

# ARE WE READY TO CONFRONT THE NONPROFIT RACIAL LEADERSHIP GAP?

The Boston Foundation Forum  
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An initiative of  
Building Movement Project

# ABOUT THE BUILDING MOVEMENT PROJECT



## Leadership

Analyzing how organizations can do their best work by promoting the most effective and inclusive practices

### Reports

Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap

### Blog

The Leadership in Leaving

### Reports

Vision for Change



## Service and Social Change

Developing the capacity of organizations to engage constituents in changing the systems that impact them

### Tools

Service and Social Change

### Blog

Small Shifts, Big Change

### Reports

Crossing Organizational Boundaries to Build New Partnerships



## Movement Building

Acknowledging and building on the distinct role of nonprofit organizations in advancing movements for social change

### Reports

The Respect ABQ Women Campaign

### Blog

Learning How to ACT UP

### Blog

Detroiters Reclaiming Voice and Power

Join the Conversation @BldingMovement @bostonfdn #RaceToLead

## WHAT WE WANTED TO KNOW

***Why – despite an increased number of training programs for developing leaders of color and the number of groups working on issues of race/race equity – are there not more leaders of color in nonprofits?***

Join the Conversation @BldingMovement @bostonfdn #RaceToLead

# BACKGROUND RESEARCH & SURVEY DESIGN



Reviewed Academic  
Literature

Conducted Three Dozen Interviews

Designed Survey

Join the Conversation @BldingMovement @bostonfdn #RaceToLead

# HOW PEOPLE HEARD ABOUT THE SURVEY

More than  
**4,300**  
Respondents  
Nationwide



**176 from MA**



One of 15 Distribution Partners



A colleague/friend



Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

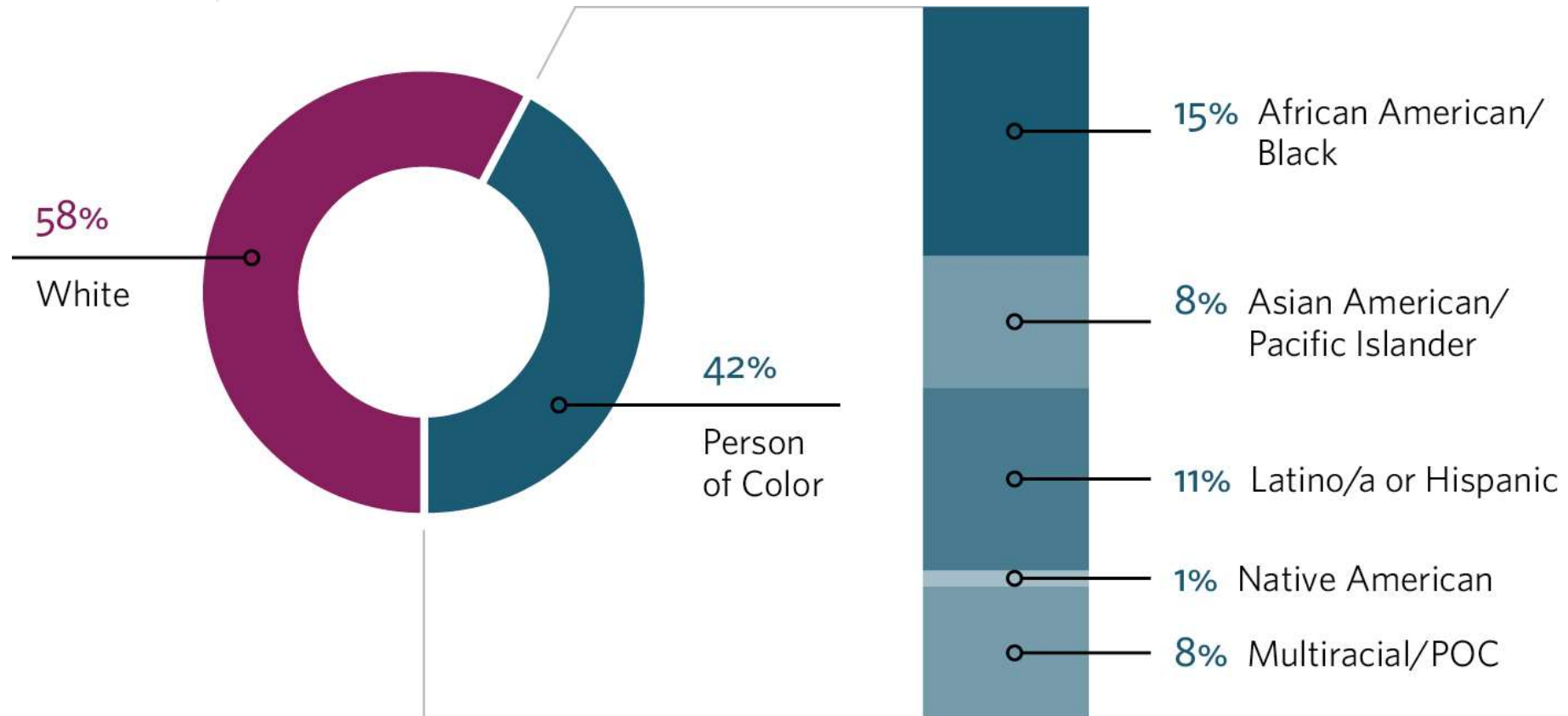


Other Organization/Network



None of These

# WHO TOOK THE SURVEY



*Race/Ethnicity*



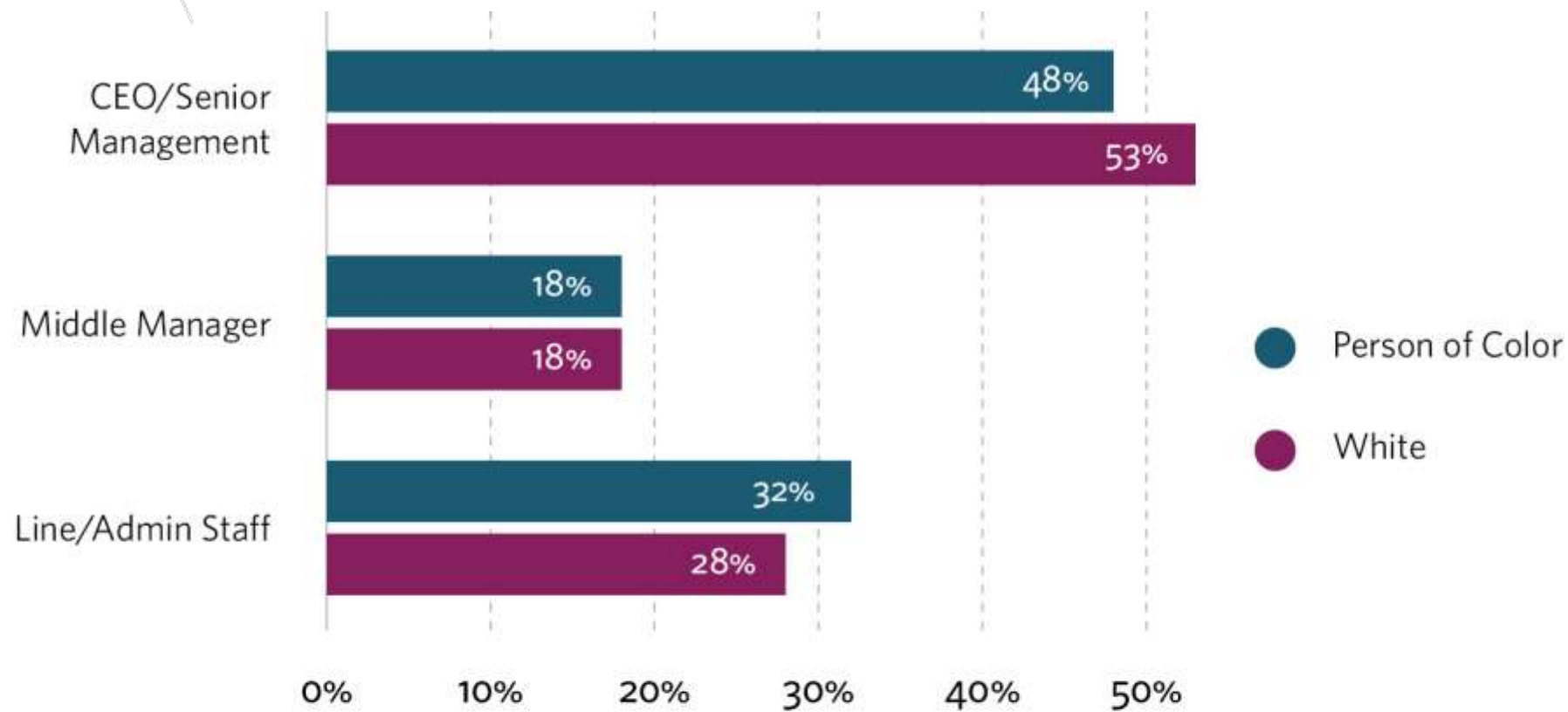
# WHAT ISN'T THE PROBLEM

# PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE QUALIFIED



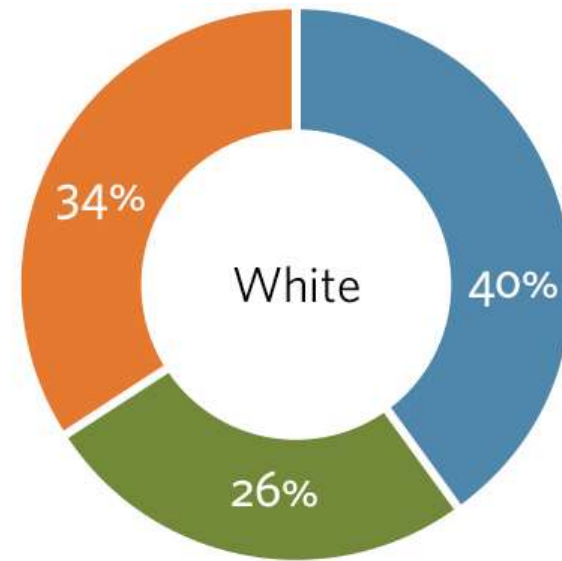
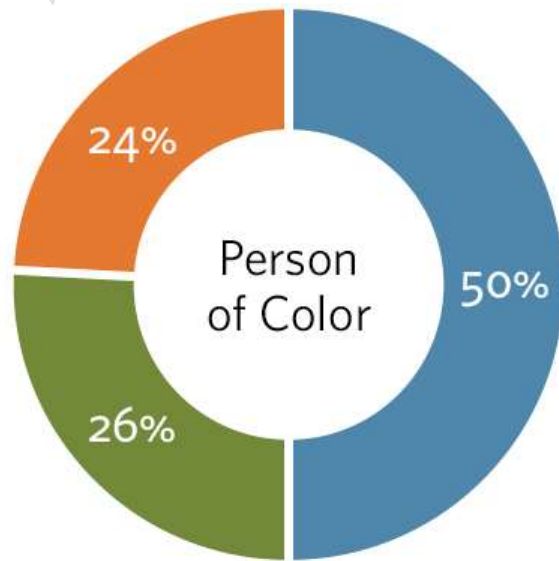


