

KFAI Annual Membership Meeting

2024 General Manager's Report

Mission

KFAI is a volunteer-based community radio station that exists to broadcast information, arts, and entertainment programming for an audience of diverse racial, social, and economic backgrounds. By providing a voice for people ignored or misrepresented by mainstream media, KFAI increases understanding between peoples and communities while fostering the values of democracy and social justice.

About

Founded in 1978, KFAI is a registered 501(c)(3) noncommercial educational (NCE) media organization whose financial support comes from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), local, state, and federal grants, underwriting and sponsorship, and through the generosity and good-will of listeners and members.

Programming Overview

KFAI's community-powered 24/7/365 broadcast is known for its eclectic entertainment and public affairs programming that features 89 programs in ten languages, with 84 programs produced locally and in-house. People of color, the LGBTQIA+ community, and many intersectional identities lead more than 50% of the programs on the broadcast schedule, making KFAI one of Minnesota's most culturally, generationally, and socio-economically diverse broadcast media outlets.

KFAI's immediate neighborhood is home to the largest Somali community in the United States and Minnesota's most culturally diverse neighborhood: Cedar-Riverside/West Bank. Beyond the broadcast, KFAI supports community building through developing, hosting, presenting, and sponsoring arts, entertainment, and cultural events across the Twin Cities.

Programming Insights

Languages spoken on-air at KFAI include Amharic, English, Farsi, Filipino, French, Oromo, Spanish, Somali, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese. East African immigrant communities are represented by Somali Link Radio, Eritrean Community Radio, SNIT: Eritreans in Minnesota, Voices of Ethiopia, Voice of Oromiyaa, and MaliStar. Other weekly programming directed by and to underserved immigrant cultures includes AVAZ, Vietnam MN Radio, and Filipino-American News, with new Hmong programming on the horizon.

KFAI is home to Fresh Fruit, the longest-running LGBTQIA+ radio program in the Nation.

News, community, and public affairs programs include Beats Rhymes and Democracy, Health Notes with Kinshasha Kambui, No Name in the Street with DA Bullock, The Conversation with Al McFarlane, Write On Radio, Views from the Ground, Northern Sun News, Disability and Progress, and others.

Staff & Contractors

KFAI employs three full-time staff members and one part-time staff member: General Manager and Executive Director Nora Doherty, Program Director Miguel Vargas, Business Operations Manager Debbie Gonsiorski, and Volunteer Coordinator Ellie Zimmerman.

Nora Doherty (she/they) - General Manager & Executive Director (GM/ED)

January 2022-present | full-time

Nora works with the board of directors to ensure we are equipped to meet the organization's goals. Nora oversees the organization's daily activities, including administration, program management, community engagement, and graphic design. Areas of oversight include regulatory compliance, strategic initiatives, financial performance, risk management, and administrative leadership.

As the designated Chief Operator, Nora is responsible for maintaining the health and operations of the analog and digital broadcast networks. When technical issues beyond their scope of knowledge arise, Nora is responsible for delegating assignments to consulting and contract technical broadcast engineers.

Miguel Vargas (he/him) - Program Director (PD)

2013-2014, November 2021-present | full-time

Miguel oversees the daily programming operations of 90.3FM, a 24/7/365 broadcast comprising 84 KFAI volunteer-produced programs in ten languages (Amharic, English, Farsi, Filipino, French, Somali, Spanish, Vietnamese, Oromo, and Tigrinya). Miguel and the GM/ED work together to ensure the broadcast schedule meets our mission to broadcast information, art, and entertainment that serves audiences of diverse racial, social, and economic backgrounds. Miguel works one-on-one with the program hosts to ensure they've got everything they need to make the radio you love.

Debra Gonsiorski (she/her) - Business Operations Manager

March 2013-present | full-time

Debbie oversees all transactional data related to vendor activity: accounts payable and receivable, invoice creation and tracking, donation receipts, web store purchases, donor acknowledgments, membership fulfillments, and bulk mailing.

Ellie Zimmerman (they/she) - Volunteer Coordinator

January 2024-present | part-time

As Volunteer Coordinator, Ellie aims to inspire, expand, engage, and retain our volunteer base.

