2020
Annual Local Content and Service Report
for KPCC-FM

As submitted to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)
March 2021
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.

The mission of Southern California Public Radio (SCPR) is to strengthen the civic and cultural bonds that unite Southern California’s diverse communities by providing the highest quality news and information service through radio and other interactive media. SCPR is a public forum that engages its audiences in an ongoing dialogue and exploration of issues, events, and cultures in the region and the world, seeking to provide greater understanding and new perspectives to the people of these communities and their leaders.

Through its station KPCC and website LAist, SCPR provides broadcast and digital stories on various topics and issues to the region, with news updates throughout the day as well as longer produced pieces. SCPR also offers multiday coverage over its produced shows and newscasts to tell stories about topics that have had a large and universal impact (COVID-19), that currently affect many in the broadcast area (unemployment, homelessness), or whose outcome will affect all (census, election). This year, SCPR’s podcast division, LAist Studios, launched multiple new series, including an investigation into a desert real estate scheme targeting immigrants, and one Angeleno’s audio tour of his beloved city through moving personal stories.

SCPR’s newsroom takes an audience-first approach, with engagement producers dedicated specifically to early childhood, pathways to college, and election coverage as well as a larger community engagement team that gathers and directly answers community questions about a wide range of topics. This approach proved particularly valuable this year in response to the pandemic, racial justice protests, and a historically contentious election. The highest number of questions pertained to unemployment, while many others identified issues for political candidates to address. School questions included school employees worried about childcare and parents concerned about Zoom bullying. Housing questions featured everything from how to get into the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) program to whether a landlord can ask to see COVID-19 medical records. SCPR’s engagement team also saw many policing concerns, mask questions, and whistleblowing.

SCPR offers multiplatform programming in order to reach audiences that no longer listen to radio. The KPCC and LAist websites offer news and information, while podcasts and mobile apps for iPads, iPhones, and Android smartphones allow SCPR to reach out to new and younger audiences who do not consume news through traditional sources.
SCPR’s KPCC In Person team produces live event discussions. Audience members can observe and ask questions as KPCC reporters and hosts examine current topics of the day or interview community leaders, panel experts, and other notable individuals. This year, the KPCC In Person team transitioned these events online with a pandemic series exploring life for an ER doctor, homemade masks, groceries, caring for young children, unemployment, rent and eviction, and the role of social contracts. People could watch events live, follow the conversation through social media posts, or access archived video later. This multiplatform approach—on air, online, and via live events—ensures that SCPR is both reaching out to new audiences as well as keeping its existing audience informed and engaged.

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.

With San Francisco public media newsroom KQED, SCPR continued to lead the California Reporting Project, a statewide newsroom coalition demanding public access to police conduct records. SCPR also continued its nationwide collaboration with WUNC in North Carolina and other public media outlets on the American Homefront Project, which covers issues regarding the military and veterans—including a virtual event examining racism in the military justice system.

The newsroom established a new partnership with local public television station KCET/PBS SoCal to produce a daily TV and video news segment featuring KPCC/LAist journalists. In addition, SCPR collaborated with KCRW, the other NPR station in Los Angeles, to produce a podcast about how women of color experience and impact today’s political events and to contribute local broadcast stories to NPR’s national news podcast.

SCPR extended the reach of its reporting nationally and to underserved audiences in Los Angeles through reporting partnerships with The New York Times (nursing homes), ProPublica (systemic racism), and local ethnic media outlets Boyle Heights Beat, Asian Journal, and KIRN-Radio Iran (COVID-19, census). SCPR’s newsroom also held virtual panel discussions on the future of local news with the USC Annenberg School of Communications and Journalism.

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.

