



BEING HEARD

Black Canadians in the Canadian Screen Industries



Ce rapport sommaire est également disponible en français

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We are greatly appreciative of the participants who took the time to respond to the online survey and participate in the qualitative interviews.

BSO would like to extend our gratitude to the following people for their support and collaboration at every stage of this study:

BSO Research Advisory Group

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- Kai Little White, *Children's Programming Associate Producer, CBC*
- Selwyn Jacob, *Filmmaker*
- Jeremy Hood, *Producer*
- Mahalia Verna, *Strategist & Producer*

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Founders

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- Clement Virgo
- Tonya Williams

Funding Partners



This research was conducted in partnership with:



Quilin

See the whole picture

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants involved in this study.

Message from the Executive Director



Joan Jenkinson,
Executive Director, Founder

Canada’s screen industries are in need of transformation. The white, cisgender, heterosexual stories that have dominated our screens throughout the industries’ formative decades are out of step with our country’s vastly diverse, multicultural residents. In short, Canadians do not see their Canada reflected in our TV, movies and digital media products. One need only look to the fact that until 2021, only four TV drama series made by and about Black Canadians had made it to air on a major broadcast network, even though Black people have been present in the country for four centuries.

Who tells the story is as important as the story itself. Recognizing that it is the people penning the scripts, behind the camera and in the industry boardrooms who determine what reaches our screens, the Black Screen Office (BSO) set out to capture data on the prevalence of Black screen industry professionals in Canada—a community that had not been enumerated in any meaningful way to date. Being Heard examines both the numbers and the experiences of Black producers, writers, directors, actors and crews. While each experience is unique, collectively they offer valuable insights into industry gaps and roadblocks and how today’s leaders can dismantle anti-Black racism, transform exclusionary practices and create opportunities that elevate Black workers and, by extension, other marginalized groups.

Through Being Heard, the BSO raises the volume on individuals who, as this research shows, are often the lone Black voice on their team. Such isolation can limit an individual’s ability to raise issues and effect meaningful, positive change within their workplace. This report offers direct calls to action to aid the sector in supporting Black talent and creating more inclusive practices.

With Being Seen, Being Counted, and now Being Heard, the BSO offers industry leaders and influencers a clear understanding of what is missing and how to engage Black talent and audiences to strengthen the industries. Armed with the tools outlined in our calls to action and directives, leaders are invited to work with BSO to develop strategies that will transform our screen industries and enable them to create truly authentic, representative content that reflects the experiences, preferences, and lives of Canadians.

Message from the Chair



Jennifer Holness,
BSO Board Chair and Founder

Being Seen, Being Counted and Being Heard go hand in hand. They represent powerful experiences that build worlds, shape culture, and valorize entire communities and the people within them. In the *doing*, they are not intangible; they are acts of resistance.

The Black Screen Office is proud to be at the forefront of presenting groundbreaking research that moves the needle of change for Black Canadians whose stories have largely been told by others and who have largely been invisible in our screen-based industry.

Being Heard is a comprehensive national labour market study that spotlights the voices and experiences of Black producers, creatives, and crew in Canada. It acknowledges the tremendous value we bring to the ecosystem and recognizes the billions lost when Black people are not given a true voice. Ten billion in profits annually would be gained in the US, simply by improving Black representation, according to a 2021 McKinsey report. And profitability increases further if our work and our stories are not underfunded and undervalued. Surely this applies to Hollywood North? But there is almost no data about Black Canadian producers and creatives, so we are taking much-needed first steps to share with you who we are, our hopes, dreams, experiences and what we need to make our industry a more equitable one.

As you delve into this research report, consider how you can be an agent for positive change. How can you be a partner in building a better future where Black creative voices, talent, and work are celebrated, sought after, and supported? Being seen, counted, and *heard*; it begins now! It begins with all of us!

Executive Summary

Until now, **Black producers, writers, directors, actors, and tech/crew have been largely absent from sector research, data, and narratives**, making it difficult to bring practical **awareness to issues of anti-Black racism**, exclusionary practices, and other barriers to access shaping the sector.

This study seeks to address this gap by centering the experiences of existing and aspiring Black talent (producers, creators, actors, and crews) regarding sector participation (who they are, where they are, and what are their experiences), pathways to career development, skills training, and paid work; barriers and challenges faced, the supports that have been most helpful, and strategies for remaining working in the sector.

Key Findings

1 The **criteria, standards, processes, and pathways to access** used by sector gatekeepers to fund, develop, and produce content are **based on the experiences of non-Black professionals**.

2 **Lack of representation among sector decision-makers perpetuates systemic oppression** and limits the development and production of **authentic content** but having **Black creators** in decision-making roles can **quickly affect scalable, sustainable change**.

3 **Black professionals are significantly underrepresented** in creative, industry (broadcaster/network/streamer), and institutional (e.g., funder) **gatekeeping roles** despite significant interest in producing, business affairs, mentorship, and collective efforts to support growth.

4 **Mid-career and established professionals are best positioned** to drive sustainable, **long-term sector change**, but are the most **underserved** population of professionals.

5 Canadian **funding structures create a closed system** that reproduces and validates a narrow set of stories and storytellers.

6 **Lack of cultural understanding among decision-makers questions the relevance** of Black-led projects and contributes to the **under-resourcing of Black-led projects**.

7 The incorporation of Black in **'BIPOC'** and **'racialized'** restricts **the availability of funding** and undermines production quality.

8 **Development programs fail to deliver on promises of credibility** and access because they lack a practical focus, do not address business affairs and sector navigation, and overlook having a workforce continuity plan that bridges training to paid work.

9 **Development programs are not designed for Black creatives**; anti-Black racism is prevalent, whiteness is centred, and the pedagogies/modes of instruction used do not reflect the aesthetics, stories, and culture that are relevant to and celebrate Black lives.

10 **Shallow corporate EDI measures** predominate, and often **commodify diversity** in ways that enable non-Black organizations to acquire social and economic benefits with **limited accountability** for action.

Key Takeaways

1 Anti-Black racism is prevalent and persistent in Canada's Screen Media industries and must be dismantled.

2 Diversity and Inclusion are not the same as Equity.

3 There is an urgent need for Black-owned and Black-led policies, spaces, development, and funding.

4 Interventions must target system changes and immediate impacts at the same time.

Why does this matter?

Significant commitments have been made toward creating a diverse, inclusive, and equitable sector. However, inconsistent, and problematic data collections practices and broadly scoped sector research used to inform those commitments often fail to capture the experiences of Black professionals, while obscuring the effects of systemic anti-Black racism that shapes sector practices. Without these insights, genuine, sustainable change will remain elusive.

This research contributes evidence-based recommendations for creatives, employers, and the sector to create long-term, sustainable transformation that addresses anti-Black biases and exclusionary practices, and builds toward a stronger, more diverse and equitable sector workforce.

Project Aims

1 Establish a preliminary dataset to represent the identities, lives, and sector experiences of Black professionals in Canada's Screen Media industries.

2 Examine the pathways pursued by Black creatives to access and build careers in the industry, barriers faced, approaches/strategies that worked, and the supports that have been most helpful when navigating the sector.

3 Document the interactions between sector narratives, stakeholder/gatekeeper practices, and the experiences Black professionals, and their effects on workforce representation and content development.

Overview

A growing body of research has focused on Canada's Screen Media industries over the last several years, driven in large part by increasing awareness of and pressure to address issues of inequity. This important work has highlighted the ways creatives and professionals of various intersectional identities experience systemic barriers to access at every level of the sector, limiting career development and mobility, and establishing a sector workforce dominated by white, cis-gendered, heterosexual storytellers.

More recent research (see Being Seen & Being Counted) has clarified the relationships between limited sector diversity, lack of authentic and representative on-screen content, and their consequences on Canadian audiences. This work has also revealed the ways research methodologies, including those traditionally used in audience research, renders large segments of the Canadian population invisible.

Indeed, while the equity research undertaken has been critical in gaining a greater understanding of the transformation required of Canada's Screen Media sector, much of this research absorbs Black and racialized professionals under umbrella terms such as 'diverse', 'BIPOC', and 'racialized'. Although this approach can point broadly to shared challenges, failure to differentiate the experiences of Black professionals delivers an insufficient understanding of how sector norms, practices, and individually-held beliefs interact to maintain cycles of exclusion. Broad research helps us understand 'what' is happening, but without drawing out the experiences of each community, we cannot fully understand 'why' or 'how' these variables interact - which has made sector change disappointingly slow.

Black producers, writers, directors, actors, and tech/crew have been largely invisible sector data, which has made it difficult to bring practical awareness to the anti-Black racism and other forms of exclusion that are embedded in the processes and practices currently shaping the sector.

Being Heard centres the experiences of existing and aspiring Black talent to represent, for the first time, their presence in the sector: who they are and where they are; the pathways they have taken to develop careers, skills training, and paid work; the barriers and challenges they have faced, the supports that have been most helpful, and their strategies for remaining working in the sector.

This research also responds to the industry's commitments to create a diverse, inclusive, and equitable sector by contributing recommendations for system-level interventions that address anti-Black biases and exclusionary practices that will enable long-term, sustainable change.

Project Aims

- Collect and analyze demographic data of identities, locations, educational and professional experiences, career stages, current roles, types of projects, career pathways, barriers encountered, supports available and work practices of Black producers, writers, directors, actors, and tech/crew.
- Examine existing networks, institutions, organizations, and programs supporting Black talent.
- Explore the pathways pursued by Black creatives to access and build careers in the industry, barriers faced, approaches/strategies that worked, and the supports that have been most helpful when navigating the sector.
- Surface narratives about access and workforce representation, including those held by participants (i.e., how do participants explain their experiences) and those encountered by participants (i.e., how do others explain the experiences of Black producers, writers, directors, actors, and tech/crew).

Research Approach

Research Team & Advisory

This study was undertaken by a collaborative team of researchers, industry professionals, and BSO leadership.

- The **Research Team** included a lead researcher who was responsible for the overall research design and methodology, and a team of Research Associates who conducted the interviews and focus groups with study participants.
- The **Research Associates** were uniquely skilled as both interviewers and members of Canada's Screen Media sector, permitting a shared context and sense of safety for participants.
- A **Research Advisory** comprised of Black producers, writers, and directors with extensive sector experience provided direction and input into the research design, analysis of findings, and reporting of results.

Methodology

The research began with a review of the current sector landscape, including funding commitments, workforce practices, and development programs, with attention to practices and interventions supporting Black talent.

This context was followed by two complementary phases:

1. An Online Sector Survey
2. Qualitative interviews and focus groups.

A total of 426 participants responded to the online survey and 70 participated in the follow up interviews.



Research Context & Limitations

History of harmful data & research practices

Although the Canadian Screen Media sector has recently started to collect identity information, this practice has not been in place long enough to establish an accurate baseline, nor to build trust regarding how these data are used. Many equity-deserving participants are reluctant to self-identify due to long histories of oppression and discrimination, and concerns about the protection of identity and privacy. Without a benchmark, it is difficult to ascertain the representativeness of the study's sample population beyond Canada's Census (which uses different categories to describe sector and employment than are used by the sector at large).

Additionally, the oppressive experiences that have made it unsafe for Black professionals to self-identify may discourage participation in these early research efforts (due to historic lack of trust).

Accordingly, it is expected that increases in sector research conducted by Black-led organizations, anchored in anti-racist research methodologies and the ethical and transparent handling of data, engagement and participation in this important work will continue to increase.



Participant representation

The sample population of this study reflects a possible overrepresentation on three demographic variables:

Location

Participants in this study reported working predominantly in Ontario and British Columbia which is due in part to the popularity of Toronto and Vancouver for film and television production and as the location of the sponsoring organization (BSO). Further, while Québec was the third-most reported participant location, the total number of participants from Québec relative to the size and scope of the Québec screen media sector suggests the Black, Francophone population is underrepresented in this study.

Language

This study was conducted primarily in English, and therefore represents the experiences of the Anglophone community within Canada's Screen Media sector. While participants had the option to participate in this research in French, Francophone participants from Québec frequently chose instead to respond in English.

Research dedicated to understanding the experiences of Francophone creators, conducted exclusively in French, is encouraged to reflect the sector dynamics in Québec.

Gender

Most respondents identified as cis-women (65%), which is an overrepresentation according to broader industry data.

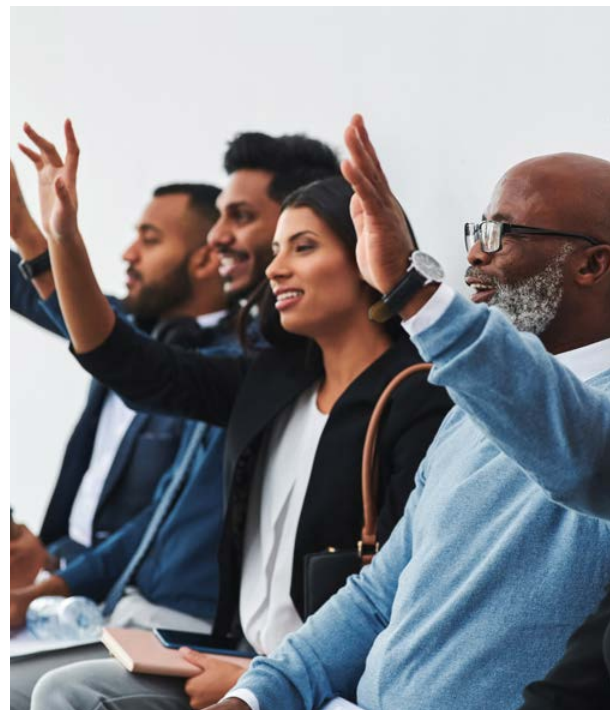
Reporting

Participants included members from a wide range of communities, reflecting a broad set of identities. The scope of this research, combined with the current workforce composition of Canada's screen sector, however, means that not all communities had sufficient participation to be differentiated in this reporting while maintaining anonymity.

When differences reported by participants with specific identities and intersectionalities were statistically significant, the experiences of these participants are presented separately in the report.

Limited differentiation is a reason for further research:

- Similarities in the experiences reported among Black creatives in this study does not suggest these experiences are 'the same' across all settings.
- It is expected that these communities and the intersectional identities that exist within these communities have experiences related to sector access and navigation that call for dedicated recruitment and exploration that goes beyond the scope of this research.
- This work would build upon these preliminary findings to support the development of specific interventions that meet the needs of each community.



This study is about Black producers, writers, directors, actors, tech, and crew; its purpose is to uncover and present the experiences of Black Screen Media professionals in Canada.

This type of research can prompt a desire for comparison between the experiences of Black professionals and their non-Black counterparts. While framed as a way of 'understanding' the findings, this framing implies that to establish the *legitimacy* of the experiences disclosed by Black people in the sector, they must be compared to a 'standard'.

While comparisons can help quantify the magnitude and urgency of issues raised, doing so in the absence of fulsome profiles of all sector participants reduces people who are historically and systemically underrepresented in the sector to comparisons, instead of allowing them to be *seen*. This presents a dramatically incomplete picture of Black professionals.

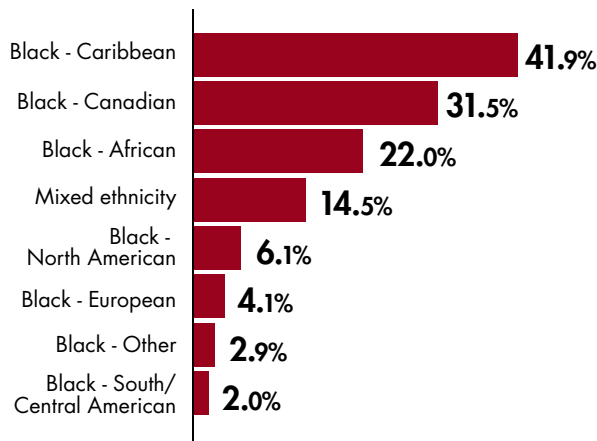
Equally troublesome, are the perspectives and experiences that define the 'sector standard' to which Black professionals are compared: the current composition of Canada's Screen Media sector is dominated by white, cis, men (and increasingly, white women). This comparison centres whiteness as the 'norm' or 'desired' standard while making Black professionals less visible, or indeed, invisible. It also reduces sector understanding to comparisons that fail to explicate the relationships between intersectional identities, social practices, and sector processes and infrastructure.

Black Screen Media professionals in Canada have, until now, never been profiled. This report, therefore, does not use comparison as a means of interpreting the findings. This report is about what it means to be Black in Canada's Screen Media sector; it creates visibility that is long overdue. Additionally, this report centres the experiences of Black professionals as a means of disrupting ways of seeing that disguise how anti-Black racism is embedded into the sector's structure, and its material consequences on what Canadians see on screen.

A Portrait of Black Canadians in the Canadian Screen Industries

Who are the Black producers, creators, actors, and tech/crews in Canada's Screen Media Sector?

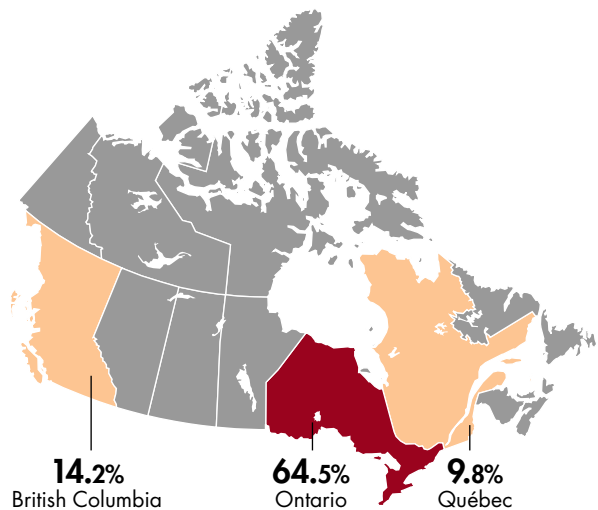
ETHNICITY



n = 460

LOCATION

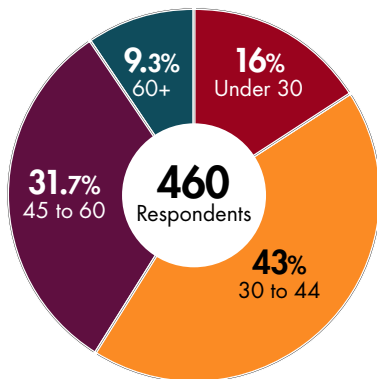
88.5%
of study participants live in
Canada's screen media hot spots.



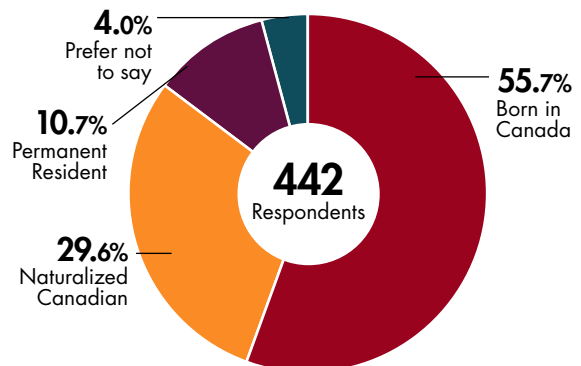
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AGE

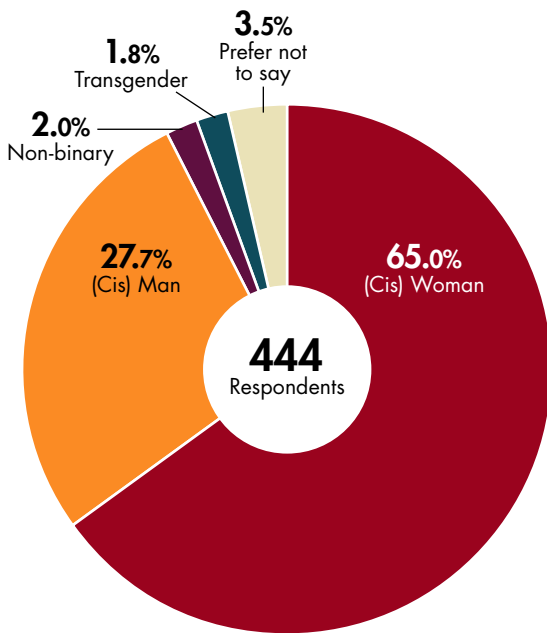
74.7%
of study participants were
between 30-60 years old.



