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# THE NETWORK:

**Empowering Diverse Women to Leverage Social Capital for High-Growth Industries**

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**The Future is Now: Year One Report**



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December 18, 2024

Dear Friends and Partners,

It is my pleasure to introduce the Women.NYC Network's inaugural Impact Report, a comprehensive account of the first year of the Women.NYC Network's suite of programs dedicated to championing women's advancement across New York City's fastest-growing sectors: Technology, Life Sciences, and the Green Economy. Launched in April 2023, the Women.NYC Network has been a critical investment by NYCEDC to empower women, particularly those from underserved communities, through strategic networking and career-building programs tailored to the unique opportunities in these dynamic industries.

The results from our first year are both promising and inspiring, as outlined in this report. We have reached over 80,000 New Yorkers from all five boroughs. Over 1,800 women have participated in Network programs, engaging in transformative experiences with industry leaders, gaining valuable skills, and establishing the connections that can propel their careers and businesses forward. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with 94% of participants planning to attend future sessions, and the data reveal clear indicators of success—from expanded strategic networks to promotions and new business ventures.

This progress underscores a critical mission: equipping New York City's diverse talent pool with the tools to excel in the sectors shaping our future. In this inaugural year, the Women.NYC Network has laid a strong foundation for bridging gaps in representation, combating systemic barriers, and fueling a robust, inclusive economy that truly reflects the spirit and talent diversity of New York City.

As we move forward, we remain committed to expanding this impactful work and helping more women access the high-growth opportunities that will define tomorrow's industries. Thank you to our partners, advisors, and participants for making this vision possible. Together, we are building a New York City where all have the same opportunity to thrive and lead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AK', written over the printed name.

Andrew Kimball  
President and CEO  
New York City Economic Development Corporation

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Women.NYC Network, initiated in April 2022 by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), aims to empower New Yorkers identifying as women (henceforth “women”), with a particular emphasis on Black/Indigenous/People of Color (BIPOC) women, by enabling career-expanding strategic network connections and essential skills in three high-growth industries: Life Sciences, Technology, and the Green Economy. The necessity for this initiative is underscored by the current economic landscape of NYC, where women, despite constituting nearly half of the workforce, face significant underrepresentation in managerial roles and experience substantial pay disparities compared to their male counterparts.<sup>1</sup>

### Context and Need

The economic data reveals substantial growth opportunities within NYC’s high-growth sectors. The tech sector, employing 330,000 workers, is the second largest in the US. The Life Sciences industry contributes \$3.1 billion to the city’s gross metropolitan product and has been growing steadily. The Green Economy is projected to employ nearly 400,000 people by 2040, contributing \$89 billion to NYC’s GMP. However, women, especially BIPOC women, remain underrepresented in these sectors, particularly in leadership roles and focus occupations.

The challenges faced by women in the workforce are compounded by systemic barriers and discrimination. Data shows that women report lacking confidence compared to their male peers, and a significant number report experiencing workplace discrimination.



<sup>1</sup>Statistics on underrepresentation drawn from NYC data 2023 and illustrated on p. 2

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## Context and Need (continued)

Without targeted and industry-specific interventions, women's participation in New York City's burgeoning sectors is at risk of decline. This underrepresentation not only affects individual career trajectories but also has broader economic implications, inhibiting innovation in sectors that are critical to the city's growth.

To harness the full potential of NYC's diverse talent pool and promote a balanced and dynamic economic landscape, it is imperative to implement programs that:

- Foster an environment that supports and celebrates female leadership and career growth in traditionally male-dominated industries.
- Provide women with the tools and resources necessary to ascend to leadership roles.
- Increase the flow of capital to female-led enterprises.

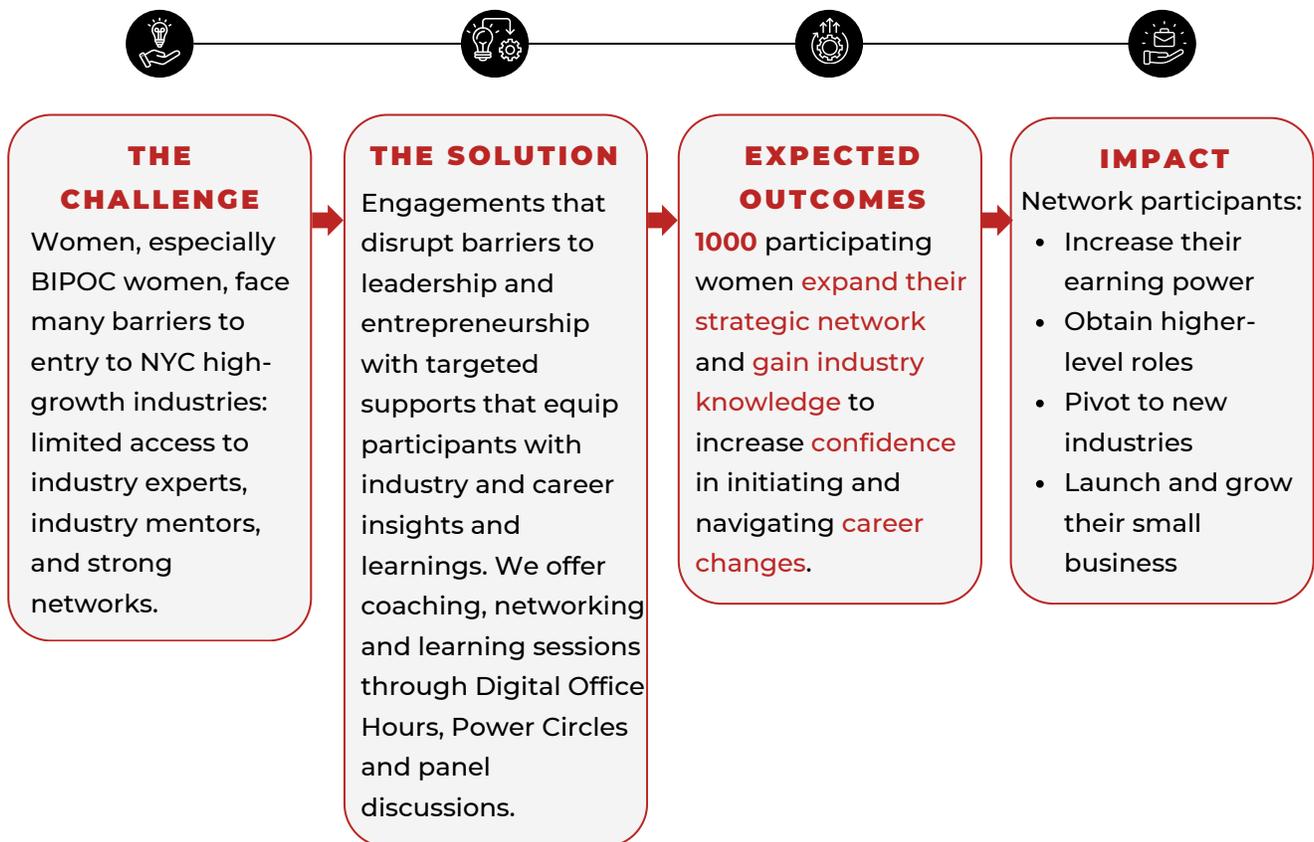
The data above are a call to action for policymakers, industry leaders, and community advocates to rally behind women in high-growth sectors. By addressing the discrimination head-on and crafting pathways for advancement, we can ensure that women are not only participants but also leaders in shaping New York City's economic future.



# Theory of Change and Program Design

## Theory of Change

The Women.NYC Network addresses common inequities faced by women through targeted interventions designed to enhance social capital and<sup>2</sup> economic mobility in high-growth sectors. Strategic networks increase the power of social capital for women in NYCEDC's priority sectors. The Network is promoting the next wave of leadership for women in industries that look toward the future.



2. The term social capital refers to a positive product of human interaction. The positive outcome may be tangible or intangible and may include favors, useful information, innovative ideas, and future opportunities. Social capital is not held by an individual, but instead appears in the potential between social network connections between individuals ([Investopedia](#))

## Theory of Change and Program Design

Data collected by Women.NYC to support the Amplify Her report *If She Can Make it Here*, focused<sup>3</sup> on challenges women face in entering leadership positions in NYC, clearly illustrates the challenges our Network participants face in accessing leadership roles and needed support, especially in industry mentorship (see Figure 1).

Data shows **Lack of Strategic Networks and No Clear Path to Leadership Role** are the two greatest challenges NYC women face, while mentorship and connections to professionals is the most important resource.

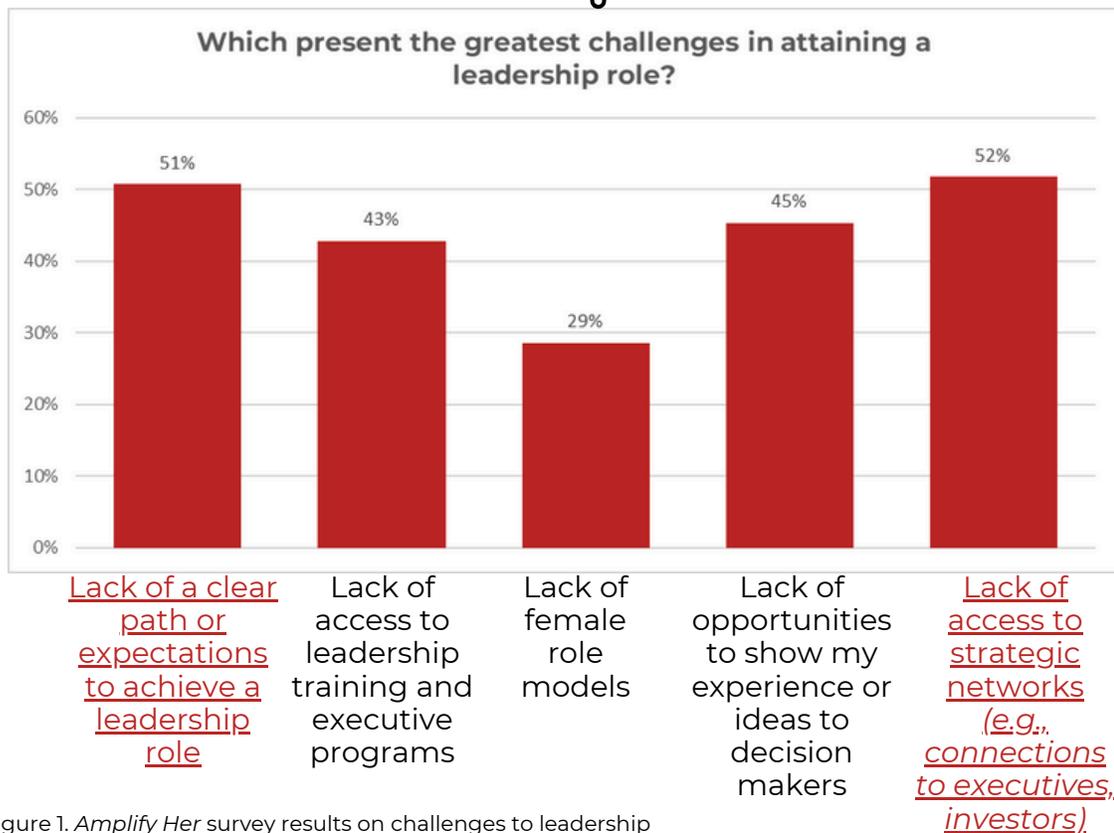


Figure 1. Amplify Her survey results on challenges to leadership

3. This survey was distributed to over 1,100 NYC women in August 2023

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# Theory of Change and Program Design

## Program Design

The Women.NYC data and theory drive the design of The Network Program, with several ways to engage across modalities. These are outlined below.

**1:1 Digital Office Hours:** These virtual sessions connect women with industry leaders and subject matter experts, offering career conversations that neutralize power dynamics and improve accessibility.

**Power Circles:** Industry-specific challenges are addressed in small group networking events and Q&A sessions led by advisors, providing a unique engagement experience with sector C-suite executives, industry leaders, and business owners.

**Events:** Industries of the Future are addressed in large group learning sessions anchored by a panel discussion and bookended with strategic networking and mentorship opportunities led by key industry executives, offering opportunities for deep industry learning as well as strategic network-building.

**LinkedIn Group:** The private, invite-only LinkedIn group offers wraparound support for all elements of the program and enables deeper understanding of participant progress.



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## Theory of Change and Program Design

### Reach

As of September 2024, information on Network programming reached over **80,000** people through targeted outreach such as subscription mailing lists, social media ad campaigns designed for our community, and promoted events on EventBrite, among other efforts. Over 9,000 people have registered for our events and about 1,800 have attended at least one as of September 2024. In the first ten months (April 2023–January 2024), the Network served 908 participants across all five boroughs, 65% of whom identified as BIPOC women (compared to 47.2% BIPOC women total in NYC),<sup>4</sup> reflecting the program’s success in reaching a diverse audience. The program has enabled access for historically disadvantaged communities, with a significant portion of participants seeking to increase their earning power and pivot their careers into high-growth sectors. Research shows that economic mobility is closely tied to social capital and strategic networks.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, there is a persistent network gap that begins in childhood and hinges on one’s zip code.<sup>6</sup>

**80,000 New Yorkers Reached**



<sup>4</sup> US Census Bureau, 2023

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/08/01/upshot/rich-poor-friendships.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.closesthegapfoundation.org/glossary/network-gap>

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## Outcomes and Impact

The Women.NYC Network has demonstrated significant positive outcomes, underscoring the achievement of goals and progress toward impact on professional growth and community building among women seeking to grow their career in high-growth sectors (see Figure 2). Key findings highlight the following successes:<sup>7</sup>

### High Participant Satisfaction and Value

- An overwhelming 94% of participants plan to attend more Women.NYC sessions, an indication and reflection of a strong appreciation for the resources and learning opportunities provided through the program.
- The vast majority, 96% of participants, agreed or strongly agreed that the Women.NYC Network programming met and/or exceeded their expectations, describing the sessions as "magical, extremely helpful, amazing and awesome."

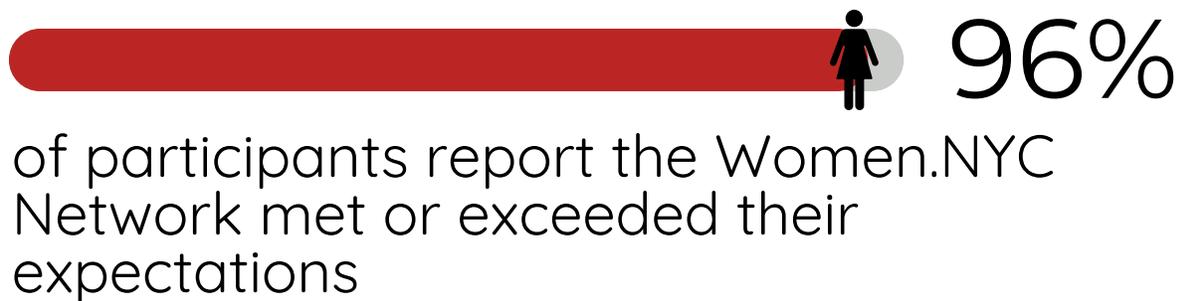


Figure 2. Participant satisfaction survey results

7. Each participant was offered an exit survey after every engagement with Network programming in addition to an end-of-year survey. The n size is 206.

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## Outcomes and Impact

### Competency Development (see Figure 3)

- 84% of participants reported an expansion of their professional network due to attending events, while 56% made strategic connections they wouldn't have accessed otherwise.
- 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they learned from industry experts, indicating the program's effectiveness in delivering valuable industry-specific knowledge.



Figure 3. Participant survey results on professional networking

# Outcomes and Impact

## Career Changes

- Participants reported tangible career advancements, including obtaining new roles, promotions, and salary increases (see Figure 4).
- 14% of the self-reported jobseekers who completed the survey achieved a promotion or raise, and 10% of entrepreneurs launched a new small business within the first year of the program.<sup>8</sup>

## Community Building

- The sense of community among participants emerged as a unique and essential aspect of the Network. Focus group respondents described a supportive environment where they could be authentic and share experiences with other women facing similar challenges.
- This community aspect was frequently highlighted as a “safe space” for learning and networking, setting the program apart from other professional development initiatives.

These positive findings underscore the effectiveness of the Women.NYC Network in empowering women to launch and grow their career in the Technology, Green Economy, and Life Sciences sectors. By fostering a supportive community and providing targeted learning opportunities, the Network has successfully enhanced participants’ career trajectories and professional learning. The program’s impact is not only evident in the quantitative data from registration forms and exit surveys, but also in the personal stories and testimonials of participants who have benefited from the Network’s offerings.

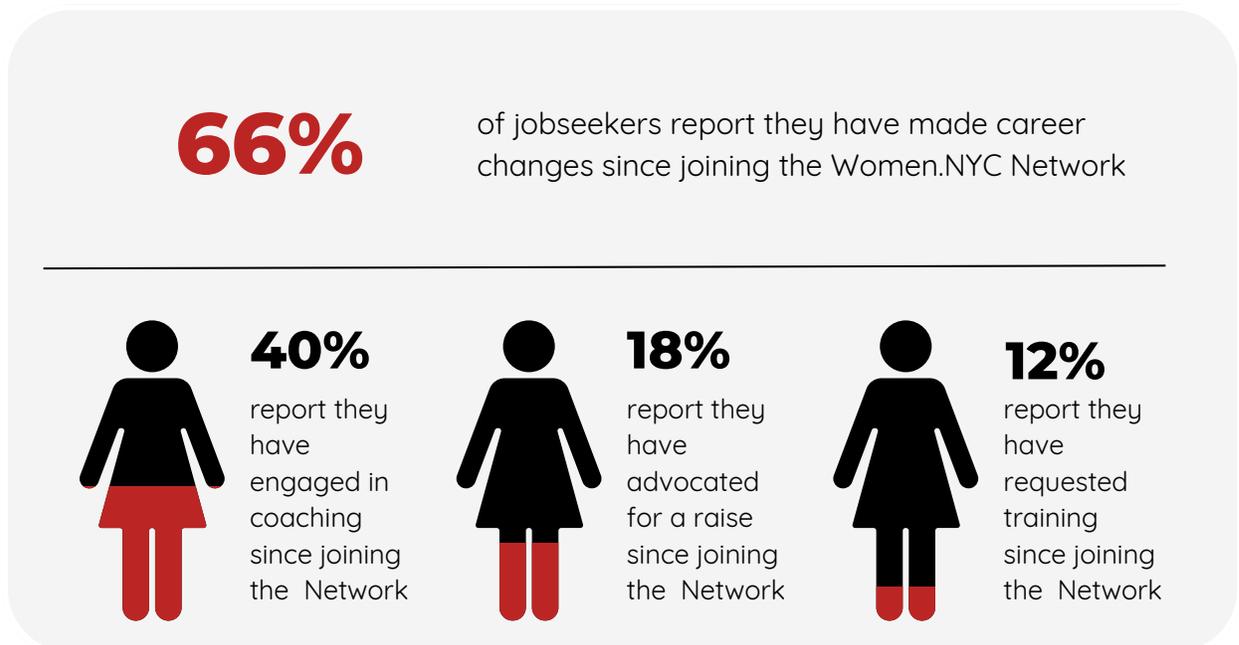


Figure 4. Participant survey results on career changes

8. 51 participants responded to the end-of-year survey regarding behavior and status changes. 25, or just over 50%, indicated they are jobseekers. 14% of that 25 indicated they achieved a promotion or raise. 10% of the 51 respondents indicated they launched a small business.

# Outcomes and Impact

## LinkedIn Group

The exclusive LinkedIn group for the Network participants is a strategic way to track outcomes after interventions and gain insights into their professional journey, in addition to creating continuity in the community. Attendees of any Women.NYC program as well as advisors are invited to join; as of January 2024, about 32% of Network participants have joined the group.

49% of the members in the group have changed roles in the last year

Nearly half our group members have been in their current role one year or less, indicating they changed jobs since they joined the Network (or shortly before).

**LinkedIn Group Members by Time Spent with Current Company**

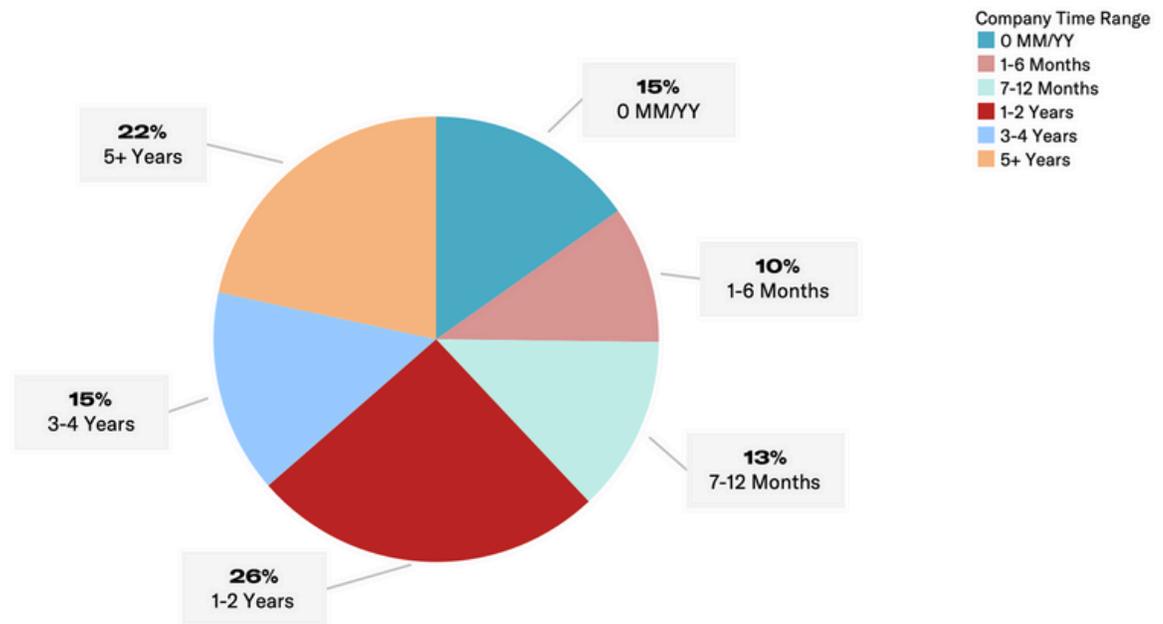


Figure 5. LinkedIn Group data

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## Outcomes and Impact

### LinkedIn Group

38% have spent less than a year with their current company

Group members who reported a new role are likely also with a new company. The data is not specific to industry, but it is possible these group members are moving from one sector to another.

#### LinkedIn Group Members by Time Spent in Current Position

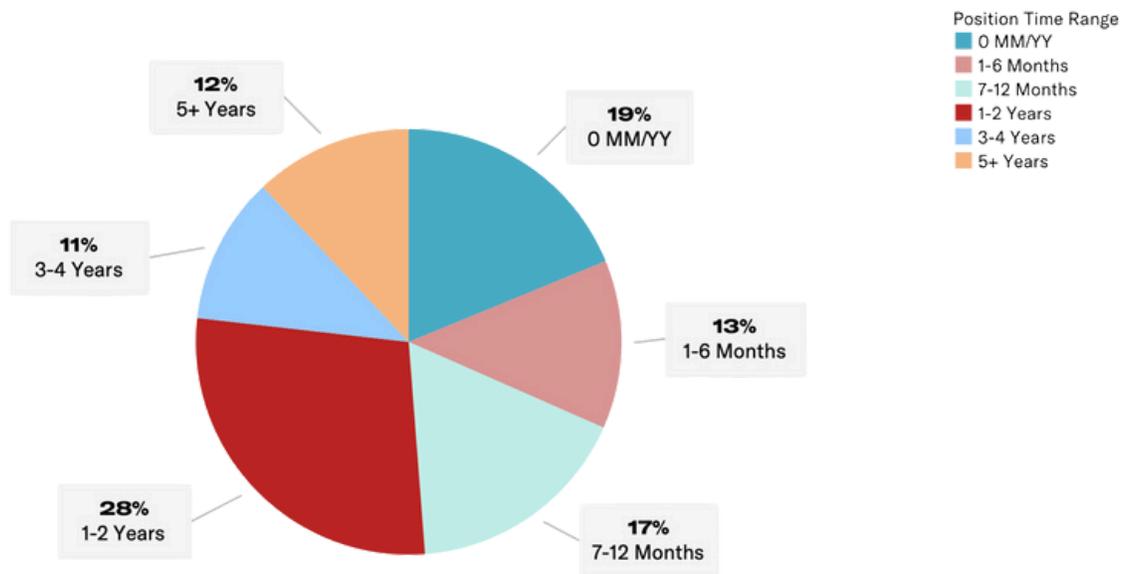


Figure 6. LinkedIn Group data



# INTRODUCTION

## Background

Launched in April 2022 within the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), the Women.NYC Network is a pivotal city program aimed at empowering women in New York City, with a particular focus on BIPOC women, to develop career-expanding networks and critical skills in priority industries: Life Sciences, Technology, and the Green Economy. When reviewing data for NYC, it's clear why these three sectors are a priority. There are 330,000 workers in the tech sector in New York—already the second largest in the US and continuing to grow. Life Sciences alone as an industry now contributes \$3.1B to the city's gross metropolitan product and has seen an average annual growth of 50+ companies since 2016 (note: does not include health care roles). And when we look at the Green Economy, encompassing a broad swath of construction and climate tech subsectors, its growth has outpaced that of the broader NYC economy over the last several years. It is projected to continue growing rapidly: by 2040, the City's green economy will employ nearly 400,000 people—7% of all jobs in New York City—and contribute \$89 billion to the City's GMP.

