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# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROGRESS REPORT



April 2022

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Diversity Statement ..... 3

Our Commitment ..... 4

Expanding Our Reach ..... 5

From Joe O’Connor / Progress on 7 Key Goals ..... 6

Board of Directors ..... 16

Community Advisory Board ..... 17

## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

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To fulfill its mission of creating quality journalism that informs, engages and inspires, WFAE will ensure its audience, staff, on-air voices, news sources, vendors and work culture reflect the diverse community it is licensed to serve.

WFAE is managed by a Board of Directors that consists of volunteers from throughout the Charlotte region. The Board has established and regularly revisits a strategic plan to guide its efforts. The station has established a Community Advisory Board to offer counsel on news coverage as well as community engagement. Both the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board will continue to recruit members to more deeply connect with the Charlotte region's rapidly diversifying residents.

WFAE will be guided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's nondiscrimination requirements as well as its commitments to equal opportunity and diversity. It expects its audience to hold the station accountable to these standards.

# OUR COMMITMENT

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We drafted our Diversity Statement in the Summer of 2020 as protests for social justice took place in our community and across the country.

The statement may have been new at the time, but the sentiment and the work behind it go back decades. We have always sought to serve our entire community and have long aimed for our staff and boards to reflect the communities we serve.

As CEO Joe O'Connor wrote in his April, 30 2021 letter, WFAE aims to "create among the most inviting, welcoming and enviable multi-cultural working environments in the public media system, if not the nation."

Diversity, inclusion and equity (DE&I) isn't a separate initiative at WFAE. It is woven into everything we do. But we did establish a committee of staff members who volunteered for the effort to help ensure that a DE&I lens is used on everything from story sources to hiring decisions.

We're aware that public radio may have an image problem, and we work to combat that. Unfortunately, it also goes deeper than image. It's what EVP Ju-Don Marshall calls "a problem inherent in public radio – there's not as much geographic or ethnic diversity as we'd like."

What to do? "We're trying to get outside our normal networks," Marshall said. "We've led a big effort to let the community be the co-author of some of our reporting. On our website, on radio and on social media, we've been asking: What do you want to hear from us? Our FAQ City podcast is based on listeners telling us what questions they want answered, but that opportunity is present throughout our website."

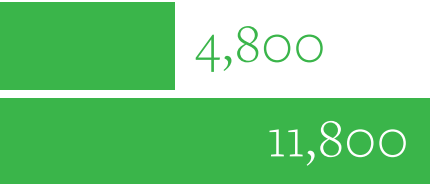
Diversity, inclusion  
and equity isn't a  
separate initiative at  
WFAE. It's woven into  
everything we do.

# EXPANDING OUR REACH / BROADCAST AUDIENCE

## BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN AUDIENCE



## LATINO / HISPANIC AUDIENCE



\* Data compares WFAE audiences from July 2020 to July 2021

As a public media organization, WFAE is obliged to represent the community we serve. The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation managed by a nine-member board appointed by the President and approved by the U.S. Senate to direct government support to public stations nationwide.

The following year, the “Kerner Commission Report on the causes, events and aftermaths of the civil disorders of 1967” was issued. “The report includes a detailed history of Blacks in American society and recommendations for improving the social conditions which foment riots,” according to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs website.

The United States hasn’t come so far in 55 years, have we?

WFAE aims to do better. We’re making steady progress but we want to move even faster.

While this report focuses primarily on 2021, this diversity work of ours is nothing new, and is

ongoing. For the past five years in particular – since Executive Vice President & Chief Content Officer, Ju-Don Marshall joined WFAE – we’ve been very intentional about serving all residents of our community. We do that through more than our reporting. Community outreach is an important part of the way we serve our communities. For instance:

- Our newsroom has hosted numerous multiplatform reports, series, conversations, public forums and podcast episodes devoted to not only focusing on issues of systemic racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice but also on building bridges of understanding.
- WFAE is developing a new platform called *Story Mosaic* with the Reese Innovation Lab at UNC Chapel Hill for anyone in the Charlotte area to suggest stories to any participating local newsroom. *Story Mosaic* provides metrics to hold us and other newsrooms accountable if we fail to respond.

We take a broad view of diversity and inclusion. We’re looking at more than race, ethnicity, gender and orientation. Diversity of thought is important

to us, too. And so is geography. Our home base may be Charlotte, but we serve 26 counties and aim to be inclusive of those residents, too.

