

2019 Local Content and Services Report Valley Public Radio – KVPR and KPRX

Section 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 occurred in Fiscal Year 2019. 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.

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.

Valley Public Radio is dedicated to serving the unique needs of listeners in the seven county region known as California's Southern San Joaquin Valley. The station has created original reporting on broadcast and digital platforms that addresses these needs and has highlighted both problems facing local communities and potential solutions. Among the highlights of our community service journalism in 2019:

Valley Fever - This airborne fungal disease is endemic to the San Joaquin Valley and much of the desert southwest. The fungus grows in the soil and when disturbed, either through human activity or by wind, it can become airborne and be inhaled. No cure exists and there are a few treatment options. For most symptoms are mild, but for many, the disease can be debilitating and even deadly, if the fungus spreads from the lungs to other parts of the body. In 2019 we reported on new research efforts, a new clinical trial, how climate change is resulting in a larger geographic area where the disease can live in the soil and infect people.

Links: <https://www.kvpr.org/term/valley-fever>

Clean Drinking Water - Around 1 million Californians still lack access to clean drinking water, making it a serious health issue. Many of the water districts that fail to meet state health standards are located in the San Joaquin Valley. Starting in 2017, Valley Public Radio began extensive reporting on this issue, which continued in 2019. This past year we reported how the issue became one of the Governor Gavin Newsom's top priorities in his first year in office, and we followed that story as bills funding the cleanup progressed through the legislature and were eventually signed into law. Our coverage dug deep into the fight over a proposed water tax to be paid by all state residents, or a search for other funding solutions. We looked at progress small communities like Lanare and Tooleville are making (or not making) in solving their water problems. We also examined how many small communities struggle to find residents with the time and expertise to sit on volunteer water district governing boards, and how some feel they

are being left out of a public process that would reshape the way people in the state tap the underground aquifer.

<https://www.kvpr.org/term/drinking-water>

Opioids - In 2019, station reporter Kerry Klein began a new series called "In Recovery" which is about the opioid epidemic in the San Joaquin Valley. Klein produced a wide range of stories as part of this project, which was part of a data journalism fellowship at the Center for Health Reporting at the University of Southern California. In the project she uncovered the lack of opioid treatment resources in Kern County, a part of our region that has been hit especially hard by this crisis. She also told the story she found in the Kern County community of Oildale, which has made progress in reducing the amount of opioid related overdoses and deaths. She produced a piece highlighting the challenges Bakersfield Police Department officers face in being first responders in these cases, and also shifted her series to turn from opioids to the newly resurgent methamphetamine epidemic.

<https://www.kvpr.org/term/opioids>

We engaged listeners in a variety of ways. We collaborated with other media outlets including KQED's The California Report and NPR's All Things Considered, which aired one of our reports on California's water crisis nationally in December. In 2019, the station won two "Golden Mike" Awards from the Southern California Radio Television News Association, including division B honors for Best Investigative Reporting, and Best Public Affairs Program. The station also won a regional Edward R. Murrow Award for Investigative Reporting, the first Murrow Award in the station's 41 year history. Our audience also increased in 2019. For the first time ever, KVPR.org topped 1 million pageviews, and the station recorded its highest-ever Nielsen audience of 77,400 weekly listeners in Spring 2019.

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

Valley Public Radio collaborated with a wide range of community partners. Our reporters contributed over a dozen reports to KQED's The California Report, and we agreed to host a KQED reporter in our newsroom in an co-working experiment. As a part of the Center for Health Reporting at USC, we have collaborated with their editors and other participating outlets including The Bakersfield Californian, Vida en el Valle, and the Voice of OC.

Our reporters have done community outreach work talking about their reporting at symposiums at Fresno City College, Clovis Community College, the Central California Women's Conference, and before local clubs and organizations. We have partnered with groups including the Kern County Public Library, Arte Americas, The San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust, and over two-dozen other groups as part of our media sponsorship programs. Our reporters worked closely with sources at groups ranging from the Fresno County Preterm Birth Initiative, The Community Water Center, the Yonsei Memory Project and many others to help bring their stories to a wider audience.

