Inclusion in Netflix Original U.S. Scripted Films & Series

Full Report

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Inclusion in Netflix Film & Series:
2023 Update

Annenberg Inclusion Initiative

Dearest gentle reader, this research report provides an update on inclusion in Netflix original scripted films and series. Building on our previous studies of content from 2018 (69 films, 80 series), 2019 (57 films, 100 series), 2020 (58 films, 64 series), and 2021 (65 films, 53 series), we included content from 2022 (63 films, 62 series) and 2023 (35 films, 42 series).[1] In total, a full 748 fictional narratives (347 films, 401 series) were analyzed for this investigation.

In terms of parameters, only live action English-language programs were assessed in this study. Our on screen inclusion metrics included gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+, and characters with disabilities whereas behind the camera measures only focused on the first two indicators. The findings below are presented by identity groups and, as in previous reports, we highlight meaningful differences that reach a minimum of 5 percentage points between groups. When possible, we provide comparisons to our own top-grossing film and scripted data as well as other relevant reports to provide industry benchmarking.

Gender

This section focuses on gender distribution on screen and behind the camera across six years of Netflix scripted films and series. First, we analyze the current trends in the most recent year (2023) and then compare these findings to 2022 and then 2018. For some analyses, we also compare film and series results.

On Screen: Film & Series

To assess gender equally across formats, we separated the data several ways. First, we focused on who was at the center of the plot or storyline as the ***lead/co-lead***. For films, this was simply the number of movies where the hero's journey was driven by a female-identified protagonist or roughly two equal leads.[2] For series, due to the structure of episodic programs, lead/co leads were established by examining the number of titles where girls and women filled 50% or more of series regular roles.[3]

In 2023, 51.9% (*n*=40) of all content evaluated (films and series) were driven by girls and women (see Table 1), which is at proportional representation with the U.S. population (50.5%).[4] Separating formats, 57.1% of films and 47.6% of series in 2023 had a female lead/co lead.

In terms of change over time, the percentage of female leads/co leads has deviated minimally. 51.9% of all 2023 storylines featured girls and women driving the plot which was down from 2022 (60.8%) but no different from 2018 (48.7%). It is important to note that across the 5 of the 6 years evaluated, Netflix depicted stories centered on girls/women at or above proportional representation.

Shifting to focus within format, 57.1% of films featured girls and women as leads/co leads in 2023. While a decrease from 2022 (65.1%), this was a substantial increase from 2018 (46.4%). Within series, the percentage of female-led shows in 2023 (47.6%) decreased from 2022 (56.5%) but did not differ from 2018 (50.6%).

Table 1
Percentage of Female-Identified Lead/Co-Leads by Storytelling Format And Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	46.4% (*n*=32)	50.9% (*n*=29)	58.6% (*n*=34)	64.6% (*n*=42)	65.1% (*n*=41)	57.1% (*n*=20)	57.1% (*n*=198)
Scripted Series	50.6% (*n*=40)	57.7% (*n*=56)	54.8% (*n*=34)	56.6% (*n*=30)	56.5% (*n*=35)	47.6% (*n*=20)	54.4% (*n*=215)
Overall	48.7% (*n*=72)	55.2% (*n*=85)	56.7% (*n*=68)	61% (*n*=72)	60.8% (*n*=76)	51.9% (*n*=40)	55.7% (*n*=413)

While Netflix exceeds population norms for female-led films and series, how does the company compare to broader industry trends? In 2023, female leads/co leads in Netflix original movies (57.1%) completely outpaced female leads/co leads in top-grossing films (30%).[5] More concretely, there was a 27.1 percentage point difference between these groups. With series, there is no comparable industry "lead/co lead" statistic. In explanation, the UCLA report defines leads as the "first credited actor" on IMDB, which may or may not be the lead of the storyline. The SDSU study, on the other hand, only looks at "major roles," which is more akin to our next set of measures. Given this, we are not able to make a direct industry comparison.

Table 2
Percentage of Female-Identified Main Cast By Storytelling Format And Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	38.9% (*n*=215)	41.1% (*n*=195)	41% (*n*=225)	46.7% (*n*=287)	49.1% (*n*=270)	43.4% (*n*=151)	43.5% (*n*=1,343)
Scripted Series	46.4% (*n*=301)	48.1% (*n*=357)	48.9% (*n*=234)	46.9% (*n*=183)	50% (*n*=267)	45.9% (*n*=151)	47.8% (*n*=1,493)
Total	42.9% (*n*=516)	45.4% (*n*=552)	44.7% (*n*=459)	46.8% (*n*=470)	49.5% (*n*=537)	44.6% (*n*=302)	45.7% (*n*=2,836)

Note: Across all years there were a total of 17 identified nonbinary characters. 5 were series regulars/main cast and 12 were speaking characters.

In addition to lead/co leads, we examined the gender of the ***main cast*** in Netflix films and scripted series. Main cast includes both primary and secondary roles that drive the story forward, which increases our sample size from the previous leads/co leads analysis. For movies, we retrieved the main cast from the landing page of each film on the Netflix website. In episodic content, series regulars were recurring roles across a show's season as defined by Luminate (formerly Variety Insight).

In 2023, the overall percentage of female main cast/series regulars across both film/episodic content was 44.6%. 2023 was not meaningfully different from 2022 (49.5%) or 2018 (42.9%). Looking specifically at mediums, films in 2023 had fewer girls/women in main cast roles (43.4%) than in 2022 (49.1%) - which was the 6-year high. While 2023 was higher than 2018, the difference was just shy of significance (<5%). Turning to scripted series, the percentage of series regulars that were female-identified clocked in at 45.9% in 2023. This percentage did not differ meaningfully from 2022 (50%) or 2018 (46.4%)!

How do the percentages in Netflix content compare to industry averages? In film, 38% of "major characters" across the 100 top-grossing films were girls and women in both 2023 and 2022.[6] These percentages are in contrast to the parity and near parity observed in main casts in Netflix films across 2023 (43.4%) and 2022 (49.1%). For scripted series, the percentage of girls/women as series regulars across original broadcast and streaming shows was 48% (2022-2023).[7] Netflix series in 2023 (45.9%) or 2022 (50%) is not meaningfully different from the industry average.

Finally, we assessed the gender of ***all speaking characters*** across Netflix fictional storylines. Overall, 40.3% of all speaking characters in Netflix storylines evaluated were girls and women. 2023 (41.3%) was not different from 2022 (42.8%) or 2018 (38.2%). However, changes were observed across the film portion of the study. While 2023 (41.2%) was not different from 2022 (42.3%), it was significantly higher than 2018 (35.8%). Series, in contrast, has remained at 41% or higher for the last 5 contiguous years.

Table 3
Percentage of Female-Identified Speaking Characters By Storytelling Format And Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	35.8% (*n*=898)	36.5% (*n*=799)	38.9% (*n*=875)	40.8% (*n*=811)	42.3% (*n*=827)	41.2% (*n*=538)	38.9% (*n*=4,748)
Scripted Series	39.9% (*n*=1,364)	41.1% (*n*=1,663)	41% (*n*=1,033)	42.1% (*n*=827)	43.1% (*n*=1,086)	41.3% (*n*=751)	41.3% (*n*=6,724)
Total	38.2% (*n*=2,262)	39.5% (*n*=2,462)	40% (*n*=1,908)	41.5% (*n*=1,638)	42.8% (*n*=1,913)	41.3% (*n*=1,289)	40.3% (*n*=11,472)

Note: Across all years there were a total of 17 nonbinary characters. 5 were series regulars/main cast and 12 were speaking characters*.*

We also compared the percentage of girls and women as speaking characters in Netflix storylines to the percentage of girls and women in top-grossing films and scripted series (i.e., broadcast, cable, streaming platforms). For film, the percentage of girls/women on screen exceeded what was observed across top-grossing films of 2023 (31.7%) and 2022 (34.6%).[8] Matter of fact, the difference was 9.5 percentage points in 2023 and 7.7 percentage points in 2022. Looking at series, SDSU reports that 44% of speaking characters were girls and women across the 2022-2023 season.[9] This percentage was not meaningfully different than the percentages across Netflix series in 2023 (41.3%) or 2022 (43.1%).

Building off speaking characters, we were interested in how many stories were ***gender balanced***. A gender balanced story was one that featured roughly half (45.7% to 55.8%) of all characters as girls and women.[10] As shown in Table 4, over a third of all stories across the 6-year sample were gender balanced.

In film, a full 31.4% of movies in 2023 depicted girls and women in roughly half of all the roles. This percentage was significantly lower than 2022 (49.2%) but higher than 2018 (26.1%). It is important to point out that roughly half (49.2%) of all films were gender balanced across the 2022 sample. A similar trend was observed with series. 35.7% of 2023 series were gender balanced, which was not different from 2022 (38.7%) or 2018 (32.5%).

Table 4
At Or Above Gender Balance By Storytelling Format & Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	26.1% (*n*=18)	31.6% (*n*=18)	37.9% (*n*=22)	30.8% (*n*=20)	49.2% (*n*=31)	31.4% (*n*=11)	34.6% (*n*=120)
Scripted Series	32.5% (*n*=26)	33% (*n*=33)	40.6% (*n*=26)	45.3% (*n*=24)	38.7% (*n*=24)	35.7% (*n*=15)	36.9% (*n*=148)
Total	29.5% (*n*=44)	32.5% (*n*=51)	39.3% (*n*=48)	37.3% (*n*=44)	44% (*n*=55)	33.8% (*n*=26)	35.8% (*n*=268)

Overall, there are four major gender trends observed in this section. First, Netflix prioritizes stories that were centered on girls and women as leads/co leads. Second, female identified main cast/series regulars account for roughly 45% of all characters in film and episodic storylines. Third, the percentage of all speaking characters that were female hovers around 41%. While this is on par with industry peers,[11] the point statistic still falls short of females' share of the U.S. population (50.5%).[12] Finally, there are very few (*n*=17) nonbinary characters depicted as leads, main cast/series regulars, or speaking characters across film and series.

Behind the Camera

In the previous section, we examined on screen patterns of representation. Now, we turn to assessing who was calling the shots behind the camera across Netflix storylines. Because the business model and hiring practices are different for film and series, we analyzed employment patterns across these two formats separately. In doing so, the hiring patterns for film will not be overshadowed and skewed by the larger number of talent hired on episodic series.

Table 5
Percentage of Women Above-the-Line in Film By Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Directors	25% (*n*=18)	20.7% (*n*=12)	16.7% (*n*=10)	26.9% (*n*=18)	32.3% (*n*=21)	25% (*n*=9)	24.6% (*n*=88)
Writers	27.5% (*n*=28)	23% (*n*=23)	22% (*n*=22)	33.6% (*n*=36)	27.2% (*n*=31)	31.3% (*n*=20)	27.3% (*n*=160)
Producers	28.6% (*n*=72)	29.6% (*n*=53)	29.7% (*n*=60)	29.1% (*n*=70)	25.8% (*n*=55)	31.3% (*n*=45)	28.8% (*n*=355)
Total	27.7% (*n*=118)	26.1% (*n*=88)	25.4% (*n*=92)	29.9% (*n*=124)	27.3% (*n*=107)	30.3% (*n*=74)	27.7% (*n*=603)

Film. The breakdown of above-the-line personnel is depicted in Table 5. For the top leadership position, a full 72.2% of directors were male and 25% were female in 2023.[13] 2023 (25%) was significantly lower than 2022 (32.3%) and identical to 2018 (25%). To contextualize these findings, we then compared the gender of Netflix directors across the 6-year sample to the gender of directors across top-grossing films. As shown in Figure 1, Netflix over indexes every year from 2018 to 2023. In 2023, Netflix hired over two times as many women directors (25% vs. 12%) compared to top-grossing films. It is important to point out, however, that only 1 nonbinary director worked across the 6-year time frame.

Figure 1
Percentage of Women Directors by Type of Distributor & Year
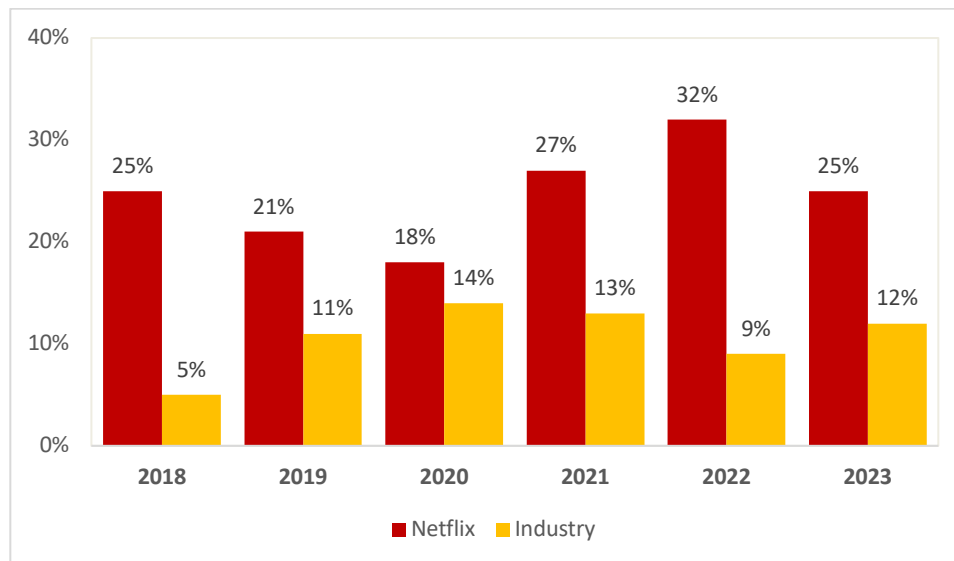
Turning to writers (see Table 5), a full 68.7% were men and 31.3% were women in 2023. This translates into a gender ratio of 2.2 males to every 1 female. Only 1 screenwriter was non-binary across all 6 years. The percentage of women screenwriters in 2023 (31.3%) did not differ from the percentage in 2022

(27.2%) or 2018 (27.5%). Like directors, women writers worked twice as much across Netflix films in 2023 than did women writers who worked across the 100 top-grossing films.[14]

Figure 2
Percentage of Women Screenwriters by Type of Distributor & Year
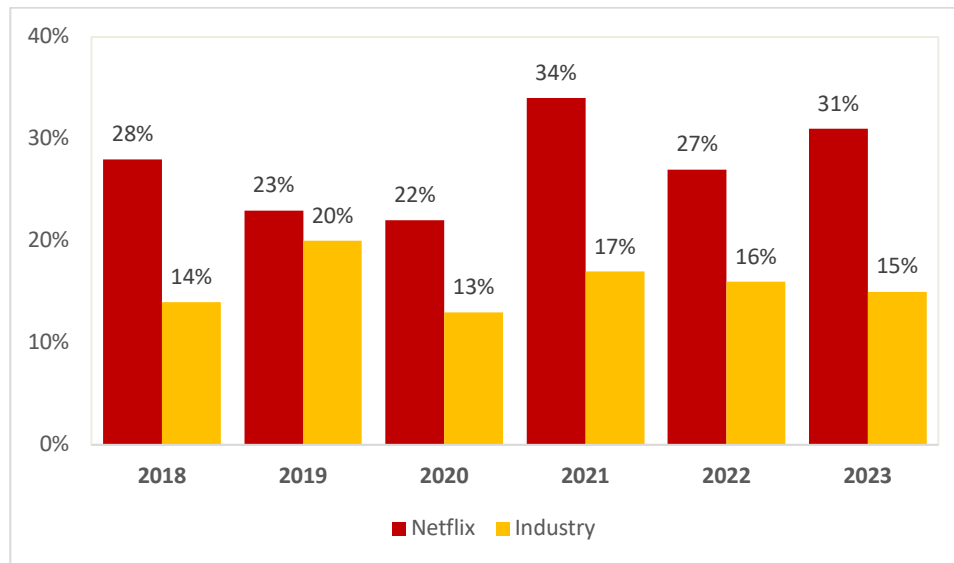
Pivoting to producers, in 2023 68.7% were men and 31.3% were women (see Table 5). Only 1 producer was nonbinary across all 6 years. Women were more likely to work as producers in 2023 (31.3%) than in 2022 (25.8%). However, 2023 (31.3%) did not differ from 2018 (28.6%). In 5 of the 6-years in the sample, Netflix outperformed hiring women producers in comparison to the 100 top films (Figure 3).[15]

Figure 3
Percentage of Women Producers by Type of Distributor & Year
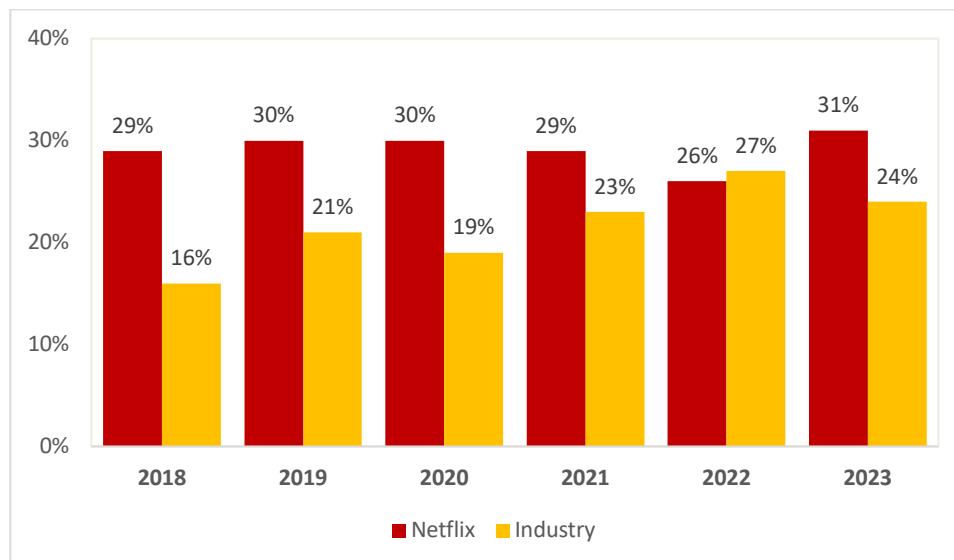
Besides behind the camera trends, we were interested in the relationship between gender on screen and gender behind the camera. More directly, we sought to answer the following question: are films with women directors more inclusive of girls and women than films without women directors? To answer this question, we bifurcated the 2023 sample into two bins: films with at least one-woman director attached and films with no woman directors attached. We then looked at the percentage of female leads/co leads, main cast, and speaking characters in each grouping. The same procedure was then applied to writers and producers.

Table 6
Percentage Of Female-Identified Leads, Main Cast, & Speaking Characters
by Content Creator Gender in 2023 Films

Measures	Directors		Writers		Producers	
	Woman Director Attached	No Woman Director Attached	Woman Writer Attached	No Woman Writer Attached	Woman Producer Attached	No Woman Producer Attached
Leads/Co Leads	81.8% (*n*=9)	36.7% (*n*=11)	77.8% (*n*=14)	26.1% (*n*=6)	56% (*n*=14)	35.7% (*n*=5)
Main Cast	49.3% (*n*=35)	41.9% (*n*=116)	49.7% (*n*=71)	39% (*n*=80)	45.9% (*n*=102)	38.8% (*n*=47)
Speaking Chars	47.9% (*n*=123)	39.5% (*n*=415)	45.3% (*n*=244)	38.2% (*n*=294)	42.5% (*n*=330)	38.9% (*n*=197)

Note: To be categorized as "woman director attached," one or more women had to be credited as a helmer on the film. The sample process was applied for screenwriters and producers.

The results in Table 6 reveal an all too familiar story. Those movies with at least one-woman director attached featured significantly more girls and women as leads/co leads (81.8% vs. 36.7%), main cast (49.3% vs. 41.9%) and speaking characters (47.4% vs. 39.5%) than did those movies without women directors attached. Similar increases were observed for women writers and producers (see Table 6).

