Grantee Information

ID 1453
Grantee Name WNMU-FM
City Marquette
State MI
Licensee Type University

1. Telling Public Radio’s Story

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 2021. 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 2021 Local Content and Services Report as part of meeting the requirement for TV CSN 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 you reached or new audiences you engaged.

FY2021 runs July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021. Quarterly issues ascertainment, done in conjunction with WNMU-TV helps to identify weekly topics for review in the co-production of “Media Meet”, a news and public affairs interview program that airs on both stations. This program provides a format for more in-depth exploration of issues regularly covered on the local spot news, and features reports, within our newscasts and daily news magazine programs. During FY21 WNMU-FM included multicultural programming in our schedule whenever offered. We included programs related to Chanukah, Passover, Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, National Poetry Month, Veteran’s Day, and Native American History Month. National Native News can be heard Monday – Friday during All Things Considered and Anishinaabe Radio News on a weekly basis. WNMU also airs Putumayo World Music, The Brazilian Hour, Thistle and Shamrock, Fiestal and Concierto and regularly features world music in national languages as part of our locally produced Classiclectic and Weekday programs. As a locally-operated station, in addition to airing nationally produced public radio offerings, we also have the ability to continue to serve the unique needs of our rural audience, including showcasing regional talent with local productions like in the Pines featuring folk and traditional music recorded at the annual Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival now in its 43rd year as well as the Porcupine Mountain Music Festival. Our afternoon Weekday program features emerging artists traveling across the country and around the world as well as local talent. WNMU-FM has had musicians from several different countries featured on-air playing and talking with host Hans Althstrom during his Weekday program. Learning Through the Seasons by Grandparents Teach Too, a program for grandparents, parents and other caregivers of young children providing informative fun activities for a lifetime of learning. This program is produced in partnership with Grandparents Teach Too a nonprofit organization founded by early elementary teachers, reading specialists, and early education childhood specialists who also co-authored the book from which the programs are based. Highlights from the Marquette Area Blues Festival, recorded by WNMU over the Labor Day Weekend festival, now in its 18th year and Peninsula Performances, which features classical music offerings from the Marquette Symphony Orchestra, Keweenaw Symphony Orchestra, Marquette Choral Society, Pine Mountain Music Festival, Marquette Community concerts, and Northern Michigan University Performing Arts series. This series has aired on WNMU for more than 15 years. During F21 we added The Shuffle to our lineup which aims to amplify new music, independent releases, local artists, music talks, unsigned and breaking artist from across our listening region and also on a national level. The Shuffle is produced locally and also seeks to tap into the local music scene in the Upper Great Lakes region with The Local Spin segment. The Shuffle program is designed to reach and meet the needs of a millennial audience. The Children’s Hour was also added in FY21. A show for and with kids, The Children’s Hour explores incredibly diverse themes using interviews, storytelling, poetry, music and discussion. It features young performers and thinkers, as well as adult expert guests in all fields and weaves the show themes together with great music. This is an unique educational children’s program that reaches many rural families. Our listeners also have the opportunity to participate in the programming during the year by recording a story for our Holiday Readings and Remembrances program featuring listener’s holiday memories that airs throughout December. We also invite people to read and record their original poetry works featured during National Poetry Month in April. This November, for the 11th year, WNMU-FM also produced and aired a special Veterans’ Reflections program featuring local vets telling stories about life in the military during both war time and peace time. WNMU has implemented a “voice-memo” option for listeners to leave voice comments directly to our website as an additional method of public engagement.

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.

