

# CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS



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**ANNUAL REPORT 2019**



## A YEAR OF GROWTH AND IMPACT

Carolina Public Press is in the second year of our expansion throughout NC and our momentum is palpable. 2019 was clearly a year for impact. One of our largest accomplishments was Seeking Conviction, a statewide investigation into issues thwarting the prosecution of sexual assault cases in NC. We established a first-of-its-kind statewide investigative reporting collaboration working with 10 other TV, radio, digital, and print media outlets across the state. Described as groundbreaking reporting, the project reached more than 1.5 million combined views. It also helped propel significant reforms to sexual assault laws in the state - reforms that were approved unanimously in both the North Carolina House and Senate. Gov. Roy Cooper signed the legislation, which also included a number of other safety protections for children.

Last year, we also launched our Faces of Hunger project, a yearlong journalism and community dialogue initiative focused on hunger and food insecurity in rural NC. In addition to in-depth, impactful reporting, we held events in rural communities across the state, drawing together stakeholders to discuss challenges and potential solutions.

In 2019, visitors to our website increased by 54% and average new monthly subscribers increased by 42%. The growth and impact we saw last year were made possible by you, the people, partners, and foundations that support CPP. We are eternally grateful for your partnership. We remain doggedly focused on key public interest issues in the state, and we take this moment to reflect on all that we achieved together last year. We celebrate our accomplishments and you, our dedicated supporters. Thank you for making these and so many other stories possible. We continue to do all of this to meet a growing demand for nonpartisan, in-depth and investigative reporting on news that matters to all of us.

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# TOP STORIES

## CHEROKEE COUNTY JAIL INVESTIGATION

Carolina Public Press began looking into multiple allegations about the Cherokee County Detention Center in late 2018. After the first few stories appeared, the State Bureau of Investigation broadened its ongoing probe of concerns there. This reporting continued into 2019, and state criminal investigations are still underway.

Reporting on the Cherokee jail in 2019 focused on the death of an inmate who had allegedly swallowed an enormous amount of methamphetamine before arriving at the jail and later passed out in his cell. CPP found that the inmate's flight to a hospital was delayed while officials tried to change his bond status.

Other incidents also continued receiving attention, including whether a dust-up between two guards and an inmate was covered up until after the primary election in 2018 and whether some records may have been deleted from the sheriff's database.



## FACES OF HUNGER

Three reporters spent time at soup kitchens and food pantries in five rural regions across NC, talking with people seeking help as well as with volunteers and administrators. Through intensive observation and listening, they crafted a series of text and audio news reports that addressed food insecurity in its many forms across the state. Photographers captured individuals as they battled with food insecurity, whether their own or that of their neighbors – sometimes both.

Appearing in CPP between June and December, the Faces of Hunger in-depth reporting project found that hunger affects people in every region. The young are vulnerable, but so are older adults. The project explored the many intersecting conditions that can lead to food insecurity, including seasonal economies, lack of education and costly medical needs.

CPP also held a series of community forums highlighting local stories, challenges and potential solutions to the web of issues contributing to hunger in rural NC. Two forums were paired with resource fairs organized by CPP that connected local families with legal, health and food relief assistance. More than 150 families received help in the forums alone, and CPP partnered with more than 30 local, regional and statewide organizations to hold the forums that helped support local dialogue, connections and conversations about potential solutions.

# SEEKING CONVICTION

Carolina Public Press analyzed 4 1/2 years of court data from every county to find that less than 1 in 4 defendants charged with sexual assault were convicted of that or a lesser sexual assault-related charge. And in some counties, CPP found, the numbers were much lower.

Starting from this data analysis, the Seeking Conviction project examined every aspect of what's been happening with sexual assault cases in NC, including victim-blaming juries, unique challenges and solutions in some jurisdictions, the benefits of more specialized police and prosecutor training, the shortage and disorganized placement of sexual assault nurse examiners and legal precedents that have made many rapes tough to prosecute.

