Grantee Information

ID	1417
Grantee Name	WKMS-FM
City	Murray
State	KY
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 occured in Fiscal Year 2024. 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 2024 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.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: 6.1

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.

The WKMS mission contains three main pillars: News, Culture, & Community. Each year, we work to both: Maintain the service listeners already rely on (WKMS produces nine local newscasts each weekday along with contributing to six state-wide midday newscasts, brings arts and public service interviews to a midday local music program, and produces close to 2,000 hours of local music shows each year, including local performances from local musicians.) AND to grow the areas we see an opportunity to increase community representation and service. This year, we worked hard to increase our digital presence, spending much of the year putting our local shows on-demand, promoting on-demand listening, and developing ideas for a new digital app. We still have far to go in increasing listenership for these new methods of engaging audience, but we think it will pay off in the new digital landscape. We also included a new "News Briefs" section of our website for shorter story content, to make sure that more of our on-air news content reaches web-only readers. In terms of education, we engaged more with the campus community in creating a "Radio 101" program, to teach students how to program, record and curate a radio show. We're currently airing shows from 7 students as a result of that effort and hope to grow it more. In an election year, it makes sense that a primary focus is providing information to the public about who and what are on the ballot. We did that through growing our collaboration with Kentucky Public Radio to include another statewide reporter (thanks to incredible help from the CPB). We helped with the creation of the statewide voter guide and shared content with all of our KPR partner stations to make election coverage as robust and comprehensive as possible with a small team. In other areas, we put together a five-part series on veterans in November – Voices of Service. In interviewing 12 veterans from different backgrounds, branches, ages, educational and economic levels – we put together a picture that showed there is no one universal service experience. Fort Campbell military base is in our listening area and it felt very positive to highlight this large population in a way that let them share their truths, sacrifices and lessons learned. And we continued and expanded our focus on mental health with a two hour music program, Sound Minds, every Thursday in May. This played listener-requested songs as well as sharing their stories of making it through challenging times. We hope to make this an even bigger engagement opportunity in the year to come. Of course, we also hosted poetry workshops, partnered on concerts and cultural events in our region and so much more. You can see more about our arts and events partnerships in the next question.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: 6.1

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.

WKMS is a strong collaborator with other public media outlets. The station is part of the Kentucky Public Radio Network- a cohort of four public radio stations that share content, like state capitol reporting, and collaborate for other programs that benefit all member stations, including statewide sponsorships. The station also worked this past year to help in the planning/creation of NPR's Appalachian Mid-South Newsroom, a regional collaboration between seven newsrooms - again sharing content and funding, to help leverage the concerns and

interests of Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia. WKMS partnered with KET for a local documentary screening, a lecture, and to provide some occasional background for Comment on Kentucky. And the station's corporate support manager is a contributor to Greater Public, offering supportive content to help the development of other public radio stations across the country. In terms of education, WKMS is part of the educational mission of Murray State University. Over the 23-24 school year, we hosted campus visits from six different academic programs, ranging from journalism to communication science students. In the broader community we partnered with a local NAACP chapter and four area schools to record students reading themed essays about nonviolent resistance, and then broadcast them in celebration of MLK Jr Day. For National Poetry Month in April, we partnered with local author and poet Constance Alexander to host a series of free workshops, where community members learned poetry writing skills. WKMS then aired poems submitted by listeners throughout the month. We also air Shakespeare Minutes in March in coordination with the Murray State Shakespeare Festival. Of course, we have numerous partnerships with arts organizations in communities across the region we serve. We broadcast concerts from the Paducah Symphony Orchestra on our classical channel. We partner on concerts and performances that enrich the culture and diversity of our region with local theaters. We air interviews with scientists, professors, artists, musicians and local non-profits providing services in our region. We even brought an interactive foley sound table to a documentary at a community college. Our daily on-air Datebook (and online calendar) highlights non-profit events and opportunities to actively engage in the community each day. From blood drives, to support groups, to lectures and performances, we're proud to connect listeners with resources to enhance their lives and better our region together. Last year, we featured over 200 non-profit, cultural, educational, or resource-based organizations. WKMS also supported the local music community. The station hosts Live Lunch, an on-going live music series showcasing local bands through station-studio performances. Station staff also put together multiple two-hour specials featuring all local bands and musicians, including one of all female musicians past and present in celebration of Women's History Month. And after a 5 year hiatus, WKMS hosted the station's Battle of the Bands again, showcasing and celebrating local music. The winning band was voted on by community members at a live performance, and as a result received additional community support, like other live performances, to help kick-start their musical journey.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: 6.1

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.

