

SAS RADIO REPORT

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.

WKSU continues to initiate, conduct and be involved with successful initiatives that connect with underserved audiences. WKSU is Ohio's largest public radio outlet. Station programming is broadcast from a main tower near Akron, four regional towers and two translator transmitters. The combined coverage area reaches listeners in 22 counties in Northeast and North Central Ohio, as well as parts of Western Pennsylvania – home to nearly four million people living in large urban cities, smaller towns and rolling rural farmland. The towers broadcast four HD Radio digital channels (primary broadcast, classical music, Folk Alley and all news). This content is also available streaming online. WKSU actively shares news stories and other reporting via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

In FY19, WKSU identified entrepreneurship as a need for reporting in our area. We partnered with the Burton D. Morgan Foundation to create a year-long look at this issue. We produced reporting on the topic throughout the year and had expanded coverage online. We also hired two interns from Kent State University to help with the project. At the end, we held a community forum to discuss entrepreneurship in Akron, hosted by Jeff St. Clair, reporter and project lead. Topics for the series included: efforts to streamline tech across state agencies, an effort to encourage baby boomers to become entrepreneurs after retirement, and accelerators and startup businesses.

Additionally, we determined the 50th Anniversary of the burning of the Cuyahoga River to be important to our listeners and produced a six-part series digging into the current state of not just the Cuyahoga, but two other Northeast Ohio rivers with industrial legacies, the Ashtabula and the Black, and the body of water that ties them all together, Lake Erie. We also looked at how the restoration of the Cuyahoga has led to competition between recreation and industry for its use, how a photo helped spur on an environmental movement and whether there's a new generation to carry on the same spirit of environmental stewardship that was born 50 years ago. We aired short stories with listener voices talking about what it was like 50 years ago, and wove in a professor from Kent State specializing in Aquatic Biology and Oceanography, to talk about the current state of Lake Erie.

Toward the end of the year, we began a new beat involving social justice. That was just getting off the ground as the fiscal year ended, but WKSU did air two stories regarding the criminal justice system and what happens after someone gets out including topics like child support and jobs.

Regional outreach also included a reception in Wooster in conjunction with the Wooster Chamber Music series. A State of the Station event for members only at our broadcasting center in April 2019. We partnered with Kent State University's Presidential Speaker Series hosting Bob Woodward as the keynote speaker for the

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annual commemoration events marking May 4th. Jeff St. Clair served as the master of ceremonies and moderated a question and answer session following Mr. Woodward's remarks.

WKSU sponsors many arts and culture events, making an effort to attend in person and make personal contact and share station information with diverse audiences. One such event is the Tremont Arts and Cultural Festival, a two-day event featuring fine art and crafts, community outreach organizations, music and a mix of food reflecting the different ethnic heritages of those living in the neighborhood.

WKSU has a long-standing relationship with the Cleveland International Film Festival. Recognized for its inclusion of foreign language, LGBTQ and urban films, CIFF is truly one of the region's most-diverse cultural institutions. WKSU also has a presence at the Cleveland Orchestra's Blossom Festival, Akron Symphony Orchestra concerts, and the Akron Roundtable, a monthly speaker series that WKSU records for later broadcast.

Along with the entrepreneurship and the environment, WKSU's news coverage in FY19 included the start of a multi-part series on elections in Ohio following a barnstorming tour by author David Giffels, a deep-dive on the city of Akron and its citizens through a series of stories we call the "Akron Initiative" and for which we hired a beat reporter, a long-range focus on the origins of the universe reported in 90 second bytes, continued coverage of immigration, issues surrounding the opioid crisis and a listener center project that allows the listener to ask questions that we then report while including the listener in the news gathering as much as they are able to join us. We also followed the continuing news at the closed GM plant in Lordstown, OH.

Other stand-out themes in ongoing features included science and innovation (Exploradio), local sports (The View from Pluto), regional music (Shuffle), Kent State University accomplishments (Elevations) and the arts (State of the Arts).

A summary of WKSU's news coverage this year:

- The continuing impact of the Opioid epidemic.
- The impact of the closing of the GM plant in Lordstown and its effect on our listening area.
- The faces and the sounds of the arts including musicians, and public art in the towns and cities of our region.
- Social justice issues throughout our region, including race relations, ex-offender reentry, immigration and housing.
- National, state and local elections, including ballot issues, throughout WKSU's coverage area.
- Medical research being conducted by regional hospitals and universities.

