

WKMS Response to 2016 Station Activity Survey Section 6

Each year the Corporation for Public Broadcasting audits its grantees finances, employment, governance, programming, public service, journalists, and station activities. CPB mandates that this section of its annual SAS (Station Activity Survey) be placed at wkms.org within 10 days of its having been submitted – in this case by February 15, 2016.

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 overall goal/vision of WKMS is to "To inspire and empower a diverse audience by being a trusted and essential resource for information, culture, community, and regional growth as a critical part of the educational mission of Murray State University." We work to achieve this mission by creating and promoting one-of-a-kind trusted news and music content, for our region. This news and music programming is created by our staff with the intent to give our region something unique and valuable. This work is impossible without our fundraising team, which provides the essential support to keep us performing at its current level.

WKMS' daily news service, on-air and online, provides context to happenings across our listening region including community meetings/protests, election related news, and variables impacting socioeconomic issues. The daily news service is primarily short in length framed in hourly newscasts. WKMS provides long-form interviews daily as part of our local mid-day music program. The interview content can range from hard news, to softer content including profiles and public service interviews specific to our region. Other broad coverage categories include politics, agriculture, health care, arts, culture, business, environment and sports.

Our news team is made aware of issues worthy of coverage in many different ways. Our staff engages our Community Advisory Board for stories of interest, we seek ideas from our social media followers and we ask students who visit WKMS. Outside of the station our reporters often spot trends in the community or uncover larger issues during community meetings. One example of a strong enterprise story/series came from a reporter who has embraced WKMS' diversity efforts and began a series of interviews with international students at Murray State. These interviews have become quite popular and, given a renewed interest in immigration news, a great resource for adding additional context to an issue that isn't necessarily discussed in our largely homogenous region.

WKMS' engagement and community education efforts have grown in the last year to include a more specific and targeted approach to address issues or prompt engagement. To focus on artistic creation writing and public speaking skills, WKMS hosted its first short storytelling contest. The nearly 60 entrants from three states was a great success. The top writers performed twice in our region and had their works published in regional magazines. WKMS also leveraged partnerships with the Paducah Sun and Murray State University to present a community political forum in person and on "Facebook Live" to

engage voters in Paducah for their city-wide races. The event garnered a crowd of around 40 to 50 people at Murray State's Paducah Campus and a viewing audience of more than 1,000 with dozens of "shares" and more than 60 comments and questions. This was, no doubt, a successful engagement project that allowed WKMS to harness a new technology and serve a hyper-local audience despite our regional radio coverage.

Another engagement/educational event that extended the broadcast aspect of WKMS included presentations by the WKMS documentary producer at regional libraries discussing Paducah Native and Vice President, Alben W. Barkley. Barkley was profiled by a recent WKMS documentary.

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 remains strongly committed to collaborations because we believe fostering partnerships remains as the best path to continued success for public media. WKMS is in the first full year of participating in a Regional Journalism Collaboration (RJC) called the Ohio Valley ReSource. The partnership has elevated the quality of journalism produced by WKMS. It has also provided unrivaled coverage of the transitioning economy to our region and the three states that are benefitting from the seven station collaboration.

The WKMS partnership within the Kentucky Public Radio Network remains strong. The organization has taken the next steps to create a fiduciary agent called the Association of Kentucky Public Radio Stations. This action allows for a more streamlined approach regarding billing and expensing services for the network. The networks is now making strides in creating a live interconnect system to allow statewide coverage at a moment's notice if needed. It also will move our "near live" hourly mid-day newscasts to "live." This will allow the newscasters to respond to breaking news if necessary.

2016 found WKMS expanding partnerships with local arts organizations in creation of the WKMS Short Storytelling Contest. More than 60 entrants participated in hopes of being featured at the Hopkinsville "Big Read" finale'. This elevated WKMS' profile in Hopkinsville and conversely helped to promote the project hosted by the Pennyroyal Arts Council. WKMS expanded its partnership with the Paducah Symphony Orchestra in 2016 to be the music sponsor of a new festival called PaBrewcah. WKMS gained additional notoriety within Paducah and showcased local bands at the festival. The Paducah Symphony benefited from the partnership by increasing awareness for their event which supports the regional arts community.

WKMS also works to ensure our region's economic development is on display through our journalism efforts. Partnerships with the Kentucky Small Business Development Center have allowed WKMS to maintain a business presences in Paducah, while also providing educational opportunities for entrepreneurs in our region. We're grateful to have a local office of the KSBDC on Murray State's Campus to allow for direct access and a good relationship with such an organization.

