

KUT PUBLIC MEDIA

2025 Impact Report



KUT Public Media Connecting, Informing and Inspiring

KUT Public Media brings together five distinct services under one independent, nonprofit organization: KUT News, KUTX 98.9, *Texas Standard*, *Austin Signal* and KUT & KUTX Studios.

Through trusted journalism, transformative music and community storytelling, we inform, connect and strengthen Central Texas. We amplify voices, bring people together and provide critical information that serves our community.

A Letter from the General Manager

OUR WORK BEGINS and ends with the people we serve. In 2025, that commitment showed up in the stories we told, the music we shared, the conversations we sparked and the community spaces we helped bring to life across Central Texas.

This impact report captures a year defined by connection and resilience.

To our members, audiences and community partners: thank you. Your trust, engagement and support make this work possible. Whether you tuned in during your morning commute, attended a live event, shared our journalism with a friend, volunteered your time or invested financially in our mission, you helped ensure public media remains strong in Central Texas.

Across our services, we worked to meet audiences where they are with journalism that brings clarity, music that inspires and storytelling that connects.

From accountability reporting on transportation, education and government policy to daily local context through *Texas Standard* and *Austin Signal* — and statewide collaboration through The Texas Newsroom — our newsroom delivered trusted, independent journalism free of paywalls and grounded in public service.

KUTX 98.9 continued bringing artists and audiences together through thoughtful curation, live performances and shared experiences that reflect Austin’s creative spirit.

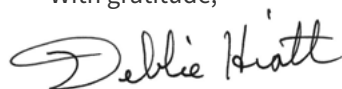
KUT & KUTX Studios grew as a creative hub for community-centered podcasts, reaching more than 3 million downloads and earning national recognition while remaining rooted in Austin’s people, culture and history.

Our team showed up — in classrooms and coffee shops, at festivals and civic gatherings, inside our studios and out in the field. Volunteers and Ambassadors extended our reach, and students took their first steps into journalism and media through paid internships and hands-on learning.

At the same time, 2025 brought real challenges. The loss of federal funding underscored the fragile landscape facing public media nationwide and reinforced how essential community support is to sustaining independent local journalism and cultural programming.

We remain committed to deepening local reporting, investing in creative storytelling and championing music that reflects and inspires our community.

With gratitude,



Debbie Hiott
Executive Director and General Manager



ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

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PAUL SCOTT

ANITA VANGELISTI,
MOODY COLLEGE OF
COMMUNICATION
INTERIM DEAN

2025 By the Numbers



3,088,090

podcast downloads

6

awards recognizing excellence in the music industry

31

awards recognizing journalistic excellence



177

music performances shared on KUTX's YouTube channel



5,000+

local artist spins aired on KUTX 98.9

30,484

members supporting news and music for all

2,300+

KUT News stories

19

new ATXplained stories

4

new podcasts

4

KUTX Live at Scholz Garten concerts during SXSW (and raised \$20,654 for the Central Texas Food Bank) featuring 16 artists



138

**songs by 106 Austin artists
added to our rotation,
airing more than 10,000 times
(and counting!)**

7

**KUTX Rock the Park
concerts**



7

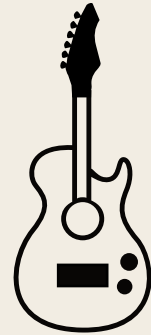
**in-person podcast
events**

2

**ATXplained Live
performances**

58

**Studio 1A live music
performances**



11

**KUTX Artist of the Month
features**

12

**local non-profits featured in
KUT's Get Involved series**

1,120

Leadership Circle Members



40

newsroom staff members

303

Business Circle Members

23

paid interns

Independent Journalism

KUT News delivers award-winning, independent journalism — free of paywalls — to keep Central Texans informed and engaged. Through in-depth and accountability reporting, we show how local, state and national policies shape daily life, from education and health to growth and changing demographics.

REPORTING WITH IMPACT

Nathan Bernier is Central Texas' only dedicated transportation reporter. He spends hundreds of hours analyzing city documents to expose what the public needs to know about major projects transforming Austin's mobility — including the [airport's rapid growth](#), the multibillion-dollar [Project Connect](#) transit expansion and the [I-35 overhaul](#), which will cost more than \$5 billion, displace more than 100 homes and businesses, and take roughly a decade to complete.

