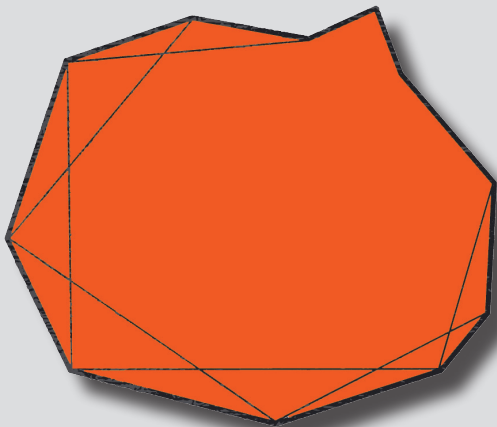
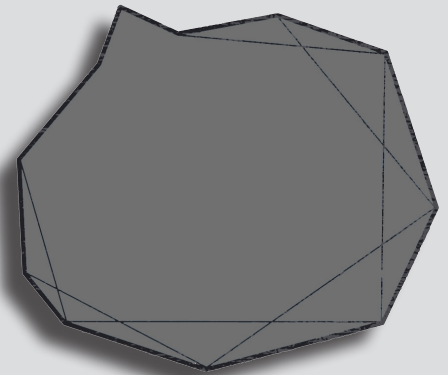


FUNDING JOURNALISM, FINDING INNOVATION



Success
Stories and
Ideas for
Creative,
Sustainable
Partnerships



HARVARD Kennedy School

SHORENSTEIN CENTER

on Media, Politics and Public Policy



**MEDIA
IMPACT
FUNDERS**

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FUNDING JOURNALISM, FINDING INNOVATION

Success Stories and Ideas
for Creative, Sustainable Partnerships

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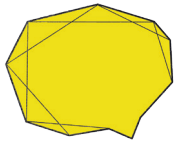
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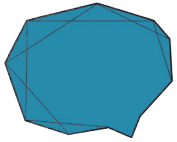
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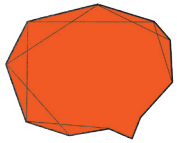
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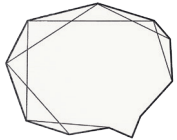
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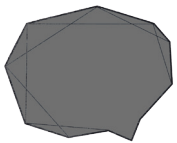
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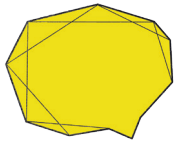
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There has been perhaps no other moment in history so volatile and uncertain—yet full of so much opportunity—for journalism. Newspapers across the country—along with countless jobs—are being eliminated at a high rate. Local news outlets are struggling with falling readership and revenues in an increasingly digital age. And as social media platforms become the primary news sources for an ever-increasing number of Americans, more of them are developing a distrust of the news media. Many politicians are widely discrediting and disparaging news organizations, with President Trump even branding the press “the enemy of the people.”

With limited resources and dwindling revenues paralyzing the industry, it's clear that journalism needs financial support now more than ever. What's unclear is how it will survive in our relatively new digital landscape. Fortunately, funding for

nonprofit news media has seen a notable uptick in support, oftentimes in the form of new types of grants. While funders have traditionally supported journalism through public media, there are now a growing number of nonprofit news sites that are focusing on a variety of reporting styles, including issue-specific, investigative, accountability, advocacy and more to fill the gaps created by newspaper cutbacks and an ever-more polluted commercial news media.

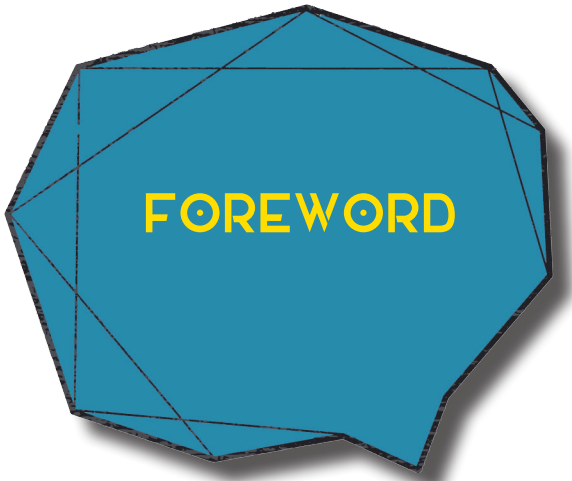
Here at Harvard University's Shorenstein Center, we're focused on the nexus of media, politics and public policy. As such, we have an unwavering commitment to advancing journalism both as a trade and national resource. To address these issues and challenges in the space, we have collaborated with Media Impact Funders—a network of funders who support media and technology in the public interest—to produce this resource, which serves to highlight innovative funding methods in journalism. We couldn't be prouder to team up with such an important organization as MIF. The work they're doing to promote journalism across the country is absolutely critical, and they have been—and continue to be—a tremendous partner to Shorenstein.

While this guide shows only a small sampling of how funders and publishers are working together to financially sustain the fourth estate, we hope that it nonetheless serves as a starting point for your own work by providing solid examples of groundbreaking funding efforts—ones that are both pioneering and effective. If you're a grantee, you may also want to use this document to think about how your work might appeal to potential funders.

Over the course of this work's production, we got to speak with fascinating folks from across the industry, all of whom shared the same sentiment: that a free press is imperative for the survival of our democracy. With so many people making strides in ensuring the sector remains vibrant and healthy, it reassured us that we aren't alone in our efforts. And with readers like you invested in the field, we can build and share scalable funding methods together in order to help media organizations remain financially solvent.

