

## CPB Station Activities Survey – Fiscal 2020

1. Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station's vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.

WORT's mission is to promote communication, education, entertainment, and understanding by providing a forum for both the discussion of public issues and the expansion of musical and cultural experience; the facilitation of community expression and provision of community access to the airwaves for the purpose of sharing music, culture, news, and information; and to challenge of the cultural and intellectual assumptions of our listeners through unique and diverse programming; with an orientation towards the audience with concern for those underrepresented by other media.

We seek to identify community issues and concerns through our call-in programs, listener comments logged throughout the year, and outreach efforts at local events by station staff, partnerships and professional connections with community groups, volunteers, and our Community Advisory Board. We have begun tracking digital analytics (social media, website, and podcast) and seeing more engagement there.

Programming at the station is created by an active volunteer base, over 300 people from all walks of life. Our volunteers are energetic and knowledgeable, often experts in their fields. Our staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to continue to provide new and current programming by creating weekly music shows from home, and remote hosting live talk shows and news segments. We have closed the station to volunteers to reduce the risk, and our staff members have stepped in to assist in the needs of volunteers to produce and air their shows. In FY2020, the station also had more than 3,100 listener-sponsors who donated money, goods, and services to keep the station running. These listener-sponsors are an active part of WORT programming. WORT encourages — and receives — a plethora of comments from the listenership and posts these comments in a log for volunteers to consider as they prepare their programs.

By working with local school organizations and colleges such as UW Madison, Madison College, Dane County Boys and Girls Club AVID/TOPS program, The Simpson Street Free Press, and Edgewood College to provide internships; and by providing station tours for groups like Wisconsin 4-H Youth Conference, the station is expanding its listening audience to new generations of listeners. Much of this work is currently on hold due to the Covid pandemic. In the meantime, we are renovating our newsroom to provide a fresh communal atmosphere when volunteers return. Our news reporters are working from home to report on issues affecting our community. Our talk hosts - at least two hours on weekdays - interview activists, scientists, artists, elected officials, and more. Our multilingual programming (Spanish and Hmong) helps us to reach out and serve new immigrant populations as well. We look forward to a return of summer festivals to reinforce that connection. Our Labor Radio program, produced by and about working people in our community, is one of the only shows of its kind addressing issues of importance to workers from a workers' perspective. Our daily Radio Kiosk, a four-minute interstitial aired four times a day, provides listeners with a calendar of free and low-cost events and a space for public commentaries. The kiosk has turned to COVID-19 protections and resources. Another program, The Access Hour, has different members of the public hosting and producing the show to talk about a particular local subject.

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.

WORT 89.9FM offers radio access to south central Wisconsin. Community members have the opportunity to be heard on the WORT airwaves and the station offers programming that is not available from other stations in the listening area. This unique programming appeals to WORT's more than 30,000 listeners by offering the area's widest range of folk, jazz, rock, blues, experimental, gospel, international, hip hop, soul/R&B, reggae and dub, women's, and classical music. The music shows on WORT regularly feature interviews and in-studio (or online) performances from local musicians, and our show hosts regularly announce upcoming local music performances. The music heard on WORT is complemented by our volunteer-produced news and public affairs programs that provide a multitude of perspectives unusual in the mainstream media.

In addition to radio programming, WORT usually produces concerts and sponsored musical stages at several neighborhood festivals which did not occur in 2020. We continued to provide promotion for virtual events in the area and maintained our connection with area nonprofits to promote their online events. WORT also partnered with the Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra to air their virtual Concerts on the Square series.

In addition, we were promotional partners for more than 20 different organizations in 2020, offering promotion for countless online and Covid-safe events.

The station is a member of several local organizations, including Community Shares of Wisconsin, Center for Change, Dane County Administrators of Volunteer Services, and Dane County Time Bank. We are a member of Dane Buy Local as well, and have strong support from local businesses through underwriting, and donation of goods and services for raffle prizes and pledge drives.

WORT is the only radio station in the area to provide grassroots coverage of local elections, including all of the candidates and their issues. WORT also airs speeches by local activists at community events, and—more than any other media outlet—offers a forum where non-profit groups can talk about their causes and activities to a listening audience known for its concern and participation. All of this provides access to information unavailable in other media.

The station began full-time webstreaming in February of 2006 and on-line archives and podcasts in 2008. The station began HD digital broadcasting in July of 2005. The station's website has undergone an update in style and content in October 2015 and we offer visitors more interactive and searchable content as a result, including a popular calendar of events that allows for the public to submit events. An active Facebook presence was begun in 2009 (now more than 12k followers), three Twitter accounts in 2015 (@wortradio has more than 1,900 followers, @wortnews has more than 4,000 followers, and @worttalk has more than almost 700 ), and an Instagram account in 2019 (more than 2,000 followers).