When COVID-19 struck, SCPR created a comprehensive, constantly updated guide for coronavirus information and resources that evolved into the website “How to (New) LA,” which provides practical guides to help Southern Californians navigate daily life in today’s rapidly shifting environment including vital information about unemployment benefits. In addition, the newsroom also launched a twice-daily digital newsletter with pandemic updates. The engagement team individually answered thousands of questions from across the nation and around the world, launched a Facebook Support group, and sent resource-packed mailers in both English and Spanish to residents without reliable internet access. SCPR also provided key information about the census as well as extensive election coverage—including a thorough voter’s guide, virtual debates (LA district attorney, LA County Board of Supervisors) and proposition explainer events, and the answering of thousands of community questions about casting a ballot in these unprecedented times.

This year, SCPR published several impactful news investigations. The first story in a series on California’s housing crisis uncovered hazardous conditions in Mike Nijjar’s PAMA Management rental empire, prompting a LA City Council member to return campaign donations to corporate landlords in the piece and State Assembly member to re-introduce a bill for tracking rents, vacancies, and ownership. Another story uncovered overcrowded and unsafe conditions in the San Gabriel Valley’s Chinese immigrant boarding houses. In partnership with The New York Times, SCPR found that nursing homes with large numbers of Black and Latinx residents have been twice as likely to be hit by coronavirus as those where the population is mostly white. This reporting led the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors to appoint a new Inspector General to investigate nursing homes.

SCPR continued to engage audiences through ongoing event series Unheard LA, which features real people sharing their stories as a way to connect with one another and celebrate the diverse communities of Los Angeles. The pandemic necessitated a switch to virtual events, while the racial justice movement inspired a refocusing as Unheard LA—A Deeper Listen. These events were part of the new multimedia series Race In LA, which invites community members to share their experiences with race and ethnicity. This initiative includes “The 8 Percent,” dedicated to the experience of Black Angelenos, and the “Racism 101” toolkit to help guide conversations about tough race-related issues, with a diverse panel of community members answering audience questions.

These activities generated positive responses from audiences, policymakers, and journalism peers. Below are some examples of their comments and feedback:
KPCC shows
“I love NPR and KPCC. Thank you for your objective and critical reporting. From [Take Two’s] A Martinez to [AirTalk’s] Larry Mantle to all the other NPR stations that contribute to your program. America needs you, California needs you, and LA needs you!” – Ingrid Marsten

“KPCC is my absolute favorite public radio station. I’m so grateful to KPCC for keeping me informed, especially during this crazy year. Also, a special shout out to Larry Mantle’s AirTalk. I think the pandemic would have felt *much* more stressful without the information provided by the doctors/scientists Larry Mantle regularly brought onto AirTalk. It was also great to hear from other Angelenos on AirTalk about how they’re coping, what they’re doing for fun, etc. etc. KPCC is an invaluable service.” – A sustaining member

“I have been a longtime fan of A Martinez and Take Two. The reports/essays by Austin Cross and Erick Galindo were extraordinary and made for a first-class and extraordinary show today. Thank you.” – Paul Blank

COVID-19
“Thanks for the very thorough information you’ve been providing all of your listeners. It’s so greatly appreciated, and I know your listeners appreciate it. But I hope you know all of us in the public health community are benefiting from the thoroughness and the accuracy of all of the reporting you’re doing.” – Barbara Ferrer, Los Angeles County Health Director

“So thankful for journalists shining a light on the unique role/pressure/burden on Filipino (specifically Filipina!) folks in the medical field right now. I know first-hand how frequently relegated our stories are to ethnic media outlets, and glad this made LAist.” – Godfrey Santos Plata

Engagement
“Your teams are so very hard at work right now and the public service you’re providing is immeasurable. Wanted to let you know that the incredible template you’ve put together is inspiring smart thinking in other newsrooms and beyond. We shared it with the City of Chicago’s Office of the Mayor and are in conversations around how they can leverage your workflows to do the same for Chicagoans going to the city’s website. Thank you for sharing your brilliance in the midst of such a workload and always thinking about how you can be making what you do as useful as possible to as many people as possible.” – Jennifer Brandel, CEO of Hearken (engagement tool)
“From one of our many questioners: THANK YOU for the personal reply! You must be swamped. This was really helpful, I’m going to pass it on to my friend who’s a senior citizen working part time. Bless you, stay healthy, and stay safe.” – Sherry

