

**HIGHER ACCESSIBILITY VERSION**

# **Progress During an Atypical Year**

**Hiring Bias and  
Wage Gaps  
in Theatre in 2021**



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# Introduction

## From the Diversity and Inclusion Strategist

Throughout 2021, the theatre industry was striving to get back to a sense of normalcy amidst an ongoing global pandemic. COVID-19 claimed the lives of almost 400,000 people in the United States in 2021, surpassing the number of deaths in 2020. This is not only a staggering number, but a wake-up call to each of us – that for us to heal, we need to protect one another. That looked like wearing masks, social distancing and washing our hands. But it also looked like redressing the accommodations people needed regarding disability access, an increased level of care for older generations and building communities of compassion despite an era of fear. The pandemic has pushed us to remember that behind the statistics are real people whose families, health and livelihoods were deeply impacted. It has pushed us, at Equity, to continue taking a human-centered approach to the work we do and the hiring practices we present here. Behind each data point in this report is a real person – one who has had to navigate a year of continued uncertainty. The goal of this report is to both call in and hold the industry accountable for the biases it has in hiring practices, but also to begin a conversation structured by rebuilding trust, taking responsibility and learning to do better together.

I'm not going to lie to you – looking at the 2021 contract statistics may be a bit disheartening, particularly when compared to other statistics like those found in the U.S. Census. This is in part because 2021 saw 87,841 fewer contracts for new work opportunities than 2019, a year that was more representative of the number of contracts that

Equity members typically work. There were fewer opportunities across the board. However, the numbers you will see in this report show steps towards progress.

During the pandemic, there was heightened attention to activism and progress in the industry (#WeSeeYouWhiteAmericanTheater, for example), and we can see some of that change in hiring practices between 2020 and 2021. For example, 28.6% of new contracts went to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) people in 2021 compared to 24.8% in 2020.

While we want to be cautious not to over-praise incremental progress and to be cognizant of 2021 as such an anomalous year, we also need to recognize that we are striving for progress over perfection. It is the progress *and* the ability to be critical of that progress that leaves space for disruption.

Disruption is essential to change and growth. The theatre industry, by itself, can't end systemic oppression in the world, but we can control how we disrupt oppressive narratives in our industry and control the impact we have through the worlds we create. As the largest union of stage actors and stage managers in the U.S., with partnerships worldwide, it is our responsibility to engage in conversations like non-binary and transgender representation on stages, combatting age discrimination, questioning inequitable hiring practices and living into the promises we (both Equity and its employers) made over the last few years. We can do better.

The question for me has become, what is "normal," and should that be our goal as we rebuild? 2021 has brought light to the many successes, missteps and new hopes for this industry. We at Equity are excited to be collaborators in navigating a new normal. I leave you with this analogy:

When we look at a flower, we don't define it by its soil.

It may have a harder time coming into its own when the soil isn't balanced, but the flower is not its soil.



It is the sun that shines on it, the water used to nourish it and the care that a gardener takes to cultivate it.

We all come from different soil and more likely than not, soil that we didn't choose and had to learn to navigate. But there are so many factors that go into how we grow and interact with one another. I hope we can give each other and ourselves grace to know that it's never too late to let the sun in, nourish and grow together. That is the new normal that I strive for and that I hope we can work towards as an industry.

With care,

DANEE CONLEY

Diversity & Inclusion Strategist,  
Actors' Equity Association

# Introduction

## From the President

When we published our report on hiring bias in 2017, it was a historic moment for Actors' Equity Association. For the first time, we did an in-depth, empirical analysis of the hiring practices of Equity employers through a demographic lens. We looked at who is hired by these theaters, and for which job functions. And we began to identify the specific barriers to employment confronting various subsets of Equity members, so we could better address them.

Since then, we've continued to examine demographic obstacles, both individually and intersectionally. In order to make progress, we know it's critical to recognize how identity interacts with access. To that end, this year's report takes a closer look at a few specific intersectional categories: Age/Race, Age/Gender and Race/Gender.

Just as we began to hit our stride with producing these reports in a way that would enable us to better understand trends over time, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down our industry. Last year's report – an analysis of hiring practices in 2020 – simply didn't. When we published our report on hiring bias in 2017, it was a historic moment for Actors' Equity Association. For the first time, we did an in-depth, empirical analysis of the hiring practices of Equity employers through a demographic lens. We looked at who is hired by these theaters, and for which job functions. And we began to identify the specific barriers to employment confronting various subsets of Equity members, so we could better address them.

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year's report takes a closer look at a few specific intersectional categories: Age/Race, Age/Gender and Race/Gender.

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Even atypical years can be both illuminating and instructive. Considering our industry's public statements, EDI trainings, leadership changes and beyond, the 2021 numbers aren't as encouraging as we had hoped. But we are nevertheless still seeing progress compared to previous years, and there are both broad and specific action steps we can take to further develop a professional theatrical community that truly works for everyone. Transforming our industry is a group project, and we all have to be in this together.

It's my hope that looking at the data presented here will inspire all of us working for change to consider how we can level the playing field within our own spheres of influence. And in the process, let us hold ourselves and one another accountable, with the goal of moving ever closer to manifesting the values and priorities we share.

In solidarity,  
KATE SHINDLE  
President,  
Actors' Equity Association

# How to Use This Report

Our 2021 Hiring Bias and Wage Gaps Report is part of Equity's vision to both hold our industry accountable and collaboratively move towards a path of inclusion, justice and belonging. The report ties directly into questions of job access and the barriers that many actors and stage managers face in seeking employment opportunities. Equity's mission is to foster the art of live theatre as an essential part of society and advance the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits including healthcare and pension plans. Consequently, biases in hiring point to the changes that need to be made in our industry and in our organization to better represent our members of the workforce.

The data in this report analyzes the distribution of contracts and the average weekly salaries among six distinct and intersecting protected identity categories: race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability and veteran status. This report also points to the intersectional nature of peoples' identities and the hiring barriers they experience.

The section titled Intersectional Representation looks at contract distribution across three sets of intersecting markers: (1) age and race, (2) age and gender and (3) race and gender. These intersectionalities are not the only ones directly impacting our membership, but they are the start of a conversation around the nuanced ways that members experience potential employment barriers. Equity is aware that no one person is ever defined by only one identity characteristic, and it is our whole selves that enter an audition, a rehearsal space and the stage

during a performance. By examining how these intersections impact hiring, we hope to delve deeper into the distinct problems that are facing our members as they develop a career with the knowledge that getting a contract means not only pay, but also access to health care, housing stability and food security, among other support systems.

While this report doesn't go into deep analysis on how we can take action (see the Looking Ahead section of the report for more information), it does provide a look at the statistics that can guide our progress in this industry. This is the first step in Equity's work towards knowing better so we can do better.

# Methodology

We examine demographic data through the lenses of hiring and wages for stage managers and actors employed on Equity contracts for new work opportunities between January 1 and December 31, 2021. Because this was not a typical year in terms of how many contracts were available, there is little comparative data. However, the older data used throughout can be found in the Diversity Reports from 2013–2015, 2016–2019 and 2020.

The six demographic identity points (race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability and veteran status) as well as the intersectional data (race and age, gender and age, race and gender) were gathered from Equity members' self-identification to the union, which is both confidential and voluntary. The earnings information comes from contracts filed with Equity; the earnings are based on weekly averages.

This data is based on a production's opening night company and does not include replacements or salary increases during the run. If someone was hired for a job in a previous year and it continued into 2021, it was included in that previous year's report. Replacement contracts for shows that opened in a previous year are reflected as well by the initial work opportunity in that year's report. Only productions that opened during the 2021 calendar year were considered for this report to focus on employment opportunities and potential hiring biases in initial casting decisions.

In this report, a **contract** refers to an individual job rather than an individual person. Using this definition, there were 6,116 contracts issued in 2021. For example, as seen later in the section on gender, 502 contracts went to stage managers who are women. This could mean any number of things: that 502 contracts went to the same woman, that 502

women each received a single contract or any iteration of the above.

Five job categories are explored in this report: principal actor in a play, principal actor in a musical, chorus actor, stage manager and assistant stage manager. Stage management contracts are not delineated by whether the production was a “play” or “musical” because members have told us that SM’s and ASM’s seek employment more fluidly between plays and musicals than the majority of their acting colleagues. Similarly, while chorus contracts do exist in some plays, the vast majority of chorus work is offered in musicals.

There are two categories that represent a lack of information: “Prefer Not to Say” and “Not Provided.” Each has a different meaning. “Prefer Not to Say” indicates that the member filling out their demographic information actively informed us that they prefer not to provide that information to their union. This could be caused by any number of factors, from not feeling safe to do so or fear of job bias to being on a journey to understanding one’s own identities or how to identify. “Not Provided” represents members who did not include any response to the demographic group being discussed.

Comparative data is sourced from the preliminary 2021 U.S. Census<sup>1</sup> in addition to non-governmental sources. This is because the U.S. Census does not track data for or engage with communities in certain demographics. For example, there is no U.S. Census data for non-binary or transgender people. Citations indicate the sources used throughout the report.

Averages are calculated as arithmetic means, rounded to the nearest tenth.

No demographic information for a specific person is ever shared outside of Equity unless given express permission from the member in question.

If you have any questions about methodology or need help reading or understanding any part of this report, please contact us at [diversity@actorsequity.org](mailto:diversity@actorsequity.org).

<sup>1</sup> [United States - Census Bureau Tables](#)

# Methodology

## Definitions in this section

### Global

Relating to or involving the entire world, including all nations, tribes, communities and cultures.

### United States

Equity organizes actors and stage managers working on land officially occupied by the United States, including non-continental, incorporated and unincorporated locations. While Equity's operations primarily take place in geographical locations occupied by the United States, we recognize these locations foremostly as land ancestrally stewarded by Indigenous and Native American Peoples.

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

An umbrella term used to describe a variety of approaches to ensuring all members of a community (such as a workplace or union) have full access to participation in all aspects of the community, from bathrooms to board rooms. Diversity ensures a full range of identities are represented at all levels of the community. Equity accounts for differences in community members' needs and proactively accommodates all members of the community to ensure equal access to facilities, opportunities and resources. Inclusion intentionally welcomes and accommodates all community members to foster an equal sense of belonging.



# **A Look at the Numbers**

# Race/ Ethnicity

Racial representation is a large conversation taking place in the theatre industry.

Between #BlackLivesMatter campaigns and Black Theater United's "New Deal" Campaign,<sup>2</sup> race has come to the forefront of the industry's cultural imaginary. Race-based discrimination runs rampant from assuming a default type (i.e., who is considered for roles that are traditionally cast as White, young, able-bodied, etc.) to reassessing what diversity-conscious casting can be.

It is important to recognize that although more diverse casts tend to gain more media representation, producers primarily hired White or European American members in the 2021 season, much like the 2016-2019 and 2020 seasons.

Of the 6,116 contracts across all job categories in 2021, 28.6% went to BIPOC people while 52.4% went to White and/or European Americans, and 3.4% went to individuals who preferred not to provide their race or ethnicity.

In 2020, of the 5,818 contracts, 24.8% went to BIPOC people, 54.47% went to White and/or European Americans, and 4.6% went to individuals who preferred not to provide their race and/or ethnicity.

<sup>2</sup> [A New Deal For Broadway - Black Theatre United](#)

**Table 1:** Contracts that went to BIPOC, White/European American, and workers that preferred not to provide their race or ethnicity, compared to the total number of contracts for the 2016-2019, 2020, and 2021 seasons.

	TOTAL Contracts	BIPOC	White/European American	Prefer Not to Say
2016 - 2019	93,957	20,200 (21.3%)	60,087 (64%)	4,891 (5.2%)
2020	5,818	1,441 (24.8%)	3,167 (54.4%)	269 (4.6%)
2021	6,116	1,750 (28.6%)	3,202 (52.3%)	209 (3.6%)

There was an increase in the percentage of contracts that went to BIPOC members between 2016-2019 to 2020 by 3.3% and then another increase between 2020 to 2021 by 3.8%. These numbers tell us a few things: (1) that there has been a steady, though small, increase in the job opportunities made available to BIPOC members and (2) that there is a lot of work that needs to be done for the disbursement of contracts to be equitable across racial and ethnic groups.

When looking at the salary distribution across racial and ethnic differences, as always, it is important to see what lies beneath the numbers. While the numerical data shows that BIPOC workers made more on average than White or European American workers in 2021 (by 9.2%), this does not paint the full picture. The average salaries calculated here cover a wide range of contract types, each with their own minimum salaries. As seen in the contract disbursement data, BIPOC workers not only receive less contracts than White or European American workers, but the types of contracts that are made available to BIPOC workers is significantly smaller. For example, BIPOC workers are employed with less frequency on more entry-point jobs in the industry such as Small Professional Theater, lower-tiered LORT, and chorus contracts.

Let's think through a quick metaphorical example:

A show hires four lead actors and six chorus members. Two of the leads are BIPOC and the other eight members of the cast are White/European American. Each lead makes \$1500, and each chorus member makes \$750. These numbers would mean that, on average the BIPOC workers made \$1500 while the White/European American workers made \$937.50 on average. This does not mean that BIPOC workers made more than White/European American workers (all the leads made the same amount), but that the numbers are skewed by the number of job opportunities.

Therefore, the numbers shared on wage gaps cannot and should not be taken at face value nor can they be used to imply that BIPOC members have greater wage opportunities than their White/European American co-workers. When we look at specific contracts, we are not seeing the same trends that we see in the averages shared below. While we cannot suppose what exactly is causing these discrepancies, we can conclude that White and European American workers were more likely to find a wider breadth of jobs in 2021 than their BIPOC co-workers and, as a result, have access to more wage opportunity.

For data both nationally and by job category, please see the following graphs and their descriptions.

**Table 2:** Average weekly salaries for BIPOC and White/European American workers compared to the total average for the 2016-2019 seasons across job categories.

2016 - 2019	TOTAL Average <sup>3</sup>	BIPOC	White/European American
Principal (play)	\$682.79	\$664.82	\$665.81
Principal (musical)	\$884.62	\$1,002.55	\$865.20
Chorus	\$1112.00	\$1,073.34	\$1,074.99
Stage Manager	\$862.65	\$882.97	\$882.04
Assistant Stage Manager	\$954.04	\$968.38	\$989.70
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$899. 22	\$918. 41	\$895. 55

<sup>3</sup> All "Total Average" salaries include those that went to people who didn't provide any demographic information.

**Table 3:** Average weekly salaries for BIPOC and White/European American workers compared to the total average for the 2020 season across job categories.

2020	TOTAL Average	BIPOC	White/European American
Principal (play)	\$761.16	\$671.44	\$819.46
Principal (musical)	\$1,005.29	\$1,101.15	\$947.92
Chorus	\$1,270.60	\$1,365.23	\$1,273.76
Stage Manager	\$912.61	\$808.67	\$971.87
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,049.93	\$940.67	\$1,115.80
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$999.92	\$977.43	\$1,025.76

**Table 4:** Average weekly salaries for BIPOC and White/European American workers compared to the total average for the 2021 season across job categories.

2021	TOTAL Average	BIPOC	White/European American
Principal (play)	\$835.74	\$920.01	\$763.34
Principal (musical)	\$1,083.03	\$1,154.05	\$1,065.79
Chorus	\$1,260.24	\$1,308.44	\$1,245.19
Stage Manager	\$1,023.36	\$1,149.48	\$1,031.54
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,158.00	\$1,288.84	\$1,181.12
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$1,072.07	\$1,164.16	\$1,057.40

# Race/ Ethnicity

## Definitions in this section

### **BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)**

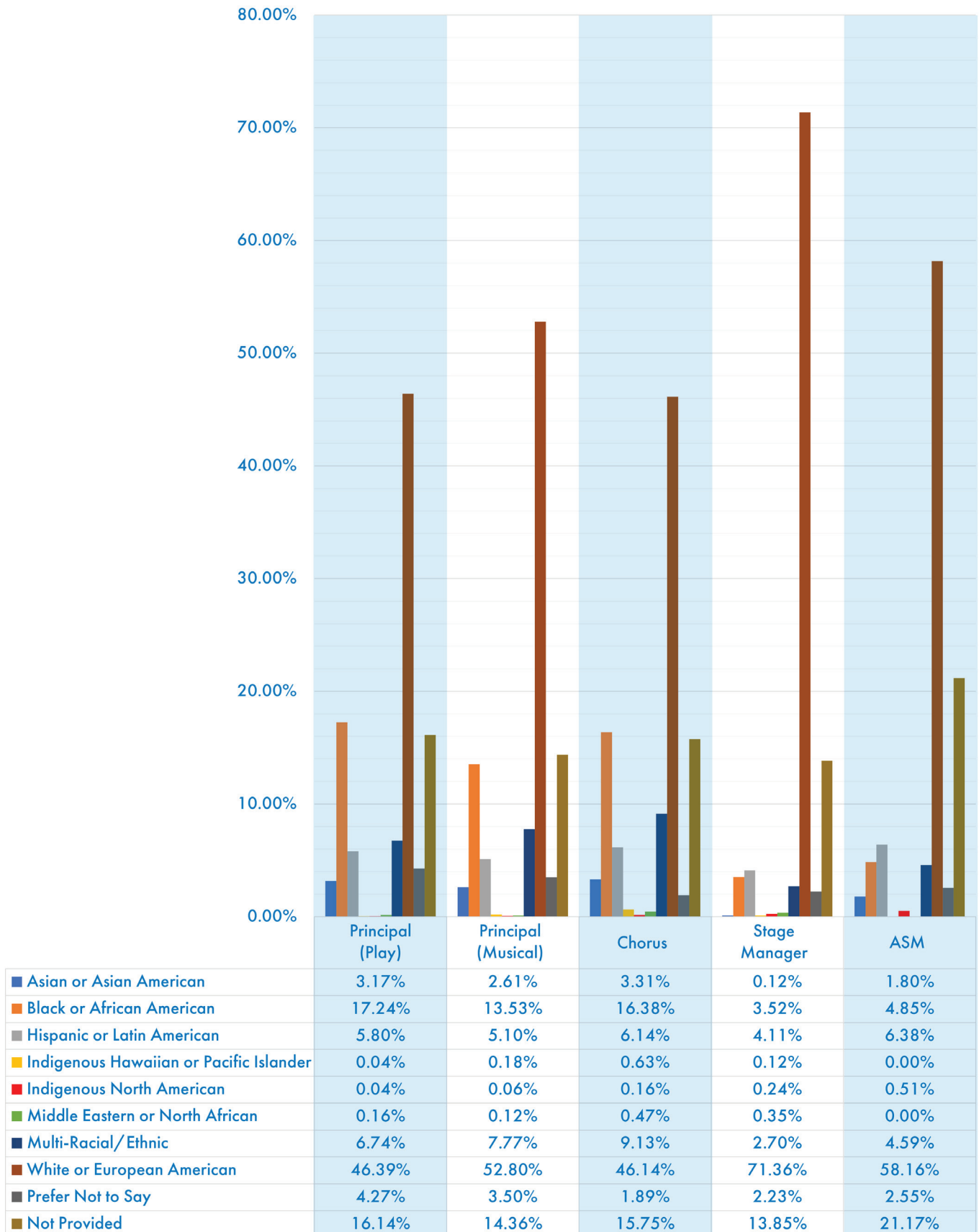
An acronym geographically and culturally specific to the United States. The creation and use of BIPOC is meant to highlight the specific historical and ongoing oppression of Black and Indigenous people while also being inclusive of people of all races marginalized by U.S. systems of oppression. While Equity utilizes this acronym as an inclusive term, we recognize that it is currently a contested term being discussed in various communities including, but not limited to, people who are Black and African American, Indigenous and Native American, Hispanic and Latine, Asian and Asian American and Middle Eastern or North African.

