

# Fundraising for People-Powered Community Radio

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A collaborative effort of:



and

PROMETHEUS RADIO PROJECT

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# Introduction

**If you remember only one thing from this admittedly incomplete lesson in fundraising, it should be this from the guru of non-profit fundraising, Kim Klein:  
“If you want money, you have to ask for it.”**

That’s **Hot Tip #1** (look for these little doubloons of wisdom throughout the handbook). It seems a bit elementary, doesn’t it? But Klein says, “Most people have no idea how much it costs to run a nonprofit, or how nonprofits get money. If you don’t ask them, they will simply assume you are getting the money somewhere.”

So, with that, we’ve put together a little handbook to help you think about the fundraising strategies that might work for your station, some samples and advice that you can take or leave...enjoy!

## Fundraising Plan

### **Assess Your Needs & Resources, Make a Plan and File it Away!**

Well, we’re kidding on that last point. You actually do need to try to carry out what you’ve put down on paper. You’ll have a better chance of reaching your fundraising goals if you actually set some. It’s easy to get caught up in the day-to-day, but you need to remember that the best way of realizing any dream is to write it down and plan how you’re going to get there. But even before you do that, you really should spell out a vision for the station. Get your core group together for a weekend and develop a strategic plan for the next five years or so, and a date to revisit it and develop the next one.

If you’re like us, you’re probably working with a very small budget, a few core volunteers who would walk a plank for the station, and a motley crew of patch-eyed musketeers you can call on from time to time to help out at events, table at Earth Day, put up flyers, etc. You’ll need to assess what you have and choose fundraising strategies that fit your situation, your resources and your community.

Some basic questions to ponder when developing your fundraising plan:

1. Do you need money fast, or are you more interested in building a sustainable organization? Where do you want the station to be in five years: more staff, more equipment, bigger facilities? If you’re more interested in the long-haul, you’ll want to use fundraising strategies that work towards building those long-term relationships with donors, even if it costs more money upfront. For instance, a mass mailing to a good list of prospective members might cost you \$1,000 from a list broker and only get you a few hundred new members, but if you can keep those donors coming back year after year, and upgrade them to give more each year, then your time and money will be well-spent.
2. What resources do you have to work with?
  - a. How many staff people do you have to help raise funds? Do you have someone to coordinate volunteers? If you have few human resources, you’ll want to focus on strategies that don’t require a lot of people, such as direct mail and grantwriting.
  - b. How many volunteers do you have? Does your board of directors help raise money? The board should be responsible for the fiscal well-being of the station, including raising money. Board members can get their friends, co-workers, and relatives to become members, host a house party or two, buy gift memberships, donate something the station needs, like a fax machine or copier.
3. What kind of budget do you have to support fundraising activities? Direct mail costs a lot, but can generate members quickly with few volunteers if you use a mail house. Do you have enough money to offer an honorarium to a famous speaker who will come and do a benefit for your station? Can you pay someone (your station manager, maybe) to write grant proposals? Do you have a little cash to organize several benefit concerts each year or enough stashed away to use during the year to pay for registration fees to get you a booth at the big community event where you can sell waffles, whirly gigs or whatever?

4. What's your history of memberships? Do you tend to lose members after the first year? How many members do you add each year? These questions will tell you where you might need to focus more: acquiring new members or retaining current members.

**If your station is like most other non-profit groups, it does depend on individuals to keep it funded. If this is true, you need to focus on strategies that will build your membership, not just raise money.**

Some typical fundraising strategies that we and many other grassroots stations use include:

1. Face-to-face asks (friends, relatives, people who know the station)
2. On-air membership drives
3. Direct mail (including new prospect mailings and trading membership lists with other similar groups, because, like Kim Klein says, "Givers Give")
4. Member mailings (including renewal mailings, upgrades, e-letters, phone calls)
5. Special Events (either one big annual event such as an auction, or regular smaller events such as benefit concerts, house parties, or film screenings that can be easily and cheaply organized and reproduced)
6. Grant proposal writing
7. Underwriting from local businesses and individuals
8. Major donor campaigns
9. Other strategies you might try include door-to-door canvassing, [cold] calls (calling people who know nothing about your station), e-fundraising using your email or website, paid ads, [and] planned giving and endowments. We've even toyed with the idea of starting some sort of micro-enterprise, like a secondhand clothing shop that would be owned by the station.

We'll discuss most of these strategies below. The main point is to diversify your fundraising strategies; don't rely on just one or two strategies like grants or special events. Relying too heavily on these types of fundraising will not only drain your energy, but also your coffers, because these strategies take up a lot time, labor and money to carry out.

Don't be afraid to try something new. A lot of fundraising strategies actually include grassroots outreach tactics. For instance, if you want more people to give you money, you need to make them aware of the station first. If you want to get the word out about your station, but don't have a huge ad budget to pummel the couch potatoes with clever sound-bites on TV, you have to get creative. Do some street theater, table at every community event possible, do presentations to community groups, or trade ads for underwriting.

**Hot Tip #2:** Just before your next on-air fund drive, get a handful of volunteers (preferably disguised with masks and eye patches) to decorate the city sidewalks with your call letters and frequency using multi-colored sidewalk chalk! It captures the attention, gets people to tune in, and, the next rain (acid or otherwise) will wash it away. I think it's even legal, though you might want to first consult your local non-profit pro bono attorney.

**For a simple fundraising plan, see Appendix A.**

## **Membership**

In a nutshell, here's what you ought to be aiming for in building your station through membership:

*Get new members. Keep them. Ask them to give more.* What you're trying to do is move passive listeners into becoming active members and then thoughtful donors. This means getting people to respond to your calls for donations and actually getting them to become regular donors that will support the station over time and maybe even put you in their will. These are people who turn into board members, great volunteers or staff, and, in turn, generate other donors and members.

