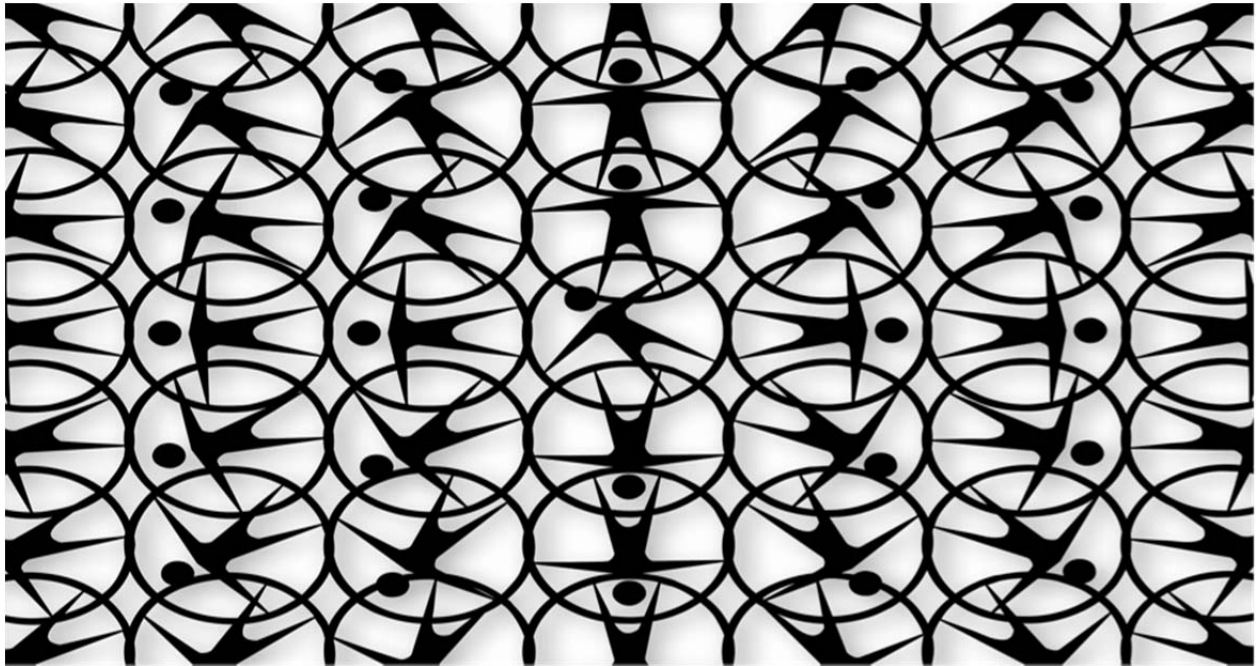


Workforce Working Group Report

February 2017



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Classical Music Rising (CMR) is a collaborative project of leading classical stations to shape the future of classical music radio as the field confronts evolution in delivery across multiple broadcast and digital platforms, demographic and cultural change, and significant disruption throughout the music industry. The initiative centers on strategy, innovative tactics, and collective action – all informed by ongoing research and analysis.

Classical Music Rising is a project of the Station Resource Group and is supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and participating station partners.



Introduction

Every week, more than eleven million Americans listen to public radio classical music content and engage via public radio digital services. This content is provided by a complex ecosystem – local all-classical stations, mixed format stations that offer both classical music and in-depth news, and national organizations that produce and/or distribute classical music programming.

Classical Music Rising’s Workforce Working Group set out to identify the opportunities and challenges for classical music stations and national organizations in terms of building and sustaining a 21st-century workforce. The group’s work plan centered around a major survey of the current staffing of classical music public radio stations in the United States.

Work Plan

- Prepare a survey to identify current state of play for all-classical and mixed-format stations as well as national classical organizations that produce and/or distribute classical music content. The intent of the survey was to surface key issues related to ensuring a strong workforce able to meet the needs of a 21st century audience.
- Assess key survey results.
- Create a draft job description of ‘ideal’ qualities needed for station host/announcer and producer positions, taking into account the need to diversify audiences.
- Explore projects that are taking new approaches to attract and develop talent and surfacing best practices. We discussed the Second Inversion project at KING FM, Q2 at WQXR, an intern project at WXXI, as well as approaches developed by the Association of Independents in Radio (AIR).
- Identify ways to improve recruitment and development across the system and outside the system. We talked to a public media consultant/recruiter and reviewed reports on how other arts organizations are approaching diversity in recruiting.
- Create a report with recommendations for moving forward.

Approach

From October 2016 to January 2017, our Working Group met via conference calls and emails, sharing expertise, individual research and reactions to the information we gathered. The central focus of our work was designing the workforce survey and then assessing and analyzing the all-classical, mixed-format and national organization survey results with a view to recommending ways to address the challenges and opportunities raised by each.

Overall Theme and Key Factors

At the highest level, we see a highly skilled workforce with many members approaching retirement age with no obvious replacements. Together, the surveys paint a complex picture of the workforce issues for classical music public radio and point toward key factors that must be addressed to ensure a healthy future.

- An aging workforce with very few new job vacancies now or in the foreseeable future.
- A non-diverse workforce with very few opportunities to hire new diverse talent now and in the foreseeable future.
- The need for skills training related to on-air presentation, digital production and social media, and fund-raising to effectively engage new audiences and members.
- The lack of a younger 'bench' to take classical forward into the future combined with worries that classical is not an attractive career choice for younger talent.
- A concern about the ability for hosts/staff to be 'local' and to connect to/engage local communities in a climate of tight resources.
- Budget and funding pressures and the resulting issue of being stretched too thin.
- Substantial concerns at mixed-format stations about the future of the classical format on these stations.

Proposed Solutions

Our Working Group is proposing several recommendations that address the dominant concerns related to the classical public radio workforce.

