

2023 Public Radio Tulsa Local Content and Services Report

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.**

Public Radio Tulsa continues to serve its public service mission with quality news and information programming that concentrated on the continuing role of public education in the state, from covering the debates over what is taught in the classroom and the state's legislative prohibitions on teaching materials that present diverse viewpoints; the continuing conflict between the state and its sovereign indigenous peoples over the role and scope of tribal governments; and continuing to cover our community's efforts to acknowledge and reconcile our racial past, from the city's troubled relationship to its African-American community, to its relations with its indigenous entities, where conflicts continue to the present day.

To that end, PRT broadcasts in partnership with KOSU and Tri-City Collective, a monthly news and public affairs program, "Focus: Black Oklahoma," which covers a range of topics relevant to the state's African American and BIPOC communities, along with "Latino USA," a nationally distributed program devoted to news and cultural reporting on America's Latino community, and "It's Been a Minute," NPR's program devoted to culture and diversity, that features conversations with creators, tastemakers, and cultural commentators.

In addition, PRT provides an outlet for fine arts music programs devoted to classical music, jazz and Americana music, an ongoing schedule of promotion for other community institutions and events, and one-of-a-kind public radio entertainment programs, including a one-hour program devoted to Tulsa's heritage music, western swing, titled "Swing on This." This program also features yearly live broadcasts from the Cain's Ballroom, the venue that through its weekly broadcasts in the 1930s and 40s, popularized the genre and its leading proponent, Bob Wills & The Texas Playboys.

"Folk Salad", hosted by Richard Higgs and Scott Aycock, an award-winning songwriter, features a wide variety of Americana music from Oklahoma's own "Red Dirt" sub-genre of contemporary singer-songwriters, classic and contemporary folk, to a dash of blues, and Southern fried rock, all with an emphasis on Oklahoma songwriters and performers, and in-studio performances.

On KWTU, our classical music station, we also air "Wind & Rhythm", a one-hour program devoted to band and wind music, which is the predominant musical art in Oklahoma schools. The program, which started on KWTU, is now heard on over 15 NPR and classical music stations around the country and has built connections with school music programs both locally and around the country. "Classical Tulsa", hosted by musicologist Jason Heilman, is a program is

devoted to giving listeners detailed information about the music and influences of composers whose work will be performed by local performing arts groups in the Tulsa area. And finally, the "Tulsa Symphony Orchestra Broadcasts", an occasional program, is generally heard one week prior to the symphony's next performance and features the orchestra's previous live performances, as a way to connect the community to one of our premier fine arts organizations.

In addition to our terrestrial signals, our digital service at www.publicradiotulsa.org offers audio streaming for four of our five terrestrial program streams, as well as digital stories from the KWGS News staff, NPR, State Impact Oklahoma, with on-demand audio for our local reports and reporting, as well as three podcasts; *Museum Confidential*, an arts podcast with a wide audience that provides listeners with an inside view into the questions that museums and visual arts communities are thinking about, and how they connect those questions with audiences, both at museums, and in commentary and other mass media forms; *ClassicalTulsa*, provides an in-depth discussion on musical pieces and groups performing in our city, and *Switchyard*, is a cultural podcast featuring in-depth discussions with writers, poets and activists.

PRT also hosts Facebook and Instagram pages and a Twitter feed as a way to link listeners with our local content and provides content for NPR One.

Public Radio Tulsa also airs numerous 30 second Public Service Announcements for qualified non-profit organizations and institutions in our community, totaling over 50,000 announcements on our five broadcast signals during the year, totaling over 400 hours of broadcast for this community-focused content.

The stations also continued to work with a wide variety of community partners as possible throughout the year, ranging from arts and cultural organizations, literary groups, social service agencies, and government agencies to bring a focus on community activities.

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.

Since 2012, Public Radio Tulsa has been a founding partner and participated with a consortium of state public broadcasters for State Impact Oklahoma. PRT and two other stations provided the support to maintain a managing editor, and three reporters who address three major reporting areas: education; healthcare; and now, environmental/natural resources reporting. The three reporters provide both broadcast and digital content daily presenting numerous newscast reports, and web stories as well as 48 broadcast features each year.

