



# Fiscal Year 2024 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



WETA is the flagship public media station for the Greater Washington area and the second-largest producing station for the PBS system.

## MISSION

The WETA mission is to produce and distribute content of intellectual integrity and cultural merit using a broad range of media to reach audiences both in our community and nationwide.

## FISCAL YEAR 2024 KEY SERVICES

**These key services ensure that educational, entertaining and inspiring content is free and accessible to all.**

**TV.** Quality television programming available 24 hours a day on five digital channels — WETA PBS, WETA UK, WETA Metro, WETA World and WETA PBS Kids — and streaming content on an array of platforms.

**Radio.** WETA Classical, the D.C. area's only full-service classical radio station, broadcasting multiple on-air channels, streaming and delivering educational and digital resources for devoted and new classical music listeners.

**National productions.** A robust portfolio of documentaries, ongoing series and specials produced for the national public media system, with deep educational and engagement resources.

**News.** *PBS News Hour*, *PBS News Weekend*, *Washington Week with The Atlantic*, and more public affairs programming, produced through News Hour Productions for a nationwide audience.

**Education.** Dynamic content and resources for learners of any age, with dedicated websites for literacy, brain health and more.

**Digital.** Exclusive digital content, websites, streaming platforms and apps, allowing WETA offerings to be accessed anytime, anywhere by a broad audience.

**Community.** In-person and virtual events and workshops exploring literacy and lifelong learning. Programs serve families, educators and community organizations and further civic dialogue about history, culture, current issues and the arts.



### Public Media for Greater Washington

An independent, nonprofit public broadcaster and content producer licensed to the community of Greater Washington, WETA is proud to provide viewers and listeners with high-quality, compelling programming while celebrating the people, places, culture and history of the region. WETA serves the District of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland, as well as areas of Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

### TV: Stories and Connections for the Community

As the flagship station in the national capital area, WETA brings high-quality PBS programming to its audience, while also creating engaging, locally focused content and events exclusively for viewers and listeners in Greater Washington.

Committed to ensuring the best of PBS and public media programming is widely available, WETA broadcasts through a variety of channels. These include five on-air destinations – **WETA PBS**, the primary channel; **WETA UK**, featuring beloved British drama, mystery, news and lifestyle programs; **WETA Metro PBS**, curating documentaries and series targeted for D.C. audiences; **WETA World**, illuminating global and American culture; and **WETA PBS Kids**, presenting educational programming for young viewers. WETA also streams content on multiple platforms.

WETA presents children's educational television that builds reading, literacy, STEM and social-emotional skills. For lifelong learners, WETA creates or acquires history, science and nature programs; news and public affairs analysis; performance programming celebrating the multifaceted cultures of the country; dramas and documentaries; and independent documentary films.

During Fiscal Year 2024, WETA curated a rich array of high-quality programs carefully selected for viewers across the region. Highlights of these included:

- Viewers valued dramas from *Masterpiece*, especially favorites *All Creatures Great and Small* and *Miss Scarlet*, as well as *Call the Midwife* and *Poirot*; history films and series from WETA partners Ken Burns and Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.; science and nature programs *Nature* and *NOVA*; independent documentary films from *POV*, *Independent Lens* and *American Experience*; and travel and culture shows *America Outdoors with Baratunde Thurston* and *Antiques Roadshow*.



- Arts and music programming featured star-studded performances in the WETA co-production *Elton John & Bernie Taupin: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song*; the new series *The Express Way with Dulé Hill*; the *Great Performances* special *Rodgers & Hammerstein's 80th Anniversary*; and the second season of *Next at the Kennedy Center* which included *Cynthia Erivo & Friends: A New Year's Eve Celebration*.
- The WETA PBS Kids Channel and the PBS Kids apps have a wealth of inspiring and fun programs for public media's youngest viewers. *Lyla in the Loop* premiered in Fiscal Year 2024, showing kids ages 4-8 ways to make problem-solving fun. PBS Kids also announced *Carl the Collector*, its first series featuring a lead character on the autism spectrum.

