



**KUOW** ORG  
94.9

**n p r** Network

# Impact Report

## Fiscal Year 2024

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

*Photo: Megan Farmer / KUOW*



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# From Our President

“What’s next?” is a question that looms large.

After a 50-year career in television and radio, I’m retiring in just a few months. “What’s next” is on my mind, both for myself and for public media. But as I reflect, I’m confronted with how little space there’s been to reflect on “what was.”

I’m hard-pressed to name anything that hasn’t changed in media.

Since I came to KUOW over a decade ago, audience expectations have shifted seismically. Trust in institutions is plummeting and increasing numbers of listeners seek affirmation of their personal worldviews above all else. Newsrooms have grappled with representation, inclusion, and the urgent pursuit of anti-racism.

Amidst all the change, KUOW has again and again hurled itself into the breach, asking “what’s next?”

Our task wrote itself: reimagine our storytelling. To do that well, we’ve cultivated a newsroom staff that reflects our community. We’ve emphasized transparency around who is gathering facts, and how. We’ve cultivated a virtuous feedback loop, establishing a Community Engagement department where humans respond to nearly 6,000 listener comments annually and incorporate your thoughts into newsroom deliberations. And we’ve sought to meet you where you are: while you can still listen live to 94.9 FM, you can also find KUOW on your phone, in your podcast feed, across social media, or out in your neighborhood.

I’m in awe of what the KUOW team has achieved in pursuit of surprising, delighting, and informing you every day. But I’m most proud of YOU. When you listen, respond to our questions, come to an event with a friend, or invest in us, you make public radio possible. You have always been the most important ingredient in our success.

Change is inevitable, and twists and turns lie ahead for independent media. But we are confident that our competence, courage, and creativity—and you—will carry the day.

Thank you, and farewell.

**Caryn G. Mathes**

*President and General Manager*



## Our *Mission*

**To create and serve a more informed public.**

## Our *Vision*

**Broaden conversations.  
Deepen understanding.**

# A Year of Challenges, Change, and Growth

KUOW believes in the power of knowledge to transform lives, foster a vibrant democracy, and build a thriving community. KUOW's mission is simple yet profound: to create and serve a more informed public.

Public media's business model is unique, and access to public media programming is not a given. Across the public media network in 2023–2024, stations faced severe financial headwinds from changes in funding sources and media consumption habits that required the realignment of operating cost models. Like many other organizations, KUOW made the difficult choice to reduce our staff, eliminating eight existing positions and closing our RadioActive Youth Media Program.

Though difficult, these changes brought new opportunities. KUOW's 2023 Audience Next research provided critical insights that helped us calibrate our content and audience engagement strategies as we pursue digital infrastructure growth that ensures that everyone has free access to honest, fact-checked news.

The future of journalism is precarious. The funding model that has sustained public radio for generations must evolve.

As ever, KUOW remains committed to its core service: producing high-quality, in-depth news. At the same time, KUOW is embracing a culture of data-informed innovation and experimentation as it reaches new audiences and inspires their support.

For over seventy years, KUOW has provided trusted programming that addresses the civic, electoral, community needs of millions across the Puget Sound region. As society faces increasingly fragmented worldviews, it's crucial to invest in a service that invites more to the table.

Photos: Megan Farmer / KUOW

## FY24 Awards

### *Society of Professional Journalists Awards*

- General Excellence (Writing)
- Education Reporting (Writing)
- Health Reporting (Writing)
- General Excellence (Audio)
- Audio Series (Audio)
- Health Reporting (Audio)
- Environment and Natural Disaster Reporting (Audio)
- LGBTQ and Equity Reporting (Audio)
- Technology and Science Reporting (Audio)
- Multimedia Storytelling

### *Public Media Journalists Association Awards*

- Arts Feature
- Enterprise
- News Feature

### *Regional Edward R. Murrow Awards*

- Feature Reporting
- Sports Reporting

### *National Murrow Awards*

- Sports Reporting, Large Market Radio
- Audio Feature Reporting, Student Division





# Our Impact

**“It’s important for a functional democracy to have publicly funded media, and that it be available to all, regardless of ability to contribute.”**

***Eric S., Seabeck***



# Daily News, Free and Accessible to All

KUOW was founded with the idea that everyone should have free and open access to trustworthy news. We provide a critical service to our local community as a free source of local, national, and international news. No paywalls, just facts.



KUOW Photo / Megan Farmer

## Making the Global Local

In addition to distributing breaking international news from NPR and the BBC, KUOW highlights local ties to global stories. Amidst news of the Israel– Hamas War and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, KUOW reporters **turned to local experts to understand the history behind the conflict** and shared diverse perspectives from Washington **Palestinians, Israelis, activists, and voters.**



KUOW Photo / Megan Farmer

## From D.C. to Washington State

From **abortion access** to **Indigenous land back movements**, KUOW united national conversations with regional realities. We reported on locals navigating national issues including **book bans, election misinformation, and school gun violence.** Through our extensive local reporting, KUOW reporters uncovered how our nation's debates both shape and are reflected in the everyday lives of average Seattleites.



KUOW Photo / Megan Farmer

## Impactful Regional Reporting

KUOW chronicled daily issues in the Puget Sound with clarity and curiosity. We explored the growing pains of progress, from **keeping Seattle's art scene alive** to protecting our treasured natural landscape amidst rapid **AI advancement** and **population growth.** But there's room for the quirky and the curious, too: the joys of a **local raquet sport gone viral** (you know the one), an **examination of our crow obsession**, and **celebrating a transformational era for women's soccer.** When quality local news can be a rarity, KUOW stands apart.

