

# Integrating Digital Fundraising Into Your Membership Funnel



# Rachael Wolber

## Vice President, M+R







## SCORE CARD

**-1%**

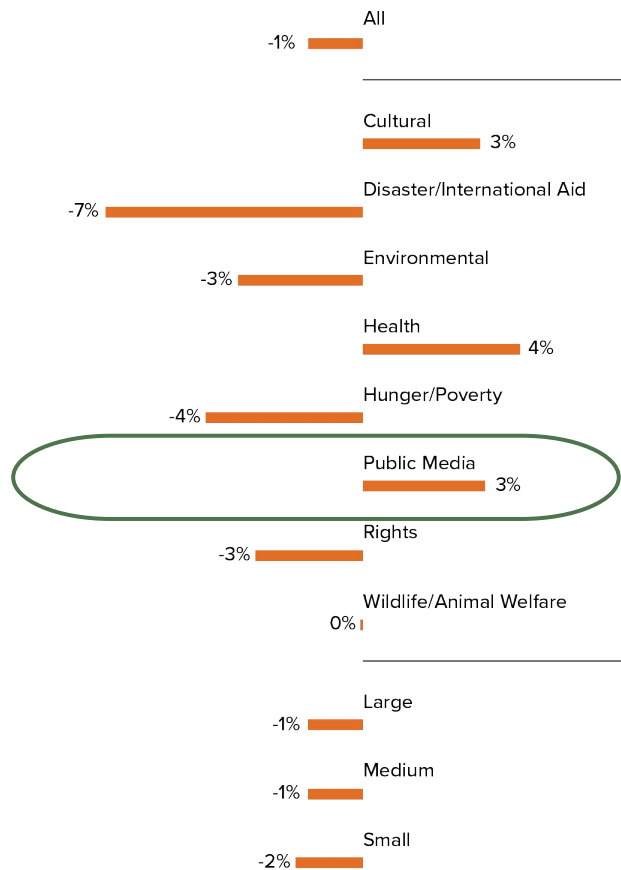
Average year-over-year change in online  
revenue.



## SCORE CARD

Public Media nonprofits had among the highest year over year growth at 3%.

### Change in online revenue 2022 to 2023

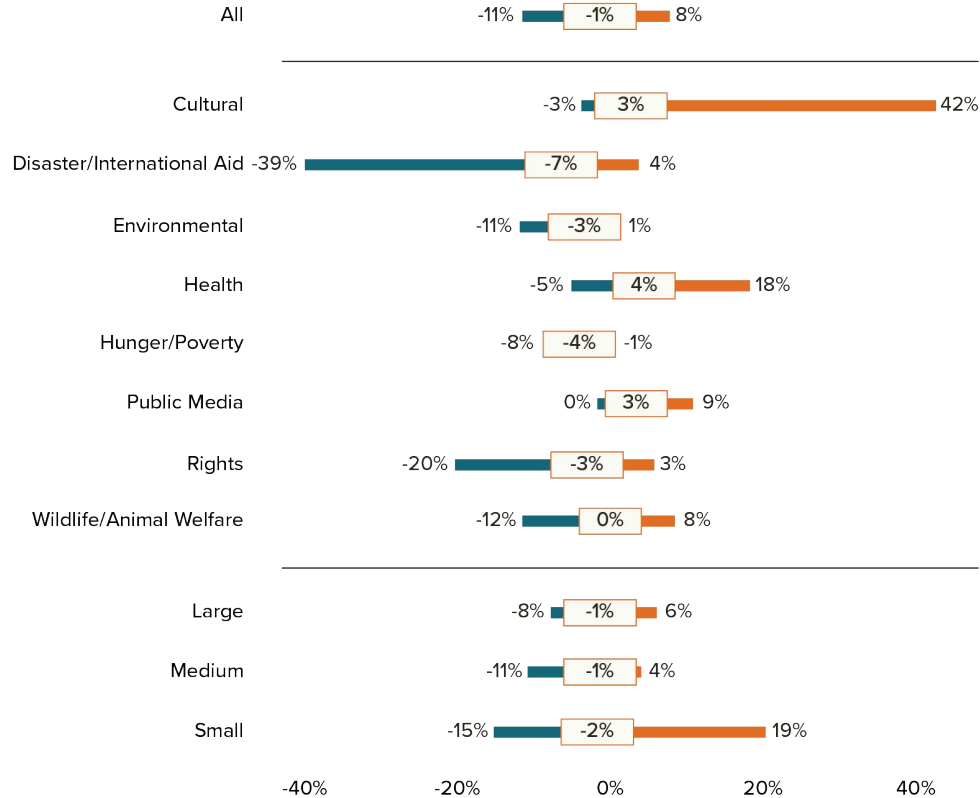


## Change in online revenue 2022-23



### SCORE CARD

“Normal” results for Public Media nonprofits ranged from a 0% change in revenue to 9% growth!







## SCORE CARD

We are still largely operating in a context set by the first year of the COVID pandemic.

