as Homer Smith in Lilies of the Field.

1847 - Abolitionist Frederick Douglass founds The North Star, an anti-slavery newspaper based in Rochester, New York. The paper eventually gains more than 4,000 readers across the U.S., Europe and the West Indies.

1870 - The 15th Amendment is ratified, guaranteeing that the right to vote cannot be denied because of race, color or previous condition of servitude. Hiram Rhodes Revels becomes the first Black and Native American member of Congress, representing Mississippi as a Republican.

1889 - Journalist and activist Ida B. Wells becomes co-owner of the Memphis Free Speech and Headlight newspaper founded in 1888 by the Reverend Taylor Nightingale and launches an anti-lynching campaign.

1909 - A group of Black and white activists, including W.E.B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

1947 - Jackie Robinson becomes the first Black person to play Major League Baseball.

1961 - Freedom Rides begin in Washington, D.C. Activists ride buses throughout the segregated South to protest segregation on buses.

1965 - Malcolm X, civil rights activist and former minister in the Nation of Islam, is assassinated in New York City.

1800s - 1900s		1900's					
1849 - Harriet Tubman escapes to Philadelphia and helps about 300 enslaved people escape to the North for freedom via the Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and safe houses to aid slaves in their escape.	1868 - The 14th Amendment, which allows Black people to be considered U.S. citizens, is ratified.	1888 - The True Reformers Bank, the first officially chartered Black-owned bank, is founded by Reverend William Washington Browne, a former slave and soldier. It opens a year later. The Capitol Savings Bank in Washington, D.C., opens in 1888, becoming the first Black-owned bank to open.	1896 - The U.S. Supreme Court rules in Plessy v. Ferguson that segregation doesn't violate the 14th Amendment's equal-protection clause as long as conditions provided are "separate but equal."	1938 Singer Ella Fitzgerald releases a playfully sung version of the nursery rhyme "A-Tisket, A-Tasket." It goes on to be her first hit, staying on the pop charts for 19 weeks and selling 1 million copies.	1939 Singer Billie Holiday gives her first performance of the biting anti-lynching song "Strange Fruit" at Café Society, New York's first integrated nightclub. The song goes down in history as one of Holiday's most gripping performances, and Holiday goes down in history as a jazz superstar.	1963 - More than 200,000 people march on Washington, D.C.; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gives his historic "I Have a Dream" speech.	1967 - 1967 Thurgood Marshall becomes the first Black U.S. Supreme Court justice. Some of his notable stances include opposing the death penalty and supporting the right to abortion.

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.

1968 - Dr. King is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

Democrat Shirley Chisholm becomes the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress, representing New York's 12th district. She goes on to become the Secretary of the House Democratic Caucus.

1970 - The Black Business Association is founded to support the entrepreneurship and development of Black-owned businesses.

1971 - Hair care company Johnson Products (founded by the husband-and-wife team of George and Joan Johnson) becomes the first Black-owned company to be listed on the American Stock Exchange.

1972 - Democrat Shirley Chisholm becomes the first Black candidate from a major party to run for president.

1977 - Dr. Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. of TIAA-CREF (now a Diversity-Inc Top 10 company), becomes the first Black chairman and CEO on the Fortune 500. Roger W. Ferguson Jr., who is also Black, goes on to become the company's CEO in 2008.

1979 - Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, a legal scholar and activist, coins the term "intersectionality" to describe the specific forms of compounding discrimination people face based on their race, class, sexuality, gender and ability.

1984 - Civil rights activist Rev. Jesse Jackson becomes the second Black person to make a bid for the presidency, running as a Democrat.

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1989 - Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, a legal scholar and activist, coins the term "intersectionality" to describe the specific forms of compounding discrimination people face based on their race, class, sexuality, gender and ability.

1990 - Democrat Lawrence Douglas Wilder of Virginia becomes the first Black person to be elected governor.

Trumpeter, composer, vocalist and actor Louis Armstrong is inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as an early musical influence.

1991 - President George H.W. Bush signs the Civil Rights Act of 1991, strengthening employment discrimination laws.

1993 - Dr. Joycelyn Elders becomes the first Black Surgeon General, known for her views on progressive issues such as drug legalization and distributing contraception in schools.

1999 - Talk show host Oprah Winfrey becomes the first Black woman billionaire on Forbes' "World's Richest People" list. Winfrey grew up in rural poverty and worked her way up as a news anchor to eventually host her syndicated talk show.

2003 - Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi create Black Lives Matter, a Black-centered activism movement calling for racial justice.

2009 - Barack Obama becomes the U.S.'s first Black President.

2010 - Poet and author Maya Angelou is awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for being one of the most prolific writers and activists of her time.

2014 - NYPD officer Daniel Pantaleo places Eric Garner in an illegal chokehold, killing him. Garner was unarmed. His last words, "I can't breathe," become a Black Lives Matter rallying cry. Pantaleo is ultimately removed from the NYPD, but federal prosecutors decided in 2019 not to bring charges against him.

2017 - Lt. Gen. Stacey D. Harris, the highest-ranking Black woman pilot in all U.S. armed forces, gets inducted into the Women in Aviation International's Pioneer Hall of Fame.

2020 - After the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and many other unarmed Black people, nationwide protests against systemic racial injustice in America begin. The demonstrations trigger a reckoning, demanding politicians, business leaders and citizens take action against racism and injustice.

2021 - American-born singer Josephine Baker becomes the first Black woman to be interred at the Pantheon in Paris — the highest honor one can receive in France. She is considered a World War II hero in France for her role in the French Resistance at the time.

2021 - Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka draw attention to mental health awareness by withdrawing from Olympic gymnastics events and the French Open tennis tournament, respectively. Their decision highlighted the disproportionate pressure heaped on Black superstar athletes.

2021 - Amanda Gorman, a 22-year-old Black writer and poet, becomes the youngest inaugural poet in U.S. history when she recited "The Hill We Climb" at President Joe Biden's inauguration ceremony.

Terence Blanchard, 59, becomes the first Black composer to perform their work at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

2021 - California Senator Kamala Harris becomes the first Black and South Asian woman to be sworn in as Vice President of the U.S. A record number of Black people vote in the 2020 election, thanks largely to the lobbying efforts of Black politicians, including politician and voting rights activist Stacey Abrams, who registered 800,000 voters during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2022 - Acclaimed poet, author and civil rights activist Maya Angelou becomes the first Black woman to appear on an official U.S. coin. The United States Mint began to circulate the new U.S. quarter featuring the late Angelou on Jan. 10.

{1900s}

2000's

2021 - Tishaura Jones becomes the first Black woman to be elected mayor of St. Louis.



“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.

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.

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.



DISCUSSION FOR EMPLOYEES

- 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?

Diversityinc's facts & figures

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

