Q1. 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.

Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) has been able to respond to significant social and demographic changes. During these uncertain and volatile times, this ability uniquely positioned MPR to be a trusted media source, especially when the pandemic hit the United States. MPR was able to reflect on the needs and voices of the communities and offer tools and resources for people trying to navigate this challenging moment.

In the middle of the fiscal year, MPR had to pivot in how they reached audiences, as well as their educational and community engagements. The MPR newsroom transformed to reach audiences by expanding its digital presence and amplifying new voices. The music services, Classical MPR and The Current used a variety of platforms to connect to their listeners.

MPR’s mission compels the organization to rise to the challenge of creating greater value and a new relevance for audiences who want to consume trusted and meaningful media. Listeners and communities need MPR to inform and inspire them so much more than they did a year ago. As a responsible steward entrusted with a valuable public service, in FY20 MPR invested in people with new skills and talents, created compelling content, innovative programming on digital channels and platforms and embraced new media technologies to reach a larger and more diverse audience.

The following are examples of how community issues, needs, and interests were addressed by MPR in FY20 through its three services — MPR News, Classical MPR, and The Current.

**MPR News:**
- The MPR newsroom employs 19 reporters. The six reporters based in Greater Minnesota covered over 1000 stories and newscasts in FY20. With the onset of COVID news, some weeks a single reporter would do 10 stories per week. The newsroom added dedicated reporting beats focused on issues audiences care about most, including aging, race, water, health, housing, and culture.
- Studios in the Greater MN locations have enabled people around the state to share their
knowledge and stories with wider audiences by connecting them to radio stations in Maine, California, New York, and even in England. An example of this:

- The BBC sought to talk with Ali Diakite from Saint John’s University’s Hill Museum and Manuscript Library about the importance of a project to digitize hundreds of thousands of West African manuscripts, mostly from Mali’s Timbuktu region. To assist in this connection, MPR’s studio in Collegeville connected BBC with Diakite, who is from the Timbuktu region and an expert on these manuscripts.

- Minnesota was already experiencing unprecedented changes — shifting demographics, increasingly complex community issues, social fragmentation, and media technology evolving at lightning speed. The events of FY 20—the coronavirus pandemic, the killing of George Floyd, and an upcoming election — created the need for even more essential reporting.

  - **COVID-19:** Lead COVID-19 reporter Catharine Richert, based in Rochester, along with a collaboration of reporters, producers, and photographers in St. Paul and our Greater MN bureaus, offered a daily snapshot of the pandemic. In addition to reporting on the way people’s lives have changed, and the unexpected ripple effects of the pandemic, the news team contributed in-depth FAQs to help Minnesotans make sense of this confusing and challenging time.

  - **Social justice and conversations about race in Minnesota:** After George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, protests large and small continued to emerge. The newsroom was committed to covering these crucial, beautiful, and often painful conversations about race and disparities and who we are as a state.

  - **Election 2020:** Politics across the state hit a high note of contention, vitriol, and division. The politics team kept close track of the races across the state, while the regional team covered campaign visits, local politics, and election disinformation.

  - **Election disinformation:** MPR launched a new initiative to help voters spot disinformation in advance of the 2020 campaign. The new initiative called, “*Can You Believe It,*” offered a service to the public to inform themselves about disinformation and how to spot it. Listeners could submit potentially dubious news to be fact-checked by the MPR News team. This information was translated into Hmong, Somali, and Spanish.

**Classical MPR (CMPR):**

- Classical MPR saw an opportunity to enrich the lives of thousands of new classical music fans and was able to create exciting new digital content for children, teachers, and families enabling listeners to enjoy world-class, culturally relevant music 24 hours a day, on any device they choose.

- To celebrate **National Poetry Month**, each week in April, CMPR played a classical track, and listeners were encouraged to write original poetry inspired by it. People could then visit the website to read the submitted poems, listen to the music, or even submit a poem of their own.

- **Hop Notes** explored the connections between beer and classical music. CMPR host Scott Blankenship visited local breweries and talked about the relationship of favorite composers’ works and the same beer styles that are still around today.
• Program host Garrett McQueen kept his *Music Through the Night* audience engaged with posts that either discuss music heard on the show, or hot topics in the classical world. Using Facebook and Twitter as a conduit for audience engagement, Garrett responded to comments in real-time from his national audience.

• Classical host Steve Staruch welcomed young performers, ages 14 to 24, to join him as co-host on Friday Favorites as part of Classical MPR’s Project DJ. Participants were interviewed on-air, introduced requests, and shared a memorable piece or a favorite performance.

**The Current**, MPR’s AAA music service:

• *The Duluth Local Show* highlights artists from the Arrowhead region and Greater Minnesota and played 40+ new songs from Duluth musicians. Even though in-person events stopped in the spring of 2020, The Duluth Local Show continued to promote the outdoor performances that did happen and the live-streaming events.

