

Diversity and Inclusion at Code for America

Annual Report 2018

CODE *for*
AMERICA

MARCH 2019

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A matter of mission

Bringing technologists into government and ensuring a strong representation of people of color, women, and non-binary people has been core to Code for America since its founding.

For us, our relationship to diversity is in fact determined by our vision and our mission.

When we chose to take on this ridiculously ambitious goal of making the American government work for people as it should, we chose to serve all Americans in their glorious diversity. We can't do that well if we work in a monoculture.

While diversity has always been important to the organization, last year we added structure to Code for America's commitment to hiring a diverse workforce so that we could continue to grow the organization in a manner consistent with our values. At the same time, we made a commitment to building an inclusive culture where all employees can bring their whole selves to work, and where the organization benefits from the full talents of all employees. Without inclusion, our efforts on diversity would reap few benefits for employees and the organization.

A team as diverse as the country we serve

Building a diverse workforce and ensuring an inclusive culture has no end point; it is the constant work of running an organization that strives to reach its full potential.

And as you'll read below, we have important work to do in some areas, including improving representation of people of color in leadership positions.

That said, we're extremely proud of the diverse team we have built and the inclusive culture we have fostered at Code for America so far:

- The racial and ethnic makeup of our team is very closely aligned with that of the country we serve, with 40% of our team identifying as people of color, as compared to 39% in the last US census.
- Code for America is a women-led organization, and women are a majority at all levels of the organization and the board.
- While women and people of color are often seriously underrepresented in technical organizations, 47.1% of our Engineering team members identify as women or non-binary, and 29.4% as people of color.

Investments in 2018

Over the past year, we have made significant progress in:

1. **creating structures** that allow us to take on diversity and inclusion work systematically,
2. **establishing metrics** that hold us accountable to progress, and
3. **implementing some critical activities** that move the needle on our goals in both of these areas.

Structure

We've structured our approach to diversity and inclusion work to enable internal engagement and outside support. We believe that the work of diversity and inclusion can't be owned only by some, so it's important that all staff know how and where they can plug in through these structures and how the pieces fit together. We recognize that we need expert guidance to be thoughtful in our approach and acknowledge that this work takes many different angles.

- **Nicole Sanchez, through her firm Vaya Consulting**, provides guidance to our leadership team, serves as an escalation path for staff concerns that can't be resolved other ways, and delivers various staff trainings.
- **People managers** have a regular meeting that makes it easier to problem-solve with peers, creates a shared culture, and builds our people management practice so that Code for America a great place to work for everyone. We believe that strong people managers will help us be more successful in promoting talent, retaining talent, and supporting our employees. All people managers participated in a "Being an Inclusive Manager" training led by Vaya Consulting in Q4 of last year.

- Our **Diversity and Inclusion Committee** consists of employees who are interested in advancing diversity and inclusion at Code for America. Membership rotates every six months and includes a C-level sponsor, a chairperson, four additional committee members, and our executive director Jennifer Pahlka.

The Committee Charter is: "The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is a node in the Code for America network that advocates for equitable and inclusive practices. We are Code for America employees who model behavior, process actionable feedback from others, recommend courses of action, take action ourselves, and hold the organization accountable."

- **Earthtones** is our people of color affinity group. The group identifies areas of concern and opportunities for improvements and brings these to any member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
- Our **Culture Committee** plans social activities and thinks about, plans, and enables good culture-building at Code for America with a focus on inclusion.

Activities

In addition to setting up the structure to support our diversity and inclusion efforts, we've undertaken a number of activities over the past year that we believe will further our goal of building a more diverse team and inclusive environment.

- We **established goals** for building a diverse staff and mechanisms to track the diversity of our pipeline and current staff. This included establishing an internal and external reporting cadence against these goals. Internally, we review data on a quarterly basis with our board, and externally, we report annual progress as we are doing today in this report. The goals include targets for Race & Ethnicity, Gender, and Mission-Relevant Experience, which are based on the racial, ethnic, and gender demographics of the Bay Area (our main hiring pool and local environment) and the demographics of the United States (reflecting the people we serve and Brigade environment).
- We **implemented a Rooney Rule**: hiring managers must interview at least one candidate onsite who would move them closer to one of the demographic areas in which they are currently underrepresented.
- We **launched an apprenticeship program**, with a focus on underrepresented demographics and people who are trying to gain entry to the civic tech space, either as a first job or a career change. We hosted three apprentices in this inaugural year of the program, and all three apprentices were hired as full time engineers and data scientists at the conclusion of the program in December. We are continuing the program in 2019.
- We **hosted a Code2040 Fellow**, who we included in our apprenticeship cohort to ensure the same high level of support and mentorship.
- We **revamped recruiting practices**, rewriting hiring manager and interviewing processes, evaluating job posting sites, and updating our job description language to encourage diversity.
- We **delivered an inclusive Summit** based on best practices provided by our diversity and inclusion consultant, including a diverse speaker roster.
- We **rolled out a career ladder with internally transparent salary ranges**, which is generally recognized as a cornerstone for organizations striving to ensure racial and gender equity in hiring, pay, and promotions.

