



TV News Gets More Diverse, Still Doesn't Reflect Public

By Bob Papper with Keren Henderson

Nov. 16, 2022 – The latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey finds the minority workforce in TV news fell to 25.5%. That’s down 2.2 from last year’s record high. But that’s deceptive. The minority workforce at non-Hispanic TV stations again rose to the highest level ever, 24.5% – up 0.9 from last year.

How can there be a drop in the minority workforce overall and a rise in the minority workforce at non-Hispanic stations? Participation of Hispanic stations dropped 72% in this year’s survey versus past years. That drop meant that total minorities in local TV (and some other numbers as well) are down even as the percentage of minorities and Hispanics at non-Hispanic stations went up.

Women TV news directors also hit another record high.

In the big picture, though, there’s still a large gap between the minority population in the U.S. and the minority workforce in local TV news.

Minority population v. minority TV news workforce 1990 - 2022

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022
Minority Population in U.S.	25.9%	27.9%	28.6%	32.8%	34.9%	37.4%	39.3%	39.6%	39.9%*
Minority TV Workforce	17.8	17.1	21.0	21.2	20.2	22.2	26.6	27.7	25.5%

*projected

Television news work force - 1995 - 2022

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022
Caucasian	82.9%	79.0%	78.8%	79.8%	77.8%	73.4%	72.3%	74.5%
African American	10.1	11.0	10.3	11.5	10.8	13.3	12.3	13.2
Hispanic/Latino	4.2	7.0	8.7	5.8	8.2	10.9	12.2	9.1
Asian American	2.2	3.0	1.9	2.3	2.9	2	2.8	2.5
Native American	0.6	<1.0	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.7

The minority workforce in local television news fell by 2.2% to 25.5%. African Americans rose 0.9 to 13.2%. Hispanics fell by 3.1 to 9.1, but that was because so few Hispanic stations participated in this year's Survey. Asian Americans dropped by 0.3, and Native Americans rose by 0.3.

Non-Hispanic TV

The minority percentage at non-Hispanic TV stations rose from 23.6% to 24.5%. That means that in five of the last six years, we've seen new records for the minority percentage at non-Hispanic stations.

At non-Hispanic stations, the minority breakdown is:

- 13.4% African American ... up from 13%
- 7.8% Hispanic ... up from 7.2%
- 2.6% Asian American ... down from 2.9%
- 0.7% Native American ... up from 0.4%

Hispanic TV

Overall, 98.1% of the TV news workforce at Hispanic stations are Hispanic. That's up from last year's 89.5%. Caucasians make up 1% and African Americans 1%.

TV: men vs. women

Historically, in TV news, men have outnumbered women for all groups except Asian Americans (where women have always outnumbered men) and Native Americans (which have commonly been about even). But there have been some slow, steady changes over the years.

This year, again, the only group that's close between men and women is Hispanic, where 51.3% are women and 48.7% are men. In order of increasing imbalance:

Native American: 55.8% men; 44.2% women

African American: 56.9% women; 43.1% men

White: 59.1% men; 40.9% women

Asian American: 61.9% women; 38.1% men

Note that women went up in percentage for every ethnic group except Asian Americans, where men picked up less than a point.

TV news directors

On the surface, it looks like minority news directors took a hit in 2022, but the story is way more complicated than that. In fact, it's a banner year for minority TV news directors. Stay with me.

Overall, minority TV news directors gave up all of their gains from 2021 – dropping almost 3 points to 17.5% from 20.3%. Two years ago, the percentage was 17.4.

Television news directors – 1995 - 2022

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022
Caucasian	92.1%	86%	88.0%	86.9%	87.5%	82.6%	79.7%	82.5%
African American	1.6	3	3.9	3.3	4.3	3.9	6.5	6
Hispanic/Latino	3.8	9	5.8	6.6	6	10	10.3	6.8
Asian American	1.5	2	1.3	2.6	1.8	3.1	2.7	3.6
Native American	1.0	<1	1.0	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.8	1.2

The biggest drop came among Hispanic/Latino news directors, which fell from 10.3% last year to 6.8% this time around. But all of that drop comes from the sharp decline in the percentage of Hispanic stations participating in this year's Survey. The 2022 Survey had a 72% decline in the percentage of Hispanic stations in the Survey, so a 34% decline in Hispanic news directors is actually surprisingly strong given the circumstances. African American news directors dropped from 6.5% to 6%, but Asian Americans rose from 2.7% to 3.6%, and Native Americans went up from 0.8 to 1.2%.