There are at least two explanations for these findings. First, women are more likely to be drawn to and tell stories that resonate with their own lived experiences. As such, women may be pitching and crafting stories featuring female characters more often than men. Second, it may be the case that executives feel more comfortable having women directors helm storylines that focus on female characters. This latter explanation is more problematic, suggesting that the identity of the characters and storylines dictates or influences who may secure employment.

Scripted Series. For the entire Netflix episodic sample, we examined *every* creator, producer, writer, and director that worked on each episode of every show. For 2023, a total of 1,439 above-the-line personnel were credited across the shows in the sample. 57.2% of the credits were men and 42.6% were women. Less than <1% (*n*=3) of content creators were nonbinary. Table 7 illuminates the percentages of women working above-the-line in scripted series as creators, directors, writers and producers by year.

The top leadership position in scripted series is the show creator. In 2023 (see Table 7), 38.1% of these prestigious positions were filled by women. This percentage was not different from 2022 (39.6%) but it was significantly higher than 2018 (26.9%). As shown in Figure 4, Netflix has outpaced the industry in putting women show creators behind the scenes in 4 of the 6 years studied.[16]

Table 7
Percentage Of Women Above-the-Line in Scripted Series By Year

| Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Creators	26.9% (*n*=32)	32.2% (*n*=47)	26.2% (*n*=27)	38.1% (*n*=32)	39.6% (*n*=38)	38.1% (*n*=24)	32.7% (*n*=200)
Producers	33.6% (*n*=258)	40% (*n*=362)	38.1% (*n*=259)	38.2% (*n*=210)	40.6% (*n*=263)	39.6% (*n*=188)	38.3% (*n*=1,540)
Writers	30.6% (*n*=372)	41.4% (*n*=590)	40.4% (*n*=318)	41.6% (*n*=412)	44.9% (*n*=356)	46.6% (*n*=248)	40% (*n*=2,296)
Directors	25.1% (*n*=191)	30.1% (*n*=271)	38.1% (*n*=204)	36.7% (*n*=188)	43.3% (*n*=265)	41.5% (*n*=153)	34.5% (*n*=1,272)
Total	29.8% (*n*=853)	37.6% (*n*=1,270)	38.4% (*n*=808)	39.4% (*n*=842)	42.9% (*n*=922)	42.6% (*n*=613)	37.7% (*n*=5,308)

Figure 4
Percentage of Women Creators by Type of Distributor & Year
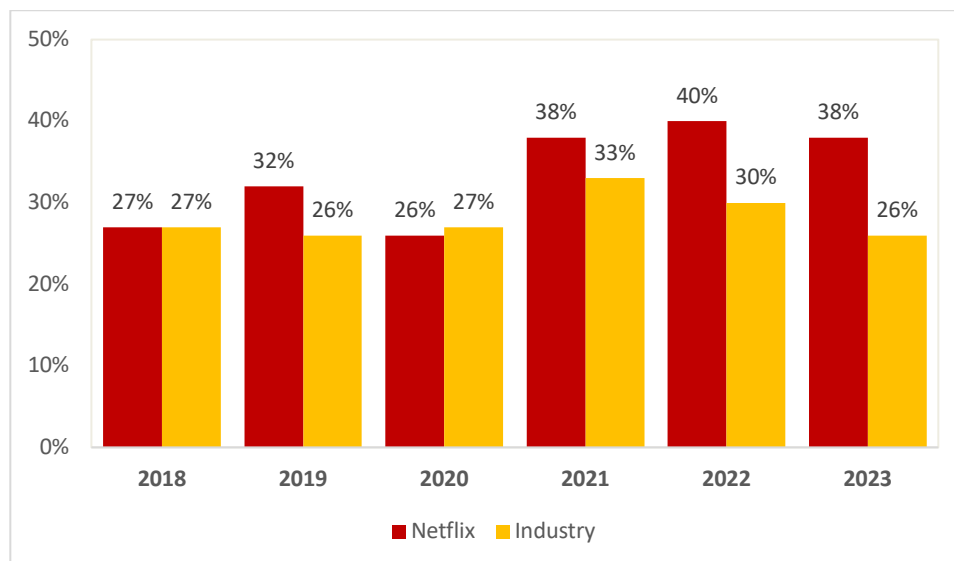
Turning to Netflix producers, 60.4% in 2023 were men and 39.6% were women. The percentage of women producers in 2023 was no different from 2022 (40.6%) but was notably higher than 2018 (33.6%). Figure 5 compares the percentage of women producers working on Netflix series to those

working across broadcast, cable, and streaming. As shown in the Figure, Netflix does not differ significantly from the broader television industry across 5 of the 6 years evaluated.[17]

Figure 5
Percentage of Women Producers by Type of Distributor & Year
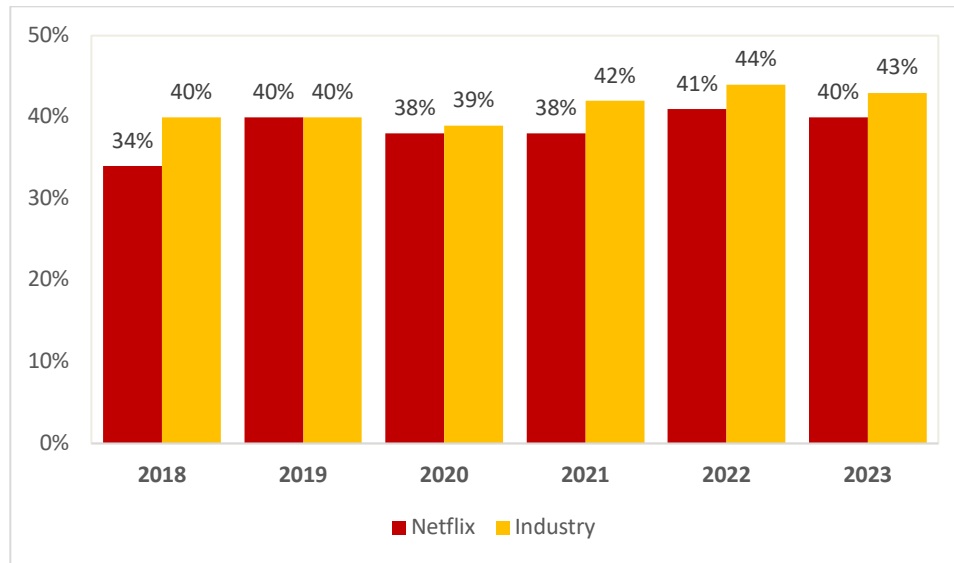
Focusing on writers, 53.2% were men in 2023, 46.6% were women, and less than 1% were non-binary. These percentages are near parity. 2023 was not meaningfully different from 2022 (44.9%) but was significantly higher than 2018 (30.6%). In comparison to the industry, Netflix has outpaced television across in 5 of the years evaluated. In 2023, Netflix hired 17 percentage points higher (47% vs. 30%) than the television industry on scripted content (see Figure 6)!

Figure 6
Percentage of Women Writers by Type of Distributor & Year
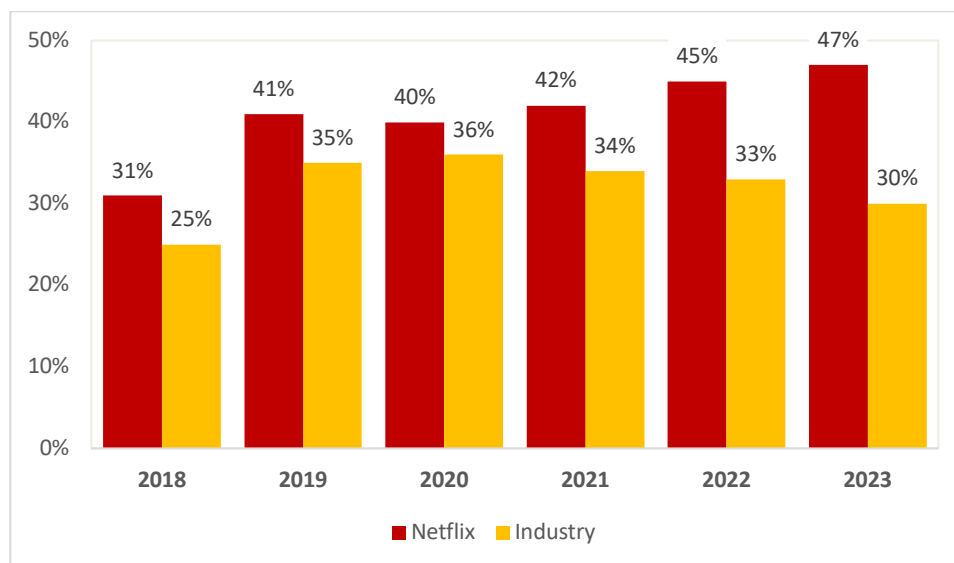
Finally, we assessed directors across every episode of each series evaluated. As shown in Table 5, the percentage of women directors on Netflix series reached an all-time high. In 2023, a full 41.5% of all directors attached to episodes were women and in 2022 the percentage was 43.3%! These percentages are in stark contrast to 2018, when only 25.1% of series directors were women. Netflix is also performing better than the industry. Across 5 of the 6 years, Netflix hired more women directors than the television industry.[18]

Figure 7
Percentage of Women Directors by Type of Distributor & Year
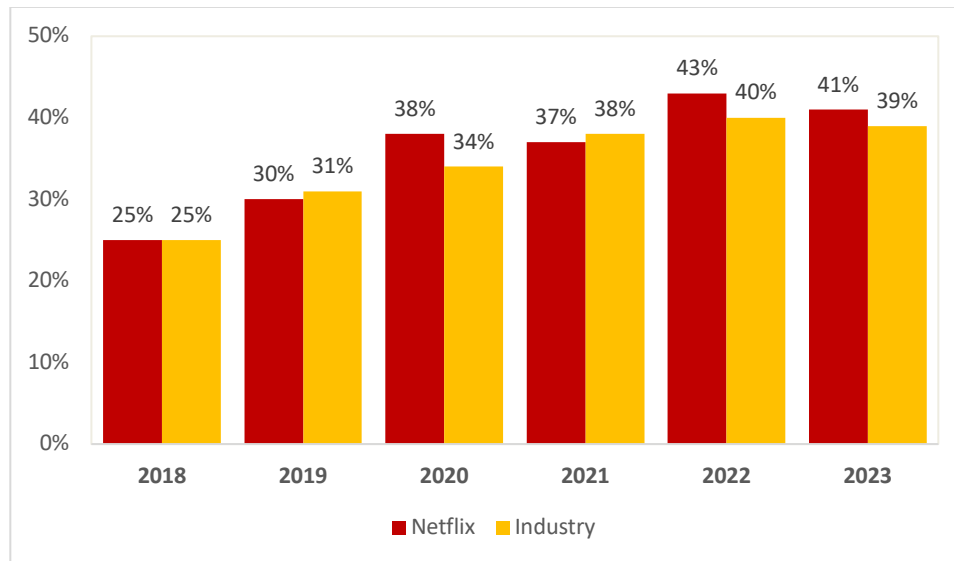
Note: Data on industry-wide women directors is drawn from the DGA Diversity Reports from 2018-2021. 2022-2023 data is from unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data.

Similar to film, we were interested in the relationship between gender on screen and behind the camera. For series, we focused on the top leadership position (creators) and two on screen indicators: series regulars and speaking characters. Just like for film, we split the sample into two categories: those with at least one female creator attached and those that did not. We then calculated the percentage of series regulars and all speaking characters that were girls and women.

Figure 8
Percentage Of Female-Identified Series Regulars & Speaking Characters
in 2023 by Content Creators Gender
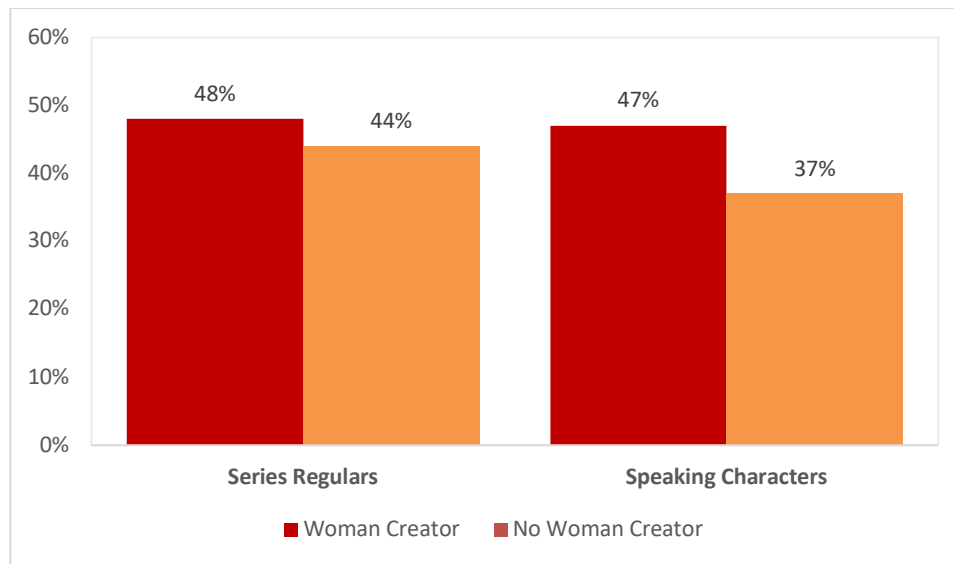
As shown in Figure 8, the relationship between gender on screen and creator gender is notable but not significant. A full 48.3% of series regulars were girls and women in shows when a woman creator was attached in comparison to 43.9% of series regulars in shows did not. A significant difference was observed with the gender of speaking characters. 46.5% of speaking characters were girls and women in shows created by one or more women. In contrast, only 37.1% of speaking characters were females when only men called the shots.

In total, Netflix creates content that reflects the world we actually live in. Roughly half of all storylines are centered on girls/women. Behind the camera, Netflix is leading in terms of women directors in film and show creators in series. Areas for improvement include the percentage of female speaking characters on screen and above-the-line women employed behind the camera.

Race/Ethnicity

This section provides the results of analyses related to underrepresented racial/ethnic groups on screen and behind the camera in Netflix content. In keeping with the prior section, results from 2023 are compared to 2022 and to 2018. For some analyses, results are presented across all 6 years evaluated and by program format.

On Screen: Film & Series

The leads/co leads, main cast/series regulars, and speaking characters appearing in Netflix films and series were evaluated. Consistent with prior reports, the U.S. Census metrics were used as a starting point for the measurement of race/ethnicity and modified for this assessment. Racial/ethnic groups examined in this study include White/Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern/North African, American Indian, Alaskan Native, and

Multiracial/Multiethnic. For analysis purposes, the metric was collapsed to reflect White/Caucasian vs. Underrepresented groups, with data on all racial/ethnic groups presented later in the report.

Table 8
Percentage of Underrepresented Leads/Co-Leads By Storytelling Format and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	31.9% (*n*=22)	40.4% (*n*=23)	46.5% (*n*=27)	47.7% (*n*=31)	39.7% (*n*=25)	31.4% (*n*=11)	40.1% (*n*=139)
Scripted Series	25.3% (*n*=20)	42.3% (*n*=41)	46.8% (*n*=29)	47.2% (*n*=25)	43.5% (*n*=27)	71.4% (*n*=30)	43.5% (*n*=172)
Total	28.4% (*n*=42)	41.6% (*n*=64)	46.7% (*n*=56)	47.5% (*n*=56)	41.6% (*n*=52)	53.3% (*n*=41)	41.9% (*n*=311)

Note: A lead is the central figure in a story. Some films have two protagonists of equal importance who share the story. These were determined to be co-leads. When a scripted series featured underrepresented series regulars in a minimum of 40% of roles it was included as a series with an underrepresented lead/co lead.

The first metric of interest was the presence of an **underrepresented lead/co lead**. The measure is designed to reflect whether a film featured one or more leads/co leads from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. Series with an underrepresented lead/co lead featured underrepresented series regulars in a minimum of 40% of roles. This reflects proportionality with the U.S. population.[19]

Table 8 reveals that 53.3% (*n*=41) of Netflix films and series in 2023 featured underrepresented leads/co leads. Series (71.4%, *n*=30) were more likely to feature underrepresented leads/co leads than films (31.4%, *n*=11). This overall figure is not only significantly higher than 2022 (41.6%, *n*=52) but 24.9 percentage points above 2018 (28.4%, *n*=42).

Differences by individual format were also explored. In film, 31.4% (*n*=11) of Netflix movies had a lead/co lead from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group in 2023. This was a decrease from 2022 (39.7%, *n*=25) and consistent with the percentage in 2018 (31.9%, *n*=22). In 2023, Netflix films featured significantly fewer leads/co leads from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group than top-grossing films (37%).[20] This was the first year since 2018 that Netflix has not outpaced top-grossing movies on this metric. See Table 9.

Table 9
Underrepresented Leads/Co-Leads In Netflix & Top-Grossing Films By Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
% of Netflix films w/an underrepresented lead/co-lead	31.9% (*n*=22)	40.4% (*n*=23)	46.6% (*n*=27)	47.7% (*n*=31)	39.7% (*n*=25)	31.4% (*n*=11)
% of top-grossing films w/an underrepresented lead/co-lead	27% (*n*=27)	32% (*n*=32)	29% (*n*=29)	35% (*n*=35)	31% (*n*=31)	37% (*n*=37)

Looking to series, more than half (71.4%, *n*=30) of Netflix series in 2023 featured underrepresented leads. This is significantly higher than 2022 (43.5%, *n*=27) and more than double the percentage in 2018 (25.3%, *n*=20). Compared to the wider industry, Netflix series was above the 58.1% of series in 2023 with underrepresented leads/co leads.[21]

Table 10
Underrepresented Leads/Co-Leads In Netflix & Industry Series By Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
% of Netflix series w/an underrepresented lead/co-lead	25.3% (*n*=20)	42.7% (*n*=41)	46.8% (*n*=29)	47.2% (*n*=25)	43.5% (*n*=27)	71.4% (*n*=30)
% of series industry-wide w/an underrepresented lead/co-lead	22.3%	27.7%	29.3%	34.9%	47.2%	58.1%

Note: Data on industry-wide leads/co leads is drawn from UCLA Hollywood Diversity Reports from 2018-2022. 2023 data is from unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data.

In addition to leads/co leads, the percentage of ***underrepresented main cast/series regular characters*** was investigated. As shown in Table 11, in 2023 46.1% (*n*=311) of series regular/main cast characters were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. This is a 6-year high for Netflix films and series, and significantly higher than 2022 (39%, *n*=421) and 2018 (29.4%, *n*=350).

In 2023, series (50.8%, *n*=167) were more likely to feature underrepresented main cast/series regulars than Netflix films (41.7%, *n*=144). For series, 2023 is a high point, with the percentage of underrepresented main cast/series regulars significantly greater than 2022 (35.5%, *n*=188) and 2018 (27.1%, *n*=175). A similar pattern was true in film, where 2023 (41.7%, *n*=144) remained on par with 2022 (42.4%, *n*=233) but significantly higher than 2018 (32.3%, *n*=175).

Table 11
Percentage of Underrepresented Main Cast By Storytelling Format and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Film	32.3% (*n*=175)	38.9% (*n*=184)	42.4% (*n*=233)	40.1% (*n*=246)	42.4% (*n*=233)	41.7% (*n*=144)
Series	27.1% (*n*=175)	38.4% (*n*=284)	39.5% (*n*=189)	40.9% (*n*=159)	35.5% (*n*=188)	50.8% (*n*=167)
Total	29.4% (*n*=350)	38.6% (*n*=468)	41.1% (*n*=422)	40.4% (*n*=405)	39% (*n*=421)	46.1% (*n*=311)

How does Netflix compare to the broader industry? Industry-wide, 47.2% of all series regulars across broadcast, cable, and streaming series in 2023 were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group.[22] Thus, Netflix is on par with this figure in its series offerings.

