

# Wage Inequality in the Workplace

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2020 was an unpredictable year full of change. Issues of racial justice, inclusion, and equality were highlighted and many companies took steps to build a more diverse workforce.

This year, in our 5th annual report on Wage Inequality, we dug deeper into the data to truly uncover how underrepresented identities including age and race compound the wage gap we already see with gender. Based on the data, it's clear that while progress on increasing workplace equality is being made, we still have a long way to go. The best way to narrow wage gaps and make pay more equitable? Increasing transparency — something we always aim to do through our annual reports.

We continue to see that groups who are paid less also expect lower salaries than their white, male counterparts — even if they have the same experience. These individuals can be stuck in a cycle of lower pay if they have no

way of truly knowing how much they deserve in compensation for their role. Our data shows that simply offering everyone visibility into what a fair wage truly is would make a meaningful impact towards narrowing the gap.

In 2021, employers must take action. Tech employees today expect to be compensated based on their merit without being disadvantaged by their gender or race. Companies that won't take meaningful steps towards lessening their wage gap risk losing out on top talent who demand forward-thinking and inclusive leaders.

We've worked to take action for ourselves at Hired. We've helped increase the diversity of our workforce and that of our clients through tools within our platform that mask candidates' demographic details and reduce unconscious bias. Our platform also alerts employers and candidates if they receive or request an offer significantly above or below the average for

their position and level of experience, helping to reduce the wage gap. We've also developed the [Ally Series](#), a broad offering of resources to help you build diverse teams through more transparent and equitable hiring practices. For example, [our most recent guide](#) offers actionable tips for employers on how to use technology to drive DE&I in every stage of the recruiting process, featuring insights from our partners at Textio, Criteria Corp, and Greenhouse.

We hope this report can give employers the confidence that increasing transparency and narrowing the wage gap is the right thing to do — both for your team and for your business. We envision a world where all hiring is equitable, efficient, and transparent, and we know with the right commitment, that goal is achievable.



Josh Brenner  
CEO, Hired

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- **The wage gap:**  
The gender and race wage gap is narrowing, but still prevalent, with Black and Hispanic women continuing to see the widest gap. 59% of the time, men were offered higher salaries than women for the same job title at the same company in 2020, compared to 65% in 2019. In terms of the pay difference, companies offer women 2.5% less on average than men for the same roles, compared to 4.4% less in 2019.
- **The expectation gap:**  
We continue to see that groups who are paid less also expect lower salaries than their white, male counterparts — even if they have the same experience. The gender expectation gap, for example, decreased from 5.8% in 2019 to 3.2% in 2020, showing a clear correlation between the expectation and wage gap.
- **Discrimination:**  
Our data shows that gender and race discrimination remain prevalent in the workplace, directly contributing to unequal pay. White employees are less likely to have discovered they were being paid less than a colleague in the same role. On the occasions where they do discover a discrepancy, they receive a salary increase after surfacing the discrepancy 28% of the time. Comparably, Black or Hispanic employees receive salary increases 20% and 15% of the time, respectively.
- **Taking action:**  
Companies need to take meaningful steps to create more inclusive and transparent work environments. Over 70% of tech candidates believe employers need to increase salary transparency across their company.
- **Prioritizing DE&I:**  
If companies want to attract diverse, talented candidates, they will need to make a genuine commitment to advancing initiatives that foster equality. Over 83% of survey respondents said that it is important that their employer takes steps to promote diversity and inclusion.

# The wage gap

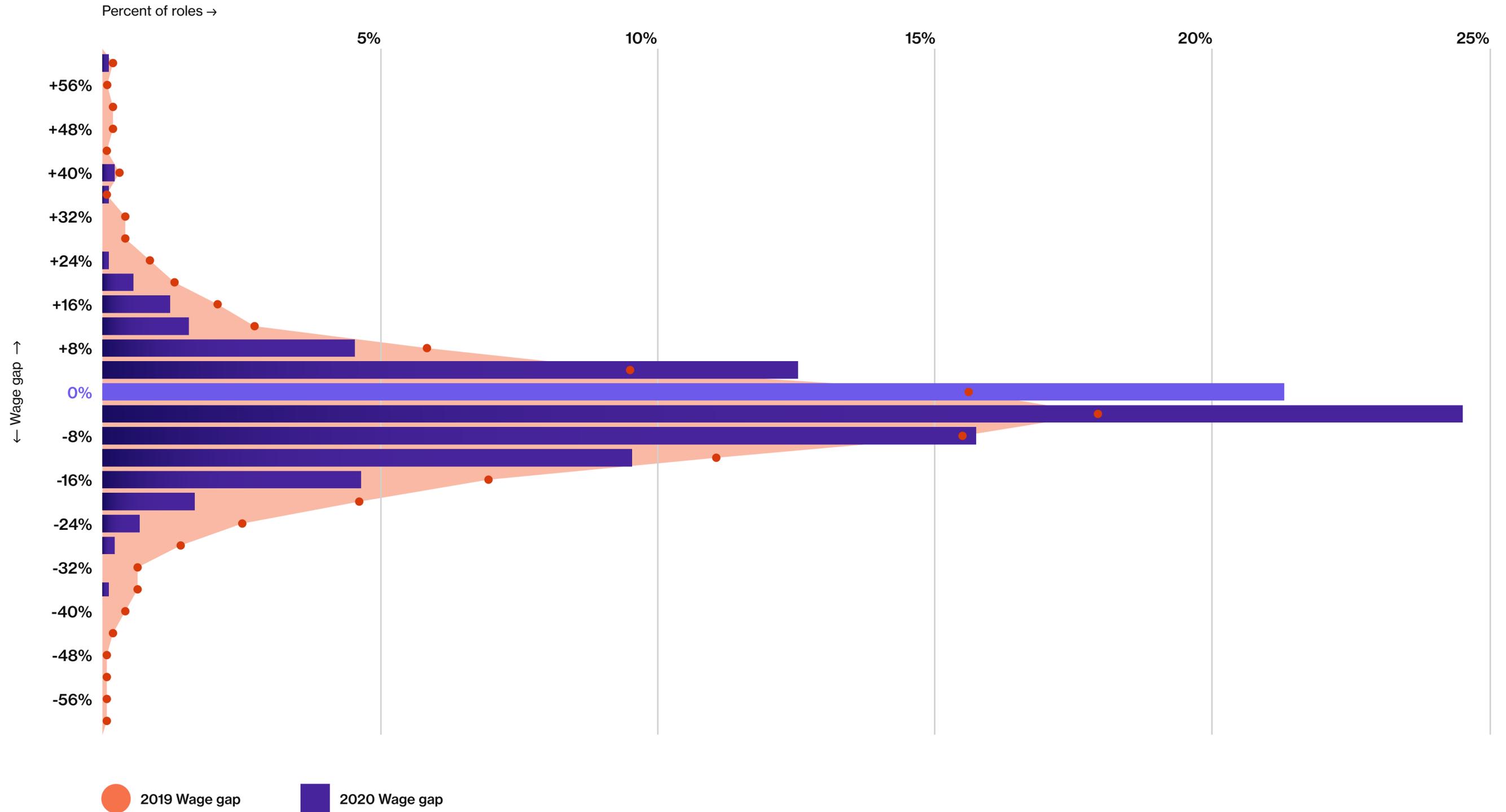
The wage gap in regards to gender and race has persisted, largely unchanged, since we began researching it in the tech industry in 2016. However, there has been positive progress in the past year as the wage gap becomes less pronounced, both in terms of frequency and severity.

## Key Findings

- 59% of the time, men were offered higher salaries than women for the same job title at the same company in 2020, compared to 65% in 2019. In terms of the pay difference, companies offer women 2.5% less on average than men for the same roles, compared to 4.4% in 2019.
- Certain markets have more work to do than others when it comes to narrowing the gender wage gap but all showed women are consistently offered less than men. In London, the gender wage gap remains at 10%, whereas it's down to 5% in the San Francisco Bay Area. Most markets are in between these extremes, with Chicago and Boston at 8%, New York and Toronto at 7%, and Seattle at 6%.

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## 2020 Gender wage gap

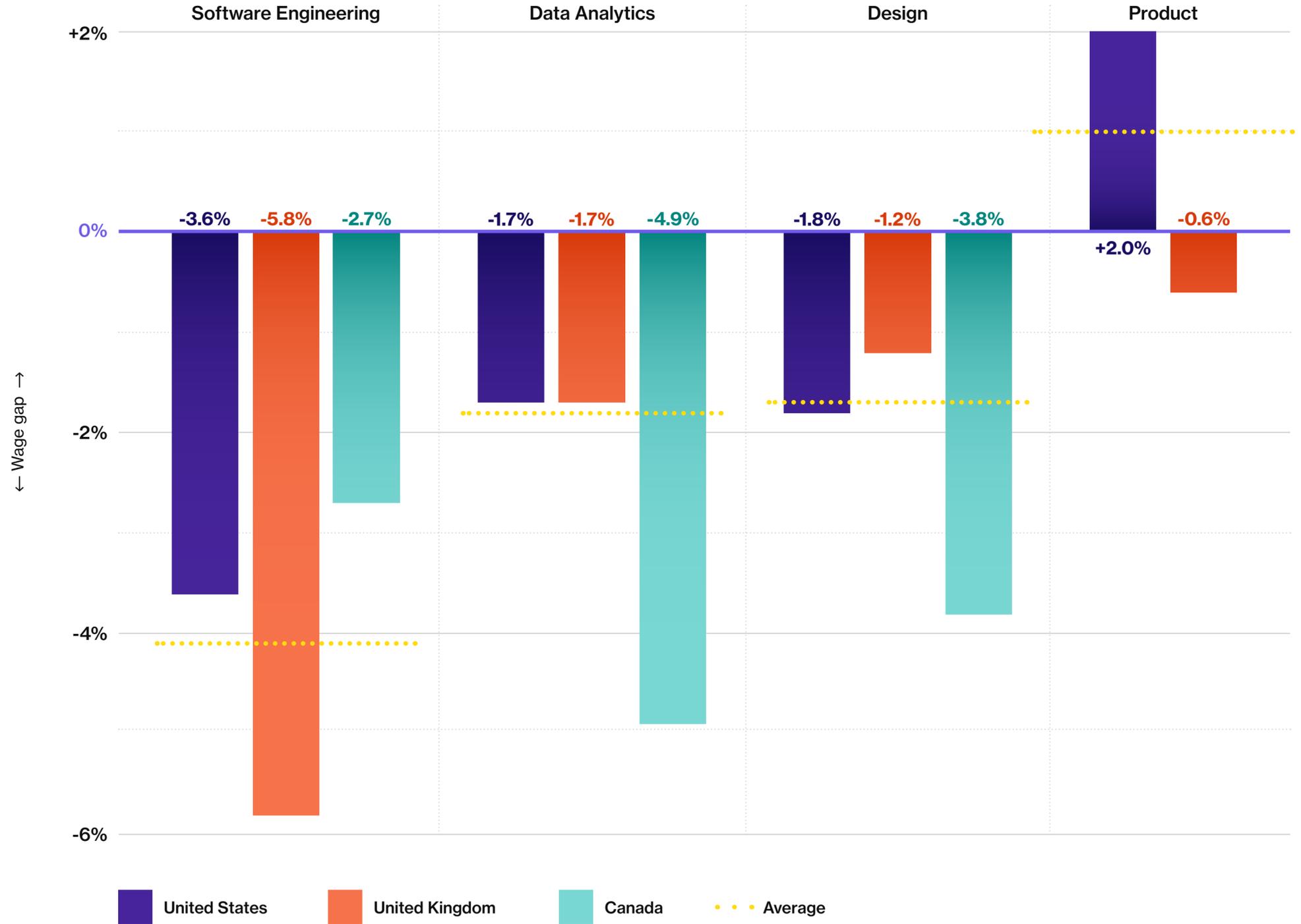


# The wage gap: Role and region

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The gender wage gap is significantly different depending on tech employees' positions. Women software engineers are offered salaries that are on average 4.1% less than their male counterparts. By contrast, women product managers are offered salaries 1% higher compared to their male counterparts.

2020 Gender wage gap by role and region



## The wage gap: Race

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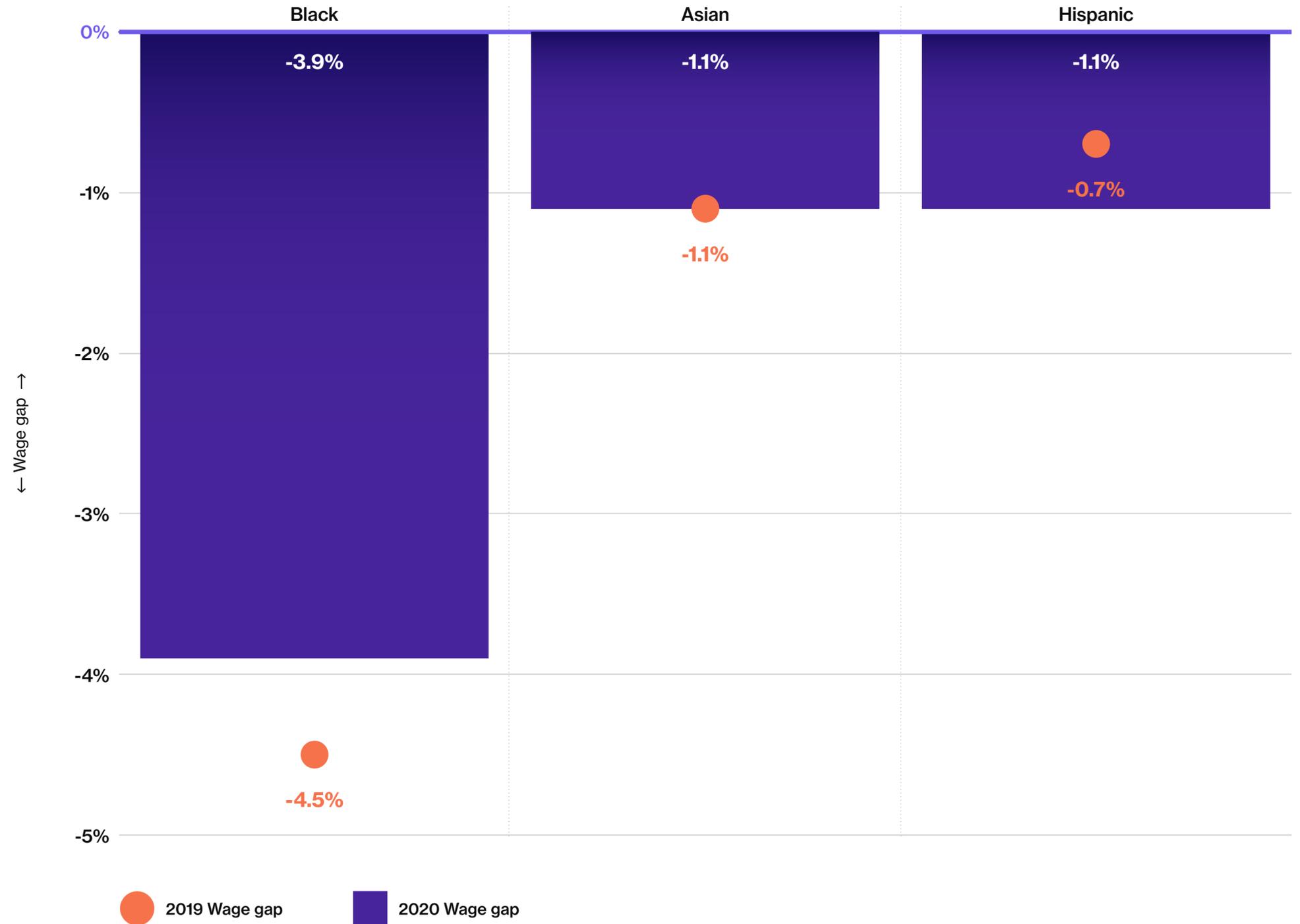
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Intersectionality makes a measurable impact in the wage gap discussion. Looking beyond gender, people of traditionally disadvantaged races and ages see a gap in wages as well. Black candidates saw wages that were 3.9% lower than the baseline in 2020 vs. a gap of 4.5% in 2019. By contrast, Asian candidates saw no change, receiving offers that were 1.1% lower in 2020 and 2019.

