

## FYE 2021 SAS – CPB report

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.

WTIP North Shore Community Radio, in Cook County Minnesota, continues to be a bridge between many different segments of our community, now in our 24<sup>th</sup> year. In 2021 WTIP's critical role with educating and supplying constant information about the ongoing pandemic was once again very prevalent. While Cook County has the smallest population in Minnesota, with just over 5,000 people residing here full time, we do welcome over 50,000+ seasonal residents/tourists to our region annually. Through strong community support, involvement and feedback, WTIP has continued to adapt our programming, outreach and response to the ongoing pandemic in our world. WTIP continues to be the local source of information about COVID-19 and public health and safety.

The overall goal of WTIP North Shore Community Radio is to be a station for community members to share their stories of living in or visiting the North Shore region of Lake Superior. WTIP accomplishes this by showcasing the work of local musicians and hosting musicians to play live on the air. Our news department remains focused on reporting local news and speaking with public officials about issues that affect everyone in our listening area. WTIP also provides a platform for storytelling, creating community events that center around radio and live music, and encouraging people to engage with us on the air, on social media and over the phone, to share what is happening in the community. We share information in a timely manner, both by broadcasting over the air and streaming programming around the world. Our multi-use web site, with archived shows, on-demand podcast segments and regular postings on social media allow us to reach a more diverse audience than those reached strictly across the airwaves. This is evidenced by analyzing web traffic data, the number of on-demand listens and social media posts/responses.

WTIP has always played a major part in notifying our listeners about emergency situations as they occur in our area. From school closings, power outages, broadband, telephone interruptions and more. We deliver the information on the air as well as posting it on our website and on social media. This role has never been more important as it has during the pandemic.

WTIP provides a place to create community conversation and explore ideas that are essential to fulfilling our mission.

- WTIP produces three daily news and information programs Monday-Friday (*Daybreak* from 7 to 8 am, *North Shore Morning* from 8 to 10 am each day, and *North Shore News Hour* 12 to 1 pm and 5 pm, Monday thru Thursday) plus three hours on Saturday (*North Shore Weekend* from 7 to 10 am). All four of these programs feature local, community voices, fresh interviews and conversations with local leaders. Our reporters and producers speak regularly with local

organizations, elected officials, and governmental agencies, interspersed with produced features on the history, arts and culture of our region, as well as information on local events, meetings and a weekly music calendar.

- WTIP makes many of these interviews and features available on our web site for on demand listening. We also regularly upload many of them to PRX to allow statewide and national access from our partner public radio stations.
- WTIP produces an hour long program *Community Conversations*, in which local issues are discussed in-depth with local and regional stakeholders. The public is invited to interactively participate either online or by phone. This program reflects the various viewpoints that exist around important and complex local issues, giving community members the opportunity to learn what their neighbors are thinking and why.
- In 2020 WTIP partnered with the local Chamber of Commerce and a private foundation to create *The TIP Jar*-an assistance fund for local musicians. Using our strong relationship with area musicians, the station helped with outreach to local musicians and organized a series of on-air performances scheduled for the first six-months of 2021. The TIP Jar is a great example of how WTIP is able to utilize our role as a community, public media outlet to fill a real need in our community, at a time when live music and venues have been shut down due to COVID-19.
- WTIP's feature called *Mindfulness Monday* is a bimonthly feature created by the Local Mental Health Advisory Council that airs on *North Shore Morning*. Like many communities, ours has struggled with mental health and wellness due to the drastic changes to daily life because of the global pandemic.
- WTIP partners with the North Wood Food Project produces the monthly, hour long program *Northern Gardening*, which incorporates listeners' ideas and examines the unique concerns that flower and vegetable growers have regarding the challenging climate and soil conditions found along Lake Superior and Minnesota's North Shore.
- With a greater emphasis on books and renewed interest in reading, both nationally and locally, WTIP's *Superior Reads* and *Superior Reviews* with Lin Salisbury helps to connect listeners with new books and regional authors. These segments are both short features in form of book reviews, as part of *North Shore Morning*, but also air monthly, as long-format programs that feature in-depth interviews with authors.
- WTIP produces the award-winning (Edward R. Murrow Award in 2020), monthly *Boundary Waters Podcast* which is specifically about the people who visit the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). This one hour podcast is

the place to experience stories from the people who visit the national wilderness area and serves as a venue to learn more about adventuring in this unique area of Minnesota. Short tracks of the podcast also air monthly.

