

# Telling the KCBX Story

1. **Goals & approach to address community issues, needs, and interests:** KCBX serves southern Monterey County, San Luis Obispo County, and Santa Barbara County -- a large geographic area on the Central Coast of California with a relatively low population density that is primarily white, with a significant Hispanic population, and a growing Filipino population. Primary economic activities include government, service jobs, agriculture, high-tech industries, tourism, universities and prisons, aerospace, oil production, power generation, military bases, manufacturing, and fishing. Our region harbors vibrant arts communities, with several orchestras, theatres, dance companies, museums, and music venues. Our goal is to serve the informational and cultural needs of our residents and visitors through broadcast and online content that covers the region's important economic and cultural drivers, through a mix of regional, national, and locally-produced material; and also through in-person and streamed events such as concerts, lectures, interviews, debates and community gatherings.

Weekly information programs spotlight the efforts of arts, cultural, and non-profit social service organizations, and cover issues of current concern to the local population, including longer-form news content. Special programming includes candidate debates, and interviews, discussion of ballot initiatives, voting issues, redistricting, and election coverage, and call-in programs where listeners can engage in discussion about issues identified as important to them in community-wide surveys funded by the local community foundation. A daily online and on-air community calendar informs our audience of arts, cultural, educational and non-profit events, including virtual events during the COVID-19 pandemic. Local volunteer music hosts present an array of musical styles seldom or never heard on other stations in the region. A weekly music and interview program spotlights local performing arts groups. In addition, KCBX sponsors and presents local, in-person live events such as music and arts performances, discussion panels, lectures and candidate forums. During the ongoing pandemic, we have continued to offer streaming events in lieu of in-person events.

KCBX broadcasts weekday local news stories during Morning Edition and All Things Considered. Our news component also features an active online component made possible by our website, where we reach an even broader portion of our population by providing a dynamic and timely source of local news. KCBX has developed a partnership with the journalism departments at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, University of California Santa Barbara, and Cuesta Community College. Students intern and volunteer in our newsroom, and contribute on-air and online stories under the guidance of our news team. Our responsive website and social media outreach provide digital news, public affairs and cultural content, as well -- and provide more opportunities for listener engagement, especially with a younger audience. KCBX listeners/users can find longer-form news content, interviews, transcripts, graphics and photos on demand at our website, and audio on NPR One, iTunes, and podcast sites.

2. **Key initiatives and collaborations:** KCBX shares news content reciprocally with other public radio stations such as KAZU, KVPR, KCLU, KQED, KPCC, and CapRadio, and we provide content to the California Report and NPR. We collaborate with the SLO New Times, the San Luis Obispo Tribune, and other local newspapers to carry occasional conversations about stories they cover. During election season, we partner with those publications to organize local candidate debates and public forums.

We also partner Action for Healthy Communities, an organization committed to identifying and carrying out projects that will improve the quality of life in San Luis Obispo County, to produce a weekly program devoted to community issues. The show's topics and guests focus on raising public awareness through credible and valid information about local and regional concerns such as health care access, neighborhood design, the state of our education infrastructure, economic impacts, and much more.

The Cal Poly Political Science department occasionally provides analysis on local politics, and professors at Cal Poly and UCSB provide information about new research at those institutions. The local Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Association both contribute regular interviews with business owners and business associations in the area. We feature local non-profit organizations regularly in a segment dedicated to highlighting their work in our region.

Our partnership with the journalism department at Cal Poly provides a robust internship program and news content from students. In addition, journalism students from UCSB occasionally contribute interviews for our weekly “Issues & Ideas” program.

We maintain close relationships with over a dozen performing arts organizations, doing stories on their productions, interviewing artists, and broadcasting recorded performances. We maintain a comprehensive and free ‘Community Calendar’ featuring the activities of nonprofit, educational and performing arts organizations. The calendar is broadcast, with more comprehensive listings online.