Most of FY21 required dealing with the worldwide COVID19 pandemic. With schools closing across the area and shelter in place, gathering
restrictions, social distancing, sanitizing and mask wearing mandates changing on a daily basis, WMU4 to have to be flexible in accommodating staff to work from home as well as keep our signal on the air with necessary information going out to listeners 24/7. Hardware and software purchases were made to help produce remote program production and on-air automation as well as staff meetings. Sanitizing protocol, occupancy limitations and PPE such as sanitizing wipes, face masks, and plexiglass shields were provided. WMU4 also partnered with the local Health Department and various local commercial news personnel, state representatives and health officials in town, to produce informative half-hour COVID-19 updates, focusing on local topics, State mandates, COVID-19 vaccinations and school requirements that were affecting our listeners on a daily basis. WMU4 operated with staff working from home for ten months of FY21 (with some exceptions for news staff). Some program productions were put on hold as we monitor the transmission of COVID-19 in our community. The ability to have guests in the studio is limited when the virus transmission in our community is at a high level. With all events that would entail crowds gathering being canceled across the country, we were unable to record new material at the Hiawatha Music Festival, The Porcupine Music Festival or the Marquette Area Blues Fest for the subsequent on-air programs, so many encore programs are still being aired. With the state health officials declaring their 2020/21 season we decided to change our Sat afternoon program lineup to include a Children’s Hour show as well as new new shows. WMU4 continues to record and air more interviews with raps from major arts orgs across our listening area highlighting their upcoming virtual and in-person events, including the Calumet Theatre, Bonifas Art Museum, Crystal Theater, Historic Vista Theatre, NMU Theatre and Music dept., Beaumaris Heritage Center, etc. The interviews are also uploaded to WMU4FM.org. WMU4 FM has partnered with the Northern Michigan University Native American Studies department since 2016 to produce Anishinaabe Radio News hosted by NMU professor April Lindala. Each 2-minute program, which airs weekly during Morning Edition and All Things Considered, explores Native American history and culture and keeps listeners up to date on Indigenous events at NMU and across the Great Lakes Region. Pieces are also posted online as weekly podcasts. WMU4 TV & FM continue to partner with community school districts across our listening area to provide hands-on learning opportunities in a variety of areas through station internships for high school and NMU students. While we were unable to have high-school interns in FY21, we were able to work with NMU students, so that they could continue to learn about public broadcasting, editing, recording, live on-air work, standards and ethics, etc. We also work with elementary and secondary schools in the Marquette area each year to assist with career awareness activities for students. WMU4 arranges student tours and provides question and answer sessions with station staff as well as a variety of different departments on campus to give students an overview in a variety of different career paths. We continue to work closely with the Upper Peninsula Children's Museum on the "8-16 Media" program, 3-minute news features on current topics written and produced for an adult audience from the perspective of a young person. All these activities were put on hold due to the COVID pandemic. WMU4 continues to work with the Lake Superior Partnership and their Lake Superior Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy is a program that nurtures tomorrow’s leaders. WMU4 hosts 30-40 adult community leaders for tours of the station, presentation of how the station operates and question/answer sessions. WMU4 continues to produce Learning Through the Seasons, now in its 8th year of production, a program for grandparents, parents and other caregivers of young children providing informative activities for a lifetime of learning. This program is produced in partnership with Grandparents Teach Too a nonprofit organization founded by early childhood specialists who co-authored the book from which the programs are based. Learning Through the Seasons airs weekly during All Things Considered and Weekend Edition as well as an online podcast. This program is produced is several languages and available around the world with 6 years of archives at WMU4FM.org. WMU4 hosted a campaign centered around grief and the PBS program: Speaking Grief. The "Speaking Grief" project included the following components: A live Zoom Speaking Grief screening event followed by an hour of discussion with local grief experts/counselors/authors, an hour and a half of interviews, high-quality on-air live and recorded promo schedule, social media blast, quarterly newsletters, monthly email blasts and one 2-minute promo segment on our sister station WMU4-TV13, which also aired the PBS program Speaking Grief. WMU4 partnered with other public stations around the nation to highlight grief awareness. Station staff worked closely with Northern Michigan University professors to provide real-life in-class writing and program production opportunities as well as on-the-job training for on-air board operators, student news reporters, field recordings for news and music, traffic and operations, copy writing, web content and design, data-base management, volunteer recruitment, training and scheduling, and fundraising for public media. WMU4 has the capability of broadcasting live performances from various campus locations and we regularly partner with the Community Media Studies (Performer) and Native American Studies (Presenter) departments at NMU to provide this live production experience to students. WMU4 partners with the NMU Music department to record and present local music performances on Peninsula Performances, hosted by music director Kurt Hauswirth. Many of these activities were on hold due to the COVID pandemic. WMU4 partnered with the Marquette County Lions Club—Defense Against Diabetes program, the West End Health Foundation, the Diabetes Outreach Network, NMU Center for Rural Health and WMU-TV to present the three-month campaign: Blood Sugar Rising. The overall goal of the campaign is to enhance community knowledge of available diabetes programs available to individuals and increase awareness of diabetes and risk factors. Also, part of the campaign includes listening campaigns conducted live by a very high profile diabetes care provider. Michigan Radio’s Dr. Ken Freedman host the program held value to our listeners and health care professionals. Station Manager Tammy Wixtrom Johnson has been staff advisor to the students who operate WUPX-FM, the NMU student radio station since September 2020. She provides guidance related to FCC compliance, internet streaming, budgeting, and overall station management. WMU4-FM has been partnering with the Michigan Public Radio Network of stations to pay for two full-time reporters that cover the news from the State Capitol in Lansing.

