



# JOURNALISM AND PHILANTHROPY: GROWTH, DIVERSITY, AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A new study examining the role and influence of philanthropic funding of journalism in the United States finds evidence of substantial growth in the nonprofit journalism sector in the last five years, increased funding to for-profit newsrooms, and a growing focus on communities of color. At the same time, however, the survey reveals a need for more adoption of written policies to increase public disclosure of donors and address potential conflicts of interest that put editorial independence and public trust at risk.

These are some of the major findings from a new survey of grantmaking institutions and newsrooms. NORC at the University of Chicago and a University of Maryland journalism professor conducted the survey in partnership with Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism. The study builds on the last comprehensive survey of funders and newsrooms in 2015 by the American Press Institute (API).

More than half of funders say their journalism grantmaking increased in the last five years. A third report funding journalism for the first time in that period. And most nonprofit and for-profit news outlets in the survey say they have seen increases in philanthropic funding.

Funders identified top priorities in their grantmaking. More than 70% say they currently make grants to increase local journalism or reporting on a specific topic. More than 50% say they make grants to help journalists increase community engagement, produce overall investigative reporting, or support news organizations with fundraising and business sustainability.

In a growing trend, 38% say they've provided philanthropic support to a for-profit news organization in the last five years.

The study also includes various signs of a focus on marginalized communities and communities of color. Nearly six in ten funders, for instance, say they have made grants to news outlets primarily focused on serving communities of color, and 7 in ten of them say those grants have grown. But just about half of nonprofit news outlets and for-profit news organizations who focus primarily on those communities say their funding has increased.

Nearly 80% of the journalism funders who participated in the survey say they consider the diversity of a grantee's team, board, and leadership before making a grant.

The new study also offers mixed signals about the ethics of funding. Some progress has been made since 2015 on how funders and newsrooms address the public disclosure of donors. But questions remain about how funders

and newsrooms navigate potential conflicts of interests. And written policies developed in the aftermath of the 2015 survey for both funders and news organizations have not been widely adopted beyond nonprofit news organizations that belong to the Institute for Nonprofit News (INN), a network of more than 400 nonpartisan, independent, non-profit news outlets.

Newspaper publishers historically maintained firewalls between newsrooms and advertisers to protect editorial independence. Commercial, for-profit newsrooms were further insulated by having so many different advertisers that no one source of funding could have undue influence. As most nonprofit news operations are relatively small, and philanthropic giving is a major revenue source, the ethics of this emerging landscape is critical. The risk increases when the reporting is focused on a single topic and the funder's other priorities include advocacy to change public policy or public behavior in that same area. Or, if there is not a mix of funders and revenue streams.

Nearly half of nonprofit news operations have written guidelines about what money they will accept. Seven in ten nonprofit news operations also have written policies about disclosing funders, up from half eight years ago when INN began making such disclosure a requirement for members. But 72% of for-profit news organizations say they do not have written policies, perhaps because most are new to philanthropic funding. Thirty-seven percent say they didn't disclose donors on their websites.

There are warning signs in survey responses about potential conflicts of interest on editorial independence. More than half of funders say they are financing journalism in areas where they also do policy work. And nearly four in ten nonprofits have been offered funding to do specific stories or investigative reporting suggested by a funder, though that is down from more than half eight years ago.

Among the study's key findings:

- Funders describe making grants in multiple areas, with 74% reporting they fund journalism that addresses a specific topic or problem and 71% saying they make investments to increase local journalism. And of those who fund local journalism, 52% say they have increased their investments in the last five years.
- When asked about the most important possible factors in their funding decisions, 81% say promoting "civic engagement with trusted news and information," is extremely or very important. Sixty-nine percent say addressing the crisis in trusted local news is an extremely or very important factor in their funding decisions.
- Sixty-eight percent of funders say ensuring racial equity and inclusion in the production of news is extremely or very important. Seventy-three percent of funders who support journalism primarily focused on serving communities of color have increased that funding in the last five years.
- About half of both nonprofit and for-profit organizations that primarily serve communities of color have seen increases in philanthropic funding to address the news and information needs of those communities.
- Fifty-one percent say ensuring coverage of important topics that align with "our mission, such as education, climate change, health inequities" is extremely or very important, while 35% say mission-driven funding is somewhat or not very important in their decision making.
- Sixty-seven percent of for-profit media say they provide free online access to reporting supported primarily with philanthropic support. Twenty-one percent do not.

The study includes three separate online surveys: a survey designed for private foundations, community foundations, family foundations and other grantmaking institutions that support journalism and news media; a

survey of mostly digital nonprofit news organizations and NPR-affiliated and PBS-affiliated public media stations; and a survey of for-profit news organizations, including legacy news organizations and online independent local outlets. Interviews were conducted between April 13 and July 21, 2023.

The research team included a consultant from Media Impact Funders who previously worked at one of the nation's biggest funders of journalism. Some members of the NORC research team were involved in the 2015 API. Funding for the research project was provided by The Lenfest Institute for Journalism, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Arnold Ventures, and Media Impact Funders.

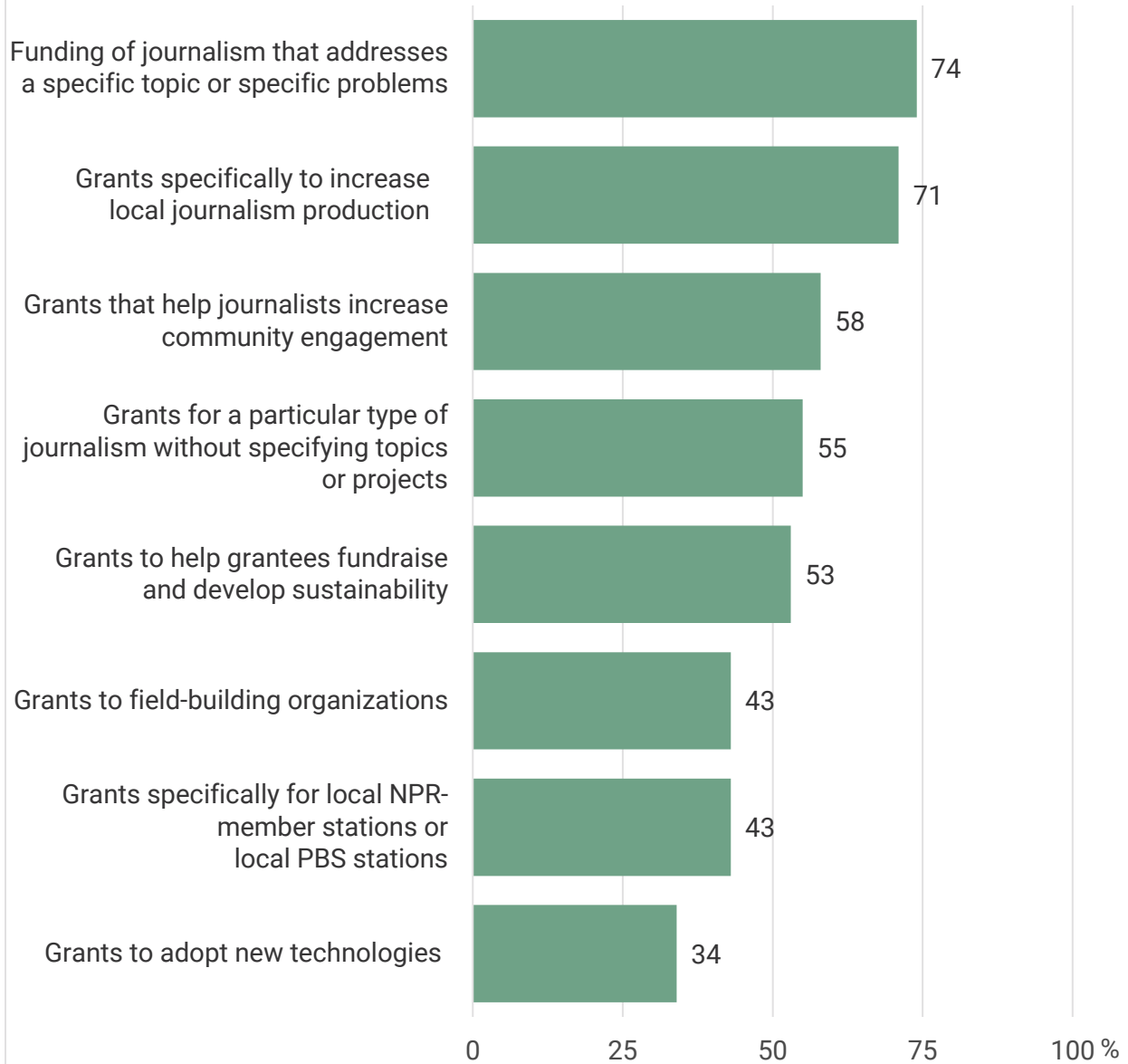
## WHY ARE FUNDERS INVESTING IN NEWS AND MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS?

Funders offered varying reasons for their investments. Asked to choose between advancing their foundation's strategic agenda and strengthening a free press and reporting to educate the public, 45% say strengthening a free press and 20% say funding journalism to increase their foundation's impact and agenda. Twenty percent say both equally. When asked a similar question, 62% of nonprofit organizations and 72% of for-profit outlets say they believe funders are more likely motivated to support journalism to strengthen a free press and educate the public over other factors such as advancing another agenda.

When asked about possible types of grants, 74% say they fund journalism to address a specific topic or problem; 71% make grants specifically to increase local journalism production; 58% make grants to help increase community engagement; 55% fund investigative reporting in general, and 53% help grantees fundraise and develop sustainability.

### Most funders are investing to benefit different aspects of journalism.

Percent of funders who make each of the following kinds of grants



**Question:** Funders: Does your organization currently make any of the following kinds of grants to journalism and news media organizations?

**Source:** NORC survey for Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism.

## CHARTING THE GROWTH OF PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT FOR NEWS

The findings show the growing role of philanthropy in the production of nonpartisan, independent news, and information in the United States at both nonprofit news outlets, public media stations and for-profit news organizations.

INN counts more than 400 publishers in its network, up from about 120 in 2015. While steadily growing, most nonprofit digital news outlets are small with more than half operating on budgets of less than \$1 million.

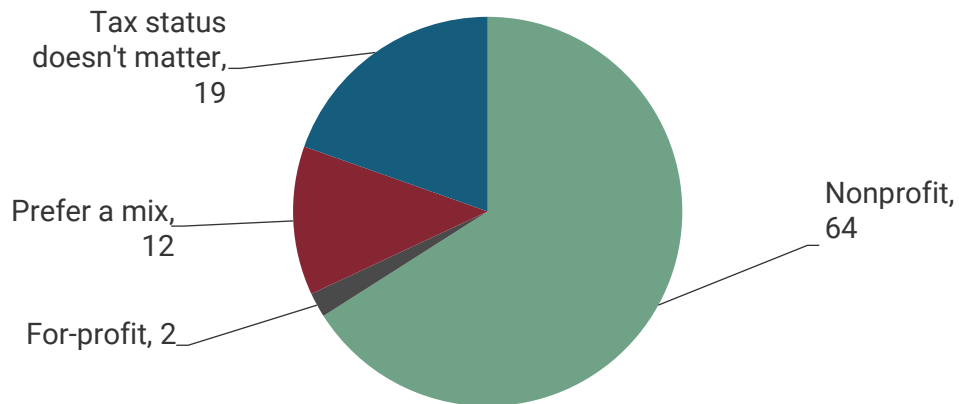
The 2023 survey of nonprofit organizations and public media stations found 67% deliver reporting on a local or regional area and 27% cover a statehouse or statewide issues. Thirty-seven percent focus their coverage on a single topic or related topics, such as education, criminal justice, or the environment. Sixteen percent report on a specific community of color, ethnicity, or religion.

The study also shows increased investments in organizations that are helping newsrooms achieve sustainable revenue growth and putting more journalists on the ground. Philanthropic giving has helped fuel new funding approaches and field-building work at organizations, such as Report for America, The News Revenue Hub, LION Publishers, The Pivot Fund, INN’s NewsMatch, the American Journalism Project, the Local Media Association and the National Trust for Local News.

Sixty-four percent of funders say they prefer to fund nonprofit journalism, but 19% say tax status didn’t matter and 12% prefer a mix.

### Most funders prefer to invest in nonprofit news organizations.

Percent of funders



**Question:** Funders: Does your organization prefer to fund nonprofit or for-profit journalism and news media?

**Source:** NORC survey for Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism.

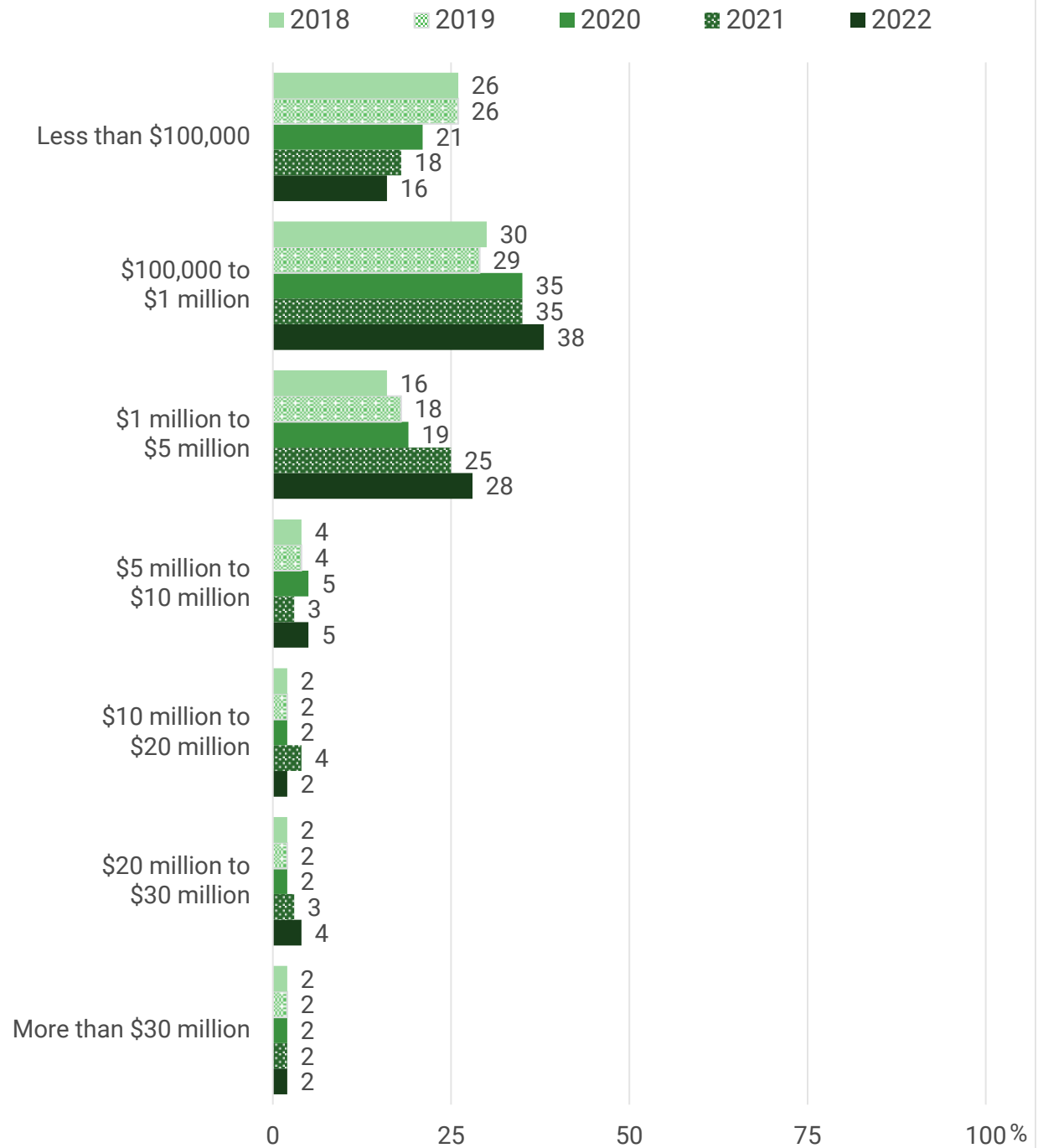
While philanthropic giving for journalism is increasing, grants are mostly small and represent, for the most part, a small percentage of an overall foundation's portfolio. While 12% of funders say that they spent more than half of their foundation's giving on journalism and news media last year, 70% say such giving represented less than a tenth of their portfolio.

