Healthy Local News & Information Ecosystems:

A Diagnostic Framework

March 2021

VERSION 1.0

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This work was supported by Democracy Fund, Google News Initiative, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

democracy fund

Google News Initiative

KNIGHT FOUNDATION

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A Note of Thanks

This research was made possible by the generous support of Democracy Fund, the Google News Initiative, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Thank you to those who kindly shared their time and expertise as part of this project:

Aasha Abdill, *Democracy Fund*
Molly de Aguiar, *Independence Media Foundation*
Jason Alcorn, *American Journalism Project*
Evette Alexander, *Knight Foundation*
Katlyn Apalti, *Outlier Media**
Madeleine Bair, *El Tímpano*
Debbie Blankenship, *Mercer University, Center for Collaborative Journalism*
Ludovic Blecher, *Google*
David Brooks, *Google*
Madhav Chinnappa, *Google*
Adam Dawes, *Google*
Anjanette Delgado, *Detroit Free Press*
Richard Gingras, *Google*
Cole Goins, *Journalism + Design*
Teresa Gorman, *Democracy Fund*
Nation Hahn, *EducationNC*
Lizzy Hazeltine, *North Carolina Local News Lab Fund*
Cierra Hinton, *Press On / Scalawag Magazine*
Darryl Holiday, *City Bureau*
Nick Humphries, *Google*
Mandy Jenkins, *Compass Experiment*
Olivia Ma, *Google*
Jessica Mahone, *Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy, Dewitt Wallace Center for Media and Democracy**
Juan Marchese, *Google*
Graciela Mochkofsky, *Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, Center for Community Media*
Ben Monnie, *Google*
Fiona Morgan, *Branchhead Consulting*
Mark Peters, *Google*
Tracie Powell, *Racial Equity in Journalism Fund, Borealis Philanthropy*
Caroline Powers, *Internews*
Nicole Ricossa, *Google*
Karen Rundlet, *Knight Foundation*
Tim Russo, *KGNU*
Josh Stearns, *Democracy Fund*
Leah Todd, *The Solutions Journalism Network*
Chrissy Towle, *Google*
Jason Washing, *Google*
Andrea Wenzel, *Temple University, Klein College of Media and Communication*
Ashley Zohn, *Knight Foundation*

**Has since left this organization.*

A special thanks to community partners who made community information needs assessments and surveys possible:

Sarah Alvarez, *Outlier Media*
Candice Fortman, *Outlier Media*
Chris Barge, *Community Foundation Boulder County*
Sarah Gustavus, *New Mexico Local News Fund*
Rashad Mahmood, *New Mexico Local News Fund*

01.

Executive Summary

01. Executive Summary

Accurate, fact-based, trusted information is critical to the health of any community. Individuals need information to make decisions about their daily lives. Community connection is built through flows of information that fairly and accurately reflect the lived experience of all community members. Governments rely on information providers to effectively distribute information throughout a community, even as a healthy news and information ecosystem simultaneously holds government power to account. And better informed and connected individuals, families, and communities, in turn, can support local news and information providers through attention, engagement, and, in some cases, monetary support. The relationship between information providers and community members is, when at its best, one based in trust and mutual respect.

Community connection is built through flows of information that fairly and accurately reflect the lived experience of all community members.

But how do we know if a local news and information ecosystem is healthy? What are the most critical components to include in any assessment of "health"? What are the quantitative and qualitative data that can be applied across diverse news and information ecosystems? And where are aspects of an ecosystem's health so contextual and specific as to require on-the-ground qualitative research?

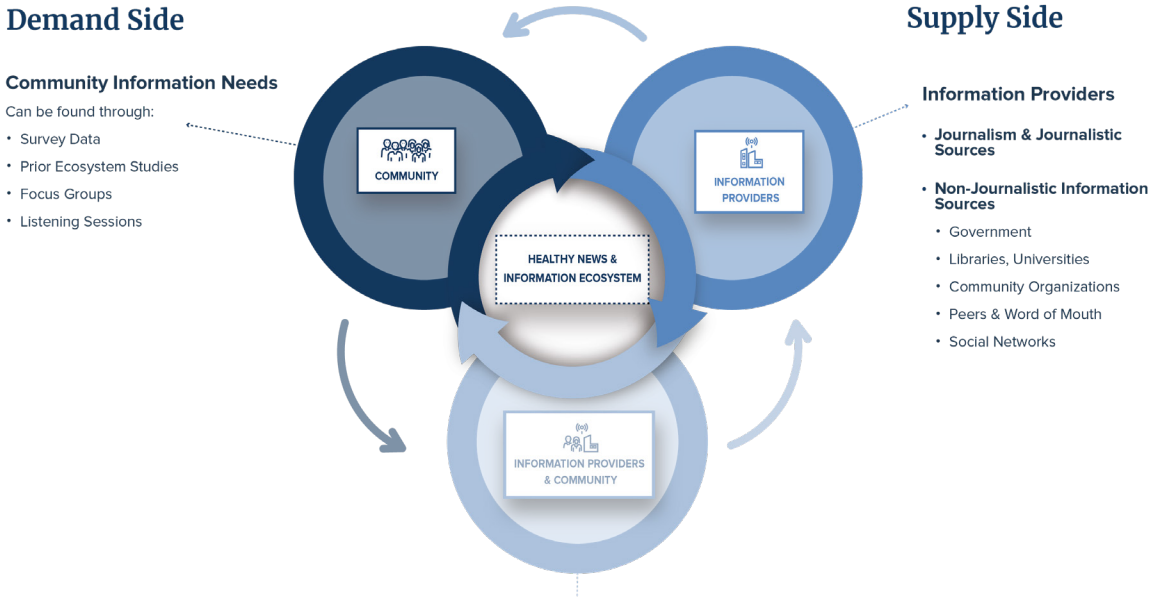
With the support of Democracy Fund, Google News Initiative, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, we set out in March 2020 to architect a framework that would answer these questions. The framework we introduce in this project builds upon work done by individuals and organizations in academia, journalism, philanthropy, and communities across the US. Our decisions about what to include - and what to leave out - stem from our goal to put forth an approach for communities to use publicly available data to understand the baseline health of their news and information ecosystem that can be applied in any city or town, county, or state across the United States.

The project is comprised of three main products:

- A Playbook for anyone interested in measuring the health of their local news and information ecosystem to set baselines, identify opportunities to support their local ecosystem, and regularly measure progress in order to continually adapt the work.
- A full report, including methodology, where we apply the framework in nine communities in the United States - one state, two counties, and six cities - to understand the health of the local news and information ecosystems through a baselining of the communities, information providers, and the relationships among them.
- A literature review, which underpins the entire framework, available as an interactive annotated bibliography in Airtable. We invite you to share additional resources to make this a living resource for the field.

Ecosystems Products

This framework centers community news and information needs, as research finds that when these needs are met, there are positive individual, social, and political outcomes, including everything from individual physical health to greater community cohesion and less local government corruption. We draw a permeable boundary between traditional journalism (e.g., newspapers, broadcast television, and public radio) and other sources of information, including informal networks, recognizing that from a community member's perspective, a trusted source of information might not necessarily be journalistic in nature for any number of historical, structural, or logistical reasons. However, because there are not consistent databases or datasets for identifying non-journalistic sources of news and information across communities, we focus on journalistic information providers in the framework.



Relationship between Community Information Needs & Information Providers

We hope this framework will be a starting point for community groups, organizations, and foundations that are interested in including local news and information in their understanding of community health to identify new opportunities to support robust local news and information ecosystems.

In this work, we sought to address four primary questions:

1.

What are the expected **outcomes for individuals, communities, and politics** in healthy local news and information ecosystems?

2.

What **information providers are present in a healthy local news and information ecosystem**, including journalism organizations?

3.

What are the **best indicators to understand and measure the health of a local news and information ecosystem**?

4.

How can we systematically **assess local news ecosystems?**

Findings

We applied the framework to measure the health of nine news and information ecosystems in the United States. Using statistical analyses of the data gathered, we found trends that, while based on a small sample size, have significant implications. These trends are generally in line with prior research (included in the literature review), suggesting further validity of this news and information ecosystem framework.

- In general, communities that have greater racial and ethnic diversity among residents are home to fewer journalism outlets[1] and fewer national newspaper chains.[2]
- Reported trust in journalism is higher among white people than Black, African American, Hispanic, and Latinx people.[3]
- As the number of journalism organizations per capita increases, community satisfaction also increases, controlling for overall education of the community.[4]
- As the number of journalism organizations per capita increases, voter turnout increases, controlling for education.[5]
- As journalism trust increases, voter turnout also increases, controlling for percentage of population with bachelor's degrees.[6]
- As the number of journalism organizations per capita increases, journalism trust increases.[7]
- Journalism trust is significantly, positively correlated with percent of the population who say that their local news sources mostly cover the area where they live.[8]

[1] r = .68, p = .040
[2] r = -.71, p = .050
[3] non-Hispanic whites (M = 1.32, SD = .34) had significantly (p < .001) higher journalism trust compared to both non-Hispanic Blacks (M = 1.28, SD = .33) and Hispanics (M = 1.28, SD = .34)
[4] The ratio of population to journalism organizations was negatively associated with community satisfaction, controlling for percentage of the population with bachelor's degrees (r = -.43, p = .174) This relation showed a trend towards significance.
[5] The ratio of population to journalism organizations was negatively related to voter turnout, controlling for education. (r = -.42), This relation showed a trend toward significance (p = .183)
[6] (r = .34) and this relation showed a trend towards significance (p = .264)
[7] Journalism trust is significantly, negatively correlated with population per organization (r = -.88, p = .004)
[8] (r = .73, p = .040)

Key Lessons Learned

- The health of a news and information ecosystem can't be understood by the presence or absence of journalism organizations alone. Instead, baselining needs to begin with efforts to understand community information needs and whether or not they're being met.
- An ecosystem assessment must include the various dimensions of news organizations, such as diversity of business models, the degree to which newsroom staff reflect the community, and the communities the newsrooms intend to serve.
- An ecosystem assessment should consider the relationships among newsrooms and other sectors of the community, as well as other backbone institutions that serve as hubs of information exchange, such as libraries and universities.
- It is challenging to generate some of the most important indicators to measure the health of information providers in an ecosystem, such as equitable representation of diverse communities among the ranks of local journalists and accurate, broad, and deep coverage of many issues areas.
- In general, communities with more people of color have lower levels of trust in information providers.[9] This trend was true even if there were Black, Indigeous, and People of Color (BIPOC) serving media present in the community, suggesting that overall perceptions of "journalism" are likely formed and reported based on the history and diversity of legacy media companies and their relationship to BIPOC communities.
- There is significant inequity in philanthropic investment in journalism and media across the nine ecosystems included in this project, ranging from over $50 per capita in Macon-Bibb County, Georgia and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to less than $3 per capita in New Mexico and less than $1 per capita in Youngstown, Ohio.

We invite you to visit the case studies in the Healthy News & Information Ecosystem report to see what it looks like to apply this framework in practice and to use the Playbook as a starting point to baseline the health of your own community's news and information ecosystem. And, as your community begins to implement your own initiatives, we hope you will periodically revisit the framework, update the indicators, and assess progress toward healthy communities, information providers, and relationships across these groups.

We're eager to learn with you and hear how you're using and iterating on this work.

[9] A one-way ANOVA revealed that journalism trust varied significantly between different racial/ethnic groups, $F(2, 32412) = 42.29$, $p < .001$. Tukey's HSD revealed that non-Hispanic Whites ($M = 1.32$, $SD = .34$) had significantly ($p < .001$) higher journalism trust compared to both non-Hispanic Blacks ($M = 1.28$, $SD = .33$) and Hispanics ($M = 1.28$, $SD = .34$). There was no significant difference in journalism trust between non-Hispanic Black and Hispanics ($p = .898$).

02.

Methodology

02. Methodology

Research for this project was conducted from March to November, 2020, with minor updates included through February 2021. While we believe all information to be accurate at time of publication, as is evidenced by many of the case studies, the state of local news ecosystems changes quickly, and case studies and data should be viewed as a snapshot in time rather than a complete and up to date account.

Current State of Knowledge

Beginning in March 2020, we conducted a review of academic and field research defining, assessing, or outlining local news ecosystems. We assessed 124 articles and research reports and found the following:

- Most studies of local news ecosystems have been limited to small-scale qualitative case studies (i.e., individual community studies);
- Industry or country-wide assessments heavily rely on the number - or absence - of journalistic outlets as the indicator of health (i.e., news deserts);
- There is a body of research connecting local news to positive outcomes for individual health and well being, civic engagement, community cohesion, and government accountability and efficiency;
- However, there is ample opportunity for more research about the relationships of news and information ecosystems to other specific indicators or measurements of community health.

We found 22 prior news and/or information ecosystem assessments broadly defined, the list of which can be found in Appendix II. We published the full literature review as an annotated bibliography in an Airtable, and we invite others to contribute additional research to make this a living resource.

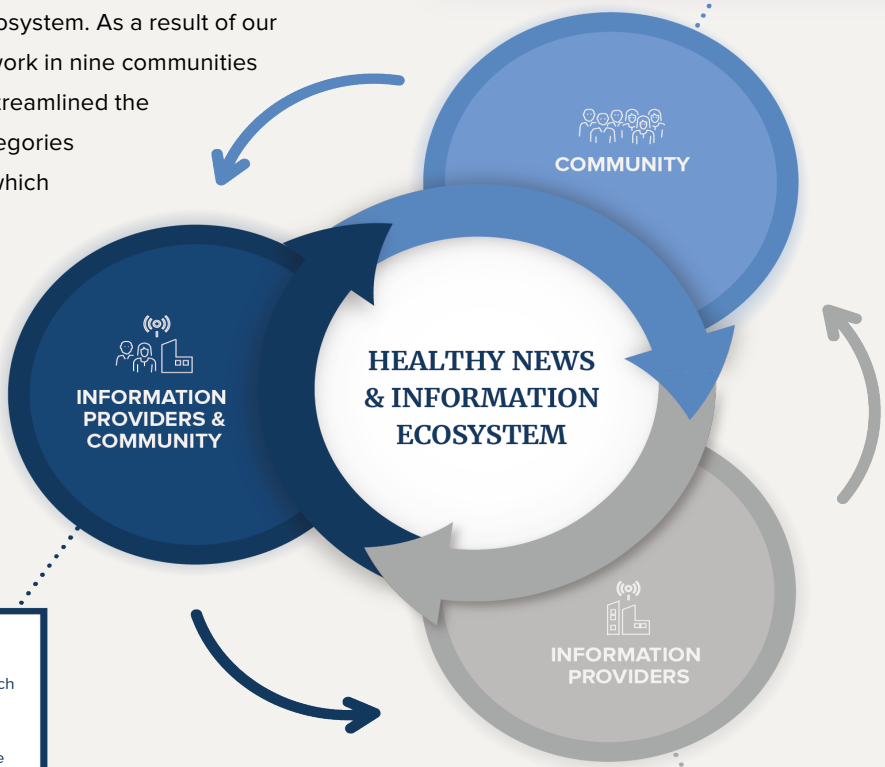
Stakeholder Interviews

Following the literature review, we conducted interviews with more than 30 stakeholders across the United States whose work intersects in some way with journalism and information ecosystems, including researchers, journalism practitioners, and journalism development and support organizations, including philanthropic funders of journalism and information. In these conversations, we sought to better understand stakeholders' diverse perspectives about what are the most important components of a healthy local news and information ecosystem. We also asked about any methodologies they have employed to measure and assess these ecosystems. Further questions aimed to better understand the nuance and complexity of a news and information ecosystem - including how to think about non-media institutions, accessibility and relevance of information, and diversity, equity, and inclusion gaps within information networks. Our interview script can be found in Appendix III.

Healthy News & Information: A Virtuous Cycle

Framework & Analysis

Informed by both the research review and stakeholder interviews, we crafted an initial framework to define, measure, and assess a local news and information ecosystem. The original framework identified five categories of inputs to an information ecosystem looking at a total of 33 quantitative and qualitative indicators that, combined, identify the strengths and weaknesses of a community's news and information ecosystem. As a result of our application of the framework in nine communities - our pilot research, we streamlined the framework into three categories with 35 indicators total, which together encompass the major generalizable elements of a healthy information ecosystem in the United States. Key terms are defined in the glossary (Appendix I).



ECONOMIC
- Median Household Income
- Per Capita Income
- Poverty Rate

EDUCATION
- High School Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Literacy Rate

RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE
- Households with Computer
- Broadband Access
- Universities
- Population per University
- Libraries
- Population per Library
- Community Satisfaction
- Voter Turnout 2018
- Prior Information Needs Study
- Prior Ecosystem Study

REPRESENTATION & PROXIMITY
- % Who say local Journalists are in touch with the community
- % Who have spoken with a journalist
- % Who say their local news source mostly covers the area where they live
- % who say their local news Includes people like you in their stories

FINANCIAL SUPPORT
- % Who pay for local news in the past year

PERCEPTIONS OF INFORMATION PROVIDERS
- % Who say their local news: Reports news accurately
- % Who say their local news: Keeps an eye on local political leaders
- % Who say their local news: Provides news that they use daily
- % Who say their local news: Covers news stories thoroughly
- % Who say their local news: Are transparent about their reporting
- % Who say their local news: Deals fairly with all sides

NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS

POPULATION PER ORGANIZATION

MEDIUMS
- Newspapers
- Television Stations
- Radio Stations
- Digital

BUSINESS MODELS
- Nonprofit
- Public Media
- National Broadcast Chain
- National Newspaper Chain
- Independent For-profit

BIPOC MEDIA
- African American / Black
- Population per outlet
- Hispanic / Latinx
- Population per outlet

DIVERSITY & COLLABORATION
- Journalist Diversity
- Source Diversity
- Collaboration

JOURNALISM FUNDING
- Philanthropic Dollars since 2009
- Funders
- Recipients Invested Per Capita

Defining Community

Understanding the people who make up your community is a core component of this framework. We suggest starting with readily available data, particularly demographic data, as well as economic and education indicators, digital access indicators, and community satisfaction indicators. In this report, we use census data to look at the percent of the population in each location identifying as white or caucasian, Black or African American, and Hispanic or Latinx and Asian as they are the largest ethnic and racial groups in the United States, by population. We include Native American and Asian/Asian American populations in the community demographics for all cases in which there are populations of at least 1% identifying as such. However, we know there are multitudes of identities and communities across the country, and as you seek to understand your community, it is important to expand and adjust this framework to accurately reflect your unique context. We particularly recommend considering Native Americans, whose information needs have often been overlooked. In most of our pilot cases, the population of Native Americans was below a percentage point, and thus was not included in the demographics of the community. In New Mexico, where there is a sizable population, we included this group in analyses and research.

We also recommend thinking about non-census categories when identifying communities, such as LGBTQ+ communities, as outlets serving these identity-based communities have in many places contributed to stronger information ecosystems on the whole. We also recommend considering recent immigrant communities that might have specific needs with respect to language.

Defining Information Providers

For the purposes of this study, we use information providers in reference to journalistic organizations. We recognize that information originating from non-journalistic sources - community organizations, government sources, online groups, social media, or word of mouth, to name a few - can and does play an important role in communities. However, because our goal was to put forth a framework that is applicable to any ecosystem, it was not possible to create an indicator or indicators that adequately account for the vast diversity of non-journalistic information sources in a generalizable, yet still meaningful, way. In the framework, we attempt to understand the value of non-journalistic sources of information to community members through information needs assessments and data on consumption habits. We recognize this is a place for future research, and we encourage anyone applying the framework in their own community to investigate and surface important non-journalistic sources of information.

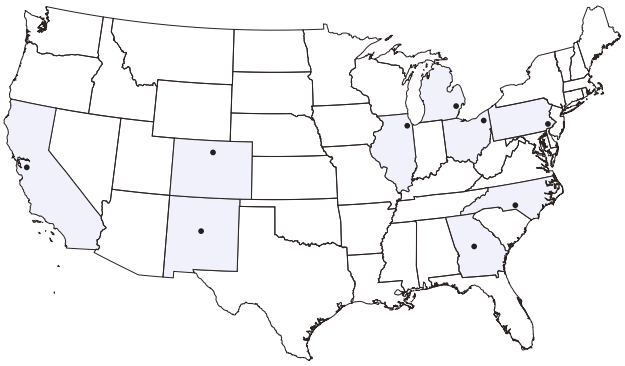
Defining Journalism Support Organizations

We define journalism support organizations as any organization that supports journalism organizations through philanthropic financial support, infrastructure support, or a combination of the two. Practically, this means we have included philanthropic foundations that fund journalism in a defined ecosystem, as well as organizations that provide resources or network support to the news and information ecosystem as a whole. We have not included local chapters or associations of national organizations that primarily support individual journalists. Given the number of support organizations locally and nationally, we recognized that our lists are not comprehensive, but rather some players of note which help illustrate the financial and organizational support of the ecosystem.

Applying the Framework in Nine Ecosystems

In order to test the feasibility, utility, and accuracy of the framework, we applied it in nine geographically defined communities in the United States of varying sizes, economic resources, and historic legacies of local news, including six municipalities, two counties, and one state.[10] The nine locations, including population and region, are listed in the table below; a more detailed chart with each community's demographic data can be found in Appendix III.

Most indicators rely on secondary data collected from existing research, data, and reports. Our goal was to use publicly available data whenever possible in order to create a framework that can be utilized without requiring excessive resources. We also carried out primary research in each community, conducting interviews, administering community surveys (in New Mexico and Boulder County), and partnering with other organizations, such as Outlier Media, to access previously gathered primary data. National data serve as a point of comparison for each pilot location, as does the average of each data point for the nine geographies. These data are provided as a touchpoint only, as each community and ecosystem is unique, and the best measurement of the a news and information ecosystem's health, growth, and progress requires comparing a community's own baseline data with future ecosystem assessment.



Location	Population	Region
Boulder (County), CO	105,673	Mountain West`
Charlotte, NC	885,708	South
Chicago, IL	2,693,976	Midwest
Detroit, MI	670,031	Midwest
Macon-Bibb (County), GA	153,159	South
New Mexico (full state)	2,096,829	Southwest
Oakland, CA	433,031	West
Philadelphia, PA	1,584,064	Mid-Atlantic
Youngstown, OH	65,422	Midwest

We recognize that this framework is a starting point, and that there is significant opportunity to go deeper with qualitative research and learning with respect to any news and information ecosystem. To that end, in each geographic community, we look at specific case studies of successful initiatives contributing to healthy local news and information ecosystems. Given research coinciding with the global COVID-19 pandemic, our primary research was necessarily limited to that which we could do remotely.

This framework is not a linear theory of change. Instead, a healthy news and information ecosystem is a virtuous circle whereby improved information contributes to improved community outcomes. And, healthy communities have more time, resources, and trust to invest in news and information providers.

A healthy news and information ecosystem is a virtuous circle whereby improved information contributes to improved community outcomes.

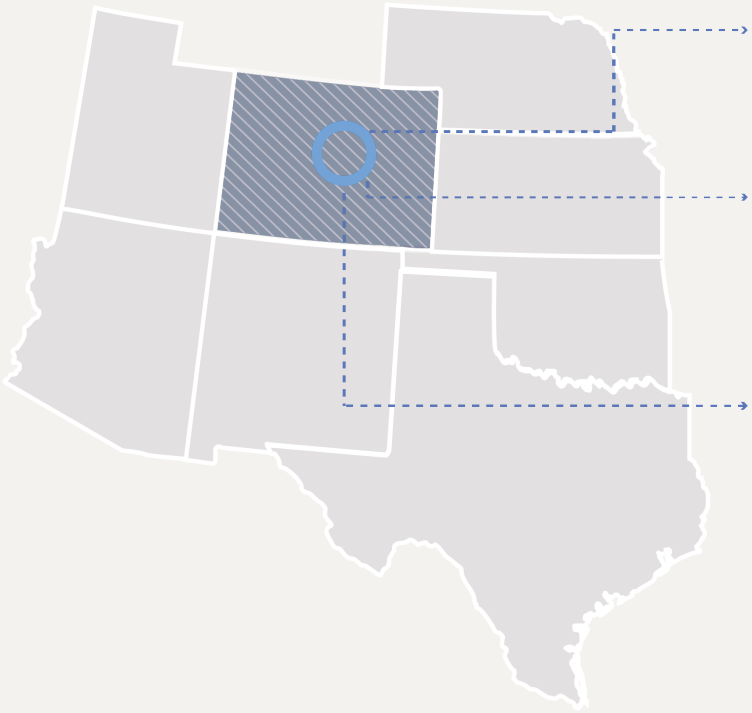
03.

Applying the Framework: Pilot Ecosystems

IMPACT ARCHITECTS

Boulder County, Colorado

Boulder County, Colorado



Population

Metropolitan Statistical Area: Boulder County

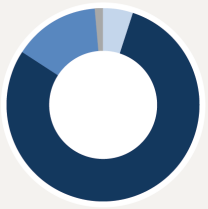
326,196

Age

19% Under 18

15% Over 65

Race



1.2% Black / AA

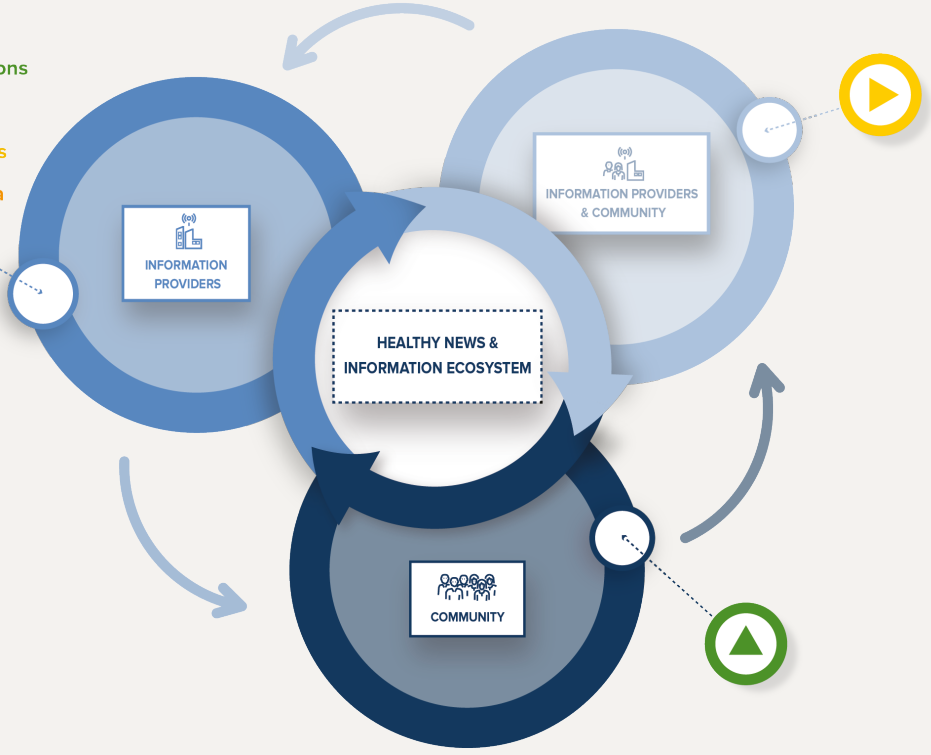
5% Asian

14% Hispanic / Latinx

77% White

News & Information Ecosystem

- Number of journalism organizations
- Types of media
- Business models of organizations
- Diversity and BIPOC Serving Media
- Collaboration
- Journalism Funding



- STRONG
- AVERAGE
- OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Key Elements

INFORMATION PROVIDERS	Boulder County has a high number of news organizations for its population, but low diversity in business models and formats.
COLLABORATION	Collaboration is a focus of the Colorado Media Project, in which Boulder outlet KGNU participates. However, additional collaboration across the Boulder County ecosystem is ad hoc and relatively new.
DIVERSITY	Diversity numbers are only available for one news organization in Boulder County, KGNU. Much more data is needed on the overall diversity of Boulder's information providers.
BIPOC SERVING & COMMUNITY MEDIA	Boulder County is notably lacking in BIPOC serving media, particularly given the 14% Hispanic/ Latinx population.
TYPE OF MEDIA	Boulder County's ecosystem is dominated by newspapers.
JOURNALISM ORGANIZATION BUSINESS MODELS	Half of Boulder County's news outlets are independent, for-profit news organizations.
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT	There has been relatively low philanthropic investment in the Boulder County information ecosystem, according to the Media Impact Partners database. (This does not include the 2020 McClatchy and Google News Initiative investment in the Longmont Leader.)
COMMUNITY TRUST	There is no data available about perceptions and trust in the media in Boulder County. Based on data including Boulder County and other similar countries, we can estimate average to high perceptions of information providers.

Summary

Boulder County ranks quite high on almost every community indicator, with some of the highest percentage rates of literacy, college graduates, and voter participation in the United States. Despite scoring high for community indicators and being home to a relatively large number of journalism organizations per capita, Boulder County's news and information landscape is deeply uneven, with an ecosystem dominated by for-profit newspapers, which are owned by both a national chain and independent companies. The ecosystem has very little diversity on all levels - few television, radio, and digital information providers, few nonprofit and no public media organizations, no BIPOC serving media outlets, and little understanding of the racial and ethnic diversity of information providers and their sources. This is likely due, at least in part, to Boulder's proximity to Denver and its broadcast media outlets which reach Boulder County.

In order to strengthen the Boulder County information ecosystem, investment in increasing diversity and equitable access to information is necessary, particularly with respect to ethnic, linguistic, and racial diversity. The Spanish language speaking population of Boulder County is served through only a few offerings from KGNU and the Boulder Weekly, both of which are primarily English language outlets. Philanthropic investment in media, on a per capita level, is relatively low in Boulder County, and could be increased in order to better support new and innovative outlets in the county, and especially those serving Hispanic/Latinx populations.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Community Indicators	National Average	Boulder County	
Economic			
Median Household Income	$61,937	$78,642	High ▲
Per Capita Income	$33,831	$43,831	High ▲
Poverty Rate	13.10%	9.70%	Low ▼
Education			
High School Degree	90%	95%	High ▲
Bachelor's Degree	36%	61%	High ▲
Literacy Rate	79%	93%	High ▲
Resources & Infrastructure			
Households with Computer	89%	96%	High ▲
Broadband Access	80%	90%	High ▲
Universities		7	Average
Libraries		10	Average
Community Satisfaction	37	95%	High ▲
Voter Turnout 2018	50%	82%	High ▲
Prior Information Needs Study	47%	No	Low ▼
Prior Ecosystem Study		No	Low ▼

In order to strengthen the Boulder County information ecosystem, investment in diversity, particularly in ethnic, linguistic, and racial diversity and representation is necessary.

Philanthropic investment, on a per capita level, is relatively low in Boulder County, and could be increased.

Community

The city of Boulder is often considered an outlier in the United States for its highly educated and affluent population, including the highest percentage of high school and college graduates per capita nationally, and a high median and per capita income.

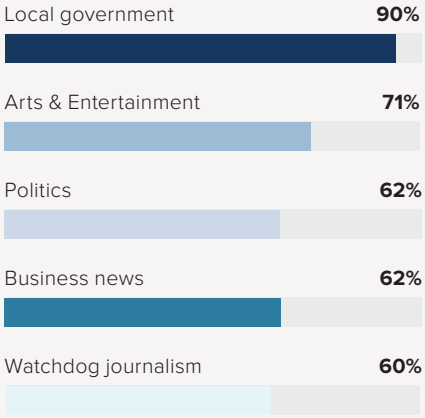
When assessing the news and information ecosystem for Boulder County, the higher than average education levels and per capita resources play an important role and are accompanied by high voter participation rates, and some of the highest community satisfaction numbers nationally.

Information Needs

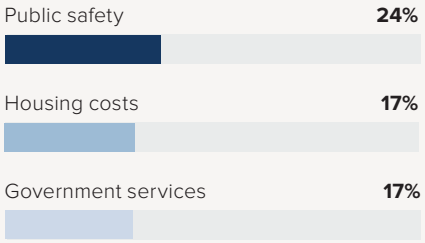
In 2019, the McClatchy newspaper company and Google partnered to launch the Compass Experiment to test models of sustainability for local news. Longmont, CO, the second largest city in Boulder County, was one of the first communities identified as a home for this Google funded, McClatchy managed initiative. Prior to launching the Longmont Leader in the summer of 2020 (see case studies), the team of the new publication conducted a resident survey and three focus groups on the news needs and habits of the 100,000 person community. The McClatchy team running the project found that 90% of respondents listed local government as one of their top news interests, followed by Arts and Entertainment (71% of respondents), politics and business news (62% each), and watchdog journalism (60%). Meanwhile, when asked "What is the biggest issue affecting you right now," the most common response was public safety with 131 responses (24%) - unsurprising given that the survey was conducted during the summer of 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Second to public safety, housing costs and government services were the most commonly reported issues, both accounting for about 17% of responses.[11]

In an effort to better understand and measure the information needs of Boulder County, we conducted a digital survey of information needs, consumption habits, and perceptions of local news, receiving 290 responses. Our main recruitment strategy was a partnership with Community Foundation Boulder County and KGNU; CFBC shared the survey with its newsletter listserv and KGNU shared through its social networks. Respondents were 90% White, 3% Hispanic/Latinx, and 2.5% Asian/ Asian American, with 68% identifying as female.

