

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

April 2023

USC Annenberg
Inclusion Initiative

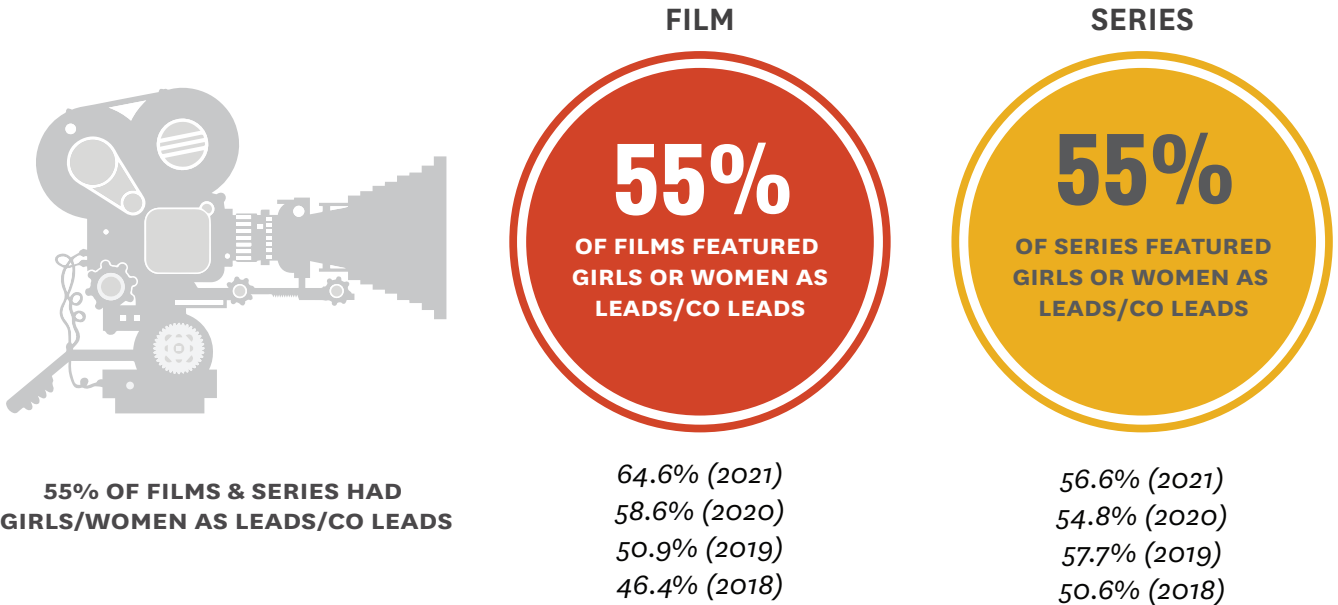
INCLUSION IN NETFLIX ORIGINAL U.S. SCRIPTED FILMS & SERIES

USC ANNENBERG INCLUSION INITIATIVE

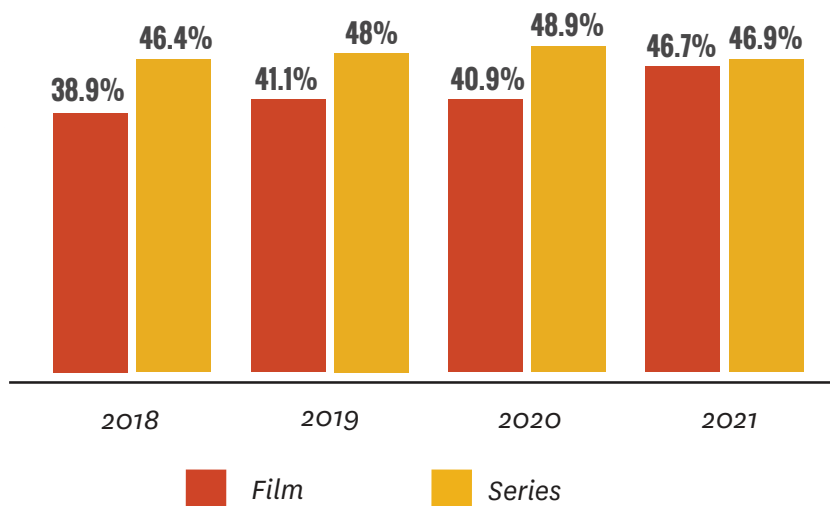


#1 GENDER IS NOT A PROBLEM IN MAJOR ROLES AT NETFLIX

Girls and women as leads/co leads across Netflix films & series, 2018-2021



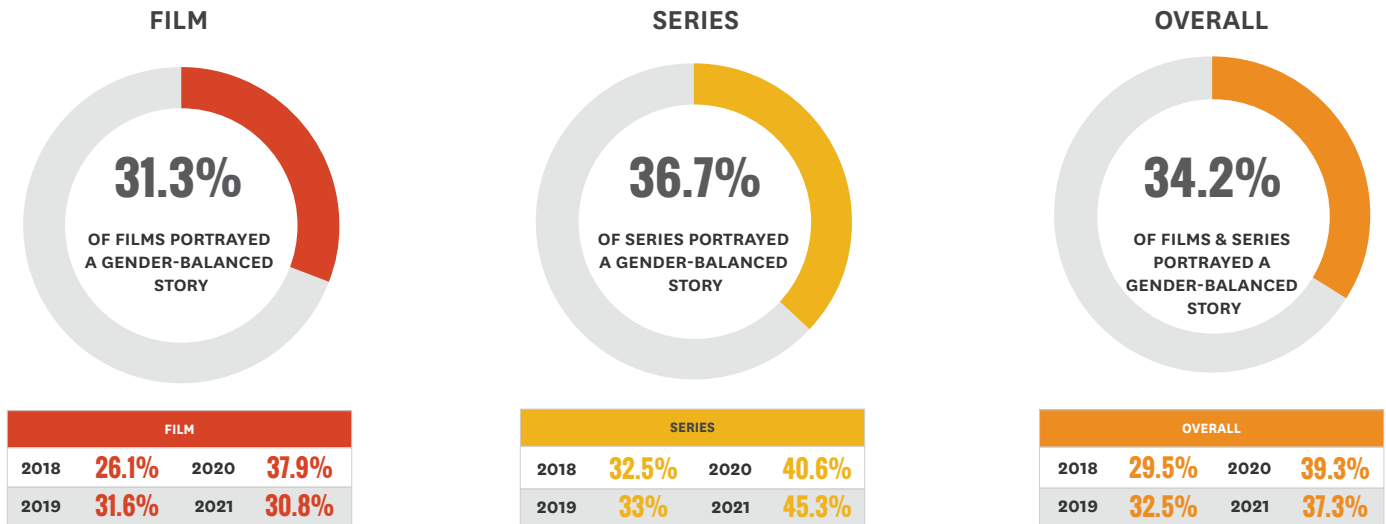
PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF GIRLS & WOMEN IN MAIN CAST ROLES



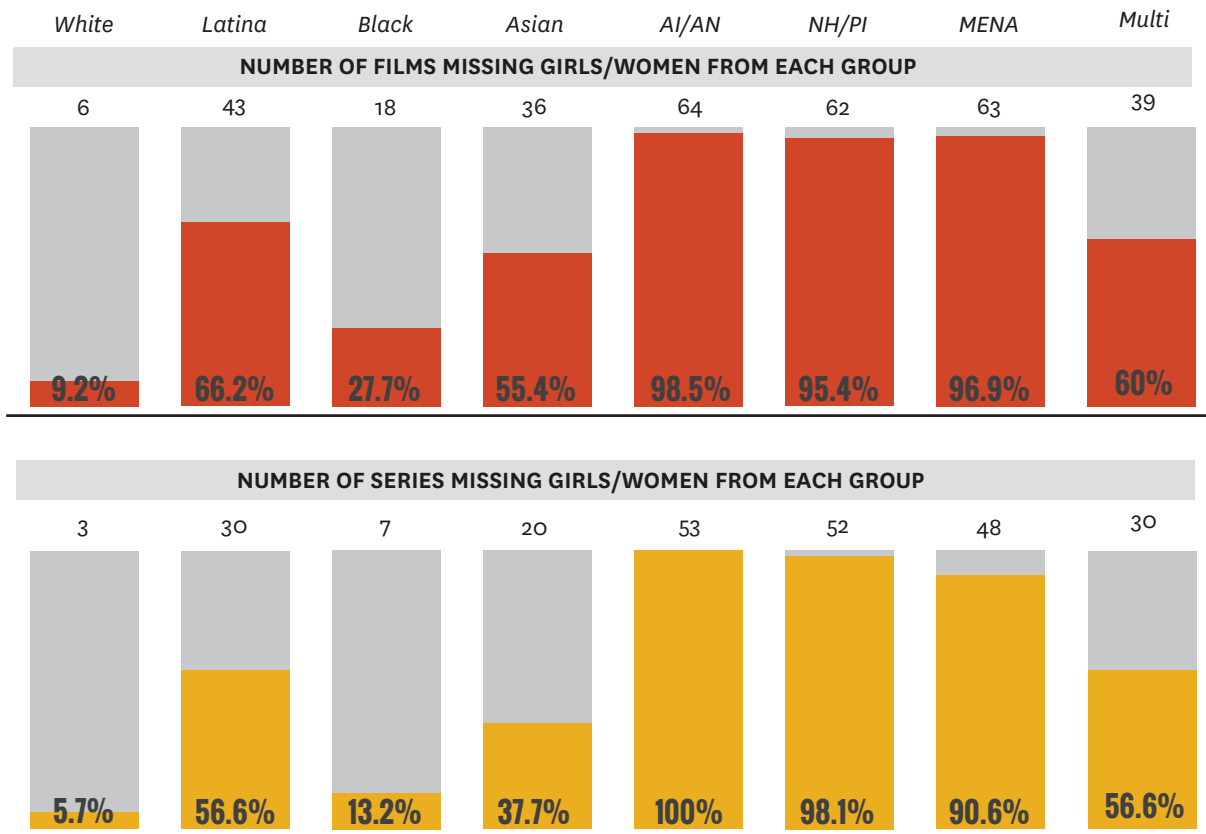
NETFLIX
 SCRIPTED SERIES HAS APPROACHED PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION ACROSS THE LAST 4 YEARS.