# Our Reach

Avg. Weekly Broadcast Listeners  
(Nielsen)

**280,115**

Avg. Monthly Streaming Listeners  
(Triton)

**217,062**

Avg. Monthly Podcast Downloads  
(Triton/Podtrac)

**468,983**

Active Contributing Members  
(KUOW Records)

**44,616**

Monthly Members  
(KUOW Records)

**23,285**

Avg. Monthly Page views on  
KUOW.org (Google Analytics)

**883,544**

Newsletter Subscribers  
(Salesforce)

**78,021**

Social Media Followers  
(Meta, Google, LinkedIn, TikTok)

**128,430**

Community Feedback Club  
Members (Groundsource)

**957**

Pieces of Feedback from  
Listeners (KUOW records)

**7,192**

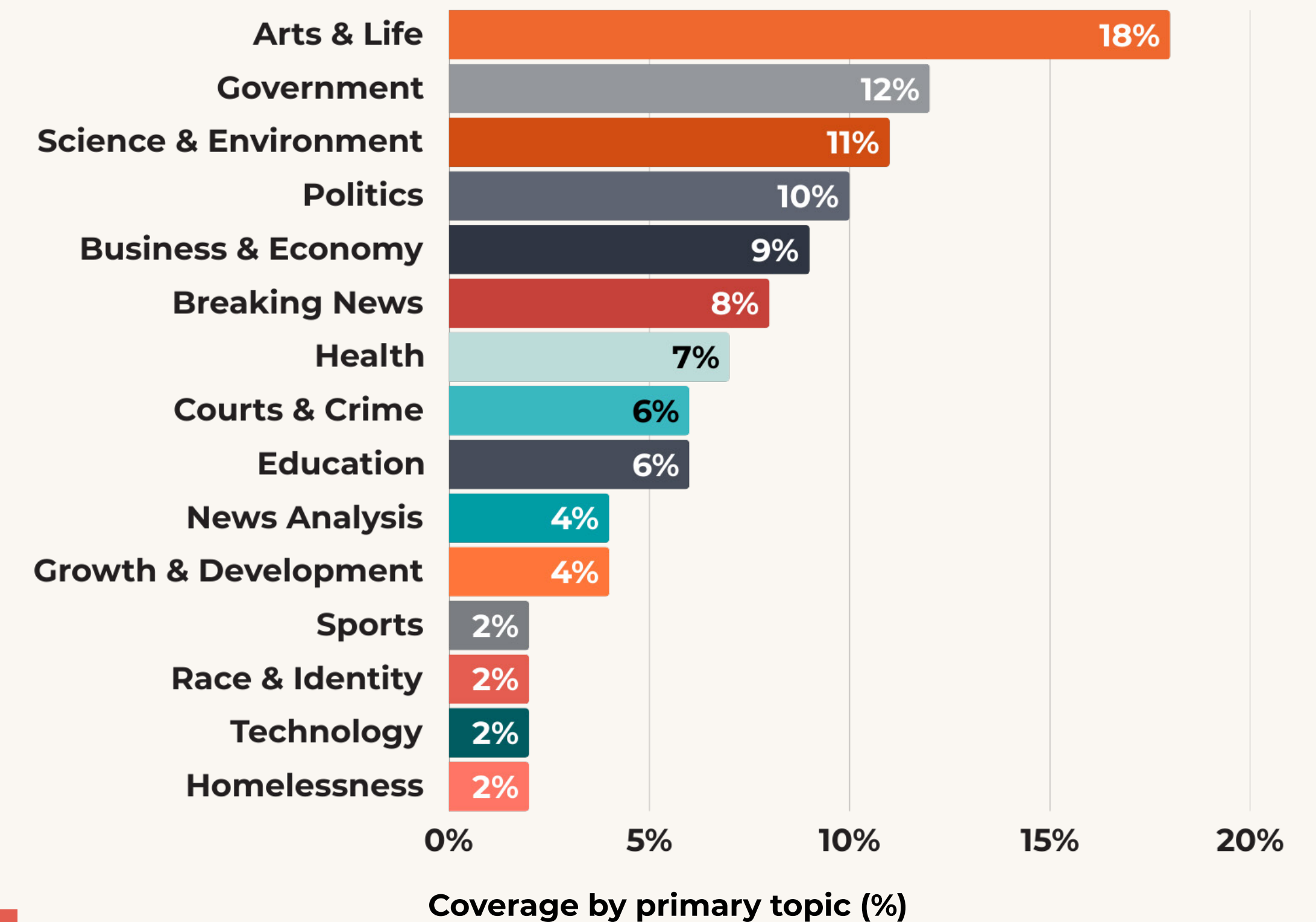
KUOW and Partner Event  
Attendees (KUOW Records)

**13,297**

# Our Local Coverage

KUOW seeks to cover a diversity of issues impacting our region. Here's a breakdown of our local coverage in FY24 by primary topic based on 2,360 stories.

Source: KUOW Records.





**“I felt it important to tell you how much I value and have valued KUOW and public radio. It has caused me to be more inquisitive, curious, and helped me not be stuck in my ways. And to see that there are many ways to look at things.”**

*Tom N., Seattle*

# In-Depth Local Reporting

KUOW provides a vital service to the Puget Sound region, going beyond surface-level reporting to bring communities in-depth coverage and thoughtful, balanced analyses of important regional issues. KUOW goes beyond the headline, unpacking the context that brought us to today, following up as stories develop, and exploring diverse perspectives. These are the hallmarks of KUOW's service to the community.



