WHRO Public Media is dedicated to expanding minds, enriching lives, and enhancing education through the power of public media.

WHRO is a valuable part of eastern Virginia’s advancement.

21 local public school divisions own WHRO.

WHRO provides digital education courses and video streaming services to local students.

WHRO engages the community through its media services and fosters community conversations on important issues.

In 2019, WHRO provided vital local services:

Created and distributed digital course content to our member owners, home school providers, and educational institutions in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Produced award-winning content for television, radio and digital platforms that focused on homelessness, education, race, arts, sea level rise, and other topics of interest in our community.

WHRO’s local services had deep impact in eastern Virginia.

WHRO broadcast services cover just over two million households in eastern Virginia.

139,941 educators across Virginia accessed over 165,608 searchable, SOL-correlated, rich-media learning objects through eMediaVA, the on-demand digital content delivery service wholly owned by the 21 divisions that own WHRO.

“It is imperative to provide awareness opportunities to the emerging workforce as early and as often as possible. WHRO is making great headway in this initiative through their American Graduate program by providing virtual access to videos and other materials highlighting skilled careers.”

- Christina Brooks, Youth Services Senior Director, Hampton Roads Workforce Council
WHRO Public Media

Long known for its public service mission, WHRO Public Media is the only public broadcasting station in the United States that is owned by 21 public school divisions. Since its founding in 1961, as Home Room One, the ownership has established educational programming and services as WHRO’s core mission. As WHRO continues its efforts to meet critical challenges faced within the community such as early childhood education, local journalism, civility and sea level rise, the goal is clear: to be an important partner in improving the future for generations to come.

Through its ownership and its outreach, WHRO is a distinctive institution that links diverse constituents throughout eastern Virginia. Whether on radio, television, in the classroom or on the digital platform, most residents are touched in some way by the services that WHRO Public Media offers.

- eMediaVA, an on-demand digital content delivery service wholly owned by WHRO member schools, features over 165,608 searchable-digital learning objects, includes regionally produced and acquired content from Virginia educational, scientific, and cultural organizations and content from across the nation through PBS Learning Media. eMediaVA is available free of charge to every public, private, and homeschool educator in Virginia through a contract with the Virginia Department of Education and local philanthropic funding and has 139,941 registered educators.

- With more than 16,000 statewide and more than 3,900 regional enrollments in 2019, Virtual Virginia, a program of the Virginia Department of Education, features nearly 80 online Advanced Placement (AP®), world language, core academic, and elective courses. WHRO is the state Operations Center providing hosting, contracting, and instructional design services; help desk support; video streaming; and other virtual staffing.

- New locally produced educational resources in 2019 included ten Deeper Learning video segments; sixteen Virginia Indian Tribes videos; Virginia Society of Technology Educators Conference live streaming of three keynote sessions; the WHRO Young Storytellers Awards Show and Reception that recognizes and features the winners of the PBS KIDS Writers Contest; three GreenBeats video segments designed to encourage good environmental stewardship habits starting at an early age; and five Virginia Commission on Civic Education segments.

- WHRO’s Literacy Van made 50 visits across the region in 2019. Inside the van, children find age appropriate books and games. In addition, the WHRO STEM Van, equipped with 20 iPads, twelve Chromebooks, and two touch screen monitors – purchased with CPB funds, and featuring a “pop-up makerspace” made 25 visits to local festivals and events and to Title I kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms in 2019.
WHRO celebrated the fourth anniversary of the WHRO Emerging Leaders Board. The board’s mission is to seek opportunities to engage new and diverse audiences in public media. With authenticity and engagement at its core, the ELB’s most striking success has been their Emerging Talks Series, where they host public conversations about local issues, developments, and other topics of interest. In partnership with Independent Lens/POV, the ELB has hosted two Indie Lens Pop-Ups in 2019.

WHRV’s local radio program HearSay with Cathy Lewis, in its 23rd year of production, continues to address concerns important to our community. Topics range from local and national politics, civility, and sea level rise to lighter topics of local food, gardening and pet health shows. HearSay broadcasts live Monday through Wednesday at noon. On Thursdays, WHRV broadcasts Another View with Barbara Hamm Lee. The live, call-in program focuses on conversations from the African American perspective, while welcoming audiences of all ethnicities. Topics include race, diversity, politics, history, health, and ends each month with an engaging roundtable discussion.

