

# **KUNI: FY21 Annual Local Content and Services Report**

**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.**

KUNI, a member station of the statewide network of Iowa Public Radio, continues to focus attention on the identified community issues, needs and interests, which directly relate to the core part of its mission statement, "enriching the civic and cultural life in Iowa through high quality news and cultural programming." The identified topics reflect the needs of both KUNI's immediate community and its expanded community, which is the state of Iowa. These topics, which guide KUNI's reporting and cultural coverage, are politics & government, health & education, arts & culture, agriculture & environment, and research & science.

KUNI's News and Digital staff hold daily meetings to review breaking, ongoing, and upcoming news and cultural stories. During this meeting, news reporting assignments and decisions are made based on the identified community issues, including how the information is best communicated to listeners. The staff provides content both on-air and online, which provides at a minimum the information shared on-air. They provide photos and video footage online as well.

KUNI's Music staff meets regularly to discuss and determine coverage for upcoming performances and cultural activities. Some of this coverage is provided on-air, including live broadcasts, while some is provided exclusively online, encouraging development of a diverse audience through both radio and online interaction.

These efforts result in greater exposure to a more diverse audience. Diversity of this audience includes ethnicity, age, political affiliation, gender, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation. Though it is not always possible to measure audience diversity quantitatively, it can be measured qualitatively.

**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.**

KUNI and its member stations of Iowa Public Radio are the only public radio stations in many parts of the state providing service to both urban and rural audiences. The educational and cultural services provided by KUNI are essential and valued by those who listen. In order to ensure it upholds its mission and properly serves the public, Iowa Public Radio has established several initiatives with multiple community partners. Some of these initiatives and partnerships include:

- Continuing its partnership with Harvest Public Media, Iowa Public Radio is a longtime member. Harvest Public Media reports on food systems, agriculture and rural issues through a collaborative network of reporters and partner stations throughout the Midwest and Plains. We share the stories of our reporter and those of our partner stations, both on-air and online, on issues impacting Iowa and surrounding states;
- Expanding our partnership in NPR's Midwest Newsroom in collaboration with KCUR in Kansas City, Nebraska Public Media, St. Louis Public Radio and National Public Radio by hiring a Senior Content Editor to focus on investigative journalism in the Midwest region;
- Continuing to partner with regional public radio news organizations, sharing the stories of our staff with those partner stations, both on-air and online, on a variety of issues impacting Iowa and surrounding states;
- Producing two daily talk shows – *Talk of Iowa* and *River to River* – airing weekdays at 10 am and 12 pm then rebroadcast in the evening and made available as podcasts. Both shows host a variety of local experts, including horticulture experts, wellness experts, home improvement, political, and wildlife experts to inform and educate listeners;
- Continuing to dedicate on-air time to discussing political and policy issues that affect Iowans. In particular, hosting "Politics Wednesday," which is an hour-long conversation every week on *River to River* focusing on current local and national political events. Additionally, during Iowa's legislative session, we host a weekly episode that covers policy issues currently in debate or consideration by the Iowa legislature that could be impactful to Iowans;
- Continuing to provide a weekly podcast to digital listeners titled *Under the Golden Dome*, which provides context, depth and a better understanding of the Iowa legislative session and the process of creating policy and law;
- Continuing a piano series called The Steinway Café, with performances by pianists from Iowa and beyond to celebrate the refurbishment of our 1918 Steinway Model B grand piano;
- Creating a partnership with a local music venue to present live performances of local and regional musicians, a multimedia holiday production involving more than 40 Iowa musicians and creatives was broadcast in lieu of an annual live performance;
- Continuing our series called "House Calls," in which a Classical music host phones an Iowa musician at home to discuss their work and asks them to play "DJ";
- Providing perspective and well-researched information during news reports, talk shows, roundtable discussions, and other community conversations by continuing to expand relationships with the broader educational community, including K-12 teachers and administrators as well as university professors and administration;
- Continuing to showcase student performances and local musicians in our Music programs, including *Gas Money*, through continued relationship development and collaboration among the public universities, private colleges, performance artists and bands, and student organizations & individuals;
- Increasing public radio's involvement and visibility in the state by serving in leadership capacities on committees and boards. Iowa Public Radio's Executive Director continues to serve as a tri-

chair of the Cultural Capital committee of the Des Moines Capital Crossroads effort. Two major goals of the committee are to promote “everyday, everywhere” art to strengthen the creative economy in Central Iowa and to work with leaders in the music community to support the local music economy. Also on a local level, the Executive Director is currently serving as Program Chair for Nexus, an executive women’s group in Des Moines. On a regional level, the Executive Director continues to serve on the board of Public Radio in Mid-America, a regional public radio organization. On a national level, the Executive Director serves on the board of National Public Radio.

