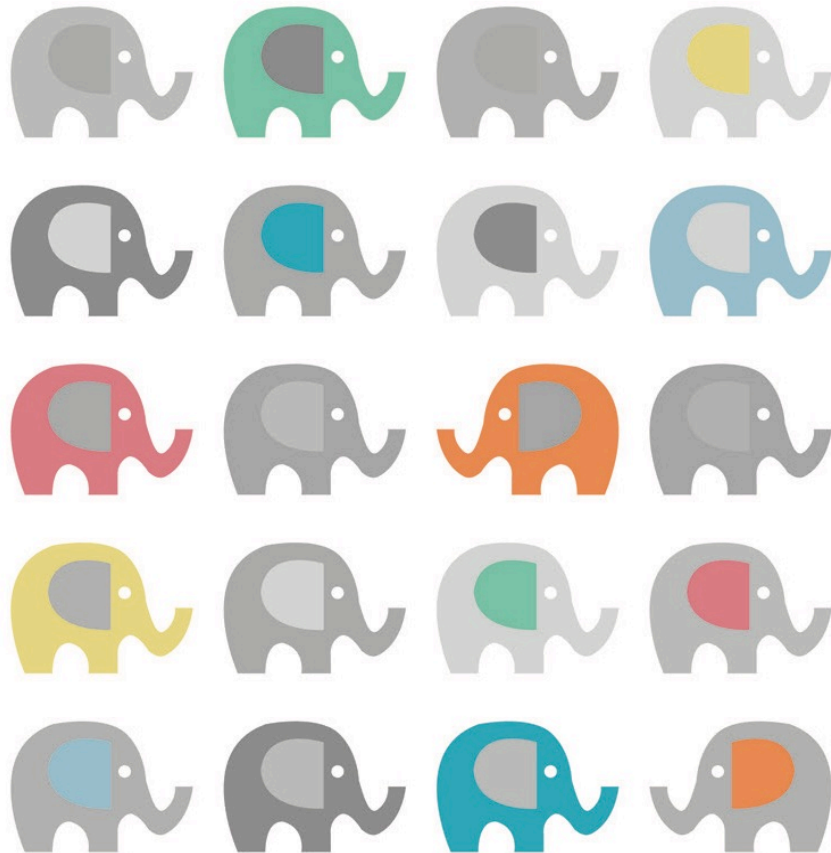


ELEPHANT IN THE PLANNING ROOM



**Overcoming Barriers to
Recruitment and Retention
of People of Color in the
Planning Profession
(NY Metro Area)**

Giovanina Tiarachristie
Masters Thesis
Pratt Institute PSPD
Presentation to Participants & APA DC
June 6, 2016

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE



Neither planning nor people are objective....

We need planners that better represent and understand the diverse communities and cultures that we serve...

= trust and sense of agency; advocacy, and inclusivity; creativity and innovation, and more just and equitable communities!

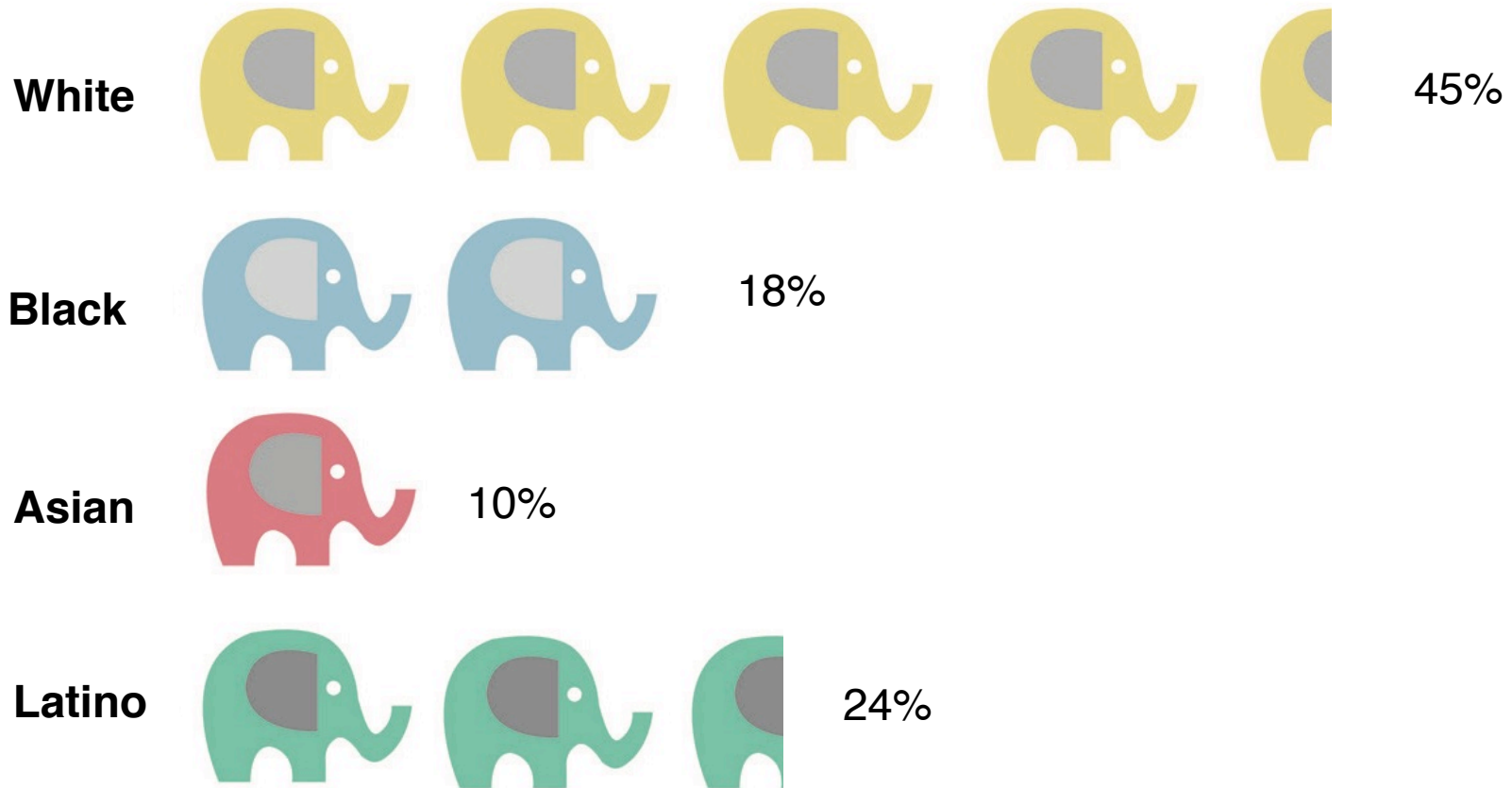
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE



Where the
diversity at?...

FOR WHOM ARE WE PLANNING?

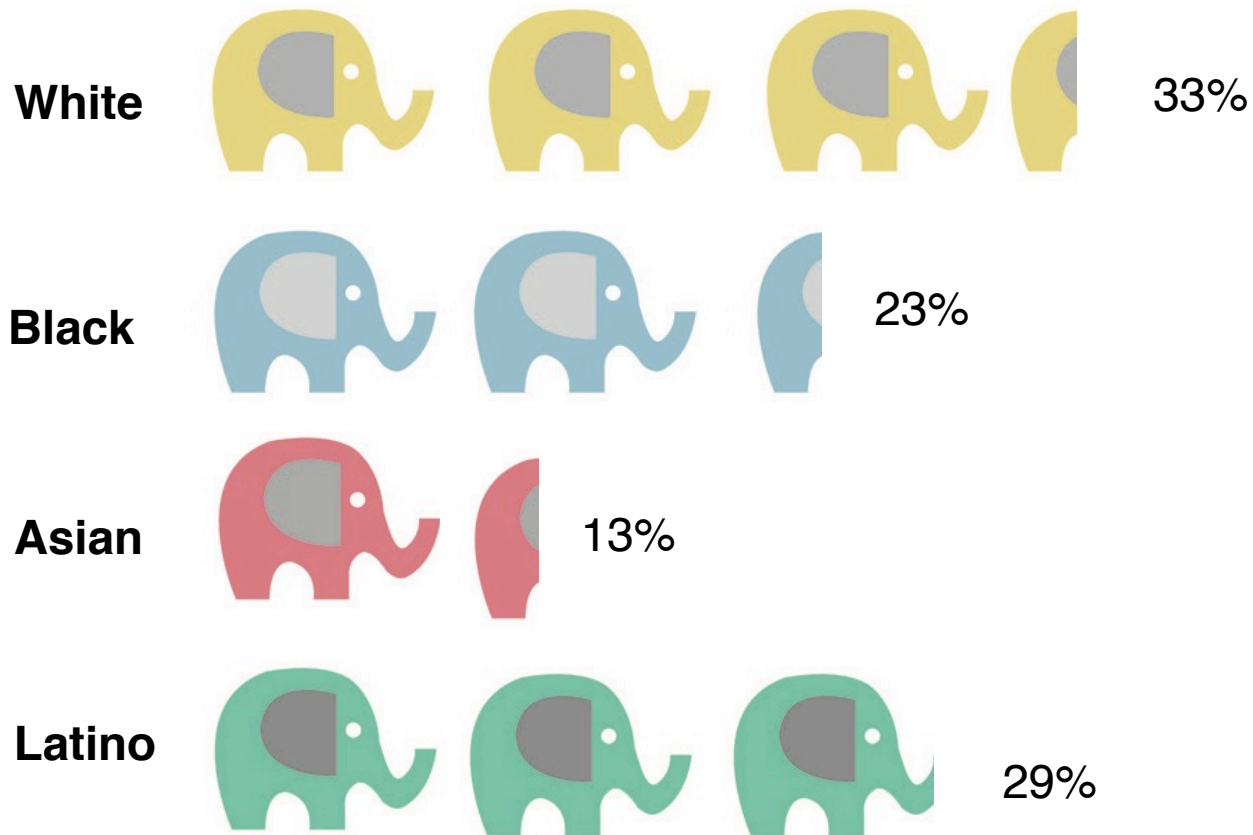
Race and Ethnicity in the New York Metro Area Population (2009-2014)



Source: American Community Survey 2009-2014 5 Year Estimates

FOR WHOM ARE WE PLANNING?