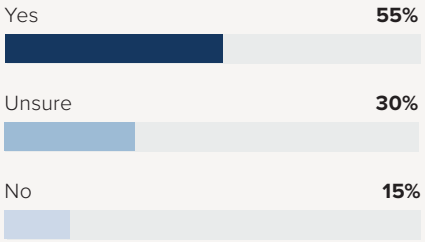
Top news interests



Biggest issue affecting you right now

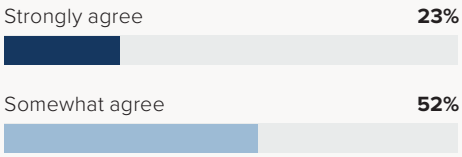


Does Boulder County have a trustworthy and accessible source of local news?



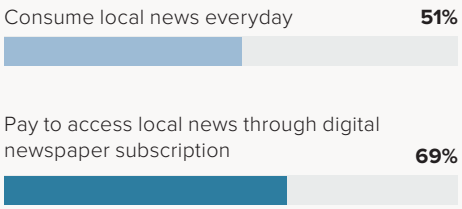
[11] Totten, Shay. "Listen, Learn and Launch." Medium, June 25, 2020, https://medium.com/the-compass-experiment/listen-learn-and-launch-d212eb98e3e0

Does the local news in Boulder County report on topics that matter to you?

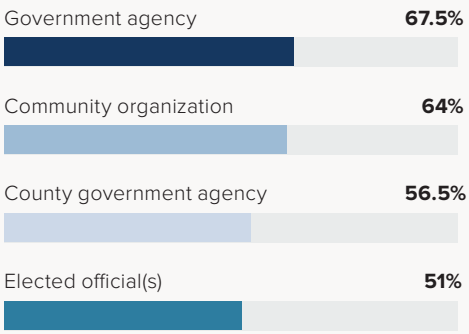


Do you regularly seek out news and information relating to local and/or state government and politics?

Level of consumption



Journalistic sources of news and information



In response to the question, “In your opinion, which of the following topics do you NOT have local, trustworthy news and information about?” the top responses were: National Government & Politics (36.6%), Immigration (29.8%), Criminal Justice (27.5%), Local and/or State Government and Politics (27.5%), Housing (26%), and the Economy (25%). When asked if Boulder County has a trustworthy and accessible source of local news, more than half of respondents (55%) said “Yes,” while 30% were unsure, and 15% responded “No.” Just under one quarter of respondents (23%) strongly agree that the local Boulder County news generally reports on topics that matter to them, while 52% of respondents somewhat agree.

Ninety percent of respondents said they regularly seek out news and information relating to local and/or state government and politics in Boulder County, with half of respondents (51%) saying they consume local news everyday. Sixty-nine percent of our respondents say they pay to access local news through a print or digital newspaper subscription.

When it comes to non-journalistic sources of news and information, the most commonly reported sources were City Government Agency (67.5%), Community Organization (64%), County Government Agency (56.5%) and Elected Official(s) (51%).[12]

Information Providers

Boulder County's news ecosystem, like many cities, is deeply consolidated, with a majority of the local news in the area owned and operated by the same company. The area’s main local newspaper, The Daily Camera, together

[12] Respondents were prompted to select all that apply and therefore response percentages add over 100%.

with three other local newspapers in the county (the Colorado Hometown Weekly, Longmont Daily Times Call, and Colorado Daily), is owned by Prairie Mountain Media, a subsidiary of Digital First Media - the second largest newspaper owner `nationally by circulation[13] – and owned by private equity firm Alden Global, known for enacting cost cutting measures at its papers.[14]

We found 16 news outlets based in Boulder County,[15] with roughly 13 additional outlets covering the area, but not based in the community. There is no publicly available breakdown of the diversity or salaries of the around 40 journalists working for the outlets serving the county. The county is 14% Hispanic/ Latinx, but lacks any dedicated Spanish language news outlet.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Information Providers	Pilot Average	Boulder County	
Journalism Providers			
Number of Organizations		16	High ▲
Population per Organization	22,548	20,387	
Mediums			
Newspapers	43%	63%	High ▲
Television Stations	23%	6%	Low ▼
Radio Stations	14%	6%	Low ▼
Digital	15%	13%	Low ▼
Business Models			
Nonprofit	22%	19%	Low ▼
Public Media	5%	0%	Low ▼
National Broadcast Chain	21%	0%	Low ▼
National Newspaper Chain	13%	25%	Low ▼
Independent For-Profit	40%	50%	High ▲
BIPOC Serving Media			
African American / Black		0	Low ▼
Hispanic / Latinx		0	Low ▼
Diversity			
Journalist Diversity		1 Report	Medium
Source Diversity		0 Audits	Low ▼
Collaboration		Developed and institutionalized, but geographically broad	Medium
Journalism Funding			
Philanthropic Dollars since 2009	$18.7 M	2.7 Million	
Funders	68	20	
Recipients	31	15	
Invested Per Capita	$20.63	$8.28	Low ▼

News Outlets Based in Boulder

	Independent	National Chain	Nonprofit/University	Public Media
Digital	Boulder Beat	Longmont Leader	The Water Desk	
Magazine	Boulder Magazine			
Newspaper	Biz West Boulder Weekly Yellow Scene Redstone Review Mountain Ear Left Hand Valley Courier	Colorado Daily Daily Camera Colorado Hometown Weekly Longmont Daily Times Call		
Radio			KGNU	
Televsion			Boulder 8 TV	

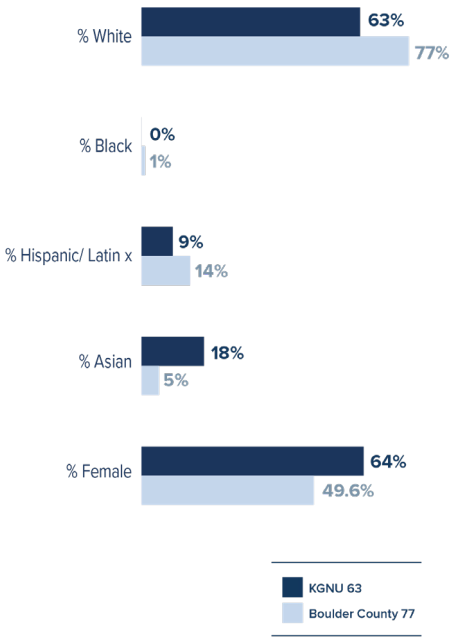
[13] Abernathy, Penelope Muse. "The Rise of the New Media Baron and the Emerging Threat of News Deserts," UNC Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local Media, 2016. http://newspaperownership.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/07.UNC_RiseOfNewMediaBaron_SinglePage_01Sep2016-REDUCED.pdf

[14] Nocera, Joe. "Imagine if Gordon Gekko Bought News Empires," Bloomberg, March 26, 2018, https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-03-26/alden-global-capital-s-business-model-destroys-newspapers-for-little-gain

[15] In September 2020, a new outlet titled "Boulder Local" was announced as part of the LION/GNI Accelerator program, though additional information on this new outlet is not yet available.e

Telemundo and Univisión broadcast from stations in nearby Denver, filling the void in Spanish language television news, while KGNU, the local community radio, and the Boulder Weekly, an independent weekly newspaper, have specific offerings in Spanish alongside their primarily English products and programs.

KGNU Staff Diversity



Diversity

None of the Boulder based news outlets participated in the American Society of News Editors (ASNE) newsroom diversity survey, and only one, KGNU, has publicly reported their staff diversity numbers.

The Colorado Media Project conducted a survey of 14 digital outlets across the state in 2018, and found that of the outlets surveyed, 53% of the staff identified as female, 83% White, 10% Hispanic/Latinx, 2% Black, 3% Asian, and 3% Native American. Only one of the outlets in the study was based in Boulder County at the time.[16]

Collaborations

Historically, Colorado's state-wide ecosystem was marked by the fierce rivalry between the Rocky Mountain News and the Denver Post, which ended in 2009 when the Rocky Mountain News shuttered. Since then, collaboration is increasingly a greater ecosystem focus, supported by the Colorado Media Project and the development of the Colorado News Collaborative, known as COLab.[17] As described by the Columbia Journalism Review, COLab:

> *"Brings together nearly a hundred journalists from more than sixty news organizations, a level of coordination that many of its participants might have found unthinkable just a decade ago. As a physical space and online resource hub, COLab oversees a clearinghouse for reporting to help journalists share work and ideas. The Associated Press is a member, and participants use the AP's tool in order to ensure more comprehensive coverage at a time of diminished resources. Participating journalists communicate via a sprawling Slack channel. Ten COLab members, representing as many news outlets, will soon move their work into the third floor of a Building in Denver."*[18]

[16] McLellan, Michele, and Alan Gottlieb and Andrew Elliman. "Colorado's Digital and Nonprofit Media Landscape: 2018 Benchmark Report," Colorado Media Project, September 2018, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b48d905c258b4f9cb79f8d3/t/5ba631fd9140b7576370f14a/1537618429568/2018+CMP-INN+Benchmark+Study+FINAL.pdf

[17] This project is in part funded by Democracy Fund, a funder of this research.

[18] Hutchins, Corey. "Journalism beyond competition." Columbia Journalism Review, August 31, 2020. https://www.cjr.org/local_news/colorado-colab-pandemic-collaboration.php

While CoLab's physical headquarters is in Denver, the impact and importance of the initiative is clear in Boulder: the community radio station KGNU is one of the ten founding members of CoLab. The COLab initiative has three pillars, which support "an informed and engaged civil society through: Collaboration, Community Engagement, and Sustainable Local News."[19] Indeed, the future of the local news and information ecosystem relies upon these three components. The success of COLab in strengthening these pillars both in Boulder and statewide will be indicative of Colorado's ability to further grow and support its news ecosystem.

Local Journalism Support Organizations

The ecosystem in Boulder does not include a specific, localized, journalism-only support organization such as a philanthropic foundation that has a primary focus of funding local journalism in Boulder county, or an organization that solely provides resources or network support to the county's ecosystem as a whole. However, Community Foundation Boulder County has made an investment in journalism with its Equity Reporting Initiative, a partnership with local community media, KGNU (described below). Designed to bridge the perceived gap between white, largely affluent residents and native Spanish and indigenous language speaking residents of Boulder County, this initiative aims to tell deeply human stories, rooted in data.[20]

Meanwhile, the state of Colorado is home to a number of journalism support organizations and associations, which employ a combination of financial, network, and infrastructural strategies to strengthen the information ecosystem of the state as a whole. Some organizations based and/or working in CO include:

We define journalism support organizations as any organization that supports journalism organizations through philanthropic financial support, infrastructure support, or a combination of the two. Practically, this means we have included philanthropic foundations that fund journalism in a defined ecosystem, as well as organizations that provide

[19] CoLab: https://colabnews.co
[20] The Equity Reporting Initiative is supported, in part, by a grant to Community Foundation Boulder County from the Knight Foundation, which is also a supporter of this research report.

resources or network support to the news and information ecosystem as a whole. We have not included local chapters or associations of national organizations that primarily support individual journalists. Given the number of support organizations this list is not comprehensive, but rather some players of note which help illustrate the financial and organizational support of the ecosystem.

Information Providers & Community

While Boulder's legacy news providers have a traditional advertising and subscription based revenue model, both the state-wide COLab initiative as well as newer, local organizations in Boulder County are prioritizing community engagement both through journalism and as a core component of journalism. Using data from Pew Research Center's March 2019 Local News Survey dataset, we can compare a set of Boulder County and look-alikes to national perceptions on local news and information providers. These data estimates reflect Boulder's higher than average perception of their local news environment.

Information Providers & Community	National Average	Boulder County [21]	
% Who say local journalists are in touch with the community	63%	70%	High ▲
% Who have spoken with a journalist	21%	24%	Average
% Who say their local news source mostly covers the area	51%	50%	Average
% Who pay for local news in the past year	14%	18%	High ▲
% Who say their local news:			
Reports news accurately	71%	74%	Average
Keeps an eye on local political leaders	66%	68%	Average
Provides news that they use daily	67%	67%	Average
Covers news stories thoroughly	65%	66%	Average
Are transparent about their reporting	62%	66%	High ▲
Deals fairly with all sides	62%	63%	Average
Includes people like you in their stories	58%	59%	Average

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Case Study – Equity Reporting Initiative: A Collaboration of Community Foundation Boulder County and KGNU

Community Foundation Boulder County, like many community foundations, produces a biennial community TRENDS report looking at key indicators across the community. Through this work, CFBC was consistently identifying inequities experienced by communities of color in Boulder County, such as access to clean water, health care, child care, and education. And while community groups, nonprofits, and government agencies said they used the TRENDS report to inform their work, CFBC felt that the inequity in Boulder County was not widely discussed or recognized, particularly among more affluent, white residents.

[21] Based on county-look alike data from Pew Local News Report

In 2018, CFBC identified a gap - and opportunity - in local news and information: while 14% of Boulder County residents identify as Hispanic or Latinx, there was no significant news coverage in Spanish. And in English language news, there was a lack of perspectives from community members with diverse life experiences. This was the result of cutbacks at newspapers due to ownership structure and business imperatives, and from a lack of what CFBC calls Latino Bilingual Cultural Brokers inside of newsrooms. CFBC embarked on a process to develop what was initially referred to as the Equity Reporting Initiative with the goals to:

1.
Increase coverage of issues of inequity in Boulder County using data and human stories

2.
Increase the amount of quality information accessible to non-native English speakers in Boulder County

3.
Provide pathways for residents to get involved in community-led solutions

In order to build on existing capacity and to test ideas quickly, CFBC looked to an established community radio station, KGNU, as a partner for this work. KGNU has a small staff and more than 230 volunteers who help run the station, producing a mix of news, talk radio, and music programming. The majority of KGNU's programming is in English, but in service of its mission to serve the entire community of the region, it has Spanish language programming on Sundays, a program dedicated to Native American voices, and broadcasts Chinese language news weekly.

> While 14% of Boulder County residents identify as Hispanic or Latinx, there is no significant news coverage in Spanish. And in English language news, there was a lack of perspective from community members with diverse life experiences.

The initial strategy developed by CFBC and KGNU[22] included the hiring of one full time bilingual reporter/producer who would use the TRENDS report as the basis for a podcast series, also broadcast on air. While the podcast is produced in English, the reporter and host, Rossana Longo, also hosts KGNU's Sunday Pasa La Voz talk radio program in Spanish, and the podcast stories provide the basis for this program once a month. The program has since expanded to include TRENDS Diaries, a community storytelling program, and a "Solutions Fund" for community members inspired by the TRENDS podcasts and later diaries who want to contribute to community led solutions.

[22] Impact Architects was contracted by CFBC to lead the strategy development process for the Equity Reporting Initiative.

CFBC's Trends Reporting Fellowship

The fellows will receive in-depth training over 10 months from nationally-recognized experts on structural, systemic and historical issues, particularly those linked to racism and discrimination. They will also deepen their journalistic skills in such areas as solutions journalism and community engagement, while connecting them to resources and tools such as data-based reporting and investigative techniques....They will explore innovative ways to reframe news stories and engage members of the public. They will give and receive peer review and guidance.

Recognizing that there are many more stories and solutions than one reporter could possibly cover, in the autumn of 2020, CFBC launched the TRENDS Reporting Fellowship to contribute to "a more diverse and inclusive local news ecosystem, in which Boulder County's full diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and class is represented on both sides of the story: in the people whose stories are covered, and in the journalists covering the stories."

CFBC and KGNU are trying not only to bolster an ecosystem that was decimated by news consolidation, but also to fundamentally shift the approach to news and information in Boulder County. The CFBC and KGNU partnership is ongoing, and while there are glimmers of positive change, both recognize that this is a long-term undertaking.

CFBC and KGNU's partnership has proven fruitful largely due to the following criteria:

Build on existing strengths and capacities

KGNU has expertise in audio production and news reporting, CFBC has community convening power, fundraising capacity, and the TRENDS report.

Shared values and vision

Both CFBC and KGNU have a fundamental shared value of equity and a vision for a Boulder County that is equitable for all residents.

Flexibility

There was a guiding philosophy and first idea for a media product, but the team has flexibly responded to challenges and opportunities and embraced each as a learning opportunity.

Funding partners

All of the work outlined above, including Impact Architects' consulting on the project, was made possible with generous support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Jacques M. Littlefield Foundation, and individual donors.

In the short term, KGNU has seen increased audience reach, with TRENDS content pulling in a significant digital audience, as well as increased individual donations with TRENDS cited as a reason. Community members reach out directly to Longo on a daily basis to thank her for shining a light on their reality, as well as to bring new stories to her attention, suggesting she has deep community trust. Similarly, CFBC has seen high digital engagement with the TRENDS content in social networks and, anecdotally, heard positive feedback from community members. In the long term, CFBC hopes to see shifts in data gathered through the TRENDS report to see if and how the needle is being pushed in the direction of equity.

Case Study - Longmont Leader

Though Longmont's population has grown in the past decade, the Longmont Times-Call local newspaper, owned by Prairie Mountain Media, moved the staff to the company's Boulder office in early 2017. In response, a local entrepreneur began the Longmont Observer, a volunteer-run local news and information site. The company then launched Longmont Public Media and took over the city's local public access television. In 2019, The Observer partnered with the McClatchy team, handing the news operation over to the new Longmont Leader and transitioning the remainder of the organization to running the community radio and public access television station as a separate entity.

Launched in the summer of 2020, the Longmont Leader is a digital publication managed by the McClatchy Compass Experiment and funded by the Google News Initiative.[23] Serving the 100,000 person Longmont municipality, the Leader "feature[s] a comprehensive view of what is happening in the city, from government to schools, public safety, business, and local events."[24] The publication, like its Compass Experiment peer publication in Youngstown Ohio, runs on the Village Media[25] platform, and utilizes the same editorial and business playbook (based on Village Media's experience building local news outlets in Canada).

[23] Compass is a local news lab founded in partnership between McClatchy and Google, and part of the Google News Initiative's Local Experiments Project. Compass works to launch and operate three digital-only news operations in small to mid-sized U.S. communities that have limited sources of local, independent journalism. The goal is to make the local operations financially self-sustaining, through experimentation with a variety of revenue models. Jenkins, Mandy, "The Compass Experiment is navigating local news in Ohio," Google News Initiative, July 18, 2019, https://www.blog.google/outreach-initiatives/google-news-initiative/compass-experiment-youngstown-ohio/
[24] Jenkins, Mandy, "Forging a new source for local news in Colorado," Medium, April 21, 2020, https://medium.com/the-compass-experiment/forging-a-new-source-for-local-news-in-colorado-d2859f577846
[25] Village Media, http://www.villagemedia.ca

The Longmont Leader aims to address community information needs; to define and preserve the identity of the city; and to foster a place for community connection. To that end, the Leader launched with input from the community, collected through a resident survey and three focus groups. Mandy Jenkins, the General Manager of the Compass Experiment, wrote in the announcement of the publication:

> *"I heard from longtime residents who worry that Longmont could lose its identity as a feisty, independent-minded city by becoming a bedroom community to Boulder and Denver. They said they want to better incorporate the city's newcomers to the community fabric without losing that which makes it special. Those newcomers wanted to know more about their new home and neighbors. It is in that need for connection that we see the most opportunity to make an impact in Longmont."*[26]

The Leader published about 750 local news pieces in the first two months of its existence and raised a few hundred dollars in donations from the community. The publication had ambitious growth plans, including hiring a bilingual reporter to make serving the Spanish speaking local community a priority. Despite these plans, it was announced in February of 2021, that in order to be put on a path towards sustainability, the Longmont Leader would be taken over by their partners at Village Media in Canada as part of its expansion into the United States.[27]

Case Study - Boulder Beat

boulder beat.

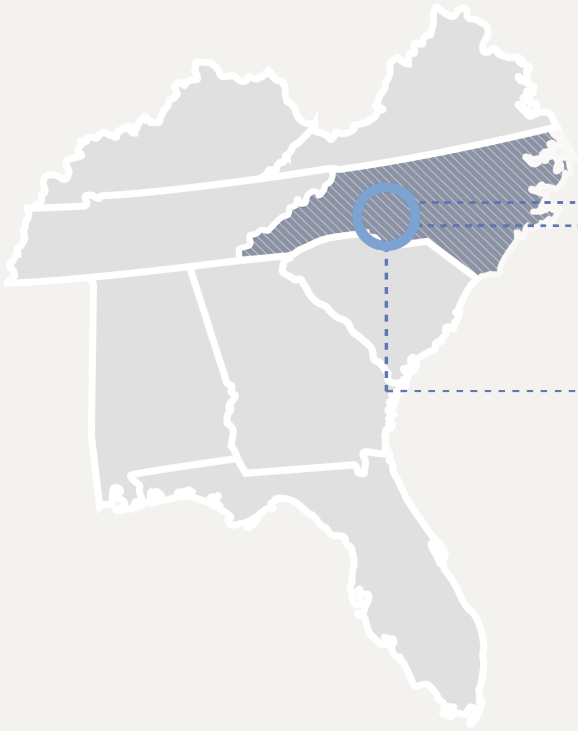
While the Longmont Leader was a community focused start-up backed by a leading national news organization (in this case, McClatchy), the Boulder Beat is a one-person operation focused exclusively on one journalistic beat - the Boulder City Council. The Beat is run and reported by local journalist and former Boulder Daily Camera and Longmont Times-Call reporter, Shay Castle. Funded through Patreon based subscriptions, Castle covers every city council meeting (including live-tweets) and sends out weekly emails to subscribers. At $8/month and 305 patrons, this one-person organization is estimated to bring in just under 30K in annual revenue. The Beat is an example of a single person filling a gap in the Colorado information ecosystem that was left behind by the rapid downsizing of newspapers previously owned by Prairie Mountain Media.

[26] Jenkins, Mandy, "Forging a new source for local news in Colorado," Medium, April 21, 2020, https://medium.com/the-compass-experiment/forging-a-new-source-for-local-news-in-colorado-d2859f577846
[27] Jenkins, Mandy, "Big changes ahead for The Compass Experiment," Medium, February 3, 2021, https://medium.com/the-compass-experiment/big-changes-ahead-for-the-compass-experiment-3b6f906e3c93

IMPACT ARCHITECTS

Charlotte, North Carolina

Charlotte, North Carolina



Population

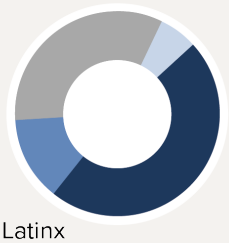
885,708

Age

24% Under 18

10% Over 65

Race



35% Black / AA

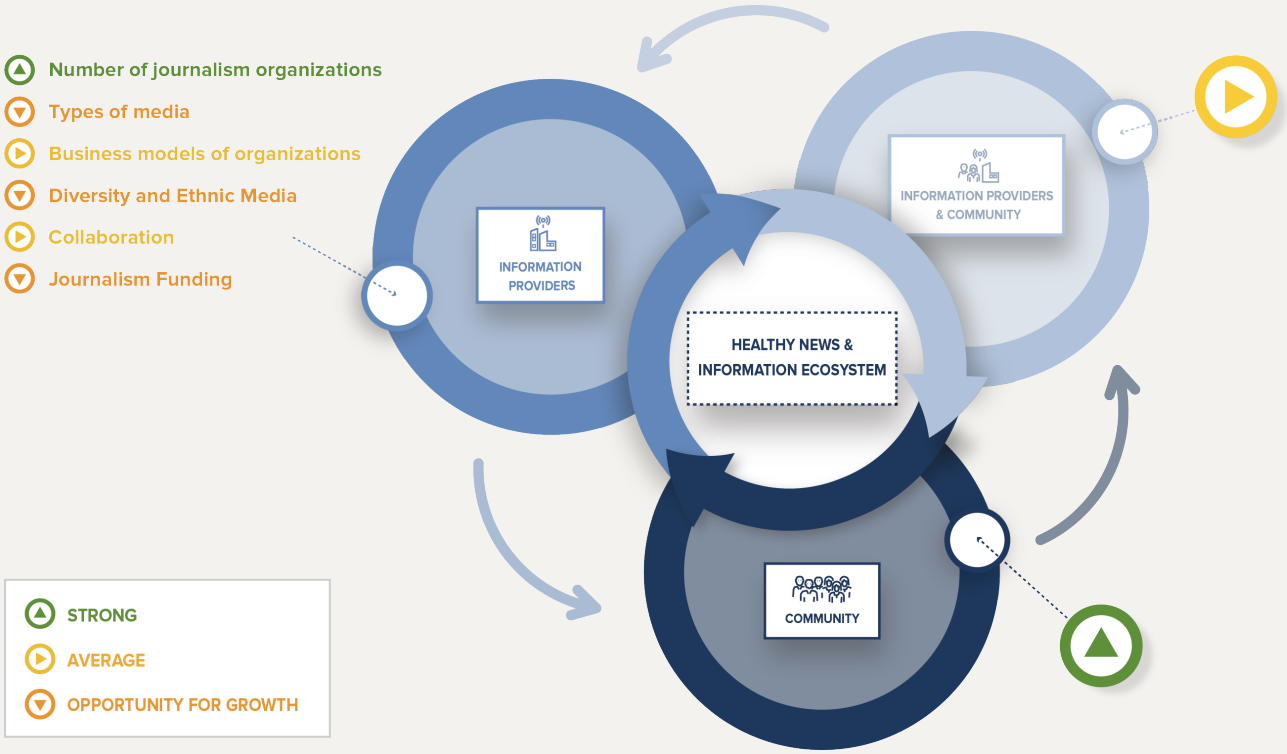
6.5% Asian

14% Hispanic / Latinx

50% White

Metropolitan Statistical Area: Chicago-Naperville-Elgin

News & Information Ecosystem



Key Elements

INFORMATION PROVIDERS	Charlotte has a relatively low number of journalism outlets for the size of its population. However, the ecosystem is relatively strong and diverse in type and age of outlets.
COLLABORATION	Collaboration is funded and institutionalized in the Charlotte ecosystem through the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative, though the initiative is still new and developing.
DIVERSITY	Organizational diversity numbers are available for the legacy newspaper of Charlotte, the Charlotte Observer. The paper is not representative of the city: 30% more white, 22% less Black/African-American, 12% less Asian, and 20% less female identifying than the population of the city.
BIPOC SERVING & COMMUNITY MEDIA	Based on population, Charlotte has a low number of outlets focused on its Black/African American population, but a relatively high number for its Spanish-speaking population.
TYPE OF MEDIA	The Charlotte ecosystem is dominated by newspapers and television stations.
JOURNALISM ORGANIZATION BUSINESS MODELS	A slight majority (52%) of Charlotte outlets are independent, for-profit, news organizations, while 33% are nationally affiliated, for-profit organizations.
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT	Charlotte has relatively low philanthropic investment in news and information per capita compared to other pilot ecosystems.
COMMUNITY TRUST	Charlotte residents have a comparatively negative perception of their local media, and strengthening the relationship between community members and local journalism organizations is necessary for the future of the ecosystem.

Summary

Charlotte scores high in community indicators when compared with national averages, reporting high literacy rates, numbers of college graduates, and computers in households. However, it has a relatively low number of journalism outlets and dollars of philanthropic support for news and information on a per capita basis. While newspapers are still predominant in Charlotte, there are a number of newer digital outlets expanding the ecosystem, as well as a strong presence of independent for-profit information providers. Charlotte has a journalism collaborative working to align and support the ecosystem, though this institutionalization of collaboration is new as of 2019 and still developing.

Charlotte residents have the most negative perceptions of information providers of the nine pilot ecosystems included in this project. While 70% of community members believe that their local news keeps an eye on political leaders, less than 60% of community members believe that their local news covers news stories thoroughly, is transparent about their reporting, deals fairly with all sides, and includes people like them in their stories. Strengthening the relationship between information providers and the community is the largest opportunity to bolster the ecosystem in Charlotte.

Community Indicators	National Average	Charlotte	
Economic			
Median Household Income	$61,937	$60,886	Average
Per Capita Income	$33,831	$36,436	High ▲
Poverty Rate	13.10%	14%	Average
Education			
High School Degree	90%	89%	Average
Bachelor's Degree	36%	44%	High ▲
Literacy Rate	79%	89%	High ▲
Resources & Infrastructure			
Households with Computer	89%	93%	High ▲
Broadband Access	80%	85%	High ▲
Universities		20	Average
Libraries	37	20	Low ▼
Community Satisfaction	50%	67%	High ▲
Voter Turnout 2018	47%	47%	Average
Prior Information Needs Study		Yes	High ▲
Prior Ecosystem Study		Yes	High ▲

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

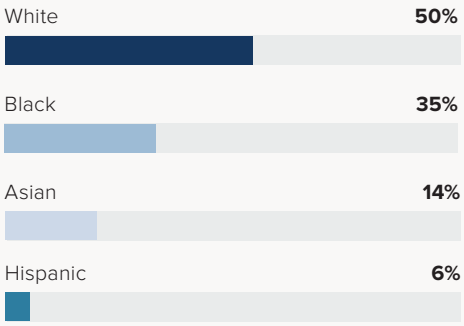
Charlotte residents have the most negative perceptions of information providers of the pilot ecosystems.

Strengthening the relationship between information providers and the community is the largest opportunity to bolster the ecosystem in Charlotte.

Community

Charlotte, North Carolina is the most populous city in the state, and the 15th most populous in the United States, with just under 900,000 residents. The city is part of the Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia MSA on the border of North and South Carolina, and contains about 2.6 million people. The city's residents identify as 50% white, 35% Black/African American, 14% Asian, and 6% Hispanic/Latinx.

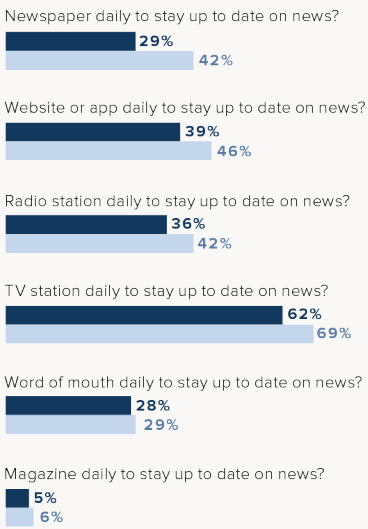
Charlotte Population by Race



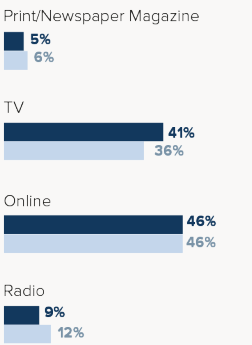
Consumption Habits

The Knight-Gallup, American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy survey[28] included 171 respondents from Charlotte, and while this is not a significant sample size, we can still glean trends from the data. Compared to national averages, Charlotte residents are more engaged in daily news consumption, with 42% of respondents reporting they use a newspaper daily to stay up to date on the news (compared to 29% nationally), 46% use a website or digital app, 42% use a radio station, and 69% use a television station.

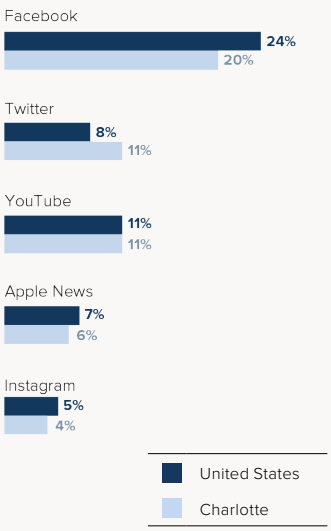
Consumption Habits[29]



Most Relied Upon Format



Social Media



[28] American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy. 4 August, 2020. Available at: https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-2020-trust-media-and-democracy/

[29] Answers to these questions are not mutually exclusive. For example one respondent may report using both a newspaper and a website daily to stay up to date on news, hence percentages do not add to 100%.

Charlotte residents broadly reflect the general American public's preferences for news platforms, although a slightly smaller percentage of respondents reported television as their main source of news (36% in Charlotte compared to 41% nationally).

