WHAD: Telling Public Radio's Story 2015-2016

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.

Wisconsin Public Radio’s (WPR) WHAD is committed to community service through news, conversation/information and entertainment content on air, online and in communities across the state. All of our content is produced with the highest standards of ethics and audience service. We strive to serve Wisconsin’s diverse communities and perspectives with content and conversations that are trustworthy, informative, useful, civil and inspiring. Guests, hosts and callers come together for smart, meaningful conversations on The Joy Cardin Show, The Kathleen Dunn Show and Central Time.

WPR regularly gathers input on community issues, programming decisions and other concerns of our listeners and the broader public. Twice during the reporting period the station partnered with St. Norbert College in DePere, Wisconsin for a statewide survey of residents. Results of the survey, which focused on state and national issues and concerns, was used to guide production of news content heard within newscasts and topic selection for our 8.5 hours of daily, local call-in programs.

Results of the survey were used to shape stand-alone news stories, but they also influenced coverage of stories throughout the year in broadcast and on wpr.org. During the reporting period, WPR provided unbiased conversation and coverage on the Wisconsin Supreme Court race, presidential primaries, policing, education, immigration, the economy and much more.

WPR also collaborated with Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) and University of Wisconsin-Extension to hold a series of meetings with residents and leaders in communities around the state. Staff from across our organization - including reporters, hosts, producers, membership and administrative staff - attended meetings in Green Bay and Barron to learn about the issues and concerns of those communities. Like the Wisconsin Survey noted above, results of these engagement meetings were shared throughout the station and influenced our content in FY16.
Beyond broadcast, WHAD’s and its affiliates news and cultural stories are also featured in articles at wpr.org where audiences can post comments, ask questions and connect with other listeners through our online forums. During the reporting period, wpr.org received more than 10 million pageviews and delivered thousands of articles and live-streamed and archive audio.

WPR also uses Twitter and Facebook to distribute content, engage audiences on and off air, and for promotion. During the reporting period, WHAD and its affiliates invited listeners to post questions, share information and engage with our hosts and guests on social media. Our main Facebook page “Likes” increased by 31%, to more than 37,000, as users continued to turn to WPR’s social media to stay up to date on everything from breaking news to job openings and community events.

On top of our survey, our community engagement events, our website, and our social media pages, WPR collaborates with WPT to offer a toll-free phone number and email account for public feedback. Each year this in-house audience services team answers more than 36,000 requests from Wisconsinites eager to learn more about the news and information they hear on our programs. These public comments are compiled and shared with the entire WPR staff on a regular basis.

In addition to covering news and current affairs, WHAD and its affiliates provide some of the best educational and life-long learning content in the state. Listeners always hear something they can use on The Larry Meiller Show, which focuses on gardening, consumer issues, and “how-to” topics. Each Tuesday, The Joy Cardin Show covers personal finance, and listeners — in Wisconsin and around the nation — turn to Zorba Paster On Your Health for perspective on medical concerns.

The station and its affiliates are also dedicated to providing a cultural resource to listeners, with curated entertainment, comedy and music programs. Chapter A Day is the original audiobook, aired every weekday for a half hour. University of the Air provides interviews on a variety of topics with experts, and Old Time Radio Drama shares the classics of radio’s golden age with listeners each Saturday and Sunday night.

During the reporting period, WPR also launched a new summer music series focused on regional rap, folk and indie-rock music groups. The series, called Set List, was posted online at wpr.org/setlist and aired during our statewide broadcasts of Central Time. On Saturdays, WHAD features world music with African roots and more on Higher Ground with Dr. Jonathan Overby. On Sundays, Simply Folk broadcasts concerts recorded in Wisconsin and traditional music of people the world over.

WHAD’s licensee, the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board, partners with the University of Wisconsin-Extension to produce and distribute programming under the banner Wisconsin Public Radio. According to Nielsen, the partnership reached an average of 488,000 listeners each week in the spring of 2016. WPR’s websites – including WisconsinLife.org and WisconsinVote.org - had more than 10.5 million page views.
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.