#2 GENDER IMBALANCE EXISTS IN SOME NETFLIX CONTENT

Percentage of Netflix films & series that met or exceeded proportional gender representation



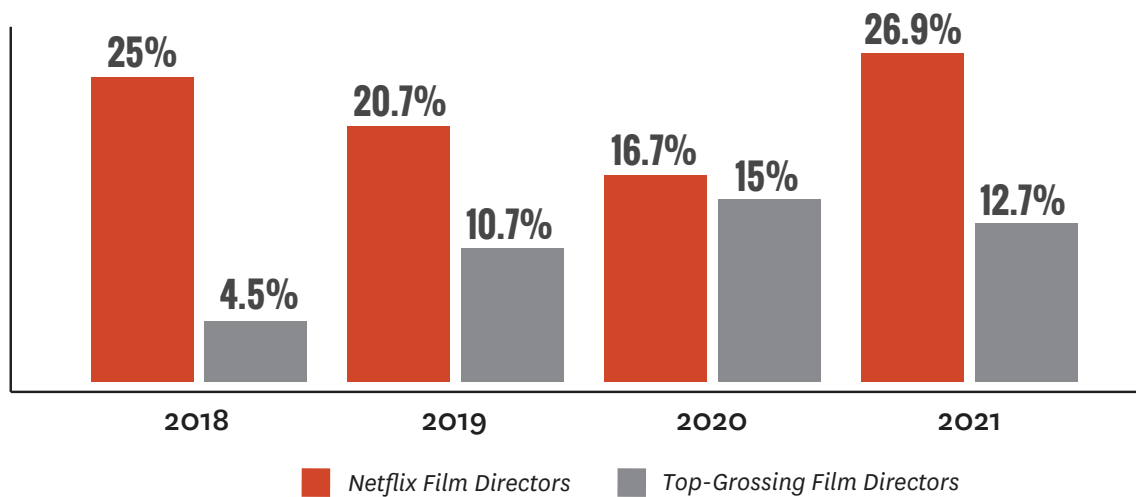
INVISIBILITY PERSISTS FOR GIRLS & WOMEN OF COLOR IN NETFLIX CONTENT



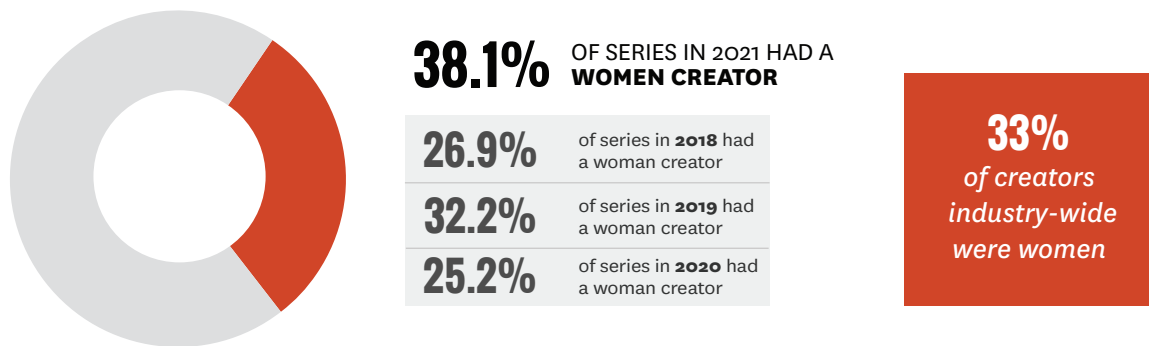
AI/AN=American Indian/Alaska Native; NH/PI=Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; MENA=Middle Eastern/North African; Multi=Multiracial/Multiethnic

#3 NETFLIX SHOWS TOP MOVIES HOW TO HIRE WOMEN

Women directors of Netflix and Top-Grossing films, 2018-21



WOMEN IN KEY CREATIVE POSITIONS ACROSS NETFLIX SERIES & INDUSTRY-WIDE

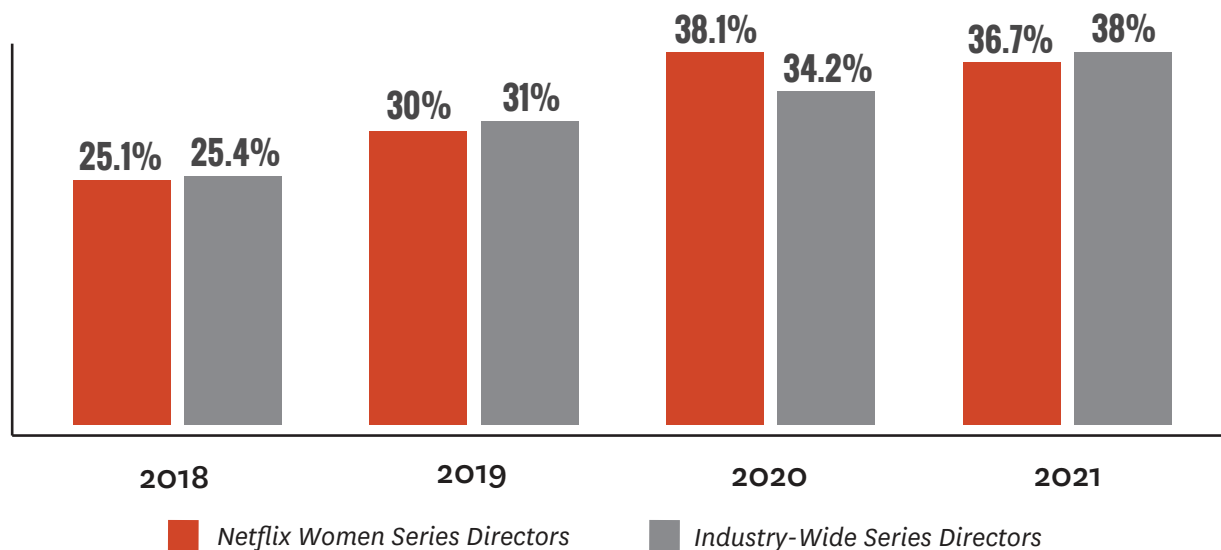


Data on industry-wide show creators are from the UCLA Hollywood Diversity Report and cover the 2020-21 season.

WOMEN PRODUCERS AND WRITERS ACROSS NETFLIX SERIES & INDUSTRY-WIDE

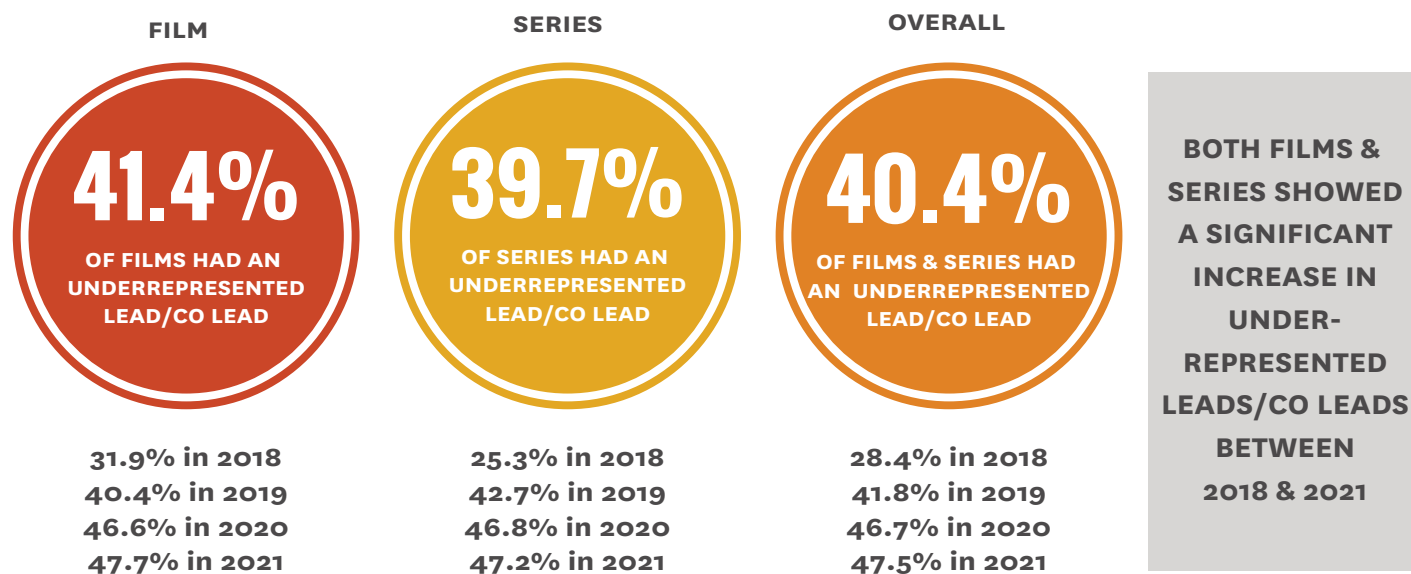
% OF WOMEN	2018	2019	2020	2021
NETFLIX WRITERS	30.6%	41.3%	39.6%	41.1%
INDUSTRY-WIDE WRITERS	25%	35%	36%	34%
NETFLIX PRODUCERS	33.3%	39.6%	38.6%	38.3%
INDUSTRY-WIDE PRODUCERS	40%	40%	39%	42%

WOMEN DIRECTORS ACROSS NETFLIX SERIES & INDUSTRY-WIDE



#4 NETFLIX FILMS AND SERIES FOCUS ON PEOPLE OF COLOR

Percentage of leads/co leads in Netflix content, 2018-21



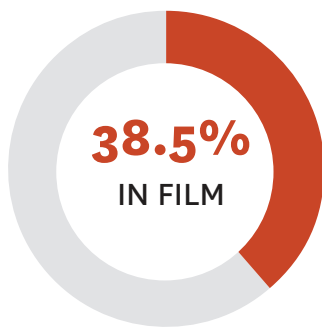
#5 PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION FOR RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS

Underrepresented main cast across Netflix films & series, 2018-21

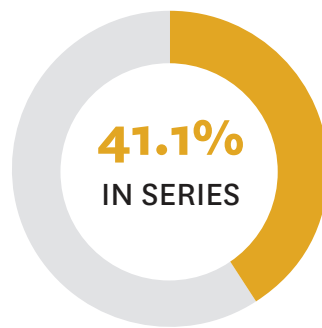
% OF UR MAIN CAST IN	2018	2019	2020	2021
FILM	32.3%	38.9%	42.3%	40.1%
SERIES	27%	38.4%	39.5%	40.9%
TOTAL	29.4%	38.6%	41%	40.4%

40.7% of the U.S. population identifies with an underrepresented racial/ethnic group

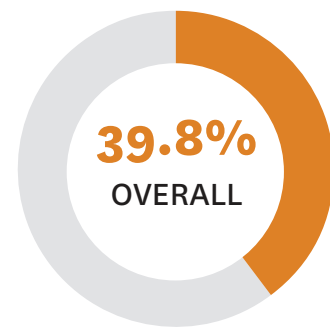
UNDERREPRESENTED SPEAKING CHARACTERS IN NETFLIX FILMS & SERIES



NETFLIX REACHED PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (40.2%) IN 2019 AND DID NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASE IN 2020 (38.3%) OR 2021 (38.5%)



UNDERREPRESENTED CHARACTERS **INCREASED** FROM 2018 (32%) TO 2021 (41.1%), JUST ABOVE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION



NETFLIX SIGNIFICANTLY **INCREASED** THE PERCENTAGE OF UNDERREPRESENTED CHARACTERS FROM 2018 (33.6%) TO 2021 (39.8%)

