

LocalMedia
Association

LocalMedia
Foundation



2025 Impact Report

OUR MISSION:

To ensure a healthy future for local journalism, which is essential to a strong democracy, by reinventing business models for news.

Dear friends of LMA and LMF

Many great things happened in LMA/LMF programs in 2025, and this report tells those stories of successes for local media of all kinds and sizes. We would seem naive, however, if we did not acknowledge the environment in which we all fight for the survival of local journalism and business models to sustain it.

We see increased threats against journalists' freedom to do their jobs — and worse. We worry as audience trust in news erodes, driven mostly by national political polarization but with cascading effects on local journalism. And the economics of the media business have never been tougher to navigate. We would understand if some folks chose to seek success elsewhere.

But that's just it. The people who are *still in this* and those who are *still coming into it*, despite the negatives, give us hope and energy. We enjoyed working with so many from this “culture of the willing” in 2025:

- We helped small, family-owned news outlets and publishers from the Black Press conduct practical experiments and community research aimed at understanding how to use Artificial Intelligence better, ethically and with greater audience trust.
- We kicked off a new collaborative of Spanish-language local media to pursue common journalism and business opportunities.
- We engaged with television broadcast companies, large and small, commercial and public, to help them transform for the digital/streaming era.
- And we rolled out a variety of “shared services” models — from fractional executive services in technology, revenue and funding, to shared specialists in audience development and direct sales. These services make needed subject-matter expertise affordable for smaller, independent media organizations.

This Impact Report tells those stories and describes the results. Our job is to provide resources, environments and sometimes just a listening ear — all to give the talented people in this industry what they need to succeed. LMA and LMF work to help the culture of the *willing* become the culture of the *able*. Please engage with us as we press ahead on behalf of local media and journalism.



Jay Small
Co-CEO



Julia Campbell
Co-CEO

BY THE NUMBERS

LMA
LMF

\$2.76M

Raised by 48 newsrooms in the Local News Fund

120

Original spanish-language articles published and shared across Latido Beat in first year

\$36M

Philanthropic funding raised by alumni of Lab for Journalism Funding

75%

Word in Black year over year audience growth

10

Broadcast companies collaborating on AI, YouTube and ConnectedTV

\$120M

Revenue generated by newsrooms in Branded Content Project since 2019

1,417

News consumers surveyed about AI uses for local news

\$250K

Technology shared services savings, Knight x LMA BloomLab newsrooms

\$10K

Stipends per FIMS Lab company to experiment with growing audience and digital revenue

LMA
LMF

Stories of Impact



Family and Independent Media Sustainability Lab

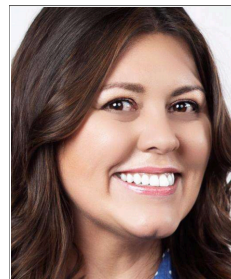
OUR IMPACT

The **Family and Independent Media Sustainability Lab**, funded by the Google News Initiative and the Knight Foundation, delivered direct impact on news sustainability. Publishers focused on audience growth, strategized revenue diversification, drove sales staff effectiveness, expanded AI knowledge and use, advanced multimedia capabilities, launched community events, and increased subscriber revenue by aligning business strategies with market opportunities.

In 2025, through goal setting, cohort discussions, in person meetings, and bespoke coaching from experienced publishers and industry experts, 19 media companies benefitted from the lab's emphasis on collaboration and experimentation. Stipends helped companies test and deploy new initiatives. Experiments currently underway focused on video content, branded content, new product development, centralization, business transformation, AI search, and digital subscriber retention and acquisition. Additionally, five teams began work with Light Touch Media to develop interactive videos for their audiences to drive digital revenue and audience engagement.

OUTCOMES

- *19 independent and family-owned media companies participated in strategic plan reviews, goal setting, and monthly progress check-ins*
- *Empowered 30+ account executives with advanced training, resulting in more productive meetings and higher sales conversions.*
- *Inspired by cohort discussions, one lab participant completely overhauled their smartphone app and generated more than \$100,000 in incremental revenue*



Jamie Opalenik

*Vice President of Business
Development
Ballantine Communications*

“Participation in the FIMS Lab has been transformative for our organization. Through collaboration and knowledge sharing with peers, we were able to test new strategies that directly strengthened our subscription model. As a result, we successfully launched subscriber only content and several targeted promotions that increased digital subscriptions and engagement.”

