

Detroit PBS Announces Lead Philanthropic Funding For Future Detroit Headquarters

Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation's Commitment Via Challenge Supports Detroit PBS' Move To Detroit

DETROIT (May 30, 2024) – Detroit PBS, the community-owned, nonprofit media organization that has served Southeast Michigan since 1955, announces the lead philanthropic gift of its campaign to support a move of its headquarters to the City of Detroit. The Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation has reflected the passion its founders had for the organization and its mission during their lifetimes by granting a \$7.5 million challenge to the organization as a 1:1 philanthropic match.

The Foundation's commitment honors the legacy of Fred and Barbara Erb, their lifelong love of and commitment to Detroit PBS and 90.9 WRCJ, and shared values of sustainability, servant leadership and collaboration toward a just and civil society. Detroit PBS expects this exceptional gift will motivate others committed to philanthropy, from its audience, other foundations and the corporate community, to match the Foundation's generosity over the next 36 months to help fund the new community media campus.

In April, the organization purchased the property at 234 Piquette Avenue, in the Milwaukee Junction neighborhood, between John R and Brush Streets, where it will renovate and expand an existing building to serve as much more than a traditional television station. The campus will provide an ideally situated home for an organizational headquarters, video production and broadcasts, 90.9 WRCJ radio production and broadcasts, arts performances, journalism hub and community events space.

“Just as Fred and Barbara Erb demonstrated through their philanthropy during their extraordinary lifetimes, their legacy of generosity and commitment to and belief in this community will impact generations to come,” said Rich Homberg, Detroit PBS's President and CEO. “Every time there's a program that makes a viewer think or act, every time a child gains enthusiasm about reading, whenever a more informed citizen decides to volunteer to help protect the Great Lakes or participate in the arts, and countless other examples, Fred and Barbara Erb will have played a role.”

“Detroit PBS was one of only two nonprofit Boards our father, Fred, served on. He truly enjoyed the jazz and educational programming as a viewer and listener for decades and advocated to the station's move to New Center in 1971. Our mother, Barbara, loved PBS nature programming and had been involved with the organization going back to the earliest days of the auction on TV in 1969,” said John Erb, the Foundation's chair. “This campus will be an extension of their belief in the enjoyment and educational power of Detroit PBS and WRCJ.”

“We are incredibly proud that the Foundation is recognizing our parents’ legacy and their shared love of public television with a gift that will help bring Detroit PBS and all of its service to the community back home to its own roots in the City of Detroit—where it can continue to evolve and inspire the next generation of viewers, listeners, and community members,” said Foundation trustee, Leslie Erb Liedtke.

[Read More About John Erb and Leslie Erb Liedtke's Tribute to Their Parents on the Erb Foundation Website](#)

“As a leading philanthropic force in our community, the Erb Family Foundation has challenged all of us to match their commitment to this mission,” added Homberg. “We look forward to others stepping forward to make every aspect of the future of public media in and around Detroit a reality.”

Detroit PBS expects to begin construction on the campus later this year, with an opening scheduled for Fall 2026. To join the Foundation in this effort, please contact Jenna Moritz, Director of Philanthropic Giving, Detroit PBS - jmoritz@detroitpbs.org or visit detroitpbs.org/detroitcampus to learn more.

About Detroit PBS:

Detroit PBS is Michigan's only community-licensed public television station, operating independently of any educational institution or governmental entity. With more than 2 million weekly viewers across its five TV channels, Detroit PBS is the state's largest and most watched public television station, reaching the most diverse public television audience in America. Formerly known as Detroit Public TV, Detroit PBS reaches nearly 4 million visitors on average each month through its websites, YouTube channels and social media platforms. Its listener-supported radio station, 90.9 WRCJ, is Detroit's only classical and jazz station, reaching a local and worldwide audience and averaging 280,000 streams per month. Licensed to Detroit Public Media, Detroit PBS is governed by a volunteer board of trustees representing the local business, civic and cultural communities.

About the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation:

The Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, founded in 2007, advances environmentally healthy and culturally vibrant communities in metropolitan Detroit and a flourishing Great Lakes ecosystem. The Foundation has paid out over \$165 million in grants since 2009. In 2022 it announced its intention to spend down its assets by 2035. For more information, visit www.erbff.org.

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