In the context of New York City's dynamic economy, women's participation in the workforce is crucial for equitable progress. Existing data paints a dire picture of the state of employment for women in New York City. Women make up approximately half of the formal labor force in New York City but are routinely underpaid and underrepresented in managerial positions compared to men (NY Dept of Labor, 2023). The Poverty Tracker study from a Robin Hood and Columbia University partnership<sup>9</sup> reveals the extent to which women in NYC are disproportionately impacted by inequity:

- *Female New Yorkers were more likely than males to experience poverty (23% vs. 18%), material hardships (32% vs. 25%), and health problems (25% vs. 20%).*
- *Black and Latina females were almost three times more likely than white females to work in low-wage jobs (40% and 39% vs. 15%).*
- *Disadvantage was also more persistent for female New Yorkers; across a 5-year period, 60% of women were in poverty for at least one year versus 45% of men, and 24% of women were in poverty for 3 or more years versus 16% of men. Gaps were similar for experiences of material hardship over a 5-year period.*

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## Background (continued)

Additionally, data shows that there is a significant “motherhood penalty” impacting working women. Mothers as a group make 63 cents for every dollar paid to fathers; even full-time working mothers make only 71 cents compared to fathers. In the decade after having their first child, mothers experience a 60% drop in earnings compared to fathers.<sup>10</sup> These grim statistics make it all the more important to ensure barriers are lowered for this group to erase any opportunity gap with their peers who continue to work. Strong strategic networks for women are the key to combatting the existing gap.

Women make up 43% of the workforce in New York City. Data on women’s employment in high-growth sectors (Green Economy, Technology, and Life Sciences) vis à vis NYC as a whole illustrates the need for additional supports (see Figure 5). Despite women representing half of the workforce in the Green Economy within the city, their presence in leadership and entrepreneurial roles remains significantly limited. We also see a missed opportunity in non-degree entry jobs that have huge potential for economic mobility; a case in point is women in construction, where they represent only 3.5% of the workforce.<sup>11</sup>

In the realm of Technology, women comprise only 34% of total workers. Life Sciences data is also bleak: BIPOC women represent 38% of the workforce but hold only 25% of managerial roles, pointing to systemic barriers in attaining leadership positions. And though our most recent data shows that women are now holding their own in managerial roles in Technology and Life Sciences (36% and 51%, respectively), they remain underrepresented in the world of entrepreneurship.



10. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X20300144>  
11. NYCEDC’s Economic Research & Policy (ERP) group, 2024

## Background (continued)

Detailed data on roles held by women in each of these high-priority sectors reveals insights on where barriers to opportunity exist, especially for BIPOC women, and where support efforts should be targeted. These differ among sectors, as illustrated in the following three visuals.

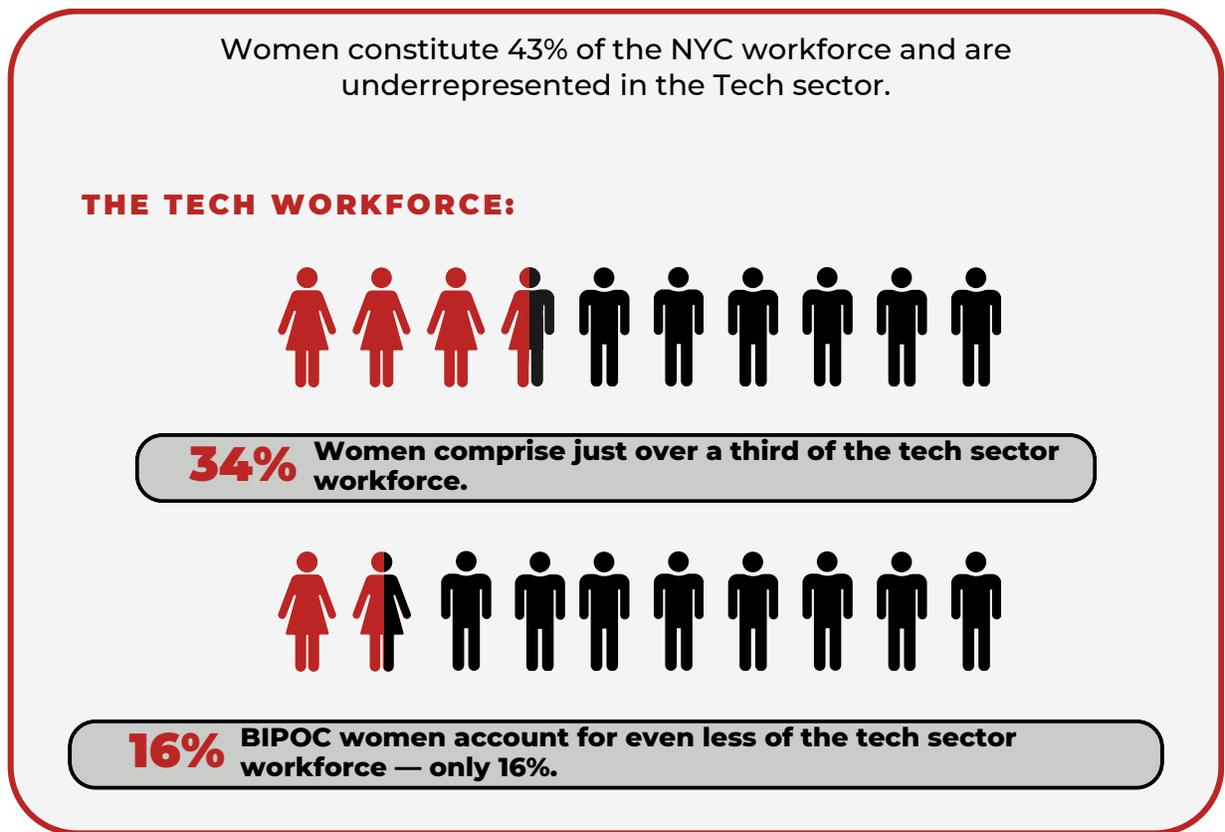


Figure 7. Data from ERP on Workforce Characteristics, 2022 and the Green Economy Action Plan

## Background (continued)

BIPOC women hold only 25% of managerial roles in Life Sciences.

### THE LIFE SCIENCES WORKFORCE:



**51%** Slightly more than half of managers in life sciences are women.



**25%** BIPOC women hold only 25% of managerial roles in the life sciences sector.

Figure 8. Data from ERP on Workforce Characteristics, 2022 and the Green Economy Action Plan

Women represent half of the workforce in the Green Economy in NYC but are limited in non-degree entry roles (focus occupations).

### THE GREEN ECONOMY WORKFORCE:



**14%** Women make up 14% of the green economy focus occupations.



**7%** BIPOC women account for only 7% of the green economy focus occupations.

Figure 9. Data from ERP on Workforce Characteristics, 2022 and the Green Economy Action Plan

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## Background (continued)

In addition to the statistics on representation, research shows that women in NYC face discrimination and experience diminished confidence in the workplace. Many of these effects were shown starkly in the Amplify Her study in 2023, in which Women.NYC partnered with Amplify Her to administer a survey to over 1100 women. In one key finding, over half (52%) of all respondents reported that they did not feel as confident as their equally-qualified male peers (see Figure 10). One quote from the report is telling: “A KPMG study finds 75% of female executives across industries have experienced imposter syndrome in their careers, which is a feeling of inadequacy and self-doubt that makes them continuously doubt if they are qualified enough for the job.”

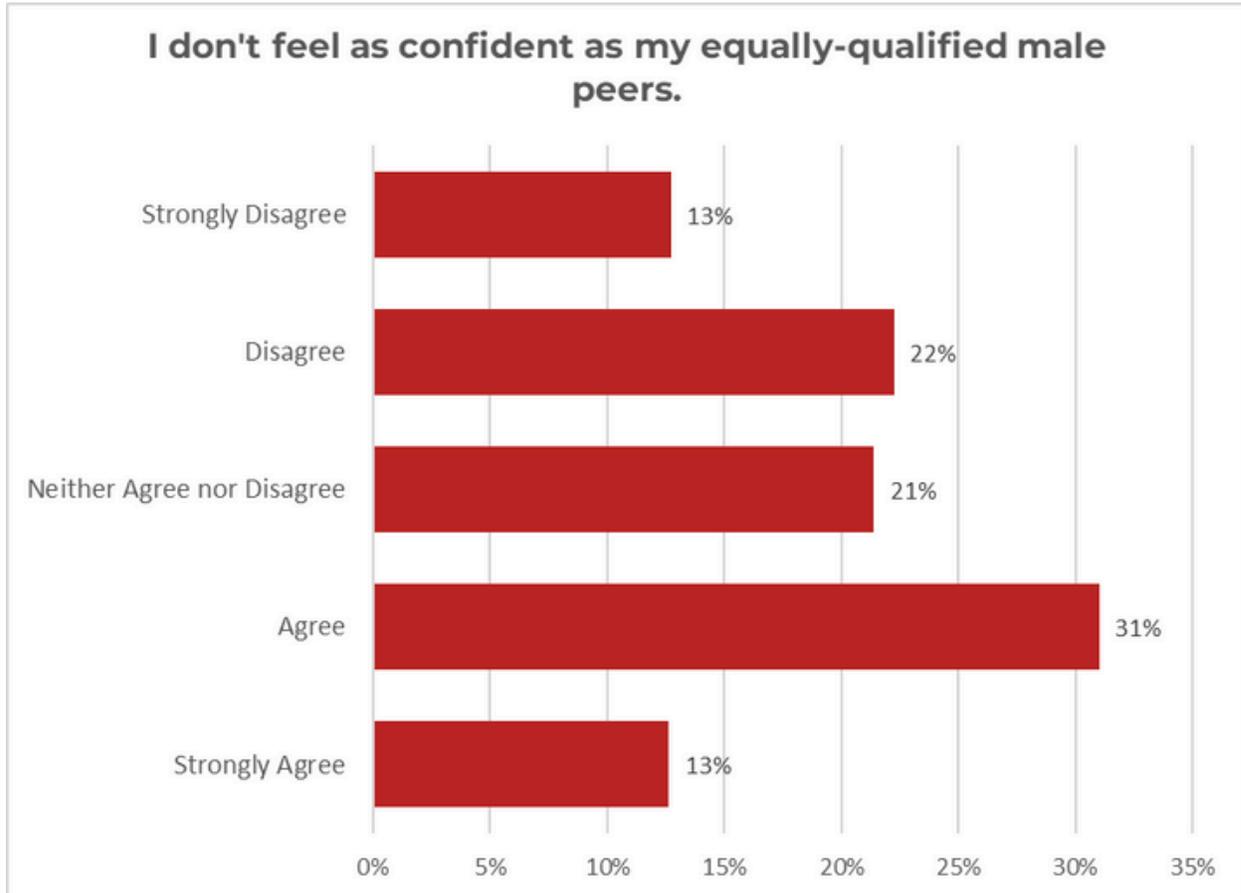


Figure 10. *Amplify Her* survey results on confidence

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## Background (continued)

Additionally, 55% of women reported they have experienced sexism or discrimination in the workplace (see Figure 11).

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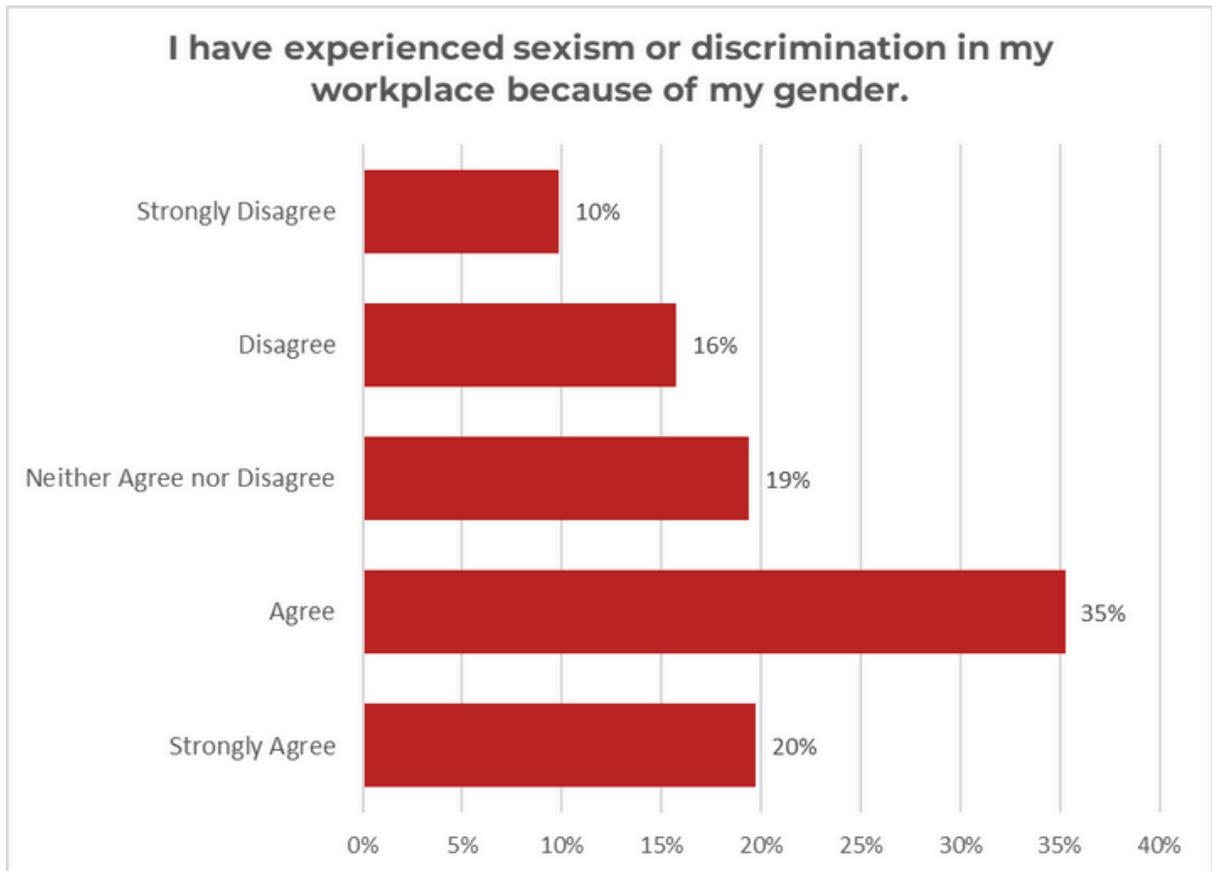


Figure 11. *Amplify Her* survey results on sexism

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## The Need

Without targeted and industry-specific interventions, women's participation in New York City's burgeoning sectors is at risk of decline. This underrepresentation not only affects individual career trajectories but also has broader economic implications, inhibiting innovation in sectors that are critical to the city's growth. As cited by Hult Business School, "Challenging each other and collaborating with people who think differently can breed creativity and promote the innovative ideas that push organizations forward."<sup>13</sup>

To harness the full potential of NYC's diverse talent pool and promote a balanced and dynamic economic landscape, it is imperative to implement programs that:

- Foster an environment that supports and celebrates female leadership and career growth in traditionally male-dominated industries.
- Provide women with the tools and resources necessary to ascend to leadership roles.
- Increase the flow of capital to female-led enterprises.

The findings above are a call to action for policymakers, industry leaders, and community advocates to rally behind women in high-growth sectors. By addressing the discrimination head-on and crafting pathways for advancement, we can ensure that women are not only participants but also leaders in shaping New York City's economic future.

## The Network: Closing the Gap

As previously noted, despite women making up a significant portion of NYC's workforce, there remains a stark underrepresentation in high-growth sectors of Technology, Green Economy, and Life Sciences. This disparity not only affects women's economic development but also contributes to wider gaps in gender pay, racial pay, venture capital funding, and leadership roles. Women.NYC prioritizes bridging these gaps, particularly for women of color, by focusing on building strategic networks to increase the power of social capital for women in NYCEDC's priority sectors. Research shows that economic mobility is closely tied to social capital and strategic networks.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, there is a persistent network gap that begins in childhood and hinges on one's zip code.<sup>15</sup> Women.NYC's goal is to enhance women's representation and mobility within these sectors, connect women to opportunities, and enable access to career-expanding strategic networks and executive skills (e.g. subject matter expertise, strategic thinking and foresight, and change management skills). With a strategic focus on the future economy, Women.NYC harnesses the power of strategic partnerships and tailored programming to uplift women in high-growth sectors where they are currently and historically underrepresented.

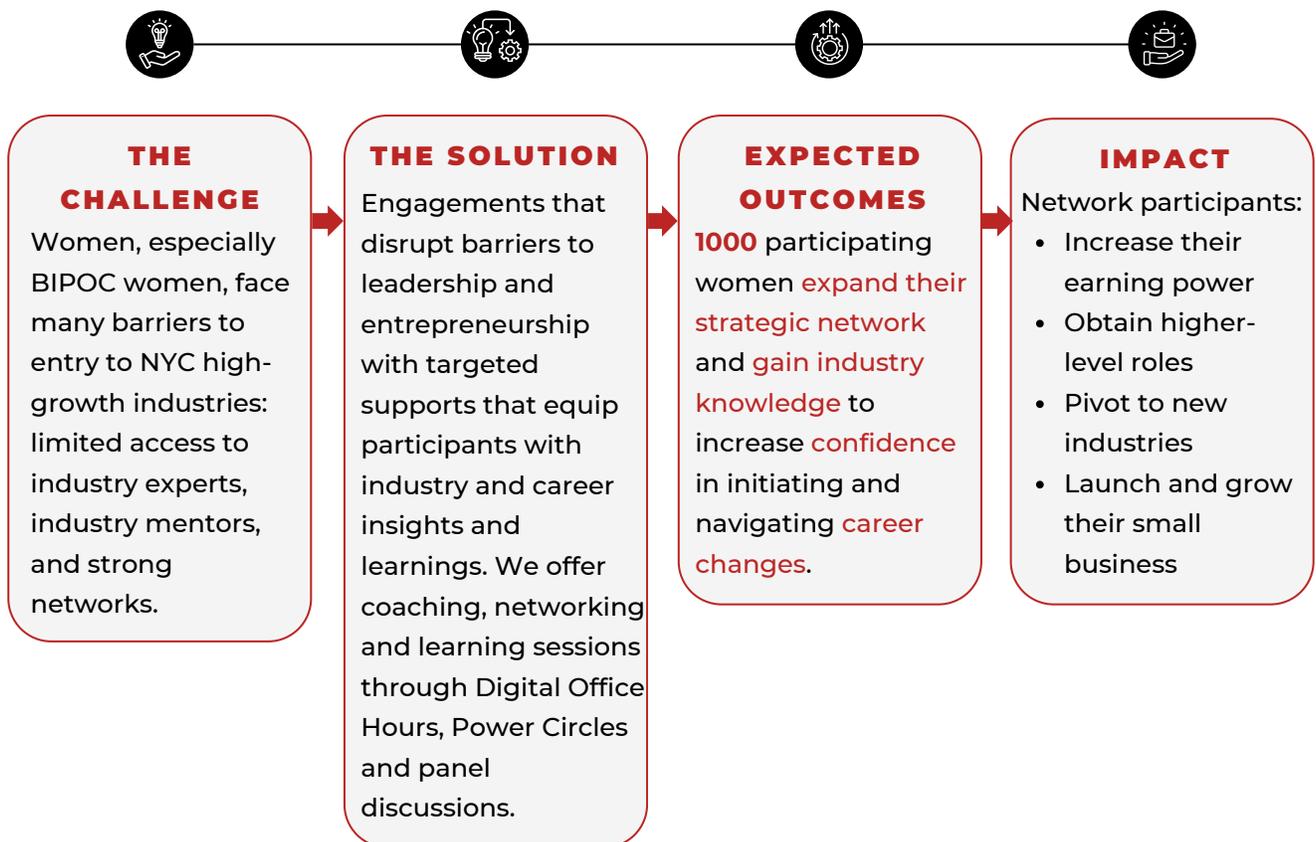
13. <https://www.hult.edu/blog/women-in-business-advantages-challenges-and-opportunities/>

14. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/08/01/upshot/rich-poor-friendships.html>

15. <https://www.closesthegapfoundation.org/glossary/network-gap>

## The Network: Closing the Gap (continued)

Understanding the critical role of social capital in professional advancement, Women.NYC developed The Network to specifically and comprehensively address this need. This platform aims to close gaps in career opportunities and professional development, especially for women of color. To lower the barriers to strategic networks, The Network offers three core ways to connect: 1:1 Office Hours, Power Circles and Events, and Insider’s Look, a new program focused on site visits and shadowing opportunities. Additionally, the Network offers an exclusive LinkedIn group that functions as a bridge for continuity for our community. This report includes outcome data from April 2023 to January 2024; therefore, it focuses only on Office Hours, Power Circles/Events, and the LinkedIn community. Data for the Insider’s Look component of our programs will be available in the future, as we continue to collect insightful data on this part of our program.



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## The Network: Closing the Gap (continued)

### Network Design

The first step in the program design process was to research and strategically think through how to reach our focus community. The team utilized a wide-ranging multi-modal approach, including: leveraging partnerships to amplify engagement; strategic social media campaigns for focus demographics; newsletters, resource-sharing, and follow-up emails; and collaborative events with partner organizations.

1:1 Digital Office Hours: These virtual sessions connect women with industry leaders and subject matter experts, offering career conversations that neutralize power dynamics and improve accessibility. Through these sessions, participants:

- Build connections/relationship with industry experts/executives
- Gain technical skills (interviewing, resume writing)
- Understand career pathways and transferable skills needed for specific roles and/or sectors
- Deepen knowledge of their target industry and how to apply to specific positions from one on one discussion with an industry leader

Power Circles: Industry-specific challenges are addressed in small group networking events and Q&A sessions led by advisors, providing a unique engagement experience with sector C-suite executives, industry leaders, and business owners. Power Circles support participants to:

- Expand strategic networks and foster peer-to-peer learning
- Build community with peers with similar interests and needs
- Deepen knowledge of industry-specific careers and gain technical skills related to the workshop content
- Gain confidence to pivot careers

Events: Industries of the Future are addressed in large group learning sessions anchored by a panel discussion and bookended with strategic networking and mentorship opportunities led by key industry executives, offering opportunities for deep industry learning as well as strategic network-building. Through large-scale events, participants:

- Expand strategic networks and connect with industry leaders in structured small- and large-group networking
- Gain an initial understanding of high-growth industries, potential career pathways, and transferable skills
- Increase skill and confidence to advance careers

Each program in the Network is designed to enhance access through different modalities and learning styles; for instance, some women are more comfortable in a large group setting and others may need to build a specific skill in a 1:1 context.

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## The Network: Closing the Gap (continued)

### Network Design (continued)

LinkedIn Group: The private, invite-only LinkedIn group offers wraparound support for all elements of the program and enables deeper understanding of participant progress. The group goal is to link participants and advisors to:

- Provide continuity to established relationships built in the program
- Create seamless connections to all Women.NYC programming

The Women.NYC Network works to ensure that women, particularly those of color, are not left behind in the rapidly evolving economic landscape of NYC. By establishing the opportunity, location, and follow-up for strategic connections, in addition to mentorship and professional learning and growth, The Network emboldens women to reach new heights in their careers, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable future economy.



# THE NETWORK EFFECT

## Program Outcomes and Impact

### Introduction

Data collected and analyzed around program outcomes show very promising results. The Network outcomes are organized into four categories representing the impact goals of the program on participant professional growth. In this section, findings are presented for the first three outcome categories (Customer Experience can be found in Appendix A). The evaluation framework and outcomes were set at the inception of the program in collaboration with the program team and NYCEDC Economic Mobility team.

### Outcome Categories

- **Competencies:** Participant learning and network expansion.
- **Behavior Changes:** Implementing changes such as coaching, professional learning, and applying for new roles.
- **Career Changes:** Obtaining a new role or a promotion, or launching a business.
- **Customer Experience:** The participant experience around finding, registering, and preparing for Network events.

### Findings

The program's progress toward goals is evident and overwhelmingly positive. Participants rated the Network very highly in terms of worthwhile sessions, skill- and competency-based specialized industry learning, strategic, structured professional networking, and career path learning. Additionally, the concrete positive outcomes of the program are clear in the women who reported advocating for and obtaining promotions, new roles, and salary increases. Finally, the vibrant community that has arisen among participants was repeatedly highlighted throughout the year in participant comments and focus groups as a key aspect of involvement.

*“Women supporting each other in technology is the best way to move the needle forward. Developing strong relationships in NYC is important. I would be happy to attend more events like this one.”*

16. Details on methodology may be found in the appendix.

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Overall Value

Respondents were enthusiastically positive in their response to questions about the value of the Women.NYC program. The chart illustrates an incredible return rate from our participants, with **94% of all attendees indicating they are likely or very likely to attend future sessions** (see Figure 12).