• *Land of 10,000 Streams* was a free, three-day, live-streaming, crowdsourced music festival, featuring more than a dozen bands and musicians. Because the COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented and disrupted the music world, this festival was an opportunity to give monetarily directly to the musicians who participated to help them persevere through this crisis.

• The Current celebrated 15 years of being a vital part of the Minnesota music scene. It was started as a radio network to complement the MPR News and Classical MPR stations that had long served the region and is now considered the most influential AAA-format station in the country. Listeners were able to celebrate with The Current in a variety of ways:
  - Jay Gabler and Andrea Swensson listed the best concerts, Top 89 songs, and studio sessions over the last 15 years on the website thecurrent.org.
  - The Current launched a new web stream on The Current's smartphone app. The stream called “The Current XV” streamed the best tunes heard on the station over the last decade and a half.
  - On the air, hosts Jade and Mary played the Top 89 tunes from each year during The Morning Show Coffee Break, and host Mark Wheat did a daily Top 15 countdown of the top songs each year since 2005.
  - The Current celebrated this milestone with an anniversary party at First Avenue. The venue was at full capacity with a lineup that included the Black Pumas, The Bad Man, Seratones, MaLLy, and 26 BATS!

**Additional Examples:**

• *In the Dark* podcast is a team of investigative journalists whose diligent work helps uncover the truth. In the second season, their reporting informed the U.S. Supreme Court decision to overturn a man’s death sentence. The team won numerous awards such as the Du Pont, Peabody, and Robert Kennedy Award on Journalism, as well as a commendation from notable news sources such as the New York Times, Fortune Magazine, and The Washington Post.

• To serve an audience of all ages amid the COVID-19 pandemic and related stay-at-home orders, MPR accelerated kid-focused podcast programming for families searching for ways to keep their little ones learning and thriving. Examples of these podcasts:
• *Julie’s Library* is hosted by acclaimed actress Julie Andrews and her daughter, Emma Walton Hamilton, and was launched as a resource for kids and families during COVID-19. The show features Andrews and Hamilton reading their favorite children’s books aloud and brought to life through music, sound design, and special guest appearances.

• The *Times* recommended the *Brains On!* spin-off *Smash Boom Best!* and Classical MPR’s *Classical Kids Storytime,* “a sneaky way to introduce your kids to classical music, with the help of children’s stories like Hansel and Gretel”.

• MPR’s Low Power FM Training helped build new skills and knowledge for low power and community radio stations. Originally planned as in-person training, participants were appreciative of the pivot to virtual training allowing sessions to be recorded so participants could watch and share with staff who were not able to attend. Sixty-five participants from twenty-two low power FM and AMPERS community radio stations in Minnesota attended.

• *Call to Mind* strives to destigmatize mental illness and help people better understand the gaps in accessing resources across cultures and communities. It aspires to foster new conversations about mental health and well-being with artists, hosts, mental health experts, and others candidly sharing their experiences and stories to destigmatize mental health by their common experiences. This year, the website was redesigned with content and resources to help audiences navigate the challenges of isolation and new living situations imposed by COVID-19.

• MPR staff were recognized for their work:
  - Sahan Journal founder Mukhtar Ibrahim and David Safar, managing director for *The Current* were named to the Twin Cities Business magazine’s “100 to Know in 2020” in the section devoted to the “emerging voices” list.
  - *The Current’s* Duluth Local show host, Brittany Lind, was recognized by the Duluth News Tribune as one of “20 under the age of 40” as a young community do-gooder.
  - Dan Nass, associate producer of *Pipedreams,* composed a piece commissioned by the Friends of the Minnesota Orchestra as part of their Kinder Konzerts, a series of one-hour orchestral performances aimed at preschoolers. The piece ‘One-Dog Canoe’ is a musical setting of the children’s book *One-Dog Canoe* by Minnesota author Mary Casanova.
  - *The Twin Cities* magazine’s annual "*City Pages People 2020*" profiles “the unsung heroes of the Twin Cities.” Mukhtar Ibrahim was named to the list for shedding light on his immigrant experience, and for investigating the methods used by the Al-Shabab terrorist group to convince young Minnesota men to fight overseas for their cause.
  - *In the Star Tribune*’s, 13 "*Stand-out Minnesotans*" host Angela Davis of “MPR News with Angela Davis” shared the biggest changes in her life over the last ten years.
Q2. 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.

MPR has an ambitious vision to become a next-generation public media service to benefit rapidly changing audiences. Using new technology and tools, MPR creates innovative programming available on a variety of digital channels and platforms. With the impact of the pandemic creating fewer in-person engagement opportunities with live audiences, in the classroom, and around the region, MPR is using a variety of these platforms to reach new audiences and forge stronger community connections.