KFAI also supports a small group of independent contractors. Today, we have Legacy Grant Manager Julie Censullo, Broadcast Engineer David Klann (Broadcast Tool and Die), Broadcast Engineer Dan Zimmerman (Diverse Communications), and Capacity-Building Consultant DA Bullock (Bully Creative).

Culture

KFAI nurtures a mission-centered workplace with generosity, adaptability, and compassion. Staff are accountable to one another, our volunteers, and themselves to benefit the community's wellness.

From the leadership level to the casual volunteer, we're committed to achieving community wellness through accessibility, dependability, mutuality, and collective action:

- **Accessibility:** sharing knowledge and maintaining safe spaces for healthy participation.
- **Dependability:** building trust by holding ourselves and each other accountable.
- **Mutuality:** sharing responsibilities, resources, and opportunities.
- **Collective Wellbeing:** holding safe and collaborative spaces to bridge gaps in understanding and work to create common ground.

Leadership Vision

- Capacity-building: developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes, and resources we need to survive, adapt, and thrive in an ever-changing world.
- Community strength: emphasizing difference as a community value.
- Community enrichment: fostering confidence and trust.

2024 Review

Staffing

On January 3, we welcomed Ellie Zimmerman to the staff as our new (part-time) Volunteer Coordinator. Ellie has been an excellent addition to the team and instrumental in growing and nurturing our off-air volunteer community.

On May 5, Mason Butler left his staff role to explore other opportunities.

As Chief Operator, I have dedicated my time to developing stable and well-informed processes where decisions are made based on a thorough understanding of relevant information. This effort has improved performance, reduced confusion, and opened pathways for making quality investments in our infrastructure.

All of the above is possible with the support of our contract engineers, whose guidance has given me confidence in assessing and understanding our needs and adapting to changing conditions.

This year, Debbie Gonsioroski celebrated a title change in her eleventh year with the organization. In August, Debbie went from Membership and Business Manager to Business Operations Manager, which included a pay raise commensurate with her added duties.

—

We continue searching for our next Development Manager, who will work closely with me and the Board of Directors. The role is divided into the following: (30%) Major Gifts and Planned Giving, (25%) Underwriting, (25%) Grants, (10%) Membership, and (10%) New Opportunities.

In the new year, we aim to increase support for the Program Director by launching a Program Department-specific internship, fellowship, or continuing education opportunity.

Volunteers

14,942 volunteer hours were logged by **233** volunteers, on and off air.

- We've held **9** new volunteer orientations and **3** volunteer social events.
- We trained **39** new volunteers and placed them in their areas of interest.
- **11** volunteers are newly board-certified.
- **6** main areas of emphasis, including **3** new and reignited initiatives: Aircheck (re-launching in 2025), Archives, Cart Crew, Front Desk, Music Library, and Website.

Lessons learned this year:

- We are slowly climbing out of the volunteer deficit left by the COVID-19 pandemic, but interest in volunteering is high; people inquire almost daily.
- We started the year with only **3** non-broadcast volunteer areas. As a result, we ran into some overloading issues—a broader array of volunteer areas helped to avoid that problem and appeal to more interests and skills.
- Volunteer retention is our biggest challenge. Changing work schedules and lack of consequence for missing shifts are likely drivers of this pattern, but how do we cope?

Membership

Individual Contributions: \$312,635.10

Membership Support: \$205,635.10

- 159 New Members
- 144 Returning Lapsed Members

Planned Giving: \$107,000.00

Membership Drive Insights

- Spring Drive Total: \$51,575.29 raised by 559 people
- Fall Drive Total: \$55,69.91 raised by 680 people
- Give to the Max Day: \$9,445 raised by 110 people

- 57 New Facebook Members contributed \$1,999.70
- 34 Returning Lapsed Facebook Members contributed \$1,193.59

- 109 Renewing Facebook Members Contributed \$5,111.80

Grants

Grant Revenue: \$456,161.13

2024 Grantors

Corporation for Public Broadcasting
 Minnesota Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund
 Minneapolis Foundation
 Saint Paul Minnesota Foundation
 The State of Minnesota

