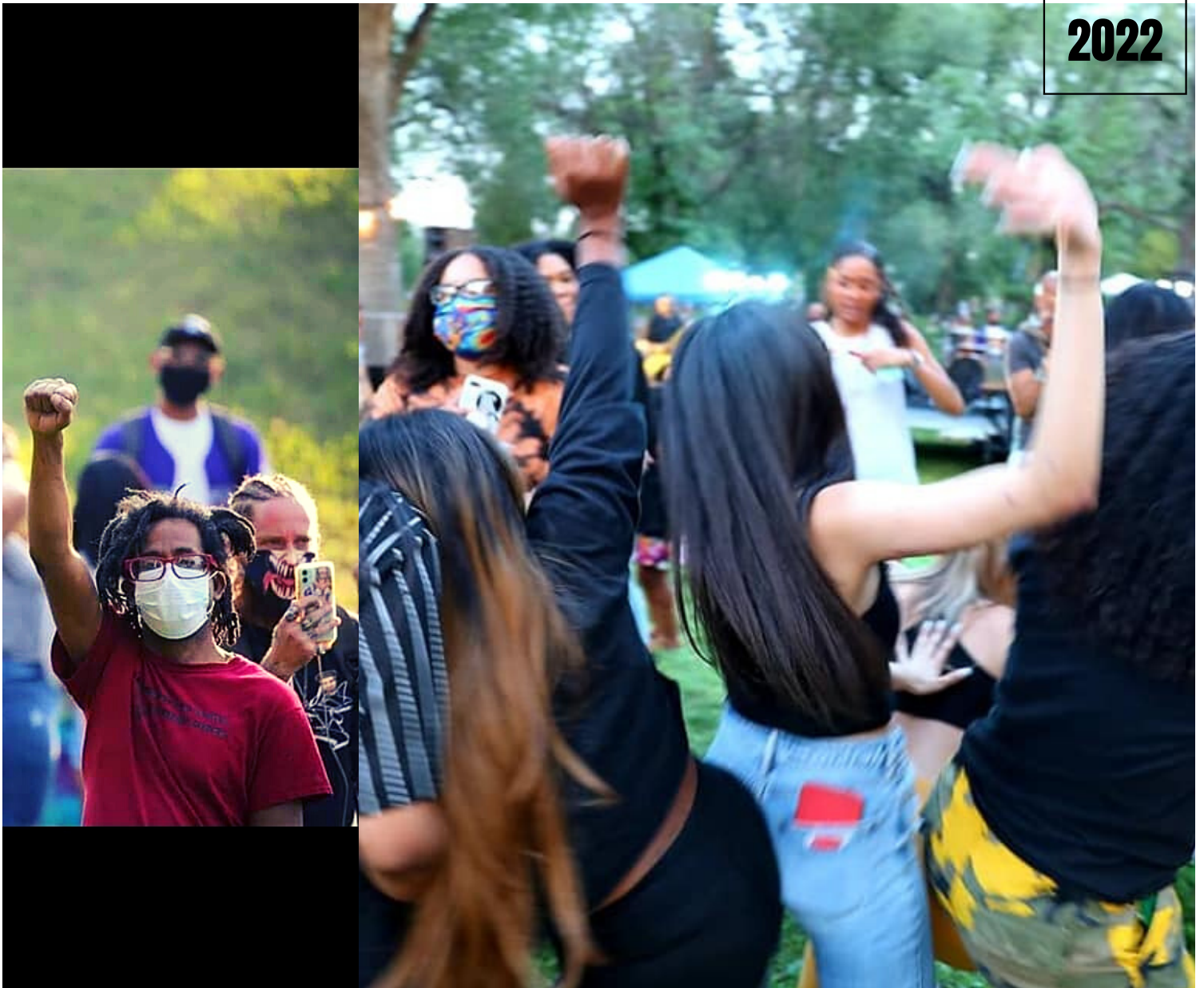


# First Year Reflections

**Establishing the Office of Black Community Engagement  
within City Government**

**2021**

**2022**





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# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to share our first year reflections and provide an overview of data collected and analyzed specific to Black communities in Albuquerque. We wish to strengthen the sharing of data specific to Black communities and municipal government in the City of Albuquerque because we are often left out or told there isn't data for our communities. It is important to explain why we use communities and not community throughout this report. Community is defined as "a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common" (Oxford Languages). As you will see, Black communities in Albuquerque are spread across the entire City and not tied to one geographic area and we are not all the same.

Data sets used in this report are diverse in many ways. The report utilizes census and non-census data, ranging over varying time periods. This report also includes quantitative and qualitative results from our Community Input Survey.



*"When we started the office in 2020, we recognized the need for the City to do more to strengthen our connection with Albuquerque's Black community, to lift up and listen to diverse voices in government, and increase access to City jobs and resources. I am proud to say we have begun to do just that with the creation of the Office of Black Community Engagement." Mayor Tim Keller*



*"We knew it was imperative to have an office with strong ties to the African American/Black community in Albuquerque so they can be assured that their voices are heard and that they have an advocate within City government," said Michelle Melendez, Director of the City of Albuquerque Office of Equity and Inclusion.*



*"After being appointed by Mayor Tim Keller, I've have been focused on learning about City departments, what resources exist within them, reviewing data and listening to the voices of the communities we serve. The next step is to develop a strategic plan for the next three years so we can begin to heal and unify," said Nichole Rogers, African-American Community & Business Liaison, Office of Black Community Engagement.*



# Our Office's Story So Far

## Our Mission

We are committed to advancing our community by influencing policy, unifying and amplifying the diverse Black voices within the city of Albuquerque.