MPR knows that it cannot achieve this alone and collaborates with statewide and local community partners including universities, elementary schools, nonprofits, and media organizations in efforts to transform and grow MPR’s public service for the greater good.

**Partnerships with Public Media Outlets:**
- MPR News distributes staff-written stories to 60 local newspapers every day and collaborates with public radio and television media organizations including KAXE/KBXE, WTIP, WPR, and KARE-TV. By working with media partners, MPR maximizes statewide resources for a greater regional reach.
- A creative partnership is formed when other media services use MPR’s photojournalist images. Photojournalists have the job of telling a story with pictures by capturing images of events, incidents, or people. A couple of MPR photojournalists are:
  - **Evan Frost.** His image of the Minnesota State Capitol’s statue of Christopher Columbus laying face-down on the pavement was used to accompany *New York Times* columnist Jamelle Bouie’s piece about historical statues and white supremacy. The front page of the *New York Times* website used his photo of the ‘Liberate Minnesota’ protest in front of Minnesota’s governor’s mansion.
  - **Nate Ryan.** His image of singer-songwriter J.S. Ondara was selected for the Communications Arts magazine. This image was reproduced in both the print and digital summer editions, and more than 25,000 copies of the print edition were distributed worldwide. His photo of Adrian Lenker of the band Big Thief was chosen to be included in the *American Photography 36th Annual Award Book*. The AP36 hardcover was published in 2020, along with an online gallery that posted the winning entries.
- American Public Media (APM) and its [APM Research Lab](#) produced credible, fact-based data and analysis that news organizations depended on to bring vital context to topics as varied as refugee resettlement, gun control, race and ethnicity, the COVID-19 pandemic, housing, mental health, and the 2020 elections. This information supported journalists in allowing their audience to deepen their understanding of critical issues and timely topics through research, analysis, and data visualization. Examples of data research serving journalists and news organizations are:
  - **Marketplace Morning Report** host and senior editor David Brancaccio used
APM Research Lab research for the series “Brains and Losses” about age-related financial vulnerability.

- Tableau Public highlighted Research Lab data visualization as part of the Roots Beyond Race project. This project has been profiled in the following media outlets: Sahan Journal, Laist, Cincinnati Public Radio, and Public Broadcasting Atlanta.

- In a new collaboration with the initiative America Amplified – Election 2020, the Research Lab’s data was woven into a story about how a hot-topic election issue of immigration is transforming attitudes in a small Iowa town.

- The APM Research Lab findings on the racial disparities of COVID-19 cases were picked up by numerous media outlets including CNN, The Guardian, Canadian Broadcasting Corp, Milwaukee Public Radio, Kansas Public Radio, and was cited in the medical journal Clinical Infectious Diseases.

**Partnerships with Community Nonprofits, Educational Institutions/Teachers and Parents, Business and Government:**

**MPR News Partnerships:**

- In partnership with ThreeSixty Journalism at the University of St. Thomas, MPR News welcomed eight high-school students for a week-long “Radio Camp” to learn the basics of radio journalism. The students worked with MPR mentors to hone their journalistic skills to write and voice their features and produce a story.

- MPR News worked collaboratively with the APM/MPR National Underwriting Broadcast Operations, Distribution, Traffic, and Marketing departments to broadcast and distribute two two-part live national call-in shows about COVID-19 soon after the pandemic hit the country.

- “COVID-19: Hard Questions, Real Answers”: host Kerri Miller was joined by guests from the Mayo Clinic to talk about the science of treating COVID-19, the challenges medical professionals face, community spread, and prevention. In part two, MPR News partnered with WABE in Atlanta (home of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) to focus on public health.

- “COVID-19 and the Economy,”: MPR News partnered with Marketplace Correspondent and host Kimberly Adams and Michelle Singletary, personal finance columnist for The Washington Post. They invited listeners to call in and discuss the effects of COVID-19 and the troubling economic news. In part two, Marketplace Correspondent and host Sabri Ben-Achour and Minneapolis Federal Reserve President Neel Kashkari answered questions about the effects of the economic downturn to average American families, the work of Congress, and what the economy might look like after the pandemic.

- MPR News partnered with Sahan Journal, a nonprofit digital newsroom service dedicated to providing authentic reporting about Minnesota’s new immigrants and
refugee groups whose voices are often omitted from or misrepresented in mainstream media. This partnership emphasized essential stories in the public eye with the intent to reach new listeners and bridge communities. WAMU’s 1A partnered with MPR and Sahan Journal on a panel discussion where host Joshua Johnson interviewed people on a variety of issues related to their Somali experiences in Minnesota.

