

LIGHTHOUSE WRITERS WORKSHOP

2021 COMMUNITY SURVEY

AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



PREPARED DECEMBER 2021

INTRODUCTION

Lighthouse's mission is to provide the highest-caliber artistic education, support, and community for writers and readers in the Rocky Mountain region and beyond. A significant component of this mission is the mandate to become a more inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist organization. Recently, we established EDIA (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility) committees among board and staff, whose first task was to survey the Lighthouse community. We've also hired two consultant firms to work with the organization, providing comprehensive survey results analysis, training, and strategic planning.

IN ADDITION TO THE SURVEY, RECENT WORK TOWARD BECOMING A MORE EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE, AND DIVERSE ORGANIZATION INCLUDE:



REVAMPED HIRING PRACTICES TO CREATE A MORE DIVERSE AND EQUITABLE WORKPLACE



IMPLEMENTED FACULTY TRAINING TO ENSURE WORKSHOP AND CLASSROOM SPACES ARE SAFE AND INCLUSIVE



DEEPEDED SUPPORT FOR INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS, SUCH AS WRITING IN COLOR AND QUEER CREATIVES



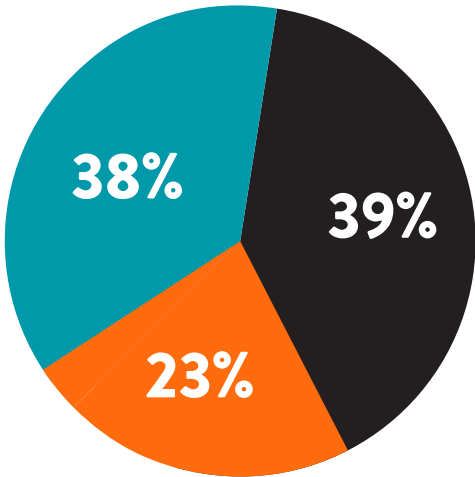
STARTED WRITING IN COLOR MEETUPS FOR TEENS OF COLOR AND RAINBOW ROOM FOR LGBTQ TEENS

KEY FINDINGS

We saw a robust response to the survey. Of the 635 individuals who participated, 86% identified themselves as community members, 12% as faculty members, and 2% as staff or board. The responses were direct, thoughtful, and thorough, and will provide a solid foundation for our EDIA efforts going forward.

SURVEY RESPONSES INCLUDED BOTH QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA AND PROVIDED EVIDENCE FOR THE FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY FINDINGS.

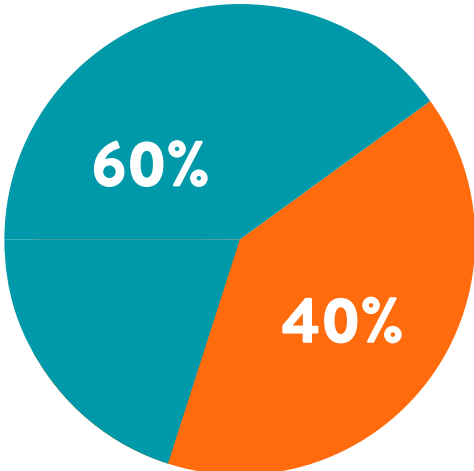
NEW MEMBERSHIP IS GROWING



38% of respondents have been involved with Lighthouse for less than two years and 23% of respondents have been involved for two-to-four years.

