

**Michigan Radio
University of Michigan**

Station Activities Survey (SAS)

Section 6: Local Content and Services Report

**A report required by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting
For the FY18 period (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018)**

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.

Michigan Radio is the public radio station licensed to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Our mission is to produce and distribute trusted content that informs, educates, entertains, and engages people who care about the state of Michigan and the world around them. You can find us on our three broadcast stations (WUOM 91.7 FM Ann Arbor and Detroit, WFUM 91.1 FM Flint, and WVGR 104.1 FM West Michigan), news website (www.michiganradio.org), social media (Facebook and Twitter), and in community spaces.

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVES

In addition to offering daily news programming from national and international public radio outlets, such as National Public Radio (NPR), American Public Media (APM), and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Michigan Radio produces and distributes its own quality, local journalism. We employ 27 full-time and three part-time staff dedicated to journalism content, including reporters, producers, and editors who work at our headquarters in Ann Arbor and at bureaus in Detroit, Flint, and Grand Rapids.

Michigan Radio is working toward a vision to be the most trusted, respected, and influential news and information provider for people in Michigan, one that cannot be ignored. As such, our team of award-winning journalists works diligently to bring breaking news stories, enterprise and investigative reporting, and in-depth interviews to a broad audience across the state. The following list highlights a sample of the local journalism initiatives produced by Michigan Radio in the 2018 fiscal year (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018):

(1) Larry Nassar sexual abuse case.

Michigan Radio first began investigating sexual abuse allegations against the former Michigan State University and USA Gymnastics doctor, Larry Nassar, after the issue was brought to light in a 2016 report by the *Indianapolis Star*.

Reporter Kate Wells devoted her reporting to this story in 2017 and 2018. With support from Michigan Radio's news team, Wells fielded tips from victims and sources and produced in-depth coverage from multiple angles of this complex story, including: police and FBI investigations into MSUs handling of sexual abuse complaints over several decades, multiple preliminary exams in the Nassar criminal case, numerous suspensions and resignations at MSU and USA Gymnastics, and a lengthy criminal trial against Nassar that ended in a 175-year sentence for sexually abusing patients under the guise of treatment.

(2) PFAS Contamination.

In August 2017, Michigan Radio began reporting on drinking water contamination near Rockford when testing by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) found elevated levels of per-and polyflouralkyl (PFAS), a family of chemicals discovered to be harmful only in the past decade.

West Michigan Reporter Bryce Huffman led the station's ongoing coverage, which centered on contamination from the former dumpsite of shoe manufacturer Wolverine Worldwide near Rockford and the emergence of at least 28 other PFAS contamination sites throughout Michigan. The coverage examined several aspects of this multifaceted story, including: class action and MDEQ lawsuits against Wolverine Worldwide, suspected PFAS-related health and environmental problems experienced by local residents, the progress of research to learn more about the actual health effects of PFAS in Michigan, and the state of Michigan's efforts to regulate the clean-up of PFAS in drinking water.

(3) Detroit Journalism Cooperative.

Michigan Radio entered its fifth year as a partner of the Detroit Journalism Cooperative (DJC), a project funded by the John S. and James. L. Knight Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

In the months leading up to the 50-year anniversary of Detroit's 1967 uprising, Michigan Radio and the Detroit Journalism Cooperative produced a series of stories to add to Michigan's understanding of those historical events. Michigan Radio's coverage included an hour-long documentary by Reporter and Host Lester Graham and more than 25 additional feature stories that appeared on-air and online. In addition, Social Media Producer Jodi Westrick developed a real-time Twitter feed on "@StatesideRadio" of the Detroit rebellion as it happened 50 years ago. In all, there were about 320 tweets spanning seven days in July 2017.

Our journalism also focused on Detroit's MorningSide neighborhood. Reporter/Producer Lester Graham spent lots of time there through December 2017, exploring local issues, like blight, crime, illegal dumping, senior care, and the neighborhood's relationship with city hall. Beginning in January 2018, we continued our work in MorningSide with the launch of a community podcast project. The one-year effort seeks to discover what happens when community members lead the conversation about their community. Imani Mixon, a Detroit-based journalist who spent part of her childhood in the MorningSide neighborhood, is embedded there and works closely with residents to produce their own stories about their own experiences during a time of transformation in a resurging city.

(4) Mismanagement at DWMHA.

In December 2017, Michigan Radio Reporter Tracy Samilton uncovered a pattern of financial waste, conflicts of interest, and cronyism at the Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority. The DWMHA manages nearly a quarter of a billion dollars in Medicaid funds to help improve the lives of 80,000 people with mental illness, physical and intellectual disabilities, and substance abuse disorders. Samilton examined related documents and conducted numerous interviews, both on and off the record, with individuals close to the situation.

