

Grantee Information

ID	1443
Grantee Name	WUOM-FM
City	Ann Arbor
State	MI
Licensee Type	University

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

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The purpose of this section is to give you an opportunity to tell us and your community about the activities you have engaged in to address community needs by outlining key services provided, and the local value and impact of those services. Please report on activities that occurred in Fiscal Year 2016. Responses may be shared with Congress or the public. Grantees are required to post a copy of this report (Section 6 only) to their website no later than ten (10) days after the submission of the report to CPB. CPB recommends placing the report in an "About" or similar section on your website. **This section had previously been optional. Response to this section of the SAS is now mandatory.**

Joint licensee Grantees that have filed a 2016 Local Content and Services Report as part of meeting the requirement for TV CSG funding may state they have done so in the corresponding questions below, so long as all of the questions below were addressed as they relate to radio operations in such report. You must include the date the report was submitted to CPB along with the TV Grantee ID under which it was submitted.

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1. Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station's vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.

Inherent in Michigan Radio's journalism work is the monitoring and reporting of important community and state issues and events that unfold each day. In addition to full-time reporters based in Grand Rapids, Flint, Detroit, and Ann Arbor, the station's news anchors, hosts and producers bring news stories to nearly half-a-million weekly listeners via newscasts, long-form reports, interviews and specials. Michigan Radio's programming is available 24 hours a day on its three stations (91.7 FM Ann Arbor and Detroit, 91.1 FM Flint, 104.1 FM West Michigan) and through a robust news website (www.michiganradio.org), which provides continually updated news stories and an audio streaming service. The station also connects with audiences via social media, namely Facebook ("Michigan Radio"), Twitter (@MichiganRadio), and Instagram (@MichiganRadio), and community engagement events, such as "Issues and Ale" discussions and "State of Opportunity" town hall meetings held in cities and towns throughout the state. In order to continue to best serve the Michigan public, Michigan Radio also assesses community issues, needs and interests through the analysis of station user/listener data, the implementation of regular audience surveys, and the review of national research and information on user/listener trends. Analysis of the station's digital metrics, for example, reveals large user growth to Michigan Radio's website. According to Google Analytics, traffic to michiganradio.org topped 3.75 million users in FY16, with over 10.1 million total page views. Compared to FY15, website users have grown by 84% and page views are up 81%. The online audio streaming service also continues to be popular, with an average monthly come of 87,227 in FY16. In addition, Michigan Radio's social media channels are experiencing consistent growth. As of June 30, 2016, "likes" on the Michigan Radio Facebook page totaled 39,255, and the station's Twitter channel followers totaled 35,000, representing an increase of 19.5% and 16%, respectively, over the previous fiscal year end. Michigan Radio's iPhone app is also attracting new users and downloads from across the state and beyond. In FY16, total app activity (downloads and updates) was 134,545 for Apple and iPhone users, almost double the activity from FY15. These data clearly

demonstrate an increase in demand for Michigan Radio's digital services, aligning with national consumer trends reported in the 8th annual Public Radio Technology Survey (PRTS8) conducted by Jacobs Media, which found a continuing trend in the adoption of non-radio devices among the public radio audience. The PRTS8 also helped identify appeal factors unique to Michigan Radio. The top five reasons people listen to Michigan Radio include 1) more credible and objective programming, 2) want deeper perspective into news, 3) balance of perspectives, 4) like specific shows/hosts and 5) enjoy learning new things. Michigan Radio's strategic planning is informed by this and other data. Currently, one of the station's key strategic goals includes growing and serving its non-broadcast audience. This entails continuing to learn about the usage habits of digital audiences, determining the staffing and digital infrastructure needed to meet the needs of non-broadcast audiences, and establishing a podcast division.

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2. Describe key initiatives and the variety of partners with whom you collaborated, including other public media outlets, community nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, the business community, teachers and parents, etc. This will illustrate the many ways you're connected across the community and engaged with other important organizations in the area.