- LESS THAN TWO YEARS WITH LIGHTHOUSE
- TWO-TO-FOUR YEARS WITH LIGHTHOUSE
- MORE THAN FOUR YEARS WITH LIGHTHOUSE

FINANCIAL DIVERSITY

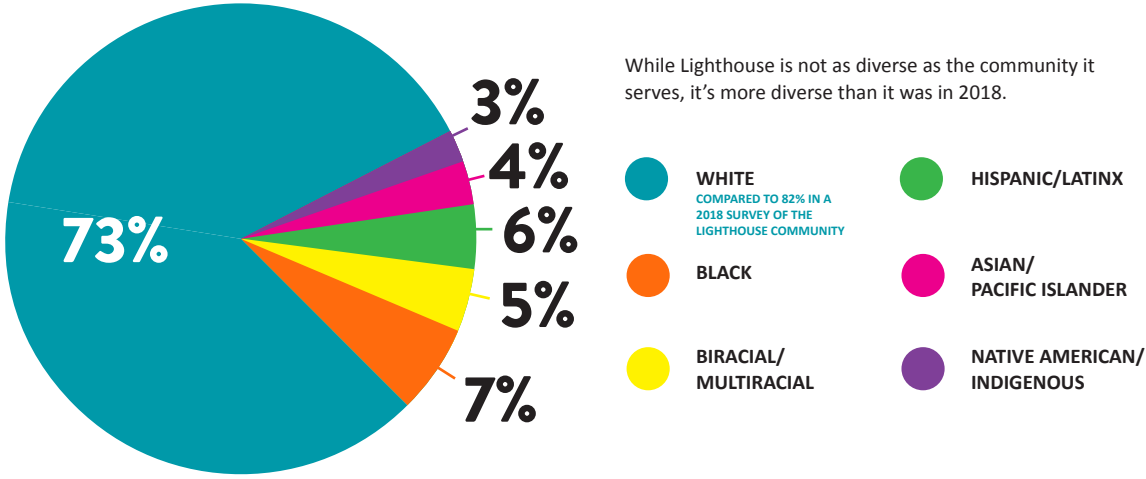


Average household income of Lighthouse community is slightly higher than the metro Denver average: 60% of respondents reported an annual household income above \$75,000. Average annual household income in Denver is \$69,000.

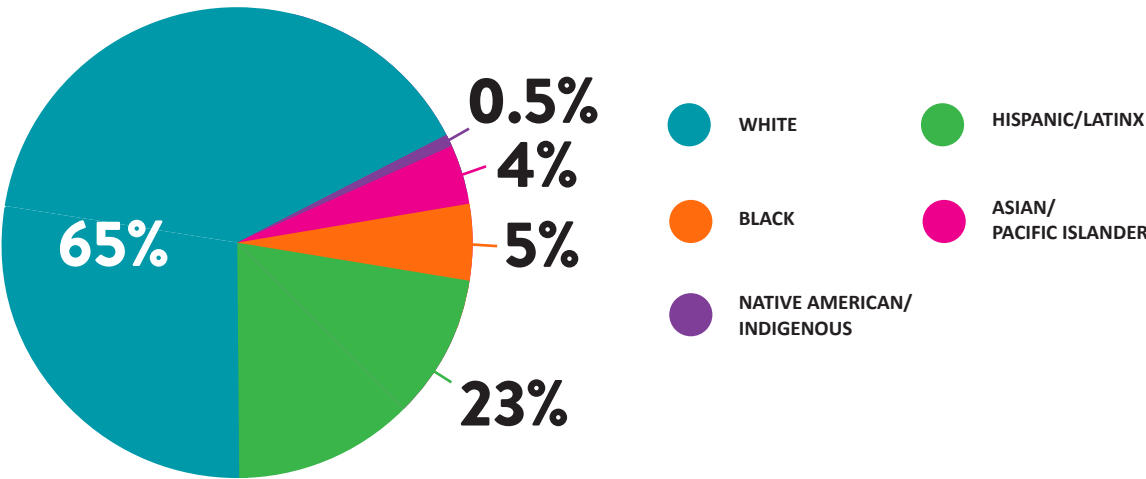
- ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME > \$75,000
- ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME < \$75,000

ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY ON THE RISE

LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY DIVERSITY (OF ALL 635 RESPONDENTS)