Table 12
Race/Ethnicity of Main Cast in Netflix Films and Series 2023

Measure	Film	Series	Total	U.S. Census
White	58.3% (*n*=201)	49.2% (*n*=162)	53.9% (*n*=363)	58.4%
Black/African American	19.7% (*n*=68)	17% (*n*=56)	18.4% (*n*=124)	13.7%
Hispanic/Latino	9% (*n*=31)	5.5% (*n*=18)	7.3% (*n*=49)	19.5%
Asian	6.1% (*n*=21)	10.9% (*n*=36)	8.5% (*n*=57)	6.4%
Middle Eastern/North African	0.9% (*n*=3)	1.2% (*n*=4)	1% (*n*=7)	1.1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0	0	1.3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.9% (*n*=3)	0.3% (*n*=1)	0.6% (*n*=4)	0.3%
Multiracial/Multiethnic	5.2% (*n*=18)	15.8% (*n*=52)	10.4% (*n*=70)	3.1%
Total	345	329	674	~334M

Table 12 presents the breakdown of film and series main cast/series regulars by racial/ethnic group in 2023. Across both formats, 53.9% (*n*=363) of main cast/series regulars were White, while 18.4% (*n*=124) were Black/African American, 7.3% (*n*=49) were Hispanic/Latino, 8.5% were Asian (*n*=57), 1% were Middle Eastern/North African (*n*=7), 0.6% (*n*=4) were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 10.4% (*n*=70) were Multiracial/Multiethnic. There were no main cast/series regulars in 2023 who were American Indian/Alaska Native.

Across all ***speaking characters***, 42% (*n*=1,261) were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group in 2023. Once again, this was a 6-year high point, and higher than 2022 (38.4%, *n*=1,657) and 2018 (33.6%, *n*=1,910). Additionally, Netflix is on par with the U.S. population (40.7%) in its depiction of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.[23]

Table 13
Percentage of Underrepresented Speaking Characters By Storytelling Format and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Film	35.8% (*n*=857)	40.2% (*n*=855)	38.3% (*n*=827)	38.5% (*n*=748)	39.1% (*n*=733)	37.1% (*n*=464)
Series	32% (*n*=1,053)	38% (*n*=1,468)	42.3% (*n*=1,031)	41.1% (*n*=786)	37.9% (*n*=924)	45.5% (*n*=797)
Total	33.6% (*n*=1,910)	38.8% (*n*=2,323)	40.4% (*n*=1,858)	39.8% (*n*=1,534)	38.4% (*n*=1,657)	42% (*n*=1,261)

Table 14 provides a breakdown of the percentage of speaking characters by each racial/ethnic group across films, series, and overall for 2023. A full 58% of speaking characters were White (*n*=1,740), 19.5% (*n*=585) were Black/African American, 6% (*n*=179) were Hispanic/Latino, 8.9% (*n*=267) were Asian, 1.3% (*n*=40) were Middle Eastern/North African, 0.1% (*n*=3) were American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.4% (*n*=11) were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 5.9% (*n*=176) were Multiracial/Multiethnic.

Table 14
Race/Ethnicity of Speaking Characters in Netflix Films and Series: 2023

Measure	Film	Series	Total	U.S. Census
White	62.9% (*n*=786)	54.5% (*n*=954)	58% (*n*=1,740)	58.4%
Black/African American	19.2% (*n*=240)	19.7% (*n*=345)	19.5% (*n*=585)	13.7%
Hispanic/Latino	5.9% (*n*=74)	6% (*n*=105)	6% (*n*=179)	19.5%
Asian	7.3% (*n*=91)	10.1% (*n*=176)	8.9% (*n*=267)	6.4%
Middle Eastern/North African	1.1% (*n*=14)	1.5% (*n*=26)	1.3% (*n*=40)	1.1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.1% (*n*=1)	0.1% (*n*=2)	0.1% (*n*=3)	1.3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.3% (*n*=4)	0.4% (*n*=7)	0.4% (*n*=11)	0.3%
Multiracial/Multiethnic	3.2% (*n*=40)	7.8% (*n*=136)	5.9% (*n*=176)	3.1%

Total	1,250	1,751	3,001	~334M

The inclusion profile of Netflix content differed by format. For film, there was no difference in the percentage of underrepresented speaking characters over time. For series, however, 2023 (45.5%, *n*=797) was significantly higher than 2022 (37.9%, *n*=924) or 2018 (32%, *n*=1,053).

Table 15
Percentage of Underrepresented Speaking Characters in Netflix & Industry Films by Year

Year	Film					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
% of underrepresented speaking characters, Netflix	35.8%	40.2%	38.3%	38.5%	39.1%	37.1%
% of underrepresented speaking characters, industry	36.3%	34.4%	41.5%	41.2%	38.3%	44.3%

In terms of speaking characters, Netflix films have closely tracked (and in some cases exceeded) the percentage of underrepresented speaking characters in top-grossing films. However, in 2023 Netflix fell significantly below top-grossing movies (37.1% vs. 44.3%) on this metric.[24] Similarly, as shown in Table 17, Netflix has tracked with the wider entertainment industry in terms of underrepresented speaking characters. Though Netflix was in line with the industry percentage in 2022, it fell below in 2023.

Table 16
Percentage of Underrepresented Speaking Characters in Netflix & Industry Series by Year

Year	Series					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
% of underrepresented speaking characters, Netflix	32%	38%	42.3%	41.1%	37.9%	45.5%
% of underrepresented speaking characters, industry	33.9%	36.9%	40.8%	45.3%	47.6%	41.5%

Note: Data on cast diversity from 2018-2022 are taken from the UCLA Hollywood Diversity report. 2023 data are from unpublished data on broadcast and series content from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

In addition to the overall percentage of speaking characters, another way to assess prevalence is by examining how many films and series reached proportional representation. We defined proportional representation as falling 5% below or exceeding the U.S. Census metric of 40.7%.[25] Thus, films and series

that featured underrepresented speaking characters in 35.9% or more roles were deemed to have reached proportional representation.

Overall, 46.9% (*n*=351) of films and series from 2018 to 2023 were at or above proportional representation. This figure peaked in 2023 when 58.4% (*n*=45) of all stories were at or above proportional representation for underrepresented speaking characters. This percentage was not significantly greater than 2022 (54.4%, *n*=68) but was significantly more than 2018 (30.2%, *n*=45).

Table 17
Stories At or Above Proportional Representation by Storytelling Medium and Year

Medium	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	37.7% (*n*=26)	49.1% (*n*=28)	55.2% (*n*=32)	46.1% (*n*=30)	55.6% (*n*=35)	48.6% (*n*=17)	48.4% (*n*=168)
Scripted Series	23.7% (*n*=19)	45% (*n*=45)	51.6% (*n*=33)	47.2% (*n*=25)	53.2% (*n*=33)	66.7% (*n*=28)	45.6% (*n*=183)
Overall	30.2% (*n*=45)	46.5% (*n*=73)	53.3% (*n*=65)	46.6% (*n*=55)	54.4% (*n*=68)	58.4% (*n*=45)	46.9% (*n*=351)

We also evaluated film and series separately. As shown in Table 17, in 2023, fewer films (48.6%, *n*=17) reached proportional representation than in 2022 (55.6%, *n*=35). 2023 was a significant increase compared to 2018 (37.7%, *n*=26), however. On the series side, 2023 was the high watermark across the 6-year time frame, as two-thirds (66.7%, *n*=28) of series reached or exceeded proportional representation. This was an increase from 2022 (53.2%, *n*=33) and more than double the percentage achieved in 2018 (23.7%, *n*=19). These findings demonstrate that across roughly half of all programs, audiences are likely to encounter a racially and/or ethnically balanced cast.

Another way to examine representation is to assess how often characters from particular racial/ethnic groups are rendered *invisible* on screen. For this analysis, we examined whether any speaking or named characters from specific racial/ethnic groups appeared on screen in each film or series evaluated. There were no films or series missing White characters in 2023, 3.9% (*n*=3) were missing Black/African American characters, and 18.2% (*n*=14) were missing Asian characters. A quarter (26%, *n*=20) were missing Multiracial/Multiethnic characters, one-third (33.8%, *n*=26) did not include a Hispanic/Latino character, and two-thirds (66.2%, *n*=51) were missing Middle Eastern/North African characters. The majority of films or series were missing Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (89.6%, *n*=69) and American Indian/Alaska Native (97.4%, *n*=75) characters. Table 18 presents the data overall and by program format.

Table 18
Stories Erasing Speaking Characters of Specific Racial/Ethnic Groups: 2023

Measures	White	Black	H/L	Asian	MENA	AI/AN	NH/PI	Multi
Films w/o speaking chars	0	5.7% (*n*=2)	31.4% (*n*=11)	25.7% (*n*=9)	71.4% (*n*=25)	97.1% (*n*=34)	88.6% (*n*=31)	40% (*n*=14)
Series w/o speaking chars	0	2.4% (*n*=1)	35.7% (*n*=15)	11.9% (*n*=5)	61.9% (*n*=26)	97.6% (*n*=41)	90.5% (*n*=38)	14.3% (*n*=6)
Total	0	3.9% (*n*=3)	33.8% (*n*=26)	18.2% (*n*=14)	66.2% (*n*=51)	97.4% (*n*=75)	89.6% (*n*=69)	26% (*n*=20)

The on-screen findings for race/ethnicity demonstrate that Netflix has achieved proportional representation overall across leads, main cast, and speaking characters. This level of representation is largely driven by series, which surpasses proportional representation across every metric. Additionally, across both program formats, Netflix has improved considerably since 2018 and on multiple indicators since 2022. We next turn to behind the camera analyses to understand if the personnel creating stories for Netflix resemble who is featured on screen.

Behind the Camera

Film. As with gender, we examined the race/ethnicity of behind-the-scenes roles separately for film and series. Of the 243 personnel evaluated in 2023, 81.1% (*n*=197) were White and 18.9% (*n*=46) were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group.

Across Netflix films in 2023 (see Table 19), 27.8% (*n*=10) of the 36 directors were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. This is significantly higher than 2022 (16.9%, *n*=11) and 2018 (16.7%, *n*=12). The high point for underrepresented directors occurred in 2020 (28.3%, *n*=17).

Of all film directors in 2023, 72.2% (*n*=26) were White, 11.1% (*n*=4) were Black/African American, 5.6% (*n*=2) were Hispanic/Latino, 5.6% (*n*=2) were Asian, 2.8% (*n*=1) were Middle Eastern/North African, and 2.8% (*n*=1) were Multiracial/Multiethnic.

Table 19
Percentage Of Underrepresented Personnel Above the Line in Film By Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Directors	16.7% (*n*=12)	17.2% (*n*=10)	28.3% (*n*=17)	23.9% (*n*=16)	16.9% (*n*=11)	27.8% (*n*=10)
Writers	13.9% (*n*=14)	19% (*n*=19)	24% (*n*=24)	17.8% (*n*=19)	13.2% (*n*=15)	19.1% (*n*=12)
Producers	15.1% (*n*=38)	10.6% (*n*=19)	17.8% (*n*=36)	17.4% (*n*=42)	12.7% (*n*=27)	16.7% (*n*=24)
Total	15.1% (*n*=64)	14.2% (*n*=48)	21.3% (*n*=77)	18.5% (*n*=77)	13.5% (*n*=53)	18.9% (*n*=46)

Compared to top-grossing movies, Netflix had significantly more underrepresented directors in 2023. Of the 100 most popular theatrically released films in 2023, 21.6% (*n*=25) had underrepresented directors, which is 6.2 percentage points below the percentage of underrepresented directors of Netflix movies (27.8%).[26]

Turning to writers, in 2023, 19.1% (*n*=12) of the 63 credited writers were underrepresented and 80.9% (*n*=51) were White. This represents a significant gain for Netflix from 2022 (13.2%, *n*=15) and 2018 (13.9%, *n*=14). 2023 remains below the previous high point for underrepresented writers in 2020 (24%, *n*=24), however. See Table 19. White writers comprised 80.9% (*n*=51) of all positions in 2023, while 7.9% (*n*=5) were held by Black/African American writers, 4.8% (*n*=3) by Hispanic/Latino writers, 1.6% (*n*=1) by Asian writers, 3.2% (*n*=2) by Middle Eastern/North African writers, and 1.6% (*n*=1) by Multiracial/Multiethnic writers.
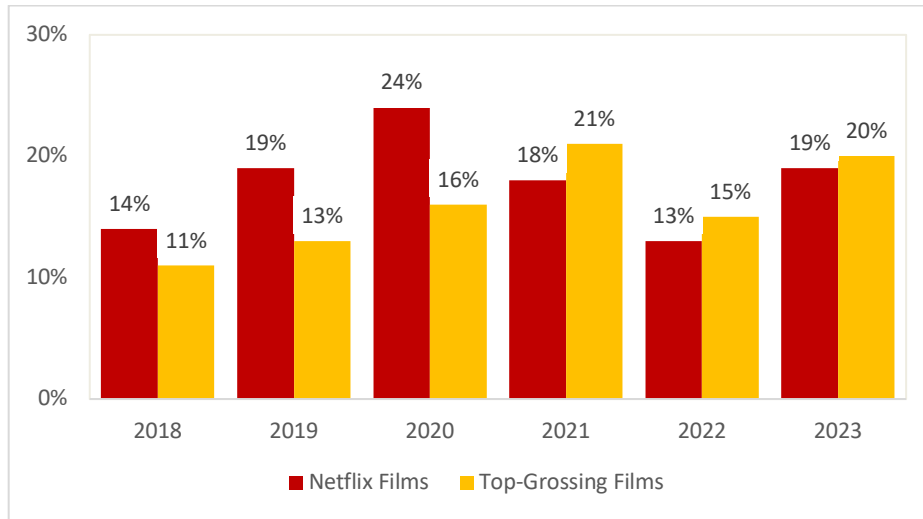
Figure 9
Percentage of Underrepresented Directors of Netflix & Top-Grossing Films by Year
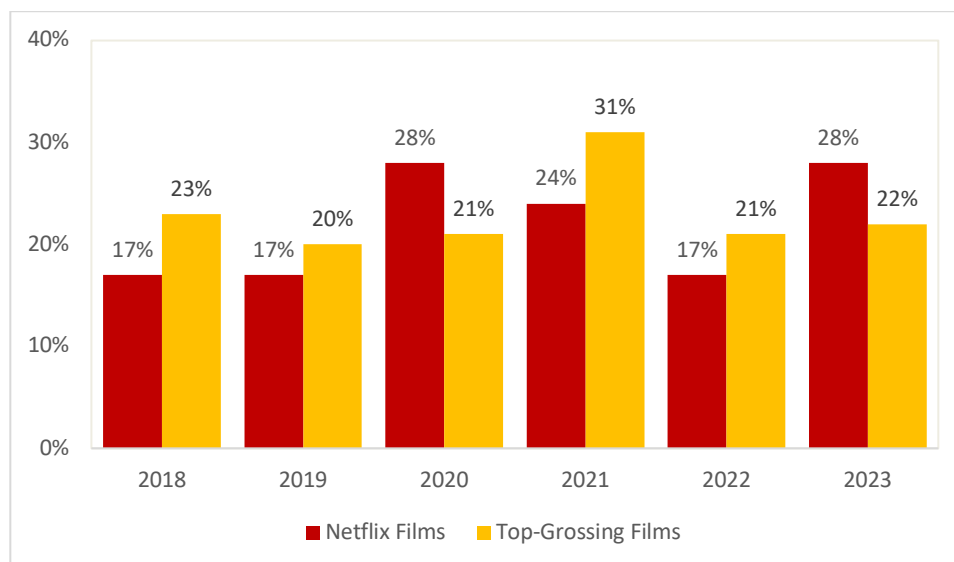
Note: Top-grossing film data is based on reports from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

In comparison to top-grossing films, Netflix had a similar percentage of writers in 2023 (20.3% vs. 19.1%). Figure 10 presents the overtime comparison between Netflix and top-grossing movies.
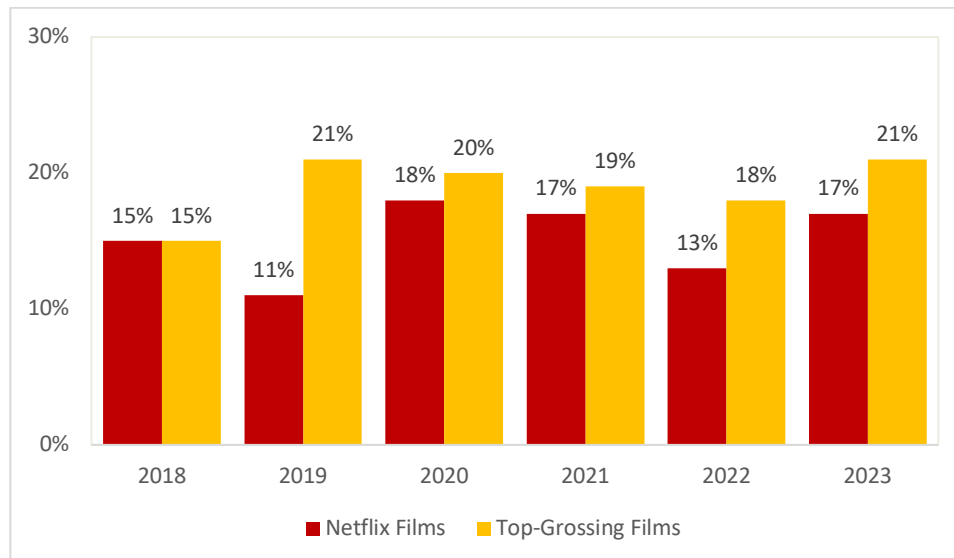
Figure 10
Percentage of Underrepresented Writers of Netflix & Top-Grossing Films by Year

Note: Top-grossing film data is based on reports from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

Of Netflix film producers in 2023, 83.3% (*n*=120) were White and 16.7% (*n*=24) were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. This percentage has not meaningfully changed from 2022 (12.7%, *n*=27) or 2018 (15.1%, *n*=38). Of producers, 83.3% (*n*=120) were White, 10.4% (*n*=15) were Black/African American, 2.8% (*n*=4) were Hispanic/Latino, 1.4% (*n*=2) were Asian, <1% (*n*=1) were Middle Eastern/North African, and 1.4% (*n*=2) were Multiracial/Multiethnic.

Figure 11
Percentage of Underrepresented Producers of Netflix & Top-Grossing Films by Year

Note: Top-grossing film data is based on reports from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

Figure 11 provides a comparison between Netflix and top-grossing films. In 2023, Netflix fell non-significantly below the percentage of underrepresented producers in top-grossing movies (21.4%, *n*=246).

Additionally, we were curious whether the presence of an underrepresented creative in any of these roles influenced on-screen representation. We separated the films in the 2023 sample into one of two groups: movies directed by at least one underrepresented director, and movies with only White directors. We then examined the percentage of leads/co leads, main cast, and speaking characters from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group across each group. This process was replicated across writers and producers.

As shown in Table 20, in each of the behind the camera positions evaluated, underrepresented creatives included more underrepresented characters on screen than White creatives did. This was true for leads/co leads, main cast, and speaking characters. Clearly, having underrepresented creatives behind the camera is a key component of showcasing underrepresented cast.

The results in this section demonstrate that Netflix has increased the percentage of underrepresented directors and writers across its films. While the percentage of underrepresented producers has not meaningfully increased, it also has not decreased. Lastly, underrepresented creatives were more likely to showcase underrepresented talent on screen. In the next section, we turn to behind the camera personnel working across Netflix series.