The top three recommendations are:

- Create training modules for on-air presentation skills and digital skills for hosts/producers.
- Create a fellowship/internship program to develop new talent at stations with potential to increase diversity of staff, add to diversity of ideas and strengthen local connection.
- Partner with Association of Independents in Radio (AIR) to launch a project designed to increase diversity and skills related to classical content, particularly digital content.

One of the most exciting outcomes of this work has been to see the engagement of classical stations and national organizations. Collectively, there is a large workforce dedicated to reaching and engaging an audience that numbers in the millions. Collectively, station and organization leaders are open to articulating the challenges, identifying what is needed to chart the future path and willing to work together to find solutions.

Classical Music Rising Workforce Working Group

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Acknowledgements

The Workforce Working Group appreciates the participation and input of stations, national organizations and individuals across the system.

We particularly thank the following individuals and organizations:

Tom Livingston, Livingston Associates

Sue Schardt and Karen Lally, AIR Media

The Classical Music Rising Steering Committee

Brenda Barnes, USC Radio Group

Jennifer Ridewood, KING FM

Matt Abramovitz, WQXR

Nick Kereakos, Minnesota Public Radio/American Public Media

Tom Thomas and Terry Clifford, Station Resource Group

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Classical Music Rising station partners

Classical Music Rising Public Radio Classical Music Workforce Survey Highlights

Survey Approach

In November 2016, the U.S. Public Radio Classical Music Workforce survey was sent to two different groups: all-classical stations (stations that primarily present classical music) and mixed-format stations (stations that program both news/info and classical music). The stations that responded represented a mix of market sizes, budgets and organizational structures. In January, a survey was sent to national organizations that produce and/or market classical content. The national organizations surveyed were American Public Media (APM), National Public Radio (NPR), WFMT Radio Network and Public Radio International (PRI).

The survey is not a census, but rather a relatively complete overview of the field. The Working Group reviewed the responses to identify key themes/issues related to the classical public radio workforce. We noted several similarities and several differences in the feedback of the three survey groups, outlined below.

Response Rate

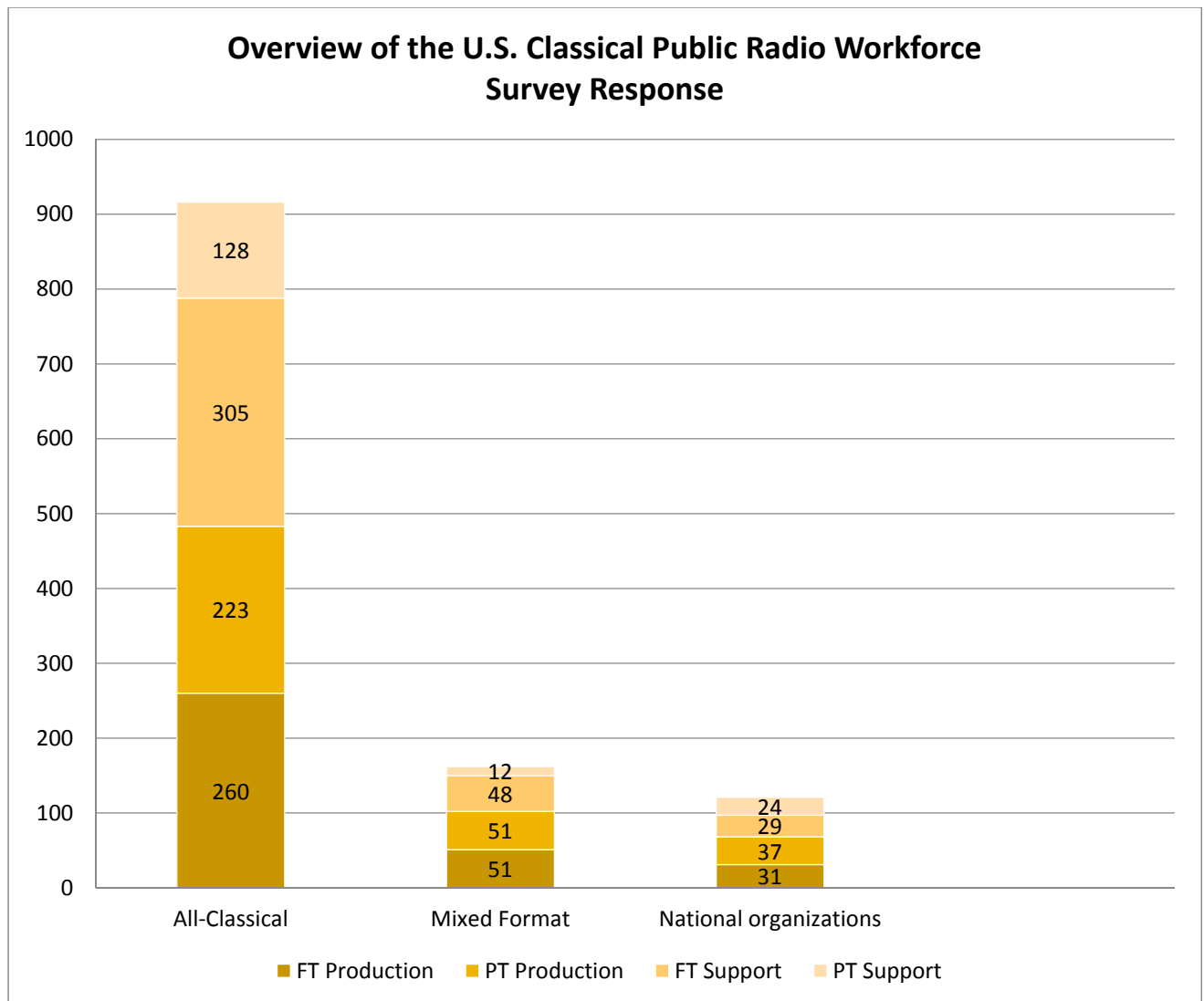
- 70 all-classical stations were surveyed with 51 responding, a total of 73%. The Working Group felt this was a significant response rate.
- 65 mixed-format stations (classical and news magazines) were surveyed with 30 responding, a total of 46%. While less than half responded, the Working Group felt the level of response was promising, given that classical music is not the principal focus at many of these stations.
- All four national organizations surveyed responded.

