



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

The Center for Michigan

Founded in 2006, the Center for Michigan is a 501(c)3 nonprofit public service organization.

The Center publishes:



Bridge Michigan
(founded 2011),
an award-winning

nonprofit news organization dedicated to providing in-depth, nonpartisan reporting on Michigan's people, politics and policies; and



BridgeDetroit (founded
2020), a nonprofit
community news,

information and engagement media service in one of America's largest majority African American cities.

2024

Our Ongoing Commitment – Letter from the CEO

For the last three years, we have produced this Annual Report to ensure our accountability to our readers, our partners, our funders and all who care about the future of nonprofit, nonpartisan news and information for Michigan.

In 2025, we are preparing to celebrate fourteen years of publishing Bridge Michigan and five years of publishing BridgeDetroit. And we commit to you that we are just getting started!

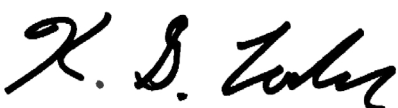
Democracy depends on journalism. Communities rely upon trustworthy information about their health, government, environment, business climate, education, and so much more that make up our daily lives. We are privileged to work to fill the needs of Michiganders who crave reliable, nonpartisan news. We are grateful to our donors and readers who have afforded us the opportunity to try to meet this critical need.

In this 2024 report, you will find:

- An overview of our mission and values
- Highlights of the reporting, events, awards and achievements of each newsroom
- Financial, audience and membership metrics
- Information about our funders, our board and our staff

Whether you are reading this as a partner, a funder, a subscriber, a member or someone entirely new to the work of the Center and its newsrooms, we are thankful you are taking the time to get to know us. We are proud of the work we do to serve Michigan and hope you continue to join us in the work.

With gratitude and determination,



Katy Locker



Our Mission

Making Michigan better through high-quality, nonpartisan journalism and engagement.



Our Values

Excellence & Effectiveness: We believe that rigorous journalism and public engagement are pillars of democracy. We provide high-quality journalism with fair and meticulously sourced reporting on policy-based issues that empowers all residents with facts, context and clarity. We embrace a culture of exploration and discovery. We are dedicated to building a better newsroom and nonprofit in Michigan, one that is financially sustainable for years to come and can contribute to new models for civic news.

Inclusivity & Accessibility: We respect all perspectives of residents in all Michigan communities, and we endeavor to reflect them in our reporting and engagement. We endeavor to be accessible to and to meet news consumers where they are with free access to all of our content. We eagerly collaborate with other newsrooms and partners when working together benefits Michigan residents. We seek a dialogue with readers and residents because the regular exchange of ideas through events and feedback benefits all of Michigan.

Trust & Reliability: We are beholden to no group, ideology or political party. We are transparent about — and independent of — our sources of funding. We use data to separate fact from conjecture, and approach stories eager to follow evidence wherever it leads. We dedicate all revenue to the mission of making Michigan better. We are clear about our methods. We own our mistakes promptly and transparently.

A Work Environment Where

People Thrive: We put people first. We believe that outside interests and pursuits make staffers more interesting, productive and better at their jobs. We believe all staff deserve a workplace that is fair, respectful, intellectually challenging and uplifting in pursuit of excellence. We are dedicated to building a staff that reflects the diversity of our state. We pursue diversified revenue sources, prudent financial management and institutional decision-making to ensure long-term, sustainable growth. We endeavor to provide a safe, nourishing workplace that values kindness, development, mental health, communication and transparency.

You can read more about the Center for Michigan's [Mission and Values](#) on our website.

Center for Michigan's Ethics & Conflict of Interest Policy

The Center for Michigan's [Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy](#), adopted August 2024, outlines rigorous standards to maintain journalistic integrity and impartiality across its publications, Bridge Michigan and BridgeDetroit. Rooted in the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics and the Institute for Nonprofit News standards, the policy balances employees' rights to engage in personal and public life with the organization's commitment to ethical journalism.

Employees must avoid conflicts of interest, political activities or board memberships that could compromise credibility, and disclose affiliations annually. Social media use, outside employment and interactions with funders are governed by strict guidelines to prevent bias or perceived impropriety. Transparency, accountability and consultation with managers are emphasized to uphold trust, with the policy serving as a flexible framework for ethical decision-making.

Ratings & Recognition



Nonpartisan and Unbiased:

AllSides, a national media bias watchdog, rated Bridge Michigan as “center,” indicating



that it is not biased to the left or the right, based on “multi-partisan, scientific analysis.” Center for Michigan publications scored 100 out of 100 from NewsGuard. The website, staffed by a team of journalists and experienced editors, produces reliability ratings and scores for news and information websites based on nine journalistic criteria. Our score reflects “high credibility” in adherence to all nine standards of credibility and transparency.



Customer Satisfaction:

Bridge Michigan's average Net Promoter Score (NPS) was +61 in 2024. BridgeDetroit's score was +51. Net Promoter is a key measure of customer satisfaction used by a wide range of industries. Calculated on a scale of -100 to +100, any Net Promoter Score above 50 is considered excellent.



Gold Seal of Transparency:

The GuideStar Seal of Transparency, introduced by Candid in 2013, provides recognition when a nonprofit shares information on the GuideStar website. To attain a Gold Seal, the Center for Michigan provided financial, board, staff, program and brand details that enable current and potential donors to thoroughly research the organization.

2024 Impact Report

In 2024, the Center benefited from a partnership with the Lenfest Institute's Statewide News Collective to undergo an impact research project.

This statewide survey of 2,020 adult (18+) Michigan residents produced a qualitative analysis of Bridge Michigan's coverage. [The report](#) concluded “Bridge Michigan's coverage reaches a wide swath of Michigan residents; is viewed as trustworthy by its readers; addresses many of their most important concerns; and promotes knowledge of key issues and engagement in their communities.”

The report highlights Bridge Michigan's significant impact on its audience and its role as a trusted source of information. The key findings of the report include:

- Bridge Michigan reaches a wide swath of Michigan residents.
- Bridge Michigan gets high marks for trustworthiness.
- Bridge Michigan makes significant contributions to the information environment.
- Bridge Michigan readers are better informed and more likely to engage in civic activity.
- Bridge Michigan stories affect readers in various ways.

Medill 2024 State of Local News Report

In the [Local News Initiative's 2024 “Brightspots” report](#) produced by Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Bridge Michigan was shared as a standout example of sustainable nonprofit journalism. In the article shared online, author Autumn Brewington noted how “**In a period when media cutbacks and closures are a norm, Bridge Michigan, the state's largest nonprofit news service, projects enviable stability.**” CEO Katy Locker, Executive Editor of Impact Joel Kurth and Membership and Engagement Director Amber DeLind shared their perspectives in a Q&A, highlighting Bridge Michigan's growth, partnerships, audience and reporting.



Stevie Hatch grew up with cousin Dustin Marshall, a jokester to his family and a chef at several Kalamazoo restaurants. He was one of at least seven people who died of an overdose in April 2023. (Mark Bugnaski for Bridge Michigan)

“The project is Bridge at its finest: delving deep into a policy issue that got little attention but affected thousands of lives. Through relentless reporting, Robin and Ron prodded governments to action, furthered understanding and empathy of an ongoing crisis and hopefully improved lives.”

*– Joel Kurth,
Executive Editor of Impact*



Trish Burgess, a former user now in recovery, volunteers at a shelter in Monroe. She said spending discussions about the opiate settlement should include the voices of people who have lived through addiction. (Robin Erb/ Bridge Michigan)

Reporting

HEALTH

Beyond accountability, reporting on opioids underscored the human toll of addiction, new approaches to care and gaps that complicate treatment. A powerful piece of investigative reporting by health reporter Robin Erb, [The ‘day of death’: How a mystery drug, spate of ODs changed west Michigan](#), recounted a devastating 29 hours in 2023 in Kalamazoo that strained emergency responders and required unprecedented levels of cooperation among health, recovery and public safety officials. The outbreak caused at least 19 overdoses and six deaths, and demonstrated how fentanyl is shattering communities. Reporter Ron French wrote numerous articles about struggles in rural Michigan, including how shortages of housing and workers exacerbate treatment gaps. His solution-oriented focus also showcased job-training programs and clinics that are providing hope. This impactful storytelling has not only informed the public but also pressured policymakers to prioritize funding and support for those battling addiction, fostering greater awareness and accountability in addressing this pervasive crisis.

Additional health reporting in 2024 tackled critical issues such as doctor shortages, access to care, mental health and health disparities. Bridge’s investigations into underreporting of COVID-19 cases and the rise of gambling addiction have held officials accountable, and spurred calls for greater transparency and action. Through comprehensive coverage, Health Watch has become an indispensable resource for policymakers, healthcare professionals and the public, driving meaningful improvements in healthcare policy and outcomes across the state.

ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

Bridge Michigan spent much of the year reporting on the opioid epidemic, which annually kills more people than guns and car crashes combined. Through more than 50 articles, reporters detailed not only the toll of the tragedy but revealed that local governments were moving slowly to direct resources to help, even as deaths escalated. Bridge’s reporting revealed that, at the start of the year, few counties or cities had spent any of the \$1.6 billion coming to them and the state from a national lawsuit settlement with opioid manufacturers and distributors. Using public records requests to 130 local governments, Bridge spent months compiling the most complete accounting of settlement funds in the state. The reporting uncovered examples of questionable expenses, prompting a complaint to the attorney general, and increased public transparency. Following the reports, Michigan doubled its budget to fight the epidemic and restored funding for tribal governments hit hard by the tragedy.



U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm announces \$500 million in federal funding to keep a Lansing General Motors plant open amid the shift to EVs. The plant, which builds Cadillac CT4s and CT5s, will be retooled for battery-powered vehicles. (Kelly House/Bridge Michigan)



Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in September cheered a \$63 million investment from Denso Corp. The Japanese auto supplier plans to retool Battle Creek production lines to transition to electric vehicles. The state contributed \$1.4 million in subsidies to the venture, which is not expected to create any jobs but is expected to preserve 2,100 jobs. (Courtesy photo)



ENVIRONMENT

Bridge Michigan's Environment Watch provided in-depth reporting on Michigan's bumpy transition to clean energy and goals to achieve 100% clean energy by 2040. Bridge reporting revealed the underwhelming results of Michigan's \$2 billion investment in electric vehicle battery plants, finding that, as of mid-2024, only 200 jobs had been created. The reporting prompted debate on the Capitol floor and legislation to reform incentives. Similarly, coverage of tax breaks for data centers highlighted concerns over limited job creation and environmental costs, fueling debates about the long-term impacts of such investments. Through its investigative reporting, Environment Watch has played a key role in ensuring that high-stakes decisions are made with transparency, accountability, and a long-term focus on both environmental and economic outcomes.

BUSINESS

Bridge Michigan's Business Watch reporting provided comprehensive coverage of Michigan's evolving economic landscape, sparking critical conversations and influencing policy decisions. For example, Michigan committed \$335 million in incentives to 83 companies, aiming to create over 11,000 jobs. A Bridge Michigan investigation found that 40% of the deals led to the creation of jobs paying less than the state's median wage of \$45,510. Michigan's \$1 billion investment in electric vehicle battery plants has so far created just 200 jobs, raising questions about the effectiveness of these large-scale subsidies. The reporting fueled a growing debate about whether these subsidies are delivering on their promise to provide high-paying, sustainable employment, or if they are primarily benefiting companies without generating significant economic returns for the state. This in-depth analysis prompted legislative action, with the Michigan Senate approving significant reforms to the state's business incentive programs to encourage higher-wage job creation.

EV road trip around Lake Michigan

Bridge Michigan's business and environment reporters teamed to focus on the growing electric vehicle (EV) industry in Michigan. Journalists Paula Gardner, Kelly House and Asha Lewis began their five-day, 1,000-mile road trip in a rented Chevy Bolt electric vehicle, designed to test charging infrastructure around Lake Michigan. The trip provided insight into challenges like range anxiety and the need for more public charging stations. Their coverage also examined the environmental and economic implications of the EV shift, spotlighting the billion-dollar subsidies for EV and battery plants, and their impact on job creation. This in-depth exploration brought a personal and policy-focused perspective to a topic critical to Michigan's future as an automotive hub.

What Our Readers Are Saying

“**Democracy** is only healthy when we have an **active independent press.**”

– Warren Williams

“**Bridge provides local news** that we're very short of here in Michigan and certainly in Lansing.”

– Esther Thorson

“The **coverage is great**, and bipartisan **without being 'both sides' biased.**”

– Mary Niesen

“Bridge fortifies our belief in the First Amendment, **an independent cadre of trained journalists seeking and reflecting truth** in an era of rampant disinformation.”

– Gregg and Dee Smith

“We teach journalism at Oakland University and recommend your website to our students as **a wonderful example of fair, accurate reporting** in the public interest.”

– Garry and Holly Gilbert

POLITICS & POLICY

Bridge Michigan's Politics Watch 2024 election coverage set a high standard for civic journalism, providing voters with the tools to make informed decisions. Central to this effort were resources like the Elections FAQ and the 2024 Voter Guide, a comprehensive hub featuring information on candidates, key issues, endorsements, polls and voting logistics. This dynamic guide evolved during the election season, incorporating the Ask Bridge Anything feature that allowed readers to submit questions to Capitol reporters for direct answers that also shaped additional coverage. The 2024 Election Tracker, updated daily, delivered breaking news on campaigns and politics, while a weekly livestreaming show engaged audiences by addressing voter questions and analyzing the latest developments.

Throughout 2024, Politics Watch reporting also delivered hard-hitting investigations into Michigan's political landscape, exposing how developers who secured substantial government grants became top political donors, prompting Attorney General Dana Nessel to call for reforms. The team spotlighted the historic rise of women in politics during the 2024 election while also tracking the state's response to national events.



Bridge Michigan reporters broke down the latest political news in our Elections FAQ live show. (Bridge graphic)

Bridge Michigan remains steadfast in its commitment to rigorous fact-checking, a cornerstone of its mission to provide trustworthy, nonpartisan journalism. In an era where social media platforms are increasingly scaling back on efforts to curb misinformation, Bridge Michigan serves as a vital counterbalance, ensuring readers have access to accurate and verified information. Through meticulous research, expert sourcing and transparency in reporting, Bridge Michigan helps readers discern fact from fiction. This dedication is especially critical during high-stakes events like elections, where misinformation can undermine public trust.



The children of Flint were feared to suffer lowered IQ and behavioral problems caused by lead in the city's water supply in 2014 and 2015. New analyses suggest the dire warnings were a "myth." (Michael Indriolo for Bridge Michigan)

EDUCATION

Bridge Michigan's Education Watch spent a year holding the state's schools accountable by conducting in-depth reporting on educational issues, including student performance, policy changes and legislative actions. Ten years after the Flint drinking water crisis, Bridge Michigan provided extensive coverage of its long-term impact on students. The reporting challenged narratives that lead exposure caused irrevocable harm to youths, pointing instead to lower expectations, trauma and stigma. Meticulously researched, the reporting helped reframe the legacy of the crisis.

Bridge Michigan's reporting on the state's community college guarantee program revealed that many students were excluded from the "free" tuition promise. This coverage highlighted the gap between government promises and the reality many students face, pressuring lawmakers to reconsider the inclusivity and fairness of the program.

Bridge Michigan's reporting on school bonds shed light on a critical shift in public opinion, revealing that Michigan voters are increasingly rejecting school bond proposals. This investigative work highlighted factors like economic concerns, public distrust and the complex nature of school finance, prompting debates about how to regain voter support. This coverage influenced public discourse and added pressure on school leaders to rethink their approaches to funding.



Students play on a playscape at the Hale Area Schools campus, where rusted metal framing has been covered with black paint. (Jeff Sauger for Bridge Michigan)

Honors & Awards



Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame – John Bebow



In 2024, John Bebow, the founding publisher of Bridge Michigan and former CEO of the Center for Michigan, was inducted into the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame. Under Bebow's leadership from its founding, Bridge Michigan grew from a twice-weekly publication into the state's largest nonprofit newsroom, garnering over 200 state and national awards and setting a national standard for nonprofit journalism. His commitment to government transparency and accountability left an indelible mark on Michigan's media landscape, including a landmark Michigan Supreme Court ruling that established public access to redistricting commission deliberations. Following his retirement in December 2023, Bebow continues to serve as an executive adviser.



Michigan Journalists of the Year

Jonathan Oosting and Mike Wilkinson
Michigan Press Association

For a fourth year in a row, Bridge Michigan journalists were named the state's Journalists of the Year. Oosting and Wilkinson uncovered issues in Michigan's grant-making process, including a controversial \$25 million health campus tied to a former House Speaker. They also highlighted Michigan State University's safety lapses following a campus mass shooting.

The two earned the honor along with 14 other awards for Bridge Michigan reporters. Bridge's sister publication, BridgeDetroit, earned eight awards in the statewide contest honoring the best in Michigan journalism.

Additional Honors from the Michigan Press Association:

- First place in news enterprise, to Isabel Lohman, for [Critical race theory flap makes teachers tiptoe on slavery, racism topics](#)
- First place in spot news, to the Bridge staff, for coverage of the MSU mass shooting
- First place in feature writing, to Ron French, for [How a tiny U.P. school became a national model for Native American education](#)
- First place in news photography, to Jonathan Oosting for a photo in the aftermath of MSU's shooting

Wade McCree Advancement of Justice Award, sponsored by the Michigan Press Association Foundation



Bridge Michigan reporter Lauren Gibbons earned the 2024 Wade H. McCree Advancement of Justice Award for her investigation into Michigan's juvenile justice system, which revealed how court fees burden families with crippling debt. Her reporting uncovered millions of dollars in collective debts owed by families, prompting swift legislative reforms to eliminate most juvenile court fees.

