To ensure a healthy future for local journalism, which is essential to a strong democracy, by reinventing business models for news.
Dear friends and colleagues in the local media industry

When we launched the Lab for Journalism Funding three years ago, we knew it would be essential for the industry. Watching one of our lab alumni hire 20 new reporters in two years, all funded by philanthropy, exceeded even our sky-high expectations.

That company is Georges Media Group, which includes NOLA.com, The Times-Picayune and The Advocate. CEO Judi Terzotis told us those hires would not have been possible without the coaching received in the lab. Some of those reporters now serve a part of Louisiana that had little to no local news coverage. It’s an incredible story.

Similarly, when we launched the Meta Branded Content Project, we knew it would be a home run for many companies. Chris Bennett, publisher/owner of the Seattle Medium, just surpassed $1 million in branded content sales — almost all from new advertisers. He credits the Meta Branded Content Project as the biggest contributor to his long term sustainability.

Broadcasters such as Graham Media Group and WRAL are having success in a wide range of LMA/LMF programs as they navigate new and accelerated disruption.

Last year, we led this report with the story of Larry Lee, publisher/owner of The Sacramento Observer, who quadrupled the size of his team after participating in a number of LMA/LMF initiatives including Knight x LMA BloomLab, Word In Black and the Lab for Journalism Funding. In 2023, he was recognized by NNPA as Publisher of the Year and Newspaper of the Year, and in Sacramento as Small Business of the Year.

These stories inspire us every day. We’re proud to share this 2023 Impact Report and excited for our 2024 plans.

Nancy Lane
Jay Small
Co-CEOs
LMA/LMF
By the Numbers

325+
local newsrooms directly served by LMA programs

$21M
raised by 101 newsrooms through LMA’s Lab for Journalism Funding

$2.5M
cost savings on technology and shared services in two years for BloomLab participants

440
stories on education inequities by Word In Black

32
local newsrooms received fiscal sponsor support through LMF Local News Fund, raising more than $1 million for reporting projects

12
newsrooms supported with 300+ technology and business consultations through the Family and Independent Media Sustainability Lab

180
original stories produced by News is Out newsrooms in first year of collaborative

$100M+
Meta Branded Content Project revenue generated by media companies since inception
The LMA/LMF Strategic Pillars

**Business Transformation**
- Family and Independent Media Sustainability Lab
- Meta Branded Content Project
- LMA Digital Club

**Industry Collaboration**
- Word In Black
- Covering Climate Collaborative
- News Is Out
- Oklahoma Media Center

**Journalism Funded by Philanthropy**
- Lab for Journalism Funding
- Local News Fund
- LMA Philanthropy Accelerator
- NewsFuel

**Sustainability for Publishers of Color**
- Knight x LMA BloomLab
- Word In Black Racial Equity Fund
OUR IMPACT

With less than $500,000 in seed money, Word In Black created a new path for digital startups.

Ten of the nation’s legendary Black publishers teamed up with Local Media Foundation to launch Word In Black in fall 2020 in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder. The goal was to focus on solutions to racial inequities in America through an authentic Black voice that is often not present in mainstream media.

In three short years, Word In Black has grown into a newsroom of 10 reporters and editors focused on specific beats including education, health, climate justice, finance and religion.

Six newsletters with nearly 50,000 subscribers each are published every week. And large brands, such as Deloitte, AARP, Biogen, McKinsey and Wells Fargo are working closely with WIB via partnerships that provide Black communities with vital information.

“Word in Black represents a new chapter defined by collaboration. It represents a new day for local and Black-owned media and … those who support our mission described in 1827 by the publishers of the nation’s first Black newspaper, Freedom’s Journal: ‘We wish to plead our own cause. For too long, others have spoken for us.’ Collectively, we will strive to remain the trusted source of news and information while amplifying the voices often overlooked or marginalized. We look forward to new opportunities to sustain our businesses. Sadly, George Floyd’s untimely and violent death struck a nerve in America. It forced equitable and impactful responses. It also brought the 10 of us together.”

Denise Rolark-Barnes
Publisher
Washington Informer
“Supporting Word In Black is an investment in dismantling systemic barriers, amplifying underrepresented voices, and fostering a more inclusive media landscape. By joining in this endeavor, we have contributed to a narrative that reflects the diversity and richness of our society, promoting a stronger, more equitable future for all.”

Rachel Huguet
Senior Partnerships Officer
The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
OUR IMPACT

Whatever a funder’s first priority, its second should be journalism — because that’s how you reach people in a community. That’s the message Knight Foundation gave to other funders at Knight Media Forum. Funders have listened.

