

Grantee Information

ID	1371
Grantee Name	WNIJ-FM
City	DeKalb
State	IL
Licensee Type	University

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

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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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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.

WNIJ's goal is to provide clear, accurate, and compelling reports that reflect the community we serve. Our news and creative teams consistently produce in-depth reporting that informs and engages residents in our FM signal area and beyond, and we pair this content with programs from NPR and other sources. A typical approach is to have our reporters frame national and international issues for our local audience through in-depth sound-rich features and interview segments. FM remains our primary platform, but we support on-air stories with web posts that offer photos, info graphics, video, text, and additional information. Links to these posts are shared widely on our social media pages. Issues our reporters try to "own" in our market include: Social justice, literature, arts and humanities, plus news of statewide interest. Recognizing that audience engagement is two-way, we regularly publish messages soliciting audience comments and suggestions, plus tips for coverage ideas. Including partnering with Hearken to develop an ongoing listener-driven feature for broadcast and podcast. To strengthen our ties with the diverse communities we serve, WNIJ features a regular panel of opinion contributors who air their "Perspectives" four times each weekday. We also invite (and broadcast) "Guest Perspectives" from community members. A new addition to the effort includes the WNIJ Mobile Studio, modeled after Story Corp. This mobile perspective and recording studio allows for embedding in projects and communities outside the main studio footprint. In a region as broad as the one served by WNIJ is an important tool in serving the public. This year, WNIJ expanded its newsroom by adding two reporters dedicated to addresses topics related to education and social justice. This work has led to deeper relationships with communities not previously served. Additionally, WNIJ continues its creative pursuits with Sessions from Studio A, which features regional and touring musicians recorded and produced in studio and now on the road.

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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.

WNIJ continues to strengthen relationships with public stations throughout Illinois. Reporting resources are coordinated to allow for shared editing, news assignments, content and unified efforts to serve the public throughout the entire state. We've continued originating Illinois-focused newscasts which are carried by partner stations in Springfield, Peoria and Carbondale. These casts include statehouse reports we've long subscribed to as part of our membership in the Illinois Public Broadcasting Council. We also carry and contribute content to a daily talk show about Illinois issues called The 21st, produced by Illinois Public Media, and a weekly program of Illinois news and features called Statewide, produced by NPR Illinois. Additional partnerships involve students in journalism and other departments at our license-holder, Northern Illinois University, through the Public Radio 101 program. These sessions focus on best practices and provide hands-on training in reporting, show producing, and audio production. Many graduates from this program become paid staffers in the WNIJ newsroom. In addition to WNIJ's content offerings, our classical station, WNIU, regularly airs performances and interviews featuring regional orchestras and ensembles in a program called ENCORE. This year, Sessions from Studio A expanded to feature artists performing and recording at partner

venues throughout the region. This brought greater diversity of artists and communities to the weekly program. Additionally collaborations between the station and the university continued to grow around STEM and education through content initiatives such as: The Sound of Science and STEM Reads.

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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.

Significant time and resources have been dedicated to efforts to strengthen media partnerships within the state. "State of Cannabis" emerged as a pilot project in response to Illinois marijuana legislation. The collaboration brought deeper understanding to the public by explaining the topic across platform through long-form and spot news stories—which could only be accomplished by sharing newsroom resources. Joint effort to promote the projects brought in audiences served by terrestrial radio, but also new audiences on digital platforms.

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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 a newsroom, we have continued to offer a twice-yearly training session open to students and members of the community to show them the ropes of reporting. This program, Public Radio 101, has been attended by a diverse group of participants who are then invited to continue to create stories in our newsroom. The contributions of these graduates offer new and fresh ideas that address topics not previously addressed by the news team. Additionally, we offer a daily segment called "Perspectives" in which members of our listening areas submit essays on a variety of topics, regularly addressing concerns of minority communities. We extend our invitation to submit an essay to all members of our audience. In addition to hiring a social justice reporter, the WNIJ Newsroom hosted and schedules Listening Events in communities in which we serve. The goal of these sessions is to hear directly from neighborhood groups, community organizers, and citizens themselves. These feedback sessions are off-the-record and when necessary Spanish interpreters are available to make these sessions available to members of Hispanic communities in our region. The social justice reporter's primary focus is to develop stories which cover topics of marginalized individuals and to shed light on issues affecting groups in our listening area. In FY20, election and census news will provide opportunity to engage diverse audiences, "the hard to count" and provide context around ballot issues. The station continues its commitment to fund and provide a reading service for print impaired citizens throughout the region.

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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?

We remain certain that programing and engagement initiatives would've been hampered without CPB funding. This funding is used to produce and procure Additionally, we leverage CPB dollars to raise money from other foundations. Last but not least, CPB funding has a "halo effect" among donors looking to support quality programming. This raises the overall profile of the station's development efforts, furthering our public service mission.

Comments

Question

Comment

No Comments for this section