2020 KISU Local Content and Services Report

Joint licensee Grantees that have filed a 2020 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.

KISU strives to create community partnerships with organizations sharing our mission to inform, enlighten, educate, and engage our local citizenry. One of the best ways KISU can achieve this mission is to engage our audience and community members directly, through in-person community partnerships with organizations such as The City Club of Idaho Falls, The Alturas Institute, Idaho Humanities Council (IHC), Idaho State University, and other outlets for information, education, and civil dialogue. During the last year, in-person engagement was nearly impossible. Therefore, KISU, like many other stations, used available resources to reengage our partners on different platforms.

Thanks in part to CARES Act funding received from CPB, KISU was able to expand its level of community engagement over the past nine months. Much of this engagement has been through the addition of local programming, local and regional news, and exponential growth in digital content at kisu.org.

Our efforts to expand digital content dovetails nicely with our mission to engage new younger audience members both in the community and on-campus. For example, KISU began an affiliation with the Mountain West News Bureau in August. Content from this organization has helped our regional news reporting on-air and on-line.

During 2020 CPB funds allowed KISU to purchase a new, more reliable server for live-streaming our FM signal, server hardware for professional audio processing, and upgraded streaming software. Reports from our national programming partners illustrated how the pandemic caused many public radio listeners to move their listening online. With these new tools in-place KISU has been successful in accommodating the needs of its expanding digital audience.

During the pandemic, KISU stepped outside of our usual programming norms to assist with area high school and university graduation ceremonies. We felt this was a vital service to community members who were struggling to celebrate students with COVID restrictions in-place.

During the spring of 2020, when the education of K-12 students in Idaho was suddenly forced online, KISU partnered with The Museum of Natural History and the hosts of KISU’s The Nature of Idaho radio program to create fun and engaging activities with the goal of providing science-based learning and stimulation for young audiences and their parents.

KISU has also continued to engage first and second-year college students studying journalism and media on the ISU campus. KISU management adapted in-person classroom presentations to allow for guest lecturing on Zoom. We believe our engagement with students is a vital component in creating awareness and value of public radio for future generations of public radio listeners.
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.

2020 Census – During the 2020 US Census count KISU worked with mayors of Pocatello, Idaho Falls, and Chubbuck as well as various city councilmen to record and distribute radio announcements aimed at educating our listening audience about the importance of being counted.

Mountain West News Bureau – During 2020 KISU became affiliated with the Mountain West News Bureau. We are excited to increase additional news stories that directly impact our broadcast and surrounding areas.

Alturas Institute - A non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education. KISU works with the Alturas Institute to create educational opportunities for community members. KISU also added the program “America Reimagined” to its local programming lineup in 2020. Learn more about the Alturas Institute at www.alturasinstitute.com.

"The City Club of Idaho Falls exists to sponsor and promote civil dialogue and discourse on all matters of public interest. They strive to do so in a non-partisan and non-sectarian manner while encouraging broad participation by the community at large. KISU records and rebroadcasts Idaho Falls City Club forums. KISU also provides audio of forums to be archived at ifcityclub.com.

Every year, KISU welcomes dozens of ISU students studying Dietetics to the station to record health tips written about their research and studies. KISU airs these tips, giving the students valuable experience addressing the public and helping them understand how their ability to communicate a message can influence the community.

"KISU allows us to provide unprecedented coverage for our women's sports at Idaho State University. The station currently broadcasts our women's soccer, volleyball, basketball and softball games. The audience the station reaches provides a venue for the student-athletes in these sports to be recognized better than any other school in the Big Sky Conference. KISU is a venue we rely on heavily to not only tell the story of the women's sports program but the entire athletic department. It is also worth noting that because of KISU's live coverage of four different women's sports events at ISU, women's athletics actually get more on-air time than the school's men's teams do through commercial radio, which also helps ISU maintain its compliance standing in relation to Federal Title IX requirements." Steve Schaack, Associate Athletic Director for Media Relations, Idaho State University.
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.

Our collaboration with many community groups has helped us grow our audience, increase listener contributions, and ultimately better understand and serve the people of eastern Idaho.

Listed below are some of KISU’s key initiatives and community partnerships for 2020, along with information regarding our collaborators. KISU enjoys a continued partnership with the groups written about in previous years. We will focus on new initiatives in this year’s SAS response. Specific areas of focus for 2020 included COVID-19, connecting during the pandemic, mental health, 2020 elections, outdoor recreation, and sustainability.

KISU employs a Public Service Announcement Director with over 15 years of experience working to promote community awareness and events of area non-profits. This director, along with our local news team, has worked closely with our local health department and state officials during the pandemic to provide impactful news and information to our audience.