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).

The impact of our WMU4 activities can be seen with closer connections to the communities we serve. WMU4-FM encourages local community organizations, scouts, schools, senior and student programs, etc., to tour the station and meet the staff. WMU4 TV & FM continue to partner with community school districts across our listening area to provide hands-on learning opportunities through station internships for high school students in a variety of areas. WMU4-FM and TV also partner with elementary and secondary schools in the Marquette area each year to assist with career awareness activities for students. WMU4 arranges student tours and provides question and answer sessions with station staff and a variety of different departments on campus to give students an overview in a variety of different career paths. WMU4-FM provides tour information via our web site and on-air and in our online monthly program guide. While the amount of tours performed was down in FY21, we were able to complete a few tours in late FY21 as COVID-19 restrictions eased. WMU4-FM partners with regional music festivals like the Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival, The Pine Mountain Music Festival, and the Marquette Area Blues Festival not just to record music for later air-play, but also to be present and available for community members to have in-person discussions with staff at events. WMU4-FM continues to partner with the Northern Michigan University Native American Studies dept. to produce Anishinaabe Radio News, now in its 9th year. WMU4 also produces "Lincoln Days," a program which airs weekly during the winter months. "Lincoln Days" is a special event series for the winter months. WMU4 also partners with the Lake Superior Partnership and their Lake Superior Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy is a program that nurtures tomorrow’s leaders. WMU4 hosts 30-40 adult community leaders for tours of the station, presentation of how the station operates and question/answer sessions. WMU4 continues to produce Learning Through the Seasons, now in its 8th year of production, a program for grandparents, parents and other caregivers of young children providing informative activities for a lifetime of learning. This program is produced in partnership with Grandparents Teach Too a nonprofit organization founded by early childhood specialists who co-authored the book from which the programs are based. Learning Through the Seasons airs weekly during All Things Considered and Weekend Edition as well as an online podcast. This program is produced is several languages and available around the world with 6 years of archives at WMU4FM.org. WMU4 hosted a campaign centered around grief and the PBS program: Speaking Grief. 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that nurtures tomorrow's leaders. WNNU hosts 30-40 adult community leaders for tours of the station, presentation of how the station operates and question/answer sessions. During these sessions, WNNU heard from many of the attendees that they really didn't know how Public Broadcasting operated. They were very happy to learn how the CPB, the University, and the members collaborated to insure a healthy community resource.