Underwriting & Community Partnerships

Underwriting Revenue: \$110,063.87

2024 Underwriters & Sponsors

Anoka-Ramsey Community College
 Bell Museum
 Bremer Bank
 CBT Minneapolis/Saint Paul
 Cedar Cultural Center
 Children's Theatre Company
 City of Saint Paul
 First Avenue & 7th Street Entry
 Hennepin County
 Health & Human Services
 Human Resources
 Elections
 Environment & Energy
 Pathways
 Hook & Ladder Theater
 Juxtaposition Arts
 Live Nation Entertainment
 Metro County
 Minneapolis College
 Minnesota State Parks & Trails
 Nobool Presents
 NorthPoint Health & Wellness
 The Ordway
 Ramsey County
 Community & Economic Development
 Elections
 Library
 Parks & Recreation
 Social Services
 Workforce Solutions

2024 Community Partners

Afghan Cultural Society
 Aliveness Project
 Ampers
 American Indian Family Center
 Asian Media Access
 Augsburg University
 Barely Brothers Records
 Black Nurses Rock Foundation
 Brian Coyle Neighborhood Center
 Cedar Cultural Center
 Cedar Riverside Community Council
 Center for Economic Inclusion
 Children's Minnesota
 Dual Citizen Brewing
 Dusty's Bar & Grill
 Drone Not Drones
 The Electric Fetus
 Hmong Public Health Association (HPHA)
 Insight Brewing
 Hook and Ladder Theater
 KRSM-LP
 Mill City Sound
 Minneapolis Central Library
 Minneapolis Public Schools
 Minnesota Department of Health
 Minnesota Historical Society
 Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center
 Minnesota Record Collectors Show
 Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition
 National Federation of Community Broadcasters

Saint Paul Public Library
Science Museum of Minnesota
Seward Community Co-op Franklin
Seward Neighborhood Group
State of Minnesota
 Department of Education
 Department of Health
 Department of Human Rights
 Department of Human Services
 Department of Labor and Industry
 Department of Public Safety
 Department of Transportation
Target Center
Trellis/Minnesota Board on Aging
The University of Minnesota
 Masonic Cancer Center

Native Roots Radio
Our Streets
Parkway Theater
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center
Quatrefoil Library
Ramsey County Landmark Center
Rare Productions
Seward Community Co-op (Franklin)
Tamu Grill & Catering
Twin Cities Medical Society
Twin Cities Skaters
West Bank Business Association
WFNU-LP
The Wienery
Youthprise

Other Revenue: \$115,691.21

- Vehicle Donations: \$10,043.64 (25 individuals)
- Webstore: \$1,817.00

Program Department

Snapshot

- In addition to the Wave Project’s weekly efforts to produce content with first-time broadcast participants and content creators outside of the KFAI community, our special 24-hour programming observances featured more than forty (40) new programming contributions from the Twin Cities community (new-to-KFAI, non-volunteers/members).
- KFAI sponsored/co-sponsored over 240 events at partner venues across the Twin Cities in 2024.
- KFAI conducted (7) eight remote [on location] broadcasts.

Detailed Summary

New Programs

- **October:** AVAZ with Atefa Tasavoli on Sundays from 11 to noon. AVAZ is the first Afghan community radio program in Minnesota.

Program Departures

- **October:** Soul Audible Detox with VP and the Prez (WFNU-LP)
We said farewell after a years-long KFAI residency, making way for AVAZ on Sunday morning.

“KFAI Presents...” Media Sponsorships

- KFAI sponsored and co-sponsored over 240 events in 2024. Here’s a highlight of some of our partner venues like 331 Club, The Cedar Cultural Center, The Dakota Jazz Club, Dusty’s Bar, First Avenue, The Hook & Ladder, The Parkway Theater, Palmer’s Bar, and more!
- BIG THANKS to The Cart Crew and Bill Hansen (ROAR), who played critical roles in the production of our sponsorship carts.
 - The Cart Crew, led by Bob Ernt, Mike Frigon, and Thom Whetston, has produced over 270 promotional carts for sponsorships with weekly volunteer voice talents!
- Thank you to the program hosts for staying up on local events. Shoutouts to Abbi Allan, Tom Wollenberg, Kenna Cottman, Ellen Stanley, Dan Rein, Umar Malik, Fred Posine, Harold Tremblay, and Sean Lipscomb, who played critical roles in how we honored the artists and venues.
- Last, A BIG thanks to the volunteers and ticket winners who attended the shows!