*“It was great to be in the same room as major women NYC leaders across government and the private sector, and came away with a strong new professional contact.”*

*“Skills are transferable, ask for what you want!”*

How likely are you to attend another Women.NYC event in the future?

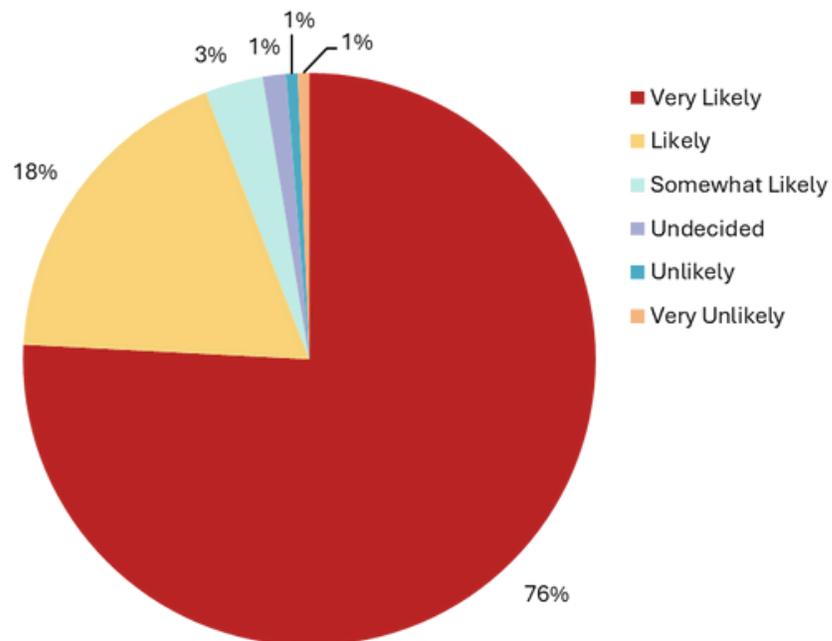


Figure 12. Participant survey results on likelihood to return

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Overall Value

Participants frequently used words like “magical”, “really helpful,” “amazing,” and “awesome” to describe the sessions. While participants offered clear feedback on areas of improvement for the program,<sup>17</sup> there was a consensus that this is a unique offering that offers a “support system of women” and that it “really helps [you] to come out of [your] comfort zone.”

**The vast majority, 96%, of our participants agree or strongly agree that our program met their expectations**

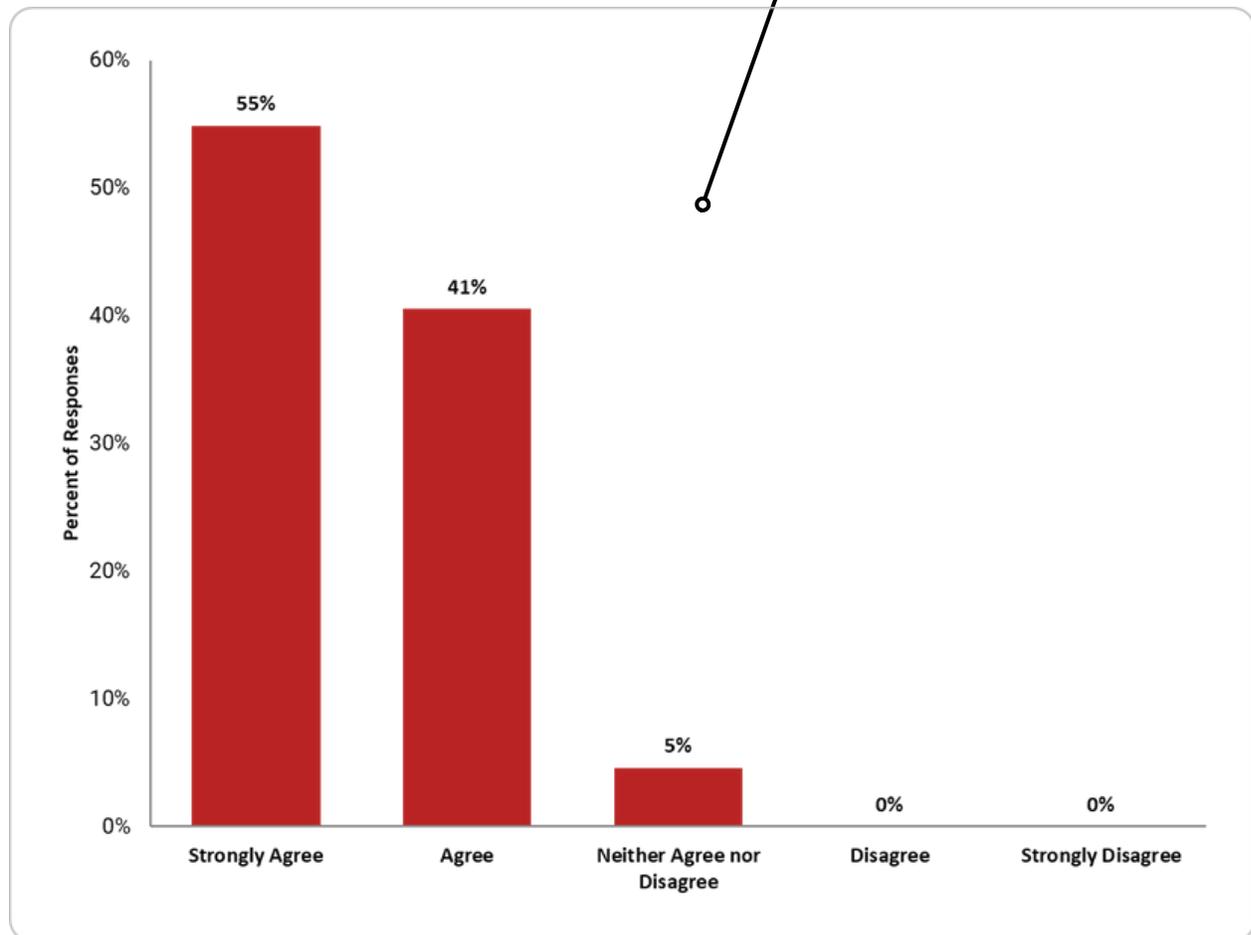


Figure 13. Participant survey results on meeting expectations

17. Feedback has been incorporated into the Recommendations section.

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

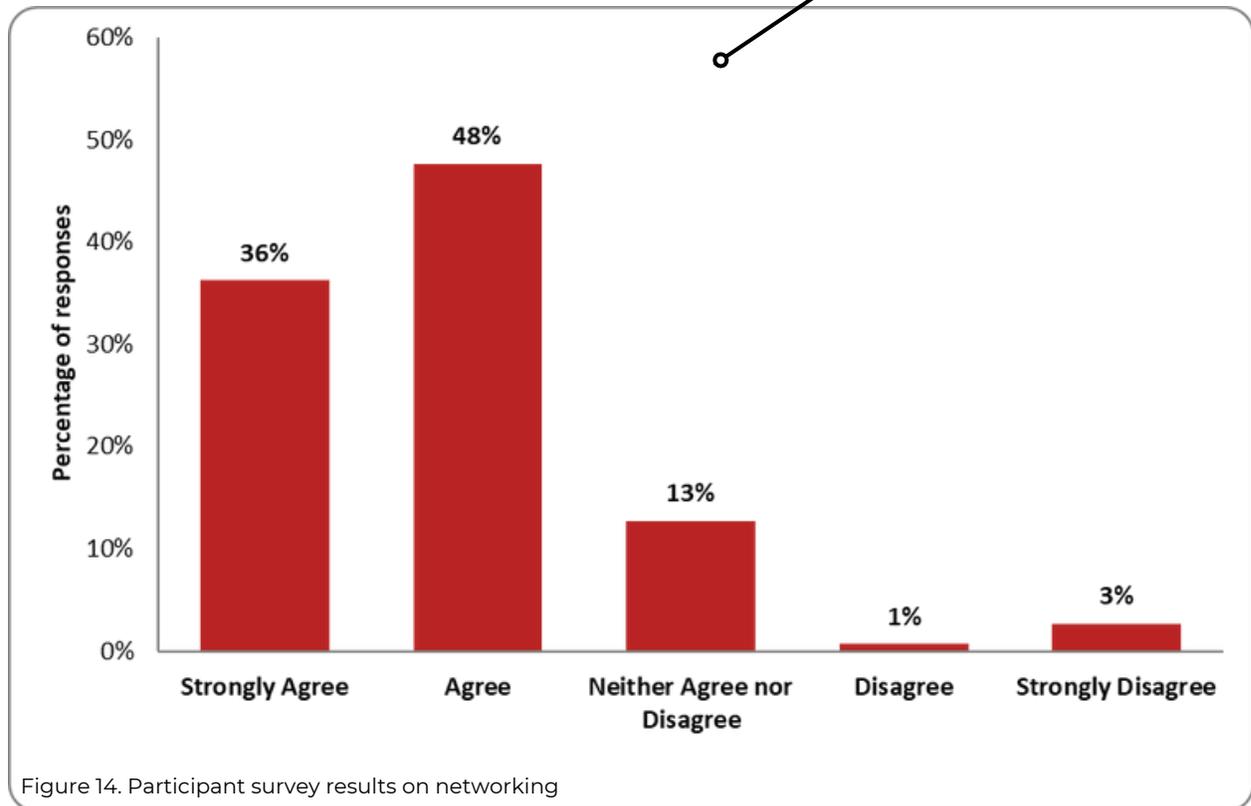
### Outcome 1: Competencies

The first category of outcomes is around competencies and learning. Some of the indicators include:

- Making connections with people in high-growth industries
- Self-reported learning about career navigation (e.g. advocating for raise, confidence to become manager, etc.)
- Increasing high-growth industry knowledge

Professional networking is at the heart of the Network's efforts to lower barriers to making strategic connections. Participant responses indicate **84% Agree or Strongly Agree that their network grew as a result of participation** (see Figure 14).

**84% reported their network grew as a result of attending an event**



## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 1: Competencies

Additionally, over half (56%) of our participants agree or strongly agree that they **made strategic connections they would not otherwise have made through their Network participation** (see Figure 15).

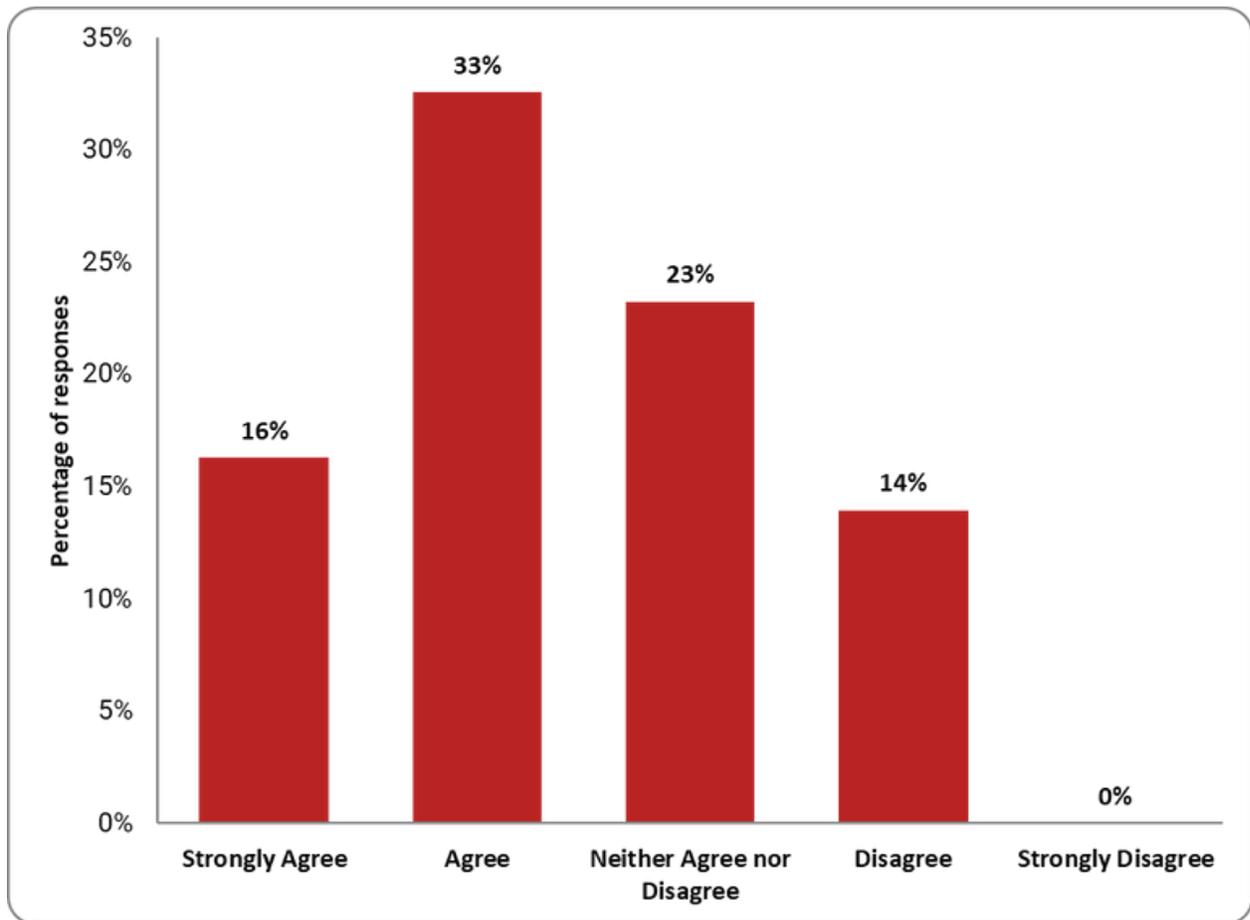


Figure 15. Participant survey results on strategic connections

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 1: Competencies

Professional learning from industry leaders is another key lever to increase participant competency. **85% of respondents agree or strongly agree they had the opportunity to learn from industry experts as a result of their participation** (see Figure 16).



*The panel of speakers gave me the inspiration I needed at a low point in my job search to keep going and to believe that I had valuable skills to offer. The networking opportunity made me feel like I wasn't alone in my current struggle to define and establish a career for myself in tech and the women I met also inspired me with their stories and achievements."*

**85% agree or strongly agree they learned from industry experts**

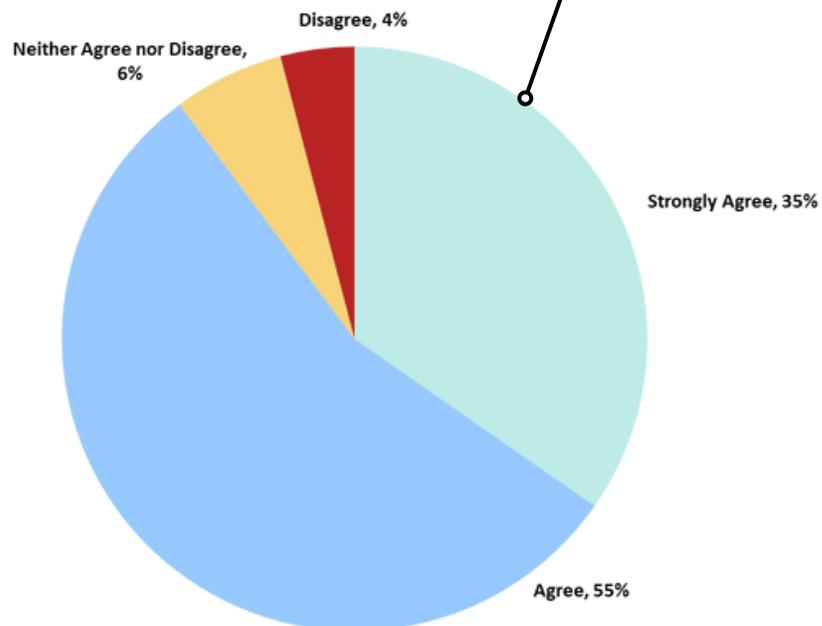


Figure 16. Participant survey results on expert learning

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 1: Competencies

Skill-building is an integral part of all programming as well. We have ample evidence that understanding improves as a result of participation (see Figure 17).

- 92% reported they gained skills that will help advance their career
- 65% of respondents indicated they are comfortable or very comfortable with Networking, the top learning focus area, as a result of their participation in the Network



*So as I'm looking I don't feel as alone, but also, I don't necessarily need to have a traditional career path. There are different ways that I can go about that and meeting people who are also trying to go in different directions and how are they doing it, how am I doing it and getting that encouragement, and it's not so alone."*

**92% reported they gained skills that will help advance their career**

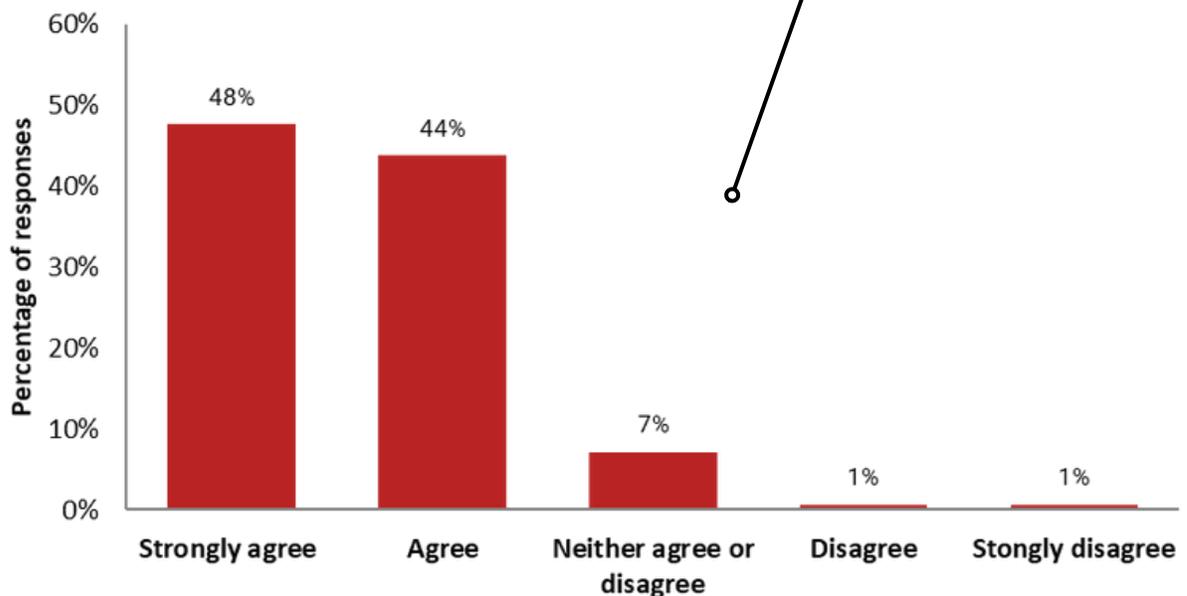


Figure 17. Participant survey results on skills and learning

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 1: Competencies

Skill-building is an integral part of all programming as well. We have ample evidence that understanding improves as a result of participation (see Figure 18).

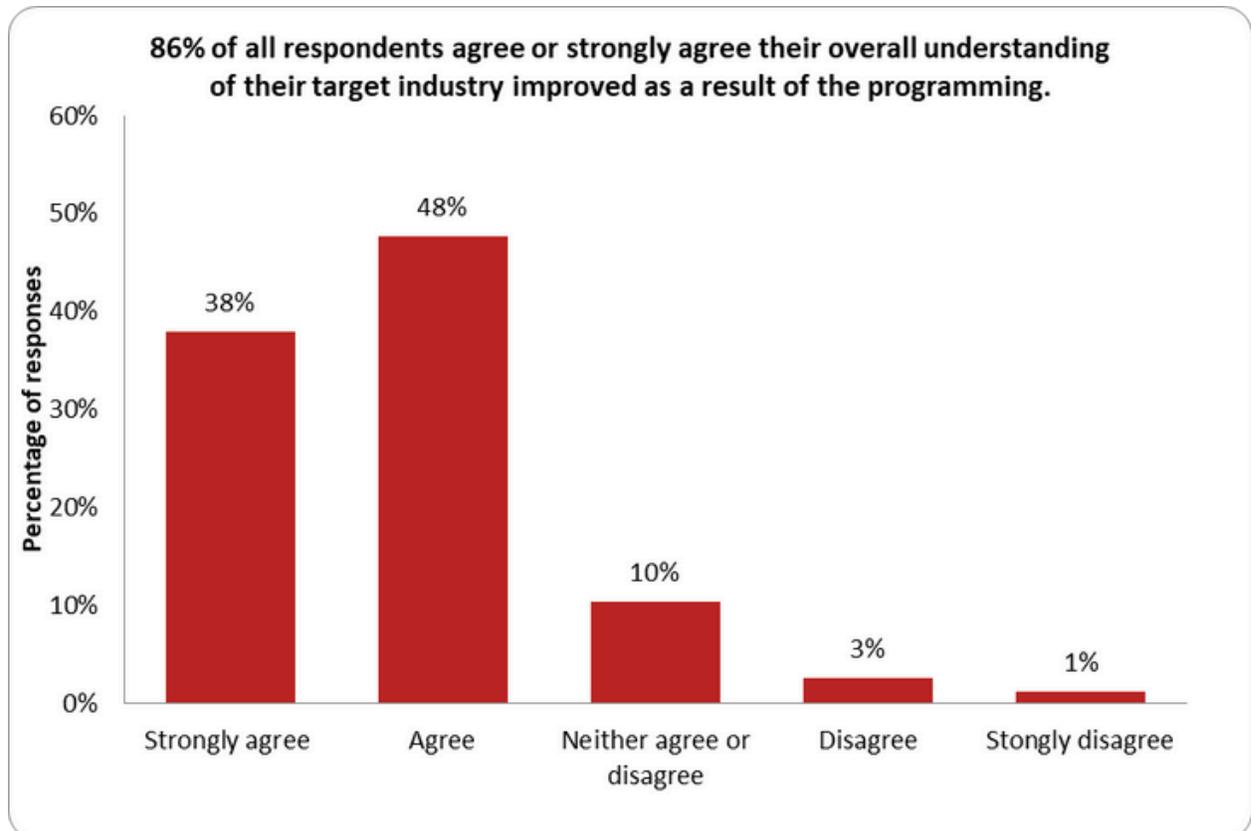


Figure 18. Participant survey results on target industry understanding



*Thank you so much for putting this together. I have been looking into opportunities in the sector and this event helped me clarify what steps I can take to get there."*



## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 1: Competencies

Understanding of career paths in focus industries has also deepened through the programming (see Figure 19).

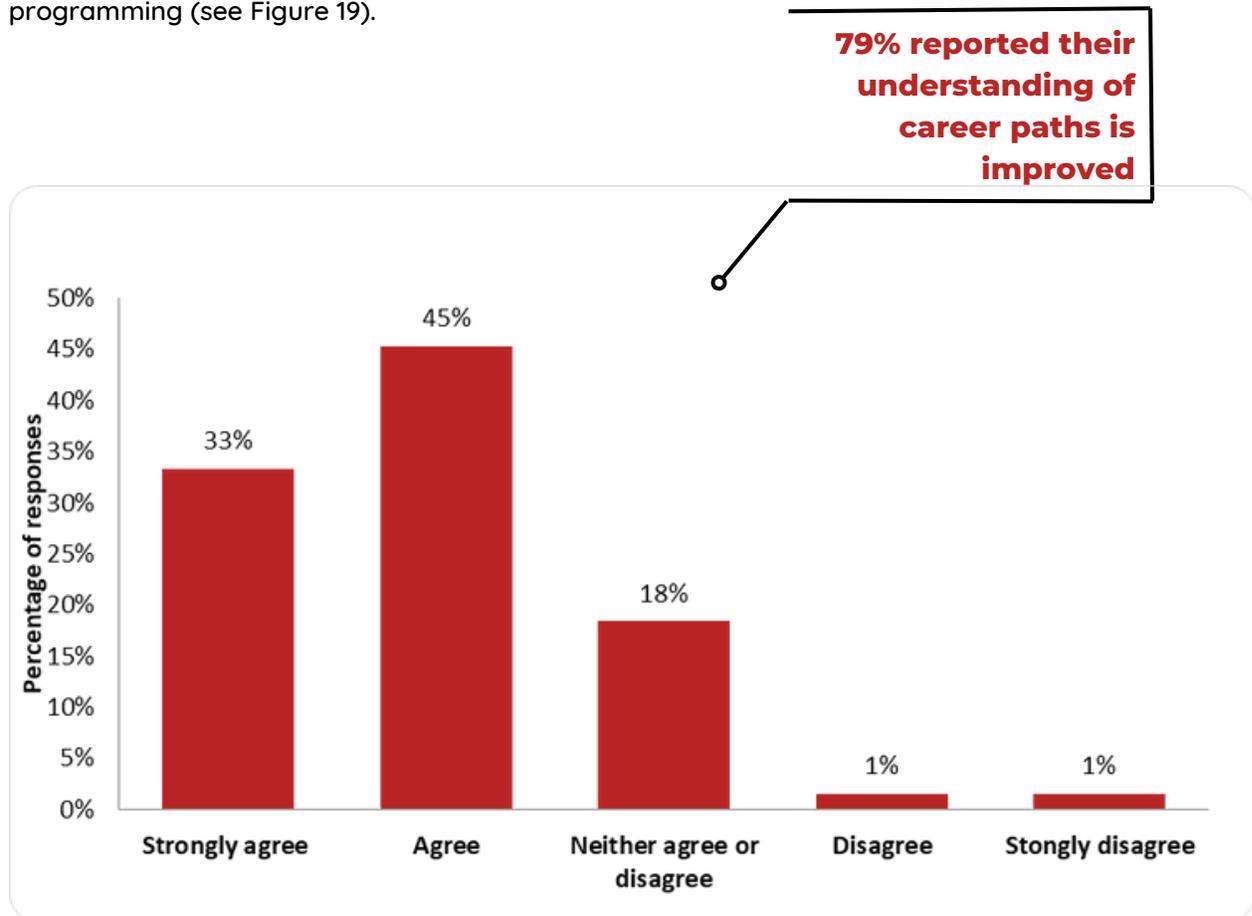


Figure 19. Participant survey results on career paths



*My best conversations at the different events have been with the other attendees and giving each other just advice or even just comfort and encouragement of like, yeah, you are doing the right things. Or, hey, have you tried this?"*



---

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 1: Competencies

Finally, it has been important to track growing comfort levels in learning focus areas longitudinally across Year One of the Network. Participants were regularly asked to rate their comfort level on the learning areas as a result of Network participation. **65% of respondents indicated they are comfortable or very comfortable with Networking, the top learning focus area, as a result of their participation in the Network.** Changing Industries, another top focus expressed by participants across events, is at 39% comfortable/very comfortable.