(5) Coverage of Flint water crisis.

In 2015, Michigan Radio's investigative reporting helped expose critical information about the failure of government officials to provide safe drinking water to Flint residents. Three years later, we are still covering the aftermath of this public health disaster.

Flint-based Reporter Steve Carmody headed our continuing coverage of the crisis in 2017, including investigations into the state's handling of the Legionnaires' outbreak, the city's decision on a new drinking water source, and the closing of local, bottled water distribution centers. In addition, Investigative Reporter Lindsey Smith led the development of a series of reports in November 2017 about the "ripple effects" of the crisis, which help us understand: How has the crisis affected the management of other water systems in Michigan? Where are the lead drinking water pipes located in our state? How will potential changes to federal and state lead-in-water rules impact water systems nationwide?

(6) Stateside.

Stateside is Michigan Radio's hour-long, weekday newsmagazine program hosted by Cynthia Canty (Monday-Thursday) and Lester Graham (Friday). The program focuses on topics and events that matter to people all across the state. *Stateside* works closely with the Michigan Radio newsroom to provide in-depth coverage of critical news stories. Long-form interviews and reporting on "Stateside" have been a critical element of numerous reporting initiatives described in this report. *Stateside* also produces special series about arts and culture, mental health, education, literature, and Michigan history, among others.

(7) The Environment Report.

The Environment Report is a four-minute segment hosted by Rebecca Williams that airs every Tuesday and Thursday. The feature report explores the natural world and Michigan residents' relationship with it. Some of the topics covered in FY18 include the condition and fate of the Line 5 oil pipeline, climate change, and the health of the Great Lakes. Note: Beginning in September 2018, *The Environment Report* was reimagined to provide timely delivery of environmental content to our audience. Stories are now produced and aired as breaking and other environmental news happens.

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 three FM signals. Michigan Radio also provides severe weather alerts based on notifications from the National Weather Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

ENGAGEMENT

At Michigan Radio, we aim to meaningfully engage with members of the local community in order to facilitate civilized conversations and the respectful exchange of ideas. In FY18, we implemented several initiatives that helped us to engage with the public, both in the digital space and in the community:

(1) MI Curious.

MI Curious uses a public-powered journalism process to engage Michigan residents in developing news stories from start to finish. In FY18, local community members submitted 337 questions about things they wanted to know about Michigan and its people. Over 1,218 people voted for their favorite questions online in three public voting rounds, which resulted in the production of 15 stories by Michigan Radio journalists.

(2) Digital platforms.

Michigan Radio's most successful digital engagement efforts are happening on Facebook, where individuals interact with one another and with our journalists about news and events they care about. We ended FY18 with nearly 50k Facebook followers. Twitter is also becoming an increasingly successful way to connect with the public. We ended FY18 with over 39k Twitter followers.

(3) In-person events.

Michigan Radio regularly engages with members of the community at special station events. For example, in FY18 more than 1,000 people attended the station's nine Issues and Ale conversations in seven different communities, and over 350 people attended the station's two *Stateside* Live programs in East Lansing and Grand Rapids.

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 takes pride in being a valuable, contributing member of its local community. One important way we do this is to engage in productive partnerships with community organizations and other news outlets. Here are highlights of our FY18 partnerships:

MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

(1) Detroit Journalism Cooperative (DJC).

In FY18, Michigan Radio entered its fifth year as a member of the DJC, a cohort of five non-profit media outlets working together to document life in the city of Detroit after its historic 2013 bankruptcy. Our DJC media partners include “Bridge Magazine,” Detroit Public Television, WDET 101.9 FM, and New Michigan Media.

(2) Interlochen Public Radio (IPR).

Michigan Radio has a content sharing partnership with IPR, which is located in the northwestern part of the state. IPR broadcasts two of Michigan Radio’s local programs, *The Environment Report* and *Stateside*. IPR journalists also regularly contribute content for our production of *The Environment Report*.

(3) Michigan Public Radio Network (MPRN).

Michigan Radio is an active member of MPRN, a consortium of 10 public broadcasters that supports a shared capital news bureau in Lansing. We also partner with MPRN to produce *It’s Just Politics*, a weekly radio segment about politics in Michigan.

(4) EncoreMichigan.com.

Michigan Radio’s *Stateside* has an ongoing partnership with EncoreMichigan.com to produce conversations every other week about Michigan’s professional theatre industry. *Stateside* producers work with *EncoreMichigan*’s Editor-in-Chief David Kiley to develop thoughtful commentary and highlight current and upcoming performing arts performances.