Table 20
Percentage of Underrepresented Leads/Co-Leads, Main Cast & Speaking Characters in Film
by Content Creator Underrepresented Status: 2023

Underrepresented Role	Directors		Writers		Producers	
	UR Director	No UR Director	UR Writer	No UR Writer	UR Producer	No UR Producer
Leads/Co-Leads	58.3% (*n*=7)	20.7% (*n*=6)	64.3% (*n*=9)	14.8% (*n*=4)	61.5% (*n*=8)	15.4% (*n*=4)
Main Cast	62.2% (*n*=61)	33.6% (*n*=83)	59.4% (*n*=63)	33.9% (*n*=81)	56.7% (*n*=59)	34.7% (*n*=82)
Speaking Characters	61.3% (*n*=168)	30.3% (*n*=296)	58.6% (*n*=177)	30.3% (*n*=287)	54.9% (*n*=181)	30.4% (*n*=275)

Behind the Camera: Series

We evaluated the creators, producers, writers, and directors across every episode of Netflix series included in the sample. In 2023, a total of 1,432 individuals worked in these roles across Netflix series. Nearly three-quarters (72.1%, *n*=1,033) were White and 27.9% (*n*=399) were from an underrepresented

racial/ethnic group. While there was no difference between 2023 and 2022 (24.3%, *n*=518) in the prevalence of underrepresented content creators, 2023 was significantly higher than 2018 (14.9%, *n*=424).

Table 21
Percentage Of Underrepresented Personnel Above-The-Line In Series By Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Creators	8.4% (*n*=10)	15.9% (*n*=23)	13.6% (*n*=14)	22.6% (*n*=19)	16.8% (*n*=16)	27% (*n*=17)
Producers	12.9% (*n*=97)	17.1% (*n*=153)	14.6% (*n*=98)	19.6% (*n*=107)	18.2% (*n*=116)	19.1% (*n*=90)
Writers	14% (*n*=169)	20.4% (*n*=291)	20.1% (*n*=158)	27.4% (*n*=270)	25.2% (*n*=198)	34.1% (*n*=181)
Directors	19.4% (*n*=148)	21% (*n*=189)	26.7% (*n*=143)	31.6% (*n*=162)	30.8% (*n*=188)	30.1% (*n*=111)
Total	14.9% (*n*=424)	19.5% (*n*=656)	19.7% (*n*=413)	26.2% (*n*=558)	24.3% (*n*=518)	27.9% (*n*=399)

In 2023, of the 63 series creators of Netflix series programs, 73% (*n*=46) were White and 27% (*n*=17) were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. Of all creators in 2023, 9.5% (*n*=6) were Black/African American, 4.8% (*n*=3) were Hispanic/Latino, 6.3% (*n*=4) were Asian, 1.6% (*n*=1) were Middle Eastern/North African, and 4.8% (*n*=3) were Multiracial/Multiethnic. Compared to 2022 (16.8%, *n*=16) and 2018 (8.4%, *n*=10), Netflix featured significantly more underrepresented creators in 2023.

Figure 12
Percentage of Underrepresented Series Creators by Type of Distributor and Year
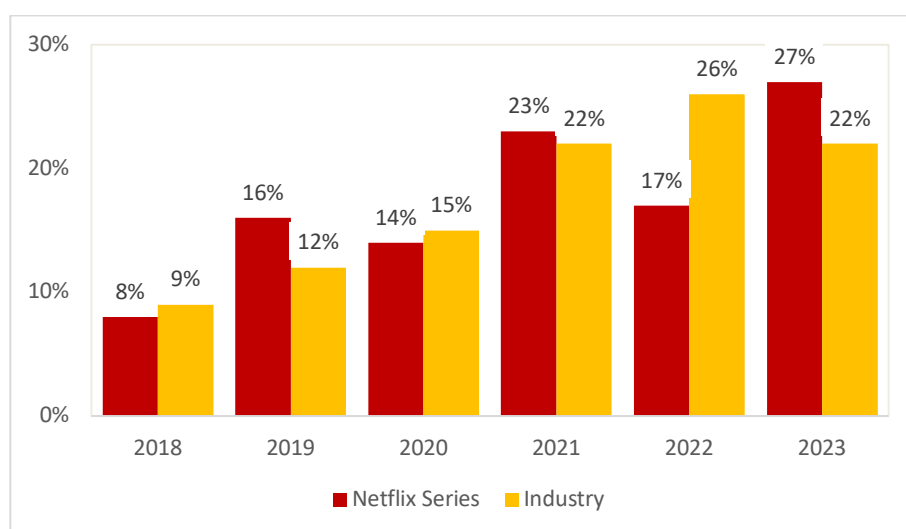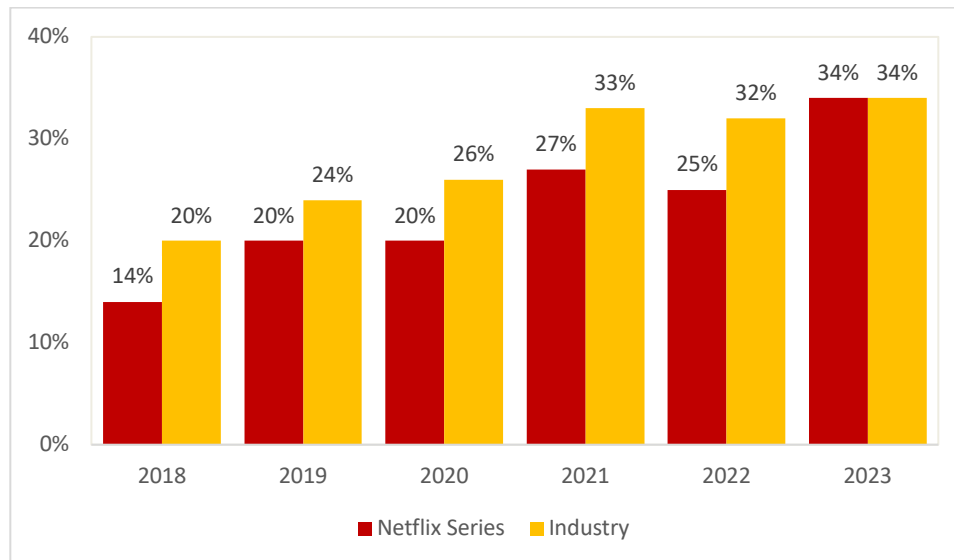
Note: Industry comparisons are drawn from the UCLA Hollywood Diversity report from 2018 to 2022. Data in 2023 are from unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative investigations.

In 2023, the percentage of underrepresented creators of Netflix series outpaced the rest of the entertainment industry (27% Netflix vs. 22% industry).[27] This is a reverse of what occurred in 2022. Prior to 2022, the percentage of underrepresented creators of Netflix and industry-wide series was not different.

Looking at producers, of the 470 identified in 2023, 80.9% (*n*=380) were White and 19.1% (*n*=90) were from an underrepresented group. While 80.9% of producers were White, 5.1% (*n*=24) were Black/African American, 3.6% (*n*=17) were Hispanic/Latino, 6.8% (*n*=32) were Asian, <1% (*n*=2) were Middle Eastern/North African, and 3.2% (*n*=15) were Multiracial/Multiethnic. There was no significant difference between the percentage of underrepresented producers in 2023 and 2022 (18.2%, *n*=116), but there were significantly more underrepresented producers in 2023 than in 2018 (12.9%, *n*=97). There were no comparable industry findings available for underrepresented producers in series and thus are not reported.

Turning to writers, of the 530 episodic series writers credited in 2023, 65.9% (*n*=349) were White and 34.1% (*n*=181) were underrepresented. Of all writers, 12.8% (*n*=68) were Black/African American, 4.3% (*n*=23) were Hispanic/Latino, 8.5% (*n*=45) were Asian, <1% (*n*=2) were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 8.1% (*n*=43) were Multiracial/Multiethnic. The percentage of underrepresented writers of Netflix content has significantly improved over time. 2023 is 8.9 percentage points higher than 2022 (25.2%, *n*=198) and 20.1 percentage points greater than 2018 (14%, *n*=169). See Table 21.

Figure 13
Percentage of Underrepresented Series Writers by Type of Distributor and Year


Note: The series industry comparisons from 2018-2022 are from the UCLA Hollywood Diversity Reports. 2023 is from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

The percentage of underrepresented writers of Netflix series was no different from the wider industry in 2023 (Netflix=34%; Industry=34%).[28] This is a change from prior years, when Netflix fell behind the industry in hiring underrepresented writers of episodic content.

Finally, of the 369 episodic directors in 2023, 69.9% (*n*=258) were White and 30.1% (*n*=111) were underrepresented. The breakdown of directors included 69.9% (*n*=258) who were White, 11.4% (*n*=42) who were Black/African American, 5.4% (*n*=20) who were Hispanic/Latino, 6.8% (*n*=25) who were Asian, <1% (*n*=3) who were Middle Eastern/North African, <1% (*n*=2) who were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 5.1% (*n*=19) who were Multiracial/Multiethnic. While the percentage of underrepresented directors has remained consistent between 2023 (30.1%, *n*=111) and 2022 (30.8%, *n*=188), it has significantly improved since 2018 (19.4%, *n*=148).

Figure 14
Percentage of Underrepresented Series Directors by Type of Distributor and Year
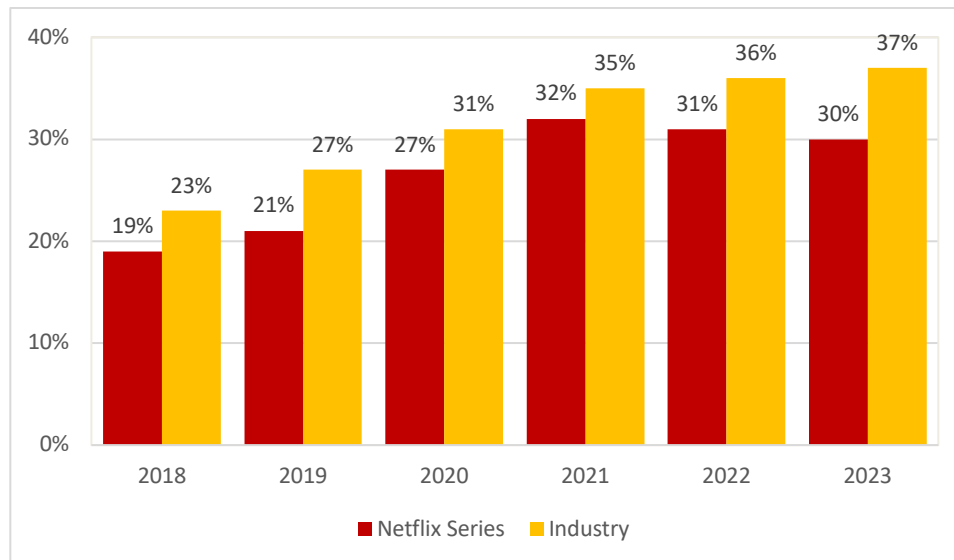
Note: Industry data are based on Directors Guild of America reports from 2018-2021 and unpublished data from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative for 2022 and 2023.

As shown in Figure 14, the percentage of underrepresented directors of Netflix content fell significantly below the broader industry in 2023 (Netflix=30%; Industry=37%).[29] This is consistent with 2022 and prior years. In other words, the gains made by Netflix around hiring directors mirror a wider push across the industry when it comes to filling this position with underrepresented voices.

What role does having an underrepresented creator behind the scenes in Netflix series play? We divided the sample into two groups: series with an underrepresented creator and series without an underrepresented creator. Then we examined the percentage of underrepresented main cast/series regulars and speaking characters in each group. Table 22 reveals that series with an underrepresented creator had significantly more underrepresented main cast/series regulars and speaking characters than series without an underrepresented creator. However, the percentage of main cast/series regulars in content without an underrepresented creator still reached proportional representation with the U.S. population.

Table 22
Percentage of Underrepresented Main Cast & Speaking Characters in Series
by Underrepresented Status of Creator: 2023

Underrepresented Role	UR Creator Attached	No UR Creator Attached
Main Cast/Series Regulars	75.6% (*n*=68)	41.4% (*n*=99)
Speaking Characters	69.7% (*n*=343)	36.1% (*n*=454)

This section demonstrates that across each position evaluated, Netflix has shown improvement over the past 6 years. This is critical, as having an underrepresented creator was associated with having more underrepresented characters on screen, particularly in main cast/series regular roles. Netflix has generally kept pace with the wider industry, which has for the most part shown over time increases for underrepresented content creators. In the next section, we examine how intersectional representation fares across Netflix content.

Gender & Race/Ethnicity: An Intersectional Analysis

While the previous section dealt with all underrepresented individuals, it was important to examine trends that crossed both race/ethnicity and gender. In this section, we explore the on screen and behind the camera representation of women of color across Netflix content.

On Screen: Film & Series

As with the prior sections, we began by examining how often Netflix films and series featured an underrepresented female in a lead/co lead role. In 2023, nearly half of all films and series (46.7%*, n*=36) had a girl/woman of color in a lead/co lead role. This was primarily due to series (73.8%, *n*=31) rather than film (14.3%, *n*=5). While 2023 was not different than 2022 (43.2%, *n*=54), Netflix has made significant progress over time, as 2023 featured more underrepresented female leads than 2018 (26.3%, *n*=39).

Table 23
Percentage of UR Female-Lead/Co Lead by Storytelling Format and Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	15.9% (*n*=11)	22.8% (*n*=13)	27.6% (*n*=16)	27.7% (*n*=18)	30.2% (*n*=19)	14.3% (*n*=5)	23.6% (*n*=82)
Series	35.4% (*n*=28)	47.4% (*n*=46)	43.5% (*n*=27)	54.7% (*n*=29)	56.5% (*n*=35)	73.8% (*n*=31)	49.6% (*n*=196)
Overall	26.3% (*n*=39)	38.3% (*n*=59)	35.8% (*n*=43)	39.8% (*n*=47)	43.2% (*n*=54)	46.7% (*n*=36)	37.5% (*n*=278)

In 2023, 14.3% (*n*=5) of Netflix films featured an underrepresented female lead/co lead (see Table 23). This was a significant downturn from 2022 (30.2%, *n*=19) and on par with films from 2018. Netflix is also on pace with top-grossing movies. In 2023, 14% of the 100 top-grossing films had an underrepresented female protagonist.[29]

Netflix series, however, have increased the percentage of women of color leads/co leads over time. 2023 (73.8%, *n*=31) was a significant improvement over both 2022 (56.5%, *n*=35) and 2018 (35.4%, *n*=28). Netflix also significantly outpaced the wider industry in 2023 (73.8% vs. 58.1%).[30]

Table 24
Percentage of Main Cast by Underrepresented Status and Storytelling format: 2023

Measures	Film	Series	Overall	U.S. Census
White Males	35.1% (*n*=121)	30.7% (*n*=101)	32.9% (*n*=222)	30%
White Females	23.2% (*n*=80)	18.5% (*n*=61)	20.9% (*n*=141)	30%
UR Males	21.5% (*n*=74)	23.4% (*n*=77)	22.4% (*n*=151)	20%
UR Females	20.3% (*n*=70)	27.4% (*n*=90)	23.7% (*n*=160)	20%
Total	345	329	674	~334 million

The percentage of underrepresented female main cast/series regulars was examined by assessing the breakdown of this position into four categories: white males, white females, underrepresented males, and underrepresented females. As shown in Table 24, roughly one-third of all series regular/main cast members were white males, followed by 23.7% who were underrepresented females, 22.4% who were underrepresented males, and 20.9% who were underrepresented females. There was one significant difference by program format. Films were less likely to feature underrepresented female main cast members than series.

Table 25
Percentage of Film Main Cast by Underrepresented Status and Year

Measures	Film					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
% of White Male Main Cast	40.2% (*n*=218)	37.2% (*n*=176)	34.2% (*n*=188)	31% (*n*=190)	31.1% (*n*=171)	35.1% (*n*=121)
% of White Female Main Cast	27.5% (*n*=149)	23.9% (*n*=113)	23.3% (*n*=128)	28.9% (*n*=177)	26.4% (*n*=145)	23.2% (*n*=80)
% of UR Male Main Cast	20.5% (*n*=111)	21.8% (*n*=103)	24.8% (*n*=136)	22.2% (*n*=136)	19.7% (*n*=108)	21.5% (*n*=74)
% of UR Female Main Cast	11.8% (*n*=64)	17.1% (*n*=81)	17.7% (*n*=97)	17.9% (*n*=110)	22.8% (*n*=125)	20.3% (*n*=70)

The percentage of underrepresented female main cast in film has changed significantly over time. In 2023, 20.3% of main cast members were girls/women of color, compared to 11.8% in 2018. There was no difference between 2022 and 2023, however. See Table 25.

Table 26
Percentage of Series Main Cast by Underrepresented Status and Year

Measures	Series					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
% of White Male Main Cast	40.2% (*n*=260)	32.8% (*n*=242)	29.7% (*n*=142)	31.5% (*n*=122)	35.5% (*n*=188)	30.7% (*n*=101)
% of White Female Main Cast	32.8% (*n*=212)	28.9% (*n*=213)	30.7% (*n*=147)	27.7% (*n*=107)	28.9% (*n*=153)	18.5% (*n*=61)
% of UR Male Main Cast	13.3% (*n*=86)	19.2% (*n*=142)	21.3% (*n*=102)	21.2% (*n*=82)	14.4% (*n*=76)	23.4% (*n*=77)
% of UR Female Main Cast	13.8% (*n*=89)	19.1% (*n*=141)	18.2% (*n*=87)	19.6% (*n*=76)	21.2% (*n*=112)	27.4% (*n*=90)

The percentage of underrepresented female main cast in series has increased significantly over time. 2023 (27.4%) series featured more girls/women of color in series regular/main cast roles than did series in 2022 (21.2%) or 2018 (13.8%).

Turning to all speaking characters, as shown in Table 27, most were still white males in 2023. However, the percentage of underrepresented female speaking characters has increased from 2018 (13.6%) to 2023 (19.7%). There was no difference between 2022 (18%) and 2023, however.

Table 27
Percentage of Overall Speaking Characters by Underrepresented Status by Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
% of White Male Speaking Characters	41.3% (*n*=2,350)	38.1% (*n*=2,285)	36.8% (*n*=1,690)	35.5% (*n*=1,370)	36.6% (*n*=1,576)	35.6% (*n*=1,065)
% of White Female Speaking Characters	25.1% (*n*=1,424)	23.1% (*n*=1,384)	22.8% (*n*=1,047)	24.7% (*n*=951)	25.1% (*n*=1,080)	22.5% (*n*=673)
% of UR Male Speaking Characters	20% (*n*=1,137)	22.2% (*n*=1,328)	22.6% (*n*=1,039)	22.6% (*n*=871)	20.4% (*n*=878)	22.2% (*n*=666)
% of UR Female Speaking Characters	13.6% (*n*=773)	16.6% (*n*=994)	17.8% (*n*=819)	17.2% (*n*=662)	18% (*n*=777)	19.7% (*n*=590)

Note: Non-binary characters are not included in the table. Per year, the number of non-binary characters was: 2018: 2; 2019: 1; 2020: 0; 2021: 3; 2022: 4; 2023: 7.