Honors & Awards, Continued.

Society of Professional Journalists - Detroit Chapter



Bridge Michigan and BridgeDetroit earned top honors at the Detroit Society of Professional Journalists' Excellence in Journalism awards. Bridge Michigan's Jonathan Oosting and Mike Wilkinson were named Journalists of the Year for their impactful investigations, including Michigan's political spending and Michigan State University's mass shooting response. BridgeDetroit's Jena Brooker was named Young Journalist of the Year for her outstanding work on community and justice issues. The publications collectively secured 16 other accolades across categories like environmental reporting, education and social media strategy, showcasing a commitment to high-quality journalism that serves Michigan communities.



Society of Environmental Journalists

Bridge Michigan reporters Paula Gardner and Kelly House earned national recognition from the Society of Environmental Journalists for their project, Michigan's Industrial Legacy, which examined the environmental fallout of abandoned auto factories. The series, which received an honorable mention for Outstanding Explanatory Reporting, highlighted how weak cleanup laws left taxpayers footing the bill for pollution while auto companies received new incentives for electric vehicle plants. Judges praised the series for connecting past pollution to future challenges, and for its impact in prompting legislative reforms. After its publication, lawmakers proposed reforms to Michigan's contamination cleanup laws and corporate incentives programs.

Partnerships



Associated Press: Bridge Michigan partnered with the Associated Press (AP) to expand access to election content and services for local newsrooms ahead of the U.S. presidential election. This collaboration, funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, was meant to bolster local newsrooms' capacity to deliver comprehensive election information.



Eldercare Collaborative: Ongoing, solutions-focused reporting on eldercare, home health care and health equity issues, with news outlets in southeast Michigan and western New York as part of the New York & Michigan Solutions Journalism Cooperative, supported by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.



Great Lakes News Collaborative: The Great Lakes News Collaborative, funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, consists of Bridge Michigan, Circle of Blue, Great Lakes Now at Detroit PBS, Michigan Public and The Narwhal, working together to bring audiences news and information about the impact of climate change, pollution, and aging infrastructure on the Great Lakes and drinking water.



Michigan Press Association: In partnership with the Michigan Press Association (MPA), Bridge Michigan provides syndicated news to newspapers across Michigan to help those hometown publications connect readers to state policy and politics. In addition, Bridge Michigan values its partnership with MPA to promote press freedom through its policy work and legal hotline.



Michigan State University School of Journalism: Gabby Nelson, a senior at Michigan State, joined the Bridge Michigan staff for a summer internship focused on environmental reporting. This specialty-beat internship was the result of a collaboration between Bridge Michigan and the MSU Knight Center for Environmental Journalism, funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.



University of Michigan English Department: Sneha Dhandapani, a junior at the University of Michigan majoring in cognitive science and creative writing, worked as a general assignment reporter at Bridge Michigan from May 28 to July 19, 2024. The internship continued a long-time collaboration between Bridge Michigan and the University's English Department.



VoteBeat: A nonpartisan reporting project created by Chalkbeat (now Civic News Company) covering local election integrity and voting access.

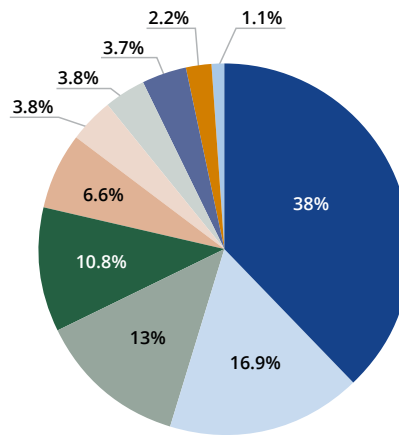
Readers & Subscribers

Sources of Website Traffic

Audience Numbers

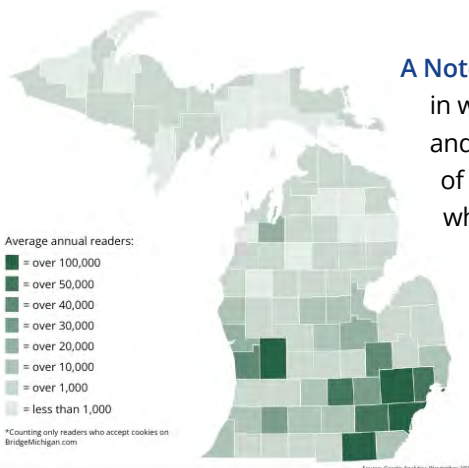
More than **319K** Average Monthly Unique Visitors

More than **104K** Newsletter Subscribers



38%	Google organic
16.9%	Direct
13%	Bridge Newsletter
10.8%	Referral
6.6%	Facebook
3.8%	Google news
3.8%	Other
3.7%	Other search
2.2%	Other social
1.1%	Google ads

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
236,994	1,487,712	577,027	698,063	481,611	319,370	Average Monthly Unique Visitors
45,231	90,513	108,354	120,973	135,711	104,014	Newsletter Subscribers



A Note About Our Audience Metrics: In 2024, Bridge Michigan experienced a decline in website visitors and email subscribers due to a combination of internal decisions and external factors. Bridge Michigan conducted our first comprehensive cleanup of our subscriber list, removing over 30,000 disengaged accounts — subscribers who hadn't opened any of our emails in several months. While this decision was necessary to improve email deliverability, as recommended by providers like Gmail and Yahoo, it contributed to the overall drop in subscriber numbers. The decline in website traffic was largely influenced by two significant changes from Google. In May 2024, Google introduced AI-generated overviews in search results, which reduced the visibility of links to external websites, including ours. Later, in September 2024, Google implemented a mandatory "consent mode" pop-up, requiring users to opt in for tracking even basic site metrics. It took several days to adjust to this change, leading to a temporary loss of website data during September.

Bridge Michigan's declining subscriber and reader numbers reflect broader trends in nonprofit news, as detailed in the [2024 INN Audience & Distribution Index Report](#). The disruption of traditional distribution channels, particularly due to Meta's removal of news posts from Facebook Pages, has forced news outlets to rely more on search and newsletters for audience growth. While search now drives the largest share of referral traffic, it often favors larger organizations, making it harder for smaller outlets like Bridge Michigan to compete. Despite these challenges, Bridge Michigan's open rate for engaged newsletter subscribers has increased slightly, and we remain committed to adapting and continuing to provide valuable news and information to our readers.

Reader Location

Courtesy of Google Analytics

44% Michigan

52% around the country

4% international

10

Engagement

Our engagement efforts build community among our readers, amplify our journalism and connect residents with those who make decisions for Michigan. In 2024, Bridge Michigan continued our popular virtual events, allowing us to interact with readers all across the state during an hour of Zoom in the middle of their day. Bridge Michigan's Culture Club events provide a platform for engaging discussions around books and films featuring Michigan authors or themes. These events encourage community participation through moderated Q&A sessions with authors and pre-event discussions in a dedicated Facebook group. Culture Club events are free and open to the public with prior registration, fostering a space for thoughtful dialogue and cultural enrichment.

BRIDGE LUNCH BREAK

Spending Michigan's Opioid Settlement Money
Moderated by Robin Erb, health reporter and Ron French, enterprise reporter

Amy Delaney
Technical Advisor, Opioid Settlement
Funds Planning & Capacity Building
at Michigan Association of Counties

Jonathan Maltzman, Ph.D.
Director, Opioid Policy Institute

Dr. Cara Poland
Associate Professor, College of Human Medicine
at Michigan State University

Bridge MICHIGAN

Wednesday, February 28, 12:00pm - 1:00pm
REGISTER: <https://bit.ly/BLBFeb2024>

Bridge Culture Club Presents:
Tin Camp Road

A virtual discussion featuring author **Ellen Airgood**.

February 14, 2024
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Register: bit.ly/BCCFeb24

TIN CAMP ROAD
A Novel
ELLEN AIRGOOD
Author of *SOUTH OF SURETH*

Issue Series – Bridge Michigan Lunch Break

12 Events, 576 Participants

- Bridge Michigan's Journalistic Impact
- Spending MI's Opioid Settlement Dollars
- Michigan's Disappearing Winters
- Figuring out the FAFSA Fiasco
- Flint Water Crisis, 10 Years Later
- Electrifying Michigan (EVs)
- EV Road Trip – Ask Us Anything
- Primary Election Edition
- Michigan's Education in 2024 – Challenges and Opportunities
- Bridge Elections FAQ event
- Bridge Supporter Zoom: Covering the Election
- Hunting in Michigan

Bridge Michigan Culture Club

5 Events, 366 Participants

- Tin Camp Road
- Dearborn
- Pelkie
- Impermanence
- Know the Mother

By the numbers:

20
Total
Events

47
Featured
Speakers

1,842
Total Virtual
Viewers

From Our Statement of Values:

- We strive to build an engaged civic community.
- We seek a dialogue with readers and residents because the regular exchange of ideas through events and feedback benefits all of Michigan.
- We endeavor to be accessible to news consumers and to meet them where they are.



