

FY2022 Local Content and Services Report

Yellowstone Public Radio / KEMC-FM

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.

In FY2022, we continued our collaboration with Montana Public Radio and Montana Free Press, which resulted in a podcast and broadcast feature called Shared State. This marked the second season of this collaborative feature with episodes focused on the greying of Montana's population, the housing crisis in Bozeman, the COVID pandemic, and more.

Our reporting is regularly featured on our website, and, when available, on-air reporting is augmented with additional audio, video, and supplementary documentation. This allows our regional reporting to give our listeners opportunities for additional education.

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 FY2022, YPR continued with its existing arrangement with Montana Public Radio (MTPR) to bring both our audiences true statewide news coverage. On a daily basis, regional news reporting from both stations is 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 to produce a second season of the well-received podcast/broadcast hybrid Shared State. This feature allowed journalists from all three entities to tell compelling stories relevant to all Montanans.

YPR partnered with Report for America again in FY2022 to bring a Report for America reporter to the YPR newsroom. YPR hired a replacement for our Statehouse Reporter position to cover news of Montana's capital and the workings of state government.

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 partnerships with Montana Public Radio and MT Free Press have helped all three entities attain a true statewide news gathering effort. The resources we provided during both the 2022 primary and general election season kept listeners informed not only about the candidates and their platforms, but also gave listeners access, both online and during broadcast hours, to key information about how and where to vote.

During the 2022 election cycle, Montana gained a congressional seat for the first time in many decades. Our collaborative arrangement with Montana Public Radio allowed us both deeper coverage of the two districts than if we weren't working together.

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.

Our initiative to focus reporting on indigenous peoples remains a focus at YPR. 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 is important to our region.

During FY2022, our Indigenous Affairs Reporter position became vacant. The position remains vacant as we look to revamp the position description and search for additional funding.

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 is 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 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 increasingly 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.