

KQED

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# Source Diversity

*November 2020*

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**i**MPACT ARCHITECTS

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# Executive Summary

## Purpose

KQED is in the process of a thorough examination of diversity, equity, and inclusion across its operations, from the diversity of its staff and inclusion practices, to the composition of and engagement with its audience, to the voices the newsroom highlights in its reporting. The following report is a deep examination of one of these areas: The diversity of sources featured in KQED reporting on air, online, and through podcasts. The goal of the investigation is to provide a baseline understanding of KQED's source diversity using five measures: Gender, race/ethnicity, age group, geographic location, and profession.

In addition to the content audit, we also surveyed the newsroom to better understand the current thinking about source diversity, as well as to identify any existing tracking practices taking place among reporters, editors, and producers. These data will be used by KQED in the creation of a sustainable source diversity tracking system, as well as to help inform decision making and goal setting.

## Process

This source diversity audit included 16 KQED programs from four different content areas: Radio, television, web, and podcasts. We manually collected records from KQED's website for all programs except for newscasts, which don't have a web presence. We coded each record based on our own research and collected enough records for each program to give a representative sample over a calendar year (August 1, 2019 through July 31, 2020). We used visual cues, reporters' and sources' own words and descriptions, and online research to make judgments. We applied the lens of an audience person to identifying sources' characteristics, with the understanding that a core element of KQED's goal for its

**KQED has equitable gender representation and is highlighting Black voices.**

source diversity initiative is to be more representative of the Bay Area, which will then create deeper and more trusting relationships with new sectors of the community that might not yet be KQED audience members. To acknowledge and mitigate potential error in our judgments, we had an "unknown" category for each measure of diversity to use when in doubt.

## Findings

Through this audit, we found that overall, KQED has equitable gender representation and is highlighting Black voices. The organization has the opportunity to take action and improve the representation of Hispanic/Latinx and Asian voices. A deeper look at the results pinpoint segments of communities that are more underrepresented than others, which will allow KQED to develop plans for creating nuanced goals and strategizing ways to meet them.

<sup>1</sup> See the attached appendix for additional explanation about the "unknown" category.

There is also much to learn from KQED's program-level source data. For example, while we found that KQED includes as many women as sources as men, that's not true across all programming, and more men than women are contributing to politics and science reporting, in particular. In terms of race and ethnicity, the audit shows that about half of KQED's sources are white, but when broken down by content area, we see that certain types of programming – feature writing and podcasts – include more non-white sources than daily news programming.

We also looked at the intersections of different source diversity categories and found that while there's an overall balance between men and women sources, white and Asian/Asian American women are underrepresented, while Black and Hispanic/Latinx men are underrepresented.

The areas where KQED is doing well is not accidental: in an internal survey, we found that the vast majority of newsroom staff say they already think about source diversity when working on stories. And perhaps counterintuitively, younger staff say they think about source diversity *less than* older staff. And while there is currently no organizational method for tracking source diversity, some newsroom staff say they track some measures of diversity for their own sources.

#### *Recommendations for Next Steps*

- **Be intentional about change and outline specific goals.** Establish a shared vision for source equity in the KQED newsroom and identify loose quantitative goals to be met across programs.
- **Learn from one another.** Identify which programming teams are doing well in any aspect of sourcing and collect a set of effective practices for newsroom wide distribution.
- **Build knowledge continuously and adapt the system when necessary.** Use the existing commitment to source diversity and the various tracking practices as building blocks for a source tracking system, and involve programming teams in a positive feedback loop to make needed adjustments to any new system.
- **Develop a pilot plan.** Piloting source diversity tracking can initiate change right away and allow KQED to beta test processes on a small scale.
  - Consider all the “fault lines” – gender, race and ethnicity, age, geography, socioeconomics – and how they intersect. Unheard voices and stories can emerge from creative uses of baseline data combined with widely available economic data.
  - Set process benchmarks, not numerical ones. Ask questions like "how can we increase Hispanic/Latinx equity in our programming area?" (not "how can we reach this predetermined threshold of success?")
  - Identify the lightest-lift technology and iterate as needed. Determine what platforms KQED is already using that could be the home for source diversity tracking and develop a protocol for how the data will get there.
  - Explore new ways to capture representation. In addition to quantifying sources, consider capturing how much airtime radio and television programming gives to different types of guests.

# The Big Picture

KQED's sourcing is equitable when it comes to gender. It also has at least proportional representation of Black and white sources when compared with Bay Area census demographics. However there are clear opportunities for improving source diversity, especially with respect to the representation of Asian/Asian American and Hispanic/Latinx sources in conjunction with geographic diversity.

