

PRESS RELEASE:

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Report For America Selects WFAE as Host Newsroom for Two Innovative Reporting Partnerships in 2020

Charlotte, N.C. (Dec. 5, 2019) – Report For America (RFA) will send three emerging journalists to Charlotte to work with WFAE and its partner organizations - Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), and La Noticia, the Spanish-language newspaper. The Library's partnership with WFAE makes it the first library to serve as a host newsroom by RFA.

RFA, which started in 2018, is a national service program that places journalists in local news organizations to report on under-covered communities and issues. RFA will pay for half of these journalists' salaries, and its local news partners will pay another portion. Together, RFA and the local groups will work together to find local and regional funders to contribute the remainder.

The reporters will serve at least a year with the opportunity to continue for a second year. RFA will screen applicants and local news organizations will select from four to five candidates. After training with RFA, the journalists will start in June.

In one partnership, WFAE is teaming up with the Library and DPLA to host two emerging journalists – a reporter and a community Wikipedia editor – who will report on local government and community issues. That coverage will air on WFAE and be published on WFAE.org. It will also be a source of content for the Library and Wikipedia. The journalists, working with staffs from all three organizations, also will convene community conversations about important issues that emerge, especially leading up to the Republican National Convention and the 2020 elections. A Wikipedia expert at DPLA will serve as a mentor over the course of the partnership.

“Libraries, like newsrooms, seek to inform, engage and empower people to make their lives and their communities better,” said Ju-Don Marshall, WFAE’s chief content officer. “With those mutual goals in mind, we will use this unique partnership to experiment with different ways of engaging residents around news and information to better meet their needs.”

“Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is excited to be the first public library involved in the Report for America initiative. This project will strengthen our relationship with WFAE and DPLA, as well as leverage the strength of Wikipedia to make an impact on the availability of information about local issues, politics, and the people in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community,” said Martha Yesowitch, community partnership leader at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

“In a country founded on the freedom of the press, there shouldn’t be news deserts, but there are -- places where people don’t have access to the latest information about their community,” said John Bracken, executive director of DPLA. “Through this first-ever, forward-thinking collaboration with Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and WFAE, DPLA will help fill this gap for communities in Mecklenburg County by doing something that others have only talked about - combining the strengths of Wikipedia with the strengths of a newsroom. Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of the best libraries in the

country and we're excited to partner with them and WFAE to do what libraries do best -- ensure that information is free and accessible to all."

In the second partnership, WFAE and La Noticia will share a reporter who will explore issues of immigration and deportation facing the Latino community. The reporter also will report on the Charlotte immigration court, one of the toughest in the nation with the second highest deportation rate in the country so far this year.

"The partnership with La Noticia will help both of our organizations better serve the Latino community during a time when immigration policy dominates our public discourse," said Marshall. "Through this partnership, we will go beyond policy reporting to look at the effect immigration and deportation practices have on families and the larger community."

"All of us at La Noticia are very happy to have this partnership with Report for America and WFAE. This will benefit our community a great deal," said Hilda H. Gurdian, publisher of La Noticia.

About WFAE

WFAE 90.7 FM is a nonprofit public radio station, licensed to the University Radio Foundation Inc. With 90.3 in Hickory, 106.1 in Laurinburg and 93.7 in Southern Pines, WFAE serves more than 320,000 monthly listeners and 200,000 monthly readers in the greater Charlotte region with an award-winning mix of local, national and international news, and entertainment programs from NPR® and other content partners. Listen online at WFAE.org.

About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America's leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online resources, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to improve lives and build a stronger community. For more, visit cmlibrary.org.

About Digital Public Library of America

The Digital Public Library of America amplifies the value of libraries and cultural organizations as Americans' most trusted sources of shared knowledge. We do this by collaborating with partners to accelerate innovative tools and ideas that empower and equip libraries to make information more accessible. Visit <https://dp.la>.

About La Noticia

La Noticia is an award-winning media company that produces the largest Spanish language newspaper in North Carolina. For more than 22 years, it has served the growing Latino community in North Carolina with coverage of immigration, local and state government, politics and community news. La Noticia has four local print editions: Charlotte, the Triangle, the Triad and the Mountains.

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