IMMIGRATION

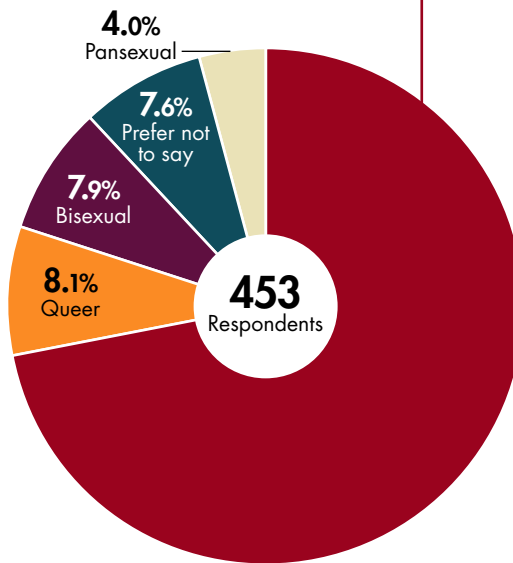


GENDER



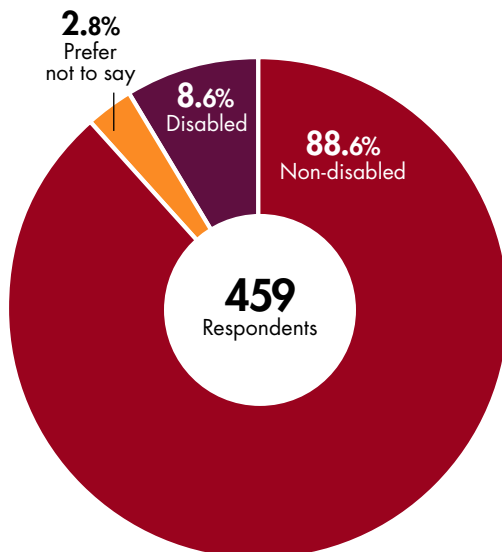
SEXUAL ORIENTATION

70.9%
of study participants identified as straight/heterosexual



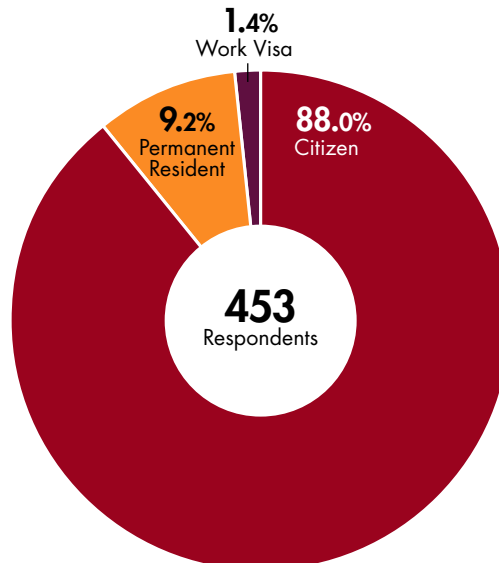
DISABILITY

91.4%
of participants identified as non-disabled or reported they preferred not to say.

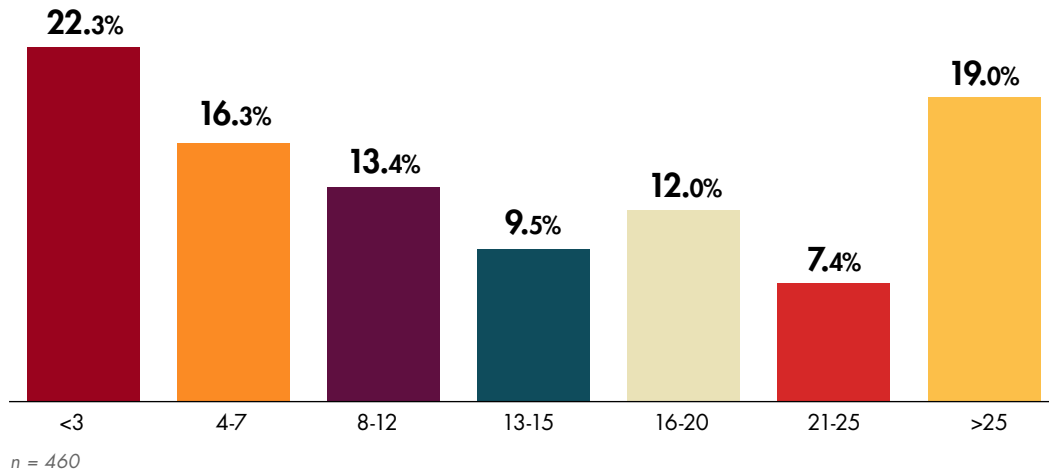


WORK STATUS

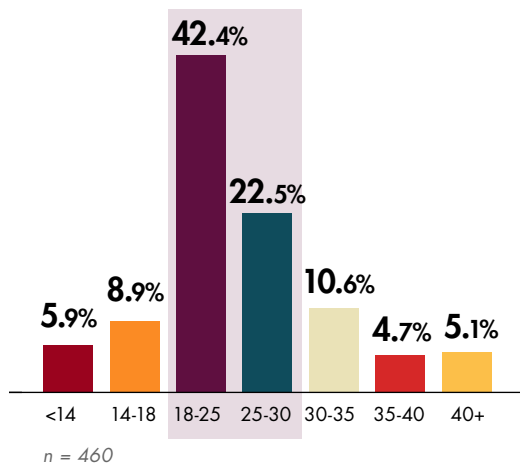
Work status includes participants who can work in Canada without being citizens or permanent residents.



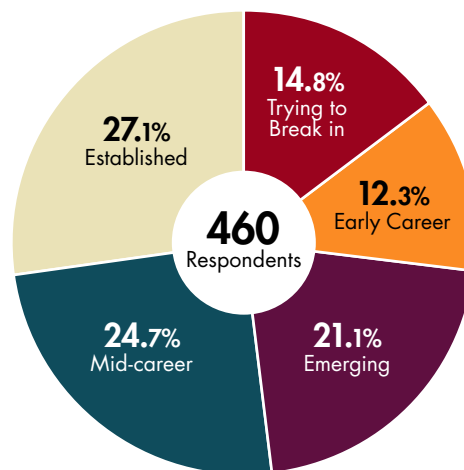
YEARS IN THE SECTOR



AGE OF START IN SECTOR

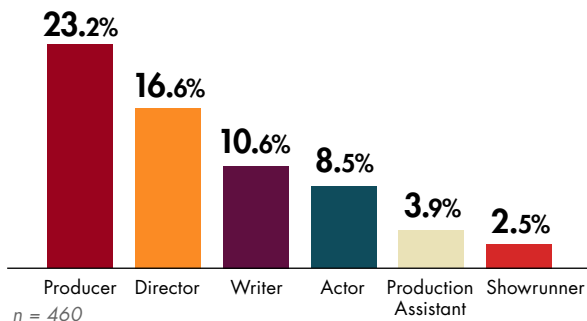


CAREER STAGE

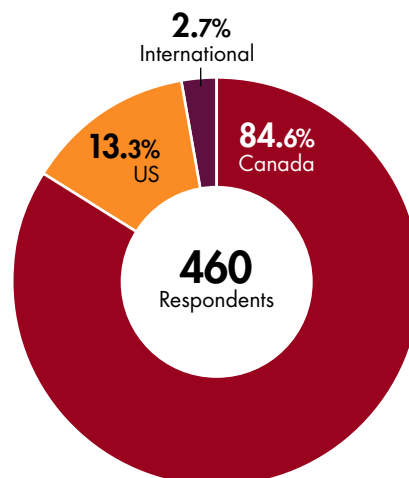


CURRENT ROLE

Other roles reported included: Executive Producer, Business Affairs, Executive (e.g., Head of Content), Cinematographer/ Director of Photography, and Art Director. Each of these roles were reported by less than 2% of participants.



PRIMARY MARKET EXPERIENCE

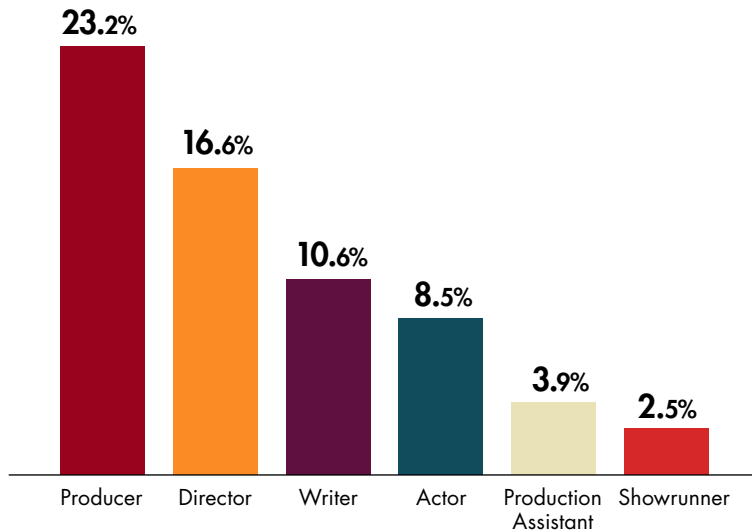


Work Experiences

What roles do Black professionals occupy in Canada's Screen Media Sector?

Role

A broad range of roles were reported by participants, including the following most-reported positions:

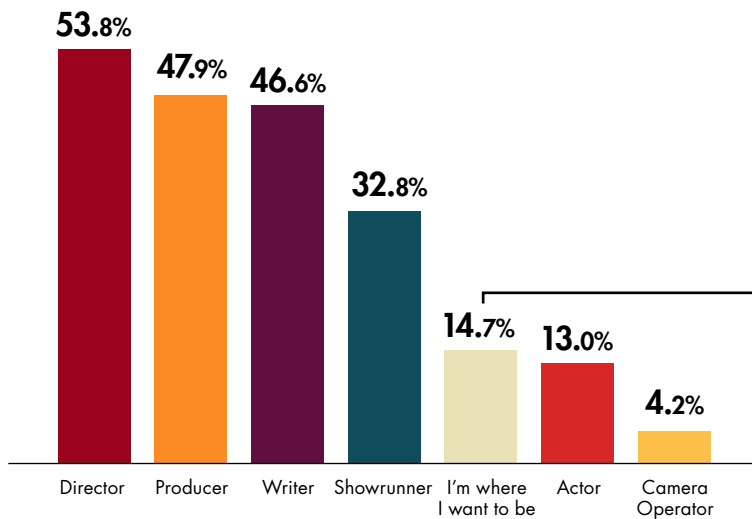


n = 460

Smaller cohorts of participants (i.e., <2% each) reported occupying the roles of Showrunner, Post-production, Production Coordinator, Costume Designer, Hairstylist, Executive Producer, Craft Services, Assistant to the Director or Producer, and Make-up Artists.

It is notable that fewer than 3% of study participants reported occupying some of the most powerful decision-making roles (Showrunner, Executive Producer).

Participants were also invited to share the **3 positions they most aspire to:**



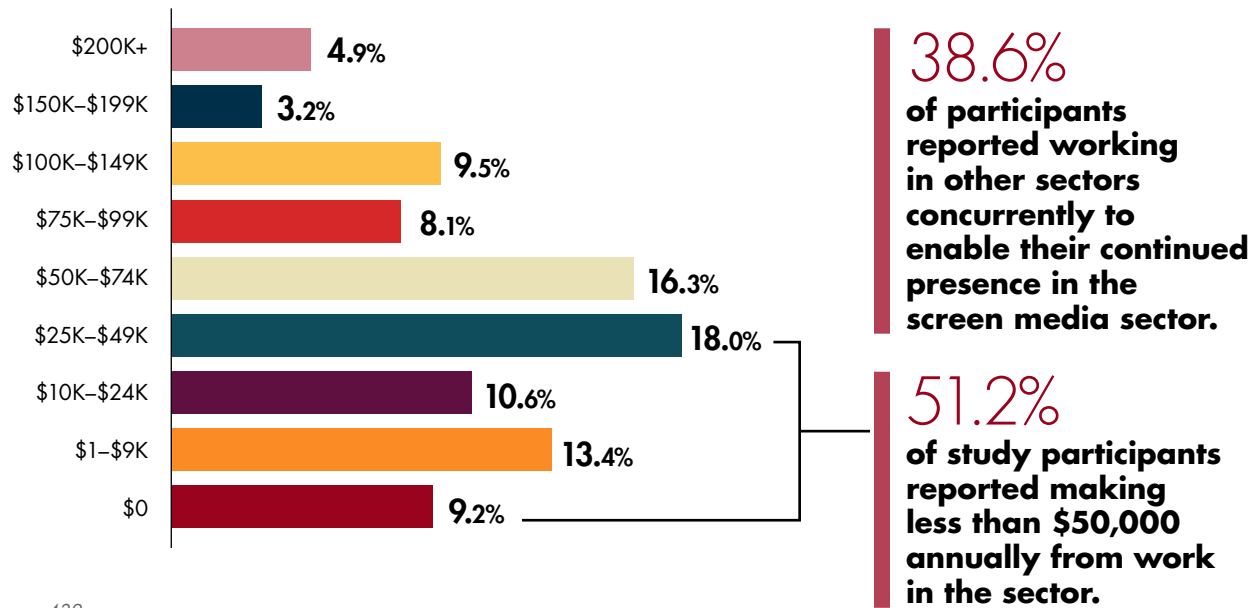
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Additional roles reported (<2% each) included: Executive Producer, Business Affairs, Executive (e.g., Head of Content), Cinematographer/Director of Photography, and Art Director.

14.7%
of participants reported currently occupying their desired role.

Income

In the context of the roles reported by participants, they were also asked about their **average income from the last 3 years** from sector work. In this case, **more than half of participants reported making less than \$50,000 annually from sector work.**

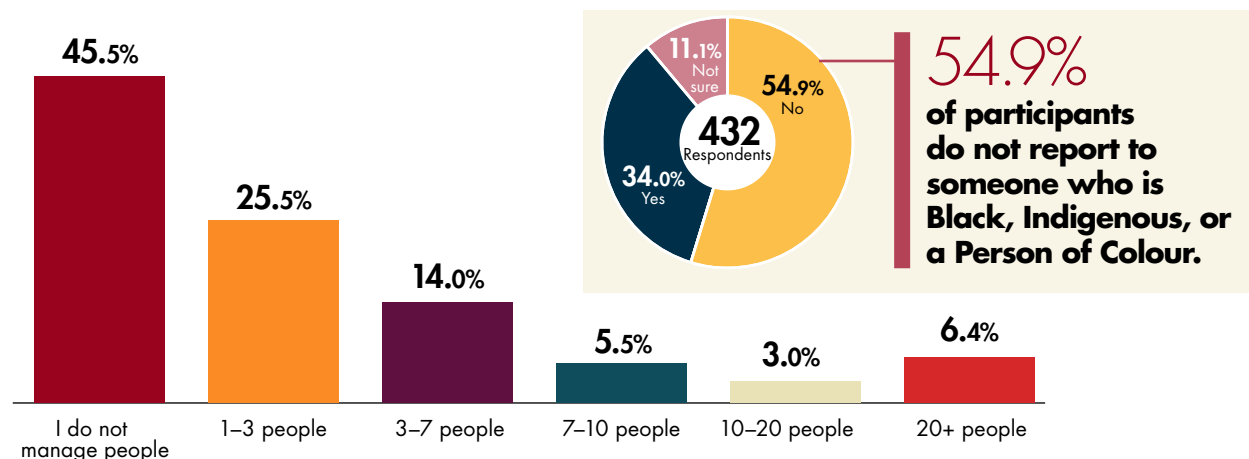


Decision-Making & Leadership

Exploring the composition of the workplaces occupied by Black professionals, and the scope of influence Black professionals have within those workplaces was an important aspect of understanding the overall working environments experienced by Black talent.

- 54.3% of participants reported being the lead of their department.
- 59.8% reported being a decision-maker
- 54.8% reported having the authority to hire personnel

Although more than half of participants reported leading their departments and having capacity to hire personnel, 45.5% of participants indicated that they *do not manage* other people.



Most participants, regardless of role or career stage, reported being 'the only' or one of very few Black people at their workplace. Given this context, participants were asked whether the person they report to most directly is Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Colour. **54.9% of participants reported that they do not report to someone who is Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Colour, and a further 11.1% reported being unsure about the identities of the person they report to.**

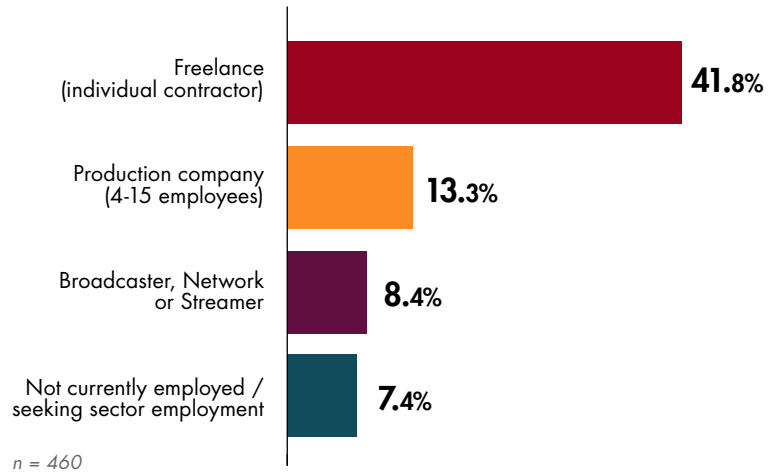
Where are Black producers, creators, actors, and tech/crew working?

Workplace

Most participants reported their primary (current) place of occupation as freelance (41.84%), followed by Production Company with 4-15 employees (13.3%).

Comparatively few participants reported working for a Broadcaster, Network, or Streamer (8.4%).

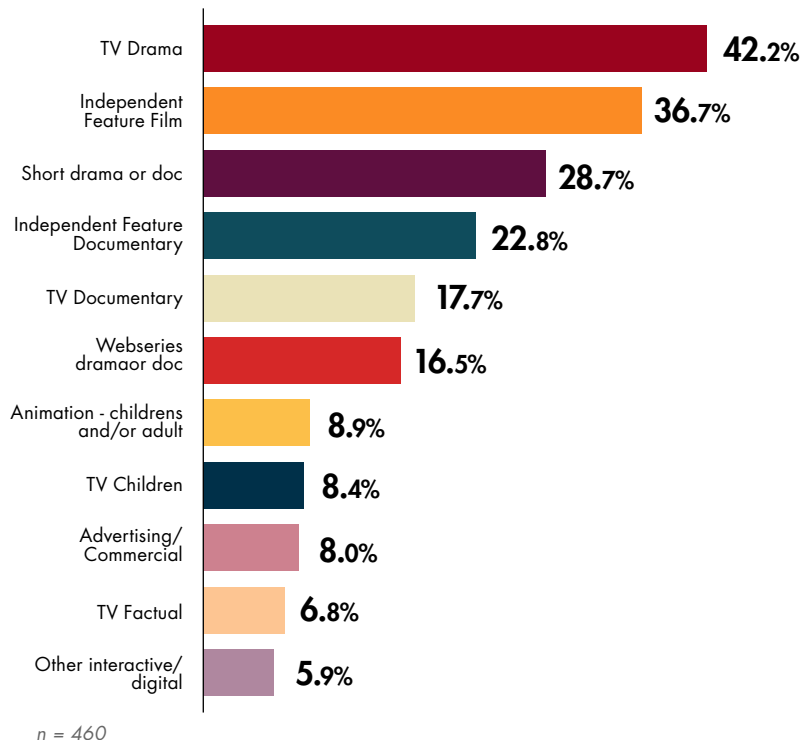
7.4% of participants reported they are currently seeking employment in the sector.