WOMEN OF COLOR INCREASE IN NETFLIX FILM & SERIES CONTENT

NETFLIX FILMS

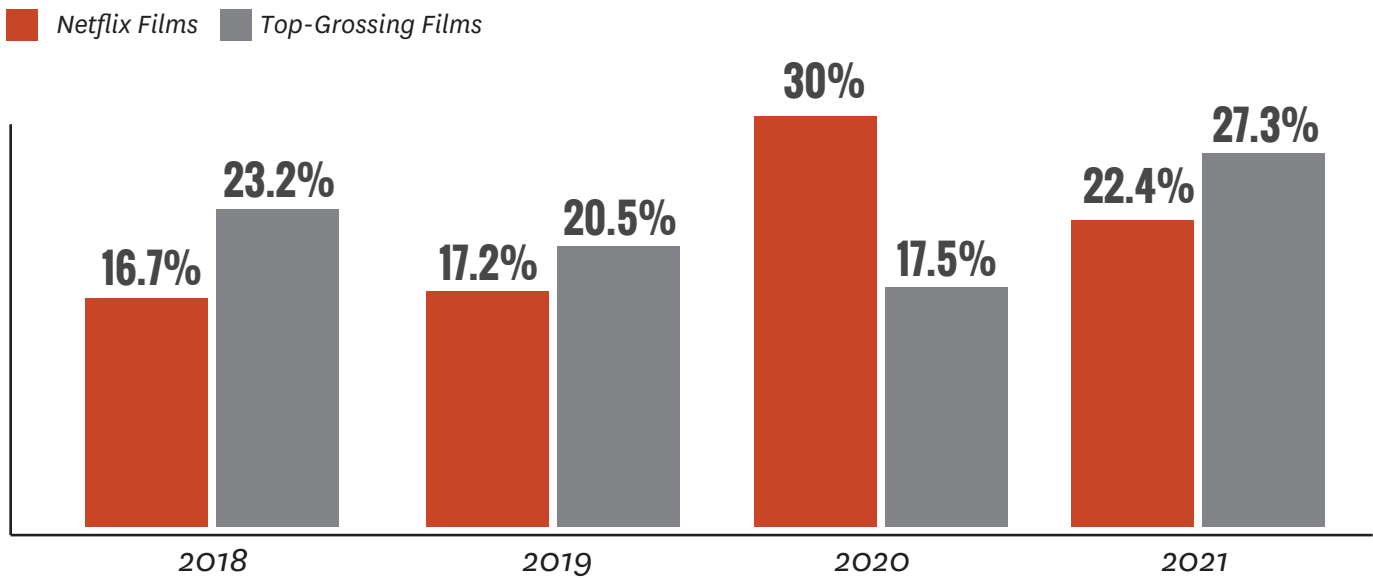
	LEADS/CO LEADS	MAIN CAST	SPEAKING CHARACTERS
2018	15.9%	11.8%	14.2%
2019	22.8%	17.1%	15.6%
2020	27.6%	17.5%	16%
2021	27.7%	17.9%	16%

NETFLIX SERIES

	LEADS/CO LEADS	MAIN CAST	SPEAKING CHARACTERS
2018	35.4%	13.8%	13.2%
2019	47.9%	19.1%	17.1%
2020	43.5%	18.2%	19.4%
2021	54.7%	19.6%	18.4%

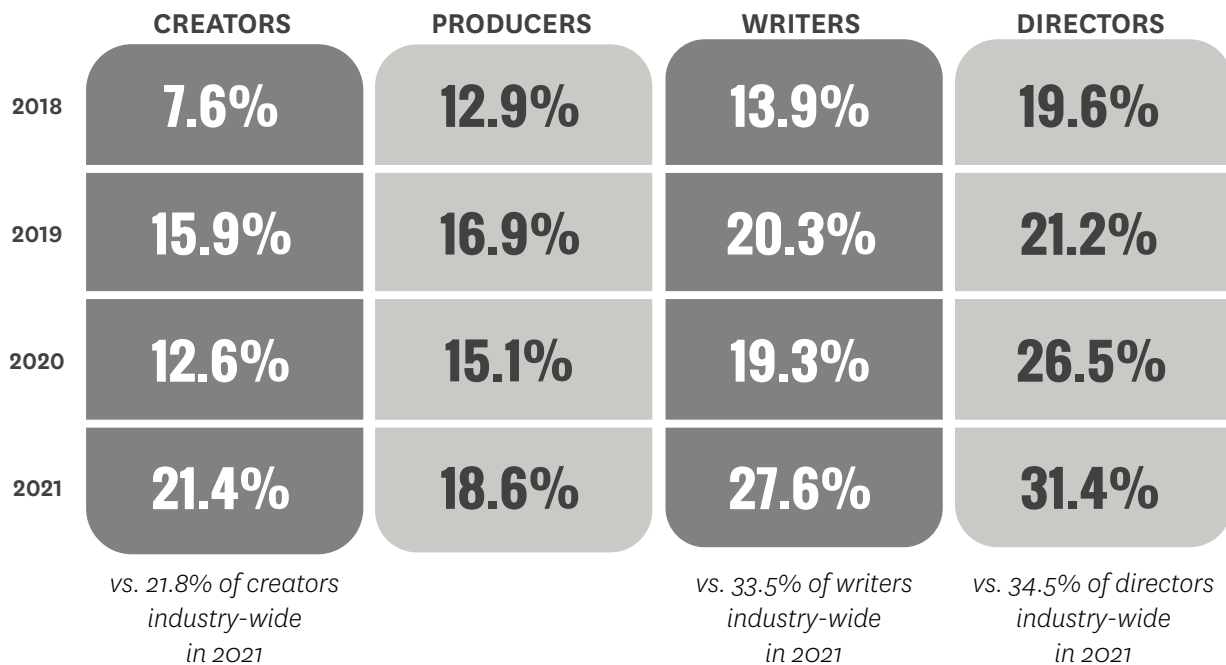
#6 INCREASES IN INCLUSION FOR UNDERREPRESENTED CREATIVES

Percentage of underrepresented directors across Netflix and top-grossing films, 2018-21

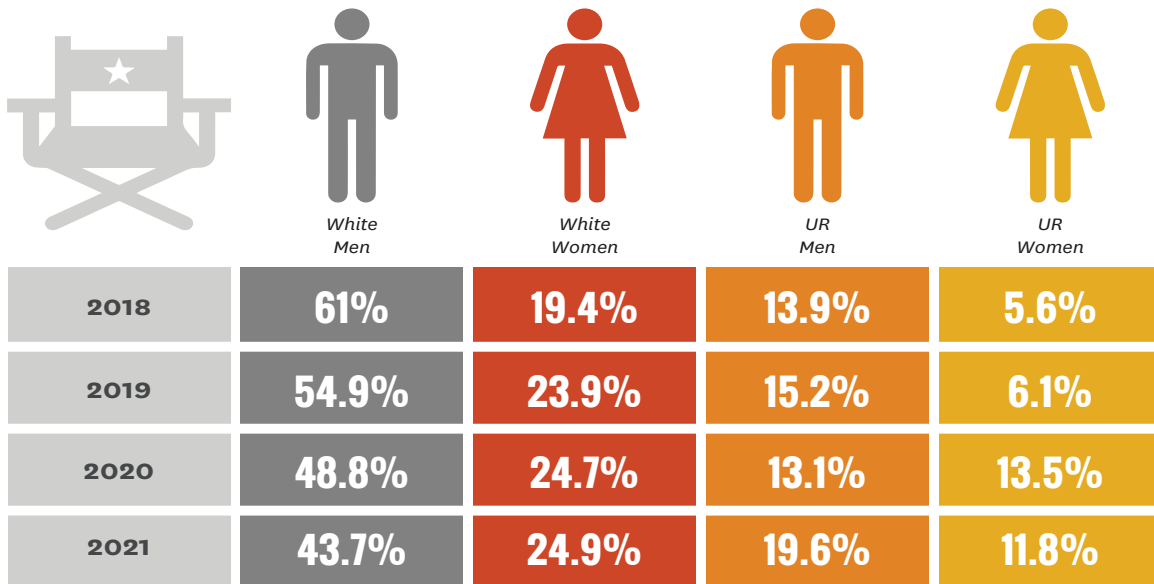


The percentage of underrepresented writers increased from 13.9% in 2018 to 24.2% in 2020, then declined to 17% in 2021. There was no change for underrepresented producers over time. 16.2% of producers in 2021 were underrepresented.

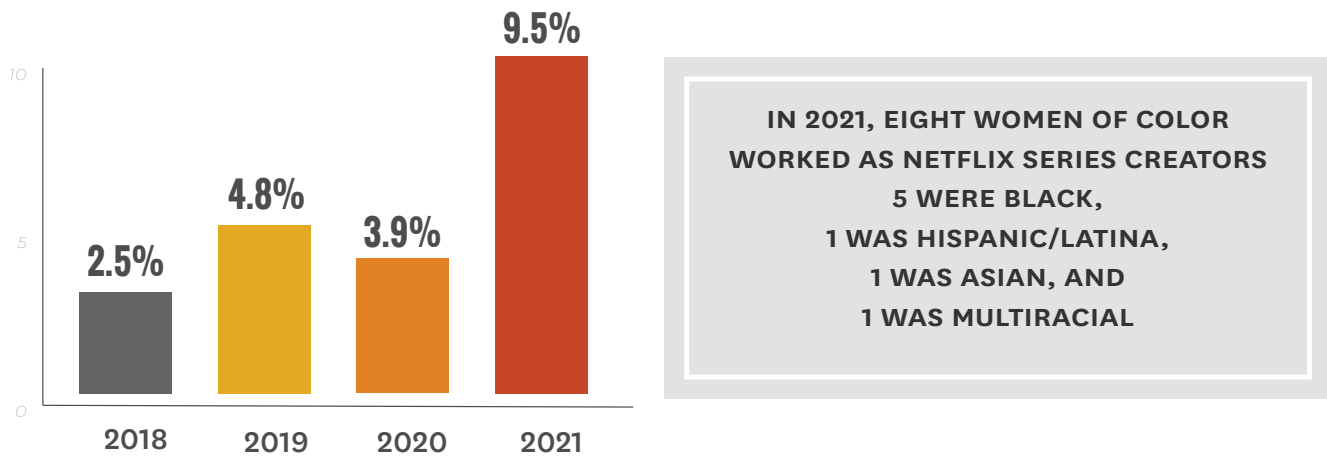
UNDERREPRESENTED KEY CREATIVES ACROSS NETFLIX SERIES



DIRECTOR RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER ACROSS NETFLIX SERIES, 2018-21