WPR’s WHAD and affiliates provide extensive election coverage and collaborate with Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) to broadcast important events, including the governor’s State of the State address, budget address, and state celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We encourage listeners to experience the state from diverse perspectives. Wisconsin Life, our state culture collaboration with WPT, continues this commitment by featuring stories of unexpected Wisconsin people and places on WPR, WPT and online at wisconsinlife.org.

In FY2016, as in all election years, we invited ballot-certified candidates to participate in broadcast debates, forums and interviews and to record unfiltered candidate statements. During the reporting period, WPR and WPT collaborated to host and broadcast a candidate debate for the State Supreme Court election. And WHAD and its affiliates also carried the presidential primary debates broadcast nationally through NPR.

WisconsinVote.org, WPR and WPT’s award-winning election site, offers immediate access to voting information, candidate statements and extensive unbiased reporting on issues that affect the people of Wisconsin. The site served more than 308,000 visitors during the fiscal year.

WPR, WPT and University of Wisconsin-Extension also collaborated during the reporting period to launch a long-form, digital-first news site called WisContext.org. The site presents the reporting, research and community-based expertise of these partners to provide information and insight about urgent and emergent issues that affect Wisconsin, including: agriculture/food, environment, health, money, people/policy and science/technology. WisContext.org content is open to syndication, and may be republished by media organizations and educators free of charge.

Wisconsin Remembers: A Face for Every Name is a traveling exhibit that features a photo for each of the 1,161 Wisconsinites officially listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. This poignant display was created by WPR and WPT in partnership with the Wisconsin Veterans Museum for use by veterans and community groups at schools, libraries and other public buildings in every county.

Over the past eight years, students, teachers, and many other volunteers from throughout Wisconsin collected photos from friends and families of those who were killed in the war. The images they found help tell the story of the Wisconsinites behind the names on The Wall and will be part of a permanent Education Center being built on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.
WHAD and its affiliates expanded their commitment to educating the next generation of reporters with the first Mike Simonson Fellowship for Investigative Journalism in partnership with the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism. The fellowship, like our Lee Ester News Fellowship, helps attract some of the brightest young minds in journalism to public broadcasting. During the reporting period, WPR also announced a third fellowship, The Second Century News Fellowship, focused on diversity and inclusion.

WPR hosts regularly make special appearances at events around the state that encourage cultural diversity, music education, the arts and more. And, each month, WPR sponsors dozens of community events around the state to help local nonprofits in the arts, science, business and more connect with our listeners.


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.

WHAD and its affiliates provide the largest network of news bureaus of any media in the state, providing in-depth explorations of Wisconsin’s public affairs issues and ideas. Every day our broadcasts and online resources help people across the state connect with elected officials and public servants at all levels of local, state and national government. Our coverage of the state and federal elections during FY2016 was particularly important to voters.

In election years, we invite ballot-certified candidates to participate in broadcast interviews and to record unfiltered candidate statements. WPR and WPT’s non-partisan WisconsinVote.org project helps citizens find information about voter registration and candidates, and hosts public
issue and candidate forums throughout the state. During the reporting period, which included state elections and federal primaries, the site garnered more than 308,000 visits.

The Wisconsin Remembers exhibit, which features a photo for each of the 1,161 Wisconsinites listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington D.C., has been requested by community groups throughout the state. The exhibit was created by WPR in partnership with WPT and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. An outdoor version of the exhibit was donated by several businesses, including Adams Outdoor Advertising, for display at the World’s Largest Brat Fest on Memorial Day Weekend, 2016.

As noted above, our hosts regularly make special appearances at events around the state that encourage literacy, music education, cultural diversity and more. We meet regularly with community members to ensure our programs are addressing issues that affect real people in Wisconsin. We help local nonprofits promote community events that celebrate nature, agriculture, science, performing arts, families and just plain fun. These promotional partners often report back that our broadcast announcement had a significant impact on their event attendance and success of their programs.