Looking to film, there has been no significant change in the percentage of girls/women of color as speaking characters since 2018. In 2023, 17.7% of speaking characters were underrepresented females, compared to 18.2% in 2022 and 14.2% in 2018. Netflix (17.7%) is consistent with top-grossing films (15.9%) when it comes to the percentage of speaking characters on screen in 2023.[31]

Table 28
Percentage of Film Speaking Characters by Underrepresented Status and Year

Measures	Film					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
% of White Male Speaking Characters	41.8% (*n*=999)	38.8% (*n*=824)	38.3% (*n*=826)	36.4% (*n*=708)	36.6% (*n*=686)	38.2% (*n*=477)
% of White Female Speaking Characters	22.4% (*n*=536)	21% (*n*=446)	23.4% (*n*=505)	25.1% (*n*=487)	24.2% (*n*=454)	24.7% (*n*=308)
% of UR Male Speaking Characters	21.7% (*n*=518)	24.7% (*n*=524)	22.3% (*n*=481)	22.5% (*n*=438)	20.9% (*n*=392)	19.5% (*n*=243)
% of UR Female Speaking Character	14.2% (*n*=339)	15.6% (*n*=331)	16% (*n*=346)	15.9% (*n*=310)	18.2% (*n*=341)	17.7% (*n*=221)

Note: Per year, the number of non-binary characters in films were: 2018: 0; 2019: 0; 2020: 0; 2021: 1; 2022: 2; 2023: 1.

In contrast, the percentage of underrepresented female speaking characters has increased significantly since 2018 in Netflix series. In 2023 (21.1%), the percentage of underrepresented female speaking characters was no different than 2022 (17.9%) but was 7.9 percentage points higher than 2018 (13.2%).

Netflix does not significantly outperform the wider industry (18.5%)[32] in its depiction of underrepresented female speaking characters in series.

Table 29
Percentage of Series Speaking Characters by Underrepresented Status and Year

Measures	Series					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
% of White Male Speaking Characters	41% (*n*=1,351)	37.8% (*n*=1,461)	35.5% (*n*=864)	34.6% (*n*=662)	36.5% (*n*=890)	33.7% (*n*=588)
% of White Female Speaking Characters	27% (*n*=888)	24.3% (*n*=938)	22.2% (*n*=542)	24.3% (*n*=464)	25.7% (*n*=626)	20.9% (*n*=365)
% of UR Male Speaking Characters	18.8% (*n*=619)	20.8% (*n*=804)	22.9% (*n*=558)	22.7% (*n*=433)	19.9% (*n*=486)	24.2% (*n*=423)
% of UR Female Speaking Character	13.2% (*n*=434)	17.1% (*n*=663)	19.4% (*n*=473)	18.4% (*n*=352)	17.9% (*n*=436)	21.1% (*n*=369)

Note: Per year, the number of non-binary characters in series were: 2018: 2; 2019: 1; 2020: 0; 2021: 3; 2022: 2; 2023: 6.

As with race/ethnicity overall, we were curious about how many films and series were missing girls and women of color altogether. Table 30 depicts the results. There were no films or series missing White girls/women in 2023. Black girls/women were not depicted in 16.9% of films and series and Asian females were missing in 27.3% of stories. More than half of films and series did not show a Hispanic/Latina and 87% were missing Middle Eastern/North African girls/women. There were no films or series that showed an American Indian/Alaska Native girl/woman and 96.1% erased Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander females. One-third of stories were missing Multiracial/Multiethnic girls/women.

Table 30
Percentage & Number of Stories Missing Females by Racial/Ethnic Group: 2023

Measures	White	Black	H/L	Asian	AI/AN	NH/PI	ME/NA	Multi
Films	0	20% (*n*=7)	60% (*n*=21)	37.1% (*n*=13)	100% (*n*=35)	100% (*n*=35)	91.4% (*n*=32)	45.7% (*n*=16)
Series	0	14.3% (*n*=6)	57.1% (*n*=24)	19.1% (*n*=8)	100% (*n*=42)	92.9% (*n*=39)	83.3% (*n*=35)	23.8% (*n*=10)
Total	0	16.9% (*n*=13)	58.4% (*n*=45)	27.3% (*n*=21)	100% (*n*=77)	96.1% (*n*=74)	87% (*n*=67)	33.8% (*n*=26)

This section demonstrates that there have been gains for underrepresented female leads/co leads, main cast, and speaking characters over time. Progress has primarily occurred in Netflix series. Additionally,

there are still a significant number of programs that erase women of color from specific racial/ethnic groups. In the next section, we explore how often women of color work behind the scenes in Netflix films and series.

Behind the Scenes: Film

Beginning with film, we examined the percentage of underrepresented women working as directors, writers, and producers. Out of 242 total behind the scenes personnel in 2023, 56.2% (n=136) were White men, 24.8% (n=60) were White women, 13.2% (n=32) were underrepresented men, and 5.8% (n=14) were underrepresented women. For women of color, there was no difference between 2023 and 2022 (4.9%) or 2018 (5.7%).

Beginning with film directors, in 2023, 51.4% were White men, 20% were White women, 22.9% were underrepresented men, and 5.7% were underrepresented women. There has been no meaningful change over time in the percentage of women of color directors of Netflix films (2022=9.2%; 2018=5.6%).

Table 31
Netflix Film Directors by Underrepresented Status, Gender, and Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
White Males	63.9% (n=46)	69% (n=40)	61.7% (n=37)	53.7% (n=36)	60% (n=39)	51.4% (n=18)
White Females	19.4% (n=14)	13.8% (n=8)	10% (n=6)	22.4% (n=15)	23.1% (n=15)	20% (n=7)
UR Males	11.1% (n=8)	10.3% (n=6)	21.7% (n=13)	19.4% (n=13)	7.7% (n=5)	22.9% (n=8)
UR Females	5.6% (n=4)	6.9% (n=4)	6.7% (n=4)	4.5% (n=3)	9.2% (n=6)	5.7% (n=2)

Despite the low percentage of underrepresented women directors of Netflix films, the company still outpaced top-grossing films, though the difference was non-significant in 2023. Figure 15 presents the differences between Netflix and top-grossing films by year.

Figure 15

Percentage of Underrepresented Women Film Directors by Type of Distributor and Year
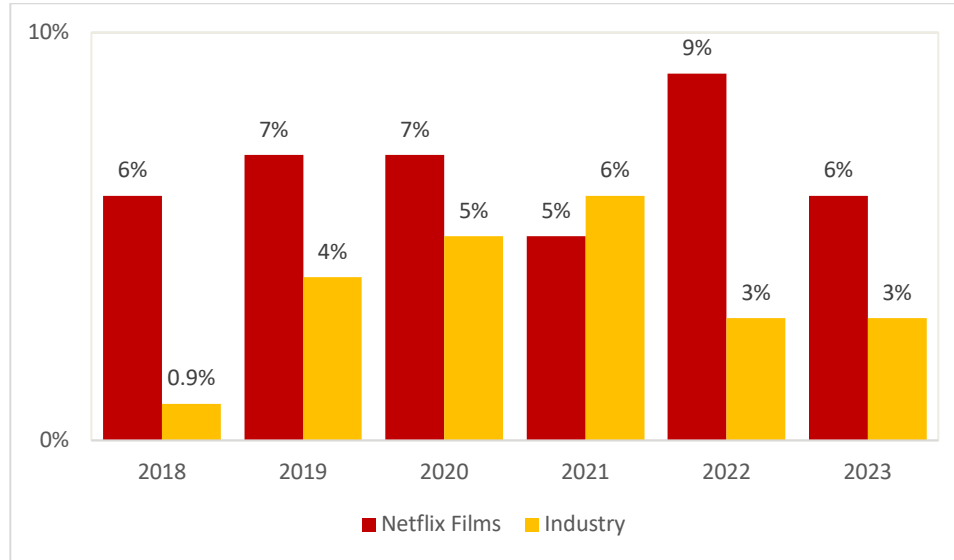
Note: Data on industry reflects Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data on top-grossing movies.

Of the 63 Netflix film writers in 2023, 54% were White men, 27% were White women, 14.3% were underrepresented men and 4.8% were underrepresented women. Again, there has been no significant change in the percentage of women of color penning Netflix films from 2022 (3.5%) or 2018 (3%).

Table 32

Netflix Film Writers by Underrepresented Status, Gender, and Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
White Males	61.4% (*n*=62)	63% (*n*=63)	60% (*n*=60)	53.3% (*n*=57)	62.8% (*n*=71)	54% (*n*=34)
White Females	24.7% (*n*=25)	18% (*n*=18)	16% (*n*=16)	29% (*n*=31)	23.9% (*n*=27)	27% (*n*=17)
UR Males	10.9% (*n*=11)	14% (*n*=14)	18% (*n*=18)	13.1% (*n*=14)	9.7% (*n*=11)	14.3% (*n*=9)
UR Females	3% (*n*=3)	5% (*n*=5)	6% (*n*=6)	4.7% (*n*=5)	3.5% (*n*=4)	4.8% (*n*=3)

Out of 144 Netflix film producers in 2023, 58.3% were White men, 25% were White women, 10.4% were underrepresented men, and 6.3% were underrepresented women. In comparison to 2022 (4.3%) and 2018 (6.7%), there has been no change in the percentage of underrepresented women producers over time.

Table 33
Netflix Film Producers by Underrepresented Status, Gender, and Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
White Males	63.1% (*n*=159)	64.3% (*n*=115)	59.4% (*n*=120)	59.3% (*n*=143)	65.6% (*n*=139)	58.3% (*n*=84)
White Females	21.8% (*n*=55)	25.1% (*n*=45)	22.8% (*n*=46)	23.2% (*n*=56)	21.7% (*n*=46)	25% (*n*=36)
UR Males	8.3% (*n*=21)	6.1% (*n*=11)	10.9% (*n*=22)	11.6% (*n*=28)	8.5% (*n*=18)	10.4% (*n*=15)
UR Females	6.7% (*n*=17)	4.5% (*n*=8)	6.9% (*n*=14)	5.8% (*n*=14)	4.3% (*n*=9)	6.3% (*n*=9)

The findings in this section show that behind the camera, little has changed for women of color working in film. Though Netflix is keeping pace with the wider industry, there is undisputedly room to grow in this area. Next, we turn to series.

Behind the Scenes: Series

Of the 1,429 personnel working on Netflix series in 2023, 44.9% (*n*=642) were White men, 27.1% (*n*=388) were White women, 12.3% (*n*=176) were underrepresented men, and 15.6% (*n*=223) were underrepresented women. 2023 was no different than 2022 (13.3%, *n*=283) for women of color but was a significant improvement when compared to 2018 (6.5%, *n*=185).

Beginning with series creators, in 2023, 50.8% were White men, 22.2% were White women, 11.1% were underrepresented men, and 15.9% were underrepresented women. While the percentage of women of color creators has not changed from 2022 (11.6%), it is significantly higher than 2018 (2.5%).

Table 34
Netflix Series Creators by Underrepresented Status, Gender, and Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
White Males	67.2% (*n*=80)	56.5% (*n*=82)	64.1% (*n*=66)	48.8% (*n*=41)	55.8% (*n*=53)	50.8% (*n*=32)
White Females	24.4% (*n*=29)	27.6% (*n*=40)	22.3% (*n*=23)	28.6% (*n*=24)	27.4% (*n*=26)	22.2% (*n*=14)
UR Males	5.9% (*n*=7)	11% (*n*=16)	9.7% (*n*=10)	13.1% (*n*=11)	5.3% (*n*=5)	11.1% (*n*=7)
UR Females	2.5% (*n*=3)	4.8% (*n*=7)	3.9% (*n*=4)	9.5% (*n*=8)	11.6% (*n*=11)	15.9% (*n*=10)

Of the 470 series producers in 2023, 49.4% were White men, 31.5% were White women, 10.9% were underrepresented men, and 8.3% were underrepresented women. Over time, this figure increased significantly between 2018 (5.2%) and 2022 (10.2%), but ultimately 2023 (8.3%) was not different from 2018 or 2022 (see Table 35).

Table 35
Netflix Series Producers by Underrepresented Status, Gender, and Year

| Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
White Males	58.8% (*n*=443)	49.9% (*n*=447)	54.6% (*n*=366)	50.9% (*n*=278)	51.6% (*n*=329)	49.4% (*n*=232)
White Females	28.3% (*n*=213)	33% (*n*=295)	30.7% (*n*=206)	29.5% (*n*=161)	30.3% (*n*=193)	31.5% (*n*=148)
UR Males	7.7% (*n*=58)	10.1% (*n*=90)	7.5% (*n*=50)	11.2% (*n*=61)	8% (*n*=51)	10.9% (*n*=51)
UR Females	5.2% (*n*=39)	7% (*n*=63)	7.2% (*n*=48)	8.4% (*n*=46)	10.2% (*n*=65)	8.3% (*n*=39)

There were 529 writers of Netflix series in 2023. White men accounted for 40.8% of writers, White women filled 24.9% of positions, underrepresented men filled 12.5% of jobs, and underrepresented women held 21.7% of writing roles (see Table 36). For women of color, 2023 was significantly greater than 2022 (16.4%) and 2018 (8.1%).

Table 36
Netflix Series Writers by Underrepresented Status, Gender, and Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
White Males	63.5% (*n*=767)	47.4% (*n*=675)	51.9% (*n*=407)	44.9% (*n*=443)	46.3% (*n*=364)	40.8% (*n*=216)
White Females	22.5% (*n*=272)	32.3% (*n*=460)	28% (*n*=220)	27.7% (*n*=273)	28.6% (*n*=225)	24.9% (*n*=132)
UR Males	5.9% (*n*=71)	11.3% (*n*=161)	7.9% (*n*=62)	13.5% (*n*=133)	8.7% (*n*=68)	12.5% (*n*=66)
UR Females	8.1% (*n*=98)	9.1% (*n*=129)	12.2% (n=96)	13.9% (n=137)	16.4% (*n*=129)	21.7% (*n*=115)

In comparison to the broader industry, Netflix has posted similar numbers for women writers. Each year since 2018, Netflix has stayed within even or a few percentage points above/below the industry figures.[33] Figure 16 displays the yearly data points.

Figure 16
Percentage of Underrepresented Women Series Writers by Type of Distributor and Year
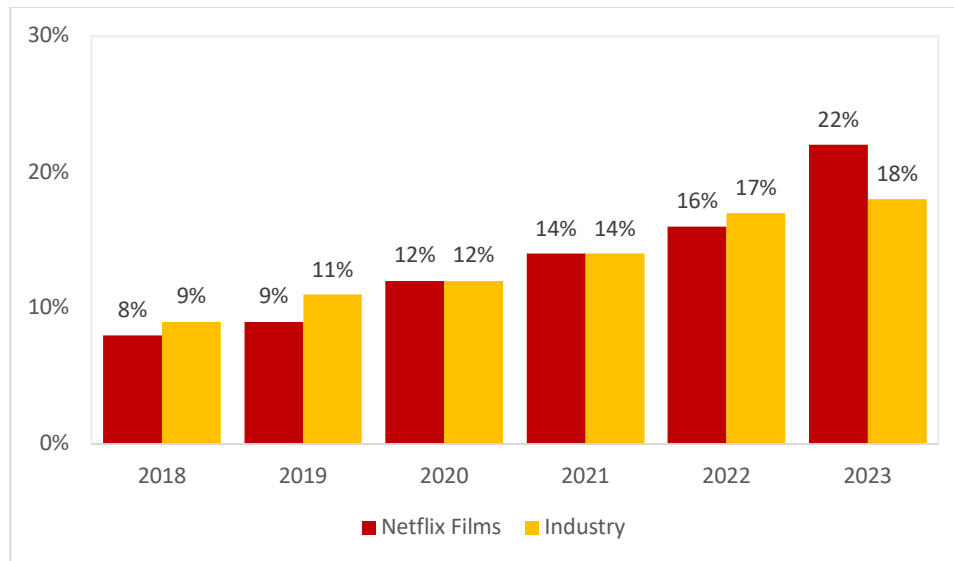
Note: Data from 2018-2022 are from the UCLA Hollywood Diversity Report. Data from 2023 are based on unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data.

Of the 367 directors of episodic content in 2023, 44.1% were White men, 25.6% were White women, 14.2% were underrepresented men, and 16.1% were underrepresented women. For women of color directors, 2023 is not significantly different from 2022 (12.8%, *n*=78) but is 10.2 percentage points higher than 2018 (5.9%, *n*=45).

Table 37
Netflix Series Directors by Underrepresented Status, Gender, and Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
White Males	61.4% (*n*=468)	55.2% (*n*=497)	48.8% (*n*=261)	43.5% (*n*=223)	38.5% (*n*=235)	44.1% (*n*=162)
White Females	19.2% (*n*=146)	23.9% (*n*=215)	24.5% (*n*=131)	24.8% (*n*=127)	30.7% (*n*=187)	25.6% (*n*=94)
UR Males	13.5% (*n*=103)	14.8% (*n*=133)	13.1% (*n*=70)	19.7% (*n*=101)	18% (*n*=110)	14.2% (*n*=52)
UR Females	5.9% (*n*=45)	6.2% (*n*=56)	13.6% (*n*=73)	11.9% (*n*=61)	12.8% (*n*=78)	16.1% (*n*=59)

In comparison to episodic series industry-wide, Netflix has closely tracked the percentage of underrepresented women directors over the past 6 years. Figure 17 depicts annual figures for Netflix and the wider industry.[34]

Figure 17
Percentage of Underrepresented Women Series Directors by Type of Distributor and Year
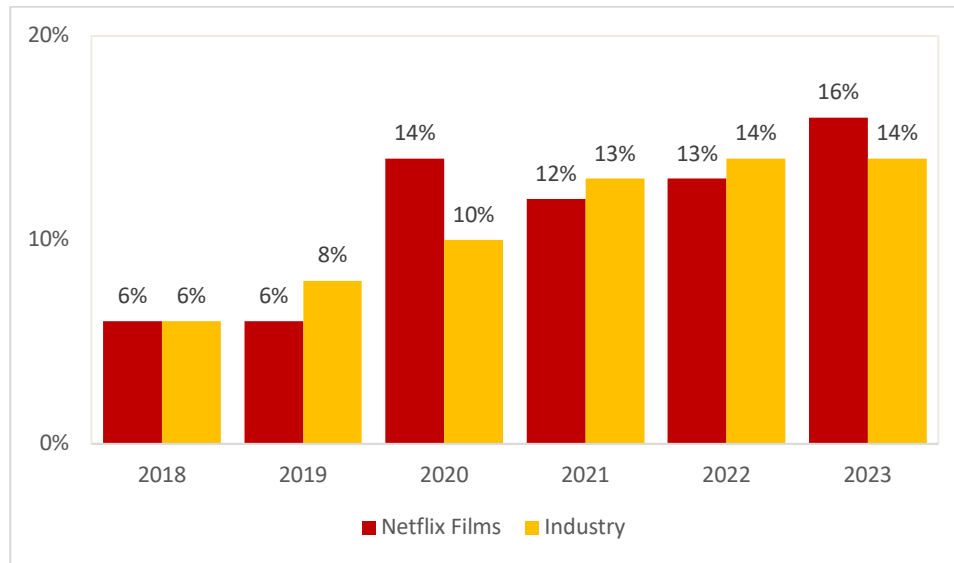
Note: Data from 2018 to 2021 is based on Directors Guild of America reports. Data from 2022 and 2023 is from Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data.

This section demonstrates that the percentage of women of color working behind the camera in Netflix series has increased over the past 6 years. For every position except producers, Netflix has seen significant improvement for women of color in these key creative roles. This means that Netflix has largely kept pace with the wider industry when it comes to women of color. While there remains room to improve, this section suggests that for Netflix series, the gaps that still exist can be expected to narrow over time.

Specific Racial/Ethnic Groups

The previous sections focused on the prevalence of on-screen characters from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. This portion of the paper will highlight specific racial/ethnic groups of the cast and crew. By using this approach, we are able to draw comparisons to the U.S. population as a whole while also identifying areas of employment where representation is lacking.

In the following analysis, we investigated leads/co leads and main cast actors who were Black/African American, Asian, Latinx, Middle Eastern/North African, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Multiracial/Multiethnic lead/co lead and main cast actors were recategorized into all groups with which they identified. The focus on actors rather than the on-screen character for this analysis was purposeful. While fictional characters may closely align with their real-life counterparts, there are additional details and information (e.g., Latinx identity) available about the actor.