Size of the Workforce

The survey asked about the number of full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) employees whose work centers on the production and presentation of classical music (including related work in social media, marketing and community outreach) as well as the number of full and part-time employees who support these ‘front-line’ troops (through positions in management, fund-raising, tech and admin support, legal and audience research.)

- The total size of the reported public radio classical workforce is significant – 1,199 people work at stations and national organizations participating in the survey with 724 in FT and 475 in PT classical-related positions.

- The majority of the reported workforce is 653 FT and PT positions related to classical production and presentation (including related work in social media, marketing and community outreach)
- The remaining 546 FT and PT reported positions are people supporting those ‘front-line’ troops (including management, fundraising, technical and administrative support, legal affairs and audience research)
- While there is a significant response rate to the survey, a number of stations did not participate. The number of people working in classical public radio is larger than we have tallied in this report. Because our response from larger stations with more staff was more complete than for smaller stations with fewer staff, we are confident we have captured a good picture of the overall workforce.



- There is a significant number of volunteers and unpaid staff, with a total of 596 reported by participating all-classical and mixed-format stations. Volunteers and unpaid staff are not included in the total workforce charts, however. There are some large discrepancies in numbers (i.e. one station reports 200 volunteers out of a system total of 516). We believe that many stations may not have fully captured all the volunteers working on classical in their locations (i.e. membership) while others did.

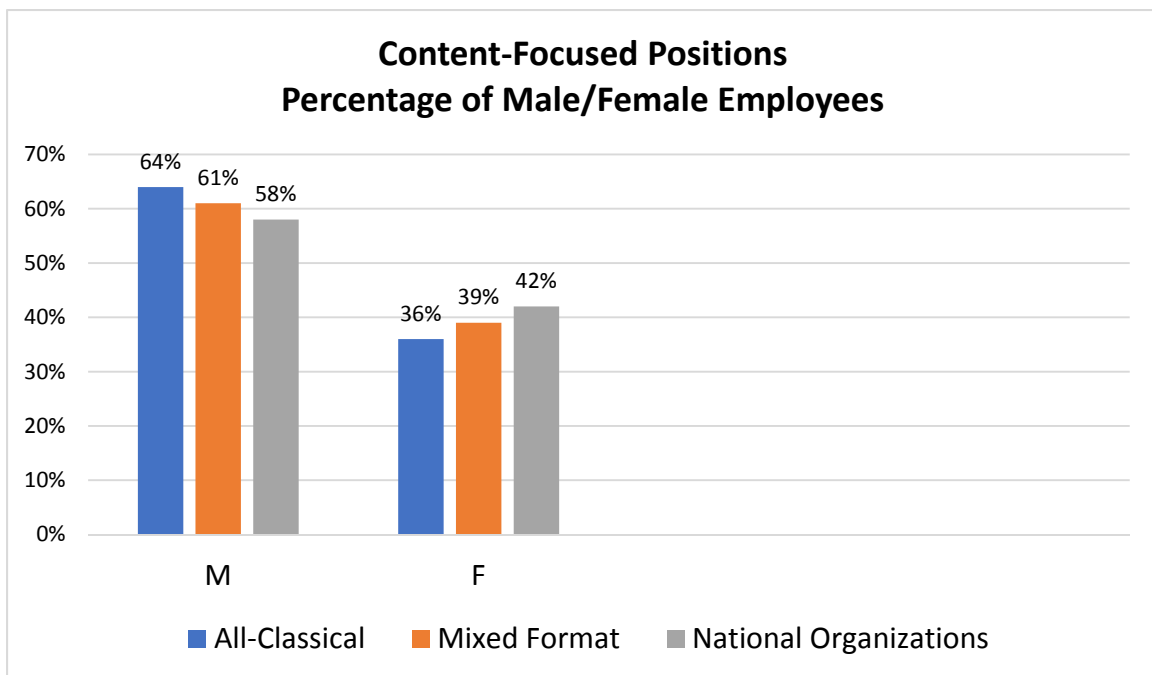
Diversity of the Workforce Related to Content Production

The survey took a closer look at the demographic composition of individuals whose work centers on classical music content.

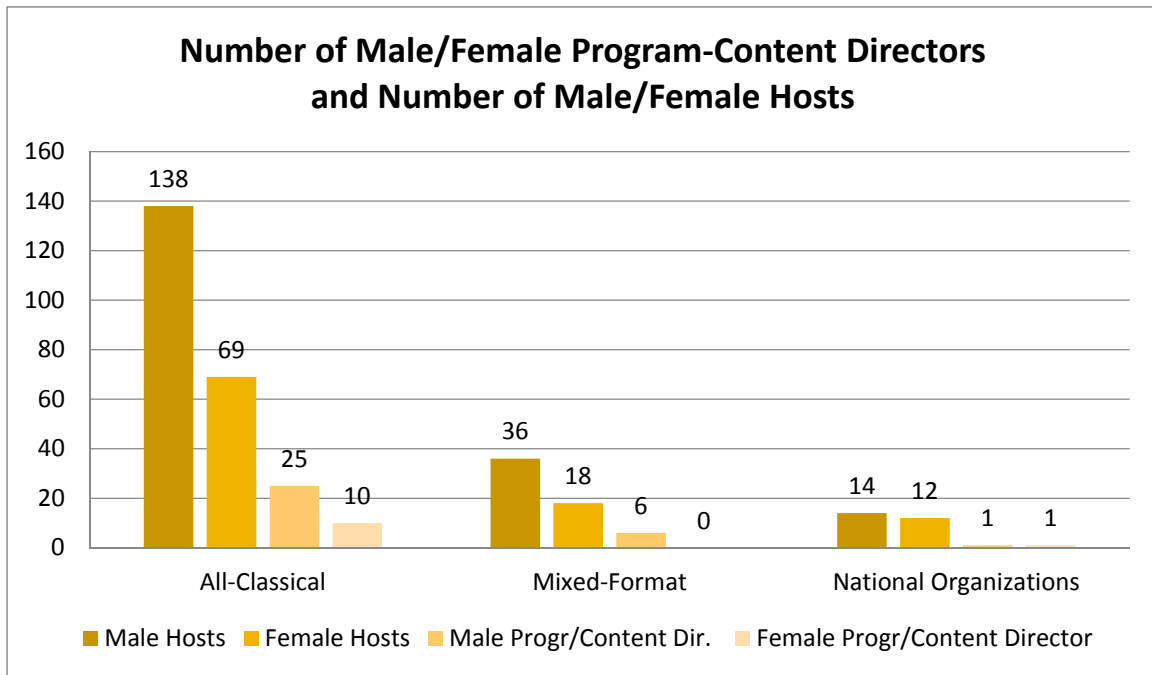
Overall, there is a significant lack of diversity related to content-centered positions in public radio classical music stations and national organizations responding to the survey.