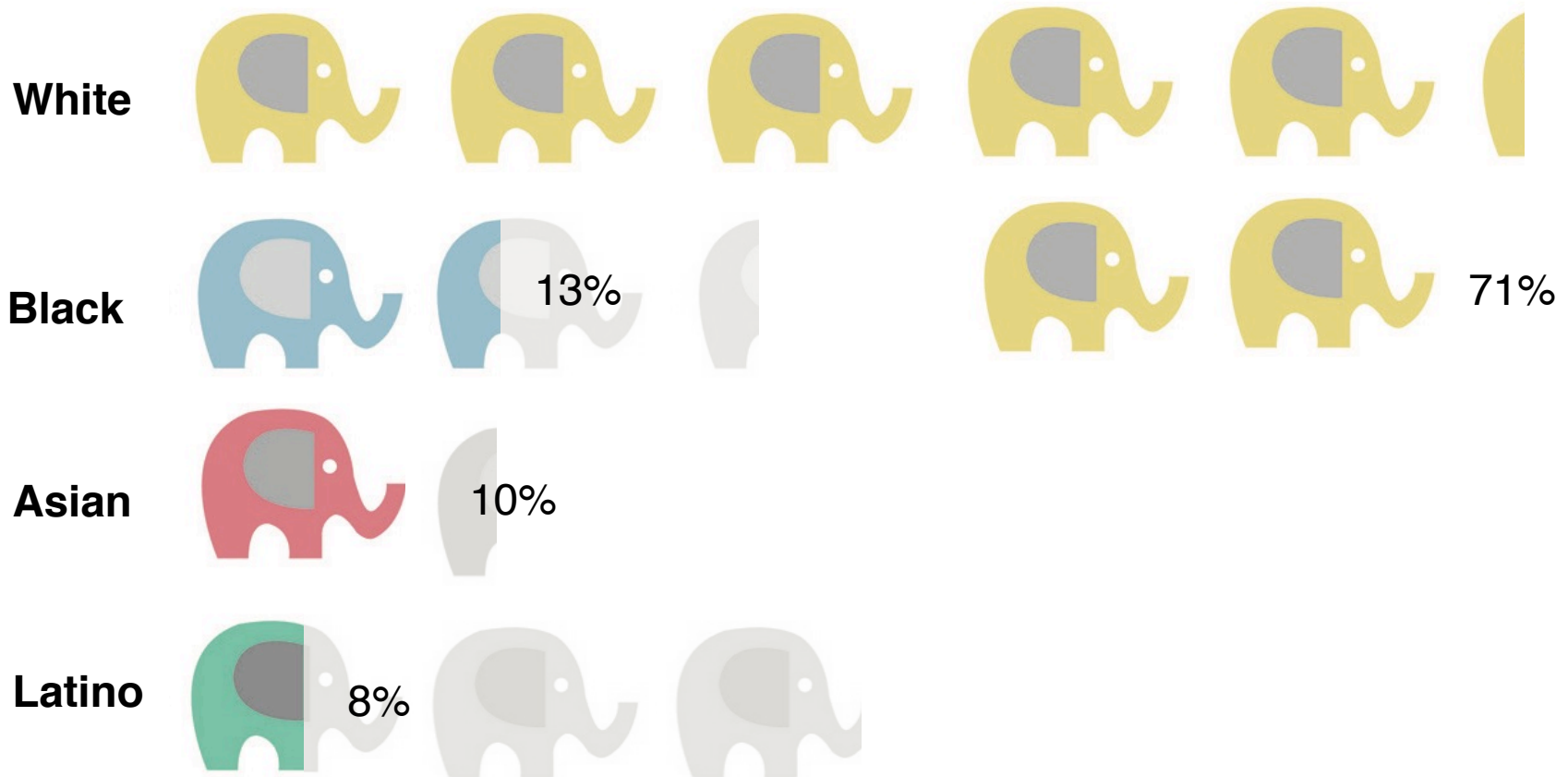
Race and Ethnicity in the New York City Population (2009-2014)



Source: American Community Survey 2009-2014 5 Year Estimates

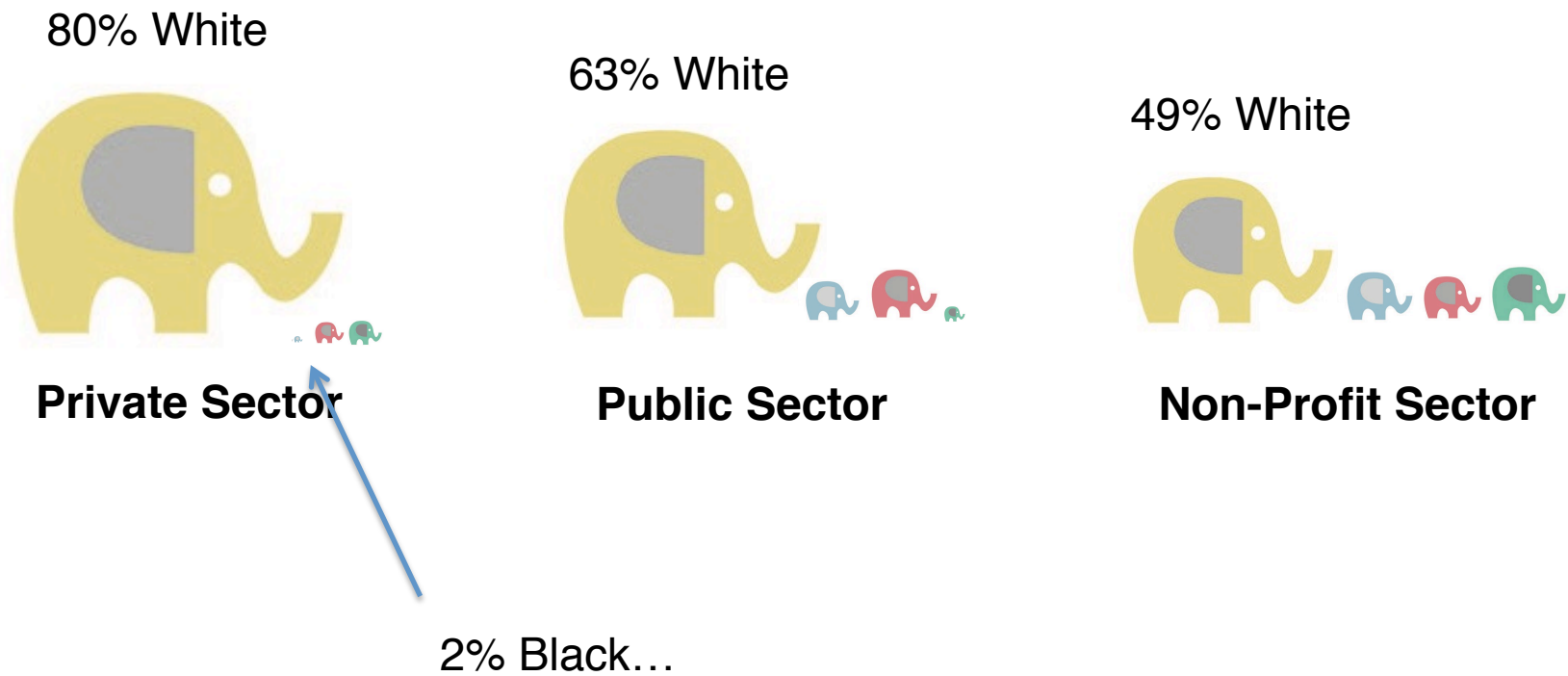
WHO IS DOING THE PLANNING?

Race and Ethnicity amongst planners in the NY Metro Area (2006-2010)



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2010 EEO Tabulation (most recent data available at geography)

RACIAL DIVERSITY BY SECTOR



Source: Diversity in Planning Survey 2015

NOT MUCH PROGRESS...

In 1990, **78%** of NY Metro planners were White.



Today, **71%** of NY Metro planners are White...



The representation gap has increased from **17.1** to **26.4** percentage points

Planners are less representative of communities today than in 1990

Source: 1990 U.S. Census; Lagging Behind Diversity Study 2000; ACS 2006-2010 EEO Tabulation; ACS 2009-2014

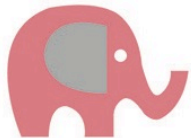
**HOW DO WE OVERCOME THESE
BARRIERS TO DIVERSITY IN THE
PROFESSION?**

OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY



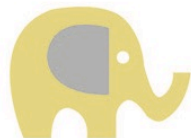
Define the importance of a diversity agenda in the planning profession

Literature Review



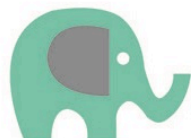
Compare demographic + professional trends of NY Metro planners since '00

*Metro-wide Online Survey
303 responses*



Share experiences and needs of planners of color in the workplace

*10 Focus Groups
11 Interviews*



Map barriers that contribute to under-representation of POC

1 workshop

METHODOLOGY : Focus Groups, Interviews, Workshop

- Blacks in Planning
- Asian Americans in Planning
- Latino/as in Planning
- Women of Color in Planning
- Queer Planners of Color
- Public Sector Planners of Color
- Private Sector Planners of Color
- Non-Profit Sector Planners of Color
- White Allies in Planning
- Original members of the APA NY Metro ECDC

+ 11 Interviews with employers, managers, & other planners of color

+1 workshop with planning schools

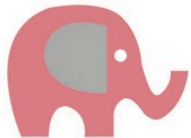
(+journaling)

OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY



Define the importance of a diversity agenda in the planning profession

Literature Review



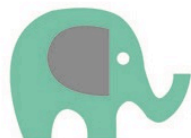
Compare demographic + professional trends of NY Metro planners since '00

*Metro-wide Online Survey
303 responses*



Share experiences and needs of planners of color in the workplace

*10 Focus Groups
11 Interviews
1 workshop
Reflections*



Map barriers that contribute to under-representation of POC



Develop a toolkit for action to proactively address barriers

*17 Strategies
60 Recommended Actions*

MAIN FINDINGS

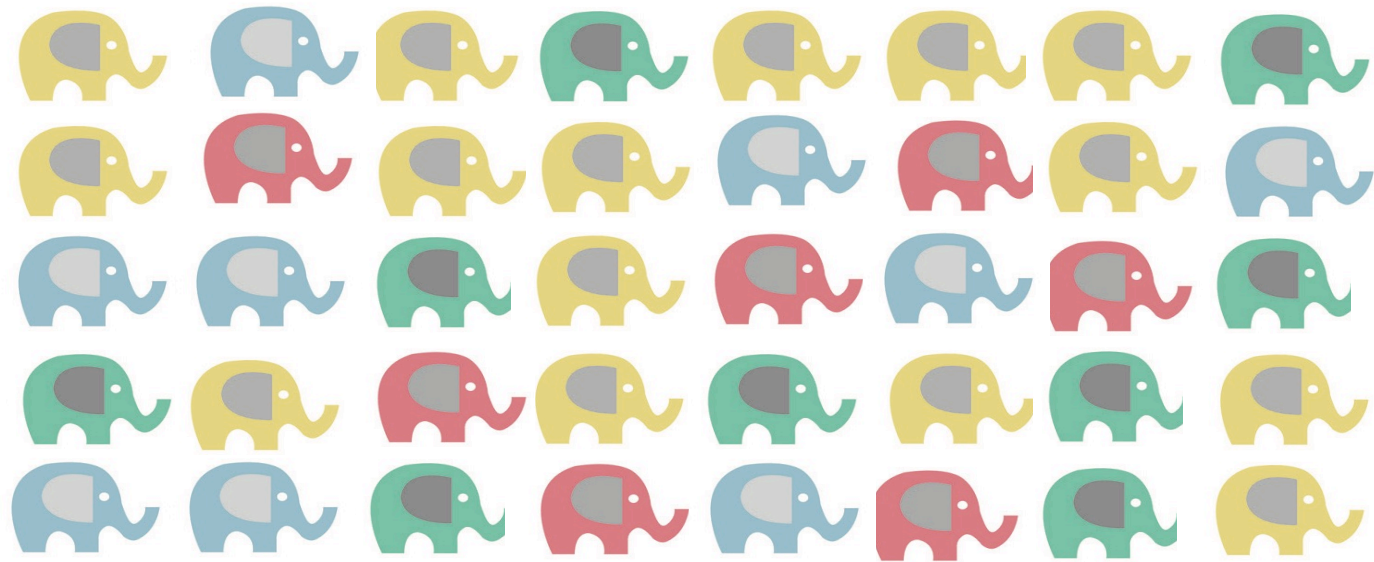
5 BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

- 1 Inequitable communities
- 2 Lack of social capital and exposure to the profession
- 3 Lack of diversity in planning schools
- 4 Unequal opportunities to gain experience
- 5 Unconscious bias and colorblindness in hiring

5 BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

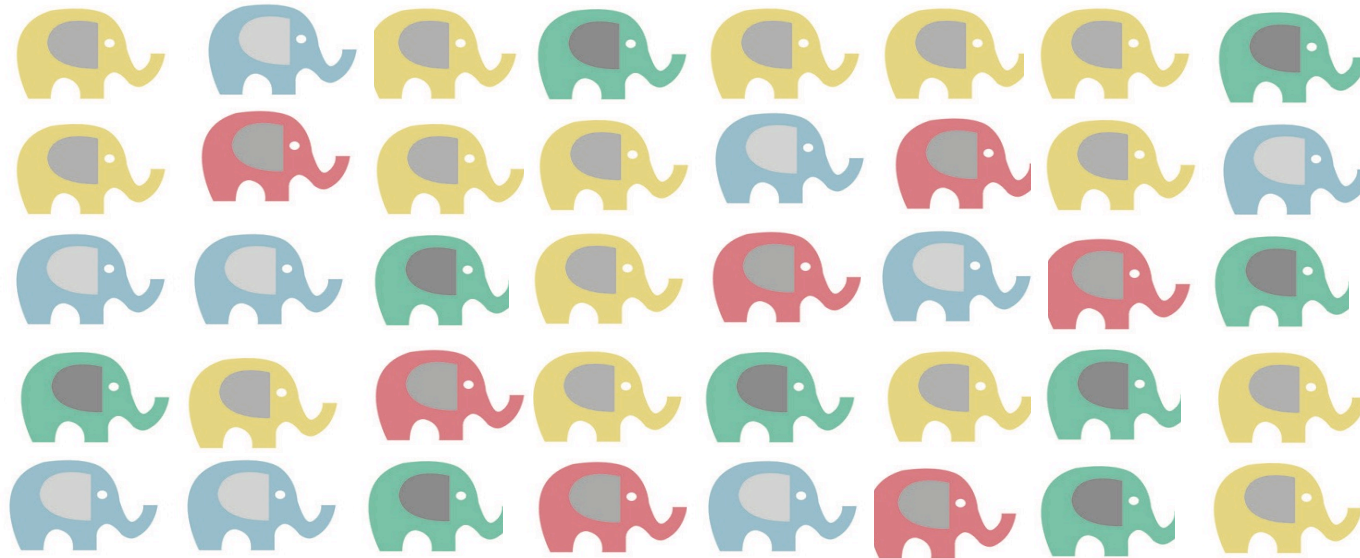
- 1 Micro-aggressions and racial fatigue
- 2 Self-doubt and isolation
- 3 Skipped promotions and less meaningful and visible work
- 4 White and patriarchal culture that covertly hinders advancement
- 5 White-dominant planning lens and inner conflict

5 BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT



BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

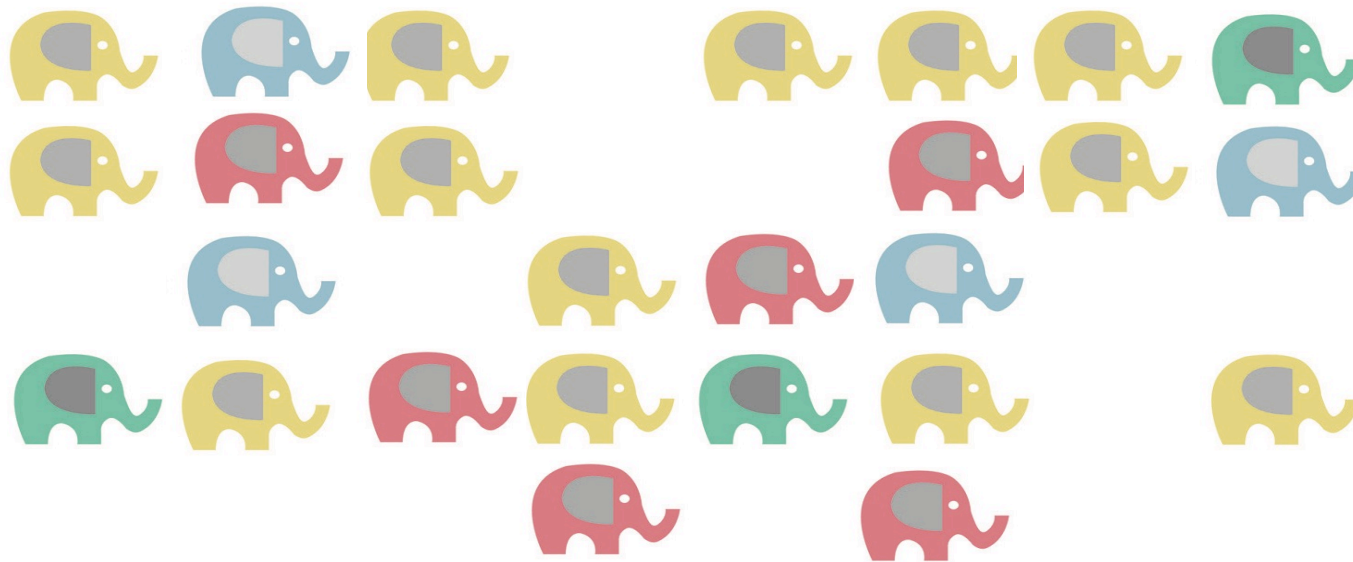
1 Inequitable communities



“Educational attainment in the neighborhood that I grew up in was very low because of all the things you deal with living in poverty. It was hard to get through high school for many, let alone college or even graduate school,”
(Focus Group, Latinos in Planning, 2016)