Information Needs

Democracy Fund, as part of its Public Square Program, conducted a study of the Local News and Information Ecosystem in the state of North Carolina in 2017, which was published in the report, "Learning from North Carolina: Exploring the News and Information Ecosystem," by Fiona Morgan, in consultation with Melanie Sill. The report outlines the state of the ecosystem across North Carolina and identifies information gaps in the ecosystem and opportunities for the future. Morgan identifies the following information needs in the state:

1.
Coverage of the state's economic future and changes to the economy, particularly on who is being left behind

2.
Reporting for the currently underserved Spanish speaking population (10% of state)

3.
Actionable reporting on the North Carolina state legislature.[30]

Meanwhile, Free Press, in conversations between Black reporters and the Black community in Charlotte through their News Voices: North Carolina campaign,[31] identified a number of information interests and needs for Charlottes' Black community. Interests include stories such as:

- **Regular folks changing our communities for the better;**
- **Black movement, exercise and fitness leaders;**
- **How Charlotte has changed over the years;**
- **Black people in parks;**
- **Building generational wealth;**
- **Land as community wealth; and**
- **The changing Black experience.**

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[30] Morgan, Fiona, and Melanie Sill. "Learning from North Carolina: Exploring the News and Information Ecosystem," Democracy Fund, December 2017.
[31] News Voices: North Carolina is a program of Free Press creating connections between local journalists, community organizations and local residents. They host gatherings and public conversations to drive collaboration across North Carolina. https://www.freepress.net/issues/future-journalism/local-journalism/where-were-working/news-voices-north-carolina

Free Press also identified a need for more and better information on:

- **Black businesses;**
- **How to fight gentrification and hostile neighborhood takeovers; and**
- **How residents can get more involved in the community.** [32]

Information Providers

We identified 25 active journalism outlets based in Charlotte, two of which are nonprofit, 12 independent for-profit media, two national newspaper chains, seven broadcast television stations, and one public radio affiliate. The city has a strong broadcast network, with the 22nd highest ranked DMA nationally, serving 1.19 million households.

The Charlotte Observer is the largest newspaper in Charlotte, both by circulation and staff size, and the second largest by circulation in the state (following the News and Observer in Raleigh). The McClatchy Company bought The Observer, along with the other Knight Ridder publications, in 2006. In March of 2020, the Observer halted the Saturday print edition as a cost cutting measure. The Observer has adopted a variety of modernization and community focused strategies, including launching a Millennial focused offshoot site, Charlotte Five, and participating in community conversations facilitated by advocacy and organizing group Free Press. The Observer also participated in the ASNE survey, with 80% of staff identifying as white, compared with 50% of the population.

Information Providers	Pilot Average	Charlotte	
Journalism Providers			
Number of Organizations		25	Low ▼
Population per Organization	22,548	36,905	
Mediums			
Newspapers	43%	52%	High ▲
Television Stations	23%	33%	High ▲
Radio Stations	14%	5%	Low ▼
Digital	15%	19%	Low ▼
Business Models			
Nonprofit	22%	10%	Low ▼
Public Media	5%	5%	Low ▼
National Broadcast Chain	21%	33%	Low ▼
National Newspaper Chain	13%	14%	Low ▼
Independent For-Profit	40%	52%	High ▲
BIPOC Serving Media			
African American / Black		2	Low ▼
Hispanic / Latinx		4	High ▲
Diversity			
Journalist Diversity		1 (ASNE)	Medium
Source Diversity		0 Audits	Low ▼
Collaboration		Developed & Institutionalized	High ▲
Journalism Funding			
Philanthropic Dollars since 2009	$18.7 M	5.9 Million	
Funders	68	8	
Recipients	31	6	
Invested Per Capita	$20.63	$6.66	Low ▼

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

[32] Morgan, Fiona. "Residents and Reporters Discuss Inequity in Charlotte." Free Press, August 20, 2017, https://www.freepress.net/our-response/advocacy-organizing/stories-field/residents-and-reporters-discuss-inequity-charlotte

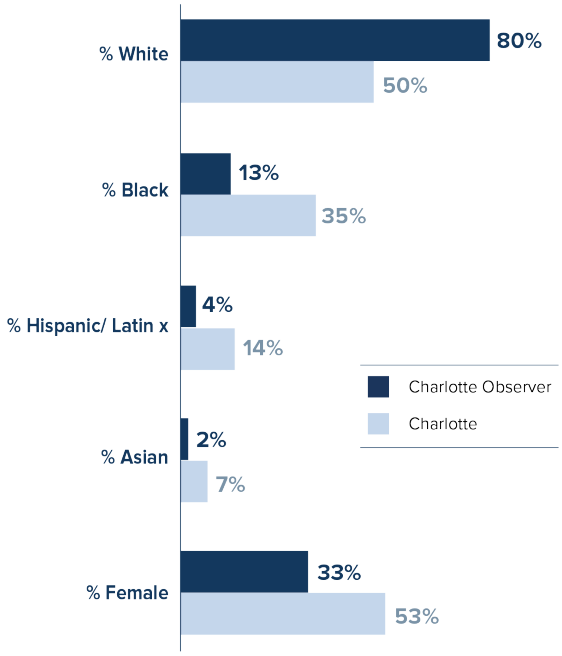
BIPOC Serving Media

The Charlotte Post has been publishing for the Black and African American community in Charlotte since 1878, and faces many of the same challenges as all legacy media, including a shrinking and increasingly older audience. The Post has joined TableStakes, a year-long program that seeks to help media organizations identify and overcome challenges to succeed in the new world of digital media, in order to catalyze their digital growth.

Q City Metro was founded in 2008 by Glenn Burkins, former deputy managing news editor from the Charlotte Observer, with a greater focus on the younger generation in Charlotte. Q City Metro is a “news, business and culture platform for the Black community in Charlotte, N.C. and surrounding areas.” It is a member of LION, Solutions Journalism Network, and Knight’s Civic Bright Spots in addition to the TableStakes program.

Spanish speakers have a variety of newspaper and digital options, including La Noticia, which has served the Spanish speaking community since 1997. However, there is no Spanish language news television based in Charlotte. Cable subscribers have access to Univisión, broadcast from Raleigh.

The Charlotte Observer Staff Diversity



Spanish speakers have a variety of newspaper and digital options; however, there is no Spanish language news television based in Charlotte.

News Outlets Based in Charlotte

	Independent	National Chain	Nonprofit/University	Public Media
Digital	Charlotte Ledger Q City Metro Charlotte Agenda Creative Loafing		PlanCharlotte.org	
Magazine	Charlotte Magazine			
Newspaper	Charlotte Post El Progreso Hispano Hola Noticias La Noticia Q Notes Que Pasa Mi Gente Queen City Nerve	Mecklenburg Times Charlotte Observer Charlotte Business Journal	Catholic News and Herald	
Radio				WFAE
Televsion		Spectrum News 1 WBT WBTV WCCB WCNC WJZY WSOC		

Case Study – The Charlotte Agenda

Launched in 2015 by Ted Williams, the Charlotte Agenda is a for-profit digital startup with a local advertising model. The site focuses on young professionals (millennials in particular), and was started by Williams after building a similar site at the Charlotte Observer (the Charlotte Five). The Agenda has 53,600 daily newsletter subscribers, and was able to bring in one million dollars in revenue after two years of operation.[33] The Agenda attempted to grow its business model to include a Raleigh edition in 2016, but closed it after only four months of operation, finding the model unsustainable in that market.[34] Digital news start-up Axios purchased the Charlotte Agenda in December, 2020, as part of its push into the local news space.

Collaborations

In 2019, The Solutions Journalism Network, with support from the Knight Foundation, launched the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative. This nine member collaborative includes: The Charlotte Observer, La Noticia, WCNC-TV, QCity Metro, WFAE 90.7 FM, QNotes, The Knight School of Communication at Queens University of Charlotte, The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, and Free Press. For its first project, the collaborative focused on the affordable housing crisis in Charlotte.

Charlotte Journalism Collaborative

The Charlotte Observer

—

La Noticia

—

WCNC-TV

—

QCity Metro

—

WFAE 90.7 FM

—

QNotes

—

The Knight School at Queens University of Charlotte

—

Free Press

—

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

`

Local Journalism Support Organizations

The network of legacy and start-up news organizations in Charlotte is supported by a variety of organizations, most working at a state level. In Charlotte, an initiative of Free Press called News Voices: North Carolina has been active since 2017. Free Press is a nonprofit organization whose News Voices campaign "organizes events, workshops and collaborative projects to build power with communities seeking a stronger voice in local news."[35]

[33] "How Charlotte Agenda reinvented advertising, got to $1 million," October 2017, LION Publishers, https://www.lionpublishers.com/how-charlotte-agenda-reinvented-advertising-got-to-1-million-on-2017-lion-summit-agenda/
[34] Lichterman, Joseph. "The Raleigh Agenda is shutting down. Nieman Lab. December 6, 2016, https://www.niemanlab.org/2016/12/the-raleigh-agenda-is-shutting-down/

While New Voices is a statewide initiative, in Charlotte, the group has held public forums on reporting on inequity, convened Black journalists to discuss strengthening the Black community in Charlotte, and facilitated conversations between community members and local reporters from the Charlotte Observer. In addition to Free Press, other active journalism support organizations active in Charlotte include:

We define journalism support organizations as any organization that supports journalism organizations through philanthropic financial support, infrastructure support, or a combination of the two. Practically, this means we have included philanthropic foundations that fund journalism in a defined ecosystem, as well as organizations that provide resources or network support to the news and information ecosystem as a whole. We have not included local chapters or associations of national organizations that primarily support individual journalists. Given the number of support organizations we recognize that our list is not comprehensive, but rather some players of note which help illustrate the financial and organizational support of the ecosystem.

North Carolina Press Association (NCPA)	Knight Foundation	Democracy Fund	North Carolina Local News Workshop	North Carolina Watchdog Reporting Network

Institutions

In addition to the philanthropic sector, Charlotte has strong institutions that are engaged in the news and information ecosystem. For example, the Program in Digital and Media Literacy at the Knight School of Communications at Queens University of Charlotte trains young journalists, and emphasizes grassroots outreach in the city. And, the Charlotte Public Library is an active member of the Solutions Journalism Network-led collaborative.

[35] Free Press, https://www.freepress.net/issues/future-journalism

Information Providers & Community

Pew's Local News Survey data reflect the weak connection between local journalists and residents in Charlotte. With many residents not feeling heard or represented in their media, Charlotte is responding by building collaborative infrastructure, a culture of innovation, and philanthropic support, all factors that will strengthen their ecosystem for all residents in the future. We expect to see improvement in relationships between community members and information providers in the coming years.

Knight and Gallup's findings in the American Views 2020 Survey from Charlotte align with Pew's Local News Report. While Charlotte residents are engaged with their local news, they have a lower than average opinion of the news media, with about one third (34%) of respondents reporting a "very unfavorable" overall opinion of the news media in the United States, compared to 22% nationally. The vast majority of respondents - 87% - believe there is a great deal or a fair amount of political bias in news coverage, compared to 83% nationally.

Information Providers & Community	National Average	**Charlotte**	
% Who say local journalists are in touch with the community	63%	66%	Average
% Who have spoken with a journalist	21%	18%	Average
% Who say their local news source mostly covers the area where they live	51%	45%	Low ▼
% Who pay for local news in the past year	14%	12%	Average
% Who say their local news:			
Reports news accurately	71%	71%	Average
Keeps an eye on local political leaders	66%	70%	High ▲
Provides news that they use daily	67%	64%	Low ▼
Covers news stories thoroughly	65%	60%	Low ▼
Are transparent about their reporting	62%	57%	Low ▼
Deals fairly with all sides	62%	53%	Low ▼
Includes people like you in their stories	58%	48%	Low ▼

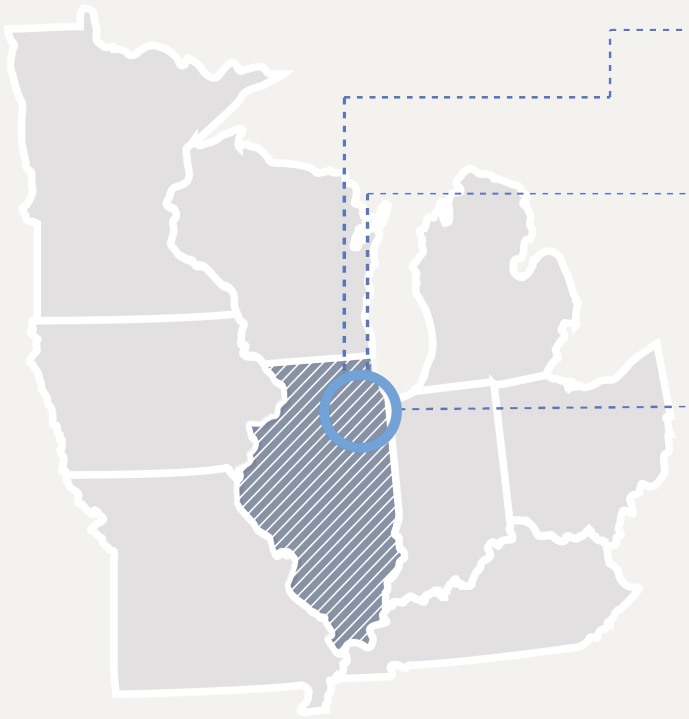
Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

While Charlotte residents are engaged with their local news, they have a lower than average opinion of the news media.

IMPACT ARCHITECTS

Chicago, Illinois

Chicago, Illinois



Population

Metropolitan Statistical Area: Chicago-Naperville-Elgin: 9.5 Million

2,693,976

Age

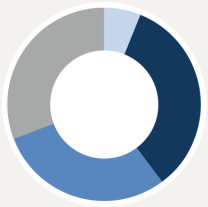
21% Under 18

12% Over 65

Race

30% Black / AA

6% Asian

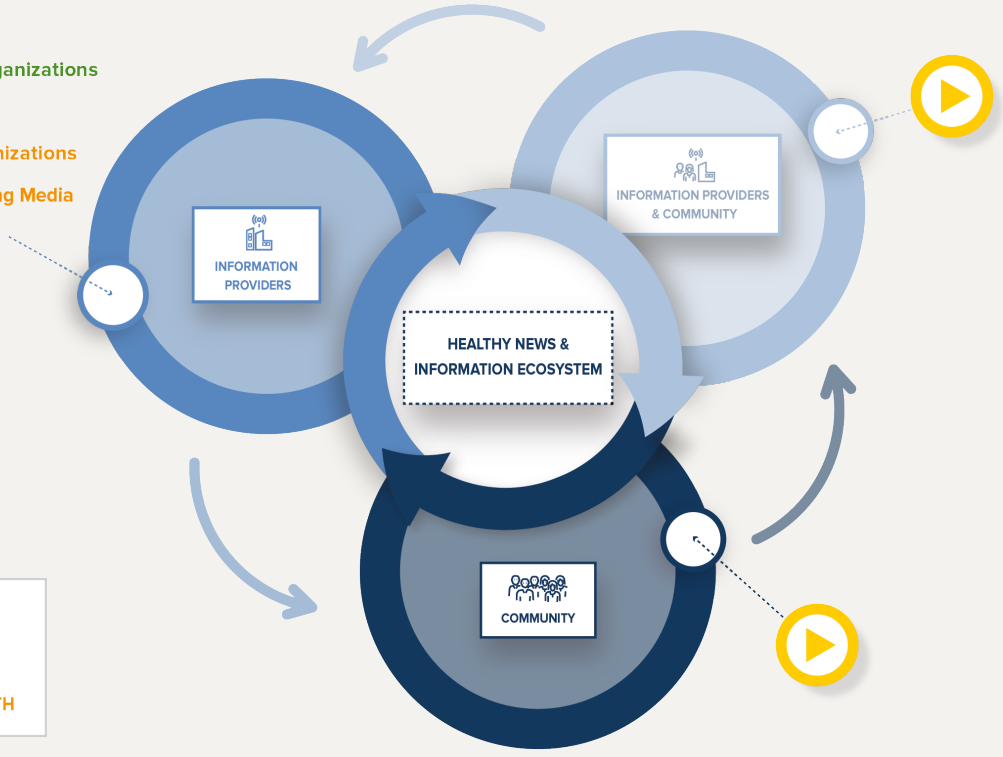


29% Hispanic / Latinx

33% White

News & Information Ecosystem

- Number of journalism organizations
- Types of media
- Business models of organizations
- Diversity and BIPOC Serving Media
- Collaboration
- Journalism Funding



- STRONG
- AVERAGE
- OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Key Elements

INFORMATION PROVIDERS	Chicago has a high number of journalism organizations, though the ecosystem's organizations have experienced the financial struggles, necessary pivots, and lack of diversity seen in other major metropolitan areas.
COLLABORATION	Collaboration is new, but growing across the ecosystem, especially with the launch of the Chicago Independent Media Alliance.
DIVERSITY	Historically, Chicago's legacy organizations have not been reflective or inclusive of the diversity of Chicago. However, many newer, often nonprofit startups have set out with a specific focus on the previously underserved communities in the city, including Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, and immigrant Chicagoans.
BIPOC SERVING & COMMUNITY MEDIA	While Chicago is home to a diverse array of BIPOC serving media organizations, there are relatively few on a per capita basis. And Chicago's historic Black and African American publications face the same financial challenges seen across the industry.
TYPE OF MEDIA	Chicago has a balance of journalistic formats (e.g., broadcast television, radio, print, and digital).
JOURNALISM ORGANIZATION BUSINESS MODELS	Two-thirds (67%) of journalism outlets in Chicago are independent, for-profit organizations.
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT	Chicago has average philanthropic investment in its news and information ecosystem on a per capita basis.
COMMUNITY TRUST	While the data may suggest average to positive perceptions of the local media, a report by the Center for Media Engagement and City Bureau underlines the diversity of opinions about media across geographies in Chicago, with residents on the South and West Sides reporting markedly less trust in the media.
*INSTITUTIONS	Chicago's ecosystem is supported by strong, journalism focused institutions, including educational institutions, such as the Northwestern Medill School of Journalism, and philanthropic foundations in Chicago investing in information ecosystems.

Summary

The Chicago news and information ecosystem is home to many journalism outlets and has a balance of media types and business models. And, while many BIPOC serving media outlets exist, the amount is relatively low when broken down per capita and given the size of Chicago's diverse communities. Additionally, the three legacy outlets that publicly disclose their diversity numbers (The Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times, and Chicago Public Media) collectively report a staff that is 28% - 52% more white than the city's population. In response, new journalism organizations are springing up which aim to better serve the diverse populations not historically served by Chicago's legacy media.

While positive perceptions of information providers in Chicago are reportedly average to high, a report by the Center for Media Engagement and City Bureau outlines more granularly how perceptions and trust in the media differ largely across the diverse communities within the city, largely based on geography.

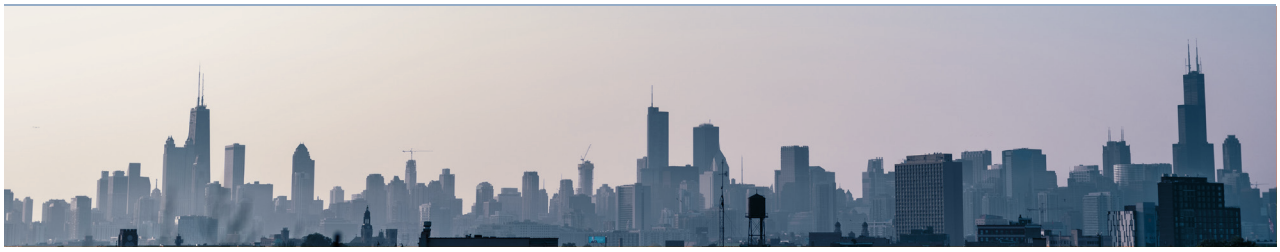
There has been a significant amount of investment in and research about the Chicago news ecosystem. Total dollars invested in the ecosystem is high; however, on a per capita basis, philanthropic investment is average.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Community Indicators	National Average	Chicago	
Economic			
Median Household Income	$61,937	$55,198	Low ▼
Per Capita Income	$33,831	$34,775	Average
Poverty Rate	13.10%	19.50%	High ▲
Education			
High School Degree	90%	85%	Low ▼
Bachelor's Degree	36%	38%	Average
Literacy Rate	79%	70%	Low ▼
Resources & Infrastructure			
Households with Computer	89%	86%	Average
Broadband Access	80%	76%	Average
Universities		71	High ▲
Libraries	37	80	Average
Community Satisfaction	50%	22%	Low ▼
Voter Turnout 2018	47%	61%	High ▲
Prior Information Needs Study		No	Low ▼
Prior Ecosystem Study		Yes	High ▲

While many BIPOC serving media outlets exist in Chicago, the amount is relatively low when per capita and given the Chicago's diversity.

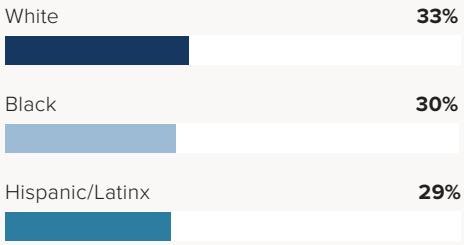
Total dollars invested in the ecosystem is high; however, on a per capita basis, philanthropic investment is average.



Community

Chicago is both the third largest city and the third largest metropolitan statistical area in the United States, with a diverse and developed information ecosystem. However, there are many fractures in this ecosystem, often reflecting the legacy of segregation in the city. Demographically, the media is still largely unreflective of the diversity of the city, where 33% of the population identify as white, 30% Black, and 29% Hispanic/Latinx.

Chicago Population by Race

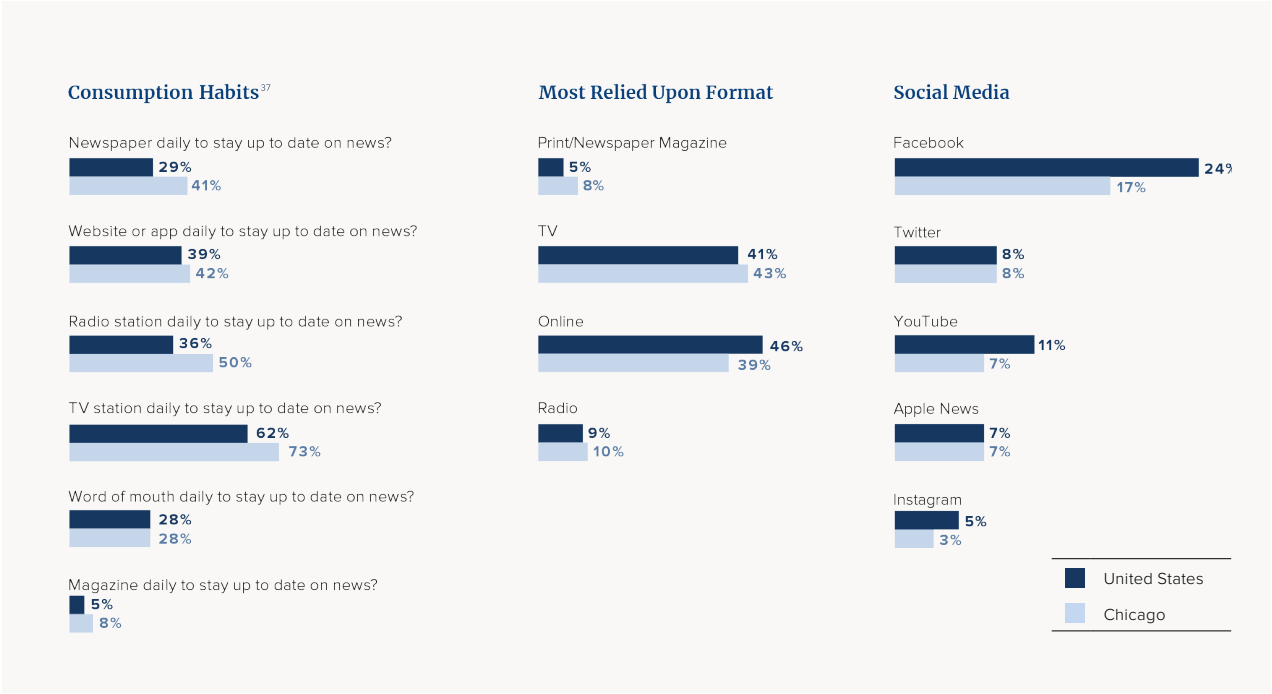


Consumption Habits

The Knight-Gallup, American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy[36] survey included 552 respondents from Chicago. Compared to national averages, Chicago residents consume more daily news from traditional sources. Half of respondents (50%) report using a radio station daily to stay up to date on news, (compared to 36% nationally), while 41% use a newspaper, 42% use a website or digital app, and 73% use a television station.

Chicago respondents' news consumption habits are generally reflective of national habits, with the greatest deviation being that 7% fewer respondents cite online sources as their primary format. When it comes to format, respondents in Chicago are slightly less likely to frequently get news from social media.

[36] American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy. 4 August, 2020. Available at: https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-2020-trust-media-and-democracy/



Information Needs

Chicago's information needs have not been comprehensively measured, though we can glean insights from two studies. The 2018 report "Chicago News Landscape" by the Center for Media Engagement and City Bureau focuses on the relationship between residents across the city and the media (see Information Providers and Community below for more) and highlights the different impressions of the media in different geographic regions of the city. Across all regions, residents reported crime and law enforcement as the most important issue facing their neighborhood, and signaled a need for improvement in how the media covers issues important to residents.[38]

Over the summer of 2020, City Bureau (profiled below) interviewed 18 residents with deep connections to their communities in neighborhoods on the South and West sides of Chicago to better understand grassroots information systems and needs in the city.[39]

[37] Van Duyn, Emily, Jennings, Jay, and Stroud, Natalie Jomini. "Chicago News Landscape." Center for Media Engagement, January 2018. https://mediaengagement.org/research/chicago-news-landscape/
[38] Mejía, Ellie. Understanding Grassroots Information Systems and Needs in Chicago.
[39] City Bureau, 17 June 2020. https://www.citybureau.org/notebook/2020/6/17/understanding-grassroots-information-systems-and-needs-in-chicago

Interviewees reported a desire for information on:

- **Basic needs - food access, housing, financial stability, health care, education, and childcare**
- **Neighborhood investment, gentrification, and displacement**
- **Immigrants' rights**
- **Information on civic and electoral processes**

In addition, City Bureau identified six factors contributing to barriers to information access including:

- **Lack of context and history, which when not presented in an accessible way to residents, can deepen mistrust in the media**
- **Inaccessibility of public services**
- **Language barriers**
- **Technological barriers**
- **The city's history of segregation and disinvestment**

Information Providers

Chicago has a robust news and information ecosystem, but an uneven reach in relationship to its residents. We found 137 news organizations throughout the city, ranging from legacy media outlets like the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun-Times, to smaller community focused start-ups, such as City Bureau and Block Club Chicago. Other landscape analyses include one by The Community Media Workshop,[40] as well as a 2018 Center for Media Engagement survey in partnership with City Bureau, that captured the relationship between Chicago residents and their news providers broken down by city region (North/Downtown, West Side, and South Side).

Chicago has two legacy daily papers - The Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun-Times. The Chicago Tribune is the 9th largest paper by circulation in the United

Information Providers	Pilot Average	**Chicago**	
Number of Organizations		137	High ▲
Population per Organization	22,548	19,664	
Mediums			
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Independent For-Profit	40%	67%	High ▲
BIPOC serving Media			
African American / Black		9	Average
Hispanic / Latinx		8	Low ▼
Diversity			
Journalist Diversity		3 (ASNE)	Low ▼
Source Diversity			Low ▼
Collaboration		Developed and Institutionalized	Medium
Journalism Funding			
Philanthropic Dollars since 2009	$18.7 M	$44,400,000	
Funders	68	335	
Recipients	31	116	
Invested Per Capita	$20.63	$16.48	Average

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

[40] Clark, Thom. The New News 2012: Ranking Chicago's Online News Scene. Community Media Workshop, https://chicagonewnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/TheNEWnews2012.pdf

States (as of 2019),[41] and the flagship business of the Tribune Publishing Company, which owns 43 newspapers, eight magazines, five websites, and the Tribune Content Agency syndication service. Since 2007, the company has gone through multiple ownership changes, restructuring, and name changes, while also spinning off the publishing arm of the business to Tribune Publishing Company, separate from the parent company of Tribune Media. In December 2019, Alden Global Capital acquired a 32% stake of shares of Tribune Publishing Company.

Competing with the Tribune is the Chicago Sun-Times, which began publishing in 1844 under the original masthead the Chicago Daily Journal and claims to be the oldest continuously published daily newspaper in Chicago.[42] The Sun-Times has at different times been owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, New York investment firm Adler & Shaykin, and the Chicago Federation of Labor. During the 2008 financial crisis, the paper went through multiple rounds of layoffs and buyouts before filing for bankruptcy in March of 2009.[43] In May of 2013, following company restructuring, the paper made headlines by dissolving its entire photography staff, a move reflective of shrinking staff sizes and increased responsibilities of journalists in legacy newspapers.[44] In 2019, ownership transferred hands again to Sun-Times Investment Holdings LLC, a group led by prominent Chicago investors.[45]

The Chicago Reader is a free alt-weekly, published in Chicago since 1971. Under ownership of The Sun-Times from 2012 to 2018, the paper then sold to a group led by the publisher of the African-American Chicago Crusader. In November 2019, after continued financial losses and a decline in advertising revenue, the Reader announced that in 2020, it would transition to a nonprofit model under a new organization, the Reader Institute for Community Journalism. This new organizational structure and ownership is not yet reflected on their website or masthead as of September 2020. The organization is the leading organization of the Chicago Independent Media Alliance (see more below).

WBEZ, the flagship radio station of Chicago Public Media, was founded in 1943 and was a charter member of National Public Radio in 1970. Initially broadcasting content primarily for Chicago schools, WBEZ has garnered national attention the past few decades for its shows (now also offered in podcast format) that do not focus on local Chicago content, including This American Life, and Wait, Wait....Don't Tell Me.

BIPOC Serving Media

Chicago has a number of Black and African American focused news organizations in a number of mediums. We found at least ten news organizations focused on the Black community of Chicago (not including those run by the National of

[41] "Top 10 U.S. Daily Newspapers," Cision, January 4, 2019, https://www.cision.com/us/2019/01/top-ten-us-daily-newspapers/
[42] "Chicago Sun-Times," the Chicago Historical Society, Encyclopedia of Chicago, 2005. http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/269.html
[43] Pérez-Peña, Richard. "Sun-Times Files for Bankruptcy" The New York Times. March 31, 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/01/business/media/01paper.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=Sun-Times&st=cse
[44] "Chicago Sun-Times Lays Off All ITs Full-Time Photographers," The Associated Press, May 31, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/business/media/chicago-sun-times-lays-off-all-its-full-time-photographers.html
[45] Feder, Robert. "New investors Sacks, Wirtz fortify Sun-Times ownership group." March 28, 2019, https://www.robertfeder.com/2019/03/28/new-investors-sacks-wirtz-fortify-sun-times-ownership-group/

Islam). Black/African American focused outlets include the Citizen newspapers (Chicago Citizen, Chatham-Southeast Citizen, Hyde Park Citizen, and South End Citizen), the Chicago Crusader, the Chicago Standard, N'Digo, WVON radio, and the Chicago Defender.

Chicago's Black press is developed and historic, but facing the same revenue declines as legacy newspapers writ large. Founded in 1905, The Chicago Defender, published as a daily from 1956 - 2003, includes in its legacy its role campaigning against Jim Crow era violence, influencing the Great Migration north towards Chicago, and publishing seminal voices such as Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Ida B. Wells. It was once the largest Black owned newspaper in the United States with a circulation of 250,000 at its peak. However, circulation had dwindled to around 16,000 in 2019, when the newspaper transitioned to an online only model.[46]

Chicago has a number of Spanish language media, particularly through local television news. Outlets serving the Hispanic/Latinx community include, El Día, La Raza, Cicero Independiented, Lawndale News (nonprofit), Telemundo Chicago (TV), Univision Chicago (TV), WESV Estrella TV 40 (TV), and WXFT UniMas 60 (TV). While there may be a variety of Spanish language news options, given the size of the Hispanic/Latinx population of Chicago, there are still relatively few Spanish-language outlets per capita for the city.

Black/African American Focused Outlets in Chicago

Chicago Citizen

—

Chatham-Southeast Citizen

—

Hyde Park Citizen

—

South End Citizen

—

Chicago Standard

—

N'Digo

—

WVON radio

—

Chicago Defender

—

Chicago Crusader

—

The Triibe

With a variety of diverse communities and a strong publishing history, Chicago's ecosystem also includes outlets serving ethnic and linguistic communities that have been part of the landscape of Chicago for generations, including Draugas (Lithuanian), Polish Daily News, Dziennik Zwaiskowy (Polish), and Korea Times.

