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PROJECT NOIR 2024

Executive Summary



Enlightened
SOLUTIONS

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In 2020, Northeast Ohio was ranked the worst region in America for Black Women.

Has
anything
changed?



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HAS ANYTHING CHANGED SINCE 2020?

PURPOSE + OBEJECTIVES

The purpose of Project Noir 2024 is to amplify the voices of Black Women in Northeast Ohio.

Enlightened Solutions conducted a phenomenological survey and report to determine whether the Cleveland-Lorain-Youngstown-Akron rural, suburban and metropolitan areas remain the “worst” region in America for Black Women.

By integrating lived qualitative vignettes with quantitative data, we aim to create actionable interventions based on the experiences of Black Women throughout Northeast Ohio.

Enlightened Solutions believes that because Northeast Ohio remains the most proximate to race and gender-based inequities, our region is the most apt to solve and export these solutions nationwide.

Project Noir is not designed to prove or disprove the existence of disparities for Black Women, nor to unfairly criticize the region.

We live here. We love Northeast Ohio.

However, we resolve to provide a research-based framework for public, private, governmental, and nonprofit organizations to improve the lived experiences of Black Women—who have long been leaders, colleagues, neighbors, matriarchs, and experts—yet continue to face systemic racism and misogyny.

Project Noir 2024 is organized into four key areas of discussion: Workplaces, Healthcare, and Education, aligning with our inaugural research and an additional 2024 Call to Action.





FINDINGS + INSIGHTS

For Project Noir 2024, we enhanced survey methodology and questions to gather more precise, timely, and highly targeted data.

As a result, year-over-year comparisons should be made with caution, emphasizing significant trends rather than minor fluctuations. While most categories in Project Noir 2024 showed only slight changes compared to Project Noir 2020, a few areas revealed more significant shifts.

For example, we observed a 37% increase in respondents reporting experiences of unfair grading in the Education category. In Healthcare, weight-related comments from practitioners decreased substantially, likely due to more precise question-wording.

Additionally, there was a 10% decline in reports of medical professionals pressuring Black Women to go on birth control. However, it's unclear if this is related to the legal impact of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade and the broader effects on protecting birth control access, accessing fertility treatments and more broadly general body autonomy.

Tackling gender and anti-Black racism-based issues requires interventions across intergovernmental, corporate, non-profit, social advocacy, cultural, educational, and healthcare sectors on a regional scale.

Collaboration and long-term strategic commitments are essential to addressing microaggressions and creating inclusive systems for Black Women.

Despite some progress, efforts to confront **misogynoir—the unique intersection of racism and sexism faced by Black Women—have been sidelined both in our region and nationwide.**

Enlightened Solutions firmly asserts that without bold, long-term financial investment and prioritization, these deeply ingrained practices will not only persist but **actively impede** our region's potential for 21st-century economic growth.

CALL TO ACTION

Enlightened Solutions believes Northeast Ohio will be a **national leader in racial and gender equity** — especially for Black Women, if local leaders invest.

Find our “Call to Action” recommendations online: [Project Noir 2024: Call to Action](#).



1,324

Black Women across
Northeast Ohio took
Project Noir 2024!



NEARLY TRIPLING OUR PROJECT NOIR 2020 RESPONSE RATE

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OUR METHODOLOGY

The Project Noir survey was designed to assess the interpersonal tactics and behaviors that contribute to systemic gender and race-based inequalities, with a methodology that centers the lived experiences of Black Women.

Our framework prioritizes community input, using feedback analysis and consistent iteration to shape and refine new questions.

We implement this approach in several ways:

Microaggression Scale: We ask Black Women in Northeast Ohio about explicit microaggressions to examine the prevalence of specific exclusionary behaviors.

Qualitative Feedback: We ask open-ended questions about our respondents' experiences within each category and use their feedback to -

Provide Insight into Existing Microaggressions: We use open-ended feedback to highlight the real-life impact of specific microaggressions on Black Women, providing concrete examples of how these behaviors manifest in everyday situations.

Identify New Themes: We categorize key themes and identify clusters of stories that reflect similar experiences. The clusters with the highest frequency are reported as community-identified themes. These themes are then incorporated into our Microaggression Scale in subsequent surveys, ensuring that it is shaped and informed by direct community input.

Survey Distribution: Between February and April 2024, we distributed the Project Noir 2024 survey through a fully digital outreach strategy, supplemented by in-person survey and advocacy events.

Response: A remarkable **1,324 Black Women** from rural, suburban and metropolitan areas—including **Cleveland, Lorain, Youngstown,** and **Akron**—took Project Noir 2024 with an impressive 85% participant completion rate.





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