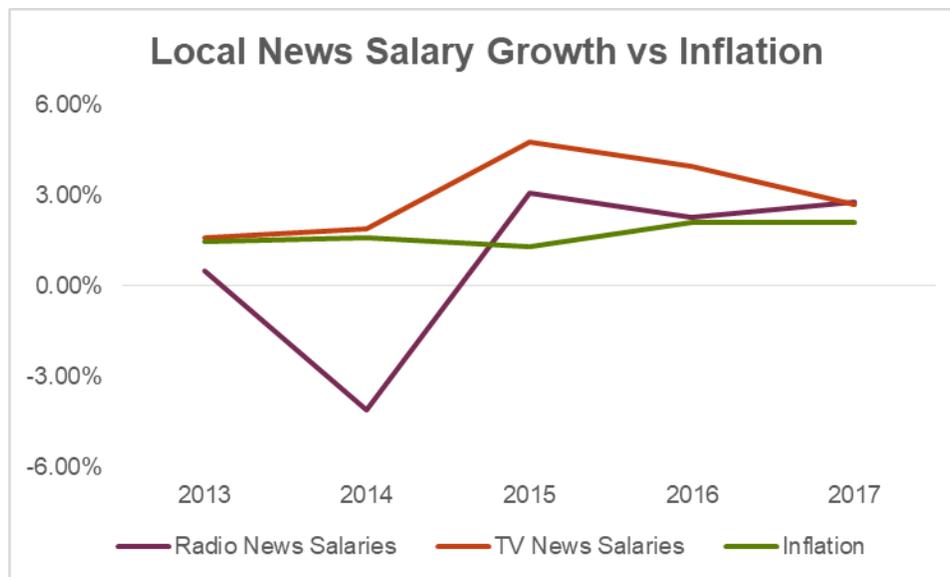


### 2018 Local TV and Radio Newsroom Salary Research

#### Highlights

- TV news salaries overall have risen at nearly twice the rate of inflation over the last 5 years.
- In 2017, growth in wages for TV news employees slowed and wages grew less than the U.S. average, but still beat inflation.
- Salaries for 2/3 of TV news positions are up in the last year.
- For the first time in half a decade, the 5-year radio salary changes exceeded inflation.
- Radio salaries grew on pace with average U.S. wage growth in 2017, and median starting pay is up by more than 10%.



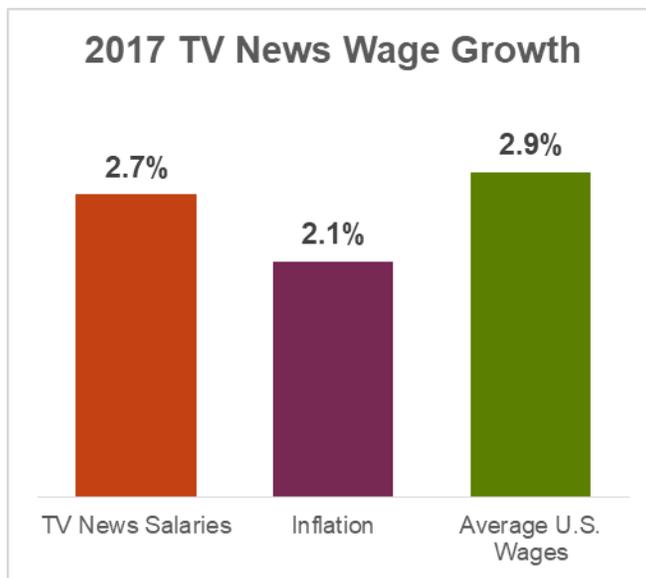
#### TV News Salaries

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Annual Survey found that local television news salaries rose by 2.7% in 2017. That's less than the last two years. Salaries were up 4% a year ago and 4.8% in 2015. Wages did increase more than inflation, which remained low at 2.1%, the same as a year ago, making the real growth in wages in the last year 0.6%. Still, the gains are a bit below U.S. average hourly wage gains of 2.9% for 2017.

#### ***A Note on Numbers:***

As averages can be skewed by particularly high or low examples, median is the best indicator of "typical" salaries, and is used in comparisons unless otherwise noted.

## Local News Salaries



It was a good year for salaries in that almost two-thirds of newsroom salaries (65%) went up and just 10% dropped, with 25% staying the same. Only news assistant and weathercaster position salaries went down; digital content director, assignment editor, news and sports anchors and executive producers stayed the same. All other positions' wages rose. *How does your position compare?* [Download your salary guide.](#)

### ***Download Your Salary Guide***

How does your salary compare?

Take a closer look at our data and see how your job's pay compares – in your newsroom, across market and newsroom sizes, and over time – with detailed breakdowns by position in our salary guides.

