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.

A former local newspaper owner I recently talked to lamented the fact that his former paper had shrunk by 40 reporters since its heyday in the 1970s. He said while they had been shrinking for some time, those cuts accelerated after he sold the paper to out-of-state owners to the point that there were just 3 full-time reporters plus interns. WVPE is unlikely to expand our reporters to replace newspapers in their ‘glory years,’ but we are excited to expand our newsroom to a size we’ve never been able to afford before. Regardless of our size, we will continue to tell as many local stories as possible in an environment where the scale of journalism once practiced has dwindled. The silver lining here is that our financial model seems more sustainable than most. This is important for the greater community good as a faculty member at nearby University of Notre Dame did a study on communities that completely lost their newspapers and found that the loss of local journalism caused an increase in cost of living because there was no local government watchdog. We help provide those local eyes. https://news.nd.edu/news/when-local-newspapers-close-government-runs-unchecked-costs-increase/

WVPE received many positive comments about the increased emphasis on local reporting after adding 2 reporters in 2017 (though we lost one reporter this past Fall and will replace her soon). While not in danger of completely losing newspapers, our local reporting is even more critical because with all area newspapers sold to ‘out-of-town’ owners, only WVPE, a small, commercial radio group, and the local public TV station remain as locally owned news media. Where possible and financially viable, WVPE will continue to expand its news and storytelling capabilities through additional collaborations and support staff. We believe this local news emphasis is paying off with our audience. For example, Nicole Mutakes of Winamac said, “I really love NPR & this station in particular, especially the local reporting.” Dustin in South Bend said, “I enjoy NPR as a concise, insightful news source. I learn something every day. I particularly enjoy the conversational interviews by Terry Gross on Fresh Air.”

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.

Continuing the journalism theme for moment, WVPE is part of the Indiana Regional Journalism Consortium [RJC], comprised of all public radio stations in Indiana. Starting with only one statehouse reporter a decade ago, the RJC has continued to add reporters at several stations across the state—several of whom were initially supported by an RJC grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Success has bred further success. Recognizing our efforts, in 2018, the Lilly Endowment donated enough to expand the RJC to include journalists at all member stations (and start a statewide talk show). This means WVPE will soon be able to hire a 3rd reporter through this grant—this will be the most reporters the station has ever had. Indeed, Executive Director
of the Indiana Public Broadcasting Stations [IPBS] Mark Newman recently said, “IPBS is committed to creating and furthering local, regional, and national conversations through the reporting of interesting and impactful news stories...Thank you for your and your team’s efforts to strengthen and improve the quality of journalism in Indiana.”

As far as educational institutions, in 2018, WVPE partnered with: The University of Notre Dame, Indiana University South Bend, Goshen College, Bethel College, St. Mary’s College, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary plus our licensee, Elkhart Community Schools.

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.

WVPE continues to partner with area non-profits and government organizations with our events and activities. In 2018, there were 46 Media Sponsorships with non-profit arts organizations ranging from several regional public libraries, museums, musical and theatrical performance organizations. There are several compliments to share including one from Jenna Grisham, Executive Director of Musical Arts Indiana who said, “It has been our honor to work with WVPE over the past five years. Their personnel’s quick response, thorough follow-through, and professional creativity are greatly appreciated. We value this partnership, because we recognize our shared audiences and affirm that we are stronger together.” Also, Michelle DeBeck, Director of Box Office Services at The Morris Performing Arts Center in South Bend said, “It is delightful to work with WVPE! It’s always been a pleasure working with you, especially when we sold-out ‘Wait, Wait Don’t Tell Me’ last year when Mayor Pete Buttigieg was the special guest. The event sold out quickly, and patrons were happy to attend such a fun show.” Station Reporter Jennifer Weingart has since done several interviews with this Presidential Candidate.

A couple of member comments include: Raymond from LaGrange, Indiana, who said, “WVPE is the cultural center of my life! I love your Summer Events;” Jennifer and Luke from Elkhart, Indiana say, “We love WVPE. It makes us happy to live here because WVPE is so much better than all other stations;” Angela & Travis from Plymouth, Indiana stated WVPE should “Keep doing your wonderful reporting.”

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.**
After losing our sole bilingual employee, our limited outreach to the Hispanic population ended. We are rethinking that outreach. To a different minority, WVPE added two programs from Native Voice One to benefit area Native Americans in the Pokagon Band of Potowatomi.

