

Yellowstone Public Radio

Local Content and Services Report

FY2019

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.

Yellowstone Public Radio (YPR) serves a diverse area that includes four small-city population centers and dozens of rural communities throughout Montana and northern Wyoming. Our broadcast area also includes four of the seven Native American tribal reservations in the state of Montana. We endeavor every day to provide a mix of relevant and timely regional news, national and international news from National Public Radio (NPR), and a programming schedule that includes a mix of classical, jazz, folk and bluegrass, public affairs, and entertainment.

FY2019 saw a 300% increase in our news team, growing from two to six full-time employees reporting on the news of our region. In addition to an overall increase in the amount of regional news, the specificity and depth of the reporting has improved immeasurably. Most importantly, we dedicated one of our reporters to an indigenous peoples and tribal issues beat, something that YPR has longed to have. This reporting dovetailed with the rise in awareness of missing and murdered indigenous women and some of our finest reporting in FY2019 was in this subject area. YPR sees this as a crucial first step in engaging our indigenous peoples' audience.

The increase in our news staff also allowed us to greatly expand our online offerings. Our reporting is regularly featured on our website, and, when available, on-air reporting is augmented with additional audio, video, and supplementary documentation. This allows our regional reporting to live on and gives our listeners opportunities for additional education

FY2019 also saw YPR hit the road for a series of "brewery tours," informal listening and community engagement sessions wherein station staff and key stakeholders can meet listeners in person and discuss YPR, our initiatives, and our programming directly. These events, particularly in rural communities such as Havre, Montana, are critical to YPR's outreach and engagement.

The growth in our news room expanded our educational opportunities. In FY2019, YPR greatly expanded our internship opportunities with our licensee, Montana State University Billings. Working with the Communications and Theater department, YPR developed several internship opportunities for students interested in journalism, giving them access to working reporters. We also developed an internship for business and marketing students in our development office.

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.

In FY2019, YPR improved upon its existing arrangement with Montana Public Radio (MTPR) to bring both our audiences true statewide news coverage. With the growth in the YPR news room, more opportunities for collaboration in the newsgathering process, editing, and feature reporting have presented themselves. On a daily basis, regional news reporting from both stations are assessed for maximum diversity of stories and the wealth of perspectives two newsrooms can provide.

YPR also partnered with Report for America in FY2019 to bring a Report for America reporter to the YPR newsroom. In addition to the reporting component, YPR's Report for America reporter undertook a community service project on the Northern Cheyenne reservation, teaching middle school and high school students the basics of podcasting.

YPR also partnered with the Billings Public Library in FY2019 to bring podcasting fundamentals to a summer activity program at the library. Over the course of two weeks, YPR staffers worked with children aged 12-18 on a variety of interview techniques, equipment usage, recording, editing, and other production techniques.

Lastly, in FY2019 YPR again partnered with the Billings Symphony Orchestra and Chorale to bring a thirteen week series of concert performances by the Billings Symphony to the YPR airwaves. This collaboration brought local classical music performances to our regional audience and showcased the excellent work the symphony is doing. There are an exceptionally small number of symphonies in the market size of the Billings Symphony with a concert series airing on public radio.

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.

In FY2019, YPR added to its profile of online streaming channels / HD channels with a News and Talk channel featuring many of the news and public affairs programs offered by NPR, American Public Media (APM), and the Public Radio Exchange (PRX). This web stream / HD channel was an immediate success, and web metrics show it almost instantly became our most-listened to channel behind our main signal. Listeners responded positively to the addition of programming and in particular the wealth of new news and public affairs programs to explore.

Our initiative to better cover indigenous people and tribal issues has paid dividends by engaging directly with tribal officials and community members. YPR has made great inroads into Montana's tribal communities, which has resulted not only in better reporting, but a better understanding of tribal communities in general. These inroads have also had the effect of opening more members of tribal communities to our reporters and staffers, which has begun many conversations about how better to collaborate and work together in the future.

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 2019, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2020. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

As has been discussed previously, our initiative to focus reporting on indigenous peoples and tribal issues has been our greatest success when it comes to diversifying our audience. Our reporting on tribal governance, missing and murdered indigenous women, energy reporting as it relates to tribal sovereignty, and other issues relating to our indigenous population has been an unmitigated success.

In FY2020, we intend to capitalize on that success by holding a series of listening tours in and around all of the tribal reservations in the state, particularly with an eye toward engaging not just tribal officials, but reaching out to tribal radio stations and key community members to better tell the stories of the indigenous peoples in our region.

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?

The Community Service Grant (CSG) and, crucially, the Rural Service Grant (RSG) component of the CSG are critically important to YPR's operations. The grant provides a stable funding mechanism for our programming budget, which frees up funding for key initiatives such as the growth in news staffing and partnerships such as the one we undertook with Report for America.

As a rural public radio network with 12 transmitters and 26 translators serving a land mass equivalent to Great Britain, our broadcast infrastructure budget is a major component of our annual expenditures. Without the CSG, YPR would have to make the difficult decision to gut our programming schedule or cut back on the communities we serve. Our rural audiences in particular routinely say that YPR is their ONLY connection to the outside world, and the thought of shuttering transmitters or translators or significantly reducing the program offerings on YPR is anathema to our mission.

Finally, the CSG and RSG allow YPR to schedule a much more diverse schedule for our largely rural audience. Our ability to bring a mix of genre programming such as classical, jazz, blues, folk and bluegrass, news, public affairs, and entertainment programming is increasing unique in the public radio system, where format consolidation is a regular occurrence. Diversity of programming is paramount in a rural setting, where there is no business model that would sustain a commercial classical or jazz format station. Funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting underpins the very mission of Yellowstone Public Radio and is a critical revenue tool for the station.

Grantee Information

ID	1490
Grantee Name	KEMC-FM
City	Billings
State	MT
Licensee Type	University

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: 6.1

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 2019. 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 2019 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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Comments

Question	Comment
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No Comments for this section