As the 2015 study first showed, journalism is a relatively new area for charitable giving in the United States. For example, it doesn't appear as a category in *Giving USA: The Annual Report on Philanthropy*, which has tracked the sources and uses of charitable giving in the United States for decades.

Still, there's opportunity, the study suggests, for growth in grantmaking for journalism and news media. In what appears to be a hopeful trend, the number of grants over \$100,000 steadily rose in the last five years, according to the survey. But only a handful of funders invested more than \$5 million.

### Many grants over \$100,000 have increased in the last five years.

Percent of funders



**Question:** Funders: What was the approximate amount of grants and direct charitable activity dollars allocated for journalism and news media grantmaking each of the following years?

**Source:** NORC survey for Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism.

More than 80% of the for-profit news organizations that responded to the survey say they received direct philanthropic support or participated in training and leadership programs funded by philanthropy during the last five years. Of those, 91% said they received direct support. The respondents represented mostly a mix of legacy newspapers and local online news sites.

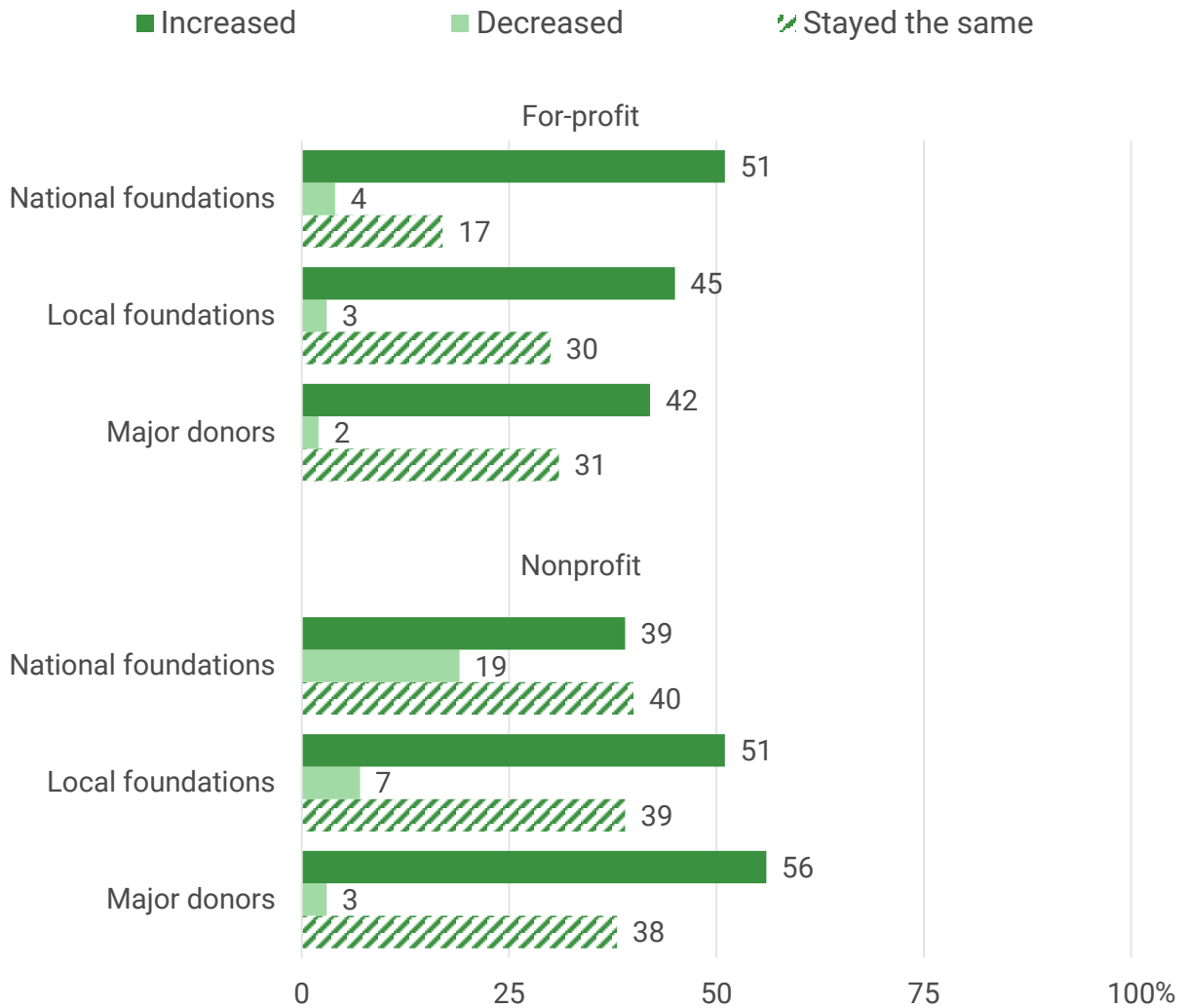
Of for-profit organizations that receive philanthropic funding, 52% say they got support from the Google News Initiative and 36% got funding from Meta. In 2022, Meta terminated its journalism project and both the funding and training resources that went with it.

While some news organizations struggled in recent months to fill that funding gap left by Meta, philanthropic giving is increasing from other sources. Sixty-five percent of for-profit organizations that receive funding from national foundations say the support has increased over the past five years. Likewise, 52% of for-profit organizations that are funded by local foundations say that funding has increased.



### Many news organizations report an increase in funding.

Percent of news organizations receiving donations or grants from...



**Question: Media:** Over the last five years, has the percentage of your organization's budget coming from [national foundation grants/local foundations/major donors] increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

**Source:** NORC surveys for Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism.

### POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ON DONOR TRANSPARENCY AND DONOR INFLUENCE

This study revisits many of the same questions from the API surveys about ethics, donor influence, and donor transparency. That study catalyzed [written guidelines](#) for both funders and newsrooms and urged them to adopt their own written guidelines.

For funders, the guidelines urged transparency with the public about their media funding, and set expectations with their media partners to report their sources of funding. The guidelines also say funders should articulate their motivations for funding journalism and allow news organizations, not funders, initiate conversations about the journalism they wish to produce.

The guidelines, co-designed by API with news and philanthropic leaders in 2016, including representatives from Media Impact Funders, clearly state that news organizations should retain editorial control and not relinquish legal and ethical responsibilities to funders or to the public. They offer multiple ways to increase transparency about funding and tips on how to communicate the news organization's mission, and strong preference of general support "on the principle that it best preserves independent journalism."

In this study, 92% of nonprofit news organizations and 83% of for-profit news outlets say funders never saw editorial content they helped underwrite prior to publication. About three-quarters of both nonprofit and for-profit organizations say that their funders' portfolio of interests is never a consideration in decision-making about news coverage.

Similarly, about seven in 10 of both nonprofit and for-profit news organizations say they never make editorial changes in content based on funder input.

This study shows progress has been made on donor disclosure but more needs to be done to help both funders and newsrooms better navigate and set boundaries for editorial independence and public trust to avoid appearances of potential conflict.

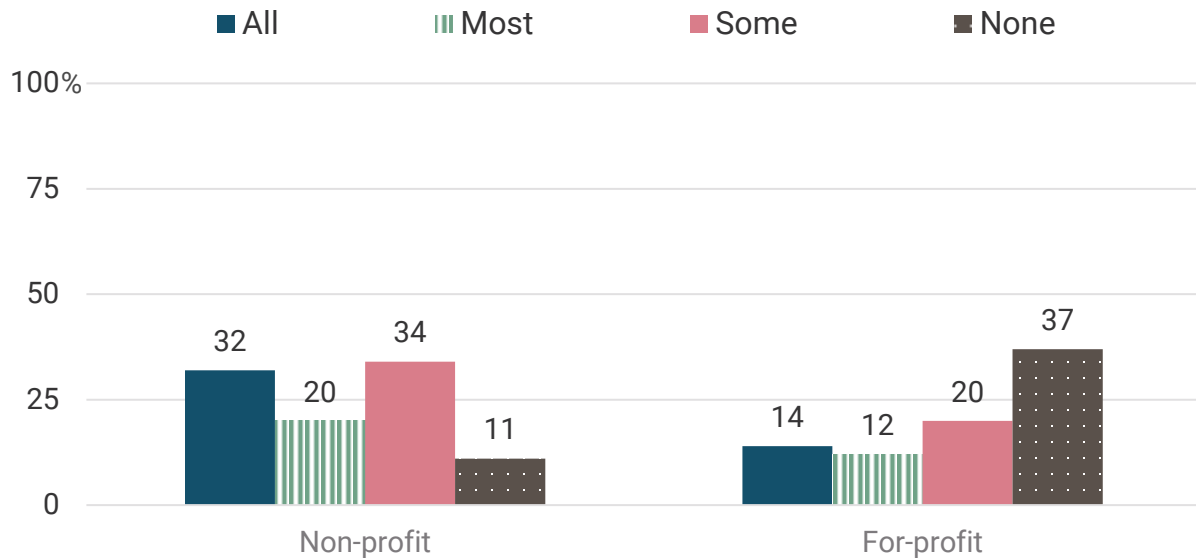
This becomes increasingly important for independent, nonpartisan newsrooms because the media landscape has become even more murky since 2015. Political operatives are spreading disinformation on social media and expanding what researchers call "pink slime" outlets that are highly partisan local media networks. They are attempting to fill the void in local news without full disclosure of the motivations of those underwriting them.

At first glance, these websites can appear to be local independent news. Instead, they're operating under the "guise of news" with "ties to political parties, special-interest groups, and lobbyists," and funded with "dark money" from political advocacy groups, according to a multi-year research project from Columbia University's Tow Center for Digital Journalism.

Most of the nonprofit participants in the survey are members of INN, following community guidelines on journalistic standards and ethics and donor transparency. INN members, for example, are asked to publicly disclose all donations above \$5,000.

In this study, 86% of nonprofit organizations say they disclose at least some of their donors on their website or in their annual report. But 29% of NPR and PBS outlets say they do not list any donors. And only 46% of for-profit news outlets publicly list any of their donors.

### Non-profit news organizations are more likely to disclose at least some of their donors than for-profit organizations.



**Question:** Media: On its website or annual report, does your organization publicly list all your donors, most of them, only some, or none?

**Source:** NORC survey for Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism.

Sixty-eight percent of nonprofit organizations have a written policy about disclosing contributors on their website or annual, up from 50% eight years ago. But in a troubling finding, 72% of for-profit news organizations do not have a written policy on donor disclosure. This is perhaps a reflection of their recent engagement with philanthropy and offers an opportunity to adopt the written guidelines developed after the 2015 survey.

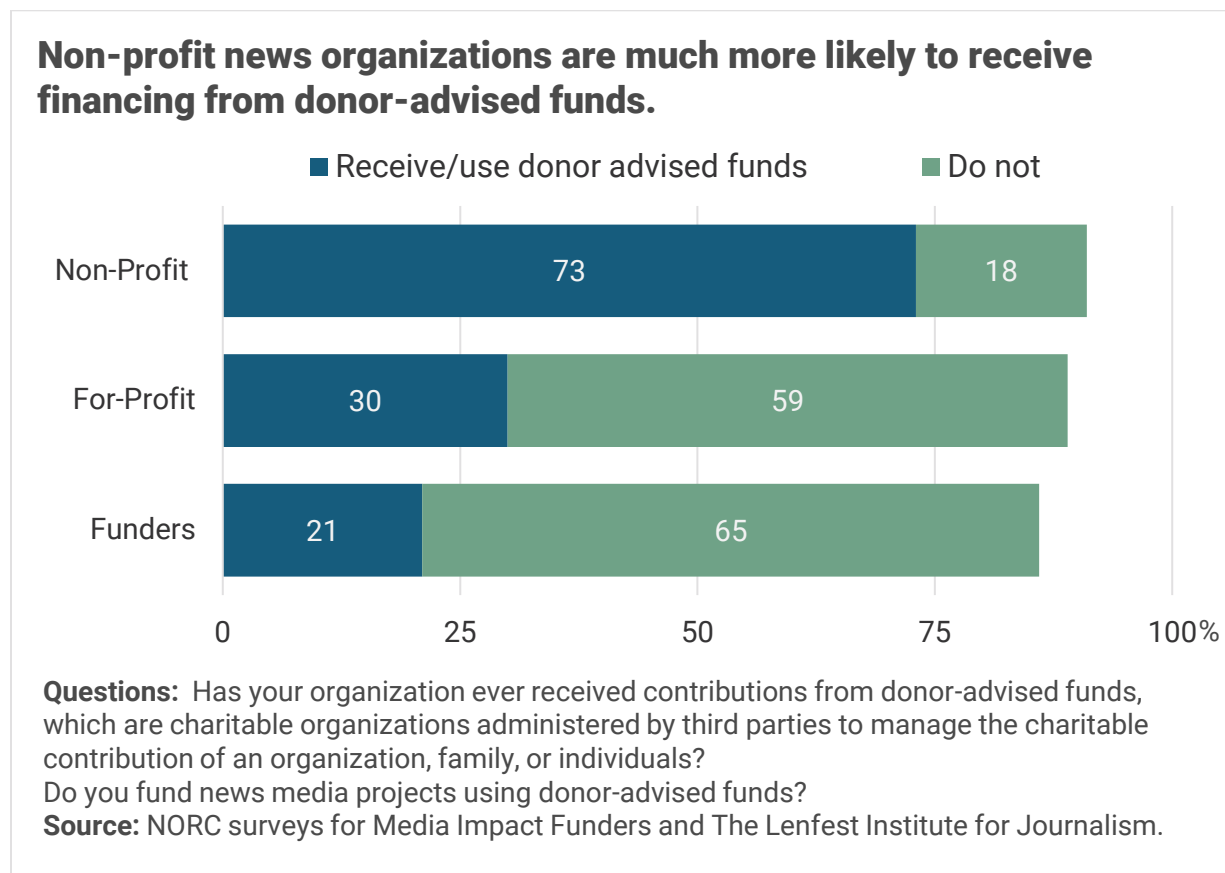
Meanwhile, 50% of funders say they did not have a specific policy about what their grantees should disclose about their funding beyond what is required by law. And 64% of funders do not have any written rules governing their organization’s participation in their grantee’s content decisions.

