

DEAR PRODUCER

PRODUCERS SUSTAINABILITY SURVEY REPORT

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About the Producers Sustainability Survey and Report

Welcome to Dear Producer's first Producers Sustainability Survey results report. One question rests at the heart of this survey: **Is film producing a sustainable career, as it exists today?** (See page 22 to see what the producers who took the survey thought!)

Dear Producer has attempted to take a snapshot of who makes up the producing community and what life is like for feature-length film producers working in the fiction and/or documentary space in 2020. The goal was to gather benchmark data on the state of independent film producing in the United States. The secondary goal was to use this data to advocate for producers in areas they identified as most important. Since 2020 was an anomaly in pretty much every way, some of the questions ask about 2019 to create a more "normal" data point.

We entered into this survey with the assumption that there are challenges (to put it mildly) in film producing as a career — an assumption based on decades of experience and in hearing from the Dear Producer community. However, questions were designed to remain open-minded and to allow room for written-in responses as much as possible, while still collecting uniform data. We covered a lot of ground, from basic demographics to specific income and fees, to mental health, career barriers and resilience.

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This survey was restricted to fiction and documentary producers who reside in the United States, and who have received the "Producer" or "Produced By" credit on at least one feature-length film that was commercially distributed (available to rent or purchase by the public through theatrical, video-on-demand, or streaming) within the last 10 years. The first question asked respondents to confirm that they met this criteria; those who did not meet the criteria were thanked but not allowed to continue.

Survey Details

The survey consisted of 75 questions and accepted responses for 6 weeks at the end of 2020. We used SurveyMonkey as the surveying platform. We restricted people from completing the survey more than once.

Answers were anonymous, and we asked respondents to be as honest as possible to help better understand the evolving needs of producers and the challenges they face. Participant quotes are featured throughout this report.

***All data charts were created using Datawrapper, which can be found at app.datawrapper.de.**

If you have any questions about the survey or this report, or if you have a press inquiry and would like access to further data, please email Rebecca Green at hello@dearproducer.com.

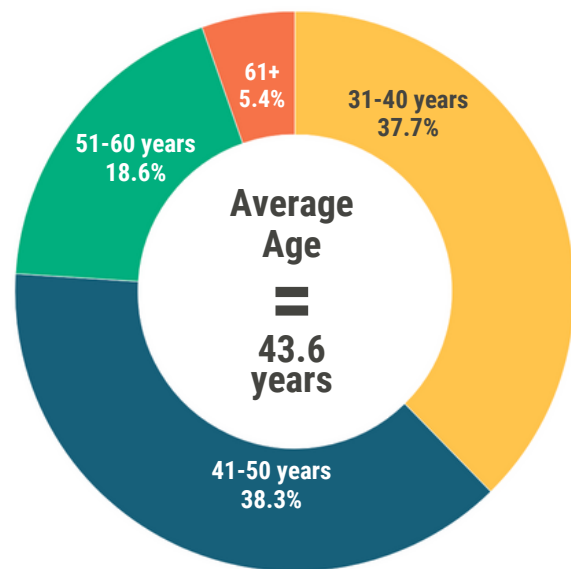
WHO ARE FILM PRODUCERS IN THE U.S.?

More than 550 producers responded to the survey, with 474 completing most questions. The survey was deployed in late 2020 and was targeted to reach the right populations with help from industry organizations and distributed among the Dear Producer audience.

The following demographics provide a glimpse into the producing community as it exists. It also provides a baseline to work from when considering how to support producers and where to focus diversity and inclusivity initiatives.

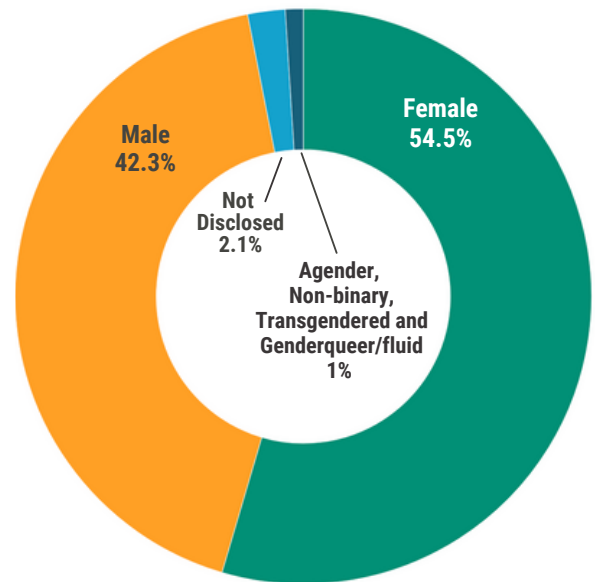
What ages are represented?

Age, in years, was selected from a drop-down list ranging from 18 to 65+. The youngest respondent was 25 years old. In comments throughout the survey, respondents said ageism against older people is an issue they have experienced.



What genders are represented?

Females represent more than half of respondents. Agender (.2%), non-binary (.2%), transgender (.4%), and genderqueer/fluid (.2%) were offered as individual options, but have been combined here.



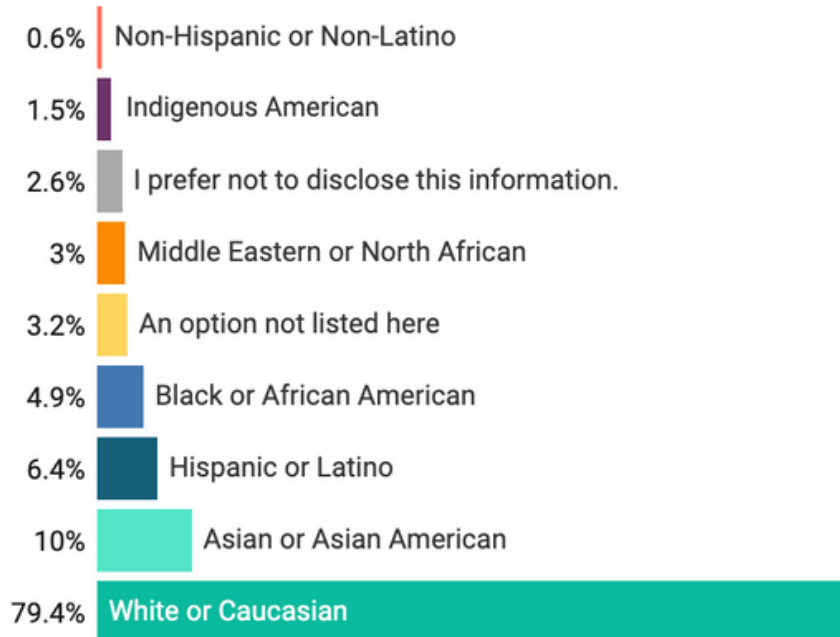
What are U.S. producers' racial and ethnic identities?

Respondents were encouraged to select as many answers as applicable and to write-in specifics as needed. White/Caucasian represented more than 79% of the responses, including those who identify as Hispanic or Latino and those who are non-Hispanic or non-Latino.

Native Hawaiian or another Pacific Islander Group was offered as a selection but had no representation.

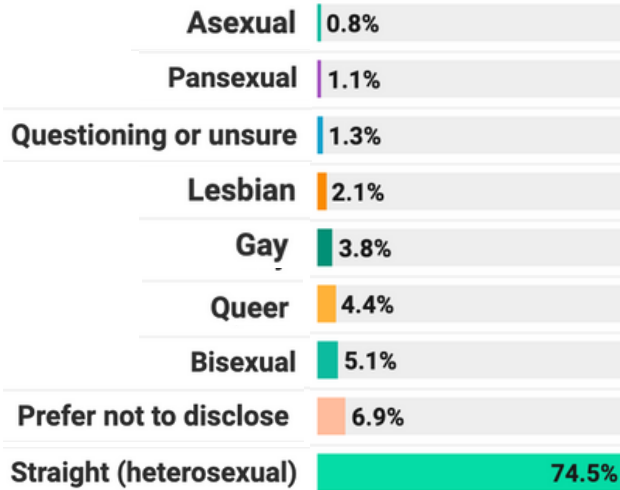
Write-ins included several people who identified as ethnically Jewish, some specifically noting Ashkenazi heritage, as well as South Asian.

Slightly more than 10% of respondents reported they are of mixed racial or mixed ethnic backgrounds.



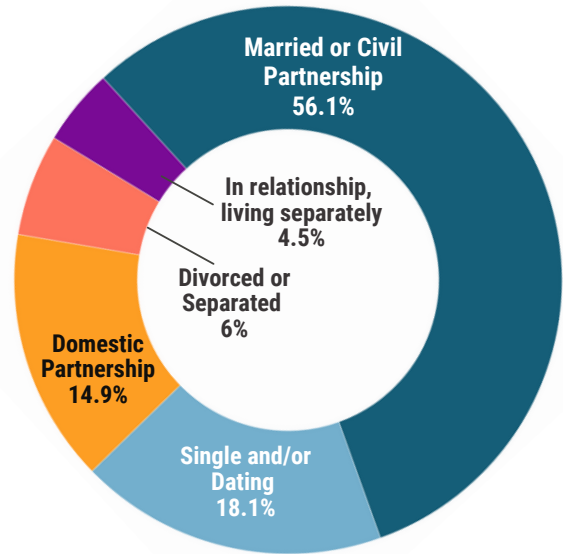
What sexual orientations are represented in the community?

Removing those who did not disclose from the equation, nearly 20% of respondents represent a non-hetero spectrum of sexuality within the producing community. That representation is encouraging when considering the LGBTQ population is estimated to be 4.5% across the U.S. population (Gallup, 2018).



What best describes producers' current relationship status?

