

Stop the Presses

Journalism Employment and the Economic Value
of 850 Journalism and Communication Programs

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GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
McCourt School of Public Policy
Center on Education and the Workforce

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2022

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Introduction

Journalism has been a shrinking profession in recent decades. Since just 2008, newsroom employment has declined 26 percent in the United States.¹ The COVID-19 recession dealt another blow to journalism jobs, with layoffs doubling in 2020 from the previous year.² As new journalists seek to join the profession, they must navigate the rising cost of higher education and growing demand for competence with new technologies, along with relatively low future earnings, which can make paying off student loans difficult.³

Why has the journalism profession seen such a steep decline in numbers? Primarily because the newspaper industry itself has experienced technological and economic disruption, accompanied by consolidation and closures. Much has been written about the complex transformation of American journalism in recent decades. The story goes something like this: successive technologies from radio to television to the internet competed with and, to some degree, conquered the printing press, once the gatekeeper to mass communication. This sequence of events drastically reduced the print advertising revenue that once supported newspapers, leading to their declining influence and an increasing number of closings.

These changes accelerated with the internet, which became widely available in the 1990s. Although many newspaper publishers sought business opportunities online, newcomers like Craigslist were much more successful.⁴ Today, three companies—Google, Facebook (now called Meta), and Amazon—are on track to scoop up a majority of digital advertising revenue.⁵ As overall spending on online advertisements has grown substantially, spending on print advertisements has fallen steadily since the early 2000s.⁶

Perhaps most detrimental to the newspaper business is the fact that today's online advertisements are much less lucrative than print advertisements were before the rise of the internet. When news outlets eventually transitioned to publishing stories online, their digital advertisements brought in significantly less revenue than their advertisements once did in print. Ultimately, revenue growth from online advertisements has not come close to offsetting losses from print advertising.⁷ US newspapers' digital advertising revenue is projected to exceed its revenue from print advertising in 2026, as revenue from print has shrunk significantly.⁸

1 Walker, "US Newsroom Employment Has Fallen 26% Since 2008," Pew Research Center, 2021.

2 Chan, "US Newsrooms Lost a Record 16,160 Jobs in 2020, Study Finds," 2021.

3 Korn and DeBarros, "Journalism Schools Leave Graduates With Hefty Student Loans," 2021.

4 One study indicated that between 2000 and 2007, Craigslist saved classified advertisers \$5 billion, which otherwise might have been newspaper revenue. Shafer, "Don't Blame Craigslist for the Decline of Newspapers," 2016.

5 Joseph and Shields, "Google, Meta and Amazon Are On Track to Absorb More Than 50% of All Ad Money in 2022," 2022.

6 Fischer, "Sheryl Sandberg's Advertising Jackpot," 2022.

7 Hendrickson, "Local Journalism In Crisis," 2019.

8 Fischer, "US Digital Newspaper Ad Revenue Expected to Surpass Print by 2026," 2022.

This report uses College Scorecard data to explore the changing journalism profession and outcomes from journalism degree programs today.

This report is part of a series from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce primarily using College Scorecard data to explore graduates' outcomes for a specific field of study. A previous report detailed the financial returns for graduates of 5,500 business programs at more than 1,700 colleges.⁹

The business model for news reporting has changed dramatically in recent years, and so have job opportunities for journalists. In Part 1, we examine the changes in the journalism profession in recent decades and the new demographics of these workers. We then turn to the economic value of 850 postsecondary journalism and communication degree programs, which are sorted into four categories: communication and media studies; journalism; radio, television, and digital communication; and "other" communication, journalism, and related programs. Part 2 ranks the financial returns from these programs at the bachelor's degree level. We also discuss the distribution of students by gender and race and ethnicity, as well as rankings of institutions by economic value for men and women and Pell Grant recipients. Finally, in Part 3, we rank financial returns from these programs at the master's degree level in addition to providing an overview of demographic changes in degree recipients.

This report uses the following terminology to discuss data from the College Scorecard, which are up to date as of September 2022. (The College Scorecard is frequently updated, often without public notice, so additional data may now be available.)

- **Earnings:** Median earnings three years after graduation from the specified program. Depending on the context, the earnings are expressed in monthly or annual totals.
- **Student-loan debt:** The amount that a person owes on federal loans three years after graduation. Depending on the context, the debt amounts are expressed in monthly or annual figures. Total debt may be higher: the College Scorecard only includes debt on federal loans. It does not include loans from other entities such as institutions, states, or private lenders.
- **Earnings net of debt payments:** The amount of earnings that a person has remaining after making the payment on outstanding federal student loans.

Falling employment at news publishers has been somewhat offset by growth in jobs in broadcasting and internet publishing.

As a result of declining revenue, many newsrooms were shuttered or hollowed out by layoffs in the past two decades. In fact, since 2005, 2,500 newspapers—representing one-quarter of US newspapers—have closed or merged with others.¹⁰ Among the newspapers

As the number of workers employed at newspapers plummeted from the 2000s to the 2010s, employment in broadcast and internet publishing grew.

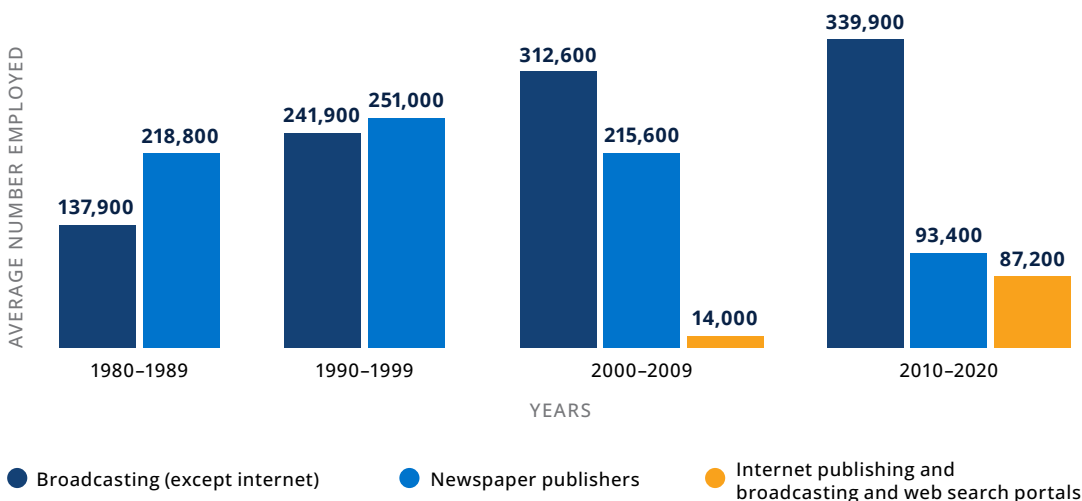
that no longer exist, about 70 published daily, and four had circulations over 100,000; the remaining newspapers published weekly. Newspaper closures continued at the same pace of two per week during the coronavirus pandemic, with more than 360 newspapers closing since before the start of the pandemic. From 2005 to 2025, the United States is on track to lose one-third of its newspapers.¹¹

Many journalists have lost their jobs amid closures, mergers, and downsizing of news outlets. About 26 percent of newsroom employees in radio broadcasting have lost

their jobs since 2008, but the greatest number of job losses occurred at newspapers.¹² Overall, since the 1980s, average employment by newspaper publishers has fallen by 63 percent (**Figure 1**). As the number of workers employed at newspapers plummeted from

FIGURE 1

Employment at newspaper publishers fell by more than half in the 2010s, while jobs grew in the broadcasting and internet publishing industries.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1980-2020, full-time, full-year workers ages 25-54.

10 Abernathy, *The State of Local News*, 2022.

11 Abernathy, *The State of Local News*, 2022.

12 Walker, "US Newsroom Employment Has Fallen 26% Since 2008," 2021.

the 2000s to the 2010s, employment in broadcast and internet publishing grew. Average employment in internet publishing, broadcasting, and web search portals increased by more than six times from the 2000s to the 2010s, while average employment in broadcasting grew by nearly 9 percent. However, these gains were not sufficient to offset job losses at newspapers entirely.¹³

Financial returns for journalism and communication majors are moderate compared to those of graduates in other fields of study, but they vary by institution.

What does the rapidly changing media landscape mean for journalists and journalism students today? First, postsecondary degrees are at a premium in the media job landscape. Today's journalism jobs typically require a bachelor's degree, and many journalists pursue a master's degree. More than 90 percent of editors and news analysts, reporters, and correspondents employed in newspaper publishing have a bachelor's degree or higher.¹⁴ Jobs are hard to come by—in fact, among journalism majors, just 15 percent become news analysts, reporters, and correspondents or editors early in their careers.¹⁵ However, two-thirds of all news analysts, reporters, and correspondents studied either journalism or communications.

Journalism has never been an especially large major for college students, representing less than 1 percent of bachelor's or master's degrees awarded each year.¹⁶ The number of bachelor's degree recipients who majored in journalism peaked in 2002, with 16,300 degrees awarded (**Figure 2**). After 2011, bachelor's degrees in journalism began a steady decline in number and as a share of all bachelor's degrees. The number of master's degrees in journalism peaked in 2014 and 2015 when 2,000 degrees were awarded. But journalism master's degrees quickly declined in number. By 2020, just 12,200 bachelor's degrees and 1,400 master's degrees were awarded in journalism—representing 25 percent and 30 percent fewer graduates, respectively, than at their peaks.



More than 90 percent of editors and news analysts, reporters, and correspondents employed in newspaper publishing have a bachelor's degree or higher.

The economic value of a degree in journalism and communication is moderate compared to the financial returns from other fields of study. At the bachelor's degree

13 Similarly, a Pew study found that employment by newspaper publishers was halved between 2008 and 2019, while employment in broadcast, television, radio, cable, and digital-native publishers rose after 2014. Walker, "US Newsroom Employment Has Fallen 26% Since 2008," 2021.

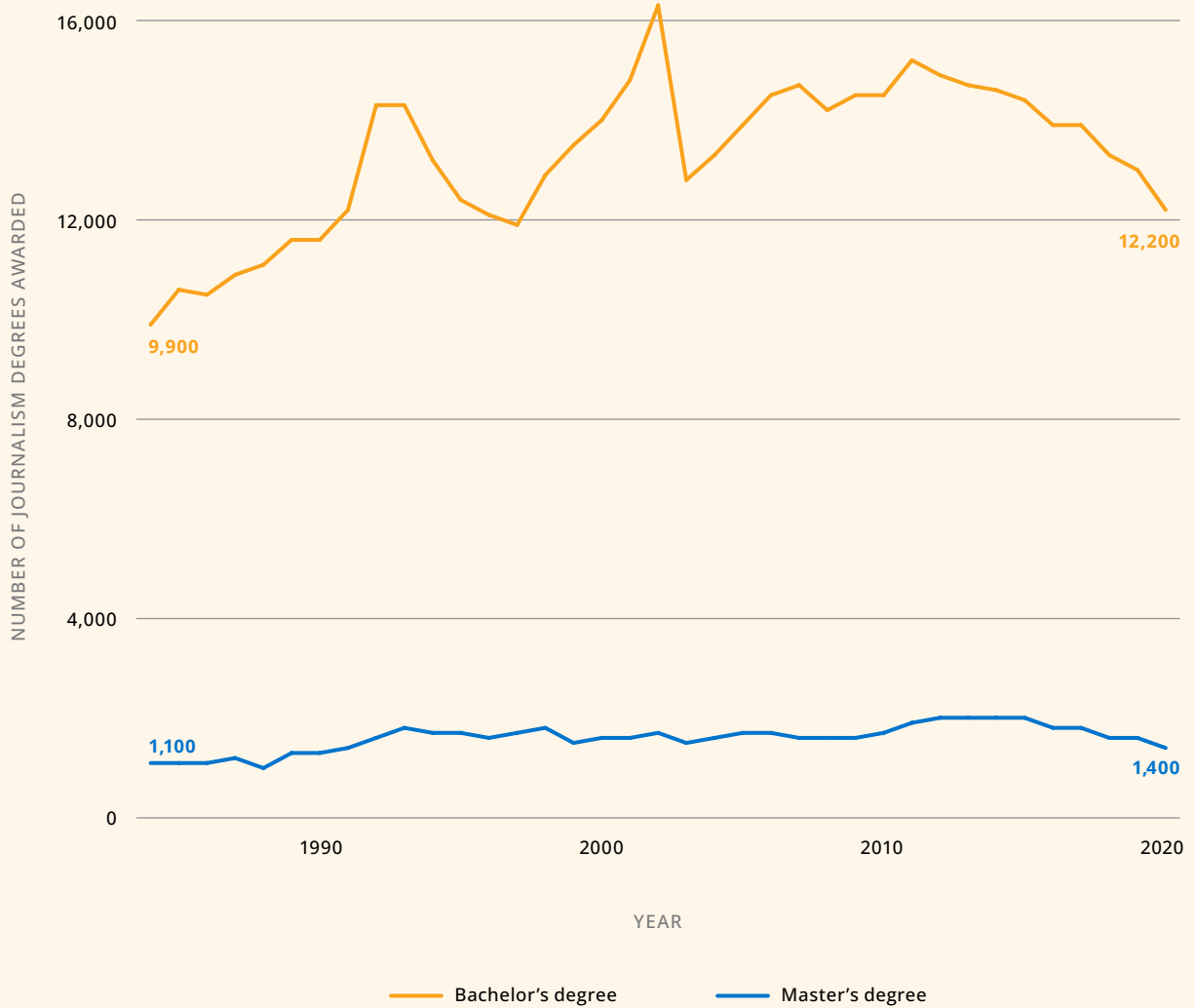
14 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1980–2020, full-time, full-year workers ages 25–54.

