

**KCRW Foundation, Inc.**  
**Corporation for Public Broadcasting**  
**Local Content & Services Report (FY2020)**  
**October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020**

**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.**

A leader in public service media for nearly 40 years, KCRW began in the post-war 1940s when the station offered returning servicemen introductory job training in the radio industry. Since then, KCRW has become a source for news and cultural programming for generations of listeners in Southern California and across the globe.

Incorporated as the KCRW Foundation in 1982, the modern history of KCRW has been defined by our steadfast commitment to both news and the arts. KCRW's long-running morning show *Morning Becomes Eclectic* has served as a source of music discovery for decades-worth of music-lovers while current affairs shows, such as Warren Olney's *Which Way, LA?*, have fostered civic debate and conversations between neighbors. KCRW continues these traditions today through our renowned slate of news, music, and arts & culture programming.

KCRW producers and journalists have received many prestigious honors for their work, including The George Foster Peabody Award, National & Regional Edward R. Murrow Awards, Radio and Television News Directors Association Awards, Southern California Press Club Awards, Corporation for Public Broadcasting Awards, and many others from additional prestigious awarding institutions.

KCRW's goals are to (1) deliver striking, human and credible programming, (2) stay relevant in the face of changing media behaviors, and (3) build a robust and engaged membership community that we represent and actively respond to.

In addition to our robust schedule of news, music, arts and culture programming, each year KCRW partners with civic and cultural organizations to produce live events and virtual/interactive programming for Southern California residents. These events, the majority of which are free or low cost to the public, allow us to reach beyond our traditional listenership to engage individuals from across the region.

Highlights of KCRW programming, both on-air and in-person, for FY20 include:

- ***Press Play with Madeleine Brand*** exemplifies the best that KCRW has to offer by combining national news, local issues, arts, culture, and music into an award-winning hour-long show. In FY20, *Press Play* focused on topics including the November 2019 general election, the March 2020 primary election, the Presidential Impeachment, health and wellness in light of COVID-19, and climate change coverage
  
- ***Greater LA***, which premiered April 2019, is a daily 30-minute local affairs program hosted by veteran reporter and host Steve Chiotakis that focuses on telling sound-rich, closely-reported

stories throughout the neighborhoods of Los Angeles. *Greater LA* explores larger issues through the lens of our local communities and increases essential local programming in our program schedule. Coverage on *Greater LA* during this period has focused on issues such as housing and homelessness and the local and national elections from the perspective of voters in Southern California and beyond.

- ***Morning Becomes Eclectic***, KCRW’s signature morning music program, has continued providing our listeners with the best new music from across the spectrum of genres. While the first half of the year saw a significant number of in-studio performances in our Annenberg Performance Studio, the second half of the year saw the program pivoting to new and innovative new formats given the COVID-19 pandemic. The most exciting of these have been “In-Residence” sessions featuring self-recorded acoustic sets from some of our listeners’ favorite artists.
- ***Left, Right & Center***, KCRW’s weekly political roundtable, features voices from across the political spectrum engaging in thoughtful and respectful discussion on the day’s most important issues. This year, the show has focused on increasing the diversity of the voices on the show’s panels. *Left, Right & Center*’s weekly spin-off program, *LRC Presents: All the President’s Lawyers*, which is a discussion of the politics of law, libel, litigation, and the White House, continues to be one of our most popular programs, along with LRC.
- ***Lost Notes***, KCRW’s critically acclaimed music anthology podcast, launched its third season in September 2020. Hosted by celebrated poet and essayist, Hanif Abdurraqib, Season 3 is dedicated to the significance of a single year in music: 1980. Throughout the seven-episode season, Abdurraqib examines a wide variety of genres at this critical year, from at how the first full-length album from the Sugarhill Gang set the stakes for an entirely new genre of music, how an Ian Curtis song propelled the fallen singer’s bandmates used to birth New Order, and how Grace Jones rose from disco’s death rattle—reinforced and reimaged—into a new decade freshly obsessed with risk.
- **The Independent Producer Project (IPP)** allows KCRW to engage with independent producers by commissioning reporting projects and offering a wide variety of workshops and networking events. In addition to supporting a slate of original programming and professional development opportunities, in June 2020, the IPP held the 8th Annual 24-Hour Radio Race, a competition that gives teams of reporters and producers just 24 hours to produce a radio feature on a given topic.
- **Report LA Fellowship:** Launched in May 2019, KCRW’s paid Report LA Fellowship is innovating KCRW’s traditional hiring process while setting a replicable example for how public radio stations can diversify their staff. Our inaugural group of Fellows have quickly become an integral part of the KCRW newsroom and produce critical content for broadcast on-air. In the second year of their fellowships, we continue to be incredibly pleased with the progress the fellows have made. Diversifying KCRW’s workforce is essential to building a station that embodies the diversity of the population that we serve through our reporting, ensuring that KCRW stays a relevant public service.

