

February 9, 2022

Section 6.1 of CPB Station Activity Survey

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.

WKMS employs a "listen first" approach to our reporting, storytelling programming initiatives. Often the act of engaging with community members where they are aid in ensuring WKMS truly serves in the public's interest. WKMS also makes a considerable effort to report on the challenges faced by those who are most marginalized in our region which includes the Black, Latino, LGBTQ communities and those who find themselves at the lowest end of the economic spectrum.

WKMS also takes very seriously our commitment to advancing local news free from interference from those in power. We operate a digital first journalism content approach. Our reporters write for our website first then extract the broadcast version of the story. WKMS produces nine local newscasts each weekday along with contributing to six state-wide midday newscasts. Additionally, WKMS provides public affairs and public service interviews during a midday local music program. This is a place where WKMS has carved out significant time for local content that may not always be considered "hard news." WKMS digital efforts continue with a podcast developed through PRX's Project Catapult. The show, *Middle of Everywhere*, is focused on demystifying the rural living experience by telling stories that shine a light on the nuance of the people and places of places often overlooked. The second season releases in February of 2022 and will focus on the role rivers play in rural America and the stories they inspire.

2021 remained a challenging year for in-person engagement as the COVID pandemic continued. However, WKMS shifted some long held public events to zoom and found greater engagement in our book clubs. We also deepened efforts in covering issues of race including a series of reports on the history of slavery in Kentucky and a follow up virtual town hall with the producer of the program, that drew dozens of attendees

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' Key Initiatives in 2021 were hyper focused on public safety reporting as the COVID pandemic continued to surge in our listening area. Our reporting with partners, Kentucky Public Radio, The Ohio Valley ReSource and the Hoptown Chronicle the reporting yielded depth of the issues with a broad regional focus.

WKMS' engagement efforts nearly always include a partner organization. In a pandemic year

WKMS engaged in 11 discrete partnerships:

- WKMS partnered with the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting and the Journalism and Mass Communications Department at Murray State to create an "Investigative Fellowship" for some of the department's highest performing students. This allowed a professional investigative journalist to spend time each week with the fellows training them in public records and public access reporting culminating in a series of reports that were published by WKMS.
- WKMS Partnered with the Pennyroyal Arts Council to serve as a presenting sponsor of the "Big Read" program and also aired a documentary about the subject book, *Circe*.
- WKMS partnered with area individuals to produce the annual set of "poetry minutes" where listeners provide short poems on a given theme. WKMS then edits those poems and airs them through weekdays in April.
- WKMS also partnered with area non-profits during "non profit day" during our spring pledge drive where listeners donated to WKMS on behalf of an area nonprofit and at the end of the day the non profits with the most "votes" received an underwriting package on WKMS. Here is some correspondence from the winners:
 - o Caroline Neal (Lotus Children's Advocacy & Sexual Violence Resource Center):
Thank you for including Lotus in this wonderful campaign!
 - o Kathy Hodge (Humane Society of Calloway County):
Thank you all for offering the on air time. We appreciate it very much.
 - o Debbie Wattier (Carson Center for the Performing Arts):
This was a thoughtful, mutually beneficial initiative. Thank you, WKMS. We look forward to using those 25 wonderful spots!
- WKMS also partnered with area small businesses for "small business day" during our spring pledge drive where WKMS donors voted for area small business and at the end of the day the small business with the most votes received an underwriting package on WKMS.
- WKMS partnered with the Kentucky Humanities Council for a virtual book club event on "Hannah Coulter."
- WKMS also partnered with the McCracken County Public Library for an education program about radio history in Paducah.
- WKMS also partnered with the Hopkinsville Parks Department to support and promote a concert of "Pops in the Park."
- WKMS also partnered with the Yieser Art Center for their arts and music festival "YACtoberfest, where station staff served as Emcees for the event.
- WKMS partners annually with the Murray State Department of Global Languages and Theater Arts to promote their weekly international film showings along with producing and airing a radio play performed by Murray State Students.
- WKMS also partnered with Artist Ben Sollee for his music series Happy Hollerdays in Hopkinsville, KY.

