

2021 Local Content and Services Report

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.

WVMR - A driving principal of programming on Allegheny Mountain Radio has always been to serve the needs of our local communities, both in the counties where we have direct transmitting capabilities as well as to the surrounding communities that interact on a regular basis with our primary listening area. As we continue to navigate the pandemic and the effects on our listeners, we have remained keenly aware that our news coverage (local, state and national) as well as our community announcements, and even entertainment through our musical programming, are critical to keeping our listeners grounded and connected to one another. As conversations around mask mandates and other COVID related topics have at times, created division in our communities, AMR has sought to present all sides of any difficult subject to give our listeners the whole picture rather than only one side or the other. We feel an informed listener is beneficial to the interaction between our listeners and the radio stations.

In addition to discussing important news topics, we continue to keep our listeners informed through regularly updated forecasts, school announcements, community calendar event announcements, road closures and road conditions reports, birthday and funeral announcements, and emergency information when needed or requested by local authorities.

WVLS – Since it's inception, Allegheny Mountain Radio/WVLS has been a key provider of entertainment, emergency updates, news, weather, education and more to the remote mountain areas we serve. The information and news comes from a combination of national, state, and local sources, including in-house production by staff of content on local government, school, agriculture and health stories and features. With the

continuation of the COVID pandemic, we have also been a point resource for information on health, vaccines, vaccination clinics, local case numbers and more.

This year AMR/WVLS moved into digital distribution of content as well with our first internally produce podcast “Unique By Nature”, which documented the development of the network.

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.

WVMR - Allegheny Mountain Radio/WVMR works with a variety of governmental and non-profit organizations to serve as a liaison of sorts to connect listeners to these organizations. Here are some of the organizations that the radio works with to provide information to our listeners:

- Pocahontas Board of Education – We report on their on their monthly meetings and through one-on-one interviews with county School Superintendent
- Pocahontas County Commission – We report on their meetings and following up on topics raised during those meeting to better inform our listeners
- Pocahontas County Convention and Visitors Bureau – Tourism is a critical part of the county economy. We have reports throughout the year on events happening in the county and the CVB is an important partner in providing that information for our listeners and visitors to the county
- High Rocks Academy – This nonprofit provides training and educational help to teens in the county and is a partner in the Grow Appalachia garden training program. We offer monthly radio programs as well that cover topics discussed in the High Rocks programs

- Pocahontas EMS – We continue to work closely with the local office of Homeland Security and Emergency services. AMR Program/News Director Heather Niday serves as the Public Information Officer for the county EMS office.
- West Virginia Public Radio – We broadcast programs from the state public radio system and Heather Niday is a contributor to the Inside Appalachia program.
- Local churches – We partner with local churches to share sermon messages each Sunday morning and daily devotionals. Many of the elderly residents of our county are “shut-ins” who cannot regularly attend weekly services. The sermons and devotions allow them to stay connected to the community even when they are not physically able to do so.

WVLS – Allegheny Mountain Radio/WVLS is deeply embedded into the community, and works closely with most local organizations, non-profits and businesses, including:

- School authorities and law enforcement, for delays, closures and emergency information.
- Virginia Department of Health, and the Highland Medical Center, for matters of general health, as well as pandemic coverage, local case numbers, vaccine updates, and vaccination clinics.
- Highland Humane Society for lost animal announcements and stories about animal care and adoption
- Highland Chamber of Commerce for news on the status of local events during the pandemic, and offering alternative tourism initiatives
- Highland Historical Society for historical information relating to the county
- Local civic organizations (Ruritan clubs, Lions club, etc) to promote events and activities for the benefit of the community
- Virginia Cooperative Extension for farm and agriculture updates

- The Highland Center and The Highland Arts Council for announcement of art and drama interest

Aside from utilizing these relationships to educate and provide timely information, the jewel of this list would be the partnership with the school system, and the formation of the Highland Mid Kids Radio Club. In school activities include club production and recording of news stories, PSA's and school updates, and twice a month, the club travels to the WVLS studio, located less than half a mile from school, to do two hours of live broadcasting.

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.

WVMR - Through our news reporting we have been able to keep listeners informed about all the twists and turns of the COVID pandemic that continues to impact our local schools in a profound way. In the past year we have seen how state governmental mask mandates have had a, at times, negative effect of our local school systems, leading to divisiveness between parents, teachers, administrators and school boards. We have done our best to cover all sides of this controversial issue, always with an eye towards the direct impacts on students and teachers.

On a happier note, we were able to work with a couple of our other community partners to provide technical assistance and sound equipment for the First Friday monthly concerts held between May and September at a new outdoor venue in Marlinton. The concerts drew not only local residents, but other folks from outside of the county, bringing in much needed tourism dollars during a year when many of the local annual festivals were cancelled or scaled back in light of the pandemic.

WVLS – Allegheny Mountain Radio/WVLS operates in an area restricted from many over the air broadcast mediums due to our geography. There is no local television coverage to speak of, and we are the provider of source when it comes to radio. In addition, much of our audience is older, and not as proficient with digital forms of communication. This creates a scenario where we are a vital link in the information chain for those who are “digitally challenged” and we do receive much positive feedback for our efforts. AMR does have a digital presence, which includes a Social Media Director who provides content for our webpage, Facebook and Instagram account. WVLS also has a Community Advisory Committee, which acts as a liaison between ourselves and the needs and desire of our listeners. As noted in Question 1, we are also trying to broaden our digital offerings in the form of podcasting, with one internally produced podcast available, and more content in the planning stage.

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 2020, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2021. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

WVMR – The region served by Allegheny Mountain Radio is approximately 97% White/Non-Hispanic by population according to the census. While we may lack racial diversity, we do recognize that there is a fair amount of social and educational diversity within the population. We have included programming provided by a more racially diverse community whenever possible and have recognized the contributions of a racially diverse population to the arts, sciences and culture through our reporting during opportunities such as Black History Month. We also recognize that there is a economic and social diversity reflected in our youth programming offered through classes at the high school and through our efforts in the WVMR Radio Club.

Many of our listeners are elderly, and could be considered underserved. So we do include information and entertainment geared towards their needs. Our Board of Directors is a mix of gender and socio-economic backgrounds, which provides oversight on our operations.

WVLS - As noted in Question 3, Allegheny Mountain Radio/WVLS operates in a geographically remote area, and diversity of color and race is less prevalent than gender and socio-economic status. Our core audience is rural and poorer than other localities, and as such, our services serve those underserved populations. That being said, the make-up of staff, Board of Directors and volunteers reflects the diversity of this area, which ensures that we are amply meeting the needs of listeners across a broader range.

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?

WVMR - CPB funding accounts for roughly half of the Allegheny Mountain Radio/WVMR annual operating budget of \$500,000. The remainder is made up of donations and underwriting, and in a listening area facing socio-economic disadvantages and the negative impacts of dealing with the pandemic, expansion of those latter sources of funding to cover a potential loss of CPB funding is not possible. Therefore, without CPB, there would be no AMR/WVMR in its current incarnation of a community radio operation. Loss of CPB funding would severely impact our ability to provide local news coverage, community announcements, emergency information and serve as a conduit between our listeners and local non-profit organizations.

WVLS - Every time I have occasion to speak with CPB staff, I thank them profusely for our funding, and make them aware that, without a doubt, we could not exist in the format we do, nor provide our vital services to our communities without it. CPB funds provide roughly 50% of our annual budget, and amount that could never be replaced, in our economically challenged area, by additional underwriting or donations. While other models could be pursued – pre-recorded or syndicated programs, automation, etc – these would not provide the timely entertainment and information that CPB support makes possible.