Diversity Counts

Racial and Ethnic Diversity among Public Service Leadership

MAY 2012

NATIONAL URBAN FELLOWS
PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY INITIATIVE
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE MWM CONSULTING GROUP, LLC
Introduction: The Case for Public Service Leadership Diversity

The initiative will help elevate and promote the field of public service, defined as work in the public, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors, as a highly valued and impactful element of American democracy.

The main goals of the initiative will work to ensure that the faces of public service leaders mirror the changing population of our nation and deliver on America’s promise.

The Public Service Leadership Diversity Initiative is committed to the following goals:

• Build and mobilize a collaborative network of national and regional stakeholders committed to greater diversity and inclusion in the public, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors.

• Develop an Inclusive Leadership framework that enhances both individual and organizational effectiveness.

• Develop a “talent pipeline” of leaders of color to provide the talent needed to increase representation in top public service leadership roles.

• Publicize leadership diversity and representation levels in the public, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors; celebrate champions; and show changes over time.

Professional research provided by:

The MWM Consulting Group, LLC, conducts research and provides technical assistance to advance concepts of fairness, diversity, and inclusion in the public and private spheres. Toward the goal of elevating a collective consciousness and implementing policies that promote fairness and diversity, the MWM Consulting Group, LLC, facilitates processes to remove structural barriers to equality and justice for all.

www.mwmconsultinggrouponllc.com
We invite you to read, take action, and commit to inspiring excellence and diversity in public service leadership as an imperative for our nation. *Diversity Counts* is our first comprehensive look at top public service leadership representation in government, nonprofits, and philanthropy. *Diversity Counts* is also our call to action.

Responding to the civil unrest that plagued the nation, National Urban Fellows was founded in 1969 to counter the under-representation of people of color in public sector leadership positions. Despite civil and human rights improvements that have occurred over the past four decades, under-representation of people of color persists for top leadership roles in government, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors. This is particularly troubling at a time when our nation needs the best leadership from all members of its citizenry.

Today National Urban Fellows and its Public Service Leadership Diversity Initiative are preparing leaders of color for public service leadership positions. As this *Diversity Counts* report reveals, diversity in top public service leadership remains both an opportunity and a challenge for the nation. The opportunity is for top decision makers in the public service sector to become inclusive, and the challenge is to expand opportunities for new, diverse perspectives in leadership.

We believe that diverse and inclusive leadership can more effectively address the social issues that confront the nation. There is a fierce urgency to inspire excellence and diversity in public service leadership. As the nation’s population moves to the majority becoming people of color by 2042, we believe that the work of the Public Service Leadership Diversity Initiative will create awareness of inclusive leadership, the talent pipeline, and champions in representation. But it is all of us who will create a movement for change.

It is our hope that *Diversity Counts*, the first representation report produced by the Public Service Leadership Diversity Initiative, will ignite a national dialogue and serve as a catalyst for change among groups including members of Congress, state and local elected officials, and boards of directors for nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

The time is now.

Paula Gavin          Floyd Johnson  
President            Chairman
The United States of America was founded on the principles of justice, equality, and inclusion. As a nation, we continue to strive for full participation and equality for all citizens, upon whose shoulders rests the responsibility for upholding these principles. As a multicultural society, we strive to be a nation dedicated to inclusive participation in our democracy. Our laws and social policies have evolved over time to reflect this commitment. Yet when we examine the makeup of the leadership throughout our public service sector, we are met by a troubling reality.

Though growing in population, people of color remain under-represented in the leadership of the public service sector, an issue that can and must be resolved if we are to successfully address the nation’s most pressing social issues—from education to health, environment, and justice. The fact is that people of color now make up one-third, or 36 percent, of the U.S. population—a population that is projected to grow to 54 percent by 2042. The public service sector—from government and academic think tanks to foundations and nonprofit organizations—must become more inclusive and representative if we are to develop fair and effective structures to fulfill the intention of our democracy.

The Public Service Leadership Diversity Initiative endeavors to build upon the diversity of our citizens to embrace the fullness of our democracy and, in doing so, to advance inclusion as both a moral imperative and an excellent business model.

