Building a diverse workforce is increasingly a primary concern of the genetics and genomics enterprise. The present lack of diversity in the workforce impacts scientific innovation, global competitiveness, and the ability to deliver new insights into human disease and health. To achieve greater diversity, there must be data to benchmark current workforce demographics as one input to foster a more inclusive environment at each stage of the career pathway. This report is a first-of-its-kind study that provides current baseline data describing the demographic composition of the human genetics and genomics workforce in training programs and the workplace, based on a fielded survey of individuals identified from an alliance of professional genetics and genomics membership associations. The report also provides insights directly from individuals in the field about their experiences of challenges and barriers to full inclusion and success in the workforce.

Overall, the report lays important groundwork for future assessment and action by individuals, organizations and departments in governmental, non-profit, academic and industry sectors. The report’s partners highly encourage each organization to review the report carefully and consider the actions they will take, within their own mission and programs, to realize a vision for the future of a diverse, equitable and inclusive human genetics and genomics workforce.

Overall, the majority (73.3%) of survey respondents identified as U.S. citizens. Approximately 78 percent were employed in a permanent position. Genetic counseling (45.7%), research (30.4%), and academic (23.4%) were the top three primary areas of work for employed respondents. Survey results revealed that there is a distinct gender difference in respondents’ specific field of study and primary area of work within the human genetics and genomics field.
Consistent with STEM and biomedical fields, the genetics and genomics workforce is predominantly a homogeneous group with 67.0% of respondents identifying their race, ethnicity, or ancestry as White (n=2,224). Other self-reported races, ethnicities, or ancestries (17.5%) include Asian (7.4%; n=245); Black, African American, or African (1.5%; n=50); Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish (2.0%; n=68); Middle Eastern or North African (1.1%; n=36); American Indian or Alaska Native (<1%); Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (<1%); and Multiracial (4.8%; n=160). 15.4% of survey respondents opted not to self identify.