Build relationships. Make connections everywhere. Talk to people about the mission of the station and why it's unique. If you do this, the money will follow, and so will volunteers, more opportunities, more exposure and therefore more relationships and more money.

**Another gem from Kim Klein to back this up is that most money given to non-profits comes from individuals—not grants, not the government, not fat-cat corporations. Now, to the strategies...**

## **On-Air Membership Drives**

Most community stations do it. So should you. For many stations, this is the biggest fundraising strategy and the way they acquire the most new members. When you're trying to reach people, remember, you run a radio station! Get on-the-air and ask for what you need! There are many questions you need to ask your group before embarking on an on-air fund drive: Do you know when most people are listening to your station? How many volunteers can you count on to answer phones and process pledges, and how many phone lines do you need/have? Do you have the ability to accept credit cards? Who will be making the "pitches" on air? How many days will the drive be? What is the monetary goal? Is there a specific need that can be articulated for the drive, i.e. "We need \$10,000 to upgrade our production facilities." What are the "thank you gifts" you plan to give away?

### **Hot tip #3:**

Find "thank you gifts" or "premiums" that you think your listeners will appreciate, but make sure they're not too expensive for the station to buy in bulk. Ask for a non-profit rate and a discount for bulk orders of books, CDs etc. Don't buy too many thank you gifts, if any, before the fund drive (you don't want to get stuck with a lot of CDs you can't use). Depending on how many volunteers you have to process pledges and send out thank you cards, you might want to limit the number of "bonus" gifts that you allow. A bonus gift might be a dinner for 6 put on by a DJ you have, or a massage donated from a local shop, or a pound of organic coffee from the local roaster.

Try to make the fund drive special by having special programming like recorded concerts or some famous speaker. We ask DJs to sit in on each other's shows so that each show is special. It livens up the conversations, teams up great voices and most importantly, it gives you double the number of people doing the on-air "pitching" or asking for money. You can ask hosts of the syndicated news programs you broadcast to record a short pitch for you to use during the drive.

Be sure to use a simple, but very clear form for phone volunteers to fill out when taking pledges. Things get crazy with phones ringing off the hook, and you want volunteers to capture as much information about callers as possible. You'll want to make sure you have enough phone volunteers. And keep confidential creditcard information locked up or destroyed after it's been entered.

Most important: Be sure to thank everyone who pledged and those who helped conduct the drive. Thank them on-the-air, in your newsletter, maybe even have a special post-pledge drive thank you party.

**See the Appendix B for a sample Membership Form for phone volunteers.**

## **Direct Mail Basics**

Direct mail is a strategy to use when you want to start building your membership, but maybe don't have a lot of volunteers, or you want to significantly increase your membership quickly and have a little spending money up front. Keep in mind, it's like a shotgun approach. It costs more, but can be easy to get out the door if you use a print shop/mailing house, and the return can boost your membership quickly.

This strategy requires that you track donors carefully and follow up with thank you notes, regular renewal mailings, upgrades, newsletters, etc. Remember, you're trying to build long-term relationships. If you're mailing to people who know nothing about your organization, the typical response rate is only about 1% - 2%. That's why it's very important to retain those new members by contacting them often with updates, newsletters, special appeals and renewal mailings.

**Hot tip #4:** Be creative! Hand-addressed mail gets opened more than computer-generated labels. Have a local well-known, well-respected person sign your direct mail letter that details why they support your station. Ask for referrals in the letter.

Have a good passionate, emotional story or anecdote to tell that grabs the readers' attention from the start. Maybe that's a testimonial from someone people recognize or even an anonymous member. Clearly state the station's need and how the reader can help be a part of the solution. Just as seasoned DJs speak on-the-air as if they're addressing one person, your letter should also directly address the reader. For instance, you could say, "This is how you can help keep media in the hands of the people..." instead of "We need money to pay our staff." Be sure to clearly detail the reason why the reader should donate now. Be sure to specifically ask people to donate. This sounds a bit silly, but if you don't ask, they won't give. There are differing opinions on the length direct mail letters should be. I think shorter is better, maybe one double-sided letter, but no more than two double-sided pages. Have a clear and easy way for them to reply, including a reply card and reply envelope (postage paid if possible).

Have someone proofread your letter before you print 10,000 copies of it. Find a local union print shop to donate some or all of your jobs, and have them print the union "bug" on the letter. We have a great relationship with a print/mail house that only charges us for the postage on all of our mailings, including newsletters to members, new member prospect mailings. They even give us a break on printing business cards. Offer your local print shop underwriting or some other gift and be sure to thank them in your newsletter, on your website, on-the-air, etc.

**See the Appendix C for a sample direct mail piece.**

### **Direct Mail Lists**

*Labels and Lists* <http://www.lalnet.com/> is a list broker that sells names and addresses of prospective members based on criteria you provide, such as whether they voted in the last election, etc. Another, more expensive list broker, *Names in the News* <http://www.namesinthenews.com/> offers more extensive services, like names and addresses of all those people in your area who subscribe to Utne Reader, for example.

**Hot tip #5:** Here's a slick way to find a hot, current, and free list of donors. The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) lists all donors to candidates on its website. There you can do a search for the candidate(s) of your choice and print out names and addresses of prospective members. To find the PDC website for your state, do an Internet search.

Always gather names and addresses you can mail to. Have sign up sheets at all your events, collaborate with other groups, table at every community event possible, ask for referrals, etc. Constantly add to your database of prospective members and mail to them at least three times before giving up on them. Never delete names from your database. You can put them in a dead category, but you never know when that one name might come up again and you'll be sorry that you deleted it.

## **Special Events**

The best way to do special events, is not to. I mean if you can meet your budget needs without them, that's great. But you probably can't. Events can be extremely time-consuming for staff, board and volunteers. They can cost a lot in invitations, flyers, ads, supplies, honorariums, etc.