- **Summer Club:** In July 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, KCRW launched Summer Club, a series featuring an eclectic array of interactive virtual events to help keep our community entertained and engaged. Weekly online events feature KCRW DJs, on-air hosts and a variety of special guest artists. From music to improv; potlucks to trivia; wrestlers & aerialists & roller girls; KCRW provided fun for fans around the globe.

Each year, KCRW hosts events that are attended by over 50,000 people across Southern California, Santa Barbara, and the Central Coast. While the COVID-19 has impacted how we deliver this sort of programming in the short term, we look forward to renewing events such as Summer Nights, the KCRW World Festival with the LA Philharmonic when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we have transitioned fan-favorite events such as the Good Food Pie Contest and KCRW and Gustavo's Great Tortilla Tournament to online events and has launched new digital events such as KCRW Trivia Club, the KCRW Summer Club, and Zoom chats with our hosts and DJs.

KCRW invites audience participation through digital media, social media, and crowdsourcing, including data and feedback gathered through audience engagement tools like Hearken, used as part of shows like *Greater LA*.

**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.**

Each year, KCRW partners with numerous organizations across multiple sectors (public media, nonprofit, government, education, and business). In FY20 some of our key initiatives and partnerships included the following:

### **News & Culture Initiatives & Partnerships**

- **NPR:** As a flagship member station, KCRW broadcasts NPR's *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered*, and *Weekend Edition* and regularly partners with NPR to report on the Southern California region.
- **California Hub:** In FY20 KCRW and a collection of other NPR member stations throughout California including KPCC, KQED, Capital Public Radio, and NPR West formed the California Hub. The California Hub is meant to enable our stations to share resources for reporting projects on issues that affect the state broadly. During the inaugural year of the project, our stations began sharing resources on a number of projects including the launch of a brand new weekly podcast, *Our Body Politic*, hosted by Farai Chideya and focusing on politics through the lens of Black women.
- ***Our Body Politic:*** *Our Body Politic* is a new collaborative show between KQED, KCRW, and KPCC hosted by Farai Chideya that focuses on politics through the lens of Black women. Launched in September 2020 partially in response to the protests against racial injustice and

police brutality, the show airs weekly on our stations and elevates essential conversations around politics, racial justice, and more.

- **American Public Media:** KCRW has carried programs from American Public Media for years including their flagship program, *Marketplace*, which airs each weekday on KCRW brings listeners the most up-to-date news on our economy.
- ***The Moth*:** KCRW carries episodes of *The Moth*, the show that celebrates storytelling, each Sunday. KCRW also partners with *The Moth* to host live and virtual storytelling events throughout Southern California.
- ***The New York Times* and the *The New Yorker*:** On weekday afternoons, KCRW airs *The Daily* hosted by Michael Barbaro. Powered by *The New York Times*' newsroom, *The Daily* focuses on just one or two stories each weekday, offering listeners a 30-minute, deep, textured portrait of the characters and human stakes driving the news. On weekends, KCRW airs *The New Yorker Radio Hour*. Hosted by David Remnick, the editor of *The New Yorker*, the program features the magazine's award-winning writers in a weekly hour of radio that both delights and informs.
- **Antioch University Santa Barbara (AUSB):** AUSB provides KDRW (KCRW's frequency in Santa Barbara) with studio space and also recommends students for our Santa Barbara Internship opportunities.

### **Music Initiatives & Partnerships**

- ***Summer Nights Concerts*:** Each summer, KCRW partners with local businesses and nonprofits to offer dozens of free concerts across Southern California, attended by thousands of people. Partner sites include One Colorado in Pasadena, Chinatown, the Hammer Museum, and KCRW's brand-new Media Center in Santa Monica. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, KCRW has had to temporarily pause Summer Nights, but we look forward to restarting this essential series as soon as is safe to do so.
- ***World Festival at the Hollywood Bowl*:** KCRW partnered with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association to produce the 20th season of signature world music concerts, the World Festival at the Hollywood Bowl. Similar to our Summer Nights concert series, KCRW and the LA Philharmonic had to postpone this year's World Festival due to COVID-19, but we look forward to restarting the series as soon as is safe. In the meantime, we were delighted to partner with the LA Philharmonic to re-air a selection of our favorite World Festival archival recordings this summer on KCRW's website.

