

### 2018 Staffing Research

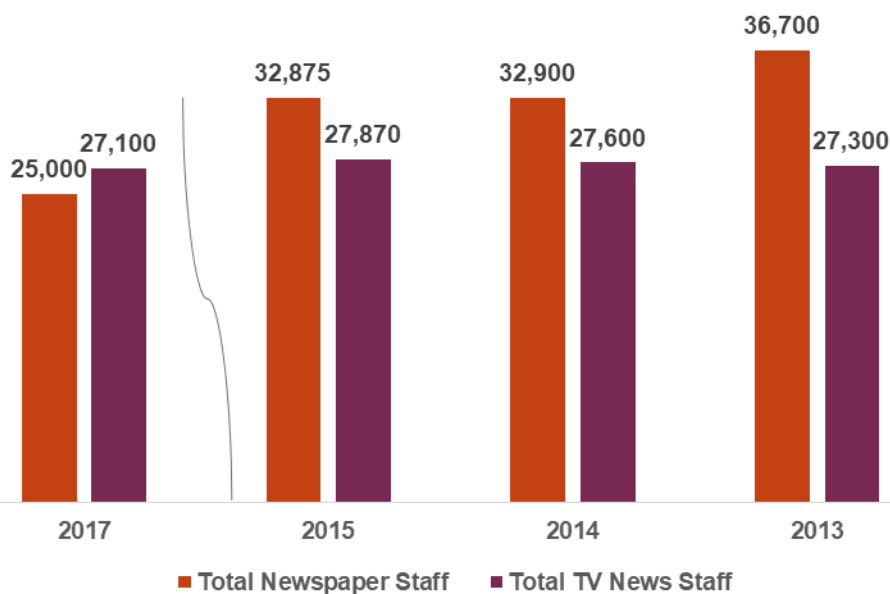
#### Highlights

- The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey has found that total local TV news employment has surpassed total newspaper employment for the first time in more than 20 years of research.
- 2017 saw a slight decrease in the number of TV news jobs, with 2 fewer newsrooms and a decrease in the median newsroom size, but the average local TV newsroom employment remains just below its all-time high.
- Nearly 90% of news directors expect their staffing to increase or remain the same in the coming year.
- The number of multimedia journalists (MMJs) or backpack journalists has been steadily increasing for several years, but this year growth slowed for the first time. In the average newsroom, MMJ jobs still increased while reporter jobs fell.
- Website responsibilities are increasingly integrated into job descriptions across newsrooms and, among newsrooms that hired in 2017, the largest proportion - nearly 20% - of newly created positions were digital-focused: web, social media or other digital media positions.

### Local TV News Employment Surpasses Newspapers for the First Time

The average TV newsroom has had more staffers than the average daily newspaper for a few years. Now, for the first time in the history of this survey, total local TV newsroom employment appears to have surpassed total daily newspaper employment.

TV News vs Newspaper Employment



Historically, this survey has compared TV employment with newspaper employment as compiled by the American Society of News Editors (ASNE). However, as of 2016, ASNE no longer calculates total newspaper employment. This year's calculation was provided by newspaper consultant and Newsonomics founder Ken Doctor, who puts total newspaper employment at 24,000 to 25,000, compared to local TV news employment of 27,100 according to the latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey.

# 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra University Newsroom Survey

## Local News Staffing

Staff Per TV Newsroom		
Average Full-Time	40.4	-0.1
Median	33	-2
Max	159	-10
Average Part-Time	4.5	0.3
Median	2	0
Max	125	55
Average Total Staff	45.9	0.7
Median	40	1
Max	160	-18

Total local TV news employment dropped 1.8% over the last year, from 27,600 employees to 27,100. Part of the loss comes from continuing consolidation in local TV news – a net loss of two local newsrooms this past year. There’s also been a small decrease in both the average newsroom size (down 0.1 from a year ago) and the median size (down 2 people from a year ago), in part due to a skew in reporting this year toward smaller market stations.

However, local TV news remains close to its peak employment of 27,900 in 2001, and the average local TV newsroom’s 40.4 full-time staff (or a median of 33) is just below the all-time high of 40.9 (median 35) in 2015.

Total TV news staffing shows a mixed picture this year. Average full-time staff slid by 0.1, and median staffing fell by 2. But this year’s survey involves a slight under-reporting by top 25 market stations and a slight over-reporting of stations in markets 101 and smaller.

Staffing levels at ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox – the “big four” – affiliates rose by 0.2 on average and 0.5 in median numbers. Staffing at stations in the top 100 markets all increased in both average and median staffing numbers. Part-time staffing largely held steady.

<b>2001 Peak Local TV News Employment</b>	<b>27,900</b>
<b>2017 Local News Employment</b>	<b>27,100</b>

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

As averages can be skewed by particularly high or low examples, median is the best indicator of “typical” newsrooms.

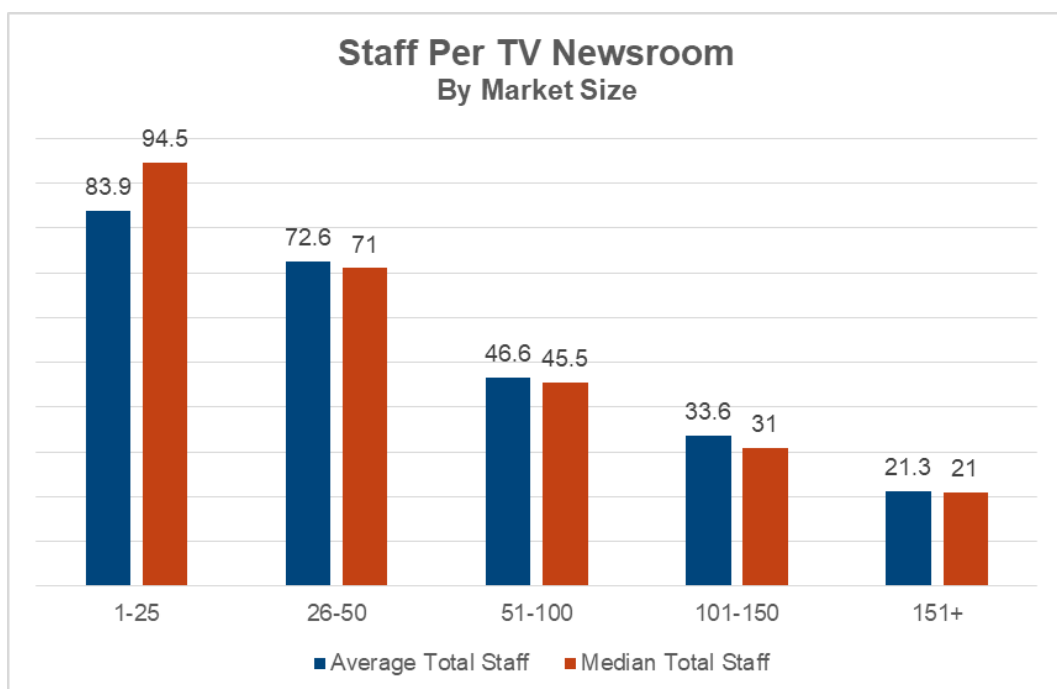
Staff Per TV Newsroom			
Affiliation	ABC, NBC, CBS & Fox affiliates	Other commercial	Non-commercial
Average Full-Time	41.7	36.8	10.6
Median	36	26	7
Average Part-Time	4.5	5.2	0.8
Median	2	1	0.5
Average Total Staff	47.2	42	13.2
Median	41	28	8.5

