

WOI-FM: FY23 Annual Local Content and Services Report

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.

WOI-FM, a member station of the statewide network of Iowa Public Radio, Inc., continues to focus attention on the identified community issues, needs, and interests, which directly relate to its mission of enriching the civic and cultural life in Iowa through high quality news and cultural programming. The identified topics reflect the needs of both WOI's immediate community and its expanded community, the State of Iowa. These topics, which guide WOI's reporting and cultural coverage, are politics & government, health & education, arts & culture, agriculture & environment, and research & science.

WOI's News, Talk Shows and Digital staff hold daily meetings to review breaking, ongoing and upcoming news and cultural stories. During these meetings, news reporting assignments and decisions are made based on the identified community issues, including how the information is best communicated to listeners. The staff provides content both on-air and online, which provides at a minimum the information shared on-air. They provide photos and video footage online as well.

WOI's Music staff meets weekly to discuss and determine coverage for upcoming performances and cultural activities. Some of this coverage is provided on-air, including live broadcasts, while some is provided exclusively online, encouraging development of a diverse audience through both radio and online interaction.

These efforts result in greater exposure to a more diverse audience. Diversity of this audience includes ethnicity, age, political affiliation, gender, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation. Though it is not always possible to measure audience diversity quantitatively, it can be measured qualitatively.

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.

WOI and its member stations of Iowa Public Radio are the only public radio stations in many parts of the state providing service to both urban and rural audiences. The educational and cultural services provided by WOI are essential and valued by those who listen. In order to ensure it upholds its mission and properly serves the public, Iowa Public Radio has established several initiatives with multiple community partners. Some of these initiatives and partnerships include:

- Continuing its partnership with Harvest Public Media, of which Iowa Public Radio is a longtime member. Harvest Public Media reports on food systems, agriculture, and rural issues through a collaborative network of reporters and partner stations throughout the Midwest and Plains. We share stories, both on-air and online, on issues impacting Iowa and surrounding states;

- Continuing our partnership in NPR's Midwest Newsroom in collaboration with KCUR in Kansas City, Nebraska Public Media, St. Louis Public Radio, and National Public Radio;
- Continuing to partner with regional public radio news organizations, sharing the stories of our staff with those partner stations, both on-air and online, on a variety of issues impacting Iowa and surrounding states;
- Producing two daily talk shows – *Talk of Iowa* and *River to River* – airing weekdays at 10 am and 12 pm then rebroadcast in the evening and made available as podcasts. *River to River* is a show about the news – from an Iowa perspective. The show takes on challenging topics, explores issues from all sides, frames community problems, and fosters conversation and understanding. *Talk of Iowa* is a place for Iowans to interact with and learn from each other. Shows delve into culture, history, art, and literature. A mix of regular guests and a range of experts are brought to the microphone to discuss what's happening in Iowa and what makes it a special place;
- Dedicating on-air time to discussing political and policy issues that affect Iowans on *River to River*. On Mondays during the legislative session, conversations are held with lawmakers and those impacted by actions at the statehouse. On Wednesdays, "Politics Wednesday" brings political analysts from around the state to help dissect the week in politics;
- Continuing to provide a weekly podcast to digital listeners titled *Under the Golden Dome*, which provides context, depth, and a better understanding of the Iowa legislative session and the process of creating policy and law;
- Continuing partnerships with local music venues and festivals to present live performances of local and regional musicians;
- Hosting and evolving a live music series called *All Access Live!* which is recorded for broadcast before a live audience in local music venues;
- Providing perspective and well-researched information during news reports, talk shows, roundtable discussions, and other community conversations by continuing to expand relationships with the broader educational community, including university professors and administration;
- Increasing public radio's involvement and visibility in the state by serving in leadership capacities on committees and boards. Iowa Public Radio's Executive Director continues to serve as a tri-chair of the Cultural Capital committee of the Des Moines Capital Crossroads effort. Two major goals of the committee are to promote "everyday, everywhere" art to strengthen the creative economy in central Iowa and to work with leaders in the music community to support the local music economy. Also on a local level, the Executive Director is currently serving as chair for Nexus, an executive women's group in Des Moines. On a regional level, the Executive Director continues to serve on the board of Public Radio in Mid-America, a regional public radio organization. On a national level, the Executive Director serves on the board of National Public Radio. Iowa Public Radio's News Director serves on both the Public Media Journalist's Association (PMJA) Awards Committee and the Radio Television Digital News Association's (RTDNA) Ethics Committee. Both are one-year commitments serving journalists in broadcast and digital news media; and

- Collaborating with community non-profits, offering opportunities for these organizations to share their stories and initiatives either through event sponsorships or through news stories and other programs.