2020 Race wage gap



## The wage gap: Sexual orientation

The data shows a wage gap by sexuality as well, but the impact was substantially lower than those caused by age or race. There was a pronounced geographic difference, with no measurable wage gap by sexuality in the United States, but a wage gap of 2.4% in the United Kingdom.

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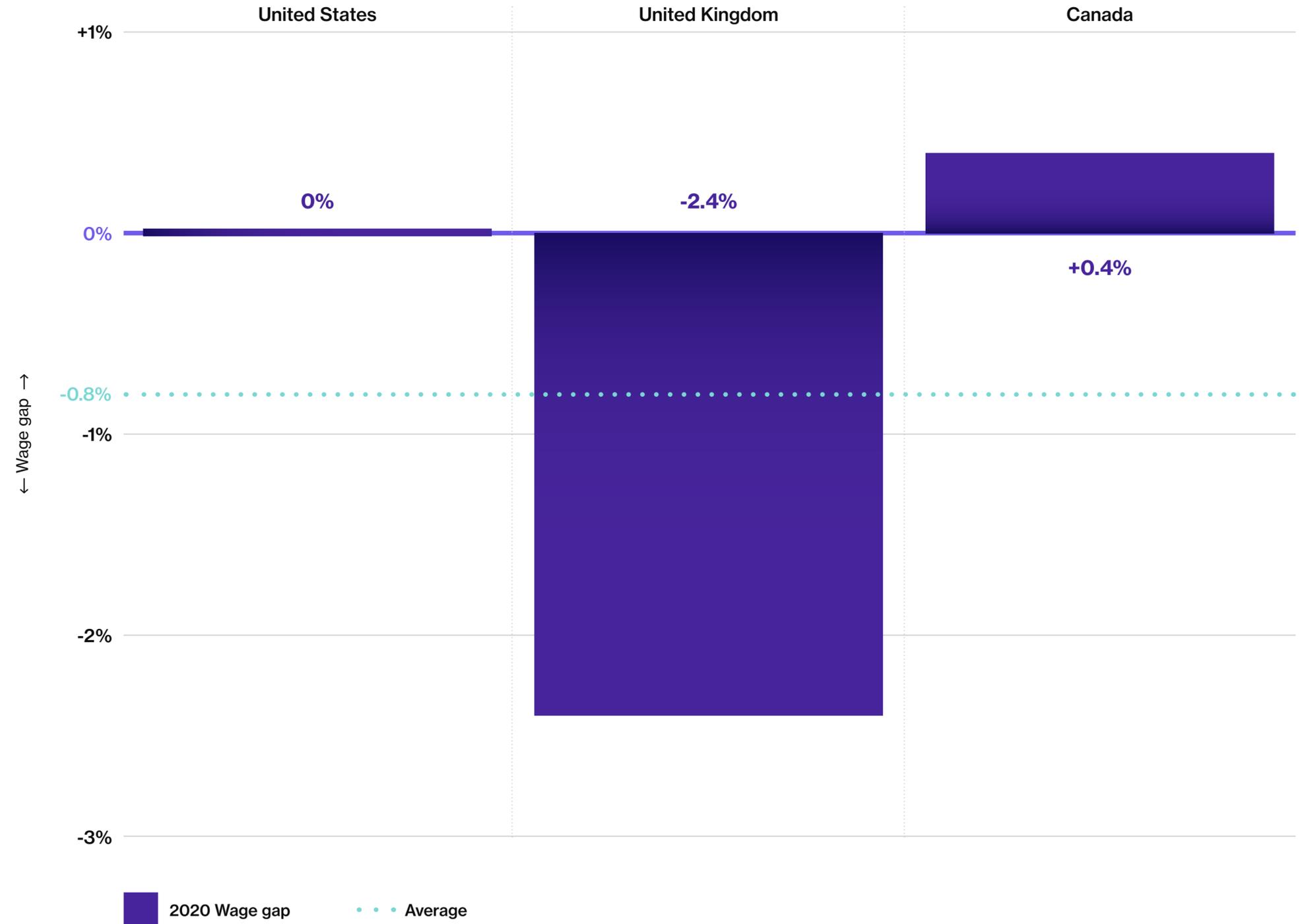
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### 2020 LGBTQ wage gap



# The wage gap: Location

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Gender wage gaps differ by location, but the gap is narrowing across the board. If the average white man made \$1, the data shows women made less in all locations in 2019 and 2020.

### 2020 Gender wage gap by location

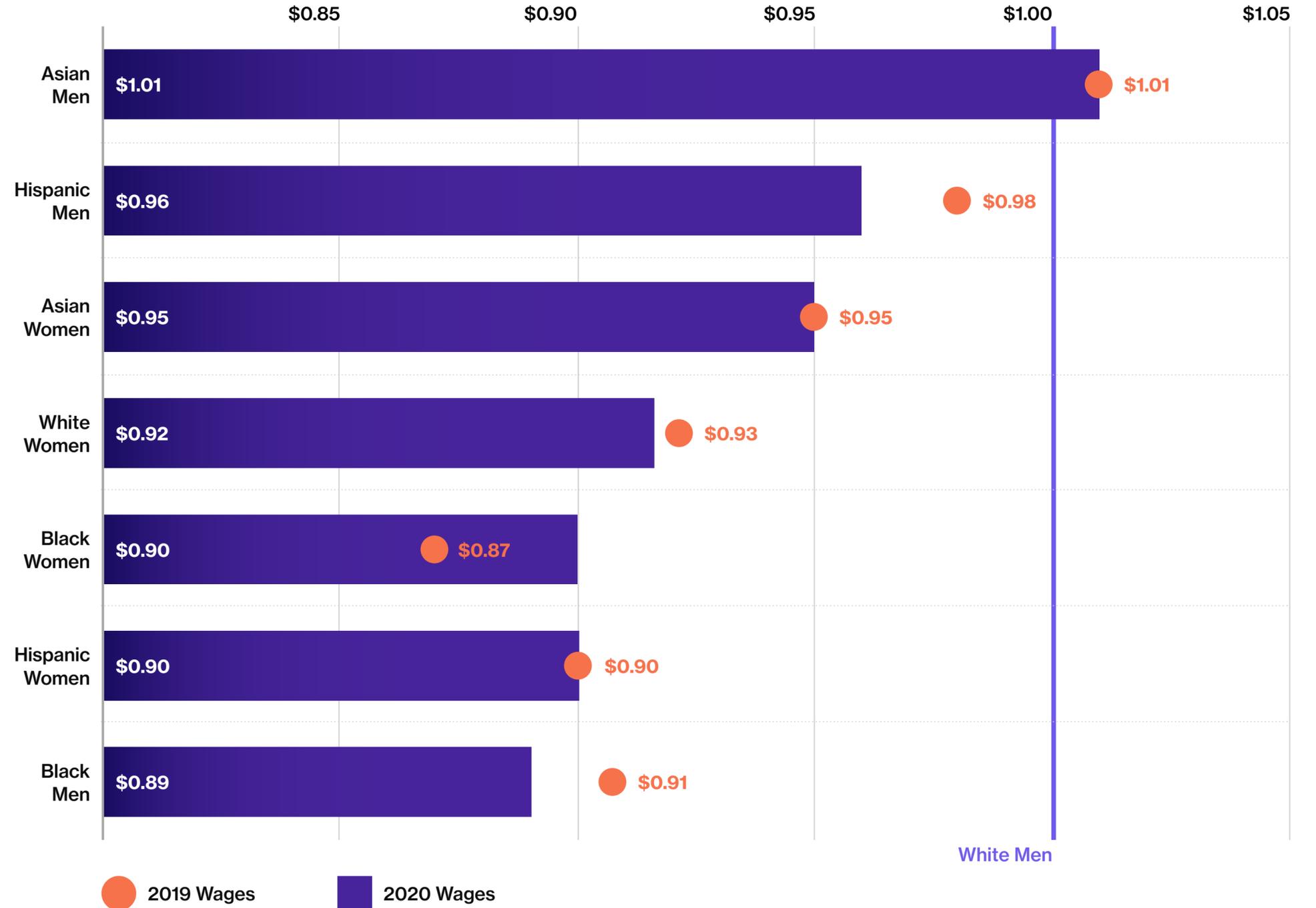


# The wage gap: Gender and race

The wage gap decreased by race over the past year as well. While it was \$0.87 for Black women in 2019, they now make \$0.90 per every \$1 their white, male counterpart earns.

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2020 Gender and race wage gap



# The wage gap: Belief in the gap

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While the wage gap is a well-accepted fact among most tech workers, women and racial minorities are more likely to believe that there is a wage gap than their male, white counterparts.

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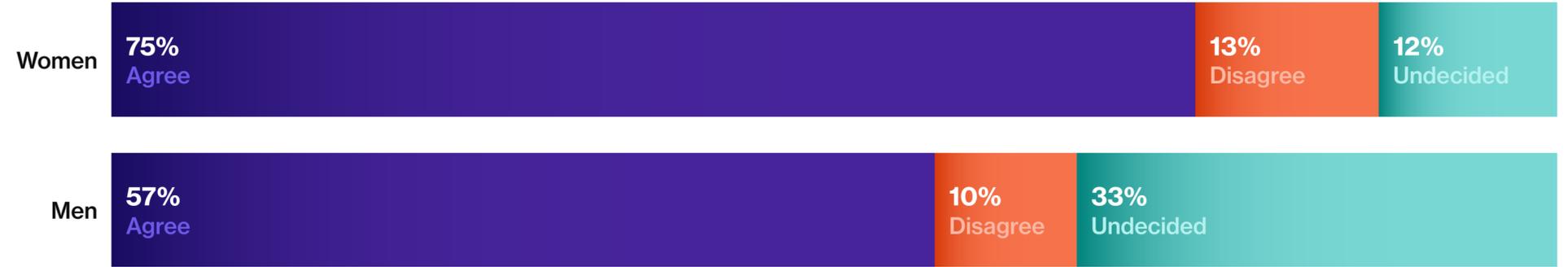
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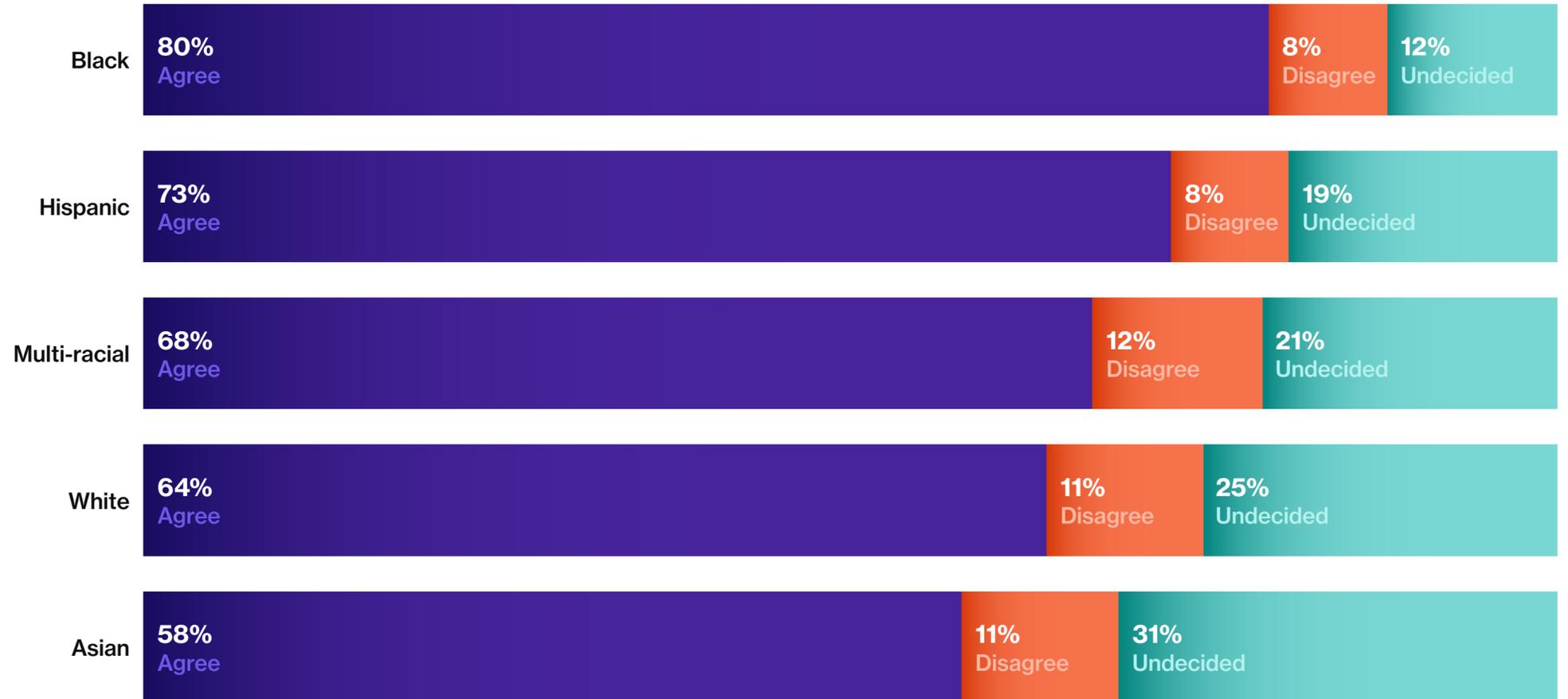
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## 2020 Belief in the wage gap

*Do you believe the pay gap exists for: Gender identity?*



*Do you believe the pay gap exists for: Race and ethnicity?*



# Discrimination

Workplace discrimination can take many forms, from overt harassment and bias to more subtle means, such as unconscious bias. Discrimination, measured both by the personal experience of candidates and our marketplace data, remains a problem for the tech industry.