# AND EXPERIENCED



*Current Role/Position in the Organization*

# AND WILLING



● Definitely/Probably Yes

● Maybe

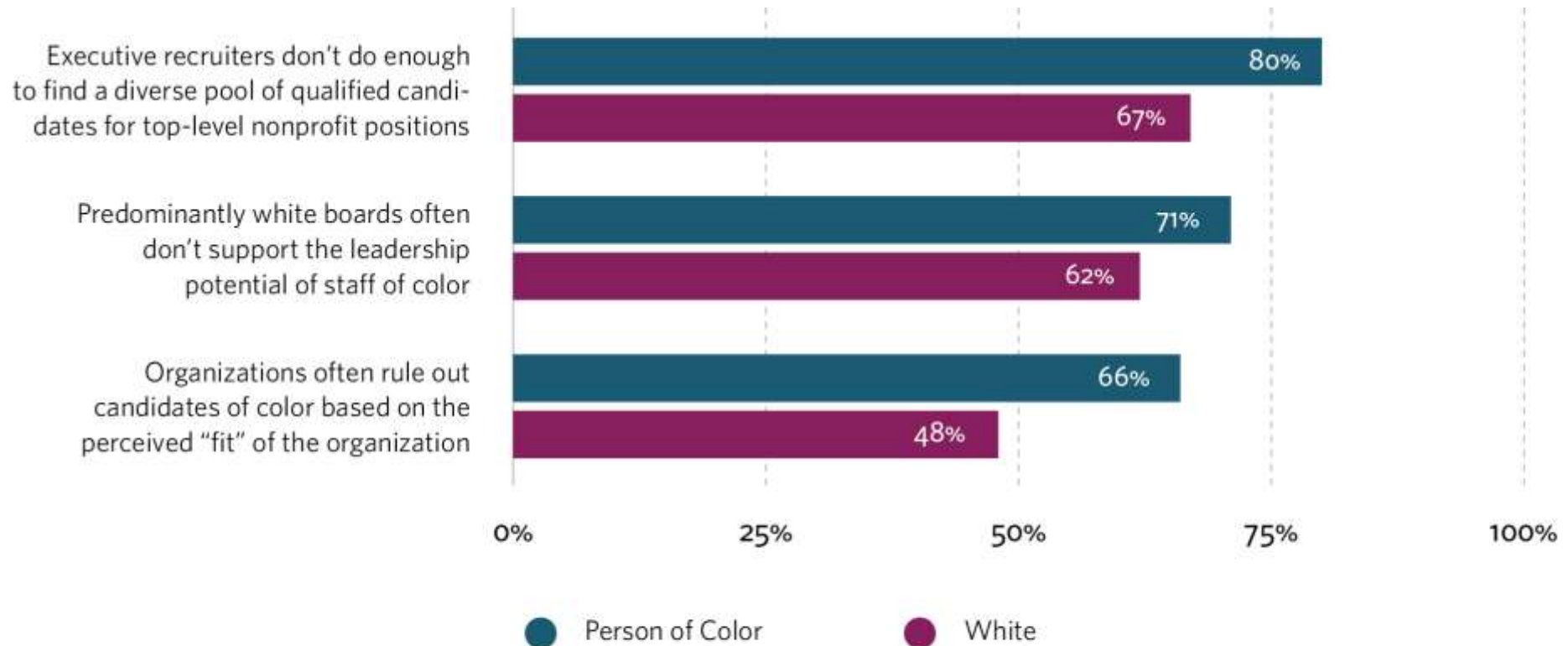
● Definitely/Probably No

*Level of Interest in Taking a Top Leadership Role (among Non-CEOs)*



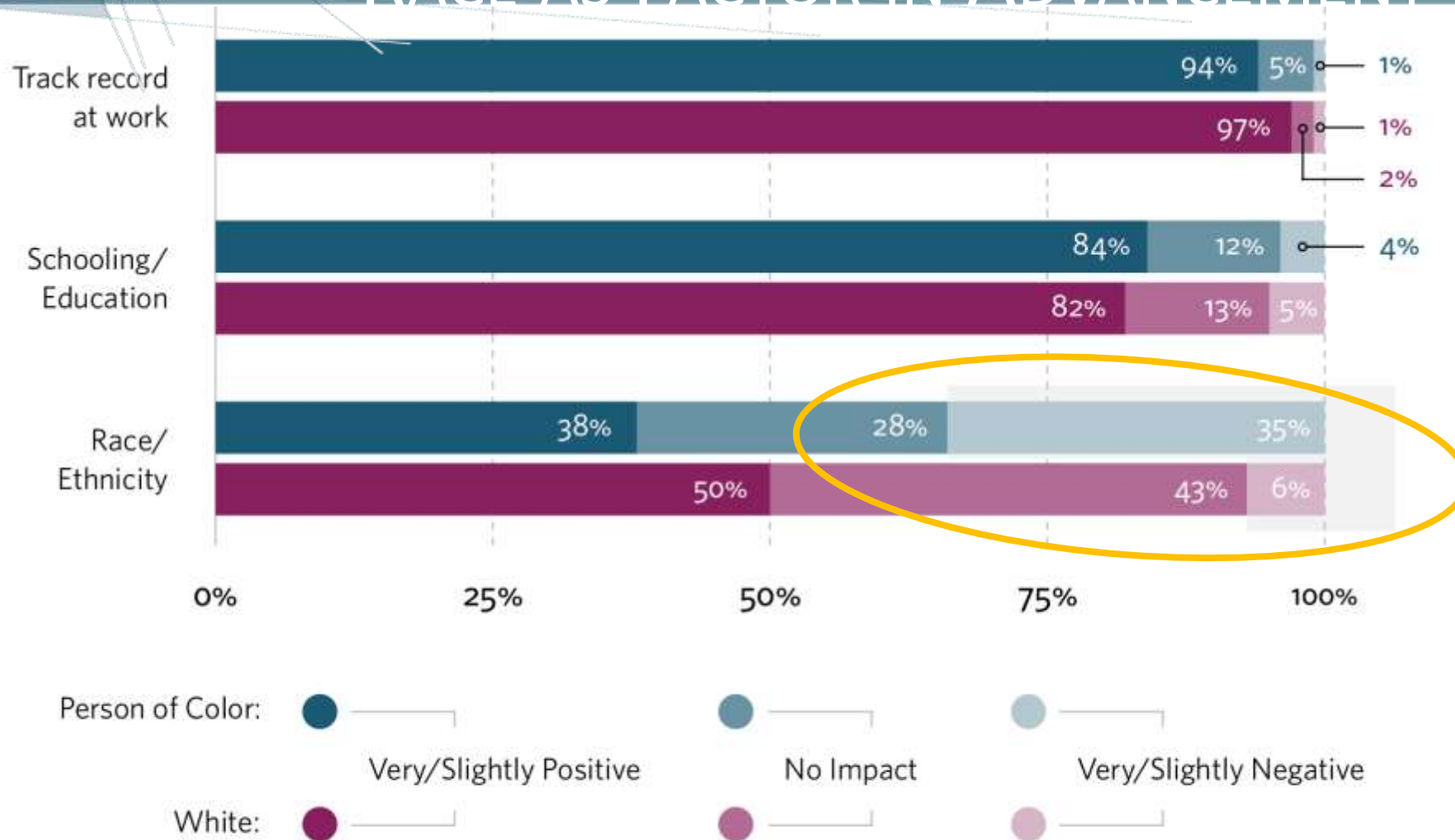
# WHAT IS THE PROBLEM

# IT'S NOT PERSONAL - IT'S THE SYSTEM



*Why So Few POC Nonprofit Executives?: Structural Reasons ("Somewhat" or "Strong" Level of Agreement)*

# RACE AS FACTOR IN ADVANCEMENT



*Factors that Have Played a Role in Respondents' Career Advancement*

# RACE AS FACTOR IN ADVANCEMENT



My organization does not support leadership of color. We have a high level of People of Color in our front line staff but the top positions are filled by mainly White men and women... I struggle to be seen as an asset and feel as though my organizations does not actually care about (or is tone deaf to) the real issues affecting my communities ...