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

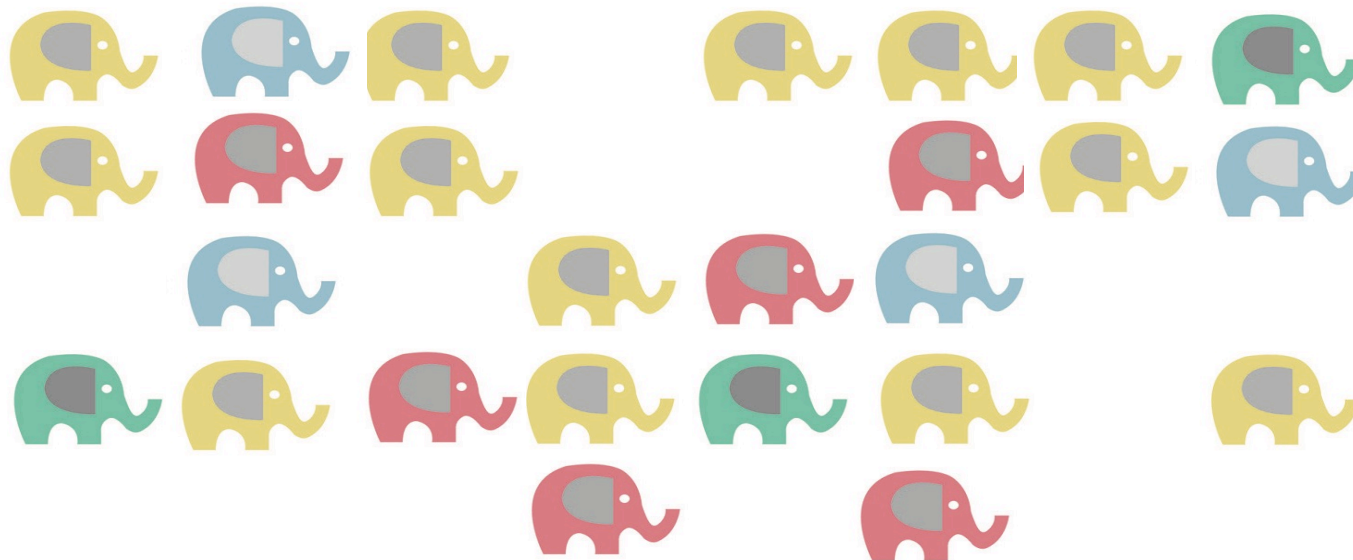
1 Inequitable communities



“Educational attainment in the neighborhood that I grew up in was very low because of all the things you deal with living in poverty. It was hard to get through high school for many, let alone college or even graduate school,”
(Focus Group, Latinos in Planning, 2016)

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

2 Limited Exposure to Planning

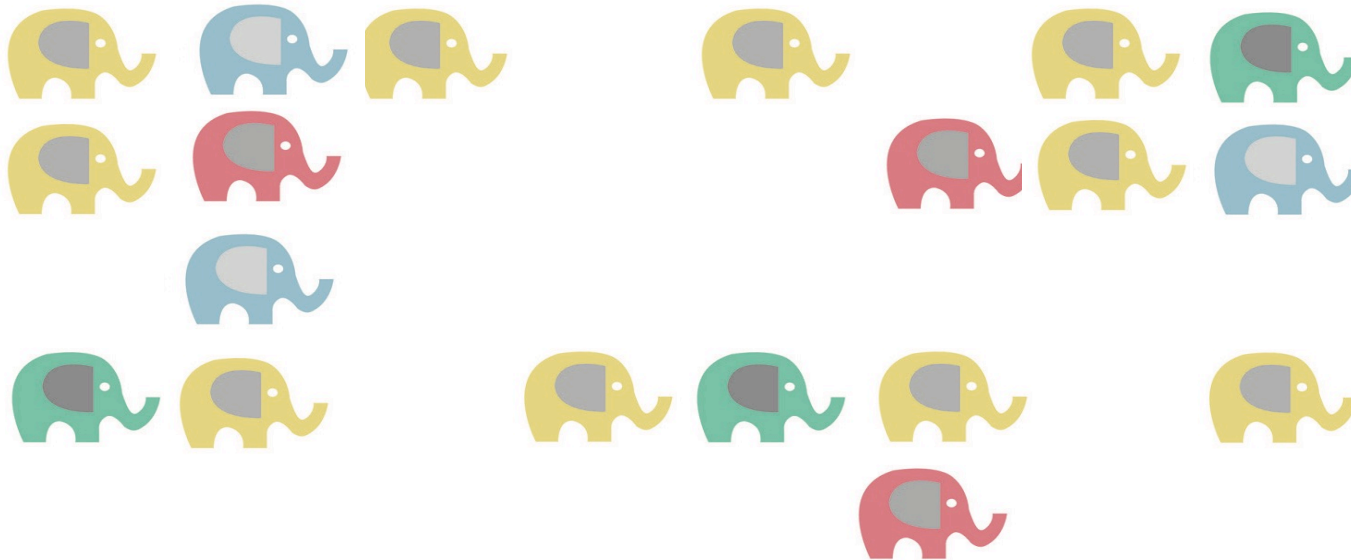


“If you grew up only seeing how the government destroys your neighborhood, and especially if that government doesn’t look like you or act like they care about you, why would you ever want to be part of the government?”

(Focus Group, Non-profit Sector Planners of Color, 2016).

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

2 Limited Exposure to Planning

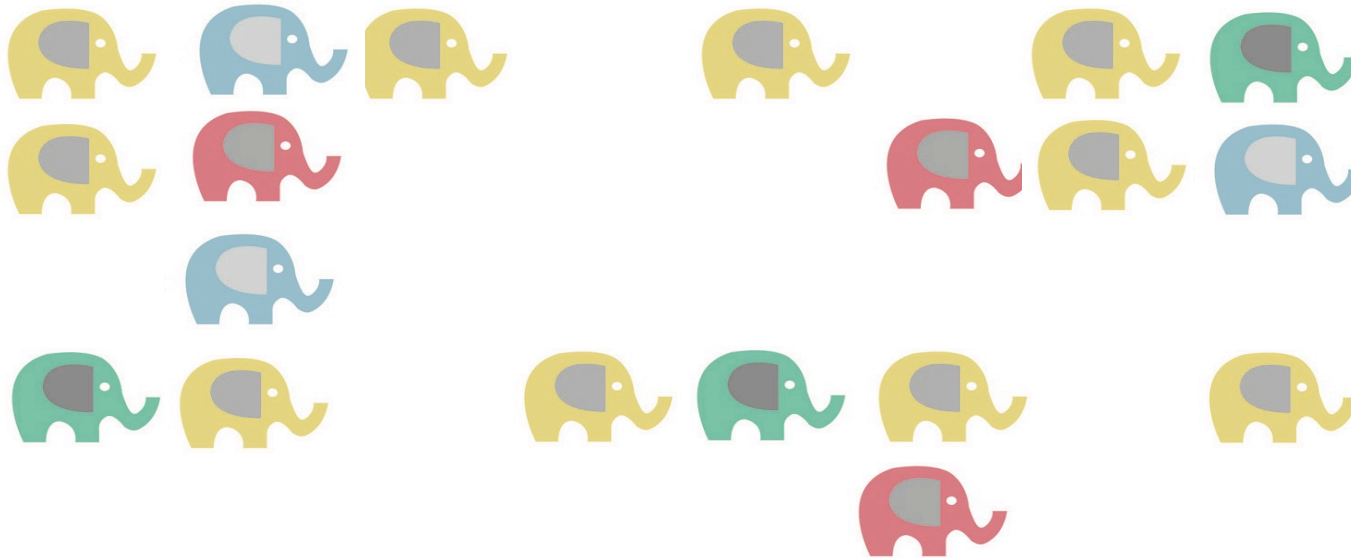


“If you grew up only seeing how the government destroys your neighborhood, and especially if that government doesn’t look like you or act like they care about you, why would you ever want to be part of the government?”

(Focus Group, Non-profit Sector Planners of Color, 2016).

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

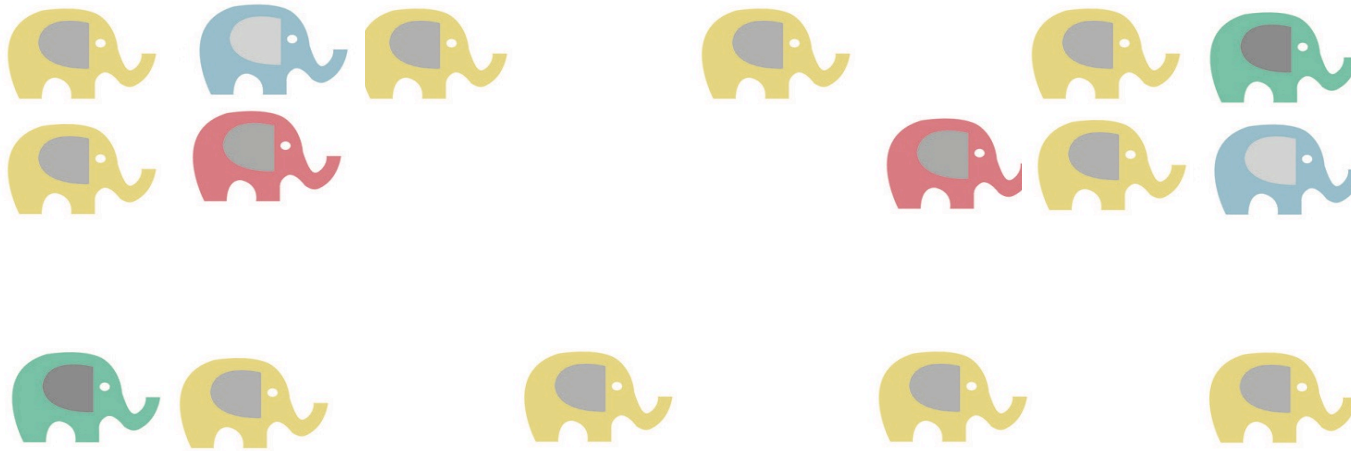
3 Lack of Diversity In Schools



“I would look around and always notice that I was the only person of color in the classroom. And then I’d be the only person bringing up race in discussions,” (Planner E, 2016)

