



# **WOMEN IN VIEW**

On Screen Report

**Executive  
Summary**

**March 2021**

## On Screen 2021

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## About Women in View

Women in View is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to gender parity and inclusion in Canadian media both on screen and behind the scenes.

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### About BIPOC TV & FILM

BIPOC TV & Film is a not-for-profit organization and collective of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour in Canada's TV and film industry. From writers, directors, producers and actors to editors, crew members and executives, our members are a mix of emerging, mid-level and established industry professionals. BIPOC TV & Film is dedicated to increasing the representation of BIPOC both in front and behind the camera.

BIPOC TV & Film was founded in 2012 as Indigenous & Creatives of Colour in TV & Film by Writer/Director Nathalie Younglai, who saw a need to form a community for others like her, who were also feeling isolated by the overall lack of representation of BIPOC in the industry. This collective is the only intersectional organization in Canada dedicated to providing safe spaces for all Black, Indigenous and People of Colour in the industry.



# Introduction

WIVOS 2021 includes an analysis of two funding cycles: film projects financed by Telefilm Canada between 2017-2019 and scripted English language television series funded by the Canada Media Fund (CMF) between 2017-2019. In this Report, the definition of women includes cisgender and transgender women, and there are also data points where non-binary people have self-identified.

In 2012, Women in View presented its first report, analyzing the position of writers, directors and cinematographers in scripted English language series funded by the CMF, and feature films funded by Telefilm Canada. These two funds provided consistent and concise data, year after year, to give us a reliable “snapshot” of the Canadian screen industry. We acknowledge that the studies do not encompass all projects in which CMF and Telefilm invested or all feature films and TV series produced in Canada.

In our fifth report, WIVOS 2019, researchers added two roles for further analysis: the producer in film and the showrunner in television. This report covered projects between 2014–2017. Here we first learned that women showrunners hired women writers in greater numbers than men showrunners did. This report also presented, for the first time, data collected to analyze the number of Black

women & Women of Colour and Indigenous women working in these key creative roles in the industry.

WIVOS 2021 picks up where WIVOS 2019 left off. By the time the projects in the current study were funded, CBC had committed to “significantly increase” women directors on TV series, the CMF had promised “tangible measures to increase women in key roles,” Telefilm Canada aimed to “achieve a balanced production portfolio that reflects gender parity,” and the CRTC had set out to “find lasting solutions to make sure more women play leading roles” in the industry.

The current data shows that gender equity initiatives had a strong impact. Between 2017 and 2019, there was a 23% increase in the number of TV episodes directed by women at CBC bringing women’s share of directing at the public broadcasters to 60%. This, in turn, raised the industry-wide percentage of women-directed TV episodes from 2017’s 27% to almost 50% in 2019 even though women’s share of directing work at Bell and Corus—where similar gender parity initiatives were not adopted—remained quite low.

While gender parity commitments were effective they were largely aimed at increasing the number of women directors and did not target all areas of

the industry. For example, women cinematographers saw only an 8% increase since 2017 to just over 17% of TV episodes in 2019.

More importantly, initiatives to increase the number of women working in TV and film did not have a significant impact on diversity. Of the 43% of women in key creative TV roles in 2019, only 6.44% were Black women & Women of Colour and 0.94% were Indigenous women.

The same disparity exists in every measured category. In 2019, although nearly half of all TV directors were women, only 12% were Black women & Women of Colour and less than 1% were Indigenous women. In the same year, women wrote 57% of TV episodes, but fewer than 5% were written by Black women & Women of Colour and fewer than 2% by Indigenous women.

This disparity was even evident on series led by women showrunners where there is more work for women overall. In 2019, on series led by women, 79% of episodes were written by women, 72% by white women, 5% by Black women & Women of Colour and just 2% by Indigenous women. On the same series, 63% of the episodes were directed by women, just 17% by Black women & Women of Colour and none by Indigenous women.

(continued...)

## SCOPE

The television data scope for this Report includes 51 scripted drama series funded by CMF for production in 2017–2018 (shorthand throughout this document as 2018) and 2018–2019 (referred to as 2019). Data from our previous report, on 2017 is provided throughout for comparison purposes. In film, 646 development projects and 257 film production projects that received Telefilm funding in 2017–2018 (referred to as 2018) and 2018–2019 (2019) were examined. Researchers are grateful to Telefilm for their cooperation in providing and explaining raw data. Data from 2017 (2016–2017 funding cycle) collected for our previous report is included throughout for comparison purposes. Researchers sought to uncover how individuals self-identified in terms of gender, ethnicity and race by collecting information from a variety of sources including associations, news articles, film festival websites, social media, blogs, press interviews (video and print), individual websites and databases and by directly surveying individuals who have not been identified in previous reports. Researchers acknowledge the complications of self-identification in some communities—particularly within Indigenous communities.

# Introduction

In the world of feature film, women-led films were financed at the lowest levels, with the investment per project much lower than that of men-led productions. Men-directed projects averaged \$649K in production financing, white women-directed projects averaged \$478K and Black women & Women of Colour-directed projects averaged just \$181K (microbudget level). On a more encouraging note, a boost to Telefilm's Indigenous Stream meant Indigenous women directors saw an average of \$496K in production financing.

When looking at projects with funding from Telefilm over \$1M, only 26% of the films were directed by women—none by Black women & Women of Colour and just 3.7% by Indigenous women. On the subset of these \$1M+ projects that were produced by women, 50% were directed by women, but just 9% by Black women & Women of Colour and 1.5% by Indigenous women.

These intersectional insights reveal a disturbing pattern common across gender-parity initiatives: setting targets merely based on gender doesn't equitably serve all women. When examined individually, these statistics are dismal and illuminate the shameful lack of diversity within leadership positions, in writing rooms, and on sets. There is still a great deal of work to do. To properly represent the diverse cultural and racial reality of our country on the big and small screens, we need to expand our commitments to hire more Black, Indigenous and Women of Colour.

WIVOS On Screen Reports prove that targets and commitments work. Change requires action. Accountability creates results. Representation matters.

## TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this report we use the terms BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour), Black women & Women of Colour, and Indigenous Women. Researchers have consulted widely on terminology and are following the lead of stakeholders and equity seeking groups. We acknowledge that language is in a constant state of flux and what is acceptable or best-practices today may not remain so.

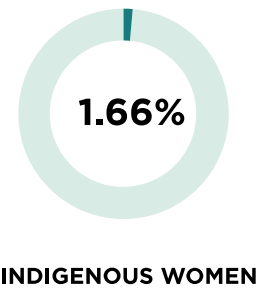
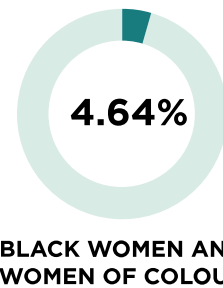
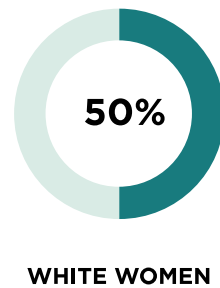
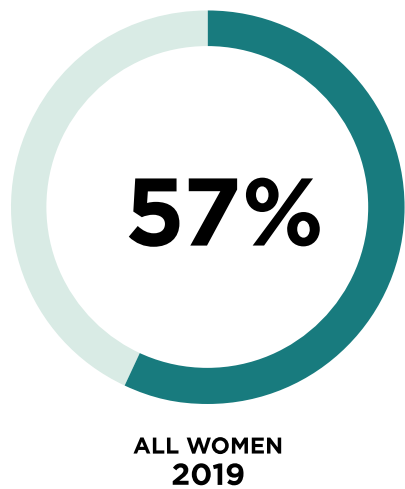
## INTERSECTIONALITY

Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" in a 1989 paper as a way to help explain the oppression of Black women and how people's social identities overlap.

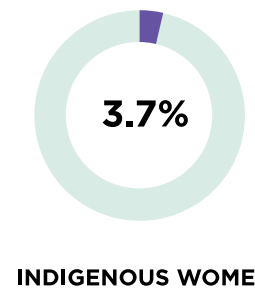
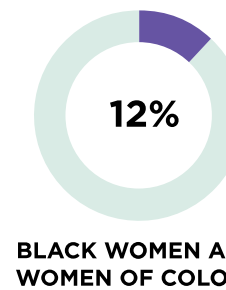
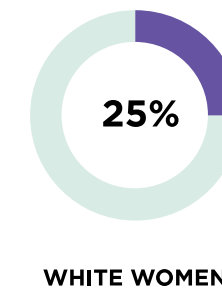
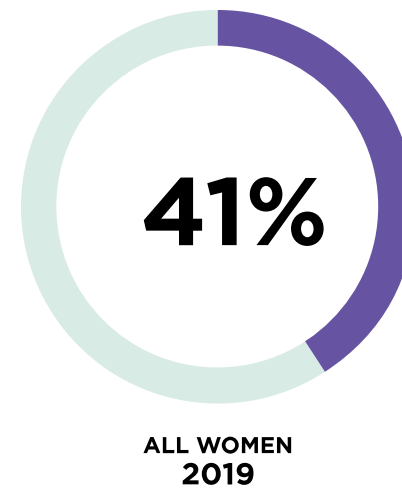
# Directing and Writing in TV & Film 2019

Film and TV are different environments with different successes to celebrate and issues yet to tackle.