If you can find a niche, some annual event that no one else is doing, like a record swap or auction, give it try. If it works, do it again. Members and the public will begin to anticipate the event every year. We do an anniversary celebration of our first live broadcast. It happens to be around Halloween so we use the holiday to make it fun and call it the annual "Halloween Hoedown." Some years we get a well-known band to do a benefit concert for us during the event, or have our DJs play dance music. We've tried to make it family and kid-friendly and it seems to be growing. The main thing about events is that you want to try to reproduce them cheaply and without exhausting your volunteers, staff and board.

**For a sample flyer from our last anniversary party, see the Appendix D.**

Another niche we found was to do benefit film nights in our lobby. The station is housed in a restored historic building downtown, and the lobby is perfect for dinner events, speakers, etc. We found that showing politically themed documentaries has caught on, and we regularly get about 20-60 people to show up each month. We ask for a \$5 donation and offer free organic popcorn (donated by a local store that gets recognition for it). We find films that we can easily get permission to show publicly and that typically don't cost more than \$25 for the rights to show them publicly. You must ask the copyright holder for permission to show films to the public. We place free announcements in all the papers and local newsletters, send out multiple reminders to our email listerv, post it to our website, record a promo for it, and have DJs read it as a PSA. We have a volunteer create an ad that we place in the local alternative weekly in exchange for underwriting. The ad can also be used as the flyer that volunteers plaster the city with.

**See the Appendix E for an example from our last film night.**

Another example of a unique annual special event is one we co-sponsor called the "Green & Blues Festival." It's put together by a local environmental non-profit that we often collaborate with. The group gets local blues bands to donate some of their time, and 2 or 3 non-profits get the proceeds from ticket sales. It's held at a well-known blues club, which means you not only get supporters to show up, but the "regulars" as well. We help with advance tickets sales, and at the show we have volunteers staff a table with sign-up sheet, shirts for sale and info about the station. One of our DJs emcees the show, and there is usually some raffle prizes and a big box for people to drop their old cell phones to be recycled. This is just an example of an event that is relatively easy and cheap to duplicate, fun, and unique.

## **Major Donors**

A strategy that all groups should work on is cultivating major donors. A major donation is whatever you determine it is. We say anything more than a \$250 donation is a major donation. The goal is to cultivate regular members into thoughtful donors who annually contribute a significant amount to the station. Or, you can ask your board and staff to identify prospective major donors who are not already members, and then approach those prospects. Again, be creative. Think of people who might agree with your mission, small business owners that like your station. Ask friends of the station if they know someone who might like the station and who might be in a position to make a large gift to the station (a banker, a publisher of the local alternative newspaper, etc).

A good prospect is someone who knows the station or someone who is involved at the station, someone who has a known history of giving to other non-profits, and someone who you think believes in your cause.

**Hot tip #6:** A good major donor prospect does not necessarily have to be rich. Remember, "givers give."

Many people hate to ask others for money. In order to make major donor cultivation more palatable, you should do major donor campaigns, and not continually ask your staff and board to make major donor asks.

Here's a little more pirate's booty from Captain Klein:

People often equate fundraising with begging for money. Begging is when you ask for something you do not deserve. If you are doing good work, then you deserve to raise the money to do it. What you must do is figure out how to articulate what you are doing so that the person hearing it, if they share your values, will want to exchange their money for your work. They will pay you to do work they cannot do alone.

A major donor campaign has a beginning and end, and particular steps to follow in the middle. You'll need to set a goal for each campaign. This can be based on a percentage of your annual budget. So, you could say, "We want 10% of our annual budget to come from major donors." You should count on about 10% of the donations coming from a few large donors and the rest from many other smaller donations.

**Hot tip #7:** Fifty percent of the people you ask for money will say yes, and fifty percent of those who say yes will give you less than you ask for. So, you need to ask a lot of people!

Plan on doing two 3-week major donor campaigns to reach that annual goal. You'll need a committee to carry it out. This group must know the station very well and be able to speak passionately about the work you do. The group brainstorms prospects, prepares materials like the letter to be sent out, practices doing the "ask" in role playing, sends letters, makes follow up calls to set up meetings, meets with prospects over coffee or lunch, and thanks [??] All donations should be recorded into your database and the committee should evaluate how the campaign went.

Sound like a lot of work? It is. That's why you need good volunteers to do it, and also why you don't want to be perpetually doing major donor work. That's not to say you shouldn't be cultivating major donors year-round. You should take people who have donated in the past, say at the \$100 level, and begin cultivating them to upgrade their giving. Send them special year-end reports of the station's progress, bumper stickers, news clippings, etc throughout the year. Invite them to events, ask them to refer people they know to become members.

The letter you send to ask for a meeting should be short and to the point. You're just trying to get their attention and tell them you'll be calling to set up a meeting.

**See the Appendix F for a sample letter to a major donor prospect.**

## Grantwriting

Everyone knows that you're not supposed to rely on grants to keep your organization going, but the truth is, almost everyone does. Grants are good for big capital expenses, start-up organizations, new equipment, emergencies, etc. But you should not depend on them to sustain your organization. Grantmaking foundations often let you apply only two or three times before they cut you off.

Grant writing and research can be extremely time-consuming. It's typical to write many proposals and be turned down for all of them. In your proposal be sure to clearly identify the need you are filling in the community. Don't be afraid to use testimonials, letters from listeners and a little emotion once in awhile to show how important your work is. Grant proposals don't need to be dry and detached. They should excite the foundation trustees into putting your proposal at the top of the pile. Like members, you need to try to build relationships with foundations over time. Cultivate them like you do any thoughtful donor, by keeping in touch with them, sending newsletters, news clippings about your organization, and even holiday cards.

