

**EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE
SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY RADIO
LPFM APPLICATION**

Picture a city with over 800,000 people where 20 percent of that population is ethnically Chinese either by birth or descent. Now imagine that community with no locally-based Chinese-language programming available on the radio airwaves.

That's the current situation in San Francisco. All residents need community-based programming available on the broadcast airwaves, especially marginalized segments with limited access to other forms of communications.

San Francisco Community Radio (SFCR) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, California Public Benefit Corporation which will promote and operate a listener-supported, non-commercial community radio station broadcasting San Francisco-based programming. That programming includes *Chinese Star Radio*, a Chinese-language program produced in San Francisco which is broadcast every weekday evening for 30-plus years to serve San Francisco's Chinese speaking community.

For over 33 years, KUSF 90.3 FM served the community radio needs of San Francisco. In 2011, the license for KUSF 90.3 FM was transferred from the University of San Francisco. The sale allowed a formerly commercial classical station (KDFC) to relocate to 90.3 FM. Since the demise of KUSF 90.3 FM, community programming has been woefully under-represented on the broadcast airwaves in San Francisco.

San Francisco Community Radio (SFCR) was formed in 2011 by former volunteers at KUSF 90.3 FM with the explicit mission of educating, engaging, and inspiring the citizens of San Francisco by operating a community-focused, independent, educational audio program content source via radio (LPFM), and the Internet. This mission will be accomplished by returning educational and community programming to San Francisco and educating area students in radio (both behind the microphone and behind the scenes) by providing them with real-world experience in running a community radio station.

The state of California approved SFCR as a public benefit corporation in June, 2011, and the Internal Revenue Service granted SFCR non-profit status shortly thereafter.

San Francisco Community Radio produces the kind of programming the Federal Communications Commission and Congress had in mind when they created the guidelines for Low Power FM radio stations. Former FCC Chair Julius Genachowski said, “Low power FM stations are small, but they make a giant contribution to local community programming.” U.S. Congressman Mike Doyle has written that radio, “is still one of the most accessible forms of media out there, because it reaches audiences far and wide regardless of economic factors. Radios are affordable, signals travel over the air, Low Power FM radio stations give everyday people a chance to be heard and to broadcast their voices to the world.” San Francisco Community Radio will deliver on this dynamic vision of what LPFM can do for a community.

As an interim step, San Francisco Community Radio helped create and currently operates a community-based educational internet radio stream. The stream transmits programming 24 hours a day, seven days a week, over the Internet with the majority of it produced locally and transmitted live from our main studio, located at Light Rail Studios in San Francisco. This programming is produced by a variety of people including college students, members of the community and former volunteers at KUSF 90.3 FM. The programming reflects community interests, needs, issues, cultures and languages. Many of these programs serve communities that have no other source of mass-media communication. *Chinese Star Radio* is one such example.

Another is *Senior News and Disability Report*, the only locally-produced weekly program created by and for members of the community with mobility issues. Many listeners of *Senior News and Disability Report* have no other way to connect to the outside world. The show also informs the community of legal issues that may affect them.

Both *Chinese Star Radio* and *Senior News and Disability Report* suffer from the cultural and

physical limitations of access to the Internet. Many Chinese-speaking immigrants do not have access to high-speed internet connections. Others are elderly and unlikely to turn to the Internet for radio programming. Bed-ridden and limited-mobility listeners have the similar obstacles. Many cannot maneuver a keyboard to access web-based radio. These communities rely on broadcast radio for news and information and no longer have access to these programs since the demise of KUSF 90.3 FM.

Local program origination is a key to LPFM. San Francisco Community Radio will continue broadcasting locally-based music programs, highlighting under-served genres as well as smaller local bands that do not have access to commercial radio. In addition, SFCR will continue to work with local clubs and music venues promoting the diverse music scene for which San Francisco is renowned. In September, SFCR broadcast a live event from Light Rail's main studio featuring four local bands. The show was open to the public but because it was also broadcast over the Internet, it was accessible to San Francisco music fans who were not able to make it down to the studio. SFCR will continue to broadcast live music events when it has a LPFM broadcast license.

San Francisco Community Radio is partnering with local educators to set up online classes for student volunteers to take for credit at local colleges. With none of the local colleges or universities currently holding a broadcast license, the real-world education for students interested in pursuing a career in radio has been curtailed. SFCR will step in to fill this void. Further, one of SFCR's current board members is a Ph.D. student at Stanford University, ensuring that students will remain central to SFCR's mission.

San Francisco Community Radio will also continue offering educational programming that cannot be found on the local broadcast airwaves. Current examples on the SFCR schedule include: *Folk Law*. This show, airing on Mondays, educates the public about legal issues and offers listeners the chance to call in and ask questions. *Poet As Radio* (Sundays) brings a weekly helping of poetry to listeners. Live radio theater can be heard on *Shoestring Radio Theater* every Friday. *History of Jazz*

runs weekly on Saturdays, exposing listeners to jazz music from an educational perspective, providing the context lacking on most jazz programs. Plans are in the works to add a guitar instruction show to the schedule. No organization in San Francisco offers more educational programming than SFCR.

The consolidation of the local airwaves has also squeezed foreign language programming off the broadcast dial. In addition to *Chinese Star Radio*, San Francisco Community Radio offers programs in French, German, Turkish and several other languages.

SFCR is headquartered in San Francisco with its main studio located at 672 Toland Place. Live, local programming on the internet stream originates from the studio 52 hours per week with plans to increase to 100 hours per week by the time the LPFM station is up and running. Eventually, SFCR plans on having 24 hours a day of live, locally-originated programming. The studio is staffed and open to the public at all times when live, local programming is broadcast. SFCR will have its transmitter sited at Sutro Tower, located near the geographic center of San Francisco.

San Francisco Community Radio is local in every sense of the word. Seven of the eight current board members reside in the city of San Francisco with the eighth living in Oakland. The vast majority of SFCR's volunteers live and work in San Francisco or are students attending college in the city.

Now more than ever San Francisco needs community radio. LPFM was created with the specific intent of returning community radio to the local airwaves, "to create a class of radio stations designed to serve very localized communities or underrepresented groups within communities." San Francisco Community Radio will fulfill that mission, building on the live, locally-produced programming currently being broadcast over SFCR's internet station to give San Francisco the best community radio station in the country.