

Request for Proposals
Urban Alternative Music Format 2021 Station Applications
Proposals Due February 12, 2021 5pm. ET

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

CPB is seeking proposals from public radio stations qualified as Community Service Grant recipients that are interested in attracting multicultural audiences, especially millennials and Generation X (“**Target Audience**”) using the Urban Alternative format. CPB will provide financial support to selected stations (“**Station(s)**”) in their efforts to implement the Urban Alternative in their markets (“**Grant Project**”). The Project will span a 24-month period, during which the Stations will receive results of format research and recommendations and coaching from a CPB engaged consultant (“**Consultant**”). The Consultant will also assist Stations with developing their strategies for digital and community engagement, fundraising and development. CPB will provide up to \$500K to each Station.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2016, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (“**CPB**”) supported development of a new music format for public radio called the Urban Alternative (“**Urban Alternative**”). The new format was built by and for a new generation of public radio listeners; a younger, multicultural cohort that would create its own public media mission and sound. The goal was to target an audience between the ages of 18 and 44, and build an innovative service connecting urban audiences through music discovery and community engagement. Deeply grounded in research, the Urban Alternative combined music and information to meet the needs of young diverse audiences, especially millennials and Generation X.

The first phase of the initiative began with research that explored contemporary music genres through focus groups, audience testing and market analyses in several urban markets. The research found that a music blend consisting of hip-hop, R&B, and urban genres including local music had broad appeal among the Target Audience and could be successful when complemented with appealing local hosts and focused community and digital engagement. While music styles and categories would vary from market to market, the approach would be positive and family-friendly, remaining true to public radio’s values.

The initial phase of the Urban Alternative initiative supported the implementation of the format by public radio stations in Houston, TX; Norfolk, VA; and Denver, CO. This request for proposals (“RFP”) will identify additional community service grant-qualified radio stations to implement the new format with assistance from the Consultant and CPB.

III. CPB BACKGROUND

CPB is a private, non-profit corporation authorized by Congress in 1967 to receive federal government appropriations and to use those funds to promote the growth and development of public broadcasting and public telecommunications services. CPB is not a government agency.

CPB remains focused on facilitating a public media system that is valued by all Americans and reflects a diversity of ideas, content, talent, and delivery. CPB's values of collaboration, partnership, innovation, engagement, and diversity guide its strategic approach to program investments system-wide and are reflected in the goals of its business plan as digital, dialogue and diversity.

CPB invests in approximately 1,500 local radio and television stations – their programs, services, and other initiatives -- to serve and engage the public. CPB funds diverse and innovative programming and other media content that is educational, informative, and cultural.

CPB-funded television programs are primarily distributed through PBS. The radio programs that CPB funds are distributed primarily through NPR, American Public Media and the PRX. CPB does more than invest in quality programming; it helps parents and teachers educate children by providing resources that enhance the learning process.

IV. PROJECT DETAILS

A. Station Requirements

Applicants must include in their proposals written commitments from their station management and their licensee with their pledge to support the project, to work collaboratively with the Consultant and CPB throughout the project, and to adopt and implement the new Urban Alternative music format on multiple platforms, including their main FM channel, website, app, and HD channels. Additionally, their representation that the station will continue using the Urban Alternative format for no less than three years following completion of this project to enable it to evaluate the format's success. Working with the Consultant, Stations should develop a clear understanding of who they want to target in their market and the appropriate music mix for their market.

To participate, Stations must have the capacity to produce and promote content, engage their communities, fundraise to support the new format, and successfully manage the Grant Project, as well as the following:

- (1) Locally based staff (new hires or reassigned existing employees) to implement the Urban Alternative format:
 - a) A Content Director
 - b) On-air hosts (minimum of three (3) with the skills and knowledge to execute the format)
 - c) A Community Engagement Manager
 - d) Development staff
 - e) Digital staff
- (2) Studio and production facilities (remote or station-based) dedicated to the Grant

Project

- (3) An on-air broadcast music scheduling system software with capacity for up to 10,000 songs and necessary on-air promos, underwriting announcements, and other broadcast announcements
- (4) Space for in-studio performances by local or visiting artists, including video production if possible (as public health and safety guidelines allow)
- (5) A station website (a dedicated music discovery website and not a re-purposed news site content management system)
- (6) Presence on Social Media Platforms (at minimum, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- (7) Outsourced imaging production for on-air branding that establishes a voice for station identification that is separate from station on-air hosts

B. Format Implementation

As part of the project, the Stations will work closely with the Consultant to create and execute an individualized implementation plan (each, an “**Implementation Plan**”), through a mix of meetings and webinars. Each Implementation Plan will include, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Mission statement
- (2) Performance and target audience goals
- (3) Format/program schedule
- (4) Music mix recommendations based on the research
- (5) Sample playlists based on the research in each specific market
- (6) A coded music library necessary to execute the playlist
- (7) A music clock
- (8) Coaching activities
- (9) Branding and imaging plan
- (10) Marketing and community engagement plans
- (11) Development activities including on-air and off-air fundraising; sustainer program; mid-level and major gift programs.

