



THE STATE OF THE DOCUMENTARY FIELD

2020 STUDY OF U.S.
DOCUMENTARY PROFESSIONALS
15 KEY FINDINGS

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APRIL 2021



Challenge and Opportunity in Documentary Storytelling

Documentary has long enjoyed a vibrant space in the global media ecology, and the marketplace for creative nonfiction storytelling continues to broaden in the United States and around the world. Despite an expansive landscape for documentary filmmakers and audiences, particular challenges are persistent while opportunities emerge. As viewers continue to discover documentary storytelling across various platforms, and as new makers enter the craft, tracking industry professionals' perspectives and lived experiences is a vital pursuit. This study stems from these ideas and imperatives.

Report Citation:

Caty Borum Chattoo and William Harder (2021). *The State of the Documentary Field: 2020 Study of U.S. Documentary Professionals, 15 Key Findings*. Center for Media & Social Impact, American University, Washington, D.C., in association with the International Documentary Association. cmsimpact.org



ABOUT THE STATE OF THE DOCUMENTARY FIELD KEY FINDINGS

The State of the Documentary Field research initiative was designed to understand documentary industry members' perspectives and lived experiences around economics, motivations, diversity and representation, funding, and changing platforms in the streaming media age.

Crafted by the Center for Media & Social Impact (CMSI) in collaboration with the International Documentary Association (IDA)—launched in 2016, repeated in 2018 and 2020—the study was informed by insights and questions derived from documentary professionals as well as consultation with peer-reviewed and public-facing related research. The full survey included 42 content questions and a battery of 16 demographic questions (for example: age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, country of residence, caretaking responsibilities, and membership in documentary-related organizations). This research was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

CMSI collected survey responses between August and November 2020, notably during the first year of the historic COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents' participation was voluntary, and personally-identifiable information was not collected. The survey was anonymous and confidential. No financial incentives were offered or given. American University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the research protocol, and the authors captured and analyzed the data. The survey was hosted online on American University's Qualtrics platform.

This is an executive summary of the U.S. documentary report, with highlights in advance of the full study, which includes both global and U.S.-based documentary professionals.

To assure robust and diverse participation from documentary film professionals, the International Documentary Association promoted the survey on its website and social media channels. CMSI promoted the survey through its social media channels and monthly e-newsletter. IDA identified and invited additional documentary groups and communities to participate in survey outreach and completion; these groups were asked to notify their members and encourage participation in the survey through email lists and/or social media promotion. The full list of U.S.-based organizations includes:

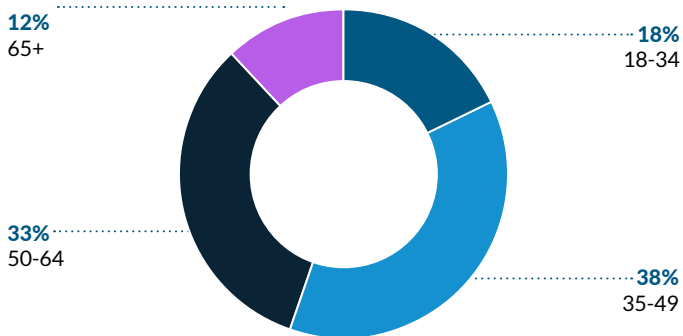
- » *4th World Media Lab*
- » *Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences*
- » *A-Doc (Asian American Documentary Network)*
- » *Allied Media Project*
- » *American Documentary, Inc. (POV)*
- » *Association of Independents in Radio (AIR)*
- » *Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC)*
- » *Black Public Media*
- » *Brown Girls Doc Mafia*
- » *Center for Asian American Media (CAAM)*
- » *Collective of Documentary Women Cinematographers*
- » *Cousin Collective*
- » *Directors Guild of America*
- » *Distribution Advocates*
- » *Doc Society*
- » *Docs in Progress*
- » *Documentary Producers Alliance*
- » *Film Independent*
- » *Firelight Media*
- » *FWD-Doc (Filmmakers with Disabilities)*
- » *Independent Television Service (ITVS)*
- » *International Documentary Association*
- » *Kartemquin Films*
- » *Latino Public Broadcasting*
- » *National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP)*
- » *New Day Films*
- » *New Orleans Film Society*
- » *New York Women in Film and Television*
- » *Nia Tero*
- » *Pacific Islanders in Communication*
- » *Producers Guild of America*
- » *Programmers of Colour Collective*
- » *Queer Producers Network*
- » *Southern Documentary Fund*
- » *Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program*
- » *The Alliance for Media Arts & Culture*
- » *The D-Word*
- » *The Film Collaborative*
- » *Undocumented Filmmakers Collective*
- » *University Film & Video Association*
- » *Vision Maker Media*
- » *Women Make Movies*
- » *Working Films*
- » *Writers Guild of America*
- » *Youth FX - NeXt Doc Fellowship*



Who is in the *State of the U.S. Documentary Field* study?

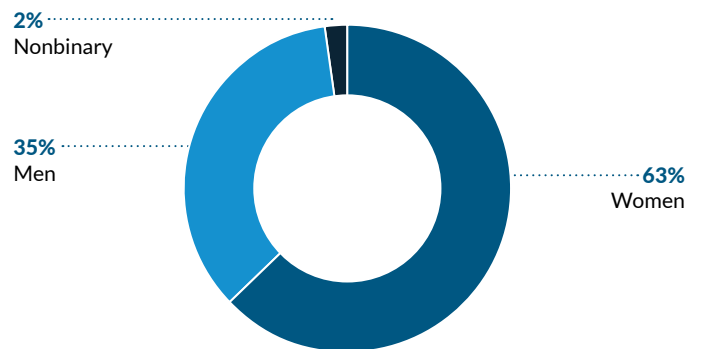
This report is based on the experiences of 620 documentary film professionals who reside in the United States. 395 of those in this sample identify as directors or producers as their primary position in documentary. The report refers to “documentary professionals” when we write about the full sample, and “documentary makers” (or “directors and producers”) when we reference the director/producer group. In order to reliably and accurately understand documentary economics based on “most recent film,” particular financial and budget-related questions were offered to the primary makers (directors and producers) who have knowledge of, and access to, the full budgets, funding, income, and revenue streams for those films.

Respondents Age

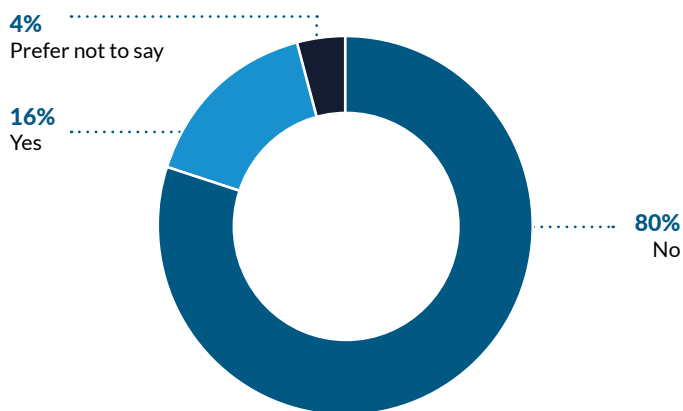


Numbers may not equal 100% due to rounding.

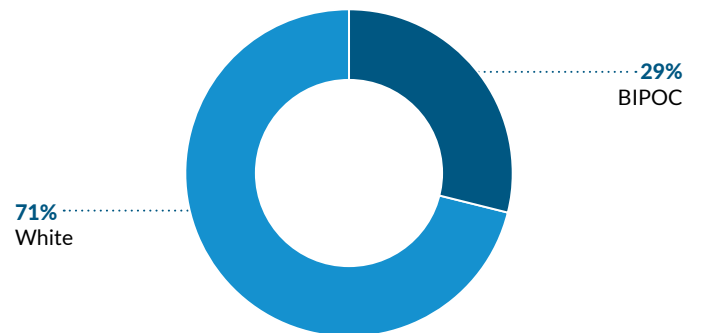
Respondents Gender Identification¹



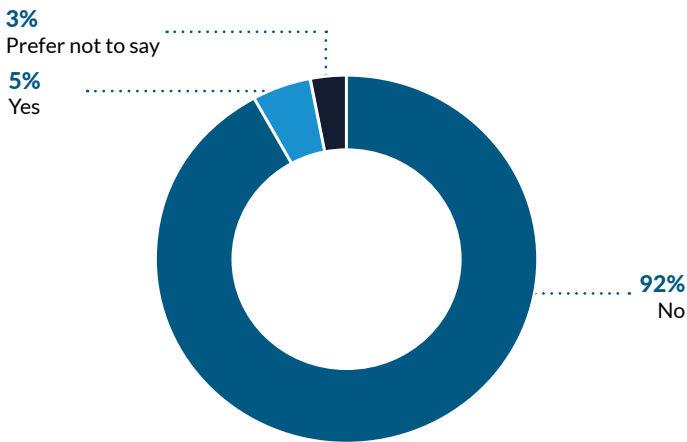
Respondents Sexual Orientation²



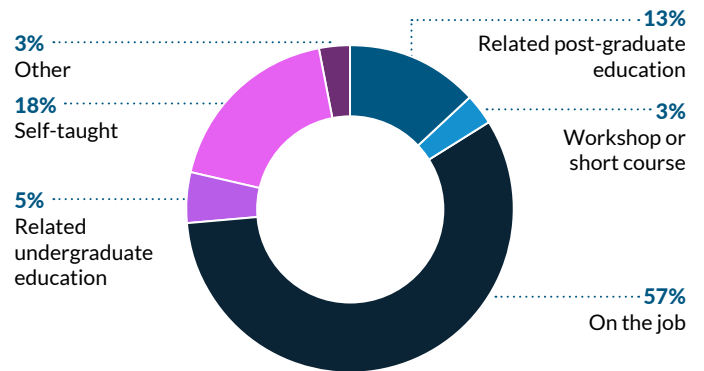
Respondents: BIPOC and White³



Disability Community⁴



Most Valuable Doc Job Training



Notes on Demographic Data:

¹ We included a “nonbinary” choice in the gender identity questions. Because resulting data for “nonbinary” is too low to report as a specific breakout across measures, this report provides breakdowns of “Women and Men” as gender identity for all major results. This should be interpreted as those respondents who identify as “Women” or “Men” in the survey. Survey question reference source: Human Rights Campaign (2018), *LGBTQ-Inclusive Data Collection: A Lifesaving Imperative*, <https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/HRC-LGBTQ-DataCollection-Report.pdf>.

² In this survey, we asked about and show the proportion of LGBTQ+ documentary professionals here in the demographic representation section. We also included a separate question about transgender identification; these results are available in the full report. This report does not present specific breakouts for content questions based on this response. Survey question reference source: Human Rights Campaign (2018), *LGBTQ-Inclusive Data Collection: A Lifesaving Imperative*, <https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/HRC-LGBTQ-DataCollection-Report.pdf>.

Finally, in consultation with a leading organization that represents the rights of undocumented persons in the United States, we did not include a question about citizenship status out of an abundance of caution, given the immigration climate in the United States at the time of data-gathering in 2020.

³ The survey allowed respondents to select from a comprehensive list of racial and ethnic identifications sourced to existing literature for both U.S.-based and global identification in these categories; each respondent was able to choose multiple categories. In analysis and reporting, we have collapsed categories into “BIPOC” and “White” to reveal broader patterns around equity in documentary work. In this report, when reporting for “BIPOC,” this includes individuals who indicated at least one of the following identifications: Black or African-American or African; Indigenous or First Nations or American Indian or Alaska Native; Arab or Middle Eastern or North African; Asian or Asian American; Hispanic or Latinx/Latina/Latino; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. When reporting for “white,” this includes those people who identified only in this category; any respondent who selected another category in addition to “white” was categorized in the “BIPOC” category given that this study seeks to understand experience differentials between BIPOC and white documentary professionals and makers. If respondents chose to use the open-ended response option (“Some other race, ethnicity, or origin, please specify”), we re-categorized them into the appropriate categories (that is, distinct racial and ethnic identifications and also in aggregate as “BIPOC” or “white”) if the response indicated this information clearly. Responses like “human race” or related were left uncategorized. Source references: Moody, C., Obear, K., Gasser, H., Cheah, S., & Fechter, T. (2013, December 5). ACPA standards for demographic questions, <http://www.myacpa.org/sites/default/files/Proposal-DemographicQuestions-and-Responses-2.pdf>; *Rethinking and Updating Demographic Questions: Guidance to Improve Descriptions of Research Samples*. Jennifer L. Hughes, Abigail A. Camden, and Tenzin Yangchen. *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research* (Fall 2016). https://cdn.ymaws.com/sites/www.psichi.org/resource/resmgr/journal_2016/21_3Fall16JN-Hughes.pdf, 141-142.

⁴ To source and properly phrase this question and its responses, we consulted with a founder of Filmmakers With Disabilities (FWD-DOC), and we also utilized these sources: https://cdn.ymaws.com/sites/www.psichi.org/resource/resmgr/journal_2016/21_3Fall16JN-Hughes.pdf; BrckaLorenz, A., Zilvinskis, J., & Haeger, H. (2014, May). *Categorizing identities: Race, gender, disability, and sexual orientation*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of Association for Institutional Research, Orlando, FL. <http://cpr.indiana.edu/uploads/Categorizing%20Identities%20Hand-out%20FINAL%20202.pdf>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

» **Economic issues** are persistent challenges facing today's documentary professionals. A small proportion of documentary professionals (one quarter) makes a full living from documentary work; 75% do other work to make a living. Only 2 in 10 documentary filmmakers made enough money to cover production costs and make a profit from their most recent film; filmmakers who make a profit on their documentaries are still a rarity, not even close to the majority. Three-quarters (74%) of documentary professionals were negatively financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. BIPOC and women-identifying filmmakers are the most economically disadvantaged in terms of film income, revenue, and access to bigger money that streaming networks can offer.

» Overall, **Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)** documentary professionals and primary makers (directors and producers) are having a different experience in the documentary industry than their white peers. In this study, BIPOC filmmakers attest to the importance of philanthropic foundations and public TV for their funding, film-based revenue, and distribution. They are more likely to make short-form nonfiction stories than white storytellers. BIPOC makers are much less likely than white makers to garner film funding, documentary revenue, and personal income from streaming networks. BIPOC makers are much less likely than white makers to have made any revenue at all from their most recent documentary film; the majority did not receive any revenue.

» **Gender is a meaningful differentiator** in several financial categories. Women-identifying documentary professionals show some level of economic disparity in the film business. Women makers report needing to rely on sources of film funding that include household income and individual donors much more than men. Male-identifying filmmakers are more likely to be found making documentary income from streaming networks and series than women. Women makers were much less likely than men to have made any revenue at all from their most recent documentary film.

» **Documentary multi-part series** are big business, and yet, many independent documentary makers still are not seeing the revenue from this work even though they see “commissioned work” from streamers and other networks as the greatest economic opportunity for the future. A small handful of players is making deals for lucrative multi-part documentary series, even though the majority of nonfiction filmmakers are interested in this work.

» Despite the tremendous possibilities of the streaming entertainment age of media, **legacy original practices and economics remain important.** Documentaries continue to be distributed in a “dual distribution” system, with grassroots community screenings used by the majority of documentary makers to reach audiences alongside commercial and public entertainment networks. In terms of revenue sources for makers, DVD sales and educational distribution (both DVDs and streaming) matter a great deal.

» Documentary storytellers are **motivated by a higher purpose** beyond simply making entertainment, also a legacy value in nonfiction storytelling. The majority of documentary makers are compelled to tell nonfiction stories to make a meaningful difference in urgent social issues. BIPOC and women filmmakers are the most motivated by the impulse toward positive social impact.



SURVEY FINDINGS

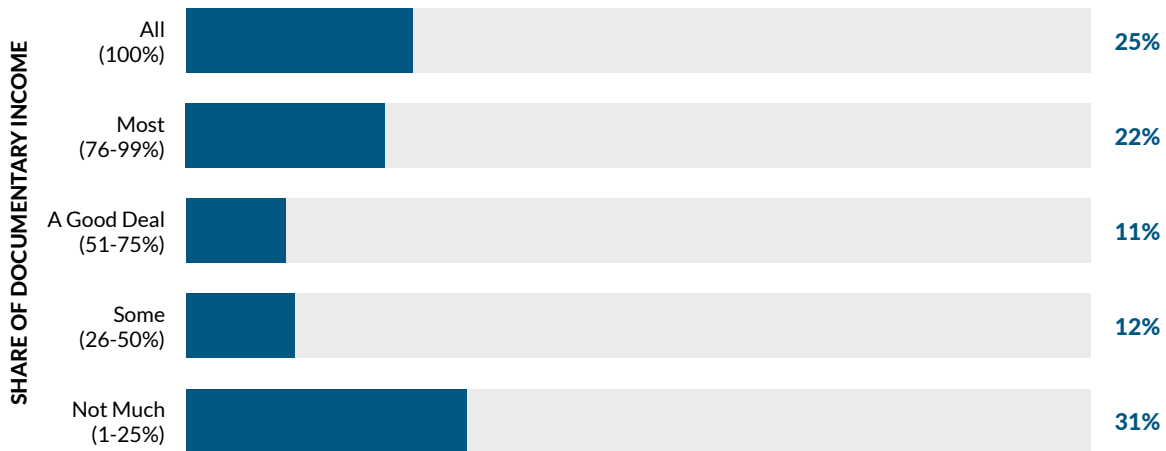


What proportion of annual income comes from documentary work?

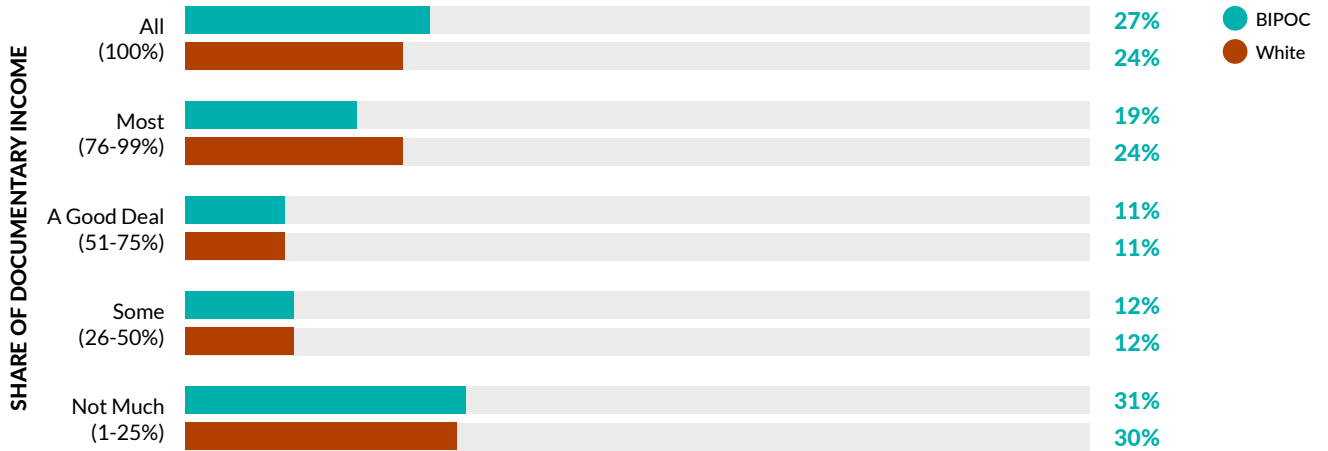
Nearly half of documentary professionals (47%) make most or all of their gross annual income from documentary work.