Michigan Radio attracts listeners across Michigan with important and intelligent public radio programs, including special coverage of current issues, both on-air and online. Throughout Fiscal Year 2016, the station's news and content group increased coverage of some of the state's most pressing issues, including four key initiatives: (1) Coverage of the Flint water crisis. In an investigative series of reports and a special, hour-long documentary, "Not Safe to Drink," airing in December 2015, Michigan Radio's Lindsey Smith worked with a water safety researcher to uncover safety problems and regulatory failures with Flint's drinking water system. The coverage received national interest, and the station is continuing to cover the story as government officials and community groups work to address the problem. The station received numerous national awards for its Flint coverage in FY 16. (2) Stateside. Additionally, Stateside, Michigan Radio's local newsmagazine program, marked its fourth anniversary of "Smart. Local. Talk" in FY16. Every Stateside show explores issues that matter in Michigan and features a wide range of people, such as politicians, educators, policy experts, artists, and community doers, via interviews, roundtables, and feature reports. Stateside partners with the BBC World Service to explore linkages between global news and events and Michigan, and the program extends its reach to the Grand Traverse Region through a broadcast partnership with Interlochen Public Radio. (3) State of Opportunity. During FY16, Michigan Radio also launched its final year of "State of Opportunity." The five-year project, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, has three reporters and one part-time digital reporter who are creating dialogue and sharing information about childhood poverty through weekly feature reports, an online portal, quarterly documentaries, special investigative shows, daily blogging, and regular community outreach events. Throughout the project, Michigan Radio has talked with a variety of people, such as teachers, parents, government officials and researchers, and worked with a variety of sources and community partners, including the Lansing nonprofit Michigan's Children. (4) Detroit Journalism Cooperative (DJC). The station also entered its third year as part of the DJC, a journalism project looking at Detroit's attempts at recovery and rebirth after being the largest municipality in the country to declare bankruptcy. Michigan Radio is one of five media partners, including "Bridge Magazine," Detroit Public Television, WDET and New Michigan Media. The DJC is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, John S. and James. L. Knight Foundation, the Ford Foundation and Renaissance Journalism.

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3. What impact did your key initiatives and partnerships have in your community? Describe any known measurable impact, such as increased awareness, learning or understanding about particular issues. Describe indicators of success, such as connecting people to needed resources or strengthening conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods. Did a partner see an increase in requests for related resources? Please include direct feedback from a partner(s) or from a person(s) served.

(1) Coverage of the Flint water crisis. Michigan Radio's December 2015 documentary, "Not Safe To Drink," was followed by a wave of national media interest in the Flint water story. In the weeks following its broadcast, there were also a series of developments in Flint, including the resignations of the EPA's Region 5 Director, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's director, water resource manager and spokesperson, and the City of Flint's utilities manager and spokesperson. Michigan Radio has received a considerable amount of positive feedback about its coverage of the Flint water crisis. "The research and coverage that was given to the story even as it was unfolding gave me hope for media, even in this new age," wrote one listener, and the state Senator representing Flint wrote, "Your reporting over the last several months helped expose a real crisis and made a big difference in the lives of people in my community." Lastly, Michigan Radio has earned numerous journalism awards for its coverage of the Flint water crisis, among them being an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award and a National Edward R. Murrow award from Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) for Best Documentary and Best Continuing Coverage. (2) Stateside. News coverage and in-depth discussions on Stateside give voice to a wide range of Michigan residents and help to increase understanding and awareness across diverse communities. For example, after being featured on Stateside, a member of Cabildo, a Latin band in West Michigan, wrote to say, "...we are super happy with the opportunity to share our story with everyone in OUR state...many times we just get on the stage, people like our music, but we don't get the chance to explain what's behind, once again we appreciate this window you gave us..." And, after hearing a Stateside and State of Opportunity joint special in May 2016, "Breaking ground: Being young and transgender in Michigan," a listener wrote in to say, "Bravo, Michigan Radio! Today's State of Opportunity / Stateside is amazing and I am so moved by the willingness of the station to present such a thoughtful, progressive, intelligent discussion of transgender issues... Cynthia's

