

Northern Public Radio
Corporation for Public Broadcasting – Station Activities Survey
For fiscal year ended June 30, 2014
Excerpt: Local Content & Services 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.

The station's goals include presenting news and information curated with the regional listener in mind. We seek out national programs and develop local content that's unbiased, in depth and informative to the citizens in our broadcast region and beyond. We look for ways to frame national and international issues for the local audience. Additionally, the stations aim to engage in the arts, cultural and educational offerings within the community as means of presenting meaningful information to a local audience. The managing editor regularly keeps a pulse on the community through his daily digest of available information including media outlets, community events, activities, conversations and beyond. In addition, the director of community engagement advances partnerships and services through a regional network of contacts. These efforts yield ongoing interaction throughout the community, across platforms, at live events and participation at community gatherings.

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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 stations partnered with the Rockford Symphony Orchestra to broadcast a series of classical concerts. This project has made performances widely available that otherwise would require a ticket to the concert hall. The WNIJ audience includes a wide geographic area in diverse communities with a wide range of challenges and opportunities. Our occasional series "Community Close Ups" aimed to inform our audience -- both on air and online -- of activities, opportunities and events in individual communities to build common understanding among listeners of the government, business and social climate in northern Illinois. WNIJ also followed students involved in a pilot project within the Rockford schools, this included a series of pieces throughout their year. WNIJ created and launched a programming element called the "Science Almanac" to highlight STEM and science related milestones and local opportunities to engage youth and adult learners. Additionally, WNIJ regularly partners with other Illinois public and commercial media to provide news from the capitol and around the region. This includes collaborative discussions on topics ranging from common core to the Illinois pension crisis. The stations also maintain programming partnerships with the non-profit sector throughout the year to showcase the arts and culture thriving in the communities we serve and to identify community needs and opportunities. For instance, the WNIJ Book Series explores regional literature through author interviews and live events in partnership with library participation to promoted wider accessibility.

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.

Fiscal Year 2014 initiatives resulted in greater awareness of the role of public radio in the community, key issues affecting the region and a broader understanding of those issues. Initiatives such as Community Close Ups develop dialogue within the communities we serve as does the continuing coverage of the story of the Jefferson High School students choices. Programming elements like the Science Almanac aim to connect the community to resources for learners and experts alike. The broadcast of the RSO concerts also increased awareness and interest in the local music scene and requests to include other performances have followed. The Rockford Symphony Orchestra Executive Director has been a vocal champion. Finally, the activity within the stations' digital offerings continues to grow and offer measurable success. We hear directly from users that they appreciate the expanded coverage we provide via the web as well as the stream services that listeners use to keep connected to their communities even when they're not in range of a transmitter.

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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 2014, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2015. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

The station operates a radio information service which provides access to print material for visually and print impaired residents in northern Illinois. We regularly look at issues affecting diverse audiences; this is always considered when making programming decisions and developing content. Issues such as legislation affecting undocumented immigrants, marriage equality, geo-policing, food programs, and education are regularly presented. In FY15 we will continue to examine these issues along with presenting longer form pieces in Free Range Radio while also airing investigative journalism special "Reveal" which looks at a wide range of topics from prisons to the environment to child care and privacy.

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?

Without this funding, engagement initiatives would have been slower to develop due to a lack of resources. This funding also ensures the stations have the resources to present the highest quality journalism and music content available. This funding is used for local and nationally distributed programming.

Comments