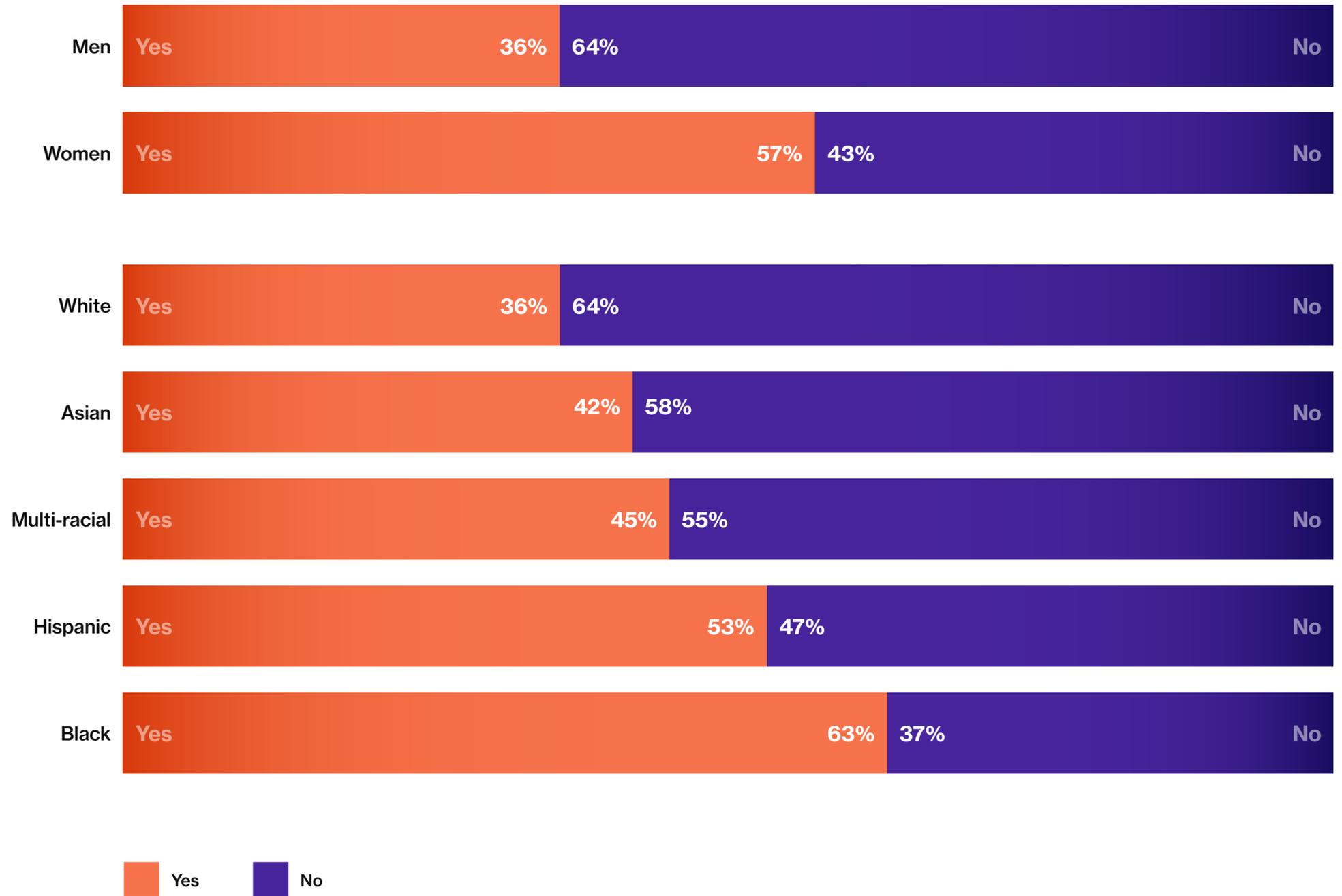
## Key Findings

- Based on survey results, 36% of men report experiencing discrimination in the hiring process compared to 57% of women.
- White employees are less likely to have discovered they were being paid less than a colleague in the same role. On the occasions where they do discover a discrepancy, they receive a salary increase after surfacing the discrepancy 28% of the time. When Black or Asian employees surface pay discrepancies, they receive salary increases 20% and 15% of the time, respectively.
- Women received 9% fewer interview requests than men — a trend that remains largely unchanged since 2018.

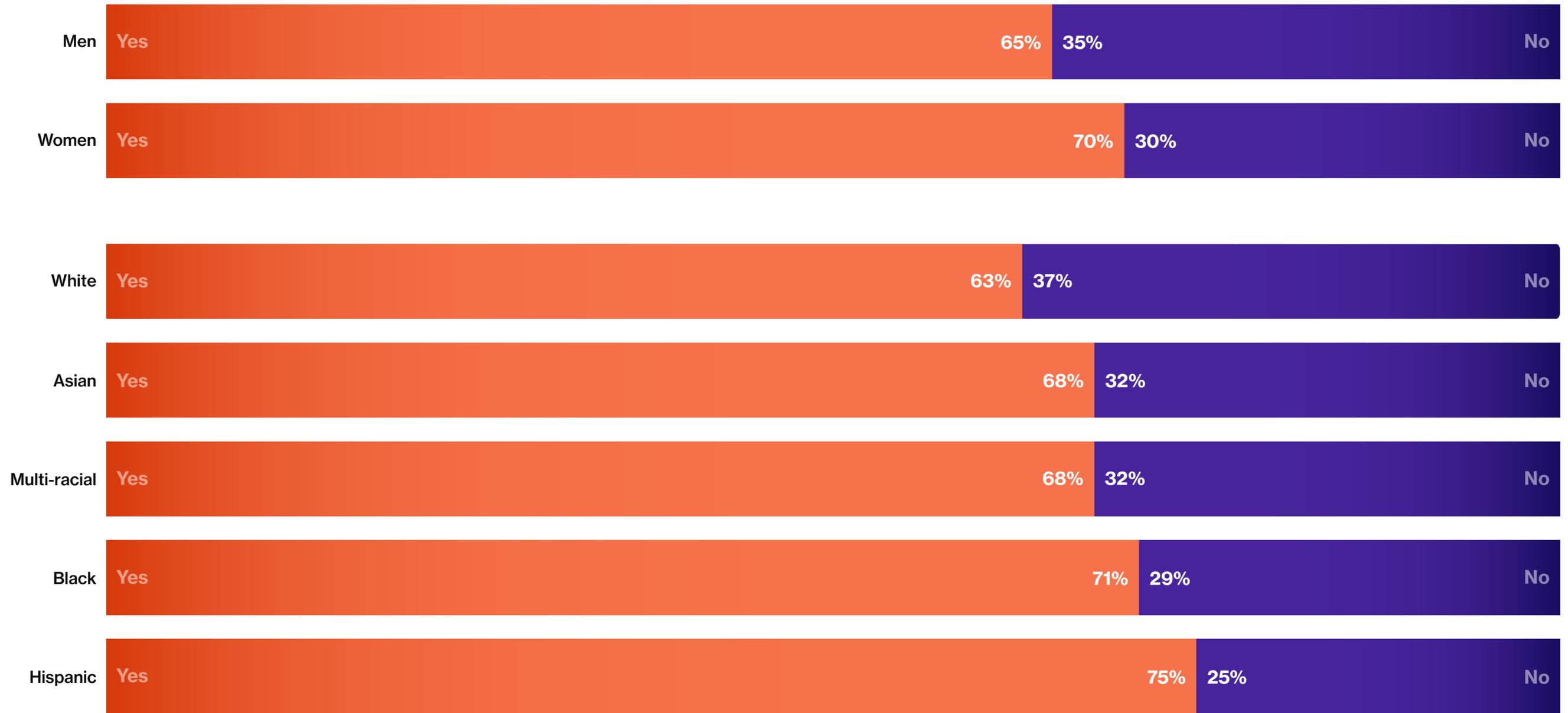
## Discrimination: Personal experience

Our data shows that discrimination in the workplace is prevalent. Based on survey results, white men report significantly less discrimination in the hiring process and are less likely to have discovered they were being paid less than a colleague in the same role. On the occasions where they do discover a discrepancy, they are more successful at arguing for an increase in salary compared to women, or Black or Hispanic employees.

Have you ever felt discriminated against in the hiring process due to demographic differences, for example, gender, racial, sexual orientation or sexuality, age, disability, or neural divergence?



Have you ever found out that you were being paid less than a peer in the same role?

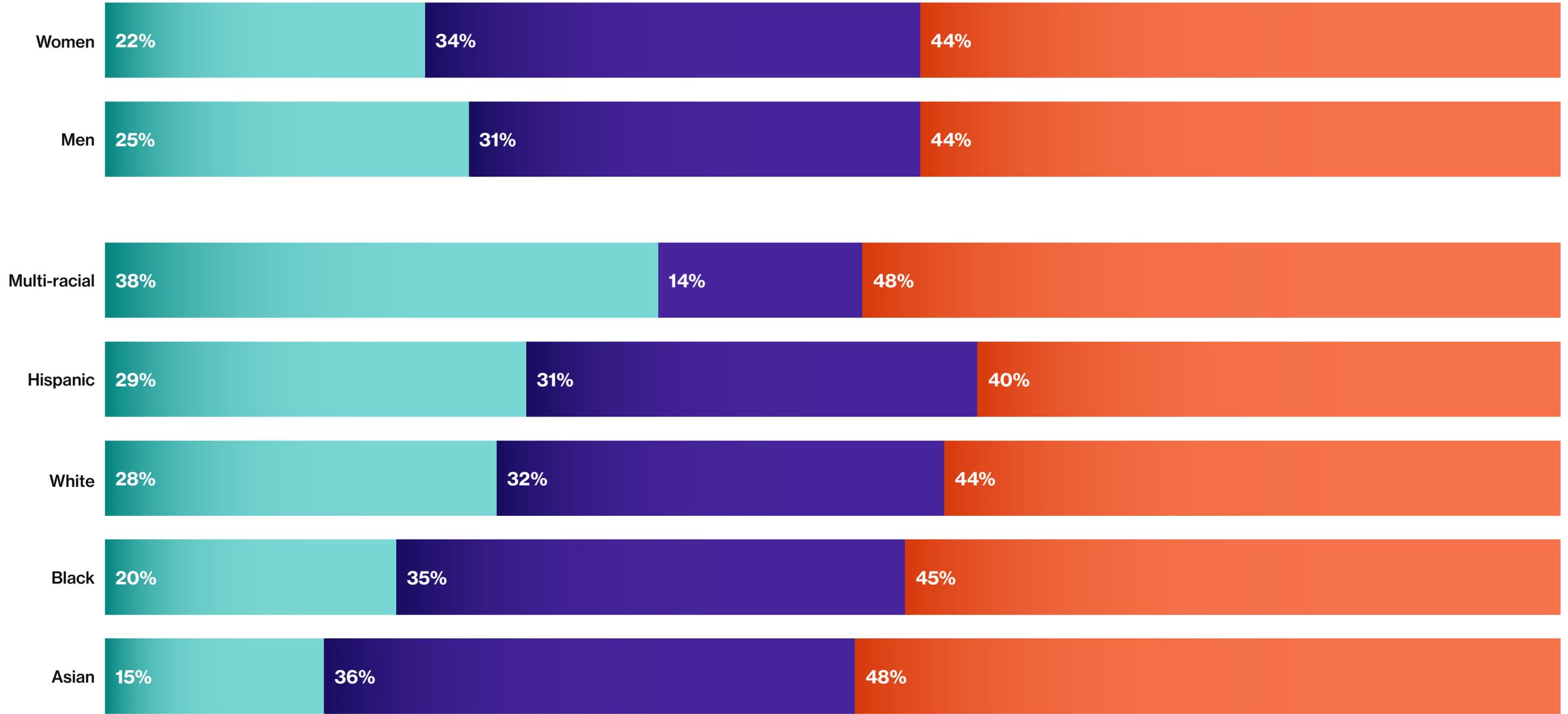


Yes No

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## If you took an action about being paid less than a peer, what was the outcome?



Given a raise    Promised a raise that never occurred    Told the pay gap was due to other factors

## Discrimination: Gender

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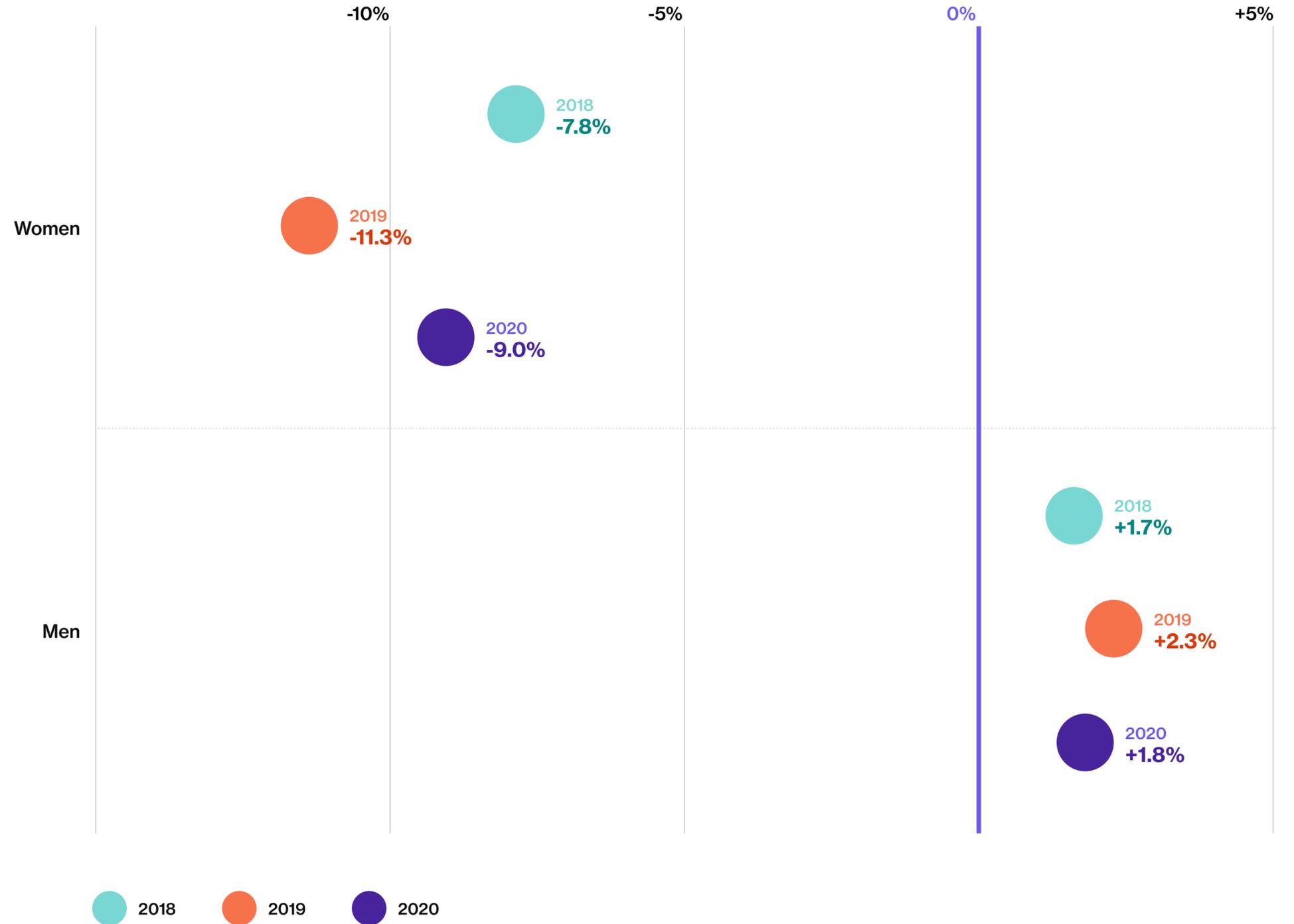
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Discrimination based on gender is seen clearly in the data from our hiring marketplace as well. For women, one of the key measurable impacts of discrimination is seen in job opportunity. After factoring in the relative number of men vs. women candidates on the Hired marketplace, women received 9% fewer interview requests than men — a trend that remains largely unchanged since 2018.