Genre

Participants were asked which genre they work in most often.

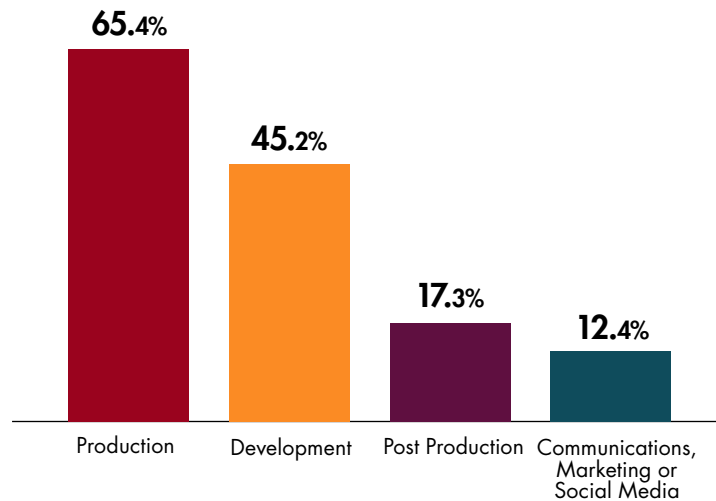
TV Drama (42.2%), Independent Feature Film (36.7%), Short Drama or Doc (28.7%), and Independent Feature Documentary (22.8%) were the most commonly reported genres.



Department

Most participants reported working in Production (65.4%) and Development (45.2%), with smaller cohorts of participants indicating a focus on Post-Production (17.3%) and Communications/Marketing (12.4%).

15.7% of respondents reported other departments, including: sales and distribution, talent, equity and inclusion, administration, and festival production.



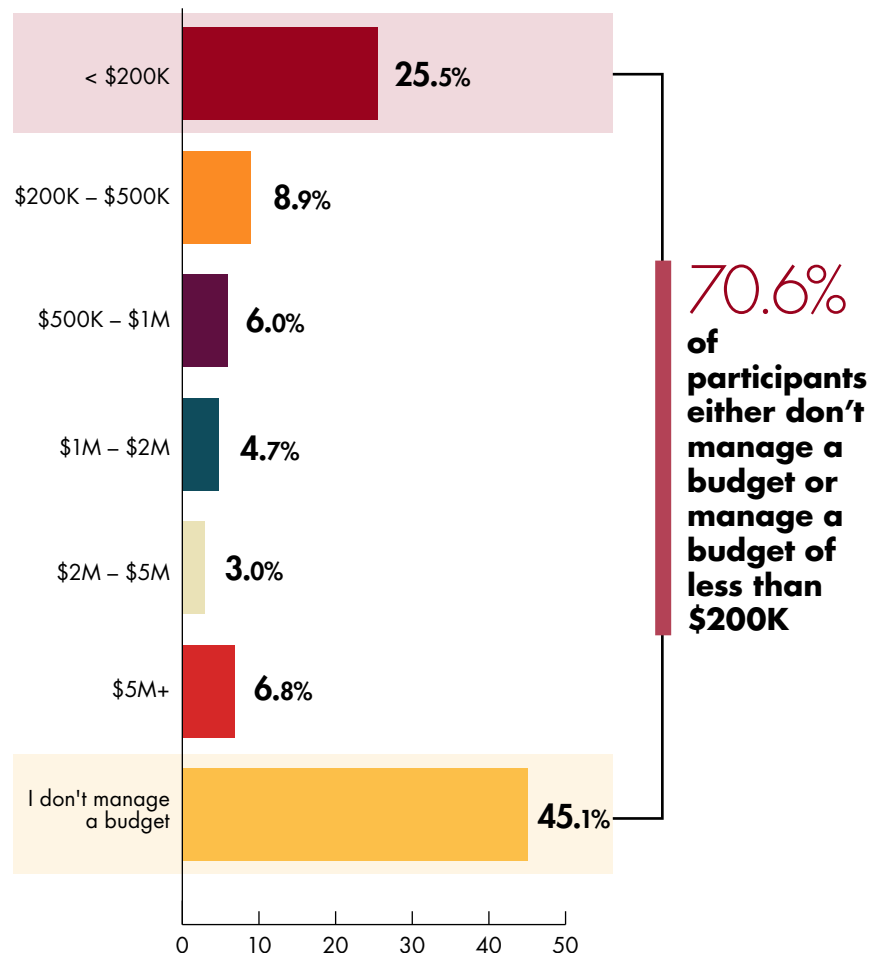
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What kinds of projects do Black producers, creators, actors, and tech/crew work on?

Projects & Budgets

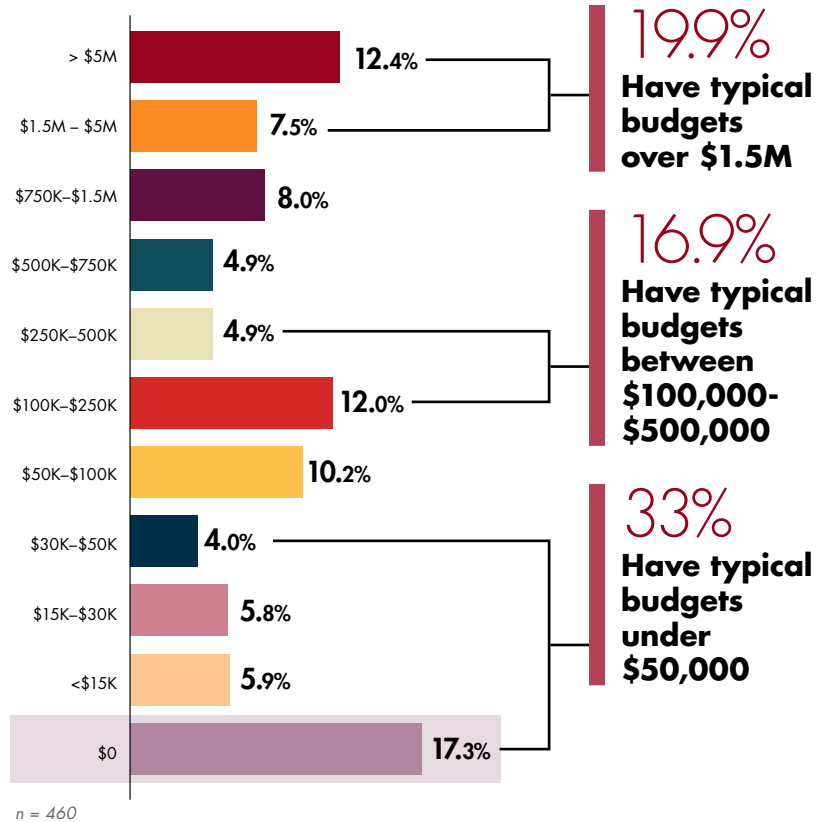
To understand the kinds of work undertaken by Black producers, creators, actors, and tech/crew, participants were asked about the types and sizes of projects, and associated budgets, they typically work with.

Participants were asked about the size of budget they managed, if they were responsible for a budget. Budgets could include non-creative budgets. This question sought to understand participants' financial decision-making authority and scope.



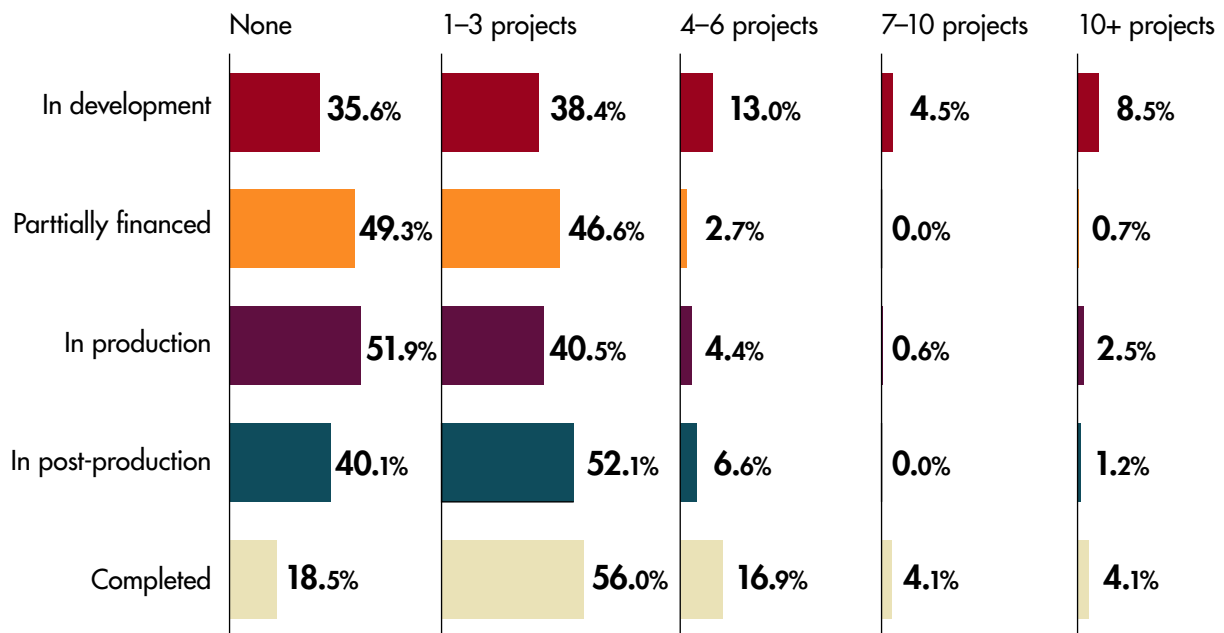
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Participants were also asked about the size of project they tended to work on, by reporting the size of the project budget. This question refers to the total project budget, which is not necessarily managed by participants.



To gain insight into the slate of projects participants were managing, they were asked to indicate the number of projects they currently have in each phase of development.

A total of 893 projects were reported, with the following distributions:



No significant differences were identified in the distribution of projects at each career stage.

Career Pathways

Participants reported widely varying pathways to sector access and career development, which is characteristic of the sector, overall. The sector follows a project-based model of production, where informal, relationship-based recruitment processes are built upon the personal and professional networks of sector members. Lack of transparency, disconnected sector gatekeepers, and relationship-based networks of access shape an intensely competitive, high stakes environment in which long hours, low pay, and job precarity are typical.

“People need to talk about the toll and resiliency needed to prevail in this field.”

These features shape the experiences of all sector members, with varying outcomes¹. Participants in this study delineated between the difficulties of an inherently challenging sector, and the additional limitations experienced by Black creatives because of anti-Black racism and mainstream career development pathways premised on the experiences of non-Black creatives.

Accordingly, participants shared the ways Black professionals create alternative ways of accessing sector resources and opportunities, often from positions adjacent to the ‘core’ of the sector².

While there was no single, reliable path to sector success, participants’ experiences revealed key trends and patterns in the ways Black professionals navigate sector spaces to gain increasing levels of access and influence.

1 POV (2022). “Understanding Social Capital in Canada’s Screen Media Sector.”

2 Alternative pathways to entry are also created by non-Black creatives. For Black creatives, however, these ‘alternative’ means of access are the main pathways to entry.

Breaking in

Most participants reported gaining initial sector access by applying persistently to job postings and opportunities they heard about from other contacts (24.6%) and through referrals by family members or close friends (23.7%).

Other typical strategies included:

- Being referred by a teacher or mentor connected to the sector: **14.98%**
- After self-funding a project that got attention: **14.0%**
- Through a union, guild, or association: **13.0%**
- By winning an award or funding opportunity: **12.1%**
- By performing unpaid work in the industry for more than 3 years: **12.1%**

There were some notable differences in strategies for breaking in according to career stage.

- **Emerging professionals** applied to job postings, participated in development programs, relied on self-funding projects, and were referred by a family member or friend to help them ‘break in’.
- **Mid-career professionals** applied to job postings, used referrals from family members or friends, or referrals from a teacher or mentor connected to the sector, self-funded projects, or ‘broke in’ after being awarded funding.
- **Established professionals** had the most distinct approach to ‘breaking in’, which most often involved referrals by a family member or friend, getting access through a union, guild, or association, by winning an award or funding, being referred by a teacher or mentor, and self-funding.

These differences seemed to have less to do with career stage, and more to do with when participants were entering the sector. Established professionals, for example, believed that an increased availability of development programs may serve as conduits to the sector that were not available when they were starting out. Interestingly, **the more recently participants entered the sector, the less their access seemed to depend on close, pre-existing relationships to the sector.**



Staying in

Strategies used by participants to remain working built upon the relationships and credibility gained with each successive job.

- **52.3%** rely on referrals by close sector contacts they have maintained over the years
- **44.4%** are typically hired directly by people they have worked with repeatedly

In addition to these strategies, participants reported:

- **25.8%** gaining referrals from people who currently or have previously mentored them
- **24.7%** self-funding projects they want to work on
- **19.7%** used social media postings (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter).

Comparatively few participants reported gaining employment through unions, guilds, or associations (10.7%), or from participating in development programs, apprenticeships, or internships (8.4%).

“I apply for everything I see, follow every industry page. I make as much effort as I can to connect with other filmmakers and producers that I find interesting. I work with my peers to make films and network up for advice and access.”

Self-funding & low-pay/unpaid work are common and unsustainable

Participants were also asked to rank different types of work / activities according to the proportion of time spent on each across their career span.

- **Emerging creatives** reported spending the most time working on self-funded projects, participating in workshops/training to build technical skills, performing unpaid/low pay work in the industry, working on projects funded by an award or grant, and participating in workshops/training to build sector relationships.
- **Mid-career and established creatives** reported spending the most time working on projects financed by a studio, streamer, broadcaster, or investors, participating in workshops/training to build technical skills and sector relationships, working on projects funded by an award or grant, and performing unpaid/low pay work in the industry.
- **Established creatives** also reported spending significant time working on self-funded projects.

“I just learn the work and do it myself. Nobody really cares about someone who doesn't have work to show.”

Participants explained how a lack of transparency (about opportunities, pathways to access) leads creatives to self-fund projects and take low or unpaid jobs to gain sector experience and build necessary relationships.

Exacerbating these pressures are sector narratives that treat unpaid/low-pay work as indicators of passion, commitment, and persistence. Indeed, participants referred to the ‘**caché**’ of self-funding – that being able to say that one has self-funded projects is evidence of their passion, desire, and commitment to the work.

- **More than half of participants currently work (38.6%) or sometimes work (16.1%) in non-screen/media industries in addition to their work in the sector. And close to 10% of participants are in the process of leaving or planning to leave the sector in the next several months.**

The ‘right’ relationships are critical at every career stage

Relationships were highlighted across all experiences, with participants emphasizing how crucial the ‘right’ relationships are to sector access and navigation. The importance of these relationships does not diminish with time spent in the sector; indeed, even the most established participants recounted the ways they continue to build, maintain, and strengthen their relational networks – ideally, with people of increasing sector influence and power.

Relationships provide sector access and capital

Participants underscored the importance of building relationships both *within* Black communities, as well as with non-Black professionals.

- Early in career development, close sector contacts serve as critical access points for ‘breaking in’ and building sector knowledge and savvy (ability to navigate the sector). Over the long-term, the centrality of networks in dictating the sector’s market structure means that **close sector contacts remain the richest source of future work** – both as sources of referrals and for direct hiring.
- Relationships with well-connected and successful Black creatives, therefore, serve as important conduits to advanced roles and higher value resources for many participants.
- The continued dominance of white men (and increasingly, women) occupying key creative and executive roles throughout the sector also necessitates building relationships and social capital with non-Black colleagues. Participants emphasized that as Black professionals, they are less likely to have pre-existing sector connections (i.e., via family, friends), which requires building relationships with non-Black creatives to gain access to the sector.
- Participants shared a variety of strategies for building these relationships, including participation in development programs, internships, and placements; applying for and accepting a range of paid and unpaid work, and cultivating interests and hobbies that reflect those of their white colleagues.
- Overall, participants emphasized that the **lack of pre-existing sector connections requires Black creatives to spend more time, money, and other resources pursuing various means of creating and accessing opportunities, with limited certainty or pay-off.**

“Take mentors and mentoring seriously. Be persistent in maintaining a good contact list, and being open-minded to working with a wide variety of creatives to establish a wider network”

The limited number of Black professionals occupying advanced roles in the sector places increased levels of pressure and expectation on these individuals to facilitate access for other creatives within their communities.

- Participants occupying decision-making and key creative roles described feeling a strong sense of responsibility and accountability for creating pathways and protecting the gains made for future generations of creators.
- At the same time these participants acknowledged the challenges of acting as one of few bridges that cross the distance between Black communities and the sector’s ‘inner circle’.

Mentorship is critical across the career span

Among the most important relationships described by participants were mentoring relationships. Quality mentorship was viewed as crucial for building relationships (network access), creative/technical development, and job access.

- **40.6%** of participants reported *being* a mentor, while **27.4%** reported having a mentor.

These relationships could be either formal (i.e., via mentoring programs) or informal (i.e., undefined relationships between sector professionals).

“Find your allies, and work with those people. Find mentors. They don’t necessarily need to be in the organization where you’re working, but it’s always useful to test what you’re thinking and what you’re experiencing with somebody else.”

In either case, mentors were described as serving three roles:

1. **Teaching:** demonstrating and scaffolding skills (e.g., technical skills), and sharing knowledge and insights.
2. **Advising:** providing feedback, advice, and guidance about career development and navigation.
3. **Advocating & Brokering:** facilitating relationships with key stakeholders, senior leaders, decision-makers, and other creatives; giving referrals, advocating for their credibility.

Overall, participants expressed disappointment with the lack of effective mentorship provided by the sector.

- While finding good mentors is challenging for all creatives, the experience for Black creatives is complicated by two conditions:
 - » The limited number of Black professionals in more senior / key creative positions significantly constrains the availability of Black mentors.
 - » Mentoring relationships with white cis men (who continue to dominate these roles) create power dynamics that can be unproductive and harmful.

Most problematic for participants were the ways anti-Black racism and systemic oppressions are reproduced in mentoring programs, many of which pair Black creatives with non-Black mentors.

- The hierarchical dynamics in many mentoring relationships (i.e., the idea that mentors are the 'knowers' and mentees have little to offer) create extreme power imbalances and place Black creatives at risk of experiencing racism and other harms. This was true even in programs positioned as 'for' developing Black talent.
- The lack of mobility created by systemically oppressive sector systems, however, left many participants feeling that enduring unsafe mentorship experiences was one of the few ways to access tangible sector opportunities. For others, these experiences were simply more of the same they encountered throughout the sector and remaining in the sector meant accepting continued exposure to these environments.



- Relatedly, a prevalent concern among participants was the lack of individualized support in the form of mentors in many development programs, particularly from Black mentors with the ability to provide tools and strategies for navigating systemic barriers in the industry.
- Participants also expressed the need for support finding the *right kind* of industry connections: higher ups, particularly Black creatives, to help them get their foot in the door.

71.4%

Participants are in a mentoring relationship. Most participants who are not in a mentoring relationship are actively seeking one.

In contrast, participants' experiences with Black mentors underscored the benefits and importance of receiving advice, support, and advocacy that centred their experiences as Black creators.

- Participants emphasized that the experience of navigating the sector as a Black person was nothing like the experiences of their non-Black counterparts. Accordingly, the advice and recommendations that might be offered were not necessarily realistic for Black creatives, nor received in the same way when used by Black professionals.