In addition to these primary partnerships that directly support the fulfillment of its key initiatives, WOI has other related partnerships that assist in communicating its mission and value. These include participation in career fairs, serving on student and community panels, guest lecturing, moderating presentations, and attending other community festivals and events.

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.

WOI and its member stations of Iowa Public Radio regularly witness the impact of its key initiatives and partnerships. As an example, potential listeners are exposed to the programming provided by WOI through its collaborations with community non-profits and participation in other events. Additionally, when WOI is present at a community event, long-time listeners as well as new listeners share that they value the diversity of programming – both in programming type and broadcast and in story-telling provided by our reporters – or that they first heard about the station through a similar event. By cultivating our existing partnerships and seeking new ones, we have been able to provide the following resources to our listeners:

- Establishing a partnership with the Western Iowa Journalism Foundation in support of reaching their goal of hiring 10 journalists in the Northwest Iowa region. Our Western Iowa Reporter resides in Sioux City and focuses specifically on Northwest Iowa, joining newspapers in that corner of the state as we strive to reach an underserved public with essential local news; and
- Continuing our partnership with Mid-Iowa Health Foundation to further their mission to improve the overall health of greater Des Moines. Our dedicated Health Reporter responsibly reports information and updates. This reporter also participates in *Side Effects*, a Midwest health reporting partnership, allowing us to share her reporting regionally, and bringing regional reporting to our listeners.

Here are some comments provided by listeners to WOI, which can be considered tangible results:

- I am proud to support the wonderful, fair, comprehensive news coverage by great journalists - the enlightening, inspiring interviews - and all the music and fun shows, too! Keep up the good work.

- I love listening to factual and entertaining information - early in the morning, all through the day, into the evening, weekdays and weekends. My "cost per hour" is an exceptional value and I want to support my local station for the future!
- IPR is the last frontier of unbiased news, stories, information, and celebration of the arts on radio. I am so lucky to be able to listen to you on my daily commute! Thank you for staying authentic and grounded in truth.
- IPR provides the best non-biased news on issues pertinent to Iowans.
- I support IPR because a free, diligent press makes me a better citizen, Iowa a better state, and the US a better country.
- I count on my public radio station for accurate and carefully-vetted news, intelligent commentary, and learning about so many topics I would NEVER hear about otherwise!

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.

WOI and its member stations of Iowa Public Radio have maintained and built upon its initiatives to expand and better serve multiple minority and diverse audiences by facilitating the following:

- Broadcasting a weekly bilingual Classical program, *Concierto*, which is programmed for Spanish speakers. Listener response to this program continues to be positive, and Iowa Public Radio plans to continue broadcasting the program;
- Continuing to expand our reach and impact via our digital presence by providing newsletters to our audience. This includes *Daily Digest*, which provides readers with the day's top local and national news, *Political Sense*, which covers the legislative session, campaigns and other political happenings, *All Access*, which curates and recommends live concerts, festivals and music news featuring Iowa artists, and *Garden Variety*, which provides advice to get the most out of your garden. We have recently added *Chatter*, tailored to millennials offering news, recommendations, and things to do. Our five-newsletter portfolio has expanded our reach, served an important need in our state, and recently won the top award from the Online Journalism Association for newsletter portfolio;
- Reaching an expanding audience through our digital journalism efforts by covering important news, and breaking news, faster, in the places where concerned Iowans look for it first. Our website viewers continue to increase largely due to our ability to quickly cover and report on breaking news around public policy, public officials and social issues of importance to our audience;
- Utilizing news and music audience research to reach potential listeners and grow our audience statewide;

- Hosting a community listening session at the West Liberty Community Center in West Liberty, Iowa. Additional community listening sessions with diverse groups of people are scheduled in FY24 for communities in Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Storm Lake and Waterloo. From these sessions, we hope to learn directly from community members ways to help us better serve both rural and minority audiences in our state; and
- Implementing our recently approved 5-year strategic plan, starting in FY24, with a focus on audience growth by building an audience-centered work culture, delivering excellence in the content desired and needed by Iowans, being brilliant at the basics of radio audience-building, reaching new, younger, and diverse audiences where they are and pursuing smart opportunities for partnerships and new broadcast signals.

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 funding continues to be an essential part of our funding resources. The additional funding received from CPB via the Collaborative Operations and Services – Implementation grant was greatly appreciated. With those funds we were able to address audience growth initiatives by conducting audience research for both our news and music programming and create an overall brand strategy based on the research that led to the development of an extensive public awareness campaign. We were also able to address sustainability initiatives with underwriting training and the implementation of a new CRM.

The CPB CSG funding we receive is typically used exclusively to pay for national programming, allowing other funding resources to be used for locally produced programming and other initiatives that are important to the communities we serve.

If we did not receive CPB funding, it would be difficult to maintain the staffing resources required to provide the level of service our listeners and communities expect from us and we believe they need.