

2023 Telling Public Radio's Story

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.

KIOS actively seeks to identify and help address community issues, needs and interests through a broad variety of ongoing relationships with local nonprofit organizations who represent a diverse ethnic and income demographic. KIOS seeks to understand and give a public voice to those organizations that may not otherwise have the resources to promote their specific needs to the community. To this end, KIOS maintains an online community calendar of listings from qualified 501(c) organizations and others holding events to support the efforts of those nonprofits.

KIOS also airs weekday morning and afternoon interviews, (both pre-recorded as well as live and (in-person) with key figures from those organizations, from four to six minutes in length. In 2023, KIOS aired 212 such interviews. These interviews fell into several categories: public health concerns, food insecurity, the needs of students

and youth including meals, warm clothing, mentoring, and educational materials. Interview topics also included growing homelessness, increasing joblessness, fundraising, education and literacy, community-based services, human trafficking, housing, women's issues, environmental, local renewable businesses, multiple ethnic based programs and celebrations, cultural, educational, and relevant charitable events of a timely nature, refugees empowerment, inclusive communities and events, hunger elimination programs, healthcare, AIDS programs and prevention, domestic violence prevention and housing for victims, local government, and the arts. These organizations typically have a well-defined mission, which includes identifying and meeting the needs of a particular part of the community.

Our newscasts are reflective of our community. We actively seek out stories with organizations that deal with minority communities and have good relationships with these organizations. KIOS works with local colleges and universities to get their stories out to the public, including Bellevue University, University of Nebraska-Omaha, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Metropolitan Community College, and Creighton University, to name a few. KIOS provides an hour-long, weekly program, called Riverside Chats, interviewing some of the top newsmakers, politicians, authors, educators, from the surrounding area. Along with that, an hour-long monthly program, Weekend Forum, allows the Omaha Press Club to present similar guest speakers on KIOS. KIOS program "Lives" is a conversation-based show focused on how to live well physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually across fields and disciplines. Lives tackles the big and noble questions of the human experience in a way that's both practical and profound. Lives airs on Sunday mornings at 9.

KIOS uses its over-the-air and online reach, along with e-newsletters, an events calendar, and social media to connect with our community. We have also hosted an open house to promote that connection and give our members a better sense of their investment in KIOS. These efforts help keep people informed and able to engage with the diverse groups KIOS has on the air at a time that is convenient for them. Live or recorded, local programming is available to the KIOS audience 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

And, finally, KIOS staff, both as representatives of the radio station and as private citizens, are active in the community donating time, talent, and money to a diverse collection of organizations for fundraising, outreach, and good old fashioned, rolled-up sleeves volunteer work.

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.

KIOS uses its relationships with a broad variety of nonprofit organizations and KIOS's broadcast coverage of the needs of those organizations as an informal initiative to create public awareness of those needs and public participation. For example, in 2023, KIOS aired in-depth interviews covering the following topics:

- Community health and wellness issues such as free testing for a variety of health conditions including COVID-19, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, adolescent health, Leukemia and Lymphoma, heart disease, flu vaccination and prevention, Parkinson's, Breast Cancer, AIDS, colon cancer, and innovative new technologies for the blind and partially sighted. In addition, we regularly interviewed the head of the Douglas County Health department about updates regarding the coronavirus, mandates, Flu, Mpox, STI's, and other publicly essential information about the health of the population in the city/county/state and the metrics the health department is tracking with respect to all the above-mentioned issues.

- Philanthropic issues concerning community giving and support, small business support, the need for PPE, vaccination availability and issues, the growing needs of the newly unemployed and newly food insecure, nonprofit advocacy and capacity building, volunteer service, ARPA fund distribution, poverty, Native American issues, food insufficiency, African American community issues and solutions, Immigration Law and the local impact of Federal policies, refugee empowerment programs.

- Topics of concern to the community, including education, school openings/closings/ and remote learning initiatives, school food distribution for the hungry even with remote learning implemented, EBT program funding, mentoring, teen suicide, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and refugees; strong neighborhoods, public and private assistance for those living at or below poverty level; Adoption of both healthy and special needs children, disease prevention, veterans issues and gratitude, women's issues, race relations and peace in the community, and gentrification.

- Education and religion, science, global studies, general and special education, afterschool programming, before school programming, (and the impact the pandemic has had on those programs), music and arts education, mentoring and positive role modeling specific to both boys and girls, and other topics geared specifically toward area youth, both able-bodied and those with special needs;

- Public art projects focused on community issues, community development, health, transgender issues, diversity, youth involvement and participation in music, dance, performing, and the visual arts, and lead contamination;

- Public forums and lectures concerning conservation, climate change, race relations and dialogue across ethnicities and religions, inclusion and diversity;

KIOS also promoted many arts and culture events online and on-air. In promoting the needs of community organizations, KIOS seeks to present information on-air that represents every part of the community. This includes multicultural events involving ethnically diverse groups and areas within our listening area, events geared toward the aging and youth, and events geared to pointing the community towards resources available from service organizations in the area. Through this type of reporting and presentation of interviews, KIOS has been able to impart to the community the progress as our society continues to open up again. KIOS has been able to keep the public informed of the ever-changing rules, from the federal, state, and local levels as to what resources are available and what resources are no longer offered from a federal/state standpoint, KIOS plans to continue this type programming in 2024.