### **Government & Education Partnerships**

- **Santa Monica College:** Santa Monica College is the license holder of KCRW-FM and a long-term partner of the KCRW Foundation. The KCRW Media Center is located on the Santa Monica College Center for Media and Design and we are proud to host a number of SMC interns each year across KCRW's various departments.

- **National Endowment for the Arts, California Arts Council, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs:** KCRW is proud to receive funding from these government funders for various programs across our organization. We view these government grants as essential endorsements of our work as we seek to bring informative news and meaningful cultural programming to the communities we serve.

### **Internship Initiatives & Partnerships**

Volunteers and interns play a vital role in all of KCRW's operations. Our more than 250 volunteers work across the station, from the Membership and Underwriting departments, at special events, in the music library, and with both terrestrial and digital programming. In FY20, KCRW continued to partner with Santa Monica College to offer student internships throughout the station's many departments. KCRW also continued internship opportunities at its station in Santa Barbara in partnership with Antioch University Santa Barbara. Current internship and volunteer programs include:

- **Membership Volunteer Program:** Volunteers donate their time once a week to take donations, answer questions and update member information in our database.
- **Weekly Volunteer Program:** Volunteers contribute their time and expertise across departments at KCRW, from helping the communications team, to helping sort/file music in the music library, to providing production assistance to our in-studio DJs.
- **Summer Marketing Internship Program:** From June to September, interns serve as KCRW's marketing arm to promote the station and foster community interaction. Interns are on site at our free Summer Nights concerts and post on social media and KCRW's blog to expand the station's reach. While we had to scale this program back in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we look forward to re-launching this program when it is safe to hold public events again.
- **Santa Monica College Internship Program:** KCRW offers internships to current Santa Monica College students (for credit and non-credit), in various departments throughout the station.
- **News Internship Program (in Santa Monica & KDRW Santa Barbara):** News interns practice developing well-focused stories, writing for broadcast news, and using audio equipment and editing software while honing career-building and networking skills.

**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.**

KCRW strives to be reflective of its audiences while providing community members with an accessible forum in which they can become better informed and engage with important ideas. We believe the best way to achieve this goal is by creating quality programming that not only informs but inspires curiosity.

KCRW measures the impact and reach of our programs on an ongoing basis through quantitative metrics that examine listenership/viewership data, as well as qualitative feedback and participation via digital and in-person platforms.

### **Direct Feedback From Listeners and Community Members**

Feedback from our listeners is essential to KCRW's growth, as it holds us accountable to remain relevant in an ever-changing media landscape. Direct feedback we have received from our listeners during the grant period includes:

"For years KCRW has brightened my day with great music and enlightened my life with new ideas and opened my mind to new perspectives. Thank you so much for the unique programming and creative approach to intelligent entertainment."

"Thank you for being a constant source of reliable information. It's so helpful to have KCRW with us in these uncertain times."

"I listen to you from Columbus, Ohio and appreciate all of the great content you provide. KCRW is by far the BEST (of everything)! Shows I enjoy include *Press Play* (Madeleine is an exceptional host). *All the President's Lawyers* is my mid-week pick me up: Josh Barro and Ken White make a great team. *Bookworm*: Michael Silverblatt is so insightful and gracious with his guests; he is the most earnest interviewer. *Left, Right & Center* is a great review of the week, and I really appreciate the diverse perspectives and intelligent, non-confrontational discussions. I love Aaron Byrd's Global Exploration of Sounds, which is always a great mix. For Elvis Mitchell's *The Treatment*, I enjoy the range of guests he interviews and the way is able to connect with them. KCRW: thank you for the great service you provide!"

"I am a sociologist who researches issues in law and society. *Left, Right & Center* and *All the President's Lawyers* are my go-to for accessible, timely analysis of current issues in law and politics. I recommend your podcasts to my students and colleagues and use it in the classroom when I can. Thank you for your efforts!"

"Anne Litt [KCRW Program Director of Music]: thank you from the bottom of my heart for showing up every weekday morning on *Morning Becomes Eclectic* to get all of our days started out on a positive note. Here you are, taking things to new levels of greatness, and with such strength and authenticity. I know it can't be easy to show up the way you have each morning, and I want you to know that when I think of Mr. Rogers' suggestion that we look for the "helpers" when we're scared, I will always think of you. You're helping so many of us at a time when we really need it. I cherish you, *Morning Becomes Eclectic*, and KCRW. "

"We rely on KCRW to keep us connected to the world, tell us the truth and help us laugh. We don't know what we'd do without KCRW."

