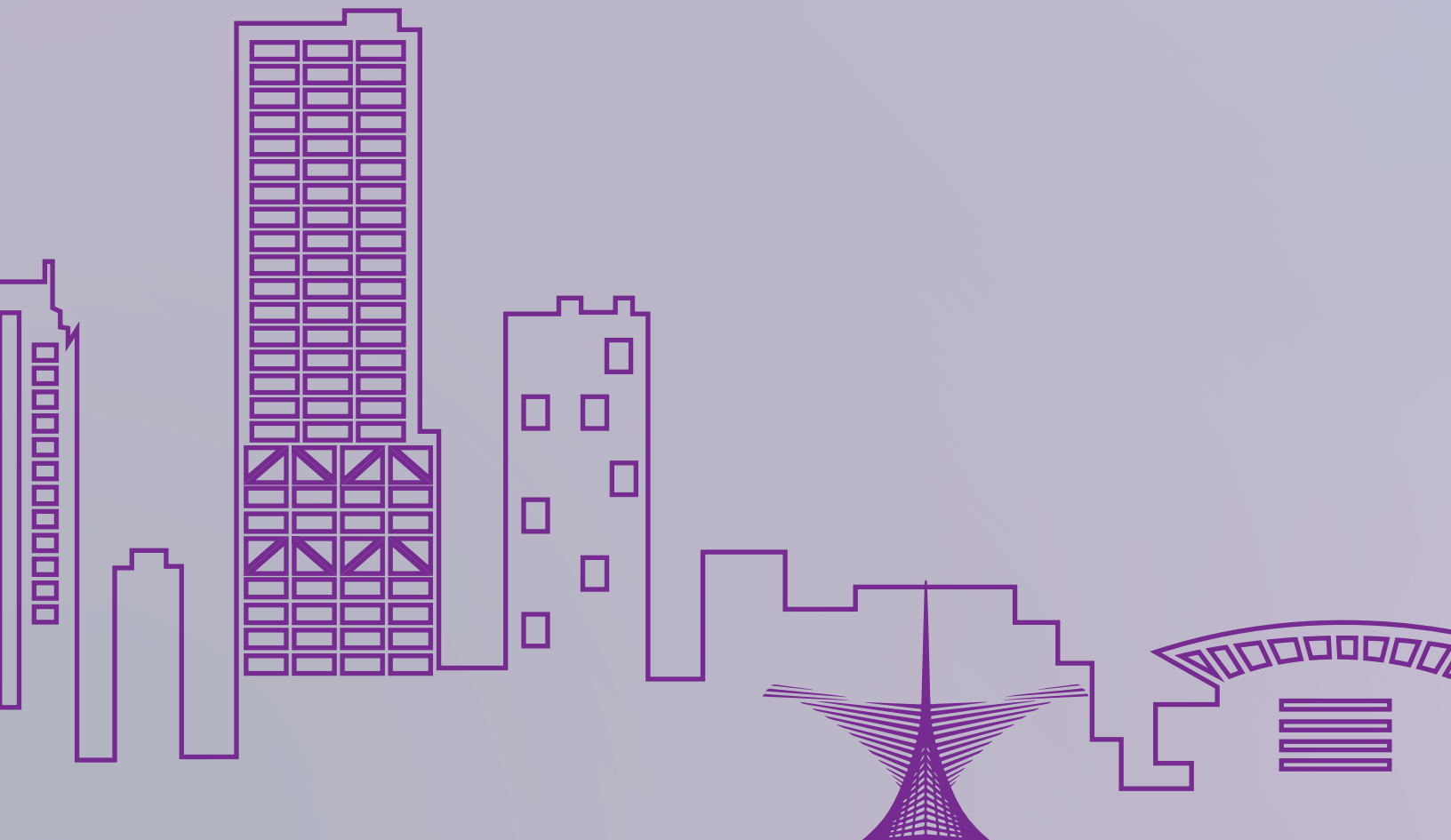


MILWAUKEE WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE: A STUDY CONDUCTED BY MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY'S INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

2023 REPORT



Acknowledgements

This paper results from a research project led by principal investigator Professor Jennica Webster, PhD.

For all who contributed to this survey and especially the people in our community who elected to participate in this research, we are immeasurably grateful.

IWL Mission

To support and conduct cutting-edge gender research and build transformational experiences and relationships that empower women and advance women's leadership.

IWL Vision

To be the leading gender research institute in the nation — providing innovative, evidence-based insights that create a more equitable and just society for all. As advocates for justice, we will engage, inspire, and transform students, faculty, staff, and community leaders.

MILWAUKEE WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE:

A STUDY CONDUCTED BY MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY'S INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

2023 REPORT

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY IS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THOSE FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO ENGAGE, INSPIRE, AND TRANSFORM IN MILWAUKEE BUSINESSES AND THE COMMUNITY.

INTRODUCTION

The contributions of diverse, talented women are critical to the development of vibrant communities and thriving economies. At Marquette University, we are dedicated to the growth and development of the next generation of women leaders as well as partnering with local communities to work toward our shared commitments to our city. IWL is committed to ensuring Marquette graduates go on to lead meaningful lives and successful careers. The purpose of this study is to better understand those factors that encourage women to engage, inspire, and transform in Milwaukee businesses, organizations, and the greater community. We call attention to pervasive workplace challenges and highlight opportunities—emphasizing the importance of establishing cultures that empower women, leverage their talents, and drive progress in the region.

