

*Sisters
in Crime*[®]

THE EQUITY PROJECT

Diversity, Equity,
Inclusion, Justice &
Belonging
Member Survey
2024

SNAPSHOT REPORT



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Introduction

Between March 26 and April 9, 2024, Sisters in Crime conducted a survey of its membership to assess efforts and progress in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging (DEIJB) within SinC. Of the 3850 emails sent to members of SinC, 550 members participated in the 50-question survey sharing their experiences (with a very high completion rate of 86%). The survey was conducted by KAMacLean Consulting LLC under SinC's Equity Project. The full report compares and contrasts the findings of the 2024 and 2022 surveys and is 97 pages long. What follows is a synopsis of those findings.

Sisters in Crime's

Mission:

Sisters in Crime was founded in 1986 to promote the ongoing advancement, recognition and professional development of women crime writers.

Core Values:

Advocacy, Equity, Inclusion, Community

Vision:

Sisters in Crime sets standards for itself, its members, and the crime writing community. Through advocacy, programming and leadership, SinC empowers and supports all crime writers regardless of genre or place on their career trajectory.

Survey Overview

The Goals of This Survey and Report

The goal of this survey is to compare and contrast the Equity Project Surveys from 2022 and 2024, gauge the demographics of the SinC community and its sentiment in regards to DEIJB, understand areas of success and forward movement, and determine opportunities for the next phase of SinC growth. Please note this summary was created by KAMacLean Consulting LLC from the data shared and reported in a 97-page document that includes charts, comparative data, and explanations to guide future work. It has been approved by SinC's DEIJB Advisory Committee and National Board.

The Survey & Reporting Process

These surveys, data review, and reports have all been carried out by our third-party consultant. The data collected was aggregated, and all written responses were read several times. For open-ended responses, common themes were highlighted and potentially identifiable info was redacted. Once all data from 2024 was compiled and reviewed, it was then compared with 2022 findings. That data was then utilized to create a detailed breakdown of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). Finally, recommendations were developed based on what the data told us, what the community expressed a need for, and what the data suggests will provide the most positive impact for SinC members. Those suggestions have been shared with SinC's DEIJB Advisory Committee and SinC's National Board.

