

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 2018. 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 2018 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.

Through WBEZ 91.5 and our sister station, Vocolo 91.1, we seek to nourish the public conversation by telling the stories that matter – stories that provoke thought, entertain, capture emotion, and inspire action. Currently, WBEZ reaches more than 750,000 weekly live listeners and over 150,000 weekly listeners via on-demand digital platforms. In addition, WBEZ has a membership of over 86,000. WBEZ meets its mission to serve our community by creating and delivering diverse, compelling content that informs, inspires, enriches and entertains. Through a broad range of media platforms, we connect audiences in our service area and beyond to one another. At a time when newsrooms across the country are shrinking, Chicago Public Media is proud to be expanding our coverage, adding staff, and deepening our impact. Further to our broadcast and digital platforms, WBEZ is developing our community engagement capabilities and goals. In addition to award-winning journalism that serves our diverse region, WBEZ has redoubled our efforts to connect more deeply with communities, including those which may have been historically underserved by our service. This year, we have undertaken the development of a robust program of community engagement events including community conversations, and public forums. The public's understanding and engagement around topic areas of our reporting and the driving forces behind them may be one of the most critical components to addressing the challenges we are facing as a region. An active, engaged, and empowered citizenry is the single most powerful tool to drive meaningful, lasting change and to build social

capital. Further, this program will inform and deepen the relevance of our reporting, and contribute to community conversation around often difficult topics. By asking local residents, leaders, policy makers, those directly impacted, and those concerned for their neighbors to engage in a dialogue that is responsive to WBEZ's enterprise reporting on key regional issues, we seek to build connections within and across neighborhoods to help drive change and inspire solutions. As part of this strategic investment, in July 2018, we hired Amin Cyntje as Director of Community Engagement and Live Events to create and oversee the strategies that will deepen CPM's relationship with our community and in turn inform our reporting. Live events extend the reach of our original programming and help us to take a more active role in our community as a resource, and steward, of critical information and analysis. This community-based programming will leverage WBEZ's original reporting to engage residents across Chicago on timely and relevant issues of concern to them. It is envisioned that these 90-minute programs will be hosted by WBEZ talent and feature reporting from WBEZ's enterprise news desks and be held in partnership with local community groups and institutions. These conversations will feature community stakeholders, leaders and residents, and allow for maximum audience engagement. Target audiences for these events are WBEZ listeners, community stakeholders and area residents. Each event will be free and open to the public with anticipated attendance of between 25 and 150 per event. We aim for each event to be livestreamed, with some being recorded for possible future broadcast. It is the objective for the events, forums and conversations to be delivered within the communities that are the focus of reporting. In this way we extend the reach of our work and we will be able to talk, and listen, directly to a breadth of community members who may be impacted by the topics of our reporting, and evolve how our content reflects the diverse nature of our city. Integral to the success of the planned program of community events will be the collection of questions from listeners ahead of each event and incorporation of community voices throughout.

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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.

Chicago is fortunate to be home to a number of organizations, some homegrown and some with national roots, that are seeking to expand the capacity, diversity and editorial framework for local news coverage. They include, but are not limited to, City Bureau, Free Spirit Media, Invisible Institute, Marshall Project, Pro Publica Illinois, South Side Weekly, and Urban Broadcast Media. While these organizations differ in their size, structure and editorial focus, they share a similar commitment to improving the depth and breadth of reporting, particularly among under-represented communities and subject areas. They represent exciting additions to the local media ecosystem, expanding both reporting capacity and the promise of more robust, inclusive and representative journalism in Chicago. CPM has been a vital partner in many of these emerging efforts and is committed to further strengthening the health and vitality of this 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 the City Bureau's regular Public Newsroom conversations and workshops.

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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 considers the following indicators and factors when examining the impact and quality of our news coverage: • 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 Additionally, WBEZ measures reach and depth of its storytelling via traditional media metrics such as Nielsen Audio ratings that tell us who is listening, when they're listening, and for how long. In addition, as WBEZ further expands into the digital landscape, we rely more heavily on data analysis tools like Google Analytics, our own web traffic, podcast downloads, and mobile app usage to tell us more about who our audience is and how they're accessing our work. Through 2017 and in to 2018, Government & Politics Reporters, Tony Arnold and David McKinney, undertook an investigation that spotlighted the Rauner administration's problematic response to a 2015 legionnaire's outbreak that killed a dozen residents at an Illinois Veteran's Home in Quincy. Surviving War, But Not The Veterans' Home also detailed administration efforts to keep key documents about the crisis secret. McKinney and Arnold's investigation prompted the following: • Legislative hearings and a State audit to explore the crisis • The resignation of the department director in charge of the home, and a probe into Governor Rauner's administration. • Eight different measures won final legislative approval o Including an appropriation in the state budget supporting a \$245 million plan to rebuild the aging facility o Additionally,

the latest bill signed in to law requires the state to notify veterans' home residents and their families within 24 hours of an infectious disease outbreak, including Legionnaires'.

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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 2018, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2019. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

Chicago Public Media exists to serve and benefit citizens across the entire city of Chicago. In order to serve a city with a population as diverse as Chicago's, CPM is committed to ensuring that our staff and newsroom mirrors our city's demographics. Central to CPM's mission, vision and values is maintaining a workplace environment that recognizes and celebrates the power of diversity, inclusion and equity. We firmly believe that our organization must be truly representative of the communities we serve in order to provide the journalism that our community needs and deserves. We also recognize that if CPM is to be the premier news organization of Chicago, we must actively recruit, hire, and develop the best talent and human capital. This means evolving and challenging our traditional hiring practices to ensure a wide applicant pool, easing the barriers to entry for traditionally underrepresented applicants such as people of color, women, and gender non-conforming individuals. The majority of CPM's staff—67%—identifies as White, with 33% identifying as Black, Asian, Latinx, Native American, or a combination thereof. While we continue to work towards a demographic breakdown more similar to Chicago's, these numbers do compare favorably to other similar news organizations across the country: 75% White at NPR, 78% at the New York Times, and 83% at daily newspapers. We understand that racial representation in our staff is merely the first step in a process towards racial equity in our organization. Beginning in early 2018, CPM leadership established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, made up of senior and junior level staff that has been tasked with assessing the current climate of CPM and offering a suggested path forward. Partnering with the Morten Group, a consulting firm specializing in non-profits and advising organizations on achieving racial equity, we've now undertaken a complete internal assessment of the organization surveying the full board and staff, resulting in several key findings that identify opportunities for CPM to achieve racial equity. As a direct result of this assessment, the entirety of the staff of CPM has now undergone mandatory training on understanding and moving toward racial diversity, equity, and inclusion within our organization. Work is now underway to develop a full and formal diversity, equity, and inclusion plan for both the board and staff that will inform how we approach professional development, hiring and retention practices, story selection, and programming decisions. Building a race equity culture takes time, and we are at the start of our journey towards that goal. Representation is merely the first step for CPM, to be followed by the creation and application of processes and strategies to engender a stronger culture of inclusion in our programming and work, and ultimately a change in how our organization meets its mission to serve our city. We embrace this difficult work ahead of us, and fully accept it as a critical component of our theory of change.

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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?

As a public media organization, Chicago Public Media cannot undertake its mission without the commitment of supporters such as the CPB. We rely on a diversity of funding that ensures we serve our audience with the service they deserve and need to be fully engaged citizens.

Comments

Question

Comment

No Comments for this section