“I wanted to take a moment to thank the KCRW Events Team and to thank KCRW DJs Anthony Valadez and Novena Carmel for the great “Live Chat” on Zoom today (Aug 20, 2020). It was a pleasant and fun event that really showcases how the talented KCRW DJs are more than just music libraries—they are thoughtful and funny and can bring people together in lots of ways. These events are a great way to reimagine what we can do while we can’t gather in person. I really enjoyed it, got some new music recommendations, and felt connected to KCRW and other supporters. It was a perfect pick-me-up for a hot afternoon, and now I can do a few more hours of work with a better attitude. I look forward to other DJ conversations in the future!”

KCRW creates programming with our large and diverse community in mind. On social media during the grant period, KCRW had 1.19 million followers across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. During this period, KCRW’s terrestrial listenership averaged roughly 456,800 monthly cumulative listeners, and we saw significant digital audience growth due to our app that allows users to listen to KCRW live and download on-demand podcasts. We are proud to report that while COVID-19 has affected some listenership habits (for example, decreased listens on commutes to-and-from work), the average length of time our listeners stay with KCRW has increased by nearly 50 percent.

In addition to this community feedback and engagement, KCRW’s programming was commended by multiple journalistic institutions, including the National Edward R. Murrow Award, multiple Southern California Journalism Awards, the Radio and Television News Association of Southern California (known as Golden Mike Awards), and more. Additional recognitions of our podcasts and programs included major news outlets including *Time*, *The New Yorker*, *IndieWire*, *Vulture*, and *The Verge*. A complete list of first place wins can be found in Section 4 of this report.

In these challenging times, responding directly to our listeners’ questions and concerns is a priority in our programming. One example of this interactive programming was a one-hour special on June 1, 2020 entitled Living While Black, hosted KCRW’s Aaron Byrd in collaboration with our public media colleague, KQED’s Brian Watt. Living While Black featured call-ins and tweeted comments from listeners across California as well historians and other expert observers as we discussed how systemic racial injustice is impacting Black Californians and tangible steps we can take to make our state (and world) more equitable for all.

Additionally, KCRW continues to use audience engagement tools, such as Hearken, as well as requests for feedback across our social media channels to make sure our regular news programming (*Press Play with Madeleine Brand*, *Greater LA*, etc) empowers listeners with regular opportunities to provide input regarding the stories KCRW tells.

**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 2019, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2020. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.**

KCRW reaches listeners through a variety of media platforms. Our primary method is our terrestrial broadcast, through which KCRW's news and cultural programming reaches 456,800 average weekly listeners across Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Mojave, Palm Springs, and Orange County. With such a large audience, it is essential that KCRW's programming efforts capture the diverse voices and needs of minority and underrepresented communities. Whenever possible, KCRW provides resources in Spanish, such as KQED's Spanish primers on the numerous California propositions that were on the 2020 ballot, via our social media channels. These bilingual segments will continue to be a priority for KCRW as it makes its programming even more inclusive and accessible.

KCRW's programs are committed to covering all of the diverse communities that call Southern California home. During the grant period, KCRW reported extensively on housing costs and homelessness, systemic racial injustice, LGBTQ+ issues, education, immigration, and how climate change impacts communities across the region.

In the past few years, KCRW has taken a number of concrete steps to improve both our internal diversity and the diversity of our coverage. KCRW is committed to making sure that our organization and our on-air voices and coverage are reflective of the incredible diversity that defines the culture of Southern California.

Following the adoption of a Cultural Equity and Inclusion statement, policy, and plan by the KCRW Board of Directors, as well as the launch of our Report LA Fellowship (both 2019), In the summer of 2020, KCRW reaffirmed our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through a number of concrete initiatives to train our staff, improve our coverage, and track our progress going forward.

KCRW has created two new internal task forces focused on "Language & Framing" and "Workplace Diversity". These two task forces are working to ensure that both KCRW coverage and our internal workforce and workplace culture are diverse and inclusive of the full spectrum of diversity present in Southern California.

KCRW's newsroom has recently undertaken the lengthy process of updating our style guide to ensure that the language we use when discussing difficult and sensitive topics is as respectful and inclusive as possible. In tandem with this effort, KCRW has begun to conduct regular internal audits of the voices being featured on KCRW-produced news programs such as *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered*, *Press Play*, and *Greater LA*. Ensuring that we are making room for underrepresented voices on KCRW's air is essential and this will be an important part of how we evaluate success in our newsroom going forward.