When the disparities in public service leadership diversity are addressed, the public service sector will have greater capability and access to people and communities of color. This is where we will find additional human capital bringing new leadership perspectives, skills, and ideas to help confront social policy dilemmas. The participation of people of color and the inclusion of diverse voices and experiences into decision-making processes will ensure both cultural competency and effectiveness within policy-based solutions to social issues.

The Public Service Leadership Diversity Initiative inspires and advocates for excellence and diversity in public service leadership to better serve America. As champions of transformational change, we have a goal not only to achieve proportional representation in the public service sector by building a pipeline of talented, highly skilled candidates of color, but also to dismantle the barriers to inclusion of people of color in leadership positions and to support the public’s recognition that diversity in leadership leads to organizational excellence and results.

With a dual emphasis on individuals and systems, and through research, communications, stakeholder mobilization, and action, the Public Service Leadership Diversity Initiative will seek out partners to develop a new, inclusive paradigm of public service leadership. Toward the goal of advancing this paradigm, the

This report is the first in a series of forthcoming reports documenting the racial and ethnic diversity of leadership within the nation’s public service sector.

work of this initiative includes efforts to track the representation of people of color in key leadership positions in the public service sector. Diversity Counts presents a current snapshot of the racial and ethnic diversity of leadership in the public service sector and will serve as a baseline for action and change.

Methodology and Sources

This report is the first in a series of forthcoming reports documenting the racial and ethnic diversity of leadership within the nation’s public service sector. For this report, the term people of color refers to African Americans, Latino/Latina Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, and Native Americans.

Those who do not fall into these categories are deemed White, non-Hispanic. Where data included a category for other or mixed race, the text reflects this. Also reflected in the text are references to subcategories (e.g., South Asian) of racial groups. This occurs only when data are presented according to specific subgroups.

Researchers used a mixed-methods approach to collect the data presented in this report. Where possible, secondary sources were used. Original sources of data were consulted if necessary. Details regarding data collection methods and sources are noted on the next page.
Federal Government Data

Elected Officials and Federal Courts
Diversity data for the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal government were collected via member rosters available online. References to ethnicity were gathered from the etymology of surnames and public narratives as presented in the media.

Roll Call’s Fabulous 50
Criteria for Roll Call’s Fabulous 50 were collected from existing information available via the Internet at http://innovation.cq.com/media/fab50/2011/index.html. Where possible, ethnicity was determined by analyzing surnames, using a tool available at http://www.surnamedb.com. Where ethnicity could not be determined by surname or photo, telephone calls were placed to confirm ethnicity.

State Government Data

Chief Diversity Officers
Data regarding the chief diversity officers were collected via Internet and telephone calls to the governor’s offices in all 50 states. Researchers also confirmed via telephone the title and position of the designated chief diversity officer for each state.

Governors
An initial roster was obtained through the National Governors Association via the Internet: http://www.nga.org/cms/render/live/governors/bios. Where possible, ethnicity was determined by analyzing surnames using a tool available at http://www.surnamedb.com. Additionally, telephone calls were placed to each governor’s office to confirm ethnicity.

State Legislatures
Member rosters were collected via the Internet (citations are included in the report). To determine race and ethnicity data, researchers examined the etymology of surnames (via http://www.surnamedb.com) and physical appearance where ethnically identifiable. Where race or ethnicity could not be determined by surname or photo, telephone calls were placed to member officers to confirm ethnicity.

Diversity indexes are referenced in the State Governments section of this report. Diversity indexes show the probability that any two residents, randomly selected, would belong to different racial or ethnic groups. These data were collected from the 2010 U.S. Census.

Local Governments

County Executives
A list of county executives was collected for the nation’s most diverse counties via the Internet: http://www.countyexecutives.org/cea/county_executive_typegov.php. A comprehensive list of county executives was collected from a national coordinating body. Phone calls were placed to the offices of the county executives included in this list to confirm the racial and ethnic heritage of the officials.

