

KCRW Foundation, Inc.
Corporation for Public Broadcasting
Local Content & Services Report (FY2024)
July 2023 - June 2024

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, 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 FY24 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 FY24, key stories included coverage on the lead up to the presidential election, Israel and Hamas war, artificial intelligence, climate change, Supreme Court decisions, and local housing issues.
- ***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 Wajatta, Yard Act and Chicano Batman. Each month, we hosted musicians and other cultural tastemakers to our program to join host Novena Carmel 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 Hozier and D Smoke.
- ***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.
- ***Greater LA hosted by Steve Chiotakis*** aired its final episode in early 2024. It was a daily news program that connected listeners to the people and places of Southern California, covering a wide range of topics that shape the region. It featured stories on local culture, politics, and social issues, providing in-depth insights into the diverse communities and experiences that define the Greater Los Angeles area. Through engaging interviews and storytelling, "Greater LA" aimed to inform and entertain its audience, offering a unique perspective on the region's complexities and opportunities. The program concluded in early 2024 after nearly five years on the air, leaving behind a legacy of thoughtful journalism and community engagement.
- ***Important Things of Great Importance***: Hosted by Concordia Shawarma McGraw, Important Things of Great Importance is a social-first, satirical news show produced by KCRW, a public radio station based in Los Angeles. The show takes on local LA stories in a humorous and engaging way, aiming to entertain while educating its audience. It features a variety of guests and topics, such as a puppet fox discussing wildlife issues and a climate reporter talking about innovative environmental solutions like algae-killing nanobubbles.
- ***Lost Notes, Groupies***, KCRW's celebrated music history podcast Lost Notes returned for a Season 5: Groupies: Women of the Sunset Strip from the Pill to Punk, an 8-part docu-series/podcast that delved deep into the teenage groupie scene of the Sunset Strip in the 1960's

and '70s. Host Dylan Tupper Rupert (Bandsplain, 33 1/3 Podcast) took listeners through both the literal, and figurative, intersections where these ambitious, music-obsessed young women and teenage girls met their real life destinies on the Strip; or right off it at Frank Zappa's studio, or Lenny Bruce's funeral, or Led Zeppelin's pool party at the Riot House. The series played host to a panoply of candid interviews including Lori Lightning, one of the infamous, so-called "Baby Groupies," of the glam-era, best known for her association with Jimmy Page, and her best friend Sable Starr; Queen of the Groupies, best selling author, Pamela Des Barres; CREEM's founding editor and pioneering rock journalist Jaan Uhelszki, who talks about being the first journalist to cover Led Zeppelin's consorts.

- ***Anti-Dread Climate Podcast***, In the Anti-Dread Climate Podcast's second season took place in 2024. In it climate change was tackled head-on with realistic positivity. Hope won't solve the increasingly terrifying climate crisis, but neither will hopelessness. Though it can feel overwhelming, a surefire way to manage anxiety and stress over the existential problem threatening our planet is to participate in solutions, which is where this podcast comes in. Led by Climate Reporter, Caleigh Wells, our team answered questions about how one can meaningfully make a difference in a short, digestible podcast and newsletter each week with evergreen suggestions and solutions that will be increasingly relevant as time goes on.
- **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. We continued with 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 15 community events, featuring live performances by artists such as Gaby Moreno and South Hill Experiment. The series encouraged people to explore their neighborhoods and beyond by presenting events at the California African American Museum, the Bowers Museum, Chinatown's Central Plaza, MOCA Geffen, the Hammer, the Japanese American National Museum and KCRW's HQ in Santa Monica.
- **Young Creators Project**: 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 Partnership with LA Radio Club:** An in-person intensive workshop was broken into two groups: a panel on networking and mentorship in collaboration with LA Radio Club, and a multi-week mentorship program that was open to public applications who were paired with experienced producers to workshop a specific LA-focused story, culminating in a pitch meeting and story feedback session with KCRW's Senior Managing Editor, Sonya Geis.

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 and local Open House events.

KCRW invites audience participation through digital media, social media, and crowdsourcing. Data and feedback gathered through the Harken audience engagement tool, helped shows like *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 FY24 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. This year we hosted in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles.