[46] Katz, Brigit. "The 'Chicago Defender,' and Iconic black Newspaper, the Release Its Last Print Issue," Smithsonian Magazine, July 9, 2019, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/chicago-defender-iconic-black-newspaper-releasing-its-last-print-issue-180972586/

Collaborations

Historically, Chicago's media ecosystem has been marked by competition. However, as revenues continue to decline and organizations strengthen their engagement efforts to reach diverse communities, collaboration is becoming more common among publishers. In 2019, following a survey of 103 independent news outlets, the Chicago Reader led the formation of the Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA), which launched in 2019 with 66 founding members.[47] In the launch plans, the organization planned a joint fundraising initiative for 2021. However, seeing the dire need for support due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CIMA instead hosted the joint fundraiser through the website savechicagomedia.org, in May of 2020,[48] raising $104,000 from individual donors, with a $60,000 match in foundation support.[49]

Diversity

Three publications - The Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times, and Chicago Public Media - all participated in the most recent American Society of News Editors (ASNE) newsroom diversity survey, and all reported white staff accounting for at least double the percentage of white residents in the city of Chicago. While individual journalists have anecdotally undertaken source diversity audits at WBEZ, we could not find any published findings on diversity of sources for Chicago news organizations.

Hispanic/Latinx American Focused Outlets in Chicago

Cicero Independiente

—

El Día

—

La Raza

—

Lawndale News

—

Telemundo (TV)

—

Univision (TV)

—

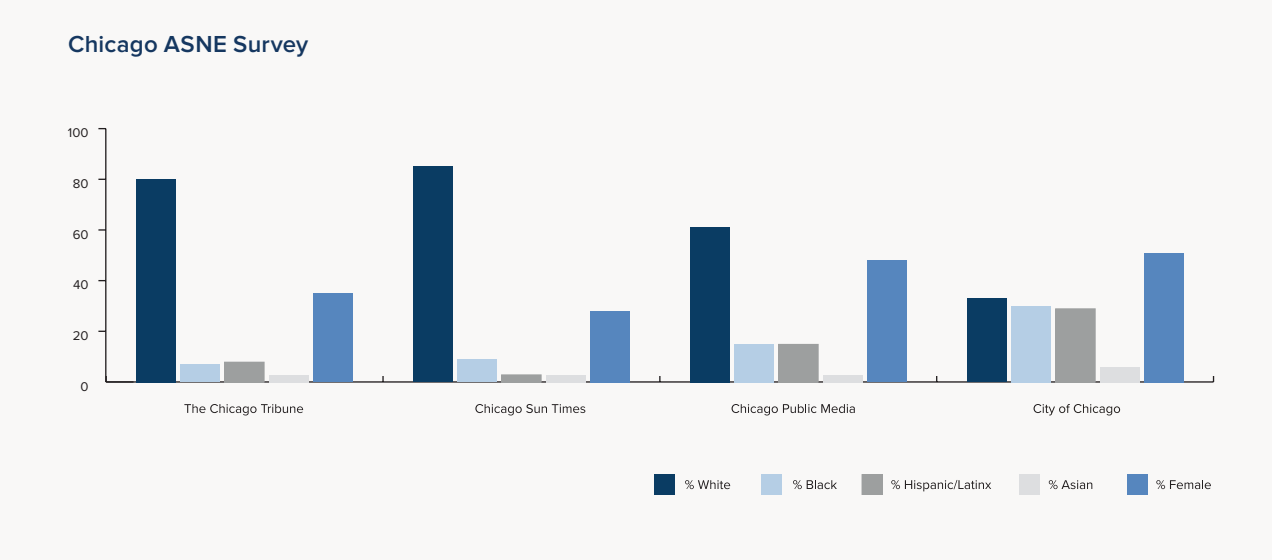
WESV Estrella TV 40 (TV)

—

WXFT UniMas 60 (TV)

As revenues continue to decline and organizations strengthen their engagement efforts to reach diverse communities, collaboration is becoming more common among publishers.

[47] Chicago Independent Media Alliance, Overview Report. https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/independent-media-alliance-about-cima/Content?oid=82156315
[48] "40+ Chicago media outlets launch joint fundraiser," Austin Weekly News, May 20, 2020. https://www.austinweeklynews.com/News/Articles/5-20-2020/40&%2343%3B-Chicago-media-outlets-launch-joint-fundraiser/
[49] "About the Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA)," Chicago Reader, https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/independent-media-alliance-about-cima/Content?oid=82156315



Local Journalism Support Organizations

Chicago has a number of organizations and institutions investing in journalism and information in the city. The organizations that have granted the most money to actors in the Chicago ecosystem include:

- Corporation for Public Broadcasting
- The MacArthur Foundation
- The McCormick Foundation
- The Ford Foundation
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- The Chicago Community Trust
- The Field Foundation of Illinois
- The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- The Joyce Foundation
- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- The Pritzker Foundation

This list is not comprehensive, but rather some players of note which illustrate the financial and organizational support of the ecosystem.

Institutions

Chicago's news and information ecosystem is bolstered by the journalism education institutions in the city. The Northwestern Medill School of Journalism is considered one of the strongest in the country and is home to the Local News Initiative, "a team of experts in digital innovation, audience understanding and business strategy," with the goal to "reinvent the relationship between news organizations and audiences to elevate enterprises that empower citizens."[50] The initiative includes the Northwestern Knight Lab, which uses "data analysis from the Local News initiative to create new products, tools and approaches to strengthen local news organizations and better serve their audiences."[51] The Chicago Tribune, IndyStar, and San Francisco Chronicle are partners of the initiative, sharing data from which the Local News Initiative can develop analyses on the challenges of local media today.

Information Providers & Community

Information Providers & Community	National Average	Chicago	
% Who say local journalists are in touch with the community	63%	64%	Average
% Who have spoken with a journalist	21%	17%	Average
% Who say their local news source mostly covers the area where they live	51%	53%	Average
% Who pay for local news in the past year	14%	16%	Average
% Who say their local news:			
Reports news accurately	71%	77%	High ▲
Keeps an eye on local political leaders	66%	72%	High ▲
Provides news that they use daily	67%	71%	High ▲
Covers news stories thoroughly	65%	70%	High ▲
Are transparent about their reporting	62%	64%	Average
Deals fairly with all sides	62%	64%	Average
Includes people like you in their stories	58%	61%	Average

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

[50] Local Journalism Initiative. Northwest Medill School of Journalism, https://localnewsinitiative.northwestern.edu
[51] Local Journalism Initiative. About Us. Northwest Medill School of Journalism, https://localnewsinitiative.northwestern.edu/about/

While the numbers from Pew's 2019 Local Journalism survey[52] seemingly reflect a positive relationship between Chicago residents and local journalists, the 2018 report "Chicago News Landscape" by the Center for Media Engagement and City Bureau highlights the truly uneven trust between Chicago communities and the media as influenced by geography. The key findings of the report include:

- Across all regions, Chicago residents saw "crime and law enforcement" as the most important issue facing their neighborhood.
- Chicago media have room for improvement in covering issues important to residents.
- There were big regional differences in how residents thought the news media sees their neighborhoods.
- In general, residents rated news coverage of Chicago neighborhoods as "average."
- A majority of Chicago residents agreed that there aren't enough stories about their neighborhood and that people from their neighborhood aren't in the news.
- Past engagement with journalists was low, but opportunity exists to engage with audiences, especially in the West and South Sides. West and South Side residents were more interested in volunteering to report on a public meeting than North / Downtown residents were.
- Respondents were more likely to donate $10 to a free news site than pay a fee of $10 to access news.
- Some of the differences by region can be explained by demographic factors like race/ethnicity.
- Residents in the West and South Side regions of Chicago were more likely to cite "crime and law enforcement" as an important issue facing their neighborhood than were residents in the North / Downtown region.
- North / Downtown residents thought Chicago news media offered better coverage of crime and law enforcement than residents in the West or South Side regions.
- West and South Side residents were more likely to see coverage of their neighborhoods as too negative and think that the coverage quotes the wrong people than were North / Downtown residents.
- North / Downtown residents were more likely to say coverage of their neighborhood does a good job of showing what's going on than were West and South Side residents.
- North / Downtown residents were more likely to have communicated with a journalist or attended an event hosted by a news organization than South Side residents.[53]

While these geographic fractures reflect a century of race and socio-economic barriers in Chicago, which until recently was the most segregated city in the country,[54] there are outlets and initiatives aiming to bridge those divides, often supported by philanthropic investment in the ecosystem.

[52] Pew Research Center, What are the local news dynamics in your city? Chicago-Naperville-Elgin. March 2019. https://www.journalism.org/interactives/local-news-habits/16980/

[53] Van Duyn, Emily, Jennings, Jay, and Stroud, Natalie Jomini. "Chicago News Landscape." Center for Media Engagement, January 2018. https://mediaengagement.org/research/chicago-news-landscape/

[54] Comen, Evan. "Detroit, Chicago, Memphis: The 25 most segregated cities in America." USA Today, July 20, 2019.

Case Study - Curious City (WBEZ)

While WBEZ is known nationally for its non-local programs, its program Curious City is a leader in local audience engagement. Running since 2012, Curious City chooses its stories based on audience submitted questions, and addresses interesting Chicago history or trivia. In 2015, then-editor Shawn Allee mapped the questions submitted to the program, developing a strategy for 2016 to reach those communities less engaged previously. Jennifer Brandel, former Curious City journalist founded Hearken, an audience engagement consulting company, based on this model.[5]Andrea Wenzel, in the Columbia Journalism Review, writes,

> ***"Overall, the project was a success: Curious City gathered 313 questions from target neighborhoods (out of a total of 976 questions submitted throughout the year). The resultant reporting included accountability stories grounded in the experiences of residents from historically under-resourced communities — for example, one story questioned why South Side (majority African-American) neighborhoods had than North Side neighborhoods.***
>
> ***The experiment also clearly identified some best practices for future outreach planning. By far, Curious City's most efficient method was setting up booths at public library branches; such outings produced 159 questions. Pavement-pounding and approaching individual residents directly generated another 137 questions, but those approaches required considerable time and energy on the part of an outreach producer. Leaving question boxes with partner organizations such as cafés generated almost no questions, due to a lack of sustained promotion. Perhaps the biggest fail was a not-inexpensive Facebook marketing campaign—which generated 1,920 clicks but only 14 questions."*** [56]

Curious City is an example of a legacy media publication shifting to be responsive to its community information needs and desires.

Case Study - City Bureau

City Bureau, a nonprofit civic news organization serving the South and West Sides of Chicago, is pioneering a new model for community journalism in the city, which has also expanded to Detroit, MI in a partnership with WDET, and Cleveland, OH. City Bureau describes its work as "bringing people together to produce media that is impactful, equitable, and responsive to the public."

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[55] Lumb, David. "Hearken Aims To Help Media Gain Traction With Readers By Crowdsourcing Story Ideas," Fast Company, July 21, 2015, https://www.fastcompany.com/3047736/hearken-aims-to-help-media-gain-traction-with-readers-by-crowdsourcing-sto
[56] Wenzel, Andrea. "Lessons in audience engagement from Chicago's Curious City," Columbia Journalism Review, May 25, 2017, https://www.cjr.org/tow_center/lessons-in-audience-engagement-from-chicagos-curious-city.php

In addition to serving as a fiscal sponsor for other organizations, City Bureau runs a ten week fellowship program where journalists learn community-centered reporting, a "documenters" program to train and pay local residents to report on local government and practice accountability journalism, and free monthly workshops and discussions aimed at building trust and inclusivity in the newsroom.[57] Part of the documenters program includes documenters.org, a website which tracks and publishes local government decisions and meetings.

In 2019, City Bureau conducted an extensive Impact Evaluation Framework to define the value and goals of their work. They outlined 12 outcomes in civic knowledge, generative relationships, information economy skills, and information system resilience. Darryl Holliday of City Bureau explains:

> ***"Each of these outcomes is supported by, and assessed through, more than 20 key metrics routinely collected by City Bureau to serve as harbingers of programmatic success. Examples include the percentage of reporting fellows from under-represented identity groups in the media industry, the number of government agencies routinely tracked and ratio of first-time Public Newsroom attendees to returners...***
>
> ***For years we have shaped our programs so that, taken together, they represent a long-term strategy for building media infrastructure that is both more democratic and more sustainable than existing models. These program outcomes provide a foundation for concrete measurement so we can ensure our work drives toward our vision: a future in which all people are equipped with the tools and knowledge to effect change in their communities."*** [58]

In May of 2020, City Bureau applied its mission of making government information and resources more accessible by launching a Chicago COVID Resource Finder both online and through SMS and translating it into 13 languages. In addition to this resource, City Bureau made its backend open source through GitHub, encouraging replication.[59]

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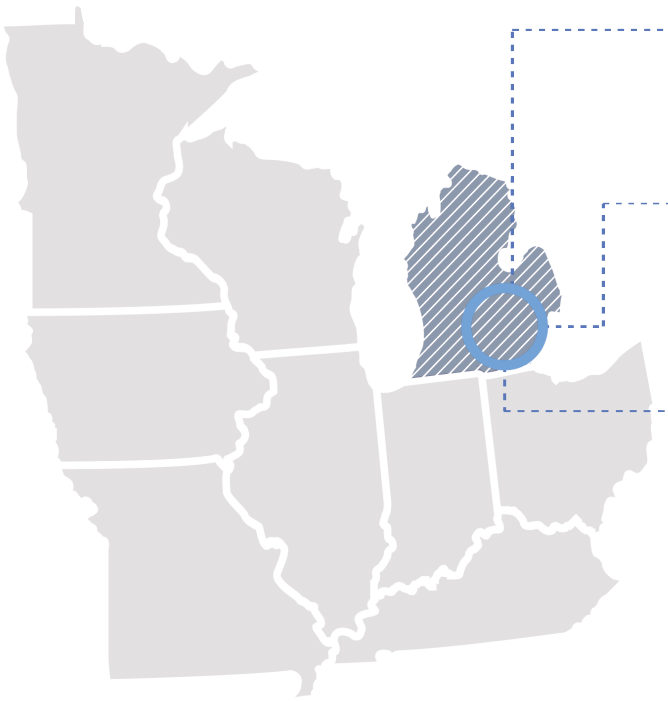
[57] City Bureau, Who We Are. https://www.citybureau.org
[58] City Bureau, Metrics to Match Our Mission: Measuring City Bureau's Impact, February 12, 2020. https://www.citybureau.org/notebook/2020/2/12/metrics-to-match-our-mission-measuring-city-bureaus-impact
[59] "How We Built (and Translated) the COVID Resource Finder," City Bureau, May 13, 2020, https://www.citybureau.org/notebook/2020/5/12/how-we-built-and-translated-the-covid-resource-finder

IMPACT ARCHITECTS

Detroit, Michigan

Detroit, Michigan



Population

Metropolitan Statistical Area: Detroit-Warren-Dearborn: 4.3 Million

670,031

Age

25% Under 18

13% Over 65

Race

79% Black / AA

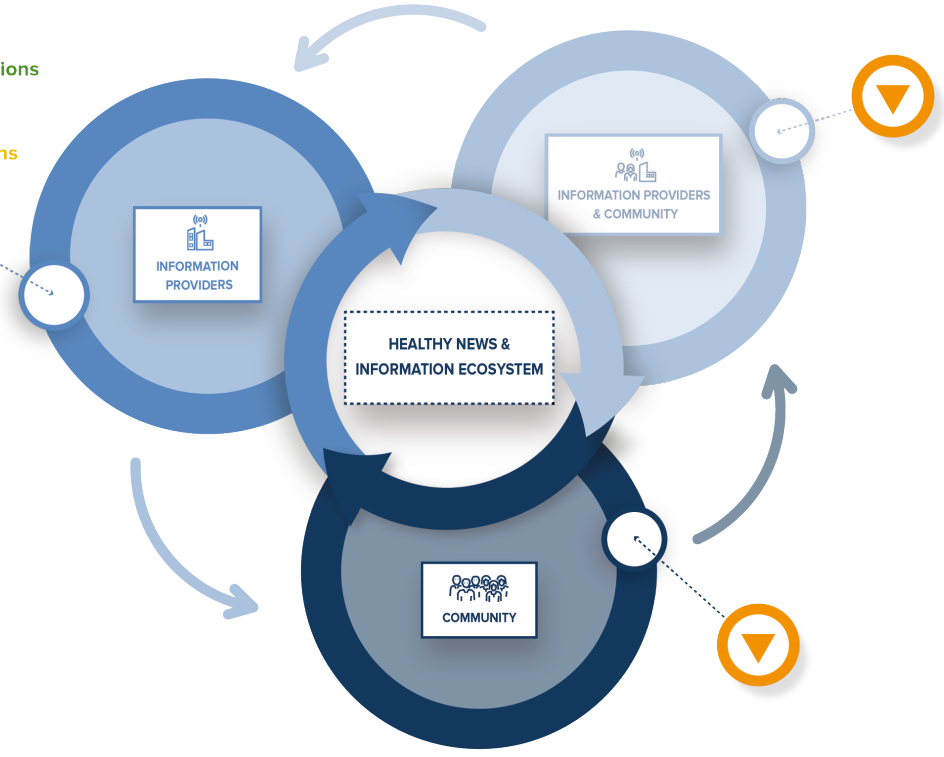
2% Asian

8% Hispanic / Latinx

10% White

News & Information Ecosystem

- Number of journalism organizations
- Types of media
- Business models of organizations
- Diversity and Ethnic Media
- Collaboration
- Journalism Funding



- STRONG
- AVERAGE
- OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Key Elements

INFORMATION PROVIDERS	Detroit has a high number of outlets for its population, but it is not evident that those outlets are representative of all sectors of the community or serving the information needs of Detroiters.
COLLABORATION	Collaboration has been a strength of the Detroit ecosystem, as demonstrated by the Joint Operating Agreement between the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News and the collaboration formalized in the New Michigan Media working consortium.
DIVERSITY	Detroit's media is far from representative of the community, and there is a need for investment in diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives, particularly when it comes to legacy media.
BIPOC SERVING & COMMUNITY MEDIA	While legacy media may not be representative of the population, BIPOC serving media in Detroit is both developed and organized through the New Michigan Media working consortium.
TYPE OF MEDIA	Detroit's ecosystem is dominated by newspapers.
JOURNALISM ORGANIZATION BUSINESS MODELS	Forty-four percent of Detroit's journalism outlets are independent, for-profit, organizations, followed by 19% nonprofit outlets.
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT	Detroit has had a low amount of philanthropic investment in its information ecosystem on a per capita basis.
COMMUNITY TRUST	The community in Detroit has relatively negative sentiments about their local news media; strengthening this relationship is crucial to bolstering the future of the ecosystem.

Summary

Detroit scores low in community economic, education, and civic engagement indicators. Despite being home to a large number of outlets, including many BIPOC serving media, and an existing collaborative infrastructure that includes prior research into information needs and the health of the ecosystem, there remain a number of challenges, including relatively low philanthropic investment in the news and information ecosystem on a per capita basis.

While there are a variety of types of journalism outlets and business models in Detroit, the community faces major challenges when it comes to the ethnic and racial diversity of its media. There are few community and BIPOC serving media outlets relative to the size of Detroit's diverse communities, and the two legacy newspapers that report diversity statistics are lacking in equitable ethnic and racial representation. Both the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News are at least 62% more white and 57% less Black/African-American than the population of Detroit. Diversity, equity, and inclusion should be a focus of investment in Detroit in order to support a more representative and equitable ecosystem for the future.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Community Indicators	National Average	Detroit	
Economic			
Median Household Income	$61,937	$29,481	Low ▼
Per Capita Income	$33,831	$17,338	Low ▼
Poverty Rate	13.10%	36.40%	High ▲
Education			
High School Degree	90%	80%	Low ▼
Bachelor's Degree	36%	15%	Low ▼
Literacy Rate	79%	53%	Low ▼
Resources & Infrastructure			
Households with Computer	89%	79%	Low ▼
Broadband Access	80%	59%	Low ▼
Universities		12	Low ▼
Libraries		22	Average
Community Satisfaction	37	24%	Low ▼
Voter Turnout 2018	50%	41%	Low ▼
Prior Information Needs Study	47%	Yes	High ▲
Prior Ecosystem Study		Yes	High ▲

Diversity, equity, and inclusion should be a focus of investment in Detroit in order to support a more representative and equitable ecosystem for the future.

Community

Located at the base of the "thumb" of Michigan, on the US-Canada border, Detroit has a population of 670,000. The Detroit metro area, along with the MSA, has a population of 4.3 million people, making it the 14th largest metro area in the United States, and the second largest in the Midwest after Chicago. Detroit's population is 79% Black, making it the city with the largest Black population by percentage in the United States. In 2013, Detroit filed for Chapter 9

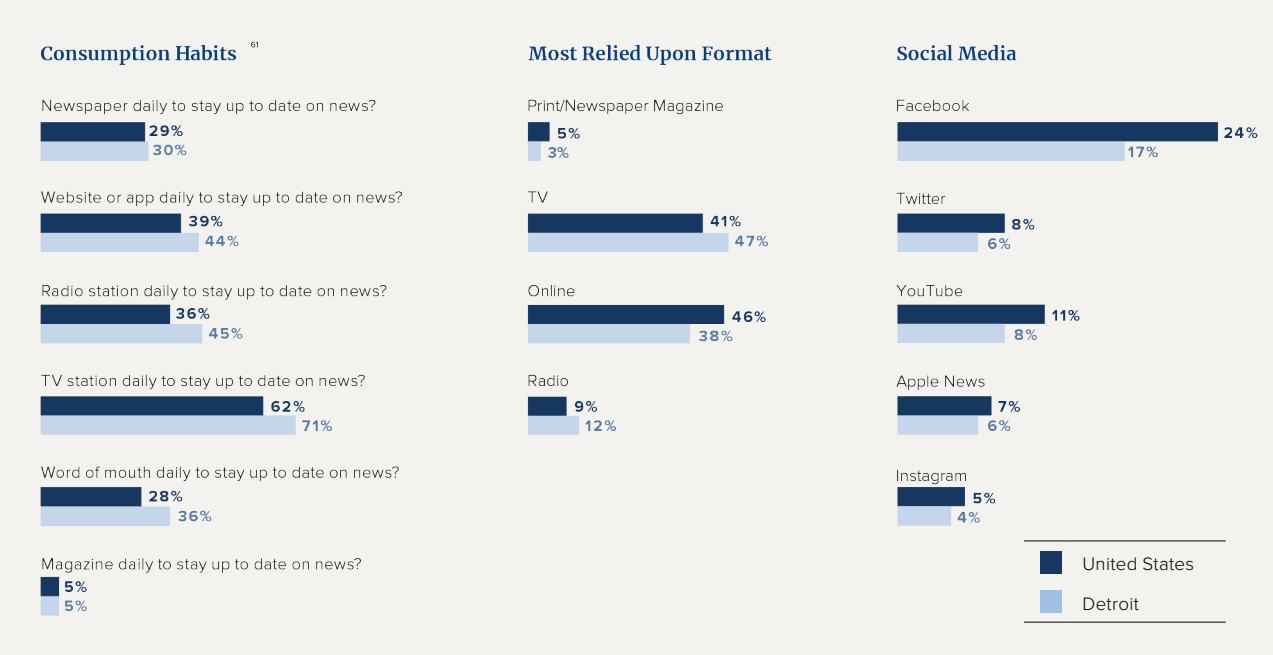
Bankruptcy, the largest municipal bankruptcy filing both by population size, and by size of debt, estimated between $18-$20 million.

Detroit has high rates of poverty when compared with national averages, paired with relatively low broadband access (59%). Given this reality, it is perhaps unsurprising that nearly three quarters of Detroiters report low levels of community satisfaction.

Consumption Habits

The Knight-Gallup, American Views 2020: Trust, Media and Democracy,[60] survey included 298 respondents from Detroit. Compared to national averages, Detroit respondents are slightly more likely to use a website or app, radio station, television station, and word of mouth daily to stay up to date on news.

Almost half of Detroit respondents (47%) use television as their primary news source, compared to 41% nationally. Thirty-eight percent of Detroit respondents report getting most of their news from online sources, compared to 46% nationally. Fewer respondents in Detroit report getting news frequently from social media sources compared to national averages. Ninety percent of respondents in Detroit believe there is a great deal or a fair amount of political bias in news coverage, the highest of our sample set, and 7% higher than the national average.



[60] American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy. 4 August, 2020. Available at: https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-2020-trust-media-and-democracy/

[61] Answers to these questions are not mutually exclusive. For example one respondent may report using both a newspaper and a website daily to stay up to date on news, hence percentages do not add to 100%.

Information Needs

Outlier Media (profiled below), based in Detroit, has built a model to assess information needs and fill critical information gaps via SMS text message. In its most recent information assessment of Detroit done in late March 2020, Outlier found that 38% of respondents said there was information that they "really need," while 46% said there was information that "would help" in their daily lives. This specific information assessment spoke to information needs at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a 2017 assessment of the Detroit Journalism Landscape that included more than 60 interfviews with local and regional stakeholders,[62] Debra Adams Simmons found a demand for more:

In-depth watchdog journalism	Representative coverage across the Detroit region	Media engagement with all of Detroit's citizens	Journalists who reflect the backgrounds of the population [62]

In a 2019 Pew Research Center report on local news, Detroiters said that the most important local news topics for daily life were: Weather (70%), Crime (46%), Traffic & transportation (42%), and Prices (40%). Respondents filled their information needs most often through TV Stations (40%), Radio stations (21%), and Daily Newspapers (17%).[63]

Information Providers

In our analysis, we found 36 news organizations based in Detroit: six television stations, including a public media affiliate, three radio stations, 15 newspapers, including three national newspaper chains, three nonprofits, four magazines, and eight digital outlets. According to the 2019 Pew Local Journalism Report, the most relied upon local news organizations in Detroit are WJBK TV - FOX (20%), WDIV TV - NBC (16%), WXYZ TV - ABC (9%), the Detroit Free Press (5%), the Detroit News (2%) and WWJ Radio (2%).[64]

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[62] Adams Simmons, Debra. Detroit Journalism Landscape, 2017. Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. https://cfsem.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Detroit-Journalism-Landscape-Executive-Summary-DJEF-FINAL.pdf
[63] Pew Research, "What are the Local News Dynamics in Your City?" March 2019. https://www.journalism.org/interactives/local-news-habits/19820/
[64] ibid.

Detroit is one of the few metropolitan areas of its size which maintains two major newspapers. The Detroit Free Press is owned by Gannett/Gatehouse and is the largest metro daily of the US Today network, and the Detroit News is owned by Digital First Media/Alden Global Capital. The two papers maintain a highly unique Joint Operating Agreement which centralizes the business operations of both papers under the Detroit Media Partnership, L.P. While the organizations have a strong journalism history, they have been victim to the revenue and circulation declines seen at legacy papers across the country. Home delivery is now only available three days a week from both papers, and the Free Press has gone from a staff of 350 in 1995, to 120 in 2017.[65]

Information Providers	Pilot Average	Detroit	
Journalism Providers			
Number of Organizations		36	High
Population per Organization	22,548	18,612	▲
Mediums			
Newspapers	43%	44%	High
Television Stations	23%	17%	Low ▲
Radio Stations	14%	8%	Low ▼
Digital	15%	19%	Low ▼
Business Models			▼
Nonprofit	22%	19%	Low
Public Media	5%	6%	Low ▼
National Broadcast Chain	21%	14%	Low ▼
National Newspaper Chain	13%	8%	Low ▼
Independent For-Profit	40%	44%	High ▼
BIPOC Serving Media			▲
African American / Black		3	Low
Hispanic / Latinx		1	Low ▼
Diversity			▼
Journalist Diversity		2 (ASNE)	Low
Source Diversity		0 Audits	Low ▼
Collaboration		Developed and Institutionalized	High ▲
Journalism Funding			
Philanthropic Dollars since 2009	$18.7 M	$4,600,000	
Funders	68	21	
Recipients	31	14	
Invested Per Capita	$20.63	$6.87	Low ▼

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Prior to the launch of the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund in 2017, The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, Ford Foundation, and Knight Foundation published a report by veteran Detroit journalist Debra Adams Simmons on the Detroit Journalism Landscape. Simmons writes,

> *While Detroit newspapers have adapted to the digital-first approach, that adaption has often come at a cost: repurposing print content, aggregating stories from other local outlets, and publishing superficial writing to optimize web traffic are all often prioritized over deeper reporting. This shift... has created a void for public-affairs reporting and in-depth journalism and has left legacy news organizations somewhat devoid of the institutional memory that comes with a deep roster of senior staff. Mainstream news outlets have also narrowed their sights to news stories that will generate wider audiences, a decision that sidelines in-depth, slow-cooked accountability stories; disincentivizes steady cultivation of localized beats; and marginalizes segments of the population.*[66]

[65] Adams Simmons, Debra. Detroit Journalism Landscape, 2017. Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. https://cfsem.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Detroit-Journalism-Landscape-Executive-Summary-DJEF-FINAL.pdf
[66] ibid

Simmons outlines a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the Detroit journalism landscape, finding strengths in talent, innovation, and collaboration; weaknesses due to distrust, dissatisfaction, and lack of diversity; opportunities stemming from talent, institutions, and engagement; and threats from changing preferences, generational shifts, and a questioning relevance of local journalism.[67]

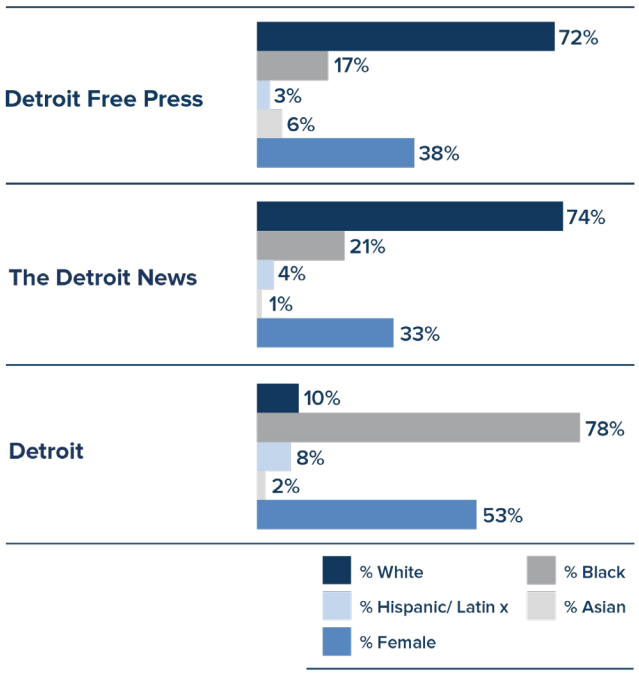
News Outlets Based in Detroit

	Independent	National Chain	Nonprofit/University	Public Media
Digital	Deadline Detroit Detour Detroit M Live		Planet Detroit Outlier Media Chalkbeat Detroit Bridge Detroit Tostada Magazine	
Magazine	BLAC Detroit Magazine D Business Hour Detroit		Riverwise	
Newspaper	Michigan Korean Weekly Arab American News Between the Lines (PrideSource) Detroit Legal News Italian Tribune Latino Press Metro Times Michigan Chronicle Detroit Native Sun Michigan Front Page	Crain's Detroit Business Detroit Free Press Detroit News	South End Detroit Catholic Detroit Jewish News	
Radio		WJR WWJ		WDET
Televsion		WDIV WJBK WMYD WWJ - TV WXYZ		DPTV

[67] ibid

Diversity

As the city with the highest percentage of Black/ African-American residents in the country, equitable representation is a particular weakness of the ecosystem. Both the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News participated in the most recent ASNE survey, reporting 72% and 74% white staff respectively, an amount more than seven times higher than the 10% of Detroit residents identifying as white.



BIPOC Serving Media

Detroit's BIPOC serving media highlight the strengths of the Detroit ecosystem, with collaboration at the forefront. The Michigan Chronicle, Latino Press, Detroit Jewish News, Arab American News, and Michigan Koran Weekly encompass the New Michigan Media working consortium (described below).

Collaboration

In 2013, New Michigan Media (and its five partners), along with Chalkbeat Detroit, Bridge Michigan, Detroit Public Television, Michigan Radio, and WDET, built a larger consortium: the Detroit Journalism Cooperative (DJC).[68] In 2017, the Knight Foundation invested $1.475 million in the cooperative, with a focus on "reporting on the city's future after bankruptcy with stories that have never been told before—on-air, online and in the community."[70] The Ford Foundation and Corporation for Public Broadcasting were additional funders of the project. The project allowed the contributing outlets to expand their readership through content sharing, and provided resources to strengthen the network of participating journalists. The Cooperative released a number of "issues" with content from all partners addressing one topic, including education, immigration, jobs and economy, justice, politics and government, quality of life, racial attitudes, and transportation. As of 2021, the cooperative is no longer active, though the New Michigan Media working consortium continues and the organizations maintain collaborative relationships.

[68] "Two projects receive more than $2.3 million in funding to support local news." Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, March 8, 2017, https://cfsem.org/new-detroit-journalism-engagement-fund/
[70] Detroit Journalism Collaborative, About. https://www.detroitjournalism.org/about/

Journalism Support Organizations

The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan has been heavily involved in assessing and funding the journalism ecosystem in Detroit and the surrounding areas. In addition to its previous support for the no longer active Detroit Journalism Cooperative, the foundation also supports and manages the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund, a $900,000 partnership with the Knight and Ford Foundations to expand local reporting and more effectively involve community residents.[71] As evidenced by this partnership and the Cooperative, the Knight Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Corporation for Public Broadcasting are additionally significantly involved in supporting the Detroit information ecosystem, while the Renaissance Journalism and Storytelling Center was additionally involved in the launch of the Cooperative.

- Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
- Knight Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Corporation for Public Broadcasting
- Storytelling Center
- Renaissance Journalism and Storytelling Center

Non-Journalistic Information

In Detroit, Pew found that journalistic sources are the most often turned to for local news. In terms of non-journalistic sources, respondents turned to online forums (11% often), neighborhood newsletters/listservs (10%), local organizations (6%), and local government agencies (6%) for their information needs.[72]

Information Providers & Community	National Average	Detroit	
% Who say local journalists are in touch with the community	63%	62%	Average
% Who have spoken with a journalist	21%	21%	Average
% Who say their local news source mostly covers the area where they live	51%	44%	Low ▼
% Who pay for local news in the past year	14%	11%	Low ▼
% Who say their local news:			
Reports news accurately	71%	73%	Average
Keeps an eye on local political leaders	66%	64%	Average
Provides news that they use daily	67%	62%	Low ▼
Covers news stories thoroughly	65%	68%	Average
Are transparent about their reporting	62%	56%	Low ▼
Deals fairly with all sides	62%	64%	Average
Includes people like you in their stories	58%	56%	Average

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

[71] "Two projects receive more than $2.3 million in funding to support local news." Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, March 8, 2017, https://cfsem.org/new-detroit-journalism-engagement-fund/

[72] Pew Research, "What are the Local News Dynamics in Your City?" March 2019. https://www.journalism.org/interactives/local-news-habits/19820/

Institutions

While only six percent of Detroit residents say they often receive news and information from local government agencies, Detroit city government has uniquely invested in building its own storytelling mechanisms. In 2017, the Mayor appointed journalist Aaron Foley as the City of Detroit's "chief storyteller." [73] Foley produced a website and cable channel called "The Neighborhoods," which was deemed by some as a propaganda initiative. [74] Foley, the former editor of BLAC Detroit Magazine led the initiative until departing for a Stanford-Knight fellowship in August 2019. Eric Thomas, a former entrepreneur and brand strategist now holds the chief storyteller role. The Neighborhoods continues to produce stories and news on the neighborhoods of Detroit, and includes links for the Mayor's Office, City Clerk's Office, City Council members, and Departments of the Detroit city government.

Information Providers & Community

Sixty-two percent of respondents of the Pew Local Journalism report believed local journalists to be in touch with the community, although only 11% have paid for news in the year prior to the study. This is the lowest percent in our pilot set, and 3% below the national finding of 14% who have paid for news.

The Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund has invested specifically in engagement projects to include the community in journalism creation in the city. The Fund "aims to strengthen local news coverage with projects designed to help journalists involve community residents in the reporting process. It supports convenings of media partners and grantees to exchange best practices of successful journalism and engagement models that might be replicated in Detroit."[75]

Case Study - Outlier Media

Outlier Media is a Detroit-based nonprofit journalism organization founded by Sarah Alvarez.[76] Outlier's mission is to "identify, report, and deliver valuable information to empower residents to hold landlords, municipal government, and elected officials accountable for long standing problems in the housing and utilities markets." Outlier defines its work as service journalism: its purpose is to understand local information needs and provide that information to residents directly, often via SMS text message.

[73] Foley, Aaron. "Detroit's first 'chief storyteller' on why his city needs an in-house journalist." Columbia Journalism Review. October 11, 2017, https://www.cjr.org/united_states_project/detroit-chief-storyteller-journalism.php
[74] Ikonomova, Violet. "Get to know the city of Detroit's propaganda arm. Detroit Metro Times, January 21, 2018, https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/get-to-know-the-city-of-detroits-propaganda-arm/Content?oid=8910656
[75] ibid.
[76] Impact Architects published a complete case study about Outlier Media's engagement efforts in a 2018 report, Engaged Journalism. https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/lindsaygreenbarber.com/assets/IA+Engaged+Journalism+Report+1.31.19.pdf

Outlier has created a framework for assessing community information needs that uses publicly available information along with direct community surveying, done via SMS. In Detroit, Outlier's original information needs assessment in 2017 identified information associated with housing as the highest priority need among residents. Outlier then built a database of relevant information that could be queried by residents by sending a text message with a specific address. The query pulls personalized information from the database, and replies with the information in a text message from Outlier. Outlier also partners with other journalists to publish more traditional journalism stories, often investigative in nature, with the goal of reaching larger audiences to hold power to account.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Outlier retooled its housing information SMS system to support information needs related to the pandemic. The system was set up to answer questions on health and safety, food, childcare, education, and housing during the pandemic, while also providing a direct link to journalists to answer questions not answered through the SMS system.[77]

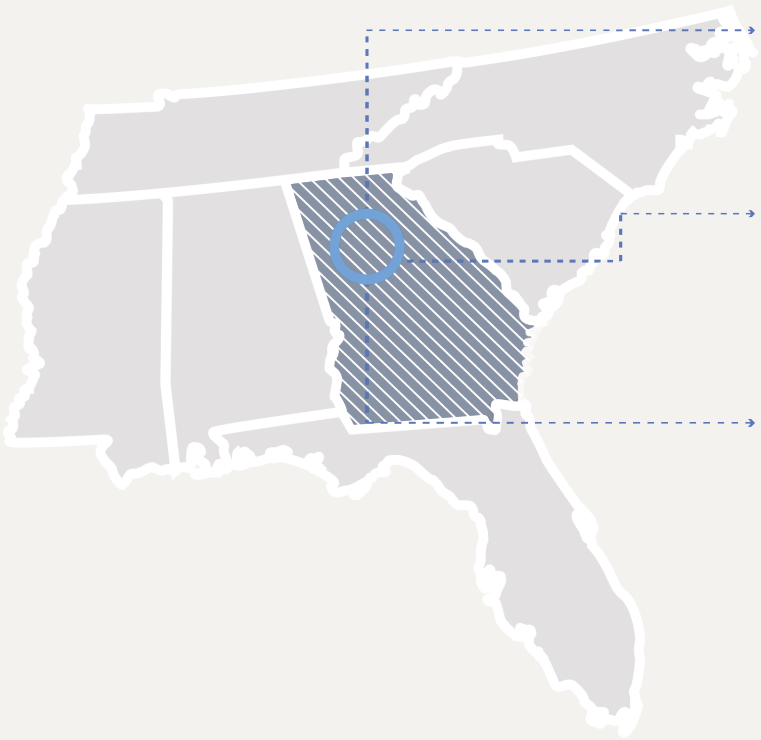
Nearly all of Outlier's revenue is from philanthropic foundations. In the past year, the organization has also generated earned-revenue by conducting community information needs assessments for clients, in partnership with local organizations.

[77] Sarah Alvarez, Finding and filing info gaps during COVID-19, Outlier Media. 26 March 2020.

IMPACT ARCHITECTS

Macon-Bibb, Georgia

Macon-Bibb County, Georgia



Population

Metropolitan Statistical Area: Macon

153,159

Age

25% Under 18

15% Over 65

Race

54% Black / AA

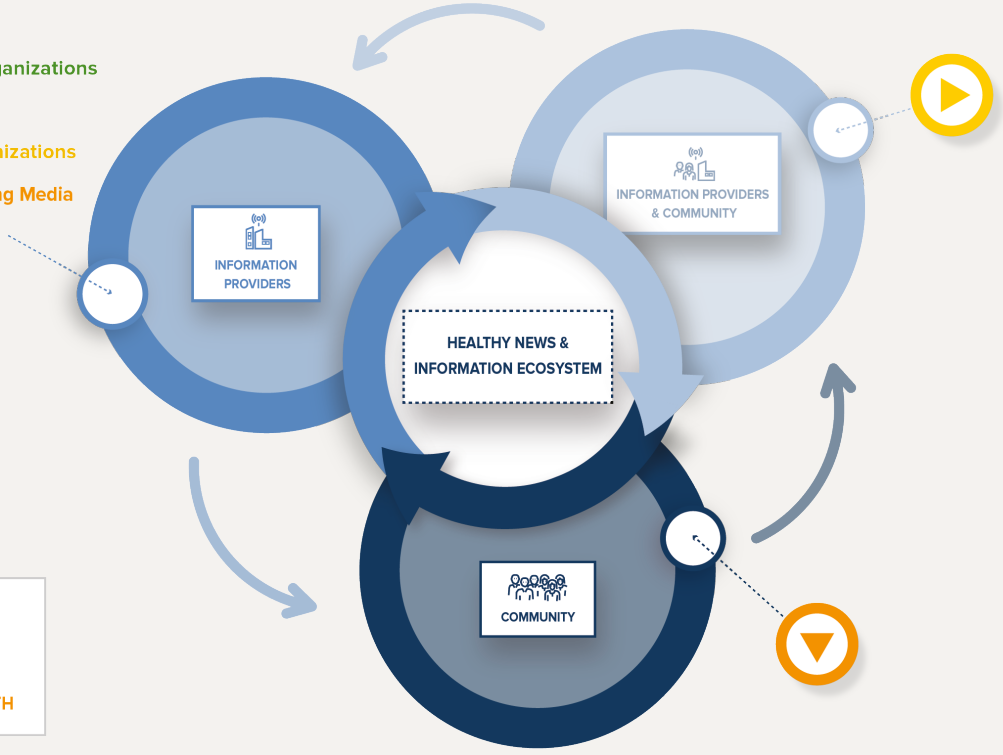
2% Asian

3% Hispanic / Latinx

41% White

News & Information Ecosystem

- Number of journalism organizations
- Types of media
- Business models of organizations
- Diversity and BIPOC Serving Media
- Collaboration
- Journalism Funding



- STRONG
- AVERAGE
- OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Key Elements

INFORMATION PROVIDERS	For the size of its population, Macon-Bibb County has a large number of news outlets. However, areas of the state near Macon have been identified as news deserts, and Macon's information ecosystem plays an important role in supporting those communities' information needs.
COLLABORATION	Macon-Bibb's ecosystem is unique and highly collaborative, driven by the Center for Collaborative Journalism at Mercer University, which serves as the nexus of all journalism in Macon-Bibb. The Center for Collaborative Journalism (CCJ) is a model for successful institutional support for information ecosystems.
DIVERSITY	There are no complete public reports of the diversity of journalism organizations in Macon-Bibb County.
BIPOC SERVING & COMMUNITY MEDIA	Macon has two BIPOC serving media outlets, one serving the Black/African-American community and one serving the Hispanic/Latinx community. This is average per capita coverage for the Black/African-American community and high on a per capita basis for the Hispanic/Latinx community. However, contextually, with 54% of the population identifying as Black/African-American, it is notable that there is only one Black/African-American media outlet.
TYPE OF MEDIA	Macon-Bibb's information ecosystem is dominated by television stations.
JOURNALISM ORGANIZATION BUSINESS MODELS	Half of Macon-Bibb's journalism organizations are for-profit and affiliated with national news organizations.
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT	Macon-Bibb has received a comparatively large amount of philanthropic funding in its information ecosystem, much of it funneled through Mercer's CCJ.
COMMUNITY TRUST	We do not have specific information on perceptions and trust in the media in Macon-Bibb County. Based on data including Macon-Bibb County and other similar counties, we can estimate average to low perceptions of information providers.
*INSTITUTIONS	Macon-Bibb's information ecosystem is defined by its backbone, Mercer University, which serves as the hub for both innovation and collaboration in the Macon-Bibb news and information ecosystem.

Summary

Macon-Bibb County's news and information ecosystem is defined by the backbone of Mercer University and its Center for Collaborative Journalism. This program not only educates and supports future journalists through a teaching hospital model, placing students in the major news outlets in Macon-Bibb, but also acts as the nexus for both collaboration and innovation in the broader information ecosystem. Macon-Bibb's ecosystem is dominated by newspapers and television stations, with 50% of all outlets in Macon-Bibb owned or operated by a national chain.

There are no complete public reports of the diversity of journalism organizations in Macon-Bibb County. There are two BIPOC serving media outlets, one serving the sizable African-American community, and one serving the Hispanic/Latinx community. Philanthropic investment in the news and information ecosystem (per capita) in Macon-Bibb is high, in part because Macon is a "Knight Community."[78] Despite this high investment, high collaboration, and high institutional support, the residents of Macon-Bibb have average to low perceptions of their information providers. Supporting relationship building efforts among information providers and community members is an opportunity for focused investment and further support, in conjunction with attention to the diversification of ownership models away from national organizations. [79]

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Community Indicators	National Average	Macon-Bibb County	
Economic			
Median Household Income	$61,937	$39,931	Low ▼
Per Capita Income	$33,831	$24,409	Low ▼
Poverty Rate	13.10%	25.70%	High ▲
Education			
High School Degree	90%	86%	Low ▼
Bachelor's Degree	36%	26%	Low ▼
Literacy Rate	79%	76%	Average
Resources & Infrastructure			
Households with Computer	89%	84%	Low ▼
Broadband Access	80%	72%	Low ▼
Universities		6	High ▲
Libraries		14	High ▲
Community Satisfaction	37	67%	High ▲
Voter Turnout 2018	50%	59%	High ▲
Prior Information Needs Study	47%	Yes	High ▲
Prior Ecosystem Study		Yes	High ▲

Supporting relationship building efforts among information providers and community members is an opportunity for focused investment and further support, in conjunction with attention to the diversification of ownership models away from national organizations.

[78] Knight Foundation supports inclusive and equitable engagement in communities where the Knight brothers owned and operated newspapers.

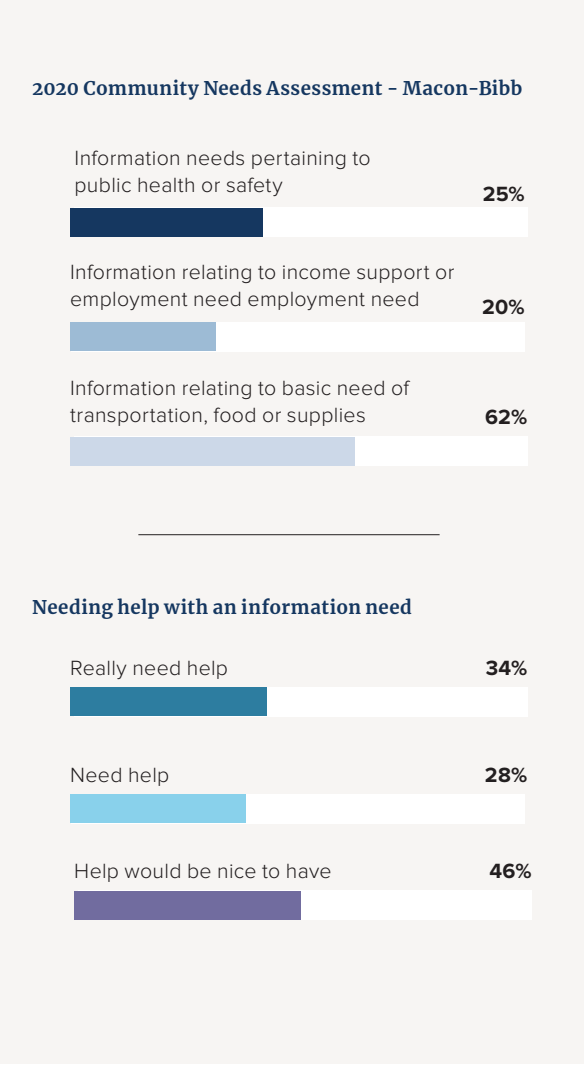
[79] Macon-Bibb is not indexed in the 2017 Gallup-Sharecare community survey. This is the only community satisfaction number from an alternative source. This is a percentage based on the ranking of "Community Satisfaction" from the Knight Foundation Community Ties Report, 2020. https://client.fathom.info/knight/explore

Community

Located in central Georgia, Macon-Bibb County is a city-county, following a referendum in 2012 consolidating the City of Macon and Bibb County under one municipal government, making it the 4th largest city in Georgia. Macon is known for its historical sites, military and musical legacy, and its institutions of higher education, with approximately 30,000 college students living in the greater Macon area. Fifty-four percent of the population identifies as Black, while 41% identify as white.

Information Needs

Outlier Media, an organization based in Detroit, conducted a community SMS information needs assessments of Macon in 2020.[80] The assessment was conducted for the Center for Collaborative Journalism (CCJ) at Mercer University, to inform both their coverage and journalism education. Using the 211 Taxonomy system to code responses, Outlier found 25% of respondents had information needs pertaining to public health or safety (survey conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic), 20% information relating to income support or employment need, and 12% relating to a basic need of transportation, food, or supplies. Of the information needs communicated, 34% said they "really needed help" with this information, while 28% "needed help," and 46% percent said help in the information would be "nice to have."



Information Providers

In the 2015 Local News in a Digital Age report, the Pew Research Center profiled Macon, Georgia specifically, finding 16 dedicated news outlets in the Macon and surrounding communities. For the purposes of our study, looking solely within the county, and only those in operation five years later, we identified 10 relevant outlets - two independent outlets (one magazine and one newspaper), one nationally affiliated newspaper, four television stations, two university owned and operated outlets, and one public media affiliate.

[80] Outlier Media shared their information needs assessment with Impact Architects for this report.

The Telegraph (formerly the Macon Telegraph), which shares a physical space with Mercer's Center for Collaborative Journalism, has been the main paper in the region since it began as a weekly in 1826. Greatly reduced in size and circulation from its peak, the Telegraph had a daily print circulation of just under 16,000 as of December 2019, and 750,000 monthly unique web visitors.[81] In 1969, the newspaper was sold from local ownership to Knight Newspapers, where it stayed through the merger with Knight Ridder, until McClatchy bought the Knight Ridder publications in 2005, the same year in which "Macon" was dropped from the Masthead.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Information Providers	Pilot Average	Macon-Bibb County	
Journalism Providers			
Number of Organizations		10	High ▲
Population per Organization	22,548	19,145	
Mediums			
Newspapers	43%	40%	High ▲
Television Stations	23%	50%	High ▲
Radio Stations	14%	10%	Low ▼
Digital	15%	0%	Low ▼
Business Models			
Nonprofit	22%	13%	Low ▼
Public Media	5%	13%	Low ▼
National Broadcast Chain	21%	50%	Low ▼
National Newspaper Chain	13%	13%	Low ▼
Independent For-Profit	40%	25%	High ▲
BIPOC Serving Media			
African American / Black		1	Average
Hispanic / Latinx		1	Low ▼
Diversity			
Journalist Diversity		0 Reports	Low ▼
Source Diversity		0 Audits	Low ▼
Collaboration		Developed and Institutionalized	High ▲
Journalism Funding			
Philanthropic Dollars since 2009	$18.7 M	$8,600,000	
Funders	68	4	
Recipients	31	5	
Invested Per Capita	$20.63	$56.15	Low ▼

Of the TV stations serving Macon-Bibb County, WMAZ, which also operates out of Mercer University, is the largest by reach, and is a CBS affiliate owned by Tegna Inc. WMAZ competes with WGXA, a FOX and ABC affiliate owned by the Sinclair Broadcast Group, and WMGT, an NBC affiliate owned by Morris Multimedia (an owner of 65 news stations or papers based out of Savannah). Owned and operated out of Mercer University is also WMUB, affiliated with France24. In addition to the public radio station WMUM operated out of Mercer, there is an AM radio station, WMAC, which as of 2020, broadcasts local news through FOX, and whose programming largely consists of conservative talk radio. WMAC is owned by Cumulus Media, the third largest owner of radio stations in the United States.

[81] McClatchy Markets, The Telegraph. https://www.mcclatchy.com/our-impact/markets/the-telegraph/

BIPOC Serving Media

The Middle Georgia Informer is the only African American focused publication in Macon-Bibb County, despite the fact that more than half of the community identifies as Black or African American. The Informer has been produced monthly since 1982, and has a small digital presence. In 2015, Pew found no active, digital-only outlets devoted to news publishing on at least a monthly basis, and zero nonprofit news outlets (outside of the public media and university affiliates).[82] We found this to be unchanged in 2020.

BIPOC Serving Media in Macon-Bibb County

0

Active digital-only outlets

0

Nonprofit news outlets

Diversity

No Georgia outlets have publicly reported their diversity statistics outside of legally required EEO Reports from those operating with FCC licenses. Anecdotal evidence and primary interviews suggest that the Black community remains woefully underrepresented in the media of Macon-Bibb County.

News Outlets Based in Macon

	Independent	National Chain	Nonprofit/University	Public Media
Digital				
Magazine	Macon Magazine			
Newspaper	Middle Georgia Informer	Telegraph	The Cluster	
Radio		WMAC		
Televsion		WGXA WMAZ WMGT WMUB		WMUM

[82] "The News Environment in Macon, Georgia." Pew Research Center, Local News in a Digital Age. March 5, 2015. https://www.journalism.org/2015/03/05/the-news-environment-in-macon-georgia/

Local Journalism Support Organizations

In addition to Mercer, both the Knight Foundation and The Peyton Anderson Foundation have invested in the information ecosystem in Macon.

Non-Journalism Information

The Pew report identified eight news providers outside of traditional journalism, all of which are institutional sources - six government or municipal agencies, and two university sources. Pew's 2019 Local News study does not include statistically significant information on non-journalistic information sources in Macon-Bibb.

Case Study – Center for Collaborative Journalism

CCJ's collaboration allows the participating outlets not only to train journalism students collectively, but also to share resources and reporting across outlets and mediums.

While Macon may lack in quantity and variety of news outlets, where its information ecosystem demonstrates strength is in the collaborative backbone provided by Mercer University's Center for Collaborative Journalism (CCJ). CCJ houses both the Telegraph and Georgia Public Broadcasting, with which it works in partnership alongside WMAZ 13. CCJ explains, "Our groundbreaking collaboration has students, faculty, and veteran journalists working together in a joint newsroom. Learning in a "teaching hospital" model, our students engage the community using the latest digital tools and leave with a portfolio of published work that gives them an edge in a rapidly changing, but never more important, field."[84] CCJ's collaboration allows the participating outlets not only to train journalism students collectively, but also to share resources and reporting across outlets and mediums.

Mercer University sits at the heart of the Macon-Bibb County news and information ecosystem, holding a particularly important role given its place in the local economy, as well as in shaping the identity and community in Macon. It is a convening force for news and information collaboration. The Center is funded by the Knight Foundation and the Peyton Anderson Foundation.

[84] Center for Collaborative Journalism. Mercer University. https://ccj.mercer.edu

Information Providers & Community

Often, Macon's community engagement initiatives, like much of the journalism innovation in the community, stem from the Center for Collaborative Journalism. In 2013, the center spearheaded a multipart initiative by CCJ, the Telegraph, and Georgia Public Broadcasting called the "Macon in the Mirror" Project, where resident's perspectives on life in Macon were collected and then cross-published across platforms.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

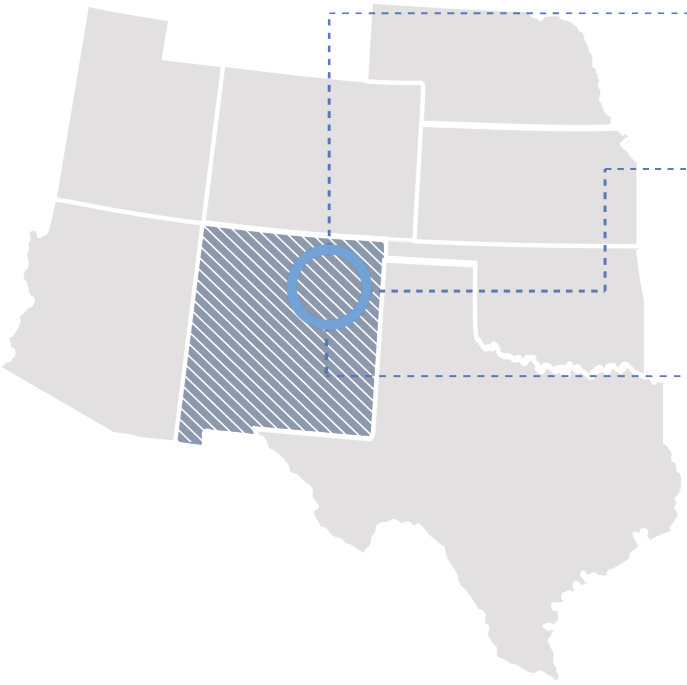
Information Providers & Community	National Average	Macon-Bibb County[85]	
% Who say local journalists are in touch with the community	63%	50%	Low ▼
% Who have spoken with a journalist	21%	24%	Average
% Who say their local news source mostly covers the area where they live	51%	51%	Average
% Who pay for local news in the past year	14%	16%	Average
% Who say their local news:			
Reports news accurately	71%	74%	Average
Keeps an eye on local political leaders	66%	67%	Average
Provides news that they use daily	67%	64%	Low ▼
Covers news stories thoroughly	65%	66%	Average
Are transparent about their reporting	62%	65%	Average
Deals fairly with all sides	62%	64%	Average
Includes people like you in their stories	58%	65%	Average

[85] Based on county-look alike data from Pew Local News Report

IMPACT ARCHITECTS

New Mexico

New Mexico



Population

2,096,829

Age

23% Under 18

17.5% Over 65

Race

3% Black / AA

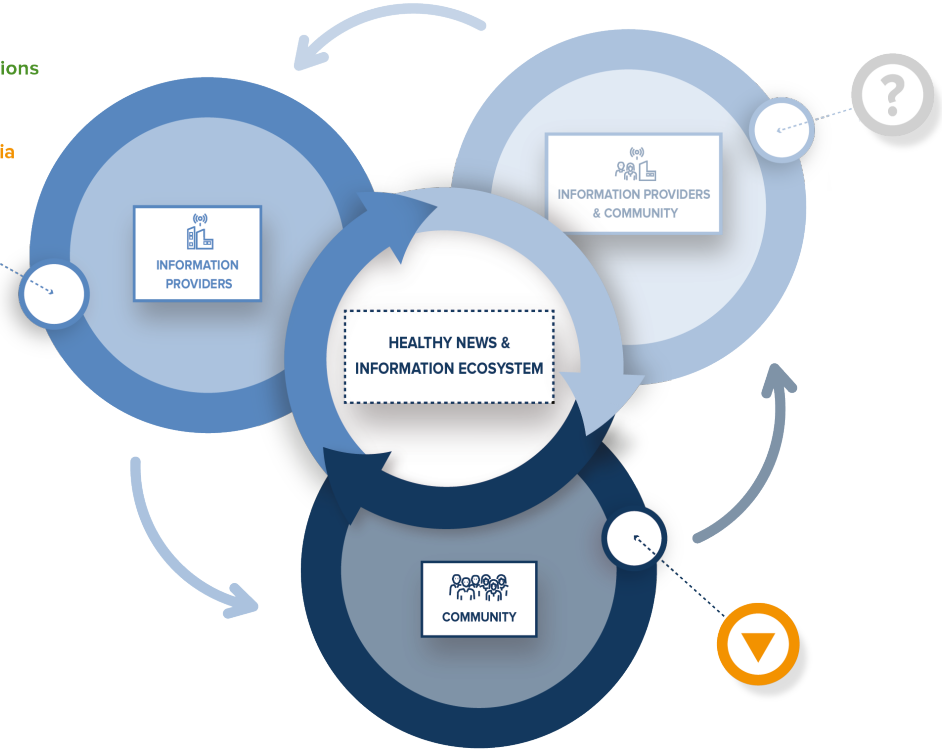
2% Asian

49% Hispanic / Latinx

37% White

News & Information Ecosystem

- Number of journalism organizations
- Types of media
- Diversity and BIPOC Serving Media
- Collaboration
- Journalism Funding



- STRONG
- AVERAGE
- OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Key Elements

INFORMATION PROVIDERS	New Mexico has a number of counties with no local news outlet, and many locations lack robust information sources focused on local needs.
COLLABORATION	The New Mexico Local News Fund is building collaborative capacity to address the challenges associated with reporting in such an expansive and diverse state, such as serving audiences, training journalists, avoiding parachute journalism, and having adequate resources.
DIVERSITY	Four newspapers in New Mexico have publicly reported their internal diversity numbers. Three of the four papers are more than 29% more white than the state overall, and all four are at least 20% less Hispanic/Latinx than the population of New Mexico.
BIPOC SERVING & COMMUNITY MEDIA	There is no holistic understanding of the BIPOC serving media landscape, nor of the gaps that likely exist, particularly with respect to Spanish-language media in New Mexico.
TYPE OF MEDIA	The news and information ecosystem in New Mexico is dominated by radio stations.
JOURNALISM ORGANIZATION BUSINESS MODELS	We could not build an accurate depiction of the business models employed by all outlets across the state.
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT	New Mexico has had little philanthropic investment in its information ecosystem.
COMMUNITY TRUST	Data measuring the relationship between the community and information providers is only available for Albuquerque. In Albuquerque, perceptions of the media are relatively high, but this cannot be extrapolated to the rest of the state.

Summary

New Mexico is a large and diverse state and, in reality, encompasses multiple news and information ecosystems. While the cities of Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Santa Fe play a large role in shaping the state-wide ecosystem, the rural and ethnically diverse nature of the state is reflected in its fractured ecosystem, which includes a number of counties with no local news outlet. Additionally, the boundaries of the information ecosystem are often poorly aligned with the geographic boundaries of the state - media markets blend on the border with Texas near El Paso, and the Navajo nation, which is served by its own newspaper, spans the borders of New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah.

Given the rural nature of New Mexico, radio is a common medium for news and information providers. There is no complete picture of business models of journalism organizations in New Mexico, nor is there a count of exactly how many BIPOC serving or community journalism outlets exist in the state. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Spanish, Navajo, and other tribal language speakers are likely underserved by the ecosystem. At the state level, there has been little philanthropic investment on a per capita basis, and there is opportunity to further support measurement of this ecosystem as well as the organizations on the ground in order to better serve a complex and geographically expansive area.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

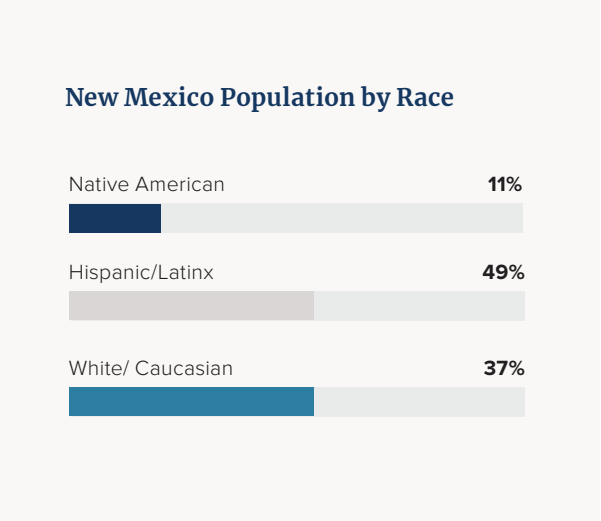
Community Indicators	National Average	New Mexico	
Economic			
Median Household Income	$61,937	$48,059	Low ▼
Per Capita Income	$33,831	$26,085	Low ▼
Poverty Rate	13.10%	19.50%	High ▲
Education			
High School Degree	90%	85%	Low ▼
Bachelor's Degree	36%	27%	Low ▼
Literacy Rate	79%	84%	Average
Resources & Infrastructure			
Households with Computer	89%	84%	Low ▼
Broadband Access	80%	72%	Low ▼
Universities		36	Low ▼
Libraries		96	High ▲
Community Satisfaction	37	6%	Low ▼
Voter Turnout 2018	50%	47%	Average
Prior Information Needs Study	47%	No	Low ▼
Prior Ecosystem Study		Yes	High ▲

Spanish, Navajo, and other tribal language speakers are likely underserved by the ecosystem.

On a per capita basis, philanthropic investment is low.

Community

Located on the border of the United States and Mexico, New Mexico, with 2.1 million residents, is the 36th largest US state by population, the fifth largest by landmass, and the sixth least densely populated. New Mexico was inhabited by Native Americans for centuries prior to Spanish colonization in 1598. The state has the third largest Native American population by percentage (11%).[86] Nearly 50% of the state identifies as Hispanic or Latinx.



Consumption Habits

In our study, we assessed three different data sources on consumption habits in New Mexico. We conducted two information needs assessment surveys in New Mexico, testing different methods - a Google Consumer Survey and a digital online survey with a local partner organization. Additionally, we looked at the The Knight-Gallup, American Views 2020: Trust, Media and Democracy, survey responses from New Mexico.