2020 Interview request under/overrepresentation by gender identity



## Discrimination: Gender and location

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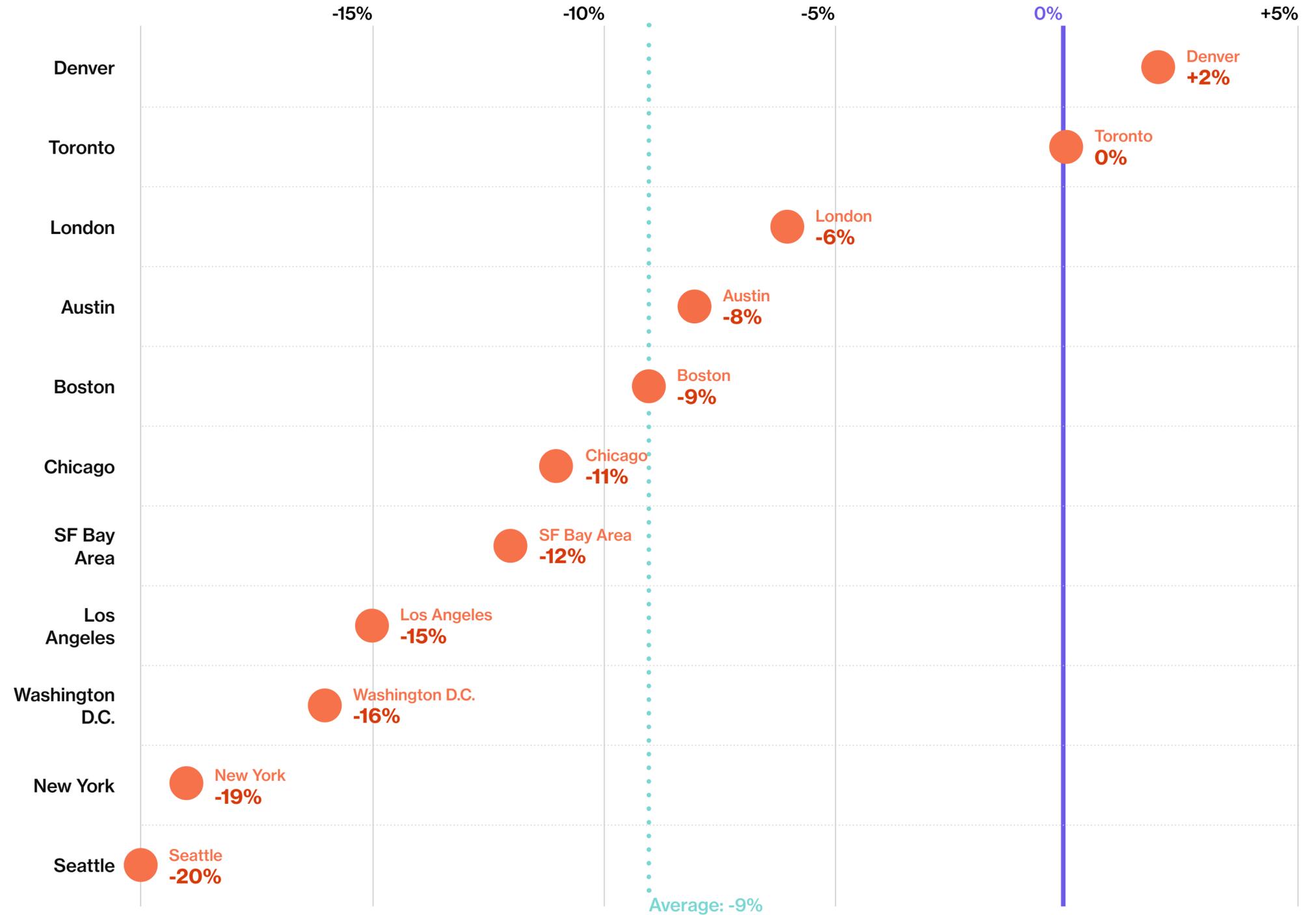
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Different geographic markets see varying discrepancies in how disadvantaged women are in the interview process. For example, women candidates in Denver are overrepresented, receiving 2% more interview requests compared to their male counterparts. Seattle, on the other hand, is particularly unfavorable. Women candidates in Seattle are 20% less likely to receive a request for an interview compared to male candidates on the same skillset.

2020 Women's interview request under/overrepresentation by location



## Discrimination: Race

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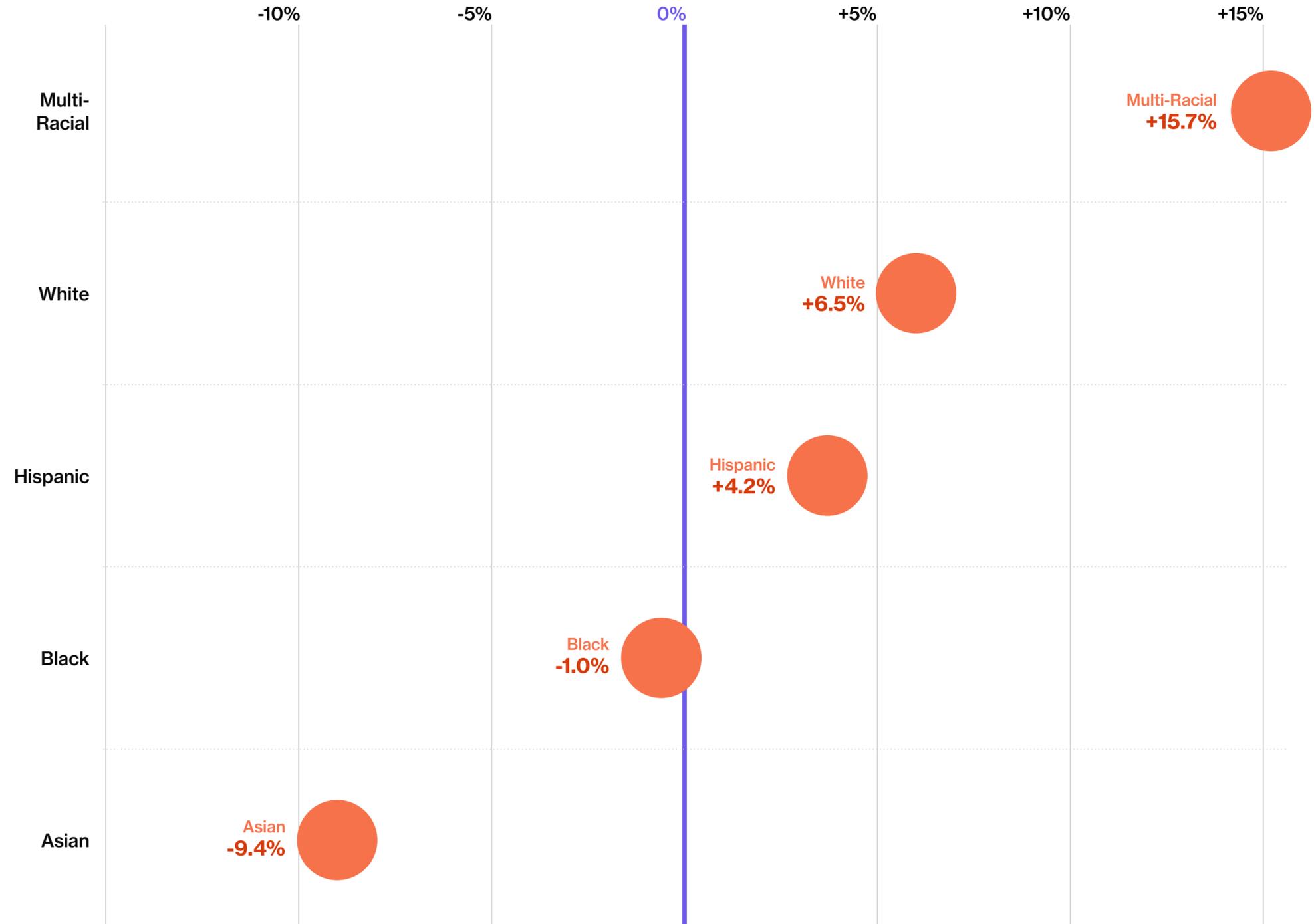
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The opportunity gap is seen in regards to race as well and not every race is treated equally. White, Hispanic, and multi-racial candidates receive proportionally more interview requests — 4-16% more on average — while Asian and Black candidates receive fewer requests, with 9% less for Asian candidates for example.

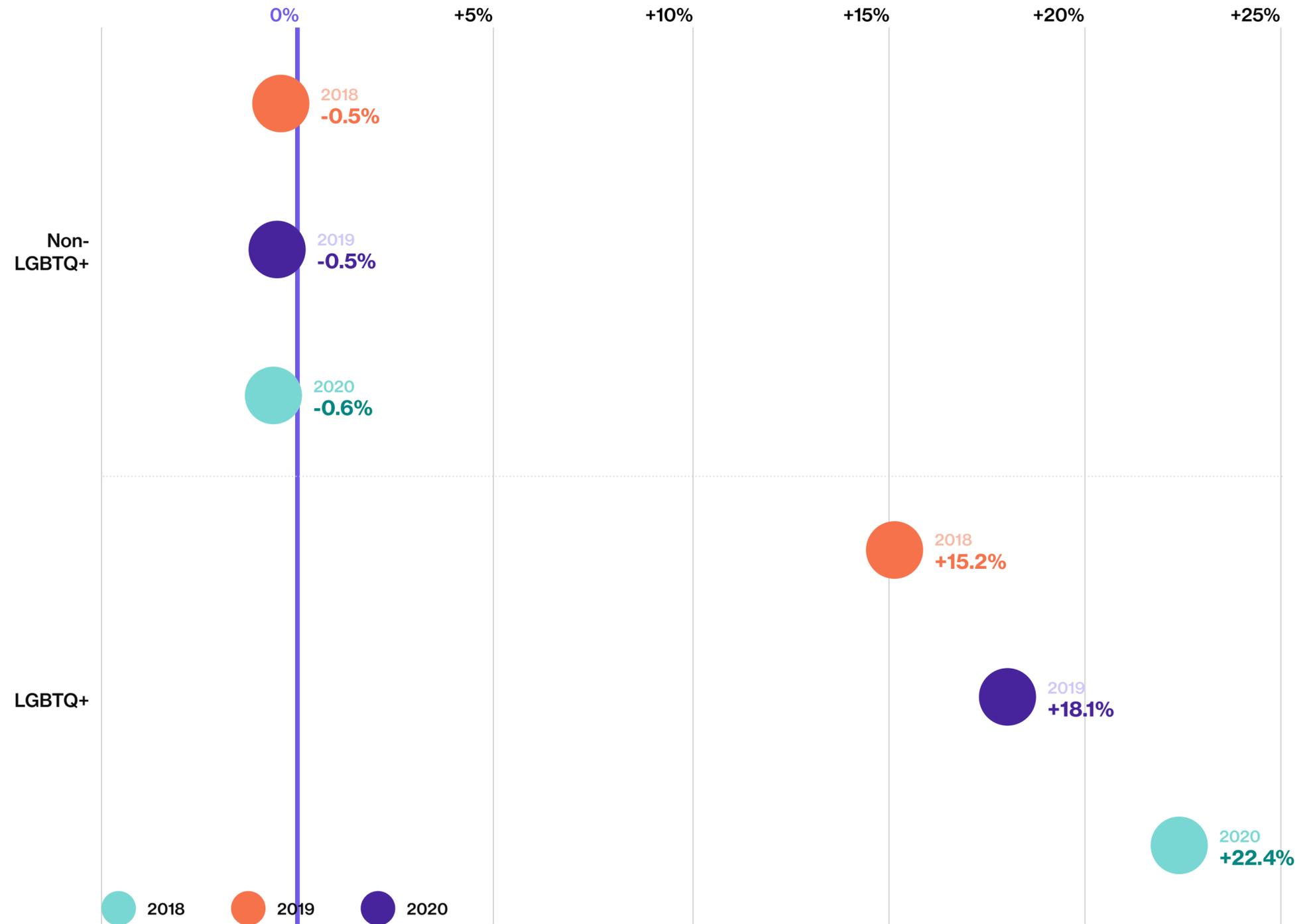
2020 Interview request under/overrepresentation by race



## Discrimination: Sexual orientation

Notably, the same gap isn't present for LGBTQ+ candidates. LGBTQ+ candidates are 22% more likely to receive an interview request than non-LGBTQ+ candidates — a pattern that has increased over the past three years.

2020 Interview request under/overrepresentation by sexual orientation



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# The expectation gap

Every year that Hired studies the wage gap, we consistently find that there is a strong link between the wage gap and the salary expectations of disadvantaged groups. [Research using our marketplace has even shown](#) that this “expectation gap” is correlated so strongly with the wage gap in tech that solving it has the potential to end the wage gap entirely.

Whether this gap in salary expectations is driven by a lack of resources for minority candidates or by candidates asking for lowering salaries in an attempt to counterbalance expected discrimination, employers that are serious about ending the wage gap should start by addressing this expectation gap.

