

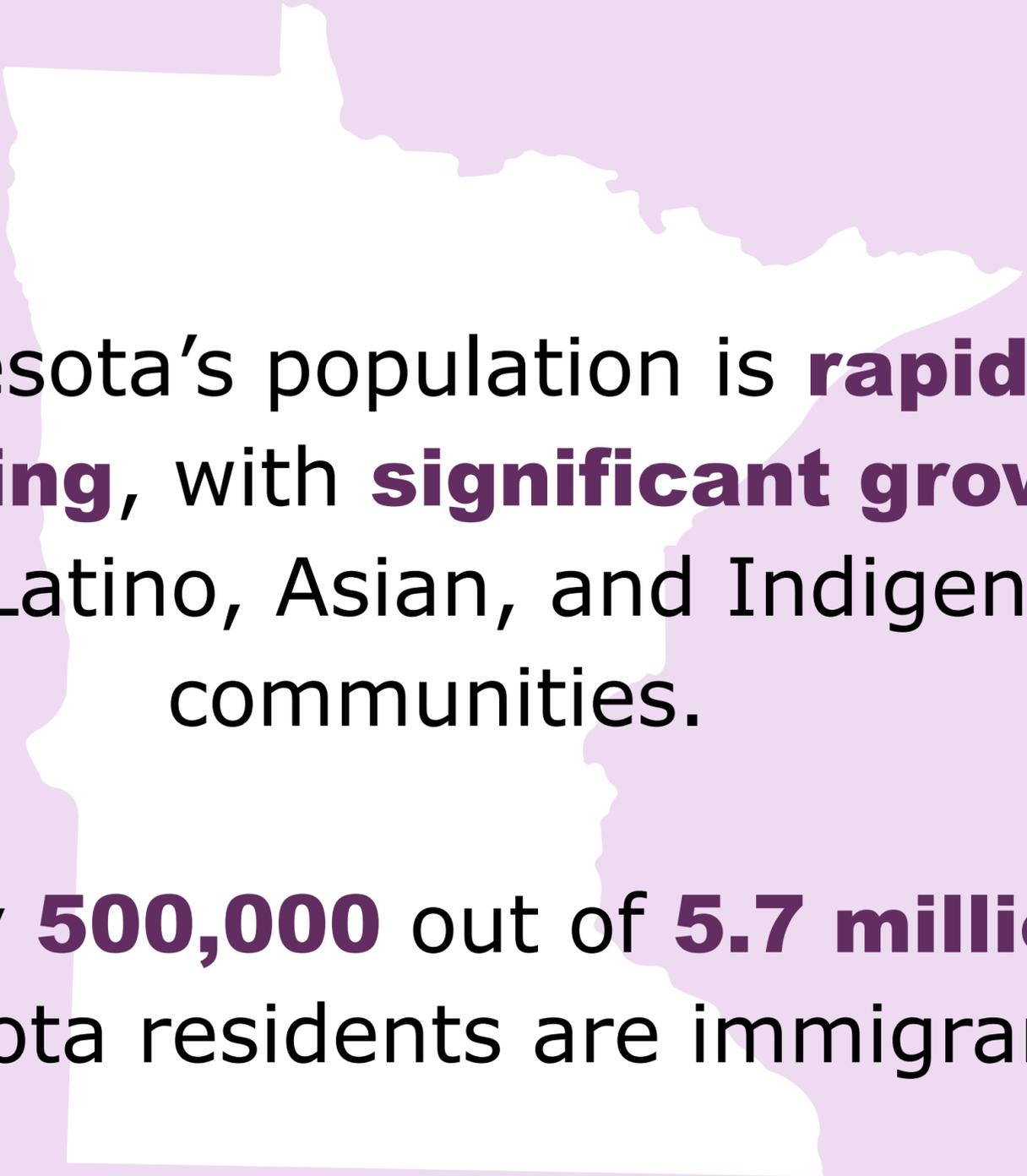


Minnesota Community News Landscape Today

Presented by The Pivot Fund



FEBRUARY 2025

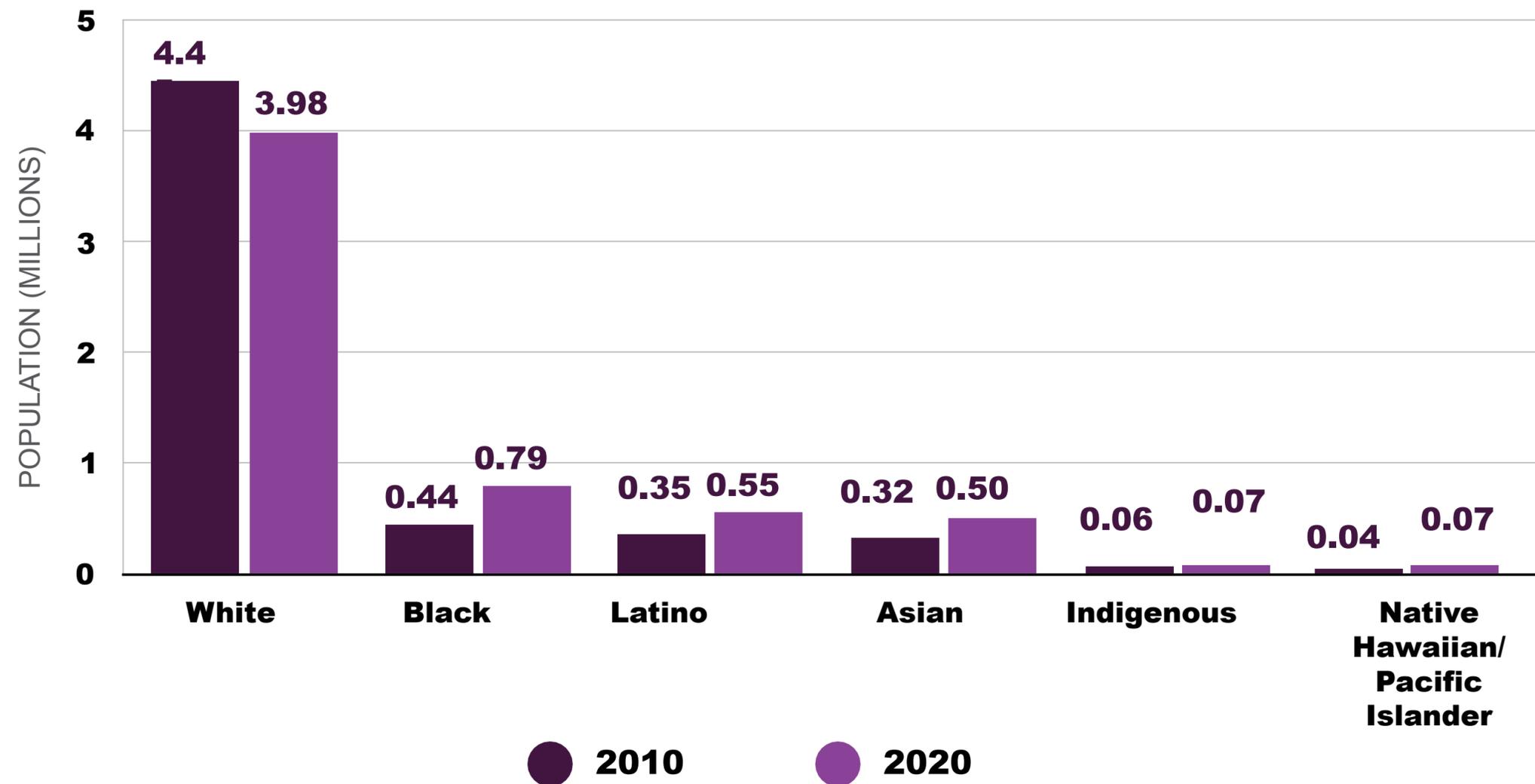


Minnesota's population is **rapidly diversifying**, with **significant growth** in Black, Latino, Asian, and Indigenous communities.

Nearly **500,000** out of **5.7 million** Minnesota residents are immigrants.

State projections indicate **non-White populations will continue to grow** at a faster rate than White populations in the coming years.

Minnesota Population Distribution: 2010 vs. 2020





KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The McKnight Foundation wants its journalism funding to have the most impact possible. That means intimately understanding the changing Minnesota news landscape.

The Pivot Fund Approach

"Who do you trust for your news and information?"

Our research approach centers the demand of the audience or community, rather than the health of traditional media.



Why Audience

While philanthropy is focused on communities, journalism is too often focused on the story. But audience is fundamental for successful journalism.

At the end of the day, if no one reads your paper, or watches your broadcast, there is no audience.

Without audience, there is no long-term sustainability.

