

## Grantee Information

ID	1370
Grantee Name	WBEZ-FM
City	Chicago
State	IL
Licensee Type	Community

### 6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

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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 occurred in Fiscal Year 2016. 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 2016 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.**

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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.

Chicago Public Media's (CPM) goal has always been to serve the public with critical news coverage and programming that fosters awareness and inspires community dialogue and engagement. Towards this goal, we offer three primary services: 1) Operation of Chicago's premiere public radio station WBEZ 91.5FM and its four Community News Bureaus; 2) Production and distribution of National programs: This American Life, Sound Opinions and Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me! (co-produced with NPR); and 3) Vocalo Radio 91.1FM, Chicago's Urban Alternative station. Through these services, we deliver broadcast and digital content, and host numerous public events for citizens to connect with us, with each other and with their leaders. As local newsrooms across the country continue in decline, CPM has invested substantially in expanding WBEZ's journalism operation to fill a rapidly growing void. In the last year, we added 12 new positions across editorial ranks and are building our investigative capacity in several key areas of coverage. CPM has also invested in the build-out of its digital delivery platforms to expand our reach and meet audiences where they are.

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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.

CPM has a long history of engaging in collaborative work with other news organizations and community partners when editorially appropriate. In recent years, we have worked with both local and national media peers, including National Public Radio, Reveal Radio, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Better Government Association, WVON Radio and the Center for Public Integrity, among many others. At this time, WBEZ has not engaged in any formal partnerships specifically related to this grant program, though we are certain our criminal justice work will be regularly featured on WTTW's Chicago Tonight program via our recent partnership with the station (discussed above). We also recognize that, while we are fortunate to have a highly skilled team of journalists and editors who consistently deliver with sound judgment and consideration for our city and audience needs, the Chicago metropolis is vast and increasingly diverse. As such, we remain receptive to the many authoritative voices outside of our internal network, those who are deeply embedded in the community and capable of bringing lesser known issues and stories to the forefront. Providing a megaphone for these voices is a critical component of our mission to serve as a reflection of the entire Chicago community. For example, a major lead was brought to our attention by Adriana Cardona-Maguigad, a reporter from a small community paper located in the Back of the Yards neighborhood. Cardona-Maguigad happened to notice an increase in homeless men frequenting her neighborhood and decided to ask questions. What she discovered is that many were heroin addicts from Puerto Rico who had been given a one-way ticket to Chicago with the promise of high-quality rehabilitation. However, upon their arrival, most found themselves in rundown facilities lacking in resources and trained staff. Recognizing the immediate significance of this story for Chicago, WBEZ worked with Cardona-Maguigad to launch a full investigation that continues today. The story inspired an episode of the national program, This American Life and prompted a call to action by government leaders, including Senator Dick Durbin who requested a federal investigation. WBEZ's reporting on this story was also recently honored with a National Edward R. Murrow Award. Furthermore, CPM understands that, on our own, we are limited to what we can accomplish in service to the Chicago community and that engaging with other cultural institutions and philanthropic organizations can have much greater impact. As such, CPM recently reinstated a Director of Community Engagement and Communications position responsible for creating, implementing, managing and evaluating all aspects of our community presence through strategic partnerships, media sponsorships, events, volunteer management, and public relations. We are also committed to amplifying the voices of the many leaders, experts and advocates in the community who can provide deeper or perhaps diverse perspectives on criminal justice related issues our city faces. Our live, locally produced morning talk program, The Morning Shift, is perhaps our most effective tool in this effort. Each day, the program features live interviews with individuals closest to the issues of the day and invites listeners to call-in and actively participate in lively public conversation.

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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.

CPM evaluates its impact through quantitative and qualitative analysis. For quantitative evaluation, CPM consistently tracks the content output, topics/themes explored, delivery platforms used and audience reach as determined by Nielsen Audio ratings, web analytics and social media metrics. WBEZ's average weekly broadcast audience is 550,000 listeners, while our digital platforms (website, mobile & tablet apps) collectively draw a growing audience of 93,000 users. Qualitative evaluation encompasses measurement of greater impact—such as noticeable shifts in the public conversation, evidence of policy change or government accountability—prompted by our reporting. For example, WBEZ reported in February 2015, that the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was illegally holding state wards in juvenile jails because officials could not find homes to place them in. This investigation impelled DCFS and juvenile judges to institute new policies that immediately cut the number of these incidents in half. Then, in September 2016, a federal judge ordered Cook County to immediately discontinue its practice of holding juveniles in jail over weekends and holidays when probable cause hearings are not held. Other evidence of impact may include, higher learning institutions—colleges and universities—citing our coverage or investigations as part of their curriculum, other news organizations (local and national) referencing our coverage or conducting related work, legislators introducing new laws or holding legislative hearings to address issues our journalists have uncovered and local community events or conversations held in response to topics and issues to which we call attention. These are a mere handful of examples that might speak to the broader impact of public service journalism. The larger conversations that commence in correlation with our news coverage and analysis help guide our editorial priorities as we continue to learn how to best serve the community.

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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 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.

Organizationally, CPM is dedicated to providing a collective "voice" for all Chicagoans, and strives to engage urban, culturally diverse citizens that are often overlooked by the mainstream media. As such, issues of inequality and social justice are consistently at the forefront. Chicago remains deeply segregated with enduring poverty and violence that disproportionately affects minority—namely Black—communities. Through our reporting, we look closely at how these factors play out across multiple systems - law enforcement, child welfare, housing, economic opportunity, access to education, incarceration etc. Additionally, CPM's second broadcast service, Vocolo Radio, was established in order to bring the next generation into the public media fold. Vocolo's radio format, called the Urban Alternative, was designed specifically to appeal to younger, urban listeners seeking social and civic engagement with their community. Vocolo utilizes music to raise awareness and celebrate Chicago's urban arts scene. With music as its cornerstone appeal, Vocolo features urban music, ranging from Hip-Hop, Dance to Indie Rock. However, unlike commercial radio, Vocolo's playlists illustrate the diversity of Hip-Hop and local urban culture. Vocolo also features talk programming that inspires conversations of immediate significance Chicagoans. Furthermore, Vocolo is rooted in the local arts scene, hosting and sponsoring a number of live events that provide a platform for Chicago musicians and artists.

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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 CPB is integral in CPM's ability to provide the independent news, information and entertainment programming that sustains a healthy informed democracy. Though we are based in Chicago, the issues we cover as a news organization are, in many ways, endemic across the U.S. heartland. As news outlets continue in decline, CPM takes very seriously its duty to serve not only Chicagoans, but the region writ-large with fact-based news coverage and analysis. CPB's support is vital to our ability to continue providing this service and to investing in expanding our operations to fill a rapidly growing void of dependable, quality journalism.

#### Comments

Question

Comment

No Comments for this section