### **People of Color**

People who are not White or who are multi-racial/multi-ethnic including both White/European and Non-White/European ancestry, and typically not of direct/solely European ancestry. Using “people of color” decenters whiteness in discussions of race, racial inequality and/or systems of racism. It is critical to note that this is meant to be used as an all-inclusive term and does not imply that people of color are monolithic in experiences of oppression, community needs for social justice or cultural practices and values.

# Contract percentage by race

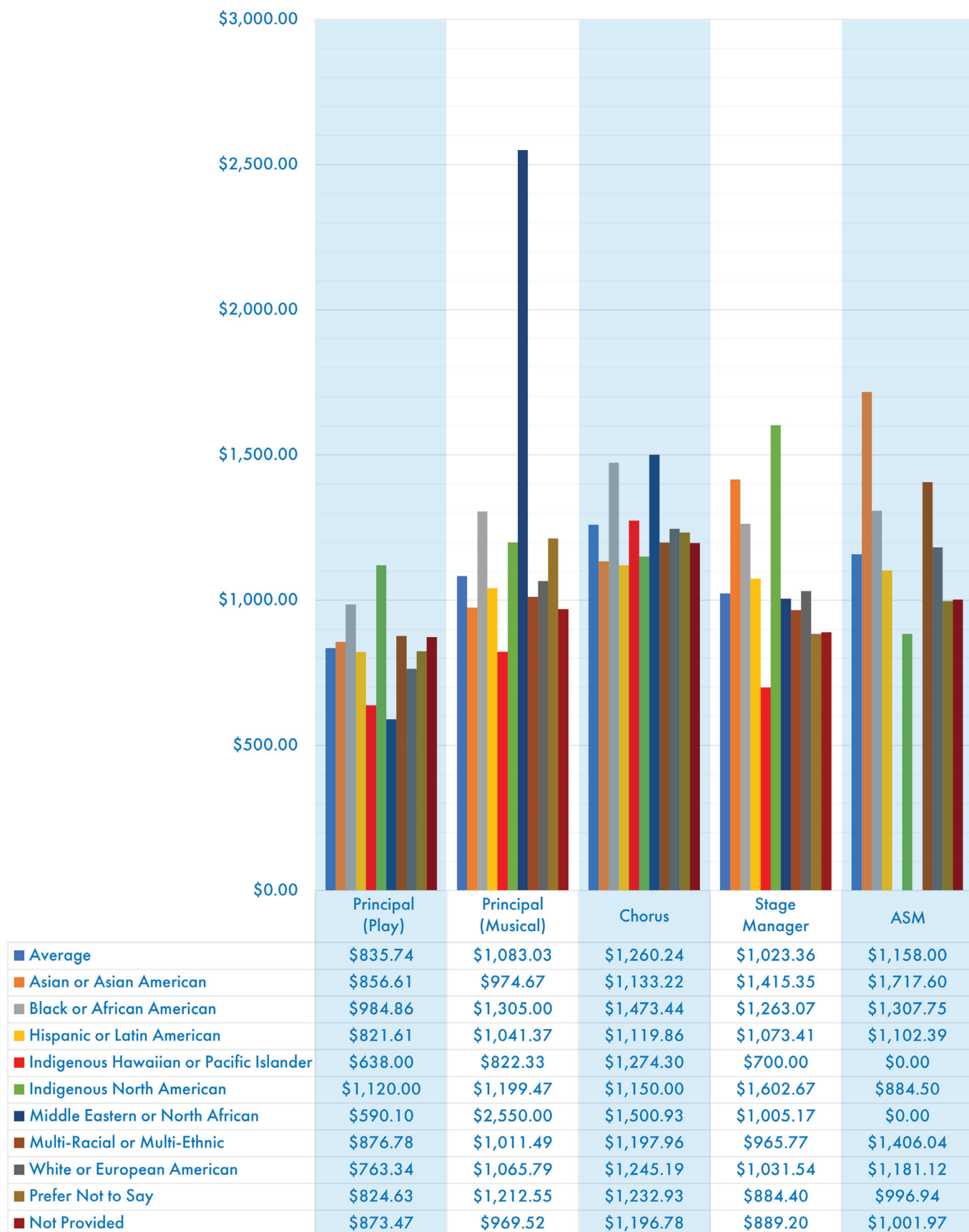
Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.





# Average contract salary by race

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



# Gender

As the following graphs show, there are clear disparities among genders and their access to job opportunities. At the same time, we must recognize that gender is a spectrum and, while only three distinct gender categories were offered in the 2021 version of the self-identification questionnaire, any individual's answer may change depending on one's place in their self-discovery journey. Additionally, what someone identified as when they filled out the form may not be the same as when the data was analyzed for this report.

Despite these nuances, there is a dissimilarity between the number of contracts offered to men and those offered to women and non-binary or third gender workers. For example, in 2021, 46.9% of total contracts went to men while 44.4% went to women and 1.0% went to non-binary or third gender workers. Also, transgender members received 0.6% of all contracts in 2021.

This tells us a few things:

(1) women not only receive fewer contracts (44.4%) than men (46.9%), but also at a rate lower than the percentage of the United States population (50.5%) that are women; and

(2) non-binary and third gender people are receiving more contract representation (1.0%) than the percentage of non-binary or third gender individuals in the United States (0.4%),<sup>4</sup> but that number is still statistically insignificant when compared to the contracts given to other genders.

Looking at change over time, there has been little change between the percentage of contracts that went to men and women, though the number of contracts that have gone to non-binary and third gender workers has

<sup>4</sup> [Nonbinary LGBTQ Adults in the United States - Williams Institute \(ucla.edu\)](https://williamsinstitute.lga.ucla.edu/press-releases/nonbinary-lgbtq-adults-in-the-united-states/)

been on the rise over the last 5 years.

It is important to note that, for non-binary and third gender workers, though there has been an increase in the percentage of contracts they received over the last five years, their representation on stages is vastly underwhelming. Similarly, non-binary and third gender identities have not been represented in the U.S. Census, so it would be remiss of us to make an exact comparison of the two datasets.

Similar to our deeper dive into wage gaps for workers of various races and ethnicities, we must also look further than just the raw data on wage gaps across gender differences.

Again, because a disproportionate number of contracts with lower minimum salaries went to men in all actor job categories in comparison to women, the numbers mask the disproportionately higher number of job opportunities given to men.

This is reflected in the 1.3% difference between the two. The inherent systemic gender bias in the distribution of roles is built into the industry, meaning that an average salary with a smaller database (the lower number of contracts for women) will be skewed to the higher contract salaries.

In comparison to both men and women, non-binary and third gender workers were paid significantly less across the board in 2021. They were paid only 81.4% of what a man made across all contracts regardless of job category. While we cannot assume what is causing these trends, it does point to the potential presence of discrimination, biases and unsafe or unwelcoming work environments impacting these numbers.

**Table 5:** Contracts that went to women, men, non-binary or third gender workers, and workers that preferred not to provide their gender, compared to the total number of contracts for the 2016-2019, 2020, and 2021 seasons.

	<b>TOTAL Contracts<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Non-Binary and Third Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Prefer Not to Say</b>
<b>2016 - 2019</b>	<b>93,957</b>	<b>42,199</b> (45%)	<b>224</b> (2.0%)	<b>48,314</b> (51.4%)	<b>70</b> (0.07%)
<b>2020</b>	<b>5,818</b>	<b>2,698</b> (46.4%)	<b>53</b> (0.9%)	<b>2,716</b> (46.7%)	<b>11</b> (0.2%)
<b>2021</b>	<b>6,116</b>	<b>2,716</b> (44.4%)	<b>59</b> (0.9%)	<b>2,867</b> (46.9%)	<b>10</b> (0.2%)

**Table 6:** Average weekly salaries for women, men, and non-binary or third gender workers compared to the total average for the 2016-2019 seasons across job categories.

<b>2016 - 2019</b>	<b>TOTAL Average</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Non-Binary and Third Gender</b>
<b>Principal (play)</b>	<b>\$682.79</b>	<b>\$671.45</b>	<b>\$691.39</b>	<b>\$598.75</b>
<b>Principal (musical)</b>	<b>\$884.62</b>	<b>\$892.37</b>	<b>\$885.19</b>	<b>\$703.54</b>
<b>Chorus</b>	<b>\$1,112.00</b>	<b>\$1,141.84</b>	<b>\$1,103.24</b>	<b>\$1,009.21</b>
<b>Stage Manager</b>	<b>\$862.65</b>	<b>\$840.24</b>	<b>\$952.53</b>	<b>\$700.31</b>
<b>Assistant Stage Manager</b>	<b>\$954.04</b>	<b>\$963.89</b>	<b>\$1,002.82</b>	<b>\$961.59</b>
<b>ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES</b>	<b>\$899.22</b>	<b>\$901.96</b>	<b>\$927.03</b>	<b>\$794.68</b>

<sup>5</sup> "Total Contracts" and "Total Average" include the data from contracts where identities were "Not Provided."

**Table 7:** Average weekly salary for women, men, and non-binary or third gender workers compared to the total average for the 2020 season across job categories.

2020	TOTAL Average	Women	Men	Non-Binary and Third Gender
Principal (play)	\$761.16	\$722.18	\$799.27	\$697.07
Principal (musical)	\$1,005.29	\$1,018.20	\$1,027.49	\$572.75
Chorus	\$1,270.60	\$1,253.04	\$1,274.34	\$2,500.20
Stage Manager	\$912.61	\$882.42	\$1,083.46	\$684.61
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,049.93	\$1,141.71	\$947.13	\$1,309.51
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$999.92	\$1,003.51	\$1,026.34	\$1,152.83

**Table 8:** Average weekly salary for women, men, and non-binary or third gender workers compared to the total average for the 2021 season across job categories.

2021	TOTAL Average	Women	Men	Non-Binary and Third Gender
Principal (play)	\$835.74	\$810.92	\$845.68	\$760.80
Principal (musical)	\$1,083.03	\$1,146.57	\$1,049.25	\$886.97
Chorus	\$1,260.24	\$1,267.95	\$1,255.67	\$1,044.93
Stage Manager	\$1,023.36	\$1,006.06	\$1,156.97	\$804.55
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,158.00	\$1,232.51	\$1,161.64	\$756.00
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$1,072.07	\$1,092.80	\$1,093.84	\$850.65

Transgender workers received only 0.6% of the total contracts in 2021 and earned less weekly than their cisgender counterpart by 8.0% and less than the overall contract salary average by 12.6%. The data tells us a few things: (1) that transgender workers are both receiving less contracts and making less on average, but also that (2) a large percentage of the workers who received a contract did not provide their transgender status. We cannot make definitive claims about what is causing either point, but the lack of data (those that didn't provide the information – which can be due to so many reasons) does skew the overall averages.

For data both nationally and by job category, please see the following graphs and their descriptions.

**Table 9:** Number of contracts, percentage of total contracts, and average weekly salary across job categories in 2021 for transgender workers.

2021	Number of Contracts	% of Contracts	Average Salary
<b>Principal (play)</b>	<b>2,552</b>		<b>\$835.74</b>
Transgender	12	0.47%	\$746.02
Cisgender	568	22.26%	\$804.53
Prefer not to say	8	0.31%	\$791.40
Not provided	1,964	76.96%	\$845.49
<b>Principal (musical)</b>	<b>1,685</b>		<b>\$1,083.03</b>
Transgender	7	0.42%	\$1,400.57
Cisgender	380	22.55%	\$906.23
Prefer not to say	1	0.06%	\$651.00
Not provided	1,297	76.97%	\$1,133.45
<b>Chorus</b>	<b>635</b>		<b>\$1,260.24</b>
Transgender	1	0.16%	\$1,165.58
Cisgender	144	22.68%	\$1,141.04
Prefer not to say	3	0.47%	\$1,057.73
Not provided	487	76.69%	\$1,296.93
<b>Stage Manager</b>	<b>852</b>		<b>\$1,023.36</b>
Transgender	8	0.94%	\$773.35
Cisgender	412	48.36%	\$1,005.28
Prefer not to say	5	0.59%	\$933.63
Not provided	427	50.12%	\$1,046.54
<b>Assistant Stage Manager</b>	<b>392</b>		<b>\$1,158.00</b>
Transgender	6	1.53%	\$577.33
Cisgender	185	47.19%	\$1,205.51
Prefer not to say	1	0.26%	\$1,360.00
Not provided	200	51.02%	\$1,130.46

Data on contracts that went to transgender workers is included here with a few things to keep in mind:

- Someone who is transgender and identifies as a man or woman are that identity. For example, a transgender woman is a woman and may already be counted into the section of data labeled “woman” – that is up to each person when they self-identify.
- Transgender actors and stage managers face different barriers to job security than that of their cisgendered counterparts.
- Transgender is typically included in the acronym LGBTQ+, which groups together marginalized sexual orientations and gender identities. However, a transgender person may identify as having any sexual orientation. Because transgender status is an aspect of gender, we include data regarding our transgender workers in this section rather than in the following section on sexual orientation.



# Gender

## Definitions in this section

### Gender vs. Gender Identity vs. Gender Expression

**Gender** is a concept, not a physical characteristic, which gains meaning through a shared understanding within specific cultures and communities over time. Different cultures and languages often have different understandings and definitions of gender. **Gender identity** refers to an individual's own internal sense of one's gender, the aspects of gender which are authentic to who they are. **Gender expression** is the way in which a person visually, verbally or otherwise outwardly presents their gender (pronouns, name, clothing choices, hair style and more).

### Non-Binary

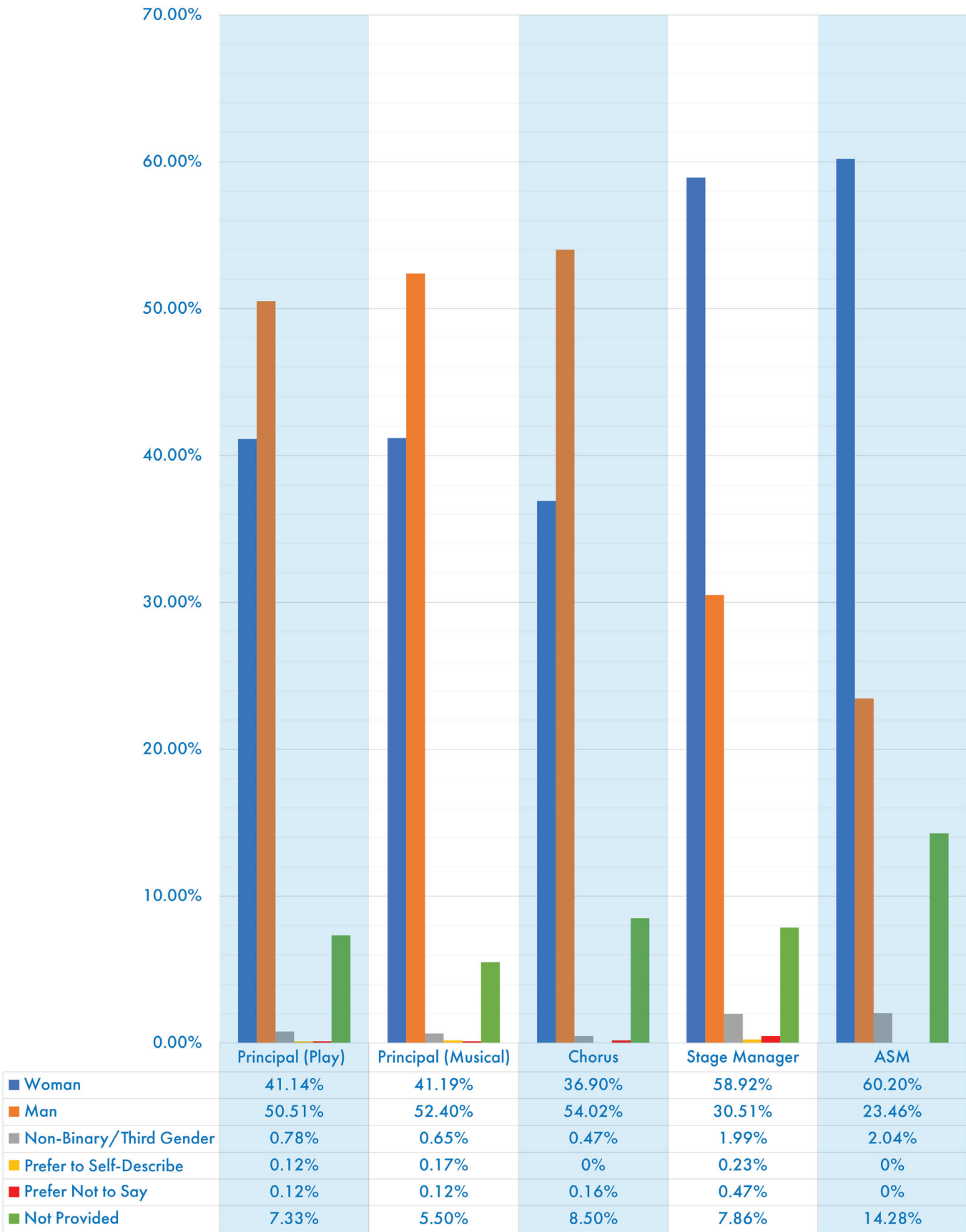
An umbrella term used by people whose gender identity and/or gender expression is outside of the man and woman gender binary. As an umbrella term, non-binary encompasses many gender identities and expressions, some of which are culturally specific.