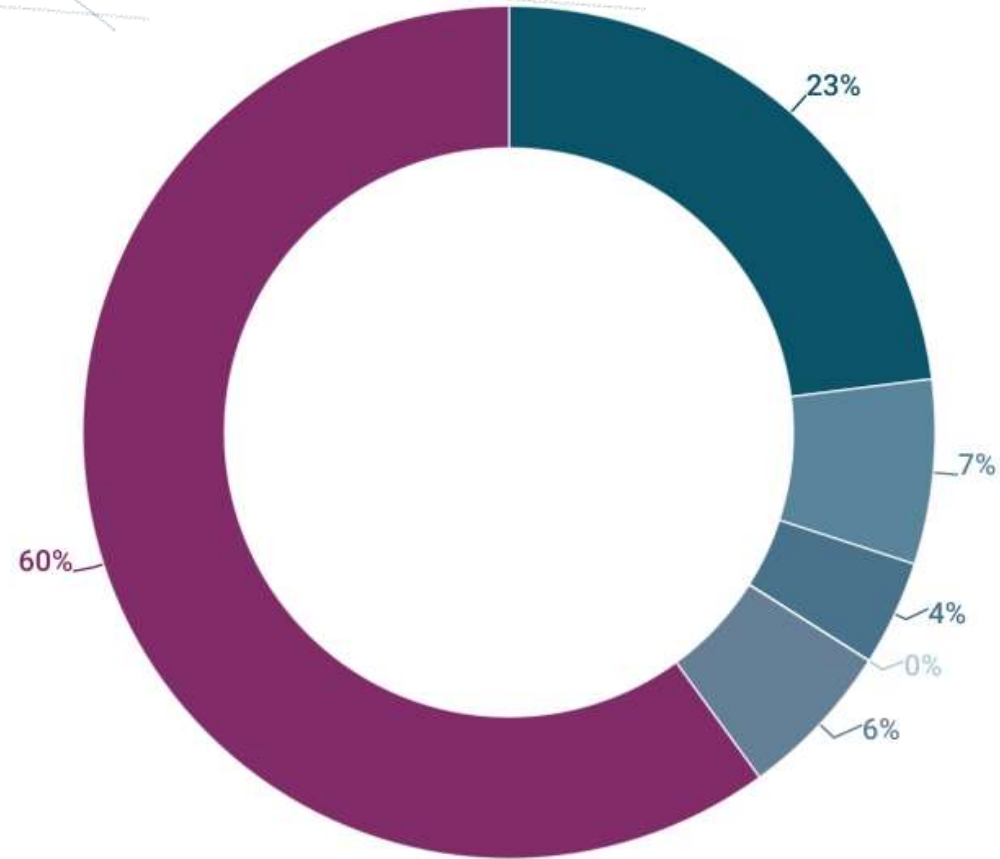


-- Multiracial Man



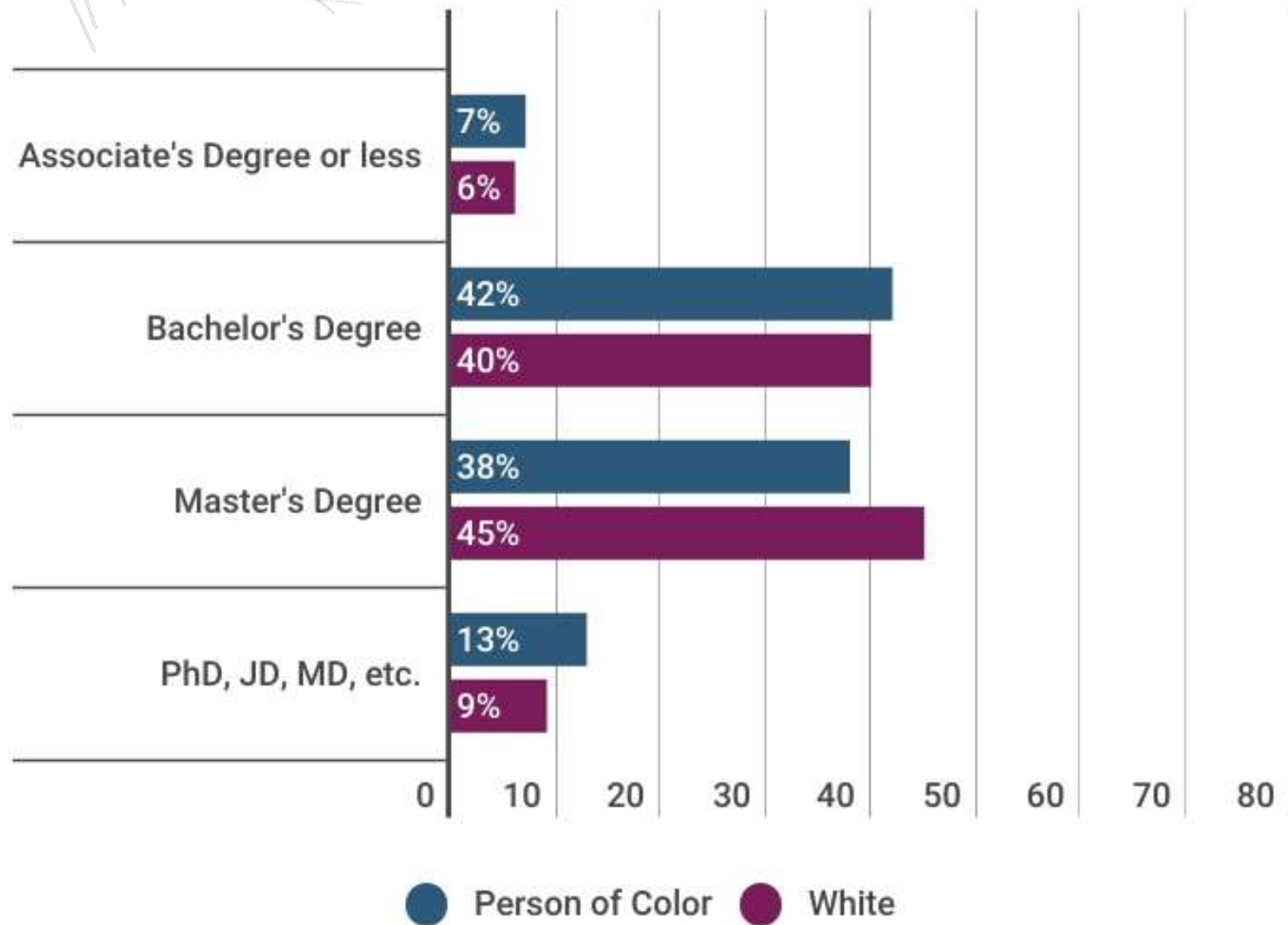
# MASSACHUSETTS RESPONDENTS