(5) LocalSpins.com.

Michigan Radio’s *Stateside* has an ongoing partnership with LocalSpins.com to produce monthly conversations spotlighting new recordings by West Michigan bands. *Stateside* producers work with *Local Spins*’ Editor and Publisher John Sinkevics to create inspiring reviews of Michigan’s rich musical talent.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

(1) Michigan History Center.

Michigan Radio's *Stateside* has an ongoing partnership with the Michigan History Center to produce weekly conversations about Michigan's history. *Stateside* producers work with the Center's archivist to develop stimulating conversations and cultivate a collection of related, historical photographs (available on michiganradio.org). The FY18 conversations covered an array of topics, including the acknowledgement of National Typewriter Day with a remembrance of the Michigan resident who created the typographer in 1892.

(2) Education Contributor Matinga Ragatz.

Michigan Radio's *Stateside* partners with Hall of Fame teacher Matinga Ragatz to produce conversations every other week about education in Michigan. In FY18, the in-depth conversations explored current issues in education, such as safety and guns in schools and the importance of talking about race in the classroom.

(3) Community organization sponsorships.

Michigan Radio regularly partners with local community organizations in order to help increase the visibility of their services and events. In FY18, we partnered with 28 different organizations in ten different communities to promote their services and events on-air and online.

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.

At Michigan Radio, we pride ourselves in providing quality, community service journalism to the people of Michigan. We have built a station-wide culture in which hard work, respect, and integrity are expected and valued, and we believe this enables us to make the greatest possible impact in our community.

One way we measure our impact and effectiveness is by participating in local audience research. In the 2018 Public Radio Tech Survey conducted by Jacobs Media, for example, nearly 600 Michigan Radio listeners indicated why they listen to public radio. The top five reasons include: (1) being informed about the news, (2) more credible and objective programming, (3) deeper news perspective, (4) enjoy learning new things, and (5) presentation of balanced perspectives.

We also monitor a variety of metrics in order to measure the effectiveness of our work. At the close of FY18, for instance, Michigan Radio had a weekly cume of 510,100 listeners (Nielsen

Audio Fall 2017 NRD), 355,560 average website users per month, 130,000 average live stream users per month, and a contributing membership exceeding 36,000 people.

In addition, we frequently find indicators of success as we implement key initiatives and partnerships throughout the year. Here are just a few of those FY18 successes:

(1) Larry Nassar sexual abuse case.

Reporter Kate Wells is largely credited as one of a handful of journalists who helped end Larry Nassar's serial sexual abuse through in-depth reporting and the development of trusted relationships with sexual abuse survivors and the prosecutor and detective on the case. Wells' reporting earned a "Best Continuing Coverage" award from the Michigan Associated Press Media Editors.

Michigan Radio's newsroom also live tweeted two of Nassar's trials, which Twitter included in its "Twitter Moments" feature. Our tweets from the first Nassar trial (January 2018) garnered 2.91 million impressions, and tweets from the second trial (February 2018) garnered 2.57 million impressions. Both the reporting and distribution of content on social media increased awareness and understanding about the Nassar case and were swept up by the national #MeToo movement.

(2) PFAS contamination.

Michigan Radio's ongoing, in-depth coverage of PFAS contamination has helped bring widespread attention to the issue. Michigan residents and government officials alike count on the station's reporting for information about testing efforts, government response, and research about the health effects of the chemicals. In response to a story about PFAS contamination in Oscoda Township, a Facebook user commented: "Thank you, Michigan Radio, for finally reporting on this, and please keep it in your focus. The Wolverine PFAS incident has been well-publicized, but this one has not." Another Facebook user wrote: "THANK YOU for taking on this very important topic. I hope you develop this story like you did with the Flint water crisis because it deserves that kind of attention!!"

(3) Detroit Journalism Cooperative (DJC).

The journalism developed by Michigan Radio and the DJC helped increase awareness and understanding of Detroit's successes, challenges, and history. In response to the station's #Rebellion67 live tweet event, for instance, one user commented: "Wow, that was more intense than I was expecting. I always knew of the riots, but wasn't aware of the scale." Another user wrote: "I highly recommend following @StatesideRadio and going through their timeline for great history on police brutality and Detroit." The live tweet event earned an Edward R. Murrow Large Market Radio award (region 7) for "Excellence in Social Media."

Michigan Radio's journalism for the DJC also served as an important information resource for Detroit residents. For example, a nonprofit organization in the MorningSide community reprinted our reports about the community and distributed them to local residents, which indicates that Graham's efforts to develop relationships and trust among community members were successful. Graham's December 2017 documentary, "How is Detroit Doing?," earned a "Best Radio Documentary" award from the Detroit Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

(4) Mismanagement at DWMHA.

