6.1 Telling Public Radio’s Story

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 2022. 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 2022 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.

KUT, Austin’s NPR affiliate, and KUTX, the Austin music experience, are committed to delivering in-depth news coverage through a local lens and diverse, intelligent explorations in local music, lifestyle and culture. We invite audience engagement throughout all of our platforms, with broadcast, podcasts, websites, robust social media, events, and customer service focused on hearing from the community and responding to their interests and needs. Our local coverage is guided by that input and longstanding newsroom staff knowledge of the community, with a focus on equity and affordability. In Fall 2023 KUTX also conducted a market research study and partnered on a music census to understand the needs of the music community. The study confirmed interest in the music we play and also in issues KUT & KUTX cover, including affordability, growth and equity. Primary coverage revolves around how state and local policy affects residents, education, environment, growth, and changing demographics. In 2022 KUT & KUTX focused heavily on the increasing cost of living in Central Texas, where housings costs increased more than 40 percent during the pandemic, and its effects on Austin and Texas residents. The KUT & KUTX podcast Pause/Play shifted its focus from Covid to housing and affordability, and how that was affecting the entire music ecosystem in Austin. KUT’s newsroom worked diligently to inform the public about housing trends, skyrocketing rental rates, and inflation, often in both English and Spanish. In collaboration with our partners in The Texas Newsroom, KUT News and Texas Standard, the daily news magazine, provided in-depth but sensitive coverage of the Uvalde shooting. As school started again in the fall, Texas Standard returned for a Uvalde special that was praised by victim families and experts for its sensitivity and focus on solutions. Both stations invested in more digital content over the past year. KUTX and Texas Standard websites continued with double digit percentage audience growth, and the stations added a podcast studio site. KUTX launched a new HD and online channel, The Texas Music Experience, to highlight the work that artists across the state are doing.
The curated station complements both KUTX and The Austin Music Experience, which we offer on HD2 (and provided for free to the City of Austin for use at the Austin airport). KUT & KUTX also invested more in on-demand listening for our audiences. We launched Black Austin Matters, an interview podcast focused on the lives and culture of Black Austinites. It is hosted by two University of Texas professors, and has had interviews ranging from former state Rep. Wilhelmina Delco to a local criminal justice activist, to a longtime East Austin barber. The stations began holding live events again, including several SXSW showcases, the return of the annual Summer Jam hip hop festival as a live event (for the first time partnering with KAZI, a black-centered community station), and ATXplained Live, a storytelling event with a mission of explaining Austin issues and culture.

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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.

KUT continues to partner with The Texas Tribune, an online City Hall reporting nonprofit called the Austin Monitor, NPR and the stations of The Texas Newsroom to strengthen our digital efforts to keep our community informed about the news and issues most relevant to them. The Texas Standard daily newsmagazine remains the centerpiece for the efforts of The Texas Newsroom, the CPB funded collaborative that has helped the four largest public radio stations in the state coordinate their news coverage efforts for more substance and impact. The stations collaborated closely on Uvalde coverage and the Texas primaries in the spring. KUT also partnered with the Austin Monitor on some online local election forums. KUT partnered with WAMU in Washington D.C. for the "1A Remaking America project, including election coverage and a panel hosted in Austin on legislation affecting trans youth. Our very successful partnership with NPR's Next Generation project continues, now as part of the Texas Newsroom collaboration. On the non-profit, public service side, KUTX continues to partner with Austin organizations promoting the health and stability of the Austin Music scene. Organizations such as the SIMS Foundation (mental health services), Health Alliance for Austin Musicians (HAAM – low cost health care for music industry workers), Austin Music Foundation (professional resources for working musicians), and Sonic Guild (a music patronage organization) are regularly talked about on KUTX and partnered with the station for events to raise dollars and awareness for each. KUTX held a series of events at the Commodore Perry for free, but took donations for music organizations such as HAAM and DAWA, an artist collective that helps artists of color. KUTX annually partners with the Austin Music Foundation and the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division for Love Austin Music Month. This is a coordinated effort to promote the diversity of the Austin music scene. This year’s Get Involved volunteerism series, which highlights local nonprofits, focused on food security, internet access, transportation assistance, and more. KUT (and KUTX since 2013) has profiled more than 200 local non-profit volunteer-centric organizations. Organizations are encouraged to use the audio and video profiles we create in a way that works for them. Many use them in e-newsletters or funding appeals and on their websites Nonprofit organizations also send in their volunteer needs and program information to KUT and KUTX for inclusion in our public service announcements. Many stations across the country either no longer do PSAs or they charge for them. KUT and KUTX continue to provide this service free of charge and we anticipate no change in that policy.