# MASSACHUSETTS RESPONDENTS BY RACE

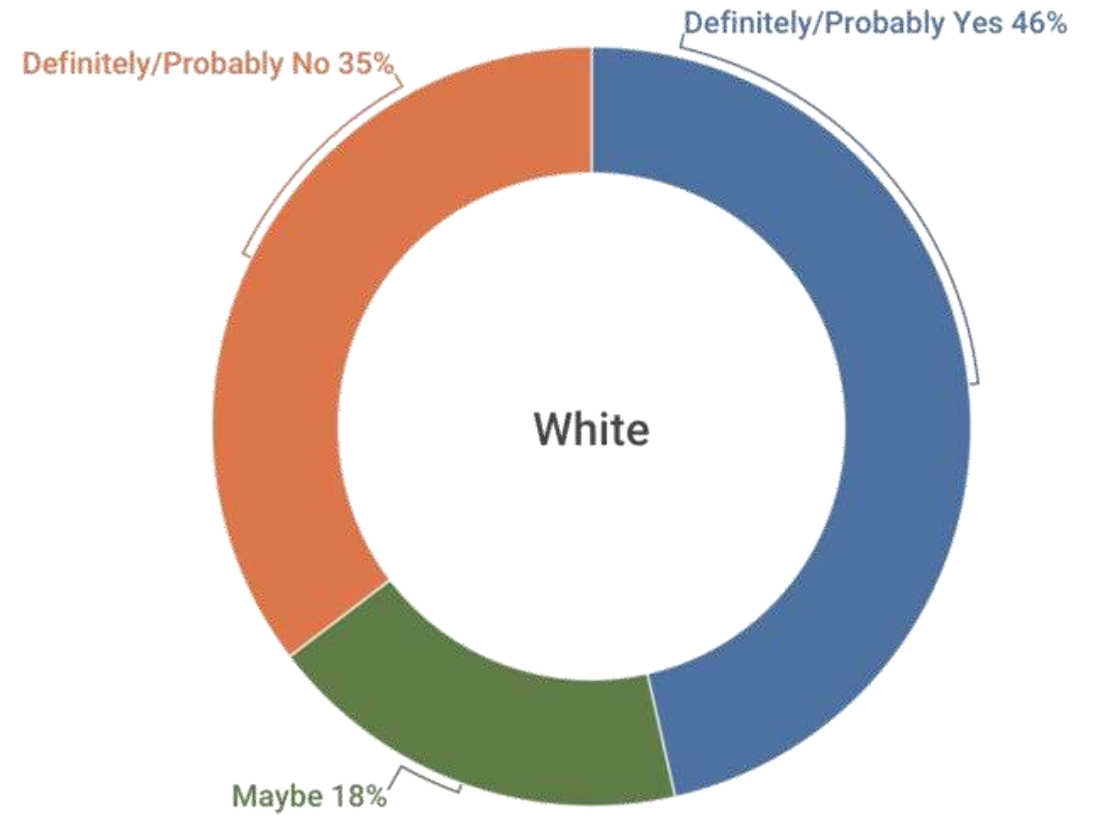
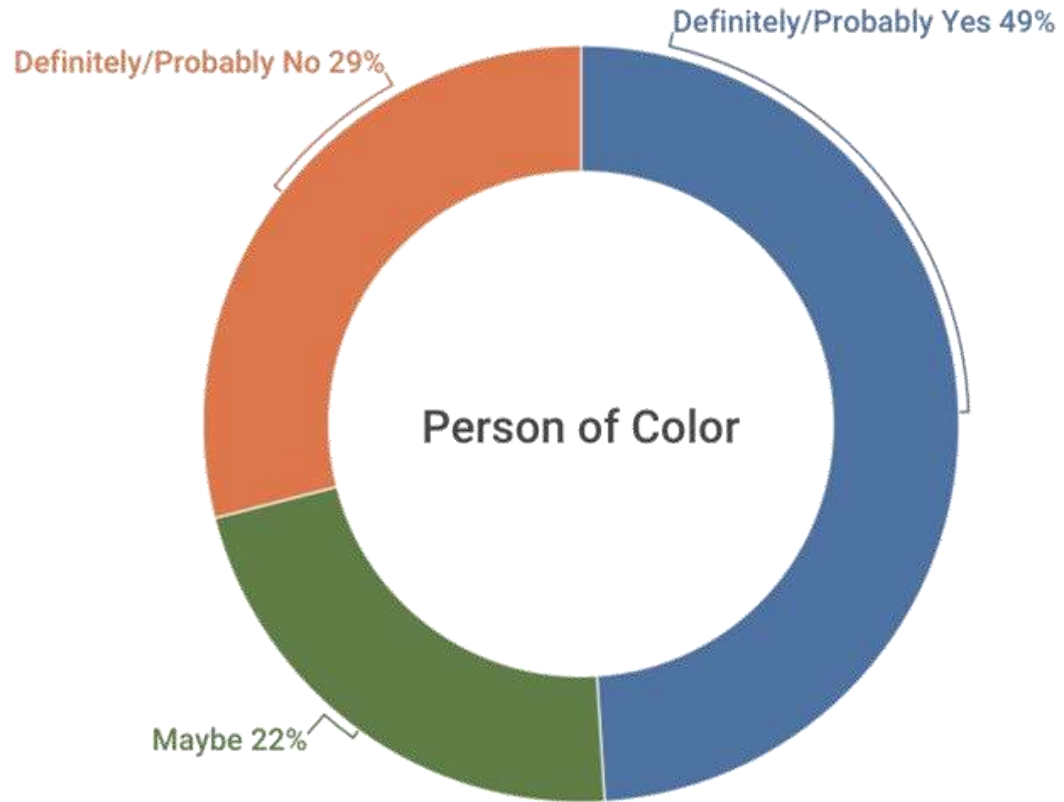




# EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS



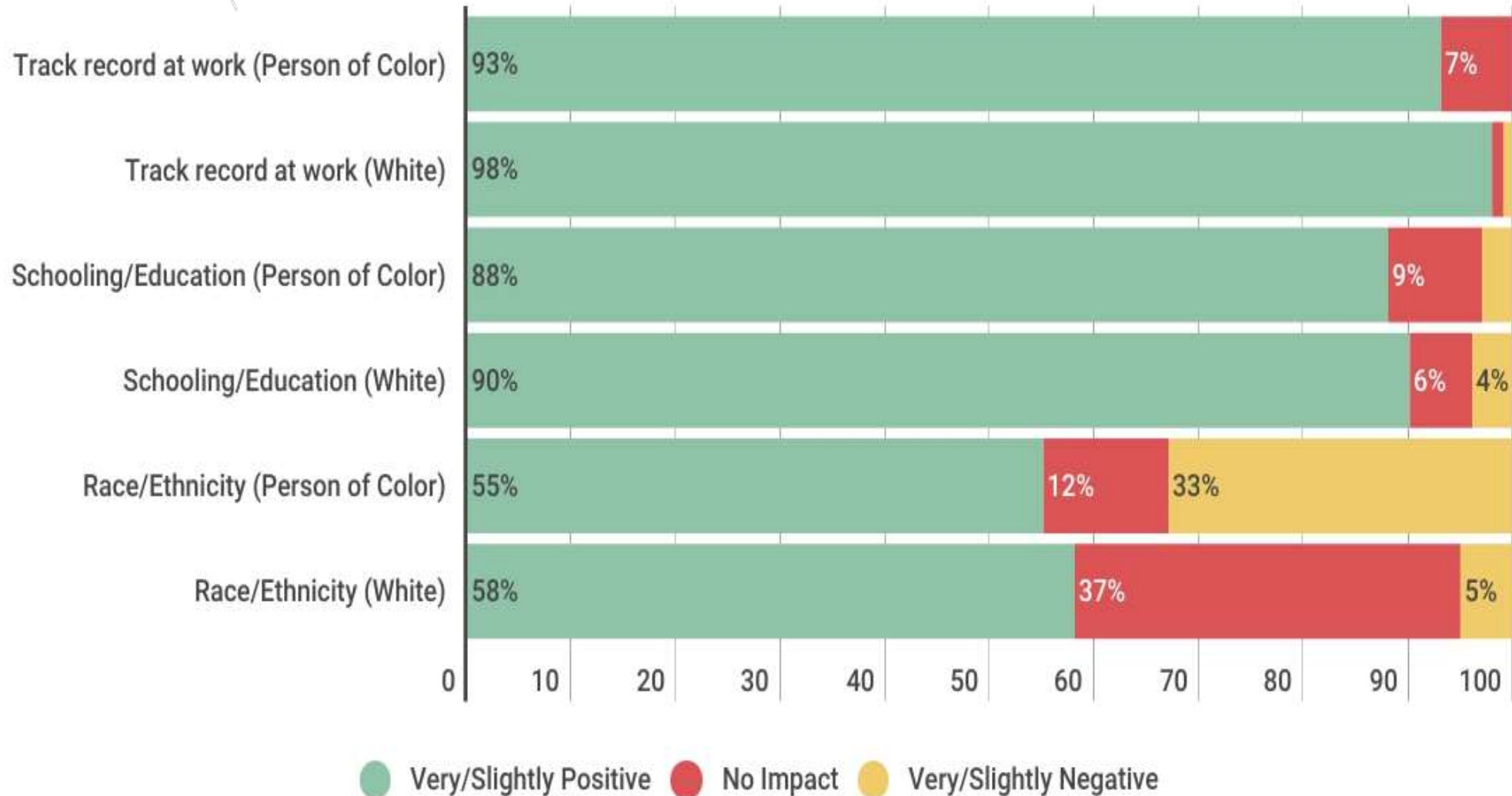
# WHO WANTS TO LEAD IN MASSACHUSETTS



# MASSACHUSETTS - IT'S THE SYSTEM



# RACE AS FACTOR IN ADVANCEMENT IN MA



## REACTIONS WE GET

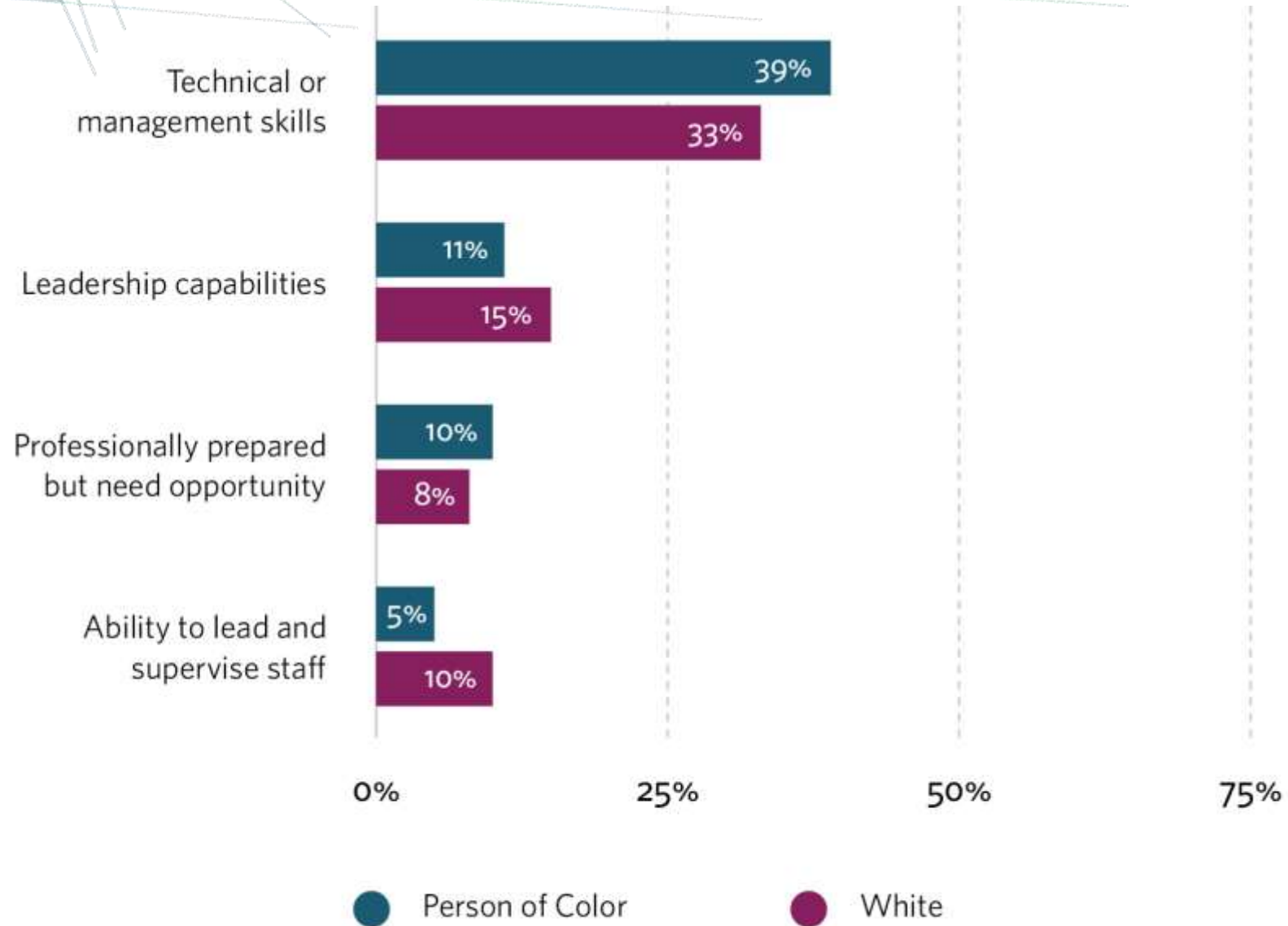
Duh!  
What  
did you  
expect?

Really?  
Are you  
sure?

