



2023-26 STRATEGIC PLAN



# WLRN TURNED 75 IN 2023

and WLRN TV turned 61. We launched onto the airwaves the same year the Polaroid camera was invented, and long-playing vinyl records were first introduced. A great deal has changed since 1948. The population of Florida has increased nearly 10 times over, WLRN has grown into a successful public media organization delighting thousands of South Floridians every day, and the photography and music industries have been completely re-invented in the digital age.

A significant anniversary provides an opportunity to celebrate our history, reflect on where we are today, and look forward to where we want to be tomorrow. We are proud of our long and impressive history, but we also recognize that the successes of the past don't promise successes for the future. The dramatic decline of vinyl, cameras, and local newspapers has shown the impact of technological change and how personal habits can change very quickly even though interest in music, photography, and news is as high as ever.

We know that we must continually adapt to meet the changing needs of our communities. We also believe that we can rise to the challenge. We need to reach a larger part of our community, including

younger and more diverse audiences, and to engage people where they are. Linear radio and television will remain important to our future, but we must also do more to engage South Floridians in other ways, including digital, social, and in-person engagement.

We also recognize that public trust and discourse is at an all-time low thanks, in part, to the decline and disappearance of many local newspapers and other family-owned media. Equity investment firms now drive much of local journalism and programming.

WLRN continues to connect South Florida to local stories every day, but we also believe we can and should be our region's leader in local storytelling to inform, educate, delight, and rebuild connection and trust in our community.

Achieving our ambitions won't be easy and we will need to invest in our people, our communication tools, and the overall organization to grow our impact and make a difference. We will also need partners to work in collaboration with and to help us generate the resources required to strengthen our organization and the community.

Over the next three years, we will build on our strong foundation of success and directly face our challenges. We will strive to create a better future for WLRN and the people of South Florida and, to do this, we will:

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**Further Diversify WLRN audience**, content, staff, and board while staying true to the organization's values and loyal audience and funder base.

**Engage People Across Platforms** with captivating content that reaches people how they want to be reached, including traditional, digital, social, and in-person engagement.

**Create a Great Place to Work** that attracts, retains, and develops staff that will be vital to WLRN's future success while fostering a culture of teamwork, kindness, and equity.

**Collaborate Effectively internally** to build successful relationships between teams and develop content and solutions that meet audience and other stakeholder needs.

**Maintain & Develop Public Trust** to ensure that WLRN can engage with all members of its community, regardless of background or political affiliation, while staying true to its values.

**Grow Revenue** to ensure that WLRN has the resources to invest in its people, content, and audience engagement.

**Build Productive Relationships** with a range of stakeholders locally and nationally, including the school district, legislature, community groups, local news organizations, and local nonprofits as well as NPR, PBS and other national organizations.

**Keep Up With Change** and evolve as needed to effectively address competition (local and national) and social change.

**Listen to Stakeholders** to understand how WLRN can best meet their needs, including the audience, wider community, funders, and others that will be critical to WLRN's future.

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This plan details the strategies that we intend to pursue over the next 3 years to ensure that WLRN is the essential source for engaging local and regional storytelling of consequence for and about South Florida.

We look forward to engaging with you along the way!

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Our strategic plan is driven by and organized around WLRN's Strategic Framework—detailing our aspirations for the future and the strategies that we will pursue over the next three years to better serve our community.

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## INTENDED IMPACT

WLRN aspires to be South Florida's essential source for engaging local and regional storytelling of consequence.

*At our best, we are:*

**Connecting** people with vital information, cultural insights, lifelong learning, and each other

**Telling Stories** about what resonates and matters in South Florida

**Engaging/Reflecting** everyone in the community through platforms that work for them

**Collaborating** between teams, with the school district, with local organizations and institutions, and with the wider community

**Changing/Impacting** people's lives, their communities, and the policies that affect them

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## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To address our challenges and increase our impact in the South Florida community over the next 3 years, WLRN will:

**Grow our awareness and reach** by expanding our footprint, investing beyond broadcast, being a leader in news, and increasing audience diversity across platforms.

**Increase our ability to succeed** by clarifying our long-term future, growing our capacity and insights, and strengthening our connections in the community.

# OUR GOALS



# GROW OUR AWARENESS & REACH

**Expand Our Footprint**—Look for opportunities to extend WLRN's broadcast footprint to new/unserved/adjacent geographic areas, develop community connections with other news providers, and create closer connection with Palm Beach, Broward and Monroe Counties.

