



THE IOWA JOURNALIST SURVEY REPORT | 2023

EIGHTY JOURNALISTS FROM THIRTY IOWA TOWNS WERE SURVEYED ON THEIR MATERIAL CONDITIONS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY. THEY RANGE FROM JOURNALISTS FROM IOWA'S BIGGEST MASTHEADS LIKE **DES MOINES REGISTER, CEDAR RAPIDS GAZETTE AND QUAD-CITY TIMES** TO MULTIMEDIA PUBLICATIONS LIKE **IOWA PUBLIC RADIO AND STARTING LINE**. **WHO-TV AND WQAD** WERE ALSO REPRESENTED.



Said they are actively looking for or considering another job



Were looking for a new place to live outside of Iowa

1 IN 2

Said if given the chance, they would have pursued another career entirely



Several journalists noted struggles with mental health and suicidal ideation

Iowa journalists believe in the importance of getting the news to Iowans. The vast majority of those surveyed (67%) said they often feel excited about their work. 60% said if given the chance, they'd pursue a career in journalism again.

Many see this as a problem.

WAGES DIMINISH DESPITE EXPERIENCE. JOURNALISTS KNOW IT.

Virtually every professional industry expects wages to rise steadily over the course of a career. But on average, a 15-year journalist veteran only makes \$6,000 more than their first- or second-year peers.

This plays out over the lifespan of a given position.



75%
Said they had been in their position for less than two years.



28%
Had been there for less than a year.

The average starting salary for Iowa journalists is \$27,583. Expertise isn't developed overnight. And when compensation isn't keeping up, **journalists aren't sticking around.**

A PROFILE OF IOWA JOURNALISTS

RACE/
ETHNICITY



90%
Respondents who identified as white.

SEXUALITY



35%
Identify as LGBTQ+.

GENDER



48%
Respondents who identified as a man.



45%
Respondents who identified as a woman.

7% percent of respondents identified as Transgender or nonbinary.

EDUCATION



90%
Have a bachelor's degree. Fewer than 13% had a masters degree or PhD.

AGE



65%
Under the age of 35. Another 14% were between 35 and 44 years old. Only 16% were over the age of 45.

MARITAL STATUS



65%
Unmarried.



35%
Married or in a domestic partnership.

CHILDREN



13%
Have children. 86% do not.

HOMEOWNERSHIP



66%
Rent their housing. 32% own. One respondent said, "I am living with a roommate and would not be able to afford rent without."

IOWA MASTHEADS RELY ON CRUNCH TO GET THE NEWS OUT.

50%

have work responsibilities that exceed their hours.

36%

say they are required to do extra work leading up to a vacation or holiday.

12%

say their employer uses comp time or compensatory time to manage overtime. This may be illegal in certain cases.

8%

do not pursue compensation for their unpaid hours.



Iowa journalists are... first-generation college graduate(s) and first gen American(s). They are not religious and also Jewish and Christian. They are born in Iowa, and they are proud Iowa transplant(s).

About the Iowa Journalist Survey | In an industry that champions the moral imperative of transparency, journalists have no broad, accessible data for conditions in an industry facing historic challenges. The survey, a signature initiative of Iowa Journalist Association (IJA), was formed to understand the conditions they work in—what they look like, how they're compensated for their labor and what their needs are for long-term sustainability. The Iowa Journalist Association solicited participation among peers via direct outreach as well as social media. The self-administered online survey collected 80 responses through a Google Form survey. Participating respondents were prescreened through an intake form to verify their status as active journalists. All participants were employed as an Iowa journalist as of January 1, 2023. To protect participants in small outlets or communities from being personally identified, the dataset created by this survey will not be publicly available. Republishing the Iowa Journalist Survey without credit to the Iowa Journalist Association is prohibited.