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?

WVPE has increased its staff to 10 for the first time since the economic downturn in 2008/9 when we had to lay off people. At the lowest point, we were merely 7 full-time staff. But we’ve clawed our way back to profitability. CPB’s grant allows us to afford additional staff before we might otherwise be able to sustain them. Indeed, our entire local news team exists because of the added support by CPB. Without it, we wouldn’t be able to afford local news so critical to this area right now because of the journalistic losses at area newspapers and television stations. We wouldn’t have been able to restart local news without CPB dollars. CPB also funded the RJC startup, and is again funding a few more years of the operation with a second grant. While not receiving funds directly, we are benefiting from the richer tapestry of information from our regional partners.

There are several final thoughts that our members said during last fall’s membership campaign: Michele from Benton Harbor, Michigan said, “In these times, WVPE is more & more important. It helps to get a history of news and then be able to analyze it;” Rebecca in Warsaw, Indiana added, “As a sociology professor I often hear reports and research that I can use in my classes. Thanks for helping me bring the real world into the classroom and opening my students’ eyes;” William from Granger added, “I pay $20/month for Netflix, but I listen to WVPE much more. It’s time to contribute;” Jesse & Erin from South Bend said, “We continue to be impressed with the great work WVPE does to give objective information;” Julie from Saint Joseph, Michigan said, “I’m addicted and listen morning and night. Whenever I miss a show, I listen to the podcast to catch up!”

They just moved back from Las Vegas. Husband got her into NPR. She likes all the facts, none of the “fluff.” She’s a teacher who enjoys learning every day. Chelsea & Kevin, Buchanan, MI

OK. I get it. I am taking responsibility for my own listening. I’ve enjoyed nearly a decade of daily listening and my conscience can’t take it any longer. New listener-member Bree, Warsaw, IN

Love the balance of political and regular life stories. Also loves The Blues! Bradley, Goshen, IN

Wanted to donate for Notre Dame match! Kathleen, Granger, IN

He met Tony Krabill a couple of weeks ago & confessed that he wasn’t a member, so now he’s paying. Richard, Three Oaks, MI

Enjoys the weekend programming and Q! Candice & Shawn, Stevensville, MI
Love politics & interviews with politicians. Lisa, Niles, MI

I really enjoy WVPE. Also listens to Chicago WBEZ & have really enjoyed Norm & Al tonight who convinced him to contribute. Christian, Saint Joseph, MI

WVPE’s news articles are insightful, in depth and varied. Barry, Granger, IN

I’ve listened for years. I enjoy hearing Michael Linville’s voice every morning. Rachel, South Bend, IN

Blues Revue is my favorite show. It’s the best Blues music program I’ve ever heard! Ole Harv is the best! Jim & Melissa, Saint Joseph, MI

I’m a new member. I have listened to WVPE for 15 years; it’s time I became a member. The payment plans you have make it easy to do that. Thank you for all that you do! Toni, Goshen, IN

I have a high level of trust with your station. Thanks for the great programming. Esther, Goshen, IN

She heard Michael talk about Comcast costs yesterday and it was what made her think, call and become new member. Camilla, Mishawaka, IN

Renewing members after a 12 year hiatus from South Bend area, but our adult children are all re-converging in South Bend, so we follow local news and the cozy, fair and reassuring WVPE programming by streaming to Decatur, IL! Chris & Patrick, Decatur, IL

I listen all the time! The Patrick Stewart spot was so funny, I laughed until my eyelids turned inside out! Jenny, South Bend, IN

NPR is my “go to” for all news. I’m new to Rochester, Indiana. NPR helped me with the move as it felt like I brought some “friends” along to talk with her, but she still had to do all the packing. I was a sustaining member at her old station. Susan & Christopher, Rochester, IN

WVPE is so thoughtful and fulfilling to me. Dannielle, Leesburg, IN

I started listening during a summer job in college, and then used the station’s app to continuing listening when I went back to school. I enjoy Michiana Chronicles and On Being. Emma, Mishawaka, IN

I love WVPE’s programming! I start out with Morning Edition, and later All Things Considered. I keep finding more shows I love! Diane, South Bend, IN

I wanted my donation to help you go over the top with your campaign goal because you’re an over-the-top station! Lee, La Porte, IN