Gender Diversity

- All-classical and mixed-format stations responding are similar in terms of gender diversity, with men in a significant majority – nearly two-thirds – of content-centered positions. National organizations report slightly highly gender diversity of total content-centered staff.

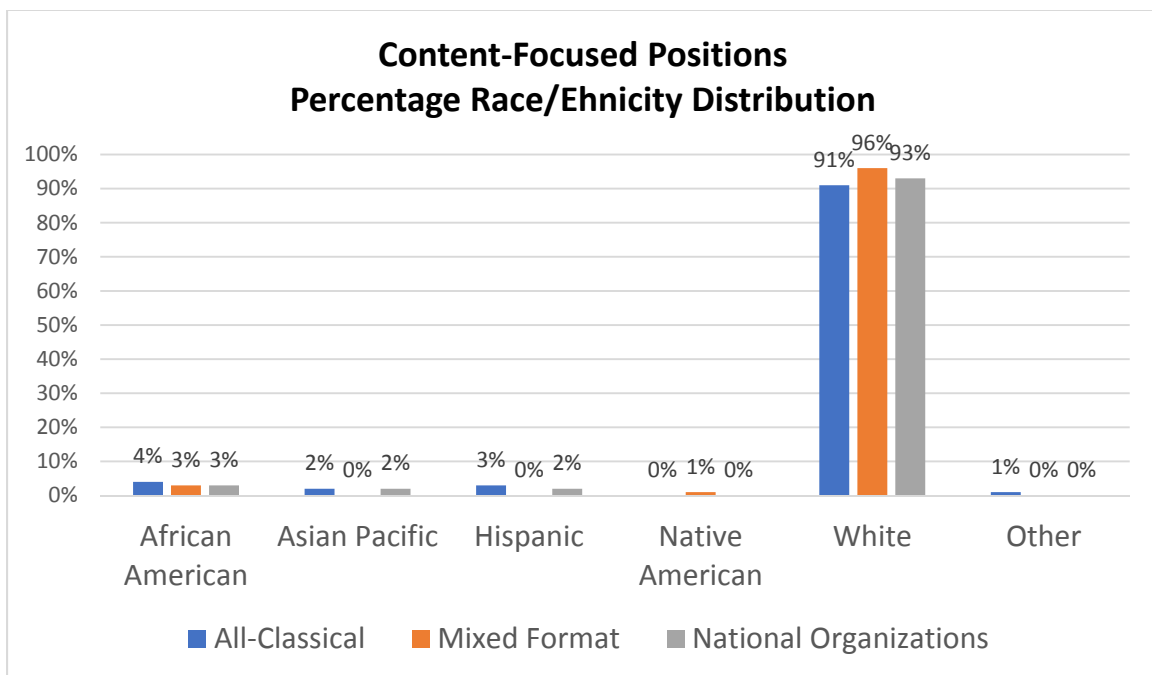


- Men make up a significant majority of on-air and content leadership positions.



