

Grantee Information

ID	1417
Grantee Name	WKMS-FM
City	Murray
State	KY
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.

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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.

The WKMS mission contains three main pillars: News, Culture, & Community. Each year, we work to both: Maintain the service listeners already rely on (WKMS produces nine local newscasts each weekday along with contributing to six state-wide midday newscasts, brings arts and public service interviews to a midday local music program, and produces close to 2,000 hours of local music shows each year, including local performances from local musicians.) AND grow the areas we see opportunity to increase community representation and service. This year, that included a focus on rural health in a number of ways. Every Thursday in May we produced a two hour music program, Sound Minds, which played listener-requested songs that got them through hard times as well as sharing their stories. This was a way to provide awareness that Mental Health is health and affects us all, even if we don't normally share about it. The third season of the WKMS podcast, Middle of Everywhere, focused exclusively on rural women's health. With episodes on access to health care, reproductive health, substance abuse recovery, trans-affirming services, OB deserts, end-of-life and more – we were able to shine a light on the nuances of people and places often overlooked. There was also a focus on solutions – highlighting programs that were combatting these problems/issues. In October, the podcast hosted an in-person collage event, where people from the community could come and share their health journeys through art. We met a 16 year-old suffering from an illness who didn't feel seen by her doctors – who talked through her to her parents. We met a woman with a traumatic brain injury who felt not "herself" anymore and had to discover who this new person was. It was a powerful night and we felt honored to hear so many stories from women in our region. In other areas, we put together a five-part series on veterans in November – Voices of Service. In interviewing 12 veterans from different backgrounds, branches, ages, educational and economic levels – we put together a picture that showed there is no one universal service experience. Fort Campbell military base is in our listening area and it felt very positive to highlight this large population in a way that let them share their truths, sacrifices and lessons learned. Of course, we also helped create statewide voter guides, hosted book clubs, partnered on concerts and cultural events in our region and so much more. You can see more about our arts and events partnerships in the next question.

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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.

WKMS partners in many ways, with many organizations, to build culture and arts and in our community. Some of those have very tangible physical outcomes: For instance, 445 pounds of food donated to Paducah Cooperative Ministries, or 135 pounds of pet food donated to Murray Animal Shelter thanks to philanthropy partnerships during fundraisers. Some enrich the community through education, literacy and connection. Each March, we produce Shakespeare Minutes in conjunction with the Murray State Shakespeare Festival. Each April, we host Poetry Minutes on the air, highlighting the talents of people of all ages across our region. This year, we were also able to host free poetry workshops across our region: in Murray, Paducah & Hopkinsville. We partnered with the Hoptown Chronicle and Hopkinsville's Big Read for two of the Hopkinsville workshops. It was an amazing night of sharing poetry and diverse experiences (and even some tears). Our goal is to show that everyone has thoughts that are worth expressing. Also in the poetry/arts/literacy vein, we partnered with the Pennyroyal Arts Council to promote Hoptown: An Immersive Dance Experience by MK Abadoo about the sisterhood of black women, including bell hooks – world-famous poet who grew up in Hopkinsville. To participate in the event, we recorded 5 bell hooks poems with bell's sister, Gwenda Motley,

and put those on the air in the days leading up to the event. Of course, we have numerous partnerships with arts organizations in communities across the region we serve. We broadcast concerts from the Paducah Symphony Orchestra on our classical channel. We air interviews highlighting international films as part of our partnership with Murray State's Cinema International. We partner on concerts and performances that enrich the culture and diversity of our region with local theaters. We partnered with the McCracken County NAACP to air the winning essays from local schools (grades 5 through 8) on MLK Day. We partnered with Murray State's Gender and Equity Caucus to participate in a panel on Women's Bodily Autonomy. And with the Louisville Orchestra to promote three free concerts in our area featuring a musician with ties to our region: mandolinist Chris Thile. Our daily on-air Datebook (and online calendar) highlights non-profit events and opportunities to actively engage in the community each day. From blood drives, to support groups, to lectures and performances, we're proud to connect listeners with resources to enhance their lives and better our region together. Finally, and very importantly, our collaborations with other public media entities in our state are vital in allowing us to provide so much more content and impact to our audiences. Our partnership through Kentucky Public Radio with LPM, WKYU, & WEKU allows us to have 6 midday statewide newscasts – which we simply could not field alone. We were able to partner on statewide voter guides for the elections. We are strongest when we work together. On a revenue side, the shared underwriting representative for statewide buys has been tremendously helpful as well. We'll continue to grow and strengthen KPR and our state capitol reporting in the coming year. Especially with the new enterprise reporter the collaboration was able to hire thanks to the generosity of the CPB.

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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.