KUOW Photo / Megan Farmer

## Exploring Regional Complexities

KUOW's immersive storytelling builds empathy and understanding around complex issues such as homelessness, addiction, and mental health. From covering the **opioid crisis on the Olympic peninsula** to the **isolation of homelessness**, KUOW's programming dives beneath the surface. KUOW also highlights stories of hope and recovery: from **a mother whose children inspired her sobriety** to **one man's devotion to his wife amidst dementia** to the **students whose advocacy in congress put Narcan in schools**.



KUOW Photo / Megan Farmer

## Holding Power to Account

Whether it involves spurring a **months-long investigation into the former Seattle police chief ending in his resignation** or providing the foundation for a **U.S. Senate discussion** around the **burden of child care costs on families**, KUOW's timely, clear-eyed investigative reporting drives change. Our reporters work tirelessly to hold institutions accountable—from **local school districts** (and **their hiring practices**) to **Seattle's Parks and Recreation department**.



KUOW Photo / Megan Farmer

## Connection Through Storytelling

Above all, KUOW values the stories that bring the Puget Sound together. KUOW's reporters deftly capture stories of today, like **diverse young ballerinas getting "en pointe,"** or **five courageous women fighting off a cougar**, or the curious case of **a sovereign nation encapsulated on a houseboat**. But we also reckon with the past, **looking back at 50 years of LGBTQ+ activism in Seattle**, or **joining Japanese American prison-camp survivors protecting their legacy**, or simply telling the sweet story of a **community coming together in a long-lost secret garden**.

# Diversifying Our Coverage

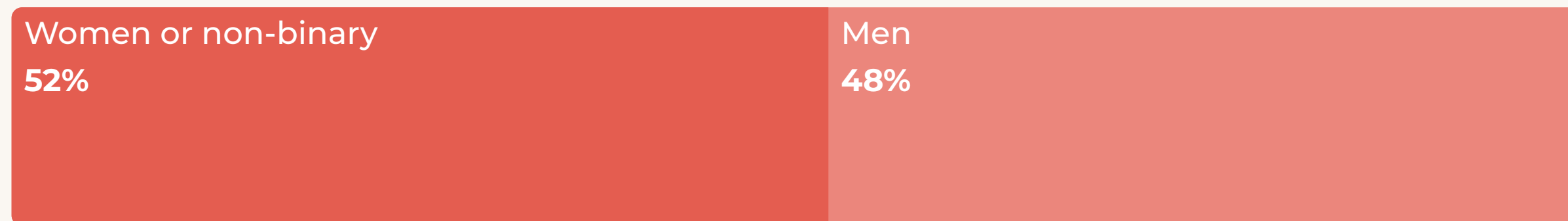
Since 2015, KUOW has been tracking the diversity of sources in our local broadcast features—defined as planned stories, investigations, or profiles—and our podcasts and local shows. This data helps us understand how we’re representing the diverse voices of our region while highlighting opportunities to increase inclusion in areas where we may be underrepresenting valuable community perspectives.