WHRV released four new podcast series on iTunes and on WHRV.org. WHRO Reports, Moon Landing Memories, Take My Word For It, and What We Do with Doug Fraser.

WHRV launched a new program in March of 2019 called Watching America. The weekly program, hosted by British born professor Dr. Alan Campbell, combines interviews, and deep dive talks into our local and national culture through the eloquent and ever curious lens of a “Brit” who has spent over two decades ‘figuring it out’; Watching America. The program airs Friday at noon and rounds out the week of locally produced programs in the noon hour.

WHRO created a digital-first series in partnership with CPB, featuring three women who had recently transitioned from military to civilian live and the challenges they faced. The digital series ignited a half-hour documentary, hosted by Cathy Doran. She’s Coming Home broadcast on WHRO TV in March 2019, shared on wavelength, a station content sharing platform created by WNET for public media. The series received a Gold Telly Award.

In an effort to facilitate difficult conversations, WHRO is in its fifth year of the Race: Let’s Talk About It initiative. The goal is to offer a safe space for civil and thoughtful discussion about race and its impact on society from a historical, academic and sociological perspective. In 2019, WHRO collaborated with Zieders American Dream Theatre and the city of Virginia Beach Department of Cultural Affairs’ to explore historical songs, music, and musical instruments and the true meaning of the lyrics and history behind them and answer the question, “Are certain songs yet another way to keep us divided?” Hosted by Lisa Godley, with performances by Teddy Holmes and Sibel Galindez, and an expert panel, the event was a great success and attended by a diverse, multi-generational audience of over 300.
City Voices: Homelessness to Hopefulness

In partnership with the Norfolk Street Choir, WHRO produced a documentary following the lives of six members of the Norfolk Street Choir, a choral group comprised of Hampton Roads residents affected by homelessness. Every Friday morning the group gathers at Freemason Baptist Church for breakfast and a choir session under the tutelage of Virginia Symphony Chorus Master Robert Shoup. The production brought to light the struggle of homelessness and inspired local conversation as well as increased involvement with local charities helping the homeless.

Curate 757 & Curate

WHRO launched the fourth season of the Emmy-award winning Curate 757. The successful digital first series explores the thriving art scene in Hampton Roads. Each week, the program features a local artist. Each episode is included in the parent broadcast series Curate, which highlights artists from various cities through the MMG arts initiative. Curate and Curate 757 receives support from five city production grants, and is underwritten by local museums. Produced in partnership with the Old Dominion University Cinema Department, the 13-part broadcast series premieres each fall. WHRO.org/Curate.

The Historic Attucks Theatre: Apollo of the South

In partnership with the City of Norfolk and the Virginia Arts Festival, WHRO produced a documentary celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the Attucks Theatre. Financed, designed and constructed by African American entrepreneurs in 1919, the theatre, located in Norfolk Virginia and named after Crispus Attucks, an African American, and the first person killed in the American Revolution. The documentary launch a yearlong celebration, which included performances by national jazz artists.
Moon Landing Memories

July 20, 2019 marked the 50th anniversary of the Apollo moon landing. To celebrate, over thirty WHRO listeners shared their memories of the historic moment. The audio memories, broadcast during Morning Edition and distributed as a podcast inspired listeners in Hampton Roads and beyond! As part of our celebration, WHRO created a companion website, whro.org/chasingthemoon, to the PBS Chasing the Moon series, implementing local historic events, interviews, photos and videos from NASA Langley.

Wall of Faces

There are 1,307 names of Virginian Vietnam Veterans listed on The Wall. WHRO proudly spearheaded a statewide initiative to ensure every Virginian listed has a photo. The images will become part of the Wall of Faces, a lasting tribute for The Education Center at The Wall. Since the launch in November 2015, the meaningful project has been the source of joy, sadness, and deep gratitude for the WHRO staff. As of this date, there are only three photos left to complete our mission and honor our Virginia soldiers.

