

KCRW Foundation, Inc.
Corporation for Public Broadcasting
Local Content & Services Report (FY2023)
July 2022 - June 2023

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 ever since. 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, KCRW has been defined by our steadfast commitment to both news and the arts.

At a time when media is undergoing a grand contraction — the downsizing of newspapers, dissolution of podcast firms, and migration of almost all news behind paywalls — KCRW is one of the few institutions actively growing and cultivating a community of creators and ensuring original, non-commercial content finds an audience. KCRW continues these traditions today through our renowned slate of news, music, and arts and culture programming.

Each day, KCRW delivers 24+ hours of accessible, on-demand content, across multiple platforms, all for free to the public. Our broadcast, digital and in-person programming reach an audience of 3.1M people worldwide. Our programs and stories are cross marketed on digital platforms that include four 24/7 live streams, a website, a mobile app, six newsletters, and more than 20 podcasts. Our social media audience includes 1.2 million people across Instagram, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Our public service includes daily current events programming such as “Press Play,” and our flagship music show “Morning Becomes Eclectic,” 15 DJ programs, and more than 30 free events throughout the year.

KCRW producers and journalists have received many prestigious honors for their work, including The Public Media Journalists Association, Radio and Television News Directors Association Awards, Southern California Press Club Awards, Corporation for Public Broadcasting Awards, and many others from additional esteemed awarding institutions.

KCRW’s goals are to create striking and exceptional content that engages, inspires and serves our audience, and to foster inclusivity and diversity inside and outside of our walls. KCRW is the cultural voice of Los Angeles. We are the home for sounds, tastes, ideas and experiences that are new, next and unexpected. We are a community that is original and daring, bringing joy and connection through music, culture and news. And because we’re free, everyone is welcome.

In addition to our robust schedule of news, music, arts and culture programming, KCRW partners with civic and cultural organizations to produce live events for Southern California residents. These events, the

majority of which are free or low cost to the public, allow us to reach beyond our listenership to connect individuals from across the region.

Programming highlights, both on-air and in-person, for FY23 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 FY23, key stories included coverage on the WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes, climate change, Supreme Court decisions, and local housing issues.
- ***Greater LA*** is a daily 30-minute local affairs program hosted by veteran reporter and host Steve Chiotakis that offers sound-rich, character-driven stories throughout the neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Coverage on *Greater LA* during this period has provided listeners with vital insights on the housing crisis in Los Angeles, and tenant and worker rights strikes. Local small businesses and entrepreneurs were also featured, such as Sip + Sonder, Inglewood's new community-focused coffee shop.
- ***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 the past year, we hosted 34 "Live From..." sessions in our performance studio, with artists spanning genres and career levels, including Margo Price, Thee Sacred Souls, and Arlo Parks. Each month, we hosted musicians and other cultural tastemakers to our program to join hosts Novena Carmel and Anthony Valadez as a Guest DJ. The Guest DJ shares a half hour of music, paired with a live conversation about what the music means to them and how it influences their own perspectives. In the past year, we've featured Guest DJ sets from Channel Tres, Seal, and Marc Maron.
- ***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. The program is one of KCRW's top three on-demand shows based on listenership analytics. This year prompted a wide variety of topics for our program to discuss, ranging from the ongoing labor strikes and upcoming Presidential campaigns.
- **Podcast Audience Lab** is our new hub for audio and shares on-demand stories through more accessible means and uses platforms and styles that connect audio storytelling to people across different ages and demographics. The Lab supports artists and projects that are more experimental and connect with new audiences, such as our new program about sex and dating called "How's Your Sex Life?" This show has a "call-in" format that invites the audience to be a part of the program, and unites them together through shared experiences. While our content is created to engage our audience, it is also driven by the audience itself.