As usual, markets 1 to 25 had the highest percentage of minority news directors, followed by markets 51 to 100. Otherwise, market size made little difference. People of color were less likely to be news directors at stations with 21 to 30 staffers, followed by the biggest staffs of 51+ and most likely at stations with the smallest news staffs (1 to 10 news people). Minority news directors were most often found at non-commercial stations and other commercial stations rather than at legacy network affiliates. The network affiliates all came in with 14 to 18% minority news directors except Fox affiliates, which came in at half that rate. Geography made little difference – except for the Midwest which had half the rate of minority news directors as any other region. That's pretty much par for the course.

The percentage of minority news directors at non-Hispanic stations went up from last year's 15.6% to 15.9% this time around. That's the highest ever, eclipsing the previous record set last year.

At non-Hispanic stations, African American news directors fell from last year's 7% to 6.1% this time around. Hispanic news directors held steady at 4.9%. Asian American news directors rose from 2.9% to 3.7%. Native American news directors went up from 0.8% to 1.2%

At Hispanic stations, 100% of the news directors are Hispanic. That's up from 88.2% last year.

Minorities in TV news

Minorities in local TV news – 2022

	News Staffs With Minorities	Minority News Directors	Minorities as Percentage of Work Force
All TV	97.4%	17.5%	25.5%
Network Affiliates	98.3	15.2	24.2
Other commercial	91.7	40	59.5
Market size:			
DMA 1-25	100	23.1	31
DMA 26-50	100	15.8	24.4
DMA 51-100	98.2	20.8	25.7
DMA 101-150	96.3	15.5	24.3
DMA 151+	94.7	11.4	18.7
Staff size:			
Staff 51+	100	9.8	25.5
Staff 31-50	100	23.4	25.2
Staff 21-30	97.4	4.9	24.7
Staff 11-20	93.5	15.6	25.7
Staff 1-10	87.5	56.2	48.9

Most of the numbers are similar to last year, although the small response from Hispanic stations has taken its toll on some of the numbers. Note that one station with 21 to 30 news staffers managed not to have a single person of color. Every Fox and NBC affiliate in the survey had at least one person of color. That was true last year as well. That was not the case for ABC or CBS affiliates. Also true last year. As usual, stations in the Midwest and Northeast had the fewest minority staffers.

TV women

Women in local TV news – 2022

	News Staffs With Women	Women News Directors	Women as Percentage of Work Force
All TV	99.5%	40.5%	44.7%
Network Affiliates	100	35.2	44.9
Other commercial	92.3	33.3	40.8
Market:			
DMA 1-25	100	37.5	43.6
DMA 26-50	95.8	36.8	43.9
DMA 51-100	100	40	45.3
DMA 101-150	100	23.7	46.3
DMA 151+	100	35.6	42.9
Staff size:			
Staff 51+	100	34	44.3
Staff 31-50	100	32.8	44.8
Staff 21-30	100	38.1	47
Staff 11-20	100	21.9	43.2
Staff 1-10	94.1	52.9	43.6

For the seventh year in a row, the percentage of women TV news directors hit a new, record high – up from last year’s 39.1 to this year’s 40.5%. Note that the figure is a precise census number based on every TV station that runs local news (rather than projected from the sample of returned surveys – where all the other numbers in the table come from).

Unlike past years, women news directors are pretty evenly spread out across market sizes and staff sizes – although they’re highest in the smallest newsrooms (1 to 10 staffers). Women news directors were a little more likely to be found at NBC affiliates, but the differences by network affiliation were fairly small. Usually, women news directors are more common in non-commercial newsrooms. Not this year, where women at non-commercial stations were half as likely to be news directors compared to network affiliates and other commercial stations. Women news directors were most common in the South, but all other areas were about equal.

Last year, every TV station in the survey had at least one woman on staff. This year, we’re one off. A small, non-network affiliate in the West prevented a second year at 100%. Maybe next year.