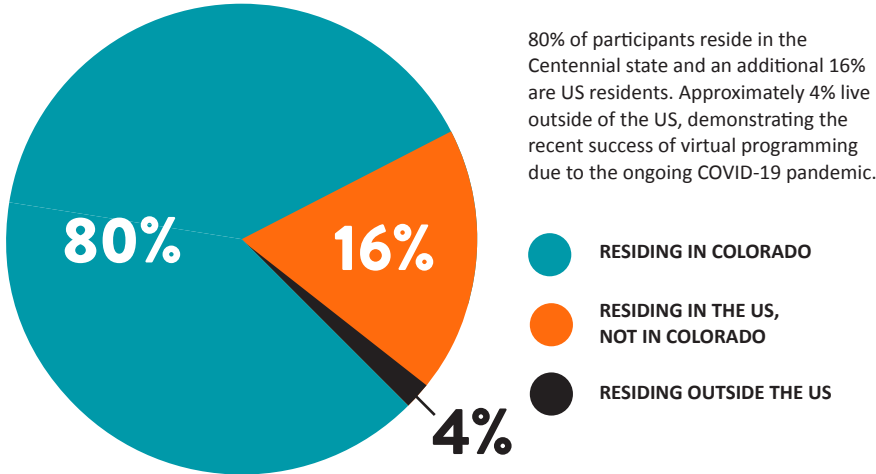


DENVER COMMUNITY DIVERSITY

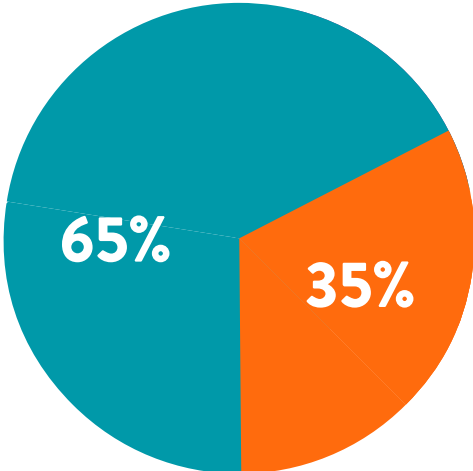


ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY ON THE RISE

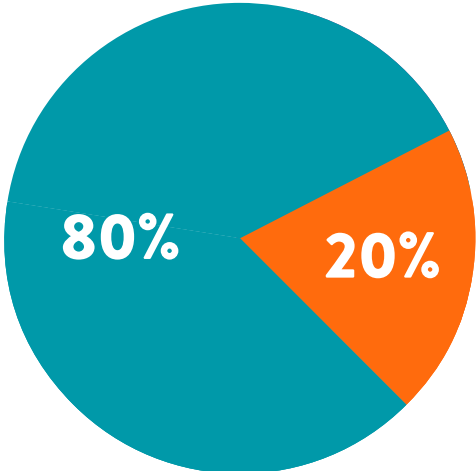
LIGHTHOUSE IS BECOMING A NATIONAL (AND WORLDWIDE) ORGANIZATION



ADDITIONAL DIVERSITY METRICS



- IDENTIFIED AS CIS-GENDER/HETEROSEXUAL
- IDENTIFIED AS LGBTQIA+



- IDENTIFIED AS PERSONS WITHOUT DISABILITIES
- IDENTIFIED AS PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES*

SIMILAR TO METRO DENVER DEMOGRAPHICS

HOW RESPONDENTS FEEL ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Lighthouse is generally well-received by participants: 78% of Lighthouse community members, faculty, and staff believe the organization attracts literary types from a variety of different backgrounds and upholds its commitment to diversity by nurturing an inclusive, supportive, and welcoming environment.

For the most part, Lighthouse fosters a sense of creative freedom and respect for participants: Respondents felt comfortable creatively expressing themselves (74% strongly agree or agree). They are also comfortable talking about their background and cultural experiences in a workshop, event, or community setting at Lighthouse (70% strongly agree or agree).

