Our Beliefs

At Cisco, our purpose is to Power an Inclusive Future for All. When we say all, we mean everyone: all communities of color, races and ethnicities, gender identities, military service, abilities, age, sexual orientations, social classes, faiths, nationalities, relationships and family status. With our purpose at the heart of everything we do, you can count on Cisco to be bold, brave and deliberate about our role and the actions we will take in support of social justice.

Beliefs inspire us; frameworks guide the decisions that result in our actions. These beliefs inform how we act as a business, including our commitment to social justice.

Technology for Good
We believe that technology makes the world better. We’re committed to building technology that empowers people and communities to create new possibilities. In doing so, we will not customize our technology to facilitate censorship, injustice or oppression.

Culture of Coalescence
We believe in fostering a culture that is beneficial to all. In moments when we see an opportunity to unite the whole, we will coalesce our people and our resources to take action to drive meaningful change. And we will encourage our employees, suppliers, communities and partners to join us in working alongside diverse communities.

Commitment to Justice
We believe that social justice is apolitical. It’s our calling to ensure that communities on the margins experience a world that is just where they are valued, validated and empowered.

Curiosity, Proximity & Empathy
We believe in modeling curiosity by continually educating ourselves about all forms of inequality and injustice. Our understanding grows more when we get proximate to the most vulnerable and insecure in our communities. By engaging in proximity, empathy and ultimately action can be realized.

Addressing Insecurity of Being
Cisco has long believed in addressing insecurity across fundamental human needs, rights and access. We are expanding our commitment and addressing a new area: an insecurity of being. Insecurity of being happens when one is a target of hate and violence solely due to their existence in a marginalized group, be it in the physical or virtual world.

Full Spectrum Diversity Impact
We believe that impact is only real if it is sustainable, systemic, and inclusive across the full spectrum of diversity. We know this requires continual evaluation and recalibration of our efforts as we expand our actions on a global scale to ensure recurring impact and generational change.
Commitment to the Black Community

The umbrella of inequality manifests differently across groups, but we are confident we can answer the call for everyone and will be relentless in our efforts to do so. Our collective history, recent murders of unarmed Black people in the United States and demonstrations in the streets across the globe have forced us all to take a hard look at our world and the racism within it.

Racism is an ugly thread in the fabric of our global society, and all communities of color across the spectrum experience harmful, discriminatory and unsafe realities every day. Cisco is anti-racist in all of its forms across all groups, from small slights to extreme acts of violence. We can no longer ignore our reality. The lack of attention to the Black experience has galvanized us to lead needed change. We must change how we focus on the Black community, specifically because of the distinct ways in which they experience racism that is grounded in anti-blackness.

Anti-Blackness is a unique version of racism where society rejects the humanity of anyone marked as Black. This form of racism is relentless and unforgiving, denying the opportunity to change the narrative of centuries of suffering.

We find ourselves at an inflection point with the Black community – Cisco is ready to respond.
12 Actions & Impact

Our Beliefs and Actions began as a show of support and solidarity with the Black community, but they provide a blueprint for how we respond to injustice and address inequity for any community.

Our Actions are enterprise wide, global priorities. While we have written goals and metrics for each of our Actions, these goals may evolve as community needs change.

1. Influence ecosystem
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2. Increase representation
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3. Expand pay parity
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4. Increase board diversity
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5. Deliver anti-discrimination education
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6. Connect leaders and employees
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8. Commit to HBCUs
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9. Support Black-owned companies
   More >

10. Diversify partner ecosystem
    More >

11. Invest in innovation
    More >

12. Human rights in technology solutions
    More >
Action 1: Influence ecosystem

Cisco will influence our ecosystem to support policy, legislation and organizations working to ensure equal rights for African American / Black people in 2020 and beyond.

What we’ll do...

Social justice will only sustain if we place an equal focus on our regional communities as we have internally at Cisco. We support national policing reform efforts and encourage Congress to reach a resolution designed to better protect, respect and serve African American / Black communities across the United States.

Voting rights are at the core of our democracy, and Cisco supports policies that promote the full, equal and active participation of all communities in federal, state and local elections.

We will provide employees with up to one business day of paid time off to vote in major country elections across the world, where applicable. We will use our influence to encourage other companies in our ecosystem and communities to do the same.

We will support the endeavors of policymakers as they pursue establishing a commission to examine the legacy of slavery and systemic discrimination in the United States and to propose solutions.

We will partner with and invest in organizations on the frontlines that bridge insecurities in the African American / Black community—including being, critical human needs, education, healthcare, and economic empowerment.

Impact

- Millions of dollars donated by Cisco and employees to nonprofits and social-justice initiatives through our Fighting Racism and Discrimination Fund.
- Partnered with 175+ companies on the Business for Voting Rights letter.
- Urged Congress to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.
- Observed Juneteenth as a paid holiday the last 2 years.
Action 2: Increase representation

Cisco will increase the representation of African American / Black employees at all levels of the company.

What we’ll do...

By 2023, achieve a 25% increase in representation of all employees who self-identify as African American / Black from entry-level through manager level and a 75% increase in representation of employees who self-identify as African American / Black from Director through VP+ level.

