

# CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

## LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT FY 2013

### **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. Twenty-five translators and transmitters serve listeners in portions of seven northeastern states.

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. With a large news staff, six regional news bureaus, between fifteen and eighteen daily local newscasts, many hours of locally originating long-form programming each day, and a constantly updated web presence, WAMC continues to engage an ever-growing radio audience.

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 2013 were the environment, quality of education, health care, the economy and crime. 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. 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. Two of our high profile regional newspapers co-produced station events with us in 2013 and 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 2013, The Linda (WAMC's Performing Arts Studio) offered live lectures, concerts films and more, many of which was broadcast regionally. Programming included world, folk and popular music, jazz, films, lectures, forums and debates. We continued to partner with a 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:

**\* 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 panel discussion about the news of the day, with a regional slant provided by host Joe Donahue and WAMC President Alan Chartock, and one or more guests to round out the panel. Representatives of the educational community, the LGBTQ community, and local newspaper and television reporters have been on hand to participate and listeners weigh in on the topics through social media and, on occasion, live call-ins.

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 and almost always does. Here is the current list:

Paul Tonko, NY, D; Bill Owens, NY, D; Chris Gibson, NY, R; Sean Patrick Maloney, NY, D; Carolyn Maloney, NY, D; Joe Courtney, CT, D; Jim McGovern, MA, D; Richard Neal, MA, D; Bernie Sanders, VT, Ind; Peter Welch, VT, D; Kirsten Gillibrand, NY, D; Charles Schumer, NY, D; Elizabeth Esty, CT, D

The program invites listener essays, which are read by their authors, and local booksellers offer weekly book pick. The local arts reporter from our weekly arts newspaper, Metroland, appears every Thursday with arts recommendations and conversations with presenting organizations, filmmakers, musicians, public policy makers, museums, and other regional organizations round out the mix.

In addition to our regular programming, we aired a special series on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Iraq War the week of March 18. We looked at local ties to the war, including the impact on vets, the cost of war, what veterans have gone on to next, and where the peace movement finds itself now.

Roundtable's special initiative about equality in America, *When Will We Ever Learn* is detailed below in Section 4.

Our partnership with the Albany Symphony Orchestra provides valuable content on *The Roundtable* as well as music programming broadcast monthly on the station.

#### **\* Outstanding Regional News Programming**

In order to serve our large broadcast area, WAMC has established satellite news bureaus in various locations. These are, in most cases, housed free of charge thanks to the generosity of organizations with whom we partner. They include:

Southern Adirondack Bureau at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY  
North Country Bureau in Plattsburgh, NY  
Hudson Valley Bureau at SUNY New Paltz, NY  
Berkshire Bureau at the Berkshire Eagle newspaper in Pittsfield, MA  
Pioneer Valley Bureau at Western New England University in Springfield, MA  
Capital District Bureau in Albany  
News from the State Capitol, in partnership with New York State Public Radio

Because our reporters and Bureau Chiefs are out and about in their communities, attending events and functions and keeping their ears to the ground, we are able to provide a unique perspective on regional news while operating efficiently and cost-effectively through our Albany-based hub.

WAMC employs 16 full time, 2 part-time, and 5 contract journalists, making our newsroom the largest radio news service in the region. Our colleagues in broadcasting have lauded us for our news gathering efforts and, during our fund drives, literally thousands of listeners comment on the excellence of our programming when they phone in their pledges.

Some program highlights include regional election coverage, special commentary and regional coverage of the Boston Marathon bombings; in-depth coverage of the latest state government ethics scandals in New York; the run up to the special election in Massachusetts, and the early stages of the Albany mayoral race.

### \* Event Partnerships during FY 2013

-- As part of its community service, WAMC and the *Albany Times Union* held a live forum looking at safety in our inner city neighborhood and examining the unusual number of fatalities along Central Avenue in Albany. In front of a live audience of community members, a panel of experts discussed how law enforcement, engineering and new technology are coming together to find ways to reduce accidents along the road.

-- With our partners from *The Berkshire Eagle* and *The Colonial Theatre* in Pittsfield, we presented an afternoon with Governor Deval and Mrs. Diane Patrick of Massachusetts. Alan Chartock interviewed the couple before a live audience about their relationship, Mrs. Patrick's history as a victim of domestic violence, their career trajectories, and more.

-- WAMC maintains a vital presence in our community and reaches out to new listeners by being a media sponsor for various events, including First Nights, Pride events, community festivals, and musical performances, a number of which are detailed below in Section 4.

-- We enjoy valuable partnerships with both the Albany Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

### \* 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 the academy. Hosted by Dr. Lynn Pasquerella, President of Mount Holyoke College, *The Academic Minute* features a different professor each day, drawing experts from top 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, featuring professors as experts on our local and national programs. We partner with Western New England College to offer journalism students hands-on training in news gathering in their own region and we work with *Legislative Gazette* students from SUNY New Paltz, teaching them how to write and edit for radio and create on-air stories.

