

People of Color in TV News

The percentage of people of color in local TV news reached a record high for the 3rd year in a row.

However, the percentage of people of color in the local TV workforce is up just 0.7 percentage points, and the gap in representation is down just 0.2 percentage points. In the last 30 years, the percentage of people of color among the U.S. population overall is up 13.4 points, but just 8.8 among the local TV news workforce. The representation gap, which widened after 2005, has been shrinking slowly the last 4 years.

Population of color v. population of color in TV news workforce 1990 - 2020

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
People of color in U.S.	25.90%	27.90%	28.60%	32.80%	34.90%	37.40%	38%	38.30%	38.70%	39.3%*
People of color in TV Workforce	17.8	17.1	21	21.2	20.2	22.2	24.4	24.8	25.9	26.6

* Projected

The workforce of color at non-Spanish language TV stations also reached record levels for the 4th year in a row.

The percentage of African Americans in local TV news increased the most: 1.3 points. Representation of Native Americans edged up and of Asian Americans held steady. Hispanic representation fell by 0.7.

Excluding Spanish-language TV stations finds the local TV workforce 25% people of color, the fourth record high in the last 4 years. This includes 13.8% African Americans (up from 12.4%), 7.8% Hispanics (down from 8.8%), 2% Asian American and 0.4% Native American (both unchanged).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that about 63% of the U.S. workforce overall is non-Hispanic white, 17% Hispanic, 13% African American, 6% Asian American and 1% Native American.

2020 RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey

Newsroom Diversity

Television news work force - 1995 - 2020									
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
Caucasian	82.90%	79.00%	78.80%	79.80%	77.80%	75.60%	75.20%	74.10%	73.40%
African American	10.1	11	10.3	11.5	10.8	10.9	11.7	12	13.3
Hispanic/Latino	4.2	7	8.7	5.8	8.2	10.5	10.8	11.6	10.9
Asian American	2.2	3	1.9	2.3	2.9	2.6	2	2	2
Native American	0.6	<1.0	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4

The top 25 local TV news markets are the most racially and ethnically diverse. All newsrooms in the top 50 markets include at least one person of color and, on average, include 35% people of color. Representation of people of color improved slightly for all affiliates, market sizes and staff sizes. However, as many as 25% of newsrooms with the fewest staffers (1 to 10) and as many as 10.1% of newsrooms in the smallest markets (DMA 151+) include no people of color on staff.

People of Color in local TV news – 2020			
	News Staffs with People of Color	News Directors of Color	People of color as % of Workforce
All Television	96.30%	17.40%	26.60%
Network Affiliates	97.4	13.9	24
Independents	88.9	45.5	62.2
Market size:			
DMA 1-25	100	41.2	39.6
DMA 26-50	100	16.7	30.4
DMA 51-100	96.7	10	19.9
DMA 101-150	98.3	15.6	24.2
DMA 151+	89.1	14.3	23.6
Staff size:			
Staff 51+	97.8	8.6	26.7
Staff 31-50	100	18.9	26.7
Staff 21-30	98.1	20	24.9
Staff 11-20	96	4	28.3
Staff 1-10	75	30	33.9

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Newsroom Diversity

Independent commercial stations tend to be much more representative than other station groups, while network affiliates include approximately 24% people of color overall (up 1.2 points and 1.4 points in the last 2 years respectively). Fox affiliates were the most diverse among network affiliates by about 5 percentage points.

Stations in the South and West are far more diverse than stations in the Northeast, and stations in the Midwest are least diverse.

Spanish-Language TV: Overall, 98.9% of the TV news workforce at Spanish-language stations are Hispanic and/or Latino. That's just below last year's all-time high of 99.7%. Caucasians make up 0.7% and Asian Americans 0.4%.

Women of color

In the top 50 TV markets, men of color outnumber women of color, but women of color increasingly outnumber men of color in all other market sizes.

Women of color outnumber men of color 55% to 45% among Asian Americans, 53.2% to 48.8% among Hispanic and/or Latinos and 54.9% to 45.1% among African Americans.

Only among white staffers are men better represented than women at 58.7% to 41.3%.

People of Color in TV News Leadership

TV News Directors

After a slight dip last year, the percentage of local TV news directors of color edged up slightly to tie 2018 for a record high of 17.4%.

News directors of color – 1995 - 2020									
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
Caucasian	92.10%	86%	88.00%	86.90%	87.50%	85.10%	82.60%	82.80%	82.60%
African American	1.6	3	3.9	3.3	4.3	5.3	6.4	5.5	3.9
Hispanic/Latino	3.8	9	5.8	6.6	6	7.1	8.4	10.7	10
Asian American	1.5	2	1.3	2.6	1.8	2.2	2.3	1	3.1
Native American	1	<1	1	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0	0.4

However, those gains were limited to 2.1-point increase in representation of Asian Americans and an increase from 0 to .4% among Native Americans. African American representation among local news directors dropped 1.6 percentage points and representation of Hispanic and/or Latino news directors was down 0.7 points.

