karat^ | Brilliant Black Minds

2024 ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT

Brilliant Black Minds
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Brilliant Black Minds
Our Purpose

"There is no shortage of brilliance in Black America, only limits to the access and opportunities extended to our community."

Serena Williams
Champion of Brilliance

Our purpose at Karat is to unlock opportunity.

We do this by making every interview predictive, fair, and enjoyable. But interviews are only as fair as the people who get invited to them, and they're only predictive of success on the job if everyone enters those interviews on a level playing field.

Systemic factors hinder Black software engineers' access to practice technical interviews and other key resources. These barriers make it hard for some of the most brilliant engineers to progress their careers. Brilliant Black Minds gives aspiring Black engineers access to free practice interviews, feedback, mentorship, networking, and opportunities to connect with our partners.

This past year, the Brilliant Black Minds community grew by more than 150% to 7,500 members, who went on to find software engineering jobs at hundreds of companies. Since joining Brilliant Black Minds, one third of our members have gone on to secure new roles. We also more than doubled the number of Partners of Brilliance and engaged the community in exciting new ways.

Read on to learn more about the program, where we've been, and where we're going in the year ahead!

A Letter from Crystal Moore
Vice President of Brilliant Black Minds, Karat

> **It is my distinct honor to present Karat's inaugural Brilliant Black Minds annual community report.**
>
> This update is both a reflection of the tremendous progress we've made over the past year and a celebration of how our community has come together to break down barriers, foster brilliance, and unlock opportunities.

I find it especially poignant to be sharing this report at a time when DEI efforts are coming under fire. 2023 saw many organizations cut and reevaluate DEI programs against the backdrop of shrinking budgets, a charged political climate, and the Supreme Court ruling striking down Affirmative Action.

Yet, despite the shifting sentiment, Karat's research still shows that **making hiring more inclusive is a significant competitive differentiator** for engineering leaders. Over the past two years, the most successful organizations cite DEI as critical to their hiring goals and they find it easier to hire people from diverse backgrounds compared to organizations that do not prioritize DEI. And as we look ahead to the future of tech work, it is paramount that fairness and equal access to opportunities are the focal point for organizations who are creating better hiring processes that level the playing field and give every candidate the opportunity to demonstrate their skills.

Being part of a company that has conducted more than 350,000 technical interviews, we understand that many traditional hiring practices act as obstacles to getting jobs in tech. We also know that when given practice, software engineers improve their interview performance, and that **Black engineers who have at least three practice interviews are six times more likely to land an internship or job**. But less than half of the Black computer science students we met with when Brilliant Black Minds first launched had ever been offered a practice interview. That's what we're working to change.

This is more important now than ever, as AI innovations and tools continue to paint a picture of a more digital and automated future. The **seven new leading organizations we welcomed to our Partners of Brilliance coalition**—DocuSign, Electronic Arts, Intuit, Snap, Uber, Unity, and Zillow—alongside our inaugural partners, Prime Video, Citi, Duolingo, and Flatiron Health, will join the thousands of Brilliant Black Minds who form our community to shape this AI-powered future and make the world of tech look more like the world it serves.

Thank you to our participants, partners, and all of the champions who are having an impact in the community. And most of all, **thank you to the thousands of members of our community** for championing each other and committing to making the world of tech a better place.
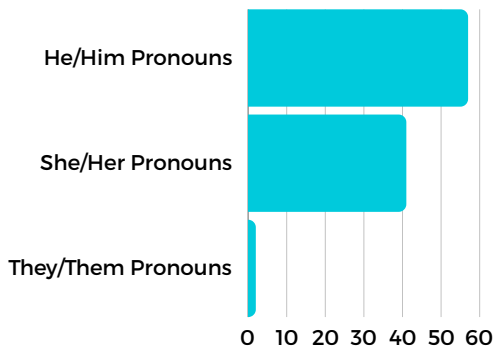
Crystal

About Our Community

A growing community of over
7,500 Black software engineers.

57% of our community members identify using he/him pronouns, compared to 41% she/her pronouns, and 2% they/them or other pronouns.

21% of the community have at least two years of experience in software development, while 42% are early-career engineers, 21% are students, and 16% opted not to report their experience.