That said, we hope that you'll share this work with your networks so that all relevant stakeholders—foundations, publishers, journalists, investors and ultimately the public—can benefit from it. To ensure the survival of fact-based, high-quality journalism, media organizations and funders need to establish and sustain long-term, fruitful relationships in a variety of ways. Our goal with this piece is to showcase model partnerships to explore as well as foster those crucial connections.

Nicco A. Mele
Director, Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy



When we were conceptualizing this guide, we marveled at how the journalism landscape has shifted over the years. Aside from the changing technology and industry trends that are shifting the roles of newspapers, we're seeing how facts and rational thought are being challenged in ways we never thought possible.

Those of us who invest in a better world understand that we need better information and evidence-based reasoning to conduct our affairs, which is why philanthropy is stepping up to revive quality journalism and reconfigure the news media ecosystem. While core funding has always been imperative, it feels like we've reached a tipping point: The case for funding media and journalism is stronger than ever.

In fact, over the past year, we've seen a spike in interest among funders about the role they can play in supporting news and community information. To meet that need, we decided it was time to update *Journalism and Media Grantmaking: Five Things You Need to Know and Five Ways to Get Started*, a starter guide for foundations interested in exploring how to make impactful journalism and community-information grants. The 2018 version of the handbook, produced with support from the Wyncote Foundation, is an update from 2011 that provides dozens of examples of successful journalism and media projects that have received philanthropic support.

We see that handbook as a complement to this one. By highlighting these case studies you are about to read, we hope to spark creativity within the sector, upend the notion that funding models have to remain static, and ultimately boost funding for media organizations.

Really, this project was a natural fit for us: We represent a vibrant and growing network of media funders, and we believe that strong networks are the foundation of this growing work. We've seen that collaboration can spark innovation and deepen learning on issues that are critical to the public interest. Thankfully, the larger philanthropic community is waking up to the challenges and opportunities, and they're looking to the existing network that has experience about how to do this work effectively.

To help pave the path forward, we're thrilled to have partnered with the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy to create this learning resource for funders.

Vincent Stehle
Executive Director, Media Impact Funders

CASE STUDY

● Einhorn Family Charitable Trust ● LOR Foundation ● Solutions Journalism Network

Through a unique set of partnerships with the LOR Foundation (LOR) and the Einhorn Family Charitable Trust (EFCT), the Solutions Journalism Network (SJV)—a nonprofit dedicated to spreading the practice of solutions-oriented journalism—has achieved measurable, large-scale impact on the national and local levels. In just five years, it transformed from a startup to an established and well-respected nonprofit whose mission is to shift the way newsrooms conceptualize reporting and engage their communities. Here, we look at how two funders with distinct missions found ways to invest in the network and its partners.

It's important to note from the outset that EFCT doesn't have a history of funding journalism and wasn't initially looking to get involved with SJN. "When we thought about what we wanted to accomplish long-term, we asked ourselves: 'How do we enable more constructive engagement among people of different ideological beliefs, backgrounds and identities?'" said Jonathan Gruber, who leads EFCT's Campus and Community work.

The answer—journalism—became clear after EFCT Executive Director Jennifer Hoos Rothberg met SJN co-founder and CEO David Bornstein and started to understand the unique role that solutions journalism could play in society. She found that the network's priorities—helping news organizations shine a light on what's working to address social problems and strengthen public engagement—aligned with the foundation's.

"We now live in a highly polarized, divisive country, and the role that journalists play in enabling constructive, fact-based, open-minded public engagement around issues is absolutely critical," Gruber said. "The concept of solutions-based reporting greatly appealed to EFCT, driving forth the idea of collaborative work the organization encourages."

The foundation started by making a four-year investment to help transform SJN from a barebones operation to a fully functioning nonprofit with national reach. "A vision for scale and spread was a clear focus from day one," Gruber added.

EFCT's investment has diversified and expanded SJN's funding base, increased its capacity to conduct experiments, and provided technical assistance to their network of newsrooms, emphasizing support and self-investment. It has also helped SJN build the Solutions Story Tracker, a searchable database of in-depth reporting on responses and approaches to social problems.

"With Einhorn, we've been extraordinarily lucky because they've been so invested in our work," said Keith Hammonds, president

and COO of SJN. "Einhorn has been a core funder since the very beginning and continues to be a core source of support, both from a general standpoint and on a project basis."

In addition, SJN also continues to hone a rigorous, multi-faceted impact measurement strategy to determine exactly what kind of value the nonprofit is adding to the journalism landscape. The organization is answering key questions such as, "How has the nature of public conversation been affected by solutions-oriented news?" and "What is the relationship



between solutions journalism and trust?" But perhaps the most critical benefit from the grant for SJN is the enormous growth that it has seen. "Solutions Journalism Network has been able to grow to 20 full-time talented employees, and they are still expanding," Gruber said. "What's great about this partnership is that we're supporting the buildout of a web of journalists and newsrooms that are adopting and sustaining the practice of solutions journalism. And that not only benefits both Einhorn and SJN, but it contributes to a healthier society."

Meanwhile, on the local level, the LOR Foundation was highly concerned with how people in the Intermountain West were consuming their news, fearing a lack of access to quality reporting.

When LOR commissioned a study of locals' news habits, it found that more than 75 percent of people polled reported that Facebook was their primary news source, confirming its suspicions. The organization started asking questions: What kind of news was coming out of the region? Was it news people wanted to receive? Was there something wrong with their local newsrooms?



Left: Joe "Butter" Milo, a councilman in Deming, N.M., and owner of J and J Printing, measures and cuts card stock for customers. Milo is one of a growing number of Hispanic entrepreneurs in Deming.