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

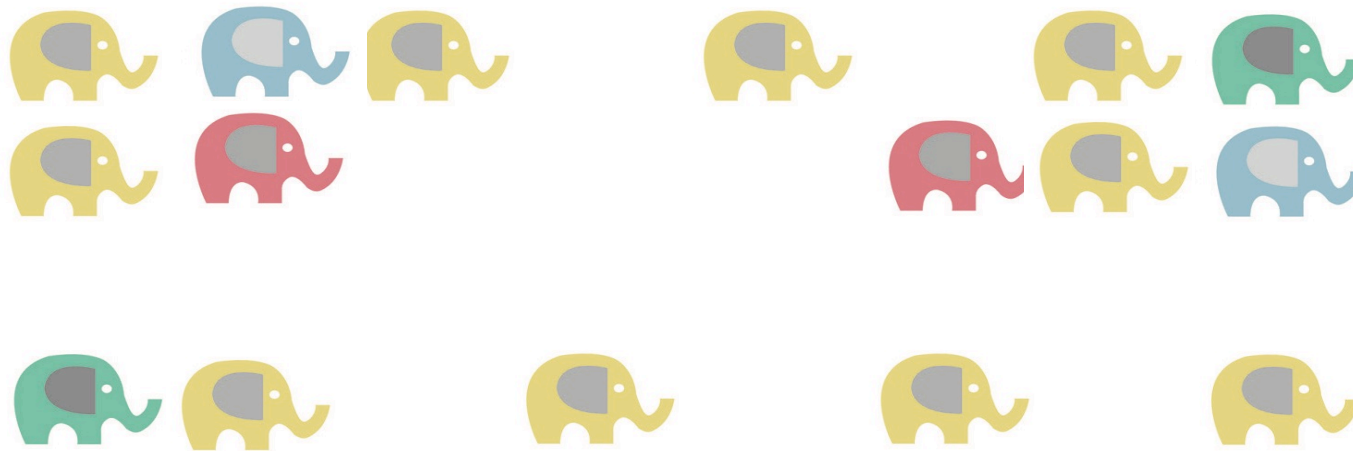
3 Lack of Diversity In Schools



“I would look around and always notice that I was the only person of color in the classroom. And then I’d be the only person bringing up race in discussions,” (Planner E, 2016)

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

4 Unequal Access to Gaining Experience

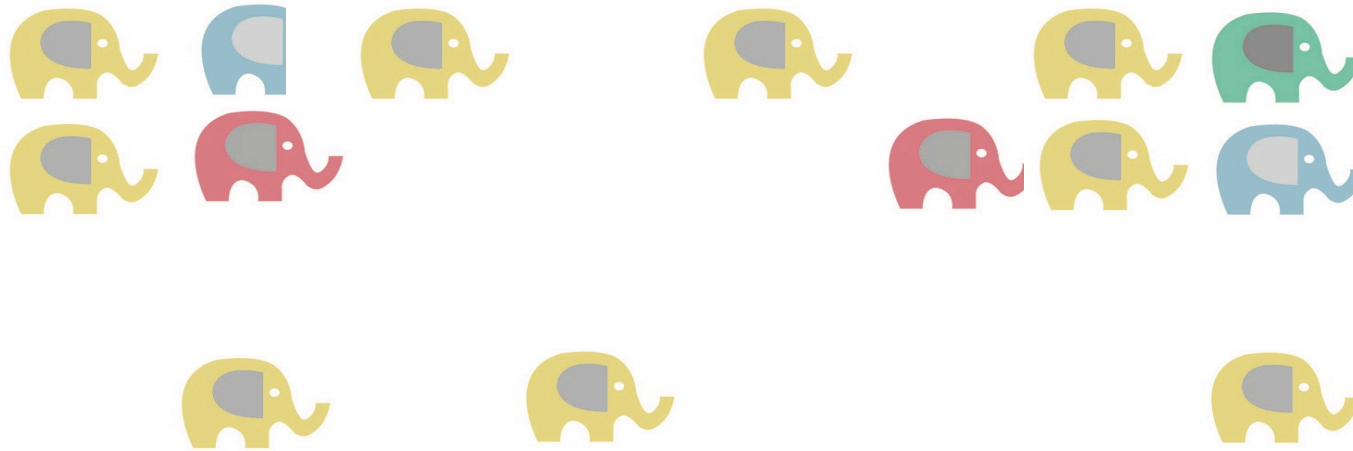


“Unpaid internships are the devil,” (Diversity in Planning Survey '15)

“There’s a particular culture and personality to every firm and agency... they hire the people that validate their values and culture,” (Employer C, 2016)

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

4 Unequal Access to Gaining Experience



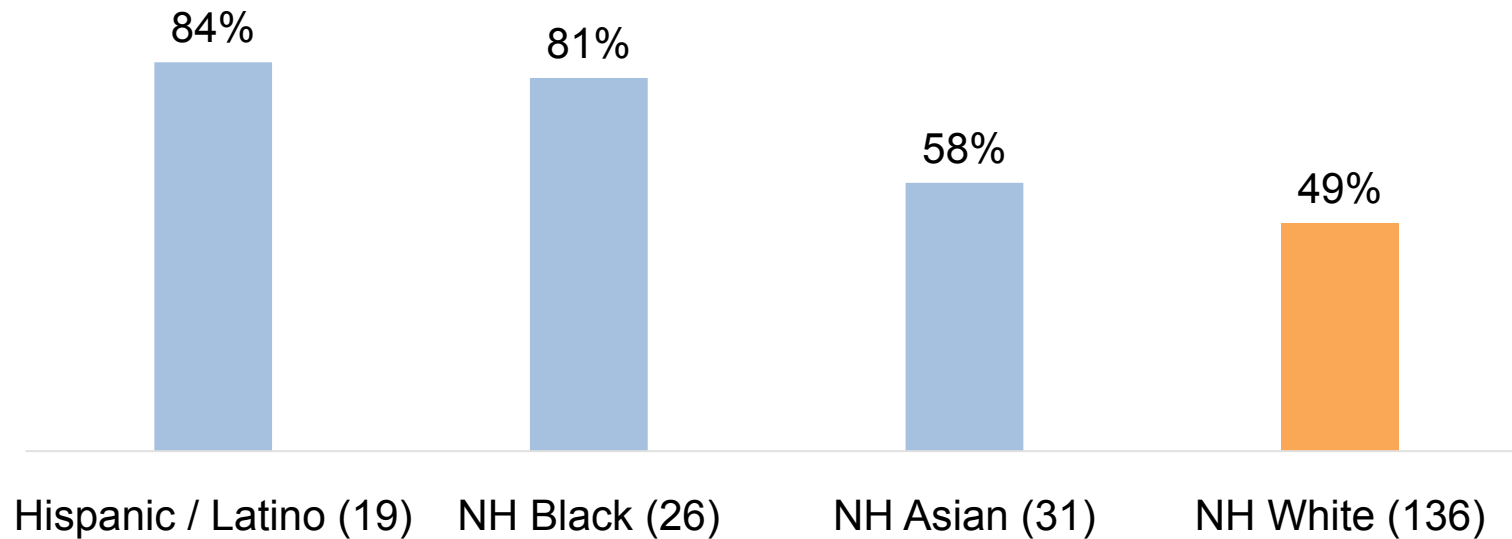
“Unpaid internships are the devil,” (Diversity in Planning Survey '15)

“There’s a particular culture and personality to every firm and agency... they hire the people that validate their values and culture,” (Employer C, 2016)

WHAT COUNTS AS “EXPERIENCE” & “QUALIFICATIONS” ANYWAY?

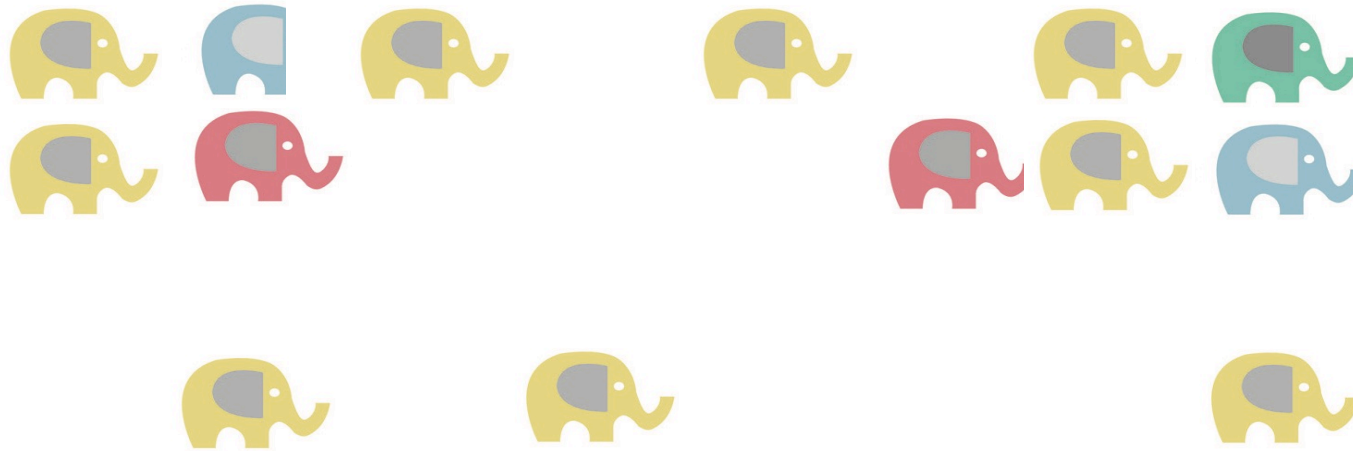


In the survey, Whites were least likely to have grown up or lived in similar neighborhoods as the communities they serve today (race / class diversity, etc.)



BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

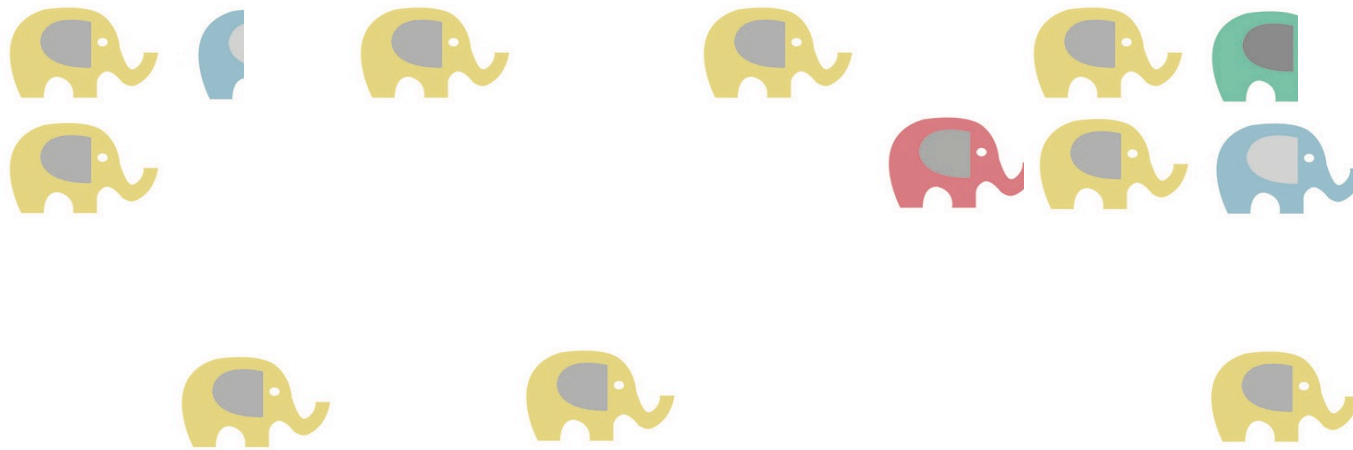
5 Unconscious Bias and Colorblindness in Hiring



“People often look at me, see I am a Black woman, and already doubt that I am competent enough to do the job” (Focus Group, Blacks in Planning, 2016).

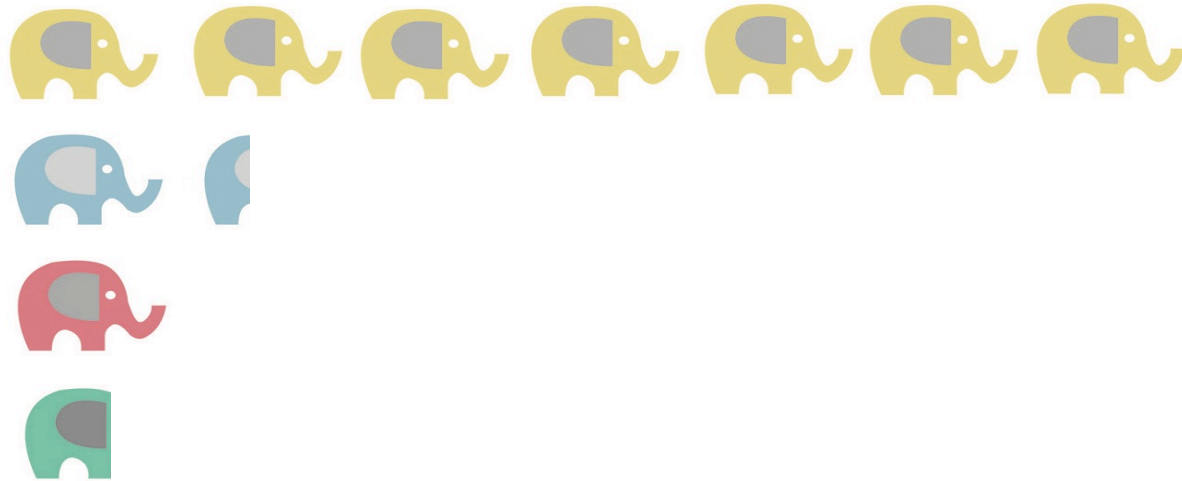
BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

5 Unconscious Bias and Colorblindness in Hiring



“People often look at me, see I am a Black woman, and already doubt that I am competent enough to do the job” (Focus Group, Blacks in Planning, 2016).

= LACK OF DIVERSITY IN THE PROFESSION



5 BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

1 Micro-aggressions and racial fatigue

“People don’t take me seriously because I am a woman *and* a person of color. In meetings, they’ll look at the White guy next to me for answers, who is *my* intern,”
(Planner E, 2016).

“To be taken seriously as a woman, I have to be more assertive—but when I am assertive, then I’m all of a sudden ‘the angry Black lady’ and am told I am ‘too aggressive,’”
(Focus Group, Pilot, 2015).

“Out in the community, people will say inappropriate things to me based on my race. But my colleagues and supervisor don’t call it out or support me,”
(Employer C, 2016).



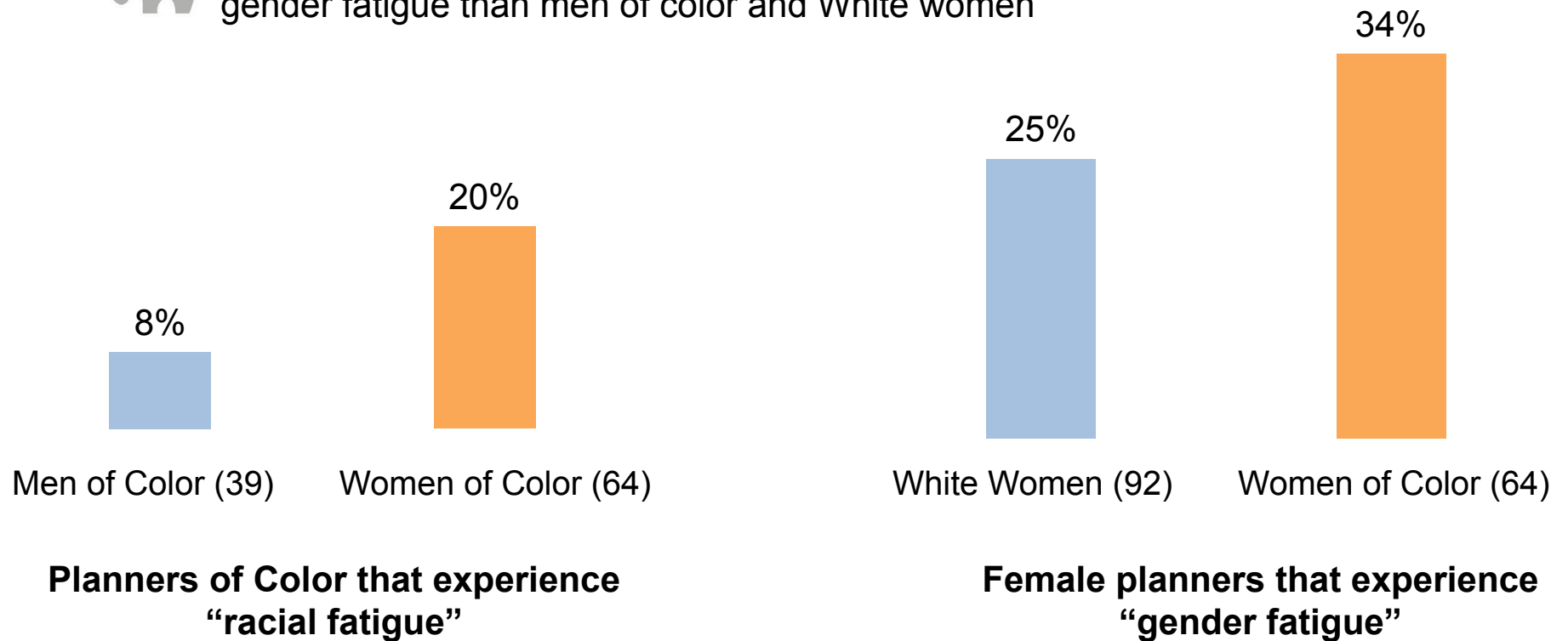
Photo: Dear White People Film (2014)

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

1 Micro-aggressions and racial fatigue



Women of color more likely to experience both racial and gender fatigue than men of color and White women



Source: Diversity in Planning Survey 2015

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

2 Isolation and Self-Doubt

“I changed jobs because I was tired of being the only person of color. It’s isolating culturally”,
(FG, Queer Planners of Color, 2016).

“I’m a woman of color and I’m competent and confident - but I’ve had a lot of self-doubt because of the way people treated me throughout my career,”
(FG, Private Sector Planners of Color, 2016)

“... do they genuinely care or do they just want you there to make the company look ‘diverse’?”
(Planner C, 2016).



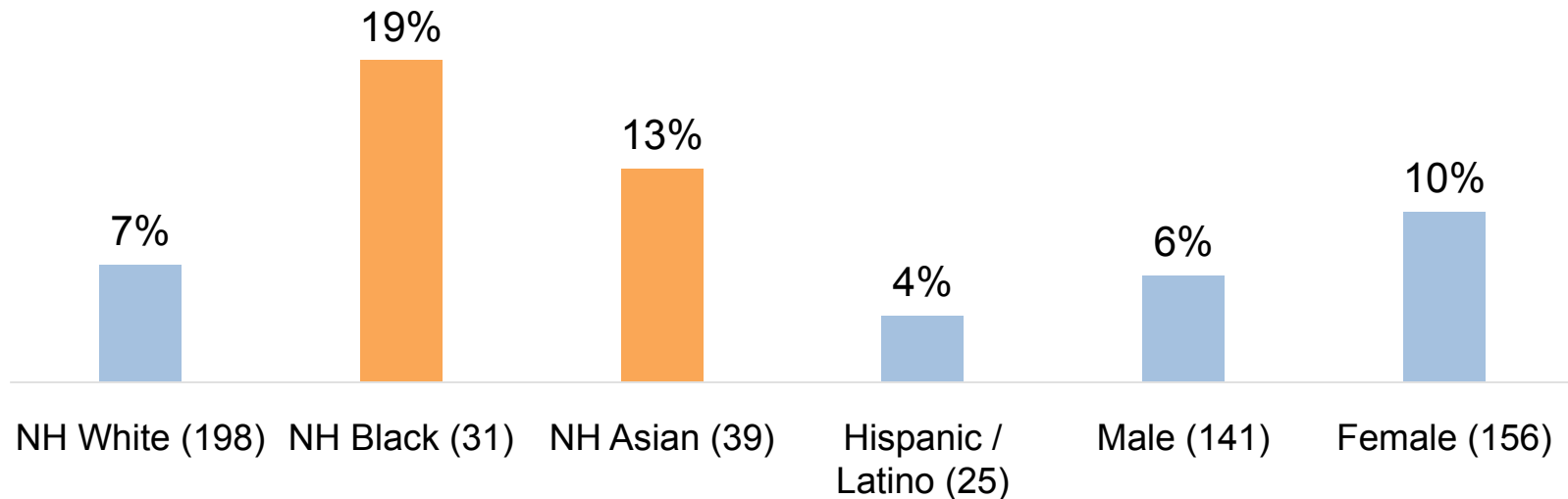
Photo: Coqui Content Marketing - Racial Fatigue and Mental Health (2015)

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

2 Isolation and Self-Doubt



Blacks and Asians are most likely to feel that making a mistake would be attributed as a reflection of their race or gender.