**See Appendix G for a narrative from a successful grant proposal to a local community foundation.**

## Underwriting

Underwriting is the contribution of some form of consideration in exchange for recognition in an on-air announcement. Usually that means money. Most underwriting coordinators get a commission on sales, typically 25%. Our fledgling underwriting program has raised thousands of dollars for the station while spotlighting worthy local organizations and businesses like the farmers market and the local non-profit arts center. Individuals can underwrite too. So a person you are cultivating as a major donor might want to underwrite his or her favorite show for a month in the name of their small business or whatever. Be careful that your underwriting announcements don't cross the line into advertising. The FCC has strict rules about non-commercial stations and underwriting. Check out the very valuable Public Radio Legal Handbook available through the National Federation of Community Broadcasters: [www.nfcb.org](http://www.nfcb.org)

Mention your underwriting program everywhere, on your website, on-the-air, flyers, etc. Hand out rate sheets and business cards to everyone you meet. Ask DJs to ask their favorite hangout, club or coffee shop. Our website says:

“KYRS offers very reasonable underwriting rates to get your business name mentioned on-the-air. Underwriting is a great way to support independent media in Spokane, while letting listeners know about the service you provide to the community.” And then we have a link to our Underwriting Coordinator’s contact info.

Once again, get creative. If it works for your underwriting coordinator, you can exchange services for underwriting. We recently exchanged underwriting for a masthead ad on the big local daily newspaper’s website on its extremely popular music/concert reviewer’s podcasting/blog site. We were also able to place a little recorded audio ad about the station for that podcasting site. You can sell ad space in your newsletter too.

## **Fundraising Resources**

1. **Hot tip #8:** Your local library should have a reference section for fundraising, grant searching, etc. and might even have friendly staff to help you. If you live in a major city, your library might have access to the very extensive grants database called The Foundation Directory: <http://fconline.fdncenter.org/>
2. The Grassroots Fundraising Journal <http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/>
3. Fundraising for Social Change by Kim Klein see <http://www.chardonpress.com/>
4. Grassroots Grants by Andy Robinson <http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-131433.html>
5. Tech Soup provides nonprofit organizations with technology information, products [www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org)
6. Chronicle of Philanthropy <http://philanthropy.com/>
7. RESIST (this very cool grant foundation has many resources on its website <http://www.resistinc.org/>
8. Ebase membership software: <http://www.ebase.org/>

## Supplementary Appendices:

### Appendix A: A sample (and simple) fundraising plan

Grants	winter	staff time	\$25,000	
Prospect Mailing #1 (10,000 pieces)	Feb.	\$2,500	\$4,000	200 new members
Major Donor Campaign	Sept	100	\$10,000	
Benefit Concert	July/August	400	\$1,200	
House Party	Oct/Nov.	\$100	\$1,000	15 new members
Prospect Mailing #2 (10,000 pieces)	early Nov.	\$2,500	\$4,000	200 new members
Renewal Mailings/Calls	summer/fall/winter	150	2600	
On-Air Fund Drive	spring	1000	10,000	
On-Air Fund Drive	fall	1200	15,000	
	TOTAL	\$7,950	\$72,800	

**Appendix B: A sample Membership Form for phone volunteers.**

Membership Form **PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

Thin Air Fund Drive, NOV. 2006

Are you a **new** or **renewing** member? **NEW / RENEWING (circle one)**

How much would you like to donate? (circle one)

\$200    \$100    \$75    \$50    \$25    other \_\_\_\_\_

**(Donations of \$100 or more get a T-Shirt. What size? S, M, L, XL, 2XL)**

**Would you like the "thank you gift" for your donation?    YES    NO**

**(IF YES, circle one)**

**\$200 level:** Chomsky book "Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda"

**\$100 level:** Michael Moore CD: "Our Country is in the Hands of Stupid White Guys"

**\$75 level:** Bioneers CD featuring Amy Goodman: "Unembedding the Media"

**\$50 level:** Democracy Now bumper sticker

**(All donations of \$25 or more get the KYRS quarterly newsletter and window decal)**

**BONUS GIFT, if any** \_\_\_\_\_

**How would you like to pay?**

Visa \_\_\_\_\_ exp date \_\_\_\_\_

Mastercard \_\_\_\_\_ exp date \_\_\_\_\_

Check (KYRS will send a reminder in the mail)

**PLEASE PRINT**

**Full Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**May we thank you on the air? We will only use first names    YES / NO**

**THANK YOU!**

**Today's date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Radio Show during which donation was**

**made** \_\_\_\_\_

**DO NOT WRITE IN THIS BOX. FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

## Appendix C: A sample direct mail piece.



35 W. Main, Suite 340  
Spokane, WA 99201  
509-747-3807  
www.kyrs.org

May Day 2006

Dear Patty,

Thin Air Radio needs your help. Hard-working volunteers are steadily building 92.3 FM KYRS into a vital community resource for independent news, views and music you won't hear anywhere else on your radio dial. But we can't succeed without your support. We are connecting people and organizations through access to the public airwaves, and helping to build the global movement for a more just and sustainable world.

We continue to expand locally produced programs covering diverse cultures, under-reported issues, and independent & local music. All locally produced programs are hosted by volunteers from the community.

### **That's what community radio is all about— putting the “public” back in the public airwaves!**

On KYRS you'll hear intelligent, hard-hitting public affairs, with honest reporting and civil discussions of important community and global issues. Don't miss “All Things African-American in the Arts,” every Thursday at 3:00PM, and “Does That Answer Your Question,” a powerful current affairs program critiquing mainstream media, every Thursday at 4:30 PM with repeats Sundays at 12:30 PM. We have a new program hosted by West Valley City School students called “Detention” which airs Mondays at 2PM, Native American program hosted by Jim Boyd, and of course lots more locally produced music programs. We recently added “Call on YAHWEH” — two hours of the best Reggae, heard Tuesdays at 6:00 PM.