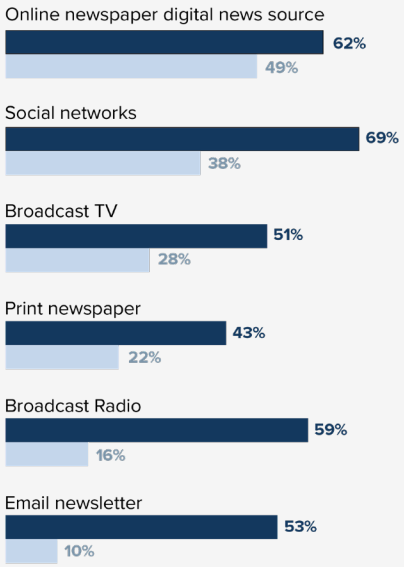
Sources of News and Information

In both the Google Consumer Survey and a digital online survey we conducted in partnership with the New Mexico Local News Fund (NMLNF), nearly half of residents reported relying regularly (more than one per week) on traditional print or digital news sources. (Digital - 62% NMLF survey, 49% Google Consumer Survey; Print - 43% NMLNF survey, 22% Google Consumer survey). Social media also ranked high in both surveys as a regular source of information (37.7% Google Consumer Survey, 69% NMLNF survey).

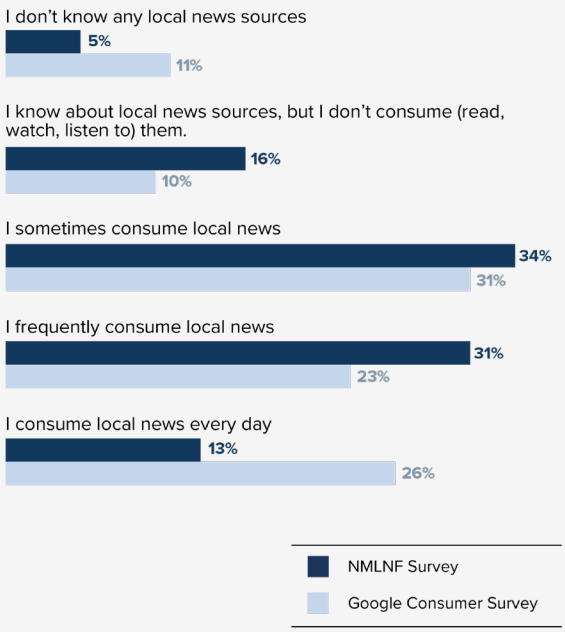
Both surveys asked respondents to select which of five statements best described their relationship (or consumption habits) with local news sources about their community in New Mexico. In both surveys, a plurality of respondents stated they “sometimes consume local news” (34% and 31%). However, responses show that participants in the Google Consumer Survey consume local news everyday at a higher rate than participants in the NLNF Survey (26% versus 13%).

[86] National Congress of American Indians, Demographics. http://www.ncai.org/about-tribes/demographics

Which of the following sources do you access for news and information about your local community at least once a week?

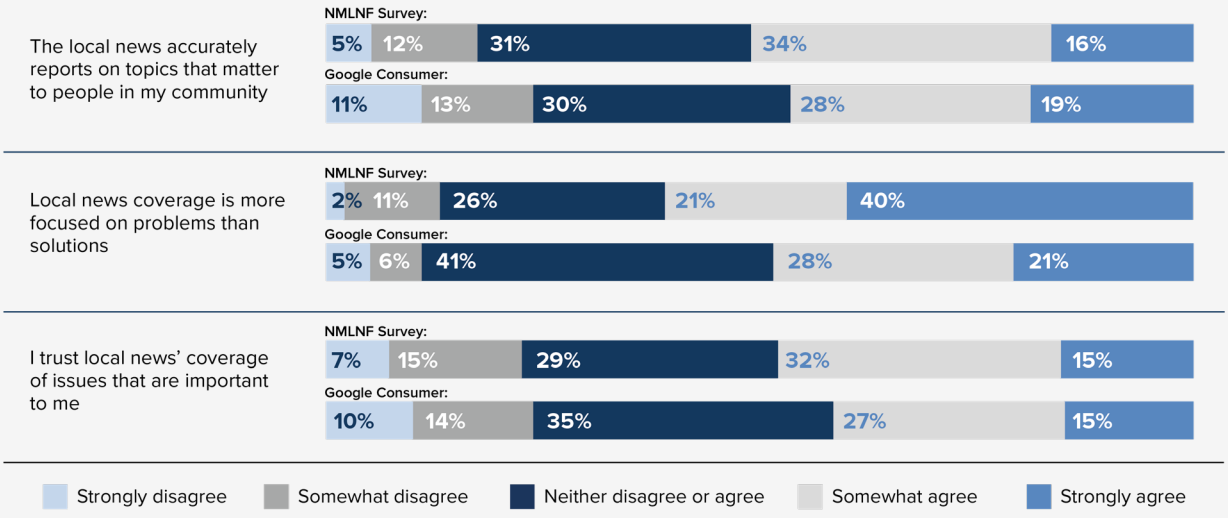


Which statement best describes your relationship with local news sources dedicated to your community in New Mexico?

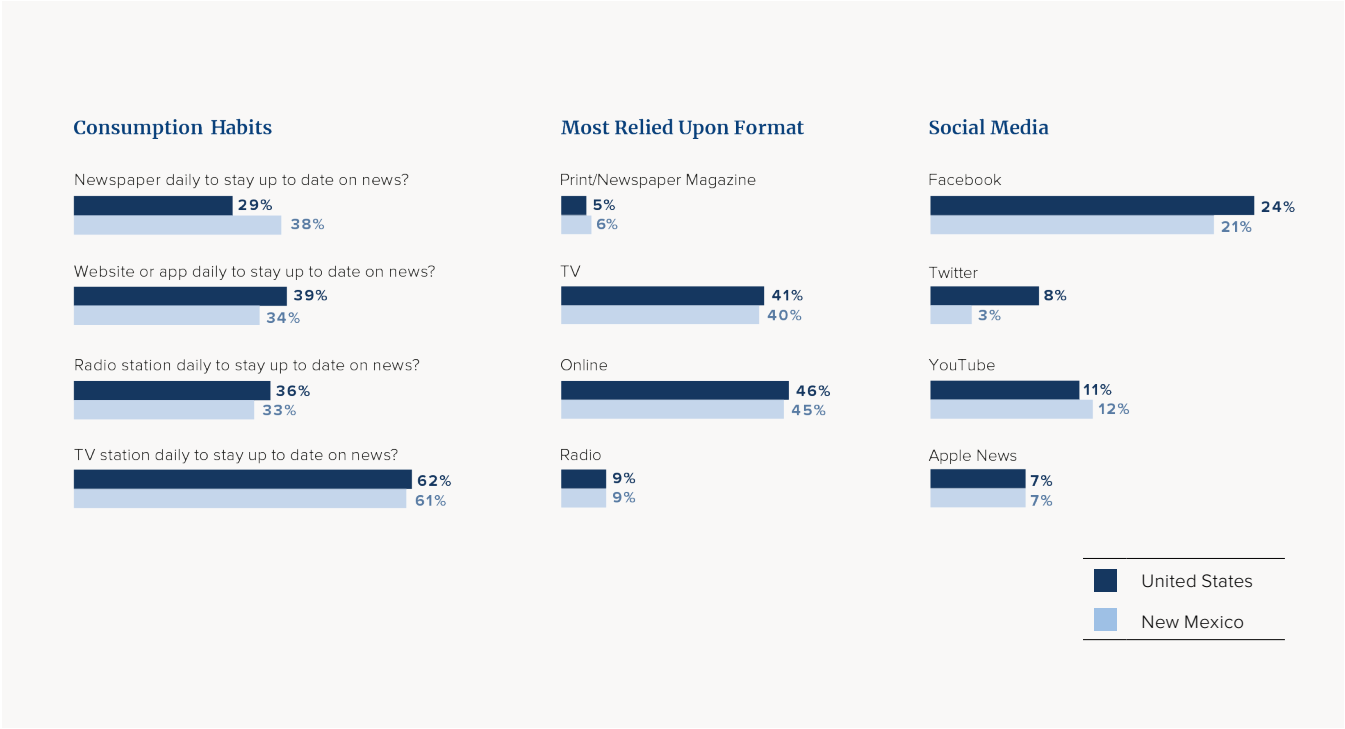


The surveys additionally asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed with three statements about their local news. Sentiments were generally found to be consistent across the two surveys, with the largest deviation being respondents to our survey with the NMLNF more likely to agree that "Local news coverage is much more focused on problems than solutions" (40% strongly agree, 21% somewhat agree, versus 21% strongly agree, 28% somewhat agree).

Local News Sentiments



The Knight-Gallup, American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy survey[87] included 128 respondents from New Mexico, and while this is not a significant sample size, we can still glean trends from the data. Ten percent more respondents in New Mexico report using a newspaper daily to stay up to date on news compared to the national average. Despite the preponderance of local news radio stations in New Mexico, according to the American Views survey, both the most relied upon news format and frequency with which residents get news from social media are nearly identical to national percentages.



The Knight/Gallup survey data suggests a higher than average view of the news media in New Mexico; 18% of respondents in New Mexico have a “very favorable” overall view of the news media in the United States, compared to only 10% nationally.

[87] American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy. 4 August, 2020. Available at: https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-2020-trust-media-and-democracy/

[88] Answers to these questions are not mutually exclusive. For example one respondent may report using both a newspaper and a website daily to stay up to date on news, hence percentages do not add to 100%.

Information Providers

In 2018, New Mexico First, a statewide, nonprofit public policy think tank, together with the Rio Grande chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, published two reports on New Mexico's journalism landscape. The reports outline the ways in which New Mexico's legacy news outlets suffer from the same shrinking revenues and staff sizes experienced by journalism organizations across the country.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Information Providers	Pilot Average	New Mexico	
Journalism Providers[89]			
Number of Organizations		358	High ▲
Population per Organization	22,548	5,857	
Mediums			
Newspapers	43%	19%	Low ▼
Television Stations	23%	22%	Low ▼
Radio Stations	14%	56%	High ▲
Digital	15%	2%	Low ▼
Ethnic Media			
African American / Black		0	Low ▼
Hispanic / Latinx		*n/a*	*n/a*
Diversity			
Journalist Diversity		4 (ASNE)	Medium
Source Diversity		0 Audits	Low ▼
Collaboration		Developing	Low-Medium
Journalism Funding			
Philanthropic Dollars since 2009	$18.7 M	$5,600,000	
Funders	68	36	
Recipients	31	40	
Invested Per Capita	$20.63	$2.67	Low ▼

This environment has clear implications for the ecosystem:

> *"The results of that work environment are almost inevitable: an increase in shallow reporting, unverified information, undertrained and overworked staff, turnover, staff shrinkage, and loss of institutional knowledge. In fact, most of New Mexico's established media companies are entering a second decade of shrinking staff sizes and diminished coverage. An evaluation of New Mexico's news industry counted the recent loss of some 30 news services due to closures, consolidations and start-up failures, the most impactful being the shuttering of the Scripps-owned Albuquerque Tribune in 2009."*[90]

In its background report, New Mexico First outlines the challenges for journalism across the state including:

- **A shortage of Spanish-speaking and Native American media proportional to the population;**
- **A lack of qualified, well-trained journalists due to non-competitive salaries; and**
- **A growing trend of marketing content which masquerades advertising as news, requiring better media literacy from the population.**[91]

[89] Business model information unavailable for New Mexico.

The largest paper in New Mexico is the Albuquerque Journal with a Sunday circulation of around 98,000 statewide as of 2018. Publishing since 1880, the Journal produces a northern New Mexico edition, and along with the Santa Fe New Mexican, maintains private, local, family ownership. Conversely, Gannett/Gatehouse owns seven of the other largest newspapers in New Mexico. The legacy papers of New Mexico are not static institutions and are aware they must innovate in order to survive. New Mexico First explains, "The Santa Fe New Mexican is developing news partnerships with online news startups. The paper took this approach to achieve broader distribution of stories and to elevate reporting through joint investigation. The Albuquerque Journal, meanwhile, has focused on amplifying its digital news platform and fostering more team coverage internally."[92]

In total, as of 2018, New Mexico had 359 media outlets, with 202 news radio stations, and 69 print newspapers, 40 of which are daily publications.[93] At least one of these publications has shuttered since 2018.[94] Two digital only nonprofits, New Mexico in Depth and the New Mexico Political Report, report statewide. While more than half of New Mexico's news organizations are radio stations, according to the New Mexico First study "In reality, only a handful of New Mexico radio stations produce notable, localized product on a regular basis. Like rural newspapers, they do so with staffs typically no more than three or four people deep."[95]

New Mexico has three public television stations, each affiliated with a public university. However three commercial television stations - KOAT, KOB, and KRQE, all based out of Albuquerque, are the most watched local news stations in New Mexico. At least 70% of residents report they get at least some of their news from television.[96] KOAT is owned by Hearst, KRQE by Nexstar Broadcasting, and KOB by KOB-TV, a local company running three additional stations. Despite their corporate ownership, KOAT and KOB have collaborated with local print organizations; KOAT shares polling information with the Albuquerque Journal, and KOB shares with the Santa Fe New Mexican.[97]

Media outlets in New Mexico

359
Outlets

202
radio stations

69
print newspapers

[90] "Advancing Sustainable, Reliable Journalism in New Mexico," New Mexico First, March 2018. https://www.nmlocalnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NM-First-report_sustainable-journalism.pdf
[91] ibid.
[92] ibid.

Case Study - New Mexico In Depth

New Mexico In Depth is a digital, member-supported nonpartisan news organization founded in 2012. In addition to original reporting focusing on good government and politics, children and education, and criminal justice, the organization runs a diversity fellowship, providing financial support, mentorship, and capacity building for journalism students and recent graduates of color. Recent projects include a report on redistricting in New Mexico in 2021, and tracking all capital outlay allocations by New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, state agencies, and 97 state lawmakers. In 2020, funding for New Mexico In Depth includes 12 organizations backing above $3000, including the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Thornburg Foundation, ProPublica, the New Mexico Local News Fund, the University of New Mexico, Report fo America, Solutions Journalism Network, the Lenfest Institute, and the Institute for Nonprofit News.[98]

Case Study - Searchlight New Mexico

Based in Sante Fe, Searchlight New Mexico is a digital, nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization focused on investigative reporting and accountability journalism. It was founded in January 2018 by Ray Rivera, a former editor of the Santa Fe New Mexican and staff writer at the New York Times. The organization aims to fill the gaps left behind by shrinking journalism resources across New Mexico, and holds republishing agreements with other news organizations in the state. In addition to weekly reporting, Searchlight New Mexico conducts year-long in-depth reports, including a 2019 investigation into special education, and in 2020, a series called Hitting Home, which chronicled the impact of COVID-19 on five towns across the state. Searchlight New Mexico is funded by individual donors and 31 foundations, which include the Knight Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, New Mexico Foundation's 221 Fund, the Sante Fe Community Foundation, the Thornburg Foundation and the Lenfest Institute.[99]

BIPOC Serving Media

New Mexico is a diverse state, with about half of the population identifying as Hispanic/Latinx. Almost 15% of New Mexicans identify as Native American, and the state is home to 19 Pueblo tribes, regions of the Navajo Nation, and two Apache tribes.[100] The Navajo Times, the newspaper serving the Navajo nation, is based in Window Rock, Arizona,

[93] ibid.
[94] NMPolitics.net shut down in April 2020.
[95] "Advancing Sustainable, Reliable Journalism in New Mexico," New Mexico First, March 2018. https://www.nmlocalnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NM-First-report_sustainable-journalism.pdf
[96] ibid.
[97] ibid.
[98] New Mexico In Depth, 2020 Funding. http://nmindepth.com/2020-funding/

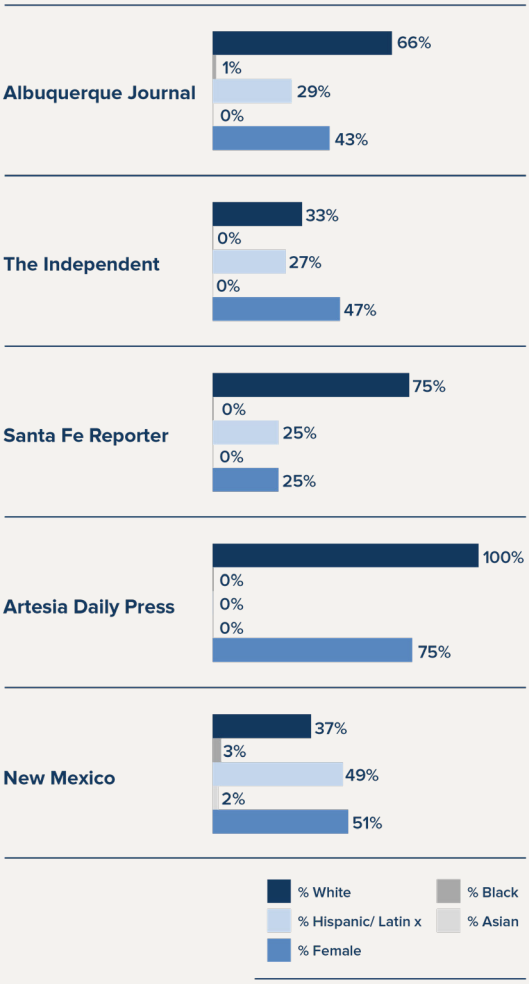
on the New Mexico - Arizona border. Native outlets in New Mexico face a similar challenge to newspapers across the state - the need to cover a diverse and geographically expansive region with little staff and resources. Circulation of the Navajo Times is an estimated 15,000 weekly as of 2018, but due to household sharing, the readership is estimated to be closer to 95,000 weekly.[101] While the paper was historically an arm of the Navajo Tribal Council, it has been fiscally independent from the Council since 2004. There is a second Native newspaper, The Jicarilla Chieftain, based out of Dulce, New Mexico, which also circulates in the state.[102]

Native America Calling and National Native News are both national Native American news radio programs by Koahnic Broadcast Corporation produced out of Albuquerque.[103] New Mexico's Spanish-speaking population is served through a variety of television and radio stations, though they are typically nationally affiliated companies covering little local news, including Univisión, Telemundo, and Azteca America.[104]

Diversity

Four news organizations in New Mexico participated in the most recent ASNE Survey. The ASNE data does not, however, include the percentage of Native American-identifying staff, which is of particular importance when looking at representation in New Mexico.

New Mexico ASNE Survey



[99] Searchlight New Mexico, Funding. https://searchlightnm.org/about/funding/

[100] "Native American population in New Mexico grows 11.4 percent," Indianz.com, March 16, 2011. https://www.indianz.com/News/2011/03/16/native-american-population-in-1.asp

Collaboration

The New Mexico Local News Fund (NMLNF), along with the Solutions Journalism Network, is particularly invested in supporting capacity and structures for collaboration across news organizations and civil society groups in New Mexico. NMLNF produced a roundtable and report on Collaborative Journalism in New Mexico in July 2019, which identified the following challenges for journalism in New Mexico to be addressed through stronger collaboration:

Collaborations are developing in the state to address the identified challenges to build capacity and cover an expansive geography, even as budgets continue to shrink. The New Mexico First report explains, "For example, New Mexico PBS (i.e., KNME) has engaged in several notable collaborations with organizations like the Solutions Journalism Network's "Small Towns, Big Change" and "State of Change" reporting projects and with the People, Power and Democracy Project (PPD) with New Mexico in Depth, KUNM radio and the New Mexico News Port."[106]

[101] "Advancing Sustainable, Reliable Journalism in New Mexico," New Mexico First, March 2018. https://www.nmlocalnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NM-First-report_sustainable-journalism.pdf
[102] ibid.
[103] ibid.
[104] ibid.
[105] Bryant, Heather. "New Mexico Collaborative Journalism Roundtable," New Mexico Local News Fund, July 12, 2019.

Local Journalism Support Organizations

Formed in March 2019, the New Mexico Local News Fund, led by Sarah Gustavus and Rashad Mahmood, "lead(s) efforts to identify strategies and innovation that could transform our local news ecosystem."[107] Developed following the 2018 New Mexico First Report, with support from Democracy Fund and the Thornburg Foundation, NMLNF focused on four programs in 2019: "Fellowships and training for reporters, training for editors who want to build new skills and engage in conversations about innovation in both reporting and business models for local news, a summit on collaboration among news outlets across the state, and community conversations to identify urgent information needs and new ideas for potential partnerships with local news media."[108] The NMLNF aims to fill the gaps identified in the 2018 New Mexico First Report, running training pilot programs with the University of New Mexico, and providing policy reports specifically made for journalists, while also pivoting to meet today's needs - including Emergency COVID-19 grants for individual journalists, and the Local News Revenue initiative for newsrooms.

Information Providers & Community	National Average	Albuquerque	
% Who say local journalists are in touch with the community	63%	70%	High ▲
% Who have spoken with a journalist	21%	27%	High ▲
% Who say their local news source mostly covers the area where they live	51%	70%	High ▲
% Who pay for local news in the past year	14%	12%	Average
% Who say their local news:			
Reports news accurately	71%	78%	High ▲
Keeps an eye on local political leaders	66%	74%	High ▲
Provides news that they use daily	67%	76%	High ▲
Covers news stories thoroughly	65%	74%	High ▲
Are transparent about their reporting	62%	70%	High ▲
Deals fairly with all sides	62%	62%	Average
Includes people like you in their stories	58%	63%	High ▲

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Information Providers & Community

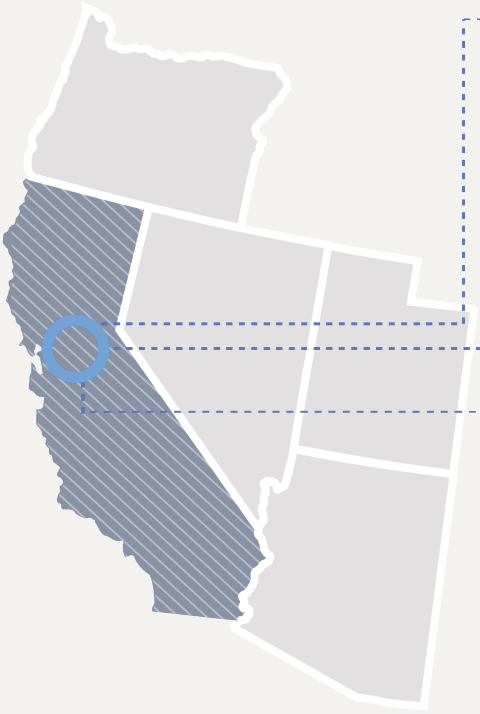
New Mexico is incredibly diverse, and the information sources available and the relationships between local journalists and communities vary greatly. Pew's 2019 Local Journalism Survey included Albuquerque, but while we may gain a snapshot of perceptions of journalists in the city, this can not be extrapolated to the rest of the state.

[106] "Advancing Sustainable, Reliable Journalism in New Mexico," New Mexico First, March 2018. https://www.nmlocalnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NM-First-report_sustainable-journalism.pdf
[107] Gustavus, Sarah. "Announcing the New Mexico Local News Fund." Medium, March 1, 2019. https://medium.com/@nmlocalnews/announcing-the-new-mexico-local-news-fund-be9a263e70de
[108] Ibid.

IMPACT ARCHITECTS

Oakland, California

Oakland, California



Population

Metropolitan Statistical Area: San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward: 4.6 million

433,031

Age

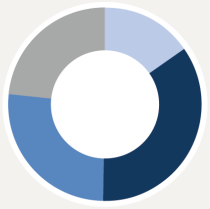
20% Under 18

13% Over 65

Race

24% Black / AA

16% Asian

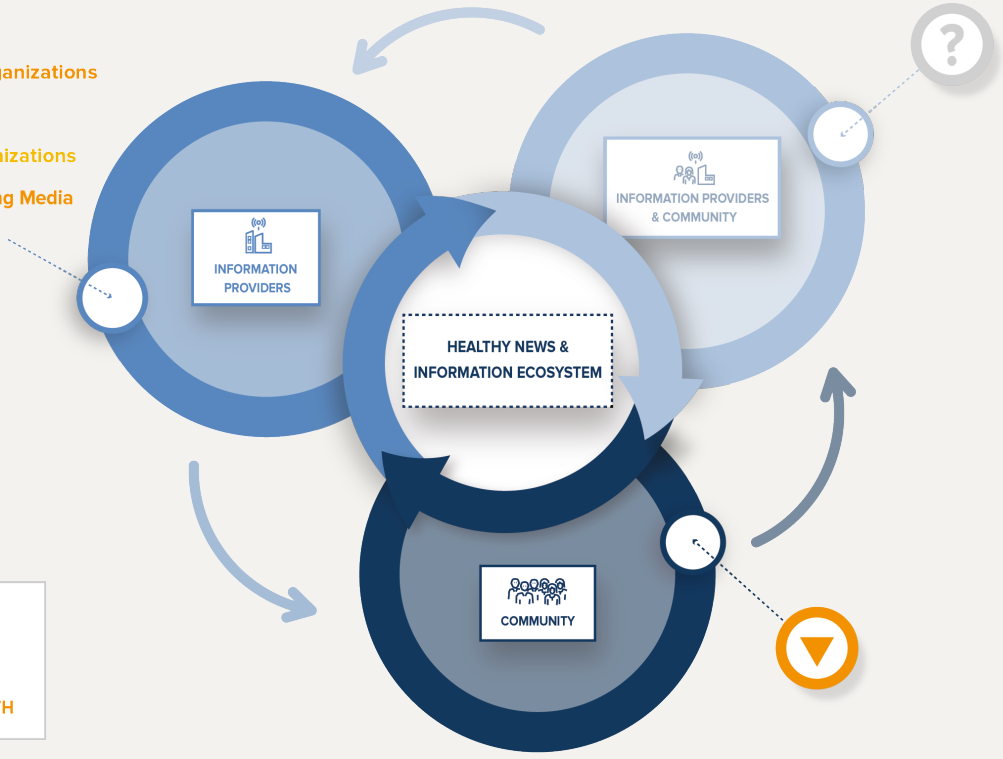


27% Hispanic / Latinx

36% White

News & Information Ecosystem

- Number of journalism organizations
- Types of media
- Business models of organizations
- Diversity and BIPOC Serving Media
- Collaboration
- Journalism Funding



- STRONG
- AVERAGE
- OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Key Elements

INFORMATION PROVIDERS	The Oakland news and information ecosystem has been underserved following the consolidation of its major papers, though new startups are stepping in to fill the void.
COLLABORATION	New organizations are being built with collaboration at their core, both as a way to better reach and serve communities and to build journalistic capacity.
DIVERSITY	We have no accurate measure of journalist diversity in Oakland, though many of the new outlets have been founded with the express purpose of supporting and collaborating with the Hispanic/Latinx and Black/African-American communities that have been historically underrepresented in the media in Oakland.
BIPOC SERVING & COMMUNITY MEDIA	There are two BIPOC serving media outlets in Oakland, one serving the Black/African-American community, and one the Hispanic/Latinx community. On a per capita basis, this is a relatively low number of outlets for the size of these communities in Oakland.
TYPE OF MEDIA	Oakland has primarily print and digital news outlets.
JOURNALISM ORGANIZATION BUSINESS MODELS	Oakland is dominated by nonprofit media outlets.
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT	Oakland has a high amount of philanthropic investment per capita in its information ecosystem, though this investment is recent and largely focused on one information provider.
COMMUNITY TRUST	We have no accurate measurement of community perceptions of information providers that allows us to assess Oakland independently from the broader San Francisco Bay Area.
*MEASUREMENT	Oakland's needs, resources, and information networks are difficult to measure alone, given the specific context of the San Francisco Bay Area and the interconnected nature of both media and communities in the region.

Summary

Oakland is a challenging ecosystem to measure, due to its proximity to San Francisco and its inclusion in the Bay Area MSA and media market. While demographics show the notable differences between Oakland and the complete San-Francisco-Oakland-Hayward MSA, our data often matches the MSA rather than the city itself.

While information needs, perception of journalism, and information consumption is difficult to measure, Oakland's journalism landscape, at least in terms of local Oakland organizations, is well defined. As Oakland's legacy outlets have consolidated, nonprofit outlets have expanded, with an eye towards serving diverse communities previously underrepresented in legacy media, even prior to consolidation. Philanthropic entities have stepped in to support new nonprofit media organizations, and Oakland has seen a high amount of philanthropic investment per capita in its news and information ecosystem. These start-up organizations are often structured around collaboration and coordination, with an aim to build a more diverse and interconnected ecosystem. Though some are well funded, these initiatives are new and still developing as they work to measure and serve the information needs of Oakland.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Community Indicators	National Average	Oakland	
Economic			
Median Household Income	$61,937	$68,442	High ▲
Per Capita Income	$33,831	$40,628	High ▲
Poverty Rate	13.10%	17.60%	High ▲
Education			
High School Degree	90%	82%	Low ▼
Bachelor's Degree	36%	43%	High ▲
Literacy Rate	79%	81%	Average
Resources & Infrastructure			Average
Households with Computer	89%	90%	Average
Broadband Access	80%	81%	Average
Universities		9	Average
Libraries		18	High ▲
Community Satisfaction	37	61%	Average
Voter Turnout 2018	50%	67%	High
Prior Information Needs Study	47%	Partial	Medium
Prior Ecosystem Study		Partial	Medium

Population

433,031
Oakland, CA

883,305
San Francisco, CA

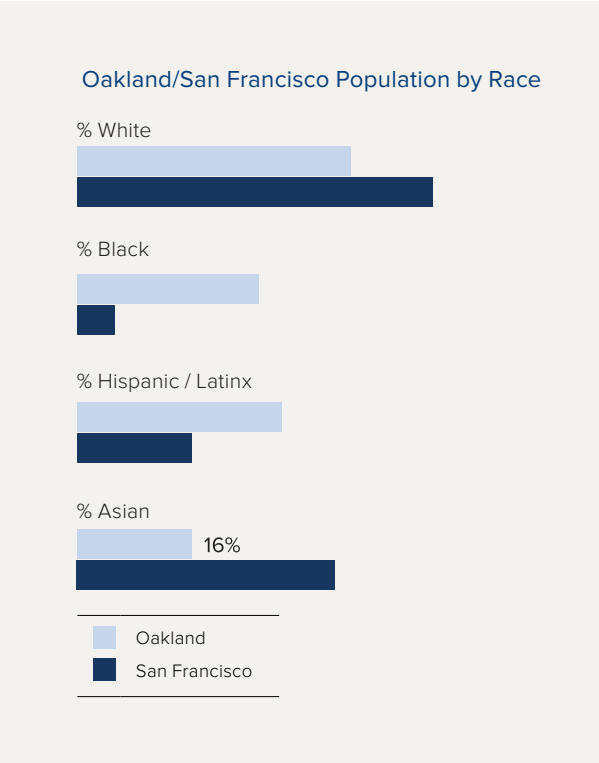
Per Capita Income

$40,628
Oakland, CA

$64,157
San Francisco, CA

Community

The city of Oakland, located on the San Francisco Bay just over the Bay Bridge from the city of San Francisco, has 433,031 residents. Perhaps surprisingly, Oakland was one of the most challenging pilot locations to measure in our study, largely due to the boundaries of most data and statistics. Oakland is part of the San Francisco - Oakland - Hayward MSA, skewing the data toward those larger cities in the MSA (in this case, San Francisco has 883,305 residents). Additionally, the county-level data out of Alameda County includes diverse areas outside of Oakland city proper, but that are very much a part of the local community and ecosystem.



San Francisco and Oakland are quite different demographically, as outlined, which makes the data from the MSA less relevant in assessing the information needs of Oakland, exclusively. There are few data sources that allow us to break down our information on the county, city, or zip code needed to really understand Oakland's information needs.