WETA produces and presents local series, developed to spotlight the people, places, culture and history of the national capital area, while also giving residents inspiration for exploring in and beyond their communities. Highlights of Fiscal Year 2024 included:

- The WETA travel series *Get Out of Town*, returned with mother-daughter hosts Laurita and Lauren Portee traveling to wine country, farm country and the snowy mountains of West Virginia.
- Emmy Award-winning WETA series *Signature Dish*, hosted by Seth Tillman, presented its second season, visiting more than 30 restaurants in the region.
- *If You Lived Here*, the WETA series exploring the homes and history of local neighborhoods, visited communities ranging from the suburbs of Maryland to D.C.'s Foggy Bottom to historic Mount Vernon in Virginia.
- *WETA Arts*, the Emmy Award-winning local arts showcase hosted by Felicia Curry, illuminates all corners of the arts scene in the D.C. area. Episodes ranged from chalk art to the legacy of artist Alma Thomas to an interview with superstar vocalist Denyce Graves.
- Short-form WETA series *Around Town Best Bets* gave viewers tips for what to watch, see and explore in arts and entertainment around the D.C. area.

WETA is home to the longest-running high school TV quiz show, *It's Academic*, now filmed in the new WETA television studios in front of a live audience. Fiscal Year 2024 marked the series' 62nd season and second in partnership with WETA.





### Radio: Classical Music for the Community

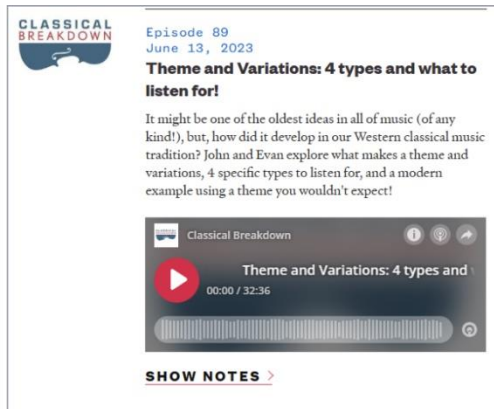
WETA Classical is the exclusive radio home of classical music in the nation’s capital. The station broadcasts symphonies, chamber music and full operas, in addition to concerts recorded from local music venues throughout Greater Washington. Listeners access WETA Classical programming via 90.9 FM and HD Channel 90.1 in Washington, D.C.; WGMS 89.1 in Hagerstown, Maryland; and a translator in Frederick, Maryland.

Listeners can also enjoy WETA Classical programming online at [wetaclassical.org](http://wetaclassical.org), via the WETA Classical App. Complementing WETA Classical, the digital music station VivaLaVoce plays a robust lineup of classical vocal music.

During Fiscal Year 2024, WETA Classical’s podcast *Classical Breakdown* launched its fifth season with two new programs: *Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 2: A Musical Comeback Story!* and *The Short Yet Musically Prolific Life of Franz Schubert*. Hosted by John Banther, the popular podcast celebrated its 100th episode in January 2024.

In the annual *Classical Countdown*, listeners voted for their favorite piece of classical music, and the top 100 most-requested works were played on the air during the days leading up to and including Thanksgiving. The most popular piece was Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9*.

For *Front Row Washington*, WETA Classical recording engineers captured live local performances at venues around the area. Presentations included the renowned Miró Quartet performing in the “Chamber Music at The Barns at Wolf Trap” concert series.



### Digital: Accessible Anytime, Anywhere

To reach the broadest audience possible beyond the station’s television and radio channels, WETA has developed a wide array of digital resources. Viewers and listeners can enjoy hundreds of series, documentaries, full-length films, short-form video, podcasts and specialized websites wherever and whenever they choose.

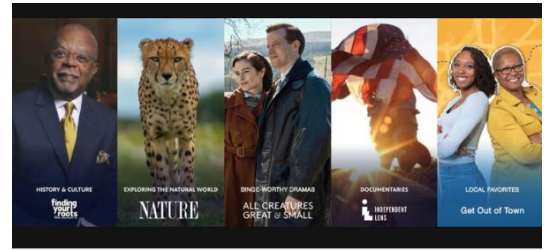
Using the PBS app and the member benefit WETA Passport, along with YouTubeTV, DirectTV and other streaming platforms, hundreds of thousands of D.C.-area individuals and family tuned in to WETA programs in Fiscal Year 2024.

WETA Metro is accessible as a livestream as well as an over-the-air station, drawing audiences for exceptional documentary films on Saturday nights and weekday afternoons. Highlights included *Go-Go City: Displacement and Protest in Washington, D.C.*, the Oscar-winning *Frontline: 20 Days in Mariupol* and *American Experience: The War on Disco*.

On WetaClassical.org, listeners can tune in to the WETA Classical service, enjoy a broad range of features and programs, and access the popular *Classical Breakdown* podcast and the WETA Classical app.

The station website weta.org was an essential destination for watching clips and full-length videos of WETA and PBS programming, while the WETA YouTube channel showed engaging and sought-after segments from WETA restaurant, travel, house-hunting and history programs.