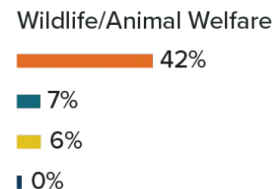
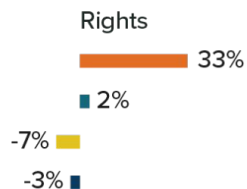
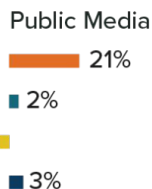
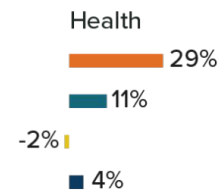
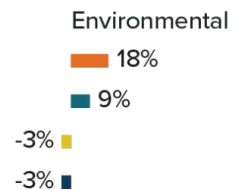
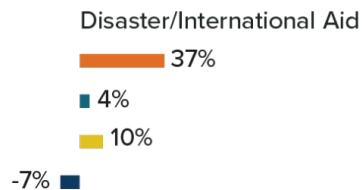
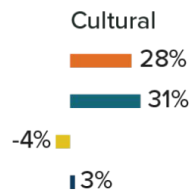
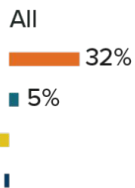
In that year, online revenue spiked by 32% — and much more in some sectors.



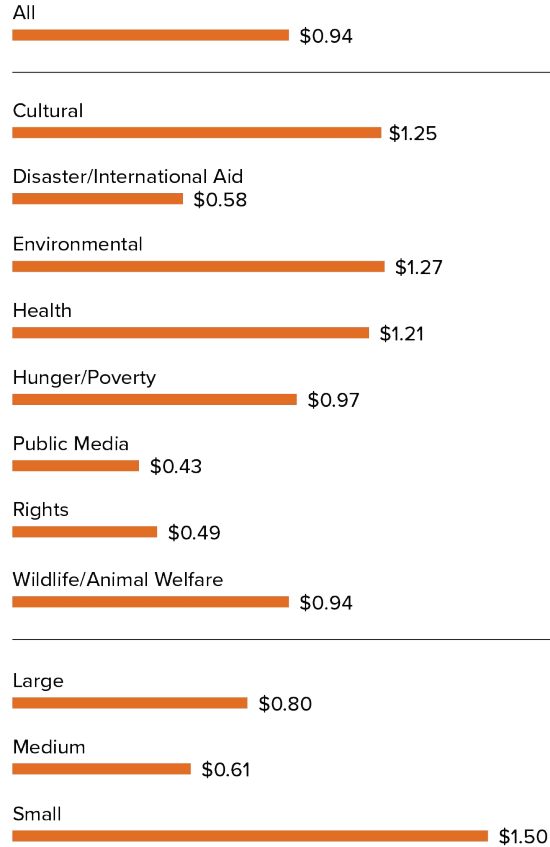
# Online revenue change year over year



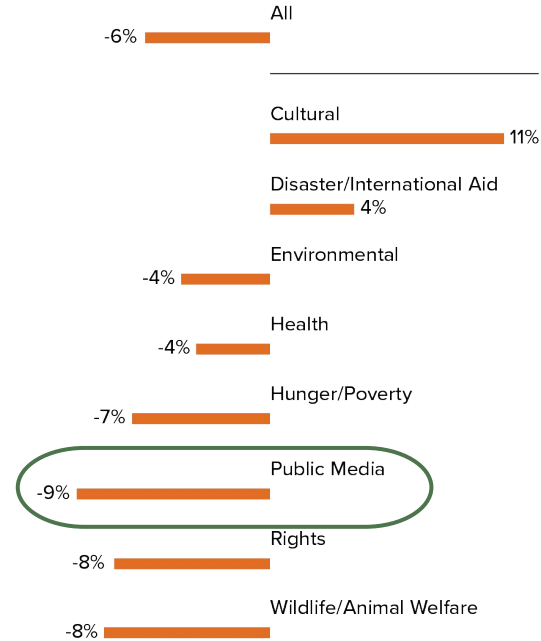
- 2019-2020
- 2020-2021
- 2021-2022
- 2022-2023



For every dollar raised online,  
organizations raised this through direct mail



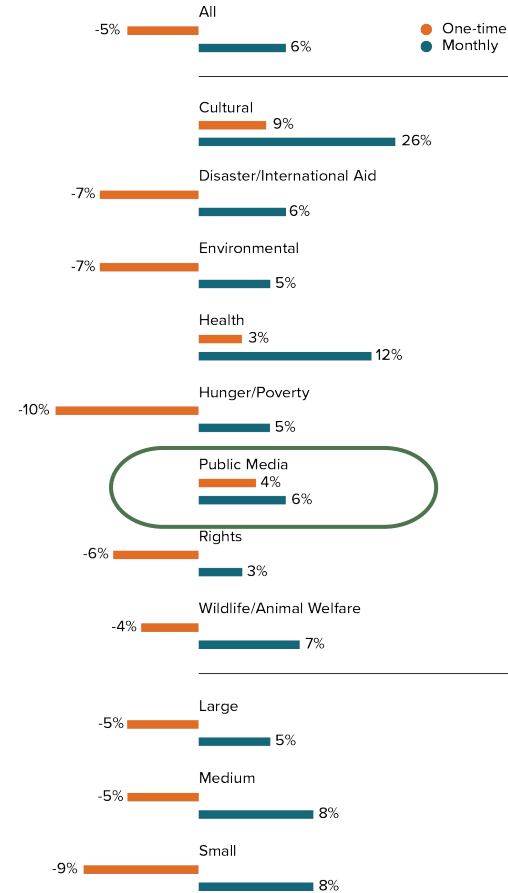
Change in revenue from direct mail 2022 to 2023





## SCORE CARD

Monthly giving accounted for 48% of online revenue for Public Media nonprofits. The overall average was 31%.

