

Press Forward

Helping communities build durable local news

Democracy flourishes
when people have access
to reliable information

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Press Forward 

pressforward.news

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On the cover: Glenn Burkins, founder and publisher of Charlotte's QCity Metro, addresses the Press Forward Summit. On this page, Lizzy Hazeltine of the North Carolina Local News Lab Fund, home to Press Forward North Carolina and Charlotte, at the summit.

A Letter from Our Director

As I write this, local news faces new and mounting pressures, from threats to press freedom to the loss of federal support for public media, alongside staff layoffs and profound questions about the role of AI in our information ecosystem.

And yet, across the country, funders are stepping forward — together — to invest in local news as essential civic infrastructure. What was once a fragmented effort is becoming a coordinated movement.

While trailblazing funders like the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation have long invested in journalism, the field of local news philanthropy is still relatively young. However, it is gaining strength and momentum. In a short time, Press Forward's network has grown six-fold to 130+ funders around the country, working collectively to support local news in ways that no single institution could achieve on its own. Along the way, we are sharing insights — including from what makes the smallest newsrooms succeed — with our funder members.

You'll see that impact throughout this report, in the 800+ newsrooms receiving support from the network, in communities they serve and in the field of philanthropy.

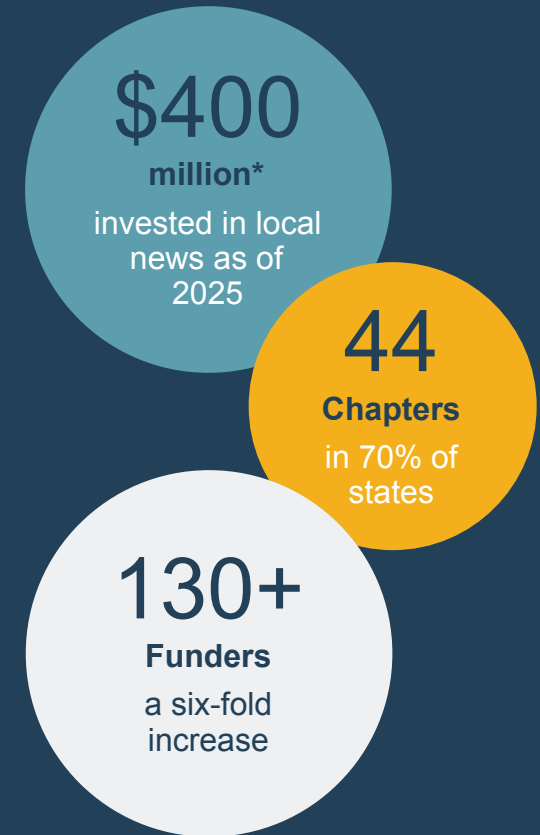
Together, we are not just responding to a moment of challenge. We are helping to build a more durable future for local news.

Thank you for being part of this work, and for what we will continue to build together.

Dale R. Anglin
Executive Director, Press Forward



Press Forward Executive Director Dale R. Anglin



*Investment numbers will be updated in Fall 2026.

Our Impact: In the newsroom

Across the country, Press Forward's investment in local news is showing up in tangible ways in the nearly 800 newsrooms receiving direct support from our network, and in the shared services, training and infrastructure that help those organizations grow.

Mariana Duran of grantee newsroom El Tecolote takes notes in her journal for a report about affordable housing in San Francisco. Photo: Pablo Unzueta for El Tecolote/CatchLight Local.

Direct funding for newsrooms

In Arizona, reporters began asking a simple question: Why were people dying in sober living homes, and why wasn't anyone stopping it?

What they uncovered was devastating, including dozens of deaths in these homes as state officials failed to respond to Medicaid fraud that targeted Native Americans.

Working in partnership with ProPublica, the Arizona Center for Investigative Reporting brought those failures into the open. Their reporting led to agency resignations, legislative action and public outcry.

This is what local news looks like at its most essential: giving people the information they need to make decisions and take action.

Nationwide, the newsrooms doing this work are often the smallest and most under-resourced in the country. That's where Press Forward began. In one of its first national investments, the Pooled Fund directed \$20 million to 205 of the country's smallest newsrooms. With a handful of staff, these outlets are keeping information flowing and news deserts at bay in rural and urban communities nationwide.

Over the past year, those investments have fueled growth, innovation and impact across the country.

In Florida, where the state ranks among the lowest in reporters per capita, the Florida Tribune expanded statewide to deliver essential statehouse and civic coverage during a pivotal election year.