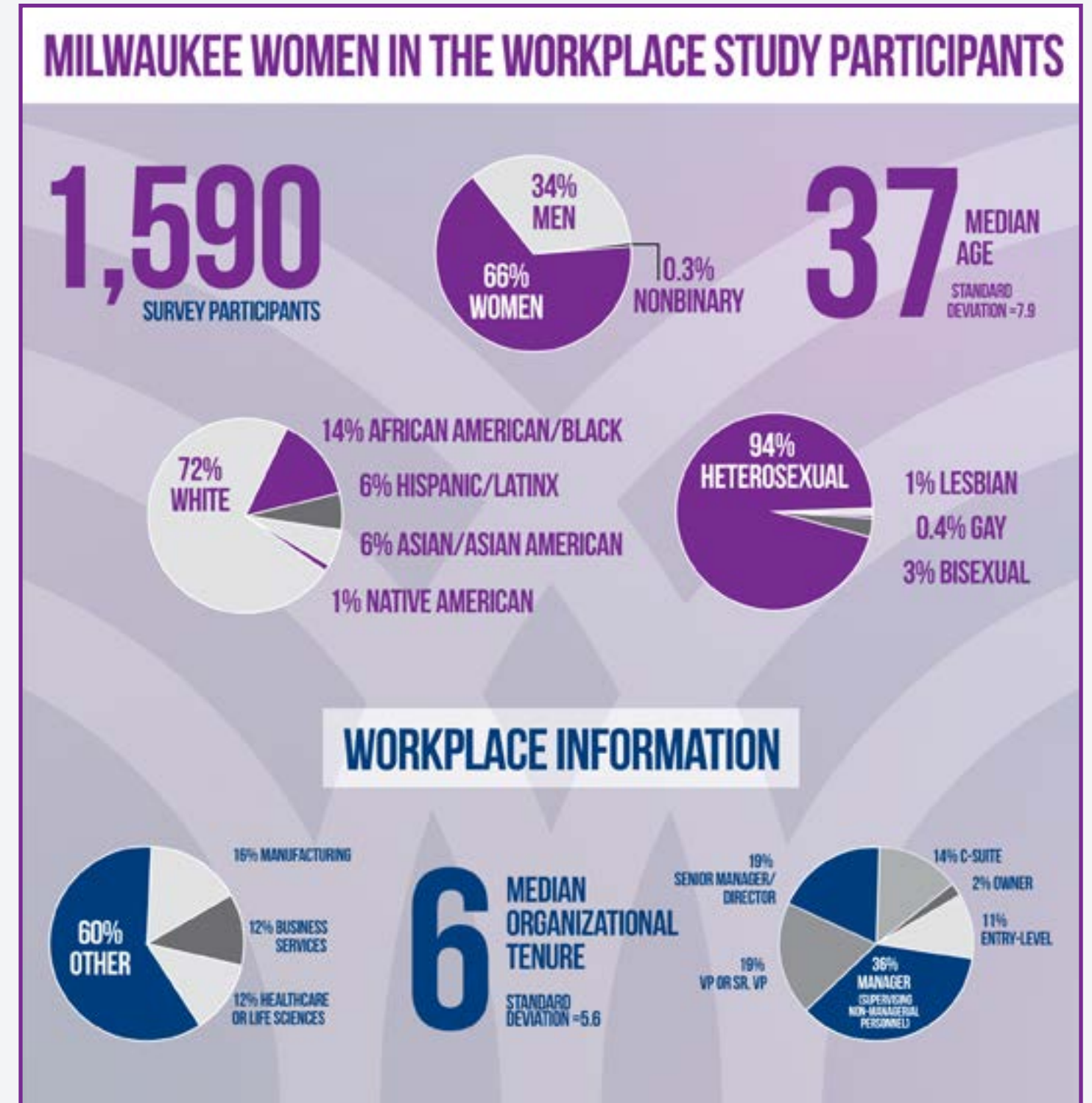
In this report, we summarize what employees in the Milwaukee metropolitan area shared about five main factors that encourage women to engage, inspire, and transform in the Milwaukee community. Those factors include...

1. Personal and financial well-being,
2. Workplace experiences,
3. Retention,
4. Workplace people and systems, and
5. Community attachments.

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

In March of 2023, IWL launched its study *Milwaukee Women in the Workplace*. This survey was distributed to workers across the Milwaukee area. The sample consisted of a broad representation across gender, race/ethnicity, age, industry, and rank.