The KCBX newsroom continued its efforts in 2021 to partner with other local media producing reporter “2-ways” conducted with the San Luis Obispo Tribune and other local news outlet staff about the reporting of local stories. In the past year, our news team has partnered with organizations such as Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE) to identify issues to cover that are important to working-class and immigrant communities. KCBX also continues to partner with the California Newsroom—a collaboration of public radio newsrooms across the state, which shares knowledge and content among its participants, and creates news stories and programs that are broadcast and shared online statewide.

3. **Community impact from initiatives and partnerships:** Our newsroom’s partnership with CAUSE resulted in a 12-part series of news features about farmworker issues on the Central Coast, which received positive critical attention from our listeners, and reached new audiences in the Latino and farmworker communities. It also drew comments from many of our regular listeners, who expressed an appreciation about exposure to these issues, which aided in deeper understanding.

KCBX News and our talk shows covered redistricting in our region throughout the year, emphasizing the importance of the process and explaining how it works and directly affects citizens. Both our newsroom and our talk shows compared the process in Santa Barbara County, with its redistricting commission and the process in San Luis Obispo County, where the politicians decide district boundaries. This coverage helped raise awareness about redistricting in our area, and may have contributed to a large turnout at our County Board of Supervisors meetings at which the redistricting decisions were made.

KCBX hears on a regular basis from listeners, our partner organizations, and other nonprofits about how our programming positively influences awareness and understanding of issues that impact our community. For example, in late 2020, the City of San Luis Obispo released a draft Active Transportation

Plan for public review—the first of its kind, which will include both bicycling and walking needs. KCBX continued its attention to this topic in news coverage and another hour-long talk show with representatives from the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments and city managers, which resulted in direct community input from listeners to city representatives.

Our partners in the arts have indicated that awareness of concerts comes largely from announcements, interviews and performances on KCBX during music and other programming. For instance, Cal Poly Arts has indicated to us that their patrons have heard about concerts more from KCBX than any other local media outlet. We know the community values our arts, cultural, and public affairs programming because we can measure that value by financial support to KCBX from the community, via comments, feedback, and direct participation like volunteering, attendance at our live and streamed events, and phone calls to our call-in programs.

4. **Efforts to meet the needs of minority and diverse audiences:** KCBX produces a weekly one-hour news magazine, "Issues & Ideas," that airs interviews with a wide variety of local groups and individuals. Topics in 2021 included continued coverage of COVID-19 and the pandemic—often relating to its effects on seniors, people of color, and immigrants. Other topics included housing issues, hunger, literacy, farmworkers' rights, legal services for people in need, local queer history, a Black Lives Matter art exhibit, legal representation of foster children, a Native American tribe's struggle for recognition by the Bureau of Indian Affairs—to name only a few. Another weekly program, "Central Coast Voices," focuses on a single important community issue each week, encouraging call-in participation by the audience. The topics have included many issues of importance to a diverse audience, including the urgent need for foster families locally, a Native American-led proposal for a national marine sanctuary, work being accomplished by our local diversity coalition, sexual and intimate partner violence, attacks on Critical Race Theory and ethnic studies curriculums in schools, and many more. KCBX music programs give air time to a wide variety of musical styles not otherwise served on broadcast radio: classical, jazz, folk music, world music, blues, soul, R&B and Latin music.

In 2021 our newsroom continued its coverage on issues of importance to underrepresented groups on the Central Coast by reporting on topics such as housing scarcity, voting rights, free job training, tenant rights, queer issues, disabled athletes, city homelessness response plans, and more. One major initiative was a 12-episode series of feature news stories covering farmworker issues in Santa Barbara County using a "solutions journalism" approach.

5. **Corporation for Public Broadcasting funding significantly impacts KCBX's ability to serve our communities:** It provides core funding that supports our ability to provide valued in-depth and responsible news coverage to our community. It allows the station to maintain a small but highly efficient staff dedicated to producing locally hosted music and issues programming as well as local fundraising efforts. The loss or significant reduction of CPB funds would severely impact these efforts. In addition to the direct station grant, KCBX, along with other funded stations, depends on CPB support to cover system-wide copyright and distribution costs that would otherwise be borne by individual stations.