6.1 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 2023. 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 2023 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.

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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.

KUT, Austin’s NPR affiliate, and KUTX, the Austin Music Experience, are committed to delivering in-depth news coverage through a local lens and diverse, intelligent explorations in local music, lifestyle and culture. We invite audience engagement throughout all of our platforms, with broadcast, podcasts, websites, robust social media, events, and customer service focused on hearing from the community and responding to their interests and needs. Our local coverage is guided by that input and longstanding newsroom staff knowledge of the community, with a focus on equity and affordability. Primary coverage revolves around how state and local policy affects residents, education, environment, growth, and changing demographics. In 2023 KUT and KUTX continued a focus on housing and affordability and its effects on Austin and Texas residents. The podcast Growth Machine, a seven-episode in-depth series explaining how Austin’s housing crisis was created, through a series of complex things from a 1928 master plan that segregated the city to a mid-90s environmental movement to the tech boom of the 2000s. The podcast was aired in its entirety over the airwaves last fall, and was downloaded 138,000 times by podcast listeners. The podcast’s host did multiple engagement events about the housing crisis. In collaboration with our partners in The Texas Newsroom, KUT News and Texas Standard, the daily news magazine, provided in-depth coverage of the Texas legislative session, with a focus on voting rights, property taxes and public education through multiple special sessions. The work KUT’s Capitol reporter Sergio Martinez-Beltran did covering the session was carried on news stations across the state, and frequently on NPR’s Morning Edition and All Things Considered. Both stations continued to invest in digital growth. KUT, KUTX and Texas Standard websites all saw double digit percentage audience growth once again. In any given month more than half a million people are engaging with one of our websites, many multiple times. Black Austin Matters, an interview podcast focused on the lives and culture of Black Austinites, went into a second season, building audience and averaging more than...
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.

KUT continues to partner with The Texas Tribune, an online City Hall reporting nonprofit called the Austin Monitor, NPR and the stations of The Texas Newsroom to strengthen our digital efforts to keep our community informed about the news and issues most relevant to them. The Texas Newsroom is the center for the efforts of The Texas Newsroom, a collaborative that has helped the first largest public radio stations in the state coordinate their news coverage efforts for more substance and impact. In 2023 The Texas Newsroom released its first podcast Sugarland, a collaborative effort looking at what happened when a Houston area school construction project unearthed the remains of 90 unidentified Black prison labor convicts buried at the site. Our very successful partnership with NPR's Next Generation project also continues, as part of The Texas Newsroom collaboration. On the non-profit, public service side, KUTX continues to partner with Austin organizations promoting the health and stability of the Austin Music scene. Organizations such as the SIMS Foundation (mental health services), Health Alliance for Austin Musicians (HAAM – low cost health care for music industry workers), Austin Music Foundation (professional resources for working musicians), and Sonic Guild (a music patronage organization) are regularly talked about on KUTX and partnered with the station for events to raise dollars and awareness for each. KUTX annually partners with the Austin Music Foundation and the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division for Love Austin Music Month. This is a coordinated effort to promote the diversity of the Austin music scene. KUTX also holds four live shows during SXSW, and proceeds go to the Central Texas Food Bank. The stations also continued the Get Involved volunteerism series, which highlights local nonprofits. KUT (and KUTX since 2013) has profiled more than 200 local non-profit volunteer-centric organizations. Organizations are encouraged to use the audio and video profiles we create in a way that works for them. Many use them in e-newsletters or funding appeals and on their websites. Nonprofit organizations also send in their volunteer needs and program information to KUT and KUTX for inclusion in our public service announcements. Many stations across the country either no longer do PSAs or they charge for them. KUT and KUTX continue to provide this service free of charge and we anticipate no change in that policy.

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.