He/Him Pronouns

She/Her Pronouns

They/Them Pronouns

0 10 20 30 40 50 60

2+ Years of Experience
21%

Students
21%

Early-Career Engineers
42%
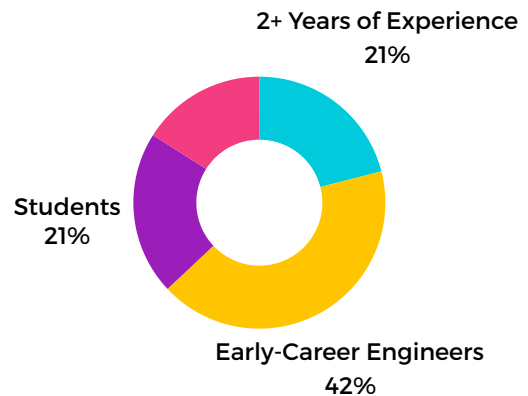
Community members come from all over the country but are most heavily concentrated in New York, Georgia, Texas, California, and Washington.

In addition to our partner organizations, community members overwhelmingly aspire to land jobs at FAANG companies.

Notable brands that resonate strongly with our community include Netflix, Capital One, and The Walt Disney Company.

When it comes to searching for jobs, our community members are primarily looking for postings on LinkedIn, GitHub and Indeed, which are used significantly more often than directly visiting employer websites.

Brilliant Black Minds
Our Impact

57%
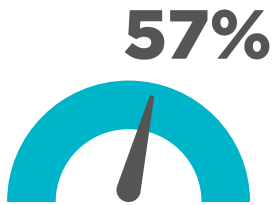
More than half of our community members had **never experienced a mock interview** before joining Brilliant Black Minds.

7,200+ INTERVIEWS

The software engineers in our community have taken over **7,200 free technical interviews** since the program launched in 2021.

75 VIRTUAL EVENTS

In 2023, the Brilliant Black Minds team hosted **75 virtual events for our community**, including technical sessions, career development workshops, office hours, and opportunities to connect with our Partners of Brilliance.

$492K TOTAL VALUE UNLOCKED

The program has provided **nearly a half-million dollars** in value through mock technical interviews, mentorship, office hours, and workshops.

650+ JOB-READY CANDIDATES

Over **650 job-ready software engineers** have been presented to our Partners of Brilliance all-time for internships and backend or full-stack roles.

31%

Nearly one-third of employed Brilliant Black Minds members say the program **help them to secure their current role**.
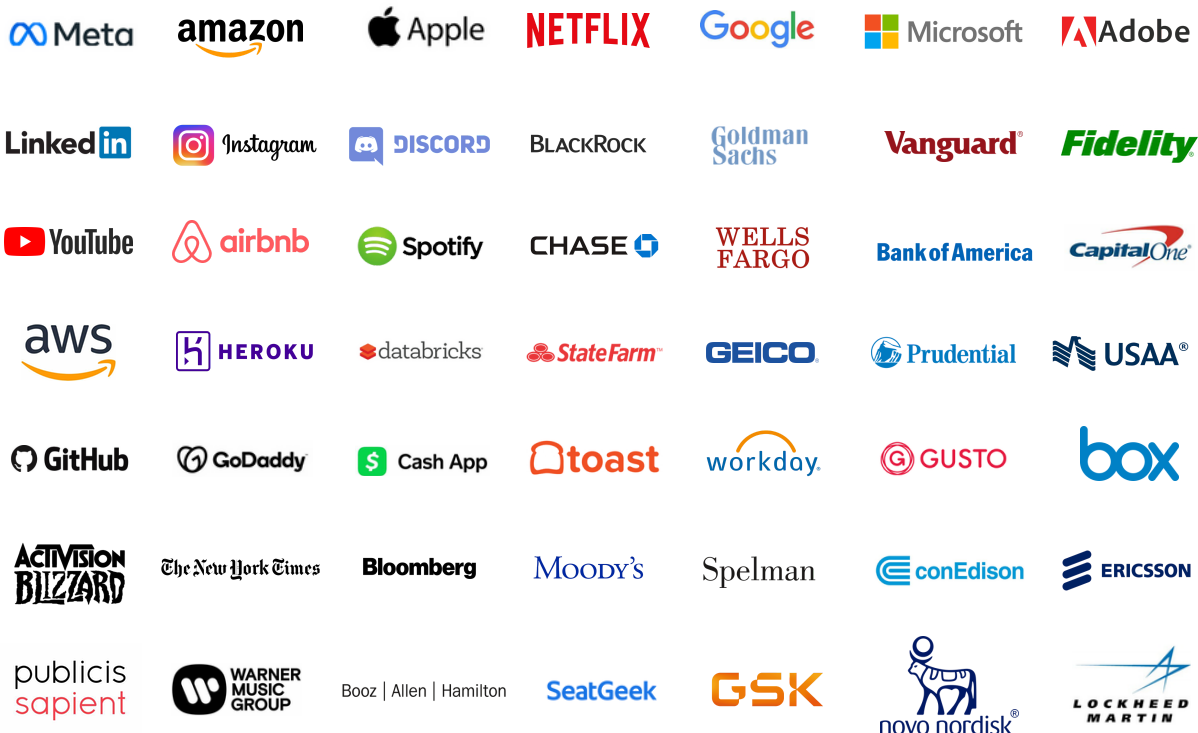
INCREASED BASE SALARY BY 25%

