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. 29 translators and transmitters serve listeners in portions of seven northeastern states, and measure over 400,000 monthly listeners.

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. We have news bureaus in the Capital District (Albany, NY), the North Country (Plattsburgh, NY), the Pioneer Valley (Springfield, MA), the Berkshires (Pittsfield, MA), the Hudson Valley (Poughkeepsie, NY) and the Southern Adirondacks (Saratoga Springs, New York).

In addition to our local presence on Morning Edition, we air 18 regional newscasts daily, a one hour, magazine format program at noon and half-hour regional news programs at 3:30 and 6:00 pm.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to create many challenges for WAMC, but also many opportunities. Listenership to our Roundtable panel continues to increase, in part because so many more people are working from home. Technology enabled our staff and panelists to work from home with studio-quality sound. Because they weren’t required to travel to the station, we were able to include many new and diverse voices to our panel. This interactive program spent considerable time addressing the major stories of 2021: the pandemic, national politics, and the economy, from a local point of view.

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. We also invite listener participation on 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 24/7 Listener Comment Line, inviting reaction to any of our programs. Comments 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 numerous specialties. WAMC has an extensive web presence at http://www.wamc.org, providing Internet streaming of WAMC and WAMC-HD 2. We offer a number of different podcasts as well as on-demand listening for many of our programs and we integrate 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. Several of our colleagues in the broadcast and print media are regular panelists or co-hosts on a number of WAMC programs. Unfortunately, the pandemic again precluded our live remote broadcasts in 2021.

Another unfortunate result of the pandemic was the forced closure of The Linda, WAMC’s Performing Arts Studio) where music, lectures, debates, films, and more are presented before a live audience. We were, however, able to present a number of Zoom events which were very well received. We remain committed to our local, neighborhood arts and community organizational partners and look forward to reopening our doors once again when it is safe to do so.

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:

* Our Fund Drive Partnerships

Over the years, like many other public broadcasters, WAMC has offered thank-you gifts to our donors for specific pledge amounts. In an effort to help other community organizations and offer a different kind of “thank you” to our donors, we have begun partnering with various local and national organizations. When listeners call in with their pledge, instead of offering them a coffee mug or tote bag, we are able to give them the opportunity to help someone else. A generous donor to a partner organization will give $100 to that organization for every $100 contributed to WAMC.

In October, 2021, in partnership with The Adirondack Council, supporters pledged to help keep 200 tons of carbon pollution out of the atmosphere, each receiving a Carbon Reduction Certificate from The Adirondack Council. In February 2021, in partnership with the Seymour Fox Memorial Foundation and Joseph’s House, listener contributions to WAMC triggered the Seymour Fox Memorial Foundation to help 900 homeless individuals to get a home for a night, including a warm and safe place to sleep, three meals, access to personal care, access to medical and dental care, legal services and other support services to help them stay off the street. And in June of 2021, in partnership with The Food Pantries, listeners were able to provide food for 400 families and summer hygiene products for over 250 needy families.

* Outstanding Regional News Programming

Because of COVID, the WAMC News Department learned to reinvent much of its news coverage and production process. Several reporters worked from home and in one-person news bureaus to keep density levels at WAMC’s newsroom down. WAMC interviewed guests and recorded commentators in a variety of manners to approximate studio sound quality: Opal Comrex, Zoom, tape synchs, Google Voice, ReportIt, and VoiceMemos. Some commentators set up home studios to ensure sound quality.
During FY 2021, in addition to the steady stream of national, regional and local news, WAMC relied on reporters throughout our region to produce a special series on returning and changing holiday traditions during the pandemic. The series ranges from light to serious topics.

WAMC collaborates with other public radio stations across New York including WNYC, WBFO, WXXI, WSKG, NCPR and WRVO as well as PBS affiliate WMHT. This has led to increased use of WAMC’s New York-focused stories by other stations in the state, promoting WAMC’s original reporting. Being a part of this collaboration has benefited WAMC’s news coverage and therefore improved and expanded information delivered to the station’s listeners.

We continued to air content cross-promoted with WMHT’s New York Now, including several interviews with newsmakers. We coordinated on occasion with WFCR to share audio of western Mass. newsmakers, and conducted regular interviews with WNPR in Connecticut about Connecticut politics and government.

* Arts, Culture, Politics and more on The Roundtable:

WAMC’s morning program, The Roundtable, is a daily three-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 and beyond.

The program begins with a two-hour panel discussion about the news of the day with a regional slant provided by host Joe Donahue and WAMC President and CEO Alan Chartock, and several guests to round out the panel. Representatives of the educational community, the medical community, the LGBTQ community, the African American community and local journalists are regularly on hand to participate and listeners weigh in on the topics through e-mails, many of which are read on the air. The program continues with thoughtful interviews with A-list newsmakers, authors, artists, sports figures, actors, and people with interesting stories to tell.


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 academia. The Academic Minute features a different professor each day, drawing experts from top national and international institutions.

Due to the pandemic, we unfortunately were not able to host interns as in previous years.

WAMC has solid relationships with regional colleges and universities, frequently featuring professors as commentators and experts on our local and national programs. We partner with several colleges to offer journalism students hands-on training in news gathering in their own region. Three of WAMC’s senior
staff members teach university-level courses in Communications and Journalism at local colleges and universities.

We continued partnering with the New York State History Museum and the New York State Historian on our podcast, A New York Minute in History.

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 measurable success of our fund-drive partnerships, the scores of awards we have received, and the 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.

* Awards:

- WAMC won a Regional Edward R. Murrow Award for Best Podcast for “A New York Minute In History.”
- Under the WAMQ banner, WAMC won a Critical Coverage merit award for “station efforts to inform about the ongoing coronavirus pandemic” in the annual Massachusetts Broadcasters Association Sound Bites Awards.
- WAMC has won three Excellence in Broadcasting Awards from the New York State Broadcasters Association. In the 55th annual competition, WAMC won in the following categories:

  - Outstanding Election Coverage: WAMC Election Coverage 2020
  - Outstanding Live Local Coverage: Albany Protesters Turn Dangerous
  - Outstanding Podcast: A New York Minute In History

* Fund Raising:

Because of the pandemic, WAMC was unable to have a traditional fund drive with volunteers in the room. Nonetheless, fund-raising took place via a “locked box” and during the Roundtable program and membership income actually exceeded that of any previous year. Listeners contributed well over $3 million dollars during FY 2021 in support of the station’s work. Monthly sustaining membership revenue is at an all-time high.

* Fund Drive Partnerships:

Our cause-driven fund drive partnerships have, in particular, drawn an incredible response from both our partners and from our listeners who are enthusiastic in their response. Hundreds of callers made it a point to tell their volunteer that they thought the partnerships were the best kind of fund raising and
the best “premiums” we ever offered. We continue to reach out to other organizations for fund drive partnerships and are able to feature two or three during each drive.

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 2020, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2021. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

WAMC’s daily locally produced programming regularly covers issues of relevance to minority groups including people of color, women, children, and people with disabilities. 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.

Once we are safely able to open, The Linda (WAMC’s Performing Arts Studio) will offer live lectures concerts films and more, much of which will be broadcast regionally. Programming includes world folk and popular music, jazz, films, lectures forums and debates.

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 our neighbors in our inner-city neighborhood access to a high-quality performance venue. 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.