- Participants at all career stages discussed the sense of responsibility felt by more experienced and successful Black professionals to support the sustainability of Black talent. The few emerging and early career participants who had access to Black mentors regularly shared anecdotes of support that extended beyond the facts of sector navigation to include practical advice about personal and emotional survival in the sector. These stories reflected mentors who went above and beyond to facilitate connections and provide multiple forms of access to their mentees.

Some important forms of access Black mentors provided, include:

- Bringing mentees to meetings so they could see how decisions were made, and how to navigate through different spaces.
- Exposing mentees to the business side of screen media, even if the mentee was focused on the creative side.
- Being transparent about IP and ownership; showing mentees how deals are negotiated and the ways a creator can be exposed to risk.
- Encouraging mistakes and learning.
- Basing advice on the whole person by taking into considering family and other circumstances the mentee was managing.



Relationships with Black creatives are a source of creative and personal resilience

In addition to the critical supports provided by formal and informal mentorship, and the sector access permitted through close relationships with other creative professionals, participants described the unique forms of support proffered by their relationships with other Black professionals.

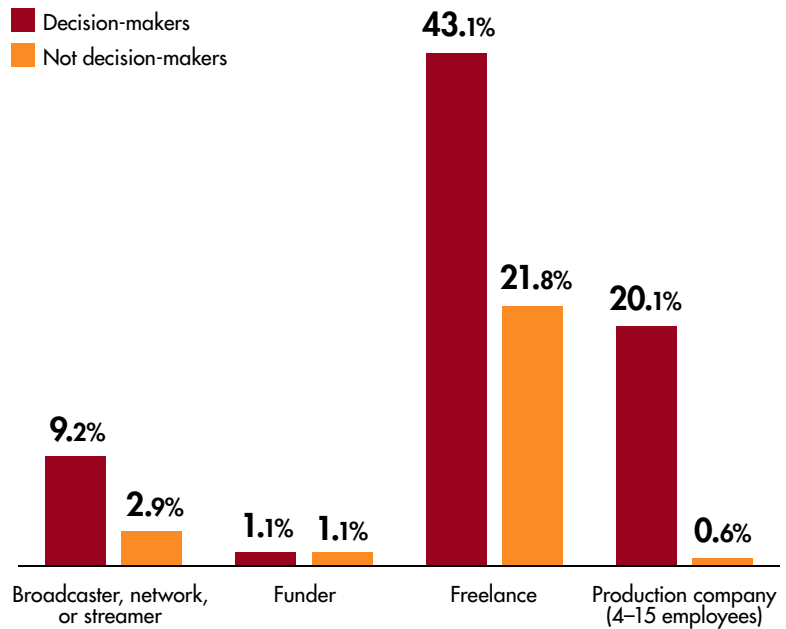
- Participants described the importance of creative communities comprised of other Black professionals as a place to be ‘seen’ in ways the broader sector does not allow, and the ways this contributes to their resilience and ability to remain working in the sector.
- The unique support offered by Black communities in the sector sometimes included the experience of being children of parents who had immigrated to Canada, and whose expectations about future employment did not include the creative sector.
- Black peers in the sector provided a sense of community and resilience, sometimes in the absence of support outside the sector.

Lack of representation among sector decision-makers perpetuates systemic oppression

The most recurring theme in this area was the predominance of white men (and increasingly, women) in positions of power who ultimately control how the sector ‘works’.

Although nearly 60% of participants reported occupying decision-making roles, most of these positions were found in freelance and small production companies, while few were found in gatekeeping organizations.

“People train who they want to train properly to advance within the sector. They might give you a bit of basic overall training, they keep you in the same position because you can do the job well.”



A smaller group of participants at the mid-level and established career stages shared a markedly different experience entering and navigating the sector.

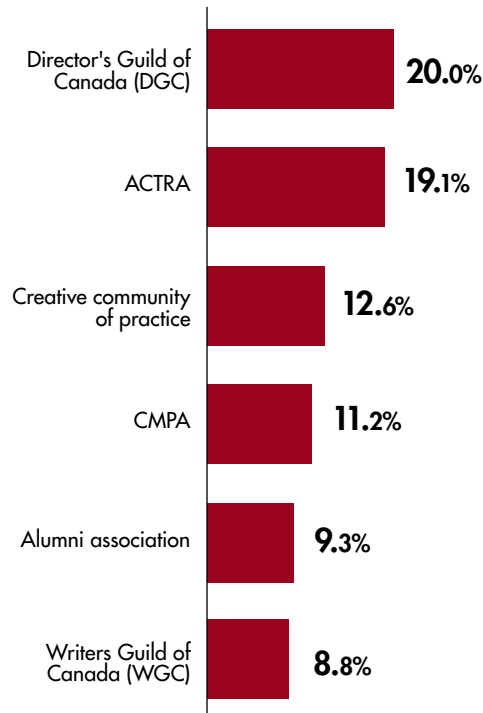
- These participants reported gaining access and ‘upward mobility’ rather quickly. While these participants were still met with individual oppressions (i.e., colleagues, peers, and leaders who displayed anti-Black racism and exercised prejudice), they felt less confronted by some of the barriers to access shared by other participants (e.g., lack of sector knowledge, difficulty accessing relationship networks).
- This group of participants was notable to many other participants, too, for the important access and pathways they created while in decision-making roles. Several participants credited this group for their careers, saying they would have never gained the access or opportunities they did without this group of leaders.

These findings underscore the critical importance of having Black creators in decision-making roles and other positions of influence and demonstrate how quickly sustainable impacts are made when scalable, structural interventions are implemented (like those created by this group of Black creative leaders).

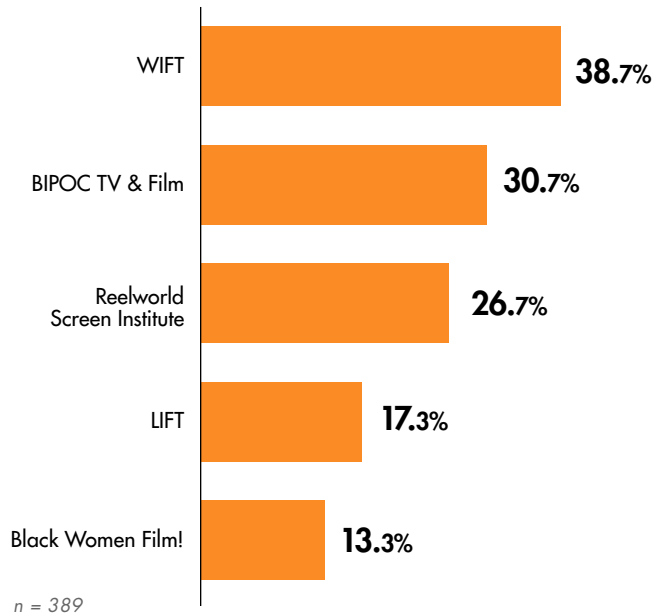
Cultural and community-based groups and associations are most accessible to Black creatives

A subset of participants reported membership in several sector guilds, unions, and associations. But while Black talent was *present* in these groups, the proportion of participants involved was small compared to cultural and community-based organizations (e.g., BIPOC TV & Film).

Sector guilds, unions and associations



Cultural and community-based groups and associations



Eligibility criteria and required experiences that privilege the experiences of non-Black creatives (e.g., being referred by a family member, number of credits, hours of paid work, affiliation with specific programs/organizations), lack of transparency about the membership process, and uncertainty about the benefits of membership in sector-based groups/associations for Black creatives explained these differences.

In contrast, **participants expressed greater trust in the leadership, intention, and supports offered by Black-focused organizations.** Indeed, while participants acknowledged areas of improvement (e.g., the need for clarity about databases – how they are populated, managed, and used), there was a belief that their **experiences as Black creatives were centred in the tenets of these organizations.**



Senior creative and decision-making roles control access and narrative

Lack of representation in senior and decision-making roles across all sector workspaces was also a top concern among participants, with many repercussions.

Not only are few Black professionals occupying these roles, but participants also emphasized the significance that these roles are occupied by mostly white men (and increasingly, women), creating culturally homogeneous networks that isolate access to resources and opportunities. This concentration of decision-making power produces practices that become both exclusionary and self-reinforcing:

- Lack of representation in key creative roles limits the development and production of authentic Black content, storytelling, and aesthetics, while reproducing white stories and ways of storytelling.
- These ideas about quality and creativity are privileged and become embedded in gatekeeping processes (e.g., eligibility criteria for group membership, evaluation criteria for judging projects, audience and market research standards) and further exclude Black talent from receiving the credibility, experience, and access needed to obtain more senior / influential positions.

“When you consider that the majority of broadcasters and independent production companies are in Toronto, how is it possible, given all the diversity initiatives that we’ve had that it’s still so homogeneous?”

- Development, apprenticeship, internship, mentorship programs and funds are often led by white decision-makers, mentors, and instructors³.
- The creative development conferred by these programs, therefore, reinforces white notions of ‘quality’ storytelling. Not only does this **invalidate Black narratives, storytelling, and aesthetics**, it also **positions the talent and potential of Black creatives to be underestimated**. That is, writing and storytelling that differ from the narrative and stylistic preferences of white decision-makers are judged as ‘lower quality’, ‘less developed’ and/or indications of ‘less talent’.
- These evaluations become prohibitive to accessing funding and other sector resources by Black creatives, while at the same time reinforcing the false narratives of Black projects being ‘high risk’, used by sector gatekeepers to rationalize keeping Black stories and storytellers out of mainstream media.

.....
³ See POV (2022) for a review of social networks dominating sector mentorship programs.

Funding, the market, and race

Funding was a major theme that emerged and re-emerged throughout all phases of this research. It is important to understand that while the topic of funding is described here, the issues faced by Black professionals related to funding influenced many aspects of sector navigation shared by participants.

Participants detailed how the ways funding is structured in Canada creates a closed system that reproduces and validates a particular set of stories developed and produced by a small group of creatives.

“Forms are so complicated. It’s so complicated to get to the door. Am I going to waste two months putting something together that I know I’m not going to get?”

- Funding processes – triggers, eligibility, complicated and convoluted forms/systems, laborious application processes, biased evaluation criteria, and ambiguous selection processes – were foremost in the issues raised by participants.
- Biases embedded into these systems (e.g., funds awarded according to program participants or other grants, which creates a small pool of creatives who are continuously funded) leave participants feeling at odds: applications require high resource investment (time, labour, money) with a low return, but since Canada’s funding model relies almost exclusively on these funds, there are few other ways to secure financial support.
- Lack of cultural understanding among decision-makers forces Black creatives to continuously “justify their existence” by advocating for and ‘proving’ the relevance of the projects and stories proposed.



Biases in evaluation

Systematic biases in evaluation were highlighted by participants at each stage of funding. This included biases in the criteria used to evaluate eligibility, and biases in the ways projects are evaluated, which go on to impact future funding opportunities.

Concerns about the appeal of Black stories and storytelling were consistent narratives encountered by participants from sector stakeholders.

- Biased methods inform these inferences (e.g., lack of representation in audience research⁴).
- Questions about the meaning and relevance of Black-led projects puts Black creatives into a position of constantly having to justify their existence; to advocate for the meaningfulness of their lives.
- Participants shared the toll this takes on them personally, confronting a system that fails to ‘see’ them in their full personhood at every stage of development and production.

Participants in all regions detailed the ways these narratives become self-fulfilling prophecies because of the ways studios and broadcasters market and manage Black projects.

“The racist barriers that I’ve experienced are centred in the International Market. ‘Black Content doesn’t sell to Asia or Europe’ is a line that I am still hearing after 25 years producing content.”

- Participants offered several examples of the way Black content is sent to alternative platforms (e.g., CBC Gem) that have significantly less viewership compared to mainstream broadcasters.
- Criteria for evaluating projects are based on white stories presented to white audiences.
- Significantly reduced marketing investment paired with a lack of understanding about *how to market* Black projects sets these projects up for sub-par performance against these criteria.
- Projects are evaluated without context (e.g., timing, storyline, marketing) but compared to other projects that receive the full promotional treatment.

4 BSO (2022). [Being Counted: Canadian Race-based Audience Survey](#).

“Unevenly distributed access to funding is a problem. The process is opaque, full of hoops and not at all inclusive. It is still reflective of a scarcity mindset that only includes a few voices.”

Together, these observations underscore how the predictive analytics used to estimate the likelihood of a project’s success are problematic: when historic data is comprised mainly of white stories shown to predominantly white audiences, predictive analytics will predict that those stories will continue to be successful. At the same time, lack of data about Black-led productions and importantly, Black audiences⁵, diminishes the predictive success of Black-led productions (for all audiences) – **not because they are less likely to be successful but because the data are not being collected.**

These faulty analytics contribute to rationalizing the lack of investment in Black productions, curtailing audiences’ exposure to authentic and representative storytelling, and perpetuating the cycle of underestimating the power, appeal, and market value of Black-led projects.



5 For the first time in Canada, research on Black audiences was conducted in 2022: [Being Counted: Canadian Race-based Audience Survey](#).

In Québec, the denial of systemic racism amplifies the message to Black creatives that “**your stories, your lives, do not matter**”. Alongside having to justify the relevance and meaning of their lived experiences, Black Francophone creatives in Québec detailed the further the requirement of “making ourselves and our stories legible” to white decision-makers in the application process by framing their stories in ways that are relevant to white creatives/audiences. But this reframing means centering white culture, and white narratives (so that they are relatable to white decision-makers), which once again reinforces that Black stories, projects, and lives are ‘other’, and ‘less than’.

- This leads many Black Francophone creatives in Québec to choose **not to apply for government funds**, and instead to seek alternative pathways to financial support (e.g., becoming content creators online, or building capacity in adjacent industries like radio).

“Why am I going to keep applying and applying when we keep getting responses that question our existence: ‘Who do these issues really affect? How many people will it touch? How do you know people will watch it?’”

The tyranny of ‘emerging’

In this study, the participants who identified as ‘emerging’ professionals reflected the largest distribution of years in the sector, with **46.6% of emerging professionals working in the sector for 4–12 years.**

- Emerging professionals with 4-12 years of sector experience were also the most likely to report working in non-screen/media sectors simultaneously, with **46.7% of emerging participants reporting that they currently also work in non-screen media jobs.**

The “tyranny of emerging” was used by one participant to describe the experience of being caught between overlapping, barriered criteria that prevent Black professionals from gaining the investments and experience required to exit the ‘emerging’ phase no matter how long they have been in the sector.

In terms of funding eligibility, which often includes references to career phase, participants pointed to inconsistencies in the criteria used to define career stages as both adding complexity to the application



process and creating barriers to eligibility. Moreover, these definitions often do not reflect the career pathways and experiences of Black creatives, which ends up excluding Black creatives from applying.

- For example, several funds use both time in the sector and credits to define career stage. In this case, creatives with fewer credits are expected to have spent less time in the industry. Participants disclosed an average of 9-13 years for a Black filmmaker to have their second film made in Canada. In this case, participants would be eligible for a given fund based on credits but would 'age out' of eligibility due to time spent in the sector.
- In other cases, funds set parameters about sector activity to manage eligibility. Building on the example used above, funds that require participants to have produced a project in the last 6 years would exclude Black filmmakers simply because the average period between first and second films is 9-13 years.

The terms “BIPOC” and “Racialized” obscure the experiences of Black creators

Participants emphasized the need to separate “Black” from terms like “racialized” and “BIPOC”, as these terms fail to distinguish the experiences of Black creators. The issue of specialized funds and the introduction of

several “BIPOC” and “Racialized” funds over the last 2-3 years underscored the importance of disaggregating these terms. Although participants acknowledged the intention behind some of these funds (i.e., to allocate resources to underrepresented and under-supported creatives), the structure and distribution of these funds caused many participants to question funders' motivations.

Issues with the term “BIPOC” (used to refer to Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) were raised throughout these conversations.

- Regardless of its origin, participants felt that the inclusion of Black in “BIPOC” had the effect of absorbing Black creatives into a monolith of “other”. Not only does this fail to recognize the enormous diversity across Black, Indigenous and People of Colour communities, it also fails to attend to the range of experiences within Black communities. Participants felt the term BIPOC served non-Black stakeholders more than Black professionals.

Participants also described issues with the allocation of “BIPOC” and/or “Racialized” funds:

- The dearth of financial support for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour professionals means that the introduction of specialized funds garners an enormous amount of attention and appeal from these communities.
- Participants spoke to the ways these funds further limit creators by (1) offering smaller funds to begin with, (2) having proportionally fewer available, leading to an ‘oversubscription’ by applicants. The result is an already small amount of money being split many ways.
 - » Participants explained how this undermines their ability to make a quality production, while being evaluated on the quality of that production without acknowledgement of the context (e.g., limited resources/funds granted).
- Participants expressed frustration and deep concern with the way these circumstances are used by sector gatekeepers to reinforce ideas about lack of talent in Black communities, while at the same time, setting them up to fail.

The notion of ‘identifying’ as Black was also problematic.

- Use of the term ‘identify’ implies that being Black is a choice, which is both disrespectful to Black people *and* leaves the door open to misappropriation and claims of identity that allow non-Black people to access funds and other resources intended to support Black creatives.
- Participants noted that white people are not asked to ‘identify’ as white to access funding, underscoring the implicit assumption that white creators are automatically eligible for all funds, while Black creatives are limited to specialized funds while also having to prove their eligibility for those funds.

The industry isn’t – and shouldn’t – be easy

Woven throughout the experiences shared by participants in this study was the acknowledgement of, and support for the fact that the industry is challenging. Mid-career and established professionals, especially, reinforced that the equity work they have undertaken for years was not to make access easier for Black professionals, but to **remove the ascriptive⁶ inequalities that disproportionately limit Black talent from sector membership.**

- Some participants expressed concern that superficial DEI efforts and interventions risk giving emerging creatives a false sense of expectation.
- Some established professionals shared frustration about their experiences mentoring younger creatives who have benefitted from an influx of development programs and organizations trying to “get on the right side of history”, without gaining an understanding of how the sector ‘works’.
- These participants expressed concern that the combination of superficial sector commitments and lack of sector awareness among younger creatives will lead to serious gaps in their development, with two important potential consequences:
 - » First, this creates an untenable situation for emerging creatives. Without these critical experiences, younger creatives will not develop the knowledge and technical skills required for a sustainable career.

6 Ascription occurs when people are placed in positions in a stratification system because of qualities beyond their control (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, religion, socioeconomic status).

- » Second, insufficient access to quality development is already a problem that inadvertently reinforces false narratives about “lack of talent” directed toward Black creatives. Participants expressed concern that high expectations (“sense of entitlement”) paired with gaps in knowledge / skill among some younger creatives promote behaviours that could similarly reinforce negative stereotypes about working with Black talent.

“It’s a hard industry. The odds are against you even not thinking about your colour. It’s not like everybody white gets in. So, to hear someone being casual about writing a grant or not getting funding or whatever just sounds so apathetic. Don’t wait for someone to hand it to you. You have to hustle. You have to use your brain. What are you going to do next?”



Skill Development

For most participants, skill development was a continuous pursuit. This included both formal (e.g., post-secondary degrees, sector-provided programming) and informal (e.g., self-directed learning through videos, books, etc.) development activities.

Self-development and creative communities are more accessible & reliable than formal programs

When it comes to skill development, participants described a variety of efforts that commonly spanned informal and formal education and training.