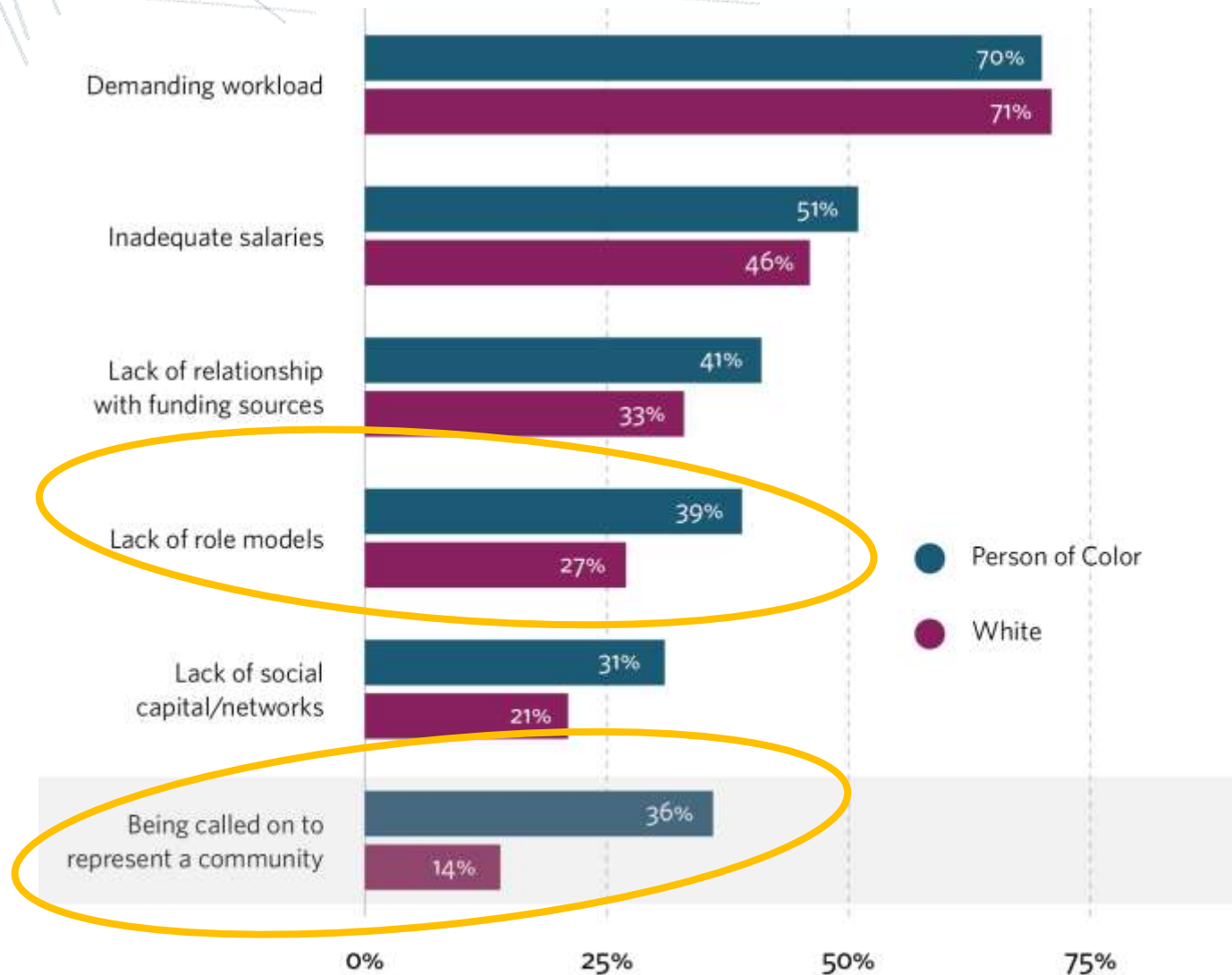


# REAL NEEDS AND SUPPORTS

# WHAT ASPIRING LEADERS SAY THEY NEED



# CHALLENGES AND FRUSTRATIONS





## LACK OF MENTORS AND ROLE MODELS



Despite my overwhelmingly positive track record, I've never had a single senior staff person at any of the three nonprofits I've worked for take me under their wing as a mentee and try to groom me for a higher position. And I've never had a supervisor of color.

-- African American Woman



## BEING CALLED ON TO REPRESENT

“

I get pigeon-holed into working for/on behalf of the Latino/immigrant community. Sometimes being Latino is seen as my only "skill."

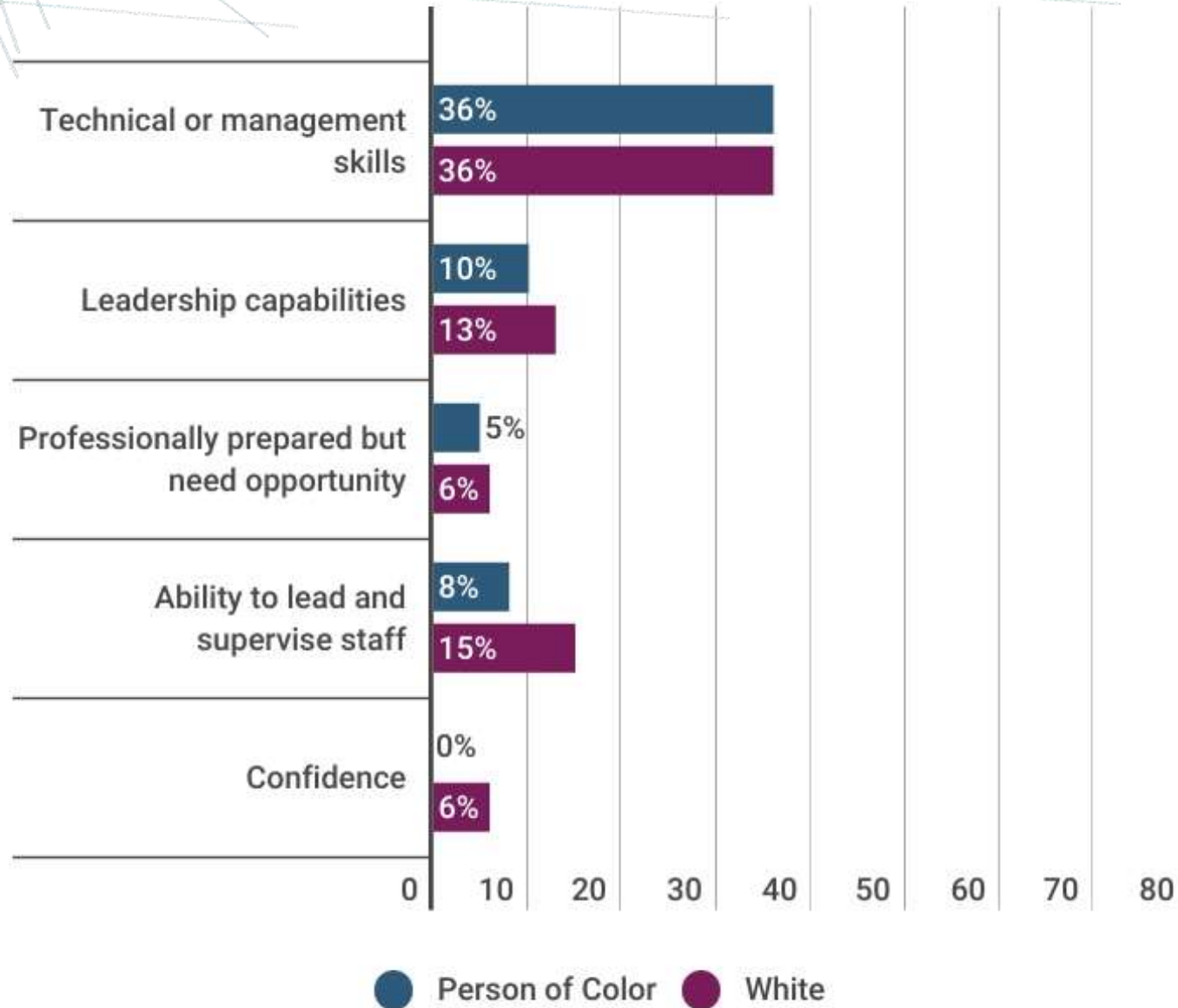
-- Hispanic / Latinx Man

”