WETA also delivers specialized websites for a range of niche interests. In Fiscal Year 2024, the *Boundary Stones* local history website created approximately 50 articles and videos, including the Emmy-winning “A D.C. Hospital Lost a Piece of Mussolini’s Brain” and “Operation Sting” videos. British TV and culture website *Telly Visions* wrapped up the final season of its podcast with episodes about a quirky British comedy film and the London theater scene.



### Public Media for the Nation

WETA is the second-largest producing station for public media in the United States, and the leading provider of news and public affairs content for the PBS system. WETA productions, co-productions and presentations include documentary films and specials from Ken Burns, Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and dozens of established and emerging filmmakers; ongoing series; and arts specials from major performance venues and the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol.

### PBS News: Trusted and In-Depth Programming

PBS News is the primary daily, breaking and special news producer for PBS; News Hour Productions LLC is a wholly owned nonprofit subsidiary of WETA.

Productions include *PBS News Hour*, *PBS News Weekend* and *Washington Week with The Atlantic*; primetime and daytime breaking news and political specials; and documentaries.

Amna Nawaz and Geoff Bennett co-anchor *PBS News Hour*, public television’s marquee news program known for its balanced, credible news coverage.

On Friday nights, moderator Jeffrey Goldberg and a rotating panel of today’s top journalists present news analysis on *Washington Week with The Atlantic*.

John Yang anchors *PBS News Weekend*, the half-hour newscast that airs Saturday and Sunday evenings.



Adding to the program’s many awards for coverage, *PBS News Hour* received a Peabody Award for “War in the Holy Land.” The hour-long special report covering the war between Israel and Hamas aired just six days after October 7th.





### National Productions Documentaries and Series

WETA works with production partners to bring stellar content to a nationwide audience. Highlights of Fiscal Year 2024 included:

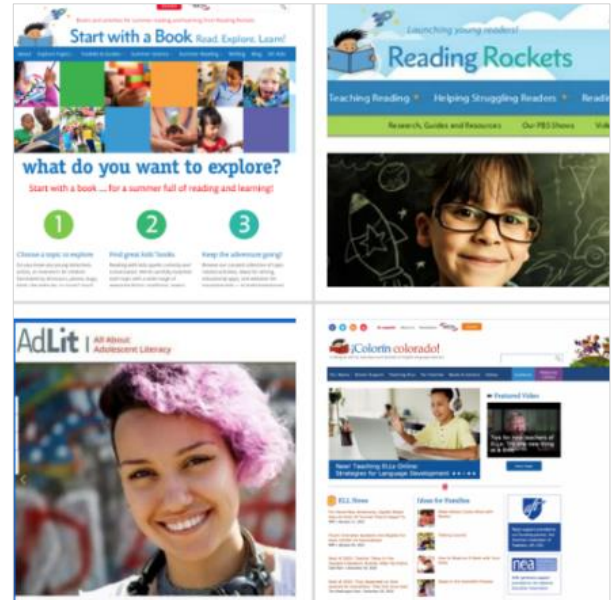
- *The American Buffalo* from longtime WETA production partner Ken Burns and his colleagues at Florentine Films explored the evolution of the buffalo and the species' relationship to the people of North America. WETA worked with PBS stations nationwide on community outreach programs, helping to organize activities and dialogue surrounding the film's content to ensure the documentary's lasting impact.
- *Gospel*, the documentary series executive-produced, written and hosted by celebrated scholar Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., spotlighted gospel music and its history, artistry and power. The WETA public engagement campaign featured more than 100 *Gospel*-related events with PBS stations around the country.
- *Elton John & Bernie Taupin: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song* honored one of the greatest songwriting duos of all time for their illustrious achievements and exceptional contributions to music. The electrifying tribute concert featured an all-star lineup of performers, including past Gershwin Prize honorees Garth Brooks and Joni Mitchell, as well as Annie Lennox, Metallica, Billy Porter and Charlie Puth.
- *Well Beings*, the WETA multiplatform, multi-year campaign addressing mental health, continued to bring together partners from across the country including youth, families, caregivers, educators, medical and mental health professionals, social service agencies, private foundations, filmmakers, corporations and media. A milestone from last year was the world premiere of *Out of the Dark: Cal Calamia* at the Tribeca Film Festival.
- Additional ongoing national productions from WETA included *National Memorial Day Concert* and Independence Day celebration *A Capital Fourth*; history series featuring dynamic and probing conversations with David Rubenstein; personal interest series *Finding Your Roots*, *Sara's Weeknight Meals*, *This Old House* and *America's Test Kitchen*; and children's favorites *Alma's Way* and *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*.



