

**2022–2023**

**Local Content and Service Report to the  
Community**

**Atlanta’s Choice for NPR and PBS:  
WABE 90.1 FM, WABE TV,  
[www.WABE.org](http://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](http://www.WABE.org). Nearly 1 million people engage with WABE per month across all platforms.

***With every story, we’re amplifying Atlanta.***

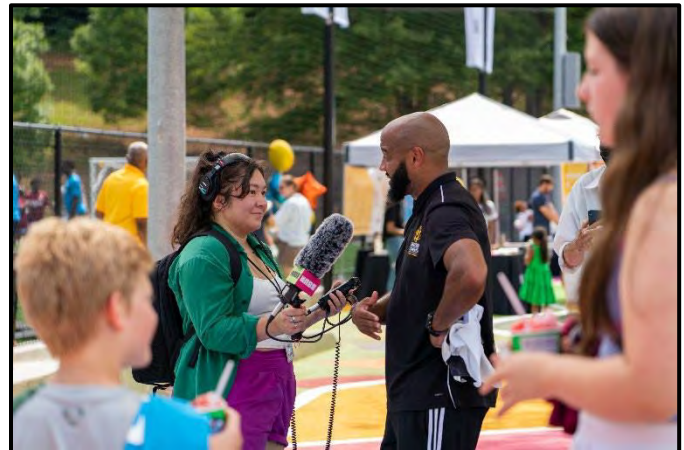
# IN THE COMMUNITY

## 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 2,600+ 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 34 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 2022–JUNE 2023



In 2023, WABE celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> year of service to the community. We held an annual preview of our work for our supporters, and proudly shared a slate of original local programs (audio and video) and gave updates on digital products to reach audiences (podcasts, e-newsletters, events).

WABE’s five-year strategic plan, developed and launched in 2021, seeks to expand our ability to serve the public and enhance our sustainability as a nonprofit organization. Our plan requires commitment, vision, and investment. We are determined to reach 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.

Garnering the energy and momentum of our 75<sup>th</sup> year anniversary, WABE has upgraded our technology infrastructure to allow us to carry operations into the future.

### **Modernization of Infrastructure**

An urgent priority has been to address our lacking and aged infrastructure. In October 2022, we hired a Chief Technology Officer to provide expertise and oversight of WABE’s modernization strategy.

WABE has invested heavily in our digital platform capabilities. We upgraded our Live Audio Stream provider, allowing for additional underwriting inventory and ease of inventory management (which benefits revenue). We have increased our podcasting capabilities and added to our catalog of shows, thus growing our underwriting inventory across this important platform. We have also revamped the WABE website, allowing for a much greater variety of banner and display ads, allowing us to increase the pricing of this platform.

WABE installed foundational hardware and software that will allow us to move to a modern network system. The remaining hardware and software upgrades will be completed over the next 24 months and will allow the staff to be more efficient and provide the ability to leverage innovative technologies that simplify their workflow and create new audio products. We purchased a Wheatstone studio system that allows WABE reporters to broadcast remotely from anywhere in the region. We recently installed our new transmitter at the tower site – allowing us to stop “tube technology” broadcasting and transition to more stable, versatile and powerful broadcasting. This upgrade has restored our broadcasting reach to 100% of our signal (vs. the fading and unstable broadcasting that was eroding to 70% and then 40% of power).

### **Newsroom and Radio Programming**

**Newsroom expansion** – WABE expanded its newsroom staff from 13 to 28 reporters. Our newsroom is diverse, with 42% people of color and 58% women. Members of this 28-person team speak six languages besides English, allowing us to connect with Atlanta’s growing international community. WABE was

recognized as the Outstanding Diversity in an Organization by Atlanta Business Chronicle 2023 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Awards. WABE was honored alongside local businesses such as the Atlanta Hawks, State Farm Arena and Georgia Credit Union.

**Excellence in local journalism** - The Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) announced winners of the 2023 Edward R. Murrow regional awards. WABE won four awards for its coverage of local stories with the depth and insight that public radio is known for. Below are the winning stories:

- Doctor at South Georgia Immigration Detention Center Abused Women, Investigation Finds - Best Hard News Feature by WABE reporter Emily Wu Pearson. (see page 6 for details).
- [The Last Year at Forest Cove: Tenants Abandoned and a Renovation out of Reach](#) – Best News Documentary by WABE reporter Stephannie Stokes.
- The Heat Effect – Best Digital Series, WABE Digital Staff. (see page 6 for details)
- [Dangerous Heat and High School Football: How Georgia Started Protecting Student Athletes](#) – Best Sports Feature by WABE’s Deputy Managing Editor Molly Samuel.

Also in 2023, WABE was awarded the following journalism awards from prestigious media organizations:

#### **The Atlanta Press Club**

- [Marshes combat climate change by storing carbon. Scientists want to know how much.](#) – Best Use of Sound by WABE environmental reporter Emily Jones.
- Georgia Innocence Project – Best Feature report by WABE Host Lisa Rayam and Producer Lily Oppenheimer. (see page 6 for details)
- *The Last Year at Forest Cove: Tenants abandoned and a renovation out of Reach* – Best Documentary by WABE reporter Stephannie Stokes.
- Rising Star Award to WABE’s Digital Writer, Editor and Producer Jasmine Robinson.