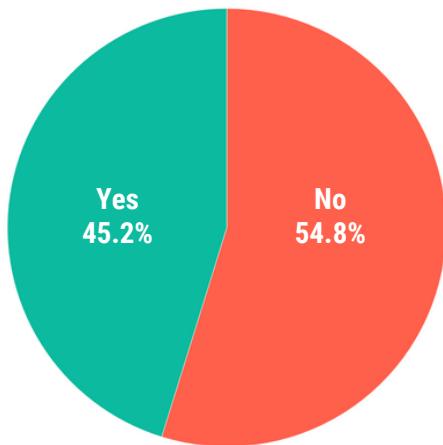
We struggled with asking this question, since it may seem more political than data-driven. We included it because relationships may play a significant role in the financial sustainability of producing. Not shown below are the Widowed and Write-in options, which were selected once.



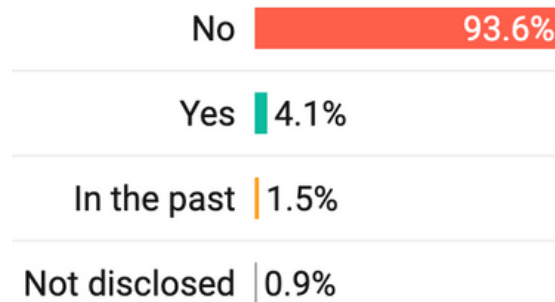
"As a single producer who runs with the HBO/PBS/Emmy/Oscar crowd, 99% of my producer friends have flat-out said they couldn't do this if their partners weren't paying the bills. Also, we can't talk about who gets to make whose films if the barrier to entry is being able to work for years without getting paid. Full stop."

Are producers parents?

The majority of respondents said they were not parents or caretakers of children (54.8%). Of those who are parents, 90% of them reported they had either 1 or 2 children. None reported more than 4 kids. More than 85% of their children are under 18 years old.

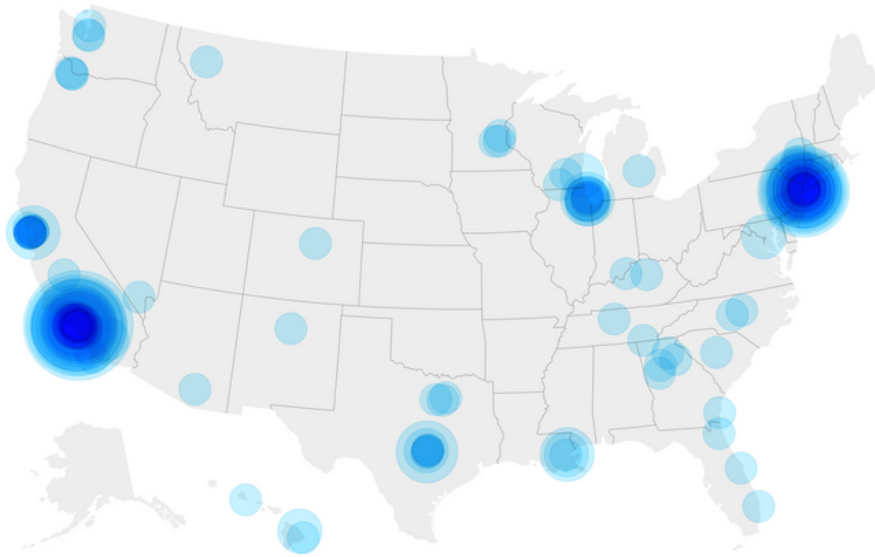


How many producers reported having a disability?



More than 5% of respondents reported a disability now or in the past. Disability was defined as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity," (U.S. ADA). The Census reports 12.5% of the American population has a physical disability, and more when mental health and behavioral disabilities are included. This seems to indicate a need for more inclusion of people with disabilities within the producing community.

Where do producers live in the U.S.?



California is home to 20% of respondents — 17% specifically from Southern California.

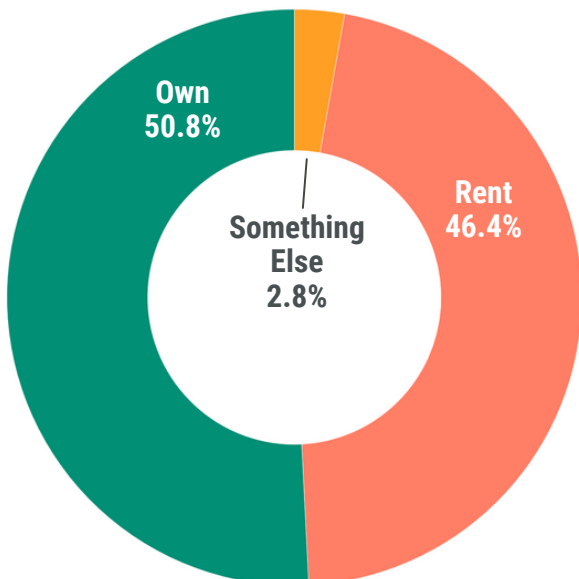
The New York area is home to 13% of the respondents. The Chicago area and Texas represented 3% and 2%, respectively.

That means **the majority of the respondents — nearly 2/3 or about 62% — live outside the LA/NYC areas.**

"I work from Providence, RI - where I am from and where my family is happy... The barriers for someone living outside of the hubs are enormous. Access to decision-makers, even just being taken SERIOUSLY by decision-makers, reduces with each additional mile outside of NYC or LA."

Do producers own or rent?

A slight majority of producers (50.8%) reported they are homeowners, which is lower than the national average of 65-67% homeowners. The pandemic will likely have an impact on living situations as well, with several respondents already noting that they had moved as a result of losing work or financial instability, living with friends, or moving in with family.



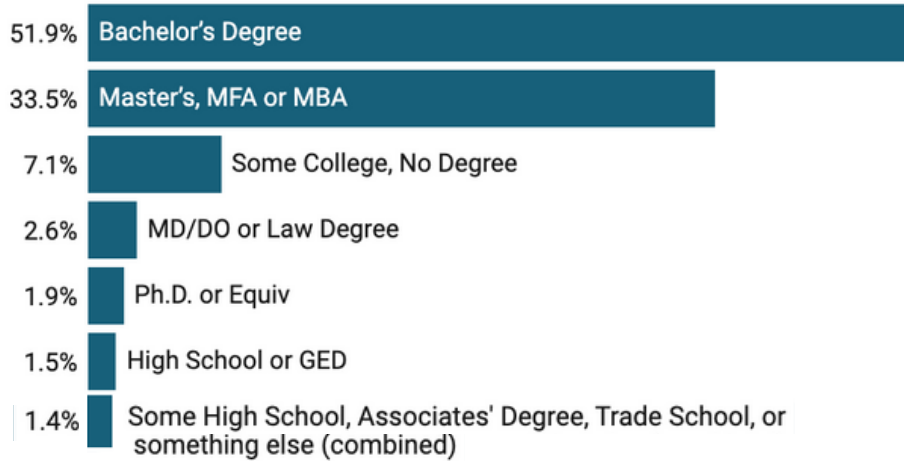
"I rent, but I am not the leaseholder, so my situation is somewhat precarious. I've been living here for a year. Before that, I experienced a two-year period of homelessness — moving almost monthly at some points and crashing on fellow artist friends' couches. I ended up in that position because I lived in NYC and was paid only \$30,000 to produce an award-winning, Sundance film."

EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

What level of education is common among producers?

More than 97% of respondents have pursued at least some college. Bachelor's degrees were most common, around 52%.

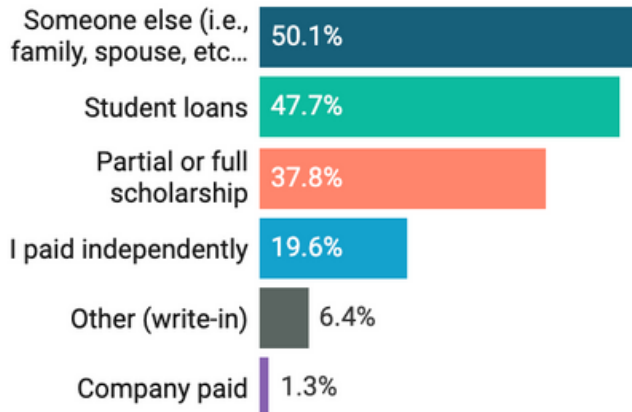
One third of overall respondents (33.5%) hold Master's degrees — more than 3 times the rate of the general U.S. population with masters-level education (10%, U.S. Census Bureau).



How did they pay for higher ed?

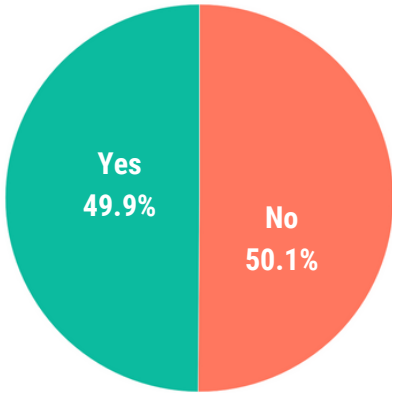
Respondents were asked how they paid for higher education, selecting all options that applied. Half reported support from family or their spouse.

Nearly 48% used student loans to finance all or a portion of their school costs. Of those, 35% reported that they are still paying off their student loans.



"It was an excellent investment, since I am from a rural area and had no other way to connect to the industry. Plus, the breadth of knowledge gave me confidence to move forward."

Did producers study film?



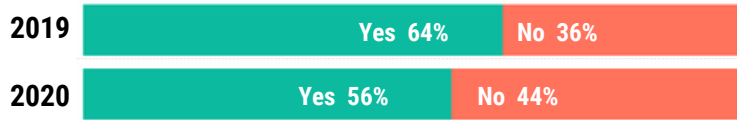
"I struggle with the question of whether or not it was smart to take out loans for film school all the time. Financially, it has not paid off at all. Creatively, this is what I want to be doing."

"Going to film school was a terrible 'investment.' Given how poorly women are paid and how unlikely our careers are to advance..."

INCOME AND COMPENSATION

Was producing the primary source of income in the past 2 years?