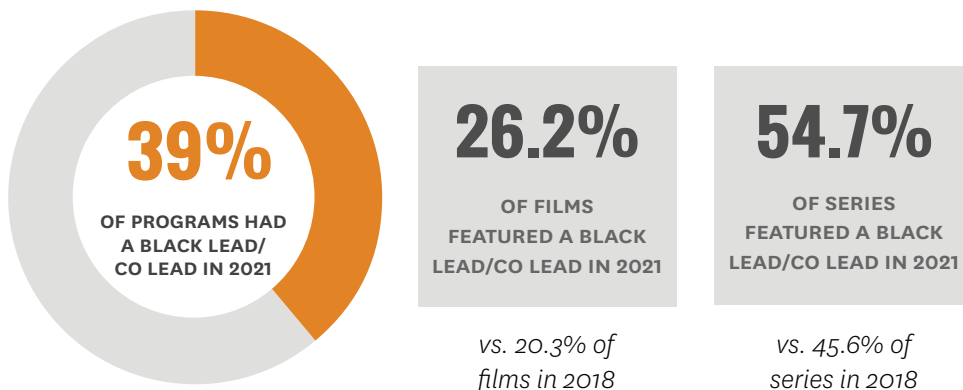


WOMEN OF COLOR AS NETFLIX SERIES CREATORS, 2018-21

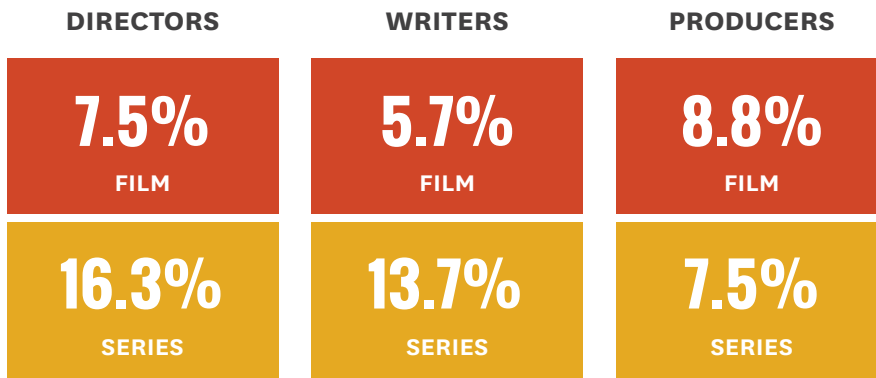


#7 RACIAL/ETHNIC REPRESENTATION OF SPECIFIC GROUPS VARIES

Percentage of Netflix film & series with a Black lead/co lead, 2021



BLACK CREATIVES BEHIND THE SCENES IN NETFLIX CONTENT IN 2021



BLACK SERIES CREATORS WERE MORE LIKELY TO FEATURE BLACK MAIN CAST ACTORS ON SCREEN

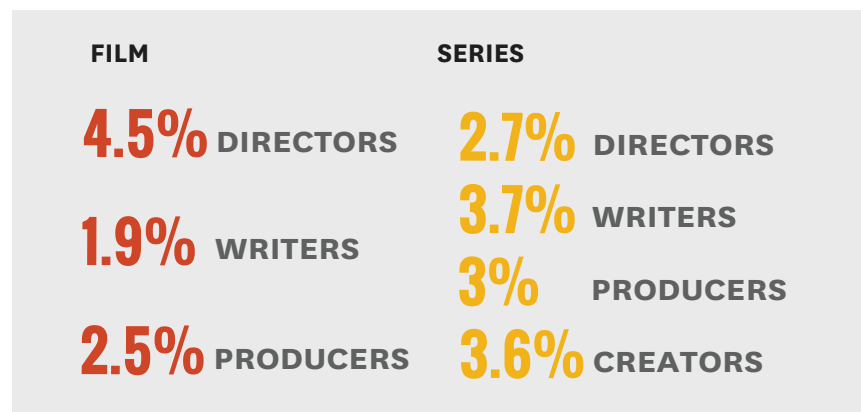
LEADS/CO LEADS & MAIN CAST BY SPECIFIC RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP, 2018-21

	MEASURES	BLACK	LATINX	ASIAN
FILM	LEADS/CO LEADS	24.1%	6.8%	9.2%
	MAIN CAST	17.1%	5.8%	9.4%
SERIES	LEADS/CO LEADS	50.5%	22%	40.2%
	MAIN CAST	16.5%	7.3%	7.4%
	U.S. POPULATION	13.6%	12%	6.1%

LATINX CREATIVES BEHIND THE SCENES IN NETFLIX FILMS AND SERIES, 2021



Latinx refers to Latinos not of Spanish origin born in the U.S. or its territories



ASIAN LEADS/CO LEADS AND MAIN CAST IN NETFLIX CONTENT, 2021



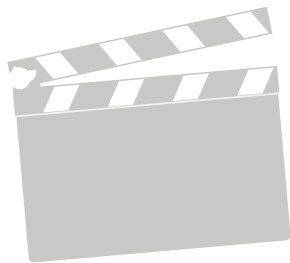
10.9% OF MAIN CAST ACTORS IN 2021 NETFLIX FILMS WERE ASIAN



8.5% OF MAIN CAST ACTORS IN 2021 NETFLIX SERIES WERE ASIAN

THE PERCENTAGE OF ASIAN LEADS/CO LEADS INCREASED FROM 2018 TO 2021 ACROSS BOTH FILMS & SERIES

ETHNIC IDENTITY OF ASIAN MAIN CAST IN NETFLIX FILM AND SERIES, 2018-21



THERE WERE
15
ASIAN COMMUNITIES REPRESENTED IN NETFLIX FILMS & SERIES

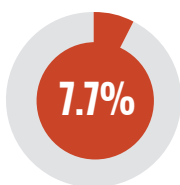
The ethnic heritage or descent of Asian main cast was assessed and includes individuals of any nationality.

COMMUNITY	FILM	SERIES
Chinese	17%	16.7%
Filipino	11.7%	12.1%
Indian	29.1%	27.6%
Indonesian	4.4%	<1%
Japanese	13.6%	7.5%
Korean	9.7%	17.8%
Laotian	0	<1%
Nepali	0	<1%
Pakistani	1.9%	3.4%
Singaporean	<1%	1.1%
Sri Lankan	<1%	1.1%
Taiwanese	1.9%	0
Thai	1%	<1%
Vietnamese	2.4%	2.9%
Multicultural	6.3%	7.5%
Total	10.9%	8.5%

#8 NETFLIX SHOWCASES LGBTQ+ LEADS, BUT LACKS MINOR ROLES

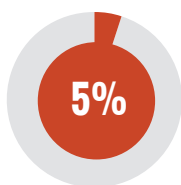
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender characters across Netflix films & series, 2018-21

LEADS/CO LEADS



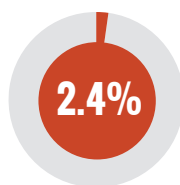
7.7% (2021)
5.2% (2020)
5.3% (2019)
2.9% (2018)

MAIN CAST

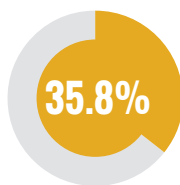


5% (2021)
5.3% (2020)
4.9% (2019)
3.8% (2018)

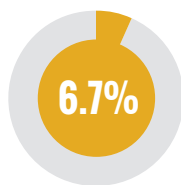
SPEAKING CHARACTERS



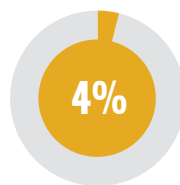
2.4% (2021)
2.1% (2020)
2.1% (2019)
1.9% (2018)



35.8% (2021)
45.6% (2020)
28.9% (2019)
19% (2018)



6.7% (2021)
10.3% (2020)
7.4% (2019)
4.6% (2018)



4% (2021)
4.8% (2020)
4.1% (2019)
2.5% (2018)

FROM 2018 TO 2021

NETFLIX SERIES

CONTENT HAD

SIGNIFICANTLY

MORE LGBTQ+

LEADS/CO LEADS

#9 CHARACTERS WITH DISABILITIES ARE RARELY DEPICTED

Characters with Disabilities across Netflix content, 2021

MEASURES	FILM	SERIES	COMPARISON
LEADS/CO LEADS	7.7%	0	IN 2019, 15.8% OF NETFLIX FILMS HAD A LEAD/CO LEAD WITH A DISABILITY
MAIN CAST	1.6%	2%	THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE OVER TIME FOR FILMS OR SERIES.
SPEAKING CHARACTERS	1%	1.2%	1.1% OF ALL CHARACTERS IN FILMS & SERIES HAD A DISABILITY.

27.2% OF THE U.S. POPULATION IDENTIFIES AS HAVING A DISABILITY

INCLUSION IN NETFLIX ORIGINAL U.S. SCRIPTED FILMS & SERIES

USC ANNEBERG INCLUSION INITIATIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this research investigation was to provide an update on inclusion in Netflix films and scripted series. To complement our previous investigation of content from 2018 (69 fictional films, 80 series) and 2019 (57 fictional films, 100 series), we examined stories from 2020 (58 fictional films, 64 series) and 2021 (65 fictional films, 53 series). Thus, a total of 546 fictional narratives (249 fictional films, 297 series) were examined for this investigation. These English-language, Netflix original, live-action programs were assessed for several inclusion metrics (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+, disability).¹ Gender and race/ethnicity were also evaluated for behind the camera personnel.

Below, the key findings are presented by identity group and by storytelling framework. Only 5 percentage point or higher differences were noted as significant. Where possible throughout the report, we provide comparisons to the wider industry using top-grossing films or episodic content.

GENDER

Gender (male-identified/female-identified/non-binary) was evaluated for every speaking character who appeared on screen. We also present information on gender of leads/co leads (e.g., the character(s) driving the action and story)² and main cast/series regulars (e.g., recurring or major characters).³ The percentage of women working in specific behind-the-camera positions is also discussed.

Leads/Co Leads

In 2021, 61% of all stories evaluated (film and series) featured female **leads/co leads**, which was substantially above the proportion of females in the U.S. population (50.5%).⁴ Looking within format, the increase overall in female leads/co leads was largely accounted for by film. The percentage of female protagonists in movies increased 18.2 percentage points from 2018 (46.4%) to 2021 (64.6%). There was an increase of 6 percentage points from 2018 (50.6%) to 2021 (56.6%) in series.

In 2021, female leads/co leads in Netflix films (64.6%) dramatically outpaced female leads/co leads in top-grossing films (41%).⁵ Focusing on Netflix series data, 56.6% of programs in 2021 were female-led as opposed to 44.8% of leads across the 2020/21 broadcast, cable, and digital television season.⁶ **Based on these findings, Netflix outperformed the competition on this indicator.**

Main Cast

The overall percentage of female **main cast/series regulars** in film and scripted content in 2021 was 46.8%. No differences were observed in 2021 by format (film=46.7%; series=46.9%). However, a significant jump was observed within film by year. Girls and women accounted for 38.9% of main cast in 2018 films and 40.9% in 2020 films but 46.7% of the main cast in 2021. There were no differences in the percentage of female series regulars by year in scripted series (2021=46.9%; 2020=48.9%). It is important to note that only 4 nonbinary characters were series regulars/main cast across the entire sample time frame.

When compared to the wider industry, both Netflix program types held strong. In 2021, Netflix films had girls and women in 46.7% of main cast roles as opposed to only 35% of major characters in top-grossing films.⁷ Girls and women comprised 46.9% of main cast in Netflix scripted series, which was on par with the percentage of female major characters (48.9%) in broadcast and streaming series in 2020-21.⁸

Speaking Characters

41.4% of **speaking or named characters** in Netflix 2021 content were girls and women. This overall percentage did not vary by format (film=40.8%, series=42.1%). For film, a 5-percentage point increase in female speaking characters from 2018 (35.8%) to 2021 (40.8%) was observed. No difference was revealed for series. Beyond main cast/series regulars (n=4), only two additional speaking or named character across the entire 4-year sample were coded as nonbinary.

How did Netflix compare with the broader entertainment ecosystem of female-identified speaking characters? Netflix films have had slightly more female-identified speaking characters than the wider industry, with 2021 being a standout year (Netflix=40.8%; TG=32.9%).⁹ Meanwhile, scripted series have remained slightly behind but not significantly different from their industry peers (Netflix=42.1%; industry=45%).¹⁰

37.3% of the 118 Netflix films and series analyzed in 2021 met or exceeded proportional representation of females in the U.S. population (50.5%).¹¹ Series (45.3%) had a significantly higher percentage of gender-balanced stories than did film (30.8%). Only series demonstrated a meaningful change from 2018 (32.5%) to 2021 (45.3%). In terms of **invisibility**, only 1 of the 546 stories evaluated across 4 years of Netflix content did not depict at least one female speaking or named character.

To summarize, over half of Netflix films and series depicted female-identified leads/co leads consistently at or above U.S. population norms. Since 2018, the percentage of females in the main cast and speaking characters for film has increased significantly, demonstrating a commitment to match their series counterparts. In series, however, a substantial increase in the percentage of gender-balanced stories was observed.