Self-development was the core strategy for developing technical and creative skills

(building one's craft):

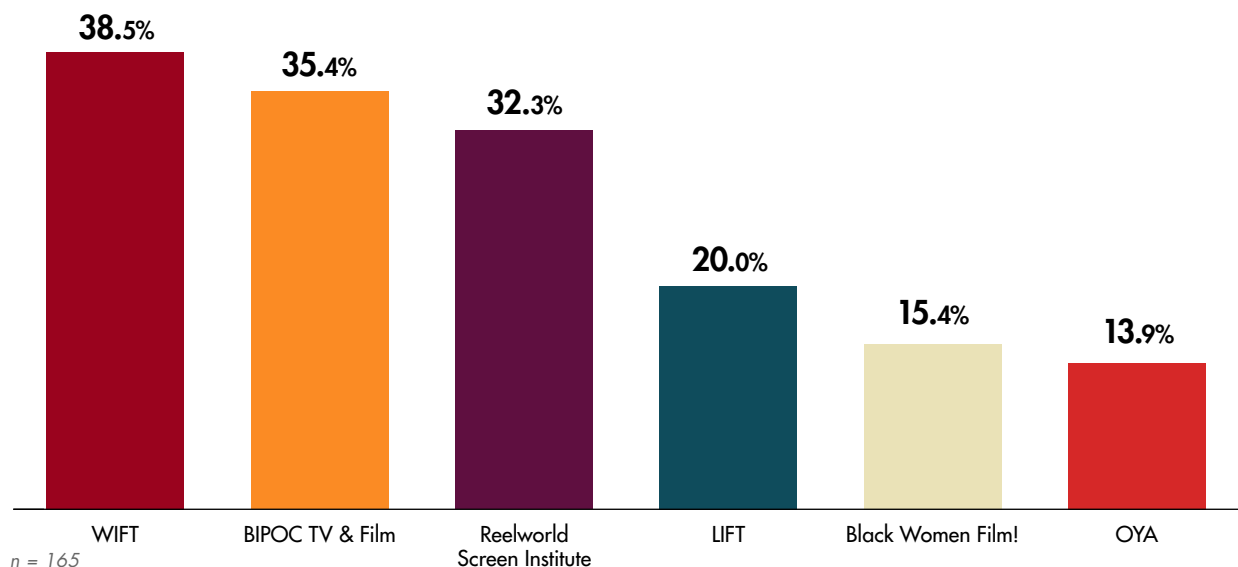
- Videos 64.6%
- Observing & mimicking others 60.9%
- Formal books 51.6%
- Articles/trades 48.4%
- Watching 'behind the scenes' videos 35.9%

Part of participants' self-development strategies involved **being part of formal and informal creative communities**, which provided important development and support, such as:

- Feedback on creative work
- Collaboration on creative projects
- Emotional support / resilience
- Access to other relationships / networks
- Sector savvy (how to navigate the sector)

“Self-learning and always taking initiative to discover inexpensive resources like YouTube and networking with industry professionals who are willing to collaborate and teach new skills have assisted me in working in the sector.”

These creative communities included **Black-led** (e.g., BSO, BIPOC TV & Film) and **Black-serving** (e.g., Reelworld, POV) **organizations** that have been **established to address the issues created by systemic anti-Black racism** that are encountered by Black professionals in the sector.



While skill development in the sector often relies on self-development, participants acknowledged that the increased reliability of culturally-specific creative communities over institutionalized and/or sector-driven development is unique to Black creatives. These differences were attributed to deficits in sector programs, rather than preferred means of development for Black professionals.

Development programs fail to deliver on promises of credibility & access

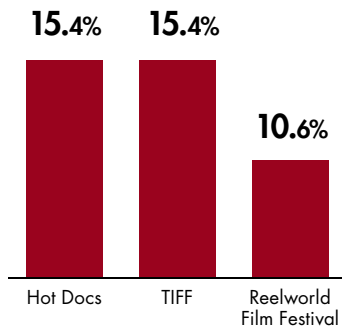
Educational institutions and sector development programs offered important **pathways to accessing**

relationships and creative/technical development.

While broader sector narratives tend to underrate the value of formal education/certification, participants described pursuing additional and advanced degrees as a means of building sector credibility – particularly among mid-career professionals seeking advancement.

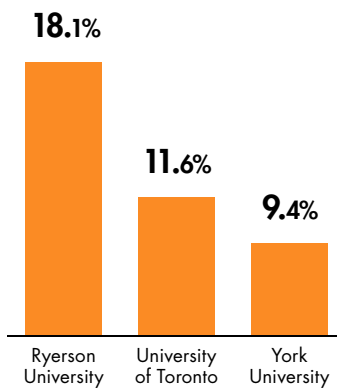
43.4% of participants reported that getting access to people/relationships was a primary motivation for participating in development programs. This was followed by the desire to learn from industry experts, build technical skills, build business skills, and receive mentorship.

Festivals



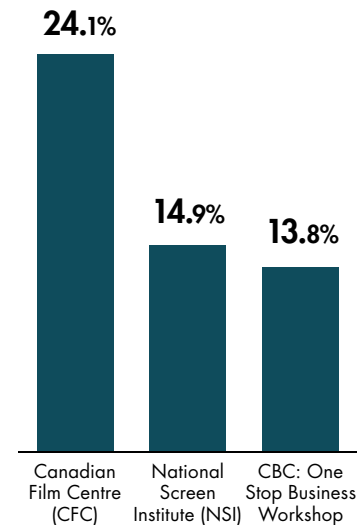
n = 189

Educational Institutions



n = 218

Sector Institutions



n = 181

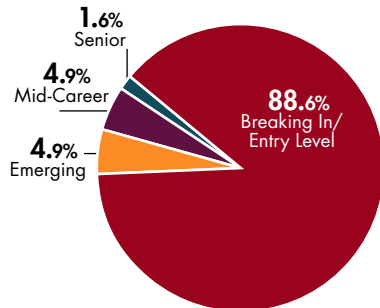


Overall, participants indicated that development programs tended to overpromise the benefits they deliver due to:

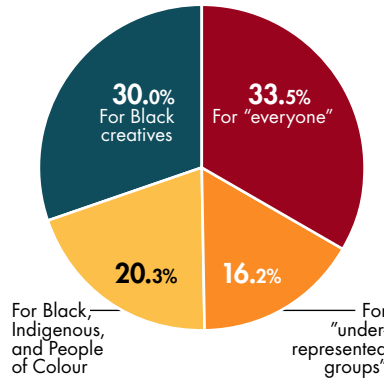
- Focus on theoretical understanding more than practical application, making the learning less transferrable to working the sector.
- Limited, short-duration placements do not lead to sustainable relationships or tangible employment post-program.
- Processes supporting various pathways to entry (e.g., job & program applications) reproduce systemic exclusions for Black professionals, including prohibitive application requirements (e.g., having to pre-identify a mentor to participate in a mentoring program; requiring nomination by program/funding decision-makers to be eligible to apply).

To provide context for the evaluation of sector development programs, a total of 163 programs/interventions were reviewed as part of this study ⁷, with the following findings:

Programs by career stage

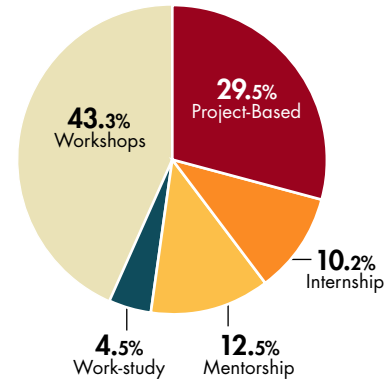


Programs by target audience



Programs by type

(i.e., project-based, placement in an organization / internship, mentorship, etc.)



The experiences shared by participants are clarified by results of this review, which illuminated the ways sector programs, incubators, and other development interventions are **not designed to support Black creatives – even when those programs are designed ‘for’ Black professionals**. Indeed, although 30% of the 163 programs/interventions reviewed were framed as being for Black creatives, for many participants, prohibitively high costs, required resources, and prerequisite experiences or relationships limited eligibility for and participation in these programs:

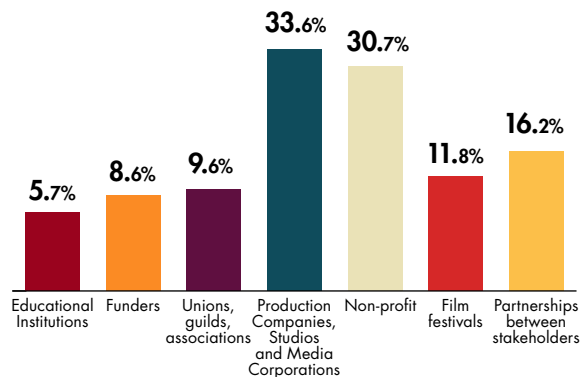
15.1%

required financial costs of the participants (in the form of application and/or participation fees).

70%

of these programs required participants to have/bring resources (e.g., a pre-existing network/relationships, credibility, a robust project, technical equipment).

Programs by stakeholder/provider



Moreover, participants shared that the development programs they participated in did little to prepare them for navigating careers in the industry. These gaps could be divided into three categories:

- (1) lack focus on the practical and technical aspects of the industry,
- (2) limited preparation navigating the sector (i.e., navigating the networking and entrepreneurial dimensions of the work), and
- (3) lack of training in the ‘business’ side of the sector.

⁷ Please see Appendix A for the list of programs included in this analysis.

Lack of practical focus

Participants consistently expressed a desire for more hands-on, 'practical' work in development programs, citing most programs as either too theoretical or too divorced from the current realities and demands of the 'real-world' industry (technical, entrepreneurial).

- Despite several programs involving a placement or project-focus, participants shared that lack of structure, planning, and employer accountability often undermine the quality of these opportunities (e.g., they are there to observe only, or are assigned tasks that take them away from the actual work).
- Participants felt that more co-op forms of training, as well as access to mentor networks or apprenticeships, would help confront this gap.

Limited preparation for navigating the sector

Relationships and social capital are the main currencies that enable sector navigation. While technical skills are important, participants reinforced that much of this can be learned on-the-job (and indeed, much of the sector views on-the-job learning as the only meaningful way to develop the craft), building sector savvy – knowing how to identify, connect to, and build relationships with important people (key/senior creatives, funders, executives, other stakeholders), understanding how information moves and where to find opportunities – is essential to sector success.

- Participants consistently remarked on the absence of sector savvy from programs. Even when programs are designed to connect participants with key stakeholders, these opportunities focus on putting participants in brief contact with these stakeholders without guidance or opportunity for developing relationships.
- Related research⁸ underscores differences in the ways Black creatives must build meaningful relationships with non-Black counterparts to be 'seen' creatively. In the current study, participants described how the parameters of these programs, which are not premised on the experiences of Black professionals, put them at a disadvantage – especially they compared to other (mostly non-Black) participants.



Lack of training about the business of the industry and distribution

Participants emphasized the gap in training focused on the 'business' side of the industry, which included: networking, pitching projects, finding funding for projects, gaining referrals that lead to more work, and understanding the mechanism of film distribution.

Not only are these topics left unaddressed by most programs, but participants also explained that the segmentation of many development programs according to stages of production encourages a short-term focus: attention is focused on securing funding and support to "get over the next hurdle" (e.g., getting a project developed, moving into production) without knowledge or guidance about the work they could or should be doing to get projects to distribution.

- **40.3% reported limited/no knowledge about the marketing/distribution process in Canada**, and 31.3% reported having some understanding, but not feeling connected to the right people/resources.
- **50.6% reported limited/no knowledge about the marketing/distribution process Internationally**, while 26.6% have some understanding.

8 POV (2022). Understanding Social Capital in Canada's Screen Media Sector.

Participants elaborated that **not understanding the mechanisms of distribution has tangible consequences when it comes to income and ownership** – two factors that can not only make the business pragmatically unsustainable, but also leave participants feeling vulnerable to being taken advantage of by more experienced professionals.

- Overcoming these gaps in understanding was typically achieved through trial and error, or with the ‘luck’ of having a more senior person who included them in meetings and brought them into spaces from which they would otherwise be excluded. This further reinforced the importance of having good mentors.
- Participants emphasized the need for programs to address how money is made on a project, and what they can do to protect themselves (e.g., how to navigate tax credits and the expectation that producers reinvest their tax credit as part of the budget) and were clear that **understanding the business is integral to sustainability**. Indeed, 47.9% of survey participants reported aspiring to the role of ‘Producer’, for which strong knowledge of the business of producing is imperative.

“There wasn’t an emphasis on how to make a film through funding and often our school’s program treated our films as unprofessional projects instead of works we could use to further our careers. There was not a lot of how to get work after graduating or how to sell a film. The logistics of making a film outside of school that is not self-funded was touched on briefly in a producing class but not to the degree that was needed to get that work done after graduating.”

Lack of workforce continuity planning post-program

In addition to the improvements needed to make development programs more effective, participants acknowledged the limitations of development programs, overall. That is, there is only so much training that one can do - ultimately, success requires being part of the workforce.

A strong criticism of current programs is the lack of workforce planning and sector commitments to employing Black creatives who complete these development programs. This was of particular concern when it came to programs aiming to create ‘pipelines of talent’ in which larger cohorts of participants are offered development. These programs set the expectation that participation will position them for tangible work opportunities and set them apart as candidates. But the sector is not consistently on board; organizations have not committed to hiring participants, which means that participants are developed or accelerated but have nowhere to go post-program. This, again, leaves participants to carry the risk and investment with limited accountability from the sector.



Mid-career and established professionals need more visibility & targeted support

This study included a large proportion of mid-career and established professionals who pointed to the lack of development and support throughout the entire career lifecycle as a critical factor that limits upward sector mobility and continued career progression.

Mid-career participants described becoming ‘stuck’ as they encountered several explicit and implicit barriers to continued career development, such as:

- Lack of transparency about how to find opportunities and navigate to mid-level roles.
- Not having access to / relationships with the ‘right’ people in increasingly senior roles (who influence the selection of people occupying mid- and senior-level roles).
- Limited mentorship, particularly by Black mentors, due in large part to the relative absence of Black professionals from senior/decision-making roles (which creates a self-perpetuating cycle of exclusion).
- Most development programs and funds focus on emerging career professionals⁹.

“We need mid-career training all programs are for emerging creators.”

Established professionals clarifies that being ‘established’ does not inherently mean being ‘successful’.

- Many participants who identified as ‘established’ (which they reported as a function of the number of years and projects they had been involved in) would not consider their careers ‘sustainable’ or ‘stable’.
- The sector, however, seems to treat established professionals as having reached an apex, or the end of their development, which is communicated by the lack of programs, funding, and other supports for established professionals.

- When established professionals are included in development programs, it is often in the role of mentor. Participants shared the frustration of being expected to look retrospectively at their careers that are still very much in progress (i.e., lack of encouragement of a forward focus).
- Meanwhile, established participants emphasized several opportunities for continued development that would not only result in more sustainable careers, but contribute to a more diverse, sustainable sector. These areas included understanding IP/ownership, business affairs, organizational capacity-building, and opportunities for entrepreneurial pursuits alongside their creative work.

Programs saturate the bottom of the workforce funnel and make the pipeline unsustainable

The overemphasis on ‘emerging’ professionals among current programming creates an increasingly large pool of underdeveloped talent, without creating the supports and scaffolding that foster continued development and access to increasingly senior roles.

- Lack of support for mid-career and established professionals directly contributes to the ‘tyranny of emerging’.
- Mid-career and established professionals are critically positioned to build sustainable pipelines of Black talent but are limited by lack of access to decision-making roles.
- Limited presence of Black professionals in mid- and senior-level decision-making roles creates a self-reinforcing system of exclusion in which Black professionals are underrepresented in workforce pipeline at all levels.

Mid-career and established creatives offer significant potential to drive system change by moving into decision-making/sector-influencing creative and corporate roles, which is a critical opportunity being missed.

“It’s been very hard to find programs or very good networking opportunities for Blacks who are interested in decision-making positions and have strong transferable skills from other industries.”

9 Of the programs reviewed for this study, 93.5% focused on breaking in/emerging professionals, while only 4.9% were for mid-career, and 1.6% were for senior-level professionals.

Development programs are not designed for Black creatives

Participants spoke to the broader attributes of sector development programs, referring to the environments, pedagogy, and composition of these programs.

- While 30% of the programs reviewed for this study named Black creators as the target audience, **57.4% of participants reported that none of the programs they attended were designed for Black creatives.** Another 18.6% felt unsure whether the program was supposed to be for Black creatives, and 17.5% reported that some or a few of the programs they attended were Black-focused.

Only 4.9% of participants had accessed a development program that was Black-led or Black-focused.

Most prevalently, participants described a lack of community in training programs, and an overall desire for belonging in those programs. This lack of community was amplified by the anti-Black racism and gender-based prejudices enacted by staff and other participants, owing to the lack of diversity and representation among instructors, mentors, and participants.

- **67.8% of participants reported that most participants in the development programs they attended were white.**
- **65.1% reported that the instructors / industry experts staffing these programs were also white.**

When program leaders were not Black:

- 69.8% of participants reported that **race was not addressed.**
- 36.3% said that **white instructors centred themselves and/or whiteness.**
- 31.3% indicated that **differences related to race, racism, and oppression were minimized.**
- 20.1% directly **expressed doubts about the experiences of Black creators**, and reinforced the idea that talent is the foremost determinant of sector access.

Programs framed as diversity-focused tend to use umbrella categories like Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (or the less favourable, “BIPOC”), which participants described as pacifying the sector’s discomfort with having to address anti-Black racism and oppression.



- These programs treat Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour communities as an aggregate, while reserving the larger share of sector opportunities for non-Black professionals.
- Moreover, broader categories like “underrepresented” or “diverse creatives” were observed to privilege those with proximity to white men (e.g., white women).

Despite the ineffectiveness of these programs in delivering tangible opportunities for Black professionals, participants explained they continue to engage in these programs because there are few other options. For many, not participating was leaving out a potential pathway (even if that pathway was often not useful).

- This was **particularly true among participants from Québec**, where established, program-based pathways between institutions (e.g., UQAM) and the sector serve as conduits for many emerging creatives.
- Participants detailed blatant anti-Black racism in these programs, which rarely include Black participants.¹⁰

10 For a detailed review of Québec development programs and the experiences of Black creatives, see Mathieu, 2023.

Seeking Black creativity and artistic voice

Amidst the sense of urgency for representation in both the composition and staffing of development programs, participants asserted a strong desire for **pedagogies and modes of instruction specific and relevant to the lives of Black creatives; for aesthetics, stories, and culture that reflected and celebrated Black lives.**

This underscored the **need for Black-led development programs that were designed by and for Black creatives**, staffed by Black instructors and industry experts, and comprised of Black participants. These spaces would centre Black creatives and permit a more fulsome experience.

“I’ve had enough of Black Excellence. What about Black mediocrity? How about Black failure? How about letting us be human? There is no learning curve for Black people – we have to be perfect, to know everything, to do it right every time.”

Development programs are precursors to ‘being seen’ authentically

The urgency for Black leadership in development programs was also reinforced by **deep concerns about current content**. Development programs impact current on-screen content in two important ways:

- Teaching, conditioning, and reinforcing particular ways of storytelling (i.e., conveying what ‘good’ writing, directing, etc. looks, sounds, and feels like).
- Identifying and connecting emerging and some mid-career creatives to future opportunities (funding, jobs, etc.).

Together, these programs shape who is creating content and how. In the absence of Black leadership, these programs risk perpetuating the representation of Black people in entertainment content as one of struggle and trauma, and the use of negative stereotypes and tropes that continue to position being Black as ‘other’.

Québec-based participants referred often to the ways broadcasters and other gatekeepers speak about Black people that “centres their othering”.

“The Black narrative here is always one of struggle, of confronting white Francophone culture, instead of realizing that there are lots of Black Francophones simply living in Québec.”

Being Black in Canada's Screen Media Sector



Participants reflected a diverse array of vibrant creative communities, rich with story and creative talent, juxtaposed against an exclusive, systemically oppressive sector that is slow to evolve amidst increasing pressures for sustainable change and accountability. The decades of sector experience shared by participants permitted a rare, but invaluable, long-term view of the sector's history.

Many participants noted that over a 20-25 year span, it is only recently (in the last 2-3 years) that awareness of anti-Black racism is reaching the sector's 'inner circle', undoubtedly advanced by the "racial reckoning" and resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement precipitated by the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Doubts about the sector's sustained motivation for change has created a strong sense of urgency among many participants to make the most of these opportunities and ensure that all Black communities are supported.