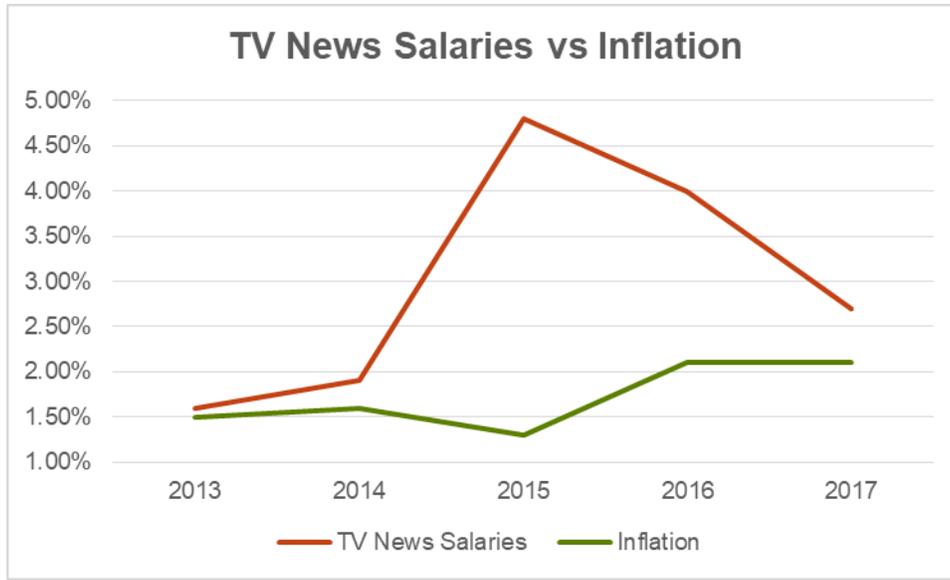
[TV News Salary Guide](#) - Free for members. \$25 for non-members.

[Radio News Salary Guide](#) - Free for members. \$25 for non-members.

*Your purchase enables RTDNA to continue this research, available nowhere else. Thank you!*

Multi-media journalist (MMJ) was separated from news reporter four years ago. Once again, reporters are paid significantly more money, overall, than MMJs. The spread this year was \$11,000. Last year, it was \$12,000, but it was a bit closer the two previous years. Some of that difference is due to market size: more reporters are in bigger markets. But even taking market size into account, reporters make more money.

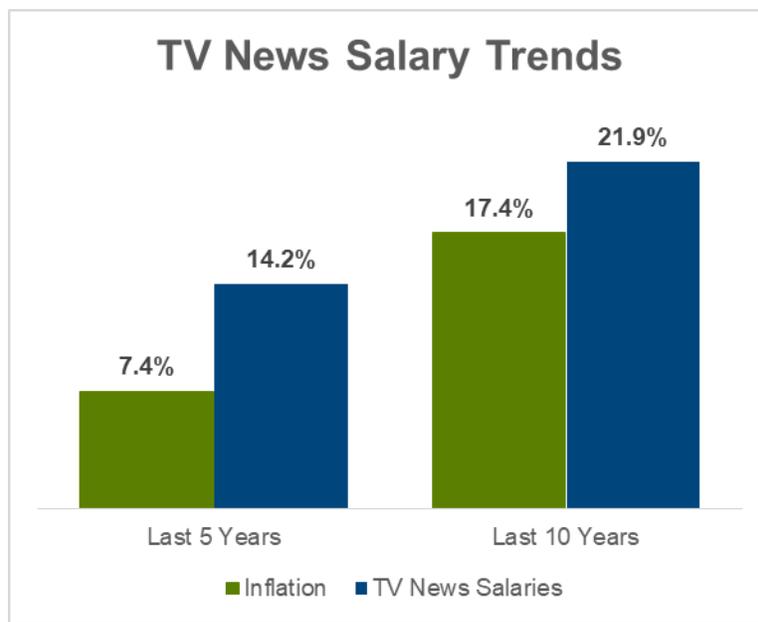
## Local News Salaries



### Long-Term Picture

After 5 straight years of overall salary increases ahead of inflation, the long-term salary picture looks better than it has in quite a few years. Overall, TV news salaries have risen at nearly twice the rate of inflation over the last 5 years, and all positions have done better than inflation except a few: managing editor, news writer and news assistant. It's a tighter comparison over the last decade, where local TV news salaries edged out inflation by four and a half points. A year ago, the 10 year comparison had inflation winning. Over the last decade, 11 positions are ahead of inflation, but 9 are running behind. *Is your position coming out ahead?* [Download your salary guide.](#)

Keep in mind that wages in this country, generally, had [not kept pace with inflation until 2017.](#)



