

1. Overall goals and approaches:

In FY 2017 at WYSO we redoubled our efforts to serve more people and to assess community needs and interests through in-person engagement, education services and digital platforms. Two days after the presidential election of 2016, we started a series of staff discussions with a goal to expand our efforts and try to get a broader range of issues and people represented on our airwaves.

In January 2017, we launched a project called "Dear Mr. President," on our airwaves and on our website. We invited our listeners to write letters to the new President and tell him about the issues of vital concern our community. We received several responses via email and through our Hearken platform, but then decided to partner with three local public library systems to expand our reach and make this a face-to-face engagement project. We sent community producers to each of the libraries on the same day, the Saturday before President's day, and they recorded the responses of people on the spot.

These libraries were in communities that serve rural, urban and suburban patrons. This engagement approach was especially successful at one library in particular, which serves mostly minority communities on Dayton's generally underserved east side.

This day-long effort yielded more than 40 responses, which we produced into several radio stories, which aired on Morning Edition and were placed on our website.

That same winter, we launched a project called "Just Ask: Talking about Disability." In this outreach and training effort, we collaborated with four local disability advocacy organizations. With both staff and community producers from WYSO, we trained 8 adults to interview and record their own stories of living with disabilities in the spring of 2017. The stories were eventually broadcast on WYSO in FY18, placed on our website, and featured in a live event, during which all the disabled adults, and their families, we given the chance to play their stories and describe their experiences.

We continued our "Dayton Youth Radio" project in calendar year 2017, training high more than 50 school students at seven different Dayton-area schools in radio production and interviewing. We aired their stories on WYSO and placed them on our website. Our Dayton Youth Radio stories get at the deep personal, family, school and community issues before young people today in our area. They touch on issues of concern to all of us: unemployment, immigration, economic inequality, race and fractured family dynamics due to divorce and blended families.

We also continued our "Veterans Voices" project, in which local military veterans interview each other in a peer-to-peer model we have been developing over the

years. This project yielded 8 stories that aired on WYSO and were placed on our website. In this project, post-911 veterans who are students at Wright State University interview each other about the issues they face returning to civilian life.

WYSO Curious continued to air on WYSO, a series based on the Curious City model, in which staff and community producers answer questions asked by members of the community through our Hearken platform. (WYSO was the first station in the nation to adapt the Curious City model to our own needs. We call it WYSO Curious) This is a fruitful approach to ascertaining community concerns and to getting our producers into communities they may not know.

WYSO aired a second season of “Rediscovered Radio” in FY 17. The 15 parts of this series explored local history in the Viet Nam era through the use of radio stories from the WYSO Digital Audio Archives. It was produced by Jocelyn Robinson, Community Voices producer.

“Culture Couch” is another series that helps WYSO producers get deeper into the community. These stories, about creativity and local arts, cover a wide range of stories in the Dayton areas many different communities.

These community-based projects have become an integral part of our operation at WYSO, using both staff and community producers trained in our Community Voices training program. They are both engagement and reporting projects because the community producers are able to spend more time in neighborhoods and communities that our staff news reporters often don’t have time for because they are often reporting on local governmental activities.

More projects of this nature will come to our listeners in FY 2018.

2. For the training phase of “Just Ask: Talking about Disability,” WYSO collaborated with four Miami Valley disability advocacy groups: the Access Center for Independent Living, Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services, United Rehabilitation Services, and Wright State University’s Disability Services Center. For six weeks, staff producer April Laissle and community producer Anna Lurie trained people with disabilities to create radio stories of their own. Each story was intended to focus on topics participants said were most important to them. All the training, story selection and discussion was held in FY 17. (The radio series aired in early FY 18.)

For the third season of “Veterans Voices”, we collaborated again with the Veteran and Military Center at Wright State University. In this project, the student veterans become “WYSO Fellows” and are trained in radio production and interviewing skills. The instructor for the course and the director of the VMC in 2017 have both been Wright State faculty members *and* WYSO Community Voices producers, trained in the WYSO Community Voices class.

For "Dear Mr. President," WYSO collaborated with three branches of the Dayton Metro Library, three branches of the Greene County Public Library and the Wright Memorial Library in Oakwood, Ohio. (The DML collaboration was especially fruitful at the Dayton Northwest branch, which led to subsequent projects in early FY 2018).

For "Dayton Youth Radio" in FY 2017, Basim Blunt, community producer, collaborated with the David H. Ponitz Career Technology Center, a Dayton Public School, Centerville High School, a public school in a Dayton suburb, Stivers School for the Arts, a Dayton Public School, the Miami Valley School, a private school in Centerville, Ohio. Dayton Early College Academy, a Dayton Public school, Yellow Springs High School, a semi-rural school, Tecumseh High School, a rural school and the YouMedia Center, part of the Springfield, Ohio, school system. At each of these seven schools, the teacher is an integral part of the instruction. He or she collaborates with our producer to discuss the students' need, and capabilities, to structure the class and to arrange for the students to spend a day at WYSO.