(James Hemphill/Solutions Journalism Network)

Right: Betty Kelly is in her 90s and works on the North Leupp Family Farm on the Navajo Nation Reservation in Arizona, growing the food she eats all year long.

(Marisa Demarco, KUNM/Solutions Journalism Network)



“The people in these rural towns were frankly being denied access to good news,” said LOR’s Chief Communications Officer LaMonte Guillory. “They were seeing consistent negative stories about their town, feeling a sense of defeat and detachment with their local papers. Where was the reporting highlighting the positive and the progress? So we thought: ‘Let’s remove the access barrier and bring them inspiring and balanced news that shows how their community or those like them are tackling tough problems.’” Realizing that SJN was trying to accomplish the same goals, Guillory decided that the network would be a perfect partner for news outlets in his foundation’s local ecosystem.

Two years in, the partnership between LOR and SJN has been expansive. Together, the organizations have enlisted 50 media outlets across the region, which have produced hundreds of news stories.

Target outlets have migrated from northern New Mexico and southern Colorado to more northern states such as Montana and Idaho, covering a vast geographic spread. LOR and SJN are currently working on expanding the program in the coming year.

“LOR took a huge risk on us in that we had never worked with smaller newsrooms and communities,” Hammonds said. “This partnership gave us an opportunity to spend time with local editors and executives at small news organizations to make our pitch—to develop confidence and trust in SJN in a way that later allowed to us to form a greater network.”

LOR is pleased with the impact SJN has had so far. “It’s working and we’re seeing the results,” Guillory said. “We’re even seeing newsrooms that declined to participate initially coming to us to join our efforts.” The most-read articles last year in the Intermountain West came directly from newsrooms participating in this collaboration, showcasing its reach.

“This solutions-generated storytelling not only enables newsrooms to shift the way they report to inspire change elsewhere, it also impacts people on the ground,” Guillory said. “Our hope is that if the news they’re reading is more positive, they’ll feel more optimistic about local challenges and proactively engage in their communities to address these issues.”

Key Takeaways for Funders and Grantees:

- You can support journalism even when it’s not a core pillar of your strategy. EFCT’s partnership with SJN fit within its “Community” domain, which has a broader focus.
- Think creatively about who you partner with and why. Not all grants have to go directly to publishers or reporters. Funding at the network level can have additive results.
- Establish clear metrics from the start and revisit early assumptions about how the work will unfold. SJN has been able to achieve measurable, large-scale impact on both the national and local levels with help from different types of funders.
- Keep an eye out. The two partnerships had different beginnings: the EFCT relationship started with a personal interest by its executive director, while LOR’s interest was sparked by program officers attending a conference.

About Einhorn Family Charitable Trust: EFCT was founded in 2002 to advance the mission of helping people get along better. The foundation invests nationally over the long term in a diverse group of nonprofit partners who leverage evidence-based approaches that provide opportunities for individuals to develop and practice empathy and inclusivity at every stage of life. Its grantmaking strategy involves supporting 501(c)(3)s that help individuals develop core skills such as kindness, empathy, cooperation and respect. EFCT wants people of different beliefs and backgrounds to see themselves as change-makers and work together to solve our nation’s most difficult social problems. In addition, the organization’s areas of interest are myriad: the foundation invests across four major developmental stages of life: parenting and early childhood, K-12 education, campus and community-related efforts. efct.org | [@EinhornTrust](https://twitter.com/EinhornTrust)

About LOR Foundation: LOR, established in 2007, was founded on the idea that small, rural communities should have access to resources, tools, and support they need to create thriving, beautiful places to live, and that a philanthropic force can be a catalyst for self-determined, community-led change. LOR partners with communities to provide solutions to problems that mutually support social, economic, and environmental well-being of the West. The foundation strongly believes that in order to address major issues, it’s imperative to activate citizenry and empower communities to take ownership over solutions. It achieves this by focusing specifically on improving Livability, Opportunity and Responsibility (L-O-R) throughout the Intermountain West—rural communities in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico and Wyoming. lorfoundation.org | [@LORfoundation](https://twitter.com/LORfoundation)

About Solutions Journalism Network: Founded in 2013, SJN works to expand the influence of solutions-oriented journalism, which doesn’t just focus on challenges but rather related proactive resolutions. It creates tools for journalists, conducts trainings on solutions-based practices for news organizations, and helps journalism teachers hone their craft. SJN’s other strategies include advising and supporting media outlets in creating high-impact solutions reporting projects, developing tools and resources to build journalists’ skills in solutions reporting and editing, and connecting and supporting those interested in how social problems are being solved. SJN has trained 150 news organizations, with 10,000 journalists using its online tools or attending a workshop. solutionsjournalism.org | [@soljourno](https://twitter.com/soljourno)

CASE STUDY

● Ford Foundation ● ACLU of Michigan

In Flint, Michigan, reports of unsafe drinking water were being ignored. The Ford Foundation responded by funding the hiring of an investigative reporter at the ACLU of Michigan—the first time a foundation grant was directed to the hiring of an investigative journalist based at a nonprofit advocacy organization. The result was the uncovering of a national scandal and the political upheaval that ensued.

The calls of distress from the residents of Flint in 2014 about the dangerously elevated lead levels in their tap water were falling on deaf ears. After county officials switched the city's water source to the Flint River, Flint's water was literally poisoning its own people. Bringing discolored tap water to community meetings and posting YouTube videos of their tap water catching on fire, locals were doing everything they could to bring this horrific epidemic to the national spotlight. But time and time again, the largely poor and underrepresented population of Flint found their pleas overlooked. Meanwhile, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Michigan, which originally started investigating the state's "emergency manager" law, was stuck with questions about how to bring the political incompetence in Flint to the broader American public. After internal deliberations, executives approached the Ford Foundation with a proposal to hire an investigative reporter, who turned out to be the first funded reporter position at any ACLU chapter. This hiring, in turn, led to a set of revelations that changed lives.