- ***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. Performers included, Roge, Baby Rose, Abraham Alexander, Afro Funke, Jungle Fire, Pearl & the Oysters and Ozomatli.
- ***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 Maggie Rogers, Fleet Foxes, and the Pixies.
- ***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 Wajatta, Yard Act and Chicano Batman and Kate Bollinger.
- In 2024, Morning Becomes Eclectic hosted 35 Guest DJ Sets, including sets from St. Vincent and John Stamos.
- KCRW also aired 39 live performances with accompanying interviews. Artists included emerging SoCal acts like Corinne Bailey Rae and Asha Puthli all in the Annenberg Performance Studio.

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.
- **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 other public community events, Young Creators Program Showcase, and KCRW Festival at the Hollywood Bowl.
- **Engineering Apprenticeship Program:** The Engineering Apprenticeship is designed to address the growing need for skilled radio engineers by providing hands-on, paid training. The program offers a comprehensive learning environment, allowing apprentices to gain practical skills in a real-world setting. By integrating theoretical knowledge with on-the-job training, KCRW aims to develop the next generation of radio engineers, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle the technical demands of public radio operations. This initiative not only supports the development of technical skills but also fosters a diverse and inclusive workforce within the broadcasting industry.
- **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 Events, Membership, and Editorial 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.

Moreover, through our annual Summer Nights events around LA we partnered with 15 community partners, featuring live performances by artists such as Jungle Fire and Pearl & the Oysters. The series encouraged people to explore their neighborhoods and beyond by presenting events at the California African American Museum, the Bowers Museum, Chinatown's Central Plaza, MOCA Geffen, the Hammer, the Japanese American National Museum and KCRW's HQ in Santa Monica.

These partnerships not only enhanced the community spirit but saw thousands of Angelinos enjoy an evening of music together.

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:

- “You guys are the best! You are the glue that holds this city together. We appreciate everything you do all year long such as the events you put together, as well as your uplifting message.”
- “Thank you KCRW for being KCRW! We have been a listener / member for 20-ish years and though the sound has evolved, it still remains above all others. Fresh, innovative, and interesting. You are still flying high. I think the current DJ line up is the best it's been.”

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*, 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:

Gracie Award Winner for Local Radio Producer

[“What Vicki Lawrence Learned from Carol Burnett about Acting”](#)

Producer Angie Perrin

James Beard Award Nominations

Good Food earned a nod for the episode, [The life and times of Lalo García](#): Immigration, deportation, reconciliation. It traces the life of chef Eduardo "Lalo" García Guzmán and features him along with journalist Laura Tillman, who wrote The [Migrant Chef: The Life and Times of Lalo García](#). Tillman's book was also nominated for a Beard Award, in the Literary Writing category.

Edward R. Murrow Regional Award

KCRW Reporter Megan Jamerson won a regional Edward R. Murrow Award for hard news for her story, [Catalytic converter thefts make LA County 'a hotspot'](#), on catalytic converter theft, which describes how the spike in thefts has overwhelmed the system from police to insurance to mechanics and can leave car owners stranded for months without their cars. A National Edward R. Murrow Award is among the most prestigious in news, recognizing local and national news stories that exemplify the importance and impact of journalism as a service to the community.

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 2024, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2025. 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.

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.

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.

Moreover, being able to bring expert reporters to cover the story is key. The defining story of the year in Los Angeles was labor. Hollywood strikes disrupted what people everywhere are seeing on TV and in theaters, but the local impact was felt by many working people - caterers, florists, makeup artists, builders, truck drivers and more. KCRW followed many of those individual stories to understand the short and long-term impact of the Tinseltown shutdown, which even forced some workers to relocate. We followed labor organizing in the grocery, fast food and hospitality sectors, including the unionization of character actors at Disneyland.

In addition, climate remains an important focus for KCRW as the impact on our community is significant. We produced a new project, *The Anti-Dread Climate Podcast*, which helped listeners navigate decisions in their daily lives and to understand which climate-friendly behaviors have real impact. We included a range of advice, from how to compost to whether washing out recyclables does more harm or good. Other environmental reporting included innovations in local urban planning, how the local commercial fishing industry is adapting to long-term changes in the seas and the discovery of underground chemicals at a local landfill suspected of sickening residents.

We also produced continuing coverage of LA's homelessness crisis, challenges facing local school systems and the local cultural scene.

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.