City Councils
The top 10 most diverse cities in the United States were located via the CNBC website (available at http://www.cnbc.com/id/43066296/The_Top_10_Most_Diverse_Cities_in_America). From this list, city council rosters (including photos) were obtained via the Internet for the following cities:

- SAN FRANCISCO: http://www.sfbos.org
- SAN DIEGO: http://www.sandiego.gov/citycouncil
- OAKLAND: http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/CityCouncil/index.htm
- HOUSTON: http://www.houstontx.gov/council
- SAN ANTONIO: http://www.city-sanantonio.gov/City_Hall/Departments/公用/council
- MIAMI: http://www.miamigov.com/city_officials

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continued on the next page
Nonprofits and Philanthropy

Researchers used data from secondary sources, primarily research reports published by nonprofit organizations. Sources are noted in this report.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include the following:

• Data presented at the state and county levels reflect only the data from the most racially diverse regions of our nation. As such, data presented in these sections do not reflect national trends and cannot be used to draw conclusions about the level of diversity nationwide at state and local levels. Additional research might collect data in these areas.

• Physical characteristics and etymology of surnames are not always consistent with an individual’s actual racial and ethnic heritage. In some cases, marriage or other historic factors may influence a person’s surname. For example, a Latino or Latina leader with a surname of Western European etymology and a more European complexion may not have been counted as a person of color. Given this limitation, diversity figures may be higher if a more accurate account of race and ethnicity were possible.

• The study includes the common limitations that are associated with using self-reported data in association with race and ethnicity, where the data presented are only as reliable as the source’s own knowledge of his or her heritage.

• Data used from previously published reports are constrained by the limitations associated with the methodologies used in those studies.

• The U.S. Senate does not publish data on staff diversity by race and ethnicity. As of this report, whether these data are collected in any form for internal use is unknown.

Despite these limitations, this report presents valuable information on a subject in which almost no comparable compilation exists. This report constitutes one of the first published profiles of racial and ethnic diversity among the leadership of the public service sector, including snapshots at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as in philanthropy and nonprofit management.
People of color represent more than one-third (36 percent per the 2010 U.S. Census) of the nation’s population. The snapshot below reveals that public service leadership has yet to reflect such diversity.

**Federal Government**

**The Historical Picture: Diversity among U.S. Presidents and the U.S. Supreme Court**
- President Barack H. Obama is the first U.S. president of color. Ninety-eight percent of U.S. presidents have been of White, non-Hispanic heritage.
- Today, 29 percent of the U.S. Supreme Court is composed of people of color. All but 6 of the 112 justices in the court’s history have been men of White, non-Hispanic heritage.

**Diversity among Congressional Representatives**
- There are 535 members of the House and Senate combined, of whom 457 (84 percent) are listed as White and 78 are people of color—including 44 (8 percent) who are African American, 10 (2 percent) who are Asian Pacific American, and 1 (less than 1 percent) who is Native American. Twenty-seven (5 percent) are listed as Latino or Latina.¹

**Diversity among U.S. House of Representatives Staff**
- People of color are under-represented among key staff positions: only 13 percent of chiefs of staff are people of color, approximately 13 percent of House legislative directors are people of color, and only about 22 percent of senior legislative aides and legislative aides are people of color.

**State Government**

**Governors**
- Among the 50 governors of the United States, 92 percent are of White, non-Hispanic heritage.

**State Diversity Officers**
- Only 13 of the 50 states (and the District of Columbia) have a chief diversity officer on record.

**Legislators in the Nation’s Most Diverse States**
- Among the five most diverse states, people of color are under-represented in state legislatures (including the state house of representatives/assembly and the state senate).

**County and Local Governments**

**Executives in the Nation’s Most Diverse Counties**
- Sixty-one percent of executives (i.e., mayor, judge, or other official county executive) in our nation’s 18 most diverse counties are identified as people of color.

**City Councils in the Nation’s Most Diverse Cities**
- In the majority of the nation’s most diverse cities, there is an under-representation of people of color on city councils, in comparison with their percentage of the general population.
- In two cities—San Francisco, California, and San Antonio, Texas—the percentage of people of color on the city council (71 percent and 90 percent, respectively) exceeds the percentage of people of color in the general population (58 percent and 73 percent, respectively).

**Nonprofit and Philanthropy**

**Nonprofit Boards and Executive Leadership**
- In 2010, 86 percent of the members of nonprofit boards of directors were people of White, non-Hispanic heritage, and only 14 percent were people of color.
- The vast majority (88 percent) of nonprofit executives are of White, non-Hispanic heritage. Only 12 percent are people of color.