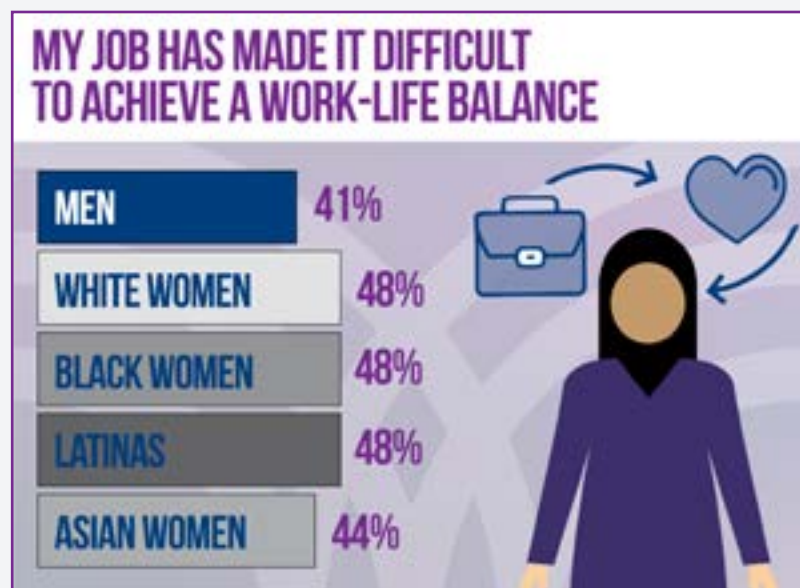
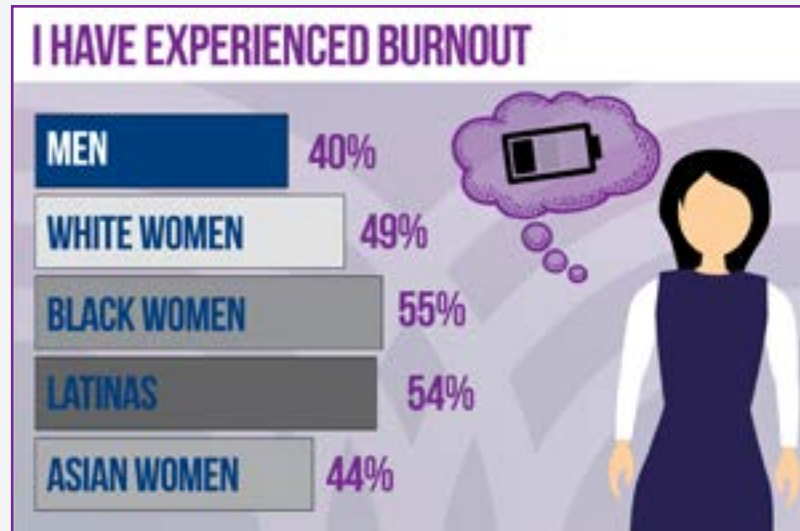
PERSONAL & FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

Two aspects of well-being were examined:

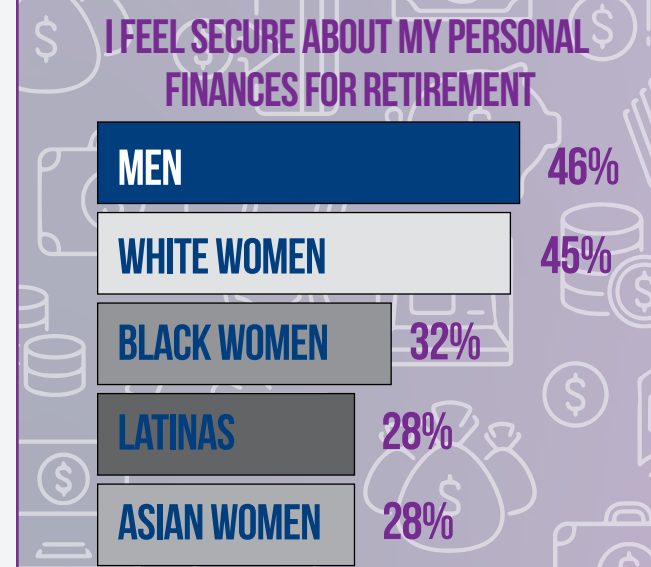
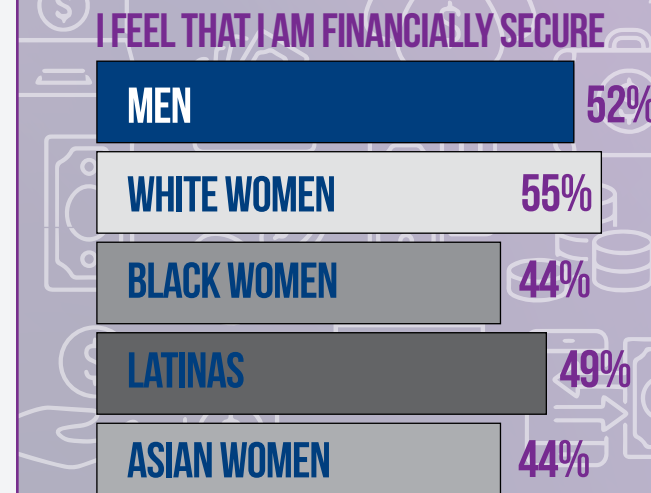
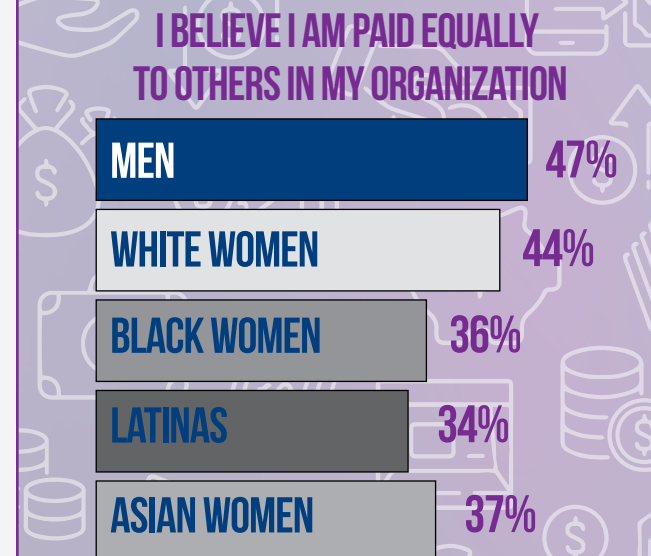
1. Personal well-being reflects burnout, mental-health, and work-life balance.
2. Financial well-being reflects the belief that one is paid equally, their current financial security, and financial security for retirement.