In rural Maine, the Midcoast Villager reimagined its newsroom as a gathering place, opening a café beneath its offices where residents connect and share ideas.

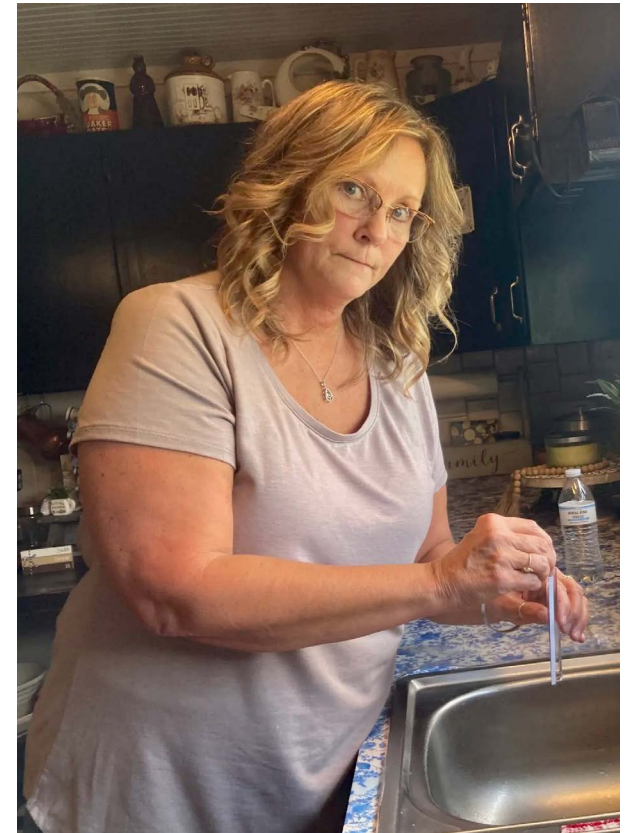
And across the country, these small but mighty newsrooms have continued to punch above their weight.

In Ohio, The Allegheny Front revealed how residents endured months of foul-smelling tap water tied to extreme weather and aging infrastructure, a warning sign for vulnerable systems nationwide.

In California, Santa Cruz Local uncovered that a city policy allowed ICE to access license plate reader data in violation of state law, prompting public outcry and the cancellation of the contract.

Whether exposing systemic failures or strengthening community connection, these newsrooms prove how important local news is to strong communities. Explore more stories.

[EXPLORE MORE STORIES](#)



Cadiz, Ohio resident Stacy Greer tests her water at home. Image by Julie Grant/ The Allegheny Front

SPOTLIGHT

Beyond funding: Support for grantee newsrooms

When Press Forward funded 205 of the country's smallest newsrooms, it started from a clear premise: Funding alone does not rebuild a local news ecosystem. Sustained growth requires hands-on support, practical tools and the capacity to act on them.

Instead of traditional grant reporting, Press Forward [partnered with LION Publishers](#) to replace reports with sustainability audits. These audits gave newsrooms a structured way to assess their businesses, from revenue streams and staffing to systems and strategy, while also creating a shared framework for understanding sustainability across the field.

Each audit is paired with one-on-one coaching from Blue Engine Collaborative through 2026, ensuring that insights turn into action. Newsrooms are not just diagnosing challenges; they are actively building stronger, more resilient operations.

At the same time, the audits are generating one of the most comprehensive data sets available on small and midsize news organizations. This field-level view is helping Press Forward and its local chapters better understand where newsrooms are growing, where they are constrained and what types of support are most effective. Given the wide range of U.S. community sizes and needs, not all communities can support larger outlets. However, many can find ways to support smaller newsrooms.

"We're sharing these insights with our chapters so local funders can make smarter, more targeted investments in the outlets serving their



communities," said Graham Ringo, Press Forward's grantee engagement and support manager.

Complementary programs, including a Maynard Institute for Journalism Education cohort focused on business and leadership skills, are reinforcing this work by helping newsroom leaders strengthen financial management, fundraising and long-term planning.

Early results are already visible. Newsrooms such as the Fayetteville Flyer and Te Lo Cuento have launched successful fundraising campaigns, strengthened advertising strategies and clarified their paths to sustainability.

At its core, this approach reflects a broader shift: Strengthening local news is not just about funding. It is about building the business infrastructure, skills and shared knowledge that allow newsrooms to sustain the work over time.

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Martin G. Reynolds, Co-Executive Director of The Maynard Institute, leads a Press Forward cohort.

Supporting the infrastructure for local news

In addition to funding newsrooms directly, Press Forward’s network is building the infrastructure essential to local news, including through journalism support organizations.