1619 Commemoration Ft. Monroe Broadcast

On August 23, 2019, Another View with Barbara Hamm Lee, broadcast live from Ft. Monroe to commemorate the arrival of first enslaved Africans in English North America. Joined by historian Dr. Cassandra Newby Alexander and National Park Service Superintendent Terry Brown, the program explored the rich history and series of events that helped shape a people and nation. Despite the 90 degree weather, over 200 audience members attended and the conversation continued well beyond the broadcast.
American Graduate

Through multimedia content and promotion, WHRO highlights the work being done to help students, parents, educators, and businesses become aware of and connect with training, apprenticeships, and resources to jumpstart a career. This multi-year collaboration, in partnership with Hampton Roads Workforce Council, Virginia Ship Repair, and Tidewater Community College, promotes the advantages and opportunities provided by skilled careers. Through community engagement, events and promotional campaigns, WHRO has successfully engaged the target audience and connected viable resources through partnerships.

Sonatas & Stories

WHRO members and guests enjoyed a treat in mid-May with the free event Sonatas & Stories, a culmination of both WHRV’s The Writer’s Block and WHRO FM’s Classical Open Mic. The event was part of the opening series for the Susan S. Goode Fine & Performing Arts Center at Virginia Wesleyan University and featured classical music performances along with spoken word performances by local artists. The event streamed live on Facebook and broadcast on both WHRV and WHRO FM.

Virginia Media Spelling Bee

WHRO and Tribune Publishing collaborated to produce and televise the 12th Annual Virginia Media Spelling Bee. Hosted by Raymond Jones, 63 of Hampton Roads’ finest young spellers, and local spelling bee champions, competed in the live broadcast on WHRO TV15. The event was streamed live on Facebook and the winner went on to compete in the Scripts National Spelling Bee in Washington, DC.
Journalism

Reach in the Community:

Long form reporting is essential now more than ever. With the dominance of social media, dwindling local newspaper journalism, and the challenge placed on America’s public to delineate between ‘fake news’ and the truth, public media serves a critical role in today’s world. In 2019, WHRO leadership established a newsroom and hired our first news director, Bec Feldhaus Adams. In January of 2020, two full-time reporters were hired to create multi-media features for WHRV and public media stations across the state through our statewide collaboration project.

Partnerships:

VPM
VPR
WMRA
Evelyn Y. Davis Foundation

Impact and Community Feedback:

The community is supportive of our local journalism efforts, especially the addition of a local newsroom. While 2019 was a planning and set up year for WHRO, we engaged community stakeholders through listening sessions and are in the process of acquiring Hearken, an engagement management system, which helps the newsrooms create more relevant, representative and original content.

WHRO Journalism Mission Statement:

WHRO seeks to provide thoughtful, in-depth, fair, unbiased, accurate news and information content on broadcast and digital platforms. Through this content, we seek to inform, educate, and engage the residents of eastern Virginia and to reflect the diverse voices of our communities.

“I love the reliable journalism of NPR and the great local and regional focus WHRO provides.”
– M. Frazier, Norfolk VA
“The classical offerings, the operas, and the whimsy – it is all grand! Thank you.” – Najla Kurani, retired teacher, Gloucester VA

180 teams of three to five students participated in the 34th annual Great Computer Challenge competition at Old Dominion University.

In 2019, WHRO earned two Regional Emmy Awards, one NETA award, nine Telly awards and five Virginia Association of Broadcasters Awards.

WHRO’s website has over 4,684 unique page visits a day and 1,709,576 unique visits annually and 4,028,713 podcast downloads in 2019.

WHRO staff conducted fourteen early childhood training sessions and 30 events across the region that reached more than 8,500 families and educators. In addition, WHRO distributed 2,730 First Books to those most in need.

WHRO reaches an audience of just over 274,286 through social media platforms. Our social media accounts are comprised of 46,000 unique users.

WHRO Public Media not only provides our community high-quality education and entertainment that are hallmarks of public media, we also engage our viewers, listeners, educators, and students with a variety of significant outreach programs. We provide avenues to respond to our programming and the world around them in meaningful ways, allowing an exchange of ideas. Born out of a belief more than fifty years ago that media can be used to enrich and inspire, WHRO has continued to explore every new technology to expand that belief.