Newsroom Diversity

Excluding Spanish-language stations, local news directors are 14.1% people of color vs 13.4% in 2019 and a record 14.3% in 2018. Among non-Spanish language stations, African Americans make up 4% of news directors, down for a second year. Hispanic and/or Latino news directors represent 6.5% of news directors at non-Spanish language stations, down from a record 6.9%. Asian American representation among news directors increased from 1.1% to 3.2% and Native American representation increased from 0 to 0.4%

At Spanish-language stations, 90.9% of the news directors are Hispanic and/or Latino. News directors are most racially and ethnically diverse in markets 1 to 25, as is typical.

Non-commercial and independent stations tended to be more representative. Among network affiliates, Fox affiliates, after being most representative a year ago, lagged ABC, CBS and NBC affiliates.

Regionally, stations in the Northeast caught up with the South and West but, as usual, the Midwest lagged well behind all the other areas in terms of representation among news directors.

TV General Managers

Though representation of people of color in local TV leadership increased slightly at the news director level, general managers are less racially and ethnically diverse than last year. Just 7.1% of general managers are people of color, down from 10.3% last year.

Just 3.9% of general managers are people of color when Spanish-language stations are excluded, down from 7.4%.

Network affiliate general managers became less representative by almost 3 percentage points.

Fewer general managers are African American or Hispanic and/or Latino.

No stations reported a general manager identifying as Native American. No stations in the Midwest report a general manager of color.

TV general managers – 2020				
	% White	% People of Color	% Men	% Women
All Television	92.90%	7.10%	81%	19%
Network Affiliates	96.2	3.8	79.5	20.5
Independents	61.9	38.1	95.5	4.5
Market size:				
DMA 1-25	73.3	26.7	83.3	16.7
DMA 26-50	89.5	10.5	74.4	25.6
DMA 51-100	93.9	6.1	88.2	11.8
DMA 101-150	100	0	77.8	22.2
DMA 151+	97.8	2.2	79.2	20.8

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Newsroom Diversity

Women in TV News

Women make up 44.7% of the local TV news workforce, just down from a record high in 2019 of 44.9%.

For comparison, women make up about 47% of the full time U.S. workforce overall. Based Department of Education college graduation numbers, 53.5% of the potential American workforce, ages 25 to 65, who have at least undergraduate degrees are women.

Women in local TV news – 2020			
	News Staffs with Women	Women News Directors	Women as % of Workforce
All Television	99.10%	36.80%	44.70%
Network Affiliates	100	30.2	44.7
Independents	100	31.8	44.8
Market:			
DMA 1-25	95.5	32.4	43
DMA 26-50	100	40.5	43.4
DMA 51-100	100	32.9	45.1
DMA 101-150	100	24.6	46.4
DMA 151+	97.8	28	45.4
Staff size:			
Staff 51+	100	31	43.2
Staff 31-50	100	35.1	45.8
Staff 21-30	100	23.2	44.9
Staff 11-20	100	16	49.1
Staff 1-10	90	50	43.8

All but about 10% of the smallest newsrooms of 10 or fewer staffers include at least one woman on the news team. Women are slightly better represented in smaller markets and on smaller news teams.

Women in TV News Leadership

TV News Directors

For the fourth year in a row, the percentage of women TV news directors hit a new, record high – up from last year’s 35.3% to this year’s 36.8%.

This is a precise census number based on every TV station that runs local news.

Women news directors were most likely to be found in top 100 markets, and women make up

44% of the news directors in top 10 markets. Women news directors are more often found in non-commercial stations. Women news directors were again less likely to be found in the Northeast than any other region.

TV General Managers

After reaching a record of 23.4% last year, the percentage of general managers who are women dropped 4.4 percentage points. Network affiliate general managers are more likely to be women, representation decreased across commercial stations. General managers who are women are most common at Fox affiliates and least common at non-network affiliated stations and CBS affiliates.

Women general managers were less likely to be found in the Midwest and South than the Northeast, a change from last year, and again are most common in the West.

Radio News Diversity

15.4% of the local radio news workforce are people of color, up just under one percentage point in the last year. This is the most representative radio has been since 1998, just before courts struck down FCC Equal Opportunity Employment rules, when people of color made up 16% of the radio workforce.