These organizations, which received a combined \$230 million, create a multiplier effect on the field, providing important training, coaching and tools to shore up outlets’ operations, support for financial sustainability, deeper and varied editorial work and connection to resources that are often hard to find for newsrooms. They also build needed infrastructure that newsrooms, especially smaller ones, can’t create on their own.

American Journalism Project, Report for America, the Racial Equity and Journalism Fund and the Local Media Foundation are example intermediaries that provide direct funding for newsrooms – while also helping them become sustainable, build capacity and bring in additional funding. One such example is Mirror Indy, which received both the placement of a journalist and one-on-one coaching that helped strengthen its mid-level and major giving strategy from Report for America.

[LEARN MORE](#)



“Supporting local news infrastructure means creating catalytic growth opportunities for local newsrooms. We want outlets to tap into resources that help them grow, expand their reach and build sustainable business models for the long term,” said Amalie Nash, vice president for journalism at Knight Foundation.



Our Impact: In Communities

A woman with blonde, wavy hair, wearing glasses and large black headphones, is speaking into a professional microphone in a radio studio. She is wearing a plaid blazer over a purple top. The background shows a window with a view of a city and some studio equipment.

Long-term sustainability for local news will take leadership and investment at the community level. That's why Press Forward has created chapters, which are building coalitions of funders and leaders who champion and support local news in 44 communities and regions nationwide.

Creating champions for local news

Press Forward chapters build support for local news nationwide. A few examples:

Central Valley: The chapter's James B. McClatchy Foundation was selected to administer California's new statewide \$20 million Civic Media Program.

Silicon Valley, Inland Empire and Central Valley: Convened news leaders and funders to discuss what can be done state-wide to revitalize local news.

New Mexico: Received a major win this spring when the state Legislature approved substantial support for local news.

Alaska and Minnesota: Raised millions for public media in the wake of federal funding claw backs.



Blue Grass: Created a pilot program with Report for America to train trusted community members to work as journalists at local publications, strengthen coverage in rural areas.



Chicago: Invested in collaboratives for both immigration and school board election coverage in a critical election year.

SW Pennsylvania: Convened community and news leaders to plan a path forward as two local newspapers announced their closure.

Central Appalachia: Invested funding and coaching in eight news outlets through its Rural News Fund – in a region that has the highest concentration of news deserts in the country.

South Florida, Tampa Bay and North Florida: Hosted a summit with Florida journalists to discuss how they might better collaboratively cover natural disasters.



Mississippi: Supported training and equipping new journalism programs in public schools, through a partnership with the New York-based nonprofit The Bell.

Spotlight: Press Forward Minnesota

In Minnesota, when ICE raids set off protests and unrest, local newsrooms suddenly found themselves covering a fast-moving, high-stakes story that demanded more time, more reporting, and more care than their already stretched resources could support.

Press Forward Minnesota moved quickly, and with catalytic, early support from Knight Foundation, raised \$700,000 for an emergency fund. The chapter got flexible dollars out the door in a week, so journalists could stay on the story and absorb the very real costs of covering communities in a volatile moment.

*“If you’ve read or listened to anything about local news funding in recent years, you’ve probably heard one goal enthusiastically proclaimed: **getting funding to move at the speed of news.**”*

It’s a line that usually elicits applause at gatherings and is the signature ethos of Knight President and CEO Maribel Pérez Wadsworth’s tenure....But what does it actually take to make that happen? Press Forward Minnesota offers one answer.”

— The Poynter Institute

[LEARN MORE.](#)



Tim Murphy of the McKnight Foundation and Press Forward Minnesota talks about the chapter's efforts.

Our Impact: In News Philanthropy





Our Impact: In News Philanthropy

Press Forward brings funders together to act collectively and increase their impact on the future of news.

That was especially evident last year when the federal government cut funding for public media. Funders quickly aligned, shared information, and coordinated a response through our Public Media Working Group.

Led by Michael Murray of the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and Feather Houstoun of the Wyncote Foundation, the group became a hub for action

that connected funders to efforts like the Public Media Bridge Fund – launched with major funding from Knight, MacArthur and Ford foundations. The working group helped funders understand how cuts were affecting local stations. The working group also commissioned new research to track those impacts and guide smarter decisions.

Alongside critical funding, the shared insight helped turn a fragmented moment into a more coordinated, confident response.

“In philanthropy, we don’t connect with our peers often enough because we’re just too busy and can get stuck in our lane,” said Murray, whose own foundation is expanding its digital transformation program to more public media stations. “Press Forward pushes you out of that — giving you access to more people, insights and information than you otherwise would have.”