“George Floyd’s death has galvanized a whole bunch of people, but the conversation and the experiences of people who look like me, they’re not new. What has happened, though, is that Mr. Floyd’s death, has pushed people to do something about things they have been told about for a very long time.”

It was this sense of urgency, augmented by an enduring belief that “this is all going to disappear” that compelled participation in this research. After decades of fighting in the sector, many mid-level and established Black professionals reported feeling a sense of responsibility to create a safe, inclusive sector in which Black creativity and storytelling can thrive.

Anti-Black racism is prevalent & persistent

Anti-Black racism remains prevalent in Canada's screen media sector, inflicting harm, perpetuating systemic exclusions, and validating oppressive practices.

Participants shared frequent experiences of anti-Black racism across settings (e.g., workplaces, development programs), which emerged in several ways, including experiences of:

- Harassment, violence, and microaggressions (83.1%)
- Unsafe workplaces (56%)
- Cultural isolation and being 'othered' (81.7%)
- Unequal pay for similar jobs (74.5%)
- Exclusion from meetings, discussions, decisions on projects (69%).
- Perceived 'lack of talent' based on identity (82.7%)
- Concerns from white professionals that programs for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour will block access to jobs, funding, and other resources for others (68.9%).

“I participated in a Black documentary filmmaking program, and it was meant to provide training and funding for a short film. That program was harmful because the people in charge, who were not Black, used language riddled with microaggressions to assert themselves above the people in the program and there was also some harassment and shaming involved.”

These experiences of anti-Black racism exert an immediate toll, while also having protracted negative impacts on career development and the ability of Black professionals to remain working in the sector over the long-term:

- 88% of participants shared experiences of harassment and cultural violence, some of which resulted in leaving situations (development programs, workplaces) that were critical to their continued career development.
- Exclusions from meetings, discussions, and general lack of transparency in decision-making processes are often overt (i.e., being excluded from meetings they should be in based on role/experience), but can also appear inadvertent (e.g., creative leads being told to ‘opt out’ of business-related meetings). In both cases, this exclusion inhibits development by blocking Black creatives from the knowledge and experiences required for more senior roles.
- Territorial and gatekeeping behaviours by sector stakeholders communicating (both directly and indirectly) that Black creatives “should be satisfied” or “should accept what [they] are given” in terms of roles and opportunities, contributing to the exclusion of Black creatives from opportunities to develop progressive skills and responsibilities.

Participants reflected on the cumulative effects of negative stereotyping (e.g., assumed lack of talent based on identity), microaggressions, casual exclusion, and othering that for some, is internalized over time. Many participants conveyed the emotional, psychological, and physical toll of this constant stress.

Participants also described the ways anti-Black racism is reified through relational power dynamics.

For example, the predominance of white, cis-men in positions of power means that many mentoring relationships involving Black creatives often pairs Black creatives with white men in mid- and senior-level positions. Similarly, it has become an increasingly common practice for emerging and mid-career Black professionals to be matched with a ‘more experienced’ white counterpart (e.g., producer) when undertaking a project or role that is deemed (often by a white stakeholder) outside the Black professional’s scope of readiness (e.g., showrunning a series for the first time; leading a larger-budget project).

- While not all of these relationships are detrimental, this dynamic can reinforce (false) narratives about belonging and power (i.e., the sector is a ‘white’ space, the white professional ‘owns’ sector knowledge, is ‘making room’ or ‘giving away’ something that is ‘theirs’)¹¹.

These precarious dynamics are exacerbated when the non-Black mentor or colleague holds negative beliefs about sector efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- For example, the increase in specialized funds for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour creatives and/or projects has led to some white creatives being forcibly paired with Black talent to access further funding (e.g., 51%/49% ownership models to meet the criteria for Black-owned projects).
- When this pairing involves white creatives who believe that programs supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour creatives, producers, actors, and tech/crew take jobs, funds, and other opportunities available *away from them*, it puts Black creatives at risk of significant harm.

In addition to the immediate harms of being in relationship with a hostile counterpart, these opportunities are often used to evaluate the potential of the Black creator – that is, their success or perceived failure will have a much greater influence over future opportunities than is the case for the white creative. Consequently, Black professionals in these situations may be compelled to endure the violence perpetuated without support, and at the further expense of creative success.

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¹¹ See POV, 2022 for a discussion of mentorship dynamics.

The Burden of Expectation: Failing means “Failing Forever”

The anti-Black racism built-in to sector practices raises the already-high stakes of sector participation for Black professionals. While the sector commonly endorses narratives of scarcity and notions that “any job can be your last”, these narratives ring true among the experiences of Black professionals.

Participants explained that having the **opportunity to experience failure is undervalued** and taken for granted by non-Black creatives, speaking at length about the impermissibility for Black professionals to take risks, make mistakes, and learn – all of which are fundamental to the creative process.

“When you’re underrepresented and you fail, you fail forever.”

Sector stakeholders frame investments in Black talent as ‘high risk’, premised on false stereotypes about talent and potential, and on biased audience information that assumes ‘Black stories’ will not appeal to the general Canadian audience. When Black-led projects are undertaken, participants described the burden of these biased expectations as raising the stakes such that any perceived failure can be terminal.

For Black professionals, not only do mistakes threaten their individual careers, but also those of their Black colleagues, or the “whole Black community”. Participants described sector stakeholders as treating Black communities as a monolith, for which each individual creative is viewed as a proxy; their individual talent, performance, and potential is taken as a direct representation of all Black people.

“While you’re here, you represent the whole Black community... they won’t give somebody else an opportunity because you made a mistake. Others are judged by their work and their expertise.”

Participants in Québec described how oppressive systems combine with internalized narratives (on the part of decision-makers) to set Black Francophone creatives up for failure:

- Application processes, biased evaluation processes, and the need to make oneself ‘legible’ to white adjudicators create systemic barriers to access for Black professionals.
- Decision-makers’ evaluations are predicated on a history of viewing Black creators and projects as ‘less than’ and not feasible or worth investing in.

Consequently, the challenges faced by Black Francophone creatives are treated as ‘inevitable’; decision-makers are unmotivated to support the application process because Black creatives are not expected to succeed.

Black creatives face challenges to personhood and creative ownership

Participants emphasized the difficulties inherent in navigating and succeeding in a sector that centres whiteness and white stories, with both personal and creative consequences.

- At the individual level, participants described “hiding [their] Blackness to make [themselves] more palatable” to non-Black colleagues and workplaces.
- This included changing the way they look (clothes, hair, etc.) to ‘fit in’ and changing the way they communicate to be seen, heard, and recognized by colleagues.
- Many participants described longing for Black spaces that privileged Black aesthetics, culture, and ways of being in which they could show up fully as themselves.

“It doesn’t feel good when you are in a place because there’s a quota. Or because someone was nice but other people are asking ‘why are you here?’, as if you don’t have anything to bring to the table; like you have no perspective.”

- Relatedly, participants shared on-set experiences that were persistently ‘othering’, such as not being able to book jobs because the project “could not find” someone to work with Black hair, or not having makeup in the right skin colour.
- A majority of participants also shared experiences of tokenism and described the prevalence of superficial commitments to diversity that reduce Black professionals to a number, diminishing or ignoring the value of their narrative and creative contributions.



“I left a job at a VFX studio because I was frequently asked to offer my opinion as the ‘Black representative’ on company initiatives, often on issues way above my expertise or pay grade. It was tokenizing and uncomfortable.”

A broader consequence of these pressures that has gained increasing attention is the **lack of authentic and representative content being developed¹², which is predicated on the presence of Black creatives producing work that not only reflects Black stories, but also incorporates Black aesthetics and culture as part of all kinds of stories.**

Related research has underscored the urgency of telling authentic and representative stories, which was reinforced by participants in this study. While participants acknowledged some improvements in this area in recent years, they often described these experiences as fraught.

- 53.1% of participants disclosed at least one experience in which more powerful (often white) creatives or other stakeholders took credit for (and the financial benefits from) ideas, development, and other work completed by Black creatives.
- Concerns about ownership and intellectual property (IP) recurred in the contexts of development programs and specialized funding, in which non-Black professionals gain access to resources by leveraging the identities of their Black counterparts.

12 see [Being Seen, 2022](#); [Being Counted, 2022](#).

- 57% participants described being pressured to change storylines to centre non-Black narratives and characters. This kind of feedback denies the creative credibility of Black creatives, while misappropriating cultural narratives. Moreover, pressures to ‘show a desire to learn’ as an indicator of passion/ commitment pressures Black creatives to surrender narrative sovereignty to ‘make it’ in the sector.

Francophone participants from Québec described the additional complexity of language when it comes to Black stories.

- Participants reported that systemic racism is not recognized in Québec, while narratives about language-based oppression are common.
- French language is integral to the cultural identity of being Québécois.
- In the cultural imaginary of French Québécois, Black people are positioned as antagonists, characterized by one-dimensional stereotypes that have defined the prototypical ‘Black character’ that appears in francophone productions¹³.

Together, this creates a situation in which Black creatives are continually oppressed, their stories are erased, and these experiences are denied by the sector at large.

13 This analysis was detailed during an interview with MA candidate Marina Mathieu. For a complete analysis and discussion of the Québec screen sector and matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion, please see Mathieu, 2023.

The experiences of Black creatives across Canada highlight the critical relationships between funding, development/production, and audience, and the urgency of having Black professionals in all decision-making and key creative roles:

- Development programs privilege and train certain ways of storytelling, reinforcing what is considered 'quality' in the sector.
- When development programs are led by mostly white stakeholders, whiteness is privileged in definitions of 'quality'.
- Funders, Broadcasters, and Producers use evaluation criteria and these internalized conceptions of 'quality' to decide which stories are relevant. When Black professionals are not present in these decision-making roles, Black creatives must reshape their projects to be legible and relatable to non-Black stakeholders. This erases the experiences and stories of Black people.
- Funders, Broadcasters, and Producers make critical choices for what Canadian audiences will see. If Black decision makers are not occupying these roles, *not all* of Canada's audiences are being represented.
- Audience research privileges certain audiences and asks about content that is currently on screen. If Black creatives are not producing content that is viewed by all audiences, data showing the relevance, interest, and importance of Black projects is not collected.
- The absence of data is used as evidence *against* the marketability and interest of these projects, rather than recognizing the methodological gaps that lead to these missing data.



Disillusionment about EDI

Amidst recognition that recent cultural shifts have had a notable impact on diversity and inclusion efforts, participants expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with the slow pace of positive change in the sector, and disillusionment with existing EDI frameworks that do little to foster meaningful equity.

Diversity & Inclusion are not the same as Equity

Participants were clear to differentiate diversity and inclusion from equity, sharing that while the sector focuses on diversity and inclusion, **equity is required for real change.**

- Diversity and inclusion focus on numbers (who is present in a space) while equity focuses on quality (what are they doing in that space?).
- This misapplied use of 'diversity' narrows opportunities for Black creatives (e.g., working only on Black stories) and gives an inflated impression of progress.

“I am grateful that there is change happening but there is a great deal to dismantle. Those who have always had will continue to push back as they are very attached to their rich and deep wallets and privilege.”

Participants also remarked on the ways **'diverse'** is **incorrectly used as a noun** (i.e., “she is a diverse creative”), to the omission of actual identity. They described it as **another way of not being seen** by the sector.

“D&I initiatives are great...but it's such a fine line between support and feeling tokenized...I'm in support of companies getting help for their diversity hiring initiatives, but as the marginalized employee, it felt so uncomfortable to know this outright. I didn't need to know the company was getting 'paid' to hire me.”

Shallow Corporate EDI Measures Predominate

Participants frequently commented on how the COVID-19 pandemic and intersecting social crises over the last several years have “exposed systemic racism” to sector stakeholders, contributing to mounting pressures to respond with tangible commitments to change.

But this 'realization' was, itself, an indicator of privilege. For Black creatives who have long experienced bias and discrimination not only in the screen media sector but in their communities, healthcare settings, schools, businesses, and the justice system, the fact of systemic racism is unavoidable.

“The systems oppressing us were designed to be oppressive and exclusionary. We have been modifying and tweaking, but the foundation upon which it is all built is still here.”

Several participants noted that it took severe acts of violence against Black people that received mainstream media attention for sector stakeholders to 'see', feel implicated, and take seriously the need for lasting reforms. Some wondered about a relationship between the extremity of these circumstances and the trauma narratives that too often characterize Black stories for non-Black decision-makers in defining what it 'takes' to be 'seen'.



Participants expressed **significant doubts about the sincerity and sustainability of the many public statements and commitments** made by the sector’s primary gatekeepers over the last several years.

- Focus on diversity over inclusion or equity brings Black professionals into largely unsafe spaces that, themselves, have not changed (nor have actionable plans to change).
- Inconsistencies in standards and lack of commitment to specific measures leaves organizations without a system of accountability, and no way to evaluate the implementation or effectiveness of these commitments.
- Lack of data collection hides the actual impacts of EDI programs and interventions, some of which are becoming visible through other research (e.g., the progress of white women into positions of power as a proxy for satisfying diversity commitments¹⁴).
- Some commitments have been in place for several years, without observable impacts, begging the question for many participants about what work is being done.
- Statements about difficulty implementing EDI (e.g., “it’s so hard to find talent”, “I don’t know where to look”, and “there’s no one qualified for the job”) absolves employers and sector stakeholders from accountability in the absence of effective measures – an issue that 90.6% of participants reported encountering directly.
- Given the denial of systemic racism in Québec, Francophone participants questioned the viability of Québec’s commitments to diversity and inclusion (e.g., the creation of specialized funds).

“The sector’s response is advancing white women, and that becomes diversity.”

14 See WIVOS, 2021

Commodifying diversity

Participants also commented on the ways EDI has been capitalized upon by non-Black stakeholders. Diversity has become a ‘hot topic’ that **enables non-Black organizations to acquire social and economic benefits**¹⁵. Moreover, non-Black organizations and stakeholders can acquire these benefits by making commitments to diversity – with or without sustainable actions.

Here, the matter of “Identifying as Black” underscores the ways non-Black creatives might and have chosen to self-identify in ways that give them access to funding and other opportunities that were created specifically for Black creatives. Not only do these actions remove crucial opportunities for Black creatives, but this behaviour also transforms the identities that make the sector unsafe for Black professionals into tangible benefits for non-Black creatives. This is violence against Black people.

Overall, the approach to EDI that commodifies diversity defines the value of being Black according to the benefits it delivers to non-Black people and organizations.



15 For an examination of racial capitalism and the commodification of diversity, see Leong, 2021.

Strategies That Work

Amidst the variety of pathways and approaches shared by participants throughout this research, there were consistent patterns in the activities, practices, and principles that underlie strategies that ‘work’.

Black-owned and Black-led policies, spaces, development, and funding are crucial

Participants were clear about the differences in the quality and effectiveness of supports that are Black-owned and Black-led versus those created and staffed by non-Black stakeholders.

These differences are apparent in the current programs and interventions produced by the sector, that ‘make room’ for Black professionals without reconstructing the space, system, or paradigm in ways that centre the lives, experiences, stories, and needs of Black creatives. Interventions produced ‘for’ Black creatives without centering the inputs of Black creatives serve the priorities of non-Black stakeholders. It is therefore essential that all interventions have Black stakeholders in key decision-making roles (*all* interventions, not only interventions for Black creatives).

Black-led organizations are essential to personal and creative sustainability

Black-led organizations situated at the intersection of Black communities and the ‘core’ of the sector make essential contributions to the career development and sustainability of Black creatives.

Participants described examples of the important work undertaken by these organizations, such as:

- Creating and delivering employment frameworks, development programs, and mentorship opportunities that centre the needs and experiences of Black talent.
- Leadership on sector/system-level interventions, including committees and collaborative networks that influence stakeholder practices (e.g., Equity and Inclusion in Data Collection (EIDC) round table).
- Knowledge sharing and practical, hands-on support for navigating the sector (e.g., how to apply for funding, reviewing applications, etc.).
- Creating funding alternatives to those offered by the sector.

- Advocacy and research supporting system interventions (e.g., policy changes).

Participants further described that being connected to these organizations also enables horizontal, peer-to-peer relationships, creative collaboration, and emotional reciprocity that many participants deemed essential to their continued presence in the sector.

Importantly, the organizations supporting Black talent are not all the same.

Participants expressed frustration with the pressures Black-led organizations face to ‘collaborate’ from sector funders and other stakeholders. While real collaboration is important, the pressures described by participants have more to do with consolidation – that is, reducing the number of organizations, or projects, rooted in the incorrect belief that “they all do the same thing”.

- This messaging was often described in the context of funding applications, when organizations that funders assume are similar/the same (because they all support Black sector members) apply to the same fund or for different funding from the same funder.

This lack of understanding demonstrated by funders is significant, and linked to other critical findings:

- This messaging is another example of Black creatives and organizations having to justify their existence, and to “make a case” for legitimacy in the sector.
- It shows a lack of investment and implication on the part of stakeholders to engage with and understand the needs and experiences of Black creatives in the sector, and the organizations that support them. Participants suggested it reveals stakeholders’ superficial commitments to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sector, and causes them to question the sincerity of these commitments.
- It treats Black communities as a monolith, which they are not.

- This orientation echoes messages participants frequently shared about “being satisfied with what you can get” – the notion that sector opportunities are not ‘for’ them.
- It reveals a problematic acceptance of limiting the funds available to Black organizations and creatives, which are often designed to be divided amongst many Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour communities.

There is a tremendous amount of work to be done in the sector. Participants acknowledged the importance of communication between Black-led organizations and awareness of the important work each is undertaking to increase the benefits, and ensure all needs are being met. But the pressure to collaborate to reduce the number of projects does not do this work of increasing impact.

- Participants called on funders and other stakeholders to hold themselves accountable to understanding the spaces different organizations occupy, the work they undertake, the needs they address, and the specific communities and interests they support.
- Participants also acknowledged an opportunity to continue working toward greater transparency between Black-led organizations so that projects are complementary and amplifying.

Black-led development programs and mentorship create safe, equitable spaces for learning

While participants discussed observable limitations to the impacts of development programs, it was also clear that such programs can deliver important value.

- Participants have benefitted most when they have been able to show up fully in spaces, and where learning is both expected and encouraged; where mistakes do not mean ‘failing forever’, and where they are ‘seen’ and acknowledged in all their layers of complexity and personhood.
- Transparency was a common theme across formal and informal settings. Participants frequently recounted the exposure and accelerated learning gained from having mentors or other senior people providing visibility into various aspects of the business (i.e., explaining thinking processes, unpacking context, bringing people into meetings, etc.).
- A valuable aspect of this transparency was in illuminating the way different parts of the business are interconnected. This contrasts with typical development programs that segment parts of the development and production processes (e.g., thinking only about putting a pitch together), and

separate those from other aspects of the business (e.g., not including more ‘creatively focused’ producers in ‘business’ meetings).

The most useful supports focus on system changes and immediate impacts

A major criticism of existing supports centred on the disconnection between local and system-wide interventions. Focusing on diversity prioritizes numbers in a way that might create access for some people *right now* but without plans for longer-term sustainability. These local interventions importantly help individual creators access opportunities that *they* might be able to transform into more enduring success, but rarely have lasting effects on the system itself (e.g., employers might hire Black creatives while the employer environment, processes, and decision-makers remain unchanged).

At the same time, participants acknowledged that system-wide interventions are more complicated and can take longer to take shape using traditional pathways (e.g., policies).

Rather than choosing between these types of interventions, participants emphasized the effectiveness of supports that accomplish both at the same time. This “real work” creates immediate access for a number of Black creatives *right now*, while building in the wrap-around supports and measurable commitments that hold the sector accountable, and permit scalability such as:



- Employment frameworks that both accelerate Black talent into decision-making roles and provide a sustainable process for building and maintaining sources of future talent.
- Formal mentorship that provides structure, disrupts traditional power dynamics and places accountability on the mentor as much as the mentee.
- Workplace programs that hold employers accountable to changing the workplace environment (e.g., looking at hiring processes, etc.). These programs are most effective when led by Black EDI experts.
- Black-focused financing programs accelerate and amplify Black stories and storytelling, while also providing jobs and career growth for Black creatives.