One of the most pressing questions about film producing is if it is a sustainable career — financially and mentally. **In 2019, 64% of producers said they earned their primary income through producing. In 2020, the proportion dropped 8%.**



How much did producers earn from all sources of income?

We asked respondents about their annual individual income for both 2019 and 2020. Individual total income was clarified as individual direct income (i.e., not company earnings) from all sources — *not* household income. **In 2019, 30% of respondents were making \$50K or less from all sources, including producing. In 2020, that percentage increased by more than 10% — with 41.8% reporting an income at \$50K or less.**

Annual Income	2019	2020
< \$10K	2.5%	7.1%
\$10-15K	2.5%	4%
\$15-20K	3.5%	4%
\$20-25K	4.4%	5.9%
\$25-30K	3.5%	6.4%
\$30-35K	3%	2.6%
\$35-40K	4.2%	3.5%
\$40-45K	3%	2.1%
\$45-50K	4.4%	6.1%
\$50-60K	9.7%	11.6%
\$60-70K	5.8%	7.1%
\$70-80K	8.8%	4.3%
\$80-90K	5.6%	3.5%
\$90-100K	7.6%	6.4%
\$100-150K	15.2%	11.3%
\$150-200K	5.8%	5.2%
\$200-250K	3.5%	4%
\$250-300K	2.3%	0.7%
\$300-350K	1.2%	0.7%
\$350-400K	0.7%	0.2%
\$400-450K	0.5%	0.2%
\$450-500K	0%	0%
More than \$500K	2.5%	2.8%

How much did producers get paid for their producing work?

Despite many reporting a solid annual income in 2019 and 2020, the money earned from producing was remarkably low. **In 2019, 41% of respondents reported they earned \$25K or less in producing income. In 2020, income from producing dropped significantly, with 56% earning \$25K or less.** More than a quarter of overall respondents reported they earned less than \$2,500 from producing in 2020.

Both the annual income and income from producing illustrate the reality of producing as a career for many in the industry — in contrast to the myth that producing is a lucrative endeavor.

Producing Income	2019	2020
< \$2,500	16.2%	25.4%
\$2,500-5K	5.1%	7.8%
\$5-7K	0.7%	4%
\$7-10K	4.9%	4.7%
\$10-12K	2.5%	2.6%
\$12-15K	4.2%	3.6%
\$15-20K	3.5%	3.3%
\$20-25K	3.9%	4.3%
\$25-30K	4.2%	3.6%
\$30-35K	3.5%	3.1%
\$35-40K	2.8%	3.1%
\$40-45K	3.7%	1.9%
\$45-50K	5.1%	3.3%
\$50-60K	6%	4.7%
\$60-70K	4.2%	4.3%
\$70-80K	3.9%	1.7%
\$80-90K	3.5%	1.7%
\$90-100K	3.5%	3.3%
\$100-150K	8.8%	4.5%
\$150-200K	3%	3.3%
\$200-250K	2.3%	3.1%
\$250-300K	1.6%	0.5%
\$300-\$350K	0.9%	0.5%
\$350-400K	0.2%	0%
\$400-450K	0.5%	0.2%
\$450-500K	0.5%	0.2%
> \$500K	1.4%	1.7%

"The old saying comes to mind that 'you can make a killing, but not a living.'"

"Even if my last film sold for double than what we made it for, I wouldn't have been able to pay rent and live in New York without other jobs or assistance. People not in the industry do not realize that just because you have a film on a big streaming site like Netflix or Hulu, it doesn't mean you can afford your groceries."

"The industry is not at all sustainable for independent producers. The only way I can make this work and choose this field is due to outside income/inherited wealth."

"It's not a career, it's a crap shoot."

"Income is a funny word. My last project saw me receive a \$100,000 fee. However that was split up over two years between commencement and delivery and also covered the previous year where I wasn't compensated, so in a sense I netted about a 33k/year from a 100k fee."

"Having a spouse with steady income is crucial to my sustainability."

"I have been producing for 12 years, and it is just now becoming somewhat sustainable. The pandemic showed how tenuous this career's sustainability can be."

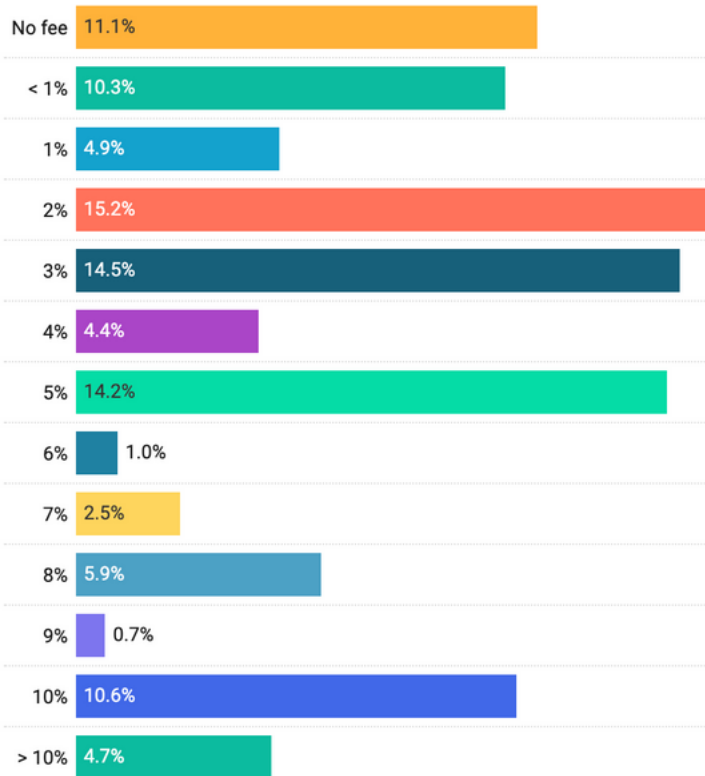
How did producers financially support themselves outside of producing?

With just under half of the respondents reporting that they do not earn their primary income from producing, it's clear that producers have to find financial support elsewhere. That appears to come from a different job within the film industry for many. **The most notable changes from 2019 to 2020 were the substantial increase in government-sponsored assistance, including food stamps, unemployment, etc. (but not including COVID relief loans), as well as a jump in relying on personal savings.**

Type of Support	2019	2020
Job in film industry (not producing)	41.3%	38.8%
Spouse or partner support	18.5%	19.4%
Teaching film	17.6%	14.9%
Savings	14.5%	20.6%
Job outside industry	14.1%	12.5%
Grant or fellowship	8.5%	9.7%
Rental property	7.9%	6.4%
Write-in:	6.9%	8.3%
Parent or family support	3.9%	5.2%
Inheritance	3.0%	3.5%
Government assistance	2.3%	21.7%
No other support	21.1%	15.1%

FEES, DEFERRALS, AND POINTS

What was your *highest* producing fee earned in past 5 years?



The fee a producer collects, typically a percentage of the budget, can vary widely — if producers get paid at all. **The chart shown here reflects the *highest* fees respondents had collected.** They were all over the spectrum, showing the lack of set fee standards across the industry.

When asked what the lowest fee earned was, nearly 50% reported that they had taken no fee on at least one project.

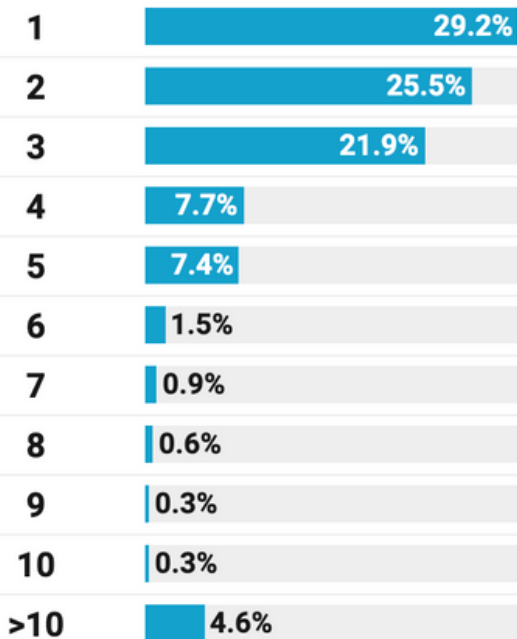
More than 80% have had to defer their fee at least once, with nearly 50% deferring their fee on multiple projects.

"I have been asked by financiers before to waive my fee to lower the total budget, and that if I don't [waive the fee], it meant I don't believe in the film."

"Stop overly betting on the backend."

On how many projects were producers asked to defer their fees?

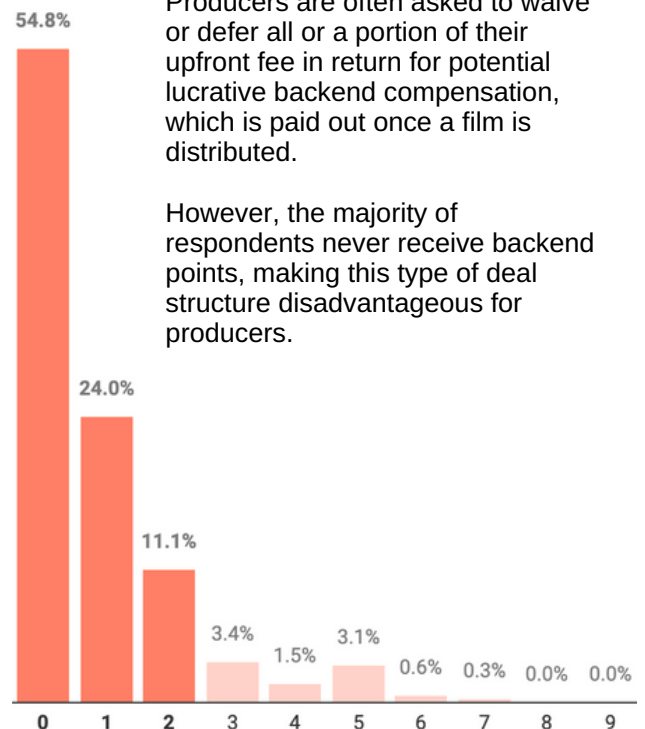
For most of the 80% who said they have been asked to defer their fees, it was not a one-time occurrence. **More than 70% had been asked to defer all or some of their fees on at least two projects.**



How many films paid out backend compensation in the past 10 years?

