

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT FY 2017

1. Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station's vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.

The overall goal of WAMC/Northeast Public Radio is to provide programming as varied as the human experience. Our mission is to serve the public by preparing and presenting non-profit and non-commercial educational, instructional and cultural radio and live programs that celebrate the diversity of our broadcast and live audience. Our two discrete program schedules and Internet streams provide a unique blend of national and regional news and information, opinion and commentary, artistic, cultural, and musical programming. 28 translators and transmitters serve listeners in portions of seven northeastern states, serving over 520,000 monthly listeners, as reported by the Spring, 2017 Neilson Audio Survey.

Recognizing the reality of media consolidation, the scarcity of substantive local radio news services, the dearth of opportunities for cultural venues to promote the work they do, and the fundamental necessity of having an informed citizenry, we are committed not only to our cities of licensure but to the broader, regional community we serve. We have news bureaus in the Capital District (Albany, NY), the North Country (Plattsburgh, NY), the Pioneer Valley (Springfield, MA), the Berkshires (Pittsfield, MA), the Hudson Valley (Poughkeepsie, NY) and the Southern Adirondacks (Saratoga Springs, New York).

In addition to our local presence on *Morning Edition*, we air 18 regional newscasts daily, a one hour, magazine format program at noon and half-hour regional news programs at 3:30 and 6:00 pm.

One way in which WAMC determines the issues most vital to our listeners is through our annual Ascertainment Survey, which helps to guide our news coverage over the coming year. This long-standing survey examines organizational leaders' opinions on a set of pre-selected issues. The top five issues across counties for FY 2017 (1) The Environment, (2) Health Care, (3) the Quality of Education, (4) Race Relations, and (5) Women's Issues.

We also invite listener participation in our Community Advisory Board, which reviews our programming and makes recommendations to our Board of Trustees. We offer ample opportunity for listener engagement through a twenty-four hour Listener Comment Line, inviting reaction to any of our programs. All comments that are appropriate for broadcast are aired weekly, including comments that may be critical of the station. Our afternoon phone-in program, *Vox Pop*, sparks listener discussion on a variety of subjects, through social media as well as on-air conversation. Open forums result in wide-ranging discussions and Monday's *Medical Monday Vox Pop* enables listeners to speak directly to physicians in any number of specialties. During FY 2017, listening to our morning Roundtable Panel increased dramatically. This discussion of the events in the news invites listener feedback via e-mail, much of which is read on-air. WAMC has an extensive web presence at <http://www.wamc.org>, providing Internet streaming of WAMC and WAMC-HD 2, offering podcasts or on-demand listening for many of our programs and integrating our on-air and on-line communities through social media.

We have developed numerous media, educational, performance venue and community partnerships, some of which will be detailed below. These offer everything from free housing for our news bureaus to valuable music programming to free or greatly reduced rents for station-related events. We broadcast our flagship Roundtable program regularly from the Boston Symphony Orchestra's summer home at Tanglewood, and at other venues across our listening area. Several of our colleagues in the broadcast and print media are regular panelists on a number of WAMC programs.

In addition to the over 2000 hours of locally produced programming WAMC broadcast during FY 2017, The Linda (WAMC's Performing Arts Studio) offered live lectures, concerts films and more, many of which were broadcast regionally. Programming included world, folk and popular music, jazz, films, comedy, lectures, forums and debates. We continue to establish partnerships with a growing number of local, neighborhood arts and community organizations to bring special events to the community.

2. Describe key initiatives and the variety of partners with whom you collaborated, including other public media outlets, community nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, the business community, teachers and parents, etc. This will illustrate the many ways you're connected across the community and engaged with other important organizations in the area.

WAMC's partnerships with community collaborators have been crucial to the success of our work. Among our key initiatives are:

*** Our Fund Drive Partnerships**

Over the years, like many other public broadcasters, WAMC has offered thank-you gifts to our donors for specific pledge amounts. In an effort to help other community organizations and offer a different kind of "thank you" to our donors, we have begun partnering with various local and national organizations. When listeners call in with their pledge, instead of offering them a CD, coffee mug or tote bag, we are able to give them the opportunity to help someone else.