## Local News Salaries

### Market Size

There is an overall tendency for markets with the most salary gains in the previous year to slip and vice versa. That was the case again. Markets 51 to 100 did the worst in terms of wage growth in 2016, but they were the easy winner in 2017, with 17 of 20 positions seeing salary gains, only 1 down and 2 the same. Markets 26 to 50, which were second from the bottom a year ago, came in second place year, with more positions gaining than losing. That wasn't the case for markets 1 to 25 and 151+. Both had down positions edge out winners. The worst group was market 101 to 150, with twice as many positions seeing standard salaries decrease vs increase. That group came in first a year ago, so things do tend to even out over time. *Where does your market fall?* [Download your salary guide.](#)

### Starting Pay

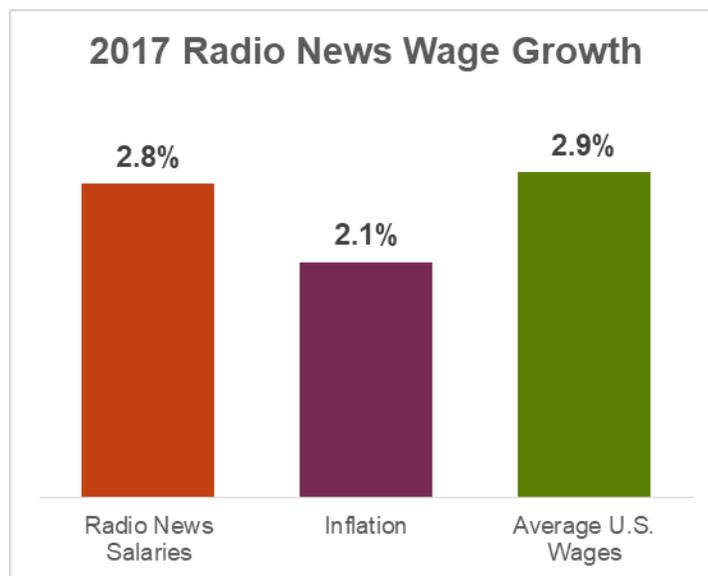
Starting pay for employees with no full-time experience is up for both radio and TV in the last year. The overall average starting pay in local TV rose by \$700, and the median increased \$600. Those are almost exactly the same increases as a year ago.

TV News Starting Pay			
Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
\$29,500	\$28,600	\$14,000	\$65,000

### Contracts

TV contract rates remained mostly the same compared to a year ago. Following last year's jump in TV contracts, this year's numbers are almost all within one or two points of last year. Not a single position moved in a meaningful way – either up or down.

### Radio News Salaries



## Local News Salaries

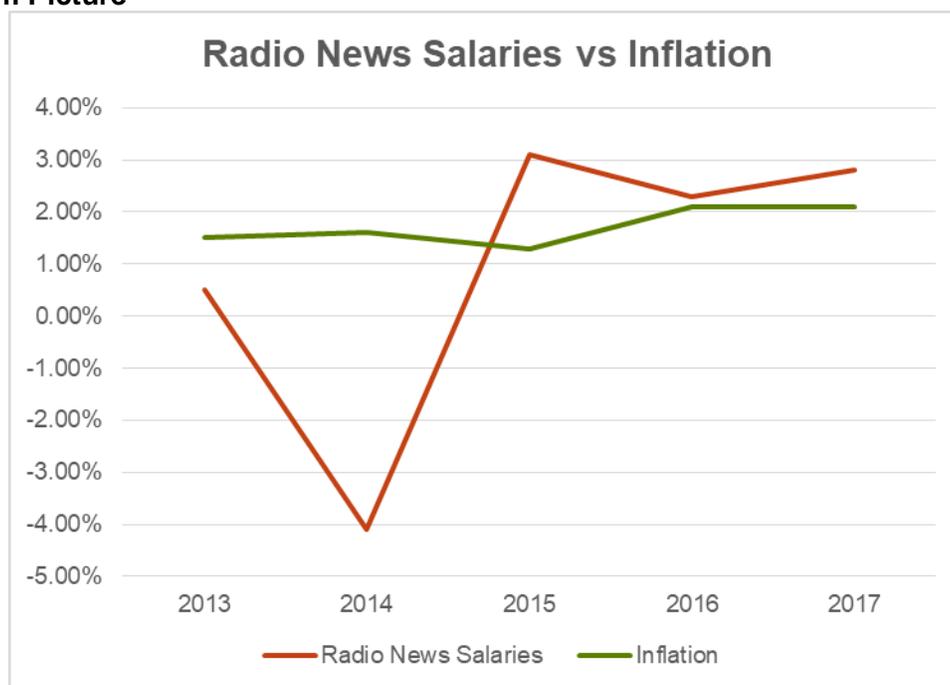
Local radio news salaries rose by 2.8% from last year. That's up from last year's 2.3% increase. Factor in low inflation of 2.1%, and radio salaries managed a 0.7 real increase over the last year and nearly matched the average U.S. hourly wage gain of 2.9% for 2017.

