



Inclusion & Equity Report 2022

Deadline

WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA WEST

7000 W. Third Street
Los Angeles, California
90048

This report provides summary information regarding the demographics of working screen and television writers in recent years, along with historical data from 10 years ago, to show to what extent the employment demographics have changed. It also includes information on the demographics of new members joining the Guild in recent years.

Keep in mind that we are in a period of flux for MBA writers. The streaming model is starting to dominate, not just for series television but increasingly for features as well. For TV writers, the dominance of streaming has thus far meant shorter episode orders, smaller staffs and the increasing need for writers to find multiple jobs to “make their year.” For screenwriters, the increasing emphasis on tent-poles for the theatrical market combined with the shift of much of the rest of the feature market to streaming upends the compensation and residuals that screenwriters have historically relied on. The last two years have also seen a pandemic that significantly reduced the number of writing jobs due to interrupted production rather than because of long term changes in the industry. With the media companies allocating billions to invest in content for their streaming services, we expect employment numbers to rebound, with the increase in both TV and screen jobs focused on streaming.

The jobs numbers reflect changes in hiring patterns that have been underway for the past few seasons, particularly at the entry level of television. There is movement toward a more diverse workforce in some writing jobs, as illustrated in the information that follows.

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2020 Employment Overviewⁱ

Table 1 provides the demographic shares of working TV series writers, pilot writers and screenwriters in 2020, along with the corresponding shares of the US population, which has historically been provided as one benchmark in the WGAW's inclusion reports.

Table 1. Summary of TV Series, Development and Screen Employment Demographics

	2020			
	US POPULATION ⁱⁱ	TV SERIES WRITERS	DEVELOPMENT/ PILOT WRITERS	SCREEN WRITERS
Women	50.8%	45.3%	35.2%	29.6%
Men	49.2%	54.6%	64.8%	70.4%
BIPOC	42.2%	37.0%	23.3%	22.6%
White	57.8%	63.0%	76.7%	77.4%
BIPOC				
BIPOC Women	20.4%	21.4%	9.9%	9.6%
BIPOC Men	19.7%	15.3%	13.2%	13.0%
White Women	30.4%	25.9%	25.9%	21.2%
White Men	29.6%	37.4%	51.0%	56.3%
RACE				
Black/African-American	12.1%	15.5%	9.7%	6.9%
Native American/ Indigenous/First Nations	2.9% ⁱⁱⁱ	<1%	<1%	<1%
Latinx	12.6%	5.9%	3.2%	3.1%
Asian/South Asian/ Pacific Islander	6.1%	6.4%	5.9%	3.4%
Middle Eastern	3.0% ^{iv}	<1%	<1%	<1%
Multi-Ethnic/Racial	10.7%	8.0%	3.8%	8.5%
IDENTITY				
LGBTQ+ ^v	7.9% ^{vi}	11.6%	6.4%	6.2%
Writers with Disabilities	26.0% ^{vii}	1.7%	1.0%	<1%
55 and Over	29.4%	15.2%	20.4%	18.1%

Screen Employment

Table 2. Screen Employment Analysis, 2010-2020

	2010 ^{viii}		2019 ^{ix}		2020 ^x	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
All	1,690	-	2,160	-	2,053	-
Women	290	17.2%	569	26.5%	601	29.6%
Men	1,399	82.8%	1,578	73.5%	1,426	70.4%
BIPOC	88	5.2%	370	20.2%	394	22.6%
White	1,602	94.8%	1,461	79.8%	1,353	77.4%

Table 3. Change in Screen Employment Analysis, 2010-2020

	CHANGE 2019 VS. 2020		CHANGE 2010 VS. 2020	
	#	% PTS.	#	% PTS.
All	-107	-	363	-
Women	32	3.1	311	12.4
Men	-152	-3.1	27	-12.4
BIPOC	24	2.4	306	17.4
White	-108	-2.4	-249	-17.4

Tables 2 and 3 compare data on screenwriter employment by gender and white/BIPOC category in 2010, 2019 and 2020. Overall screenwriter employment increased by 363 writers from 2010 to 2020, and decreased by 107 writers, roughly 5%, from 2019 to 2020. The drop in screen employment in 2020, although less than the job loss on TV series, was also meaningful.

- Women writers increased from just 17.2% of screenwriters in 2010 to 29.6% in 2020, while BIPOC writers were 5.2% of screenwriters in 2010 and increased to 22.6% in 2020.
- Both groups gained very slight shares in 2020 from the prior year.

Table 4. Screen Employment Analysis by White/BIPOC and Gender, 2019-2020

	2019 ^{xi}		2020 ^{xii}		CHANGE	
	#	%	#	%	#	% PTS.
White Women	368	20.2%	367	21.2%	-1	1.0
White Men	1,084	59.6%	975	56.3%	-109	-3.3
BIPOC Women	130	7.2%	166	9.6%	36	2.4
BIPOC Men	236	13.0%	225	13.0%	-11	0.0

Table 4 shows an analysis of screen writer employment change from 2019 to 2020 by both gender and white/BIPOC attribute of each writer. The overall contraction in screen jobs, although not nearly as negative as in TV, impacted a bit more heavily on white men than on the other categories of writers:

- BIPOC women's share of screen jobs increased 2.4 percentage points between 2019 and 2020, white women's share increased 1 percentage point, white men's share of jobs fell 3.3 percentage points, while BIPOC men's share remained flat.