**Our vision** is to help Albuquerque become a City where our Black communities have equitable access to the resources needed to thrive.

## Our goals are to:

- Connect the City's resources to the Black communities;
- Increase participation of Black youth in City programs;
- Conduct outreach and coordinate communication among CABQ, business and youth leaders in Black communities;
- Develop and implement strategies to advance our community.

The Office of Black Community Engagement was established in 2020 by Mayor Tim Keller who appointed Nichole Rogers to lead the office in April 2021.

**“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”**

**Barack Obama**

# Our Goals

After a careful review of data found in this report and community input our charge is to remove barriers that hinder equitable access to City resources. The City of Albuquerque (CABQ) has vast resources that include jobs, grants, contracts, programs and business resources. We also must develop and implement innovative ways to reach out to our communities to better understand what resources are needed and then link them to what the city can provide.



## **01 Connect the City's resources to Black communities.**

During our first year we focused on getting out of City Hall and bringing resources directly to the community in parks, community centers and various community events. We found that Black communities and those in the most need did not know how to access services the City has to offer. One way to remove this barrier is to work with City Departments on their marketing plans to ensure they include images of Black families so we know we belong.

## **02 Increase participation of Black youth in City programs.**

Our youth need safe places to hang out and be with friends. While CABQ offers after school, spring break and summer programs at all of our community centers, it is unclear how many Black youth utilize these programs. We are also working to bring more diversity to our Mayors Youth Advisory Council (MYAC). This council meets monthly and has direct interaction with leaders in the City who can implement ideas from the youth on our team. Applications can be found by [clicking here](#) or visiting our website.

## **03 Conduct outreach and coordinate two-way communication among CABQ, business and youth leaders in Black communities.**

This goal will be ongoing and really speaks to the core of what we are here to do, increase engagement and information sharing as a way to increase our access to City resources. We pledge to be visible in the community and accessible to those in need.



# Outreach Efforts

Our focus on outreach will be an ongoing priority because at its core, community outreach helps us function better. Our community outreach efforts are a direct link to our goal of coordinating two-way communication among CABQ departments and leaders in our Black communities.

There are several ways we conducted outreach during our first year:

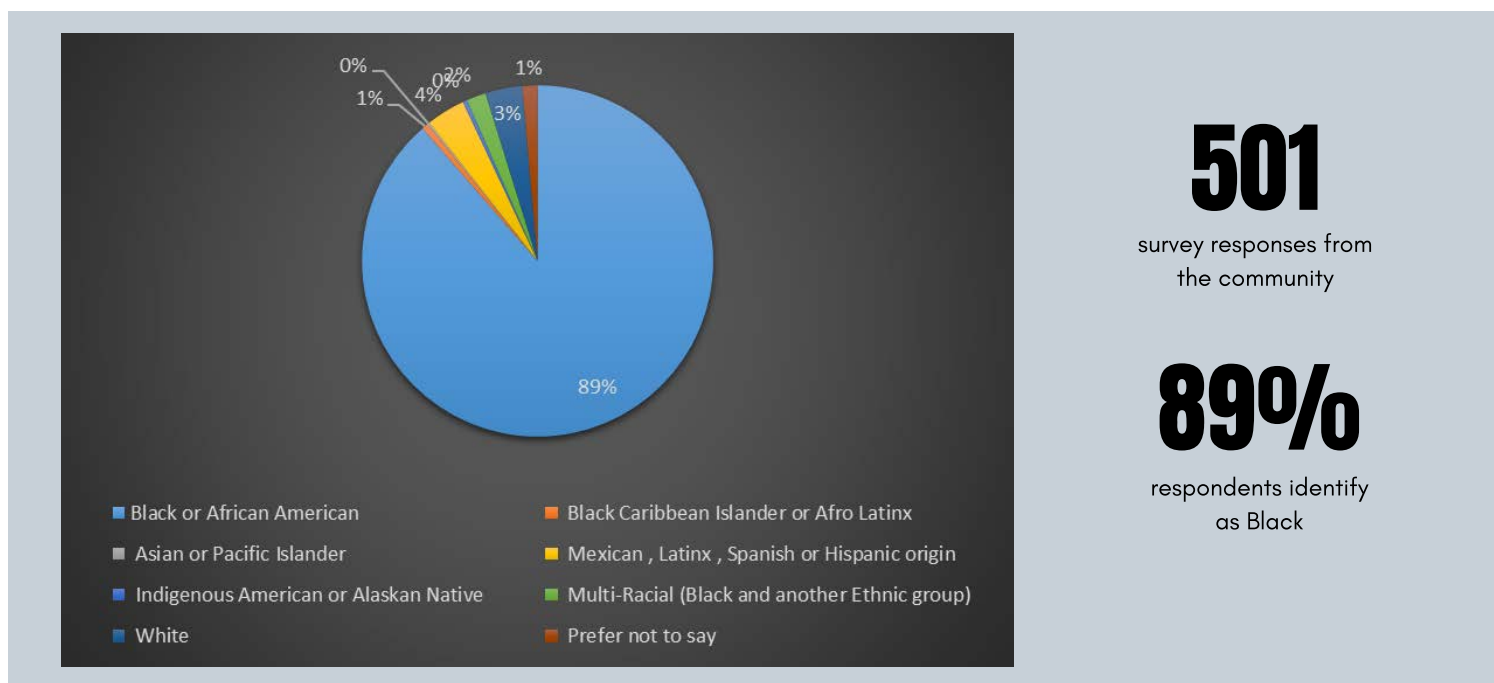
- Hosted 26 community events
- Launched social media accounts
- Hosted 10 Workshops / Learning opportunities
- Attended over 50 community events
- Held 120 meetings with local leaders and community members
- Completed a community input survey