Omaha Public Radio works cooperatively with non-profits by creating underwriting packages that assist them in their mission. Some of those non-profits include:

- Omaha Community Foundation. A giving collective that connects philanthropists with the people and nonprofits who are making an impact in our city and region.

- Nebraska Appleseed. A nonprofit advocacy organization fighting for justice and opportunity for all. With a focus on poverty, children's welfare, health care and immigration.

- Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Helping people losing their sight to navigate this life change, and providing information about training and services that help the blind and visually impaired to lead independent and productive lives.

- Nebraska Community Blood Bank. a nonprofit community-based blood center currently providing a safe reliable blood supply for over 20 healthcare facilities in our community.

- Film Streams. Enhancing the cultural environment of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area through the presentation and discussion of film as an art form.

- Food Bank for the Heartland. Providing emergency and supplemental food to people in need in Nebraska and western Iowa. Working to eliminate hunger, with respect, integrity, and urgency.

-Girls Inc. Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold through direct service and advocacy.

- We Care for Kids, a nonprofit working towards quality early childhood education for all Nebraska families.

- Nonprofit Association of the Midlands. Promoting adherence to good organizational practices through education and self-regulation. The Guidelines and Principles provide tools for evaluating regulatory compliance.

- Siena Francis House. Every day providing over 1,000 meals and serving more than 500 guests in their emergency shelter and supportive housing apartments. Helping clients navigate the path to permanent housing.

- Opera Omaha. The only professional opera company in Nebraska. Since 1970, providing quality opera entertainment through performances and in collaboration with diverse community groups. An operatic showcase for promising vocal talent in the region.

- Omaha Symphony. Enriching people's lives through the exhilarating experience of live orchestral music, with a deep commitment to community education and collaboration among diverse people and organizations.

-Omaha Public Schools. The Station Manager is on the Career Pathways Board for the Central High School Journalism career path. Involves the station with the education of students preparing for Higher Education and/or the workforce in broadcasting.

- There are many others as well including Nebraska Cultural Endowment, United Way of the Midlands, Omaha Performing Arts, Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, Visiting Nurse Association, Omaha Community Playhouse, Nebraska Children's Home Society, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Kaneko (art center), Child Saving Institute, Community Alliance-Omaha, Children's Respite Care Center, Durham Museum, Joslyn Art Museum, Girls, Inc., Girl Scouts Nebraska, Kids Can Community Center, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, Nebraska Sierra Club, Omaha Metro Transit, Nebraska Wind Symphony, SHARE Omaha, The Nature Conservancy, Union for Contemporary Art, Cinco de Mayo-Omaha, Planned Parenthood, Omaha Summer Arts Festival, Notre Dame Housing, and The Omaha Public Library Foundation to name just a few.

Many of the performing arts organizations have established policies and strategic plans that promote inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. The KIOS interviews and sponsorships reflect that commitment in diverse ways. We have identified the need for more audience engagement in the under-40 age bracket. So, we have increased our social media presence to more directly, and more frequently, engage with people within that demographic as well as the organizations and businesses that serve it. For example, we have hosted info tables at Creighton University and the local neighborhood farmer's market.

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.

Since KIOS' support of community organizations is informal, we use anecdotal information to assess the impact of our support for partnerships with community stakeholders. Feedback received from listeners and the community organizations whose activities we promote continues to be- overwhelmingly positive, indicating listener awareness of and participation in community events and philanthropy directly due to our broadcast coverage. We share our news content via the web and social media. Our content is occasionally shared via Twitter and Facebook by listeners and organizations, and we also receive feedback that way. In addition, listeners will call and email questions regarding contact information of interviewees and their organizations so that they may take action, donate, or get involved.

A KIOS program host, Mike Hogan, who conducts daily interviews with nonprofit organizations to expose them to a wider audience was recognized with another Gold Level Award as hosting and producing the Best In-Depth Investigative Story or Series by the Nebraska Broadcasters Association for 2023. That program has now received four awards and counting. Since that recognition, the requests from numerous organizations to secure an interview slot on the program Hogan hosts have increased substantially. And he also receives phone calls and emails from guests he has interviewed sharing stories of increased donations, or an uptick in contact and recognition following the airing of their interview. That is augmented when the guest receives a link to that very interview on the KIOS.org/Live-local website, which they in turn propagate through their own social media network, email, etc.

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.

KIOS regularly interviews organizations that have the mission of helping a diverse range of ethnic groups, opening and maintaining dialogue between disparate cultures, and those groups that provide services of all types (from basic human needs of food and shelter to legal, vocational, and educational) to refugee and immigrant communities within our city and the surrounding townships. KIOS also features the cultural events, festivals, and happenings that celebrate the numerous and various cultures that live and thrive in our community.

KIOS is investigating integrating additional streaming channels, including the possibility of adding a second language channel in cooperation with the Omaha Public Schools district. KIOS is also in the process of implementing streaming technology and the relevant production procedures that will allow for more targeted programming for underserved communities, such as Omaha's Latino and Native populations, in cooperation with Omaha Public Schools.

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 did not receive it?

The most significant portion of our CPB funding goes towards the diverse programming that serves the needs of the community and salaries of part-time and full-time broadcasters who provide it to the listeners. Without this funding, program decisions would be based on what is cheapest rather than what is best for our audience's needs.

In addition, KIOS has been able to purchase some equipment and software that allows for the full utilization of studio space and remote production for show and segment producers to continue creating content that serves the public. Without these tools, the volume of community content would decrease measurably.