Two in five members who landed roles with help from Brilliant Black Minds **increased their base salary by 25% or more**.

Brilliant Black Minds
Our Impact

In addition landing roles with our Partners of Brilliance, community members have secured jobs at Wells Fargo, Airbnb, Lockheed Martin, Amazon, Netflix, JPMorgan Chase, Google, and more than 100 other employers.

Meta · amazon · Apple · NETFLIX · Google · Microsoft · Adobe

LinkedIn · Instagram · DISCORD · BLACKROCK · Goldman Sachs · Vanguard · Fidelity

YouTube · airbnb · Spotify · CHASE · WELLS FARGO · Bank of America · Capital One

aws · HEROKU · databricks · State Farm · GEICO · Prudential · USAA

GitHub · GoDaddy · Cash App · toast · workday · GUSTO · box

ACTIVISION BLIZZARD · The New York Times · Bloomberg · Moody's · Spelman · conEdison · ERICSSON

publicis sapient · WARNER MUSIC GROUP · Booz | Allen | Hamilton · SeatGeek · GSK · novo nordisk · LOCKHEED MARTIN

Tofik Mussa
Software Engineer, Uber
Hired through Partners of Brilliance program

"Brilliant Black Minds is solving a unique problem for black software engineers like myself, thoroughly assessing technical abilities and filling up knowledge gaps. The mock interviews I did with BBM helped curb my impostor syndrome and made me feel like I can show off my skills in technical interviews. Each of the mock interviews I did was an improvement, a stepping stone and confidence booster leading me to the final offer."

Brilliant Black Minds
Key Highlights

We welcomed 7 new Partners of Brilliance!

DocuSign, Electronic Arts, Intuit, Snap, Uber, Unity, and Zillow joined our inaugural partners: Prime Video, Citi, Duolingo, and Flatiron Health.

Hear from our partners at DocuSign, Intuit, and Duolingo:

Rodney Tabares
Director of DEI Partnerships & Accountability, DocuSign

Brilliant Black Minds
Key Highlights

With the help of our members and Partners of Brilliance, we expanded the Brilliant Black Minds program in a number of important ways last year:

