



TV news diversity declines

By Bob Papper and Keren Henderson

July 16, 2024 – The latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey finds the minority workforce in TV news dropped nearly four points from last year’s record high of 29.6% – down to 25.7%. The minority workforce at non-Hispanic TV stations also fell from their all-time high of 28.4% last year to 24.5% this year.

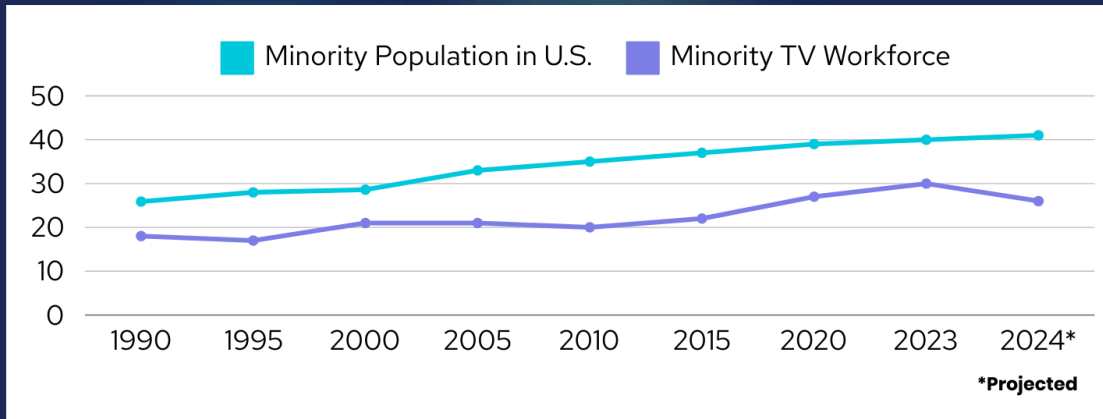
Women in the TV news workforce stayed nearly the same, sliding from 45% to 44.4%. The one bright note was women news directors, which hit an all-time high of 41.8%, up from last year’s record of 41.3%.

Minority population v. minority TV news 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% | 39.3% | 40.7% | 41.1%* |
| Minority TV Workforce | 17.8 | 17.1 | 21.0 | 21.2 | 20.2 | 22.2 | 26.6 | 29.6 | 25.7 |

*projected

MINORITY POPULATION VS. MINORITY TV NEWS WORKFORCE



WOMEN & MINORITIES TV

RTDNA

Syracuse University
Newhouse School of
Public Communications

TV news workforce - 1995 - 2024

| | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2023 | 2024 |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Caucasian | 82.9% | 79.0% | 78.8% | 79.8% | 77.8% | 73.4% | 70.4% | 74.3% |
| African American | 10.1 | 11.0 | 10.3 | 11.5 | 10.8 | 13.3 | 14.8 | 13.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 4.2 | 7.0 | 8.7 | 5.8 | 8.2 | 10.9 | 11.4 | 9.7 |
| Asian American | 2.2 | 3.0 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 2.9 | 2 | 2.7 | 1.8 |
| Native American | 0.6 | <1.0 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 0.7 |

The minority workforce in local television news fell by the same four points that it gained a year ago – back down to 25.7%. All groups went down except Native Americans, which remained the same.

There's another way to look at this

If we assume that the ethnic mix will reflect the community being served, then the proper percentages will be different for every market. But nationwide, if we take the number of adults in the U.S. workforce (132.6 million) times the ethnic breakdown and factor in the percentage of college graduates by ethnicity, then the overall ethnic distribution will be:

- 70% Caucasian
- 10.7 Hispanic
- 9.5 African American
- 9.2 Asian American
- 0.6 Native American

Overall, this year, here's what local TV news looks like:

| | |
|-------|------------------|
| 70.3% | Caucasian |
| 9.7 | Hispanic |
| 13.3 | African American |
| 1.8 | Asian American |
| 0.7 | Native American |

On that basis, local TV news appears to be in pretty good shape – although Asian Americans are woefully under-represented.

Non-Hispanic TV

The minority percentage at non-Hispanic TV stations rose from 23.6% three years ago to 24.5% two years ago to 28.3% last year – back down to 24.5% again this year. That's still the second highest level ever – but it's a retreat from a year ago.