### Third Gender

An umbrella term often used for data or documentation purposes to account for people whose gender identity and/or expression is neither man nor woman.

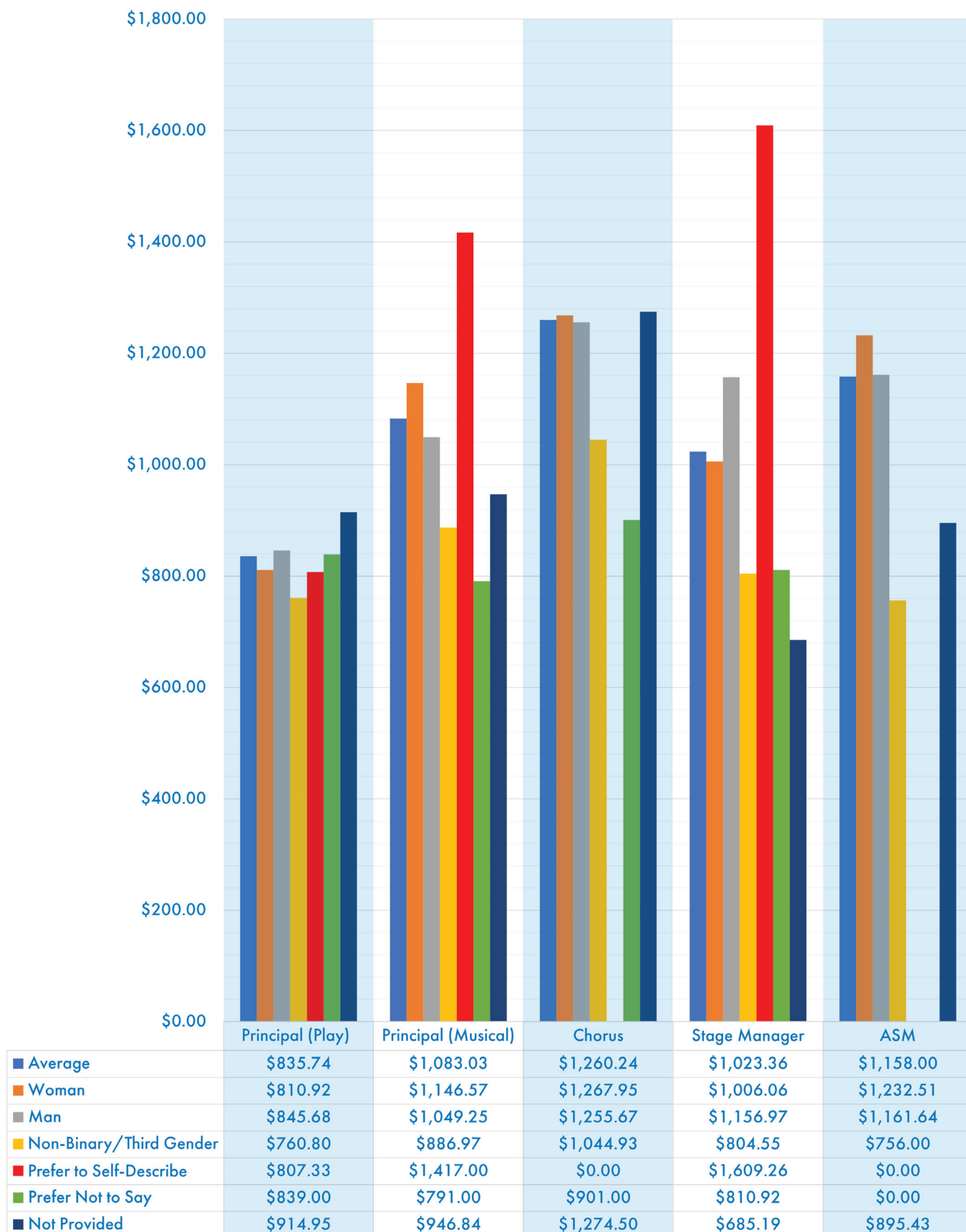
# Contract percentage by gender

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



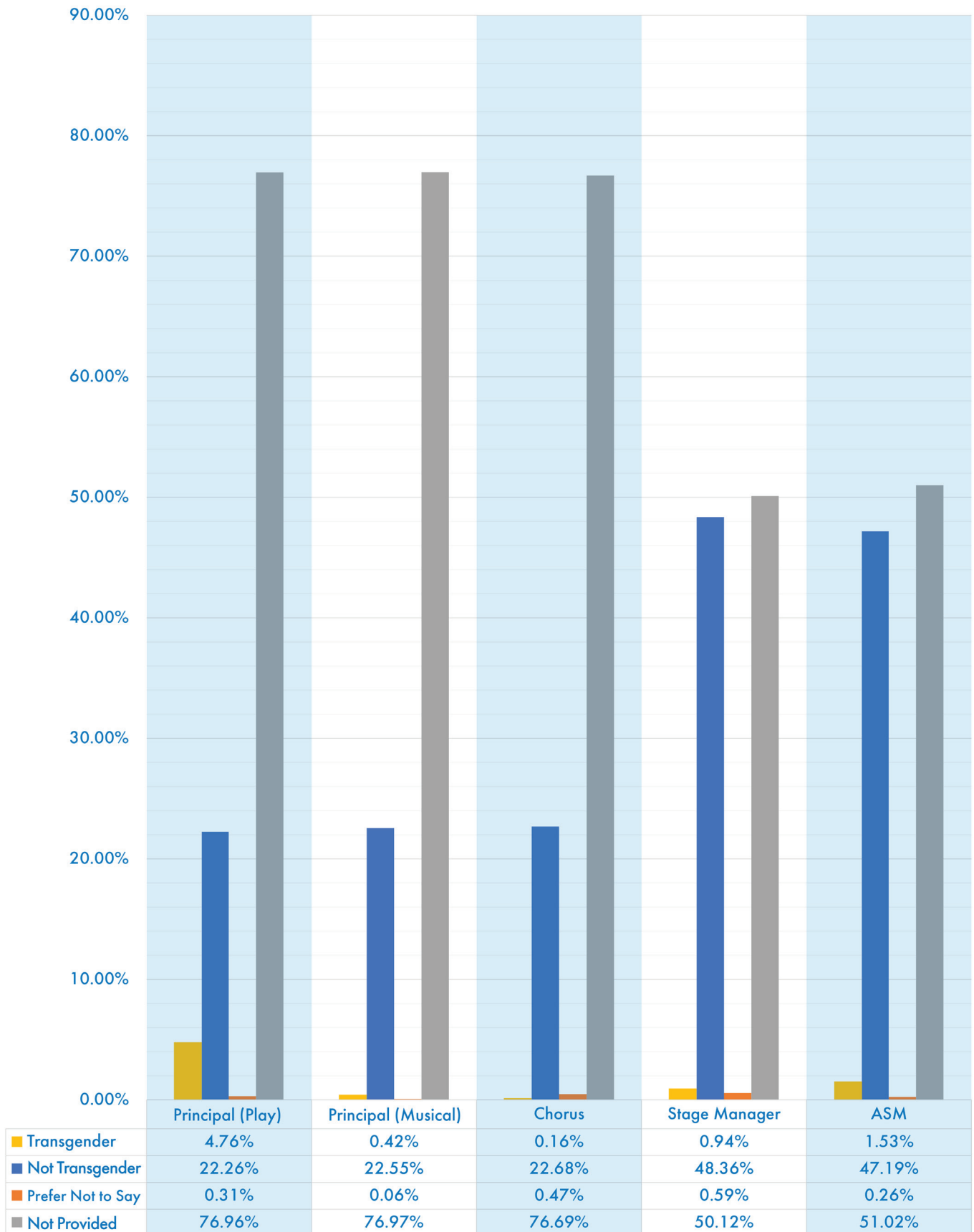
# Average contract salary by gender

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



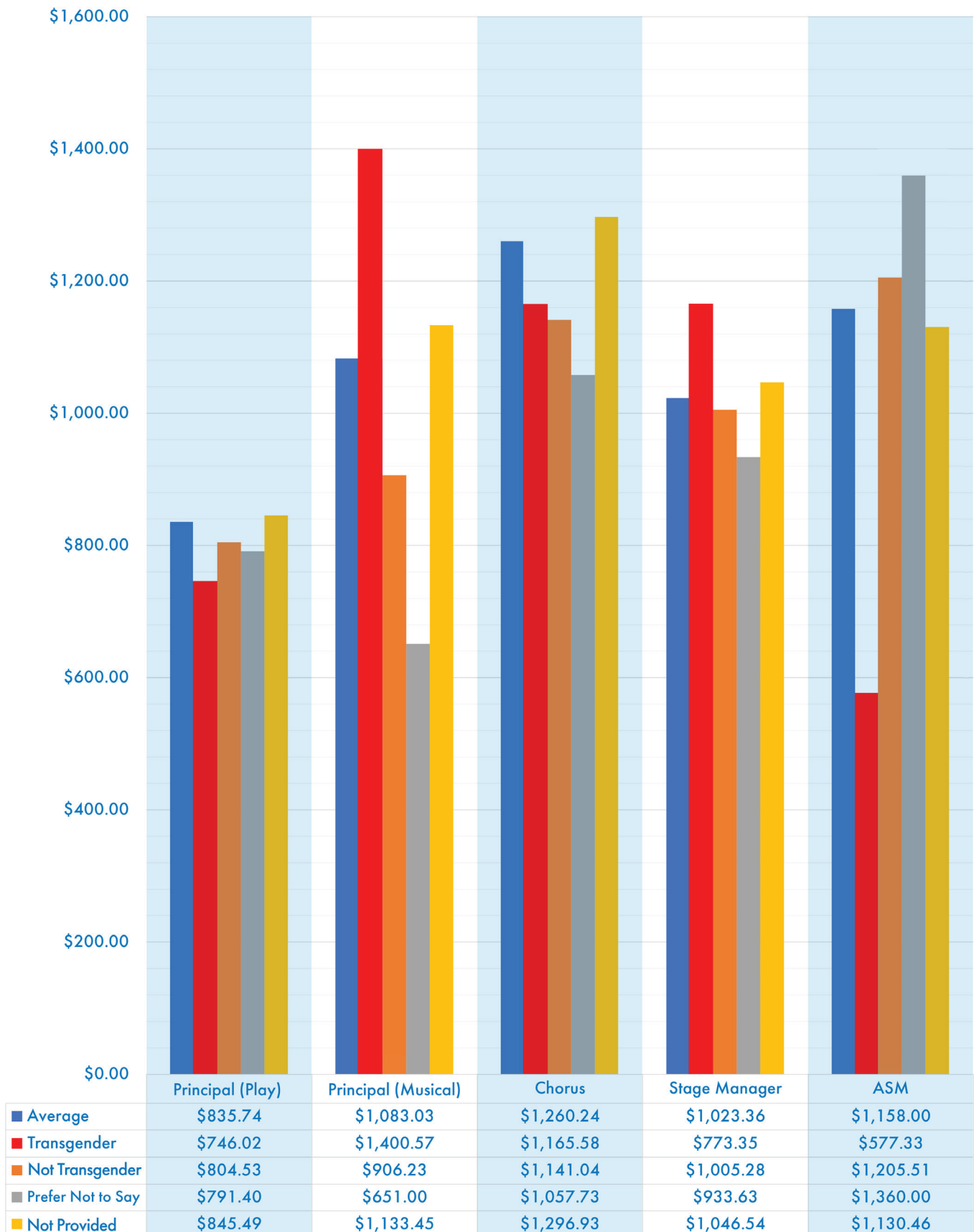
# Contract percentage by transgender status

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



# Average contract salary by transgender status

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



# Sexual Orientation

When looking at hiring bias regarding sexual orientation of our members, we must remember that there are many orientations that aren't represented in this report. The self-identification that members can participate in only covers the following options: bisexual, gay or lesbian, straight/heterosexual, prefer to self-describe, prefer not to say or not provided. "Prefer to Self-Describe" is essential here. It points to the fact that sexual orientation is a spectrum, and people may not fall into the more rigid categories of bisexual, gay or lesbian, or heterosexual. All sexual orientations are valid and represent a personal journey; they are also malleable and may change over time. To honor that malleability, we at Equity consistently update our identity categories in the self-identification options for our members. As members self-ID, we can expand and adjust to best represent our members and their identities.

In 2021, of the contracts that went to people who provided their sexual orientation (1,893 out of 6,116), 34.9% went to workers who identifies as bisexual, gay or lesbian, or preferred to self-identify, whereas 56.9% went to workers who identify as straight/heterosexual. Of those 1,893 contracts, 8.2% preferred not to provide their sexual orientation.

While the percentage of contracts that went to people with LGBTQ+<sup>[1]</sup> identities (9.5%) is larger than the percentage of the entire 2021 LGBTQ+ population in the United States (7.1%), the theatre industry is not immune to sexual orientation-based discrimination and even if one doesn't personally experience it in their day-to-day interactions, chances are someone else is. It is also important to recognize what this report can't

present, which is that although these numbers are higher than the national average, we should also be looking at the type, complexity and variability of roles/characters that are offered to people who are open about their sexuality. Representation must do more than check boxes for which kinds of people appear on stage. True representation means that the stories told span the full spectrum of lived (and imagined) experiences, so no one is restricted to merely playing or seeing stereotypes of themselves.

**Table 10:** Contracts that went to LGBTQ+ workers, Straight/Heterosexual workers, and workers that preferred to self-describe or not to provide their sexual orientation, compared to the total number of contracts for the 2016-2019, 2020, and 2021 seasons.

	TOTAL Contracts	LGBTQ+	Straight or Heterosexual	Prefer to Self-Describe	Prefer Not to Say
<b>2016 - 2019</b>	<b>94,051</b>	<b>5,603</b> (5.9%)	<b>12,832</b> (13.6%)	<b>731</b> (0.8%)	<b>1,091</b> (1.2%)
<b>2020</b>	<b>5,818</b>	<b>415</b> (7.1%)	<b>882</b> (15.2%)	<b>86</b> (1.5%)	<b>92</b> (1.6%)
<b>2021</b>	<b>6,116</b>	<b>579</b> (9.5%)	<b>1,077</b> (17.6%)	<b>81</b> (1.3%)	<b>156</b> (2.6%)

Stage managers and actors who identified as being bisexual, gay or lesbian made 7.1% less than their straight or heterosexual counterpart. They are also making 11.5% less than the average salary in 2021. While we cannot say exactly what is causing these numbers, these differences in salary, though seemingly small, still reveal a bias in what roles are going to whom. For example, there is the potential for discrimination when those in a position to hire make assumptions about what roles a professional may fill based on their personal characteristics or how they present them.

The total average salaries (for all sections in the report, as noted above) include the contracts that went to people who did not report their sexual

orientation, which is why the overall averages tend to be higher than any individual average.

**Table 11:** Average weekly salaries for LGBTQ+ workers, Straight/Heterosexual workers, and workers that preferred to self-describe or not to provide their sexual orientation compared to the total average for the 2016-2019 seasons across job categories.

2016 - 2019	TOTAL Average	LGBTQ+	Straight or Heterosexual	Prefer to Self-Describe	Prefer Not to Say
Principal (play)	\$747.85	\$634.52	\$639.25	\$621.68	\$634.70
Principal (musical)	\$920.42	\$782.22	\$773.22	\$800.75	\$813.21
Chorus	\$1,112.00	\$1,035.32	\$1,060.01	\$1,108.03	\$1,052.09
Stage Manager	\$862.65	\$925.93	\$856.64	\$893.84	\$908.24
Assistant Stage Manager	\$954.04	\$958.02	\$970.93	\$820.14	\$878.66
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$839.93	\$836.79	\$773.57	\$763.78	\$776.97



**Table 12:** Average weekly salaries for LGBTQ+ workers, Straight/Heterosexual workers, and workers that preferred to self-describe or not to provide their sexual orientation compared to the total average for the 2020 season across job categories.