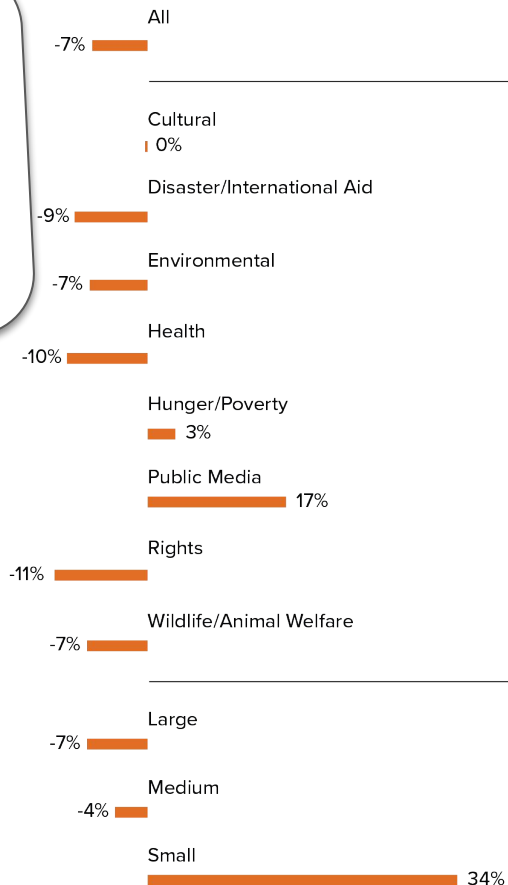


## SCORE CARD

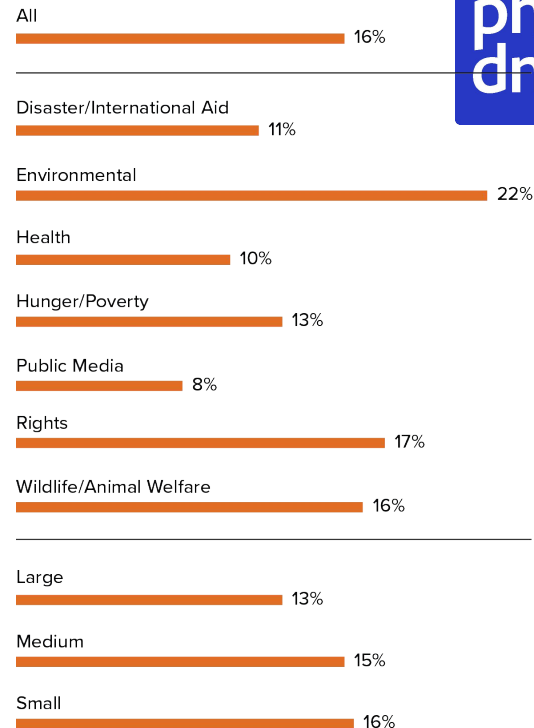
Email revenue is down overall, but increased for Public Media.



### Change in email revenue 2022 to 2023



### Share of online revenue from email

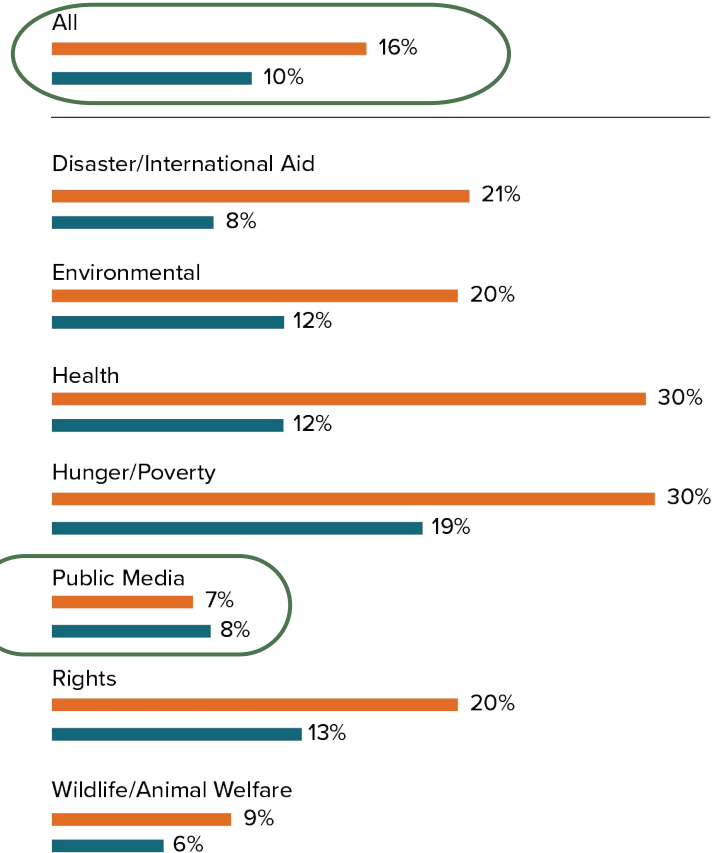


## Investment in digital advertising divided by total online revenue



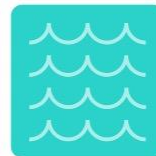
## Main donation page conversion rate by device