Texas Standard reporter Sarah Asch is working on a yearlong examination of Texas' [fragile adult education system](#) — following learners balancing work, family and immigration challenges while exposing the real-world consequences of shifting federal policies that delay access to the services that are a vital pathway to literacy, workforce opportunity and dignity.

Her report about a [Texarkana nonprofit addressing low literacy](#) reached far beyond the broadcast, becoming one of *Texas Standard's* most popular Instagram posts with nearly 12,000 engagements and more than 60 shares. This coverage was supported by the Advancing Democracy Innovation Fund of the Solutions Journalism Network, in partnership with Hearken and Trusting News.

COLLABORATION WITH THE TEXAS NEWSROOM

KUT News is part of [The Texas Newsroom](#), a collaboration among public radio stations across the state and NPR that closes critical news gaps by coordinating resources for statewide coverage while freeing local journalists to pursue deeper community reporting.



Transportation reporter Nathan Bernier

Below: *Texas Standard* reporter Sarah Asch reports on adult literacy from Waco.



“
Your Adult Literacy story really stands out as a strong example of a solutions-focused piece on a challenging topic: it shows how this approach can drive engagement, especially on social media.”

— Jaisal Noor
Democracy Manager, SJN

The collaboration proved essential during severe July flooding in the Hill Country and Central Texas, when reporters worked together to deliver timely, potentially life-saving information along with clear, trusted context for audiences statewide.

During the 89th Texas legislative session, the collaboration also helped keep Texans informed about school funding, redistricting, budgets and water infrastructure through daily updates and data-driven reporting.

MILESTONES

[Texas Standard](#) celebrated its 10th year as Texas’ national daily news show with a statewide tour that brought the program directly to listeners in Austin, El Paso, Abilene, Waco, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Fort Davis.

In October, KUT News launched [Austin Signal](#), a daily local news magazine and podcast hosted by Jerry Quijano. The 30-minute weekday program blends trusted journalism with Austin’s cultural life, connecting listeners to the day’s most important stories alongside music, arts and sports.

To close the year, KUT News launched [Art Beat](#), a new reporting desk focused on Austin’s arts community, exploring how art is made, funded and experienced — and why it matters to the region’s creative life.



Top to bottom: The July 2025 floods; *Texas Standard* staff celebrating the show’s 10th birthday; Jerry Quijano hosting *Austin Signal*.

2025 KUT NEWS AND TEXAS STANDARD NEWSROOM AWARDS

1 National Murrow Award

5 Regional Murrow Awards

8 Public Media Journalists Association Awards

9 Texas Association of Broadcasters
Broadcast News Awards

2 Headliners Foundation of Texas Awards,
promoting excellence in Texas journalism

2 TMA Anson Jones, M.D. Awards, honoring
excellence in health journalism

Best of Austin reader poll, presented by
The Austin Chronicle

— Audrey McGlinchy, Best News Reporter

— *Texas Standard*, Best Radio Program

— KUT.org, Best Online Media Outlet

— *Take a Moment*, Best Daily Meditation Moment

— Lauren McGaughy, Best Ken Paxton Watchdog

Music That Brings People Together

As Austin’s go-to source for thoughtfully curated local, national and international music, KUTX 98.9 strengthens the fabric of Austin’s music community. We bring local artists, venues and audiences together to keep Austin’s music culture thriving. Through live events, signature on-air programming and digital storytelling, KUTX amplifies local talent, nurtures emerging artists and creates shared musical experiences that reflect and unite our city.

Signature Events

ROCK THE PARK

The show marked its 15th and 16th seasons in 2025, Rock the Park has become a beloved, family-friendly Austin tradition. The free concert series transforms Mueller Lake Park each spring and fall into a lively gathering place where music lovers of all ages come together for sing-alongs, dancing and high-energy performances. Featuring artists including The Tiarras, Tribe Mafia, Tele Novella and Joe McDermott, the 2025 seasons continued our commitment to elevating homegrown talent while creating welcoming spaces for the community to experience live music.

“
Thank you and the team for making me ‘Artist of the Month.’ I don’t think there’s ever been a radio station, anywhere, that’s showed their love for me so long and so loudly... I got videos from people all over Austin listening to my song on KUTX. I’m so grateful.”

