

Grantee Information

ID	1445
Grantee Name	WDET-FM
City	Detroit
State	MI
Licensee Type	University

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: 6.1

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 2024. 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 2024 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.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: 6.1

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.

WDET is in the process of updating its mission, vision, values and strategic plan which will succinctly illustrate our goals and approach. Our strategic planning process is inclusive of community input, stakeholder input, staff input and the best practices of public and commercial media. An inclusive process such as we are undertaking always take a long time to conduct and is never quite "finished." But as of this writing, one thing is clear: WDET exists to reflect, uplift and serve the community. Our most central goal is shaping to be "Make WDET Detroit's number one public media source." WDET's strategic priorities are: 1. Audience - Grow audience and membership 2. Quality – Increase quality of service. 3. Stability – Stabilize finances and operations WDET's approach to priority 1 consists of developing targeted marketing and advertising campaign. We approach priority 2 by advancing and introducing news, music and conversation programming, capitalizing on the celebration of WDET's 75th year of service and the station's significance to the City of Detroit. We hope to achieve Priority 3 through an enhanced focus on membership fundraising, underwriting and corporate funds. And also through our people -- striving to make WDET a great place to work. We work collaboratively internally and with external partners – most of whom are area non-profit organizations – to research, develop, produce and present outstanding content in the areas of news, music and public affairs talk shows. Our canvas – or platform -- is terrestrial radio, a full suite of digital offerings, social media and in-person events. We teach as we learn – hosting 8-10 interns each semester and welcoming young people and learners of all ages. We publish podcasts including CuriosiD which answers community questions about their region in long-form features. MichMash provides analysis of state politics in ways that are easy to understand and relatable to everyday life. The Detroit Evening Report provides news tailored for Detroit's communities of color and delivers the essentials in less than five minutes of content each weekday. Our Detroit Radio Reading Service (DRIS), has forged new partnerships within the African American, Hispanic, Jewish and Arab communities by using volunteers recruited from their ranks to read ethnic papers. DRIS also has expanded its focus to embrace people experiencing social isolation and illiteracy. Poetry readings and a book club have been added. Interactive two-way communication is on the horizon as soon as the necessary equipment can be purchased. A growing area of engagement is evident in WDET's robust travel program and a busy schedule of events happening winter, spring, summer and fall. Thousands have shared their data with WDET at events indicating a desire to join the WDET community.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: 6.1

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.

Please see the description of several partners and collaborative projects detailed in the answer to Q3. This narrative below includes rich feedback from our partners. Here are additional notes about key initiatives WDET is involved within the Community: • In 2024, WDET expanded its relationship with the Concert of Colors Global Music Festival which celebrates diversity through the presentation of global music. WDET locked arms with Concert of Colors in a major fundraiser that benefited both organizations. The event was held at the historic Motown Mansion. • WDET opened its doors to welcome Morning Edition producers in a meet and greet with listeners. This led to a week-long hosting by WDET of the Morning Edition broadcast live from Detroit. As a result more Detroit and Michigan stories – many of them tied to the election – were included in the national broadcast. • A partnership was initiated with The Love Building community center in Detroit and a commitment was forged to work together to elevate emerging culture creators whose creative work in Detroit has not yet enjoyed the spotlight it deserves

in the areas of food, fashion, fine art and music. The audio and video productions connected to this project will be created in 2025. • WDET shared its journalist's work with other public radio stations around the state broadening the audience for stories about Metro Detroit. • WDET continued its partnership with Chicago's City Bureau and Outlier Media to improve coverage of city government meetings by engaging members of the public to document those meetings and freely share information with Detroit's journalism ecosystem. This information is used as the basis of news stories in commercial and public media – print and broadcast. • WDET played an early role in recruiting Back Pocket Media to conduct a "Story Fest" in Detroit. That event finally happened in 2024 and WDET was a major sponsor. One of our veteran journalists told the story of a homeless man he befriended who died in the cold and was unclaimed in the city morgue for many months. This original reporting launched a national movement to collect funds to bury those whose family and friends were unable to do so. • Extra funds were raised to send WDET journalists to both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions to better report on the Michigan delegations active at the conventions and dig into issues and policy platforms that would impact the state. • Four "Smart Politics" events were held for the community to come together with subject matter experts to better understand voting and policy positions related to the general election year. • One of the new music shows is hosted by globally renowned techno artist, Waajeed. He leads the Detroit Underground Music Academy which works with young people to learn how to "make beats." Waajeed's proteges are involved in the production of his program. • WDET hosts a very robust paid internship program which involved about 10 learners per semester in the areas of show production, audio engineering, digital marketing, graphic design, photojournalism, and news reporting to name a few. The interns learn about broadcasting and also receive a generous curriculum of professional development topics such as resume writing, networking, financial literacy and workplace behaviors and ethics. • Close to 700 people toured WDET during "Noel Night" in December. In addition to educational tours, these guests were invited to watch and listen as we broadcast live and they could even record their own membership testimonial for the station. • Wayne State University student radio operators are affiliated with the station and station personnel is helping the students upgrade their programming and WAYN student radio.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: [6.1](#) ▼