— Michael Murray, President and CEO,
Arthur Vining Davis Foundations

[LEARN MORE.](#)

Previous page: Silvia Rivera, MacArthur Foundation, and Dale R. Anglin, Press Forward. This page: Michael Murray of the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations.

The Network: Gathering



Maribel Pérez Wadsworth addresses the Press Forward Summit.

The Network: Sharing Learnings and Insights

Press Forward Summit 2025

At a pivotal moment for local news, more than 200 local and national funders and field leaders gathered at the October 2025 Press Forward Summit in Charlotte — to meet the urgency of the current moment and intentionally design what comes next.

Participants immersed themselves in the city's local news ecosystem, hearing firsthand how collaborative models are driving growth. They explored new funding streams and sustainability strategies, and engaged with public media leaders navigating an uncertain future in the absence of federal support.

The Summit also created space to look ahead. Together, the network envisioned what local news could look like in 2036, as a way to guide action today.



Knight Media Forum: A Focus on Chapter Growth

At the Knight Media Forum in Miami in February 2026, Press Forward local chapters came together for a day of shared learning and connection.

The gathering centered on peer exchange, with small-group roundtables bringing chapter leaders into candid conversations about real challenges, from attracting new investment in local news to strengthening and growing local chapters.

The sessions created space for practical problem-solving and honest dialogue, leaving participants with fresh ideas, clearer next steps and stronger relationships to carry the work forward.



Above: Kaarin Austin, founding director of the Washington Local News Fund, home to Press Forward Washington, and Adelia Kittrell of the Arkansas Community Foundation, home to Press Forward Arkansas. Below, Lucy Schultze of Press Forward Mississippi and Andrew Britton, Press Forward South Florida, at the Knight Media Forum workshop.

Championing Local News

As part of our mission to recruit more local news champions, Press Forward took part in two campaigns to help Americans understand the role news and information plays in communities.

Local News Day

From days of action at State Capitols to coffee chats with reporters, more than 1,700 newsrooms and partners nationwide brought communities together to celebrate Local News Day on April 9.

Founded by nonprofit news publisher John Adams, with Press Forward as a founding sponsor, the day set out to connect more Americans to local news and encourage them to subscribe and support them.

Two dozen Press Forward chapters and foundations joined in, by hosting community conversations, encouraging state and local government declarations and even, in San Antonio, delivering treats to local newsrooms to show their appreciation.

Reimagining Local News

In October 2025, Press Forward, in partnership with the MacArthur Foundation, debuted Reimagining Local News, a docuseries hosted by journalist and author Charles M. Blow.

The series takes viewers inside the people and ideas reshaping the local news landscape — from nonprofit outlets in Colorado to hyperlocal startups in Chicago and Louisiana — showing that solutions to the local news crisis are not only possible but already in place.



It also became a catalyst for conversation. Through seven screenings and community events nationwide, and with more than 70,000 online views, the series created space for communities to engage with both the challenges facing local news and the emerging models pointing toward its future.

Above: For Local News Day, Press Forward San Antonio delivered gift baskets of appreciation to newsrooms in the region. Right: Press Forward Blue Grass hosted a screening of "Reimagining Local News." Pictured are Chapter Leader Melissa Newman and journalist and author Charles M. Blow.



The Press Forward Network

Many thanks to our network of funders who make this work possible.

Alaska Center for Excellence in Journalism Fund
Alaska Community Foundation
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
Anne & Gene Worrell Foundation
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Anonymous
Appalachia Funders Network
Arkansas Community Foundation
Arnold Ventures
Arthur Vining Davis Foundations
Atwood Foundation
Avis Family Foundation
Barr Foundation
Benter Foundation
Blue Grass Community Foundation
Blue Mountain Community Foundation
Broward Community Foundation
Carnegie Corporation of New York
Center for Media Innovation at Point Park University
Centre Foundation
Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies
Chicago Community Trust
Colorado Media Project
Communities Foundation of Texas
Community Foundation for Mississippi
Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln
Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County
Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque
Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

