



2021-2022 Local Content and Service Report to the Community

**Atlanta's Choice for NPR and PBS:
WABE 90.1 FM, WABE TV,
www.WABE.org**

WABE operates WABE 90.1 FM and WABE TV (Channel 30), Atlanta's original, independent, non-profit sources for news and local stories, offering NPR, PBS, BBC and more. Our stations deliver fact-based journalism and inclusive, engaging, cultural content that informs, inspires, reflects, and empowers the millions who call the Greater Atlanta area home. WABE's programs, reporting, podcasts, and events make Atlanta's stories and storytellers accessible and relevant across a variety of platforms for our diverse audience of listeners, viewers, visitors, and members.

Reaching 34 counties and 54 percent of Georgia's population, WABE's content is free to the community via radio, television, and the web at www.WABE.org. Nearly 1 million people engage with WABE per month across all platforms.

With every story, we're amplifying Atlanta.

IN THE COMMUNITY

LOCAL VALUE

Independently minded and inclusive to the core, WABE is the conduit for perspectives, voices and stories as unique and diverse as the people of the greater Atlanta area. We are our community's steadfast public resource for local and national news and stories. Through well-rounded, thoughtful content, we share the commonalities that help a big world feel smaller. Whether by broadcast, digital, social media, or in person, the connections we create are grounded in the truth and presented without bias. WABE is a vital community resource, providing high-quality local journalism focused on issues of importance to people all across our area. WABE is locally supported, with 90 percent of our operating budget coming from metro Atlanta, primarily through member support and underwriting.

KEY SERVICES

WABE provides credible, accurate reporting. We counter false narratives with verified facts. We are tireless in our effort to present the fullest version of the truth we can deliver—from the tiniest detail to big-picture context. By providing the facts people need to reach their own conclusions, we achieve our mission to create a more informed public, one better able to recognize false claims and avoid being misled. Our journalists produce 2,000+ local news stories per year.



Through our in-depth coverage of local issues, original podcasts, innovative digital content, and broad television line-up, WABE's programming reflects the people and culture of Atlanta. Our free programming and community outreach activities inspire deep exploration of community issues, amplify vital civic conversations, connect Atlanta's diverse audiences, and encourage media literacy.

LOCAL IMPACT

WABE broadcasts to 23 of Georgia's most populated counties, reaching more than half of the population of our state, and some of the most influential decision makers in the region. Our newsroom expands audience awareness and understanding of policy issues that impact their communities. Through monthly events, civic forums, and community partnerships, we connect with audiences where they live in ways that are essential to a healthy democracy.

HIGHLIGHTS: JULY 2021-JUNE 2022

In 2021, WABE's board and staff crafted a bold new strategic plan to guide the organization through the next four years. This plan vastly expands our ability to serve the public and enhances our sustainability as a nonprofit media organization. It requires commitment, vision, and investment. We are determined to build new audiences, align our content mix to better serve and reflect metro Atlanta's needs and interests, and meet our audiences when and where they want to engage. Over the next four years, we will seek to further diversify our audiences and our donor base, and ensure our coverage is creating a more informed public and meeting the changing needs of the whole community.

Parallel to drafting this new strategic plan, WABE developed and adopted a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) plan. DE&I drives our work and our culture, and from an administrative perspective, it is essential to our way of doing business. Our recent efforts include completion of a third-party pay equity study, the addition of a source diversity tracker in the newsroom, joining Atlanta Action for Racial Equity, and re-joining Think Public Media. Every area of the organization has developed DE&I strategies and action points, including enhanced staff training opportunities, new efforts to support minority- and women-owned businesses, and content and programming initiatives.

WABE remains committed to increasing the diversity of types of voices we hear from, aiming for a healthy balance of elected officials, experts, spokespeople, and the general public. The addition of our Source Diversity Tracking tool has enabled our newsroom to measure the diversity of voices on our air, ensuring we are inclusive and equitable in the sources we choose and the perspectives we share. In addition to monitoring the tracker internally, we publish reports twice annually on our website.



To grow our audience and reach, WABE developed a new brand strategy which unites all our content channels (radio, television, podcast, and digital) under one brand and launched our new brand and website in January 2022. The unified visual brand has led to increased brand awareness and has enhanced our show promotion and audience engagement efforts.

With one of the strongest newsrooms in the Southeast, WABE produces 2,000+ local stories per year, and our reporting is frequently picked up for national coverage on NPR, American Public Media, and other outlets. Our reporters cover public affairs, local business, environment, education, politics, and more with context and perspective. In addition to airing on radio, our news stories and features are published on WABE.org, distributed via e-newsletters, and shared on social media, reaching hundreds of thousands more digital visitors beyond our loyal radio audience. Our newsroom is diverse, with 45% people of color and 58% women. Members of this 26-person team speak six languages in addition to English, allowing us to connect with Atlanta's growing international community.