## FY24 Source Diversity

### Ethnicity



### Gender



### Age



Source: KUOW Records

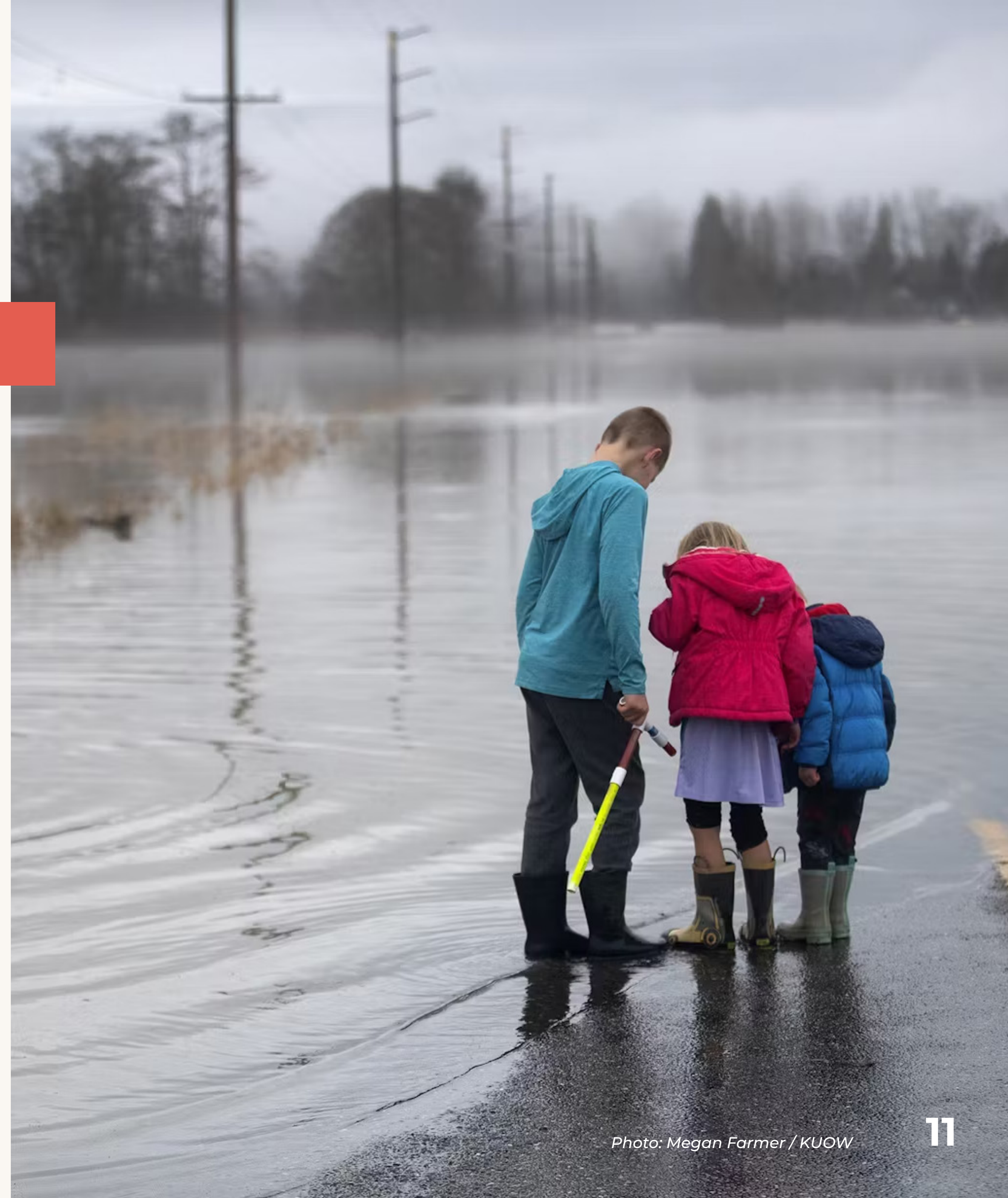


Photo: Megan Farmer / KUOW

**“Stories I love, stories I trust,  
stories I need to hear.”**

***Matthew R., Seattle***



# Community Trust

Since 1952, KUOW has served the Puget Sound as a vital source of trusted local news, as a forum for civic discussion, and as a touchstone of culture. Outside of our daily and in-depth reporting, KUOW has strategic initiatives in place behind the scenes to bring community voices into our coverage. This includes robust individualized feedback programs, listening groups, and on-the-ground community outreach. In building this mutual trust and respect with our community, KUOW can share the real voices of our region, reporting on events through the perspectives of the people living through them and amplifying voices that may otherwise go unheard.



In partnership with America Amplified, KUOW answered dozens of listener questions about the election process, sharing the answers with our audience through the [KUOW Politics newsletter](#). We documented over 60 instances of direct impact through this project, both institutional and individual—from [informing U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal's work](#) to [connecting local people in financial crisis with financial advisors](#).



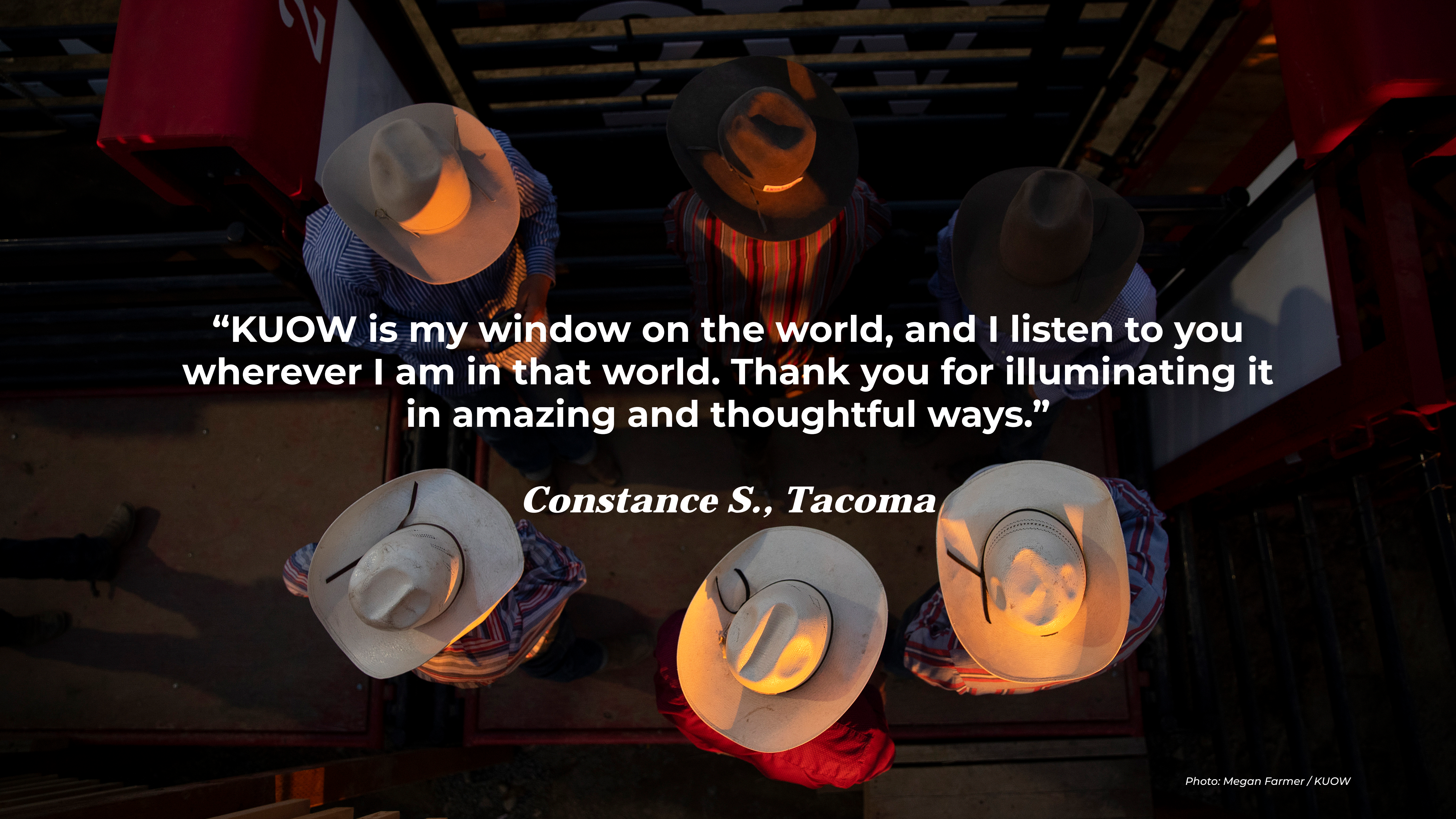
We partnered with [StoryCorps](#) to recruit 48 community members of diverging political beliefs to partake in one-on-one conversations, with a focus on getting to know one another—away from politics. Since these conversations, a number of our participants have reported that they've continued the conversation with their partner on their own time.