Remote Broadcasts

- January 26 - DRONE NOT DRONES at The Cedar Cultural Center
- April 24 - Radio Pocho - Live From Palmer’s Bar
- June 25 - Write On Radio - Live From Grey Duck Tavern, St. Paul
- July 14 - Bonjour MN - Bastille Day Celebration
- August 28 & 29 - Live at the Minnesota State Fair
- September 8 - African Rhythms - Imagine Cedarfest
- November 21 - Funkraiser - Dual Citizen Brewery

2024 Special Programming Events

- Drone Not Drones: 24-Hour Special Broadcast Event in Support of Doctors Without Borders
- Celebrating Black History Month - Saturday, February 3, coordinated by Kenna Cottman
- Celebrating International Women’s Day - Friday, March 8, coordinated by Quinn Villagomez & Nora Doherty
- Metal Meltdown VI - Thursday, May 23, coordinated by Elena Erfoeva & Bill Hansen Celebrating
- Pride - Thursday, June 27, coordinated by Quinn Villagomez with Rox Anderson, Jason Bucklin, and Raquelle Lenoir
- Celebrating Ethiopian New Year - Sunday, September 15, curated by Atnafu Yeshidagne & Sewit Woldegiorgis
- Celebrating Latine Culture - Tuesday, October 1, coordinated by Lariza Estrada & Miguel Vargas
- Turtle Island: Voices Rising - Monday, November 11, coordinated by the community
- The Funkraiser (Give to the Max Day) - Thursday, November 21, coordinated by the community

Broadcast & Network Systems

Continued support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and increased support from the State of Minnesota through the Ampers General Fund (Community Service and Equipment Grant) have allowed us to replace aging production equipment and critical broadcast and network infrastructure.

Our systems have stabilized through consistent, responsive, and strategic decision-making when upgrading and updating equipment and programs.

As I mentioned, I have dedicated considerable time to developing stable, well-informed processes. This intentionality has improved performance and increased stability across departments, staff, contractors, and vendors.

All of this is possible with the support of our contract engineers, whose guidance has instilled confidence in my ability to assess our needs and adapt to changing conditions. Additionally, I've pressed our vendors to provide the support outlined in our contract agreements, and the clarity and collaboration have made a tremendous difference in our ability to keep systems operating smoothly.

Notable improvement:

- We replaced the archive.kfai.org DNS server. The capture of archival content has stabilized, and the audio quality [of the live stream and the archived files] continues to be flawless.
- We uninstalled out-of-service equipment at the IDS.
- Equipment configurations in the engineering bay continue to improve... a work in progress.

Finance

In-depth details are included in the Treasurer's Report.

MinneCulture (Minnesota Legacy Funding)

What we published in FY24:

- **10,000 Fresh Voices** (4-6 min) - Thirty (30) stories for distribution via all major podcast platforms, plus KFAI.org, SoundCloud, PRX, and social media. Four stories by new producers.
- **MinneCulture Podcast** (12-20 min) - 8 episodes for distribution via all major podcast platforms, plus broadcast, KFAI.org, SoundCloud, PRX, and social media.
- **MinneCulture In-Depth** (30-60 min) - 3 segments featuring scarcely told Minnesota moments.
- **Live from Minnesota** - 1 presentation (video + audio) for broadcast and web audiences.

Social media metrics:

- The MinneCulture Facebook posts reached 139,700 people in 2024
- The MinneCulture Instagram posts reached 38,200 in 2024
- Our median post engagement (likes, comments, shares) is 900 in 2024

Other successes:

Minnesota Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Page One Award Placements:

<https://www.mnspj.org/2024/06/18/mnspj-2024-page-one-awards-winners/>

- **2nd place: Feature Reporting** - Julie Censullo, "[Rudos in the ring, técnico in the community](#)"
- **2nd place: Podcast** - Tony Williams, Kira Schukar, Emily Haavik, Julie Censullo, "[MinneCulture](#)"

Minnesota Department of Health (Diverse Media Grant)

The Diverse Media Grant opportunity was sunset in July 2024.