15 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey micro data, 2009–2019, based on full-time, full-year workers ages 22–27 with a bachelor's degree and no graduate degree.

16 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

FIGURE 2

The number of bachelor's and master's degrees awarded in journalism has fallen steadily in the past decade.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.



level, the economic value of a degree in communication, journalism, and related programs ranks 14th out of 34 major groups included on the College Scorecard.¹⁷ Three years after graduation, students with these majors earn a median of \$39,700 net of their student-loan debt payments. For master's degree holders, communication, journalism, and related programs rank 12th out of 26 major groups, with median earnings net of debt payments of \$49,300. At both degree levels, communication and journalism majors still come out ahead of several other major groups, including education, English, history, and psychology.¹⁸

Communication and journalism majors include journalism; communication and media studies; radio, television, and digital communication; and other communication, journalism, and related programs.¹⁹ Among communication and journalism programs discussed here, the "other" category of communication, journalism, and related programs has the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation at the bachelor's (\$40,800) and master's (\$55,200) degree levels (**Figure 3**).²⁰ Among bachelor's degree recipients, journalism majors earn \$40,800 net of debt payments three years after graduation, compared with \$38,400 for communication and media studies majors and \$36,000 for radio, television, and digital communication majors. For master's degree holders, communication and media studies majors earn \$52,800 net of debt payments three years after graduation, compared with \$46,800 for recipients of master's degrees in both journalism and radio, television, and digital communication.

There is also significant variation in earnings and debt by institution, with some institutions providing graduates with especially high earnings net of debt payments. Among communication and journalism bachelor's degrees, these are the institutions with the highest median earnings net of debt for students three years after they graduate:

- Cornell University (\$63,600) for communication and media studies majors;
- George Washington University (\$52,800) for journalism majors;
- Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus (\$66,000) for radio, television, and digital communication majors; and
- California Lutheran University (\$50,400) for other communication, journalism, and related programs.

17 The Department of Education's classification for communication, journalism, and related programs consists of journalism and five other programs: communication and media studies; radio, television, and digital communication; public relations, advertising, and applied communication; publishing; and a category called communication, journalism, and related programs, other.

18 See Appendix B for full rankings by major.

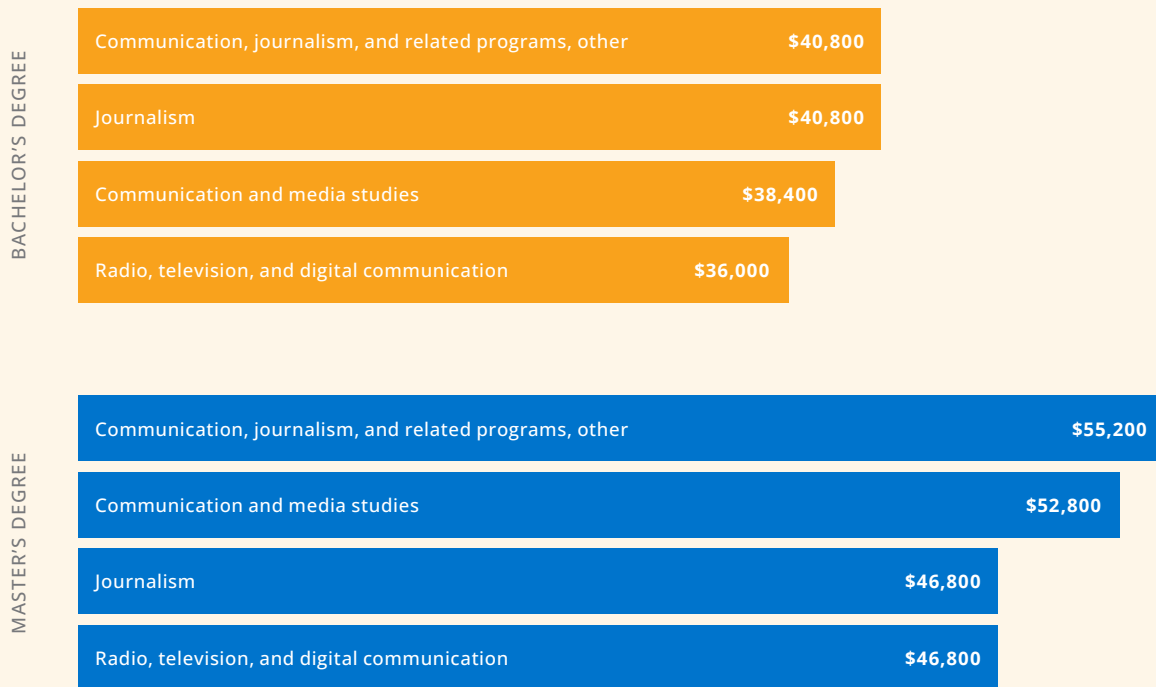
19 Communications and journalism majors also include public relations, advertising, and applied communications, and publishing majors, which are not discussed in detail in this report.

20 The programs in the "other" category vary widely. The College Scorecard does not say which programs fit into that category, but they might include programs such as sports communications and marketing communications at California Lutheran University; personal communication at Farmingdale State College; and digital communication and media/multimedia at Northwestern University.

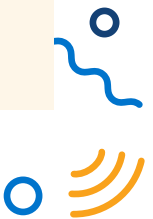
FIGURE 3

Journalism majors have lower earnings net of debt payments compared to students who majored in some other closely related programs.

MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS NET OF DEBT BY MAJOR AND DEGREE



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.



Among communication and journalism master's degrees, these are the institutions with the highest median earnings net of debt for students three years after they graduate:

- Columbia University (\$87,600) for communication and media studies programs;
- the University of Georgia and University of Missouri-Columbia (both \$52,800) for journalism programs;
- the University of Washington-Seattle Campus (\$72,000) for radio, television, and digital communication programs; and
- Northwestern University (\$80,400) for other communication, journalism, and related programs.



Median earnings for students who received Pell Grants are lower three years after graduation than those of students who did not receive Pell Grants.

across three communication and journalism majors. Meanwhile, across the journalism and communication majors discussed in this report, median earnings for students who received Pell Grants are lower three years after graduation than those of students who did not receive Pell Grants.

Because earnings and debt vary by field of study, institution, and numerous other factors, it is important for potential students to carefully evaluate program outcomes before enrolling. Specifically, if students are planning to take out loans, they may want to determine whether they would be positioned to earn enough money to pay off those loans after they graduate.

Financial returns from college degrees vary by other factors including gender, race and ethnicity, geography, and family income. This report includes data on earnings net of debt payments for men and women and Pell Grant recipients that are available on the College Scorecard. Notably, the data show that three years after graduation, women's median earnings are equal to or higher than men's



PART 1

The Changing Journalism Profession

16

Amid contractions in the journalism industry, employment prospects have dwindled for people working in the field or hoping to break into it. This holds particularly true for people working in the newspaper industry. The average number of workers employed by newspaper publishers declined by more than half from the 2000s to the 2010s.²¹ Many of these job losses have been the result of newspaper closures, including the 2,500 newspapers that have disappeared since 2005.²²

Not only has journalism employment shrunk, but the journalism jobs that remain have been transformed by the new demands of the industry. Journalists are more likely to be employed by large national news outlets or online outlets than local or regional news outlets—especially print newspapers—than they were in the past. Furthermore, the demographics of the industry have shifted. Compared to journalists in previous decades, today's reporters and editors are more likely to live in cities, have a college degree, and be women, and they are less likely to be White.

21 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1980–2020, full-time, full-year workers ages 25–54.

22 Abernathy, *The State of Local News*, 2022.



The growth in employment at digital-only news sites, which typically cover larger cities, represents a shift in newsrooms away from rural areas.²³ About one-fifth of all journalists live in New York, Los Angeles, or Washington, DC. In addition, employment in internet publishing and broadcasting industries—both of which have experienced growth in recent years—is more concentrated in a few major cities.^{24,25} Average journalist salaries are highest in the states where those metro areas are located. These include Washington, DC, New York, Connecticut, Georgia, and New Jersey.²⁶

About one-fifth of all journalists live in New York, Los Angeles, or Washington, DC.

This geographic shift largely reflects the diverging fortunes of local and national newspapers. Although many national news outlets have endured layoffs while struggling to innovate, in recent years, several of the largest newspapers have found a reliable revenue source in online subscriptions.²⁷ Compared to struggling local and regional newspapers, these national papers employ a growing number of journalists, and many of their reporters are relatively influential and well-compensated. For example, at the *New York Times*, reported salaries range from \$70,000 to more than \$300,000 per year, and reporters are frequently on leave to write books related to their news coverage.^{28,29} But these reporter salaries are an exception relative to the financial fortunes of most journalists. Overall, journalists have low salaries compared to other college-educated workers,³⁰ and many reporters and editors face uncertainty as the news outlets where they work struggle to stay afloat.

Notably, editors have been more affected by job losses in the past few decades than their colleagues who are news analysts, reporters, and correspondents. The average number of editors began a steep decline in the 2000s, with 20 percent fewer jobs on average (**Figure 4**). By the 2010s, there were half as many editor jobs compared to their peak average employment in the 1990s. Many of the editor jobs lost may be attributed to steep cutbacks of copy editors across newsrooms.³¹

By contrast, the number of news analysts, reporters, and correspondents employed in newspaper, digital, and broadcasting grew, on average, through the early 2000s. Their employment fell roughly 6 percent in the 2010s from the previous decade, but it was still higher than in the 1990s. By 2020, editors no longer outnumbered reporters. In fact, the opposite was true: on average, there were three reporters for every two editors in the 2010s, compared to two editors for every reporter in the 1980s.

23 The decline of local newspapers means that today, more than one fifth of Americans have little or no access to local news. Abernathy, *The State of Local News*, 2022.

24 Overall, the decline in newsroom employment has affected US regions—the South, Northeast, West, and Midwest—similarly. Greico, “One-in-Five Newsroom Employees Live in New York, Los Angeles or Washington, D.C.,” 2019.

25 Shafer and Doherty, “The Media Bubble Is Worse Than You Think,” 2017.

26 US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, “News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists,” 2021.

27 Hagey, Alpert, and Serkez, “In News Industry, a Stark Divide Between Haves and Have-Nots,” 2019.

28 Rodriguez, “How Much the New York Times Pays Employees in 2021,” 2021.

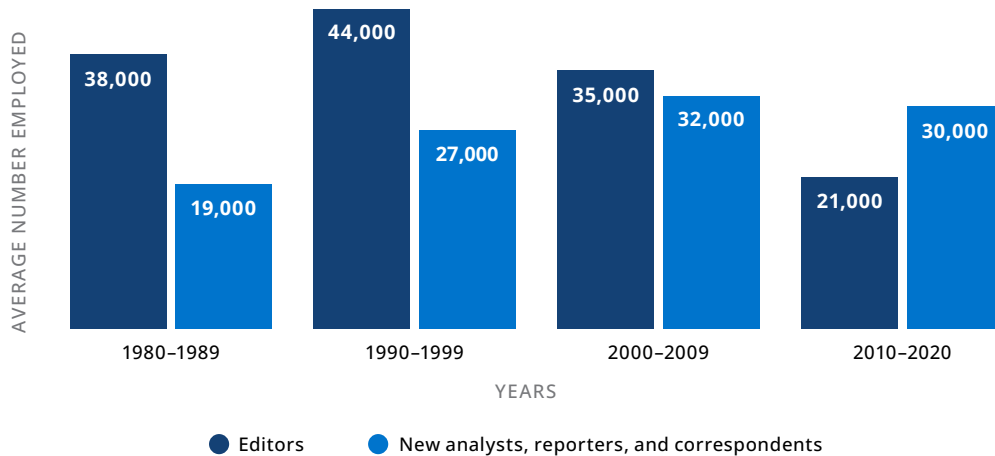
29 Pompeo, “The Times Has Become a Book-Deal Factory,” 2019.

30 Grieco, “Newsroom Employees Earn Less Than Other College-Educated Workers in U.S.,” 2018.

31 Beaujon, “Copy Editors ‘Have Been Sacrificed More Than Any Other Newsroom Category,’” 2013.

FIGURE 4

The number of editors has been in steep decline since the early 2000s, while the number of news analysts, reporters, and correspondents has held relatively steady.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1980-2020, full-time, full-year workers aged 25-54.

On average, there were three reporters for every two editors in the 2010s, compared to two editors for every reporter in the 1980s.



Beyond employment of reporters and editors, other jobs associated with the news industry have also declined rapidly. Total employment in news publishing—including jobs in accounting and management, sales and marketing, and production and distribution—decreased 70 percent from 2006 to 2021. While accountants and managers had the most job security, production and distribution professionals were most likely to lose their jobs as print circulation declined.³²

Our projections show that newsroom jobs—including news anchor, reporter, radio news anchor, staff writer, and television news reporter positions—will decline by roughly 3 percent from 2022 to 2031, adding to the long-term decline in journalism jobs (Figure 5). By 2031, our projections show that the number of journalism jobs will have fallen by nearly 35 percent since 2002, a loss of more than 20,000 jobs.