We’re always striving to be better. WFAE has come a long way in our goal to represent our broad and diverse listening area, but we acknowledge there’s more work to be done.

Our most significant initiative on this front is our newly established Race & Equity Team. An innovative project for public media/journalism, the Race & Equity Team is a group of culturally competent journalists who work across WFAE’s content area to ensure that our coverage considers race whenever possible. How can we report on housing, education, healthcare, the arts, politics and more *without* considering the role that race plays in those stories? The Race & Equity Team will ensure that these considerations are made.

## FROM JOE O'CONNOR

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For decades, WFAE has done our utmost to reflect the diversity of the community it is licensed to serve. As a public broadcasting station, we have a mission to inform, engage, inspire, and if we're only informing, engaging and inspiring a portion of the community, we're actually not fulfilling that mission.

We track the diversity of our audience, staff, on-air voices, news sources, partners, vendors, Board of Directors and Community Advisory Board. But tracking isn't enough. If you're reading this, you're likely a constituent of WFAE with an interest in our DE&I efforts. We want to share our progress and results with you.

In the letter I wrote on this subject last April, I shared some of WFAE's diversity goals for the coming year. On the following pages is an update on how we've done, and are doing, on each. Are there stats that we're missing? Are there issues you think we should pay attention to? If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at [joe@wfae.org](mailto:joe@wfae.org).

*Joe O'Connor*



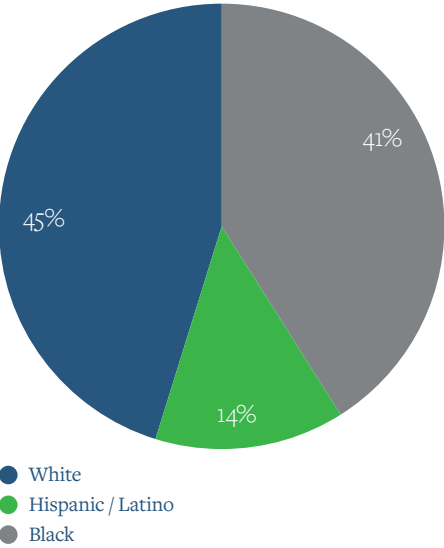
# GOAL 1

Strategic employee recruitment from not just professional and civic organizations with a diverse membership base but with constant executive outreach to build a pipeline of diverse talent.

WFAE posts open positions with local and national organizations and sends posting notices to diverse organizations, including specific diverse professional organizations for each position. Job postings neither include requirements for a college degree nor previous public media experience in hopes of attracting people with different backgrounds. To build a hiring pipeline and a pool of qualified diverse candidates, WFAE participates in diverse job fairs such as NCA&T, Online News Association, Public Media Village, and Charlotte Area Association of Black Journalists. Strategic employee recruitment comes from not just professional and civic organizations with a diverse membership base, but with constant executive outreach to build a pipeline of diverse talent. It is a requirement of our recruiting process to have a diverse staff member in our interview process as part of the hiring committee. We also require a qualified diverse finalist for every position.

With these policies in place, 55% of new hires in 2020 and 2021 were people of color.

## NEW HIRES 2020 & 2021



# GOAL 2

## Implementing strategies and tactics to help reporters expand the diversity of their sources and topics.

The idea of diversity in news coverage isn't new for us. "We've had a big push over the past four or five years to be sure we're talking *to* the people affected and not just *about* the people," said Ju-Don Marshall, WFAE's EVP and chief content officer, as well as a 17-year veteran of *The Washington Post's* newsroom. "Anyone who's listened to us that long can see the difference in our reporting and also in our community outreach and engagement."