AI Community Journalism Lab

OUR IMPACT

Artificial intelligence as a technology is disrupting not only journalism but society at large. The **AI Community Journalism Lab**, with support from Walton Family Foundation, guided 21 newsrooms on a strategic approach to leveraging the opportunities, and managing the risks of AI, while also engaging in dialogue with their communities about the technology.

AI Lab teams successfully experimented with AI-powered chatbots to help news consumers get answers to questions, community-submitted content, production of news briefs, AI agent guidance that helps reporters become more proficient in preparing and editing stories, video production, social media, and text-to-audio.

Through a collaboration with Trusting News, the AI Lab also conducted a national online survey inviting news consumers to answer, “How should newsrooms use AI?” The survey generated valuable insights, including that local audiences want clear expectations, policies, and transparency about newsroom AI use.

17

17 newsrooms conducted a diverse set of AI experiments

1,417

news consumers from 16 states and Washington D.C. surveyed

Research project published in collaboration with Trusting News on AI in newsrooms



Paris Brown
Publisher
The Baltimore Times

“Our experiment was successful because it solved a major challenge for our newsroom—improving efficiency and expanding our ability to produce more community-centered stories with limited resources. This project demonstrated that AI can be a practical, value-driven solution when applied thoughtfully.”

Lab for Journalism Funding

OUR IMPACT

In 2025, the **Lab for Journalism Funding** trained a record level number of newsrooms with its industry-leading best practices. The lab trained 66 newsrooms, including three state cohorts in California, Illinois and New Mexico, made possible with expanded support from Google News Initiative; and a national cohort funded by Knight Foundation. The Lab partnered with Medill Local News Initiative in Illinois and the New Mexico Local News Fund on the cohorts in their states. Across these programs, the Lab for Journalism Funding awarded \$75,000 in project stipends.

With new support from the Knight Foundation, the Lab for Journalism Funding also launched The Lab Link, an initiative offering support and programming for lab alumni and industry leaders working in philanthropy for local journalism. Each edition of The Lab Link biweekly newsletter reaches more than 200 news organizations, and bimonthly fundraising webinars have averaged 100 registrants per webinar.

“The Lab helped us create relationships with funders and build bridges between residents, leaders, and decision-makers. The impact is tangible: stronger partnerships, better-informed citizens, and a more connected mountain community.”



Hannah Dean
Senior Editor and Partner
Cloudcroft Reader

\$36M

More than \$36 million raised since inception to fund local journalism.

214

214 newsrooms trained in fundraising best practices since launch

NEW

Launched The Lab Link, a biweekly alumni newsletter featuring funding opportunities

NEW

Launched webinar series for Lab alumni on advanced philanthropy strategies

Broadcast Transformation Lab

OUR IMPACT

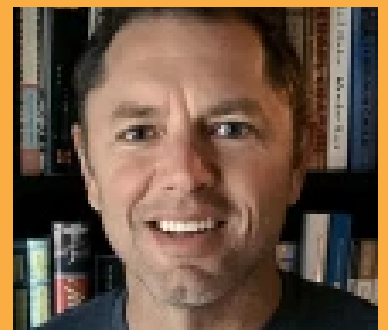
LMA launched the **Broadcast Transformation Lab** in 2025 with support from Google News Initiative to help local broadcasters respond to critical shifts in audience consumption habits and broadcasters' ability to monetize these shifts.

A group of ten leading broadcast companies convened at Google NY to identify key pain points and opportunities facing the industry. From that listening session, LMA developed three tracks of programming to accelerate broadcast transformation focused on the use of streaming/connected TV's, YouTube and short-form video, and AI applications. The cohorts, which run through June 2026, connect broadcast leaders with industry thought leaders in each of these areas and peer-to-peer sharing to create best practices for leveraging these three areas of opportunity.

