

**KCRW Foundation, Inc.**  
**Corporation for Public Broadcasting**  
**Local Content & Services Report (FY2021)**  
**October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021**

**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.**

KCRW began in the post-war 1940s when the station offered returning servicemen introductory job training in the radio industry, and has been a leader in public service media for nearly 40 years. 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 *Press Play* and *Greater LA*, have fostered civic debate, exploration of our communities, 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, credible, and accessible programming that is representative of the communities we serve, (2) stay relevant in the face of changing media behaviors, and (3) build a robust and engaged membership community that we represent and to which we are actively responsive.

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 FY21 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 FY21, *Press Play* focused on topics including the 2020 Presidential Election, the Capitol Insurrection, climate change, wildfires, homelessness, and ongoing coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Greater LA** 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, the impact of COVID-19 on local communities, vaccine rollout, climate change and fires, and reporting on small businesses.
- **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. In January 2021, we were thrilled to announce Anthony Valadez and Novena Carmel as the new hosts of the long-running program. This pair has brought a new energy, electricity, and a spirit of music discovery to the show that our audience has responded to enthusiastically.
- **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 prompted a wide variety of topics for our panel to discuss, ranging from the 2020 Presidential Election to the government's COVID-19 response and the January Capitol Insurrection. After the results of the 2020 election, *LRC Presents: All the President's Lawyers* made a major title change in light of the new administration: *LRC Presents: All the **Presidents'** Lawyers*.
- **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 FY21, the IPP supported a broad slate of original programming and professional development opportunities.
- **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. As the first cohort of Report LA Fellows complete their time in their fellowship roles, we're excited to recruit and hire two new fellows for the 2nd Report LA Fellowship.
- **Summer Nights:** After pivoting to an online format for our long-running Summer Nights series in 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we were excited to bring back live, in-person events in Summer 2021 with the relaunch of Summer Nights. The series saw events across the Los Angeles area including the Grand Performances, One Colorado in Pasadena, and Descanso Gardens.

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 impacted how we delivered this sort of programming during the majority of FY21, we were thrilled to bring back the KCRW World Festival with the LA Philharmonic and Summer Nights in the Summer of 2021. Over the course of the year, KCRW

also produced a wide variety of digital events including a digital Tortilla Tournament, a 24-Hours of Serenity event, and a large selection of panels and community conversations.

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*, *Press Play*, *Morning Edition*, and *All Things Considered*.

**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 FY21 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. Since then, the hub has continued to collaborate on important topics such as wildfires, droughts, and more. The hub also worked on the impactful *Dangerous Air* reporting series, which used extensive data analysis to track the impact of wildfire smoke on communities in California and across the country. This work received attention from an array of news outlets and elected officials.
- ***Our Body Politic*:** Hosted by Farai Chideya, *Our Body Politic* launched as a collaborative effort between KQED, KCRW, and KPCC that examines 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 is now produced by Farai and her team and airs weekly on our stations to elevate 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 Yorker:*** 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.

### **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, Descanso Gardens, and the California African American Museum.
- ***World Festival at the Hollywood Bowl:*** In Summer 2021, the KCRW World Festival at the Hollywood Bowl returned with four shows hosted in partnership with the LA Philharmonic. Shows included Brittany Howard, Jamila Woods, Kamasi Washington, James Blake with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and the return of Reggae Night.

### **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 Campus, 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 FY21, KCRW continued to partner with Santa Monica College to offer student internships throughout the station's many departments. 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. While this program slowed

during the COVID-19 Pandemic, we look forward to re-launching the program when it is safe to do so.

- 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. While this program slowed during the COVID-19 Pandemic, we look forward to re-launching the program when it is safe to do so.
- 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 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we look forward to re-launching this program when it is safe to do so.
- 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: 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.
- Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture supported interns: We were thrilled to host LA County Department of Arts and Culture supported interns for the first time in FY21. In our inaugural year of participating in this program, we hosted two paid interns in our Development and Music departments.

**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:

KCRW has always played an important part in our lives, but during this past year it has especially been a lifeline. MIL GRACIAS for the extraordinary work you do in educating, entertaining, and building community!

I've been listening to this station since I was a teenager. I just moved from LA to San Francisco and I'm sooo homesick. I'm listening to you as I unpack my boxes and it's making me feel so much better. KCRW is my slice of home.

KCRW has been my lifeline to civilization, and like a very kind and cuddly cat during these troubling times. This station and their culture is more like a family than otherwise. I feel connected, vibrant, and healthier as a result of this relationship. Thank you a million times over.

Thank you for making me dance! Thank you for making me think! Thank you for getting me through the pandemic!!

Thank you KCRW team for keeping me grounded, informed, and inspired on a daily basis. I'm eternally thankful (and proud!) to have such an amazing community resource in my own backyard.

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 450,000 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 significantly.

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.

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 about 450,000 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.

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. In summer 2020, KCRW adopted the Pledge for Equity, which outlines concrete steps our organization will take to make our organization more diverse and inclusive and create more programming that reflects and appeals to the vast diversity of the region we serve.

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 continuously updates our style guide to ensure that the language we use and the framing of events is inclusive and accurate and our language is frequently reviewed by the "Language and Framing" task force. In tandem with this effort, KCRW has conducted 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 FY21, KCRW received many top awards for its coverage of topics relevant to the diverse populations in Southern California. A sampling of these awards include:

### **63rd Southern California Journalism Awards**

- 1st Place:

- Best Broadcast Race and Society, Radio: Madeleine Brand and Brian Hardzinski, "Former NFL player Emmanuel Acho on 'Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man'"
- Best Broadcast Pandemic Reporting, Radio: Benjamin Gottlieb, "San Gabriel Valley Restaurateurs Are Determined to Make Their Businesses Work, Even with Mounting Losses"
- Best Radio/Podcast Lifestyle Feature: Danielle Chiriguayo, "How LAUSD's Classic Coffee Cake Evolved and Led to Love"
- Best Radio/Podcast Personality Profile/Interview, TV/Film personalities over 10 minutes: Kim Masters and Kaitlyn Parker, "Director Bong Joon Ho on the 6-time Oscar-nominated 'Parasite'"
- Best Radio/Podcast Personality Profile/Interview, under 10 minutes: Angel Carreras, "This LA Barber Started Giving \$20 Haircuts in His Garage After COVID-19 Closed His Shop"

**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. After pausing in-person and building out a robust schedule of online programming due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we're thrilled to have brought back in-person programming in summer 2021, kicking off with our returned and revitalized Summer Nights concert series. We're excited to continue live, in-person events in FY22 while incorporating lessons learned with digital events during the pandemic.

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. While we were unable to host in-person sessions due to COVID-19, we continued engaging with new artists through projects such as *Private Playlist* interviews and *In-Residence*

sessions. As we move towards being able to host in-person sessions again, we're excited to get back to bringing the best new artists live to our audience from the KCRW Media Center.

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.