Please note the new partnership on this research as it becomes the RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey. I am privileged to have joined the outstanding faculty at Syracuse. That’s the name you’ll see on the research from here on … and that’s what you’ll see on the painfully long survey questionnaire later this fall.

Bob Papper

**Mixed Numbers for Minorities and Women in Local Radio News**

**by Bob Papper**

The latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey found that the minority workforce in radio went up nearly a point to 15.4%. That’s the second highest it’s been in the 26 years I’ve been doing the survey … and the highest since 1998, when it hit an all-time high of 16%. And that was before the DC Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the FCC’s EEO guidelines in Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod v. FCC.

Of course, 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 - 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Minority Population in U.S. | 25.9% | 27.9% | 28.6% | 32.8% | 34.9% | 37.4% | 38% | 38.3% | 38.7% | 39.3%\* |
| Minority Radio Workforce | 10.8 | 14.7 | 10.0 | 7.9 | 5.0 | 9.8 | 11.7 | 11.3 | 14.5 | 15.4 |

\*projected

**Radio news work force - 1995 - 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Caucasian | 85.3% | 90% | 92.1% | 95.0% | 90.2% | 88.3% | 88.7% | 85.5% | 84.6% |
| African American | 5.7 | 5 | 0.7 | 2.9 | 4.4 | 2.8 | 5.1 | 5.9 | 6.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 7.5 | 3 | 6.0 | 0.7 | 2.7 | 4.2 | 3.6 | 6 | 5 |
| Asian American | 0.6 | 1 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 4 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 3.1 |
| Native American | 1.0 | 1 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.5 |

Africans Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans all went up from a year ago, but Hispanics fell by one point.

**Radio: Men vs. Women**

In radio news, historically, there have generally been about 50% more men as women. That eased up a bit last year but widened again this time around: 60.1% men and 39.9% women. The difference is almost entirely among whites. There are more African American, Hispanic/Latino and Asian American women than men. There are more Native American men than women, but the numbers are small. Among whites, it’s 65% men and 35% women.

The non-commercial workforce is about twice as diverse as the commercial workforce, regardless of specific ethnicity.

**Radio News directors**

After going up substantially a year ago, radio news directors of color dropped a point – from 8.2% to 7.1%.

**Radio news directors – 1995 - 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Caucasian | 91.4% | 94% | 89% | 92.9% | 94.9% | 93.8% | 94.1% | 91.8% | 92.9% |
| African American | 5.4 | 3 | 0.0 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 3.4 | 2.7 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2.4 | 2 | 8.8 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.5 | 3.4 | 2.5 |
| Asian American | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.9 | 0 | 0.8 | 0 | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| Native American | 0.8 | 1 | 2.2 | 0.9 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 1.3 | 1.4 |

African American and Hispanic/Latino fell, by 0.7 and 0.9, respectively. Both Asian American and Native American edged up. The bigger the market, the more likely for a station to have a minority radio news director. Minority news directors were most common in the South and, as with TV, a lot less common in the Midwest.

**Minorities in local radio news – 2020**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | News Staffs  With Minorities | Minority  News Directors | Minorities as  Percentage of  Work Force |
| All Radio | 23.2% | 7.1% | 15.4% |
| Major Market | 66 | 14.5 | 22.8 |
| Large Market | 26.3 | 9.1 | 9.4 |
| Medium Market | 12.9 | 4.8 | 7 |
| Small Market | 7 | 4.5 | 5.7 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Commercial | 9.5 | 7.6 | 9.1 |
| Non-commercial | 47.7 | 6.1 | 19.2 |

For the second year in a row, the minority numbers are almost all up. The percentage of radio news staffs with minorities rose by half a point after a big jump a year ago. Minority news directors are down by 1+, but the minority workforce is up nearly a point and nearly at the record of 16% set in 1998. Non-commercial stations lead the way in overall diversity, although not with news directors. As usual, the Midwest lags well behind all other areas.

**Radio General Managers**

**Radio general managers – 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Percent Caucasian | Percent Minority | Percent Men | Percent Women |
| All Radio | 93.7% | 6.3% | 76.4% | 23.6% |

The percentage of minority radio general managers fell by almost a point from a year ago. They were more than twice as likely in major markets than any other size and four times as likely at non-commercial stations as commercial ones. Minority GMs were most often found in the West and the Northeast and way less often in the Midwest.

African American GMs came in at 2.9% (up a hair from last year) and well ahead of Hispanic/Latino at 1.8% (down a point). Native American came in at 1.1% (down a hair) and Asian American at 0.5% (up a hair).

Women general managers dropped by less than a point. Women GMs were much more common in major markets and at the biggest radio news operations. There are no meaningful differences based on geography or commercial and non-commercial.

**Radio: Women**

**Women in local radio news – 2020**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | News Staffs  With Women | Women  News Directors | Women as  Percentage of  Work Force |
| All Radio | 47.8% | 28.8% | 39.9% |
| Major Market | 81.1 | 40.3 | 48.4 |
| Large Market | 63.2 | 24.2 | 42.7 |
| Medium Market | 35.6 | 20.8 | 22.7 |
| Small Market | 31.4 | 33.9 | 27.6 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Commercial | 34.7 | 27.5 | 26.6 |
| Non-commercial | 71 | 31.6 | 47.8 |

Women news directors are up more than half a point from last year. Their percentage dropped in large markets but held largely steady in medium markets and went up in both small and major markets. Historically, women news directors have been much more common at non-commercial stations than commercial ones. Last year, the margin got closer, and this year they’re only 4 points apart. Geographically, the numbers are almost identical.

Both news staffs with women and women as a percentage of the workforce fell by nearly 5 points. Note that women are much more likely to be found in large and major markets … and dramatically less likely to be found in medium and small markets and at commercial stations.

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)

(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)

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

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**About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2019 among all 1,702 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,427 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,313 television stations (77.1%) and 673 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,996 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.