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| **6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story** | | |
| The purpose of this section is to give you an opportunity to tell us and your community about the activities you have engaged in to address community needs by outlining key services provided, and the local value and impact of those services. Please report on activities that occured in Fiscal Year 2020. Responses may be shared with Congress or the public. Grantees are required to post a copy of this report (Section 6 only) to their website no later than ten (10) days after the submission of the report to CPB. CPB recommends placing the report in an "About" or similar section on your website. This section had previously been optional. Response to this section of the SAS is now mandatory. | **Joint licensee Grantees that have filed a 2020 Local Content and Services Report as part of meeting the requirement for TV CSG funding may state they have done so in the corresponding questions below, so long as all of the questions below were addressed as they relate to radio operations in such report. You must include the date the report was submitted to CPB along with the TV Grantee ID under which it was submitted.** |  |

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| 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. |

WJFF's Mission Statement lays out a vision for making available to the listening community “a broad range of ideas and ideals useful to a full and enlightened life” while also involving this community to broadcast its viewpoints, concerns, needs, and interests.

To that end, WJFF’s mission establishes three goals: (1) engage the community in “preserving and transmitting [its] cultural heritage and artistic expressions,” (2) connect the local community to the cultural heritage and artistic expressions “of the global community,” and (3) “promote understanding among people of diverse social and cultural backgrounds.”

WJFF Radio Catskill serves communities in Sullivan County, the Catskills, and Northeast Pennsylvania by keeping listeners connected to the information they need.

In reality, the singular “community” of WJFF’s Mission Statement is made of many diverse communities in a rural area. Different people–farmers, artists, caregivers, corrections officers, second-home owners, service industry laborers—all live and work together.

Yet, these people also live apart. In addition to divisions of race, religion, income, and politics, there are also divisions stemming from the geography of the listening area. There are a few larger villages that are population centers, but just as many people are spread across isolated hamlets, hilltops, and valleys. The winters are long, the roads are long, and internet connection can be tricky at best.

WJFF is a key part of bridging these divides and staving off isolation in the best of times, and 2020 was not the best of times. Our goals and approach changed drastically to meet new community needs and overcome strange new obstacles.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone in the world. WJFF’s corner of the world happened to be on the doorstep of the global epicenter of the pandemic. Located just 2 hours northeast of New York City, COVID came to our listening area sooner and hit harder than it did in many rural areas. The last volunteer to broadcast from WJFF’s main studios left the night of March 12, and volunteers have not been back to broadcast since then.

WJFF staff quickly identified essential Needs and Goals for the listener and station operations. This outline addressed immediate needs in a crisis setting, forming a foundation for us to work from:

FOR THE LISTENER:

Keep Listeners Informed

* Increase Amount of National News
* Increase Amount of Local News & Information
* Emphasize Reliable & Informed Sources

Keep Listeners Engaged & Connected

* Local Reporting
* Local Conversations
* Ongoing broadcast of local services, resources, & emergency aid

(food banks, government & NGOs, help lines, etc.)

Help Listeners De-Stress

* Have Breaks from News (Music, Entertainment)
* Wellness Programming

FOR STAFF:

* Increase Efficiency
* Reduce Time Finding & Editing Local Shows
* Reduce time communicating with & coordinating individual producers
* Facilitate Automation, as Needed
* Create space for local content
* Create a sustainable local production routine
* Make Schedule More Promotable
* Easily explain what plays where (headlines, specials, music, news)

This “triage” outline of goals/needs left room to incorporate other, long-standing goals, such as maintaining a diverse range of voices and perspectives. It informed the most radical changes to the WJFF schedule and its on-air sound since the station’s founding.

The response from the community was immediate and resounding.

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.

Despite having no news director, no news department, and only two staff people able to go live on air, WJFF Radio Catskill leapt head-first into local news production. This news took multiple forms: pre-recorded headlines that fit into the NPR clock, live-read news updates, live phone interviews, and pre-recorded interviews.

Local interviews aired during the final segments of All Things Considered Monday through Friday and on Radio Chatskill on Sunday. Local headlines aired seven days a week. We started recording interviews in response to the pandemic on One staff member, Jason Dole, conducted more than 580 interviews.

Our tagline became “Keeping You Connected.” As we did that through all of this coverage in a time of crisis, certain key needs in the community became clear.

WJFF looped back around to these topics, partnered with specific institutions to tackle them, and turned these issues into our Key Initiatives for 2020.

**KEY INITIATIVES**

Food Insecurity

An overlooked problem exacerbated by the pandemic, WJFF interviewed the neighbors, nonprofits, food pantries, and local government offices responding to food insecurity. The station also created webpage of food banks and other food relieve initiatives for those in need or those looking to help, and regularly announced these food resources live on-air.