WKMS also partners closely with its licensee, Murray State University. We hire, teach and train budding journalists, we provide studio space and airtime for occasional radio dramas, concerts, and interview scholars and researchers about their work.

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.

WKMS' 2021 key initiatives and partnership did yield impact through awareness and action by listeners and members of WKMS. The following notes from listeners and members indicate the impact WKMS had on their lives in 2021.

WKMS provided reporting on alleged mistreatment of Calloway County Jail inmates related to the COVID pandemic where inmates alleged they did not receive proper treatment or allowed to follow appropriate quarantine protocols. Here is an email from a listener who had an acquaintance who was jailed and phone to let our listener know about the impact the reporting had:

"We appreciate so much WKMS's part in connecting the Calloway County Jail inmates with Jared(reporter). Ron (inmate) was so instrumental in rounding up guys to talk with him as well as getting them to sign up for the J&J shots. However, if it had not been for my telling him about the pause, the inmates would not have known what was going on with the shots' delay." Listener Helen Roulston.

The WKMS Podcast, *Middle of Everywhere* explores big stories from the small places we call home. The project is intended to demystify the rural experience. This listener's comment about an episode of that program elicits just what we hope listeners will take away from the podcast:

"I really enjoyed the Middle of Everywhere podcast episode "IM GOD", because it was very different from most news stories. It was not necessarily a "feel-good" story and it discussed religious freedom in a way that most people would not expect, from the perspective of an atheist. I would like to see (hear?) deeper dives into community history and community stories. I think in order to move the needle toward social progress, we need to introduce folks to topics they may not be aware of, or be uncomfortable to approach on their own. WKMS provides a familiar venue with excellent journalism to be able to address some social issues."-Listener Jessica Evans

The WKMS book club featuring a book on the founding mothers of NPR generated great interest and two nice comments that show the impact these projects can have for a listener.

He really enjoyed the "Susan, Linda, Nina & Cokie" book club. He can't believe how different things are now. When he graduated high school in 1971 and came to MSU, women were encouraged to be teachers and nurses. The one woman in his class who became an attorney was out of the norm. When he had a building supply place, he put a great woman at the front counter and some people said that wasn't "her place", but he didn't care. The odds these women overcame were impressive (and what NPR overcame as a whole). He doesn't understand letting the "best part of society" take a backseat.- Steve Oliver, Listener

"Susan, Linda, Nina & Cokie" book club made her think that we all need to work on inspiring future generations of women in whatever ways we can. Sharon Barton, Listener

Even the university administrator who oversees WKMS is compelled to publicly exclaim the impact the work of WKMS and journalism at large has on his life:

"I read two fantastic articles yesterday. The first was from [WKMS](#)' [Liam Niemeyer](#) about a family's struggle with COVID. The second was by [Alex Acquisto](#) in the Lexington Herald-Leader about the struggles medical professionals are facing in this wave of COVID. Both reporters allowed us to walk a little bit in the shoes of others during this crisis. Both gave the reader the opportunity to identify with real live humans who are suffering during this time. Instead of casting blame they instead invited us into the real lives of real people. Instead of acrimony, they built empathy. These are but two examples of why I am proud that WKMS and the [Murray State University Journalism and Mass Communications Department](#) are housed in the Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business. It's why I'm proud to be their Dean. It's why I'm proud to call them friends. Thank you Liam and Alex for helping me see the world through others' eyes." David Eaton Dean, listener/member and Direct Report for WKMS.

Listener Katrina Franklin relied on WKMS throughout the pandemic for trustworthy and reliable information.

"I've been a fan of WKMS for years, but you have been my lifeline during the pandemic. Thank you!"-Listener Katrina Franklin.

Some listeners reach out to simply say thanks for the value of local, national and international news WKMS provides. It is otherwise unavailable for free with no cost of entry.