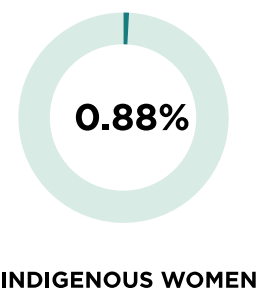
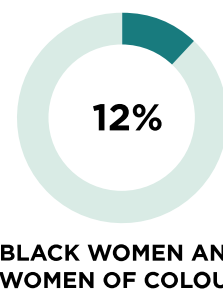
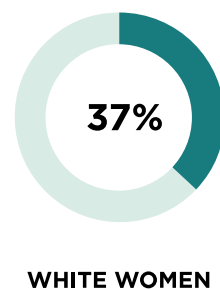
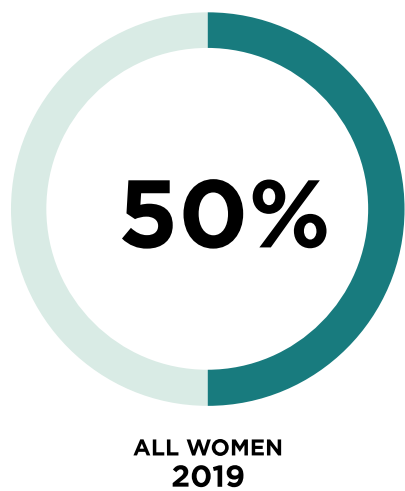
## WRITING TV CREDITS



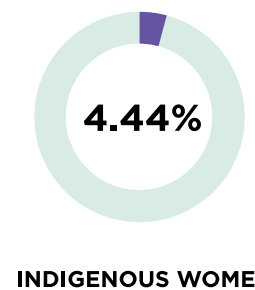
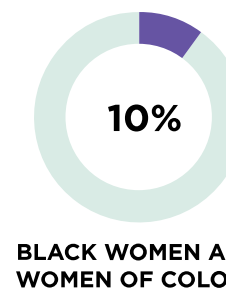
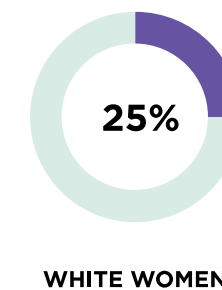
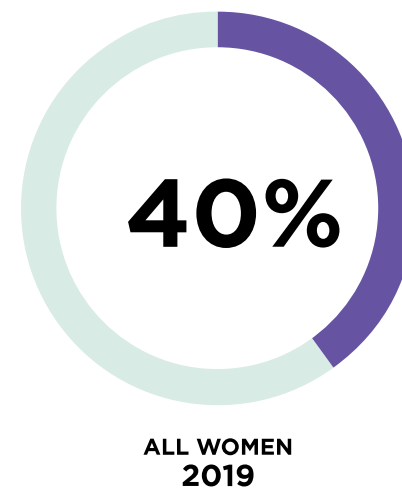
## WRITING FILM PRODUCTION



## DIRECTING TV CREDITS



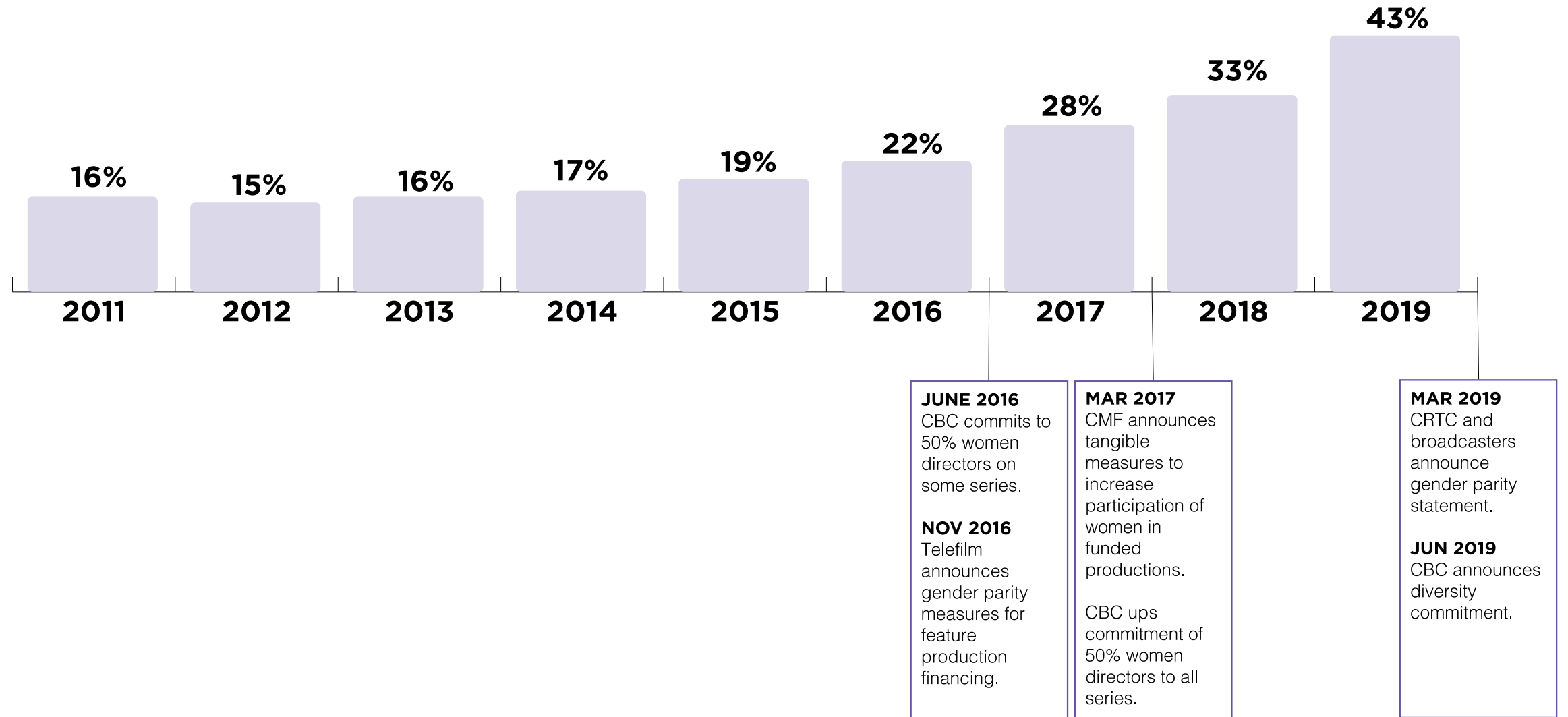
## DIRECTING FILM PRODUCTION



# Directing and Writing in TV & Film 2019

Over the last few years, industry organizations have made quantifiable commitments and then have reported publicly on their success. These initiatives appear to be effective with immediate and rapid impact.

To impact diversity, commitments that specifically address the hiring of BIPOC creatives are needed. In renewing their commitments to women, organizations can fine-tune them to address the gaps identified in this study, in particular to encourage the hiring of Black women, Indigenous women, and Women of Colour.

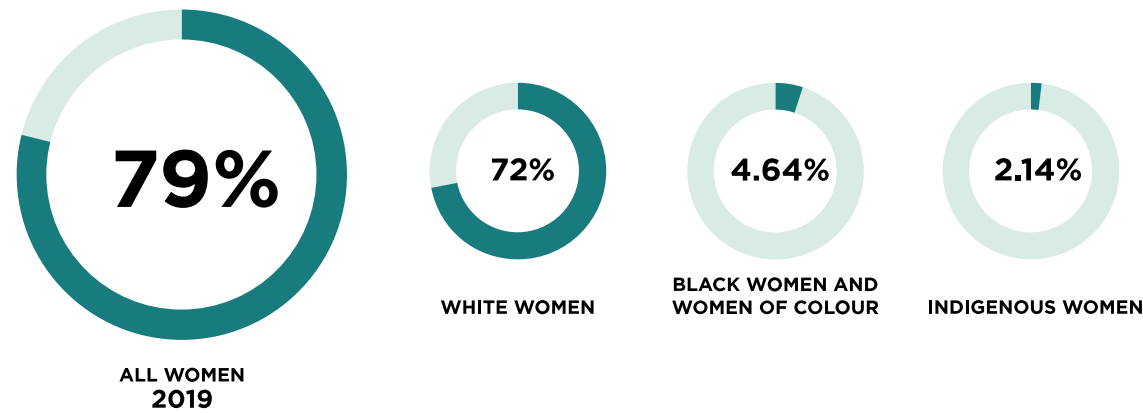


# The Creative Leadership Effect

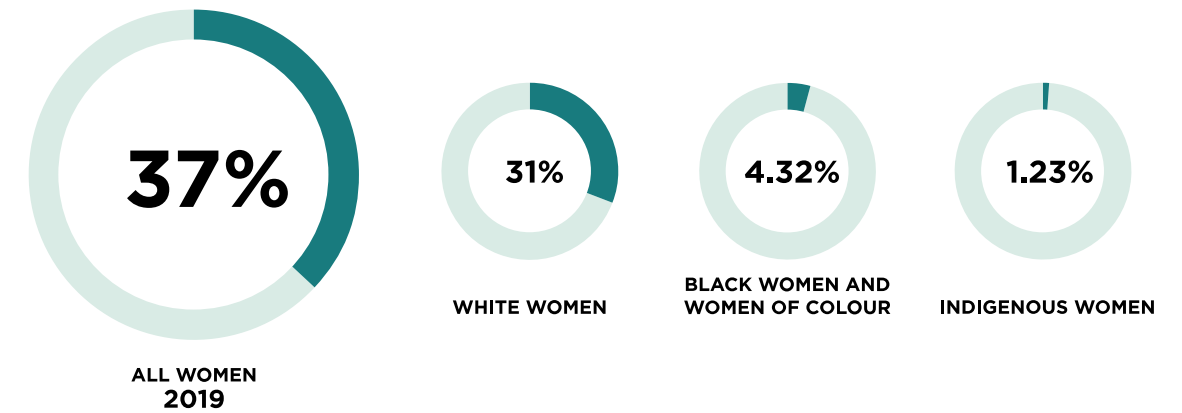
## Women hire women.

When women showrun or produce, women work. Women's creative participation on projects led by men remains low.

