

**The WBEZ Alliance, Inc.**  
**(Licensee of WBEZ-FM, WBEQ-FM, and WBEW-FM)**

**OUTREACH ACTIVITIES and INITIATIVES, 2006-2007**

**Outreach Activity/Initiative # 1. Vocalo.org Community Outreach and WBEZ Internship Program.** In connection with the development of a new program service (called Vocalo.org), The WBEZ Alliance, Inc. (“WBEZ Alliance”) undertook a city-wide community-based outreach effort to determine community needs and receptivity to a new focus in noncommercial radio. One major component of these outreach efforts, which spanned the license year from August 2006 through the present, involved “talent scouting,” to develop a diverse and community-based staff for the new service, including on-air talent. This unique initiative, developed and implemented by the WBEZ Alliance (with the aid of outside consultants as well as several members of its own staff), should probably be classified as falling under subsection (xvi) of Rule 73.2080(c)(2) because of its unique and creative nature; however, elements of the initiative would also satisfy either subsections (v) (establishing an internship program for members of the community), (ix) (establishing a mentorship program), and/or (xi) (sponsoring at least two community events to inform the public about employment opportunities in broadcasting).

**Background and Overview of Outreach Effort.** Having recognized that its audience (both core and occasional) was overwhelmingly white (91%), with only 5 % African-American and 4% Latino listeners, the WBEZ Alliance determined that, as a public radio station, it should develop a second program service that would meet the needs of a broader population in the Chicago community, which is 19% African American, 17% Latino, and 5% Asian-American. After expanding its Board of Directors to better reflect Chicago’s diverse population, the WBEZ Alliance board and management decided to begin comprehensive outreach efforts in order to take the pulse of the community and determine what type of program service would best meet its needs. In the spring of 2007, WBEZ Alliance management and staff began these community outreach efforts, which involved a series of community events, open production meetings, the formation of informal partnerships with cultural workers and arts organizations throughout the Chicago area, as well as liaison and workshops with community-based media outlets, other community-based organizations, and community opinion leaders.

**Details of Outreach Initiative.** The majority of the community events mentioned above were held or hosted in communities and neighborhoods in Chicago where the majority of residents were members of racial or ethnic minority-groups. The specific efforts included at least three community parties/events held at music/dance clubs (with attendance ranging from 70 to 220 persons), two of which were held at *Sonothèque* in the Ukrainian Village neighborhood and one at *Room 43* in Kenwood/Bronzeville, a predominantly African-American neighborhood. Eight open production meetings (with an average attendance of 10-20 persons each) were held,

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one each in the following locations and neighborhoods: the Silver Room in Wicker Park, the South Shore Cultural Center in the South Shore area, the Medici Café in Hyde Park, the Youth Services Project in Humboldt Park, the Cobra Lounge in the West Loop area, the Little Black Pearl in Kenwood/Hyde Park, the Hot House in the South Loop area, and the Smart Bar in Wrigleyville. Informal partnerships were created with over 20 community cultural and arts organizations, including Radio Arte, Sonotheque, the Muntu Dance Theatre, Street Level Youth Media, and Young Chicago Authors, and with numerous community-based media outlets (both web-based and print), including the Community Media Workshop, the L.I.S.C. Group, Bean Soup Times, and the Chicago Reporter. By the time the project was concluded, the WBEZ Alliance had initiated, contacted and begun constructive communication with over 60 community based organizations and opinion leaders, including the Youth Services Project, the Southwest Youth Collaborative, Young Chicago Authors, and 826CHI.

**Employment Outreach.** As noted above, during the course of the above-described initiative and outreach, two new employees were ultimately hired by the WBEZ Alliance as on-air hosts to staff its new Vocolo.org program service. Two other Vocolo.org staff members hired in 2007 are former WBEZ interns, once again demonstrating the success of WBEZ's internship program as an outreach source for recruiting employees from diverse backgrounds. WBEZ Alliance employees who were involved in the Vocolo.org outreach and fellowship include Kedar Coleman, Senior Partnership Liaison, and George Lara, Director of Internships and Mentorships.

**Outreach Activity #2. Vocolo.org "Bootcamp" Program.** In total, eight new staff members were recruited in 2007 to staff the new Vocolo.org program service, including the interns mentioned in connection with Outreach Activity #1. Once hired, however, these eight staffers were enrolled in a two-week in-house mentoring program, internally known as the "Vocolo.org Bootcamp," to train them in the use of radio equipment, production, editing, news gathering, and web-based skills. The "Bootcamp" participants were given assignments which would eventually be used on-air and went through an intensive training and critique process involving several members of the WBEZ Alliance production and news staff. Vanessa Harris, Production Coordinator, and George Lara, Director of Internships and Mentorships, were the WBEZ employees in charge of the program.

**Outreach Activity/Initiative # 3. Diversity in Communications Program.** Diversity in Communications is a university-based program that provides diverse sophomores and juniors at Chicago- area universities, including the University of Chicago, DePaul University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, the opportunity to learn more about business-related opportunities at media and other communications companies located in Chicago. The Diversity in Communications program provided students who are interested in a career in advertising, public relations or journalism the opportunity to visit two out of ten Chicago companies within these industries, including three in advertising, three in public relations, and four media outlets, including The WBEZ Alliance, Inc. The “Diversity in Communication” program provides students with opportunities to learn about various business sectors in Chicago, explore possible career paths, and develop potential networks.

The Diversity in Communications event, which was scheduled for February 2007, also serves as an opportunity for participating media and communications companies to showcase recruiting opportunities to talented and motivated undergraduate students. Up to fifteen students from each participating university were chosen to be part of the event. Each student spent a morning session at one company or station and the afternoon at another. The day concluded with a reception and networking event, where students had the opportunity to meet representatives from many of the day’s participating companies.

This initiative is of the type described in subsection (x) of Rule 73.2080(c)(2).

**Participation by the WBEZ Alliance.** The WBEZ Alliance, Inc., along with other local media organizations such as CBS Chicago, NBC Chicago, Q101 101.FM, and The Loop 97.9 FM, participated in the 2007 Diversity in Communications program, hosting students for this University of Chicago-sponsored Diversity in Communications event. On February 16, 2007, the students received tours of the station and then had the opportunity to hear presentations from WBEZ’s reporter Sonari Ginton, producers Steve Bynum and Ayana Contreras, Senior Partnership Liaison and Marketing Coordinator Kedar Coleman, and Vice-President of Programming Ron Jones on subjects related to careers in journalism or broadcasting. A presentation about WBEZ’s extensive internship program (which has been described in prior WBEZ EEO Annual Reports and which was offered every year, including the 2006-2007 license year), was also provided for the students, along with a question and answer session during which students had the opportunity to interact with WBEZ staff to find out more about careers in broadcasting. George Lara, Director of Internships at WBEZ, hosted the event. The entire presentation at WBEZ’s studio/office was presented twice, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.