

WPLN (90.3 FM) / WTML / WHRS
2022 3rd Quarterly Report
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Source Diversity Numbers

Reporters ask sources to self-identify their gender, race/ethnicity and other demographic and professional information that's relevant to the story.

In the third quarter of 2022, 463 sources were heard during our newscasts. Our goals for newscasts in 2022 are that at least 50% of sources are female or nonbinary each quarter and at least 40% are people of color. Here is how they broke down demographically.

GENDER IDENTITY

Female: 50% | Male: 49% | Nonbinary: >1% | Unknown/various: 1%

RACIAL IDENTITY

Asian: 2% | Black/African American: 28% | Latino/Hispanic: 3% | Middle Eastern/North African: 2% | Native American/Alaska Native: 0% | White Non-Hispanic: 61% | More than one race: >1% | Unknown: 2%

LOCATION

Davidson County: 63% | Middle Tennessee (outside Nashville): 14% | Tennessee (outside Middle Tennessee): 11% | Outside Tennessee: 11% | Unknown: >1%

Meanwhile, 273 sources appeared on our midday show, *This Is Nashville*. Our goal for the show is that at least 70% of our sources are people of color.

GENDER IDENTITY

Cis Female: 46% | Cis Male: 43% | Non-binary or genderqueer: 2%

RACIAL IDENTITY

Asian: 4.5% (Goal: 8%) | Black/African American: 32% (35%) | Latino/Hispanic: 7.5% (30%) | Middle Eastern/North African: 5% (5%) | Native American/Alaska Native: 1% (1%) | White Non-Hispanic: 48% (30%)

Coverage Narrative

Key topics for the quarter included:

- **Pipeline spill:** WPLN environmental reporter Caroline Eggers broke the story of a pipeline spill in West Tennessee — the second-largest in the state's history. By scouring public records, she discovered that more than 200,000 gallons of crude oil had spilled from a gash in the Mid-Valley Pipeline in Chester County, information that state regulators had not shared with the public. She has been diligently reporting on the clean-up and the aftermath of the spill, including the possibility that it may have impacted local waterways.
- **Abortion:** Tennessee's total ban on abortion went into effect on Aug. 25, and WPLN has been on top of this historic change's ramifications. We've reported on the underground market for abortifacients, highlighted the legal risk that doctors now face for terminating pregnancies to save the life of their patients, and talked to businesses about how they'll be affected from a recruitment and benefits standpoint. We've also looked back at a previously unreported judicial program to help

minors obtain abortions without parental consent and forward to how abortion may be motivating more people to register to vote.

- **Critical explainers:** WPLN is committed to publishing stories that explain complex subjects in a timely manner. Our illustrated, comic-book style explanation of Tennessee’s laws on contraception and abortion (published in the second quarter) was cited at this year’s Online News Association conference as an exemplar of how newsrooms can reach beyond their core audience to deliver much-needed information. In July, we published an explainer of the state’s gun laws that laid out the basics of firearms — starting with the differences between handguns and various rifles — and walked our audience through how each type is regulated. And in late September, we published a series of stories explaining what is and isn’t allowed in Tennessee for minors seeking transgender care.
- **The recovery in Waverly:** The newsroom completed a year of reporting of the flooding in Waverly with reflections from residents on whether they plan to rebuild and coverage of a memorial service on the town square. WPLN’s Damon Mitchell has led this effort. His stories have pointed residents toward resources to help them in the rebuilding, told the stories of families as they recover, and raised awareness locally and nationally about the dangers of flash flooding amid climate change.
- **Curious Nashville:** Our popular, community-driven series was back with three new episodes answering questions about Nashville. Our reporters explained the long history of Kurds in Middle Tennessee, explored the region’s unique pronunciations of place names, looked into the persistent problem of trains stopping at high-traffic road crossings, and found the probable reason that juniper trees can be found in abundance in one unlikely corner of North Nashville.
- **Diversity in the arts:** Nashville is known internationally for country music, a white-dominated genre. But as an organization, we’ve continued to showcase non-white musicians and other artists working in Music City. In July, we published an interview with the actor and singer Shonka Dukureh about her breakout performance in the Elvis Presley biopic. It would be one of her last interviews; two weeks later, she died suddenly. In August, we interviewed Nashville’s Youth Poet Laureate about her debut work of poetry, which focused on her Black ancestry on her maternal side. And in September, we dove deep into the “Cashville” brand, from its origins in the city’s 1990s’ hip hop scene to its present-day meaning among Black Nashvillians.
- **This Is Nashville:** Our daily, hourlong show recently finished up its seventh month on the air. Highlights this quarter include a remembrance of Fisk Jubilee Singers director Paul Kwami; an update on the school featured in our Peabody-winning podcast, *The Promise*; and an episode devoted to birth control availability in Tennessee in the wake of the Dobbs decision.
- **Digital video:** The digital news team has leaned further into video content, creating Reels that are posted to Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Twitter. They range in style from the traditional news video package to stand-up style updates from hosts or reporters to promotional fundraising compilations. The pivot was pushed by the main platform we focus on, Instagram, changing its algorithm to promote video over still images, but was made possible thanks to an extra set of hands to help on digital with our Dow Jones News Fund intern, Jackie Llanos, for the summer.