Top Social Media Engagement of 2024

- ['Wind phones' give those in grief a connection to lost loved ones in Michigan](#); 742,829 views via an [Instagram carousel](#)
- Wolf killed in southern Michigan; 10,200 [Instagram reel](#) views
- Kamala Harris rally in Detroit; 4,341 [Instagram reel](#) views
- Range anxiety; 2,813 [Instagram reel](#) views
- Could Whitmer replace Biden on the ballot; 3,392 [Instagram reel](#) views
- Hear what a \$198,000 guitar sounds like; 9,900 views on [YouTube](#)
- Why was Trump campaigning in Detroit?; 3,600 views on [YouTube](#)

By the numbers:

48,000
Facebook
Followers

7,259
Instagram
Followers

19,100
X Followers

676
YouTube
Subscribers

What one word describes Bridge Michigan?



Reader Survey Results

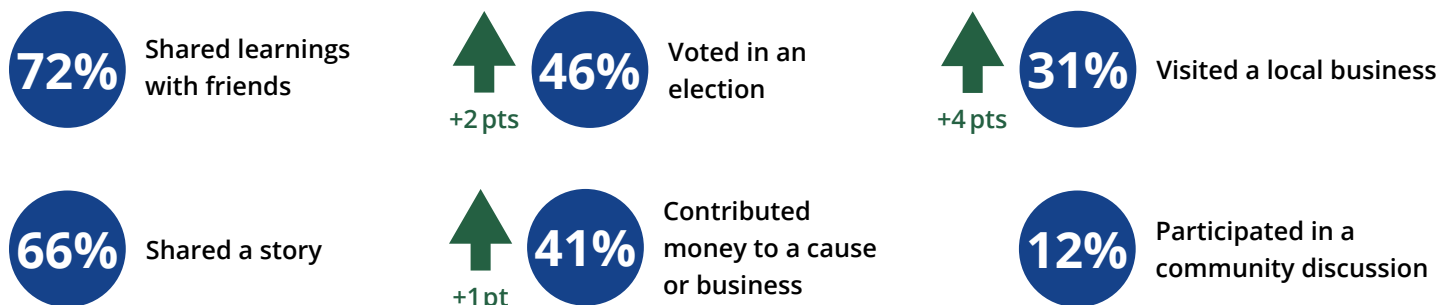
From Our Statement of Values:

- We strive to be inclusive and accessible to all of our readers.
- We respect all perspectives of residents in all Michigan communities, and we endeavor to reflect them in our reporting and engagement.
- We endeavor to be accessible to news consumers and to meet them where they are, and build a dialogue with readers and residents because the regular exchange of ideas through events and feedback benefits all of Michigan.

In 2024, **2,930 people participated in our annual reader survey**. To better help Bridge Michigan understand its audience, this survey is sent to all Bridge Michigan newsletter subscribers, as well as shared on our website and social media channels. **The survey sample represents 3% of Bridge Michigan's total newsletter subscribers.**

- **74%** of respondents said that if Bridge Michigan ceased to exist tomorrow, they would feel they have lost a source of news they can't find anywhere else.
- **83%** of respondents said they do not detect any political bias in Bridge Michigan's reporting.
- **86%** of respondents said Bridge Michigan newsletters are almost always or always useful.

What readers have done thanks to Bridge's journalism



Bridge Club Members

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Supporting Members	3,594	8,662	8,743	8,926	8,925	8,386
Total Donations (household gifts <\$1,000)	\$274,335	\$734,330	\$874,084	\$964,140	\$1,026,542	\$1,061,939
Average Household Annual Donation Size	\$76	\$85	\$100	\$108	\$115	\$127

What Our Readers Are Saying

“Bridge is **the most accurate, thorough, objective, and timely source of news** about Michigan politics.”

– Douglas Welker

“Your work has **made Michigan communities demonstrably better** for those who participate actively in democracy.”

– Karen Holman

“You cover **important issues** for our state, **sometimes you're the only group covering them.**”

– Ann Marie O'Connell

The Individual Charitable Donors Supporting our Work

37% of Bridge Club members are sustaining donors. We're particularly grateful for these recurring members, whose monthly or annual donations give us consistency to help make long-term budget decisions. Recurring gifts are an important part of keeping our mission afloat.

- Bronze Membership (\$1-\$99 per year): 3,224 members
- Silver Membership (\$100-\$499 per year): 4,945 members
- Gold Membership (\$500+ per year): 217 members



Thank You, Amber

The Center for Michigan bids a fond farewell to long-time Membership & Engagement Director Amber DeLind. Amber's career at the Center for Michigan started in 2011. Over the years, she forged strong relationships with members and readers, steadily growing Bridge Michigan and BridgeDetroit's individual giving initiatives. Her leadership

contributed to the Center for Michigan raising over \$1 million for the first time in 2022 and every year since then. Amber developed and led Bridge Michigan's popular engagement events, connecting hundreds of readers to journalists, issue experts, authors and artists. The Center for Michigan is grateful for her many contributions. Amber continues her dedication to nonprofit news as the director of philanthropic partnerships at the American Journalism Project.

Our Financial

Health & Sustainability

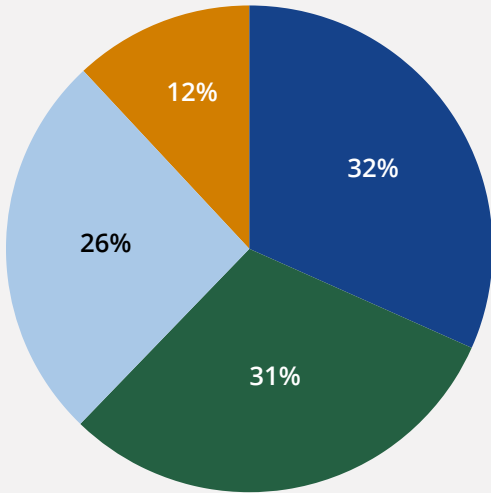
Building a Sustainable Model for Civic News: As a nonprofit newsroom, Bridge Michigan relies on the generosity of individuals, foundations and businesses to fund our reporting. All revenue returns to the mission of making Michigan better. We are dedicated to building a better newsroom and nonprofit in Michigan, one that is financially sustainable for years to come and can contribute to new models for civic news.

Membership is ¼ of Our Revenue!

Thanks to support from around the state, we raised **OVER \$1 MILLION DOLLARS** from nearly 8,400 individuals for the third year in a row! We have seen increased donations for the last seven years in a row!

Transparency

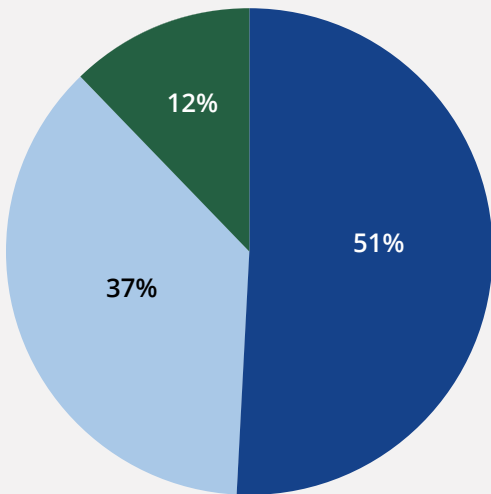
We achieve this fundraising success without sacrificing our journalistic integrity and fairness. We adhere to the Institute for Nonprofit News standards for transparency and publish the names of any individual or entity that supports us with over \$5,000 in a year.



