

Alabama Public Radio CPB Station Activities

Survey for 2021

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.*

Alabama Public Radio provides regular ongoing coverage of community issues through local news headlines and feature stories scheduled within our most-listened parts of the daily schedules. Our goal is to be an indispensable source of high quality, reliable information for our community of listeners. Our transmission system covers approximately two thirds of the state of Alabama and in many parts of the state APR is the only source of noncommercial news and information. In 2021, the APR news team produced 422 minutes of radio feature stories, a half hour documentary, 8 short video documentaries, and a new podcast. We also provide a full schedule of locally hosted classical, bluegrass and big band music which attracts an enthusiastic and loyal audience.

The station identifies concerns and needs through regular contact with a broad range of educational, political, religious and community leaders. APR has overhauled our website using the new Grove platform to increase capacity on our digital workflow, making it easier for listeners to access news, podcasts and commentaries from either their computers or mobile platforms. Currently, three APR podcasts are live and available on all platforms. Alabama Public Radio produced its latest podcast this year called When Vanya Came Home. The story was brought to life using original audio that "sat in a box" unheard since it was recorded two decades ago. APR and CPT unearthed and digitized this original material for use in our podcast, which aired around the 35th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. "When Vanya Came Home" focuses on the still unfolding story of the "children of Chernobyl" program in Alabama. In 1999 and 2000, families in Alabama hosted youngsters impacted by radiation from the 1986 nuclear plant disaster in the Soviet nation of Ukraine.

Video has also become a vital part of our digital workflow this year with 8 of our feature audio stories being produced for delivery both on air as audio features and on our website as short video documentaries.

With three HD channels and a robust online presence, the station strives to reach a diverse audience through multiple platforms including an active website, online streaming, and

multiple social media sites. Our online streaming includes our main broadcast channel as well as two sub-channels featuring BBC News and contemporary music.

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.

Alabama Public Radio seeks to address the diversity of its listening audience through its local news coverage, diverse program schedule, and non-broadcast activities.

Throughout the pandemic, Alabama Public Radio has maintained collaborative relationships with the Tuscaloosa and Mobile symphonies. Part of that collaboration includes four nights of broadcasts of the Mobile Symphony concerts.

Alabama Public Radio has continued its coverage of the pandemic, keeping our audience informed with the latest news about vaccines, COVID variants, and other effects the pandemic has had across the state. Our reporters have continued collaborating on stories with local Tuscaloosa commercial station WVUA 23, University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital, the University of Alabama's College of Community Health Sciences, the Mobile County Department of Health, Baldwin County Emergency Management, and charitable support groups like Prodissee Pantry.

In 2021, the Alabama Public Radio news team started new collaborations with the Selma Sun Newspaper, WABE-FM in Atlanta, and WFSU-FM in Tallahassee to broaden the scope of stories covered by the APR newsroom. Working in concert with The Selma Sun, APR was able to provide its listeners with comprehensive coverage of the introduction of the John Lewis Voting Rights act by Congresswoman Terri Sewell at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. APR and the Sun also collaborated on covering the effort for lighting the Edmund Pettus Bridge so visitors can see this iconic civil rights landmark at night. Reporting in concert with WABE and WFSU, APR was able to provide unique coverage of the tri-state water war between Alabama, Florida, and Georgia, with each station contributing content from each state that they serve.

Throughout FY 2021, APR also continued to expand its coverage of issues along the Gulf coast through an innovative effort to recruit and train former print reporters to help address the "news desert" left by the demise of the Mobile Press Register newspaper. This enabled APR to produce newscast coverage and long-form features on issues ranging from plans to build a community center in Africatown to preserve the stories of the former slaves brought over aboard the Clotilda. That's the last slave to bring kidnapped Africans to the United States by way of Mobile. APR's Gulf coast correspondents also covered the start of Federal renters' assistance in Baldwin County, and renewed concerns over coal ash pollution along the Alabama coast. APR's efforts were

rewarded by a national Sigma Delta Chi award from the Society of Professional Journalists for a four-month investigation and documentary on the tenth anniversary of the BP Gulf oil spill.