Through our Community Feedback Club, KUOW responded to 7,192 pieces of individual feedback in FY24 after receiving more feedback in the first half of 2024 than in the entirety of 2023. This rich and varied feedback has shaped our newsroom, providing inspiration and sources for stories on everything from finances to food. This project ensures KUOW's reporting authentically reflects our community's interest, experiences, and needs.



In FY24 KUOW piloted the KUOW Community Council, a forum that gave us the opportunity to hear detailed feedback on our reporting from a demographically and politically diverse group of community members. While the KUOW Newsroom used their constructive, informative feedback to guide their work, and most of the Community Council participants reported that it increased their trust in KUOW's reporting and approach.



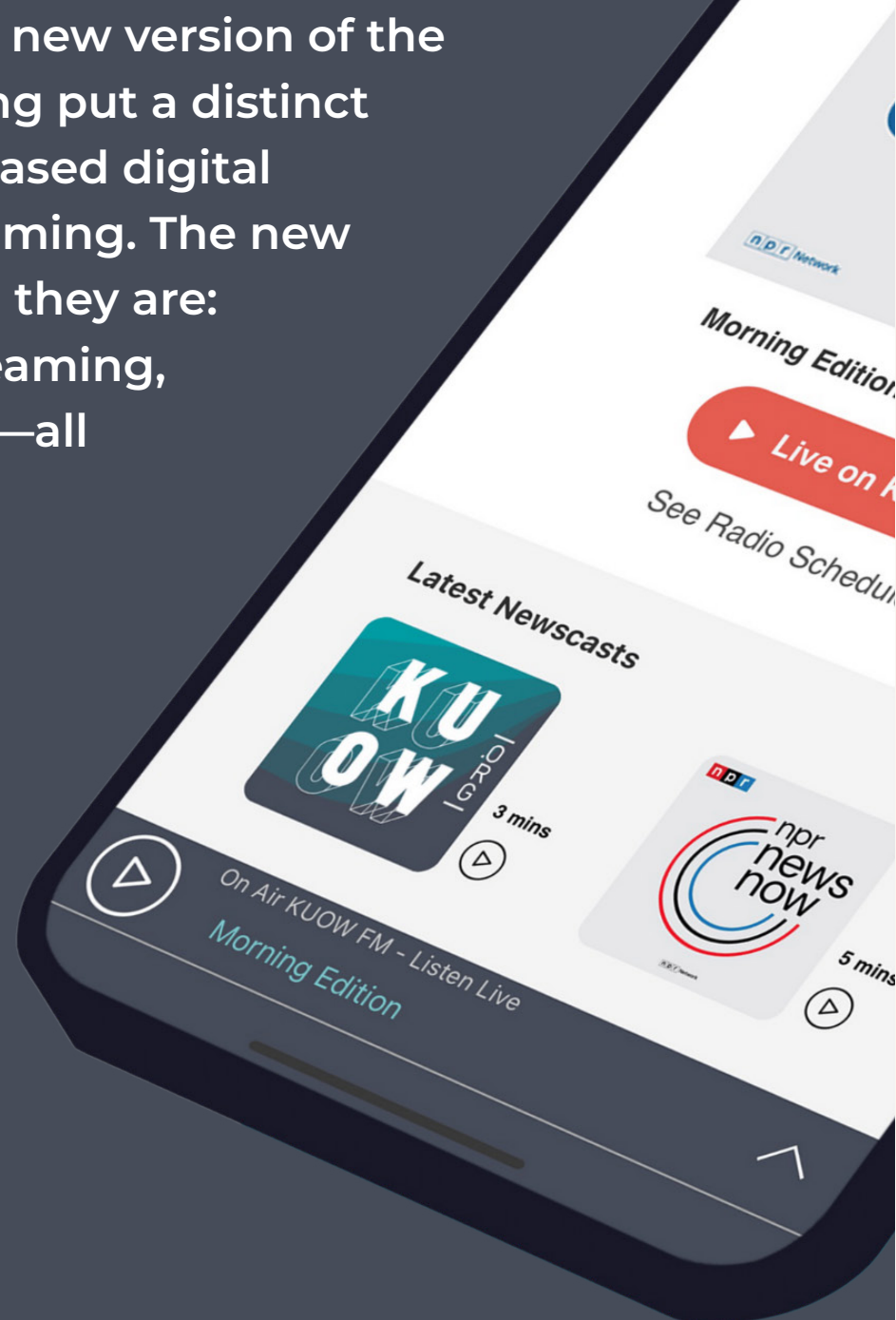
**“KUOW is my window on the world, and I listen to you wherever I am in that world. Thank you for illuminating it in amazing and thoughtful ways.”**

***Constance S., Tacoma***

# Growing in the Digital World

## The “New” KUOW App

In late FY24, KUOW launched a new version of the KUOW app. Detailed user testing put a distinct emphasis on the need for increased digital accessibility to KUOW programming. The new app meets our audience where they are: providing user-friendly live streaming, podcasting, and audio content—all without a paywall.