When creating these interventions, participants emphasized the important role of Black-led organizations in driving an agenda that centres the needs of Black creators in a sector that remains deeply afflicted with anti-Black racism. This is a context that is inaccessible to non-Black stakeholders, inherently limiting the effectiveness of the supports they can offer.

- Participants shared feeling ‘known’ by organizations like the BSO, BIPOC TV & Film, and Reelworld, trusting and in some cases relying on their work – particularly when this work targets both local and sector-wide interventions.



Long-term sustainability often means leaving the constraints of Canada’s Screen Media sector

Although most participants said they planned to remain working in the screen media sector, this often involved alternative pathways that were not necessarily in Canada.

Alternative and adjacent paths to entry

For participants who planned to remain in Canada, finding and *creating* alternative and adjacent pathways to entry was an important means of navigating sector barriers.

- For some participants, this meant “making their own table” by creating a thriving creative community or ‘mini-sector’ adjacent to the sector’s core.
- Francophone participants referred to trends that see Black creatives in Québec pivoting to online content creation and using the attention and following to transfer that social capital to the screen media sector.
- Similar approaches were discussed by participants who built careers in adjacent sectors or mediums, like radio.

In most cases, these alternative approaches provided access to different types of funding and funding models from the barriered funding infrastructure of Canada’s Screen Media sector.

Leaving Canada

Most participants assumed they might need to leave Canada or had already left the Canadian system (at least temporarily or were working in both the US and Canada).

- Participants identified funding access as a major contributor to leaving Canada, where finances are controlled by a very small group of organizations.
- Participants also commented on “going where you’re wanted” rather than “chasing who doesn’t want you”. To this end, participants were receiving expressions of interest and the fostering of relationships that follow through with real commitments and resources from US and international stakeholders.
- The same has not been true for many participants in Canada, reinforcing the message that Canada might not be where they and their work belong.

Call to Action



This study explores the perspectives, experiences, and careers of Black producers, writers, creators, actors, and tech/crew who, until now, have not been fully represented in sector research, or appropriately disaggregated in sector data.

This study provides sector stakeholders with an informed path toward supporting Black talent, guided by the following calls to action:

Commit to inclusive funding practices that promote sustainability

- Hire Black decision-makers to bring cultural awareness to project selection and the allocation of funding.
- Invest directly into production companies by creating operational funds that provide organizational stability.
- Define a wider set of market factors in the allocation of funding to sustain and grow the pipeline of Canadian IP, both triggers and market factors need to be diversified, in support of both cultural and economic goals.

Revise decision-making: people, processes, and systems

- Accelerate Black professionals into mid-level and senior-level decision-making roles.
- Hold non-Black decision-makers accountable for understanding the spaces Black-led organizations occupy, the work they undertake, the needs they address, and the specific communities and interests they support.
- Redefine career stages and evaluation criteria to incorporate the experiences of Black producers, writers, creatives, actors, and tech/crew (see [Appendix C](#)).

Link employer-level interventions and accountability to funding and other opportunities

- Mandate education and training on anti-Black racism as part of awards/funding/credits.
- Follow up on education and training to track the changes employers have made and incorporate sustained change as a requirement for continued/future funding/eligibility.
- Commit to hiring from development programs.

Collaborate with Black-led organizations to revise the internal structure and design of development programs

Structure

- Revise the internal structure development programs to include Black instructors, mentors, and adjudicators.
- Require that non-Black instructors, mentors, and adjudicators follow equity practices in their own work (e.g., do they hire Black producers, writers, creatives, actors, and tech/crew? What positions do Black professionals occupy in their organizations? Who works on their projects?).
- Embed development programs into career pathways that lead to paid work.
- Prioritize the communal aspects of relationship building with mentors and executives, ensuring enough time is spent working with and alongside more senior creatives to build social capital.

Content

- Invest in development for mid-career and established professionals
- Create development programs that target key decision-making roles in which Black professionals are most significantly underrepresented (e.g., Showrunner).
- Provide practical training on the business side of the sector
- Create wrap-around supports that deliver hands-on learning around projects (e.g., grant-writing).

Conduct Quebec-based research in parallel

- Québec-based and Francophone professionals in the Screen Media sector are significantly underrepresented in most sector research to-date.
- Mobilizing research in Québec requires a “French-first” approach (versus English translated into French), undertaken in partnership by a Québécois firm.
- Research funds must be allocated to permit parallel studies.

Commit to equitable data collection and measure the impact of sector commitments

Appendix A: Methodology

Research Methodology

The research began with a review of the current sector landscape to set context. This included reviewing funding commitments, workforce practices, and development programs, with attention to practices and interventions supporting Black talent.

This context was followed by two complementary phases:

1. An Online Sector Survey
2. Qualitative interviews and focus groups.

The activities undertaken in these phases were guided by the following principles:

- The research design (how) and areas of focus (what) were determined using input and direction from industry stakeholders, funders, the BSO Research Advisory, and experienced researchers.
- The collection and interpretation of data, and the sharing of findings, provided individuals with the opportunity to tell their own stories, in their own words.
- The participant sample is as representative as possible at this stage, given the absence of consistent demographic information about the sector.

Sector Survey

The study employed established social research survey methods to collect input from sector professionals across roles, and at every career stage to share their understanding, perspectives, and experiences in the sector.

The survey was distributed through direct email to the BSO's extensive membership and professional networks, by sector organizations and partner associations to their memberships by email and newsletters, film festivals, and community programs, and by posting in popular Facebook groups that provide job and information resources to the sector.

Qualitative Interviews & Focus Groups

Sector interviews made it possible to cover a range of topics beyond what is possible through surveys alone, providing depth and context to the survey-based data. These interviews were opportunities to explore findings and themes from the survey data – to examine the 'why' and 'how' behind the perspectives shared.

Importantly, the qualitative interviews provided detail and nuance to make tangible the lived experiences shared by

participants. These insights were used to drive the research and analysis, which contrasts popular sector research that centres quantitative (i.e., survey-based) results. While survey-based methods are valuable, their interpretation requires context. This study appropriately privileged the context provided by study participants and the Research Advisory through the combination of qualitative interviews and focus groups.

Interview participants were drawn from participants who volunteered for follow up during the sector survey, key contacts of BSO and the research team, and sector professionals referred to by study participants. Participants also had the option of only participating in an interview or focus group (i.e., not complete the survey).

Privacy & Data Collection

Data were treated as confidential, and the privacy of participants was protected as much as possible. Participants had choices with respect to participation and anonymity, ranging from having their interviews/focus groups recorded on video (in which case their anonymity cannot be preserved and that was explained), to having no record of their interviews/focus groups.

- Survey data were anonymous and confidential, and interview/focus group data were confidential.
- Email addresses used for the communication during the project (for volunteer focus groups and interviews) were deleted after the project.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted using Zoom. Only those participants who consented to being recorded were recorded, even in group situations. For example, if one participant in the group declined to be recorded, the group was not recorded. Participants who chose not to be recorded remained anonymous.

Most participants agreed to have their interviews and/or focus groups recorded, on the condition that the only be used for the research and would be deleted once the research is complete.

- Audio/video recordings were used exclusively for data analysis purposes and will never be used in presentations or publications in their audio/video format, to prevent participants from being identified according to their identifiable speech patterns or opinions.

Research data will be retained only for the duration of the study and submission of the final summary report. Upon acceptance of the study deliverables by the funder(s), all participant data will be deleted.

Appendix B: Programs Reviewed

Programs Reviewed (163)

B.L.A.C.K. Ball Festival	Centennial College: Performing Arts Fundamentals Certificate	FilmPEI In-Kind Production Assistance Program
Banff Diversity of Voices	Centennial College: TV & Film - Business (Graduate Certificate)	Game Theory Films: Black, Indigenous, People of Colour Filmmaker Initiative
Banff Spark	CFC Features	George Brown: Acting for Media (Diploma)
Being Black in Canada: Filmmaking program	CFC Media Lab: Fifth Wave Connect	George Brown: Media Acting (Certificate)
Bell: Industry Development	CFC: Bursary fund for Black Creators	George Brown: Media Foundation (Certificate)
BIPOC TV & Film: BIPOC Children's TV Writing Bootcamp	CFC: Bursary fund for Underrepresented Creators	George Brown: Screenwriting & Narrative Design (Postgraduate)
BIPOC TV & Film: HireBIPOC Job Board	Charles Street Video workshops	George Brown: Sound Design & Production (Postgraduate)
BIPOC TV & Film: REELWORK Filmmaking Initiative	CMF: Feature Film Stream	George Brown: Video Design & Production (Diploma)
BIPOC TV & Film: Showrunner Training Bootcamp	CMF: Pilot program for Racialized Communities	George Brown: Visual Effects (Postgraduate)
BSO Black Creators Film Festival Initiative	CMPA Mentorship Program for Diverse Producers	Hot Docs: Cross currents + Netflix
BSO-BellMedia Pre-Development Incubator	CMPA: International Co-production Accelerator Program -	Hot Docs: CrossCurrents Canada Doc Fund
Black Space WPG: Afro Prairie Film Festival	CMPA: International Co-production Accelerator Program -	Hot Docs: Doc Ignite
Black Space WPG: Project Heal	CMPA: Mentorship Programs	Humber: Film and Media Production (Bachelor)
Black Women Film! Elevate Masterclass Series	CMPA: STAR Producer Program	Humber: Media Video Production (Certificate - School of Media Studies (Continued Education))
Black Women Film! Industry Directory	Collective Bunch: Membership-based community, workshops & seminars	In focus Film School: Film Production Program (1 year)
Black Women Film! Leadership Program	Corus-Banff Apprentice Program	Independent Filmmakers Co-operative of Ottawa: Youth program
Black Women Film! M/othering in the Industry	Creative BC: Equity and Emerging Development Program	Kids Can Pree Talent Incubator: Black Write Edition
Bring it Black: Films by Black Artists in Canada	Creative BC: REEL FOCUS BC's Equity + Emerging Development Program	Langara College: Art of Camera & Lighting
BSO – DGC Black Women Directors Accelerator Program	Creatives Empowered: Online training for PA role	Langara College: Digital Film Production Full & Part time
Canadian Academy Executive Residency Program	Creators of Colour Incubator	Langara College: Documentary Film Production
Canadian Independent Screen Fund for BPOC Creators	CSC Intern Program	Level UP
Capilano University: School of Motion Picture Arts	CSIF Filmmaker Mentorship Program	LIFT: LIFT OUT LOUD
Centennial College: Animation - 3D Diploma	DGC: Black Creatives Spotlight Series	LIFT: Production and Post-Production Support Grant
Centennial College: Art & Design Fundamentals Diploma	Doc Accelerator	LIFT: Workshops
Centennial College: Broadcasting (Advanced Diploma)	Drama Series Stream	NFB: Filmmaker Assistance Program (FAP)
Centennial College: Digital Visual Effects Diploma	Durham College: Video Production Diploma	
	Fabienne Colas Foundation (FCF): Black Film Festivals	
	Film and Video Arts Society: Calgary - Workshops and Classes	
	Film4Ward	

NFB: Francophone Creative Lab	Storyhive: Community Showcase	Vancouver Film School: Diploma and Degree programs
NFB: Internship	Telefilm Canada Talent to Watch Program	Vancouver International Black Film Festival
NFB: REPÊCHAGE	Telefilm Development Programs	WarnerMedia & The Black List: Writer Pipeline Project
NSI + CMF: EAVE On Demand Program	Telefilm: Development Program Stream for Racialized Persons/Visible Minorities	WarnerMedia Access x Canadian Academy Writers Program
NSI Business for Producers	Telefilm: Talent to Watch program	WarnerMedia: Global Access Writers Program
NSI Series Incubator	Telefilm: Theatrical documentary program	Whistler film festival: Doc Lab
OCAD: Digital Painting and Expanded Animation	The Absolutely Canadian Program	WIFT: Company 3 Post-Production Mentorship
OCAD: Integrated Media Program (Bachelor of Fine Arts)	The Black Academy: Skills & Development Program	WIFT: Intermedia Production Accounting & Tax Credits
OYA Emerging Filmmakers Program	The Black Academy: Write Your Legacy	WIFT: Introduction to Entertainment Law
OYA Scale Up Immersive	The CSC Field of View Mentorship Program	WIFT: Media Business Essentials
PEI screenwriters bootcamp	TIFF Rising Stars	WIFT: Media Leadership Program
POV Film: Envision lab	TIFF–CBC Films Screenwriter Award	WIFT: Meridian Artists Agency Mentorship
POV Film: Media Training Program	TIFF: Filmmaker Lab	WIFT: Pitching 101 Workshop
POV Film: PA Program	TIFF: Micki Moore Residency	WIFT: Scripted Digital Series Incubator
REEL Canada: Travelling film festival (films in schools, lesson plans, career workshops)	TIFF: Talent Accelerator	WIFT: Technicolor VFX Mentorship
Reelworld Screen Institute: Emerging 20 Program	Toronto Arts Foundation: Neighbourhood Arts Network - HIRE	William F. White: Production Manager Mentorship
Reelworld Screen Institute: Meridian Artists Agency Apprenticeship	Toronto Film School/Yorkville U: Film Production Diploma	Workshops
Reelworld Screen Institute: Reelworld Black Entrepreneurs Program	Toronto Metropolitan University: Certificate in Film Studies (Continued Education)	Writer's Guild of Canada (WGC): Script of the Month program
Reelworld Screen Institute: Reelworld Producers Program	Toronto Metropolitan University: Film Studies (Bachelor of Fine Arts)	York University: Media Arts Bachelor of Fine Arts
Regent Park Film Festival	Transgender Media Portal: BIPOC Trans Filmmakers	York University: Production Bachelor of Fine Arts
Rogers-BSO Script Development Fund	Université de Montréal: Baccalauréat en cinéma	York University: Screenwriting Bachelor of Fine Arts
Seneca College: Broadcasting - Television	Université de Montréal: Baccalauréat en écriture de scénario et création littéraire	
Seneca College: Documentary and Non-Fiction Media Production Certificate	Université de Montréal: Baccalauréat par cumul avec appellation (BACCAP) en cultures visuelles	
Sheridan College Motion Picture Camera Assistant Workshops	Université de Montréal: MA, PhD études cinématographiques	
Sheridan College: Bachelor of Animation	University of Toronto: Black Creatives Series	
Sheridan College: Honours Bachelor of Film and Television	UQAM: Bachelor Création médias – cinéma	
Sheridan College: SenecaVFX	UQAM: Bachelor Création médias – médias interactifs	
Simon Fraser University: Art, Performance and Cinema Studies Bachelor of Arts	UQAM: Bachelor Création médias – télévision	
Simon Fraser University: Film Bachelor of Fine Arts	UQAM: Certificat Scénarisation cinématographique	
STORYHIVE Summer Crew	UQAM: Media Studies (MA, PhD)	
Storyhive Voices		
Storyhive x BSO: Black Creators Edition		

Appendix C: Career Stages

Career stages are defined inconsistently throughout the sector, despite their frequent appearance in funding and development program eligibility criteria.

This study highlighted the importance of standardizing the way career stages are defined, with attention to the way different types of criteria (e.g., time in sector, number of credits) can interact to create access or barrier access. In support of this need, the following definitions are proposed¹⁶.

Talent Definition

	Grassroots	Emerging	Mid-career	Established
Writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated interest No credits Non-funded Completing various screen practitioner courses and internships Making some online content with no funding or sponsorship No screen networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want it as a career path Have industry experience 1–2 credits in related roles Actively applying for funding at the state and federal level Beginning to pitch to broadcasters and or other platforms Attending various screen conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generating opportunities and earning a living Independently creating opportunities with their brand networks Writing across TV drama series, online series and features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competing for opportunities on ambitious productions Ongoing opportunities in Australia and overseas Signed by a major agency Sought after
Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated interest No credits Non-funded Completing various screen practitioner courses and internships Making some online content with no funding or sponsorship No screen networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want it as a career path Have industry experience 1–2 credits in related roles Actively applying for funding at the state and federal level Beginning to pitch to broadcasters and or other platforms Attending various screen conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More sophisticated productions (e.g. bigger crews, budgets and responsibility) Some critical success with awards and international festivals Working on various TV Drama series About to or have just completed a first feature film, or factual series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambitious productions (e.g. bigger crews, budgets and responsibility) Ongoing opportunities in Australia and overseas Signed by a major agency Sought after
Producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-funded Have completed studies First timer Cross-over producers Online content creator No network or industry knowledge and relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credited Funded Demonstrated trajectory of work w/out funding (e.g. YouTube) Narrative-based content Expansion of network and knowledge An understanding and practice of physical producing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadcaster relationships established Funding body relationships Building market relations “Physical producing” (meaningful, not associate) Slate of projects in development Building own company or partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital to invest Slate of projects Approached for EP roles Own company Competitive for SA Enterprise funding International investment and sales on a range of content Commercial and critical success with funded content
Tech/Crew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest Looking for opportunities Some training / internships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting to sustain full-time living Employed in junior crew roles Building pathway – moving up ladder Credited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained income Industry recognition Agent Slate of upcoming projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Booked consistently Expensive – higher rates Sought after Agent Awards

16 These definitions are from the work of Screen Australia’s Indigenous Department <https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/getmedia/0e703ea4-7fc2-46cf-abbe-63e6966f8068/The-Next-25-Years.pdf?ext=.pdf>

Appendix D: Survey

Until now, **Black producers, writers, directors, actors, and tech/crew have been largely absent from sector data and narratives**, making it difficult to bring practical awareness to issues of anti-Black racism, exclusionary practices, and other barriers to access shaping the sector.

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring **the experiences of existing and aspiring Black talent** (producers, creators, actors, and crew) regarding **sector participation, pathways to career development, skills training and paid work; barriers and challenges faced, the supports that have been most helpful, and strategies for remaining working in the sector.**

The findings from this study will contribute to **evidence-based recommendations** to help creatives, employers, and the sector as a whole create long-term, sustainable **system changes that address anti-Black biases and exclusionary practices**, and contribute to a stronger, more diverse and equitable sector workforce.

Participation in this survey is 100% anonymous and confidential. By completing the survey, you are consenting to have your responses included in a summary report of findings. These findings will never be tied to individual participants. You may also, at any time, choose to have your responses withdrawn from the study by contacting lvalve@quilin.ca

If you choose, you may also volunteer to participate in a follow-up discussion at the end of the survey, but **this is not mandatory.**

[Cliquez ici pour répondre à l'enquête en français**](#)**

1. NOTE: Please indicate below if you do not want to take the survey, but would like to be part of an interview/focus group (only).