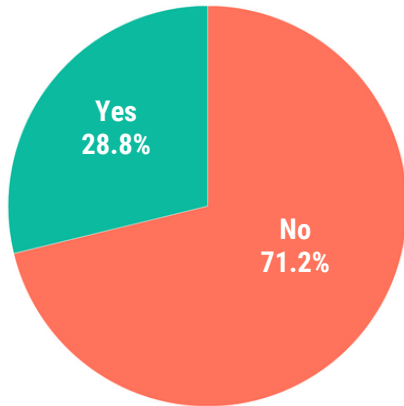
Producers are often asked to waive or defer all or a portion of their upfront fee in return for potential lucrative backend compensation, which is paid out once a film is distributed.

However, the majority of respondents never receive backend points, making this type of deal structure disadvantageous for producers.



How many producers received COVID relief funds in 2020?

The COVID-19 pandemic has essentially shut down the film industry, despite a high demand for new content. Under 30% of respondents received PPP, EIDL or other COVID-specific financial relief in 2020.



"In 2020, I was fortunate to book a producing job — otherwise unemployment/COVID relief + SBA loan would have barely got me through the year with my expenses and debt. I also went 10 months of 2020 with no rent payment and have been without a car and car payment since June..."

"I'm concerned about the financial impact of developing and making work in a new COVID world, and what that could mean for filmmakers in vulnerable communities who have important stories to tell but struggle with resources and support."

What would make producing a more financially sustainable career in the U.S. today?

We asked respondents what they thought would make producing a more sustainable career, with the option to select as many factors, as well as write-in answers.

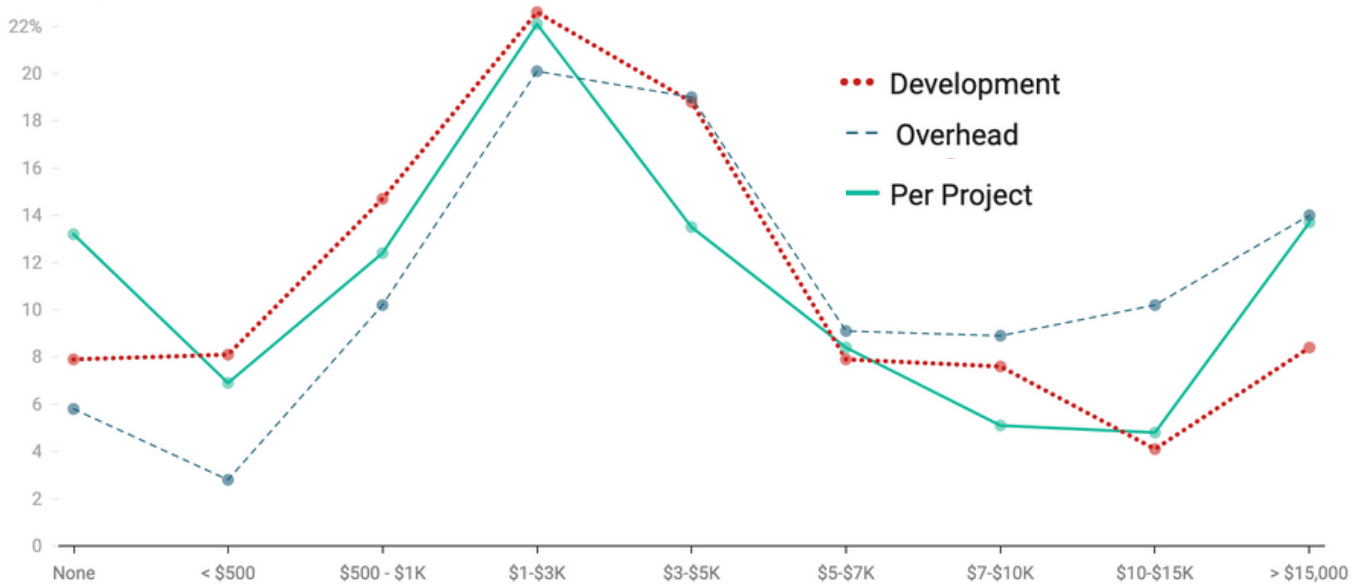
The write-in suggestions ran the gamut from more transparency (i.e., in distribution, sales, etc.), to supporting people, not projects, to elevating the status of producers so they command the same support as directors, and to defining what a producer does and how a producing credit can be earned (not bought).

Change Factor	Percent
Industry-accepted minimum compensation for producer fees	77.8%
A shift in perspective of how much (or little) money producers make	71.2%
Designated line item in the budget to reimburse producers for development costs	69.0%
More support from industry organizations and companies for producers	62.2%
A better understanding amongst the industry of what a producer does	61.6%
Faster access to revenue in the waterfall	60.6%
Designated line item in the budget to reimburse producers for overhead costs	59.0%
A collective bargaining organization that negotiates on behalf of producers	56.3%
A wider range of tastes among "gatekeepers"	52.9%
Something else not listed here	16.1%

PERSONAL AND TIME INVESTMENT

How much do producers spend out-of-pocket to make their films?

More than 87% of producers spent their own money on projects during an average year. For the per-project costs, producers were asked how much they typically spend on a single project including production, post, film festivals, and distribution expenses that they did not expect to get reimbursed — not including development and overhead in that figure. Development and overhead costs were asked about separately. **When combining average spend across all categories, producers paid \$9K of their personal money per project.**

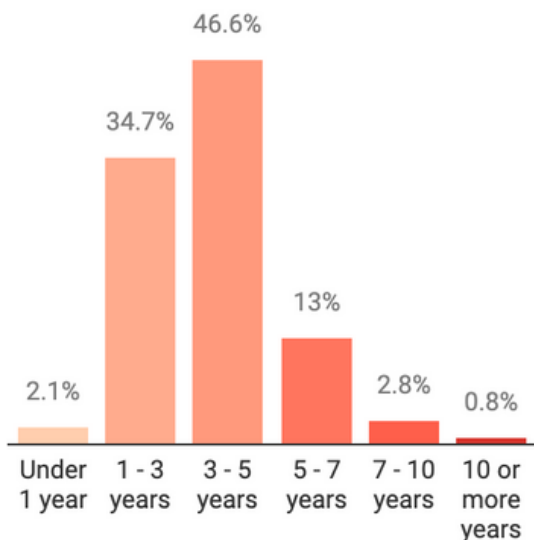


"No money spent [means] no projects made."

"Many times it feels expected by other industry professionals that I'm only serious if I put 'skin in the game' (aka, my own money)."

How long does a film take to make, from development to release?

Nearly half of the respondents said an average film takes 3-5 years to move a feature film from development stage to release. Much of that time is spent in development, with producers not getting paid or investing their time and money with no guarantee that the project will ever be completed.



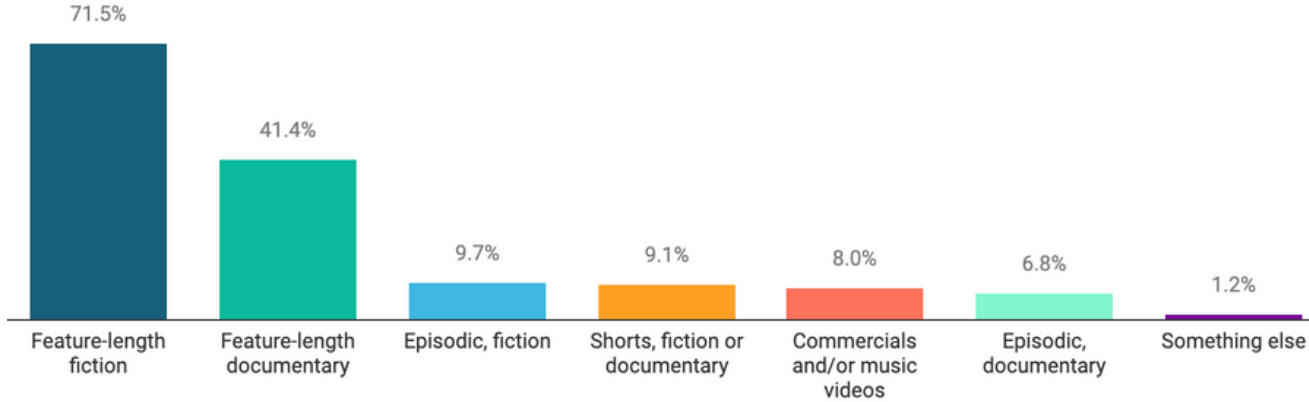
"I have two projects fully funded in development, but won't be paid until in production. But I've been working on them for over a year each."

"I am still promoting and working on distribution for films I physically produced 2-4 years ago. This is unpaid."

PRODUCERS' WORK

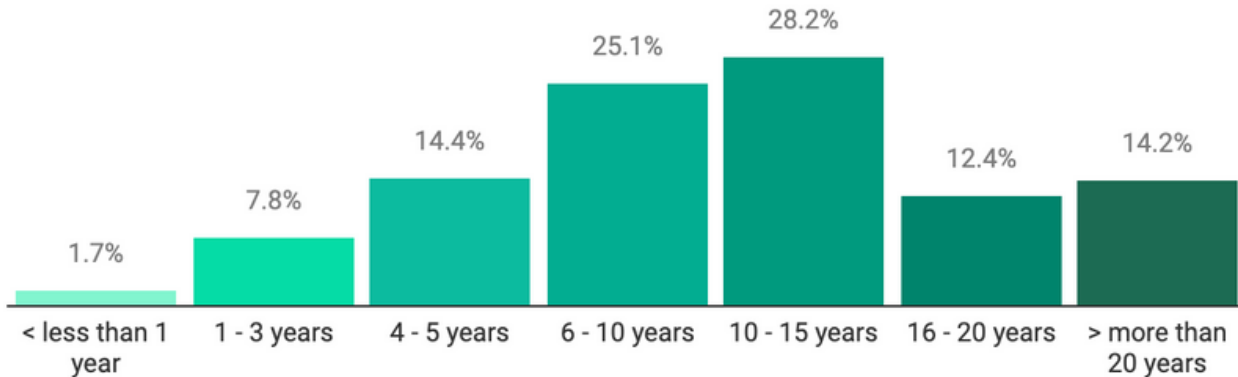
What type of content do the respondents primarily make?