Community Foundation of New Jersey
Community Foundation of North Florida
Community Foundation of Snohomish County
Community Foundation of South Puget Sound
Community Foundation of Southern Arizona
Community Foundation of Tampa Bay
Connie Ballmer
Coral Gables Community Foundation
Coxe Family Fund
CREATE Foundation
Democracy Fund
El Paso Community Foundation
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
Field Foundation of Illinois
Ford Foundation
Gates Family Foundation
Gill Foundation
Glen Nelson Center at American Public Media Group
Glick Philanthropies
Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
Greater Green Bay Community Foundation
Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
Greater Tacoma Community Foundation
Greater Washington Community Foundation
Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation
Headwaters Foundation
Health Forward Foundation
Health Justice Partners
Heising-Simons Foundation
Henry L. Hillman Foundation
Henry Luce Foundation
Inasmuch Foundation
Indiana Philanthropy Alliance
Inland Empire Community Foundation

Inland Empire Journalism Fund and Hub
Innovia Foundation
James B. McClatchy Foundation
John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
John O'Farrell and Gloria Principe
Kansas Health Foundation
Kaphan Foundation
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Key Biscayne Community Foundation
KFF
Knight Foundation
Krishnan Shah Family Foundation
Legacy Foundation
Lenfest Institute for Journalism
Lorber Family Foundation
Lumina Foundation
Maine Community Foundation
Mary W. Graham
McKnight Foundation
Media Growth Partners
Minnesota Council on Foundations
Missoula Community Foundation
Monya and Dan Baker
Morino Institute
Nellie Mae Education Foundation
New Jersey Civic Information Consortium
New Mexico Local News Fund
North Carolina Local News Lab Fund
Ocean Reef Community Foundation
Outrider Foundation
Path Partnerships
Pilot House Philanthropy
Posner Foundation of Pittsburgh
Potrero Nuevo Fund, a fund of Tides Foundation
Rachelle Lopp
Rhode Island Foundation

Rita Allen Foundation
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
San Antonio Area Foundation
Sawyers Family Fund
Scripps Howard Fund
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Skyline Foundation
Susan Byrd and the Community Wellness Fund at Tides Foundation
The Archewell Foundation
The Colorado Health Foundation
The Colorado Trust
The Hahn Charitable Fund
The Heinz Endowments
The Joyce Foundation
The Miami Foundation
The Noon Whistle Fund at The Chicago Community Foundation
The Parallel Foundation
The Pittsburgh Foundation
The Steinman Foundation
The Steinman Institute
Thornburg Foundation
van Beuren Charitable Foundation
Vermont Community Foundation
Virginia Funders Network
Whatcom Community Foundation
Wichita Foundation
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Wyncote Foundation
Wyoming Community Foundation
Yakima Valley Community Foundation
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

Team

Management Committee

Thank you to our Management Committee, which sets Press Forward's strategic direction.



Angelica Das
Program Director, Reimagine & Rebuild at Democracy Fund



Amalie Nash
VP/Journalism, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation



Silvia Rivera
Director, Local News, MacArthur Foundation



Jenny Montoya Tansey
Senior Program Officer, Just Democracy, Skyline Foundation

Team

The Press Forward team brings decades of experience in philanthropy and journalism, collaborations and collective impact. We partner closely with our network of funders to leverage our combined strengths and build durable local news nationwide.

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Marika Lynch, Director of Communications
Jessica Silverman, Chief Development Officer

MIDDLE ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Dakota Dukes, Administrative Coordinator
Caroline Merenda, Director of Chapter Advancement
Graham Ringo, Grantee Engagement & Support Manager
Dale R. Anglin, Executive Director

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

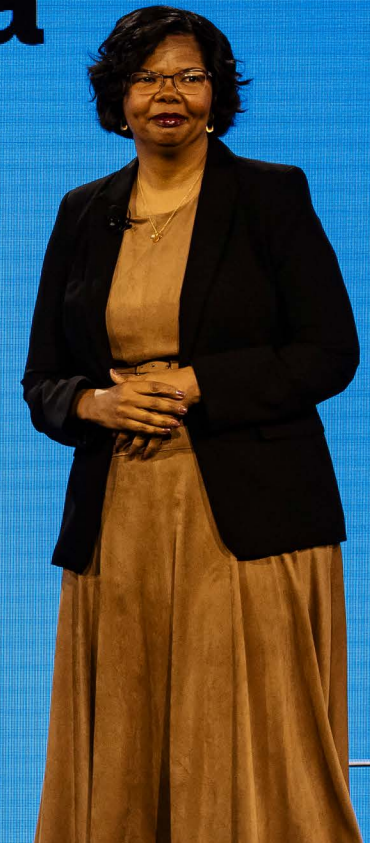
Christina Shih, Senior Director, Development, Learning and Strategy
Lindsey Linzer, Chief Impact Officer, The Miami Foundation
Melissa Milios Davis, Director of Grantmaking



We'd love to hear from you.



Knight Media Forum 2026



Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or ideas.

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