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Page 2: Tell us who you are!

Q1 Contact Information

Name	Eric Greiling
Title	Chief Development Officer
Station	Wisconsin Public Television
Email	eric.greiling@wpt.org
Phone Number	608.265.0691

Page 3: Award Categories

Q2 Select a category. **Special Achievement/Innovation**

Page 7: Special Achievement/Innovation

Q21 Project Title

Hip Hop-U: Engaging fundraising to foster diverse content creation

Q22 What was the overall goal of project, problem it sought to solve or opportunity it sought to leverage? (suggested word count 100-250)

Noticing both a challenge and an opportunity in our service area, Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) embarked on new multi-faceted collaboration. Through its Young Performers Initiative (YPI), WPT celebrates young performers in the arts across the state and works with partners to support and advance music education. WPT realized that YPI could and should play a larger role in statewide efforts to make music education more accessible to underserved youth.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Wisconsin has the regrettable distinction of ranking worst in the nation for racial equality. Minority youth face immense barriers to success in key categories of wellbeing, particularly education. Educational disparities extend to and—for a variety of reasons—are exacerbated in music education. As students progress from elementary to middle and high school, students of color disengage and drop out at alarmingly high rates. WPT sought to support culturally relevant and responsive music education programming rooted in best practices for retaining minority students.

WPT reached out to First Wave, the ground-breaking hip-hop studies and urban arts program run by University of Wisconsin. A program like no other, WPT was blown away by the quality of the performances, the pedagogical rigor, and the power of the participants' own stories. We wanted to collaborate with First Wave to create new educational opportunities for students and educators and we wanted to create a documentary to share First Wave with our viewing audience. Raising necessary funds was the first step.

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Q23 Describe the activity, what it achieved, and why it was successful. (suggested word count 200-400)

The sheer breadth of what we hoped to accomplish proved to be an advantage in fundraising. An hour long documentary about hip hop and spoken word poetry? In Wisconsin? This film would be quite different from what our viewers are accustomed to seeing. We started with fundraising for distinct, definable education opportunities to teach the teachers, and built from that foundation. WPT found donors with both a vision for education and for serving underserved communities. We asked them to join us in sponsoring K-12 teachers to participate in the Hip Hop in the Heartland conference for educators, run by First Wave's home department. We also needed to gather more data from educators to help us understand the disconnects in music programming. We knew some educators were already doing inclusion work really well. We wanted to figure out what they were doing and help replicate it. A focus group of this cohort of educators help us create video content so that we could reach more educators and help them understand how they could successfully incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms. We were clear that we were not simply asking funders to throw money at a problem. Through surveys and listening sessions, WPT sought feedback from educators statewide on their needs for resources and support, then made continuous improvements to meet their needs. These efforts were not only accomplishing our educational objectives, they were building the case and the relationships that would be necessary to make the documentary. WPT's development team worked closely with the education, production, and engagement teams to develop a deep understanding of what was working best and communicate that to both the initial donors and new donors. We sought out a blend of individual, corporate, and foundation donors with visions for advancing education, the arts, and underserved communities, built the proofs of concept and performance, and ultimately raised over \$130,000 toward the combined projects. WPT was intentional in selecting talent in front of the camera and behind the camera in order to tell authentic stories of students of color on the UW-Madison campus. WPT steadily worked for three years to build the scaffold on which the documentary could be made. In fall 2018, WPT premiered Hip-Hop U: The First Wave Scholars. During a national climate of increasing racial tension, Hip-Hop U helps give Wisconsinites a starting point for conversations about equality, diversity and social change.

Q24 Tell us any metrics or benchmarks that show the success of project. Please consider quantitative and qualitative data. (suggested word count 100-250)

The project maximized opportunities for deep connections and broad reach. The documentary Hip-Hop U: The First Wave Scholars premiered September 24, 2018. Two community premiere screenings attended by roughly 60 individuals helped kick off JVN Day, an annual hip-hop festival in Madison celebrating the genre's potential to positively impact lives and spark dialogue. WPT also launched a vibrant, immersive Hip-Hop U website <https://wpt4.org/hiphopu/> to encourage audiences to go deeper.

Among WPT's viewing audience, 63% of viewers had never heard of First Wave prior to watching Hip-Hop U. After watching the program, viewers responding "Extremely" or "Very" interested in First Wave increased significantly from 20% to 68%. Viewers commented:

"We need more public representations of non-white Wisconsin."

"Wonderful! Watching Hip-Hop U really showed me the value and importance of this art form and the positive effects it has had on those who practice it."

WPT sponsored 78 educators to attend UW's Office of Multicultural Arts Initiative annual Hip Hop in the Heartland conference. Educators responded with comments like these:

"It helped me to better understand my students' perspectives and the value of music in their lives. It gave me viable tools and activities to engage them in my music classroom."

"All of the workshops that I attended were very helpful, engaging and thought provoking. I gained new ideas to try to consider in our efforts to create more inclusive environments."

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Q25 Tell us how the project leveraged national or local content (primetime, KIDS, pop-out, etc). (suggested word count 100-250)

Ken Burns Vietnam- WPT and First Wave collaborated on a school performance held in conjunction with the release of Ken Burns' documentary Vietnam. The roughly 300 student attendees had recently studied the Vietnam War in their Modern U.S. History class. First Wave members created and performed a powerful piece linking Vietnam War Era themes such as war, protest, race, injustice, silence, social divisions, etc., to the present day conflicts around the Black Lives Matter Movement. The event featured a spoken word performance followed by a question and answer session between performers and students.

Continuing Digital Engagement- Leveraging the station's strategic interest in jumpstarting digital content production, WPT is working with former First Wave member, Zhalarina Sanders, to create a compelling digital series that explores addiction, hip-hop culture, mental health, sexuality, faith, and relationships with law enforcement in communities of color.

Staff Development- Additionally, First Wave member Nia Scott joined WPT as a Production intern in early 2019. While providing a student of color valuable experience on her path toward a career in media, this internship opportunity also supports a critical need WPT has recognized to foster diversity behind the camera as well as in front of it.

Website – WPT created a vibrant, immersive Hip-Hop U website <https://wpt4.org/hiphopu/>. The website encourages audiences to gain insight into the role of hip-hop as a form of community-building, go deep into the First Wave timeline highlighting key moments in the program's history within the context of broader culture, and get involved by exploring university hip-hop archives and creative arts community groups.

Q26 Do you have any supporting materials or items to upload? (optional) **Yes**

Page 10: Additional Items

Q31 Please upload all materials as a single document.

WPT's Hip Hop-U.docx (7.1MB)