Black Cast & Crew. A film or series had a Black lead when it featured a Black protagonist/co protagonist or 13% (or above) of series regular roles were filled by Black actors.[35] In 2023, 46.7% (*n*=36) of stories featured a Black lead/co lead (see Table 38). This is consistent with 2022 (44%, *n*=55) but a significant increase from 2018 (33.8%, *n*=50). Progress in film and series was not equivalent. In film, 2023 (14.3%,

5

n=5) was a significant decline from both 2022 (28.6%, *n*=18) and 2018 (20.3%, *n*=14). Series, however, capped a six-year increase as 73.8% (*n*=31) of series had Black leads, compared to 59.7% (*n*=37) in 2022 and 45.6% (*n*=36) in 2018.

Table 38
Black Leads/Co Leads by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	20.3% (*n*=14)	22.8% (*n*=13)	29.3% (*n*=17)	27.7% (*n*=18)	28.6% (*n*=18)	14.3% (*n*=5)	24.5% (*n*=85)
Series	45.6% (*n*=36)	48.5% (*n*=47)	56.5% (*n*=35)	54.7% (*n*=29)	59.7% (*n*=37)	73.8% (*n*=31)	54.4% (*n*=215)
Total	33.8% (*n*=50)	39% (*n*=60)	43.3% (*n*=52)	39.8% (*n*=47)	44% (*n*=55)	46.7% (*n*=36)	40.4% (*n*=300)

We also examined the percentage of Black main cast/series regulars across films and series. In 2023, 23.1% (*n*=157) of all main cast/series regulars across film and series were Black (see Table 39). This is higher than the percentage of Black/African American people in the U.S. population.[36] There was no difference between the percentage of main cast/series regulars in film or series. For film, there was also no difference between the percentage of Black main cast in 2023 (21.2%, *n*=73) or 2022 (24.9%, *n*=136). There was no significant improvement between 2023 and 2018, when 17.9% (*n*=99) of main cast were Black. In series, the 24.9% (*n*=84) of series regular/main cast members who were Black was a significant increase from both 2022 (18.9%, *n*=104) and 2018 (15.1%, *n*=102).

Table 39
Black Main Cast by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	17.9% (*n*=99)	24.4% (*n*=116)	26.1% (*n*=143)	21.2% (*n*=126)	24.9% (*n*=136)	21.2% (*n*=73)	22.6% (*n*=693)
Series	15.1% (*n*=102)	21.9% (*n*=171)	17.9% (*n*=88)	21.8% (*n*=84)	18.9% (*n*=104)	24.9% (*n*=84)	19.7% (*n*=633)
Total	16.3% (*n*=201)	22.9% (*n*=287)	22.2% (*n*=231)	21.4% (*n*=210)	21.9% (*n*=240)	23.1% (*n*=157)	21.1% (*n*=1,326)

Behind the camera, we assessed the number and percentage of Black directors, writers, and producers in film. In 2023, 11.1% (*n*=4) of directors, 7.9% (*n*=5) of writers, and 11.1% (*n*=16) of producers were Black (see Table 40). The only significant change over time occurred for producers. 2023 films featured significantly more Black producers (11.1%) than 2022 (6.1%, *n*=13) or 2018 (5.2%, *n*=13). The four Black directors in 2023 were George C. Wolfe, Numa Perrier, Juel Taylor, and Kenya Barris.

Table 40
Percentage of Black Above-the-Line Film Personnel by Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Directors	6.9% (*n*=5)	12.1% (*n*=7)	16.7% (*n*=10)	6% (*n*=4)	10.8% (*n*=7)	11.1% (*n*=4)
Writers	4.9% (*n*=5)	11% (*n*=11)	12% (*n*=12)	4.7% (*n*=5)	5.3% (*n*=6)	7.9% (*n*=5)
Producers	5.2% (*n*=13)	4.5% (*n*=8)	10.4% (*n*=21)	8.3% (*n*=20)	6.1% (*n*=13)	11.1% (*n*=16)

Did having a Black director impact on screen inclusion? As shown in Figure 18, yes it does! Films with a Black director were significantly more likely to feature Black leads/co leads than non-Black directors. The same was true of main cast. When a Black director was at the helm, 65% of main cast were Black, versus 13% when a non-Black director was behind the camera. Two details are important about this. First, Black directors are clearly helming films that are centered on and populated with Black casts. Second, even when a film did not have a Black director, the percentage of Black main cast still approached proportional representation with the U.S. population.[37] This suggests that non-Black directors are inclusive of Black actors in film.

Figure 18
Relationship between Black Film Directors and Black Leads/Co Leads and Main Cast: 2023
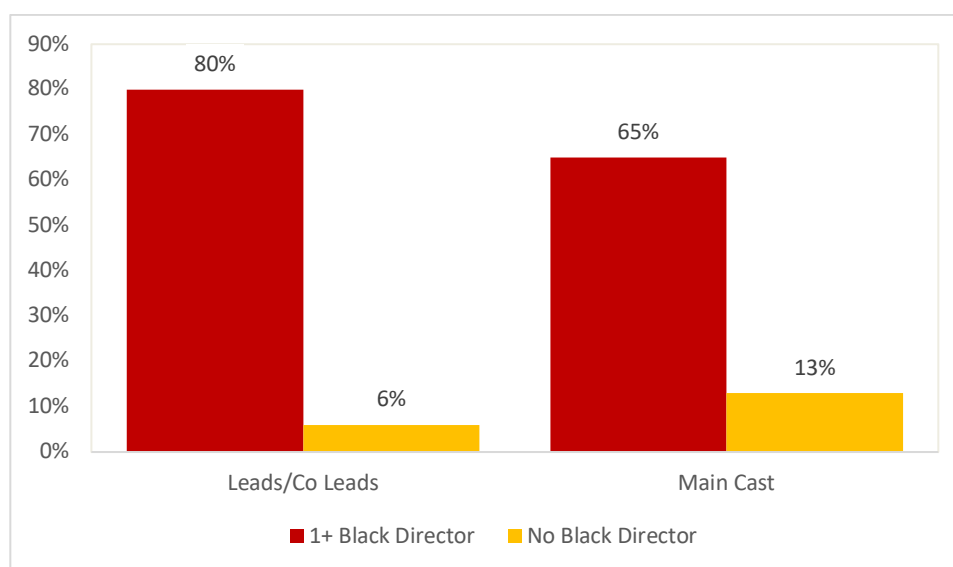
Looking to series, 12.7% (*n*=8) of creators, 6% (*n*=28) of producers, 15.9% (*n*=84) of writers, and 12.2% (*n*=45) of directors were Black in 2023 (see Table 41). There were three areas where there has been significant over time change: creators, writers, and directors. For creators, 2023 (12.7%) reflects both a one-year increase (2022=6.3%) and a 10.2 percentage point gain from 2018 (2.5%). 2023 featured the

highest percentage of Black writers (15.9%). Finally, among directors, the increase from 2018 (7.1%) to 2023 (12.2%) was significant.

Table 41
Percentage of Black Above-the-Line Series Personnel by Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Creators	2.5% (*n*=3)	9.7% (*n*=14)	3.9% (*n*=4)	9.5% (*n*=8)	6.3% (*n*=6)	12.7% (*n*=8)
Producers	4% (*n*=30)	7.6% (*n*=68)	5.4% (*n*=36)	8.1% (*n*=44)	6.4% (*n*=41)	6% (*n*=28)
Writers	5.7% (*n*=69)	10.9% (*n*=155)	8% (*n*=63)	13.5% (*n*=133)	10.4% (*n*=82)	15.9% (*n*=84)
Directors	7.1% (*n*=54)	11.2% (*n*=101)	13.1% (*n*=70)	16.4% (*n*=84)	9.3% (*n*=57)	12.2% (*n*=45)

As with film, we examined whether the presence of a Black creator influenced on screen representation for main cast actors. Series with a Black creator featured Black main cast/series regular actors in 53.2% (*n*=25) of all roles. When series did not have a Black creator, 20.3% (*n*=59) of main cast were Black. Similar to film, this suggests that Black series creators are centering Black actors in storytelling. At the same time, it also indicates that non-Black creators are inclusive of Black actors in important roles.

The results in this section point to the inclusion of Black stories in Netflix content. Across leads and main cast, Netflix has exceeded proportional representation for both films and series. Behind the camera, there is still room to grow the participation of Black content creators.

Asian Cast & Crew. Asian actors in a ***lead/co lead*** role were evaluated across films and series. As illustrated in previous sections, there are different criteria to identify the lead roles between formats. For film, this was if the story had at least one Asian protagonist central to the plot. For series, at least 6% or more of the series regulars had to be identified as Asian. This threshold reflects the percentage of Asians in the U.S. population.[38] Across both films and series in 2023, 36.4% of leads/co leads were Asian. While there was no difference between 2023 and 2022, there was a significant increase from 2018 to 2023 (see Table 42).

Between formats a different story emerges. Across film, 2023 only had one film that was led by an Asian identified actor which is a steep decline from the previous 2022 year. This remains on par with 2018.[39] Pivoting to series, the percentage of Asian leads/co leads was at an all-time high in 2023 (64.3%). As shown in Table 42, 2023 series had significantly more Asian leads/co leads than 2022 (54.8%) and 2018 (36.7%). Put differently, episodic content is well ahead of its film counterpart when it comes to featuring Asian actors in leading roles.

Table 42
Asian Leads/Co Leads by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	5.8% (*n=4*)	8.8% (*n=5*)	8.6% (*n=5*)	12.3% (*n=8*)	14.3% (*n=9*)	2.9% (*n=1*)	9.2% (*n=32*)
Scripted Series	36.7% (*n=29*)	40.2% (*n=39*)	45.2% (*n=28*)	43.4% (*n=23*)	54.8% (*n=34*)	64.3% (*n=27*)	45.6% (*n=180*)
Overall	22.3% (*n=33*)	28.6% (*n=44*)	27.5% (*n=33*)	26.3% (*n=31*)	34.4% (*n=43*)	36.4% (*n=28*)	28.6% (*n=212*)

Shifting focus to main cast trends, in 2023 12.2% of **main cast** actors across all stories were Asian. While similar to 2022, this did increase significantly from 2018 (see Table 43). An interesting story emerged by format. The percentage of Asian main cast remained consistent across all six years of film data. 2023 series was a highlight for the community as 16.9% of the main cast actors were Asian. Put differently, episodic content in 2023 was a standout year and represents a significant increase in visibility from 2018 (6.1%). Across both films and series, Netflix has continued to consistently reach proportional representation with the U.S. population (6.4%) for Asian main cast actors.[40]

Table 43
Asian Main Cast by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	7.6% (*n=42*)	8.6% (*n=41*)	11.1% (*n=61*)	10.9% (*n=65*)	11.7% (*n=64*)	7.6% (*n=26*)	9.8% (*n=299*)
Scripted Series	6.1% (*n=41*)	7.3% (*n=57*)	8.9% (*n=44*)	9.1% (*n=35*)	9.5% (*n=52*)	16.9% (*n=57*)	8.9% (*n=286*)
Overall	6.7% (*n=83*)	7.8% (*n=98*)	10.1% (*n=105*)	10.2% (*n=100*)	10.6% (*n=116*)	12.2% (*n=83*)	9.3% (*n=585*)

Additionally, we investigated the ethnic background of the actors across the 6-year sample with the goal to capture how diverse Netflix stories were in encompassing the Asian community as a whole. As shown in Table 44, the majority of main cast actors were Indian (28.5%), followed by Chinese (15%) and Korean (14.5%). Film and series differed somewhat in the percentage of main cast actors from particular ethnic backgrounds (see Table 44).

Table 44
Asian Main Cast Actors by Storytelling Medium

Measure	Film	Series	Total
Indian	31.1% (n=93)	25.9% (n=74)	28.5% (n=167)
Chinese	15.7% (n=47)	14.3% (n=41)	15% (n=88)
Korean	10.4% (n=31)	18.9% (n=54)	14.5% (n=85)
Japanese	11% (n=33)	10.1% (n=29)	10.6% (n=62)
Filipino	9% (n=27)	11.2% (n=32)	10.1% (n=59)
Multicultural	6% (n=18)	7.7% (n=22)	6.8% (n=40)
Vietnamese	3.7% (n=11)	2.8% (n=8)	3.3% (n=19)
Pakistani	3% (n=9)	3.1% (n=9)	3.1% (n=18)
Indonesian	3.3% (n=10)	<1% (n=1)	1.9% (n=11)
Taiwanese	1.3% (n=4)	<1% (n=1)	<1% (n=5)
Malaysian	1.3% (n=4)	<1% (n=1)	<1% (n=5)
Sri Lankan	<1% (n=1)	1.4% (n=4)	<1% (n=5)
Nepali	0	1.4% (n=4)	<1% (n=4)
Thai	1.3% (n=4)	0	<1% (n=4)
Singaporean	<1% (n=2)	<1% (n=1)	<1% (n=3)
Cambodian	1% (n=3)	0	<1% (n=3)
Laotian	0	<1% (n=2)	<1% (n=2)
Bangladeshi	<1% (n=2)	0	<1% (n=2)

Behind the camera within film in 2023, 8.3% of **directors**, 3.2% of **writers**, and 1.4% of **producers** were Asian. As shown in Table 45, 2023 had significantly more Asian directors than 2022 and a similar number when looking at 2018. Writers and producers did not differ significantly across the six years.

Table 45
Percentage of Asian Above-the-Line Film Personnel by Year

Medium	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Directors	4.2% (*n*=3)	1.7% (*n*=1)	3.3% (*n*=2)	6% (*n*=4)	1.5% (*n*=1)	8.3% (*n*=3)
Writers	4% (*n*=4)	5% (*n*=5)	3% (*n*=3)	5.6% (*n*=6)	1.7% (*n*=2)	3.2% (*n*=2)
Producers	5.6% (*n*=14)	2.2% (*n*=4)	3.5% (*n*=7)	4.6% (*n*=11)	1.9% (*n*=4)	1.4% (*n*=2)

Shifting focus to series, in 2023 7.9% of **creators**, 8.3% of **producers**, 12.3% of **writers** and 7.9% of **directors** were Asian. The creators were: Jamie Uyeshiro, Jenny Han, Lee Sung Jin, Mindy Kaling and Steven Maeda. All were responsible for 5 unique series. While the number of Asian creators in 2023 was on par with 2022, there was a significant increase when compared to 2018. A similar story unfolds when shifting focus to producers and writers as well (see Table 46). Asian directors did not differ meaningfully across the 6-year sample.

Table 46
Percentage of Asian Above-the-Line Series Personnel by Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Creators	1.7% (*n*=2)	1.4% (*n*=2)	1% (*n*=1)	5.9% (*n*=5)	5.3% (*n*=5)	7.9% (*n*=5)
Producers	2.9% (*n*=22)	3.8% (*n*=34)	3.3% (*n*=22)	5.1% (*n*=28)	4.9% (*n*=31)	8.3% (*n*=39)
Writers	4% (*n*=48)	4.7% (*n*=67)	5.1% (*n*=40)	8.1% (*n*=80)	9% (*n*=71)	12.3% (*n*=65)
Directors	5.8% (*n*=44)	3.7% (*n*=33)	5.2% (*n*=28)	5.7% (*n*=29)	8.2% (*n*=50)	7.9% (*n*=29)

Latinx Cast & Crew. This section details insights regarding Latinx cast and crew. As in previous reports, we first evaluated Hispanic/Latinos from all racial/ethnic backgrounds. We then focused specifically on Latinos born in the U.S. or its territories and who were not of Spanish origin or who had no other Latino identity. Our population reference for this group is 12%, which was used to determine whether a series had Latinx lead/co lead actors.[41]

Across films and series, 14.3% (*n*=11) featured **lead/co leads** who were Latinx (see Table 47). This figure is not different than the 11.2% (*n*=14) of leads/co leads who were Latinx in 2022, but is significantly greater than 2018 (6.8%, *n*=10). There were no significant gains for film when compared to 2022, as 8.6% (*n*=3) of leads/co leads in 2023 were Latinx, on par with 2022 (6.3%, *n*=4). There were significant improvements when comparing to 2018 (1.5%, *n*=1). Series showed an overall gain, however, from 19.1% (*n*=8) in 2023 to 11.4% (n=9) in 2018, which was also no different than 2022 (16.1%, *n*=10).

Table 47
Latinx Leads/Co Leads by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	1.5% (*n*=1)	5.3% (*n*=3)	8.6% (*n*=5)	10.8% (*n*=7)	6.3% (*n*=4)	8.6% (*n*=3)	6.6% (*n*=23)
Series	11.4% (*n*=9)	20.6% (*n*=20)	32.3% (*n*=20)	32.1% (*n*=17)	16.1% (*n*=10)	19.1% (*n*=8)	21.3% (*n*=84)
Total	6.8% (*n*=10)	14.9% (*n*=23)	20.8% (*n*=25)	20.3% (*n*=24)	11.2% (*n*=14)	14.3% (*n*=11)	14.4% (*n*=107)

Examining main cast, 6.1% (*n*=42) of roles went to Latinx actors in 2023 (see Table 48). Over time, there has been no significant change in Latinx main cast/series regular roles overall. There were also no differences between films (7.9%, *n*=27) and series (4.4%, *n*=15) in 2023.

Table 48
Latinx Main Cast by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	3.3% (*n*=18)	4.2% (*n*=20)	6.6% (*n*=36)	5.9% (*n*=35)	4.9% (*n*=27)	7.9% (*n*=27)	5.3% (*n*=163)
Series	3.7% (*n*=25)	6.9% (*n*=54)	8.9% (*n*=44)	7.8% (*n*=30)	4.4% (*n*=24)	4.4% (*n*=15)	6% (*n*=192)
Total	3.5% (*n*=43)	5.9% (*n*=74)	7.7% (*n*=80)	6.6% (*n*=65)	4.7% (*n*=51)	6.1% (*n*=42)	5.7% (*n*=355)

Behind the camera, 3.5% (*n*=1) of directors, 5.1% (*n*=3) of writers, and 3% (*n*=4) of producers in film were Latinx in 2023 (see Table 49). There has been no significant change over time for directors or producers, but 2023 does represent a gain from 2018 when there were zero Latinx film writers. The lone Latinx director in 2023 was Robert Rodriguez.

Table 49
Percentage of Latinx Above-the-Line Film Personnel by Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Directors	1.4% (*n*=1)	0	3.3% (*n*=2)	6% (*n*=4)	3.1% (*n*=2)	3.5% (*n*=1)
Writers	0	1% (*n*=1)	6% (*n*=6)	2.8% (*n*=3)	1.8% (*n*=2)	5.1% (*n*=3)
Producers	1.2% (*n*=3)	1.1% (*n*=2)	2.5% (*n*=5)	2.5% (*n*=6)	1.9% (*n*=4)	3% (*n*=4)

In 2023, 6.3% (*n*=3) of creators, 4.4% (*n*=14) of producers, 8.1% (*n*=28) of writers, and 6.3% (*n*=18) of directors were Latinx. Over time, the only significant change for Latinx personnel was for writers. 2023 featured significantly more Latinx writers than 2022 (2.7%, *n*=21) or 2018 (2.6%, *n*=31).