Respondents were asked to identify what they primarily produce and were allowed to select up to 2 choices from the list, including a write-in option. Feature-length films were the majority, with fiction leading the way. Write-in responses included creating art and installations, events, branded digital content, and app content.



How many years have respondents been producing features?

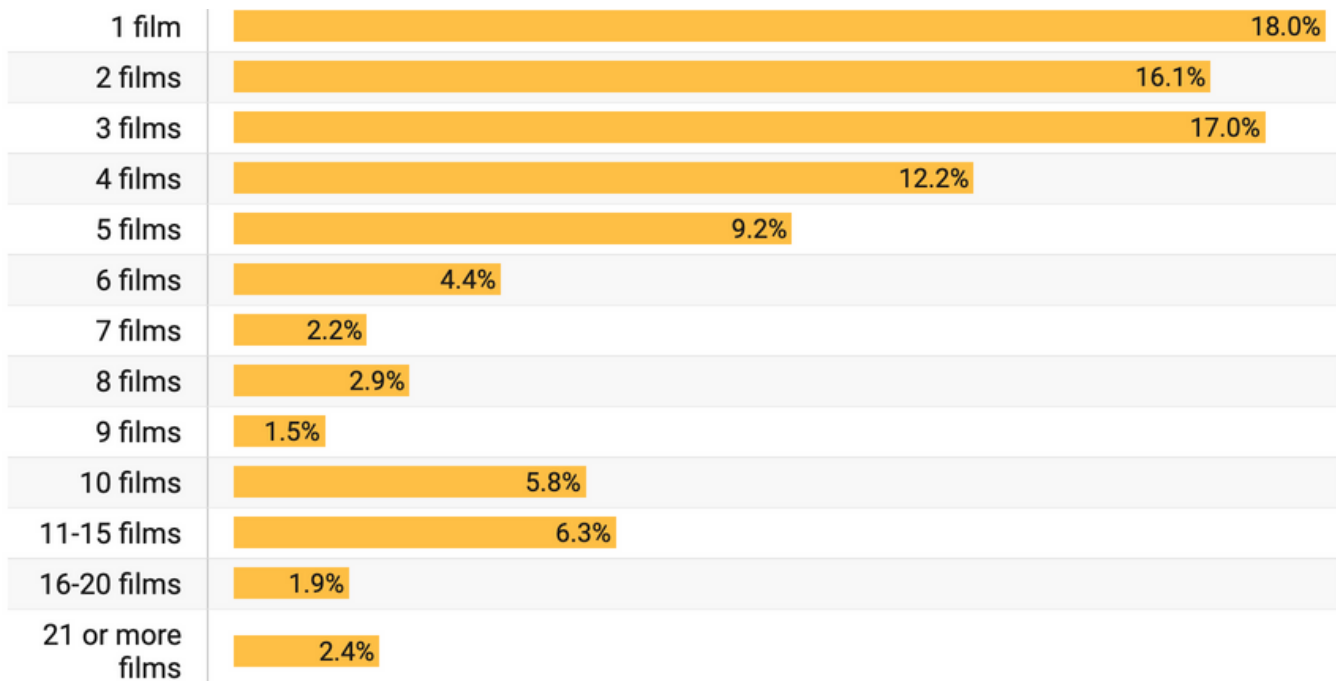
The majority of producers report mid- and late-career experience levels, with 6 to 15 years in the industry representing more than 53% of respondents. More than 26% reported 16 or more years of industry experience. About 24% have 5 or less years of experience in the industry.



"No industry can survive without a clear system to get new talent trained and ready to take the reins from the preceding generations of leaders. We need to get serious about making being an early-career or independent producer a sustainable, integrated part of the industry, or all we'll have left will be nepotism, inherited money, and luck."

How many feature films have producers made in the past 10 years?

Most producers made 4 or less feature-films in the past 10 years, which may be due to the time investment required for each project.



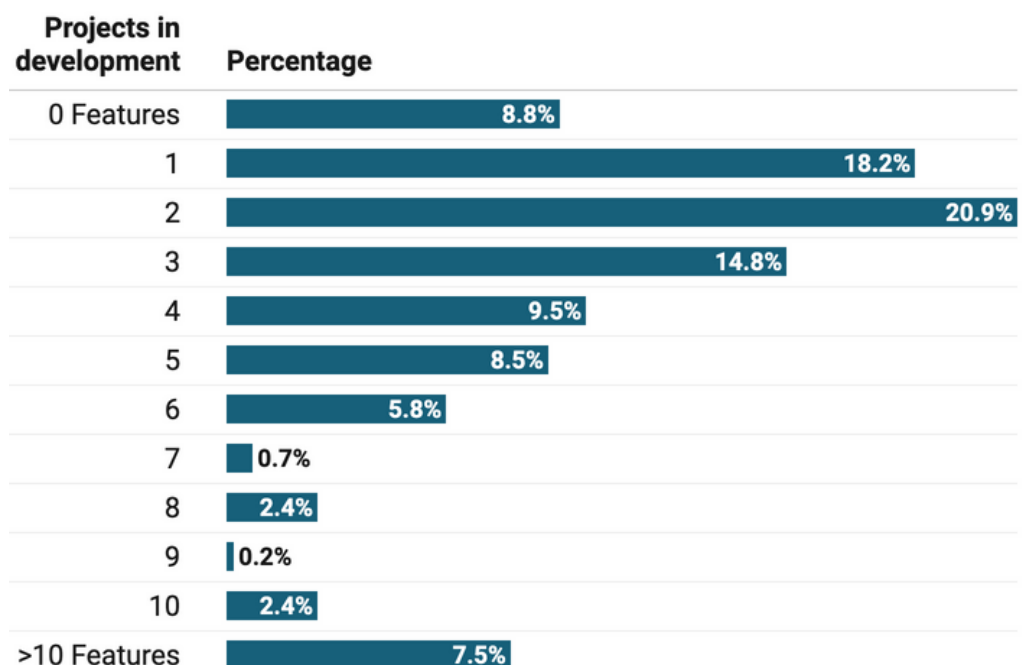
"As we know too well, except for occasional freelance budget/schedule work, you're only paid to produce a film once the production funding has been found. This often means years of unpaid work before funding is secured, and of course, there are the projects that never get financing and all the work done is uncompensated."

How many feature-length projects do producers have in development?

The COVID-19 pandemic may have skewed the results of this question, since all projects were stalled or indefinitely postponed for the majority of 2020 and into 2021.

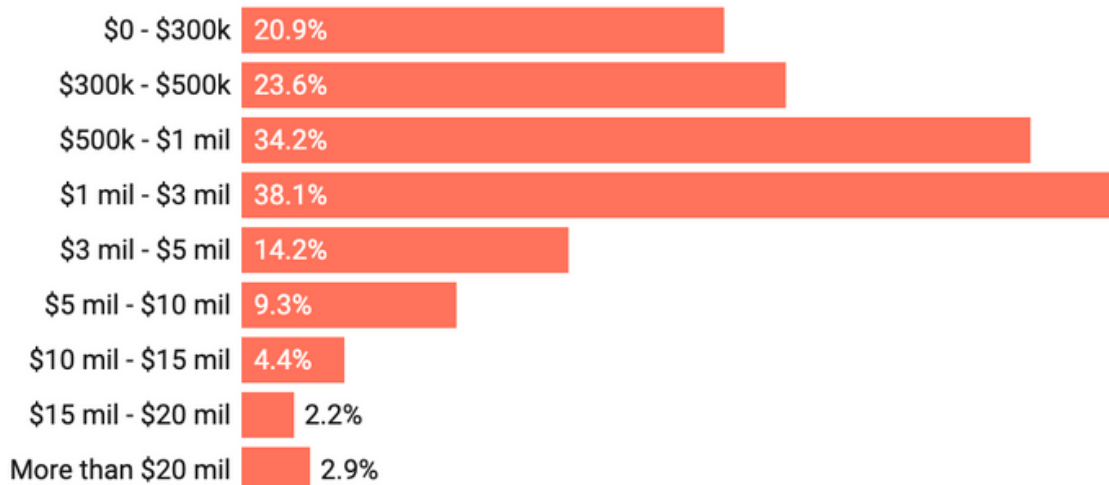
However, because of the payment structure for producers and lengthy timeframe from development to release, it is common for producers to be splitting their focus on several projects at once.

For 10% of respondents, that means 10 or more projects are currently in various stages of development.



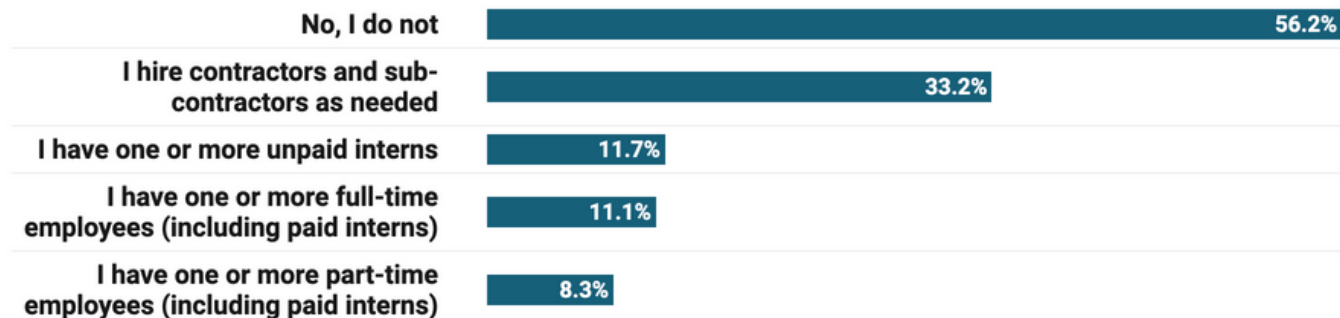
Which budget ranges do producers work in for feature films?