In the coming year, we plan to continue and to explore further the following topics:

- Local and national 2020 elections
- The 50th anniversary of the May 4, 1970 Kent state Shootings
- Recycling
- Economy
- Music throughout our listening region

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- Science and innovation
- Arts
- 50th Anniversary of the burning of the Cuyahoga River
- Immigrations issues
- Social justice
- Eviction
- Infant mortality

All stories from the WKSU newsroom are available online, often with informational links and additional story background. Stand-alone web areas were created for the Watershed, Akron Initiative, social justice, *OH Really?* which is our listener focused question series, Mark's Almanac – a look at history through a 90 second lens, and To Understand Ohio – our barnstorming series.

There are also web areas for the Exploradio series on science and innovation in Northeast Ohio, sports commentary on the View from Pluto, the music-based Shuffle and State of the Arts.

The WKSU.org website allows reporters to tag and assign categories to their posts and make them easier to search and share through social media. Community events are searchable from their own calendar and from web features for station collaborations.

Along with WKSU.org, station content can be streamed via free mobile apps. Folk Alley has its own distinct free app, which includes access to streaming audio and Folk Alley Sessions video performances. The WKSU mobile app connects listeners to all four of WKSU's content streams (on-air, Folk Alley, classical music and all news) and provides links for news reports from WKSU and NPR, and information on community events.

WKSU also focuses on promoting listening through smart speakers, like Amazon Echo and Google Home, through TuneIn and iHeartRadio. WKSU staff continue to be aware of emerging technology developments so our listeners can listen to our station in the manner most convenient for them.

WKSU's award-winning website, WKSU.org, continues to focus on the stories created by the WKSU news team and content partners such as the Ohio Public Radio Statehouse News Bureau, Your Voice Ohio, along with station information and upcoming events.

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.

The News Department, in cooperation with WCPN (public radio affiliate in Cleveland, Ohio), and WOSU (public radio affiliate in Columbus, Ohio), continued a joint project called "StateImpact Ohio: Eye on Education." This was the first of eight collaborative stations with NPR to be approved and up-and-running. The on-line and on-air reporting has been picked up by local newspapers, the entire public radio network in Ohio, public

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radio stations in surrounding states and NPR as well. Although, NPR wound down its support of StateImpact, three Ohio stations, including WKSU chose to maintain it at full strength. It remains a key source of education reporting in the state.

WKSU has an ongoing commitment to working with WCPN, our public radio colleagues in Cleveland to insure the broadest coverage for our listeners. This includes StateImpact mentioned above, and the Statehouse News Bureau bringing WKSU listeners news from our capitol in Columbus, OH and OPR – Ohio Public Radio, designed to facilitate and coordinate reporting efforts by Ohio's Public Radio news rooms and bring coverage from each newsroom to the other stations in the state.

In FY19, WKSU continued its collaboration with radio, television and newspapers through the state in "Your Voice Ohio", an initiative created to cover the opioid epidemic in the Mahoning Valley.

WKSU also collaborates with our license holder, Kent State University. This year we continued our five-minute module featuring a student, staff or faculty member of Kent State by showcasing their work at Kent State for our listening area. We engage journalism and communications students in our news room as interns, and we have started engaging student media in partnerships to create content for our website including graphics and maps using data journalism. For FY19, WKSU's *Morning Edition* Host was the advisor to Kent State University's student media internet radio station, Black Squirrel Radio and taught Storytelling with Sound, an advanced journalism class for KSU.

WKSU prides itself on being an integral part of Northeast Ohio. The station provides a public radio and media service, as well as taking pride in being a visible force in the community. WKSU staff members participate in various community-related activities. The news director was on the board of the Akron Press Club and the newsroom's senior reporter/digital editor is past-president of the Akron Press Club and past-president of the Ohio Associate Press Media Editors. Staff regularly speak to community groups and with groups of high school and college students.