- Collaborations with community non-profits, offering opportunities for these organizations to share their stories and initiatives either through event sponsorships or through news stories and other programs.

In addition to these primary partnerships that directly support the fulfillment of its key initiatives, KUNI has other related partnerships that assist in communicating its mission and value. These include participation in career fairs, serving on student and community panels, guest lecturing, moderating presentations, and attending other community festivals and events.

**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.**

KUNI and its member stations of Iowa Public Radio regularly witness the impact of its key initiatives and partnerships. As an example, potential listeners are exposed to the programming provided by KUNI through its collaborations with community non-profits and participation in other events. Additionally, when KUNI is present at a community event, long-time listeners as well as new listeners share that they value the diversity of programming – both in programming type and broadcast and in story-telling provided by our reporters – or that they first heard about the station through a similar event. By cultivating our existing partnerships and seeking new ones, we have been able to provide the following resources to our listeners:

- Continuing our partnership with Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, which helped us in hiring a health reporter, to further their mission to improve the overall health of greater Des Moines. This partnership was established just prior to the pandemic and has allowed us to report regularly on COVID numbers and as the pandemic continues, to provide in-depth reporting on the broader impacts of the pandemic including the impact on rural hospitals, health care workers and Iowa’s meatpacking industry. This reporter participates in *Side Effects*, a Midwest health reporting partnership, allowing us to share her reporting regionally, and bringing regional reporting to our listeners;
- Continuing our partnership with Report for America, which helped us in hiring a bilingual reporter to cover Iowa’s growing Latino populations and communities. This partnership has allowed Iowa

Public Radio to improve coverage and to better serve immigrant and minority communities for both a statewide and national audience; and

- Produced *Juneteenth: The Movement*, a two-hour television, radio and digital event celebrating the Juneteenth holiday in partnership with Iowa PBS and xBk, a venue that actively works to create a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for artists and guests.

Additionally, the public and private universities frequently communicate how much they appreciate partnering with us – both in our news and arts and culture programming. They feel it is a valuable outreach effort on their part, one that pays off by greater exposure to the parents of potential and current students, and appreciate being able to share the wisdom and inspiration of their faculty and staff. Here are some comments provided by listeners to KUNI, which can be considered tangible results:

- There is no other source that so thoroughly and conveniently covers news, the arts and culture from Iowa's small towns to the farthest reaches of the galaxy. I grew up with IPR and I'm happy to hear my children quote things they've heard on air. Keep up the outstanding work!
- During these uncertain times, one thing we are certain about is receiving fact-based news from IPR and NPR!
- I honestly could not have survived the pandemic without my daily doses of public radio – THANK YOU!

**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 2021, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2022. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.**

Over the past year, KUNI and its member stations of Iowa Public Radio have maintained and built upon its initiatives to expand and better serve multiple minority and diverse audiences by facilitating the following:

- Broadcasting a weekly bilingual Classical program, *Concierto*, targeting Spanish speakers. Listener response to this program continues to be positive, and Iowa Public Radio plans to continue broadcasting the program;
- Expanding our digital presence to better serve our audience against their changing media diet. Our pandemic news newsletter has evolved into a weekday daily news narrative newsletter, with locally and nationally reported news and details for the audience to be fully informed;
- Producing a new daily news podcast, *Here First*, delivering essential local news from across the state in under 15 minutes;
- Creating a partnership with *Hola Iowa*, a bilingual online news site, to translate reporting into Spanish for their audience; and
- Producing two in-depth series in the months after the summer of protests in 2020 to help listeners better understand the issues. On *Talk of Iowa*, a series of interviews with Black Iowans called "Listening to Black Voices" was produced and the reporters did a series of interviews examining systemic racism, its legacy and ongoing impacts.

**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 continues to be an essential part of our funding resources and the additional CARES and RESUCE funding were appreciated. The CPB CSG funding we receive is used exclusively to pay for national programming, allowing other funding resources to be used for locally produced programming and other initiatives that are important to the communities we serve.

If we did not receive CPB funding, it would be difficult to maintain the staffing resources required to provide the level of service our listeners and communities expect from us.