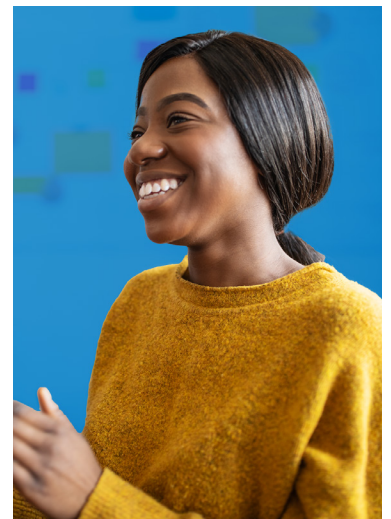




# Advancing


# I.D.E.A.





# Together

2023-2024 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Report





The dedication of our employees, leaders, members, and communities fuels our journey to create a healthier, more equitable, and vibrant **future for all.**



# Working toward greater representation

As part of our commitment to I.D.E.A., we work to attract and retain a workforce that is reflective of the members and communities we serve. We measure progress and opportunities for growth in the areas of career advancement, development, and recruitment.



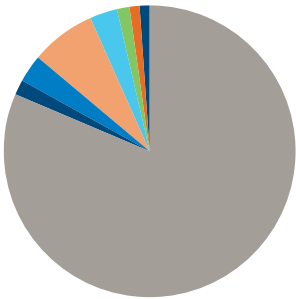
**4,386**

Total headcount:  
Full-time employees

**75.23%**

Percentage of  
female employees

## Employee racial/ethnic breakdown



**0.59%**  
American Indian/  
Alaskan Native

**3.63%**  
Asian

**7.00%**  
Black/  
African American

**3.10%**  
Hispanic/Latino

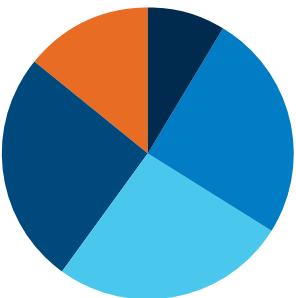
**1.78%**  
Multiracial/more  
than one race

**0.05%**  
Native Hawaiian/  
Pacific Islander

**82.17%**  
White

**1.69%**  
Not specified

## Employee age breakdown



**35.04%**  
Under 40

■ 18-29 9.53%

■ 30-39 25.51%

**64.96%**  
40 and over

■ 40-49 25.58%

■ 50-59 25.88%

■ 60+ 13.50%



# We commit to an inclusive, equitable, and accessible workplace

**Our annual Inclusion Survey is one way we measure employee experience and progress in our DEI journey.**

While increasing representation is important to us, we also understand that strengthening inclusion and belonging are just as crucial. Understanding how our employees experience I.D.E.A. at our company helps us measure the distance between our goals and their daily experience. This feedback not only lets us know where we are succeeding but informs our programs and continues to hold us accountable for driving change.

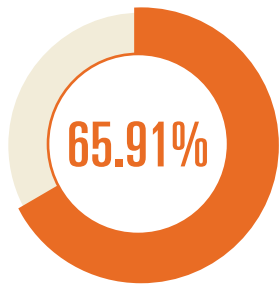
	2024	2023	2022	2021
Agree that we are committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access	95%	97%	94%	92%
Agree that senior leadership encourages diversity, equity, and inclusion	91%	92%	91%	90%
Agree that we respect individuals and value their differences	93%	94%	91%	88%
Agree that we are making progress with diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives	91%	92%	90%	88%
Agree that we do a good job at providing job training programs that promote multicultural understanding	91%	90%	88%	85%
Agree that we provide an environment for free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs	87%	89%	87%	84%
Agree that DEI issues are openly discussed	85%	84%		
Agree that I have the same opportunities for advancement as other employees in my organization	81%	84%		

**Each year, we include questions related to a specific area of I.D.E.A. This year, our focus was on accessibility, with questions including:**

Agree that I have the materials and equipment I need to be effective at work	93%
Agree that should I need an accommodation, I trust my manager would assist me with meeting my needs	95%