In all these cases, the parents and guardians of the students are made aware of the students' work and engaged enough to give permission for the student work to air on WYSO.

WYSO teaches classes every year under the umbrella of Community Voices. These classes are open to citizens from all over our listening area and in 2017, our classes had a broad demographic reach: men and women, young and old, people from many neighborhoods and backgrounds come together and learn radio production and podcasting skills in our weekend classes.

3. One way by which we objectively measure the impact of our coverage of local issues is by social media 'likes', 'comments', and 'shares'. Our stories about local hardships, perseverance, growth and history receive the most social media traffic. Our Dayton Youth Radio stories are very popular.

The teacher at Centerville High School, Tricia Rapoch, whose students have participated for several years in DYR, sent these comments to DYR producer Basim Blunt:

Our Athletic Director came see me today - he wanted to tell me how impressed he was by the stories our kids tell. How important they were for parents/adults to hear. He then shared how Alexis' story had touched him .. so much so that he wanted to talk to her and to thank her for it.

Well done and congrats on creating such a wonderful vehicle for kids ... (and vicariously, adults).

We frequently hear this kind of response to DYR stories. When we fundraise around them, the phones ring off the hook. It's by far the single most-commented upon local series we have on WYSO.

In addition to the strong response we get during on-air fundraising, FY 2017 we were able to raise funds for DYR in an online Power2Give Campaign, which raised \$2,000, plus enough funds from local Montgomery County foundations to cover our costs. We see local funding as a positive sign from observant community members that our stories are reaching deep into our communities.

4. Several WYSO efforts in FY 2017 were aimed at meeting the needs of minority audiences.

Most of the students who take part in our DYR project, in FY 17 that was 38 stories, represent minority and immigrant groups. The immigrant students especially, are grappling with issues of assimilation, often trying to hold onto their own cultural traditions in the midst of overwhelming pressure to conform to American life.

For "Dear Mr. President" we intentionally partnered with the Dayton Metro Library and placed community producers in library branches located in predominantly minority communities especially on Dayton's underserved west side, where unemployment, income inequality, lack of services and underperforming schools have been ongoing problems. Citizens were encouraged to express their concerns about their neighborhoods and how the federal government does or does not meet their needs by addressing President Donald Trump directly.

In July 2016, at the beginning of FY 17, WYSO aired the final story in a 14 week series called "Women's Voices from Dayton Correctional Institution," one of two women's prisons in Ohio. That story was the culmination of a nine month long education and outreach project based on our community voices model, in which a staff member and a community producer collaborated to train incarcerated women and allowed them the chance to tell their own stories to our listening audience. Those stories help our listeners understand, if they did not already know about, the opioid crises in our community. Most of the women had been charged with drug-related felonies and to hear them explain how they got involved in drug use and how that lead to their incarceration. Most of the women came from minority communities and through their stories, our listeners could hear and decide for themselves how income inequality and issues of race affected these women's lives.

Ohio has a burgeoning prison population and there is perhaps no population with fewer opportunities to tell their stories.

In 2018, WYSO will collaborate with a producer from PRI who is creating a series about the connection between the opioid crisis and the rate of incarcerated women.

In FY 18, WYSO has joined a collaborative effort of more than 30 media outlets, known as Your Voices Ohio, to share data and stories about the opioid crisis in our area, which by some measures, is the worst in the nation. Part of YVO is a series of community discussions in Dayton, Middletown, Wilmington and Washington Courthouse, all within our listening area, to solicit direct comments from community members about how the local media should cover this ongoing story.

This community feedback model was developed by the Jefferson Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, the major funder of Your Voice Ohio.

And finally, in 2018, WYSO will partner with the “100 Days in Appalachia” project at West Virginia Public Broadcasting in an innovative engagement initiative to further our reporting ambitions and to continue to use our groundbreaking peer to peer model. “100 Days” is eager to form a cross-publishing and content repurposing arrangement with WYSO through this project, the details of which are under discussion but will be launched in spring 2018.

5. How we use the CPB grant.

WYSO’s innovation and experimentation goes back to its beginnings, when CPB recognized the station for its experimental approach to radio and news gathering. Now nearly 50 years since we first became CPB certified, we continue to use our federal dollars to reach out into the community. Our Community Voices project is integrated into the function of our staff. The general manager, content manager, managing editor, staff reporters and several free-lance community voices producers work together and integrate this community focus into everything we do. Our mission is to “Give Voice to the Community” and we are a highly mission- driven team.

We value the national programs that we purchase from NPR and other programming providers, but we live to create our local ones, and CPB funding makes that possible.