**Classical MPR (CMPR) Partnerships:**

- **Class Notes** residencies are a series of visits to middle or high schools. Designed for students participating in orchestra or choir, each residency develops skills and is customized to the unique needs of the partner school. FY20 residencies include:
  - Mirandola Ensemble partnered with St. Paul Highland Park and Mound Westonka high school vocal groups.
  - Border CrosSing coached Minneapolis South and St. Paul Harding high school vocal groups.
  - Mill City String Quartet coached students at Park Center and Washburn high schools on string quartet projects. The Quartet also created our first virtual residency program for Buffalo Middle School in partnership with MPR’s education team and the Buffalo Middle School string director. Together they created twenty-four educational videos.

- A partnership between CMPR and King’s College in Cambridge celebrated forty years. CMPR aired the first American broadcast of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. This year marked the 100th anniversary of this live performance and the 40th year of Classical MPR’s broadcast of this Christmas tradition.

- Classical MPR’s broadcast operations team records performances around the state to be available to music organizations. In FY20, they recorded performances in Brainerd, Duluth, Northfield, St. Michael, Winona, Minneapolis, and St. Paul. This year’s recordings included Winona’s nationally renowned Minnesota Beethoven Festival as well as the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra Beethoven Project. Voces 8 in St. Michael, Lakes Area Music Festival in Brainerd, the nationally broadcast St. Olaf Christmas Festival, as well as regional and national broadcasts of the Minnesota Orchestra and The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

- CMPR’s **Choral Works Initiative** supports Minnesota’s rich choral tradition with the Choral Stream highlighting concerts. CMPR and Choral Stream work closely with community and school choirs to feature performances.

**The Current Partnerships:**


- The Current produced Rock the Cradle and co-presented with Children’s Minnesota. More than 7,000 people attended this annual free event which brought families together at the Minneapolis Institute of Art to explore music, arts, and culture. Rock the Cradle offered a range of activities to get kids actively learning, moving, and creating. This was MPR’s final FY20 live event, occurring just weeks before Minnesota’s official stay-at-home order. Examples of Rock the Cradle partners included: YWCA Minneapolis, Pizza Luce, Classical MPR, APM’s Call to Mind, Children’s Museum, and Peace
Coffee.

- MPR collaborated with Dessa, Minnesota Orchestra, and local vocal talent to produce “Dessa: The Making of Sound the Bells”, an event, a radio program featured on The Local Show, and video series. The distribution of this content through social media channels resulted in wide acclaim, including a retweet and praise by Lin-Manuel Miranda, creator of Hamilton.

**Other MPR partnerships in FY20:**

- MPR took a leadership role in a statewide collaboration that included more than 20 partners from sectors as varied as health care, childcare, business, media, government, nonprofit and faith-based organizations. Little Moments Count focuses on the critical importance of early brain development in children during the first three years of life. In these times of social distancing, shelter-at-home, and closed daycares, tips, ideas, and resources are offered to support parents and caregivers of young children.

- **Shine on MN** was a partnership event hosted by FOX9TV and MPR to raise much-needed funds for struggling nonprofits. This televised event had entertainment, stories of hope, inspirational messages, and performances by Minnesota artists and celebrities. MPR News’ Cathy Wurzer and The Current’s Jill Riley hosted this event with FOX 9’s Jason Matheson and Alix Kendall. This event was also an opportunity to reach new audiences and collaborate with another media organization in a new way.

- The stay-at-home order inspired a new Bring the Sing collaboration across all three MPR Services - Classical MPR, The Current, and MPR News. Bring the Sing Home was a series of statewide virtual sing-alongs of unifying songs that aired simultaneously on all three stations on Friday evenings and were also accessible through streaming.

- Working with MPR’s three services, Call to Mind works to initiate awareness and understanding through partnerships using a variety of media platforms to activate and amplify the public conversation. Examples of these are:
  - The Splendid Table® helped listeners draw vital connections between food, culture, and mental well-being.
  - The Current has dedicated a webpage to the latest ways musicians and the music industry are addressing the importance of mental well-being.
  - CMPR host Steve Seel created special programming, “Regions of the Heart”, and a FeelBetter Playlist to bring awareness for Mental Health Month.
  - CMPR and The Current helped address the stigma surrounding mental health by interviewing artists about their own experiences and challenges, as well as offering custom playlists.

- MPR News reported hundreds of stories on topics such as how to find appropriate care (especially in rural areas), ways to cope with loneliness and depression, and how the coronavirus pandemic impacts our mental health and access to treatment. A resource guide was created featuring MPR News stories, toolkits for parents, features on telehealth and maintaining recovery, and tips on how to deal with anti-Asian racism during coronavirus. And, after George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, Call to Mind and MPR News produced a community discussion, Spotlight on Black Trauma and Policing.

Q3. 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.

Serving nearly one million listeners each week, MPR and its three regional services—MPR News, Classical MPR, and The Current—produce and air programming for radio, digital on-demand, and live audiences. MPR broadcasts on 46 stations throughout Minnesota, with 41 translators providing additional local coverage. Through this robust broadcast network, MPR provides essential daily journalism, delivers poignant and calming music, and brings audiences innovative cultural programming to build human connections. MPR continues to create new partnerships to expand audience reach and strengthen communities.

