The WBEZ Alliance, Inc.
(Licensee of WBEZ-FM, WBEQ-FM, and WBEW-FM)
EEO Annual Report, 2007-2008

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES and INITIATIVES, 2007-2008

Outreach Activity/Initiative # 1: PRNDI Regional Training Workshop (April 24 - 26, 2008). WBEZ partnered with the Public Radio News Directors, Inc. ("PRNDI"), and served as the host site for the first Regional Training Workshop conducted by PRNDI. Under the overall direction of WBEZ Managing Editor, Sally Eisele, WBEZ Senior Editor Julia McEvoy worked with PRNDI trainers Tanya Ott and Michael Marcotte for the workshop, which is considered a "bootcamp" in public radio news feature production. Sally Eisele, Managing Editor, was in charge of the PRNDI program.

Description of Activity: Thirteen reporters from public radio stations in various Midwest states were selected to participate in the workshop, including two reporters from WBEZ. Topics covered included selecting and framing stories and topics, story and script visioning, writing well, and editing. The purpose of the workshop was to assist both inexperienced and somewhat-more experienced radio journalists to learn about these important aspects of radio journalism from PRNDI and WBEZ experts, with the aim of improving the skills and furthering the career path of the participants. The workshop lasted two full days and covered every stage of news reporting for radio, beginning with story assignment and development to research, working with sources, interviews, writing, editing, and technical aspects of radio reporting. The WBEZ workshop was the first of what PRNDI plans to become a regular series of training opportunities in reporting and editing for radio news that will be offered around the country to public radio journalists. WBEZ was pleased to be able to make this first workshop possible and believes it will be a valuable resource for public radio journalists interested in improving their skills. (This fits Outreach Categories #8, #9 in § 73.2080 of the FCC Rules.

Outreach Activity/Initiative #2: Vocalo.org is The WBEZ Alliance's new program service which is broadcast on WBEW(FM) and live-streamed on the www.vocalo.org website. The Vocalo.org staff has developed a community outreach program to teach members of the community how to produce programs for radio. The program is called the "Make Your Own Audio" Workshops. These workshops were conducted primarily by Vocalo.org employees Dan Weissman and Tom Herman, both of whom are Hosts/Producers, under the over all direction of Breeze Richardson, whose job title is Director of Strategic Partnerships.

Description of Program. Vocalo.org is produced as a type of interactive media with its audience, which is encouraged to produce and post commentary and programs onto the website and to provide such programming and commentary for on-air use. Community members can provide messages, commentary, or stories to be broadcast by telephone or online. The "Make Your Own Audio" training sessions are being offered in order to teach the basics of audio production for radio to those members of the community who wish to acquire such skills.

Community members can then upload music, interviews, or commentary to the website, some of which will be utilized during live broadcasts on WBEW.

The program format Vocalo.org is based upon a belief that public conversation can help make people better citizens. Over the course of the past year Vocalo.org has conducted fourteen"Make Your Own Audio" Workshops. Workshop locations ranged from Little Black Pearl, a community-based non-profit organization located in the Bronzeville neighborhood, to the Street Level Youth Media site located in West Town to the Westside Health Authority office, to Compy School, a local computer-related educational entity that has offices and classroom space in the Northside neighborhood of Chicago. In each of these training sessions, a highly diverse group of participants from the community learned the basics of producing radio programs and features, as well as practical knowledge related to getting material played on air. In order to keep radio-production accessible to all, including low-income listeners, the staff members taught editing using free software. The staff also shared a unique Vocalo.org software program that allows people to record their audio for airplay by using telephones. By the end of the workshops, participants had each produced pieces using materials that many of them had at home. One participant – a self-described "African-American conservative" – wrote that he had learned "he could really have a voice."

To date, a total of one hundred and eight people have participated in these training workshops, which have reached a highly diverse group of people. Of those participants that responded to questions regarding race/ethnicity, 36% identified themselves as African-American, 31% identified themselves as white, 18% identified themselves as Hispanic, and 14% identified themselves as "other" (including Asian). Workshop participants went on to create material for Vocalo.org, and some even came to the studio to participate in the broadcast of their content. In addition to these "Make Your Own Audio" workshops, Vocalo.org has provided specially-tailored training sessions at numerous local high schools, after- school programs, and at the Peace Center in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood.

(This outreach initiative potentially fits within each of the following categories under § 73.2080 of the FCC Rules: #4, #5, #10, or #11. It could also be categorized as #16 – a unique community-outreach initiative designed by the licensee to disseminate information to listeners and other community members about producing content for broadcast and to teach community members the skills needed for work in the broadcasting field.)