

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.

At WFDD, our mission has always been to serve and connect with our community in meaningful ways. This past year was a powerful reminder of just how vital that mission is. When Hurricane Helene struck, knocking out communication systems across the High Country, we remained one of the few reliable sources of information. As the storm intensified, we paused our fund drive and shifted to extended live coverage, providing critical updates beyond our usual newscasts. Being that trusted voice when everything else was silent reinforced the importance of our work. For listeners who were experiencing flooding, power outages, and uncertainty, especially those near our Boone transmitter, this information was essential. WFDD was the only radio station on the air during this storm in the Boone area.

But our commitment to our community goes beyond crisis moments. Across the 32 counties we serve, local news is disappearing—many towns no longer have a newspaper to rely on for news coverage. We've stepped up to help fill that gap, covering more than **820** local stories this year alone. One of our senior reporters traveled to small towns, including areas that no longer have a local news source, to hear directly from residents about what mattered most to them in the upcoming election—ensuring that every voice had a chance to be heard. Whether it's covering local government, schools, or the stories of everyday people, we're dedicated to keeping our listeners connected to what's happening in their own backyards.

WFDD is about more than just delivering the news. We're here to bring people together. Our Book Club held four meetings in two towns, bringing together dozens of readers for thoughtful discussions. Our Look Up and Listen event drew more than **250** attendees, who gathered for an evening of storytelling under the stars, enjoying food, friends, and even telescopes to take a closer look at the night sky. Through The Hive®, we're empowering young people in radio journalism. More than **100** students have participated in our Radio Camp, high school classes, after school program, or Wake Forest University college class. And our community drink meet-ups have been a hit, with nearly **200** people joining us, whether for coffee at one of our three morning gatherings or local craft beers at our five evening events across the listening area. At WFDD, we're not just informing the community, we're creating connections that last.

At our core, we're more than just a radio station. We're a neighbor, a resource, a gathering place, and a friend. Whether it's delivering trusted news when disaster strikes, covering the local stories that matter, bringing people together through community events, or empowering the next generation of journalists, WFDD is here for our listeners. Through every storm, every challenge, and every story that needs to be told, we remain committed to serving and connecting our community.

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.

At WFDD, we believe that meaningful journalism and community engagement go hand in hand. This past year, we deepened our commitment to serving our region through investigative reporting, educational initiatives, and events that connect and inspire. Whether amplifying underreported stories, providing hands-on opportunities for young journalists, or creating spaces for thoughtful conversation, we strive to be more than just a news source — we aim to be a trusted partner to the communities we serve. Through strong collaborations with local organizations, educational institutions, and cultural institutions, we continue to expand our reach and impact across our 32-county listening area.

Public Media Collaboration

Ensuring that we cover issues affecting underserved communities within our region remains at the heart of our mission. This year, our newsroom focused on investigative reporting that holds institutions accountable and highlights gaps in services that impact vulnerable populations. One example is our in-depth reporting on supportive housing projects that were promised but never built in North Carolina (<https://www.wfdd.org/story/sold-promise-north-carolina-supportive-housing-projects-were-never-built>). This work exemplifies our commitment to telling stories that matter and bringing attention to issues that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Community Engagement & Education

To educate is part of our mission. Hive®, our youth education program continues to create meaningful opportunities for young people to develop journalism skills and share their unique perspectives. Through Hive®, we connect with students, teachers, and parents across our region, reinforcing the importance of amplifying youth voices in public media.

In FY24, we continued our Radio 101 partnership with R.J. Reynolds High School, where students explored critical topics through in-depth reporting. Our Radio Camp, a hands-on experience for middle and high school students, grew in both reach and impact this year. Radio Camp gave students the opportunity to learn the craft of radio journalism — conducting interviews, writing scripts, and producing their own audio stories. As part of the experience, students interviewed a variety of community members, learning firsthand how to tell meaningful, impactful stories. Across all Hive® programs, we engaged over **100** students, fostering the next generation of journalists and storytellers.

Our Photo of the Year initiative continued to bring the visual storytelling of our listeners to life. This year's exhibition returned to its established locations, with **80** attendees at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Winston-Salem, **60** at the Blowing Rock Art & History Museum in the

High Country, and **40** at the Ambleside Gallery in Greensboro, ensuring audiences across the region could experience the collection. While the locations remained the same, engagement grew significantly, with over **600** photo submissions from listeners, reflecting the deep connection our audience has with sharing their perspectives through photography.

This year's Look Up and Listen event welcomed around **250** attendees for an evening of storytelling, community, and connection. Originally scheduled to take place at Hanging Rock State Park, the event had to be moved at the last minute after the state canceled all events at state parks due to the hurricane. Thanks to the support of two new partners, Camp Hanes and StoCo Provision Company, we were able to seamlessly relocate the event while keeping the same date. Attendees gathered in this beautiful new setting to listen to a thoughtfully curated public radio show episode, share s'mores around the campfire, and connect with WFDD team members and each other. The success of this event reinforced the strength of our community partnerships and our shared commitment to creating meaningful spaces for public media engagement.

At WFDD, we believe that strong partnerships make our work more meaningful and impactful. Whether through investigative journalism, youth education, artistic initiatives, or community events, we remain committed to deepening our connections across the region and continuing to serve as a vital resource for the communities that rely on us.

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.

At WFDD, we believe that the strength of our station lies not just in the stories we tell, but in the connections we foster and the tangible impact we have in our community. Through strong partnerships and community-driven initiatives, we've been able to inform, engage, and directly support the people we serve — whether by providing life-saving information, amplifying underrepresented voices, or addressing real community needs.