Although there are fewer journalism jobs available, occupations that involve some of the same competencies have grown. LinkedIn data show that there has been an increase in social media and content management jobs, which require similar skills.³³ In addition, public relations jobs outnumbered journalism jobs by 5 to 1 in the past decade, and they pay a median of roughly \$20,000 more per year.³⁴

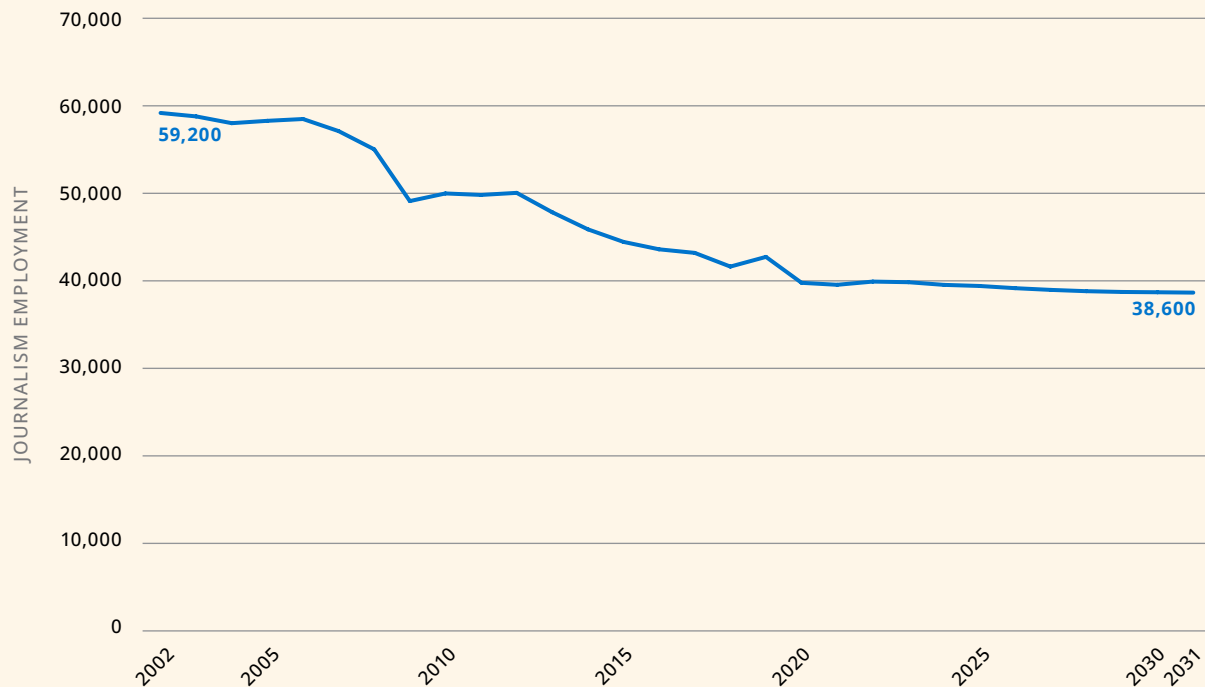
32 Abernathy, *The State of Local News*, 2022.

33 Molla, "Chart: How the Definition of 'Journalist' Is Changing," 2019.

34 Williams, "The Growing Pay Gap between Journalism and Public Relations," 2014.

FIGURE 5

Journalism employment is projected to decrease about 3 percent from 2022 to 2031, and it will have decreased by 35 percent since 2002.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce forecast using data from the US Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey; US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Macroeconomic Advisers LLC; and Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI).

Note: Journalists include workers who narrate or write news stories, reviews, or commentary for print, broadcast, or other communications media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, or television.

Reporters and editors employed at news publishers do not reflect the changing demographics of the US workforce.

In 2020, 69 percent of Americans surveyed said that it was critical or very important for the news media to “reflect the diversity of the American population,” referring to factors including race and ethnicity, political views, gender, income, and age.³⁵ Although the shares of women and Black and Latino reporters and editors in newsrooms have grown in recent decades, newsroom demographics have not kept pace with the changing demographics of the communities and regions they cover.³⁶

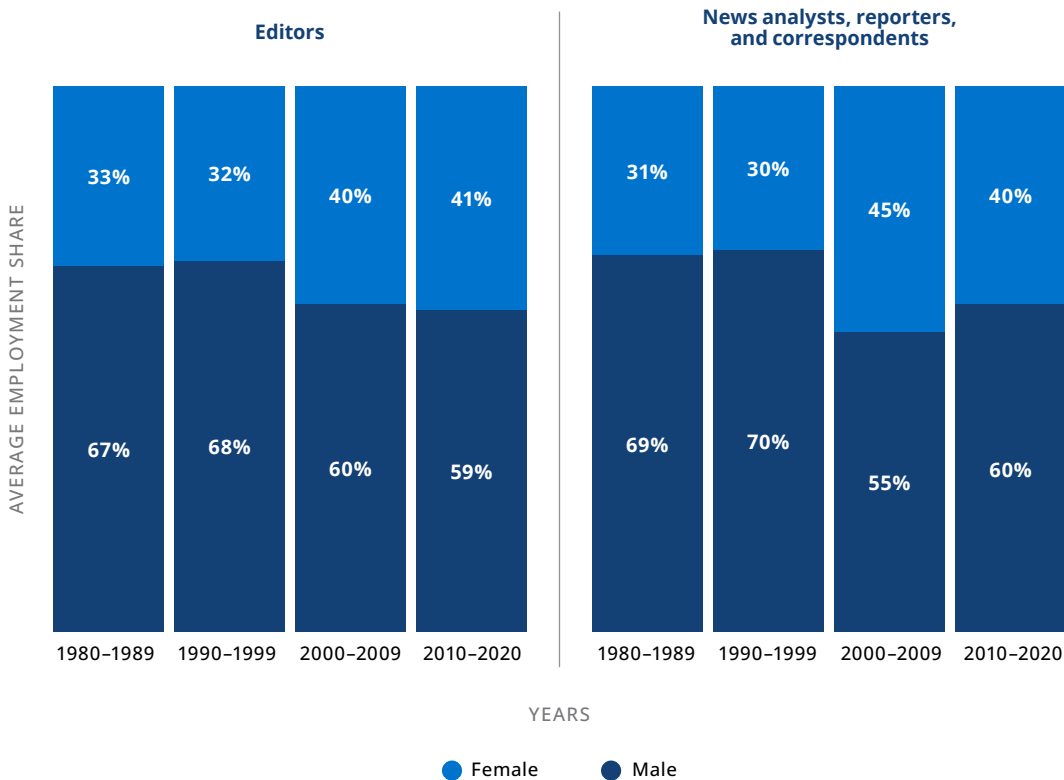
In recent decades, women have represented a growing share of editors and news analysts, reporters, and correspondents. In the 1980s and 1990s, the share of women in both occupations who were employed in news publishing was roughly one third. But the share of jobs held by women has grown: over the past decade, on average, 41 percent of editors and 40 percent of news analysts, reporters, and correspondents were women (**Figure 6**). Women are just as likely to be represented as editors and news analysts,

³⁵ Holcomb and Stubbs, “In US, Views of Diversity in News Vary by Party ID, Race,” 2020.

³⁶ Grieco, “Newsroom Employees Are Less Diverse Than US Workers Overall,” 2018.

FIGURE 6

Women represent about 40 percent of editors and news analysts, reporters, and correspondents.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1980-2020, full-time, full-year workers aged 25-54.

reporters, and correspondents as they are in the workforce overall, where they make up 42 percent of workers.³⁷ But women are still far from parity with men in the industry. This disparity persists despite the fact that more than 60 percent of bachelor’s degrees in journalism have been awarded to women every year since the 1980s. Furthermore, even in newsrooms where women are better represented than they are in corporate America overall, they leave their jobs at higher rates than men.³⁸ These disparities could be explained, at least in part, by women’s lower labor-force participation rates and working out of field in occupations such as marketing and sales managers and public relations specialists.³⁹

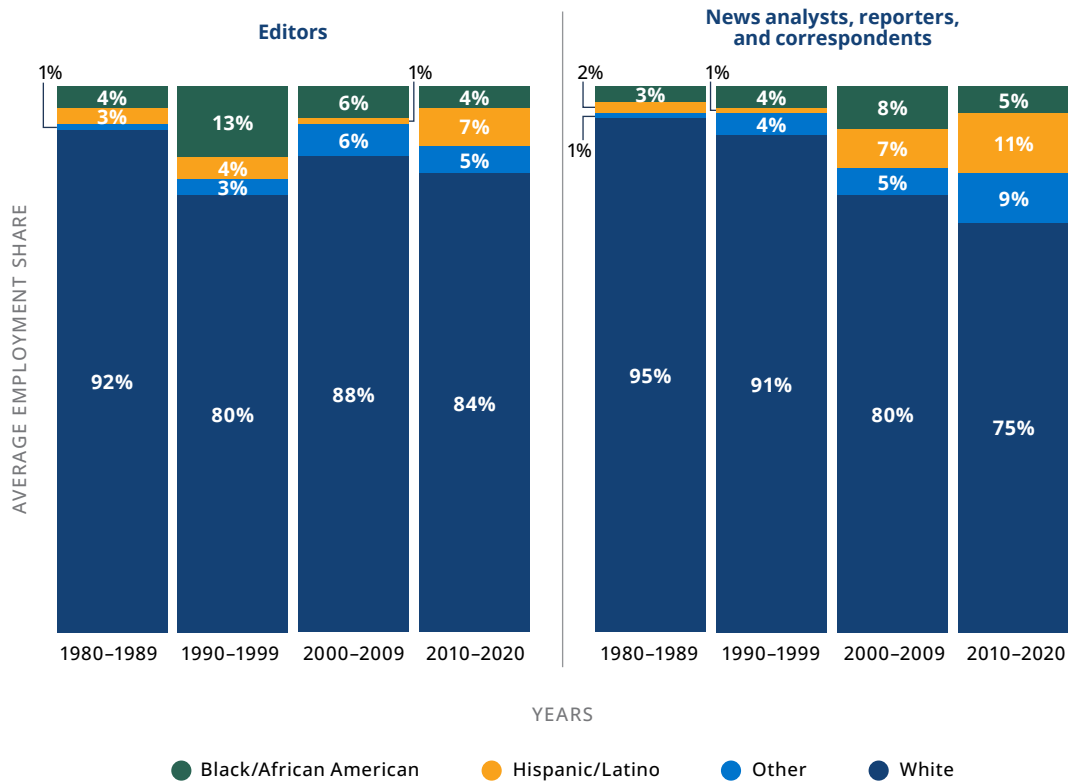
37 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1980-2020, full-time, full-year workers aged 25-54.

38 Beard et al., “Shattering the Glass Screen,” 2020.

39 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey micro data, 2009-2019, based on full-time, full-year workers ages 22-27 with a bachelor’s degree and no graduate degree.

FIGURE 7

Newsrooms have become more diverse by race and ethnicity in recent decades.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1980-2020, full-time, full-year workers aged 25-54.

Since the 1980s, newsrooms have become more diverse by race and ethnicity, though they have not kept pace with the overall US workforce. In particular, the share of news analysts, reporters, and correspondents who are White has fallen from 95 percent in the 1980s to 75 percent in the 2010s (Figure 7). The share of editors who are White has declined from 92 percent in the 1980s to 84 percent in the last decade. Over the same time period, the average share of Black news analysts, reporters, and correspondents grew slightly from 3 percent to 5 percent, and the number of Latino workers in those positions grew from 2 percent to 11 percent.⁴⁰ The average share of Black editors remained unchanged overall at 4 percent, and the share of editors who are Latino grew from 3 percent to 7 percent. By contrast, in the 2010s, on average, 63 percent of US workers were White, while 11 percent were Black and 17 percent were Latino.⁴¹

⁴⁰ In this report, we use the term Black to refer to people who identify as Black or African American and the term Latino to refer to people who identify as Hispanic or Latino, including people who identify racially as Black and ethnically as Latino. In figures, tables, and related references to data, we use the terms White, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino.

⁴¹ Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1980-2020, full-time, full-year workers aged 25-54.



The slowly growing diversity in journalism holds true at major newsrooms. A survey conducted by the American Society of News Editors found that 40 percent of top newsrooms became more racially diverse from 2001 to 2018, while 16 percent of these newsrooms became less racially diverse in the same time period. Furthermore, 32 percent of these newsrooms gained gender diversity, while 21 percent of newsrooms lost gender diversity from 2001 to 2018.⁴²

Few major national newspapers' employees proportionately represent the makeup of the residents of the cities they cover. In fact, the Washington Post was the only national newspaper at which women made up more than half of the newsroom (and were represented in half of leadership positions). Among newsrooms surveyed in 2018, on average, 59 percent of newsroom employees were men. Furthermore, White newsroom employees were overrepresented by 25 percentage points, on average, compared to the demographics of the city in which the newspaper was published.⁴³

Perhaps as a result of this demographic mismatch, a majority of Americans reported in 2020 that news organizations "don't understand people like them." Black Americans reported that the misunderstanding was related to their race, and Latino Americans surveyed were more likely to report that the news media misunderstood their personal interests. By contrast, White Americans, particularly Republicans, were more likely to say that news organizations misunderstood them based on their political views.⁴⁴

Ninety percent or more of editors and reporters have a bachelor's degree or higher, but only one third of editors majored in communication or journalism.