46% of BIPOC professionals make all or most of their income from documentary, compared to 48% of white documentary professionals. But a full half (50%) of women documentary professionals received most or all of their income from documentary work, compared to 39% of men who did. Male-identifying documentary professionals are therefore more diversified in their incomes than women-identifying professionals.

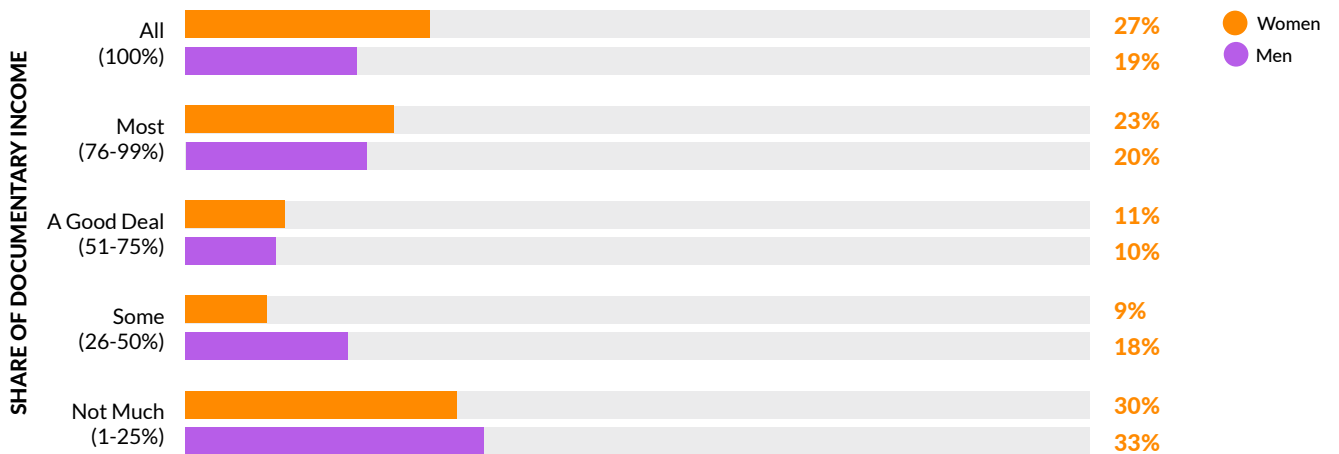
Percentage of Gross Annual Income from Documentary (Past Year)
U.S. Documentary Professionals (*All Respondents*)



Percentage of Gross Annual Income from Documentary (Past Year)
 U.S. Documentary Professionals (**BIPOC and White**)



Percentage of Gross Annual Income from Documentary (Past Year)
 U.S. Documentary Professionals (**Gender Identity**)

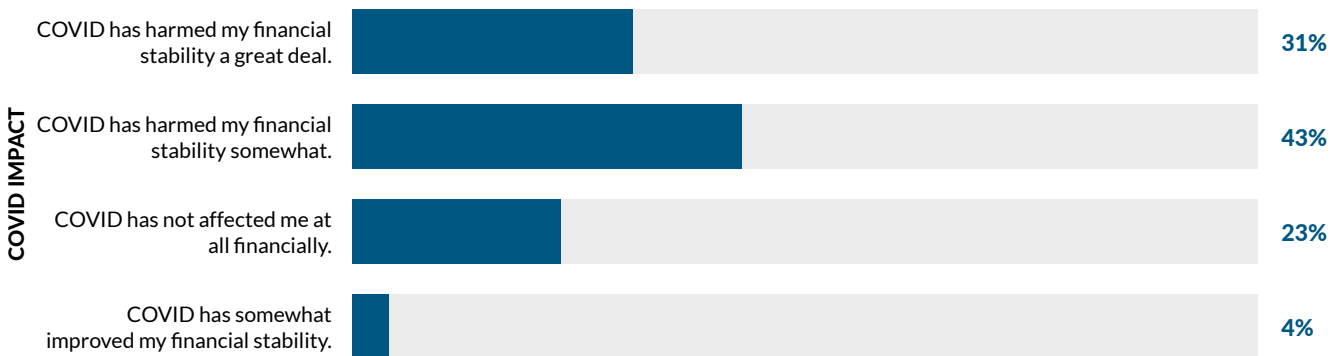




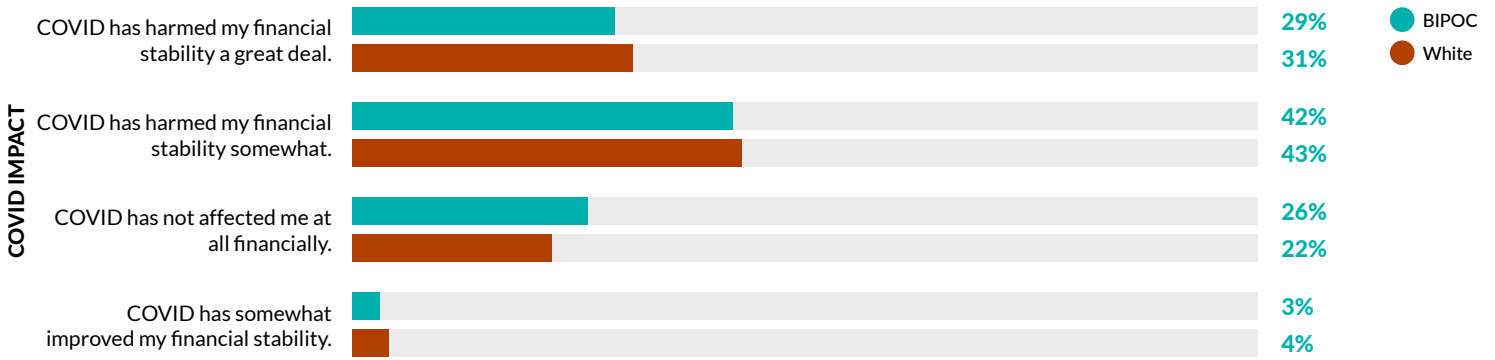
What impact did COVID-19 have on documentary professionals' finances?

The pandemic has had a dramatic impact on documentary professionals' financial security. Nearly three-quarters of documentary professionals (74%) said COVID-19 harmed their financial stability somewhat or a great deal. This pattern holds true equally for both BIPOC and white documentary professionals, as well as men and women.

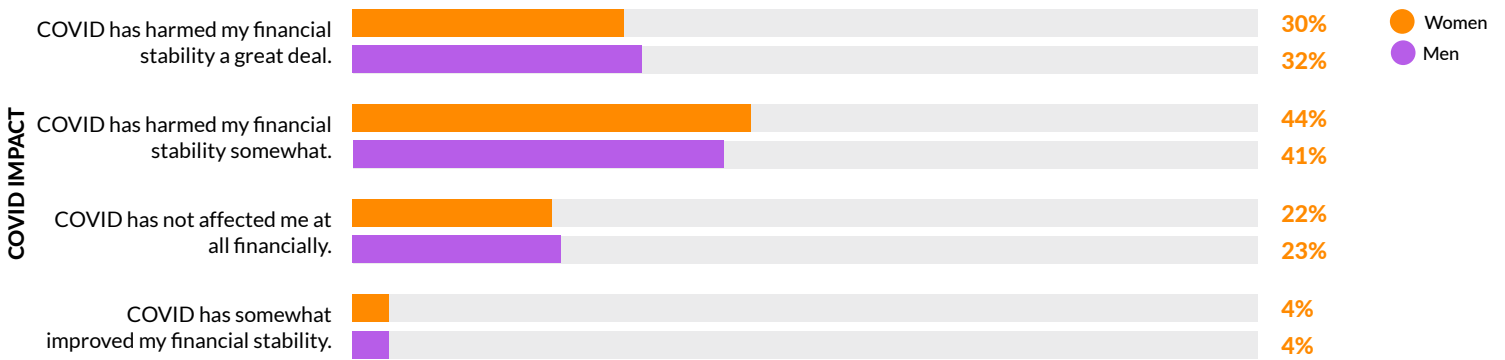
Impact of COVID-19 on Documentary Careers U.S. Documentary Professionals (*All Respondents*)



Impact of COVID-19 on Documentary Careers
 U.S. Documentary Professionals (*BIPOC and White*)



Impact of COVID-19 on Documentary Careers
 U.S. Documentary Professionals (*Gender Identity*)



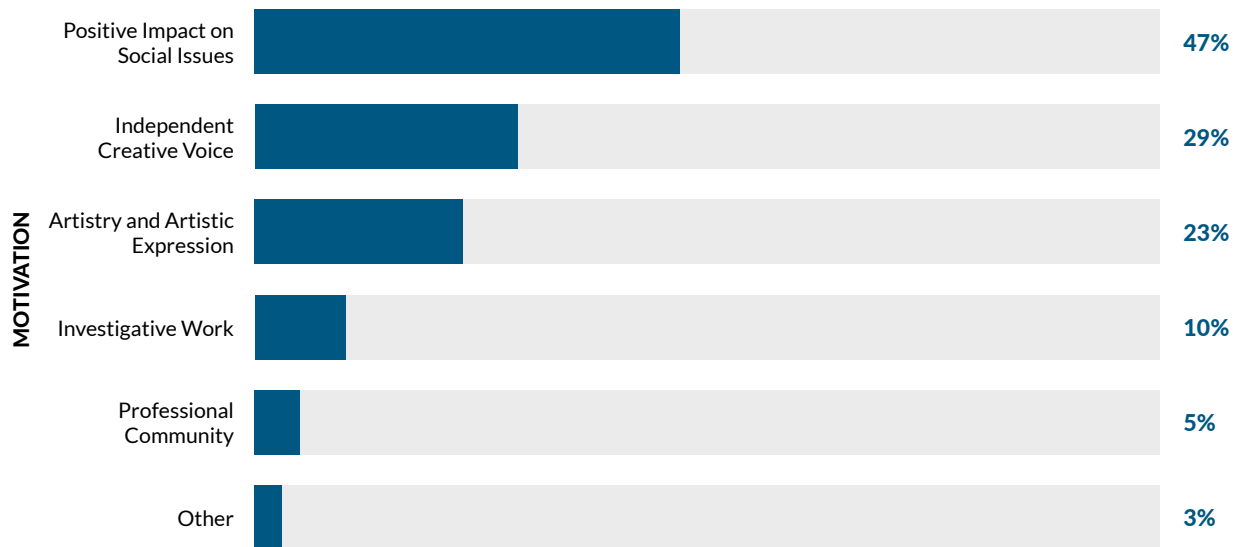


What motivates U.S. documentary professionals?

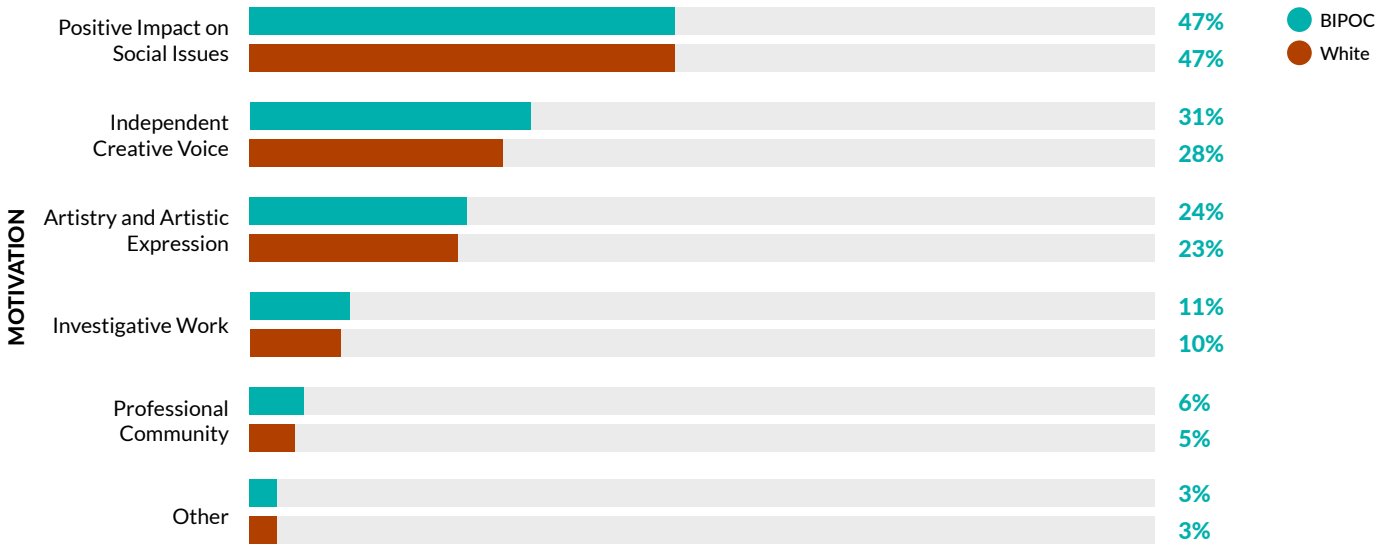
Documentary professionals are primarily motivated to make a positive impact on social issues (47%), and they value their independent creative voice, as well as artistry and artistic expression next.

BIPOC and white documentary professionals are equally motivated by making a positive impact on social issues as a primary motivator. There is a distinction by gender identification: 51% of women are motivated by making an impact on social issues compared to 42% of men. Men report being more motivated by artistic expression in documentary as a motivation than women.

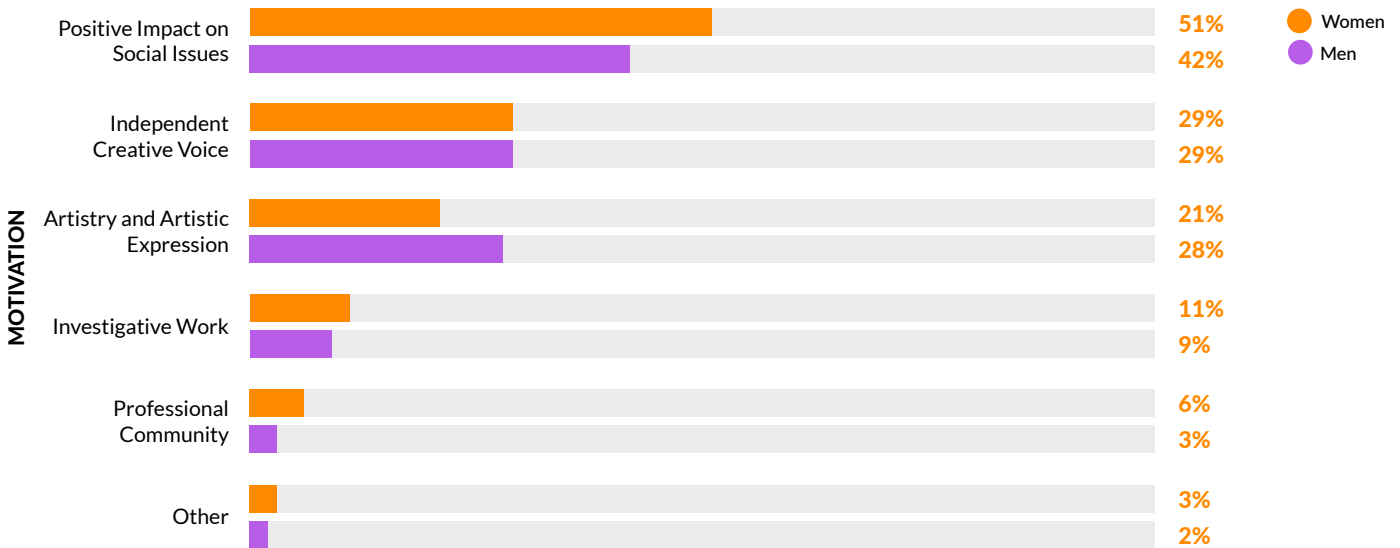
Most Meaningful Part of Documentary Work U.S. Documentary Professionals (All Respondents)



Most Meaningful Part of Documentary Work
 U.S. Documentary Professionals (*BIPOC and White*)



Most Meaningful Part of Documentary Work
 U.S. Documentary Professionals (*Gender Identity*)



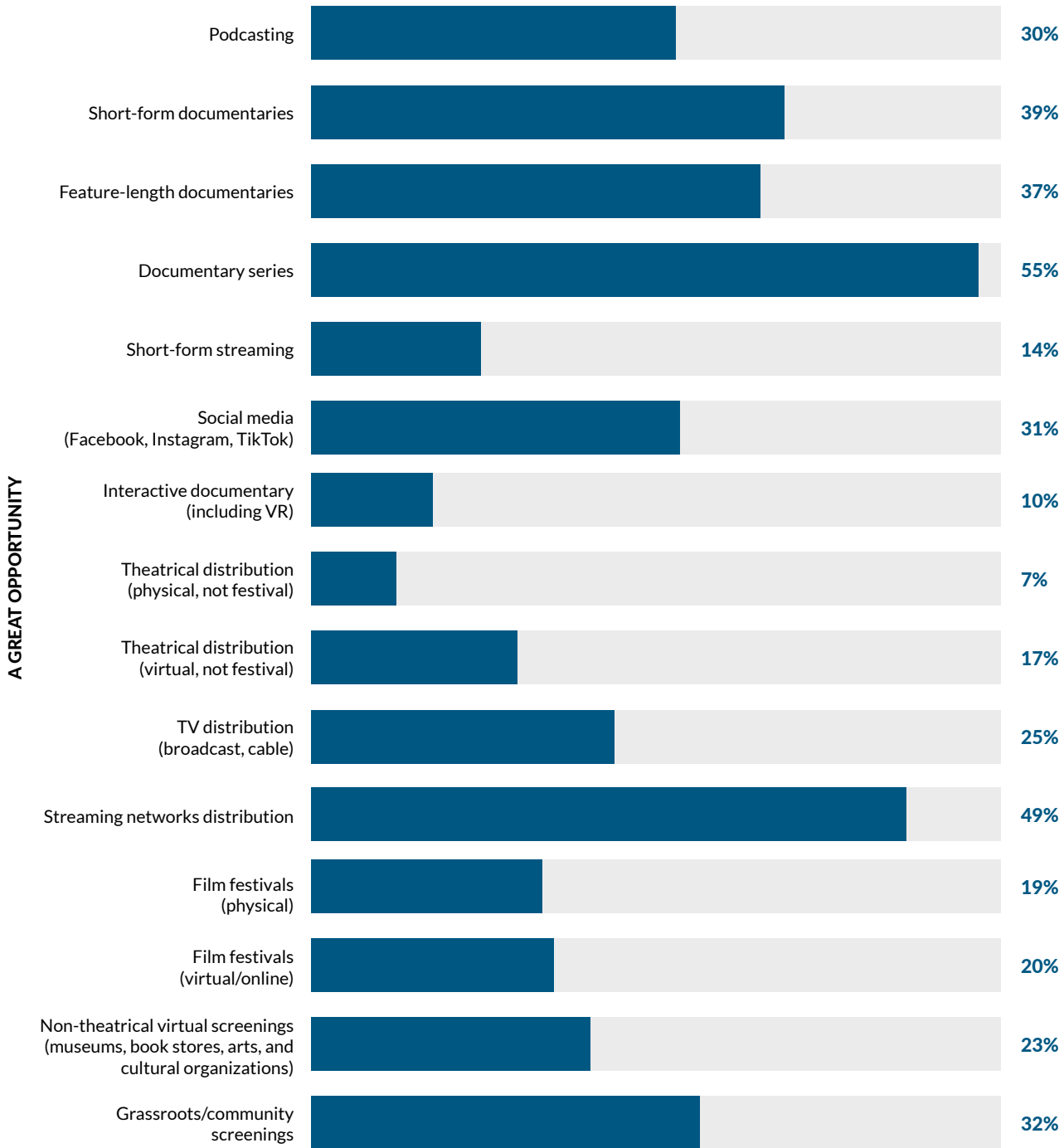


What do U.S. documentary professionals see as the the greatest future opportunities in terms of format?