- WTIP broadcasts local sports, connecting listeners with play-by-play coverage of home and away football, volleyball and basketball games. Our reporters also provide regular coverage of ski meets, swimming and other high school sports. Due to the ongoing pandemic in 2021, coverage of high school sports was reduced to only home football games during the regular season and playoffs.
- WTIP hosts *Radio Waves*, a local music festival, which provides a primary and vital connection for Minnesota musicians and the local community (including many families). This annual event is usually attended by over 1,000 locals and visitors, as a great community celebration. However, due to COVID-19, the 2021 *Radio Waves Music Festival* was changed to a two-day, on-air and online-only event, featuring 18 musical acts. Musical performances alternated between an open-air tent outside the WTIP studio and virtual performances who were broadcast via Cleanfeed technology. While we did not have an audience in person broadcast listeners were able to join us for *Radio Waves* from all over the world, via [wtip.org](http://wtip.org).
- WTIP maintains a community garden on site, partnering with the Local Food Project and one of the hosts of WTIP's *Northern Gardening*. The garden was created in direct response to a community need for locally grown food, and was funded by the "Engaging Communities on the Economy" grant from the National Center for Media Engagement. Gardening commenced as usual in 2020!
- In WTIP's ongoing coverage, the monthly *Lake Superior Project* looks at the culture and history of the Lake Superior region and investigates issues such as the impacts of climate change, invasive species, development and industry, as well as exploring how people come together to protect and preserve Lake Superior. This project is funded in part by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

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.

Many non-profit organizations in Cook County provide monthly and supplemental updates when needed, to inform our listeners about the services they offer, special events and news on what they are doing in, and for, the community. Key Initiatives in 2021 include:

- WTIP partnered with the local **Chamber of Commerce** and a **private foundation** to create *The TIP Jar*-an assistance fund for local musicians. Using

our strong relationship with area musicians, the station helped with outreach to local musicians and organized a series of on-air performances performed during the first half of 2021. The TIP Jar is a great example of how WTIP is able to utilize our role as a community, public media outlet to fill a real need in our community, at a time when live music and venues have been shut down due to COVID-19.

- WTIP's feature called *Mindfulness Monday* is a bimonthly feature created by the **Local Mental Health Advisory Council** that airs on *North Shore Morning*. Like other communities, ours has struggled with mental health and wellness due to the drastic changes to daily life because of the global pandemic.
- WTIP partnered with **KTWH-FM** radio located in Two Harbors, Minnesota (75 miles southwest of WTIP) sharing music shows, features and interviews about life on the North Shore. As each station has a different broadcast area, this collaboration has expanded the reach of information to listeners of both stations.
- The Station Manager is a Board Member of the **County Creative Economy Collaborative (CEC)** and attends its monthly meetings. The CEC works in partnership to look at public art and its installation weather located in the City of Grand Marais or in the county This organization's directives are to develop and market the identity and brand of Cook County as well as to build and support public and private capacity and foster a commitment to common goals to grow the arts and culture sector of our region.
- The Station Manager attends regular monthly meeting of the **Grand Marais Business Coalition and the Pandemic Economy Group**, both formed at the beginning of the pandemic to address the ever-changing State and National rules, regulations and recommendations.
- WTIP has a strong participation with the **Ampers** network, a coalition of 17 community radio stations in Minnesota. Whether it's sharing Ampers produced programming like *Racial Reckoning*, *Minnesota Native News*, *Native Lights* or *Veteran's Voices*, or serving as a peer consultant for other area stations, WTIP makes a great effort to stay in touch with our fellow Ampers stations and the Ampers administrative staff.

This project is funded in part by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. And relies on a continued partnership with the Cook County Historical Society.

- Remote broadcasts are usually a great opportunity to partner with area organizations and businesses, but due to COVID-19, live broadcasts were limited, as compared to previous years. WTIP did broadcast live from the **Grand Marais Arty Colony's Art Festival** in July of 2021.

- WTIP is taking a deeper look at who we are as a community with its new series ‘It Happens Here: The Roots of Racial Inequity on the North Shore’  
It is our commitment to learn more about the history of where we live here on the North Shore—from a time long before the first towns were established and the first European settlers arrived. The series will dig into land history, the background of our early school systems and talking to a number of people who can help us answer some of the many questions we have about how we fit into the “big” picture when it comes to the various forms of racism and the roots of racial inequity. A special advisory board was created for this initiative and includes five members of our local BIPOC community members.

This project is funded in part by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. And relies on a continued partnership with the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the Cook County Historical Society and our area schools.