Not all funders publicly disclose who they fund beyond what the law requires. Fifty-seven percent say they publicly disclose the names and grant amounts of all grantees. Sixteen percent say they only disclose the grantees’ names, and another 16% disclose only what the law requires.

Adding to the challenges for the ethical debate around donor transparency is the growing trend of donors using donor-advised funds (DAFs) at community foundations and financial institutions to administer their charitable contributions. Often, the individual donor is not identified; only the entity making the distribution. News organizations should insist on knowing the identity of the donor.

Because DAFs can be used and are being used to contribute anonymously and pour “dark money” into political organizations and advocacy groups, independent news organizations need to know and disclose their funders to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

In 2023, 74% of nonprofit news organizations say they receive contributions from DAFs, up from 56% in 2015. Only 22% identify both the name of the contributor and the name of the fund, down from 40% in 2015. Of the for-profit news organizations that say they receive funds from donor-advised accounts, only 10% identify the name of both the fund and contributors. More than half of funders who support media with DAFs identify the source of the money.

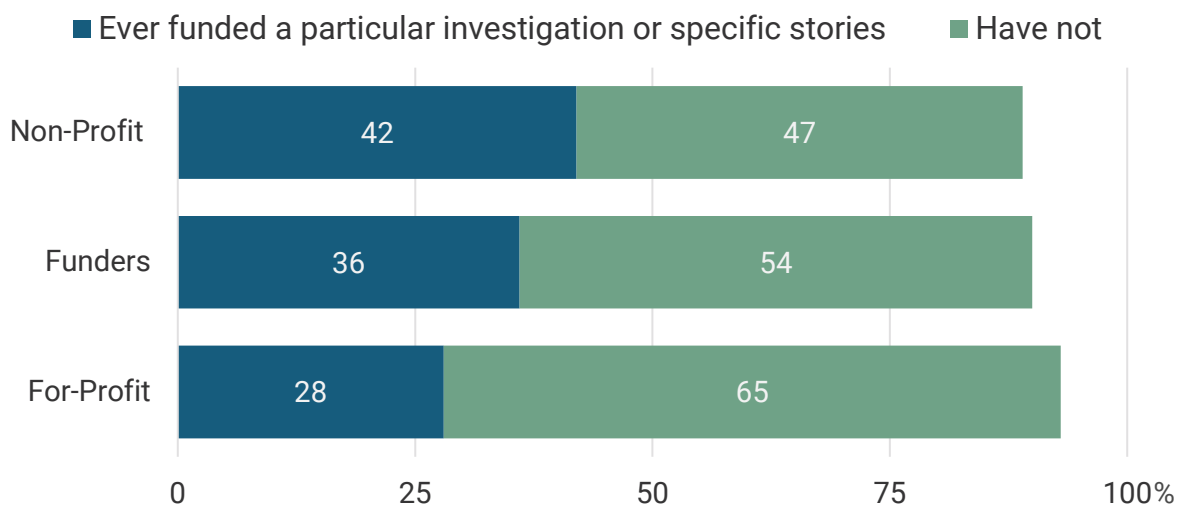


On the issue of donor influence, about three-quarters of media organizations say they have never considered the “portfolio of interests of our funders in our decision making.”

The highest risk for conflicts of interest, as both the 2015 survey and this one show, occur when funders underwrite journalism on specific issues on which they are seeking to influence policy or change public behavior. Fifty-seven percent of funders say they have financed news in areas where they were working to influence policy or change public behavior.

Another area of concern is when funders express interest in financing a specific series of stories or an investigative reporting project.

## Most media organizations have not received offers to fund specific news content.



**Questions: Media:** Has a foundation ever offered to fund an investigation or specific series of stories on an issue or problem, as opposed to ongoing coverage of a general topic area?

**Funders:** Has your organization ever funded a news media organization to produce an investigation into a particular problem or do specific series of stories?

**Source:** NORC surveys for Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism.

Of those who have been offered funding for a specific story or investigation, both nonprofit and for-profit news organizations are inclined to accept such specifically targeted financing.

Most nonprofit news organizations and for-profit news organizations say the project was already on their list of things or struck them as worthwhile.

This is the first phase of a research project that will later include additional research and analysis of the survey’s findings. Recommendations will follow on next steps. If you would like to participate in this next phase of research, please contact Jennifer Preston at [jennifer@mediafunders.org](mailto:jennifer@mediafunders.org).

### METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago in partnership with Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism. Funding was provided by The Lenfest Institute for Journalism, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Arnold Ventures, and Media Impact Funders. The research was conducted by Marjorie Connelly and Betsy Broadus from NORC at the University of Chicago, Tom Rosenstiel, the Eleanor Merrill Professor on the Future of Journalism at the University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism and senior fellow at NORC, and Jennifer Preston, a consultant for Media Impact Funders and a coach in the Journalism Funding Lab at the Local Media Association. Preston is a former reporter and editor at The New York Times and former Vice President for Journalism at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, where she worked from 2014 until 2021 during a significant expansion of philanthropic giving in support of local journalism.

The study included three separate online surveys: a survey designed for funders that support journalism and news media; a survey for leaders at nonprofit news and public radio stations; and a survey for leaders at for-profit news organizations, including legacy news organizations and online independent local outlets. This is the first comprehensive survey of funders and the field since an American Press Institute study in 2015 that charted the growth of the nonprofit journalism sector and new ethical concerns about potential conflicts of interest between funders and the journalists they support.

The research team constructed a list sample for all three survey populations and all organizations on the list were invited to participate. The surveys do not represent the complete population of the foundations and grantmaking institutions that fund journalism and news media. They also do not represent all nonprofit journalism organizations or for-profit news media organizations in the United States. The precise size and scope of that universe is difficult to determine, but efforts were made to have as comprehensive and representative sample as possible.

For the three samples, we identified as many funders supporting journalism and leaders at nonprofit and for-profit news organizations as possible.

- To develop the sample for the funder survey, we created a database from a publicly available data map, Foundation Maps for Media Funding, developed by Candid and hosted by Media Impact Funders. To help confirm and further identify journalism funders, we also used ProPublica's NonProfit Explorer and reviewed annual reports and websites of nonprofit news sites that belong to INN because they ask members to publicly disclose donors giving more than \$5,000. We also included top leaders at as many community foundations as possible to help learn about local funder engagement, if any for journalism and news media.
- For the for-profit survey, we began with the recently updated database of for-profit news organizations in the United States at The University of North Carolina's Hussman School of Journalism and Media and the national database of community media at the Center for Community Media at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. We refined the database by assembling lists of news organizations that had engaged with philanthropy from publicly available information at the American Press Institute, Local Media Association, LION Publishers, The Poynter Institute, The Lenfest Institute for Journalism and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Several of the above organizations also responded to requests to urge their members to consider participation in the survey.
- For the survey of nonprofit news organizations and public radio stations, we assembled a database with the assistance of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and INN. More than 400 nonprofit news organizations belong to INN, which has created community guidelines on donor disclosure and journalistic ethics. INN produces the INN Index, an annual survey that tracks trends about this growing sector and this survey sought not to replicate questions. INN invited members to participate in this survey and the survey was only sent to those INN members who agreed to participate.

Email invitations containing links to the appropriate on-line survey were sent, with multiple reminder follow-up emails. The surveys were conducted in English using Qualtrics XM, an online research software system. The analyses are based on unweighted data and no margin of sampling error can be calculated because this was not a probability-based sample. The surveys were conducted from April 13 to July 21, 2023.

Survey invitations were sent by email to representatives at 563 private foundations, family foundations, community foundations, and other grant making institutions. A total of 156 funding organizations responded. Most

results are based on the 129 funders who said yes to the screening question, “Does your organization make grants in support of journalism and news media?”

For nonprofit media organizations, including both NPR-affiliated public radio stations, 493 email invitations were sent, and representatives from 293 outlets responded.

Email invitations were sent to 540 for-profit news companies and 164 responded. Of those organizations, 138 were determined to be eligible for the study because they said in the last five years, they received donations or other direct philanthropic giving, or participated in philanthropic-funded training and leadership programs. Of those, 91 % said they received direct charitable contributions.

It is possible that many of the funders chose not to respond because they do not give grants for journalism and news media organizations, and some news media outlets may not have responded because they have had no relationships with funders and foundations. No responses were dropped from the dataset due to poor data quality.

The report and complete topline can be found at: <https://mediaimpactfunders.org/our-work/reports/>. For more information on the study, please contact Jennifer Preston at [jennifer@mediafunders.org](mailto:jennifer@mediafunders.org).

Marjorie, I think I need to double check this ABOUT US SECTION....

## ABOUT MEDIA IMPACT FUNDERS

Media Impact Funders (MIF) is a national membership organization that advances the work of a broad range of funders committed to effective use and support of media in the public interest. Learn more at [mediaimpactfunders.org](http://mediaimpactfunders.org).

## ABOUT THE LENFEST INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism is a nonprofit organization whose sole mission is to develop sustainable solutions for local journalism. In addition to being the non-controlling parent organization of The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Institute supports journalism and news organizations serving local communities in Philadelphia and around the United States.

## ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created, and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge. Please visit [www.norc.org](http://www.norc.org) for more information.



MEDIA IMPACT FUNDERS and THE LENFEST INSTITUTE FOR  
JOURNALISM SURVEY  
Conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago

## Funders

*Interviews: 4/13- 7/5/2023*

*156 organizations*

*129 organizations make grants in support of journalism or news media*

*NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled.*

*Results labeled "API 2015" are based on a survey conducted in 2015 by the American Press Institute. Results labeled "API 2015 w/o no response" were recalculated eliminating respondents who skipped the question.*



1. How many years has your foundation or funding organization been in existence?

	All 4/13- 7/5/2023	Funders 4/13- 7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Less than 15 years	21	22	22	26
16-50 years	49	45	37	42
50-99 years	26	29	25	29
More than 100 years	4	2	3	3
Don't know/Not sure	-	-	*	*
No response	1	2	13	

N= 156 129 76 66

\*Question read: How many years has your foundation been in existence? Without nonresponse

2. In what city and state is your organization's main headquarters located? City, State, Zip code.

	All 4/13-7/5/2023	Funders 4/13-7/5/2023
<b>Northeast</b>	26	29
New England	4	5
Mid-Atlantic	22	25
<b>Midwest</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>
East North Central	13	12
West North Central	8	5
<b>South</b>	21	20
South Atlantic	13	13
East South Central	3	2
West South Central	4	5
<b>West</b>	28	29
Mountain	6	5
Pacific	22	24
No response	3	3
N=	156	129

3. Which of the following best describes your organization?

	All 4/13- 7/5/2023	Funders 4/13- 7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Individual donor	1	2	5	6
Public charity	4	3	8	9
Private foundation	37	41	45	52
Community foundation or place-based funder	25	19	4	5
Family foundation	13	14	18	22
Corporate funder or foundation	3	2	3	3
Non-Profit Organization that distributes grants	6	6		
Pooled Fund or venture philanthropy model	4	5		
Other (please specify)	4	5	3	3
Don't know/Not sure	1	1	*	*
No response	3	3	14	
N=	156	129	76	65

*\*Question read: Which of the following best describes your foundation?  
Neither "Non-Profit Organization that distributes grants" nor "Pooled Fund or venture philanthropy model" were possible responses.*

4. Is your foundation's overall giving mostly:

	All 4/13-7/5/2023	Funders 4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Local, state, or regional	54	51	25	29
National	17	19	20	23
International	3	4	3	3
Several of the above	21	22	34	40
Other (please specify)	3	2	4	5
No response	3	2	14	
N=	156	129	76	65

*\*Question read: Is your foundation's giving mostly:  
Local and state/regional were separate possible responses.*

5. Approximately, what was the total amount of your organization’s grantmaking in 2022?

	All 4/13-7/5/2023	Funders 4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Less than \$999,000	10	10	9	11
\$1 million to \$10 million	29	25	24	29
\$11 million to \$50 million	32	36	14	17
\$51 million to \$100 million	9	9	12	14
More than \$100 million	17	19	21	25
Don't Know/Not sure	1	-	3	3
No response	2	2	17	
<i>N=</i>	156	129	76	63

*\*Question read. Approximately, what was the total amount of grant making by your foundation in the last calendar year?.*

**6. IF Q3=COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OR PLACE-BASED FUNDER:** Has the quality of local journalism and public affairs coverage in the community that your organization funds gotten better, gotten worse or stayed the same during the last five years?