- Review and, where it makes community and financial sense, take advantage of opportunities to expand Public Media to new and unserved areas through signal acquisition or partnership, including West Palm Beach and the Treasure Coast.
  - Develop partnerships with other local media outlets to share content and expand WLRN's journalistic reach to help engage new audiences and address growing disparities in local news coverage, especially local news deserts.
  - Continue to expand WLRN's staff and board presence beyond Miami to help create closer community connections throughout South Florida.
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**Go Beyond Broadcast**—Expand/improve digital and social presence and audience, including developing content for specific platforms, while continuing to grow in-person events.

- Develop an overall WLRN digital/social media content and distribution strategy to help us reach and successfully engage a larger and more diverse audience.
- Continue to expand in-person events to directly engage the community, build long-term relationships, and generate revenue (directly and indirectly).
- Identify gaps and, where needed, invest in our non-broadcast engagement capacity and capabilities, including staffing, skills, software, and hardware.

**Diversify**—In coordination with going beyond broadcast, further diversify WLRN's audience (and content, staff, and board) to reach a younger and more diverse community representative of South Florida and all its people while staying true to WLRN's values.

- Clarify who WLRN currently serves across platforms and ultimately further diversify WLRN's audience (with consideration to age, race/ethnicity, and political ideology) to ensure that the organization serves all South Florida communities that align with WLRN values.
  - To help increase audience diversity, continue and expand WLRN's platform-specific content development to help engage audiences how they want to be reached and enjoy media.
  - Further increase staff and board diversity to help ensure all community voices are heard and to help grow connections with diverse audiences throughout South Florida.
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**Lead in Local**—Expand WLRN's role as a leader in South Florida news and storytelling.

- Increase WLRN's focus on local government throughout South Florida to provide more insight into the issues that impact all communities in the region.
  - Explore opportunities to expand and deepen WLRN's Florida coverage, including developments in Tallahassee that are shaping the region and the state.
  - Consolidate and grow WLRN's role as South Florida's premier storyteller across platforms, particularly with video, and take advantage of cross-platform promotion opportunities.
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**Increase Awareness**—Grow overall brand awareness of WLRN throughout South Florida.

- Clarify and define the brand purpose, positioning, and personality of WLRN and its services.
- Develop a WLRN marketing and communications strategy and associated campaign to increase awareness of WLRN and grow audience across all platforms, including in-person events.

# INCREASE OUR ABILITY TO SUCCEED

**Secure Long-Term Future**—Ensure that WLRN's broadcast operations are secure for the long term and update the organization's corporate name to better reflect its current reality.

- Continue to work with Miami-Dade County Public Schools to secure a long-term future for WLRN's radio and TV broadcast operations, including potential future acquisitions.
  - Review and update the organization's corporate name and identity (in coordination with the rebranding work), to reflect Friends of WLRN's new status as a manager, owner, and operator of Public Media.
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**Clarify and Adapt**—Clarify WLRN's overall approach to serving younger audiences within a changing media environment and community needs.

- Continue to grow and expand the reach of WLRN's award-winning television documentaries through national and international distribution with accompanying K-12 classroom materials.
  - Recognizing that early childhood learning is losing its viability via traditional television and radio broadcasting, develop and implement local initiatives that use WLRN's journalism and storytelling to better serve younger audiences.
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**Invest in People**—Grow WLRN's overall human resource capacity, increase staff and board diversity, and ensure that WLRN has the people and culture needed to fulfill its mission.

- Build WLRN's staff and board capacity to position the organization for future growth and increased impact in the community (while also ensuring that WLRN is reflective and representative of South Florida).
- Create a work culture and environment that promotes a safe, creative, productive, and collaborative community that helps WLRN attract and retain the people it needs to thrive.



**Grow Insight**—Ensure that WLRN has the information, insight, and processes needed to guide internal decision making and meet external needs.

- Further develop WLRN's data capabilities and culture to help ensure that information and insight is collected, analyzed, and used as a decision-making tool or future success.
  - Share audience and other insights with teams throughout the organization to allow all relevant people to know, grow, and engage WLRN's constituents.
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**Grow Revenue**—Continue to grow WLRN's overall financial health to help ensure that WLRN can continue to invest in its people, the organization, and the needs of the community.

- Continue to expand WLRN's financial capacity across all revenue generation areas, particularly high growth areas for public media such as major giving and philanthropic support, to ensure that the organization can invest in its future.
- As engagement on non-broadcast platforms and with new audiences grows, ensure that WLRN has the tools and capabilities needed to capture revenue from new sources (especially as legacy media engagement and public media's traditional funding models decline)