## Equitable representation

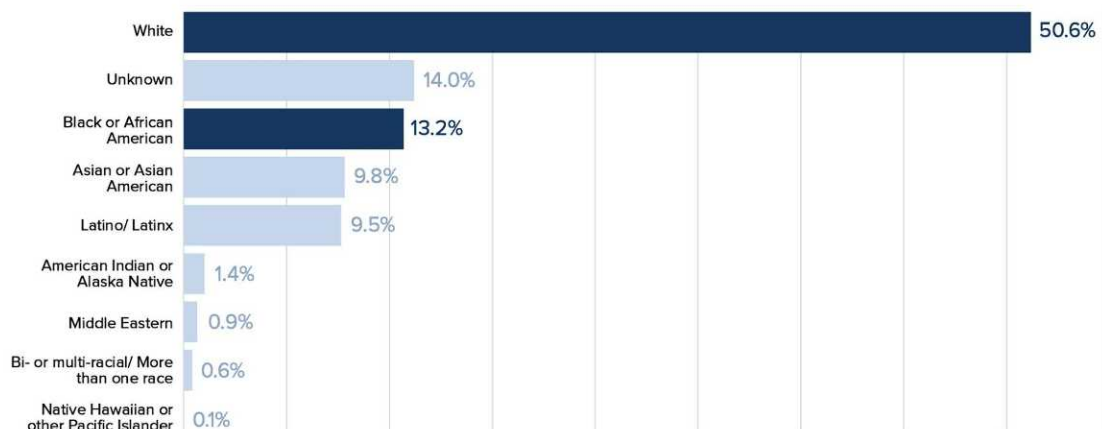
KQED, as a whole, is achieving gender balance in its sourcing; of the 1,635 source records in the audit, 50.6% were identified as men and 48.9% as women. The balance applies almost as equally when breaking down the shows by primary format – radio, television, web, or podcast. In other words, **when looking at the overall picture of KQED content, women are about as likely as men to appear as sources**, regardless of the primary format (digital, podcast, radio, television).

Just over 13% of sources are identified as Black, which is double the Bay Area's Black/ African American population of 6.5%

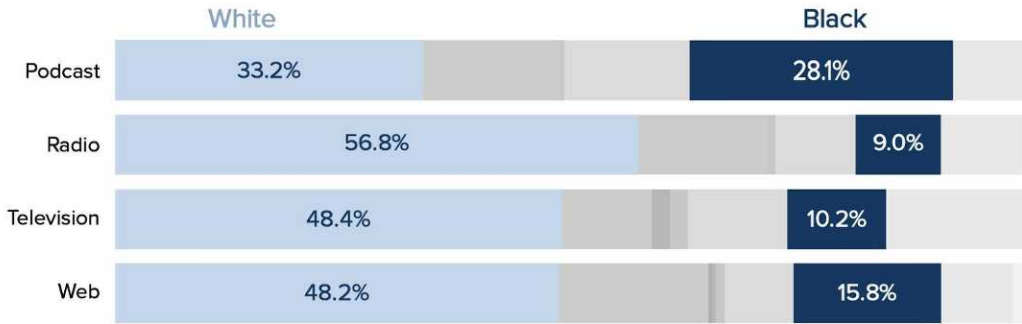
KQED's other clear success is in the breakdown of white and Black sources, interpreted through the lens of population estimates. Fifty-one percent of the source records in the audit are classified as white, which is lower than the Census Bureau's estimate for the Bay Area (58.6% white). Just over 13% of sources are identified as Black, which is double the Bay

Area's Black/African American population of 6.5% (according to US Census Bureau estimates). However, there are some distinctions between content areas: radio programming has the highest percentage of white sources (56.8%), while podcasts have the lowest percentage of white sources (33.2%). And podcasts (28.1% Black sources) and web content (15.8% Black sources) have significantly more Black sources than other formats.

Overall: Race/ethnicity



Race/ethnicity by Primary Format



## Opportunities

There is a clear opportunity for KQED to improve gender equity among sources at the program level, as well as racial and ethnic representation among Asian/Asian Americans and Hispanic/Latinx sources.

Among the 16 KQED programs audited, six have 55% or more men as sources: in radio, Newscasts (57.8% men) and The California Report, Morning (56.5% men); in television, KQED Newsroom (55.1% men); in podcasts, Bay Curious (68.2% men) and Political Breakdown (64.3% men); and, digitally, the Science (58.4% men) beat. There are some patterns in these shows. Newscasts and The California Report, Morning are daily news programs, and have a higher frequency of government officials as sources; about one-third of all source records from these programs have "government official" as their profession. Similarly, Political Breakdown is dedicated to covering California politics, and [according to an analysis by CalMatters](#), 69% of the California legislators are men. Among these three shows, 61.7% of "government officials" are men, and that structural imbalance likely contributes to the over-representation of men on these three shows.