	All 4/13-7/5/2023	Funders 4/13-7/5/2023
Gotten better	21	33
Gotten worse	59	50
Stayed about the same	21	17
Don't know/Not sure	-	-
No response	-	-
<i>N=</i>	39	24

7. Which of the following statement best describes the local news environment in the community your organization primarily serves? The news environment we serve:

	All 4/13-7/5/2023	Funders 4/13-7/5/2023
Includes a variety of high-quality news outlets that invest heavily in local reporting	24	26
Includes some news outlets that regularly produce substantial local reporting	43	46
Features occasional quality local reporting but it's generally lacking in quantity and consistency	22	18
Is a "News desert" or nearly so.	5	5
Don't Know/not sure	3	3
No response	3	2
N=	156	129

8. Does your organization make grants to address concerns in any of the following categories?  
Select all that apply.

	All 4/13-7/5/2023	Funders 4/13-7/5/2023
Increasing civic engagement	66	71
Protecting democracy	47	53
Addressing political polarization	24	26
Counteracting the spread of misinformation and disinformation	39	47
Addressing systemic racism and racial inequality	70	73
Protecting or expanding voting rights	24	27
No response	-	-
N=	156	129

9. Does your organization make grants in support of journalism or news media?

	All 4/13-7/5/2023	Funders 4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	83	100	83	86
No	13	-	12	12
Don't know/Not Sure	4	-	1	1
No response	-	-	4	-
N=	156	129	76	73

\*Question read. Does your foundation make grants to news or media organizations?

**Following questions based only on Funders, those organizations that make grants in support of journalism or news media.**

10. When did your organization first start making grants in support of journalism and news media?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Within the last year	5
Within the last 2 to 5 years	28
Within the last 5 to 10 years	20
More than 10 years ago	45
Don't know/Not sure	2
No response	1

N= 129

11. Last year, approximately what percentage of your organization's total funding went to journalism and news media grants?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Zero	6	2	2
1 percent to 10 percent	64	51	59
11 percent to 25 percent	9	17	20
26 percent to 50 percent	8	8	9
More than 50 percent	12	2	2
Don't Know/Not Sure	-	6	7
No response	2	14	

N= 129 63 54

*\*Question read. Approximately what percentage of your foundation's total funding went to media grants in the last calendar year?*

12. **IF Q11 ne ZERO:** Last year, how many grants were distributed to journalism and news media grantees?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Less than 5	40
6-10	26
11-25	18
More than 25	13
Don't Know/Not sure	1
No response	2

N= 119

13. **IF Q11 ne ZERO:** Last year, what was the TYPICAL size of individual grants, investments or donations to journalism and news media grantees?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Less than \$50,000	29
\$50,000 to \$99,999	25
\$100,000 to \$249,999	25
\$250,000 to \$499,999	7
\$500,000 to \$999,999	3
\$1 million to \$4.9 million	4
\$5 million to \$10 million	2
Greater than \$10M	-
Don't know/Not sure	2
No response	3

N= 119

14. In the last five years, has the number of grants for journalism and news media in your organization increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Increased	59	41	47
Decreased	7	8	9
Stayed about the same	29	29	33
Don't know/Not sure	3	10	11
No response	2	13	

N= 129 63 55

\*Question read. In the last 5 years, has the OVERALL NUMBER of media grants your foundation gives increased, decreased, or remained about the same?

15. Last year, what types of philanthropic support did your organization provide to journalism and news media grantees?

Select all that apply.

	4/13-7/5/2023
Grants for projects	77
Unrestricted grants	57
Program-related investments, such as loans	5
Direct charitable funding for activities, including training, fellowships, technical assistance, coaching, convenings, research.	47
Other (Please specify)	16
No response	-

N= 129

16. Has your funding of journalists working in collaborations with multiple news organizations and partners increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Increased	50
Decreased	3
Stayed about the same	33
Don't know/Not sure	12
No response	2

N= 129

17. Does your organization mostly fund news outlets directly or does it mostly fund field-building organizations that provide resources to news outlets, such as the American Journalism Project, Institute for Nonprofit News and Report for America?

	4/13-7/5/2023
News outlets directly	47
Field building organizations	9
Both	36
Don't know/Not sure	5
No response	2

N= 129

18. Does your organization prefer to fund nonprofit or for-profit journalism and news media?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Non-profit	64
For-profit	2
Prefer a mix	12
Tax status doesn't matter	19
Don't Know/Not sure	2
No response	2

N= 129

19. In the last five years, has your organization provided sponsorships, Report For America fellows, or other philanthropic giving at a for-profit newspaper?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Yes	38
No	55
Don't Know/Not sure	5
No response	2

N= 129

20. In the last five years, has your organization’s collaborations with other funders increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Increased	47
Decreased	2
Stayed about the same	40
Don’t collaborate with other funders	6
Don’t know/Not sure	3
No response	2

N= 129

21. Do you anticipate your organization’s funding for journalism and news media will increase, decrease, or stay the same in the next five years?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Increased	52
Decreased	1
Stayed about the same	35
Don’t know/Not sure	11
No response	2

N= 129

22. Before making a grant, does your organization consider:

4/13-7/5/2023 N=129	Yes	No	Don’t know/ Not unsure	No response
The diversity of the grantee’s team, board, and leadership	78	17	4	2
The demographic makeup of the audience and community that the grantee is serving	90	5	4	2

23. Does your organization support journalism and news media organizations that primarily focus on serving communities of color?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Yes	57
No	29
Don’t Know/Not sure	11
No response	3

N= 129



24. **IF Q23=YES:** In the last five years, has your organization’s funding for journalism and news media organizations that primarily focus on serving communities of color increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Increased	73
Decreased	-
Stayed about the same	25
Don’t know/Not sure	3
No response	-

N= 73

25. **IF Q23=YES:** What communities of color are primarily being served by journalism and news media funded by your organization?

Select all that apply.

	4/13-7/5/2023
Asian American, East Asian, South Asian, or Southeast Asian	41
Black or African American	93
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	84
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	11
Middle Eastern or North African	18
Native American, indigenous, or Alaska Native	44
Other racial or ethnic group (Please specify)	3
No response	-

N= 73

26. Are any of the following groups the primary audience for any of your organization’s grantees?

Select all that apply.

	4/13-7/5/2023
Women	29
LGBTQIA+	22
Low-income communities	56
Rural communities	38
Immigrants	36
None of the above	28
No response	-

N= 129

27. What was the approximate amount of grants and direct charitable activity dollars allocated for journalism and news media grantmaking each of the following years?

4/13-7/5/2023 N=129	Less than \$100,000	\$100,000 to \$1 million	\$1 million to \$5 million	\$5 million to \$10 million	\$10 million to \$20 million	\$20 million to \$30 million	More than \$30 million	Don't know/ Not sure	No response
2018	26	30	16	4	2	2	2	12	7
2019	26	29	18	4	2	2	2	11	7
2020	21	35	19	5	2	2	2	8	6
2021	18	35	25	3	4	3	2	6	5
2022	16	38	28	5	2	4	2	3	2

28. What expectations does your organization have about disclosure by your news media grantees about your funding?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
We require disclosure of our funding in specific ways, such as on the grantee's websites or in annual reports, as a condition of our grant	12	13	15
We require public disclosure of our funding but do not stipulate the form	9	14	17
We have no specific policy about what our news media grantees disclose about our funding beyond what the law requires	50	56	59
We don't require but ask for acknowledgement of the funding	16		
Other (please specify)	9	3	9
No response	3	14	
N=	129	63	54

\*Question read: What is your foundation's policy about what you expect media grantees to disclose about your funding? "We don't require but ask for acknowledgement of the funding" was not an option.

29. When it comes to what your organization discloses about itself, to what extent do you publicly list the names and amounts of your news media grantmaking?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
We publicly disclose the names of all grantees and amounts given to them	57	79	91
We publicly disclose all grantees and amounts above \$5,000	4		
We publicly disclose the names of all grantees but not the amounts	16	3	4
We publicly disclose only what is required by law	16	2	2
Other (please specify)	4	3	4
No response	3	13	
N=	129	63	55

\*Question read: When it comes to what your foundation discloses about itself, to what extent list the names and amounts of your media grant making?

30. Do you fund news media projects using donor-advised funds?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	21	19	22
No	65	60	69
Don't Know/Not sure	12	8	9
No response	2	13	
N=	129	63	55

31. **IF Q30=YES:** Does the fund identify the sources of its money (the organization, family or individual who made the contribution)?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	52	11	58
No	11	21	8
Other (please specify)	30	6	33
Don't know/Not sure	7	81	
No response	-		
N=	27	63	12

32. On balance, how would you describe whether journalism grantees met your expectations in the last five years?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Our grantees exceeded our expectations.	31
Our grantees generally accomplished our expectations.	56
Our grantees have probably fallen short of our expectations.	5
Don't know/Not Sure	5
No response	2

N= 129

33. Does your organization currently make any of the following kinds of grants to journalism and news media organizations? *Select all that apply.*

4/13-7/5/2023 N=129	Yes	No	Don't know/ Not unsure	No response
Grants to help grantees fundraise and develop sustainability	53	36	3	7
Grants specifically to increase local journalism production	71	22	2	4
Grants specifically for local NPR-member stations or local PBS stations to increase local journalism resources	43	50	2	6
Grants for a particular type of journalism (such as investigative) without specifying topics or projects	55	36	5	5
Funding of journalism that addresses a specific topic or specific problems	74	20	2	3
Grants that help journalists increase community engagement	58	30	4	8
Grants to adopt new technologies	34	52	4	10
Grants to field-building organizations, such as The Institute for Nonprofit News, The Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, Report for America, Solutions Journalism Network, NewsMatch	43	46	3	8

34. **IF Q33=YES to any:** Has the funding increased, decreased, or stayed about the same for:

4/13-7/5/2023	Increased	Decreased	Stayed about the same	Don't know/ Not unsure	No response	N=
Grants to help grantees fundraise and develop sustainability	51	1	43	3	1	69
Grants specifically to increase local journalism production	52	3	40	3	1	92
Grants specifically for local NPR-member stations or local PBS stations to increase local journalism resources	24	7	65	4	-	55
Grants for a particular type of journalism (such as investigative) without specifying topics or projects	41	7	46	4	1	71
Funding of journalism that addresses a specific topic or specific problems	39	6	48	5	2	96
Grants that help journalists increase community engagement	44	4	47	4	1	75
Grants to adopt new technologies	48	5	43	5	-	44
Grants to field-building organizations, such as The Institute for Nonprofit News, The Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, Report for America, Solutions Journalism Network, NewsMatch	45	2	45	7	2	56

35. How many of your grants for journalism or news organizations are followed by additional grants to the same recipient?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
None	9		
Less than 10 percent	5	3	4
10 percent to 24 percent	2	5	6
25 percent to 50 percent	15	14	17
More than 50 percent	57	52	63
Don't know/Not sure	9	8	10
No response	2	17	

N= 129 63 52

\*Question read: How many of your grants to news organizations are followed by additional grants to the same recipient?

36. Does your organization ever make grants to news media organizations or journalists on issues where you are also engaged in work such as trying to change policy or public perception or behavior on that issue?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	57	52	65
No	33	19	24
Don't know/Not sure	9	10	12
No response	2	19	

N= 129 63 51

\*Question read: Does your foundation ever make grants to media on issues where you are also engaged in work such as trying to change policy or public behavior on that issue?

37. Recognizing there can be many factors in funding decisions, which of the following statements comes closer to describing the reason your organization funds media organizations?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
We fund journalism and news media to strengthen a free press and to educate the public regardless of the outcome of the reporting we fund.	45	43	44
We fund journalism and news media to have an impact and advance the larger strategic agenda of our foundation.	20	35	54
Both equally	20	2	2
Other (please specify)	10		
Don't know/Not sure	2		
No response	2	21	

N= 129 63 50

\*Question read Recognizing there can be many factors in funding decisions, which of the following statements comes closer to describing the reason your foundation funds media organizations?

38. Please describe in a paragraph why you fund journalism and news media and how it fits your organization's mission.

Open end

39. How important are each of the following possible factors in funding decisions?  
*Select all that apply.*

4/13-7/5/2023 N=129	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all	Don't know/ Not unsure	No response
To address the crisis in trusted local news and information	38	31	16	5	2	-	9
To ensure a sustainable future for journalism	32	31	22	6	2	-	7
To ensure racial equity and inclusion in the production and availability of news and information for BIPOC and historically marginalized communities.	39	29	20	4	2	-	7
To ensure regular coverage of important topics that align with our mission, such as education, climate change, health inequities.	30	21	26	9	7	-	7
To fight the spread of misinformation and disinformation	27	32	28	7	-	-	6
To hold the powerful to account through rigorous, independent reporting.	27	26	27	9	4	-	8
To help promote civic engagement with trusted news and information.	43	38	9	2	2	-	6
To support news and information about science	10	11	29	28	15	-	8

40. Before journalistic content is produced, to what degree do you usually talk with grantees about what they are working on?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
We usually discuss what stories news media grantees are working on and the possible timing of those stories.	6	6	8
We usually discuss what problems the reporting might expose and the implications they might raise but not specific stories.	3	11	15
We usually talk about coverage areas but only in general terms.	19	21	27
We like to have a “heads up” when a news media grantee is about to produce a story we have underwritten but otherwise do not discuss the work ahead of time	2	10	13
We never talk with news media grantees about what they are working on before it appears.	45	25	33
Depends on the grantee or topic	13		
Other (please specify)	7	3	4
Don’t know/Not sure	2		
No response	3	24	

N= 129 63 48

\*Question read Before journalistic content is produced, to what degree do you usually talk with media grantees about what they are working on?

41. Whatever your discussions, how often, if at all, does your organization see journalistic content you have underwritten prior to publication?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Always	2	*	*
Usually	2	3	4
About half the time	1	*	*
Only sometimes	7	8	10
Very rarely	16	22	29
Never	64	40	52
Don't Know/Not sure	6	3	4
No response	2	24	

N= 129 63 48

\*Question read Whatever your discussions, how often, it at all, does your foundation see journalistic content you have underwritten prior to publication?



42. **IF Q41 ne NEVER:** Which of the following comes closest to the comments you most often offer?