Documentary professionals see the greatest future opportunities in series (55%), short-form docs (39%), and feature-length (37%). In terms of distribution, documentary professionals perceive the greatest future opportunities in streaming (49%), followed by grassroots community distribution (32%) and TV (25%).

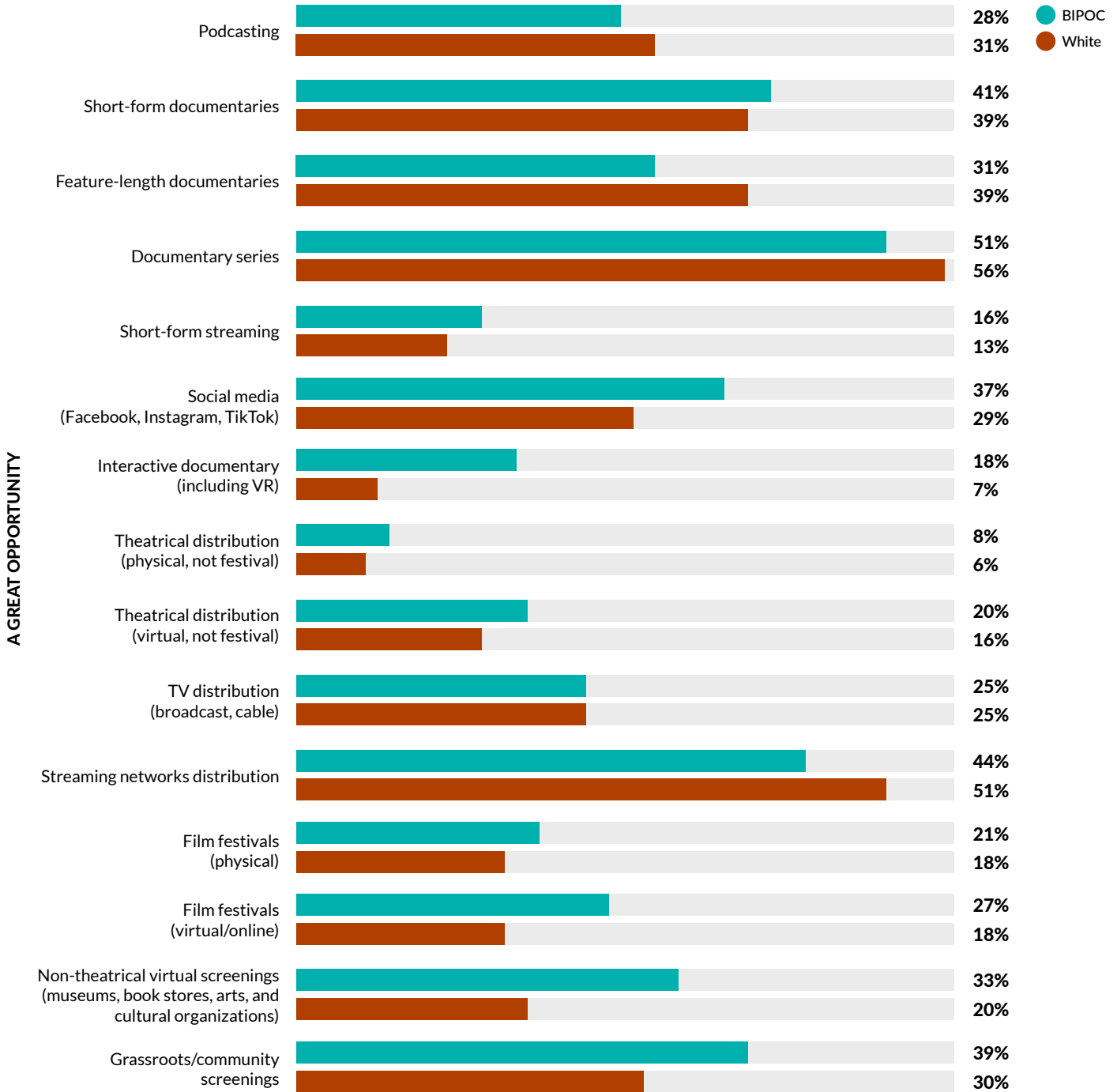
BIPOC and white documentary professionals generally follow the same patterns, but BIPOC documentary professionals feel that grassroots community screenings offer greater future opportunities compared to white professionals: 39% compared to 31%. Women are more enthusiastic about grassroots screenings as an opportunity for documentary work than men: 34% compared to 29%.

Format & Distribution: Perceptions of Greatest Future Opportunity
U.S. Documentary Professionals (All Respondents)



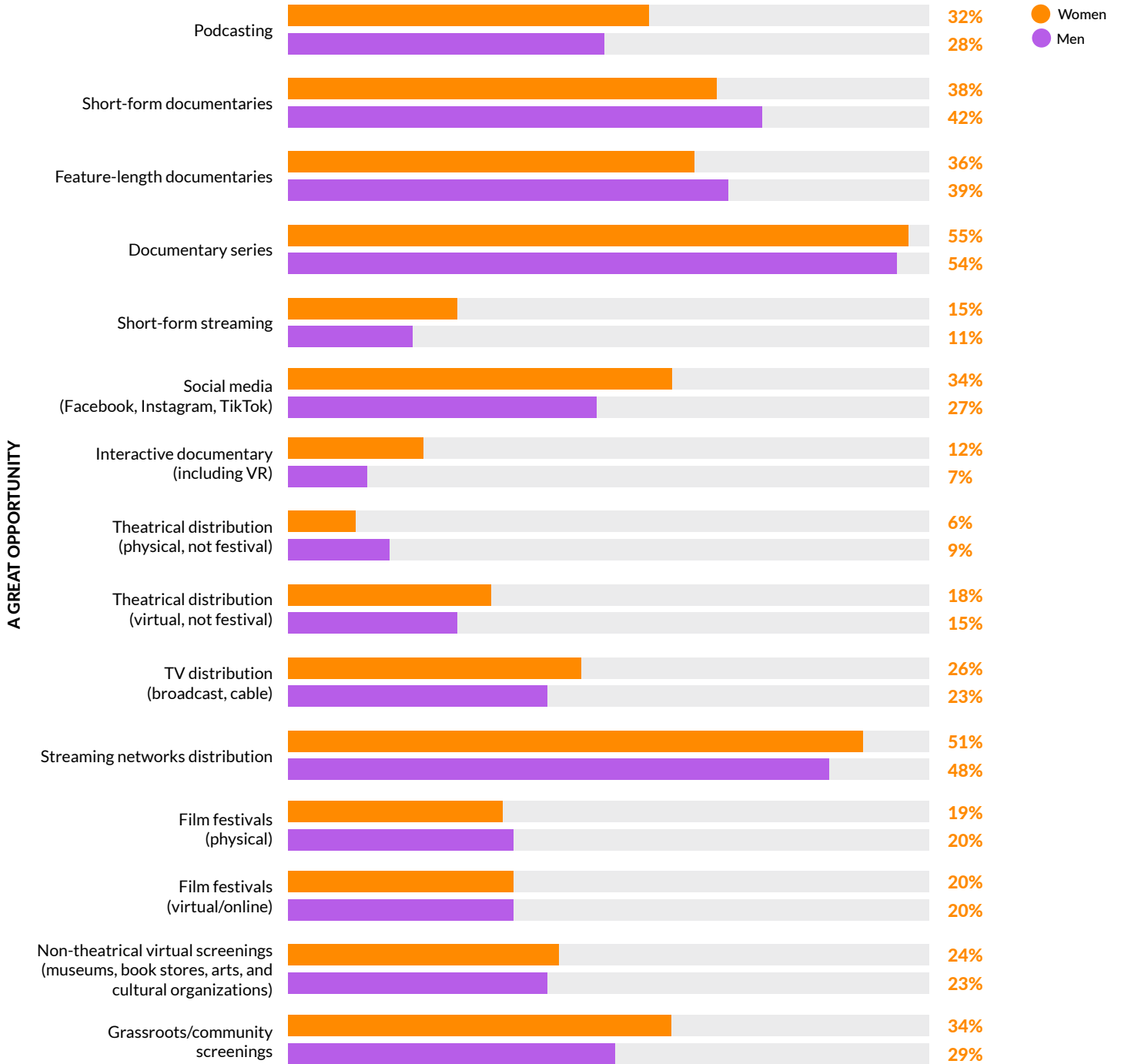
This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "a great opportunity" for each response (instead of "not much of an opportunity" or "an opportunity").

Format & Distribution: Perceptions of Greatest Future Opportunity
U.S. Documentary Professionals (BIPOC and White)



This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "a great opportunity" for each response (instead of "not much of an opportunity" or "an opportunity").

Format & Distribution: Perceptions of Greatest Future Opportunity U.S. Documentary Professionals (Gender Identity)



This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "a great opportunity" for each response (instead of "not much of an opportunity" or "an opportunity").

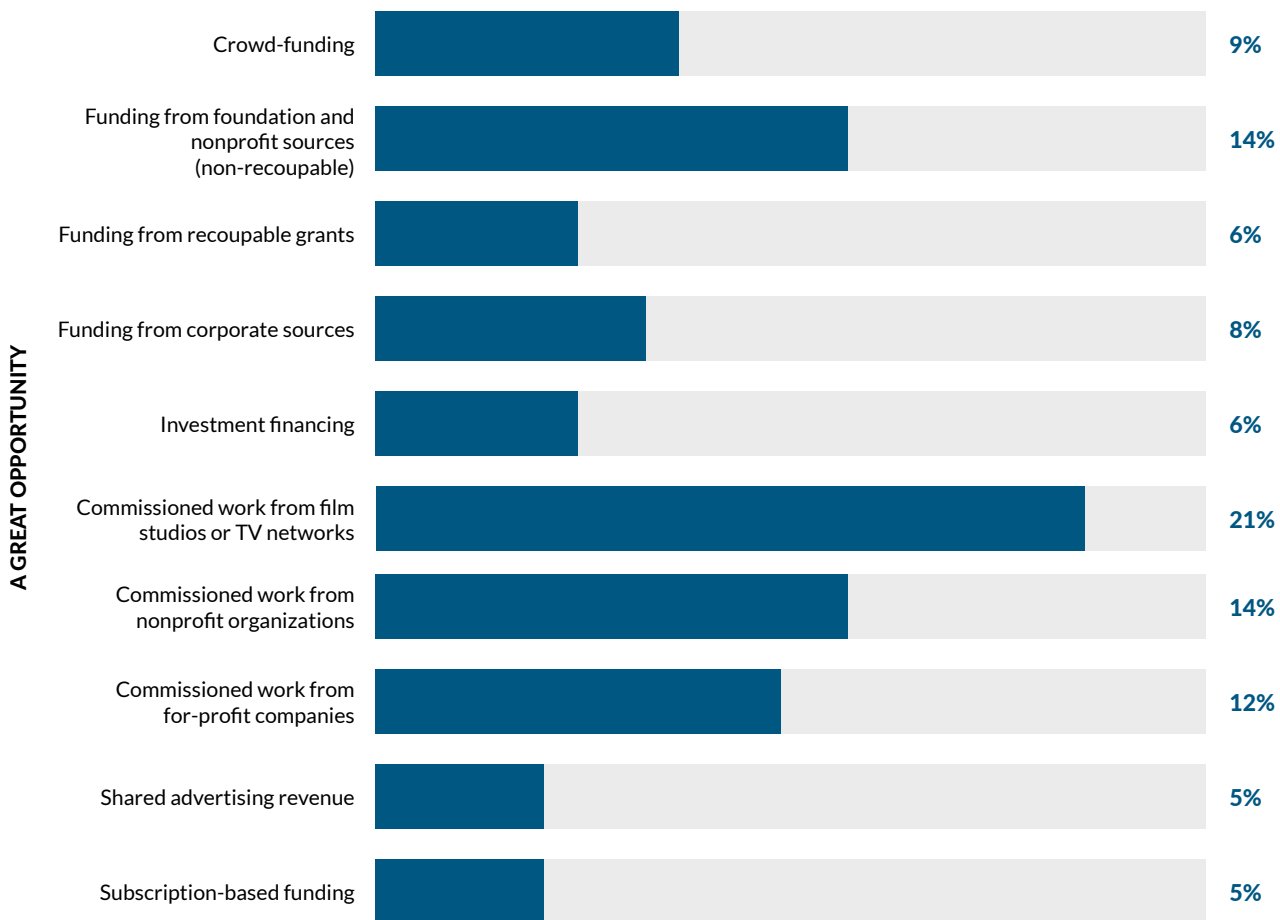


What do documentary professionals see as the greatest opportunities for documentary income streams?

By far, documentary professionals see greatest economic opportunities in commissioned work from film studios or TV networks (21% say this is a great opportunity), followed by foundation and nonprofit grant funding, and commissioned work from nonprofit organizations (both 14%). By contrast, documentary professionals do not look favorably at funding from recoupable grants, investment financing, shared advertising revenue, and subscription-based revenue; only 6% or less name these revenue streams as “great” income opportunities.

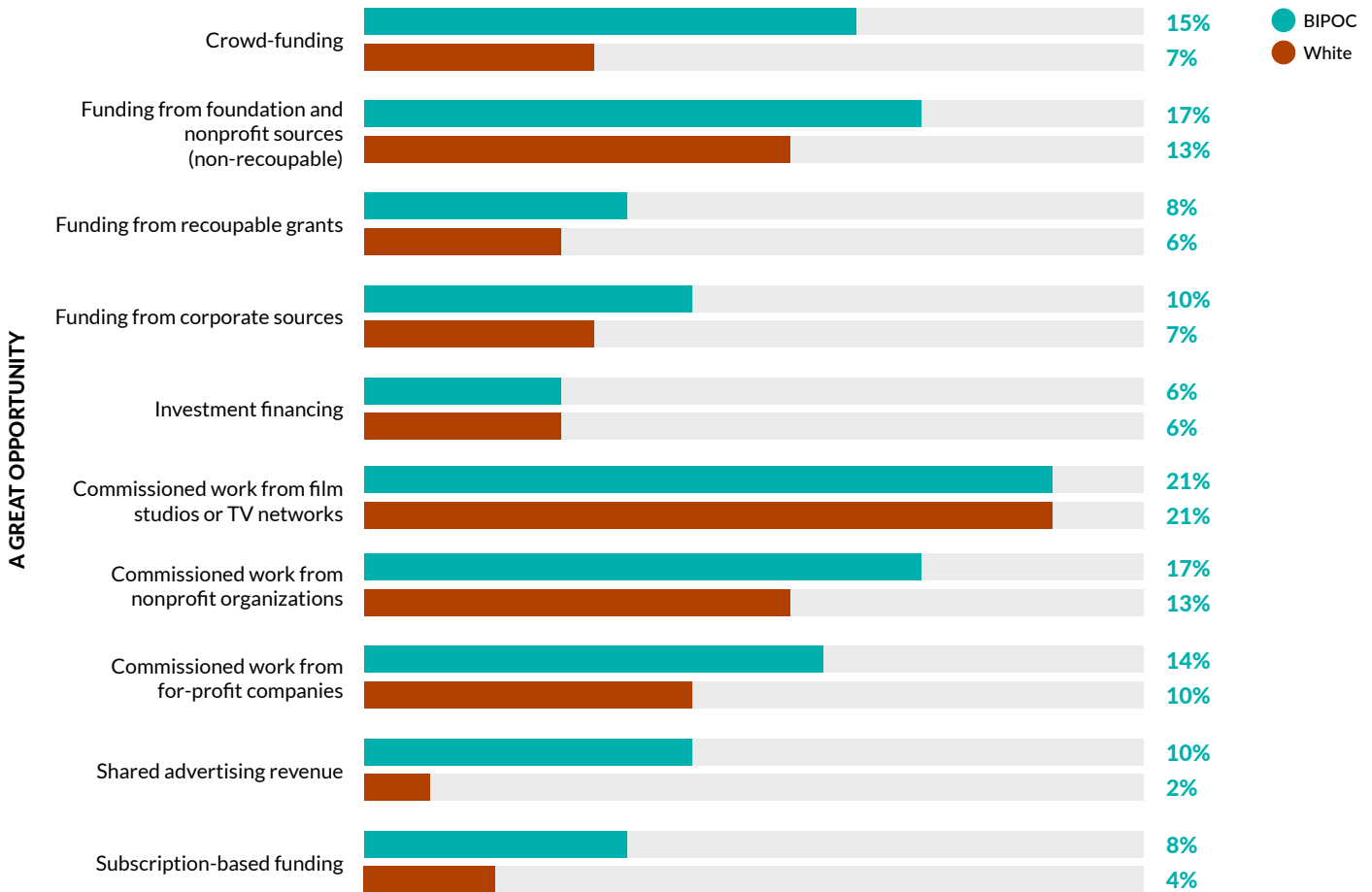
BIPOC and women documentary professionals rely the most on foundation and nonprofit grant funding for their income streams, seeing this source of income as a great opportunity.