Healthcare

WJFF immediately set up a webpage of national and local COVID-19 informational resources and began regular on-air conversations with local healthcare entities, from Public Health officials in multiple counties, local hospitals, and clinics. As poor health was a “pre-existing condition” in the WJFF listening area before COVID-19, it was important to connect listeners with a range of health topics in addition to key info about the coronavirus.

Racial & Social Justice

The pandemic disproportionally affected people of color. In our area, that also meant a lot of migrant farm workers, caretakers, and members of the Latinx community. WJFF was already covering these issues when racial injustice seemed to become its own epidemic in the spring. The moment nation-wide protests erupted over the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other unarmed African-Americans, local protests erupted over the use of racial slurs in one local government.

Official Information & Resources

During the pandemic, state and local governments had to get a lot of information out to the public about safety, changes to services, relief, and resources and WJFF helped make that happen. We preempted regular programming for NY Governor Andrew Cuomo’s daily briefings. Similarly, we simulcast the twice-weekly live online information sessions held by the Sullivan County Legislature. We also spoke regularly with rural Pike and Wayne Counties in Northeast PA, which have less governmental infrastructure and resources for “getting the word out.” WJFF also made regular announcements of the local government “help lines” where those in need could find help and those wishing to help could offer aid.

Education

Schools in the WJFF listening area announced a three-week closure on March 14, 2020. They didn’t reopen again that school year. From the impact that the closing had on students and families to the many, many questions surrounding school reopenings, WJFF pursued issues around education with all of the key players: parents, teachers, administrators, students, teachers unions, school nurses, and community members.

Mental Health

The pandemic cause its own wave of stress, isolation, and depression on top of making existing mental health issues even worse. Substance abuse rose in local communities already battling the opioid crisis. Spousal and child sexual abuse rose. WJFF spoke with local experts in these fields and others. The station also announced mental health resources for adults and children, held weekly conversations with experts on Disaster Mental Health, and conducted regular on-air mindfulness and meditation exercises.

Voting & 2020 Election

WJFF Radio Catskill connects the community with candidates and voting information every election year, but in 2020 our role was even more crucial. COVID kept candidates from meeting the public and the pandemic thoroughly upended everything: primary dates, voting locations, mail-in ballot rules, etc. We spoke with key candidates and gave regular updates on voting information. Plus, as the entire nation watched Pennsylvania this election, we spoke regularly with the local officials, Democrat and Republican, responsible for making the elections run smoothly in PA’s Wayne and Pike counties. They needed to get important voting info out to rural residents, and we made that happen.

Arts & Nonprofits

Many people working in the arts suffered terribly during the pandemic, especially musicians, actors, and other artists who depend on an audience. Meanwhile, many local nonprofits within the arts and beyond faced serious threats to their budgets even as their staff had to work harder than ever. WJFF realized that it was important to talk to those in the arts & nonprofits, not just about a given event or initiative, but to remind people that their organizations were still there, still vital. We did what we could to honor the fact that, whatever difficulties our organization had, as a radio station we never lost our venue during COVID.

**PARTNERS**

*These are the entities that WJFF partnered with as we pursued these key initiatives to benefit those in the community.*