From Fall 2020 to July 2024, we highlighted, featured, and celebrated individuals and communities whose work bridged the gaps between access, equity, and quality service for all Minnesotans.

So far, we're fulfilling our mission by producing segments capturing the experiences of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ community members. Nearly all of the featured guests were first-time radio participants.

Community Advisory Board (CAB)

The CAB operates as an advisory body independent of the Board of Directors. It may have other responsibilities delegated to it by the station or its governing body. It does not exercise control over the station's daily management or operation. The CAB's insights help KFAI elevate our methods of community responsiveness and build new pathways to meet the educational and informational needs of the people we serve.

KFAI's unique programming demonstrates the power of community media by creating positive, equitable change in the media landscape and beyond. CAB participants will help map KFAI's strategic and financial goals to meet our mission at all levels of the organization, from governance to ground-level community engagement, and see to it that we honor our commitment to amplifying the voices, music, stories, and perspectives of our community's most marginalized, such as identities within the imperial/colonial and trade diasporas and the LGBTQIA and Two-Spirit communities.

KFAI has been doing some deep work the last several years to recenter our mission, vision, and values with diversity, equity, inclusion, and access at the center to increase the effectiveness of our cultural, environmental, health, and economic justice work and bridge cross-cultural and multigenerational divides.

Last year's full-scale effort to recast the Community Advisory Board resulted in diminishing returns. This year, we dug into dense topics about how to help guide our work and partner with others to grow our local network of like-minded partners. As a part of this process, we've hired Bully Creative CEO and Founder, DA Bullock, to assist us in our commitment to the mission and build capacity for the work ahead.

Community Core Building

At the February Board Meeting (Monday, February 26, 2024), I announced that my work with DA Bullock started this month and provided a sketch of our initial conversation, which included the following:

- Interest in growing support, promotion, and development of alternative, representative, participatory, and collaborative media/journalism practices within the KFAI organization.
- Consult about evolving the operational definition of community media for this organization.

- Asses the integration between board, staff, and community advisory board.
- Audit policies and procedures.
- Audit strategic planning process.

At the March board meeting (Monday, March 25, 2024), I provided the draft of the scope of work:

- Refine and redefine roles: staff, board, and volunteers
 - Survey the history of group dynamics, concentrating on areas of growth/challenges
 - Foster cross-collaboration through assignments that excite and challenge
 - Seek new ways to foster follow-through, accountability, and trust
 - Adopt and uphold do-no-harm interventions; seek resources and measure impact.
 - Communicate needs, offload when appropriate, and value accountability.
- Grow our network of stakeholders
 - Grow the pool of community partners
 - Create opportunities for community partners to connect
 - Diversification of funding sources
- Community safety on-site: Cedar-Riverside/West Bank
 - Improve community connections and communications to maintain the safety of our volunteers, staff, and visitors.

At the April Board Meeting (Monday, April 22, 2024), I presented four core concentrations:

1. **Work and Volunteer Culture**

- Overview of past & present challenges as a multicultural and multigenerational organization.
- Establishing Community Agreements through the lens of the following values:
 - Spiritual Wellness: expanding our sense of purpose.
 - Emotional Wellness: adapting to maintain effectiveness through challenges.
 - Physical Wellness: maintaining a healthy quality of life.
 - Social Wellness: sustaining healthy, supportive, and nurturing relationships.

2. **Policies and Procedures**

- Review the strategic planning goals, vision, and organization by-laws.

3. **Areas of Healing and Growth**

- Review and reimagine volunteer culture and responsibility. Establish accountability structure and organizing principles that align with KFAI's mission, goals, and administrative/leadership capacity.
- Co-creating community agreements.
- Design a framework for mediation and conflict resolution.

4. **Building Capacity**

- Sustaining the ecosystem.