● Desktop ● Mobile



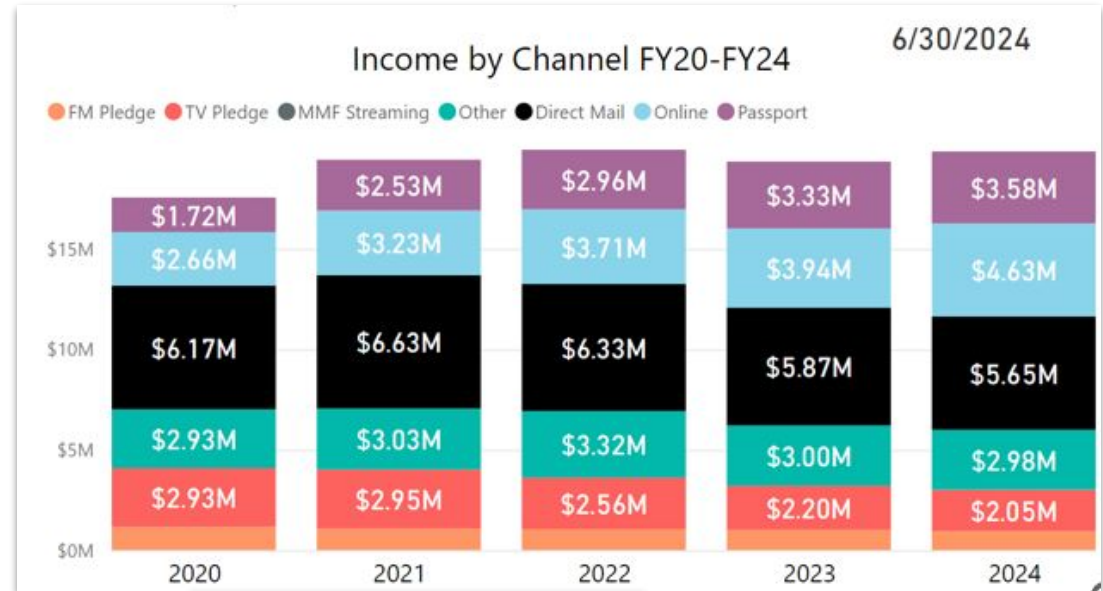
# Alicia Salmoni

Senior Director, Direct Response  
Fundraising and Audience Services

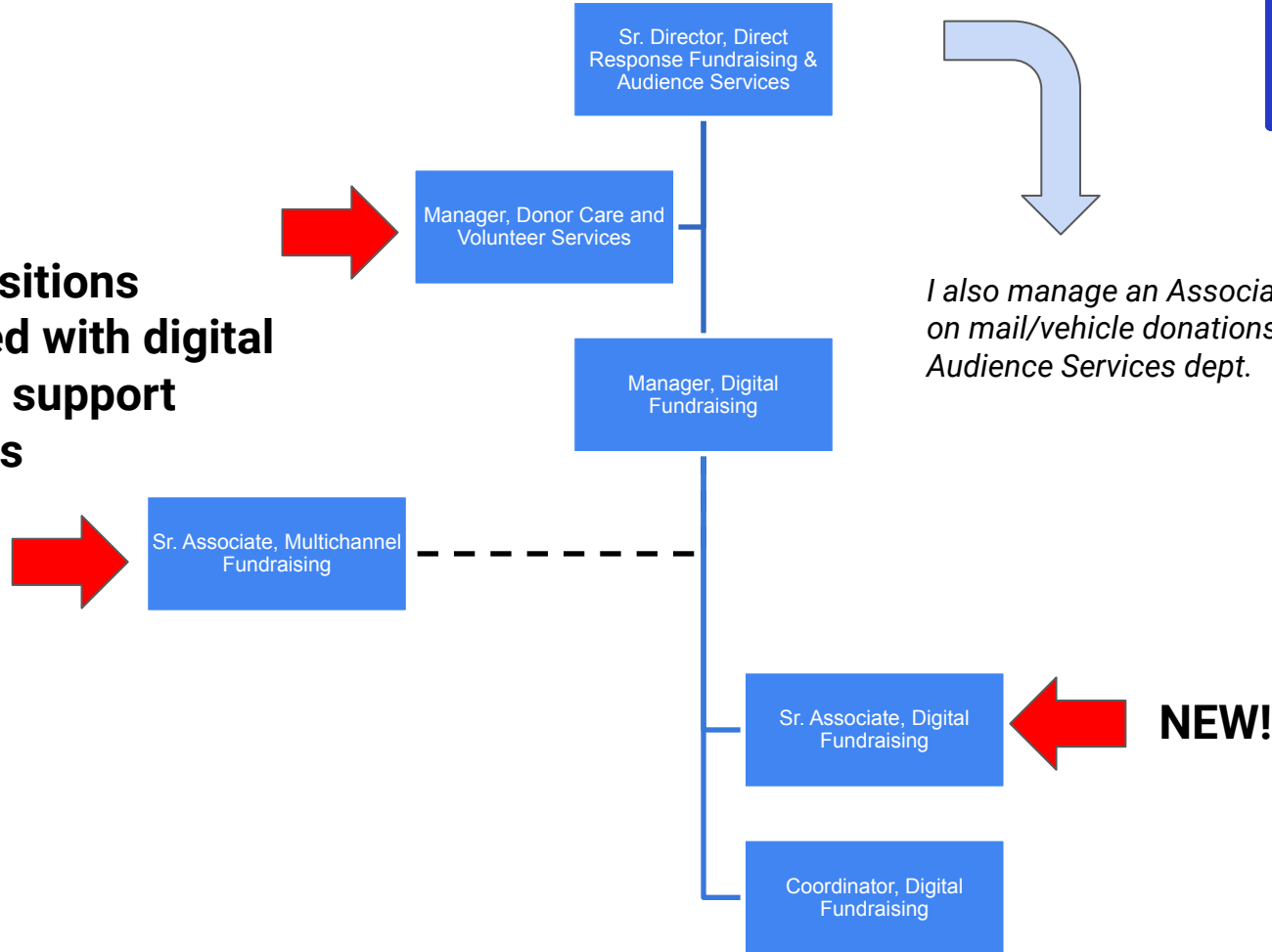


# Online + Passport Growth in Membership Program

- Mail returning to pre-pandemic levels; still a significant source of annual income.
- Online + Passport spiked during the pandemic and continues to grow; largest driver of new/rejoins for file.



## Existing Positions reconfigured with digital fundraising support components



# Email Program



- **Tentpole Multichannel Appeals**
  - CYE, Giving Tuesday, FYE, Public Media Giving Days
- **Special Multichannel Appeals**
  - Spring into WETA, Back to School Campaign, etc.
- **Passport Communications**
  - Passport Picks, Streaming Picks, special solicitation offers
- **Sustainer Upgrades**
  - Quarterly upgrade offers

- **Renewals**
  - Email companion to mail series
- **Trigger-based emails**
  - Sustainer Recapture
  - Welcome Series