Economic Streams: Perceptions of Positive Future Opportunity U.S. Documentary Professionals (All Respondents)



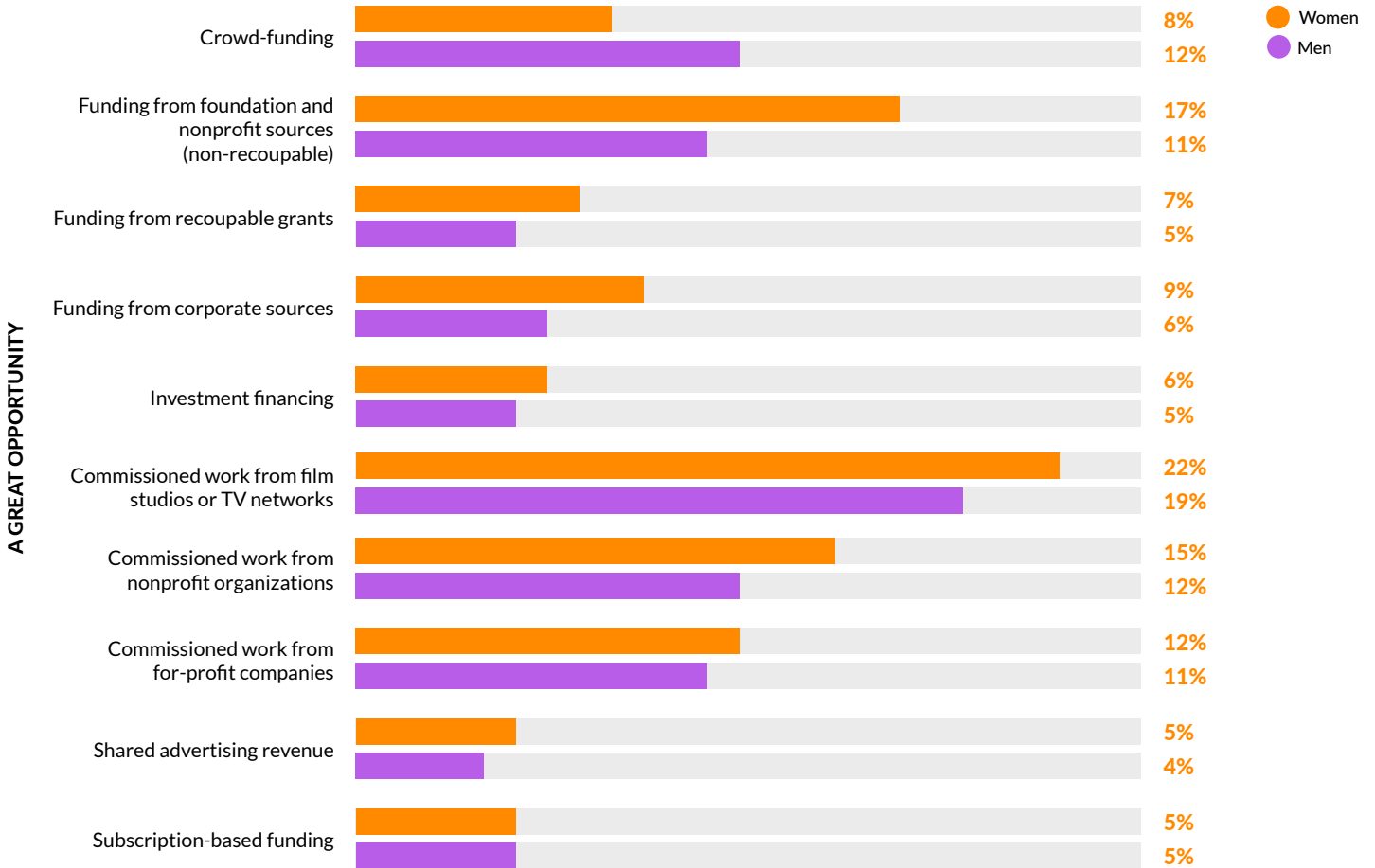
This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered “a great opportunity” for each response (instead of “not much of an opportunity” or “an opportunity”).

Economic Streams: Perceptions of Positive Future Opportunity U.S. Documentary Professionals (BIPOC and White)



This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "a great opportunity" for each response (instead of "not much of an opportunity" or "an opportunity").

Economic Streams: Perceptions of Positive Future Opportunity U.S. Documentary Professionals (Gender Identity)



This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "a great opportunity" for each response (instead of "not much of an opportunity" or "an opportunity").

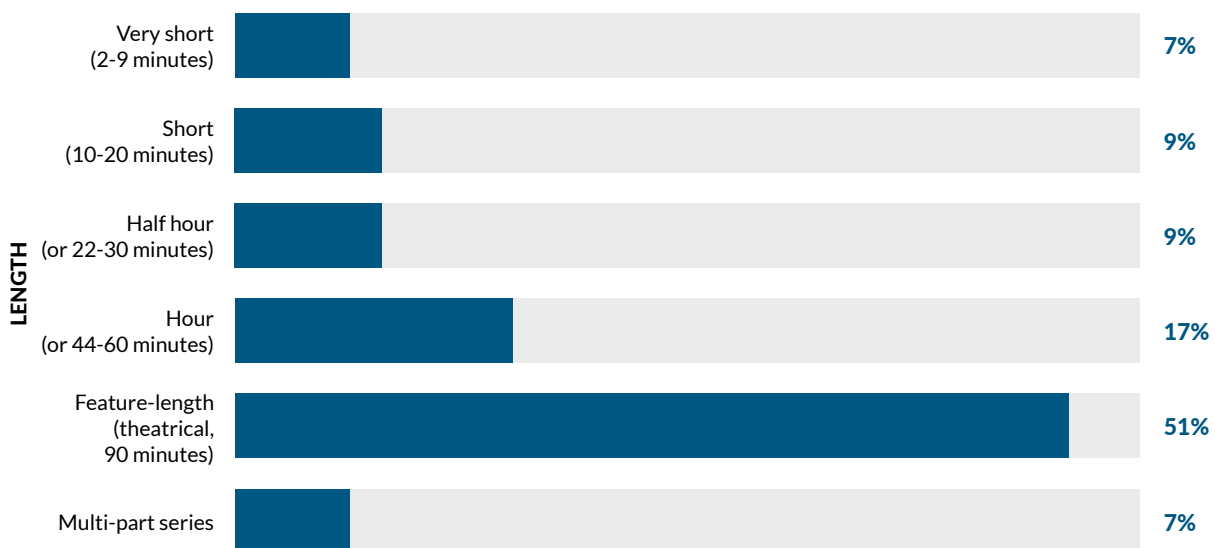


In the multi-channel streaming age of storytelling, what are the dominant film lengths for contemporary nonfiction directors and producers?

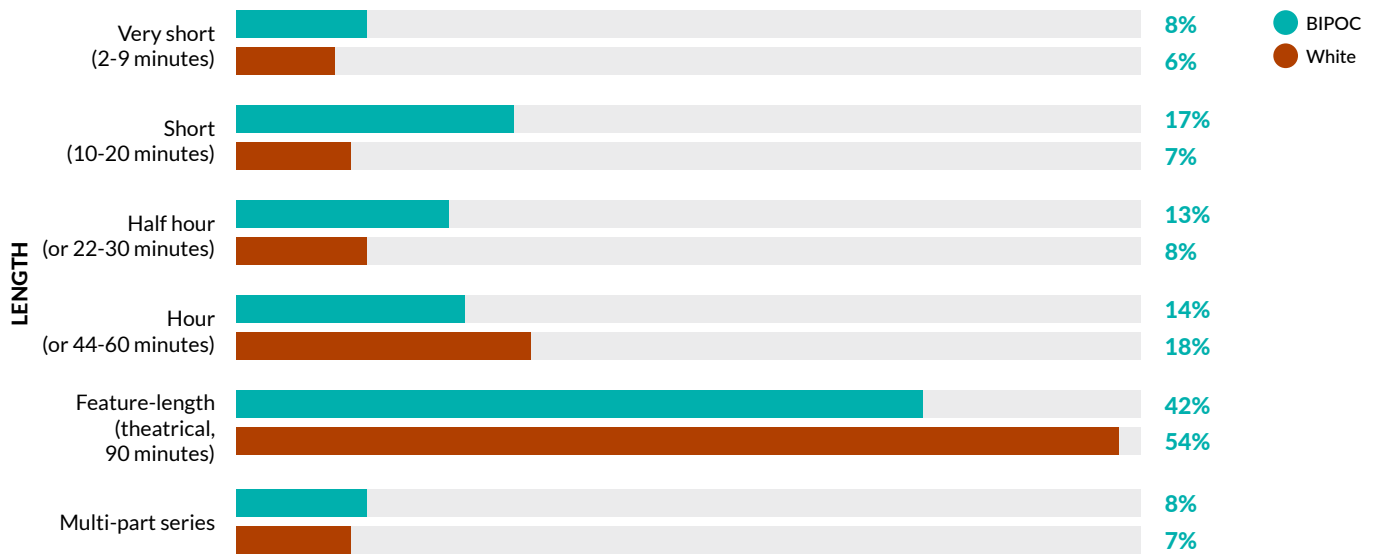
Documentary directors and producers are working in feature-length films as the most dominant (51%), followed by hour-long docs (17%). Paradoxically, most are not yet working in documentary series (only 7% said their last documentaries were series), even though other study findings here reveal that documentary makers see series as the greatest future opportunity for their craft.

While this pattern for feature films is intact across lines of race and gender, BIPOC and white makers differ a bit in some meaningful ways: BIPOC filmmakers are much more likely than white filmmakers to have produced a short-form project as their most recent documentary (17% vs. 7%), and less likely to have produced a feature film than white filmmakers (42% vs. 54%). More men than women report their most recent documentary project as a series.

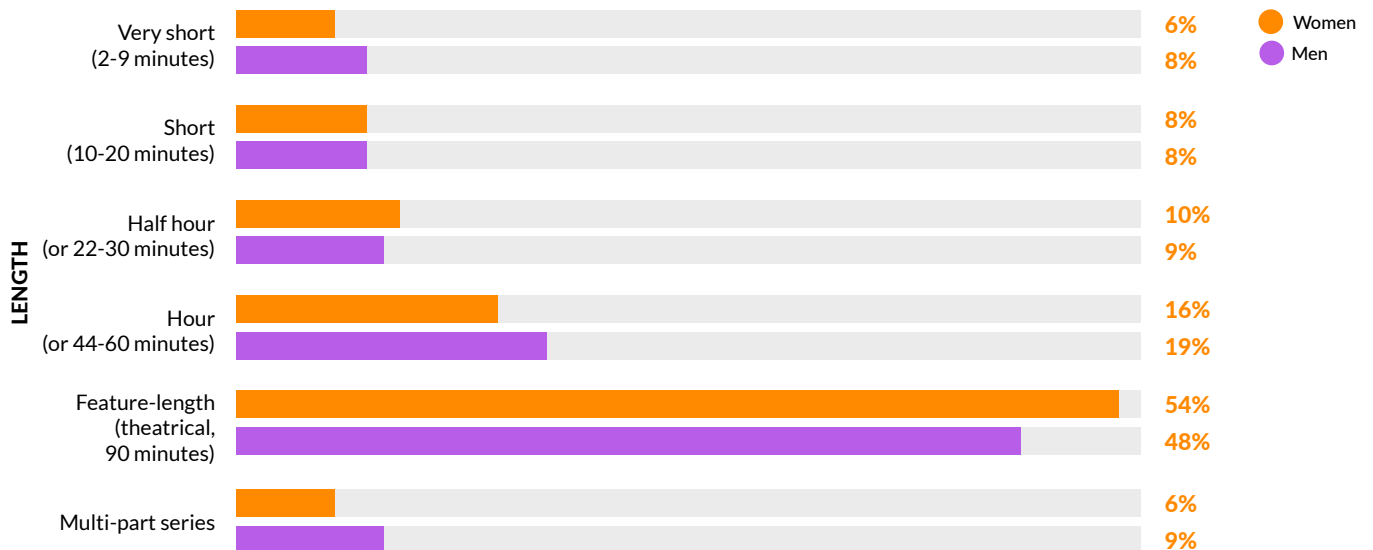
Documentary Length of Most Recent Film
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (All Respondents)



Documentary Length of Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (BIPOC and White)



Documentary Length of Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (Gender Identity)



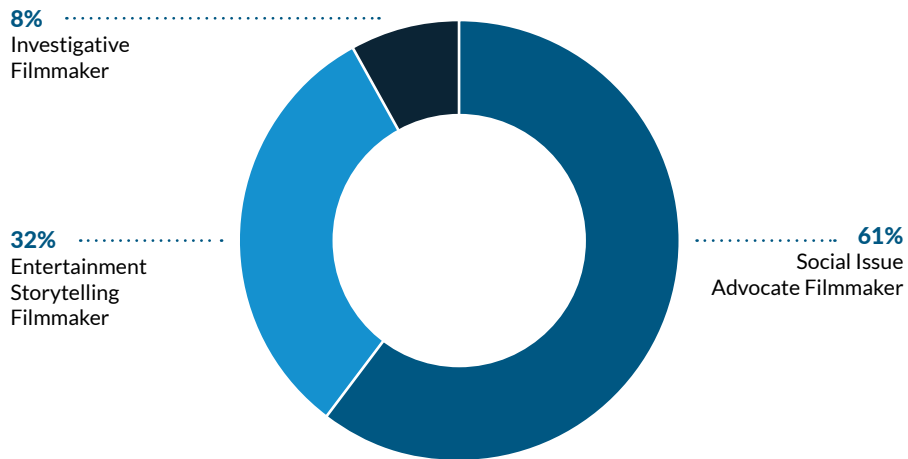


Do documentary directors and producers see themselves as social issue advocates or pure entertainment storytellers?

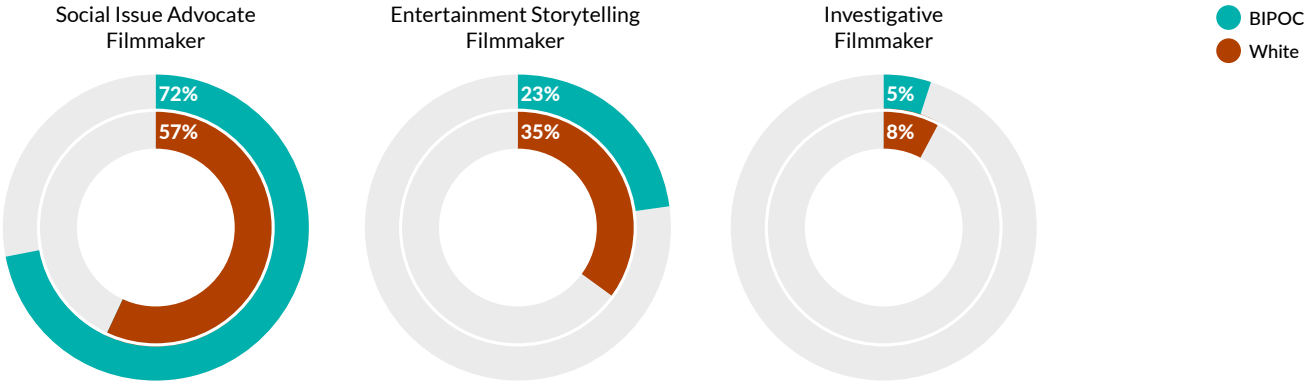
Contemporary documentary makers see a higher calling in their work, beyond craft and entertainment alone. The majority of documentary directors and producers describe themselves as social issue advocates (61%)—twice as many describe themselves in this way compared to purely entertainment storytellers (32%).

Nearly three-quarters of BIPOC documentary makers (72%) describe themselves foremost as social issue storytellers compared to more than half (57%) of white filmmakers who see themselves in this way. Men are more likely than women to describe themselves as pure entertainment storytellers (42% vs. 25%).