During membership drives, the development team engaged the community by hosting “Coffee Klatches” in our broadcast area including Florence, Mobile, Orange Beach, Tuscaloosa, Montgomery, and Daphne.

APR engages with the community through membership organizations including, but not limited to, The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, Public Relations Council of Alabama, Baldwin Business Council, Women’s Business Alliance, Mobile Senior Coalition, Mobile Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, Partners for Environmental Progress, The Sierra Club, Coastal Conservation Association, and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber. These organizations enable APR to engage with the community through multi-media venues.

In addition, organizations including Alabama Association for Non-Profits, Prodissee Pantry, Veterans Recovery Resources, Arts Alive, Alabama League of Women Voters, Alabama Audubon, Alabama Rivers Alliance, Valley Arts and Entertainment, Opera Birmingham, Birmingham Ballet, The Literacy Council of Alabama, Theatre Tuscaloosa, Kennedy Douglass Trust, Fairhope Film Festival, Weeks Bay Foundation, Mobile Earth Day, Frank Brown Songwriters Festival, Bellingrath Gardens, GULFQUEST, Jewish Film Festival, Pensacola Opera, Mobile Ballet, Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, University of South Alabama, Tuscaloosa Symphony, Mobile Chamber Music Society, Mobile Symphony, and Alabama Port Authority use APR to inform listeners across the state about services and performance opportunities.

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.

APR’s coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 expanded beyond the basics of public safety, and expert coverage of how to cope with the virus. Investigative reporting along the Gulf coast focused on issues like the impact of the coronavirus on tight-knit coastal neighborhoods, doctors and nurses coping with the health implications of so called “long COVID” among their patients, and an analysis who’s rolling up their sleeves for a COVID vaccine along the coast and who’s not.

APR also collaborated with University of Alabama Professors Daniel Levine and Waleed Hazbun on a series of public forums called “Tuscaloosa Takes on the World.” Students, educators, and Tuscaloosa area residents are invited to these monthly discussions on topics including the United States’ changing role in Global Affairs and humanity’s responsibility to the natural world.

APR listeners provide ongoing feedback about our programming and its impact on the community. Comments like these are typical:

A source of news, information and cultural programming that is very thorough, thought-provoking and entertaining.

Unbiased national & local news, smart analysis, excellent entertaining news-based shows including Radio Lab, Wait Wait Don't Tell Me, and The Daily.

I grew up listening to my local public radio station in Concord, NH, in the 1980s, and now my family listens to APR. I enjoy the (mostly) great music programs and talk shows. I also appreciate the training given to youth.

It means everything to me. You learn about other people's Value. The wonderful courage stories. Above all the music, all the music. It is a universal Language for people.

I love This American Life, Reveal, Radio Lab, On the Media, BBC late at night, All Things Acoustic, and more. APR is an important source of entertainment, news, and thoughtful analysis and commentary for me. I don't think I could live without it!

Everything! We love the classical music, the non-biased reporting (no yelling!), and especially the Sunday night line-up of Getting Sentimental Over You, the Crooners, and Kim Scott's Jazz. That is a fantastic way to spend your Sunday evening. I just wish I could give more.

I am a lifelong fan and supporter of my local NPR station. Could not function without it. It is our daily newsfeed from the time the alarm goes off in the morning until the evening

news. APR is new for me, having just moved to the coast from Huntsville. Great programming.

Thank you to APR and David Duff for the excellent classical music programming that brightens lives all across Alabama. I also appreciate APR's support of the Mobile Symphony, and I look forward to broadcasts of the MSO each year on APR! Thank you!

I live in Guadalajara Mexico most of the year and stream APR daily so that I can keep up with the latest news and news analysis. I also enjoy all of the Saturday shows through 5:00 p.m. I love classical music and am grateful for your morning and early afternoon weekly offerings. When I am not in Guadalajara I live in Mobile.