Journalists have become more highly educated since the 1980s. Even as a growing share of the US workforce has a bachelor's degree or higher, newsroom employees are still more than twice as likely to have a college degree than the rest of the workforce.⁴⁵ Among editors, 90 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher in the past decade, up from 79 percent in the 1980s (**Figure 8**). Similarly, 92 percent of news analysts, reporters, and correspondents had a bachelor's degree or higher in the past decade, up from 74 percent in the 1980s. Notably, even though more than 20 percent of workers in these occupations had less than a bachelor's degree in the 1980s, 10 percent or less do today.



42 Survey includes newsrooms with a total staff of 25 or more. American Society of News Editors, "How Diverse Are US Newsrooms?," 2018.

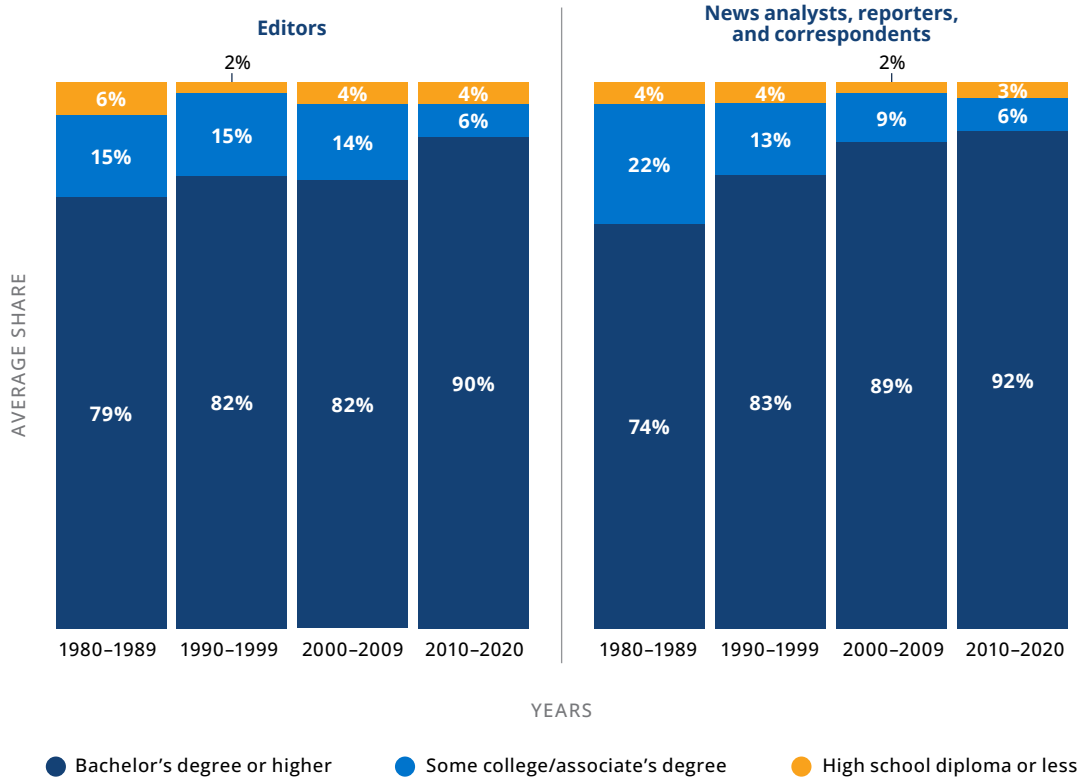
43 "How Diverse Are US Newsrooms?," 2018.

44 Gottfried and Barthel, "Black, Hispanic and White Adults Feel the News Media Misunderstands Them, but for Very Different Reasons," 2020.

45 Grieco, "Newsroom Employees Earn Less Than Other College-Educated Workers in U.S.," 2018.

FIGURE 8

Ninety percent or more of editors and news analysts, reporters, and correspondents had a bachelor's degree or higher in the 2010s.



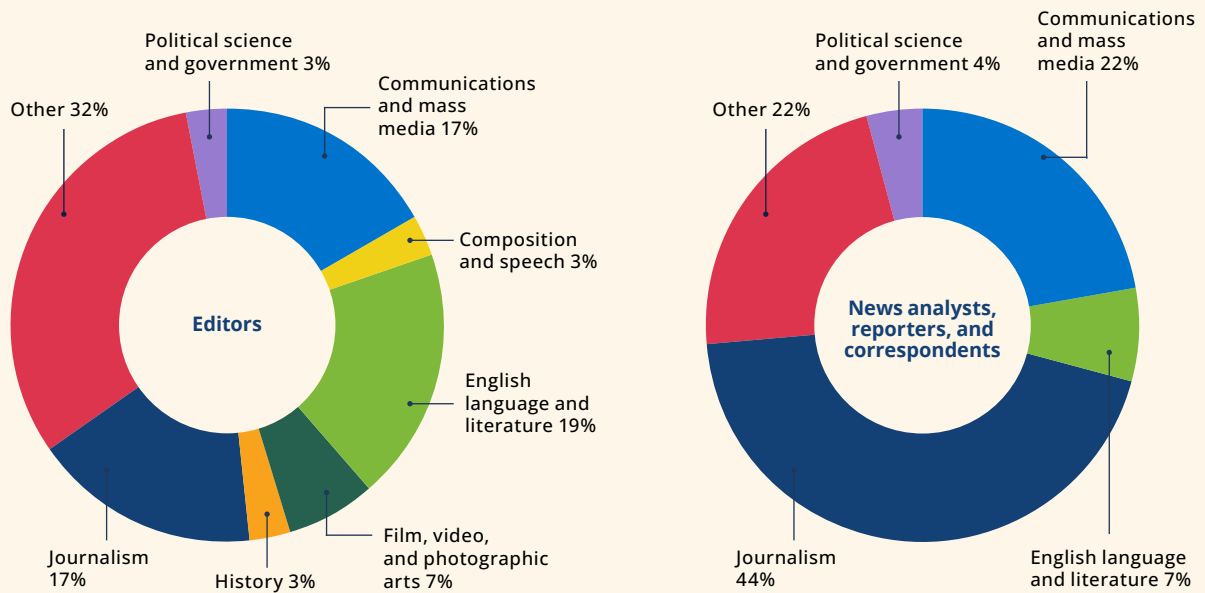
Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1980-2020, full-time, full-year workers aged 25-54.

Majoring in journalism specifically is by no means a requirement to qualify for a journalism job. In many cases, students may not have the opportunity to major in journalism at the college they attend, or they may choose another field of study in pursuit of a journalism career. Students who do not major in journalism can still gain journalism experience by working for their college newspaper, radio station, or television station, and taking internships in professional newsrooms, preparing them to work in the field without a degree in journalism.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Benton, "It's Time to Create an Alternative Path to a Journalism Career," 2021.

FIGURE 9

News analysts, reporters, and correspondents are more likely to major in journalism than editors.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey micro data, 2009–2019, based on full-time, full-year workers ages 22–27 with a bachelor’s degree and no graduate degree.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Nonetheless, journalism is still the most common major (44 percent) for news analysts, reporters, and correspondents across industries (Figure 9).⁴⁷ Besides journalism, common majors for news analysts, reporters, and correspondents include communications and mass media (22 percent), English language and literature (7 percent), and political science and government (4 percent). Editors are more likely to major in English language and literature (19 percent), followed by journalism (17 percent) and communications and mass media (17 percent).

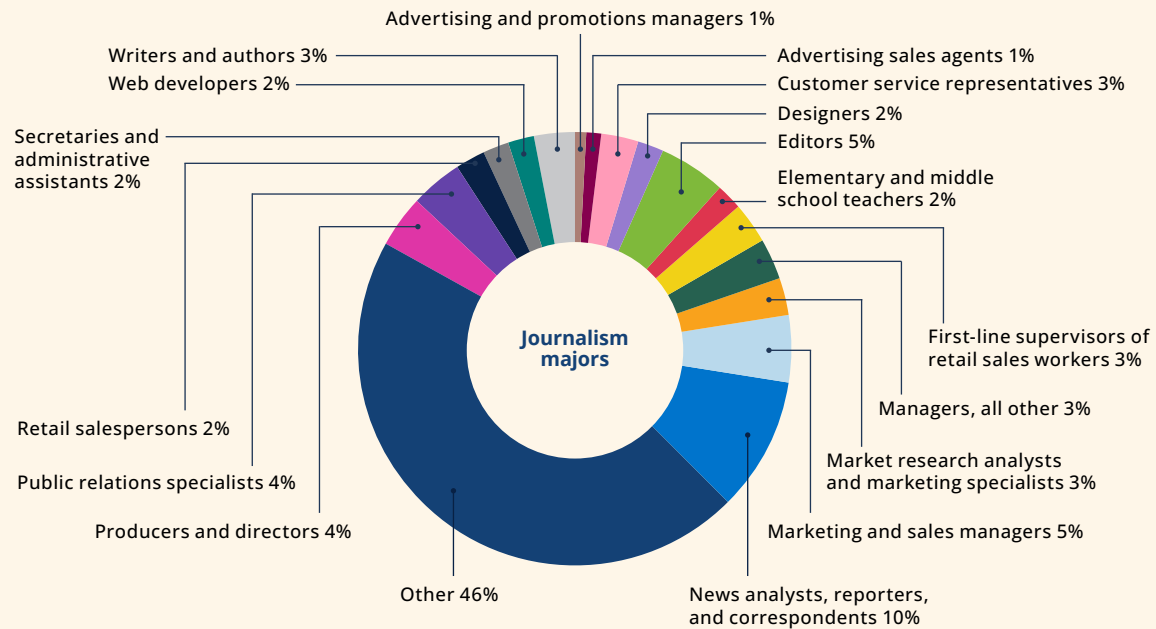
Although they work in the same occupations, earnings for these workers can vary based on their college major. Among early-career news analysts, reporters, and correspondents (ages 22–27), those who majored in communications and mass media have the highest median earnings (\$40,000), followed by journalism (\$37,000). For editors, earnings are the same for English language and literature majors (\$43,000), and they are slightly lower for communications and mass media majors (\$42,000).⁴⁸

47 These major groups are categories used in the American Community Survey, and they do not directly correspond with major groups used by the College Scorecard, which follows the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP).

48 These earnings figures from the American Community Survey differ from earnings data on the College Scorecard. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey micro data, 2009–2019, based on full-time, full-year workers ages 22–27 with a bachelor’s degree and no graduate degree.

FIGURE 10

Only 1 in 10 journalism majors become news analysts, reporters, and correspondents early in their careers.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey micro data, 2009–2019, based on full-time, full-year workers ages 22–27 with a bachelor's degree and no graduate degree.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Among journalism majors, 85 percent pursue occupations other than news analysts, reporters, and correspondents or editors.

At the same time, students who major in journalism are not limited to pursuing journalism careers. Among journalism majors, 85 percent pursue occupations other than news analysts, reporters, and correspondents or editors (**Figure 10**). Five percent of journalism majors become marketing and sales managers, while 4 percent become producers and directors or public relations specialists. The rest pursue a range of occupations including customer service representatives, designers, first-line supervisors of retail sales workers, market research analysts and marketing specialists, and writers and authors.

Many of the people who earn journalism degrees but enter different professions might be making a more lucrative choice. Journalism majors who become marketing and sales managers earn \$47,000 per year early in their careers, while editors earn \$43,000 and news analysts, reporters, and correspondents earn \$37,000.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ These earnings figures from the American Community Survey differ from earnings data on the College Scorecard. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey micro data, 2009–2019, based on full-time, full-year workers ages 22–27 with a bachelor's degree and no graduate degree.



PART 2

Bachelor's Degrees



26



With the continued decline in journalism employment and an uncertain future ahead, students considering pursuing a career in journalism face a difficult calculation. Although college is expensive, bachelor's and master's degrees typically pay off.⁵⁰ But do degrees in journalism and related fields pay off?

Data from the College Scorecard reveal that a bachelor's degree in journalism and communication has a moderate payoff compared to other majors. Within this category, other communication, journalism, and related programs lead to the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation, followed by journalism; communication and media studies; and radio, television, and digital communication programs. However, it is important for prospective students to consider the payoff of individual colleges and universities, because these majors lead to higher returns at some institutions than others.

Communication and media studies is the most common program among communication and journalism majors.

Communication and media studies is the most common communication and journalism major at the bachelor's degree level, with nearly 550 programs with data available on the

⁵⁰ Carnevale et al., *The College Payoff*, 2021.