At non-Hispanic stations, the minority breakdown is:

- 13.5% - African American ... down from 15.1%
- 8.3% - Hispanic ... down from 9.8%
- 1.9% - Asian American ... down from 2.8%
- 0.8% - Native American ... up from 0.7%

Hispanic TV

Overall, 99% of the TV news workforce at Hispanic stations is Hispanic. That's up from last year's 98.6%. Caucasians make up the remaining 1%.

TV: Men vs. women

Overall, the TV news workforce is 55.6% men and 44.4% 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 several slow, steady changes over the last several years.

This year, the group closest between men and women is Hispanic, where women are 52% and men are 48%. That represents a reversal from last year. Next is African American, where women make up 54.6% versus men at 45.4%. Native American is right behind, where men make up 54.7% of the workforce and Native women are 45.3%. The Caucasian split is 58.9% men and 41.1% women. Asian Americans split 61.1% women and 38.9% men.

Women are about 3% more likely to graduate from college than men. If both men and women worked full time at the same rate, the college-educated workforce would be 51.7% women and 48.3% men. However, women are less likely to work full time. The actual U.S. full time workforce is 44.2% women. The actual local TV news workforce is 44.4% women, and women make up 41.8% of TV news directors.

TV NEWS WORKFORCE GENDER BREAKDOWN

- The TV news workforce consists of 55.6% men and 44.4% women.
- Historically, men have outnumbered women in all groups except Asian Americans and Native Americans.
- This year, Hispanic representation is closest to gender parity with 52% women and 48% men, a reversal from last year.
- Women make up 54.6% of African Americans and 45.3% of Native Americans in TV news, while the Caucasian split is 58.9% men to 41.1% women, and Asian Americans are 61.1% women to 38.9% men.

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TV news directors

Minority news directors also lost ground this year, with overall numbers close to what we found back in 2020.

Television news directors – 1995 - 2024

| | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2023 | 2024 |
|------------------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Caucasian | 92.1% | 86% | 88.0% | 86.9% | 87.5% | 82.6% | 82% | 82.6% |
| African American | 1.6 | 3 | 3.9 | 3.3 | 4.3 | 3.9 | 5.7 | 4.1 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3.8 | 9 | 5.8 | 6.6 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 11.6 |
| Asian American | 1.5 | 2 | 1.3 | 2.6 | 1.8 | 3.1 | 2.5 | 1.7 |
| Native American | 1.0 | <1 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.8 | 0 |

Three of the four groups of news directors of color dropped in the latest Survey, with African American news directors and Asian American news directors both dropping from a year ago; Native American news directors disappeared from the Survey. Hispanic news directors picked up much of last year's losses, but the total was still down by 0.6. The record for TV news directors of color is 20.3% set in 2021.

Markets 1 to 25 have the highest percentage of minority news directors, but markets 51 to 100 again come in right behind. Markets 101+ lag well behind in the 11% minority news director range. The smaller the size of the newsroom, the more likely to find a news director of color. Last year, ABC affiliates had the most minority news directors among big four affiliates and CBS had the fewest. This year, ABC, CBS and NBC are all virtually tied for minority news directors with FOX stations noticeably behind.

As usual, stations in the Midwest lag in news directors of color, but the other regions were all pretty close, which either marks progress for the Northeast or slippage for the West and South.

At non-Hispanic stations, African American news directors dropped from last year’s 5.9% to 4.2% this time around. Hispanic news directors shot up to 9% from 6.7%. Asian American news directors dropped from 2.5% to 1.8%. Native American news directors dropped from 0.8% to 0. Not a good year, with news directors of color dropping from last year’s record high of 18% down to 15% at non-Hispanic stations.

At Hispanic stations, 100% of the news directors are Hispanic. Same as last year.

Minorities in TV news

Minorities in local TV news - 2024

| | News Staffs With Minorities | Minority News Directors | Minorities as Percentage of Work Force |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| All TV | 95.5% | 17.4% | 25.7% |
| Network Affiliates | 96.4 | 13.8 | 24.3 |
| Other commercial | 84.6 | 46.7 | 43.3 |
| Market size: | | | |
| DMA 1-25 | 100 | 25 | 28.1 |
| DMA 26-50 | 93.8 | 16 | 22.8 |
| DMA 51-100 | 97.5 | 22.7 | 29.5 |
| DMA 101-150 | 92.9 | 11.9 | 19.7 |
| DMA 151+ | 93.8 | 12.1 | 23.7 |
| Staff size: | | | |
| Staff 51+ | 97.8 | 16 | 25.4 |
| Staff 31-50 | 100 | 8.6 | 23.8 |
| Staff 21-30 | 93.8 | 25 | 28.7 |
| Staff 11-20 | 90 | 40 | 51.6 |
| Staff 1-10 | 50 | 66.7 | 20 |

A small pullback in nearly every category this year. At least one station with 51 or more staffers has no people of color and a couple in the 21 to 30 category also have no minorities on full-time staff. Among network affiliates, only FOX stations all had people of color; no region of the country hit 100%.