Behind the Camera: Film

In 2021, 26.9% of the 67 **directors** in the movie sample were women. While the percentage of women directors increased from 2020 (16.7%), there has been little change when compared to 2018 (25%).¹² Netflix films consistently featured a higher percentage of women directors than those top films released at the box office. **In 2021, the percentage of women directors of Netflix films (26.9%) was 14.2 percentage points higher than top-grossing films (12.7%).**¹³

33% of **screenwriters** were women in 2021. 2021 was the strongest year for women writers, increasing 5.5 percentage points from 2018 (27.5%). **Netflix films had more women screenwriters than top-grossing fare in 2021 when 33% of Netflix film writers were women compared to 17.1% of writers in 2021's top-grossing movies.**¹⁴

In 2021, a total of 241 **producers** were credited across 65 movies and only 29% were women. Since 2018, no differences have emerged by year. **Netflix films featured more women producers (29%) than did top-grossing films (22.6%) in 2021 and across all 4 years evaluated.**¹⁵

Films in 2021 with at least one woman director attached had significantly more girls and women on screen as leads/co leads (79.3% vs. 54.9%), main cast (54% vs. 43.5%), and speaking characters (43.8% vs. 39.7%) than did those films without at least one woman director attached. This trend continued when we focused on women screenwriters but to a lesser extent with women producers.¹⁶

Behind the Camera: Series

In 2021, over a third of **series creators** were women (38.1%) which was a substantial increase from 2018 (26.9%). **Netflix has outpaced the industry in putting women show creators behind the scenes in its 2021 series (industry=33%).**¹⁷

Men (63.3%) were more likely to be credited as a **director** of an episode of a Netflix series in 2021 than were women (36.7%). When compared to 2018 (25.1%), there was a significant increase of 11.6 percentage points for women directors in 2021. **Netflix has not been different from overall industry patterns in employing women directors across the entire sample time frame.**²⁰

41.1% of **screenwriters** were female in 2021. **There was a substantial increase when compared to 2018 (30.6%). Netflix (41.1%) was significantly above the industry norm (34%) in terms of hiring women writers in 2021, as well as in 2018 and 2019.**¹⁹

Of the 530 **producers** identified in 2021 series, 38.3% were women. While this was a meaningful increase from 2018 (33.3%), women in the producer role have not changed significantly since 2019 (39.6%). **Overall, Netflix was on par with the industry in three of the four years evaluated.**¹⁸

Scripted series with at least one woman creator featured more female series regulars and speaking characters than those shows without a woman creator.²¹ More than half (55.9%) of series regulars were female when a woman creator was present, versus only 38% of series regulars with solely male creators. When it comes to on-screen speaking characters, we found that female show creators ensured that 47.7% of these roles were filled by girls and women. In comparison, male show creators depicted girls and women on screen in only 35.9% of all speaking roles.

Overall, this section reveals the value Netflix places on storytelling by women. Particularly for directors, writers, and series creators, Netflix has shown an increase in the percentage of women working behind the camera. The presence of women behind the camera in these roles has clearly been one reason for the percentage of women in on-screen roles as well.

RACE/ETHNICITY

The race/ethnicity of every speaking character was assessed using a definition that aligns with U.S. Census categories.²² Below, we present data on characters from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. The full report as well as later sections of the executive summary provide data on characters from specific racial/ethnic groups.

Leads/Co Leads

47.5% of Netflix's 2021 stories had an underrepresented **lead/co lead**, which did not differ for film (47.7%) or series (47.2%).²³ The percentage of underrepresented leads/co leads was significantly above the U.S. population estimate (40.7%).²⁴ Over the past four years, Netflix has demonstrated a 19.1 percentage point increase in the number of underrepresented leads/co leads in all scripted content (2018=28.4%; 2021=47.5%). In film, the number of protagonists of color has increased from 2018 (31.9%) to 2021 (47.7%). In series, there was a gain of 21.9 percentage points from 2018 (25.3%) to 2021 (47.2%).

Not only is Netflix above demographic norms according to the U.S. Census, they have also outpaced top-grossing movies in the percentage of stories showcasing protagonists of color. In 2021 specifically, Netflix films (47.7%) had significantly more underrepresented leads/co leads than top movies (32%).²⁵ **Netflix also significantly outperformed the wider industry in its series. In 2021, 47.2% of Netflix series showcased underrepresented leads/co leads compared to 34.9% industry-wide.**²⁶

Main Cast/Series Regulars

Overall, 40.4% of the **main cast/series regulars** in 2021 were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group, which is a substantial increase from 2018 (29.4%). Notably, the greatest increase can be seen from 2018 (29.4%) to 2019 (38.6%) while subsequent years have shown more modest gains. **In 2020 and 2021, Netflix main cast achieved proportional representation with the U.S. population (2021=40.4%; 2020=41%).**

There was no difference in the percentage of underrepresented main cast characters by format in 2021 (film= 40.1%; series=40.9%). However, across 4 years, the percentage of underrepresented main cast increased significantly across both formats. Slightly less than one-third (32.3%) of main cast characters were underrepresented in 2018 films compared to 40.1% in 2021. Series followed a similar pattern, with an increase of 13.9 percentage points since 2018, from 27% to 40.9%.

All Speaking Characters

Overall, 39.8% of all **speaking characters** in 2021 were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. This is consistent with U.S. Census figures (40.7%).²⁷ From 2018 (33.6%) to 2021 (39.8%), the percentage of underrepresented speaking characters in Netflix films and series increased by 6.2 percentage points. No difference over time was observed for film. The percentage of underrepresented characters in Netflix movies (38.5%) in 2021 was not different from top-grossing films the same year (39.7%).²⁸ Series, however, had significantly more underrepresented characters in 2021 (41.1%) than in 2018 (32%). **Netflix gains are similar to an overall upward industry trajectory for underrepresented characters in episodic series.**²⁹

In 2021, 46.6% of all Netflix content was at or above **proportional representation** with those identifying with an underrepresented racial/ethnic group on the U.S. Census. This is a substantial increase from 2018 where only 30.2% of all scripted content reached or exceeded proportional representation. Notably, in 2020 more than half of Netflix films and series (53.3%) were at proportional representation. Pivoting to focus on each format, there was little difference between film (46.2%) and series (47.2%) in 2021. **Over time, both formats significantly increased the percentage of stories at or above proportional representation.**

In terms of **invisibility**, only 3 stories in 2021 (2.5%) were missing any White characters while 98.3% and 94.9% were without American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander characters, respectively. The majority (83.1%) were missing Middle Eastern/North African characters. Asian characters were absent in just under a third of films and series (29.7%) while Hispanic/Latino characters were absent in slightly less than half (44.9%) of Netflix stories. Of 118 Netflix stories, 9 stories (7.6%) were missing Black/African American characters.

Summarizing the on-screen findings for race/ethnicity, Netflix has reached proportional representation overall for leads/co-leads, main cast/series regulars, and all speaking characters. Despite these findings, there are still stories where individuals from specific racial/ethnic groups were missing on screen.

Behind the Camera: Film

Of 67 film **directors** in 2021, 22.4% were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. There were significantly more underrepresented directors in 2021 (22.4%) than in 2018 (16.7%), although the highest percentage of underrepresented directors occurred in 2020 (30%). In comparison to top-grossing films, Netflix has had both significantly more (2020: Netflix=30%; TG=17.5%) and significantly less (2018: Netflix=16.7%; TG=23.2%) underrepresented directors over time.³⁰ However, in 2021, there was no meaningful difference between Netflix (22.4%) and top-grossing movies (27.3%).³¹

Of 106 credited film **writers** in 2021, 17% were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. The percentage of underrepresented writers did not change from 2018 to 2021, though the high point occurred in 2020 (24.2%). In 2021, there was no difference between the percentage of underrepresented writers of Netflix films (17%) and those of top-grossing movies (21.4%).³²

Of the 240 **producers** examined across the sample of 2021 films, 16.2% were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. The percentage of underrepresented producers in 2021 was not meaningfully different from 2018 (14.7%). **Netflix (16.2%) and top-grossing films (17.5%) reached similar levels of underrepresented producers in 2021.**³³

Films from 2021 with an underrepresented director attached in 2021 were significantly more likely to feature underrepresented leads/co-leads (86.4% vs. 39.7%), underrepresented main cast (75.2% vs. 31.4%), and underrepresented speaking characters (61.9% vs. 30.6%). The same patterns emerged on these indicators when comparing underrepresented and white writers and producers.³⁴

Behind the Camera: Series

Of 84 series **creators** in 2021, 21.4% were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. There was a substantial increase in underrepresented creators across the four years evaluated (2018=7.6% vs. 2021=21.4%). **The broader entertainment industry has also seen an increase in underrepresented creators over time. Netflix is not significantly different from its industry peers on this measure.**³⁵

Across all Netflix series **producers** in 2021, 18.6% were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. There was a meaningful increase for underrepresented producers over time, with 2021 (18.6%) significantly higher than 2018 (12.9%).

27.6% of **writers** in 2021 were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. Since 2018, there have been significantly more underrepresented Netflix series writers, including an increase from 2020 (19.3%) to 2021 (27.6%). **Compared to the wider industry, Netflix has generally worked with a lower percentage of underrepresented writers during the time period examined.**³⁶

Of 510 **directors** across Netflix 2021 series, 31.4% were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. Netflix was on a positive trajectory in terms of hiring directors of color from 2018 (19.6%) to 2021 (31.4%). DGA data on all episodic directors was used to compare Netflix to its industry counterparts. **From 2019 to 2020, Netflix fell significantly below overall industry figures. However, in 2021, Netflix was not meaningfully different from the wider industry.**³⁷

When at least one underrepresented creator was attached to a story, it was more likely to feature underrepresented series regulars (79% vs. 32.5%) and underrepresented speaking characters (63.5% vs. 36.1%).

Overall, Netflix demonstrated gains for underrepresented creators, producers, writers, and directors across its series. These gains allowed Netflix to keep pace with larger industry hiring practices, though not outstrip them. For Netflix films, there were increases for directors while the percentage of underrepresented writers was highest in 2020. In both film and series, underrepresented creatives were largely responsible for the presence of underrepresented main cast and speaking characters. *Given the findings throughout this section, one remaining question is whether the gains for underrepresented individuals in Netflix content have benefitted both underrepresented men and women.* In the next section, we shift our focus to examine girls and women of color in Netflix films and series.

THE INTERSECTION OF RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER/WOMEN OF COLOR

In addition to examining gender and underrepresented status independently across Netflix content, it is essential to look at patterns through a lens of intersectionality. Given the historical underrepresentation and marginalization of women of color, the next section focuses on underrepresented females across Netflix programs.