# 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra University Newsroom Survey

## Local News Staffing

Staff Per TV Newsroom					
Market	1-25	26-50	51-100	101-150	151+
Average Full-Time	75.3 (+4)	66.7 (+5.8)	42.8 (+0.3)	28.5 (-1.3)	17.6 (-2.8)
Median	89 (+6)	64 (-5)	44 (+2)	28	17 (-4.5)
Average Part-Time	7.2 (-2.5)	5.2 (-0.3)	3.8 (-0.3)	4.9 (+2.2)	3 (+0.5)
Median	1.5 (-3.5)	3 (+1)	2	2	1
Average Total Staff	83.9 (+2.6)	72.6 (+4.4)	46.6 (-0.2)	33.6 (+0.3)	21.3 (-1.9)
Median	94.5 (-0.5)	71 (-1)	45.5 (+.05)	31 (-1)	21 (-3.5)

The TV staffing totals are up for every market size except the smallest (151+), but that disguises a surprising pattern in employment: Almost all market sizes are actually down in full-time staff but up in part-timers. The exception is the biggest market group (1 to 25) which is up a full person full-time and up in part-time staff as well.



2017 TV News Staffing Changes				
	Increase	Decrease	Same	Don't know
All TV news	33.30%	19.20%	46.50%	1%
Big four affiliates	32.7	17.8	48.4	1.1
Other commercial	43.5	34.8	21.7	0

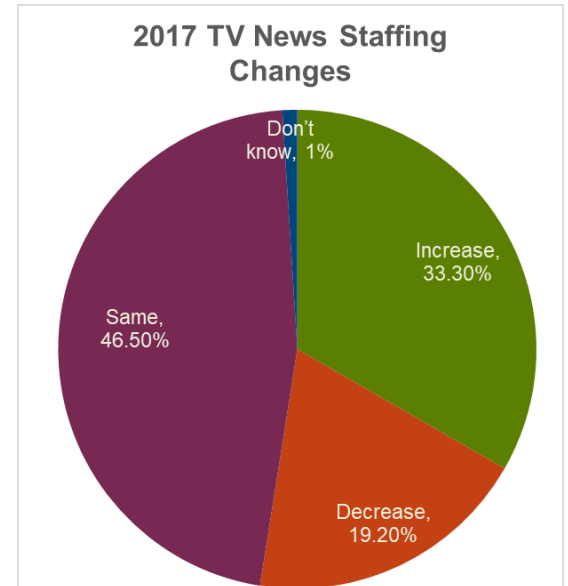
## Local News Staffing

2017 TV news employment was characterized more by stability than either growth or shrinkage. Almost half of all stations said their staffing levels did not change, although nearly twice as many stations reported staff expansion versus staffing cuts.

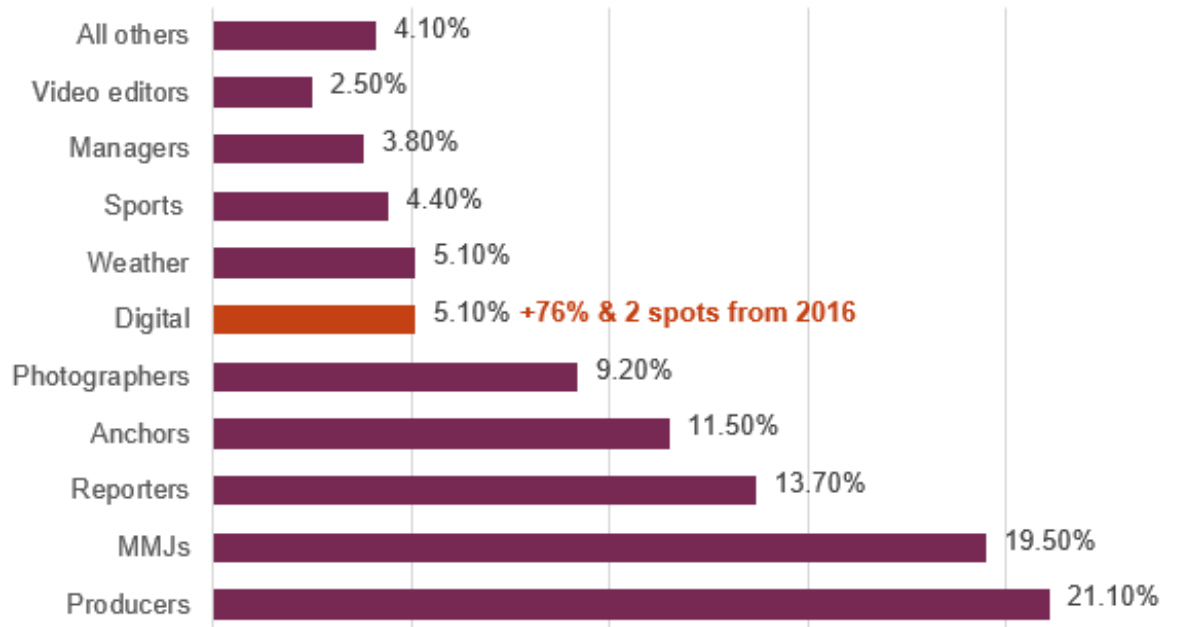
Generally, the biggest stations in the biggest markets were most likely to grow. A majority of stations in top 25 markets increased in staff, and market 26 to 50 stations were equally level or adding staff. ABC affiliates were a bit less likely than other affiliates to increase staff, and stations in the Northeast and South were more likely to grow than stations in the Midwest and West.

### TV Newsroom Hiring

The latest survey found that the average TV station hired 6.8 replacements during 2017 and 1.2 staff for new positions. This is a change of 0.3 more replacements than a year ago, but 0.4 fewer new positions. In other words, turnover is slightly up and newly created positions slightly down.