- **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. This year, we welcomed our third cohort of Fellows, who have continued to grow their skills and produce original stories to share with our community.
- **Summer Nights:** Summer Nights is our free, all-ages, outdoors series featuring KCRW DJs and local artists that bring music exploration to neighborhoods across Greater Los Angeles. Within this grant period, KCRW hosted 17 community events, featuring live performances by artists such as Abraham Alexander, Ozomatli, and Rog . The series encouraged people to explore their neighborhoods and beyond by presenting events at the Hammer Museum, the Bowers Museum, Chinatown's Central Plaza, and KCRW's HQ in Santa Monica.
- **Young Creators Project:** Approaching its third iteration, KCRW's Young Creators Project continues to invite Los Angeles youth to share their self-expression through disciplines including music and storytelling. The program connected young artists with educational and professional resources to help them explore pathways to the creative economy in their respective areas. The project culminated with a free, all-ages showcase for artists, family, friends and the broader KCRW community to celebrate the young creators and enjoy performances across the subject areas.
- **Podcast Bootcamp:** This past June, we hosted the first session of a brand-new iteration of the Podcast Bootcamp at KCRW's HQ. This session attracted 75 guests to a three-hour convener, highly beneficial for early-career creators but open to all. The program offered storytelling and podcast production basics including pitch development, practice pitching, and the business of podcasting. A highlight of the day was industry expert and guest panelist Hrishikesh Hirway, host of the well-known *Song Exploder* podcast, discussing how a KCRW storytelling workshop he attended early in his career still provides inspiration for his work.
- **Engineering Apprenticeship,** KCRW's newest addition to our Next Generation initiative, supports the professional growth of emerging media professionals. The engineers who keep hundreds of radio towers running throughout the country are aging out of the industry. The first of its kind, our Apprenticeship fills this gap, developing the next generation of highly skilled technicians through hands-on training for this in-demand career.

Each year, KCRW hosts events that are attended by more than 200,000 people across Southern California. This year's KCRW Festival featured artists such as Maggie Rogers, Fleet Foxes, and the Pixies at the Hollywood Bowl. In addition, KCRW produced a wide variety of community events including Summer Nights, local Open House events, and the return of our PieFest.

KCRW invites audience participation through digital media, social media, and crowdsourcing. Data and feedback gathered through the Harken audience engagement tool, helped shows like *Greater LA*, *Press Play*, *Morning Edition*, and *All Things Considered* understand what topics would be most useful to listeners, readers and all SoCal residents. Staff training and workshops ensured our content teams understood how to take actionable steps to apply the data in meaningful ways.

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 FY23 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.
- **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 cultural institutions to offer dozens of free concerts across Southern California, attended by tens of thousands of people. Through a cross-pollination of promotion and outreach, our collaborative events bring the diverse audiences of various organizations together.
- ***KCRW Festival at the Hollywood Bowl*:** In Summer 2023, the KCRW Festival at the Hollywood Bowl returned with six shows hosted in partnership with the LA Philharmonic. Shows included Chicano Batman, Portugal. The Man, Modest Mouse, and Los Auténticos Decadentes.
- ***Global Beat*** expanded this year to present *Global Beat Mexico*, a new iteration of our program that encourages listeners to expand their musical tastes in international directions. This season provides a deep dive into the vibrant and colorful sounds and artists from our neighbors south of the border. Our ears-on-the-ground hosts include our very own Raul Campos, resident DJ and taste-maker; Junf, one of CDMX's hippest curators and DJs; and the highly-respected Betto Arcos.

- **Live From....:** To bring intimate performances, fresh sounds, and candid conversations to our audience, we have continued growing our series of shows called *Live From...* that gives artists a platform to share their unique art with audiences. Through live performance events held at KCRW's Annenberg Performance Studio, we invite artists to discuss insights and stories from their musical worlds with us. Live performances this year featured guests such as Little Dragon, Meridian Brothers, and Thee Sacred Souls.
- **Bent by Nature:** Following our *Bent By Nature* podcast in 2021, exploring the legacy of DJ Deirdre O'Donoghue, KCRW resurfaced dozens of live performances from R.E.M, Tom Waits, Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, and Sarah McLachlan, and more from our 1980s archives of her show, *Snap*. We also launched a brand-new streaming arm called *Bent24*, where you can listen, on-demand, to a non-stop rotating selection of O'Donoghue's original broadcasts on KCRW from 1982 to 1991.

Government & Education Partnerships

- **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 SMC interns each year across KCRW's various departments.
- **National Endowment for the Arts, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, and City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs:** KCRW maintains critical partnerships with several government funders and views these grants as essential endorsements of our work to serve our community with informative news and meaningful cultural programming.

Internship Initiatives & Partnerships

Our more than 100 volunteers and interns play a vital role at KCRW by contributing their ideas and skills that influence final products like community events, membership growth, and newsletters. To encourage a mutually beneficial exploration, volunteers and interns participate in learning sessions with key departments throughout KCRW to understand the various roles within a nonprofit. Current internship and volunteer programs include:

- **Street Team Volunteer Program:** Volunteers assist with audience engagement during live events, helping guests learn about the station, become a member, and purchase KCRW swag. Live events include Summer Nights and Open House events, Young Creators Program Showcase, and KCRW Festival at the Hollywood Bowl.
- **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:** In our third year of participating in this program, we hosted three paid interns in our Development, Membership, 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 diverse 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.

KCRW builds community through connections of identity, culture, and history. Our events aim to convene people from diverse corners of Southern California to celebrate the spirit of Los Angeles through music, exploration, and expression. During this grant period, we have been more intentional about where we promote and host our events, in order to reach new audiences by meeting them where they are.