2020	TOTAL Average	LGBQ+	Straight or Heterosexual	Prefer to Self-Describe	Prefer Not to Say
Principal (play)	\$835.74	\$732.51	\$793.53	\$643.77	\$843.31
Principal (musical)	\$1,083.03	\$818.52	\$972.61	\$946.59	\$1,133.73
Chorus	\$1,260.24	\$1,072.62	\$1,174.63	\$1,014.81	\$1,317.60
Stage Manager	\$1,023.36	\$1,049.74	\$954.94	\$1,184.40	\$837.60
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,158.00	\$1,129.66	\$1,210.55	\$832.97	\$1,199.01
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$994.73	\$926.75	\$944.76	\$846.70	\$979.96

**Table 13:** Average weekly salaries for LGBTQ+ workers, Straight/Heterosexual workers, and workers that preferred to self-describe or not to provide their sexual orientation compared to the total average for the 2021 season across job categories.

2021	TOTAL Average	LGBQ+	Straight or Heterosexual	Prefer to Self-Describe	Prefer Not to Say
Principal (play)	\$835.74	\$729.40	\$793.53	\$643.77	\$843.77
Principal (musical)	\$1,083.03	\$819.35	\$972.61	\$946.59	\$1,133.73
Chorus	\$1,260.24	\$1,049.42	\$1,174.63	\$1,014.81	\$1,317.60
Stage Manager	\$1,023.36	\$1,029.06	\$954.94	\$1,184.40	\$837.60
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,158.00	\$1,116.69	\$1,210.55	\$832.97	\$1,199.01
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$1,072.07	\$948.78	\$1,021.25	\$924.51	\$898.82

69% of contracts went to individuals who did not provide their sexual orientation to the union. More than half of our membership who worked on these contracts didn't respond to the question at all. As we grow, we hope to encourage members to feel safe and comfortable sharing their identities with their union so we can better represent our membership in future diversity reports – and at the bargaining table.

# Sexual Orientation

## Definitions in this section

### **LGBQ+**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and more. While LGBTQ+ (including T for transgender) is the more widely used acronym, this section of the diversity report assesses sexual orientation statistics; therefore, we have adjusted the acronym to accurately reflect the identity characteristics being analyzed.

### **Queer**

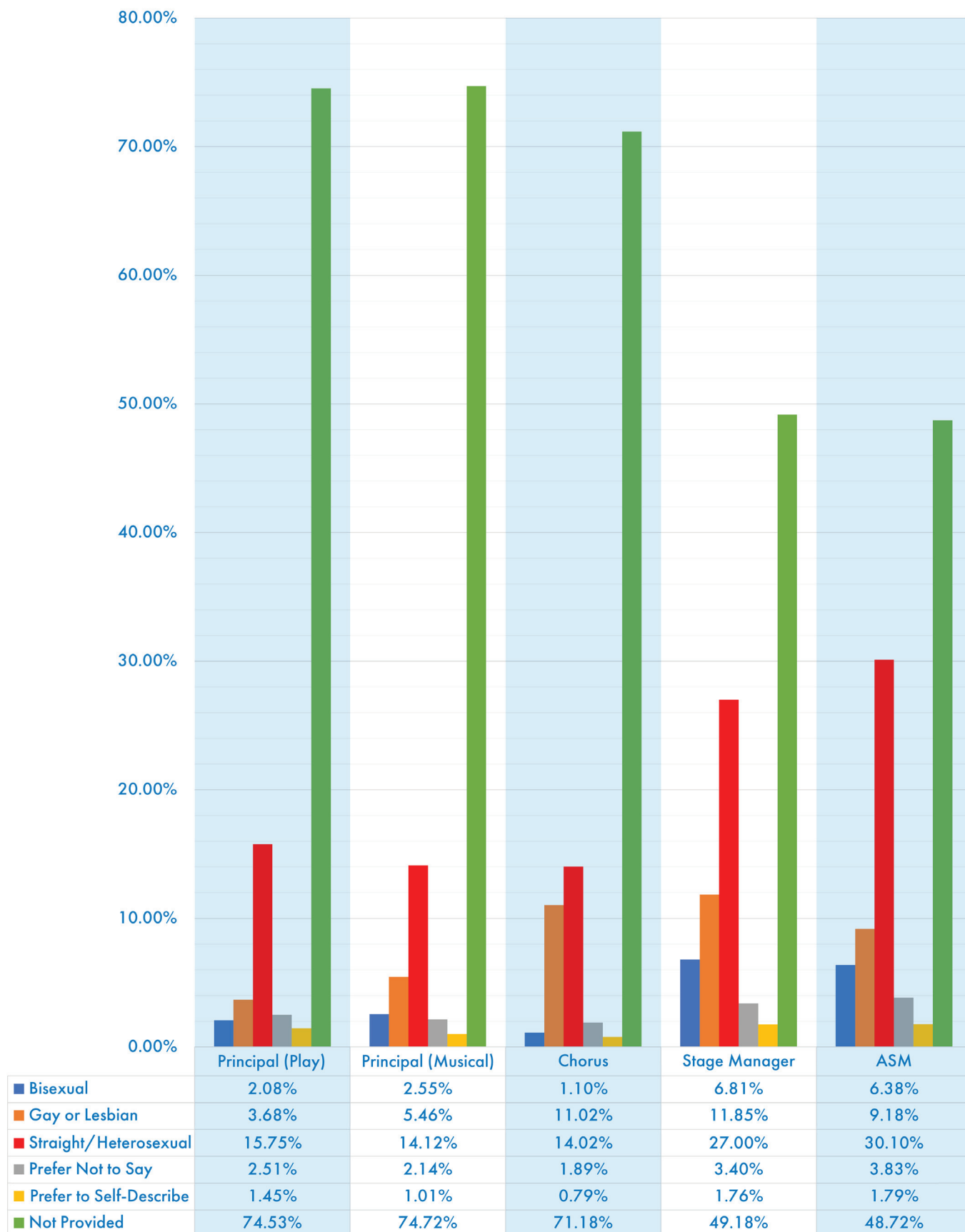
Currently used as an umbrella term for people or communities which are non-heterosexual/straight. While queer individuals have done work over recent years to re-claim the word queer (for example, integrating it into the LGBTQ+ acronym), it is important to recognize that this term has been historically weaponized as an anti-homosexual slur.

### **Representation**

How cultural concepts, groups of people and individuals are depicted or described. Diverse and inclusive representation accounts for the range of different identities in a group (race, age, gender, etc.), and who is creating the narrative or understanding of those identities. Authentic representation centers the voices of those being portrayed in how they are described or depicted (think, “nothing about us, without us”).

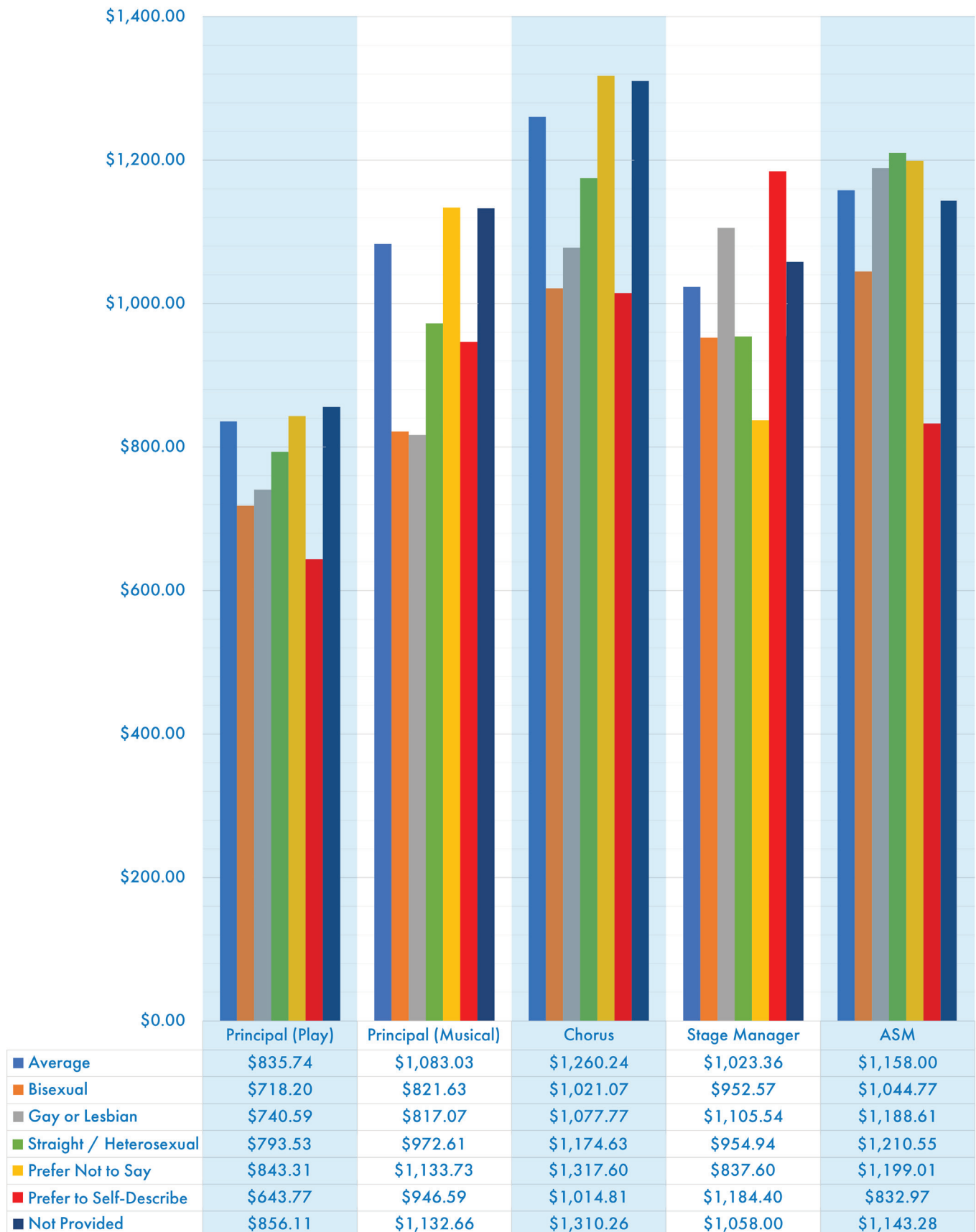
# Contract percentage by sexual orientation

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



# Average contract salary by sexual orientation

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



# Age

Ageism and age discrimination are not new to the theatre industry. In an industry that relies, in part, on what age an actor can present themselves as, there is a lot of room for stereotyping, judgement and disenfranchisement. While ageism can be waged against people of any age, there is significant data to show that the number of contracts our actors and stage managers receive after the age of 44 significantly diminishes.

**Table 14:** Contracts that went to each age group and those who did not provide their age compared to the total number of contracts for the 2016-2019, 2020 and 2021 seasons.

	0 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 +	Not Provided
2016 - 2019	784 (0.8%)	12,753 (13.6%)	48,146 (51.2%)	26,248 (27.9%)	3,165 (3.5%)	2,861 (3%)
2020	25 (0.4%)	203 (3.4%)	3,163 (54.3%)	1,770 (30.4%)	356 (6.1%)	301 (5.2%)
2021	27 (0.4%)	308 (5%)	3,461 (56.6%)	1,649 (27%)	316 (5.2%)	355 (5.8%)

Of the 4,872 contracts that went to actors in 2021, 56% went to actors in the 25–44 age group, dropping to 27.4% for actors in the 45–64 age group. Only 5.7% of total actor contracts went to actors aged 65 and up. While children (aged 0-17) work on Equity contracts, the employment of children is outside the scope of this study.

We see the biggest difference in casting biases for chorus actors once they enter the 45–64 age range. The percentage of contracts that go to chorus actors drops by 57% between the 25–44 age range and the 45–64

age range.

Of the 1,244 contracts issued to stage managers (including assistant stage manager), 4.8% went to those in the 18–24 age group, 58.8% went to those in the 25–44 age group, 25.1% went to those in the 45–64 age group and 3% went to members over the age of 65.

There was an overall 11.4% increase in pay between the ages of 18–24 and 25–44. This increased again by 6.3% between the ages of 25–44 and 45–64. However, there is a substantial drop of 15.1% once workers are 65+. These numbers are greatly impacted by the number of roles that went to each age group and the delineation of what roles were given (for example, workers who were 65+ did not receive as many principal roles in a play as those who were 25–44). There was a similar trend in 2020, though the salaries between workers who were 25–44 and those who were 45–64 were significantly closer (only a \$6.43 difference). 65 is often seen as the typical retirement age and the culture around aging is built upon that notion. However, the theater industry is not entirely guided by the same principles, even if it is steeped in that context, and ageism (particularly whose stories are being told) plays a huge role in the differences we are seeing in the data provided.

**Table 15:** Average weekly salaries for each age group and those who did not provide their age compared to the total average for the 2016-2019 seasons across job categories.

2016 - 2019	TOTAL Average	0 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 +	Not Provided
Principal (play)	\$682.79	\$935.76	\$713.82	\$678.47	\$678.17	\$700.65	\$663.38
Principal (musical)	\$884.62	\$1,244.70	\$862.63	\$890.00	\$862.71	\$1,037.92	\$766.31
Chorus	\$1,112.00	\$1,254.08	\$1,137.18	\$1,132.29	\$971.81	\$902.32	\$886.15
Stage Manager	\$862.65	\$567.15	\$702.28	\$871.25	\$965.32	\$825.32	\$570.82
Assistant SM	\$954.04	\$710.31	\$863.27	\$1,042.00	\$989.75	\$727.11	\$691.31
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$899.22	\$942.40	\$855.84	\$922.80	\$893.55	\$838.66	\$715.60

**Table 16:** Average weekly salaries for each age group and those who did not provide their age compared to the total average for the 2020 season across job categories.

2020	TOTAL Average	0 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 +	Not Provided
Principal (play)	\$761.16	\$1,264.68	\$756.95	\$675.52	\$889.89	\$683.82	\$739.12
Principal (musical)	\$1,005.29	\$1,385.68	\$1,074.91	\$1,057.27	\$868.00	\$1,177.02	\$700.72
Chorus	\$1,270.60	\$1,341.06	\$1,332.23	\$1,303.29	\$1,085.43	\$729.00	\$1,186.09
Stage Manager	\$912.61	NA	\$616.68	\$894.23	\$1,018.20	\$1,159.67	\$640.00
Assistant SM	\$1,049.93	NA	\$774.87	\$1,080.57	\$1,181.55	\$1,107.12	\$762.27
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$999.92	\$1,330.47	\$928.35	\$1,002.18	\$1,008.61	\$971.33	\$805.64



**Table 17:** Average weekly salaries for each age group and those who did not provide their age compared to the total average for the 2021 season across job categories.

2021	TOTAL Average	0 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 +	Not Provided
Principal (play)	\$835.74	\$790.00	\$828.73	\$854.45	\$825.05	\$712.44	\$915.47
Principal (musical)	\$1,083.03	\$1,618.42	\$1,024.45	\$1,043.53	\$1,133.70	\$1,512.22	\$912.49
Chorus	\$1,260.24	\$2,362.54	\$1,189.90	\$1,239.32	\$1,357.05	\$1,078.05	\$1,206.30
Stage Manager	\$1,023.36	NA	\$625.84	\$1,002.89	\$1,188.94	\$871.02	\$689.78
Assistant SM	\$1,158.00	NA	\$1,076.28	\$1,212.94	\$1,206.60	\$676.20	\$906.30
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$1,072.07	\$1,590.32	\$949.04	\$1,070.63	\$1,142.27	\$969.99	\$926.07

Age discrimination can take many forms, from decreased hiring to judgement of a person's productivity based on their age, and, in any form, it impacts the culture of a workplace. These numbers don't only demonstrate the differences in hiring practices, but also the ideals that are upheld in the workplace – when we see a lack of age representation amongst our coworkers, we mentally develop the link between age and value.

It is essential to address age-related concerns in theatre because, as a cultural product, the stage provides a space for audiences to develop an understanding of stereotypes, interpersonal relationships and principles. What we see on the stage impacts how we see people off it.

As we explore age-related barriers to employment, Equity has begun to look more closely at the 25–44 age range and the margins that exist therein. Do contract opportunities begin to decline prior to 45? If so, where, and how can we as an industry examine those discrepancies more closely? See the section “Looking Ahead” for what to expect in the next

report regarding age and hiring practices in 2022.

For data both nationally and by job category, please see the following graphs and their descriptions.