The same partners (KWGS, KOSU, KGOU) have also partnered on the Oklahoma Public Media Exchange, whereby partners share their news gathering content with other stations in the state, from spot news reports on a variety of daily news topics, to the sharing of longer feature stories on a wide range of news topics.

And this year, our collaboration has grown as we have now added a Statehouse Reporter through CPB's state government reporting initiative. KOSU will be the host station, but Oklahoma partners will provide funding for a full-time journalist dedicated to providing data-driven investigative and enterprise reporting on the state legislature, government representatives, and public policy issues whose work will be shared with public radio throughout the state. PRT continued its podcast collaboration with Philbrook Museum of Art. "Museum Confidential provides a "behind-the-scenes" look at cultural and historic museums, the issues facing them, and context for the way they present their collections to the public. Beyond these formal partnerships devoted to broadcast, PRT provides a multitude of public service announcements and programming in conjunction with a variety of non-profit partners and collaborators to connect our audiences with organizations that share their passions and interests. The number of organizations and their mission focus is large and wide, and ranges from arts and cultural organizations, social service non-profits, higher education, governmental agencies, and grassroots organizations.

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) served.

With a small staff, it's difficult to ascertain the impact beyond simple metrics, like audience data, website usage, and on-demand audio usage. We know that collaboration stories are some of the most popular stories in terms of website usage, although by national standards, are website usage is quite low, around 10,000 views a week.

Perhaps a better way of measuring impact would be by viewing our coverage for the reactions they receive. A very recent example was our joint reporting between State Impact and non-profit journalism outlet Oklahoma Watch, that reported on the State Superintendent's effort to recoup bonus money given by the State to teachers that did not meet the guidelines for the bonuses. Our collaborative's story that the teachers were truthful in their applications was denounced by the Superintendent and the Governor, but within days, the Superintendent backed down from clawing back the money from the teachers.

Other measures of impact include the reach of some of our digital properties. For Museum Confidential, we average around 7,400 average daily downloads for the episodes of that podcast on all platforms. For our other podcasts, we average around 100 downloads per episode.

While there's no real measurable impact for our public service announcements, we do receive anecdotal feedback from non-profit organizations reporting on the effect of our announcements on the attendance and interest in their organization.

- 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.**

We continue to cover the friction between the state and our indigenous tribal governments in the aftermath of the US Supreme Court's *McGirt v. Oklahoma* decision. The tension extends far beyond criminal jurisdictional issues to significant confrontations on gaming, sovereignty, taxation, and the ability for tribes in non-disestablished reservations to govern their territory and peoples.

In addition, we continue our partnership with station KOSU, and Tri-City Collective and the program, "Focus: Black Oklahoma," which is now in its fourth full year of programs featuring on issues of important to the state's African-American population.

The station continues to broadcast two programs designed specifically to address the needs of a more diverse audience, including "Latino USA," and "It's Been a Minute" to address national topics within the Latino and BIPOC communities, and on the local side, we also broadcast a locally produced music program devoted to the music of African, Latin, and other cultures, "Rhythm Atlas," originated on KWGS and now is broadcast in two additional markets (Spokane, WA, and College Station, TX).

- 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?**

For many years, CPB funding has provided a base for the purchase of national programming each year, which allows us to provide expanded local programming by using local dollars for local radio. Federal funding in general has provided a base line for making the case for enhanced local support by emphasizing the national-local-licensee partnership to donors. Our CPB grant, which we use to purchase national programming exclusively, represents little over 20% of our national programming purchases. Without CPB funding of approximately \$150,000 of federal dollars, PRT would be forced to make existential decisions on whether KWGS could be a 24 hour news & information station, have a fine arts station, or conversely, have any local programming of community significance.

As seen nationally, business underwriting has been declining nationally, and locally, funding has still not recovered to pre-pandemic levels, CPB funding continues to be a hedge against these reductions, and an incentive to raise more dollars in the community.