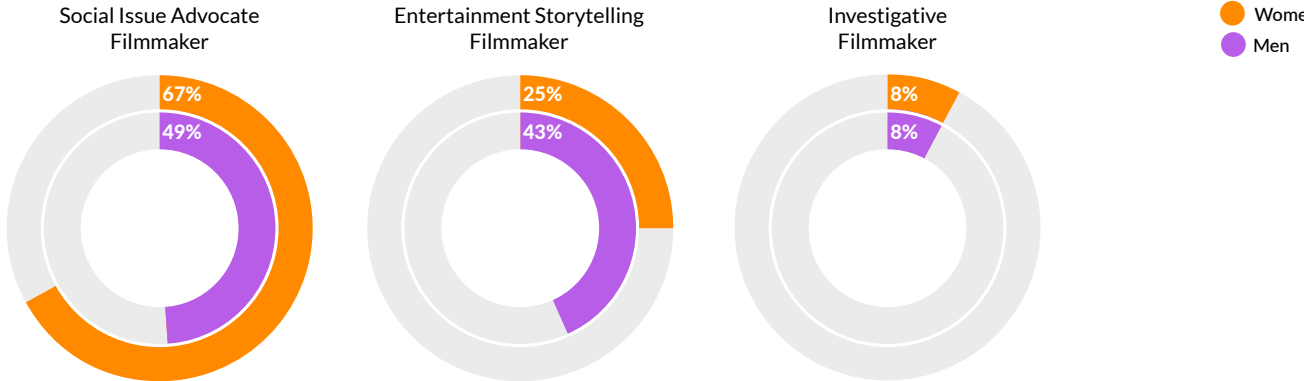
Social Issue or Pure Entertainment Films
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (**All Respondents**)



Social Issue or Pure Entertainment Films
 U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (**BIPOC and White**)



Social Issue or Pure Entertainment Films
 U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (**Gender Identity**)



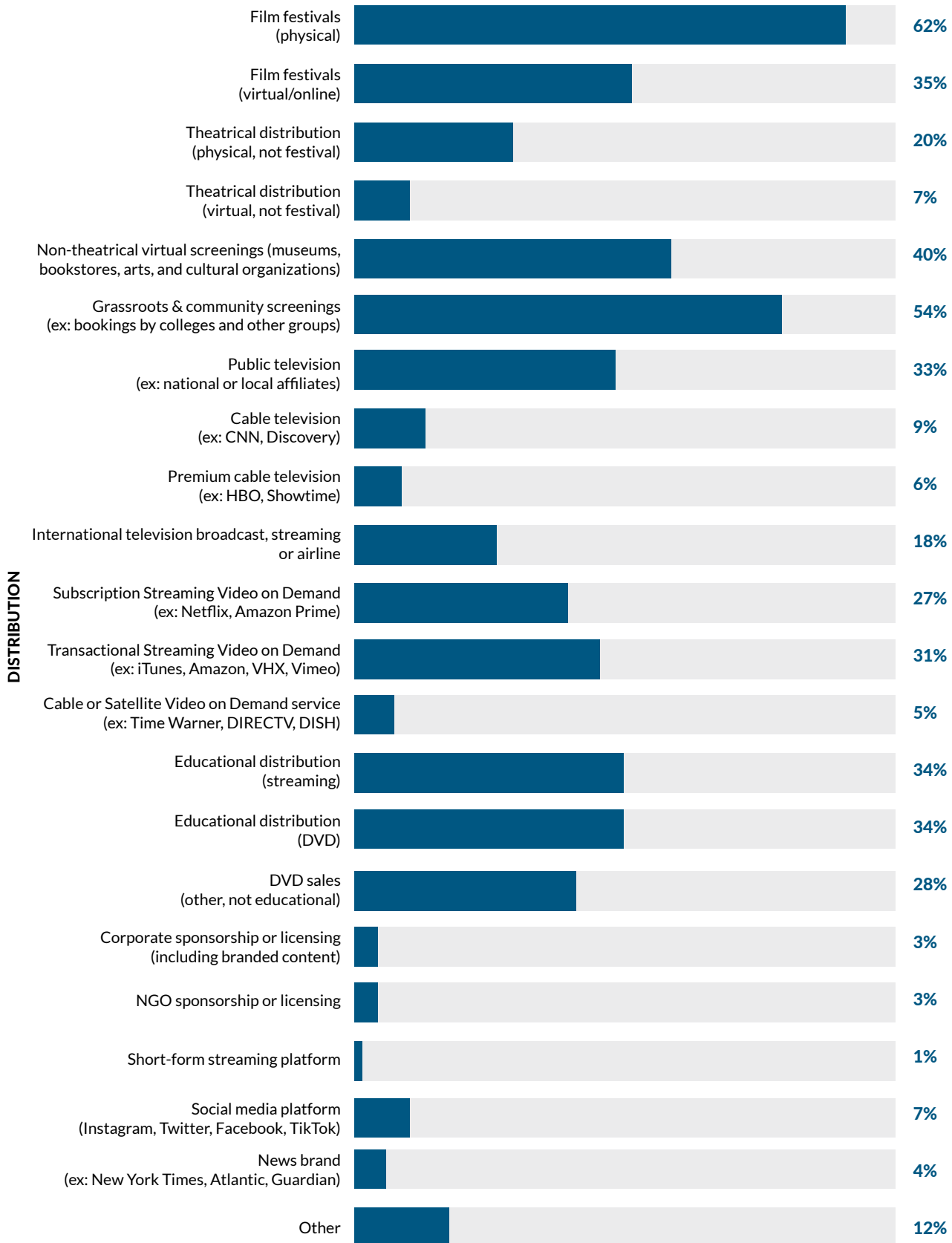


How did documentary directors and producers distribute their most recent nonfiction films?

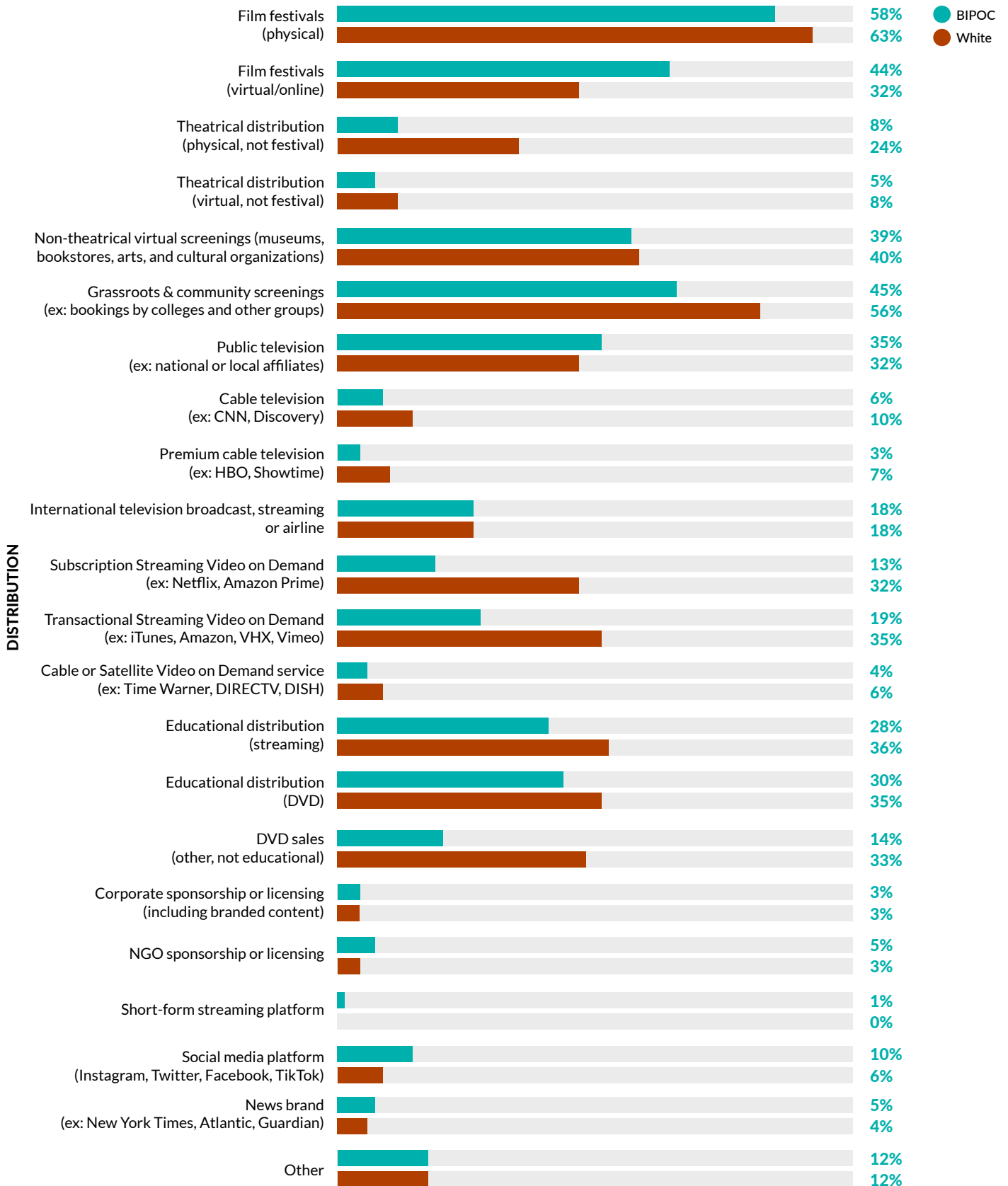
The top five ways that documentary directors and producers distributed their most recent nonfiction films include: physical film festivals (62%), grassroots community screenings (52%), non-theatrical virtual screenings (not including festivals) (40%), virtual film festivals (35%), and educational distribution (streaming and DVDs tied at 34%). Public TV is the final top distribution path (33% distributed their most recent documentary in this way).

BIPOC filmmakers report lower distribution than white makers across nearly every distribution mechanism except virtual film festivals (44% of BIPOC filmmakers distributed via virtual film festivals compared to 32% of white filmmakers), public TV (35% of BIPOC filmmakers distributed via public television compared to 32% of white filmmakers), and social media platforms. More men than women distributed their most recent documentaries on transactional streaming video on demand (35% men vs. 29% women).

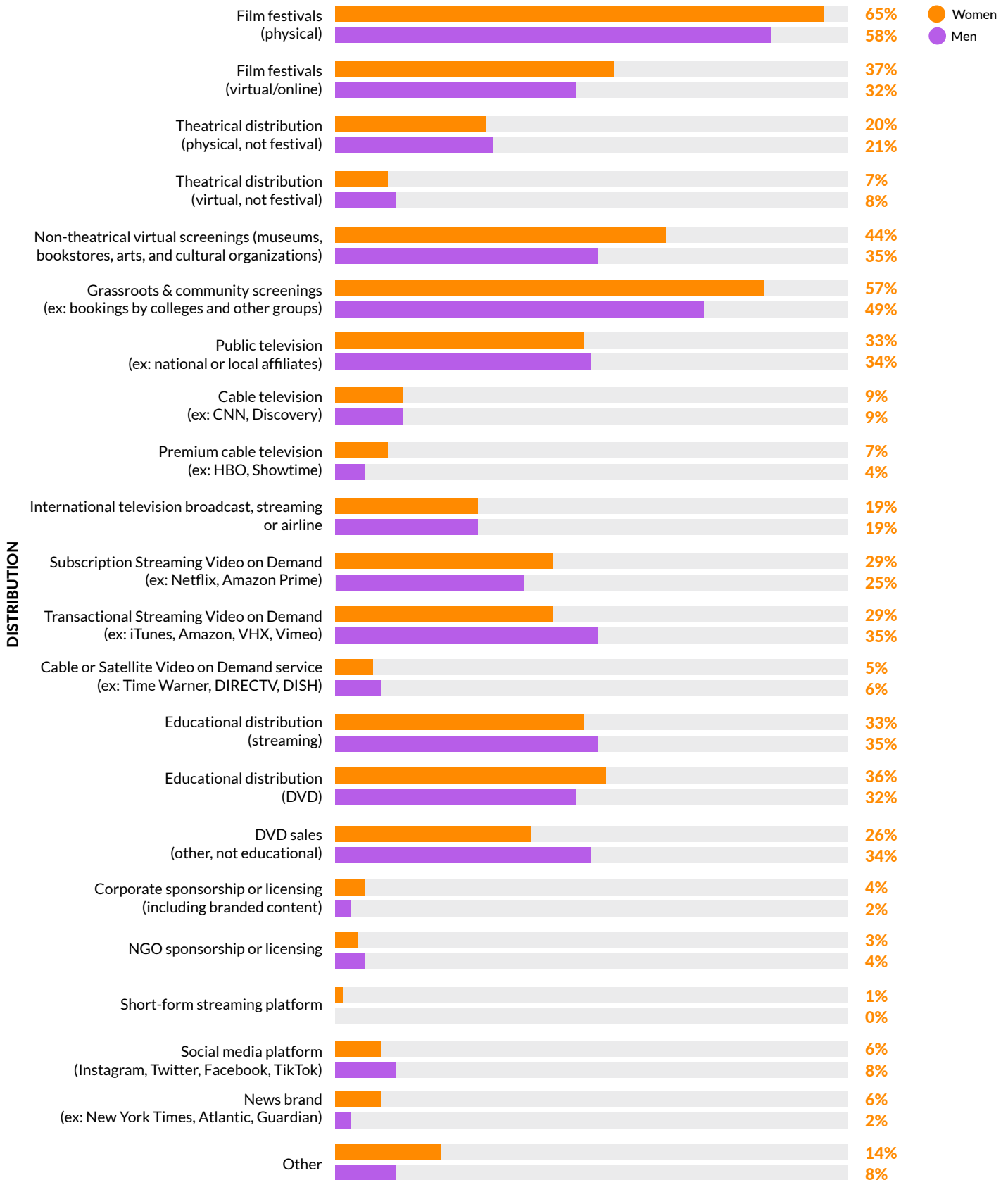
Distribution for Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (All Respondents)



Distribution for Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (BIPOC and White)



Distribution for Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (Gender Identity)



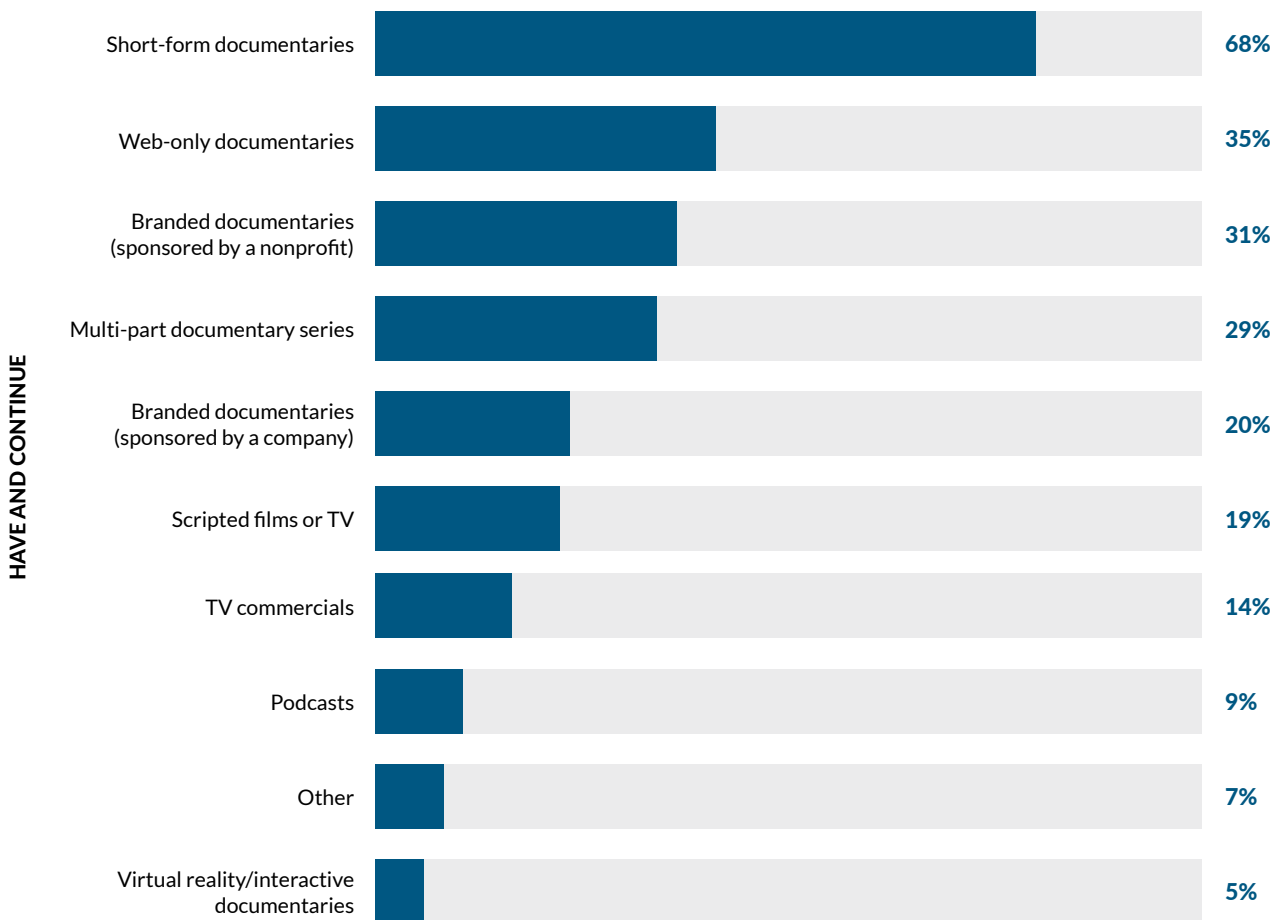


What are documentary makers' film format plans for the future?

In terms of film formats filmmakers have produced and will continue in the future, the top five formats for documentary makers include: short-form docs (68%), web-only films (35%), branded documentaries sponsored by nonprofit organizations (31%), multi-part documentary series (29%), and branded docs sponsored by companies (20%). Virtual reality is at the bottom of the list.

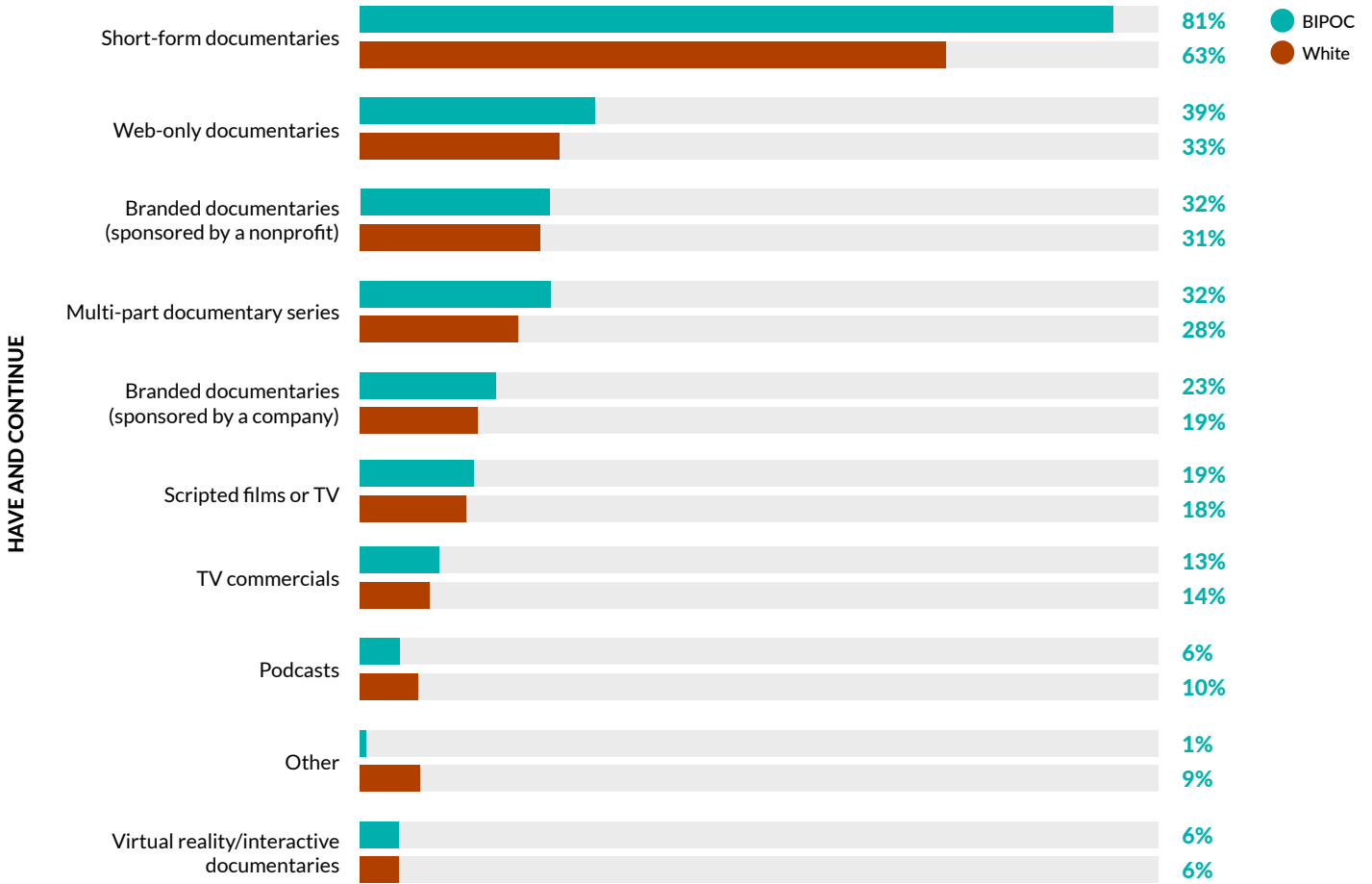
About 8 in 10 (81%) of BIPOC documentary makers say they have produced short-form documentaries and will continue into the future, compared to 63% of white makers. Women filmmakers are more likely than men to say they have produced, and will continue to make, nonprofit-sponsored (32% vs. 28%) or corporate-sponsored branded documentaries (21% vs. 18%). Men are more likely to produce multi-part series and web-only docs.

