

MAB FOUNDATION

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A Description of Careers in Broadcasting

Have you ever thought about a career in broadcasting? Well if you have, you've also arrived at the right place to find out more information. This page is designed to help you answer some of the questions you did not know you had about careers in broadcasting!

The great secret about broadcasting is that there is no secret. There are ultimately many different ways to be active in a broadcasting career and the road that one would take to get to that career is as varied as the frequencies on the dial. Ultimately, proper education, preparation and some forethought can go a long way to giving you the tools you need to break into the career of your dreams.

This website, the Michigan Association of Broadcasters and the [MAB Foundation](#) seeks to help you find the route that is best fitted for you. The [MAB is committed](#) to assisting broadcast stations statewide in their recruitment efforts to actively seek out and hire qualified full and part-time employees.

You will find a listing of links to [Michigan Colleges and Universities](#) that offer Broadcasting, Engineering and Communications programs that can start as a base for your broadcasting career. There is a comprehensive list of [Broadcasting Organizations](#) that are also interesting in promoting employment in the broadcasting industry. Check them out as well for more information on the industry.



If you don't know exactly what you would like to do in broadcasting, the MAB suggests that you see our comprehensive description of possible [Careers in Broadcasting](#). This is a good place to start if you are not quite sure what you want to do. It's also a good place to start if you are looking for educational programs to match your path to a dream career. Keep in mind that every company and station is different, so job descriptions and duties vary greatly.

There is also a section on creating an effective [Broadcasting Portfolio](#). Questions about demo tapes, tips on resumes and insider information from folks already in the business are found here. This section also provides information on how to gain experience in the broadcasting field

as well as tips on how to land an entry level job.

Several Michigan stations have [virtual tours or related information](#) on the internet. Take these tours to understand more about the stations.



Once you review this sections, go to the [MAB Job Bank](#) and put your name, face and demo online. The Careers Section of the web-page is designed to help you get your resume and short demo tapes on-line so that MAB members stations that are looking for qualified staff will find you right away. Instant access equals instant opportunities.

One of the best ways to learn information and make contacts is to network with broadcasters at various broadcasting functions. Visit the [MAB conferences](#) section to learn more about upcoming conferences where you can attend and meet broadcasters from throughout Michigan.

The Michigan Association of Broadcasters hopes that you will find this website informative and helpful. But if you have any questions or concerns in addition to this website, we ask that you [contact](#) us and an MAB staff member will due their best to help you. Thanks for stopping by and good luck!

Descriptions of Broadcasting Jobs

A brief description of many of the positions available at Michigan radio and television stations.

In Michigan alone, an estimated 8,000 jobs exist directly in radio and television. Michigan broadcasters are committed to hiring a diverse group of individuals to work at their stations. Broadcasting is a fast-paced and dynamic industry that is continually changing. Careers in broadcasting can be exciting, unique and rewarding. As with all forms of business, broadcasters look to recruit qualified individuals looking to learn and grow with the changes of the broadcast industry.

Digital technology is quickly changing radio and television to the benefit of all audiences. Radio will soon reach the digital age and become connected to computers and other electronic devices to form the next digital stereo system. Television stations will convert programming from an analog to a digital delivery system that has an astonishing clear picture quality.



Broadcasting encompasses all aspects of the job market today including marketing, public relations, engineering, sales, news, programming and management. These are the jobs that the next broadcasting millennium holds for the future.

Following are some general descriptions for jobs in radio and television. Remember that each station is unique in its staff structure, and no two stations are organized in the same fashion. The size of a station and the market it serves often dictates the number and types of jobs available. The following descriptions provide an overview of just some of the positions and responsibilities.

Radio Jobs:

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE - The account executive is the person who sells advertising and works closely with marketing businesses to the station listeners.

ANNOUNCERS - Announcers are the radio station's voice and are often the people with whom the public identifies. This person introduces programs and music, reads commercial copy and public service announcements, and is involved in the overall public presentation of the station.