### TV News Replacement Hires

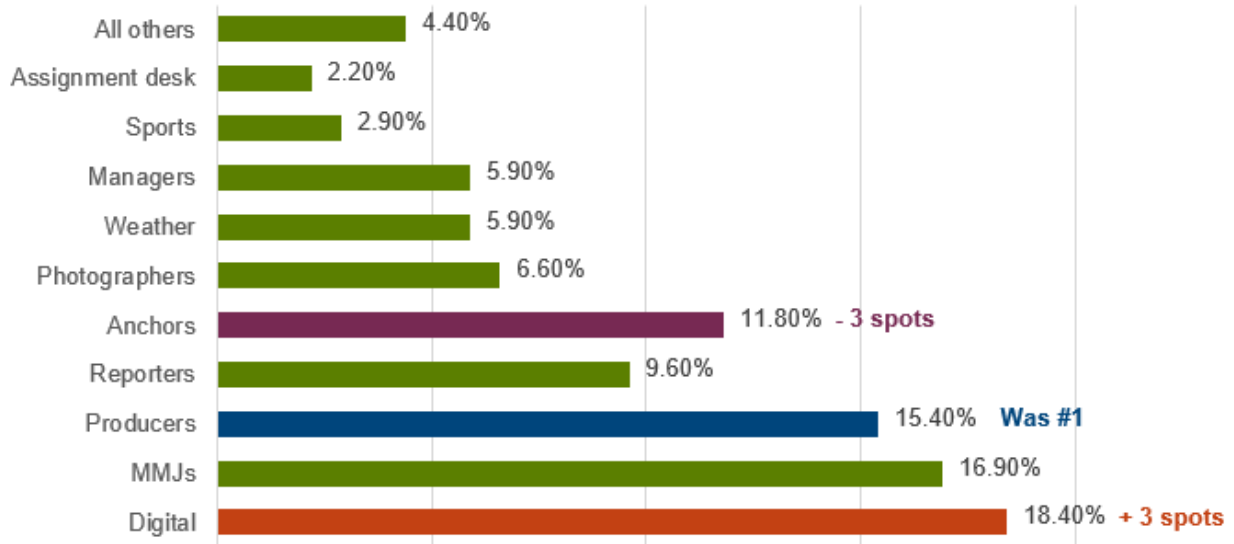


Combining MMJs with reporters makes MMJs/reporters overall the #1 replacement position at a combined 33.2%

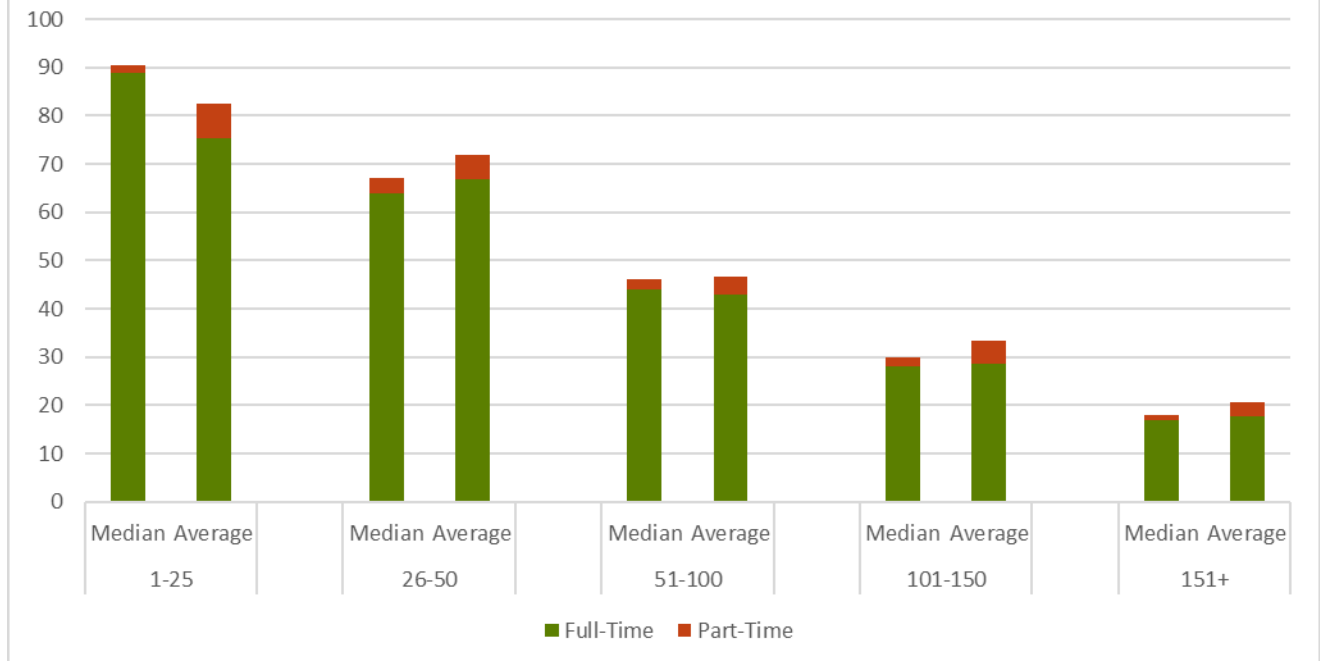
# 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra University Newsroom Survey

## Local News Staffing

### TV News New Hires



### Full-Time & Part-Time TV News Staff by Market



### Typical TV Newsroom Makeup

This is what the latest survey shows the “average” local TV news department of 40.4 people looks like:

Typical TV Newsroom Makeup	
Photographer	6.2
News Anchor	5.4
News Producer	5.4
MMJ	4.9
News Reporter	3.7
Weathercaster	3.2
Video Editor	1.9
Sports Anchor	1.5
Executive Producer	1.3
Assignment Editor	1.3
Web/Mobile Writer/Producer	1.2
News Director	1
Digital Content Manager	0.7
Assistant News Director	0.6
Sports Reporter	0.5
Social Media Producer/Editor	0.4
Managing Editor	0.3
Graphics Specialist	0.3
News Writer	0.2
News Assistant/AP	0.2
Other	0.2

Generally, the bigger the newsroom, the more staff in each position, and the more likely to have at least one of the fractional positions.

There are few big changes from last year. Digital positions (web/mobile writer or producer, social media producer or editor and digital content manager) increased from 2.1 for a typical newsroom last year to 2.3 this year.