- **Emails for pledge drives**
  - Email companions to on-air pledge
- **Cultivations**
  - Enter to wins, share your story, quizzes, event invitations, etc.

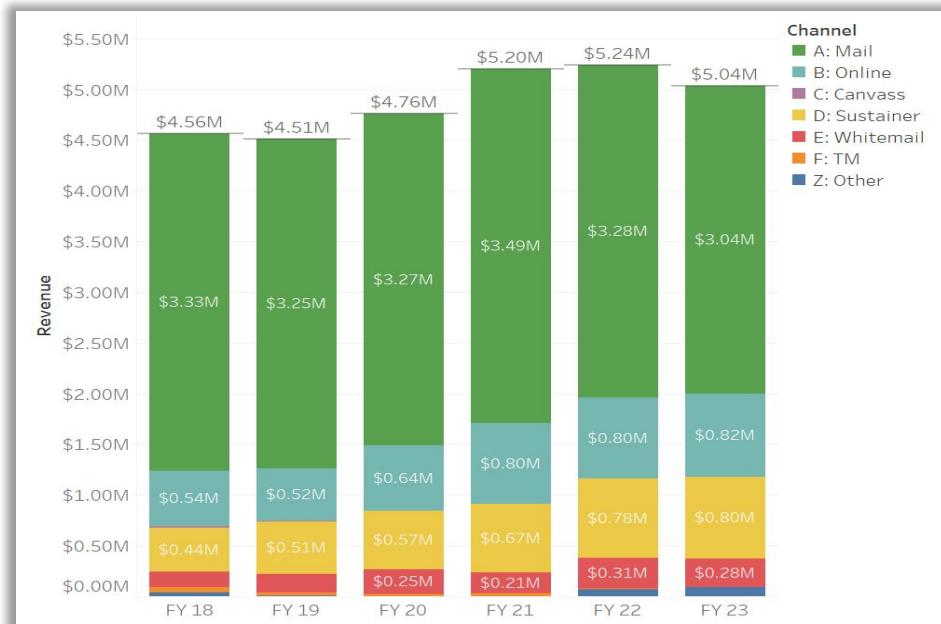


## The Digital Fundraising Team also manages...



- Website assets for all the multichannel campaigns and pledge, and coordinate/strategize TV, FM and streaming spot asset development with the MMF team.
- Donation form testing on such locations as the main donate button, renewals and the Passport donation forms. We also support the donation form companions to our mail program.
- Led the digital ads testing pilot in FY22/23 and currently manages paid Search ads and coordinates Roku ads strategy with the Local/Comms team.

# Subsequent Giving by Channel by DM Joins



- Donor behavior is becoming more multichannel!
- Donors who join via direct mail typically keep giving direct mail gifts, though that has shifted slightly in recent years; more are becoming multi-channel donors (40% in FY23).

