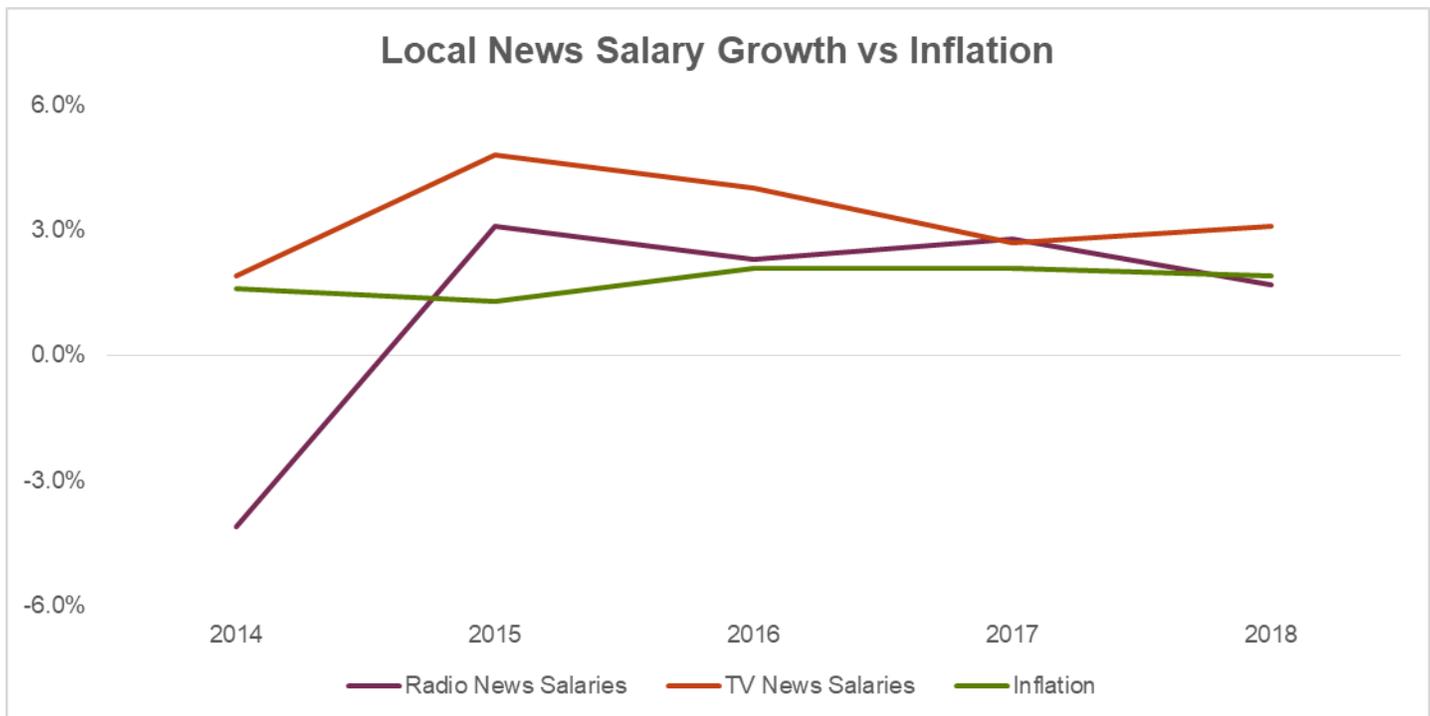


Local News Salaries

Highlights:

- Local TV news salaries rose on par with average U.S. wages overall in the last year.
- The long-term salary picture looks better than ever for local TV news, beating inflation over the last 5 and 10 years.
- Radio news salaries increased more slowly in the last year, but for the second year in a row, overall radio news salaries have exceeded inflation in a five-year comparison.



TV News Salaries

The latest RTDNA/Lawrence Herbert School of Communication - Hofstra University Annual Survey found that local television news salaries rose by 3.1% in 2018, just over the U.S. average hourly wage gain of 3% for 2018. With inflation remaining low at 1.9%, real wage growth in local TV news hit 1.2%.

