

SAS RADIO 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.

WKSU continues to initiate, conduct and be involved with successful initiatives that connect with underserved audiences. WKSU is Ohio's largest public radio outlet. Station programming is broadcast from a main tower near Akron, four regional towers and two translator transmitters. The combined coverage area reaches listeners in 22 counties in Northeast and North Central Ohio, as well as parts of Western Pennsylvania – home to nearly four million people living in large urban cities, smaller towns and rolling rural farmland. The towers broadcast four HD Radio digital channels (primary broadcast, classical music, Folk Alley and all news). This content is also available streaming online. WKSU actively shares news stories and other reporting via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

As part of a major overhaul in WKSU's digital outreach program, the station's twice-monthly e-newsletter was refocused on community engagement and a second, weekly e-newsletter was launched to highlight reporting from the WKSU newsroom and NPR.

In FY18, WKSU identified a need for reporting surrounding mental health care access and availability throughout Ohio. The newsroom produced a six-part series, accompanied by expanded information online. Topics in "Navigating the Path to Mental Health" covered by the WKSU news staff included stigma attached to mental illness, mental health "deserts," the path to finding the right help, obstacles to access, and training and awareness for first responders. The series concluded with a personal piece by a Kent State student newsroom intern about her experience with involuntary commitment.

At the end of the news series, WKSU held a free public mental health forum at the Akron-Summit County Public Library with a panel of experts and community members, moderated by reporter M.L. Schultze. Before the forum, local mental health organizations participated in a mental health fair in the library lobby.

WKSU also participated in collaboration with the HuffPost as part of their "Listen to America" national tour that featured Schultze's coverage of Akron's large Bhutanese community and a free community forum on urban renewal at the Akron Art Museum.

Regional outreach also included a State of the Station event in Wooster, a Shuffle CD release party with local band The Dreemers in Akron, a live taping of the NPR Politics Podcast in Cleveland (co-produced with WCPN ideastream) and a presentation of NPR reporter David Folkenflik in Akron. In October, WKSU celebrated its 68th birthday with a public open house at its Broadcast Center in Kent.

Answers apply to the 2018 Fiscal Year – 7/1/2017 – 6/30/2018

WKSU sponsors many arts and culture events, making an effort to attend in person and make personal contact and share station information with diverse audiences. One such event is the Tremont Arts and Cultural Festival, a two-day event featuring fine art and crafts, community outreach organizations, music and a mix of food reflecting the different ethnic heritages of those living in the neighborhood.

WKSU also has a long-standing relationship with the Cleveland International Film Festival. Recognized for its inclusion of foreign language, LGBTQ and urban films, CIFF is truly one of the region's most-diverse cultural institutions. WKSU also has a presence at the Cleveland Orchestra's Blossom Festival, Akron Symphony Orchestra concerts, the free Downtown@Dusk concert series at the Akron Art Museum and the Akron Roundtable, a monthly speaker series that WKSU records for later broadcast.

Along with the mental health crisis, WKSU's news coverage in FY18 included a multi-part series on Congressional district gerrymandering, a series on judges who are in charge of managing local park systems (an issue identified in earlier Community Conversation events), a long-range focus on entrepreneurship, continued coverage of immigration, issues surrounding the opioid crisis and Ohio's move to legalizing medical marijuana, the midterm elections, changes in the auto industry and their effect on local employment and the urban revitalization of Akron, one of our region's most important cities.

Other stand-out themes in ongoing features included science and innovation (Exploradio), local sports (The View from Pluto), regional music (Shuffle), Kent State University accomplishments (Elevations) and the arts (State of the Arts).

A summary of WKSU's news coverage this year:

- The continuing impact of the Opioid epidemic.
- The intersection of innovation, research and business in Northeast Ohio.
- The faces and the sounds of the arts including musicians, public art and the food scene in the towns and cities of our region.
- Social justice issues throughout our region, including race relations, food insecurity and LGBTQ issues.
- National, state and local elections, including ballot issues, throughout WKSU's coverage area.
- Immigration and the ongoing question of the US policy on deportation, focusing on a local business owner.
- Medical research being conducted by regional hospitals and universities.
- Entrepreneurship reporting including Cleveland and Akron and involving student interns as well as professional staff.

