

WPLN (90.3 FM) / WTML / WHRS
2023 1st Quarter 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 first quarter of 2023, 408 sources were heard during our newscasts. Our goals for newscasts in 2023 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: 44% | Male: 49% | Nonbinary or genderqueer: 4% | Unknown/multiple people: 2%

RACIAL IDENTITY

Asian: >1% | Black/African American: 26% | Latino/Hispanic: 2% | Middle Eastern/North African: 1% | Native American/Alaska Native: >1% | White Non-Hispanic: 65% | More than one race: 1% | Unknown: 4%

LOCATION

Davidson County: 57% | Middle Tennessee (outside Nashville): 13% | Tennessee (outside Middle Tennessee): 17% | Outside Tennessee: 12% | Unknown: >1%

Meanwhile, 262 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. This quarter, roughly 50% of our sources were people of color.

GENDER IDENTITY

Cis female: 47% | Cis male: 46% | Non-binary or genderqueer: 3% | Trans female: 1% | Trans male: 1% | Prefer not to say: 2.4%

RACIAL IDENTITY

Asian: 4% (Goal: 8%) | Black/African American: 40% (35%) | Latino/Hispanic: 4% (20%) | Middle Eastern/North African: 3% (5%) | Native American/Alaska Native: 1% (1%) | White Non-Hispanic: 50% (30%)

Coverage Narrative

Key topics for the quarter included:

- **Alternate Ending:** Led by Metro reporter Ambriehl Crutchfield, *This Is Nashville* aired a one-hour special exploring the impact of displacement on Nashville's Black community, particularly the corridor of North Nashville that was pushed out to make way for Interstate 40. The special was accompanied by two community events meant to extend the conversation on how community is built and lost through public policy.

- ***This Is Nashville:*** Our daily, hourlong show recently celebrated one year on the air on March 1. *TIN* has filled a gap in Nashville’s journalism ecosphere by convening conversations and elevating voices that are often overlooked. The show has also become a conduit for community response to the news. For instance, our Feb. 27 episode on plans to build a new NFL stadium on the East Bank of the Cumberland River included representatives of Mayor John Cooper and the Tennessee Titans — both of whom support the project — and critics on the Metro Council. And when members of our audience told us that lineup didn’t fully capture the range of views, *This Is Nashville* dedicated a second show to the debate centering voices from Nashville’s BIPOC communities. That has ignited more community response to the development plan.
- **Statehouse coverage:** WPLN has demonstrated its commitment to covering Tennessee politics throughout the legislative session that began in January. Key issues debated so far have included restrictions on transgender care and drag show performances, modifications to the state’s ban on abortion and gun legislation. WPLN political reporter Blaise Gainey also broke the story of a dispute between Republican lawmakers and a young Black legislator over proper attire — foreshadowing a later showdown that led to the legislator’s expulsion.
- **Education.** WPLN’s new education reporter Alexis Marshall has spanned Middle Tennessee in the service of covering her beat. In the first quarter, Marshall detailed the maneuvering that has led to a conservative-led takeover of the [Sumner school board](#) and she delivered a scoop by uncovering the State Textbook Commission’s draft [procedures for reviewing book bans](#). She also provided thorough coverage of the debate over [third-grade retention](#), from community meetings to statehouse debates.
- **Drag ban and transgender care.** Restricting transgender care and expressions of gender identity isn’t just a political issue. These proposals — some of which are now law in Tennessee — have had a deep impact on people in Tennessee’s LGBTQ+ community. WPLN’s Marianna Bacallao has highlighted that fact with [stories that describe](#) the real-world impact of anti-trans legislation.
- **Enterprising environmental reporting.** WPLN environmental reporter Caroline Eggers has produce a great range of stories, from delightful stories about [aquatic critters](#) and gardening using [native plants](#) to deeply technical ones about [dangerous chemicals](#), [air pollution](#) and [climate change](#).
- **Covenant School shooting:** WPLN closed out the quarter by leading NPR’s coverage of the shooting at Covenant School on March 27, filing four two-way interviews by the end of the month, as well as five newscast spots. Coverage has continued into the second quarter.

Key Numbers

In total, WPLN News created:

- 324 local stories with sound, including 25 features (3:30 or longer in length) and 36 superspots (1:45 to 2:30 in length).
- 16 national features, superspots and appearances, 21 national newscast spots

National features and appearances:

1. [Once pandemic emergency protections end, millions likely to lose Medicaid](#) (Blake Farmer, Marketplace, Jan. 2)
2. [Hospitals explore virtual nursing to cover staffing shortages and fight burnout](#) (Blake Farmer, Marketplace, Jan. 11)
3. [Museum Programs Embrace Patrons With Dementia](#) (Blake Farmer, Here & Now, Jan. 18)
4. [Adeem the Artist refines their ability to tell country tales from where they stand](#) (Jewly Hight, Jan. 24)
5. [After Damar Hamlin's cardiac arrest, there's new urgency to get AEDs in schools](#) (Blake Farmer, Morning Edition, Jan. 25)
6. [Private equity investment is flooding into addiction treatment. Is that a good thing?](#) (Blake Farmer, Marketplace, Jan. 25)
7. [Why Tennessee is turning down millions of federal dollars for HIV prevention](#) (Blake Farmer, Marketplace, Feb. 3)
8. [TSU program is designed to get more HBCU students involved in the outdoors](#) (Alexis Marshall, NPR, Feb. 9)
9. [Why Tennessee is rejecting millions to fight HIV](#) (Blake Farmer, Here & Now, Feb. 15)
10. [Fisk University is the first HBCU to have a women's intercollegiate gymnastics team](#) (Ambriehl Crutchfield, NPR, Feb. 17)
11. [Charley Crockett: Tiny Desk Concert](#) (Jewly Hight, NPR Music, Feb. 24)
12. [Despite legislation against them, surprise medical bills can still ... surprise](#) (Blake Farmer, Marketplace, Feb. 28)
13. [Tennessee will soon ban drag performances, becoming the first state to do so](#) (Marianna Bacallao, NPR, March 4)
14. [Tennessee musicians grapple with potential impact of new anti-drag legislation](#) (Jewly Hight, NPR, March 21)
15. [What we know about the Nashville school shooting](#) (Alexis Marshall, NPR, March 27)
16. [What we know about the deadly Nashville school shooting](#) (Alexis Marshall, Here & Now, March 28)