

# Women and Minorities in the Newsroom

African Americans have  
gained ground in radio and  
TV, while other minority  
groups have slipped.

By **Bob Papper**

**A**fter strong growth the year before, minority employment in local TV news eased back from 22.2 percent to 21.5 percent. African Americans rose while all other minority groups decreased.

### Minority Population v. Minority Broadcast Workforce

	2007	2006	2005	2000	1995	1990
Minority Population in U.S.	34.5%	33.6%	33.2%	30.9%	27.9%	25.9%
Minority TV Workforce	21.5	22.2	21.2	21.0	17.1	17.8
Minority Radio Workforce	6.2	6.4	7.9	10.0	14.7	10.8

### Broadcast News Workforce

	2007	2006	2005	2000	1995
<b>TELEVISION</b>					
Caucasian	78.5%	77.8%	78.8%	79.0%	82.9%
African American	10.1	9.5	10.3	11.0	10.1
Hispanic	8.7	9.6	8.7	7.0	4.2
Asian American	2.3	2.7	1.9	3.0	2.2
Native American	0.4	0.5	0.3	<1.0	0.6
<b>RADIO</b>					
Caucasian	93.8%	93.6%	92.1%	90.0%	85.3%
African American	3.3	2.5	0.7	5.0	5.7
Hispanic	0.7	1.9	6.0	3.0	7.5
Asian American	1.1	1.8	0.7	1.0	0.6
Native American	1.1	0.2	0.5	1.0	1.0

**TELEVISION:** The percentage of African Americans has risen more than half a percent, the percentage of Asian Americans is down 0.4 percent, the percentage of Native Americans has slid by just 0.1 percent and the percentage of Hispanics has dropped 0.9 percent.

Among non-Hispanic stations, the minority workforce has fallen to 19.4 percent, down one percent from a year ago. At non-Hispanic stations, the minority breakdown is: 10.4 percent African American, 6.2 percent Hispanic, 2.3 percent Asian American and 0.5 percent Native American.

Overall, 90.9 percent of the TV news workforce at Hispanic stations are Hispanic. Another 7.7 percent are Caucasian, 1.1 percent Asian American and 0.4 percent African American. There are 15 percent more African American men than African American women; almost 42 percent more Hispanic men than Hispanic women; 50 percent more Native American men as Native American women; and more than 64 percent more Caucasian men than Caucasian women. But there are almost 56 percent more Asian American women as men.

**RADIO:** The picture is mixed. The percentage of African Americans and Native Americans is up while the percentage of Hispanics and Asian Americans is down.

Non-Hispanic TV news departments mirror those results. Overall, there was a decrease in minorities of one percent, with African Americans and Native Americans going up and Hispanics and Asian Americans dropping.

The percentage of minorities in radio news slid to the lowest point in the past 13 years: 6.2 percent, just below last year's rate of 6.4 percent.

Minority TV news directors also dropped from 13.2 percent to 10.9 percent, but the percentage of minority radio news directors soared to 12 percent—nearly triple the year before.

The survey research necessarily involves projecting figures for the industry based on the news directors who participate. Not surprisingly, the stations returning the survey vary from year to year. That's not a problem for most of the data, but because different ethnic groups may be more numerous in specific areas of the country, ethnicity is at least partly based on geography. That's why we work at making sure that we have a good balance across the country. Even so, participation from certain markets and certain cities can make a noticeable difference in the ethnicity data from year to year.

That appears to be what happened with Hispanics this year. Fewer stations in Los Angeles, San Diego, Phoenix and Tucson (along with Louisville, KY, and Charlotte, NC,) filled out the ethnic breakdown on the survey or didn't return the survey at all. That appears to have led to the drop in both Hispanics and Asian Americans.

Julio Moran, executive director of the California Chicano News Media Association, says he is "surprised" by the apparent drop in Hispanics. He says that, if anything, he sees a growth in interest among Hispanic students—at least in Los Angeles—and steady or high numbers of Hispanics in the major markets of California.

Jose Rios, vice president of news at KTTV and KCOP-TV in Los Angeles, says he has not seen a decrease at his stations.

