

Alabama Public Radio CPB Station

Activities Survey for 2019

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.*

Alabama Public Radio provides regular ongoing coverage of community issues through local news headlines and feature stories scheduled within our most-listened parts of the daily schedules. Our goal is to be an indispensable source of high quality, reliable information for our community of listeners. Our transmission system covers approximately two thirds of the state of Alabama and in many parts of the state APR is the only source of noncommercial news and information. We also provide a full schedule of locally hosted classical, bluegrass and big band music which attracts an enthusiastic and loyal audience.

The station identifies concerns and needs through regular contact with a broad range of educational, political, religious and community leaders. In addition to the listener events held in Northport and Fairhope, APR has invested in enhancing our online profile to engage with our listening audience. Web traffic has increased by 63% during the year as the result of these investments. Our investment in online activity also increased digital engagement through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

With three HD channels and a robust online presence, the station strives to reach a diverse audience through multiple platforms including an active website, online streaming, and multiple social media sites. Our online streaming includes our main broadcast channel as well as two sub-channels featuring BBC News and contemporary music.

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.*

Alabama Public Radio seeks to address the diversity of its listening audience through its local news coverage, diverse program schedule, and non-broadcast activities.

APR's classical music programming included collaborations with the Tuscaloosa, Mobile and Huntsville symphonies. APR's evening schedule included a special three-night broadcast featuring performances by the Mobile Symphony Orchestra, collaboration valuable to both our Gulf Coast audience and the orchestra. APR began a relationship with the Alys Stephens Center (ASC) in Birmingham to inform listeners of program opportunities across the performance spectrum which are hosted throughout the year at ASC.

In 2019, the Alabama Public Radio news team completed a fourteen month project investigating human trafficking in Alabama. The effort included a three month collaboration with the Computer Forensics Research Lab, which is a cybercrime unit at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. This joint study generated a one day “snap shot” of verified on-line human trafficking ads in Mobile, Montgomery, Birmingham and Huntsville. This total outpaced the numbers that day for Atlanta, a central hub for trafficking in the southeast. APR also examined familial trafficking, where a parent or adult family member is the trafficker, as well as LGBTQ trafficking and labor trafficking in the state. The team generated eight news feature stories and an hour long documentary.

APR engages with the community through membership organizations including, but not limited to, The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, Public Relations Council of Alabama, Baldwin Business Council, Women’s Business Alliance, Mobile Senior Coalition, Mobile Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, Partners for Environmental Progress, The Sierra Club, Coastal Conservation Association, and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber. These organizations enable APR to engage with the community through multi-media venues.

In addition, organizations including Alabama League of Women Voters, Alabama Audubon, Alabama Rivers Alliance, Valley Arts and Entertainment, Opera Birmingham, Birmingham Ballet, The Literacy Council of Alabama, Theatre Tuscaloosa, Kennedy Douglass Trust, Fairhope Film Festival, Weeks Bay Foundation, Mobile Earth Day, Frank Brown Songwriters Festival, Bellingrath Gardens, Jewish Film Festival, Pensacola Opera, Mobile Ballet, Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, University of South Alabama, Tuscaloosa Symphony, Mobile Chamber Music Society, and Alabama Port Authority use APR to inform listeners across the state about services and performance opportunities.

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.***

APR's five month project on how Alabama was a key battleground for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s fight for civil rights, earned gold in the New York Festival's international radio competition. APR was one of only eight content creators in the United States to be so honored. Our MLK documentary coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of King's assassination, and featured the work of Malian reporter Ousmane Sagara. He worked in the APR newsroom as an exchange journalist in 2016, and combined his experience in Alabama with how his country feels about King 50 years after his death.

APR listeners provide ongoing feedback about our programming and its impact on the community. Comments like these are typical:

Although classical music is my preferred genre, Jeremy Butler's All Things Acoustic constantly introduces me to brilliant musicians--Sweet Honey in the Rock, Varttina, and many others--who enrich my enjoyment of music and expand the bounds of my taste. Thank you for All Things Acoustic and the other excellent programming! My best work experience stemmed from the five or so years I worked at WHIL in Mobile, when I realized the importance of listener contributions.

News that I would not hear anywhere else. I love Fresh Air, Weekend Edition, Wait! Wait!, Moth Radio, Live From Here, and many more. These programs/stories give me insight and perspective that I wouldn't find anywhere else. I use this information to open thought-provoking conversations with friends, family, & work colleagues. I also use information I receive to combat the "misinformation" that some of my friends post on social media.

We started listening to WHIL in Mobile in the early 80s...and were members until moving away to Memphis and then Yakima, WA where we were members of our respective public radio stations.

I grew up listening to 91.3 WHIL with my grandfather. APR is a huge part of my life. Even though I live and work in Texas I still listen to APR to keep up with what is going on in my hometown. I am so glad that I am able to donate for the first time!!!!