To further our mission, KUOW is embarking on a new path to enhance digital access and discoverability by delivering the right digital platforms that best enable new audiences to engage with KUOW’s news and information. KUOW must also invest in creating more local reporting and storytelling in a variety of formats (audio, video, text, and in-person touch-points). In FY24, KUOW doubled our online content and launched a much-improved version of the KUOW app. We’ve listened to audience feedback asking for more transparency, personalization, and community, hosting a variety of in-station events like in-station author talks for KUOW’s Book Club, or a series of Voter Panels ahead of the 2024 election. KUOW was on the vanguard when co-founding NPR a half-century ago. We are seizing the opportunity to lead once again, scaling and diversifying our impact by increasing the accessibility of trustworthy journalism. By 2027, KUOW plans to expand its digital audience by 200%, reaching 2 million monthly news consumers.

## Podcasts Launched in FY24

**Text Me Back**  
*November 2023*



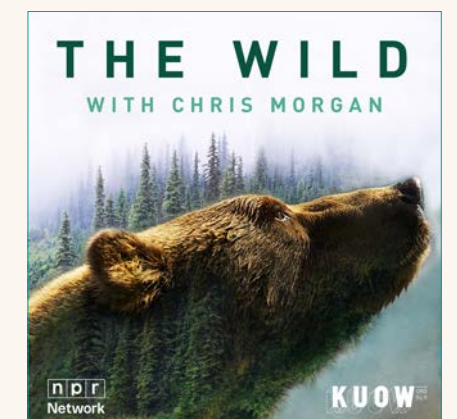
**Seattle Now**  
*Relaunch // February 24*



**Ten Thousand Things**  
*Season 3 // April 2024*



**THE WILD**  
*Season 6 // May 2024*



**Booming**  
*January 2024*



**Lost Patients**  
*March 2024*



**Let the Kids Dance**  
*April 2024*

# KUOW Podcasts Slated for FY25



**Sound Politics**  
*July 2024*



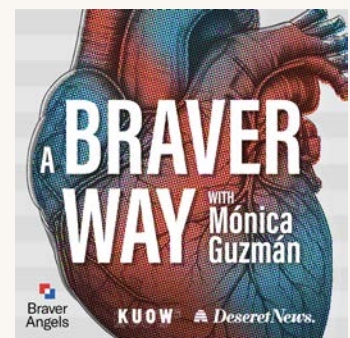
**Spectacular Specimens**  
*January 2025*



**Seattle Eats**  
*September 2024*



**An Arm and a Leg**  
*January 2025*  
*(distributed with partner, KFF)*



**A Braver Way**  
*October 2024*  
*(distributed with partner, Braver Angels)*



**Arts Podcast**  
*April 2025*  
*(in development)*



## KUOW Book Club

After the initial success of KUOW's new Book Club, launched in March, KUOW opened station doors to book club members and donors for intimate discussions with authors including Kristen Millares Young and Timothy Egan.



## CE Voter Panels & KUOW Politics Newsletter

Leading up to the November 2024 election, KUOW committed to helping our audience sift through the noise to stay informed. We relaunched our bi-monthly KUOW Politics Newsletter, in which we answer listener questions and provide insights on how the newsroom does its work. Our Community Engagement team also conducted three voter panel discussions, each asking voters of distinct political beliefs about what matters to them. By publishing these conversations, across which panelists shared their love of Washington, the U.S., and their desire for both to succeed, KUOW offers listeners the opportunity to hear perspectives outside of their own sociopolitical bubbles and to build empathy for their neighbors on the "other" side.





## Our Funding Partners

Thank you to our funders. Along with the generosity of KUOW listeners and business supporters, support from the following funders made our work possible—thank you!



*Guiliani Family Foundation*

*Blue Foundation*

*Sunrise Fund*

*Crabby Beach Foundation*

*Juniper Foundation*

*TEW Foundation*

KUOW was grateful and honored to receive gifts from the estates of the following community members in FY24:

*Estate of Rebecca Ann Benton*

*Estate of Richard Lee Grubb*

*Estate of Dan J. Mahler*

*Estate of Lesley JoAnne DeKrey*

*Estate of Janice Richardson*

*Estate of Harold M. Sutton*

*Estate of Billie Jean Mathews*

# FY24 Financials

## Statement of Activities

Revenue	FY24	FY23
Listener Support	14,463,343	15,830,386
Business Support	4,532,589	4,362,538
Institutional Support (UW + CPB)	1,235,447	1,164,183
Interests and Dividends	287,728	240,052
Ancillary Revenue	51,026	78,673
Donated Services and Supplies	35,552	64,180
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,605,685</b>	<b>21,740,012</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Program Expenses	15,925,082	14,772,065
Fundraising	5,422,805	5,839,864
General and Administrative	3,639,244	3,511,967
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,987,131</b>	<b>24,123,896</b>
<b>NET FROM OPERATIONS</b>	<b>-4,381,446</b>	<b>-2,383,884</b>