*My advisor took the time to get to know me and what I was looking for, and she shared a lot of information about what her industry is about, what they look for, as well as offer suggestions for how I could proceed."*

Participants shared about their experience with strategic networking through the program and the impact it had on their careers. All the women who joined the focus groups reported **increased confidence in networking and making connections.** Participants actively sought out events to exercise their networking skills and discussed the positive results from these sessions. Networking was the most discussed and highly praised aspect of the Network events, with several participants noting these as a safe space where they could bring their authentic selves to professional learning and discussions. Not only did women make valuable connections with each other and with advisors, they also learned and practiced the skills of networking generally. Women who felt alone or isolated met and connected with others in similar situations, which gave them confidence and increased their comfort and assurance to move forward with career changes and pivots.

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 1: Competencies

Participants also reported concrete learning and inspiration for the different high-growth industries. Multiple women referenced increased confidence not only in leaving their job or preparing to do so, but also to ask for a raise or negotiate in salary discussions.

We heard that women were able to see transferable skills needed in high-growth industries that they hadn't considered before. Many reported that they feel ready to make concrete plans to pivot careers or move into a management role. It was clear from the focus group conversations that the increased confidence stems not only from deepening knowledge but also from the sense of community and encouragement arising from the connections made at events.



*My biggest take away from the event was to give yourself grace and don't be afraid to fail. Keep going you can learn from your mistakes you made in business and make improvements along the way."*



*The panel was excellent! I got a lot out these amazing ladies."*



## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 2: Competencies

The second outcome category focuses on changes participants are implementing in service of career growth. Some of the indicators include:

- Enrolling in target industry coursework
- Implementing coaching or other career changes
- Applying and/or interviewing for jobs in high-growth industries

The team evaluated progress toward these **behavioral** outcomes through the EOY survey and focus groups. While about half the respondents reported they are not currently looking for a new job, **two-thirds of participants who are jobseekers have implemented career changes**. Of those changes, 40% were focused on career coaching, 18% were participants who initiated a salary conversation, and 12% requested training and/or professional development through their workplaces (see Figure 20).

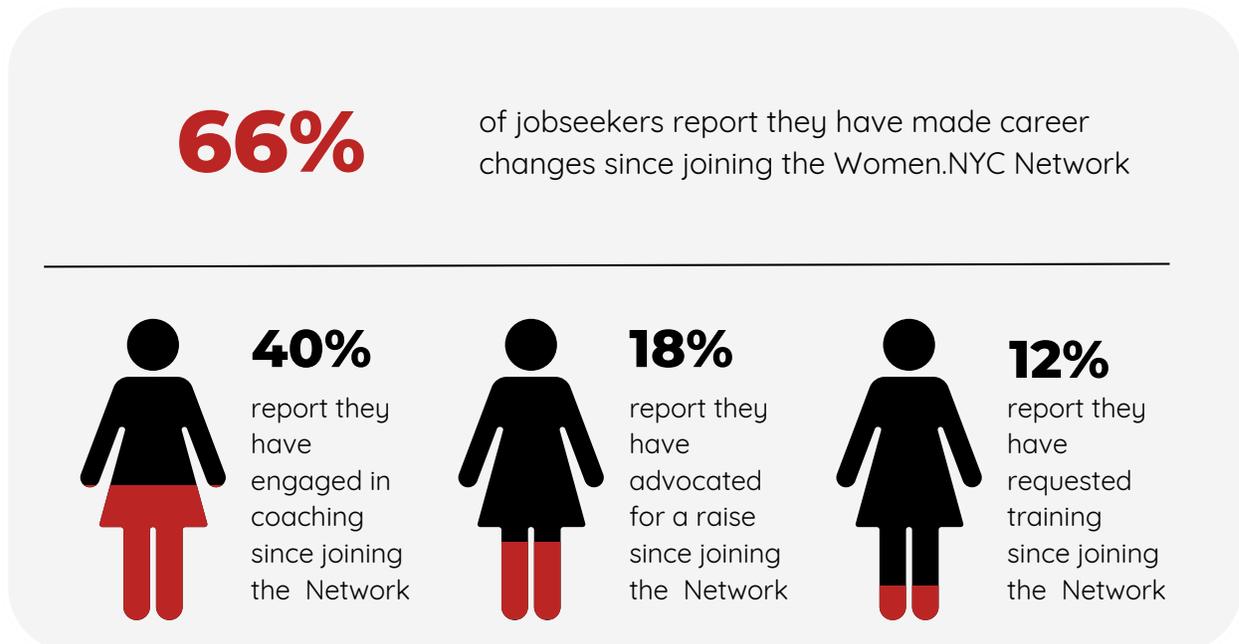


Figure 20. Participant survey results on career changes

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 2: Competencies

Additionally, 80% of participant jobseekers have applied for at least one job in high-growth industries, and 72% have had at least one interview (see Figure 21).

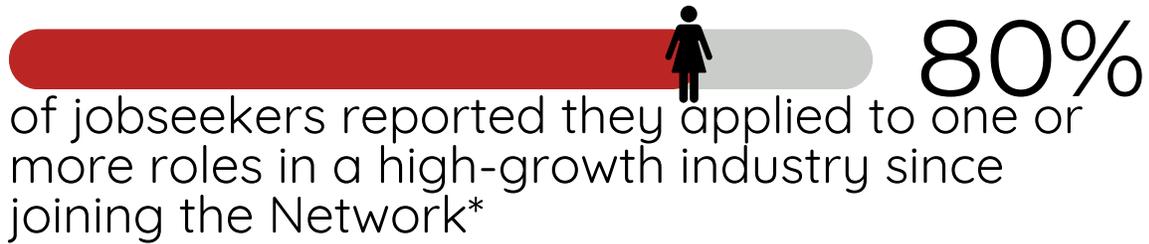


Figure 21. Participant survey results on career changes



## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 2: Competencies

Participants described themselves and those they met throughout participation in the Network as seeking dramatic change in their careers. They noted that they have transitioned in preparation for pivoting their careers, with one participant responding that she had quit her job and another sharing about her transition to a higher-level role in a new geography and community.

*“Don't underestimate the skills you can bring to a new career path!”*

*“Be open to change and follow your passions!”*

Many of the participants shared that being able to talk to women from different industries brought completely new perspectives to how they would think of their career path. Multiple participants spoke of a hunger to understand at a deep and specific level not just what it's like to pivot and the experiences that go along with it, but also a how-to of sorts when thinking of moving industries and careers. Focus group participants indicated they have much to share as well, sharing a great deal of confidence and enthusiasm to “pay it forward” and help others as they have been helped. The thread of curiosity ran strong, with women in each of the three groups expressing interest in high-growth industries that are still new to them.



## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 3: Career Changes

The third set of outcomes for the program focuses on the concrete impact the Women.NYC Network has had on participant careers. Some of the indicators include:

- Obtaining promotions and/or salary increase
- Obtaining a new job or promotion in a high-growth industry
- Launching an entrepreneurial endeavor

Figure 22 illuminates the Network's progress toward **Career Change** goals. In less than one year, 14% of all our jobseeking participants have achieved a promotion or raise, and 10% have launched a new small business.<sup>18</sup>

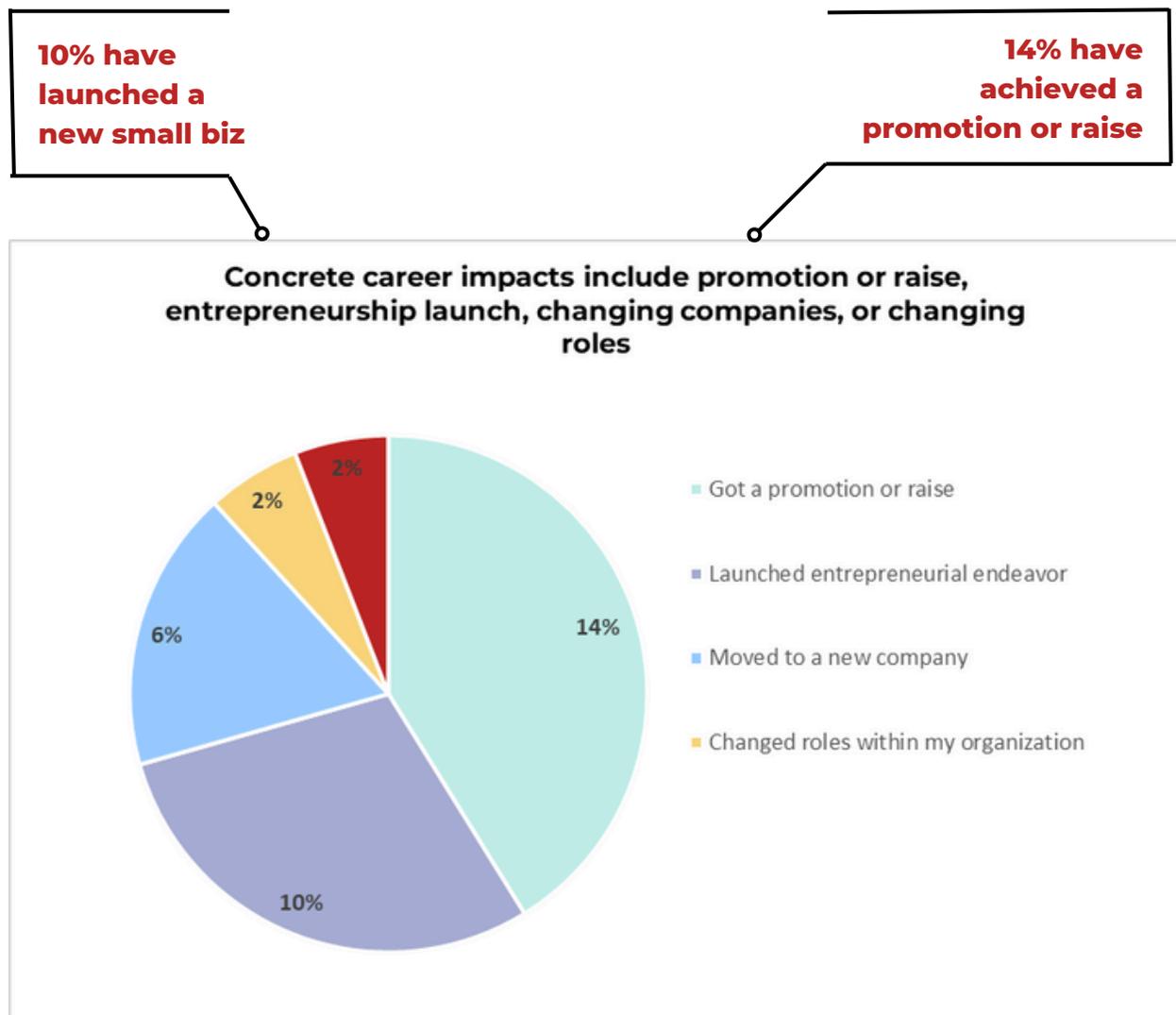


Figure 22. Participant survey results on career changes

18. n size=25

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Outcome 3: Career Changes

In describing concrete career changes or pivots, it was clear that the Network has impacted participants significantly. For instance, one participant described the concrete plans she has developed to start her own business, as well as the specific support and advice she received from an advisor to help bring those plans to life.



Another shared news of her transition to a higher-level role in a new geography and community. A third participant noted expansion of her retail business through the lens of sustainability and the green economy, while continuing to support underrepresented groups of women as an employer. These examples show that the Network has changed the way participants approach career changes and growth.



*Wonderful to experience authenticity of all the speakers as they shared the external and internal highs, grows, and nos."*



*I met many cool women in many bio careers."*



## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

### Community Building

An important and inspiring unlooked-for outcome of network participation has been the community arising among network participants. Focus group respondents described a feeling of community in being underrepresented and sharing ways to grow together.

*I got insight from an expert. I needed help navigating my options and goals in technology.”*

Participants agree: the community is the unique and essential aspect of the Network that sets it apart from other programs. They noted they can be authentic and meet other women going through similar experiences, enabling them to feel they are not alone.

*Incredible stories and testimonies of personal and professional growth.”*

They reported the Network as a “safe space” to learn and develop their networks and future career endeavors. The community aspect of in-person network events has made the Women.NYC Network a unique pathway to draw together diverse groups of women to support each other in growing their careers and businesses.



*I feel the panelists were frank, friendly and used humor to make points memorable! I feel so empowered.”*

## Program Outcomes and Impact (continued)

*I think having in person networking events where you're meeting with other women who are in this field and then others who are trying to figure out either moving in or moving up [is] really helpful."*



*That [being able to negotiate salary] is helpful for me or women in any industry, so those tips of what has worked and what is beneficial [made me feel like] I could use that in the future."*

*Now I'm planning, like, not just my next move, but where I could be in five years type of a thing. And that all happened because [of a Women.NYC] event, in which I was able to just meet other women who want to talk careers and aren't in my nonprofit bubble."*



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## LinkedIn Group Data: Tracking Progress Over Time

The exclusive LinkedIn group for the Network participants is a strategic way to track outcomes after interventions, in addition to creating continuity in the Network community. Attendees of any Women.NYC program, as well as advisors and program team members, are invited to join. As of January 2024, about 32% of Network participants have joined the group. Through the LinkedIn group, women are invited to share their journey, build connections with others, and make connections with advisors. Exclusive Network information and advance notice of opportunities are also pushed out through the community. Not only does LinkedIn provide critical infrastructure for community-building efforts, it also provides insights into career pathways and status of the members, allowing the organization to find correlations between the interventions and the participants' career progress.

### **49% of the members in the group have changed roles in the last year**

Review of statistics on time in current position show that nearly half our group members have been in their current role one year or less. It can be inferred that many of the group members have changed jobs since they joined the Network or shortly before. Focusing on career pathways and mobility is important for this dynamic group.

### **38% have spent less than a year with their current company, indicating likely career pivots**

The analysis of time spent with current company is closely correlated with time in current position, suggesting that those who reported a new role are likely also with a new company. It is possible these group members are engaged in a career pivot, moving from one sector to another.

Through the LinkedIn group, the Network is providing strategic connections for women in managerial positions.

This is a critical space for women in our targeted industries, where they tend to be underrepresented in managerial positions. Interestingly, in reviewing the top seven most common job titles of women in the LinkedIn group, the majority (78%) are in leadership or managerial positions. The needs of this specific group may differ from those of the Network at large.



**32% of the Network attendees have joined the Women.NYC Network Exclusive LinkedIn Group.**

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## Conclusion

The outcomes and impact of the Women.NYC Network program are a testament to the power of strategic networking and industry-specific learning in driving career advancement and community building among participants. The program has made clear progress toward goals, as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive participant feedback, significant increases in competencies, behavior changes, and career shifts.

With 94% of participants eager to continue engaging with the program, and a growing community of women who feel empowered to take bold steps in their careers, the Network has proven to be an invaluable resource for women navigating high-growth industries.

The impact of the program is not only reflected in the small but growing number of career advancements and new business ventures, but also in the strong, supportive community that has developed—a community where women can be their authentic selves, share their journeys, and support one another in their professional growth. As we continue to build on these successes, the Women.NYC Network stands as a powerful example of how targeted interventions and community-building efforts can create lasting change and empower women to reach new heights in their careers.



## Women.NYC Network: Year One Report

# COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

As a pillar within NYCEDC, the Women.NYC programs have a mandate to reach a diverse audience in underserved communities across the five boroughs. While understanding and recognizing the positive outcomes arising from the Network program is vital, there is also a wealth of valuable data on the demographics of our participants. These women are the foundation of the Network community and it is critical to understand community needs. In addition, program direction and improvements will be based not just on feedback data, but also on the intersectionality and complexities of this community. The Women.NYC team has a robust system of data collection on the demographics of participants in the program.

## Our Community and Services: By the Numbers

### Overall Reach

As of September 2024, information on Network programming reached over 80,000 people through targeted outreach. Over 9,000 people have registered for our events and about 1,800 have attended at least one as of September 2024. In the first ten months (April 2023–January 2024), the Network served 908 participants across all five boroughs, 65% of whom identified as BIPOC women (compared to 47.2% BIPOC women total in NYC),<sup>19</sup> reflecting the program's success in reaching a diverse audience (this report reflects data collected from April 2023 through January 2024). (See Figure 23)

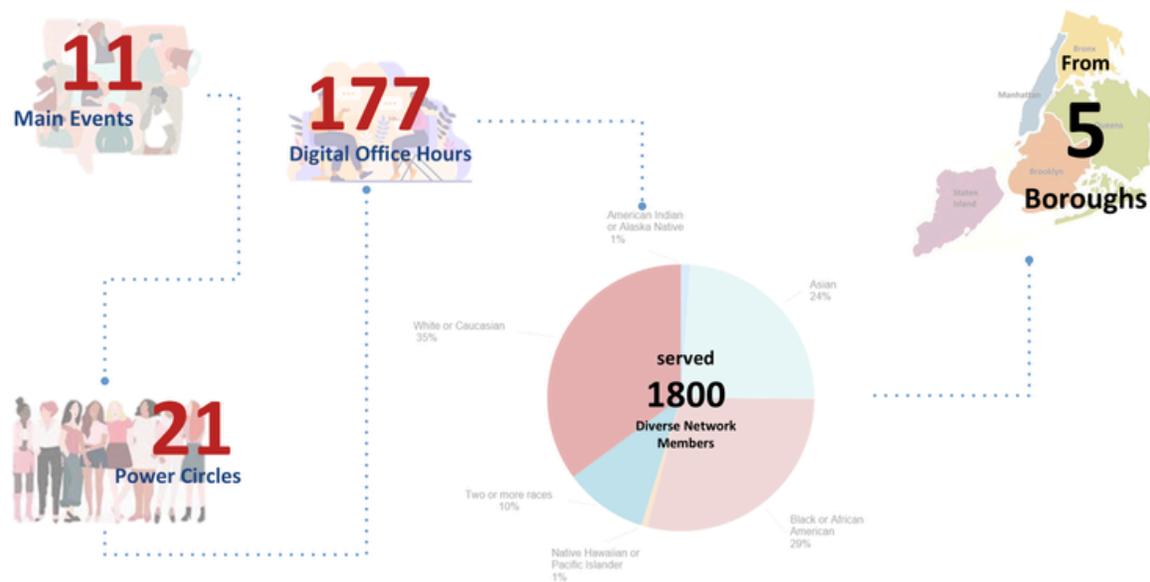


Figure 23. Current community statistics through September 2024

<sup>19</sup>. 788 unique participants, 83 of whom have attended more than one session

### Overall Participant Race & Ethnicity

65% of participants who reported their race indicated they identify as a woman of color, reflecting our success at reaching a diverse audience of women across NYC. Additionally, Black women represent the largest portion of BIPOC women who participate in our programs, comprising 29% of participants over the last year (see Figure 24). Citywide, 40% of workers identify as women of color, with 21% identifying as Black women.

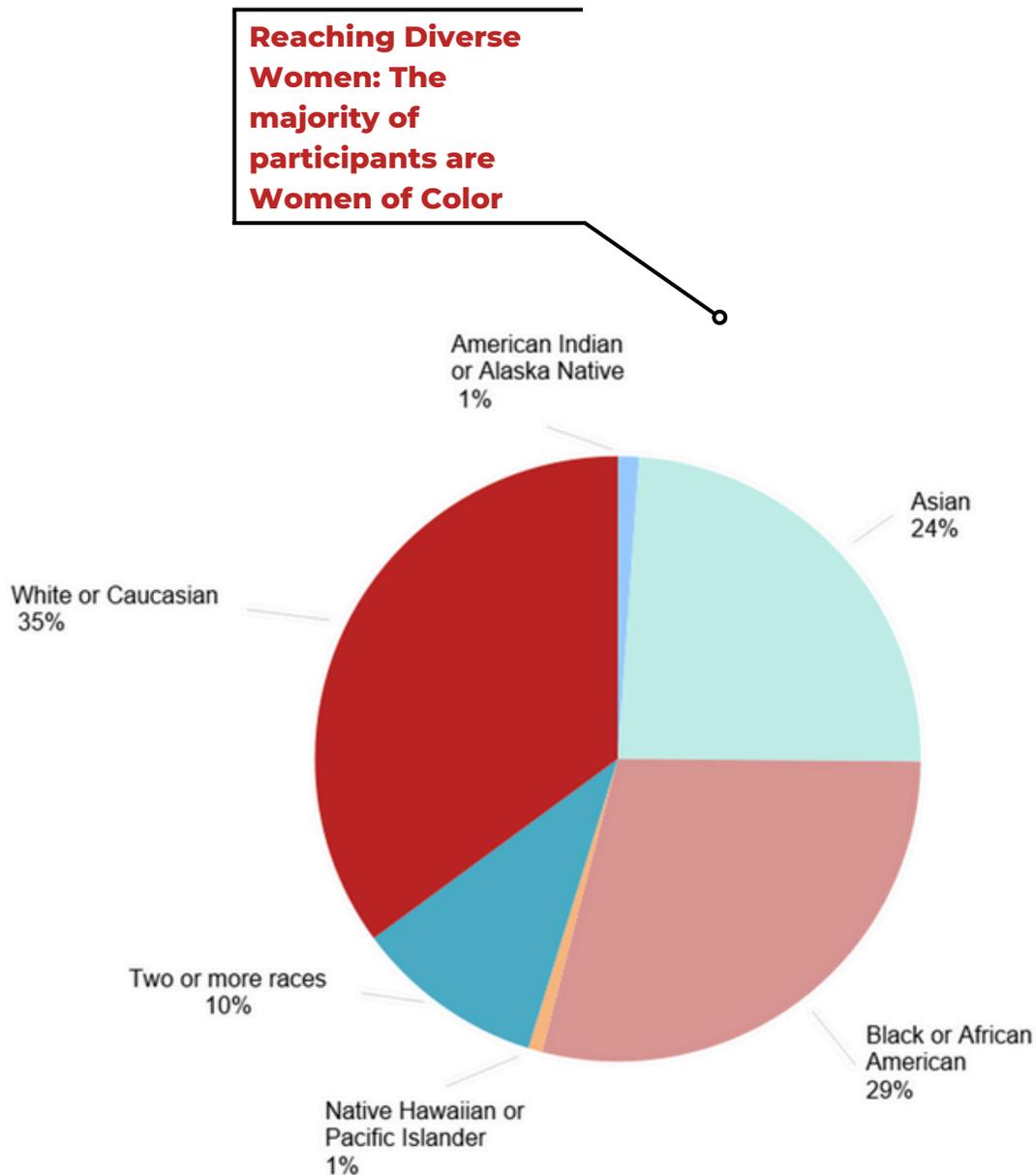


Figure 24. Participant intake form results

### Overall Participant Race & Ethnicity

In terms of ethnic representation across all participants, 29% indicated they are Hispanic or Latino/a (see Figure 25).