"Government official" is also the most common profession among sources for Science content, likely because our definition of "government official" is expansive and includes state employees (such as scientists at the California Department of Parks and Recreation). Nevertheless, the same pattern emerges as with the other programming for which men are overrepresented, and "Government officials" comprise 24.7% of Science sources, 60.5% of which are men.

KQED also has an opportunity to increase equity in racial and ethnic representation among Asian/Asian American and Hispanic/Latinx sources. Across KQED programming, Asian/Asian Americans comprise only 9.8% of sources, while Asian/Asian Americans account for 28.2% of the population in the Bay Area. Only one show, The Bay, comes within 10 percentage points (18.5%) of reaching equitable representation of the Asian/Asian American population percentage of the Bay Area. Other programs that surpass 10% representation include: Check, Please! (16.8%), Above the Noise (16.7%), KQED Newsroom (15.3%), The California Report, Magazine (13%), Perspectives (12.8%), and Newscasts (10.7%).

Similarly, the percentage of Hispanics/Latinxs that appear in KQED news coverage is only 9.5%, while the Bay Area Hispanic/Latinx community comprises 21.9% of the population, and in California as a whole, that percentage is even higher, 39.4%. Only The Bay's sourcing meets or exceeds equitable representation of Hispanic/Latinx sources with 25.9%. Other shows with more than 10% of Hispanic/Latinx sources include: Mindshift (16.7%), Political Breakdown (16.7%), The California Report, Magazine (11.3%), Check, Please (11.2%), Forum (11.2%), KQED Newsroom (11%), and Arts (10.9%).

**KQED also has the opportunity to increase the diversity of voices with respect to race and ethnicity that are underrepresented in public narratives writ large.**

The program with the lowest percentage of Hispanic/Latinx sources – and highest percentage of white sources – is Perspectives. As Perspectives is an audience driven show with repeat commentators, the racial breakdown might be a reflection of KQED's audience. Regardless, Perspectives

is the type of program – selective, not breaking news, not reliant on spokespeople – that can more easily diversify the voices and viewpoints it's elevating with intention.

KQED also has the opportunity to increase the diversity of voices with respect to race and ethnicity that are underrepresented in public narratives writ large. The American Indian or Alaska Native population is 1.1% in the Bay Area and 1.6% in California, and accounts for 1.4% of the source records in this audit. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders are 0.7% of the population in the Bay Area and 0.5% in California, and they are 0.1% of the source records in this audit.

The Middle Eastern or Arab and bi- or multi-racial categories are more difficult to determine in comparison to population. Current population estimates don't include "Middle Eastern or Arab" (or anything approximating these identities), so there is no reliable and current baseline population data. For bi- and multi-racial KQED sources (0.6% of sources), we often couldn't make determinations through research, and thus we only counted if a source self-identified as bi- or multi-racial. As such, the percentage of bi- or multi-racial sources in the audit is likely undercounted and as a result is smaller than Bay Area (4.9%) or California (4%) population estimates.

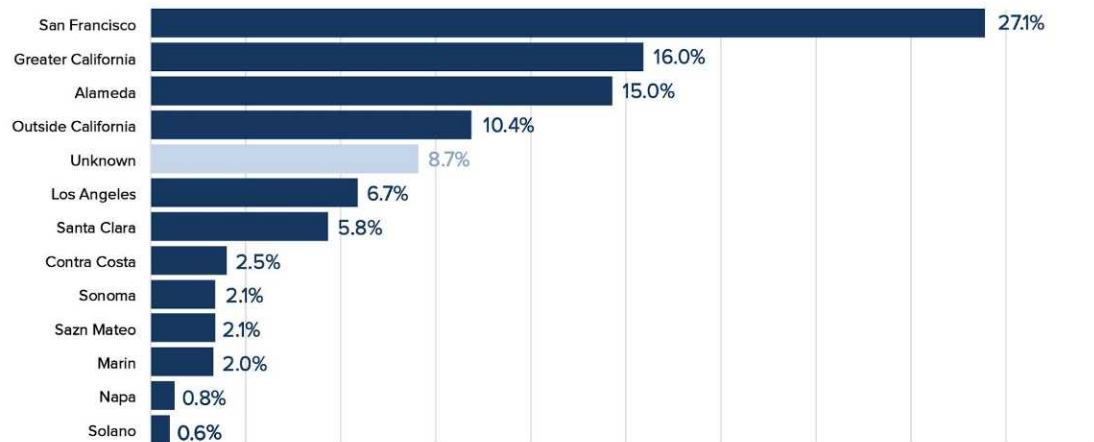
<sup>2</sup> Interpreting the percentage of the Hispanic/Latinxo population is more complex. U.S. Population estimates categorize the Hispanic/Latinx category as an ethnicity, and each individual identifies either as Hispanic/Latinx or not, and then identifies with one of the racial categories. Thus, the population estimates referenced throughout this report include some potential double counting. In our audit, however, we included Hispanic or Latinx as a racial category without double counting..

