As Connecticut Public develops our future, central to our mission is providing impactful local journalism that fully reflects our state—the highlights AND the challenges.

Rooted deep within our soul is our desire to provide our state with great investigative journalism. We’re happy to report that with much of your support, we now have our new investigative unit—The Accountability Project—up and working led by veteran journalist Walter Smith-Randolph along with long-time Connecticut reporter Jacqui Rabe Thomas and data journalist Jim Haddadin. Look for continued in-depth meaningful original journalism which we’re confident will strengthen our state in the long-run.

We have also made continued investments in an invigorated visuals team (think photos, videos, graphics). In addition, we just added a new education reporter, Catherine Shen, a new social media editor, Sabrina Herrera, and news producers Matt Dwyer and Jeni Ahrens to our growing and talented staff.

None of this would have happened without you and your support. Period.

So, for that, thank you and we look forward to sending you further updates on our organization’s journalistic progress in the months and years ahead.

Many thanks,

Mark G. Contreras, President and CEO

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Why make an annual leadership gift? We’re sure you’ve asked yourself that question because you are both a member and a leadership donor to Connecticut Public. What’s the difference and why does it matter?

Many donors at the $1,000+ level contribute as both a member and a leadership giver. Some donors see membership as a contribution to the TV and radio they watch and listen to so faithfully. When they make an additional annual leadership gift, they do it to help Connecticut Public grow—creating new programs, adding reporters and interns, or planning for organizational and technological expansion. Connecticut Public values our 55,000 members and donors. We especially appreciate your double duty as both a Member and an annual Leadership Giver. We wouldn’t be Connecticut’s trusted public media source with you!
The Accountability Project, CT Public’s new investigative reporting team lead by editor Walter Smith-Randolph, has hit the ground running. With our two new hires in place, we’re turning stories that are making an impact.

In our first month, we produced a fact-check about the rise in car thefts in Connecticut after politicians claimed there was a huge spike and blamed the juvenile justice system. Our fact check showed the numbers didn’t add up and it led to a deeper dive. In the coming months, Jacqui Rabe Thomas will have a three-part series about the challenges facing the juvenile justice system. In late July, Jacqui and Jim joined forces to produce another fact-check on exactly how much the governor’s pay raises will cost taxpayers. Jim’s data skills have also come in handy, adding context to stories like motor vehicle thefts in Connecticut and leading the way with two previously unreported stories—Tweed New Haven Airport’s risky expansion deal and the number of vaccine mandate exemptions at UConn.

We’re also collaborating with our daily reporters in the newsroom. Jim and Patrick Skahill have teamed up to tackle a story about the solar panel industry while Walter is assisting reporter Ali Oshinske with an investigation into Connecticut’s corrections system.

Walter Smith-Randolph, Editor and Lead Reporter, The Accountability Project

IN profile

Jacqui Rabe Thomas, Investigative Reporter
Jacqui Rabe Thomas is a familiar name to Connecticut Public listeners and viewers. During her nearly 12-year tenure at our partner, The Connecticut Mirror, Jacqui collaborated with us on housing and education reporting. She’s excited to tackle even more as TAP’s Investigative Reporter. Jacqui holds a master’s in public policy from Trinity College and is a graduate of Bowling Green State University. She calls Hartford home.

Jim Haddadin, Data Reporter
Jim is no stranger to New England. He most recently worked as an investigative producer at the NBC owned and operated station in Boston. He also wrote for newspapers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. His work has been recognized by the Radio Television Digital News Association, the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences as well as the New England Newspaper & Press Association. He calls New Haven home.

INvestigative reporting

The Accountability Project team is (left to right) Editor and Lead Reporter Walter Smith-Randolph, Investigative Reporter, Jaqueline Rabe Thomas, and Data Reporter Jim Haddadin.

Connecticut Public is profoundly grateful for the contributions of many of you, our closest friends, who helped us launch The Accountability Project. Thank you!
When Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico four years ago, we approached it as a local story because, for the more than 300,000 state residents with a link to the island, it was.

So we started *The Island Next Door*, a year-long, newsroom-wide project with trips to the island and reporting in Connecticut to document the effects of the storm. We spoke with people who stayed in Puerto Rico, and those who tried to make new lives in Connecticut. The award-winning reporting aired locally, regionally, nationally, and culminated with an hour-long television show.

Now, four years later, we’re refocusing. In July, Reporter Brenda León, Visuals Editor Joe Amon, and Visuals Journalist Ryan Caron King returned to the island to document the lives of people who find themselves torn between Puerto Rico and Connecticut, still living with Maria and the aftermath. Their work will result in the September episode of *CUTLINE: Los de María*. Watch live or stream on CPTV Passport.
Our nine NENC stations are working together to produce news that informs and empowers our communities across New England, a region that is becoming more diverse every year.

But we recognize that the voices in news coverage haven’t always reflected that diversity. Too often while reporting, journalists in our industry have turned to sources they know—and too few of those sources are people of color.

Over the past year, the NENC stations have collaborated to amplify the voices of more community members in our stories and radio programs. Our journalists recently created an internal database of hundreds of sources across New England, highlighting people of color who are experts on topics ranging from climate change to public health.

That’s one of the steps the New England News Collaborative is taking to strengthen our coverage now and in the future.

Diversity makes our local and regional journalism stronger; our multimedia stories richer and more nuanced; and public media truer to its mission.

Distant relatives of Pat Wilson Pheanious, a Connecticut state representative, are memorialized in the Witness Stones Project, which honors the lives of enslaved people in Guilford, Connecticut. Pat’s story is part of a special radio series, “Racism in New England,” produced by the NENC and America Amplified.