One of the most immediate and measurable examples of our impact came during Hurricane Helene, when WFDD served as the only available source of emergency information for some communities in the High Country. Many of our listeners told us that, at the scariest moments during and after the storm, we were all they had — broadcasting on their old battery-operated radios when all other communication channels had failed. Stories like these reinforce not only the critical role we play in public safety and emergency response, but also the responsibility we have to ensure that communities can always count on us in times of crisis.

As a result, we have invested funding into shoring up our equipment in the High Country, including the installation of a new generator that will ensure we remain on the air, no matter the conditions. This improvement guarantees that WFDD will always be in a position to provide

essential emergency information when our listeners need it most. Our role as a trusted lifeline for the region is one we take seriously, and we remain deeply committed to keeping our communities informed, connected, and safe — before, during, and after the storm.

Our commitment to public service extends beyond news coverage. In December, WFDD partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank and Kaplan Early Learning for a special backpack campaign, distributing 1,300 backpacks filled with food to students as a thank-you gift for supporting the station. This initiative ensured that children facing food insecurity had access to essential resources during the holiday season. By working together, we were able to directly connect students with the support they needed, while also strengthening our ties with community partners who are on the front lines of hunger relief.

Our Hive® youth education program continues to create space for young voices, fostering media literacy and storytelling skills among students. This year, we engaged over 100 students through Radio 101, Radio Camp, and other Hive® programs, equipping them with tools to tell their own stories and explore important issues. The success of this program is reflected in both student and parent feedback. On the final day of Radio Camp, parents attended the listening party, where they heard the pieces their children had created over the week. Many expressed excitement and pride in their children's work, reinforcing the value of giving young people a platform to share their voices. This moment underscored the impact of Hive® — not only in empowering students but also in building connections between families, education, and public media. All of the student stories from these programs are available on our website and are aired Saturday mornings on WFDD.

Meanwhile, our Look Up and Listen event, centered around introducing people to public radio programming and station staff brought 250 attendees together for an evening of conversation and community. Many of those in attendance were experiencing the event for the first time, and families with children of all ages came out to enjoy the evening. Partnering with Camp Hanes and StoCo Provision Company for this year's event allowed us to expand our reach and introduce new audiences to WFDD's mission. The enthusiasm and positive feedback from attendees were so strong that we are adding an additional similar event this spring, further building on the success of this community gathering.

At WFDD, we measure success not only in numbers but in the stories we hear from those we serve. From listeners who relied on us during Hurricane Helene, to students empowered by our Hive® program, to community partners who see increased engagement because of our collaborations — every initiative we undertake is designed to inform, connect, and uplift. Through deep-rooted partnerships and a commitment to public service, we continue to make a lasting impact across our region.

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 2024, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2025. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

Serving our entire community, including underserved and underrepresented populations, is at the core of WFDD's mission. We recognize the importance of ensuring that our journalism reflects the diversity of our region and that our reporting reaches as many people as possible — particularly those who have historically been overlooked in mainstream media.

Recently WFDD hired a Spanish-speaking reporter, further strengthening our ability to provide in-depth coverage of Hispanic and Latinx communities in our region. This reporter has helped us connect with Spanish-speaking audiences, ensuring that their perspectives and stories are represented in our newsroom. By continuing this investment, we are working to break down language barriers and provide more accessible, inclusive reporting.

Additionally, WFDD launched an ongoing Spanish-language blog on election night, providing real-time election results and updates in Spanish. This initiative ensured that Spanish-speaking community members had direct access to critical electoral information in their preferred language, improving accessibility and engagement during a pivotal civic event.

We also continue to track and analyze source diversity through quarterly reports, ensuring that the voices featured in our stories accurately reflect the demographic makeup of our community. By actively seeking out diverse sources and perspectives, we aim to amplify voices that are too often left out of the conversation and foster more inclusive storytelling.

Our Hive® Education Program continues to provide meaningful opportunities for young people from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds to engage in storytelling and journalism. The Radio 101 class at R.J. Reynolds High School, an arts magnet school in Winston-Salem, serves one of the most diverse student populations in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School District, representing students from more than 40 countries. The student body is 34% Black, 33% White, 25% Hispanic, 5% Multi-Racial, and 3% Asian, with approximately 50% qualifying for free and reduced lunch as part of the school's Title 1 designation. This program equips students with the tools to tell their own stories, explore critical issues, and amplify perspectives that might not otherwise be heard, ensuring that public media remains accessible and representative of the full community it serves.

Plans for FY25: Expanding Access & Representation

WFDD is committed to making our reporting even more inclusive and accessible in FY25. We plan to expand Hive® partnerships to reach more students in rural and underrepresented communities, ensuring that young people from all backgrounds have the opportunity to develop their storytelling skills and share their perspectives. We are also exploring additional bilingual content options to better serve non-English-speaking audiences and provide more news coverage that speaks directly to the needs of these populations. Additionally, we are actively

seeking out more stories that impact underrepresented communities, ensuring that our newsroom continues to shine a light on issues that matter most to them.

At WFDD, we remain committed to elevating diverse voices, increasing access to critical news, and fostering an inclusive public media space for all.

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?

CPB funding has been essential in allowing WFDD to serve our community in ways that would not be possible without it. This support enabled us to provide critical, live updates during Hurricane Helene, ensuring our listeners had reliable information when other communication systems failed. It allowed us to expand local news coverage, filling gaps in areas that no longer have their own news sources and covering over **820** local stories, including an election series that gave a voice to underserved communities. CPB funding also strengthened our community engagement efforts, from hosting book clubs, drink meet-ups, and live storytelling events to expanding The Hive®, which trained over **100** young journalists. It supported our Photo of the Year exhibition, which received over **600** submissions and engaged audiences across multiple locations across our **32** counties. Simply put, CPB funding makes it possible for us to be more than just a radio station. It allows us to be a trusted source of news, a gathering place, and a vital part of the communities we serve.