



Pittsburgh Black Media Federation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pittsburgh Media Diversity Study Shows Newsroom Underrepresentation, Much Work to Be Done

Federation's Series to Continue with Community Forum in Coming Months

PITTSBURGH (Sept. 23, 2016) — The Pittsburgh Black Media Federation released its much-anticipated study of newsroom diversity at its media diversity summit this week but its work is not done.

Study results, though preliminary, are sobering: Pittsburgh-area newsrooms are underrepresented in terms of racial diversity among full-time staff members.

As staffing cuts hit newsrooms hard across the nation, PBMF encourages local media outlets to prioritize the importance of diverse newsrooms as they adapt to the public's changing news-consumption habits.

The summit, “Press Forward: A Discussion of Race, Diversity & Inclusion in the Pittsburgh News Industry,” kicked off PBMF's Media Diversity Series that will explore issues related to inclusion in local media over the next two years. About 100 people attended the event Wednesday at Point Park University.

PBMF is planning a forum with community members next to further discussion of fair and balanced coverage of communities of color.

“In coming months, we're looking forward to delving deeper into issues such as newsroom climate, perspectives of minority and female working journalists, perceptions of minority communities about news coverage, and issues of inclusion at area colleges and universities on communications department faculties and in public relations offices,” PBMF Diversity Committee Co-Chair LaMont Jones Jr. said.

The study, which can be found at www.pbmf.org, includes results from surveys of 10 newsrooms in the Pittsburgh area, including the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Pittsburgh Tribune-Review.

People of color make up about 20 percent of the population in Allegheny County, and 35 percent of Pittsburgh's population. On average, they make up about 10 percent of workers among the newsrooms surveyed in Allegheny County.

Additionally, the survey found that only one of the newsrooms – the alternative, weekly Pittsburgh City Paper – had any people of color assigned to cover issues related to criminal justice, education or urban neighborhoods.

“It is clear from the data that Pittsburgh-area newsrooms are woefully underrepresented in terms of diversity,” said Dr. Letrell Crittenden, PBMF parliamentarian and lead author of the study. “Simply put, newsrooms in the Pittsburgh region are not using people of color to cover issues impacting the Pittsburgh

community.”

Additionally, the survey found that the newsrooms lacked plans to increase diversity, or regularly monitor news coverage for bias against communities of color.

Broadcast media outlets declined to participate in the survey used for the study.

The study was released at the summit, where Washington Post reporters Keith Alexander and Wesley Lowery discussed their team's Pulitzer Prize-winning series on police shootings. They then joined a panel of local journalists for an engaging discussion of best practices, challenges and missteps covering communities of color.

Point Park's Center for Media Innovation co-presented the summit.

The Pennsylvania Women's Press Association, Press Club of Western Pennsylvania, Robert Morris University School of Communications & Information Systems and Women's Press Club of Pittsburgh were co-sponsors.

A link to the video of the summit is at www.pbmf.org.

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Founded in 1973, the Pittsburgh Black Media Federation is a nonprofit that advocates for diversity in newsrooms, hosts programs that recognize excellent media coverage of minority communities, and trains young people to enter the media industry. The National Association of Black Journalists named PBMF a chapter of the year in 2015.