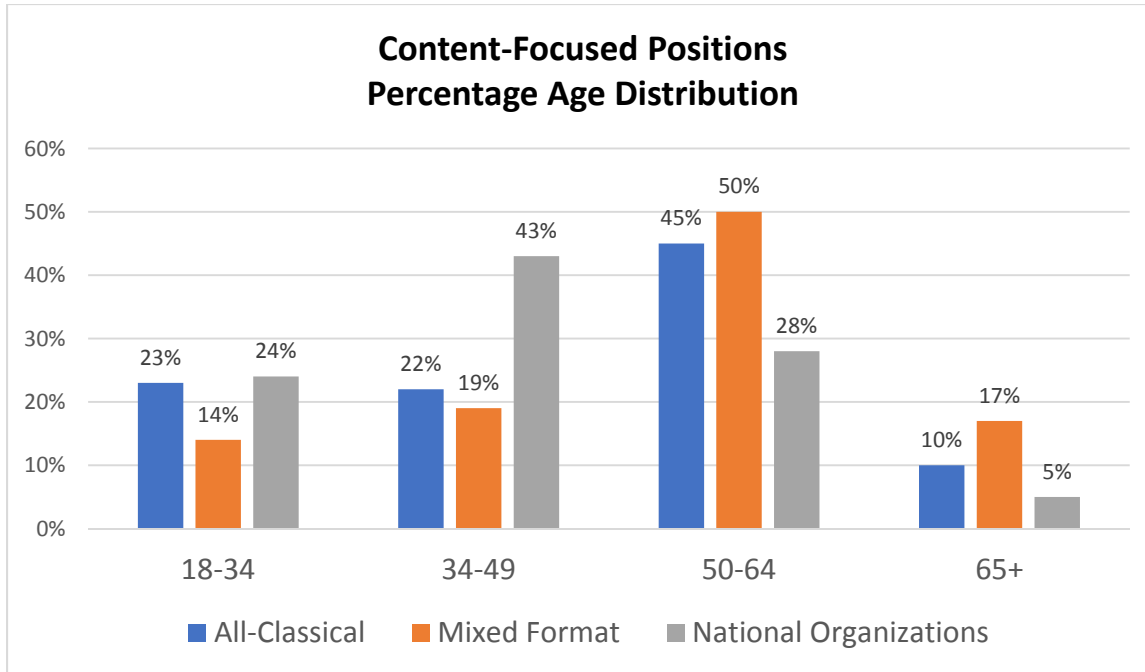
Race/Ethnic Diversity

- Nearly all reported content-related positions are held by white/non-Hispanic employees – **91% of all-classical content-related employees, 96% of mixed-format content-related employees and 93% of national organization content-related employees.**



Age Diversity

- More than 50% of the content-related workforce in all-classical and mixed-format stations that responded is over age 50.



Open Positions

- The current 90-day open-position rate is extremely low for both all-classical and mixed-format stations with 9 total vacancies for all-classical, 1 vacancy for mixed-format and 1 for national organizations that responded.

The Working Group concluded that the low current open-position rate, combined with the low expectancy of new positions coming open in the future indicate that changing the diversity profile of the public radio classical music workforce quickly is a very large challenge.

Priorities for Training and Support

The survey asked stations and national organizations to consider the range of responsibilities of their regular hosts, announcer and production staff and the needs of their audience and then to identify areas that would benefit from additional training/support.

The top priority for both all-classical and mixed-format reporting stations is training in on-air presentation. The Working Group discussed the type of training that might be most useful. We were not sure if the concern is that an aging group of on-air hosts is not reflecting a contemporary sound/approach or if the need for training is more centered on the people who would need to replace current hosts as they retire. We also wondered whether on-air training related to localizing the sound/content or whether effective on-air fund-raising might be issues. We concluded that to address this need, more investigation is required to identify specifics of the most helpful on-air presentation needs.

- **The top four station choices combining “Top” priority and “Other” priority responses:**

All-Classical Station Training and Support Combined Priorities

1. On-Air Presentation
2. Web/social media
3. Fund-drives (on-air, email, social media)
4. Connecting with community/community events

Mixed-Format Station Training and Support Combined Priorities

1. On-Air Presentation
2. Interviews/Features
3. Fund-drives (on-air, email, social media)
4. Connecting with community/community events

- **The top priority for national organizations is training in hosting/programming alternative services (i.e. digital streams)**

National Organization Training and Support Combined Priorities

1. Hosting/programming alternative services (i.e. digital streams)
2. Web/social media
3. Connecting with community/community events
4. Hosting/producing live events

Priorities for New Positions

Stations and national organizations were asked which new positions they would like to create now and in the future.

All-Classical

- The top priority for all-classical stations is new positions related to adding new digital roles and/or increasing the digital skill-set of hosts and producers.
- Other priorities for all-classical are increasing the number of hosts and others in content-producing roles, increasing technical roles and increasing marketing roles.
- Several all-classical stations talked about creating a “Community Engagement”, “Public Engagement” or “Arts Liaison” position to connect and build community engagement.

Mixed-format

- The top priority for mixed-format stations is new hosting positions.
- Other priorities are related to adding more producers.
- Some mixed-format stations flagged the need for a “Community Engagement”, “Outreach” or “Events person.”
- Some mixed-format stations mentioned the need for online/social media roles.

National Organizations

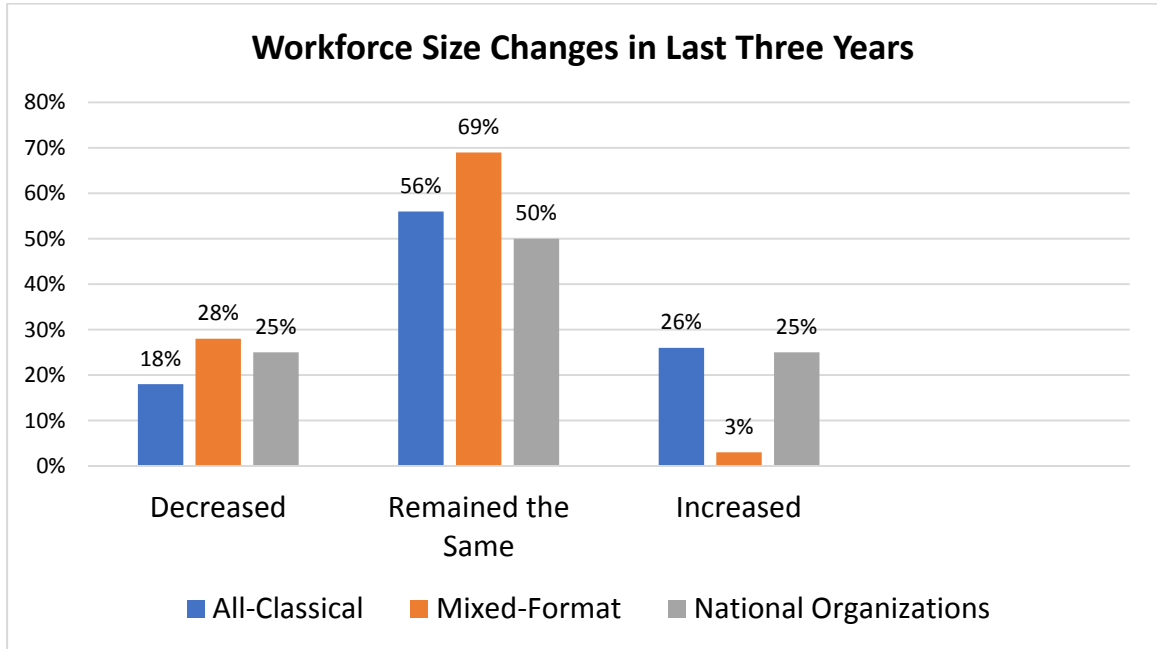
- National organizations identified digital, video journalist and extra producers.