Employee Representation in 2018

Our primary focus in creating a more diverse team at Code for America has been on activities that increase the number of candidates of color, women, and non-binary people who are hired and retained at Code for America.

We are focused on these groups because they are underrepresented in tech and marginalized in many professional jobs. Without a strong focus on diversity in hiring, we run the risk of perpetuating this underrepresentation and marginalization at Code for America.

Gender

Code for America is a majority-women organization. At Code for America, we are organized into three departments: Programs, Operations, and Product & Technology. We have elected to break out our numbers somewhat differently, however, to highlight engineering specifically as an area where people of color, women, and non-binary people are typically quite underrepresented.

We're proud of our progress in building a diverse engineering team over the past year, a time in which we have grown our staff from 5 to 17 engineers, 47.1% of whom identify as women or non-binary.

Code for America is also a women-led organization. Women make up 75% of leadership (Directors and above), 66% of the executive team, and 57% of our board.

Figure 1: Gender by department

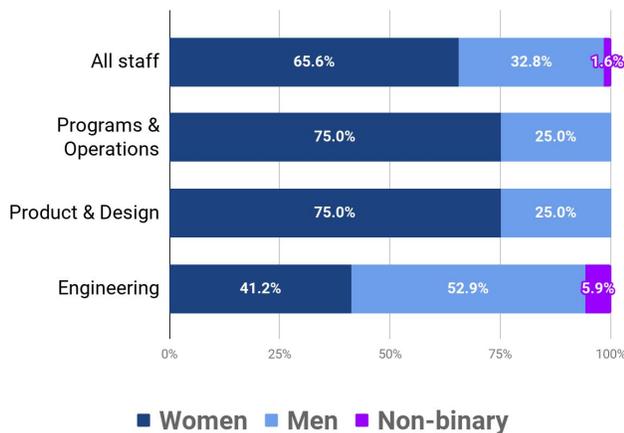
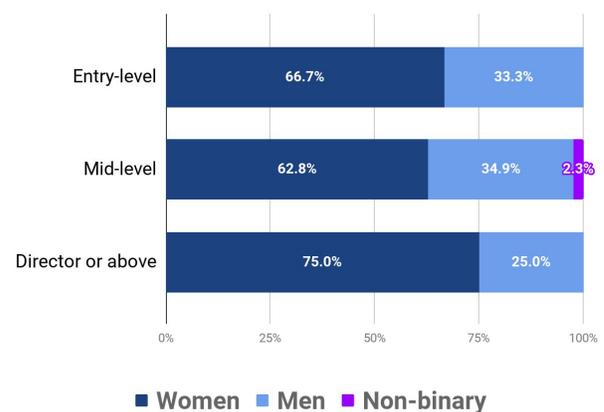


Figure 2: Gender by seniority



Race and ethnicity

Overall, 40% of our workforce identify as people of color, compared to 39% in the national census and 63% in the Bay Area, and ranging by department from 30% in Engineering to 50% in Product & Design.

Our biggest gap as compared to US census benchmarks is in our Latinx representation, where we are overall 6.5 percentage points below the national average. Compared to Bay Area demographics, our Asian representation is most disparate, given 28% of Bay Area residents identify as Asian compared to 6% nationally and 8.2% at Code for America.

Our biggest opportunity for improvement is to grow representation of minority groups at the most senior levels of the organization. Amongst our Junior and Intermediate employees, who typically have 0-5 years of work experience and are not in people management roles, 47.8% identify as people of color.

At Senior levels, where employees typically have greater than 5 years of experience and are either senior individual contributors or people managers, 42.3% identify as people of color. However, only 16.6% of leadership in Director positions and above identify as people of color.

