



## 2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

*"I trust WFYI to provide calm, accurate information at all times and especially during times of crisis."*

- Melissa, WFYI Member

**Smart, loyal & committed like the very best of friends, WFYI is a nonprofit organization providing trusted news & quality entertainment for 50 years – educating & engaging the community. WFYI is Always Here For You.**



**WFYI is a valuable part of Central Indiana's advancement.**

- As the leading noncommercial media outlet, WFYI is uniquely positioned to connect with and explore critical community issues.
- WFYI serves as a local conduit for trusted news, inspiring stories and lifelong learning.
- Through community-engagement journalism, WFYI's news team expands awareness of local issues, as well as efforts to address them.

**In 2021, WFYI provided these vital local services:**

- Three full-day television stations, providing a mix of inspiring stories, trustworthy news and lifelong learning.
- Two digital radio stations.
- A mix of on-demand and digital access to our programs, news stories and educational resources.
- Community outreach and engagement that informed both our reporting and diverse communities.

**WFYI's local services had deep impact in Central Indiana.**

- Shared expanded health, education, criminal justice and policy information.
- Partnered locally to amplify stories from and share information with underserved communities.
- Told local stories of culture, history and civics, building a stronger understanding of our world.
- Prioritized digital distribution to meet audiences where they are.



## 2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

Through a mix of news and television, radio and digital programs, WFYI provides meaningful information to central Indiana's diverse audiences. The station couples its trusted journalism, inspiring stories and efforts with ongoing community engagement, outreach and partnerships, designed to expand both public awareness of WFYI's content and the station's engagement with Central Indiana's diverse communities.

### Meeting Our Community's Evolving Needs & Preferences

In addition to a mix of national and locally produced radio and television programs, WFYI continued to **expand its engagement activities** through events, social media, community partnership, educational resources and web content. With the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, WFYI continued to prioritize virtual engagement, from Facebook Live conversations to expanded social media engagement efforts. Alongside that broad-scale work, WFYI's community engagement team increased its outreach locally, building on previous health engagement and collaboration with other local publications as they also forged new relationships with educational groups.

In fiscal year 2021, **WFYI increased its digital services and reach**. From adding podcast versions of popular audio programs to expanded digital supports on the news team, WFYI was able to expand our audience and engagement. Alongside this growth, WFYI also was able to retain the pandemic-fueled growth in website service to the local community, with a special focus on our radio livestream and our news services. Finally, we saw year-over-year growth with our on-demand video audience, demonstrating our commitment to meet audiences where they are and provide programming that meets their needs, from local digital shorts to high-interest dramas.

In 2021, several existing WFYI initiatives continued to provide our community with critical supports in a time of unprecedented needs. WFYI's **Bright by Text** service continued providing age-based information to parents and caregivers and sharing local information about essential supports such as utility insurance, job fairs and COVID-19 updates. Our **Side Effects Public Media** collaborative, hosted by WFYI, provided our local and regional audiences with important updates about the dynamic impact of COVID-19. As schools grappled with a return to in-person learning, COVID spikes, battles over curriculum and demands for better staff supports, WFYI's **expanded education coverage** offered both in-depth news and analysis, helping families navigate a challenging period.

### Connecting to Our Local Community During a Global Pandemic

As the pandemic continued during WFYI's 2021 fiscal year, our audience and community engagement teams never stopped finding new ways to connect with our community.

WFYI's event series, including the News & Brews trivia events, WFYI Nerds gatherings, the Listen Up events featuring NPR and PBS personalities, Side Effect events and Data and Drafts, presented in partnership with SAVI, were held in primarily virtual settings. Depending on the local COVID risk, we were able to hold some in-person events, which our audiences delighted in. From cooking classes featuring local Black, female chefs to dynamic conversations on important news, WFYI's team continued to bring issues, challenges and stories to life through community connections.



## 2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

In the virtual space, WFYI's team presented a series of **Facebook Live events** featuring experts and community members. Additionally, WFYI continued the **Nerds "Back to School" series** and **virtual Listen Up events**, featuring Fresh Air's Terry Gross and No Passport Required host Marcus Samuelsson.