Film Format Plans for the Future
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (All Respondents)



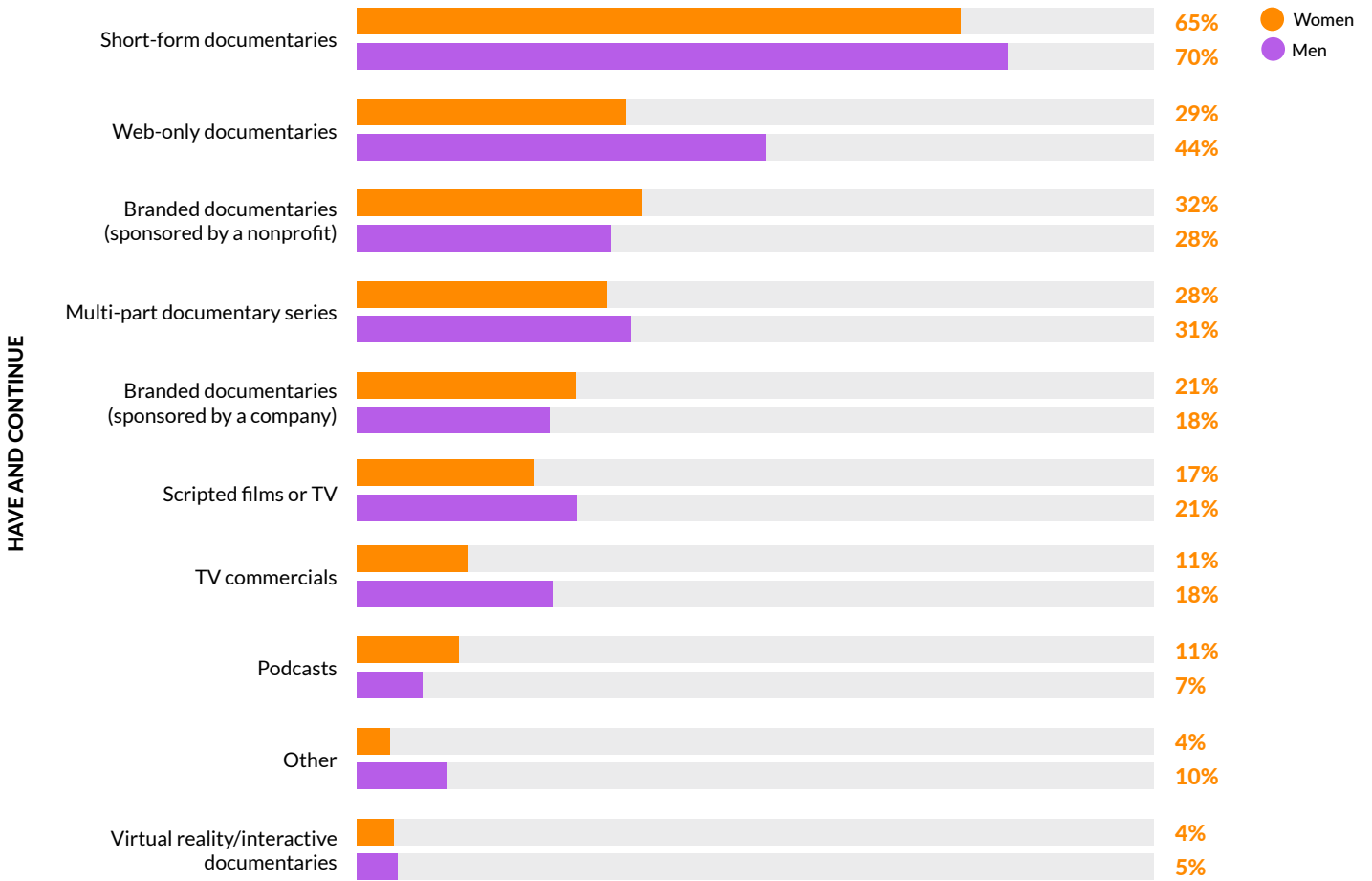
This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "I have produced this already and plan to in the future."

Film Format Plans for the Future U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (BIPOC and White)



This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "I have produced this already and plan to in the future."

Film Format Plans for the Future U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (Gender Identity)



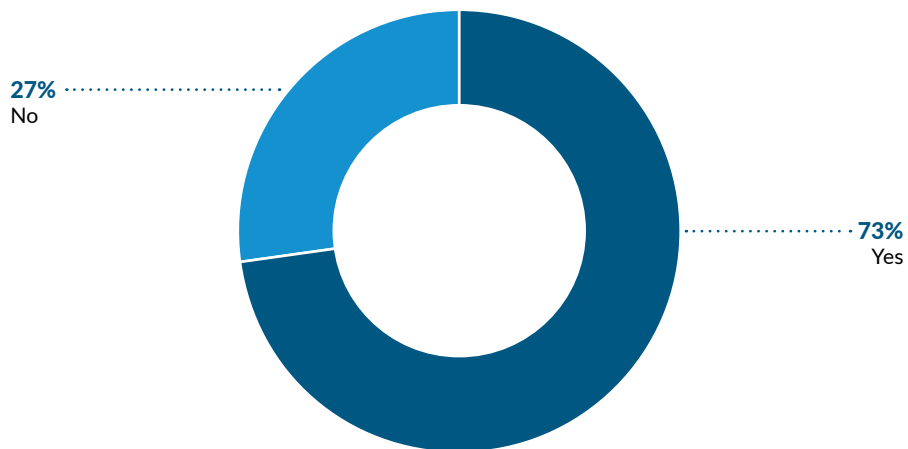
This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "I have produced this already and plan to in the future."



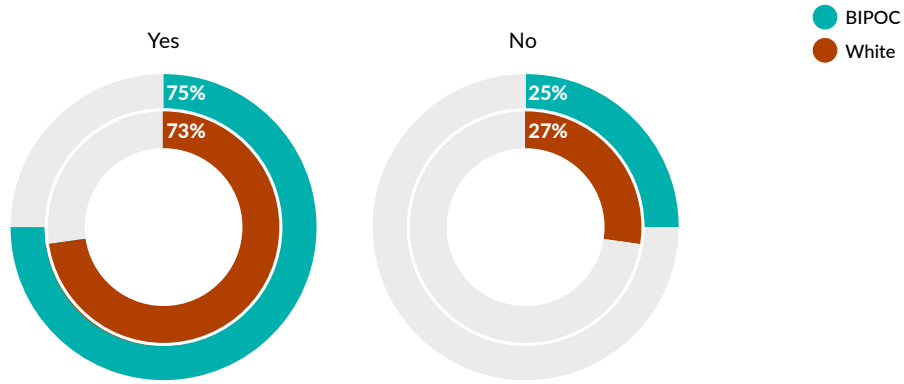
How are documentaries distributed outside the entertainment marketplace?

Grassroots community distribution is still important for documentary directors and producers. Nearly three-quarters (73%) distributed their most recent films directly within communities, not just the entertainment marketplace. BIPOC and white makers were about equal in community screenings, but fewer men than women makers brought their films directly to communities.

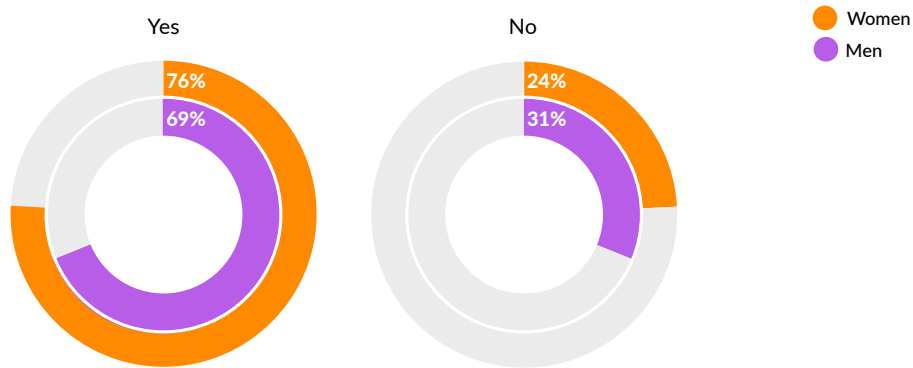
Community Screenings for Most Recent Film
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (All Respondents)



Community Screenings for Most Recent Film
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (**BIPOC and White**)



Community Screenings for Most Recent Film
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (**Gender Identity**)



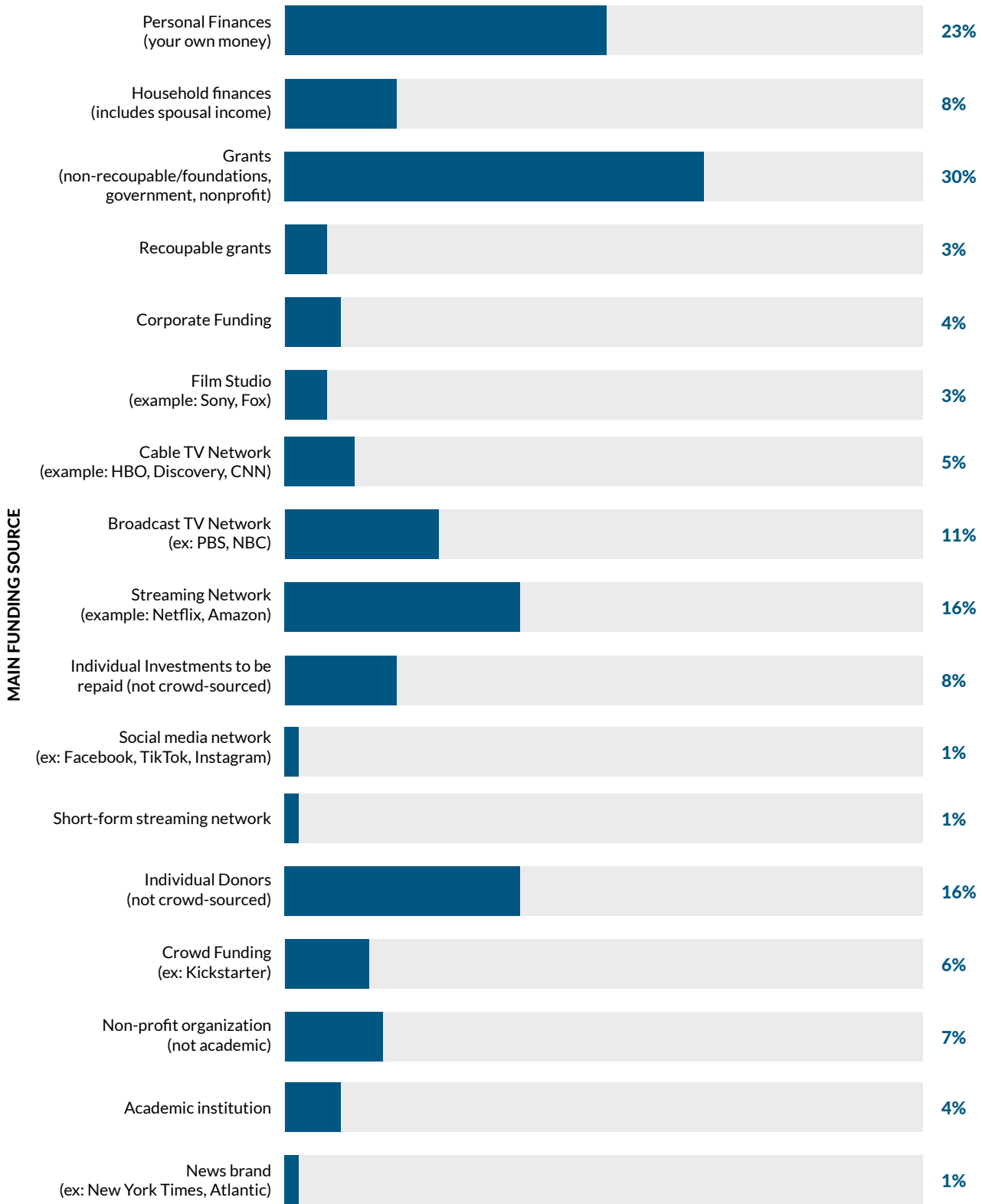


What are the main sources of funding for documentary films?

In terms of their most recent films, the top five main sources of documentary funding reported by nonfiction makers are: grants (non-recoupable from foundations, government, and nonprofit organizations) (30%), personal income (23%), individual donors (16%), broadcast TV networks (including public TV) (11%), and household finances and individual investments to be repaid (both 8%).

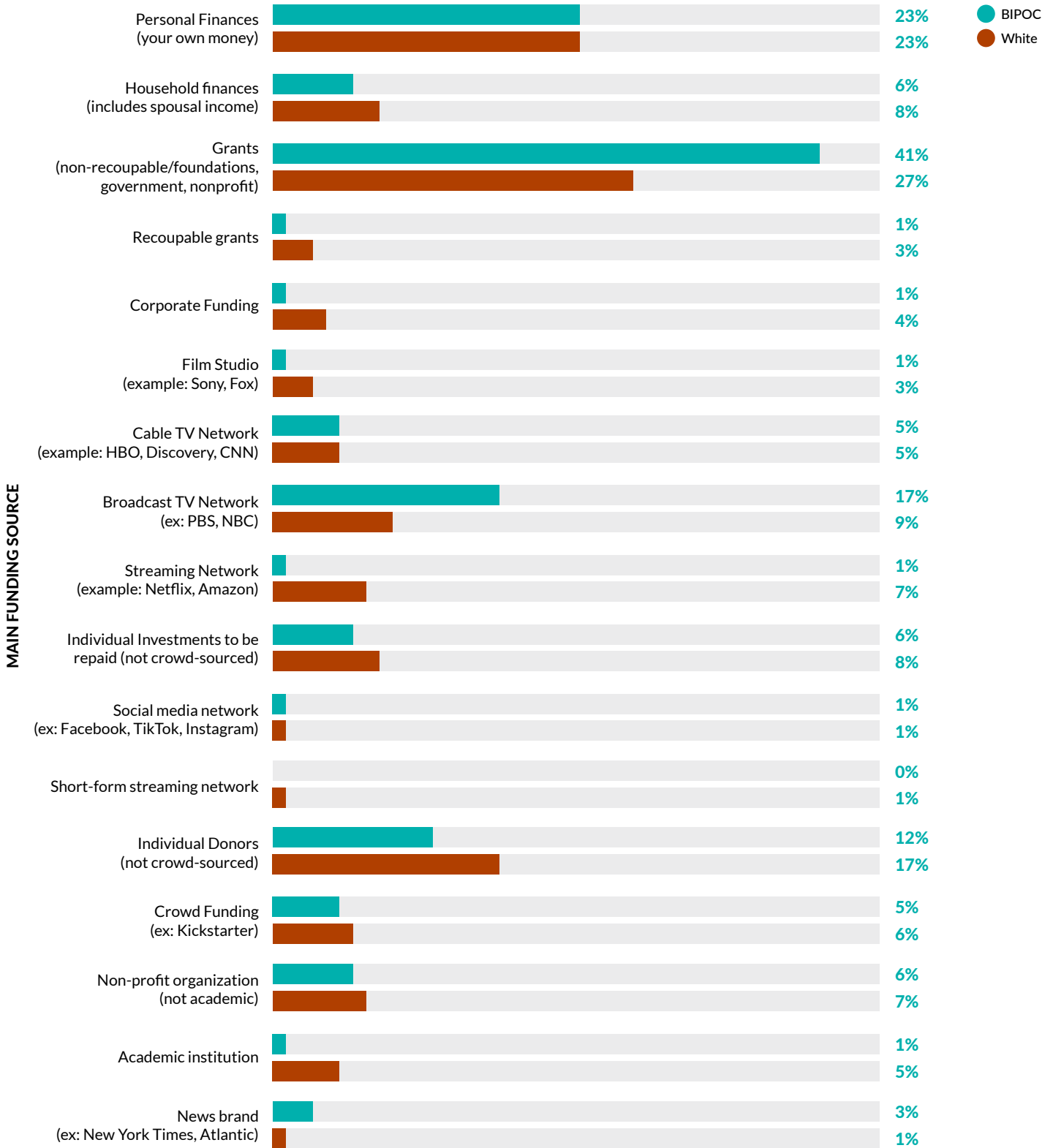
BIPOC and white filmmakers differ in main sources of documentary funding in a few areas. 41% of BIPOC makers report grants (foundations, government, nonprofit organizations) as main sources of documentary funding compared to 27% of white filmmakers. And in a dramatic difference, white filmmakers are much more likely to report streaming networks as main sources of documentary funding compared to BIPOC makers (7% vs. 1%). Twice as many women filmmakers report individual donors as a main source of documentary funding compared to men (20% vs. 10%), as well as household income (9% vs. 4%).

