

# Here's where Hollywood's efforts to improve diversity really stand in 2022

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10 Ahead of the annual Academy Awards ceremony, the attention in Hollywood turns to the lack of diversity in the entertainment industry. Ever since #OscarsSowWhite trended in 2015 and 2016 when there were no people of color nominated for the 20 acting nominations each of those years, the industry has been reckoning with how a lack of diversity in front of and behind the camera is, among other things, a missed business opportunity. UCLA just released its annual Hollywood Diversity Report to address gender and racial diversity gaps, and efforts to close them.

15 The UCLA study found that women held the gains they've made on-screen, representing 47% of film leads and 42% of actors. Women and people of color have made progress in the key, powerful roles of director and film writer, but are still vastly underrepresented. Women are less than 22% of directors and 33% of film writers. And both male and female people of color represent 30% of directors and 32% of film writers.

20 "There's a lot more work that needs to be done, particularly for women of color," says Ana-Christina Ramon, UCLA's director of research and civic engagement. "They again lag behind, in getting those major jobs as directors of top films."

## **A ripple effect**

25 This lack of diversity at the top has a ripple effect across productions: the study found that films written or directed by women last year had casts that were significantly more diverse than those written or directed by white men. But the study also found that women and people of color have a harder time raising financing for a film, and when they do, raise less funding for their films – they're more likely to helm a film with a budget of less than \$20 million than white men are.

30 "There is definitely this inequitable system that's working against women. When you have a higher budget, you can obviously do a lot more and [the film] is definitely going to get a lot more marketing, more backing from the studio," says Ramon.

All this data, Ramon says, points to a massive opportunity for Hollywood: films with more diverse casts perform better at the box office. Eight of the top 10 theatrically-released films in 2021 featured casts that were greater than 30% minority, while films with less than 11% minority actors were the lowest box-office performers.

35 With attention to that data (and a 2021 McKinsey study about the \$10 billion opportunity in addressing anti-Black bias), Hollywood's been taking steps to address these gaps. Another factor driving change: The Academy set representation and inclusion standards for films to qualify for the 2024 awards.

40 These standards address on-screen representation, themes and narratives – films can qualify if they either have a lead actor from an underrepresented racial or ethnic group, 30% of secondary and minor roles from at least two underrepresented groups, or a storyline or subject matter centered on an underrepresented group. Films must also meet certain criteria in terms of the diversity of creative leadership and project teams, marketing, as well as the production company's access to opportunities.

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The Academy explained its initiative to push the studios to embrace greater diversity in the next few years with this statement: “Our values at the Academy are based on the belief that arts and sciences, including the arts and sciences of filmmaking, thrive from diversity. This belief, coupled with our mission to recognize and uphold excellence in the motion picture arts and sciences, inspire  
50 imagination, and connect the world through the medium of motion pictures, requires a commitment to representation, inclusion and equity. There are so many stories that need to be told and have not yet been told – we want to encourage this across the industry.”