Investigations
“I have been doing work for poor tenants or unhoused people and conducting related research for nearly 50 years. I have read a lot on the subject and have written a fair amount myself. I don’t remember reading anything on the subject that made me so angry – not so much at the PAMA parasites, but at the ‘justice’ system that will jail homeless people who had no money to pay a citation and missed a court date because they were trying to survive, but will never present more than a minor annoyance to people like [landlord Mike] Nijjar, as they squeeze a little more profit from the utter misery and sometimes death of others.” – Gary Blasi, UCLA law professor

“This reporting details the horrifying and dangerous conditions that some tenants are forced to live with. It also shows the need for a comprehensive rental registry. Luckily, [State Assembly member] Buffy Wicks has a bill to create one. Let’s get it done.” – David Chiu, California Assembly Housing Committee chair

Race and racial justice
“I am a conservative Republican Latina woman, a former elementary schoolteacher, and a retired Sheriff’s Lieutenant. I am seeking to better understand issues pertaining to racial equality/inequality, particularly as they pertain to African Americans. Your articles are interesting, informative, and helpful. Thank you.” – Gabrielle Peloquin

“It’s always a pleasure to work with Josie Huang, who brings so much depth and nuance to her reporting on SoCal’s Asian American communities. Her writing here is just A+.” – Ava DuVernay, director

Member testimonials
“I started listening to KPCC when I moved to LA two years ago to complete my teaching credential. KPCC has been with me on the car ride to drive my cousin to Woodrow Wilson Senior High, on the drive to attend my classes at Cal State LA, and now playing at my home before I start my online classroom each day. Thank you for keeping me informed during my challenges in college and while I take care of my responsibilities to my family.” – Alex Torres

“My parents are long-time listeners and contributors. I also believe in the importance of fair and free journalism. It would be an odd morning not to hear KPCC being streamed as I wake and prepare for school. I thank you for your reporting and hope to keep KPCC and NPR as a part of my daily routine far into the future.” – Jason Salazar, 10th grader
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.

Nothing defines Southern California more than its role as a magnet for people who are seeking a better life for themselves and their children. Whether they come from different parts of the US or other locations around the world, this region provides a level of optimism about the future that is fundamental to understanding civic, cultural, and religious life. The search for the “American Dream” continues to make the Los Angeles region one of the most diverse and multiethnic populations in the nation, and the generations of immigrants that have settled here create an evolving definition of both “Angeleno” and “American.” With that in mind, SCPR’s daily news reporting and programming must reflect these diverse ethnic cultures and communities.

SCPR aims to provide the Southland with coverage that mirrors the makeup of Southern California—its hope, optimism, and cultural richness as well as the serious challenges that must be addressed daily. Immigration reporter Erick Galindo posted stories about new street vending rules, day labor center protests, what Kobe Bryant meant to the city’s Latinx community, and the best café de olla before shifting into a columnist role with the series “Mis Angeles,” which explores the COVID-19’s personal impact on his stories of growing up Mexican American. Asian American Communities Correspondent Josie Huang reported on the effects of the pandemic—including the rise in anti-Asian hate incidents, the burden on California’s Filipino nurses, and how to build a food pantry for Asians—as well as on topics such as the US Census Bureau turning to children to reach Asian immigrants, Vietnamese American voters courted in Orange County’s Little Saigon, Long Beach’s first Cambodian American city councilmember, and how Jeopardy host Alex Trebek was regarded as an “uncle” by immigrant children learning English.

