Connecting people to powerful ideas that inspire personal growth, exploration of our world and positive change.

WKAR Television is a valuable part of Michigan’s Capital Region.

The station provides public broadcasting service on five WKAR television stations plus radio.

Serving a 19-county viewing area, WKAR is involved with those communities through a variety of activities including: Ready to Learn; WKAR Family, public community screenings and discussions; participation in community events and with station representatives on community boards and committees; and community support through student learning internships.

WKAR produces local content that addresses key issues impacting our community.

In 2021, WKAR provided these vital local services:

- Five Television Stations
  - WKAR-HD
  - WKAR-Create
  - WKAR-World
  - WKAR-PBSKIDS
  - Michigan Learning Channel
- Three Radio Stations
  - WKAR-AM 870kHz
  - 90.5 WKAR-FM
  - 105.1 WKAR-FM
- Online Streaming of TV and Radio programming
- Educational workshops
- Community-wide family events
- Screenings/discussions
- National and local programming including news, public affairs, arts, health, education.
- 60+ hours of children’s programming per week.

WKAR’s local services had deep impact in Michigan’s Capital Region.

Through station partnerships with local schools and agencies, WKAR Family initiatives centered on PBS Kids and additional resources reached thousands of local children and their families to better prepare them for school.

Locally produced programs, with work including DEI principles, target issues of importance to the community, and our free public screenings feature speakers and panelists of local experts and MSU faculty who lead dynamic discussions with participants.

“CATA sees WKAR as a consistent and dependable source for news, education, and entertainment.”

Lolo Robinson
Capital Area Transportation Authority
Connecting people to powerful ideas that inspire personal growth and positive change is the mission of WKAR. WKAR serves that mission through broadcast services WKAR HD, World, Create and PBS Kids 24/7 and the Michigan Learning Channel; through research partnerships at our host Big Ten university; through a rich digital presence across multiple platforms; and through educational outreach and engagement events across our community.

**Education**

**WKAR Family** is aimed at forming connections to help kids be resilient, lifelong learners. The initiative includes PBS Kids 24/7, video shorts offering research-based tips for parents and educators, the Michigan Learning Channel and outreach to share PBS educational resources with parents and educators.

Spring of 2021 saw WKAR’s education outreach events remain virtual due in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Online offerings included several workshops and at-home learning resources.

WKAR had multiple book giveaways to local elementary schools. These included over 10,000 highly engaging books to help decrease the early literacy achievement gap.

The **WKAR PBS Kids 24/7** channel continues to offer free, over-the-air educational children’s programming around the clock and WKAR’s primary HD channel airs over 60 hours of PBS Kids shows per week during daytimes.

The initiative also included the “**WKAR Family** and PBS Kids” newsletters to share tips, resources, and curriculum-based content for parents and caregivers to help children continue to learn at home. WKAR provided free books to classrooms and partnered with community organizations to reach Head Start families. The **WKAR Family** video series continued its partnership with the College of Education to create new research-based at-home-learning tips for caregivers.

**March is Reading Month Kits Giveaway** Through March and April, WKAR collaborated with over 75 mid-Michigan organizations to provide 1,788 WKAR Family Reading Kits to families. The kits were targeted for prek-1st graders and 2nd - 4th graders, and, included two new grade level appropriate books, local community resource flyers, PBS LearningMedia literacy activities, Scholastic printable activities, literacy bingo, site word card games and lots of WKAR swag.

**Political Coverage**

Political coverage in 2021 included the **2021 Michigan State of the State** address and the annual **Evening with the Governor** series. WKAR distributes these specials to commercial and public media stations across Michigan.

**Off the Record** has a history dating back to 1972 as Michigan’s only statewide political talk show, with 52 new weekly episodes each season.
Community Engagement

When public events were curtailed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, WKAR moved in-person film screenings to virtual events via the online platform OVEE. OVEE allows audience members to interact with each other and panelists around each film.

Community screenings included the documentaries and films in the Indie Lens Pop-Up series, as well as several PBS KIDS events.

PBS Kids Day at WKAR January 2021 welcomed over 400 families online to celebrate PBS KIDS, via a video presentation. The presentation included read alongs with Daniel Tiger, activities for kids and other kid-friendly fun content, in partnership with the PNC Foundation; Impression 5 Science Center; and Fred Rogers Productions.

WKAR hosted three virtual Be My Neighbor Days for families in our community on March 27, Nov. 20, and Dec. 18. Participants learned about the caring neighbors in their community and how they can be a caring neighbor, too.