— Judy Blank
November 2025 Artist of the Month

KUTX LIVE AT SCHOLZ GARTEN

During the 2025 SXSW Music Conference, KUTX 98.9 showcased 16 standout artists at KUTX Live at Scholz Garten, a four-morning concert series attended by more than 2,000 people. Performances spanned genres from indie pop and R&B to country, hip-hop and electronic music, featuring artists from Texas, across the U.S. and around the world.

Broadcast live on air and online, the series connected local audiences with new talent while highlighting Austin as a vibrant music city. A \$10 suggested donation raised more than \$20,000 for the Central Texas Food Bank — demonstrating how music can bring people together to make a meaningful community impact.



November 2025 Artist of the Month Judy Blank



From left to right: Rock the Park at Mueller Lake Park & Amphitheater; February Artist of the Month Anastasia Hera, London’s Honeyglaze performs at KUTX Live at Scholz Garten during SXSW.

Programming

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Our [Artist of the Month](#) series is a meaningful investment in Austin’s creative economy, giving local musicians a powerful platform to grow their audience. Each selected artist receives robust on-air and digital exposure, including heavy rotation (up to 90 spins), a Song of the Day feature, a My KUTX guest DJ set and a Studio 1A performance with a professional photoshoot for ongoing promotion. Beyond their featured month, artists continue to receive airplay, extending their reach and visibility year-round.

WET, HOT, AUSTIN SUMMER

Wet, Hot, Austin Summer celebrated the music and energy of Austin’s triple-digit days with on-air programming and free and low-cost live music experiences across the city, including curating the Drop-In concert series at the Long Center and Music Under the Stars at the Bullock Museum, vinyl happy hours and movie nights.

BACKSTAGE AT ACL FEST

KUTX brings listeners behind the scenes at the Austin City Limits Music Festival with stripped-down backstage performances recorded inside the KUTX tent and shared on social media, to help audiences experience ACL Fest beyond the stage.

SIGNATURE ON-AIR PROGRAMMING

Each of these signature programs highlights the diverse voices, histories and traditions that shape Austin’s cultural landscape, offering listeners a deeper connection to the artists and stories that define our community.

- Love Austin Music Month
- MLK Day
- Under the Covers Weekend
- Black History Month
- International Women’s Day
- SXSW
- Willie Weekend
- ACL Festival
- My KUTX
- My KUTX marathon
- Holiday Music Mix

2025 AWARDS

Austin Music Awards, presented by *The Austin Chronicle*

- KUTX 98.9, Best Radio Station (11th win)
- Jay Trachtenberg inducted into the Austin Music Industry Hall of Fame
- Laurie Gallardo, Best Radio Personality (8th win)
- *Left of the Dial*, Best Radio Show (2nd win)

Best of Austin poll, presented by *The Austin Chronicle*

- KUTX 98.9, Best Radio Station
- Laurie Gallardo, Best Radio or Podcast Host

Community Storytelling

[KUT & KUTX Studios](#), the podcast arm of KUT Public Media, creates distinctive listening experiences rooted in the people, places, culture and history that shape Austin. In 2025, the studios continued to grow as a hub for community-centered podcasts, strengthening audience connection while extending our reach beyond Central Texas.

NEW IN 2025

This year, we launched four new podcasts: *Austin Signal*, *This Is My Thing*, *Take a Moment with Marnie Castor* and *Money Talk with Carl Stuart* — while also releasing new seasons of audience favorites, including *Tacos of Texas* Season 5, *(SPF 1000) Vampire Sunscreen* Season 2, *Pause/Play* Season 6, *¡Vamos Verde!* Season 2 and *Black Austin Matters* Season 3.

EXPANDING OUR REACH

Several of our podcasts were featured on NPR's *Weekend All Things Considered* 'Pod Corner,' a national spotlight highlighting standout podcast episodes. *Tacos of Texas* host Mando Rayo appeared on the program in October to discuss how tacos reflect history, identity and political divides, while *Pause/Play* co-hosts Miles Bloxson and Elizabeth McQueen joined in November to explore how Austin musicians are navigating the rise of AI. *The Disconnect* was also highlighted nationally on NPR and featured on the main page of Apple Podcasts — further extending the reach of our storytelling.

LISTENER IMPACT

Listener response underscored the power of these shows to make people feel seen and heard. A *Song Confessional* call-out recorded at KUTX Live at Scholz Garten invited anonymous submissions from listeners and resulted in 20 heartfelt song confessions — an episode that captured the fun, intimacy and trust our audience brings to these projects. We also received an outpouring of positive feedback for *24 Hours in Austin*, with listeners sharing how deeply the series reflected their lived experience of the city.