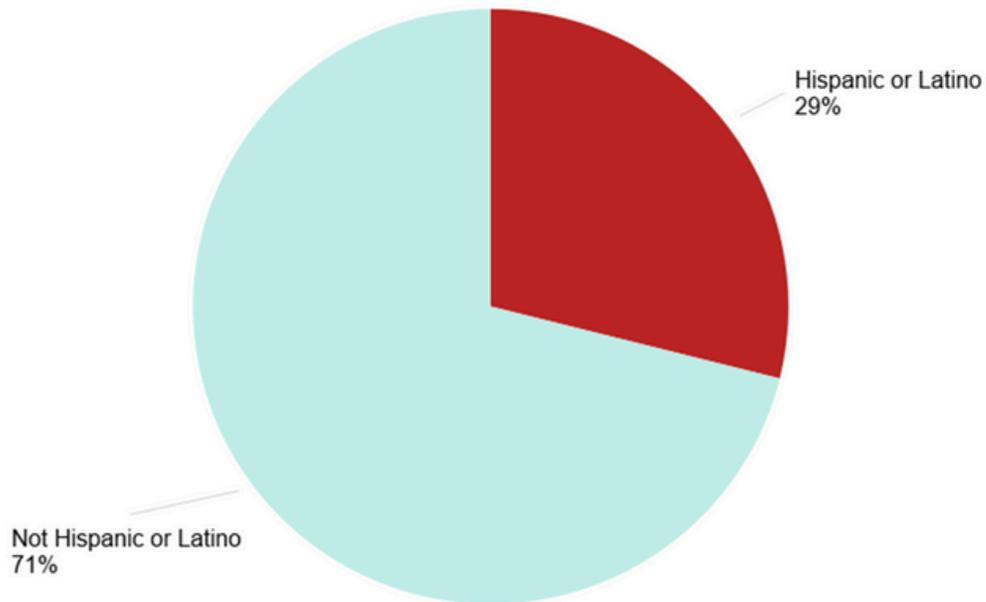


Figure 25. Participant intake form results



## Participant Race & Ethnicity by NYC Borough<sup>20 21</sup>

Looking at borough locations, we see the majority of our participants hail from Manhattan (45%), followed by Brooklyn (23%), and Queens (13%) (see Figure 26). These statistics closely follow citywide statistics on places of work.

Black participants reported the Bronx as the most common borough of residence, while Asian participants were more evenly distributed across boroughs. 40% of Bronx and Queens residents identified as Hispanic, while 20% to 30% selected Hispanic as their ethnicity in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Staten Island (see Figures 27 and 28).

### Total Participants by Borough Location

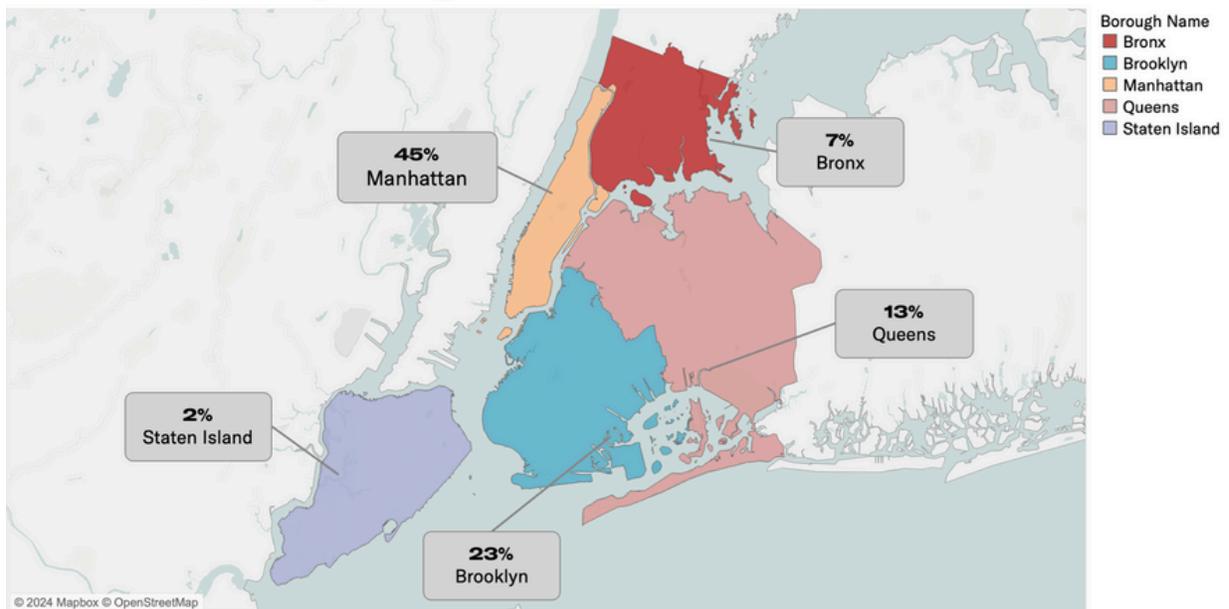


Figure 26. Map of participant home boroughs

20. Percentages in this section represent an n size of 788.

21. 13% of participants chose not to disclose their race and 10% chose not to disclose ethnicity.

# Participant Race & Ethnicity by NYC Borough

**Participant Race by Borough Location**

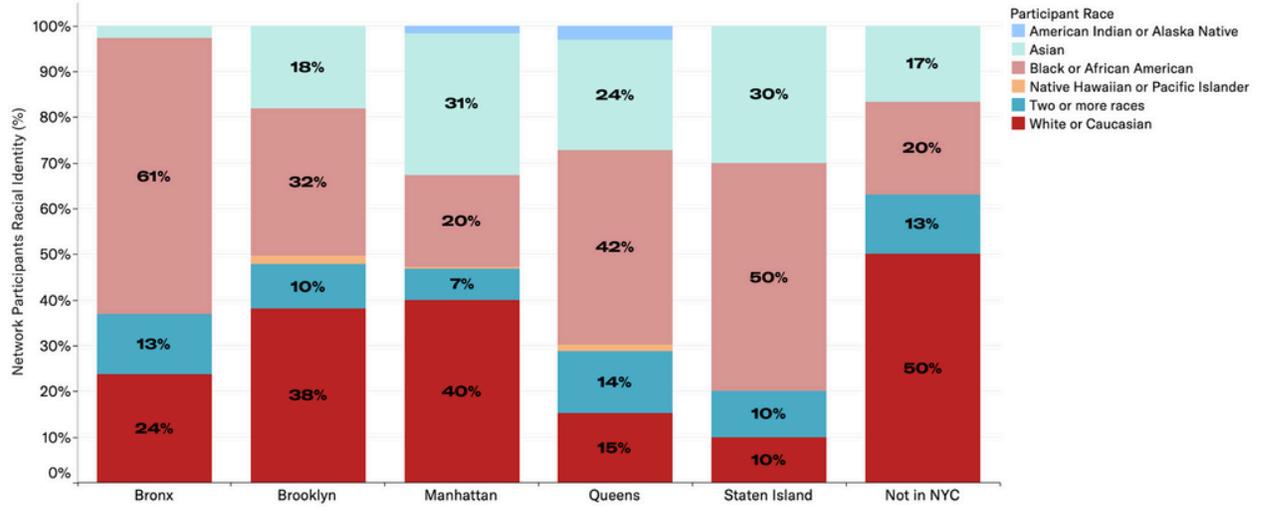


Figure 27. Participant intake form results

**Participant Borough Location by Ethnicity**

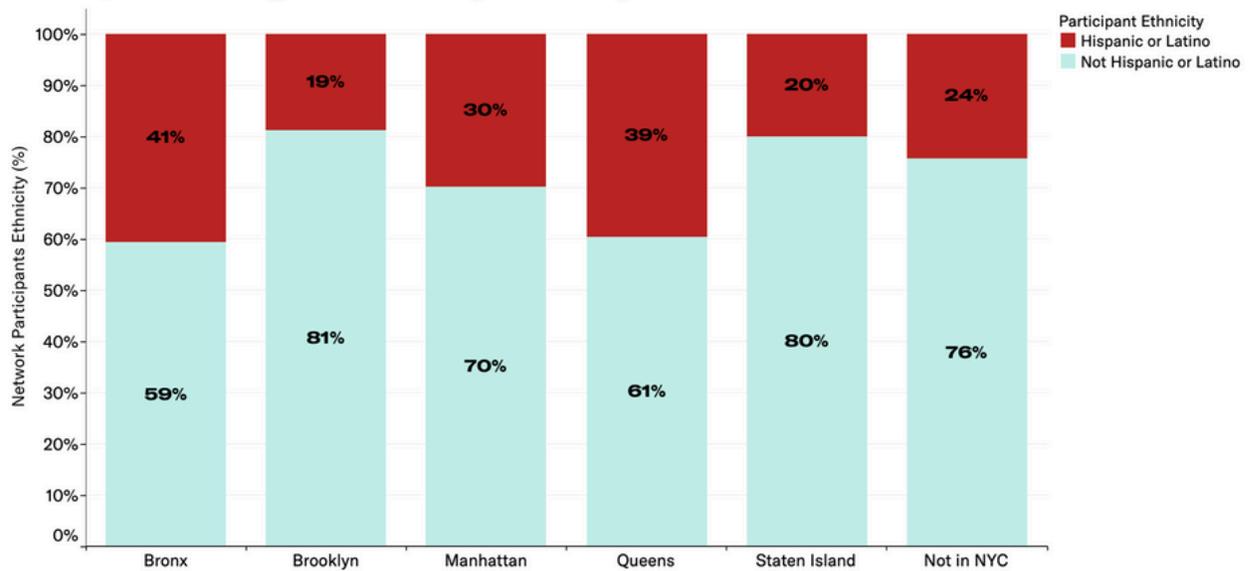


Figure 28. Participant intake form results

## Race & Income Intersections

45% of participants who shared their income are making under \$60,000 per year. Another 14% earn between \$60,000 and \$90,000 (see Figure 29). Considering that many of our participants are parents or household heads, this places our audience squarely in the lower-middle income demographic.

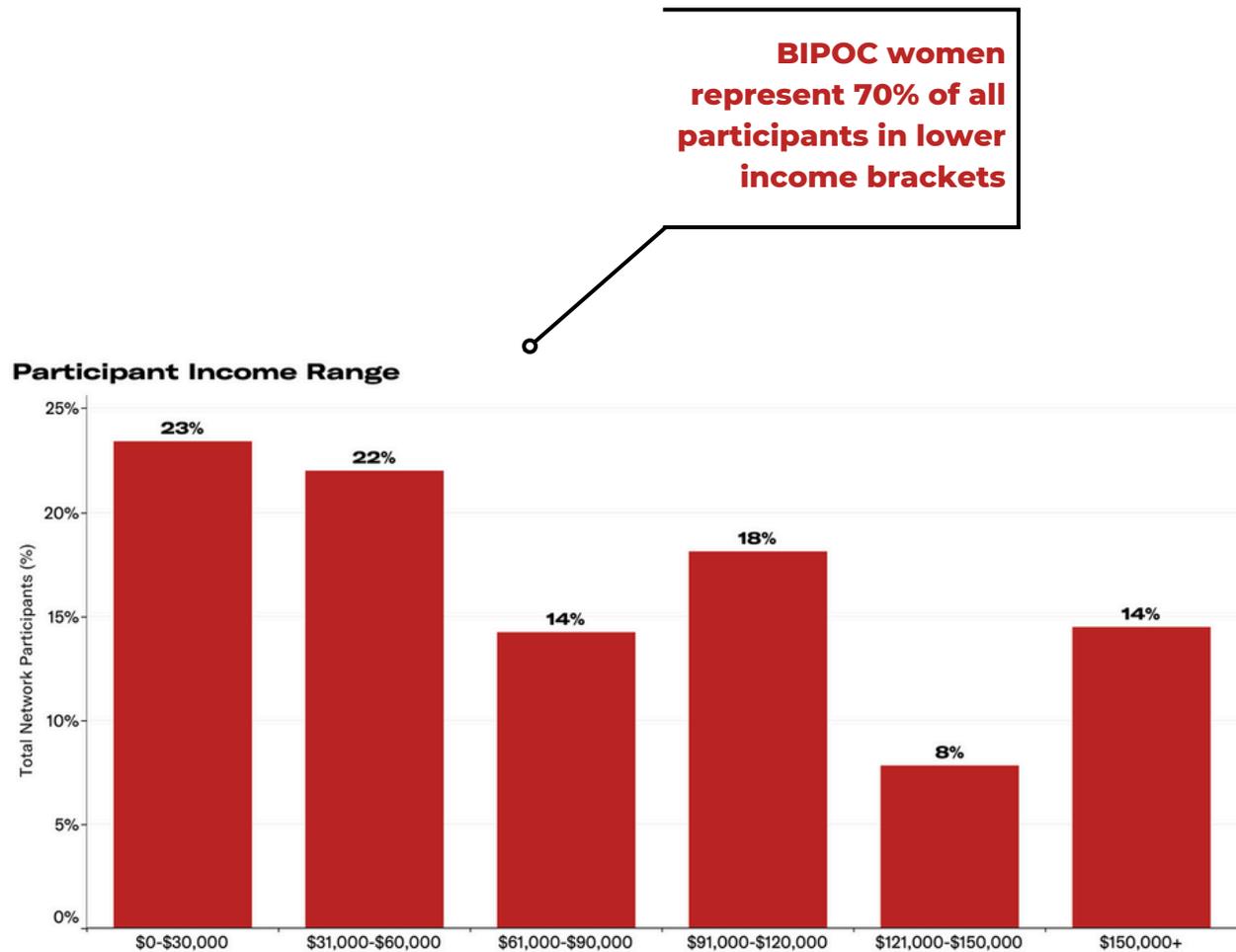


Figure 29. Participant intake form results

## Race & Income Intersections

Additionally, people of color make up ~70% of the participants making under \$60,000 per year (see Figure 30)(NYC median income for women is \$56,100). As income level increases, so does the proportion of participants identifying as White. Ethnicity is more evenly distributed, with an average 30% of Hispanic participants across income brackets (see Figure 31).

**Participant Income Range by Race**

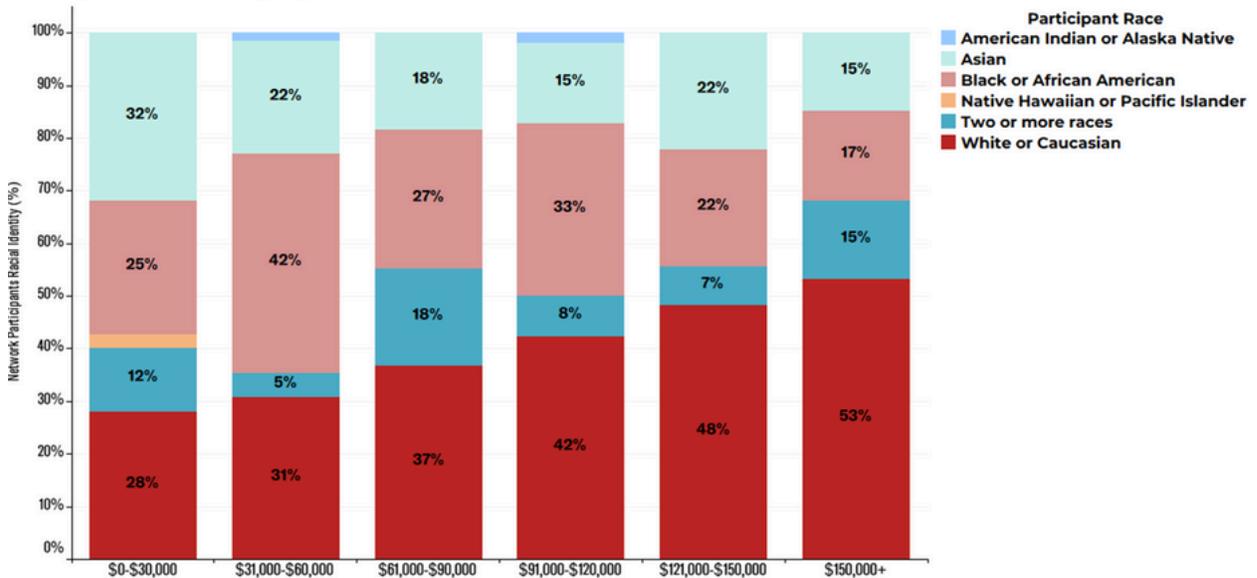


Figure 30. Participant intake form results

**Participant Income Range by Ethnicity**

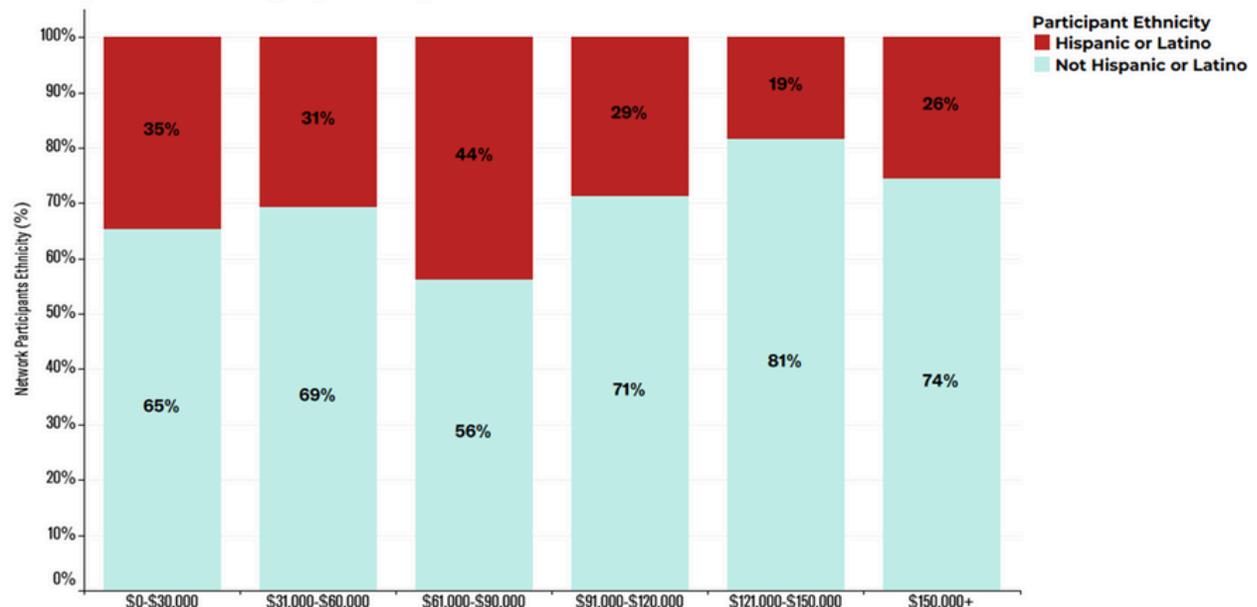
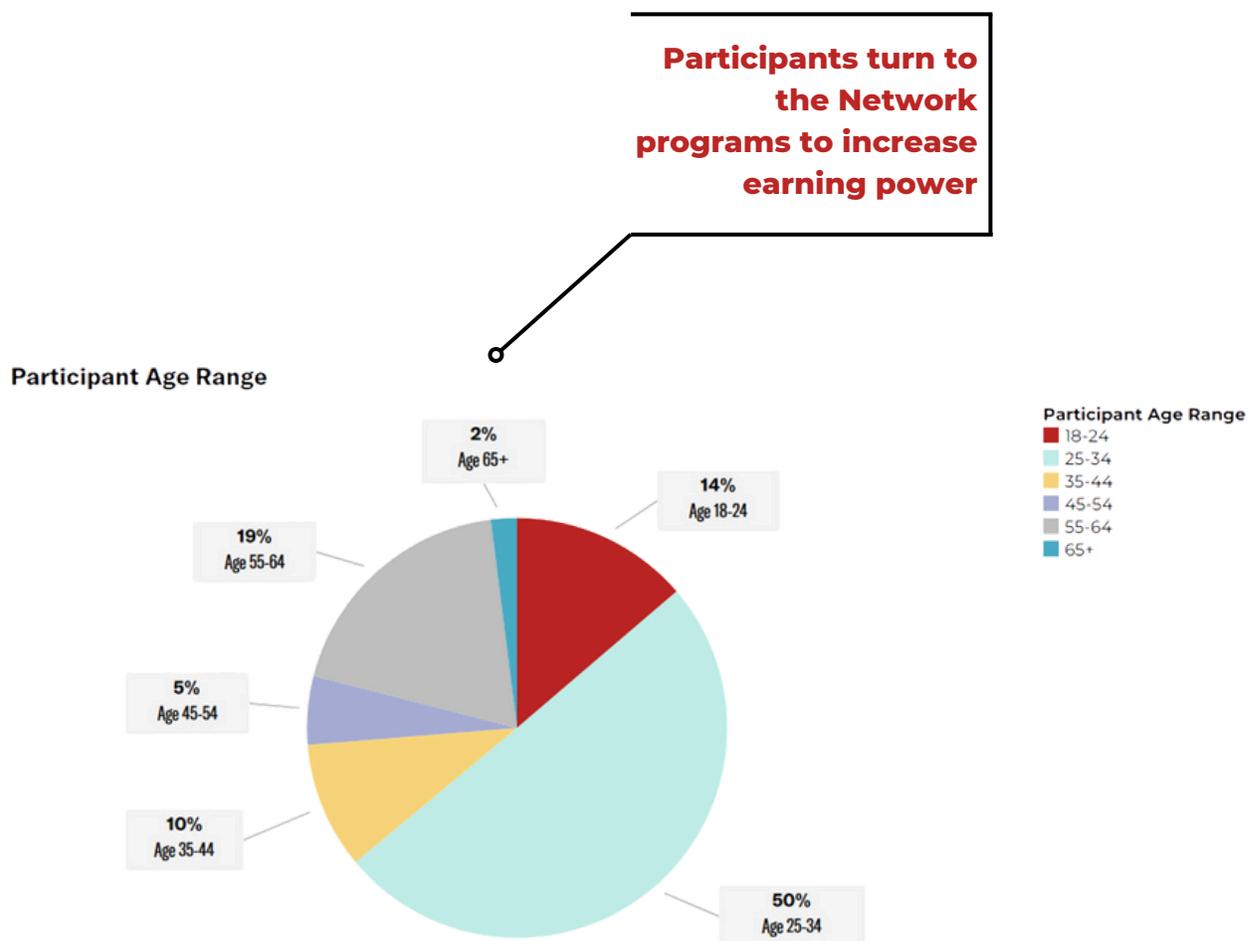


Figure 31. Participant intake form results

## Age & Income Intersections

Half of the Network participants are between 25 and 34, with only 14% of participants overall under age 25.<sup>22</sup> A significant percentage (37-45%) of participants in age ranges 25-64 earn less than \$60,000 per year, running contrary to a typical assumptive career trajectory in which earning power increases with age (see Figure 33). We can infer that Network participants are turning to our opportunities to increase their earning power while still in prime wage-earning years.



22. 26% of participants chose not to disclose their income. 4% chose not to disclose their age.

## Age & Income Intersections

Analysis of the top seven industries our participants currently work in, disaggregated by age, presents exciting intersections with younger participants especially: for instance, 70% of the 18-24 age group is currently working in either Technology, Sustainability/Green Economy, or Life Sciences. This is followed by older groups: 50% of the 25-34 age group are working in one of these sectors, and 52% of the 35-44 age group. 42% of the 45-54 age group are currently in at least one of the target sectors. Alignment across all age groups within the high-growth sectors indicates the program is supporting women in early stages of their career to advance to higher levels (see Figure 34).