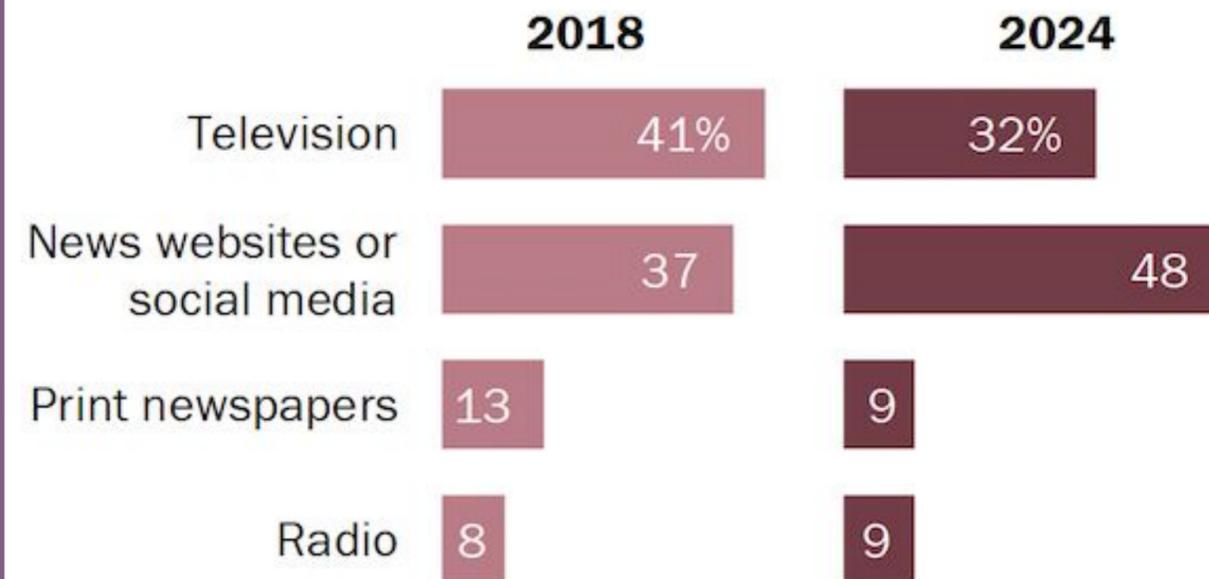


The Shift

We know that there's been a seismic shift in how people consume news.

Americans increasingly prefer digital pathways to local news

% of U.S. adults who say they prefer ___ for getting local news and information



Note: Respondents who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 22-28, 2024.

“Americans’ Changing Relationship With Local News”

PEW-KNIGHT INITIATIVE

Many communities express **distrust toward legacy news outlets**, citing biased or incomplete reporting, particularly around crime and civic issues.



If they can't come for the good stuff, they don't need to come for the bad."

Member of the Little Earth community, Minneapolis

PARTICIPANTS IN LITTLE EARTH LISTENING SESSION / PHOTO BY SEAN LIM

As a result, **communities have turned to nontraditional media sources** to access news and information.

