

Grantee Information

ID	1377
Grantee Name	WCBU-FM
City	Peoria
State	IL
Licensee Type	University

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

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The purpose of this section is to give you an opportunity to tell us and your community about the activities you have engaged in to address community needs by outlining key services provided, and the local value and impact of those services. Please report on activities that occurred in Fiscal Year 2023. Responses may be shared with Congress or the public. Grantees are required to post a copy of this report (Section 6 only) to their website no later than ten (10) days after the submission of the report to CPB. CPB recommends placing the report in an "About" or similar section on your website. **This section had previously been optional. Response to this section of the SAS is now mandatory.**

Joint licensee Grantees that have filed a 2023 Local Content and Services Report as part of meeting the requirement for TV CSG funding may state they have done so in the corresponding questions below, so long as all of the questions below were addressed as they relate to radio operations in such report. You must include the date the report was submitted to CPB along with the TV Grantee ID under which it was submitted.

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.

WCBU is primarily a news and information station, but also features locally curated eclectic music (Highway 309) on weekends. The station has increased its news and content staff from one full-time and one part-time in May of 2019 to, as of this writing, four full-time, two part-time, and several correspondents/stringers and student interns. WCBU features daily local newscasts during morning and afternoon drive times, a weekly local arts program, and a daily 8-minute local news podcast that also airs four times during Morning Edition.

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.

The most impactful partnership has been that with WGLT-FM in Normal-Bloomington, whereby WGLT manages WCBU's day-to-day operations, that went into effect in June 2019. This has allowed WCBU to increase the size of its content staff and provided economic stability to both stations. An extension of this agreement (into 2029) was signed in October 2023. In January 2022, WCBU started providing four local newscasts each weekday - two in the morning and two in the afternoon - to local community radio station WAZU "Strictly Hip Hop", which combines locally selected hip hop music and community service elements to serve a diverse audience. In February 2022, WCBU began a content sharing agreement with The Community Word, a Peoria-based monthly newspaper. WCBU's weekly "Out and About" program is a co-production with the local Arts Partners group and spotlights the local arts and culture scene. Other partners have included Bradley University Theatre, Corn Stock Theater, Heartland Festival Orchestra, Peoria Symphony Orchestra, and more.

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.

Digital usage is the best quantitative tool WCBU has at our disposal, and WCBU tracks those monthly. Usage is up 6-7 times since 2019, with WCBU podcasts regularly seeing more than 10,000 monthly downloads, while traffic to WCBU.org - primarily for its written content - typically exceeds 60,000 users and 120,000 page views monthly.

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.

In addition to the partnership with WAZU mentioned above, WCBU's CAB continues to recruit new members and group is more diverse and more active in providing feedback on the station's community service.

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?

It's doubtful WCBU could survive without CPB funding. With WCBU's partnership with WGLT, the station has been able to increase quality, quantity, and depth of its independent and professional local news coverage, as well as its coverage of local arts, culture, and music. That trajectory should continue, but only if CPB funding continues.

Comments

Question

Comment

No Comments for this section

