

Michigan Radio Statement on Diversity

July 10, 2020

For Michigan Radio, increasing diversity is an existential pursuit.

Diverse stories and perspectives have the power to expand thinking and challenge assumptions - both of which are central to our mission, especially in an increasingly polarized world. When paired with an equally thoughtful and inclusive approach to community outreach, this type of content also has the potential to diversify and expand our audiences, which is essential to the station's long-term sustainability.

In order to do any of that well, we recognize we must make sure the station's staffing composition broadly reflects the communities we serve now - and those we wish to serve in the future. We are absolutely committed to doing just that.

This commitment is not new. Previous and ongoing efforts to increase staff diversity include:

- Establishing a paid internship program to make public media learning opportunities more accessible;
- Advertising all open positions with minority journalism organizations;
- Maintaining an annual presence at job fairs in Michigan's major cities;
- Attending the National Association of Black Journalists' annual conference; and
- Actively participating in the University of Michigan's¹ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan.

These efforts have clearly not been sufficient. While we have welcomed a number of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) to Michigan Radio through the internship program, our relatively low staff turnover means that most of them have left us upon advancing from the program. The end result is that, at present, only five of Michigan Radio's fifty-four employees are BIPOC. That's simply not good enough.

That's why our strategic plan is anchored in the imperative to grow and diversify our audiences, which is inseparable from the imperative to grow and diversify our staff. The details of the plan call for a number of new positions to be created. One of these will be a senior manager with dual Finance and Human Resources expertise that will lead Michigan Radio's organizational development, with a particular focus on diversity. In combination with the three positions currently unfilled and two others to be posted later in the current fiscal year, this cohort of new positions presents an unparalleled opportunity to increase the station's diversity, broadly defined, in the immediate future.

We also plan to implement additional, supportive actions, such as:

- Providing anti-racism, unconscious bias, and other relevant professional development opportunities for existing staff, in order to create a more welcoming workplace;
- Transforming our hiring practices - from pre-screening job postings to ensure bias-free language; to expanding search committees to include more diverse evaluators; and standardizing our processes to ensure an equitable experience for all candidates.
- Introducing an annual report on the demographic composition of our staff which is posted publicly on our website and tracked with prior period comparisons.

¹ University of Michigan is the station's license-holder

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In the future, we will also create content advisory councils in the major cities we serve, intended to invite feedback on story selection, sourcing, and the voices heard on Michigan Radio.

We know that we have much work to do. Yet, we are undaunted by the challenge, knowing that our very future depends on it.