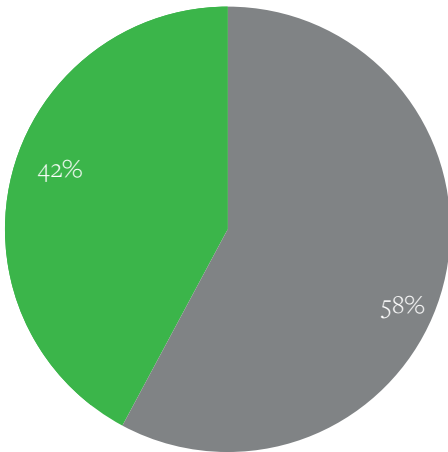
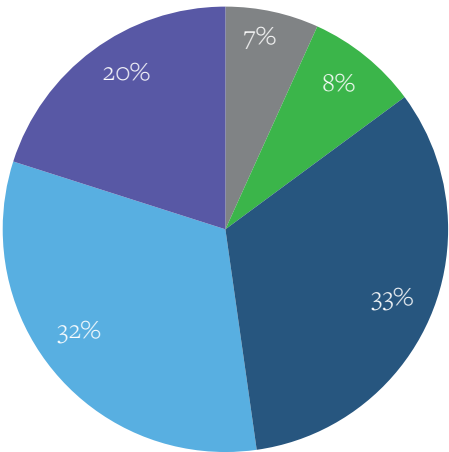
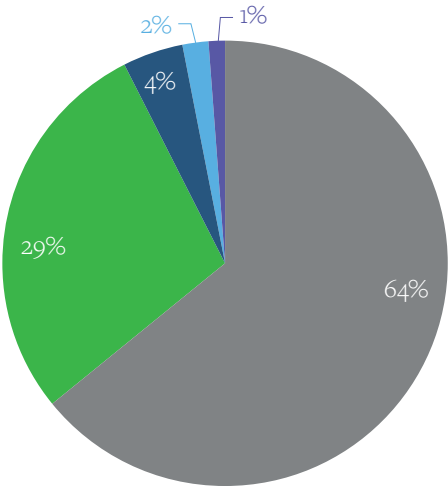
Training is key to helping us expand our sources and topics – not to mention our minds.

- In February 2021 our staff participated in an online diversity-awareness session and we followed up on that with an in-depth, one-day training in April.
- WFAE has joined the N.C. Media Equity Project with six other media organizations to advance diversity, equity and inclusion for the state's residents. Participants gather quarterly to learn best practices from leading experts, hold each other accountable and share lessons learned.
- WFAE's content team has instituted procedures to track the sources and guests they connect with for their reporting. Race, age, gender as well as political orientation are tracked as part of this project.

SOURCES BY RACE / ETHNICITY

SOURCES BY AGE

SOURCES BY GENDER



- Native American or Alaska Native
- Asian / Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic / Latino
- Black
- White

- 0-17
- 18-30
- 31-45
- 46-64
- 65+

- Female
- Male

\* WFAE source data May, 2020 – January 2022.



## GOAL 3

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# Tracking the diversity of our audience, staff and on-air hosts/voices.

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We are proud of the diversity of age groups our staff represents and feel we have a good mix of veterans, newcomers and mid-career professionals.

Last May, we launched an internal diversity committee guided by additional training to address individual employee concerns, develop metrics for inclusion and encourage concrete steps for the foundation of a remarkable company culture that welcomes and celebrates diversity.

In January 2022, Debra Turner Bailey, a former Board member with an extensive career in global human resources, including 21 years with Corning Inc., the final nine years of which were as global diversity officer, joined our senior team as our first Chief People Officer. In this role, Debra is working closely with our senior staff, human resources team and staff diversity committee to ensure that we're doing all we can to have an inclusive work place. With Debra joining the team alongside our recently hired Chief Revenue Officer, Penda Howell, a full 60% of WFAE's Senior Staff identify as non-white.

Tracking the diversity of our news sources and guests is an important step in ensuring that our coverage is a reflection of our community, but we believe it is also important that our staff represents the region we serve.

White members of our staff account for 72% of our total employees, which is on par with the 71.6% of white individuals within our broadcast area. We under index slightly for Black employees, with 20% of our full staff identifying as Black/African American. We over index for Latino/Hispanic and "other" races with 6% of our full staff identifying as such. 2% of our staff identifies as Asian, of Other Pacific Islander.

In addition to reviewing our full staff demographics, we've also segmented to report on our content/broadcast team. The broadcast team is 68% white, 24% Black/African American and 5% Latino/Hispanic. 3% of our content team has declined to share their race.