We cannot imagine a day without public radio. We wake up to it on our alarm radios, listen to it at our bathroom vanities and in our shower as well. In the mornings, we stream it on speakers that allow us to listen throughout the house. Now that we've returned to Fairhope, we're again proud members of APR, delighted to see it grow to a statewide organization in our 35-year absence. We particularly enjoy Morning Edition, Live From Here and the Saturday morning line-up. Well done APR. We pay premium fees for print, streaming and satellite subscriptions...to not support APR, which we use and enjoy daily, would be irresponsible in our minds.

I love APR and NPR for consistent, reliable news reporting and stimulating cultural programming. My favorite shows are Morning Edition, All Things Considered, The Crooners, Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me, Classical Music with David Duff, Fresh Air, On the Media, Reveal, and of course Don Noble's Book Reviews.

There aren't nearly enough stations for classical music. The only music to which I listen is classical music. On the occasions when we have had interruptions in service for tower repairs, etc. I just turn off the radio and I am reminded of what it would be like if we didn't have a station for classical music. Basically, a radio would be useless to me without classical music.

I cannot imagine my life without public radio. Thank you for the excellent journalism, in-depth reporting and factual content that allows me to form my own opinions based on accurate information. The relevancy of your content keeps me informed and knowledgeable. I am so grateful.

It's the go to stop on the radio where I know the news is correct and concise. I listen to the podcast and really appreciate your and NPR reporters who place themselves in harm's way. In a democracy the truth will always rise to the top. Alabama Public Radio is the source of this Oracle of knowledge.

- 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 2018, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2019. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.**

APR provides regular on-going coverage of stories of special interest to minority and other diverse audiences. In addition to the series on Human Trafficking, APR produced stories in 2019 including:

- A report on the new Tuscaloosa Civil Rights Trail, which focuses on events, including “Bloody Tuesday” in 1964, where African American protesters at the county courthouse were beaten by police and later tear gassed in a local church.
- Coverage of the Beauregard Tornado, which hit African American residents of the Lee County community where twenty three people were killed by the EF-4 twister.
- Reporting on Korey Wise, who was exonerated for his role in the “Central Park Five” controversy. DNA testing proved Wise’s innocence. He now travels the country, speaking in favor of criminal justice reform, and in defense of men

falsely accused of crimes.

- An interview with the director of the documentary “Hale County This Morning, This Evening,” which was nominated for an Academy Award. The film focuses on the lives of African Americans in this rural community south of Tuscaloosa.

APR believes that diversity of staff and students leads to diverse, relevant programming. APR staff participated in a job and career day event staged by United Way of West Alabama in the town of Demopolis.

Each semester, APR recruits University of Alabama students to work as interns in the newsroom. Over the FY 19 academic year, APR worked with 13 students—two thirds of whom were female and two-thirds of whom were ethnic minorities. These budding journalists are trained in newscast copy writing, which results in 60% of the material used during the 107 minutes of news updates APR airs each week. During their next semester, our interns work with our News Director on long form radio features. This training prepares our graduates for jobs in the industry, including Jessica Rendell of Brisbane, Australia. After newscast training and the production of a feature on Alabama’s Democratic Party, Jessica headed home to Australia where she’s currently covering that nation’s wildfires for the Australian Broadcasting Company, or ABC. Other APR grads have moved onto positions in Pittsburgh, Birmingham, Biloxi, and Mobile.

Over the last year, APR students have worked to add to the diversity of voices in local programming by helping to launch and expand a number of local commentaries:

- **Keepin’ It Real** hosted by Cam Marston, who works remotely from Mobile, Alabama, considers generational and demographic trends to provide new ways to interpret the changing world around us. It won 1st Place for the Alabama Associated Press Media Editor’s Best Commentator or Editorialist Award (2018) as well as a Communicator Award of Distinction Honoring Excellence in Marketing and Communication. Segments and more information at **apr.org/keepinitreal**
- **Crunk Culture** hosted by University of Alabama Associate Professor Robin Boylorn is a commentary about creative and sometimes cursory perspectives and responses to popular culture and representations of identity. A special feature about Dr. Boylorn and the commentary will be published in the Communication and Information Sciences’ *Communicator* magazine in spring 2020. Segments and more information at **apr.org/crunkculture**
- **Living with Less Plastic** hosted by Mary Liz Ingram, who works remotely from Birmingham, Alabama, is a commentary about reducing plastic waste and saving the planet. Segments and more information at **apr.org/lessplastic**

This initiative to produce more local content has not only added variety to our station, but has added diversity by putting more interns, women and people of color on the air and highlighted their work on our website.

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?***

CPB funding is critical to Alabama Public Radio's local mission: The APR News staff is the largest public radio news team in the state, covering political, economic and cultural issues of critical importance to the people of Alabama. CPB funding allows us to support staff who are engaged with our diverse citizenry. Alabama continues to grapple with significant social and economic issues; many of its counties rank among the poorest in the country and our broadcast signal reaches more than 80 percent of the state. CPB funding helps us leverage the support of listeners and local companies extending our ability to produce high quality unique local programming.

Without the support of CPB Alabama Public Radio would be unable to provide the current level of community programming and outreach.