FY21
ANNUAL REPORT
TO THE COMMUNITY
An update provided to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and our valued community stakeholders.
Local Journalism Content

In addition to offering daily news programming from national and international public radio outlets, such as National Public Radio (NPR) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Michigan Radio produces and distributes its own local journalism. We employ 32 full-time staff dedicated to creating journalism content, including reporters, producers, editors, and hosts who work at our headquarters in Ann Arbor and at bureaus in Detroit, Flint, Lansing, and Grand Rapids.

Michigan Radio’s team of award-winning journalists presents statewide news in hourly newscasts throughout the day and multiple times per hour during drive/commute times. In addition, our content staff develops in-depth reporting via feature stories, enterprise and investigative reports, long-form interviews, and podcasts. The following list highlights a sample of the news coverage produced by Michigan Radio in Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021):

Black Lives Matter
In the wake of George Floyd’s murder, Michigan Radio reported on ongoing, local demonstrations against police brutality. Protests in Detroit, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids presented safety challenges, and we invested in protective equipment for reporters who covered these events. Much of our coverage included Facebook live streams, so our audience could see the protests and police response in real time. We also published dozens of newscasts, longform stories, and conversations as the BLM movement unfolded across the state.

COVID-19
Michigan Radio continued reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic as it stretched through its first year and into a second. Our news team produced daily newscasts and in-depth coverage, including: stories from inside emergency rooms and hospitals during the second and third surges; the promise of the COVID vaccine and its rollout in Michigan; a resistance by some Michiganders to get the vaccine and wear masks; public debates over returning to school in person; what it’s like to live in a prison during the pandemic; and much more.

Election 2020
In the months leading up to the presidential election on November 3, 2020, Michigan Radio provided coverage of statewide and national campaigns as well as personal perspectives in a series called “Voter Voices.” This year, our coverage continued intensively post-election, as Michigan became one of the most prominent states in the misinformation campaign to discredit election results. Our journalists provided live coverage from Detroit’s TCF Center and the state capitol in addition to national and international news outlets. We also provided numerous hours of live, special coverage, including: the January 6th insurrection; the second impeachment trial of President Trump; the inauguration of President Biden; the Michigan State of the State address; and history-making arguments before the Supreme Court.
Environment
Michigan Radio kept Great Lakes and drinking water issues at the forefront of its environmental coverage. Led by Reporter Lester Graham, we provided our audience with in-depth coverage of Enbridge Energy’s Line 5; forward-looking reporting about climate disruption; ongoing coverage on how PFAS, lead, and plastics are making their way into our drinking water; and much more. Michigan Radio also joined the Great Lakes News Collaborative, a partnership of four nonprofit news outlets, to enhance our reporting on these issues.

Investigation into Lakeside Academy
Michigan Radio investigated what happened when a 16-year-old boy died after being restrained at Lakeside Academy in Kalamazoo, which houses children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. We also investigated the for-profit company Sequel, which ran Lakeside. A mini-documentary report by West Michigan Reporter Dustin Dwyer aired on Stateside on September 24, 2020, revealing years of problems at Sequel facilities in multiple states.

Minutes: Making Public Meetings More Public
Minutes is an innovative speech-to-text tool designed to collect information on local government meetings from videos posted online. Led by West Michigan Reporter Dustin Dwyer and Digital Tech Specialist Brad Gowland, Minutes provides a growing database of government meeting transcripts from more than 40 municipalities around the state. Michigan Radio reporters can search the database and link to the online videos to obtain audio recordings. Minutes also makes podcasts of government meetings available to the public.

Editorial and Programmatic Initiatives
In FY20, Michigan Radio continued to offer several station-produced editorial and programmatic initiatives, including:

- Stateside: Hosted by April Baer, Stateside focuses on topics and events that matter to people all across the state. Stateside also produces special series about arts and culture, health, education, literature, and Michigan history, among others. It airs Monday–Friday, 3–4 p.m., with an encore broadcast at 9 p.m. Episodes are also posted on Michigan Radio’s news website.

- Stateside podcast: In October 2020, we relaunched and repackaged our Stateside podcast. The new, daily podcast is a 15-25 minute digest of meaningful conversations happening each day on Stateside, from policymakers in Lansing, to entrepreneurs in Detroit, to artists in Grand Rapids.