<sup>3</sup> That includes 45 shows from August 2019 through July 2020.

## Race and Ethnicity in Geographic Context

We coded each source record for one of 12 geographic regions, including each of the nine counties in KQED's Bay Area listening area, Los Angeles County, greater California (meaning outside of the Bay Area and not Los Angeles), and outside of California. About a quarter of sources in the audit are either from greater California or outside of California altogether. More KQED sources are based in San Francisco County than anywhere else (27.1%).

Overall: **Geographic location**



While there are too many variables (e.g., population changes, uneven distribution of institutions, and dissimilarity across counties) for KQED to be a precise reflection of each of its listening areas, KQED's sources as compared with population estimates sheds light on where sources are most and least reflective of the local community.

## Race and Ethnicity Makeup of the Geographic Regions

For example, in Alameda county, the percentage of Black sources (31.8%) was three times the population (11%). Meanwhile, Solano County's Black population accounts for 14.8% of its total population, but only 0.9% of Black sources in this audit are based in Solano County. Solano County's Asian/Asian American community comprises 16.2% of its population, but just 0.6% of the Asian/Asian American sources from the audit overall. Similarly, Contra Costa County has an Asian/Asian American community that is 18.3% of its population, but Asian/Asian American sources accounted for just 1.9% of Asian/Asian American sources. After San Francisco County (32.3%), most Asian/Asian American sources are from Santa Clara County (15.8%).

Variation in population size likely accounts for some of the gaps in population demographics and source demographics. For example, Alameda County's population is more than three-times that of Solano County, and Santa Clara County's even larger.



Black or African American Sources



Greater California, 8.2%; Los Angeles, 5.1%; Outside California, 6.3%.

Asian or Asian American Sources



Greater California, 7.5%; Los Angeles, 11.2%; Outside California, 12.1%.

KQED’s Bay Area Hispanic/Latinx sources come from an even narrower geographic band, with one third of Hispanic/Latinx sources located in San Francisco.<sup>4</sup> As noted earlier, the percentage of Hispanic/Latinx representation is below population estimates overall. If KQED seeks to diversify racial and regional sourcing, it would make sense to consider the stories that can be told in less populous but diverse regions.

Hispanic or Latinx Sources



Greater California, 20.1%; Los Angeles, 7.1%; Outside California, 4.5%

1/3 of Hispanic/Latinx sources located in San Francisco.

<sup>4</sup> Hispanic/Latinx population ranges from a low of 7.5% (Marin County) to a high of 31.3% (San Mateo County).

# Intersecting Traits

## Intersecting Source Diversity Categories

The intersection of the five diversity indicators included in our audit reveals more granular information about source diversity at KQED and provides insight into how programming teams can direct their energy to increase equitable representation.

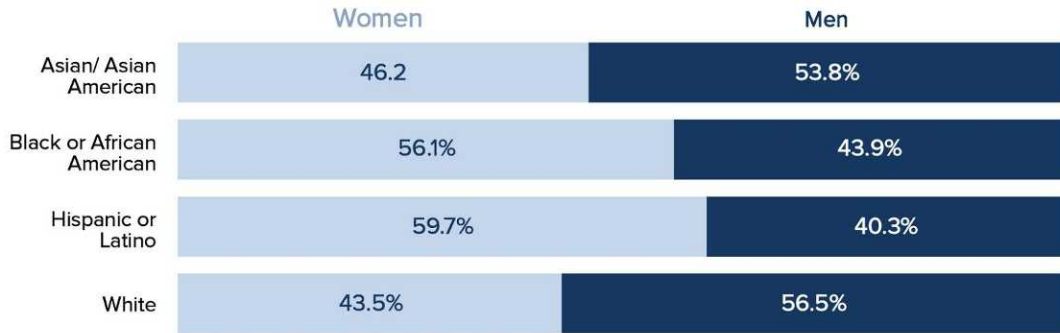
### Race and Gender

Thinking of race and gender together reveals potentially untapped sources, revealing unheard stories and voices. Among white sources, 56.5% are men and 43.5% are women. A similar picture emerges for Asian/Asian American sources. If a source is Asian/Asian American, the source is slightly more likely to be a man (53.8%) than a woman (46.2%).

Thinking of race and gender together reveals potentially untapped sources, revealing unheard stories and voices.