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 2021. and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2022. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

WNNU continues to produce Learning Through the Seasons, now in its 8th year of production, a program for grandparents, parents and other caregivers of young children providing informative fun activities for a lifetime of learning. This program is produced in partnership with Grandparents Teach Too a nonprofit organization founded by early elementary teachers, reading specialists, and early education childhood specialists, who co-authored the book from which the programs are based. Learning Through the Seasons airs weekly during All Things Considered and Weekend Edition as well as an online podcast. This program is produced in several languages and available around the world with 6 years of archives at WNNUFM.org. WNNU has partnered with Northern Michigan University's Native American Studies department on campus since 2016 to produce Anishinasabe Radio News hosted by April Lindal. Each 2-minute module which airs weekly during Morning Edition and All Things Considered explores Native American history and culture and keeps listeners up to date on Indigenous events at NMU and across the Great Lakes Region. Pieces are also posted online as weekly podcasts. Community involvement is key to our survival here at WNNU-FM. Rather than attempt to host large community events with our small staff of six, we're able to better maximize financial and people resources by partnering with local organizations to provide promotional support and volunteer involvement at their events. These partnerships were limited due to COVID-19 in FY21. Each individual staff member is also personally involved with one or more community organizations, which, serves to further connect WNNU to our listening communities. These partnerships also give the staff face to face time with members of our community, which helps us to assess our community impact on various audiences. WNNU-FM continues to work on expanding our social media audience engagement through our station Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts and our podcast studio. WNNU also launched a new mobile app, both Apple and Android, so that our listeners would have another resource at their fingertips and the station has multiple options to meet the needs of minorities through additional sources. WNNU is continuing to work on expanding digital offerings to audiences and also utilizing analytics to track and target rural and minority audiences that we serve. WNNU-FM works with faculty in the Communication and Media Studies (Performing Arts) department at Northern Michigan University to give students hands-on experience in producing live performances from various campus locations, which air live on WNNU, Public Radio 90. In FY22, WNNU has opened a new Podcast Studio that will be available to the Northern Michigan University community, station members and the public. This will be another method in which we can serve our rural and minority populations by opening up avenues in which their voices can be heard. WNNU staff works with students to continue the University Beat on-air segment and turn it into a podcast, which will be a student-centered production, giving them hands-on experience of radio production and podcast from start to finish. The program will feature items of interest at Northern Michigan University. We have been in the testing phases of this program for the past few years requiring NMU students to produce a University Beat program as a requirement of their internships. The collection of student produced pieces can be heard at https://www.wnnumf.org/programs/university-beat. WNNU will also host all community, student, and NMU community podcasts on our website to share the amazing creativity of our diverse residents. The feedback on our podcast studio is that the community is happy to have this as a resource to them as they need it.

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?

The funding WNNU-FM receives from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting not only helps us serve our broadcast communities, it enables it. CBP funding of WNNU-FM through the annual community service grant decreased 16% between 2004-2009, another 6% between 2009-2014 and an additional 7% between 2015-2021. In addition to reductions in our CPB community service grant, the anticipated fee increase for the NPR Station Compact project, is projected to be 91% for WNNU-FM for NPR programs and services, making our CPB grant funding even more vital. While WNNU-FM is always striving to become as financially independent of state and federal funding as possible, if our CPB funding is reduced any further our ability to offer any local service, let alone maintain the current level of programming service, will be seriously affected. As a small market station (175), our small population base has traditionally limited our ability to generate funds. This is slowly changing with the evolution of internet program streaming and podcasting. WNNU is also highly focused on a membership campaign to encourage more sustaining members and also to bring in new and next generation members. However, operating in a small market means being extremely fiscally conscious as we continue to work at finding new revenue streams in digital and enhancing our current revenue/fundraising efforts. WNNU has struggled with poor on-air reception in Marquette, our main city of license, since losing our 102.3 translator frequency in 2000. Streaming, alongside the new mobile app, has enabled us to work around this obstacle and provide listeners with access to station programming no matter where they're located. Prior to FY04, WNNU-FM received nearly 60% of its annual operational budget from its licensee Northern Michigan University. Because of drastic decreases in state funding support to Michigan colleges and universities, WNNU was forced to make cuts across the board including WNNU-FM. University support now accounts for only 28% of the operational budget each year. Since FY04, CPB grants, listener contributions and underwriting support have been the primary sources of revenue for WNNU-FM. As costs continue to rise, CPB funding is even more crucial in keeping WNNU-FM on the air and enabling us to continue serving the unique needs of our rural audience.

Comments

No Comments for this section