KUT and KUTX have combined on-air audience averaging more than 350,000 weekly listeners. KUT is always in the top 5 for listenership, and KUTX is in the top 10. Our digital audience for our three main websites is more than half a million unique visitors, and our podcasts were downloaded 3.5 million times. All of that leads to strong listener feedback. Here are a few examples: "In this fractious political environment, I feel that KUT provides the latest news and special interest stories in a nonpartisan way. I listen daily to get updates on breaking local, national, and local news. I particularly love the special reporting such as The Disconnect." - Debra G "Dear Texas Standard, My name is Gareth K(…). I'm a high school sophomore in Houston, TX. I don't get to listen to your program every day, but I always enjoy listening with my mom who is an avid listener to the podcast. I really like the wide variety of programming you do about issues impacting the state as a whole and issues that impact different areas of the state. I feel like I'm a better-rounded Texan and American because of your news and information. Thank you for your reporting and education to the public. Thank you for being a trusted and fair news source." - Gary K "As a retired military journalist, you guys are astounding. The four-hour podcast today, "the Growth Machine", was magisterial work on the part of all involved. You should enter it for next year's Pulitzer. Oh, sorry, I am a print journalist! Umm, Peabody? Taishoff?" – Gary R. "Good Afternoon KUT Team, Long-time listener. Long time sustaining member. Now, more than ever, local, unbiased, integrity-driven news is what we all need. If you are in a position to give PLEASE DO. Let's do our part to offset that with some good! Thank you for all you do at KUT/KUT-X for this community and beyond. -Best, Dmitri J(…) USMC Ret." "I love KUTX particularly on days like 'Giving Tuesday' when all local music is played. There's so much musical talent in Austin and throughout the state. All genres and style of music too! You could probably play local music for two or three months and still not hear all of it. Your DJs are excellent too -- very knowledgeable about the artists!" – John B. KUT News and the Texas Standard team provided hundreds of stories about the legislature, affordability, transportation, local housing issues, and more throughout the year. KUT's Austin and Texas coverage has become a staple of regional and national outlets. KUTX continued amplifying the work of Austin musicians and highlighting the struggles of the music industry as the region's cost of living increases.
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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 2023, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2024. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

As mentioned above, KUT launched the second season of Black Austin Matters, focused on the lives and culture of Black Austinites. KUT also started a new monthly broadcast segment called Austin Cultura, focused on Latino arts and culture in Austin. The segment’s hosts, KUT’s Juan Garcia and Austin Vida’s Nancy Flores, tell the story of Latino culture in a conversational way that weaves the Spanish language in and out of the conversation. KUT also aired an hour-long special on Juneteenth. The Texas holiday has taken on national significance, and KUT’s documentary explored the holiday through the lens of Black Austinites, reflecting both on the past and the present. KUT’s newsroom, including the Texas Standard staff, continued its Spanish language translations, publishing up to 3-5 stories in Spanish each week on topics of note for the community. KUT and Texas Public Radio continue to provide more Spanish-language news for the state by providing translations for The Texas Newsroom. With help from KUT, The Texas Newsroom also launched the Oye Texas newsletter, focused on young Latino Texas residents. KUT and Texas Standard also went into the third year of a partnership with the Voces Oral History Project at Moody College of Communication to create content to inform our audience about the significant contributions of Hispanics in U.S. history. For Hispanic Heritage Month KUT partnered with Voces to run short bios of historically significant Hispanic residents twice a day every day for the month. Voces oral histories of everyday life and the pandemic have also become Sonic IDs for KUT. KUT’s work inspired an additional Texas Newsroom effort for 2022-23 to add Black History Month segments (now airing); AAPI Month segments, Women in History, and Pride Month segments. Nationally, KUT continues to air Latino USA in a prime slot after NPR’s All Things Considered on Sunday evenings. Launched in 1993 at KUT, it is the longest running Latino focused program on public media. KUT also moved Fronteras, a Texas Public Radio show about border issues and culture, into the weekly Sunday lineup. We continue to produce, as we have for over 50 years, and air In Black America—IBA. IBA, hosted by John L. Hanson Jr., is a weekly half-hour program about the African-American experience in the United States that is distributed nationally. The program is heard on more than 20 stations nationwide including on two stations here in Austin and available as a podcast through KUT.org. Hanson also hosts the three-hour Friday afternoon funk and soul music program, The Old School Dance Party, on KUTX and features African-American centric community announcements and engagement. It has become a key part of how KUTX brings The Austin Music Experience to audiences. KUTX also launched a new show called Groove Temple, billed as “an exploration of the Black Side of Electronic Music/the Electronic side of Black Music and everything in between.” The music station continued an annual tradition of looking at Austin’s Black music roots with segments during Black History Month. KUTX airs the locally-produced music shows Horizontes targeted at the Latin and World music communities of Austin. Finally, The Breaks, which showcases Austin and Texas Hip Hop and R&B, continues to grow and continues to be a rallying point for the Austin hip-hop scene.

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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 provides about 5 percent of our budget and allows us to serve current audience and expand for new audiences. CPB funding is critical to the continued growth of our newsroom, and to expanding community engagement efforts in the coming years. KUT and KUTX are working hard to reach audiences we haven’t reached or served well enough in the past, especially communities of color. In order to do this while maintaining our core audience, we will need to keep growing.

Comments

Question

Comment

No Comments for this section