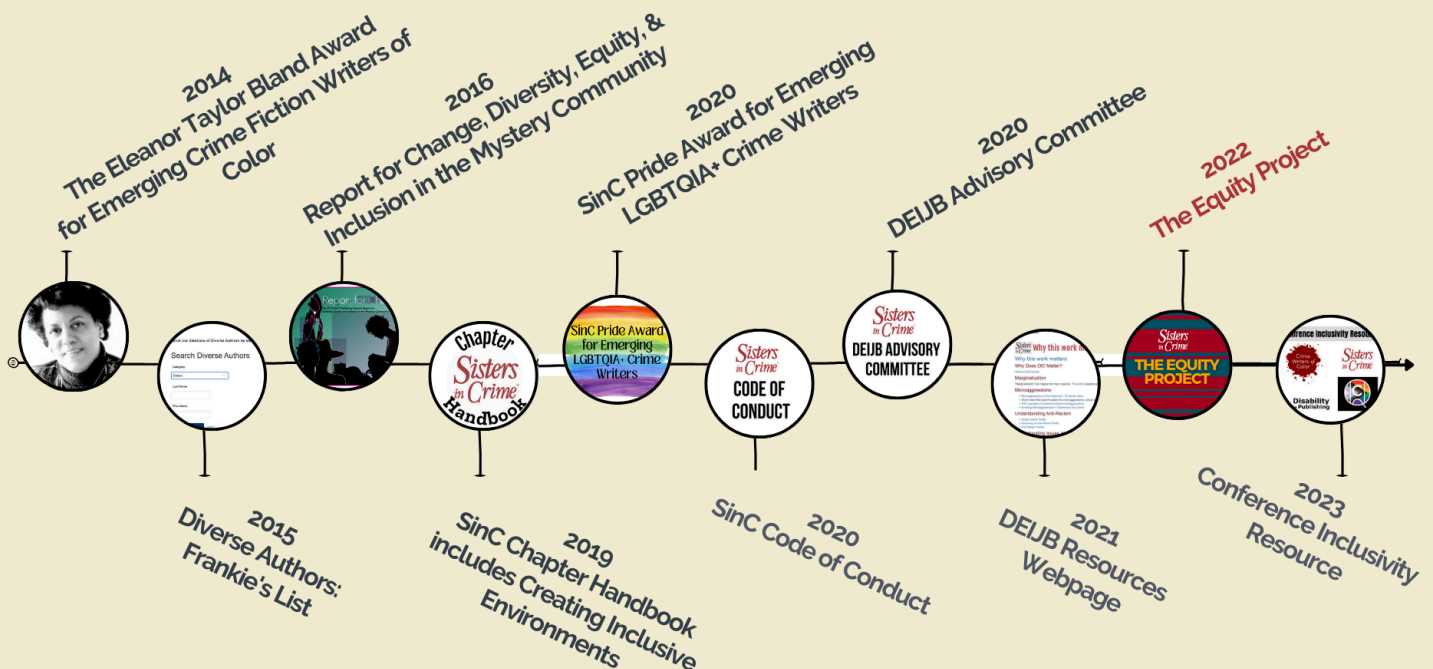
Understanding DEIJB in This Survey

Diversity looks at how many different kinds of people we have represented, often by the numbers. **Equity** seeks fair and just practices and policies that ensure all community members have the opportunities and access they need to thrive, participate, & succeed. **Inclusion** means all community members are valued and feel respected, have a sense of belonging, and are able to participate & achieve their full potential. **Justice** acknowledges inequities and past harm so that we can dismantle barriers to resources and opportunities. **Belonging** is a culture where differences are valued and everyone can feel accepted and authentically themselves. DEIJB intends to correct a historical imbalance that has excluded different groups over time. Those groups include:

Race	Nationality
Ethnicity	Country of Origin
Religion	Wealth/Class
Gender Identity	Immigration Status
Sexual Orientation	Language
Neurodiversity	Political Affiliation
Disability/Ability	Age
Body Size	Education

Why does DEIJB matter and why is SinC dedicated to this work?

Sisters in Crime was founded to address inequity, and our DEIJB work is essential to continuing that mission. We are committed to building a community where every member feels they belong as their true selves. By actively supporting underrepresented and historically marginalized groups, we uplift everyone. Expanding our empathy and understanding of diverse experiences will sharpen our storytelling skills. As our world becomes more interconnected, it's crucial for us to evolve and broaden our view of who SinC members are and can be, ensuring we remain a dynamic and inclusive community for another 40 years.



Overall Survey Respondent Data

550 respondents completed the 50-question survey between March 26 and April 9, 2024. SinC's dominant culture can be described as white, heterosexual, cis-gendered female, college-educated, able-bodied, middle-class, non-caretakers, English-speaking, and over 50. As you read through the survey findings, it is useful to consider who is the status quo at SinC and when, how, and where that influences DEIJB experiences.

The Role Of Demographics in Survey Assessment & Outcomes

This data allows us to better identify whose voices and experiences are represented, especially when compared with national and global census data. It also provides context for us when reading through responses; SinC members have varied experiences that may or may not be informed by their identities.

Gender Identity:

88% Female, 9% Male, 2% Non-Binary or Gender Fluid, 2% Prefer not to answer for another reason

Identify as LGBTQIA2S+ (*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Two-spirit, plus*):

84% No, 13% Yes

Racial and/or Ethnic Identity:

76% White, 7% Jewish, 4% Black or of the African Diaspora, 2% Latin /o/a/x, 2% Asian or of the Asian Diaspora, 2% Indigenous, 0.8% Middle Eastern/North Africa, 5% Preferred not to answer

Living with a Disability:

66% No, 25% Yes, 9% Prefer Not To Say

Age:

0% Under 18/18-20/21-30, 3% 31-40, 8% 41-50, 20% 51-60, 35% 61-70, 29% 71-80, 5% 81-90+

Language:

100% English Speaking, 6% French, 6% Spanish, 2% Italian, 2% Other, <1% Japanese, German, Dutch, Hindi, Cantonese, Hebrew

Education:

0.4% high school diploma or equivalent, 9% some college, 3% Associate Degree, 31% BA/BS, 39% Master's Degree, 16% Doctoral Degree

Household Income:

- 21% High Income, 66% Middle Income, 13% Lower Income

Belonging to multiple marginalized groups is called “intersectionality.” There are multiple intersecting ways you and your ancestors may experience exclusion, discrimination, and barriers to opportunities. Belonging to fewer marginalized groups is referred to as “privilege” and an indication that you are likely part of a dominant culture. The dominant culture at SinC is not necessarily what we would consider to be the dominant culture in a member’s community or in other aspects of their lives.

Intersectionality at SinC:

13% of respondents report belonging to two or more “minoritized groups” including gender, race/ethnicity, living with a disability, LGBTQIA+, and/or low income

“Dominant Culture” at SinC:

27% of respondents self-identified as white and heterosexual and female and able-bodied and English-speaking and over 50 and middle-class or higher, and having a BA/BS and higher education.