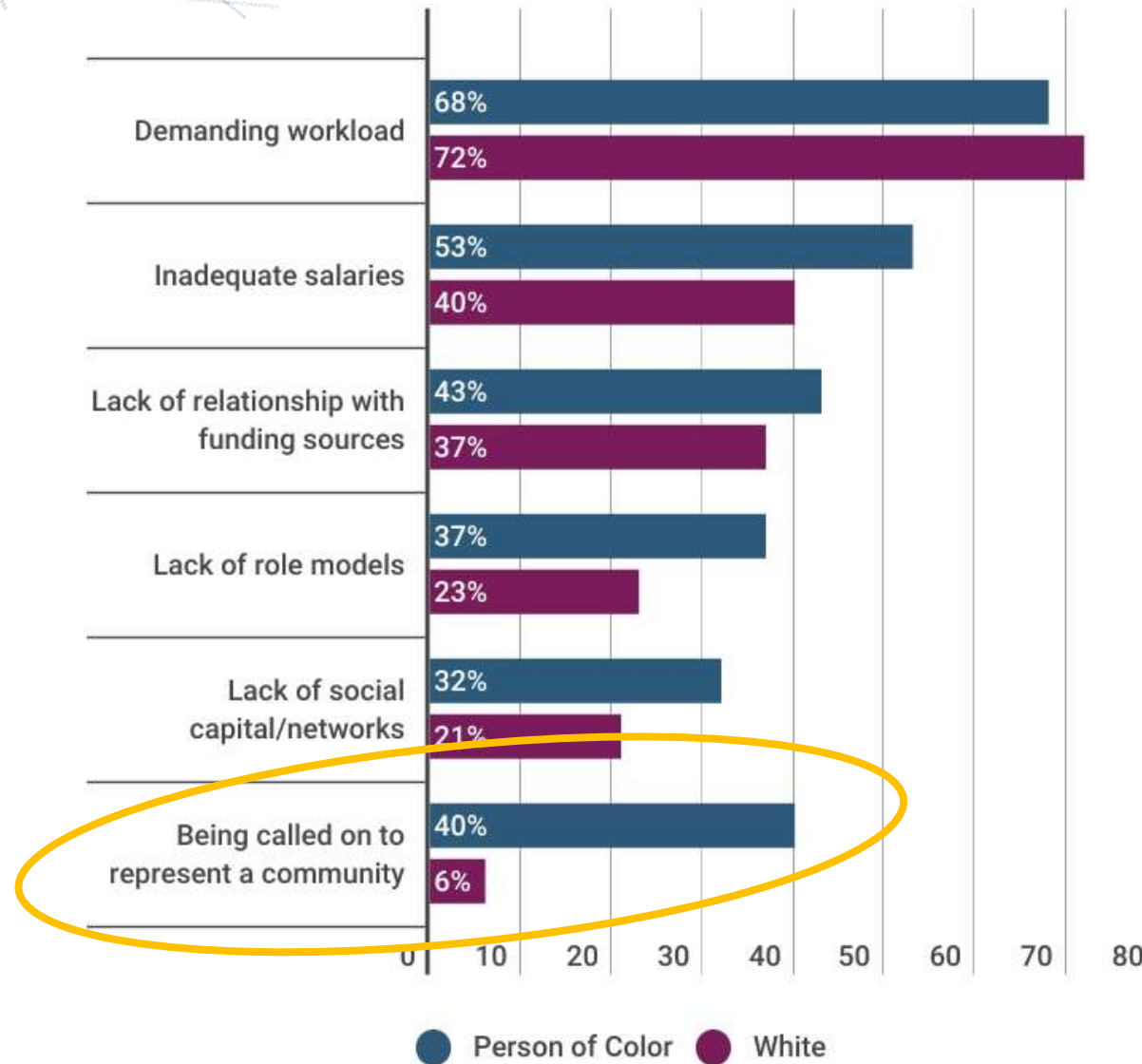


# MASSACHUSETTS RESPONDENTS

# WHAT ASPIRING MA LEADERS NEED



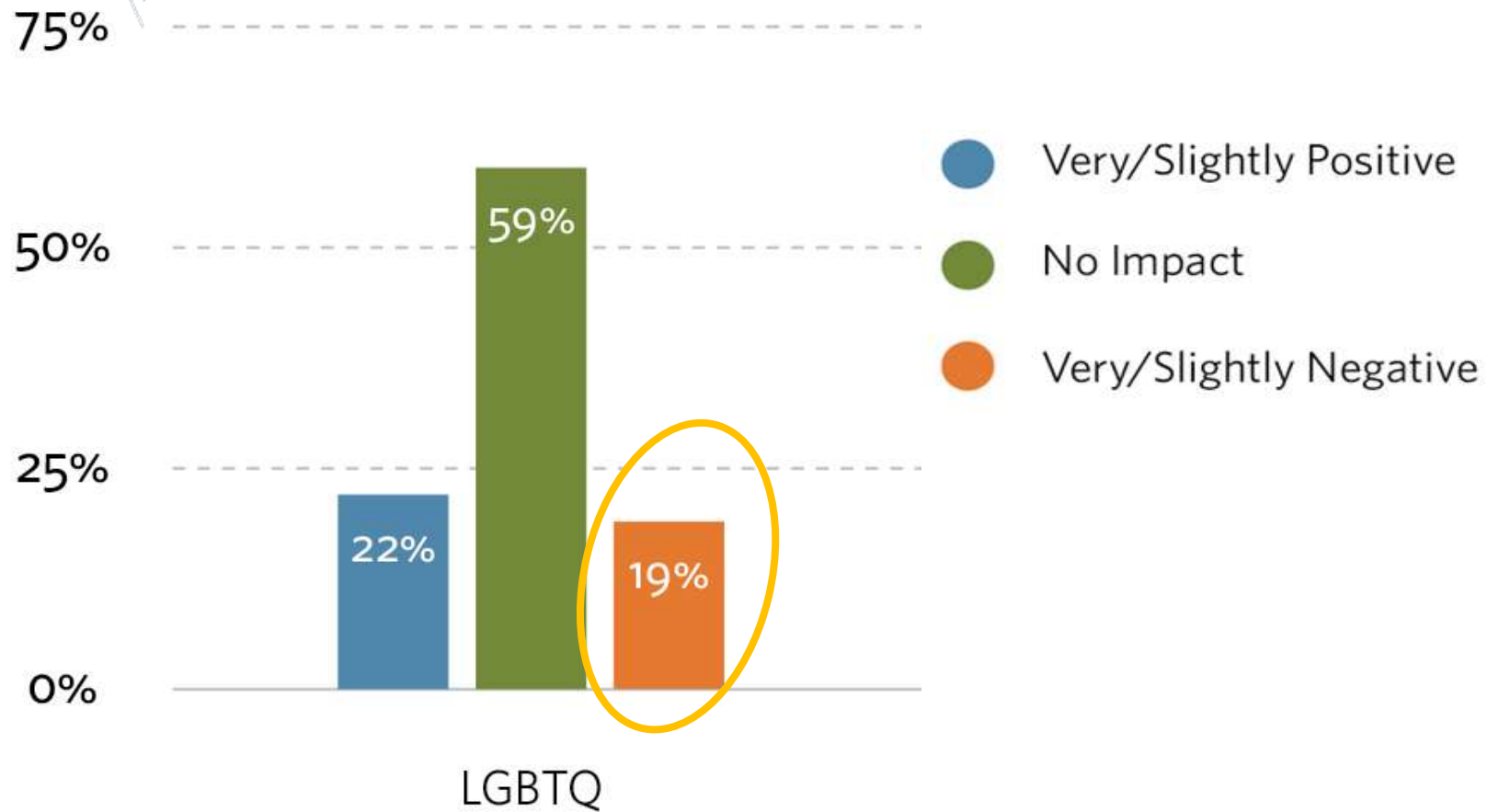
# MA CHALLENGES & FRUSTRATIONS





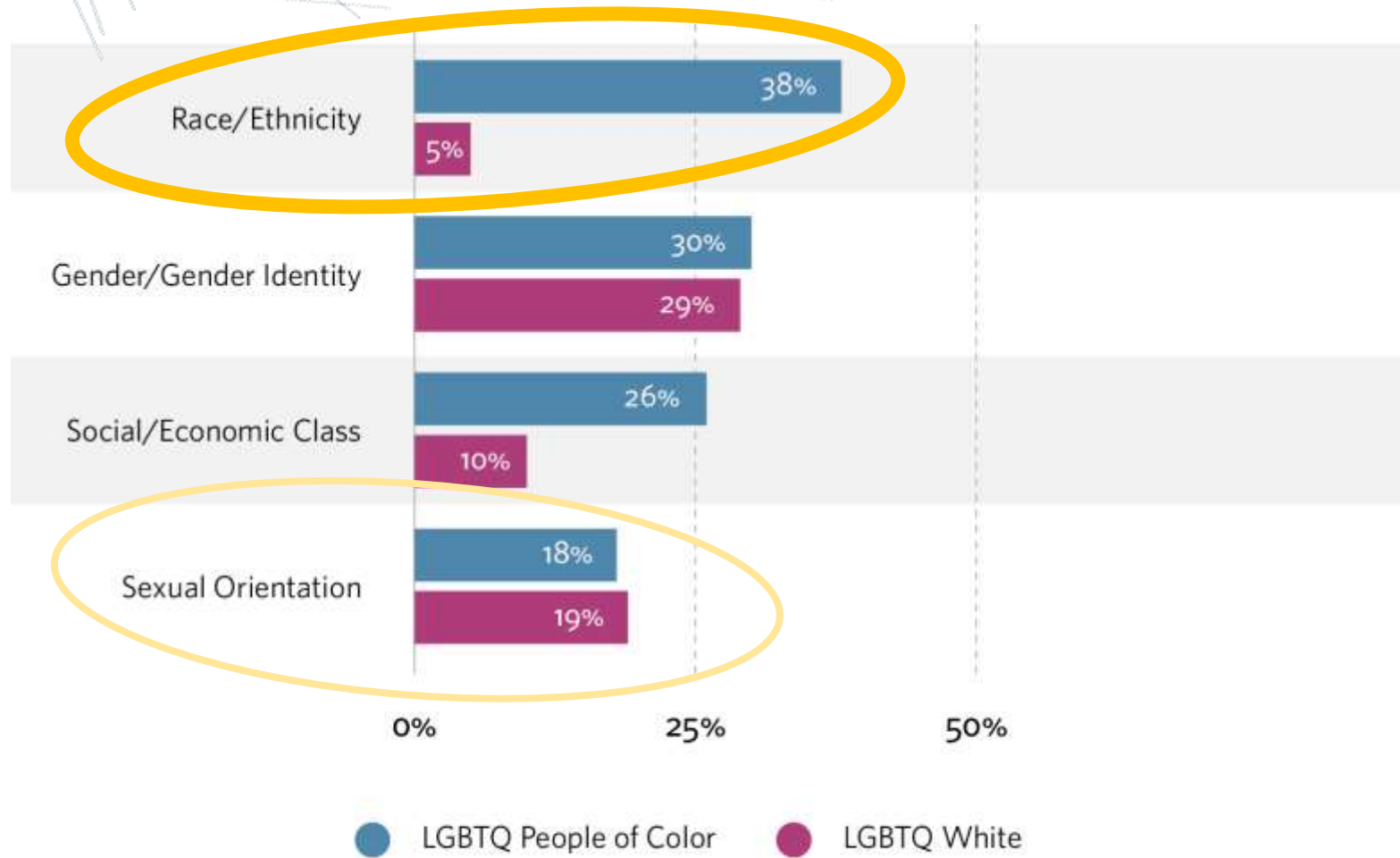
# LGBTQ Identity Is a Factor

# IMPACTS OF SEXUALITY ON ADVANCEMENT



*Impact of Sexual Orientation on Respondents' Career Advancement*

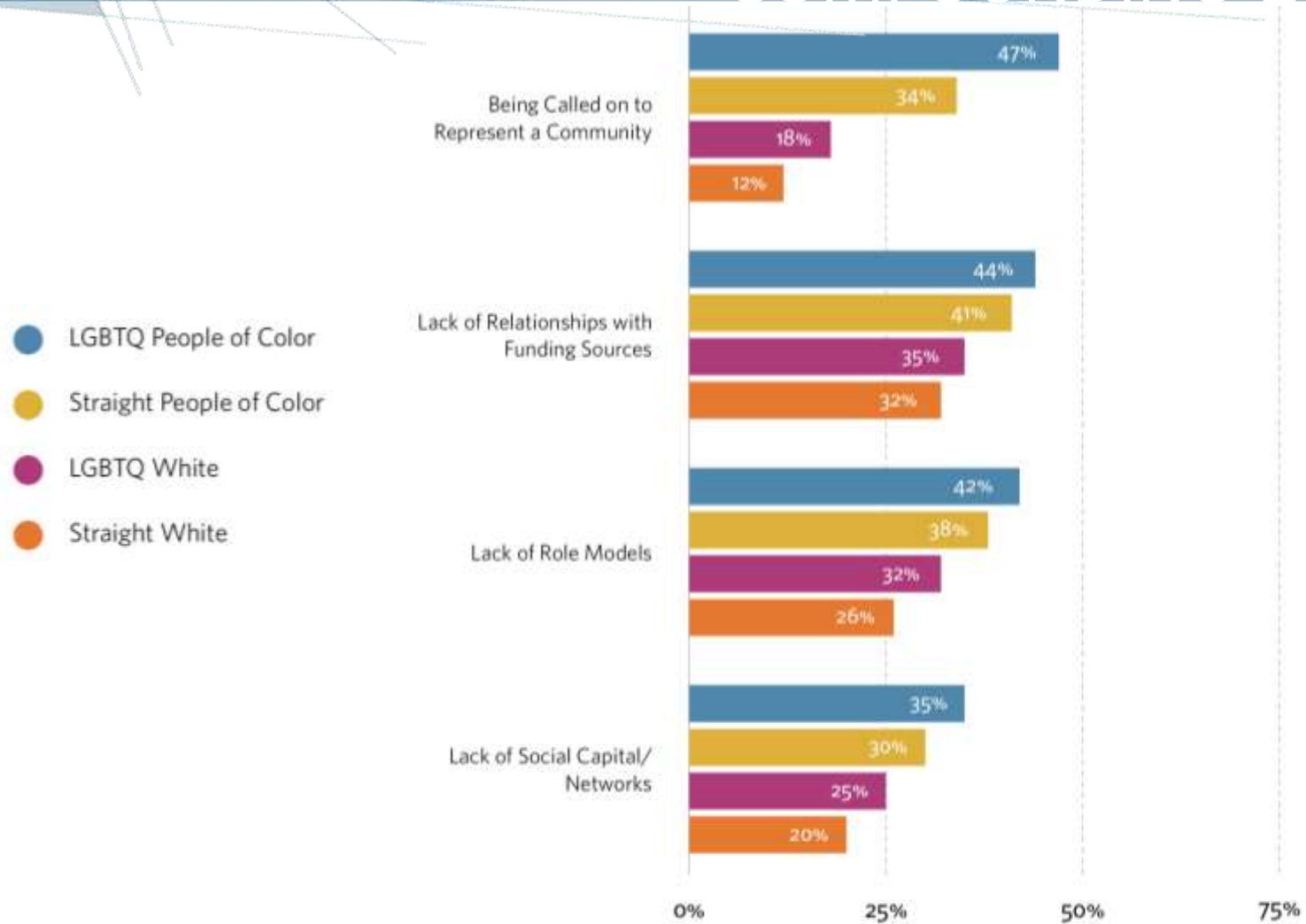
# BUT RACE IS BIGGER FACTOR



*Factors Negatively Impacting Career Advancement of LGBTQ Respondents, by Race ("Very" or "Slightly")*



# COMPOUNDING EFFECTS



## FINDING SAFETY

“

I found a way for myself as an out lesbian by working for organizations with socially charged missions. It has been a bit easier to thrive in those organizations because they have worked to be inclusive of Lesbian Gay and Bisexual folks.

-- Black Lesbian

”



What Can We Do?

# THE ISSUE



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## THE ISSUES



**Nonprofit CEOs** don't reflect the diversity of the U.S.



**1/3 people of color** feel their race/ethnicity has negatively impacted their career.



**80% of people across race** think lack of racial diversity at the top is a problem.

# CREATING A SECTOR WHERE POC CAN EXCEL & LEAD

## **Address Bias and Racism**

- Bad experiences can kill aspiration
- Diversity can't just be added demand to "represent"

## **Shift the Culture of Current Leaders**

- Take leadership in and outside of organizations
- Embrace change (in power)