For example, during the October 2016 fund drive, WAMC partnered with the Food Pantries of the Capital District. During a pre-determined period of time, each \$100.00 pledge the station received triggered a donation of 125 pounds of food to the regional food pantry by MVP, a local health care provider, and the Seymour Fox Foundation. Thanks to the generosity of these two funders and WAMC listeners, we provided 229,750 pounds of food to the food insecure in our region.

In February of 2017, WAMC joined with the Seymour Fox Foundation to provide necessary services to the homeless through Joseph's House and Shelter. Each \$100 pledge to WAMC triggered a donation from the Seymour Fox Memorial Foundation that made it possible for three homeless people to stay at Joseph's House emergency shelter for one night. The services there included a warm and safe place to sleep, three meals, access to personal care, access to medical and dental care, legal services and other support services to help them stay off the street. In all, 1,293 night of shelter were donated.

Also in February 2017, WAMC partnered with the Seymour Fox Foundation to provide a one month supply of diapers to a baby in need. The Food Pantries of the Capital District purchased and distributed the diapers. A total of 943 babies received a one month supply of diapers through this partnership.

During the February 2017 and June 2017 fund drives, WAMC joined with the Adirondack Council to offer carbon reduction certificates. In all, WAMC helped to retire 413 tons of carbon emissions.

During the June 2017 fund drive, WAMC joined with the Seymour Fox Foundation to provide personal hygiene items to the Food Pantries of the Capital District. In all, 797 sets of personal hygiene items were provided.

By offering listeners these opportunities to leverage their pledge dollars and help not only their public radio station but people in need in their communities, we have facilitated vital connections between various organizations, to the mutual good of all.

*** Arts, Culture, Politics and more on *The Roundtable*:**

WAMC's morning program, *The Roundtable*, is a daily 3 hour live program committed not only to strong and in-depth coverage of world affairs but also to keeping listeners informed about what's going on in their communities. The show's hallmark is thoughtful interviews with A-list newsmakers, authors, artists, sports figures, actors, and people with interesting stories to tell.

The program begins with a 90 minute panel discussion about the news of the day with a regional slant provided by host Joe Donahue and WAMC President and CEO Alan Chartock, and one or more guests to round out the panel. Representatives of the educational community, the LGBTQ community, the African American community and local journalists have been on hand to participate and listeners weigh in on the topics through e-mail.

Each day on *The Roundtable*, WAMC features a *Congressional Corner* segment affording listeners an opportunity to hear directly from their representative about issues that are of most concern to them. Every Member of Congress and/or United States Senator who represents any geographical area within WAMC's broadcast range is invited to appear. Here is the current list:

John Faso, R, NY-19, Sean Patrick Maloney, D, NY-18, Eliot Engel, D, NY-16, Nita Lowey, D, NY-17, Paul Tonko, D, NY-20, Elise Stefanik, R, NY-21, Richard Neal, D, MA-1, Jim McGovern, D, MA-2, Elizabeth Esty, D, CT-5, Joe Courtney, D, CT-2, Sen. Chris Murphy, D, CT, and Peter Welch, D. VT-at-large.

*** Outstanding Regional News Programming**

-- We hosted a debate between John Faso and Zephyr Teachout for New York's open 19th Congressional District seat and a live panel discussion on the future of the Hudson River.

-- We spent months preparing a special week-long series on veterans, with a specific focus on the dwindling population of World War II vets. <http://wamc.org/term/veterans-series-2016>

-- We also, of course, were busy with election coverage and offered continued coverage of water contamination in our region.

*** Educational Partnerships**

WAMC's daily module, *The Academic Minute*, features researchers from colleges and universities around the world, keeping listeners abreast of what's new and exciting in academia. *The Academic Minute* features a different professor each day, drawing experts from top national and international institutions.

WAMC maintains an active internship program offering both part-time and full-time internships to area college students interested in journalism, radio production, communications, administration, and media

sales. Students spend their internships receiving hands on training at the station and have become an integral part of our operation.

WAMC has solid relationships with regional colleges and universities, frequently featuring professors as commentators and experts on our local and national programs. We partner with several colleges to offer journalism students hands-on training in news gathering in their own region. Three of WAMC's senior staff members teach university-level courses in Communications and Journalism at local colleges and universities.