Projects	Details	Outcome
Community Input Survey (June- Nov 2021)	Goal of survey was to help guide the direction of the newly established office and to gain input on the Black communities' feelings about relations with the City.	501 responses with 89% of respondents identifying as Black. Results can be found on the next page.
Community Block Parties (October 2021 -March 2022)	Goal is to dispatch resources directly to neighborhoods in most need using the Social Vulnerability Index and Violence Intervention Program data.	Hosted 21 events, connected over 80 community partners & City Departments, deployed Emergency Rental Assistance, COVID-19 vaccines & testing kits and more.
Community Outreach (April 2021-April 2022)	Conduct outreach and coordinate communication among CABQ, business and youth leaders in Black communities.	Hosted events including 4 meet & greets with over 500 attendees, participated in planning of Juneteenth in 2021 & 2022 and supporting other community events.

In June 2021, we launched a community input survey to help guide the direction of the newly established office. We also wanted to gain input on the Black communities' feelings about relations with the City. We developed the survey to include both quantitative and qualitative data that will be used to build our strategic plan. We used various methods to gain input mostly using a QR code we could take out into the community. We hosted several meet and greets both in person and virtually, attended numerous events, and utilized digital media to gain responses.

## Community Input Survey Respondents

Below are the survey demographic options and breakdown of those who responded.

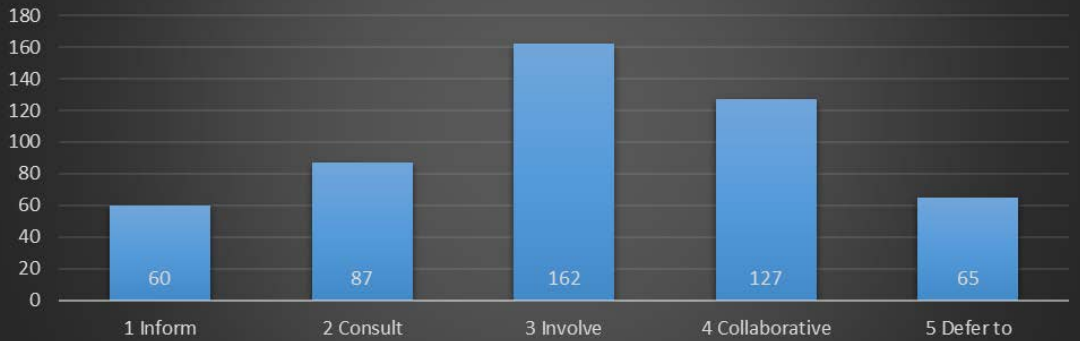


Quantitative survey questions are defined as "objective questions used to gain detailed insights from respondents about a survey research topic. The answers received for these quantitative survey questions are analyzed and a research report is generated based on this quantitative data." (Alchemer.com). Below are the quantitative survey questions we asked along with the responses from the community and our analysis of the information gathered.

We asked the question How would you rank the City's relationship with the Black community based on "The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership" model from FACILITATING POWER." Who is working to create a thriving culture of participation in which communities work together to solve social, economic, and environmental challenges provides essential tools, techniques, and strategy to educators, organizers, service-providers, managers, and community leaders looking to revolutionize engagement and deepen their facilitative leadership."

# Community Input Survey

How would you rank the city's relationship with the Black community?



# 162

respondents agreed they have a voice in decision making

# 127

respondents believe they have power in decision making

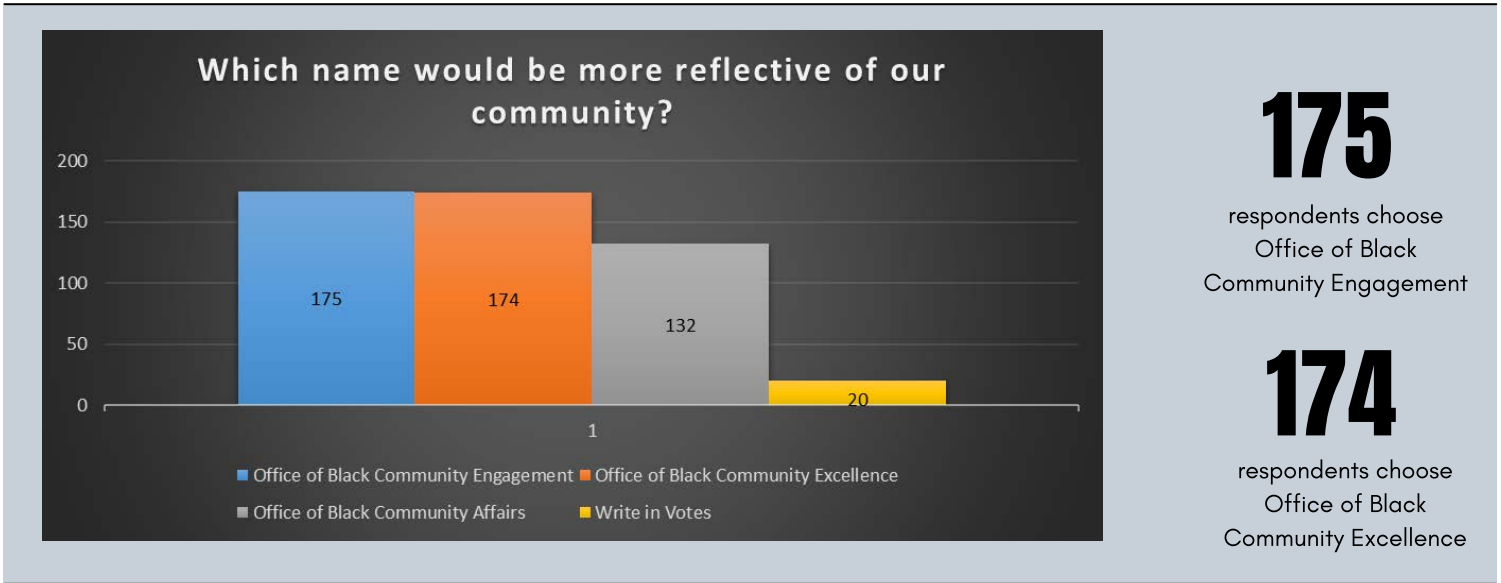
## THE SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP





# Community Input Survey

Next we asked the community if we should differentiate our office and that of the State Office of African American Affairs (OAAA) also located in Albuquerque. Our recommendation, based on the above feedback from the community, was to re-launch our office with the name Office of Black Community Engagement. That name beat out Office of Black Community Excellence by one vote and using the name the community voted on has been well received. We are happy that the name change was approved and officially announced in February 2022 during Black History Month.



**284**  
respondents agreed we need a Strategy Community.

**280**  
respondents agreed we need a paid advisory board

**223**  
respondents agreed we need an African-American Commission

The next question set was designed to gauge community feelings about the creation of a Commission, Strategy Committee, or Paid Advisory Board specific to the needs of the Black community. We included the definitions for each option in the survey so respondents could choose based on shared language for the terms we were proposing. "Shared language refers to people developing understanding amongst themselves based on language (e.g. spoken, text) to help them communicate more effectively."

Based on the results, we are recommending a phased approach by first establishing a formal Strategy Committee, then moving on to advocate for an official compensated Board or Commission. It is important to note that the City of Albuquerque does not currently pay its Board or Commission members and would need to begin to take steps in that direction. Based on research from Facilitating Power, we agree that compensating our Board and Commission members would help us achieve the highest level of community engagement, Community Ownership. We cannot continue to ask constituents to help us improve by giving us their time for free.

The make-up of a strategy committee is extremely important to capturing voices of the many intersections of the Black community. Our goal would be to map out those intersections and recruit members to ensure representation from across our vast community.

# Community Input Survey Open Ended Questions

Qualitative questions ask “why” in a way that is open-ended, giving respondents the space to provide greater detail about their motivations and reasoning in their own words. These responses are more difficult to analyze because, for the most part, the answers cannot be quantified using hard numbers. (Alchemer.com) Our method for analyzing this portion of the data focused heavily on identifying key themes by counting the number of times specific words, phrases or ideas came up in responses. We’ve listed the top 10 themes from each question and have identified areas of focus.

## Youth Programming

The first question asked in this section was “What resources do YOU need from the city?”

This question allows us to conduct a small needs assessment based on how many times respondents named a specific need. This is important to identify the City services and resources we should help highlight and amplify in the community. The need that was mentioned by most respondents was youth programming, especially for middle school and high school ages.

Here are some suggestions we pulled out of the responses to highlight the voices of our community.

- Fun events for youth and separate ones for young adults (college)
- Funding for kids' programs
- More communication of programs CABQ offers from senior to youth age groups
- Cultural events
- Revitalization services and funds to maintain programs for the youth
- Low cost or free venue space for Black only events like a Black community center or
- Cultural Center

## Mental Health Support

The next need that was elevated based on the number of times respondents mentioned it was mental health support. It is clear reviewing these responses that our communities are on the same page in regards to the inadequate amount of mental health resources available. Our recommendation would be to add this as a focus area for our strategic planning process beginning in Spring 2022.

Here is a small sampling of comments in support of this need.

- Focus on Black Mental Health
- Mental health support, rehabilitation, a sense of safety on the streets
- Ease of access to affordable healthcare including mental health
- Get a mental health and addiction treatment center going

# Community Input Survey Open Ended Questions

## Public Safety

The final theme that arose from a large number of respondents was regarding public safety. Specifically, crime and policing. This is an indication that we may need to focus on this topic in our community more heavily.

Here is a small sampling of comments in support of this need.

- Urgency in addressing the City's crime problem
- Law Enforcement, crime control; trash pick-up; recycling; parks.
- More police officers, I would like to feel SAFE in Albuquerque
- Police protection, fire help when needed
- Accountability from police department
- Provide public safety that can handle property crime, violence, human trafficking, the exploitation of minors, and the drug trade. Figure out how to balance accepting the reality of homelessness and also having a clean city.

## Culturally Relevant Activities

The second question asked in this section was "What resources does the Black community need from the city?" This question helps us gauge what the Black community as a whole needs from the City of Albuquerque. We learned that the community as a whole wants more communication around where to go for support and culturally relevant activities.

Here is a small sampling of comments in support of this need.

- Info on where to go for community support
- Collaboration with community organizations
- Community activities and assistance
- Black Albuquerque residents need engagement and legislation that directly addresses needs that are specific to our community.
- Cultural events



# Community Input Survey Open Ended Questions

## Equitable Access

The third question asked in this section was "What steps can the city take to improve quality of life for Black community members?"

The first theme that we identified based on the number of times respondents mentioned was access.

- Break the tricultural myth, resources , childcare support, access to health care and to nutritional info
- Providing educational opportunities and jobs creation in the Black communities so that people see opportunity where they live and not outside of where they are
- Better access to education, access, Wi-Fi, reparations and housing/homeowner programs

## Better Support Black Employees

The second theme we found was around how to better support Black employees who work for and with the City.