Listener feedback:

KISU is without exception the best radio station in Southeast Idaho for current events of *all* kinds, including news, school sporting events, scientific and medical updates, music programs, anyone wanting the most current unbiased reporting. -DennisMcAteer

Due to the pandemic KISU - who we depend on daily for updates on local Covid-19 news - will be the only donation we can make this year. Thank you for doing this for us! – Mark and Pam Edwards

Exhibits at the Idaho Museum of Natural History (INMH) provide exciting interactive learning opportunities for adults and children who want to learn more about Idaho’s past. KISU regularly provides information about exhibits and features interviews with museum organizers and educators. The Director of Idaho Museum of Natural History, Leif Tapanila and the Director of Zoo Idaho, Peter Pruitt co-host the KISU-FM program The Nature of Idaho. Two area high school science teachers provided positive verbal feedback about the program over the last year, explaining they’ve used materials and audio from the program as they educate their students about science-related issues in Idaho.

Two student-led KISU reporting projects have enjoyed tremendous success in 2020.

1. Mindtap is a weekly series examining a wide range of mental health topics and services for students and community members. The series is led by graduate students from the ISU Department of Biology. Topics have included: student-athlete mental health, suicide awareness, substance abuse, nature, and mental health, grief, loss, and other important topics.

Listener Feedback:

I listened to your KISU radio show, Mind Tap. I wanted to reach out and let you know that I sincerely appreciate the effort of this group to produce such a great show for our student community. I am so proud that we have students and faculty like you to help and support our Bengal family. – ISU President Kevin Satterlee
Scott, thanks for your work with MindTap, being able to put a question to the President on COVID-19 was great. - Tanner Garz, 1st-year student

Thanks for bringing attention to these important topics. You’re great and doing such good work. Hannah Brinser, ISU Counseling Doctoral Student

2. Sustainable Idaho explores locally important sustainability topics. Considering the three key pillars of sustainability, the economic, society, and the environment, Sustainable Idaho explores why aspects of sustainability matters to Idahoans.

Feedback-

You are doing such a great job. You are putting out there actual news that Portneuf Valley residents had not heard. - Muriel Roberts, Sustainable Idaho collaborator and long time KISU supporter
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 2020, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2021. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

During 2020 KISU added the local program Navigating Diversity with Krisstoff Kissoon. Just recently, Krystoff, the host of the program, was awarded the Joy Morrison award for his multi-part radio series examining a wide range of religious experiences with the goal of finding commonalities among them. The series also featured conversations with various faith group members speaking about their beliefs. Many community members sent feedback with an appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about the beliefs of their friends and neighbors in the community.

KISU also added the nationally syndicated program Alt Latino from NPR to its evening music lineup to better showcase music with Latinx performers and perspectives. In addition, KISU’s holiday programming offered a wide variety of cultural celebrations and ethnically diverse programs.

KISU has aired "Native America Calling" from Koahnic Broadcasting for one hour each weekday for the past 19 years. The program often features both callers and guests from our listening area. KISU also promotes and/or sponsors parts of the annual Shoshone-Bannock Indian Festival held at the nearby Fort Hall Indian Reservation.

At a variety of times throughout each year KISU endeavors to find, produce, or include special programming aimed at education, enlightenment, and finding commonality in relation to religious and cultural celebrations happening locally, nationally, and throughout the world. We pay particular attention to promoting awareness and education for and about diverse groups that often go overlooked by local and national media outlets. They include enlightening programs related to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. They also promote cultural, race, and gender equality. KISU has annually included short programming models promoting awareness and empowerment during nationally celebrated African American History Month, Women’s History Month, and Native American History Month.

KISU also promotes and publicizes, through in-studio interviews and public service announcements, other events, and activities sponsored by minority populations, including the annual community Greek Festival, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations and march, and like events at Idaho State University such as International Night, African Night, Nepal Night, and the annual Chinese New Year Celebration.
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?

KISU has used CPB funds to maximize workspace, improve, recording-spaces, and purchase live streaming equipment and software for a more reliable and better-sounding web-stream.

KISU anticipates using CARES Act funding in FY21 to improve facilities related to local news writing and reporting.

Because CPB grant funding helped pay for much of our network programming costs, local dollars could be directed towards other needs, like purchases of broadcast automation software and equipment, the hiring of a new development director in 2021, and the purchase of digital and remote technologies. It’s true for many smaller stations and especially for KISU, with such a substantial portion of our annual budget coming from the CPB grant money it might well be the reason we’re still on the air today.

Since acquiring CPB grant funding, KISU FM has been able to purchase, then upgrade its radio automation software, creating a more seamless programming stream, allowing employees to be much more efficient with their time at work. When we function with just two full-time employees and a small group of part-time employees and volunteers, this is a major benefit.