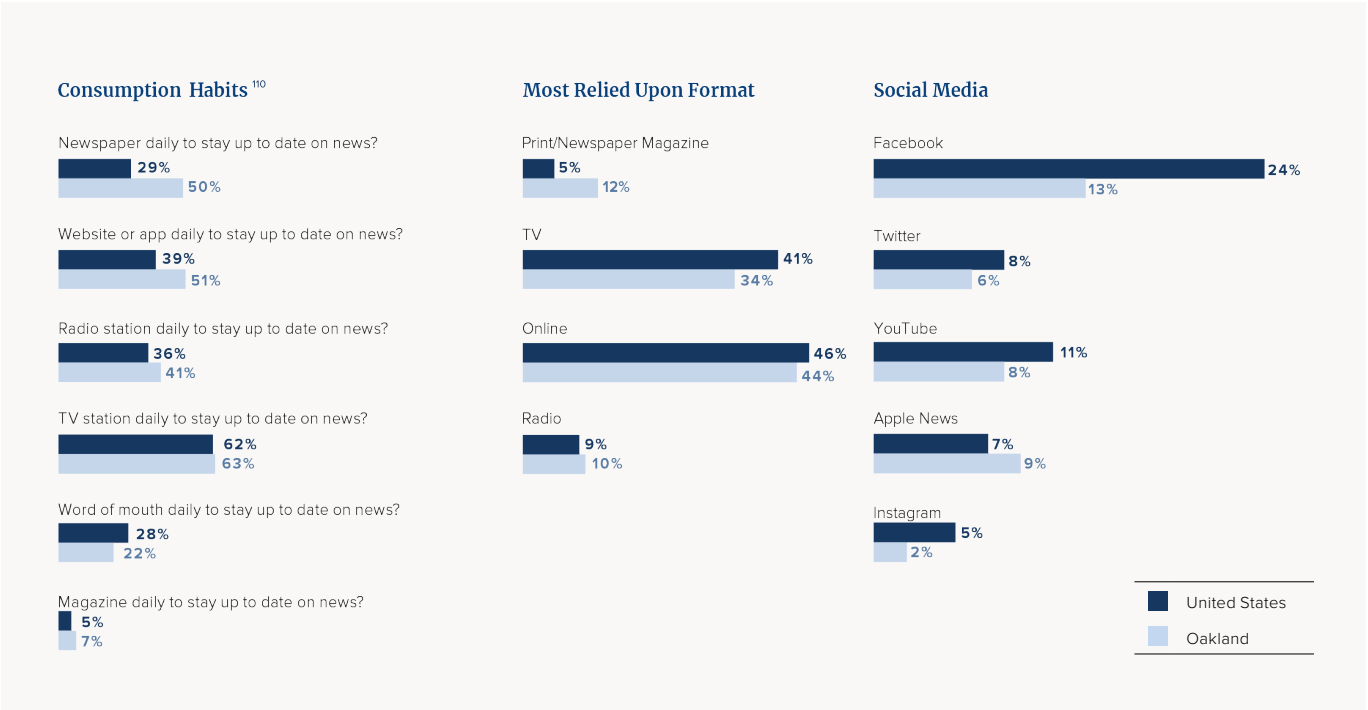
Consumption Habits

The Knight-Gallup, American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy[109] survey included 235 respondents from the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward MSA. This is not a statistically significant sample, and it includes all major metropolitan areas in that MSA, including San Francisco, so all data needs to be analyzed in context.

Respondents in the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward MSA report higher rates of daily news consumption than the national average: 50% of respondents report using a newspaper daily to stay up to date on news (compared to 29% nationally), and 51% report using a website or app daily to stay up to date on news (compared to 39% nationally).

San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward MSA residents are more reliant on print newspapers as their primary news format than nationally (12% compared to 5%) and less reliant on television news (34% compared to 41% nationally).

[109] American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy. 4 August, 2020. Available at: https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-2020-trust-media-and-democracy/



Despite the fact that many social media companies are headquartered in the Bay Area, respondents in the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward MSA are less likely to report frequently getting news from social media compared to the national average. Far fewer respondents in the MSA agree that "there is so much bias in the news media that it is often difficult to sort of the facts," 30% compared to 45% nationally.

Information Needs

Madeleine Bair, founder of El Tímpano (profiled below), in collaboration with Listening Post Collective, conducted an information ecosystem assessment of Latino Immigrants in Oakland from 2017 - 2018. The assessment focused on monolingual Spanish and Mam speaking residents, and is based on conversations with about 300 residents and two dozen community leaders. Bair outlines key information gaps in the assessment which include:

- A dearth of local news and information relevant to the community
- The existing media often "leaves residents feeling afraid and disempowered"
- People want news and information they can use including information on basic resources
- Community institutions and strong social networks address information needs
- No resources catering to the linguistic needs of Oakland's Mam Mayan indigenous community
- No central source of timely, local information
- Few opportunities for Oakland's immigrants to share their stories and "exert their voices in local civic conversations[111]

[110] Answers to these questions are not mutually exclusive. For example one respondent may report using both a newspaper and a website daily to stay up to date on news, hence percentages do not add to 100%.

[111] Bair, Madeleine. "Más Información: An information Needs Assessment of Latino Immigrants in Oakland California. Internews, July 11, 2018, https://internews.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/INA_Oakland%20California_7.11.18_for-web.pdf

In a conversation with The Oaklandside, Bair further explains:

> *"People told us their top issues were, number one, health. Number two, education. Then, housing and jobs. Then, immigration. We also heard a lot of common critiques of the existing news media, particularly commercial TV news—a feeling that the news was disempowering because it portrayed their communities as victims. Many said they were actually beginning to avoid the news because it made them feel fearful and helpless. It didn't give them information that empowered them to take action on the things impacting them. A lot of people told us they wanted more information about how they can get involved and what they can do."*[112]

Looking more broadly at Oakland as a whole, in the lead up to the launch of The Oaklandside newsroom (profiled below) in 2020, Berkeleyside/Cityside organized a community listening tour to learn the information needs of the community from leaders and local residents. The themes that emerged included: wanting more information on housing developments; the "lack of dialogue between Oakland communities;" the rapidly rising cost of living; as well as a desire for positive stories on "heroes" in the neighborhood.[113] These sentiments were used to inform The Oaklandside's founding values, in addition to their coverage priorities.

The Oakland Tribune tower.

[112] Simas, Jacob. How El Tímpano passes the mic to Spanish-speaking and Indigenous immigrant communities." The Oaklandside, June 16, 2020. https://oaklandside.org/2020/06/16/how-el-timpano-passes-the-mic/
[113] Goins, Cole. "A foundation of listening." Berkeleyside, https://www.berkeleyside.com/oakland/#10-a-foundation-of-listening

Information Providers

While there has been promising growth, renewal, and innovation in the past few years, Oakland's media landscape has for decades been marked by consolidation and dramatically shrinking newsrooms. We found 12 news organizations serving Oakland and based in the city - two newspapers owned by Media News Group, six nonprofit organizations, one nationally affiliated broadcast television station, and three independent outlets. While there is no public media affiliate based in Oakland, KQED, based across the bay in San Francisco, covers the entire Bay Area and is one of the largest public radio stations by listenership in the United States.[114]

Information Providers	Pilot Average	Oakland	
Journalism Providers			
Number of Organizations		12	Low ▼
Population per Organization	22,548	36,086	
Mediums			
Newspapers	43%	50%	High ▲
Television Stations	23%	8%	Low ▼
Radio Stations	14%	8%	Low ▼
Digital	15%	33%	High ▲
Business Models			
Nonprofit	22%	50%	High ▲
Public Media	5%	0%	Low ▼
National Broadcast Chain	21%	8%	Low ▼
National Newspaper Chain	13%	17%	Low ▼
Independent For-Profit	40%	25%	Low ▼
Ethnic Media			
African American / Black		1	Low ▼
Hispanic / Latinx		1	Low ▼
Diversity			
Journalist Diversity		0 Reports	Low ▼
Source Diversity		0 Audits	Low ▼
Collaboration		New and formalized	Medium
Journalism Funding			
Philanthropic Dollars since 2009	$18.7 M	$15,900,000	
Funders	68	104	
Recipients	31	34	
Invested Per Capita	$20.63	$36.72	High ▲

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

For 142 years, Oakland was served by a number of newspapers, most notably, the Oakland Tribune, a charter member of the Associated Press. After being owned by three different families, the Oakland Tribune was bought by Combined Communications Corporation in 1977, which then merged with the Gannett Company in 1979. The paper was bought by the publisher Robert Maynard and his wife Nancy Hicks Maynard in 1983, in the first management-led leverage buyout of a newspaper in the United States. Additionally, Maynard became the first African American owner and publisher of a major metropolitan newspaper. While the paper flourished editorially, continued financial difficulties forced the sale in 1992 to the Alameda Newspaper Group, (now the Bay Area News Group), a division of MediaNews Group owned by private equity firm Alden Global Capital.

[114] KQED, About. https://www.kqed.org/about/

News Outlets Based in Oakland

	Independent	National Chain	Nonprofit/University	Public Media
Digital			Oaklandside El Tímpano Oakland Voices Local News Matters	
Magazine				
Newspaper	East Bay Express El Mundo Oakland Post	Montclarion East Bay Times	Catholic Voice	
Radio			Youth Radio	
Televsion		KTVU Fox 2		

Following subsequent consolidations, in 2016 the Bay Area News Group announced a restructuring, folding six Bay Area publications - including the Oakland Tribune - into two papers - the East Bay Times and the Mercury News.[115] Christine Schmidt wrote in Neiman lab about the decimation of news organizations in the East Bay, explaining:

> ***"In 2016, the 142-year-old Oakland Tribune was folded along with several other nearby dailies into the East Bay Times — one of the more egregious examples of Alden Global Capital's pillaging of local media nationwide. The East Bay Times is all that's left of what were 12 different newspapers a decade ago; it currently lists only 7 reporters dedicated to covering news in Alameda County, which includes both Oakland and Berkeley and has a population of 1.5 million."***[116]

Filling the gaps left by this consolidation is an outcropping of new, community focused news organizations seeking to center residents and their stories in the coverage of Oakland. These include El Tímpano, The Oaklandside, and Oakland Voices, profiled below.

[115] Lang, Marissa. "Oakland loses Tribune, with paper folded into East Bay Times," SF Gate, March 1, 2016, https://www.sfgate.com/business/article/Bay-Area-News-Group-consolidates-newspapers-6863720.php

[116] Schmidt, Christine. "Berkeleyside is launching a sister site in Oakland to help fill the void left by pillaged newspapers," Nieman Lab, December 10, 2019, Neimhttps://www.niemanlab.org/2019/12/oaklandside-berkeleyside-is-launching-a-sister-site-to-help-fill-the-void-left-by-pillaged-newspapers/

Diversity

None of Oakland's news outlets have participated in the American Society of News Editors newsroom diversity survey, nor have they publicly reported their diversity numbers. Both El Tímpano and The Oaklandside have publicly stated their commitments to diversity and inclusion in their staffing and sourcing.

Coverage by Outlets Outside of Oakland

As part of the larger Bay Area, Oakland receives a high amount of coverage by outlets based outside of Oakland. These include KQED (noted above), KALW, the San Francisco Chronicle (owned by Hearst), Mercury News (owned by Bay Area News Group/MediaNews Group), CalMatters, the Alameda Sun, El Tecolote, ABC 7 East Bay, and KPIX 5 CBS BayArea, and the Bay City News wire service and Foundation, among others. The Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) was founded in Oakland and is currently based in Emeryville next door, but is not focused on local coverage.

Case Study – El Tímpano

El Tímpano, founded by Oakland native Madeleine Bair in 2018 following a nine month information assessment and participatory design process, aims to develop "two way channels of information" between the organization and residents to "foster civic engagement and political empowerment while building more inclusive local media."[117] The organization is designed for and with the Latinx and Mayan immigrants of Oakland, who have little to no local news serving their communities directly. El Tímpano's approach to delivering news focuses on those mediums and information topics that the community identifies as most relevant and important for their everyday lives. Initiatives include a participatory SMS reporting platform, collaborations with local artists and partnerships with general-audience outlets such as The Oaklandside to amplify the stories of El Tímpano's community.

[117] El Tímpano, About Us. https://www.eltimpano.org/about-us

Case Study - The Oaklandside

Launched in June 2020, The Oaklandside is an outgrowth of the successful local news start-up Berkeleyside in neighboring Berkeley. The expansion created an umbrella organization, Cityside, to oversee this new "nonprofit network of local news sites in the Bay Area," and has been funded by the American Journalism Project and the Google News Initiative.[118] The Oaklandside was launched with editor-in-chief Tasneem Raja, a former Oakland resident who served as the executive editor and co-founder of the Tyler Loop in East Texas before returning to Oakland. Raja points to inspiration and learning from local journalism organizations across the country, including City Bureau in Chicago, Outlier Media in Detroit, the Broke in Philly project in Philadelphia, and El Tímpano in Oakland, which was one of the founding partners of The Oaklandside.[119]

One of the foundational values of The Oaklandside is "learning and growing through a commitment to listening." In order to cultivate this listening,[120] The Oaklandside developed a community listening process, spearheaded by local consultant Cole Goins, which included hosting conversations with community stakeholders, collaborations with artists, and a series of public events that invited residents to share what they wanted to see from a new local newsroom. The Oaklandside also launched a community survey (on Google forms), inviting feedback on the information needs across the community. As of September 2020, The Oaklandside has staffed a newsroom of seven, including reporters for Education Equity, Housing and Homelessness, Arts & Community, and Small & Immigrant-Owned Business.

Case Study - Oakland Voices

Oakland Voices, supported by the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, is not a traditional journalism news outlet. Instead, it is a community organization that trains local residents in digital media storytelling, supporting them as correspondents to report on the city and publish on OaklandVoices.us in addition to other outlets. The program began as a partnership between the Oakland Tribune and the Maynard Institute, but continues today in the absence of the Tribune. The program has trained over 60 correspondents as of September 2020.[121]

Collaboration

[118] Schmidt, Christine. "Berkeleyside is launching a sister site in Oakland to help fill the void left by pillaged newspapers," Nieman Lab, December 10, 2019, Neimhttps://www.niemanlab.org/2019/12/oaklandside-berkeleyside-is-launching-a-sister-site-to-help-fill-the-void-left-by-pillaged-newspapers/

[119] Cityside, About the Oaklandside. https://www.citysidejournalism.org/oaklandside/

[120] ibid.

[121] Oakland Voices, About. https://oaklandvoices.us/about-us/

Though still new, the collaboration between El Tímpano and The Oaklandside aims to show how coalition journalism can bridge the news and information silos that can often separate immigrant-serving and general audience media. Through El Tímpano's "two-way" model, El Tímpano brings stories from its community to The Oaklandside newsroom, to then be collaboratively reported and published. This partnership strengthens The Oaklandside's coverage of Oakland's Latinx and Mayan immigrants, while expanding the reach of El Tímpano. Additionally, given El Tímpano's "two-way" model, The Oaklandside invites first-person reporting from "members of El Timpano's network who have firsthand experiences and stories to tell, which can deepen our readers' understanding of issues impacting our immigrant and undocumented neighbors."[122]

Journalism Support Organizations

The Bay Area is home to a variety of organizations investing in journalism in Oakland and in the broader region, though none are based in Oakland at the moment. The Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, founded by Robert C. Maynard, the first Black owner and publisher of the Oakland Tribune, invests heavily in the community, most notably through Oakland Voices. Acción Latina and Independent Arts and Media are both based in San Francisco, but fund journalism initiatives in Oakland. The Google News Initiative is involved as one of the primary funders of The Oaklandside, but is based in New York and San Francisco, while the American Journalism Project, the other primary funder, is based in Washington D.C. The Listening Post Collective, an initiative of Internews, based in Washington, DC, funded the original information needs assessment of Latinx Immigrants in Oakland in 2017 and provides ongoing technical support to El Tímpano. Additionally, Renaissance Journalism and Storytelling Center is an organization funding journalism initiatives, and a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives, based in Oakland. This is not a comprehensive list, but rather some players of note which help illustrate the financial and organizational support of the ecosystem.

Information Providers and Community

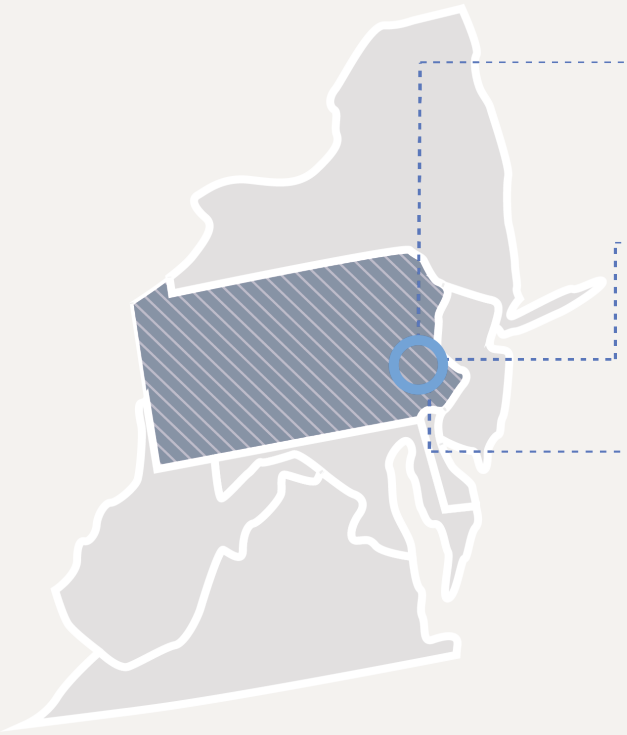
Outside of Bair's comprehensive ecosystems study of Spanish-language information flows and qualitative information from the launch of The Oaklandside, there is no public information granular enough to reflect the relationship between journalists and the community in Oakland.

[122] Simas, Jacob. How El Tímpano passes the mic to Spanish-speaking and Indigenous immigrant communities." The Oaklandside, June 16, 2020. https://oaklandside.org/2020/06/16/how-el-timpano-passes-the-mic/

IMPACT ARCHITECTS

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Population

Metropolitan Statistical Area: Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington: 6.1 Million

1,584,064

Age

22% Under 18

13% Over 65

Race

42% Black / AA

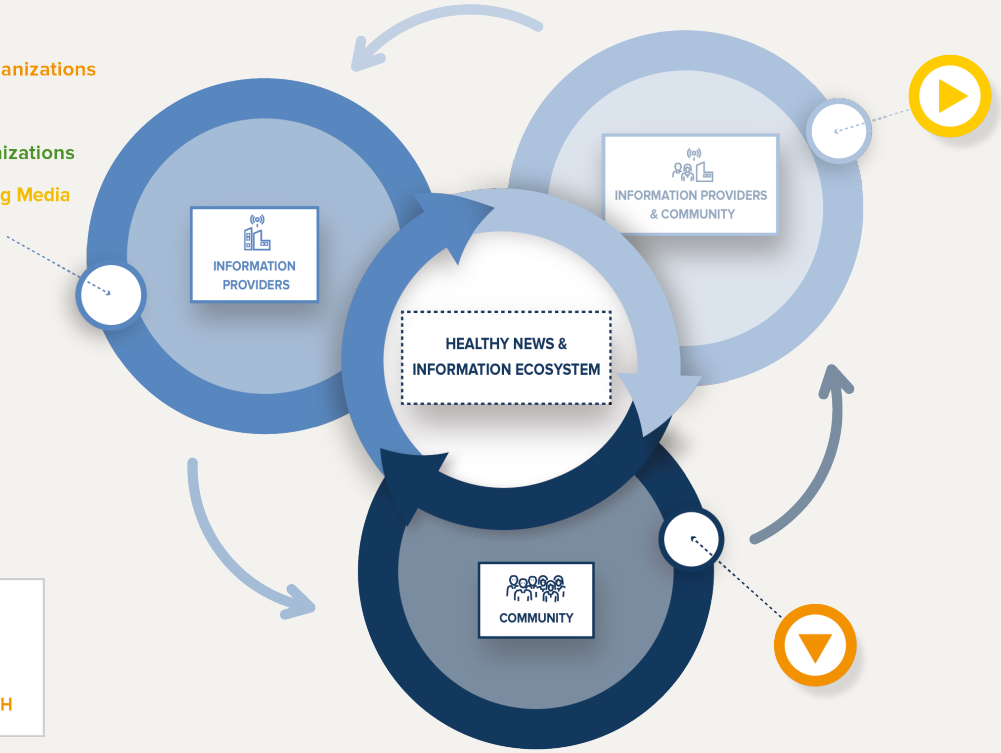
7% Asian

14% Hispanic / Latinx

41% White

News & Information Ecosystem

- Number of journalism organizations
- Types of media
- Business models of organizations
- Diversity and BIPOC Serving Media
- Collaboration
- Journalism Funding



- STRONG
- AVERAGE
- OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Key Elements

INFORMATION PROVIDERS	If anything, Philadelphia has too many outlets serving the general population - consumers are overwhelmed with information. This is not the case for the African American/Black community, which instead reports being underserved in their information needs.
COLLABORATION	Collaboration is developed and institutionalized, supported through organizations such as the Lenfest institute, and organized through initiatives such as Resolve Philly, among others.
DIVERSITY	WHYY invested heavily in building its “cultural competency” program, and is a model of how to initiate diversity and equity initiatives in public media organizations both in Philadelphia and nationally.
BIPOC SERVING & COMMUNITY MEDIA	While Philadelphia has a number of BIPOC serving media organizations, there are few relative to the size of its Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Asian/Asian American communities.
TYPE OF MEDIA	Philadelphia’s market is predominantly newspapers, though there are newer digital and community focused information organizations.
JOURNALISM ORGANIZATION BUSINESS MODELS	There is a balance of business models in the Philadelphia ecosystem.
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT	Philadelphia has had a very high amount of philanthropic investment per capita in its information ecosystem, with the Lenfest Institute operating as a backbone to the entire Philadelphia journalism ecosystem.
COMMUNITY TRUST	Philadelphians have about average positive perceptions of their local news media, though a lower than average percent of people say their local news includes people like them in their stories.

Summary

While Philadelphia does not have a high number of outlets on a per capita basis, its outlets are robust and relatively well funded, resulting in a large amount of information. In fact, research into the Philadelphia ecosystem suggests that rather than a "news desert," Philadelphia is a "news jungle," an environment in which consumers have too much information and do not know where to turn under the deluge.

There are relatively few BIPOC serving media outlets in Philadelphia for the size of its Black/ African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Asian/ Asian American communities, and these communities report being underserved in their information needs. While only a handful of outlets in Philadelphia have reported their diversity statistics, WHYY, the public media station, did an extensive cultural competency audit, including a staff and source diversity report. Its work is a model for how a public media organization can invest in gaining a better understanding of its own internal diversity, as well as where it falls short in serving diverse sectors of the community.

Philadelphia's ecosystem is stronger than many, with high philanthropic investment, high institutional support, and strong collaborative initiatives. However, there is still opportunity to improve with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion. While there has been a very high amount of previous investment in Philadelphia, future investment should look more closely at closing the information gaps for diverse communities of Philadelphians that have not previously been served by, or represented in, the news and information ecosystem.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Community Indicators	National Average	Philadelphia	
Economic			
Median Household Income	$61,937	$43,744	Low ▼
Per Capita Income	$33,831	$26,557	Low ▼
Poverty Rate	13.10%	24.90%	High ▲
Education			
High School Degree	90%	84%	Low ▼
Bachelor's Degree	36%	29%	Low ▼
Literacy Rate	79%	78%	Average
Resources & Infrastructure			
Households with Computer	89%	84%	Low ▼
Broadband Access	80%	74%	Low ▼
Universities		28	Low ▼
Libraries		52	Average
Community Satisfaction	37	19%	Low ▼
Voter Turnout 2018	50%	28%	Low ▼
Prior Information Needs Study	47%	Yes	High ▲
Prior Ecosystem Study		Yes	High ▲

There are relatively few BIPOC serving media outlets in Philadelphia for the size of the its diverse communities.

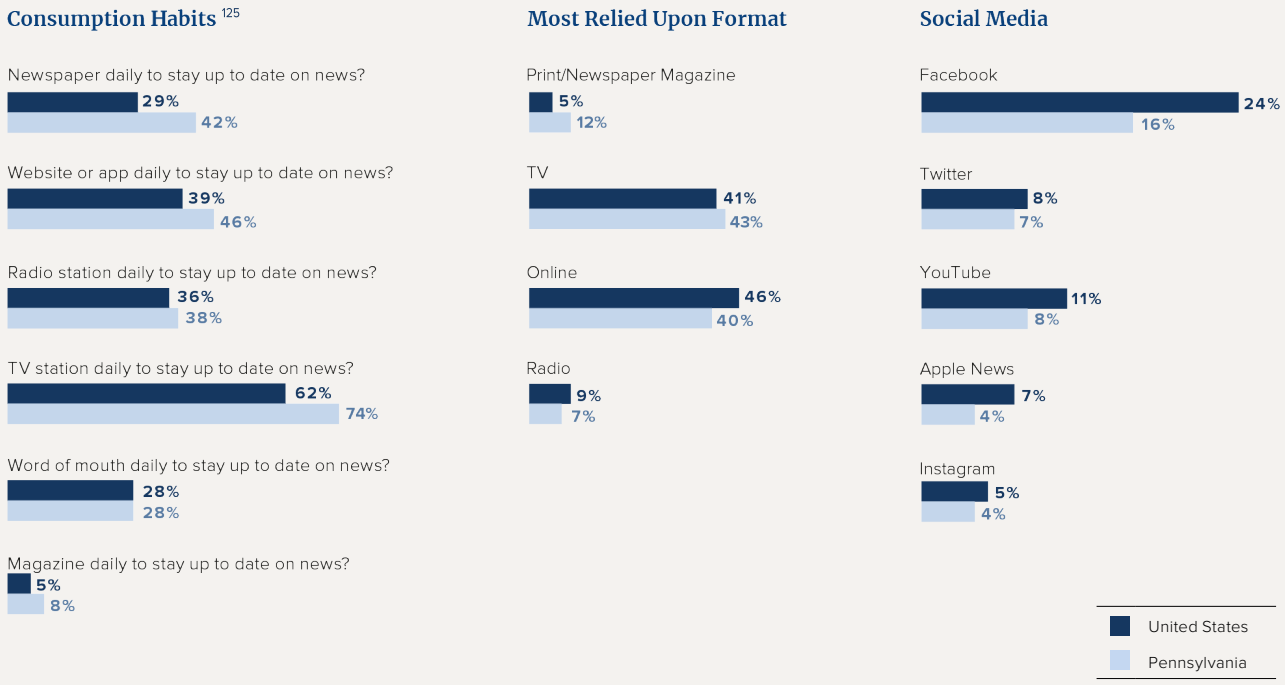
With high philanthropic investment, high institutional support, and strong collaborative initiatives, Philadelphia's ecosystem is stronger than many

Community

Philadelphia is the sixth largest city in the United States, with an estimated population of 1.58 million. The Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington MSA is the eighth largest in the country, with a population over six million. The MSA is inclusive of counties in four states, reflecting Philadelphia's unique geographic location, with suburbs stretching into all three neighboring states. Forty-two percent of the population identifies as Black or African-American, 41% White, 14% Hispanic or Latinx, and 7% Asian.

Consumption Habits

The Knight-Gallup, American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy[124] survey included 407 respondents from Philadelphia. Compared to national averages, Philadelphia residents report high rates of daily news consumption, with 42% of respondents in Philadelphia saying they use a newspaper daily to stay up to date on the news (compared to 29% nationally), 46% use a website or digital app, 38% use a radio station, and 74% use a television station.



[124] American Views 2020: Trust, Media, and Democracy. 4 August, 2020. Available at: https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-2020-trust-media-and-democracy/

[125] Answers to these questions are not mutually exclusive. For example one respondent may report using both a newspaper and a website daily to stay up to date on news, hence percentages do not add to 100%.

Respondents in Philadelphia are less likely to cite online media as their primary news source (40%) compared to the national average (46%). Respondents in Philadelphia are also less likely to report frequently getting news from social media compared to the national average. Respondents in Philadelphia have a slightly more positive view of the United States news media than most Americans with more than a quarter (27%) reporting a somewhat favorable overall opinion of the news media in the United States, compared to 21% nationally. And Philadelphians have slightly lower levels of distrust in news, with 40% agreeing that "there is so much bias in the news media that it is often difficult to sort of the facts," compared to 45% nationally.

Information Needs

Philadelphia has a rich journalism history and has been the subject of two information ecosystem studies in the past decade: a 2018 study from the Lenfest Institute titled "Being Informed: A Study of the Information Needs and Habits of Philadelphia Residents," and "Exploring a Network Journalism Collaborative in Philadelphia: An Analysis of the City's Media Ecosystem with Final Recommendations," a 2010 study written by then director of J-Lab, Jan Schaffer.

The Lenfest Institute used focus groups to understand the information needs, information sources, and consumption habits of Philadelphia residents. The report outlines:

> *"Consistently across groups, what mattered most to people was information and interactions of a highly personal nature that was relevant for planning the day: food shopping, cooking and meal planning, restaurants, devotional material, entertainment, checking in with friends and family, health and exercise, etc. It also included information that was of use for work and (for those either in college or with kids) school.*
>
> *To the extent "news" was relevant, it fit this same pattern: the day's weather, traffic, public transportation and any very local issues related to crime, schools, fires and the like that needed to be taken into account in preparing themselves and their families for the day. Following sports news was also commonly mentioned. There was some, albeit little, voluntary mention of broader local issues like policy (police, taxes, social services, etc.) or local government (e.g., the mayor, city council, city agencies, etc.). ... Largely missing was a sense that this information was actionable or directly relevant to their lives, other than in the very broadest of senses."* [126]

[126] Carpini, Michael X Delli, Mariela Morales Suárez and Burt Herman. "Being Informed: A Story of the Information Needs and Habits of Philadelphia Residents,"Lenfest Institute for Journalism, October 2018. https://live-lenfest-institute.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Being-Informed.-Information-Needs-of-Philadelphia-Residents.-Delli-Carpini-Morales-Suárez-and-Herman-final.pdf

When it comes to information sources, the study focused on both the platforms (e.g., social media, phone applications, etc) and mediums (e.g., radio, television, print, digital) through which people got their news and information, as well as from which specific news organizations. Lenfest found that mobile phones were the "most popular source of information across all age groups, races, and household income levels,"[127] with most participants relying upon default phone apps (such as Google and Apple maps or Apple news) and social media apps. Following phone applications, "Local TV news stations ranked second and enjoyed greater trust. Other news sources include word of mouth and radio stations. Magazine and newspapers, mostly associated by study participants with their print versions, ranked last." [128]

Information Providers	Pilot Average	**Philadelphia**	
Journalism Providers			
Number of Organizations		53	Low ▼
Population per Organization	22,548	29,888	
Mediums			
Newspapers	43%	50%	High ▲
Television Stations	23%	15%	Low ▼
Radio Stations	14%	12%	Low ▼
Digital	15%	23%	Low ▼
Business Models			
Nonprofit	22%	38%	Low ▼
Public Media	5%	4%	Low ▼
National Broadcast Chain	21%	15%	Low ▼
National Newspaper Chain	13%	10%	Low ▼
Independent For-Profit	40%	35%	Low ▼
BIPOC Serving Media			
African American / Black		5	Low ▼
Hispanic / Latinx		6	Average
Diversity			
Journalist Diversity		3 (ASNE)	Medium
Source Diversity		1	Medium
Collaboration		Developed and institutionalized	High ▲
Journalism Funding			
Philanthropic Dollars since 2009	$18.7 M	$81,000,000	
Funders	68	182	
Recipients	31	48	
Invested Per Capita	$20.63	$51.13	High ▲

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

The study also investigated trust in local news sources, finding that 70% of participants said "at best, they only partially trusted news and information from mainstream media." [129]

The Lenfest Institute focus group participants suggested that rather than a news desert, their main challenge in accessing news and information is that they experience Philadelphia as a news jungle, meaning "they had too much information and news on their screens and that they had to opt out, sort through and hunt for information that they were actually interested in." However, the report outlines the exception to the news jungle phenomena for participants of color, "who repeatedly mentioned information gaps in the media about specific issues affecting Latino and Black communities, like high childbirth deaths, cultural traditions, and celebrations and consequences of gentrification in neighborhoods."[130]

[127] ibid.
[128] ibid.
[129] ibid.
[130] ibid.

Written in 2010, the J-Lab ecosystem study of Philadelphia found 60 “blogs and Web sites that have some journalistic DNA” in addition to the city’s two daily newspapers and four commercial television stations.[131] Ten years later, we found 53 journalism outlets in Philadelphia (which includes seven tied to university institutions, which are student-run). Given the size of the city, we know it is quite possible this is not a complete and exhaustive list - there are likely niche, small, and/or hyperlocal publications that were not unearthed in our landscape scan.

According to Pew’s Local News report, the most frequent sources for local news sources in Philadelphia are WPVI TV ABC (21% of respondents), WTXF TV FOX (7%), KYW TV CBS (6%), WCAU TV NBC (6%), and The Philadelphia Inquirer (5%).[132]

Collaboration

The Philadelphia news and information ecosystem is unique in that it has several legacy news organizations that are willing and generous collaborators. For example, the Philadelphia Inquirer offers its content on relevant topics like economic justive, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other public health matters to partners for free and open use. In addition to the legacy newspaper, commercial media, such as the local NBC affiliate, and public media affiliate WHYY are active collaborators in the ecosystem.

Case Study – Resolve Philly

Resolve Philly is “an unconventional nonprofit challenging the field of journalism to be equitable, collaborative, and informed by community voices and solutions.”[133] Their first initiative, the Reentry Project, was launched by the Solutions Journalism Network and was a collaboration of 19 local news organizations, providing in-depth, nuanced, and solutions-oriented reporting about prisoner reentry in Philadelphia from November 2016 through March 2018.[134, 135] Following this first initiative, the group spun off from SJN to form an independent 501(c)3, Resolve Philly. The organization has been a hub for new collaborative work across Philadelphia's information ecosystem, providing project management, community engagement, editorial support, among other resources and services.

