

Public Media Awards Judges Scoring Criteria

Public media exists to serve communities through trusted, inclusive, and mission-driven storytelling that informs, educates, and inspires. At its best, public media strengthens civic life, advances learning, and reflects the diverse voices and experiences of the communities it serves. NETA proudly supports and celebrates this work—empowering public media organizations to achieve their educational potential, expand community impact, and lead with innovation, integrity, and purpose.

The Public Media Awards recognize excellence in content and service that embodies this mission: elevating public trust, amplifying diverse perspectives, and demonstrating the essential role of public media as a cornerstone of education, engagement, and community connection.

Content/Independent Production/Overall Excellence in Content

Storytelling

Does the program deliver compelling storytelling that engages or challenges the viewer?

Does the program have a clear and unique storyline?

Is the program appropriately paced and structured for the concept or story being told?

Craft

Craft reflects overall production quality, including sound, photography, graphics, editing, lighting, and visual design.

Is there clear excellence in craft?

Does the craft enhance the content being presented?

Do music, visuals, and video strengthen the story rather than distract from it?

Impact

Does the story inspire further interest, learning, or engagement with the topic?

Does the story meaningfully influence your perspective on the topic?

Innovation

Creative Approach:

Does the content demonstrate originality in concept, storytelling, or production?

Technological Integration:

Does the use of technology or platforms improve delivery, accessibility, or audience experience?

Pioneering Practices:

Does the content advance the field through distinctive methods, themes, or execution?

Marketing/Communications & Overall Excellence in Marketing/Communications

Creativity

Is the entry creative? Consider the originality of the idea, the quality of the writing and design, and the effective use of music, video, or photography.

Innovation

Creative Approach:

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Technological Integration:

Does the use of technology or platforms improve delivery, accessibility, or audience experience?

Pioneering Practices:

Does the content advance the field through distinctive methods, themes, or execution?

Appeal

How compelling is the project?

Does it create a connection or spark interest in learning more?

Visual Design

How strong is the project's visual design?

Strong visual design is high-quality, appropriate, and aligned with the audience and message.

Brand Integration

How effectively is the brand integrated into the project?

When rating Brand Integration, consider the following:

- Is the brand easily recognizable in the piece?
- Does the content reinforce the brand's identity?
- Is the concept distinctly aligned with the brand?
- Does the brand presence feel balanced rather than heavy-handed?

Execution

How well is the piece executed in its chosen medium?

Do the production values strengthen the message?

Education/Overall Excellence in Education

Does this project incorporate 21st-century learning skills?

These skills include:

- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Technology Literacy
- Flexibility
- Leadership
- Initiative
- Productivity
- Social Skills

Innovation

Creative Approach:

Does the content demonstrate originality in concept, storytelling, or production?

Technological Integration:

Does the use of technology or platforms improve delivery, accessibility, or audience experience?

Pioneering Practices:

Does the content advance the field through distinctive methods, themes, or execution?

Impact

Did the project make a meaningful difference in the local community?

Relevance

Is the project clearly connected to the community it is intended to serve?

Is there evidence of a meaningful local connection?

Appeal

How compelling is the project?

Does it create a connection or spark interest in learning more?

Visual Design

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Execution

How well is the piece executed in its chosen medium?

Do the production values strengthen the message?

Community Engagement/Overall Excellence in Community Engagement

Innovation

Creative Approach:

Does the content demonstrate originality in concept, storytelling, or production?

Technological Integration:

Does the use of technology or platforms improve delivery, accessibility, or audience experience?

Pioneering Practices:

Does the content advance the field through distinctive methods, themes, or execution?

Impact

Did the project make a meaningful difference in the local community?

Relevance

Is the project clearly connected to the community it is intended to serve?

Is there evidence of a meaningful local connection?

Appeal

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