TABLE 1

Communication and media studies graduates from Cornell University have the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation, at \$63,600.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	Cornell University	NY	\$5,300	\$200	\$63,600
2	University of Pennsylvania	PA	\$5,100	\$200	\$61,200
3	University of California-Berkeley	CA	\$5,000	\$100	\$60,000
4	Northwestern University	IL	\$4,900	\$200	\$58,800
5	Santa Clara University	CA	\$4,800	\$200	\$57,600
6	Northeastern University	MA	\$4,700	\$200	\$56,400
7	University of Virginia-Main Campus	VA	\$4,600	\$200	\$55,200
8	University of Maryland-College Park	MD	\$4,500	\$200	\$54,000
8	Boston College	MA	\$4,500	\$200	\$54,000
8	Boston University	MA	\$4,500	\$200	\$54,000
8	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	MI	\$4,500	\$200	\$54,000

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

College Scorecard. This major includes general communication, speech communication and rhetoric, and mass communication. The general major “spans the study of mass communication/media studies, old and new media technologies, social and political applications, and speech communication and rhetoric.”⁵¹

The communication and media studies program at Cornell University leads to the highest earnings net of debt payments for this major, at \$63,600 three years after graduation (**Table 1**). Among the top 10 programs, median earnings net of debt are at least \$54,000 three years after graduation, and debt payments range from \$100 to \$200 per month.

51 US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Classification of Instructional Programs, 2020.

TABLE 2

For bachelor’s degree journalism majors, median annual earnings net of debt payments are highest for graduates of George Washington University.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	George Washington University	DC	\$4,400	\$200	\$52,800
2	University of Southern California	CA	\$4,300	\$200	\$51,600
2	Northwestern University	IL	\$4,300	\$200	\$51,600
4	University of Colorado Boulder	CO	\$4,200	\$200	\$50,400
4	Elon University	NC	\$4,200	\$200	\$50,400
6	Syracuse University	NY	\$4,100	\$300	\$49,200
7	University of Connecticut*	CT	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000
7	University of Maryland-College Park	MD	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000
7	Texas Christian University	TX	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000
10	Indiana University-Bloomington	IN	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800
10	Northeastern University	MA	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800
10	University of Missouri-Columbia	MO	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

*Includes all branch campuses of the University of Connecticut.

Journalism majors have higher median earnings than radio, television, and digital communication majors.

Journalism programs focus on “the theory and practice of gathering, processing, and delivering news.” They prepare students to work as professional print journalists, news editors, and news managers. Journalism majors also include specific programs in broadcast journalism, photojournalism, business and economic journalism, cultural journalism, and science/health/environmental journalism.⁵²

Among the 147 bachelor’s degree programs in journalism on the College Scorecard, the program at George Washington University leads to the highest earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation, at \$52,800 (**Table 2**). Overall, median annual earnings net of debt payments are at least \$46,800 at the 12 colleges with the highest payoff for bachelor’s degrees in journalism. The median monthly debt payments from these institutions range from \$200 to \$300 per month.

The median monthly debt payments from these institutions range from \$200 to \$300 per month.

Despite lower median returns, radio, television, and digital communication majors have a higher payoff than journalism majors at the top institution for each program.

There are 94 radio, television, and digital communication degree programs with data available on the College Scorecard. These programs focus on “the theories, methods, and techniques used to plan, produce, and distribute audio and video programs and messages.” Digital communication and media/multimedia programs, also included in this group, emphasize the “development, use, critical evaluation, and regulation of new electronic communications technologies using computer applications.” Together, these programs prepare students to work as staff, producers, directors, and managers of radio and television shows and media organizations or developers and managers of digital communication media.⁵³



TABLE 3

Three years after graduation, bachelor's degree holders who majored in radio, television, and digital communication have the highest earnings net of debt payments from the Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus	GA	\$5,500	\$300	\$66,000
2	University of Connecticut*	CT	\$4,600	\$200	\$55,200
2	New York University	NY	\$4,600	\$200	\$55,200
4	Miami University-Oxford	OH	\$4,300	\$200	\$51,600
5	Hofstra University	NY	\$4,100	\$200	\$49,200
6	Lebanon Valley College	PA	\$4,000	\$300	\$48,000
7	Savannah College of Art and Design	GA	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800
7	University of Texas at Dallas	TX	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800
9	University of Mississippi	MS	\$3,800	\$200	\$45,600
10	Montclair State University	NJ	\$3,700	\$200	\$44,400

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

*Includes all branch campuses of the University of Connecticut.

The Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus has the highest earnings net of debt payments for this program, at \$66,000 three years after graduation (**Table 3**). Annual earnings net of debt payments for the top 10 institutions for this program are at least \$44,400 at the median, while typical monthly debt payments range from \$200 to \$300.

Other communication, journalism, and related programs have the highest median earnings net of debt payments among the majors discussed in this report.

There are 16 other communication, journalism, and related programs with data available on the College Scorecard. These programs do not fit in the communication and journalism

TABLE 4

California Lutheran University has the highest median earnings net of debt payments among other communication, journalism, and related programs, at \$50,400 three years after graduation.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	California Lutheran University	CA	\$4,200	\$200	\$50,400
2	Farmingdale State College	NY	\$4,000	\$100	\$48,000
3	Ohio State University- Main Campus	OH	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800
4	Seton Hall University	NJ	\$3,600	\$300	\$43,200
5	Pennsylvania State University- Main Campus	PA	\$3,500	\$200	\$42,000
5	West Virginia University	WV	\$3,500	\$200	\$42,000
7	University of Minnesota- Twin Cities	MN	\$3,400	\$200	\$40,800
8	SUNY Buffalo State	NY	\$3,100	\$200	\$37,200
9	Berry College	GA	\$2,900	\$200	\$34,800
9	Grand Valley State University	MI	\$2,900	\$300	\$34,800

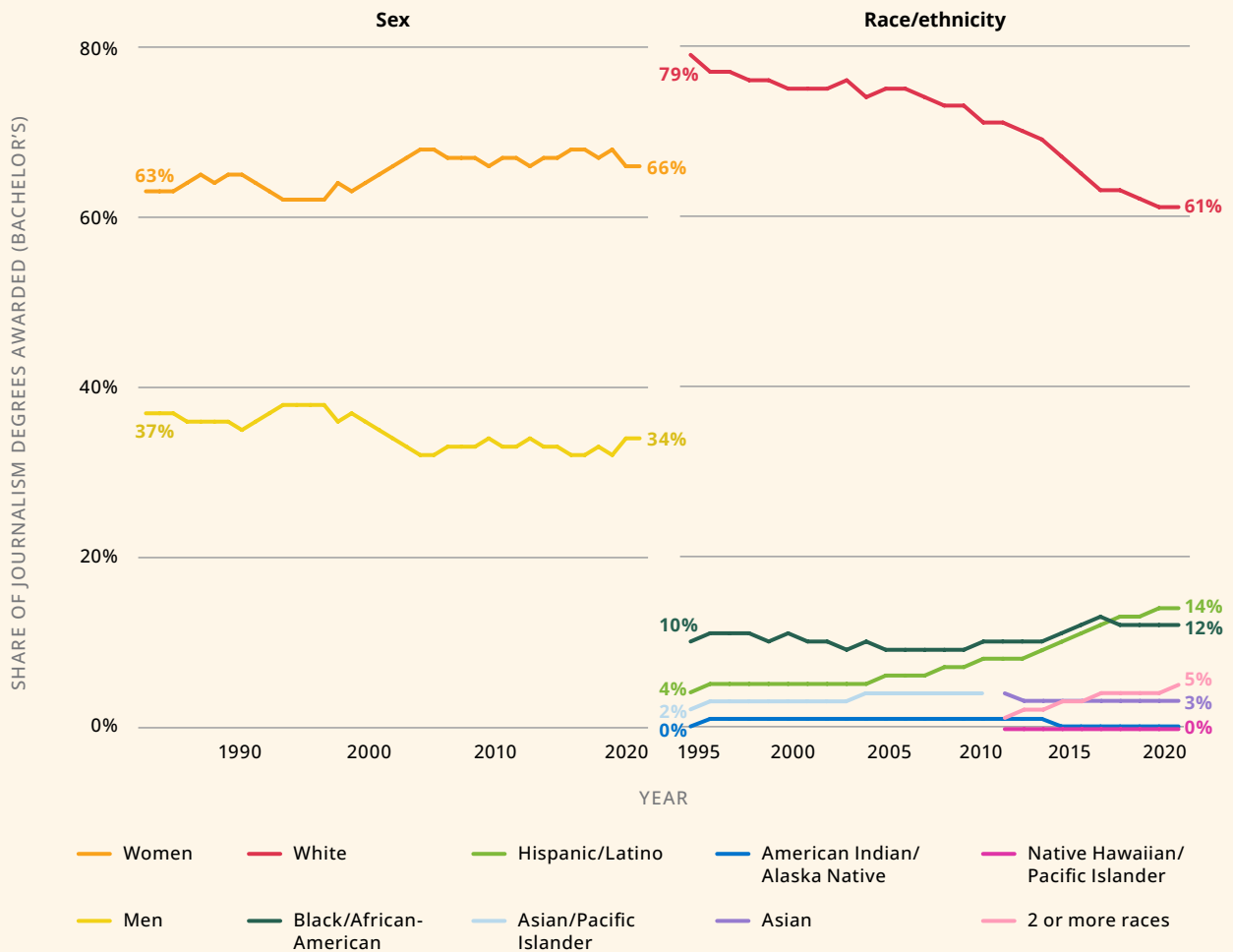
Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

categories already discussed, nor are they considered public relations, advertising, and applied communication or publishing majors. However, they could include such majors as sports communication and marketing communications at California Lutheran University and personal communication at Farmingdale State College.

Among other communication and journalism programs, the program at California Lutheran University leads to the highest median earnings net of debt payments, at \$50,400 (**Table 4**). For the top 10 programs, median earnings net of debt payments are at least \$34,800, while monthly debt payments range from \$100 to \$300.

FIGURE 11

Graduates of bachelor's degree programs in journalism have become more diverse by race and ethnicity in recent decades, with the share of White degree recipients in decline.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Note: The Department of Education did not begin collecting statistics on race/ethnicity until 1995. Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were combined until 2010.



Among bachelor's degree holders in communication and journalism, women typically earn the same or more than men net of debt three years after graduation.

In recent decades, women and Latino and Black students have made up an increasing share of graduates with a bachelor's degree in journalism. Women outnumbered men among bachelor's degree recipients in journalism in the 1980s. Two-thirds of journalism graduates today are women, a similar share to the women-to-men ratio for the last 40 years (**Figure 11**). Since the 1990s, the share of journalism bachelor's degrees awarded to White students has steadily declined, from 79 percent in 1995 to 61 percent in 2020. In the same timeframe, the share of the degrees awarded to Latino students increased from 4 percent to 14 percent, and the share to Black students increased slightly, from 10 percent to 12 percent.

Other demographic groups, including Asian and multiracial graduates, each represented 5 percent or less of journalism graduates in 2020. Despite their relatively low representation, Asian workers with a bachelor's degree in journalism have the highest earnings among young workers, ages 22–27, at \$45,000, followed by young White (\$40,000) workers. Multiracial, Latino, and Black workers trail closely behind, with each group earning about \$38,000 annually.⁵⁴ These earnings disparities by race and ethnicity generally reflect those of all bachelor's degree holders over their lifetimes.⁵⁵

The College Scorecard provides data on earnings and debt payments by gender for several communication and journalism programs at the bachelor's degree level. Three years after graduation, women's median earnings are equal to or higher than men's across three communication and journalism majors, based on data from the College Scorecard. In fact, women's median earnings are higher than men's for 64 percent of journalism programs, 58 percent of communication and media studies programs, and 60 percent of radio, television, and digital communication programs.



Three years after graduation, women's median earnings are equal to or higher than men's across three communication and journalism majors.

⁵⁴ Data on earnings by race and ethnicity are not available from the College Scorecard. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey micro data, 2009–2019, based on full-time, full-year workers ages 22–27 with a graduate degree.

⁵⁵ Carnevale et al., *The College Payoff*, 2021.

TABLE 5

Three years after graduation, the University of California-Berkeley leads to the highest median earnings net of debt payments for women majoring in communication and media studies.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
Women					
1	University of California-Berkeley	CA	\$5,000	\$100	\$60,000
2	Northeastern University	MA	\$4,800	\$200	\$57,600
3	Cornell University	NY	\$4,700	\$100	\$56,400
4	Santa Clara University	CA	\$4,600	\$200	\$55,200
4	Boston University	MA	\$4,600	\$200	\$55,200
4	Bryant University	RI	\$4,600	\$300	\$55,200
4	University of Arizona	AZ	\$4,600	\$200	\$55,200
Men					
1	Colorado State University-Global Campus	CO	\$5,000	\$300	\$60,000
2	University of California-Berkeley	CA	\$4,900	\$100	\$58,800
2	Santa Clara University	CA	\$4,900	\$200	\$58,800
4	California State University-East Bay	CA	\$4,800	\$200	\$57,600
4	University of Maryland-College Park	MD	\$4,800	\$100	\$57,600
4	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	MI	\$4,800	\$200	\$57,600

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Among all journalism and communication majors, both women and men have the lowest median earnings for majors in radio, television, and digital communication.

Overall, among bachelor's degree holders in journalism, women's median earnings are \$42,000 compared to \$37,700 for men three years after graduation. For communication and media studies bachelor's degree holders, women's median earnings are \$39,300 compared to \$38,200 for men. Finally, for those who majored in radio, television, and digital communication, women's median earnings are \$38,000, compared to \$32,900 for men. Among all journalism and communication majors, both women and men have the lowest median earnings for majors in radio, television, and digital communication.