News reporting can be a powerful tool, especially for underserved community groups. Our reporting on Greyhound stopping bus service without warning in Paducah helped spur feedback from hundreds of people, raising awareness and helping reverse the decision. Baptist Health Paducah hospital administrator and listener Mike Muscarella said: "You all led the charge in reporting to help change the course of a poor idea. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!" Other comments from listeners and programming surveys: "I think you guys do a great job on reporting on stories in the local area! I especially appreciate coverage of local elections and policy changes. I trust this station to provide quality reporting on local political issues. It helps reduce the burden of having to research and filter that information during my time off. WKMS is a crucial source of news for our region." "Hey Guys, A token of my gratitude and appreciation for your show. It's an absolute radio treasure and I look forward to it every week. Thanks for all you do". - Barry Niemeyer "WKMS was my window to the world when I was a student at MSU, and I want to support the station for the current students...and those in the community that need their little window to the world." – David Dikin "Thank you for riding along with me every morning as I head to work. WKMS 91.3 continually brings me information that I need to know, and information that I didn't yet know I needed. I'm always enlightened in some new way through listening to WKMS." – Jason Adams "Thank you for accurate news and for informative and heartwarming stories of survival and hope!" - Corinne Rudd "I can't believe I can commute to work and feel like I have already traveled the world because Murray State's own public radio station WKMS can inform, entertain and uplift me with every minute of programming." – Marcie Hinton "The Kentucky Public Radio Voter Guide made this year's trip to the polls a lot easier. If you're trying to learn more before casting some votes, I think it's worth checking out. Thanks to the public radio station teams, including WKMS, for putting this resource together." – Gavin Posey "When I was in elementary school, my grandmother worked in the district's Head Start office which was located in the same building. I would stay in her office after school, and she'd take me home after she clocked out. We normally left around 3:30pm, and she would always have the car radio tuned to 91.3 FM. We would listen to Ari Shapiro and Audie Cornish on All Things Considered, as she drove me home. We'd spend the car ride listening to the stories and discuss what they meant. I'm certain most 4th graders were not trying to understand the Syrian Civil War or Gerrymandering, but those car rides shaped a large part of my world view. I wouldn't be the person I am today with those car rides with my Nene, and we would not have been able to do that without WKMS!" - WKMS Student Reporter, Zach Lamb In terms of partnerships, Arricka Dunsford at the Louisville Orchestra credited WKMS as a major contributor for the great attendance at Madisonville's Glema Mahr Center for the Arts (they had a jump of hundreds more tickets immediately following us starting promotion) and a sold-out show at Lovett Auditorium "Congratulations to all of you for making this a success. This is your hard work paying off!"

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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.

This year for the first time we started logging sources in a diversity tracker, with a goal of learning more about which groups we can do a better job of representing in all story content – not just racially or gender specific reporting. We only have a couple months of data thus far, but are excited to learn more and grow in this area. Of course, we work to engage with our local NAACPs and partner with them on several events each year, including MLK Day, the Rosa Parks celebration, Juneteenth, Emancipation Day and more. We host Black History Month programming, book clubs that feature works by women or authors of color. We also have the wonderful work of Dr. Todd Hill sharing the stories and music of black big band musicians in Black Cats Jump every Tuesday night. We highlighted a diversity of women's voices and opinions, along with women-produced songs in a show called Femme Fridays for Women's History Month in March. Our new podcast season focused on rural women's health. For Ukrainian Independence Day, we produced a two hour special with all Ukrainian music and an interview with a Ukrainian-refugee-turned-baker who lives in our listening area. We also host an international music show weekly. And have reported on Latinx students in our schools. WKMS also partnered with Pride Festivals in our rural communities, co-sponsoring and attending the festivals. "Love the photo of Derek and Hannah at the Pride Festival, along with the basic fact of WKMS having a booth there. Proud of our NPR station" - Martha Emmons And partnered with Trail of Tears Commemorative Park in Hopkinsville to share Native American stories in special on-air programming for Native American Day. While there's so much more we'd like to do (and intend to do this year). The intentionality and focus of bringing diversity to every aspect of our programming is definitely there now. Public media is here to serve all people of all backgrounds. We want to make sure we can build the trust needed to truly be able to serve all of our communities.

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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?

The CPB has incredible impact on the stability and strength of the station. Especially in light of funding concerns at the university level. The grants allow the station to pay for the full-time employment of a host who also does daily interviews showcasing the voices of our region. They also allow us to pay for programming that isn't offered anywhere else in the majority of the counties we serve from NPR. The CPB's support of

our Kentucky Public Radio collaborative has recently allowed great expansion in that area as well – adding powerhouse politics reporter Joe Sonka to our enterprise capital reporting. As the legislature is moving so very quickly on so many bills that impact the lives of all kinds of people in our region, this legislative session it is a blessing to have so many watchful eyes on the process from KPR. Simply put, the CPB is the engine that helps drive rural public radio and journalism, and the return on investment for the CPB is tremendous as these funds have allowed WKMS historically to raise six dollars for every dollar invested by the CPB. Thank you for all the ways you impact public media and its listeners.

Comments

Question

Comment

No Comments for this section