# Age

## Definitions in this section

### **Ageism**

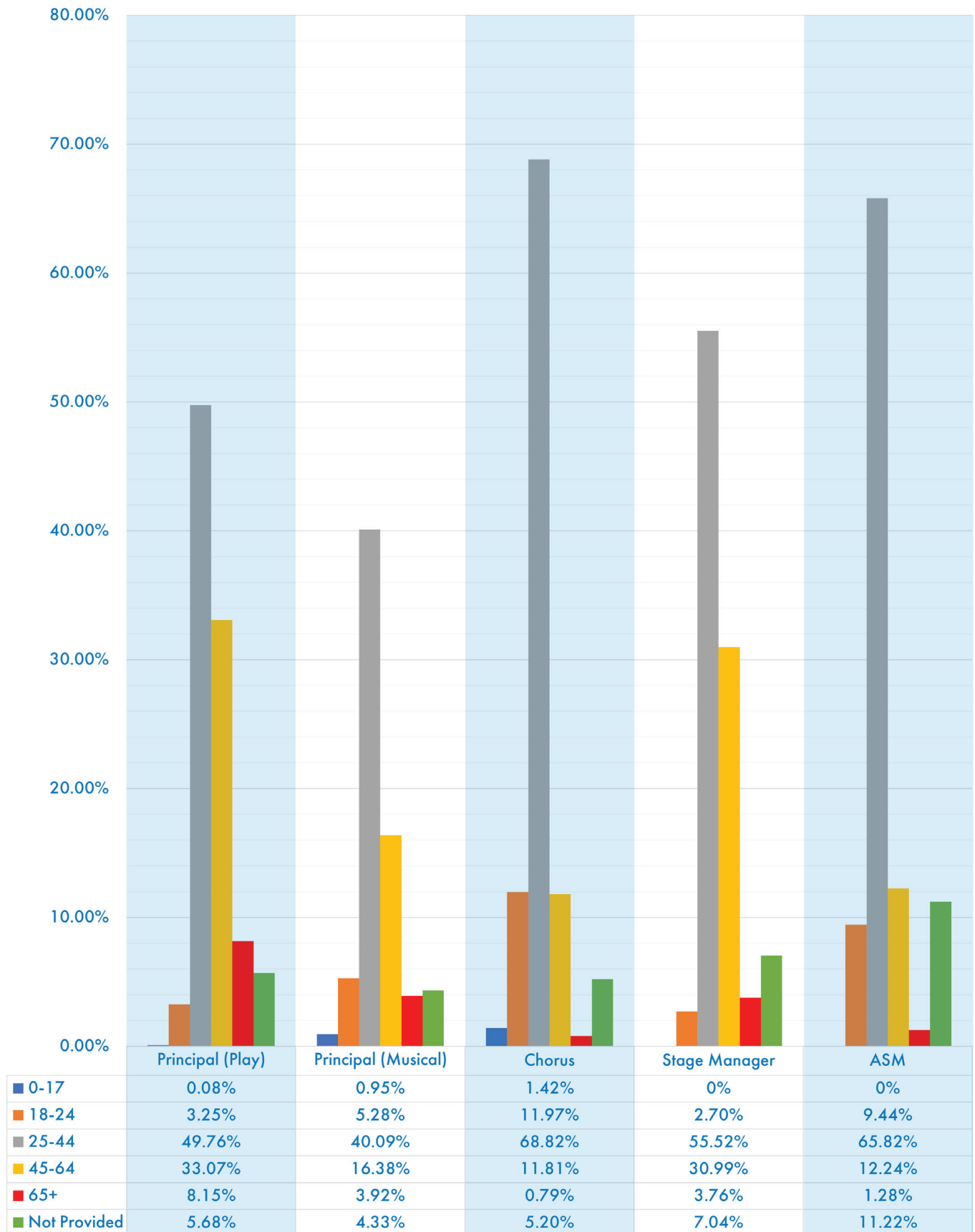
Discrimination or prejudice against people or communities based on age and stereotypes associated with different age groups.

### **Age Discrimination**

The act of unfair treatment or harassment of someone due to age-based biases and prejudices.

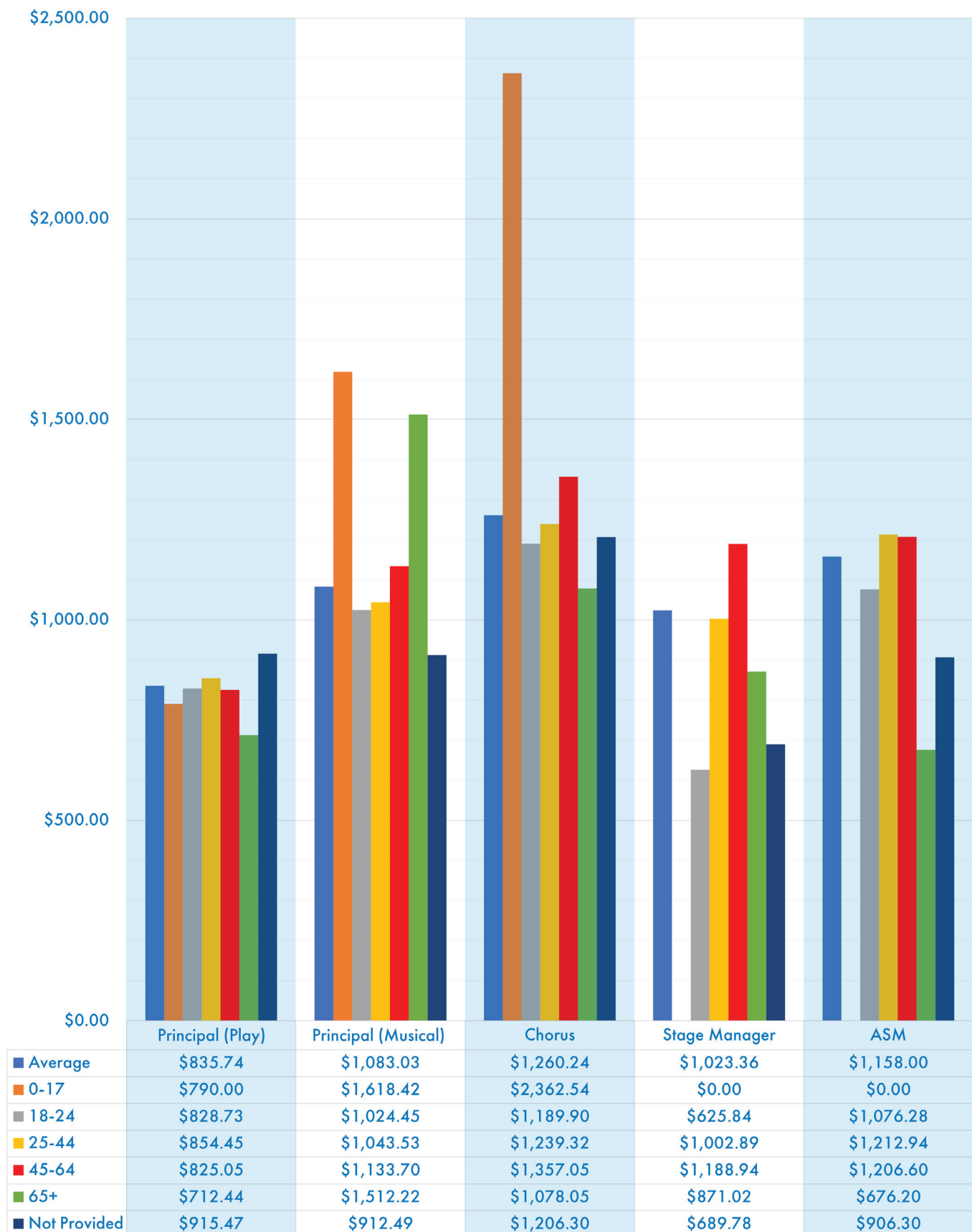
# Contract percentage by age

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# Average contract salary by age

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



# Disability

26% of adults in the United States have a disability. However, only 1.5% of the total contracts (91 out of 6,116 in 2021) went to workers who self-identified as having a disability. This number is skewed by the sheer number of people who did not provide their disability status – 70% of the total contracts in 2021 went to workers who did not share whether they have a disability.

To better understand the percentage of contracts that went to workers who self-identified as having disabilities, let's look at the total number of contracts that went to someone who either said they did/did not have a disability or preferred not to say: 1,834. Of those contracts, 5% went to workers with disabilities while 93.3% went to workers without a disability. 1.7% went to workers who preferred not to provide their disability status – this could be due to not wanting that information to impact their job opportunities, not knowing if they have a disability, or any number of reasons.

**Table 18:** Contracts that went to workers who self-identified as having a disability, who did not have a disability, preferred not to say, or didn't provide demographic information compared to the total number of contracts for the 2016-2019, 2020 and 2021 seasons.

	TOTAL Contracts	Disability	No Disability	Prefer Not to Say	Not Provided
2016 - 2019	93,957	945 (1%)	18,399 (19.6%)	549 (0.6%)	74,064 (78.8%)
2020	5,818	71 (1.2%)	1,339 (23%)	33 (0.6%)	4,375 (75.2%)
2021	6,116	91 (1.5%)	1,711 (28%)	32 (0.5%)	4,282 (70%)

While these numbers may seem negligible due to the number of contracts that went to someone who did not provide an answer, it does point to some social phenomena. It tells us that there may be some confusion around what qualifies as a disability (see footnote for a link to the ADA website, which is a good starting point though not all disabilities are listed),<sup>6</sup> what is being done with this information that may cause someone to not provide an answer and stigma around having a disability in this line of work. This can also point to the accommodations that may or may not be available in said workplaces which may deter someone with a disability from feeling comfortable applying or auditioning. These numbers point to the essential work that needs to be done to ensure safety and representation for the potentially one in four workers who have a disability, and either aren't receiving equitable employment or don't feel that they can share that part of themselves with their union or their workplace.

While the average salary across all contracts for workers with disabilities

<sup>6</sup> [Introduction to the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

looks higher, this data is offset by a few high paying salaries amidst a very small pool of opportunities. For example, principal actors without a disability in a musical made \$946.78 per week on average whereas it seems as though principal actors with a disability in a musical made roughly \$100 more at \$1046.96. However, those without a disability received a wider range of job opportunities (398 contracts) while those with a disability did not (11 contracts). The breadth of opportunity comes with varying levels of salary, offsetting the average weekly salary for those without a disability.

For both stage managers and assistant stage managers, workers with disabilities made less on average than their coworkers without disabilities by 2.8%, with stage managers with disabilities making below the average salary rate.

For data both nationally and by job category, please see the following graphs and their descriptions.

**Table 19:** Average weekly salaries for workers who self-identified as having a disability, who did not have a disability, or preferred not to say compared to the total average for the 2016-2019 seasons across job categories.

2016 - 2019	TOTAL Contracts	Disability	No Disability	Prefer Not to Say
Principal (play)	\$682.79	\$630.35	\$643.30	\$572.73
Principal (musical)	\$884.62	\$742.93	\$779.38	\$740.25
Chorus	\$1,112.00	\$953.83	\$1,123.39	\$1,132.44
Stage Manager	\$862.65	\$825.16	\$898.31	\$766.70
Assistant Stage Manager	\$954.04	\$880.51	\$977.19	\$800.16
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$899. 22	\$806.56	\$884.31	\$802.46



**Table 20:** Average weekly salaries for workers who self-identified as having a disability, who did not have a disability, or preferred not to say compared to the total average for the 2020 season across job categories.

2020	TOTAL Contracts	Disability	No Disability	Prefer Not to Say
Principal (play)	\$761.16	\$624.86	\$675.58	\$799.01
Principal (musical)	\$1,005.29	\$895.28	\$814.76	\$539.00
Chorus	\$1,270.60	\$1,158.17	\$1,224.93	NA
Stage Manager	\$912.61	\$924.58	\$925.81	\$972.04
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,049.93	\$830.78	\$1,162.37	\$701.09
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$999.92	\$878.81	\$833.34	\$827.12

**Table 21:** Average weekly salaries for workers who self-identified as having a disability, who did not have a disability, or preferred not to say compared to the total average for the 2021 season across job categories.

2021	TOTAL Contracts	Disability	No Disability	Prefer Not to Say
Principal (play)	\$835.74	\$738.46	\$805.20	\$571.17
Principal (musical)	\$1,083.03	\$1,046.96	\$946.78	\$600.17
Chorus	\$1,260.24	\$1,442.42	\$1,131.25	\$969.43
Stage Manager	\$1,023.36	\$992.39	\$1,024.66	\$988.93
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,158.00	\$1,169.48	\$1,199.26	\$824.66
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$1,072.07	\$1,077.94	\$1,021.43	\$790.87

# Disability

## Definitions in this section

### Ableism

Discriminatory or prejudice actions, beliefs and policies against people or communities based on disability status.

### Accessibility

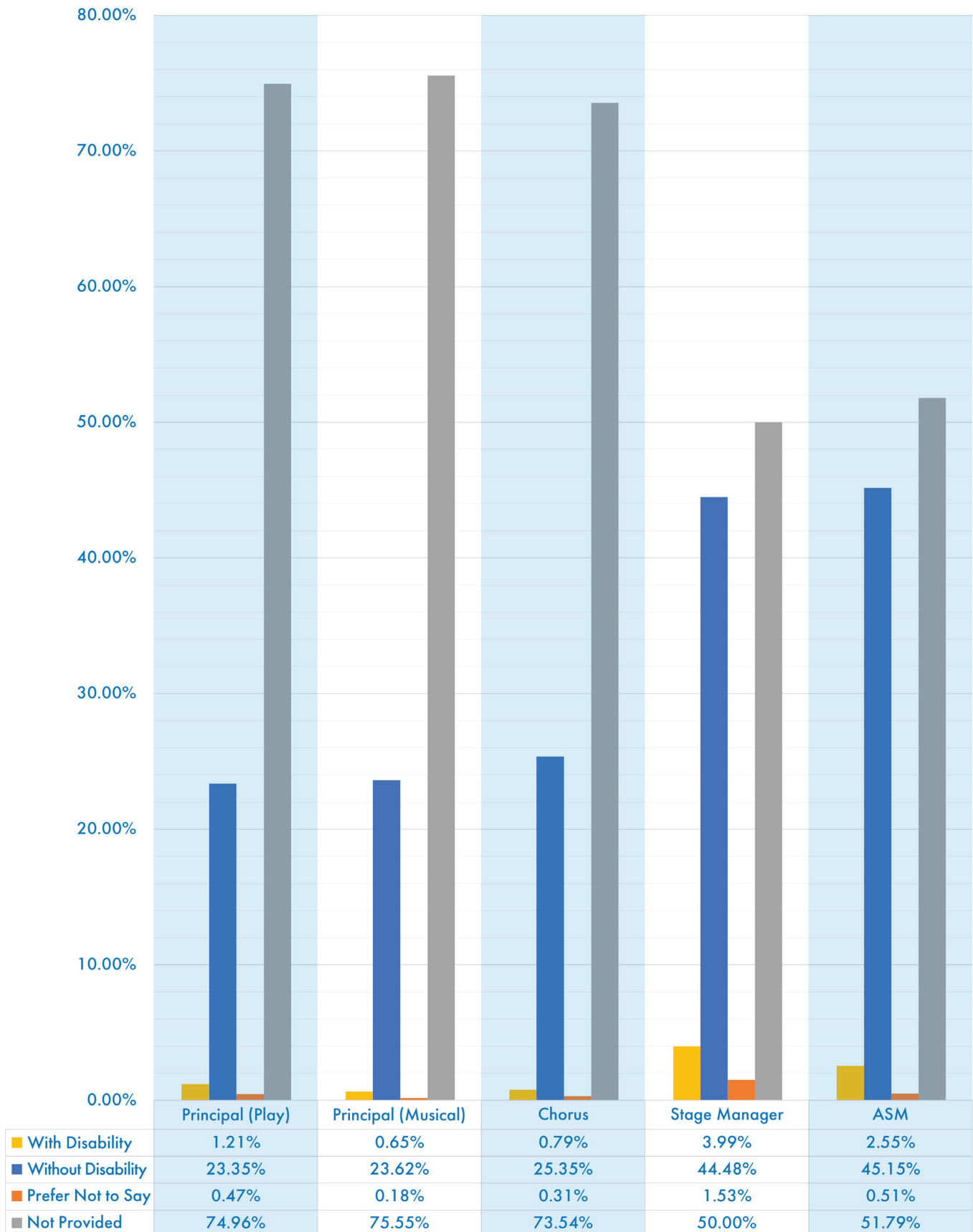
Taking steps to ensure that information, resources, physical spaces and social activities are available and equitably attainable. Accessibility standards are determined by a variety of institutions, agencies, and organizations. Such standards may take the form of government policies (such as the Americans with Disabilities Act), industry guides to best practices (such as Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) or advice from expert researchers, advocates and activists. These standards aim to mitigate/prevent ableism and disability-based discrimination.

### Disability

People with disabilities often define and understand disability as a socially imposed phenomenon. Meaning, a person is disabled by an environment wherein society has implemented common accommodations that exclude people with certain impairments from access to and participation in mental, physical and/or social community and support. For example, those who have impaired vision may use glasses to see clearly. As a socially normalized impairment accommodation, people who wear glasses to see clearly are not disabled by their environment or community.