CPB will require that the Stations complete and begin carrying out their Implementation Plans within the first six (6) months of the grant period.

C. Distribution

The Stations, in consultation with the Consultant and CPB, will participate in a distribution strategy for the Urban Alternative to maximize their reach through a combination of broadcast platforms (analog and HD channels) and digital platforms (streaming media, web, app, social media, YouTube).

D. CPB Reports

The Stations and the Consultant must keep CPB advised of their progress through monthly telephone conferences.

Further, Stations will be required to provide CPB with quarterly progress reports, including financial updates.

At the end of the Grant Project, the Stations will coordinate with the Consultant to provide CPB with a comprehensive final report that describes the activities undertaken by all the Stations during the grant period, challenges faced, the steps taken to address them, and the final outcomes.

V. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be broken into two elements: (i) Technical Proposal, and (ii) Budget.

A. Technical Proposals

Proposals should be no more than ten (10) pages and include the following, preferably in the order presented:

- (1) Written commitment (preferably Microsoft Word or Adobe format), from the Station Licensee and Station Management to implement the format for a period of at least three years following completion of the project. This period is the minimum required to gauge the project's success.
- (2) Summary paragraph (preferably Microsoft Word or Adobe format), a written (no longer than 200 words) summary including:
 - a) Name of applicant and primary contact information
 - b) A description of the media market and demographics that may identify with the Urban Alternative format
 - c) Vision and/or mission statements that supports the applicant's readiness to adopt the new format
 - d) The amount of the grant request
- (3) A narrative description (preferably Microsoft Word or Adobe format), of the Station's readiness to participate in the grant program, including but not limited to:
 - a) Staffing capacity
 - b) Production capacity
 - c) Digital capacity
 - d) Promotion and engagement capacity
 - e) Development capacity

B. Budget

Please provide an itemized project budget (Microsoft Excel spreadsheet) showing expenses associated with the project for the two-year grant period.

It should include a budget narrative (Microsoft Word or Adobe format) that describes how costs were calculated and an FTE allocation of staff time.

CPB will fund up to 100% of salary and benefits for up to two new station staff positions necessary to implement the music format and/or defray the cost of technical upgrades necessary to meet the station requirements listed above.

VI. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Questions

All questions must be in writing and submitted to Jacquie Gales Webb at jgaleswebb@cpb.org by **December 31, 2020**. The questions and CPB's responses may be posted on CPB's website without attribution.

Grant Management System Access

Please submit the technical and budget proposals through CPB's electronic grants management system. To gain access to the system, please send an email request to Jacquie Gales Webb at jgaleswebb@cpb.org no later than **February 5, 2021**. Access will then be given to the electronic grants management system.

Required Formats

Technical Proposals and Budget Narratives must be in Microsoft Word or PDF. Budget Proposals must be Excel worksheets with calculations. Other formats will not be accepted.

Proposal Due Date. Proposals are due no later than **February 12, 2021 5 PM (ET)**. CPB will not consider proposals submitted after the Due Date.

CPB may request offerors with the top scores to present their proposal to senior management at CPB's offices in Washington, D.C or virtually. If so, CPB will notify applicants of the time and date.

VII. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following factors with the associated weight:

- A. Commitment:** The Station's written commitment to implement the format. (30 percent).
- B. Readiness:** The Stations ability to implement the various aspects of the format (25 percent).
- C. Market Potential and Current Performance:** The potential for the format to be a success in the market based on existing competition and market conditions (25 percent); and
- D. Budget:** The reasonableness of the proposed budget (20 percent).

VIII. TIMETABLE

Below is the anticipated timetable.

| ACTIVITY | DATE |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Submissions of Questions | December 31, 2020 |
| Access to Grants Management System | February 5, 2021 |
| Proposal Submissions Due 5 pm EST | February 12, 2021 |

IX. PROPOSALS

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP shall be valid for at least 90 days following the closing date. This solicitation does not constitute an agreement by CPB to extend funding to any party. CPB may, in its sole discretion, elect not to pursue this project. CPB is not responsible for any costs incurred by applicant (Applicant) in preparing and submitting its proposal in response to this RFP, or in performing any other activities relative to this solicitation.

Neither multiple nor alternate applications will be accepted.