We will use this learning as a blueprint to expand increased representation across the full spectrum of diversity at every level.

Impact

Our hiring rate for Black employees increased from 5.9% in FY20 to 7.4% in FY21.

Since FY20, Black representation has increased 11% in non-executive roles, 90% in director-level roles, and 120% in vice-president (and above) roles.
Action 3: Expand pay parity

Cisco will expand our pay parity program to include additional forms of compensation and promotion practices to ensure fairness for all employees.

What we’ll do...

We will aggressively expand our approach to Fair Pay beyond base salary to also include additional forms of compensation — promotion, stock and bonus. We will expand the program to ensure it addresses all employees across the full spectrum of diversity through new methodologies and practices, expansion to our global self-reported data collection, along with intentional transparency of the process.

We will maintain focus on promotion fairness across the company to ensure our leadership and pipeline represent an inclusive future for all.

Impact

Expanded our pay fairness program to include bonus and stock incentives.
Action 4: Increase board diversity

Cisco will focus on increasing the diversity of its Board Members.

What we’ll do...

Our executives and board must reflect the full spectrum of diversity. We know we have gaps in the representation on the board and our Executive Leadership Team (ELT). We are committed to closing these gaps, beginning in 2020 and beyond, by leveraging diverse candidate slates, robust succession planning and a commitment to developing a pipeline of diverse talent for the executive ranks.

Impact

Welcomed John D. Harris II and Marianna Tessel to our Board of Directors.
Action 5: Deliver anti-discrimination education

Cisco will deliver anti-discrimination education for our workforce and will make content available to all partners and suppliers by 2022.

What we’ll do...

Within the next 18 months, we will require all Cisco teams to participate in learning focused on anti-discrimination. The design of this content will be for a global audience recognizing that bias, discrimination, racism, colorism, and classism are experienced all over the world and that learning interventions are the catalyst for allyship.

This content will be the first offering of a new and ever-expanding library of trainings focused on educating our teams about the full spectrum of diversity and the challenges groups face in the workplace.

We will also build new avenues and models to make foundational anti-discrimination content available to all suppliers and partners by 2022.

Impact

Defined parameters for a company-wide training program.

Began assessing potential vendors to design the program.
Action 6: Connect leaders and employees

Cisco will enable leaders to get proximate to African American / Black employees and Cisco Networking Academy students to create a culture of sponsorship and drive adoption of The Multiplier Effect by partners and suppliers by 2022.

What we’ll do...

Within the next 12 months, we commit to ensuring our African American / Black employees have the opportunity to meet 1:1 with a senior leader other than their direct manager with the intended outcome of securing sponsorship. We will also extend this to other communities.

Within the next 18 months, we will focus on ensuring our African American / Black talent have access to mentoring or sponsoring relationships. Every Cisco executive is expected to sponsor at least one or more African American / Black or diverse talent within Cisco or Networking Academy.

By the end of CY2022, drive adoption to The Multiplier Effect (TME) in our partner and supplier organizations to grow cultures of sponsorship across industries by offering a powerful and engaging sponsorship platform with resources to 100% of our partners and suppliers. In the next 18 months, conduct a pilot with 5 to 10 of our largest suppliers and partners to drive adoption of TME in their organizations and achieve 80%+ pledge adoption with their executive teams. This cross-industry pilot will yield success stories that will enable other organizations to successfully drive TME and sponsorship in their environments.

Impact

100% of Cisco Vice Presidents have taken The Multiplier Effect Pledge.

200+ Cisco executives participated in 1000+ proximity meetings in fiscal 2021. Of leaders who participated, 95% have adopted more inclusive behaviors including showing empathy and listening more.
Action 7: Supplier engagement

Cisco will require preferred suppliers in 2021 to report annually on the full spectrum diversity of their US workforce provided to Cisco, where permissible, and we will recognize and reward those that excel in increasing diversity.

What we’ll do...

Our suppliers are an extension of Cisco. We will expand our competitive sourcing to require 100% of bids include at least one qualified diverse supplier with an objective of doubling our percentage spend with diverse suppliers by 2023.

Cisco will insert core anti-discrimination training into standard training provided to preferred suppliers that work with Cisco.

In the US, we will focus on offering African American / Black-owned businesses access to Cisco mentorship and coaching. Outside the US, we will focus our diverse supplier program to address inclusion of marginalized communities.

Impact

Received workforce diversity reports from 100% of our FY20 preferred suppliers with U.S. workers in FY21.

Continued our executive sponsorship program, which pairs diverse suppliers with Cisco executives for regular meetings during which suppliers learn more about Cisco’s priorities and receive coaching and feedback. The program evolved in fiscal 2021, which now includes monthly curriculum meetings, as well as speaker events and networking opportunities. Cohorts in the United States and United Kingdom completed the program, and we kicked off our first program for women-owned businesses in India.

In early fiscal 2022, we launched a new cohort for African American / Black-owned businesses in the United States.
Action 8: Commit to HBCUs

Cisco will commit to the strategic recovery, sustainability and legacy of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), post - COVID & beyond.