	4/13-7/5/2023
We do not offer news media grantees comments on journalistic content they've produced prior to publication unless we see a major problem or red flag	43
The nature of our review varies case by case	14
We expect a full editorial review	-
We offer general reactions but, as a matter of policy, never specific editorial suggestions	11
We make suggestions but we do not expect grantees to accept them all	9
Other (please specify)	17
Don't know/Not sure	6
No response	-

N= 35

43. **IF Q41 ne NEVER:** How often do you estimate grantees make editorial changes based on input from your organization, whatever its nature?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Almost always	9
Often	9
Half the time	14
Sometimes	20
Hardly ever	31
Never	14
Don't know/Not Sure	-
No response	3

N= 35

44. Does your organization have any written rules governing your organization's participation in content decisions made by news media grantees?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	12	2	3
No	64	57	90
Depends	1		
Other (please specify)	12	5	8
Don't know/Not sure	9		
No response	2	37	

N= 129 63 40

*\*Question read: Does your foundation have any written rules governing your organization’s participation in content decisions made grantees? “Depends” was not an option*

45. Does your organization require grantees to have written rules regarding the involvement of funders in content decisions, or regarding ethics or conflict of interest?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	13	10	15
No	65	52	80
Depends	2		
Other (please specify)	16	3	5
Don’t know/Not sure	-		
No response	4	35	
N=	129	63	41

*\*Question read: Does your foundation require grantees to have written rules regarding the involvement of funders in content decisions regarding ethics or conflict of interest? “Depends” was not an option*

46. Does your organization typically ask media grantees to provide regular financial reporting during grant period about how the funds are being allocated?

	4/13-7/5/2023
Yes	59
No	33
Don’t Know/Not sure	5
No response	3
N=	129

47. Has your organization ever funded a news media organization to produce an investigation into a particular problem or do specific series of stories?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	42	30	42
No	47	33	47
Don’t Know/Not sure	8	8	11
No response	3	29	
N=	129	63	45

*\*Question read: Has your foundation ever funded a media organization to produce an investigation into a particular problem or do specific series of stories?*

48. **IF Q47=yes:** Does your organization discuss with grantees in advance what kinds of problems it expects the reporting to expose or conclusions to come to when your organization provides funding for investigations?

	4/13-7/5/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	7	10	32
No	69	16	47
Don't Know/Not sure	20	6	22
No response	4	68	
N=	54	63	19

*\*Question read: Have you discussed with grantees in advance what kinds of problems you expect the reporting to expose or conclusions you expect the reporting to come to when your organization has provided funding for investigations? Option "Other" included with Don't know/not sure*

49. Where and how do you think major new philanthropic giving for journalism should be directed?  
*Open end*

50. What do you think are obstacles to persuading more donors to invest in journalism and news media? *Open end*

**METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago in partnership with Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism. Funding was provided by The Lenfest Institute for Journalism, Media Impact Funders, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and Arnold Ventures. The research was conducted by Marjorie Connelly and Betsy Broaddus from NORC at the University of Chicago, Tom Rosenstiel, Eleanor Merrill Professor on the Future of Journalism at the University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism and senior fellow at NORC, and Jennifer Preston, a consultant for Media Impact Funders and a coach in the Journalism Funding Lab at the Local Media Association. Preston is a former reporter and editor at The New York Times and former Vice President for Journalism at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, where she worked from 2014 until 2021 during a significant expansion of philanthropic giving in support of local journalism.

The study included three separate online surveys: a survey designed for funders that support journalism and news media; a survey for leaders at nonprofit news and public radio stations; and a survey for leaders at for-profit news organizations, including legacy news organizations and online independent local outlets. This is the first comprehensive survey of funders and the field since an American Press Institute study in 2015 that charted the growth of the nonprofit journalism sector and new ethical concerns about potential conflicts of interest between funders and the journalists they support.

The research team constructed a list sample for all three survey populations and all organizations on the list were invited to participate. The surveys do not represent the complete population of the foundations and grantmaking institutions that fund journalism and news media. They also do not represent all nonprofit journalism organizations or for-profit news media organizations in the United States. The precise size and scope of that

universe is difficult to determine, but efforts were made to have as comprehensive and representative sample as possible.

For the three samples, we identified as many funders supporting journalism and leaders at nonprofit and for-profit news organizations as possible.

- To develop the sample for the funder survey, we created a database from a publicly available data map, Foundation Maps for Media Funding, developed by Candid and hosted by Media Impact Funders. To help confirm and further identify journalism funders, we also used ProPublica's NonProfit Explorer and reviewed annual reports and websites of nonprofit news sites that belong to INN because they ask members to publicly disclose donors giving more than \$5,000. We also included top leaders at as many community foundations as possible to help learn about local funder engagement, if any for journalism and news media.
- For the for-profit survey, we began with the recently updated database of for-profit news organizations in the United States at The University of North Carolina's Hussman School of Journalism and Media and the national database of community media at the Center for Community Media at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. We refined the database by assembling lists of news organizations that had engaged with philanthropy from publicly available information at the American Press Institute, Local Media Association, LION Publishers, The Poynter Institute, The Lenfest Institute for Journalism and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Several of the above organizations also responded to requests to urge their members to consider participation in the survey.
- For the survey of nonprofit news organizations and public radio stations, we assembled a database with the assistance of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and INN. More than 400 nonprofit news organizations belong to INN, which has created community guidelines on donor disclosure and journalistic ethics. INN produces the INN Index, an annual survey that tracks trends about this growing sector and this survey sought not to replicate questions. INN invited members to participate in this survey and the survey was only sent to those INN members who agreed to participate.

Email invitations containing links to the appropriate on-line survey were sent, with multiple reminder follow-up emails. The surveys were conducted in English using Qualtrics XM, an online research software system. The analyses are based on unweighted data and no margin of sampling error can be calculated because this was not a probability-based sample. The surveys were conducted from April 13 to July 21, 2023.

Survey invitations were sent by email to representatives at 563 private foundations, family foundations, community foundations, and other grant making institutions. A total of 156 funding organizations responded. Most results are based on the 129 funders who said yes to the screening question, "Does your organization make grants in support of journalism and news media?"

For nonprofit media organizations, including both NPR-affiliated public radio stations, 493 email invitations were sent, and representatives from 293 outlets responded.

Email invitations were sent to 540 for-profit news companies and 164 responded. Of those organizations, 138 were determined to be eligible for the study because they said in the last five years, they received donations or other direct philanthropic giving, or participated in philanthropic-funded training and leadership programs. Of those, 91 percent said they received direct charitable contributions.

It is possible that many of the funders chose not to respond because they do not give grants for journalism and news media organizations, and some news media outlets may not have responded because they have had no relationships with funders and foundations. No responses were dropped from the dataset due to poor data quality.

The report and complete topline can be found at: <https://mediaimpactfunders.org/our-work/reports/>. For more information on the study, please contact Jennifer Preston at [jennifer@mediafunders.org](mailto:jennifer@mediafunders.org).

### **ABOUT MEDIA IMPACT FUNDERS**

Media Impact Funders (MIF) is a national membership organization that advances the work of a broad range of funders committed to effective use and support of media in the public interest. Learn more at [mediaimpactfunders.org](http://mediaimpactfunders.org).

### **ABOUT THE LENFEST INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism is a nonprofit organization whose sole mission is to develop sustainable solutions for local journalism. In addition to being the non-controlling parent organization of The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Institute supports journalism and news organizations serving local communities in Philadelphia and around the United States.

### **ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created, and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge. Please visit [www.norc.org](http://www.norc.org) for more information.



MEDIA IMPACT FUNDERS and THE LENFEST INSTITUTE FOR JOURNALISM SURVEY  
Conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago

## For-Profit Journalism Organizations

*Interviews: 4/13- 7/21/2023*

*164 organizations*

*138 organizations have received donations or other direct philanthropic giving in the last five years or participated in philanthropic-funded training and leadership programs.*

*NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled.*

*Results labeled "API 2015" are based on a survey conducted in 2015 by the American Press Institute. Results labeled "API 2015 w/o no response" were recalculated eliminating respondents who skipped the question.*

1. What year was your organization founded? How many years has your foundation or funding organization been in existence?\*

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Less than 5 years ago	16	18	15	15
6-9 years ago	10	8	12	12
10-15 years ago	17	17	3	3
16-50 years ago	18	16	3	3
More than 50 years ago	37	38	65	66
Don't know/Not sure	-	-	1	1
No response	2	3	1	
<b>N=</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>144</b>

\*Question read: How long ago was your news organization founded?

2. Where is your organization based? City, State, Zip code

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
<b>Northeast</b>	32	33
New England	7	8
Mid-Atlantic	25	25
<b>Midwest</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>
East North Central	7	7
West North Central	9	8
<b>South</b>	22	25
South Atlantic	15	14
East South Central	3	3
West South Central	8	9
<b>West</b>	23	23
Mountain	7	8
Pacific	16	15
<b>Outside U.S.</b>	1	1
No response	1	1
<b>N=</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>138</b>

3. Is the company that owns your news organization headquartered in your state?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	79	79
No	20	19
Don't know/Not sure	-	-
No response	2	2
<b>N=</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>138</b>

4. Which media category best describes your news organization?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
Community media focused on serving a particular community of color, ethnicity, or religion	10	10
Local online publisher	34	36
Newspaper media	36	35
Single subject news organization (digital or multiplatform)	2	1
Radio media	4	4
Podcast or social media	1	1
Television media	1	1
Other	7	6
Don't know/Not sure	-	-
No response	7	8
N=	164	138

5. What is the primary geographic scope of your organization's coverage?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Global	1	1	2	2
National	1	-	1	1
Regional (multi-state)	9	9	8	8
State	12	14		
Local (such as city, county, town, or suburb)	74	73	27	27
Hyperlocal			47	48
Other				2
Several			10	10
Don't know/Not sure	-	-		
No response	3	4	1	
N=	164	138	146	144

\*Question read. Which of the following best describes your core audience?

Global was labeled international; state and regional were combined; Local (such as city, county, town, or suburb) was labeled Metro.



6. What was your organization's approximate calendar year (CY) 2022 expense budget? .

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Less than \$500,000	53	51		
\$500,000 to \$999,999	5	5	43	44
\$1 million to \$1.9 million	5	7		
\$2 million to \$4.9 million	10	11	27	28
\$5 million to \$49 million	4	4	18	19
\$50 million to \$99 million	12	10	0	
More than \$100 million	8	9	1	1
Don't know/Not sure	1	1	8	8
No response	1	1	3	
N=	164	138	146	142

\*Question read: What approximately was your overall newsroom budget in the last calendar year

In 2015 options included: Less than \$1 million; \$1 million to \$4.9 million; \$5 million to \$49.9 million; \$50 million to \$100 million; More than \$100 million.

7. Roughly, what percentage of your organization's CY 2022 expense budget was dedicated to producing journalism?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
Less than 25 percent	5	4
25 to 49 percent	16	17
50 to 74 percent	21	23
75 to 100 percent	38	36
Don't know/Not sure	20	20
No response	1	1
N=	164	138

8. About how many full-time or full-time equivalent journalists or news producers does your organization have?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Fewer than 5	54	51	29	30
5 to 9	13	14	9	9
10 to 19	11	10	13	13
20 to 29	7	8	10	10
30 to 49	6	7	10	10
50 to 99	1	1	14	15
100 to 499	1	1	12	12
500 to 1,000	2	2	-	-
More than 1,000	4	5	1	1
Don't know/Not sure	-	-	-	
No response	1	1	2	
N=	164	138	146	143

\*Question read: About how many full-time staff employees does your newsroom have?

9. Over the last five years, has your newsroom staffing budget increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
Increased	38	38
Decreased	34	32
Stayed about the same	25	27
Don't know/Not sure	2	3
No response	1	1
N=	164	138

10. Has your organization eliminated any full-time newsroom staff positions in the last five years? **If yes:** About how many full-time newsroom staff positions have been eliminated in the last five years?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
Our organization has not eliminated any full-time newsroom staff positions in the last five years	52	52
Less than five	23	22
5-9	5	4
10-29	5	7
30-50	2	2
50-99	2	2
100-499	-	-
More than 500	6	7
Don't know/Not sure	1	1
No response	2	2
N=	164	138

11. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Philanthropy should play a role in supporting all types of for-profit news organizations.

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
Agree	67	72
Disagree	19	18
Don't know/Not sure	13	9
No response	1	1
N=	164	138

12. **If Q11 = Disagree:** Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Philanthropy should play a role in supporting only a select group of for-profit organizations that are family owned, independently owned, or locally owned?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
Agree	35	44
Disagree	55	44
Don't know/Not sure	10	12
No response	-	-
N=	31	25

13. Has your news organization received donations or other direct philanthropic giving in the last five years?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	77	91
No	21	9
Don't know/Not sure	2	-
No response	-	-
N=	164	138

14. In the last five years, philanthropy has funded new training and leadership programs to help accelerate subscriptions and digital transformation from print. Has your organization or members of your organization participated in any of these programs?

	All 4/13-7/21/2023	Grantees 4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	55	66
No	40	30
Don't know/Not sure	5	4
No response	-	-
N=	164	138

**Following questions based only on Grantees, organizations that over the past five years have received donations or other direct philanthropic funding; or participated in any philanthropic-funded training and leadership programs.**

15. Do you provide free online access to reporting and stories that are supported primarily with philanthropic support?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	67
No	21
Don't know/Not sure	12
N=	138

16. In your CY 2022 expense budget, approximately what percentage of revenue came from each of the following revenue sources?

4/13-7/21/2023 N=138	Less than 10 percent	10 to 25 percent	25 to 50 percent	More than 50 percent	None	No response
Advertising	9	4	23	38	7	18
Subscriptions	20	9	15	7	28	22
Individual giving less than \$4,999	44	7	4	7	20	17
Individual giving more than \$5,000	18	7	-	1	54	21
National foundations	18	5	1	2	52	21
Local foundations, including community foundations, place-based funders, local family foundations, and local businesses	28	9	6	3	35	20
Donor-advised funds, such as from Fidelity Charitable or other financial institutions, excluding community foundations	12	-	1	-	66	21
Technology companies providing direct grants, including Meta, Google and Microsoft	23	5	4	1	47	20
Funding partners providing direct grants, such as Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Institute for Nonprofit News, Report for America, the American Journalism Project, or Local Media Association	24	12	4	1	42	18
Other earned revenue, including underwriting, local business, or corporate sponsorships	29	9	7	4	33	18
Other	7	4	4	-	15	71

17. **IF Q16: National foundations ne NONE:** Over the last five years, has the percentage of your organization's budget coming from national foundation grants increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Increased	65
Decreased	5
Stayed about the same	22
Don't know/Not sure	8
No response	-
N=	37

18. **IF Q16: Local foundations ne NONE:** Over the last five years, has the percentage of your budget coming from local foundations, including community foundations and family foundations, increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Increased	52
Decreased	3
Stayed about the same	35
Don't know/Not sure	3
Suppressed*	6
No response	-
N=	63

\*Cases were suppressed in the data due to a programming error on an early version of the survey.