Source: Diversity in Planning Survey 2015

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

3 Skipped promotions and less meaningful and visible work

“There were many qualified people of color who did their time but were passed for promotions for less experienced Whites. People left because of that,”
(Planner B, 2016)

“To be promoted, you need the sexy projects – the ones that get you in front of the Commission. But only White planners get the sexy projects,”
(FG, Women of Color in Planning, 2016).

“If you are Hispanic, then you get the Hispanic community project. But the White planner gets the hot Midtown project,”
(FG, Original Founders of the ECDC, 2016)



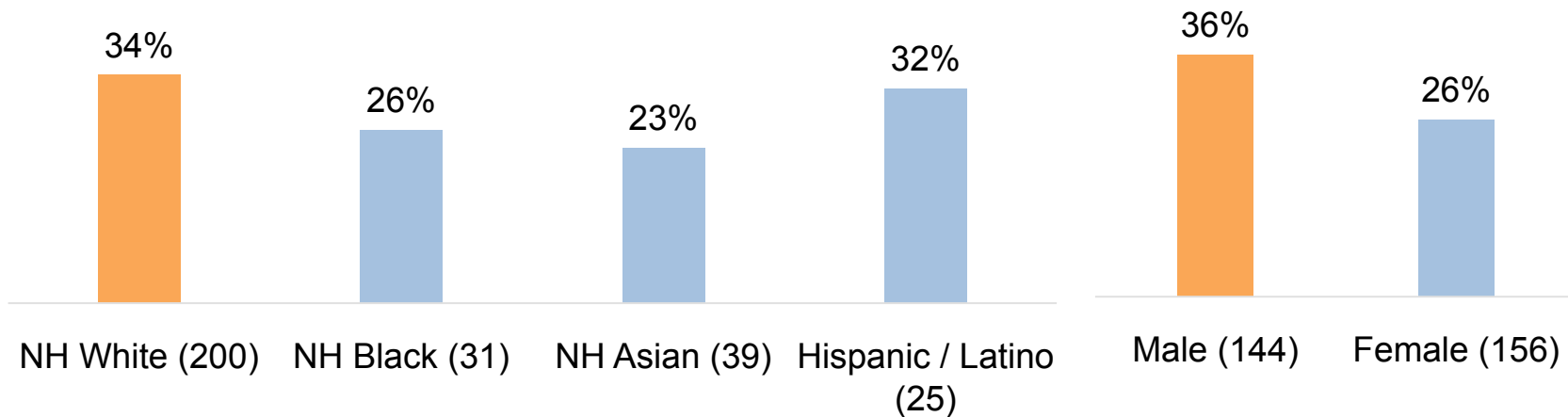
Photo: Etech conference (2015)

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

3 Skipped promotions and less meaningful and visible work



There is a greater percentage of Whites and Men in senior-level positions compared to planners of color and women



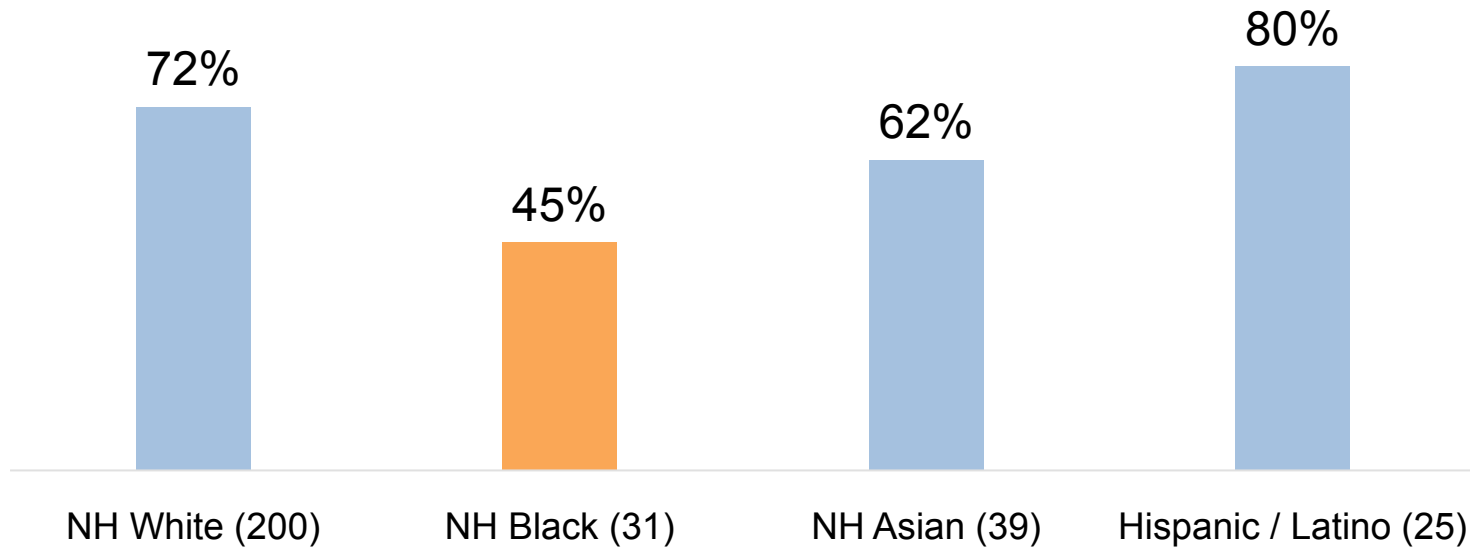
Source: Diversity in Planning Survey 2015

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

3 Skipped promotions and less meaningful and visible work



Blacks are least likely to be in positions that allow for multiple “major responsibilities” such as hiring decisions, representing organization, soliciting projects, etc.



Source: Diversity in Planning Survey 2015

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

4 White patriarchal culture that covertly hinders advancement

“Whites grew up with different cultures, and they often misinterpret humility and modesty as a lack of confidence. I’m very confident - it’s just not my nature to self-promote; jockeying is not my style,”
(FG, Non Profit Sector Planners, 2016).

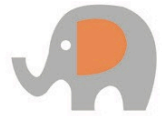
“My availability to work was subject to being able to arrange for childcare,”
(Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015)



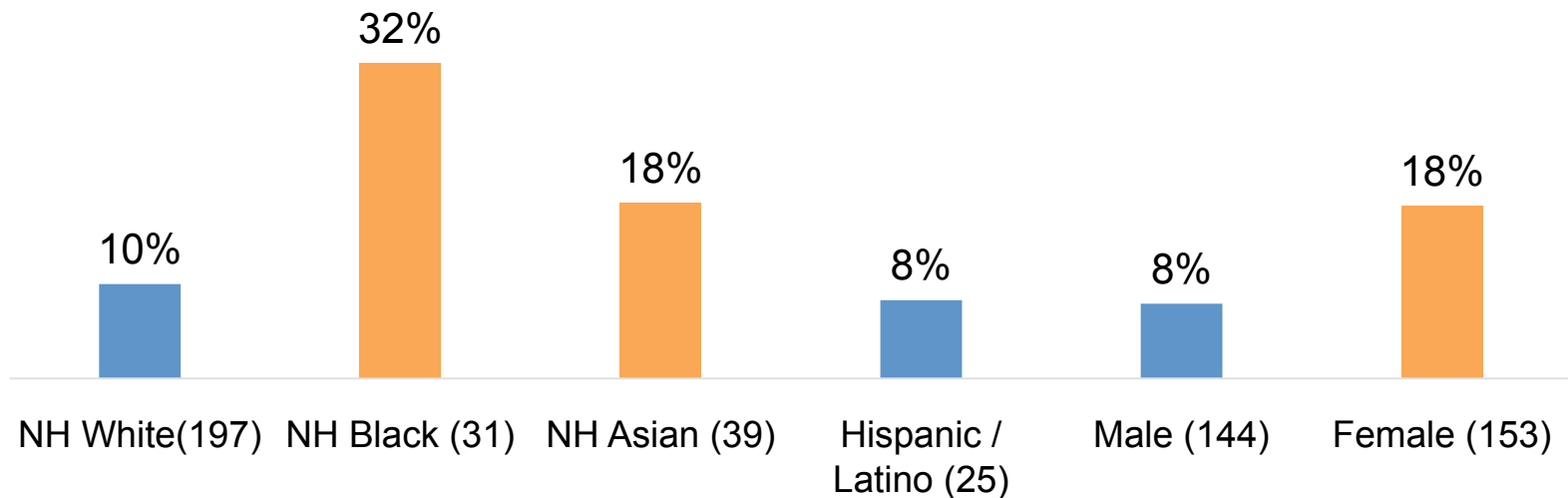
Photo: Empact Cultural Competency Training (2008)

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

4 White-male dominant culture that covertly hinders advancement



Majority of Whites and men felt that their work environments “foster inclusion and opportunity.” But significantly more Blacks, Asians, and women disagreed/strongly disagreed:



Source: Diversity in Planning Survey 2015

BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

5 White-dominant planning lens and inner conflict

“I think people are uncomfortable that inequity is how our city developed, but we need to acknowledge that communities were invested in unequally[...] there is a deeper sense of accountability when we are called out on how we destroy communities,”
(Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016)

“People think they’re doing the right thing if we are not actively debating,”
(Focus Group, White Allies in Planning, 2016).