#### **National Association of Black Journalists**

- Georgia Innocence Project – Best Features (Top 15 Market).
- [A New Georgia Voting Law Reduced Ballot Drop Boxes in Places that Used Them Most](#) - Best Feature (Network), WABE, GPB, NPR (Sam Gringlas with Stephen Fowler, Jingnan Huo, Cheryl W. Thompson).

#### **The Society of Professional Journalist Green Eyeshade Awards for Excellence in Journalism**

- Best Feature, Lisa Rayam and Lily Oppenheim - Georgia Innocence Project
- Second Place News Documentary, Stephannie Stokes - *The Last Year at Forest Cove: Tenants abandoned and a renovation out of reach.*

#### **Georgia Association of Broadcasters**

- Best Podcast Series, Stephannie Stokes, *The Last Year at Forest Cove: Tenants abandoned and a renovation out of reach.*

WABE reporters earned fellowships from preeminent news reporting agencies to further our investigative reporting efforts, from ProPublica’s Local Reporting Network to cover the foster care system and housing in Georgia over the next year; Poynter Institute Editorial Integrity and Leadership Program to help incorporate training for WABE’s newsroom; and fellowships from the Association of Health Care Journalists to produce multiple stories on maternal mortality in Georgia.

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.

### **Podcast Expansion**

In February 2023, we hired a Senior Director of Podcasting to oversee the continued production of WABE’s current podcasts, develop new podcast projects tied to Atlanta stories, and manage the Podcast Network. In addition, we increased our podcast production staff from one to three.



WABE has grown WABE’s current podcast line-up in 2022–2023 with the addition of *The Boom*, a weekly look at the growing film and television in Atlanta, *Calls for Justice*, *How Do You Atlanta?*, *Wake Up & Create*, and *Democracy Vibe Check*. We proudly report increased annual podcast downloads from 1.3 million in 2020 to nearly 3 million in 2023. Also in 2023, WABE launched five new groundbreaking podcasts highlighting topics such as Atlanta’s growing movie/film industry, politics, community events, arts, and culture.

### **Original Video Content**

WABE TV offers a full slate of PBS and PBS Kids programming and produces originals that are unique to Atlanta. We founded WABE Studios and have developed, produced, and aired the following new original local shows: *Sounds Like ATL Season 2*, *Atlanta on Film*, and *(RE) Defining History\**. WABE Studios is developing the following shows with Atlanta creators and partners: *Money Mentors*, *How to be a Dope Artist*, *The Un-Wedding Ceremony*, *Twisted Soul*.

### **E-newsletters**

We invested in our E-Newsletter offerings by creating daily, weekly, and monthly news updates and community events newsletters that include premium sponsorship placement. Our newsletters are sent to 75,000 e-mail addresses and have a higher-than-average open and click rate, indicating high engagement with our content.

# STORIES OF IMPACT

## “Doctor at South Georgia immigration detention center abused women, investigation finds”

In 2022, WABE reporter Emily Wu Pearson won an Edward R. Murrow award for her reporting into South Georgia’s Irwin Detention Center where widespread medical abuse against women who were held in immigration detention. Irwin was at the center of a 2021 federal whistleblower complaint after a nurse altered advocates about suspected abuse.



Read the story [here](#).

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## The Heat Effect: Weekly on WABE

WABE’s series “The Heat Effect” was also awarded an Edward R. Murrow award for Best Digital News series. The Heat Effect covers climate change and other environmental topic related to the metro Atlanta and the state of Georgia. The stories reported in the series highlight how Georgians are adapting to climate change.



The series can be found [here](#).

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## The Georgia Innocence Project

WABE Host Lisa Rayam and Producer Lily Oppenheimer won Best Feature report from The Atlanta Press Club. The report featured the story of Calvin Johnson (pictured here with this father) who had his conviction and life sentence overturned through DNA testing.



**WABE's Continuing Coverage: Georgia bans certain gender affirming care for transgender kids**

In early 2023, WABE delivered extensive coverage of Georgia's restriction of gender-affirming care for transgender youth. WABE's Sam Gringlas reported on the state measure that prohibits doctors from providing hormone replacement therapy and other related laws that when into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**WABE's Ongoing Election Coverage**

In 2023, WABE reported more than 50 stories on the Georgia case against former President Donald Trump and his allies for alleged interference into the state's 2020 election result. Trump lost the state to President Joe Biden by 11,780 votes, becoming the first Republican since 1992 to lose the state's electoral votes.

Throughout the year, we chronicled all the news on the election interference case at our [special website buildout](#).

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



WABE’s events in 2022–2023 complemented our reporting and programming, expanded our reach with audiences, and strengthened relationships in the community. We delivered more than a dozen events throughout 2021–2022, from film premieres and live music events to political trivia and panel discussions.