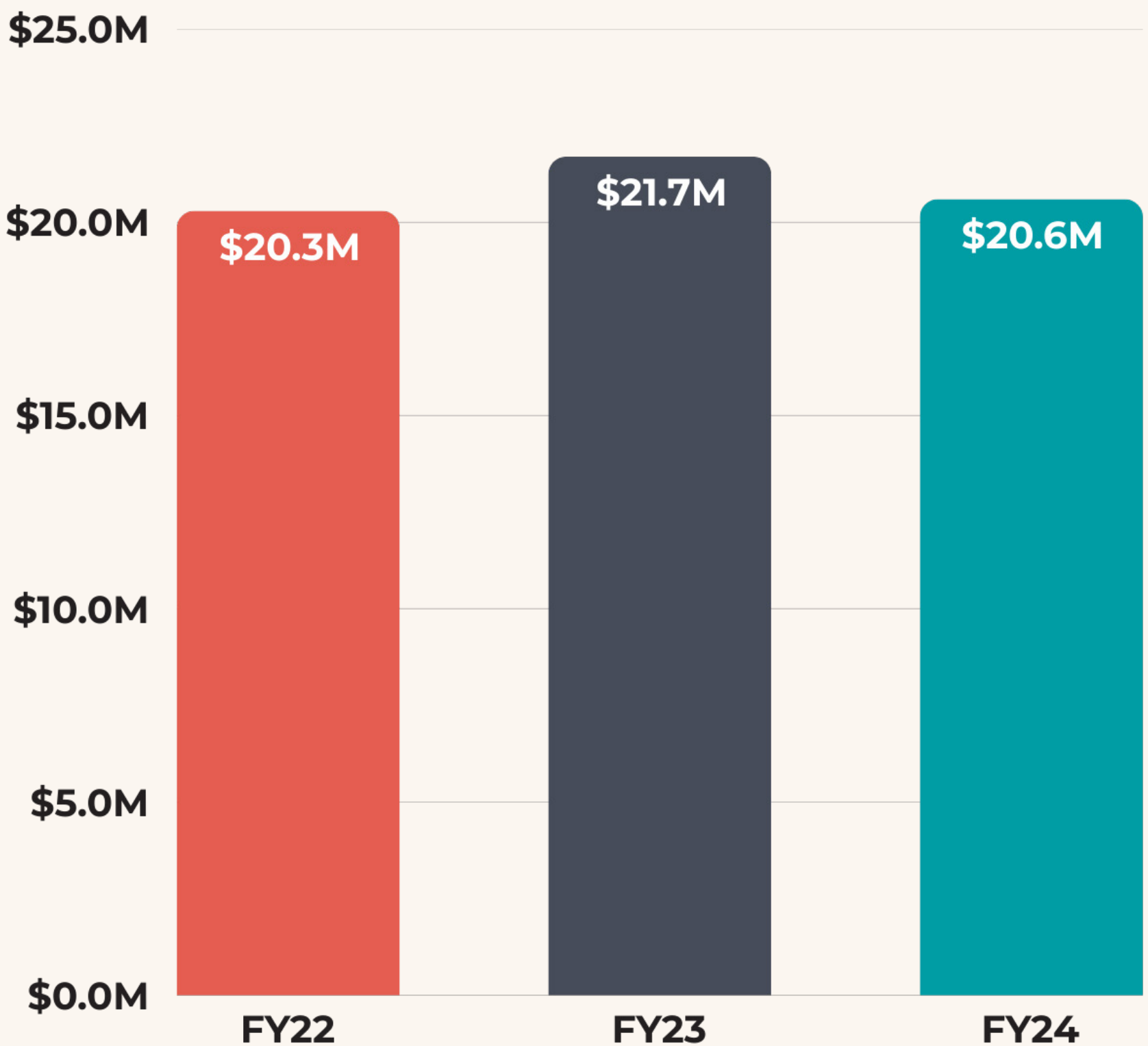
## Statement of Financial Position

Assets	FY24	FY23
Cash	1,435,554	5,094,378
Investments	4,130,424	4,108,143
Accounts Receivable (Net)	902,899	504,133
Pledges Receivable (Current)	168,484	233,335
Prepaid Expenses	266,911	298,252
Endowments (PSPR & UW)	100,801	93,592
Long-term Pledges Receivable (Net)	357,246	525,730
Property, Plant, and Equip (Net)	3,641,725	3,815,126
Investments Held for Long-Term Purposes	5,962,943	5,617,460
Operating Lease, Right-of-Use Asset, Net	12,073,209	12,754,283
Finance Lease, Net	36,800	78,075
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>29,076,996</b>	<b>33,122,507</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	489,566	351,578
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>15,943,470</b>	<b>19,590,408</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>29,076,996</b>	<b>33,122,507</b>