### Education: Promoting Literacy and Brain Health for All

Millions rely on the WETA Learning Media's award-winning sites for insights on reading instruction, learning disabilities, brain injury and PTSD. Since 1996, these highly regarded resources have provided authoritative and accessible information to families and educators nationwide. In conjunction with the children's programming that WETA broadcasts, the station engages with teachers, parents, daycare providers and community groups to extend literacy resources, including digital at-home learning tools from PBS and direct service literacy training.

WETA literacy resources include **ReadingRockets.org**, a multimedia project that helps struggling readers; **ColorinColorado.org**, a bilingual project with resources in both English and Spanish for parents and teachers of English-language learners; **StartWithABook.org**, created to prevent summer learning loss; **LDonline.org**, the leading website on learning disabilities and ADHD for parents, teachers and students; **AdLit.org**, developed to support the literacy of adolescent readers; and **Reading Universe**, which provides evidence-based reading instruction for grade-school teachers.

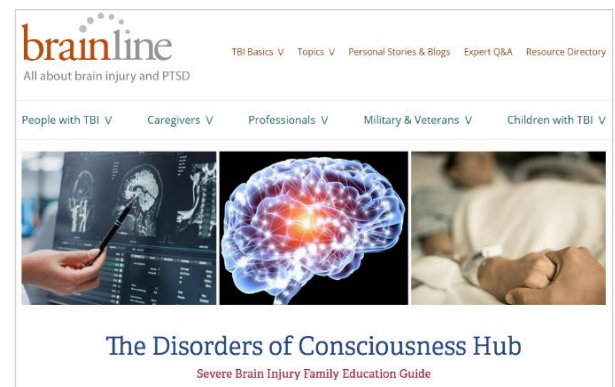


Highlights of Fiscal Year 2024 included:

- Reading Rockets relaunched with an expanded classroom strategy library and new resources on neurodiverse learning. The site debuted The Diverse Bookshelf, celebrating multicultural communities through children's literature. AdLit developed content on autism and literacy, launched Accelerated Learning with its resources to boost student achievement, and added video interviews with authors Renée Watson and Angeline Boulley. Colorín Colorado launched a new ELL strategy library that K-12 educators are using to support instruction.
- WETA Learning Media launched **ReadingUniverse.org**, a platform to improve young children's reading and writing skills using on-demand, research-based support for kindergarten and first grade educators. Resources include lesson plans, downloadable flashcards and free decodable texts, all grounded in the Science of Reading. Extensive classroom videos filmed in various states provide visual guidance. Future expansions will include content for Pre-K and 2nd through 6th grade teachers.

WETA is also home to **BrainLine.org**, the comprehensive source for brain-injury information. This award-winning website provides reliable information and support for those impacted by brain injury or PTSD, with a special focus on veterans and service members. In Fiscal Year 2024, BrainLine launched the Disorders of Consciousness Hub, where families and clinicians dealing with coma or vegetative states can find comprehensive resources covering injury, diagnosis, prognosis and care.

The site added expert videos featuring Dr. Tamar Rodney from Johns Hopkins, and Dr. Kyle Faust and Dr. Laura Harward from Wounded Warrior Project's Home Base Program. A new video titled "Reclaiming Hope: Healing from PTSD and Depression" features Air Force veteran Adam Watson.





### Public Media in the Community

In Fiscal Year 2024, WETA created more than 70 community events to engage the public with workshops, screenings, panel discussions and interactive virtual events to further civic dialogue about local and national history, American culture, current issues and the arts.

#### A Center for Community Engagement

- In June 2024, WETA completed the multi-year renovation and expansion of its headquarters in Shirlington, Virginia. The Sharon Percy Rockefeller Center for Public Media consolidated production departments, broadcast and digital studios, and administrative offices into one centralized and modern facility. The new design has created wonderful spaces for public screenings and discussions, meetings of local community groups, school visits, local and international visitors, and other gatherings.
- In preparing to open the new PBS News studios at the station headquarters, WETA gratefully welcomed volunteers who donated more than 100 hours of their time. Volunteers had the unique experience of serving as stand-in anchors and guests, allowing production crews to adjust light, set and sound equipment in preparation for live broadcasts.
- WETA headquarters was buzzing with activity from student journalists onsite for the PBS News Hour Student Reporting Labs Summer Academy. The flagship student training event welcomed 24 high school journalists from across the country; during the academy, fellows received coaching and skills training in video journalism – including sessions with *PBS News Hour* anchors Amna Nawaz and Geoff Bennett – and wrapped the week with a public screening of their video reports.