In the coming year, we plan to continue and to explore further the following topics:

- Gerrymandering
- Local and national 2018 midterm elections
- Mental Health
- Opioid Crisis
- Economy
- Entrepreneurship in Ohio

Answers apply to the 2018 Fiscal Year – 7/1/2017 – 6/30/2018

- Music throughout our listening region
- Science and innovation
- Arts
- 50th Anniversary of the burning of the Cuyahoga River
- Immigrations issues

All stories from the WKSU newsroom are available online, often with informational links and additional story background. Stand-alone web areas were created for the Entrepreneur Beat, Gerrymandering: Shading the Lines, and our Mental Health series: Navigating the Path.

There are also web areas for the Exploradio series on science and innovation in Northeast Ohio, sports commentary on the View from Pluto, the music-based Shuffle and State of the Arts.

The WKSU.org website allows reporters to tag and assign categories to their posts and make them easier to search and share through social media. Community events are searchable from their own calendar and from web features for station collaborations.

Web-only initiatives for FY18 included participation in StoryCorps' Great Thanksgiving Listen, a project that encouraged people across the county to share family stories during the Thanksgiving holiday. The stories were captured on cell phones via an app and copied to the StoryCorps archives at the Library of Congress. The station's coverage of the opioid epidemic had online-only components, such as an interactive timeline.

Along with WKSU.org, station content can be streamed via free mobile apps. Folk Alley has its own distinct free app, which includes access to streaming audio and Folk Alley Sessions video performances. The WKSU mobile app connects listeners to all four of WKSU's content streams (on-air, Folk Alley, classical music and all news) and provides links for news reports from WKSU and NPR, and information on community events.

WKSU also focuses on promoting listening through smart speakers, like Amazon Echo and Google Home, through TuneIn. This year, WKSU staff developed an Alexa skill for adding station newscasts to a user's Flash Briefing, along with general Alexa skills for WKSU and Folk Alley that allow a direct connection to station content.

WKSU's website, WKSU.org, is responsive, allowing the layout to instantly adapt to screen sizes ranging from desktop and laptop to smartphone and tablet. The prime focus of the site continues to be the stories created by the WKSU news team and content partners such as the Ohio Public Radio Statehouse News Bureau, Great Lakes Today, and Your Voice Ohio, along with station information and upcoming events.

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.

Answers apply to the 2018 Fiscal Year – 7/1/2017 – 6/30/2018

The News Department, in cooperation with WCPN (public radio affiliate in Cleveland, Ohio), and WOSU (public radio affiliate in Columbus, Ohio), continued a joint project called “StateImpact Ohio: Eye on Education.” This was the first of eight collaborative stations with NPR to be approved and up-and-running. The on-line and on-air reporting has been picked up by local newspapers, the entire public radio network in Ohio, public radio stations in surrounding states and NPR as well. Although, NPR wound down its support of StateImpact, three Ohio stations, including WKSU chose to maintain it at full strength. It remains a key source of education reporting in the state.

WKSU has an ongoing commitment to working with WCPN, our public radio colleagues in Cleveland to insure the broadest coverage for our listeners. This includes StateImpact mentioned above, and the Statehouse News Bureau bringing WKSU listeners news from our capitol in Columbus, OH and OPR – Ohio Public Radio, designed to facilitate and coordinate reporting efforts by Ohio’s Public Radio news rooms and bring coverage from each newsroom to the other stations in the state. We also collaborate with WVIZ public television station in Cleveland as our reporter M.L. Schultze participates in a public affairs panel broadcast on radio and television.

In FY18, WKSU continued its collaboration with radio, television and newspapers through the state in “Your Voice Ohio”, an initiative created to cover the opioid epidemic in the Mahoning Valley.

WKSU also collaborates with our license holder, Kent State University. This year we continued our five-minute module featuring a student, staff or faculty member of Kent State by showcasing their work at Kent State for our listening area. We engage journalism and communications students in our news room as interns, and we have started engaging student media in partnerships to create content for our website including graphics and maps using data journalism. For FY18, WKSU’s *Morning Edition* Host was the advisor to Kent State University’s student media internet radio station, Black Squirrel Radio and taught Storytelling with Sound, and advanced journalism class for KSU.