To engage with new audiences across LA, we launched KCRW's Open House, a series that provides a welcoming and barrier-free way to experience LA culture across the city. This initiative intentionally reaches into neighborhoods and draws people to explore and connect with more corners of Los Angeles. Each event hosts our community for a free night of art, music from KCRW DJs, and treats from local vendors. Past events have included tours and gallery exhibits at SoFi Stadium, the California African American Museum, and the Autry Museum of the American West.

Our communities have benefitted from our diverse range of work, including our Report LA Fellowship. From our current cohort, Fellow Eddie Sun spoke with community members in Monterey Park after tragedy struck in 2023 when a gunman entered the Star Dance Ballroom and killed 11 people, injuring nine others. Nearing the anniversary of the tragedy, community members offered a space for survivors to grieve by hosting a remembrance fair. Reporter Sun is fluent in Mandarin, and was able to connect with victims and friends of victims as they shared their struggles with trauma and healing. We look forward to the growth of the Report LA Fellowship as it continues to amplify the stories and voices of our diverse community.

Direct Feedback From Listeners and Community Members

Feedback from our listeners is essential to KCRW's growth, as it ensures accountability and relevance in an ever-changing media landscape. We receive hundreds of messages each week that are reviewed by our

senior leadership teams and used to inform critical programming decisions. Listeners shared this feedback during the grant period:

Kudos KCRW, for maintaining the highest standards in broadcasting, for producing consistently engaging and stimulating programs, and for holding me as a captive listener for thirty years wherever I am in the world. KCRW is simply the best. Thank you, all of you, for your professionalism and dedication to the fine art of communication. You're with me now on my sailboat at sea in the Bahamas and I share you with everyone I meet.

KCRW, you are the poster child for delivering well-researched content, rolling out different approaches & presenting facts from multiple angles avoiding bias, a respectful way to present content - and after all, providing awesome shows and podcasts that I love! The more I listen, the more I want to hear, your station & format became my new staple in 2023.

With our large and diverse community in mind, KCRW creates broadcast, digital and in-person programming to serve an audience of 3.1 million people worldwide monthly. Each month, KCRW tracks the size of our audience across nine sources including broadcast, streaming, downloads and social media. Our digital products include three 24/7 live streams, a website, a mobile app, newsletters, and more than 20 podcasts. Our social media audience includes 1.2 million people across Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

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*, *Greater LA*, etc) empowers listeners with regular opportunities to provide input regarding the stories KCRW tells.

In addition to community feedback and engagement, KCRW's programming was commended by multiple journalistic institutions, including multiple national and local Press Club Journalism Awards, the Radio and Television News Association of Southern California (known as Golden Mike Awards), and more. A list of first place awards include:

LA Press Club Southern California Journalism Awards

- Best Audio Lifestyle Feature: Elina Shatkin / "[Maíz is Life](#)"
- Best over 10 Minute Story: Jonathan Bastian and Andrea Brody / "[Inciting joy: Poet Ross Gay on gardening, grief, and basketball](#)"
- Best under 10 Minute Story: Marcelle Hutchins and Madeleine Brand / "[Designing costumes for 'Masked Singer': New technologies helps](#)"

LA Press Club National Arts And Entertainment Awards

- Best One-on-One Interview, Film Personalities: Elvis Mitchell, Rebecca Mooney, Katie Gilcrest / "[Oscar nominee Stephanie Hsu on loving her vile 'Everything' character](#)"
- Best Use of Sound: Madeleine Brand, Bennett Purser / "[Plagiarism or just the basics of a pop song? Sheeran-Gaye trial explained](#)"
- Best Multimedia Package: Myke Dodge Weiskopf, Andrea Domanick, Bob Carlson, Anne Litt: "[Bent By Nature](#)"

Public Media Journalists Association

- Best Collaboration: The California Newsroom, including reporting by Megan Jamerson / “[LA’s card rooms and tribal casinos at odds over Prop 26](#)”

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 2021, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2022. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

While KCRW employs a variety of media platforms, our terrestrial broadcast remains the primary method through which our news and cultural programming reaches 440,000 average weekly listeners across Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Mojave, Palm Springs, and Orange County. During the grant period, KCRW reported extensively on pressing housing issues, ongoing labor strikes, LGBTQ+ issues, education, immigration, and how climate change impacts communities across the region.

In the summer of 2019, KCRW adopted a Cultural Equity and Inclusion statement, policy, and plan by our Board of Directors. These documents acknowledge that to be representative of the communities that we serve, we must invest heavily in ensuring that our staff, on-air hosts, guests, and coverage are diverse and sensitive to the diversity of the place that we call home. Our annual Pledge For Equity Report is posted on our website and distributed to our audience. Summarizing on our DEIA initiatives, the document includes self-reported demographics of our workforce, leadership, and KCRW Foundation Board.