#### Events for Audiences Throughout the Area

- A preview screening of Ken Burns’s *The American Buffalo* drew a full house to George Washington University’s Lisner Auditorium. The screening was followed by a lively panel discussion about themes in the film.
- Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.’s new series *Gospel* was launched with a joyful and spirited screening event at the historic Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, D.C.
- At the D.C. Travel and Adventure show, one of the largest travel-related trade shows in the country, volunteers greeted and welcomed thousands of fans of the WETA local travel series *Get Out of Town*. Program hosts Laurita and Lauren Portee were among the featured speakers.
- In partnership with Filmfest DC, the largest and longest-running annual international film festival in Washington, D.C., WETA Metro spotlighted a special lineup of films made by local filmmakers, including *A Chocolate Lens*, *The Legacy of Lee’s Flower Shop*, *Meet Cute*, and *The Black Fire*.



### Connections With Music Lovers

- WETA Classical partnered with Wolf Trap Center for the Performing Arts, George Mason University, the Folger Consort, and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra on onsite promotions and pre-concert lectures.
- Wolf Trap’s Chamber Music at The Barns featured heavily on WETA Classical’s *Front Row Washington*, a weekly program that spotlights performances around the Washington area.
- In April, WETA Classical participated in the annual Friends of Classical Music event at La Maison Française in Washington, D.C., which included a performance by local pianist Adriano Spampinato.

### Hands-On Experiences for the Next Generation

- In-person events gave kids and families the opportunity to interact directly with PBS Kids programming and learning activities. These included The Big Build, in partnership with the National Building Museum, and Be My Neighbor Day, in partnership with PNC Grow Up Great and local YMCAs.
- The WETA PBS Kids Writer’s Contest invited young authors to pen an original story using the prompt “A Day in the Life.” More than 300 stories were submitted in 2024, marking one of the highest participation levels since 2020.
- In Fiscal Year 2024 WETA received a multi-year grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to create “Learning Neighborhoods,” a community-wide culture of learning anytime and anywhere for underserved populations in Prince George’s County. The project began with Latinx Indigenous families in two Maryland elementary schools and their respective Judy Center Early Learning Hubs. In subsequent months, family learning events centered around computational thinking, everyday literacy and other early learning skills.
- Together with the Learning Neighborhoods initiative, the WETA Ready To Learn and Where Literacy Begins programs served nearly 6,000 students with early learning resources.

**Credits — Cover page:** The Sharon Percy Rockefeller Center for Public Media. **Page 2:** *Get Out of Town* (Jenna Schwartz); *All Creatures Great and Small* (Courtesy Masterpiece); *Cynthia Erivo & Friends: A New Year’s Eve Celebration* (Scott Suchman); *If You Lived Here* (Leapfrog Productions); *WETA Arts* host Felicia Curry with baritone Aaron Reeder (Jenna Schwartz); *Miss Scarlet* (Courtesy Masterpiece). **Page 3:** *Funny Woman* (Courtesy Potboiler Productions, Sky UK Limited); *Daniel Tiger* (Courtesy The Fred Rogers Company); *It’s Academic*. **Page 4:** WETA Classical host Bill Bukowski; *Classical Breakdown* podcast; Miró Quartet (Courtesy the Artists). **Page 5:** WETA Passport offerings; *Boundary Stones*; *20 Days in Mariupol* (AP Photo/Mstyslav Chernov). **Page 6:** *A Capitol Fourth* (Courtesy Capital Concerts); *PBS News Hour* co-anchors Geoff Bennett and Amna Nawaz, *Washington Week with The Atlantic* moderator Jeffrey Goldberg, and *PBS News Weekend* anchor John Yang (Mike Morgan). **Page 7:** Ken Burns *Ken Burns (Tim Llewellyn Photography)*; *Samantha Brown’s Places to Love* (Samantha Brown Media Inc.); Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (PBS); *Elton John and Bernie Taupin: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song* (Mauricio Castrol). **Page 8:** StartWithABook.org; ReadingRockets.org; ColorinColorado.org; AdLit.org; BrainLine.org. **Page 9:** *The American Buffalo* preview event (Risdon Photography); *Gospel* launch event (Risdon Photography); PBS News Student Reporting Labs. **Page 10:** WETA Classical microphones above the National Symphony Orchestra; Geoff Bennett and Amna Nawaz speaking at WETA Salon Series event (Risdon Photography); Adriano Spampinato performing at La Maison Francaise (Risdon Photography). Uncredited images are by WETA staff.

