

## 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 2017. 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 2017 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) Vocolo 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. This past year WBEZ has significantly grown its local journalism and daily news operation, bolstering our reporting teams with leading journalists and skilled editors. For one, our award-winning education reporting team now has more reporters covering the beat than any other outlet in the city and we are currently investing in the build-out of two additional topic-focused reporting desks: Criminal Justice and Government & Politics, a measure that will significantly strengthen the reporting expertise and authority we are able to provide listeners surrounding these critical issues. Through our successful efforts to build-out our digital capabilities (website, mobile app) we are reaching a growing and more diverse audience. Today, WBEZ reaches 580,000 weekly broadcast

listeners and over 100,000 weekly listeners on our digital platforms. In addition, for the first time ever, WBEZ has a membership of over 89,000 individuals — up 30% over the past two years.

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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. Just in the past year, CPM has collaborated with National Public Radio, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Better Government Association, the Marshall Project, ProPublica Illinois, and WTTW. Other community based organizations with whom we enjoy collaborations, or informal engagement, include City Bureau, Free Spirit Media, Invisible Institute, South Side Weekly, and Urban Broadcast Media. CPM has been a vital partner with these organizations and is committed to further strengthening the health and vitality of the community and media landscape. Indeed, City Bureau reporters and fellows serve as correspondents for WBEZ's Curious City stories as part of an ongoing partnership, and our Criminal Justice desk is actively partnering with two City Bureau reporters on a forthcoming investigative story that will air on WBEZ. WBEZ journalists also appear frequently as trainers and presenters at Public Newsroom conversations and workshops. ProPublica Illinois' produced its very first report in collaboration with WBEZ, a gripping account that raised questions about possible overreach by the ATF in its efforts to crack down on small time gun dealers. Both organizations are eager to identify another project we can jointly pursue. Additionally, WBEZ's newsroom is committed to engage with community members and activists on emerging stories. For example, WBEZ produces a series of stories titled, Every Other Hour. This series explored issues of gun violence in Chicago, telling stories from a variety of perspectives. As part of the editorial process our editors and reporters held a series of community engagement events to gain feedback on their reporting.

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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.

WBEZ reaches 580,000 weekly broadcast listeners and over 100,000 weekly listeners on our digital platforms. In addition, for the first time ever, WBEZ has a membership of over 89,000 individuals — up 30% over the past two years. The investments WBEZ has made in our editorial capacity and the resulting growth in our audience helps reinforce our role as a trustworthy source of news and information for Chicago and beyond. Listeners rely on us for high quality, in-depth reporting and storytelling that raises awareness and inspires action. As an example of such reporting, consider our examination of children and state mental health services, a story we began reporting in 2013. Our continuing investigation ultimately revealed that Illinois was not approving Medicaid dollars for certain treatments, which meant that some families could not get the psychiatric services their children needed. Last year, reporter Shannon Heffernan told the story of a mother, Eileen, who felt her only option was something called a “psychiatric lockout” — to abandon her son at the hospital intentionally. Once a parent refuses to pick up her child, DCFS takes custody, at which point the state must give the child the mental health services he requires. By abandoning her child, Eileen could get her son the services that Illinois was refusing to fund and that she could not afford on her own. Since then, the state of Illinois has signed an interagency agreement with the goal of stopping these psychiatric lockouts. Advocates that we spoke with say this was in part a result of our reporting. Lawmakers have said our story also helped them get access to data about lockouts that they had been unable to obtain before. WBEZ is committed to holding public officials accountable, to giving voice to the powerless and to helping equip citizens with diverse perspectives and sound analysis. We aim to provide the highest quality programming and journalism that the Chicago region deserves and demands — the kind of news that not only informs, but engages and moves people to action. Within this framework, we are attuned to the following indicators to consider the impact of our work and fulfillment of our mission: • Reporting that receives a significant response from the public • Reporting that sparks a broader public conversation • Changes in policy resulting from our reporting • Reporting that uncovers systemic injustice • National attention to and distribution of our reporting • Reporting that is widely viewed and shared through social media • Reporting that receives recognition for its journalistic excellence WBEZ will evaluate the quality of our reporting and content against these core values and toward fulfilling our mission long-term. We will also continue to utilize standard audience metrics, such as Nielsen Audio and Google Analytics to track audience growth and progress in reaching new listeners. Additionally, industry awards — for which WBEZ is frequently honored — often speak to the quality and strength of our reporting and content.

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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 2017, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2018. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

Chicago Public Media (CPM) serves the public interest by creating and delivering diverse, compelling content that informs, inspires, enriches and entertains. Through a broad range of media platforms, we connect diverse audiences in our service area and beyond to one another. We help them make a difference in our communities, our region, and our world. Because of CPM's mission and values, to serve our community with public service journalism, it is critical that our organization, and in turn our newsroom, is representative of the community we serve. Only in this way can we tell the breadth of stories that our community needs to hear. CPM is undertaking a holistic approach to effectively improving the diversity across the organization. However, we believe that success will only come via an authentic and sustained effort led by our board and senior management team. With this in mind, we are proactively working to increase the diversity of our board, as well as ensuring that existing directors are trained on issues of race, diversity, and equality. The racial justice training that our board will undertake will enable and enlighten them to lead the organization toward achieving its diversity goals. The senior management team will also undergo training. In order to tell the breadth of stories our community deserves, and as part of our newsroom expansion, a newly established Race, Class, and Communities desk will provide sustained, integrated coverage exploring the ways in which race, class, and communities shape our region — and their relationship with the region's larger institutional forces. Covering these forces and the people at the heart of them is essential for understanding the critical challenges and opportunities facing our region in the 21st century. This focus on the intersection of people and place will bring rigorous reporting and human insights to these fundamental dynamics of urban life. Beyond telling increasingly representative stories, and core to our efforts to reach new and more diverse audiences, is our sister station, Vocalo. Vocalo amplifies the voices that enrich our city, both socially and culturally, and features programming that inspires conversations reflective of the reality of how young Chicagoan's experience their city.

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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