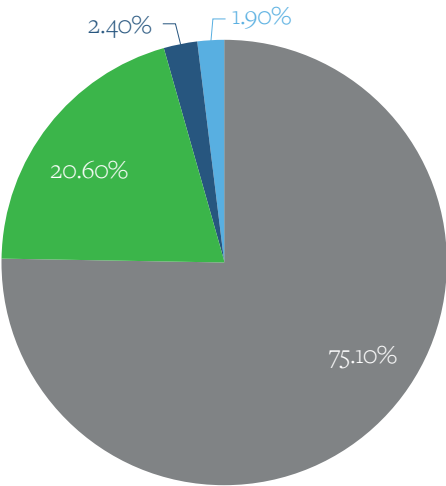
62% of WFAE's full staff identifies as female and we have a nice variety of ages/generations represented with about half of our staff aged 20 to 49 and half over 50.

The data on the next pages details the demographics of WFAE's staff, broadcast audience and the demographics of our 26 county broadcast area. We acknowledge that these categories are limited and "othering" and we are working to get better data that details more demographics.

Reporter Nick de la Canal. Credit: Jeff Cravotta Photography

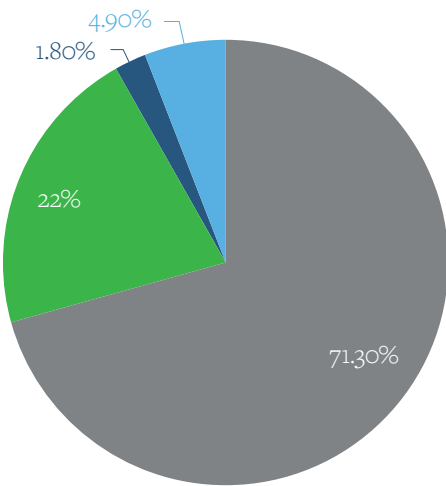


WFAE AUDIENCE RACE/ETHNICITY



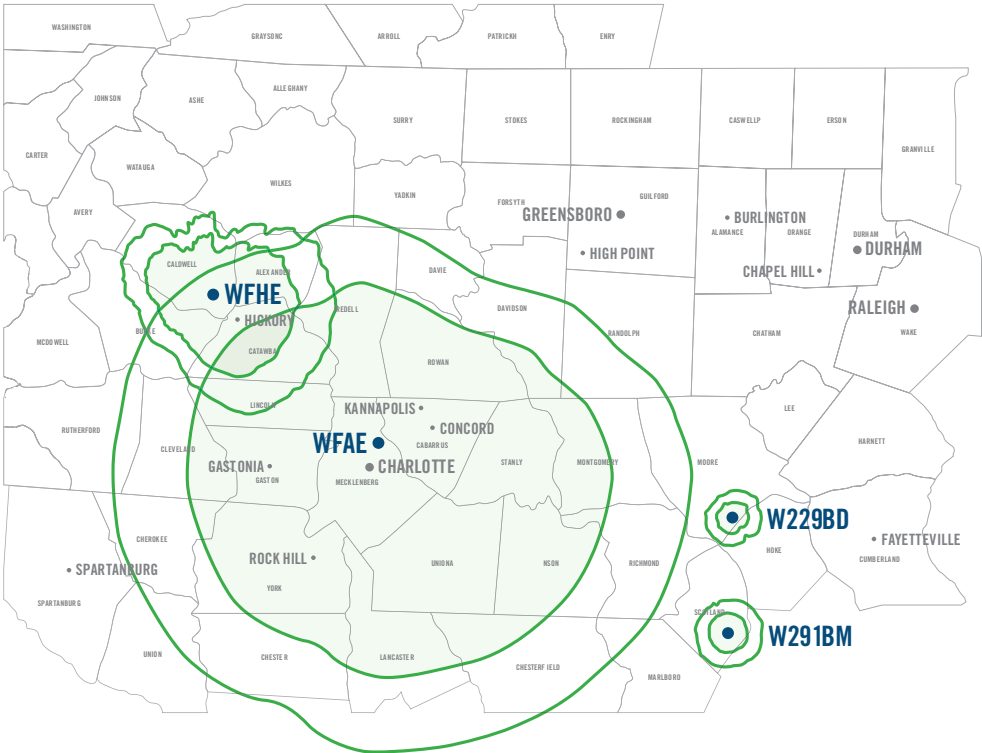
- Latino /Hispanic & Other
- Asian
- Black / African American
- White

