



# Minority representation soars to record high in radio news

By Bob Papper and Keren Henderson

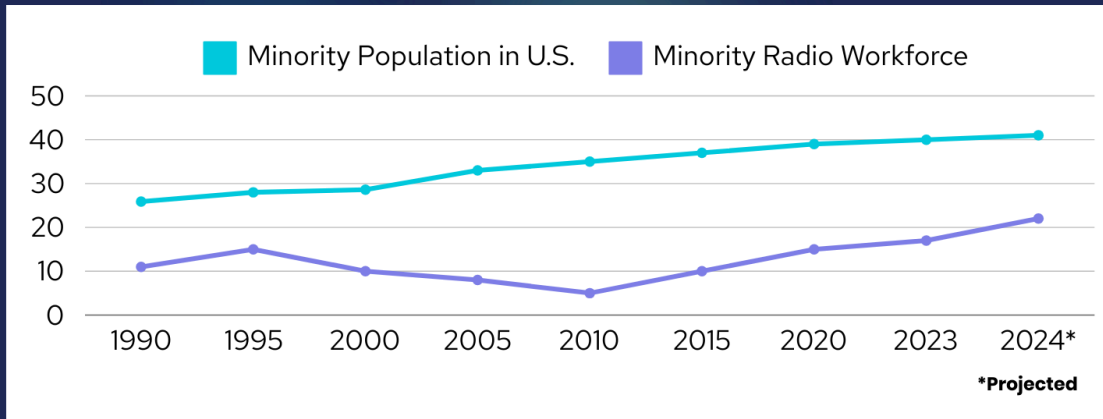
Aug. 1, 2024 – The latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey found that the minority workforce in radio rose nearly 5 points to 21.5% – the highest level ever – eclipsing the old record of 17.8% set in 2022. All minority groups set record highs except Native Americans, which edged down by 0.1.

## Minority population vs. minority broadcast workforce 1990 - 2024

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2023	2024
Minority Population in U.S.	25.9%	27.9%	28.6%	32.8%	34.9%	37.4%	39.6%	40.7%	41.1%*
Minority Radio Workforce	10.8	14.7	10.0	7.9	5.0	9.8	15.4	16.6	21.5

\*projected

# MINORITY POPULATION VS. MINORITY RADIO NEWS WORKFORCE



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## Radio news workforce - 1995 - 2024

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	2023	2024
Caucasian	85.3%	90%	92.1%	95%	90.2%	84.6%	84.2%	83.4%	78.5%
African American	5.7	5	0.7	2.9	4.4	6.8	6.7	6.3	7.5
Hispanic/Latino	7.5	3	6.0	0.7	2.7	5	5.6	5.5	7.7
Asian American	0.6	1	0.7	0.4	1.7	3.1	2.6	3.8	5.4
Native American	1.0	1	0.5	1.1	1	0.5	0.9	1	0.9

The big change this year came in commercial radio – which soared from last year’s 9.8% minority to this year’s 19.4%. Non-commercial radio held fairly steady at 23.5% minority – compared to 23.2% last year. We cannot account for the big jump at commercial stations. We’ll wait until next year’s numbers to see if this is real or a one-year anomaly.

## Radio men vs. women

In radio news, historically, men have outnumbered women by about 50%. Men still outnumber women, but the margin got noticeably tighter this year, with 57.4% men compared to 42.6% women. That’s 4 points down for men, and 4 points up for women. This year, only white men outnumber women. Among Caucasians, the percentage is 61.6% men versus 38.4% women. That’s 3 points down for men, 3 points up for women. In all other groups, women now outnumber men. With Hispanics, it’s 54.7% women and 45.3% men; African American women outnumber men, 57.5% to 42.5%; Asian American women way outnumber the men, 64.2% to 35.8%, and Native American women are 55.6% to 44.4% men.

# RADIO NEWS WORKFORCE GENDER BREAKDOWN

- In radio news, men have historically outnumbered women by about 50%.
- This year, men still outnumber women but the gap has narrowed to 57.4% men and 42.6% women.
- Only white men still outnumber women at 61.6% versus 38.4%.
- In all other ethnic groups, women now outnumber men, with the largest gap among Asian Americans at 64.2% women to 35.8% men.

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## Radio news directors

Minority radio news director percentages are going up and down. Last year was down 1.5; this year it's up 1.7.

### Radio news directors - 1995 - 2024

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2023	2024
Caucasian	91.4%	94%	89%	92.9%	94.9%	92.9%	91.6%	89.9%
African American	5.4	3	0.0	2.7	1.7	2.7	4.1	4.6
Hispanic/Latino	2.4	2	8.8	2.7	1.7	2.5	2.3	3.9
Asian American	0	0	0	0.9	0	0.5	1.3	1.3
Native American	0.8	1	2.2	0.9	1.7	1.4	0.8	0.3

It's not the first time that minority radio news directors have cracked the 10% bar, but it's been quite a few years. African American and, especially, Hispanic/Latino went up from last year. Asian American held steady while Native American fell.

The South and the West have the highest percentage of minority news directors, with the Northeast and Midwest trailing well behind. Not this year. The Northeast joined the South and West, leaving the Midwest well behind.

### Minorities in local radio news – 2024

	News Staffs With Minorities	Minority News Directors	Minorities as Percentage of Work Force
All Radio	13.6%	10.1%	21.5%
Market size:			
Major Market	36.8	32.4	37.2
Large Market	14.5	6.9	13.4
Medium Market	13.6	7.9	16.3
Small Market	4.1	6.9	5.2
Commercial	10.2	8.7	19.4
Non-commercial	23.5	13.9	23.5

The percentage of minority radio news directors is up from 8.4% last year to 10.1% this time around. All market sizes are up except large markets. The percentage of radio news staff with minorities dropped by 8 points from last year. But the percentages of minorities in radio news shot up by almost 5. All market sizes are up – especially major markets. All the growth of minorities comes in commercial radio; non-commercial is largely unchanged from last year.