## Leadership - female representation



% of all  
leaders

70.94%

First-Level Management  
(Supervisor & Manager)

58.49%

Mid-Level  
(Director)

55.70%

Senior-Level  
(VP & SVP, Non-Executive)

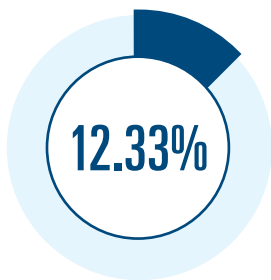
53.85%

Executive  
Leadership

33.33%

Board of  
Directors

## Leadership - racial/ethnic representation (non-white)



% of all  
leaders

12.83%

First-Level Management  
(Supervisor & Manager)

11.79%

Mid-Level  
(Director)

11.39%

Senior-Level  
(VP & SVP, Non-Executive)

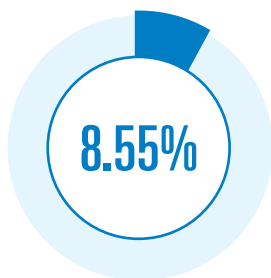
15.38%

Executive  
Leadership

33.33%

Board of  
Directors

## Intersectional representation - female leaders of color



% of all  
leaders

9.42%

First-Level Management  
(Supervisor & Manager)

6.60%

Mid-Level  
(Director)

8.86%

Senior-Level  
(VP & SVP, Non-Executive)

15.38%

Executive  
Leadership

13.33%

Board of  
Directors

## New hires - started in 2024 and still active



**% of  
employee  
population**

**65.73%**

Female

**20.56%**

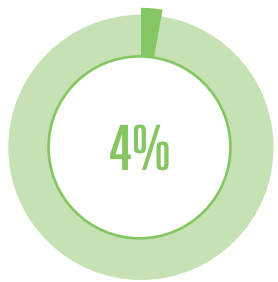
Racial/ethnic  
representation  
(non-white)

**12.50%**

Female and racial/  
ethnic representation

## Additional workforce representation

**Employee self-ID demographics  
from Human Resources  
information system**



**% of  
employee  
population**

**2%**

LGBTQ+

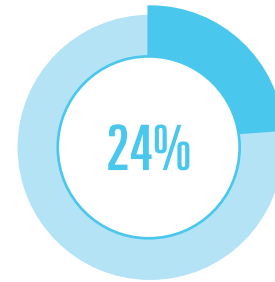
**1%**

Veterans

**1%**

Disability

**Employee self-ID demographics  
from 2024 Inclusion  
Survey participants**



**% of  
Inclusion  
Survey  
participants**

**11%**

LGBTQ+

**2%**

Veterans

**11%**

Disability

At the end of 2023, we moved to a new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) which allowed us to capture additional LGBTQ+, Disability, and Veteran identities. We are actively working to close the gaps between the self-identification reported in our new HRIS and the representation in our annual Inclusion Survey.

# I.D.E.A. is a group effort

## An ongoing commitment to learning and inclusion

We've long recognized that fostering an inclusive workplace isn't a one-time effort, but an ongoing responsibility requiring daily actions. Through a combination of educational programs, leadership development, and collaborative events, we are continually advancing our understanding and actions related to I.D.E.A.

## DEI Book Club

Begun in 2020 by two employees, and with leadership support, the DEI Book Club provides employees with a space to explore different perspectives and lived experiences, allowing for deep engagement, broad discussions, and strengthened connections. The Book Club tackles a wide range of topics, from understanding intergenerational dynamics in the workplace to discussing the experiences of indigenous youth in residential schools. This is just one of the ways we address intersectionality and create safety so that all voices are heard and respected within our organization.

### Book Club picks:

- *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei (2024)
- *American Like Me: Reflections on Life between Cultures* by America Ferrera (2024)
- *Indian Horse: A Novel* by Richard Wagamese (2023)
- *A New Kind of Diversity: Making the Different Generations on Your Team a Competitive Advantage* by Tim Elmore (2023)
- *Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People* by Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald (2022)
- *We Can't Talk About That at Work* by Mary-Frances Winters (2022)
- *Black Fatigue: How Racism Erodes the Mind, Body, and Spirit* by Mary-Frances Winters (2021)
- *Waking Up White (and Finding Myself in the Story of Race)* by Debby Irving (2021)



“Being a part of the book club has given me the opportunity to grow personally and professionally by allowing me to learn, understand, and think differently.”