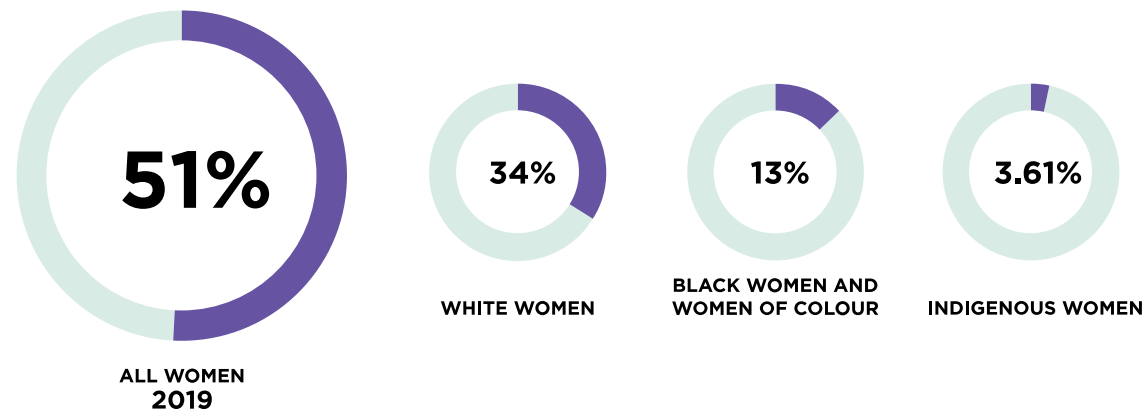
**WRITING  
TV EPISODES SHOWRUN BY WOMEN**



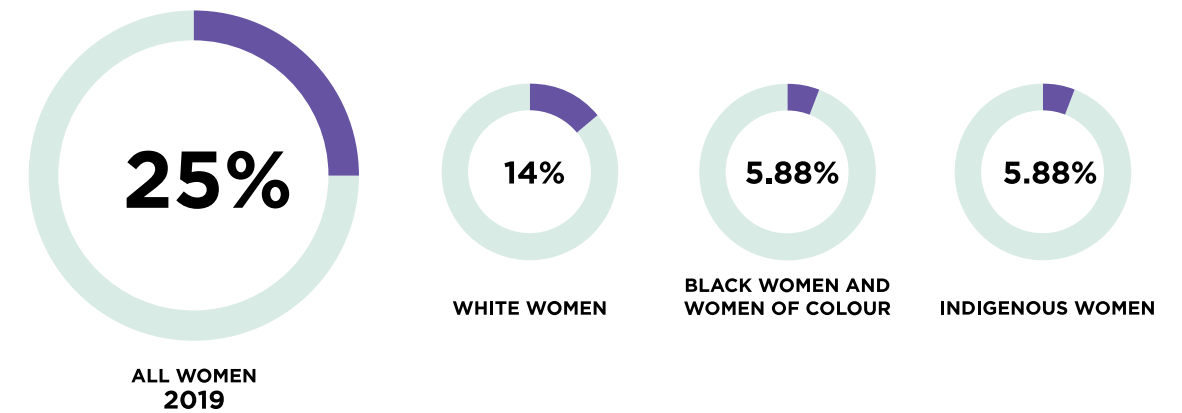
**WRITING  
TV EPISODES SHOWRUN BY MEN**



**DIRECTING  
FILM PRODUCTIONS PRODUCED BY WOMEN**



**DIRECTING  
FILM PRODUCTIONS PRODUCED BY MEN**

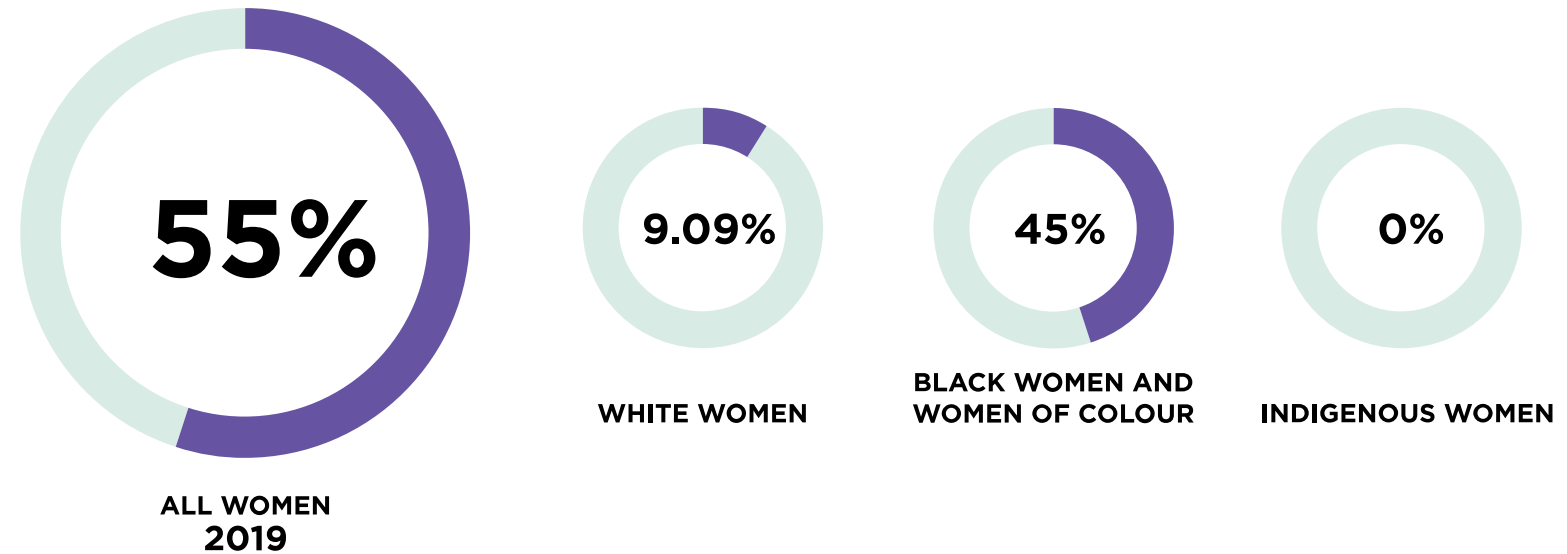


# The Creative Leadership Effect

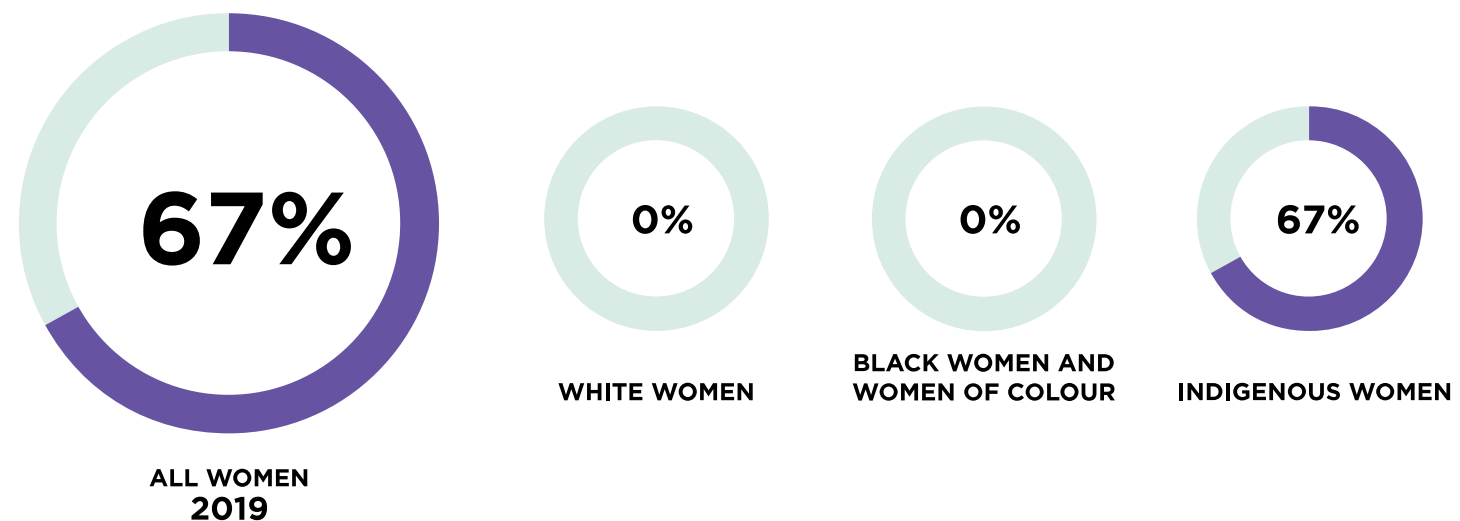
In film, when Black women & Women of Colour lead, Black women & Women of Colour work. When Indigenous women lead, Indigenous women work. There is not enough data on Black women, Indigenous women, and Women of Colour showrunners in 2019 to provide analysis for the impact of BIPOC women's leadership in television.

Prioritizing productions showrun, produced and directed by BIPOC women is an effective way to increase the participation of BIPOC women in the industry.

