

2019 Local Content and Services Report (FM)

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 lack of affordable housing is one of Virginia's most pressing issues. VPM convened community leader stakeholder meetings in March and June 2019 to help inform our housing series *Where We Live*. Covering affordability, evictions, homelessness, senior housing, state and local policies, land development, tax incentives and more, the series explores both challenges and solutions.

VPM has partnered with local housing nonprofits, researchers and professors at Virginia Commonwealth University to produce 25 in-depth multiplatform features for this series which includes radio stories, videos and web articles with infographics.

"Historically, Richmond has had one dominant source for local news," said Kathryn Howell, PhD, Assistant Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University; Co-Director, RVA Eviction Lab. "But with the recent expansion of the newsroom at VPM, we have seen important local issues – like eviction and other symptoms of systemic inequality – come to the fore and remain part of conversations in community-based organizations, churches, City Hall, and classrooms where I teach at Virginia Commonwealth University. I often hear that local engagement requires a strong local news source. VPM is proving that daily, and I am grateful to have them doing the hard work of equalizing access to information about local government and local challenges.

Our cultural events calendar, *Artsline*, highlights arts-related events around the city of Richmond and other localities in our listening area. We aim to reach the listeners through our radio announcements--which run three times-per-day, and highlight 28 varied and diverse events each week--1456 per year.

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.

VPM's "Learning Curve" education series produces approximately 20 in-depth features each year. Stories covering early childhood education, K-12 and higher education include perspectives from state and local officials, educators, students, parents and researchers. FY19 coverage included stories on student homelessness, school funding and facilities, diversity on campuses, rezoning, financial aid, and a program to help first generation college students in rural areas of Virginia.

For our community cultural events calendar, *Artsline*, our collaborators include, but are not limited to: Public Libraries in Richmond and surrounding localities, the Library of Virginia; local bookstores Book People and Chop Suey Books; Firehouse Theater, a community non-profit; the Virginia Repertory Theatre educational institutions like Virginia Commonwealth University, Randolph Macon College and the

University of Virginia. While we announce several opportunities taking place at large institutions, we strive to highlight events hosted by independent theatre companies, local businesses etc.

We've done both in-person and social media outreach to widen our pool of collaborators and listeners as well — and have formed strong working relationships with local public libraries.

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.

VPM has engaged with local non-profits for our long-term project Resettled, an audio and digital series highlighting the experiences of refugees as they resettle in the United States, from education and health to culture and career advancement. VPM has hired refugees to work on this project and designed and facilitated storytelling workshops for adult and teen refugees.

“The Storytelling for Radio workshop was an amazing opportunity for our Refugee Voices and Ambassadors group (RVA),” said Kate Ayers, Executive Director of ReEstablish Richmond. “It provided confidence that the speakers needed to share the parts of their story that mean the most to them while helping them to understand the impact that their storytelling has on a community. Over the last year, I have seen the growth in each of the speakers as they refine their stories for different audiences and engage at a different level.”

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.

VPM's “Virginia Currents” weekly radio series produced 50 in-depth radio and web features in FY19. Out of these, 64% included minority and diverse sources examining issues that include inequality, systemic biases, refugee resettlement, food deserts, a culinary program for low-income youth, inequities in sports, art exhibits and plays focusing on Black history and a series of stories about the 400 year anniversary of the first Africans arriving in North America. This marks a 4% increase in diverse voices and topics from FY18.

All events announced on Artsline are either free, or benefit non-profit organizations. But in an effort to increase accessibility to the arts for low-income families and individuals we prioritize including free events and a wide range of locations. We feature a culturally and racially diverse range of events. Recent examples of our increased accessibility and diversity efforts include:

Free and Half-priced admission at Richmond Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts' Black History Month programs.

Diversity Richmond's PRIDE film marathon at the Byrd Theater.

Richmond Public Library's exhibit "Evicted in Richmond" exploring the city's role in the national housing crisis — related documentary screenings and events.

Multilingual Scrabble events at the local Richmond bookstore Book People.

Craft workshops that promote sustainability at Scrap RVA, a local reuse home and arts supply store.

Several film screenings taking place as part of the Israeli Film Festival.

The Virginia Repertory Theatre's "Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad".

Author lectures on the importance of diversity in literature.

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?

Community Service Grants support operations in regions where populations and resources are small. Our station operates two full-power transmitters serving small audiences in less-populous sections of the state. These stations would not be self-supporting if independently operated. Additionally, in 2018, our company put two additional stations on the air, both dedicated to music programming and allowing our preexisting station to offer an exclusive news format. The stations offer classical and jazz music and interviews many times-per-week with representatives of local arts and cultural organizations. At this point, the cost of operating the all-music stations exceeds the revenue generated by the programming on those stations.

Community Service Grants also support the broadcast of programming that does not receive specific, identifiable support from business or individual contributions. Three times per week we feature selections recorded locally by the Richmond Symphony Orchestra for which we receive no financial support. Approximately once per month we record, produce, and air hour-long local public forum programs on topics of political, scientific, or historic interest; these shows are not underwritten by dedicated funding.