Population of color v. broadcast radio workforce of color 1990 - 2020										
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
Population of color in U.S.	25.9%	27.9%	28.6%	32.8%	34.9%	37.4%	38%	38.3%	38.7%	39.3%*
Radio Workforce of Color	10.8	14.7	10	7.9	5	9.8	11.7	11.3	14.5	15.4

* Projected

Radio news work force - 1995 - 2020									
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
Caucasian	85.3%	90%	92.1%	95.0%	90.2%	88.3%	88.7%	85.5%	84.6%
African American	5.7	5	0.7	2.9	4.4	2.8	5.1	5.9	6.8
Hispanic/Latino	7.5	3	6	0.7	2.7	4.2	3.6	6	5
Asian American	0.6	1	0.7	0.4	1.7	4	1.9	2.1	3.1
Native American	1	1	0.5	1.1	1	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.5

People of color in local radio news – 2020			
	News Staffs with People of Color	News Directors of Color	People of colors as % of Workforce
All Radio	23.2%	7.1%	15.4%
Large Market	26.3	9.1	9.4
Medium Market	12.9	4.8	7
Small Market	7	4.5	5.7
Commercial	9.5	7.6	9.1
Non-commercial	47.7	6.1	19.2

Africans Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans are all slightly better represented in radio than year ago, but Hispanic and/or Latino radio broadcasters lost ground.

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Newsroom Diversity

Just 23.2% of local radio newsrooms include one or more people of color, up half a point after an almost 8-point gain last year.

The non-commercial workforce is about twice as diverse as the commercial workforce, but lags in diverse leadership.

As is typical, radio stations in the Midwest are least diverse.

Radio News Directors

Last year, there were more news directors of color in radio than at any point in the last 5 years, at 8.2% of news directors. This year, just 7.1% of radio news directors are people of color.

Larger market radio stations and stations in the South are most likely to have a news director of color, while stations in the Midwest are least likely to.

Radio news directors – 1995 - 2020									
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
Caucasian	91.40%	94%	89%	92.90%	94.90%	93.80%	94.10%	91.80%	92.90%
African American	5.4	3	0	2.7	1.7	2.3	2.5	3.4	2.7
Hispanic/Latino	2.4	2	8.8	2.7	1.7	1.9	2.5	3.4	2.5
Asian American	0	0	0	0.9	0	0.8	0	0.3	0.5
Native American	0.8	1	2.2	0.9	1.7	1.2	0.8	1.3	1.4

African American and Hispanic/Latino news directors each lost representation, by 0.7 and 0.9, respectively. Both Asian Americans and Native Americans are slightly better represented among news directors.

Radio General Managers

The percentage of radio general managers of color fell by almost a point from a year ago to just 6.3%.

General managers of color are more than twice as likely

in major markets than any other size and four times as likely at non-commercial stations as commercial ones. General managers of color were most often found in the West and the Northeast and least in the Midwest.

Radio general managers – 2020				
	% White	% People of Color	% Men	% Women
All Radio	93.7%	6.3%	76.4%	23.6%

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Newsroom Diversity

2.9% of radio general managers are African American, up slightly. 1.8% are Hispanic and/or Latino, down a point. 1.1% are Native American, down slightly, and 0.5% are Asian American, up slightly.

Radio: Women

Men tend to be overrepresented in local radio news, except among people of color. This year radio is 60.1% men to 39.9% women overall, including 65% men to 35% women among whites.

There are more African American, Hispanic/Latino and Asian American women than men in local radio. There are more Native American men than women, but the numbers are small.

Women in local radio news – 2020			
	News Staffs with Women	Women News Directors	Women as % of Workforce
All Radio	47.8%	28.8%	39.9%
Major Market	81.1	40.3	48.4
Large Market	63.2	24.2	42.7
Medium Market	35.6	20.8	22.7
Small Market	31.4	33.9	27.6
Commercial	34.7	27.5	26.6
Non-commercial	71	31.6	47.8

Compared to last year, women make up less of the radio workforce and are present at all on fewer radio news teams, each down about 5 percentage points.

47.8% of radio news teams include one or more women. Women are much more likely to be found in large and major markets and much less likely to be found in medium and small markets or at commercial stations.

At 28.8%, there are more women news radio news directors overall this year. The percentage of women news directors dropped in large markets but held largely steady in medium markets and

went up in both small and major markets. Historically, women news directors have been found more frequently at non-commercial stations than commercial ones, though this year the gap has shrunk to a 4-point difference.

23.6% of general managers are women, down slightly from last year. Women general managers were much more common in major markets and at the biggest radio news operations.

Major markets are those with 1 million or more 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.

Note that the typical (median) radio news operation had a full-time news staff of one, with the overall average number of full-time staffers at 3.

Newsroom Diversity

For More Information

Alliance for Women in Media (AWM)
202-750-3664
<https://allwomeninmedia.org>

Asian American Journalists Association
(AAJA)
Phone: (415) 346-2051
www.aaja.org

The Association for Women in
Communication (AWC)
Phone: (417) 886-8606
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.nabj.org

National Association of Hispanic Journalists
(NAHJ)
(202) 853-7760
www.nahj.org

National Lesbian and Gay Journalists
Association
Phone: (202) 588-9888
www.nlgja.org

Native American Journalists Association
(NAJA)
www.naja.com

About the Survey

The RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey, funded in part by the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication at Hofstra University, was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2019 among all 1,702 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,427 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,313 television stations (77.1%) and 673 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,996 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 Papper

Bob Papper is Adjunct Professor of Broadcast and Digital Journalism at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news.