Even though the Flint water crisis is a well-known scandal now, most Americans were unaware of the problem until 2015. The ACLU of Michigan and the Ford Foundation, however, knew the disturbing facts much earlier. The issues began as far back as 2011, when Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder appointed four emergency managers over five years to control Flint's finances. These managers, in turn, were granted broad jurisdiction to modify existing state programs in order to save money, and they had little to no accountability.

In April 2014, in order to save approximately \$5 million in two years, Flint started treating water from the Flint River, resulting in toxic tap water. "What we learned is the emergency manager in Flint made reckless decisions simply based on improving their bottom line," said Josh Cinelli, the chief of media relations and manager of strategic communications at the Ford Foundation. "The Pew Research Center brought in doctors to perform tests on the water and raise red flags. But what was still needed was a way to amplify the message so that the mainstream media would pay attention."

Meanwhile, the ACLU of Michigan had tried all of the standard communications efforts to get folks to pay attention.

Staffers were working overtime, pitching journalists and trying to get people to visit the city, all to no avail. Racking their brains for an alternative solution, the ACLU came up with an idea.

"The Ford Foundation folks and I were stuck, just going back and forth with each other on how to move forward, and no one was happy," said Kary Moss, the ACLU of Michigan's executive director. "Then it hit me. We needed an investigative reporter." So executives asked the Ford Foundation for direct funding to hire acclaimed reporter Curt Guyette to conduct a broad investigation into Michigan's emergency managers, and Ford program officers agreed immediately.





The Ford Foundation decided to initially contribute \$500,000 to the project, and in total, it ended up funding the ACLU of Michigan for \$2.5 million from 2013-2017.

As soon as he discovered the corruption in Flint, Guyette took a multipronged approach to tackling the issue. He produced a mini-documentary for the ACLU of Michigan on the epidemic, started testing the water himself, and even exposed a leaked memo from a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency official that explained how Michigan's process for lead testing in Flint's water delivered artificially low results. Exposing the problem as a systemic scandal with multiple high-level conspirators all the way up to the governor, Guyette is widely credited as the reporter who broke the story and gave it a national platform. Media commentators such as MSNBC's Rachel Maddow immediately started covering the story on a nightly basis,

exponentially expanding the scandal's reach and impact while pressuring lawmakers to act quickly. Americans were outraged by the story, finally forcing change.

The fallout from the scandal was swift and powerful. In October 2015, Gov. Rick Snyder announced that the state and other entities would spend \$12 million to reconnect Flint to a safer water supply. In January 2016, President Obama declared a state of emergency in Flint and authorized \$5 million in aid. And lawmakers are finally being held accountable for their crimes: In June 2017, involuntary manslaughter charges were brought against five government officials in Flint. Additionally, the work directly resulted in an \$87 million settlement with the state of Michigan that will ensure that all lead and galvanized pipes are fully replaced in the city over the next three years.



ACLU of Michigan reporter Curt Guyette (right) and *Democracy Now!* co-host Amy Goodman (left) discuss covering the Flint water crisis at the 2016 Media Impact Forum in New York. (Albert Yee/Media Impact Funders)

"I've been doing [journalism] for more than 30 years," Guyette said in a recent interview. "I'm not sure I've ever been involved in anything more important."

So what made this partnership unique?

Typically, journalism grants are made directly to nonprofit investigative outlets such as *Mother Jones* or *ProPublica*. But in this case, the money went directly to a reporter housed within a nonprofit advocacy organization. The ACLU of Michigan is the only chapter in the country to have an investigative reporter on staff.

"Oftentimes in philanthropy, you get siloes," Cinelli said. "You have a program officer who is working on a specific portfolio but not connected to any other ones, which can be very limiting. In this case, by funding a journalist directly, what was created is an entirely new tool foundations can use in the future. This collaboration created a two-pronged approach—one that promotes quality journalism as well as advocacy journalism."

For its part, the ACLU of Michigan couldn't praise the partnership enough. "With this project, I truly had a funder who was willing to take a risk with me," Moss said. "This effort simply wouldn't have worked without a reporter, and Ford has been so supportive of continuing the funding for similar work."

And the project has paved the way for similar ones. Now other satellite ACLU offices are also trying to hire journalists. Finally, the success with the Flint case

has allowed Ford to invest more in journalism-centered projects. "Supporting and defending journalism as an institution has really ramped up in the last year for us," Cinelli said. "We have a new focus on protecting institutions, free speech and freedom of the press. And the beauty of this new model is that we can use it to address other critical social issues, like economic inequality, climate change and mass incarceration. The potential for long-term capacity building is limitless."



Key takeaways for funders and grantees:

- Rather than focusing on direct grants to publishers, consider financially supporting individual reporters in order to cover specific stories—but be aware of ethical issues that come with targeted funding strategies. The American Press Institute recently established guidelines for funders of nonprofit media, which you should use as a resource.
- Experience and talent matters. Guyette was an established investigative reporter with a long track record of success.
- Focus on the amplification of the story you're trying to shed light on: what will expand your reach and messaging in the most effective way possible?