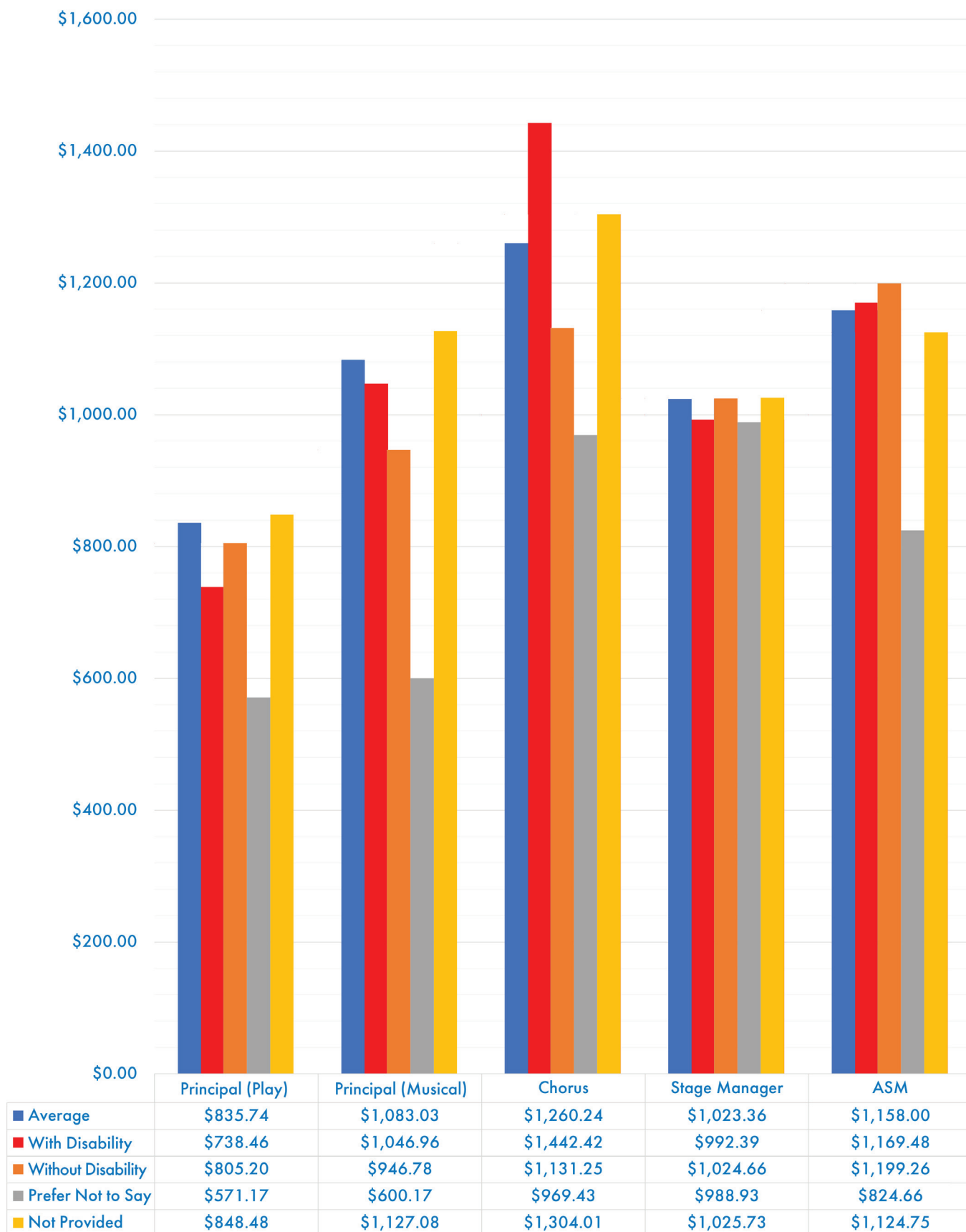
# Contract percentage by disability

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



# Average contract salary by disability

Note: This graph is not e-reader friendly.



# Veteran Status

A similar issue in data collection and analysis occurs when looking at contracts that went to veterans. Of the 6,116 total contracts that went to both stage managers and actors, 4,305 went to people who did not provide their veteran status. Of the 1,811 contracts for individuals who did provide a response, 1.5% of actor contracts went to veterans and 2.1% of stage manager contracts went to veterans. Both are increases from 2020, when actors who were veterans received 1.4% of contracts and stage managers who were veterans received 0.8% of contracts. In 2021, there were roughly 19 million veterans in the United States and 4.4% were unemployed.<sup>7</sup> While this doesn't paint a complete picture because these census figures often don't account for veterans who were unable to participate in the census, those affected by the carceral system, or those experiencing homelessness, it does point to a lack of job opportunities available to veterans in the United States. While we can't determine a definitive cause for this in our own industry, we do need to work towards creating spaces that feel safe, productive, and lucrative for all workers.

<sup>7</sup> [Employment Situation of Veterans News Release - 2021 A01 Results \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/vet_092021.pdf)

**Table 22:** Contracts that went to workers who self-identified as being a veteran, who were not a veteran, or preferred not to say compared to the total number of contracts for the 2016-2019, 2020 and 2021 seasons.

	TOTAL Contracts	Veteran	Not a Veteran	Prefer Not to Say
<b>2016 - 2019</b>	<b>93,957</b>	<b>278</b> (0.3%)	<b>19,227</b> (20.5%)	<b>72</b> (0.08%)
<b>2020</b>	<b>5,818</b>	<b>17</b> (0.3%)	<b>1,409</b> (24.2%)	<b>5</b> (NA)
<b>2021</b>	<b>6,116</b>	<b>31</b> (0.5%)	<b>1,773</b> (29%)	<b>7</b> (NA)

When looking at salaries, veterans made less than the national average by 23.7% and less than their non-veteran coworkers by 22.6%. The overwhelming lack of data on our members' veteran statuses made it impossible to draw any meaningful conclusions about the data we have.

Even in a more indicative year (2019) of our industry's job opportunities, veterans were making less than their non-veteran coworkers by 3.4%. In future years, we hope to gain further insight into the job opportunities available to veterans, including the encouragement of workers to share their veteran status so that the data isn't skewed by the large number of contracts that went to workers who did not provide that information.

**Table 23:** Average weekly salaries for workers who self-identified as being a veteran, who were not a veteran, or preferred not to say compared to the total average for the 2016-2019 seasons across job categories.

2016 - 2019	TOTAL Contracts	Veteran	Not a Veteran	Prefer Not to Say
Principal (play)	\$682.79	\$559.52	\$640.91	\$594.34
Principal (musical)	\$884.62	\$580.73	\$782.92	\$835.77
Chorus	\$1,112.00	\$1,121.17	\$1,048.75	\$850.00
Stage Manager	\$862.65	\$812.87	\$883.81	\$961.31
Assistant Stage Manager	\$954.04	\$1,098.35	\$962.75	\$844.58
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$899.22	\$834.53	\$863.83	\$817.20

**Table 24:** Average weekly salaries for workers who self-identified as being a veteran, who were not a veteran, or preferred not to say compared to the total average for the 2020 season across job categories.

2020	TOTAL Contracts	Veteran	Not a Veteran	Prefer Not to Say
Principal (play)	\$761.16	\$593.53	\$679.23	\$738.33
Principal (musical)	\$1,005.29	NA	\$817.11	NA
Chorus	\$1,270.60	\$665.00	\$1,252.98	NA
Stage Manager	\$912.61	\$888.71	\$916.42	\$1,970.10
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,049.93	NA	\$1,113.42	NA
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$999.92	\$667.18	\$833.08	\$1,231.04

**Table 25:** Average weekly salaries for workers who self-identified as being a veteran, who were not a veteran, or preferred not to say compared to the total average for the 2021 season across job categories.

2021	TOTAL Contracts	Veteran	Not a Veteran	Prefer Not to Say
Principal (play)	\$835.74	\$583.26	\$791.73	\$1,066.75
Principal (musical)	\$1,083.03	\$776.25	\$930.25	\$604.00
Chorus	\$1,260.24	\$946.80	\$1,147.10	\$900.00
Stage Manager	\$1,023.36	\$777.07	\$1,002.07	NA
Assistant Stage Manager	\$1,158.00	\$833.78	\$1,187.64	NA
ACROSS JOB CATEGORIES	\$1,072.07	\$783.43	\$1,011.76	\$856.92

Veterans face distinct barriers to employment in the United States that are unique to the theatre industry. For example, across deployment and branches, 11-20% of veterans experience PTSD<sup>8</sup> that can be triggered by any number of stimuli from loud noises to flashing lights, making many theater spaces inaccessible. While some of these issues can be accommodated through the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), there are also acts of discrimination that can be harder to pinpoint – stereotypes, judgement of political choices and different healthcare needs that aren't being met. While it isn't discussed in this report, there are many overlaps between veteran communities, disability communities, multigenerational communities and the intersectional experiences they face.

<sup>8</sup> [How Common is PTSD in Veterans? - PTSD: National Center for PTSD \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/PTSD/about/PTSD-in-veterans/)



# Veteran Status

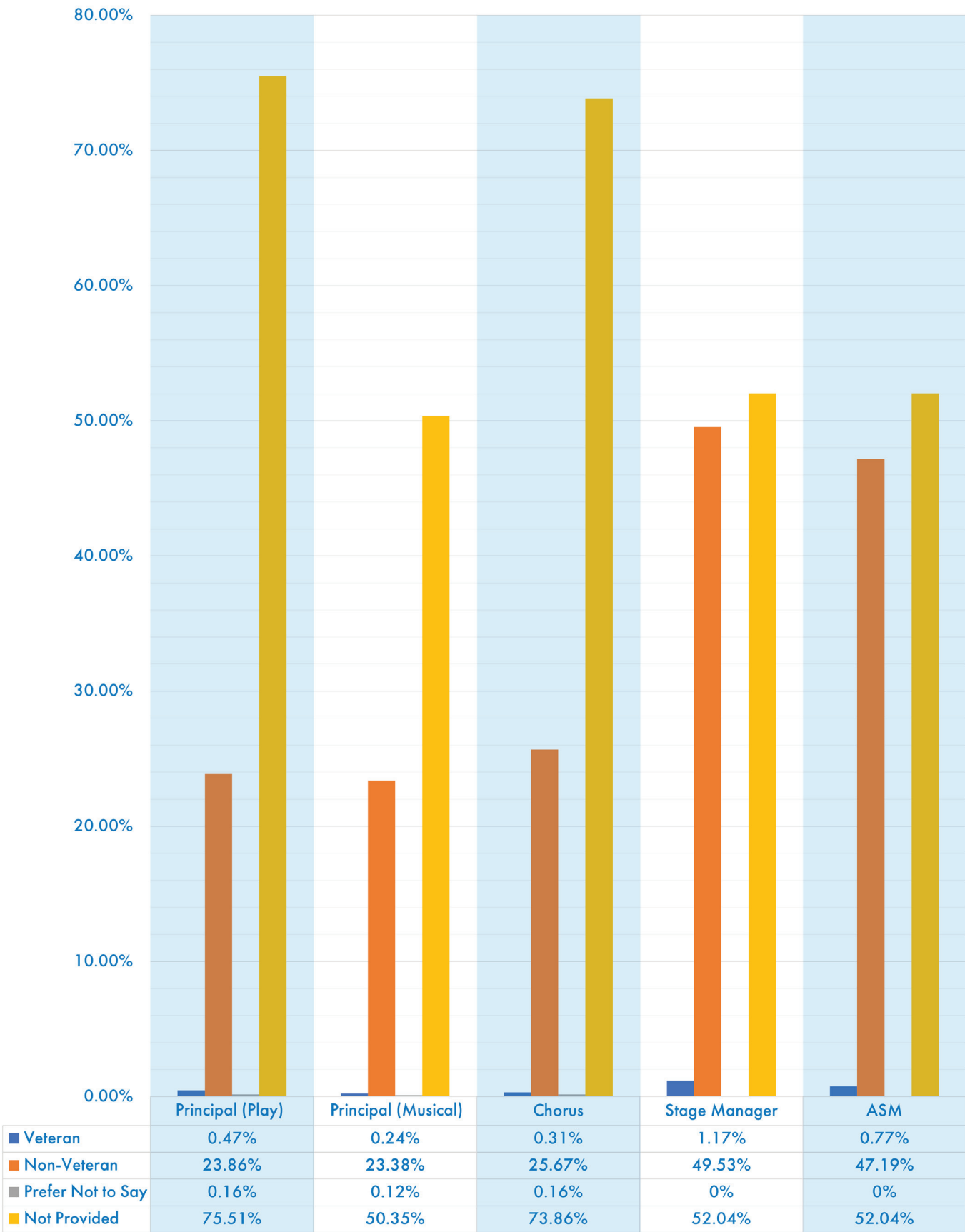
## Definitions in this section

### **Veteran**

A person who served in the active military, naval or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

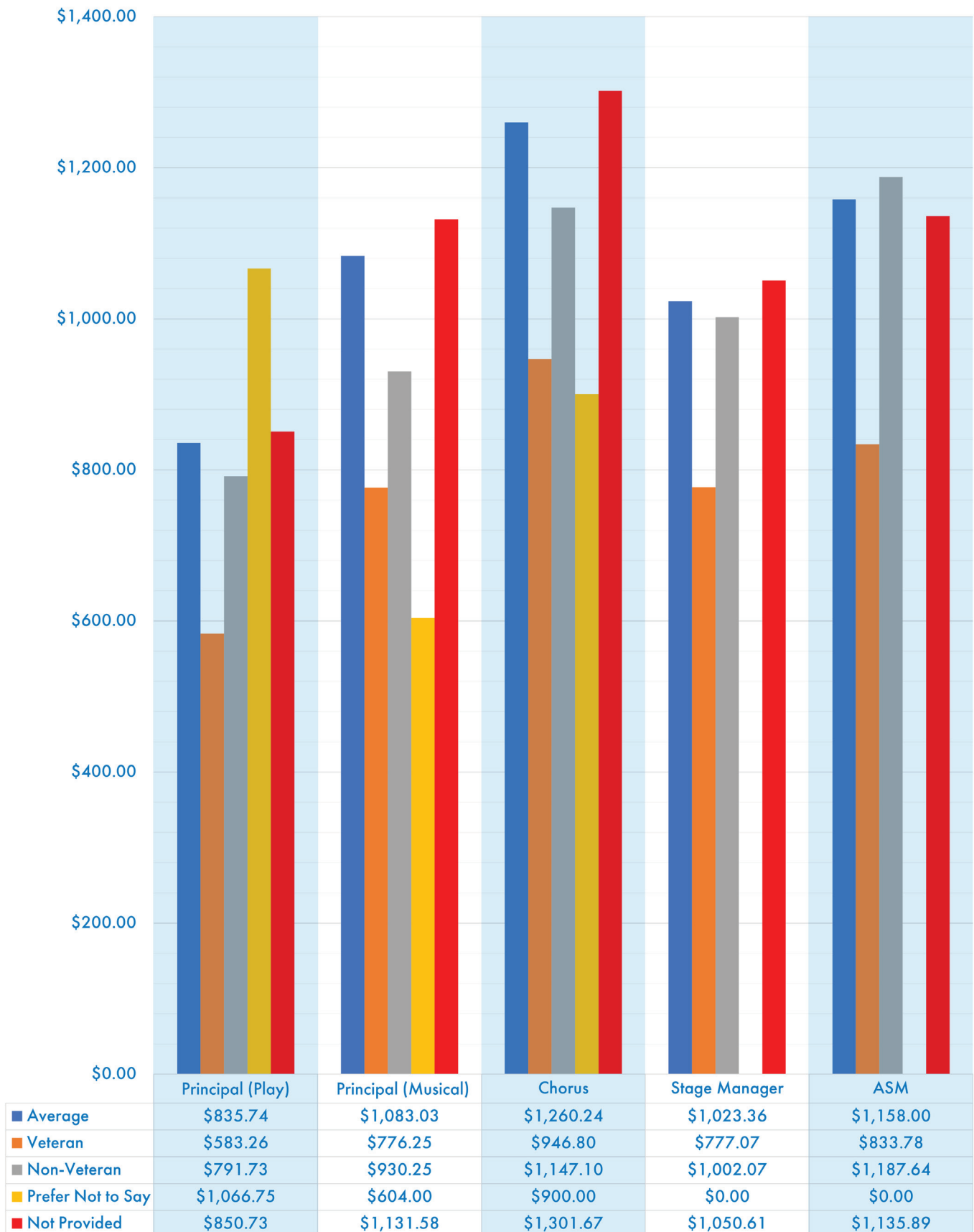
# Contract percentage by veteran status

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# Average contract salary by veteran status

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# **Intersectional Representation**

# Age and Race

We see a few trends across the different racial and/or ethnic identities.

**Table 26:** Number of contracts and average weekly salaries in 2021 for BIPOC and White/European American workers across age groups.

Age	BIPOC Number of Contracts	BIPOC Average Salary	White/European American Number of Contracts	White/European American Average Salary
0 - 17	8	\$1,932.67	6	\$1,507.00
18 - 24	106	\$1,184.40	102	\$988.00
25 - 44	1,215	\$1,087.14	1,832	\$965.00
45 - 64	353	\$965.67	1,036	\$991.00
65 +	49	\$1,014.00	226	\$917.00

BIPOC stage managers and actors (including workers who are Black or African American, Asian or Asian American, Hispanic or Latin American, Indigenous Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Indigenous North American, Middle Eastern or North African and Multi-Racial or Multi-Ethnic) saw job opportunities decrease past the 25-44 age group by 70.9%. The decline continues between that age group and those who were 65+, dropping by 86.1%.

Alternatively, White and European American workers only experienced a 43.5% decrease in contracts between the ages of 25-44 and 45-64, dropping by 78.2%.

This tells us that BIPOC workers are experiencing a larger drop in

job opportunities as they age than White and European American workers. This may be due to the roles being offered and their race or age delineations, the misconception that the default of a role is a certain age or race, and the systemic discrimination of older BIPOC members both in the theater industry and outside of it.

These trends fall in alignment with those of both race/ethnicity and age trends we explored earlier in the report. Earlier, we demonstrated that actors and stage managers older than 44 are hired at lower rates than their younger colleagues and BIPOC individuals were hired at lower rates than their White or European American counterparts.

**Table 27:** Contracts that went to each age group and those who did not provide their age compared to the total number of contracts for the 2016-2019, 2020 and 2021 seasons.