- Michele D.,  
executive assistant, DEI Book Club co-founder

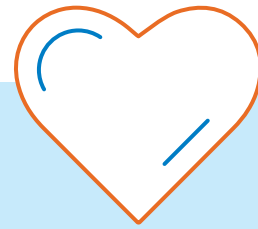
## Essential Habits program

Leaders of our organization play a critical role in creating an inclusive and safe working environment, which is why we invest in strengthening and developing essential leadership habits through our Essential Habits program. In 2024, our Essential Habits training focused on inclusive leadership, a vital component of living our company values. Leaders had access to self-paced learning modules that equipped them with the skills to lead with empathy, understand the unique needs of each team member, and apply practical tools for leading tailored 1:1s and team meetings. Complementing these modules, our Learning and Development team also offered virtual, instructor-led training that provided leaders with opportunities for deeper reflection and practical application. These efforts support our goal of shifting inclusive leadership from a theoretical concept to a consistent practice within our organization.

## Employee Resource Group (ERG) events

Our ERGs provide our employees with meaningful connections, resources, and support for business and personal goals, while supporting our culture and strengthening our intersectional approach. In 2024, our ERGs offered our employees more than 45 learning opportunities to partner within our organization, and with community-based organizations beyond our walls. Examples of those include:

- **Suicide Awareness:** A collaboration between the 7 Generations, African American, Awareness of Visible and Invisible Disabilities (AVID), and Lifetime Pride ERGs, this virtual event highlighted the disproportionate impact of suicide on historically marginalized groups. The presentation featured insights from the Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service of Tompkins County, and provided valuable resources and education to help address this critical issue within our communities.
- **HerStory Speaker Series:** Hosted by the Women & Empowerment Network ERG, HerStory is an annual series of events that brings together women leaders from across the organization, from various backgrounds, to share their lived experiences. These discussions cover a range of topics, from career development and leadership strategies to personal growth and work-life balance. HerStory not only empowers women within our organization, but also fosters a culture of mentorship and support.



“The Essential Habits inclusive leadership training has reinforced the importance of embracing and understanding diversity, equity, and belonging, and fostering an environment where all my team members feel safe, valued, empowered, and heard. Inclusive leadership isn’t just about setting expectations for others—it’s also about holding yourself accountable to these same values and behaviors. My hope is that by continuously applying these learnings, I have created a more cohesive, engaged, and high-performing team that benefits from the strengths and insights of every individual.”

- Anna D.,  
employee experience manager





## Internal development resources

By keeping I.D.E.A. at the forefront of employees' minds, we're advancing a culture in which everyone feels valued, heard, and empowered to do their best, together. **We all have a responsibility to model I.D.E.A., and for employees who want to dive deeper, we offer a range of DEI resources and programs, such as:**

- Digital accessibility resources and education to create more accessible digital content and experiences
- New DEI Multicultural Learning Collection: Multiple self-paced learning modules throughout the year
- Free access to LinkedIn Learning courses
- Internal leadership programs
- Toastmasters program to help enhance public speaking
- Annual I.D.E.A. Series, focused on cultural humility; welcomes subject matter experts on DEI-related topics
- Mentor and mentee programs
- Internal coaching and insta-coaching
- Tuition assistance to access higher education
- DEI Book Club
- Essential Habits training twice per year for all leaders
- Mandated all-employee training on cultural humility in alignment with National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) requirements
- Two DEI-specific electives: Inclusive Language & Addressing Microaggressions Workshop and Working Across Multi-Generations
- Ten Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)
- Sponsorship to complete Dale Carnegie Skills for Success Training and Dale Carnegie High Impact Presentations



# Building on our accomplishments

As we take meaningful steps to improve our company, we're proud of our progress. At the same time, we understand that we still have much work to do and continue to set annual goals as part of our corporate commitment to I.D.E.A.