The number of reporters in a typical newsroom fell by 0.4 while multi-media journalists (MMJs) rose by 0.7. This change could be due to more precise reporting since the survey split the two jobs a few years ago.

Reporters edged out MMJs in the top 50 markets and the largest newsrooms (with staffs of 51+), but MMJs won out in all other newsroom markets and sizes. Network affiliation and geography made no difference.

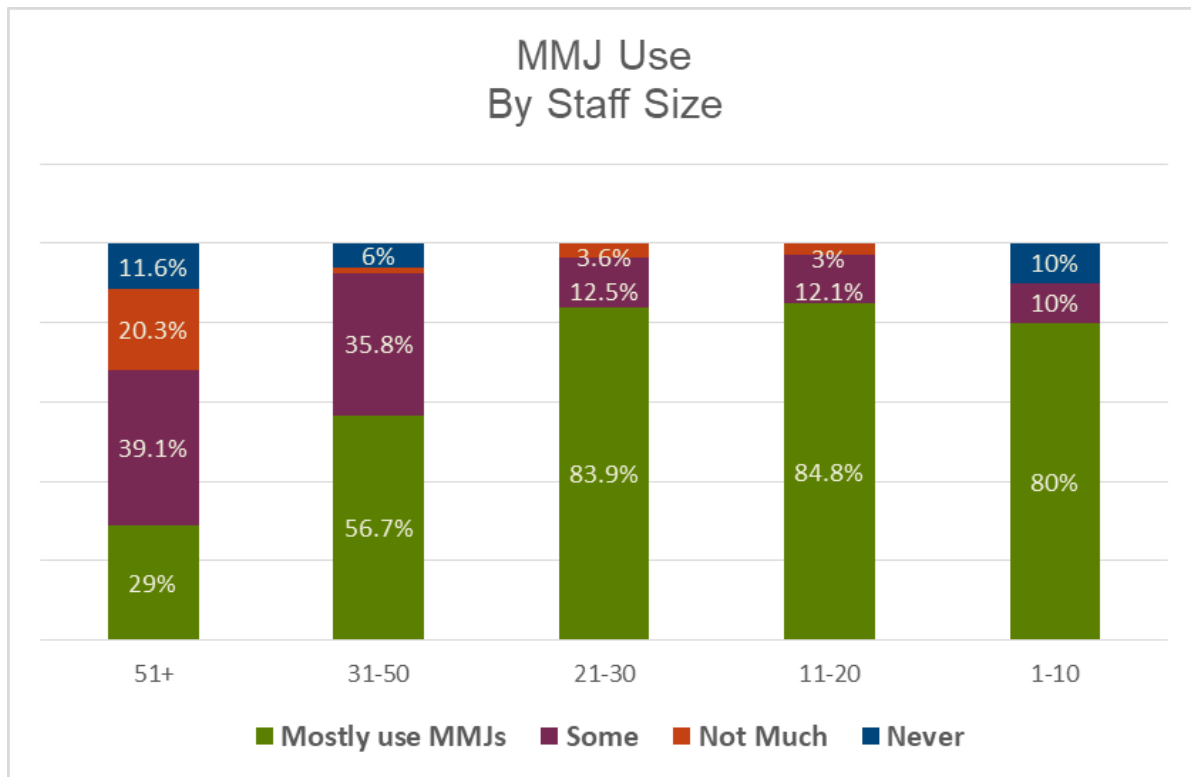
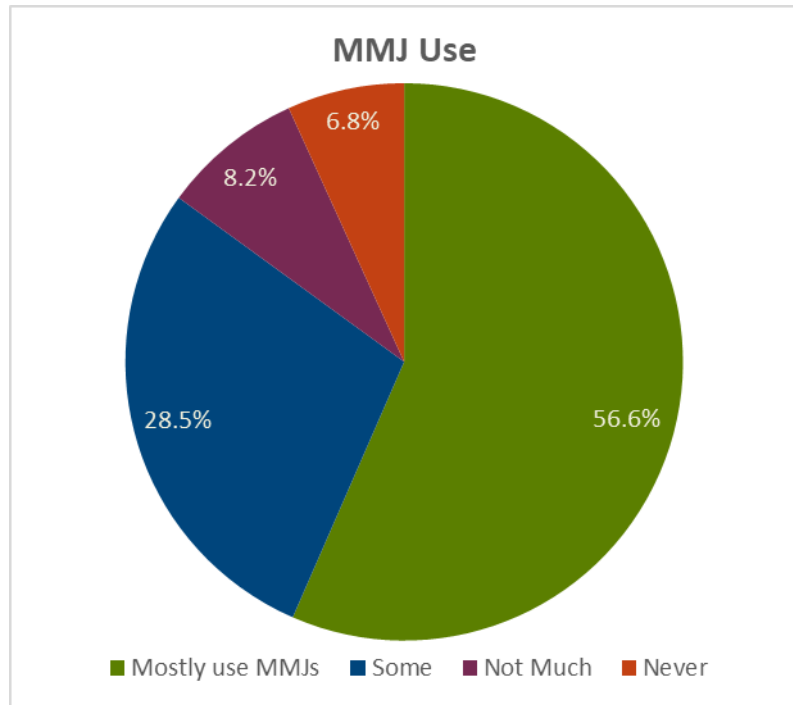
The number of MMJs or backpack journalists has continued to generally edge upward. About a decade of tracking MMJs has shown a regular, relentless 2 to 3 point-per-year increase in their use. But this year’s survey shows a change.