2024 Revenue

32%	Foundation Grants
31%	Mid- & Major Giving (Charitable Gifts > \$1,000)
26%	Membership (Individual Charitable Gifts < \$1,000)
11%	Earned Revenue & Other Income

\$4,147,193

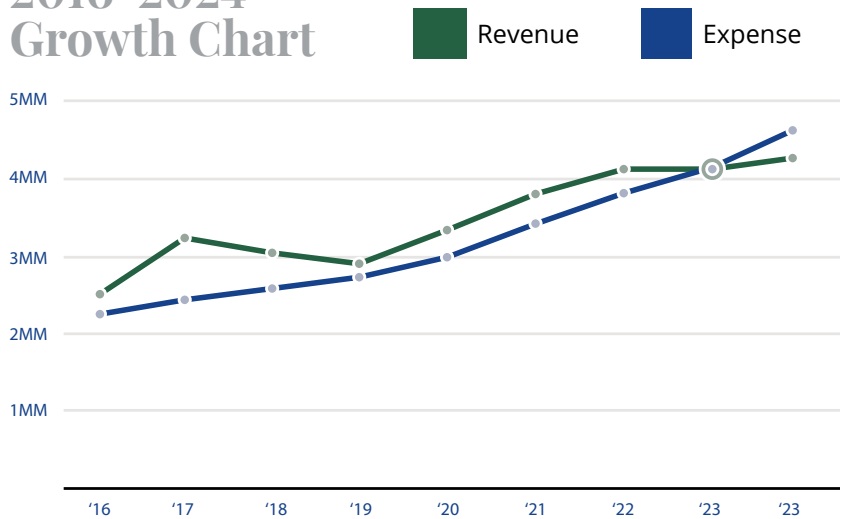


2024 Expense

51%	Newsroom/Journalism
37%	Administration
12%	Engagement

\$4,443,718

2016-2024 Growth Chart



	'20	'21	'22	'23	'24
Revenue	\$3,348,970	\$3,794,839	\$4,100,000	\$3,958,550	\$4,147,193
Expense	\$2,988,000	\$3,424,356	\$3,800,000	\$4,079,148	\$4,443,718

The figures presented here are unaudited for 2024. The figures presented here represent the revenue and expenses of the Center for Michigan and Bridge Michigan. The Center for Michigan supports BridgeDetroit as an independent project and its financials are separately maintained (and available upon request).

Bridge Builders

Organizational and Institutional Members Supporting our Work

Bridge Michigan's institutional membership program is an opportunity for nonprofit and business organizations to support our mission and reach our audience with marketing and sponsorship initiatives. Institutional members power Bridge Michigan's high-quality journalism, and allow us to help readers and leaders alike navigate this fast-paced era of change with daily in-depth coverage of the issues most important to Michigan.

Leadership Circle Members (\$2,500)

AARP	Association
Amway	Michigan Health & Hospital Association
Bellwether Public Relations	Michigan Health Endowment Fund
Business Leaders for Michigan	Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association
Cook Family Foundation	Michigan League for Public Policy
CRIMSON	Porter Family Foundation
Ethel and James Flinn Foundation	Public Sector Consultants
Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation	University of Michigan Go Blue Guarantee
Michigan Association of Health Plans	VVK PR + Creative
Michigan Chamber of Commerce	William Glasser Memorial Foundation
Michigan College Access Network	
Michigan Community College	

Community Partner Members (\$1,000)

Cascade Engineering	Michigan Environmental Council
Clark Hill	Mission Point Press
Crystal Mountain Resort	Renaissance Venture Capital Fund
CultureSource	University of Michigan - Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
Frey Foundation	
Gud Marketing	
McAlvey Merchant & Associates	
Michigan Association of School Boards	
Michigan Association of State Universities	

Advertise With Us

Business and nonprofit partners have the opportunity to advertise with Bridge Michigan.

Be Seen in Our Newsletters: Place ads in Bridge Michigan's daily newsletter with over 65,000 subscribers. Sponsor or place ads in any of our five Watch newsletters (Business, Education, Environment, Health and Politics) or regional newsletters (North MI and West MI) reaching targeted audiences of engaged readers.

Exclusive Sitewide Website Advertising: Three ads on the Bridge Michigan homepage and two ads on each story page, with links to sponsor-designated landing pages.

Events Sponsorship: Events are on-the-record, open-to-the-public ways for Bridge Michigan to engage business leaders, policymakers and readers in civic engagement and discourse on issues important to Michigan residents. These include our virtual Issue Series and Culture Club events, and our regional policy and conversation convenings.

For more information about Bridge Builders, sponsorship and advertising, please contact ecarr@centerformichigan.org.

"Advertising with Bridge has always been a win for the Community Foundation. We're excited to support the publication and mission of Bridge while also reaching the audiences engaged in making southeast Michigan a place where everyone can thrive. The staff made **advertising simple and easy** with flexible options and fantastic results."

*- Ashley Collins,
Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan*

Power Circle

Our Power Circle membership is a recognition program for individuals who have made significant investments in Bridge Michigan, designed as a way to bring these investors closer to the core of our work.

Pleasant Peninsula Circle (\$5,000+)

Essel and Menakka Bailey

James and Donna Brooks

Thomas Buhr

Susan Burda

Brenda Frey and Edward J. Frey Jr.

Winnie Gallagher

Paul and Nancy Hillegonds

Denise and James Jacob

Mike and Sue Jandernoa

Eleanor Luedtke

Bill Martin

Philip D. and Nancy Miller

James Murphy

Carol and David Myers

Philip and Kathy Power

Aaron and Veronica Seybert

Jennifer Poteat and Michael Staebler

Blue Waters Circle (\$2,500-4,999)

Kathryn and Steve Bandstra

Monica Donnelly

Del Dunbar

Steven and Katherine Jacob

Thomas Porter

Joy Whitten and Jeff Williams

White Pine Circle (\$1,000-\$2,499)

Christopher Andrews

Edward Beckman

Richard Bond

Susan Buxton

Randall Bytwerk

Kyle Caldwell

Laura Champagne

William Collins and Deanna Klosinski

Eleanor Cruze and Kevin Hart

Nicholas Dahlin

Stephen and Judy Dobson

Paul Dimond

David Egner

Charles Eisendrath

Trey Eldridge

Robert and Linda Finkel

Max Gates

Allan D. Gilmour

Norbert Goldfield

Cindy Goodaker

Wendy Greeney

Bob Grosshans

Thomas Guback

Neil and Annmarie Hawkins

Mary Hoekwater

Pat House

Al and Kay Huberty

John Hunting

Joyce Jenereaux

Dale Jones

Michael Joseph

David Katz

Jim and Kristina Kunz

Joan and Michael Martin

Hugh McCombs

Mary McIntire

Charles Monsma

Michael Morris

Cathy Mueller

Dawneane Munn

Eric Nemeth

Patricia Nevala

Dennis Pace and Anne Grofvert

Jeffrey Padden

Margaret and Richard Patmos

Karl Pearson

Bill Phillips and

Marianne Udow-Phillips

Milt and Barbara Rohwer

Dawn Schumann

Mary Sharp

James Sherman

Linda Stafford

Michael Swieton

Sophie Tatarian

Anita and Ron Taylor

Barbara Tucker

Lee VandeBunte

Amanda Van Dusen

Bonnie Woods

Susan and Jon Wooley

Philanthropic Supporters

Amway	Google LLC**	Michigan Association of Health Plans
American Press Institute*	Hudson-Webber Foundation**	Michigan College Access Network
Arnold Ventures	Institute for Nonprofit News**	Michigan Health & Hospital Association
Cascade Engineering	John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*	Michigan Health Endowment Fund
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	Joyce Foundation**	Michigan State University School of Journalism
Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan**	Kresge Foundation**	Next City*
Consumers Energy Foundation	Laybel Family Foundation**	Power Foundation
Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism CUNY Foundation*	Lenfest Institute	Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation**
DTE Energy Foundation**	LION - Local Independent Online News Publishers	Skillman Foundation**
Ethel and James Flinn Foundation	Local News Hub	W.K. Kellogg Foundation**
Ford Foundation*	McGregor Fund**	

**Support for BridgeDetroit*

***Support for both Bridge Michigan and BridgeDetroit*

The Center for Michigan subscribes to standards of editorial independence adopted by the Institute for Nonprofit News. This includes **making public all donors who give a total of \$5,000 or more per year**. We thank all of our donors — over 9,000 individuals — for their ongoing support of our mission.

Public Service Plan 2024 - 2029

The Center for Michigan is in the early stages of fundraising for its [2024-2029 Public Service Plan](#). The Public Service Plan looks ahead to our continued public service, our sustainability and our prospects for growth over the next five years – envisioning a 2030 where Bridge is the preeminent news and information brand throughout Michigan. We outline our revenue plan and our request for philanthropic support to achieve this vision. Altogether, this Public Service Plan requires at least \$28 million over the next five years to fund the service of both Bridge Michigan and BridgeDetroit. This will be raised through the blended support of donating readers/members, earned revenue and philanthropy. We seek to raise a total of \$10-\$13 million from philanthropy.

Together, we can **support and grow Michigan's democracy** and Michigan's success. We're **thankful to all partners** who invest in this mission.