## DIRECTING FILM PRODUCTIONS PRODUCED BY BLACK WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOUR



## DIRECTING FILM PRODUCTIONS PRODUCED BY INDIGENOUS WOMEN

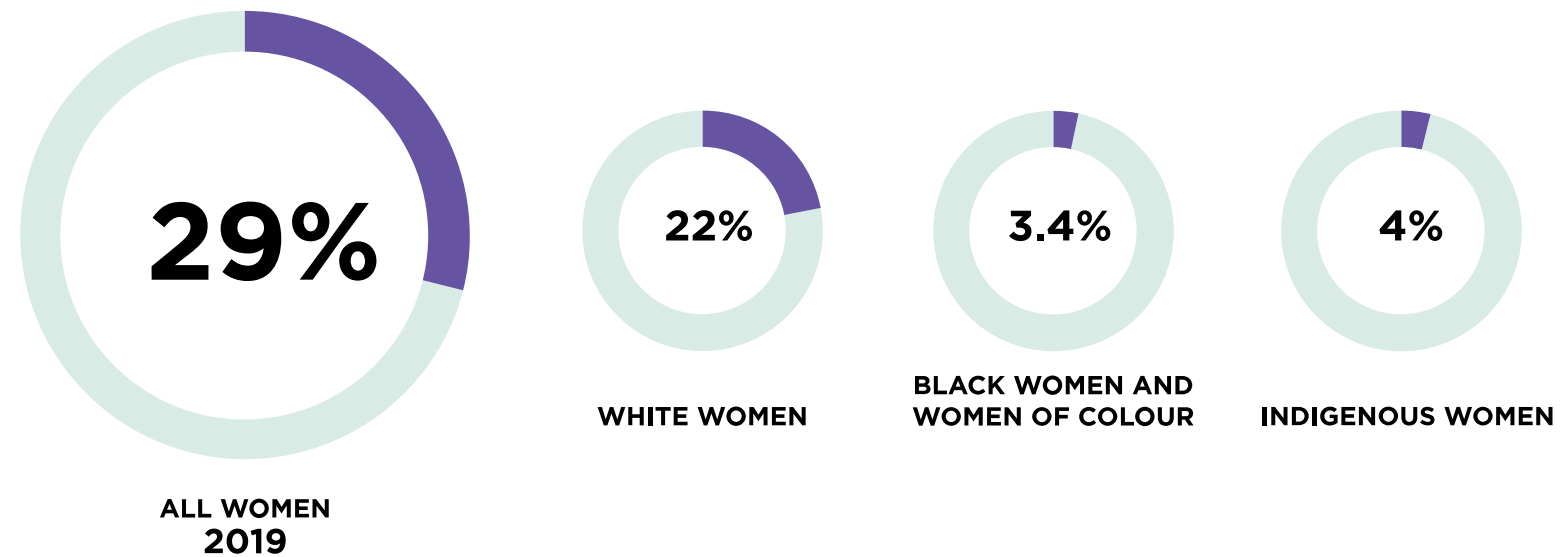




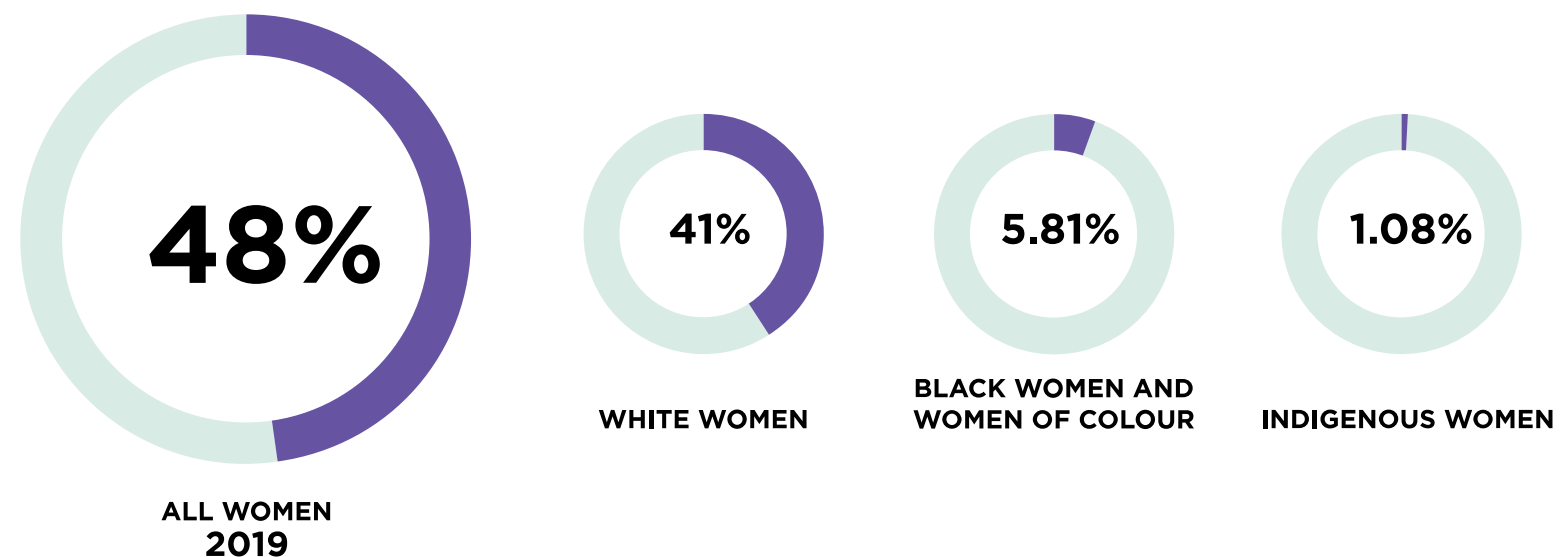
# Underinvestment in Women

In film, investment in women remains lower than in men particularly when it comes to directors. It is lower still when producers and directors are Black women, Indigenous women, and Women of Colour.

## INVESTMENT FILM PRODUCTIONS DIRECTED BY WOMEN



## INVESTMENT FILM PRODUCTIONS PRODUCED BY WOMEN

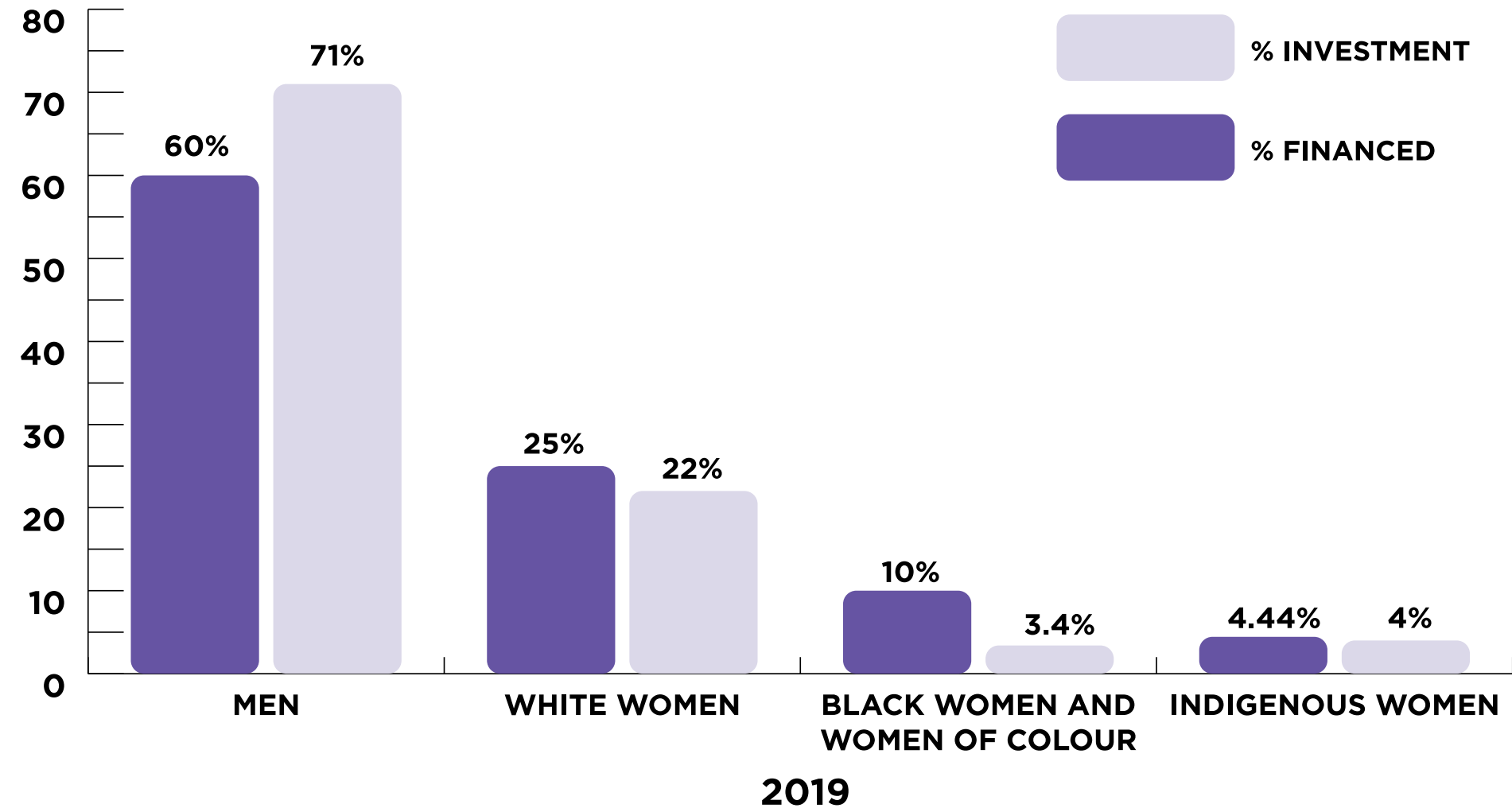


# Underinvestment in Women

The study identified three key ways in which the low investment in women plays out.