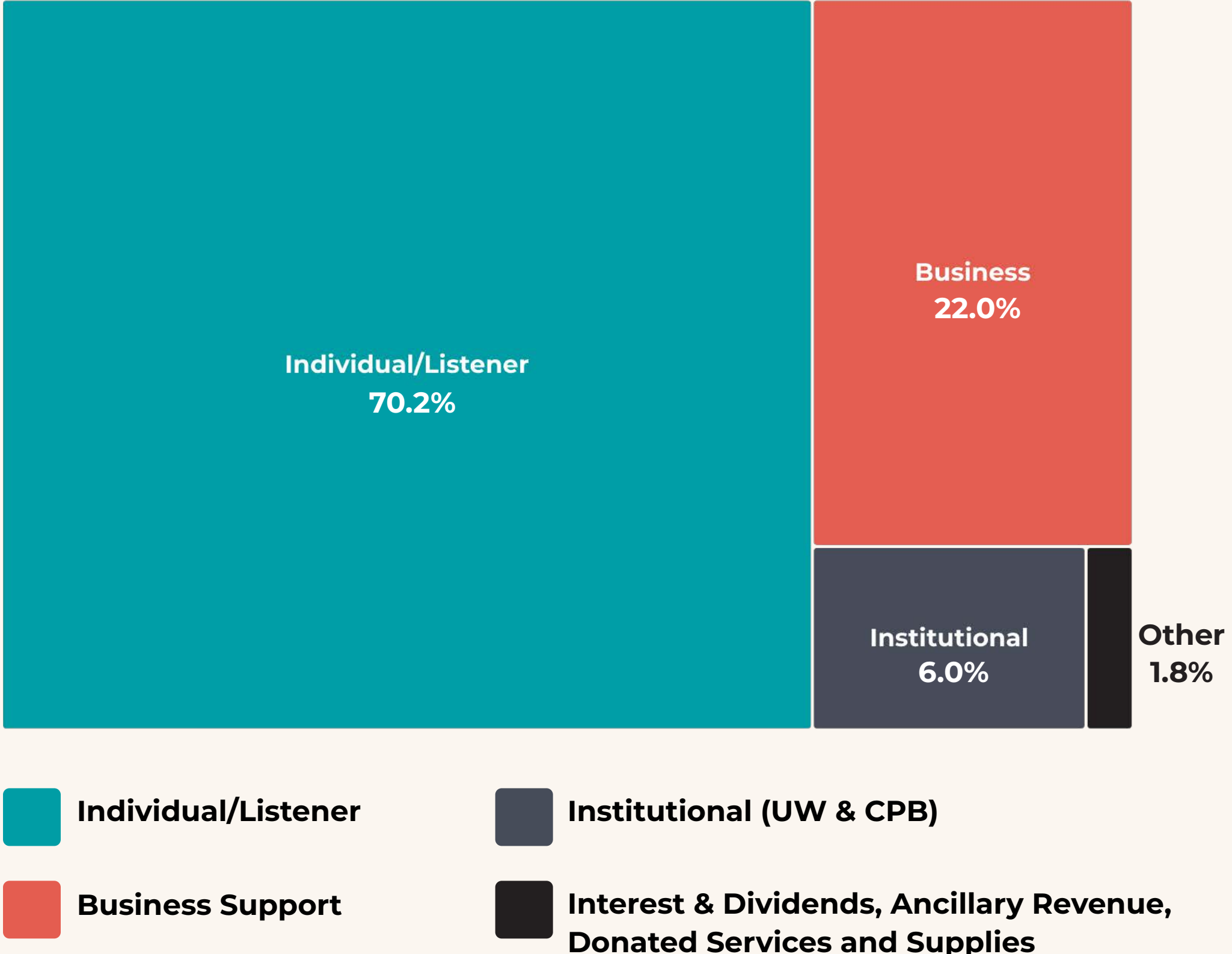
Source: 2024 Puget Sound Public Radio Financial Statements

# FY24 Financials

## Annual Revenue



## Revenue Sources



Source: 2024 Puget Sound Public Radio Financial Statements

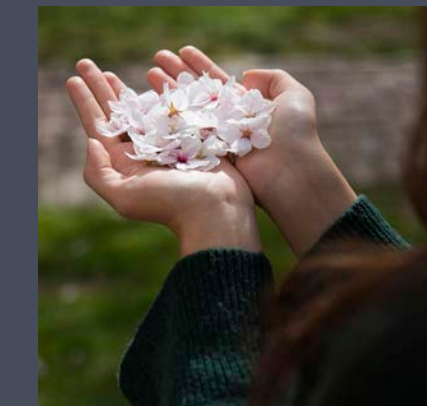
# Thank you

This year has been a challenging one for journalists, but they have worked tirelessly to ensure that our communities have the context and information they need to make informed decisions and understand what is going on in their communities. Thank you for supporting their hard work. We hope you hear the impact of your support every time you tune in.



Photos: Megan Farmer / KUOW

# Our Values



## *Earn Trust*

Trust is our foundation—and it must be earned. Listen. Seek first to understand. Be fully transparent. Admit errors. Speak honestly with our audience and each other.

## *Be Curious*

Ask, test, try, build, and rebuild. Challenge the status quo and your own assumptions. We enthusiastically seek ideas that surprise us and teach us something new.

## *Have Courage*

Take risks. Show grit. Tackle the uncomfortable and unknown. We relentlessly pursue the truth and don't yield to pressure. When things get tough (because they will), we remain steadfast.

## *Value Diversity*

Be inclusive and equitable. Seek a multitude of perspectives and experiences. Practice fairness. It is imperative to our journalism, the decisions we make, and the culture we create.

## *Act in Service*

We act in service of the public, each other, and something bigger than ourselves. Lead with respect. Offer a solution. We love what we do and go the extra mile for our mission.

## *Demand Integrity*

Set the bar high, and hold yourself and your teammates to it. We do not cut corners. We never choose what is easy over what is right.

## *Always Grow*

When we fail, we own it. Having a growth mindset means embracing what we've learned and moving forward. We take joy in pushing ourselves to be better.

## *Collaborate*

We are the sum of our parts—the magic happens when we work as one. Celebrate each other's strengths and welcome new ideas. Treat feedback as a gift and give lots of high fives.