# WETA's "Formula" for Multichannel Campaigns



**If the file's behavior is increasingly moving towards multichannel engagement with WETA—strike where the opportunity is!**

We approach our multichannel campaigns with a “formula”:

- Emails: primary source of income
- Utilize accompanying web assets
- TV, Radio, Pre-roll spots
- WETA branded item to drive brand awareness/donor loyalty
- Donor goal/match/deadline often incorporated
- Run spots/web assets for a few days to saturate messaging and conclude campaign with urgency/deadline driven emails

# Lean into local: What's your "cherry blossom"?

**LAST CHANCE**



Get your *Rise above the buzz* WETA mug!

**SPRING INTO WETA**

DOUBLE your support and claim your WETA Cherry Blossom bag!

**DONATE NOW**



**Claim your thank-you gift now!**

**Donate now**

**TRIPLE your support for WETA!**



and receive our new Cherry Blossom heat-changing mug!

**DONATE NOW**



# Adapt National Trends



# Add Authenticity with In-house Talent



**TRIPLE your support for WETA!**

and receive our new Cherry Blossom heat-changing mug!

**DONATE NOW** *Jamila Approval!*

Dear Friend,

As one of the hosts from the local fan-favorite show *Get Out of Town*, I want to extend a huge Happy Public Media Giving Days to you!

First, everything we do here at WETA is a result of your unwavering generosity. That's why we're going to participate again—with a special TRIPLE match—in Public Media Giving Days today and tomorrow.


We're seeking 250 donations by midnight tomorrow and we have a TRIPLE match made possible by The Menwith Foundation, up to \$25,000, to help us get there. Now is the time to step up with a contribution to WETA and watch your support here go 3x the impact! You're doing your part in this nationwide campaign to uphold the invaluable service of public broadcasting stations to our community.

And to say thank you for your generous support, we'll send you our brand-new Cherry Blossom heat-changing mug! Watch the blossoms "bloom" right before your eyes as you enjoy this exclusive new collector's item (specially designed for Public Media Giving Days, celebrating one of the most iconic images of our local DC area).

Last year, our community showed up and supported us in a huge way. Now we're looking to all of you to do it again this year! So we can continue providing you and your neighbors with the best in public broadcasting for many years to come.

From trusted news and analysis provided by PBS *NewsHour* and *Washington Week* with The *America* (both produced here at WETA) to thought-provoking documentaries from Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Ken Burns, and local series that celebrate our unique history and culture (Season 2 of *Get Out of Town* is here, I'm so excited for you to see it!), plus access to new seasons of the best dramas and movies, as well as the world's greatest music from WETA Classical—we're committed to being here for you with the best in public broadcasting in the years ahead.

While we're here for you 365 days of the year, we only have **THREE** days to make our goal and keep part in Public Media Giving Days. So please join me in donating by midnight tomorrow for your gift to be TRIPLED and receive our exclusive mug as a thank you for your generosity.

Sincerely,  
 Laurita Portes  
 Host, *Get Out of Town* • Public Media Giving Days donor

P.S. For over 60 years, we've been your source for reliable news coverage, fascinating documentaries, thrilling dramas and classical music! Please take advantage of this special 3x match opportunity with your generous contribution and make our on-air work possible today.

P.P.S. With your qualifying contribution, you'll also get access to WETA Passport, your on-demand streaming member benefit! Binge-watch just added seasons of dramas like *Quill* and other favorites from *Edgar Allan Poe*, programs from Ken Burns and Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and entire Walter Prewitt Collection of international dramas, access to great podcasts with new member benefit NPR+ and so much more!

# Permission to be Irreverent/Light Tone



Dear Friend,

If you wake up in the morning already thinking about pouring that first cup of coffee, you're in good company. Fellow coffee aficionado J.S. Bach often held concerts at his favorite coffee house and even wrote a comic work featuring a character addicted to coffee—now known as the "Coffee Cantata".



And did you know that today is National Coffee Day? To celebrate, we have an exciting limited time offer: donate to our WETA Classical Fall Pledge Drive before midnight tonight and you can receive our exclusive Bach "Coffee Cantata" mug as a thank you! The mug features Bach holding a WETA Classical mug and a quote from his caffeine-fueled work: "Ah! How sweet coffee tastes! Coffee, I must have coffee... and if a treat, ah! just give me some!"

Make a sustaining gift of \$5 a month or an annual gift and this special edition Bach "Coffee Cantata" Mug to the fun mug every morning will be a reminder that you keep Classical as a valued member.

Friend, your support right now will get us closer to our imp. Classical Fall Pledge Drive goal to keep the music alive for community. It's thanks to listener support that we're able to classical music around the clock, so we're relying on you! Your generous donation today. Please make a pledge before 11 midnight tonight—and receive a Bach "Coffee Cantata"

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,



Nicole Lacroix  
Nicole Lacroix  
Classical WETA On-Air Host

P.S. Supplies are LIMITED: so our Bach "Coffee Cantata" Mug offer will expire at midnight! Contribute right now to receive this special gift that we created especially for

So please, join your fellow community members right now and remember this buzzy spring with a "Rise above the buzz" mug with your generous Fiscal Year-End contribution. Your *\*buzzworthy\** thank you gift will show our appreciation for your faith in us and for your financial support of our programs and services to the community.

We've seen a great show of support from your friends and neighbors, but as of this morning, we're still 147 away from our 250 donor goal. Today is your last chance to claim your cherr-tastic WETA Cherry Blossom mug or a mug PLUS a handy Cherry Blossom tote bag!