WKSU prides itself on being an integral part of Northeast Ohio. The station provides a public radio and media service, as well as taking pride in being a visible force in the community. WKSU staff members participate in various community-related activities. The news director was on the board of the Akron Press Club and the newsroom’s senior reporter/digital editor is past-president of the Akron Press Club and past-president of the Ohio Associate Press Media Editors. Staff regularly speak to community groups, ranging from the Akron Women’s Club to the Canton Early College Program, and speak with groups of high school and college students.

In March 2018, a group of middle school students who were part of the Tom Tod Ideas program in Canton learned more about journalism with a visit to WKSU. The station also gave tours to interested community members. WKSU staff members – including reporters, on-air hosts, External Relations and administrative staff – supported cultural and arts organizations by serving as WKSU representatives and building community engagement at regional events.

Answers apply to the 2018 Fiscal Year – 7/1/2017 – 6/30/2018

WKSU continues to be a strong supporter of arts and cultural organizations and events throughout the region by offering promotional assistance for institutions including The Cleveland Orchestra, Apollo's Fire, the Akron Art Museum, the Canton Museum of Art, Magical Theatre Company (a theatre group for young audiences), Weathervane Community Playhouse, Karamu House, Wooster Chamber Music and many others. WKSU has sponsored and hosted events for the Cleveland International Film Festival, Tremont Arts & Cultural Festival and Downtown@Dusk (a free concert series in Akron). Attendance at these activities in communities throughout WKSU's 22-county listening area is a strong reinforcement for the positive work being created by organizations throughout Northeast Ohio.

WKSU is also the producing home of FolkAlley.com, a streaming music service featuring folk, Americana and roots artists. Folk Alley offers hosted 24-hour streaming audio on its website, along with a two-hour weekly program that is syndicated nationally. Because of the reach of the Internet, Folk Alley is a global force for the preservation and promotion of tradition-based music, finding the service a worldwide audience made up of multiple generations, ethnic heritages and nations of origin. NPR often uses Folk Alley hosts and writers as genre experts. Folk Alley's stream can be accessed from FolkAlley.com, NPR.org, iTunes, TuneIn, iHeartRadio, and other streaming sites.

Along with Folk Alley audio content, the site features music reviews, previews and artist profiles, and exclusive Folk Alley Sessions performance videos produced by Folk Alley in Kent, Ohio, and Saranac Lake, New York, as well as remote recordings from festivals across North America, such as the 30A Songwriters Festival in Florida. Folk Alley also posts regularly on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, sharing performance content, folk music news and links. Content from Folk Alley is often shared with NPR for the NPR Music website.

This year, FolkAlley.com was relaunched as a mobile-friendly website with additional features. WKSU also created a Folk Alley Alexa skill that allows people to easily play Folk Alley content from their Amazon Echoes or other Alexa-enabled devices

Since 1996, the annual Hunger Challenge provides an opportunity for WKSU to address a community need: hunger. This day of the end of year on-air drive allows WKSU donors to make a greater impact for their community by offering a thank you gift of meals. During the Hunger Challenge, donors give to WKSU and then have the option to select meals which are then donated to one of WKSU's regional foodbank partners. Donors are supporting independent journalism and have the opportunity to help those in need by selecting the thank you gift of meals. Sponsors of the Hunger Challenge help pay for the thank you gifts of meals.

Representatives from the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank and the Greater Cleveland Food Bank are guests in the studio. Additionally, pre-produced testimonials from Campus Kitchen representatives air throughout the day. Collectively, these representatives offer information and details about hunger in the community and how the agencies operate.

WKSU's mission statement says that "WKSU creates a shared civic and cultural life that connects communities through a diverse mix of media that extends the heritage of Kent

State University.” Based on the above criterion, it is evident that reaching 22 Ohio counties and parts of Western Pennsylvania; WKSU truly connects and reaches out to constituents in the Northeast Ohio region.

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.

As an active part of the Kent State University community, the station has long-played a role as a real-world educational experience. WKSU recruits Kent State journalism and communication students to work at WKSU while completing their degrees, this gives students the chance to develop real and marketable skills – such as gathering and producing news reports – while working alongside station professionals. These jobs at WKSU create a solid building block for the next generation to learn in a setting that enhances their education and can be used as a catalyst for their careers. This association with students also gives staff members a glimpse into rising trends and the minds of younger consumers.

While most of the KSU students work in the award-winning WKSU newsroom, there are also interns learning about public relations, communications and music radio production in their positions. WKSU encourages hands-on learning and often has student interns participate in the day-to-day functions of the station. Station staff attended a recruitment event created by the Kent State University College of Communication and Information to meet interested students and introduce the station’s internship program.