Our People

Center for Michigan Board of Directors

Regina Bell

Cindy Goodaker

Devin Scillian**

Paula D. Cunningham*

Paul C. Hillemonds, *Chair*

Sara Wycoff McCauley,
Vice Chair

Loyal A. Eldridge III

Philip Power

Katy Locker, *ex officio*

Rob Fowler

Glenda D. Price

* *Departed board at 2024 annual meeting*

** *Joined board at 2024 annual meeting*

Center for Michigan & Bridge Michigan Staff

Leslie J. Allen, *Deputy Editor*
(started February 2024)

Lauren Gibbons, *Capitol Reporter*

Joel Kurth, *Executive Editor of Impact*

Emma Carr, *Revenue Development Specialist*
(started July 2024)

Laura Herberg, *Outdoor Life Reporter*
(started January 2025)

Asha Lewis, *Digital Marketing Associate*

Amber DeLind, *Membership & Engagement Director*
(departed November 2024)

Jordyn Hermani,
Capitol Reporter
(started February 2024)

Katy Locker, *Chief Executive Officer*

Bill Emkow, *Growth Strategy Director*

Justin Hinkley, *Regional Editor*
(started February 2025)

Isabel Lohman, *Education Reporter*

Robin Erb, *Health Reporter*

Arielle Hines-Glerum,
Production Specialist

Jonathan Oosting, *Deputy Editor*
(promoted February 2024)

Rebecca Fedewa, *Development & Communications Specialist*

Kelly House,
Environment Reporter

Diana Roginson, *Chief Operating Officer*

Ron French,
Enterprise Reporter

Janelle D. James, *General Assignment Reporter*

Simon D. Schuster, *Capitol Reporter*
(started April 2024)

Paula Gardner,
Business Reporter

AJ Jones, *Production and Technology Director*

Mike Wilkinson, *Data Reporter*

Jackquelyn Garrett, *Fund Development Associate*

Kathy Kieliszewski, *Executive Editor of Innovation*
(started September 2024)

Lisa Yanick Litwiller, *Executive Editor, Innovation and Daily News*
(started January 2024)

Bridge Michigan Internship Program Participants

Gabby Nelson, *Michigan State University's Knight Center for Environmental Journalism*

Sneha Dhandapani,
University of Michigan

Daniel Schoenherr,
Michigan State University



In Memorium - Lisa Yanick Litwiller

In 2024, the Center for Michigan and Bridge Michigan mourned the loss of Lisa Yanick Litwiller, a visionary journalist and leader who joined Bridge as executive editor of innovation and daily news in January. Throughout her career, Yanick Litwiller was a passionate champion of community journalism, dedicated to lifting voices often overlooked and creating meaningful change through storytelling. A Central Michigan University graduate and Mt. Pleasant native, she brought extraordinary depth to her work, having previously led groundbreaking investigations at the Center for Public Integrity and Hearst Newspapers. Despite serving at Bridge only briefly before her passing, her impact was profound — she championed inclusive newsroom practices, emphasized finding each team member’s unique “superpower,” and remained committed to her core belief of creating journalism that makes lives better across Michigan. Her legacy of amplifying unheard voices and driving systemic change will continue to inspire the Bridge Michigan team and journalists throughout the state.



Welcome - Kathy Kieliszewski

Bridge Michigan welcomed Kathy Kieliszewski as executive editor of innovation in September 2024. A nationally recognized journalist with 22 years of experience at the Detroit Free Press, including four national Emmy Awards and contributions to a Pulitzer Prize-winning team, Kieliszewski brings extraordinary expertise in storytelling and visual journalism. She joins Bridge Michigan with a mission to reimagine content delivery, deepen reader connections and enhance the organization’s digital storytelling capabilities in a challenging media landscape. Her appointment underscores Bridge Michigan’s commitment to evolving journalism that informs, engages and drives meaningful change across the state. Kieliszewski works alongside Executive Editor of Impact Joel Kurth to continue Bridge’s tradition of impactful, nonpartisan reporting.



BridgeDetroit Staff (Valerian Waller for BridgeDetroit)

BridgeDetroit

A community-engaged, community-focused, journalist-led newsroom

Since its inception in 2020, BridgeDetroit has become a trusted news source for Detroit residents. Its success lies in a steadfast commitment to community-driven journalism, amplifying Detroiters' voices and prioritizing the issues that matter most to them.

BridgeDetroit's unique Community Priorities Model puts residents at the heart of its reporting. Through surveys, community meetings, a dedicated advisory committee and partnerships with local organizations, BridgeDetroit ensures its coverage reflects Detroiters' lived experiences. Staff members even go door-to-door, gathering firsthand insights to inform impactful reporting on housing, education, social justice and city services.

Recognizing Detroit's digital divide, BridgeDetroit broadened its reach in 2024 by launching BridgeDetroit Magazine, a quarterly print publication. The magazine delivers essential stories, resources and guides to residents without reliable internet access, furthering the organization's mission of equitable information access.



BridgeDetroit's inaugural magazine.
(Credit: Laurén Abdel-Razzaq, BridgeDetroit)

BridgeDetroit is:

CONNECTED: Reaching thousands of Detroiters through its engagement approach, which is not about the extraction of information, but the formation of deep, sustained relationships.

RESPONSIVE: Building its newsroom and priorities around the feedback it gets from Detroiters about what they need and want. The pillars of BridgeDetroit coverage — things like housing security, community safety, housing development and education — are all subjects Detroiters have told BridgeDetroit they care about deeply.

PROLIFIC: With 31,000 newsletter subscribers and more than 65,000 monthly website visitors, among the city's largest nonprofit news sources. Publishing new content almost every day, it brings the power and value of both responsive and enterprise journalism to Detroiters to enhance their civic understanding and participation.

GROWING SUSTAINABLY: In addition to support from nearly every local foundation and several national ones, continuing to enhance revenue through other sources (e.g., reader support, corporate support) through the model of income growth established by the Center for Michigan and Bridge Michigan.

PARTNERED: Building substantial, important partnerships with other journalism, community and engagement organizations that broaden BridgeDetroit's reach and impact, and it has helped lift other organizations' efforts.

BridgeDetroit is an unincorporated project of the Center for Michigan.

- BridgeDetroit is an editorially independent publication with a specific focus on serving Detroiters.
- Bridge Michigan and BridgeDetroit have same-day publishing rights to each other's content, and the editors and reporters of both publications seek to coordinate where editorial agendas overlap.
- BridgeDetroit benefits from the membership, audience development, production and administrative experience, and expertise of the entire Center for Michigan team.
- The Center serves as fiduciary and employer for all BridgeDetroit staff.

BridgeDetroit Team

Laurén Abdel-Razzaq, *Executive Director (started January 2024)*

Malachi Barrett, *Reporter*

Jena Brooker, *Reporter*

Orlando Bailey, *Engagement Director (departed May 2024)*

Christine Ferretti, *Managing Editor*

Stephen Henderson, *Executive Advisor*

Bryce Huffman, *Engagement Editor (started September 2024)*

Nushrat Rahman, *Reporter (in partnership with Detroit Free Press)*

Micah Walker, *Reporter*

Contributors

Quinn Banks, *Photographer*

Olivia Lewis, *Reporter*

Kayleigh Lickliter, *Reporter*

J. Gabriel Ware, *Reporter*

BridgeDetroit Interns

Juniper Favenyesi, *Michigan State University*



BridgeDetroit Executive Advisor Stephen Henderson. (Credit: Valarian Waller)



(from left) WDET-FM reporter Bre-Anna Tinsley, Daniel Baxter, who oversees absentee ballots for the Detroit Department of Elections, Detroit Deputy City Clerk Andre Gilbert II, Deputy Secretary of State Aghogho Edevbie and Branden Snyder, Detroit Action executive director, take part in a BridgeDetroit Community Conversation on voter access on June 18, 2024 with reporter Malachi Barrett. (Quinn Banks, Special to BridgeDetroit)

Engagement

BridgeDetroit demonstrates its commitment to community engagement through a variety of strategies that help grow relationships within the community, increase trust and gather the information necessary to deliver on its commitment to produce news for and by Detroiters. In 2024, BridgeDetroit hosted numerous community conversations and events to foster dialogue and address critical local issues. Strategic partnerships with faith-based organizations, local media outlets and national groups expanded BridgeDetroit's reach and enabled the publication to serve diverse communities across the city. The launch of a quarterly print magazine, consistent canvassing efforts and an active social media presence underscore BridgeDetroit's dedication to meeting the needs of Detroiters where they are, making it a model for community engagement in journalism.



(Credit: Quinn Banks)

Community Conversation Series

Over the summer, BridgeDetroit hosted four free monthly events to engage Detroiters looking to share and receive vital information. The goal of the series was to foster conversation between reporters and residents about the issues impacting them most, and to provide access to city and state officials and agencies that administer programming.

- **Voter Information & Access:** This event provided election information for voters including information on how to vote. It also promoted discussions around voter access and about why voting matters. Following the event, BridgeDetroit distributed 10,000 voter guides, promoted voter information via social media and partnered with the Associated Press to increase election coverage.

Meet the Reporters Event

BridgeDetroit's Meet the Reporters event provided an opportunity for the community to directly connect with reporters – building stronger relationships and the trust needed to do community journalism. In 2024, this event served as a valuable source for reporting and provided 45 potential story ideas.