WFAE BROADCAST AREA RACE/ETHNICITY



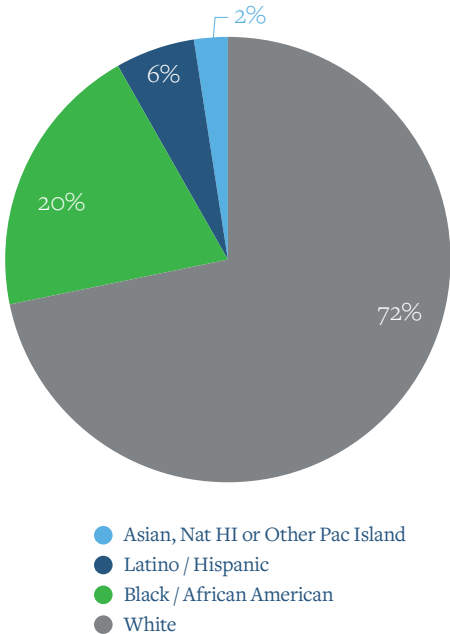
- Latino /Hispanic & Other
- Asian
- Black / African American
- White

WFAE BROADCAST AREA

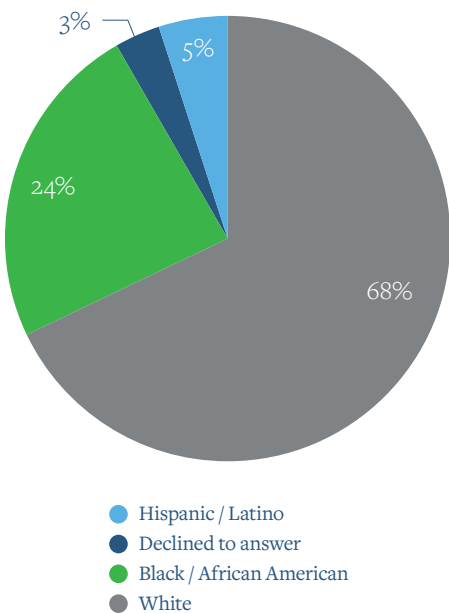


\* Source: Nielsen/Scarborough Report, Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill (Metro Survey Area) Scarborough R1 2020: Feb 20 - Feb 21 Adults 18+

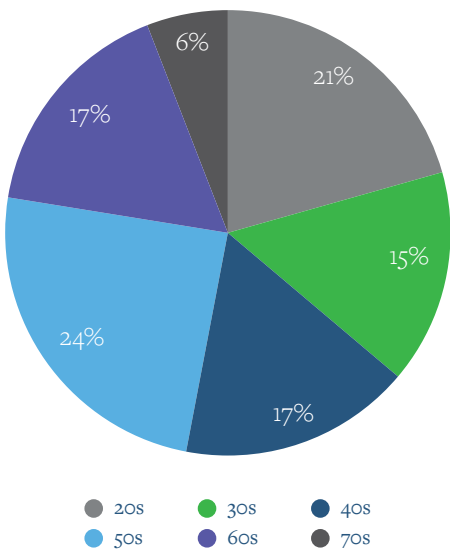
FULL STAFF RACE/ETHNICITY



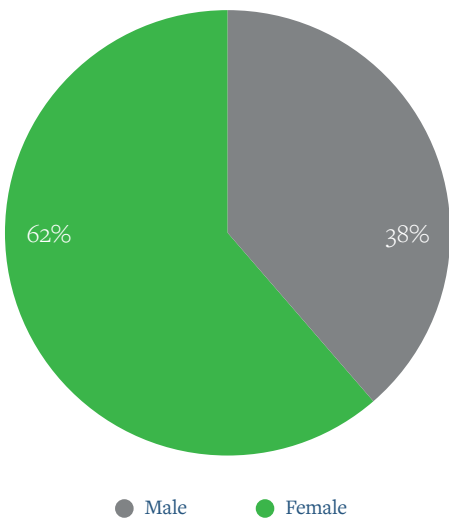
CONTENT STAFF RACE/ETHNICITY



FULL STAFF AGE



FULL STAFF GENDER



## GOAL 4

### Expanding existing partnerships with media of color.

WFAE has partnered with *Report for America*, *Google* and *Facebook* to hire additional reporters to cover diverse communities in partnership with well-established local media of color such as *Q City Metro* and *La Noticia*. In addition, WFAE is part of the *Charlotte Journalism Collaborative*, which includes *QNotes*, a publication serving the LGBTQ community in the Carolinas.