Television Employment

Table 5. Television Series Employment Analysis, 2010, 2019 and 2020

	2010 ^{xiii}		2019		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
All	1,840	-	2,717	-	2,055	-
Women	532	29.3%	1,161	43.5%	918	45.3%
Men	1,285	70.7%	1,506	56.5%	1,106	54.6%
BIPOC	250	13.6%	833	35.3%	660	37.0%
White	1,589	86.4%	1,529	64.7%	1,125	63.0%

Table 5 provides information on TV staff employment on series released in the past two seasons, as well as a historical comparison to the 2010 season. From these data, we can make a few observations:

- Over a ten-year period, women writers have grown from 29.3% of writers employed to 45.3%, and BIPOC writers have increased from 13.6% of writers employed to 37%.
- The share of employment by gender and race remained largely the same between the staffs of TV series released in the 2019 and 2020 seasons.
- A significant development in the 2020 season – which impacted all TV series writers – was a 24% decline in total jobs on television series from the prior year.

- The pandemic had a significant impact on production, and as a result 49 fewer series were released than the prior year. These effects are primarily the result of the pandemic, and we expect at least half of the job loss to be regained in the current season.
- There is an ongoing decline in basic cable employment driven by the maturation of that market and the shift of consumers to streaming. Basic cable series typically produce a few more episodes per season than streaming series, and the staff sizes are slightly larger.

Table 6. Television Series Employment Analysis by White/BIPOC and Gender, 2019 and 2020

	2019		2020		CHANGE	
	#	%	#	%	#	% PTS.
BIPOC Women	445	19.1%	378	21.4%	-67	2.3
BIPOC Men	370	15.9%	270	15.3%	-100	-0.6
White Women	624	26.7%	457	25.9%	-167	-0.8
White Men	894	38.3%	660	37.4%	-234	-0.9

Table 6 provides employment data by both the white/BIPOC and gender information of each writer for the two most recent seasons.

- Table 6 shows that white men make up the largest share of TV employment, followed by white women, BIPOC women and BIPOC men.

The table also shows the breakdown of the 600+ job losses among writers, highlighting that all groups have been impacted to some degree by the contraction in TV series jobs.

Table 7. Television Series Staffing Analysis by Job Title, 2019 and 2020

JOB TITLE	BIPOC WOMEN			BIPOC MEN			WHITE WOMEN			WHITE MEN		
	2019	2020	CHANGE % PTS.	2019	2020	CHANGE % PTS.	2019	2020	CHANGE % PTS.	2019	2020	CHANGE % PTS.
Staff Writer	30.4%	36.6%	6.2	17.5%	17.7%	0.2	27.6%	28.3%	0.7	24.4%	16.5%	-7.9
Story Editor	35.6%	39.3%	3.7	17.8%	21.4%	3.6	27.1%	21.4%	-5.7	19.5%	17.2%	-2.3
Executive Story Editor	31.3%	35.7%	4.4	31.3%	16.3%	-15.0	23.5%	27.9%	4.4	13.9%	20.2%	6.2
Co-Producer	24.7%	26.8%	2.0	22.5%	26.1%	3.6	23.6%	21.8%	-1.8	29.2%	25.4%	-3.9
Producer	29.6%	28.0%	-1.6	21.0%	17.0%	-4.0	27.2%	29.0%	1.8	22.2%	26.0%	3.8
Supervising Producer	26.3%	24.3%	-2.0	18.2%	21.4%	3.2	30.3%	20.4%	-9.9	25.3%	34.0%	8.7
Consulting Producer	11.5%	16.3%	4.7	16.7%	17.5%	0.8	23.1%	31.3%	8.2	48.7%	35.0%	-13.7
Co-Executive Producer	17.1%	15.1%	-2.0	16.7%	11.9%	-4.8	30.2%	31.3%	1.1	36.0%	41.7%	5.7
Executive Producer	7.7%	7.4%	-0.4	11.6%	10.0%	-1.6	20.0%	18.8%	-1.2	60.6%	63.8%	3.2
Showrunner	8.2%	6.9%	-1.3	10.3%	11.8%	1.5	25.1%	23.6%	-1.6	56.3%	57.7%	1.4

Table 7 shows the share of TV series employment for BIPOC women, BIPOC men, white women and white men by job title for the 2020 season compared with the prior season.