About the Ford Foundation: Established in Michigan in 1936, the Ford Foundation's mission is to "reduce poverty and injustice, strengthen democratic values, promote international cooperation and advance human achievement." Though the 80-year-old foundation is based in New York, it boasts a global reach. And it maintains deep ties to its home state, supporting a variety of "economic, civic and arts organizations working to advance local opportunity and prosperity." In recent years, the organization has gained a slew of positive press coverage due to its integral role in Detroit's "Grand Bargain," a 2014 agreement between various entities to help resolve the city's bankruptcy. The foundation committed \$125 million over 15 years to aid in recovery efforts. The organization, seeing itself as both "a connector and enabler," has since shifted its focus to movement building and helping local citizens understand the power of their own engagement in social issues. With deep pockets and committed, clear leadership, the Ford Foundation has positioned itself as a committed journalism funder with a particular focus on inequality. fordfoundation.org | [@FordFoundation](https://twitter.com/FordFoundation)

About the ACLU of Michigan: The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), founded in 1920, has been a leader in fighting to conserve the liberties of American citizens, no matter their creed, sex or race. The ACLU now boasts more than 500,000 members and supporters with 54 state affiliate offices as well as a legislative office in Washington, D.C. The ACLU of Michigan, a state chapter of the national ACLU, was founded in 1959 and is focused on civil liberty efforts in Michigan. aclumich.org | [@ACLUofMichigan](https://twitter.com/ACLUofMichigan)

CASE STUDY

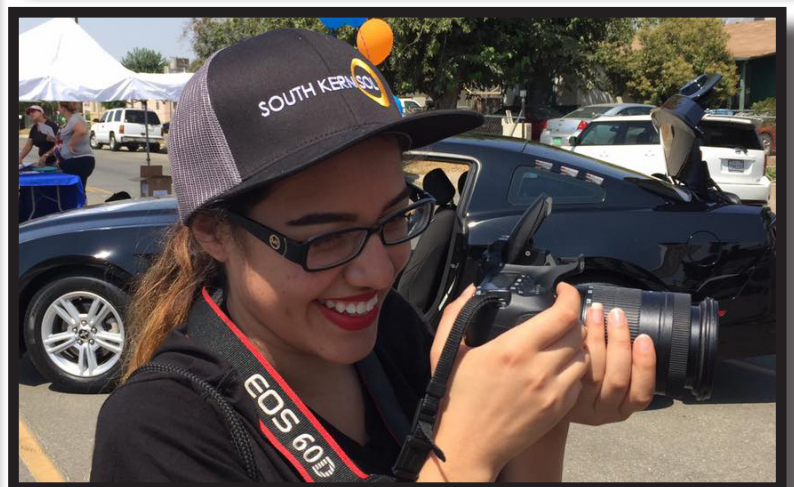
● The California Endowment ● Youth Media Hubs

The California Endowment, a private foundation focused on improving health in underserved communities, deeply invested in youth journalism as a strategy for community well-being and empowerment.

Created in 1996, the California Endowment is the state's largest health foundation and is focused on improving health among underserved communities and people in California. As the foundation started its Building Healthy Communities initiative focused on improving health in 14 low-income neighborhoods, program officers wanted to create ways for the voices of local youth and residents to be heard in neighborhoods that had become media deserts. The foundation decided to invest in an experimental idea—youth media hubs—that would be led by young people on behalf of the communities. The hubs would provide training for youth journalists, create websites with unique local identities, and encourage the civic involvement of youth and residents advocating for healthier neighborhoods.

The California Endowment's primary goal isn't to support journalism, per se—it's not one of its main areas of focus. However, the foundation turned to the field after recognizing the dearth of accurate reporting in California's poorest communities. This lack of coverage was preventing these neighborhoods from receiving the attention they deserved and investments in health that they needed.

"It's really important for people who live in disadvantaged communities to be seen and heard in media in ways that are accurate and complete," said Mary Lou Fulton, a program director at the Endowment who was the first program officer for the youth-led media project. "What we see all too often is that mainstream media coverage of these communities suffer from the 'murders and festivals' syndrome: Outlets only cover terrible violence and urban festivals. Of course, the people in these neighborhoods are much more than that." Echoing similar sentiments, Albert Maldonado, senior program



manager at the Endowment, said that “young people need to be able to tell their own stories and challenge the narrative behind marginalized youth of color. The mainstream media has one portrayal, but young people have a very different story.”

So how could the Endowment make strides in promoting healthier communities across California? Program officers decided that in order to amplify the voices of the disadvantaged, they needed to go directly to the source—the people themselves. After diligent strategic planning, executives came up with the concept of “youth media hubs”—youth-led media outlets in various sites supported by the Endowment that would speak by and for their own communities.

“Our vision is that everything that makes up a community—schools, gardens and the like—is crucial to health care,” Fulton said. “So to help communities become healthier, we have to shed light on what’s actually happening in these towns. And you do that by creating great journalism.” Other ancillary benefits were identified as well—youth would have the opportunity to create original content, augmenting their own professional skills while allowing their voices to be heard. With minimal oversight from adults, participating high schoolers and young adults would have complete editorial control and decision-making power.

The creation of these youth-led outlets followed, with the project officially launching with an initial grant in 2009. Program managers started by strategically choosing six locations for hubs among the 14 communities where the Endowment was working (e.g., East Oakland, South Los Angeles, Fresno, etc.). Four program models were then identified:

- Prioritizing journalism training for beginners and experienced folks alike;
- Encompassing a wide variety of media (such as print, video, radio, photography and social media);
- Stressing youth-led and adult-supervised story development; and
- Engaging strongly with local communities (with town halls, etc).

Outlets such as the *Richmond Pulse* and *Boyle Heights Beat* have scaled up considerably; today, each hub engages about 17 primary youth journalists and has a minimum of one full-time staff member as well as two part-time youth reporters.