1. Women's share of investment tends to be lower than their rate of participation.

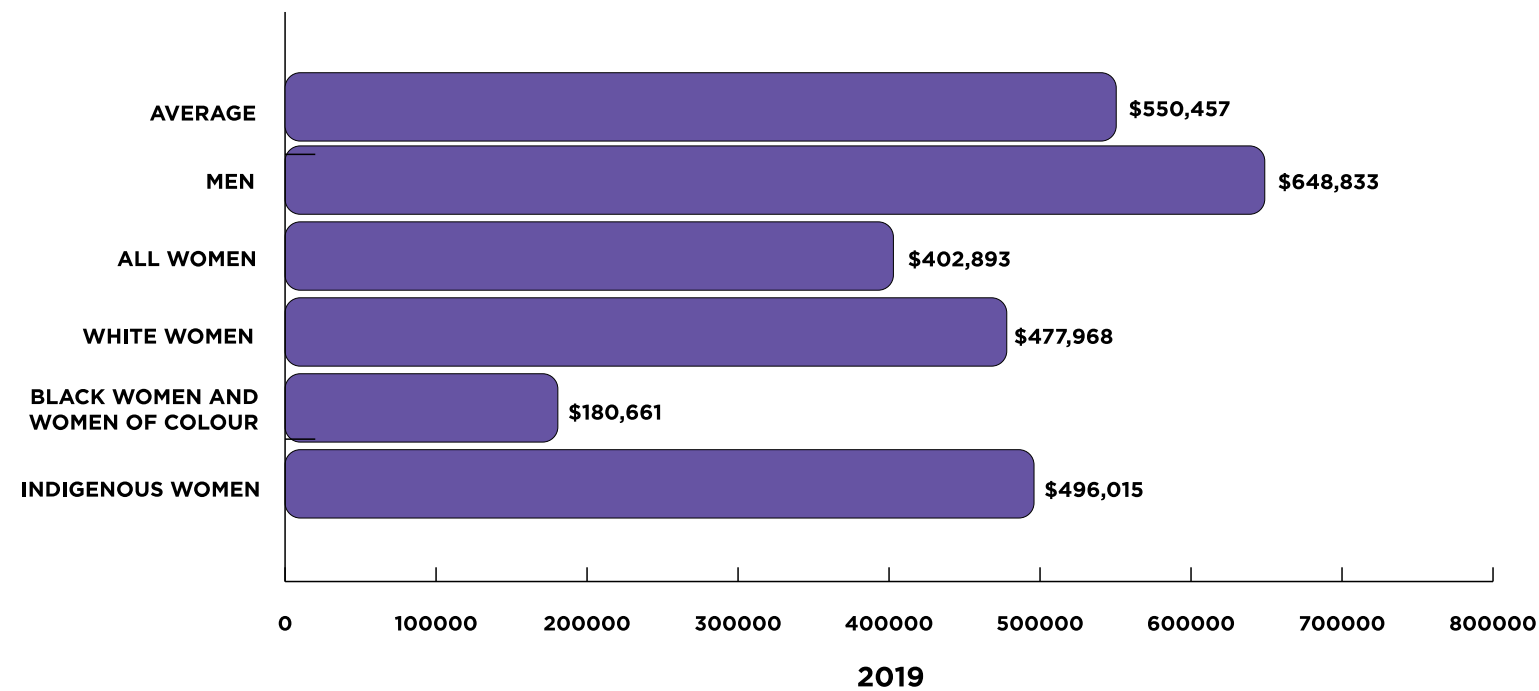
## DIRECTING % OF FILMS FINANCED VS. % INVESTMENT



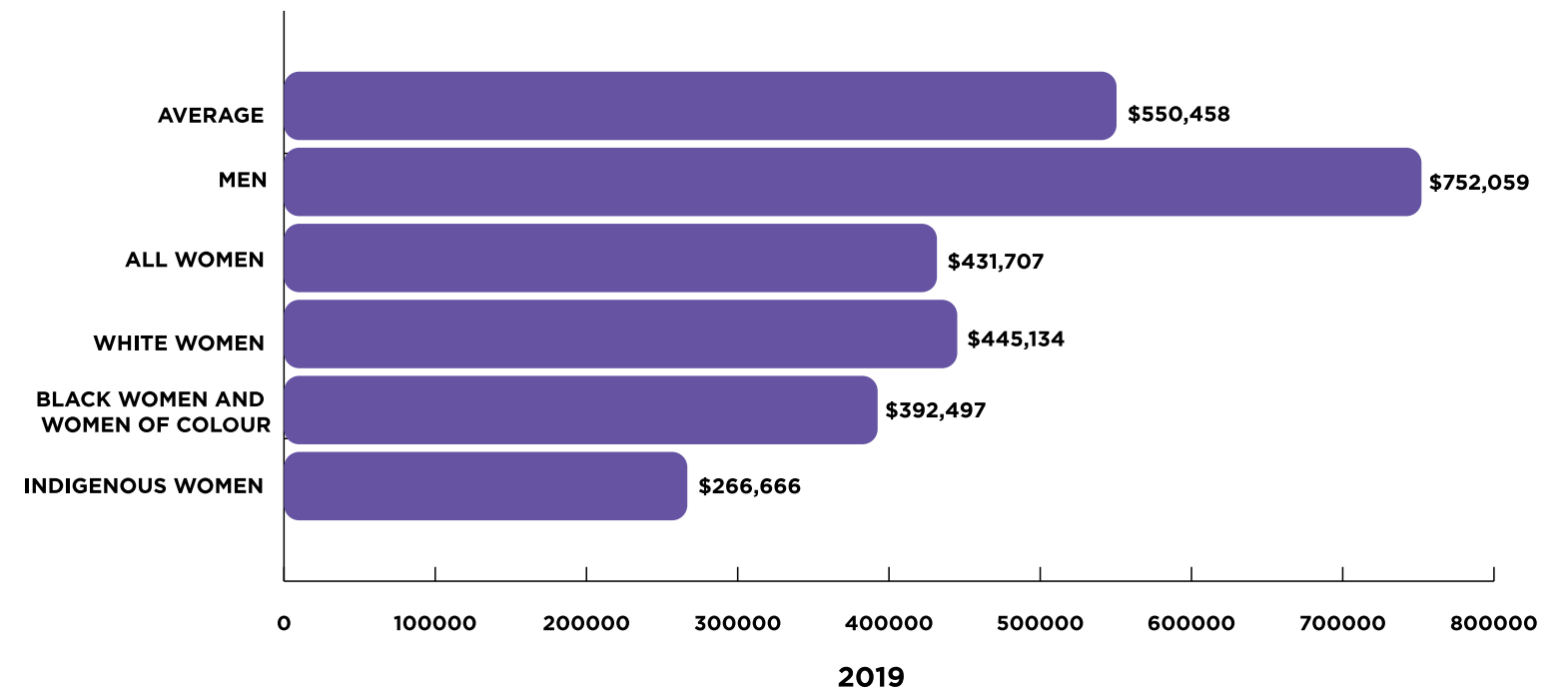
# Underinvestment in Women

2. Investment/project in woman-directed and woman-produced projects is lower than in men's. The discrepancy is magnified when the director or producer is a Black woman, Indigenous woman, or Woman of Colour.

### DIRECTING AVERAGE INVESTMENT/PROJECT



### PRODUCERS AVERAGE INVESTMENT PER PROJECT



# Underinvestment in Women

3. Women's projects are overwhelmingly funded at the lowest financing levels. BIPOC women directors and producers are almost entirely absent from the highest funding levels.

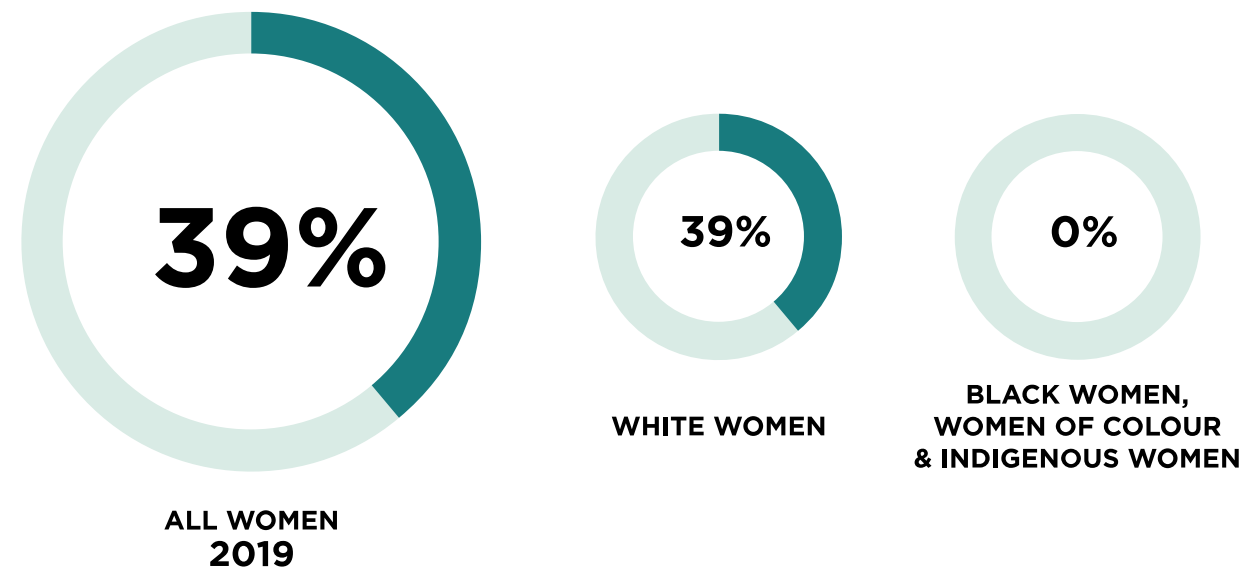
DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCING AMONG DIRECTORS													
DIRECTORS 2019	TALENT TO WATCH			UNDER \$500K			\$500K-\$1M			\$1M+			
# FILMS FINANCED	44			55			9			27			
MEN   WOMEN	24	20		34	21		4	5		19	8		
WHITE WOMEN   BLACK WOMEN & WOMEN OF COLOUR   INDIGENOUS WOMEN	10	8	2	13	6	2	4	0	1	7	0	1	

DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCING AMONG PRODUCERS													
PRODUCERS 2019	TALENT TO WATCH			UNDER \$500K			\$500K-\$1M			\$1M+			
# FILMS FINANCED	44			55			9			27			
MEN   WOMEN	13	30		21	34		4	5		13	14		
WHITE WOMEN   BLACK WOMEN & WOMEN OF COLOUR   INDIGENOUS WOMEN	22	7	1	31	2	1	4	0	1	12	2	0	

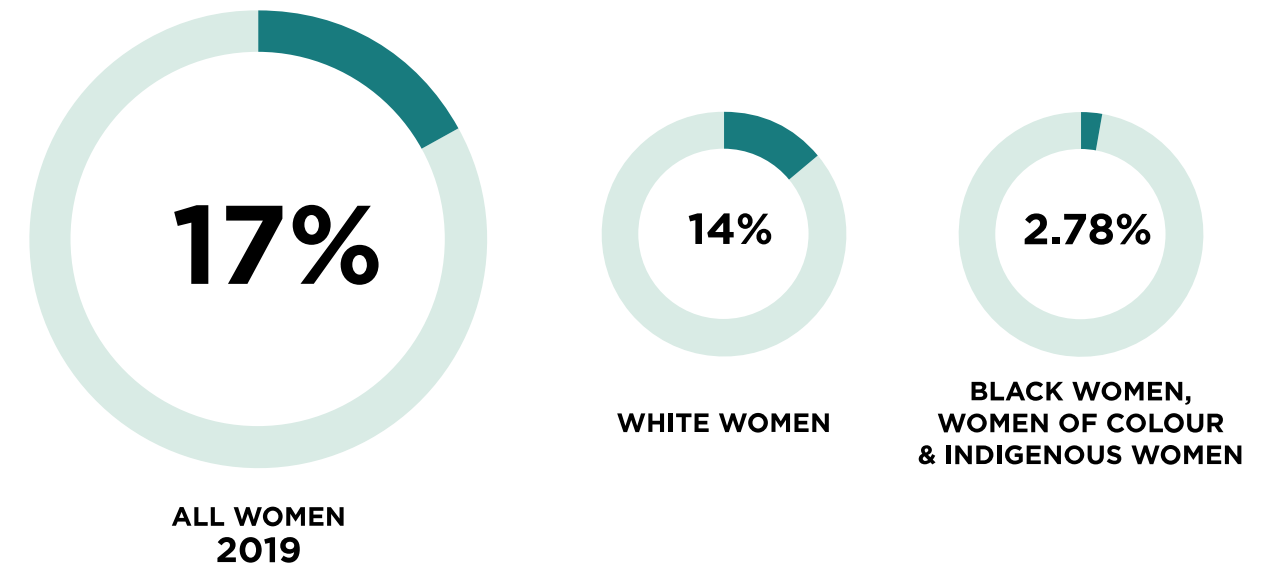
# Cinematography

Women's share of cinematography work in TV has grown, but only on productions showrun by women. Like writing in TV, there is a lack of diversity in cinematography.