Producer respondents were asked to identify their typical budget ranges for feature films, selecting up to 2. When looking at all content producers, the majority are working in the lower-end ranges at \$3 million or less. Feature-length fiction producers accounted for all of the responses in the \$10 million or higher range.



Do producers have staff to help with their workload?

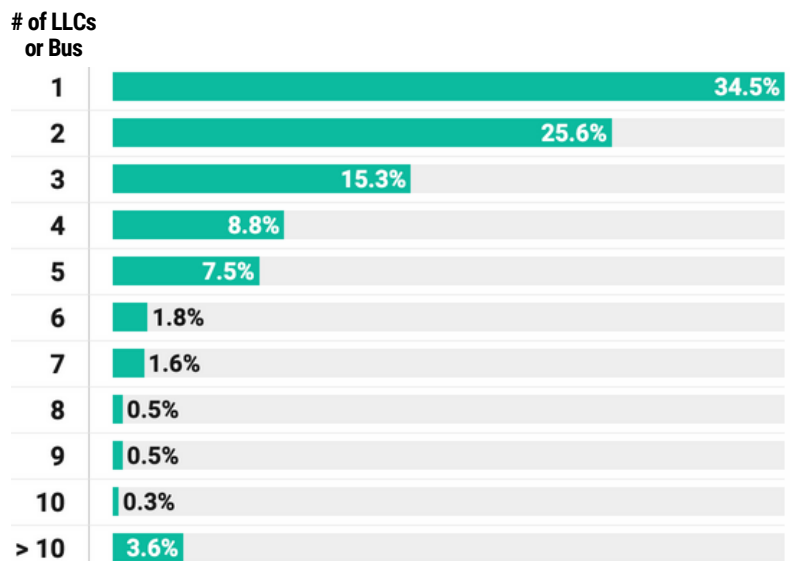
We asked the respondents about the support they have in producing, in the form of staff and interns (could select all that apply). More than half said they do not have anyone on staff nor do they hire out work. The next common scenario was that producers hire contractors and subcontractors.



How many LLCs and other corporations do producers own or manage?

Producers are usually responsible for owning and operating the Limited Liability Company (LLC) and other corporations that films are produced under. This increases a producer's personal risk on a film, and requires the producer to oversee accounting and tax filings for the life of the LLC, which greatly extends the length of time a producer works on a film. When averaged, respondents are overseeing 2 businesses.

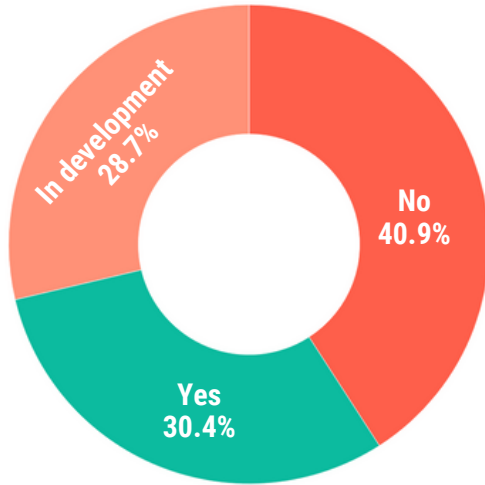
The majority of respondents reported overseeing 1 LLC, with 34.5% respondents selecting the option. Slightly more than 40% of respondents are operating 2 or 3 LLCs. A quarter of respondents are operating 4 or more LLCs/business for their films.



PRODUCERS' WORK - EPISODIC

Are producers working in episodic series?

More than half of the respondents have produced an episodic series or have at least 1 in development.



"I'm lucky enough to supplement my film producing income (which is very little) with a day-to-day producing job on episodic docu-series television."

"T.V. pays the bills."

"I would like to see gatekeepers and financiers recognize and value the creative team, not just the director. Too often the director is plucked away from their team and expected to replicate a successful project... Unfortunately, most new directors don't know/are in no position to fight to bring along their creative producers as they move to new projects."

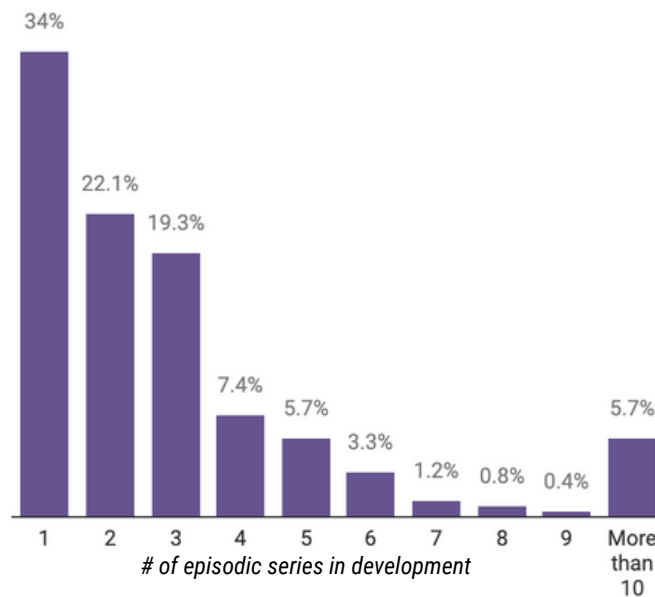
"Producers at the top should actively mentor producers trying to find a break with paid opportunities at their production companies and on studio films and episodic series. There should be a pipeline for people with appropriate skills and experience, but who haven't had the exact level or type of experience to work on such projects so that the chicken-and-egg scenario can go away."

How many episodic series do producers have in development?

We asked only respondents who replied that they were working on or had worked on episodic series how many they currently have in the development phase.

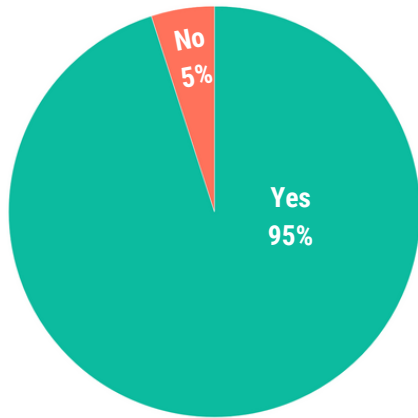
The majority of respondents are working on 3 or less shows, with a dropoff thereafter.

There was a bump at the end of the spectrum, however, with nearly 6% reporting 10 or more shows in development.



ACCESS TO BENEFITS AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

How many respondents have health insurance?



Overwhelmingly producers currently have health insurance. Covered under a spouse or partner was the most common reported access at 27%. Private insurance, aka self-paid, was next at 21%. Rounding out the top were through a current employer at 19%, and the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare) at 16%.

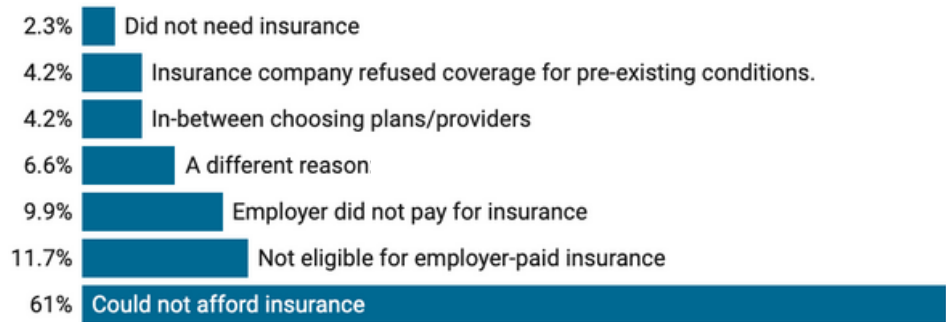
Medicare/Medicaid, a former employer or COBRA, and other scenarios were also included. Three write-ins specifically noted MPI insurance as a provider.

"Participating in individual and group therapy has been incredibly helpful in staying grounded and healthy. Thankfully my individual therapy is covered by my health insurance. My group therapy is not covered, and I pay out of pocket."

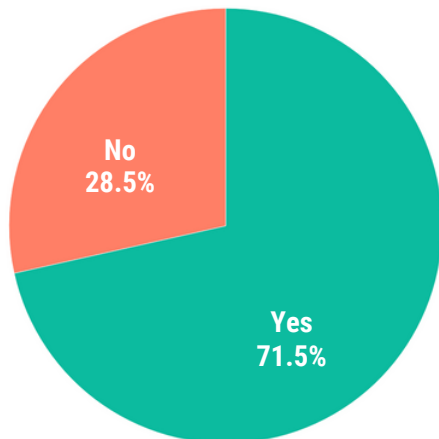
"We producers need a health insurance option. It would be game changer for my life and ability to continue doing this work."

Reasons for going without health insurance now or in the past?

While health insurance is currently not a concern for most of the respondents, more than 40% report that at some point in their career in the film industry, they have gone without health care insurance for more than 12 months. We asked the reasons why, as shown here.



Are producers saving for retirement?