WFYI also proudly shared content and events designed to **showcase local relevance for national programs**, including The Black Church and Hemingway. Through a partnership with the local Indy Women in Food group, Black congregations, and Central Indiana-focused fashion and design magazine Pattern, we elevated the voices of local churchgoers, explored how attire reflects cultural pride, and highlighted local culinary creatives through recipes and a cooking class. We worked with local artists to create local looks for each engagement effort. Additionally, local writers and the Indy Parks system were featured in our outreach efforts.

WFYI's community engagement team expanded to reflect our journalist's broader reach. This was achieved in partnership with local Black-owned newspaper The Recorder, educators, health systems and other public media agencies. Through a mix of listening sessions, community conversations and outreach activities, WFYI staff both elevated issues facing essential workers and helped our reporting team connect with those in schools, hospitals, neighborhoods and more.

### **Recognized for Quality Programming & Reporting**

WFYI journalists and television producers were also recognized for their work. In the last year, our team collected numerous nominations and awards for a variety of news stories, newscasts, feature reporting, documentaries, marketing, public affairs programs and more. WFYI Public Media journalists earned **14 awards from the Indiana Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists** for a wide range of work, including coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-racism protests. Additionally, WFYI content creators and production partners were nominated for 14 Regional Emmy Awards from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences' Lower Great Lakes Chapter's awards.

WFYI's reporting went beyond informing our audience of essential news. They also shaped policy. WFYI's Side Effects reporter Jake Harper won a 2021 Edward R. Murrow Award for continuing coverage in the large market radio category for detailing the pandemic's impact inside Indiana's prisons. Following months of stories, the corrections department began a comprehensive review of the Indiana Women's Prison and its warden retired.

Our commitment to collaboration and community engagement journalism led to WFYI becoming the new home of the America Amplified initiative in 2021. The America Amplified initiative aims to expand the use of journalism practices that meaningfully address local information needs through active listening and engagement, especially in communities that have been traditionally underserved by public media. In this second iteration of the project, America Amplified 2.0, 20 public media stations will be part of community engagement journalism cohorts, with the goal of expanding this practice within public media outlets.

## Building Civics Knowledge

WFYI continued to build civics knowledge for all ages with its video short series, Simple Civics. In an important political year, Simple Civics broke down elements of the political process and U.S. civics in bite-sized ways, highlighting both the history and hot topics within our electoral process. Episode topics included the electoral college, the peaceful transition of power, Supreme Court appointment process and the history of political debates in the U.S.



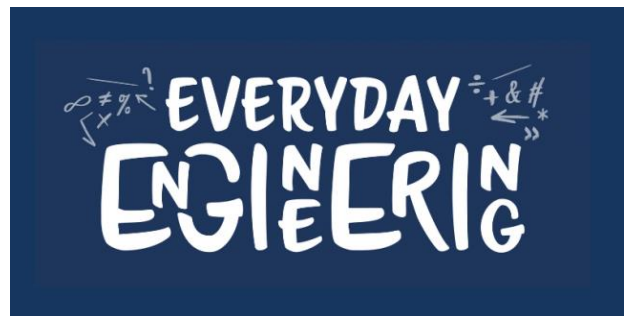
## Community Challenges: Through an Equity Lens

The WFYI News team adopted an equity lens for all reporting efforts. From education to health to economy, this focus informs all WFYI journalism – and is sparking change in the community. For example, they explored the burden people of color experienced in the workplace during the pandemic. Following that story, a leader of a local hospital reached out to the reporter to ask about making vaccines available to those workers and their communities – and they soon set up a clinic nearby.



## Showcasing STEM Careers & Diversity

In partnership with the Indiana Afterschool Network, elementary-age learners were able to connect with local heroes with WFYI's Everyday Engineering! In a series of short videos, children got to meet six Hoosier women whose work in STEM fields aimed to give little engineers insight into the engineering design process. WFYI's Everyday Engineering series was distributed across all social channels, as well as through the partner organization's channels.