## Key Findings:

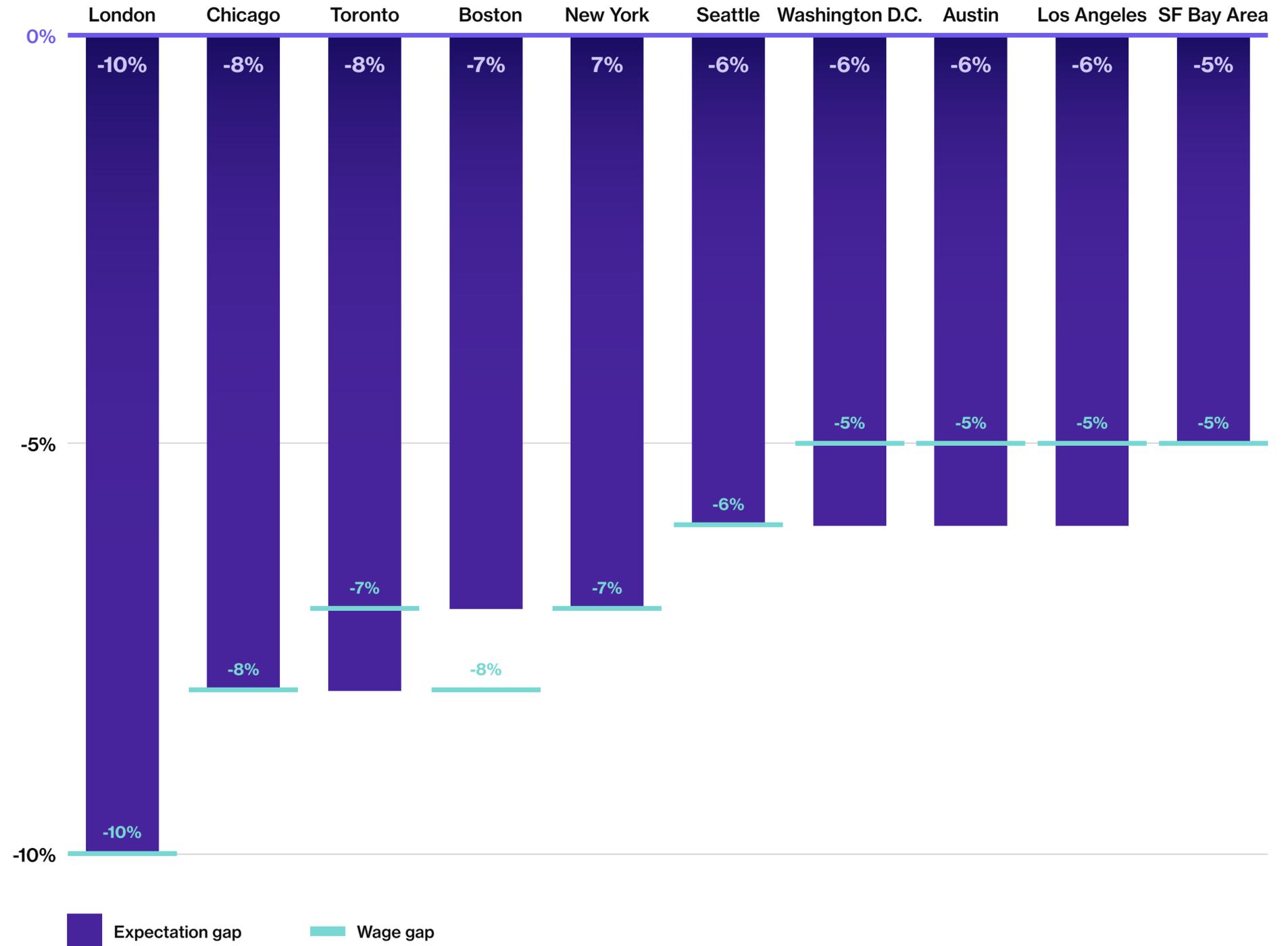
- Race contributes significantly to the expectation gap, as low wage expectations are most prevalent in minority women compared to White women or minority men. For example, Black women expect salaries that are 10% lower than those of their white male counterparts.
- 60% of women candidates received offers lower than the average for their position and years of experience in 2020, compared to 66% in 2019.

## The expectation gap: Gender

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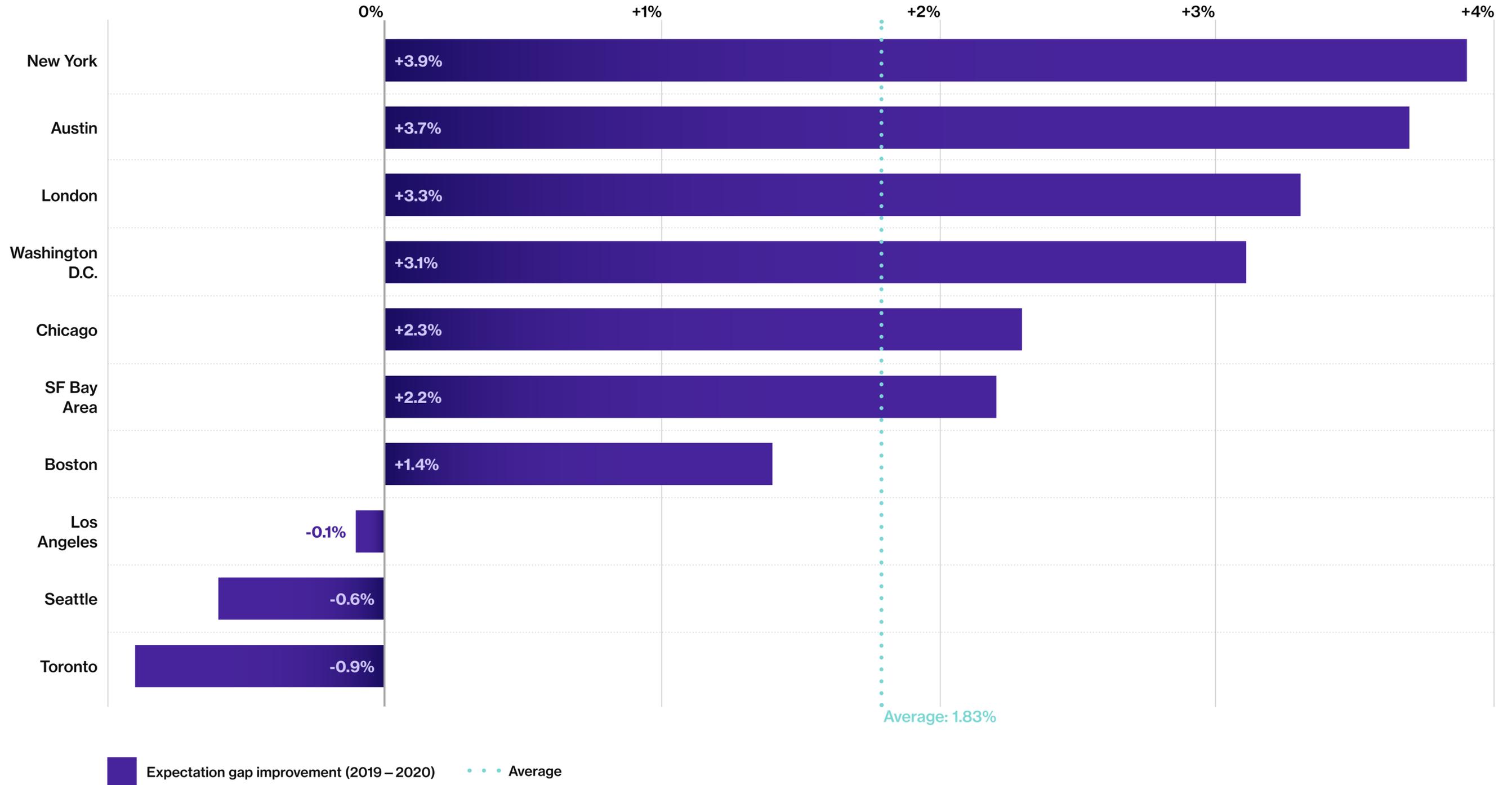
The gender expectation gap improved slightly from 2019, but it is still largely prevalent. 60% of women candidates received offers lower than the average for their position and years of experience in 2020, compared to 66% in 2019. Companies offer women 2.5% less on average than men for the same roles, compared to 4.4% in 2019. At the same time, the average expectation gap decreased from 5.8% in 2019 to 3.2% in 2020.

2020 Gender expectation gap by location



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### 2020 Gender expectation gap improvement by location

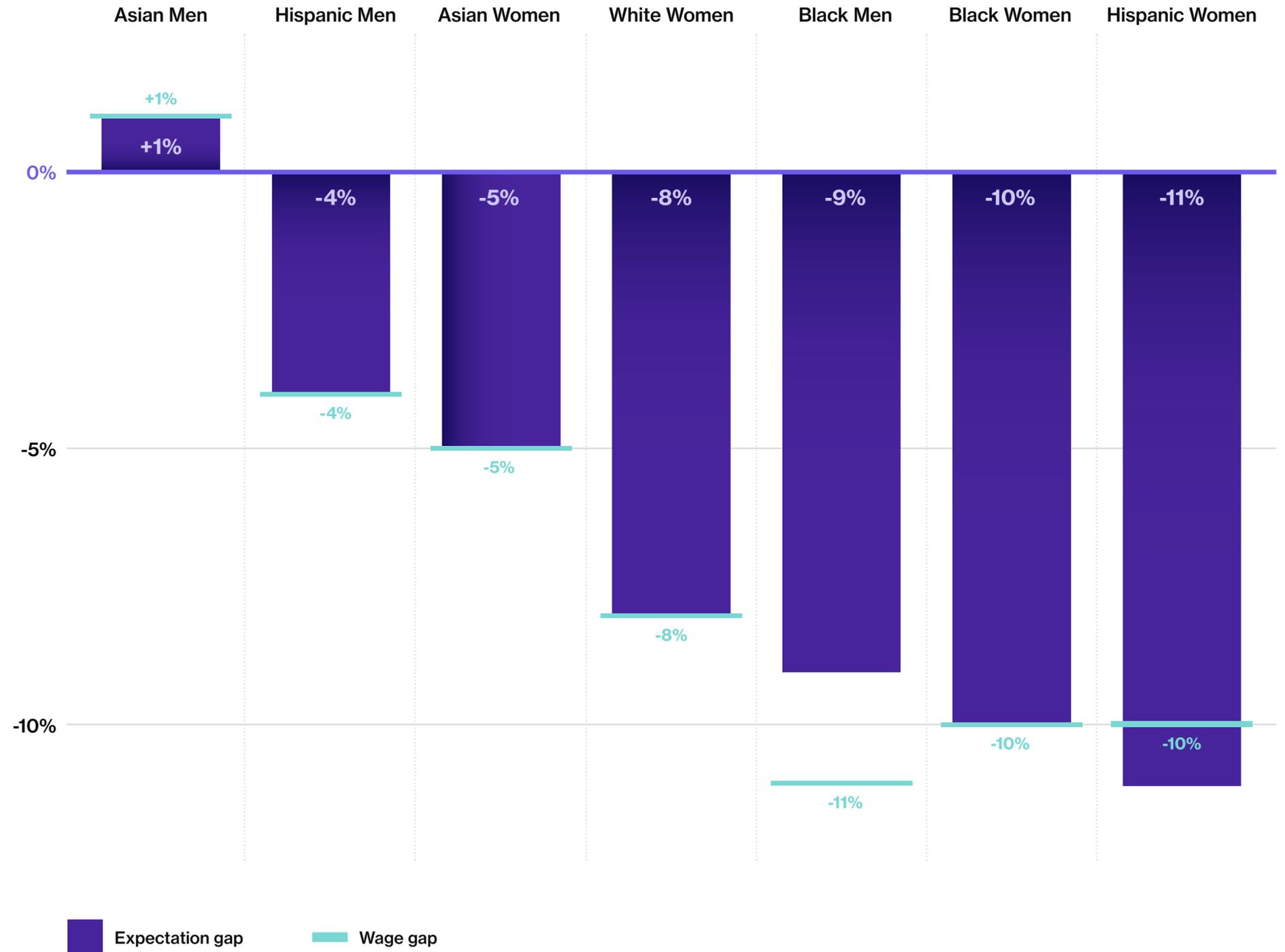


## The expectation gap: Race and gender

Race also contributes significantly to the expectation gap, as low wage expectations are most prevalent in minority women compared to white women or minority men. For example, Black women expect salaries that are 10% lower than those of their white male counterparts.

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2020 Race and gender expectation gap

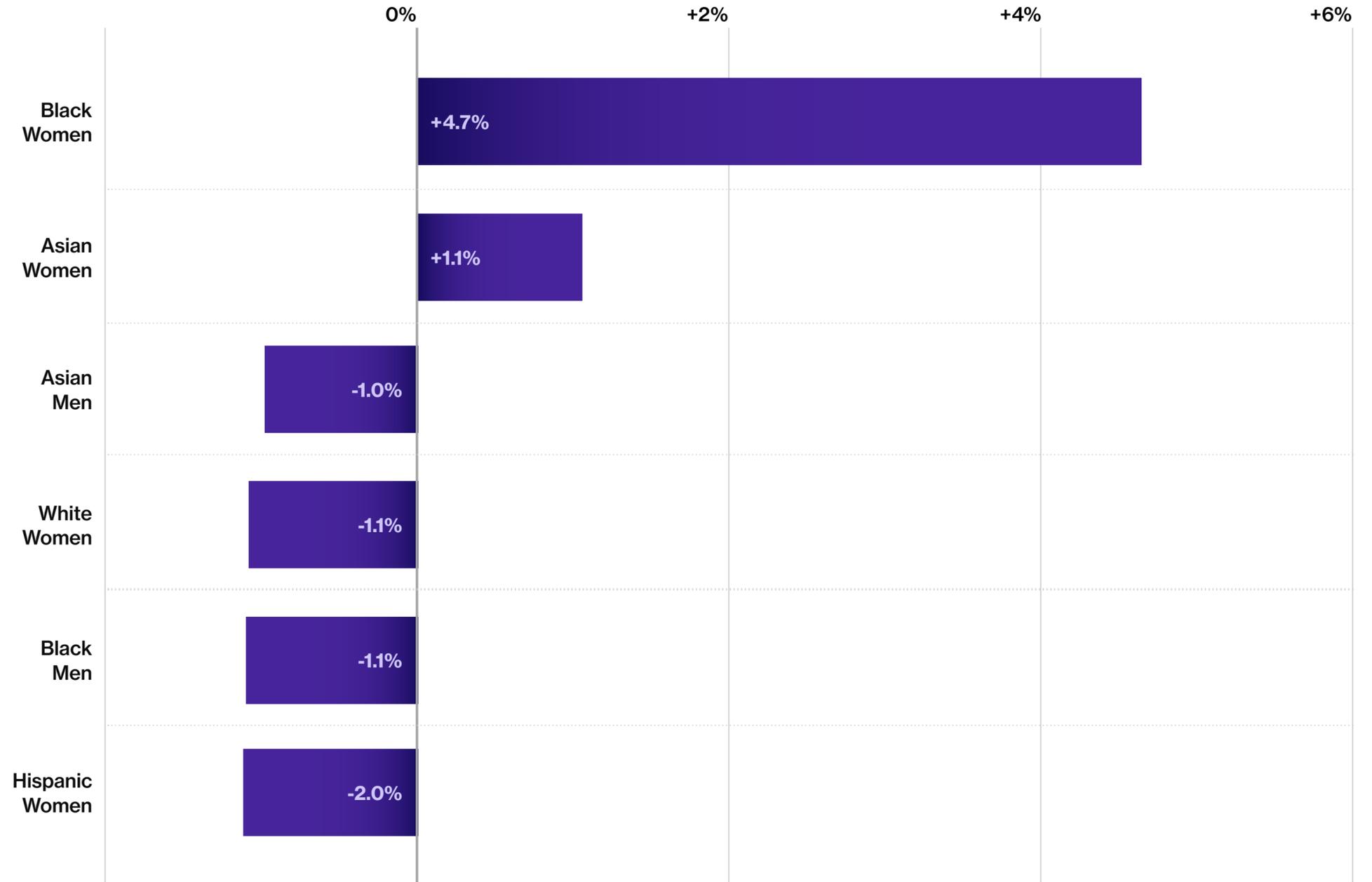


## The expectation gap: Race and gender

Overall, while the gap is lowering, Black candidates and Hispanic women candidates expect salaries lower than white men, leading to a comparable wage gap as well. Asian men continued to see an expectation gap slightly higher than white men.