	0 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 +	Not Provided
2016 - 2019	784 (0.8%)	12,753 (13.6%)	48,146 (51.2%)	26,248 (27.9%)	3,165 (3.5%)	2,861 (3%)
2020	25 (0.4%)	203 (3.4%)	3,163 (54.3%)	1,770 (30.4%)	356 (6.1%)	301 (5.2%)
2021	27 (0.4%)	308 (5%)	3,461 (56.6%)	1,649 (27%)	316 (5.2%)	355 (5.8%)

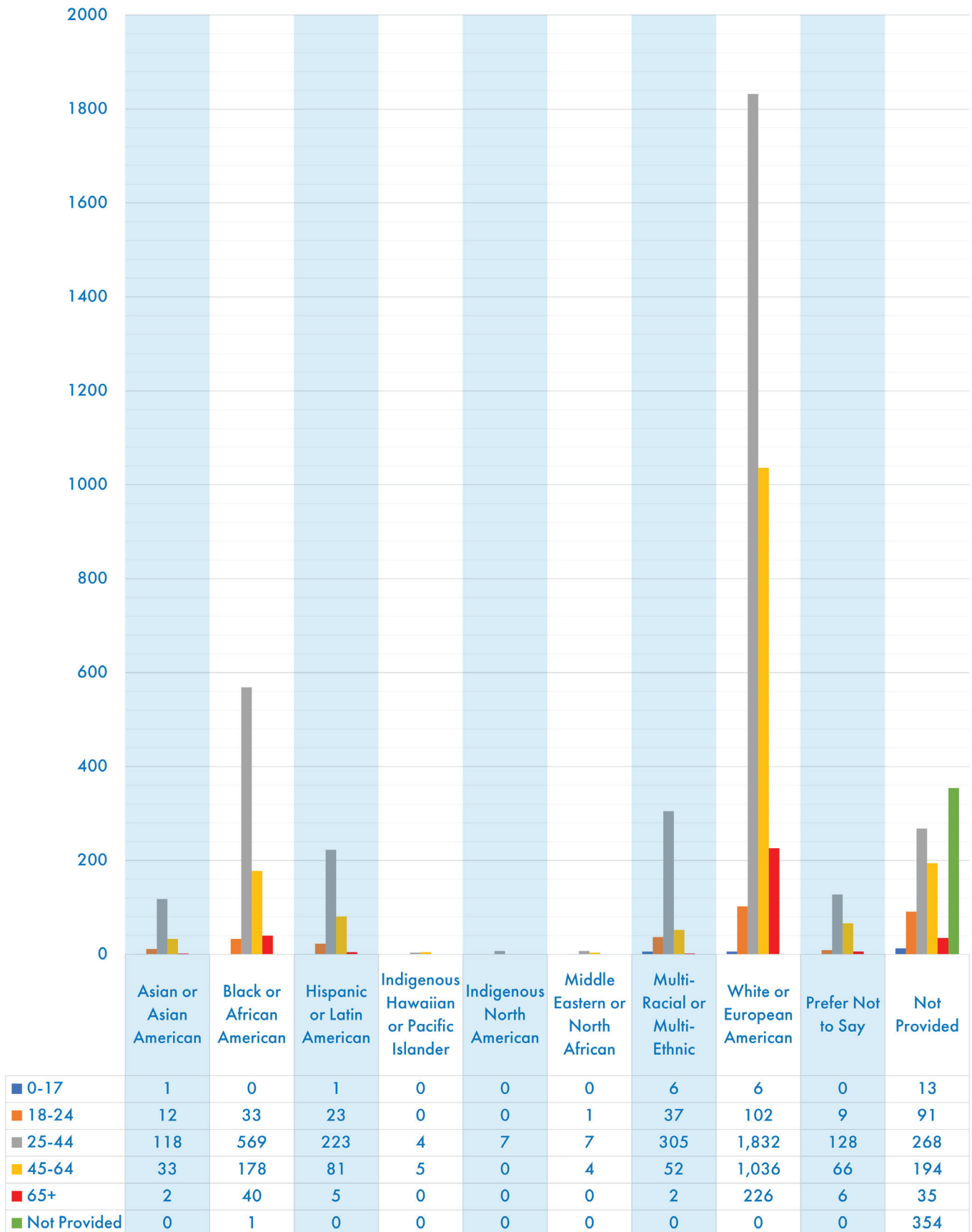
**Table 28:** Contracts that went to BIPOC, White/European American, and workers that preferred not to provide their race or ethnicity, compared to the total number of contracts for the 2016-2019, 2020 and 2021 seasons.

	TOTAL Contracts	BIPOC	White/European American	Prefer Not to Say
2016 - 2019	93,957	20,200 (21.3%)	60,087 (64%)	4,891 (5.2%)
2020	5,818	1,441 (24.8%)	3,167 (54.4%)	269 (4.6%)
2021	6,116	1,750 (28.6%)	3,202 (52.4%)	209 (3.4%)

Additionally, there are discrepancies in pay across racial and ethnic groups. Based on the above chart, BIPOC members received higher pay than those of their White and European American counterparts. However, these numbers are skewed by individual salaries that are increasing the BIPOC average weekly salary. For example, on average, BIPOC workers above the age of 65 received 49 contracts and made \$1,014 per week, but two of these contracts averaged \$1,879 whereas the other 47 contracts averaged out to \$735.67 per week. This is 19.8% less than White and European American workers of the same age group.

# Contract numbers by age and race

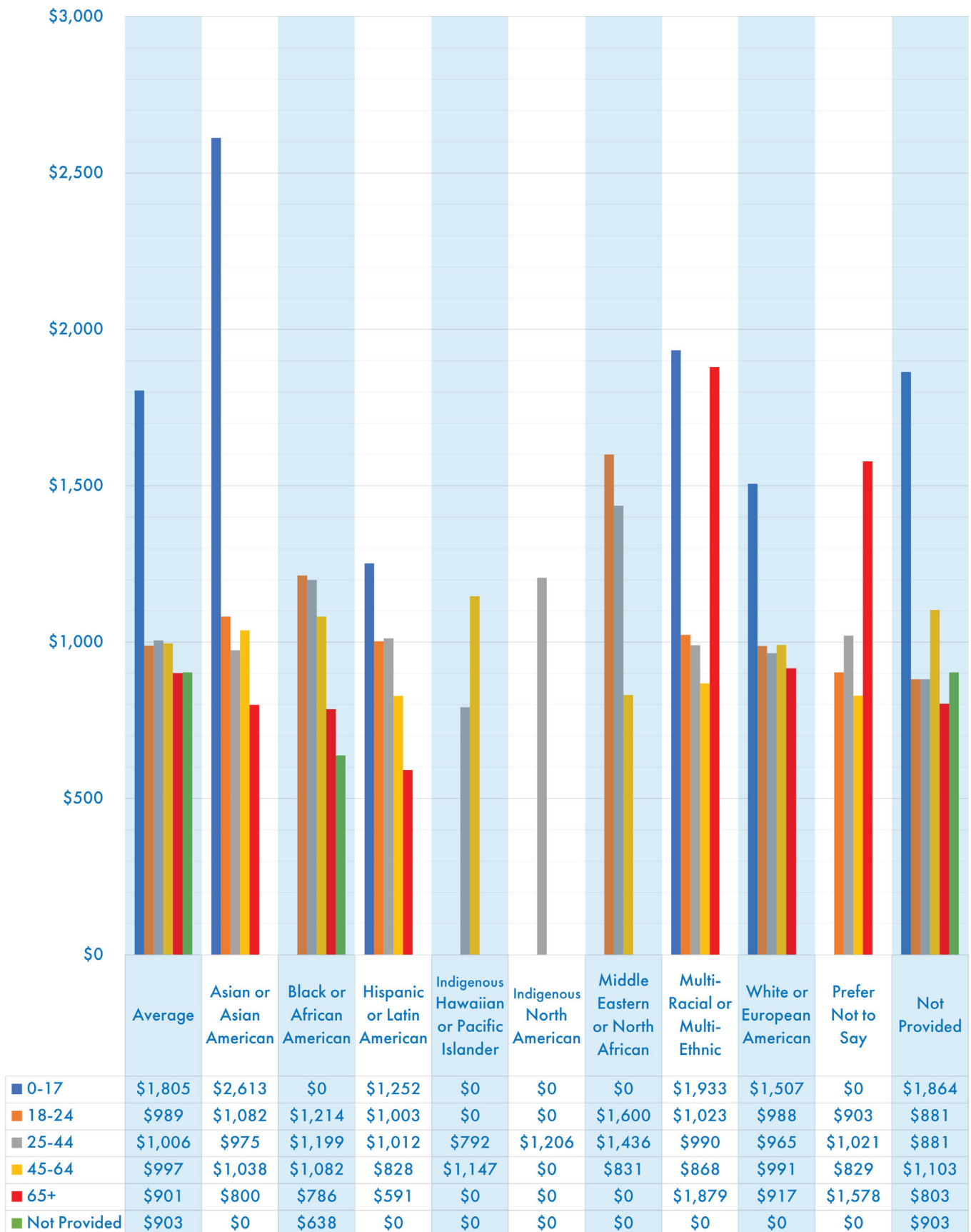
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# Average contract salary by age and race

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# Age and Gender

Another trend that the intersectional data points to are discrepancies across gender as our members age.

**Table 29:** Number of contracts in 2021 for women, men, non-binary or third gender workers, and those who preferred to self-describe or not to say across age groups.

	0 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 +
Women	7	148	1,734	683	138
Men	13	102	1,608	959	178
Non-Binary / Third Gender	0	7	48	4	0
Prefer to Self-Describe	0	2	5	1	0
Prefer Not to Say	0	2	8	0	0

Women received 48.1% of contracts in the 18-24 age group. This increases to 50.1% for the 25-44 age group and then declines to 41.4% for women workers aged 45-64. Women then receive 43.7% of contracts when they reach the ages of 65+. Men received 33.1% of contracts in the

18-24 age group, increasing to 46.5% in the 25-44 age group, and then increasing again to 58.2% in the 45-64 age group. That number decreases to 56.3% when they reach 65+. Non-binary and third gender stage managers and actors experienced an overall decrease in job opportunities as they aged. 2.3% of all the contracts that issued to workers in the 18-24 age range went to non-binary and third gender individuals. This decreases to 1.4% for the 25-44 age group and then again to 0.2% for non-binary and third gender members who were 45-64 years old. We have no record of any non-binary or third gender individuals being hired over the age of 65 in 2021.

This tells us that people of different genders experience job opportunity loss and gain at different rates and even at different stages in their life. Women experience the most loss between 25-44 and 45-64 with an 8% difference, whereas men experience an increase in job opportunities between the same two age groups. However, where women see an increase in job opportunities within the 65+ age group, men experience a decrease in the number of contracts in that same age group. Conversely, non-binary and third gender members experience a decrease in jobs across the board, no matter the age group.

Important to note, here, is the lack of full information we have when it comes to gender data. For example, 15.3% of contracts that went to members who were 18-24 years old went to those who did not provide their gender identity to the union. This could be due to many things, but it does impact the data we present here. Additionally, we must recognize the differences in definitions and relationships to gender identities and expressions that occur between generations. The data analyzed here has no way to account for the potential intergenerational differences in ideologies, definitions of gender, etc.

**Table 30:** Average weekly salary in 2021 for women, men, non-binary or third gender workers, and those who preferred to self-describe or not to say across age groups.

	0 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 +
Women	\$1,996.49	\$1,007.88	\$1,007.82	\$1,026.05	\$903.87
Men	\$1,599.06	\$1,025.25	\$1,013.35	\$975.59	\$898.33
Non-Binary / Third Gender	NA	\$705.89	\$794.72	\$1,186.28	NA
Prefer to Self-Describe	NA	\$1,800.00	\$1,056.70	\$1,008.00	NA
Prefer Not to Say	NA	\$797.00	\$831.21	NA	NA

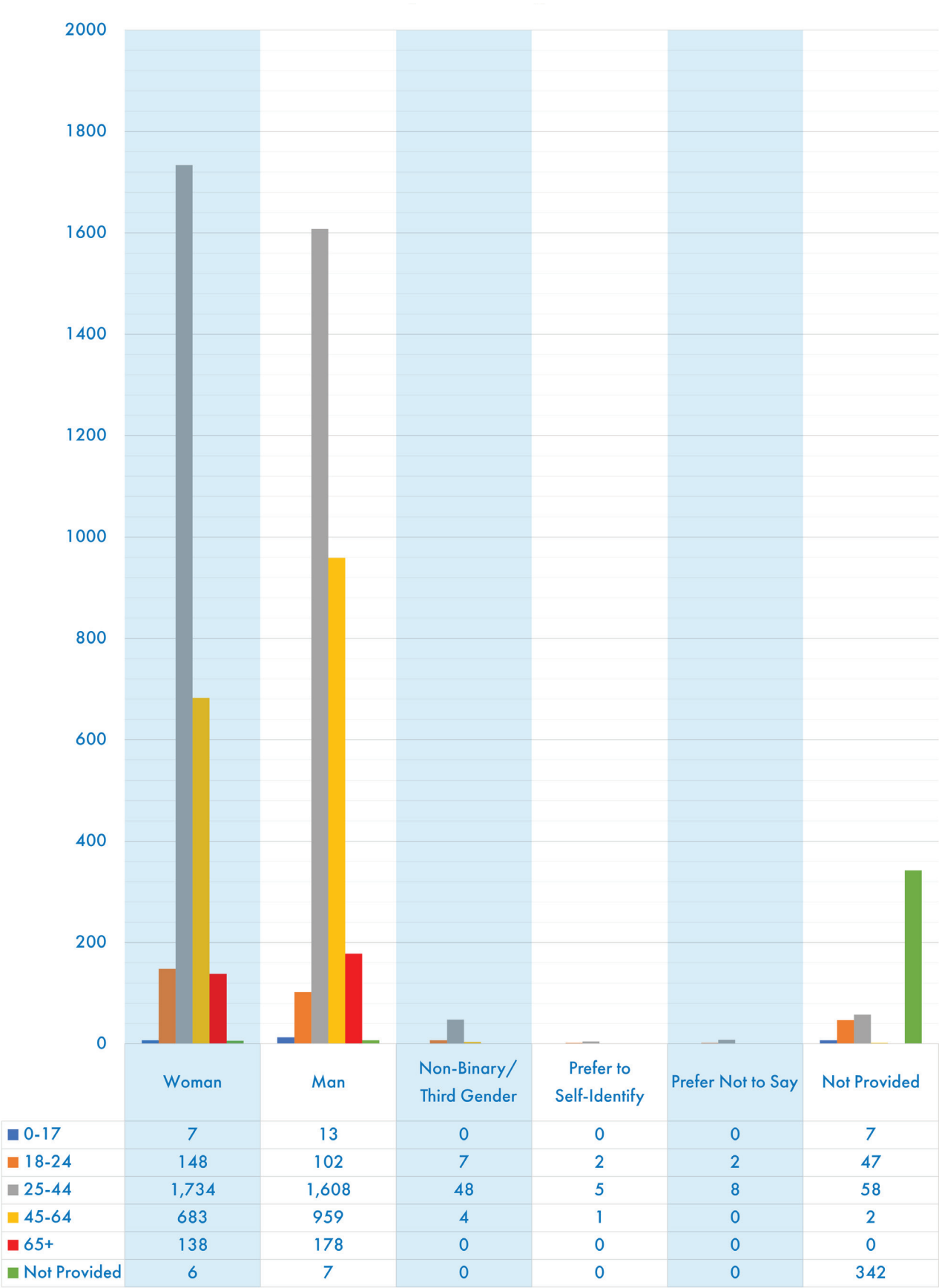
Looking at average weekly salaries across the intersectionality of age and gender, women ages 18-24 and 25-44 made roughly the same (only a 6-cent difference) but experienced an increase of 1.8%. This percentage drops by 11.9% when women reached the ages of 65+. Men experienced a decline in pay each grouping of years (though this is impacted by the number of jobs they received in comparison to both women and non-binary/third gender individuals), dropping 1.2%, 3.7%, and 7.9% between the ages of 18-24, 25-44, 46-64 and 65+ respectively. Non-binary and third-gender individuals experienced the largest percentages of change, though in a positive direction increasing by 11.2% between the ages of 18-24 and 25-44 and then a 33% increase between the ages of 25-44 and 45-64. While the latter numbers are exciting to see, that 33% increase is based on only 4 contracts that went to non-binary and third gender

workers between the ages of 45-64 as opposed to the 48 that went to those aged 25-44.

While we cannot determine the cause for this trend, the statistics do draw attention to the fact that there are clear inconsistencies in the job opportunities and wages made available as workers with a marginalized gender identity (women and non-binary/third gender) get older. One thing that does seem to be part of this conversation is the consistent discriminatory practices against the aging body in the theatre industry, specifically when it comes to the societal conceptions of what both women's and non-binary bodies should look like. With that in mind, the theatre world, and employers in particular, can take this data and redress their own hiring practices so they can be a part of that collective shift towards equitability.

