An introductory note, if you will. 2019 marks my 25th year conducting the

RTDNA (before that, RTNDA) Annual Survey. First at Ball State University and now at Hofstra University. It has been my privilege to do this, and I want to thank RTDNA, Ball State and Hofstra for the support and opportunity to keep this going. Most of all, I want to thank all of you who spend what I know is way too much time poring over the way too many questions that I ask on this survey. Thank you.

- Bob Papper

**Mostly Good News for Minorities and Women in Local Radio News**

**by Bob Papper**

It’s a mixed picture, but the latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Annual Survey finds the minority workforce in local radio news at its highest level in more than 20 years … and a big jump for women in the radio news workforce.

The big, long term picture for minorities in local radio news shows an industry well behind an ever-increasing minority population in the U.S.

**Minority population v. minority broadcast workforce 1990 - 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Minority Population in U.S. | 25.9% | 27.9% | 28.6% | 32.8% | 34.9% | 37.4% | 38% | 38.3% | 38.7%\* |
| Minority Radio Workforce | 10.8 | 14.7 | 10.0 | 7.9 | 5.0 | 9.8 | 11.7 | 11.3 | 14.5 |

\*projected

**Radio news work force - 1995 - 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Caucasian | 85.3% | 90% | 92.1% | 95.0% | 90.2% | 88.3% | 88.7% | 85.5% |
| African American | 5.7 | 5 | 0.7 | 2.9 | 4.4 | 2.8 | 5.1 | 5.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 7.5 | 3 | 6.0 | 0.7 | 2.7 | 4.2 | 3.6 | 6 |
| Asian American | 0.6 | 1 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 4 | 1.9 | 2.1 |
| Native American | 1.0 | 1 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.4 |

The minority workforce in radio shot up by 3.2. At 14.5%, the minority radio workforce is the highest it’s been in more than 20 years. In 1998, it hit its all-time peak of 16%. At 14.5%, radio is at its third highest percentage. Note that both of the previous record highs for minorities in radio news came before the DC Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the FCC’s EEO guidelines in Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod v. FCC.

**Radio: Men vs. Women**

In radio news, historically, there have been about twice as many men as women, but that changed dramatically this year. Men came in at 55.6% of the total with women at 44.4%. All the disparity comes from Caucasians where men outnumber women 1.5:1. In all minority groups, women outnumber men except Native American – which are even.

**Radio News directors**

Minority news directors in radio hit the highest level in five years.

**Radio news directors – 1995 - 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Caucasian | 91.4% | 94% | 89.0% | 92.9% | 94.9% | 93.8% | 94.1% | 91.8% |
| African American | 5.4 | 3 | 0.0 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 3.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2.4 | 2 | 8.8 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.5 | 3.4 |
| Asian American | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.9 | 0 | 0.8 | 0 | 0.3 |
| Native American | 0.8 | 1 | 2.2 | 0.9 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 1.3 |

Radio news directors of color jumped from 5.9% a year ago to 8.2% this year. That’s the highest level since 2014. All groups went up. Large markets led all other sizes, and the West and South led the Northeast and Midwest. Non-commercial stations were twice as likely as commercial ones to have minority news directors.

**Minorities in local radio news – 2019**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | News Staffs  With Minorities | Minority  News Directors | Minorities as  Percentage of  Work Force |
| All Radio | 22.7% | 8.2% | 14.5% |
| Major Market | 65.2 | 9.5 | 20.9 |
| Large Market | 39 | 15.5 | 14.8 |
| Medium Market | 9.8 | 6 | 4.6 |
| Small Market | 4.5 | 5.8 | 2.6 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Commercial | 9.7 | 6.3 | 6.3 |
| Non-commercial | 48 | 12.6 | 18.7 |

In a complete reversal from a year ago, the minority numbers are almost all up. After falling by 2 points a year ago, the percentage of radio news staffs with minorities rose almost 8 points this year. Minority news directors are up by 2.3, and the minority workforce is at a 20+ year high. As usual, the South and West led the way with the Midwest lagging well behind. Also as usual, non-commercial stations remain far more diverse than commercial ones, but all the numbers are up for both groups except the minority workforce which fell nearly 2 points at commercial stations.

**Radio General Managers**

**Radio general managers – 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Percent Caucasian | Percent Minority | Percent Men | Percent Women |
| All Radio | 92.8% | 7.2% | 75.6% | 24.4% |

The percentage of minority radio general managers went up 1.5 from a year ago … after going up 1.7 the year before. They were twice as likely to be found at non-commercial stations than at commercial ones, and in major and large markets and in the South. African American GMs came in at 2.8%, tied with Hispanic/Latino at 2.8% and Native American at 1.3% and Asian American at 0.3%. All groups were up from a year ago except African American, which slid from 3.1 to 2.8.

Women general managers rose by 2 points over last year … which was up a point over the previous year, which was up 2 points from the year before. Women GM’s were slightly more common at commercial stations and much more common in major markets and the West.

**Radio: Women**

**Women in local radio news – 2019**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | News Staffs  With Women | Women  News Directors | Women as  Percentage of  Work Force |
| All Radio | 52.5% | 28.2% | 44.4% |
| Major Market | 89.1 | 35.4 | 54.2 |
| Large Market | 72.9 | 36.1 | 45.4 |
| Medium Market | 38.2 | 21.1 | 27.5 |
| Small Market | 36.4 | 27.6 | 27.7 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Commercial | 35.9 | 23.2 | 26 |
| Non-commercial | 85 | 39.3 | 53.7 |

Women news directors are within a tenth of a point of where they were a year ago. Their percentage dropped in small and medium markets but rose in large and major ones. Women news directors remain much more likely at non-commercial stations than commercial ones, although the margin got noticeably closer this year.

Most numbers here are positive. The percentage of news staffs with women went up more than 4 points – although all of the increase came at non-commercial stations. That was also true of women as a percentage of the work force – which jumped by 10 points.

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)

The 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)

[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)

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

***Bob Papper is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Journalism at Hofstra University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news. This research was supported by the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication at Hofstra University and the Radio Television Digital News Association.***

**About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2018 among all 1,685 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,481 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,310 television stations (77.7%) and 645 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,938 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.