- That’s What They Say: This weekly segment is hosted by University of Michigan’s Dean of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and English Professor Anne Curzan and Michigan Radio Host Rebecca Kruth. Together, they explore our changing language and explain why we say what we say.

Emergency Information
Michigan Radio is a participating station in the Emergency Alert System (EAS). As such, we disseminate critical information about national and state emergencies to the public via our five FM signals. Michigan Radio also provides severe weather alerts based on notifications from the National Weather Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Community Engagement
At Michigan Radio, we aim to meaningfully engage with members of local Michigan communities in order to facilitate civilized conversations and the respectful exchange of ideas. In FY21, we implemented several initiatives that helped us engage with the public, both in the digital space and in communities:

Digital Platforms
Michigan Radio’s most successful digital engagement efforts are happening on Facebook and Twitter, where users interact with one another and with our journalists about news and events they care about. In FY21, we also expanded our work on Instagram and launched a TikTok page.

Issues & Ale Discussion Series
Michigan Radio regularly engages with members of the community via Issues and Ale events. Typically, these events take place in the informal setting of a brewpub or bar, but COVID-19 forced us to transition to a virtual format. Issues & Ale @Home featured virtual discussions hosted by Michigan Radio reporters and on-air hosts, allowing us to engage with listeners all across the state from the safety of their homes.
The Great Lakes region has an abundance of water. But water quality, affordability, and aging water infrastructure are vulnerabilities that have been ignored for far too long. Michigan Radio’s Lester Graham explores what it might take to preserve and protect this precious resource as part of the Great Lakes News Collaborative.

**KEY PARTNERSHIPS**

Michigan Radio takes pride in being a valuable contributing member in communities across the state. One important way we do this is to engage in productive partnerships with community organizations and other news outlets.

**MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS**

**GREAT LAKES NEWS COLLABORATIVE**

In September 2020, Michigan Radio became an inaugural member of the Great Lakes News Collaborative along with nonprofit news outlets Detroit Public Television, Bridge Michigan, and Circle of Blue. The group’s purpose it to increase news coverage about the Great Lakes and drinking water issues. The Collaborative is funded in part by the C.S. Mott Foundation.

**INTERLOCHEN PUBLIC RADIO (IPR)**

Michigan Radio has a content sharing partnership with IPR, located in northwestern Michigan’s Traverse City region. IPR broadcasts Michigan Radio’s Stateside live on weekdays on its three news stations: 91.5 FM, Traverse City; 90.1 FM, Harbor Springs/Petoskey; and 89.7 FM, Manistee/Ludington.

**MICHIGAN PUBLIC RADIO NETWORK (MPRN)**

Michigan Radio is a member of MPRN, a consortium of 10 public broadcasters that supports a shared capitol news bureau in Lansing. Michigan Radio’s news director serves as MPRN’s managing editor, coordinating the sharing of news stories across all participating stations.

**MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO**

Michigan Radio has a content sharing partnership with Minnesota Public Radio’s WGGL-FM (91.1 FM), an NPR member station serving the Upper Peninsula’s Houghton region. WGGL airs Michigan Radio’s Stateside on weeknights at 8 p.m.

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY / PUBLIC RADIO 90**

Michigan Radio has a content sharing partnership with Public Radio 90 / WNMM-FM, an NPR member station licensed to Northern Michigan University. Public Radio 90 airs Michigan Radio’s Stateside on 90.1 FM Marquette weeknights at 10 p.m., with an encore broadcast at 5 a.m. the following morning.

**WAMU 88.5 FM, WASHINGTON DC**

Michigan Radio partnered with fellow NPR affiliate WAMU in Washington D.C. on 1A Across America, a nationally syndicated journalism collaborative. Our journalists appeared on 1A to tell statewide stories of importance, including our program director, Zoe Clark, co-hosting the show on election day.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

**ARISE DETROIT!**

In Spring 2021, Michigan Radio began a partnership with ARISE Detroit! to launch a citywide journalism engagement initiative. The purpose of the project is to provide news coverage that meets the information and accountability needs of Detroit residents, especially those underserved by traditional news outlets. The project is funded in part by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION SPONSORSHIPS**

In FY21, Michigan Radio partnered with 20 organizations in seven different communities to promote their services and events on-air and online at no cost. Based on current on-air and online trade sponsorship rates, the value of the broadcast and online media exposure totaled over $85,000.
COMMUNITY IMPACT

At Michigan Radio, we are proud to be the most-listened-to public radio station in Michigan. Our organization-wide culture values hard work, respect, and integrity, which helps us make the greatest possible impact in Michigan communities.