We launched our first Interview Accelerator
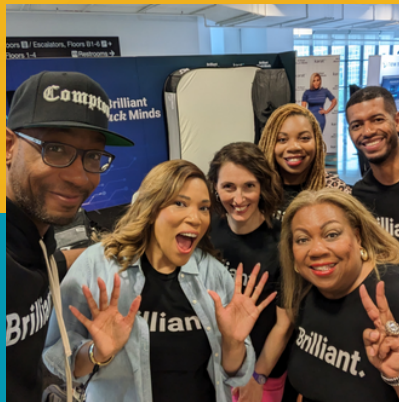
JOIN OUR 5-WEEK INTERVIEW ACCELERATOR
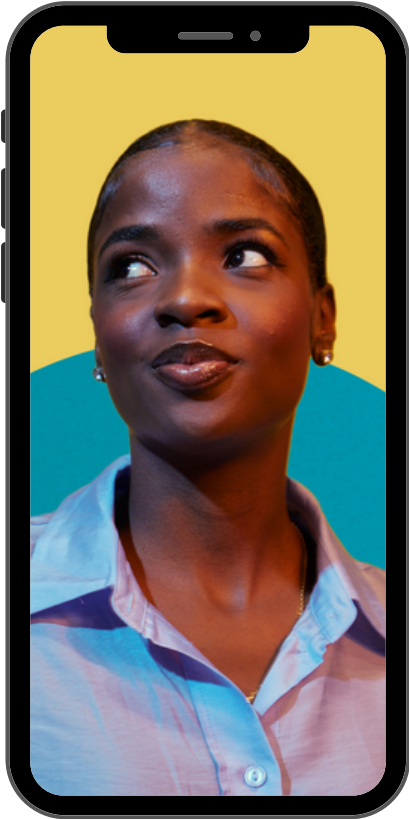
We produced thousands of professional headshots by Joel Arbaje for our community members.
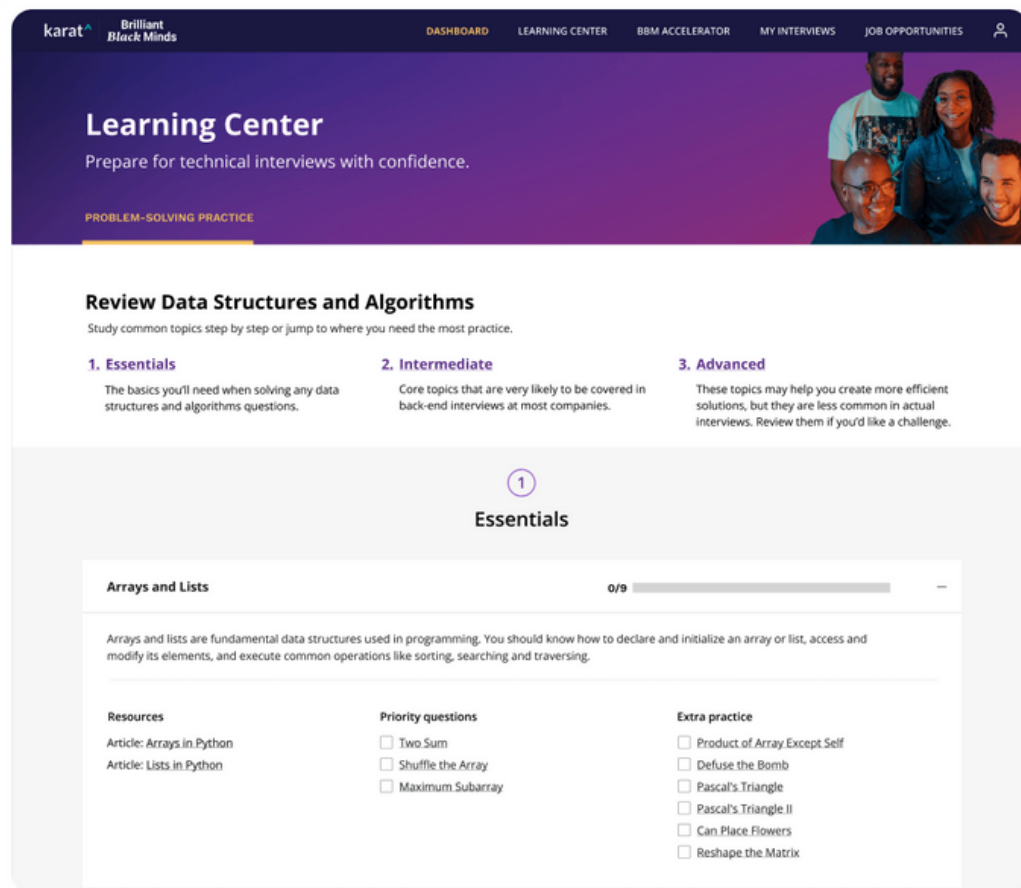
Brilliant Black Minds
Key Highlights

We engaged with our community at NSBE, RenderATL, Black Men in Tech, and AfroTech.

Brilliant Black Minds
Key Highlights

We created a learning center to allow for structured self-study and development online.

We hosted webinars on topics ranging from open-source development to portfolio creation and fighting imposter syndrome.

Brilliant Black Minds
What We Learned
Launching Our Interview Accelerator with Prime Video

In addition to the interview access gap, there's a big gap in access to mentorship.

Over half of our community members have not had mentorship in their careers but are seeking mentorship. Candidates greatly value industry expertise and experience as a factor when choosing a mentor and are less worried about their mentor coming from a similar background. These candidates haven't been able to find mentorship because they're unsure how to begin the process.

To address these systemic issues in tech, we partnered with Prime Video to design and launch our first Interview Accelerator program. The pilot consisted of 5 weeks of weekly group practice, coaching, and 1:1 mentoring support from 6 senior engineers from the Prime Video team with the goal of arming our participants with the ability to successfully pass a technical interview loop at a FAANG-level company. Over 400 community members applied to participate.

