

Vermont Public Local Content and Services Report – 7/1/22 through 6/30/23

At a time when our society is becoming more disconnected, divided and disempowered, Vermont Public seeks to convene, connect, and empower our community, so we can collectively step forward to create our future. To do this, we must engage with a broader and more diverse audience, reaching people who will never buy a radio or subscribe to cable, and those who think public media isn't for them. We seek to become the preeminent place to understand and share the long story of Vermont, whether on new digital platforms or gatherings on the town green.

At the beginning of FY23, Vermont Public embarked upon a three-year strategic plan aimed at increasing our 18-45 audience for original content and events on key platforms by 50 percent, while maintaining our existing audience and our bedrock commitments to education and journalism.

Here are some of the ways we served our community's needs across all platforms in FY23:

Trusted Journalism & Storytelling

Vermont Public produced wide-ranging, multi-platform coverage of the historic 2022 election. The election saw a big shakeup in Vermont's Congressional delegation, with [Sen. Patrick Leahy](#) retiring after serving for 48 years and Vermont's only U.S. representative, Peter Welch, running for the empty seat. As part of this coverage, Vermont Public hosted a [series of debates between major party candidates for U.S. Senate, U.S. House, governor and lieutenant governor](#). They aired live during *Vermont Edition's* radio broadcast at noon and on Vermont Public's YouTube channel, later that day on Vermont Public's [main TV channel](#), and via highlight videos posted to YouTube and social media channels. In addition, the newsroom produced a [voter guide](#) to candidates and issues in play.

When Sen. Patrick Leahy retired from public office in January 2023, and our reporters and production crew were in Washington, DC to [document his final days in the halls of the Capitol](#). In two wide-ranging conversations, [Jane Lindholm spoke with Leahy](#) to understand how he frames his nearly half-century-long career as a Vermont senator, and what he hopes his legacy will be.

In our ongoing series "[What Class Are You?](#)", reporter Erica Heilman traveled Vermont asking what she called an "awkward and probably offensive question" - one that resulted in deep conversations and perspectives about money, class and privilege.

The Italian sculptors who immigrated during Barre's granite boom have died, retired, or moved away. Only one is left. In an [audio documentary, we met Giuliano Cecchinelli](#).

Vermont Public launched [Out There](#), an email newsletter featuring climate and environmental stories from across the state, plants, animals and fungi you might encounter on your next stroll, and outdoor happenings you can take part in.

As a new joint licensee with a long history of audio and digital journalism, Vermont Public continued to build its video news capabilities with stories such as a piece on Burlington's [record pressing industry](#) and [board game culture](#).

Music, Arts & Culture

The [Made Here Fund](#) is an initiative to broaden and diversify Vermont storytelling and support content creators. Storytellers from across the state were invited to apply for special funding to produce projects such as documentary films, podcasts, and multimedia projects. Applications were open to all Vermonter, and submissions from creators of color, rural and youth residents will be prioritized to advance equity in public media. Vermont Public awarded [grants to ten local content producers](#) in its first round, who represent six Vermont counties. Their [projects will range from short documentaries and short animated films, to digital video series and podcasts](#).

But Why, Vermont Public's podcast for curious kids, released a [series of short videos on YouTube focused on farm animals](#), introducing But Why to a new audience.

Vermont Public's local film series Made Here introduced audiences to characters from around the region, [including the next generation of race car drivers at Thunder Road](#) and 15-year-old Kaiden Fischer.

In February 2023, after speaking with so many prolific and talented artists in our "Homegoings" series, host and musician Myra Flynn and Vermont Public staged Homegoings: A Live Performance at Spruce Peak in Stowe. The evening featured several Black artists featured in the series, and was filmed and produced for a [five-part video series](#) that aired on our broadcast and digital channels.

Vermont Public Classical's [music education series Timeline](#) series took a deep dive into the life and work of [Black composer Julius Eastman](#).