AUDIENCE METRICS

According to the Nielsen Audio National Regional Database, Michigan Radio had a monthly broadcast audience of 860,000 people in Spring 2021 (Persons 12+, Mon-Sun 6am-12Mid), representing an increase of almost 9% over Spring 2020 and a rebound from the previous year’s pandemic-induced listener loss. Our monthly website audience included 450,000 users (825,000 pageviews) and 175,000 live stream listeners (1,000,000 listening hours), an increase of 13% and 17%, respectively, over pre-pandemic figures. And, finally, our social media audience held steady, as we ended FY21 with 104,800+ combined followers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

LOCAL AUDIENCE RESEARCH

In the 2021 Public Radio Tech Survey conducted by Jacobs Media, nearly 550 Michigan Radio audience members indicated why they consume public radio. The top five reasons include: (1) being informed about the news, (2) more trustworthy and objective programming, (3) deeper news perspective, (4) presentation of balanced perspectives, and (5) enjoy learning new things.

AWARD RECOGNITION

Michigan Radio earned 36 journalism awards from five different agencies for its 2020 news coverage. This includes “Station of the Year” and other awards from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters as well as recognition from the following agencies: Radio Television Digital News Association, Michigan Associated Press Media Editors, Michigan Press Association Foundation, and the Public Media Journalists Association.

LISTENER / USER FEEDBACK

We frequently find indicators of impact in the form of listener/user comments as we implement key initiatives and partnerships throughout the year. Here is just a small sample of comments we received in FY21:

“Michigan Radio provides unbiased journalism and allows its listeners to formulate their own opinions about issues of our time. It’s important that as members of this society, we have access to credible information so that we make informed decisions.” – Jacqueline, Grand Rapids

“I value Michigan Radio for including voices of people who have a wide range of lived experiences, for analysis that explains the roots of racial inequity and offers policy insights, and for its fact-based journalism.” – Elizabeth, Flint

“Thank you for your thorough reporting on politics, the pandemic and the world. Whenever it becomes overwhelming I can count on the weekend programming to make me laugh, cry and recharge.” – Diane, Birmingham

“Michigan Radio is a great source of inspiration that leads to my conversations with our kids as we travel to school and athletic events. It is great to have balanced reporting that lacks the vitriol of some news sources.” – Joel, Rockford

“... as a government teacher, I rely on Michigan radio to stay up-to-date with what’s going on in our state and around the country. Thank you so much for doing such an amazing service for our community, and for democracy.” – Chloe, Ann Arbor
Michigan Radio provides unbiased journalism and allows its listeners to formulate their own opinions about issues of our time. It is important that as members of this society, we have access to credible information so that we make informed decisions.” – Jacqueline, Grand Rapids

“... a deep felt thank you for the past hour highlighting Marvin Gaye and “What's Goin’ On?” I sat glued to my sofa listening to the entire broadcast. The statements and questions raised continue to haunt our society and the war is for the equity of people of color, and specifically, for black lives... Thank you for one of the best hours of reflection, understanding and courage.” – Patti, Ann Arbor

“I really appreciated the three-generation vaccine story reported by Erin Allen today on Michigan Radio. This kind of in-depth personal story is much needed right now. Through her mother’s business as well as her mother and grandmother, she was able to report a range of responses and reactions to the idea of getting vaccinated. Great story!” – Nan, E. Lansing

MEETING NEEDS OF DIVERSE AUDIENCES

Michigan Radio is working toward diversifying its audiences by evolving its programming and delivery platforms and diversifying its staffing composition to better serve Michigan communities.

The key imperative of Michigan Radio’s 2020 strategic plan is to diversify and grow our audiences. In addition to evolving programming and diversifying staffing composition, the plan calls for developing healthy, long-term relationships with underrepresented communities in Michigan, paying particular attention to those in our prime listening areas and beginning with the city of Detroit.

Toward this end, we have redoubled our commitment to diversifying candidate pools as staff vacancies arise, and we are thrilled to have welcomed four BIPOC women to our content team and one to our management team in FY21. We are also continuing to provide paid, immersive internships for young people from all backgrounds, including those who would otherwise be unable to accept an unpaid position, with the support of a dedicated endowment fund.