It was a comparatively good year overall for radio news salaries, although it was a mixed picture for the two most common positions: news director and news reporter.

Average radio news director salaries increased, but they held steady in the more meaningful median (typical) category. That happens because large and major market salaries bring up the average, but the larger number of lower, smaller and medium market salaries bring down the typical pay. That's why the median news director salary can be lower than median salaries for news reporter or news producer. The two latter positions are more often found in larger, higher-paying markets, while a news director, frequently the only news employee, is found across the board.

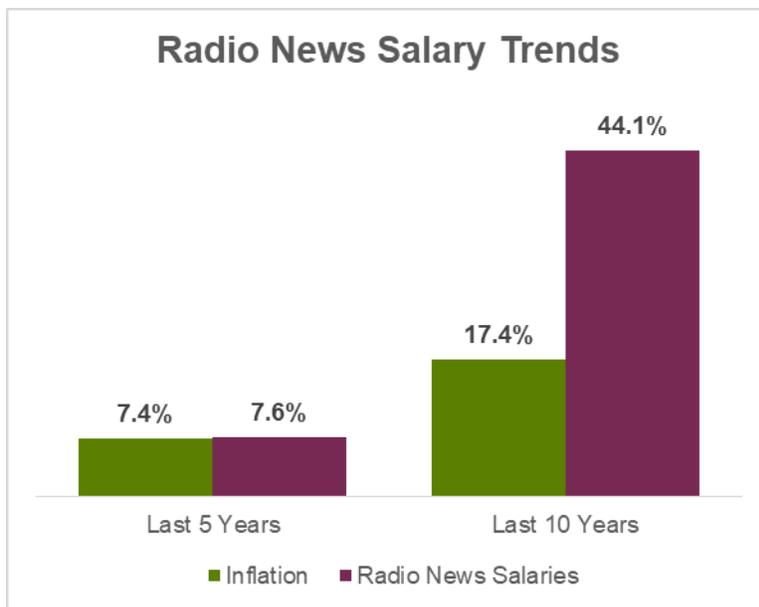
News reporter wages also rose on average, but in terms of median they actually dropped. News producer salaries dropped in both average and median. News anchors, sports anchors and web producers/writer all increased. The survey did not find enough sports reporters to be able to use the numbers. That may be a warning right there. *Is your position coming out ahead?* [Download your salary guide.](#)

### Long-Term Picture



Five- and 10-year salary comparisons continue to show two entirely different pictures. Still, the overall news is good. For the first time in half a decade, the 5-year radio salary changes exceeded inflation, if barely. The 10 year gain appears better due to very low salaries a decade ago.

## Local News Salaries



### Market Size

News director, news anchor and sports anchor salaries increased in newsrooms of all market sizes except medium markets. News reporter salaries fell in all market sizes except medium, where they remained the same. News producer wages dipped across the board. Web producers/editors made salary gains in the biggest and smallest markets but not the two middle groups. *What have salaries for jobs like yours done in your market?* [Download your salary guide](#).

In general, salaries go up as market size goes up. They also tend to go up as staff size increases, but much of that is a function of market size as well. The number of stations in a local group has no consistent effect on salaries, and region makes no consistent difference, either.

What makes a significant difference in pay is whether a station is commercial or non-commercial. Salaries for non-commercial stations were 46% higher, overall, than those at commercial stations. That's a 7 point higher differential than a year ago. Every position saw higher salaries for non-commercial stations except news producer and sports. News producer wages were 11 points higher for commercial stations, and non-commercial stations didn't report any full-timers in sports, so there's no way to compare.

*Major markets are those with 1 million or more listeners. Large markets are those from 250,000 to 1 million; medium markets are from 50,000 to 250,000; and small markets have fewer than 50,000 listeners.*

### Starting Pay

In radio, average starting pay for employees with no full-time experience rose \$500 in 2017. It rose \$600 a year ago and \$700 in 2015. Median pay rose by an astonishing \$3,000. It rose \$1,000 each of the last two years, but had fallen \$3,000 the year before that.

# 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra University Newsroom Survey

## Local News Salaries

Radio News Starting Pay			
Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
\$28,600	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$45,000

News reporters remain the top hire, but reporter positions have decreased as a percentage of the total; this is the first year in recent times that reporters have made up less than 50% of all new positions. Compared to last year, news director positions rose two places and news anchors dropped two.

### Contracts

Radio contract rates generally fell slightly from 2017. After three years of steady drops, the percentages under contract in radio are almost all up from a year ago. Note that non-compete agreements are illegal in a number of states.

### About the Survey

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2017 among all 1,683 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,542 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,333 television stations (79.2%) and 415 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,110 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.

### About Bob

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.