



THE 2025-26 PRIMETIME UPFRONT: THE SHIFT CONTINUES

**Media Dynamics, Inc. releases preliminary estimates in advance
of its annual upfront and CPM-CPP reports**

Nutley, NJ, August 14, 2025 - A number of factors were at play during the negotiations for the 2025-26 national primetime TV upfront. As in previous years, the shifting of ad spending from linear TV to streaming continued but, at the same time, time buyers were able to improve their CPMs from many streaming sellers, in part because they used Free Ad-Supported Streaming services (FASTs) to a greater extent and these tend to charge lower CPMs than other streaming sellers. In addition, some ad-supported streaming services have increased their ad loads and this, coupled with streaming's increased viewing time, has created more GRPs to sell. On the linear side, several networks benefited by offering attractive sports packages and when these are prorated to account for the portions that take place in primetime, this mitigates softening demand for time in the sellers' entertainment and newsmagazine fare.

Our estimate is that the broadcast TV networks' 2025-26 primetime ad sales amounted to \$9.1 billion, down only 2.5% from the previous upfront, which saw a larger reduction last year. The cable channels fared less well—as was the case in the last upfront—garnering \$8.7 billion, down 4.3%. All in, the linear TV total was \$17.8 billion, compared to \$18.4 billion for the 2024-25 upfront. In contrast, streaming posted another significant gain, rising to \$13.2 billion in the latest upfront, an increase of 17.9% over the previous upfront.

The CPM picture was a bit different from the ad revenue pattern. Following a pattern set last year, all three platforms featured CPM declines. The broadcast TV networks' CPM for 30-second messages and adult viewers dropped to \$43.50, which was down 4.1% over last year, and cable declined to \$19.35, down 6.8%. As for streaming, even though time buyers kept up their pressure for CPM reductions, generally, the increase in anticipated future GRP inventory plus the increased strength of FASTs reduced the average CPM by 7.6% to \$27.25. However, this was a less precipitous decline compared to the 17.9% drop that took place last year.

Finally, as we note every year, the upfront extends well beyond primetime. There is national syndication as well as daytime, early- and late-evening, plus weekend sports to consider, which, combined, can amount to \$10-12 billion over and above primetime's \$31 billion.

The following table summarizes our primetime upfront estimates for the 2023-24 through 2025-26 seasons. A more detailed breakdown of upfront CPMs and CPPs by demos and dayparts—including trending for past seasons—will be released shortly to [MDI Direct](#) subscribers in our [Upfront Tracker](#) report. This publication is also available to non-subscribers for \$550. Pre-order the report prior to its release date on September 15th and save \$50. Find out more [here](#).

PRIMETIME TV UPFRONT AD SALES AND ADULT CPM

2023-24 To 2025-26 SEASONS

	BROADCAST			
	NETS.	CABLE	STREAMING	TOTAL
AD SPEND (\$ Mil.)				
2023-24	9,575	9,520	8,200	27,295
2024-25	9,340	9,065	11,200	29,505
% Change	- 3.5	-4.8	+ 35.3	+ 8.1
2025-26	9,110	8,675	13, 200	30,989
% Change	-2.5	-4.3	+17.9	+ 5.0
ADULT CPM (:30s)				
2023-24	\$48.04	\$22.10	\$35.40	\$33.06
2024-25	45.35	20.60	29.50	30.10
% Change	-5.6	-6.8	-16.7	-8.9
2025-26	43.50	19.35	27.25	28.30
% Change	-4.1	- 6.1	-7.6	- 6.0

Source: Media Dynamics, Inc.

About Media Dynamics, Inc.

[Media Dynamics Inc.](#) is a publishing & consulting company founded in 1982 by Ed Papazian, the former Media Research Director and Media Director of BBDO (1960-75) and co-creator/publisher of **Ad Forum** and **The Media Cost Guide**. MDI's **Dimensions** series has served as the reference source for data trending and insights on radio, magazines, TV and intermedia. Media Dynamics' library includes several research annuals and numerous special reports and white papers that focus on targeted areas of the media, including spot TV, cable, ad receptivity, CPMs and upfront cost estimates. Media Dynamics, Inc. has also spent more than 30 years consulting on various media issues, including agency/client interactions on the media function, the hiring of independent media buying services and the evaluation of agency/media buying performance. Past clients include a cross section of TV networks, cable services, magazines, TV & radio reps, advertisers, ad agencies, research companies and new media.