Michigan Radio also persists in being thoughtful and intentional about producing local content that increases cross-group understanding, strengthens conversational ties between diverse communities, and holds those in power accountable. Here are just a few examples from FY21:

“Thoughts of getting vaccinated have some Detroiters a ‘bit anxious.’” (February 9, 2021): In February of 2021, COVID-19 vaccines were still very new. There was a fair amount of conversation and reporting about vaccine hesitancy, but few stories managed to capture the humanity of the situation like this story by Stateside Producer Erin Allen. The story features Allen’s mom, a Detroit barber, and captures conversations about people’s doubts, fears, skepticism, and hopes.
“Atlanta killings revive memory of Vincent Chin and another time of Anti-Asian sentiment,” (April 5, 2021): Hate crimes are too often covered in isolation, without connecting the dots to other instances of violence against a community. Reporter Beenish Ahmed’s story related the March 2021 killing of six Asian women in Atlanta to the 1982 beating death of Vincent Chin just outside Detroit.

“Poet Tommye Blount’s new book mines the nuance of queer Black life in Detroit and white America,” (April 13, 2021): Tommye Blount spoke with Stateside Host April Baer about Fantasia for the Man in Blue, his debut poetry collection and finalist for the 2020 National Book Award. The segment was part of a yearlong conversation series on Stateside highlighting the art of queer Michigan artists.

“For quadriplegic car crash survivors, July 1 could be start of second tragedy,” (June 7, 2021): Until last year, Michigan drivers paid the highest auto insurance rates of any state in the country, and Detroit the highest insurance rates of any city. In May 2021, lawmakers made sweeping changes to Michigan’s auto insurance laws, including slashing lifetime medical coverage for victims of catastrophic accidents. Reporter Tracy Samilton warns that many would lose healthcare coverage if changes weren’t made.

“A year after “defund” protests, most large Michigan cities spending more on police, not less,” (June 22, 2021): One year after protests over police funding filled city streets, Reporters Dustin Dwyer and Nisa Khan set out to discover how local governments responded in their 2021 budget planning. By analyzing budgets from Michigan’s 20 biggest cities and accessing transcripts and recordings of government meetings via Minutes, they found that many cities actually increased funding for police.

And finally, as of the close of FY21, we had launched a new community engagement journalism initiative in Detroit. In partnership with local nonprofit ARISE Detroit!, we were working to form an inaugural Community Reporting Engagement Council (CREC) to serve as a valued thought partner, sounding board, and networking hub. We were also conducting a broad search to hire our first-ever community engagement reporter. Moving forward, we will strengthen our connections with local Detroiters as well as our understanding of select information needs via regular CREC meetings, one-on-one talks, and community conversations. By making the shift to a community-centered approach, we will create more inclusive news coverage that is meaningful and useful for Detroit residents.
Due to the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, FY21 was a difficult year for many nonprofits. Michigan Radio is incredibly fortunate, however, to remain in good financial standing thanks in large part to contributions from our loyal audience members. While corporate sponsorship revenue fell by 16% due to economic impacts of the pandemic, revenue from individual gifts and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting increased by 1% and 30%, respectively, compared to FY20.

**Revenue**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual gifts*</td>
<td>$6,226,429</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net investment income</td>
<td>$1,618,473</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate sponsorship</td>
<td>$1,502,223</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other**</td>
<td>$900,175</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corp. for Public Broadcasting</td>
<td>$714,878</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td>$10,962,179</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Individual gifts (membership), net investment income, and corporate sponsorship were Michigan Radio’s largest sources of revenue in FY20 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021). FY21 revenue totaled $10,962,179, a 15.3% increase over FY20 and a 16.1% increase over FY19.

*At the close of FY21 Michigan Radio had 34,786 contributing members.

**Other includes indirect administrative support from the University of Michigan, government and foundation grants, trade, rental income, and media sales/royalties.

**Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programming &amp; production</td>
<td>$5,277,180</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development*</td>
<td>$2,283,399</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management &amp; general</td>
<td>$1,098,197</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>$615,352</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$9,274,128</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Programming and development represented Michigan Radio’s two largest areas of expense in FY21. Expenses totaled $9,274,128, a 3.1% decrease over FY20 and a 1.9% increase over FY19.