TV news wage growth for 2018 was up four-tenths of a point from last year's 2.7% increase.

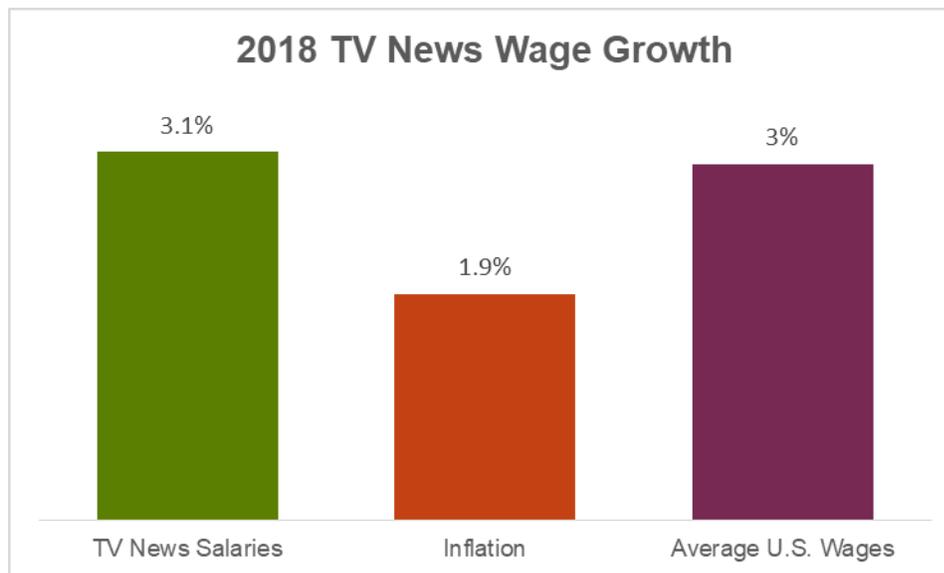
Local TV news salaries look better on the average with salaries for 80% of TV news jobs increasing and just 20% decreasing. Of median salaries, which are more indicative of typical pay, half increased with a quarter each decreasing or staying the same. *How does your position compare?* [Download your salary guide.](#)

A Note from Bob:

2019 marks my 25th year conducting the RTDNA Annual Survey. First at Ball State University and now at Hofstra University. It has been my privilege to do this, and I want to thank RTDNA, Ball State and Hofstra for the support and opportunity to keep this going. Most of all, I want to thank all of you who spend what I know is way too much time poring over the way too many questions that I ask on this survey. Thank you.

- Bob Papper

Local News Salaries



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!