**Participant Age Range by Income Range**

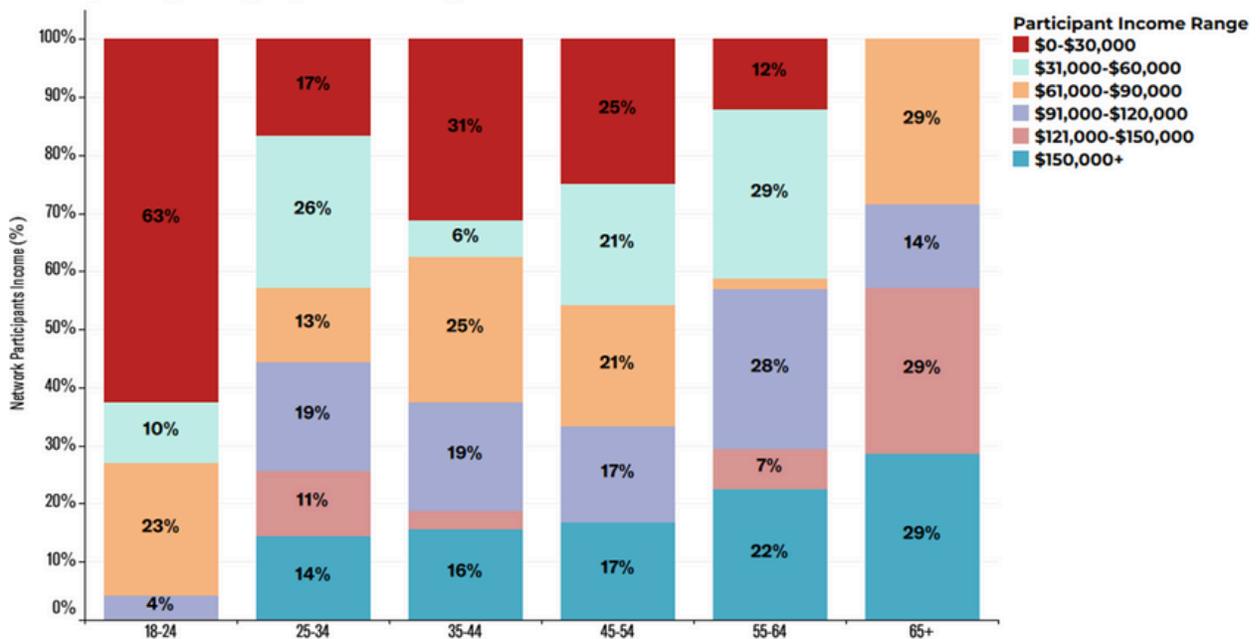


Figure 33. Participant intake form results

## Age & Income Intersections (continued)

Participant Current Industry by Age Range

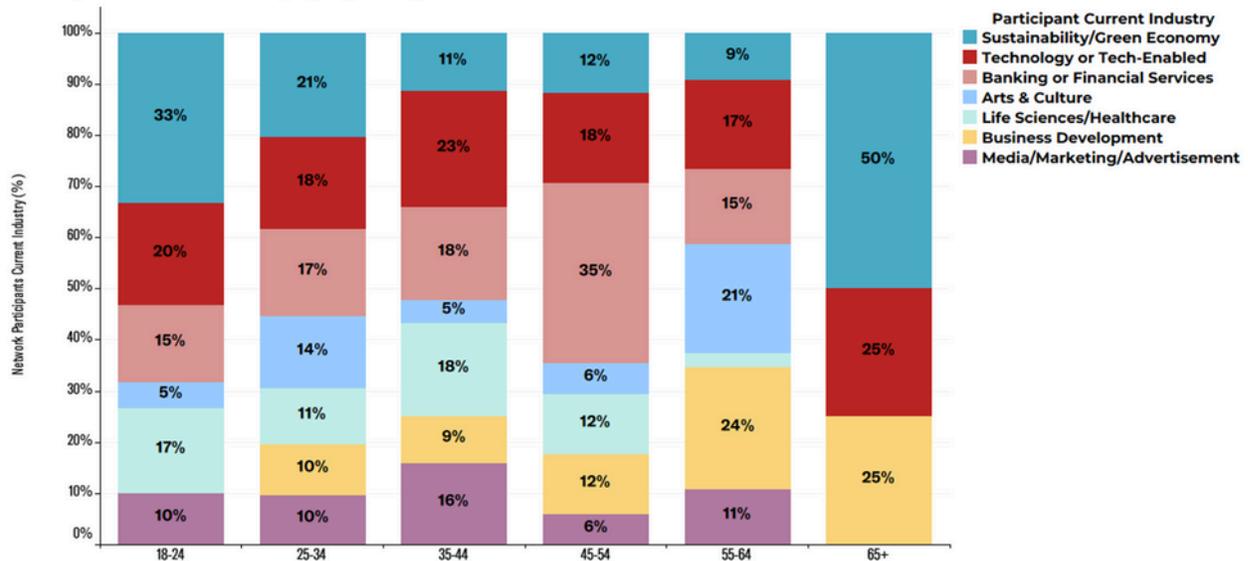


Figure 34. Participant intake form results

## Occupation Intersections with Income & Age

Less than half of Network participants are working a traditional full-time job at an organization. In some ways this is unsurprising, as we expect that participants are seeking career growth and stable income. It represents successful efforts to reach underserved communities in need of career support and access to professional networks.

Among the 59% of participants who are not working for an organization, we see occupation status is distributed across entrepreneurs, students, and those not currently working. Entrepreneurs who own their own business or are planning to start one make up 25% of all participants in the Network (see Figure 35).

**41% of Network participants are working a full-time job at an organization; 25% are entrepreneurs**

## Occupation Intersections with Income & Age

Another 16% of participants reported they are not working, whether unemployed or providing full-time care for a family member.<sup>23</sup>

- Looking at the intersection with those not working and income levels, we see that 67% of those not currently working make \$60K or less per year, along with ~39% of entrepreneurs in the same income bracket. We may infer that a significant portion of respondents who chose entrepreneur as their occupation are in the early stages of starting a business and are not earning a sustainable income. They are in urgent need of support as they transition into becoming full-time job creators in NYC (see Figure 36).
- The third graph shows that 57% of women ages 25-34 are not currently working (almost the same percentage report they are working for an organization). Whether this is due to child or other family caregiving or being unemployed, it clearly illustrates the need for programming to prepare women to return to the workforce (see Figure 37).

**Participant Occupation Status**

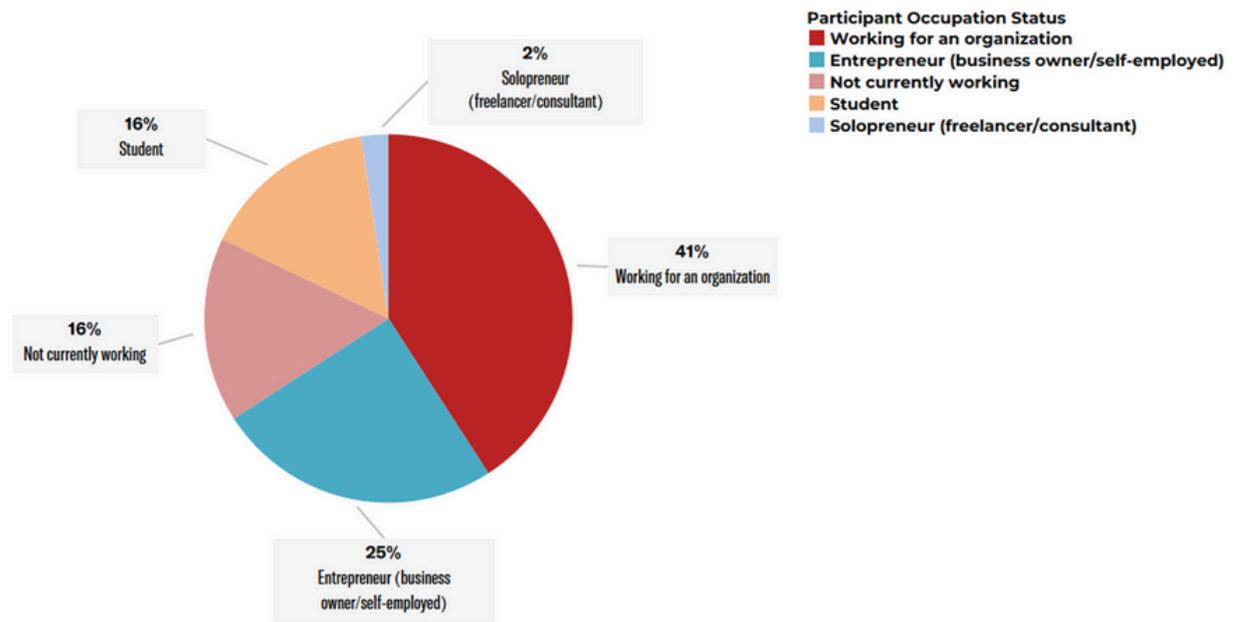


Figure 35. Participant intake form results

23. The "Not currently working" category includes the following categories: unemployed, in transition, retired, full time parenting, and unpaid family caregiving.

# Occupation Intersections with Income & Age

**Participant Occupation Status by Income Range**

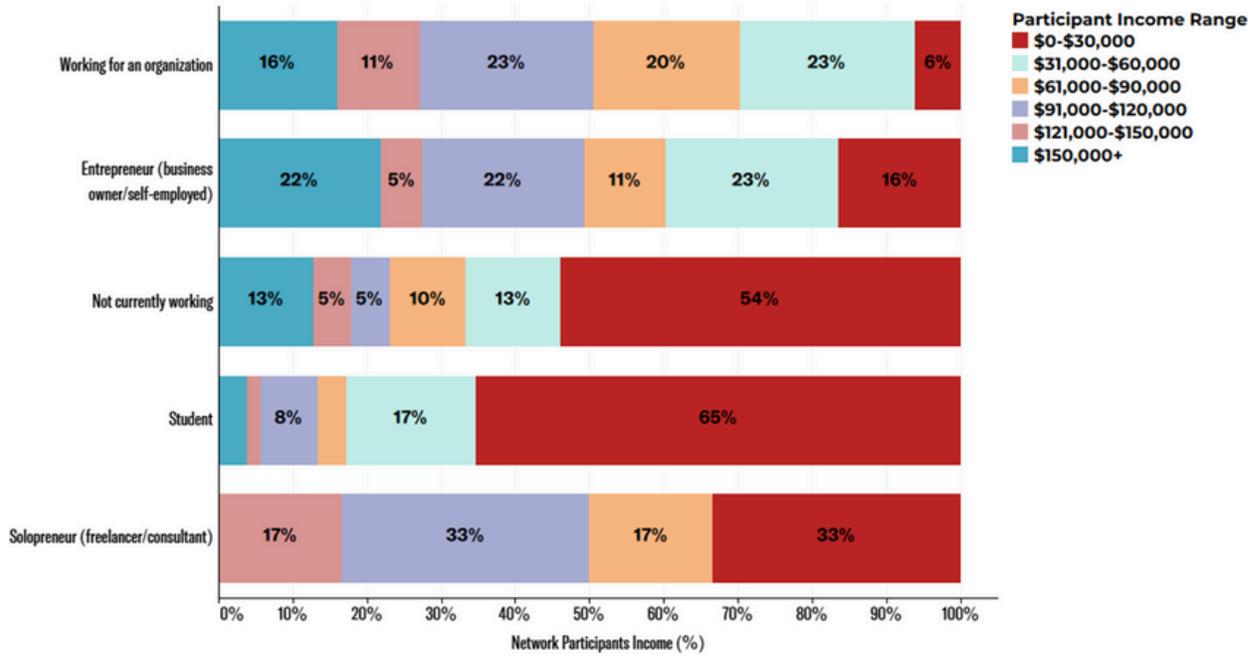


Figure 36. Participant intake form results

**Participant Occupation Status by Age Range**

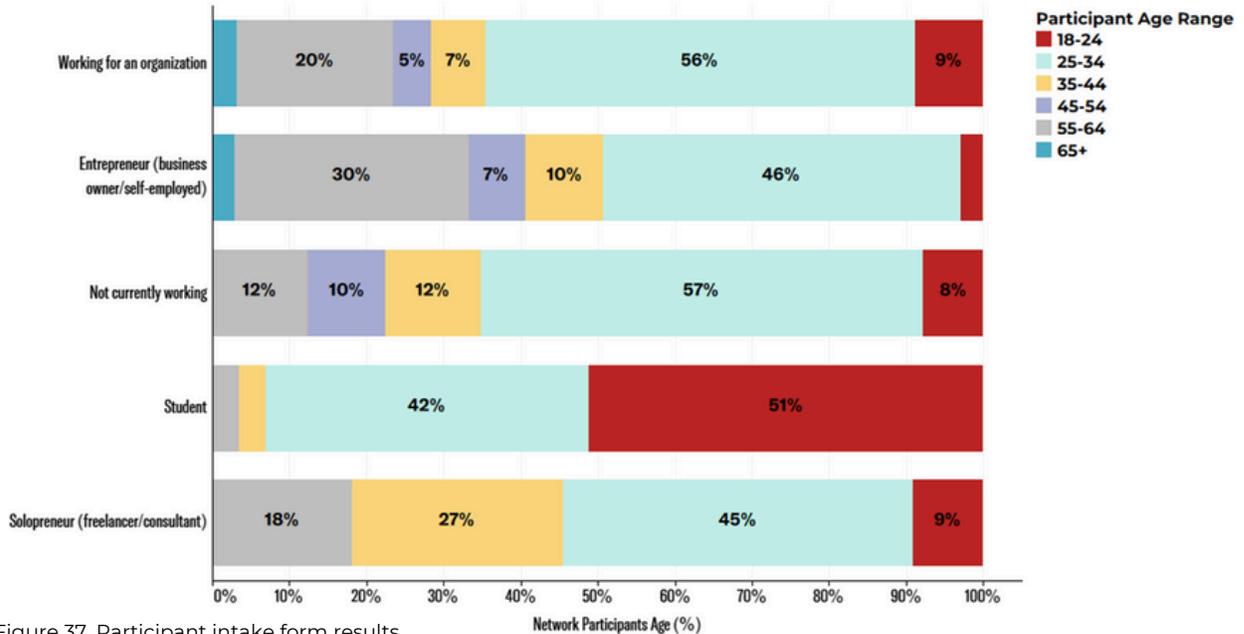


Figure 37. Participant intake form results

## Professional Experience Level

We collected information across the program on participants' experience level. The three largest experience level groups, Entry Level, Mid-Career, and Senior Professionals, align with observations that most participants are either focused on pivoting as they enter mid/late-career or on networking as they enter the workforce (see Figure 38). Unsurprisingly, older participants are more likely to be in mid-career and management positions (see Figure 39). Tracking alongside increasing seniority is increased earning power, with the majority (63%) of those in Management positions reporting salaries of \$91,000+ per year (see Figure 40).

Professional Experience Level

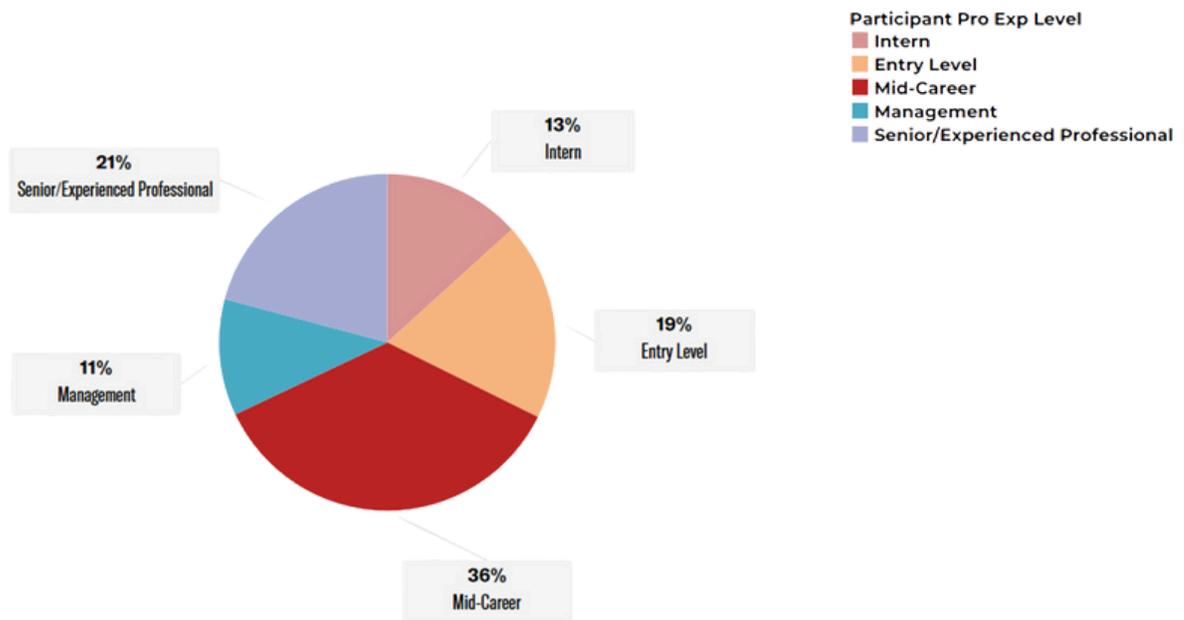


Figure 38. Participant intake form results

**The Network reaches participants who are looking to pivot or enter the workforce**

# Professional Experience Level

Participant Professional Experience Level by Age Range

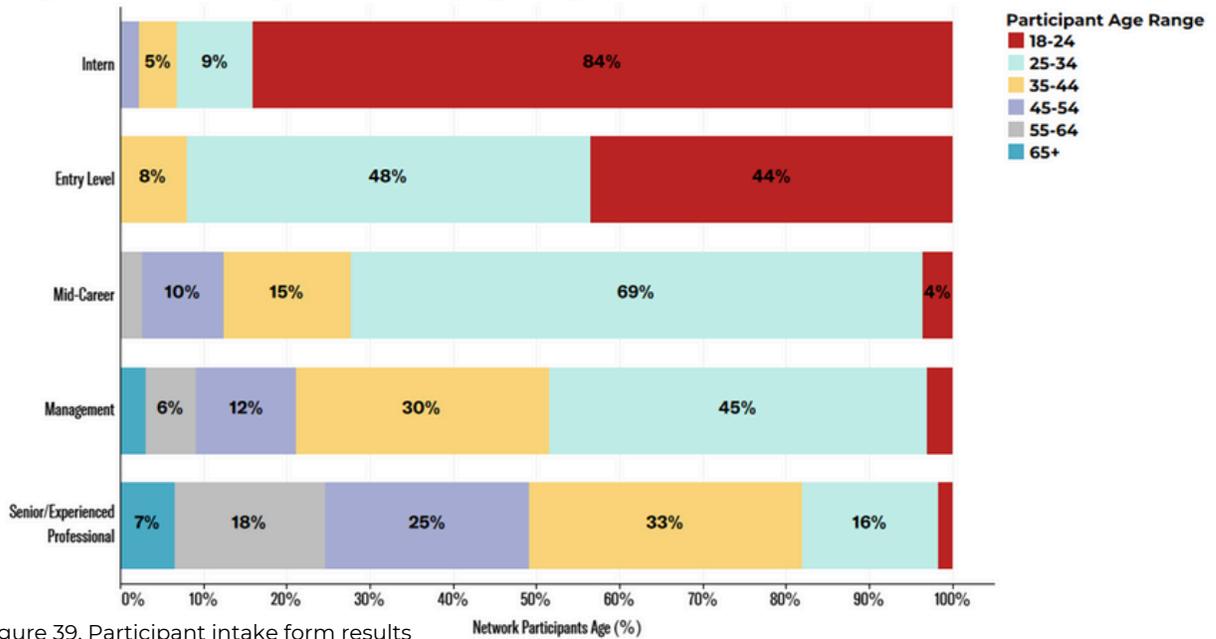


Figure 39. Participant intake form results

Participant Professional Experience Level by Income Range

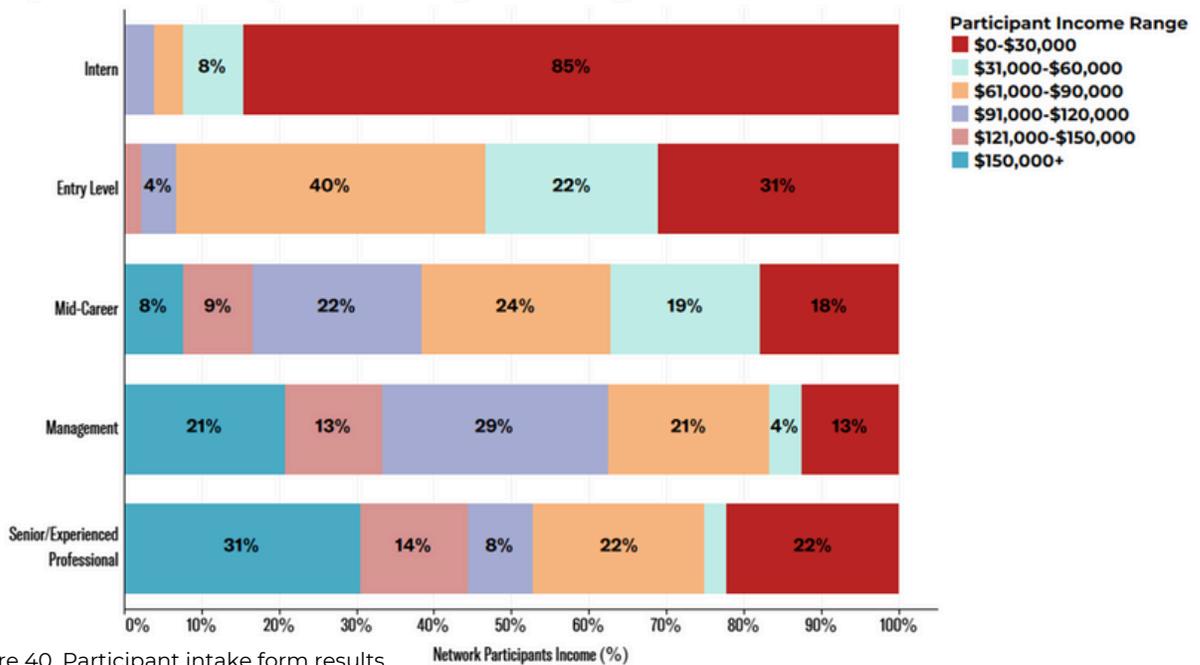


Figure 40. Participant intake form results

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## Conclusion

The demographic insights gathered from the Women.NYC Network program provide a valuable understanding of the complex intersectionality of backgrounds and experiences of our participants. The data reveals intersections between race, ethnicity, income, age, and occupation that highlight the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the women we serve.

Our participants come from across New York City, with a strong representation from Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. The program has successfully reached a diverse audience, particularly women of color, who represent a significant portion of those in lower-income brackets. This underscores the importance of the Network in providing career growth opportunities and support for those facing economic challenges.

The age and income data reveal that many participants, especially those in their prime earning years, are seeking to increase their income through the opportunities provided by the Network. Additionally, the program has been instrumental in supporting entrepreneurs and those transitioning back into the workforce, addressing the needs of women who are in the early stages of business development or career pivots.

Overall, these demographic insights provide a clear picture of the diverse and dynamic group of women the Women.NYC Network serves. The data underscores the program's effectiveness in reaching underserved communities, supporting career growth, and fostering a sense of community among participants. As we continue to refine and expand our offerings, these insights will guide our efforts to empower women across New York City to achieve their professional goals.

# PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS FOR PROGRAM DESIGN

## High-Growth Industries

Among the three high growth industries of Tech, Green Economy, and Life Sciences, participants chose Tech with the greatest frequency (see Figure 41). This is partially reflective of the industry-focused events Women.NYC held, as three events were at least partially focused on the tech sector, comprising ~45% of our attendees. The industry breakdown also reflects the proportion of advisors we have in each sector who can offer mentorship and small group sessions. Overall, these findings reflect the need for amplification of opportunities in the green economy and life sciences sector, as well as the importance of advisors with expertise in these two fields.

**Tech is the most popular high-growth industry**

**There is a need to increase access to Green Economy and Life Sciences for Black and Hispanic women**

The breakdown of interest in high-growth sectors by race suggests a much higher percentage of White and Asian participants are interested in the Green Economy and Life Sciences compared to Black participants (see Figure 42). This is true to a lesser degree for Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic as well (see Figure 43). Considering the severe underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic women in these two sectors, it is clear that more needs to be done to attract interest from Black and Hispanic communities, especially in the green economy, a sector that expects to increase its workforce through attracting a high percentage of career changers by 2040. The climate sector also holds opportunities through a higher share of occupations that do not require college degrees than in other industries.