We maintain partnerships with Kentucky's Chamber of Commerce and the related local chapters. We partner to host and moderate debates to ensure the business community is aware of candidates seeking public office and their platforms. We also work closely with local schools. Our annual poetry minute project puts a WKMS staff members in regional schools to record sonnets produced by elementary school children. We produce the project and air sonnets daily to promote poetry awareness during National Poetry Month. We also continue a grant funded project to record school music ensembles and air them on our classical broadcast service, which reaches more than 60,000 people on terrestrial radio.

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.

WKMS' key initiatives in 2016 yielded some measurable impact in our region. For example, the WKMS short story-telling contest, in partnership with the Pennyroyal Arts Council, yielded some 60 entrants who showcased storytelling skills for our region. This project certainly provided increased awareness of the literary talent in our region.

WKMS partnered with Baptist Health Paducah regarding a project on early onset addiction in children. The special report focused on a recovering addict who began using drugs at a very young age and had overdosed numerous times by the age of 15. His story and a subsequent interview with a medical expert yielded this response from Baptist Health Paducah Outreach specialist, Dr. Patrick Withrow:

"Good morning Chad. I wanted you to know that your WKMS, NPR, radio production broadcasted on addiction using Matt L and myself was shared with Laura Krueger and Justin Allen both of KET. As a direct result of your work on this, Matt L (counsellor at Center Point Recovery Center) and others were used in a major KET project. This project covers Opioid treatment throughout the state of Kentucky. The people from KET have spent a significant amount of time in the western Kentucky area researching and interviewing many different people on aspects of the problem....I for one, am very appreciative of all your efforts to inform and our citizenry about the menace of drug abuse and what we can do to help. Again, this is just an appreciative FYI to all and hopefully we can help and support each of our entities to get the word out. Thanks for all you do!"

WKMS also annually partners with Murray State's Cinema International program. Each year the station sponsors a film related to science and technology. This year WKMS featured the film "Alien" and held a well-attended panel discussion prior the film's showing. The discussion focused on the role of women in STEM fields and how Sigourney Weaver was the first major film star to be cast as a female Sci-Fi Heroine. This certainly provided additional awareness to our audience regarding women in STEM and SCI-FI film history.

WKMS, again, sold out the local non-profit independent movie theater for the WKMS Battle of the Bands competition. This project, in partnership with Maiden Alley Cinema, brings various local musicians to a wider audience to cultivate awareness of great local music, that can also be heard on WKMS.

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 2016, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2017. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

WKMS has continued its series of interviews with international students to give our region insight into life as a non-native of our region. The interviews also give listeners insights into the lives of regular inhabitants of countries that have been highly politicized in our country. Some students hailed from Syria, Pakistan and Kenya.

WKMS also supports a grant project to raise awareness for people with disabilities through community art projects. That has included news coverage from our newsroom and WKMS is currently working through a poetry project with this grant to feature poems written by area youth about perception of disabilities.

WKMS has also instituted a diversity initiative in each aspect of our annual goal setting process. The WKMS Newsroom has interest in creating a fellowship for a student reporter to solely focus on the Hispanic community in our region. It ideally would include some Spanish language reporting, too. This is an ongoing project as WKMS works to identify funding for this project. WKMS News also takes an intentional approach to find stories in our region that provide context to national issues related to diversity and immigration.

WKMS News reporters are tasked with taking an intentional approach to exploring plurality in all parts of our society, whether it's using an expert source who doesn't look or sound like they are from "western Kentucky", or taking a moment to listen to someone new to our region who has a different perspective or way of life. Those stories remain high priorities for our team.

WKMS features Black History Month programming each February that are often produced by public radio stations/networks for national distribution.

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 Funding for WKMS-FM is vital for the station to succeed at its vision to "To inspire and empower a diverse audience by being a trusted and essential resource for information, culture, community, and regional growth as a critical part of the educational mission of Murray State University." Specifically the funds allow the station to provide unparalleled news coverage to this region on-air and online. The funding also makes the web service possible through membership fees to our content management system provider. We purchase most of the programming with CPB funds which comprise about 15 percent of our total annual budget.

CPB Funding also supports the salary and benefits of a local producer/announcer for WKMS. This is a critical position because the University Licensee has decreased its support of salaried positions for the station within the 15/16 fiscal year, despite the station's aggressive improvement of its transmission systems and outreach programs over time.