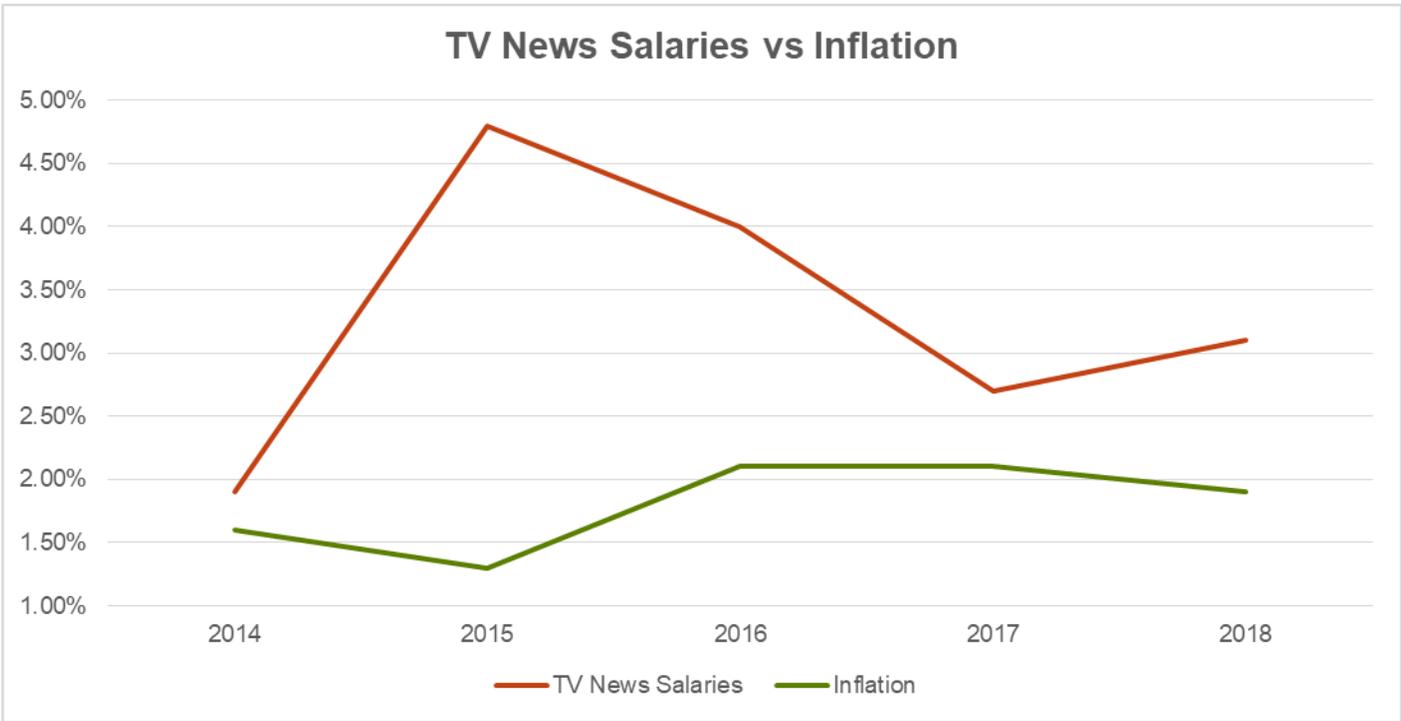
The survey separated multi-media journalist (MMJ) from news reporter five years ago. Reporters have consistently earned more money, overall, than MMJs. The spread this year is \$16,200, compared to \$11,000 last year and \$12,000 the year before. Some of that difference is due to market size: more reporters are in bigger markets. But reporters make more than MMJs in markets 1 to 25, 26 to 50 and 51 to 100, so the pay differences aren't just due to market size.

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.