3. What impact did your key initiatives and partnerships have in your community? Describe any known measurable impact, such as increased awareness, learning or understanding about particular issues. Describe indicators of success, such as connecting people to needed resources or strengthening conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods. Did a partner see an increase in requests for related resources? Please include direct feedback from a partner(s) or from a person(s) served

The impact of our initiatives can be seen in the unprecedented success of our fund-raising, the measurable success of our fund-drive partnerships, the scores of awards we have received, and the growth in our online community as evidenced by increases across the board in page views, visitors to live audio and video streams, Twitter and Facebook followers, online contributions, and users of our mobile applications. Anecdotal evidence also comes from specific feedback from listeners, both throughout the year via their online e-mails and comments, and during our on-air fund-raising campaigns when they are invited to comment on our programming.

The interest in the panel discussion that comprised the first hour of The Roundtable was so great during this recent election year that we extended the conversation by another thirty minutes. We field far more requests for community organizations to appear on the program than we can possibly accommodate. Those we cannot feature are invited to post to our online community calendar.

Awards:

During FY 2017 WAMC received awards from:

Regional Murrow Award for continuing coverage of water contamination in the Northeast in 2016.

New York State Broadcasters Association: Best Local Newscast for Midday Magazine and Northeast Report; Best Feature Story for A Lost Marine Returned Home

AP Awards from the 2016 New York State Associated Press Association: Investigative Reporting: Allison Dunne, WAMC-FM Albany, "Stewart ANG Base Becomes a Superfund"; Continuing Coverage: Lucas Willard and Allison Dunne, WAMC-FM Albany, "Northeast Communities Grapple with Water Pollution." Public Service: WAMC-FM Albany, "New York 19th Congressional District Debate"; Staff Feature: Jim Levulis, WAMC-FM, Albany, "Mount Greylock Gets International Fame for a Spell"; News Series: Staff, WAMC-FM Albany, "WAMC Veterans Series." Sports Coverage: Jim Levulis, WAMC-FM Albany, "Steeped in Baseball History, Exhibit Celebrates Berkshires' Influences on the Game"; Paul Tuthill, WAMC-FM Albany, "In Springfield, a Year of Hockey Highs and Lows." Use of Sound: Lucas Willard, WAMC-FM Albany, "Before the Gates Open at Saratoga Race Course." Newscast: Staff, WAMC-FM Albany

Massachusetts Broadcasters Association Awards: Sports Feature, Radio, Merit “1980 Miracle on Ice Scoreboard Decommissioned”; Feature Story, Radio, Merit; “Veterans Series: Adams’ Ski Troop

Fund Raising:

WAMC’s three annual fund drives bear witness to the station’s success – listeners contributed over \$3 million dollars during FY 2017 in support of the station’s work and underwriting by area businesses and organizations also exceeded \$3 million. During pledge drives, listeners have the opportunity to tell us exactly what they like – and what they don’t like – about WAMC. All of their comments are read on-air.

Fund Drive Partnerships:

Our cause-driven fund drive partnerships have, in particular, drawn an incredible response from both our partners and from our listeners who are enthusiastic in their response. Hundreds of callers made it a point to tell their volunteer that they thought the partnerships were the best kind of fund raising and the best “premiums” we ever offered. We continue to reach out to other organizations for fund drive partnerships and are able to feature two or three during each drive.

4. Please describe any efforts (e.g. programming, production, engagement activities) you have made to investigate and/or meet the needs of minority and other diverse audiences (including, but not limited to, new immigrants, people for whom English is a second language and illiterate adults) during Fiscal Year 2017, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2018. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language.

WAMC’s daily locally produced news magazines and call-in programs regularly cover issues of relevance to minority groups including people of color, women, children, and people with disabilities and our subject-specific public affairs programs which are distributed nationally to other public radio stations free-of-charge also address minority and diverse audience needs.

The Linda (WAMC’s Performing Arts Studio) offers live lectures concerts films and more, much of which is broadcast regionally. Programming includes world folk and popular music, jazz, films, lectures forums and debates.

Since making a concerted outreach effort to our diverse local community we have helped bring a wide variety of new programming to the Linda. Through affordable rentals, partnerships and grants we have provided our neighbors in our inner city neighborhood access to a high quality performance venue.

5. Please assess the impact that your CPB funding had on your ability to serve your community. What were you able to do with your grant that you wouldn't be able to do if you didn't receive it?

Since the bulk of our grant is used to purchase national programming any decrease in the amount of that grant would either necessitate our seeking other funding to purchase such programming or would result in our cutting back in the usage of such programming.