This is considered normal daily reporting, but it is not the only coverage that SCPR provides. This year, other reporters and correspondents told stories about unemployment hitting LA’s Black neighborhoods hard during the pandemic, an undocumented farmworker worried about feeding her children if her job is eliminated, Black college students and staff creating a safety net against COVID-19, an All Black Lives Matter march highlighting queer and trans rights, the 50th anniversary of the Chicano Moratorium protesting the Vietnam War and civil rights violations, the new ethnic studies requirement in the Cal State University system,
and Black dads on Father’s Day hoping for a better future for their sons. These examples show the kind of reporting and programming that is an integral part of SCPR’s public service and mission.

SCPR-produced shows also offer segments that cover the melting pot of Southern California and address the racial justice movement:

- *Take Two* tells stories of the ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity of Southern California authentically and organically, without the fanfare that might be needed elsewhere. Stories covered last year included high school students and alumni at some of LA’s elite private schools, spurred by the Black Lives Matter movement, using Instagram to share their experiences with racism on campus; how LA’s Historic Filipinotown is morphing into something called HiFi; a conversation with the directors of the Netflix documentary *Mucho Mucho Amor*, the story of Puerto Rican astrologer Walter Mercado; advice about shopping at Thai markets; and Angelenos reading their personal essays from SCPR’s Race in LA series.

- *AirTalk* offers longer, in-depth conversations on local, national, and international topics. Discussions last year included how communities of color are bearing the brunt of the pandemic; Asian Americans navigating COVID-19 xenophobia and bigotry; Muslims moving Ramadan traditions online; local Black law enforcement officers reflecting on national conversations about race and the future of policing; how the 1992 LA riots started a major demographic shift; a state report on racial profiling and traffic stops; advice for having difficult conversations about race at work; the demographics of LA’s Iranian community; the possibility of affirmative action returning to California with Prop 16; the impact of the Latinx vote on the election; and the boundaries of cultural appropriation in fashion for “Racism 101.”

- *The Frame* looks at music, movies, television, the arts, and entertainment. Segments from last year profiled individuals from a variety of backgrounds and artistic disciplines—including Japanese American multimedia artist Miwa Matreyek, Mexican American comedian Cristela Alonzo, Black actor Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, and South Korean director Bong Joon-ho—as well as such bands as Mariachi Arcoiris de Los Angeles and the Pan Afrikan People’s Arkestra. While *The Frame* went on hiatus at when California’s stay-at-home order was issued in March, host John Horn continued to report on arts and entertainment during the news day and on *Take Two*. He also hosted a podcast on which influential artists and executives discussed how Hollywood should reinvent itself in the face of the pandemic and a social justice movement demanding equity, access, and representation.
SCPR’s reporters work daily in the diverse communities of Southern California, and this staff has the technology, training, and ability to produce timely coverage for SCPR’s platforms: broadcast, digital, and events. Several members of the news staff are fluent or conversational Spanish speakers, and news and production staff have skills in a variety of other languages spoken in the LA metro area.

Southern California is one of the most multiethnic and diverse regions in the nation. In 2021, KPCC is committed to continuing to tell the stories of its people—whether they have been here for a few days, their whole life, or anywhere in-between.

5. Please briefly assess the impact that your CPB funding has on your ability to serve your community. What can you do with your grant that you wouldn’t be able to do if you didn’t receive it? 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?

Continued funding from CPB makes possible the kinds of on-air, online, and event programming described above. SCPR would not have had the resources to produce a daily newsmagazine, a daily discussion program, and regular arts reporting and to broadcast stories from our newsroom last year without support from CPB. SCPR would be forced to make cutbacks in other areas that would be detrimental not just to the station but to the broadcast audience as well. Almost as important, CPB’s support makes it possible to have this information available on SCPR’s websites, mobile apps, podcasts, and social media. Finally, CPB’s continued support also makes it possible for SCPR to create partnerships with other institutions in the community and to leverage these partnerships creatively to improve the depth, breadth, and quality of its programming and public service.