The Working Group noted that local community engagement/connection is a significant theme. We talked about the “Community Engagement Champion” as a new, but potentially critical position for many stations.

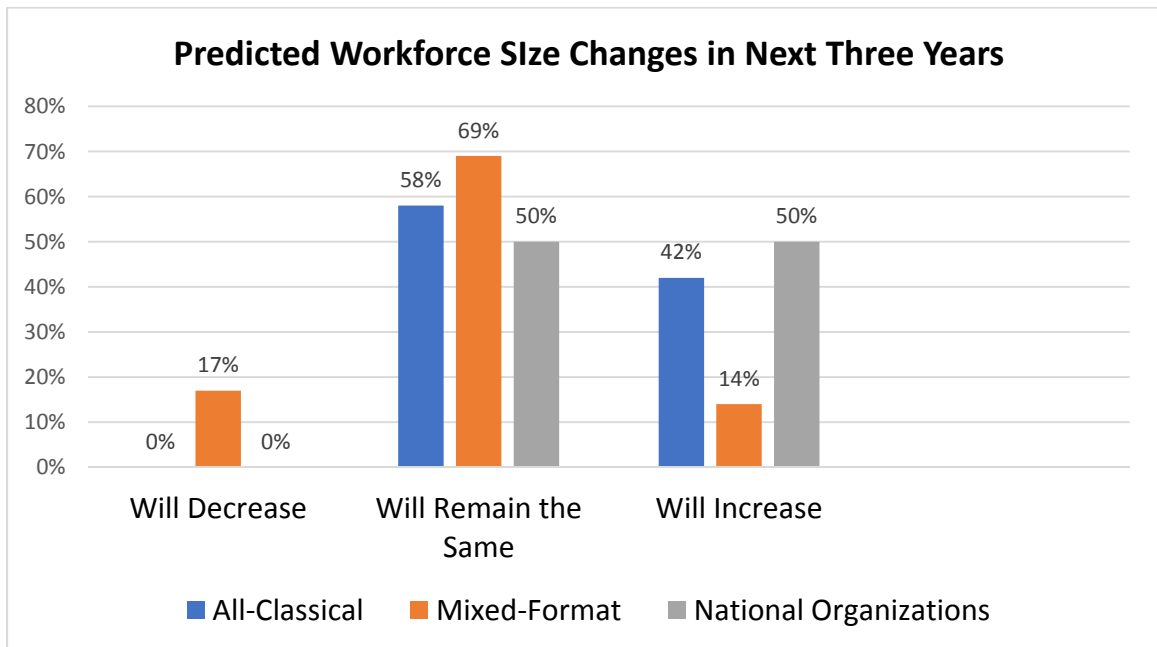
We also observe that with respect to priorities for both training and new hires, the all-classical stations and national organizations highlighted digital, web, and social media but mixed-format stations did not.

Workforce Dynamics

- The majority of responding all-classical and mixed-format stations has seen no change in the size of their workforce over the past three years.



- The majority of stations predicts no change in size for the next three years. Of the remaining, neither all-classical nor national organizations predict decreases in the next three years, while the outlook for mixed-format station is more negative.



Hiring Potential

- Overall, the opportunities for hiring in classical-related positions are very limited.
- There were very few classical-related hires in the past year with 74% of all-classical and 96% of mixed-format stations reporting 1 or fewer hires in the last year.
- 50% of national organizations made no hires in the last year.
- 80% of all-classical and 100% of mixed-format stations report they expect 1 or fewer vacancies in the upcoming year.
- Two of the four national organizations report they expect to make 3 or more hires in the next year.
- The most likely hire in the next year is host/announcer for both all-classical and mixed-format stations.
- All-classical stations predict a mix of other very-likely positions, including digital, membership, and management, whereas mixed-format see very little possibility for hires other than host/announcer.
- National organizations are most likely to hire audio producers in the next year, followed by a mix of digital/web, social media and host positions.

The Working group concluded that the limited opportunity for hiring is a significant challenge to diversifying the workforce and creating a workforce with the skills ready to meet the challenges of 21st century audience needs.

Recruitment

The survey asked about **sources** for recruitment and **resources** used for recruitment.