- BIPOC women make up significant shares of lower level writers. BIPOC women writers make up the smallest share of EPs and Showrunners at 7.4% and 6.9%, respectively.
- White women represented the second largest share of staff writer, story editor (with the same share as BIPOC men) and ESE positions. White women are also the second largest share of upper level positions, though they still lag behind white men considerably.
- White men's share declined at the staff writer and story editor level compared to the prior season. However, they account for a majority of jobs at the higher levels, making up 64% of EPs and 58% of Showrunners.
- BIPOC men accounted for 16-26% of jobs from staff writers to consulting producer. At the upper levels of Co-EP, EP and Showrunner, they accounted for 10-12% of jobs.

Table 8. Television Series Staffing Analysis by Job Title, 2011 and 2020

JOB TITLE	WOMEN			MEN			BIPOC			WHITE		
	2011	2020	CHANGE % PTS.	2011	2020	CHANGE % PTS.	2011	2020	CHANGE % PTS.	2011	2020	CHANGE % PTS.
Staff Writer	35.4%	63.1%	27.7	64.6%	36.2%	-28.4	28.4%	55.6%	27.2	71.6%	44.4%	-27.2
Story Editor	38.6%	60.4%	21.8	61.4%	39.0%	-22.4	20.4%	61.0%	40.6	79.7%	39.0%	-40.7
Executive Story Editor	32.9%	60.1%	27.2	67.1%	39.9%	-27.2	26.5%	52.6%	26.1	73.5%	47.4%	-26.1
Co-Producer	32.5%	46.5%	14.0	67.5%	53.5%	-14.0	22.8%	53.1%	30.3	77.2%	46.9%	-30.3
Producer	31.7%	57.5%	25.8	68.4%	42.5%	-25.9	21.1%	45.0%	23.9	79%	55.0%	-24.0
Supervising Producer	44.8%	43.6%	-1.2	55.2%	56.4%	1.2	22.3%	46.2%	23.9	77.7%	53.8%	-23.9
Co-Executive Producer	30.1%	44.5%	14.4	69.9%	55.5%	-14.4	9.9%	27.3%	17.4	90.1%	72.7%	-17.4
Executive Producer or Showrunner	18.6%	27.6%	9.0	81.4%	72.4%	-9.0	7.8%	17.9%	10.1	92.2%	82.1%	-10.1

Table 8 compares employment data for the White/BIPOC and Women/Men categories for job titles in the most recent season to historical information from prior reports released by the WGAW, allowing for a review of changes over the past ten years.

- Compared with the 2011 season, there has been a share shift of between 23 and 41 percentage points in each job title from Staff Writer through Supervising Producer from white to BIPOC writers, with white writers having represented between 70% and 80% of each of those categories about a decade before.
- Within the upper level positions, where white writers accounted for more than 90% of the jobs a decade prior, they now account for 73% of Co-Eps and 82% of EPs and Showrunners.
- There has also been a share shift from male to female writers of between 14 and 28 percentage points in job titles from Staff writer through Producer, though men's Supervising Producer share has remained flat.
- At the Co-EP level, men have gone from 69.9% of the jobs to 55.5%. At the EP and Showrunner level, men went from 81.4% of the jobs to 72.4%.

New Member Information

Table 9. Percent of New Members Self-Identifying as Women, BIPOC, Disabled or LGBTQ+

	WOMEN	BIPOC	DISABLED	LGBTQ+
2017	41%	25%	2%	12%
2018	45%	34%	3%	15%
2019	50%	36%	2%	18%
2020	52%	40%	4%	20%
2021	53%	50%	7%	22%

- In recent years, writers from historically underrepresented groups have joined the WGAW in growing numbers.

Table 10. Percent of New Members with Gender and Ethnicity Known

	BIPOC WOMEN	BIPOC MEN	WHITE WOMEN	WHITE MEN
2017	15%	14%	26%	45%
2018	20%	18%	27%	35%
2019	26%	15%	28%	31%
2020	26%	20%	28%	26%
2021	33%	22%	21%	25%

- In the last five years, the share of BIPOC men writers joining the WGAW has increased substantially, while the share of BIPOC women writers has more than doubled.

ⁱThroughout this document, percentages are calculated on the basis of writers who provided relevant demographic and employment information.

ⁱⁱUS population figures were obtained from analysis of the [2020 US Census](#) and [2019 American Community Survey](#), except where otherwise noted.

ⁱⁱⁱ[2020 Census Results on Race and Ethnicity](#).

^{iv}TTIE. [Factsheet MENA People 2021](#).

^vThroughout this report, writers self-identified as Non-Binary are included in the category of LGBTQ+ writers.

^{vi}US Census. [Household Pulse Survey](#). Average of weeks 35-37 of survey.

^{vii}CDC. [Disability Impacts All of Us](#).

^{viii}WGAW. [The 2014 Hollywood Writers Report](#).

^{ix}WGAW. [WGAW Inclusion Report 2020](#).

^xWGAW. [WGAW Screen Inclusion Report 2021](#).

^{xi}WGAW. [WGAW Inclusion Report 2020](#).

^{xii}WGAW. [WGAW Screen Inclusion Report 2021](#).

^{xiii}WGAW. [2013 TV Staffing Brief](#).