# 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra University Newsroom Survey

## Local News Staffing

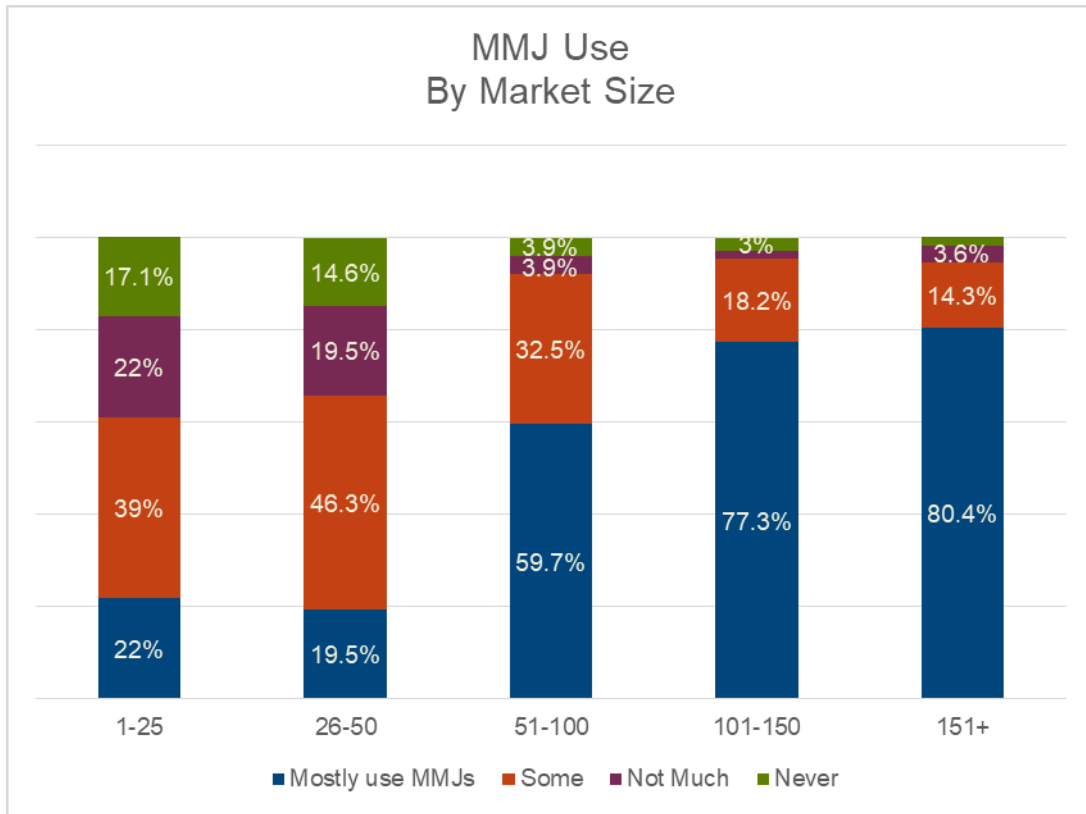
The typical 2 to 3 point MMJ growth of the past few years fell to just 1 point this year. It is too soon to tell if this is a trend, but a number of news directors have reported over the last year that they're looking at cutting back on the use of MMJs.

Overall, full-time web staffing slipped slightly in TV in 2017, with all market sizes under the top 25 dropping 0.1 to 0.3 points. However, part-time web staffing increased slightly, so total web staffing rose despite full-time staffing's decrease.



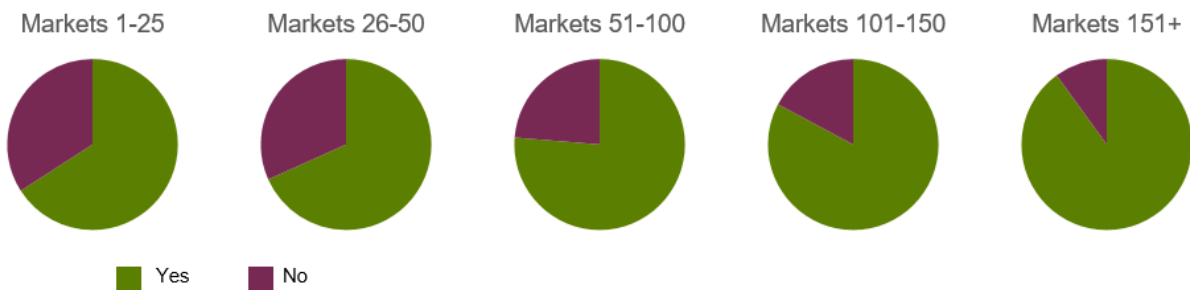
# 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra University Newsroom Survey

## Local News Staffing



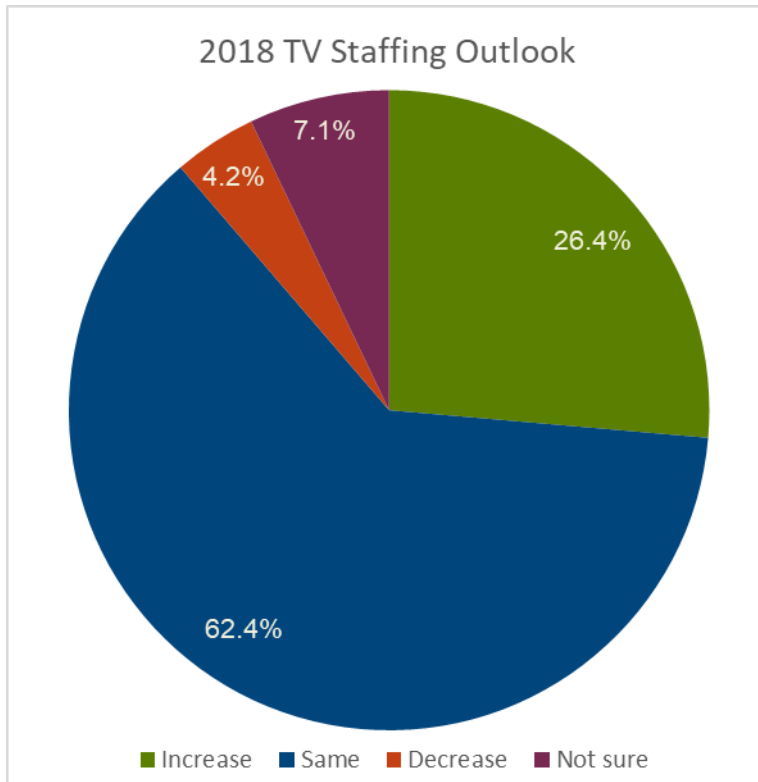
How many people work on the digital side?			
	Full-time	Part-time	Total
<b>All TV</b>	2.8	1.3	4
Markets 1-25	5.7	1.4	7.1
26-50	3.6	0.8	4.6
51-100	2.8	1.8	4.6
101-150	1.9	1.6	3.2
151+	1	0.6	1.4

### Do other staffers help with the website?





The percentage of TV news staff with website responsibilities edged up a point and a half from 2016, with all market groupings moving up except the smallest (151+), which dropped slightly but in which the most staffers have web duties.



The annual survey question asking news directors about their planned staff changes has been a good predictor of the year to come. Although it underestimated both staff increases and staff decreases by about 10 points last year, it provides a rough forecast.

The percentage of news directors expecting staff growth this year is up by 4 points, and the percentage expecting staff declines is down by about 3.

There are few discernible patterns to the optimism or pessimism. News directors in the Northeast are the least likely to expect growth and the most likely to expect declines. They said much the same a year ago, but the numbers didn't bear out the pessimism. Fox affiliates were most likely to expect growth. That's what they said last year, too, and that's what they did.