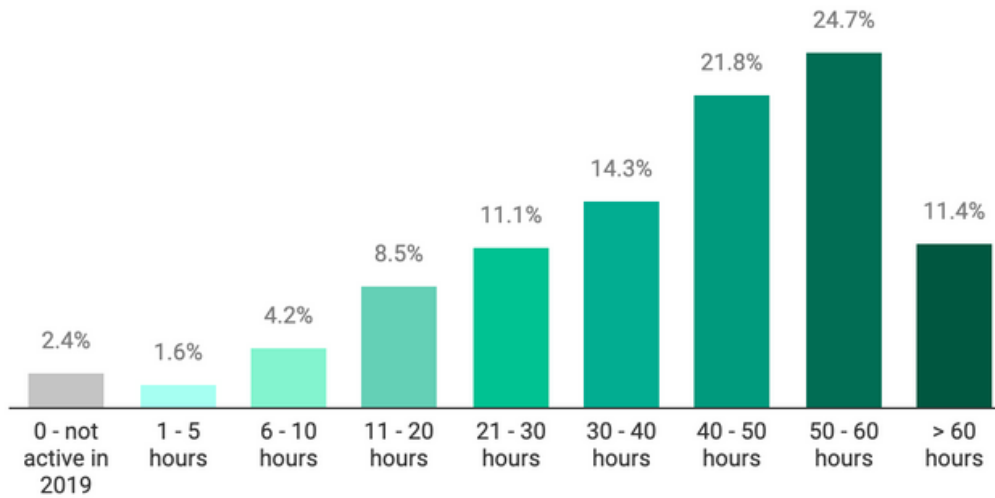
More than 71% of respondents say they have some kind of retirement savings — mainly through an independent account (i.e., one-person 401(k); SEP IRA; SIMPLE IRA; and Keogh plan, etc.) as reported by 70.8% of those who have retirement savings.

That was followed by employer sponsored plans (12.2%) and savings that are not specifically in retirement accounts (5.8% plus write-ins).

However, though they may be planning for retirement, the amount in retirement accounts was polarized. The majority of respondents (53.4%) said they had less than \$75K set aside for retirement. Just over 11% have retirement savings of \$500K or more (in pre-pandemic value).

Does work-life balance exist in producing?

How many work hours did producers spend on their projects during an average week in 2019?

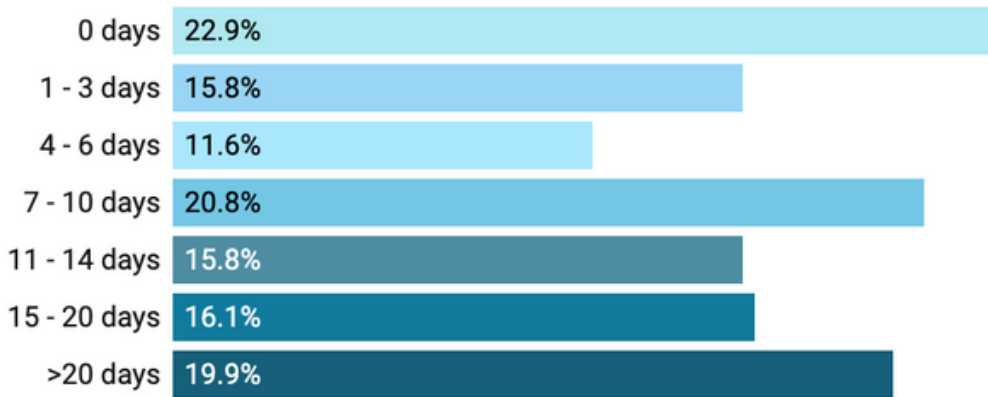


The majority of respondents noted that they spent 40-60 hours working on their projects in 2019 (since 2020 was such a different kind of work year).

We did not ask if that was independent of another job for those who supplement outside of their producing work. So it is feasible that producers are working this in addition to other jobs.

How many personal days did producers take in 2019?

What about vacation? Or sick time and family care? Time off was highly variable. Though **more than 20% of respondents took no personal time off during 2019**, which is significant, **nearly the same amount took more than 20 days off**. Another **20% took 7-10 days**. Personal time was defined as truly unplugging and not working, but could have included caring for sick family, vacation, maternity/paternity leave, etc.



"As an independent producer, the lack of government-supported paid vacation, sick time, and childcare support makes it very hard to truly take time off. With the ongoing closure of my 5-year-old's school with no end in sight, this is seriously exacerbated by the pandemic."

"I have found that one of the qualities that makes a good producer often is being good at being a source of support for your director/writer, etc., but that often comes at the cost of being able to support yourself, whether that's mentally, financially, emotionally."

PRODUCER SENTIMENT AND WELL BEING

How much do producers enjoy their work?

We asked producers to rate how they felt about producing when finances were not a factor. They were provided a scale of 4 hearts, ranging in sentiment from not at all to love it.

Overwhelmingly, producers enjoy their work: 39% said they enjoy it "a good amount," while more than 50% said they love it.

Only 2 out of all respondents said they do not enjoy their work *at all*. Just over 8% said they enjoy it "a little."

3.4



average rating



"I LOVE this work. I love the filmmakers I work with, the films we put out into this world to audiences who need them. But at some point, doing this work is a luxury that my family will not be able to afford. I need to earn a real paycheck for my family to survive, and if that is not forthcoming in a meaningful way within the next 2 years, then I will be forced to either supplement significantly or leave producing entirely."

"It is not getting any easier. The job is taken for granted by many. The days of the 'big money' producers is ending. BUT, I am an optimist. I love what I do and my peers do. There is nothing else I would rather do."

"I love working with artists, interpreting them, finding ways for them to connect to others more effectively — and I love watching my own creative contributions marry with theirs to make a better film, a better pitch, a better promotion package, a better rough edit, a better social media campaign, etc. I love attaching myself to someone else's idea and making it better through the long process of learning what they want..."

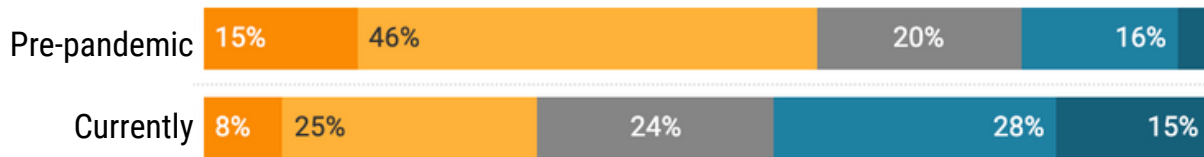
"I want this to be a job — a real job — where there is a system in place that supports and allows producers to be creative and do our job. And to find the pleasure of doing what we love without having to sacrifice our family life, seeing our kids grow up, having time for ourselves, our mental health. I want this to feel like a real job that others respect as much as we do."

How optimistic and satisfied are producers with the state of the industry pre- and mid-pandemic?

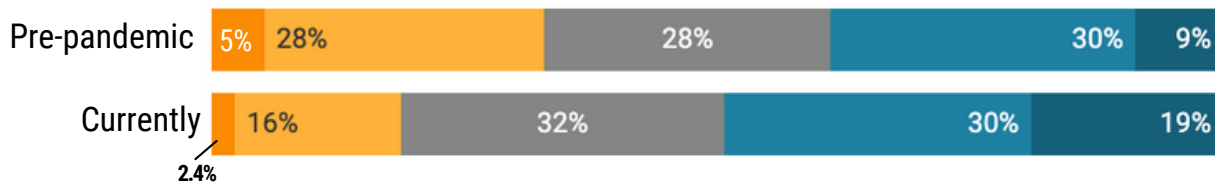
Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements related to job satisfaction, sense of the future, belonging and progress. We asked them to gauge their feelings on a 5-point scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree with a Neutral option in the middle. Pre-pandemic and mid-pandemic were asked separately, but have been combined here for comparison.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

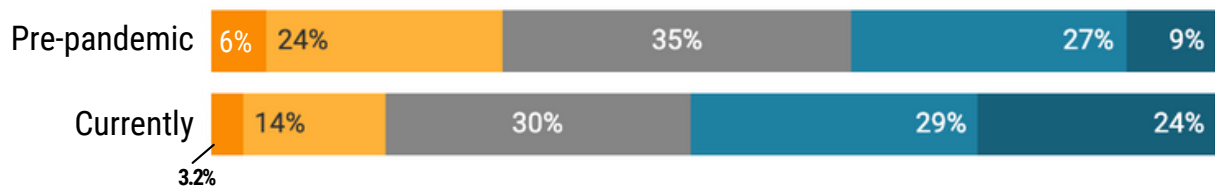
I felt/feel optimistic about the future of film.



My experience with funders and securing funding has been positive.



I would encourage someone to pursue producing as a career.



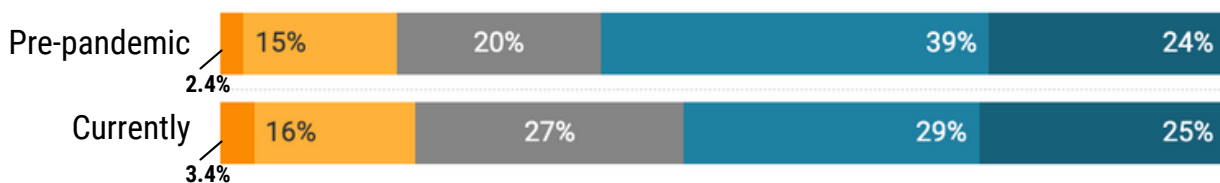
I am satisfied with my compensation.



Diversity, equity and inclusion are taken seriously in the industry.



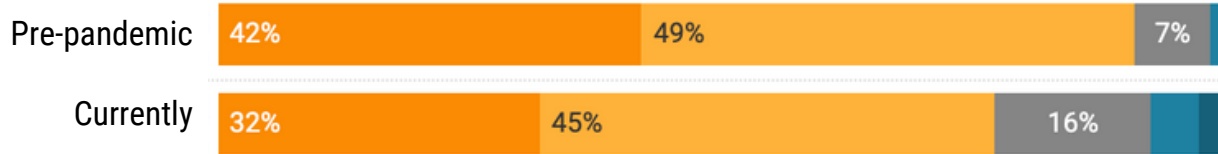
I am satisfied with work-life balance.



How optimistic and satisfied are producers with the state of the industry pre- and mid-pandemic?

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I feel good about the work I do.



As a producer, I feel supported.