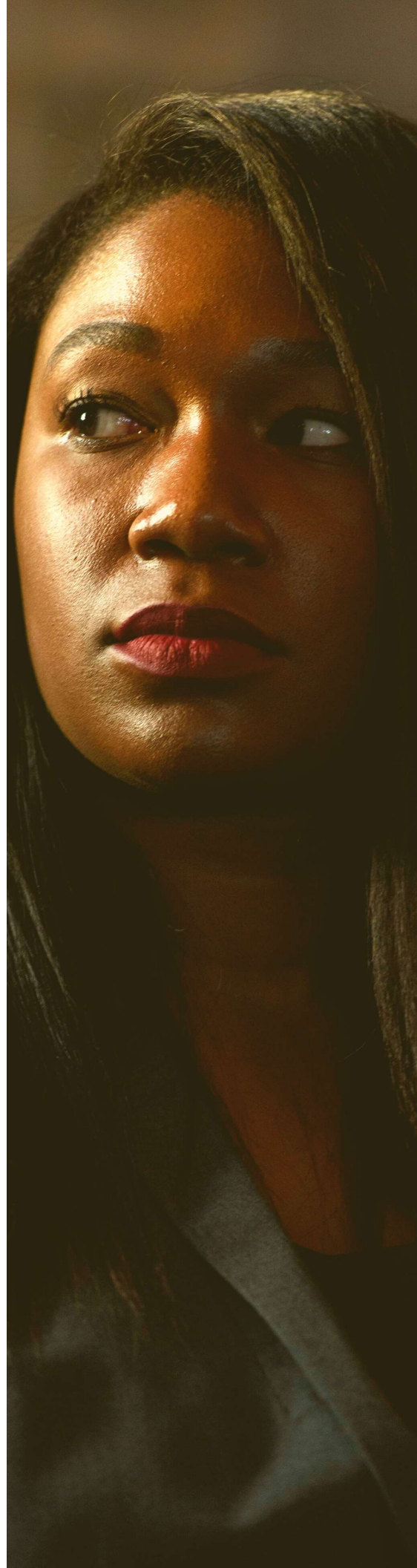
The four-day collaborative series of articles from CPP and its news media partners began Seeking Conviction, along with eight community-based events, including listening sessions and public forums in each part of the state. Coverage continued throughout the year, expanding on additional issues, such as the many NC sexual assault cases that remain unresolved long after suspects have been charged.

Reporting also focused on the on-again-off-again legal process as legal reforms to correct some of those troubling precedents advanced through the General Assembly. In previous sessions, measures dealing with withdrawal of consent and sex while incapacitated by alcohol or drugs couldn't survive the committee process. In the last week of October, both houses of the legislature unanimously passed a slate of reforms, later signed by the governor.

Seeking Conviction wasn't just a major investigative series of stories about an urgent statewide issue. It was also a groundbreaking collaboration among 11 news organizations, led by CPP. Every major article in the series had writers from multiple print, online, television and radio organizations, with stories from across the state woven together to create a unified web of voices and narratives.

CPP's partners included The Fayetteville Observer, The Herald-Sun, Hickory Daily Record, The News & Observer, News & Record, North Carolina Health News, Winston-Salem Journal, WLOS, WRAL and WUNC.

The project is now being held up nationally as a model for successful collaboration. In a post for the Nieman Journalism Lab at Harvard University, Stefanie Murray, director of the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair University, wrote, "You have to read the series to understand the kind of incredible journalism they produced." At BuzzFeednews.com, Joshua Stearns pointed to the series in a column on how nonprofit journalism is reshaping news.



# 14 AWARDS

## NC PRESS ASSOCIATION

IN FEBRUARY 2019, CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS WAS AWARDED THE FOLLOWING IN THE ONLINE NEWS ORGANIZATION CATEGORY:

First place for investigative reporting

First place for general excellence

First place for public service reporting

First place in news enterprise reporting

First place for business writing

First place for general news reporting

First place for illustration/photo illustration/print or interactive graphics

Second place for appearance and design

Second place for illustration/photo illustration/print or interactive graphics

Second place for photography, feature

Second place for photography, general news

Third place for city, county government reporting

Third place for election/political reporting

Third place for news feature writing

# VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

## Peter Kent - Journalist, Podcaster, Storyteller

As a podcaster, Peter Kent is constantly looking for stories that have the power to move people, make a connection and will be remembered.