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 2020, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2021. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

APR provides regular on-going coverage of stories of special interest to minority and other diverse audiences. In addition to the documentary on audio documentary/podcast/video short doc *When Vanya Came Home*, APR produced stories in 2021 including:

- APR produced a three-part series for PRIDE month on the treatment of transgender Alabamians. Alabama is joining a growing list of states that ban transgender youth from participating in high school sports. Another proposal to ban medical treatment to help with gender affirmation and transitioning failed to pass this legislative session. Part two focused on how Alabama is joining the growing list of states to restrict how transgender youth participate in high school sports, and trans activists are now pushing back on the new rules. Part three focused on the medical accessibility for trans people of color in Alabama
- The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities of color in Alabama. APR's Gulf coast correspondents investigated how trust in the healthcare industry among minorities,

and the availability of transportation to vaccine sites, were significant factors in whether they got their shots.

- APR reported on a new trend that could ease the pervasive poverty among the residents of Boykin, Alabama who produce world famous “Gee’s Bend quilts.” These handstitched works of art are in high demand from museums and collectors. However, the average income among the women who make the quilts by hand averages \$12,000 a year. Some are managing to earn more by marketing their town work on websites like Etsy.

APR believes that diversity of staff and students leads to diverse, relevant programming. Each semester, APR recruits University of Alabama students to work as interns in the newsroom. Over the FY 21 academic year, APR worked with 8 students—three quarters of whom were female or ethnic minorities. These budding journalists are trained in newscast copy writing, which results in 60% of the material used during the 107 minutes of news updates APR airs each week. During their next semester, our interns work with our News Director on long form radio features. This training prepares our graduates for jobs in the industry, including Allison Mollenkamp. This UA graduate recently won her first national Edward R. Murrow award for covering Midwest flooding for Nebraska Public Radio. Allison is now the inaugural Howard Fellow, working in the investigative unit at NPR. Another intern, Tina Turner, was just named an inaugural “Jim Lehrer Journalism Fellow” with PBS News Hour in Washington, D.C. Tina now works for a podcast production company in New York City. Other APR graduates have moved onto positions in Miami, Atlanta, Utah, Wisconsin, Washington, D.C., and Birmingham.

Over the last year, APR students have continued to add to the diversity of voices heard on APR. This initiative to produce more local content has not only added variety to our program schedule, but has also promoted diversity by putting more interns, women and people of color on the air and on our website. Commentaries include:

- Crunk Culture (hosted by University of Alabama Associate Professor Robin Boylorn) has covered topics like Covid-19 and Vulnerable Communities, Black Infant Mortality, Missing White Woman Syndrome and the Impacts of New NIL Policy for Changes for Student-Athletes in FY21.
- Keepin’ It Real (hosted by Cam Marston who works remotely in Mobile, Alabama) First Place for the Alabama Associated Press Media Editor’s Best Commentator or Editorialist Award; also recognized with a Communicator Award of Distinction Honoring Excellence in Marketing and Communication; Communicator Award of Distinction for “Unhinged” commentary.
- Living with Less Plastic (hosted by Mary Liz Ingram who works remotely from Birmingham, Alabama) commentary about reducing plastic waste and saving the planet.

- Book Reviews with Don Noble is a weekly book review series that helps raise awareness for new books from a diverse pool of established southern authors and up-and-coming new voices.

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 is critical to Alabama Public Radio's local mission: The APR News staff is the largest public radio news team in the state, covering political, economic and cultural issues of critical importance to the people of Alabama. CPB funding allows us to support staff who are engaged with our diverse citizenry. Alabama continues to grapple with significant social and economic issues; many of its counties rank among the poorest in the country and our broadcast signal reaches more than 80 percent of the state. CPB funding helps us leverage the support of listeners and local companies extending our ability to produce high quality unique local programming.

Without the support of CPB Alabama Public Radio would be unable to provide the current level of community programming and outreach.