Summary of Key Findings

Strengths

Areas SinC is Already Doing Well

- **Support and Engagement:** SinC boasts a dedicated membership with strong support for DEIJB initiatives. Members highly value opportunities for connection, learning, and networking, especially online.
- **Inclusive Environment:** A majority of members feel included and valued, with SinC recognized as a safe space, particularly for older women. The organization has a female majority of 88%, with 89% of members over the age of 50.
- **Commitment to DEIJB:** 91% of respondents support DEIJB work, viewing SinC as a thought leader prioritizing these values. The positive impact of DEIJB initiatives is noted even among those initially unaware of their benefits.
- **Willingness to Learn:** There is a growing awareness and willingness to address issues, reflected in increased self-reporting and witnessing of discriminatory behavior.

Opportunities

Areas SinC Can Leverage and Grow Into

- **Educational Initiatives:** Over half the respondents plan to take The Equity 101 course, presenting a strong opportunity for DEIJB education.
- **Inclusivity and Support:** SinC can enhance support for diverse writers and create safer conference environments. Standardizing support practices will strengthen member trust.
- **Community Engagement:** By clarifying information and addressing systemic issues disproportionately affecting women, such as unpaid labor. SinC can better support its members.

Weaknesses

SinC's Areas of Challenge

- **Homogeneity:** The membership demographics are predominantly white, cis-gendered, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class, college-educated, and over 50, lacking broader societal diversity.
- **Inconsistent Handling of Discrimination:** Reports of discriminatory behavior are inconsistently handled, especially at the chapter level, indicating a need for standardized support and reporting systems.
- **Educational Gaps:** Misunderstandings about DEIJB principles persist despite available resources, hindering organizational inclusivity.

Threats

Areas of potential risks to SinC's health, longevity, & stability

- **Right to Comfort and Defensiveness:** Prioritizing comfort over learning impedes progress. Defensiveness and binary thinking hinder growth and threaten organizational cohesion.
- **Resistance to DEIJB Education:** 32% of members do not intend to take The Equity 101 course, risking continued inconsistency in understanding and implementing DEIJB practices.
- **Dismissive Attitudes:** Even a small number of dismissive comments about race, gender identity, and sexual orientation threaten community health and safety.

“If this helps my home chapter become more diverse, I'll likely invest more energy in SinC again.”

Anonymous Survey Response

2024 SWOT Analysis Snapshot

A SWOT analysis offers a clear overview of internal and external factors that impact an organization by identifying **strengths**, **weaknesses**, **opportunities**, and **threats**. It helps organizations build on strengths, address weaknesses, seize opportunities, and minimize risks. For SinC, this analysis provides insight into their current state and future goals, and can guide planning, policy, and training across all levels of the organization.

Strengths

- Dedicated, loyal membership, actively sharing positive experiences.
- 91% of surveyed members support DEIJB efforts.
- Opportunities to connect, learn, and network, especially online.
- SinC reps at conferences make a positive impression.
- Core values are evident through DEIJB initiatives.
- Most members feel included, valued, and represented within the community.
- With 88% female majority and 89% over 50 years old, SinC is a unique space for older women.
- 91% of surveyed members support DEIJB efforts.
- A thought leader
- SinC is committed to expanding who benefits from their advocacy.
- Survey responses indicate a willingness to learn, adapt, and better allyship.

Weaknesses

- SinC does not yet reflect the pluralistic reality of our world or global diversity.
- Privileged members perceive unfounded threats, creating a misleading sense of opposition to DEIJB.
- Fear of "replacement" limits learning and empathy, fueling denial of data and lived experiences.
- Emotional Tax carried by those most impacted by inequities.
- DEIJB is viewed by some as distinctly separate from other SinC goals/work.
- Some limits to who has time to lead/volunteer
- Insufficient support when reporting discrimination.
- Misinformation/misunderstanding of basic DEIJB concepts/words.
- Small but vocal dissenters pulling focus and creating unease.
- New members and those less comfortable with technology struggle to navigate SinC's resources.

Opportunities

- Create clear pathways for reporting, support, and learning when discrimination does occur.
- In order to strengthen community trust, support members who fear reporting discrimination.
- Improve access to vast library with material that can address DEIJB and other topics w/in the community
- Face unfounded fears with facts and POV from those who have positive DEIJB experiences.
- Lean into what members already appreciate about SinC to address some challenges.
- Continue to address historical and current inequities through grants/awards.
- Address exclusions related to writing genres and self-publishing.
- Enhance understanding and standardized inclusive practices across the org.
- Encourage safer, more inclusive conference environments.
- Improve clarity and info sharing across all community levels, particularly leadership.
- Recognize and address the disproportionate unpaid labor burden on women globally.