Leads/Co Leads

Across all Netflix films and scripted series in 2021, 39.8% depicted underrepresented female **leads/co leads**. 2021 had significantly more stories with an underrepresented female lead/co lead than 2018 (26.4%). *Underrepresented girls and women as leads/co leads increased in both film and series.*³⁸

Main Cast/Series Regulars

Slightly less than one-third (31.2%) of 1,000 main cast/series regular characters in 2021 were White males, 28.4% were White females, 21.8% were underrepresented males, and 18.6% were underrepresented females. As girls and women of color comprise 20% of the U.S. population,³⁹ Netflix content in 2021 approached proportional representation. There was no significant difference between film (17.9%) and series (19.6%) in 2021 in the percentage of underrepresented female main cast characters. Across both formats, there was an increase in underrepresented female main cast characters from 2018 (12.9%) to 2019 (18.6%). These gains held into 2021. *In 2021, the percentage of underrepresented female main cast in Netflix content aligned with both top-grossing films (Netflix=17.9%; TG=14.8%) and the wider industry for episodic series (Netflix=19.6%; industry=20%).*⁴⁰

All Speaking Characters

Across all Netflix programs in 2021, 35.5% of speaking characters were White males, 24.7% were White females, 22.6% were underrepresented males, and 17.2% were underrepresented females. *There was no change over time in the percentage of underrepresented female speaking characters.*

By format, film (16%) and series (18.4%) in 2021 did not differ in the proportion of underrepresented female speaking characters. *Across both films and series, the percentage of underrepresented females approached 20%, or proportional representation to the U.S. population.*⁴¹

In 2021, the percentage of underrepresented female speaking characters in Netflix films (16%) was similar to top-grossing movies (14.6%).⁴² For Netflix series, there was a significant increase from 2018 (13.2%) to 2021 (18.4%) in the percentage of underrepresented female speaking characters. *Looking to the wider industry, 19.4% of speaking characters in episodic series in 2020/21 were girls/women of color, which is not different than the percentage in Netflix content.*⁴³

In terms of **invisibility**, nearly all programs in 2021 failed to include American Indian/Alaska Native (99.2%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (96.6%), and Middle Eastern/North African (94.1%) girls and women. Nearly two-thirds were missing Latinas (61.9%), and more than half of films and series (58.5%) were missing Multiracial/Multiethnic female characters. Slightly less than half (47.5%) of stories failed to include an Asian female, while 21.2% were missing Black girls/women. Only 7.6% of stories were missing White female

characters.

There were some differences between films and series. A higher percentage of films than series were missing Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and Middle Eastern/North African female characters.

Overall, Netflix has increased representation of girls and women of color as leads/co leads and main cast since 2018. Gains for underrepresented female speaking characters were observed in series, though not in film. In addition, across leads/co leads, main cast, and speaking characters, the proportion of underrepresented females reflects the U.S. population.

Behind the Camera: Film

Beginning with film **directors**, in 2021, 6% or 4 directors were underrepresented women. Two of these women were Asian and two were Multiracial. The percentage of underrepresented women directors in Netflix films has not changed over time. *Across four years, Netflix and top-grossing movies had a similar percentage of underrepresented women directors.*⁴⁴

Turning to film **writers**, 5.7% were underrepresented women in 2021. The percentage of underrepresented women writers in Netflix films did not change over time. In 2021, 4.6% of top-grossing film writers were women of color, which is comparable to Netflix films in the same year.⁴⁵

Across Netflix film **producers** in 2021, 5.8% were underrepresented women. There was no change for underrepresented women producers over time. As with directors and writers, the percentage of underrepresented women producers in Netflix content in 2021 was similar to top-grossing movies (4.6%).⁴⁶

Behind the Camera: Series

In 2021, 9.5% of series **creators** were underrepresented women. Five of these women were Black, 1 was Hispanic/Latino, 1 was Asian, and 1 was Multiracial/Multiethnic. The percentage of underrepresented women creators in 2021 was significantly greater than in 2018. These underrepresented women were affiliated with 7 series in 2021, compared to just 3 series in 2018.

Less than 10% of series **producers** in 2021 were underrepresented women (7.9%), a percentage which did not vary over time.

13.8% of series **writers** were underrepresented women in 2021. There was a steady gain from 2018 (8.1%) that culminated in a significant increase in 2021. *In comparison to the broader industry (14.3%), Netflix employed a similar percentage of women of color writers on its series in 2021.*⁴⁷

Turning to **directors** in 2021, 11.8% were underrepresented women. The percentage of underrepresented women directors increased between 2018 and 2021 from 5.6% to 11.8%. However, the high point was reached in 2020 when 13.5% of directors were underrepresented women. As a point of comparison, 13% of directors in the 2020/21 season were underrepresented women, according to the DGA.⁴⁸ *Across 3 of the last 4 years, Netflix has not differed from its industry counterparts when it comes to hiring underrepresented women directors.*

In summary, in 2021, women of color working behind the scenes on Netflix series saw significant gains as creators, writers, and directors. On the film side, while there was little change at Netflix for women of color, this was also true of the broader film industry. These changes behind the camera provide an important context for the on screen increases reported earlier for underrepresented females.

SPECIFIC RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS

In the previous sections, we explored the overall prevalence of characters from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. Now, we look to understand more deeply the prevalence of cast and crew from each specific racial/ethnic group. This allows for comparisons to U.S. population data—which was used to determine leads/co leads across series—and identifies gaps in representation and employment.

In the analysis that follows, we examined leads/co leads and main cast actors who were Black/African American (yes, no), Asian (yes, no), Latinx (yes, no), Middle Eastern/North African (yes, no), American Indian/Alaskan Native (yes, no), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (yes, no). Leads/co leads and main cast actors⁴⁹ who were Multiracial/Multiethnic were recategorized into all groups with which they identified

Black Cast & Crew. To determine if a program had a Black *lead/co lead*, we examined whether one or more film protagonists was Black or whether at least 13% of series regular actors were Black, in line with population data.⁵⁰ In 2021, 39% of all Netflix films and series featured a Black lead/co lead, significantly more than the percentage of programs in 2018 (33.8%). In 2021, more than a quarter of films (26.2%) and more than half of series (54.7%) had a Black lead/co lead. These figures represent a meaningful increase from 2018 for both films (20.3%) and series (45.6%).

Turning to *series regular/main cast* actors, 20.3% of all main cast were Black in 2021. There was no difference over time in the percentage of Black main cast overall. In film, although there was no sustained change over time, Netflix movies in 2020 (25%) had significantly more Black cast than 2018 (17.9%) or 2021 (19.8%). In series, 21.1% of main cast actors were Black in 2021 compared to 14.8% in 2018, though 2021 was on par with 2019 (21.8%).

Behind the camera, in 2021, 7.5% of Netflix film *directors* were Black, as were 5.7% of *writers*, and 8.8% of *producers*. There was no significant change from 2018 to 2021 across any of these positions. However, 2020 was the high-watermark across all four years; films in 2020 had significantly more Black directors, writers, and producers (16.7%, 12.1%, and 10.5%, respectively) than movies in 2018 (6.9%, 5%, and 5.2%, respectively).

Turning to Netflix series, 9.5% of *creators* in 2021 were Black, which was significantly greater than the 2.5% of creators who were Black in 2018. A total of 7.5% of producers in Netflix series were Black, which did not change meaningfully over time. Of all writers in 2021, 13.7% were Black. This was a sample-wide high point and a significant increase from 2018. Finally, 16.3% of Netflix series directors in 2021 were Black, the culmination of a 4-year increase from 2018.

Asian Cast & Crew. Asian *lead/co leads* were evaluated. This included films with at least one Asian protagonist and series in which 6% or more of the series regulars were Asian. The percentage for series was chosen to align with the percentage of Asians in the U.S. population.⁵¹ Across Netflix films and series in 2021, 25.4% of leads/co leads were Asian. ***There was no longitudinal change from 2018 to 2021 overall, though for both film (2018=5.8%; 2021=12.3%) and series (2018=35.4%; 2021=41.5%) there was a significant linear increase.***

Looking to *main cast* trends, 10% of main cast actors in 2021 were Asian. This was not significantly different from 2018. Films (10.9%) and series (8.5%) were not significantly different from each other, and neither increased significantly from 2018. Across both film and series, Netflix content has reached proportional representation with the U.S. population (6.1%)⁵² for Asian main cast actors.

Behind the camera, 6% of *directors* in 2021 were Asian, as were 5.7% of *writers*, and 4.2% of *producers*. The percentage of Asian individuals across each of these positions has not meaningfully increased over time. Turning to series, 6% of *creators* were Asian in 2021, as were, 5.4% of producers, 8.2% of writers and 6.1% of directors.

Latinx Cast & Crew. In this section, we report on Latinx cast and crew. For this measure, we began by assessing the presence of Hispanic/Latinos from all racial/ethnic backgrounds. Then, to identify Latinx cast and crew, we focused more narrowly on those who were born in the U.S. or its territories, excluding those with Spanish origin and no other Latino identification.

Films had a Latinx *lead/co lead* when at least one protagonist was Latinx, while series had a Latinx lead/co lead when a minimum of 12% of series regulars were Latinx, which is in line with population metrics for this community.⁵³ In total, 18.6% of Netflix films and series in 2021 had Latinx leads/co leads. This is significantly more than in 2018 (6.8%), though less than the high reached in 2020 (20.8%). ***For Netflix films, there was linear increase from 2018 (1.4%) to 2021 (10.8%) in the percentage of movies with a Latinx lead/co lead. For series, an overall gain occurred from 2018 to 2021. The highest percentage of Netflix series with a Latinx lead/co lead occurred in 2020 (32.3%).***

Looking to **main cast** actors, 6.4% of those in this role were Latinx across 2021 Netflix films and series. This figure has not meaningfully improved since 2018. Given that the percentage of Latinx people in the U.S. is roughly 12%,⁵⁴ this figure falls below proportional representation. *There was no difference between film and series in the percentage of Latinx main cast. Additionally, neither has changed significantly from 2018 to 2021. Only in series was there any notable increase, from 2018 (3.4%) to 2020 (8.9%).*

Behind the camera in film, 4.5% of **directors** in 2021 were Latinx, as were 1.9% of **writers** and 2.5% of **producers**. There has been no significant improvement for Latinx directors or producers in film since 2018. Across Netflix series, 3.6% of **creators** were Latinx in 2021. Similarly, 3% of producers, 3.7% of writers, and 2.7% of directors were Latinx in 2021. *There was no change over time across any of these above-the-line positions.*

Middle Eastern/North African Cast & Crew. A Middle Eastern/North African (MENA) **lead/co lead** included films with a MENA protagonist and series in which at least 1% of series regulars were MENA. *No Netflix films and few series (7.5%) had MENA leads/co leads in 2021, with no observed change over time.*

Turning to **main cast**, 2.1% of main cast actors in 2021 were MENA, with no change since 2018. *The percentage of MENA main cast did not differ across films (2.6%) or series (1.5%) in 2021, and neither varied over the four years evaluated.*

Behind the camera, few MENA creatives worked above the line in 2021 Netflix films. This included 1.5% of **directors**, 1.9% of **writers**, and less than 1% of **producers**. In Netflix series from 2021, 2.4% of series **creators**, 1.5% of producers, <1% of writers, and 1.6% of directors were MENA. *There has been no increase over time for MENA creatives in Netflix films or series.*

American Indian/Alaska Native Cast & Crew. Only 6% of all programs had a **lead/co lead** that was American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN) in 2021.⁵⁶ By definition, films with an AIAN lead/co lead had at least one AIAN protagonist and series had a minimum of 1% of series regulars who identified with this racial/ethnic group. Overall, 2021 (6%) was not significantly different than 2018 (3.4%), and neither film nor series evidenced an increase over time. Looking to **main cast** actors, 1.6% were AIAN, on par with the U.S. population.⁵⁷ *As with leads/co leads, there was no difference by program format and no change over time.*

Behind the camera, there were no AIAN film **directors** or **writers** in 2020 or 2021, and 3 **producers** (2020=1; 2021=2). In series, no AIAN **creators** were responsible for Netflix series, though 1 producer, 2 writers, and 5 directors were affiliated with Netflix content in 2020 and 2021.