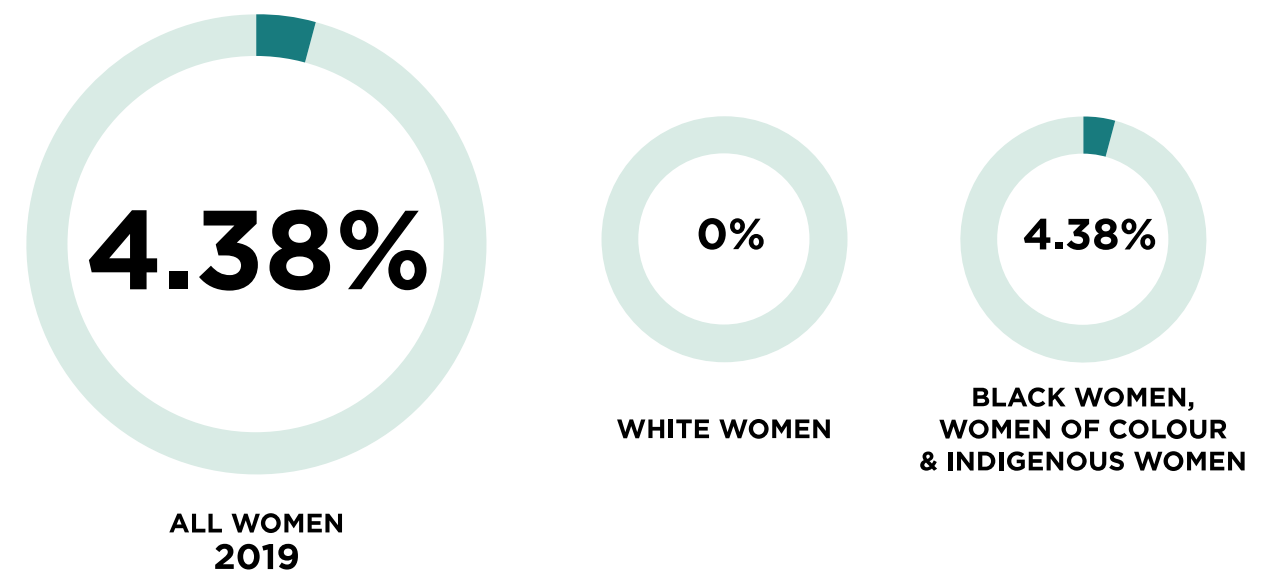
## CINEMATOGRAPHY TV EPISODES SHOWRUN BY WOMEN



## TV CINEMATOGRAPHY CREDITS



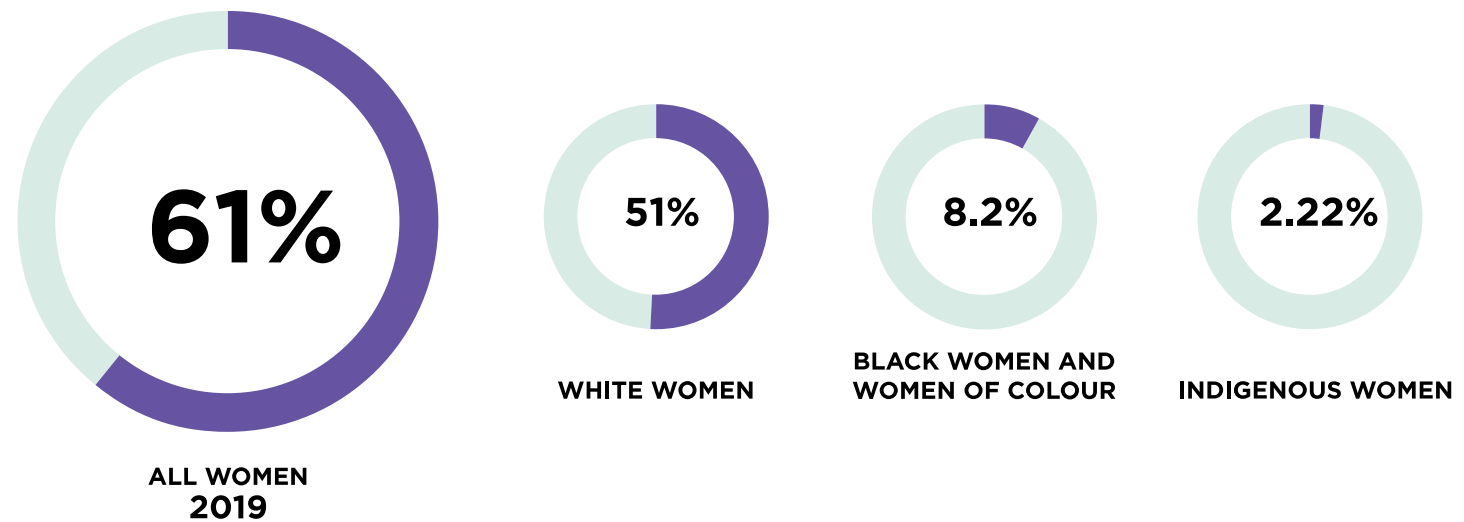
## CINEMATOGRAPHY TV EPISODES SHOWRUN BY MEN



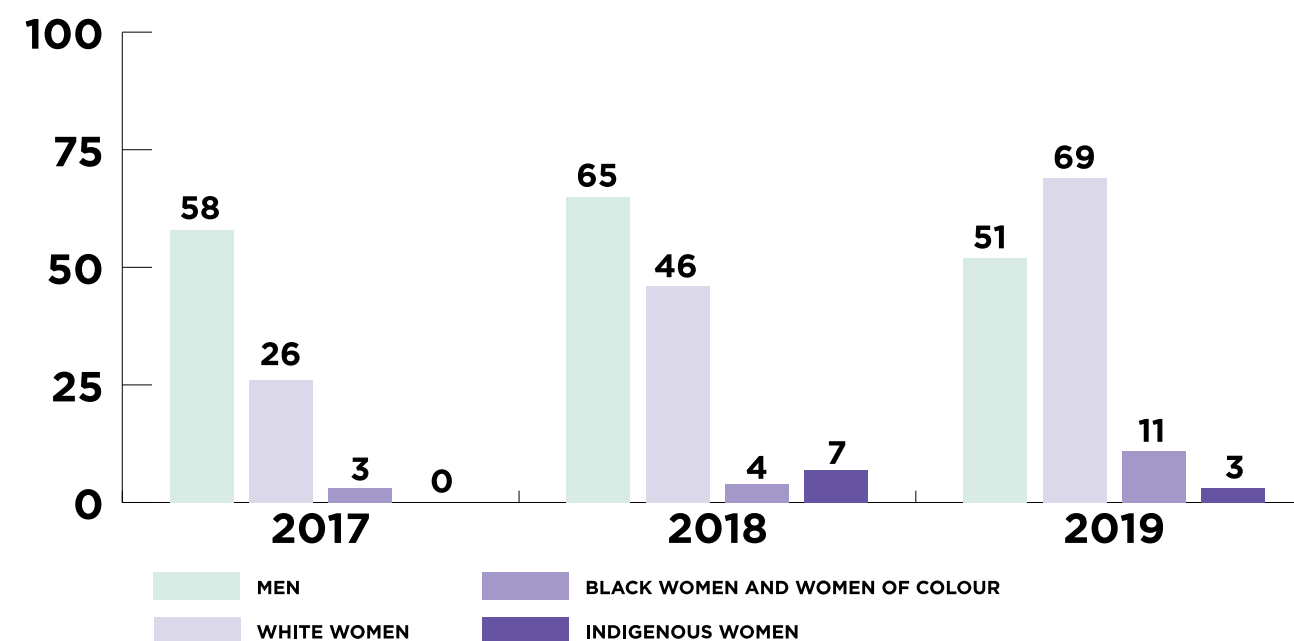
# Women Producers

The share of film projects produced by women has grown largely due to an increase in the number of films financed without a substantial decrease in men-produced projects. Indigenous women producers have not shared in the growth.