Threats

- Prioritizing comfort in DEIJB engagement over growth.
- Homogeneity of the membership threatens the future and sustainability.
- Responses to incidents of discrimination are inconsistent and reliant upon individuals' abilities, beliefs, and values rather than a SinC process and norms.
- A population without diversity of age in members is less sustainable long-term.
- 32% of members resist taking the Equity 101 course, risking inconsistent DEIJB practices.
- Lack of awareness and belief of what others' experiences related to discrimination alienates members.
- Perceived threats to women's prioritization and dismissive attitudes towards DEIJB undermine community health and safety.

Summary of Recommendations from KAMacLean Consulting

The survey data provides a foundation for Sisters in Crime's National Board to align its strategic planning priorities of membership growth and retention, community building, and DEIJB integration. The SinC National Board will be reviewing the recommendations provided by the consultant which fall into the categories below.

Policy, Process, and Priorities

Develop a transparent reporting system for discrimination, embed DEIJB into policies to create an inclusive environment, and standardize accommodations for all members at events.

Targeted Educational Initiatives

Normalize discomfort in DEIJB learning, leverage existing resources while creating new content, and provide structured learning pathways to enhance DEIJB understanding.

Culture and Behavioral Initiatives

Standardize practices across chapters for a cohesive SinC brand, broaden the mission to include diverse identities, and ensure diverse representation on panels based on expertise.

Leadership Initiatives

Provide comprehensive DEIJB training for leaders, apply successful national practices at the chapter level, and establish norms for inclusive meetings across SinC.

Member Needs Initiatives

Streamline access to SinC's resources, clarify volunteer roles to encourage diverse leadership, and investigate why underrepresented groups join and stay in lower numbers to improve retention.

“ SinC leadership consistently responds with speed, empathy, honesty, and advocacy to controversy and errors within SinC community and the writing community at large.
Anonymous Survey Response ”

“ At the national level, even still talking about DEI is admirable, as is the 101 course. I wish every board member who was required to take it would talk more about it.
Anonymous Survey Response ”

Progress Since 2022

Several action items have been accomplished per the recommendations given in the 2022 Equity Project Survey Report. Needs and recommendations that are outstanding have been resurfaced in the 2024 recommendations and/or are part of the milestones, deliverables, and progress listed in 1, 3, 5, and 10-year Strategy Plan.

Top-Level Deliverables From The Equity Project

[View more info. & depth HERE](#)

- Research & Strategic Planning
 - 2022 & 2024 “The Equity Project Survey”
 - 2022 & 2024 Survey Reports
 - [2022 Survey Snapshot](#)
 - 1, 3, 5, 10-Year DEIJB Strategic Guide for SinC
- Thinkific Learning Opportunities
 - [The Equity Project 101](#)
 - [Better Your Worlds, Better Your Writing](#)
 - [Intro to The Equity Project](#) (3 X in March 2022)
 - [Leadership and The Equity Project](#) (April 2022)
 - [Connecting Through Story](#) (June 2022)
 - [Learning Through Lived Experiences](#)
 - [How We Think About Bodies](#) (May 2022)
 - [How We Think About Inclusion](#) (July 2022)
 - [How We Think About Trauma](#) (Sept 2022)
 - [How We Think About Justice](#) (Nov 2022)
- SinC Forward Videos ([17 published on YouTube](#))
- [DEIJB Corner](#) - articles by DEIJB Cmte members
- DEIJB Write-Ins
- [Podcast Interviews](#)
- [Townhall Q&A “The Equity Project Survey”](#)

Policy & Procedural Actions

- [Conference Inclusivity Resource](#)
- Updated Code of Conduct (CoC)
- FAQs to support CoC
- Expanding DEIJB practices for Chapter Handbook

SinC Website

- Additional [resources](#) added (including hotlines)
- “[Ask Kimberly Anything](#)” form
- Updated navigation for ease of access
- [Frankie’s List](#) updated and redesigned as searchable database

Go to additional



online resources

“

One only has to look at the marked and continuous rise of women writers in general and crime writers especially to know that Advocacy and Equity have been helpful to women writers.