- **Reparations/I-375:** A reparations-focused panel discussed arguments for and against reparations in Detroit, the history behind I-375 and how the current-day project factors into the conversation, and how community input can play a part in driving solutions. Reporter Malachi Barrett covered the topic through a multi-part reporting series that examined the status of Detroit's reparations task force, possible forms of reparations and the influence of notable Detroiters.
- **Housing & Home Repair:** Community conversations in every district amplified a need to connect people with housing and home repair resources. This event featured a panel that provided crucial information on the resources available, how to gain access and how to navigate through the red tape. In addition to the discussion, the 60 participants had access to information provided by 10 nonprofit and city resource tables. BridgeDetroit complemented this session through its reporting and a focus on housing and home repair in the quarterly magazine.
- **Refugee Resources:** The Refugee Resource Fair served as a gateway to vital information and resources for attendees. Attendees were provided information on issues of immigration, accessing basic city services and career resources – and Spanish and Arabic translators were on site to guide residents. Additionally, municipal IDs were offered at the fair, a service provided in partnership with Detroit ID. Following the event, BridgeDetroit partnered with El Central to publish a guide on how undocumented residents can protect themselves.



(from left) Janis Hazel, a member of Detroit's Reparations Task Force, takes part in a BridgeDetroit Community Conversation on Reparations/I-375, alongside Khary Frazier, founder of Detroit is Different and Kim Faison, vice president of Detroit Future City. (Quinn Banks for BridgeDetroit)

Awards

Michigan Press Association (MPA) Awards



Public Service Award: Jena Brooker, [Detroit's cost for automotive growth: Generational displacement](#)

Special Section: First place, Malachi Barrett for his [City Council Notebook](#) newsletter.

Government/Education News: BridgeDetroit swept the category for local media.

- First Place, Micah Walker, [Recreational marijuana: A path to Black prosperity in Detroit](#)
- Second Place, Bryce Huffman, [Detroit families wait-listed for 'maxed out' after school program](#)
- Third Place, Micah Walker, [Detroit nonprofit leader asks: Where are the men in education?](#)
- Honorable Mention, Malachi Barrett, [When nature calls on Belle Isle, visitors struggle to find a bathroom](#)

News Enterprise Reporting:

- Third place, Nushrat Rahman, [Youth homelessness an 'invisible crisis' in plain sight, providers say](#)
- Honorable Mention, Olivia Lewis, [New Bargain Block season, same appraisal problems](#)

LION: Local Independent Online News



- Finalist, Community Engagement
- Finalist, Collaboration of the Year

Society of Professional Journalists - Detroit Chapter



Sojourner Truth Award: One Detroit, American Black Journal staffers Zosette Guir and Bill Kubota and BridgeDetroit staffers Bryce Huffman and Orlando P. Bailey received the Sojourner Truth Award in Topical Reporting, which honors excellence in journalism covering racial justice. The Sojourner Truth Award seeks to recognize reporting that is revealing and impactful in tackling new subject matter. The group was recognized for its [Walk to Freedom coverage](#).

Young Journalist of the Year: Jena Brooker for her outstanding work on community and justice issues

What Our Readers Are Saying

"Bridge Detroit has been **vital in my decision to move to Detroit** this summer. Learning about what's happening from a community oriented perspective **made the difference when choosing to invest in Detroit long term.**"

– AJ Durand

"Your view of the reality of Detroit is **broader than that of our other local news sources**, your editorial approach is **fairer to all the stakeholders and decision-makers**, and **your writing would make Strunk and White blush with pride.**"

– Michael Madigan

"I'm a **social worker serving people who live in Detroit** and your reporting **helps me to better serve them.**"

– Emily DeMeester

"I believe in the **transformative power** of the kind of **community-centered journalism that BD champions.**"

– David Porter

Collaborative Coverage

- Second place, Nushrat Rahman, [Vouchers help-low-income families find housing but using them isn't easy](#)
- Third place, Malachi Barrett and Mike Wilkinson, [See how much you'll save under Detroit land value tax proposal](#)
- Fourth place, Christine Ferretti and Sarah Rahal (The Detroit News), [AFSCME puts Michigan's Council 25 in receivership](#)

Community/Local News Reporting:

First place, Jena Brooker, [Detroit's cost for automotive growth: Generational Displacement](#)

Consumer Watchdog: Third place, Jena Brooker, [Hantz tree farm falls short on solving east side blight](#)

Engagement-Driven Coverage

- First place, Nushrat Rahman, [What happens when a court officer comes knocking during an eviction?](#)
- Third place, Jena Brooker, [Can Detroiters afford more dollar stores?](#)
- Fourth place, Malachi Barrett, [When nature calls on Belle Isle, visitors struggle to find a bathroom](#)

Feature Reporting: First place, Nushrat Rahman, [From shelter to home, how one woman climbed out of homelessness](#)

Newsletter Strategy: Fourth place, Malachi Barrett, Micah Walker, Jena Brooker, Nushrat Rahman, Christine Ferretti, [BridgeDetroit Newsletters](#)

Racial Justice Reporting

- Third place, Malachi Barrett, [False arrest of Detroit mother reignites criticism of facial recognition tech](#)
- Fourth place, Nushrat Rahman, ['Rationing justice': Legal aid programs struggle to meet high demand](#)

National Headliner Awards: BridgeDetroit won its first national award, taking third place for local news coverage. Winners were noted for "creating a model for the future of journalism."



From shelter to home — how one woman climbed out of homelessness. Tonya Hogan, 50, opens a treat bag for her dog Pepper inside their room at Harbor Light Salvation Army in Detroit. (Sarabeth Maney, Detroit Free Press)



Olivia Lewis, third from left, was chosen for a year-long fellowship program with the Us@250 initiative. (Laurén Abdel-Razzaq, BrideDetroit)

Fellowships

Olivia Lewis: BridgeDetroit contributor Olivia Lewis was selected for the prestigious Us@250 fellowship, where she focuses on the I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project in Detroit. Her year-long [project](#) explores the freeway's legacy of displacing African American communities and the potential impact of proposed changes on safety, walkability and community inclusion.

Jena Brooker: Awarded the Kozik Grant from The National Press Foundation (NPF) and the National Press Club Journalism Institute (NPCJI). She was awarded funding for a project investigating the Michigan Air Pollution Control Exemption law, with the aim of increasing transparency, informing Detroit residents about the law's impact and identifying how much it has cost Detroit.

Malachi Barrett: Selected for the National Press Foundation's Elections Journalism Fellowship. This fellowship provides journalists with training and resources to prepare for election coverage, including topics like election infrastructure, safety, voting rights and changes in voting laws.

Nushrat Rahman: Picked for a fellowship through the New York & Michigan Solutions Journalism Collaborative. As part of the collaborative, Nushrat examined the effectiveness of monthly cash assistance for mothers. Her work produced two articles examining the programs overall, as well as looking closely at the impact in Flint.

What Our Readers Are Saying

"You provide **information about Detroit** that **I cannot get anywhere else.**"

- Deborah Grace

"I support **independent journalism in Detroit, by Detroiters!**"

- Barry Fishman

"It's so important to have a forum for **local voices** on issues of **equity and justice.**"

- Kathe Stevens

"I want to **support publications that represent underserved populations.**"

- Leah Miller



The following are examples of the type of reporting being done at BridgeDetroit:

Meet Detroit’s other ‘People Mover,’ Michael Cunningham II, Bryce Huffman

BridgeDetroit highlighted the story of a taxicab driver and public transit activist who provides taxi rides at no charge for those who don’t have the money to pay. The story further profiled Cunningham’s experience with housing instability and how he was living directly in his taxi. Following this piece, Cunningham spoke at a Community Conversation on transit issues. It’s there where he met city officials who helped him secure an apartment — he is no longer experiencing homelessness.

Black men bond where they feel at home — in the barbershop, Bryce Huffman, Orlando Bailey and Quinn Banks

In a first for BridgeDetroit, three Black male journalists partnered to create a first person narrative of the importance of barbershops as a “third space” for Black men. The story expanded beyond written word to include audio and photo essay elements — and was so consequential that it took off on social media and was picked up by WDET for an on-air segment.

Reparations Series, Malachi Barrett

This three-part series by reporter Malachi Barrett looked at where the Detroit reparations task force stands after a year, what form reparations could reasonably take and the role iconic Detroiters played in the history of the reparations movement nationally.

BridgeDetroit Reporting

BridgeDetroit’s journalism begins with engagement — steady, multi-sourced, compiled feedback and interactions — and uses various streams of information to shape journalism that informs at the highest level.

It is an approach based on building relationships with Detroiters over time, and building trust with them that leads to an ongoing exchange of information. This is key in Detroit, where many residents feel used by media organizations or looked past. It’s not just that they don’t see themselves or their lives reflected in news coverage; they literally feel no relationship with the people or organizations that produce that coverage.

