**Mostly Not So Good News for Minorities and Women in Local Radio News**

**by Bob Papper**

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Annual Survey finds the minority workforce in local radio news slipping back to 11.3%. That’s down 0.4 from a year ago. Women numbers were mixed, with women news directors going up but overall women in the radio news workforce going down.

The big, long term picture for minorities in local radio news shows an industry going nowhere, even as the minority population in the U.S. continues to go up.

**Minority population v. minority broadcast workforce 1990 - 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Minority Population in U.S. | 25.9% | 27.9% | 28.6% | 32.8% | 34.9% | 37.4% | 38% | 38.3%\* |
| Minority Radio Workforce | 10.8 | 14.7 | 10.0 | 7.9 | 5.0 | 9.8 | 11.7 | 11.3 |

\*projected

**Radio news work force - 1995 - 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Caucasian | 85.3% | 90% | 92.1% | 95.0% | 90.2% | 88.3% | 88.7% |
| African American | 5.7 | 5 | 0.7 | 2.9 | 4.4 | 2.8 | 5.1 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 7.5 | 3 | 6.0 | 0.7 | 2.7 | 4.2 | 3.6 |
| Asian American | 0.6 | 1 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 4 | 1.9 |
| Native American | 1.0 | 1 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1 | 0.7 | 0.6 |

The minority workforce in radio fell by 0.4, despite big gains coming from African Americans, which nearly doubled from a year ago. But Hispanic and Native American slid back, and Asian American plunged in half.

**Radio: Men vs. Women**

In radio news, historically, there have been about twice as many men as women, and that continued in this year’s survey. Almost all that disparity comes from white men who outnumber white women about 2.3 to 1. There were more Native American men than women, but in all other groups, the women outnumbered the men. The highest disparity involves Asian American, followed by African American and then Hispanic/Latino.

**Radio News directors**

Bad news for minority news directors in radio.

**Radio news directors – 1995 - 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Caucasian | 91.4% | 94% | 89.0% | 92.9% | 94.9% | 93.8% | 94.1% |
| African American | 5.4 | 3 | 0.0 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 2.3 | 2.5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2.4 | 2 | 8.8 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.5 |
| Asian American | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.9 | 0 | 0.8 | 0 |
| Native American | 0.8 | 1 | 2.2 | 0.9 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 0.8 |

Radio news directors of color slid slightly from last year’s 6.2% to this year’s 5.9%. African American and Hispanic radio news directors went up, but Asian American and Native American went down. A year ago, non-commercial stations had almost three times the percent of minority news directors as commercial stations. This year, they’re just over a point apart. Minority news directors were much more likely to be found in the Northeast and West than in the Midwest or South.

**Minorities in local radio news – 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | News Staffs  With Minorities | Minority  News Directors | Minorities as  Percentage of  Work Force | Average  Number of  Minorities on Staff |
| All Radio | 14.9% | 5.9% | 11.3% | 0.2 |
| Major Market | 56 | 23.3 | 21.5 | 1.2 |
| Large Market | 18.8 | 0 | 10.1 | 0.2 |
| Medium Market | 7 | 4.3 | 3.5 | 0.1 |
| Small Market | 2.2 | 3.9 | 1.7 | <0.1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Commercial | 9.1 | 5.6 | 8.1 | 0.1 |
| Non-commercial | 33.3 | 6.8 | 16.6 | 0.5 |

The numbers are almost universally bad this year. The percentage of radio news staffs with minorities fell about 2 points; minority news directors dropped by 0.3; the minority work force in radio news fell by 0.4. Other than major markets, the rest dropped in most categories. The percentage of staffs with minorities dropped for both commercial and non-commercial stations. Commercial stations went up in minority news directors and the minority percentage of the work force, but non-commercial stations dropped across the board. As usual, stations in the Midwest lagged all other regions.

**Radio General Managers**

**Radio general managers – 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Percent Caucasian | Percent Minority | Percent Men | Percent Women |
| All Radio | 94.3% | 5.7% | 77.8% | 22.2% |

The percentage of minority radio general managers went up 1.7 from a year ago. They were way more likely at non-commercial stations than at commercial ones (by more than 4:1), in major markets and in the Northeast. African American GMs came in at 3.1 percent, followed by Hispanic/Latino at 2.2 percent and Native American at 0.4 percent. The survey found no Asian American general managers. Women general managers rose by a point over last year, which was up 2 points from the year before. Women GM’s were slightly more common at non-commercial stations and in major markets, the Midwest and the West.

**Radio: Women**

**Women in local radio news – 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | News Staffs  With Women | Women  News Directors | Women as  Percentage of  Work Force | Average  Number of  Women on Staff |
| All Radio | 48.3% | 28.3% | 34.3% | 0.7 |
| Major Market | 80 | 25.8 | 40.7 | 2.2 |
| Large Market | 68.8 | 34.2 | 41.6 | 1 |
| Medium Market | 38 | 25.8 | 25.7 | 0.4 |
| Small Market | 32.6 | 29.5 | 25 | 0.2 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Commercial | 38.6 | 22.7 | 28.5 | 0.5 |
| Non-commercial | 78.6 | 45.8 | 44 | 1.4 |

After dropping a point a year ago, women news directors shot up more than 5 points this time around. Women are twice as likely to be news directors at non-commercial stations than commercial ones. Again. They’re also far more likely to be in the Northeast than anywhere else. Almost all the rest of the numbers for women went down. The percentage of staffs with women dropped nearly 4 points, and women in the radio news workforce fell from 36.1 to 34.3. Non-commercial stations are much higher than commercial stations, but all of them fell except in the news director category.

Major markets are those with 1 million or more listeners. Large markets are from 250,000 to 1 million. Medium markets are 50,000 to 250,000. Small markets are fewer than 50,000.

**For More Information**

Alliance for Women in Media (AWM)

202-750-3664

<https://allwomeninmedia.org>

Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA)

Phone: (415) 346-2051

[www.aaja.org](http://www.aaja.org)

Association for Women in Communication (AWC)

Phone: (417) 886-8606

[www.womcom.org](http://www.womcom.org)

Emma L. Bowen Foundation for Minority Interests in Media

[www.emmabowenfoundation.com/](http://www.emmabowenfoundation.com/)

International Women’s Media Foundation

(202) 496-1992

[www.iwmf.org](http://www.iwmf.org)

National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ)

Phone: (301) 405-0248

[www.nabj.org](http://www.nabj.org)

National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ)

Phone: 202-853-7760

[www.nahj.org](http://www.nahj.org)

National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association

Phone: (202) 588-9888

[www.nlgja.org](http://www.nlgja.org)

Native American Journalists Association (NAJA)

Phone: (405) 325-1649

[www.naja.com](http://www.naja.com)

UNITY Journalists for Diversity

Phone: (414) 335-1478

[www.unityjournalists.org](http://www.unityjournalists.org)

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**About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2017 among all 1,683 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,542 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,333 television stations (79.2%) and 415 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,110 radio stations. Some data sets (e.g. the number of TV stations originating local news, getting it from others and women TV news directors) are based on a complete census and are not projected from a smaller sample.