Food Insecurity

Food Bank of The Hudson Valley

The Wayne [County] Community Foundation

Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster

Cornell Cooperative Extension, Sullivan County

Sullivan Federation for the Homeless

Sullivan County Social Services

Monticello Rotary Club

Liberty Rotary Club

The Cooperage Project

Wayne County Office of the Aging

Wayne County Office of Human Services

Pike County Hands of Hope

New Hope Community

A Single Bite

Healthcare

Sullivan County Department of Public Health

Garnet Healthcare

Sun River Health

Wayne Memorial Hospital

Wayne Memorial Community Health Centers

Crystal Run Healthcare

Hudson Valley Veteran's Administration

Mental Health

Sullivan 180

Wayne County Behavioral Health Department

Institute for Disaster Mental Health at SUNY New Paltz

Hudson Valley Center for Vets Reintegration

The Kingfisher Project

Vet 2 Vet

Doug Bill, Honesdale Wellness

Racial & Social Justice

NYCLU

Sullivan County NAACP

Hudson Valley Labor Federation

National Young Farmers Coalition

Gender Equality New York

Ulster County District Attorney

Amnesty International Mid-Hudson Chapter

TriVersity Center for Gender & Sexual Diversity

Official Information & Resources

Sullivan County Government

Wayne County Government

Pike County Government

Delaware County Government

New York State Governor & Lieutenant Governor

Pennsylvania Department of State

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Education

SUNY Sullivan

Sullivan County Childcare Council

Monticello Central School District

Sullivan West School District

Wayne Highlands School District

Voting & 2020 Election

State Senator Jen Metzger

Mike Martucci, Republican candidate for State Senator

Kyle Van De Water, candidate in New York’s 19th Congressional District Race

Rep. Antonio Delgado (NY-19), incumbent

NY Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul

PA Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar

Frank LaBuda, Sullivan County District Attorney Candidate

Megan Galligan, Sullivan County District Attorney Candidate

Sullivan County Young Democrats

Arts & Nonprofits

Bethel Woods Center for The Arts

Forestburgh Playhouse

Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre

CAS [Catskill Art Society]

Delaware Valley Arts Alliance

The Cooperage Project

EB Crawford Public Library

Western Sullivan Public Library

Liberty Public Library

Manor Ink

Ashokan Center

Farm Arts Collective

Sullivan County Visitors Association

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.

Overall Impact

We heard from community members again and again in 2020 that WJFF was a “lifeline” for them. That we were keeping them going during a hard time. That we were doing a tremendous job with the additional news, interviews, and information. It’s hard to measure this kind of impact but the tone, scope, and amount of positive feedback we heard is above and beyond anything staff members have heard in recent years.

In the local River Reporter Newspaper’s “The Best of 2020” reader’s choice poll, WJFF was voted by the community as “The Best Radio Station,” and Program Director Jason Dole was voted “Best Radio Personality,” likely for the increased amount of live local interviews he did. “Best Station” is something WJFF has won in the past, but not in many years. “Best Personality” is something no one at the station has ever won before. People seem to be genuinely grateful for the job we’ve been doing.

Sullivan County NAACP

Following the police killing of George Floyd, Beronna Taylor, and other unarmed African-Americans and the subsequent protests that followed, New York’s Governor Cuomo issued an executive order saying that all NY municipalities that have police officers need to work with the police and all stakeholders in the community to review and reform policing, especially to reduce racial bias.

In October 2020, Sandra Johnson Fields called WJFF because as local police departments were beginning this process, the NAACP didn’t have a seat at the table. She was seeking guidance and assistance for an important story that needed to be told. WJFF advised Fields on next steps and to be ready to put out a press release after speaking on air the next month. Local papers also began reporting on this story.

Sandra Johnson Fields returned as a guest for a follow-up in January and reported that the NAACP of Sullivan County was able to get people on these panels, but that she still has concerns over the reform process. These concerns are now finding echoes across the state. WJFF is continuing to follow the story in 2021.

Jocelyn Cramer, Wayne County Commissioner

Early in the pandemic, listeners complained that there was not enough information being given for Wayne and Pike Counties in northeast PA. This was due to a relative lack of information from PA. The county governments in Wayne and Pike are smaller than Sullivan and have less staff to communicate. Sullivan was putting out about two press releases a day in March 2020 as the pandemic dawned. By comparison, Wayne had sent only about 5 press releases in the same time period.

So, WJFF set up regular interviews with Wayne County Commissioner Jocelyn Cramer, which became a very efficient way to get out information to isolated listeners in the county. She has since thanked us several times for helping get the word out on everything from COVID restrictions to county services, food aid, business reopenings, and other issues. As election time drew near, WJFF became the vehicle for both Wayne and Pike counties to get out the word about many changes to voting procedures in the battleground state during the pandemic.

“Thank you for all the good news and good work you have done sharing this information on WJFF,” says Cramer. “Thank you again for the opportunity to reach your listeners about updates here in Wayne County. As a new commissioner, I keep reviewing these [interviews], to learn how I can improve content and messaging in general. I really hope people are appreciating your local programming in a new and heightened way these days. I know I am!”

David Dann, Production Manager, *Manor Ink*

In 2020, WJFF partnered with Manor Ink, a local newspaper written by teenagers who work in conjunction with adult mentors. The result is a monthly edition of Radio Chatskill that is hosted by the young reporters and features their interviews, columns, and editorials in their own voices. This was a major step forward in terms of age diversity on our station, and marked the return of regular youth-produced radio for the first time in 5 years.

Manor Ink Production Manager David Dann sends this impact statement:

“Our student journalists at Manor Ink have found the opportunity to read and discuss their news stories on air to be an educational as well as exciting experience. In addition, we have had very positive feedback from the Town of Rockland community regarding the broadcasts. We publicize them on our social media accounts and those postings always get many likes and shares. I know I speak for all of our young staff as well as our adult mentors when I say that Manor Ink is delighted to be able to share news and information with WJFF’s many listeners in Livingston Manor, Roscoe and in other hamlets and villages throughout Sullivan County.”