This year was a critical time for MPR to provide trusted, fact-based journalism and inspiring music, during a global pandemic, economic turmoil, a divisive election season, and as we grapple with our nation’s history of systemic racism.

**MPR News:**

- As Minnesota’s only statewide network, MPR News reflects the varied perspectives and rich cultural diversity of our communities while delivering content to audiences who are consuming media largely on digital and on-demand platforms. Below are examples of listener comments:
  - “Thank you for ensuring that the vital work of journalists at MPR, which is critical to our democracy, will continue.” – JoEllen
  - “The journalism produced by MPR News is unequalled. Thank you for providing such an important service to Minnesotans. We are all indebted to you.” – Emily
  - “Thank you so much for all of the responsible reporting that you do. I BELIEVE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION.” – Tish
  - “I’m especially grateful to the MPR reporters, editors, producers, and other staffers who are working their hearts out to provide what’s wanted and needed in this crazy time. You are a source of comfort, necessary upsets, love, fun, down-to-earth information, and much more. You reflect life to us in full. Thank you for all of it.” – Melinda

- MPR News’ Morning Edition program reached out to 40 Minnesota musicians during the stay-at-home order to share how they were doing and perform a song they had written during the pandemic.

- *Art Hounds* amplifies the diversity of Minnesota’s rich cultural scene throughout the state to foster engagement, build community, and inspire enthusiasm for the arts. This year, *Art Hounds* Ambassador Denzel Belin engaged with *Art Hounds* contributors in the wider Minnesota arts scene.

- Represented more than a dozen different art disciplines including dance, film, improvisation, mixed media and multidisciplinary arts, music, opera, painting, photography, pottery, puppetry, sculpture, storytelling, theater, and writing.
- Maintained its commitment to statewide reach with more than one-third of artists or ensembles featured from Greater Minnesota.

**Classical MPR (CMPR):**

- The Classical Music Education Initiative creates videos and curriculum for virtual learning. This content is used by schools and families across the state and by people around the world, raising the profile of Minnesota’s vibrant music scene.
  - **Classical Music Education Initiative** content was accessed more than 260,000 times since March.
  - In response to schools across Minnesota closing last spring, CMPR created [Classical Kids Music Lessons], daily music lessons designed to introduce young listeners to the joys of classical music. These 90 digital lessons have been downloaded more than 125,000 times.
  - **Music for Learning**, a portfolio of programs designed to meet Minnesota K-12 music education standards and foster student passion for classical music, received 45,453 unique pageviews.
  - **Audio Backpack**, a teacher’s tool for creating, saving, and sharing playlists of musical clips for classroom use, received 1,224 unique pageviews.
  - Demand for **Classical Kids Storytime**, a series of illustrated folktales set to a classical music score, reached new heights as teachers and parents of young children identified it as a valuable tool for at-home learning. Viewership increased 286% with 54,000 monthly downloads.
- Using the Choral Stream Facebook page as a platform to share content, a choral performance of the Young People’s Chorus of New York City singing “Bridge Over Troubled Water” went viral with over 104k views in 24 hours.
  - “Thank you for all you do! I’m streaming from NYC while I work from home and the Choral Stream is keeping me calm despite the circumstances.” - Maren
- The **Daily Download** is a handpicked, free piece of classical music emailed daily to subscribers. In FY 20 it had a yearly download of 1,332,205 and CMPR had 471,468 downloads and 5,276,244 streaming hours.
- **Minnesota Varsity** is a competition where students submit recordings of an instrumental or vocal performance or an original score for evaluation by a panel of judges and vie for the opportunity to perform their music during a live broadcast. Sixty-seven high school music students applied.
- The **Class Notes** program provides students with access to live performances and tailored lesson plans by classical musicians, 60% of whom are women and people of color. Before the switch to at-home learning this spring, Class Notes had already made 353 visits to 163 classrooms in 27 counties for a total of 28,400 student connections. When COVID-19 forced school closures, CMPR took **Class Notes** online. Lessons have been viewed more than 275,630 times. MPR heard loud and clear that teachers are overwhelmed with constantly changing formats during the pandemic (in-person, hybrid, distance) and they are very grateful that **Class Notes** is available, flexible, and easy to use.
  - “Class Notes provides music educators with another tool in the classroom to make music alive and real outside of the classroom experience. Many students do
not see much as a part of their lives after school... Class Notes allows students of all cultures, income levels, and abilities to experience a hands-on musical performance. My students loved it!” – Music teacher from Centerville Elementary

The Current:
The Current is a multimedia experience that brings audiences closer to the artists they love. The station’s transformation and digital expansion ensure that musically curious people around the globe can experience The Current as a source for music discovery and community building.