In Fall 2021, a partnership with Seattle-based environmental news non-profit *Grist* allowed WABE to expand our climate reporting in Georgia with the addition of an environment reporter. Emily Jones is based in Savannah and functions as part of WABE's newsroom but is employed and funded by *Grist*. She

is focused on climate impacts and solutions throughout the state, and her stories are syndicated in local papers in Georgia cities that don't have their own climate and environment coverage.

In partnership with Report for America, WABE added a full-time reporter in Spring 2022 to cover business, community affairs, and more in the areas of Atlanta south of I-20. DorMiya Vance provides on-the-ground coverage of Atlanta's south side that examines the root causes of inequality and drives positive change.

WABE's reporters and hosts have spotlighted overcrowding in Fulton County jails, inequities in housing and employment, unionization efforts among Starbucks employees, and the back-and-forth on Georgia's abortion ban and its impacts. WABE's podcast portfolio expanded in 2021–2022 with the addition of *The Brief*, a daily news roundup, *WABE Tech Cast*, and *Georgia Votes 2022*. Much of our content was produced across multiple platforms – radio, TV, and digital – expanding our reach and meeting audiences when and where they want to engage.



WABE's two weekday radio programs, *Closer Look* with Rose Scott and *City Lights* with Lois Reitzes are mainstays of our local programming. Since launching in January 2015, both shows have helped us to reach younger, more diverse audiences and develop new partnerships throughout metro Atlanta. *Closer Look* provides an important forum for government officials, community leaders, and change-makers, bringing together viewpoints from all sectors of society. *City Lights* amplifies public awareness of arts and cultural offerings, and consistently features small to mid-sized arts organizations alongside Atlanta's nationally recognized institutions.

WABE TV offers a full slate of PBS and PBSKids programming and produces originals that are unique to Atlanta. In 2021, WABE TV premiered a weekly talk show hosted by one of Atlanta's most outspoken and thoughtful artists. *Love and Respect with Killer Mike* features conversations between the multi-hyphenate rapper/activist/entrepreneur and the people who shape Atlanta and the world through their contributions to society. In February 2022, we introduced our new live music series, *Sounds Like ATL*. Over the course of the year, we taped 10 episodes that are now airing on WABE TV. In addition to developing new local content, WABE TV engages with audiences around PBS programs like Ken Burns' *Muhammad Ali*.

WABE TV is a 14-time Regional Emmy Award Winner and received two Telly Awards in 2022: A General-Television- Silver Award for "Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms: The WABE Interview" and a General-Online-Silver Award for "Meet the Innovators: Sammie Hasen."

STORIES OF IMPACT

“The Last Year at Forest Cove” and the Impact of WABE’s Reporting



“The Last Year at Forest Cove,” a deep investigation of this privately-owned public housing complex by WABE housing reporter Stephannie Stokes, had extensive impact throughout our community. WABE 90.1 aired the five-part investigative documentary over five days (February 7-11, 2022), published it digitally on WABE.org, aired the documentary in its entirety on Saturday, February 12, and subsequently made the entire series a podcast. The investigation focuses on the residents of Forest Cove, a project-based Section 8 housing complex in Atlanta, who had been waiting years for improvements to their nearly uninhabitable units.

After years of inaction, four key entities responded to the situation within weeks of WABE’s story. Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens and Councilmember Jason Winston visited Forest Cove on February 12, just 24 hours after the final installment aired, and promised to relocate residents by the end of that week. HUD’s new regional administrator made an unpublicized visit to Forest Cove on February 17 and released a statement that conditions there were “unacceptable.” HUD later took action against Millennia Housing, the company that had been attempting to purchase the complex since 2016 and managing it since 2017. With no action from the city more than one week after Mayor Dickens’ promise to relocate residents, the Housing Justice League announced plans for a rent strike on February 21. In the face of protests by residents and the threat of a rent strike, Millennia announced in late February that it would no longer charge rent for residents of Forest Cove. The effort to relocate Forest Cove residents to more appropriate housing dragged on throughout 2022, as the nonprofits assisting with relocation struggled to find available quality housing. Residents ended up relocating to homes throughout the metro area, from Stone Mountain to Union City.