Across all shows, KUT & KUTX Studios reached 3,088,090 podcast downloads in 2025, a testament to growing engagement and sustained listener loyalty.

BEYOND THE HEADPHONES

Audience connection extended into shared community spaces through free, open-to-all events. 2025 highlights included a *Tacos of Texas* Season 5 wrap party at Paprika ATX and a live taping at the Austin City Limits Music Festival's *Bonus Tracks* stage; an *(SPF 1000) Vampire Sunscreen* Season 2 celebration and live recording with the musical artist BLK ODYSSEY at The Vortex; a live recording of *¡Vamos Verde!* at Central Machine Works to kick off MLS All-Star Week in Austin; *The Disconnect* season wrap happy hour at the Stephen F. Austin Bar; and podcast meetups hosted at the Apple campus in north Austin and in KUT Public Media's Studio 1A. Together, these moments reinforced KUT & KUTX Studios' role as a convener, bringing people together around shared curiosity, conversation and culture.

¡Vamos Verde! co-hosts Jimmy Maas and Juan Garcia interview Brad Stuver, Austin FC goalkeeper, on the Bonus Tracks Stage at ACL Festival.





Clockwise from top: *Pause/Play* backstage at ACL Festival; community podcast meet-up at the KUT Public Media Studios; Laurie Gallardo, hosting a *(SPF 1000) Vampire Sunscreen* taping at the Vortex; *Black Austin Matters* hosts Richard J. Reddick, Lisa B. Thompson with guest Fran Harris.



Left to right: Volunteers at ATXplained Live; KUT Newsroom staff at a coffee meet-up at Radio Coffee & Beer; A rainbow ribbon cutting at the KUT Public Media Studios in partnership with the Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce

Community Engagement

Community engagement is core to how we serve Central Texas. From classrooms and coffee shops to festivals, studios and civic spaces, our team showed up in the community to listen and connect.

COMMUNITY ACTIVATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the year, we met our audience where they were — to create meaningful, in-person connections. We hosted casual meetups at local coffee shops in Austin, Dripping Springs and Georgetown, creating opportunities for people to meet staff and share what’s on their minds. We brought public radio energy to unexpected places, including a tailgate at a Texas Longhorns baseball game against the Florida Gators.

We welcomed audiences into our studios as well; hosting fall open houses for members and students. KUT & KUTX Connections, a mixer for public radio fans, offered an opportunity for listeners to connect with each other through fun ice breakers.

Our journalists and hosts were active participants in community conversations across Central Texas, sharing their expertise and facilitating dialogue at events such as the Texas Book Festival, the Texas Conference for Women, Rotary Club and AARP meetings and industry events hosted by organizations including the National Association of Black Journalists.

Our *KUT Considers* series hosted a breakdown of the Texas Legislature, a live event featuring *Texas Standard’s* Laura Rice, The Texas Newsroom’s Blaise Gainey and KUT News’ Mose Buchele. Together, they unpacked the highs and lows of the 2025 Texas legislative session, offering clarity and context.



POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS AND AMBASSADORS

As a small but mighty team, we rely on community members to help power our work. One hundred volunteers supported KUT Public Media throughout the year by staffing marketing and membership tents at events, writing thank-you postcards and making appreciation calls during membership drives, leading station tours for school groups and welcoming KUTX Concert Club members at Studio 1A performances — totaling [800 volunteer hours](#).

In spring 2025, we wrapped up a successful yearlong trial run of a KUT News Ambassador Program focused on extending our reach through a deeply engaged group of “super fans.” By fall, we expanded the program to include all of KUT Public Media. Today, a cohort of 30-plus Ambassadors is helping amplify our work, connecting us to new audiences and identifying partnership opportunities across Central Texas.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT & PARTNERSHIPS

Community support is woven into our programming year-round. Since 2006, our Get Involved series has spotlighted a local nonprofit each month, educating audiences about their missions and volunteer needs. Some organizations featured in 2025 include We Are Blood, Shoal Creek Conservancy, Ballet Austin and Austin Pets Alive! Thrift.