1. Confidential Information. Applicant must clearly identify any portion of its proposal that it considers confidential, proprietary commercial information or trade secrets.
2. Subcontractors. Applicant must identify all subcontractors included in its proposal and a description of their roles.
3. Terms. Applicants selected for funding are deemed to have accepted the terms in this RFP. Any exceptions to these terms must be clearly identified. CPB, at its sole discretion, may reject proposals that include exceptions.
4. CPB Information. In reviewing Applicant's proposal, if CPB shares any materials, data, other information and analyses (collectively, "Information"), as a condition of receiving such Information, Applicant shall be deemed to agree to protect, preserve and maintain the same on a strictly confidential basis. Applicant shall promptly return to CPB upon its request all tangible copies in Applicant's possession.
5. Proposal Loss and Copyrights. CPB is not responsible for the loss or damage to material that Applicant provides to CPB in conjunction with this RFP. Upon submission, said materials shall become CPB's property (not including any intellectual property rights contained in such submission), and CPB is not required to return the same to Applicant.
6. Duplicate Information. By submitting a proposal, Applicant grants to CPB the right to duplicate, use, disclose and distribute the proposal and any related materials and information.
7. Applicant's Representations. Applicant represents and warrants that it is the owner of all rights, title and interest in the information and materials in any and all media, included in its proposal and/or provided to CPB in connection with this RFP. Further it represents and warrants that the same are not defamatory and do not infringe upon or violate the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party. Further, Applicant shall indemnify CPB from any loss resulting from Applicant's breach of any of these representations and warranties.

X. CONDITIONS OF AGREEMENT

If a proposal is selected for funding, Applicant must sign a binding agreement that meets with CPB's approval (Agreement). Until this Agreement is executed by both parties, no express or implied commitment has been made to provide funding for the same. Applicant is not authorized to commence any work until the Agreement is fully executed, nor will CPB compensate it for the same.

Applicant must guarantee that, among other things, that any work it undertakes is not defamatory and will not violate or infringe upon the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of CPB any third party. Applicant must also agree to indemnify CPB against any loss resulting from a breach of this representation.

The Agreement will contain additional requirements, including but not limited to the following.

1. **Financial Means.** Applicant must demonstrate that it has adequate financial support to complete the work and to deliver the services, reports and/or other intellectual property set forth in the Agreement.
2. **Applicant and Subcontractor: Record Retention, Audit Access, and Time Sheets.** Except for the work that Applicant completes pursuant to a fixed price contract awarded pursuant to competitive bidding procedures, Applicant must keep records reasonably necessary to disclose fully the amount and the disposition of CPB funds and the total cost of the project, including that supplied by other sources for a period of at least three years, and to facilitate an effective audit.
3. Applicant shall ensure that CPB, the Comptroller General of the United State and their authorized representatives shall have access to such records, including any books, documents, papers and records for the purpose of auditing and examining funds provided by CPB or from other sources. To clarify, Applicant must ensure that its subcontractors provide the same access and retain such records for the three-year period set forth above. Accordingly, Applicant and its subcontractors must have timesheets or other similar documents to verify staff time spent on the project.
4. **U.S. Comptroller General Audit Report.** Applicant must promptly provide CPB with a copy of any U.S. Comptroller General audit report issued in connection with the project.
5. **Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination.** Applicant must comply with all applicable equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies.
6. **Governing Law.** Except as otherwise required by law, the parties agree that the Agreement and all related issues shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia. Notwithstanding the jurisdiction of any other court, by entering into the Agreement, Applicant expressly submits and consents in advance to the jurisdiction of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia for all claims or disputes pertaining directly or indirectly to the Agreement, or any matter related thereto.
7. **Spending Restrictions.** Applicant is strictly prohibited from using any funds provided by CPB:
 - a. for any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the United States Congress or any state legislature; or
 - b. to conduct any reception or provide any other entertainment for any officer or employee of the federal government or any state or local government.

8. CPB's Appropriation. CPB's primary source of funding is appropriations made by the U.S. Congress. In the event reductions occur in the amount of the federal appropriation, which is allocated for this project, whether by rescission or otherwise and whether before or after funds are paid pursuant to the Agreement, and that reduction materially affects CPB's ability to meet its obligations under the Agreement, then CPB and Applicant, at CPB's discretion, may agree to enter good faith negotiations to modify the Agreement.

9. Applicant's Representation and Warranty. All research and materials created, developed, compiled or produced pursuant to or as a result of this project (including but not limited to all reports) will be considered ordered and commissioned by CPB as works made for hire under the copyright laws, and made in the course of services rendered (collectively "Research and Materials"). If, for any reason, the Research and Materials are not considered works made for hire under the copyright laws, Applicant agrees to assign all right, title, and interest in the same to CPB. Applicant further agrees that neither it, nor any of its subcontractors or any third party participating in the creation of the Research and Materials, will have any copyrights or other intellectual property rights whatsoever in the same.