Pervasive challenges persisted in 2023 for women:

- More women reported experiencing burnout, mental health challenges, and difficulty achieving a work-life balance compared to men.
- More women reported that they were not paid equally in their organizations compared to men.
- Black women and Latinas experienced poorer physical and mental health compared to men, white women, and Asian women.
- Women of color (vs. men and white women) experienced poorer financial well-being (feeling less financially secure currently and for retirement).

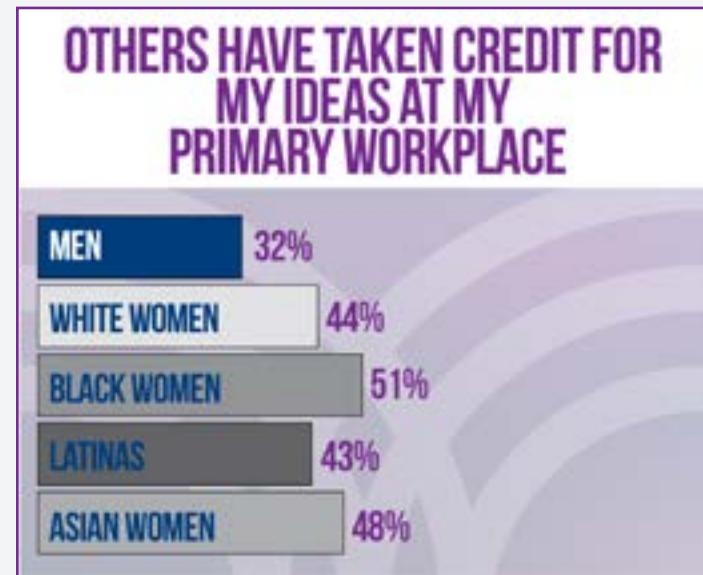
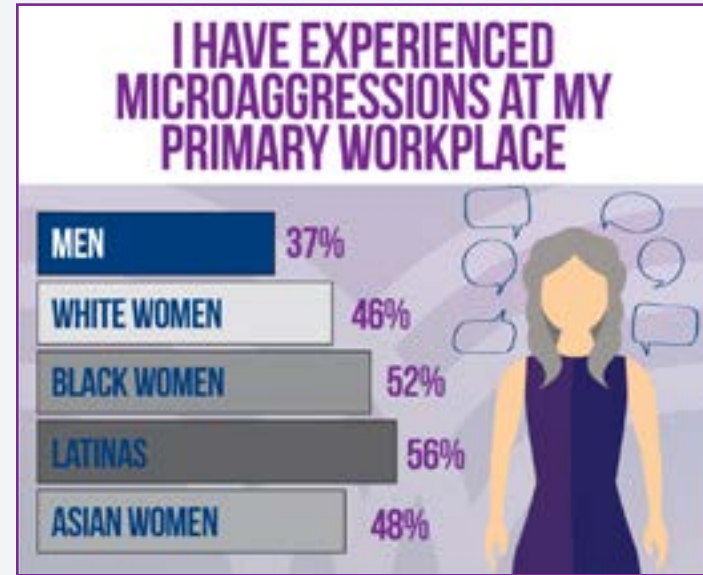


FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS



MORE WOMEN SAID THEY EXPERIENCED BURNOUT, MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES, AND DIFFICULTY ACHIEVING A WORK-LIFE BALANCE COMPARED TO MEN.

WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES

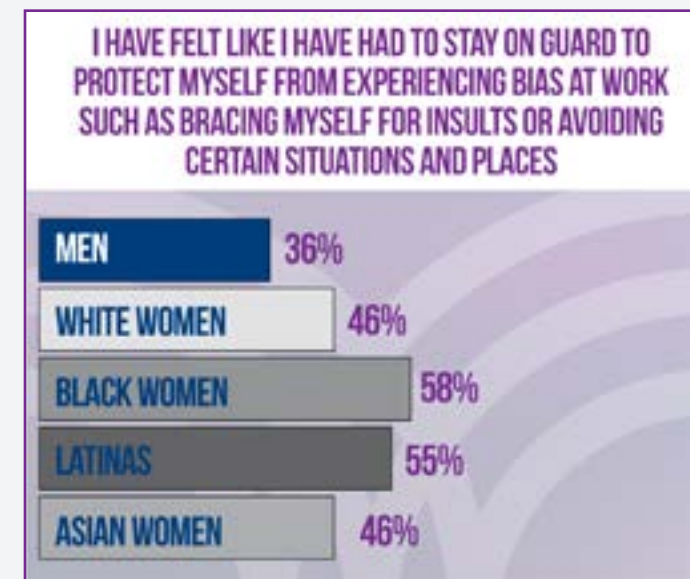
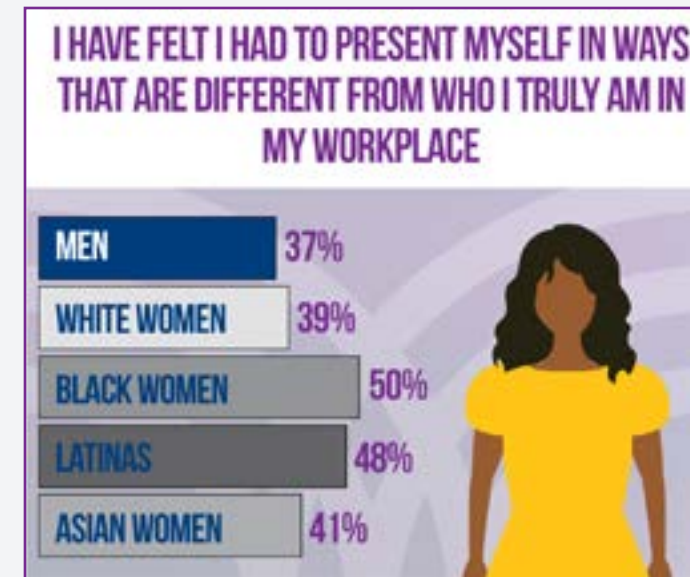
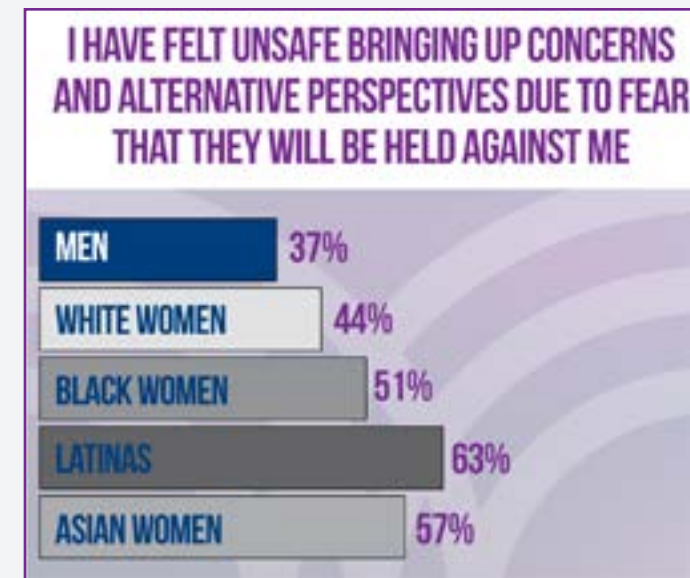
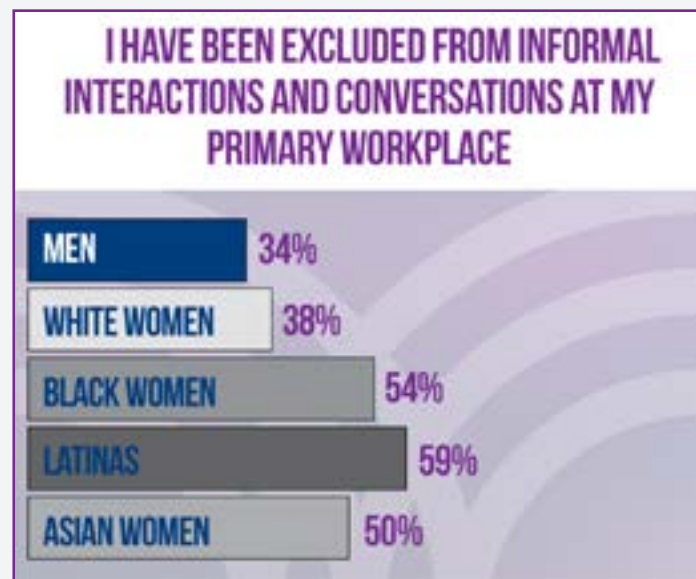


Women in racial/ethnic minority groups were more likely to experience non-inclusive behaviors at work: 56% of Latinas reported that they had experienced microaggressions, 51% of Black women reported that others had taken credit for their ideas, 52% of Asian women reported that they were given fewer opportunities to speak up in meetings, and 59% of Latinas reported that they had been excluded from informal conversations.

The lack of psychological safety was a major concern among all women, and particularly women of color: 63% of Latinas, 57% of Asian women, and 54% of Black women reported that they would feel unsafe bringing up concerns or alternative perspectives.

Women in racial/ethnic minority groups were less likely to feel they could be their true authentic selves at work: 50% of Black women, 48% of Latinas, and 41% of Asian women reported that they had to present themselves in ways that are different than from who they truly are.

Many women, particularly women in racial/ethnic minority groups, experience an emotional tax at work: 58% of Black women, 56% of Latinas, and 46% of Asian women and white women reported that they have to stay on guard to protect themselves from experiencing bias at work.



WOMEN IN RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS WERE LESS LIKELY TO FEEL THEY COULD BE THEIR TRUE AUTHENTIC SELVES AT WORK.