Beyond reporting, we also extended partnership with a variety of educational institutions and youth groups for our program Young Artists Spotlight. We worked closely with the Bakersfield Youth Symphony, Lindsay High School, Central Unified School District in Fresno, University High School of Fresno, Youth Orchestras of Fresno, the Fresno Musical Club and others to bring their students to our Barmann-Chaney Performance Studio to perform on the air live, for our program Young Artists Spotlight.

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.

Among the biggest areas of measurable impact our reporting has had has come in the effort to bring clean drinking water to California's rural communities. Around 1 million California residents have drinking water that fails to meet the state's health standards. We began reporting on this issue in 2017, and have continued it as a major reporting project. In 2017 and 2018, efforts to fix the problem either died in the legislature or failed to win the signature of the governor. In 2019 however, momentum built, as the issue caught the attention of Governor Gavin Newsom, who eventually signed SB200 into law, which will finally direct funding to these communities to solve the problem. While many news organizations reported on this issue, we were among the first to bring it to light, and to do sustained, in-depth coverage of the problem and bring it to wider attention.

Our reporting caught the attention of lawmakers in Sacramento. Valley Public Radio was named California Non-Profit of the year in 2019 by Senator Melissa Hurtado for Senate District 14. Hurtado issued the following statement praising the station's work: "As a district that is comprised of some of the most rural communities in California, presenting timely access to information is invaluable," stated Senator Melissa Hurtado. "Serving the Central Valley, our region relies on non-partisan reporting of local issues and news to ensure that we are given the opportunity to fight for our fair share of resources in the state of California. Moreover, the community work and art promoted through KVPR provides our region with the ability to sustain our diverse culture and share our own unique stories."

Source: <https://sd14.senate.ca.gov/news/652019-state-senator-melissa-hurtado-names-valley-public-radio-senate-district-14-nonprofit>

Hurtado cited the station's reporting on issues like access to clean drinking water as an example of the work the station is doing to bring issues of our residents to a wider audience.

Online user Monica Campbell also posted the following on one of our stories on KVPR.org

"Unbelievable you wouldn't image this was USA. Drinking water is second nature in UK. Good luck for the future."

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.

We have made a variety of efforts to make our coverage reflect the diversity of our region, which is one of the most diverse in the country. Following a tragic mass shooting in Fresno, CA that left four members of the Hmong-American community dead, Valley Public Radio produced more than a half dozen stories showcasing the local Southeast Asian community. We examined not only their response to the senseless tragedy but also the deep cultural roots that the Hmong have had in the Fresno area since they settled here in the late 1970's following the end of the CIA's "Secret War" in Laos.

<https://www.kvpr.org/term/hmong>

The station also dedicated the bulk of one reporter's time to cover issues related to immigrants and immigrant communities in the San Joaquin Valley. Reporter Monica Velez, who is bilingual (Spanish & English) brought us stories of immigrants who are struggling to find access to legal services in Tulare County, stories about the controversy over the future of an immigrant detention facility in downtown Bakersfield, and about a mother/daughter team fighting to bring more attention to the needs of residents of rural immigrant communities, through their group El Quinto Sol de America.

<https://www.kvpr.org/post/mother-daughter-team-brings-visibility-unincorporated-communities>

<https://www.kvpr.org/post/scarcity-immigration-services-tulare-county-means-some-people-get-wrong-type-help>

We plan to continue these general themes of news coverage into 2020. Valley Public Radio also does broadcast regularly in Spanish, with the bilingual Spanish/English classical music program Concierto.

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?

CPB funding is an essential part of our station's revenue stream. Support from CPB allows us to bring our listeners national programming that drives audience and community service. We then pair our local reports with the strength of national content from NPR and other producers/distributors, to bring maximum exposure and impact to our work. If we saw the absence of CPB funding, we would likely be forced to downsize our local news department, in order to be able to use our remaining resources to continue to offer national programming that attracts the largest audience. Support from CPB is an essential part of our overall fiscal health and revenue.