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Cast & Crew. Of Netflix films and series in 2021, 2.6% had a Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI) **lead/co lead**. This was defined as films with a NHPI protagonist and series in which 1% or more of series regulars were NHPI.⁵⁸ Overall, the percentage of NHPI leads/co leads did not change over time or in film. However, the percentage of series with a NHPI lead/co lead declined from 2018 (6.3%) to 2021 (0). Only 1% of **main cast** actors were NHPI, which did not vary by year or by format.

Behind the camera in film, only 2 **producers** in 2021 were NHPI, with no **directors** or **writers** affiliated with this community. In series, all NHPI creatives appeared in 2020, including 2 directors, 2 writers, and 1 producer.

The results in this section reveal that while Netflix has demonstrated gains for underrepresented characters in its content, this was primarily true for their percentage of Black main cast, Asian and Latinx leads/co leads. Behind the camera, the largest improvements were seen among Black creatives. Moving forward, the investment and intention that Netflix has made to increase the prevalence of Black and Asian cast and crew can be extended to other racial/ethnic groups.

LGBTQ

In this section, we examine the prevalence of LGBTQ+-identified characters as leads/co leads, as main cast/series regulars, and overall speaking characters. Focusing on leads/co leads, we were interested in the percentage of shows that depicted an LGBTQ+ character driving the plot. For film, a movie was coded as having an LGBTQ+ lead/co lead if either protagonist was part of this community. For series, however, we stipulated that 10% or more of the series regulars had to be coded as LGBTQ+ for a show to qualify. The 10% criterion was used to reflect population norms of LGBTQ+ individuals living in the U.S.⁵⁹

Leads/Co Leads

In 2021, 20.3% of Netflix films and series **leads/co leads** were LGBTQ+ characters.⁶⁰ This is less than the percentage in 2020 (25%) but greater than 2018 (11.5%) or 2019 (20.1%). **For film, no changes were observed in LGBTQ+ leads/co leads across the 4-year sample.*** The 5 movies in 2021 accounted for 6 LGBTQ+ characters, with most identifying as female (83.3%) and lesbian (67%). Only 1 of these leads/co leads was gay and 1 was bisexual. Half of the characters were white and half were multiracial. Only 1 of the six LGBTQ leads/co leads was a parent.

Pivoting to series, over a third (35.8%) of all programs featured LGBTQ+ characters as 10% or more of series regulars, which was less than 2020 (43.5%) but substantially higher than 2019 (28.9%) and 2018 (19%). The 19 shows in 2021 accounted for 25 unique LGBTQ+ characters. Forty-eight percent of the characters were male and 48% were female. One character (4%) was coded as gender nonbinary. Sixty percent were White, 16% were Black and 16% were Hispanic/Latino. Only 1 LGBTQ+ lead/co lead was Asian and one was multiracial. Few (16%) of the LGBTQ+ series regulars who were leads/co leads were parents.

Main Cast/Series Regulars

Of all the **main cast/series regulars**, 5.7% in 2021 were LGBTQ+. No meaningful differences emerged from 2018 to 2021. **The highest percentage of LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars was observed in 2020 in episodic content (10.3%), but there were no other over time differences by format.** As a point of comparison, 9.1% of primetime broadcast series regulars in the 2020/21 season were LGBTQ+, according to GLAAD.⁶¹

Since there were no differences overall in main cast/series regular representation across film and series, we present the demographic profile together. Of the LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars in 2021, 25 were lesbian, 24 were gay, 6 were bisexual and 2 were transgender. In 2021, the majority of LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars was female (54.4%, male=43.9%, nonbinary=1.8%). Just over half (50.9%) of all LGBTQ+ main cast/series regulars were White, with 15.8% Black, 12.3% Hispanic/Latino, 8.8% Asian, 10.5% Multiracial/Multiethnic, and 1.8% Middle Eastern/North African (o). Six or 10.5% of the LGBTQ+ series regulars/main cast were caregivers or parents.

All Speaking Characters

Out of all **speaking or named characters** in 2021 Netflix content, 3.2% were LGBTQ+ with no differences observed between film (2.4%) and series (4%). **2021 did not deviate meaningfully from 2020 or 2018.** The majority of LGBTQ+ speaking characters in 2021 were gay (52.8%), 35.4% were lesbian, 8.7% were bisexual, and 3.2% transgender.

Most LGBTQ+ speaking or named characters were male (56.7%). Over forty percent were female (42.5%) and <1% were gender nonbinary. 46.5% of LGBTQ+ speaking characters were White, 22.8% were Black, 11.8% were Multiracial/Multiethnic, 9.4% were Hispanic/Latino, 7.1% were Asian, and 2.4% were MENA. The vast majority of LGBTQ+ speaking characters were portrayed as adults (59.8%) or teens (21.3%). Eleven (8.7%) of the 127 LGBTQ+ speaking characters were depicted as parents or caregivers.

In terms of **invisibility**, more than half of all fictional stories in 2021 (55.1%) were missing the LGBTQ+ community on screen, which is no different from 2020 (58.2%) but significantly lower than 2018 (61.1%). Series decreased significantly in the number and percentage of shows that erased the LGBTQ+ community on screen from 2018 (56.2%) to 2021 (41.5%). For film, 2021 (66.2%) was lower than 2020 (74.1%) but not different from 2018 (66.7%).

Netflix content has shown some gains when it comes to LGBTQ+ representation over the past four years. This is evident in the fluctuation of leads/co leads and series regulars/main cast, while the percentage of series without an LGBTQ+ character has declined. However, more than half of films and series did not feature an LGBTQ+ speaking character. Incorporating more characters across series and films is a key way to increase LGBTQ+ representation overall.

CHARACTERS WITH DISABILITIES

This section examines how characters with disabilities were represented in Netflix films and series. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definition was referenced in our conceptualization of characters with disabilities.⁶²

Once a character fit the definition, the nature of the disability was then categorized into U.S. Census designations as communicative, cognitive, and/or physical.⁶³ Below, we describe the prevalence of disabilities among leads/co leads, main cast/series regular characters, and all speaking or named characters.

Leads/Co Leads

In 2021, 4.2% of stories featured a **lead/co lead** with a disability. Lead/co lead designations were made when the protagonist(s) in a film or when 27% or more of series regulars within an episodic show had a disability.⁶⁴ The percentage of leads/co leads in 2021 was nearly equivalent to that in 2018 (4.1%). Films (7.7%) in 2021 were also similar to 2018 (8.7%), though the high-water mark for movies showcasing a lead/co lead with a disability occurred in 2019 (15.8%). No series in 2021 had a lead/co lead with a disability (i.e., a series in which 27% or more of series regulars were shown with a disability). This was the same as in 2018. **Netflix was on pace with top-grossing films (5%) in 2021 in terms of leads/co leads with a disability.**⁶⁵

Main Cast

1.8% of **series regulars/main cast** in 2021 programming were depicted with a disability which was not different from 2018 (4.4%). There were similar percentages of main cast characters with disabilities across films (1.6%), and series (2%), and neither varied over time. Looking to the broader entertainment industry, GLAAD reports that 3.5% of series regular characters in primetime broadcast were shown with a disability in the 2020-21 season.⁶⁶

All Speaking Characters

In 2021, 1.1% of all **speaking characters** were shown with a disability. This was on par with 2018 (1.9%). Films (1%) and series (1.2%) featured a similar percentage of characters with disabilities in 2021, with neither evidencing any change over time.

Characters with disabilities were **invisible** in nearly three-quarters (72%) of films and series in 2021, which was an increase from 2018 (55.7%). By format, 75.4% of Netflix movies were without a character with a disability, significantly more than 2018 (66.7%). In series, two-thirds (67.9%) of series did not have a speaking role for a character with a disability, a jump from 2018 (46.2%).

Characters in 2021 Netflix programming were most likely to experience physical disabilities (60.5%). The percentage of characters with physical disabilities was higher in film (65%) than in series (56.5%). Examples of characters with physical disabilities included those who had mobility issues, were missing limbs, or were depicted in a wheelchair. Communicative disabilities were experienced by a quarter of all characters with disabilities (25.6%) and occurred almost equally in film (25%) and series (26.1%). Examples of communicative disabilities include blind characters, deaf characters, and those experiencing speech issues. Finally, 23.3% of characters with disabilities had cognitive disabilities. Series (26.1%) were more likely to depict cognitive disabilities than film (20%). Examples of cognitive disabilities include depression, anxiety, Down Syndrome, PTSD, and dyslexia.

In summary, characters with disabilities as leads/co leads, main cast/series regulars, and all speaking characters remained below proportional representation with the U.S. population. Moreover, these percentages have not changed across the four years examined. The profile of characters with disabilities was also limited; the majority of characters with disabilities had a physical disability, and most were still White and male. Looking ahead, this community represents an opportunity for greater inclusion in the future.

CONCLUSION

Across four years of evaluation, Netflix has demonstrated that its content continues to move toward greater inclusivity for women, people of color, and the LGBTQ+ community. Given the findings in this report, it is clear that the company has been reflective and intentional regarding how its content can serve its audience and how its practices can ensure access and opportunity. At a time of industry flux and transformation, ensuring that these practices continue to be in place will be important to establishing Netflix as a champion for inclusion.

A few limitations must be noted, as with any research investigation. First, only U.S. original scripted films and series were evaluated for this report. Looking to other types of Netflix content (e.g., unscripted, animation) could provide additional insight into where the company is showcasing inclusive content beyond one format. Second, across the report we have endeavored to provide industry benchmarking. Differences in methodological approach, a lack of data, and the process of creating single comparison statistics warrant caution in interpretation of some of these metrics. These figures are provided as an estimation for interested readers. Lastly, some methods and data analytic practices have been updated since our previous study, and figures in this report may vary from those initially reported. Endnotes provide insight into which analyses may differ and why.

Our future work will continue to explore inclusion in Netflix content. The goal will be to track whether the increases demonstrated in this study are sustained. Additionally, we will examine if other indicators trend toward proportional representation over time. Finally, we intend to look beyond fictional content to explore how Netflix reflects its audience over the breadth of its content offerings. This will allow us to understand to what extent one company has represented a variety of communities both on screen and behind the camera.

FOOTNOTES

1. The methodology for this report mirrors that used by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative in its study of Netflix fictional films and series from 2018 and 2019. As in the previous study, the samples (2020, 2021) were determined by Netflix calendar-year releases of scripted, fictional, live-action content considered an original to the company. This included films and 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. Only films driven by a lead/co lead were able to be evaluated for the presence of a female in either of these roles. Put differently, ensemble movies (with three or more leading characters) were automatically coded as “0” or not featuring a female lead or co lead. This approach was taken so that we can compare Netflix findings to leads/co leads in domestic top-grossing box office movies. Across the 4-year sample, only 9 films were defined as ensembles (2=2018, 4=2019, 1=2020, 2=2021). Of these, 5 featured girls and women in 50% or more of the 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 were as follows: 2018 (46.4%, n=32), 2019 (56.1%, n=32), 2020 (58.6%, n=34), 2021 (67.7%, n=44).