In 2023, the Lab for Journalism Funding completed two more cohorts and trained its 100th newsroom in its industry-leading best practices. Together, alumni of the lab have collectively raised more than $21 million, including the first broadcaster to fully fund a reporting position. These results prove philanthropy can be one of the pillars to sustain local journalism going forward.

In 2023 the Lab also added a Philanthropy Accelerator for top-performing alumni as a way to continue to support program graduates. The Lab experience is free to local newsrooms thanks to the support of Google News Initiative.

“Everything I know about fundraising I learned from the LMA Lab for Journalism Funding! Since then, we’ve raised more than $2.6 million.”

Autumn Phillips
Editor in Chief
The Post and Courier
Charleston, S.C.

$21m
raised for local journalism by news outlets since September 2020

NEW
Philanthropy Accelerator cohort launched in 2023 to increase fundraising impact for Pitch Day winners from the Lab

12
Case studies of philanthropy best practices published and shared to the industry

101
Newsrooms graduated from the Lab for Journalism Funding since launch
“The Google News Initiative has been proud to support and collaborate with LMA over the last several years. LMA continues to demonstrate its commitment to the sustainability of the news ecosystem through its innovative programs, like the Lab for Journalism Funding. We look forward to our continued partnership with LMA and its members.”

Tiffany Proscia
News Partner Manager, Google
Family and Independent Media Sustainability Lab

OUR MISSION

LMA launched the Family and Independent Media Sustainability Lab (FIMS Lab) in Spring 2023 with funding from Google News Initiative. The first cohort — 12 independent local media organizations with news outlets across the country — has benefited from intensive group training, individual consulting, benchmarking and collaboration on critically important subject areas:

- Advertising products and sales strategies
- Audience development and engagement
- Digital subscription growth and optimization
- Growing philanthropic support
- Human resources and benefits best practices
- General strategic planning

Each participating company also developed its own “SMART Goals” for lab work, focused on one or more of those subject areas. All participants will measure their success on their goals as the cohort’s work extends into the first few months of 2024.

OUTCOMES

- Increased conversions for those in the cohort who focused on a digital subscription sprint
- Increased revenue for lab publishers through new branded content strategies
- Improved revenue and sales quality through consulting and compensation planning

“Our participation in the FIMS Lab has helped our entire team — across all of our divisions — stay focused on our expansion goals, and the development of our philanthropic channels. Sharing our wins with and learning valuable insights from a growing community of trusted family and independent local publishers has been invaluable.”

Eric Johnston
Chief Executive Officer and Publisher
Sonoma Media Investments
OUR IMPACT

As the Meta Branded Content Project embarks on its sixth year, the synergy among local media companies continues to drive remarkable success. **Cohort participants have generated an impressive $100 million in total revenue since the project's inception in 2019,** showcasing the tangible impact of our training, products, and programs.

Our commitment to supporting independently owned media companies, publishers of color, and those serving small markets remains unwavering. In 2023, we broadened our brand studio services through strategic national collaborations with industry giants like AARP, Biogen, and Deloitte. We launched The Exchange, a collaboration between Black-owned newspapers in major metropolitan cities across the country and Deloitte, with a mission to amplify diverse voices in media.

Established through a strategic partnership involving the Meta Journalism Project, Local Media Association, and the Local Media Consortium, the Branded Content Project welcomes new partners in 2024 to build on its success.

Watch more: [Our 2023 Impact Video](#).

“**The Meta Branded Content Project provided a sounding board for ideas and a network of colleagues to share best practices. Their help was the start of what's now a half-million-dollar business annually. The ability to learn about what's working for other publishers, to share vendor recommendations, and to be inspired by new ideas has made a difference in the approach and the success of Newsday’s branded content initiative.**”

**Nannette Fevola**
Senior Director, Client Solutions/Brand360
Content and Video, Newsday
IMPACT

In 2023, the second year of the Knight x LMA BloomLab, the final cohort of eight publishers was added — joining 16 from the first two cohorts for a total of 26 Black-owned local media organizations in the lab.

Adriana Lacy, a consultant focused on audience development strategies, joined the lab to provide key insights, thanks to additional funding from the Walton Family Foundation. The lab’s three full-time directors focused on audience and community development; technology; and sales and marketing. They provided individualized and group-level advice and consultation focused on strategies for economic and strategic sustainability. These experts acted as seamless extensions of the publishers’ teams, making regular in-person visits and weekly calls.

Publishers have used their funds strategically: upgrading to modern content management systems, streamlining newsletter management, implementing reader revenue platforms, and leveraging workflow and artificial intelligence tools.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation provided $3.2 million funding to Local Media Foundation to establish the BloomLab in early 2022.

