

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The DOC Institute engaged Nordicity to analyze three years of funding awarded to Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) documentary creators in the Canadian film and television industry and produce a snapshot report on the composition of BIPOC documentary content produced in Canada. More specifically, the project aimed to answer the following research questions:

- ▶ How successful are BIPOC documentary creators at securing funding as compared to non-BIPOC applicants?
- ▶ Do BIPOC documentary creators who are funded receive the same amount of discretionary screen-based funding support as compared to the average funding levels?
- ▶ What is the breakdown of BIPOC documentary creators by role including owners of production companies, key crew members, etc.? Where and why are there discrepancies in BIPOC representation?

To answer these research questions, data was collected directly from Telefilm Canada, the Canada Media Fund (CMF), the National Film Board (NFB), and TV Ontario (TVO). Each funder filled out relevant data on: total funding by calendar/fiscal year, province, format, source of funding, as well as the number of key creatives supported. A survey was conducted to supplement the data provided by funders.

### 1.1 KEY FINDINGS- BIPOC DOCUMENTARY CREATORS AND PUBLIC FUNDING

Nordicity's analysis revealed several key findings on the experiences of BIPOC documentary creators who are navigating public funding for documentary production.

#### Funding distribution

- ▶ Due to the inconsistent and lack of data across the industry, Nordicity's analysis of funding distribution was limited to Indigenous creators. Based on the data collected, less than 1/5 th of documentary creators supported identify as Indigenous, and less than 1/5 th of documentary funding is provided to Indigenous documentaries.
- ▶ The data provided by funders indicates that the proportion of funding provided to Indigenous works is higher in documentary production (16% from this study) than in the broader film and television industry (less than 1% based on research conducted by Nordicity and the REMC). Due to the lack of data on Black people and People of Colour, a similar comparison cannot be made for BPOC works.
- ▶ Of the funders who were part of this study, TVO was the only funder to collect data on Black, Indigenous and People of Colour documentaries and creators. TVO's data showed a decline in the number of BIPOC creatives supported between 2017 and 2020, however, it should be noted that these numbers are likely not unique to TVO. Anecdotal evidence suggests that representation is low across the industry.

#### Applying for funding

- ▶ Caucasian/White identifying documentary creators apply for funding more often than their BIPOC counterparts. The survey revealed that the majority (88%) of respondents identifying as Caucasian / White applied for funding for documentary production at least once between 2017 and 2020, compared to 67% of Black survey respondents, 20% of those identifying as Indigenous, and the 47% identifying as a Person of Colour. These numbers may indicate and be a result of unique barriers experienced by historically marginalized groups that disqualify and dissuade them from applying.

## Barriers to Applying for Public Funding

- ▶ The survey asked respondents about the barriers they experience when applying for public funding for documentary production. Black, Indigenous, and creators identifying as People of Colour experience barriers to applying for funding at higher rates than their Caucasian / White counterparts. The same is true for those identifying as genders other than cisgender woman or cisgender man. The most common barriers selected for each group is presented below.

**Table 1: Most common barriers by group**

BLACK	INDIGENOUS	PEOPLE OF COLOUR	CAUCASIAN / WHITE
Meeting eligibility criteria (54%)	A lack of time/resources (100%)	A lack of time/resources (48%)	No one barrier stood out as most common.
A lack of time/resources (46%)	Difficulty navigating funding application language (80%)	A lack of awareness of funding programs (43%)	20% stated they do not face any of the barriers listed.
Lack of access to operating funding (46%)	A lack of acknowledgement/awareness of my culture/my organization’s culture in public funding models (60%)	A lack of acknowledgement/awareness of my culture/my organization’s culture in public funding models (35%)	
	A lack of access to operating funding (60%)		

## Intellectual Property Ownership

- ▶ Caucasian / White creators are typically more successful at retaining the IP for projects they get funded than their Black, Indigenous and People of Colour counterparts. The majority (80%) of Caucasian/White survey respondents stated they typically retain the IP for projects they get funded, compared to just 61% of respondents identifying as People of Colour and 54% identifying as Black.

Despite initiatives at various levels of the industry to earmark funding for BIPOC groups and collect demographic data on funding distribution, an industry-wide system of data collection, monitoring and reporting still does not exist. This research plays a key role in filling in major knowledge gaps in the Canadian film and television industry by revealing inequities in funding distribution for documentary production, as well as key barriers to public funding and IP ownership for BIPOC documentary creators.