WORKPLACE RETENTION

48% of women (vs 35% of men) said they were currently looking for a new job:

When asked about the main reasons why respondents were considering leaving their primary employer, differences arose across men and women:

- Women reported their top reasons for wanting to leave as not enough opportunities to advance (21%), followed by poor pay (18%), and lack of work-life balance (16%).
- Men reported their top reasons for wanting to leave as a lack of work-life balance (23%), followed by poor pay (19%), and not enough opportunities to advance (16%).



WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON WHY YOU ARE CONSIDERING LEAVING YOUR PRIMARY EMPLOYER?

Reason	% of men	% of women
Not enough opportunities to advance.	16%	21%
Lack of work-life balance.	23%	16%
Pay is not high enough.	19%	18%
Supervisor does not support me or value my contributions.	13%	14%
Lack of diversity in the organization.	14%	13%
Company's values do not align with my own.	13%	13%
Other	3%	5%

WORKPLACE PEOPLE AND SYSTEMS

When asked about critical relationships, fewer women reported having...

- Sponsors/mentors who advocated for them (72% of women vs. 93% of men), who supported them during stressful times (78% of women vs. 93% of men), or who helped to them to advance their careers (70% of women vs 90% of men); or
- A colleague who would defend them if they were treated unfairly/poorly (88% of women vs. 93% of men).

Those who did have such critical relationships were less likely to consider leaving their organizations.

When asked about diversity-valuing behaviors on the part of their supervisors, **participants who had supervisors that...**

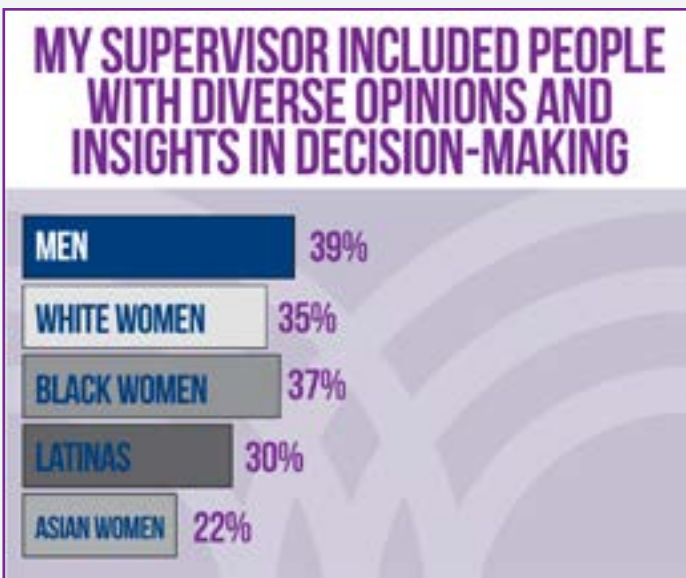
1. Considered diverse perspectives in decision-making, *and*
2. Fostered a culture of belonging

...were less likely to consider leaving their organizations.



THOSE WHO HAD A SUPERVISOR WHO INCLUDED PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE OPINIONS AND INSIGHTS IN DECISION-MAKING WERE 26% LESS LIKELY TO REPORT THAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB.

THOSE WHO HAD A SUPERVISOR WHO MADE SURE EVERYONE IN THEIR WORK GROUP FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG WERE 37% LESS LIKELY TO REPORT THAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB.



In terms of organizational systems, participants were asked about the availability and importance of benefits that are important to a diverse workforce.

The top workplace benefits reported by women include...

- 1) Opportunities for professional growth and development,
- 2) Personal leave for mental healthcare,
- 3) Paid parental leave, and
- 4) Support for reproductive health.

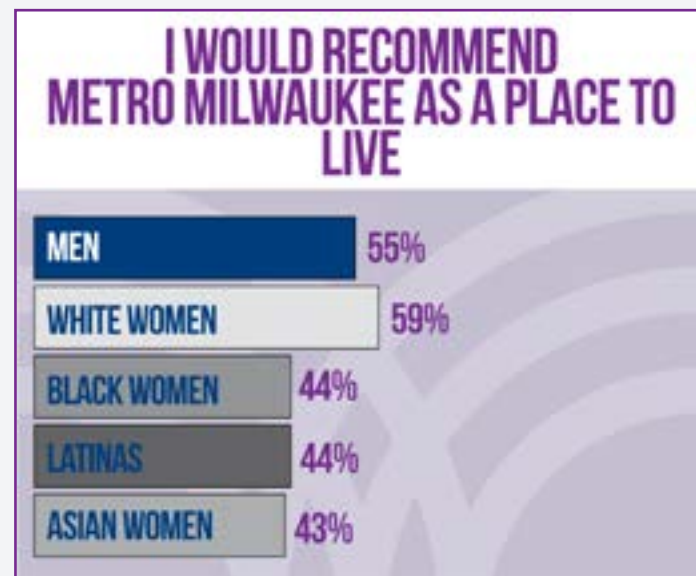
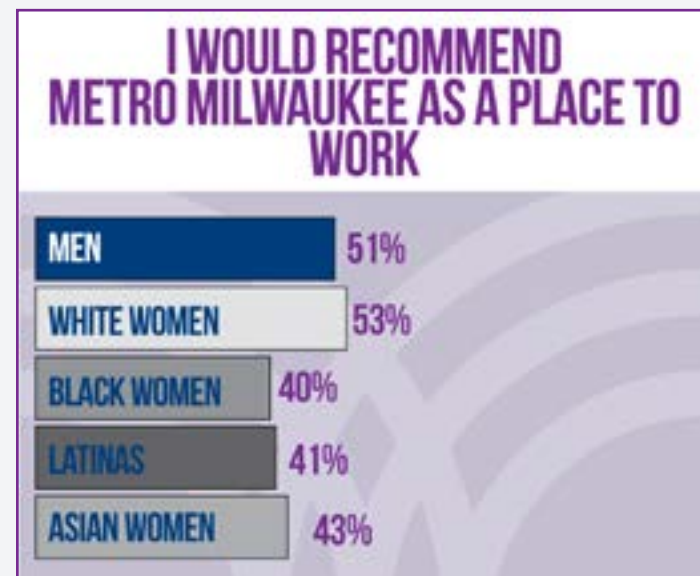
DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE THE FOLLOWING BENEFIT? HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOU THAT YOU WORK FOR AN EMPLOYER THAT OFFERS THE BENEFIT?