Between the three events, 700 WKAR Family Activity Kits were distributed to families to add an in-home participation element to the virtual event. Each WKAR Family Activity Kit included Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood books, Impression 5 Day Pass, activity sheets, stickers and more.

In the Community

Throughout the year, WKAR celebrated our diverse heritage and communities with special programming during Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women's History Month, Asian American Pacific Islander History Month, and Pride Month.

WKAR Partners with MSU's Juneteenth Celebration
In collaboration with the MSU Juneteenth Celebration, WKAR hosted a virtual discussion on Thu. June 17, 2021 around a special screening of From a Free Place to Displace, the latest episode from the annual PBS series, Juneteenth Jamboree.

Year of Global Africa Film Screening with Q&A
As part of MSU Homecoming 2021: Spartans Journey Together, WKAR hosted a virtual screening of the film, Year of Global Africa, in partnership with the African Studies Center and the School of Journalism. Joining the discussion following the film were Lisa Frugé, African Studies Center events coordinator, filmmakers Gloria Nzeka and Jason Howard, and African Studies Center alumnus Shinji Mavima. The engaging discussion is available now at PBS Video.
Five Nights Toward Freedom: WKAR, MSU Libraries honor Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy through film and discussion. As part of MSU’s 2021 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration week, WKAR partnered with MSU Libraries for a week of virtual film screenings and discussion honoring King’s legacy. WKAR’s virtual screening took place Fri. Jan. 22, 2021 at 7pm and featured Freedom Riders, a film that tells the powerful, harrowing, and ultimately inspirational story of six months in 1961 that changed America forever.

WKAR Originals

The educational series Curious Crew continues to challenge kids to explore science through hands-on learning activities. Episodes include Curious About Careers segments featuring young investigators exploring career possibilities by visiting women working in STEM-related professions. Curious About Careers is also available as standalone shorts for broadcast and on-demand viewing online. Curious Crew and Curious About Careers are offered nationally each season through NETA.

Three investigative video reports have been produced as part of the Science+Society project from NOVA: Algorithmic Injustice, Zoomed Out, and Cannabis and Driving Under the Influence.

Right to Read, a new documentary from WKAR, presents the moving story of Michigan families attempting to secure the right to read for their children. Faced with challenging circumstances -- like social inequity, Michigan's Read by Grade Three law, and limited access to books -- parents, educators and experts weigh in on how to solve the literacy crisis in Michigan. Their goal? To encourage the joy of reading and promote childhood literacy at home. The special aired in June and is available free on-demand now.

Story of Us: Michigan This WKAR Original is a story told by everyday people - in their own words - on their struggles, triumphs, and joys. In this PBS American Portrait special from WKAR, Michiganders share short stories about their lives, inspiring conversation about what it means to be an American today. A variety of selfie videos, photos, and comments provide a unique look into life in the Great Lake state.

University Distinguished Professors 2021 WKAR produced a series of video profiles featuring University Distinguished Professors named in 2021. The the videos are available in the PBS Video app and are airing between programs on WKAR TV.

Technology

The broadcast industry has been focused on deployment and development of the new ATSC 3.0 broadcast standard, with little thought being given to how to use the technology to serve communities. Through our work with industry partner Gaian, WKAR is focusing on real world applications of ATSC 3.0 technology.

Through collaboration with national partners National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA), WKAR launched and hosted an 11-month NextGen TV course on NETA’s Public Media Learns platform. This course was open to all Public Media professionals, allowing conversation and idea-sharing around how public television stations can adapt to the new broadcast standard. Each month focused on a different aspect of ATSC 3.0 and how that aspect can help and will impact television stations across the public media network.

Recently WKAR and industry partner Gaian debuted our presentation “REALizing NextGen TV,” in which we present demonstrations of applications for education, community alerting, mobile radio service, and public engagements with impact.

Leadership - Local to National

WKAR is fortunate to have a leadership role to give our local community a voice within the public broadcasting system nationally. WKAR Director of Broadcasting and General Manager Susi Elkins serves on the PBS Board of Directors, on the board of America's Public Television Stations (APTS), the PBS Children’s Media & Education Station Leadership Committee, MSUFCU’s Reseda Group board and the MAPB Board of Directors. Additional WKAR staff members serve on national committees and share expertise through presentations at public broadcasting and industry conferences and exhibitions.