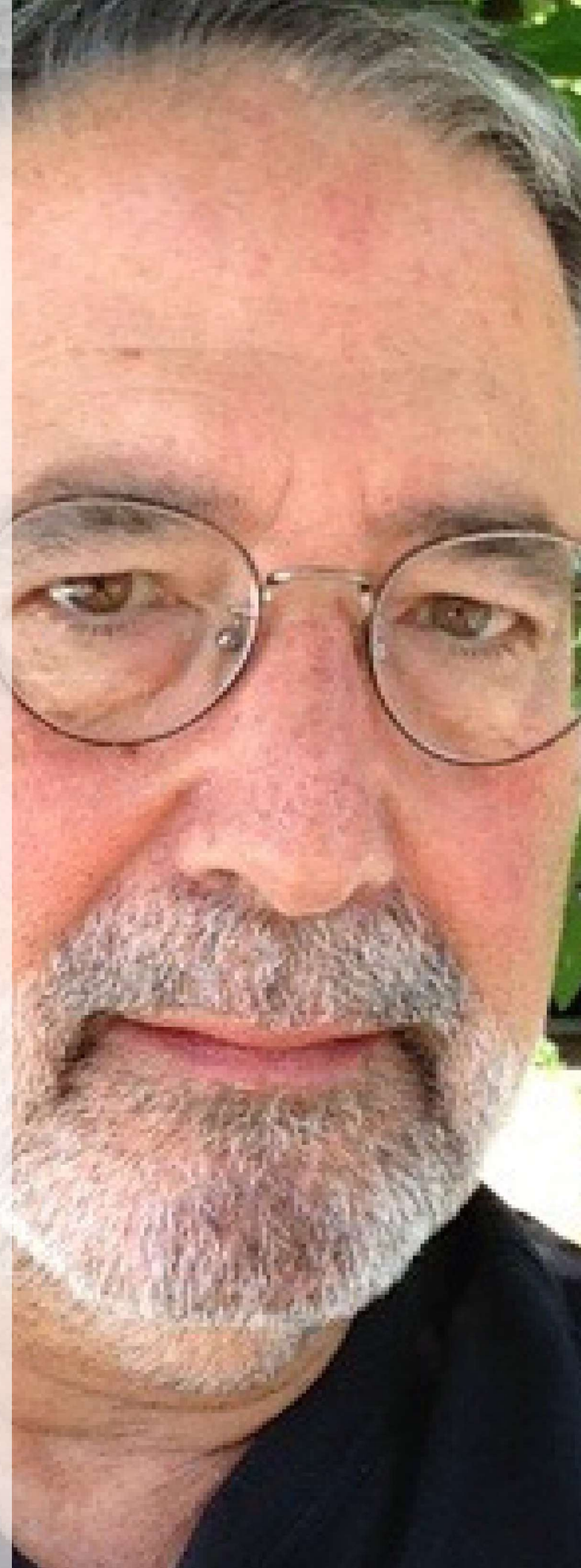
Peter earned his bachelor's degree at UNC-Chapel Hill in Mass Communications or what used to be called RTVMP - Radio, Television, and Motion Pictures. Even though his studies made him a well-rounded student of communications, he says he "always had a crush on radio." That "crush" would serve him well later in life. After college, he worked at an Atlanta-based newspaper, then went on to work as a research news writer for Clemson University before retirement brought him to Asheville.

After moving to Asheville, he immersed himself in the community and culture, volunteering for several community radio stations. He recalls attending a Carolina Public Press Newsmakers Forum where he met Founder and Executive Director Angie Newsome and Managing Editor Frank Taylor. "I was so taken with their professionalism and passion for local journalism, that I knew I had to be a part of this scrappy little newsroom. Angie is the embodiment of what journalism needs to be. I have always had a respect for journalists who respect readers enough to bring them actual information in an even-handed manner that encourages functional discussions."

Peter says he wanted to volunteer for CPP and proposed to Angie that they try a podcast. Angie and Frank agreed, and The Kicker was born. "I am thrilled to be a part of Carolina Public Press because these days, legacy newspapers are being reshaped or misshaped by corporatism. In this new digital landscape, revenues are drained, traditional newspapers are in peril, corporate hedge funds move in and consolidate. This is not good for democracy. The demise of the local newspaper and news deserts are creating an uninformed public. Small newspapers are withering.

"While traditional newspapers are struggling, Carolina Public Press is growing. However, CPP requires people to support it. There has never been a more important time for independent, investigative news. News organizations like CPP hold local leaders accountable. And people need to financially support Carolina Public Press. If CPP is to continue with the stellar reporting - investing in reporters to go out and dig up stories all over NC and create award winning series like Seeking Conviction - this costs money. If you care at all about democracy, nonpartisan, unbiased reporting that covers unreported stories you need to invest in Carolina Public Press."

Thank you, Peter, for your amazing contributions to our growing newsroom and for launching The Kicker. We appreciate you!