It is very unusual for women's average earnings to be higher than men's average earnings over the full sweep of their careers. This is true even in fields in which women outnumber men, such as teaching or nursing. Among all bachelor's degree holders, men earn a median of \$51,500 net of debt payments three years after graduation, while women earn \$37,900, based on College Scorecard data.⁵⁶ In fact, women typically need one more degree to achieve the same median earnings as men.⁵⁷ However, other research indicates that men and women begin their careers closer to pay parity, and the wage gap widens over time.⁵⁸

Among communication and media studies majors, women have the highest median earnings net of debt three years after graduation from the University of California-Berkeley: \$60,000 compared to \$58,800 for men (**Table 5**). By contrast, at Santa Clara University, men have higher financial returns than women: \$58,800 compared to \$55,200. Women's and men's typical monthly debt payments range from \$100 to \$300, among the programs with the highest returns for these majors.



56 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

57 Carnevale et al., *Women Can't Win*, 2018.

58 Fry, "Young Women Are Out-Earning Young Men in Several US Cities," 2022.

TABLE 6

Among journalism majors, women have the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation from Northwestern University, while men have the highest returns from the University of Maryland-College Park.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
Women					
1	Northwestern University	IL	\$4,600	\$100	\$55,200
2	Syracuse University	NY	\$4,200	\$300	\$50,400
3	University of Connecticut*	CT	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000
3	University of Maryland-College Park	MD	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000
5	Indiana University-Bloomington	IN	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800
5	University of Missouri-Columbia	MO	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800
Men					
1	University of Maryland-College Park	MD	\$4,100	\$200	\$49,200
2	Syracuse University	NY	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000
2	University of Connecticut*	CT	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000
4	Northwestern University	IL	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800
4	Indiana University-Bloomington	IN	\$3,900	\$200	\$46,800
4	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	MI	\$4,800	\$200	\$57,600

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

*Includes all branch campuses of the University of Connecticut.

For men and women majoring in journalism, the highest earnings net of debt payments come from many of the same colleges. Women have the highest median earnings net of debt payments from Northwestern University, at \$55,200 three years after graduation (**Table 6**). Northwestern University also is among the top five institutions for men's financial returns from journalism bachelor's degrees, but men's highest returns come from the University of Maryland-College Park, at \$49,200. Women's median monthly debt payments from journalism programs range from \$100 to \$300, while men's are \$200 from the top programs.

For women majoring in radio, television, and digital communication, the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation come from New York University, at \$57,600 (**Table 7**). For men with the same major, the highest returns come from Savannah College of Art and Design, at \$55,200. Miami University-Oxford and Hofstra University rank among the top five institutions for both men's and women's financial returns for this field of study, based on data from the College Scorecard. At both universities, however, women's median earnings net of debt payments are higher than men's. While men's median monthly debt payments are \$200 at the top institutions on this list, women's median monthly debt payments range from \$200 to \$300 per month.

There are just a few institutions with data available by gender for other communication, journalism, and related programs. Farmingdale State College in New York leads to the highest median earnings net of debt payments for men and women who major in other communication, journalism, and related programs three years after graduation, though returns are higher for women: \$50,400 compared to \$44,400 (**Table 8**). Women also have higher returns from other communication and journalism programs at West Virginia University: \$43,200 compared to \$40,800 for men. Typical monthly debt payments for women range from \$100 to \$200, while they range from \$200 to \$300 for men.



TABLE 7

Women who majored in radio, television, and digital communication have the highest median earnings net of debt payments from New York University three years after graduation, while men’s returns are highest from the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
Women					
1	New York University	NY	\$4,800	\$200	\$57,600
2	Miami University-Oxford	OH	\$4,400	\$200	\$52,800
3	Hofstra University	NY	\$4,200	\$200	\$50,400
4	Syracuse University	NY	\$3,900	\$300	\$46,800
4	Seton Hall University	NJ	\$3,900	\$300	\$46,800
Men					
1	Savannah College of Art and Design	GA	\$4,600	\$200	\$55,200
2	Miami University-Oxford	OH	\$4,300	\$200	\$51,600
2	University of Texas at Dallas	TX	\$4,300	\$200	\$51,600
4	Hofstra University	NY	\$3,700	\$200	\$44,400
4	Florida State University	FL	\$3,700	\$200	\$44,400
4	Ithaca College	NY	\$3,700	\$200	\$44,400
4	Washington State University	WA	\$3,700	\$200	\$44,400

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

TABLE 8

Women and men have the highest earnings from Farmingdale State College among other communication, journalism, and related programs.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
Women					
1	Farmingdale State College	NY	\$4,200	\$100	\$50,400
2	University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	MN	\$3,800	\$200	\$45,600
3	West Virginia University	WV	\$3,600	\$200	\$43,200
4	Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus	PA	\$3,500	\$200	\$42,000
Men					
1	Farmingdale State College	NY	\$3,700	\$200	\$44,400
2	Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus	PA	\$3,500	\$300	\$42,000
3	West Virginia University	WV	\$3,400	\$200	\$40,800

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Bachelor's degree holders in these fields who received Pell Grants have lower earnings net of debt payments than their peers.

Given the growing costs associated with college, it is important for prospective students to consider their future earnings when choosing a major, particularly if they expect to take out loans to pay for college. In general, students from low-income families see a lower return on investment from college than all students.⁵⁹ Likewise, across all communication and journalism majors, Pell Grant recipients' median earnings three years after graduation

59 Carnevale et al., *The Colleges Where Low-Income Students Get the Highest ROI*, 2022.

TABLE 9

Pell Grant recipients who majored in communication and media studies have the highest earnings net of debt payments from the University of California-Berkeley three years after graduation.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	University of California-Berkeley	CA	\$5,100	\$100	\$61,200
2	Santa Clara University	CA	\$5,000	\$200	\$60,000
3	Cornell University	NY	\$4,900	\$100	\$58,800
4	California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo	CA	\$4,800	\$100	\$57,600
5	University of Virginia-Main Campus	VA	\$4,700	\$200	\$56,400

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

are lower than those of graduates who did not receive Pell Grants. Furthermore, Pell Grant recipients earn a median of \$40,000 or more three years after graduation in less than 40 percent of programs in each communication and journalism major. For Pell Grant recipients, journalism is the major with the highest share of programs that lead to earnings of \$40,000 or more. Median earnings for journalism majors who received Pell Grants are \$37,600 three years after graduation.⁶⁰

Students who receive Pell Grants earn more than \$40,000 three years after graduation from just 31 percent of communication and media studies programs. Their median earnings are \$37,000 compared to \$45,000 for students who did not receive Pell Grants. The University of California-Berkeley offers the communication and media studies program with the highest returns for these students: \$61,200 three years after graduation (**Table 9**). The remaining top programs lead to median earnings net of debt payments of at least \$56,400 per year. Typical monthly debt payments for these programs range from \$100 to \$200.

60 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

TABLE 10

Among Pell Grant recipients, journalism majors who graduated from the University of Southern California have the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	University of Southern California	CA	\$5,200	\$200	\$62,400
2	Northwestern University	IL	\$4,500	\$100	\$54,000
2	Syracuse University	NY	\$4,500	\$300	\$54,000
4	University of Maryland-College Park	MD	\$4,100	\$200	\$49,200
5	Indiana University-Bloomington	IN	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Among journalism majors, Pell Grant recipients earned more than \$40,000 three years after graduation in just 37 percent of these programs with data on the College Scorecard. Journalism graduates who received Pell Grants earn a median of \$37,600 three years after graduation, compared to \$44,000 for graduates who did not receive Pell Grants. The University of Southern California leads to the highest median earnings net of debt payments for Pell Grant recipients who majored in journalism, at \$62,400 (Table 10). Notably, at the same institution, these financial returns are well above the returns for journalism graduates who did not receive a Pell Grant (\$46,800).

The median earnings of Pell Grant recipients are \$37,000 compared to \$45,000 for students who did not receive Pell Grants.



TABLE 11

Among Pell Grant recipients, radio, television, and digital communication majors who graduated from the University of Connecticut have the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	University of Connecticut*	CT	\$4,600	\$200	\$55,200
2	New York University	NY	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000
2	Hofstra University	NY	\$4,000	\$200	\$48,000
4	Savannah College of Art and Design	GA	\$3,700	\$300	\$44,400
5	The University of Texas at Dallas	TX	\$3,600	\$200	\$43,200
5	Boston University	MA	\$3,600	\$300	\$43,200

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

*Includes all branch campuses of the University of Connecticut.

Earnings are particularly dismal for low-income radio, television, and digital communication majors. Pell Grant recipients with this major earn more than \$40,000 three years after graduation from just 12 percent of programs with data on the College Scorecard. Their overall median earnings are \$32,000, compared to \$38,700 for graduates of the same program who did not receive Pell Grants. For the graduates who received Pell Grants, the highest median earnings net of debt payments come from the University of Connecticut, at \$55,200 three years after graduation (Table 11). Among the institutions with the highest median earnings net of debt payments, Pell Grant recipients only earn more than non-Pell Grant recipients at Boston University, at \$43,200 three years after graduation compared to \$42,000 for graduates who did not receive Pell Grants.

TABLE 12

Among Pell Grant recipients, those who majored in other communication, journalism, and related programs have the highest earnings net of debt payments from Farmingdale State College three years after graduation.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	Farmingdale State College	NY	\$3,800	\$200	\$45,600
2	West Virginia University	WV	\$3,400	\$200	\$39,600
3	Seton Hall University	NJ	\$3,300	\$200	\$39,600
3	Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus	PA	\$3,300	\$300	\$39,600
5	SUNY Buffalo State	NY	\$2,900	\$200	\$34,800
5	Grand Valley State University	MI	\$2,900	\$300	\$34,800

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

*Includes all branch campuses of the University of Connecticut.

Just 14 percent of other communication, journalism, and related programs lead to median earnings for Pell Grant students of more than \$40,000 three years after graduation. Other programs have median annual earnings of \$37,100 for Pell Grant recipients, compared to \$42,100 for students who did not receive Pell Grants. Among the seven institutions with data available on Pell Grant recipients, the highest earnings net of debt payments come from Farmingdale State College in New York, at \$45,600 three years after graduation (**Table 12**). The remaining top programs lead to median financial returns of at least \$34,800, and typical monthly debt payments range from \$200 to \$300.





PART 3

Master's Degrees



44



While a bachelor's degree is generally required for journalism jobs, some journalists have a master's degree as well. But the payoff of a master's degree in this field is questionable. Overall, a master's degree in journalism provides graduates with the smallest earnings boost over a bachelor's degree in the same field among communication and journalism programs: median annual earnings net of debt rise just \$6,000 for a journalism master's degree holder compared to a bachelor's degree holder in the same field. The added payoff from a master's degree in radio, television, and digital communication is \$11,300 per year compared to a bachelor's degree in the same major. The greatest boosts in earnings net of debt come from master's degrees in communication and media studies and other communication, journalism, and related programs, which each amount to \$14,600 per year over the returns from a bachelor's degree in the same fields.

At some colleges, median earnings net of debt for a master's degree in journalism or radio, television, and digital communication are the same—or even lower—than they are for a bachelor's degree holder in the same major at that institution.⁶¹

Among the eight institutions with data available from the College Scorecard for journalism graduates at both degree levels, only half of master's degree programs lead to higher

⁶¹ A *Wall Street Journal* analysis had similar findings based on data from an earlier version of the College Scorecard. Korn and DeBarros, "Journalism Schools Leave Graduates with Hefty Student Loans," 2021.

returns than the bachelor's degree program at the same institution. For radio, television, and digital communication, two out of three programs with data available do not result in an earnings boost for graduates with master's degrees. In other words, undergraduate students in these majors are better off financially than students who graduated from the master's degree program in the same field at the same university. By contrast, master's degree holders in communication and media studies tend to earn more than bachelor's degree holders with the same major from the same institution.

Nonetheless, a master's degree in journalism and communications may appeal to students intending to work in a newsroom who did not major in these fields as undergraduates. Among master's degree holders in journalism and communications, 40 percent majored in communications as undergraduates; 27 percent in humanities; 13 percent in business; and 9 percent in social sciences.⁶² For the 60 percent who studied fields other than communications, the master's degree may provide experience relevant to the professional field they want to pursue.

Communication and media studies is the most common master's degree program in communication and journalism.

There are 31 communication and media studies programs at the master's degree level with data available on the College Scorecard. The program at Columbia University leads to the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation, at \$87,600 (**Table 13**). Among the top 10 programs, median earnings net of debt payments are at least \$63,600 three years after graduation, and typical debt payments range from \$200 to \$800 per month.

Compared to the bachelor's degree programs in communication and media studies, master's degree programs in the same field at the same institution typically lead to higher financial returns three years after graduation. The greatest earnings boost comes from graduates of the communication and media studies program at Northwestern University, who earn \$18,000 more net of debt payments than Northwestern graduates with bachelor's degrees in the same field.

Master's degree holders in journalism have the same median earnings net of debt payments as those who studied radio, television, and digital communication.

