

KEMC-FM FY2020 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICES REPORT

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.

Yellowstone Public Radio (YPR) serves a diverse area that includes four small-city population centers and dozens of rural communities throughout Montana and northern Wyoming. Our broadcast area also includes four of the seven Native American tribal reservations in the state of Montana. We endeavor every day to provide a mix of relevant and timely regional news, national and international news from National Public Radio (NPR), and a programming schedule that includes a mix of classical, jazz, folk and bluegrass, public affairs, and entertainment.

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.

In FY2020, YPR improved upon its existing arrangement with Montana Public Radio (MTPR) to bring both our audiences true statewide news coverage. With the growth in the YPR news room, more opportunities for collaboration in the newsgathering process, editing, and feature reporting have presented themselves. On a daily basis, regional news reporting from both stations are assessed for maximum diversity of stories and the wealth of perspectives two newsrooms can provide.

We also partnered with MT Public Radio and MT Free Press during the general election cycle to produce a broadcast feature and podcast called Shared State, which looked at the election through the lens of Montana voters and their diverse voices. Part history, part political science, and part reporting, Shared State was so positively received that a second collaboration is underway to cover the 2021 MT Legislative Session. Called The Session, the broadcast feature and podcast format was reintroduced to keep listeners aware of the goings on in the legislative session.

YPR partnered with Report for America again in FY2020 to bring two Report for America reporters to the YPR newsroom. In addition to a new Indigenous Affairs reporter, YPR gained a Statehouse Reporter in time to cover the 2021 MT Legislative Session.

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.

Our newsroom resources and collaborations in FY2020 were absolutely critical to keeping people informed during the pandemic. Our COVID resources, both broadcast and online, kept people informed at a time when information was at a premium.

In addition to the ongoing COVID crisis, our coverage of a primary election season and a general election cycle brought our listeners a wealth of information about candidates and initiatives.

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.

As has been discussed previously, our initiative to focus reporting on indigenous peoples and tribal issues has been our greatest success with diversifying our audience. Our reporting on tribal governance, missing and murdered indigenous women, energy reporting as it relates to tribal sovereignty, and other issues relating to our indigenous population has been an unmitigated success.

In FY2021, we intend to deepen our communication with key stakeholders in the indigenous community to ensure that our reporting accurately reflects the culture and concerns of Native peoples in Montana.

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 Community Service Grant (CSG) and, crucially, the Rural Service Grant (RSG) component of the CSG are critically important to YPR's operations. The grant provides a stable funding mechanism for our programming budget, which frees up funding for key initiatives such as the growth in news staffing and partnerships such as the one we undertook with Report for America.

As a rural public radio network with 12 transmitters and 26 translators serving a land mass equivalent to Great Britain, our broadcast infrastructure budget is a major component of our annual expenditures. Without the CSG, YPR would have to make the difficult decision to gut our programming schedule or cut back on the communities we serve. Our rural audiences in particular routinely say that YPR is their ONLY connection to the outside world, and the thought of shuttering transmitters or translators or significantly reducing the program offerings on YPR is anathema to our mission.

Finally, the CSG and RSG allow YPR to schedule a much more diverse schedule for our largely rural audience. Our ability to bring a mix of genre programming such as classical, jazz, blues, folk and bluegrass, news, public affairs, and entertainment programming is increasing unique in the public radio system, where format consolidation is a regular occurrence. Diversity of programming is paramount in a rural setting, where there is no business model that would sustain a commercial classical or jazz format station. Funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting underpins the very mission of Yellowstone Public Radio and is a critical revenue tool for the station.