# DONORS & FOUNDATIONS

## FOUNDATION GRANTS AND NONPROFIT DONATIONS

Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation

Facebook Journalism Project Network Grant via Lenfest Institute for Journalism

Fund for Investigative Journalism

Fund for Nonprofit News at The Miami Foundation

Jonathan Logan Family Foundation

Laura and John Arnold Donor Advised Fund

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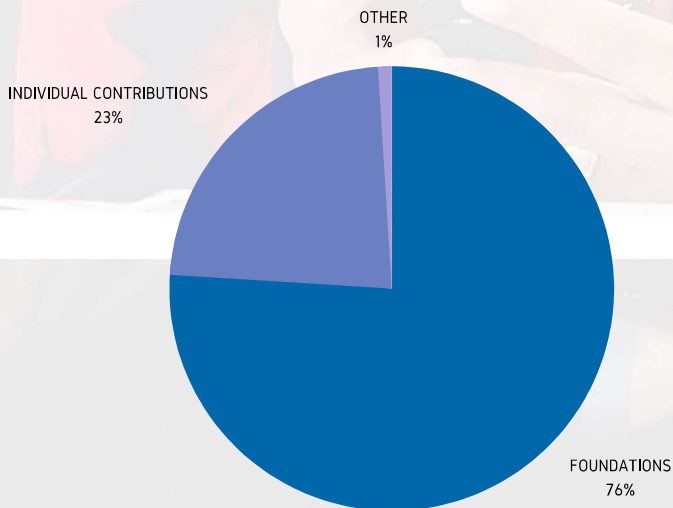
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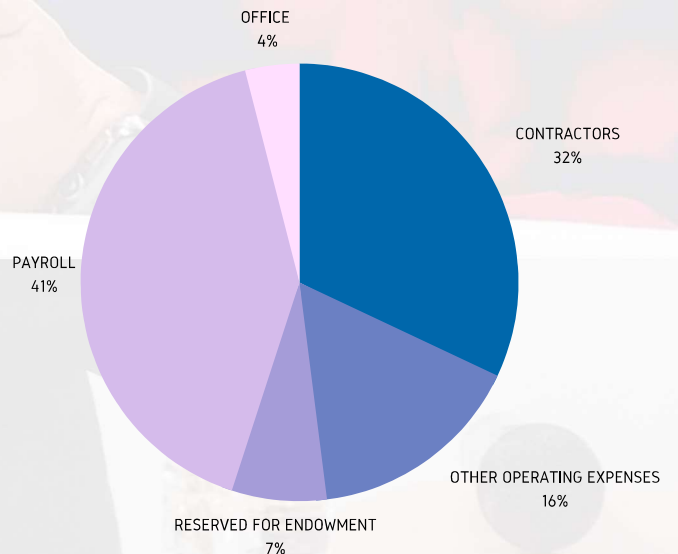


# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES





## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

It's difficult to reflect upon our past and set plans for our future without considering where we are presently. On March 13, 2020, our lives were upended by COVID-19. We never could have predicted that 2020 would look like this. Entire states have been on lock-down for weeks. Schools are still closed, and businesses are just beginning to reopen. Perhaps for the first time, we are examining what is essential. Most would agree that having access to reliable local news and information is more important than ever. Carolina Public Press remains dedicated to ensuring you and your neighbors have continued access to the news and information you need to stay connected and informed during this emergency.

CPP focuses on the issues, topics and challenges faced by the 10.2 million residents of NC. Since our state-wide expansion in 2018, we have continued to bring award-winning, public service journalism to every corner of the state. In 2019 we led an 11-news organization collaboration examining the convictions of sexual assault cases in every single NC county. This is the kind of in-depth, investigative reporting our residents deserve. In 2020 we are in a statewide collaboration to shine a light on unreported issues during the COVID-19 crisis. This statewide six-newsroom collaborative called the 2020 NC Coronavirus Testing Collaborative, has reported on COVID-19 stories ranging from hospital staffing shortages to inconsistent NC death records. Joint legal action by the group led to the release of COVID-19 outbreaks in nursing homes.

Our goal remains the same - to be the go-to, sustainable, independent and investigative news arm for NC. We are on our way, but we have more work to do. We must raise \$1.8 million in annual operating capital by 2024 to achieve our vision of being NC's biggest independent, non-profit, investigative news. Thank you for all your support, now and in the future!