For nearly 23 years, WTIP has developed, and worked to maintain and foster relationships with many organizations, and agencies in our region. We welcome these entities to present issues and information to our community via our community-based news programs and locally produced variety programming. We are the platform for non-profits to stay in touch with a broader audience by offering a more effective and thorough means of communication that is reliable and far-reaching. And providing access to current events and offering area non-profits an easy way to utilize our public services announcement option via the homepage at [www.wtip.org](http://www.wtip.org), makes community radio the preferred method of public outreach. Radio has proven to be more effective than paid advertising or reliance on a weekly print newspaper. And public radio has a much more comprehensive local reach than other subscription based online media sources, which don’t focus on local events and news.

You can hear regular interviews and updates with a wide variety of partners including, our city and county government officials, the **National Weather Service, local Economic Development Authority, Cook County Emergency Management board, the US Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Anishinaabe, Cook County Chamber of Commerce, Visit Cook County, all of our volunteer fire departments, the Sheriff’s department, our elementary and high-school principals and school superintendent, representatives from the School Board, Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, North House Folk School, North Shore Hospital, five area historical societies and museums, Grand Marais Art Colony, North Shore Music Association, Cook County Local Energy Project, Arrowhead Electric Cooperative, Grand Marais Playhouse, Lake Superior Coastal Program, Violence Prevention Center, Local Mental Health Advisory Council, Go Dog North Shore and Cook County Food Shelf** to name several.

Here are just a few messages of thanks from key WTIP partners in our community:

*“I love getting to talk books every month with Mark on North Shore Morning. Also, appreciate the news WTIP provides, both on-air and on the website.”*

Gwen Danfelt, manager of Drury Lane Books

*Your radio folks are always so nice. Kind of feel like I get a little bit being up in Grand Marais when I'm on the air. Of all the places we've been and lived (China, India, South Africa, Canyonlands...), Grand Marais and the woods by the lake are always our favorite.*

*Kind regards,*

Doug

Douglas P. Kennedy, PhD

Assistant Professor

NCMIC Research Fellow

Earl E. Bakken Center for Spirituality & Healing

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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.

- 2021 was the second straight year of news coverage and community conversations about the impact of COVID-19 on the North Shore. Timely and relevant updates were shared every weekday morning and public health remained the focus of interviews on *DayBreak*, *North Shore Morning* and the *North Shore News Hour*. **Grace Grinager, public health coordinator**, and **Dr. Kurt Farchmin, the infectious disease coordinator at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic** were regular guests on these programs. Listeners also rely on the WTIP website for important information as the pandemic eventually reached us, in far, northern Minnesota. These news stories garnered a lot of feedback from listeners, and again, WTIP was the primary source of public health outreach and information during this very difficult and critical time. The stories that our news department delivered made a great impact on listeners here on the North Shore as well as others who accessed news and news stories online through [www.wtip.org](http://www.wtip.org).

Here's a selection of listener comments:

*“We are so grateful for WTIP. Informative, entertaining and the best resource for everything in Cook County and very notably the pandemic. We love WTIP!”*

Sandy and Jack McHugh, Lutsen MN

*“Thank you for putting a smile on our face every morning on Maple Hill!”*

David Howe

*“Really enjoy the way WTIP presents the news, including the occasional hummingbird reports!”*

Hillary and Carol

*“WTIP has maintained a sense of togetherness and community in this era of social distancing through its informative, heartfelt and locally-based news stories. WTIP keeps us radio lovers!”*

Kaylan Dix

*“We appreciate the last year of reporting on Covid-19 and have been a long-time listener, as a visitor and now resident of the Northland.”*

Anonymous

*“Listening to you here in Arlington Heights, IL got me through the pandemic imagining I was there in the great north country! P.S. I LOVE Polka Time!”*

Lauren Bubula

*“I support WTIP because of the amazing way this community works together. So proud of you WTIP and all of your members. We are oh, so fortunate.” –*

Chris Angelo, GM

*“Kudos is really deserved for Mark Abrahamson. Mark has selflessly stepped forward since the Covid-19 pandemic started. His enthusiasm and professionalism have really made a difference for us and the community. We look forward to Mark’s voice at 8 a.m.!! Please let him know.”*

Don & Carla, Hovland

*“Invaluable local news coverage especially the coverage of Covid-19 in Cook County. WTIP is an outstanding asset to the community.”*

Beverly Balos

- In spite of the global pandemic, WTIP continued to bring music and variety programming to the air waves. We carefully reopened our studios to volunteer music hosts that had vaccine cards. After a year of volunteers using their home recording studios and transferring their shows via the web, many of them chose to

return to the studio in 2021. These volunteers provided needed breaks in the constant barrage of pandemic related news and let our listeners find a refuge they did not otherwise have.