Benefit	% who has the benefit	Unsure	Importance of benefit for Men (% of important/very important)	Importance of benefit for Women (% of important/very important)
Personal leave for mental healthcare.	47%	18%	56%	66%
Paid parental leave.	49%	14%	55%	64%
Paid leave for caregiving.	37%	24%	55%	60%
Access to reproductive healthcare.	43%	18%	52%	58%
Support protections for reproductive health.	42%	24%	55%	61%
Support for transgender healthcare.	38%	24%	48%	54%
Emergency backup childcare services.	39%	20%	50%	53%
Flexibility to schedule when and where I work.	53%	12%	58%	60%
Formal sponsorship programs focused on women.	44%	17%	45%	55%
Formal sponsorship programs focused on Women of Color.	38%	21%	47%	59%
Opportunities for employees to learn and develop.	59%	10%	61%	68%
Active support for racial/social justice in the community.	49%	18%	57%	58%

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENTS

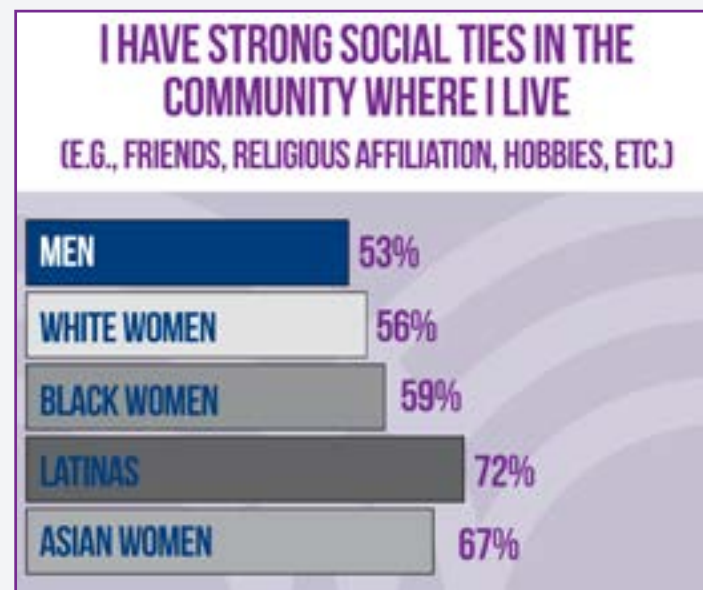
While the organizations at which people work are important entities that help determine whether people will engage, inspire, and transform, so too is the Milwaukee community:

- Men and white women were more likely to recommend Metro-Milwaukee as a place to live and work compared to racial/ethnic minority women.
- Participants who took part in the entertainment, sporting, and cultural activities in their communities were two times more likely to recommend Metro-Milwaukee as a place to live and work.
- Participants who had strong social ties in their communities were more likely to recommend Metro-Milwaukee as a place to live and work.
- Women who were members of...
 - 1) Women’s professional associations,
 - 2) Non-profit boards, and
 - 3) Local professional associations...
 ...felt that those affiliations helped them feel more embedded in the Milwaukee community.



ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS? IF SO, HOW IMPORTANT HAS IT BEEN TO YOUR FEELING EMBEDDED IN THE MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY?

Affiliation	% Membership	% who rated important/very important
Women’s professional associations (e.g., Milwaukee Women inc, Professional Dimensions, TEMPO)	40%	58%
Non-profit board	41%	51%
Corporate board	35%	42%
Academic board	36%	41%
Local professional association	43%	53%



THOSE WHO TAKE PART LOCALLY WERE **MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY** TO RECOMMEND METRO-MILWAUKEE AS A PLACE TO WORK (2.3X) AND PLACE TO LIVE (2.1X).