The same is true at KBAK-TV in Bakersfield, CA. News director Meaghan St. Pierre says she just lost a Hispanic reporter to an entertainment show, but she hasn't seen a drop in overall numbers or in Hispanic job applicants. Geoff Roth, news director at KMPH-TV in Fresno, CA, also says he hasn't seen any drop or recruitment problems. He says he's in a market that's about

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## Broadcast News Directors

	2007	2006	2005	2000	1995
<b>TELEVISION</b>					
Caucasian	89.1%	86.8%	88.0%	86.0%	92.1%
African American	2.0	4.2	3.9	3.0	1.6
Hispanic	7.2	6.0	5.8	9.0	3.8
Asian American	1.0	1.2	1.3	2.0	1.5
Native American	0.7	1.8	1.0	<1.0	1.0
<b>RADIO</b>					
Caucasian	88.0%	95.6%	89.0%	94.0%	91.4%
African American	4.4	1.9	0.0	3.0	5.4
Hispanic	3.8	1.3	8.8	2.0	2.4
Asian American	1.9	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Native American	1.9	0.6	2.2	1.0	0.8

**RADIO:** The percentage of every minority group of radio news directors has increased. In fact, the percentage of Asian Americans and Native Americans has more than tripled; the percentage of Hispanics has nearly tripled from the year before, and the percentage of African Americans has more than doubled.

Minority news directors are more likely to be at commercial stations than the non-commercial, and are least likely to be in the smallest markets or in the Midwest.

**TELEVISION:** In TV, the percentage of all minority news director groups has fallen except Hispanics, which has increased by 1.2 percent. The percentage of Asian American news directors has edged down by 0.2 percent, but the percentage of African American and Native American news directors each has been cut in half.

Minority TV news directors are most commonly found in the largest markets (23.3 percent in markets 1–25) and least often found in the smallest markets (4.1 percent). But minority news directors are also most likely to be in the smallest news departments, with 5.3 percent at the largest stations (51+ staffers) and 21.4 percent at stations with 10 or fewer newspeople. Minority news directors are most commonly found in the South (16.1 percent) and West (13.1 percent) as opposed to the Northeast (5.7 percent) or Midwest (4.7 percent).

At non-Hispanic stations, the percentage of minority TV news directors has fallen to 6.5 percent from last year's 8.6 percent. The percentage of Hispanic news directors at non-Hispanic stations almost doubled from 1.3 percent a year ago to 2.5 percent this year, making that the largest minority group of news directors at non-Hispanic stations. The number of African Americans has fallen from last year's 4.2 percent to this year's 2.2 percent. Asian Americans have slid from 1.3 to 1.1 percent, and Native Americans have dropped from 1.9 percent to 0.7 percent.

## Women in Local News

	News Staffs With Women	Women News Directors	Women as Percentage of Work Force	Average Number of Women on Staff
<b>ALL TELEVISION</b>				
Network Affiliates	100.0	23.6	40.0	14.6
Independents	100.0	0.0	37.0	10.0
DMA 1–25	96.0	27.3	38.1	17.6
DMA 26–50	93.5	17.4	39.1	18.0
DMA 51–100	98.2	22.7	39.5	17.1
DMA 101–150	98.5	24.4	40.8	10.4
DMA 151+	100.0	26.0	43.5	8.0
Staff 51+	100.0	19.0	39.7	27.8
Staff 31–50	100.0	20.0	39.2	15.2
Staff 21–30	100.0	24.6	39.2	10.0
Staff 11–20	100.0	26.1	44.5	7.1
Staff 1–10	79.2	33.3	43.7	2.6
<b>ALL RADIO</b>				
Major Market	60.0	33.3	27.7	1.2
Large Market	40.0	16.1	18.8	0.5
Medium Market	39.5	29.0	29.1	0.6
Small Market	25.0	19.0	18.6	0.3

**RADIO:** The percentages for women in the radio news workforce are largely unchanged from past years. The percentage of women radio news directors has risen from 20.4 percent last year to 23.5 percent. All market sizes rose except large markets. Generally, the larger the staff, the greater the likelihood of a female news director, but there is no consistent relationship based on the number of stations or market size. Women news directors are a little more likely to be found at group-owned stations than at independents and are more likely to be in the South than elsewhere in the country.

There is a significantly higher percentage of women in commercial radio (24.7 percent) than in non-commercial radio (18.8 percent). Major markets are those with 1 million or more listeners. Large markets are from 250,000 to 1 million listeners. Medium markets are 50,000 to 250,000 listeners. Small markets are fewer than 50,000 listeners.

**TELEVISION:** There have been no significant changes in women in TV news in years, and the most recent figures represent more of the same. Women have stayed at about 40 percent of the TV news workforce for almost a decade. They continue to make up a quarter of the TV news directors, although this year's number is the second-highest level ever; at 26.3 percent it is just behind the record of 26.5 percent set in 2003. As with minorities, women news directors are found in increasing percentages as the size of the newsroom drops.

ABC affiliates are less likely to have female news directors than other network affiliates (17.1 percent for ABC versus an average of 26 percent for the others). We found no female news directors at independent stations. Overall, geography makes little difference for the gender of TV news directors, although women news directors are a little more common in the West than elsewhere.