The station also hosts a graduate student who is paid through the Walton D. Clarke Fellowship. This scholarship is a partnership with the Kent State College of Communication and Information to give a graduate student a two-year experience with hands-learning at the radio station.

Guests with a connection to NPR and public radio are often retained for public speaking engagements at the Akron Press Club and the Akron Roundtable through the efforts of WKSU. Because WKSU encourages learning, giving journalism students access to NPR professionals is one way that the station strives to bring the experienced world of journalism and radio to local young people in our community. Station reporters and professional staff speak with high school and college classes, such as Canton’s Tom Tod Ideas, which brought middle school students to Kent State University two years in a row.

As part of community educational outreach, WKSU also hosts community tour groups each year, guiding school children, college students, Cub Scouts and others through the broadcast center and studios. WKSU’s offices are ADA compliant and easily accommodate people with disabilities.

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Organizations all over Northeast Ohio support WKSU via their underwriting/sponsorship of the station. Their organizations are impacted by our audience attending their events, purchasing their goods/services, and associating their brand with quality. WKSU has community organizations that have sponsored WKSU programming for 5, 10, 20, even 30+ years. These organizations share their impact stories with WKSU on how their business has improved, but also enjoy being associated with a well-respected media organization that benefits the community.

With the growth in WKSU's social media presence, this "halo" effect can be somewhat tracked by marking response and share rates of stories on the station's Facebook (WKSU.FM), Twitter (@WKSU) and Instagram (wksu897) feeds – which applies to stories on any topic.

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.

WKSU's programming and news coverage is intended to reach to all Northeast Ohio communities. Reports focused on the immigrant experience – including coverage of possible reforms under the Trump administration – touch those involved while telling an important story to the full listening audience. WKSU also reported on LGBTQ and gender issues, voting rights issues and the widespread and ongoing effects of the growing opioid epidemic. The major news series, Navigating the Path to Mental Health, featured stories of diverse populations. The series included a free public mental health forum and mental health care fair at the central and easily accessible Akron-Summit County Public Library. The news team focused on Gerrymandering this year as well.

Folk Alley makes a conscious effort to honor diversity with its programming. The music stream and syndicated show attempts to add diverse artists in each hour, including African American, LGBTQ, and World (Latin/Hispanic, Cajun, Celtic and African) music artists. The roots-based music that makes up the Folk Alley stream is also rich with songs from Appalachia and historical social issue folk music.

The station works to partner with arts and cultural events with a connection to diverse audiences. Notable efforts include sponsoring two films at the Cleveland International Film Festival, promoting the Akron Symphony Orchestra's Gospel Meets Symphony, working with Karamu House (a historic African American theatre company) and sponsoring the Tremont Arts & Cultural Festival, a two-day community event celebrating one of Cleveland's most ethnically diverse neighborhoods. WKSU also records and broadcasts monthly Akron Roundtable (a popular community forum) addresses on a variety of topics of community interest.

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 the Corporation for Public Broadcasting via this grant enables WKSU to reach a 22-county area in Northeast and North Central Ohio and parts of Western Pennsylvania, allowing our station to access and provide public radio service to communities and regions that extend far beyond our main broadcast facility in Kent, Ohio. Without CPB funding, WKSU would not have such a broad reach. Without the CPB grant, WKSU could not purchase high-quality programming from National Public Radio, Public Radio International, and American Public Media. In addition, without the CPB grant, WKSU would not have been able to bring additional HD channels to our community, providing 24-7 folk and classical services on yet another platform within our region.

The CPB grant also helps WKSU extend its reach through the news. Northeast Ohio is a diverse region, and although that diversity is a strength in our region, it can also be perceived as a weakness as disparate communities struggle to connect with each other. Many times, WKSU is the glue among those communities because our station and its news service helps people recognize their connection to each other. It is a point of pride for WKSU that our station takes a regional approach to covering the news – an approach that no other Northeast Ohio media can claim. In addition to WKSU’s main news bureau at the Kent broadcast facility, our station has news studios and reporters in the three major cities in Northeast Ohio (Akron, Canton, and Cleveland).

