

ANA Launches List of Diversity-Certified Agencies

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Key Insights:

- Industry pros have been taking the problem into their own hands by creating talent diversity platforms.

As brands increasingly look for diversity in the teams that create their marketing, the question is often whether the firm itself truly has a diverse makeup—or whether it just hired a few contractors to look more diverse for a project.

The Association of National Advertisers is trying to take some of the mystery out of the equation with a new supplier diversity list launched today. The initial list of over 100 marketing and advertising agencies will continue to grow, as the ANA asks the industry to contribute nominations.

“The ANA is resolute in its belief that supplier diversity offers many benefits to corporations,” said CEO Bob Liodice in a statement. “It provides opportunities for business expansion as new consumer needs emerge based on shifting demographics. Supplier diversity drives competition between existing and potential suppliers while promoting innovation, as diverse vendors can offer new products, services and solutions.”

The diversity-certified list comes out of an ongoing initiative sparked by the ANA’s AIMM (Alliance for Inclusive & Multicultural Marketing) in June. In a letter published by ANA/AIMM that month, dozens of major brands promised to “do better,” acknowledging that only 5% of ad spend targets multicultural segments, and the ANA’s own May report on

supplier diversity showed that a majority of brands did not have plans in place to increase diversity in the marketing firms they contract with.

The list has been made available in a downloadable PDF, with 104 firms in a table showing one or more diversity certifications—each linked to proof of certificate. The certification bodies that ANA drew from for the initial list are:

- NMSDC: National Minority Supplier Development Council
- WBENC: Women's Business Enterprise National Council
- NGLCC: National LGBT Chamber of Commerce
- WOSB: Woman-Owned Small Business
- MBE: Minority Business Enterprise
- MBC: Minority Business Certification
- MWBE: Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprises
- WBE: Women Business Enterprise
- WEConnect: International Women-Owned Business
- WMBC: Woman/Minority Business Certification
- WMBE: Women/Minority Business Enterprise
- SBE: Small Business Enterprise
- SDVOB: Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business

Notably missing from the list are DOBEs (Disability-Owned Business Enterprises), which are currently certified through the organization Disability:IN. But the list is a living document; the ANA encourages submissions through its website.

While this is the ANA's first attempt at a supplier diversity database, individual industry professionals had already created similar efforts to make finding multicultural agencies easier. Alma Har'el's 2016 initiative Free the Bid expanded in 2019 with Free the Work, a curated platform for discovery of underrepresented creative and advertising talent.

In June, Lincoln Stephens and Larry Yarrell of Marcus Graham Project launched Locomotus, a new platform for discovering

Black advertising talent. And just 10 days ago, another pair of well-known ad pros (Ron Lewis, vp and creative director at McCann Health, and Walter T. Geer III, svp and group creative director at TBWA Worldhealth) launched the free platform Diverse Creatives—a simple, searchable grid that takes viewers to the LinkedIn profiles of brand strategists, copywriters, creatives and more.

<https://www.adweek.com/agencies/ana-list-diversity-certified-agencies/>