## FILM PRODUCTIONS PRODUCED BY WOMEN



## PRODUCERS FILMS FUNDED/YEAR

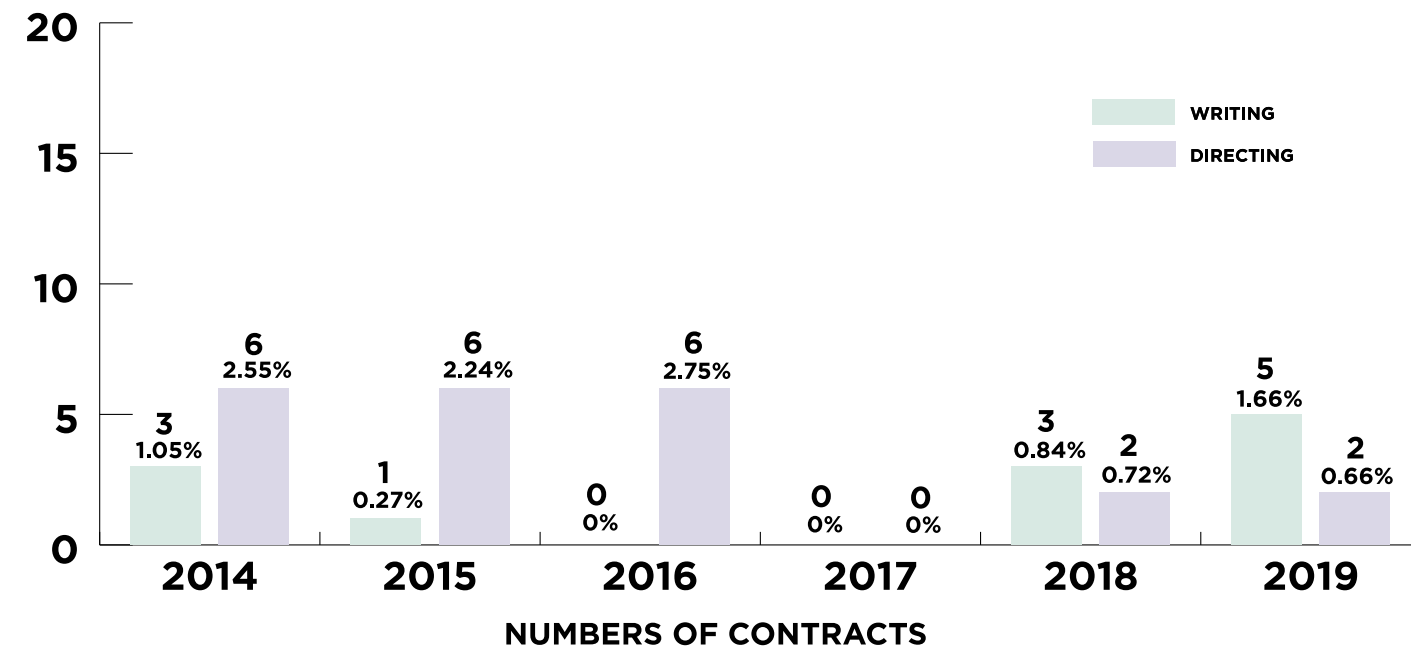


# Indigenous Women

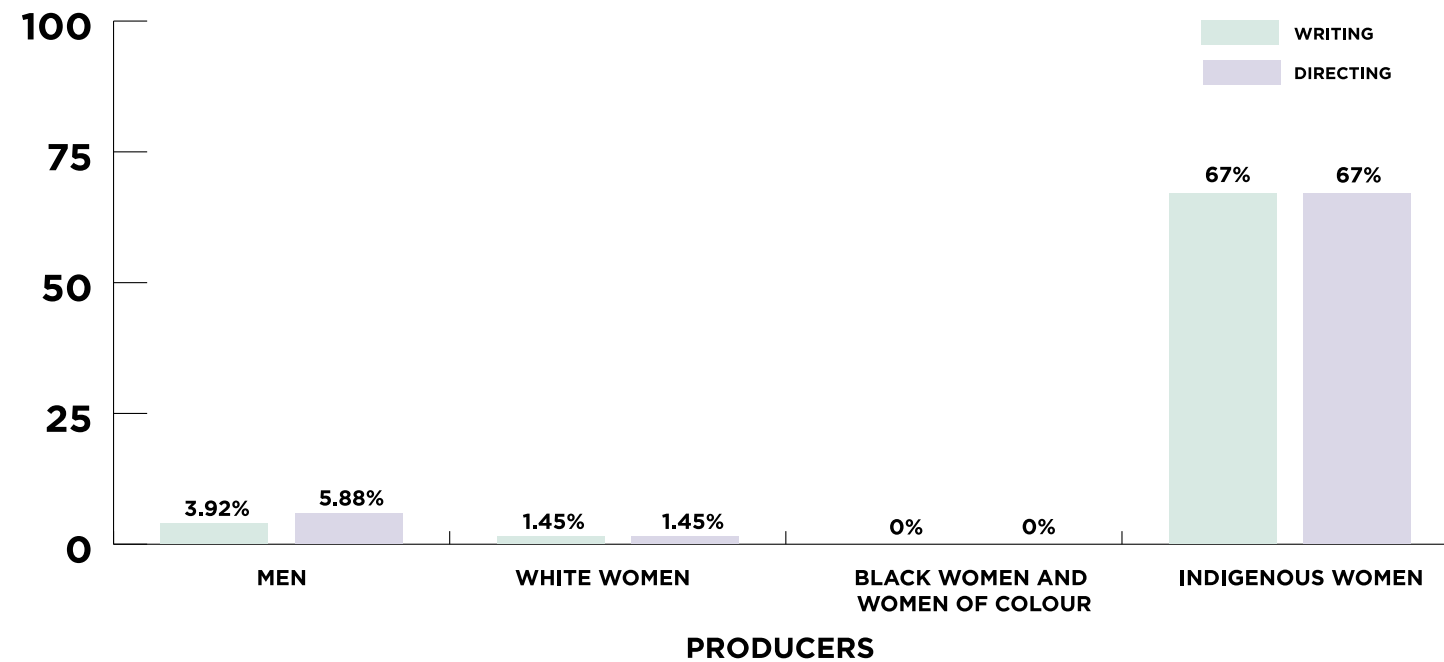
In both TV and film, Indigenous women work almost exclusively in environments led by Indigenous women. In TV, with few Indigenous women showrunning, work for Indigenous women as writers or directors is almost negligible, with little change over time.

A greater number of Indigenous women writers and directors find work in film where there are more Indigenous women-led productions.

**WRITING AND DIRECTING  
INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S SHARE OF TV WORK**



**WRITING AND DIRECTING  
INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S SHARE OF FILM WORK**

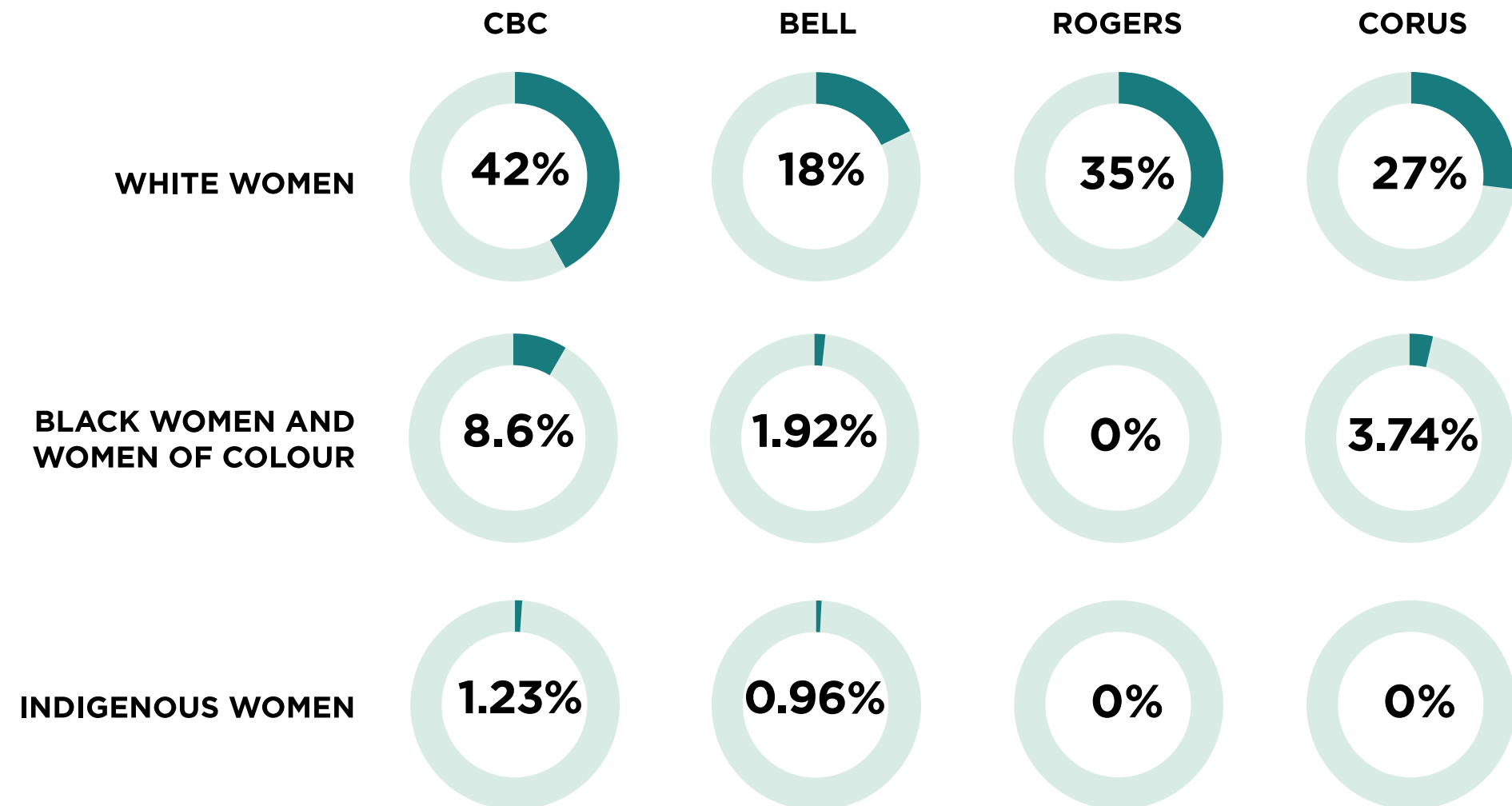


# Black Women and Women of Colour

There are many areas of the industry in which few Black women & Women of Colour find work.

In TV, this includes TV writing and showrunning. The percentage of Black women and Women of Colour hired to write and direct is significantly lower at the private broadcasters than at CBC.

## WOMEN'S KEY CREATIVE WORK BY BROADCASTER (2019)

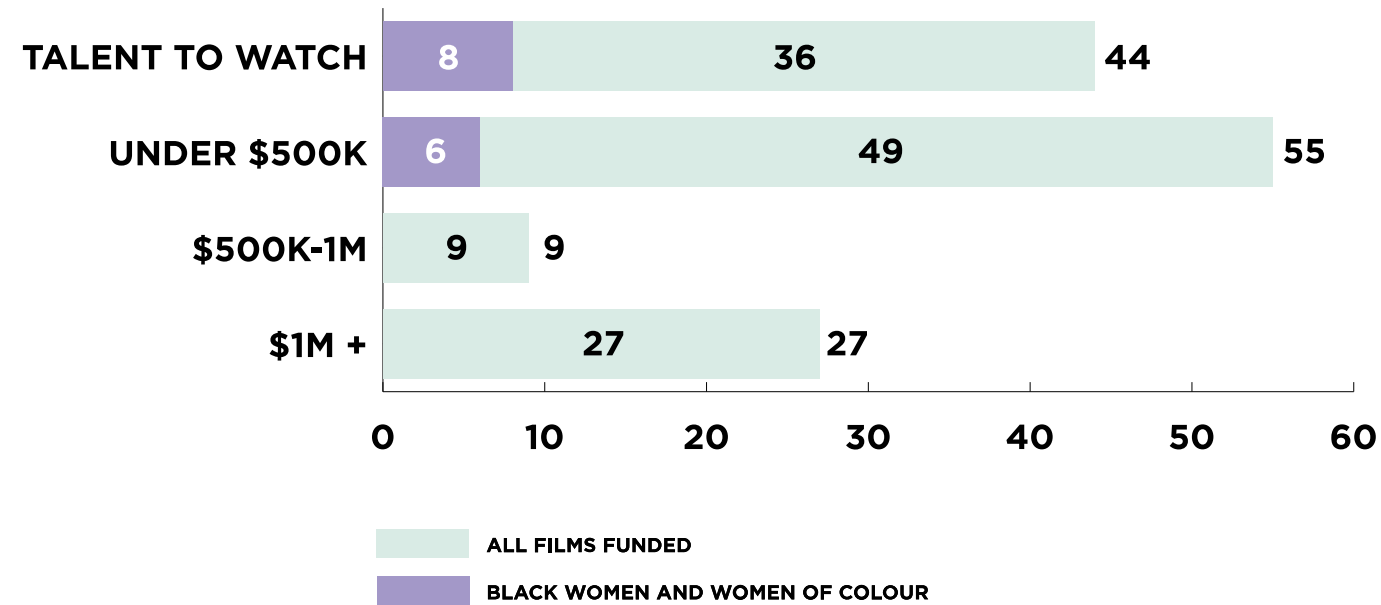




# Black Women and Women of Colour

In film, Black women & Women of Colour directors are shut out of the highest funding levels. The regional funding breakdown reveals where in the country Black women & Women of Colour find their greenlights.

## BLACK WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOUR DIRECTORS SHARE OF FUNDING/LEVEL



## BLACK WOMEN & WOMEN OF COLOUR'S SHARE OF FILMS FINANCED BY REGION 2019

	ATLANTIC	QUEBEC	ONTARIO	WEST
NO. OF FILMS	12	53	50	20
NO. OF FILMS DIRECTED BY BLACK WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOUR	1	4	8	1
NO. OF FILMS PRODUCED BY BLACK WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOUR	0	1	9	1

# Conclusion

Women in View has tracked women's participation in Canada's publicly funded film and television industry since 2011 when just 16% of key creative television work went to women. Five years later, in 2015 women still hadn't broken 20%. In our last report, we noted a four-year gain of 11%. In this report, we document a gain of nearly 15% in just two years, taking women's share of key creative work in TV from 2017's 28% to 2019's 43%. This is a significant advance.