The strong representation we see at Junior, Intermediate, and Senior levels in the organization is a reflection of the investment we've made in recruiting and hiring of underrepresented groups, including this year's apprenticeship program.

Improving representation at the leadership level is a clear opportunity, and in 2019 we plan to invest in retaining and growing our Junior, Intermediate, and Senior staff while also hiring underrepresented candidates directly into leadership roles.

Figure 3: Race and ethnicity by department

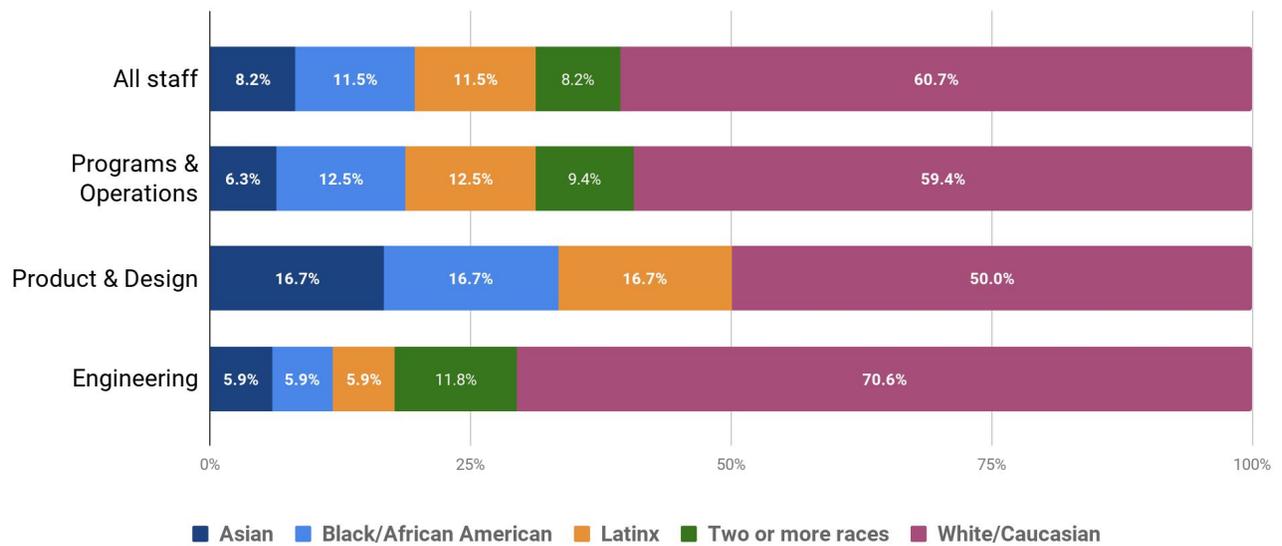
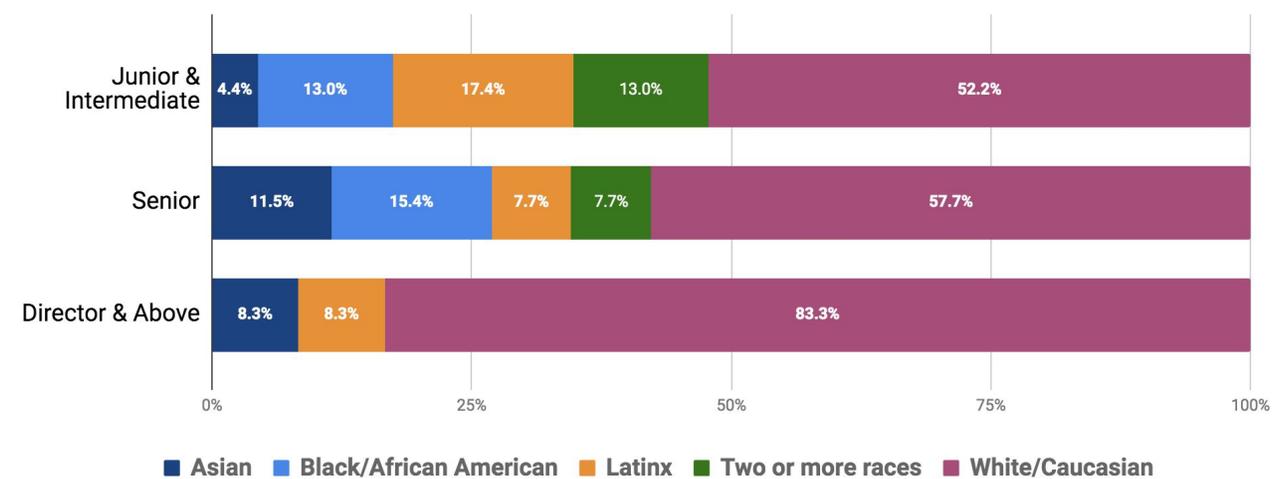


