

The background of the slide is a photograph of a port at night. Several large gantry cranes are illuminated with warm lights, and their silhouettes are reflected in the dark water. In the distance, a city skyline with various lit-up buildings is visible under a dark, cloudy sky. A single bird is seen in flight in the upper center of the frame.

# KUOW PUGET SOUND PUBLIC RADIO STRATEGIC IMPACT FRAMEWORK

Fiscal Year 2026



# Introduction

A “Strategic Impact Framework” (SIF) is a framework an organization uses to build strategies and make decisions through the lens of social impact.

Externally, a SIF communicates an organization’s intended impact and the social return on investment.

KUOW first developed a SIF in 2021 and has used it to guide our strategic planning, budgeting, partnerships and allocation of resources.

KUOW’s SIF is a “living” document, meant to evolve as KUOW responds to societal, media and audience changes.

**This is the latest iteration of our SIF, updated in the summer of 2025.**



# SIF Components



## NORTH STAR

A solution to a critical social problem that KUOW exists to support

## INTENDED IMPACT

The change in status quo KUOW is uniquely qualified to bring about

## OUTCOMES

The outcomes needed to achieve KUOW's Intended Impact

## STRATEGIES

How KUOW will work towards each outcome

## VALUES

The values that drive KUOW's work

# Critical Assumptions



KUOW leadership built our SIF with the following assumptions:

- Listening habits are evolving quickly. While terrestrial radio drive-time listening is still strong, it is eroding. Audiences have more options for at-home media (and fewer have broadcast radios in the home), as well as ways to consume news and information. **Broadcast listening will continue to decline as a share of audience's total media consumption.**
- Younger and more racially diverse audiences have different media consumption habits than audiences that public media has historically attracted. **KUOW and public media must determine new audiences' media needs and position itself to engage with them.**
- The local and national news combination of NPR member stations is a unique offering competitors can't easily replicate. **KUOW must leverage the benefits of the NPR Network initiative to find and engage with new audiences and untap new sources of revenue.**
- Audience habits are increasingly screen-based. Audiences want their information in more visual mediums over verbal and/or text-based formats. **KUOW needs to pursue audiences on each digital platform in a customized way to meet their expectations.** Digital platforms are going to increasingly be the future, and disruption to the media landscape will only intensify.
- "News exhaustion" will lead audiences to seek content that has more meaningful connection to people, places and ideas.
- Misinformation and disinformation will continue to be prevalent and to polarize society. **A trusted convener of civil dialogue is needed to help communities and residents decipher information they consume.**
- Some portion of the population will still seek objective truth rather than affirmation of their worldview. Shared values are critically important to younger audiences. **It is critical that public media navigate polarization to maintain trust.**
- **Public media needs a comprehensive digital strategy.** Even a large market public station is too small to single-handedly produce enough content to be present, effective, and competitive on all the digital platforms audiences are using to consume news.
- **Public media has severe issues with diverse representation and racial equity in hiring, staff development, pay, etc.** Societal disruption has shown to exacerbate inequities. Diversity, equity and inclusion practices increase opportunities for excellence.
- **DEI training alone isn't enough;** public media organizations must completely transform to attract, engage, and retain talent and audience to represent the stories, identities, and interests of communities in order to shape our content, impact, and sustainability.

# KUOW STRATEGIC IMPACT FRAMEWORK

FISCAL YEAR 2026

**NORTH STAR:** A fertile and vibrant ecosystem exists for community and democracy to thrive.

**INTENDED IMPACT:** Everyone in the Puget Sound Region can access information needed to understand and engage with what is happening in the world around them positioning them to have greater agency and power.

## OUTCOME 1 KUOW is trusted.

### STRATEGIES

- 1.1** Be ethical and transparent in all journalism and business practices.
- 1.2** Create journalism that is relevant and creates value for the people in our region.
- 1.3** Ask for and act on audience feedback.
- 1.4** Develop programs that invite listeners regularly to the station for conversations with content makers.

## OUTCOME 2 KUOW is accessible, inclusive and accountable to our communities.

### STRATEGIES

- 2.1** Rapidly pilot and adapt content and engagements to solve evolving user needs. Engage with audience through feedback channels and incorporate the learnings into content production.
- 2.2** Articulate firm targets for source diversity across beats and topic areas so that KUOW sounds and looks like the people in our region.
- 2.3** Continue to deploy Personas strategy into audience growth and engagement.
- 2.4** Seek partnerships that provide opportunities for expanding audience reach.
- 2.5** Follow ADA and usability best practices on all digital platforms.

## OUTCOME 3 KUOW is anti-racist and equitable.

### STRATEGIES

- 3.1** Continue to foster a culture of feedback and accountability.
- 3.2** Continue to diversify KUOW's staff across all levels of the organization.
- 3.3** Ensure KUOW's organizational culture embeds antiracism, anti-oppression, and pursuit of equity through policy and practice.

## OUTCOME 4 KUOW is sustainable.

### STRATEGIES

- 4.1** Continue to foster a culture of innovation with clear objectives and key results (OKR).
- 4.2** Continue to build and enhance our audience funnel that leads to donor conversion.
- 4.3** Invest in training, cultural development, recruitment, and belonging to perpetuate excellence and retention in our staff.
- 4.4** Be fiscally responsible and build a sustainable revenue model.

# FY26 SIF MEASURES

## MEASUREMENT

- ❑ Trust Project Indicators → KUOW uses researched indicators of trust-building journalism to improve our website and audio products.
- ❑ 50%+ of KUOW's content sources are BIPOC, and 50 %+ of KUOW's content sources are women/ nonbinary/ transgender → KUOW has tracked source diversity since 2015 and reports on it annually in our Impact Report.
- ❑ Gallup Engagement Survey, TOCA perceptual study, and supervisor assessments in 360 Performance → KUOW uses internal assessment tools to monitor and improve staff satisfaction and engagement.
- ❑ Diverse composition of staff, supervisors, and senior leadership → KUOW tracks the racial diversity of our staff and reports on it annually in a CPB Diversity Report.
- ❑ Audience growth and conversion to members → KUOW has aggressive goals to increase our digital audience and convert more listeners into sustaining donors.
- ❑ 75% of people who feel more informed. 65% of people who believe multiple sides and perspectives were considered and represented fairly. → Learn who our audiences are and what they want and deliver a product that creates and serves a more informed public, broadens conversations, and deepens understanding.





# Engaging with the SIF

**LEARN MORE //** We invite you to see the SIF at work in our latest Impact Report at [KUOW.org/impact](https://kuow.org/impact).

**GET IN TOUCH //** We greatly value input from our local community. If you have questions or comments about our SIF, please reach out at [engage@kuow.org](mailto:engage@kuow.org).

**SUPPORT THIS WORK //** KUOW's intended impact is only achievable with the support of our local community. Learn how you can support KUOW's work at [KUOW.org/support](https://kuow.org/support).