- Have more black people in positions of power.
- Giving people a voice isn't enough. Sometimes I feel like the programming I see around us looks great for image but doesn't have a lot of practical application or data to show that it's helping. I believe the City needs to evaluate policies, services, and programs from within to determine areas that are still causing barriers in services because of structural racism, intrinsic biases, and microaggressions.
- Make cultural sensitivity trainings mandatory for management.
- Have Black community members at the table when important decisions are being made

## Economic Stability

The third theme we identified based on comments from respondents is economic stability.

Here is a small sampling of comments in support of this need..

- Housing & economic opportunities for building wealth. A black community center. Be serious about rent control now before gentrification makes it harder for us to own homes.
- The city needs to commit to a multi-year plan of earmarking more funding directly for the Black community, while allowing said community to select local Black leaders whom they trust to collectively direct how those funds are to be used.
- The City should also expand efforts to target opportunities for city employment and leadership openings for Black people.
- It would be great to also see the City go above and beyond by considering reparations to rectify any historical wrongs and prejudices inflicted on the Black community by either intentional or non-intentional biases and negligence.

# Community Input Survey Open Ended Questions

## Black Youth Programming

The final theme we identified was the need to focus on Black youth programming. Here is a small sampling of comments in support of this need.

- Accessible and inspirational facility that serves as a hub for community engagement, youth mentorship, and adult education
- Everything starts with education, making sure students have close places to help them with school work
- More youth events
- Safe spaces for us

This need gets to the heart of the desire to have a cultural center that our community can dispatch resources, programming and most importantly offer a safe space to our youth to explore their talents.

We want to thank everyone who took time to respond. We hope providing survey results and our plans to use what you shared helps in building a foundation of transparency and trust. All of the information found in our community input survey will direct our work over the next three years.

If you are interested in joining our strategic planning team please reach out to Nichole Rogers via email at [nrogers@cabq.gov](mailto:nrogers@cabq.gov) or phone at 505-768-4521.



# African American Population Demographics in Albuquerque

Albuquerque's Black communities' have long contributed to the city's rich cultural fabric. According to the 2020 decennial Census, there are 16,649 Black residents in the City of Albuquerque and 21,562 Black residents that live in the Albuquerque Metro Area (2020 Decennial data, US Census Bureau).

The New Mexico African American Complete Count Committee chaired by Nichole Rogers and Beverly Jordan worked in 2020 statewide with many community partners and faith leaders to ensure Black communities were counted. The unified effort of so many contributed to a significant population increase for the African American community here in Albuquerque and in places like Las Cruces, Hobbs, Clovis and La Mesa, New Mexico. To learn more about the data specific to the growth of Black communities in New Mexico [click here](#).

**16,649**

Black residents in  
the City of Albuquerque

**\$39,481**

median household  
income for African  
American families

**26.4%**

of Black residents in  
Albuquerque live below  
the poverty level

## Economic Profile

Economic factors and socio-economic status are fundamental determinants of human functioning across one's lifespan, including development, well-being and physical and mental health (American Psychological Association, 2007).

Economic information suggests that 26.4% of Black residents in Albuquerque live below the poverty level, while 12.5% of White residents of Albuquerque live below the poverty line. The median household income for African American families in the past 12 months is \$39,481, compared to \$74,912 for White families. With regards to homeownership, about 37% of African American families are owner-occupied compared to 73% for White families.

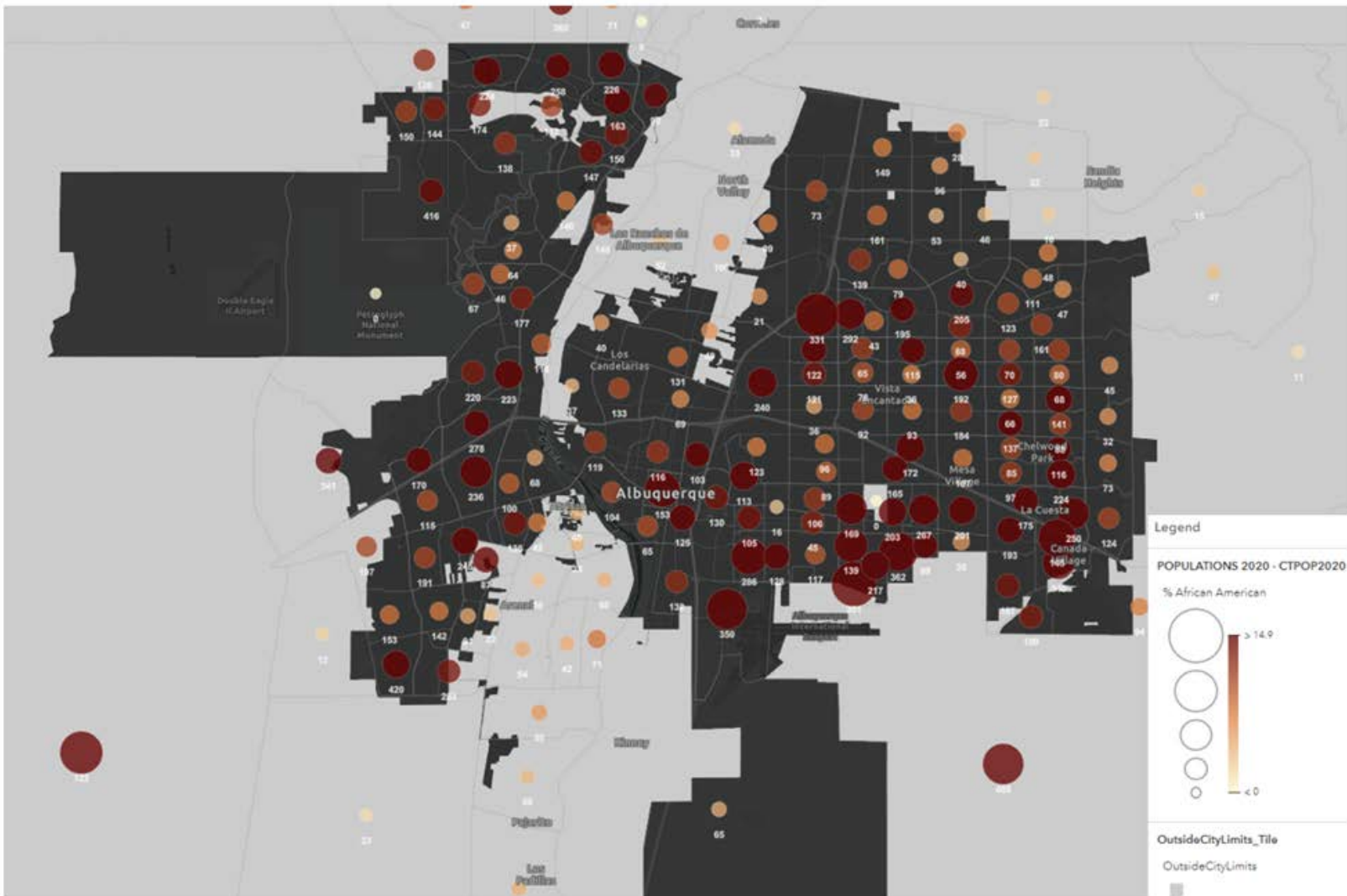
According to *The Economic State of Black America in 2020*, "the consequences of high poverty rates are felt throughout the life cycle for Black Americans. Poverty has well-documented adverse effects on children's educational outcomes and limits young adults' ability to pursue post-secondary education. Those born to families at or below the poverty line are more than twice as likely to be in poor health as adults as those born into families with income more than twice the poverty line."