**Philanthropic Boards and Executive Leadership**
- Only 15 percent of philanthropic boards are people of color.
- The most recent data reveal that only 8 percent of philanthropic executive leadership and only 12 percent of executive staff are people of color.

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¹ Note that Hispanic or Latino people may be of any racial category.
Introduction

The federal government has traditionally played a substantial role in the inclusion of people of color in public-sector employment. This section summarizes the representation of people of color in key leadership positions in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of the U.S. government.

Executive Branch: Office of the President

In 2008, Barack H. Obama was elected the 44th president of the United States and the first president of African descent. The monument of this occasion was significant in the greater scheme of American politics and within the construct of removing racial barriers among the public service leadership.

Throughout the history of our nation, all of the U.S. presidents have been men, and 98 percent have been of White, non-Hispanic heritage.¹

Judicial Branch: U.S. Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court is the nation’s highest court. While 36 percent of the nation’s population are people of color, only two justices of color (29 percent) serve on the U.S. Supreme Court: Justice Clarence Thomas and Justice Sonia Sotomayor. The remaining justices (71 percent) are of White, non-Hispanic heritage. Historically, all but 6 of the 112 justices in the court’s history have been men of White, non-Hispanic heritage:

- Two African American men
- Three women of White, non-Hispanic heritage
- One Latina
- No Asian Pacific Americans or Native Americans

Federal Courts

The United States has 208 federal courts with 3,360 judges.² As of December 21, 2011, despite the total U.S. population including 36 percent people of color, 90 percent of the federal bench are of White, non-Hispanic heritage. Only 10 percent of the federal bench is composed of people of color. The racial/ethnic distribution of federal court judges is as follows: 3,054 (90 percent) of White, non-Hispanic heritage. Only 10 percent of the federal bench is composed of people of color. The racial/ethnic distribution of federal court judges is as follows: 3,054 (90 percent) of White, non-Hispanic heritage, 176 (5 percent) African Americans, 104 (3 percent) Latinos/Latinas, 24 (1 percent) Asian Pacific Americans, and 2 (0.2 percent) Native Americans, with the remaining 0.8 percent comprising those of other racial or ethnic heritage.³

Legislative Branch: Congress

The legislative branch of the U.S. government is one of the most influential segments of the public service sector, with the ability to develop and pass laws that affect every social policy issue. Congress regularly publishes the demographic data of the officials elected to public office. There are 535 members of the House and Senate combined, of whom 457 (84 percent) are listed as White and 82 (16 percent) are people of color. Specifically, 44 (8 percent) are African American, 27 (5 percent) are Latino/Latina, 10 (2 percent) are Asian Pacific American, and 1 (less than 1 percent) is Native American.⁴

U.S. Senate

Of the 100 members of the U.S. Senate, 96 (96 percent) are of White, non-Hispanic heritage and 4 (4 percent) are people of color. Specifically, 2 (2 percent) are Latino/Latina, and 2 (2 percent) are Asian Pacific American. There are currently no African American or Native American members of the Senate.

U.S. Senate Staff Diversity

Very little data are currently available on the race and ethnicity of key U.S. Senate staff. Recent reports show that there is...
only one Latino chief of staff (1 percent) and one Latino committee staff director (2.5 percent) in the Senate. No public data are available regarding the racial and ethnic breakdown of Senate staff; however, efforts are currently underway to increase diversity. The Senate Democratic Diversity Initiative, for example, aims to “ensure that the Senate workforce reflects the diversity of the nation and the constituents [it serves].”

**U.S. House of Representatives**

There are 439 members of the House of Representatives, of whom 361 (82 percent) are listed as White and 78 (18 percent) are people of color. Specifically, 44 (10 percent) are African American, 25 (6 percent) are Latino/Latina, 8 (2 percent) are Asian Pacific American, and 1 (less than 1 percent) is Native American.

**U.S. House Staff Diversity**

Staff positions associated with the U.S. House of Representatives are important elements of our government. Not only are these positions usually carefully selected by our elected representatives, but they are also entrusted to make key decisions that affect the quality of life for the constituents of these representatives. The racial and ethnic diversity of these key positions, which include chiefs of staff, House legislative directors, senior legislative aides, and legislative aides, are described below.