Collaborative stories have focused on immigration, Ukrainian and Afghani refugees, census demographics, how communities of color have been impacted by the pandemic and much more. All of these stories can be found on our website, [WFAE.org](https://wfae.org).

WFAE/RFA reporter Maria Ramirez Uribe. Credit: Kim Brattain Media



**REPORT  
FOR AMERICA**

**Google**

**facebook.**

**LN™**

**city  
metro**

**CJC**

## GOAL 5

# Expanding current fellowship programs to hire additional diverse news staff.

In 2020, WFAE and partner organizations hired three Report For America (RFA) journalists. RFA is a national service program that places emerging journalists in local news organizations and covers a portion of their salaries. RFA corps member Dante Miller calls the program “the journalism version of the Peace Corps.”

Miller was part of the first wave of RFA journalists to join WFAE’s newsroom in May 2020, along with Alexandra “Alex” Watts and Laura Brache.

WFAE shared Brache with *La Noticia*, a local Spanish-language newspaper. Her stories appeared in English and Spanish.

A survey WFAE and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library distributed sought to find what communities of color wanted in their news and in public forums. In early 2020, WFAE held a virtual community conversation about mental health in the Black community – a direct outcome of the survey.

“We looked at how COVID has affected people’s mental health, specifically in the Black community,” Miller said. “There was a huge – there still is – stigma in the Black community about mental health issues.”

The RFA corps members’ work highlighted the need for journalism that reflected the concerns

of an increasingly diverse Charlotte. That’s where WFAE’s Race & Equity Team, established at the end of FY21, comes in – with help from current RFA reporters Gracyn Doctor and Maria Ramirez Uribe.

Doctor, who was recently featured in a *60 Minutes* story on RFA, began her new role by asking what stories mattered to listeners who may have felt underserved by news organizations.

“I started by actually getting out into the community and finding out what we’re lacking in our coverage,” she said. “What are ways that we can cover the community better? What are things that need to be covered that we aren’t covering?” Miller and Watts said that, in 2020, what people wanted was more information on political candidates and where and how to vote. WFAE responded with expanded political coverage and voters’ guides.

Given how COVID changed the world of work, survey respondents said they wanted community conversations on how to start a business, so WFAE hosted just such a conversation. Ramirez Uribe felt that collaboration within the newsroom helped, too. “WFAE is unique in its genuine commitment to the work that we’re doing now,” she said. “I think it’s no small feat that a newsroom is putting a lot of resources into creating this team.”

“WFAE is unique in its genuine commitment to the work that we’re doing now. I think it’s no small feat that a newsroom is putting a lot of resources into creating this team.”

Maria Ramirez Uribe

*All Things Considered* host Gwendolyn Glenn. Credit: Jeff Cravotta Photography





## GOAL 6

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### Working with diverse business associations to diversify station vendors.

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In addition to reviewing the make-up of our audience, staff, boards, sources, etc (and working to diversify each), WFAE has also worked to review the companies that we partner and contract with – the companies we work with to provide support to our business operations.

Since beginning this process, we have transitioned a total of \$650,000 from our operating reserve to Worth Advisors and Mechanics & Farmers Bank, which is North Carolina's oldest African American-owned bank.

On a smaller scale, WFAE has committed to printing the majority of its t-shirts and other promotional items with MacFly Fresh, a local Black-owned print shop.

Taj Polite of MacFly Fresh (right) prints a WFAE retro logo t-shirt for former WFAE General Manager, Roger Sarow during the station's 40th anniversary celebration. Photo credit: Jeff Cravotta



## GOAL 7

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Determining diversity metrics in collaboration with the aforementioned staff diversity committee and the newly established, permanent Equity and Fairness Committee of our Board of Directors.

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Leading WFAE's efforts to address race and equity are two committees launched in 2021 – a staff committee comprised of members of the content, business and fundraising teams lead by Sway Steward, an equity and inclusion advisor for Greater Public (an organization that supports public media organizations across the country) and our Board's Equity & Fairness Committee. The two committees meet monthly, with the Board committee meetings open to the public, to address issues of equity at WFAE. To date the committees have produced and analyzed surveys to the WFAE staff to get a sense of their wants, needs and concerns related to equity and inclusion.