Here's a selection of listener comments:

*"Live, local music is superb—oh do I miss concerts! You all go out of your way for us—all of us—in Cook County."*

Nikki, GM

*"For the excellent musical choices of Will Moore. I'm blown away by his musical direction."*

Kimberly Ziegler, GM

*"We support WTIP because of the well-rounded programming—so much to listen to—nature and phenology is great too. Also appreciate the local news and hearing our friends and neighbors on the air."*

Mike, Myra and Aurora

*"Carl's belated St. Pat's Day song selection! Where else would I hear this?"*

New sustaining members from Grand Marais, MN

*"We listen at 6 a.m. to Bill Burkhardt. Good job! And we like "For the Birds" and "Small Change" too!"*

Steven and Jeanette Johnson, Carbondale, IL

*"Polka Time has sustained us over the last year when local polka dances couldn't happen. Thanks! More schottisches please! Thanks again!"*

Anonymous renewing members

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 2016, 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



At 8.7 % of the population, Native Americans are the predominant minority population in NE Minnesota. The tribal lands of the Grand Portage Anishinaabe are included in our listening area and in cooperation with the Band, WTIP installed a transmitter to serve the Grand Portage Reservation in 2008. This essential piece of broadcasting equipment connects the reservation to WTIP's on-air broadcasts and helps to ensure the safety and well-being of the people, homes and businesses in Grand Portage, by increasing WTIP's capacity to relay emergency information in a timely way.

The Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Anishinaabe) was an early government, organizational and business partner with WTIP. We are in constant contact with the band to bring information on relevant issues. WTIP also airs *In the Spirit of Medicine*, a monthly feature by Dr. Arne Vainio and produced by KUMD in Duluth.

WTIP has produced many programs and revisits features that reflect the culture of Indigenous people including a weekly Native American music program, *First Nations Time*, hosted by John Morrin, a Grand Portage tribal member. WTIP also airs *Anishinaabe Way*, a feature produced by Grand Portage descendant Staci Drouillard in 2012-2016, featuring conversations with Ojibwe people to learn more about the work they do, the art that they produce, and the impact that their culture has on their modern lives.

WTIP recently added the weekly one-hour show from Koahnic Broadcast Corporation, *Indigefi* with Alexis Sallee. This show introduces listeners to the future of Native music with new and trending artists.

In addition, WTIP purchases and airs, *Native Lights*, daily *National Native News Health Updates*, *National Native News*, *Undercurrents* and *Soul Deluxe* from Native Voice One. We also carry several features produced by Ampers including *Minnesota Native News*, *Racial Reckoning and Counter Stories*.

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?

When I took over as the executive director of WTIP North Shore Community Radio, I knew that WTIP, was and is, a vibrant part of our Cook County and North Shore community. The events of the past two years requiring us to change and alter our modes and methods showed me just how important our radio station is to our volunteers, staff and listening community.

The continued funding from CPB constantly shows me how important the funds are to having WTIP remain the go to media place in the Arrowhead region of Northeastern Minnesota. CPB funding allows WTIP to pay for essential services that range from electricity and rent to keep out three transmitters running at peak capacity as well as the constant barrage of changing technology needed for us to remain up to date. CPB funding has allowed us to bring local and regional information to our rural listeners in our

somewhat media desert area. With no over-the-air television signals and only a once a week published newspaper, WTIP is the voice and link to our area.

Looking forward, WTIP will be able to implement new strategies and further innovate how we deliver radio service, while engaging new listeners and providing good service to our business and organizational partners. Because of CPB funding we are able to:

- \* Upgrade our existing in-studio broadcast equipment to digital, increasing the abilities and functions for daily use by our staff and volunteers
- \* Select and purchase quality national programming that resonates with our listener-members.
- \* Continue the efforts of our award winning news department.
- \* Train our staff and volunteers to create high quality, professionally produced news, arts, culture and historical features specifically about our region.
- \* Sustain our locally created, interactive and issue driven *Community Conversations* program, which was originally created as a direct result of CPB's Community Engagement Initiative.

There has never been a more critical time for community radio and WTIP continues to offer up-to-the-minute public health information, locally focused news and features that reflect this unique and interesting community. Our mission is to: *provide timely and accurate reports of local and state events, including weather, news and community happenings; to provide a forum open to all residents of the area for the discussion of public issues; to provide music and entertainment for our audience; to provide a diversity of programs designed to educate and inform; to promote the general well-being of the area; to train local residents to use the medium of radio to express their thoughts, feelings and talents.,*

**WTIP is proud to meet our mission on all counts and in a variety of ways. Thank you for helping us to meet our mission's goals which ultimately are based in service to our community and beyond.**