Our DEI work begins by internally investing in staff development, such as hosting quarterly trainings, which consist of staff-wide DEI seminars with DEI experts. Our internal staff committee, called the Culture Club, is responsible for fully supporting new team members, including interns, and hosts regular in-office mixers that introduces them to other staff members.

KCRW also is contributing to the future of our industry through career opportunities that are accessible, collaborative, and diversify our work in front of and behind the microphone. Services we provide include professional development training, and emerging and established artist support. To expand and diversify our pipeline and the public media industry as a whole, we have created multi-year initiatives that foster talent and support artists, including: the Young Creators Project, the Report LA Fellowship, the Engineering Apprenticeship, and Podcast Bootcamp.

Key to the organization’s strategy as a whole, inclusivity continues to be a priority for all of our news programs with daily efforts to ensure a wide range of guests and topics. Our shows thrive as a designated space for thoughtful conversations on essential issues that allow our community to have open dialogues with diverse perspectives and voices. In recent years, KCRW has utilized NPR’s proprietary source tracker to further engage our community and diversify our voices. Tools such as this and the network’s

content management system allow us to measure the diversity of our sources and guests, guide the stories that are being pitched, and keep ourselves accountable to our goal of producing inclusive storytelling.

In FY23, KCRW received many top awards for its coverage of topics relevant to the diverse populations in Southern California. A sampling of these awards include:

Southern California Journalism Awards

- Best Audio News Feature: Susan Valot and Sonya Geis / “[No disease but no food: CA pelicans are mysteriously hurt and hungry](#)”
- Best Use of Sound: Susan Valot and Sonya Geis / “[Marine Mammal Care Center LA survives COVID, cares for seals and sea lions](#)”

LA Press Club National Arts And Entertainment Awards

- Best Soft News Feature: Danielle Chiriguayo / “[LA’s boot scootin’ boogie: Queer line dancing hits Echo Park](#)”

Golden Mike Awards

- Best Entertainment Reporting / “[Steve Martin Hasn’t Watched LA Stories in 30 Years](#)”
- Best Science Reporting / “[To Infinity and Beyond with JPL’s New Director](#)”

Jazz Journalists Association

- Jazz Hero Award: LeRoy Downs, KCRW / [Just Jazz](#)

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 our trademark community events that differentiate us from other public media organizations. More than just a radio station, KCRW brings people together to find commonality and to celebrate differences, curiosity, and exploration. Through unique live experiences such as music performances, film screenings, and political and cultural forums, we cultivate community rooted in discovery.

To bring the most important news of the day to our audience, we rely on our reporters who are experts in their respective fields. In FY23, KCRW had three dedicated beat reporters; Anna Scott discussing the urgency of housing and homelessness, Megan Jamerson spotlighting small businesses and entrepreneurship, and Caleigh Wells analyzing the connection between climate and public health.

As the housing crisis becomes increasingly severe in Los Angeles, KCRW remains committed to chronicling and contextualizing this pressing issue while providing solutions-oriented explorations of the issue. KCRW's housing reporter, Anna Scott, created *City of Tents: Veterans Row*, which followed the story of the Veterans Row encampment outside of the Los Angeles VA campus. The series touched on personal stories from those affected, the complex legacy of the VA campus, and an analysis of the ultimate dissolution of the encampments. The series received significant acclaim and was even cited in a town hall conversation with LA Mayor Karen Bass.

The support of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting allows us to create the highest quality music programming that sets us apart from many public radio stations. KCRW broadcasts our flagship show, *Morning Becomes Eclectic*, every weekday morning from 9AM - 12PM, along with our late evening, early morning, and weekend shows featuring our incredible roster of 15 DJs.

Our music initiatives also feature live performances from some of today's most interesting artists, both established and up-and-coming. This philosophy of curating, recording, and encouraging the development of music and artists is a central tenet of KCRW. While our organization has an equal emphasis on news and culture, our eclectic music programming serves the whole person and elevates the human experience as only art can. This "eclectic" format is driven by the freedom our expert DJs have to play whatever music resonates with them. Unlike commercial stations or AI-driven models, our DJs are curators who are encouraged to take chances on new artists and play music our listeners might not have heard before. Most importantly, KCRW music serves a diverse audience base through accessible and barrier-free platforms of terrestrial radio, the KCRW website and app and social media.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting's grant serves as an endorsement of KCRW's work and our model, enabling us to solicit and secure 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 Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, and the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.