19. **IF Q16: Major donors ne NONE:** Over the last five years, has the number of major donors – individual donors who contributed more than \$5,000 – increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Increased	54
Decreased	3
Stayed about the same	40
Don't know/Not sure	3
No response	-
N=	35

20. Has your organization’s collaboration with other news organizations increased, decreased, or stayed about the same in the last five years?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Increased	53
Decreased	4
Stayed about the same	36
Don't collaborate with other news organizations	6
Don't know/Not sure	1
No response	-
N=	138

21. **IF Q20 ne DON'T COLLABORATE:** Have funders offered financial incentives to increase your organization's collaboration with other news organizations in the last five years?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	23
No	63
Don't know/Not sure	8
No response	-
N=	128

22. In the last five years, has your organization received direct funding or participated in accelerator or other training programs from the Meta/Facebook Journalism Project?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	36
No	52
Don't know/Not sure	12
No response	-
N=	138

23. **IF Q22=YES:** In the last five years, what was the total amount of direct funding your organization received from the Meta/Facebook Journalism Project?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Less than \$50,000	44
\$50,000-\$99,999	28
\$100,000 to \$249,999	18
\$250,000 to \$499,999	-
\$500,000 to \$1 million	-
More than \$1 million	10
Don't know/Not sure	-
No response	-
N=	50

24. In the last five years, has your organization received direct funding, accelerator, or other training from the Google News Initiative?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	52
No	36
Don't know/Not sure	11
No response	1
N=	138

25. **IF Q24=YES:** In the last five years, what was the total amount of direct funding your organization received from the Google News Initiative?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Less than \$50,000	74
\$50,000-\$99,999	6
\$100,000 to \$249,999	7
\$250,000 to \$499,999	3
\$500,000 to \$1 million	-
More than \$1 million	11
Don't know/Not sure	-
No response	-
N=	72

26. Does your organization or staff belong or participate in programming, training and resources provided by any of the following? *Select all that apply.*

	4/13-7/21/2023
America's Newspapers	7
Investigative Reporters and Editors Association, including NICAR (IRE)	28
The Lenfest News Philanthropy Network	33
LION Publishers (LION)	43
Asian-American Journalists Association (AAJA)	9
National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ)	21
National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ)	13
National Newspaper Publishers Association	14
Native American Journalists Association (NAJA)	4
News Leaders Association	8
News Media Alliance	6
News Product Alliance	5
Open News	1
Online News Association (ONA)	23
Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)	33
None of the above	9
N=	138

27. **IF Q26 ne NONE:** Which programs or associations offer the most value for your organization?

*List up to 5. Open end*

28. In the last five years, have you or members of your organization participated in training, accelerators, fellowships, or leadership development programs from any of the following? *Select all that apply.*

	4/13-7/21/2023
American Press Institute	22
Local Media Association	36
Google News Initiative	51
Maynard Institute for Journalism Education	11
Meta/Facebook Journalism Project	33
Microsoft	3
Online News Association	12
Poynter Institute	33
Solutions Journalism Network	31
"Table Stakes" leadership programs at various institutions, including American Press Institute, Arizona State University, Poynter Institute and University of North Carolina	30
The Lenfest Institute for Journalism	35
University-based programs, such as fellowships and training at HBCUs, Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, Northwestern, and others	20
None of the above	17
N=	138

29. **IF Q28 ne NONE:** Which programs or associations have offered the most value for your organization?  
*List up to 5. Open end*

30. In the last five years, have you or members of your organization accessed direct funding, fellows, or resources from any of these organizations? *Select all that apply.*

	4/13-7/21/2023
Borealis Racial Equity Journalism Fund	3
Google News Initiative	37
Local Media Association	26
Meta/Facebook	27
Microsoft	2
NewsMatch	4
NewsPack	8
News Revenue Hub	12
ProPublica	13
Report For America	32
Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press	1
Solutions Journalism Network	24
The Lenfest Institute for Journalism	14
A state-level funding initiative, such as Colorado Media Project and other projects in NJ, NC, NM, and CA	7
None of the above	20
N=	138

31. **IF Q30 ne NONE:** Of the help you have received from outside organizations, what has been most valuable?  
*Open end*

32. **IF Q30 ne NONE:** What else would you like to receive from these outside organizations?  
*Open end*

33. Does the racial and ethnic diversity of your newsroom reflect the community you serve?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	63
No	31
Don't know/Not sure	6
No response	-
N=	138



34. In the last five years, how much has your organization increased the racial and ethnic diversity of your newsroom to better reflect the community you serve?

	4/13-7/21/2023
A great deal	18
A moderate amount	33
Only a little	16
None at all	19
Don't know/Not sure	13
No response	1
N=	138

35. Does your organization focus primarily on serving the information needs of communities of color? By "focus primarily," we mean that people of color comprise most of your audience and your organization spends most of its funding, resources, and staff time on stories for people of color.

	4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	23
No	73
Don't know/Not sure	4
No response	-
N=	138

36. **IF Q35=YES:** What communities of color are primarily being served by your organization?

Select all that apply.

	4/13-7/21/2023
Asian American, East Asian, South Asian, or Southeast Asian	6
Black or African American	66
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	19
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	-
Middle Eastern or North African	-
Native American, Indigenous, or Alaska Native	3
Other racial or ethnic group	6
Don't know/Not sure	-
No response	-
N=	32

37. **IF Q35=YES:** In the last five years, has funding your organization received to specifically address the news and the information needs of communities of color increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Increased	56
Decreased	6
Stayed about the same	34
Don't know/Not sure	3
No response	-
N=	32

*In this section, we revisit many of the same questions that were asked in the 2015 survey produced by the American Press Institute to better understand the ethical implications of the rise of philanthropy to support journalism. The 2015 survey findings prompted new practices around donor transparency. Thank you for helping us learn about what challenges remain.*

38. On its website or annual report, does your organization publicly list all your donors, most of them, only some, or none?

	4/13-7/21/2023
All	14
Most	12
Some	20
None	37
Don't know/Not sure	17
No response	-
N=	138

39. **IF Q38=MOST or SOME:** Does your organization set a level of financial contribution above which it discloses the name of the donors, and if so at what level?

	4/13-7/21/2023
\$250 and above	-
\$500 and above	7
\$1,000 and above	11
\$5,000 and above	7
\$10,000 and above	-
All donations regardless of their level	-
We do not set a threshold	67
Don't know/Not sure	9
No response	-
N=	45

40. Has your organization ever received contributions from donor-advised funds, which are charitable organizations administered by third parties to manage the charitable contribution of an organization, family, or individuals?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	30
No	59
Don't know/Not sure	10
No response	-
N=	138

41. **IF Q40=YES:** What information does your organization provide about contributions from donor-advised funds on your organization's website or annual report?

	4/13-7/21/2023
The donor-advised fund is identified but not its constituent contributors	19
Both donor-advised fund and its contributors are identified	10
Neither	17
Other	21
Don't know/Not sure	33
No response	-
N=	42

42. Does your organization have a written policy about disclosing contributors that is posted on your website or annual report?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Yes	14
No	72
Don't know/Not sure	14
No response	-
N=	138

43. Has a partner or funder your organization has worked with ever subsequently been a subject of one of your organization's own news stories?

	4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	28	53	56
No	51	34	37
Don't know/Not sure	20	7	7
No response	-		
N=	138	76	71

\*Question read: Has a partner or funder you have worked with ever subsequently been a subject of one of your own news stories?

44. **IF Q43=YES:** Did you mention the funding in that story?

	4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
We cited the funding in news stories about them	44	23	23
We didn't cite the funding in news stories about them	23	33	33
We cited the funding in some news stories but not others	8	20	21
Other (Please specify)	18	13	13
Don't know/Not sure	8	10	10
No response	-	3	
N=	39	40	39

\*Question read: Did you mention your previous collaboration in that story, did you not cite it, or do you not know?

45. Even without any explicit conversations taking place, would you say your organization's relationship with a funder has ever influenced coverage in any of the following ways?

Select all that apply.

	4/13-7/21/2023
At times, we've avoided covering certain issues that might have a created conflict of interest with a funder's other activities	4
We increased coverage of certain issues that we knew were of interest to a funder	10
We have never considered the portfolio of interests of our funders in our decision making	78
Don't know/Not sure	11
No response	-
N=	138

46. To what degree does your organization usually communicate with funders about what you are working on prior to publication?

	4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
We talk about specific stories and timing	2	13	18
We talk about the problems our reporting might expose and the conclusions we will come to but not specific stories	1	3	4
We talk about coverage areas but only in general terms	21	22	30
Our policy is never to discuss with funders specifically what we are working on prior to publication	58	16	21
Only communicate during the grant process	-	3	
Other (Please specify)	7	4	27
Don't know/Not sure	10	12	
No response	1	28	
N=	138	76	56

\*Question read: To what degree do you usually communicate with non-profit funders prior to publication about the work they have underwritten?

47. How often, if at all, do funders see editorial content they have helped underwrite prior to publication?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Always	2
Usually	2
About half the time	-
Only sometimes	-
Very rarely	5
Never	83
Don't know/Not sure	7
No response	1
N=	138

48. How often, if at all, does your organization make any editorial changes in your content based on funder input?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Almost always	-
Usually	-
About half the time	1
Only sometimes	1
Hardly ever	4
Never	76
We have never been asked to do so	14
Don't know/Not sure	4
No response	1
N=	138

49. Recognizing there can be many factors in funding decisions, which of the following statements comes closer to describing the reason you think your funders make grants to news and media organizations?

	4/13-7/21/2023
To have a desired impact and advance the larger strategic agenda of the foundation.	15
To strengthen a free press and to educate the citizens regardless of the outcome of the reporting they fund.	72
Don't know/Not sure	12
No response	1
N=	138

50. Has a foundation ever offered to fund an investigation or specific series of stories on an issue or problem, as opposed to ongoing coverage of a general topic area?

	4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	28	46	52
No	65	36	40
Don't know/Not sure	7	7	7
No response	-	12	
N=	138	76	67

\*Question read: Has a foundation, university or college, non-profit media operation or other nonprofit ever approached you about funding or partnering on an investigation into a particular problem or doing specific series of stories?

51. IF Q50=YES: Did your organization accept the funding?

	4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	79	57
No	16	34
Don't know/Not sure	5	9
No response	-	
N=	38	35

\*Question read: Did you accept the funding or partnership?

52. IF Q51=YES: What were the main reasons your organization went forward with the project?

Select up to two.

	4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015* w/o no response
We already had a good relationship with this funder	3	30
We wanted to establish a relationship with this funder	3	15
While the particular project was not on our list, the general topic was one we cover	17	
The project was not on our list already but struck us as worthwhile	43	15
The project or investigation was already on our list of things to do	40	25
The funding was important to our sustainability	7	10
Other (Please specify)	3	
Don't know/Not sure	3	
No response	-	
N=	30	20

\*Question read: What were the main reasons you went forward with the project? Responses included "In general, we want to increase such collaborative journalism" 35% and "The partnership provided us with expertise that we did not otherwise have access to" 50%.

53. **IF Q51=NO:** What were the main reasons your organization declined the project?

Select up to two.

	4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015* w/o no response
Previous experience with funder led us to decline working with them again	17	-
We didn't have the capacity at the time to do the work	-	33
We felt the funder would be too involved	33	17
We never accept funding for specific investigations or stories	17	13
The subject was not one we generally cover	33	8
The funder is such an advocate on the issue that this felt like a conflict of interest	17	50
The stories were not already on our list	-	-
Other (Please specify)	-	8
Don't know/Not sure	17	
No response	-	
N=	6	12

\*Question read: What were the main reasons you declined the project?

54. Has your organization ever had to defend itself from public criticism because it accepted funding from a particular foundation or technology company?

	4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	9	5	6
No	82	76	88
Don't know/Not sure	7	5	6
No response	1	13	
N=	138	77	66

\*Question read: Has your news organization ever had to defend itself from public criticism because of funding or a collaboration with a non-profit?

55. Does your organization ever accept grants to cover issues on which the funder is also engaged in work such as trying to change policy, or influence public behavior on that issue?

	4/13-7/21/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
No, our policies require that we would decline that funding as a conflict of interest	23	47	59
We make those decisions case by case, based on the level and nature of the advocacy	8	28	34
We would accept the funding, but only under the condition that it be for general operating support but not for coverage of a specific topic, issue or project	5	5	7
We receive donations from funders active in same sector we are covering/advocacy publication	3		
We have never been approached about doing this	51		
Other (Please specify)	4		
Don't know/Not sure	6		
No response	1	20	
N=	138	76	61

\* “We receive donations from funders active in same sector we are covering/advocacy publication,” “We have never been approached about doing this,” and “Other” were not offered as response options.

56. What actions or changes in philanthropic giving practices would make it easier for organizations like yours to get access to more philanthropic support?

*Open end*

57. Do you agree with the goals of the Rebuild Local News coalition and others to increase government funding support for journalism?

	4/13-7/21/2023
Agree	41
Disagree	14
Don't know/Not sure	45
No response	1
N=	138

58. What do funders need to know to help strengthen journalism and the long-term sustainability of journalism entities?

*Open end*



## METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago in partnership with Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism. Funding was provided by The Lenfest Institute for Journalism, Media Impact Funders, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and Arnold Ventures. The research was conducted by Marjorie Connelly and Betsy Broaddus from NORC at the University of Chicago, Tom Rosenstiel, Eleanor Merrill Professor on the Future of Journalism at the University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism and senior fellow at NORC, and Jennifer Preston, a consultant for Media Impact Funders and a coach in the Journalism Funding Lab at the Local Media Association. Preston is a former reporter and editor at The New York Times and former Vice President for Journalism at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, where she worked from 2014 until 2021 during a significant expansion of philanthropic giving in support of local journalism.

The study included three separate online surveys: a survey designed for funders that support journalism and news media; a survey for leaders at nonprofit news and public radio stations; and a survey for leaders at for-profit news organizations, including legacy news organizations and online independent local outlets. This is the first comprehensive survey of funders and the field since an American Press Institute study in 2015 that charted the growth of the nonprofit journalism sector and new ethical concerns about potential conflicts of interest between funders and the journalists they support.

The research team constructed a list sample for all three survey populations and all organizations on the list were invited to participate. The surveys do not represent the complete population of the foundations and grantmaking institutions that fund journalism and news media. They also do not represent all nonprofit journalism organizations or for-profit news media organizations in the United States. The precise size and scope of that universe is difficult to determine, but efforts were made to have as comprehensive and representative sample as possible.