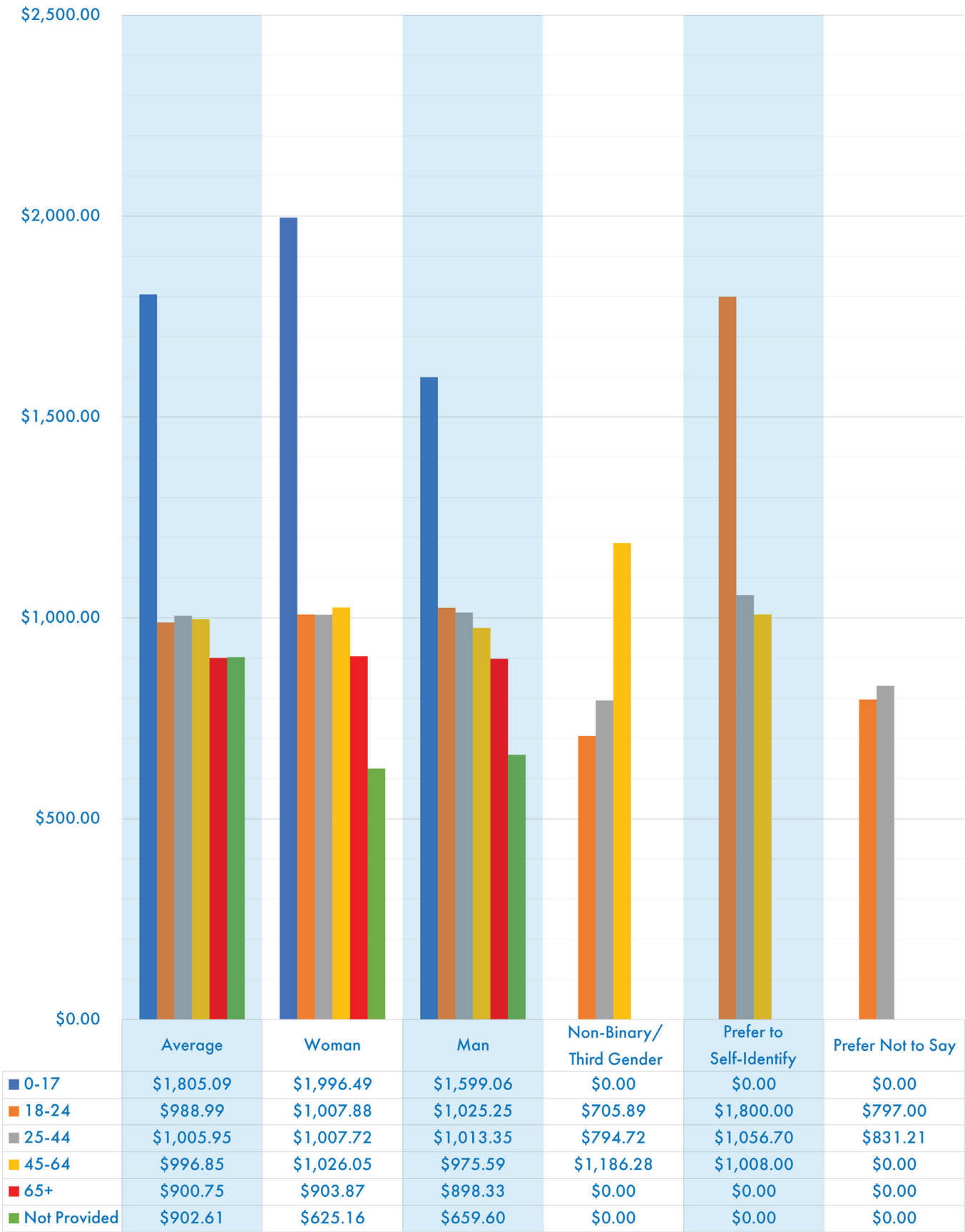
# Contract numbers by age and gender

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# Average contract salary by age and gender

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# Race and Gender

The last intersection that we want to look at in this report (though by no means the last intersection that impacts our members) is the impact of both race and gender on job opportunities and wages.

Across all genders, BIPOC individuals received fewer contracts than White or European Americans.

Of the contracts issued to women in 2021, 31% of contracts went to women of color, whereas 56.1% of contracts went to White or European American women. Similarly, of the contracts issued to men, 30.5% of contracts went to men of color, but 57.1% of contracts went to White or European American men. Also, of the contracts issued to non-binary and third gender people, 34% of contracts went to non-binary and third gender people of color, while 59.3% of contracts went to White or European American people who were non-binary and third gender.



**Table 31:** Number of contracts and average weekly salaries in 2021 for BIPOC and White/European American workers across gender demographics.

Gender	BIPOC Number of Contracts	BIPOC Average Salary	White/European American Number of Contracts	White/European American Average Salary
Women	845	\$998.29	1,523	\$1,009.66
Men	877	\$1,088.52	1,637	\$941.84
Non-Binary / Third Gender	20	\$753.97	35	\$751.51
Prefer to Self-Describe	5	\$1,342.89	3	\$1,093.11
Prefer Not to Say	1	\$790.00	3	\$933.83

These numbers point to the consistent dissimilarities between job opportunities for BIPOC people and White or European Americans, just as women and non-binary or third gender people receive fewer contracts than men. Delving a bit deeper, the data suggests that BIPOC women and non-binary or third gender individuals combined receive fewer contracts than BIPOC men by 1.2%. However, BIPOC men receive less contracts than White or European American women by 42.4%, though neither BIPOC members (men, women, and non-binary and third gender) nor White or European American women receive more contracts than White or European American men.

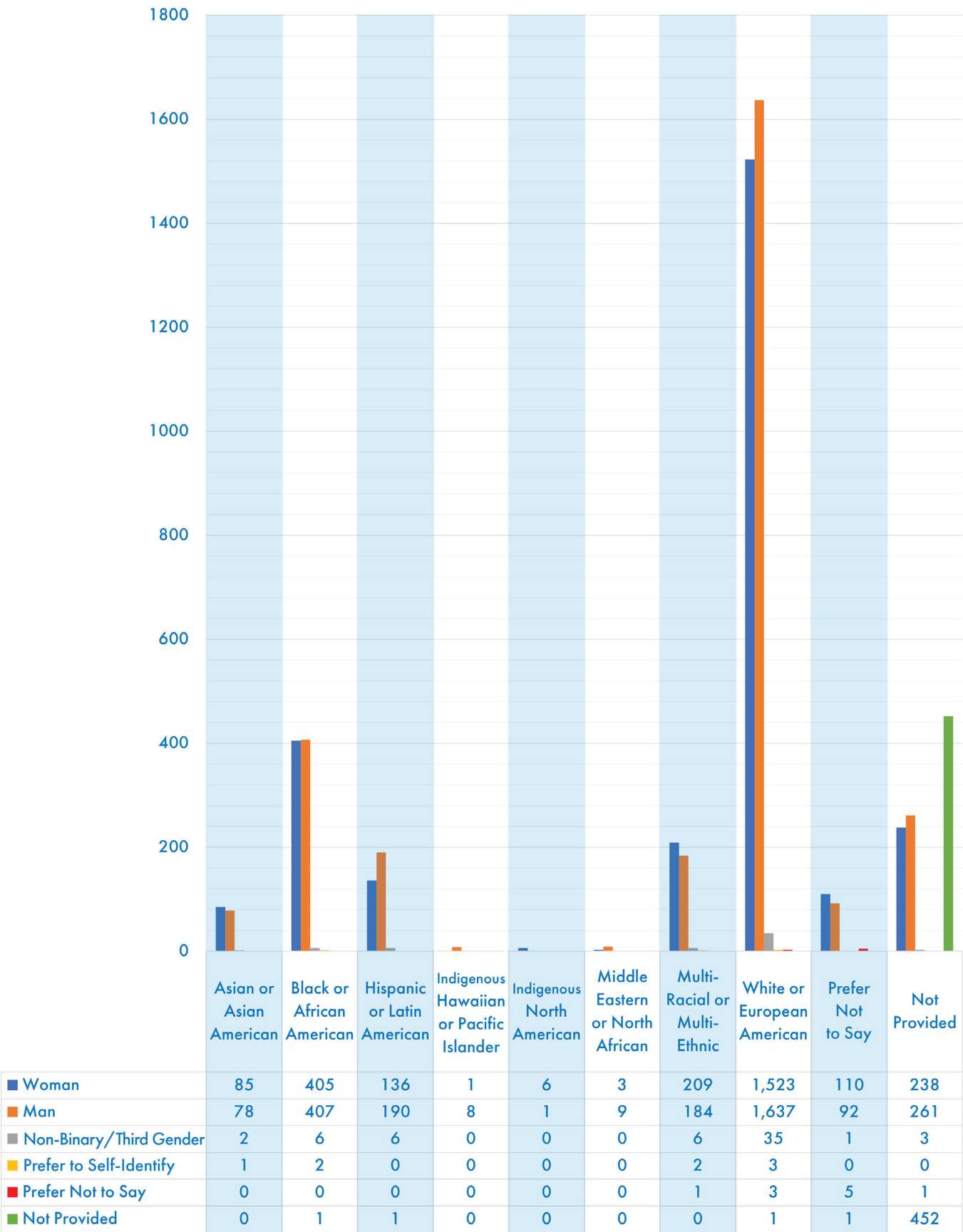
BIPOC women make less on average (\$998.29/week) than White or European American women (\$1,009.66/week) by \$11.37, although the average salary for White and European American women is lowered due to the range of job opportunities afforded to them, almost double the

number of contracts that went to BIPOC women. BIPOC men make more on average (\$1,088.52/week) than White or European American men (\$941.84/week), though this is primarily due to almost double the contracts going to White and European American men than BIPOC men. BIPOC non-binary and third gender workers made about the same (\$753.97/week) as White or European American non-binary and third gender workers (\$751.51/week). Non-binary and third gender workers made less on average than workers with all other race/gender intersectional identities overall.

Again, while we cannot ascertain the exact factors that lead to these disparities, it is important to recognize that people are disproportionately impacted by both their race and gender simultaneously.

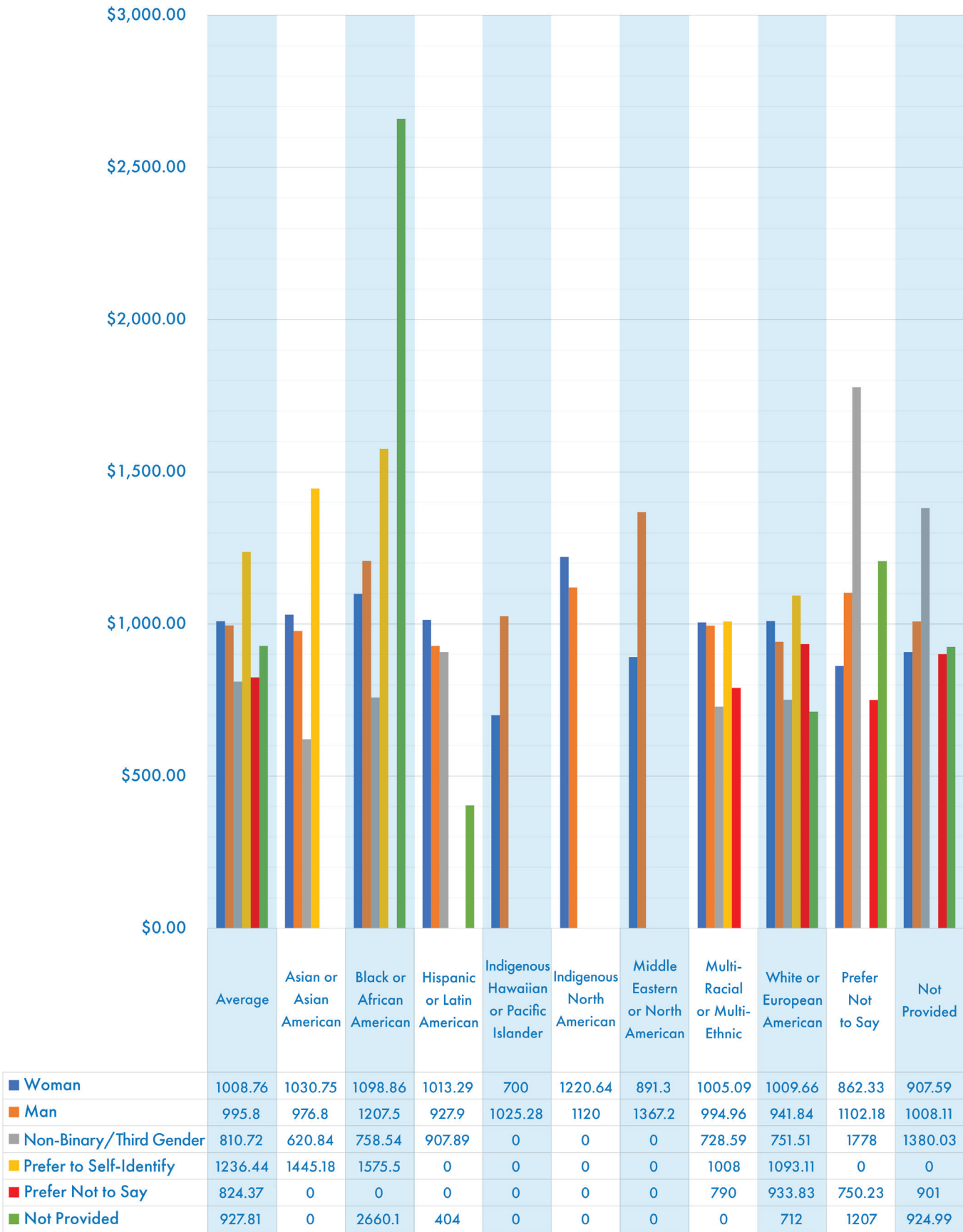
# Contract numbers by race and gender

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# Average contract salary by race and gender

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# Intersectional Representation

## Definitions in this section

### **Men of Color**

Men (including men who are transgender and gender non-conforming) who are not White, or White but multi-racial/ethnic including Non-White/European ancestry.

### **Historically Marginalized/ Erased/ Excluded Communities**

Cultures or communities that have been excluded from historical records, conversation on current events and equitable participation in political, social and economic policy making which often denies or obscures the existence and identities of marginalized people and communities.

### **Intersectionality**

A concept which encompasses the understanding that individuals, communities, their experiences and the ways in which they are perceived by others are defined by many different aspects of identity simultaneously. For example, one's full self is often defined by race/ethnicity, gender, disability, age and more. "Intersectionality" was coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw in her 1989 essay on Black feminism.

### **Equality**

Allocating the same quantity and/or quality of resources to all people and communities regardless of socioeconomic status (immigration

status, class, gender, etc.) or life circumstances, such as caregiving responsibilities.

## **Equity**

Allocating resources to different communities with the recognition that each community faces different degrees of oppression and acknowledges that effective aid requires meeting the needs of communities where they are at. While equality means giving the same resources to everyone regardless of community needs, equity means giving resources to groups of people according to their needs.

## **Allyship**

The practice of supporting an oppressed or marginalized community, to which one does not belong, by acting in solidarity with community-led initiatives, organizing, and learning. While some individuals may self-describe as allies, an allyship is an ongoing commitment to action, not a characteristic or identity.

# Looking Ahead

These numbers feel small and, at times, disheartening. Let's acknowledge and hold onto that realization, but not become swept up or bogged down in the assumption that it means we aren't headed towards or can't strive for change. 2021 is one year; an atypical year that can only be compared to the data we have from 2020, though even then, the data from that year was scant. 2021 saw the start of a slow recovery amidst a global pandemic and must be looked at as such.

What we can do with this information, though, is look at the messages behind the numbers and note the changes that must be made so that this industry can grow into one that is not only inclusive but enacts practices of belonging and care. This is a rebuilding moment, providing the opportunity to not just build on the progress that was interrupted by the pandemic, but to also set new goals, expectations and standards for a new era.



# Key Lessons

## **Change happens slowly.**

It takes time to see significant changes, both in data and in cultural shifts. Incremental change in the meantime can feel discouraging. However, while large-scale change takes time, we should still hold our industry and employers accountable and demand they take responsibility for the change that still needs to happen.

## **Sometimes what we see highlighted in the media isn't the whole picture.**

Because issues like racism, sexism and homophobia are being addressed in the U.S., there are many headlines highlighting diverse plays or musicals, lauding racially diverse casting choices and box office hits that privilege diverse hiring practices. While that is true for those specific shows, there is still a dramatic dissonance between what we see in the media and what we see in the data provided here. While the media highlights increased diversity, contracts are still largely going to historically privileged groups of people (primarily those who are White and/or European American able-bodied men, for example). Just because we see large proclamations of change, that doesn't always translate into actual hiring practices.

## **One's own personal experiences are not invalidated by the data, even if that data reflects a result you weren't expecting.**

There were so few contracts in 2021, and that was true across the board, no matter the job title, no matter your identity. That fear and uncertainty is valid and seen.

**The inequities we have identified in previous reports (2016-2019<sup>9</sup> and 2020<sup>10</sup>) can be magnified in years with such a small sample size.**

As such, we must be especially attuned to bias in settings like 2020 and 2021 where resources and opportunities are scarce.

**There are serious gaps in our data that point to a larger issue in collection and communication.**

As Equity moves forward, we are finding ways to create a safe and inclusive environment, so our members feel comfortable sharing their identities with us. This will, ideally, build stronger communities and fill in those gaps seen throughout the data (“Not Provided”).

Now that we have looked at this data, what comes next? 2022 saw an increase in contracts, which will provide a stronger sample and allow us to look at what has changed as the industry is getting back on its feet. The theatre industry is a microcosm of the country we live in, and these reports provide a platform to see the successes and failures of our work and how it can empower and even liberate the people it impacts. The next report that Equity’s Diversity & Inclusion Department will release, in 2024, will touch on that very question: What next? There will be sources for training programs, self-guided educational tools and guides for self-reflection (both personal and in your organization). It will also look at best practices to build a more inclusive work environment and what you can do if you see yourself or your organization missing the mark. Additionally, the report will address the other side of things like unconscious bias and

<sup>9</sup> [PowerPoint Presentation \(actorsequity.org\)](https://actorsequity.org/powerpoint-presentation)

<sup>10</sup> [hiring-bias-2020.pdf \(actorsequity.org\)](https://actorsequity.org/hiring-bias-2020.pdf)

anti-racism – helping to provide information on what to do once biases are recognized and how to not only recognize potentially racist practices, but also work towards changing them.

The next Hiring Bias and Wage Gap Report will be released looking at the 2022 and 2023 seasons. This shift is to work towards two goals: (1) allow the hiring bias reports to take a more comparative approach, putting two years side-by-side to examine growth over time and (2) to provide practical information and resources in the off-years so we are not only seeing these numbers, but also doing something about them. Additionally, as we move forward, future hiring bias reports will pay closer attention to our more under-discussed populations compared to previous reports including chorus actors and stage managers, while also building on the intersectional work that began in this report.

2022 was a year of regrowth and we look forward to continuing that work in 2023 and beyond, both at Equity and in collaboration with the theatre industry at large!

**For further information, questions or comments, please reach out to [diversity@actorsequity.org](mailto:diversity@actorsequity.org).**