Community engagement

Impact Report—May 2023

BIPOC Minnesotans as a share of population and sources, by area of the state

Minneapolis/St. Paul — 41% / 46%
Metro suburbs (7-county metro) — 27% / 27%
Greater Minnesota — 17% / 14%

Source: IPUMS NHGIS. Graph by David H. Montgomery | MPR News
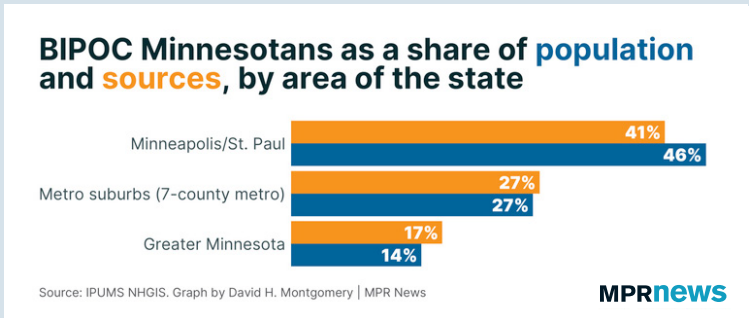
MPRnews

How MPR News is striving to reflect the voices of all Minnesotans

Donor support powers Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) and American Public Media's (APM) public service mission, creating the future of public media by amplifying voices to inform, include and inspire. MPR and MPR News have long strived to reflect the voices of all Minnesotans. Over the past few years, we have attempted to hold ourselves more accountable to this goal by keeping track of the types of people you hear in our stories as "sources"—the experts, community leaders and even regular, everyday Minnesotans whose voices are included in our reporting. Your generosity encourages the development of innovative content and enables MPR to find ways to serve broader and more diverse audiences and also amplify broader and more diverse voices.

In February 2021, MPR News implemented a formal source diversity tracking system, the Diversity Tracker Project, to collect and examine the newsroom's source data. Source diversity tracking is a means of holding ourselves accountable to representing the diversity of the community in our news coverage. This system monitored data including race/ethnicity, age, pronouns, place of residence and source role on sources who were interviewed or otherwise featured in digital and broadcast stories or news shows.

The purpose of this system was to develop a data set that would help the newsroom self-reflect and ascertain equity in news coverage. The project was launched by deputy managing editor Michael Olson and former data reporter David Montgomery.

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Source tracking is essential work done by reputable news organizations. It helps everyone involved in the editorial process check individual and collective biases. Representations matters. Just as we confirm our facts, we monitor what communities and demographics appear in the stories we cover. Are we reflecting the voices of the communities we serve? Tracking gives us important information to answer that question."

– Michael Olson, MPR News Deputy Managing Editor

IMPACT:

The APM Research Lab, at the invitation of MPR News leaders, examined the source data collected from February 2021 through April 2022 to provide the newsroom with a year-in-review report of trends and insights into source diversity. The goal of this report was to provide an understanding of who appeared in the newsroom's content and to establish benchmarks against which future newsroom goals could be measured.

Staff tracked metrics that showed how the tracker has increased source diversity. In addition to providing data, the exercise of collecting the data—which was done by reporters and show producers themselves—kept the importance of pursuing source diversity on the forefront of the minds of those crafting MPR's news coverage. Here are some interesting impacts of this project:

- Not only did the report generate a lot of discussion and internal learning, it also became a means for building trust and credibility with the public: Under the leadership of former Managing Editor, Sarah Glover, MPR News publicly published the results, including a detailed report.

- Based in part on the importance of MPR News' source diversity tracking efforts, the MPR | APM Board of Directors designated source diversity tracking as one of the highest-level organization-wide goals for fiscal year 2023 (July 2022–June 2023).

- MPR News developed a specific board-level goal to increase the proportion of expert sources who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) from the 29% in the baseline period by 5 percentage points (34%) during this fiscal year.

- The APM Research Lab is also working with other parts of APMG on their source diversity tracking efforts, including APM Studios, LAist and Marketplace.

Since this report was released, MPR News and The APM Research Lab have started another round of analysis. MPR News continues to track source diversity, and plans to publicly report on the results again in the summer of 2023.

RESULTS:

67% of all sources identified as non-Hispanic white alone, which is less than the **76%** of Minnesotans who identify as non-Hispanic white alone in the state overall.

17.6% of all sources were Black, more than the **6.9%** of the population that identifies as Black in Minnesota overall.

3.2% of all sources were Indigenous, more than the **1.0%** of the population that identifies as Indigenous in Minnesota overall.

4.7% of all sources were Asian, slightly less than the **5.2%** of the population in Minnesota who identify as Asian.

3.8% of all sources were Hispanic, less than the **6.1%** of the population who identifies as Hispanic.