If you haven't heard **“On the Clock”** and **“Take the Power Back,”** here is a sampling of some of the excellent, diverse interviews and topics you're missing on these locally produced commentary shows: Scott Ritter, Ward Churchill, Dahr Jamail, Rachel Paschal-Osborn, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Shannon Sullivan (on the Mayor West recall), Gavin Cooley (CFO for City of Spokane on cuts to human services, and on living wage), media democracy, police brutality, depleted and undepleted uranium, the Burlington Northern Fuel Depot & the Spokane River aquifer, Wal-Mart, race and class in the aftermath of Katrina, white phosphorous used by the US in Iraq, nuclear waste and environmental degradation of the Spokane Indian Reservation, conscientious objection; military recruitment in schools, domestic partner benefits ordinance for City of Spokane employees, the recall of Spokane Mayor West, midwifery, fair housing and discrimination in Eastern Washington, and the State Human Rights Commission. **Wow, what other media outlet can boast such diverse, important local and global content?**

On Our “**Local Heroes**” program, Dr. Barbara Baumgarten has interviewed your neighbors, including Eva Lassman (Jewish Holocaust survivor), Idalia Apodaca (Latina School teacher), David Edwards (African-American Building Manager of the Center for Justice), Stephy Nobles-Beans (African-American Assistant Director of Diversity Studies at Whitworth College), Tia Griffith (African-American Gonzaga University student), and Ben Cabildo (Asian Director of AHANA).

**We are building a strong, listener-supported community radio station that empowers people, not merely entertains them.**

We continue to build on and diversify our fundraising. But we need your help to keep this station alive and growing. As a true community radio station, we depend on support from individuals like you. Right now, as more and more big corporations gobble up the airwaves and other media outlets, independent community radio is urgently needed.

This year, on top of our operating budget, we need to raise about \$18,000 to move our transmitter. Included in our operating budget are the costs of building the programming, developing an outreach and marketing plan, upgrading our studio equipment, and expanding our space. Our studio and tower rent will increase to about \$7,000 in 2006.

**Please consider making a \$100 donation today to help support Your Radio Station!**

Spread the word about Spokane’s independent, non-commercial Low Power community station. If you have friends or relatives who you think might want to join the cause, please tell them to tune in or give us a call.

And be sure to tune in to 92.3/95.3 FM for the award-winning progressive news program “**Democracy Now,**” at 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Thank you!

Lupito Flores, Station Manager



***P.S. ...oin online at [www.kyrs.org](http://www.kyrs.org)! Become a monthly donor! It's easy, secure, saves you time and saves us money.***

**Tell a Friend about KYRS-Thin Air Community Radio  
95.3/92.3 FM**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Include this form with your donation today and help spread the word about KYRS!  
Mail to: KYRS, 35 W. Main, Suite 340, Spokane, WA 99201*

Appendix D: A sample flyer for an anniversary party.

**KYRS  
3RD ANNIVERSARY PARTY  
AND HALLOWEEN HOODOWN**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28TH AT 7:00PM**

**IN THE COMMUNITY BUILDING  
35 W. MAIN**

**\$5 ADULTS, KIDS FREE.  
FAMILY FUN, COSTUMES,  
DANCING, KID'S MUSIC.**




**509.747.9807 | WWW.KYRS.ORG | KYRS 92.9 & 95.9 FM**


**DB**

Appendix E: A sample of a special events flyer.

**THE SPOKANE  
TRANSLATOR  
ASSOCIATION**



which brings you KYRS on 92.3FM  
Presents the film:



The Power  
Of Community:

**HOW CUBA  
SURVIVED  
PEAK OIL**

**Wednesday, Nov. 29th**  
7:00PM w/ \$5 donation,  
free popcorn

Community Building  
35 W. Main

Call 747-3012 for more information

## Appendix F: A sample letter to a major donor prospect.

Dear Jim,

XXXXXX thought you might like to know about KYRS-Thin Air Community Radio.

Broadcasting on 92.3 & 95.3 FM, KYRS is Spokane's only non-profit, non-commercial Low Power community station. On KYRS you get news, views, music and culture you won't hear anywhere else on the dial.

No other radio station in the region boasts locally produced programs as diverse as the "Persian Hour," "Radio Russia," "the Gospel Music Hour," "The Next Wave: Spokane Women," and "Local Heroes." Powerful programs like "Democracy Now!" and our locally produced "On the Clock" and "Take the Power Back" serve listeners seeking alternative news and views. Musically, we feature independent artists and genres including Blues, Jazz, World, Latino, Indie, Reggae, Bluegrass and much more.

KYRS is not only a great source for unheard and eclectic non-commercial music, but we are also dedicated to bringing you the unheard voices and the stories between the headlines that are often ignored in the mainstream media.

Media consolidation continues to threaten locally produced media around the country. This is acutely felt in Spokane where Clear Channel, which owns 1,400 radio stations nationwide, controls six of Spokane's radio stations. Citadel owns seven. These large commercial stations produce little or no local community news, and inundate the airwaves with overplayed commercial music and hours of advertising. Thin Air Radio programming builds a stronger community by encouraging and enabling increased participation in the community, and by providing educational information, rather than mere entertainment.

As a true community radio station, we depend on support from the community and individual donations from people like you. Right now, as more and more big corporations gobble up the airwaves and other media outlets, independent community radio is urgently needed in Spokane.

I would like to set up a time in the next week or so to meet with you to tell you more about this vital community resource and to ask you to make a major gift. I'll try calling you soon, but feel free to contact me at xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

**Mr. Lupito Flores, Station Manager**

# Appendix G: A narrative from a successful grant proposal to a local community foundation.

## 1. Mission, History, and Accomplishments

KYRS-Thin Air Community Radio serves the Spokane area with progressive perspectives and provides programming to diverse communities and un-served or underserved groups. Thin Air programming emphasizes non-corporate, neglected perspectives and discussions on important local, national and global issues, reflecting values of peace, social, economic and environmental justice, human rights, democracy, multiculturalism, freedom of expression and progressive social change.