**Here are just some of our accomplishments this past year:**

- Excellus BCBS received a **2024 Gallup Exceptional Workplace Award**. We received this recognition for creating a workplace where employees across our organization are engaged, empowered, and proud of the work they do. To achieve this recognition, our organization met Gallup's rigorous standards of excellence and demonstrated how our business performance is fueled by an engaged workforce. The Annual Lifetime Way Employee Engagement Survey participation rate of 85% exceeds Gallup's criteria (80% or higher) and our overall engagement score of 4.40 places us in the 96th percentile of companies within Gallup's database.
- For the fourth year in a row, our organization has been named a **Best Place to Work for Disability Inclusion** with a top score of 100% on the 2024 Disability Equality Index, a national benchmarking survey by Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities.

## Continued

- We continue to listen to our employees and improve on our I.D.E.A. efforts. One example was introducing live captioning for our Spring and Fall leadership meetings. The original inquiry came from a member of our Awareness of Visible and Invisible Disabilities (AVID) Employee Resource Group. Though we have captioning included in our internal learning materials, this was an opportunity to incorporate it in person and increase access for the more than 700 people in attendance.
- Excellus BCBS received a score of 85% out of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's **2023-2024 Corporate Equality Index (CEI)**, the nation's foremost benchmarking survey and report measuring corporate policies and practices related to LGBTQ+ workplace equality. Our company joins the ranks of 1,384 major US businesses that were also ranked in the 2023-2024 CEI.





**BEST EMPLOYERS  
FOR DIVERSITY**

**Forbes  
2024**

POWERED BY STATISTA

**#25** **Forbes Best Employers  
for Diversity 2024**

We were among 500 organizations with 1,000 or more employees on the list of **Forbes Best Employers for Diversity 2024**. This is the second consecutive year Excellus BCBS made the list. We ranked No. 25 among all employers nationally (up from No. 135 in 2023) and No. 5 among employers in the insurance industry.

## Recognized

- We were once again named one of the best employers in the United States! Excellus BCBS was ranked No. 8 on the **Forbes 2024 list of America's Best Midsize Employers**. Excellus BCBS topped the list in both the insurance industry and in upstate New York.
- Forbes also recognized us as one of **America's Best Employers for Women**. This is the first time we have made the list. We ranked No. 103 among all employers nationally and No. 6 among all employers in the insurance industry.

## Reaffirmed

- *Until Justice Just Is:* We join the YWCA annually in reaffirming our commitment to Until Justice Just Is through an online pledge and learning on structural racism, bias, and how to be an ally.
- *Interrupt Racism:* We are a proud participant in the Rochester Urban League's Interrupt Racism Program. The program is intended for local businesses and organizations ready to interrupt and dismantle institutional racism. Organizations identify inequitable policies, practices, and behaviors, and create an equitable work environment in which all employees can thrive.





# Size inclusion: Looking beyond what's expected of DEI

While we continue to build upon our foundation of I.D.E.A., our employees help us to expand beyond the boxes in which many expect efforts of diversity, equity, and inclusion to belong.

When we think of inclusion, it means all of us. Body size is one aspect of diversity that is often overlooked, though it can carry societally based stigmas, biases, and stereotypes that impact all aspects of life.

In the last year, we are proud to have invested in both the creation and expansion of internal resources for our employees and learning opportunities for our provider networks.

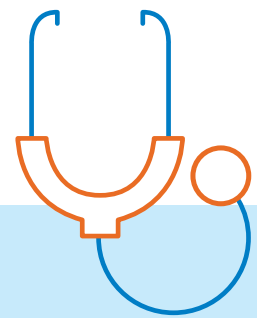


## We work with our employees to champion change

A major catalyst was when Sarah S., claims analyst, was introduced to Sady A.-F., DEI officer, and they began a conversation about how body positivity could be integrated into the company's DEI work. They agreed that people of any size deserve a holistic, dignified, caring, and fair approach to their health care. The two then developed a plan to collaborate across various departments to incorporate size inclusion through multiple efforts, including:

- The formation of a new employee-led body inclusion group (BodyPosi) where employees can gather and learn about positivity, acceptance, visibility, and support for all different body shapes and sizes.
- The inclusion of body size diversity and inclusion in internal Wellbeing learning modules throughout the year, with feedback and content review from members of our body inclusion group.
- The launch of a new training module, Weight Stigma and Size Inclusion, developed by our Provider Training team with input from members of our body inclusion group. The training addresses biases related to weight, the negative impacts to health outcomes for patients of size, and best practices to be size inclusive.

