There is a little good news on the casting diversity front. The Asian American Performers Action Coalition (AAPAC) released a survey of the ethnic distribution of actors hired in the 2014-2015 theatre season on Broadway and at the top 16 not-for-profit theatre companies in New York City.

The survey found “there is a definite upward trend in the casting of actors of color,” but employment numbers still do not approach the proportion of non-white actors in the city.

The report, “Ethnic Representation on New York City Stages,” found that the New York City theatre industry hit a record high in diversity for the nine years AAPAC has been collecting data. For the first time, 30 percent of all available roles went to actors of color, a jump from 24 percent the previous year. The nine-year average was 23 percent, and the last three seasons exceeded that, meaning the trend was upward.

Information on the current 2015-2016 season is still being compiled and was not included.

Among bullet points in the study:

- African-American actors were cast in 17 percent of all roles, Latino actors in 3 percent, Asian American actors in 9 percent and all other minorities (including disabled actors) comprised less than 1 percent when looking at both Broadway and the non-profit theatre companies. Caucasian actors filled 70 percent of all roles. Caucasians continue to be the only ethnicity to over-represent compared to their respective population size in the New York City/the tri-State area.

- On Broadway in the 2014-15 season, numbers for minority actors dropped to 22 percent of all roles from 24 percent the previous year. Despite Asian numbers increasing from 2 percent to 11 percent (largely due to the Lincoln Center revival of The King and I, which was responsible for employing more than half of all Asians hired in the industry) and
Latino representation increasing slightly from 1 percent to 2 percent, numbers for African-American actors suffered a severe drop, from 21 percent in the 2013-14 season to only 9 percent in the latest year, one of the worst showings on record and leading to a net loss for the Broadway industry as a whole.

- The non-profit theatres were clearly the driving force behind the upswing in total minority actors, filling 38 percent of all available roles with actors of color, a 13 point jump from 25 percent the previous year and the highest point on record. The only non-profit theatre company in the study that hired no actors of color in 2014-2015 was the MCC Theatre Company.

- In the non-profit sector, African-American employment saw the largest increase, filling 26 percent of all roles, a significant leap from 13 percent the previous year and a record high for African-American employment for the years we have data. Of all the non-profit theatre companies, The Public Theater hired the most African American actors with the largest number of contracts going to its Off-Broadway production of *Hamilton*. The survey predates the Broadway production.

- Latino representation within the non-profit sector remained unchanged from the previous year, holding steady at 4 percent.

- Asian American representation within the non-profit sector increased to 7 percent from 5 percent the preceding season. Percentages of Asian-American representation among the non-profits have been higher than the 9-year average of 4.4 percent for the past 3 years, indicating an upward trend. In the survey year, every one of the non-profit theatres studied employed Asian American actors except for MCC Theater, Primary Stages, Signature Theatre and York Theatre Company.

- Only 10.2 percent of all available roles were non-traditionally cast this season, down from 11.2 percent the previous year. This year’s levels revert back to the nine-year average of 10 percent after slight upticks in the preceding two seasons. Non-traditional casting percentages have largely remained stagnant over the nine years studied and have not moved as significantly as the percentages for total minority employment.

- 5.3 percent of roles went to African-American actors for roles that were not defined by their race.

- 2.3 percent of roles went to Latino actors for roles that were not defined by their race.

- 2.0 percent of roles went to Asian-American actors for roles that were not defined by their race. Asian Americans were the minority group least likely to be able to transcend their race.