Conversely, both Black and Hispanic/Latinx sources are more likely to be women than men. When considering a direction to increase source diversity at KQED, pursuing Black or Hispanic/Latinx men would make just as much sense as pursuing Asian/Asian American or white women.

Race by gender

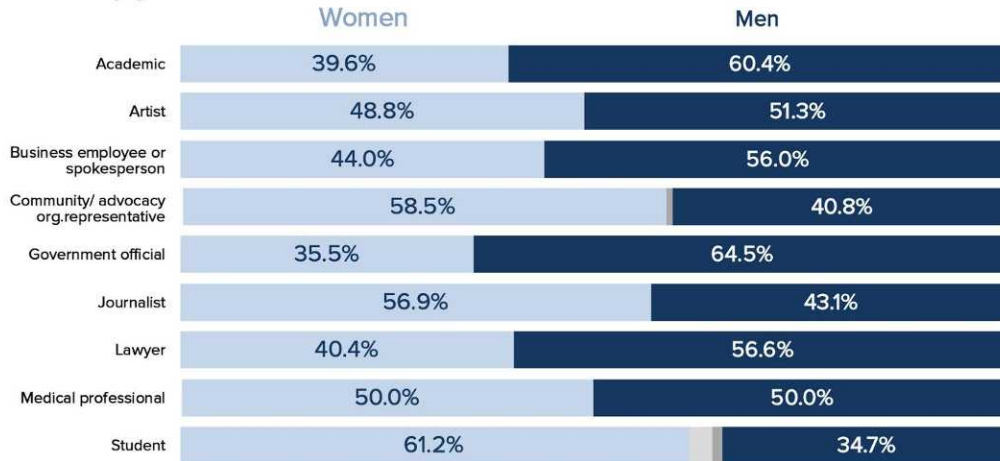


*Greater california, 8.2%; Los Angeles, 5.1%, Outside california, 6.3%*

### Race and Gender by Profession

The intersections between gender and expertise and race and expertise provide insight into who is called upon to share their professional insights and discuss a specific topic. There are four "Profession" categories that include at least 56% men as sources: Government officials, academics (defined as scholars or professional researchers, but not including university affiliated medical professionals), lawyers, and business employees or spokesperson. Three professional categorizations include at least 56% women as sources: Community or advocacy organization representatives, students (K-12 or higher education), and journalists. The other categorizations are either close to a 50/50 split or did not have enough records to draw any meaningful conclusions.

Profession by gender



Categories with fewer than 50 records excluded

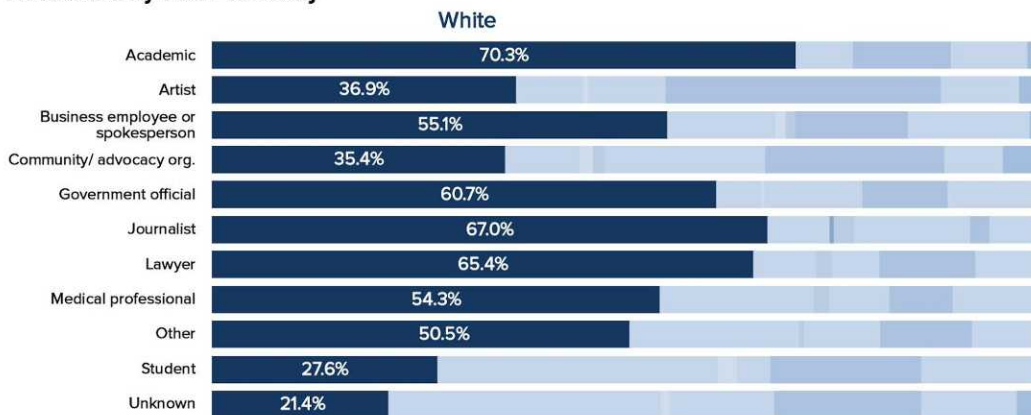
As suggested earlier, the structural inequality found in the government likely accounts for the gender disparity among government officials. When it comes to elected officials, journalists might not have much choice in their sources; however, the same cannot be said for academics, for even though gender discrepancies exist in academia,

The professions that are more likely to be male are also more likely to be white.

especially among tenured faculty, there are qualified women academics in all fields. Not only that, but there are many resources available for journalists to find women academics to discuss a variety of topics, including [Women also Know Stuff](#), [Women also Know History](#), and [500 Women Scientists](#).

Notably, the professions that are more likely to be male are also more likely to be white. Again, academics have the highest percentage, with 70.3% categorized as white. Government officials, lawyers, and journalists are each over 60%.

Profession by race/ ethnicity



The two most racially and ethnically diverse professions are artists and community/advocacy organization representatives. Black sources are well represented in both, and Hispanic/Latinx sources are particularly well represented among sources associated with community or advocacy groups.