**Roll Call’s Fabulous 50**

Roll Call’s “Fab 50” is a showcase of Capitol Hill’s leading Democratic and Republican staffers. Four criteria are used to determine who is named on the list: mastery (i.e., the Hill’s policy and procedural experts), influence (i.e., individuals who drive the agenda, “cut the deals, craft legislation, and sway members”), spin (i.e., Congress’s best communicators who

*continued on the next page*
help set the tone and frame the debate), and access (i.e., staffers who are in the room when decisions are made). In 2010, more than 90 percent of those recognized on the “Fab 50” list were of White, non-Hispanic heritage, and fewer than 10 percent were people of color.

Federal Commissions

Aside from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, other important federal agencies and commissions also inform the course of public policy in the United States. Following is a snapshot of the racial/ethnic diversity of three commissions established by special charter or legislation: the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Federal Elections Commission (FEC).

| Source: 2010 U.S. Census, ICF International |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. POPULATION (2010 U.S. Census)</th>
<th>CHIEFS OF STAFF</th>
<th>HOUSE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTORS</th>
<th>SENIOR LEGISLATIVE AIDES</th>
<th>LEGISLATIVE AIDES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Pacific American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Latina</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (NH)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Federal Trade Commission

The FTC is charged with protecting consumers against unfair methods of competition in commerce. The FTC is the only federal agency with jurisdiction over consumer protection and competition in broad sectors of the economy. There are five members of the FTC; as of November 1, 2011, three members are of White, non-Hispanic heritage, one is Latina, and one seat is vacant.10

Federal Communications Commission

The FCC operates as an independent government agency designed to regulate interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories. There are five members of the FCC; as of November 1, 2011, three members are of White, non-Hispanic heritage, one is African American, and one seat is vacant.11

Federal Election Commission

The FEC was established in 1975 by Congress. The FEC’s function is to administer and enforce the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA), the statute that governs the financing of federal elections. The duties of the FEC “are to disclose campaign finance information, to enforce the provisions of the law such as the limits and prohibitions on contributions, and to oversee the public funding of presidential elections.”12 There are six members of the commission, all of whom are of White, non-Hispanic heritage.13
Between 2000 and 2011, the diversity of our nation’s population increased, with a number of states, counties, and cities now having areas with a majority of people of color.

**Introduction**

State governments play a significant role in the development and administration of public policy. From education and healthcare to criminal justice, state governments protect and serve local needs. Between 2000 and 2011, the diversity of our nation’s population increased with a number of states, counties, and cities now having areas with a majority of people of color.

This section summarizes the representation of people of color in key state government positions.

**Governors**

As the chief executives of states or U.S. territories, governors hold tremendous decision-making power with regard to the policies and practices associated with state government. Throughout the nation, a growing number of governors are running states in which the majority of residents in the states, or in counties of the states, are people of color. However, despite this growing diversity, among the 50 governors of the United States, 92 percent are of White, non-Hispanic heritage.

Research conducted for this report found the following distribution of governors:

- 45 of White, non-Hispanic heritage
- 2 Latino/Latina
- 1 African American
- 1 South Asian American
- 1 Native American

continued on the next page
Diversity Trends in the State Legislatures of the Five Most Diverse States

Diversity indexes show the probability that any two residents, randomly selected, would belong to different racial or ethnic groups. Using diversity indexes, the five most diverse states are shown in the table at left.

While people of color represent a significant portion of the population in these five states, their representation in state legislatures tends not to match the percentage of people of color in the population.

Hawaii
Hawaii is a racially diverse state, with the majority of its population being people of color. The state legislature almost mirrors the general population of Hawaii with respect to the percentage of people of color. People of color represent 77 percent of the general population, 71 percent of the state house of representatives, and 76 percent of the state senate. Additional research is required to confirm whether there is an under-representation of native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders in state leadership.

California
California was one of the first states to have a majority of people of color, and with more than 37 million residents, it is also the most populous state. People of color represent nearly 60 percent of the general population in California, but only approximately 38 percent of the state assembly and approximately 33 percent of the state senate.