Thin Air Radio began in 1999 when local peace and environmental activists learned the Federal Communication Commission would be allowing locally controlled non-profit groups nationwide to start Low Power FM community radio stations. LPFM was an attempt to give back a small sliver of the public airwaves for non-commercial, local use. Citizens for Clean Air, a Spokane environmental non-profit with more than 10 years in the community, added Thin Air Community Radio as a formal project in May 2001. We began broadcasting with 100 watts in October 2003. Thin Air Radio will soon file for its own 501c3 status. Many of the core volunteers who started Thin Air are still involved, including the founder, Lupito Flores, and Rusty Nekon of the Peace and Justice Action League.

Thin Air was built almost entirely by hundreds of volunteers donating thousands of hours, and nearly \$40,000 in donations (primarily from individuals). In the summer and early fall of 2003, we raised more than 100 Founding Members in the community at \$100 each.

We now have 44 locally produced programs on-the-air, all hosted by volunteers from the community, a vast majority of whom have no radio experience, just a passion for serving their community. We have 64 programmers, including substitutes and co-hosts. Our programs cover a wide variety of social issues and cultural interests, including important discussions on poverty, living wage, and equity.

Thin Air Radio is steadily growing into a vital community resource for independent news, views, arts, and culture. We are connecting people and organizations through access to the public airwaves, and we are helping to build the global movement for a more just and sustainable world. Unlike commercial media, which aim to entertain, distract and sell products for large corporate advertisers, Thin Air Radio and the media democracy movement empower people, especially low-income and other vulnerable populations, providing them a platform for discussion of critical issues that impact their daily lives and serving as a tool for networking and building solidarity.

## 2. Commitment to Families/Building Community

Community radio is about building strong communities and giving voice to low-income families and other underserved populations that are often ignored by commercial media.

Our programs address the core social problems that inhibit low-income families and other vulnerable populations from becoming and staying healthy. Our locally produced "Take the Power" program supports low-income families and other underserved populations through in-depth discussions and interviews covering issues often ignored by the mainstream media: issues such as the negative impacts of the proposed Wal-Mart megastore, city budget cuts to human services, gentrification, living wage campaigns, fair housing and discrimination in Eastern Washington, midwifery, human rights, prevention programs available to Native Americans, a debate on the city's domestic partner benefits ordinance, military recruitment and "Opt-out" provisions in Spokane schools, war tax resistance, media democracy vs. media consolidation. Here's a note from a listener of "Take the Power:"

I have listened to your show and was especially interested in what the Rev. Lang had to say about Christo-Fascism. I really just wanted to send you a sincere thank you for your work and effort.

Here is a sampling of some of the excellent, diverse interviews conducted on "On the Clock:" Brad Read on Washington Won't Discriminate and the threats to Washington State's anti-discrimination law, police brutality in Spokane, living wage campaigns, Deborah Abrahamson on nuclear waste and environmental degradation of the Spokane Indian Reservation, Rachel Paschal-Osborn on the Burlington Northern Fuel Depot and the Spokane River aquifer, Scott Ritter on Iraq and Iran, Ward Churchill, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans for Peace, Kitty Kitzke of the Lands Council on the water quality of the Spokane River, Chuck Armsbury with the November Coalition, and Peter Hudis on the World Social Forum. Unfortunately, these important topics are covered nowhere else in the Spokane media to the degree they are regularly on Thin Air Radio.

Thin Air Radio has the only women's issues program in Spokane, the only youth program, the only locally produced Spanish-language radio show, the only GLBT program, the only locally produced Native American

program, and the only Iranian program.

We are very proud of “The Next Wave: Spokane Women,” which is a weekly conversation with women, about women. The conversations explore ways in which women can embrace their own sacred feminine power to transform their lives and the community of Spokane. Topics have included domestic violence and pornography, women and politics (interview with Nan Ingalls of the Agnes Kehoe Progressive Alliance and Bonnie Mager, candidate for Spokane County Commissioner), autonomy and birthing, pharmaceutical refusals (interview with the director of Planned Parenthood in Spokane), women and meditation, women in athletics, and the portrayal of women in film.

Here is a note from a listener:

“Your show and your guest speakers were terrific! The information provided was extremely insightful and educational. I hope you will consider re-airing it at some point, since it's a subject that isn't often discussed - especially not to the degree that you did.”

Also, we conducted an extensive interview with Dawn Sidell, the Director of the Northwest Autism Center. These conversations, unheard in the commercial media, break down barriers, open dialogue and build bridges. Listeners hear their friends and neighbors discuss issues that affect them personally. Our programs give them opportunities to explore concrete ways to improve their lives.

Dr. Barbara Baumgarten, host of our “Local Heroes” program has conducted in-depth interviews with Spokane residents on such subjects as poverty, drug addiction, childcare, domestic violence, community sustainability, and much more. She conducted an extensive interview with Cathy Mann of Voices on low-income issues, did a series on people from the West Central Neighborhood (one of Spokane's poorest) on the subjects of struggling with domestic violence, drug addiction recovery, gangs and poverty. Barbara also did an interview with the concerned neighborhood activist who started C.O.P.S. West after two girls were murdered in the West Central Neighborhood, and an extensive interview with Louise Stamper, low-income community activist (this episode was also broadcast nationally during National Women's Month). Barbara interviewed the director of the West Central Community Center and the principal of that neighborhood's elementary school. Barbara's program has received many compliments from listeners, typically affirming the important topics she tackles and the diverse community voices she chooses to air. This program empowers those who speak out publicly over the air, but also listeners who share the same problems, hopes and dreams. Through public conversations and sharing experiences "on-the-air," listeners explore solutions and new ways of addressing problems in our community.