CHIEF ENGINEER - The chief engineer is responsible for the technology necessary to put the station's broadcast "on-the-air" within the station's licensed range. The engineer works to maintain existing broadcasting capabilities and provide quick solutions to problems that may arise with the transmitter, tower, satellite receiver and other related equipment.



COPY WRITER - This staff member writes commercial and promotional copy in support of the station's sales, marketing and promotional efforts.

GENERAL MANAGER - The person responsible for the overall operation of a station. This position requires business knowledge, leadership ability and a technical understanding of how a station operates.

GENERAL SALES MANAGER - This person hires and supervises the sales staff, reviews programming for the best sales opportunities, develops sales plans and goals, oversees billing, studies and understands the station's market and approves all sales promotion campaigns. Some stations have multiple levels of sales managers, including National, Regional and Local sales managers who focus on various aspects of sales.

MAINTENANCE ENGINEER - The maintenance engineer installs and performs preventive maintenance on the station's control consoles, boards, recording equipment, microphones, and a wide variety of other station equipment and electronic systems.

MUSIC DIRECTOR - This person manages the station's music library and works with the program director in selecting new recordings to be played as they are submitted by record companies.

NEWS DIRECTOR - The news director runs the news department. The news director assigns stories to reporters on staff, monitors the wire service and is involved with identifying the important news issues within the community.

OWNER - A person or group of persons that possess the station. Every owner must hold a license from the Federal Communications Commission.

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR - The production manager assigns announcers, schedules studios, arranges recording sessions, produces commercials, and directs programs.

PROMOTIONS DIRECTOR- This position promotes the station's image, programs and activities. The promotions person works closely with the program director in creating on-air promotions and also with the sales department in securing new clients and maintaining current advertisers.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR - Responsible for the entire on-air product, the PD governs the sound of the stations. With control over production, talent, work schedules, and program schedules, the PD's programming objectives support the goals of the general manager and the general sales manager.

RECEPTIONIST - The duties of the receptionist vary according to the size of the station. This position is ideal for understanding all the aspects of how a station operates.

SALES ASSISTANT - This position offers support to the sales staff and managers by handling much of the office work, including drafting proposals, which allows the sales staff to focus on meeting with clients and developing business.

SPORTS DIRECTOR - This position is similar to the news director position. Sports directors often handle the play-by-play coverage of local sporting events. Stations that do a lot of sports sometimes hire a "color" announcer to complement the play-by-play talent.

TRAFFIC DIRECTOR - Collects data from other departments in order to prepare a minute-by-minute schedule for the broadcast day. The traffic person is the daily link between the sales department and programming department, keeping up-to-date commercial time availability.

Television Jobs:

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE - The representative of the station who solicits advertising from commercial business. Account executives develop working relationships with local business leaders and with local advertising agencies and client representatives.

ASSIGNMENT EDITOR - This person is responsible for the gathering of the news that goes into a program. Usually a team effort, they set news coverage priorities, organize the logistics of camera crews and reporters, and arrange for the various satellite feeds and live on-scene coverage.

BUSINESS MANAGER - Responsible for all financial transactions. Business managers are generally expected to have extensive professional background in accounting and financial management.

CHIEF ENGINEER - Heads the technical staff. The chief engineer was the senior technical person at the station.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR - This person plans, coordinates and executes a station's services and programs developed to respond to the needs of the community.

CONTINUITY WRITER - The continuity person writes some of the local commercial and promotional copy. Must be detail-orientated and have skills in computer and word-processor operation.

DIRECTOR - The person responsible for the actual on-line execution of a program. Serves as producers for entire programs or for the production of portions of larger programs.

ELECTRONIC NEWS GATHERING (ENG) - They work alongside reporters to capture events on tape and to produce live, on-scene coverage of breaking news stories. In addition to operating the video camera and sound, ENG crews must also operate the sophisticated microwave and satellite transmission equipment.