THOSE WHO SHARED THAT THEY HAVE STRONG SOCIAL TIES WERE **MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY** TO RECOMMEND METRO-MILWAUKEE AS A PLACE TO WORK (2.4X) **AND NEARLY TWICE AS LIKELY** TO RECOMMEND IT AS A PLACE TO LIVE (.9X)

1. PRIORITIZE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

2. SUPPORT WORK-LIFE BALANCE

3. BE RELENTLESS IN PROVIDING EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK AND MAKE IT TRANSPARENT

4. FULLY COMMIT TO ELIMINATING NON-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE BEHAVIORS AND HOLDING PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE

5. FOCUS ON CREATING A CULTURE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prioritize health and well-being

Participants clearly expressed experiencing burnout, challenges with mental health, and difficulty achieving work-life balance. Further, more than three out of every five women and over half of men said that it was important/very important that their employer make personal leave for mental healthcare available. Yet, fewer than half of the participants indicated that their employer offered it.

2. Support work-life balance

Balancing work-life demands continues to be a challenge for both men and women. It emerged as one of the main reasons men (24%) and women (16%) were considering leaving their primary employer. More than half of the participants indicated that it was important that their employer offer work-life balance supports such as 1) paid parental leave, 2) paid leave for caregiving, 3) emergency back-up childcare, and 4) access to reproductive health care.

3. Be relentless in providing equal pay for equal work and make it transparent

Women continue to express that they are not paid equally. Moreover, women expressed considerable concern about their financial security currently and about their finances for retirement. These concerns were especially pronounced among women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds where fewer than half of women in these groups felt financially secure and only three out of ten felt secure about their finances for retirement.

4. Fully commit to eliminating non-inclusive workplace behaviors and holding people accountable

A considerable number of women reported experiencing non-inclusive behaviors such as

microaggressions. The finding that more than half of the women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds experience microaggressions is particularly alarming. The finding that more than half of the women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds report being excluded from informal interactions in their workplace is also of concern.

5. Focus on creating a culture of psychological safety

Many women reported a lack of psychological safety at work. It is especially noteworthy that among women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, more than half of Black women and approximately three out of every five Latina and Asian women felt unsafe bringing concerns or alternative perspectives due to fear of backlash. Many of these women also reported not being able to bring who they truly are to work and that they experience an emotional tax because of their identity. That is, they must be on guard to protect themselves against insults or by avoiding certain situations and places where they work all together.

6. Create relationships that provide women with sponsors and mentors within the organization

Significantly fewer women than men reported having mentors/sponsors to support them when they faced upsetting or stressful events at work, to advocate on their behalf, and to help advance their careers and navigate workplace politics. The absence of these types of mentors and sponsors who provide career support impacted women's consideration of changing employers. Relatedly, a lack of opportunity to advance was the top-rated reason women reported considering leaving their current employer; and the availability of advancement opportunities was rated as the most important benefit for an employer to offer by approximately seven out of ten women.

6. CREATE RELATIONSHIPS THAT PROVIDE WOMEN WITH SPONSORS AND MENTORS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

7. DEVELOP INCLUSIVE LEADERS, ALLIES, AND ADVOCATES THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION

8. ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

9. PROMOTE INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIAL TIES IN THE MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY

7. Develop inclusive leaders, allies, and advocates throughout the organization

Both women and men reported a lack of critical leadership behaviors. Overall, fewer than two out of every five participants reported having a supervisor who included diverse opinions and insights when making decisions. Women, and especially those women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, were even less likely to report having a supervisor who included diverse perspectives when making decisions. Similarly, women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds were also much less likely to report having a supervisor who made sure everyone in their workgroup felt like they belonged.

8. Encourage participation in women's professional organizations

Nearly six in ten women who were members of women's professional organizations indicated that those organizations play an important role in helping them feel embedded in the community. More than half indicated being a member of a local professional organization and serving on the board of a non-profit organization helped them feel embedded in the community. Women's professional organizations and similar activities, like serving on a board, provide critical opportunities for mentorship, networking, and role modeling as well as skill-building. Such organizations and community involvement also provide an important avenue for the advocacy of women throughout the region.

9. Promote involvement and social ties in the Milwaukee community

More women than men reported taking part in entertainment, sporting, and cultural events in the community where they live; and this number was even higher among women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. More women than men also reported having strong social ties such as friends, religious affiliations, and pursuing hobbies in the community. Again, this number was even higher among women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. Those who reported these types of involvement and social ties were also much more likely to rate the Milwaukee area as a great place to live and work. However, despite the higher level of engagement with the community, fewer than half of women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds described Milwaukee as a great place to live or work.



CONCLUSION

Diverse and talented women are essential to vibrant communities and thriving economies.

The findings in this *Milwaukee Women in the Workplace* study identified concerning trends.

Nearly half of the women who took part in the study indicated that they were currently looking for a new job in a different organization.

About half of women indicated they would recommend Metro-Milwaukee as a place to live and work; and that number was significantly lower for women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds.

The data also shows the challenges women face that are driving these concerns:

- 1) Personal and financial well-being,
- 2) Workplace experiences,
- 3) Retention,
- 4) Workplace people and systems, and
- 5) Community attachment.

While these challenges are pervasive, they are not insurmountable.

Business organizations, women's professional groups, and community leaders all play a role in improving the lives of women in ways that drive the region forward.

BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS, WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL GROUPS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS ALL PLAY A ROLE IN IMPROVING THE LIVES OF WOMEN IN WAYS THAT DRIVE THE REGION FORWARD.



ENGAGE. INSPIRE. TRANSFORM.

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