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2020 Race and gender expectation gap improvement



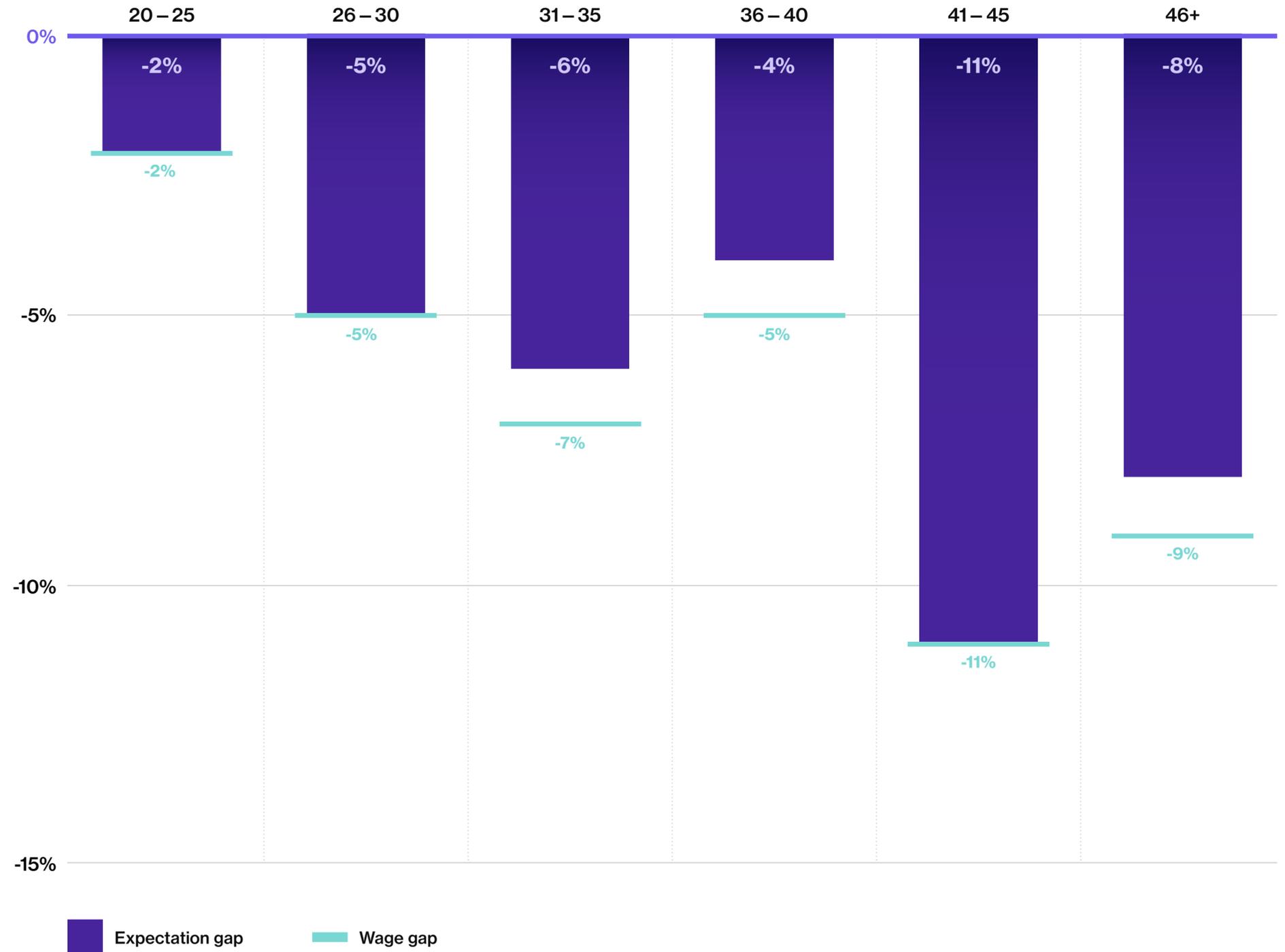
■ Expectation gap improvement (2019 – 2020)

## The expectation gap: Age and gender

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The expectation gap starts at the beginning of the career and becomes more pronounced as women advance in their professional journey. Unfortunately, the gap is most significant for older age groups and particularly around the difference from expectation to wage gap. It has also gotten worse year over year, suggesting that economic challenges may have impacted older generations most.

2020 Women's expectation gap by age

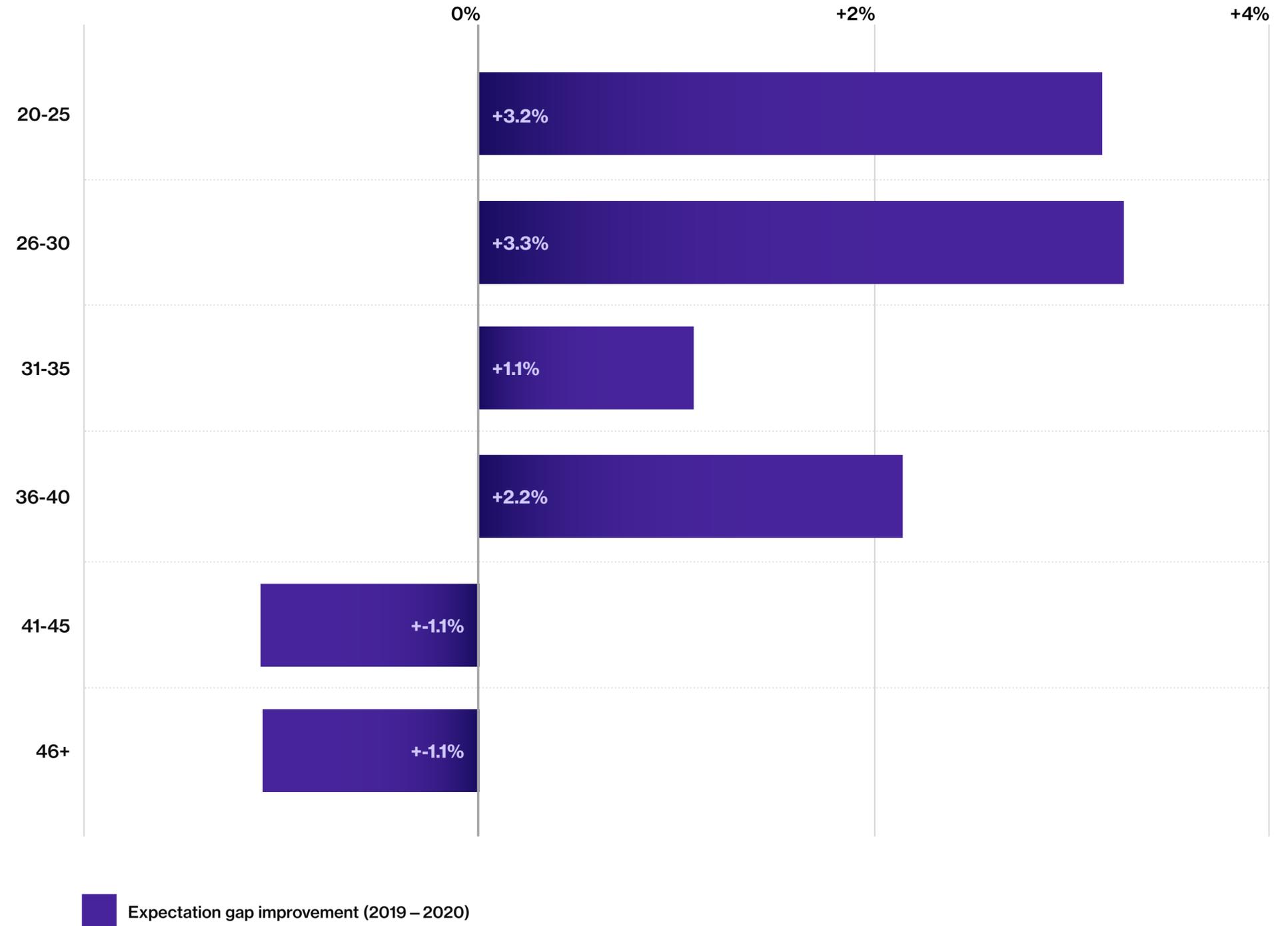


## The expectation gap: Age and gender

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There are, however, positive signs that the expectation gap is beginning to narrow. We found that younger employees are more likely to ask for, and receive, more equal wages than in past generations — a trend that has continued YOY. And, when entry-level employees are paid more equitably, it increases their chances of being paid fairly throughout their careers. Continuing to increase wage transparency and reducing the expectation gap for entry-level employees could have a profound, long-term impact on wage inequality as a whole.

2020 Women's expectation gap improvement by age

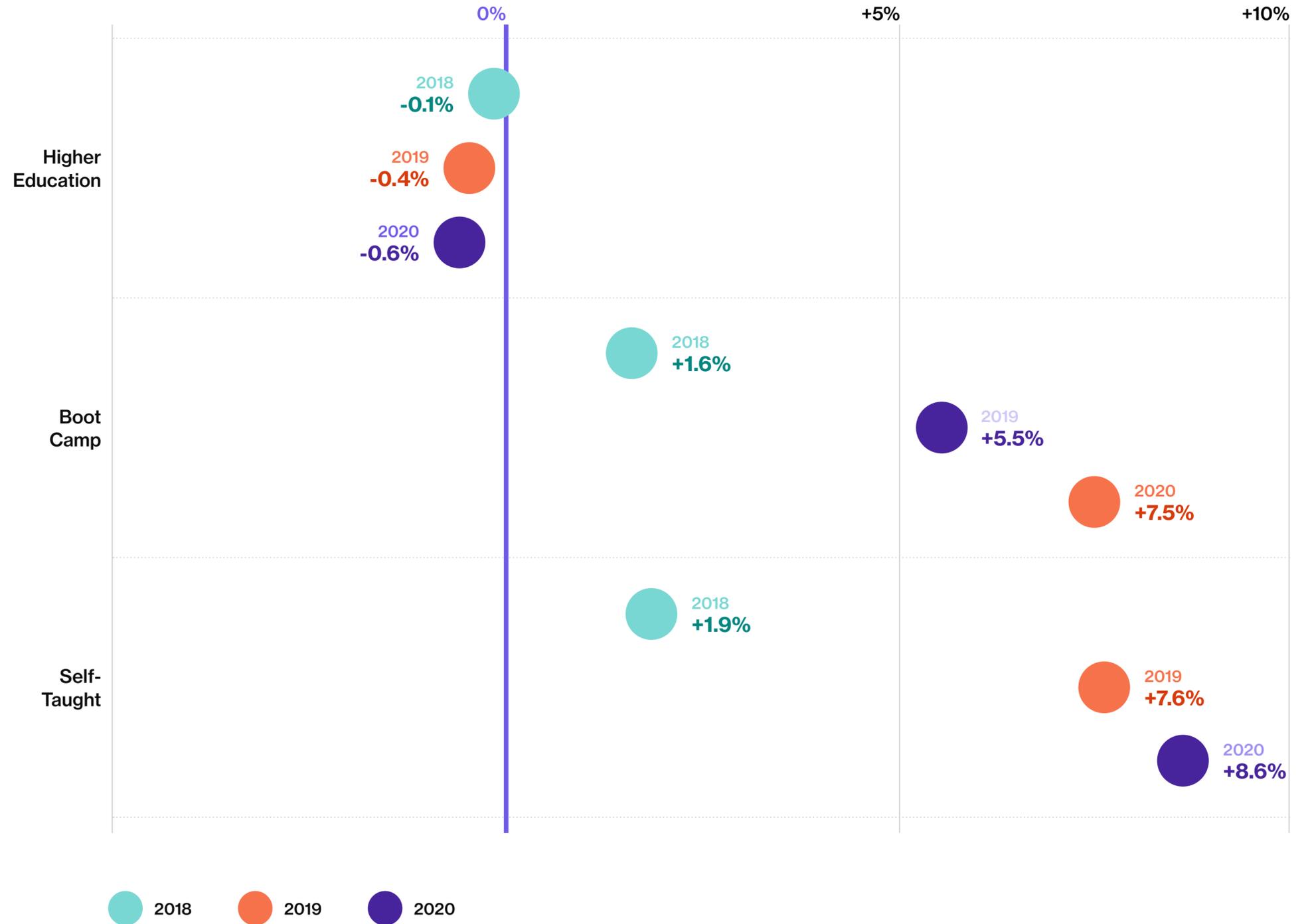


## The expectation gap: Non-traditional backgrounds

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Diversity is not only a matter of race, age, or sexuality, but also of experience and background. The best teams represent a variety of viewpoints and perspectives, and historically, the most successful teams have consisted of people who've learned their trade through a wide range of avenues — including non-traditional ways of learning. Candidates who learned tech skills through a bootcamp program or are self-taught were 8-9% more likely to receive an interview request in 2020 than candidates with traditional college degrees.