Main Source of Funding for Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (All Respondents)



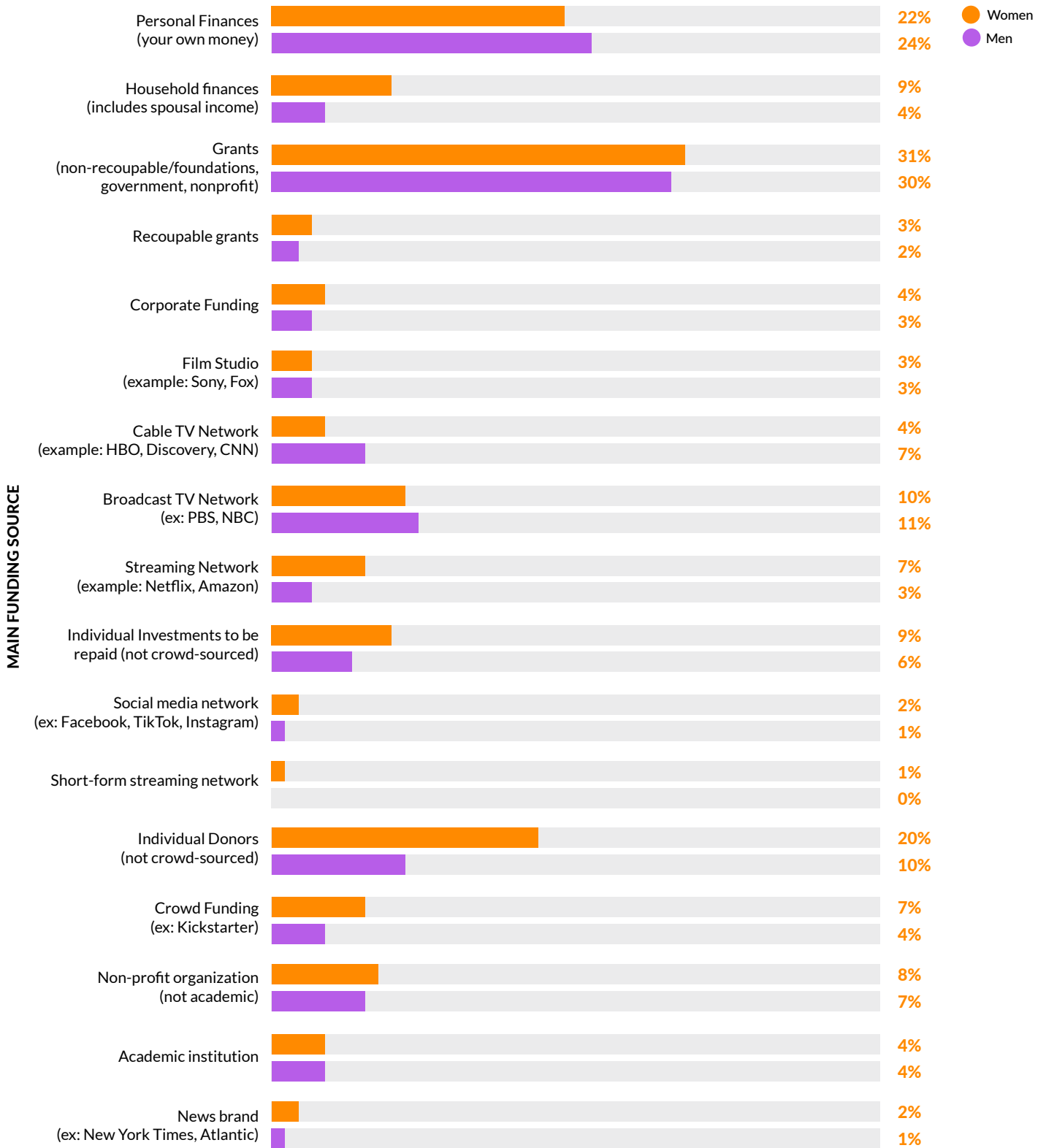
This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "main source of funding" for each option.

Main Source of Funding for Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (BIPOC and White)



This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "main source of funding" for each option.

Main Source of Funding for Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (Gender Identity)



This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "main source of funding" for each option.

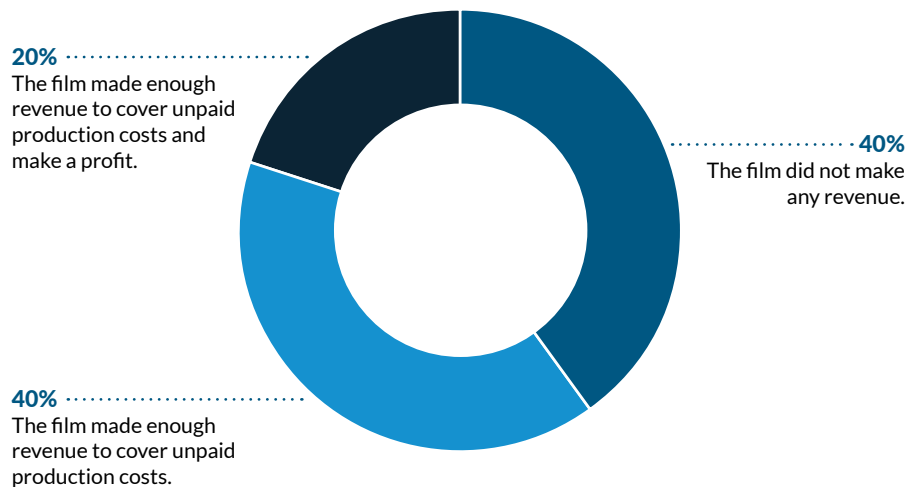


How much revenue do documentary makers generate from their nonfiction films?

Only 20% of documentary filmmakers say their most recent film made enough revenue to make a profit, and 4 in 10 nonfiction storytellers (40%) said their film did not make any revenue at all.

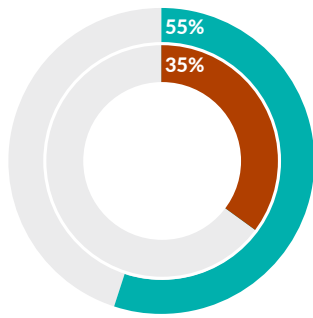
Differences are more stark for BIPOC filmmakers. About a quarter (27%) of BIPOC filmmakers said their most recent film generated a profit (compared to 44% of white makers), and nearly 6 in 10 (55%) of BIPOC filmmakers said their most recent film did not make any revenue at all, compared to 35% of white filmmakers. Women filmmakers were more likely than men to report that their most recent film did not make any revenue at all (42% to 35%).

Documentary Revenue From Most Recent Film
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (All Respondents)

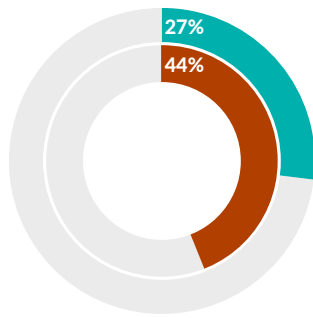


Documentary Revenue From Most Recent Film
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (BIPOC and White)

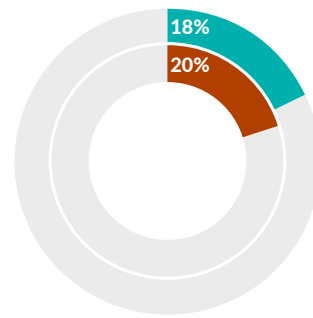
The film did not make any revenue.



The film made enough revenue to cover unpaid production costs.



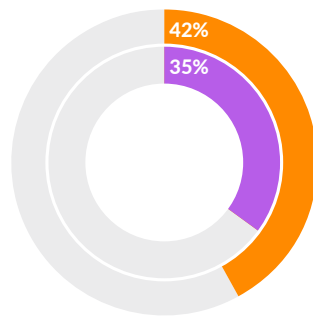
The film made enough revenue to cover unpaid production costs and make a profit.



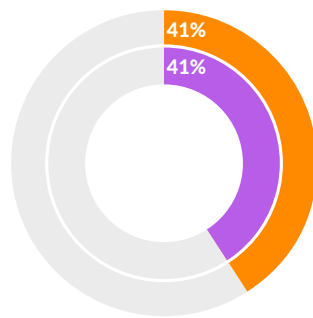
● BIPOC
 ● White

Documentary Revenue From Most Recent Film
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (Gender Identity)

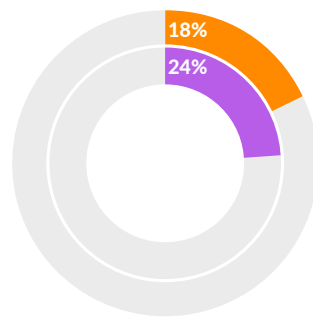
The film did not make any revenue.



The film made enough revenue to cover unpaid production costs.



The film made enough revenue to cover unpaid production costs and make a profit.



● Women
 ● Men



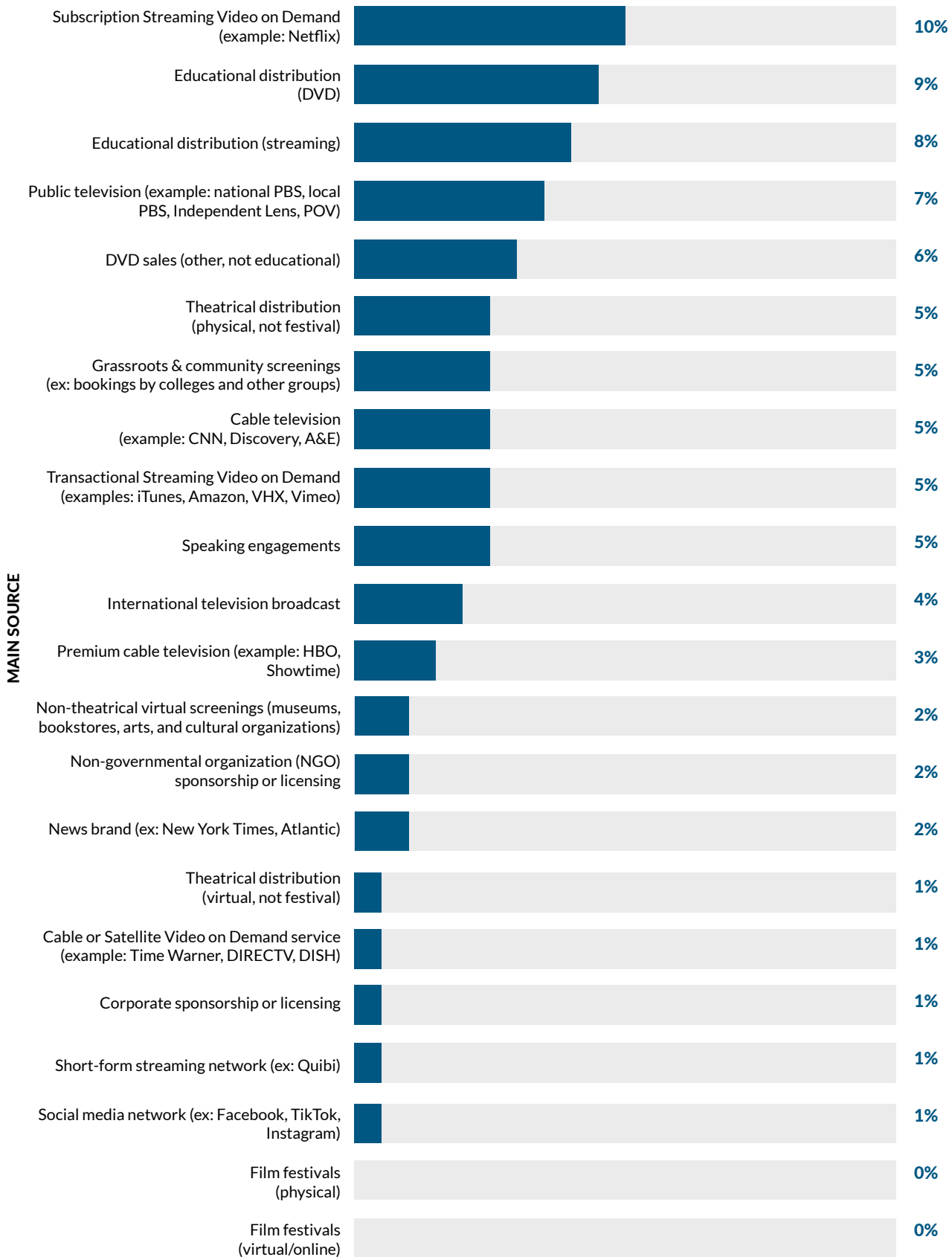
What are main sources of documentary revenue for directors and producers?

For their most recent film, the top five main sources of documentary revenue for nonfiction directors and producers are: subscription streaming video on demand (EX: Netflix, Hulu), education distribution (DVDs), educational distribution (streaming), public TV, and DVD sales (not including educational distribution).

The distinctive patterns for BIPOC filmmakers in terms of revenue from their most recent film are severe: BIPOC filmmakers are dramatically less likely to have received revenue from any streaming networks: subscription streaming video on demand (ex: Netflix, Hulu), and transactional streaming on demand (ex: iTunes). They were similarly less likely to report cable TV networks as a main source of documentary revenue for themselves. Public TV and physical theatrical distribution were their top “main” sources of documentary revenue for their most recent film.

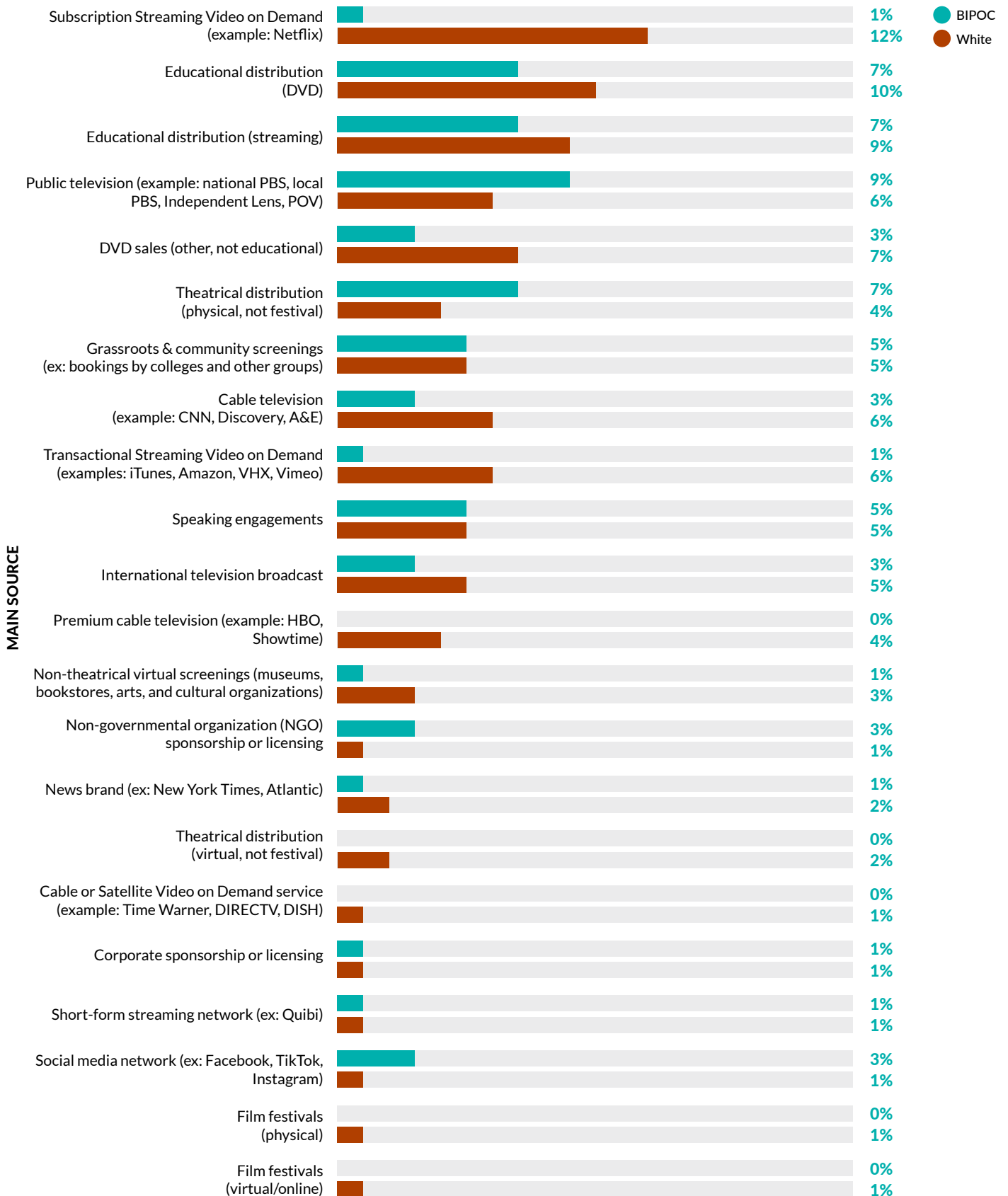
Women makers report lower levels of main documentary revenue nearly across the board, and women are also much less likely than men – like BIPOC makers – to report main sources of revenue from streaming services (subscription or transactional streaming networks).