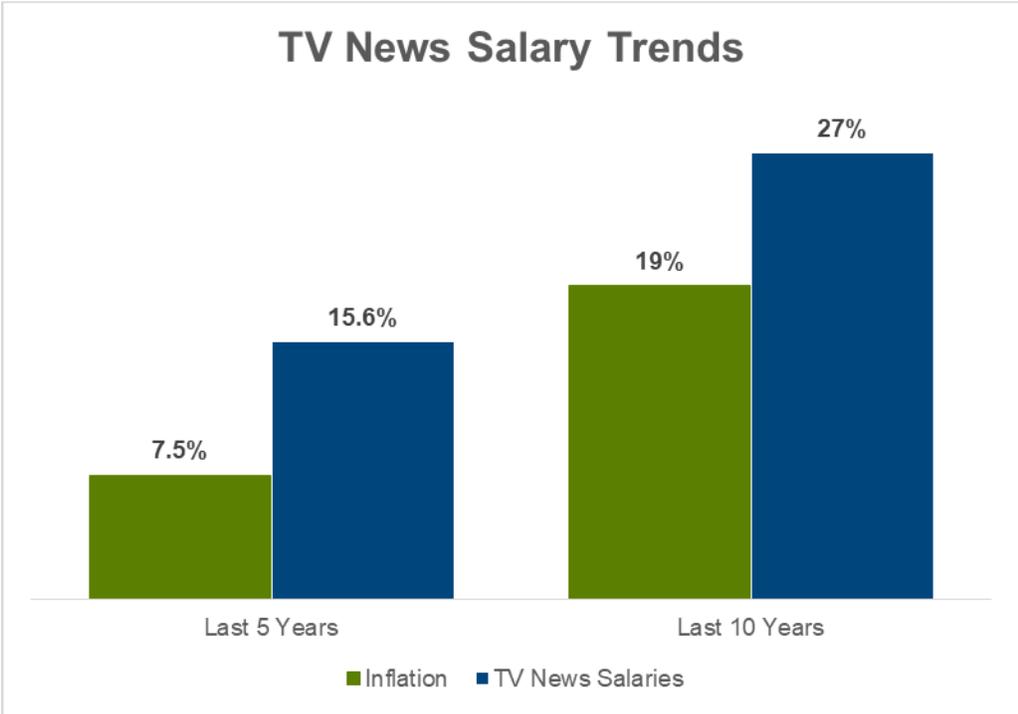
Long-Term Picture

After 6 straight years of overall salary increases ahead of inflation, the big, long-term salary picture looks better than ever. Overall, TV news salaries have risen at twice the rate of inflation over the last 5 years, and nearly all positions have done better than inflation. *Is your position coming out ahead?* [Download your salary guide.](#)



Even over the last decade, three-quarters of TV news positions are now running ahead of inflation. That’s a huge improvement over just a few years ago.

Keep in mind that wages in this country, generally, had not kept pace with inflation until 2017.



Local News Salaries

Market Size

Usually there are winners and losers in the salary race, but this time around things were remarkably even.

Nearly all market sizes saw a majority of positions increase in salary, but both markets 1 to 25 and 26 to 50 were overwhelmingly so. That's a reversal for the biggest markets, but 26 to 50 had a strong year last year as well. Markets 101 to 150 came in last a year ago and third this time around with a bare majority of positions gaining ground. Markets 51 to 100, which came out on top last year was barely edged out for last place by markets 151+. In both, nearly two-thirds of positions the same or down from a year ago. *Where does your market fall? [Download your salary guide.](#)*

Starting Pay

Average starting pay in TV increased by \$1,000, but median starting salary dropped by \$600 compared to last year, indicating that starting market size made all the difference. [Download your salary guide](#) to find average, median, minimum and maximum reported starting salaries for 10 TV news job titles.

Newsroom Size

Sorting by size of newsroom leads to an unusual pattern this year. If you worked in the largest newsrooms of 51+ people or mid-sized ones with 21 to 30 staffers, it was a good year for salaries, with nearly three-quarters of the positions moving up in pay. For those in newsrooms of 20 or fewer, three-quarters of the positions either went down in salary or stayed the same.

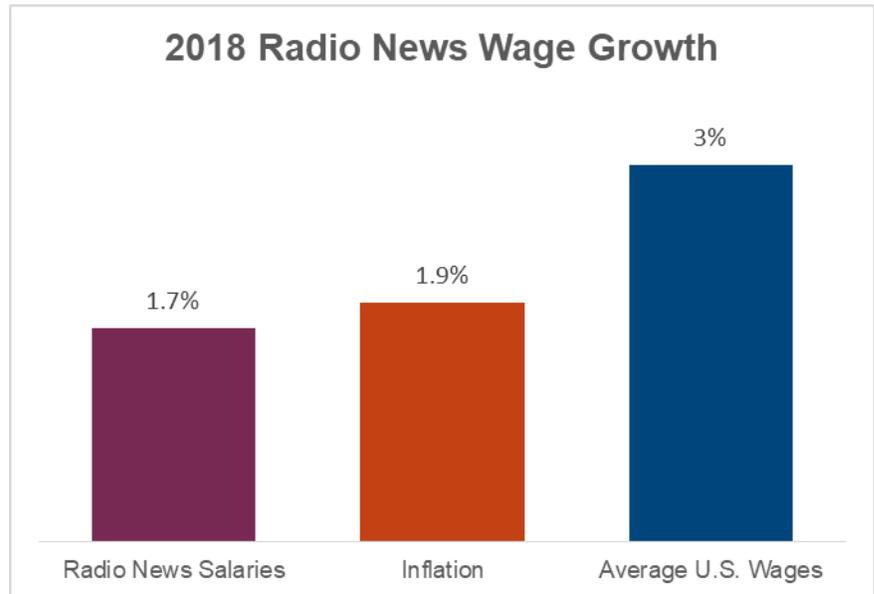
Note that the two smallest newsroom groups include a number of newsrooms in the biggest markets, so salary numbers for those group tend to be erratic. *Where does your newsroom size fall? [Download your salary guide.](#)*