At the May Board Meeting (Monday, May 26, 2024), I presented the following highlights of what's been accomplished: ● Narrative summary of expenses using KFAI's FY22 990 as the reference point. The summary was shared with staff, contractors, and select volunteers for feedback and presented during last month's board meeting. ● Updated and expanded description of staff and i/c duties and contact details at kfai.org. ● Designed the KFAI organizational chart and posted it to kfai.org. ● Created clear and

direct pathways to the monthly General Manager’s Report from multiple starting points on the website and via Mailchimp. ● Weekly staff check-ins focused on emergent to-do and the week’s goals. ● Bi-weekly staff and contractor meetings focused on departmental insights, strategic planning, and cross-departmental collaboration.

At the June and July Board Meetings, I presented the following progress report:

Creating Community Connections: DA and I have developed a process for the next phase of this work. He has the volunteer contact sheet and will connect with various volunteers to capture preliminary community insights before developing the first draft of KFAI community agreements.

Once this phase is complete, we’ll schedule a Circle Discussion. Circles are characterized by a controlled process in which both talking and listening are essential because mutual understanding lays the groundwork for deeper, more meaningful discussion—more soon.

At the September and October Board Meetings, I presented the following progress report:

Areas of Healing & Growth: The information-gathering part of phase 3 is still underway - DA is scheduling 1:1 meetings with volunteers and staff members. The 1:1 sessions are centered on the individual’s personal and organizational insights regarding past and present experiences within the organization.

To develop a thriving KFAI “eco-system” that creates trust, is diverse, equitable, inclusive, and values its members, KFAI’s Board of Directors worked independently with Restorative Justice Community Action and received the following recommendations based on what was gleaned in the conversations by the consultants and participants. The KFAI directives already underway are [noted in blue-green](#).

- Work with a third-party organization/facilitator with expertise in the field to develop KFAI-specific Community Agreements (CA)/institutional norms that should be in place and enforceable. [\[The work started: 3/2024\]](#)
- Budget transparency between the board, staff, and volunteers. [\[The work started: 10/2023\]](#)
- Get to know one another: More interaction between the board, staff, and volunteers. [\[The work started: 1/3/2024, coinciding with the Volunteer Coordinator’s hiring\]](#)
- When appropriate, allow for more collaboration opportunities amongst all stakeholders. [\[This is already embedded in our work\]](#)
- Create a well-defined onboarding process for volunteers to understand better what it takes to be a successful contributor. [\[Work started: 3/2024\]](#)
- Uphold and enforce the Code of Conduct (Community Standards) equally for all stakeholders and promptly address issues. [\[Work started: 3/2024\]](#)
- The Board of Directors continues to diversify and reflect the demographics of station volunteers. [\[In progress and on-going\]](#)
- Create space for stakeholders to have a voice in envisioning the KFAI ecosystem. [\[In progress and on-going\]](#)

This year's work brings us back to center and affirms the quality of our intentions as we head into Strategic Planning in 2025.

- Programming and interpersonal wholeness through:
 - **Spiritual Wellness:** expanding our sense of purpose
 - **Emotional Wellness:** adapting to maintain focus and effectiveness through challenges
 - **Physical Wellness:** maintaining a healthy quality of life.
 - **Social Wellness:** sustaining healthy, supportive, and nurturing relationships.
- From the leadership level to the casual volunteer, community wellness is achievable through accountability and includes the following values:
 - **Accessibility:** sharing knowledge and maintaining safe spaces for healthy participation.
 - **Dependability:** building trust by holding ourselves and each other accountable.
 - **Mutuality:** sharing responsibilities, resources, and opportunities.
 - **Collective Wellbeing:** holding safe and collaborative spaces to bridge gaps in understanding and work to create common ground.

–

Thank you for your continued support; we look forward to the year ahead!



Nora Doherty
General Manager & Executive Director
KFAI Fresh Air Community Radio, Minneapolis & Saint Paul
1808 Riverside Avenue #300, Minneapolis, MN 55454
O: 612-887-4400 | D: 612-887-4343
nora@kfai.org | gm@kfai.org