“Surrounded by Tribes,” our new locally produced Native American program has already made a positive impact in the community. On his second episode, the host, Jim Boyd, interviewed Toni Lodge of the Native Project on the many services it provides to the large urban Indian population that has been disenfranchised and segmented so completely that the people don't know where to seek help for addiction or where to learn about infant nutrition or causes and prevention of diabetes. “Surrounded by Tribes,” as all of our public affairs programs, serves as a clearinghouse of information and opportunities that vulnerable populations may not otherwise hear about.

“There Goes the Neighborhood” is another new locally produced program. It covers neighborhood planning and sprawl, tracks city and county government, interviews neighborhood and business leaders, and emphasizes the many resources available to families and low-income residents through local, non-profit, social-change organizations. For example, “There Goes the Neighborhood” has covered the proposed Kendall Yards development. This large development with expensive condominiums and commercial properties is on the edge of the West Central Neighborhood. The program hosts discussed the development's impact on the neighborhood and publicized the public meetings planned for it. They also encouraged and helped to facilitate the public participation process between the developer and the neighborhood to address traffic issues and gentrification that may negatively impact the West Central low-income residents.

Besides our locally produced programs, we broadcast award-winning nationally syndicated shows like “Democracy Now!” and “Free Speech Radio News” that enlighten and engage listeners in discussions of peace, justice and many other progressive issues that strengthen and empower families, low-income, and other underserved populations by providing them with resources needed to make informed decisions, and mobilizing them to take action.

Here is a note from a listener:

“Bucketfuls of thanks for your excellent hard work and, I assume, fun. You have literally pulled me out of a music and news depression. The variety of music you provide is wonderfully refreshing, and many of the current-events programs you provide (especially Democracy Now, Worker's Independent News, and Bioneers) provide perspectives I have long thirsted for in the journalistic desert of our times. I am even happy knowing you air shows I have no personal interest in, as I believe they are filling voids in our community's media. Keep up the good work!”

Not only do we support low-income families and build community through our unique programs, we also provide a vital community service to area non-profits in the form of public service announcements. We have announced hundreds of PSAs, some of which were discussed in our Progress Report. Few Spokane media outlets, if any, can boast such a wide variety of public service announcements educating the community on issues and services they may not otherwise hear about in the mainstream media. The number of PSAs we receive continues to rise, indicating that, increasingly, people view Thin Air Radio as an important resource and outlet for community issues and services.

Thin Air Radio encourages low-income and disadvantaged people to volunteer and get involved with their local community radio station. For example, our Career Path Services volunteer organized a successful benefit concert for the radio station, soliciting bands and partners, and handling all the promotional aspects. This job gave her confidence and skills she otherwise may not have developed.

### **3. Engaging Parents and Youth**

No other local radio station provides programming for and by teens. "Raise Your Voice" is a youth program in training at Thin Air Radio. This is a collaboration between the Chase Youth Commission, Spokane Valley High School, Lewis & Clark High School and Gonzaga Prep. High School. The goal of "Raise Your Voice" is to foster civic activism and change among youth. The show will consist of two live hosts (students will rotate the position), music, discussion, interviews and call-ins. It will inform, entertain and urge teens to get involved in their community. The student producers of "Raise Your Voice" believe that all people, regardless of age, have the right to be informed, express their opinion, and that every individual can create change for the better. The content of each show will explore and investigate themes of interest to teens, such as economic justice, health, rights, education, and discrimination, and offer ways for teens to get involved.

"Detention" is a teen program we have on-the-air now. This locally produced program hosted by 6th to 8th grade students provides the community with youth perspectives and shows their peers that youth can make a positive impact in their community. In the process, the teens learn new skills and build confidence. One of the kids said, "We feel so lucky to be able to be on the radio and talk about what we care about and share our favorite music."

### **4. Our Community**

At the core of our mission is the commitment to serve people and issues ignored by commercial media and to build bridges between diverse populations. Approximately 300,000 people live within the listening area of 95.3 and 92.3 FM. The population is largely white, conservative, and poor, with thirteen and a half percent living below the poverty level. Minority populations include Hispanics, Asians, African Americans, and Native Americans. We have a large Russian refugee community as well. More than thirteen and a half percent of the population lives below the poverty level. In Spokane County, 25% of children under five years of age live below the poverty level. The county has nearly 6,000 homeless individuals.

Thin Air's programs help make a stronger and more effective regional social change movement by promoting and facilitating communication and understanding. For example, our "Take the Power" program receives engaging calls from listeners who identify themselves as politically conservative, but who find they agree with the program host on some issues, including those that impact low-income families, such as economic unfairness and how low-income men are more likely to be incarcerated or serve in the military. Therefore we believe we are building a better community by opening civil dialogue and building bridges in the community.

### **5. Public Policy**

Using interviews and informed discussions, our programs educate listeners on policy issues and legislation such as the local efforts to force big-box retailers to pay a living wage, the clean energy initiative, the State anti-discrimination bill, media democracy legislation that would strengthen citizen-run community radio, the ban on phosphates in dish detergent, and the Spokane's domestic partner benefits ordinance, which recently passed.

We affect policy change by educating and activating our listeners about policies that affect their daily lives. For example, we collaborated with Eastern Washington University's Latino club on recent immigrant's rights organizing. During the week before May Day, we helped spread the word about a large rally and march to support immigrant's rights by announcing and discussing the rally on-the-air and through email alerts to our networks. One of our Latino program hosts was a featured speaker at the rally that took place in downtown Spokane. On May Day we aired special segments from "Free Speech Radio News" covering the nationwide support and mass rallies for the immigrants that contribute so much to our society.

Besides our excellent locally produced programs that affect public policy, shows like the award-winning

nationally syndicated "Democracy Now!", "Free Speech Radio News," "Making Contact," and "Between the Lines," consistently and fairly challenge unjust US policies, both foreign and domestic.