More than 100,000 WABE listeners heard some or all of the five-part story February 7-11, or the one-hour airing on February 12, for a total of 250,000+ impressions. On WABE.org, the story saw 9,574 page views: 4,764 from Facebook, and 604 from Twitter, with an average time on page of 4:29. Two follow-up stories to the original piece aired February 12 and February 21, and together had over 13,500 page views on WABE.org. The podcast, published in the summer of 2022, re-purposed content from Stokes’ original story and follow-ups, alongside new coverage. The original investigation and follow-up reporting are also showcased in [this special section](#) of our website.

WABE and other local media continued to report on Forest Cove developments throughout 2022. Conversations about Atlanta’s affordable housing crisis have continued on WABE, in other local media, and among civic and nonprofit leaders.

Season One of *Sounds Like ATL*

WABE's new music documentary series, *Sounds Like ATL*, launched in February 2022. The program is built around a desire to amplify Atlanta's diverse and world-renowned music community. Modeled after the long-running music weekly series *Austin City Limits*, produced by Austin PBS, each monthly concert features live performances from a fresh lineup representing a variety of genres. Performances were taped in front of a live audience at City Winery, then produced for air on WABE TV, with a separate edit created for air on WABE 90.1 to reach our large and loyal radio audience.



After piloting the new series with 10 episodes in 2022, we plan major changes for season two in 2023, including expanded artist interview segments and a more aggressive plan for building the TV audience. We will increase the number of episodes and opportunities for sponsorship, provide viewers a deeper understanding of each artist and how their music amplifies Atlanta, and create a more intimate feel and higher level of production. *Sounds Like ATL* is part of WABE's effort to produce more original local content and to balance our content mix to better serve and reflect metro Atlanta's needs and interests. It also supports our efforts to reach younger and more diverse audiences.

"The United States of Wildfire" and Georgia's fire-prone areas

WABE is one of the few local media outlets covering environmental issues in the Southeast. Our reporting in 2021–2022 included a groundbreaking collaboration with NPR and New Hampshire Public Radio, [The United States of Wildfire](#). This compelling piece combined reporting, photography, video, maps, and other elements in an exploration of the growing risk of major wildfires in three regions of the country where fires rarely make headlines: the Northeast, the Southeast and the Midwest. As part of this project, WABE's environment editor Molly Samuel also reported [this piece on wildfire risk in Georgia](#), which was one of our most visited stories on WABE.org in 2021.

WABE's Ongoing Election Coverage

Our newsroom delivered important coverage of Georgia's new voting laws in 2021, from their introduction and passage, the ensuing calls for boycotts, and impacts of the new laws on voters the fall 2021 elections. The Atlanta mayoral race was a focus of our reporting throughout the year, with coverage of former Mayor Bottoms' decision not to run for re-election, the 16-candidate field, debates and forums, early voting, Election Day, and the November 30 run-off election.

WABE hired two new political reporters in 2021, doubling our coverage of this key beat. Rahul Bali came to WABE in October from Oconee Radio Group and previously reported for WSB Radio, CNN Radio, WTOP Radio in D.C., and GPB's Lawmakers TV program. Bali is national director of the Asian American Journalists Association Radio & Podcasting Group, co-chair of the Atlanta Press Club's Debate Committee, and on the board of SPJ Georgia and the Atlanta Press Club. Sam Gringlas was a producer at NPR's *All Things Considered* in Washington, D.C. before coming to WABE in December 2021. He has reported for the NPR Elections Desk and NPR Business Desk. Prior to NPR, Gringlas worked at WDET in Detroit, NBC News, and *The Michigan Daily*.



In spring 2022, WABE launched *Georgia Votes 2022*, a new podcast anchored by Bali and Gringlas focused on shepherding voters through the entire 2022 election season, from the May primaries through November and any possible runoffs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



WABE’s events in 2021–2022 complemented our reporting and programming, expanded our reach with audiences, and strengthened relationships in the community. Throughout the year, we shifted from primarily virtual events to hybrid and in-person events that were often produced for broadcast and/or digital availability. We delivered more than a dozen events throughout 2021–2022, from film premieres and live music events to political trivia and panel discussions.

Athletes x Activism | September 13, 2021

WABE hosted this virtual community conversation to engage audiences around the premiere of Ken Burns’ *Muhammad Ali* on PBS. WABE host Rose Scott moderated the four-member panel, which included Olympic athlete Edwin Moses. Through this event, we engaged our audience in a meaningful conversation around Ali’s activism and his influence on future generations of athletes and activists.

WABE Day of Service | February 10, 2022

WABE staff and volunteers came together to support Atlanta Community Food Bank, Open Hand and Free99Fridge.



Amplifying Atlanta: Community Night | February 22, 2022 at Chattahoochee Food Works

WABE sustainers (those providing an ongoing, recurring monthly contribution) attended this “mix and mingle” gathering with WABE hosts and reporters.