As a direct result of these hubs and the local stories they publish, news of the challenges affecting people in each community has been disseminated widely, attracting attention and calling for change. “Amazing stories have come pouring out, featuring critical topics like the ‘school-to-prison’ pipeline, community violence and access—or lack thereof—to healthy food,” Maldonado said. “The voices of the underserved are finally being heard by decision-makers and elected officials.”

Reyna Olaguez, editor of the youth media hub South Kern Sol, agreed: “This project has inspired youth from across Kern to get civically engaged through our stories and through our events.”

The centers utilize a wide network of distribution channels, including but not limited to physical newspapers, digital assets, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and newsletters. Interestingly, the youth involved gravitated toward printed newspapers (the outlets were producing only digital editions). In an era of constant media oversaturation, the oldest format of the news has become the format of choice for this particular group of young people.

The Endowment has also invested in the hub infrastructure through the power of networking: People involved in the media centers convene multiple times a year to share best practices and determine how to partner with each other



“Young people need to be able to tell their own stories and challenge the narrative behind marginalized youth of color. The mainstream media has one portrayal, but young people have a very different story.”

**—Albert Maldonado,
Senior Program Manager,
California Endowment**



**"To help communities become healthier, we have to shed light on what's actually happening in these towns. And you do that by creating great journalism."
—Mary Lou Fulton, Program Director, California Endowment**

effectively. But change didn't come overnight. "You have to be patient," Fulton said. "We're in our seventh year working with youth-led media. We're gaining traction now because we invested long-term in the concept and recruited great people."

The initiative has had lasting impact. With the help of partnerships with established legacy media brands such as NPR as well as amplification through social media, these outlets are reaching tens of thousands of people nationwide. Other major media outlets such as the *New York Times* have covered the effort itself as well, writing an entire piece on the *Boyle Heights Beat*, which begins: "To an outsider, a food cart in Boyle Heights might look like just another place to buy a churro or some corn on the cob. But for Jonathan Thunderbird-Olivares, street vendors are the center of a conflict between a community and its poorest members, one that touches on issues of land use, immigration and economic

policy. And the best place to read about that conflict is the *Boyle Heights Beat*."

Olaguez adds that partnerships with local media partners have allowed her organization, South Kern Sol, to not only report on timely issues that affect the community, but also to reach a much wider audience—across the county and the state of California. "As mainstream media newsrooms shrink in personnel, communities of color, particularly those that have been traditionally excluded from the public discourse, including undocumented immigrants, LGBTQ, [and the] formerly incarcerated, we are positioned to bring greater attention to critical health issues impacting these communities."

But perhaps more importantly, the project has confirmed the immense value of local journalism. "The idea that has sustained is the power and value of community-oriented media," Fulton said. "The outlets we helped create are a platform for youth voice. Everything we do here—the training, development, support and coaching of young people—enables these kids to become confident storytellers and create large-scale change."

Summing up the entirety of the project, the Youth Media for Building Healthy Communities homepage observes: "In California, where farm workers often live in towns where they can't buy fresh fruits and vegetables, where more than 700,000 children don't have health insurance, where 16 percent of children have asthma and where the leading causes of death for young men of color are preventable violent incidents, one sector is thriving: youth media."

Key Takeaways for Funders and Grantees:

- Solidify the infrastructure for your projects from the beginning, with hub managers who have experience in both youth development and journalism. Having a good foundation for your work is critical.
- Be patient. Oftentimes, it will take years to see the benefits of your funding.
- Engage with local communities as much as possible and seek community participation. As distrust of mainstream news outlets increases, there is a hunger for quality local journalism.
- Build from the grassroots. Local reporting can carry more weight than PR or educational campaigns.

About the California Endowment: With a mission to "expand access to affordable, quality healthcare for underserved individuals and communities and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians," the Endowment invests in community organizing and empowerment as a primary strategy for changing policies, government systems and neighborhood environments. The foundation's 10-year, \$1 billion Building Healthy Communities initiative includes a substantial investment in narrative change, with a focus on the idea that health is more than just a prescription or a visit to the doctor. Health has its roots in where people live, work and play, the foundation believes, and poor health in disadvantaged neighborhoods is due to ineffective policies and a lack of public investment in those places. A central belief behind Building Healthy Communities is that the best and most important insights about how to improve health in underserved communities come from the people who live there, but there were few ways for those ideas and insights to be heard by fellow residents and decision-makers. calendow.org | [@CalEndow](https://twitter.com/CalEndow)

CASE STUDY

● John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation ● Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is one of the largest supporters of independent journalism and public interest media in the country, with grants totaling \$25 million annually across three areas: professional nonprofit journalism, nonfiction multimedia storytelling, and participatory civic media. In 2016, the MacArthur Foundation made an unprecedented move in the field of philanthropy and journalism by announcing five-year, unrestricted grants to twelve nonprofit newsrooms, including the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. At a time when most funders were providing shorter-term, project-based funding, MacArthur stood as an outlier among its peers.

According to Kathy Im, director of the Journalism and Media program at MacArthur, “Unrestricted support for nonprofit news organizations is essential for two reasons: It is important for establishing the newsroom’s editorial independence, and it creates the conditions that spur authentic experimentation and innovation.”

MacArthur’s support of the Pulitzer Center allowed it the freedom to invest in journalism projects on critical emerging issues, as well as experiment with in-depth, multimedia partnerships with news organizations.