Social determinants of health and access to education as well as institutionalized racism within policy and governmental practices have led to disproportionate outcomes for African American communities in Albuquerque. Further exploration on how social determinants have affected Black/African American communities in Albuquerque is needed.

# Population Density

It is important to note that Black communities have been historically undercounted in the decennial census, disadvantaging our families, communities, and neighborhoods. In fact, the 2010 Census undercounted nearly 1 million Black residents in the U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2020). Approximately seven percent of young Black children were overlooked by the 2010 Census, roughly twice the rate for young non-Hispanic White children. Additionally, Black men have been historically undercounted in greater numbers than men of other racial or ethnic groups. Today, more than one in three Black residents live in hard-to-count areas like New Mexico.

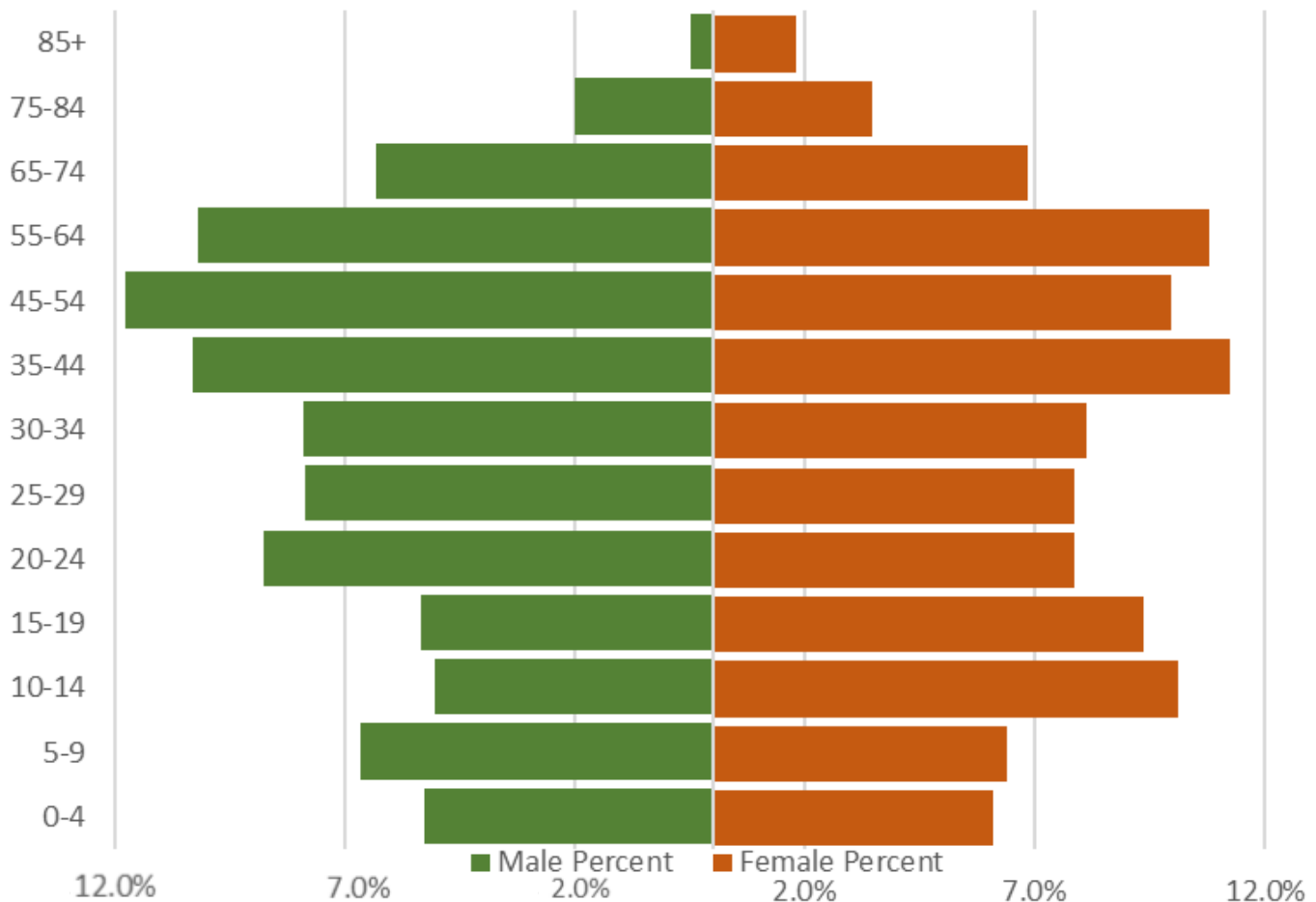
The map below illustrates population clusters of Black residents per census tract within the City of Albuquerque. The dots are placed on a spectrum. The darker the dot, the higher the population density of Black residents. The map demonstrates that Black residents are located across the entire city. There are some population clusters that are denser in the southeastern and south-central parts of Albuquerque, as well as census tracts just below Balloon Fiesta park that have high Black population counts.