TV women

Women in local TV news – 2024

| | News Staffs With Women | Women News Directors | Women as Percentage of Work Force |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| All TV | 100% | 41.8% | 44.4% |
| Network Affiliates | 100 | 32.5 | 44.3 |
| Other commercial | 100 | 40 | 44.9 |
| Market: | | | |
| DMA 1-25 | 100 | 42.9 | 44 |
| DMA 26-50 | 100 | 34.6 | 42.8 |
| DMA 51-100 | 100 | 33.3 | 47 |
| DMA 101-150 | 100 | 24.4 | 44.5 |
| DMA 151+ | 100 | 30.3 | 41.3 |
| Staff size: | | | |
| Staff 51+ | 100 | 37.5 | 44 |
| Staff 31-50 | 100 | 25.7 | 47.9 |
| Staff 21-30 | 100 | 18.8 | 42.6 |
| Staff 11-20 | 100 | 20 | 41.2 |
| Staff 1-10 | 100 | 0 | 26.7 |

For the ninth year in a row, the percentage of women TV news directors hit a new, record high – up from last year’s 41.3% to 41.8%. 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). In fact, given the large discrepancy between the actual percentage and the percentage of women news directors who returned the survey this year, it’s safe to say that all the numbers (except overall women news directors) understate the real totals. We’ve spoken with other researchers on this point, but no one can explain why – every single year we’ve been able to calculate an exact number – women news directors are less likely to fill out the Survey than men. According to the survey, the percentage of women TV news directors is estimated to be 32.2%. We know the real percentage is 41.8%. Consider this a plea to women news directors to fill out and return the Survey.

Women news directors are spread out across market sizes and staff sizes. In our survey, women are less likely to be found leading FOX affiliate newsrooms and more often in the South and then the West and less likely in the Midwest and especially Northeast.

The percentage of women in the workforce slipped back from last year’s record of 45% to 44.4%.

This year, every single station in the RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey had a woman on staff.

TV general managers

TV general managers – 2024

| | Percent Caucasian | Percent Minority | Percent Men | Percent Women |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|
| All TV | 87.3% | 12.7% | 70.3% | 29.7% |
| Network Affiliates | 90.5 | 9.5 | 70.1 | 29.9 |
| Other commercial | 58.3 | 41.7 | 76.9 | 23.1 |
| Market size: | | | | |
| DMA 1-25 | 69.2 | 30.8 | 57.7 | 42.3 |
| DMA 26-50 | 83.3 | 16.7 | 68 | 32 |
| DMA 51-100 | 90.7 | 9.3 | 77.3 | 22.7 |
| DMA 101-150 | 92.5 | 7.5 | 68.9 | 31.1 |
| DMA 151+ | 93.8 | 6.2 | 75 | 25 |

Last year we had a “startling increase” in the percentage of minority TV general managers – up from 9.7% to 16.1%. This year, half of that increase disappeared. Still, at 12.7%, that’s the second highest we’ve found in the 23 years of asking the question. The drop was across the board – except for the smallest markets, which were already low. Hispanic GMs took top honors at 7.9%, but that’s well down from last year’s 9.6%. African American GMs slid from 4.8% to this year’s 4.2%. Asian American also dropped from 1.7% last year to 0.6%. Once again, we did not find any Native American general managers.

The percentage of minority general managers at non-Hispanic stations was 11.1% – down from 14.7%, with 6.8% Hispanics, 3.7% African Americans and 0.6% Asian Americans. That’s a decrease in all three groups.

Women TV general managers dropped slightly from 31.2% last year to 29.7% this time around. That’s still the second highest (behind last year’s record) that we’ve recorded in the 23 years we’ve asked the question. All the loss came from “other commercial” stations.

This data is based on TV stations that run local news. They do not represent the larger sample of local TV stations that do not run local news.