The Pulitzer Center first became a grantee of the MacArthur Foundation in 2013 when the Foundation made an initial one-year grant of \$75,000. With greater recognition of mutual goals and alignment, a second grant of \$300,000 over two years followed in 2014. In 2015, the Foundation made a \$500,000 grant explicitly aimed at strengthening the Pulitzer Center’s relationship with key national news outlets. In 2016, it approved a five-year unrestricted grant totaling \$2.5 million. The Pulitzer Center’s vast network of talented international reporters, its ability to work across a range of media forms, and its entrepreneurial and flexible publishing and partnership model were among the reasons why the MacArthur Foundation decided to make that significant and long-term unrestricted commitment.

Nathalie Applewhite, Pulitzer Center’s managing director, says the relationship with MacArthur opened up new opportunities for the organization to take more editorial and creative risks, work with more media outlets in new and different ways, and pursue unconventional and innovative methods of reaching audiences and having greater impact.

“With the generous infusion of funding from MacArthur, we really had to ask ourselves how we could take advantage of all of our relationships with reporters, news outlets, educational institutions and audiences,” Applewhite said. “The unrestricted support gave us a sense of both deep responsibility and profound freedom.”

MacArthur is not involved in the Pulitzer Center’s selection of reporting projects, or editorial process—a standard position for MacArthur and consistent with the American Press Institute’s *Guidance on Philanthropic Funding of Media and News*. From MacArthur’s standpoint, its support enables the Pulitzer Center to fund freelance reporters to pursue in-depth reporting on systemic global issues, place those stories in news outlets that have significant audiences, and create educational materials based on those reports for classroom use.



“[Pulitzer has] the capacity to work across many media forms and have relationships with both local/regional and national outlets to bring untold stories to audiences that need both deeper and broader appreciation of the world.”

—Kathy Im, Director,
Journalism and Media,
MacArthur Foundation



"At a time when so much of the discussion about journalism has focused on what is lost, or what can't be done, MacArthur has allowed us to think big."

—Jon Sawyer, Executive Director, Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting

"Pulitzer acts as a broker between amazing freelance talent and news outlets that need original content," Im said.

"And in between the two parties, Pulitzer brings a tremendous amount of editorial and creative oversight into the projects, bringing them to that next level. They have the capacity to work across many media forms and have relationships with both local/regional and national outlets to bring untold stories to audiences that need both deeper and broader appreciation of the world."

The Pulitzer Center has used the funds it receives from MacArthur to support impactful projects in a few different ways.

Grantee Erik Vance's cover story for the December 2016 issue of *National Geographic* looked at the science behind the placebo effect and the ways in which what people expect and believe can actually influence how they heal. The Pulitzer Center then brokered a follow-on

assignment for a broadcast version of the story for PBS "NewsHour."

"The Great Land Rush," a wide-ranging, multimedia series in the *Financial Times*, examined how global land grabs in Ethiopia, Myanmar and Indonesia can upend livelihoods and spark life-and-death struggles. Thanks to Pulitzer Center support, the package also included use of the Shorthand multimedia platform, a first for the *Financial Times* and a highly effective tool for educational engagement.

Grantee Ben Taub, just a year out of journalism school, got access to an explosive trove of material documenting Syrian war crimes. The Pulitzer Center gave him the funds required for a three-month investigation. The result, the *New Yorker* article "The Assad Files," was recognized by both the Overseas Press Club and the Robert F. Kennedy Awards.

MacArthur support has also been crucial to the Pulitzer Center's collaboration with regional news outlets across the country, from a groundbreaking investigation of a botched border wall with the *Texas Tribune* to multiple projects with the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, the *Des Moines Register*, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and the *Miami Herald*. That support has also helped the Pulitzer Center be a strong partner in the A Culture of Safety (ACOS) Alliance, a collaboration of nearly 100 news organizations dedicated to raising the standards on freelance journalism practices and ensuring that freelancers have the training they need to report safely in conflict zones. Over the past three years, the Pulitzer Center has partnered with ACOS, Thomson Reuters and the *New York Times* to provide nearly 50 freelancers with in-depth hostile-environment and first-aid training.



MacArthur support also facilitated the biggest single project in the Pulitzer Center's history: "Fractured Lands," the package of reporting, photography and virtual-reality video on the tragedy of the modern Middle East that took over an entire issue of the *New York Times Magazine* in August 2016. The project won the Society of Professional Journalists' prize for public service.

The Pulitzer Center then organized a national tour with reporter Scott Anderson, making more than 20 presentations at the Center's partner schools and universities. Whitney Young High School in Chicago worked with the Center's education staff to build an eight-week unit around "Fractured Lands," with student teams writing and illustrating children's-book versions of Anderson's work that were then presented in local middle schools. Another impactful offshoot of the project: bipartisan presentations at Pulitzer Center schools and universities by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and

former National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley.

Jake Silverstein, editor in chief of the *New York Times Magazine*, says the Pulitzer Center is “sort of a laboratory of audacity.”

“This is, undoubtedly, a new age of journalism that we’re in,” Silverstein said. “It’s a challenged age. And we have to be creative. And part of that creativity is in finding partners you can work with to amplify what you’re trying to do. That’s true for everybody. It’s true for small outlets and individual journalists, and it’s even true for the *New York Times*. The Pulitzer Center has an absolutely huge role to play in all of this.”

Jon Sawyer, the Pulitzer Center’s founder and executive director, says that MacArthur’s support has been essential to the Center’s success—and a model very much worth following by other foundations and donors. “The unrestricted, long-term support from MacArthur, and its belief in our model, has meant the world.” Sawyer said. “At a time when so much of the discussion about journalism has focused on what is lost, or what can’t be done, MacArthur has allowed us to think big.”

