

2026 Competition - Public Radio Categories

1. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

May be any public service announcement locally produced by the station, a public service activity coordinated by the station or any form of gratis community outreach which is a public service of the station to serve its local community. Submit file and any substantiating material. Entry must include an explanation of events.

Criteria: Production, creativity, and community impact.
Entries Allowed: One

2. FEATURE/USE OF MEDIUM

A single report which may have aired in a newscast as relief or contrast to serious reporting or a long form program.

Criteria: Human interest, subject portrayal, creative writing, entertainment value, effective use of audio, video and editing medium.
Entries Allowed: Three

3. HARD NEWS & CURRENT EVENTS STORY

Coverage of a significant event affecting the community. May be an investigative or enterprise story.

Criteria: Significance, presentation of facts, thoroughness, and delivery.
Entries Allowed: Three

4. MARKETING MATERIALS & PROMOS

Promotion of your station or a promotional announcement for a program your station produces and airs. Must be written, produced, and aired on your station. May be single announcement or series.

Criteria: Creativity, effectiveness, and production.
Entries Allowed: Three

5. MEMBERSHIP APPEAL

A live or pre-produced pitch or spot which is engaging and moves listeners to action.

Criteria: Should be unique, entertaining, and creative.
Entries Allowed: Three

6. MINI-DOCUMENTARY OR SERIES

Series of reports on a single topic which may be included in a regularly scheduled newscast.

Criteria: Significance, resourcefulness, comprehensiveness, thoroughness of research, and production value.
Entries Allowed: Three



2026 Competition - Public Radio Categories

8. MUSICAL PROGRAMMING

Best locally originated, regularly produced musical programming.

Criteria: Presentation, entertainment value, creativity, and enrichment.
Entries Allowed: Three

9. NEWSCAST

Best locally originated newscast.

Criteria: Presentation, production value, interest of stories presented, and overall impact of the newscast.
Entries Allowed: Three

10. NEWS SPECIAL OR PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

A single, self-contained report or program which aired separately from a regularly scheduled news program and is at least 30 minutes in length.

Criteria: Significance, resourcefulness, comprehensiveness, thoroughness of research, and production value.
Entries Allowed: Three

11. SPECIAL INTEREST & CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

Public affairs program featuring issues of interest to Michigan citizens of all ages (may be children's programming, recreation, sports, special performances, parades, concerts, etc.) at local and state levels.

Criteria: Presentation, production, and comprehensiveness.
Entries Allowed: Three

12. SPOT NEWS

A report on any topic that aired during a station's regular newscast. Maximum length of entry – two minutes.

Criteria: Clarity, conciseness, quality of writing, and quality of sound.
Entries Allowed: Three

13. STATION EXCELLENCE (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

A 1,000-word maximum essay explaining why the station is deserving of the overall Station of the Year title. Must include at least three testimonials or letters of support from station partners, sponsors and/or affiliates. **A station must enter this category to be considered for station of the year.**

Entries Allowed: One



2026 Competition - Public Radio Categories

14. USE OF MULTIPLATFORM MEDIA, PROMOTIONAL/MEMBERSHIP MATERIALS

Stations should showcase their use of digital media content for promotional materials and membership appeal. Content placement examples include, but are not limited to, Reels, Instagram posts, and TikToks. Compile content into a linear submission up to ten minutes long.

Criteria: Innovation, creativity, presentation.
Entries Allowed: Three

15. USE OF MULTIPLATFORM MEDIA, PROGRAMMING MATERIALS

Stations should showcase their use of digital media content for programming. Content placement examples include podcasts and online-specific programming. Compile content into a linear submission up to 30 minutes in length. Option to include a one-paragraph narrative of submission.

Criteria: Innovation, creativity, presentation.
Entries Allowed: Three

PUBLIC RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR

Only those public radio stations who enter the Station Excellence category are eligible for Station of the Year. Station of the Year will be based on the total cumulative points for all awards won, with weighted points in the Station Excellence Category. The winners of both the Best and the Merit award in the Station Excellence category will receive an additional 60 points to be counted toward Station of the Year.

Tie Breaker
In the event of a tie, the station with the most Best awards will be awarded Station of the Year. If a tie remains, the station who placed Best in the Community Involvement category will be awarded Station of the Year.