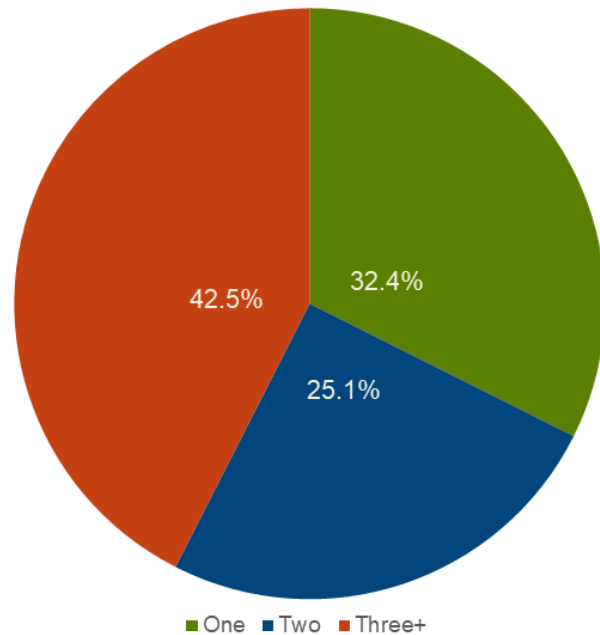
2018 TV Staffing Outlook				
	Increase	Same	Decrease	Not sure
Big four affiliates	26.3%	61.9	4.3	7.5
Other commercial	22.7%	68.2	4.5	4.5

### Radio News Staffing Stays Stable

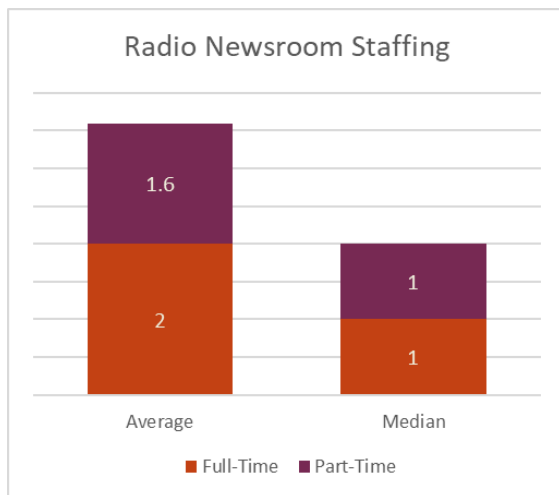
The 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey shows the typical or median radio news operation had a full-time news staff of one, a number that has remained consistent over the last two decades or more.

Radio news remains highly centralized, with the typical radio news director overseeing the news on an average of 2.5 or median of 2 stations. Those numbers are identical to the past two years' data. All told, 84.1% of all multi-station local groups operate with a centralized newsroom. That's down 1 from 2016's 85.2%.

How many stations do Radio News Directors oversee?

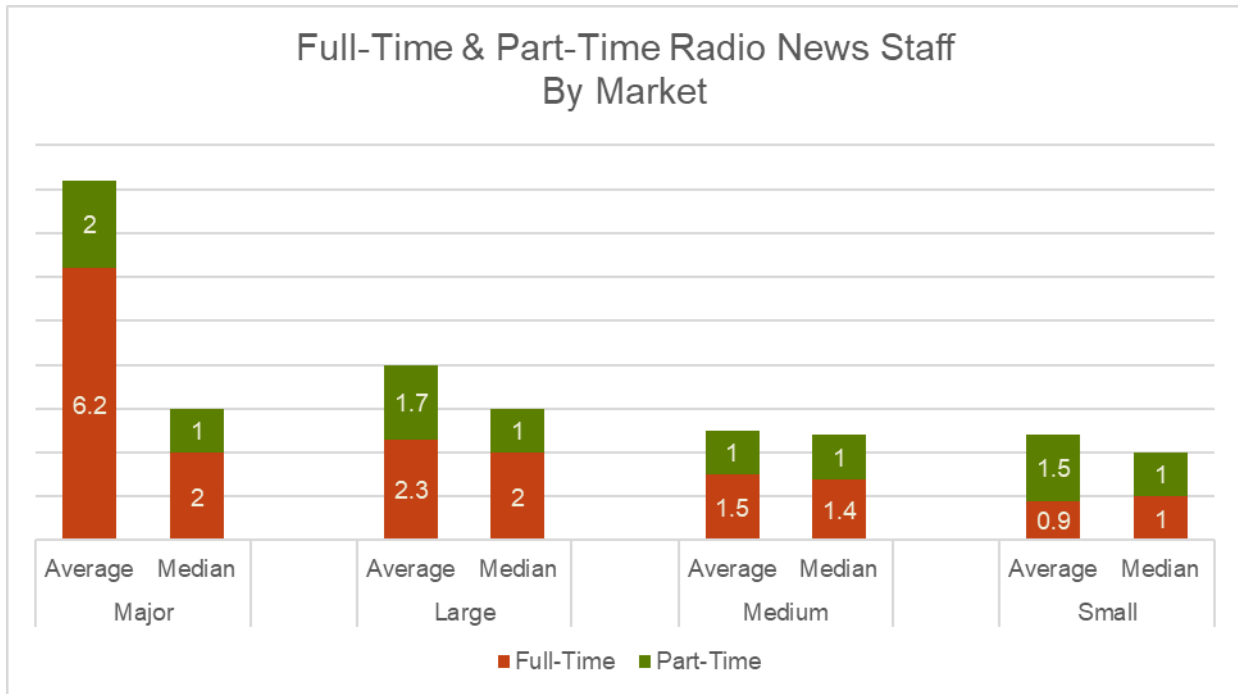


How many stations do Radio News Directors oversee?	
Average	2.5 locally
Median	2
Maximum	13 locally / 13 elsewhere