- The Current connected Minnesota musicians, who could no longer play live concerts, to their fans statewide and beyond through a virtual festival, Sounds Like Home, that featured 40 musicians and had more than 80,000 views.
- Minnesota artists received 16,541 spins for over 1,000 hours of music.
- When the pandemic caused a mass shutdown of concert venues in Minnesota, The Current pivoted toward a way to continue connecting with and showcasing artists online. The Virtual Gig List is a calendar where Minnesota artists can share information about their upcoming digital concerts with Current audiences.
- During The Current’s 15th Anniversary Celebration two digital benchmarks were achieved by increasing output, adding new content, and engaging with audiences. The Current reached 50,000 followers on Instagram and 200,000 subscribers on YouTube.
- Listeners love The Current:
  - “There is simply not a better radio station than The Current! The hosts are wonderful and facilitate my continued discovery of both old and new music—you’re greatly appreciated up here in Duluth.” – Rachel
  - “My fiancé and I have been working from home in our small apartment for the past eight weeks. The Current is our favorite co-worker. Thanks for keeping us sane and connected the community during these crazy times!” – Emily

Additional Examples:
- In FY20, MPR/APM received more than 1,000 journalism awards.
- Podcasts:
  - Debuting in June, Spectacular Failures held the position of number one business show in Apple Podcasts. Download numbers grew at an impressive pace with the first episode reaching 225k downloads. The second episode surpassed 100K downloads in only 15 days. The third episode reached 77K downloads in its first five days.
  - Brains On! reached over a million downloads in April.
  - Smash Boom Best, a debate show for kids and families, received positive reviews:
    - “My kids adore @smashboombest. When the new season came out a few weeks ago, they were literally doing a happy dance. I hope they don’t get too good at debating me.”
    - “Elliott and I have been listening to a new podcast called Smash Boom Best, and it is so much fun. It’s a debate show for kids... As a former high school debate club president, I love this! We’re both learning new things and Elliott is learning how to respectfully express his opinions.”
- The Current, MPR News, and Classical MPR came together to create Bring the Sing Home events – broadcasting a unifying song that people across the state could join in to
singing at a designated time on Friday nights. For over two months listenership reached more than 13,000 each week and more than 200,000 people through social media. Examples of some participant feedback:

- *Stopped by my mom's so we could harmonize from a distance. We love Carole King.* - Rachel
- *Brought out my old boom box and cranked it up on my front porch. About a dozen neighbors sang with me. Very sweet.* - Karyn
- *Drove to our good friend’s house, turned MPR up real loud on the car radio, and socially distanced sang along with Carole King with “You’ve Got a Friend.”* - Nancy

- Listeners shared their comments and feedback for all three MPR services.
  - *Thank you for all of your honest, intelligent news for us, and thanks for all the different kinds of music that soothes our souls as we all socially isolate and stay home. Music is a priceless gift to our community. Thanks for all you and the MPR staff do. With gratitude.* - Mary
  - *Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I don’t know what I would do during this stressful time if I didn’t have Minnesota Public Radio to keep me informed and sane.* - Nancy
  - *MPR is the greatest media blessings I have. I could not have a good day without you. And I could not have challenging days without you. I rely on you for information and respite of entertainment. I thank you for ALL you do. Stay healthy.* - Patti

Q4. 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.

Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) continues to serve all listeners by taking thoughtful and necessary approaches in amplifying voices and expanding perspectives, especially those in the BIPOC and unserved communities throughout the state.

MPR is making investments to tell stories in new ways and illuminate some of the cultural inequities this pandemic has brought to light. MPR programming fosters a dialogue that enriches communities to celebrate diversity and creativity.

**MPR News**

MPR News is dedicated to expanding the stories about what it means to be indigenous, working-class, or a person of color in Minnesota. Not only to point out that disparities exist, but to inform audiences how they were created and what systems or policies are perpetuating them.