**OTHER IMPACTS**

Lawrence Winters, Veteran & Mental Health Counselor, Guest on *Let’s Talk Vets* (veterans affairs)

“I got only a few comments [from others] on the show, but they were deep and meaningful comments. During this time the public is so inundated with fear…I would not expect much room for our vets story to be paid attention to. The young vets are engaged in making something out of what they came back to and the old vets are losing their lives and voices. Thank you for your voice and consistently working to keep the truth going out. If only a few understand and are changed, we’ve done our jobs.”

Jay Quaintance, President, SUNY Sullivan

“In this age of 24/7 access to information that threatens to overwhelm us, it is important to have a source for news, entertainment and content that is local, curated and honest. Radio has been that for so many people for so long. WJFF has over 30 years of history in the Catskills ‘in the can.’”

Colleen Monaghan, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County

“WJFF has been an invaluable partner to Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County, our programs, volunteers, membership, partners, and community for decades. By giving our membership, youth, and agricultural businesses a voice county-wide, WJFF is a local leader in cultivating community, ensuring Sullivan County residents and visitors have the most up to date, relevant information about important issues and opportunities and creating a sense of place and affinity around our rural heritage.”

Eric Frances, Chief Executive Officer, Bethel Woods Center for the Arts

“During times like these, the importance of partnership and support of your community is a cornerstone to success. WJFF is an anchor institution within Sullivan County. They continue to be a community resource, preserve our cultural heritage, and promote the arts within the region.”

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.

WJFF’s mission statement, diversity statement, the goals of its staff, and the benchmarks laid out in its strategic plan all emphasize diversity as a primary value and increasing the diversity of both those who participate in WJFF and whom the station serves.

Spanish/Bilingual Programming:

WJFF added a weekly hour-long Spanish language public affairs program “La Voz en Breve,” featuring information, interviews, and music for the Hudson Valley and Catskills’ vibrant Hispanic community. The program is hosted by journalist Mariel Fiori, recipient of the Humanitarian Award of the NAACP and Woman of the Year award of the AAUW, and co-founder of La Voz magazine, a monthly Spanish language publication housed at Bard College, serving the Mid-Hudson Valley and the Catskill region. The station continued broadcast of the nationally distributed bilingual program Concierto, “the first classical music program to specifically target Latino listeners.” Host Frank Dominguez presents classical music in both English and in Spanish.

LGBTQ Programming - Local Interviews, This Way Out & Outcasting:

WJFF increased awareness of local services and organizations that welcome, support and empower the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) community living in and visiting our listening area. We conducted multiple interviews with Catskills Pride (Sullivan County, NY) and TriVersity Center for Gender and Sexual Diversity (Pike County, PA) during local news programming highlighting their social, supportive and educational services.

Additionally, WJFF continued airing weekly programming from Outcasting and This Way Out. This Way Out is “The International LGBT Radio Magazine,” airing on stations for more than 30 years. Each episode includes features and a headline roundup of LGBTQ news from around the world. Outcasting is “Public radio’s LGBTQ youth program,” recorded in the Mid-Hudson Valley.

SALT – Sullivan Agencies Learning Together

WJFF continued its partnership with The Catholic Charities and SALT (Sullivan Agencies Learning Together). They focus on the needs of underserved, minority, immigrant, and/or low-income residents in Sullivan County. We conducted multiple interviews during local news programming about S.A.L.T’s diverse partnership of agencies and community resources committed to working together to improve the quality of life for the residents of Sullivan County.

Let’s Talk Vets with Doug Sandberg:

SSGT Doug Sandberg (USAF, ret.) continued his Let’s Talk Vets program for US Veterans and their families, moving from monthly to bi-weekly broadcasts last year. As a veteran himself, Doug has been able to reach and serve this community in ways other volunteers could not. Veterans are an underserved community at

greater risk of suicide, homelessness, and mental health issues than the general population. Doug Sandberg spent much of the year coordinating with local veterans reacting to the COVID pandemic and continuing to honor the fallen.

Indigenous Voices:

WJFF increased its indigenous programming by adding 15 hours of programming from Native Voice One (NV1). NV1 distributes work from Native and non-Native producers whose programming educates, advocates, and celebrates Indigenous life and values. The programs also enlighten and inform the general public about Native American news, culture, history, music, events, and modern life.