2020 Education interview request under/overrepresentation

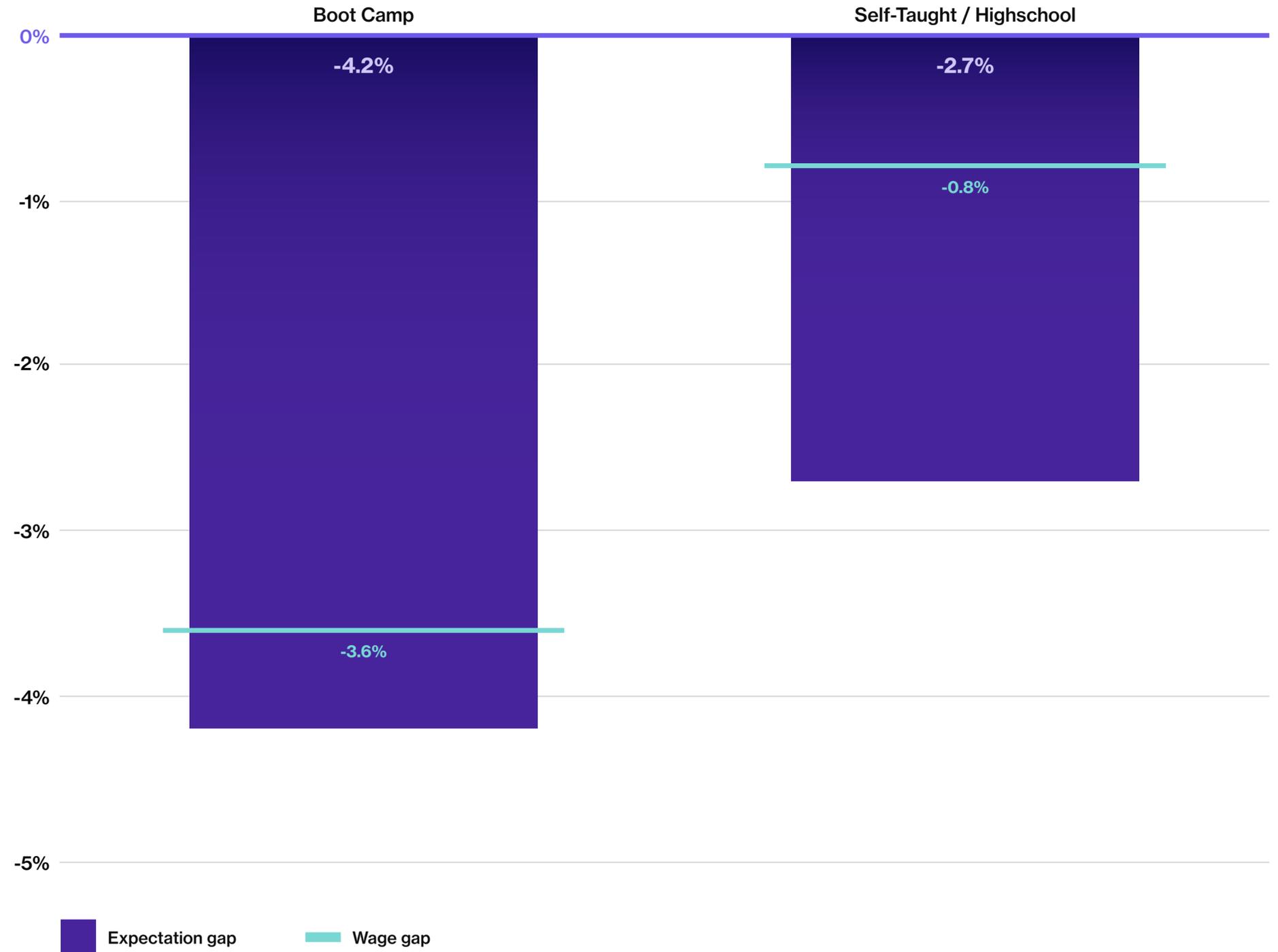


## The expectation gap: Non-traditional backgrounds

However, candidates without traditional education may lack the connections and resources to understand what a fair salary for their skill set would be. As a result, these candidates ask for and receive less money than their counterparts. Candidates who are either self-taught or learn through a bootcamp expect salaries that are up to 6% lower than the norm — and are paid less as a result.

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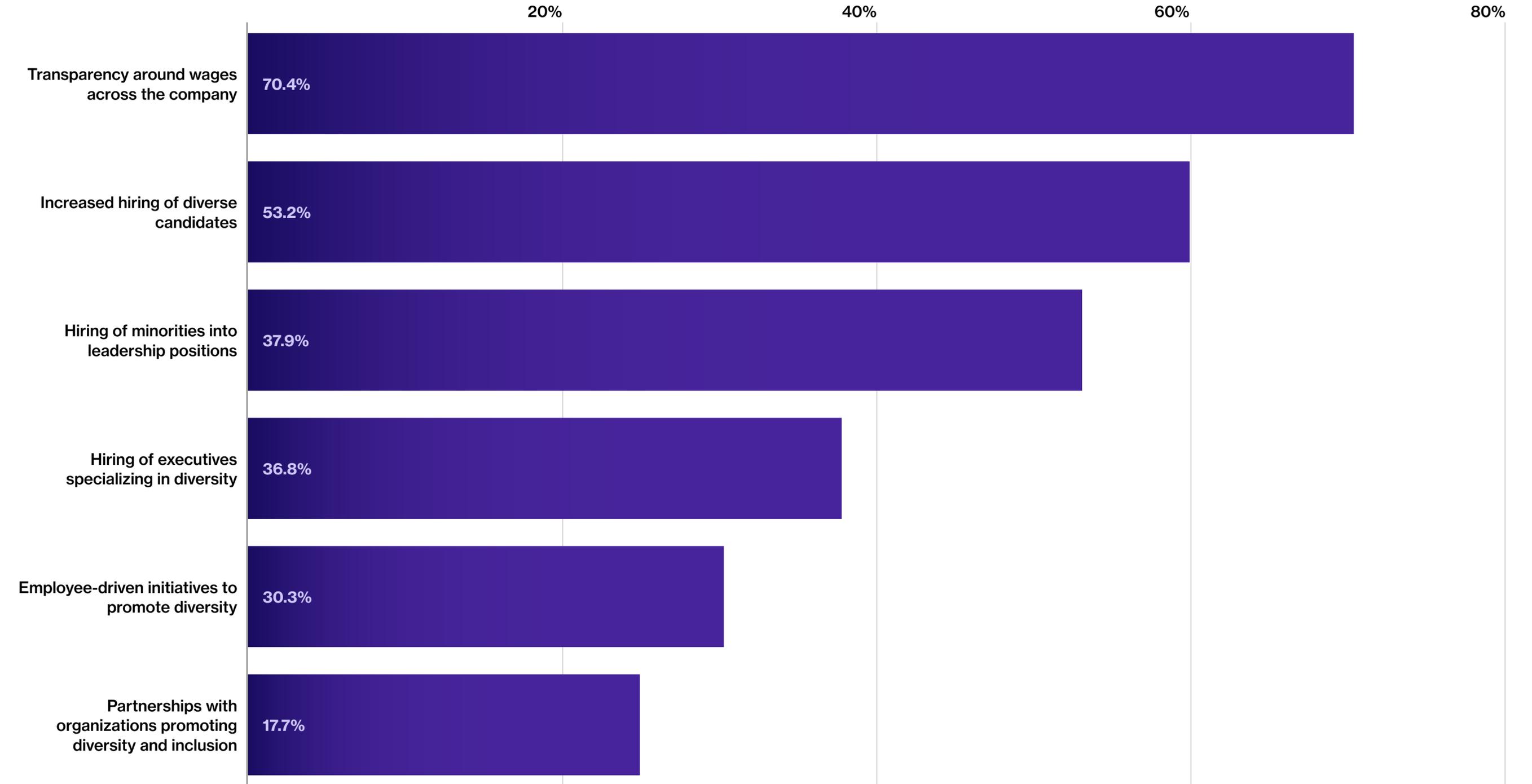
# Need for transparency

The simplest, quickest way to eliminate an expectation gap is to make it clear to prospective employees what a fair salary is for their role. Whether this means employers making their salary data public or employees discussing their salaries more openly with their colleagues, it's clear that change is needed — over 70% of tech candidates believe employers need to increase salary transparency across their company.

## Key Findings

- The best way for businesses to show candidates that they are serious about creating an equal workplace is by increasing wage transparency, hiring a diverse range of candidates, and increasing the diversity of their senior leadership team. Over 70% of candidates believe employers need to increase salary transparency across their company.
- Salary transparency is a retention problem. Two-thirds of tech employees report learning they were being paid less than their counterparts for the same work, and from those, over 40% look for new positions.

## How should companies improve diversity and inclusion efforts?



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## Need for transparency: Personal experience

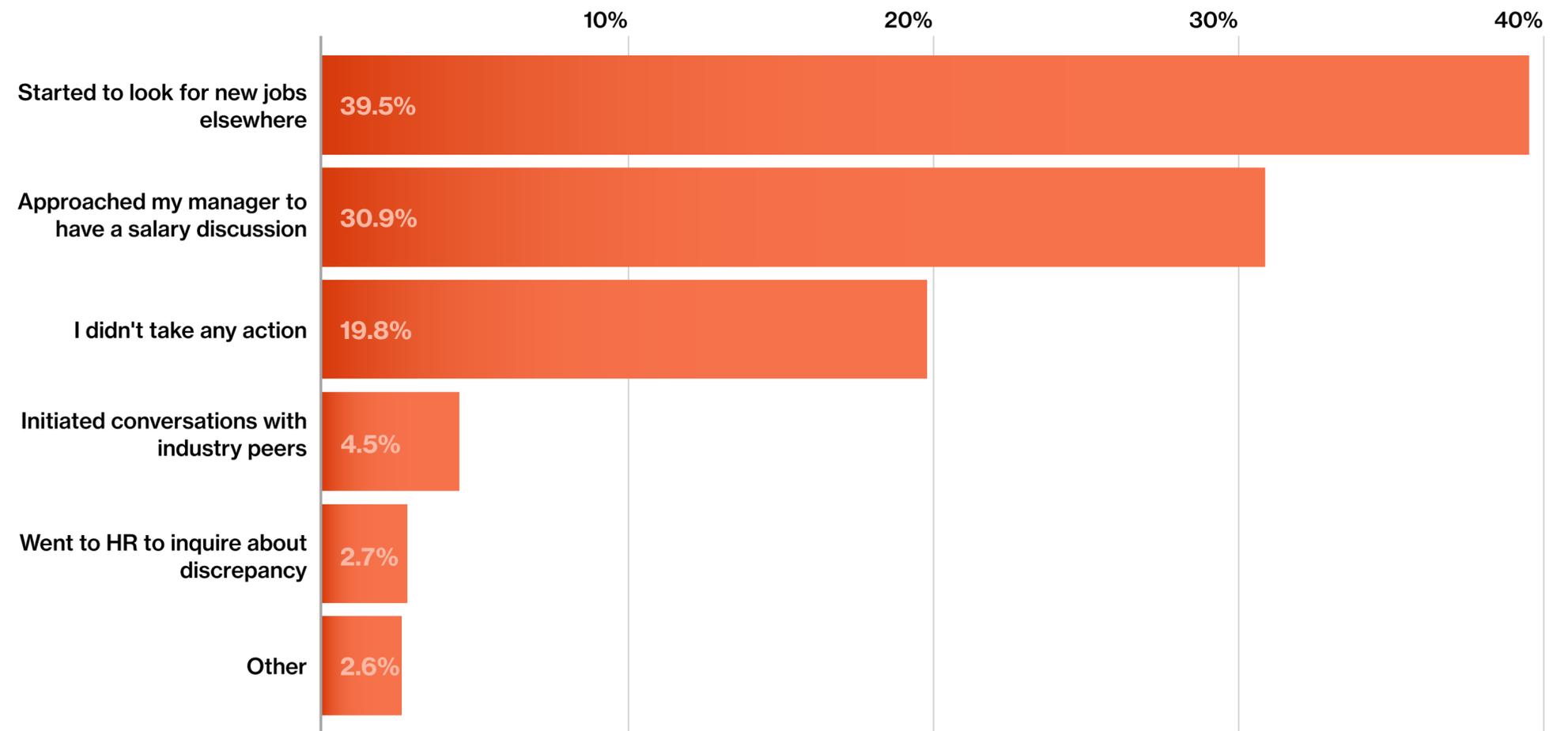
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Being more transparent about salaries may seem daunting or costly to employers, but employers also suffer from the obfuscation of salaries. Two-thirds of tech employees report learning they were being paid less than their counterparts for the same work, and from those, nearly 40% look for new positions. If companies chose to promote transparency earlier on, they'd be saving costs in the long term due to higher employee fulfillment and increased retention.

Have you ever found out you were being paid less than a peer for the same role?



What action did you take?



# Employee expectations

Between the COVID-19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter protests, and the increase of hate crimes against Asians in America, diversity, equity, and inclusion have come starkly into focus for companies and employees. If companies want to attract diverse, talented candidates, they will need to make a genuine commitment to advancing DE&I initiatives and make meaningful, measurable strides towards equality and diversity.

## Key findings:

- Over 74% of candidates believe that disclosing compensation ranges early in the interview process is one of the most effective ways to combat discrimination in hiring.
- Over 83% of survey respondents said that it was at least somewhat important that their employer take steps to promote diversity and inclusion.

## Who is the most responsible for the wage gap?

**74.4%**  
Company leaders  
are responsible

**11.9%**  
Underpaid groups  
are responsible

**13.7%**  
The government  
is responsible



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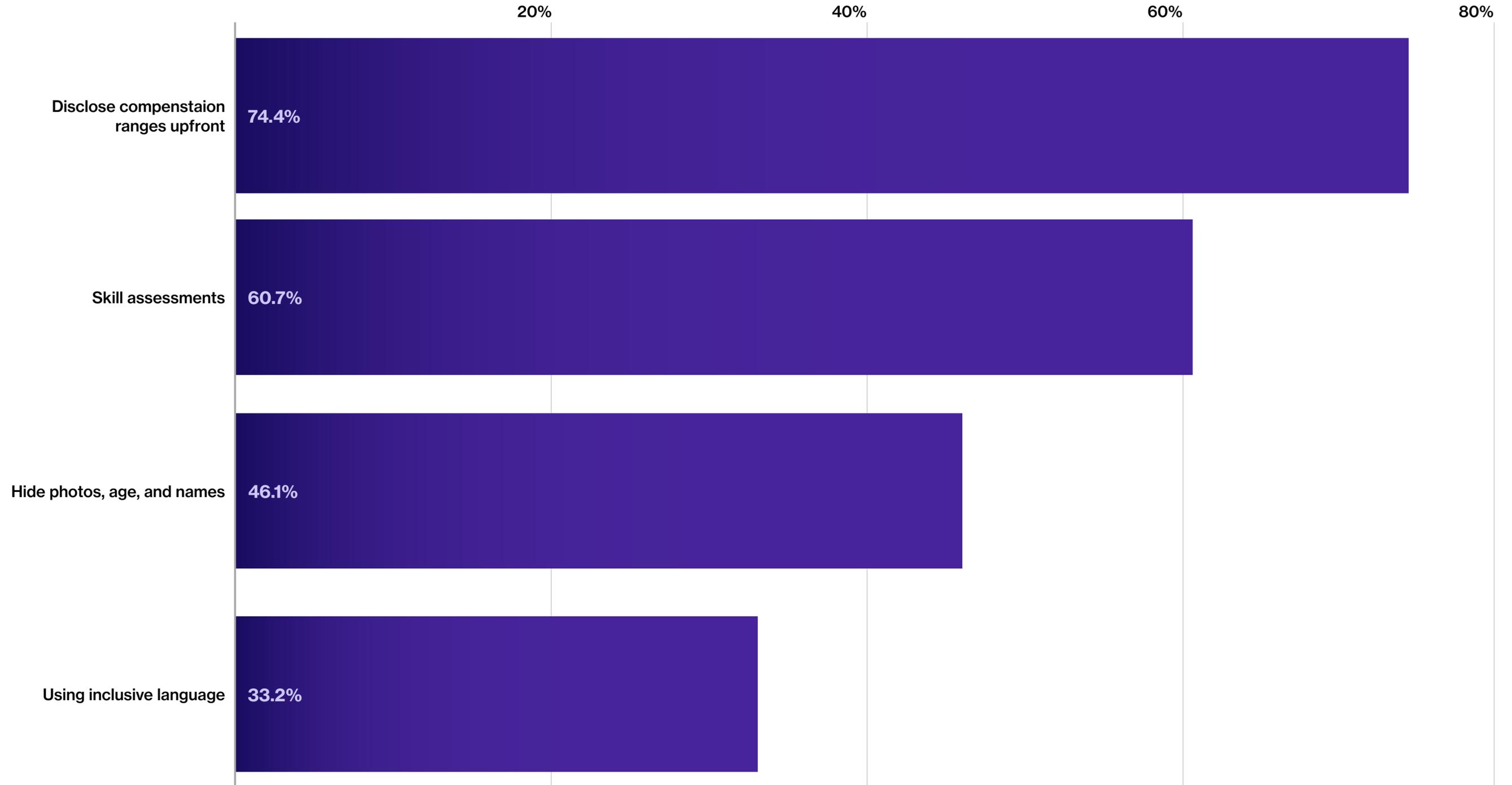
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What methods do you think are the most effective for companies to use to combat discrimination in the hiring process?