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.

Partnerships or working with others is a way of life for WDET. We humbly respect the "big megaphone" our broadcast license affords the station and we share it generously with community partners. A few examples not mentioned elsewhere: • In FY 24, WDET shared the co-host chair of our daily news magazine, The Metro with journalists from Bridge Detroit, the City of Detroit, Outlier Media, Automotive News, Michigan Public Radio Network. • Citizen watchdogs from Documenters Detroit are frequently heard on WDET and collaborate with the station's news team. • In October, WDET partnered with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and the public media program, The Middle, to conduct a two-country, cross-country town hall about the US presidential election and its impact on Canada. It was called, "America Votes: A Cross Border Conversation." The Senior Producer of the production and the weekly "Cross Country Checkup" said this in a December letter: o ".....Right now, Canada and the United States may be inching toward an unprecedented trade war which would have catastrophic economic effects on both sides of the border. US president-elect Donald Trump has made repeated slights toward Canada's Prime Minister and mocked its sovereignty. We don't know exactly what the future holds as we consider four years of this new president. But I certainly know that we will return to WDET to open the lines of communication between our two great nations. Because ultimately, it's those personal bonds and collaboration that will get us through times of misunderstanding and define our future success. The "America Votes" special led to a 90% increase in broadcast ratings on CBC News Network for its TV time slot. The national radio broadcast reached over 700 thousand Canadians and a ratings jump of 23%. It was carried on over 170 stations across the USA and generated thousands of emails, phone calls, online posts and survey responses. Most importantly, it gave citizens on both sides of the border to understand each other a little bit more. None of this would have been possible without the enthusiastic support of the staff at WDET!" • The non-profit, Global-Ties Detroit partners with WDET when journalists and delegations from other countries visit the metro Detroit area. In 2024, at their request WDET engaged with several high-profile international delegations, including: o A delegation of Russian journalists in exile, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, discussing free speech and the role of media in holding governments accountable. o A U.S. Department of State-sponsored group of Edward R. Murrow Fellows from 24 nations, who explored best practices for countering disinformation and sustaining journalism in the modern media landscape. o A Congressional Office of International Leadership-sponsored delegation of Lithuanian journalists from border regions, learning about diverse viewpoints, including those of linguistic and ethnic minorities and historically underserved populations. • The manager of a beloved "dive bar" with whom WDET partners, gave the station this insight about the station's impact on their business: Over the past four summers, The Old Miami has had the privilege of partnering with WDET for their "What's Funny About Detroit" comedy show series, and the experience has been nothing short of transformative for our venue. Through this collaboration, WDET has brought a vibrant and dynamic energy to The Old Miami. The "What's Funny About Detroit" series not only showcases the exceptional comedic talent in our community but also attracts a diverse audience that might not have discovered our bar otherwise. These events have brought in fresh faces, expanding our customer base and creating an environment filled with laughter, connection, and celebration. The "What's Funny About Detroit" series has consistently drawn an audience of 350-400 people to our bar on Thursday evenings from 6-9 PM—traditionally a slower time for us. This influx of new and diverse patrons has not only helped us fill our space during these hours but also expanded our exposure within the community. WDET includes radio promotions that introduce The Old Miami to an even broader audience, solidifying our reputation as a welcoming hub for local culture and entertainment. The professionalism and creativity of WDET's team have made them a dream to work with. Their commitment to curating unique, high-quality events aligns perfectly with our mission to serve as a hub for culture, community, and entertainment. The positive impact of this partnership is evident in the strong relationships we've built with the station and both new and returning patrons, and we look forward to continuing this tradition of collaboration. • One of Detroit's largest international tourist attractions is the Movement Music Festival, produced by Paxahau. Morin Yousif, their Media and Communications manager said this about WDET: "Our partnership with WDET has been an extraordinary example of how two organizations can collaborate to elevate and celebrate the cultural fabric of Detroit, and we are proud to champion their contributions to our community. Since its founding, WDET-FM 101.9 Public Radio has been a beacon of storytelling, music, and news, showcasing the rich diversity and creative talent of Detroiters locally and globally. Their commitment to amplifying voices that are often undiscovered and underheard aligns seamlessly with Paxahau's mission of showcasing Detroit's unparalleled legacy in electronic music and innovation."