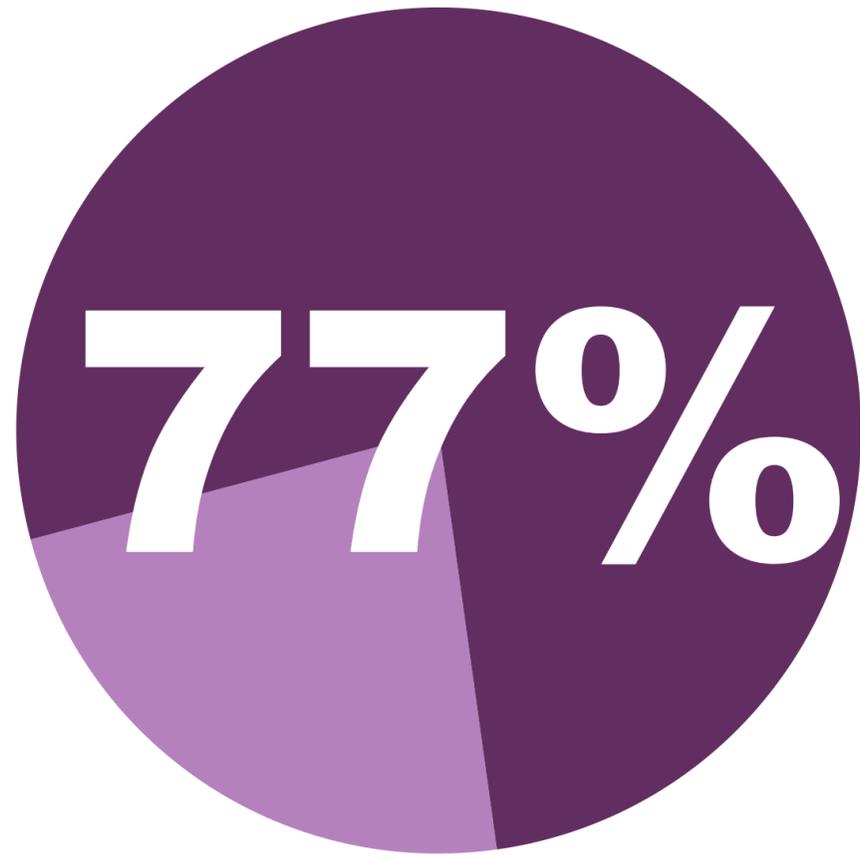


**SOCIAL
MEDIA**



**DIGITAL
PLATFORMS**

**MEDIA
OUTLETS
WITHIN THEIR
COMMUNITIES**



of surveyed individuals **relied on social media for local news** in the past 30 days



Platforms like **Reddit and TikTok** are increasingly popular for news consumption, particularly among younger generations.

Our Methodology



We dove deep into **demographic census data**, creating analysis and insight that **guided our listening sessions.**



We conducted **listening sessions and surveys** with over 600 Minnesotans across **diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.**



Minnesota Listening Sessions



PARTICIPANTS AT LATINO LISTENING SESSION / PHOTO BY ERIC ORTIZ

- ✓ Little Earth of United Tribes
- ✓ African immigrant communities
- ✓ Latino communities
- ✓ Asian immigrant communities
- ✓ Black communities
- ✓ Rural communities



When other people share our stories through their lens, even in education, it's often incorrect or incomplete. **We want to be the authors of our stories.**”

A SOMALI LISTENING SESSION PARTICIPANT WORKING IN EDUCATION



IN STUDIO FILMING AT 3HMONGTV

Participants emphasized the need for **trusted, hyperlocal sources of information**, particularly for issues affecting their neighborhoods, schools, and local government.

They want **news and information about their neighborhood in real time**, rather than an afterthought, and not always connected to crime.

MINNESOTA PARTICIPANTS SAID:

No more:

- ✗ Bad news about shootings, drugs, accidents, etc.
- ✗ Polarizing, partisan coverage
- ✗ Sensationalist stories that generate heat but no light
- ✗ Coverage that stokes division

We need news that:

- ✓ Creates understanding about why things are happening
- ✓ Informs about what's being done to create solutions
- ✓ Is responsive, reparative, balanced and fair
- ✓ Helps resolve issues
- ✓ Makes people's lives better

More **key findings** about the Minnesota local news landscape



3HMONGTV COVERING A COMMUNITY EVENT

- **Growing need and opportunity** for community media to fill in gaps and protect against disinformation
- **Social media is an important source of news** and information for community members of all ages but especially younger people
- **Need for better training of diverse journalists** who come from the communities themselves
- **Philanthropy needs to fund local community media** that already has community trust and can meet demand for culturally competent journalism.

The Rise of Media Entrepreneurs

The report also highlights the **growing importance of media entrepreneurs** who serve the state's diverse communities.



PAMOJA WOMEN COFOUNDERS KHADIJA ALI AND FATUMA AHMED

These small, often underfunded outlets have become vital sources of news to inform and empower communities of color, immigrants, and rural residents.

Meeting Community Information Needs

Media entrepreneurs funded by Minnesota Press Forward Local

- **BLCK Press**
- **3HmongTV**
- **North News**
- **Project Optimist**
- **ThreeSixty Journalism**



