

**The purpose of this section is to give you an opportunity to tell us and your community about the activities you have engaged in to address community needs by outlining key services provided, and the local value and impact of those services. Please report on activities that occurred in Fiscal Year 2023. Responses may be shared with Congress or the public. Grantees are required to post a copy of this report (Section 6 only) to their website no later than ten (10) days after the submission of the report to CPB. CPB recommends placing the report in an "About" or similar section on your website. This section had previously been optional. Response to this section of the SAS is now mandatory.**

**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.**

WMRA's mission is to be a trusted source of news and information that supports an engaged community. WMRA's vision is to be recognized as the essential, community-supported source of news, information, and stories significant to our listening area. WMRA's core values are service and engagement, accuracy, reliability and accountability, professionalism, innovation, and civility and respect. WMRA strives to be more engaged in the local community by seeking opportunities to serve a broader range of people, and to provide news, information, and events that reflect the culture and issues of the region.

WMRA reaches a weekly audience of approximately 55,000 listeners across a largely rural area. The station must use a combination of platforms to maximize its outreach and ensure that its news reporting represents the needs of all communities within its audience. WMRA seeks to achieve its organizational goals through a combination of long-form stories, news features, a daily news podcast, digital media, and community events that are offered both in-person and virtually. WMRA currently employs one full-time reporter, and has a small pool of freelance journalists. With a small newsroom and limited resources, gaps in reporting are inevitable. WMRA utilizes partnerships with other media outlets to help bridge these gaps and ensure that WMRA's news coverage has a broad geographic footprint.

**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.**

WMRA regularly partners with Virginia Public Radio and WCVE in Richmond to provide more comprehensive coverage of local and state news. WMRA shares these stations' features on-air, in "The WMRA Daily" news podcast, and in its weekly newsletter that is emailed to approximately 6,000 listeners. WMRA also features content from a local, independent newspaper, "The Harrisonburg Citizen," on the station's mobile app.

In a partnership with VPM News in Richmond, WMRA was selected as a Report for America host newsroom in December 2022. Through this partnership, both WMRA and VPM News will expand coverage of rural healthcare issues in the Shenandoah Valley and areas around Charlottesville. The first news feature resulting from this partnership aired in August 2023.

WMRA produced seven episodes in the second and final season of its “Folklife Fieldnotes” podcast, a collaboration with The Virginia Folklife Program at Virginia Humanities. This season featured a wide variety of musical genres, including a pastor incorporating jazz into his worship service, a band fusing Venezuelan and Appalachian folk music, DIY punk houses, and traditional Sephardic Jewish music.

WMRA’s cultural event series, “Books & Brews,” is an ongoing collaboration between WMRA and several small, locally owned businesses: breweries, an audio production company, and a woman-owned, independent bookstore. In addition, a local architecture firm has sponsored the series for several years, to help cover production costs. This collaboration resulted in nine hours of community engagement between September 2022 and April 2023. In Fiscal Year 2023, all “Books & Brews” live events were held in Harrisonburg, but beginning in Fiscal Year 2024, WMRA will hold events in other cities across its listening area, which will open the event series to a broader audience than before.

**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.**

WMRA’s “Books & Brews” in-person events had an average attendance of 80 people per event. The Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 season featured authors discussing a broad range of topics, including the displacement of families to form Shenandoah National Park, the history of racism in America, and near-death experiences. Each “Books & Brews” event was recorded and uploaded on YouTube for on-demand viewing. The most popular video, with over 57,000 views, was the February 2023 event with Dr. Bruce Grayson, discussing near-death experiences. This video attracted views and comments from around the world, and it remains WMRA’s most-watched video to date.

According to Google Analytics, WMRA’s website had 389,364 unique visitors and 502,871 page views over the course of Fiscal Year 2023. WMRA’s mobile app, which allows listeners to access news in areas with limited radio broadcast coverage, continued to provide significant service in its fifth year. In Fiscal Year 2023, the app had 3,963 unique users, peaking at an average of 441 daily users.

WMRA’s daily news podcast reached 11,067 users and had 44,724 downloads for the year, with an average of 122 downloads per day. The “Folklife Fieldnotes” podcast had 2,576 downloads from 1,858 users over the course of the year. Station news stories were downloaded 36,753 times from 30,159 unique users. The most popular story on WMRA’s website—with 3,592 views and 5,616 downloads—was a report about a veterinarian having his license suspended indefinitely in Virginia.

**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 2023, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2024. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.**

Following up on a special news series from 2022, WMRA continued to cover stories of school desegregation in the listening area. These included a report about high school students serving as tour guides at historical sites that were at the center of *Brown v. Board of Education*, and coverage of a trailblazer of desegregation returning to her hometown to deliver an address.

In April 2023, WMRA produced a two-part story on efforts to combat substance abuse in Winchester, which federal officials have designated as a High intensity Drug Trafficking Area. WMRA's reporting included interviews with stakeholders representing various sides of the issue, including the police department's addiction resource officer, the community outreach manager at a treatment center, and two participants from a drug court program.

Another highlight from Fiscal Year 2023 was WMRA's multi-part series on how a local school system engaged parents and teachers in targeted discussions over pandemic restrictions, how racial history is taught and how to treat transgender students. The final report in this series received national attention when it was featured on *All Things Considered* in March 2023.

In a partnership with VPM News in Richmond, WMRA was selected as a *Report for America* host newsroom in December 2022. This partnership will add a second, full-time reporter to WMRA's staff in Fiscal Year 2024. The *Report for America* reporter will cover rural health care in the Shenandoah Valley and Charlottesville areas. News coverage will have a special focus on Virginians who are at risk of homelessness, have limited health coverage, and are recipients of federal aid such as Medicaid, WIC, and SNAP.

WMRA's sister station, WEMC, continues to air "Concierto"—which is broadcast in both English and Spanish—on Saturday afternoons. This music program helps address the needs of the large Hispanic and Latino population in WMRA's audience.

**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?**

With CPB funding, WMRA can afford to provide national news programming from NPR. This eases WMRA's financial burden, so the station can focus its efforts on providing more coverage of WMRA's local communities. WMRA covers a large geographic area, with many listeners living in rural areas with no reliable internet or television. A significant portion of WMRA's audience relies on radio—and WMRA in particular—to stay connected on a local, national, and international scale. Without CPB funding, WMRA would have to significantly reduce its local news reporting, which would lead to the local community losing the in-depth coverage and insights that national news reports alone cannot provide.