Fostering a better understanding of body positivity is important to the work we do – from personal relationships and work culture, to the health and wellbeing of our communities.



“Weight stigma and discrimination is something that affects all of us, whether it has happened to us directly, or to a family member, friend, and those we cherish in our communities. People are dying from conditions that could have been prevented or treated, all because they are frightened, embarrassed, uncomfortable, nervous, self-conscious, etc., due to the everyday stigma they experience from many around them.”

- **Sarah S.,**  
claims analyst



# Wellbeing for everybody

Often, when we hear “health and wellbeing,” we attribute it to our physical state. But wellbeing is more than just getting a step count in for the day: Wellbeing is the state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy. It’s a combination of physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and financial wellbeing.

**As a health plan with about 4,500 employees, we know wellness can come in many different forms and isn’t the same for everyone. Our team is comprised of individuals who are as diverse as the communities in which we live and serve. Our employees also have daily experiences that change the way their wellbeing is impacted, so we make it a priority to meet each individual where they are in their unique wellbeing journey.**



## 2024: Expanding our inclusive wellbeing strategy to increase opportunities for all employees to live a healthy life

We continue to offer a variety of wellbeing programs that engage our employee population, including virtual fitness classes and mindfulness classes. New in 2024, we added free access to ThriveWell<sup>SM</sup> for our employees and their spouses who enroll in one of our medical plans. ThriveWell, in partnership with Personify Health (formerly known as Virgin Pulse), is a digital home base that helps people engage in healthier choices and build healthy habits.

### Within the platform, our employees have access to:

- A variety of wellbeing content
- Specific actions to address Social Determinants of Health
- Coaching that supports everyone
- Assistance and guides for navigating the complex health care system
- Users can connect a fitness tracker to ThriveWell to improve their physical wellbeing

With this benefit, our team members can get **content and support for a variety of things known to improve overall wellbeing, such as:**

- Improving sleep habits for a better night's rest
- Recognizing and overcoming burnout
- Setting a wellbeing goal
- Connecting with colleagues, friends, and family through wellbeing challenges
- Managing anxiety and general mood
- Improving gut health through diet
- Moving better while living with arthritis and joint pain

Plus, our employees with ThriveWell also gain **free access** to two additional resources in the platform:

- **Headspace<sup>®</sup>**: Focused on mental and emotional health, Headspace provides access to hundreds of meditations and exercises for stress, focus, sleep, and movement. It also has great accessibility features such as closed captioning, audio descriptions, and language options.
- **Foodsmart**: A digital nutrition platform, Foodsmart has tools that make it easier to eat well based on food preferences and cost.

Our goal is to encourage healthy habit-building and cultivate better resilience among our employees, no matter their circumstances. Building this into our benefits package helps make it **more accessible to everyone on our team.**

Personify Health is an independent company and offers a digital wellbeing service on behalf of Excellus BCBS.

Headspace is a preferred partner of Personify Health, offering a meditation app to our employees.





# Community Health Spotlights

## Nourishing hope

Volunteers from the **Open Door Alliance and the Asian Employee Resource Group** came together for a meaningful day of service at the Central New York Blessing Box in December. They worked tirelessly to sort and organize bags of food donations, ensuring that over 1,400 families have access to nutritious and culturally relevant meals.

**CNY Blessing Box**, a local Syracuse food pantry, is committed to promoting diversity and equity by increasing access to culturally relevant foods for new Americans and others facing food insecurity. Our volunteers not only provided essential support, but also celebrated the rich cultural diversity of our community.