Filtering out professions can also provide useful information about who the "non-experts" are in KQED's coverage. For the purposes of this analysis, we define a "non-expert" as someone whose profession doesn't typically include frequent interaction with the media, that is all professions other than academics, government officials, and journalists.

### The large percentage of unknown non-expert sources is a major reason to institute ongoing and journalist produced source diversity tracking.

If we filter out academics, government officials, and journalists from The California Report, Morning, the percentage of white sources goes from 52.7% to 42.4%, while the percentage of unknowns goes from 26.6% to 36.4%. These results

indicate that non-expert sources are far more likely to have an unknown race/ethnicity than expert sources. A retroactive audit can't compensate for these unknowns, but the large percentage of unknown non-expert sources is a major reason to institute ongoing and journalist produced source diversity tracking.

# Content in Comparison

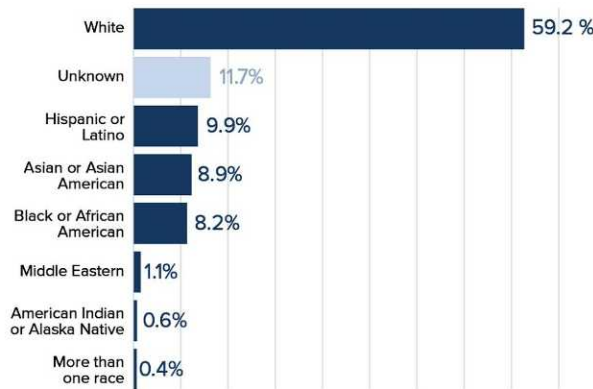
We've seen throughout this report that content areas and shows vary significantly in their sourcing patterns. The content areas are distinguished by primary format – radio, television, podcasts, and web – but we can also group specific programs across platforms to draw comparisons.

## Daily News and Feature Reporting

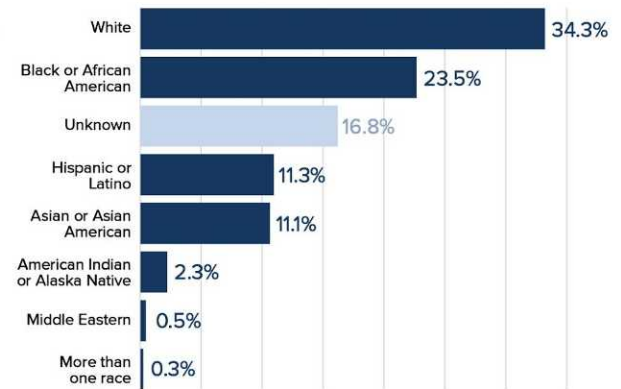
We created one grouping for daily and weekly news (Forum, KQED Newsroom, The California Report, Morning, and newscasts) and compared that with a composite category of feature-based reporting (Above the Noise, The California Report, Magazine, and podcasts). There's a small difference in gender representation between these two program groups: Daily and weekly news has a slightly higher percentage of men (53.2%) than feature reporting (51.8%).

There's a substantial difference in racial makeup between the daily news and feature reporting categories. White sources comprise 59.2% of all records across the four daily and weekly news programs, while they are just 34.3% for feature reporting. Feature reporting also has a much higher percentage of Black sources (23.5%) than do daily and weekly news (8.2%). These results aren't surprising given that podcasts are the most diverse content area and have the fewest white sources and most Black sources overall.

Race and Ethnicity: Daily and Weekly News



Race and Ethnicity: Feature-based Reporting

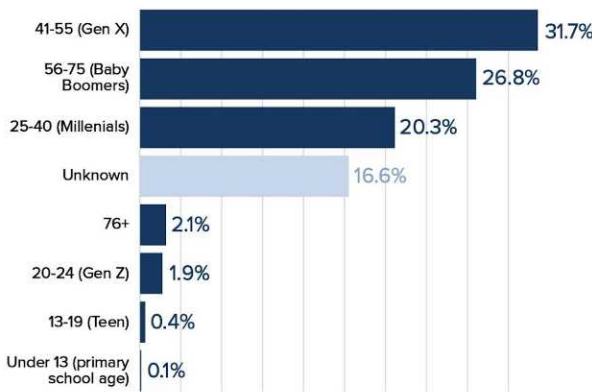


We also looked at race and ethnicity together with age group to identify any potential patterns of sourcing. Age group is the most opaque of our five measures of diversity because it's difficult to determine without written evidence. We can perhaps infer with