Recruitment Sources

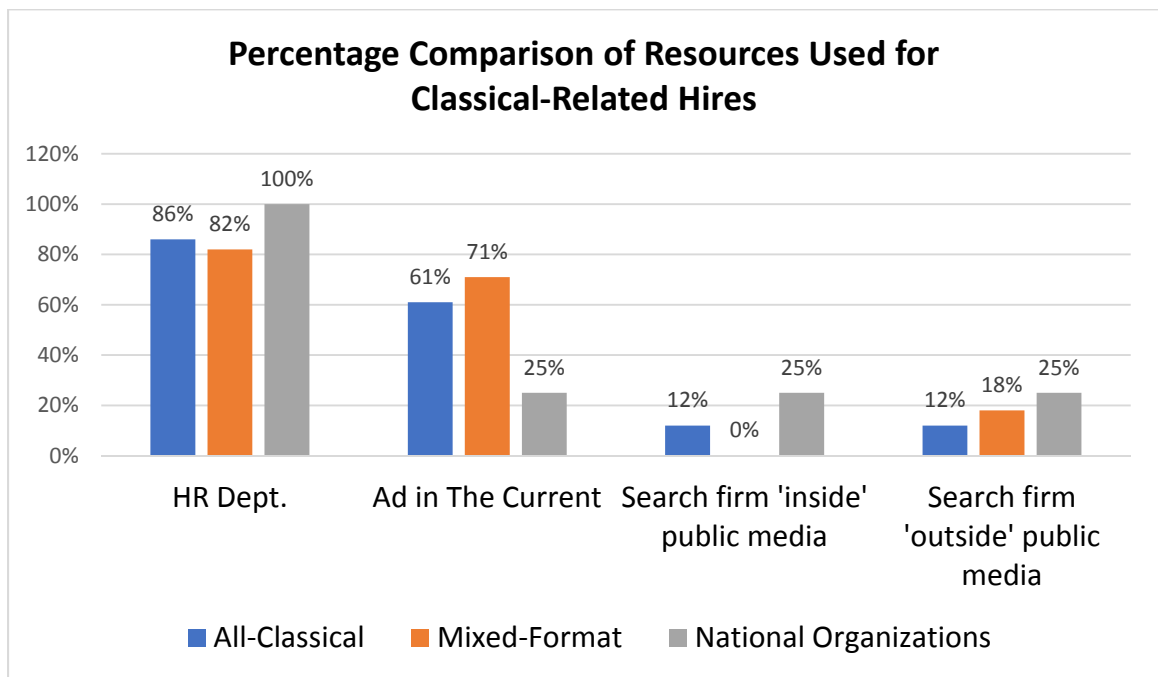
- The most popular source of recruiting for all-classical stations and national organizations that responded is from people already working in the public media classical music system.

- The most popular source or recruiting for mixed-format stations is music schools/conservatories.

The Working group noted that the most popular sources of recruitment lack diversity. Those sources also recognize the need to diversify and the Working Group wondered about developing partnerships between key conservatories and radio stations/organizations aimed at targeting diversity as a recruitment priority.

Recruitment Resources

- The most popular resource used to find new hires is station and organization HR departments.



- Other sources identified were CPB job line, external job posting sites and word of mouth.

Dominant Issues and Concerns

We asked stations and national organizations to articulate what keeps them up at night thinking of their current and future workforce.

All-Classical

- The top concern of all-classical stations that responded is the aging of their staff. There is a concern that the current, mostly static workforce is aging and committed to long-standing approaches with a lack of new ideas.
- While there is a theme of the need for change, many stations are concerned that change will be slow or not possible with the existing workforce. Others are worried that the current staff can't keep up with a changing audience and changing audience needs.
- Digital skills were identified as a prominent issue.
- Another strong theme is the lack of resources and the sense that resources are so stretched that it is difficult to implement change.
- The need for capacity to create a local sound and build local connection is also an issue.
- There is a concern about insufficient bench strength when it comes to new and younger talent and the related inability to properly develop the next generation of on-air hosts.
- When it comes to younger talent, many stations worry that classical radio is not an attractive career option, with younger workers choosing careers in digital and video fields instead.
- There is concern about the lack of diversity and the implications this has for stations' ability to connect effectively with increasingly diverse communities.
- And there are questions about where to find new diverse talent.

Mixed-Format

- The top concern for mixed-format stations is an aging workforce and the accompanying worry about 'how' – and in some cases 'if' – to replace people when older staff retires.
- That worry is related to a few issues, including possibly losing positions as people retire and/or difficulty finding replacements.

- There are substantial worries about the future of classical music on mixed-format stations with some concern that mixed-format stations are increasingly transitioning to an all-news/info format as classical hosts retire or in the face of funding pressure.
 - Stable funding and budget issues are other concerns.
-

The Working Group felt the Mixed-Format responses indicated a much more negative and concerned picture of the future. As one comment states: “Will classical be part of a successful mixed-format station 3-5 years from now? Many say it isn’t successful now. Are we creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of killing off classical music in public radio by not preparing for the future?”

National Organizations

- National organizations had a mix of concerns including managing retirements, lack of a development plan for people to replace the existing aging workforce, no “farm” team, and a worry about lack of interest in classical in general.

One comment from a national organization responder echoed many of the themes heard from stations:

“Classical stations as a group need a deeper understanding of their pathways as digital-media access to media increases and as younger listeners turn with increasing frequency to digital providers to access music of any kind. What will it mean to FM broadcasters to have classical music accessed primarily on-demand via YouTube, Spotify, Pandora, etc...? What role will classical stations have in the curation of and access to serious music in 5 to 10 years...? How can organizations such as AARP help public radio understand the needs of the existing core audience and perhaps also engage this existing audience in the process of effectively reaching their grandchildren/great grandchildren...?”

Interest in Collaboration

There is widespread interest in collaboration among all stations and national organizations that reported.

All-Classical and Mixed-Format Stations

- The top choice for collaborative activity for both all-classical and mixed-format stations is system-wide skills training.

- The second choice for both is joint-fundraising (grants/major gifts) for system-wide station collaborative projects. This shows a strong willingness to work together to raise the resources needed for new projects.
- Two other areas that were very close in terms of interest are a system-wide mentoring project and creation of a national job website for all classical positions.

National Organizations

- National organizations are most interested in joint experimentation/try-it projects.
- They are also interested in system-wide projects such as a mentorship project, creation of a national job website and system-wide skills training.

The Working Group believes that further work is needed to understand which skills would be most useful for station staff training.

The Working Group discussed the pros and cons of creating a national job site and decided to not recommend this at this time because it was thought that the very few available positions would not merit the resources needed to set this site up and maintain it effectively.

Workforce Working Group Host/Producer Job Descriptions

The Working Group was asked to consider the ideal qualities needed for two key content-related positions: Host/Announcer and Producer. The Group reviewed and discussed samples of current job descriptions from several stations.

The Working Group talked a great deal about the most important skills for a host/announcer, debating whether the most important skill is advanced knowledge and passion for classical or advanced on-air hosting skills. **At the end of the day, most agreed that the absolute necessary, primary skill would be passion for the music combined with the ability to communicate that passion to audiences in a way that engages them. Advanced knowledge could come later.**

Here's what we propose for people in these key positions.