All of these programs engage the public in the democratic process, covering issues and ideas that directly affect the daily lives of low-income residents, families and other underserved populations. Through these programs, Thin Air Radio informs and inspires people to make steps towards affecting positive social change.

## **6. Fighting Against Racism**

Multiculturalism, equality and anti-racism are a core part of our mission. Fifteen of our program hosts are ethnic minorities, providing the community with information and perspectives that broaden appreciation for different cultures. Our locally produced programs break down stereotypes by letting people speak for themselves. "Surrounded by Tribes," "Los Caminos de La Vida," and "All Things African-American in the Arts," expose listeners to diverse cultures and provide examples of how these populations are an important, vibrant part of our community. The "Persian Hour," hosted by an Iranian-American, continues to build community understanding of the rich Iranian culture while challenging the current anti-Middle Eastern sentiment in this country. We actively recruit people of color and other underrepresented populations to submit program proposals and serve on committees.

## **7. Organizational Strengths**

The diversity in our programming is also reflected in station operations and management. Thin Air Radio relies on more than 80 volunteers--dedicated individuals who serve on committees, help with fundraisers, conduct outreach, coordinate volunteers, produce programs, and more. Thin Air has two paid staff: Lupito Flores, full-time Station Manager, has worked for non-profit groups for 15 years as organizer and development director. Rose Johnson, part-time Program Director, oversees and supervises all programmers. Many of the core committee members have been involved for years.

## **8. Measuring Success**

We will measure our success by whether we have reached the goals and objectives detailed below. We will track all response to our programming, send an annual survey to our membership, solicit feedback from the community on-the-air, through our website and by email. Our program committee, which is made up of steering committee and community members, annually evaluates programming to ensure that we are fulfilling our mission and serving the community in the most beneficial way possible. We will track the number of public service announcements we read to support local organizations working on behalf of low-income families and other underserved populations, the number of interviews conducted with the same, and the input we receive from local organizations that provide assistance to low-income residents. In our new by-laws, we have set annual membership meetings, part of which will be used for community feedback and evaluation of the station's operations.

## **9. Challenges**

Media consolidation continues to threaten public access to free information and access to the public airwaves. As mentioned in our previous grant proposal, we overcame our small listening area when the "translator" began re-broadcasting Thin Air Radio on 92.3FM in early 2005, reaching more than 300,000 people. Now we face an even greater challenge. We recently learned that a large commercial radio station from out-of-state is moving in to our community on our frequency in order to access the Spokane advertising market. Because of the way Congress and the FCC developed Low Power FM, we have no right to object or stop this encroachment. We must move our transmitter and antenna farther out of town. This unplanned move will cost us nearly \$18,000 in addition to our annual operating budget.

## **10. Sustainability and Fundraising Strategy**

We are working to diversify our fundraising strategies in order to sustain the station and plan for organizational growth. We are cultivating major donors and recruiting new members through direct asks, mailings, and outreach presentations. We will conduct two on-air pledge drives per year and increase underwriting revenue from local small businesses. This year our underwriting coordinator has negotiated approximately \$4,500 in contracts and \$1,700 in actual payments. By the end of 2007, we anticipate \$20,000 in annual underwriting revenue.

Our 2005 cash budget was \$88,000, but we have calculated the approximate number of hours and value of the in-kind labor and services we received for the year. Including all of our programmers, producers, outreach, technical, and office volunteers, we received a minimum of \$23,000 in volunteer labor. We also received \$8,500 in-kind from a local print shop that donates the cost of printing all of our mailings and member newsletters. In addition, because of the generosity of Jim Sheehan and the Community Building in which we're housed, we received

approximately \$1500 in subsidized rent for our studio, office and production room in 2005. This adds \$33,000 to our 2005 budget, making the total \$121,000.

Thin Air Radio would like to ask for \$15,000 per year for two years. The unplanned move of our transmitter and antenna due to the encroaching commercial station comes at a time when we are not yet able to sustain operations primarily through members. We are maximizing our resources and volunteers, working in a small space, and successfully using grassroots outreach and fundraising strategies to build the membership, but we need grant funding to buttress that effort and to ensure that the station has the adequate time and resources invested to make it an effective and lasting community resource for progressive social change and a strong coalition-building tool.

## Objectives

From our previous grant proposal we identified these objectives: 1) Begin producing at least two or more additional programs representing local ethnic groups, and two shows covering local public affairs and community issues. 2) Build on and diversify our funding to pay a living wage and develop a viable fundraising plan. As detailed in our progress report and above, we have successfully accomplished these objectives. During the grant period to-date, we added the following excellent locally produced programs that serve and empower low-income families and other vulnerable populations: "The Next Wave: Spokane Women," "Surrounded by Tribes," "Take the Power," "On the Clock," "Topics of Our Times," "All Things African-American in the Arts," "There Goes the Neighborhood," "Does That Answer Your Question," and "Detention."

**New Objective #1.** By the end of 2007, we hope to fund nearly 50% of operational costs through member support, raising \$30,000 from 1,200 members, and 20 major donors contributing \$15,000. By the end of 2008, we will add another 300 new members and raise \$50,000 through members and grassroots fundraising. During the grant period we will support two, full-time staff at a living wage.

**New Objective #2.** We will build a full and diverse Board of Directors, with special consideration of socio-economic, ethnic and racial diversity. This summer we will submit the application to become a separate 501c3 organization, and therefore must recruit and train new board members. Using a consultant, will develop criteria for recruiting prospective board members and a process for training and integrating them into our organization and to help us update our strategic plan. At the annual membership meeting in January 2007, the existing board will elect the new board.

**New Objective #3.** By the end of 2007, we will build the program schedule to consist of nearly 50% locally produced programming and continue to provide a platform for low-income voices and perspectives. Currently, we have 71 hours per week of locally produced programs. If we can add nine more hours of locally produced programs, we will be near 50%.