Key Takeaways for Funders:

Unrestricted support for nonprofit newsrooms is vital for many reasons:

- With declining public trust of the news media, it is imperative to support and promote the idea of a free and independent press, not bound to or influenced by funders.
- Lacking a true business model for sustaining public interest news, funders should acknowledge and address the financial instability that results from newsrooms heavily supported by many, small, short-term, restricted grants.
- Reject the notion that general operating support leads to complacency. Quite the contrary: Unrestricted support creates the necessary conditions within an organization for experimentation and innovation.

About the MacArthur Foundation: The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people, effective institutions, and influential networks building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. With an endowment of \$6.3 billion, MacArthur focuses on major global issues, among them over-incarceration, climate change, nuclear risk, and building financial capital for the social sector. The Foundation has a significant international presence, with offices in India, Mexico and Nigeria as well as projects in more than 50 countries around the world. The goal of the Journalism and Media program is to strengthen U.S. democracy by supporting just and inclusive narratives that inform, engage, and activate Americans to build a more equitable future. The program aims to do this by investing in the creation, dissemination, and amplification of accurate, authentic, and well-told narratives across three areas of media: Professional Nonprofit Reporting, Nonfiction Multimedia Storytelling, and Participatory Civic Media. In Professional Nonprofit Reporting, the Foundation’s focus is on supporting national nonprofit newsrooms that conduct explanatory, investigative and international reporting, and strengthening the supportive infrastructure that promotes and protects a free and independent press. In Nonfiction Multimedia Storytelling, MacArthur supports organizations that nurture professional media makers who work in many different storytelling forms. In Participatory Civic Media, the Foundation works with organizations that encourage and enable diverse groups and individuals to express and organize themselves for social change using new media tools and practices. macfound.org | [@macfound](https://twitter.com/macfound)

About the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting: The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting is a nonprofit journalism organization dedicated to supporting in-depth engagement with global affairs through quality international journalism created independently and distributed across media platforms and through partnerships with a network of hundreds of schools and universities. It holds open calls for independent reporting projects on underreported issues around the globe. In 2017, the organization funded 125 professional reporting projects and produced more than 600 stories that were published in more than 150 media outlets. The Pulitzer Center has become the recognized leader in this space, providing nearly \$2 million per year in direct support of reporting projects and educational outreach. The Center employs strong editorial standards in the selection of projects to support and then works with its networks of media outlets and educational partners to maximize the impact of its work. It’s also built a diverse mix of funding sources, from large foundations and individual donors to fee-for-service arrangements. The Center also serves as a buffer between donors and journalists, assuring the proper role of each. It places stories in a variety of outlets from PBS “NewsHour” and the *New York Times* to the *New Yorker*, BuzzFeed, PRI’s “The World,” *Science*, and *National Geographic*. Projects supported by the Pulitzer Center have won nearly every major journalism award, from the Pulitzer and Peabody Prizes to national Emmys and World Press Photo Awards, as well as best-online-reporting awards from the National Press Foundation, the Society of Professional Journalists, and the National Press Club. Its innovative collaborations include poetry-as-journalism, museum exhibitions, and theatrical productions. In addition, the Center does extensive outreach work in the education space, particularly within secondary schools and universities. Staffers and journalist grantees hold close to 600 events that reach nearly 100,000 students each year with lectures, panel discussions, film screenings and photography exhibits and workshops. Its online curricular materials include hundreds of lesson plans tied to Pulitzer reporting that are freely available to educators worldwide. University students receive international reporting fellowships and mentorship from professional journalists—producing award-winning stories on critical issues. The Pulitzer Center is as strong a presence in red-state Missouri and North Carolina as in blue-state New York and Washington, D.C.; in all venues it is a voice for civil discourse on critical issues facing the globe. pulitzercenter.org | [@pulitzercenter](https://twitter.com/pulitzercenter)

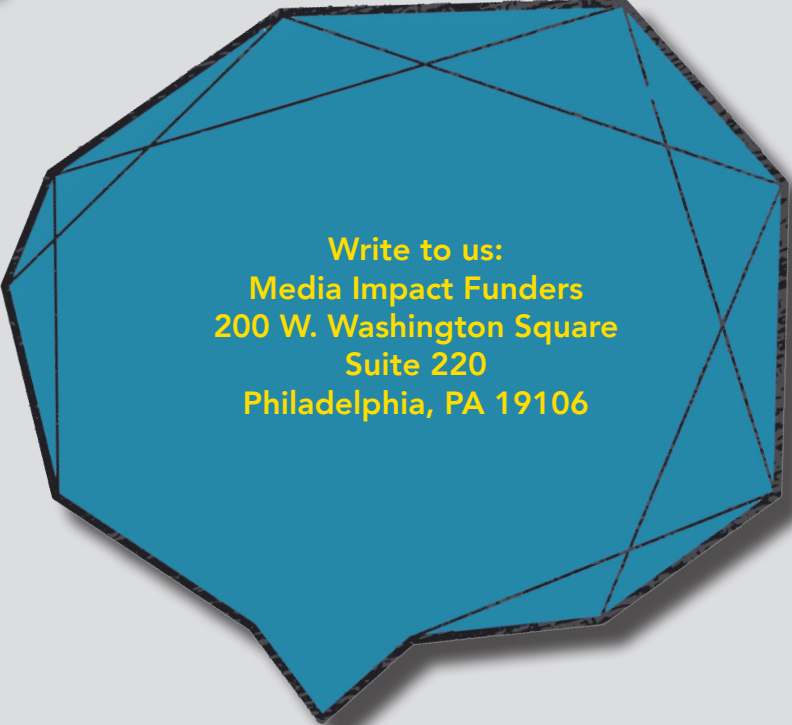


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