Jewish Concerns & Jewish Holiday Programming:

During the pandemic, we saw a rise of local sentiment fearing the seasonal Orthodox Jewish community that comes to the Catskills from New York City. There was a lot of negative bias before the summer season even began. Since the CDC specifically warned against stigmatization of specific groups during the pandemic, and because of our commitment to diversity and potentially overlooked communities, and our role to combat ignorance as an educational broadcaster, WJFF made a point of asking local officials to be clear about the overblown and frankly prejudicial nature of local sentiment towards this community.

Moreover, we aired multiple special greetings from Ha Rav Smuel Fishbain, leader of the Bethel Torah Center and longest-serving religious leader in Sullivan County, making it clear to him off-air that he should use us as a resource if his community faced any problems or attacks. On-air, after his prepared remarks for the holiday, WJFF would ask Rabbi Fishbain to speak openly about how his congregation was doing during the pandemic.

WJFF continued its tradition of broadcasting music and information specials for the High Holy Days as well as Hanukkah and Passover. Hanukkah programs included “Eternal Echoes” featuring Violinist Itzhak Perlman and Jewish music scholar, performer Hankus Netsky and host James David Jacobs with an hour of songs and stories celebrating the holiday; and “Sounds Jewish” from host Andy Muchin for Mississippi Public Broadcasting Music Radio.

Specials – MLK Day and Black History Month

WJFF aired more than 15 hours of special programming on Martin Luther King Jr Day weekend. These specials were a mix of music programming, documentary programming, and the words of Dr. King himself.

Black History Month was marked with multiple special programs across February, including local and national specials about Frederick Douglass, a salute to black composers, Kusar Grace’s weekly exlploration of black history, especially Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X.

Janus Adams

Dr. Janus Adams is an award-winning journalist and historian, and her program weekly program The Janus Adams Show, “A Conversation on Race and Courage,” brings ideas and perspectives from the African American community to everyone. Guests on The Janus Adams Show have helped represent Native Americans, migrant workers, rural white farmers, and other groups.

When George Floyd was killed, his words “I can’t breathe” reminded many, especially New Yorkers, of the same thing Eric Garner said years earlier in his deadly encounter with the NYPD. The same week the nation erupted in outrage over Floyd’s killing, Janus Adams’ live guests included the director of American Trial: The Eric Garner Story, and Garner’s widow.

When residents of the mostly white, rural community staged their own Black Lives Matter protest and rally, Janus Adams was one of the guest speakers. The rally itself was recorded and broadcast on WJFF.

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?

A crisis like the pandemic in a rural area like ours is the time and place that public radio was made for. It’s the service we were always meant to provide. It’s what CPB funding was meant to do. We’ve kept people informed, connected, enriched, and entertained. Some longtime listeners have commented that this is the best the station has ever been.

CPB funding has always enabled WJFF to afford the subscription and per-program fees for national-level programming it would be otherwise unable to afford. This programming is tremendously important to our listening area, as it provides our listeners a real alternative to commercial broadcast media, especially since streaming data, Wi-Fi, and high-speed internet access can still be difficult to access in our listening area. Bringing a global perspective to our rural broadcast region allows WJFF to connect its local communities to the cultural heritage and artistic expressions of the whole world.

National and international programs like NPR’s All Things Considered and the BBC World Service also give WJFF’s schedule balance and substance. It’s a foundation. That quality is hard to come by in the free programming available to public radio stations. It requires real journalism and a broad network of resources. Without CPB funding, WJFF could not afford flagship NPR news programming. And, contrary to recurring accusations of left-leaning bias against NPR, the fact is without NPR news, WJFF would sound exponentially more biased as it is forced to rely on free and low-cost programs produced in a more purely activist spirit. This would likely drive away more moderate listeners, which in turn would require the station to appeal to an increasingly narrow base to fund the rest of its budget. In this sense, CPB funding is a safeguard against further divisiveness in divisive times. It ensures public media serves as much the public as possible.

Additionally, CPB funding enables WJFF the ability to pay its staff a fair wage and provide them with benefits appropriate to professional workers. Increased staffing has increased the quality, consistency and quantity of WJFF’s locally-produced programming, enabling local communities to better transmit and preserve their own cultural heritage and artistic expressions. Without a three-person full-time staff, bold initiatives like sponsoring the Hispanic Heritage Festival, producing The Janus Adams Show and Out n About, and partnering with such a wide range of local nonprofits would not have been possible.

These two realities—affording quality national programming and affording resources to produce more local programming—positively impact two of the goals in WJFF’s mission statement. Taken together, they each help increase WJFF’s ability to achieve the third: “promote understanding among people of diverse social and cultural backgrounds.” WJFF’s CPB funding plays a key role in fulfilling the station’s mission.