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.

WCBU is primarily a news and information station, but also features locally curated eclectic music on weekends. The station has increased its news and content staff from one full-time and one part-time in May of 2019 to, as of this writing, four full-time, two part-time, and several correspondents/stringers and student interns. As of December 2021, WCBU features daily local newscasts, a weekly local arts program, a daily 8-minute local news podcast that also airs four times during Morning Edition, and WCBU launched a 30-minute local news magazine ("All Things Peoria") airing Monday-Friday at 5 P.M. in October of 2021. It is our hope to add more general assignment and beat journalists to staff as fundraising permits.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

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," in 2020, 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. The show is in its third season. Beginning in January 2022, WCBU started providing four local newscasts each weekday - two in the morning and two in the afternoon - to local community radio station WAZU "Strictly Hip Hop", which combines locally selected hip hop music and community service elements to serve a diverse audience. And in February 2022, WCBU began a content sharing agreement with The Community Word, a Peoria-based monthly newspaper.

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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 ("Out and About") 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 are up approximately 5 times since 2019 thanks to enhanced local news content. Our best month of "On Deck" saw 2500 subscribers, and the podcast version of "All Things Peoria" saw 4500 users in its best month.

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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.

In addition to the partnership with WAZU mentioned above, WCBU's CAB has recruited several new members in the past year and group is more diverse and more active in providing feedback on the station's community service.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

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 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