In December 2017, Michigan Radio Reporter Tracy Samilton uncovered a pattern of financial waste, conflicts of interest, and cronyism at the Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority. Her resulting report and conversation with the director of the Integrity Division within the Office of Inspector General prompted the State of Michigan to take immediate action. Specifically, the OIG scheduled of an onsite "certification review" at DWMHA and recommended new language in its contract with all community mental health agencies that will help prevent the future waste of Medicaid dollars. Samilton's reporting earned a "Best Investigative Reporting" award from the Michigan Associated Press Media Editors.

(5) Coverage of the Flint water crisis.

In FY18, Michigan Radio continued its public service journalism about the Flint water crisis, helping to give Flint residents a voice and providing critical information about the situation to the Michigan public. Reporter Lindsey Smith's series of reports, "Ripple Effects of the Flint Water Crisis," earned an Edward R. Murrow Large Market Radio award (region 7) for "Investigative Reporting."

(6) Stateside.

Stateside is Michigan Radio's third most-listened-to weekday program, with a weekly, cumulative broadcast audience of over 130k people. Because of its significant following, the daily, locally-produced program provides an important space to hold conversations about local news and events, policy issues, and culture and lifestyle stories. Here are just a few impact highlights of FY18:

Michigan Radio's *Stateside* team produced in-depth coverage about how Trump-era immigration policies affected the lives of Michiganders. The ongoing reporting followed attempts by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain and deport Iraqi nationals and other undocumented immigrants living in Michigan, among other events. In response to a June 2018 interview segment about efforts to reunite migrant kids with their families, one listener wrote to *Stateside* staff: "Your recent interview with the immigration lawyer...about separated children sent to Michigan was fantastic. What great information. Your show is one of the best on radio. Thank you!!"

Throughout FY18, *Stateside* also produced a series of interviews and reports about arts and culture in Michigan, helping to fill a void in local journalism coverage of culture and the arts. This type of reporting helps people identify more strongly with their community, region and state; increase their tolerance of others through better understanding; and become more involved in issues they learn and care about. A June 2018 story about “[Women bringing Macbeth to life in Shakespeare prison program](#),” for example, helped expose audiences to the prisoners’ human side. In a message to *Stateside* staff, the director of the prisoners program wrote: “The story turned out beautifully... Several of our alumni on the outside listened and loved it, too. One got incredibly emotional, actually. In a good way.”

(7) The Environment Report.

Michigan Radio’s *The Environment Report* is an important news and information resource for Michigan residents seeking to better understand the natural world and the everyday lives of people. For example, a high school student from an international school in Venezuela wrote to Michigan Radio in May 2018 to relate how TER content contributed to his classroom’s learning and helped him prepare for his AP exam in environmental science: “...From your podcast, I learned so much about wildlife and all the problems in the Great Lakes...I think that it has a lot of value in every podcast episode you make. All the problems you mention have to be resolved to live in a better place and I think it is amazing that you are making awareness of them.”

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 2018, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2019. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

One of Michigan Radio’s strategic goals is to be more reflective of the state and to better relate to more diverse audiences. We are striving to accomplish this in several ways. First, we are making strides to increase cultural, racial, and gender diversity among our staff through broad recruitment efforts, targeted professional development opportunities, and the expansion of our internship program. With the establishment of an internship fund in 2016, we are able to provide paid, 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.

Second, we are making concerted efforts to increase cultural, racial and gender diversity among the news sources used in our reporting through extensive networking and research efforts. We are also pursuing the development of a minority and diversity source database, which will help inform our journalism coverage with a greater variety of perspectives and experiences.

Lastly, we are thoughtful and intentional about producing local content that increases cross-group understanding and strengthens conversational ties between diverse communities. In FY18, for example, Detroit Journalism Cooperative Reporter Lester Graham helped elevate traditionally underrepresented voices through a reporting series from Detroit's MorningSide neighborhood, an economically disadvantaged community of color. We also began a new citizen podcast project in the MorningSide neighborhood in January 2018, which is helping to further elevate the voices of local community members.

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 approximately 5% 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 for the investment of other financial resources into important local news and information priorities. For example, it extends our ability to hire and retain a statewide news staff, grow and expand our flagship program, *Stateside*, and enables us to host community outreach forums.

We also recognize that indirect support from CPB includes payment of various music licensing fees for broadcast programming, which benefits all of public media. In effect, the value and impact of CPB support, both direct cash through 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.

**For more information about the contents of this report, contact Ellen Han, Associate Director of Development, Grants and Communications, at erinck@umich.edu and/or 734-764-9210.*