For the 11 master's degree programs in journalism with data available from the College Scorecard, the University of Georgia and the University of Missouri-Columbia offer the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation, at \$52,800

⁶² The remaining master's degree holders majored in a wide range of other fields. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Baccalaureate and Beyond: 2008/2018*.

TABLE 13

Columbia University offers the communication and media studies master’s degree program with the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	Columbia University	NY	\$7,300	\$700	\$87,600
2	Northwestern University	IL	\$6,400	\$600	\$76,800
3	Johns Hopkins University	MD	\$6,200	\$400	\$74,400
4	California State University-Fullerton	CA	\$6,000	\$200	\$72,000
5	Westminster College	UT	\$5,700	\$500	\$68,400
6	National University	CA	\$5,400	\$300	\$64,800
6	University of Southern California	CA	\$5,400	\$800	\$64,800
6	Purdue University-Main Campus	IN	\$5,400	\$300	\$64,800
9	American University	DC	\$5,300	\$600	\$63,600
9	Northeastern University	MA	\$5,300	\$400	\$63,600

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

(Table 14). Among master’s degree programs in journalism, debt payments range from \$200 to \$800 per month.

In some cases, a master’s degree in journalism can lead to the same payoff as a bachelor’s degree in journalism. In fact, the institutions tied for the highest earnings net of debt at the master’s degree level lead to the same median returns (\$52,800) as those of a journalism graduate with a bachelor’s degree from George Washington University, which offers the highest returns at that level.

Furthermore, master’s degree holders in journalism can sometimes earn less than bachelor’s degree holders in the same field at the same institution. At the University of Southern California and Northwestern University, median earnings net of debt payments

TABLE 14

The University of Georgia and University of Missouri-Columbia offer master's degree holders in journalism the highest annual earnings net of debt payments.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	University of Georgia	GA	\$4,400	\$300	\$52,800
1	University of Missouri-Columbia	MO	\$4,400	\$200	\$52,800
3	Kent State University at Kent	OH	\$4,100	\$400	\$49,200
4	St. Bonaventure University	NY	\$4,000	\$300	\$48,000
5	Columbia University	NY	\$3,900	\$800	\$46,800
5	Arizona State University-Downtown Phoenix	AZ	\$3,900	\$300	\$46,800
7	University of Southern California	CA	\$3,700	\$500	\$44,400
8	Northwestern University	IL	\$3,400	\$800	\$40,800
8	Boston University	MA	\$3,400	\$400	\$40,800
10	DePaul University	IL	\$2,900	\$400	\$34,800

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.



In some cases, a master's degree in journalism can lead to the same payoff as a bachelor's degree in journalism.

for bachelor's degree holders in journalism are \$51,600 three years after graduation. A combination of lower earnings and higher debt payments leads to lower returns for master's degree holders in journalism who graduated from these universities: \$44,400 and \$40,800, respectively. At Boston University and DePaul University, master's degree holders in journalism earn more than bachelor's degree holders in the same field. However, because of higher debt payments, their earnings net of debt are the same as for bachelor's degree holders who majored in journalism at the same university.

TABLE 15

People with master’s degrees in radio, television, and digital communication have the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation from the University of Washington-Seattle campus.

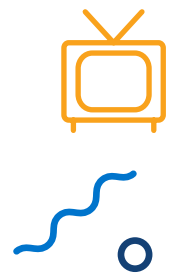
Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	University of Washington-Seattle Campus	WA	\$6,000	\$600	\$72,000
2	New York University	NY	\$4,500	\$600	\$54,000
3	Savannah College of Art and Design	GA	\$4,300	\$700	\$51,600
4	Elon University	NC	\$3,500	\$600	\$42,000
5	The University of Texas at Austin	TX	\$1,600	\$600	\$19,200

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Note: Data are only available for five of the 100 institutions that offer this master’s degree.

Graduates with a master’s degree in radio, television, and digital communication can have higher earnings net of debt payments than journalism majors at the top institutions.

There are five master’s degree programs in radio, television, and digital communication with data on the College Scorecard. A master’s degree in journalism from the University of Washington-Seattle Campus leads to the highest median annual earnings net of debt payments, at \$72,000 (Table 15). On the low end, at the University of Texas at Austin, master’s degree holders earn a median of \$19,200 net of debt payments. For these master’s degree programs, median monthly debt payments range from \$600 to \$700.



For radio, television, and digital communication programs with data available on the College Scorecard, master’s degree graduates of the Savannah College of Art and Design earn more net of debt payments than their counterparts with a bachelor’s degree: \$51,600 compared to \$46,800 three years after graduation. However, earnings net of debt payments are not always higher for master’s degree holders in the same field. In fact, for graduates of New York University and the University of Texas at Austin, those with a master’s degree in the same field actually earn less net of debt payments than bachelor’s degree holders: \$54,000 and \$19,200, respectively, compared to \$55,200 and \$36,000 three years after graduation.

TABLE 16

Northwestern University offers the “other” communication and journalism master’s degree program with the highest median earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
1	Northwestern University	IL	\$6,700	\$700	\$80,400
2	Gonzaga University	WA	\$5,100	\$400	\$61,200
3	Bowie State University	MD	\$4,200	\$500	\$50,400
4	New York University	NY	\$4,100	\$1,200	\$49,200
5	Georgia Southern University	GA	\$3,600	\$500	\$43,200

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Note: Data are only available for five of the 26 institutions that offer this master's degree.

Other communication, journalism, and related programs lead to the highest earnings net of debt payments for master’s degree holders among the programs discussed in this report.

There are five communication and journalism master’s degree programs categorized as “other.” Among these programs, Northwestern University graduates have the highest median earnings net of debt payments, at \$80,400 three years after graduation (**Table 16**). These five programs lead to median earnings net of debt of at least \$43,200, and median debt payments range from \$400 to \$1,200.⁶³

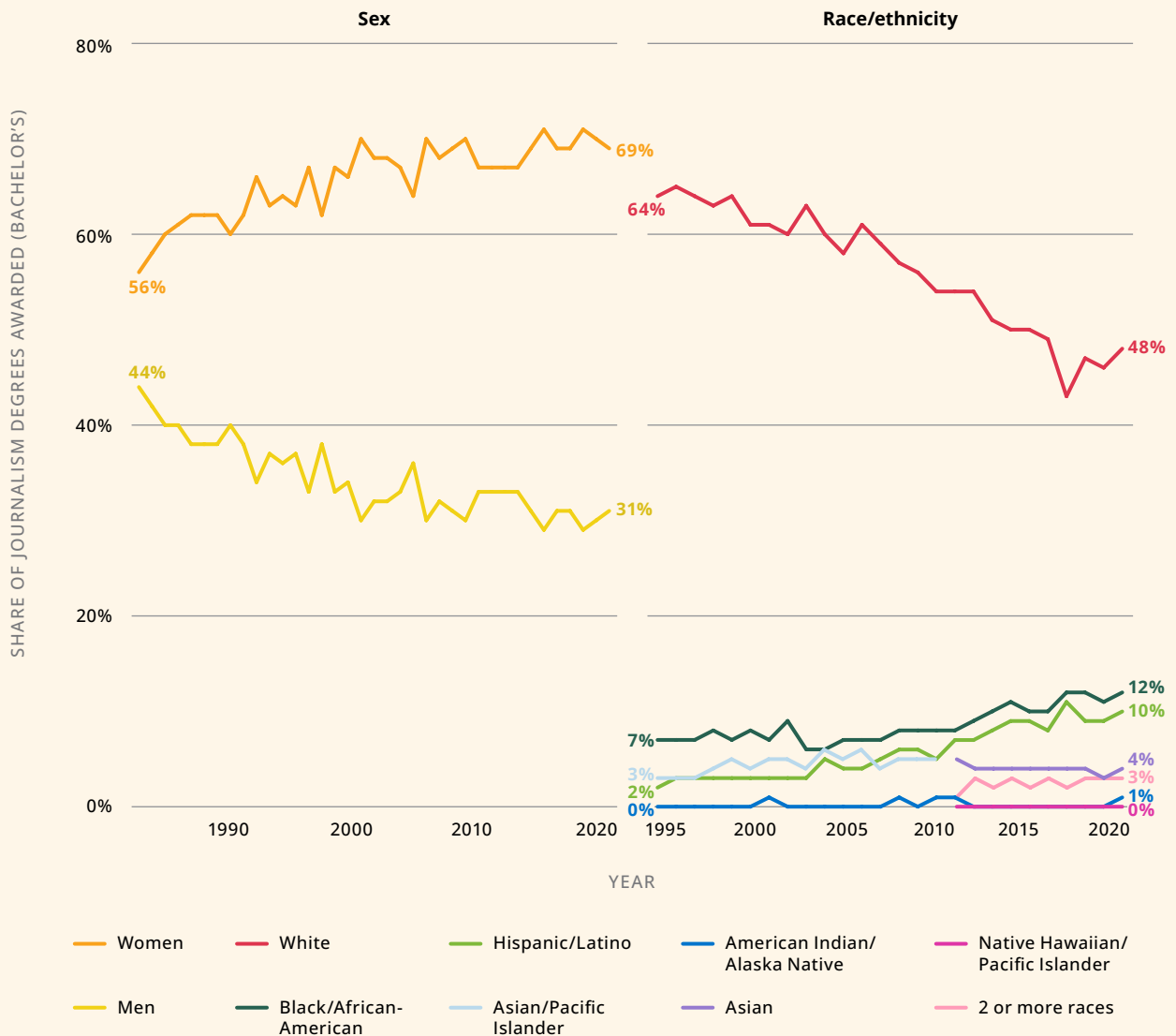
Journalism master’s degree recipients are mostly women, and they have become more diverse by race and ethnicity over time.

Women have outnumbered men as recipients of master’s degrees in journalism since the 1980s. By 2020, women made up 69 percent of all graduates with these degrees (**Figure 12**). Journalism master’s degree recipients have also become more diverse by

⁶³ The College Scorecard does not have data available on bachelor’s degree programs in the same field for the institutions ranked at the master’s degree level, so we are not able to determine whether the master’s degree programs offer an earnings boost.

FIGURE 12

The share of women awarded master’s degrees in journalism has grown in past decades.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.
 Note: The Department of Education did not begin collecting statistics on race/ethnicity until 1995. The Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander categories were combined until 2010.

race and ethnicity. The share of those graduating with a master’s degree in journalism who are White declined from 64 percent in 1995 to 48 percent in 2020. Over the same time period, the share of these graduates who are Black rose from 7 percent to 12 percent and the share who are Latino increased from 2 percent to 10 percent.⁶⁴

64 White workers with a master’s degree in journalism earn \$46,000 per year. Earnings data are not available for other racial and ethnic groups. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey micro data, 2009–2019, based on full-time, full-year workers ages 22–27 with a graduate degree.

TABLE 17

Among communication and media studies master's degree holders, women have the highest financial returns three years after graduation from Northwestern University, while men's returns are highest from the University of Southern California.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
Women					
1	Northwestern University	IL	\$6,500	\$600	\$78,000
2	Johns Hopkins University	MD	\$6,100	\$300	\$73,200
3	Purdue University- Main Campus	IN	\$5,500	\$300	\$66,000
4	University of Southern California	CA	\$5,400	\$700	\$64,800
4	American University	DC	\$5,400	\$500	\$64,800
Men					
1	University of Southern California	CA	\$6,900	\$700	\$82,800
2	American University	DC	\$5,200	\$500	\$62,400
3	University of Florida	FL	\$4,000	\$400	\$48,000
4	The New School	NY	\$2,100	\$500	\$25,200

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Note: Data for men and women are available for only four and eight institutions, respectively, of the 310 that offer this master's degree.

For the master's degree communication and media studies programs with earnings and debt data available for men and women, men have higher median financial returns. The University of Southern California offers the highest median earnings net of debt payments for men with this degree, at \$82,800 three years after graduation, compared to \$64,800 for women (**Table 17**). Northwestern University offers the communication and media studies program with the highest returns for women, at \$78,000 three years after graduation. Typical monthly debt payments for women range from \$300 to \$700, compared to \$400 to \$700 for men.



TABLE 18

Men and women who graduated with a master’s degree in journalism have the highest earnings from Columbia University, with men earning more than women.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
Women					
1	Columbia University	NY	\$3,900	\$700	\$46,800
2	Northwestern University	IL	\$3,500	\$700	\$42,000
3	Full Sail University	FL	\$2,300	\$400	\$27,600
Men					
1	Columbia University	NY	\$4,000	\$900	\$48,000
2	Northwestern University	IL	\$3,400	\$700	\$40,800
3	Full Sail University	FL	\$2,800	\$400	\$33,600

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Note: Data for men and women are available for only three out of 80 institutions that offer this master’s degree.

Data for graduates by gender are available on the College Scorecard for only three journalism master’s degree programs. Among these programs, Columbia University has the highest earnings net of debt for women, at \$46,800 three years after graduation (**Table 18**). These returns are lower than men’s at the same institution, which are \$48,000. Likewise, women’s median earnings net of debt are lower than men’s from the same program at Full Sail University. By contrast, women’s median earnings net of debt are higher for journalism graduates at Northwestern University, at \$42,000 compared to \$40,800 for men.