"I pay nearly 200\$ a month for cable and wifi service for my home and family, but I spend more time EVERY DAY listening to WKMS. This is one of the greatest public

resources in the region, it is only fair that I chip in when I can afford to!- Listener, R Samuel Lucas

Another key initiative for WKMS is serving as an educational institution for Murray State Students interested in journalism.

Student reporter Dalton York spent two years with WKMS and graduated in December of 2021. Dalton was awarded the outstanding senior man award for Murray State University. Dalton has gone on to host Morning Edition on a partner station in Kentucky. Here is an excerpt from his thank you note to WKMS:

"Thank you for all your help as I navigated the application process for my new job. I can't begin to describe how excited I am for the new challenge and move to Bowling Green. I sincerely hope that I am able to mentor someone in the future the way you have mentored me." Dalton York, WKMS Student Reporter.

Additionally, WKMS commits to aid area non-profits when possible, and in some cases WKMS serves as a connector. One such project was a joint book club, in partnership with McCracken County Public Library and the Kentucky Humanities Council:

"I just read the article you wrote about the Hannah Coulter book discussion. Thank you for publicizing your event in Murray. We so appreciate our partnership, and all that Murray State does humanities related." Kathleen Pool - Kentucky Humanities:

"Loved connecting with you sharing ideas. WKMS is such an awesome partner." Bobbie Wrinkle - McCracken County Public Library.

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.

WKMS was fortunate to partner with public radio producer, Dan Gediman, who produced a multipart series on the history of slavery in Kentucky, called the Reckoning. This project received significant interest from our audience members. We hosted a virtual meet and greet with Gediman who provided much more context to the project. One university professor made this project required listening, reaching more than 70 undergraduate students. Additionally here are some comments from listeners and attendees of the event with Gediman:

"I thought the program was AWESOME, as well as the virtual presentation last night by the producer. So much new information and so much older information presented in a new frame. Every single bit was documented--at least one primary source for every point that Mr. Gediman made. All facts, no myth-making as of yore. Many letters from WOMEN and men; many quotations from journal entries; many documents, like bills of sale for enslaved persons, public documents, and newspapers.

*One interesting part of the frame, which is obvious but which I had not heard stressed before, was that Kentucky was **NOT** a Confederate state; it **NEVER** left the Union. Lincoln said, "We have to have Kentucky. If we lose Kentucky, we lose the War." He regarded Kentucky as the key to holding the other slave states of Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware. Lincoln held on to his native state and the other three states and won the War."*-Randy Patterson, Listener.

"I thought the hour went by very fast and I just loved the eye opening content! Thank you for offering this presentation. I found it very educational. Thank you." Fr. Charles Uhlik, Presbyterian Minister and listener.

"This was an awesome presentation. Just wanted to thank you for putting it together and continuing to provide valuable commentary that contextualizes events here -- definitely a deeper dive into the issue of cursory Black History Month activities.

Let me know if I can ever help you at any point in time and please keep me in the loop on any ongoing projects when possible. I have Caste on the bookshelf and look forward to getting to it soon after having read the Warmth of Other Suns.

Thanks again. I appreciate it. Please relay gratitude to the team." Sherman Neal, Listener

In 2022 WKMS will welcome a Report for America Corps member who will cover income disparity and social access. We anticipate this reporting to come from the most marginalized citizens in our region, those on the lowest end of the economic spectrum.

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?

WKMS has been the recipient of CPB funding for many years. Last fiscal year WKMS was so fortunate to continue to benefit from the annual Community Service Grant and Rural Service Grant. Those grants allow WKMS to pay for the full-time employment of one person, but also pay for programming that isn't offered anywhere else in our region. WKMS continues to benefit from previous CPB funding for the Ohio Valley ReSource Regional Journalism Collaborative, now in its sixth year. The project has given WKMS the ability to fund a full-time journalist while gaining the reporting of 6 other journalists and a regional editor. This project has significantly

aided in the ability for WKMS to provide ethical, thoughtful reporting that goes beyond the “headlines.”

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 allow WKMS to raise six dollars for every dollar invested by the CPB.