WIVOS 2021 shows that many of the initiatives undertaken to move the Canadian film and TV industry closer to gender parity have been impactful, particularly in increasing directing work for women. However, this report also shows that gender parity initiatives do not bring us any closer to racial equity.

## ***There have been few gains for Indigenous women***

The statistics show that white women have benefited the most from gender parity initiatives. There have been few gains for Indigenous women. Indigenous women's share of key creative TV work remains at less than 1%. In 2014, we reported with considerable alarm that only nine of the 744 TV contracts studied went to Indigenous women. In 2019, that number dropped to seven of 745 TV contracts. In film, Indigenous women fared only slightly better with approximately 8% of both

writing and directing in 2018, but falling to about 4% of writing and directing in 2019. Indigenous women produced nearly 6% of films in 2018 but fell again to 2% in 2019. In both film and TV, Indigenous women find their work almost entirely on projects led by Indigenous women. We found that 1/3 of writing and directing work by Indigenous women is self-produced, far higher than any other segment. While Telefilm's Indigenous Stream has been helpful in supporting Indigenous led projects, Indigenous women have not been integrated into the larger industry.

## ***Growth in work for Black women and Women of Colour has not kept pace***

Similarly, growth in work for Black women & Women of Colour has not kept pace with broader industry trends. Of particular concern is the area of television writing. As both film and TV draw on the same talent pool, it appears that hidden barriers are preventing Black women & Women of Colour writers from gaining entry to TV. In 2019, Black women & Women of Colour wrote just 4.64% of the episodes produced—that's 14 out of 745. In film for the same year, Black women & Women of Colour wrote 12% of projects produced. In film, investment in films produced or directed by Black women & Women of Colour were significantly underfunded. In 2018, Black women & Women of Colour produced 3.28% of films on 0.67% of investment while in 2019, they produced 8.2% of

films on 5.81% of investment. In 2019, the average investment in all film projects was \$550K but less than \$181K in films directed by Black women & Women of Colour. It should be noted that in June 2019, CBC announced that by 2025 "at least one of the key creatives in all scripted and factual commissioned programs will be held by a person from a diverse background." Telefilm announced the development of an Equity and Representation plan in June 2020.

While issues around racial equity are the most urgent, this study found other gaps. In film, women made gains in writing and directing but the funding did not make similar gains. Women directed 40% of films financed in 2019 but more than 70% of the investment went to films directed by men. Women produced more than 60% of films but more than 50% of the investment went to films produced by men.

In television, the gains are also uneven. TV productions commissioned by Canada's private broadcasters continue to be dominated by men. In 2019, this study found that women's share of key creative work was only 21% on series made for Bell, close to 30% for Corus and 34% for Rogers—all significantly lower than the industry wide 43% and CBC's 51%. Cinematography also remains a male bastion with only 17% of work going to women in 2019.

Our results suggest that men-led productions still hire women in small numbers. In films produced by men in 2019, only 16% were written by women and 25% directed by women. On series with men showrunners, 72% of key creative work went to men.

## ***Creative leadership is key to who gets hired***

In fact, the majority of women's gains in television can be attributed to series showrun by women. In this study, as in our previous one, we found that creative leadership has a significant impact on who gets hired on a production. Since less than 30% of key creative work on men-run series goes to women, women-led TV series are integral to women's success in television. However, with very few Black women & Women of Colour and Indigenous women showrunning—as with other gender parity initiatives—woman's creative leadership does not have an impact on diversity. We see in film that when Black women & Women of Colour produce, significantly more Black women & Women of Colour work. When Indigenous women produce, significantly more Indigenous women work. These findings suggest that gender parity initiatives must include specific commitments to diversity and inclusion in order to ensure that benefits reach all women.

(continued...)

# Conclusion

As noted throughout this report, moving the needle for women in film and television has taken considerable effort and contributions from many sectors. CBC, Telefilm Canada, CMF and the CRTC made commitments, set targets, offered incentives and tracked their success. Women in Film and Television (WIFT) and other women's organizations across the country, along with Toronto International Film Festival, the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television and others, ran programs that raised profiles, built networks and offered work experience. Individuals sought out new talent, mentored, changed hiring practices and supported women's creativity with their attention and dollars.

Progress has been made. In 2019, our industry achieved gender parity in TV writing and directing. This is a momentous step but there remains considerable work ahead. Especially when we consider the impact of the current pandemic, which according to multiple sources including Statistic Canada's July 2020 Labour Force Survey, has disproportionately impacted women and in particular, Black women & Women of Colour and Indigenous women. We don't know the extent of the losses for the women working in Canada's film and TV industry yet but we do know that women's participation in the Canadian labour force has dropped significantly and that the pay gap has widened.

***We urge the industry to maintain gender parity initiatives to avoid losing recent gains, while making bold and specific commitments to inclusion and racial equity to ensure our industry finally achieves a landscape that truly represents the audiences it sets out to entertain and inspire.***

# Methodology

Women in View on Screen examines the employment of women-identifying and non-binary key creatives in Canadian publicly-funded live-action television series and feature films.

Since the launch of the first Report, WIVOS 2012, the primary source of data has been the online databases of funded projects found on the Telefilm and Canadian Media Fund websites. These publicly-funded agencies provide consistent, detailed and decisive annual reporting of their investments. As with previous Reports, WIVOS 2021 does not encompass all investments made through CMF and Telefilm. Instead, the Report draws significant segments of the investments for each funding body as a representative sample.

The television data scope for this Report includes 51 scripted drama series funded by CMF for production in 2017-2018 (shorthand throughout this document as 2018) and 2018-2019 (referred to as 2019). Data from our previous report, on 2016-2017 (referred to as 2017) is provided throughout for comparison purposes. This data does not include unscripted series, variety series, animated series, movies of the week, or children & youth programming. The full list of series studied are included below.

CMF's funded project database lists information on series seasons, episodes and broadcasters for each fiscal year. In gathering key creative credits, researchers viewed on-screen credits twice at a minimum for each television episode studied. In tracking series by broadcaster, in the case of acquisitions, the series was counted with the current broadcaster.

In film, 646 development projects and 257 film production projects that received Telefilm funding in 2017-2018 (referred to as 2018) and 2018-2019 (2019) were examined. Researchers are grateful to Telefilm for their cooperation in providing and explaining raw data. Data from 2017 (2016-2017 funding cycle) collected for our previous report is included throughout for comparison purposes. For the section entitled Producers in Film, producer refers to the project's lead producer as defined by Telefilm. In instances where researchers could not find information on the key creative of a feature film, the film was excluded from the data reviewed resulting in a variance between this Report and reporting by Telefilm Canada.

Note on 2016-17 Development Data for Producers: we were given the list of projects by Producer separately from the list of projects by Writer. Therefore, our total numbers for development differ between the writer and producer data. The writer data includes a total of

282 projects with 193 projects in the Under \$20k category and 68 projects in the \$20-\$50k category. The producer data includes a total of 280 projects with 192 projects in the Under \$20k category and 67 projects in the \$20-\$50k category.

In past reports, researchers used a variety of sources to further identify key creatives on each film and series, including, individual websites, film festival websites, production company and broadcaster websites, annual reports and media databases. Researchers also liaised with production companies, agents, guilds and unions and contacted individuals who appear in this data to cross-check this information.

Nathalie Younglai, founder of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour in Television and Film (BIPOC TV & Film), with the support of Akriti Jain, Muna Deria and Tracey Deer, lead the portion of analytics regarding Black women & Women of Colour and Indigenous women. The data was pre-coded by three different researchers as a starting point using news articles, film festival websites, social media, blogs, press interviews (video and print), individual websites, databases.

In addition, researchers circulated a survey to those who have not appeared in our data in the last four years. This survey included self-identification for gender and race / ethnicity.

Researchers acknowledge the complications of self-identification in some communities - particularly within Indigenous communities. We look to the Indigenous Screen Office and Aboriginal Peoples Television Network as they begin consultation around best practices for Indigenous identity and the conversation around self-identification protocols and considerations continues to grow.

Furthermore, future iterations of this report will also seek guidance from the consultations undertaken by the Canada Media Fund with national and regional funding agencies and organizations representing underrepresented stakeholders. Their findings on how people prefer to articulate their own identities will be adapted and applied to our data collection process to better understand representation in the industry.

The definition BIPOC in this Report includes mixed race. The definition of Indigenous includes those who self-identify as First Nations, Inuit, Métis as well as those who identify as Indigenous outside of North America. In future studies, where possible, the statistics of each group encompassed in Black, Indigenous and People of Colour should be looked at separately.

(continued...)

# Methodology

In the interest of protecting privacy and safety concerns, researchers decided not to share the break out BIPOC identification within the non-binary data. This is a consideration for future studies as researchers acknowledge the cross-section of this data. Researchers acknowledge the importance of including intersectional identities as they can often increase barriers for those who come from more than one underrepresented community.

Each year, the number of individuals in our scope of data is counted as well as the total number of contracts. Many of the same individuals appear in the data year after year. Therefore, the same person may be counted multiple times as an individual for each of the years they appeared in our data.

In the analysis of showrunners, some series were run by a team and some by an individual. Whether run by a team or an individual each series was counted only once and classified as man-led if the individual or members of the team were men, woman-led if the individual or team were women and split-team-led series if the team included both a man and women.

All data is assessed on a simple numerical formula of percentages.

## Television Series Studied:

The following series and seasons were studied for this report; *Anne with an E* (1 & 2), *Bad Blood* (2), *Baroness Von Sketch Show* (3), *Burden of Truth* (1), *Cardinal* (2), *Caught* (1), *Coroner* (1), *Departure* (1), *Diggstown* (1), *The Detail* (1), *Frankie Drake* (1 & 2), *Frontier* (3), *Heartland* (11 & 12), *Hudson & Rex* (1), *Jann* (1), *Kim's Convenience* (3), *Letterkenny* (3 & 4), *Little Dog* (1 & 2), *Mary Kills People* (2 & 3), *Mr. D* (7 & 8), *Murdoch Mysteries* (11 & 12), *Nurses* (1), *Private Eyes* (3), *Pure* (2), *Ransom* (2 & 3), *Schitt's Creek* (4 & 5), *Second Jen* (2), *Street Legal* (1), *The Indian Detective* (1), *The Murders* (1), *Unspeakable* (1), *Transplant* (1), *Versailles* (2), *Vikings* (6), *Workin' Moms* (2 & 3), *Wynonna Earp* (3).