Top community issues for BridgeDetroit reporting in 2024 included:

- Arts and Culture
- Education
- Environment
- Food
- Government and Civic Engagement
- Housing and Home Repair
- Public Safety
- Small Business and Economic Development
- Transportation

Detroit targets 8K abandoned vehicles in crackdown. Do residents know the rules?, Kaleigh Lickliter

In its first story for a partnership with Next City, BridgeDetroit reported on the city's crackdown on abandoned vehicles. Through her investigations, Lickliter received a tip about Detroiters paying to get their stolen vehicles out of impound nearly two years after the Duggan administration announced reforms to eliminate the practice. Her follow-up story prompted the Detroit Police Department to change its policy on informing residents of impound fees.

With more hot days, Detroit students' learning and health suffer, Jena Brooker and Katie Worth of Climate Central

In collaboration with Climate Central, BridgeDetroit reported about Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) releasing students early due to extreme heat, a policy triggered by rising temperatures and the city's lack of widespread air conditioning in schools. The story highlights the impact climate change has on student learning and health — and the challenges both students and parents face due to early school closures.

Election Coverage, BridgeDetroit Staff

In 2024, BridgeDetroit provided Detroiters with comprehensive election coverage. Pre-election coverage included results from the primaries, and highlighted voter sentiment across the city. Election day coverage included original reporting as well as shared content with Bridge Michigan, VoteBeat and the Associated Press, and focused on turnout and outcomes in the days following the election.

BridgeDetroit

created a series of practical guides to support Detroiters facing challenging situations. These resources offer clear, actionable steps on navigating situations and empowering residents with the information they need during critical times.

- Detroit Police have arrested your loved one. Here's what to do next

- The eviction process: What Michigan renters should know
- Thousands of Detroiters need home repair help. Here's how to get it
- Immigrant rights group: Noncitizens can take these steps ahead of Trump presidency
- How to respond to Detroit ICE agents in a variety of places

78% Growth in Unique Visitors

71% Growth in Average Monthly Unique Visitors

Audience	2020 (Partial Year)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Newsletter Subscribers	4,992	9,856	20,700	30,011	31,179
Unique Visitors	90,933	229,889	332,304	740,569	734,872
Average Monthly Unique Visitors	12,136	20,391	22,651	38,037	65,227

Partnerships

From its inception, BridgeDetroit has prioritized collaboration. The aim has been to harness shared resources and encourage other newsrooms to embrace the engagement-focused journalism that defines BridgeDetroit's mission. Partnerships are integral to its operations, seamlessly woven into its efforts to produce high-quality journalism. These collaborations are diverse and adaptable, ensuring maximum opportunities to work with a wide range of organizations.



Associated Press: Thanks to a program funded through LION and INN, BridgeDetroit gained access to election-related stories and photos from The Associated Press for three months, including Election Day results and race calls. BridgeDetroit also shared original reporting on Election Day with the Associated Press.



American Press Institute: BridgeDetroit's partnership with the American Press Institute (API) focused on an election engagement experiment aimed at increasing voter participation and connecting print materials with online engagement. Funded by a grant as part of API's work with the Knight Election Hub, BridgeDetroit printed and distributed 10,000 voter guides at two community meetings. This project tested how effectively print materials could drive online engagement and used social media to extend the project's reach.



Chalkbeat: The education-focused nonprofit newsroom Chalkbeat Detroit shares education reporting and editing resources with BridgeDetroit. BridgeDetroit's reporter adds to Chalkbeat's reach, while Chalkbeat's editors, who have more experience managing education stories, help with guidance and growth for BridgeDetroit's reporter.



Climate Central: BridgeDetroit collaborated with Climate Central on a story about the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) having to close schools due to extreme heat. This partnership brought together BridgeDetroit's local reporting expertise with Climate Central's data analysis capabilities to highlight the impact of climate change on Detroit's schools.



Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism: BridgeDetroit's partnership with the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism through the Black Media Initiative provided funding for three in-depth election stories focused on community issues, which were intended to offer a deeper perspective than mainstream media. This partnership also included an invitation for BridgeDetroit to participate in CUNY's National Elections Reporting Grant Program with nine other community newsrooms nationwide. This initiative underscores a commitment to community-based election coverage and highlights BridgeDetroit's role within a larger national network of community news organizations focused on enhancing their election reporting.



Detroit Free Press: BridgeDetroit shares reporter Nushrat Rahman with the Detroit Free Press, the largest for-profit news organization in the city. Covering economic mobility, one of Detroit's most critical issues, Rahman works out of both newsrooms and taps into BridgeDetroit's engagement efforts for guidance and direction.



Detroit ID: BridgeDetroit worked with the City of Detroit's Detroit ID program to offer municipal IDs to attendees at a refugee resources fair. The fair was held in October and welcomed over 70 residents who spoke English, Spanish and Arabic.

BridgeDetroit's Interfaith Insight Initiative

BridgeDetroit teamed up with three diverse faith-based organizations in Detroit: Downtown Synagogue (Jewish), Dream of Detroit (Muslim) and Triumph Church (Christian). The partnership was developed to introduce BridgeDetroit to new constituencies by sharing BridgeDetroit's top stories each week in the newsletters that these organizations send to their members. BridgeDetroit's first quarterly magazine, published in June 2024, was designed specifically to reach Detroiters who might not have easy access to the internet or who prefer reading printed material. The printing included 3,200 copies distributed through the Interfaith Initiative partner organizations, as well as libraries, schools, rec centers and religious institutions across the city. A second printing in October 2024 furthered this outreach.



Detroit PBS: BridgeDetroit collaborated with Detroit PBS's One Detroit and American Black Journal programs on several joint segments that appeared on American Black Journal. They also worked together on a project about the preservation of the Malcolm X house in Inkster and a feature segment on the impact of a concrete crushing plant.



El Central: BridgeDetroit partnered with El Central Hispanic News to translate and co-publish some of its stories in Spanish for El Central's weekly print product. This collaboration aimed to reach a wider audience, particularly Spanish-speaking residents in Southwest Detroit and the metro area. The partnership began with a story about a Venezuelan refugee's journey to Detroit, highlighting the changing demographics in Southwest Detroit.



Freedom House: BridgeDetroit partnered with Freedom House to offer resources at a refugee resources fair. This partnership was part of an effort to provide support to the community by offering valuable resources in multiple languages.



Next City: BridgeDetroit's partnership with Next City was established to contribute to solutions journalism in Detroit, including reporting, photos, visuals, dissemination and promotion of six stories about public safety issues. This initiative was funded by the Kresge Foundation.



New York & Michigan Solutions Journalism Collaborative: BridgeDetroit's partnership with the New York & Michigan Solutions Journalism Collaborative is a collaboration focused on solutions journalism, where news organizations and community groups work together to report on successful responses to social problems. This collaborative is highlighted by reporter Nushrat Rahman, who produced two articles: one examining monthly cash payments to mothers and another exploring the outcomes of giving mothers and babies \$7,500 in Flint.



Outlier Media: BridgeDetroit partnered with Outlier Media to cover 46 city budget hearings. The partnership resulted in a concise weekly newsletter and stories published on both websites. The goal was to make the information from the hearings easily accessible to residents.



Planet Detroit: The Planet Detroit newsletter and website focus on the environment and environmental justice issues. The two organizations share story-planning meetings and cross-edit content, having evolved beyond content sharing.

VOTE BEAT

VoteBeat: BridgeDetroit partnered with Votebeat, a nonpartisan reporting project created by Chalkbeat (now Civic News Company) covering local election integrity and voting access, to share content on Election Day, including results. This collaboration was part of a larger effort that also included Bridge Michigan and the Associated Press.



Wayne Metro: BridgeDetroit partnered with Wayne Metro to offer resources at a refugee resources fair. This partnership was part of an effort to provide support to the community by offering valuable resources in multiple languages.



WDET: This collaboration allowed BridgeDetroit's work to reach a wider audience through WDET's radio platform. This content sharing and cross-promotion, where an existing story from BridgeDetroit was adapted for a new medium, increased the visibility of BridgeDetroit's journalism.



Financial Support

	2020 <i>(Partial Year)</i>	2021	2022	2023	2024
Supporting Members	426	495	549	562	591
Total Donations	\$30,160	\$52,746	\$58,486	\$56,961	\$100,205
Average Household Annual Donation Size	\$71	\$107	\$102	\$100	\$170

For the first year, BridgeDetroit surpassed **\$100K in donations** from individuals!

Funders & Sponsors (\$5000+)

- American Press Institute
- Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
- Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism CUNY Foundation
- DTE Energy Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Google LLC
- Hudson-Webber Foundation
- Institute for Nonprofit News
- John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- Joyce Foundation
- Kresge Foundation
- Laybel Family Foundation
- McGregor Fund
- Next City
- Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
- Skillman Foundation
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Power Circle (\$1,000+)

Our Power Circle membership is a recognition program for individuals who have made significant investments in BridgeDetroit, designed as a way to bring these investors closer to the core of our work.

- Laura Champagne
- Paul and Nancy Hillegonds
- Cynthia Ford and Edsel Ford II
- Susan Newell
- Dug and Linh Song
- Kathryn Vizas

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