## Preserving Cultural History

On the radio and via podcast, WFYI launched Echoes of Indiana Avenue at the beginning of our 2021 fiscal year. This audio documentary celebrates the cultural contributions of Black creatives whose work brought the Hoosier capital's Indiana Avenue to life throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From jazz legends to drag shows, host Herman "Butch" Slaughter – who grew up and performed on the Ave – and producer Kyle Long are capturing this history and sharing it broadly.



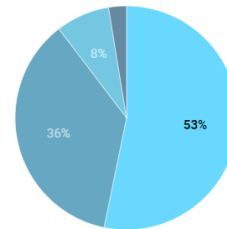
## Illuminating the Impact of Policy on People's Lives

While covering Central Indiana's pressing challenges, as well as potential solutions, WFYI reporters place an emphasis of the impact of policy on everyday lives. One series shared the stories of women who have lived with HIV for decades. Another story highlighted how lack of training impacts school resource officers and students, following several high-profile cases of alleged abuse of power. As our team covered homelessness, articles highlighted not just point-in-time counts, but what it would take to truly end homelessness.

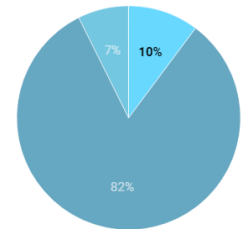
### HIV In Indiana

Newly reported HIV cases in Indiana in 2020 showed Black women disproportionately affected by the disease.

■ Black ■ White ■ Hispanic ■ Other



Female HIV cases



Female population

## Journalists Who Activate To Cover Stories & Continue to Report on Context

In April 2021, a 19-year-old killed eight people at a local FedEx facility. WFYI News quickly reported on the evolving story and the impact after the event. That coverage didn't stop after the initial burst of news. The WFYI team continued to report on the impact on local victims and the laws that did not prevent the shooting, sharing their analysis and the deeper context with the broader NPR network as well.







## 2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT

# STORIES OF IMPACT

## Programs & news that serve our diverse audiences

In 2021, WFYI's leadership team identified our next steps for programming, audience and sustainability. At the core of our plans is our intention: "Always Here for You." In this year, we have realized a vision of "here" that encompasses meeting our existing and emergent audiences in all the places they are. Additionally, our "you" is intentionally diverse: we seek to serve all those in our community who rely on the kind of trusted, inspiring and educational programs we deliver.

### Reach in the Community:

This year included a transition of power unlike any we have seen in our time and the ongoing struggle to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, two situations that compelled us to continue our commitment to reaching audiences throughout our community. From digital conversations to listening sessions that helped us understand community needs to screening partnerships, we were able to meet the interests, needs and opportunities presented by both our audiences and our programs.

### Partnerships:

2021 partners included but were not limited to: local school districts and teachers, Child Care Answers, Indiana Afterschool Network, organizations focused on inclusive practice for people with disabilities, the Indianapolis Recorder, health clinics and hospitals, cultural groups, and several groups representing the interests of newcomer and refugee populations.

### Impact and Community Feedback:

In 2021, our team re-committed to sharing content in an audience-focused way. WFYI's audiences have expanded on social media and through streaming platforms. We have heard consistently, from both partner organizations and individuals, that both our long-time and novel approaches are meeting community needs.



"WFYI has been doing outstanding work in the area of promoting expanded civic education for the people of Central Indiana."

- Jonna M. MacDougall  
Assistant Dean IU  
Robert H. McKinney  
School of Law



*“WFYI has a long history of listening in the community and acting upon what it learns through television, radio, news, community events, education services and social platforms.”*

*– Laura Alvarado, Executive Director  
Indiana Blind Children’s Foundation*

WFYI’s impact is revealed in both these snapshots of our work and in the audience numbers that demonstrate our reach.

In the last year, WFYI was able to reach:

- 2.2 million visitors to our website, a new record
- Almost twice the number of programs streamed online in our community
- Increased engagement across all social media channels, tripling engagement across all channels



WFYI’s ongoing Bright by Text project sends free age-based texts to local subscribers. Through the service, local parents and caregivers receive learning tips and local resources that support families, especially during pandemic surges and challenges with child care access.

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**WFYI continues to always be here for our full community, sharing trusted news, inspiring stories and lifelong learning with the goal of a more informed, inspired and inclusive Indiana.**

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