NORTH NEWS
Your North Minneapolis news source



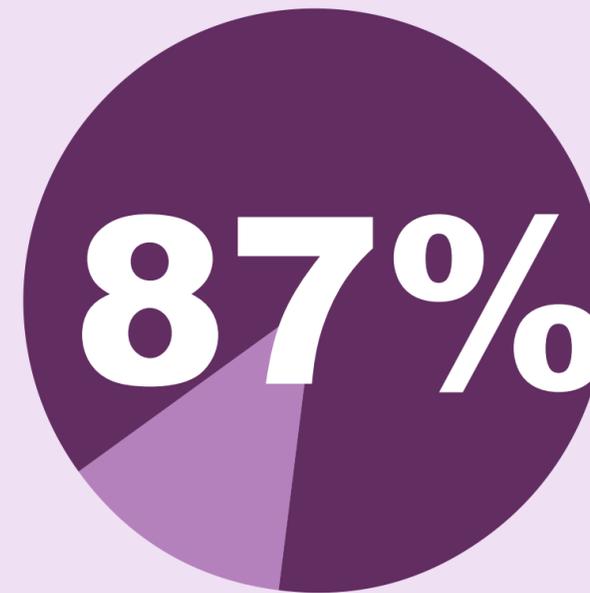
Challenges in Sustainability

- Operate on **shoestring budgets**
- Rely heavily on **volunteer support**
- **Lack necessary financial support**
- **Struggle with visibility** and reach
- **Need professional development,** technical support and capacity building assistance
- **Limited access to digital tools** and strategies, including newsletter development, AI and other innovative technologies and techniques
- **Need help with strategies** and infrastructure to collaborate with other media outlets

Challenges in Sustainability



of surveyed media entrepreneurs of color said they **received enough funding** from philanthropy to cover basic operations.



of surveyed media entrepreneurs of color saw funding decisions as **inequitable.**

SOURCE: "ARCHITECTS OF NECESSITY"
BY DR. MEREDITH CLARK AND TRACIE POWELL

Opportunities for Collaboration and Innovation

Create a **new local media ecosystem that bridges gaps** between traditional and community media with:

- ✓ Partnerships
 - ✓ Shared resources
- ✓ Collaborative storytelling initiatives
- ✓ Events and sponsorship opportunities to drive revenue

Opportunities for Collaboration and Innovation

The Pivot Fund identifies fundable journalism outlets and builds **partnerships between philanthropy and local media** to create healthy growth in community-centered news.

- ✓ Provide funding for staff and capacity to produce quality reporting
- ✓ Fund technical and wraparound support for business operations
- ✓ Support journalism training that prioritizes cultural competency and community engagement

What's Next

The future of journalism in Minnesota **hinges on serving the needs of all its diverse communities.**



CENTER FOR BROADCAST JOURNALISM TEAM
WITH GEORGIA FORT AND MARIANNE COMBS

THIS REQUIRES:

- ✓ Accurate representation and accessible information
- ✓ Journalism that strengthens communities
- ✓ Funding, resources and partnerships for local news sources to grow their operations, improve quality and expand their reach
- ✓ Traditional and community news outlets building trust and working together to create a more effective media landscape people will turn to for their information

“

We need to change the whole thinking system, because that's why, after all this time, we're still fighting for crumbs in this economy that we, this nation, that we built.”

A BLACK WOMAN AND COMMUNITY LEADER AT THE BLACK
COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION



PIVOT FUND **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations

1.

Provide transformational philanthropic support and wrap-around services to existing or emerging media entrepreneurs and their local news sources.

2.

Support creation of inter-generational community convenings/news hubs for Indigenous, Southwest Asians, Latino, Black, and African immigrant communities.

3.

Support more collaborative approaches to mutual aid, and couple that with community engagement projects around news and information.

Recommendations

4.

Fund journalism trade school models with organizations serving youth. Teach technical, ethical, and entrepreneurial skills alongside workforce opportunities.

5.

Provide legacy publications with meaningful levels of funding for cultural competency training.

6.

Fund community and civic engagement efforts. This strengthens democracy and accountability while empowering communities to address inequities.

Recommendations

7.

Fund journalism training programs to develop more immigrant journalists, and to create a pipeline for bilingual and multilingual journalism.

8.

Fund experimentation around advertising and revenue generation initiatives that support community-based media and ethnic media.

9.

Support the creation of a platform or service that connects nontraditional and traditional media organizations.

Call to Action

To build a sustainable future for local news, we need local journalism that **meets the needs of all communities.**



YOUTH COMMUNITY JOURNALIST
AT LITTLE EARTH COMMUNITY EVENT

THIS REQUIRES:

- ✓ Philanthropic support — Multi-year grants, infrastructure
- ✓ Collaboration — Connect traditional with nontraditional
- ✓ Training programs — Create community journalism pathways for youth, immigrants, and underrepresented communities
- ✓ Community hubs — Build and expand local spaces (e.g., trade schools, media centers) where community journalism can be produced, shared, and accessed



Funders have a crucial role to play in empowering community media outlets to grow and thrive.

By listening to community publishers and providing meaningful support, grantmakers can increase the impact of their investments and ensure local media ecosystems serve the needs of all audiences.



Thank you.



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