Working on inclusivity?

A new question in last year’s Survey asked whether the station had done anything in the past year to make the newsroom more inclusive. Over 70% said yes. The bigger the market and the bigger the staff, the more likely that the station encouraged inclusivity. This year, over 70% say they make the newsroom more inclusive, but this time there is little difference in market size. Except for the smallest markets, they are less likely to have done anything.

We've broken the answers down into four broad categories:

Most often, at 45.9%, the responses relate to attempts to hire a more diverse staff. In their own words:

- Actively recruited more diverse candidates for job openings
- Advertise in specific places, attend job fairs, seek candidates from NABJ [National Association of Black Journalists] and NAHJ [National Association of Hispanic Journalists]
- Consistently looking for more diversity in hiring and applicants
- Focus on recruiting diverse candidates and focusing on non-traditional candidates for open positions
- I am looking for journalists that want to work at our station who represent the communities we serve. We need to be representative of the different backgrounds and cultures that make our region great
- Recruiting at HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities]

Second, at 35.1%, are internal station discussions and establishing committees:

- Discussed any issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion right away whether in the newsroom staff or in a story
- Diversity of staff audits, diversity in content audits, feedback to staff
- Focus on reflecting a more diverse community in our news gathering
- Held meetings with each group to talk about culture challenges and needs, started monthly culture meetings with all levels of station managers
- I am working to ensure that we cover more news that affects people from a wider range of social, ethnic and religious backgrounds
- We talked about how Black men are typically portrayed on TV as athletes, comedians, or criminals. From that conference I came back and put together a list of experts who are minorities: local business owner, attorney, doctor, college professor, political analyst. We even have a barbershop owner who allows our cameras in to record a segment called "barbershop talk." Our anchor throws out some thought-provoking questions on politics, education, race, discrimination, money, crime, church, etc. Men of all races sit in barber chairs, solving the world's problems. It's a lot of fun. There are a lot of laughs and sometimes some tears
- We continue to make diversity a priority in retention and recruitment. We have a newsroom diversity group that meets bi-weekly. and we continue to update our newsroom diversity manual
- We have a focus on telling more stories in underserved communities, diversifying our experts and the people we include in our stories, and have formed an internal task force specifically to help us better connect with our Latino communities
- We have made our interview process more inclusive so all candidates are interviewing with diverse members of staff, before any decisions are made

- We've opened our editorial meetings to our entire newsroom to encourage each to speak up as we work to get varying opinions about the stories we cover. We are intentional about broadening our guest/expert list. We don't rely on going to the same guests for interviews

Third, at 16.2%, are news directors who say they hired a more diverse staff (as opposed to *trying* to hire more people of color):

- Hired 2 Hispanic reporters, 1 Black female anchor and 1 Arab American reporter
- Hired several more people of color in the newsroom. Broken down barriers between people of different religious views to form stronger working relationships
- Hired staff of various racial backgrounds and incorporated training
- Most hires have been either Hispanic, Black or LGBTQ

At 2.7% it's other:

- Hiring best available employees, regardless of race
- Hiring the best people we can find regardless of gender or ethnicity
- Take any applicant into consideration regardless of their race or ethnicity

LGBTQ+ and Transgender

We're in the third year of asking whether any staff members are part of the LGBTQ+ community. Over three-quarters of news directors say yes. That's virtually identical to last year. LGBTQ+ is understood to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning. The plus represents other sexual identities.

Members of the news staff openly part of the LGBTQ+ community

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|-------|-------|
| All TV | 75.7% | 24.3% |
| Market size | | |
| DMA 1 – 25 | 78.1 | 21.9 |
| DMA 26 – 50 | 93.3 | 6.7 |
| DMA 51 – 100 | 82.3 | 17.7 |
| DMA 101 – 150 | 76.4 | 23.6 |
| DMA 151+ | 51.2 | 48.8 |

All these numbers are nearly identical to a year ago. The bigger the staff, the more likely for the answer to be yes. Network affiliation again makes no difference, but the prevalence of LGBTQ+ staffers is highest in the Northeast.

For just the second time, we asked if any members of the news staff are openly transgender. Overall, 23.5% say yes. That's well above last year's 14.5%. Once again, there is no consistent

pattern by market size, staff size, or geography, although all subgroups answered the question affirmatively.

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 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.