TABLE 19

Women who graduated from New York University with master's degrees in radio, television, and digital communication have the highest median earnings net of debt three years after graduation.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
Women					
1	New York University	NY	\$4,700	\$700	\$56,400
2	Savannah College of Art and Design	GA	\$4,600	\$400	\$55,200
3	Elon University	NC	\$3,500	\$500	\$42,000
Men					
1	Savannah College of Art and Design	GA	\$4,400	\$700	\$52,800
2	New York University	NY	\$3,600	\$400	\$43,200

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Note: Data for men and women are available for only two and three institutions, respectively, of 100 that offer this master's degree.



Among master's degree holders who studied radio, television, and digital communication, women have higher median earnings net of debt compared to men at the same institutions. Women's median returns are higher at New York University (\$56,400 compared to \$43,200 for men) and Savannah College of Art and Design (\$55,200 compared to \$52,800) (Table 19).

TABLE 20

Women and men who majored in other communication, journalism, and related programs at Northwestern University have the highest earnings net of debt three years after graduation.

Rank	Institution	State	Median monthly earnings net of debt payments	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt payments
Women					
1	Northwestern University	IL	\$6,700	\$600	\$80,400
2	Gonzaga University	WA	\$4,800	\$300	\$57,600
Men					
1	Northwestern University	IL	\$6,900	\$700	\$82,800
2	Gonzaga University	WA	\$6,100	\$400	\$73,200

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Note: Data for men and women are available for only two out of 26 institutions that offer this master’s degree.

There are two other communication, journalism, and related master’s degree programs with earnings available from the College Scorecard by gender. Graduates of the program at Northwestern University who are women earn \$80,400 net of debt payments three years after graduation, compared to \$82,800 for men (Table 20). At Gonzaga University, women with this degree earn \$57,600 net of debt, compared to \$73,200 for men. The monthly debt payments in these two programs range from \$300 to \$600 for women, while they are a bit higher for men, ranging from \$400 to \$700.

Conclusion

For students and working professionals interested in a career in journalism, there are many factors to consider before transitioning into the field. If the last few decades offer any insight into the future of American journalism, local newspapers will continue to struggle and perhaps close, while digital news outlets, major national newspapers, and broadcasting will grow slowly but steadily. Despite this growth, there are fewer jobs available for journalists overall than there were when employment at news publishers reached a peak in the 1990s.

The nature of journalism jobs is changing, and so is the average profile of journalists. Today's journalists are more likely to be reporters than editors. They are more highly educated: about 90 percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher. And they are more likely to be women and less likely to be White than in the past, though the demographics of people working in journalism have not kept pace with the changing composition of the US workforce.

Beyond the availability and stability of jobs in the journalism field, the financial payoff of a journalism major is another factor for students and their families to consider when deciding whether to pursue the degree. And given the cost of a college degree and potential burden of student debt, it is an important one.

At the bachelor's degree level, the economic value of a degree in communication, journalism, and related programs ranks 14th out of 34 major groups categorized by the College Scorecard. However, returns vary substantially by institution. At the bachelor's degree level, journalism majors have the highest earnings net of debt payments from George Washington University, at \$52,800. Radio, television, and digital communication majors who attended the Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus earn more than journalism majors, with earnings net of debt of \$66,000 three years after graduation.

Not all reporters and editors major in journalism. Overall, about two-thirds of news analysts, reporters, and correspondents major either in journalism or communication and mass media. English language and literature is the other common major for workers in this occupation.⁶⁵

Median earnings net of debt typically rise for master's degree holders across higher education. While this holds true for master's degrees in journalism, these programs represent a more questionable investment. That is because a master's degree in journalism does not provide a substantial earnings boost over a bachelor's degree in the same field. Overall for master's degree holders, the economic value of communication,

⁶⁵ These major groups are categories used in the American Community Survey, and they do not directly correspond with major groups used by the College Scorecard, which follows the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP).

journalism, and related programs ranks 12th out of 26 major groups categorized by the College Scorecard. Three years after graduation, median earnings net of debt payments are \$46,800 for journalism and radio, television, and digital communication majors, only slightly higher than the typical returns for these majors at the bachelor's degree level. However, the University of Southern California, Northwestern University, New York University, and the University of Texas at Austin all have programs in journalism or radio, television, and digital communication with lower earnings returns at the master's degree level than at the bachelor's degree level. At other institutions, returns are the same or not much higher for master's degree programs than for bachelor's degree programs.

By contrast, communication and media studies majors generally see a greater earnings boost from a master's degree over a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, master's degree holders in communication and media studies usually have higher net earnings than bachelor's degree holders in the same field at the same institution. This master's degree appears to have a stronger payoff than journalism and radio, television, and digital communication programs.

With more data connecting postsecondary education and labor market outcomes, prospective students and their families will have more information to guide their decisions. More information is a good thing, but for consumers, it will only become more challenging to make sense of these complex findings. In particular, for students planning to pursue careers in journalism, the rapidly changing media landscape only complicates their pathway from college to a well-paying job.



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Appendix A:

Data Sources and Methodology

This report uses data from multiple sources:

1. Program-level data in the College Scorecard released by the US Department of Education in September 2022

We based the report only on data from journalism programs that report students' earnings three years after completion and their median debt. The College Scorecard pooled the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 completion cohorts to obtain their earnings in 2018 and 2019. Debt amounts were based on the pooled 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years. The Department of Education assumed a 10-year repayment period and an interest rate of 3.73 percent when computing monthly debt payments.

The data from the College Scorecard have the following shortcomings:

- Earnings data are only available for students who took out federal loans or received federal financial aid, such as a Pell Grant. Not all graduates participated in these programs so the earnings may not be representative of all students who completed the program.
- Debt calculations are based only on federal loans and do not capture loans from other entities such as institutions, states, or private lenders. The calculations also do not include capitalized interest on debt, so estimates may be lower than amounts owed upon completion.
- The Education Department took precautions to reduce the chance of disclosure of information that could be traced to individuals. Results for many programs are not disclosed on the College Scorecard due to small numbers of graduates. To further reduce disclosure risk, the rules for when data are suppressed are not publicly released.
- Earnings measured early after completion may not be indicative of longer-term earnings.
- Earnings of past degree completers may not be predictive of earnings for future completers due to existing global or local economic conditions.
- Names of programs are based on codes from the Department of Education's Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) and may not resemble fields of study in the course catalogs from institutions. Different institutions with similar programs may report those programs under different CIP codes.
- Some institutions report earnings at the system level rather than at the specific campus level.

2. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (National Center for Education Statistics, US Department of Education)

3. Current Population Survey and American Community Survey (US Census Bureau)

TABLE A1

Median earnings for journalism and radio, television, and digital communication majors are higher on average at higher degree levels, as are total debt and debt payments three years after graduation.

Degree level	Median annual earnings	Median total debt	Median monthly debt payments
Bachelor's degree	\$41,300	\$22,500	\$220
Master's degree	\$55,700	\$42,800	\$480

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

TABLE A2

For many programs, data on earnings three years after completion and debt are unavailable from the College Scorecard.

Degree level	Program name	Total number of programs	Share of programs with data suppressed
Bachelor's degree	Communication and media studies	564	52%
	Journalism	148	65%
	Radio, television, and digital communication	107	71%
	Communication, journalism, and related programs, other	16	86%
Master's degree	Communication and media studies	31	90%
	Journalism	12	85%
	Radio, television, and digital communication	5	95%
	Communication, journalism, and related programs, other	5	81%

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

Appendix B: Program-Level Rankings

The following tables show where communication, journalism, and related programs rank at two degree levels against other fields of study by annual earnings net of debt payments three years after graduation, based on two-digit classification of instructional programs (CIP) and annual earnings net of debt payments three years after completion.

TABLE B1

Bachelor's degrees

Rank	Program	Median monthly earnings net of debt	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt	Median debt
1	Engineering	\$6,000	\$240	\$72,200	\$23,900
2	Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians	\$5,700	\$230	\$68,500	\$22,800
3	Health professions and related clinical sciences	\$5,200	\$230	\$61,900	\$22,400
4	Engineering technologies/technicians	\$5,100	\$270	\$61,800	\$25,500
5	Transportation and materials moving	\$4,900	\$230	\$59,000	\$23,100
6	Science technologies/technicians	\$4,500	\$230	\$54,300	\$22,700
7	Mathematics and statistics	\$4,500	\$200	\$54,200	\$20,400
8	Computer and information sciences and support services	\$4,400	\$410	\$52,600	\$26,700
9	Architecture and related services	\$4,100	\$250	\$49,600	\$25,000
10	Physical sciences	\$3,800	\$230	\$45,600	\$22,800

Rank	Program	Median monthly earnings net of debt	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt	Median debt
11	Business, management, marketing, and related support	\$3,700	\$360	\$44,500	\$35,900
12	Social sciences	\$3,400	\$200	\$41,100	\$21,000
13	Agriculture, agriculture operations, and related sciences	\$3,300	\$200	\$40,100	\$20,000
14	Communication, journalism, and related programs	\$3,300	\$220	\$39,700	\$22,500
15	Parks, recreation, leisure, and fitness studies	\$3,100	\$230	\$37,000	\$22,700
16	Area, ethnic, cultural, and gender studies	\$3,000	\$170	\$36,400	\$17,400
17	Foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics	\$2,900	\$200	\$35,100	\$20,300
18	Education	\$2,900	\$240	\$34,900	\$24,700
18	Biological and biomedical sciences	\$2,900	\$220	\$34,900	\$22,200
20	Natural resources and conservation	\$2,900	\$220	\$34,600	\$21,700
20	Liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities	\$2,900	\$230	\$34,600	\$22,700
22	History	\$2,900	\$210	\$34,200	\$21,500

Rank	Program	Median monthly earnings net of debt	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt	Median debt
23	Family and consumer sciences/human sciences	\$2,800	\$260	\$33,800	\$24,200
24	Security and protective services	\$2,800	\$400	\$33,300	\$29,900
25	Psychology	\$2,700	\$240	\$32,600	\$24,100
26	English language and literature/letters	\$2,700	\$210	\$32,500	\$21,500
27	Personal and culinary services	\$2,500	\$260	\$30,200	\$32,400
28	Philosophy and religious studies	\$2,400	\$230	\$29,200	\$23,100
29	Theology and religious vocations	\$2,400	\$240	\$28,300	\$24,300
30	Visual and performing arts	\$2,300	\$260	\$28,100	\$26,000
31	Legal professions and studies	\$2,300	\$350	\$27,900	\$35,500
32	Public administration and social service professions	\$2,300	\$430	\$27,700	\$36,100
33	Multi/interdisciplinary studies	\$2,100	\$400	\$25,200	\$40,400
34	Communications technologies/technicians and support services	\$1,800	\$350	\$22,000	\$29,100

Note: Only programs with five institutions or more are included.

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.

TABLE B2


Master's degrees

Rank	Program	Median monthly earnings net of debt	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt	Median debt
1	Engineering	\$7,400	\$310	\$88,500	\$31,100
2	Mathematics and statistics	\$7,000	\$330	\$83,500	\$40,800
3	Engineering technologies/technicians	\$6,100	\$270	\$73,100	\$28,400
4	Computer and information sciences and support services	\$5,400	\$460	\$65,100	\$41,600
5	Social sciences	\$5,100	\$490	\$61,700	\$50,500
6	Health professions and related clinical sciences	\$5,000	\$520	\$60,500	\$52,300
7	Biological and biomedical sciences	\$4,700	\$510	\$56,000	\$41,000
8	Business, management, marketing, and related support	\$4,400	\$400	\$53,200	\$41,000
9	Multi/interdisciplinary studies	\$4,300	\$410	\$52,100	\$41,000
10	Architecture and related services	\$4,300	\$410	\$51,700	\$40,800
11	Natural resources and conservation	\$4,200	\$410	\$50,200	\$41,000
12	Communication, journalism, and related programs	\$4,100	\$400	\$49,300	\$42,800
13	Education	\$4,000	\$300	\$47,600	\$29,700

Rank	Program	Median monthly earnings net of debt	Median monthly debt payments	Median annualized earnings net of debt	Median debt
14	History	\$3,900	\$380	\$46,500	\$39,600
15	Parks, recreation, leisure, and fitness studies	\$3,700	\$310	\$44,100	\$30,700
16	Foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics	\$3,600	\$260	\$43,700	\$25,700
17	Public administration and social service professions	\$3,600	\$410	\$43,200	\$41,000
18	Liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities	\$3,500	\$430	\$42,300	\$43,000
19	Library science	\$3,400	\$330	\$41,000	\$33,500
20	Theology and religious vocations	\$3,300	\$390	\$39,300	\$40,200
21	Security and protective services	\$3,200	\$410	\$38,600	\$38,100
22	Family and consumer sciences/human sciences	\$3,000	\$410	\$36,400	\$40,800
23	English language and literature/letters	\$2,800	\$430	\$33,300	\$42,700
24	Psychology	\$2,700	\$490	\$32,800	\$42,900
25	Legal professions and studies	\$2,700	\$570	\$32,600	\$54,300
26	Visual and performing arts	\$2,200	\$510	\$26,900	\$51,400

Note: Only programs with data available for five institutions or more are included.

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Department of Education College Scorecard, 2022.



To explore the data, visit:
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