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 scores of awards we have received, and the measurable 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. We can also point to a verifiable increase in the number of listeners commenting on the *Roundtable's* first hour and the fact 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 2013, WAMC receive awards from the Massachusetts Broadcasters Association for Best Spot News Story for Paul Tuthill's report on Sen. Ed Markey's win in the special election; and for Best Sports Feature for Ian Pickus' "Yankees Renewal Rivalry with Army."

The New York State Broadcasters recognized WAMC with awards for Best Individual Public Affairs Program or Series for "Dear Bully" and Best Feature Story for Lucas Willard's story on Neil Lerner's Video Game Sound.

The Associated Press awarded the WAMC News Department a Special Mention for "Northeast Report Late Edition," a Special Mention for Alan Chartock and David Guistina's "Pearl Harbor Over the Radio," and a Special Mention for "Dear Bully – A Look at Bullying in America."

Alan Chartock won the top Communicator Award of Excellence for his interview with Sean Lennon on Fracking in the Overall Programs category and the WAMC News Department won an Award of Distinction in the Overall News category for its live coverage of Hurricane Sandy, the night the storm hit the northeast.

**Fund Raising:**

WAMC's three annual fund drives bear witness to the station's success – listeners contributed over \$3 million dollars during FY 2013 in support of the station's work and underwriting by area businesses and organizations exceeded \$3 million for the first time. 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.

**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 2013, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2014. 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.

With support from MASS Humanities, WAMC presented three hours of radio content that explored, with scholars and radio listeners, questions surrounding persistent inequality of certain groups compared with others in historical and contemporary American culture. The series was broadcast over three days, and each day was devoted to the discussion of one of three questions related to equality in America:

Segment 1: "What is equality? How do we define it? What makes us equal?"

Segment 2: "What is disenfranchisement?" "Who are the enfranchised, the disenfranchised, and those forgotten?"

Segment 3: "What are we doing to cross the divide?"

Each segment began with a twenty minute discussion between *The Roundtable* Host Joe Donahue live on-air with the day's guest scholars in-studio before opening the phones to listeners. The remaining forty minutes allowed audience members to talk directly with the guest scholars. The project also included a standalone webpage, audience engagement via social media and extensive publicity.

Here are a few examples of messages or partial e-mail messages we received after the program aired:

*I listened with interest to this morning's excellent discussion about insuring that all citizens have access to the opportunities that exist for a good education leading to a good job. One of the callers responded to the question of whether there was another era in which things were better than they are now by citing the 1950's when a working class family with only a single income could not only survive but send their kids to college. Thank you for the great work you do. Sincerely yours, -Carol M.*

*Thank you for this excellent segment. I think of this kind of programming as coming under the rubric "how the world actually works". I wish there were much more of it in all media. A lot of your interviews with authors contribute to this kind of understanding. Thanks again. You continue to amaze me. - Bill I.*

*I love today's show and the whole tone of Socratic dialog among rather interestingly stated but differing viewpoints. Keep up the great work!! -Paul M.*

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. A new addition to our support of diversity and culture is our relationship with Albany Poets, a local not-for-profit organization whose goal is to promote the poets and poetry of Upstate New York. Albany Poets hosts open mics, poetry readings, slams, music and spoken word events, and the annual Albany Word Fest to increase participation and attendance in the local arts community. Our collaboration with other individuals and organizations of color has helped The Linda to produce new and diverse programming.

The Wolf pack is a group of local business women of color who produce social networking events, youth and adult talent contests and music events. They worked with The Linda to develop a spring festival to celebrate and connect the diverse Central Avenue community of residents and businesses through the arts and culture. The inaugural festival took place this past spring and the intent is to follow up with an even bigger event this coming spring.

We are working on projects with International Center of the Capital Region and Capital Cinema Cultural Exchange that will bring foreign filmmakers into the region and highlight cultural exchange and appreciation through film screenings and other events.

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 access to a high quality performance venue. Individual producers and organizations have included United Sisters of New York, Black Women's Association of Albany, The Wolf Pack, Hunger Action Network of New York State, Amnesty International, International Center of the Capital Region, Ladyfest Upstate, Balance Mix Ent, Albany Poets, Jennifer McMullen Presents, Boys and Girls Club, and Capital Pride Center. Utilizing our services, these organizations and others have presented quality programming for a broader and more diverse clientele with events such as inner-city youth theater performances, gospel comedy nights, community concern meetings, fundraisers, CD release parties, spoken word events, fundraisers, awards ceremonies, youth and adult talent competitions, social networking events and more.

**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.