In November 2018 we hosted a group from Kent State University's Rural Scholars Program for a tour and discussion. The program exposes Columbiana County youth to a variety of career and educational paths that can be taken past high school. They were especially interested in hearing about broadcast and multimedia production. In April 2019, a group of 8th grade students who were part of the Tom Tod Ideas program in Canton learned more about journalism with a visit to WKSU. This visit focused on good audio storytelling. The students had submitted five entries (depression, anxiety, life of a middle schooler, year-round schooling, and school shootings) in the NPR podcast challenge and wanted some feedback. A staff member and intern did critique of the entries after they had been submitted. Another staff member worked with students at Hudson Middle School on podcasting. One of those students was a national finalist in NPR's first student podcast challenge with "How Video Games Affect Your Life." The station also gave tours to interested community members. WKSU staff members – including reporters, on-air hosts, External Relations and administrative staff – supported cultural and arts organizations by serving as WKSU representatives and building community engagement at regional events.

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WKSU continues to be a strong supporter of arts and cultural organizations and events throughout the region by offering promotional assistance for institutions including The Cleveland Orchestra, Apollo's Fire, the Akron Art Museum, the Canton Museum of Art, Magical Theatre Company (a theatre group for young audiences), Weathervane Community Playhouse, Karamu House, Wooster Chamber Music and many others. WKSU has sponsored and hosted events for the Cleveland International Film Festival. Attendance at these activities in communities throughout WKSU's 22-county listening area is a strong reinforcement for the positive work being created by organizations throughout Northeast Ohio.

WKSU is also the producing home of FolkAlley.com, a streaming music service featuring folk, Americana and roots artists. Folk Alley offers hosted 24-hour streaming audio on its website, along with a two-hour weekly program that is syndicated nationally. Because of the reach of the Internet, Folk Alley is a global force for the preservation and promotion of tradition-based music, finding the service a worldwide audience made up of multiple generations, ethnic heritages and nations of origin. NPR often uses Folk Alley hosts and writers as genre experts. Folk Alley's stream can be accessed from FolkAlley.com, NPR.org, iTunes, TuneIn, iHeartRadio, and other streaming sites.

Along with Folk Alley audio content, the site features music reviews, previews and artist profiles, and exclusive Folk Alley Sessions performance videos produced by Folk Alley in Kent, Ohio, and Saranac Lake, New York, as well as remote recordings from festivals across North America, such as the 30A Songwriters Festival in Florida. Folk Alley also posts regularly on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, sharing performance content, folk music news and links. Content from Folk Alley is often shared with NPR for the NPR Music website.

Since 1996, the annual Hunger Challenge provides an opportunity for WKSU to address a community need: hunger. This day of the end of year on-air drive allows WKSU donors to make a greater impact for their community by offering a thank you gift of meals. During the Hunger Challenge, donors give to WKSU and then have the option to select meals which are then donated to one of WKSU's regional foodbank partners. Donors are supporting independent journalism and have the opportunity to help those in need by selecting the thank you gift of meals. Sponsors of the Hunger Challenge help pay for the thank you gifts of meals.

Representatives from the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank and the Greater Cleveland Food Bank are guests in the studio. Additionally, pre-produced testimonials from Campus Kitchen representatives air throughout the day. Collectively, these representatives offer information and details about hunger in the community and how the agencies operate.

WKSU's mission statement says that "WKSU creates a shared civic and cultural life that connects communities through a diverse mix of media that extends the heritage of Kent State University." Based on the above criterion, it is evident that reaching 22 Ohio counties and parts of Western Pennsylvania; WKSU truly connects and reaches out to constituents in the Northeast Ohio region.

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.

As an active part of the Kent State University community, the station has long-played a role as a real-world educational experience. WKSU recruits Kent State journalism and communication students to work at WKSU while completing their degrees, this gives students the chance to develop real and marketable skills – such as gathering and producing news reports – while working alongside station professionals. These jobs at WKSU create a solid building block for the next generation to learn in a setting that enhances their education and can be used as a catalyst for their careers. This association with students also gives staff members a glimpse into rising trends and the minds of younger consumers.

While most of the KSU students work in the award-winning WKSU newsroom, there are also interns learning about public relations, event planning, and communications in their positions. WKSU encourages hands-on learning and often has student interns participate in the day-to-day functions of the station. A staff member attended a day-long career fair at Garrettsville High School to provide information about the requirements for working at a radio station.

The station also hosts a graduate student who is paid through the Walton D. Clarke Fellowship. This scholarship is a partnership with the Kent State College of Communication and Information to give a graduate student a two-year experience with hands-learning at the radio station.