### Radio women

#### Women in local radio news – 2024

	News Staffs With Women	Women News Directors	Women as Percentage of Workforce
All Radio	51.9%	26.1%	42.6%
Market size:			
Major Market	86.2	47.1	50.7
Large Market	73.3	42.1	46.9
Medium Market	45.3	14.8	39.2
Small Market	35.9	23.1	23.7
Commercial	39.9	20.4	29.8
Non-commercial	84.3	43	54.6

Historically, women news directors have been much more common at non-commercial stations than commercial ones, and that’s certainly true again this year. There were gains for women news directors in major markets but losses in medium and small markets. In the end, the percentage overall is virtually identical to a year ago. Women news directors are most common in the West. This year we also have the first reports of non-binary news directors – at 0.7% overall.

As usual, the bigger the market and the bigger the newsroom, the more likely that women will be part of it, and all but the smallest market sizes went up. The same was true for the percentage of women in the workforce.

## Radio general managers

### Radio general managers – 2024

	Percent Caucasian	Percent Minority	Percent Men	Percent Women	Non-Binary
All Radio	91.8%	8.2%	75.7%	23.8%	0.5%

The percentage of minority radio general managers edged up this year, picking up half a point. As usual, they are most often in the biggest markets, but for the second year in a row, not much more common to non-commercial stations than commercial ones.

African American GMs came in at 3.2% (down 0.9 from last year), identical to Hispanic/Latino at 3.2% (up 0.7 from last year). Asian American doubled from 0.6% last year to 1.3% this year. Native American slipped 0.1 to 0.5%.

Women general managers lost 1.1 after losing 0.8 last year and 1.3 the year before. Market size and staff size made little difference, but non-commercial stations were noticeably higher.

## LGBTQ+

This is the third year that we've asked whether "you or any members of the news staff were members of the LGBTQ+ community." Overall, 19.7% say yes. The number has edged up from 15% to 17.8% to this year's 19.7%. LGBTQ+ is understood to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning. The plus represents other sexual identities.

Major markets, at 44.4%, and non-commercial stations, at 44.1%, lead the way – by far – saying that they have LGBTQ+ members on the staff. The bigger the staff, the more likely the positive response (no surprise there). Once again, stations in the Northeast are much higher than all other regions.

For the second time, we asked if any staff members were openly members of the transgender community. Overall, 15.6% say yes, which is down from last year's 18.2%. Distribution is surprisingly similar across all sub-groups, although the smallest markets are lower and stations in the West are much higher.

## Walking the talk

This is the second year we've asked whether the station has done anything to make the newsroom more inclusive. As with last year, nearly a third (30.2%) of radio news directors and general managers say yes. That broke down to 64.5% of non-commercial stations and 18.5% of

commercial ones. The bigger the market, the more likely a “yes” answer. Geography made little difference.

The comments and what stations are doing cover a pretty broad range of activities. The top of the list, at 29.2%, is recruiting – mostly more efforts at casting a wider net. Here’s what news directors and general managers had to say, in their own words:

- More active recruiting. Partnering with other nonprofit newsrooms. Actively seeking DEI candidates for current job opening
- Open job posting. Interviewed a female candidate. She withdrew after learning the job responsibilities

In the Survey, 17.8% said they had created internal committees, were just discussing the issues or working on professional development:

- We now have a DEI community advisory board
- We receive input from other part time employees from other departments
- We have a DEI council, a charter and regular learning sessions with that group on a wide range of issues from creating the right culture of inclusiveness to keep people in positions and in how we recruit for new positions

Right behind that, at 17.7% managers said, specifically, that they either had hired someone from a diverse background or the station was already inclusive:

- We are already inclusive
- We have the most diverse news women in our region
- Added a full-time member that is Hispanic and have been working with African-American women in the market to develop news and journalism skills

Next, at 14.6% came a bunch of comments related mostly to hiring women as part-time employees or interns:

- Had a female summer intern
- Internship programs to attract students of color

Another 13.5% said they were working on news content and making sure that they had diverse sources when covering the news:

- News content reflect concerns, social issues affecting Hispanic community

- Specific listening project with area groups of different ethnicities, ages, lifestyles; recruiting of part-time news staff/volunteers of minority groups, continued training on diversifying sources on stories
- Source diversity audit, with intention to make sources more diverse

And 7.3% were hard to categorize:

- I just started so I'm not sure. But my organization is mindful of others in a good way
- Added a news department
- Less conservative

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: (202) 729-8383  
[www.aaja.org](http://www.aaja.org)

The Association for Women in Communication (AWC)  
Phone: (417) 409-2492  
[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.nabjonline.org](http://www.nabjonline.org)

National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ)  
[www.nahj.org](http://www.nahj.org)

The Association of LGBTQ Journalists

Phone: (202) 588-9888

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

Native American Journalists Association (NAJA)

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

### **About the Authors**

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### **About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2023 among all 1,876 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 4,764 radio stations. The television response rate is different for every question, but Valid responses came from as many as 1,387 television stations (73.9%) and 631 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,902 radio stations. Some data sets (e.g. the number of TV stations originating local news, getting news from others and women TV news directors) are based on a complete census and are not projected from a smaller sample.