Throughout the year WKMS formed "philanthropic partnerships," where we help connect a local donors with a local nonprofit. For our winter 2023 fund drive, we partnered with True North Yoga of Paducah to donate 5 pounds of food to Paducah Cooperative Ministry (PCM), a local food bank, for every donation WKMS received. To help raise awareness of overall current needs and the impact of donations, we also aired an interview with the director of PCM. For every donation WKMS received during our spring 2024 fund drive, we had an anonymous donor commit to awarding scholarships for the Paducah Symphony Orchestra summer camp, and raised awareness for the camp's opportunities for underfunded kids to attend. Thanks to this partnership, six local students attended the camp who might not have otherwise been able to afford it. News reporting can be a powerful tool, especially in an election year. We heard from listeners who said they used our voter guide before going to the polls to learn more about constitutional amendments and down ballot races. Our features for specific races led to comments like this, from Lisa Hall, "I really appreciated the article I read recently about James Comer. I had no idea he had his sights on becoming Governor and I also did not know he had some opposition for his House seat." While we can't know that our reporting was responsible, we had multiple stories on the state rock/mineral being mixed up this year, and those designations were officially changed by the legislature. We were also able to share information nationally about the TVA approving a power agreement for Elon Musk's supercomputer in TN. Our arts partners and local bands are always grateful for our support in raising awareness for what they do, but I think it's the comments from listeners that stick with me the most: I love local music, and WKMS helped me discover my favorite local band, King Kaiju, through a live lunch. - Zach Lamb I moved to KY last year, away from New Orleans and my local NPR station. The first thing I did in my new silent house was to troll the radio, and was thrilled to discover WKMS. I listen to news and music every day. Thank you. -Susan Bergman Hey Guys, A token of my gratitude and appreciation for your show. It's an absolute radio treasure and I look forward to it every week. Thanks for all you do. -Barry Niemeyer I just wanted to let you all know that I really enjoyed the recent story about the history of Stuart Nelson park and the man it was named for. I didn't hear the story on the radio -- I read it on the website. But I absolutely loved it! It was so interesting. I often run with friends in Paducah, and we often go along the Greenway and through Stuart Nelson Park, but I never knew much about it. I had heard that it had originally been a historically black park, but that's about all I knew. The story was so interesting with all of the details it shared about how it was created, what it was before it was a park, how the name was chosen, and everything about Stuart Nelson's life. Thanks for teaching me some neat new stuff! - Aviva Yasgur WKMS truly has been very important to me and my personal growth over the past 15 years. As a musician, vocalist and event producer-Music has always been a driving force in my life. However, there was a time whenever I stopped listening to music and radio out of disgust for "today's music" and corporate advertisements. As you can imagine, losing the drive to listen to music was devastating to me. I stopped playing, going to shows, really anything that involved music. I'll never forget the first time someone turned me on to WKMS and public radio. This was such a pivotal moment in my life as each time I got into my vehicle I turned it to WKMS, and each time I began to fall in love with music and everything surrounding it all over again. I then met Tracy, who booked our band Red Ember for Sounds Good and was given the opportunity to play in the Battle of the Bands competition. Derek Operle was the first journalist to give our album a professional review and even went with us on tour during one of our trips. -Foster Stacy

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: 6.1

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 2024, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2025. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

WKMS partners with the Paducah-McCracken Co NAACP throughout the year to support their programs, including their MLK Jr Celebration and Essay Contest, Rosa Parks Power of One Banquet honoring Women's History Month, Juneteenth Celebration, and the Freedom Fund Banquet, an annual fundraiser for the local chapter. The station also partnered with the West Kentucky Chapter of the National Organization of Women to host a screening of KET PBS's bell hooks documentary. The event also helped gather donations for the Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center. WKMS has an on-going partnership with Murray State University's Cinema International, hosting free screening of foreign and domestic films that feature diverse directors, actors, languages, and stories from around the world. Throughout the spring and fall semesters, the station hosts weekly interviews with the film program's organizers to help promote screenings and share any cultural details about the film that are relevant to current times. To engage with a more diverse community and gain valuable feedback on programming, news content, and engagement efforts, WKMS has revamped its Community Advisory Board for the 2024- 2025 fiscal year to host Radio

Roundtables in the community. Station staff identified members of underrepresented communities and sent personal invitations asking for them to attend quarterly meetings and provide input. Underrepresented communities and groups that have been asked to attend include the Hispanic and Spanish-speaking population, people of color, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, along with individuals from a variety of age groups, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographic locations. WKMS covers a very large rural area of Western Kentucky with a very small staff; The station can’t be everywhere all the time so this feedback will help us gauge current concerns and needs as we plan and implement programming, news coverage, and nonprofit involvement.

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

Jump to question: 6.1

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 CPB has an incredible impact on the stability and strength of the station. The grants allow the station to pay for the full-time employment of a host who also does daily interviews showcasing the voices of our region. They also allow us to pay for programming that isn’t offered anywhere else in the majority of the counties we serve from NPR. The CPB’s support of our Kentucky Public Radio collaborative has recently allowed great expansion in that area as well – adding powerhouse politics reporter Joe Sonka to our enterprise capital reporting. As the legislature is moving so very quickly on so many bills that impact the lives of all kinds of people in our region, this legislative session it is a blessing to have so many watchful eyes on the process from KPR. Finally, next year we will get funding for the NGWS FEMA grant through the CPB, to upgrade equipment and to install a generator at our Water Valley transmitter, which covers many of the most underserved counties in Kentucky that have had several catastrophic weather events in the past 5 years. As a primary EAS provider, it’s an incredible thing to be able to strengthen the service we provide these communities when they need it most. Simply put, the CPB is the engine that helps drive rural public radio and journalism, and the return on investment for the CPB is tremendous as these funds have allowed WKMS historically to raise six dollars for every dollar invested by the CPB. Thank you for all the ways you impact public media and its listeners.

Comments

Question	Comment

No Comments for this section