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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.

KUT and KUTX have a combined on-air audience averaging more than 350,000 weekly listeners. KUT is often the market leader in audience share, and KUTX is regularly in the top 5. Our digital audience for our three main websites is about half a million unique visitors, and in a given month our podcasts are downloaded more than 400,000 times. All of that leads to strong listener feedback. Here are a few examples: “I have been listening to KUT since 1960. The news and information I have received over the last 60 years far exceed that from any other source and it has enhanced my understanding and enjoyment of the world and my life immensely. Thank you for your service to the Austin community and the world at large!” - Joe F "We’re a workshop full of auto techs that can’t get enough of the information and entertainment both KUT and KUTX give us. Seriously, we listen to KUT all day long. It’s a little embarrassing. We’ve got to be the most well-informed bunch of grease monkeys you’ll ever meet." - Brent from Hill Country European Autoworks "KUTX is a cultural treasure. It reminds (me) all the time how proud I am to be an Austinite. Moreover, with minimal effort, I can consistently see that my young son is consistently exposed to diverse, creative, beautiful selections of music—with the kid some culture. The hosts are like friends. I’m so glad that we have your station as an example of something that can be done for all the right reasons and grow successful and thrive." - Max S. “I am supporting KUTX today because you are the last unbiased news source out there and that is important now more than ever.” - Yvonne J. KUT News and the Texas Standard team provided hundreds of stories about the election, historic abortion rulings, local housing issues, and more throughout the year. KUT's Austin and Texas coverage has become a staple of regional and national outlets. KUTX continued amplifying the work of Austin musicians and highlighting the struggles of the music industry during the pandemic.
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 2022, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2023. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

As mentioned above, KUT launched a new podcast, Black Austin Matters, focused on the lives and culture of Black Austinites. In June 2022 KUT aired an hour-long special on Juneteenth. The Texas holiday has taken on national significance, and KUT's documentary explored the holiday through the lens of Black Austinites, reflecting both on the past and the present. KUT's newsroom continued its Spanish language translations, publishing up to 3-5 stories in Spanish each week on topics of note for the community. Texas Standard also began posting Spanish language content, and KUT and Texas Public Radio spearheaded efforts to provide more Spanish-language news for the state by providing translations for The Texas Newsroom. KUT and Texas Standard also went into the second year of a partnership with the Voces Oral History Project at Moody College of Communications to create content to inform our audience about the significant contributions of Hispanics in U.S. history. For Hispanic Heritage Month KUT partnered with Voces to run short bios of historically significant Hispanic residents twice a day every day for the month. Voces oral histories of everyday life and the pandemic have also become Sonic IDs for KUT. KUT’s work inspired an additional Texas Newsroom effort for 2022-23 to add Black History Month segments (now airing); AAPI Month segments, Women in History, and Pride Month segments. KUT also made plans to begin airing special segments featuring Austinites remembering the legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in February 2023. Nationally, KUT continues to air Latino USA in a prime slot after NPR’s All Things Considered on Sunday evenings. Launched in 1993 at KUT, it is the longest running Latino focused program on public media. KUT also moved Fronteras, a Texas Public Radio show about border issues and culture, into the weekly Sunday lineup. We continue to produce, as we have for over 50 years, and air In Black America—IBA. IBA, hosted by John L. Hanson Jr., is a weekly half-hour program about the African-American experience in the United States that is distributed nationally. The program is heard on more than 20 stations nationwide including on two stations here in Austin and available as a podcast through KUT.org. The podcast has a devoted audience, and was downloaded 210,000 times in 2022. Hanson also hosts the four hour Friday afternoon funk and soul music program, The Old School Dance Party, on KUTX and features African-American centric community announcements and engagement. It has become a key part of how KUTX brings The Austin Music Experience to audiences. The music station continued an annual tradition of looking at Austin's Black music roots with segments during Black History Month. KUTX airs the locally produced music shows Horizontes targeted at the Latin and World music communities of Austin. Finally, The Breaks, which showcases Austin and Texas Hip Hop and R&B, continues to grow and continues to be a rallying point for the Austin hip-hop scene. In 2022 The Breaks once again hosted Summer Jam, highlighting local and Texas hip hop artists. KUT & KUTX also hosted tables at the Juneteenth 2022 festival, to introduce our work to new audiences and engage with the current audience.