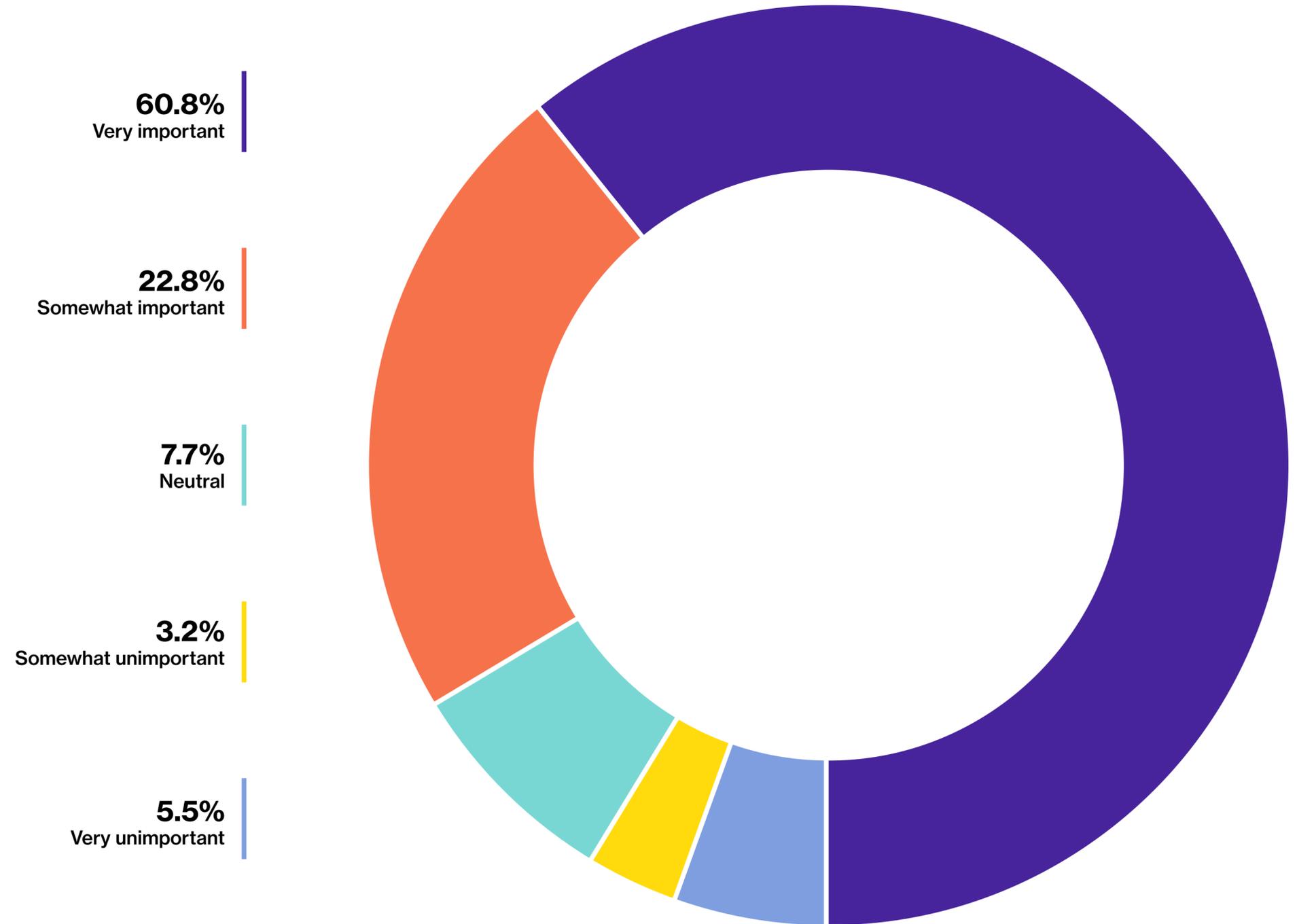
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## Employee expectations: Importance of diversity and inclusion

To retain top talent, employers have to prioritize DE&I initiatives. Over 83% of survey respondents said that it was at least somewhat important that their employer take steps to promote diversity and inclusion.

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How important is it to you that your employer take steps to promote diversity and inclusion?



## Employee expectations: Effect on hiring

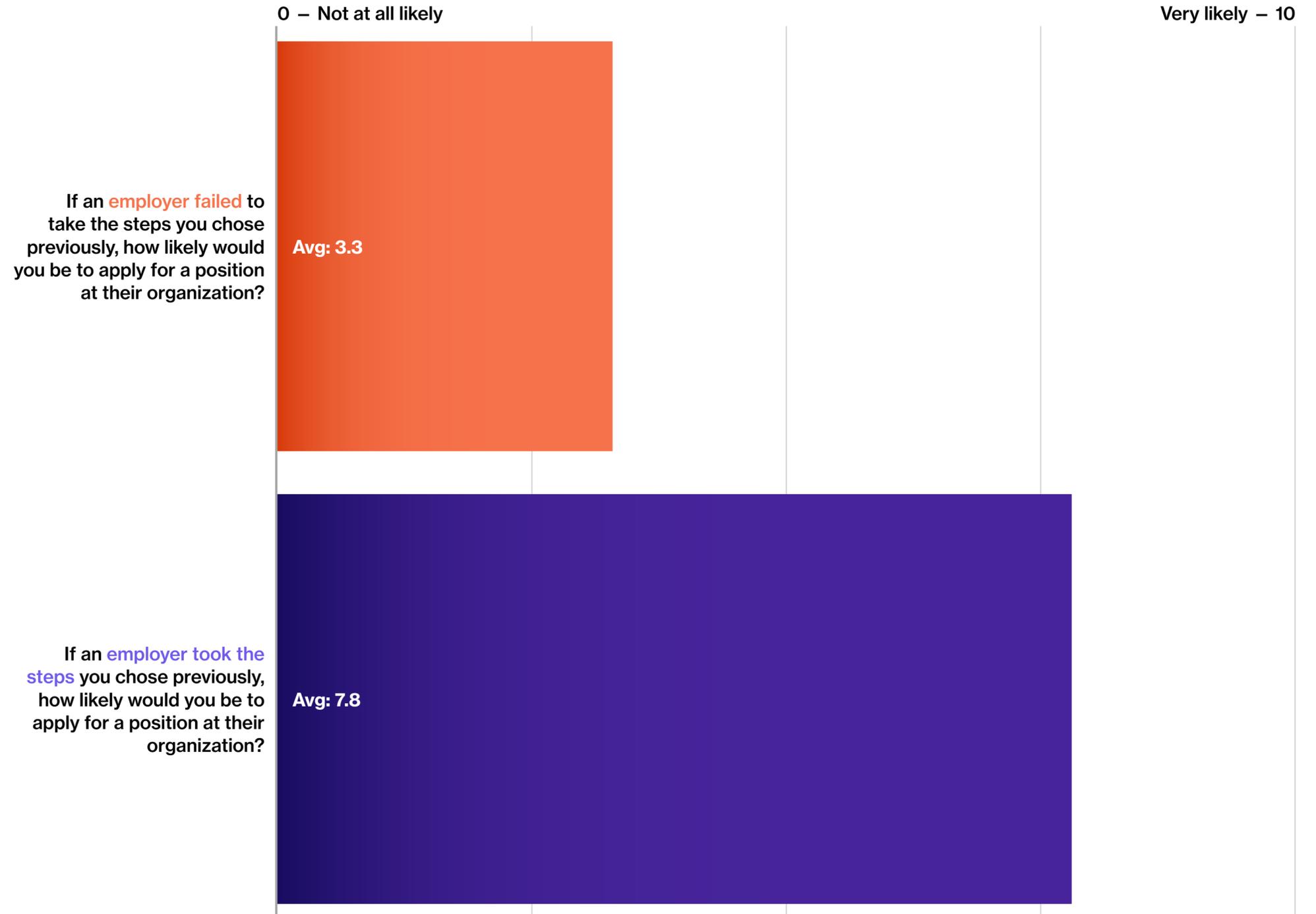
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Despite the increased focus on DE&I in 2020, nearly 60% of candidates say it still isn't enough. And it makes a meaningful impact on whether they would apply for a position at a given company.

When asked about which companies are doing the best job building diverse workforces, here are some of the companies most often named by candidates:

- Google
- Microsoft
- Facebook
- Amazon
- Coinbase
- Glassdoor
- Smartsheet
- Workday

### How do DE&I improvements affect hiring?



## Next steps

There is still a lot of work to do to close the wage gap and, while we've seen some improvements over the last year, many issues around discrimination in the workplace remain. The report shows that the expectation gap remains a core problem that we can only solve by increasing salary transparency and openly communicating what fair salaries look like for certain roles and levels of experience. It's also clear that employees expect companies to take concrete steps to increase diversity, build an inclusive workplace, and offer more transparency to fight the wage gap. Inaction is no longer an option if you want to attract top talent and build a successful and growing business.

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As a leading company for diversity recruiting and hiring tools, we constantly strive to provide an inclusive and equitable workforce and culture. At Hired, we're taking proactive and consistent steps on this journey to build a truly diverse team, launching and promoting initiatives such as our first BIPOC internship program to build a more diverse pipeline of employees and supporting and partnering with organizations such as Year Up, Dress for Success, Blacks in Technology, Techqueria, and Girls who Code. With our marketplace and its unique bias reduction features, we're committed to making the hiring process and experience more equitable, efficient, and transparent, empowering connections between ambitious people and teams.

We're excited to see our customers make an impact and work towards building a more inclusive and equitable work environment. Here are some Hired customers that have been called out by the survey respondents for showing their commitment to DE&I and launching inspiring initiatives.

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OVO understands that transparency and accountability are key to gender pay equality. The company publishes a detailed, honest report each year outlining the differences in pay by gender within the organization with transparent goals committed to publicly. These reports take into account things like job role and experience and deliver a blunt assessment of what they can improve on and do better in the following year. Initiatives they're advancing as a result include building a mentoring program for women in the organization, relaunching their careers website to remove unconscious bias, and adopting new workplace policies that promote inclusion and diversity.



Discovery partners with third parties to evaluate their hiring processes and hold themselves accountable. They then analyze the data and layer it over their process to understand if initiatives designed to build diverse teams are truly working as intended. The result has been a significantly broader mix of demographics going through their hiring process, and a more diverse workforce as a result.



Compass takes an all-encompassing approach to increasing diversity in their team. Their broad array of initiatives includes creating sponsorship and mentorship programs for employees, partnering with third-party organizations who seek to address inequities in their industry, and encouraging Compass agents to spend a percentage of their allowed budgets at Black-owned businesses. The company is also creating various employee resource groups designed to empower their teams to advance initiatives that are meaningful to them. Compass has an Employee Diversity Council to ensure employees have the power they need to advance real, needed change.

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This report is based on proprietary data gathered and analyzed by Hired’s strategy and analytics team, examining interview request salary offers and candidate salary expectations on the Hired marketplace from January through December 2020. The analysis in this study was done using a combination of voluntary, self-reported demographic data and a classifier that identified the gender of the candidate based on their first name. The results are based on a candidate’s self-identified gender, if present, before considering the predicted gender classifier. Only data from candidates with unambiguous gender classifications were used in this report.

Additional data related to race, ethnicity, age, education, and LGBTQ+ status was collected through an optional, self-reported survey given to Hired candidates that garnered over 2,000 responses. The survey is used only for aggregated research purposes and not shared with Hired clients. The salaries included reflect base pay only and are drawn from a sample set of more than 226,000 interview requests and job offers facilitated through our total marketplace of over 10,000 participating companies and more than 245,000 job seekers.

When talking about the wage gap, we refer to the difference in salary that was offered by an employer after an interview. The expectation gap refers to the difference in preferred salary between various groups of candidates, i.e., what the candidate lists on their Hired profile as their preferred salary.

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**Black** A racial category ascribed and/or assigned to individuals from 54+ countries across the Black/African Diaspora that spans the globe, including Africa, South and North America, and the Caribbean.

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**Asian** A racial category ascribed and/or assigned to individuals from 20+ countries across Asia (e.g. Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, and other Asian countries)

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**Hispanic** An ethnic category ascribed and/or assigned to individuals from 26+ Latin American and 7+ Caribbean countries. People who ascribe and/or get assigned to this ethnic category may identify as Indigenous, Black, Asian, and/or White.

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**White** A racial category ascribed and/or assigned to individuals from having origins in any of the original people of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. The 'top' classification of the socially constructed racial hierarchy. Those perceived and categorized as white are granted social, cultural, institutional, psychological, and material advantages. Historically, who gets to be called white has changed. For example, some folks of European descent have been labeled white since as early as the 17th Century. In the 1900s, Italians, Jews, Polish, Greeks, and Irish were not considered white. In many contexts now they are.

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**Multi-racial** People who identify with more than one race to indicate their racial mixture, such as "American Indian" and "White".

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**LGBTQ+** Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.

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**Woman** An adult individual identifying as female.

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**Man** An adult individual identifying as male.

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Hired is the largest AI-driven marketplace that matches tech and sales talent with the world's most innovative companies, including Instacart, Wayfair, Zendesk, Postmates, Twitch, Capital One, and Peloton. Backed by the world's leading talent advisory and solutions company, The Adecco Group, Hired combines intelligent job matching with unbiased career counseling to help people find a job they love and reach their full potential. By providing accurate, real-time information, access to equal opportunity, efficiency, and transparency, the Hired platform serves as the backbone for hiring managers, recruiters, and C-level executives to surface the best matching talent and build ambitious, diverse teams.

Hired is committed to building equity in the hiring process through a more representative talent pool, using bias reduction features, customized assessments, and salary bias alerts to help remove unconscious bias when hiring. For more information, visit [hired.com](https://hired.com).