## **Measure Change**

- Be as rigorous about measuring DEI
- Honor small wins

# BMP'S FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

## **CEOs / Executive Directors**

- Compare POC and white CEOs/EDs (800+ in survey)
- Understand pathways to leadership

## **Intersection of Gender and Race**

- Analyze data
- Explore particular issues of gender bias that surfaced in write-ins and focus groups

## **Deep Dive in Specific Places**

- Conduct qualitative research in cities / states
- Prioritize places with majority people of color.

## **Re-Survey in 2019**

- Collect data 3 years later to measure change and continue to build momentum.

[www.racetolead.org](http://www.racetolead.org) & [www.buildingmovement.org](http://www.buildingmovement.org)

ALL RESPONDENTS

LGBTQ RESPONDENTS



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NEWSLETTER SIGN UP

DOWNLOAD REPORT

# RACE TO LEAD

## CONFRONTING THE RACIAL LEADERSHIP GAP

**Summary** The percentage of people of color in nonprofit executive director roles has remained under 20% for the past decade. To increase the number of people of color leading nonprofits, the sector needs a new narrative about the problem and new strategies to address it. Nonprofits have to transfer the responsibility for the racial leadership gap from those who are targeted by it (aspiring leaders of color), to those governing organizations.

DOWNLOAD REPORT

DOWNLOAD EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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