In 2020, KCRW received many top awards for its coverage of topics relevant to the diverse populations in Southern California. A sampling of these awards include:

**National Edward R. Murrow Award**

- Left, Right & Center: Two Years: Diaries of a Divided Nation

### **Radio and Television News Association of Southern California (Golden Mike Awards):**

- Best Radio (Division A) Sports Segment: Greater LA: “How did LA Football Club Build Such a Huge Fanbase?”
- Best Radio (Division A) Entertainment Reporting: Greater LA: “Black Stuntpeople”
- Best Radio (Division A) Use of Sound: Greater LA: “Where Cars Go To Die”

### **AP Television and Radio Association**

- 1st Place:
  - Best Use of Sound- Greater LA - Steve Chiotakis & Kathryn Barnes: "Where Cars Go to Die": Steve Chiotakis and Kathryn Barnes “Where Cars Go to Die”
  - Best Feature Story - Greater LA - Steve Chiotakis & Christian Bordal: "Sunset Strip nightclubs made historic landmarks": Steve Chiotakis and Christian Bordal “Sunset Strip Nightclubs Made Historic Landmarks”

### **62nd Southern California Journalism Awards**

- 1st Place:
  - Radio Journalist of the Year: Steve Chiotakis
  - Best Talk/Public Affairs Piece: Madeleine Brand, Sarah Sweeney, and Michell Eloy "California's Clout in the 2020 election"
  - Best All Platform Solutions Journalism: Anna Scott "How do you solve the toughest cases of homelessness?"
  - Best All Platform National Political/Government Reporting: John Fecile, Elizabeth Nakano, Jesse Dukes, and Sonya Geis "Two Years: Diaries of a Divided Nation"
  - Best Radio News Feature: Kerstin Zilm and Sonya Geis "Far from recovered: A woman's life 1 year after Woosley Fire"
  - Best Radio Investigative: Anna Scott, Steve Chiotakis, Sonya Geis, Phillip Richards, and Christian Bordal "Solar Eviction"
  - Best Broadcast Gender/LGBTQ Reporting: Courtney Kocak, Steve Chiotakis, Sonya Geis, Phillip Richards, and Christian Bordal, "Silver Lake council member Maebe A. Girl"
  - Best Radio Lifestyle Feature: Carla Green "For many homeless Angelenos, the gym is critical to survival"
  - Best Radio Personality Profile/Interview, Under 20 Minutes: Jackson Cantrell, Steve Chiotakis, Sonya Geis, Ray Guarna, and Christian Bordal "Once a successful singer, Jonny Fair struggles with mental health and housing"
  - Best Radio Entertainment Reporting: David Weinberg "How black men and women fought to become stunt doubles in Hollywood"

### **2020 Online Journalism Awards**

- 1st Place: Excellence in Audio Digital Storytelling (Ongoing Series): Bodies

**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 allows KCRW to fund critical news programming, notably NPR's *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*, which brings our listeners the highest quality reporting from across the nation and around the globe. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting's consistent support for this programming allows KCRW to allocate funds raised by the station to support original local programming initiatives such as our daily local news and music shows, podcasts, and reporting projects.

The continued support of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting allows KCRW to put resources into creating trademark community events that differentiate us from other public media organizations. More than just a radio station, KCRW extends its presence beyond the airwaves by bringing unique live experiences such as concerts, film screenings, political and cultural forums, and community events to Southern California and beyond. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, KCRW had to rework our events calendar to ensure the safety of our staff and our community. As discussed earlier, we developed a series of online events such as KCRW Trivia Club, KCRW Summer Club, and more. We also created online versions of the Good Food Pie Contest and KCRW and Gustavo's Great Tortilla Tournament. We look forward to being able to host large-scale community events as soon as it is again safe to do so.

KCRW's unique music programming sets us apart from many public radio stations, and the support of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting allows us to create the highest quality music programming. KCRW broadcasts this cutting-edge music programming through our flagship show, *Morning Becomes Eclectic*, every weekday morning from 9AM - 12PM, along with our late evening, early morning, and weekend programming featuring music programming from our incredible roster of DJs. KCRW's music programming also features live performances from some of today's most interesting artists, both established and up-and-coming. Recent performances have included Jamila Woods, Soccer Mommy, Robert Glasper, Los Lobos, and many more. As we have been unable to host live sessions in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic, *Morning Becomes Eclectic* pivoted to In-Residence sessions where some of our favorite artists self-record intimate acoustic sessions and tell the stories behind their music. Recent sessions have included Raphael Saadiq, Nana Adjoa, Perfume Genius, and Norah Jones.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting's grant serves as an endorsement of our work and our model, enabling us to solicit and secure new support from members of the public, from private local and national foundations, and from public grantmakers such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, and the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.