BIPOC Serving Media

Philadelphia has strong BIPOC serving media, including Al Día, Al Hispano, El Sol, WUVP, WWSI, and Impacto Latino serving the Spanish speaking community; the Philadelphia Sunday Sun, Philadelphia Tribune, Scoop USA, WURD, and Fun Times Magazine serving the African American/Black community; the Korean Phila Times serving the Korean community; and the New Mainstream Press serving the Vietnamese and Chinese community. However, Lenfest's focus gropus suggest that these media are not always reaching the community members they aim to serve.

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[131] Schaffer, Jan. Exploring a Network Journalism Collaborative in Philadelphia: An Analysis of the City’s Media Ecosystem with Final Recommendations,” J-Lab, 2010.
[132] Pew Research, “What are the Local News Dynamics in Your City?” March 2019. https://www.journalism.org/interactives/local-news-habits/37980/
[133] Resolve Philly, About. https://resolvephilly.org/about/
[134] https://thereentryproject.org/
[135] https://brokeinphilly.org/who-we-are/

News Outlets Based in Philadelphia

	Independent	National Chain	Nonprofit/University	Public Media
Digital	West Philly Local Technical.ly Philly Green Philly		Catholic Philly The Philadelphia Citizen Generocity Resolve Philly Pennsylvania Capital-Star Chestnut Hill Local Hidden City Philadelphia Kensington Voice Next City	
Magazine	Philadelphia Fun Times Magazine	Smart Business		
Newspaper	Philadelphia Public Record Philadelphia Sunday Sun Philadelphia Tribune Philadelphia Weekly Scoop USA Metro University City Review Al Dia El Hispano El Sol Jewish Exponent Korean Phila Times Philadelphia Gay News New Mainstream Press	Legal Intelligencer Philadelphia Business Journal Star News Philly South Philly Review Northeast Times	Impacto Latin Philadelphia Inquirer Chalkbeat Philadelphia Southwest Globe Times Wharton Journal Triangle Temple News Daily Pennsylvanian Hawk	
Radio	WURD	KYW	WRGU-LP PhillyCAM	WHYY
Televsion		KYW WCAU WPHL WPVI WTXF WUVP WWSI NBC10		

Diversity

Three of Philadelphia's outlets participated in the last ASNE survey in 2019, including Hidden City Philadelphia, one of the only non-legacy outlets to participate in the study. All publications that participated are significanly more white than the city's population overall. The Philadelphia Inquirer released a Diversity and Inclusion Audit Report in February 2021, published after the close of this research report.

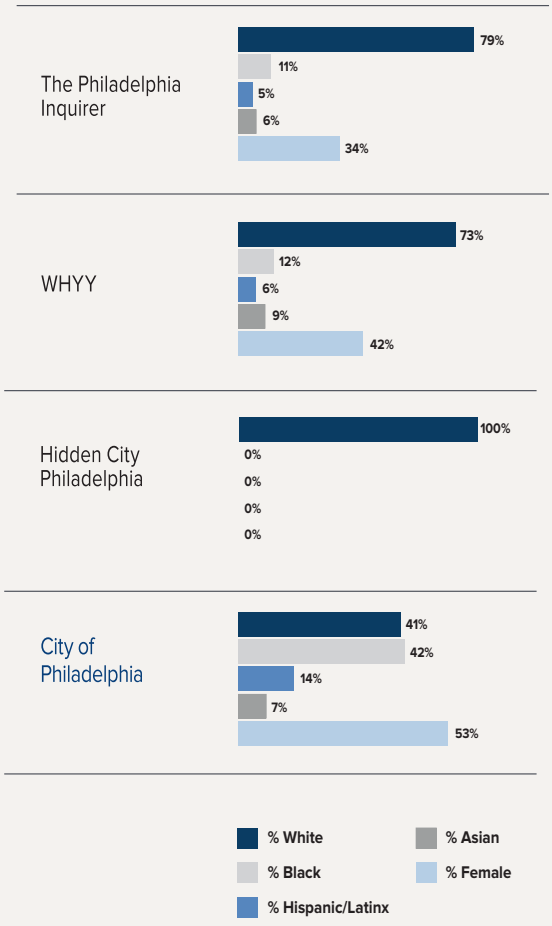
Case Study – WHYY's Cultural Competency Initiative

WHYY, the NPR and PBS affiliate in Philadelphia, institutionalized an effort to increase "cultural competency," which it defines as "understanding the nuances of the communities we cover, building relationships that further our knowledge and ability to accurately cover these communities, and recognizing and doing something about our own skewed lenses and how they impact the narratives we present."[136]

At the beginning of the project, 80% of the WHYY staff identified as white, alongside almost 80% of their listeners - although only 42% of Philadelphians identify as white. The initiative began through foundation-supported grants, and focused on "their practices of news production (especially sourcing), their engagement with the region's many diverse communities, and their recruitment, hiring, and retention of staff from a range of backgrounds."[137]

Diversity

Three of Philadelphia's outlets participated in the last ASNE survey in 2019.



[136] Wenzel, Andrea. "Sourcing Diversity: WHYY and the rocky road to "cultural competency". Columbia Journalism Review, September 30, 2019, https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/public-radio-cultural-competency.php
[137] ibid.

Andrea Wenzel writes on the lessons from the initiative in the Columbia Journalism Review, including:

- **Processes auditing and tracking the diversity of sources is successful in encouraging journalists to increase the variety of voices included in reporting;**
- **Source auditing does not address the narratives of the stories, leaving journalists of color feeling "narratives were often being crafted about communities of color but not for them";**
- **A number of institutional changes will need to be made to increase trust across races and classes;**
- **Engagement and community outreach programs can be crucial, but can only have long-term impact when those doing the work are fully integrated into core newsroom operations and hold institutional power;**
- **Foundations should play a role in supporting mid-career and senior journalists and editors of color, particularly in legacy newsrooms; and**
- **Sustained, long-term change will be limited until organizational structures and demographics are changed, with cultural competency a priority at all levels of a news organization.**[138]

Journalism Support Organizations

Journalism support organizations refers to both local philanthropic foundations that have a primary focus of funding local journalism in their community, as well as organizations that provide resources or network support to the news and information ecosystem as a whole.

Founded in 2016 by the cable television entrepreneur H. F. Lenfest, the Lenfest Institute for Journalism is squarely focused on supporting and sustaining the future of local journalism in Philadelphia and across the country. Upon founding, the initiative was granted an endowment of $20 million, along with ownership of the Philadelphia Inquirer. The Institute gives grants, develops partnerships, and funds research in pursuit of three goals: high impact journalism; news technology and innovation; and diverse, growing audiences.

[138] ibid.

In addition to the Lenfest Institute, a number of other foundations and organizations are involved in supporting local news in Philadelphia including:

- Knight Foundation (Miami)
- Independence Public Media Foundation
- The Philadelphia Foundation
- Wyncote Foundation
- The William Penn Foundation
- Temple University Klein College of Media and Communications
- CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism (New York)
- Solutions Journalism Network
- The Scattergood Foundation

This list is not comprehensive, but rather some players of note which help illustrate the financial and organizational support of the ecosystem.

Non-Journalistic Information

According to Pew's 2019 Local News Survey, Philadelphia residents look to non-journalistic sources for their local news about on par with others in the United States. Philadelphia residents often or sometimes turn to neighborhood newsletters/listservs (35%), online forums (34%), local organizations (30%), and local government agencies (28%) for local news.

Institutions

Philadelphia's information ecosystem is bolstered by its numerous historical and educational institutions. In addition to many museums, there are 28 universities, and 52 library branches. Of particular note is Temple University's Klein College of Media and Community, from which there are a number of initiatives around journalism and community engagement.

Information Providers and Community

In Philadelphia, 58% of respondents of the Pew Local Journalism study believe that local journalists are in touch with the community, though only 17% say they have spoken with a local journalist. Three quarters of residents (76%) believe their local news media reports news accurately; however, only 53% say the local news does well in including people like them in their stories. In the last year, 16% of residents had paid for local news, higher than the national average of 14%.

In addition to the WHYY cultural competency initiative, Philadelphia's journalism landscape has a number of community engagement initiatives aiming to strengthen the relationship between local journalists and the community.

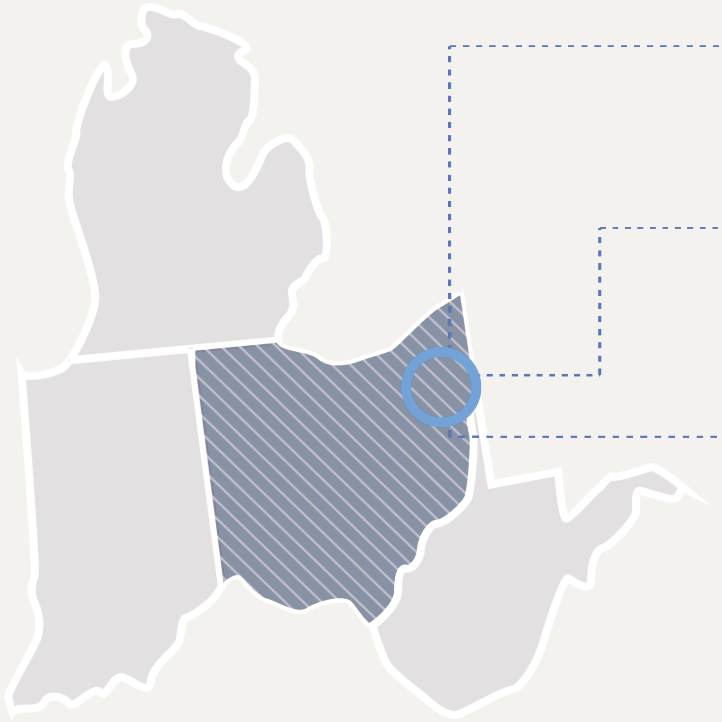
Information Providers & Community	National Average	**Philadelphia**	
% Who say local journalists are in touch with the community	63%	58%	Low ▼
% Who have spoken with a journalist	21%	17%	Average
% Who say their local news source mostly covers the area where they live	51%	50%	Average
% Who pay for local news in the past year	14%	16%	Average
% Who say their local news:			
Reports news accurately	71%	76%	High ▲
Keeps an eye on local political leaders	66%	67%	Average
Provides news that they use daily	67%	66%	Average
Covers news stories thoroughly	65%	69%	High ▲
Are transparent about their reporting	62%	65%	Average
Deals fairly with all sides	62%	60%	Average
Includes people like you in their stories	58%	53%	Low ▼

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

IMPACT ARCHITECTS

Youngstown, Ohio

Youngstown, Ohio



Population

Metropolitan Statistical Area: Youngstown-Warren-Boardman: 565,800

65,422

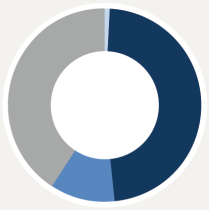
Age

22% Under 18

17% Over 65

Race

42% Black / AA



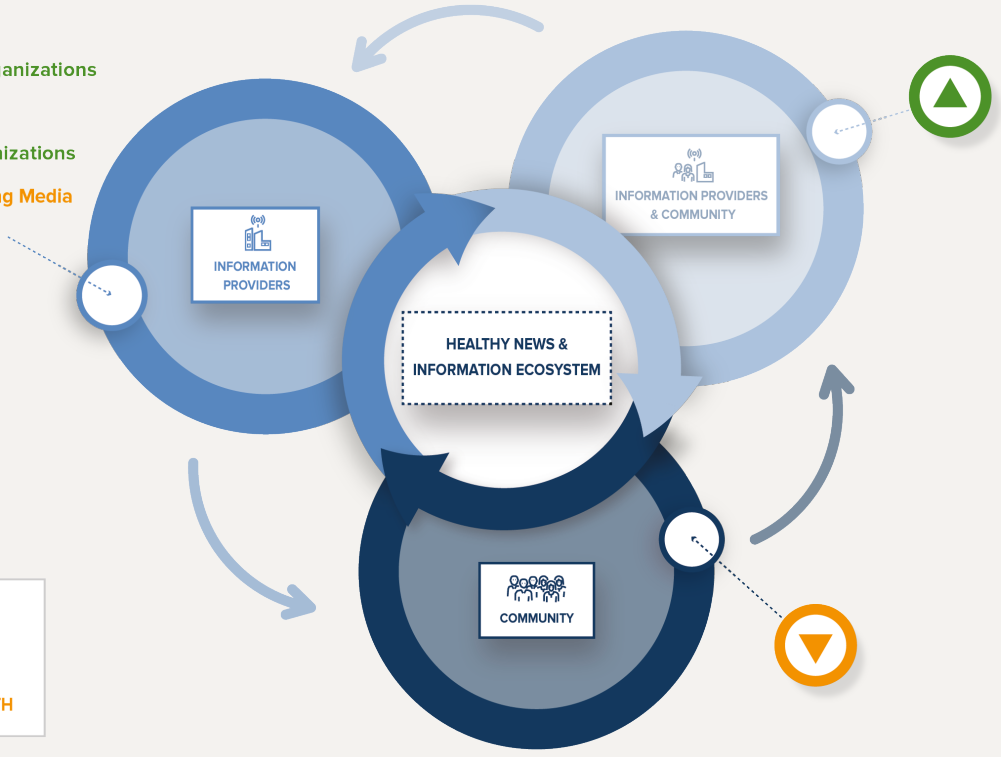
1% Asian

11% Hispanic / Latinx

49% White

News & Information Ecosystem

- Number of journalism organizations
- Types of media
- Business models of organizations
- Diversity and BIPOC Serving Media
- Collaboration
- Journalism Funding



- STRONG
- AVERAGE
- OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Key Elements

NEWS DESERTS	The large number of outlets in Youngstown is misleading; few are full-fledged, high quality local news operations.
COLLABORATION	Mahoning Matters was building a collaborative network, but it has yet to be seen if the network will continue as Mahoning Matters transitions to a McClatchy property.
DIVERSITY	There is no public report on the diversity of any of Youngstown's journalism organizations.
BIPOC & COMMUNITY MEDIA	For the size of the Black/African American community in Youngstown, their unique information needs are underserved with only one Black/African American serving outlet.
TYPE OF MEDIA	Youngstown has predominantly newspaper and television outlets.
JOURNALISM ORGANIZATION BUSINESS MODELS	There is a strong mix of business models in the ecosystem.
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT	According to the data from Media Impact Funders, Youngstown has very little philanthropic investment in its information ecosystem. This does not include the McClatchy & Google News Initiative funding for Mahoning Matters.
COMMUNITY TRUST	Despite a weaker overall ecosystem, Youngstown residents have relatively good perceptions of their local news.

Summary

While Youngstown appears to have a high number of information providers for the size of the population, the metric is misleading as few of the outlets provide nuanced, in-depth, locally focused news and information. In 2019, McClatchy and the Google News Initiative announced Youngstown as the location of The Compass Experiment's first local news operation - Mahoning Matters - attempting to build a collaborative network and prove a model for financial sustainability in a previously weak ecosystem. However, in February 2021, the Compass Experiment announced it will be handing the outlet's operations to the McClatchy news division. This change to Mahoning Matters central infrastructure will potentially bring new assets to the publication, but the future of Youngstown's ecosystem as a whole still requires signicant attention and investment.

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

Community Indicators	National Average	Youngstown	
Economic			
Median Household Income	$61,937	$26,951	Low ▼
Per Capita Income	$33,831	$17,827	Low ▼
Poverty Rate	13.10%	36.20%	High ▲
Education			
High School Degree	90%	84%	Low ▼
Bachelor's Degree	36%	14%	Low ▼
Literacy Rate	79%	65%	Low ▼
Resources & Infrastructure			
Households with Computer	89%	86%	Average
Broadband Access	80%	66%	Low ▼
Universities		2	High ▲
Libraries		16	High ▲
Community Satisfaction	37	30%	Low ▼
Voter Turnout 2018	50%	45%	Average
Prior Information Needs Study	47%	Yes	High ▲
Prior Ecosystem Study		No	Low ▼

Despite the challenges of the ecosystem, Youngstown residents have a better perception of their information providers than other pilot locations. New initiatives can build upon this trust and deepen the relationship between the community and information providers, rather than needing to build the relationship from scratch.

Community

Youngstown is a city of 65,000 in eastern Ohio. A former steel town, the population has been in decline since it peaked at 170,000 residents in the 1930's at the height of its industrial age. Halfway between New York City and Chicago on Interstate 80, Youngstown is often marked by its proximity to Cleveland (65 miles) and Pittsburgh (61 miles). With a median household income of $26,951, and per capita income of $17,827, Youngstown has one of the highest urban poverty rates in the country; 36.2% of the population lives below the poverty line, and it has the highest

[139] Rodriguez, Jennifer. "Youngstown ranked #1 in Ohio in child poverty rates," WKBN, January 3, 2020, https://www.wkbn.com/news/local-news/youngstown-ranked-1-ohio-city-in-child-poverty-rates/

In line with the economic decline of the industrial base of Youngstown, it consistently ranks low on community satisfaction. In 2017, the Gallup-Sharecare Community Wellbeing Index places the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman MSA as 167 of 186 MSAs overall, and it ranked 130 of 186 in "Community," defined as "Liking where you live, feeling safe, and having pride in your community." [140]

Information Providers

The saga of Youngstown's historic local paper, The Vindicator, has been followed closely in the past few years by those tracking the closures of local newspapers. There was fear that Youngstown was on track to become a news desert without a dedicated local, daily newspaper, a worrying thought given the size of the population and the media market.

Ultimately, The Vindicator closed in August of 2019, after 150 years of publishing. Its closure made Youngstown the largest city in the United States without a local daily newspaper. Upon the closure, the subscription list, masthead, and Vindy.com domain was bought by the owners of the nearby Tribune Chronicle, Ogden Newspapers - a West Virginia based company with about 60 newspapers nationally. The Tribune Chronicle, based in Warren, Ohio, now publishes a Vindicator edition of its daily newspaper. While the paper covers Mahoning County where Youngstown is located, it is no longer based in the community.

Information Providers	Pilot Average	Youngstown	
Journalism Providers			
Number of Organizations		13	Low ▼
Population per Organization	22,548	5,032	
Mediums			
Newspapers	43%	50%	High ▲
Television Stations	23%	31%	High ▲
Radio Stations	14%	13%	Low ▼
Digital	15%	6%	Low ▼
Business Models			
Nonprofit	22%	19%	Low ▼
Public Media	5%	6%	Low ▼
National Broadcast Chain	21%	25%	Low ▼
National Newspaper Chain	13%	13%	Low ▼
Independent For-Profit	40%	25%	Low ▼
BIPOC Serving Media			
African American / Black		1	Low ▼
Hispanic / Latinx		0	Low ▼
Diversity			
Journalist Diversity		0 Reports	Low ▼
Source Diversity		0 Audits	Low ▼
Collaboration		New and repeat	Medium
Journalism Funding			
Philanthropic Dollars since 2009	$18.7 M	$45,000	
Funders	68	1	
Recipients	31	1	
Invested Per Capita	$20.63	$0.69	Low ▼

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

[140] "The State of American Wellbeing; 2017 Community Wellbeing Rankings," Gallup Sharecare, March 2018, https://wellbeingindex.sharecare.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Gallup-Sharecare-State-of-American-Well-Being_2017-Community-Rankings_vFINAL.pdf

In addition to this semi-local new edition of The Vindicator, we found 15 journalism organizations based in Youngstown: four television stations (one locally owned for-profit); three national chains; two radio stations (one national chain and one public media affiliate); five independent newspapers or magazines; and two nonprofit outlets (one religiously affiliated, the other a student publication out of Youngstown State University). While the number of outlets may suggest a thriving media in Youngstown, in reality, most organizations devoted to journalism are run by national conglomerates, while the independent papers and magazines are often niche, special interest outlets.

BIPOC Serving Media

The Buckeye Review is a weekly newspaper serving the African American population in Youngstown since 1937. Its estimated circulation is 5,250.

Diversity

No outlets in Youngstown have publicly reported their staff diversity numbers outside of required FCC EEO filings.

News Outlets Based in Youngstown

	Independent	National Chain	Nonprofit/University	Public Media
Digital		Mahoning Matters		
Magazine				
Newspaper	Daily Legal News Business Journal Metro Monthly Senior News	The Vindicator	Buckeye Review Jambar Catholic Exponent	
Radio		WKBN-AM570		WYSU-FM
Televsion		WYTV-ABC WYFX - FOX WKBN- CBS WFMJ	Jambar - TV	

Non-Journalistic Information

Pew found in their Local Journalism Survey that when it comes to getting news and information from non-traditional journalistic sources, 36% of residents of the Youngstown MSA reported getting information from online forums; 30% from local organizations; 36% from neighborhood newsletters or listservs; and 29% from local government agencies.[141] Compared to national habits, Youngstown residents are slightly less likely to get information from online forums and government agencies (2% and 1% less likely respectively) and 5% less likely to get information from local organizations, but 3% more likely to get information for a neighborhood newsletter or listserv.

Institutions

The city's largest employer is Youngstown State University, which serves about 12,000 students and is part of the Ohio University system. The university students produce their own news publication, the Jambar, which publishes a few times per month.

Youngstown's civic participation rate, measured by voting and volunteering, has been historically lower than national averages, other than the most recent municipal election in which 33% of eligible voters cast a ballot, compared to the average national voter turnout of 27% in local elections.

Information Providers & Community

Twenty-one percent of MSA residents report they have spoken with a journalist, while 13% pay for a news subscription, both of which are about equal to national averages.[142]

Information Providers & Community	National Average	Youngstown	
% Who say local journalists are in touch with the community	63%	69%	High ▲
% Who have spoken with a journalist	21%	21%	Average
% Who say their local news source mostly covers the area where they live	51%	51%	Average
% Who pay for local news in the past year	14%	13%	Average
% Who say their local news:			
Reports news accurately	71%	77%	High ▲
Keeps an eye on local political leaders	66%	78%	High ▲
Provides news that they use daily	67%	77%	High ▲
Covers news stories thoroughly	65%	66%	Average
Are transparent about their reporting	62%	68%	High ▲
Deals fairly with all sides	62%	68%	High ▲
Includes people like you in their stories	58%	64%	High ▲

Key	High	Low
Favorable	▲	▼
Unfavorable	▲	▼

[141] Pew Research, "What are the Local News Dynamics in Your City?" March 2019.https://www.journalism.org/interactives/local-news-habits/49660/

[142] Pew Research, "What are the Local News Dynamics in Your City?" March 2019. https://www.journalism.org/interactives/local-news-habits/49660/

Case Study – Mahoning Matters

After the closure of The Vindicator, the Compass Experiment[143] out of McClatchy (funded by McClatchy and the Google News Initiative) chose Youngstown for its first local news experiment. In 2019, the Compass Experiment launched Mahoning Matters, an entirely digital publication with a mandate to cover Mahoning County. The outlet published about 3,000 stories in its first ten months, with "the mission to tell the stories that matter in Mahoning County and empower citizens to engage in their community with a focus on solutions."[144] Mahoning Matters launched with just two reporters, both coming from the original Vindicator, and has a focus on contextualized and accountability reporting.

Before launching, Mahoning Matters gathered community input and feedback, conducting three "design-thinking focus groups" at local libraries with community members. Focus groups surfaced the following themes as coverage priorities:

- **Easy access and explanation of public resources including job listings, veterans' resources, and affordable housing;**
- **News that both highlights successes of Youngstown and fulfills the role of watchdog journalism, uncovering corruption and other misdeeds;**
- **Regional stories on population decline, public funding distribution between Youngstown and the suburbs, and the abolitionist history of the county; and**
- **"Specific and insightful" stories on Black families in Youngstown.**[145]

Collaborating with existing outlets, communities, and institutions was very important to the Mahoning team, prompting a number of partnerships and initiatives. For example, Mahoning Matters has a content sharing agreement with WYSU-FM, providing daily on-air headlines as well as broader story sharing in areas of coverage overlap, and it planned to host local events with the Better Business Bureau, Rotary, Kiwanis, Youngstown Press Club, Chamber of Commerce, Youngstown City Club, and the Business Journal.

Citing the difficulties in operating local news sites without the benefits of a national network, The Compass Experiment announced in February 2021 that the initiative would be handing over Mahoning Matters to McClatchy's news division.[148] The future of Mahoning Matters is of critical importance for the Youngstown ecosystem as a whole.

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[143] Compass is a local news lab founded in partnership between McClatchy and Google, and part of the Google News Initiative's Local Experiments Project. Compass works to launch and operate three digital-only news operations in small to mid-sized U.S. communities that have limited sources of local, independent journalism. The goal is to make the local operations financially self-sustaining, through experimentation with a variety of revenue models. Jenkins, Mandy, "The Compass Experiment is navigating local news in Ohio," Google News Initiative, July 18, 2019, https://www.blog.google/outreach-initiatives/google-news-initiative/compass-experiment-youngstown-ohio/

[144] Mahoning Matters, About. https://www.mahoningmatters.com/other/about

[145] Reimer, Abby. "Charting a new (collaborative) course in Mahoning County. Medium, September 19, 2019. https://medium.com/the-compass-experiment/charting-a-new-collaborative-course-in-mahoning-county-fa858fca1e82

[146] Oprea, Mark. "Youngstown, Ohio, Lost Its Only Paper. A 'Zombie' News Site Wants To Fill The Void," NPR, August 10, 2020, "https://www.npr.org/2020/08/10/900692440/youngstown-ohio-lost-its-only-paper-a-zombie-news-site-wants-to-fill-the-void

[147] Jenkins, Mandy. "Growing Pains and Daily Gains," Medium, November 19, 2019, https://medium.com/the-compass-experiment/growing-pains-and-daily-gains-a126e00a0ecc

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04. Conclusion

04. Conclusion

> News and information ecosystems are complex. Researchers, journalists, and media funders have spent countless hours and dollars attempting to understand how they work, why they matter, and what can be done to improve them, even as the news industry undergoes radical changes. This project is a continuation of that work. As such, it pulls heavily on field research, the frameworks of others, and expertise that has been developed by our peers over years.

In our research, we found consistent evidence that the health of information providers, specifically journalism organizations, and strong relationships among information providers and community members, are correlated with engaged residents, community cohesion, and other positive community outcomes. The 35 indicators in our framework are not the only indicators that can help understand the health of a local news and information ecosystem, but they are a solid baseline.

A healthy news and information ecosystem can be a virtuous circle whereby better news and information and closer ties among journalists, community groups, and community members can contribute to healthier communities.

With this project, we have put forth a framework that we hope is generalizable across all news and information ecosystems, is accessible, requires little in the way of resources to apply to your own community using the Playbook, and that provides access points for community members interested specifically in news, but also for others who care about other aspects of community health, to enter into a shared conversation about how to understand the current state of any local news and information ecosystem. Baseline data, compared with national averages, provides a clear picture of both the bright spots in any community and opportunities for focusing efforts to spark change. The categories and indicators we suggest are not finite, meaning others can add or remove fields as they see fit, making this framework your own.

In our application of this framework, we've demonstrated its utility, as well as its limitations. When applying the framework in your community, you have the opportunity to use it as a jumping off point, and then identify areas where you can go even deeper. For example, you might dig into:

- **What are non journalistic sources of news and information that are present in your community?**
- **How can you support stronger connections between these individuals or groups and journalists?**
- **What important data - like the number and demographics of journalists present in your community - aren't available, and how could you help support the creation of that knowledge and data?**
- **What racial, ethnic, linguistic, or other identity based communities are present in your ecosystem, and how are they being served or not served by current sources of news and information?**
- **What critical information is being produced but missing a link to those who most need access to it?**

Trying to find answers to these questions can generate a more rich and deep understanding of your unique ecosystem, and the strengths and opportunities that lie within it.

Rather than a linear "inputs and outcomes" model, we hope that the healthy news and information ecosystem can be a virtuous circle whereby better news and information and closer ties among journalists, community groups, and community members can contribute to healthier communities, overall. And healthier community members who trust local sources of news then contribute to the success of the news and information sector.

05.

Appendices

Appendix I – Glossary of Terms

BIPOC serving media - Media organizations serving audiences that identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color, that generally have leadership and staff who identify as BIPOC, and that are reflective of the communities they serve.

Black and African American- We use Black and African American to refer to individuals, communities, and/or organizations that identify as Black or African American.

For-profit media - Media organizations which seek to generate profit and income for publishers, owners, or shareholders. These organizations pay taxes on their revenues.

Healthy news and information ecosystem - Where flows of information and strong relationships among community members and information providers create an interconnected and complex network that contributes to the health of individuals, communities, and political institutions.

Hispanic/Latinx - Individuals, communities, and/or organizations that identify as such, typically meaning they have connections with Latin America. We use Latinx, rather than Latino/Latina, in order to be gender inclusive.

Independent media - For-profit media organizations that are not under corporate or public ownership and are not affiliated with any larger media organization either locally or nationally.

Information needs assessment - A systematic process to better understand the information needs of a community. The assessment can take many forms, including community surveys, focus groups, workshops, or interviews.

Information providers - Sources of fact-based information for a community. While there are information providers of many varieties, in this study we focus specifically on journalistic information providers that publish through a formal media or journalism organization.

Local journalism support organizations - Any organization that supports journalism organizations through philanthropic financial support, infrastructure support, or a combination of the two. Practically, this means we have included philanthropic foundations that fund journalism in a defined ecosystem, as well as organizations that provide resources or network support to the news and information ecosystem as a whole. We have not included local chapters or associations of national organizations that primarily support individual journalists.

Native American - Individuals, communities, and/or organziatons that identify as Indigenous, Native American, or Native Alaskan.

Nonprofit media - Media organizations generally seeking to serve a public interest, and from which publishers and owners cannot share in the organizations' net revenue. Nonprofit media organizations in the United States are typically 501(c)(3) organizations, which are tax-exempt.

Public media - Media organizations with a primary focus of public service and that receive (at least some) funding from government institutions.

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Appendix III - Stakeholder Interview Questions

Full name with spelling

Organization and Title

How do you broadly define a healthy local news ecosystem?

In your opinion what are the important components of a healthy local news ecosystem?

One of the most broadly used indicators is the number of news outlets or news deserts, beyond this metric, what is the most important thing in your opinion in defining an information ecosystem?

How would you, or do you, measure those components?

What would be most important for us to include in our research and framework?

How does your understanding of a healthy local news ecosystem influence what you are funding/researching?

Are there communities that you think are particularly healthy (and unhealthy) local news ecosystems?

What are the characteristics present that make you think it's healthy?

How do you think about non-media information institutions in a local news ecosystem? (E.g. libraries, universities, municipal communications)

How do you think about accessibility of information and what are the most important factors of accessibility?

What information do you wish you could know about a community's access to information that would better inform your work?

How do you think about the relevancy of information for the community?

How do you measure how well the information available is meeting community members' information needs?

How do you think about equity, diversity and inclusion in your funding (or research)?

How do you capture how "close" information providers to the community?

How do you capture how representative of the community the information providers are?

What benchmarks around the health of information ecosystems would be useful for you in your work?

What is the audience you envision for those benchmarks?

Do you envision internal or external use for those benchmark?

Appendix IV - Pilot City Demographic Data

Demographics	National	Pilot City Avg	Boulder County	Charlotte	Chicago	Detroit	Macon-Bibb	New Mexico	Oakland	Philadelphia	Youngstown
Population	327 M	989,824	326,196	885,708	2.7 M	670,031	153159	2.09 M	433,031	1.58 M	65,422
% under 18	22.40%	22.30	18.8	23.9	21.2	25.1	24.8	23	19.8	22	22.1
% over 65	16%	13.93	14.8	10	12	13.3	14.8	17.5	12.9	13.2	16.9
% White	75.10%	40.76	77.4	49.5	32.8	10.3	40.9	37.1	28.3	41.2	49.3
% Black / African - American	14.10%	34.40	1.2	35.1	30.1	78.6	54.1	2.6	23.6	42.3	42
% Hispanic / Latinx	18.30%	17.99	14	6.5	29	7.6	3.2	49.1	26.9	14.2	11.4
% Asian	6.80%	6.03	5	14	6.4	1.6	2	1.8	15.7	7.2	0.6
Median Household Income	$61,937	$50,148	$78,642	$60,886	$55,198	$29,481	39931	$48,059	$68,442	$43,744	$26,951
Per Capita Income ($)	$33,831	$29,765	$43,831	$36,436	$34,775	$17,338	24409	$26,085	$40,628	$26,557	$17,827
Poverty Rate (%)	13.10%	22.61	9.7	14	19.5	36.4	25.7	19.5	17.6	24.9	36.2
% High School Graduate	90%	85.41	95.1	88.9	84.5	80	85.7	85.3	81.6	83.9	83.7
% Bachelor's Degree	36%	32.74	60.8	43.5	38.4	14.6	25.7	27.1	42.5	28.6	13.5
% Households w/Computer	88.80%	86.76	95.5	92.9	85.8	79.4	83.5	83.8	90	84.1	85.8

Appendix V - Complete Data

The complete data set for baselining can be found here.