### Diversity Indexes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent People of Color</th>
<th>State Diversity Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hawaii</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. California</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. New Mexico</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Texas</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nevada</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages for people of color in each state have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

People of color represent nearly 60 percent of the general population in California, but only approximately 38 percent of the state Assembly and approximately 33 percent of the state Senate.

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iii If all residents are of the same ethnic group, the index is 0. If half of the group is from one group and half is from another, the index is 50.
New Mexico
Like California’s, New Mexico’s population is nearly 60 percent people of color. However, people of color are underrepresented in the state legislature, composing only 46 percent of the assembly and 38 percent of the state senate.17

Texas
Texas is one of the nation’s most diverse states. People of color represent approximately 55 percent of the general population in Texas, but only approximately 31 percent of the state house of representatives and 26 percent of the state senate.18

Nevada
Nevada rounds out the top five most diverse states in the nation. People of color represent approximately 46 percent of the general population in Nevada, but only approximately 24 percent of the state assembly and 14 percent of the state senate.19

State Diversity Officers
Although diversity is growing among the nation’s population, not every state has developed an appropriate infrastructure to ensure equal opportunity for all, including those populations that may be under-represented in key positions of public service leadership. Research for this report confirmed that of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, only the following 13 have a chief diversity officer on record:

- Arizona
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Michigan
- Missouri
- Montana
- New York
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Tennessee
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Introduction

Local governments are the first line of public service leadership for our nation. These structures operate counties and cities that provide the infrastructure for our nation’s growing diversity. This section summarizes the representation of people of color in key leadership positions in local governments.

Diversity Trends in the Nation’s Most Diverse Counties

County diversity is measured by an index that tracks the presence of populations of color (excluding White, non-Hispanic populations) that are residents of a particular county. Per the 2010 U.S. Census, at right is a list of the nation’s most diverse counties.

Diversity among Local Executives

More than 840 county executive governments are located in 45 states throughout the country. Local executives may include those with the title of mayor, borough president, county administrator, chief executive officer, county judge, or county executive. Although data were not available regarding the racial and ethnic composition of local executives nationwide, research for this report found that 11 (61 percent) of executives for the nation’s 18 most diverse counties are people of color.
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The Most Diverse Cities in the United States

Diversity among City Councils in the Nation’s 10 Most Diverse Cities

City councils are, in many cases, the first line of local government. For this report, researchers examined the racial and ethnic diversity of city councils in the nation’s 10 most diverse cities. The figure at right provides a snapshot of the findings.

As shown at right, people of color are generally under-represented on city councils relative to their percentage of the populations in these cities. For example, while people of color make up approximately 71 percent of the population in Dallas, Texas, they make up only 53 percent of the city council. In Oakland, California, where people of color make up 74 percent of the population, their representation on the city council is only 37 percent. As of December 12, 2011, the same was true for a number of the other cities heralded as our nation’s most diverse—specifically, Los Angeles and San Diego, California; Miami, Florida; Dallas and Houston, Texas; and Las Vegas, Nevada.

Diversity among City Councils

The Bronx delegation to the New York city council nearly reflects the diversity of the borough’s population. As shown above, some city councils not only reflect the diversity of the general population but also have people of color as the majority of the council members. In San Antonio, Texas, and in San Francisco, California, the representation of people of color on the city council exceeds their representation in the general population of these cities.

*Note: The figure for Bronx, New York, represents the percentage of the Bronx delegation to the New York city council.
Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations play an extremely important role in our society, helping both the government and the private sector to address many of our nation’s important social issues.

BoardSource reports that among directors of nonprofit organizations in 2010, 86 percent were people of White, non-Hispanic heritage, and 14 percent were people of color. Specifically, 7 percent were African American, 3 percent Latino/Latina, and 4 percent other. The leadership and boards of directors for nonprofit agencies tend to be less ethnically and racially diverse than the staff in this segment of the public service sector.

As with boards of directors, there is also little diversity among executives of nonprofit organizations. The vast majority, 88 percent, of nonprofit executives are of White, non-Hispanic heritage. Only 4 percent are African American, 2 percent are Latino/Latina, 0.6 percent are Asian Pacific American, 0.2 percent are Native American, and 6 percent have a heritage of two or more racial groups.