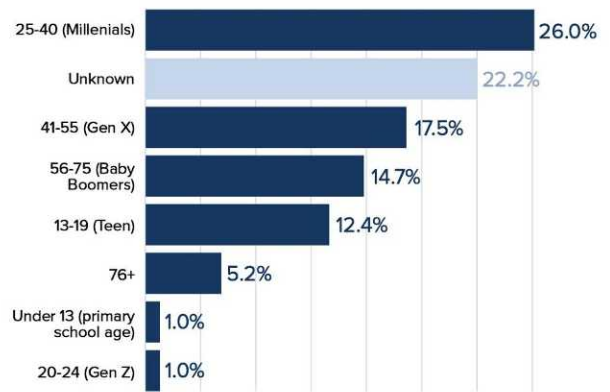
confidence whether or not someone belongs in the Baby Boomer (56-75) age group or the Millennial (25-40) age group, but it's nearly impossible to make an accurate guess between Baby Boomers and Gen X (41-55) or between Gen X and Millennials. That's why we have more "unknowns" for the age group category than any actual age group overall, 28.1%.

However, daily and weekly news shows make identifying age groups easier, given the relatively high profile guests with digital trails (anything from a Wikipedia page to a LinkedIn page with a professional and educational history). Sources on daily and weekly news programs are older than those that appear in feature reporting. Across the daily and weekly news programs, 58.5% are either Baby Boomers or Gen X. Millennials comprise 20.3% of the sources. For feature reporting, however, Millennials are the largest age group, at 26%, but Baby Boomers and Gen X still combine for 32.2%. For the reasons stated above, daily and weekly news has fewer unknowns.

Age Group: Daily and Weekly News



Age Group: Feature-based Reporting



### Digital and Audience Centered Content

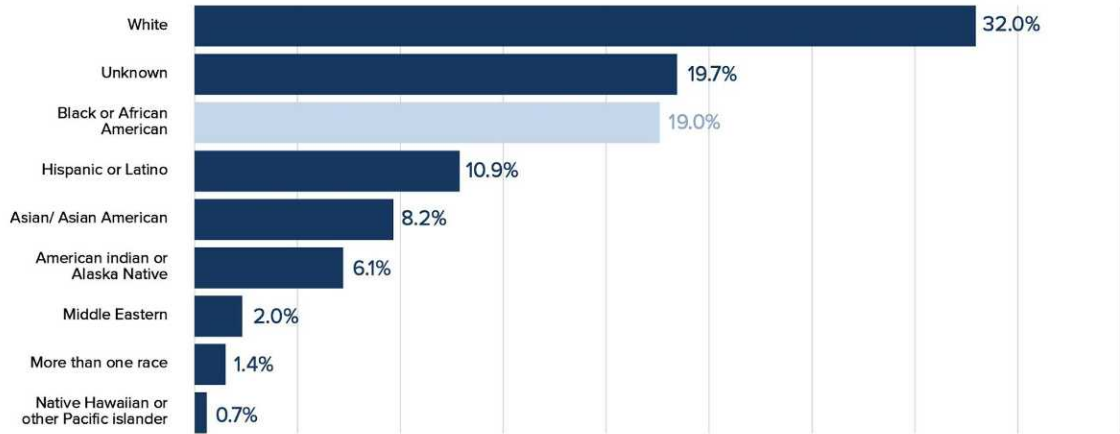
We wanted to understand more about shows that have similar platforms and content approaches, but that have significantly different source diversity results. This is most evident when comparing the digital Science beat with the digital Arts beats, and Check, Please! with Perspectives.

The digital beats are both primarily feature-based, with some daily news content. One major difference is that the Science beat is more geographically expansive: 24.7% of the sources are from greater California and 18.7% from outside California entirely. Conversely, 72.1% of the Arts beats sources are from either San Francisco or Alameda County, with just 8.2% from greater California or outside of the state.

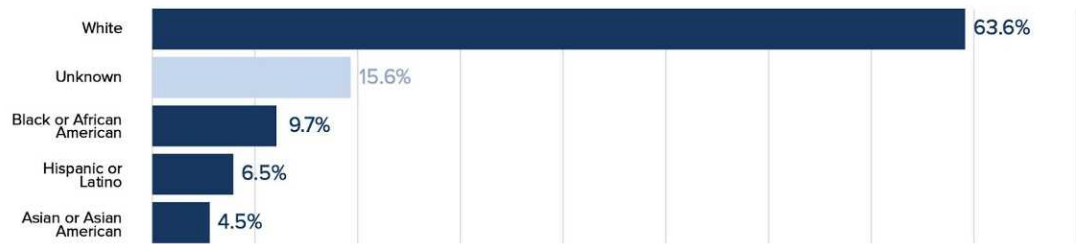
Another difference between the Arts and Science beats is that the Arts beat has more women as sources and is much more racially diverse. Women comprise 55.8% of Arts

sources, while men comprise 58.4% of Science sources. In terms of race/ethnicity, 32% of Arts sources are white, while 63.6% of Science sources are white.

