

LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICES REPORT

Section 6 - Station Activities Survey

As completed and submitted to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (ISIS) on January 22, 2025.

Grantee Information:

ID: 1572
Grantee Name: KUCO
City: Edmond, OK
Licensee Type: University

KUCO's Mission

To be Oklahoma's Voice for the Performing Arts by advancing the appreciation of classical music within our local, state, and global communities; advocating organizations and programs around this art form; and serving as a community-supported outreach of the University of Central Oklahoma through ethical, creative, and innovative engagement.

Telling KUCO's Story

1. Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station's vital local services, such as multi platform 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.

In Fiscal Year 2024, KUCO continued its mission to enrich the lives of Oklahomans through the power of classical and performing arts music, while addressing evolving community needs and interests. Our commitment to fostering cultural enrichment and accessibility remained steadfast as we enhanced our outreach and content creation.

In FY24, KUCO expanded collaborations with regional arts organizations, increasing our capacity to spotlight local talent and amplify the arts in underserved areas. Our flagship community programs, Performance Oklahoma and Spotlight on the Arts, continued to serve as vital platforms for promoting local culture. Performance Oklahoma grew from 26 programs per year to 52, focusing on showcasing Oklahoma talent, while Spotlight on the Arts expanded its scope of interviews to feature a broader range of voices and a variety of performing arts, community leaders, and non-profit opportunities.

Recognizing the growing role of digital media, KUCO redesigned its website to be more user-friendly and to include station-produced, on-demand programming, such as expanded interviews and behind-the-scenes content from Spotlight on the Arts. These enhancements allowed younger audiences and those outside our traditional broadcast area to connect with our content. Our live broadcasts continued to be accessible via KUCO's mobile app, website, and smart home devices, ensuring programming remained widely available across platforms.

In addition to content delivery, KUCO deepened its engagement with the community by hosting live events such as panel discussions, musical showcases, and outreach activities aimed at students and families. Educational initiatives, including partnerships with local schools and universities, provided younger members of our community with a platform to share their interests and talents, reinforcing our role as a cultural hub for all age groups.

Through these efforts, KUCO demonstrated its ongoing commitment to addressing community issues and fostering meaningful connections with a broad and diverse audience. Our focus on innovation and collaboration ensured that we continued to provide vital, locally focused services that reflect the needs and interests of the Oklahoman community.

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.

In Fiscal Year 2024, KUCO strengthened its connections within the community by developing new initiatives and continuing meaningful collaborations with a variety of organizations.

A significant addition to our programming this year was Rising Melodies, a 30-minute interview series featuring the educators and students of community high schools in central Oklahoma. This program highlights exceptional student talent and engages administrators in discussions about the critical role of music programs in nurturing future talent and enriching our community. The initiative was warmly received and further deepened KUCO's engagement with younger audiences and local educational institutions.

Performance Oklahoma also expanded its focus in 2024, dedicating four weeks to the performances of several Oklahoma universities. This included showcasing choral, band, and performing arts programs, providing these institutions with a broader platform to share their work and fostering a connection between the academic and public music communities.

KUCO continued its strong partnerships with regional arts organizations, including the Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Painted Sky Opera, Brightmusic, and many others, ensuring a diverse range of performances reached audiences across the state. As a licensee of the University of Central Oklahoma, we remained committed to supporting the activities and performances of UCO's College of Fine Arts and Design (CFAD), spanning disciplines such as classical music, dance, opera, jazz, and musical theatre.

Through these initiatives and collaborations, KUCO demonstrated its unwavering dedication to providing platforms for local talent, fostering educational enrichment, and ensuring the accessibility of high-quality arts programming for all Oklahomans.

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.

In Fiscal Year 2024, KUCO's initiatives and partnerships yielded significant impacts, fostering stronger community connections and increasing listener engagement.

The introduction of Rising Melodies brought new opportunities for engagement with local schools. Administrators expressed interest in participating, reinforcing the program's value as a platform to highlight the importance of music education in Oklahoma high schools. Additionally, faculty from various universities praised the Performance Oklahoma college month initiative, voicing their appreciation and requesting the continuation of this series in the future.