- Reporters and hosts covered a broad range of topics in FY20 to highlight Minnesota’s diverse culture:
- Reporter Peter Cox and Fellow John Nguyen highlighted an annual celebration of the Latino culture and community in *Fiesta Latina provides Minnesota’s Latino community a welcome opportunity to come together*.
- Reporter Jon Collins wrote an in-depth feature of how *Hmong immigrants helped save this prairie town [Walnut Grove], but now their children are leaving*.
- MPR News host Angela Davis spoke with senior reporter Riham Feshir about her story, *For Muslims wrestling with substance abuse, it’s often a silent struggle*. They talked about the efforts within the Minnesota Muslim community to break the silence and offer culturally competent care.
- Reporter Riham Feshir featured a daylong event focusing on health challenges that Somali Americans face in *St. Paul to host the first Somali health summit to address disparities*.
- Collegeville reporter Kirsti Marohn wrote *Forum on hate crimes coming to St. Cloud* to inform about what hate crimes are, how they're handled, and if someone feels targeted or victimized, what they can do and where they can get help.
- On *MPR News with Angela Davis*, the show, *What’s next for LGBTQ rights?*, guests from OutFront Minnesota and Gender Justice, and Mikko Gaysin discussed the concern for human rights after the confirmation of conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett.
- The feature *A new exhibit takes a fresh look at the history of Native people in Minnesota* by reporter Jiwon Choi reflects on how the exhibit, “Our Home: Native Minnesota shifted the focus from the conflicts and hardships that indigenous people have faced over the years to how Native people in Minnesota continue to live their traditions, their resiliency and their connection to the land.
- *“Part of this country:” At Capitol, Minnesota welcomes newest citizens* by reporter Brian Bakst was the story of the fifty-one people who became Minnesota’s newest U.S. citizens.
- In *Local food shelf provides culturally specific foods for immigrant communities*, host Tom Crann talked with Ekta Prakash, executive director of CAPI, a nonprofit that helps the newest Minnesotans navigate social services and offers culturally specific foods to serve all immigrants, refugees, and communities of color.
- *Native nonprofit expands Minnesota farm, aims to scale up crop production amid pandemic* by reporter Emily Bright was a story about Dream of Wild Health, an organization that grows market vegetables as well as “culturally appropriate foods.”
- Reporter Riham Feshir wrote about *A ‘profoundly different’ Juneteenth in Minnesota* as people fight for racial justice in the wake of the George Floyd killing.
- *Seraphia Gravelle: A voice for change on the Iron Range* by Duluth reporter Dan Kraker was a story about Gravelle’s experience as a Hispanic woman living in northern Minnesota, why she organized marches in her community, and what she hopes for the future.
Virtual Town Hall: Spotlight on Asian Racism during COVID-19 pandemic was a panel-driven straight-forward, insightful discussion of Asian racism and its personal and cultural effects on the Asian American community and beyond.

- In Water Main and Equity, the APM initiative The Water Main and MPR News worked with people, organizations, and media outlets in North Minneapolis to create conversations about water, community, and racial equity.
- In FY20, Conversations on the Creative Economy focused on Native American entrepreneurship. Chris Farrell, Senior Economic Contributor at Marketplace, hosted the community conversation Building a Native-owned business in Bemidji. Four prominent Native entrepreneurs discussed how they are building their businesses and how tribal ties, culture and tradition play into their work. This was later broadcast on MPR News.

**Classical MPR (CMPR)**

- CMPR shifted its audience demographics from nearly 75% of listeners being over the age of 65 to an audience that is significantly more age- and ethnically diverse. Listeners between the ages of 35 and 44 are now the largest listener segment, and Black and Latinx listeners make up 10% total audience.
- In FY20, the podcast Trilloquy was produced and hosted by Garrett McQueen and had 3,772 download requests. It was a weekly podcast and arts initiative that affirms the "classic" aspects of compositions from all cultures to decolonize so-called "classical music."
- Class Notes brought educational music performances and programming into elementary, middle, and high schools throughout Minnesota. Examples of FY20 Class Notes artist diversity:
  - Border CrosSing presents music from all over Latin America, spanning 400 years of history.
  - Gaelynn Lea is a musician and disability activist.
  - Mestifonia is a four-person ensemble, composed of voice, guitar, cello, and percussion creating awareness of the cultural significance of Ibero-American music.
  - Siama’s Congo Roots Trio incorporates African songs and lively rhythms into their music.
- Performance Today celebrated Women's History Month by honoring the women who have made a lasting impact on classical music. 2020 Classical Woman of the Year Valerie Coleman was chosen for her devotion to teaching and mentoring hundreds of up-and-coming musicians. Coleman is the founder of the Imani Winds ensemble, known for its adventurous programming with compositions featuring African, Latin American, and American influences.
- CMPR has a dedicated webpage, The Land of 10,000 Lakes, featuring stories of the rich tapestry of classical music cultures, traditions, and artists. Some highlights are:
  - The story, Shamisen Tokyo brings modern spin on Japanese folk music to Minnesota, featured Tokyo's performance at the annual Harukaze concert organized by the Japan America Society of Minnesota, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering cross-cultural exchange.
  - African Children's Choir provides a life-changing experience for performers and audiences alike, featured the story of singers from impoverished backgrounds who performed in Minnesota in their U.S. tour.
In Minnesota composer Tensae Fayise goes back to her Ethiopian roots, the story reflects on the music she heard growing up and writing compositions to be played with krar, a traditional Ethiopian instrument.