- Interview/focus group ONLY
- Survey (you will have the option to volunteer for an interview/focus group at the end)

Demographic Questions

2. Location (province of residence)

- British Columbia
- Alberta
- Saskatchewan
- Manitoba
- Ontario
- Quebec
- New Brunswick
- Nova Scotia
- Prince Edward Island
- Newfoundland & Laborador
- Northwest Territories
- Nunavut
- Yukon
- Other (please specify)

3. Immigration status

- Born in Canada
- Naturalized Canadian
- Permanent resident
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

4. What is your gender identity (select all that apply)

- (Cis)Woman
- (Cis)Man
- Transgender woman
- Transgender man
- Transgender, non-binary
- Two-Spirit
- Non-binary
- Genderqueer
- Gender non-conforming
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

5. Which of the following best describe(s) your ethnic identity? (select all that apply)

- Black - African
- Black - Canadian
- Black - Caribbean
- Black - European
- Black - North American
- Black - South/Central American
- Black - Other
- Indigenous - Metis
- Indigenous - Inuit
- Indigenous - First Nations
- Indigenous - Other
- East Asian
- South Asian
- Southeast Asian
- Middle Eastern / North African
- Latin American (Latinx)
- White - European
- White - Other
- Mixed ethnicity
- Prefer to self-describe

6. Age

- <20
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 54-59
- 60-64
- 65+

7. What is your sexual orientation? (select all that apply)

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Heterosexual (straight)
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self describe

8. Do you identify as a Person with Disability

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

9. If yes, which of the following do you identify with? (select all that apply)

- Neurodiverse
- A sensory impairment (vision or hearing)
- A mobility impairment
- A learning disability (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia)
- A mental health disorder
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self describe

10. Work status

- Able to work in Canada (citizen)
- Able to work in Canada (Permanent Resident)
- I have a Canadian work permit/visa
- I have a Canadian student visa that allows me to work
- I am not eligible to work in Canada
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

11. Which of the following best describes your primary (current) place of occupation?

*If your exact place of occupation is not listed, please select the closest example

- Broadcaster, Network or Streamer
- Funder
- Studio
- Freelance (individual contractor)
- Production company (4-15 employees)
- Production company (15-25 employees)
- Production company (>25 employees)
- Distributor or sales
- Festival
- Cultural Institution
- Educational Institution (paid position/educator)
- Non-profit/Community/Special Interest Group
- Student
- Paid internship / apprenticeship/ placement
- Unpaid internship / apprenticeship/ placement
- Not currently employed / seeking sector employment
- Other (please specify)

12. What is your primary genre?

- Short drama or doc
- Web series drama or doc
- Independent Feature Film
- Independent Feature Documentary
- TV Drama
- TV Documentary
- TV Children
- TV Factual entertainment: reality, game show, DIY
- VFX, AR, Games
- Other interactive/digital
- Animation - childrens and/or adult
- News/Journalism
- Advertising/Commercial
- Vlogging
- Podcasting/Social Audio
- Other (please specify)

13. What is your primary department?

- Development
- Production
- Post Production
- Sales and Distribution
- Communications, Marketing or Social Media
- Other (please specify)

14. What is your primary role right now?

- Director
- Assistant to Director
- Producer
- Assistant to Producer
- Showrunner
- Writer
- Camera Operator
- Production Coordinator
- Production Assistant
- Gaffer
- Sound mixer
- Costume designer
- Make-up artist
- Art director
- Post-production
- Craft services
- Actor
- Other (please specify)

15. Which 3 positions do you most aspire to?

- Director
- Assistant to Director
- Producer
- Assistant to Producer
- Showrunner
- Writer
- Camera Operator
- Production Coordinator
- Production Assistant
- Gaffer
- Sound mixer
- Costume designer
- Make-up artist
- Art director
- Post-production
- Craft services
- Actor
- Other (please specify)

- None of the above/I'm where I want to be

16. Are you the lead of your department?

- Yes
- No

17. Is the person you most directly report to Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Colour?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

18. Are you a decision-maker?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

19. Can you hire personnel?

- Yes
- No

20. How many people do you manage?

- 0
- 1-3
- 3-7
- 7-10
- 10-20
- 20+

21. What size budget do you manage?

- < \$200K
- \$200K - \$500K
- \$500M - \$1M
- \$1M - \$2M
- \$2M - \$5M
- \$5M - \$10M
- \$10M - \$20M
- \$20M - \$50M
- \$50M+
- Not applicable (I don't manage a budget)

22. What size of project budget do you tend to work with?

- \$0
- < \$1,000
- \$1,000-\$5,000
- \$5,000-\$15,000
- \$15,000-\$30,000
- \$30,000-\$50,000
- \$50,000-\$100,000
- \$100,000-\$250,000
- \$250,000-\$500,000
- \$500,000 - \$750,000
- \$750,000 - \$1.5M
- \$1.5M - \$5M
- \$5M - \$10M
- \$10M-\$15M
- \$15M-\$20M
- \$20M+

23. Please indicate the number of projects you currently have in each of the following phases of development:

In development _____
Partially Financed _____
In Production _____
In Post-Production _____
Completed _____

24. How many years have you been working in screen-based industries?

- <1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-12 years
- 13-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- >25 years

25. How old were you when you began pursuing a career in media?

- <14
- 14-18
- 18-25
- 25-30
- 30-35
- 35-40
- 40-45
- 45-50
- 50-55
- 55+

26. Where did you gain your production experience and/or complete your training? (select all that apply)

- In Canada
- In the US
- I do not have production or training experience
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

27. What career stage would you consider yourself in?

- Trying to break in
- Early career
- Emerging
- Mid-level
- Experienced/Established

28. Which of these best describe your average personal income from work in the screen sector over the last 3 years?

- \$0
- \$1 to \$9,999
- \$10,000 to \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 to \$249,999
- \$250,000 to \$299,999
- \$300,000+
- Prefer not to say

29. Are you also currently working in non-screen/media sectors?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Pathways to Career Development

30. Please rank the following activities according to how much time you have spent doing this kind of work throughout your career (i.e., what you have spent the most time doing should be ranked #1, while an activity you have spent little or no time on should be ranked last).

The purpose of this question is to explore the activities that creatives of various identities use to build and progress a career in the sector.

- Working on self-funded projects (I used my own personal money, or money raised from family and/or friends to finance the project)
- Performing unpaid/low pay work in the industry
- Completing an internship or work placement
- Participating in workshops/training to build my technical skills
- Participating in workshops/training to build my sector relationships/network
- Working on projects funded by an award or grant
- Working on projects financed by a studio, streamer, broadcaster or investors
- Working on projects for corporate or non-profit organizations

31. How did you first get into the sector? (Select all that apply)

- Referred by a family member or friend
- Referred by a teacher or mentor connected to the sector
- By applying to a job posting
- Through a union/guild/association I am a member of
- From a program/apprenticeship I paid to participate in
- From a program/apprenticeship offered free of charge
- By participating in a development program
- By winning an award or funding opportunity
- After self-funding a project that got attention
- After self-funding multiple projects
- By crowdfunding project(s)
- By performing unpaid work in the industry for < 1 year
- By performing mostly unpaid work in the industry for 1-3 years
- By performing mostly unpaid work in the industry for more than 3 years
- Other (please specify)

32. How did you gain your craft or technical skills? (select all that apply focusing on what you did MOST)

- By learning on my own through videos, books, trial and error, etc. (self-taught)
- By studying at an educational institution (university or college)
- By attending workshops or other programs offered by sector institutions (e.g., unions, guilds, associations), non-profit organizations (e.g., WIFT, OYA), or festivals
- Through PAID on-the-job training (learning from senior people in the company / in the workplace)
- Through UNPAID on-the-job training (learning from senior people in the company / in the workplace)
- Through paid or unpaid internships, placements, or apprenticeships
- By working on a production or studying at an educational institution outside of Canada
- Other (please specify)

33. What kind(s) of formal training/development have you participated in? (select all that apply)

- I am **ONLY** self-taught (I have never participated in any formal development)
- Film/Television/Media program(s) at an educational institution (university or college)
- Workshops or other programs offered by **sector institutions** (e.g., CFC)
- Workshops or other programs offered through **festival(s)**
- Workshops or other programs offered by **non-profit organizations** in the sector (e.g., WIFT, POV, OYA)
- Other (please specify)

34. Through which educational institution(s) have you received training/development? (Select all that apply)

- I have not received training through an educational institution**
- Centennial College
- George Brown
- Humber College
- OCAD
- Ryerson University
- Seneca College
- Sheridan College
- University of Toronto
- University of British Columbia
- York University
- Concordia University
- Simon Fraser University
- Capilano University
- Langara College
- Trebas Institute
- Université de Montréal
- L'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)
- Other (please specify)

35. From which of the following institution(s) have you received training/development? (Select all that apply)

- I have not received training through a sector institution**
- National Screen Institute (NSI)
- Canadian Film Centre (CFC)
- Toronto Film School
- National Theatre School
- CBC: One Stop Business Workshop
- INIS
- NAD
- Other (please specify)

36. Through which organization(s) have you received training/development? (Select all that apply)

- I have not received training/development from a sector organization
- ImagineNATIVE
- Reelworld Screen Institute
- Black Women Film!
- WIFT
- LIFT
- Charles Street Video
- OYA
- BIPOC TV & Film
- Second City
- Bad Dog Theatre
- Collective Bunch
- Other (please specify)

37. Through which festival(s) have you received training/development? (Select all that apply)

- I have not received training/development from a festival
- Hot Docs
- TIFF
- Inside Out Festival
- Reel Film Festival
- Regent Park Film Festival
- Other (please specify)

38. What kinds of resources do you use to self-teach/build your craft?

- Formal books
- Videos (e.g., Youtube)
- Watching BTS
- Articles/trades
- Observing and mimicking others
- Other (please specify)

39. Which programs have you participated in through this/these institution(s)?

- BA/BFA - film focus (e.g., cinema, media)
- BA/BFA - writing focus (e.g., screenwriting)
- BA/BFA - production focus (e.g., film production, television production)
- Diploma/Advanced diploma - broadcasting focus
- Diploma/Advanced diploma - film focus
- Diploma/Advanced diploma - writing focus
- DESS
- Post graduate certificate
- Technical training (e.g., animation, editing, sound, vfx)
- Post-production training
- Business training/workshop(s)
- Master's degree
- Other (please specify)

- None of the above

40. Were these programs specific to supporting Black creators?

- Most of them
- Some of them
- A few of them
- None
- Not sure
- Other (please specify)

41. What were the most valuable aspects of these programs?

(Choose 3)

- Access to people/relationships (networking)
- Access to funding
- Access to decision-makers in production companies, broadcasters, and/or streamers
- Access to internships or field placements (paid)
- Access to internships or field placements (unpaid)
- Building my technical skills
- Building my business knowledge/skills
- Learning from industry experts
- Receiving mentorship/feedback
- Meeting the criteria to join a union or association
- Access to a job board or other employment resources
- Building a community of peers I can collaborate with
- Connecting with a community where I can find support
- Knowledge of how the sector 'works' (i.e., 'sector savvy')
- Hands-on experience in the workplace
- Prestige of the degree / certification
- Learning how I will be evaluated by sector employers
- Access to production equipment (e.g., cameras, etc.)
- Information about the business side of the industry
- Other (please specify)

- None of the above

42. What was missing?

43. Which of the following best describe the program environments you have participated in? (select all that apply)

- Most participants were Black
- The instructors/industry experts were Black
- Most participants were White
- The instructor/industry experts were White
- There was good representation of identities among instructors/industry experts
- There was a good mix of identities among participants
- The program was specifically for Black creators
- The program was part of a DE&I initiative
- The program was tied to funding that would become available to me
- The program offered job shadowing, mentorship, apprenticeship, or another form of placement
- Other (please specify)

44. When the program leaders (instructors, industry experts, facilitators, etc.) were not Black, which of the following were true? (Select all that apply)

- They demonstrated awareness of anti-Black racism in the sector, and the systemic barriers faced by Black creators
- They had participated in antiracism / anti-oppression training and seemed to apply that learning
- They welcomed constructive feedback about how they were showing up in the space/the needs of participants
- They shared examples of inclusive practices they actively employ on their projects
- They expressed doubts about the experiences of Black creators, reinforcing the idea that talent determines sector access
- They expressed concern about the 'prejudice' against white creators of Black-focused / diversity-focused programming, funding, and other interventions
- They minimized differences/race/oppression
- They centred themselves or whiteness
- They did not address race or oppression directly
- They were judgemental of "some" marginalized groups but not all
- Other (please specify)

Sector Resources & Relationships

45. Which of the following groups/types of groups do you belong to? (Select all that apply)

- Directors Guild of Canada (DGC)
 - Writers Guild of Canada (WGC)
 - Canadian Media Guild
 - ACTRA
 - CMPA
 - IATSE 873 (Film technicians)
 - IATSE 667 (Cinematographers, Publicists)
 - IATSE 411 (Production Coordinators, Assistant Coordinators, Production Secretaries, Craft Services)
 - NABET 700 (Film, TV New Media Technicians)
 - Youth Media Alliance
 - Children's Media Association
 - Association québécoise de la production médiatique (AQPM)
 - Alumni association
 - Creative community of practice
 - Mentoring relationship
 - Other (please specify)
-
- I am not part of a group of any kind

46. What motivated you to join the group(s) indicated in the previous question? (Choose top 3)

- Access to jobs
 - Access to people / relationships
 - Access to decision-makers
 - Access to funding
 - Access to equipment
 - Access to training/development/learning
 - Access to sector knowledge (e.g., how to navigate the sector)
 - Access to other creatives I can work with
 - Increased credibility, which makes me more desirable to gatekeepers (employers, funders, etc.).
 - Job stability
 - Guaranteed paid work
 - Other (please specify)
-
- None of the above

**47. How do you typically find work now?
(Choose up to 5)**

- Referrals by close sector contacts I've maintained over the years
- Getting hired directly by people I've worked with repeatedly
- Referrals by someone who currently or has previously mentored me
- Company website job postings
- Social media job postings (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter)
- Job board (e.g., Indeed)
- Community job boards/email blasts
- Trades (e.g., Playback)
- Job Fairs
- Through a union/guild/association I am a member of
- Through a non-profit partner (e.g., BSO, BIPOC TV & Film, HireHire)
- Being part of a talent directory
- By participating in programs, apprenticeships, etc. connected to jobs/placements
- By applying for awards or funding opportunities
- By self-funding projects I want to work on
- By crowdfunding projects I want to work on
- By performing unpaid work in the hopes that it becomes paid
- Other (please specify)

**48. Which of the following resources have you used to hire/gain sector employment?
(Select all the apply)**

- Access Reelworld database
- Film in Colour
- HERe directory
- HireBIPOC.ca
- Black Women Film!
- Hire Higher
- Out on Set
- CultureBrewArt
- Collective Bunch
- Other (please specify)

- None of the above

49. To what extent have the following strategies helped YOU secure work/build your career in the sector?

	Essential to my success	Helpful	Somewhat helpful	I've done this, and it was not at all helpful	I've done this, and it was harmful	I haven't done this
Doing unpaid / low pay work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding a mentor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in an internship or apprenticeship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking training/ development courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in development labs/ programs tied to funding (e.g., TIFF, Telefilm)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doing favours (e.g., filling in for someone)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing equipment or other resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking directly for referrals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building relationships over social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cold calling/ emailing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking questions and showing a desire to learn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in paid placements that accelerate my career development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending / being an alumni of the right school/ educational institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

50. How have the following personal/relational activities helped YOU secure work/build your career in the sector?

	Essential to my success	Helpful	Somewhat helpful	I've done this, and it was not at all helpful	I've done this, and it was harmful	I haven't done this
Spending time outside of work with peers/colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing similar hobbies/interests so I can connect more to people on a project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Changing the way I look (clothes, hair, etc.) to 'fit in'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Changing the way I speak to sound more like my colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making a point to work with people who have different backgrounds and identities than me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

51. Do you engage in some form of mentorship / sponsorship with people in the sector? (Select all that apply)

- Yes, I AM a mentor
- Yes, I HAVE a mentor
- I used to have a mentor, but I no longer do
- I used to have someone that I mentored, but I no longer do
- No, but I would like to be a mentor
- No, but I am looking for a mentor
- No, and I am not interested

52. How would you describe your knowledge/understanding of the distribution process in Canada? (Select all that apply)

- I have limited/no knowledge about the marketing/distribution process
- I have some understanding, but do not feel connected to the right people/resources
- I have some direct experience, but I did not lead the project through this process
- I have direct experience and feel capable of taking a project through the marketing/distribution process
- I feel very confident taking a project through the marketing/distribution process successfully
- Other (please specify)

**53. How would you describe your knowledge/unders tanding of the distribution process internationally?
(Select all that apply)**

- I have limited/no knowledge about the marketing/distribution process
- I have some understanding, but do not feel connected to the right people/resources
- I have some direct experience, but I did not lead the project through this process
- I have direct experience and feel capable of taking a project through the marketing/distribution process
- I feel very confident taking a project through the marketing/distribution process successfully
- This does not feel relevant to me

Challenges & Strategies

54. Please indicate the extent to which the following statements related to **access and resources** reflect your experiences in the sector.

	This is not a problem for me	This is occasionally a problem	This is sometimes a problem	This is a problem for me	This is often a problem	This is always a problem (significant barrier)
I have had difficulty building credibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have had difficulty accessing the right people / decisionmakers/ building sector relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have faced barriers to advancement opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have had difficulty accessing financing/funding and/or other resources (e.g., equipment)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have needed to work another job to pay my bills while working on projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been unsure about how to navigate the sector (e.g., how to get a job)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have had difficulty finding a mentor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have had a hard time accessing internships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

55. Please indicate the extent to which the following **circumstances** reflect your experiences in the sector.

	This is not a problem for me	This is occasionally a problem	This is sometimes a problem	This is a problem for me	This is often a problem	This is always a problem (significant barrier)
Workplaces are harmful/unsafe places for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prevalence of nepotism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prevalence of racism, sexism, ableism, or ageism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of real-world, hands-on training / development programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of support from industry organizations for Black creatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of diversity in decision-making roles and/or gatekeeping organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

56. Please indicate the extent to which the following **overall sector** situations created challenges you directly experienced while working/pursuing work in the industry.

	This is not a problem for me	This is occasionally a problem	This is sometimes a problem	This is a problem for me	This is often a problem	This is always a problem (significant barrier)
Biased funder selection of projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concern about calibre of talent or experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerns that programs for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour will unfairly block access to jobs, funding, and/or other resources for others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerns about conflict of interest or impartiality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Witnessing microaggressions toward other marginalized groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languishing mentorship, professional/career development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Statements about difficulty implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion (e.g., "it's so hard to find talent"; "I don't where to look"; "there's no one qualified for job")	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

57. Please indicate the extent to which the following **workplace/employer** situations created challenges you directly experienced while working/pursuing work in the industry.

	This is not a problem for me	This is occasionally a problem	This is sometimes a problem	This is a problem for me	This is often a problem	This is always a problem (significant barrier)
Exclusion from meetings, discussions/ decisions on a project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unequal pay for similar jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural isolation / being 'othered'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harassment in the workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Subtle, but offensive comments/actions by colleagues ('microaggressions')	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative assumptions about my skills/abilities based on my identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerns about not fitting in to the workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

58. To what extent have the following been **helpful** in addressing barriers to access and other challenges you have experienced in the sector?

	Essential to my success	Helpful	Somewhat helpful	I've done this, and it was not at all helpful	I've done this, and it was harmful	I haven't done this
Diversity, equity & inclusion policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal mentorship (i.e., facilitated through a sector program, association or other organization)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connecting with Black-focused and/or Black-led sector organizations that offer training, funding, and other forms of access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Events/programs that connect Black talent to industry creatives and decision-makers (networking)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black-focused development/training programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black-focused financing programs (i.e., grants, awards, etc. for Black creators)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment frameworks / workplace programs that place Black talent into decisionmaking roles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creator collectives (i.e., formal/informal groups of creatives who work together/help each other)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

59. Are there other strategies that have helped you continue working in the sector that you want to share?

61. Please use this space to share anything else you would like about your experiences in the sector (or skip it!).

60. How long do you intend to continue working in the sector?

- For the rest of my life, or until I reach the retirement age
- For 10 more years at least
- For 6 to 10 more years
- For 3 to 5 more years
- For 1 or 2 more years
- I want to / am planning to leave in the next several months
- I am in the process of leaving now

Follow Up

62. As a follow-up to this survey, would you consider participating in an interview or focus group during which you will be invited to share more about your experiences, observations, and recommendations for the sector?

Note: Not all respondents who answer 'yes' will be contacted.

- Yes
- No

63. Thank you! Please enter your contact information.

Note: Not all respondents will be contacted.

Name

Email Address

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A background image of a woman with her hand to her chin, speaking into a microphone. The image is overlaid with a dark red gradient.

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