### **Words & Beats: Telling the Juneteenth Story – June 16, 2023**

WABE’s Closer Look host Rose Scott moderated a discussion of generational storytelling and the importance of genealogy research among Black Americans. The event intended to unite the country’s oldest federal holiday (July 4<sup>th</sup>) with its newest (Juneteenth) to understand the past and shape the future.

### **Political Breakfast LIVE – September 20, 2022**

WABE hosted a live broadcast of Political Breakfast at Georgia State University.

### **Georgia Votes Live – November 2, 2022**

WABE hosted a live taping of Georgia Votes in partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta.

### **“Atlanta on Film” Premiere Part – January 8, 2023**

WABE City Lights host Lois Reitzes and How Do You Atlanta? Co-host Mike Jordan led a sneak peek of Season 1 of ATLANTA ON FILM, a new original WABE Studios series. The event featured filmmakers and films connected to Atlanta and her stories. The event was held at the Plaza Theatre.

### **“The US and The Holocaust” screening – January 25, 2023**

WABE hosted a screening of the “The US and The Holocaust” at The Temple.



**“Making Black America” screening – February 9, 2023**

On February 9, 2023, WABE teamed up with WABE 90.1 for a Conversation and Celebration of the Henry Louis Gates Jr. PBS documentary series – *Making Black America: Through the Grapevine*. The event featured clips from the series with a focus on HBCU’s and Black Greek Lettered organizations. The discussion was moderated by A Closer Look host Rose Scott. The event was held at Fulton County Central Library.



**“Gold Dome Scramble” Live - February 16, 2023**

WABE hosted a live session of the Gold Dome Scramble at Kennesaw State University

**“Behind the Story Telling” Buried Truths – February 28, 2023**

WABE hosted an intimate look at the artifacts and images behind Season 4 of Buried Truths. The event was held at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights.

**Women in Media Roundtable – March 20, 2023**

WABE report Molly Samuels joined a roundtable discussion around women in media at Agnes Scott College.

**Facts & Acts: Workforce Development – March 30, 2023**

In partnership with the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, WABE Closer Look host Rose Scott moderated a panel discussion for the FACTS on our region’s workforce and opportunities to ACT and make a difference.

**Facts & Acts: Arts, Culture and Creative Enterprises – May 23, 2023**

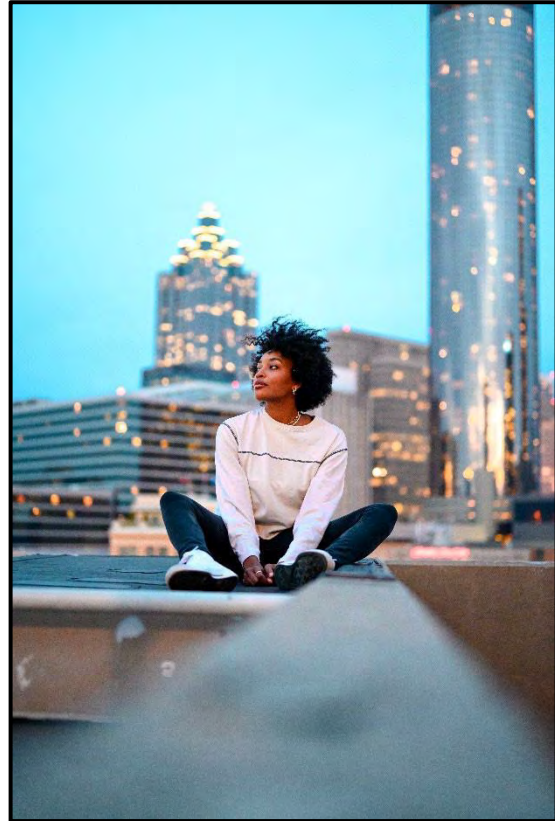
In partnership with the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, WABE City Lights host Lois Reitzes moderated a panel discussion of the FACTS on our region’s art sector to ACT and make a difference.

**WABE Mixtape Block Party – June 25, 2023**

WABE’s FREE community block party sponsored by the United Way of Greater Atlanta. The event featured a one-of-a-kind concert experience showcasing the 2023 NPR Tiny Desk Contest Winner and Atlanta-based indie artists + local food and vendors.

Through these events and other initiatives, WABE partnered with dozens of organizations in 2022-2023, including:

- Agnes Scott College
- Atlanta Community Food Bank
- Atlanta History Center
- 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
- Georgia State University
- Kennesaw State University
- Latin American Association
- Morehouse College and Atlanta University Center
- National Center for Civil and Human Rights
- Out on Film
- Plaza Theatre
- Report for America
- YMCA of Greater Atlanta



## AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

“WABE has done so well with running high quality programs that both stimulate the mind while entertaining the masses. Well done guys...Hope you guys will be around forever! Cheers!”

“I’m a huge fan of the radio station - I listen daily (mostly to the NPR programming). However, my check-ins are for pledge drive time when I volunteer for both the Spring and Fall WABE drives and the Winter and Summer PBA30 drives.”



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# WABE

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[www.WABE.org](http://www.WABE.org)

### 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.*