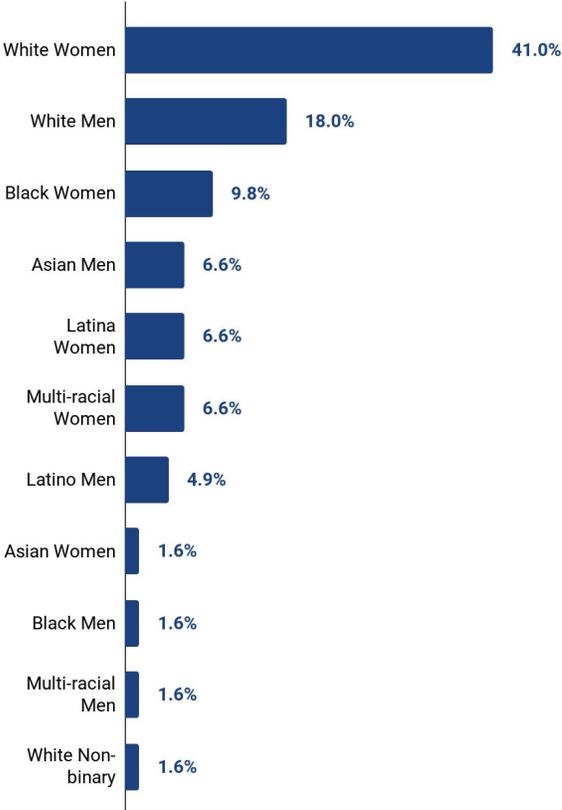
Figure 4: Race and ethnicity by seniority



Intersectionality

People experience bias and disadvantage in different ways based on the intersection of their various social identities. We strive to understand and provide transparency into the representation of these intersectional identities at Code for America. Because we are a majority-women organization, representation of those intersectional identities is more in line with the national average than it is for men at Code for America. In mapping our staff demographics this way, we see opportunities to be more representative of both the Bay Area and the nation going forward.

Figure 5: All staff race, ethnicity, and gender



Next steps in 2019

We're excited to be able to share this look at where we are today on our diversity and inclusion efforts. We're even more excited about the big steps forward we plan to take again in 2019.

Diversity and inclusion

In terms of diversity, one area we expect to gather more insight on in the coming year is our staff's "Mission-Relevant Experience." We're interested in understanding how our staff's experience has been influenced by situations we regularly come into contact with in the course of work as we help America's most vulnerable to avoid poverty and incarceration. We also strongly believe that people who have experience with systems that reinforce poverty and incarceration must be involved in any attempt to address them.

We're also looking forward to focusing more on inclusion in 2019. We recently incorporated a number of inclusion-focused questions into our employee engagement survey, and we're analyzing the responses so we can start to understand what kind of disparities exist in the experiences of people with different ethnic backgrounds and gender identities at Code for America.

We'll develop an action plan from those survey results to augment some of the inclusion-focused efforts we already have underway, such as "Paragraphs Not Boxes" sessions where we share personal stories in a small group environment, and we look forward to sharing much more on our inclusion efforts in our next report.

Equity

Finally, we plan to expand our diversity and inclusion efforts with a major new focus on equity in 2019. Internally, we think it's vital to include this focus as we strive to ensure that underrepresented groups have opportunities at every level of our organization and throughout our Brigades.

We also believe this focus is absolutely necessary in order for us to fulfill our promise of delivering government services that really work for the most vulnerable in our country. Our clients deserve a government they can trust to serve them effectively and with dignity.

At Code for America, we intend to lead the way in showing how this can be done. This means we must grow our service delivery practices with a deep understanding of race and culture as key determinants of experience, we must be fully transparent with the details of our technology and algorithms when they could help make decisions that impact people's lives, and we must confront the trade-offs inherent in collecting detailed race and ethnicity data in the course of our work.

In 2019 we'll be putting the same kind of structure and accountability in place around these new commitments that we put into our diversity and inclusion commitments last year—you can expect our next report to be titled "Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at Code for America."