The lack of diversity among nonprofit leadership is also evident throughout the nonprofit sector. It is estimated that among all nonprofit employees, 82 percent are of White, non-Hispanic heritage and 18 percent are people of color. Specifically, 10 percent are African Americans, 5 percent Latino/Latina, 3 percent other, and 1 percent Asian Pacific American.

Philanthropy

The field of philanthropy is one of the most important segments of our nation’s public service sector. As the financial backbone of the programs and services that make it possible for our nation’s nonprofit agencies to address key social issues, such as education and healthcare, among others, philanthropy influences...
not only our awareness of important social issues but also our responses to them. Philanthropic boards are often the key decision-making bodies determining which organizations and programs receive funding, and previous research has shown that foundations with diverse boards are more likely to support activities led by and in diverse communities.²⁶

According to the most recent research presented by the D5⁷ people of color make-up 34 percent of program officers at foundations; however, individuals of White, non–Hispanic heritage represent 92 percent of foundation CEOs and executive leadership.²⁷ Specifically, recent reports reveal that only 3 percent of CEOs are African American, 3 percent are Latino/Latina, 1 percent are Asian Pacific American, and 0.5 percent are Native American.²⁸ Similarly, 88 percent of full-time executive staff are of White, non–Hispanic heritage, while only 12 percent are people of color.²⁹

In 2010, people of color made up about 16 percent of foundation boards (see chart at right).³⁰

Philanthropy, as a segment of the public service sector, is itself extremely diverse. Variances in structure and size may influence the level of diversity at the board and executive leadership levels. Although data are not uniformly available regarding the current state of racial diversity by foundation size, the most recent data regarding the 46 largest foundations reveal the following information:

- 28.3 percent had no people of color on their boards.
- 69.9 percent had no Asian Pacific Americans on their boards.
- 56.5 percent had no Latino/Latina Americans on their boards.

- 37.8 percent had no African Americans on their boards.³¹

These data reflect an under-representation of people of color in leadership positions in philanthropy and among nonprofit organizations. Large-scale efforts (e.g., D5) are currently underway to improve the inclusivity of these segments in the public service sector.

⁷ The D5 Coalition is a five-year effort to grow diversity, equity, and inclusion in philanthropy. Founded by 18 organizations, the coalition is now the collective effort of 50 foundations and allied partners supporting the Diversity in Philanthropy project.
Public service leadership is a broad and expanding field, as well as a collective of critical decision points along the spectrum of civic and political engagement. While there are segments of public service leadership that have effectively engaged people of color, in too many areas of leadership there is an under-representation of people of color. Even in some of our nation’s most diverse communities, people of color are not represented in public service leadership at levels commensurate with their percentage of the population.

What is evident is an opportunity for the sector to embrace the promise of our increasingly diverse democracy. The Public Service Leadership Diversity Initiative pledges to work in a collaborative way to:

• increase knowledge and awareness of the benefits of inclusive leadership;
• expand public service leadership development and opportunities;
• celebrate and share best practices in diversity and inclusion; and
• promote public service leadership as a valued career and civic engagement as a leadership strategy for community health and prosperity that benefit all.

We are approaching an important shift—a generational shift of leadership. In these modern times, there is an abundance of talented, highly credentialed and skilled people of color who are capable of providing the new wave of leadership to advance public sector agendas at every level. Until public service leadership becomes truly diverse—where the representation and perspectives from communities of color begin to approach the proportion of the overall population—the total capacity of our full efforts will remain unrealized. The potential for contributions to solving social ills is going untapped because the treasure of talent within communities of color remains on the margins of leadership.

As our nation grows increasingly diverse, it is important for our public service leadership to improve its reflection of that diversity. The absence of racial and ethnic inclusion is a gap that must be filled if our nation is to uphold its core value of unobstructed opportunity for all. This is our collective work in progress and the duty of all who uphold the importance of an inclusive democracy.

Please join us in our efforts. To do so, visit our website at www.publicserviceleaders.org.

Take the pledge to support leadership diversity in the public service sector and partner with us on this critically important work.

This Is Leadership for a Changing America


24. Ibid.


28. Ibid., p. 5.

29. Ibid.

30. Supra, note 23.