“Other commercial” station salaries tended to be higher than most, and non-commercial salaries tend to be lower (as both usually are). Differences by network or region were inconsistent and inconsequential.

Radio

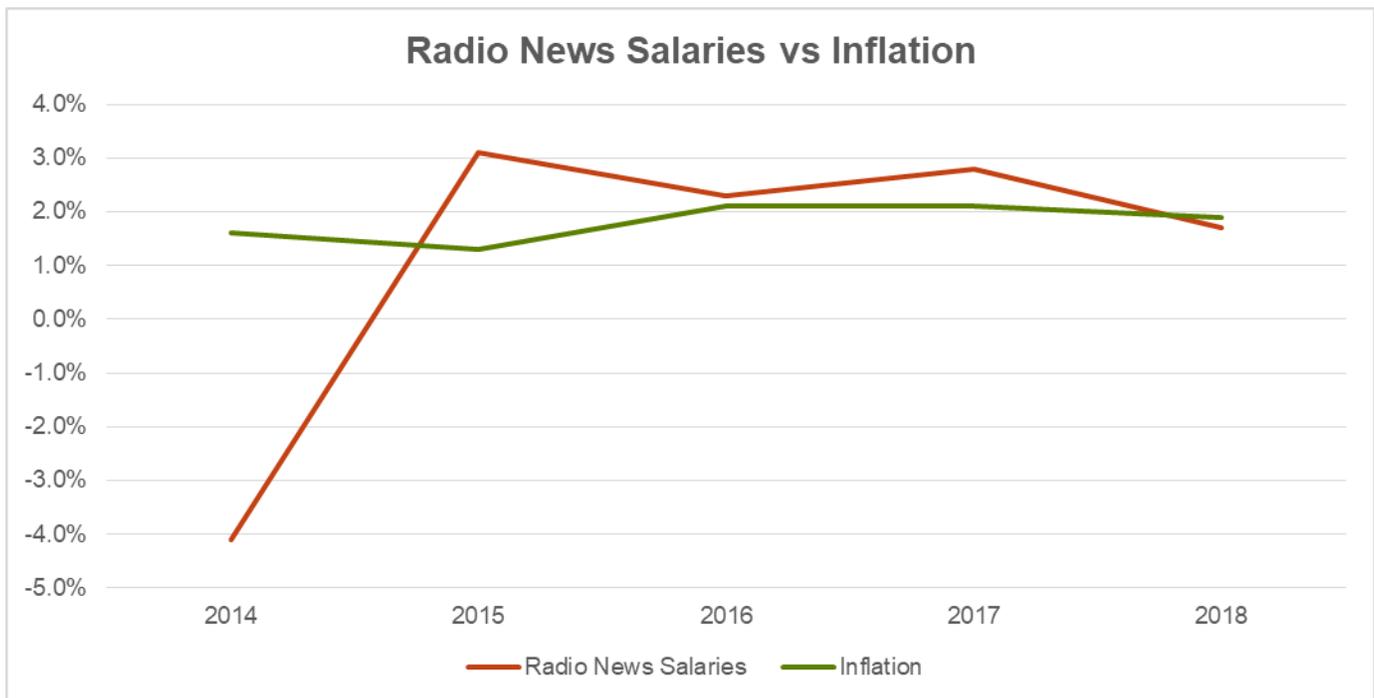
The latest RTDNA/Lawrence Herbert School of Communication - Hofstra University Annual Survey found that local radio news salaries rose by 1.7% from last year. That's down from last year's 2.8% increase. Factor in low inflation of 1.9%, and radio salaries almost held even over the last year, with a loss against inflation of 0.2%.