## Age Distribution

Census data from 2019 ACS 5-year estimates indicate the following age distribution of male and female Black residents in Albuquerque. More Black men are between the ages of 45-54 than any other age group and more Black women are between the ages of 35-44 than any other age group. The Census does not yet have a measure for non-binary populations. The age distribution of the population indicates that there are a significant number of individuals eligible to participate in the workforce (between the ages of 15 to 74 years in age). Because there are many Black residents that are within the ages of 35-64, we anticipate that many individuals are within the prime or aging out of employment age. Black youth numbers are low which may be related to an undercount in the Census.

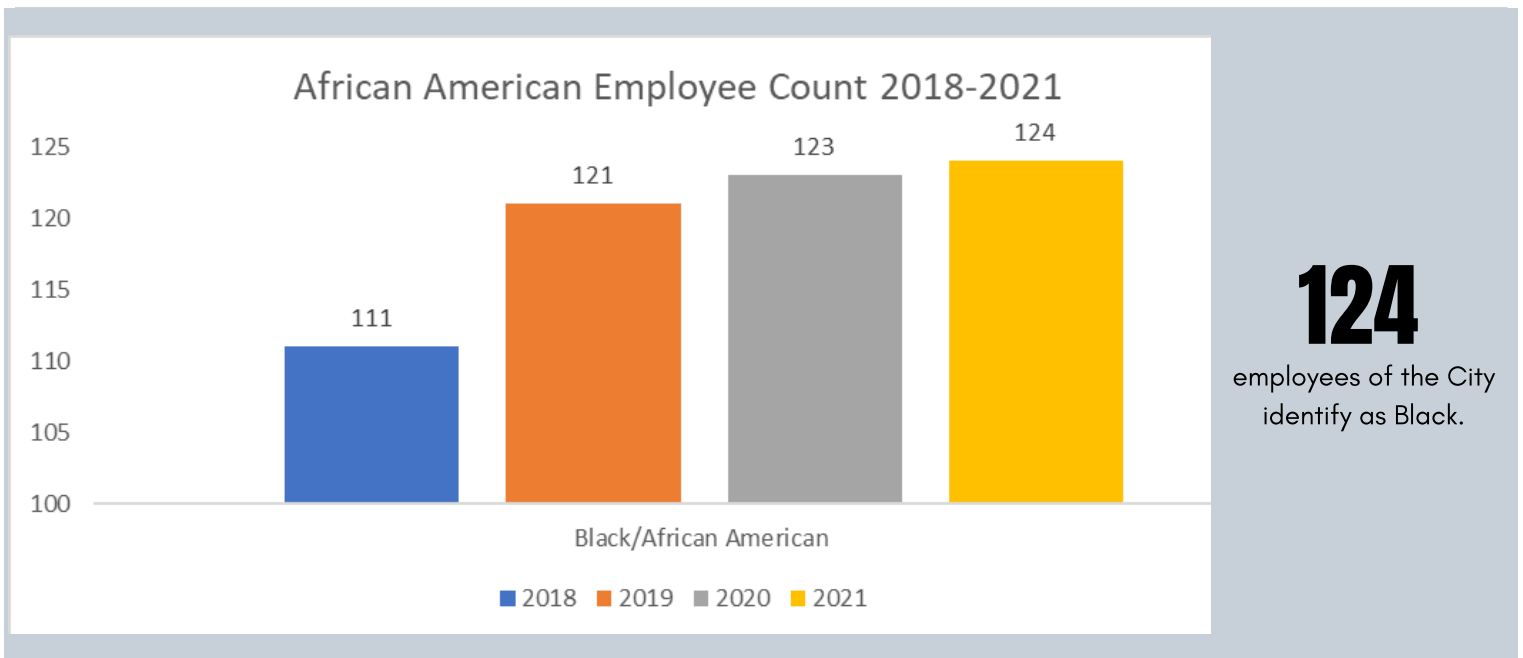
### Population Age Distribution of African American Population in Albuquerque, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates





# City of Albuquerque Workforce Inclusion

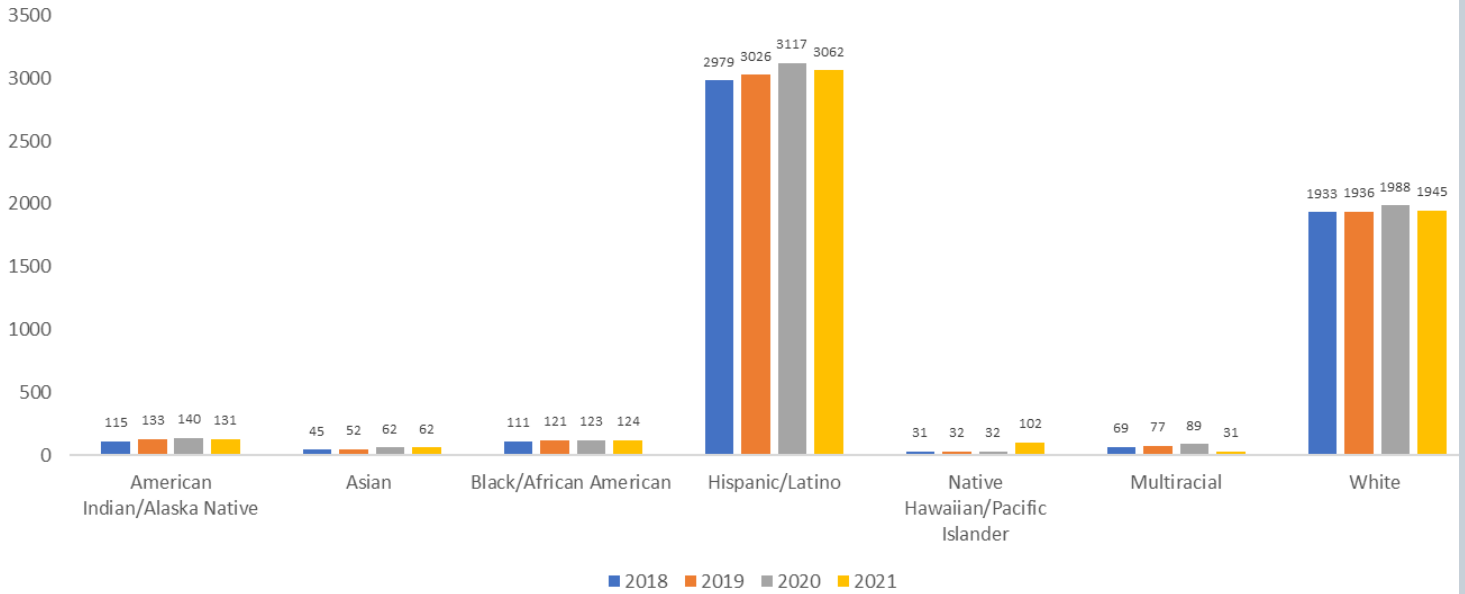
With more than 5,500 employees, the City of Albuquerque municipal government is one of the largest employers in the city and a source of good-paying jobs with benefits. A municipal government is better able to serve a diverse community when its workforce is broadly representative of its population demographics. Below we examine the representation of African American employees in the City's municipal workforce.



The graph above shows the number of employees who identify as Black/African American from 2018 to 2021. The number of employees increased by 10 employees from 2018 to 2021 from 111 Black/African American Employees to 121 Black/African American employees. The number of employees who identified as Black/African American increased by two employees from 2019 to 2020 and then increased by one employee from 2020 to 2021. The number of employees from 2019 to 2021 demonstrate stability in the number of Black/African American employees in the City of Albuquerque, and slight incremental growth from 2019 to 2021.

It's important to determine whether pathways to higher paying positions are available to Black/African American employees from the vantage point of their current positions. What is the universe of Black/African American professionals in Albuquerque and is the City effectively recruiting from these professional and technically skilled communities? Additionally, we suggest further evaluation in the retention of Black/African American employees in the City of Albuquerque workforce and the culture of support available to Black employees at the City.

Race & Ethnicity of CABQ Employees, 2018-2021



The graph above compares employee counts of all race and ethnicity groups within the City of Albuquerque municipal workforce from 2018-2021. The data demonstrates that though the number of Black/African American employees has remained stable, Black people are a minority population within the City’s workforce. Also evident is a consistent jump in the number of employees from 2018 to 2019 for all race/ethnicities except for White. City departments with the greatest number of African American employees include Police (29), Fire (17), Solid Waste (11) and Technology & Innovation Department (10).

Based on these data, setting clear goals and measurable objectives toward increasing the number of Black employees will be added as a priority area during strategic planning. This priority includes creating a support network among Black City employees so they feel connected and supported in their departments.



# Next Steps

Thank you for reading our office's first year reflections. We are excited by the momentum we've built and look forward to the future. Based on the data and community feedback outlined, we have identified the following items as next steps in our office's work:

- Develop a Strategic Planning Team who can help our office strategize about how to reach our goals and provide recommendations on the issues facing our communities. If you or someone you know would be interested in serving on this team, please reach out to Nichole Rogers via email at [nrogers@cabq.gov](mailto:nrogers@cabq.gov).
- Complete a logic model, which is a planning and evaluation tool that facilitates effective program planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Review demographic data of youth in CABQ's youth programming and focus programming specific to Black youth.
- Develop and implement initiative(s) to increase the number of Black employees within City Government.
- Identify a hub location where Black youth can gather safely.
- Develop and advocate for a budget to increase staffing levels for the Office of Black Community Engagement.



# Acknowledgements

We would like to name all of our contributors and collaborators who helped to make this report possible.

Those responsible for concept and coordination include Nichole Rogers, Andrea Calderon, Race Equity Data Analyst, Vicente Quevedo, Deputy Director of The Office Equity & Inclusion, Michelle Melendez, Director of The Office Equity & Inclusion and Jazmen Bradford, Graphic Designer.

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*We thank you for your continued support.*

## Contact

**Nichole Rogers**

Office of Black Community Engagement

1 City Hall, Albuquerque, NM 87106

505-768-4521

[nrogers@cabq.gov](mailto:nrogers@cabq.gov)

<https://www.cabq.gov/obce>