ENG EDITOR - The person who edits tape taken by the ENG crew. ENG editors work with producers, reporters and writers to build news packages from the raw tape sent in from the field or gathered on feeds from networks or other sources.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER - This position coordinates the content and presentation of broadcasts under the direction of the executive producer, managing editor and news director.

GENERAL MANAGER - The person responsible for every aspect of a station's operation. This position requires business knowledge, leadership ability and a technical understanding of how a station operates.

GENERAL SALES MANAGER - The person responsible for producing all advertising revenues for a station. The general sales manager must also be adept at understanding the business climate in the community and must have a strong knowledge of the interests of the station audience. Some stations have multiple levels of sales managers, including National, Regional and Local sales managers who focus on various aspects of sales.

GRAPHIC ARTIST - Supports all production activities. Computer skills are particularly valuable, as is a background in art and design and radio-television production.

MAINTENANCE ENGINEERS - Responsible for the repair, maintenance, installation and modification of all of the electronic equipment in the station.

MASTER CONTROL/VIDEOTAPE ENGINEER - Responsible for operating the videotape recording and playback equipment for live programs and during commercial breaks in network and taped shows.



NEWS ANCHOR - The most visible members of the news staff. These are the people that appear as the "up front" personalities on local newscasts. The news anchor is a complete journalist, familiar with reporting, on-scene live coverage and skilled at writing, and in some cases, producing news packages.

NEWS DIRECTOR - The news director supervises the news department. Must understand budgeting, personnel management and the technical aspects of television. In addition to having a firm understanding of the community service role of broadcast journalism, he or she must also have solid news judgment - the ability to determine which stories are most informative and of the greatest value to the local viewer.

NEWS REPORTERS - The key "front-line" people in the news department. They are on-the-scene at every kind of event. Local news reporters must be excellent writers, capable of working quickly and accurately.



NEWS WRITER - The writer's responsibilities may include monitoring news feeds, preparing news packages for voicing by anchors or

reporters, researching story information, booking guests for live interviews on news shows and producing segments of news programs. Exceptional writing skills are a must.

OWNER - A person or group of persons that possess the station. Every owner must hold a license from the Federal Communications Commission.

PRODUCER - This person develops and organizes local programs and is responsible for scripting, story development, booking of guests and overseeing field production and editing.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT - A production assistant works with all production personnel helping where necessary.

PRODUCTION MANAGER - This position is responsible for all of the details required in the actual production of local programming. The production manager supervised producers, directors, floor directors and state managers.



PROGRAM DIRECTOR - The manager of the program department. The program director works closely with the general manager and sales manager to determine and direct the station's policies and to plan the most effective program schedule for the station.

PROMOTIONS DIRECTOR - The promotions director's job is to promote the station's image, programs and activities. They conceive and execute a variety of written and taped station promotion spots, secure station advertising in other media, and in conjunction with the sales department, develop ways to keep current viewers and advertisers and to attract new ones.

RECEPTIONIST - The duties of the receptionist vary according to the size of the station. This position is ideal for understanding all the aspects of how a station operates.

STAGE MANAGER - The director's representative on the studio floor and at the site of any live broadcast.

STATION MANAGER - The chief operating officer of the station. The station manager must have effective personnel management skills and a thorough knowledge of all aspects of a broadcast operation.

STUDIO ENGINEERS - Responsible for operating all of the equipment necessary for the production of a program. This includes the studio cameras, the audio console, studio lighting, the video switcher, and in some stations, the character generator and the electronic still-storage graphics display equipment.



Broadcast Industry Organizations

The following organizations can provide valuable resources on careers in broadcasting. Some of these organizations have their own Job Banks to assist both employers and people searching for jobs.

[State Broadcasting Associations](#) - Many states have statewide associations, similar to MAB, which represent the interests of the stations in the state.

[AAJA](#): The **Asian American Journalists Association** seeks to increase employment of Asian American print and broadcast journalists; assist high school and college students pursuing journalism careers; encourage fair, sensitive and accurate news coverage of Asian American issues; and provide support for Asian American journalists.