Main Source of Documentary Revenue From Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (All Respondents)



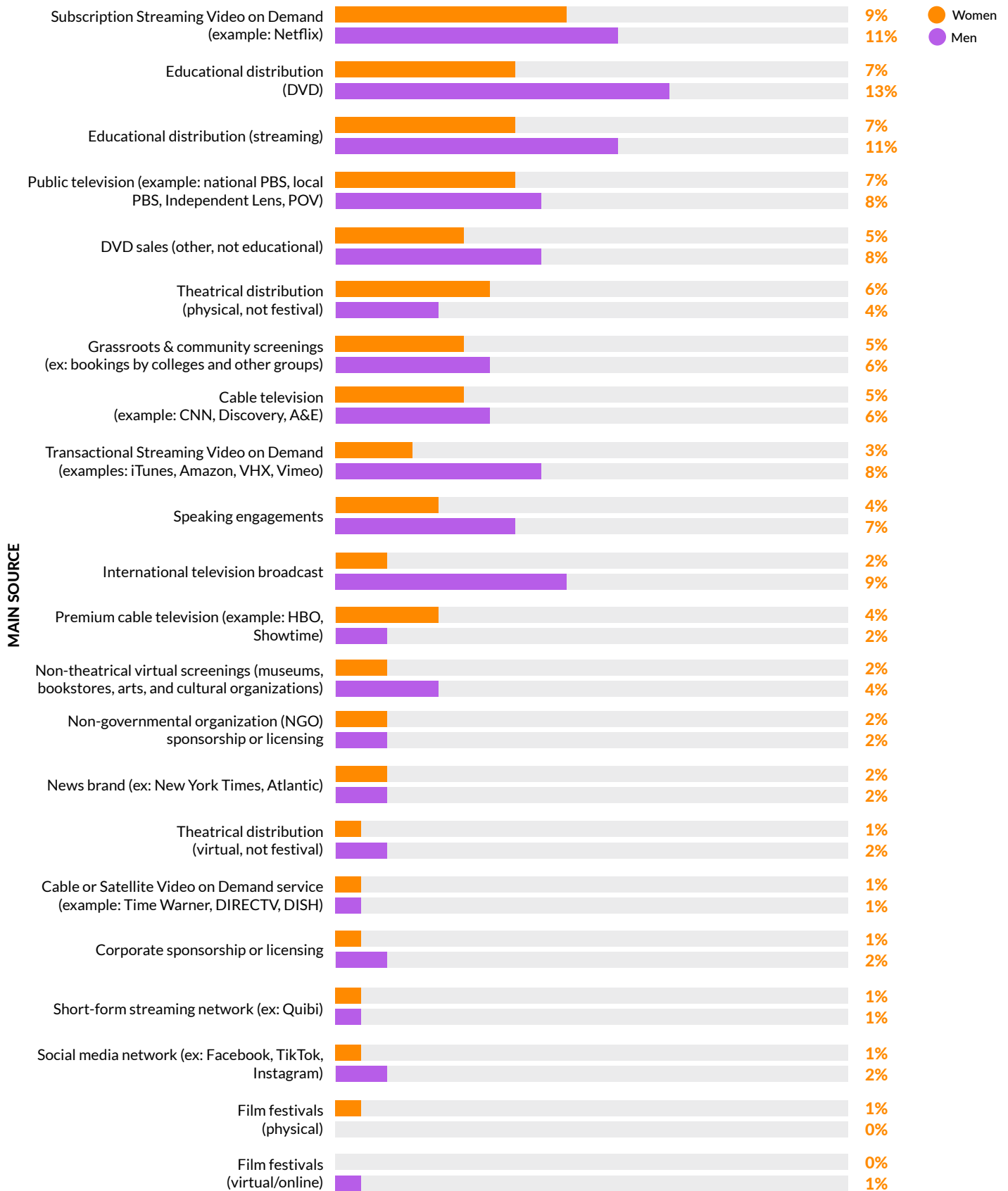
This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "main source of documentary revenue" for each option.

Main Source of Documentary Revenue From Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (BIPOC and White)



This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "main source of documentary revenue" for each option.

Main Source of Documentary Revenue From Most Recent Film U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (Gender Identity)



This graph depicts the percentage of respondents who answered "main source of documentary revenue" for each option.

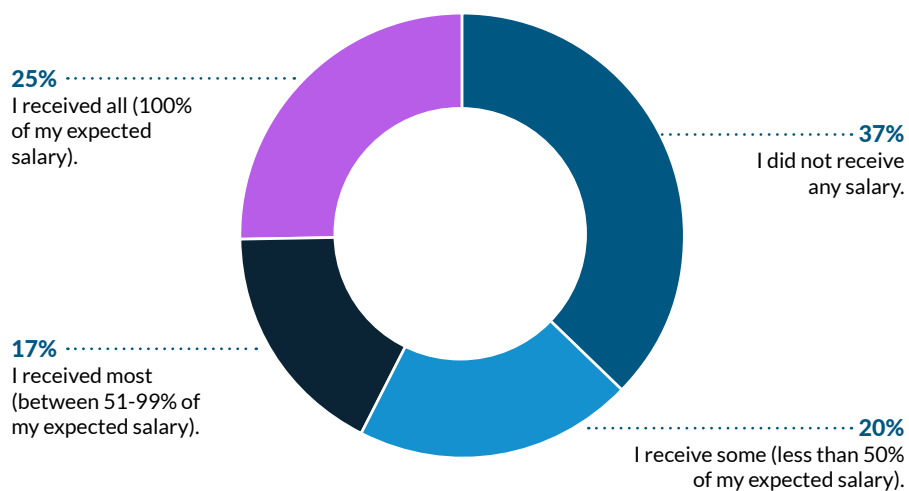


How much of their expected salary do documentary directors and producers earn from their films?

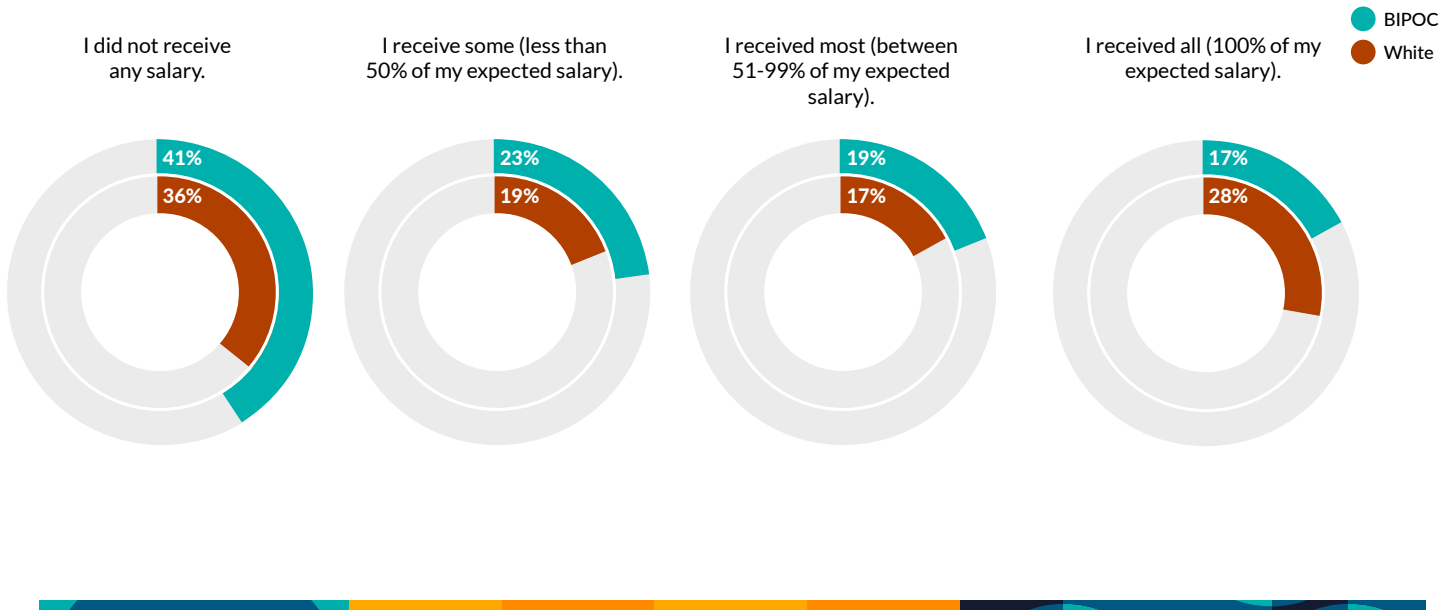
Nearly 4 in 10 documentary makers (37%) did not make any of their expected salary from their most recent film. Only a quarter (25%) made all of their expected salary from their most recent nonfiction film project.

BIPOC makers were more likely than white makers to report low salaries. 4 in 10 BIPOC makers (41%) did not make any of their expected salary from their most recent film, compared to 36% of white filmmakers who said this; and less than 2 in 10 BIPOC makers (17%) said they made all of their expected salary, compared to 28% of white makers. Women and men are roughly equivalent in their salary levels for their most recent nonfiction films.

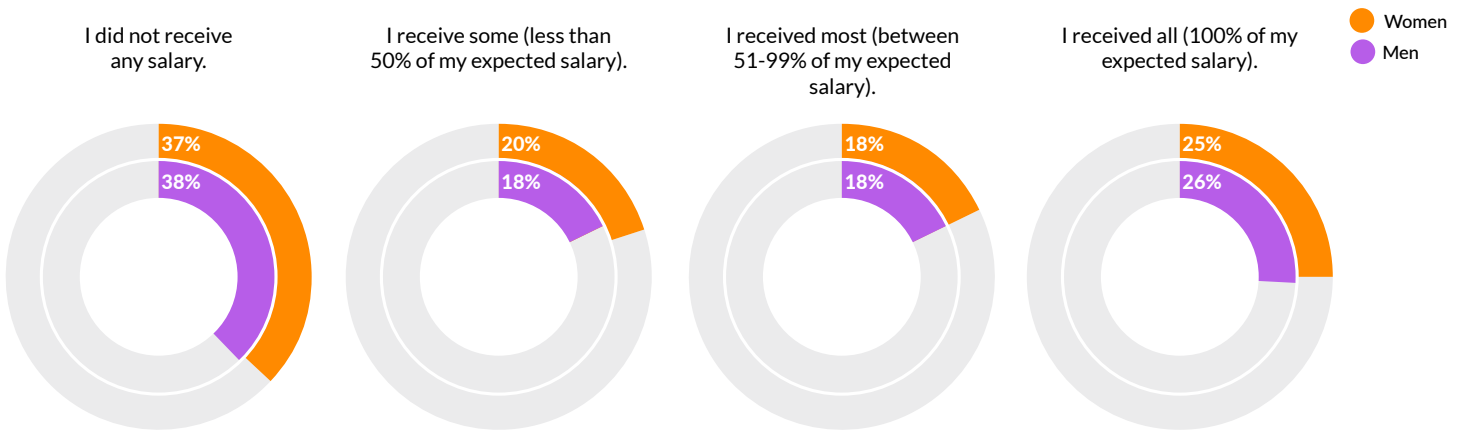
Salary From Most Recent Documentary
U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (**All Respondents**)



Salary From Most Recent Documentary
 U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (**BIPOC and White**)



Salary From Most Recent Documentary
 U.S. Documentary Directors and Producers (**Gender Identity**)



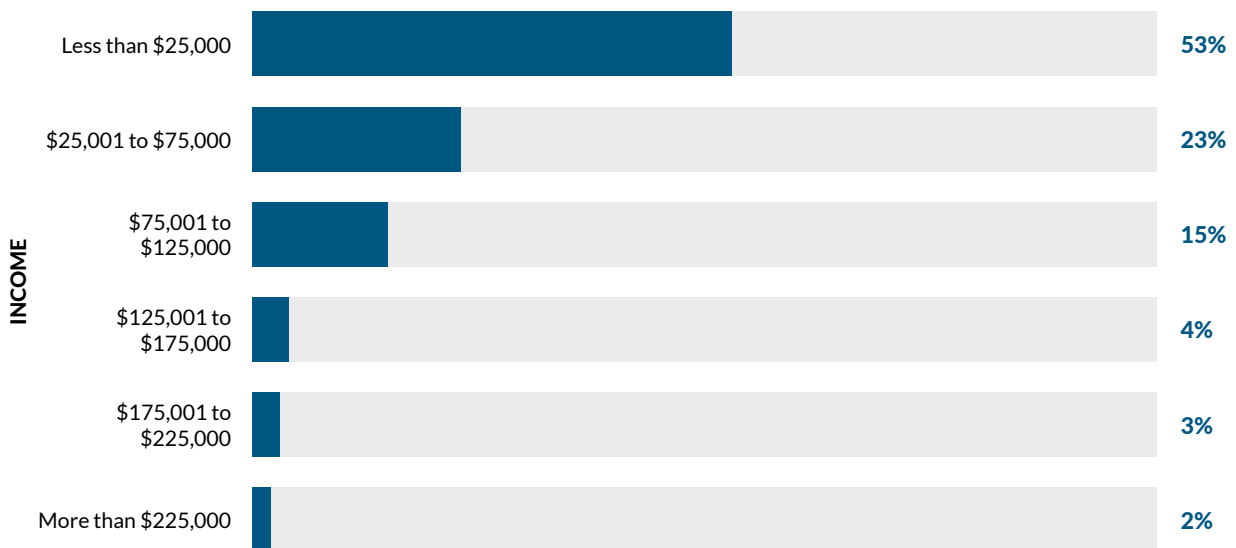


How much personal income do documentary directors and producers earn from their films?

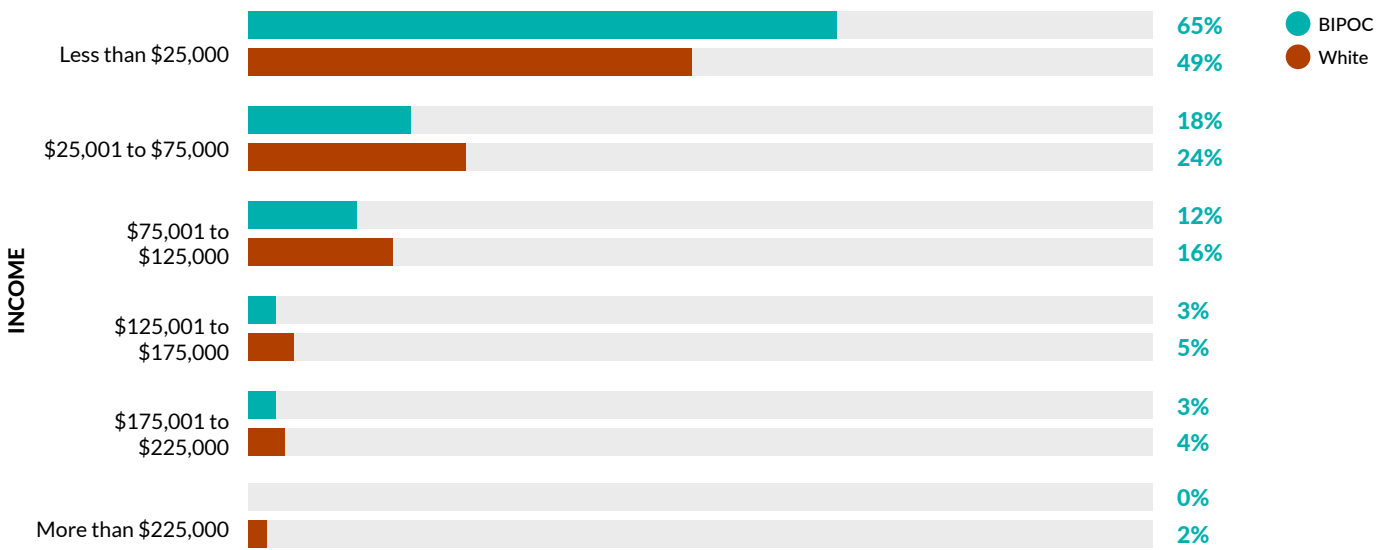
More than half of documentary makers (53%) made less than \$25,000 in personal income from their most recent films.

Racial and gender differences are distinct here. Nearly 7 in 10 (65%) of BIPOC filmmakers said they made less than \$25,000 in personal income from their most recent films, compared to half (49%) of white makers who said the same. Gender identity also shows differential results. Almost six in 10 (55%) of women filmmakers made less than \$25,000 in personal income from their most recent films, compared to almost half (48%) of men.

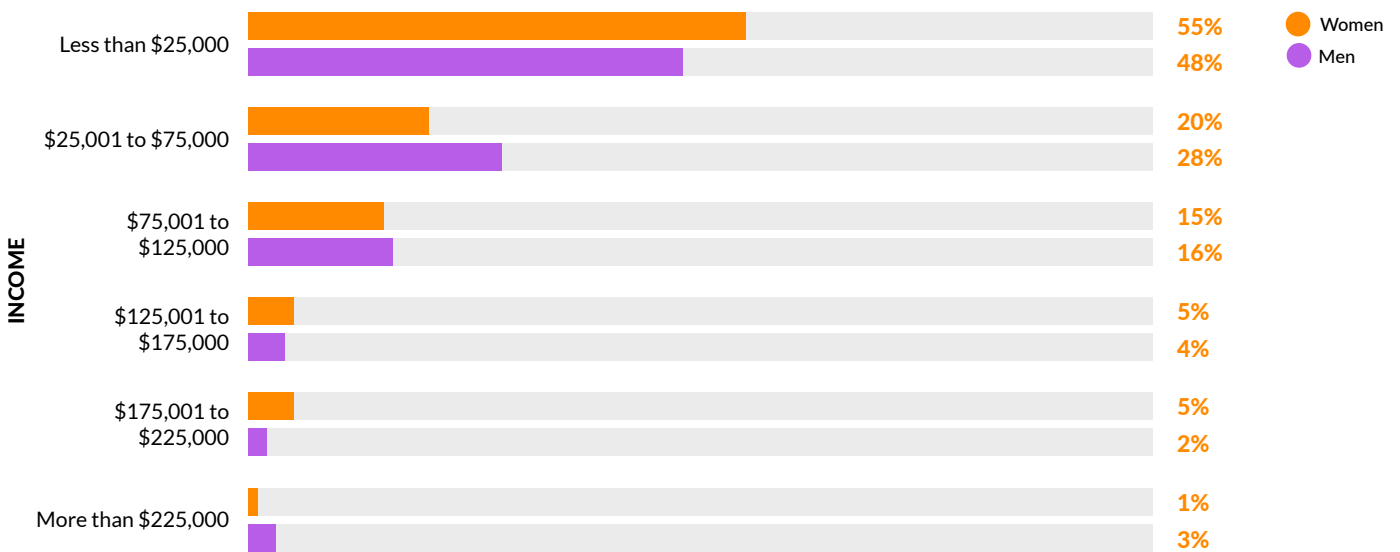
Personal Income Amount from Most Recent Documentary
U.S. Directors and Producers (*All Respondents*)



Personal Income Amount from Most Recent Documentary
U.S. Directors and Producers (BIPOC and White)



Personal Income Amount from Most Recent Documentary
U.S. Directors and Producers (Gender Identity)





The Center for Media & Social Impact (CMSI), based at American University's School of Communication, is a creative innovation lab and research center that creates, studies, and showcases media for equity, social change, and social justice. Focusing on independent, documentary, and entertainment media, the Center bridges boundaries between scholars, producers and communication practitioners across media industries, social justice, public policy, and public engagement. The Center produces resources for the field and academic research; creates original media; convenes conferences and events; and works collaboratively to understand and design media that matter.

cmsimpact.org



The International Documentary Association (IDA) supports the vital work of documentary storytellers and champions a thriving and inclusive documentary culture. IDA provides production funding and fiscal sponsorship to filmmakers, advocates for the rights of documentary makers around the world, publishes *Documentary* magazine, and produces year-round programming including *Getting Real*, the largest professional conference in the U.S. for documentary makers.

documentary.org