Table 50
Percentage of Latinx Above-the-Line Series Personnel by Year

Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Creators	2.5% (*n*=3)	2.1% (*n*=3)	6.9% (*n*=7)	3.6% (*n*=3)	1% (*n*=1)	6.3% (*n*=3)
Producers	2.5% (*n*=19)	2.1% (*n*=19)	2.6% (*n*=17)	2.8% (*n*=15)	3.1% (*n*=19)	4.4% (*n*=14)
Writers	2.6% (*n*=31)	1.9% (*n*=27)	4.8% (*n*=37)	3.9% (*n*=38)	2.7% (*n*=21)	8.1% (*n*=28)
Directors	2.5% (*n*=19)	2.2% (*n*=20)	3.4% (*n*=18)	2.7% (*n*=14)	3.2% (*n*=19)	6.3% (*n*=18)

Middle Eastern/North African Cast and Crew. To determine Middle Eastern/North African (MENA) leads/co leads, we examined the protagonist of each film and whether 1% (or more) of series regulars/main cast were MENA in series. In 2023, 11.7% (*n*=9) of films and series featured a MENA lead. There was a significant difference between films (2.9%, *n*=1) and series (19.1%, *n*=8), however (see Table 51). Over time, there has been no change for film, but a significant increase for series from 2018 (5.1%, *n*=4) to 2023 (19.1%) for MENA leads/co leads. 2022 series was on par with 2023.

Table 51
MENA Leads/Co Leads by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	Leads/Co Leads					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Film	2.9% (*n*=2)	0	3.5% (*n*=2)	0	1.6% (*n*=1)	2.9% (*n*=1)
Series	5.1% (*n*=4)	5.2% (*n*=5)	3.2% (*n*=2)	13.2% (*n*=7)	14.5% (*n*=9)	19.1% (*n*=8)
Total	4.1% (*n*=6)	3.3% (*n*=5)	3.3% (*n*=4)	5.9% (*n*=7)	8% (*n*=10)	11.7% (*n*=9)

Turning to main cast/series regulars, in 2023, 2.3% (*n*=16) of all series regulars/main cast members were MENA. There has been no overtime change since 2018 and there was no difference between films and series in the percentage of MENA main cast.

Table 52
MENA Main Cast by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	Main Cast					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Film	2% (*n*=11)	<1% (*n*=4)	1.6% (*n*=9)	2% (*n*=12)	1.5% (*n*=8)	2% (*n*=7)
Series	<1% (*n*=4)	1% (*n*=8)	1% (*n*=5)	2.3% (*n*=9)	2.2% (*n*=12)	2.7% (*n*=9)
Total	1.2% (*n*=15)	1% (*n*=12)	1.3% (*n*=14)	2.1% (*n*=21)	1.8% (*n*=20)	2.3% (*n*=16)

Behind the camera, there were few MENA individuals who worked on Netflix films in 2023: 2.8% (*n*=1) of directors, 3.2% (*n*=2) of writers, and <1% (*n*=1) of producers were MENA. The MENA director in 2023 was Sam Esmail. In Netflix series, 1.6% (*n*=1) of creators, <1% (*n*=2) of producers, <1% (*n*=2) of writers, and <1% (*n*=3) of directors were MENA. There has been no change over time for MENA personnel behind the scenes in film or series.

American Indian/Alaska Native Cast & Crew. The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) leads/co leads was examined. This involved assessing whether films had an AIAN protagonist and any series featured AIAN main cast/series regulars in 1% or more of roles. In 2023, 6.5% of all programs were AIAN led (see Table 53). All of these actors appeared in series. There has been a significant increase from 2018 (6.3%, *n*=5) and 2022 (1.6%, *n*=1) to 2023 (11.9%, *n*=5) for AIAN leads/co leads in series. However, there was no corresponding increase for film.

Table 53
AIAN Leads/Co Leads by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	Leads/Co Leads					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Film	2.9% (*n*=2)	1.7% (*n*=3)	1.7% (*n*=1)	6.1% (*n*=4)	0	0
Series	6.3% (*n*=5)	8.3% (*n*=8)	6.5% (*n*=4)	7.5% (*n*=4)	1.6% (*n*=1)	11.9% (*n*=5)
Total	4.7% (*n*=7)	5.8% (*n*=9)	4.2% (*n*=5)	6.8% (*n*=8)	<1% (*n*=1)	6.5% (*n*=5)

Looking to main cast, in 2023 <1% (*n*=6) of main cast roles went to AIAN actors. All of these roles occurred in Netflix series. There has been no change over time in the percentage of AIAN main cast in Netflix films and series.

Table 54
AIAN Main Cast by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	Main Cast					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Film	<1% (*n*=5)	<1% (*n*=3)	<1% (*n*=2)	2.0% (*n*=12)	<1% (*n*=2)	0
Series	<1% (*n*=4)	1.3% (*n*=10)	1% (*n*=5)	<1% (*n*=3)	<1% (*n*=1)	1.8% (*n*=6)
Total	<1% (*n*=11)	1.1% (*n*=14)	<1% (*n*=7)	1.6% (*n*=16)	<1% (*n*=3)	<1% (*n*=6)

Behind the camera, there were no AIAN directors, writers, or producers in Netflix films in 2023. In series, <1% (*n*=1) of producers, <1% (*n*=1) of writers, and <1% (*n*=2) directors were AIAN in 2023. No creators were part of this community in 2023. There has been no change over time behind the camera for AIAN personnel.

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Cast & Crew. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI) leads/co leads included films with an NHPI protagonist or series in which 1% or more of the main cast/series regular roles were held by an NHPI actor. As shown in Table 55, 3.9% (*n*=3) programs were NHPI led in 2023. Series (7.1%, *n*=3) featured all of the leads/co leads while film featured none. There has been no change over time for NHPI leads/co leads across either format.

Table 55
NHPI Leads/Co Leads by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	Leads/Co Leads					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Film	0	3.5% (*n*=2)	1.7% (*n*=1)	4.6% (*n*=3)	1.6% (*n*=1)	0
Series	6.3% (*n*=5)	3.1% (*n*=3)	3.2% (*n*=2)	0	4.8% (*n*=3)	7.1% (*n*=3)
Total	3.4% (*n*=5)	3.3% (*n*=5)	2.5% (*n*=3)	2.5% (*n*=3)	3.2% (*n*=4)	3.9% (*n*=3)

Turning to main cast, 1% (*n*=7) of all roles were held by NHPI actors in 2023. This did not differ by film (1.2%, *n*=4) or series (<1%, *n*=3). There have been no meaningful changes over time for NHPI main cast since 2018 (see Table 56).

Table 56
NHPI Main Cast by Storytelling Medium and Year

Format	Main Cast					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Film	0	1.3% (*n*=6)	<1% (*n*=5)	1.6% (*n*=9)	<1% (*n*=3)	1.2% (*n*=4)
Series	1.2% (*n*=8)	<1% (*n*=4)	<1% (*n*=3)	0	<1% (*n*=3)	<1% (*n*=3)
Total	<1% (*n*=8)	<1% (*n*=10)	<1% (*n*=8)	<1% (*n*=9)	<1% (*n*=6)	1% (*n*=7)

Behind the camera, Netflix films did not have any NHPI directors, writers, or producers in 2023. In Netflix series, less than 1% (*n*=1) of producers, 1.3% (*n*=7) of writers, and <1% (*n*=2) of directors were NHPI. No creators in 2023 were from this community. There has been no change over time for NHPI behind the camera personnel in film or series.

The results in this section demonstrate that Netflix has improved in its portrayal of Black and Asian characters, and in certain roles behind the camera for these groups. For Latinx, MENA, AIAN, and NHPI communities, there has been little change over time on screen or behind the camera. Thus, while the overall increase in underrepresented communities in Netflix films and series is important, there is room to grow for these specific groups.

LGBTQ+

This section focuses on the presence of LGBTQ+-identified characters who are portrayed in lead/co lead roles, identified as part of the main cast or series regulars, and represented among all speaking characters. In films, a lead/co lead is considered LGBTQ+ if one of the protagonists is part of the community. In series, **at least** 10% of series regulars need to be identified as LGBTQ+ to meet this lead criteria.[42]

Table 57
Percentage of LGBTQ+ Leads/Co Leads by Year and Storytelling format

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	2.9% (*n*=2)	5.3% (*n*=3)	5.2% (*n*=3)	7.7% (*n*=5)	4.8% (*n*=3)	8.6% (*n*=3)	5.5% (*n*=19)
Scripted Series	19% (*n*=15)	28.9% (*n*=28)	43.5% (*n*=27)	35.9% (*n*=19)	33.9% (*n*=21)	52.4% (*n*=22)	33.4% (*n*=132)
Overall	11.5% (*n*=17)	20.1% (*n*=31)	25% (*n*=30)	20.3% (*n*=24)	19.2% (*n*=24)	32.5% (*n*=25)	20.3% (*n*=151)

In 2023, there was a record number of titles led/co led by a LGBTQ+ character across both films and series (32.5%, *n*=25). As shown in Table 57, this finding does increase from 2022 (19.2%, *n*=24) and shows progress when compared to 2018 (11.5%, *n*=17). While film remains consistent across the years, the highest percentage of LGBTQ+ led series was observed in 2023 episodic content. Though the overall percentage is encouraging, distinct differences emerge when we separate the two media.

Over the 6-year sample there were minimal changes observed year to year for films featuring a LGBTQ+ character in a leading role. As shown in Table 57, in 2023 8.6% of films featured a LGBTQ+ lead/co lead. While this is consistent with 2022 (4.8%), it marks an improvement from 2018 when only 2.9% of films had a LGBTQ+ protagonist. Across the three films there were two men and one woman identified as the lead. Of those individuals, there was only one man of color. All three of them were identified as middle aged and only 1 was depicted as a parent. The number of film titles through the years with a LGBTQ+ lead/co lead has never exceeded more than 5 films.

In comparison to the wider entertainment industry, Netflix has remained on par with traditional top-grossing films in terms of LGBTQ+ characters in a leading role. In 2023, there were 5 films on the silver screen that depicted a LGBTQ+ protagonist.[43]

Series has continued to remain ahead of its film counterpart. In 2023, over half (52.4%) of all programs released in the year featured LGBTQ+ characters as 10% or more of series regulars. This is a stark contrast to 2022 where only a third (33.9%) were represented. Compared to the first year of this study, this most recent year more than doubles what was recorded in 2018 (19%).

While the percentages illustrate a dramatic increase, the number of shows has remained consistent throughout the years. Put differently, Netflix released overall less original scripted content in 2023 but the number of LGBTQ+ lead/co lead series regular shows remained consistent. The 22 shows had 43

unique LGBTQ+ characters as part of the series regular/main cast. A little over half (53.5%) of the characters were male and 46.5% were female. This year, more than 60% of the LGBTQ+ series regulars were people of color.

Table 58
Percentage of LGBTQ+ Main Cast by Year and Storytelling Format

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	3.8% (*n*=21)	4.9% (*n*=23)	5.3% (*n*=29)	5.1% (*n*=31)	5.3% (*n*=29)	5.2% (*n*=18)	4.9% (*n*=151)
Scripted Series	4.6% (*n*=30)	7.4% (*n*=55)	10.3% (*n*=49)	6.7% (*n*=26)	6.2% (*n*=33)	13.4% (*n*=44)	7.6% (*n*=237)
Overall	4.3% (*n*=51)	6.4% (*n*=78)	7.6% (*n*=78)	5.7% (*n*=57)	5.7% (*n*=62)	9.2% (*n*=62)	6.3% (*n*=388)

All *main cast and series regulars* were coded for LGBTQ+. This analysis differs from the previous one as we include all the main cast/series regulars regardless of the percentage of LGBTQ+ identified lead or co-lead characters in the story. In 2023, 9.2% of main cast/series regulars were LGBTQ+ (see Table 58). This did not differ meaningfully when compared to 2022 (5.7%). However, when compared to 2018 (4.3%) the percentage of main cast/series regular characters doubled. While historically there has been no difference in the number of LGBTQ+ cast between media, 2023 marks a highlight for episodic content where 13.4% of series featured LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars. As a point of comparison, 10.6% of primetime broadcast series regulars in 2022/23 season were LGBTQ+ according to GLAAD.[44]

Within 2023 films, over half of the LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars were male (55.6%) and less than half (44.4%) were female. A majority (61.1%) of these characters in film were White with, 19.3% Black, 9.2% Hispanic/Latino, 6.1% Asian, 5.5% Multiracial/Multiethnic and less than 1% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or Middle Eastern/North African. There were no American Indian/Alaska Native LGBTQ+ series regulars in 2023. Over half (55.6%) of the characters were depicted as adults and 44.4% were middle aged. Of the LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars characters who could be assessed for parental status, half were shown as a parent and half were not.

Shifting focus to series, over half of LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars identified as part of the central cast were male (52.3%) and (47.7%) were female.

Less than a third (29.5%) of all LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars were White, with 22.7% Black, 27.3% Multiracial/Multiethnic, 11.4% Asian, 6.8% Hispanic/Latino, and 2.3% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. There were no Middle Eastern/North Africanor American Indian/Alaskan Native LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars. In 2023, more than half (45.5%) of LGBTQ+ characters were teens followed by adults (43.2%), middle agers (9.1%). Only one (2.3%) LGBTQ+ series regular/main cast was elderly. 4.8% of the LGBTQ+ series regulars/main cast were depicted as caregivers or parents.

Across all *speaking or named characters* in 2023 Netflix content, 3.7% (*n*=115) were identified as LGBTQ+ with no difference observed between film (2.4%) and series (4.6%) (see Table 59). Across all six years, there was no change in the percentage of LGBTQ+ speaking or named characters. The majority of

LGBTQ+ characters in 2023 were gay (47%, *n*=54), 33% (*n*=38) were lesbian, 15.7% (*n*=18) were bisexual, 2.6% (*n*=3) were another sexuality, and 1.7% (*n*=2) transgender.[45] As there were no differences observed between the two mediums, demographic profiles are presented together.

The majority of all identified LGBTQ+ speaking or named characters were male (56.5%). Over forty percent were female (42.6%) and <1% were gender non-binary. In 2023 more than half (59.7%) of these LGBTQ+ identified characters were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. Breaking down these specific groups, 40.3% were White, 27.2% were Black, 13.2% were Multiracial/Multiethnic, 11.4% were Asian, 7% were Hispanic/Latino, and less than 1% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. There were no Middle Eastern/North African or American Indian/Alaska Native LGBTQ+ identified speaking or named characters in 2023. Focusing on age, a majority of these speaking characters were portrayed as adults (54.8%) or teenagers (25.2%). There were fewer middle aged (17.4%) or elderly (2.6%) LGBTQ+ characters shown across Netflix content in 2023. Only 27% were depicted as parents or caregivers.

Table 59
Percentage of LGBTQ+ Speaking Characters by Year and Storytelling format

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	1.9% (*n*=47)	2.1% (*n*=46)	2.1% (*n*=46)	2.4% (*n*=48)	2.4% (*n*=47)	2.4% (*n*=31)	2.2% (*n*=265)
Scripted Series	2.5% (*n*=83)	4.1% (*n*=162)	4.8% (*n*=120)	4% (*n*=79)	4.4% (*n*=109)	4.6% (*n*=84)	3.9% (*n*=637)
Overall	2.2% (*n*=130)	3.4% (*n*=208)	3.5% (*n*=166)	3.2% (*n*=127)	3.5% (*n*=156)	3.7% (*n*=115)	3.2% (*n*=902)

Finally, we investigated how many titles failed to depict any LGBTQ+ characters across the plot. As shown in Table 60, in 2023 less than half (44.2%) of all fictional stories were missing the LGBTQ+ community on screen. While 2022 lagged behind (52.8%), both years were significantly lower than 2018 (61.1%). When looking between mediums, a familiar story unfolds. For film, 2023 (60%) did not differ significantly from 2022 (63.5%). However, this most recent year did better than 2018 (66.7%). LGBTQ+ speaking characters were missing from only 30.9% of series titles in 2023 which is less than the previous 2022 year (41.9%). As shown in Table 60, 2023 greatly differs from 2018 when over half of the series (56.3%) erased these characters completely.

Table 60
Number of Stories Missing LGBTQ+ Representation

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	66.7% (*n*=46)	70.2% (*n*=40)	74.1% (*n*=43)	66.1% (*n*=43)	63.5% (*n*=40)	60% (*n*=21)	67.1% (*n*=233)
Scripted Series	56.3% (*n*=45)	53% (*n*=53)	43.7% (*n*=28)	41.5% (*n*=22)	41.9% (*n*=26)	30.9% (*n*=13)	46.6% (*n*=187)

Overall	61.1% (*n*=91)	59.2% (*n*=93)	58.2% (*n*=71)	55.1% (*n*=65)	52.8% (*n*=66)	44.2% (*n*=34)	56.1% (*n*=420)

To summarize, Netflix content continues to make gains when it comes to LGBTQ+ representation within leads/co leads and series regular/main cast positions. While more than half of films did not feature a single LGBTQ+ speaking character, series has continued to highlight LGBTQ+ storylines. In the next section, we turn our attention to another historically marginalized community in entertainment, characters with disabilities.

Characters With Disabilities

This section will investigate how characters with disabilities were represented in Netflix scripted films and series. We used the definition from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to inform our conceptualization of characters with disabilities.[46] After a character met our modified definition of the ADA, their disability was categorized according to the U.S. Census designations as communicative, cognitive, and/or physical.[47] Below we explain the prevalence of disabilities among leads/co leads, main cast/series regular characters, and all speaking or named characters.

In 2023, 5.2% (*n*=4) of stories across both mediums featured a **lead/co lead** with a disability (see Table 61). Lead/co lead classifications were assigned when a film's protagonist or at least 27% of the series regular cast in an episodic show had a disability. As shown in Table 61, there was no difference observed across films and series between 2023 and 2022. The percentage of leads/co leads in 2023 (5.2%) is similar to 2018 (4.1%).

Separating the two-story formats, within films, 2023 was similar to both 2022 and 2018 (see Table 61). Netflix films were on pace with top-grossing films (8%) in 2023 in terms of leads/co leads with a disability.[48] Of the 3 identified lead protagonists with a disability, 1 was male and 2 were female. Focusing on race/ethnicity, all of the lead/co lead characters were white. Two were adults and one was a teen. None of these characters were portrayed as caregivers or parents.

Table 61
Percentage of Leads/Co-Leads with a Disability By Storytelling Format and Year

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	8.7% (*n*=6)	15.8% (*n*=9)	6.9% (*n*=4)	7.7% (*n*=5)	9.5% (*n*=6)	8.6% (*n*=3)	9.5% (*n*=33)
Scripted Series	0	2.1% (*n*=2)	3.2% (*n*=2)	0	1.6% (*n*=1)	2.4% (*n*=1)	1.5% (*n*=6)
Overall	4.1% (*n*=6)	7.1% (*n*=11)	5% (*n*=6)	4.2% (*n*=5)	5.6% (*n*=7)	5.2% (*n*=4)	5.3% (*n*=39)

Within series, in 2023 there was one title (*All the Light We Cannot See*) where at least 27% of the series regular/main cast had a disability. Similar to its film counterpart, there was little difference between the number of lead/co leads depicted with a disability within episodic content between 2023, 2022, and

2018 (see Table 62). In this single show, there were 2 unique series regulars/main cast characters, 1 male and 1 female, who were depicted as having a disability. Both protagonists were white and one was a teenager while the other was a middle ager. There was one character who could be evaluated for parental status and they were depicted as a non-parent.