Guests with a connection to NPR and public radio are often retained for public speaking engagements at the Akron Press Club and the Akron Roundtable through the efforts of WKSU. Because WKSU encourages learning, giving journalism students access to NPR professionals is one way that the station strives to bring the experienced world of journalism and radio to local young people in our community. Station reporters and professional staff speak with high school and college classes, such as Canton's Tom Tod Ideas, which brought middle school students to Kent State University four years in a row.

As part of community educational outreach, WKSU also hosts community tour groups each year, guiding school children, college students, Cub Scouts and others through the broadcast center and studios. WKSU's offices are ADA compliant and easily accommodate people with disabilities.

Organizations all over Northeast Ohio support WKSU via their underwriting/sponsorship of the station. Their organizations are impacted by our audience attending their events, purchasing their goods/services, and associating their brand with quality. WKSU has community organizations that have sponsored WKSU programming for 5, 10, 20, even 30+ years. These organizations share their impact stories with WKSU on how their

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business has improved, but also enjoy being associated with a well-respected media organization that benefits the community.

With the growth in WKSU's social media presence, this "halo" effect can be somewhat tracked by marking response and share rates of stories on the station's Facebook (WKSU.FM), Twitter (@WKSU) and Instagram (wksu897) feeds – which applies to stories on any topic.

WKSU has reorganized our volunteer strategy and offered our first official volunteer training in May 2019 with 35 interested volunteers attending. Our volunteers will be used in a variety of ways – from stuffing envelopes, making thank you calls to donors, doing research for our news staff, to representing the station at community events throughout our 22-county region.

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.

WKSU's programming and news coverage is intended to reach to all Northeast Ohio communities. Reports focused on entrepreneurship and the environment, continued coverage of immigration, issues surrounding the opioid crisis, a long-range focus on the origins of the universe reported in 90 second bytes, our "Akron Initiative" reporting, and a listener center project that allows the listener to ask questions that we then report while including the listener in the news gathering as much as they are able to join us. We also followed the continuing news at the closed GM plant in Lordstown, OH.

Folk Alley makes a conscious effort to honor diversity with its programming. The music stream and syndicated show attempts to add diverse artists in each hour, including African American, LGBTQ, and World (Latin/Hispanic, Cajun, Celtic and African) music artists. The roots-based music that makes up the Folk Alley stream is also rich with songs from Appalachia and historical social issue folk music.

In recognition of Black History Month, WKSU aired a four-week series hosted by Cece Winans titled *Gospel Roots of Rock and Soul*.

The station works to partner with arts and cultural events with a connection to diverse audiences. Notable efforts include sponsoring two films at the Cleveland International Film Festival, promoting the Akron Symphony Orchestra's Gospel Meets Symphony, working with Karamu House (a historic African American theatre company) and sponsoring the Tremont Arts & Cultural Festival, a two-day community event celebrating one of Cleveland's most ethnically diverse neighborhoods. WKSU also records and broadcasts monthly Akron Roundtable (a popular community forum) addresses on a variety of topics of community interest.

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?

Support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting via this grant enables WKSU to reach a 22-county area in Northeast and North Central Ohio and parts of Western Pennsylvania, allowing our station to access and provide public radio service to communities and regions that extend far beyond our main broadcast facility in Kent, Ohio. Without CPB funding, WKSU would not have such a broad reach. Without the CPB grant, WKSU could not purchase high-quality programming from National Public Radio, Public Radio International, and American Public Media. In addition, without the CPB grant, WKSU would not have been able to bring additional HD channels to our community, providing 24-7 folk and classical services on yet another platform within our region.

The CPB grant also helps WKSU extend its reach through the news. Northeast Ohio is a diverse region, and although that diversity is a strength in our region, it can also be perceived as a weakness as disparate communities struggle to connect with each other. Many times, WKSU is the glue among those communities because our station and its news service helps people recognize their connection to each other. It is a point of pride for WKSU that our station takes a regional approach to covering the news – an approach that no other Northeast Ohio media can claim.

CPB funding helps Folk Alley fulfill its goal of providing listeners with access to a musical art form that would otherwise be limited or non-existent. This is accomplished through our 24-7 hosted stream; our in-studio interviews and performances, specialty side streams, and more. Our goal is to provide quality folk, roots and Americana music to listeners who have no listening options, and to enhance the listening options to people with limited opportunities to hear this music.

