

Delta State University LPFM Radio Station Proposal and Justification

Delta State University desires to start a local, low-powered FM station on our campus that will broadcast student-centered educational programming, student-directed music formatting, campus news, and community service programming. Additional programming will emphasize the Mississippi Delta's regional heritage, as well as include content that addresses various challenges in our region in the areas of health care, education, and economic development.

Delta State University sits near U.S. Highway 61, the 'Blues Highway,' in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. The small campus serves a diverse population of approximately 4,000 students and anchors the cultural and arts community of the region. Because of its proximity to the cradle of America's popular music, and because of Delta State's curricular offerings in communications, journalism, music industry studies, and audio engineering, a low-powered FM radio station would enhance Delta State University's educational opportunities. An LPFM station on our campus would represent a tangible opportunity for Delta State University to train the next generation of broadcasters, artists, writers, journalists, and music industry professionals in our region.

Delta State is also located in one of America's most economically challenged rural areas. Poverty and unemployment rates are high, and educational attainment levels are low. There are significant obstacles to equitable healthcare access. Through the medium of a community-supported radio station, a significant public service can be offered to the citizens of Cleveland, Mississippi. For instance, Public Service Announcements about free healthcare screenings and blood drives can be regularly produced via DSU's School of Nursing, and continuing education efforts can be promoted throughout the community.

A key inspiration for applying for an LPFM license is to fill the Delta State airwaves with the music that helps define Mississippi. Multiple statewide economic development taskforces have repeatedly identified the Mississippi Delta blues and other genres of roots music, like Gospel and country music, as key to our ever-growing creative economy.

It is imperative that college students preparing for jobs in Mississippi's creative economy familiarize themselves with the specifics of music like the blues and other regional genres, as well as the methods for transmitting this music to the community; unfortunately, there are relatively few local outlets for the traditional Mississippi music and new original music other than live music venues and festivals. An LPFM station will also introduce Delta State students from a wide variety of other academic fields to the local and traditional music of the area and the means to broadcast said music.

Mississippians are passionate about their music, their communities, and their sense of place. Most native Mississippians are also passionate about storytelling, and they rarely shy away from giving their opinions. A student-run, town-and-gown-supported, low-powered FM station will serve as a welcome outlet for the creativity, for the diverse voices, and for the civic engagement of the community that is Delta State University.