Audience-Centered Reporting

Brave Little State is Vermont Public's podcast driven by listener questions and involves listeners in the research and reporting of the answers. Some notable episodes of FY23 were:

- [5 Vermonter talk about guns](#)
- [How much does Vermont's power grid depend on fossil fuels?](#)
- ['Stick season is a viral hit. What else has put Vermont on the cultural map?' \(which led to a March Madness style bracket to vote on Vermont's greatest cultural contribution\)](#)
- [How did Vermont profit from slavery?](#)

Our engagement journalism team continued its work with reporters to [invite audience to shape our coverage of key issues](#) such as aging, public safety, climate, science and health, politics and policy, and southern Vermont.

Overall Reach

- Average Monthly Website Users: 260,758
- Avg. Weekly Radio Listeners: 191,800 (Source: Nielsen Audio Spring 2023 National Regional Database, Persons 12+ M-Su 6a-12m)
- Avg. Monthly Streaming Listeners: 98,484
- Avg. Monthly On-Demand Audio Downloads: 760,579
- Avg. Monthly Television Viewers: 238,963
- Avg. Monthly Streaming Viewers: 2,191
- Avg. Monthly On-Demand Video Users: 17,290
- Broadcast Network: 8 transmitters, 13 full-power radio stations and 14 translators.
- Population that can access our broadcast channels at home*: 1.76 million (*in the U.S.)
- Email Newsletter Subscribers: 78,305
- Social Media Followers: 160,000

During the pandemic, our [Kids & Education resources](#) with the Vermont Agency of Education were seeing 500-800 web views per month. In FY23, these pages had more than 12,000 users.

In 2019, when legacy Vermont PBS signed our contract with PBS LearningMedia, we had 3,000 Vermont users. By July 2021, we had 6,000 users. Our [PBS LearningMedia](#) reached 11,800 educators in FY23. FY23 had 12,137 users.

Feedback about 'Out There' our newly-launched environmentally-focused newsletter:

"Relevant to my concerns, thought provoking but easy to digest, readable."

"Clear, concise and informative in a positive way"

"Accessible info about environmental issues in Vermont"

"I wanted a newsletter that was locally focused, short and sweet, and compelling - I love the illustrations/graphics."

Feedback about Timeline's exploration of Julius Eastman:

"I am Louie Fleck, Archives Manager of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. I really enjoyed the illuminating documentary about Julius Eastman, a very important composer and performer. I look forward to hearing more work of this type. Many thanks!" - Fleck also asked for the audio to be included in the archives at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) for researchers and students to access."

Feedback about the last Italian Stone Carver documentary:



Diana Brown

I listened, it was breathtakingly beautiful and moving. I remain in awe of each of them and their work. Anna and this remarkable stone sculptor Giuliano Cecchinelli are in perfect balance throughout the interview. LISTENING will transport every listener.

- Comment from a local history Facebook group on the Italian Stone Carvers documentary, June 9, 2023

"Anna's story on Giuliano is just incredible. So rich in detail. Thank you. I visited Hope last month and the story makes me want to go back with this new knowledge. Jim, East Dorset"



Diana Brown

Oh my goodness. This is the most 'alive' story, despite the subject matter. Having moved to Vermont at about the same time and a few years younger than Giuliano, to just a ways up the road from Barre, the whole piece touches me and resonates through the decades of Vermont memories. Proctor, his first home, the marble quarries and that area is also very familiar to me - I imagine I worked with a few of his classmates in the class of 1964.

I will listen again and share with my sister. Anna Van Dine deserves an Edward R Murrow award.

Feedback on our Classical service: "Please let James know... how much I appreciate his voice/TIMELINE. I feel like I'm back at university... enrolled in the music history course I never took. You present so well. Thank you for sharing your musical knowledge with such confidence, calm and sparkle. (Sparkle is a good thing :-).