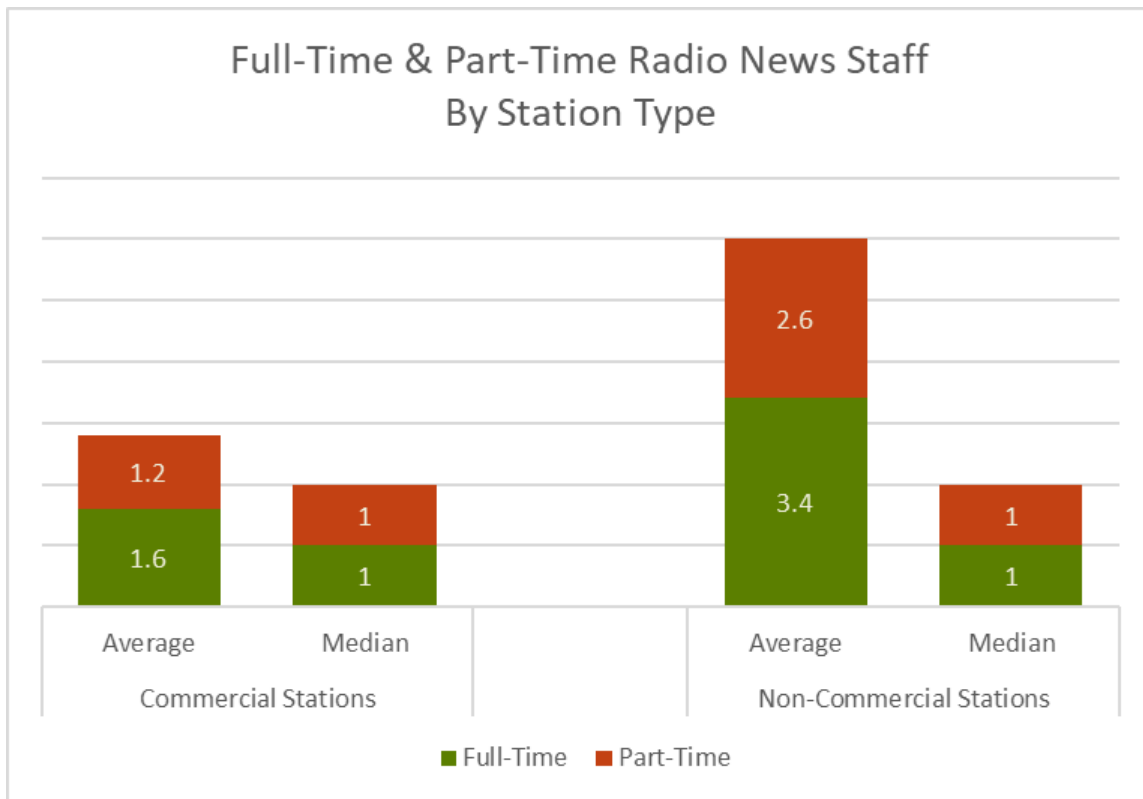


Only about 7% of radio news directors oversee news for a station outside their own market. That's up from 2016's 5%, but the same as in 2015. More news directors and general managers reported that just one station or one station in the group does local news, but the average and median number of stations that a news director oversees remained at 2.5 and 2, respectively.

## Local News Staffing



*In radio, major markets are those with 1 million or more potential 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.*



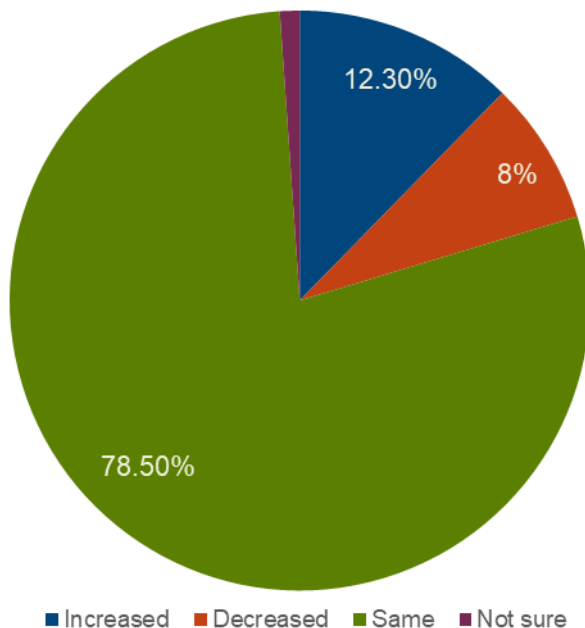
## Local News Staffing

Most indicators of radio staffing remain close to unchanged from 2016. The one exception is major market news departments. The median – or typical – number didn't change, but the averages increased slightly, indicating higher survey return rates from all-news radio stations, most of which are in major markets, than a year ago.

Overall, the median radio news staff size remains at 1. As of 2015, the reporting sample is large enough to study commercial and non-commercial stations separately, which highlights some of the biggest and most consistent differences in local radio news today. The average full-time staff is nearly the same as a year ago, with twice as many employees at non-commercial stations as commercial ones. However, the median number of staffers at non-commercial stations dropped back down to 1 in 2016 from 2 in 2015.

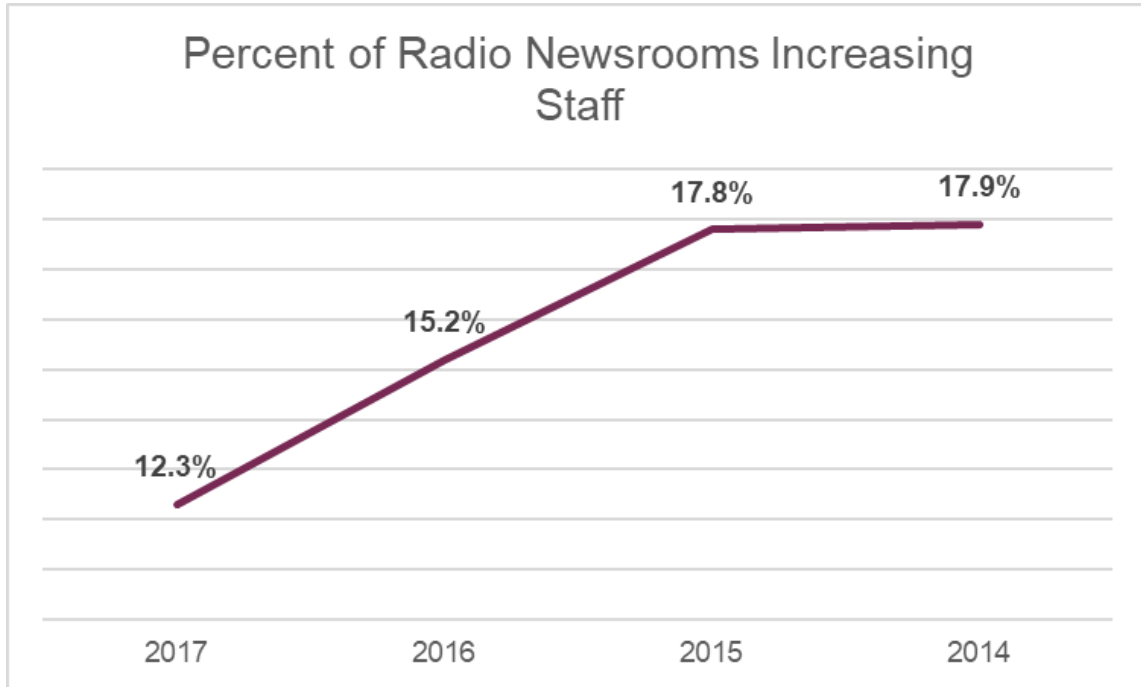
Local groups of 3 or more stations generally had a larger news staff, on average, than standalone stations or two-station combos. But all groups had a median staff size of 1.