For the three samples, we identified as many funders supporting journalism and leaders at nonprofit and for-profit news organizations as possible.

- To develop the sample for the funder survey, we created a database from a publicly available data map, Foundation Maps for Media Funding, developed by Candid and hosted by Media Impact Funders. To help confirm and further identify journalism funders, we also used ProPublica's NonProfit Explorer and reviewed annual reports and websites of nonprofit news sites that belong to INN because they ask members to publicly disclose donors giving more than \$5,000. We also included top leaders at as many community foundations as possible to help learn about local funder engagement, if any for journalism and news media.
- For the for-profit survey, we began with the recently updated database of for-profit news organizations in the United States at The University of North Carolina's Hussman School of Journalism and Media and the national database of community media at the Center for Community Media at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. We refined the database by assembling lists of news organizations that had engaged with philanthropy from publicly available information at the American Press Institute, Local Media Association, LION Publishers, The Poynter Institute, The Lenfest Institute for Journalism and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Several of the above organizations also responded to requests to urge their members to consider participation in the survey.
- For the survey of nonprofit news organizations and public radio stations, we assembled a database with the assistance of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and INN. More than 400 nonprofit news organizations belong to INN, which has created community guidelines on donor disclosure and journalistic ethics. INN produces the INN Index, an annual survey that tracks trends about this growing sector and this survey sought not to replicate questions. INN invited members to participate in this survey and the survey was only sent to those INN members who agreed to participate.

Email invitations containing links to the appropriate on-line survey were sent, with multiple reminder follow-up emails. The surveys were conducted in English using Qualtrics XM, an online research software system. The analyses are based on unweighted data and

no margin of sampling error can be calculated because this was not a probability-based sample. The surveys were conducted from April 13 to July 21, 2023.

Survey invitations were sent by email to representatives at 563 private foundations, family foundations, community foundations, and other grant making institutions. A total of 156 funding organizations responded. Most results are based on the 129 funders who said yes to the screening question, “Does your organization make grants in support of journalism and news media?”

For nonprofit media organizations, including both NPR-affiliated public radio stations, 493 email invitations were sent, and representatives from 293 outlets responded.

Email invitations were sent to 540 for-profit news companies and 164 responded. Of those organizations, 138 were determined to be eligible for the study because they said in the last five years, they received donations or other direct philanthropic giving, or participated in philanthropic-funded training and leadership programs. Of those, 91 percent said they received direct charitable contributions.

It is possible that many of the funders chose not to respond because they do not give grants for journalism and news media organizations, and some news media outlets may not have responded because they have had no relationships with funders and foundations. No responses were dropped from the dataset due to poor data quality.

The report and complete topline can be found at: <https://mediaimpactfunders.org/our-work/reports/>. For more information on the study, please contact Jennifer Preston at [jennifer@mediafunders.org](mailto:jennifer@mediafunders.org).

## **ABOUT MEDIA IMPACT FUNDERS**

Media Impact Funders (MIF) is a national membership organization that advances the work of a broad range of funders committed to effective use and support of media in the public interest. Learn more at [mediaimpactfunders.org](https://mediaimpactfunders.org).

## **ABOUT THE LENFEST INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism is a nonprofit organization whose sole mission is to develop sustainable solutions for local journalism. In addition to being the non-controlling parent organization of The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Institute supports journalism and news organizations serving local communities in Philadelphia and around the United States.

## **ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created, and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge. Please visit [www.norc.org](http://www.norc.org) for more information.



MEDIA IMPACT FUNDERS and THE LENFEST INSTITUTE FOR JOURNALISM SURVEY  
Conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago

## Nonprofit Journalism Organizations

*Interviews: 4/13- 7/8/2023  
293 organizations*

*NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled.*

*Results labeled "NPR/PBS 2023" are based on organizations that indicate they are an NPR-member public radio station, a PBS-member public broadcasting station, or joint NPR/PBS licensee.*

*Results labeled "API 2015" are based on a survey conducted in 2015 by the American Press Institute. Results labeled "API 2015 w/o no response" were recalculated eliminating respondents who skipped the question.*

1. What year was your organization founded? How many years has your foundation or funding organization been in existence?

	4/13-7/8/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Less than 5 years ago	30	35	37
6-9 years ago	13	39	41
10-15 years ago	19	7	8
16-50 years ago	19	10	10
More than 50 years ago	17	3	3
Don't know/Not sure	-	1	1
No response	1	4	
<b>N=</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>90</b>

\*Question read: How long ago was your nonprofit news organization founded?

2. Where is your organization based? City, State, Zip code

	4/13-7/8/2023
<b>Northeast</b>	26
New England	11
Mid-Atlantic	15
<b>Midwest</b>	<b>16</b>
East North Central	10
West North Central	6
<b>South</b>	28
South Atlantic	17
East South Central	3
West South Central	8
<b>West</b>	25
Mountain	9
Pacific	16
No response	5

3. What is the focus of your organization? *Select all that apply*

	4/13-7/8/2023
Reporting on a single topic or related topics (such as education, environment, or criminal justice)	37
Reporting on a local or regional geographic area, covering general news or reporting on a number of topics	67
Reporting on a statehouse or state level	27
Reporting on national or international topics	19
Reporting on a particular community of color, ethnicity, or religion	16
Capacity-building organization (such as Report for America, Solutions Journalism Network, News Revenue Hub)	10
Other (Please specify)	12
Don't know/Not sure	-
No response	-
N=	293

4. What is your outlet's primary distribution channel?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Online and print	18
Online only	42
Email newsletter	4
Podcast, social media, or SMS platform based	2
NPR-member public radio station	13
PBS-member public broadcasting station	*
Joint NPR/PBS licensee	5
Community radio or television	*
Capacity building providing services and resources to the field	2
Other (Please specify)	12
Don't know/Not sure	-
No response	1
N=	293

5. What is the primary geographic scope of your organization's coverage?

	4/13-7/8/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Global	6	3	3
National	16	15	16
Regional (multi-state)	10	31	33
State	25		
Local (such as city, county, town, or suburb)	42	13	13
Hyperlocal	-	11	11
Several of the above		14	15
Other/Several	-	9	9
Don't know/Not sure	*		
No response	1	5	
N=	293	94	89

\*Question read: Which of the following best describes your core audience?

Global was labeled international; state and regional were combined; Local (such as city, county, town, or suburb) was labeled Metro.

6. What was your organization's approximate calendar year (CY) 2022 expense budget? .

	4/13-7/8/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Less than \$500,000	43	55	61
\$500,000 to \$999,999	11	14	15
\$1 million to \$1.9 million	15	9	9
\$2 million to \$5 million	12	4	5
More than \$5 million	17	9	9
Don't know/Not sure	-	*	*
No response	2	10	
N=	293	94	85

\*Question read: Approximately, what was your organization's overall budget in the last calendar year?

In 2015 options included: Less than \$100,000, \$100,000 to \$249,999, and \$250,000 to \$499,999.

7. Roughly, what percentage of your organization's CY 2022 expense budget was dedicated to producing journalism?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Less than 25 percent	7
25 to 49 percent	11
50 to 74 percent	27
75 to 100 percent	52
Don't know/Not sure	2
No response	1
N=	293

9. About how many full-time or full-time equivalent journalists or news producers does your organization have?

	4/13-7/8/2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Fewer than 5	49	57	63
5 to 9	22	11	12
10 to 19	12	9	9
20 to 29	8	4	5
30 to 50	4	4	5
More than 50	5	5	6
Don't know/Not sure	-	1	1
No response	1	9	
N=	293	94	86

\*Question read: About how many fulltime staff employees does your organization have?

10. Over the last five years, has the number of journalists or news producers in your organization increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Increased	60
Decreased	7
Stayed about the same	28
Don't know/Not sure	2
No response	2
N=	293

11. Over the last five years, has the size of full-time or full-time equivalent staff in your organization working on revenue and audience growth, fundraising, and business sustainability increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Increased	49
Decreased	6
Stayed about the same	41
Don't know/Not sure	3
No response	2
N=	293

12. In your CY 2022 expense budget, approximately what percentage of funding came from each of the following revenue sources?

4/13-7/8/2023 N=293	Less than 10 percent	10 to 25 percent	25 to 50 percent	More than 50 percent	None	DK/ NS	No response
Individual giving less than \$4,999	27	24	25	15	2	1	5
Individual giving more than \$5,000	44	17	14	2	12	2	9
National foundations	18	15	10	17	26	4	10
Local foundations, including community foundations, place-based funders, local family foundations, and local businesses	35	19	14	8	15	2	8
Donor-advised funds, such as from Fidelity Charitable or other financial institutions, excluding community foundations	45	12	3	1	22	8	9
Technology companies providing direct grants, including Meta, Google and Microsoft	33	4	2	1	45	3	12
Funding partners providing direct grants, such as Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Institute for Nonprofit News, Report for America, the American Journalism Project, or Local Media Association	34	18	7	4	25	3	9
Earned revenue, including advertising, underwriting, local business or corporate sponsorships	29	23	16	4	18	1	9
Other	3	3	2	2	5	2	82

13. **IF Q12: National foundations ne NONE:** Over the last five years, has the percentage of your organization's budget coming from national foundation grants increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Increased	39
Decreased	19
Stayed about the same	40
Don't know/Not sure	1
No response	1
N=	175



14. **IF Q12: Local foundations ne NONE:** Over the last five years, has the percentage of your budget coming from local foundations, including community foundations and family foundations, increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Increased	51
Decreased	7
Stayed about the same	39
Don't know/Not sure	3
No response	*
N=	221

15. **IF Q12: Major donors ne NONE:** Over the last five years, has the number of major donors – individual donors who contributed more than \$5,000 – increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Increased	56
Decreased	3
Stayed about the same	38
Don't know/Not sure	2
No response	*
N=	227

16. Has your organization’s collaboration with other news organizations increased, decreased, or stayed about the same in the last five years?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Increased	66
Decreased	3
Stayed about the same	21
Don't collaborate with other news organizations	6
Don't know/Not sure	2
No response	1
N=	293

17. **IF Q16 ne DON'T COLLABORATE:** Have funders offered financial incentives to increase your organization's collaboration with other news organizations in the last five years?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Yes	26
No	62
Don't know/Not sure	11
No response	*
N=	264

18. In the last five years, has your organization participated in NewsMatch?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Yes	73
No	24
Don't know/Not sure	2
No response	2
N=	293

19. **IF Q18=YES:** How much do you attribute NewsMatch for helping your organization increase revenue and audience growth?

	4/13-7/8/2023
A great deal	22
Quite a bit	20
A moderate amount	25
Only a little	27
None at all	3
Don't know/Not sure	3
No response	*
N=	213

20. Does your organization or staff belong or participate in programming, training and resources provided by any of the following? *Select all that apply.*

	4/13- 7/8/2023
Greater Public	18
Institute for Nonprofit News (INN)	82
Investigative Reporters and Editors Association, including NICAR (IRE)	37
The Lenfest News Philanthropy Network	29
LION Publishers (LION)	39
Asian-American Journalists Association (AAJA)	15
National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ)	28
National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ)	23
Native American Journalists Association (NAJA)	10
News Product Alliance	8
Open News	3
Online News Association (ONA)	34
Public Media Journalists Association (PMJA)	17
Society of Professional Journalists. (SPJ)	38
None of the above	2
No response	-
N=	293

21. **IF Q20 ne NONE:** Which programs or associations offer the most value for your organization?  
*List up to 5. Open end*

22. In the last five years, have you or members of your organization participated in training, accelerators, fellowships, or leadership development programs from any of the following? *Select all that apply.*

	4/13- 7/8/2023
American Press Institute	11
Local Media Association	14
Google News Initiative	33
Maynard Institute for Journalism Education	10
Meta/Facebook Journalism Project	18
Microsoft	5
Online News Association	17
Poynter Institute	38
Solutions Journalism Network	28
"Table Stakes" leadership programs at various institutions, including American Press Institute, Arizona State University, Poynter Institute and University of North Carolina	13
The Lenfest Institute for Journalism	22
University-based programs, such as fellowships and training at HBCUs, Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, Northwestern, and others	21
None of the above	26
No response	-
N=	293

23. **IF Q22 ne NONE:** Which programs or associations have offered the most value for your organization?  
*List up to 5. Open end*

24. In the last five years, have you or members of your organization accessed direct funding, fellows, or resources from any of these organizations? *Select all that apply.*

	4/13- 7/8/2023
American Journalism Project	12
Borealis Racial Equity Journalism Fund	2
Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Journalism Program	9
Google News Initiative	37
Meta/Facebook	22
Microsoft	7
NewsMatch	68
NewsPack	14
News Revenue Hub	14
ProPublica	12
Report For America	30
Solutions Journalism Network	21
A state-level funding initiative, such as Colorado Media Project and other projects in NJ, NC, NM, and CA	8
None of the above	11
No response	-
N=	293

25. **IF Q24 ne NONE:** Of the help you have received from outside organizations, what has been most valuable?  
*Open end.*

26. **IF Q24 ne NONE:** What else would you like to receive from these outside organizations?  
*Open end.*

27. Does your organization focus primarily on serving the information needs of communities of color? By "focus primarily," we mean that people of color comprise most of your audience and your organization spends most of its funding, resources, and staff time on stories for people of color.

	4/13-7/8/2023
Yes	16
No	79
Don't know/Not sure	3
No response	1
N=	293

28. **IF Q27=YES:** In the last five years, has funding your organization received to specifically address the news and information needs of communities of color increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Increased	50
Decreased	6
Stayed about the same	42
Don't know/Not sure	2
No response	-
N=	48

In this section, we revisit many of the same questions that were asked in the 2015 survey produced by the American Press Institute to better understand the ethical implications of the rise of philanthropy to support journalism. The 2015 survey findings prompted new practices around donor transparency. Thank you for helping us learn about what challenges remain.

29. On its website or annual report, does your organization publicly list all your donors, most of them, only some, or none?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
All	32	11	40	48
Most	20	6	22	27
Some	34	49	16	19
None	11	29	3	4
Don't know/Not sure	2	4	2	3
No response	1	2	16	
N=	293	55	94	79

\*Question read: On your website or annual report, does your organization publicly list all your donors, most of them, only some, or none?