Across all **series regulars/main cast** in both 2023 films and series, 4.6% (*n*=31) of these characters were depicted with a disability. As shown in Table 62, there was no meaningful difference observed when comparing 2023, 2022, and 2018. The percentage of main cast characters remained the same between both films and series (4.6%). While there has been no change to the number of series regulars/main cast with a disability across 6 years of data, Netflix remains on par with the broader industry. While there is no point of comparison for traditional top-grossing films, there is a comparison for episodic content. Of the series regular characters featured in the top series across traditional broadcast and cable shows in 2023, 4.4% were shown with a disability.[50]

Table 62
Main Cast Characters with Disabilities in Netflix Films and Series

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	3.4% (*n*=19)	4.9% (*n*=23)	4.9% (*n*=27)	1.6% (*n*=10)	2.9% (*n*=16)	4.6% (*n*=16)	3.6% (*n*=111)
Scripted Series	5.2% (*n*=34)	5% (*n*=37)	4% (*n*=19)	2% (*n*=8)	4.5% (*n*=24)	4.6% (*n*=15)	4.4% (*n*=137)
Overall	4.4% (*n*=53)	4.9% (*n*=60)	4.5% (*n*=46)	1.8% (*n*=18)	3.7% (*n*=40)	4.6% (*n*=31)	4% (*n*=248)

Of all the 31 identified series regulars/main cast characters with a disability, 61.3% (*n*=19) were male and 38.7% (*n*=12) were female. Over half of these characters (58.1%, *n*=18) were White while just under a half (41.9%, *n*=13) were underrepresented. Examining age, 35.5% of characters (*n*=11) were middle agers, 32.3% (*n*=10) were adults, 25.8% (*n*=8) were teenagers, and 6.5% (*n*=2) were elderly. Of the series regulars/main cast characters who could be analyzed for parental status, only 34.6% (*n*=9) were shown as parents.

Next, we analyzed the prevalence of **speaking or named characters** with disabilities. In 2023, across both formats 2.5% (*n*=80) of all speaking characters were shown with a disability. There were no differences observed across all 6 years (see Table 63). As has been the trend in this section, both films (2.5%) and series (2.6%) featured a similar percentage of characters with disabilities in 2023. Netflix films remains on par with the broader industry as only 2.2% of all speaking characters across top-grossing films released in 2023 featured a character with a disability.[51] Shifting focus to series, Netflix continues to keep pace with traditional episodic content. Across some of the top scripted television shows, 2.5% of all speaking characters had a disability.[52]

Table 63
Speaking Characters with Disabilities in Netflix Films and Series

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	1.3% (*n*=33)	1.7% (*n*=37)	2.1% (*n*=48)	1% (*n*=20)	1.6% (*n*=31)	2.5% (*n*=33)	1.7% (*n*=202)
Scripted Series	2.4% (*n*=83)	2.5% (*n*=100)	1.9% (*n*=48)	1.2% (*n*=23)	1.5% (*n*=38)	2.6% (*n*=47)	2.1% (*n*=339)
Overall	1.9% (*n*=116)	2.2% (*n*=137)	2% (*n*=96)	1.1% (*n*=43)	1.5% (*n*=69)	2.5% (*n*=80)	1.9% (*n*=541)

Of the speaking or named characters with disabilities in 2023 across both films and series, 56.3% (*n*=45) were male and 43.7% (*n*=35) were female. Just under three-quarters of the characters with disabilities were White (72.4%, *n*=55) and 27.6% (*n*=21) were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. Of the characters with a disability, two (2.5%) were LGBTQ+. Analyzing age, 28.7% of characters with a disability were middle agers or young adults (age 21-39) while 17.5% were elderly, 16.3% were teenagers, and 8.7% were children. Of these characters with a disability, 16 were shown as a parent.

We explored the percentage of films and series that either rendered characters with disabilities ***invisible*** or failed to feature a single speaking or named character with a disability (see Table 64). In 2023, less than half (42.9%) of films and series did not have a single character with a disability. This is an improvement from 2022 (62.4%) and 2018 (55.7%). Put differently, more than half of the content released across all stories featured at least one character with a disability in 2023. Focusing on each individual format, in 2023 42.9% of Netflix films were without a character with a disability, an improvement from both 2022 (61.9%) and 2018 (66.7%). In series, less than half (42.9%) of titles rendered characters with disabilities invisible. While this is an improvement from 2022 (62.9%), this remains on par with 2018 (46.3%).

Table 64
Number of Stories Missing Representation of Characters with Disabilities

Format	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Film	66.7% (*n*=46)	57.9% (*n*=33)	51.7% (*n*=30)	75.4% (*n*=49)	61.9% (*n*=39)	42.9% (*n*=15)	61.1% (*n*=212)
Scripted Series	46.3% (*n*=37)	59% (*n*=59)	48.4% (*n*=31)	67.9% (*n*=36)	62.9% (*n*=39)	42.9% (*n*=18)	54.9% (*n*=220)
Overall	55.7% (*n*=83)	58.6% (*n*=92)	50% (*n*=61)	72% (*n*=85)	62.4% (*n*=78)	42.9% (*n*=33)	57.7% (*n*=432)

Finally, we were curious about the nature of disabilities presented within the story. When a character was identified as having a disability, they were assessed to determine whether the condition occurred in

the physical, cognitive, or communicative domain. It is possible for a character to experience more than one disability (e.g., a character may be blind and may also be missing a limb), and thus the condition could overlap across domains.

Table 65
Domain of Disability in 2023 Netflix Films and Series

Format	Physical	Cognitive	Communicative
Film	72.7% (*n*=24)	15.1% (*n*=5)	24.2% (*n*=8)
Scripted Series	76.6% (*n*=36)	12.8% (*n*=6)	25.5% (*n*=12)
Overall	75% (*n*=60)	13.7% (*n*=11)	25% (*n*=20)

As shown in Table 65, the majority of characters in 2023 Netflix scripted content were most likely to have a disability in the physical domain (75%). The percentage of characters with a physical disability were the same between film (72.7%) and series (76.6%). Examples of characters with physical disabilities include those who had mobility issues or were missing limbs. Cognitive disabilities were experienced by 13.7% of all characters with a disability and occurred at a similar rate between both film and series (see Table 65). Examples of cognitive disabilities include dyslexia or PTSD. Finally, 25% of characters with disabilities had a communicative disability and occurred almost equally in film (24.2%) and series (25.5%). Examples of communicative disabilities include blind or deaf characters.

In summary, characters with disabilities featured as leads/co leads, main cast/series regulars, or as a speaking character continue to remain below proportional representation with the U.S. population. Across 6 years of data, the percentages have not changed. The majority of characters with disabilities were predominantly shown to have a physical condition. Additionally, most of these characters were white and male.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to overview patterns of representation on screen and behind the camera across Netflix U.S. original films and series from 2018 to 2023. Below, we review four major findings from the research.

Netflix Continues to Lead on Gender Representation in Film & Series

With its performance in 2023, Netflix has again demonstrated that girls/women make up a significant proportion of its leading, main cast, and speaking characters across films and series. While gains from 2018 may be more modest across some measures, Netflix has outpaced the wider industry when it comes to leading and speaking characters. Behind the camera, Netflix films also lead the industry in hiring women in key above-the-line positions. In Netflix series, the percentage of roles held by women has increased significantly over time. In some cases, this means keeping pace with industry gains (e.g., directors, producers) and in others it demonstrates Netflix's leadership (e.g., creators, writers). These

results speak to an ongoing commitment to an audience that looks like the U.S. and the global population.

Netflix Content is Inclusive of Underrepresented Voices

In 2023, Netflix continued to increase representation of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups across leads, main cast, and speaking characters. The gains were more pronounced for Netflix series than films, particularly for leading/co leading and speaking characters. However, apart from film leads in 2023, Netflix has reached proportional representation for underrepresented characters in its U.S. Original content. Behind the camera, Netflix has shown significant improvement in hiring underrepresented creatives across both films and series. In some arenas, this tracks with a wider industry increase in underrepresented voices behind the scenes. In others, Netflix leads its peers in hiring. This is critical, as having an underrepresented director or creator resulted in significantly more on-screen representation for people of color.

While the overall numbers for underrepresented racial/ethnic groups show improvement, the evidence for specific racial/ethnic groups shows room for improvement. This is particularly true for Latinx, MENA, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander communities. While some indicators (e.g., Latinx and MENA leads in series) showed an increase since 2018, for main cast and speaking characters, Netflix content still underrepresents certain groups. This is also the case behind the camera. Very few creatives from these communities were hired in above-the-line roles in 2023. As the analysis demonstrates, having a key creative role filled by a member of one community is associated with more on-screen representation of that community. For groups who hold few on-camera roles, filling positions behind the camera with individuals who identify as Latinx, MENA, etc., can be an important step toward increasing representation on screen.

Netflix Content Showcases Women of Color On Screen

In 2023, Netflix content was notably inclusive of girls/women of color. On screen, the percentage of underrepresented females increased for series leads/co leads, main cast, and speaking characters, and for film main cast. These results demonstrate that the increases for women and for underrepresented racial/ethnic groups reflect intersectional inclusion in storytelling. Across series, Netflix has reached proportional representation for underrepresented girls/women on these metrics. However, not all girls/women are represented equally. Not one film or series in 2023 featured an American Indian/Alaska Native female, and more than 90% were missing Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander girls/women. Behind the camera, less than 10% of directors, writers, or producers in film were women of color. Series saw the greatest gains for women of color, particularly for writers. These data suggest that Netflix's work to increase behind the scenes representation, particularly in series, has dividends for its on-screen numbers as well.

LGBTQ+ Representation Rises in Series, Falters in Film

There were gains for the LGBTQ+ community in Netflix content in 2023, but these were exclusively in series content. In that program format, series with an LGBTQ+ lead/co lead and main cast characters both increased from 2018. However, film still falls flat with this community, as less than 10% of films had a LGBTQ+ lead/co lead, and less than 10% of main cast or all speaking characters were LGBTQ+-identified. Despite these overall gains, the picture of LGBTQ+ representation is still largely white and

male, meaning that the representation of this community, while increasing, may still present a skewed reality to audiences.

Characters with Disabilities Continue to Face a Deficit in Netflix Content

Though a quarter of the U.S. population lives with a disability, Netflix films and series do not reflect this portion of the audience proportionally. Fewer than 10% of films or series feature a lead/co lead with a disability. Five percent or less of main cast or speaking characters were depicted with a disability in both films and series from 2023. Over time, these figures have been stubbornly resistant to change. However, one area that has altered is the distribution of characters with disabilities. In 2022, nearly two-thirds of programs were missing characters with disabilities. That number is now 43% across films and series. While characters with disabilities remain rare, this finding does suggest that audiences are encountering these portrayals across a wider spectrum of programming than in prior years.

Limitations

With each report, we remind readers of two limitations that should guide interpretation of the data in this report. First, this analysis covers U.S. original scripted films and series released from 2018 to 2023. Other programming types (e.g., scripted, unscripted) as well as licensed content or international storytelling may differ on the metrics evaluated. Nevertheless, this analysis provides critical insights as to the decision-making of Netflix executives and content creators on this selection of content. Second, throughout the report, we provide industry benchmarks to highlight how Netflix performs relative to others. Some data points come from other research reports who have different methodological approaches and thus comparisons should be treated as suggestive. Finally, as with any longitudinal investigation, some methods of data collection or analyses have been updated from prior reports. These are detailed, where needed, in the footnotes.

Final Note

After 6 years of content evaluation, it is clear that Netflix can and has made progress on particular indicators of inclusion, primarily for girls/women, underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, and girls/women of color. There is still room to improve, particularly behind the camera and for specific communities, including the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities. As the industry continues to adjust to new challenges, Netflix has proven that inclusion can be both adaptable and resilient to change.

Endnotes

1. The methodology for this report has not changed since the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative's report covering films and series from 2018 and 2021. The sample was determined by Netflix and reviewed by the Initiative's internal team and covers the 2023 calendar-year releases of scripted, fictional, live-action Netflix original content. This included films and seasons of scripted series, along with TV specials, which were included in the series sample. Information on the evaluation process, including unitizing and variable reliability can be obtained from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

2. Ensemble films (with three or more leading characters) were not included, consistent with our domestic top-grossing methodology. Only films that were driven by a lead/co-lead were evaluated. Across the 6-year sample, a total of 14 films were deemed ensembles (2=2018, 4=2019, 1 =2020, 2=2021, 2022=4, 2023=1). Of these, 7 featured girls and women in 50% leading ensemble cast. If we were to recalculate the percentage of films with a female lead/co leads with these movies included, the percentages by year would be as follows: 2018 (46.4%, *n*=32), 2019 (56.1%, *n*=32), 2020 (58.6%, *n*=34), 2021 (67.7%, *n*=44), 2022 (66.7%, n=42), 2023 (60%, n=21)**.**

3. We determined series regulars by using IMDbPro and Luminate (formerly Variety Insight). Series regulars reflect recurring characters who appear across episodes. When information was not available through these online databases, the Netflix platform was used to identify main cast/series regulars.

4. U.S. Census Bureau (2023). Quick Facts. Retrieved October 2, 2024 from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/SEX255223#SEX255223

5. Neff, K., Smith, S.L., & Pieper, K. (2024, February). Inequality across 1,700 popular films: Examining gender and race/ethnicity of leads/co leads from 2007 to 2023. Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, Los Angeles, CA.

6. Lauzen, M.M., (2024). It's a Man's (Celluloid) World: Portrayals of Female Characters in Top Grossing U.S. Films of 2023. San Diego State University, CA. https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2023-Its-a-Mans-Celluloid-World-Report.pdf

7. Lauzen, M.M., (2024). Boxed In: Women On Screen and Behind the Scenes on Broadcast and Streaming Television in 2023-24. San Diego State University, CA. https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2023-24-Boxed-In-Report.pdf.

8. Smith, S.L., Pieper, K., & Wheeler, S. (2024, August). Inequality in 1,700 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBTQ+ & Disability from 2007 to 2023. Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, Los Angeles, CA. https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-popular-films-2024-08-02.pdf

9. Lauzen (2024).

10. The total number of female-identified characters within each medium was used to calculate whether a film or series was gender balanced. A title was considered to reach gender balance if the percentage of female-identifying characters or main cast fell within a range of 10% above or below the U.S. Census Bureau (2023) statistics of females in the population. In this case, the range was (45.7% to 55.8%).

11. Smith, Pieper, & Wheeler (2024).

12. U.S. Census (2023).

13. In 2023, there was only one film director who was identified as non-binary.

14. Smith, Pieper & Wheeler (2024).

15. Smith, Pieper & Wheeler (2024).

16. Ramon, A.C., Tran, M., & Hunt, D. (2023). Hollywood Diversity Report 2023, Part 2: Television. Retrieved from: https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2023-Television-11-9-2023.pdf. The UCLA Hollywood Diversity Report 2023 was used to draw comparisons for 2022. We used an average of three types of series from UCLA and reported on the highest year. Additional comparison data was taken from Lauzen's Boxed In reports. See https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2023-24-Boxed-In-Report.pdf. For 2023, only the averages of broadcast and cable were calculated for comparison purposes.

17. Lauzen (2024). Lauzen, M. (2023). Boxed In: Women On Screen and Behind the Scenes on Broadcast and Streaming Television in 2022-23. Retrieved from https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2022-23-Boxed-In-Report.pdf

18. Data on directors from 2018 to 2021 is taken from Directors Guild of America reports. See https://www.dga.org/The-Guild/Diversity/Industry-Reports.aspx. Data on directors from 2022 and 2023 is compiled from unpublished data from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.
19. U.S. Census QuickFacts (n.d.) Retrieved November 5, 2024 from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/.
20. Smith, Pieper, & Wheeler (2024).
21. Neff, Smith, & Pieper (2024).
22. Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data.
23. U.S. Census Quickfacts https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/. Data on Middle Eastern/North African representation was identified using: Arab American Institute Foundation (2018). *Arab American Demographics Factsheet.* Retrieved January 20th, 2020 from: https://censuscounts.org/whatsPage 34at-stake/arab-american-demographics-factsheet/
24. Smith, Pieper, & Wheeler (2024).
25. Similar to gender balance, proportional representation was calculated as the percentage of underrepresented characters identified across all speaking characters in each individual program. We examined whether each program featured underrepresented characters within +/- 10 percentage points of the U.S. underrepresented population (40.7%). Because the study began in 2018, we used population values at that time (39.9%) to calculate the range for proportional representation. Films and series that were 5 percentage points below (35.9%) or exceeded the U.S. Census metric of 39.9% were deemed to be at or above proportional representation. Though the current population benchmark is 40.7%, using the value from 2018 ensures that programs from the earlier years of the sample are evaluated consistently with population figures at the time of their release.
26. Films and series that were within the 10 percentage point range or above proportional representation are included in the table.
27. Smith, Pieper, & Wheeler (2024).
28. Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data.
29. Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data.
30. Smith, Pieper, & Wheeler (2024).
31. Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data.
32. Smith, Pieper, & Wheeler (2024).
33. Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative data.
34. Ramon, Tran, & Hunt (2023). Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative Data.
35. Data on directors from 2018 to 2021 is taken from Directors Guild of America reports. See https://www.dga.org/The-Guild/Diversity/Industry-Reports.aspx. Data on directors from 2022 and 2023 is compiled from unpublished data from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.
36. U.S. Census (2023).
37. U.S. Census (2023).
38. U.S. Census (2023).
39. U.S. Census (2023).
40. The findings would change slightly if films featuring an ensemble cast with 6% or more Asian identified actors were included. 2023 is 5.7%, *n*=2, 2022 is 17.5%, *n*=11, and 2018 is 7.3%, *n*=5.
41. U.S. Census (2023).
42. The population metric of 12% was identified based on the proportion of Hispanic/Latino people in the U.S. population and information from the Pew Research Center demonstrates that roughly two-thirds of Hispanic/Latinos are U.S.-born. See: https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/fact-sheet/latinos-in-the-us-fact-sheet/#demographic-characteristics.
43. To determine population estimates of the LGBTQ+ community, we relied on different sources and identified the median point between them. According to a Gallup poll, 7.6% of U.S. adults identify as LGBTQ+ while a GLAAD report puts the percentage at 12%. The midpoint of 10% was chosen so as not to over or undercount the percentage of the population that identifies as LGBTQ+. Sources: Alfonseca, K. (2024). *Who makes up the LGBTQ+ community? A look at the growing population. ABC News.* Retrieved from: https://abcnews.go.com/US/makes-lgbtq-community-growing-population/story?id=110435387#:~:text=These%20are%20just%20some%20of%20the%20at,as%20record

ed%20by%20a%20recent%20Gallup%20survey. GLAAD (2017). *Accelerating Acceptance.*
https://assets.glaad.org/m/1dbaf27e1f7baa32/original/2017-GLAAD-Accelerating-Acceptance.pdf.

44. Smith, Pieper & Wheeler (2024).
45. GLAAD (2023). Where We Are on TV. Retrieved November 8, 2023 from
https://assets.glaad.org/m/114d72edf8a779a6/original/GLAAD-2022-23-Where-We-Are-on-TV.pdf.
46. In the past, our studies have specifically focused on the portrayals of lesbian, gay, and bisexual
relationships. In 2023, we expanded our definition to encompass characters who were depicted with
another sexuality (e.g., asexual, pansexual, queer, demisexual, etc). In 2022 there was one character in
the show *The Imperfects* identified as another sexuality. In 2023 there were three characters, one in the
show *Fatal Seduction* and two in *The Fall of The House of Usher.*
47. Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). https://www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada/. The definition of
disability can be found in Smith, S.L., Choueiti, M., & Pieper, K. (2016). Inequality in 800 Popular Films:
Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBT, and Disability from 2007-2015. Annenberg School
for Communication & Journalism. Retrieved from:
https://annenberg.usc.edu/sites/default/files/2017/04/10/MDSCI_Inequality_in_800_Films_FINAL.pdf.
Characters with a disability had a condition (based on the function, form, or structure of the character's
mind and/or body), which created a limitation (including interference and/or non-functioning) related to a
'major life activity' or 'major bodily function' longer than six months.
48. U.S. Census Bureau (2018). *Americans with Disabilities: 2014*. Retrieved August 27th, 2020 from:
https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2018/demo/p70-152.html
49. Smith, Pieper, & Wheeler (2024).
50. Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative Data.
51. Smith, Pieper, & Wheeler (2024).
52. Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative Data.
53. Unpublished Annenberg Inclusion Initiative Data.