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: [6.1](#) ▼

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 2024, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2025. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

WDET initiated a community survey two years ago to assess listener needs and observations about the station. With pro bono assistance from a prominent branding agency, we also conducted focus groups of listeners and non-listeners to assess awareness and input from the community. These surveys told us our community was craving more local programming and more off-the-beaten path music – especially musical genres with roots in the metro Detroit area. The surveys tallied results by age, race and ethnicity to better help us identify needs of

each constituency. In February 2024, our programming schedule was dramatically changed to reflect a much higher percentage of local voices, local hosts and local content. Now, over 60% of all WDET programming is local. Listenership has increased 15% and WDET's share of the market has increased over 60%. WDET has also increased engagement events in the community. WDET was involved in 41 events at which we directly engaged 1 on 1 with more than 8,000 people. Thousands more were touched through our sponsorships, partnerships and other community activities. Activities and crowds are diverse reflecting both the varied programming on WDET – news, music, conversation and also the diversity of the community the station serves. WDET operates the Detroit Radio Information Service (DRIS) on a sub-channel. DRIS is a radio reading service that has traditionally served the needs of the blind and print-handicapped community. DRIS has expanded its focus to also target ethnic and minority communities and also directly address social isolation. DRIS now offers live local readings of the Jewish News, El Central (for Spanish speakers), the Michigan Chronicle which serves African Americans, and we are negotiating with the Arab American community news. DRIS has also added a book club, poetry readings and reading of the local grocery shopping circulars coupled with recipe-sharing based on the food on sale which is appreciated by our shut-in listeners who may only get one or sometimes no trips to the grocery store each week. New and augmented relationships with these papers and their communities has allowed WDET main-channel programming and news to be echoed in their publications. WDET has enhanced the Detroit Evening Report – a daily three-minute round-up of news which focusses on the concerns, passions, ideas and needs of Detroiters of Color. It's available digitally. The Detroit Evening Report is hosted by WDET's journalists of color, all of whom are experienced journalists. The WDET Internship Program, Building Equity in Media, is quite robust and has been augmented to enhance the pipeline of future journalists, broadcasters and other media related jobs. Our interns are also helping level the playing field for these jobs with a professional pipeline and mentorship for young people including a high percentage of interns of color. The program has increased its learning objectives and casts a wide net to recruit. Interns are now paid (entry level) to further provide access to low-income learners.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: [6.1](#) ▼

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?

Without the CPB grant, WDET could not fulfill its mission of service. WDET spends the CPB grant on programming. This is the station's essence. Fundraising sources other than CPB are aggressively pursued, but a huge hole would be created if not for CPB funding and it would touch every function of the station. Our largest single source of revenue is the CPB grant. The largest amount of revenue comes from individual listeners who contribute gifts from \$5 to \$50 per month and to sometimes \$5,000 per year. In FY 24, WDET made a push to add more individual contributors to the station's membership rolls, but it is a challenge especially since many memberships cycle off after a year and are not renewed. There is constant churn. Business and foundation support has been difficult to maintain at status quo. Our ability to train students, share information with the blind and print-handicapped community, and open our doors to young learners would be threatened as these things are not considered core to the business although WDET considers them core to our service. Through news and music programming WDET informs the community about the region's past, present and future. And WDET gives lift and life to the region's arts and culture community, social service agencies and newsmakers.

Comments

Question

Comment

No Comments for this section