WORT is located near a major university in a well-educated community with four local high schools. These are big sources of our volunteers, and we train many current students, and those who have recently graduated, in radio news, radio producing, sound engineering, and radio DJing. . Our public affairs and talk programming regularly feature community, state, and national leaders, writers, academics, scientists, elected officials, political candidates, labor leaders, and journalists. . Our daily

community calendar announcements keep listeners aware of upcoming events of interest both on campus and in the community as a whole. Many of our music programmers are experts in their fields of interest. For example, our country music host, Bill Malone, wrote the definitive history on country music and was featured in a recent Ken Burns documentary on country music. Our hosts provide educational programming on particular and sometimes obscure artists and styles. A few music programmers even produce their own newsletters for listeners and other interested students of a particular genre or style. Many have independent social media presences and dedicated fanbases, in addition to the station's main outlets.

WORT provided training for dozens of community members in FY2020: new volunteers were mentored in engineering, news writing and interviewing, journalism ethics, audio editing, and on-air vocal techniques. For most positions, this did not stop during the pandemic, although the training occurred remotely for volunteers who joined after March 2020. Volunteers and trainees of all ages are afforded hands-on experience and numerous opportunities for challenge, responsibility, and growth. WORT volunteers are able to carry this experience to other aspects of their lives and to careers in media; those involved in our news and public affairs often go on to careers in broadcasting and journalism (National Public Radio, Wisconsin Public Radio, local newspapers, etc). WORT staff have also been resource people for classes and workshops at local high schools, colleges, and universities. When the new student radio station at the University of Wisconsin went on-air in February 2002, WORT assisted with technical needs and the training of students and staff. WORT has also offered assistance to newly founded LPFM's in our area, offering tours for two local LPFM's, and presenting a lecture on underwriting rules and strategies for one local LPFM.

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.

WORT's cultural programming is often cited as a reason for Madison's diverse and vibrant culture.

The station has received awards several years in a row from the Madison Area Music Association. WORT has been named Madison's favorite radio station in the readers' poll of alt-weekly newspaper Isthmus for 29 of the past 31 years.

The station regularly wins annual awards from the Milwaukee Press Club and the Wisconsin Broadcasters' Association, competing in the large market category against media outlets that are often five to ten times our budget. In 2020, we won two awards from the Milwaukee Press Club: Silver in the Best Coverage of a Single or Ongoing Breaking News Story for our story about a local high school security guard fired unjustly, and the Bronze award in the same category for ongoing coverage of a locally-owned grocery store struggling to stay open. The Wisconsin Broadcasters Association awarded us third place in "Best Spot News" for a story about a UW-Madison house fellow terminated, the ensuing protest, then reinstatement. . WORT's music department also took home awards in 2020 from the Madison Area Music Awards for favorite local radio personality (Cooper Talbot of Her Infinite Variety), as well as Favorite Local Music Station of the Year. WORT was recognized for our 20th, 25th

and 30th anniversaries with proclamations from the City of Madison and the State of Wisconsin, as well as a commendation read into the US Congressional Record.

WORT's contributions to Madison's cultural and political life have been noted by national figures such as Professors Noam Chomsky and Robert W. McChesney, media personalities Amy Goodman and John Nichols, as well as elected officials including Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes, US Representatives Mark Pocan and Glenn Grothman, Senator Tammy Baldwin, and too many state legislators to name here.

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.

WORT airs numerous programs produced by and for minority audiences. All of these attempt to be responsive to the needs and requests of community members both on and off-air. Several of our daily talk programs reach out into various minority communities to get guests on topics of relevance to those particular communities as well as the general listenership. Many of the hosts are themselves members of various minority communities. Some programs are a mix of music and information in English geared to specific communities, particularly south-Asian, African-American, and Latinx. We offer two programs in foreign languages - Spanish and Hmong - that are of particular importance to those communities, offering news and public service announcements in their native language, together with a refreshing mix of music from home. Spanish speakers are the fastest growing population segment in Dane County, Wisconsin (our listening area) and WORT continues to expand the services it is able to provide to this sector of our community. Several music programs play material not available anywhere else on the dial, and all of the programmers regularly receive telephone requests for specific musical pieces or styles.

WORT 89.9FM airs the longest-running locally produced LGBTQ radio program in the area—Queery. In addition, WORT also airs a weekly news program for and by women—Her Turn. WORT is a promotional partner for Madison Pride, and staffs an outreach table. In addition, WORT is listed in the OutReach LGBTQ Directory, and enjoys a promotional partnership with OutReach, Madison's LGBTQ Center.

WORT is expanding our broadcast journalism training in Summer 2021 (if safe to do so). This was originally planned for summer 2020, but was canceled due to COVID. This news school will offer paid internships, targeted directly for those who are low-income and people of color. We intend to work closely with community partners, building on relationships that exist already and forming new ones. We are funding the program through support from private donors and grant foundations.

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?

In the event of a total elimination of federal funds, a great deal of additional on- and off-air fundraising would be required to even begin to approximate the loss, risking donor fatigue in an uncertain economic time. Valuable international and national news services would also need to be discontinued. Our already overloaded staff would be squeezed and possibly cut, meaning we would be less able to serve as a training ground for our hundreds of current hosts and hundreds of future hosts. Our equipment and

production capabilities - and our programming - would suffer. These cuts would seriously decrease our ability to serve unrepresented and underrepresented members of our community with an important source of news, information, and culture.