## Embrace the puns!



# Jennifer Whiteside

## VPM, Director of Membership





# VPM Overview



- Joint Community Licensee

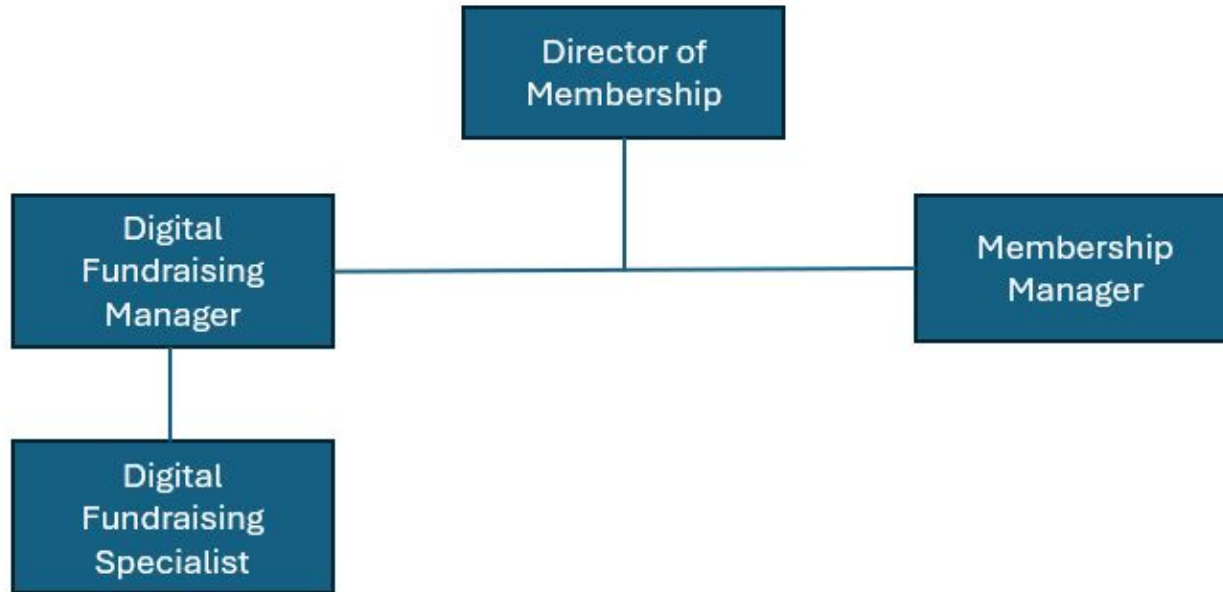
- Three PBS Stations – WCVE (Richmond), WHTJ (Charlottesville) and WVTP (Harrisonburg/Shenandoah Valley)
  - Each with five streams of content à Main PBS Station, Sub Station, Create, World and PBSKIDS
- Two radio stations – VPM News and VPM Music
- Locally Produced Content includes Podcasts, documentaries, limited-series, digital first content, etc.

- Audience

- Average Monthly TV Households = 120K
- Average Monthly TV Streaming Users = 86K
- Average Monthly VPM News FM Listeners
  - Over-the-air = 30K
  - Digital Streaming = 28K
- Average Monthly VPM Music FM Listeners
  - Over-the-air = 11.5K
  - Digital Streaming = 3K
- Average Monthly Unique Users to VPM.org = 156K



# VPM Membership Team Staff



## VPM Digital Fundraising Goal:



Meet our audience where they are, encourage engagement, and facilitate donations.





# Email Strategy



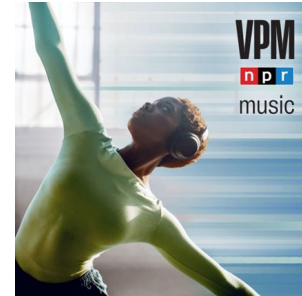
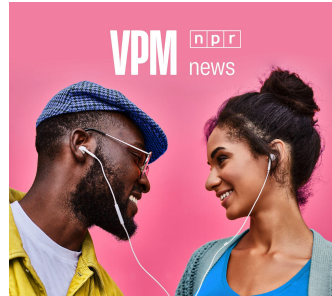
- Digital First Email Campaigns
  - Calendar Year-End, Fiscal Year-End, Public Media Giving Days
- Renewals
  - Monthly E-renewal email to complement direct mail outreach
- Routine Touchpoints
  - Weekly Update (e-newsletter)
  - Monthly “this month on PBS” ads
- Trigger Based emails
  - Welcome Series
  - Thank you emails for all online donations
  - Sustainer re-capture series
- Emails for Pledge Drives
  - Email campaign (3-5 depending on length of drive) to complement on-air messaging



# On-Air Pledge Strategy

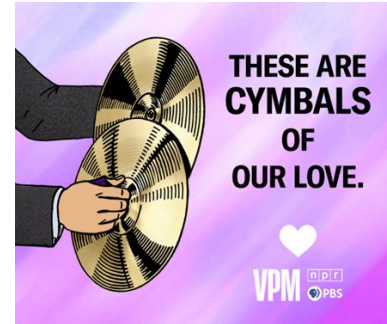


- Cohesive seasonal or holiday-driven themes
- Custom graphics and photos
- Meta ads
- Emails
- Complementary content



