



CPB Local Content and Service Report 2022

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

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.

The goal at KAXE is to bring together people of all ages and backgrounds through music, conversation and events. We are a trusted and respected source for information, entertainment, and a positive force for change in the communities we serve. We seek out community feedback from our board of directors, volunteers and Community Advisory Board. We also receive on-going feedback from our talk back phone and text line and from the PSAs that come in from community organizations including area non-profits, government agencies, school districts and higher education systems. We deliver our stories on a variety of platforms including broadcasting on-air and streaming, online through our website, podcasts and social media. We have weekly e-newsletters that highlights stories from the past week. We also continue to foster and maintain partnerships with a diverse group of organizations like the MacRostie Art Center, Visit Grand Rapids, Long Lake Conservation Camp, Minnesota North, Itasca Economic Development Corp, and the Blandin Foundation to name a few. We work hard to serve a wide cross-section of our listening area. We offer these organizations promotion of their events and services.

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.

One of our strategic goals is to Foster Community Engagement, we have worked to build relationships with area organizations. Here are just a few that highlight those partnerships:

2022 Grand Rapids Riverfest – This event was a collaboration with KAXE and the City of Grand Rapids to co-host a one-day music festival. This event brought a large cross-section of our community together including the Grand Rapids Area Library which provided the location for the event on the banks of the Mississippi River. Area restaurants and food trucks created a food village. We had area artists create art during the festival. United Way of 1000 Lakes held a 5k run. Area breweries held pre and post

festival music events. We held guided nature walks along the Mississippi between acts to educate people about native and invasive species. We received financial support from a wide array of local businesses and organizations. Over 60% of the attendees were from out of the area which not only highlighted Grand Rapids as a great area to visit and live, it also created a great economic boost to the community. We also collaborated with other community radio stations throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin like KVSC, KFAI and WXPB to cross promote events in our respective communities.

Phenology in the Classroom – In 2022, we expanded our Phenology in the Schools program. This program gives teachers and other youth leaders from area environmental learning centers like Long Lake Conservation or youth groups like 4H the tools to get their students outside and exploring the natural world around them. Once teachers have completed the course, their classrooms/students send in weekly reports of the student's nature sightings. We range from 4-16 reports a week from schools all across the state as far north as Baudette, to up the North Shore of Lake Superior, to the community schools in Bemidji, as far south as Northfield and all points in between. We broadcast those and distribute them as part of a podcast. We also use portions of those reports to create social media posts and many of the reports make our weekly Season Watch Newsletter. As part of this project we have partnered with the University of Minnesota to build and interactive map to share nature observations from around the state. We also have on-going conversations with scientists and conservationists to help round out our coverage.

From Kenya to Minnesota – Thanks to funding from the Minnesota state Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, we held an event at the historic Hibbing High School auditorium. We brought in folk musician Ondara who was so inspired by the works for Bob Dylan he left his home in Kenya and moved to Minneapolis. We partnered with the Hibbing Dylan Days committee, as well as, local writer and historian Aaron Brown to provide the history of Hibbing and Dylan. Prior to the event other local musicians wrote essays and songs inspired by Bob Dylan. This project concluded with a concert where Ondara performed Dylan classics and concluded with songs from his unreleased album. This concert was recorded and we created a special that was broadcast to our listeners.

Anishinaabe Fashion Show – We partnered with Anishinaabe Fashion designer Delina White. Delina held a fashion show during Minnesota Fashion week in Minneapolis. She brought in designers and models from other indigenous communities across the state and from far away states like Alaska. We provided promotion of the event and Delina was interviewed to help educate our listeners on the traditions of native garments like jingle dresses. The event itself featured beautiful garments created by Delina and other native designers. All models were BIPOC or two-spirited. Indigenous musicians performed during the event and there were vendors selling handmade goods. In attendance of the event included leaders from area non-profits and even our state Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan.

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.

The Grand Rapids Riverfest was a huge success. It brought together such a wonderful cross-section of the community that we realized the power of collaboration. We also realized how important sense of place is when creating events or content. What made this event stand out was that it felt authentically like our community. We put together an experience where visitors could feel what made Grand Rapids special and why those of us that live here care so deeply for it. We received great feedback including:

From former State Rep – Sandy Layman- “ Grand Rapids has a winner here with Riverfest! Amazing work by KAXE, City of Grand Rapids, and all the great sponsors to pull off such an event, bringing thousands of people together in a beautiful outdoor setting along the river to close out the summer with a bang.”

Local Artist, Tom Page created artwork inspired by the event and said, “Thanks KAXE and Grand Rapids for a great Riverfest.”