interview with the wonderfully articulate professor was fantastic and thank you, Cynthia, for striking the right tone without "playing dumb..." And thanks to Michigan Radio for offering intelligent discussion and reporting during daytime weekday hours! I hope for more." (3) State of Opportunity. This five-year reporting project has made great strides in increasing awareness about the complex issues surrounding childhood poverty in Michigan and in moving people to help make a difference. For example, the documentary, "The Hidden Epidemic," on the growing use of opioid abuse and addiction among teens in Michigan preceded numerous legislative efforts to address the issue. These included expanding good samaritan laws for people reporting overdose victims, allowing police and parents to purchase the anti-overdose drug Naloxone, and some communities mimicking a program profiled in the documentary that tries to find rehabilitation space for any addict that walks into a police department asking for help. In addition, a 2015 audience study conducted by Jacobs Media found that 70% of people who listened to "State of Opportunity" reports took some action as a result of listening, such as discussing the issues with family or friends, contributing money to a charity or organization, or attending a community meeting or group. For example, 18% of respondents said they are contributing money to charity as a result of listening to State of Opportunity. And, lastly, many listeners write to Michigan Radio with comments about how this special project impacts them. Here is just one example: "...I am a teacher educator at UM-Flint and can only recall your stories as those that truly communicate settings such as Detroit classrooms and the students from Detroit with even-handed fairness. Thanks for the depth and quality you bring to such stories; you bring a texture and richness that really makes one feel more connected to the part of the story that's not so easy to communicate with mere words." (4) Detroit Journalism Cooperative (DJC). Michigan Radio's participation in the DJC has enabled the station to deepen its coverage about the City of Detroit's historic bankruptcy. Not only does this work provide quality, unbiased news about life in the city after bankruptcy to hundreds of thousands of people; but, it does so in an authentic way by weaving the voices and experiences of diverse Detroit residents throughout the ongoing coverage. The journalism has helped increase awareness and understanding of Detroiters' successes and challenges. In recent listener interviews conducted by media research firm Jacobs Media, listeners expressed their appreciation for Michigan Radio's in-depth Detroit coverage and for the resulting increase in understanding about the city among citizens residing outside of Southeast Michigan. For example, a listener in Grand Rapids said, "Detroit is an important component of Michigan's economy. We like to denigrate it, but for the whole system to work, Detroit needs to work." Another West Michigan listener commented that "the bankruptcy doesn't affect day-to-day life, but it is an important blueprint for what could happen elsewhere..."

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4. Please describe any efforts (e.g. programming, production, engagement activities) you have made to investigate and/or meet the needs of minority and other diverse audiences (including, but not limited to, new immigrants, people for whom English is a second language and illiterate adults) during Fiscal Year 2016, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2017. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

Michigan Radio serves a diverse audience across a wide geographic area. The station's signal can be heard across southern Michigan, including the major metropolitan areas of Detroit, Ann Arbor, Lansing, Flint, and Grand Rapids. Despite its multicultural populations, Michigan remains one of the most segregated states in the country, particularly in its urban areas. Michigan Radio news coverage provides an opportunity to increase cross-group understanding and strengthen conversational ties between diverse communities. The station regularly provides coverage about the complex issues related to race, culture and diversity in its state. For example, the DJC took a year-long look at the history of racial tensions in Detroit, beginning with the 1967 riots, and compared those racial tensions to what exists today, and "State of Opportunity" produced in-depth coverage about being young and transgender, about public policy and immigration, about how city development and expansion is impacting poor communities in Grand Rapids and Detroit, and much more. Additionally, Michigan Radio is making strides toward diversifying its staff through broad recruitment efforts, participation in various career fairs and the expansion of its internship program. The Robben Fleming Public Media Internship Fund was established in 2016 to help bring new perspectives to Michigan Radio's work and to prepare the next generation of journalists. The program provides on-the-job learning opportunities for young people from all backgrounds, including those who may not be in a position to otherwise accept an unpaid position. Michigan Radio is also making concerted efforts to increase cultural, racial and gender diversity among the news sources used in its reporting through extensive networking and through the development of a source database. The station is also working to broaden its audiences/participants through the development of relatable content, such as airing programs that appeal to a younger, more diverse audience, creating original podcasts, and sponsoring a series of wide-ranging community events. Lastly, Michigan Radio's news coverage is made accessible to a broad audience, regardless of economic condition, disability or other demonstrable factor, through the use of a radio and/or computer (listening to audio and/or reading text). In addition, the station's studios are handicap accessible for employees, on-air guests, and visitors.

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5. Please assess the impact that your CPB funding had on your ability to serve your community. What were you able to do with your grant that you wouldn't be able to do if you didn't receive it?

CPB funding represents 6% of direct revenues for Michigan Radio. This allocation is entirely directed to the purchase of national programming from NPR, American Public Media, and Public Radio International. This CPB funding provides substantial support that allows allocation of resources to critical local news and information priorities- enabling Michigan Radio to provide significant news coverage for our entire listening area. It extends our ability to hire and retain a statewide news staff which has garnered the station notable awards for state and regional news

coverage, to grow and expand our flagship program, "Stateside," and it enables Michigan Radio to host community outreach forums, such as our established series, Issues and Ale, facilitating topical and timely public conversation. The station also recognizes that indirect support from CPB includes payment of various music licensing fees for our programming, which benefits all of public media as one less local expense to address. In effect, the value and impact of CPB support, both direct cash thru the CSG, and the offsets of services that a station does not have to pay directly, make CPB participation in a successful public media operation crucial to our success.

Comments

Question	Comment
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No Comments for this section