I enjoy the classical program he hosts in the late afternoon - early evening as well. The musical choices seem just right for my ears. - Jennifer Anne"

Climate Across America

Vermont Public partnered with NOVA to produce and distribute two short digital films as part of the series' national Climate Across America initiative. Vermont Public was one of 10 public media stations working closely with NOVA to create, share, and amplify solutions-oriented climate reporting. The stories explored [how biodigesters work](#) as well as what it would be like to [take an entire town off the grid](#).



Community News Service

Vermont Public partnered with UVM's Community News Service to provide students the opportunity to learn the craft of audio reporting while expanding the range of voices and stories heard on the air. 22 students worked with Vermont Public editors and reporters to produce 32 [pieces during FY23.](#)

Made Here Film Festival

In partnership with the Vermont International Film Festival, the annual [Made Here Film Festival](#) is New England's only competitive festival devoted entirely to films made by New England filmmakers and our neighbor, Québec. The Made Here Film Festival is free to the public and takes place each April in Burlington.

New England News Collaborative

Vermont Public is an active member of the [New England News Collaborative](#), a consortium of nine public media newsrooms reporting stories that are shared and broadcast across New England. Our multimedia coverage delves into climate change and clean energy; racial inequality and immigration; and the impacts of the pandemic on people, businesses and schools in the region.

Fairbanks Museum/Eye on the Sky

For more than 30 years, Vermont Public (formerly VPR) has partnered with the Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium in St. Johnsbury, Vermont to bring [Eye On The Sky](#) weather forecasts to the airwaves. The daily reports provide region-wide, detailed weather information complemented by science, history, astronomy, and lore. Special features focus on farm and garden information, seasonal recreation, storm coverage and even a daily report on what's happening in the night sky.

Vermont Symphony Orchestra Concerts

The Vermont Symphony Orchestra is one of the cultural hallmarks of Vermont. Vermont Public is a long-standing partner with this institution, with [weekly concert broadcasts on Vermont Public Classical](#) from the current season and archive recordings from the Orchestra's Masterworks Series and Made in Vermont Festival. In addition, Vermont Public Classical frequently presents pre-concert talks at VSO performances.

Music Comp

The [Music Composition Mentoring Program](#) (Music-COMP) is a Vermont non-profit that pairs students in grades 3-12 with professional composers as mentors. Vermont Public Classical features the voices and music of Music-COMP students monthly in the [Student Composer Showcase](#), in a partnership that supports young musicians and classic music as a living art form in our state.

Giving Tuesday Partnership

Vermont Public and the Vermont Foodbank joined together for its eighth Giving Tuesday fundraising collaboration, where every gift to Vermont Public also provided meals for the Vermont Foodbank to deliver to people facing food insecurity. The generous donors of the Vermont Community Foundation funded this effort. The 2022 campaign resulted in 29,955 meals to be distributed to Vermonters in need. In addition to the incredible community impact, Vermont Public received \$200,226 in donations from 1,997 gifts.



Education Initiatives

Vermont Public makes learning accessible by curating educational “anywhere, anytime” resources through broadcast, radio, digital, offline, and live events. Vermont children, teachers and families are invited to engage interactively with safe media content in living rooms, classrooms and on the go across platforms by knowledgeable media mentors.

Our education projects focus on providing local opportunities and new access to our trusted brand. We look to reach key audiences through strategic local partnerships, grants for affiliate project collaborations, and by highlighting locally produced content through the national reach of the PBS LearningMedia platform.

We continue to partner with the Vermont Agency of Education weekly, updating our [curated Education webpage](#) with local and national standards-based resources at each grade band, and works with partners such as the Vermont Department of Libraries and ECHO Leahy Center for Lake Champlain to reach families and educators looking for safe, playful learning media connections.

In FY23, Vermont Public launched a teacher-directed [Education Ambassadors program](#) that connects Vermont educators with free, standards-based, multimedia teacher resources available from Vermont Public and PBS.