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## Minorities in Local News

	News Staffs With Minorities	Minority News Directors	Minorities as Percentage of Work Force	Average Number of Minorities on Staff
<b>ALL TELEVISION</b>	90.6%	10.9%	21.5%	7.5
Network Affiliates	92.2	6.2	19.6	7.4
Independents	100.0	33.3	13.2	2.3
DMA 1–25	94.4	23.3	32.5	15.0
DMA 26–50	92.5	8.7	23.3	11.7
DMA 51–100	91.3	11.3	18.6	7.9
DMA 101–150	86.7	9.5	18.0	4.7
DMA 151+	91.8	4.1	15.5	2.9
Staff 51+	100.0	5.3	23.0	16.3
Staff 31–50	96.4	10.1	20.8	8.1
Staff 21–30	91.8	10.3	21.1	5.5
Staff 11–20	87.2	15.9	18.1	3.0
Staff 1–10	60.7	21.4	32.9	2.0
<b>ALL RADIO</b>	11.7%	12.0%	6.2%	0.1
Major Market	20.0	13.3	6.4	0.3
Large Market	30.0	14.3	9.4	0.3
Medium Market	13.2	14.8	6.4	0.1
Small Market	2.8	7.4	4.7	0.1

**TELEVISION:** There is little difference among network affiliates, although Fox stations are a little more diverse at 22.1 percent, versus 19.1 percent for the other network affiliates. Independents are the least diverse at 13.2 percent minority. Stations in the South (28.2 percent minority) and West (25.9 percent) are more diverse than stations in the Northeast (16.8 percent) or Midwest (11.2 percent).

Overall, the concentration of African Americans is highest in the South (13.8 percent) and lowest in the West (4.7 percent). The concentration of Hispanics is highest in the West (14.0 percent), just edging out the South (12.4 percent) and least likely in the Northeast (5.7 percent) and Midwest (1.6 percent). Asian Americans are most heavily concentrated in the West (6.6 percent), where the population is fairly evenly split between men and women versus all other geographic areas, at an average of 1.4 percent, with women outnumbering men by a 2 to 1 ratio. The concentration of Native Americans is highest in the West (0.7 percent) and the South (0.6 percent), and lowest in the Midwest (0.2 percent), with none showing up in the Northeast.

**RADIO:** There are more minorities at independent radio stations than group-owned stations (8.5 percent versus 5.4 percent), and more in the South and less in the West.

## General Managers

	Percent Caucasian	Percent Minority	Percent Men	Percent Women
<b>ALL TELEVISION</b>	93.6%	6.4%	84.2%	15.8%
Network Affiliates	96.7	3.3	84.2	15.8
Independents	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
DMA 1–25	77.8	22.2	86.5	13.5
DMA 26–50	92.5	7.5	72.5	27.5
DMA 51–100	98.1	1.9	85.7	14.3
DMA 101–150	95.5	4.5	85.5	14.5
DMA 151+	100.0	0.0	89.5	10.5
<b>ALL RADIO</b>	94.5	5.5	79.7	20.3

**RADIO:** At radio stations that run local news, female GMs are more common at non-commercial stations and independent stations, and are least often found in the Northeast.

Minority GMs are twice as likely to be found at non-commercial stations than commercial stations, and are three times more likely to be found at independent stations than group-owned stations.

Minority GMs are also more often found in the South and West than in the Northeast and Midwest.

The percentage of minority GMs at radio stations has risen for the first time in several years, to 5.5 percent up from last year's 2.5 percent.

**TELEVISION:** The percentage of women GMs at stations that run local news has edged up from 15.2 to 15.8 percent. Women GMs are least likely to be found in the very smallest markets (151+). There are fewer than half as many women GMs in the Northeast as any other part of the country. Fox stations (25.9 percent) are much more likely to have female GMs than other network affiliates (14.3 percent).

The percentage of minority GMs at television stations that run local news has dropped less than one percent from last year (7.1 to 6.4 percent). Only 3.6 percent of non-Hispanic stations have minority GMs. Almost 90 percent of the minority GMs are African American; the rest are Asian American.

Overall, minority GMs are most likely in markets 1–25, but at mostly Hispanic stations. The greatest percentages of minority GMs are in the smallest stations and in the West.