The cohort of engineers in the accelerator were actively seeking jobs. 80% were either unemployed, seeking their first job, or not employed full-time in software engineering positions.

Every single participant either completed the program or dropped out due to starting a new role at one of their desired companies.
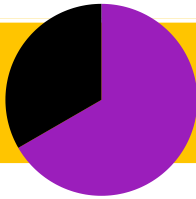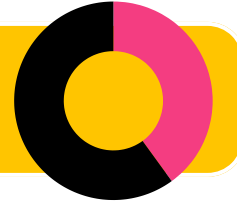
In 2024, we are continuing to build on the accelerator model with a new cohort of engineers and mentors from Snap and DocuSign.
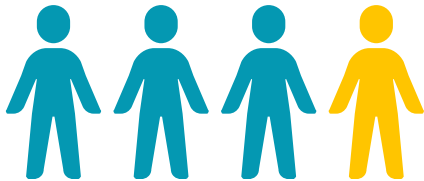
What We Learned

Candidates who completed the accelerator were:

Nearly 40% more likely to feel confident taking online assessments.

Nearly twice as likely to feel more prepared for future Prime Video interviews.

More than 3x as likely to achieve key interviewing performance levels
compared to non-accelerator candidates

By the end of the program, more than three-quarters of the participants had secured jobs, promotions, or internships, including 83% of the first-time job seekers.

For more information about partnership opportunities with Brilliant Black Minds, go to:

karat.com/partners-of-brilliance

Brilliant Black Minds
Hear from Our Members

Camille Hall
Software Engineer, Chief
Brilliant Black Minds Ambassador

Right out the gate, Brilliant Black Minds helped me go from a $120,000 to a $250,000 compensation package by landing me a more lucrative role at a different company. That increase in pay propelled my family's lifestyle, my credit score and credit limits increased substantially, and I was able to fund my own AI startup company. Not to mention the network at Brilliant Black Minds has been so supportive and rooting me on through it all. I'm so thankful for this life-changing transformation that BBM played a part in.

Felix Patawah
Software Engineer, JPMorgan Chase

My journey from the pharmaceutical industry to the tech sector is a testament to the power of resilience, adaptability, and the transformative support of initiatives like Brilliant Black Minds. My non-traditional path has imbued me with a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities that lie at the intersection of healthcare, technology, and diversity. It is this unique vantage point, coupled with the invaluable support I received from Brilliant Black Minds' mock interview resources, that fuels my desire to serve as an ambassador for this groundbreaking program.

Micah Forster
Machine Learning Engineer
2024 Accelerator Participant and Brilliant Black Minds Ambassador

My experience with Brilliant Black Minds has been a Godsend for me regarding my professional development. Prior to utilizing this resource, my progression in technical interview skill development was lethargic at best. Since participating in the mock interviews at Brilliant Black Minds, I have noticed a substantial improvement in my ability to problem solve and adequately communicate my thoughts with my interviewers.

Ermiyas Hailemichael
Full-stack Software Developer

Brilliant Black Minds has played a pivotal role in my growth during my nearly year-long membership. The free mock interview program has helped my interview preparation, boosting my confidence and skills. Actively engaging in the Discord channel has not only facilitated valuable connections with fellow software engineers but has also opened doors to insightful discussions and events.

Brilliant Black Minds
Closing

Looking ahead, 2024 is going to be a promising year for Brilliant Black Minds.

Resilient Futures: Nurturing Diverse Talent in the Age of AI

We recently hosted an inspiring webinar featuring Career Karma CEO and co-founder, Ruben Harris, Uber Vice President of Engineering, Lee Rudolph, and McKinsey & Company Digital and Analytics Engagement Manager, Matthew Finney, to talk about the transformations happening to tech jobs around the industry.

View the entire conversation on-demand.

Join the program

If you're preparing for your next career opportunity, sign up for Brilliant Black Minds and gain access to free mock technical interviews and connections to some of the world's top companies.

Sign up at joinbrilliantblackminds.com/2024.

Partner with us

Support the program as we expand our community and impact by becoming a Partner of Brilliance, mentoring the next generation of brilliant software engineers, or becoming an industry partner.

To learn more, reach out to: brilliantblackminds@karat.com.

Meet us at RenderATL or AfroTech

We look forward to connecting in Atlanta and Houston this year. If you are interested in partnering on an event or activation, contact us.

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LEARN MORE AT

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✉ brilliantblackminds@karat.com