# Other Responsibilities

- VPM Support Web Pages
- VPM Donation Forms
- Member Portal
- Customer Service via digital outreach
  - Email
  - Online Contact Form
- QR code development
- Other creative stewardship content as needed
  - Example: [VPM Holiday Poem](#)





**11,440**

**HOURS OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS AIRED IN 2023**



PUBLIC MEDIA GIVINGDAYS 2024 VPM PBS

**9**

**LOCAL VPM TV PROGRAMS CURRENTLY IN PRODUCTION/AIRING**



PUBLIC MEDIA GIVINGDAYS 2024 VPM PBS

**171,600**

**MINUTES OF LOCALLY HOSTED MUSIC AIRED IN 2023**



PUBLIC MEDIA GIVINGDAYS 2024 VPM PBS

**2,875,000**

**LIFETIME DOWNLOADS OF VPM PODCAST EPISODES**



PUBLIC MEDIA GIVINGDAYS 2024 VPM PBS

**917**

**LOCAL NEWS ARTICLES PUBLISHED BY THE VPM NEWS TEAM IN 2023**



PUBLIC MEDIA GIVINGDAYS 2024 VPM PBS

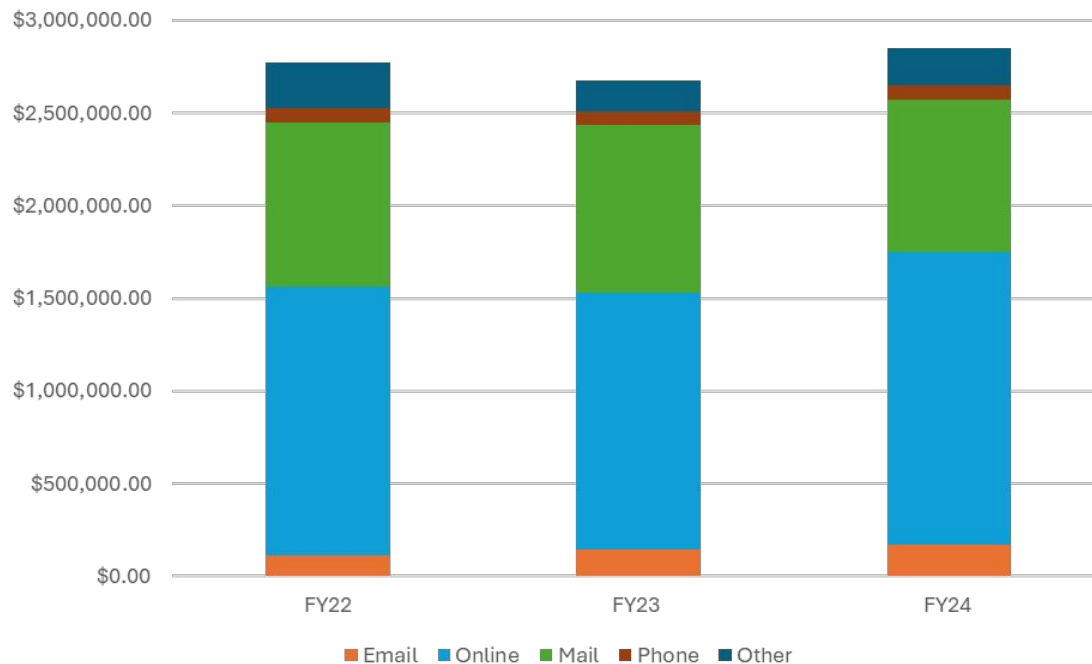


**PUBLIC MEDIA GIVINGDAYS**

**MAY 1-2 2024**



# Membership Giving by Channel





# Cross-Departmental Collaboration



- Marketing/Communications
  - Informing each other of plans/campaigns to avoid any potential conflicting or confusing messaging
  - Coordinating with/complementing any Marketing campaigns with our fundraising campaigns when possible
    - Ex. “Connected to what matters” and upcoming 60 year anniversary campaign
  - Receiving design approval on all graphics created for membership purposes to ensure brand consistency
  - Working with our senior graphic designer to develop campaign elements as needed (ex. PMGD shirts)
  - Utilizing impact-related and membership campaign supporting content compiled and written by Comm team
- Content producers
  - Exclusive content to work into our campaigns
    - Year-In-Review video
    - Sneak peek videos
    - Behind the scenes or unused clips
- Digital Content/Social Media Team
  - Planning in advance to ensure the social media posting schedule can accommodate membership-related content
  - Trusting the expertise of those scheduling and writing posts



# In Development



- Lead Conversion Series
  - Prospects from PBS and NPR
- Google ads
  - Separate from Marketing Team efforts to promote VPM or upcoming programs
- New stewardship emails
  - Example: YMAD emails and dedicated Vehicle Donation Thank you emails
- Monthly “Best of PBS” local station content

**THANK YOU!**  
THANK YOU!  
THANK YOU!  
THANK YOU!  
THANK YOU!



# Takeaways



- Assess your station's specific opportunities for new channels to try and test;
- Let the research inform what you do, utilize existing resources
  - [M+R Benchmarks](#)
  - [M+R Toolshed](#)
  - PBS Campaign Planning Resource

# Discussion