## Updated Diversity Toolkit Now Available

This spring, RTNDF updated its Diversity Toolkit, which contains a downloadable workbook with streaming video of stories to help stations evaluate how they address diversity in their newsrooms and in their coverage. Made possible by a grant from the MK Level Playing Field Institute, this resource encourages journalists to broaden the definition of diversity to include a variety of voices and groups. For streaming video of five in-depth stories about diversity, step-by-step instructions for holding a diversity workshop, strategies for achieving diversity in hiring, retention, advancement and content, or to order a free copy of the DVD, visit [www.rtna.org/diversity/toolkit.shtml](http://www.rtna.org/diversity/toolkit.shtml).

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half Hispanic with a staff that's 40 to 50 percent Hispanic. Given the market, he says he has no problem in recruitment.

The number of Hispanic applicants at KSAT-TV in San Antonio hasn't changed either, reports news director Jim Boyle. He is also "surprised" by the notion that there are fewer Hispanic journalists, because he still received many Hispanic applications, even from larger markets—and people from the San Antonio area who want to come home.

Many news directors aren't reporting a mass exodus of Hispanic journalists, but that doesn't mean the number of Hispanics in the newsroom are "where they should be," says Anzio Williams, news director at KCRA-TV in Sacramento. It's not that he's lost Hispanics, he says, but that he wishes there were more—especially behind the scenes—to better reflect the growing Hispanic community.

Recruiting and retaining Hispanics is "rough—no doubt about it," says Darrell Adams, news director at WBBH-TV and WZVN-TV in Ft. Myers, FL. Adams says he recently lost one Hispanic who left the business and another who moved closer to home in Texas. He also wasn't able to hire an anchor recruit who wanted to be closer to his native Texas. Hispanics make up about 11 percent of his area, and the number is growing, so he's actively recruiting local Hispanics and training them, although at the moment he says he sees "very few Hispanic applicants."

Regardless, the bigger picture remains unchanged. In the last 17 years, the minority population in the U.S. has risen

## For More Information on Diversity Issues

**RTNDF Newsroom Diversity Campaign**  
Contact: Melanie Lo  
Phone: 202.467.5218  
[www.rtna.org/diversity/index.shtml](http://www.rtna.org/diversity/index.shtml)  
[melaniel@rtna.org](mailto:melaniel@rtna.org)

**American Women in Radio and Television**  
Phone: 703.506.3290  
[www.awrt.org](http://www.awrt.org)  
[info@awrt.org](mailto:info@awrt.org)

**Asian American Journalists Association**  
Phone: 415.346.2051  
[www.aaja.org](http://www.aaja.org)  
[national@aaja.org](mailto:national@aaja.org)

**Association for Women in Communication**  
Phone: 703.370.7436  
[www.womcom.org](http://www.womcom.org)  
[info@womcom.org](mailto:info@womcom.org)

**Emma L. Bowen Foundation for Minority Interests in Media**  
Phone: 202.637.4494  
[www.emmabowenfoundation.com](http://www.emmabowenfoundation.com)  
[phylis.eagle-oldson@corporate.ge.com](mailto:phylis.eagle-oldson@corporate.ge.com)

**International Women's Media Foundation**  
Phone: 202.496.1992  
[www.iwmmf.org](http://www.iwmmf.org)  
[info@iwmmf.org](mailto:info@iwmmf.org)

**National Association of Black Journalists**  
Phone: 301.445.7100  
[www.nabj.org](http://www.nabj.org)  
[nabj@nabj.org](mailto:nabj@nabj.org)

**National Association of Hispanic Journalists**  
Phone: 202.662.7145  
[www.nahj.org](http://www.nahj.org)  
[nahj@nahj.org](mailto:nahj@nahj.org)

**National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association**  
Phone: 202.588.9888  
[www.nlgja.org](http://www.nlgja.org)  
[info@nlgja.org](mailto:info@nlgja.org)

**Native American Journalists Association**  
Phone: 605.677.5282  
[www.naja.com](http://www.naja.com)  
[info@naja.com](mailto:info@naja.com)

**UNITY: Journalists of Color**  
Phone: 703.854.3585  
[www.unityjournalists.org](http://www.unityjournalists.org)  
[info@unityjournalists.org](mailto:info@unityjournalists.org)

8.6 percent; the minority workforce in TV news is up less than 4 percent, and the minority workforce in radio is down more than 4 percent.—Bob Papper is professor of telecommunications at Ball State University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news. Data entry and tabulation has been done by the Bureau of Business Research at Ball State. This research is supported by the Department of Telecommunications at Ball State University and the Radio-Television News Directors Association.

## About the Survey

The RTNDA/Ball State University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2006 among all 1,596 operating, non-satellite television stations and all 11,942 radio stations for which we could gather complete data. Valid responses came from 974 television stations (50.9 percent), and 225 radio news directors and general managers representing 740 radio stations. Data for women television news directors is from a complete census and is not projected from a smaller sample.