From the President of the Blandin Foundation - “We are so honored to be a supporter of KAXE and KBXE. THANK YOU SO MUCH for bringing people together to dream and bring such a great experience to northern Minnesota. Me & my little ones had an incredible time listening to music, eating great food, running into old friends and meeting new ones. So many volunteers from such a great cross section of the community. I loved that Shovels & Rope did a little harmonica rendition of Dylan too. I hope everyone is soaking it in and enjoying the beautiful day today.”

From Kenya to Hibbing was another event that brought together people, shared history about the community and exposed people to great music. Here are some of the comments we heard:

“Thank you for bringing Ondara to Hibbing at last night’s concert. That was a beautiful experience in a stunning setting. Thank you for bringing live music to our area. I send deep appreciation to the entire staff for making this happen!” – Linda Flanagan, member of KAXE.

“Thank you for being such a great radio station - my favorite! I have a cabin near Hibbing and listen when I’m there.” – Pat an attendee of the event from Stillwater, MN.

“What a great concert. I traveled 50 miles to attend.” – KAXE listener

“These programs offer a bonding experience that we share with pride as residents and tax payers in Minnesota. The Arts and Cultural Heritage programming is a major source of pride across our many, sometimes divided, groups of Minnesotans.” – KAXE listener, commenting on Dylan Legacy Fest

We have heard from listeners that the student phenologists inspire them to get outside and observe the natural world around them. Here is some of the feedback we have received.

“As we drove from Brainerd to Merrifield to ring in the new year, we noticed the beauty of the ice crystals on the trees & wooded areas. This precipitated a discussion about rime ice vs hoarfrost. Both are beautiful, their source beginnings different. We decided what we saw was hoarfrost. I have to think John has spoken many times about this glorious nature’s art. I’m not sure if Bemidji &/or Grand Rapids was gifted with this frosty gift, but we here in Brainerd have a gorgeous view of the outside world.” Kathleen from Merrifield.

“I am 74 and lived many years of my life up north. Now I live in Rockford to be closer to daughters. For the past few years, KAXE has been my lifeline. I spent many months in isolation due to Covid and ill health. KAXE has brought me sparks of joy, laughter, hearing different perspectives, like the Native News, always expanding my life and broadening my world view. I only wish I could give more. In fact, and I think I speak for most all of us, the value of KAXE to your community of listeners is priceless. My next goal is to connect my grandchildren’s school up with Phenology.” Pamela from Rockford.

We also heard from participants in the workshops:

“For me, learning about how the teachers (particularly how Rob did it in his class) collected the data, got students to script the reports, and the recording on voice memo and sending it in was very helpful. I’ll also start putting my own observations in Nature’s Notebook (I’ve been keeping a personal handwritten phenology journal for many years).”

“I was incredibly uplifted and inspired by all of the presenter’s passion for phenology and excited to bring some ideas right away to my students! Especially bringing nature right into the classroom, loved the examples they brought in and realized how simple that was. “

“I so appreciated the 'spirit' and obvious commitment to phenology by the staff. You are all making a wonderful contribution to enrichment of lives, young and old!”

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 2022, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2023. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

We partner with many indigenous creators to create content for us. One producer is Michael Lyons, He greets Boozhoo Nana Boozhoo which teaches listeners Ojibwe culture and language through music and storytelling.

Through our partnership with Ampers, we air Counter Stories. A weekly program hosted by Anthony Galloway, Luz Maria Frias, Don Eubanks and Hlee Lee. They discuss race, identity, social justice and culture in a region grappling with demographic changes.

In FY23, we are rolling out a couple of new initiatives to invite and cultivate new voices and topics. One is the “Curiosity Club.” Inspired by KUOW in Seattle. We will establish a

cohort of 10 inquisitive humans from northern Minnesota. We will work with community partners to be intentional about members of the club – keeping at the forefront that we are looking for people who aren't normally reflected or heard in media. This 3-month experiment will gather people at a local restaurant monthly for a meal and conversation about topics we have been covering. The Curiosity Club will be free to participants, and we anticipate it will lead to an open invitation to stay involved.

Our next initiative is "Community Ambassadors". The American Journalism Project has a program called Community Listening Ambassadors: Vital Partners in Guiding New Funding for Local News. They have built this model to finance and sustain local news for a strong democracy. It entails the creation of a goals worksheet with purpose, people, assets, priorities, and allies and creating a cohort of 10-15 people to represent a balance of underrepresented groups in northern Minnesota. Ambassadors will be trained and paid for interviewing people in their own communities while creating a transparent atmosphere of inclusivity that will help us determine next steps and best practices in local coverage.

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?

CPB funds are critically important to our station. Northern Community Radio is located in sparsely-populated rural northern Minnesota. Its signals cover a large geographic region. It provides stability to our organization. We are able to purchase high-quality programming from National Public Radio and the CBC. We also supplement our local programming with content from PRX, Public Radio International, Native Voice One, and more.