Partnerships

Local partnerships inspire WKAR to best serve our local community through educational resources, timely news and helpful information. This last year, WKAR collaborated with national partners: PBS, WETA, NETA, and Fred Rogers Productions to bring our community new content, educational and engagement opportunities; as well as local partners: PNC, Capital Area Head Start, Impression 5 Science Center, AgeAlive, Wharton Center, MSU Broad Art Museum, MSU College of Music, MSU College of Social Science, MSU College of Education, and MSUFCU.

In Conclusion

Collaboration, innovation and community support. These are strengths that, through routine days and times of crisis, WKAR television draws upon to fulfill its mission to connect people to powerful ideas that inspire personal growth, exploration of our world and positive change.
American Exile | Film Preview with Q & A and national PBS broadcast

A groundbreaking documentary on the deportation of U.S. veterans from WKAR and MSU filmmakers John J. Valadez and Carleen L. Hsu aired nationally on PBS in primetime.

*American Exile* is part of the VOCES series of specials from Latino Public Broadcasting.

The film, produced by MSU professors of practice John J. Valadez and Carleen L. Hsu and is presented by WKAR Public Media at MSU, is the story of two unlikely war hero brothers who became veteran’s rights activists after being threatened with deportation and learning that thousands of veterans are being rounded up and deported.

It's a remarkable achievement that *American Exile* was produced by MSU faculty and students and will air in communities across the country.

WKAR and MSU School of Journalism, Film Studies Program, Chicano/Latino Studies Program, and community partners hosted a special preview screening of the film on Veterans Day, Thu., Nov. 11, ahead of the national broadcast on PBS.

Our panel included filmmakers Valadez and Hsu, and Manuel Valenzuela and Gloria Segura, both of whom appear in the film. ComArtSci Dean Prabu David moderated the discussion. We were pleased to have a capacity audience of 100 with us in Studio A -- safely, with masks required -- plus a virtual audience of 45 via Livestream. Streaming now in the free PBS App and online.

This screening and the broadcast generated a high amount of earned media.
WKAR Impacts through Screenings and Open Discussion

After the pandemic began, Indie Lens Pop-up events were moved to a virtual platform. During Fall and Winter 2021, WKAR presented a number of Indie Lens Pop-Up events, featuring Independent Lens films such as Coded Bias. This series allows WKAR to connect with our community by featuring films about diverse topics followed by meaningful community dialogue. Discussion panelists include experts from Michigan State University and community organizations.

Political Programs Offers Insight into Key Michigan Issues

Off the Record, anchored by Senior Capitol Correspondent Tim Skubick has a history dating back to 1972 as Michigan's only statewide political talk show. 52 new weekly episodes plus specials are produced by WKAR each season and offer viewers key insight as well as meaningful dialogue via social media. WKAR political coverage in 2019-2020 also included the 2021 Michigan State of the State address and the annual Evening with the Governor series (pictured).

WKAR Launched Michigan Learning Channel

On Jan. 22, 2021, WKAR Public Media has joined other Michigan public television stations in launching the Michigan Learning Channel (MLC), available statewide on a series of new dedicated broadcast channels. Developed in partnership with leading educators and community leaders, the network delivers instructional content and programming to students, parents and teachers.
This past year, WKAR helped children learn to read, get excited about science, and be ready for school.

We expanded our programs and specials to showcase Michigan Capital Region talents and professions, and we addressed timely issues.

We increased awareness around local issues, provided discussions, and featured world-class MSU researchers.

As a result, membership and viewership are up and our audiences are more diverse.

WKAR plays an essential role in Michigan’s Capital Region and at Michigan State University as a key source for quality children’s educational programming; as a showcase for local artists, musicians, and nonprofit community organizations; and offering a variety of engaging forums for community members to share their talents, interests, concerns, and cultural backgrounds.

“WKAR has become increasingly important to me over the past almost 50 years. I have played many roles with WKAR, from volunteering at WKAR events, working with the Radio Reader Service (RRS), and becoming a sustaining member, as well as including WKAR in my estate plans.”

Merry Rosenberg
Proud WKAR volunteer and donor for 47 years

“Over the last few years, I have had the opportunity to work closely with WKAR to offer insight and support as we, collaboratively, worked to better serve our local Latinx Community. WKAR’s role in the Lansing area, as a broadcast station, community supporter and convener of discussions, is vital to creating better opportunities for our growing community through programming and engagement opportunities.”

Saturnino Rodriguez
Lansing School District Board of Education

“WKAR provides meaningful platforms that enable healthy community interactions”

April Clobes
President, Michigan State University
Federal Credit Union