KUCO's community engagement extended beyond programming. Four live remotes at Oklahoma City Metro Library branches in June provided opportunities for direct interaction with community members. Scores of visitors attended each event, offering positive feedback about KUCO's efforts to remain accessible and visible in the community.

The 2023 programming ballot survey continued to impact 2024 by increasing community participation. Listeners felt more connected to KUCO as they contributed programming suggestions, leading to heightened support and a sense of shared ownership in the station's direction.

Positive feedback via email and voicemail highlighted appreciation for KUCO's increased focus on local content. Programs like Rising Melodies and Performance Oklahoma demonstrated the station's commitment to reflecting the community's diverse interests and talents.

The KCSC Classical Music Foundation also played an essential role in reinforcing KUCO's impact within the arts community. Comprised of leaders from various arts organizations, the foundation serves as a bridge between KUCO and the broader arts community. Members provide invaluable feedback on programming and community inclusion, often noting the positive influence of KUCO's efforts in promoting local arts and fostering cultural engagement.

By prioritizing community-centered programming and fostering direct interaction, KUCO strengthened its role as a cultural hub, providing platforms that enrich and connect Oklahomans across varied demographics and locations.

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 2024, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2025. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

In Fiscal Year 2024, KUCO deepened its commitment to multiple audiences across central Oklahoma. Recognizing the demographics of our audience, KUCO continued to prioritize and refine programming to meet those needs responsibly and respectfully.

KUCO sustained and prominently features its bilingual programming through Concierto, hosted by Frank Dominguez, which blends classical compositions with Spanish-language content. This program continued to spotlight renowned composers from Spain and Latin America, fostering cultural appreciation among both English- and Spanish-speaking listeners.

Additionally, KUCO expanded its focus on programming that highlights topics relevant to various cultured communities. Programs were curated to feature works by many composers and performers, ensuring broader community representation within classical music and the performing arts.

KUCO remains committed to broadcasts where all members of the community feel represented and valued. Through ongoing partnerships, innovative programming, and targeted outreach, KUCO serves as a vital resource for fostering cultural understanding in Oklahoma and continues to review and incorporate appropriate local and syndicated programs that represent those values shared in our community.

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 remains a cornerstone of KUCO's ability to serve the community effectively. As the only full-time performing arts station in Oklahoma and one of the few remaining non-commercial classical stations in the United States, KUCO relies heavily on the Community Service Grant (CSG) to sustain its operations. This funding enables KUCO to provide a diverse range of music and arts programming to its audience, much of which would otherwise be inaccessible, particularly in the rural communities we serve.

The grant is essential for maintaining KUCO's operations and infrastructure. It supports the continuation of impactful local programs such as Performance Oklahoma and Rising Melodies, which showcase local student talent and highlight the positive arts initiatives within our state and local communities. These programs play a vital role in enhancing cultural education and providing a platform for local voices that might otherwise go unheard.

The CSG grant also bridges the gap created by limited listener contributions and underwriting support in today's challenging economic and technological environment for classical radio. While the University of Central Oklahoma provides space for KUCO's operations and funds two of our four full-time salaries, it does not cover costs related to programming, equipment upgrades, maintenance, or essential connections such as internet for STL or satellite reception. CPB funding fills this gap, enabling KUCO to acquire high-quality national programming that enriches our offerings and serves the diverse needs of our audience.

Without CPB support, KUCO would face significant challenges in maintaining its local programming and community engagement efforts. Programs like Rising Melodies and Performance Oklahoma would be at risk of discontinuation. Additionally, outreach initiatives such as live remote broadcasts, which foster direct interaction with the community and strengthen listener connections, would be severely limited. KUCO faces difficult economic decisions in the near future to sustain its viability. CPB funding will help mitigate the severity of those decisions.

In summary, CPB funding empowers KUCO to fulfill its mission of enriching Oklahoma's cultural landscape. It ensures the station remains a vital resource for diverse audiences, providing educational and cultural programming that connects and engages the communities we serve. Without this essential support, KUCO's ability to serve its audience and sustain its operations would not be possible.