## A caring journey supporting mothers before and after birth

To bridge the disparity in health outcomes for Black mothers, Excellus BCBS provided a **Health Equity Innovation Award to Mohawk Valley Prenatal & Maternal Support** to support their Sister Circle program.

Sister Circle is a birth and feeding initiative which provides and promotes doula services to Women of Color, with the goal of improving birth rates, birth outcomes, and providing breast feeding and post-partum support.

“We are thankful to Excellus BCBS for providing us with a Health Equity Innovation Award which will strengthen our Sister Circle program and provide vital support to Women of Color in our community,” said Mohawk Valley Prenatal & Maternal Support Program Director, Ashley Engram. **“Our program will have an impact on birth outcomes and birth rates among Black women in our area for years to come** because we are focusing on long-term solutions and introducing new doulas into the community.”

## Strengthening communities and making a lasting impact

In today’s rapidly evolving business environment, diversity isn’t just a buzzword – it’s part of what we strive to do both internally and externally as an organization.

That’s why we were **proud to be part of the 2024 Upstate New York Supplier Diversity Summit and Expo** in Rochester in January. Our commitment to supplier diversity is about driving meaningful change, creating opportunities for women and minority-owned businesses to thrive, and fostering economic growth in our communities.

“We want our suppliers to be just as representative of our employee community as our member community,” says Jack S., sourcing manager.

With more than 200 vendors from across our region including Buffalo and the Southern Tier, Jack, along with Supplier Diversity Coordinator Ann H., spoke one-on-one with vendors who said, “I have your insurance, but how can I get a chance to earn your business?”



That's where our Supplier Solutions/Sourcing Teams, and our participation in these events, come in.

Our company has focused efforts on finding more opportunities to do business with diverse suppliers. In the past year, we've increased the amount of our business conducted with minority and women-owned businesses, but need to **continue that growth by digging deeper** to find additional ways to work with these suppliers.

## Affordable and accessible care for all

The ACCEL Clinic, a health care facility located at the Economic Opportunity Program in Elmira, is providing affordable care to community members when they need it most.

For Glenda and Woody Aikens, residents of West Elmira, the cost of weekly co-pays to have their blood pressure checked was simply not affordable. But thanks to the ACCEL Clinic, they have been able to follow their primary care doctor's orders at no cost. They learned about the clinic through a flyer provided with a food delivery from the Economic Opportunity Program. The Aikens said they were thrilled to discover that the clinic offered free services and easy access, allowing them to consistently monitor their health and interact with others in the community.

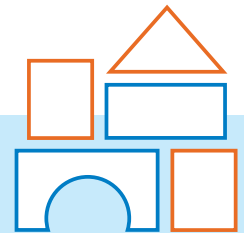
The **ACCEL Clinic is a collaborative partnership** between Excellus BCBS, Arnot Health, Chemung County Health Department, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM), and the Economic Opportunity Program. **The clinic provides free and accessible medical services to children and their families.**

The ACCEL Clinic is supported by an Excellus BCBS Member and Community Health Improvement grant, and the funding has enabled the clinic to enhance health outcomes and reduce health disparities in Chemung County. This has been achieved through the analysis of data collected from over 350 children tested for lead, and over 100 community members

receiving blood pressure screenings, enabling the clinic to provide targeted care and connect them with appropriate health care providers.

"The ACCEL Clinic helped us when we needed medical services but couldn't pay for them," said community member Glenda Aikens. "We enjoyed going there every week to check in and we feel important at the clinic. The ACCEL Clinic is great for our community and for people who don't have much money."

Since opening in 2022, the clinic has successfully conducted over 400 lead screenings, contributing to the reduction of lead levels in Chemung County, according to Economic Opportunity Program Chief Executive Officer Andrea Ogunwumi.



"Convenience and accessibility are key factors in the success of the ACCEL Clinic. Being in the same building as Head Start programs and after-school activities makes it easier for parents to bring their children in for screenings. This eliminates barriers such as transportation and time constraints, ensuring that health care services are readily available to those who need them."

**- Andrea Ogunwumi,**  
**Economic Opportunity Program chief**  
**executive officer**



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