What impact has producing had on producers' mental health?

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements related to job stress, mental wellness, and actions and barriers to action for seeking mental health help. We asked them to gauge their agreement on a 5-point scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

My job has had a negative impact on my well-being.



My job has had a positive impact on my well-being.



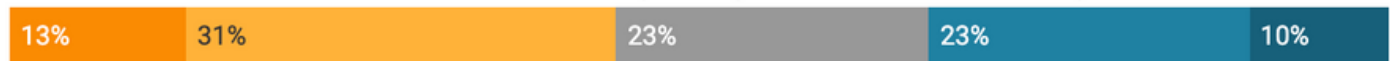
I have taken at least one action to offset the negative effects my job has on my mental health.



I would take an action or more extensive actions to improve my mental health, but access to insurance is a problem.



I would take an action or more extensive actions to improve my mental health, but cost is a problem.

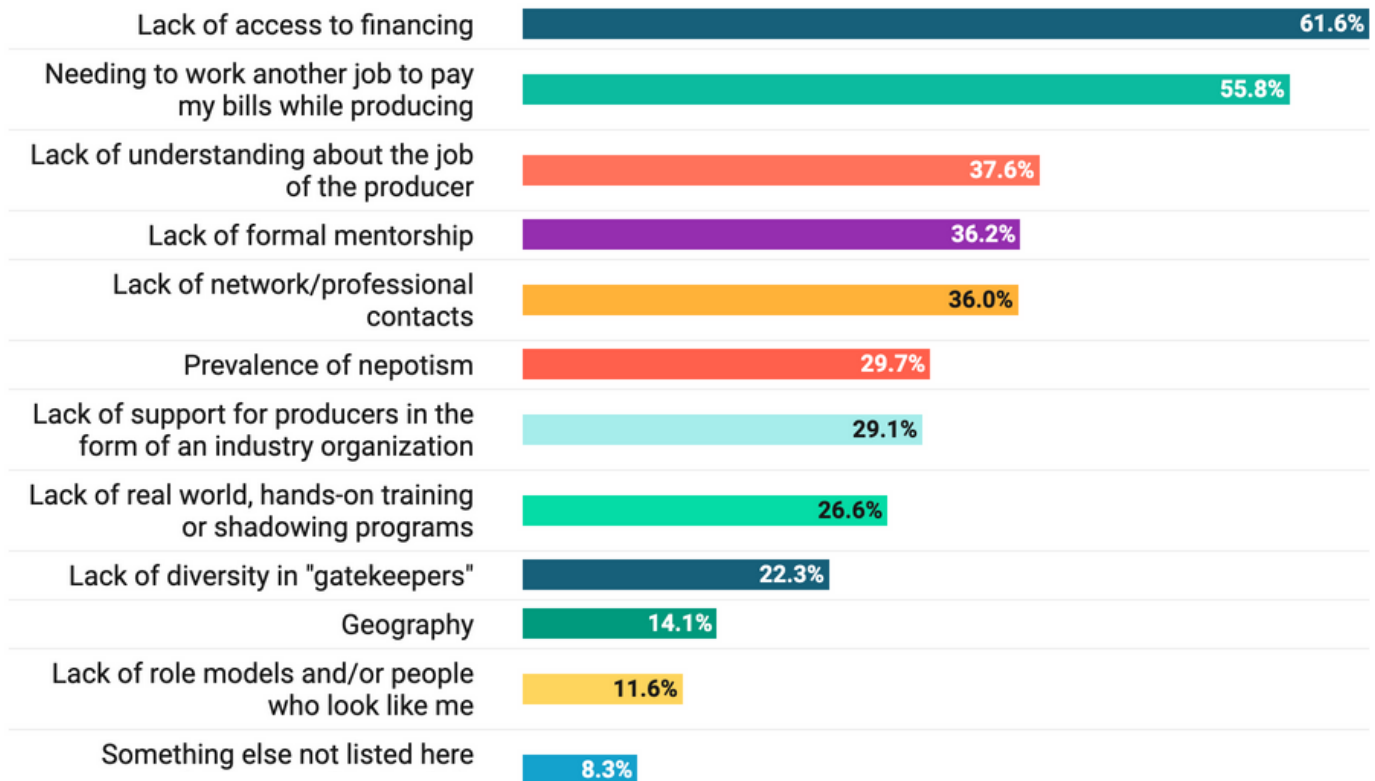


I have considered leaving the industry because of the impact my job has had on my mental health.



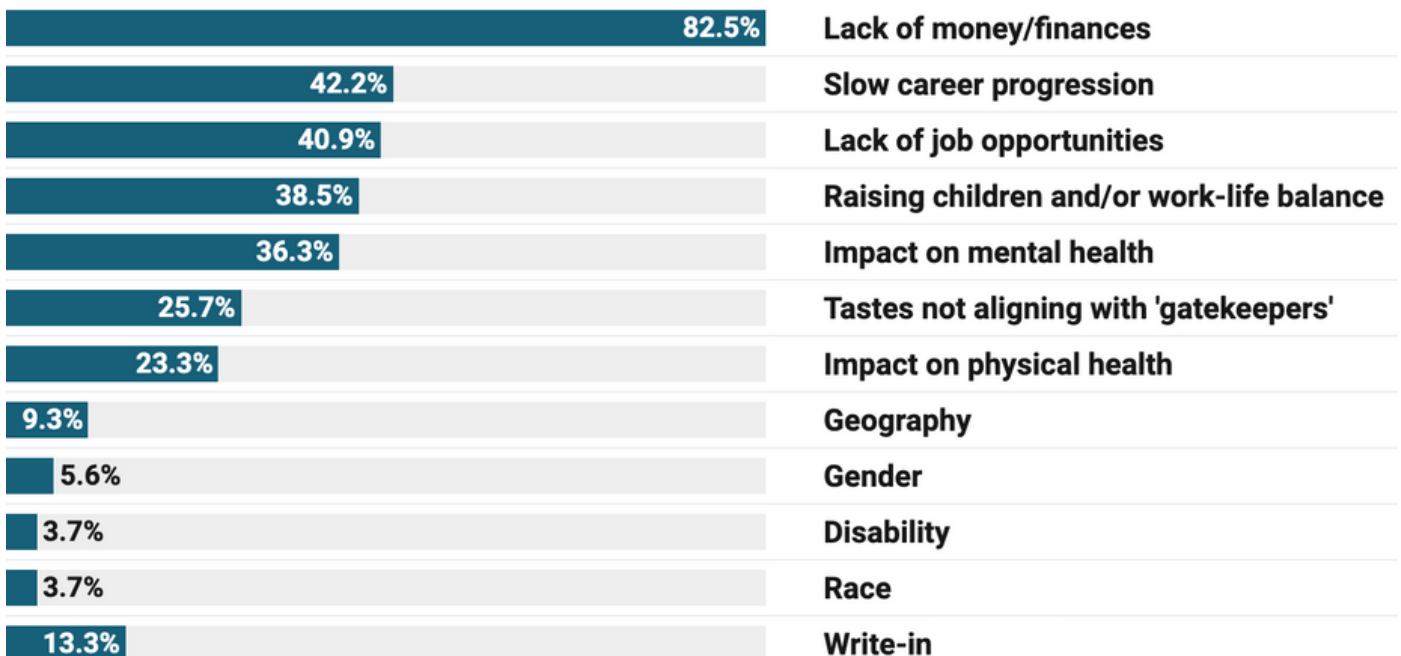
What do producers see as barriers to entry or progress in producing?

Respondents were asked what they thought were the biggest barriers in producing, selecting all that applied. **More than 60% cited a lack of access to funding for films, while 56% noted the lack of consistent and fair compensation.** Ageism was not an option, but was a recurring theme in the write-in comments.



What factors would contribute to a producer leaving producing as a career — or have done so already?

Respondents were asked what would drive them out of the industry and they could select up to 5 choices, including a write-in option. **Finances make an appearance at the top of the list again, chosen nearly twice as much as the next popular options.**



What keeps producers going?

We asked producers where they find their resilience and what keeps them moving forward in the face of the challenges and barriers. Love of the work was prevalent not just in the selected choices, but also in the comments.

A love of the work

87.0%

A drive to inject more original voices into film and storytelling

76.6%

A need to change the industry for the better

43.1%

Peer support

40.4%

I don't know what else I would do

37.5%

Support from non-profits

18.9%

Mentors

14.1%

The paycheck and/or fringe benefits

11.4%

Something else

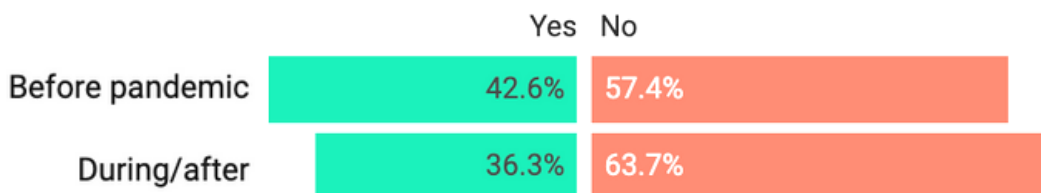
10.4%

"I truly think that producing documentaries, excruciatingly hard as it is, is so spectacularly fun, so mind-bogglingly rewarding on several levels, that I feel it has profoundly enriched my life by keeping it from ever being boring."

Do producers think film producing is a sustainable career?

It's the question we initially set out to answer: *As it exists today, is producing a sustainable career?* We also wanted to account for how the pandemic may contribute to respondents' attitude toward their career paths. **The majority of producers say no, producing is not a viable career — both before and after the start of pandemic.**

While there were several comments from producers who have found traditional success amidst the challenges, the collective comments were overwhelmingly about pay inequity; not being able to afford the basics in life despite having multiple award-winning and successful films; lack of formalized training, mentoring and defined career paths; and a lack of understanding around what it means to be a producer. The responses underscore the systemic issues producers are dealing with in the industry today.



CONTACT

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