

Low Power FM

Low Power FM (LPFM) stations are community-based, noncommercial radio stations that operate at 100 watts or less, broadcasting within a 3- to 5-mile radius.

As uniquely local outlets, LPFM stations directly serve their communities.

- LPFM licenses are granted to high schools, churches, nonprofits, labor unions and civic organizations that understand the needs of their local community.
- LPFM stations give politicians, clergy and civil rights leaders a forum to discuss local issues.
- LPFM stations provide essential emergency services for local communities during times of crisis.

LPFM stations serve communities and groups that are often shut out of the mainstream media.

- LPFM stations strengthen community identity in neighborhoods, rural towns and other communities that are too small to attract much attention from ratings-driven media.
- LPFM stations provide opportunities for people of color and women to run local radio stations and work in radio programming.
 - People of color make up 33 percent of the U.S. population, yet own just 7.7 percent of all local AM and FM stations.
 - Women make up 51 percent of the U.S. population but own just 6 percent of all radio stations.
 - People of color make up only 6 percent of the nation's radio newsroom work force.
- Creating more LPFM stations won't address all of our needs for more media diversity, but these outlets are a step in the right direction.

Who benefits from more LPFM stations? Everyone:

- **Women and People of Color:** LPFM stations provide opportunities for people of color and women to run local radio stations and address issues that are often neglected by commercial radio stations.
- **Religious Groups:** LPFM stations allow religious groups to broadcast their church services, reaching new audiences and people who are unable to leave their homes.
- **Musicians:** LPFM stations play the music of local artists and a variety of genres unavailable on the rest of the radio dial.
- **Farmers:** As farm radio declines, LPFM stations provide farmers and rural communities with the local information they need.

Low Power FM: In Congress

In 2000, Congress authorized the FCC to issue LPFM licenses. But legislators attached an unnecessary rule that limited LPFM stations to rural areas. Since then, thousands who submitted applications with the FCC to operate their own stations have been blocked.

Big commercial broadcasters claimed LPFM stations would interfere with their signals. But according to a \$2 million study ordered by Congress – known as the MITRE Study – LPFM stations don't actually interfere with bigger FM outlets.

Local Community Radio Act of 2009 (H.R. 1147) (S. 592)

- The Local Community Radio Act was introduced in the House by Reps. Mike Doyle (D-Penn.) and Lee Terry (R-Neb.) and in the Senate by Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.).
- This important legislation would eliminate current restrictions and authorize the Federal Communications Commission to license hundreds — if not thousands — of new LPFM stations in cities, towns and suburbs across the country.

Local Success Stories

WBFC-LP – Boynton, Georgia

Boynton's 103.7 FM, Boynton Low Power Broadcasting, broadcasts Southern Gospel music and Christian talk in a North Georgia community grateful for its local service. When the station first went on the air, it received dozens of calls from listeners overjoyed to find Southern Gospel on their local airwaves. The station broadcasts three hours a day of Christian-oriented youth programming, as well as local Christian music provided by local churchgoers.

WCTI-LP – Immokalee, Florida

The rural farmworkers of Southwest Florida depend on a unique community radio station for a diversity of news and information. From local women's rights programs to music and information from across the region and the world, WCTI broadcasts in Spanish, as well as indigenous Mexican and Guatemalan languages, like M'am, Q'anjob'al, and Haitian Creole. Hundreds of farmworkers working in the fields listened to Radio Consciencia as Hurricane Wilma approached in 2005 — and the station was able to help more than 350 workers to find shelter from the storm.

WSCA-LP – Portsmouth, New Hampshire

WSCA-LP is an essential part of New England's burgeoning arts and music scene. With more than 25 hours a week of locally produced arts, public affairs and music programming, the station is the place to go for amateur musicians and established regional acts who can't get airplay on the commercial dial. These musicians get invaluable airplay and exposure.