We aired public service announcements for more than 150 Central Texas nonprofits, amplifying their reach through trusted public media airwaves. Additionally, we partnered with civic groups, chambers of commerce, nonprofits and community celebrations — including the MLK Day Celebration at Huston-Tillotson University — to deepen our connections while delivering significant in-kind value through trade partnerships and media sponsorships.

Opposite: Friends enjoyed our third baseball tailgate at Disch–Falk Field in May.



Top: KUT & KUTX Connections attendees; **Bottom:** Thousands participated in our annual Holiday Sing-Along in front of the Texas Capitol building.

EDUCATION & STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

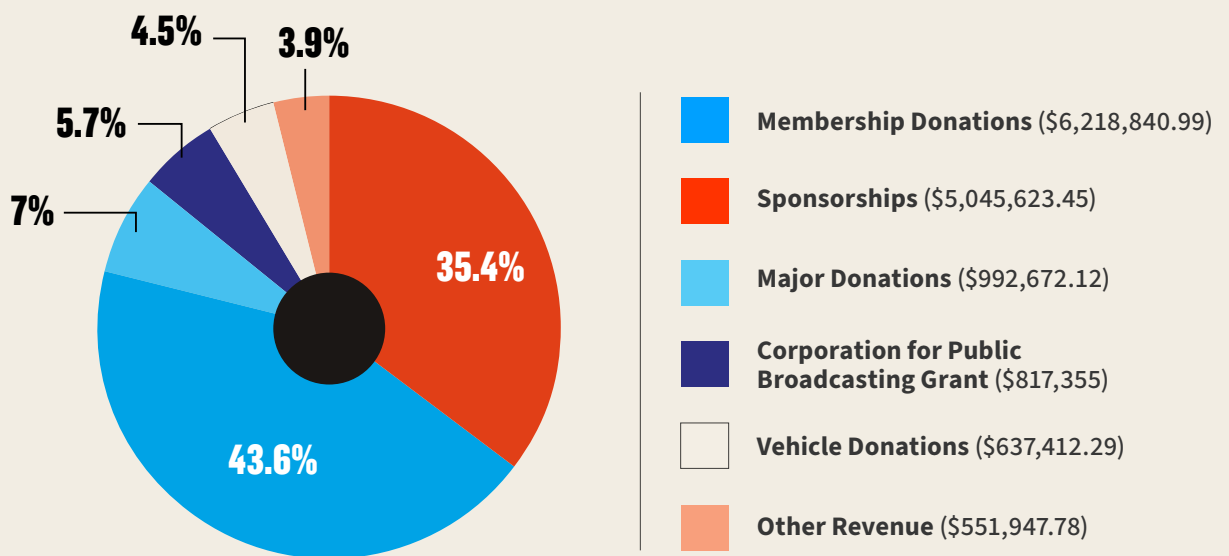
Thanks to a generous donor, we removed a major barrier to entry in journalism and media careers by paying 23 interns this year. Students from The University of Texas at Austin, St. Edward’s University, Texas State University, Austin Community College and beyond gained firsthand experience across our news, music, podcast and multimedia teams.

Over the summer, *Texas Standard* and KUT News led a free three-day teen journalism workshop at the Austin Central Library. Participants ages 13-18 learned core reporting skills — interviewing, research and storytelling — and explored how journalism can help them better understand and share the stories of their own communities.