OUTCOMES

- $2.5+ million cost savings for technology services in two years
- 100+ technology platform/service implementations
- 6% combined revenue growth for Cohort 2, far surpassing negative industry averages

“The BloomLab has really been a lifeline. It’s opened up possibilities, access to resources, expert consultant services, and training that we could not have afforded on our own. It’s given us a great appreciation of our brand value as a local publication and our contributions to the community. It’s helped to increase our digital product offering and really effectively compete in a digital space. It’s prepared us for digital growth.”

Paris Brown
Associate Editor
The Baltimore Times
OUR IMPACT

News is Out: National Queer Media Collaborative, initially inspired by Word In Black, had a fantastic second year fueled by philanthropic and commercial support.

The Queer Media Sustainability Lab was launched in 2023 with funding from the Knight Foundation, to help all six NIO publishers with their long-term sustainability plans. This included valuable technology stipends that enabled each publisher to modernize their tech stack. This in turn led to revenue growth.

Additional funding and sponsorships came from AARP, McKinsey and Comcast Foundation

The six publishers and full-time editor have focused on inequities and threats to the LGBTQ+ community in their journalism coverage, publishing hundreds of stories and making a difference in local communities.

“News is Out has provided invaluable support on multiple fronts. First, it is a place for us to learn from one another. Second, it has provided great training and resources from Local Media Association and its partners. And third, we have seen significant funding streams open up because of this collaborative and the vital work it does in the LGBTQ community.”

Tracy Baim
Owner/Cofounder
Windy City Times
Climate change became a household topic in communities across the country in 2023 as extreme weather events made this global issue both more local and more personal.

LMA’s Covering Climate Collaborative doubled in 2023 to 50 leading local broadcast, digital and print partner news outlets including the Miami Herald, Graham Media, NOLA.com/Times-Picayune, WRAL, and broadcast newsrooms from Scripps, ABC O&O and TEGNA.

In 2023 LMA enhanced the collaborative, adding on-the-record monthly calls with climate experts, deepening its relationships with science partners, and launching a new weekly newsletter to amplify the reach of the local solutions reporting done by our news partners, with funding from Google News Initiative.

**OUTCOMES**

- Climate collaborative doubled in size to support 50 local newsrooms
- Climate solutions weekly email newsletter launched
- More than 250 original local climate stories produced and shared

“Joining LMA’s Covering Climate Collaborative has helped our reporters be able to better ‘connect the dots’ between the disruptions people in our community are noticing in our local weather, the effects on their quality of life, and the connection to climate change.”

Tom Shaw
Chief Product Officer,
Shaw Media
In its first full year as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Oklahoma Media Center executed a multiphase ecosystem project focused on local news consumption patterns to learn how to increase citizens’ trust in local journalism.

Based on research results, OMC awarded newsroom funding for data-driven projects to improve trust in, and financial support of, local news in Oklahoma. OMC is distributing over $112,500 in grants to a dozen media partners, with the cohort working closely with the national nonprofit Trusting News program to implement these measurable engagement projects.

OMC is reaching out to other news organizations statewide to learn about the greatest needs of local journalists. Also, the collaborative is planning a customizable media literacy campaign for local newsrooms to help them explain the importance of a free and independent press as a function of a healthy democracy.

**OUTCOMES**

- Over $457,000 raised for OMC members through various grants.
- $112,500 awarded to a dozen Oklahoma media outlets for the production of data-driven projects to enhance local news trust and sustainability.
- More than 50 working journalists, representing more than 30 news outlets, engaged in Trusting News training facilitated by OMC at University of Oklahoma.

“The Oklahoma Media Center offers a vital forum for meeting, sharing views and collaborating with other journalists across Oklahoma. It has also given the Eagle much needed funding for some impactful projects. OMC is key to my success and growth and the Eagle’s success as a news institution.”

Gary Lee
Managing Editor
The Oklahoma Eagle
“As Oklahoma Media Center continues to expand its impact in Oklahoma, LMA has been key in providing the infrastructure and strategic support needed to manage a collaborative. The team’s knowledge and work across the industry in collaborations is why we prioritized an ongoing partnership with LMA in 2023 and beyond.”

Tyler Tokarczyk
Senior Program Officer
Inasmuch Foundation
Driving Broadcast Transformation

IMPACT

“My involvement in LMA has literally changed my career. I would not be where I am today without LMA’s many transformational programs.”

Catherine Badalamente
CEO, Graham Media Group

OUTCOMES

“LMA has helped in so many ways ... from helping us fund a full-time education reporter to launching a data strategy, they are one of our most valuable resources.”