- **A more seamless system on social:** The ONA conference may have come late in the quarter but instantly had a strong effect on the relationship between the main WPLN and This Is Nashville specific accounts. Both Rachel and Anna were in attendance at the conference and picked up so many skills and tips for better practices from other outlets, particularly other public radio stations who are doing great things on digital. By working closer together in each weekly plan and then crosspromoting each other's content all week, our reach and engagement shot up as the quarter came to a close, and we expect to continue riding that wave into Q4 and the end of the year.
- **Award-winning journalism:** The joint investigation led by WPLN's Merbiah Knight and ProPublica's Ken Armstrong received several more awards, including the Online News Association's Knight Award for Public Service, Sigma Delta Chi Award for Feature Reporting and a Molly Award for investigative journalism. WPLN also received four awards from the Tennessee Association of Broadcasters.
- **Two Fulbright winners:** News director Emily Siner was selected to participate in the Fulbright U.S. School program. She received a three-month grant for teaching and research in Ireland, starting in late August. Meanwhile, WPLN reporter Alexis Marshall was chosen for a weeklong Fulbright scholarship to study German labor markets and how the nation has grappled with the darker aspects of its history through the Berlin Capital Program.

Key Numbers

In total, WPLN News created:

- **378** local stories with sound, including **41** features (3:30 or longer in length) and **34** superspots (1:45 to 2:30 in length).
- **21** national stories and appearances, **23** national newscasts

National features and appearances:

1. [One veteran found respite through growing flowers. Now, he's sharing the benefits with others](#) (Blake Farmer, Here & Now, July 12)
2. [Self-Managed Abortions Gain Attention, but Helpers Risk Legal Trouble](#) (Blake Farmer, KHN/NPR, July 12)
3. [The Judge Who Illegally Jailed Children Is Retiring. The Candidates to Replace Her Have Different Approaches.](#) (Paige Pflieger, ProPublica, July 15)
4. [Lab billing operations add to rural hospital woes, leaving some on life support](#) (Blake Farmer, Marketplace, July 18)
5. [GOP redraws Nashville from 1 Democratic district into 3 Republican-leaning districts](#) (Blaise Gaaney, NPR, July 26)
6. [Music Festivals Embrace Overdose Reversal Drugs, but Fentanyl Testing Kits Remain Taboo](#) (Blake Farmer, KNH/NPR, Aug. 3)
7. [Today in Nashville, 9 Republicans run for a seat redistricted out of Democrats' reach](#) (Blaise Gaaney, npr.org, Aug. 4)
8. [To boost diversity in clinical trials, NIH takes to the road to collect DNA from underrepresented groups](#) (Blake Farmer, Marketplace, Aug. 9)
9. [Black Voters Say New Congressional Maps Water Down Their Influence](#) (Blaise Gaaney, NPR Politics Podcast, Aug. 18)
10. [Some survivors remain traumatized a year after a flood killed 20 in Waverly, Tenn.](#) (Damon Mitchell, NPR, Aug. 18)
11. [Some Rural Hospitals Are in Such Bad Shape, Local Governments Are Practically Giving Them Away](#) (Blake Farmer, KHN/NPR, Aug. 18)
12. [In a flood-ravaged Tennessee town, uncertainty hangs over the recovery](#) (Damon Mitchell, NPR, Aug. 19)
13. [Flooding in Waverly, Tenn., one year later](#) (Damon Mitchell, Here & Now, Aug. 19)
14. [Examining President Biden's student loan forgiveness program](#) (Alexis Marshall, NPR, Aug. 26)
15. [Obstetricians weigh their legal risks under Tennessee's new abortion ban](#) (Blake Farmer, Marketplace, Aug. 29)
16. [His mom and sister were killed by domestic violence. Now, he's trying to help others](#) (Paige Pflieger, NPR, Sept. 4)
17. [Encore: After a decade-long spate of closures, one rural Tennessee hospital reopens](#) (Blake Farmer, KHN/NPR, Sept. 5)
18. [Nashville families are struggling to find housing after being displaced](#) (Ambriehl Crutchfield, NPR, Sept. 7)
19. [Tennessee teens can no longer seek judicial bypass for abortions](#) (Paige Pflieger, NPR, Sept. 9)
20. [Supply chain issues mean hot chicken business in Nashville sometimes has to wing it](#) (Alexis Marshall, Marketplace, Sept. 20)

21. [Monkeypox cases may be down, but it still can cause economic harm to infected employees](#)
(Blake Farmer, Marketplace, Sept. 29)