**The Current**
- *The Local Current* is an online destination for local music coverage, from upcoming events to in-depth profiles and in-studio performances. Digital and multimedia features tell the stories of Minnesota's music scene. Hosts on The Current interviewed artists and community members about their experiences and perspectives - first due to the pandemic and then in the wake of George Floyd’s killing. Digital assets were instrumental in sharing information and resources with audiences around topics including community aid efforts and supporting Black-owned businesses and Black artists.
- **Examples of The Current’s outreach efforts:**
  - Host Mary Lucia talked with Rachelle Cordova, whose moniker *Reina del Cid* originates from Spanish literature, about her rise in the music world from playing in bars in Minnesota to gaining national attention and being featured on the likes of Paste Magazine, Baeble Music, and NPR.
  - *The program, The Message*, hosted by Sanni Brown and Sean McPherson focuses on classic hip hop and R&B, as well as keeping listeners up to date on tours, music news, and in-studio interviews with Minnesota artists.
  - *Radio Heartland* and *The Local Current* strengthen the cultural heritage of Minnesota’s diverse and changing communities by programming and hosting conversations with musicians involved in the local music scene and creative community.

**Additional efforts:**
- APM’s *Lunar Startups*, is a startup business incubation specializing in growth, connection, and innovation for women, people of color, and other high potential entrepreneurs. Based out of the Glen Nelson Center, this year’s cohort are 67 percent led by women, 60 percent led by a person of color, 33 percent led by a woman of color, and 7 percent led by a person who identifies as LGBTQ+. This past year, the *Minneapolis-Saint Paul Business Journal* recognized Lunar Startup, “When startup accelerators are trying to heed calls for more diversity and inclusion, Lunar is not only seen as far ahead of the pack but is being approached by other accelerators for advice.”
- Through two community engagement opportunities, MPR built trust, listened, focused on audiences, and demonstrated inclusiveness:
  - MPR sponsored the India Association of Minnesota’s India Fest 2019 – a celebration of the rich heritage, traditions, diversity, and culture of India. Over 20,000 people attended the one-day event.
  - This is the third year that MPR has sponsored the North Minneapolis National Night Out block party. MPR supplied the food and entertainment to over 300 residents. This sponsorship works to build meaningful relationships with North Side residents and businesses.

**FY21 Diversity and Inclusion plans:**
In this past fiscal year, MPR took a hard look at itself and its values and culture, especially after the civil unrest that occurred in MPR’s backyard. Resources and time are now being
spent to build a more inclusive, creative, collaborative, and performance-driven workplace. This ability to bridge differences within MPR will then shape our ability to bridge differences across Minnesota. Examples of efforts for FY21 Diversity and Inclusion include:

- MPR News is building a coalition to change the racial narrative. The newsroom is working with other media organizations and community stakeholders to identify—and just as critically, to change—the gaps and blind spots in local media’s approach to race. A work plan is being created to change the racial narrative as well as form habits that make these changes last.

- A company-wide book club conversation on *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota* - a rich and illuminating collection of essays written by people of color living in Minnesota - was hosted by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion club. It consisted of four virtual discussion groups and an ongoing discussion on a Slack Channel.

- As part of the APM Audiences First 2025 plan, work is being done to create a Blueprint for Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, and Access. It will include goals, objectives, evidence, success, assignments, timelines, resources, and a scorecard to mark regular progress.

- Departments in the company have the option of participating in The Space Between Us - Cultural Fluency Series, an interactive introductory workshop recommended as a journey towards individual Cultural Fluency. Participants will work to build an individual lens using common language to lay the foundation for organizational, systemic change, and gain a solid foundation for understanding social identities.

Q5. 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?

Fiscal Year 2020 was a time when listeners needed to draw on news and music to find meaning, solace, and connection. For the first eight months, programming included the normal mix of celebrated favorites along with experimental new projects and collaborations. Even though the final months of the fiscal year were entirely unexpected and incredibly challenging, they were also inspiring as public media filled a crucial need of relaying information.

MPR’s ability to reach 95% of the population of Minnesota ensured that listeners, regardless of income or location, had access to news and information as well as arts, culture, and music programming. As the COVID-19 crisis extends far longer than initially expected, MPR continues to provide trusted lifelines for so many people grappling with a global pandemic, economic upheaval, and new challenges.

MPR delivered vital and essential public services such as:
- Live severe weather updates and daily weather reports.
- Served as the backbone and technological infrastructure for Minnesota’s Emergency Alert System and the AMBER Alert System.
- Aired Public Service Announcements about mandatory Minnesota stay at home orders.
- Aired MPR News broadcasts live daily briefings from the Minnesota Department of
Health or Governor's office.

MPR’s ability to pivot to meet the audience’s shifting needs would not have been possible without the generous support of the CPB funding. This allowed us to double-down on trusted, in-depth information that engaged and equipped listeners to make informed decisions about their health, the economy, and our democracy. With continued funding, MPR will invest in understanding and addressing the systemic issues of racism and inequities, find new ways to give people more control over when and how they listen, offer greater access to content on their favorite media devices, and continue to offer fresh, distinctive programming that deepens MPR’s values and attracts new and diverse audiences.