Chris Weatherly
General Manager, WRAL
THE PATH FORWARD

Here are three innovative initiatives LMA is pursuing in 2024 to advance its mission of transforming business models for local news.

1. Word In Black spinoff
In early 2024, the Word in Black collaborative of 10 Black-owned publishers became a public benefit corporation, creating new opportunities for further innovation to serve and represent the Black perspective and lead the way in equitable reporting.

2. AI Innovation Center
Artificial Intelligence has the potential to transform local news and media companies in ways comparable to digital and social media disruptions. LMA seeks partners to create an AI Innovation Center to develop new best practices and guardrails to seize the opportunities and manage the threats for local news.

3. Expanded Philanthropy Lab
In its first three years LMA’s Lab for Journalism Funding has help 101 local newsrooms raise more than $21 million to support local journalism. In the new year, LMA seeks to expand this high-impact program to more newsrooms, and add new ongoing coaching and resources to support its alumni.
Boards of Directors

LOCAL MEDIA FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Daniel Williams
Founder/CEO
BlueLena

Jane Wooldridge
Senior Director for Journalism
Sustainability & Partnerships
Miami Herald
# Local Media Association Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role/Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Lane</td>
<td>Co-Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay Small</td>
<td>Co-Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julia Campbell</td>
<td>Chief Business Transformation Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frank Mungeam</td>
<td>Chief Innovation Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lindsey Leisher Estes</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Celestand</td>
<td>Program Director, Knight x LMA BloomLab</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penny Riordan</td>
<td>Director, Business Strategy and Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorrine Mendoza</td>
<td>Lead Program Director, FIMS Lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liz Courquet-Lesaunier</td>
<td>Managing Director, Knight x LMA BloomLab</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apryl Piloli</td>
<td>Technology Director, Word In Black</td>
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<td>Janice Norman</td>
<td>Director, Accounting and Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Walker-Smith</td>
<td>Digital Revenue Director, Knight x LMA BloomLab</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teresa Kartholl</td>
<td>Director, Journalism Funding Initiatives</td>
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<td>Rob Collins</td>
<td>Project Manager, Oklahoma Media Center</td>
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<td>Dana Piccoli</td>
<td>Project Manager, News is Out</td>
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<td>Peter Lamb</td>
<td>Branded Content Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nadira Jamerson</td>
<td>Digital Editor, Word In Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anissa Durham</td>
<td>Health Data Reporter, Word In Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracie Campbell</td>
<td>Accounting Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Moore</td>
<td>Data Entry Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexa Imani Spencer</td>
<td>Health Reporter, Word In Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorothy Boulware</td>
<td>Religion Reporter, Word In Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aziah Sid</td>
<td>Health Reporter, Word In Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph Williams</td>
<td>Education Reporter, Word In Black</td>
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ENGAGE WITH LMA

“Local news is the lifeblood of our communities and our democracy. But traditional business models face historic challenges. The Local Media Association is a ray of hope for those who believe in a brighter future. Through training, innovation, technology, philanthropy, and collaboration, LMA is helping news organizations reinvent their business models. They’re not just fighting for survival; they’re building a more sustainable future for local news, and for the communities we serve.”

Tom Shaw
Chair, LMA Board of Directors
Chief Product Officer, Shaw Media

“We are at a critical moment in our country, and local news plays an essential role.”

I’m proud of the work of Local Media Foundation to ensure that we elevate the voices of those in our communities who have been historically underserved; and that we work together collaboratively both to sustain local news outlets and to make sure everyone in the community has access to trusted, accurate and inclusive sources of local information.”

Larry Lee
Chair, LMF Board of Directors
Publisher, Sacramento Observer

A healthy local news ecosystem needs many players — traditional media, start-ups, funders, technology platforms and more. Local Media Association brings everyone together for the purpose of reinventing business models for news. Have an idea or need help? We’d love to hear from you.

For more information on LMA, including membership, visit www.localmedia.org or contact Lindsey Estes at lindsey.estes@localmedia.org
THANK YOU
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The Commonwealth Fund
The Henry Luce Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Walton Family Foundation
We welcome support for all our programs and initiatives. To discuss how you can make a difference, contact Nancy Lane at nancy.lane@localmedia.org.

Local Media Foundation supports journalism through a range of initiatives designed to create sustainable business models for local news.

We also accept donations to directly support these essential programs.

Word In Black, founded by 10 of the leading Black publishers in the U.S., fosters solutions to racial inequities in America.

News is Out, a pioneering national collaborative of the leading local queer news publishers.

Covering Climate Collaborative, 50 newsrooms working together to report on the local impacts of climate change and to empower residents to take meaningful action in their communities.

We invite you to continue to support our programs.

DONATE today!