On the question “I feel like I belong at Lighthouse”: BIPOC survey respondents generally matched the responses of white individuals—65% of white respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement; 66% of BIPOC respondents strongly agreed or agreed. (Overall, 65% strongly agreed/agreed). However, looking deeper into the data, there’s a telling shift: just 50% of respondents who identified as Asian strongly agreed/agreed, and 56% of respondents who identified as Black strongly agreed/agreed. 63% of LGBTQIA+ respondents strongly agreed or agreed. 60% of respondents living with a disability strongly agreed/agreed.

Lighthouse Writers Workshop needs to do a better job making the community aware of current EDIA (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility) progress, with 62% of participants being unaware or uninformed about staff and faculty trainings, workshops, or policies surrounding values of diversity, equity, and safety within Lighthouse.

COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY

“I like that you continue to embrace youth programs, at-risk populations, and diversity/inclusivity.”

“From my perspective, Lighthouse’s engagement and intersectionality has grown tremendously in the last few years. I see them as a community org doing these things well.”

“EDIA progress has been made in fits and starts for the last several years. Lighthouse is now making steadier progress but EDIA needs to become part of Lighthouse’s DNA.”

“I would feel encouraged if, in addition to these important values, Lighthouse would also stand up for diversity when those stances did not guarantee social acceptance on the left and praise—I’d like to see a little more courage and less partisanship and tribalism.”

“I do feel comfortable sharing my ideas at Lighthouse and feel that I belong—however I’m very aware of the fact that I’m cis, straight, and white. I’m not sure how someone in a minority community would answer those questions.”



MOVING FORWARD

This survey data gives us a better understanding of who's represented in our community and how our efforts to be a more equitable and inclusive organization have been successful—but more importantly, where those efforts have fallen short. There is much work to be done.

The plan is to start with the following:

- 1. Hire consultants to inform, strategize, and prioritize our EDIA work.** Continue working with equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility consultants to inspire and inform our work at all levels—from management and board to staff, volunteers, and faculty. In the last year, we've held equity and inclusion trainings with Suzi Q. Smith and LGBTQ+ awareness training with Sydney Fowler. Both are experienced trainers and Lighthouse faculty members. We're also working with two additional consultant groups—**Creative Strategies for Change** and **Gemini Group**—who will lead staff and board training sessions. They'll both help inform our strategic planning, training, and monitoring processes.
- 2. Develop more equitable and inclusive relationships with community members.** Fostering stronger connections with our community members will elevate our equity work and allow us to discover—and meet—the needs of our community. Additionally, improving communication between the Lighthouse staff, board, and community members will help build trust.
- 3. Improve staff, faculty, and board member recruitment and retention.** We must build a more diverse and equitable leadership team among the board, staff, and faculty. As mentioned above, we'll work with our consultants on furthering our anti-bias hiring and retention practices, ensuring that our leadership and staff both demonstrate our commitment to diversity and reflect the communities we serve.
- 4. Create a system for receiving honest feedback.** In addition to collecting regular demographic survey data, we will create a way for community members to provide feedback on how we're doing—where we're succeeding in becoming more inclusive, and where we're falling short.

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE JUST A STARTING POINT.
OUR JOURNEY TOWARD EQUITY WILL TAKE TIME,
RESOURCES, AND COMMITMENT. BUT WE BELIEVE THESE
ACTION ITEMS LAY A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR THE WORK.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF THE LIGHTHOUSE
COMMUNITY, AND FOR BELIEVING IN OUR MISSION.

Contact us with any questions, thoughts, or concerns:

303-297-1185

info@lighthousewriters.org

1 SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, POPULATION ESTIMATES PROGRAM 2020, [HTTPS://WWW.METRODENVER.ORG/REGIONAL-DATA/DEMO-GRAPHICS/ETHNICITY](https://www.metrodenver.org/regional-data/demo-graphics/ethnicity)

2 SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER ON BIRTH DEFECTS AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION [HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/NCBDDD/DISABILITYANDHEALTH/IMPACTS-COLORADO.HTML](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts-colorado.html)