Many other organizations have recognized WKSU's accomplishments, particularly as related to the news and to reaching into communities to cover important community issues. WKSU's journalistic excellence is demonstrated by the countless awards presented to the station and staff by local regional and national organizations. Fiscal Year 2019 WKSU Awards include:

2018

Society of Professional Journalists-Ohio Chapters—Ohio's Best Journalism Awards

- Best in Show-Best News Operation, WKSU Staff
- Best in Show-Best Reporter, M.L. Schultze
- Best in Show-Best Anchor, Amanda Rabinowitz
- Best in Show-Best Newscast, "Morning Edition"
- First Place-Best Consumer Reporting, Kabir Bhatia—"With Amazon Looming, What Is the Future of Retail in Akron?"
- First Place-Best Continuing Coverage, WKSU Staff—"Opioids: Turning the Tide in the Crisis"
- First Place-Best General Assignment Reporting, WKSU Staff—"Remembering Ralph Regula"

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- First Place-Best Government Reporting, WKSU Staff—“Gerrymandering, Shading the Lines”
- First Place-Best Health Care Feature Reporting, Jeff St. Clair—“First Year Cleveland Targets the Racial Disparities Behind Infant Mortality”
- First Place-Best Sports Reporting, Terry Pluto, Amanda Rabinowitz—“The View from Pluto”
- Second Place-Best Documentary, M.L. Schultze—“An Akron Refugee Story: From Surviving to Thriving”
- Second Place-Best Medical/Health Reporting, Jeff St. Clair—“The Ancient Science of Ayurveda Inspires Arthritis Research at NEOMED”
- Second Place-Best Website, WKSU Staff—“WKSU.org”

2019

Radio Television Digital News Association—Regional Murrow Awards

- *Video for Radio*, Mark Arehart and Joe Gunderman—“Go for a Ride on Goodyear's Newest Blimp”

Ohio Associated Press—Ohio APME Awards

- Best in Show-*General Excellence*, WKSU News
- First Place-*Best Sportscast*, Amanda Rabinowitz and Terry Pluto—“Cavs' Kevin Love Starts A Much-Needed Conversation About Mental Health”
- First Place-*Best Use of Sound*, Kabir Bhatia—“Akron's Canal Park Holds a Different Type of Tryout”
- First Place-*Best Documentary or Series*, WKSU Staff—“Navigating the Path to Mental Health”
- First Place-*Best Coverage of a Scheduled Event*, WKSU Staff—“Election Night 2018”
- Second Place-*Best Anchor*, Amanda Rabinowitz
- Second Place-*Best Enterprise Reporting*, Jeff St. Clair—“Industry 4.0 in Cleveland”
- Second Place-*Best Spot News Coverage*, Mark Arehart—“The Last Goodyear Wingfoot Blimp Takes Flight”
- Second Place-*Best Newscast*, Jeff St. Clair—“All Things Considered”
- Second Place-*Best Digital Presence*, WKSU Staff—“WKSU.org”

Press Club of Cleveland—Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards

- Best in Show-*Radio Newscast, Major Market*, Amanda Rabinowitz and Jeff St. Clair—“Morning Edition”
- First Place-*On-going Coverage*, M.L. Schultze—“Amer Adi Deportation”
- First Place-*Public Service*, WKSU Staff—“Navigating the Path to Mental Health”
- First Place-*Use of Sound*, Mark Arehart—“A New Kind of Wooden Coaster Twists and Turns at Cedar Point”
- First Place-*News Writing*, Jeff St. Clair—“Blockland Backers Dream of a Cleveland Tech Mecca”
- First Place-*Radio News Website*, Staff—“WKSU.org”
- First Place-*Use of Social Media*, Staff—“WKSU Social Media”
- Second Place-*Radio News*, M.L. Schultze—“EBay Finds Akron's Jugglers, Beekeepers and Artists”

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- Second Place-*Human Interest*, Amanda Rabinowitz—“Project D.R.E.W. Helps Veterans Heal Through Song”
- Third Place-*In-Depth Coverage*, Jeff St. Clair—“Industry 4.0 in Cleveland”

Public Radio News Director, Inc—PRNDI Awards

- Second Place-*Nationally Edited News Feature*, M.L. Schultze—“Ebay Trains Ohio Retailers”
- Second Place-*Newscast*, Amanda Rabinowitz—“Morning Edition”