

KSMU Station Activities Survey
Section 6 – Telling Public Radio’s Story

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.

KSMU’s mission is to “explore ideas and deepen our shared understanding of what it means to be an engaged member of the community.” We seek to engage our listeners in civil dialogue around current events, public affairs, and the arts. We accomplish this through community partnerships, digital engagement, and a robust schedule of broadcast programming.

KSMU produces several programs focused on local community issues, including multi-part quarterly series “Sense of Community,” that dives beyond the headlines to provide in-depth coverage on national issues as they pertain to the Ozarks, and “Making a Difference” – presented in partnership with our local community foundation - that draws upon the personal stories and voices of Ozarks residents to highlight key issues impacting our community.

Other local programs such as “Arts News” and “Studio Live” highlight the latest in the local performing arts, visual arts, and music scenes. KSMU’s “Weekend Outlook,” online “Community Calendar” and related on-air announcements highlight local community events related to educational opportunities, nature and conservation, fitness, kids and families, nonprofit events, and more.

This mission-driven content has allowed KSMU to cultivate a local audience that is thoughtful, diverse, community-minded, educated, and engaged.

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.

KSMU maintains numerous community partnerships that help support and expand the impact of our work. A few of these key partnerships include:

“Making a Difference” – through a long-running partnership with the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, this bi-monthly series draws upon the personal stories and voices of Ozarks residents to highlight key issues impacting our community. The FY2022 series addressed issues identified in CFO’s Community Focus 2021 report. Topics included: health resources, public safety, education, climate change, and recreational opportunities.

“Making Democracy Work” – KSMU partners with the League of Women Voters of Southwest Missouri to produce this weekly series covering topics related to the Ozarks and democracy. This collaboration between KSMU and the League of Women Voters of Southwest Missouri on this program has been in existence for over 40 years.

“STEM Spots,” “Engaging the Community,” and the “Missouri State Journal” – KSMU leverages its resources as both a public broadcaster and as a part of the campus community to bring listeners a variety of public affairs programming from Missouri State University. Examples of this collaboration include “STEM Spots,” a weekly science program hosted by Dr. David Cornelison from MSU’s Physics, Astronomy and Material Science Department; “Engaging the Community,” a monthly program with MSU president Clif Smart that examines national and international events and their impact on the university community; and “Missouri State Journal,” a weekly series that informs the community of events, discussions, and academic research taking place across campus.

Election Coverage and Local Candidate/Issue Forums – KSMU is part of a coalition of local organizations – including the League of Women Voters, Leadership Springfield, Drury University, Ozarks Technical Community College, and more – with the goal of educating and engaging voters ahead of national, state, and local elections. The coalition produced several local candidate and issue forums throughout 2021 and 2022 which KSMU presented online and on-air.

“These Ozarks Hills” – KSMU also highlights the rich history of the Ozarks region through partnerships with local storytellers and historians. The show “These Ozarks Hills,” is a monthly radio essay from renowned Ozarks storyteller Meredith Sisco.

StoryCorps – In the spring of 2022, Springfield hosted a stop on the StoryCorps mobile tour. We partnered with the Springfield-Greene County Library District, who provided space where over 100 people were able to tell their stories and record their interviews for inclusion in the Library of Congress. To ensure a broad and diverse representation of the Ozarks in this endeavor, KSMU also partnered with the West Plains Council on the Arts and the Missouri State University-West Plains Camps to offer recording opportunities to the more rural areas of our broadcast area. Ten of these stories were featured in our ongoing “Sense of Community” series and one local interview even made its way to national airwaves during Morning Edition as oncologist Robert Carolla recounted the impact a small gesture can have on patients and families dealing with tough diagnoses. The mobile tour was capped off with a Listening Party held at the Creamery Arts Center, the local headquarters for more than 30 arts organizations. StoryCorps participants, sponsors, and the community were invited to listen to some of the recordings collected from our area and meet the StoryCorps staff.

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.

We hear frequently from listeners expressing gratitude for the programming and information shared on KSMU. In letters, emails, and phone calls, listeners often voice their deep appreciation of our local coverage on important community issues and events. One example of measurable impact comes from KSMU's partnership with Synergy, a local therapy and addiction center. When Synergy leadership learned that KSMU would be hosting a stop on the StoryCorps mobile tour, they secured the presenting sponsorship for the visit because of their deep affinity for the program. As part of their support, they received underwriting messages and after the messages began airing on KSMU, Synergy reported to their station corporate support representative that they were seeing an increase in calls seeking more information about their services.

KSMU's election coverage and voter engagement/education initiatives were also well-received. Listeners were grateful for KSMU's civil, respectful tone, and for opportunities to learn more about local candidates and ballot issues through our various community collaborations. While increased voter turnout cannot be attributed to KSMU's efforts alone, the station prides itself on contributing to the engagement and education of voters in our region.

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 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.

KSMU is proud to provide services and programming to help meet the needs of minority and other diverse audiences.

KSMU is part of the Audio-Reader Network, a reading and information service for individuals who are blind or print-disabled. The service is available free-of-charge and offers daily readings of newspapers, magazines, and books.

"Missouri State Journal," a series produced in partnership with Missouri State University, informs the community of discussions, initiatives, events, and academic research taking place across campus. Episodes during FY2022 highlighted various international cultures of MSU students, explored the history and impact of the African American community on the region, and relating immigrant experiences through poetry.

KSMU's "Sense of Community" featured several topics throughout FY2022 that shed a light on diverse and underrepresented populations including; "Stories from the Springfield-Greene County African-American Heritage Trail," "Crossroads: the intersection of housing and homelessness in Springfield," and "An Ozarks Checkup" which featured pandemic recovery

stories from area nonprofits, healthcare providers, arts organizations, and more, and the people who rely on their services.

KSMU also offered special holiday programming that celebrates the traditions of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

We look forward to continuing to leverage our relationships within the university and the local community to bring more programming in FY2023 that serves minority audiences.

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 grant funding that KSMU receives from CPB helps pay for NPR programming expenses, as well as broadcasting expenses for the entirety of our schedule. More than 42,000 listeners tune to KSMU for national, regional, and local news and cultural programming. We are the only NPR station serving the Ozarks region. The CPB grant is key to helping KSMU maintain a strong and diverse funding portfolio and enables us to serve our community with a robust schedule of programming.