Host/Announcer

Ideal Skill Set

- Strong passion for classical music combined with a warm personality that connects what is unique about classical music to a diverse audience
- Strong on-air presentation skills and live event hosting skills
- Knowledge of classical music
- Curiosity
- Belief in the public service media mission
- Social media content production and networking skills
- Strong audio production skills
- Strong web content production skills
- Strong interpersonal communication skills

Ideal Experience

- On-air experience in radio
- Experience hosting live events in the community
- Experience connecting to audiences via social media
- Experience creating content for multi-platforms, including familiarity with audio editing software
- Experience in fundraising
- Knowledge of the local community
- Bachelor's degree in music or equivalent

Producer

Ideal Skill Set

- Strong passion for classical music
- Understanding of diverse audiences and their needs, particularly the station local audience
- Ability to create content strategies and implement tactics to connect to audiences on air, through events and through social media
- Ability to produce content for multi-platforms
- Strong audio and web production skills
- Knowledge of classical music
- Belief in the public service media mission

Ideal Experience

- Production experience in radio and digital
- Track record of success at creating content that built audiences on-air and via digital platforms
- Knowledge of the community
- Leadership experience
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Bachelor's degree in music or equivalent

A key issue is that while there is an expectation that hosts and producers know how to reach audiences via digital platforms, many hosts and producers lack the digital skills and resources necessary to effectively engage audiences on these platforms.

Workforce Working Group Recommendations

The Working Group makes the following recommendations, most of which require investments beyond current Classical Music Rising resources. **Our top three priorities are:**

- **Create training modules for on-air presentation skills and digital skills for hosts/producers.** We must still determine the key on-air and digital training needs for hosts/producers in order to effectively create the appropriate modules. Fundraising presentation was also identified as a need from both all-classical and mixed-format stations. Modules could be delivered in person, online, or via webinars. It is important to take into account needs of stations that cannot afford to send people to conferences. Classical Music Rising could oversee the design and execution of the modules. NPR's Next Generation Radio project for young journalists could be a model for this effort and may be able to provide some training materials.
- **Create a fellowship/internship program to develop new talent at stations with the goal of increasing diversity of staff and adding to diversity of ideas.** This could be modeled after the NPR Next Generation Radio project, which features central leadership, station-based activities, and follow-on support.
- **Partner with AIR (Association of Independents in Radio) to launch a project designed to increase diversity and skills related to classical content, particularly digital content.** This could be modeled on AIR's New Voices or Localore projects. Could Classical Music Rising partner with AIR to find funding and then stations/participants apply to be part of it?

The Working Group also recommends consideration of the following activities and projects.

- **Build the profile of classical public radio in the public media system so that it is recognized as an essential audience service and innovator alongside news and information.** Consider new initiatives that support this goal, such as a "*Classical Music Rising Award for Innovation/Engagement*" that is awarded each year at an annual conference like the Public Radio Program Directors' gathering.
- **Create a cross-system mentorship program.** Identify mentors and pair them with select candidates from stations to build skills and to build a classical "network" support system. This could be done on a volunteer basis, but may require some funding for travel or one-one connection.
- **Create a 'best practices for classical stations' blog/site or integrate with FaceBook's classical chat to share what the most successful stations are doing.** This could include things like stations that have successfully built external connections with diversity leaders in their community, or who have successful experience creating a dynamic

community/engagement outreach leader. Another key component would be best-practices associated with fund-drives, both on-air and digital. It could also include a section where stations share their best content either as examples of successful projects and/or as potential content to be shared by others. This could be launched by Classical Music Rising and would require stations' active participation.

- **Build stronger outreach into music schools and conservatories to develop the talent pipeline, especially diverse talent.** Create a plan with key schools and stations to create a better pathway for the most promising music students to consider public radio classical as a career. This could be designed by Classical Music Rising with participation of some key stations in communities with participating conservatories.
- **Ensure dynamic speakers and critical topics for classical are part of PRPD and other conference keynote sessions.** Of particular interest is diversity--understanding it in your community, expressing it via classical radio, and engaging new diverse listeners in an environment where there is little new job opportunity for classical stations. Classical Music Rising could play a key role in connecting with Public Radio Program Directors, Greater Public, and public radio's regional organizations to help set the agenda for conferences.
- **Consider digital streams as a place to develop new presentation skills and experiment with new content approaches.** The Working Group noted that while this has proved successful for some stations it may not be an option for many other stations given resource levels.

Conclusion

The stations and national organizations that responded to the Classical Music Rising survey represent more than 1,200 dedicated individuals who work in classical-related positions. Many of those individuals have committed their entire professional careers to serving their audiences and their communities. Collectively, there is significant experience and achievement represented by that workforce. However, with many announcers and hosts approaching retirement age, there are serious questions about who is going to be able to engage new and diverse audiences not only on-air but in fast-expanding digital spaces.

As we look ahead to our next generation of audience service, there are some key workforce issues that need to be addressed, including a lack of diversity, a need to improve presentation, digital and fundraising skills and an absence of a strong bench of younger employees who are passionate about engaging audiences through classical music on all platforms. The survey responses made it clear that stations across the country, as well as national organizations, recognize the need for change and are willing to work together to find solutions.

This Workforce Working Group is one facet of the wide-ranging Classical Music Rising initiative. We hope that our findings will help inform other aspects of the project. We also hope our recommendations will spark a healthy discussion in the system about which ideas might be implemented quickly to support stations in their work to create a sustainable future for public service classical music. More than eleven million Americans, and hopefully many millions more in the future, are counting on it.

Complete results from the U.S. Public Radio Classical Music Workforce Survey, including verbatim responses to open-ended questions, are available in a companion report, *Workforce Survey Results*.