How has radio staffing changed in the past 12 months?



The percentage of stations that increased staff during the past year is almost 3 points less than in 2016 and follows 2015's 2.5 point fall. The bigger the staff, the more likely the station increased staff even more. Overall, the bigger the market, the more likely for a station to increase staff size; the smaller the market, the less likely the station cut news staff.

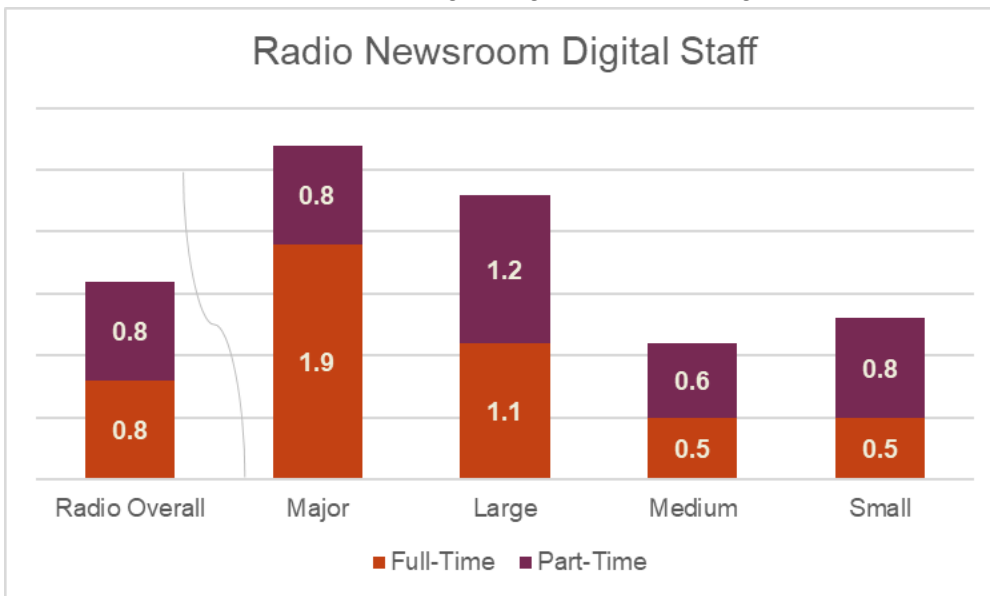
Non-commercial stations were twice as likely to increase staff as commercial stations, but also twice as likely to cut staff. Geographically, the Northeast led the way in both increases and cuts.



### Radio Staffing by Position

Radio web staffing is virtually unchanged from 2016.

Major market radio web staffing increased again this year after dropping a year ago. Large market web staffing generally held steady with medium and small markets slipping back. Non-commercial stations have a slight edge in web staffing over commercial stations.



Radio reversed last year's drop in the number of staffers who also have website duties, moving up overall by two points. Every market category saw more staffers helping on the web, except medium markets, in which slightly fewer did. Type of station and geography made no meaningful difference.

The biggest differences in radio news staffing are between commercial and non-commercial stations. Along with a news director, the average commercial radio station has half a reporter (0.5) while the average non-commercial station has almost 2 (1.9). On the other hand, the average commercial station has about a third of a person (0.3) in sports, and the average non-commercial station has none.



### Radio News Hiring

The average radio station hired 0.4 replacement positions and 0.2 new hires. Both of those numbers are virtually identical to a year ago. But the median was zero for both in 2017 – the same as 2016, 2015 and 2014. The Northeast and South led in replacement hiring. New positions, such as they were, were most often hired in the West.

The top radio replacement position was news director, followed by reporter and producer. For the very, very few new positions hired, reporters overwhelmingly led the way.

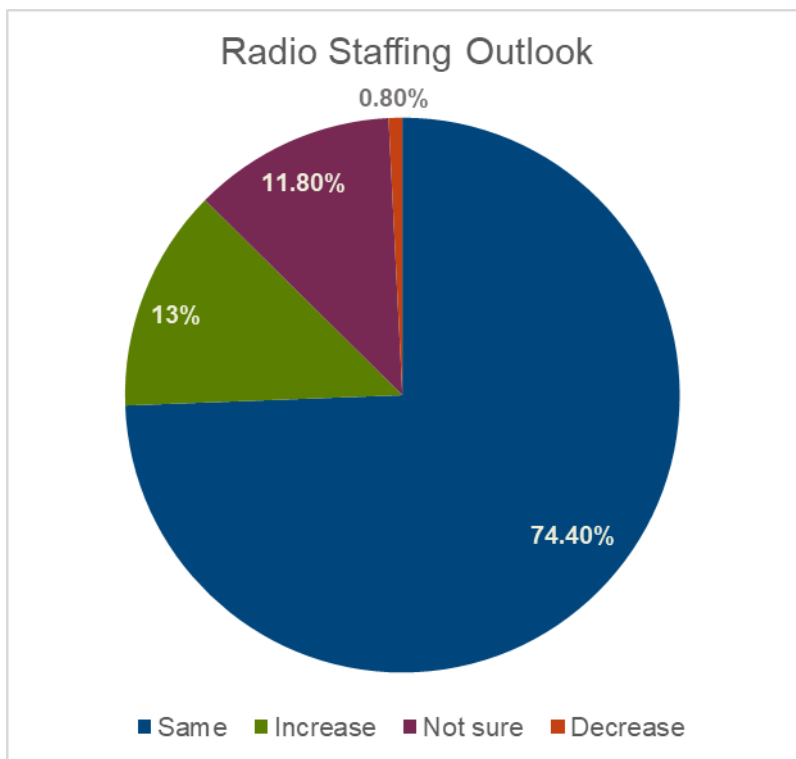
# 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra University Newsroom Survey

## Local News Staffing

### 2018 Radio Staffing Outlook

News directors' planned additions and cuts have been a relatively reliable predictor in TV news. This has not been the case in radio, so take these numbers with that caveat.

Non-commercial stations are three times more likely to expect to increase staff than commercial stations. That's generally the case, although 2017 actual hiring didn't reflect the trend. The bigger the market, the more likely the station expects to add staff – peaking at 27.8% in major markets. The bigger the news staff, the more likely to expect hiring, and stations in the Northeast were more likely to expect to add staff than any other region.



### 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.