Anonymous Survey Response

”

Reported Impacts of DEIJB Initiatives at SinC

- New members share that the diversity and inclusivity of SinC’s programming is a draw. This is reiterated throughout the 2024 survey data.
- *Better Your Worlds, Better Your Writing* course indicates SinC holds a strong reputation for creating craft-focused content, with usefulness to writers at all stages that also addresses DEIJB content.
- National Leadership reports that *The Equity 101* course helped them understand the issues, needs, and ways they can be part of the work and why it matters at SinC.
- Positive support from the majority of chapter leaders regarding the updated Code of Conduct when discussed at ‘23 Bouchercon.
- Chapter leaders feel empowered and supported by National to support their own members with respect to equity and inclusion initiatives.
- SinC is actively reaching out and connecting with other organizations focused on creating equitable and inclusive writing communities.
- Anecdotal internal feedback indicates that practices of transparency in governance bolster and maintain members’ confidence in SinC.
- Building trust and communication has led long-time members to report past discriminatory experiences that affected their time at SinC.
- Improved accessibility at many SinC events in response to more awareness.
- Financial accessibility and support for those in need.

Conclusion

Sisters in Crime is at a pivotal moment in its journey toward equity and inclusion. The organization excels in supporting women crime writers, especially those over 50, through strong community bonds and educational programs. However challenges remain including resistance to DEIJB efforts, barriers for global and younger members, and a need for greater empathy within its mostly white, cis-gendered, heterosexual membership.

To advance, SinC should leverage its strengths in advocacy and community support while addressing weaknesses with improved education, standardized accommodations, and targeted recruitment. By expanding accessibility, amplifying diverse voices, and reinforcing its DEIJB commitment, SinC can become more inclusive and ensure that all members feel valued in the crime writing community. While SinC has already done so much work under the DEIJB umbrella, continued work, learning, and action will enhance organizational resilience, member engagement, and community growth, ensuring SinC remains a leader in the crime-writing community.

Sharing the survey results with both internal and external audiences is crucial to building trust and demonstrating commitment. Regular updates on progress, including goals and challenges, will enhance transparency and accountability, keeping the organization aligned with its mission.



A Message from SinC's DEIJB Advisory Committee:

SinC is an organization where writers' belong, but those cannot only be words. They require action. SinC remains committed to leaning into that action.

We are excited to share the results of the 2024 DEIJB Survey of Sisters in Crime members. The results of this survey underscore our members' continued commitment to strengthening the mystery writing community through advocacy and outreach. As the survey demonstrates, we understand that we must uphold our mission to make this organization a place where writers belong regardless of age, ability status, ethnicity, national origin, gender status, language, sexual identity, or religious affiliation. As a committee and a community, we are resolved to pursue programs and initiatives which will make that goal a reality.

“ All the work SinC has done (visible and not) to advance these core values. Not just their DEIJB work but considering these values when they make decisions. ”

Anonymous Survey Response

“ The creation of this survey and the DEIJB committee shows that the these issues have become a top priority. ”

Anonymous Survey Response

Appendix

Go to online
appendix + resources



tinyurl.com/yywmmkaz

Supporting Documents:

- Full Executive Summary Report
- Slideshow of all graphs from 2024 survey data
- [Public 2022 Survey Snapshot](#)

2023-2024 Board and Staff



Meet the Board

Executive Director, Julie Henrikus
President, Kelly Oliver
Vice-President, Tracee de Hahn
Secretary, Lori Roberts Herbst
Treasurer, Deanna Fowler
Chapter Liaison, Kimberly G. Giarratano
Chapter Liaison, Debra H. Goldstein
DEIJB Liaison, Delia Pitts
Education, Mary Sutton
Grants & Awards, Linda L. Richards
Immediate Past President, Jennifer J. Chow
Libraries & Bookstores, Susan Hammerman
Membership, Yasmin Angoe
Member-At-Large, Amy Condra
Member-At-Large, Mia P. Manansala
Monitoring, Kia Dennis
Publicity, Karen Odden

2023-2024 DEIJB Advisory Committee



DEIJB@sisterincrime.org

Delia Pitts, Co-chair
Faye Snowden, Co-chair
Stephanie Argy
Ashley-Ruth Bernier
Jose Handal Bogon
Jennifer Chow
Judie Gaines
Tracee de Hahn
Julie Henrikus
Caitlin Highland
Myra Jolivet

Culture & Belonging Consultant: [Kimberly A. MacLean, M.Ed.](#)



[Ask Kimberly Anything](#)

How to Get Involved & Support DEIJB at SinC

Learn. Take the online courses. Do the work. Listen to understand.

Engage. Join or start conversations in your chapter(s), talk about your own learning journey, take classes together. Lead with a growth mindset.

Connect. Reach out to the DEIJB Committee, national or chapter leaders, and other SinC siblings. Ask questions. Share ideas.

Check in about progress. Keep us all accountable.

Participate. Volunteer at the national or chapter level. Take surveys, attend events, join committees, ask questions.