Photo: APA Conference Seattle (2015)

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Planning Schools

For Employers / Managers

For Planning Institutions (APA, etc.)

For Whites who want to be Allies

For Planners of Color

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Planning Schools



Photo: Harlem Success Academy Planning Workshop (2015)

1. Remove financial barriers to attendance for students of underprivileged backgrounds

- Create a full scholarship for first-gen. students of color.
- Develop a fast-track college to masters degree programs and/or joint degree or cross-sector programs.
- Enable flexibility (online, evening, and weekend classes; work credits).

2. Implement early recruitment initiatives while improving visibility of profession

- Sign up for ambassadors program; connect with undergrad. related studies.
- Highlight alumni POC and present awards to for advancing diversity and equity.
- Advertise about the profession and program targeting local minority-markets.
- Encourage students and faculty to apply for prestigious scholarships, fellowships, policy programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Planning Schools (Cont')



Photo: Harlem Success Academy Planning Workshop (2015)

3. Equip students (and faculty) with cultural competency skills before graduation 🐘

- Design a diversity-centered curriculum and measure learning in course evaluations.
- Implement on-going mandatory diversity training for students, faculty, admin.
- Encourage, fund, and support a “Diversity Initiatives Group” to help advise efforts.

4. Proactively recruit faculty of color and support their growth and visibility 🐘

- Target recruitment of practicing POC to teach.
- Encourage and support faculty of color in publishing peer reviewed journals and applying for fellowships.
- Provide mentorship and support for diverse candidates for tenure.
- Promote mentorship and collaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Employers and Managers

1. *Build the social infrastructure to foster inclusive work environments*

- Increase understanding of own privilege and bias.
- Plant leadership that values diversity as an asset.
- Centralize equity in mission and goals.
- Mandate anti-oppression & CC trainings.
- Enable work flexibility; ask staff.

2. *Strategically recruit for all levels*

- Charge EEO officer to proactively recruit.
- Connect with existing diversity local networks.
- Recruit from CBOs & non-profits.
- Recruit from community colleges & HBCUs; mentor!
- Work with local schools – fellowship/paid internships

3. *Be intentional in leadership to help POC grow*

- Validate and legitimize POC staff.
- Assign meaningful projects; rotate to diversify exp.
- Seek opp's to advance skills and visibility.



Photo:NYC HPD Edgemere Planning Workshop (2015)

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Planning Institutions



Photo: EPL Diversity Forum for Planning Schools (2015)

1. *Execute comprehensive outreach about profession*

- Strengthen incentives & info-sharing for Ambassadors.
- Develop a campaign that targets minority markets.

2. *Centralize and increase visibility of social equity goals and outcomes in dominant planning discourse*

- Recruit for diversity & social justice values in leadership.
- Highlight minority planners and successful initiatives in communities of color.
- Require an equity reflection in all articles and panels.
- Be more active & vocal on national/local social issues.

3. *Promote cultural competency and introspection as critical skills in the profession*

- Require and monitor diversity CM credits.
- Emphasize diversity and social justice as explicitly as possible in core curriculum / accreditation requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Planning Institutions (cont')



Photo: EPL Diversity Forum for Planning Schools (2015)

4. Provide more opportunities for networking, mentorship, support, and growth for POC

- Provide MWBE entrepreneurship training workshops.
- Expand the mentorship to recruit more POC.
- Feature keynotes that reflect on equity / diversity related issues in all events.
- Facilitate better information sharing across chapter diversity committees.
- Reconvene a summit for planners (and students) of color.

5. Remove cost barriers to enter planning school and APA membership

- Fundraise for bigger scholarship money using an opt out collection system during conference registration.
- Create a sliding scale for membership and/or conference fees based on income earned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For White Planners

1. Actively introspect & adopt an anti-oppression stance in your personal & professional life 🐘

- Bring awareness to your personal biases.
- Call out discrimination and educate other Whites on diversity issues.
- Don't be a by-stander and come out as an 'ally.'

2. Promote the advancement of planners of color (use White privilege for good!) 🐘

- Shift the discourse to diversity as an asset.
- Recognize where structural racism occurs; validate, support, and advocate for POC.
- Nominate under-celebrated colleagues of color for important projects, awards, promotions.
- Join the local Chapter Diversity Committee!
- Own the discriminatory history of planning & centralize economic justice.



Photo: EPL Diversity Forum for Planning Schools (2015)

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Planners of Color



Photo: EPL Diversity Forum for Planning Schools (2015)

1. “Come out” as a planner of color and recruit and advocate for others

- Get involved in expanding planning as a career to youth of color.
- Promote and care for other planners of color.
- Get involved with Diversity Committee and POC LinkedIn network.
- Support and mentor students of color or entry level planners of color.

2. Place extra effort to improve your own growth and visibility

- Network and seek real mentorship.
- Participate in panels, conference, write articles, and encourage others
- Collaborate with other planners of color and start MBWE firms.

CONCLUSIONS



Introspection

Awareness

Initiative

CONCLUSIONS



The barriers to diversity are structural and systemic.

Real change will require economic, political and educational reform, and the dismantling of structural racism and White supremacy.

Planners are at the center of enabling more equitable communities.

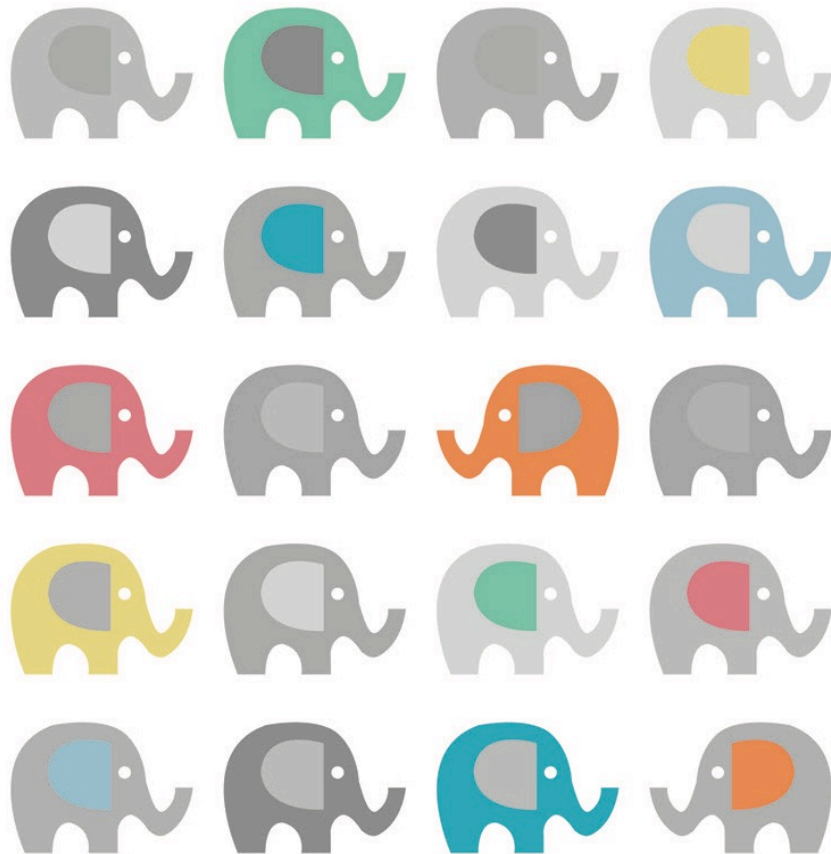
“ELEPHANT IN THE PLANNING ROOM”



Diversity

= key to enhancing planning practice and ensuring that the aspiration for health, happiness, and quality of life is achievable for all.

QUESTIONS?



**Overcoming Barriers to
Recruitment and Retention
of People of Color in the
Planning Profession
(NY Metro Area)**

Giovanita Tiarachristie
APA Diversity Committee Co-Chair
gtiarachristie@gmail.com
412-251-4764

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

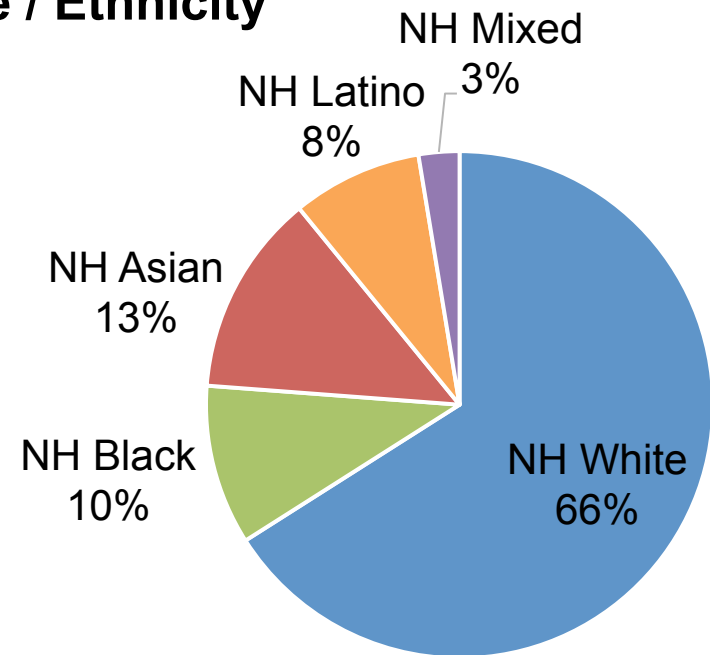
SURVEY RESPONDENTS (July-Oct 2015)

- 303 Respondents
- 51% Female, 48% Male
- 17% LGBTQ

- **Sectors:**
46% in Public, 32% Private, 17% NFP

- **Position Levels:**
25% Entry, 43% Mid, 31% Senior

Race / Ethnicity



Source: Diversity in Planning Survey 2015