The percentage of women in the workforce went back to 44.7% from last year’s 43.9%. It’s just 0.2 off the all-time record high set in 2019. Given what’s taking place with women in the workforce nationally, 44.7% is an impressive figure.

TV general managers

TV general managers – 2022

	Percent Caucasian	Percent Minority	Percent Men	Percent Women
All TV	90.3%	9.7%	73.2%	26.8%
Network Affiliates	92.4	7.6	74	26
Independents	73.3	26.7	66.7	33.3
Market size:				
DMA 1-25	79.3	20.7	75.9	24.1
DMA 26-50	83.3	16.7	73.3	26.7
DMA 51-100	89.7	10.3	75	25
DMA 101-150	96.4	3.6	67.2	32.8
DMA 151+	95.5	4.5	76.7	23.3

Minority TV general managers edged down from last year's 9.8% to 9.7% this time. They'd have been a lot higher if the response from Hispanic stations weren't so low this year. At Hispanic stations, 60% of the GMs are Hispanic; 40% are White. Minority GMs at network affiliates rose to the second highest level in the 21 years I've been asking the question. The highest was 8% back in 2008. At non-Hispanic stations, the percentage of minority GMs rose from 5.9% last year to 8.5% this year. African American GMs rose from 2.5% to 4.2%; Hispanic GMs edged up from 2.5% to 2.8%; and Asian American GMs rose from 0.9% to 1.4%.

Women TV general managers rose 4 points to 26.8%. That's the highest level in the 21 years I've been asking that question. For a point of reference, 21 years ago, just 12.6% of TV general managers were women. While women are more likely to be GMs at non-commercial and other commercial stations, they're still general managers at 26% of legacy affiliates. Most often at ABC stations and stations in the West.

Note that this data is based on TV stations that run local news and does not necessarily represent the larger sample of local TV stations that do not run local news.

Parity in the workforce?

How close is local TV news to parity in the workforce? Still has a way to go with minorities, as the tables here make clear. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that about 63% of the U.S. workforce is non-Hispanic White ... 17% Hispanic ... 13% African American ... 6% Asian American ... and 1% Native American. That puts all minority groups behind the employment average.

Women make up about 47% of the full-time U.S. workforce, although COVID has hit working women harder than men. So women, at 44.7% of the TV workforce, are pretty close.

On the other hand, virtually all jobs in local TV news require a college degree. We can debate whether that should be so, but it is. Women go to college in greater numbers than men, and they graduate in markedly greater numbers than men. According to the Department of Education, 57% of college graduates are women. So if we look at the potential American workforce, ages 25 to 65, who have college degrees (or more), we find that 53.5% of that workforce are women. So maybe we still have a way to go there, too.

LGBTQ+

A new question in the Survey this year asked whether “you or any members of the news staff are members of the LGBTQ+ community.” Overall, 70.5% said yes. That doesn’t translate into 70.5% of the staff being members of LGBTQ+; it means that 70.5% of stations have one or more members of the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ is generally understood to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning. The plus represents other sexual identities.

The bigger the staff, the more likely that it includes LGBTQ+. No surprise there. Market size made little difference except that the smallest markets were decidedly lower than all the rest (51.2%). No difference by network affiliation or other commercial, but non-commercial was much lower, at 20%, than all other groups. On the other hand, it was also higher in not knowing (40%). Stations in the South were the lowest in having LGBTQ+ members (64.4%), but the West was highest in not having any (15.4%).

Overall, 6.4% said they did not have any LGBTQ+ staffers, and 23.2% said they didn’t know.

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

The Association for Women in Communication (AWC)

Phone: (417) 409-2492

www.womcom.org

Emma L. Bowen Foundation for Minority Interests in Media

www.emmabowenfoundation.com/

International Women’s Media Foundation

(202) 496-1992

www.iwmf.org

National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ)

Phone: (301) 405-0248

www.nabjonline.org

National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ)

www.nahj.org

The Association of LGBTQ Journalists

Phone: (202) 588-9888

www.nlgja.org

Native American Journalists Association (NAJA)

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 2021 among all 1,780 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,379 radio stations. Valid responses came from as many as 1,336 television stations (75.1%) and 765 radio news directors and general managers representing 2,310 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.