While it was a largely stagnant year overall, some positions fared much better than others.



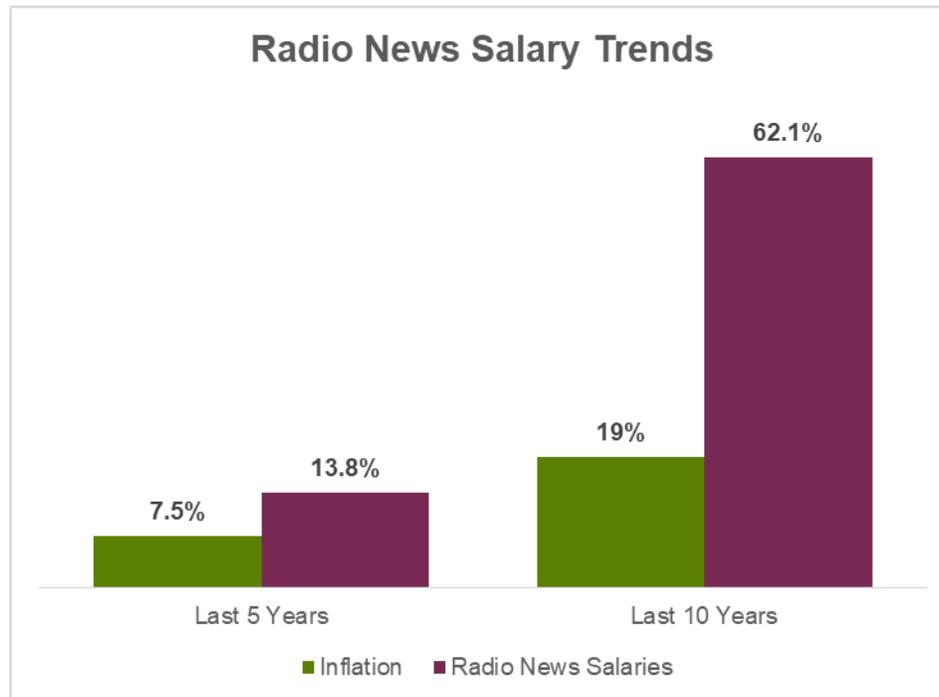
Long-Term Picture

With just a couple exceptions, five-year comparisons look strong, with overall salary growth well ahead of inflation for most radio news positions. Aided by the disastrous year of 2009, the 10-year comparison is strong across the board. *Is your position coming out ahead?* [Download your salary guide.](#)



Local News Salaries

This is only the second year in a row where overall radio news salaries have exceeded inflation in a five-year comparison, at least for quite a few years. Ten-year comparisons have been stronger, but that's heavily based on some very low salaries a decade ago.



Commercial vs Public

Overall, non-commercial salaries are 37.4% higher than commercial ones, but that's not quite a fair comparison. The vast majority of non-commercial stations surveyed are in large and major markets.

Using median (or more typical) salaries, non-commercial radio salaries come out 23.6% higher than commercial radio salaries – just looking at comparable market sizes.

To compare median radio news salaries by position and market size, [download the radio news salary guide](#).

Starting Pay

Average starting pay in radio increased a whopping \$3,300 after increasing \$500 last year, \$600 the year before and \$700 the year before that.

Median (more typical) starting salaries rose by \$100 after a \$3,000 jump last year. [Download your salary guide](#) to find average, median, minimum and maximum reported starting salaries for radio news jobs.

Local News Salaries

About the Survey

The RTDNA/ Lawrence Herbert School of Communication at Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2018 among all 1,685 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,481 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,310 television stations (77.7%) and 645 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,938 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.