Participant High Growth Industry Interest

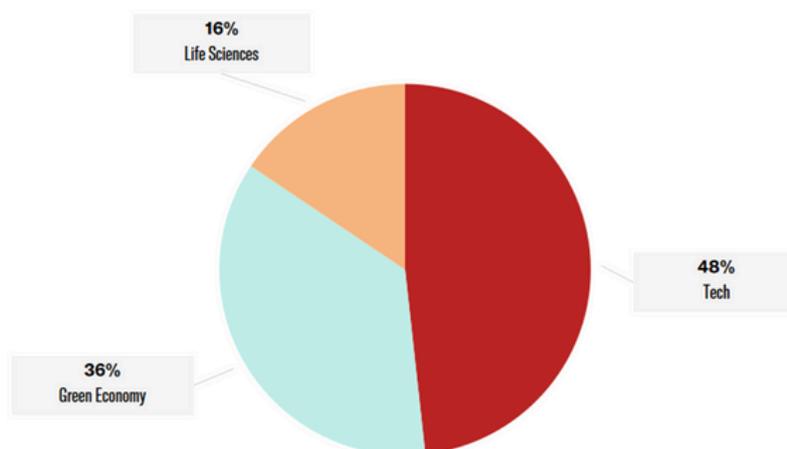


Figure 41. Participant intake form results

# High-Growth Industries

Participant Race by High Growth Industry Interest

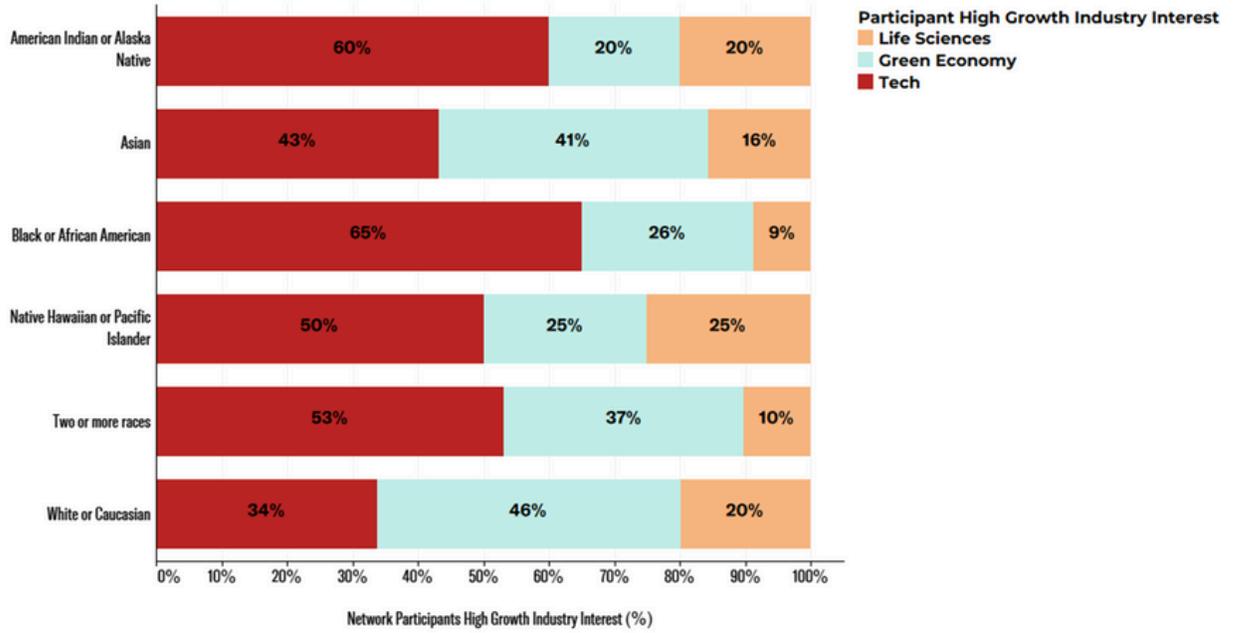


Figure 42. Participant intake form results

Participant High Growth Industry Interest by Ethnicity

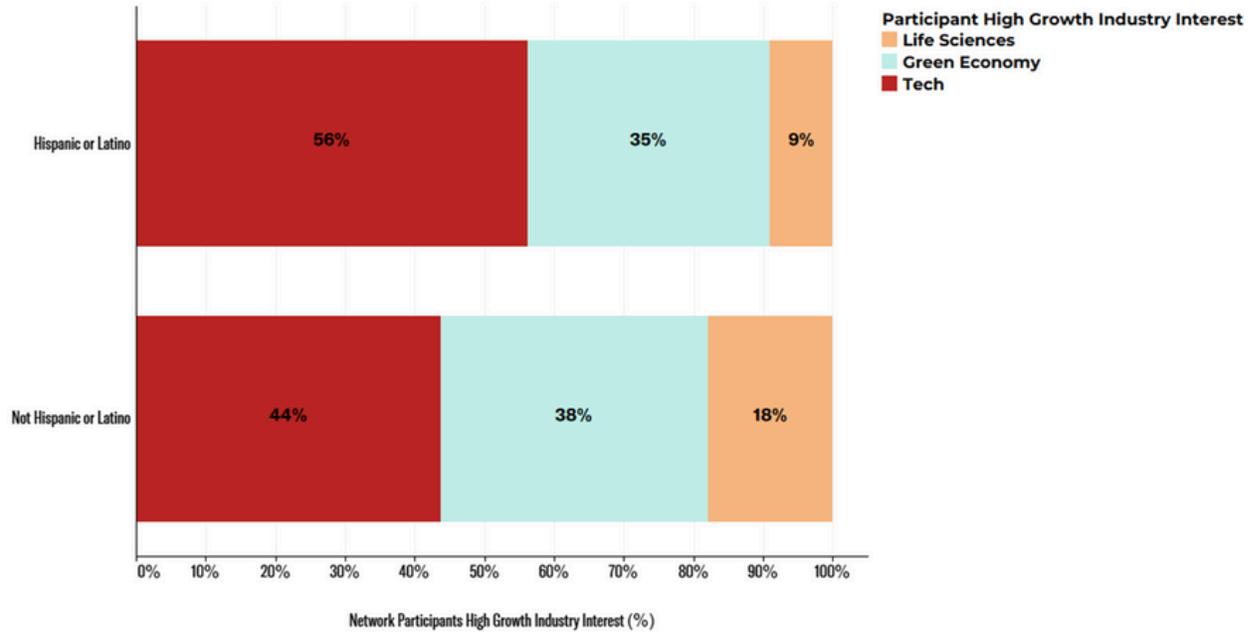


Figure 43. Participant intake form results

## High-Growth Industries & Occupation Status Intersections

Examining the interest in high-growth industries broken down along occupation status, the proportions are fairly consistent across all **except** for students, where over half chose the Green Economy as their chosen sector (see Figure 44). It can be inferred that Green Economy is an attractive career path for NYC college students. The small share of solopreneurs in the Green Economy, and the lack of any in Life Sciences, reflect the difficulty of consulting or freelancing in these sectors.

**Participant Occupation Status by High Growth Industry**

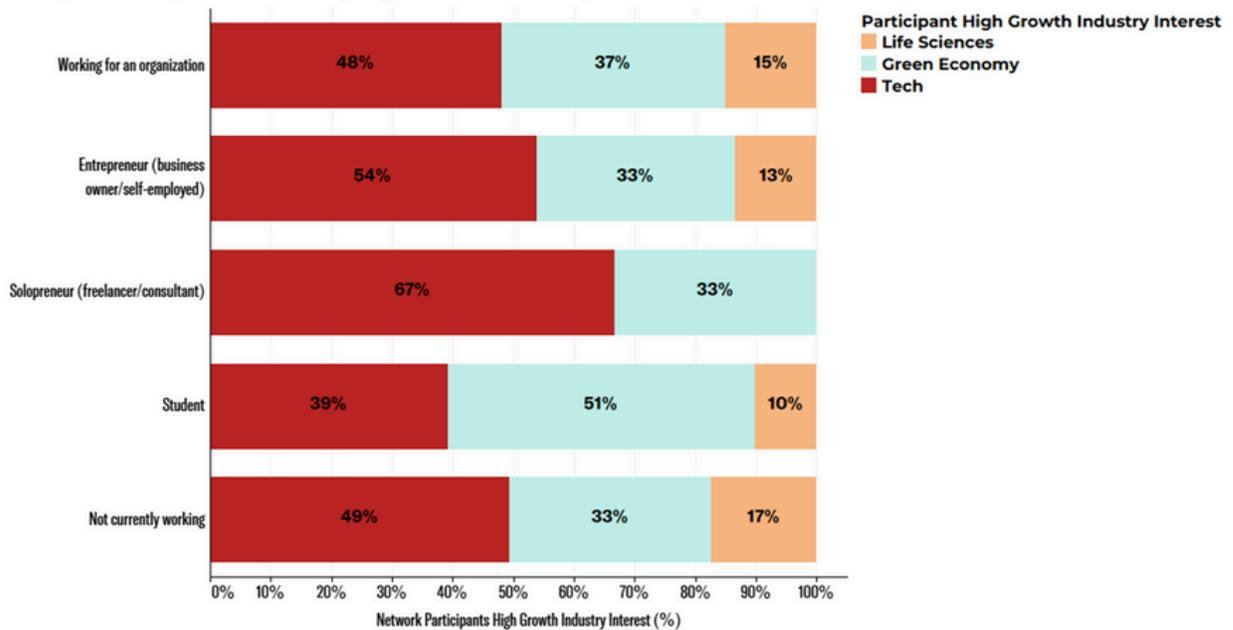


Figure 44. Participant intake form results

## High-Growth Industries & Current Industry Intersections

In reviewing the breakdown of high-growth sectors along the current industry in which participants work, many participants in a given high-growth industry wish to stay in the same sector. For those working in other industries, the majority of participants from each report Tech as their target high-growth industry (see Figure 45). Interestingly, a high percentage of those currently in Banking and the Arts are focused on the Green Economy for their future career.

**High Percentages of participants working in Banking and the Arts are focused on Tech and the Green Economy as future career paths**

**Participant Current Industry by High Growth Industry Interest**

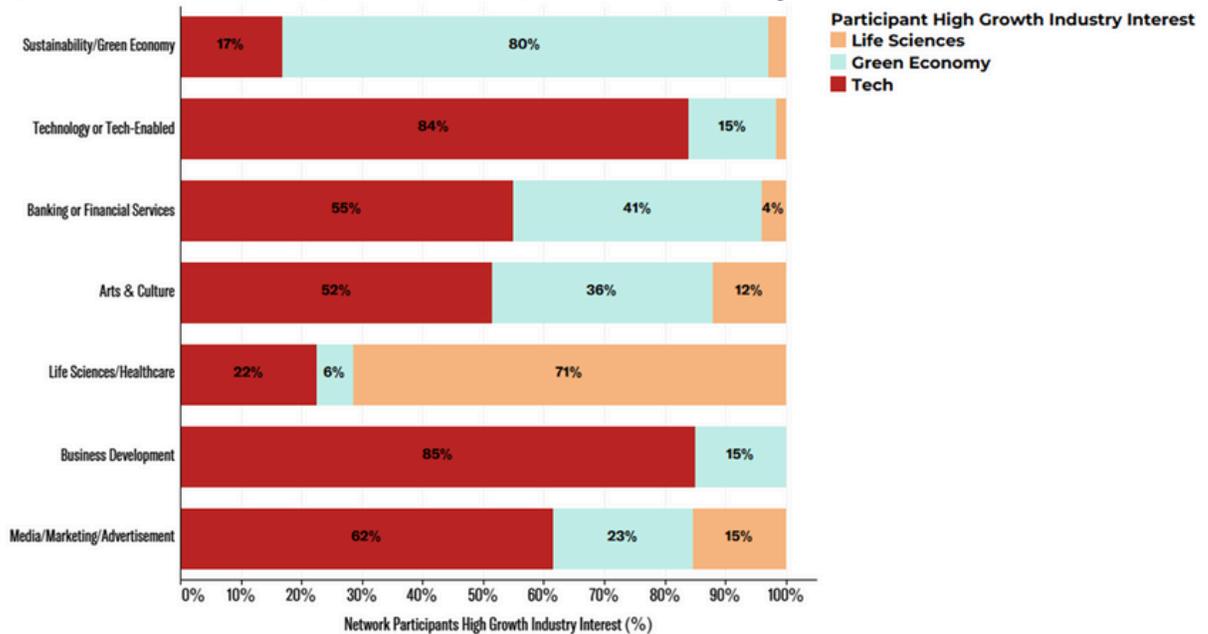


Figure 45. Participant intake form results



## High-Growth Industries & Learning Needs

Looking at the high-growth sectors disaggregated by learning needs reveals notable insights across sectors. While participants who chose Tech as their target industry make up about 45% of all Network participants, they make up 63% of those who chose Job Interview Prep as their top learning need, indicating interview skills as a particularly key lever for career growth in Tech. Women who chose Entrepreneurship and Moving into Management were also more focused on Tech (see Figure 46).

**High percentage of women looking to move to Tech careers need support in job interview preparation**

**Jobs of the Future & Negotiation Skills are key levers for women interested in Green Economy and Life Sciences**

Compared to the percentage of participants interested in Green Economy (36%), a relatively high proportion chose Jobs of the Future, Personal Branding, Negotiation Skills, and Networking as their most urgent learning needs and critical areas for career transition. Jobs of the Future and Negotiation Skills were also relatively more important to women who indicated Life Sciences as their focus sector (20% and 27%, respectively, compared to 16% of all participants interested in Life Sciences). (See Figure 46.)<sup>25</sup>

Participant High Growth Industry Interest by Learning Area Interest

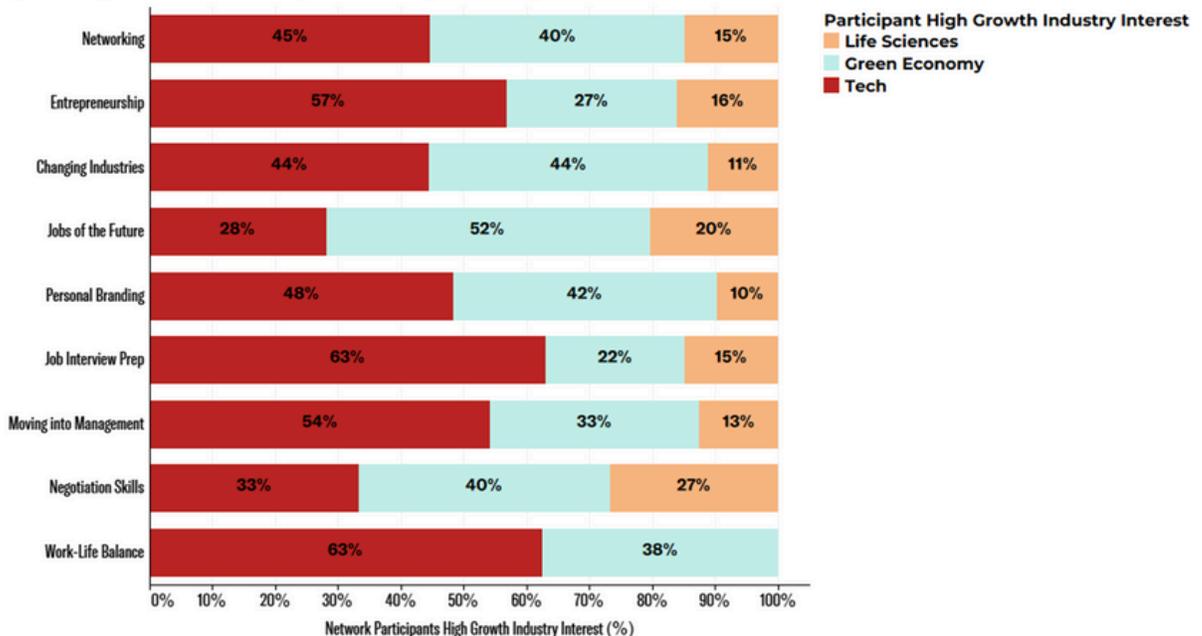


Figure 46. Participant intake form results

25. Work-Life Balance represented only 2% of participants overall so is excluded from top interest areas in this intersectional discussion.

## Obstacles to Professional Growth

Throughout the year, to identify obstacles to growth, we continually asked our participants: what do you want to learn? From a wide range of choices, top learning areas remained consistent across all events. Learning interest area options as a whole represent underlying persistent challenges participants face when working toward success in their career. The prevalence of **Strategic Networking** in particular as the highest-percentage learning area illustrates the need for more opportunities for structured, strategic networking opportunities.

**Strategic Networking is both a key lever and a significant obstacle**

As highlighted in the introduction, **strategic networks are the key lever to increase economic mobility and expand career options**. In NYC high-growth industries, lack of strategic support networks is an increased challenge for **women with limited industry background**; this is exacerbated for those aiming to enter leadership roles. Research shows that “Progress remains slow for women at the manager and director levels,” negatively impacting the pipeline for women to move into more senior leadership positions. Additionally, “women of color face the steepest drop-off in representation from entry-level to C-suite positions,” illustrating the need for programs like the Network that offer strategic networking specifically targeted to BIPOC women.<sup>26</sup>

Additionally, the significant percentages of **Changing Industries** and **Jobs of the Future** correspond to how many of our participants are urgently looking to pivot their careers into high-growth industries.



26. <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/diversity%20and%20inclusion/women%20in%20the%20workplace%202023%20v2/women-in-the-workplace-2023-full-report.pdf?shouldIndex=false>

## Learning Area Insights

Looking more deeply at the top Learning Areas, the popularity of Entrepreneurship as a response reflects the high proportion of entrepreneurs in the Network (see Figure 47). Additionally, 76% of those who selected Entrepreneurship as their top learning area were BIPOC participants (see Figure 48).

**76% of all participants focused on Entrepreneurship self-identified as BIPOC**

Data shows that BIPOC women often start their own businesses as a result of systemic gender discrimination. Additionally, statistics show that the growth potential of NYC minority/women-owned small businesses is enormous, and we have a mandate to support them by facilitating strategic connections that can impact business ideation and growth.

**50% of participants focused on Job Interview Prep, Negotiation Skills, & Moving into Management are Hispanic**

In the statistics for learning areas by ethnicity, of those reporting needing help with Job Interview Prep, Negotiation Skills, and Moving into Management, ~50% are Hispanic (see Figure 49). This trifecta of challenges keenly illustrates the critical need for practical, hands-on learning for our participants to apply for and obtain new jobs in high-growth sectors.

### Participant Learning Area Interest

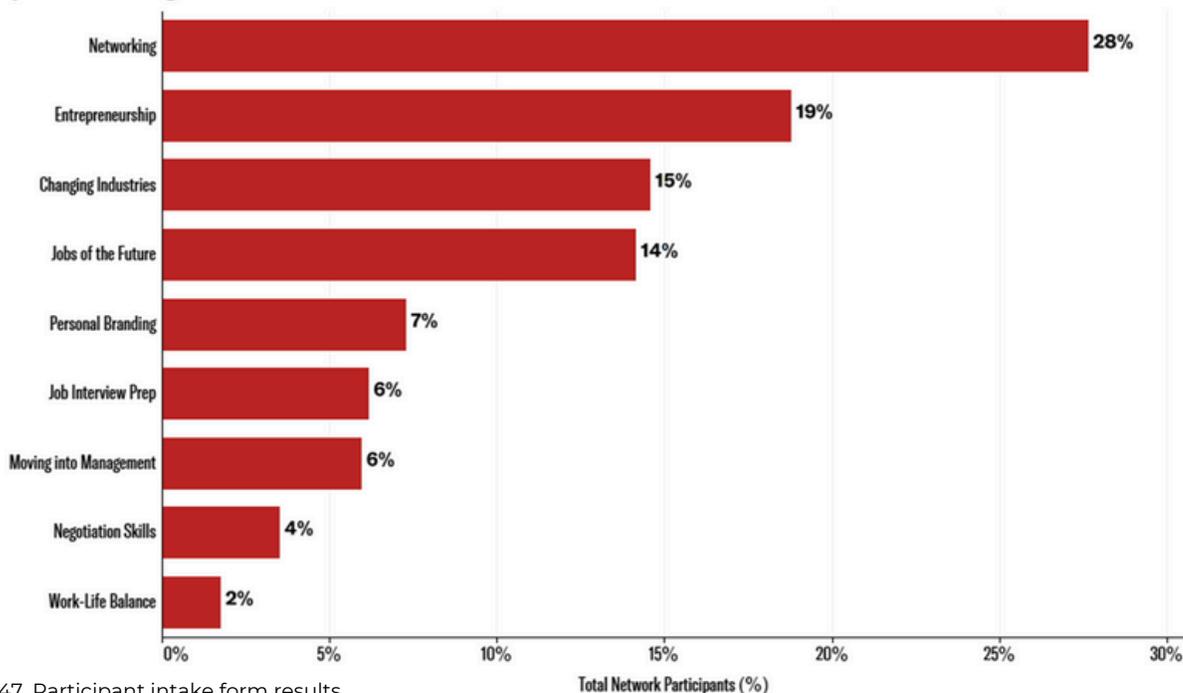


Figure 47. Participant intake form results

# Learning Area Insights

## Participant Learning Area Interest by Race

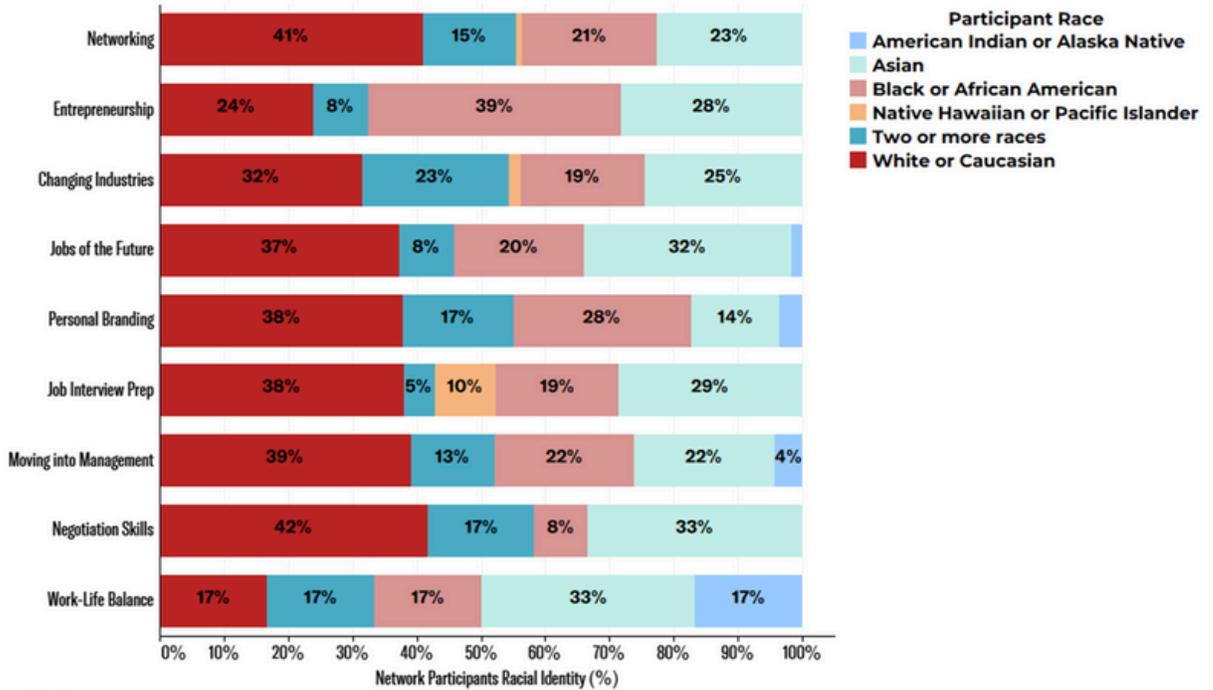


Figure 48. Participant intake form results

## Participant Learning Area Interest by Ethnicity

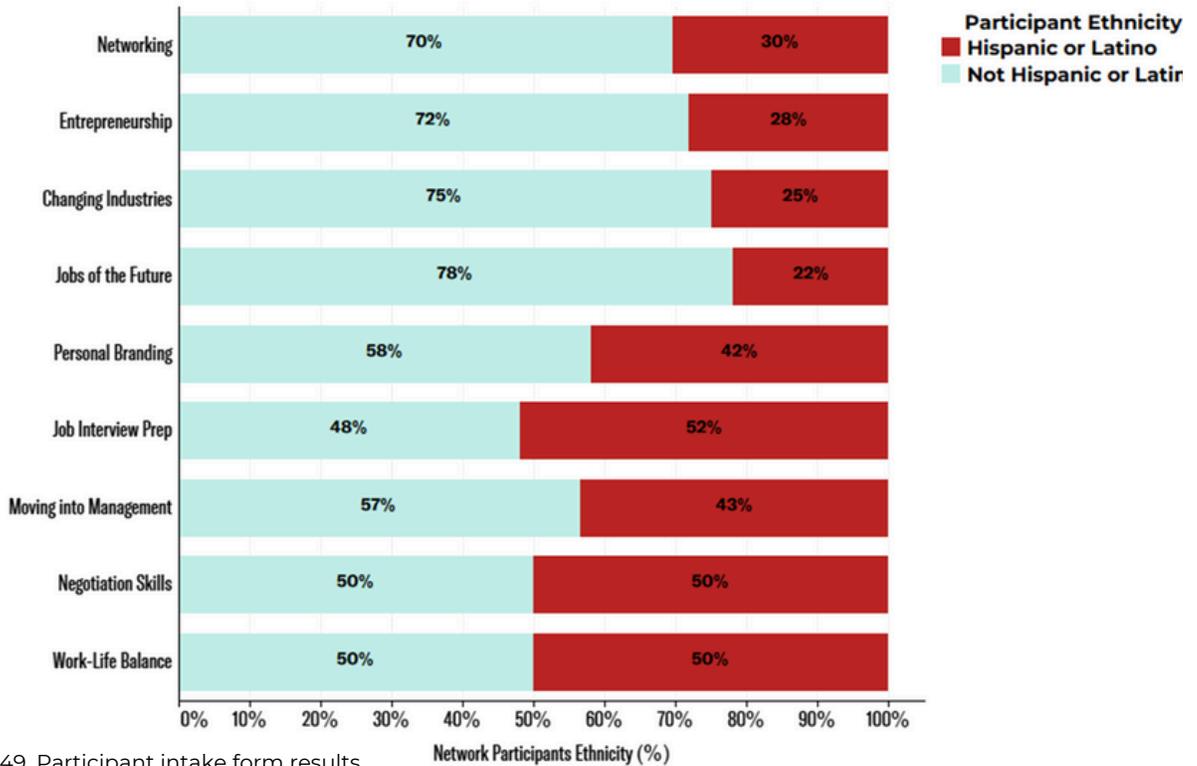


Figure 49. Participant intake form results

# If She Can Make It Here: The Challenges to Unlock Leadership Potential<sup>27</sup>

Data collected by Women.NYC to support the Amplify Her report *If She Can Make It Here*, focused on challenges women face in entering leadership positions in NYC, reinforces and expands our understanding of the challenges our Network participants face in accessing leadership roles and needed support, especially in industry mentorship (see Figures 50 and 51).

Data shows **Lack of Strategic Networks and No Clear Path to Leadership Role** are the two greatest challenges NYC women face, while mentorship and connections to professionals is the most important resource.