What we’ll do...

Over the next 5 years, we will invest in HBCUs to ensure a successful post COVID-19 recovery. We commit to providing technology upgrades to ensure exceptional remote learning options and scholarships to ensure enrollment to those in need due to COVID-19.

By 2025, we will commit to partner with HBCUs to develop a long-term sustainable strategy focused on delivering student success, innovation opportunities, and investment into African American / Black-owned startups.

Impact

Committed $150 million to fund STEM education and drive technology modernization at four-year Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Committed $50 million to the Student Freedom Initiative “Access to Education” endowment, of which $12.5 million was spent in FY21.

Selected 8 HBCUs to receive tech assessments in partnership with AVC Technologies as part of our IT Modernization program to build technology excellence.
Action 9: Support Black-owned companies

Cisco will provide access to capital, education and customers for African American / Black-owned financing companies.

What we’ll do...

We will partner with financing providers that serve African American / Black-owned companies and communities to provide attractive financing offers to ensure access to the most impactful technology solutions that drive business results.

We will implement an education program for African American / Black-owned Cisco Partners on how to use Cisco financing programs to increase revenue and profitability.

Cisco will seek to incorporate African American / Black-owned US equipment financing companies into Cisco Capital’s portfolio of finance partners to provide these companies with access to a broader base of potential customers.

Impact

Created a 0% and six-month deferral offer for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Formed a fund for select partners to participate in Equipment Leasing and Finance Association (ELFA) / Certified Lease & Finance Professionals (CLFP) training.
Action 10: Diversify partner ecosystem

Cisco will commit $50M over 5 years to increase the diversity in our partner ecosystem.

What we’ll do...

Cisco will increase the number of African American / Black-owned technology companies in our partner ecosystem with the goal of promoting the financial growth and opportunities for these partners.

We will also drive the hiring of African American / Black employees into tech and management roles, especially from HBCUs and Cisco Networking Academy across the partner ecosystem.

Impact

Established the African American Cisco Partner Community (AACPC), starting with 53 partners in FY21, with a focus on investing in partner growth.

Created a pilot program focused on supporting and accelerating existing Black-owned partners.

Launched the “Power Your Edge” coverage model to increase support and alignment between distribution and partner account managers supporting AACPC partners.
**Action 11: Invest in innovation**

Cisco will invest in innovation through strategic venture capital.

**What we’ll do...**

We will launch a $50M venture investment fund (the “Aspire Fund”) to make investments in Venture Funds and Startups with diverse founders and leadership teams. Aspire Fund will be managed by the same team in Cisco Investments.

Cisco Investments will help its portfolio companies, as well as the portfolio companies of the venture funds (in which Cisco Investments is an investor), scale up their businesses through its dedicated team of portfolio development professionals.

**Impact**

In 2020, Cisco Investments launched the Aspire Fund, with an initial commitment to invest $50 million into diverse-led startups and venture funds over five years.

Since launching the Aspire Fund, Cisco Investments has invested in several diverse-led venture funds and startups, led by exceptional Black, Latino, Asian, female founders and CEOs.

Looking to the future, Cisco Investments will continue to accelerate our investment efforts and will be regularly announcing investments in diverse-led startups and venture funds through the Aspire Fund.
Action 12: Human rights in technology solutions

Cisco will ensure technology solutions and day-to-day operations maximize human rights benefits, mitigate potential human rights harms, and respect ethical principles.

What we’ll do...

In FY21, Cisco’s human rights team will partner across the business to ensure a human rights perspective is integrated into our technology solutions and day-to-day operations. This will include, among other actions:

Identifying the salient human rights issues associated with key product groups: Collaboration, Meraki, Security, IoT, and 5G, and conducting a review of Cisco’s product design requirements and guidance to ensure human rights and fairness principles are integrated from the very beginning.

Continuing to train relevant employees on how to identify human rights concerns and how to seek guidance on mitigation and remediation strategies.

Engaging with stakeholders to refine our human rights approach, including affected or potentially affected stakeholders or their legitimate representatives to ensure an inclusive design process.

Working to ensure that our suppliers and partners abide by these same standards.

Impact

Established our Human Rights Advisory Committee to promote and champion human rights across Cisco and provide expertise to inform and refine Cisco’s business and human-rights strategy.

Continued assessing impact of our products on human rights.

Engaged engineers across Cisco to ensure that our solutions with artificial intelligence and/or machine-learning components are developed to be robust, fair, explainable, transparent, and accountable.
Ways you can support Cisco Social Justice

Accelerating fairness and equity everywhere is one of the most powerful ways that Cisco can power an inclusive future. By creating innovative models of engaging across our employees, customers, partners, suppliers, and communities and making tangible commitments to drive transformational change, we’re signaling that Cisco is part of the collective.

Join us in taking bold, brave, and deliberate action in service of our beliefs and purpose.

Get involved

Give
Donate to the Fighting Racism & Discrimination Fund

Pledge
Take the pledge to sponsor diverse talent with The Multiplier Effect

Download
Read and share the 2021 Purpose Report

www.cisco.com/go/socialjustice