CPB funding helps Folk Alley fulfill its goal of providing listeners with access to a musical art form that would otherwise be limited or non-existent. This is accomplished through our 24-7 hosted stream; our in-studio interviews and performances, specialty side streams, and more. Our goal is to provide quality folk, roots and Americana music to listeners who have no listening options, and to enhance the listening options to people with limited opportunities to hear this music.

Many other organizations have recognized WKSU’s accomplishments, particularly as related to the news and to reaching into communities to cover important community issues. WKSU’s journalistic excellence is demonstrated by the countless awards presented to the station and staff by local regional and national organizations. Fiscal Year 2018 WKSU Awards include:

2017

Society of Professional Journalists-Ohio Chapters—Ohio’s Best Journalism Awards

- Best in Show-*Best News Operation*, WKSU Staff
- Best in Show-*Best Reporter*, M.L. Schultze
- Best in Show-*Best Anchor*, Amanda Rabinowitz
- First Place-*Best Consumer Reporter*, Tim Rudell, Kabir Bhatia and Kevin Niedermier—“Grounded: The De-hubbing of the Region’s Airports”
- First Place-*Best Environment Reporting*, Jeff St. Clair—“Exploradio”
- First Place-*Best General Assignment Reporting*, Kevin Niedermier—“RNC Trash, RNC Hotel Rooms, Indians Lose Game 7”
- First Place-*Best Health Care Feature Reporting*, M.L. Schultze, Amanda Rabinowitz and Vivian Goodman—“The Business of Health”

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- First Place-*Best Sports Reporting*, Tim Rudell, Kabir Bhatia and Kevin Niedermier—“Cavs Win!”
- Second Place-*Best Medical/Health Reporting*, Jeff St. Clair—“Exploradio”

2018

Ohio Associated Press—Ohio APME Awards

- Best in Show-*General Excellence*, WKSU News
- First Place-*Best Anchor*, Amanda Rabinowitz
- First Place-*Best Reporter*, M.L. Schultze
- First Place-*Best Broadcast Writing*, M.L. Schultze—“An Akron Mother and Her Sons Plan for the Once Unimaginable: Separation and Deportation”
- First Place-*Best Sportscast*, Amanda Rabinowitz and Terry Pluto—“The View from Pluto”
- First Place-*Best Use of Sound*, Kabir Bhatia—“The Dragon Invasion of Turkeyfoot Lake Could Net About \$20,000 For Breast Cancer Awareness”
- First Place-*Best Enterprise Reporting*, M.L. Schultze—“Ride Hailing In Rural America: Like Uber With A Neighborly Feel”
- First Place-*Best Investigative Reporting*, M.L. Schultze—“Race, Deaths and Past Wars on Drugs: All Shape Ohio's Response to the Heroin Crisis”
- Second Place-*Best Feature Reporting*, Amanda Rabinowitz—“Shuffle”
- Second Place-*Best Continuing Coverage*, WKSU Staff—“Opioids: Turning the Tide in the Crisis”
- Second Place-*Best Newscast*, Jeff St. Clair—“All Things Considered”

Press Club of Cleveland—Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards

- Best in Show-*Radio Newscast, Major Market*, Amanda Rabinowitz—“Morning Edition”
- First Place-*News Writing*, M.L. Schultze—“An Akron Mother and Her Sons Plan for the Once Unimaginable: Separation and Deportation”
- First Place-*Public Service*, M.L. Schultze, Mark Arehart, Kabir Bhatia, Karen Kasler—“Gerrymandering: Shading the Lines”
- First Place-*Human Interest*, Amanda Rabinowitz—“Shuffle: Sofar Sounds Marks Three Years of Secret, Intimate Concerts in Cleveland”
- First Place-*Use of Sound*, Kabir Bhatia —“The Dragon Invasion of Turkeyfoot Lake Could Net About \$20,000 For Breast Cancer Awareness”
- First Place-*Radio News*, M.L. Schultze—“With 1,200 Losing Their Jobs, Lordstown Hopes the Cycle Turns and Plans for a New Economy”
- Second Place-*On-going Coverage*, Kabir Bhatia, M.L. Schultze, Tim Rudell, Mark Arehart—“The Revitalization of the City of Akron”
- Second Place-*Documentary*, M.L. Schultze—“An Akron Refugee Story: From Surviving to Thriving”
- Second Place-*Radio News Website*, Chuck Poulton, Staff—“WKSU.org”