Race and Ethnicity: Arts



Race and Ethnicity: Science



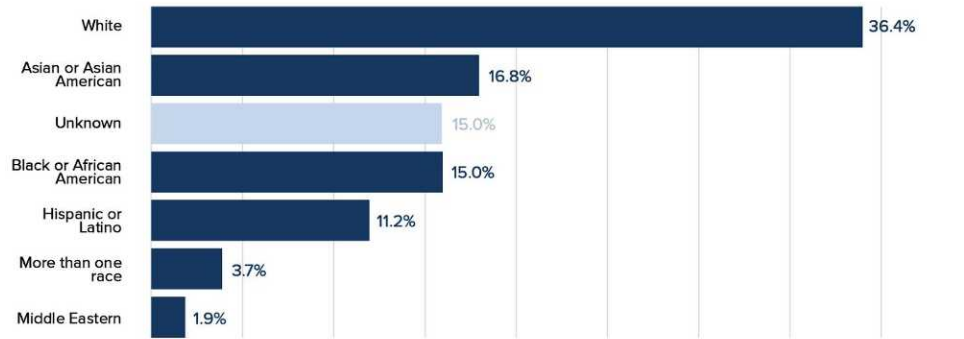
The overrepresentation of men in the sciences surely plays a role in the differences here, but teams have the opportunity to seek out sourcing practices that can be borrowed from one beat to the other to increase gender equity.

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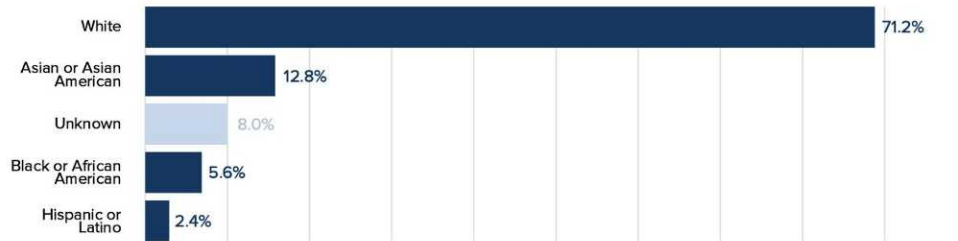
Similarly, there are differences in sourcing between two programs that feature community members, Check, Please! and Perspectives. Both platforms are selective and offer a platform for community

members to take part in KQED content. Yet, Check, Please! is much more racially diverse than Perspectives (they are about the same when it comes to gender, both close to a 50/50 split between men and women). The difference is most acute when it comes to Black sources and Hispanic/Latinx sources.

Race and Ethnicity: **Check, Please!**



Race and Ethnicity: **Perspectives**



While there are dozens of other possible combinations of shows and content areas to analyze a clear trend emerges through this analysis: when it comes to sources, content that allows for more deliberation (such as podcasts and feature reporting) tends to have

more gender balance and be more racially diverse. There are likely structural barriers to overcome, but cross learning is still possible and could be an excellent starting point for increasing diversity overall.

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# Appendix: Methodology

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The audit includes 1,635 records from 16 KQED programs, including radio, television, podcasts, and web content. Not every record is a unique source, so individual sources (such as Governor Gavin Newsom) can have multiple records due to appearances on different programs and on different dates. We have included enough records to mitigate any potential oversampling from repeat sources.

The records were a randomized sample drawn from one calendar year's worth of content (August 1, 2019 to July 31, 2020). Wherever possible, we created composite samples from each of the following quarters:

- Quarter 1: August-October, 2019
- Quarter 2: November 2019-January 2020
- Quarter 3: February-April 2020
- Quarter 4: May-July 2020

Newscast data includes only the first quarter. Each program had sample size designed to give a representative sample of 90% confidence and a 5% margin of error, based on an estimate of how many sources appear in our time frame. Because KQED did not have exportable records of content, the record collection was necessarily manual and based on our own research, there is likely some additional error in the findings. As a result of this sampling method, some programs have more records included than others. We conducted a quality check for 10% of records for each program.

We recorded five measures of diversity: gender, race/ethnicity, age group, geographic location, and profession. The record collection was manual and based on our own research. This method includes two limitations. First, there is potential for misclassification of gender and racial/ethnic identity because the sources are not self-identifying. To classify gender, we relied on gender expression and pronouns, so we might have undercounted sources who would self-identify as nonbinary or a gender other than "man" or "woman."

The second limitation is that there are varying degrees of "unknowns" in the results, which is how we resolved ambiguity about race/ethnicity. We used the "unknown" category when we couldn't make confident judgments based on our research. From an analytical perspective, having "unknowns" in the results is preferable to guessing.