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### WFAE BOARD EQUITY & FAIRNESS COMMITTEE

**Richard Lancaster**, Board Chair

**Nick Wharton**, Board Vice Chair

**Mary Tabor Engel**

**Mark Ethridge**

**Kathleen Price**

**Sharon Blalock**

# 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WFAE is thankful for the volunteer service of our Board of Directors and their commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity within their ranks. They are intentional about recruiting members who are representative of the greater Charlotte community. We are also incredibly honored that EVERY member of WFAE's board contributed to the campaign to launch our Race & Equity Team.

As the graphs below illustrate, the diversity of our board over indexes for Black, Asian and Latino/Hispanic membership in comparison to our community. Similar to WFAE's staff, the board has more members that identify as female than male.

## WFAE BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS



CHAIR  
**Richard Lancaster**  
Controller, Carmel Country Club



VICE CHAIR  
**Nick Wharton**  
President & Chief Executive Officer, Charlotte Area Fund Inc.



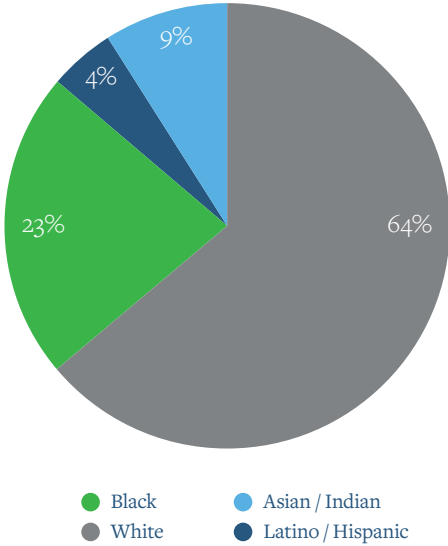
SECRETARY  
**Angela Oliver**  
Learning & Leadership Development Client Manager, Bank of America



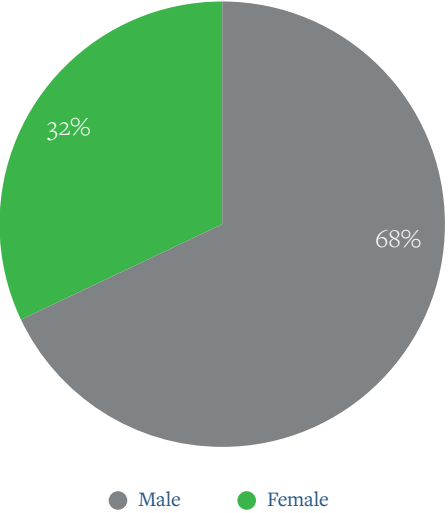
TREASURER  
**Glenn Stewart**  
SunTrust, Retired

- Joe O'Connor**, WFAE President & CEO, Ex Officio
- Debra Turner Baily**, Consultant
- Riaz Bhamani**, Bank of America
- Sharon Blalock**, Spot Marketing
- Chris Cicoletti**, US Bank
- Dan Clodfelter**, State Utility Commissioner, Former Mayor of Charlotte
- Gene Cochran**, Retired President of the Duke Endowment
- Mary Tabor Engel**, Journalist, Instructor at Knight School for Journalism at Queens University of Charlotte
- Mark Ethridge**, Journalist, Novelist, Screenwriter and Communications Consultant
- Paul Freestone**, Stryker Corporation, Retired
- Charles Johnson**, Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, P.A.
- Tony Norwood**, Trane Technologies
- Kathleen Price**, Ally Financial
- Diana Quarry**, Morrison & Foerster, LLP
- Dick Sesler**, Camp Blue Skies
- Carolyn Shaw**, Kirk, Palmer & Thigpen, P.A.
- Anasa Sinegal**, Central Piedmont Community College
- Matthew Socha**, Cherry Bekaert
- Jose Vega**, Senior Counsel, Wells Fargo
- Meg Whalen**, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

## BOARD RACE / ETHNICITY



## BOARD GENDER



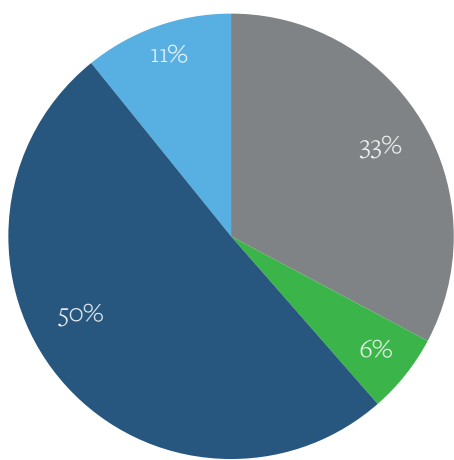


# 2021 COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

WFAE's Community Advisory Board (CAB) is a group of volunteers from throughout WFAE's broadcast area that provide feedback on our programming and services. We are very proud of the diversity of this group with 33% of the members identifying as Black/African American, 11% identifying as Latino/Hispanic and 6% identifying as Asian/Indian. Like our staff and Board of Directors, the majority of CAB members identify as female.