Throughout the report, we use population metrics to set a threshold for series leads/co leads. The table below indicates each threshold that was set per group. Across the sample, a series had a lead from each group if the percentage of series regulars/main cast reached or exceeded the threshold set. For example, if 40% of series regulars were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group, that series had an underrepresented lead/co lead.

THRESHOLD PER GROUP		
GROUP	POPULATION	LEADS THRESHOLD
Girls/Women	50.5%	50%
Underrepresented	40.7%	40%
Girls/Women of Color	20%	20%
Black/African American	13.6%	13%
Asian	6.1%	6%
Latinx	12%	12%
Middle Eastern/North African	1.1%	1.1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.3%	1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<1%	1%
LGBTQ+	10%	10%
Characters with Disabilities	27.2%	10%

3. Series regulars were determined using IMDbPro and Variety Insight/Luminate. Series regulars reflect recurring characters who appear throughout content. When information was not available via online database, the Netflix platform was used to identify main cast/series regulars based on the actors listed for each film/series examined.

4. U.S. Census Bureau (2020). Quick Facts. Retrieved December 03, 2021 from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/SEX255219#SEX255219>

5. Neff, K., Smith, S.L., & Pieper, K. (2022, March). Inequality across 1,500 popular films: Examining gender and race/ethnicity of leads/co leads from 2007 to 2021. Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, Los Angeles, CA.

6. For comparison purposes, we relied on the leads as determined by the UCLA

Hollywood Diversity Report. See <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2022-Television-10-27-2022.pdf>. There are two limitations to using the UCLA findings for comparison purposes. In that report, leads are “the first credited actor/ performer for a given project’s list of cast members” (p. 66). Put differently, the authors of that report did not actually view the storylines and render a judgment about inclusion. Given that character order listing on sites like IMDbPro, Variety Insight, and/or even credits can be influenced by notoriety, contractual agreements, and/or marketing, this approach to measurement is only a crude indicator of who carries a story line. Further, the UCLA study does not report the percentage across all television evaluated. As such, we took the average of three percentages from broadcast (44.3%), cable (49.1%), and digital (40.9%) series.

7. Lauzen, M.M., (2020). It’s a Man’s (Celluloid) World: Portrayals of Female Characters in Top Grossing U.S. Films of 2020. San Diego State University, CA. https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2020_Its_a_Mans_World_Report_v2.pdf.

8. Lauzen, M. (2021). Boxed In: Women On Screen and Behind the Scenes on Broadcast and Streaming Television in 2020/21. Retrieved from: https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2020-21_Boxed_In_Report.pdf. Lauzen, M. (2020). Boxed In 2019-20: Women On Screen and Behind the Scenes in Television. Retrieved from https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2019-2020_Boxed_In_Report.pdf.

9. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

10. Lauzen (2021), Lauzen (2020).

11. The number of female characters within each individual program was calculated to determine whether a film or series was gender balanced. A program was considered to meet or exceed gender balance if the percentage of female-identifying characters or main cast fell within a range of 10% below the U.S. Census Bureau (2020) statistic of females in the population (50.5%), or up to 100% of the cast. In this case, the range was 45.72% and above.

12. For film, behind-the-camera positions were compiled based on information available on IMDbPro.com. The gender and race/ethnicity of each individual was ascertained using the same procedure outlined for main cast, as described above, with a notable exception. When possible, confirmation of race/ethnicity was sought from the individual’s representation (e.g., agents, managers, etc.). Information obtained from other Annenberg Inclusion Initiative studies was also used to provide race/ethnicity and gender information for behind-the-camera personnel.

13. Smith, S.L., Pieper, K., & Khan, A. (2022). Inclusion in the Director’s Chair: Analysis of Director Gender & Race/Ethnicity Across 1,500 Top Films from 2007 to 2021. Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. <https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-inclusion-directors-chair-2022.pdf>.

14. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

15. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

16. Stories with at least one woman writer had more girls and women than did those stories without a woman writer attached: leading/co leading roles (71.1% vs. 54.5%), main cast (51.6% vs. 42.6%), and speaking characters (46.1% vs. 37.3%). When at least one female producer was present we continued to see more on-screen female representation. This was true for leads/co leads (68.8% vs. 50%). The percentage of main cast and speaking characters who were girls and women did not differ by producer gender, however.

17. Ramon, A.C., Tran, M., & Hunt, D. (2022). Hollywood Diversity Report 2022: A New Post-Pandemic Normal? Retrieved from: <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2022-Television-10-27-2022.pdf>. For comparison purposes, the UCLA Hollywood Diversity Report 2022 was used. We averaged the percentage of female show creators across broadcast, cable, and digital series.

18. Comparison data were taken from Lauzen's Boxed In reports. See <https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2021-22-Boxed-In-Report.pdf> and https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2019-2020_Boxed_In_Report.pdf. For 2020/21, only the averages of broadcast and streaming were calculated for comparison purposes. For the three earlier years, we averaged across broadcast, cable, and streaming.

19. Lauzen (2021).

20. Directors Guild of America reports on the inclusion of women directors yearly. Percentages retrieved from the following online reports: <https://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2021/210223-Episodic-Television-Director-Diversity-Report.aspx>, <https://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2022/220505-Episodic-TV-Inclusion-Report.aspx>, <https://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2019/191119-Episodic-Television-Director-Diversity-Report.aspx>.

21. As in our prior report, only the relationship between series creators and the presence of female main cast and speaking characters was examined. The contributions of directors and producers in series content to on screen casting are more ambiguous and thus this relationship was not evaluated.

22. Information on character race/ethnicity is derived from the story plot and incorporates both explicit and implicitly-provided information.

23. This definition of leads/co leads was employed for series as 40% is in line with the percentage of underrepresented individuals in the U.S. population. This definition has been updated from our previous report. If films with ensemble casts in which 40% or more of the ensemble characters were underrepresented were included in the analysis, the findings would change slightly. In film, the new totals for leads/co leads would be as follows: 2021=50.8%, n=33; 2020=46.6%, n=27; 2019=45.6%, n=26; 2018=31.9%, n=22.

24. U.S. Census (2021).

25. U.S. Census (2021); Neff, Smith, & Pieper (2022).

26. Ramon, Tran, & Hunt (2022).

27. U.S. Census (2021).

28. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

29. Ramon, Tran, & Hunt (2022).

30. Smith, Pieper & Khan. (2022).

31. Smith, Pieper & Khan. (2022).

32. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

33. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

34. Films with an underrepresented writer were associated with more underrepresented leads/co-leads (85.7% vs. 40.5%), main cast members (72.3% vs. 33.7%), and speaking characters (65.8% vs. 31.2%). Netflix films were more likely to be inclusive in terms of casting when an underrepresented producer was attached (leads/co-leads, 83.3% vs. 31.2%; main cast, 65.4% vs. 28.6%; speaking characters, 53.7% vs. 30.2%).

35. Ramon, Tran, & Hunt (2022).

36. Ramon, Tran, & Hunt (2022).

37. Directors Guild of America reports on the inclusion of underrepresented directors yearly. Percentages retrieved from the following online reports: <https://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2021/210223-Episodic-Television-Director-Diversity-Report.aspx>.

38. If films with ensemble casts in which 20% or more of the ensemble characters were underrepresented women were included in the analysis, the findings would change slightly. In film, the new totals for leads/co leads would be as follows: 2021=29.2%, n=19; 2020=27.6%, n=16; 2019=26.3%, n=15; 2018=15.9%, n=11.

39. U.S. Census (2021).

40. Lauzen (2022); Lauzen (2021).

41. U.S. Census (2021).

42. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

43. Lauzen (2021).

44. Smith, Pieper, & Khan (2022).

45. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

46. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

47. Ramon, Tran, & Hunt (2022).

48. Directors Guild of America reports on the inclusion of underrepresented directors yearly. Percentages retrieved from the following online reports: <https://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2021/210223-Episodic-Television-Director-Diversity-Report.aspx>, <https://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2022/220505-Episodic-TV-Inclusion-Report.aspx>, <https://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2019/191119-Episodic-Television-Director-Diversity-Report.aspx>.

49. This analysis focuses on main cast and lead/co lead actors rather than characters. While characters may provide some information on their racial/ethnic background, additional detail was available for actors, including identification with specific racial/ethnic groups, particularly for Latinx identity. Across each racial/ethnic group, the definition of leads/co leads was updated from how it was determined in our previous report.

50. If films with ensemble casts in which 13% or more of the ensemble characters were Black were included in the analysis, the findings would change slightly. In film, the new totals for leads/co leads would be as follows: 2021=27.7%, n=18; 2020=27.6%, n=16; 2019=28.1%, n=16; 2018=20.3%, n=14.

51. U.S. Census (2021). If films with ensemble casts in which 6% or more of the ensemble characters were Asian were included in the analysis, the findings would change slightly. In film, the new totals for leads/co leads would be as follows: 2021=13.8%, n=9; 2020=10.3%, n=6; 2019=8.8%, n=5; 2018=5.8%, n=4.

52. U.S. Census (2021).

53. U.S. Census (2021). If films with ensemble casts in which 12% or more of the ensemble characters were Latinx were included in the analysis, the findings would change slightly. In film, the new totals for leads/co leads would be as follows: 2021=10.8%, n=7; 2020=8.6%, n=5; 2019=8.8%, n=5; 2018=1.4%, n=1.

54. Noe-Bustamante, L. & Flores, A. (2019, September 16). Facts on Latinos in the U.S. Pew Research Center. Retrieved December 20, 2022 from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/fact-sheet/latinos-in-the-u-s-fact-sheet/>

55. If films with ensemble casts in which 1% or more of the ensemble characters were MENA were included in the analysis, the findings would not change.

56. U.S. Census (2021). If films with ensemble casts in which 1% or more of the ensemble characters were American Indian/Alaskan Native were included in the analysis, the findings would not change.

57. U.S. Census (2021).

58. U.S. Census (2021). If films with ensemble casts in which 1% or more of the ensemble characters were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were included in the analysis, the findings would not change.

59. Powell, L. (2021). We Are Here: LGBTQ+ Adult Population in United States Reaches At Least 20 Million, According to Human Rights Campaign Foundation Report. Retrieved December 20, 2022 from <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/we-are-here-lgbtq-adult-population-in-united-states-reaches-at-least-20->

[million-according-to-human-rights-campaign-foundation-report](#)

60. If films with ensemble casts in which 10% or more of the ensemble characters were LGBTQ+ were included in the analysis, the findings would change slightly. In film, the new totals for leads/co leads would be as follows: 2021=12.3%, n=8; 2020=10.3%, n=6; 2019=12.3%, n=7; 2018=7.2%, n=5.

61. GLAAD (2021). Where We Are on TV. Retrieved December 20, 2022 from <https://www.glaad.org/sites/default/files/GLAAD%20-%20202021%20WHERE%20WE%20ARE%20ON%20TV.pdf>.

62. Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). <https://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastat-uteo8.htm>. 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/MDSCL_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' for longer than six months.

63. U.S. Census Bureau (2018). Americans with Disabilities: 2014. Retrieved December 20, 2022 from: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/demo/p70-152.pdf>

64. If films with ensemble casts in which 27.2% or more of the ensemble characters were shown with a disability were included in the analysis, the findings would change slightly. In film, the new totals for leads/co leads would be as follows: 2021=7.7%, n=5; 2020=6.9%, n=4; 2019=17.5%, n=10; 2018=8.7%, n=6.

65. Data are from published and unpublished studies by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

66. GLAAD (2021).