*Development includes membership, major gifts, grants administration, corporate support, and marketing.

**Endowment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY21</td>
<td>$5,899,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY20</td>
<td>$4,264,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY19</td>
<td>$3,615,762</td>
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Michigan Radio maintains a combination of permanent and quasi-endowment funds. The sum of the endowed funds at the close of FY21 totaled $5,899,843, a 38.4% increase over FY20 and a 63.2% increase over FY19.
In FY21, Michigan Radio generated the majority of its funding from nearly 35,000 individuals, corporations, and foundations. It is because of this group of generous supporters that we are able to continue providing freely accessible, fact-based news and information to the people of Michigan 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. The following is a list of our corporate and foundation supporters.

**Supporters $15k and up**

- AARP of Michigan
- Allstate Home Leisure
- Ann Arbor SPARK
- Bank of Ann Arbor
- Blanchard & Walker PLLC
- Bob’s Red Mill
- Calvin University
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- Children’s Foundation
- Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
- Consumers Energy Foundation
- Corporation for Public Broadcasting
- Enbridge Energy
- Flint Institute of Arts
- Girl Scouts, Heart of Michigan
- Google, Inc.
- Grand Rapids Community Foundation
- Greenbrook TMS
- Greenleaf Trust
- Harness IP
- Health Alliance Plan of Michigan
- Henry Ford Health System
- Hillsdale College
- Holland Area Visitors Bureau
- Hope Foundation, The
- Kerrytown Market & Shops
- Liberty Title
- Library of Michigan
- MESSA Michigan Education Special Services Association
- Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs
- Michigan Health Endowment Fund
- Mika, Meyers, Beckett & Jones, PLC
- MSU Broad College of Business Exec. MBA
- Nacht Law
- National Heritage Academies
- Silver Maples Retirement Neighborhood
- Traverse City Tourism
- U-M Health System Michigan Medicine
- U-M Michigan Online
- Wayne State University Marketing & Communications
- Flint River Watershed Coalition
- Flowers for Dreams
- Founders Brewing Company
- Fred A. & Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation
- Gilmore, The
- Gordon Water Systems
- Grand Rapids Community College
- Grand Rapids Public Museum
- Great Lakes Learning Academy
- Greenhills School
- Harvest Solar
- Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies
- Healthcare DME
- Heart to Heart Hospice
- Holland Tulip Time Festival
- Hometown Urgent Care
- Hospice of Michigan
- Hungry Harvest
- Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative
- Impression 5 Science Center
- Inn at Bay Harbor
- Integrated Health Associates (IHA)
- Integrity Shows
- Jefferson Shows
- John Ball Zoo
- Kalamazoo College
- Kendall College of Art & Design of Ferris State University
- Kettering University
- Kettering University
- League of Women Voters of Michigan
- Legacy Land Conservancy
- Livingston Audiology & Hearing Aid Services
- Local First!
- Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum
- McCamly Plaza Hotel
- McLaren Health Care
- Medico Insurance Company
- Michigan Association of Nurse Anesthetists
- Michigan Awesome

**Supporters under $15k**

- Academy of the Sacred Heart
- Action Senior Benefits
- Aim High School
- Alden B. Dow Home & Studio
- Allergy & Immunology Associates of MI
- Alzheimers Assoc. — Great Lakes Chapter
- American Heart Association
- Ann Arbor Academy
- Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority
- Ann Arbor Film Festival
- Ann Arbor Public Schools
- Antique Touring Company
- Arbor Hospice
- Atomic Object LLC
- Barnes & Thornburg, LLP
- Birmingham Shopping District
- Business Leaders For Michigan
- Cardamom Fresh Indian Restaurant
- Charles Reinhart Company Realtors
- Children’s Advocacy Centers of Michigan
- Children’s Trust Fund
- Clark Retirement Communities
- College for Creative Studies
- Comcast Xfinity
- Community Foundation of Greater Flint
- Concordia University
- Cranbrook Art Museum
- Creative Windows
- Dawn Farm
- Doug Keller Construction Inc
- Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.
- Ecce
- Encore Musical Theatre Company
- Ferndale Downtown Development Authority
On the cover: Reporter Kate Wells prepares to enter the room of a COVID-19 patient at Lansing’s Sparrow Hospital during the third surge in April 2021 (Lester Graham).