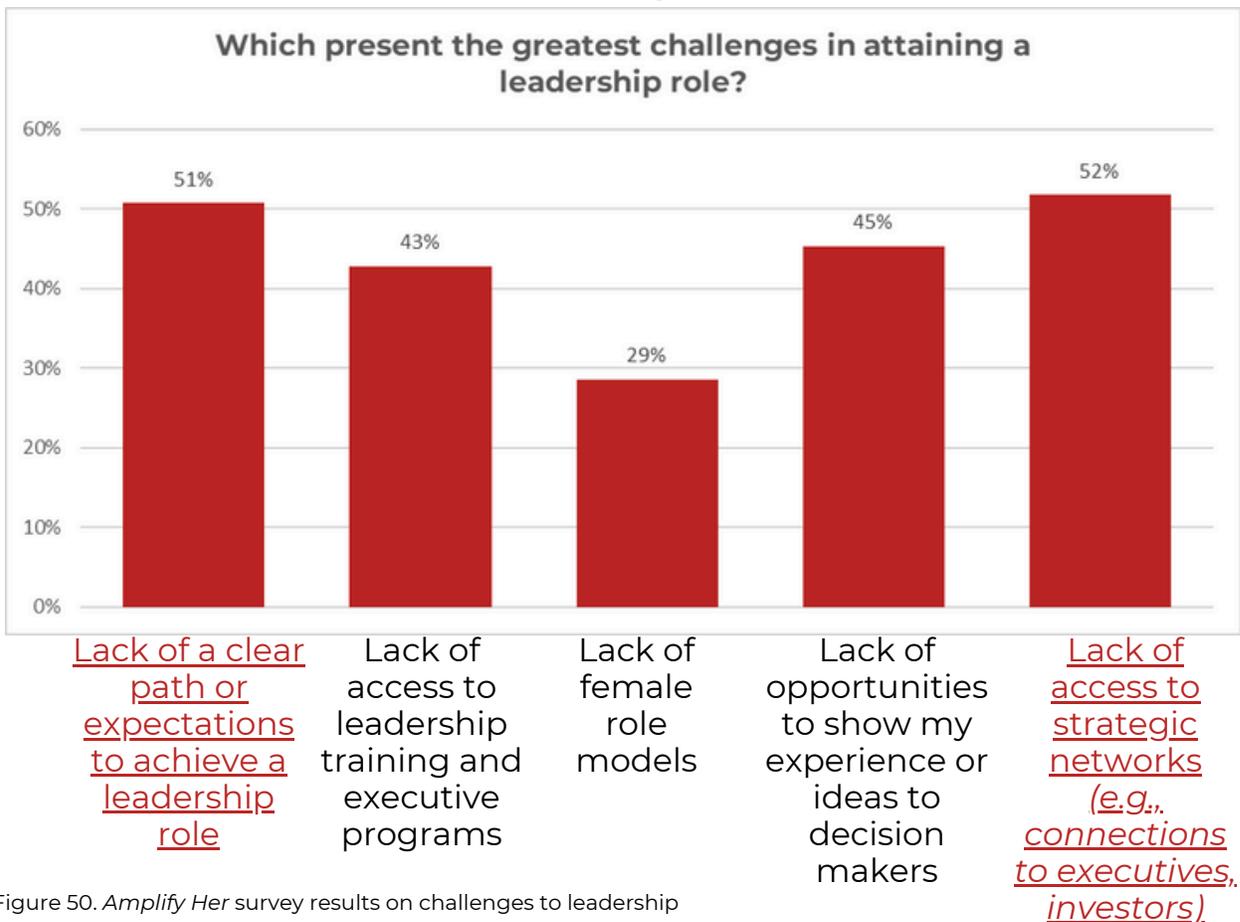


Figure 50. Amplify Her survey results on challenges to leadership

27. This survey was distributed to over 1,100 NYC women in August 2023.

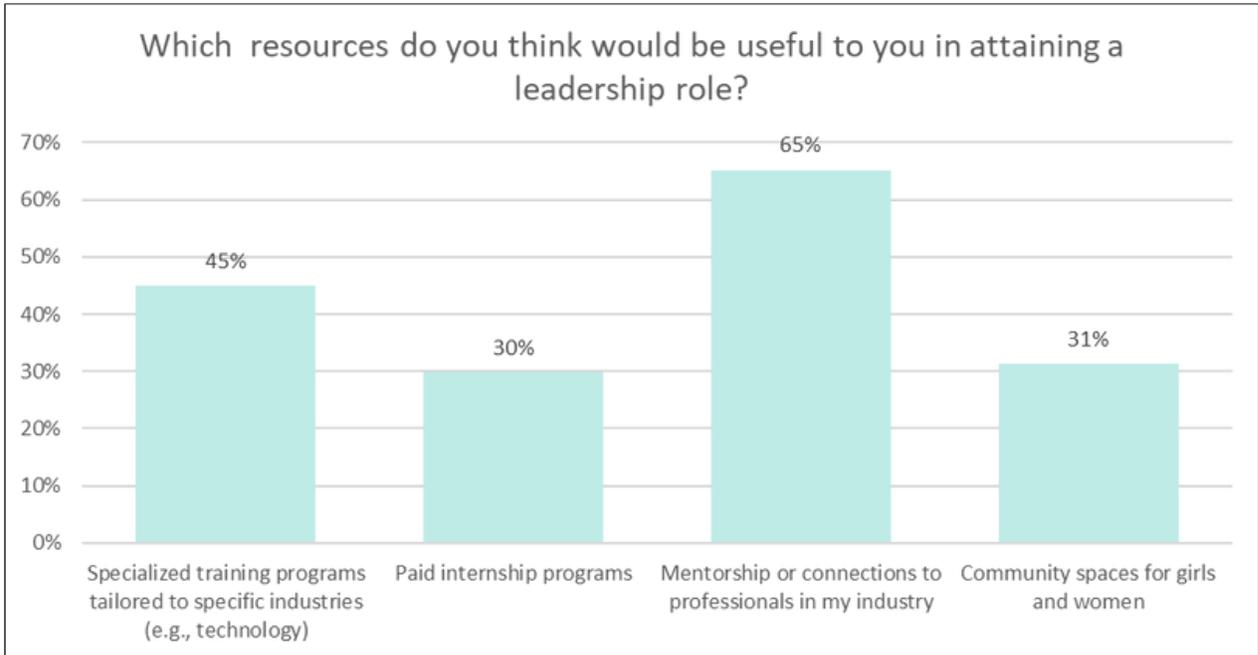


Figure 51. *Amplify Her* survey results on useful resources

## Implications: Data-Informed Program Design

The above information has been vital to planning outreach and marketing efforts, as well as tailoring offerings to participant needs. Without knowing the audience, it would be difficult to ensure high-leverage topics and objectives. Without understanding the barriers, it would be impossible to expand in the right areas to ensure intentional outreach to underestimated communities. As the program iterates, not only must it increase reach, it must also deepen and widen impact on the career trajectory of existing participants. To that end, the team collected systematic and intentional feedback and recommendations from participants and advisors. Findings from that analysis follow.



# **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM EXPANSION & SUCCESS**

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As referenced above, the community that has arisen around the Network is one of the most valuable outcomes cited by participants. Accordingly, many comments received in feedback forms and through our focus groups centered on improving the opportunities to build community. These suggestions fell into three broad categories: first, increase the number of events, especially in other boroughs and locations; second, add scaffolds to the networking opportunities; and third, make it easier to connect between events. Detailed recommendations follow.

## **Improve Outreach**

Advisor feedback and participant demographics and comments all indicate there is more to be done in focusing outreach to underestimated communities. There seems to be a missing link in our postings, newsletters, and advertising that interrupts information on Network offerings getting to the intended audience. Dr. Graham hypothesized it could also be due to a breakdown of trust in establishment organizations and that one may have to work harder to build trust to ensure that intended supports are viewed as authentic and meaningful.

## **Increase Engagements**

- 27% of the EOY survey respondents noted they hadn't been to enough events to be able to rate the program overall, illustrating the need for offering more events and publicizing them more widely.
- Advisors also indicated they thought more events would improve results for participants.
- Many participants live in outer boroughs; adding events that are more local to our constituency will be helpful to increase participation.

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## Target Networking Opportunities

- A mix of structured and free-ranging networking sessions is helpful so that women who are just starting out can be supported to make new connections, while also fostering deeper strategic connections for those who are ready.
- Structured networking suggestions included:
  - icebreaker questions, scaffolded practice, and clear instructions or advance notice of what will happen.
- Offer both industry-specific and mixed-industry networking, so that participants can make a wide variety of connections across industries especially as they explore their career options.
- Survey the audience to ensure we are responsive to current needs, as well as varying the structures.
- Improve access to the experts and/or panelists through:
  - signing up for time in advance
  - more structured rotations at tables
  - virtual affinity groups based on interests from the events, to alleviate pressure on in-person advisor and participant events.

## Enhance Digital Office Hours

Advisors had several suggestions to make our digital office hours more effective and streamlined, categorized by suggestion below.

### Preparation Supports

- Ensure the advisor has sufficient information to be able to effectively help the mentee with what they need; several advisors reported going in “cold” or not being sure what specific needs the participant had.
- Ensure participants are clear on what advisors can help them with; e.g., advice for their business and/or career, not funding or partnerships.
- Provide participants with a list of questions or suggested topics so they are prepared to make the most of their time.

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## Scheduling Supports

- Advisors would prefer to have calendar holds immediately after providing their availability, and participant information as early as possible.
- Advisors asked that participants confirm earlier, 48 hours prior to appointments (currently 24 hours).

## Conclusion

It is clear that we must improve our targeted outreach, increase the number of events while diversifying the locations, and continue to build community within and across our focus communities. One way in which the program team is already tackling this is in development of an app that will make connecting and scheduling with advisors easier, while also enabling deeper community-building and connections among mentees through seamless communication. Additionally, to support improved scheduling with advisors the team has adopted Calendly as a scheduling solution, streamlining all bookings and limiting pull on volunteer advisor time.



# APPENDIX

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## Survey and Focus Group Methodology

To effectively measure program impact, a data collection plan was implemented to collect participant and advisor feedback that would illustrate progress toward these outcomes. The team developed exit surveys to be distributed with every event (event surveys), a comprehensive end-of-year survey (EOY survey), year-end focus groups, and an advisor survey.

### Focus group Analysis

The Women.NYC focus groups engaged three groups of Network participants totaling 18 women. The participants volunteered and were selected on the basis of group availability followed by the highest number of events attended. This analysis focuses on the themes that arose through the lens of the program outcomes.

### Participant and Advisor Surveys

Information was collected after each touchpoint with a participant through an event survey. An EOY survey was also implemented to collect additional feedback from participants about the program more broadly. Advisors were asked to complete a survey assessing participant learning and experiences. Surveys were designed to collect information related to the program's three outcome categories.

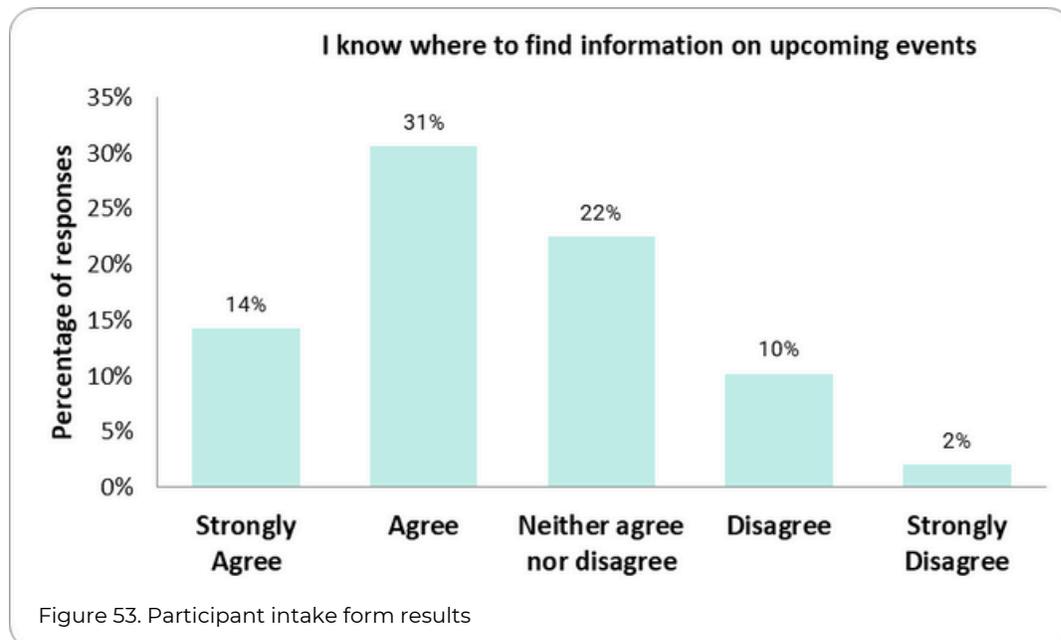
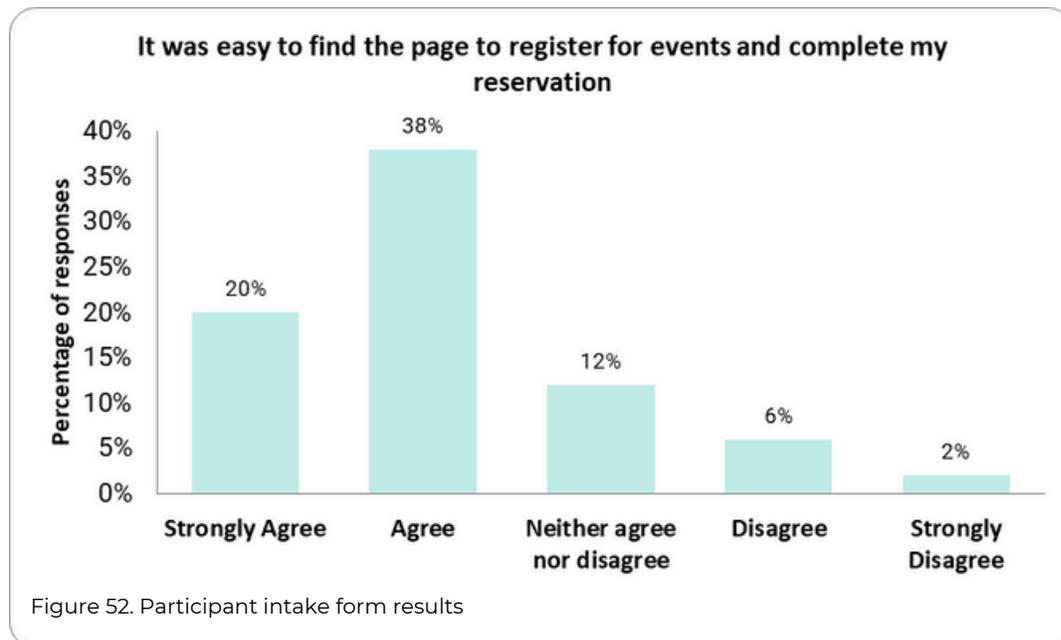
Event surveys focused mainly on **competencies**: the **success of the networking/connections** portion of a given event and **concrete learning**. The EOY survey followed up on some of these questions while also inquiring about specific **behavioral** and **career change** outcomes for participants. All surveys included questions about the registration and website experience. It should be noted that throughout the year, over 150 event surveys were collected, while 50 participants total responded to the EOY survey. Advisors completed open-ended questions about their perceptions of participant learning and confidence, as well as suggestions for improvements to the program.

## Outcome 4: Customer Experience

The fourth outcome for the program focuses on the lowering barriers to digital access to networks and professional learning to underserved communities. Indicators include:

- Ease of registration
- Ease of navigating Network site

The team asked participants to rate these program elements in every survey and in the focus groups. Data was collected through four questions.



## Outcome 4: Customer Experience

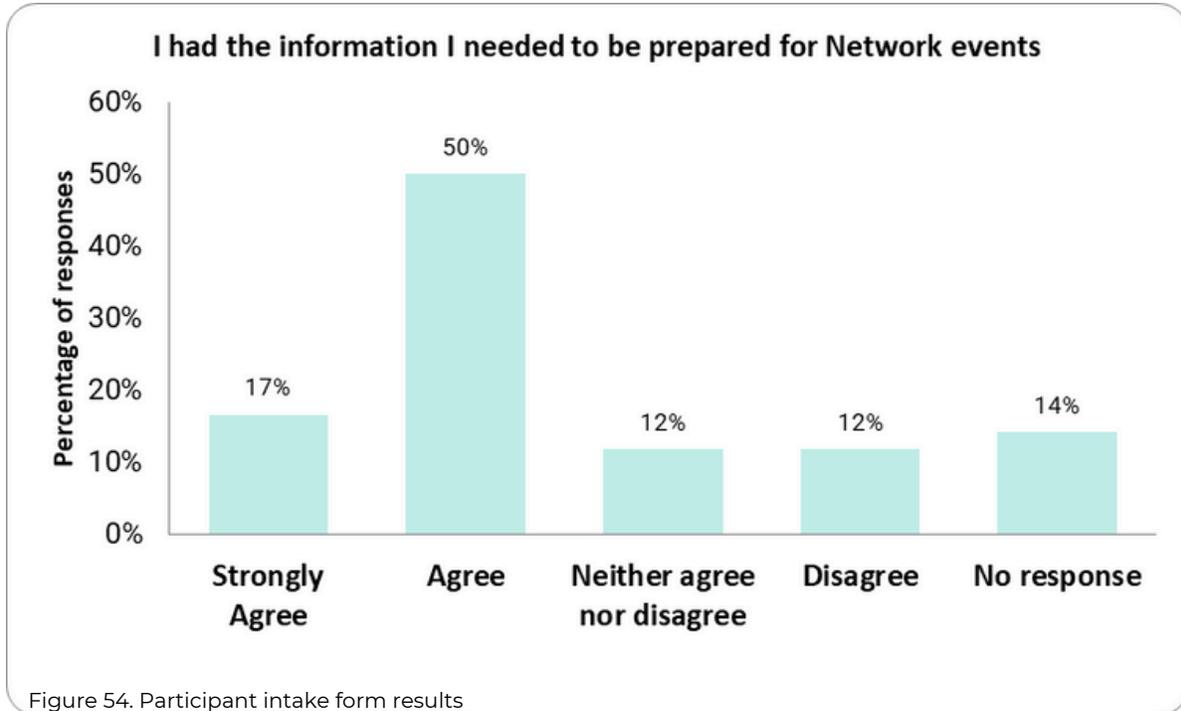


Figure 54. Participant intake form results

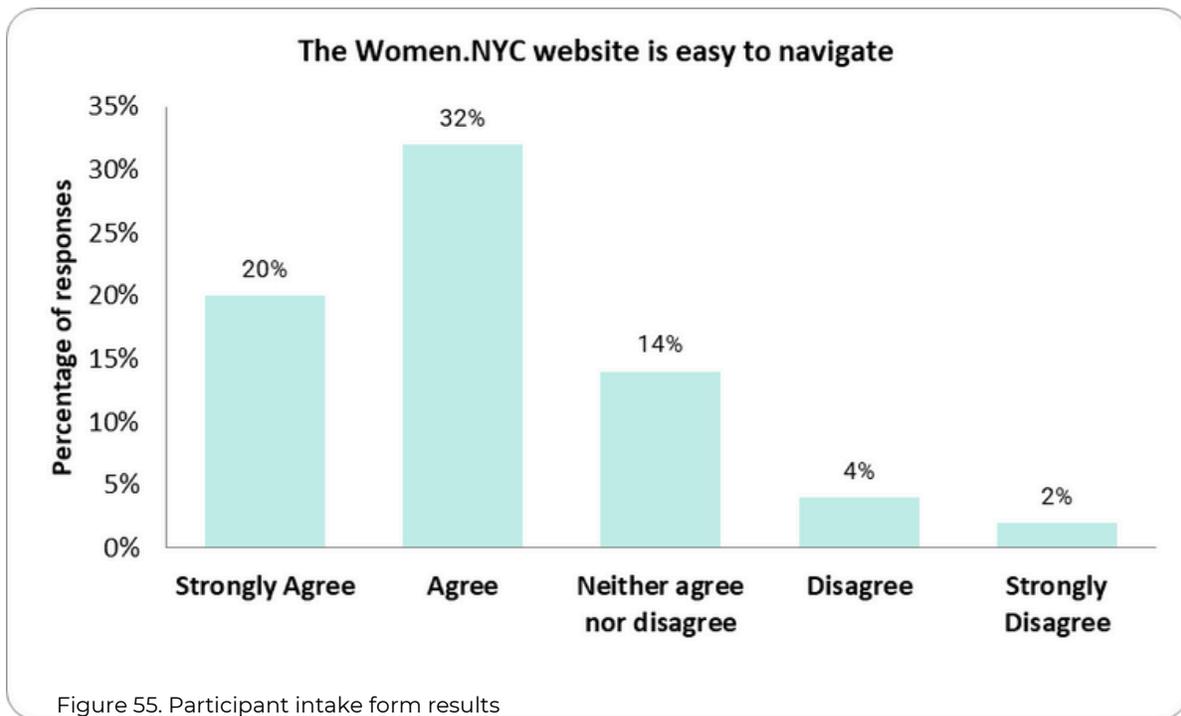


Figure 55. Participant intake form results

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## Outcome 4: Customer Experience

The focus group also sought information and feedback on navigating the various access pathways to program elements. Feedback on the digital platform was mixed, with some finding it user-friendly while others suggested improvements for easier navigation and access to resources. While many appreciated the simplicity of the registration process for events and one-on-one sessions, there were recommendations for streamlining rescheduling and enhancing the overall user interface to accommodate diverse schedules. Specific recommendations include:

- Shortening the intake form or at least making it so that folks only have to fill it out once
- Difficulty in finding events across so many different platforms
- Suggestions for more evening events, or more events at different times of day
- Desire for longer time allotted during 1:1 sessions – complaints that the current timeslots do not provide enough time to fully share with one another
- In networking, some suggestions for planning a mix of free-flowing and more structured networking opportunities to differentiate for different needs and levels of experience
  - There were also specific recommendations to develop a networking framework that outlines key steps and tips of how to network effectively, while also allowing participants to exercise those tips
- Several focus group participants and survey respondents indicated frustration with advisors canceling on participants without any follow-up, or sharing their email and then not ever responding to outreach
  - There were several suggestions to make expectations of both advisors and mentees extremely clear, with possibly even different tiers of advisors, some of whom might be willing to match for longer relationships, while others might be more interested in practice interviews, technical skills, or other one-off types of sessions
- Some participants thought it could be great to have some events by industry and to group others by purpose or need, bringing together a diverse group of job-seekers

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## LinkedIn Group Data

Ancillary data from the LinkedIn group affords insights on career trajectories of many participants. Interestingly, in reviewing the top seven most common job titles of women in the LinkedIn group, the majority (78%) are in leadership or managerial positions (see Figure 58). The needs of this specific group may differ from those of the Network at large.

### LinkedIn Group Members by Top Position Titles

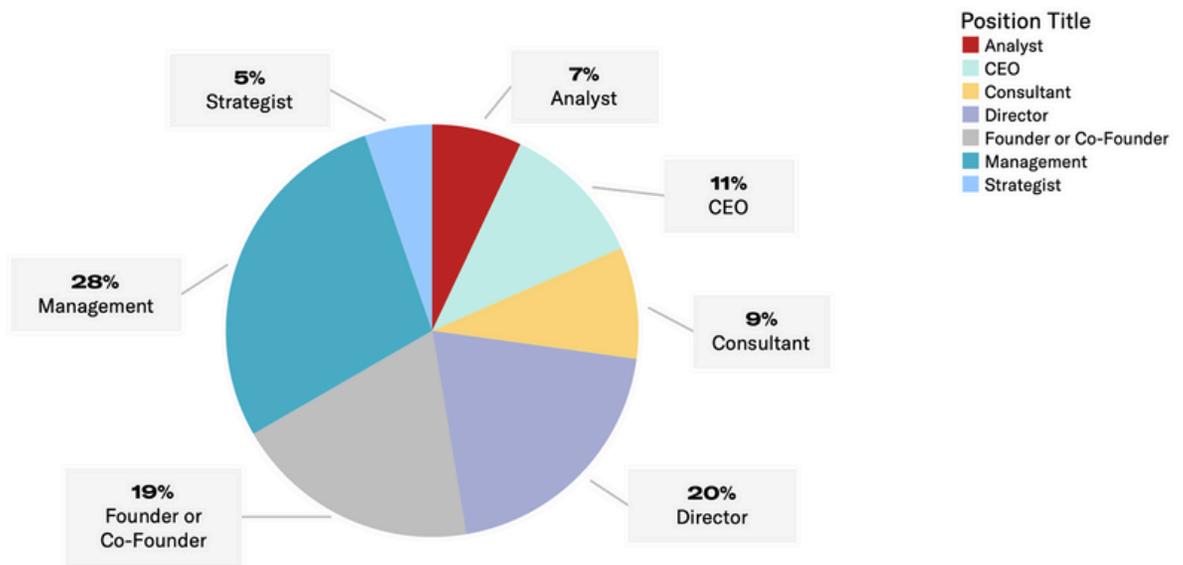


Figure 58. Participant intake form results

## Acknowledgments

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Together, we are building a future where every woman in New York City has the support, opportunities, and resources needed to thrive.

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