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 2015, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2016. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

WPR, including WHAD and its affiliates, is committed to serving all Wisconsinites and to reflecting the diverse experiences and perspectives of our state in our programs and staffing. As noted above, our community engagement meetings – a partnership with UW-Extension and Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) – invited diverse partners to share their hopes and concerns about community issues with WPR, WPT and UWEX staff. Two meetings were held during the reporting period, in Green Bay and Barron, and minority individuals and organizations that serve diverse audiences were invited to participate. Production staff were encouraged to attend the meetings in person and comments from the meetings were shared with all staff.

During the reporting period, WPR and WPT collaborated to draft a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan to reinforce our commitment to serving all Wisconsinites. A cross-departmental, cross-organizational “change team” was created to work with leadership and staff on implementing the plan. WPR and WPT was one of a handful of area organizations selected for training through the YWCA’s program “Creating Equitable Organizations.”

This program encompasses both internal culture and external content and constituents and included internal staff assessments and training to support strategic planning and action
towards change as framed by the Multicultural Organizational Development Model (MCOD) provided by the YWCA.

All WPR staff are encouraged to participate in a two-day Multicultural Awareness Workshop from the UW-Extension’s Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and several staff members have been trained to lead these workshops for other employees in the campus system. The facilitated workshops bring participants together from across the institution to “increase the diversity of our programs and partnerships; enhance our ability to apply multicultural concepts and practices in our work; and improve our ability to recruit and retain a diverse work force while valuing and building on the strengths and abilities of all our staff.”

On air and online during this reporting period, WHAD and its affiliate reporters covered a significant number of stories that explored issues of diversity, including education, policing, business development, elections, immigration and a weeklong series looking at literacy in Wisconsin among other things. WHAD and its affiliate’s “New Voices Project” is an effort to ensure diversity and inclusion among our call-in program sources and guests. Producers collect demographic data on show guests and receive regular reports that can help them better understand how their sourcing choices reflect Wisconsin’s diversity.

In addition to exploring issues of diversity through our call-in shows and news coverage, our cultural coverage regularly features people and places that reflect Wisconsin’s diverse population. Wisconsin Life, our collaboration with WPT, has featured stories by and about immigration, religion, community and important figures and events of Wisconsin’s past and present. During the reporting period, WHAD also began carrying several national programs featuring diverse hosts, including Latino USA, Snap Judgment and Jazz Night in America.

Each January, we broadcast the official state ceremony honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., produced and hosted by WPR’s Dr. Jonathan Overby. Our website, wpr.org, also live streams the annual State of the Tribes Address from the State Capitol. And, through our community partnerships we regularly feature and promote events and educational activities that embrace diversity and inclusion.

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?

We share and preserve the stories of Wisconsin’s people. Our programs celebrate Wisconsin’s way of life. We reach out beyond broadcasts to serve Wisconsin online and in the community. WPR’s news team and WHAD producers work together to provide deeper coverage of big issues like elections, the economy, immigration, health and more. Because of strong funding support, we continue to attract and keep the best available broadcast producers and journalists, including two full-time reporters at the Capitol. Without CPB funding, all of these things would be affected.
CPB funding also allows WPR to maintain a local presence in Milwaukee, Wisconsin’s largest city. Without CPB funds, it is unlikely that WPR would be able to continue a Milwaukee programming presence. In addition to having a reporter in the station to cover issues in southeastern Wisconsin, our statewide news director is also based there. And, The Kathleen Dunn Show, a daily call-in program, originates in the WHAD studios and is carried statewide by 18 other stations in the Wisconsin Public Radio network.

The scope of national programs broadcast on WHAD and its affiliates would be greatly diminished without CPB’s support. Programs like NPR’s On Point help keep our listeners connected to the world and help us put local and statewide content in a national or even international context.

CPB funding helps ensure that our cultural programming is available for tens of thousands of listeners every week. And, of course, CPB funding contributes to our ability to reach audiences beyond broadcast with online streaming, news and cultural content, mobile apps, community events and more.