30. **IF Q29=MOST or SOME:** Does your organization set a level of financial contribution above which it discloses the name of the donors, and if so at what level?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015* based on q29=most/some
\$250 and above	2	-	5	6
\$500 and above	6	3	4	8
\$1,000 and above	22	20	13	28
\$5,000 and above	41	13	3	6
\$10,000 and above	3	3	1	3
All donations regardless of their level	1	-	21	11
We do not set a threshold	23	53	26	28
Don't know/Not sure	3	7	5	11
No response	-	-	21	
N=	158	30	94	36

\*Question read: Do you set a level of financial contribution above which your organization discloses the name of the donors, and if so at what level? Question was asked of all respondents.

31. Has your organization ever received contributions from donor-advised funds, which are charitable organizations administered by third parties to manage the charitable contribution of an organization, family, or individuals?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	74	84	47	56
No	18	6	28	33
Don't know/Not sure	8	9	10	11
No response	1	2	16	
N=	293	55	94	79

\*Question read: Have you ever received contributions from donor-advised funds, which are charitable organizations administered by third parties to manage the charitable contribution of an organization, family, or individuals?

32. **IF Q31=YES:** What information does your organization provide about contributions from donor-advised funds on your organization's website or annual report?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
The donor-advised fund is identified but not its constituent contributors	19	11	34	36
Both donor-advised fund and its contributors are identified	22	11	39	40
Neither	21	41	9	7
Other (Please specify)	24	15	5	5
Don't know/Not sure	12	22	11	12
No response	1	-	5	
N=	216	46	44	42

\*Question read: Do you identify both the name of the donor-advised fund on your website or annual report, as well as the individual(s) who make the contribution? "Other" wasn't an option.

33. Does your organization have a written policy about disclosing contributors that is posted on your website or annual report?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	68	35	40	50
No	21	46	35	43
Don't know/Not sure	10	18	5	7
No response	1	2	19	
N=	293	55	94	76

34. Has a partner or funder your organization has worked with ever subsequently been a subject of one of your organization's own news stories?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	45	60	37	46
No	38	11	39	49
Don't know/Not sure	15	26	4	5
No response	2	4	19	
N=	293	55	94	76

\*Question read: Has a partner or funder you have worked with ever subsequently been a subject of one of your own news stories?

35. **IF Q34=YES:** Did you mention the funding in that story?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
We cited the funding in news stories about them	71	94	66	68
We didn't cite the funding in news stories about them	11	-	9	9
We cited the funding in some news stories but not others	10	-	20	21
Other (Please specify)	6	3		
Don't know/Not sure	2	3	3	3
No response	-	-	3	
<b>N=</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>

\*Question read: Did you mention your previous collaboration in that story, did you not cite it, or do you not know?

Responses referred to collaboration rather than funding. "Other" wasn't an option.

36. Even without any explicit conversations taking place, would you say your organization's relationship with a funder has ever influenced coverage in any of the following ways?

Select all that apply.

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023
At times, we've avoided covering certain issues that might have a created conflict of interest with a funder's other activities	1	4
We increased coverage of certain issues that we knew were of interest to a funder	19	13
We have never considered the portfolio of interests of our funders in our decision making	75	82
Don't know/Not sure	4	4
No response	-	-
<b>N=</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>55</b>

37. Does your organization have written guidelines regarding who they will and will not accept money from?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	48	49	37	45
No	39	31	38	47
Don't know/Not sure	12	18	6	8
No response	2	2	18	
<b>N=</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>77</b>

\*Question read: Do you have written guidelines regarding who you will and will not accept money from?

**38. IF Q37=YES:** Are the funding guidelines published on your organization's website or anywhere else?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015* w/o no response
Yes	72	33	71
No	19	48	17
Don't know/Not sure	9	19	11
No response	-	-	
N=	140	27	35

\*Question read: Are your funding guidelines published on your website or anywhere else?

**39.** To what degree does your organization usually communicate with funders about what you are working on prior to publication?

	4/13- 7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015* w/o no response
We talk about specific stories and timing	2	-	2	3
We talk about the problems our reporting might expose and the conclusions we will come to but not specific stories	5	6	2	5
We talk about coverage areas but only in general terms	36	29	33	41
Our policy is never to discuss with funders specifically what we are working on prior to publication	47	53	34	42
Other (Please specify)	7	7	7	9
Don't know/Not sure	1	4		
No response	2	2	19	
N=	293	55	94	76

\*Question read: To what degree do you usually communicate with funders about what you are working on prior to publication?

**40.** How often, if at all, do funders see editorial content they have helped underwrite prior to publication?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015 w/o no response
Always	-	-	1	1
Usually	2	-		
About half the time	-	-		
Only sometimes	1	-	1	1
Very rarely	3	6	3	4
Never	93	91	73	91
Don't know/Not sure	1	2	2	3
No response	1	2	19	
N=	293	55	94	76



41. How often, if at all, does your organization make any editorial changes in your content based on funder input?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015 w/o no response
Almost always	-	-		
Usually	-	-		
About half the time	-	-		
Only sometimes	*	-	2	3
Hardly ever	5	7	3	4
Never	70	78	51	64
We have never been asked to do so	23	13	22	28
Don't know/Not sure	1	-	1	1
No response	1	2	20	
N=	293	55	94	75

\*Question read: How often, if at all, do you make any editorial changes in your content based on funder input?

42. Recognizing there can be many factors in funding decisions, which of the following statements comes closer to describing the reason you think your funders make grants to news and media organizations?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015 w/o no response
To have a desired impact and advance the larger strategic agenda of the foundation.	30	22	33	41
To strengthen a free press and to educate the citizens regardless of the outcome of the reporting they fund.	62	71	40	51
Don't know/Not sure	6	4	6	8
No response	2	4	20	
N=	293	55	94	75

\*Question read: Recognizing there can be many factors in funding decisions, which of the following statements comes closer to describing the reason you think your funders make grants to media organizations?

43. Has a foundation ever offered to fund an investigation or specific series of stories on an issue or problem, as opposed to ongoing coverage of a general topic area?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015 w/o no response
Yes	36	33	41	52
No	54	49	34	43
Don't know/Not sure	9	16	4	5
No response	1	2	20	
N=	293	55	94	75

**44. IF Q43=YES:** Did your organization accept the funding?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015 w/o no response
Yes	69	50	80
No	27	50	20
Don't know/Not sure	3	-	0
No response	1	-	
N=	106	18	40

\*Question read: Did you accept the funding?

**45. IF Q44=YES:** What were the main reasons your organization went forward with the project?

Select up to two.

	4/13- 7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015 w/o no response
We already had a good relationship with this funder	6	11	9
We wanted to establish a relationship with this funder	7	11	9
While the particular project was not on our list, the general topic was one we cover	18	22	13
The project was not on our list already but struck us as worthwhile	10	-	16
The project or investigation was already on our list of things to do	66	67	69
The funding was important to our sustainability	10	-	13
Other (Please specify)	16	11	16
Don't know/Not sure	*	-	
N=	73	9	32

\*Question read: What were the main reasons you went forward with the project? Non-response not included.

**46. IF Q44=NO:** What were the main reasons your organization declined the project?

Select up to two.

	4/13- 7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015 w/o no response
Previous experience with funder led us to decline working with them again	*	-	
We didn't have the capacity at the time to do the work	10	22	13
We felt the funder would be too involved	24	33	
We never accept funding for specific investigations or stories	45	33	63
The subject was not one we generally cover	24	44	
The funder is such an advocate on the issue that this felt like a conflict of interest	28	11	13
The stories were not already on our list	7	11	
Other (Please specify)	10	-	
Don't know/Not sure	*	-	
N=	29	55	8

\*Question read: What were the main reasons you declined the project? Non-response not included.

47. Has your organization ever had to defend itself from public criticism because it accepted funding from a particular foundation or technology company?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015 w/o no response
Yes	14	13	24	31
No	81	75	51	65
Don't know/Not sure	4	11	3	4
No response	1	2	21	
N=	293	55	94	74

\*Question read: Has your organization ever had to defend itself from public criticism because it accepted funding from a particular foundation? Non-response not included.

48. Does your organization ever accept grants to cover issues on which the funder is also engaged in work such as trying to change policy, or influence public behavior on that issue?

	4/13-7/8/2023	NPR/PBS 2023	API 2015*	API 2015 w/o no response
No, our policies require that we would decline that funding as a conflict of interest	14	24	6	9
We make those decisions case by case, based on the level and nature of the advocacy	23	29	35	48
We would accept the funding, but only under the condition that it be for general operating support but not for coverage of a specific topic, issue, or project	10	13	7	10
We receive donations from funders active in same sector we are covering/advocacy publication	8	4		
We have never been approached about doing this	35	22	24	33
Other (Please specify)	4	2		
Don't know/Not sure	6	6		
No response	1	2	27	
N=	293	55	94	69

\* "We receive donations from funders active in same sector we are covering/advocacy publication" and "Other" were not offered as response options. Non-response not included

49. What actions or changes in philanthropic giving practices would make it easier for organizations like yours to get access to more philanthropic support?

Open end.

50. If a funder gave your organization \$1 million in unrestricted support this year, how would you allocate it?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Hire more reporters and editors	31
Invest in new forms of storytelling and community engagement	11
Hire more operations and tech support to increase audience, revenue, and business sustainability	23
Other (Please specify)	32
Don't know/Not sure	2
No response	1
N=	293

51. Do you agree or disagree with recent efforts underway by the Rebuild Local News Coalition to increase local and federal government funding support for journalism?

	4/13-7/8/2023
Agree	41
Disagree	9
Don't know/Not sure	50
No response	1
N=	293

52. About how much additional annual funding would your organization need to increase the quality and volume of reporting to better serve the news and information needs of your community or audience?

	4/13-7/8/2023
25 percent more	17
50 percent more	29
75 percent more	12
100 percent or more	34
Don't know/Not sure	7
No response	1
N=	293

53. What do funders need to know to help strengthen journalism and the long-term sustainability of journalism entities?

*Open end.*

## METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago in partnership with Media Impact Funders and The Lenfest Institute for Journalism. Funding was provided by The Lenfest Institute for Journalism, Media Impact Funders, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and Arnold Ventures. The research was conducted by Marjorie Connelly and Betsy Broaddus from NORC at the University of Chicago, Tom Rosenstiel, Eleanor Merrill Professor on the Future of Journalism at the University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism and senior fellow at NORC, and Jennifer Preston, a consultant for Media Impact Funders and a coach in the Journalism Funding Lab at the Local Media Association. Preston is a former reporter and editor at The New York Times and former Vice President for Journalism at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, where she worked from 2014 until 2021 during a significant expansion of philanthropic giving in support of local journalism.

The study included three separate online surveys: a survey designed for funders that support journalism and news media; a survey for leaders at nonprofit news and public radio stations; and a survey for leaders at for-profit news organizations, including legacy news organizations and online independent local outlets. This is the first comprehensive survey of funders and the field since an American Press Institute study in 2015 that charted the growth of the nonprofit journalism sector and new ethical concerns about potential conflicts of interest between funders and the journalists they support.

The research team constructed a list sample for all three survey populations and all organizations on the list were invited to participate. The surveys do not represent the complete population of the foundations and grantmaking institutions that fund journalism and news media. They also do not represent all nonprofit journalism organizations or for-profit news media organizations in the United States. The precise size and scope of that universe is difficult to determine, but efforts were made to have as comprehensive and representative sample as possible.

For the three samples, we identified as many funders supporting journalism and leaders at nonprofit and for-profit news organizations as possible.

- To develop the sample for the funder survey, we created a database from a publicly available data map, Foundation Maps for Media Funding, developed by Candid and hosted by Media Impact Funders. To help confirm and further identify journalism funders, we also used ProPublica's NonProfit Explorer and reviewed annual reports and websites of nonprofit news sites that belong to INN because they ask members to publicly disclose donors giving more than \$5,000. We also included top leaders at as many community foundations as possible to help learn about local funder engagement, if any for journalism and news media.
- For the for-profit survey, we began with the recently updated database of for-profit news organizations in the United States at The University of North Carolina's Hussman School of Journalism and Media and the national database of community media at the Center for Community Media at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. We refined the database by assembling lists of news organizations that had engaged with philanthropy from publicly available information at the American Press Institute, Local Media Association, LION Publishers, The Poynter Institute, The Lenfest Institute for Journalism and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Several of the above organizations also responded to requests to urge their members to consider participation in the survey.
- For the survey of nonprofit news organizations and public radio stations, we assembled a database with the assistance of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and INN. More than 400 nonprofit news organizations belong to INN, which has created community guidelines on donor disclosure and journalistic ethics. INN produces the INN Index, an annual survey that tracks trends about this growing sector and this survey sought not to replicate questions. INN invited members to participate in this survey and the survey was only sent to those INN members who agreed to participate.

Email invitations containing links to the appropriate on-line survey were sent, with multiple reminder follow-up emails. The surveys were conducted in English using Qualtrics XM, an online research software system. The analyses are based on unweighted data and

no margin of sampling error can be calculated because this was not a probability-based sample. The surveys were conducted from April 13 to July 21, 2023.

Survey invitations were sent by email to representatives at 563 private foundations, family foundations, community foundations, and other grant making institutions. A total of 156 funding organizations responded. Most results are based on the 129 funders who said yes to the screening question, “Does your organization make grants in support of journalism and news media?”

For nonprofit media organizations, including both NPR-affiliated public radio stations, 493 email invitations were sent, and representatives from 293 outlets responded.

Email invitations were sent to 540 for-profit news companies and 164 responded. Of those organizations, 138 were determined to be eligible for the study because they said in the last five years, they received donations or other direct philanthropic giving, or participated in philanthropic-funded training and leadership programs. Of those, 91 percent said they received direct charitable contributions.

It is possible that many of the funders chose not to respond because they do not give grants for journalism and news media organizations, and some news media outlets may not have responded because they have had no relationships with funders and foundations. No responses were dropped from the dataset due to poor data quality.

The report and complete topline can be found at: <https://mediaimpactfunders.org/our-work/reports/>. For more information on the study, please contact Jennifer Preston at [jennifer@mediafunders.org](mailto:jennifer@mediafunders.org).

## **ABOUT MEDIA IMPACT FUNDERS**

Media Impact Funders (MIF) is a national membership organization that advances the work of a broad range of funders committed to effective use and support of media in the public interest. Learn more at [mediaimpactfunders.org](https://mediaimpactfunders.org).

## **ABOUT THE LENFEST INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism is a nonprofit organization whose sole mission is to develop sustainable solutions for local journalism. In addition to being the non-controlling parent organization of The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Institute supports journalism and news organizations serving local communities in Philadelphia and around the United States.

## **ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created, and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge. Please visit [www.norc.org](http://www.norc.org) for more information.