[AES](#): The **Audio Engineering Society** is the only professional society devoted exclusively to audio technology.

[AWC](#): The **Association for Women in Communications** is the one organization that recognizes the complex relationships that exist across communications disciplines.

[AWRT](#): **American Women in Radio and Television** is a national, non-profit, professional organization of women and men who work in the electronic media and closely allied fields.

[BBA](#) – **Black Broadcasters Alliance** is primarily comprised of African American broadcasters, who represent the interests of both employees and owners in the broadcast communications industry.

[BEA](#): The **Broadcast Education Association** is the organization for professors, students and professionals involved in teaching and research related to radio, television and electronic media education.

[BTP](#): The **Broadcasting Training Program's** mission is to diversify the newsroom by the placement of minority TV/radio news reporter and news management trainees at television and radio stations across the United States.

[CBI](#): **Collegiate Broadcasters, Inc.** represents students involved in radio, television, webcasting and other related media activities. They provide technical, legal, organizational promotional and political resources to members.

[IBS](#): **Intercollegiate Broadcasting System** is an organization representing college and school-based Webcasting, closed-circuit, AM carrier-current, cable radio and FCC-licensed FM and AM stations.

[IRTS](#): The **International Radio and Television Society** Foundation offers educational programs on electronic media for established and young professionals, students, professors, and other interested publics.

[MCAI](#): **Media Communication Association International** (formerly called ITVA) serves the needs of accomplished visual communicators who work in corporate, organizational, and independent settings.

[MAEB](#): **Michigan Association of Educational Broadcasters** represents low-power educational broadcasting stations in Michigan.

[MAPB](#): **Michigan Association of Public Broadcasters** represents the public radio and TV stations in Michigan.

[NAB](#): The **National Association of Broadcasters** priority is to maintain a favorable governmental, legal and technological climate for the constantly evolving and dynamic business of free over-the-air broadcasting by representing the radio and television industries in Washington -- before Congress, the FCC and federal agencies, the courts, and on the expanding international front.

[NABJ](#): The **National Association of Black Journalists** is the largest media organization for people of color in the world.

[NAHJ](#): The **National Association of Hispanic Journalists** is dedicated to the recognition and professional advancement of Hispanics in the news industry.

[NAJA](#): The **Native American Journalists Association's** primary goal is to improve communications among Native people and between Native Americans and the general public.

[NBS and AERho](#): The **National Broadcasting Society** and Alpha Epsilon Rho have as their purpose to enhance the development of college and university students involved in telecommunications, broadcasting, cable and other electronic media.

[Newslab](#): A non-profit resource for television newsrooms, focused on research and training.

[NLGJA](#): The **National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association** works from within the news industry to foster fair and accurate coverage of lesbian and gay issues and opposes newsroom bias toward lesbians and gays and all other minorities.

[NPPA](#): The National Press Photographers website.

[The Poynter Institute](#): The **Poynter Institute** is a school for journalists, future journalists, and teachers of journalism.

[Project for Excellence in Journalism](#): An initiative by journalists from all media to clarify and raise the standards of American journalism.

[RTNDA](#): The **Radio & Television News Directors Association** is the national association of electronic journalists. RTNDA represents local and network news executives in broadcasting, cable and other electronic media in more than 30 countries.

[RTNDF](#): The **Radio and Television News Directors Foundation's** mission is to promote excellence in electronic journalism through research, education and professional training in four principal program areas: journalistic ethics and practices; the impact of technological change on electronic journalism; the role of electronic news in politics and public policy; and cultural diversity in the electronic journalism profession.

[RTVJ](#): The Radio-Television Journalism Division of The **Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication** ([AEJMC](#)) focuses on the teaching, practice, study and research of broadcast news as a profession.

[Reporter.org](#): Resources for journalists, including specific beat-related links.

[SBE](#): The **Society of Broadcast Engineers** is a non-profit organization serving the interests of Broadcast Engineers.