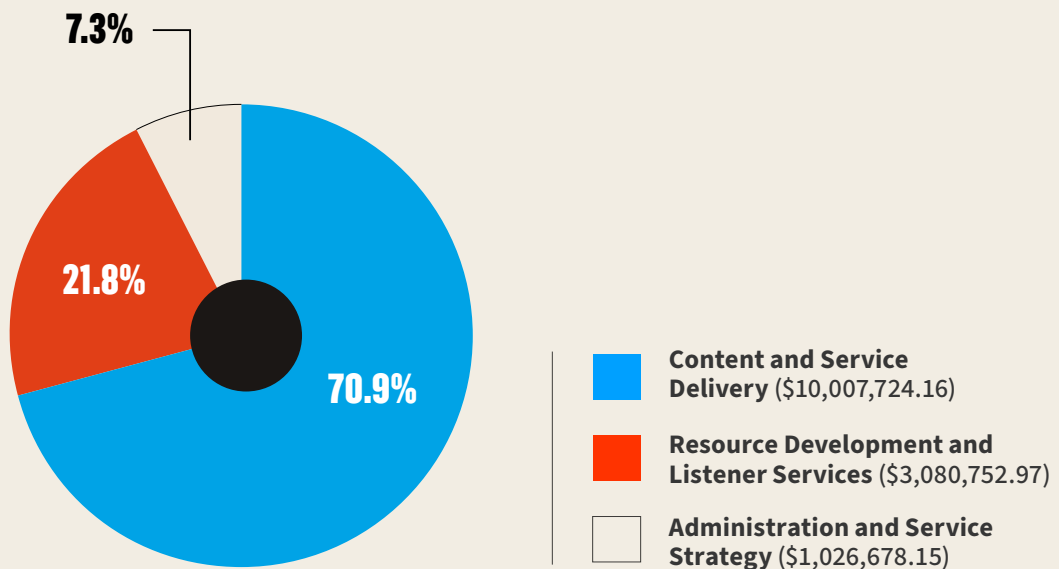
Financials

We rely on a broad community of individual members, major donors, foundations and corporate partners to power our work connecting and strengthening Central Texas through independent local and national news, transformative music and community storytelling. We are deeply grateful for the support we have received over the past year.

REVENUE



EXPENSES



Voices From Our Community

“No matter the day of the week, the time of the day, or the second of the hour, KUTX always seems to know exactly what my wife and I need to help move us through the day. **From your specialized programming and thoughtful, inspiring DJs to your truly diverse music selection, KUTX represents the Austin community in every way.**”

— Terry

“**Nothing has brought me closer to this city than your two radio stations.** You get Austin, and we get you! I’ll be in a mood that your station knows exactly what to play to make me feel alive, while also keeping me informed about today’s news and world stories. More than ever, we need your radio waves to give us hope and joy.”

— Sonja M.

“KUT is an essential part of living in Austin. It is my primary news outlet for local and statewide updates. Perhaps more importantly, though, I just love KUT and KUTX. **There’s deep meaning in feeling connected to your city and where you live—that where you are is specific and unique and special—and KUT offers that connection to its listeners in Austin.**”

— Tom

“We have been in Austin for 5 years now and listen to KUT & KUTX every day! Your music selection and banter on KUTX is unparalleled. **Whether I am trying to stay informed globally or locally or listen to good music, y’all are truly the heart & soul of Austin!**”

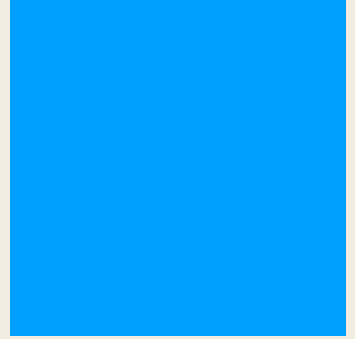
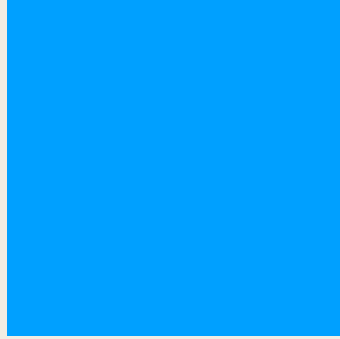
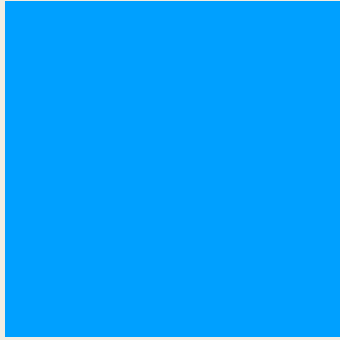
— Lily

“I fell in love with Austin in 1997 and its music scene. I’ve never lived in Austin but it’s a place I hold dear. No matter where I am, KUTX has been a staple. **I’m so grateful that I am able to stream KUTX. You are all like old friends that remind me of who I am and all the amazing music throughout time.**”

— Ebru

“I’ve listened to KUT and eventually KUTX as long as I can remember. I moved to San Francisco back in 2000 and missed listening to KUT immensely. When we moved back to Austin in 2006, I flipped on KUT and it just felt like home. **I listen to KUT every single morning as I’m getting ready for work. It’s not only how I catch up on the daily news, but it’s how I feel and stay connected to my unique community.** I can honestly say — from experience — it’s like nowhere else on earth.”

— Jill



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www.kut.org | www.kutx.org