Pints and Politics | April 19, 2022 at Urban Tree Cidery

WABE listeners joined political reporters Rahul Bali and Sam Gringlas for a night of team trivia.

Soil Festival | May 7, 2022 at the Truly Living Well Center for Natural Urban Agriculture

WABE partnered with Food Well Alliance and Truly Living Well to host this family-friendly event where people gathered to experience an urban farm. Attendees enjoyed food sourced from local vendors; learned about the importance of healthy soil; and engaged in cooking demos, kids' activities, and workshops on composting and gardening.

Housing Our Region | May 12, 2022 at the Central Fulton County Library

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens; Lawrenceville Mayor David Still; Lejla Prljaca, executive director of Gwinnett Housing Corporation's; and Focused Community Strategies' president Jim Wehner, along with Frank Fernandez, CEO of the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta and moderator Rose Scott, discussed how these two very different cities are tackling affordable housing from a municipal and nonprofit perspective, and the critical role philanthropy plays. In addition to engaging with a live audience of more than 50, this discussion was live-streamed, produced and aired on WABE TV and WABE 90.1, and made available on WABE.org.

Seeds of Resilience Season Two Premiere | May 18, 2022 at the Central Fulton County Library

WABE's Lois Reitzes hosted this screening and interviewed filmmaker Tabia Lisenbee-Parker onstage. This series of short documentaries shines a light on the experiences of Atlanta's Black agrarians.

Closer Look Open Access: Juneteenth | June 17, 2022 at Atlanta History Center

Host Rose Scott discussed the history and importance of the Juneteenth holiday with scholars and historians at this live taping of *Closer Look*.

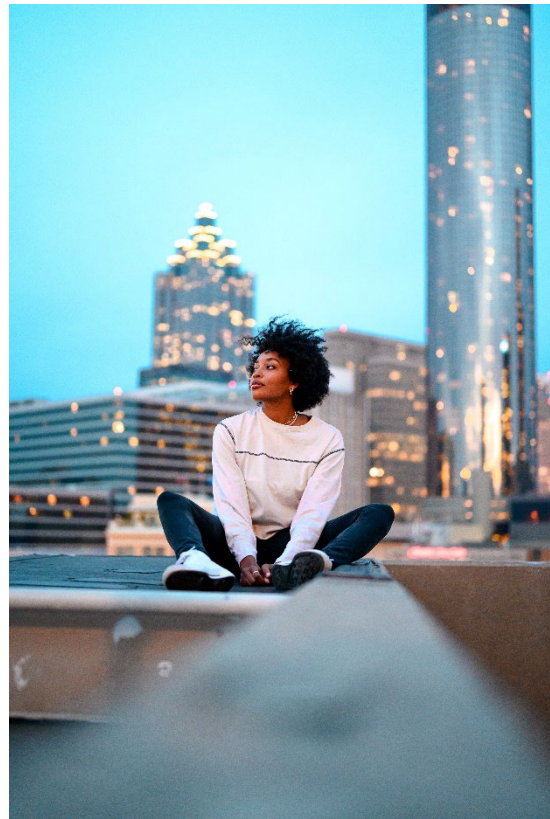


MixTape Live | June 26, 2022 at Monday Night Garage

More than 375 individuals attended WABE's second annual live music showcase featuring Atlanta artists who entered NPR's Tiny Desk contest.

Through these events and other initiatives, WABE partnered with dozens of organizations in 2021-2022, including:

- Atlanta Community Food Bank
- Atlanta History Center
- Atlanta Jewish Film Festival
- Atlanta Public Schools
- Atlanta Science Festival
- City Winery
- Cobb County Public Schools
- Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta
- Emory University
- Food Well Alliance
- Free99Fridge
- Fulton County Library System
- Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Latin American Association
- Morehouse College and Atlanta University Center
- Out on Film
- Report for America
- YMCA of Greater Atlanta



AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

“Many thanks for the great job you are doing and adding such value to our community!”

“My kids and I greatly enjoy listening to pretty much all the shows. What gives me the greatest pleasure is when my younger one will play WABE by herself to listen to the news. I love that your programs have sparked that interest in their young minds. Thank you!!”

“The wide variety of programs keep us engaged with topics and perspectives that affect our world, from the local to the global level. We learn, contemplate, talk, and feel more connected.”

“Thanks for the hard and consistent work of bringing us fact based reporting and providing context for what's going on in our community and the world around us every day. I appreciate y'all!”



WABE

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Mission & Vision

*WABE seeks to inform, inspire, reflect and empower our greater Atlanta community.
Our vision is to be the most trusted, independent source of news and local storytelling, furthering
community and civic participation and advancing equity.*