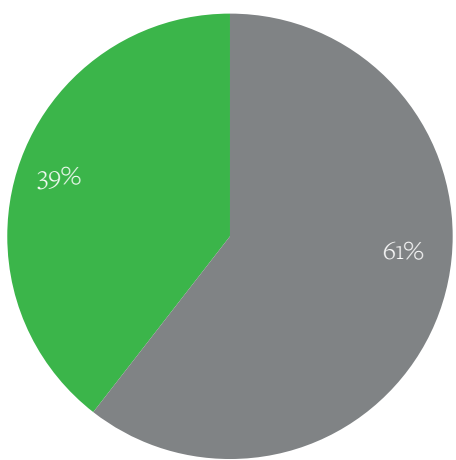
<b>Barbara Lom, Chair</b> Huntersville, N.C. Davidson College <i>Appointed 2019</i>	<b>Allyson Colaço</b> Charlotte, N.C. Windy O'Connor Art & Home <i>Appointed 2020</i>	<b>Jarrett Hurms</b> Charlotte, N.C. Bank of America <i>Appointed 2020</i>	<b>Dennis Lazarus</b> Charlotte, N.C. Retired from the United Nations Development Programme <i>Appointed 2020</i>	<b>Gigi Shamsy Raye</b> Charlotte, N.C. Accenture <i>Appointed 2021</i>
<b>Cephas Kwame Agbeke</b> Charlotte, N.C. TIAA <i>Appointed 2019</i>	<b>Dr. Myah Davis</b> Charlotte, N.C. Educator <i>Appointed 2020</i>	<b>Ingrid Travis James</b> Charlotte, N.C. YMCA of Greater Charlotte <i>Appointed 2020</i>	<b>Katarina Moyon</b> Rock Hill, S.C. Winthrop University <i>Appointed 2021</i>	<b>Lecia Shockley</b> Charlotte, N.C. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools <i>Appointed 2019</i>
<b>José Alvarez</b> Charlotte, N.C. Prospera <i>Appointed 2021</i>	<b>Stephen Guardipee</b> Charlotte, N.C. Hatcher Law Group <i>Appointed 2019</i>	<b>Keenya Justice</b> Charlotte, N.C. The Justice Firm, LLC <i>Appointed 2017</i>	<b>Srinath Nagarajan</b> Matthews, N.C. Chief Innovation and Product Officer at Bethesda Lutheran Communities <i>Appointed 2016</i>	<b>Dr. Shante Williams</b> Charlotte, N.C. RW Capital Partners <i>Appointed 2019</i>
<b>Jennifer Beightley</b> Charlotte, N.C. JLB Pilates & Coaching <i>Appointed 2019</i>	<b>Brad Harvey</b> Mooresville, N.C. Brad Harvey Creative <i>Appointed 2021</i>	<b>Dr. Magdalena Krajewska</b> Monroe, N.C. Wingate University <i>Appointed 2019</i>	<b>Raquel Rivera</b> Charlotte, N.C. A Special Needs Plan <i>Appointed 2020</i>	<b>Bryn Wilson</b> Mooresville, N.C. Ogletree Deakins <i>Appointed 2020</i>

## BOARD RACE / ETHNICITY



- Hispanic / Latino / Latina
- Caucasian / White
- Asian / Indian
- African American / Black

## BOARD GENDER



- Female
- Male

# 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# 2021 COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

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## EXPECT MORE FROM US

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These seven goals – and our progress on each – does not begin to reflect all of our diversity work; these are a few representative highlights.

We don't mean to “toot our own horn” with this report.

We've made strides in our effort to be more diverse and inclusive and want to be transparent in sharing with you how far we've come. And how far we have to go.

This is not the first – or the last – you'll be hearing from us on the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion. We intend to update the public regularly on how we're going. We encourage you to hold us accountable.

Onward!