

Grantee Information

ID	1377
Grantee Name	WCBU-FM
City	Peoria
State	IL
Licensee Type	University

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

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The purpose of this section is to give you an opportunity to tell us and your community about the activities you have engaged in to address community needs by outlining key services provided, and the local value and impact of those services. Please report on activities that occurred in Fiscal Year 2020. Responses may be shared with Congress or the public. Grantees are required to post a copy of this report (Section 6 only) to their website no later than ten (10) days after the submission of the report to CPB. CPB recommends placing the report in an "About" or similar section on your website. **This section had previously been optional. Response to this section of the SAS is now mandatory.**

Joint licensee Grantees that have filed a 2020 Local Content and Services Report as part of meeting the requirement for TV CSG funding may state they have done so in the corresponding questions below, so long as all of the questions below were addressed as they relate to radio operations in such report. You must include the date the report was submitted to CPB along with the TV Grantee ID under which it was submitted.

1. Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station's vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.

WCBU is primarily a news and information station, but also features locally curated music on weekends. The station has increased its news staff from one full-time and one part-time in May of 2019 to two full-time, three part-time, and several correspondents/stringers as of this writing. Plans to add a third full-time journalist by Summer of 2020 were suspended as a result of pandemic-induced economic uncertainty. April of 2020. WCBU features daily local newscasts, a weekly local arts program, and frequent local interviews and investigative pieces during Morning Edition. WCBU also launched a new daily news podcast called "On Deck" in July of 2020.

2. Describe key initiatives and the variety of partners with whom you collaborated, including other public media outlets, community nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, the business community, teachers and parents, etc. This will illustrate the many ways you're connected across the community and engaged with other important organizations in the area.

The most impactful partnership has been that with WGLT-FM in Normal-Bloomington, whereby WGLT manages WCBU's day-to-day operations, that went into effect in June 2019. This has allowed WCBU to increase the size of its content staff and provided economic stability to both stations. In response to the pandemic and the prohibition on performing arts audiences, WCBU launched "WCBU presents," a special on-air on online series featuring performances by local performing arts entities. Partners have included Bradley University Theatre, Corn Stock Theater, Heartland Festival Orchestra, Peoria Symphony Orchestra, and more.

3. What impact did your key initiatives and partnerships have in your community? Describe any known measurable impact, such as increased awareness, learning or understanding about particular issues. Describe indicators of success, such as connecting people to needed resources or strengthening conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods. Did a partner see an increase in requests for related resources? Please include direct feedback from a partner(s) or from a person(s) served.

In addition to "WCBU Presents" the station partners with the local Arts Partners non-profit group on a weekly interview program, which promotes local art, music, theater and dance events and also posts a weekly "community events calendar" on our website. Feedback for WCBU presents has been overwhelmingly positive, both from listeners and from the arts agencies themselves. Unique visitors to the station's website have doubled in the last two years thanks to enhanced local news content. And "On Deck" hit 1500 subscribers within a few months of its launch.

4. Please describe any efforts (e.g. programming, production, engagement activities) you have made to investigate and/or meet the needs of minority and other diverse audiences (including, but not limited to, new immigrants, people for whom English is a second language and illiterate adults) during Fiscal Year 2020, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2021. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

WCBU operates a Reading Information Service. Volunteers read the local newspaper on air for the benefit of the visually impaired. This service, which is available to listeners by obtaining a special sub-carrier receiver from the station, also airs a national reading information service, reaches a diverse audience of visually-impaired residents in a ten county area. Additionally, WCBU's newsroom has established an informal news-sharing arrangement with minority-owned LPFM WPNV in Peoria. And WCBU's CAB has recruited more than a half a dozen new members in the past year and group has become much more active in providing feedback on the station's community service.

5. Please assess the impact that your CPB funding had on your ability to serve your community. What were you able to do with your grant that you wouldn't be able to do if you didn't receive it?

It's doubtful WCBU could survive without CPB funding. With WCBU's new partnership with WGLT, the station has been able to increase quality, quantity, and depth of its independent and professional local news coverage, as well as its coverage of local arts, culture, and music. That trajectory should continue, but only if CPB funding continues.

Comments

Question

Comment

No Comments for this section