OUTCOMES

- *Convened a cohort of leading local broadcasters for an industry needs assessment*
- *Convened sessions with access to Google product leads*
- *Programmed 18 sessions featuring industry experts and peer-to-peer collaboration on the three strategic priorities: Connected TV, YouTube and Artificial Intelligence*

"As distribution and monetization grow more complex, staying current with emerging technologies is one of the biggest challenges facing publishers like Griffin. The LMA Broadcast Transformation Lab has been essential this year, providing both a trusted peer forum and insight from industry experts—and even the platforms themselves."



Richard Cox

*Director of Digital Services
Griffin Media*

Knight x LMA BloomLab

OUR IMPACT

After three years of lab programming with 25 Black-owned local news organizations, the **BloomLab** shifted focus in 2025 to establish “fractional executive” services in three areas: technology, revenue and funding. Pilot clients paid discounted rates for critical services beyond the lab’s “teach-me” training, in the realm of “do-it-with-me” and “do-it-for-me” consulting. All three services will add at least five more clients apiece in 2026.

- The technology service took on 11 clients, helping them fulfill use cases tied to \$80,000 in AI grants, implement cost optimizations that generated \$250,000 annual savings, and build reader-revenue technology and automations.
- The revenue service delivered almost \$250,000 incremental revenue for its six pilot clients. The clients also expanded sales pipelines, regained key accounts, and unlocked new digital opportunities.
- The funding service helped five pilot clients prepare and submit grant applications totaling more than \$5.37 million, securing \$289,500 in philanthropic funding. Clients also received consultation from industry experts.

In the first few months of shared services:

\$250K

annual client savings in tech shared service

\$250K

incremental in revenue shared service

\$290K

grants awarded in funding shared service



Denise Rolark Barnes
Publisher and Owner
The Washington Informer

“Working with the BloomLab has been like gaining an extension of The Washington Informer – a partner that delivers expert guidance and services proven to strengthen our digital transformation. When I think about the BloomLab, I think of progress. I’m deeply grateful for the team’s insight, innovation, and support.”

LatidoBeat

OUR IMPACT

In 2025, **LatidoBeat** laid the foundation for a national platform connecting trusted, community-rooted Spanish-language news organizations across the United States. In August, LatidoBeat launched its website, reaching 4,000+ users and 7,000 pageviews in less than five months, entirely through organic growth. The project also launched its newsletter, generating 1,500+ visits, and established a social media presence with 250+ followers, all without paid promotion.

Beyond audience growth, LatidoBeat focused on building durable collaboration and shared capacity. The project produced 120+ original articles that were available for republication across all participating publishers, multiplying their local impact without increasing newsroom burden. In parallel, LatidoBeat supported fundraising efforts at both the collective and individual publisher level, helping strengthen relationships with national funders while positioning local newsrooms to pursue new funding opportunities. LatidoBeat also hosted two live events convening publishers, partners, and community leaders, and secured GNI funding to invest in long-term sustainability.

OUTCOMES

- *Launched a national Spanish-language news platform reaching 4,000+ users and 7,000 pageviews organically in under five months*
- *Produced 120+ original articles available for republication across all participating publishers, expanding local coverage at scale*
- *Secured \$300,000 from the Google News Initiative and committed \$140,000 in publisher stipends to support content production and newsroom capacity*

“Collaborating on revenue and content through LatidoBeat has empowered us to amplify our local expertise to a national level, ensuring authentic Latino stories inform and empower audiences nationwide.”



Hilda Gurdián
CEO
La Noticia, Inc.

LocalMedia
Association

LocalMedia
Foundation



Economic Opportunity Lab

OUR IMPACT

The **Economic Opportunity Lab** demonstrated the power of collaboration, successfully linking 48 newsrooms across five major markets with groundbreaking economic research. Journalists in Chicago, Miami, Philadelphia, the Bay Area, and Washington, D.C. partnered with Harvard's Opportunity Insights to translate complex data on economic mobility, neighborhoods, and schools into compelling stories that resonated with their communities.

What made this initiative special was bringing journalists together for hands-on workshops with leading researchers. These gatherings created space for reporters to learn new skills, exchange ideas, and forge relationships that strengthened their work. The conversations sparked fresh story angles and built trust across markets.

Spearheaded by Comcast NBCUniversal and Local Media Foundation, with support from Opportunity Insights, Lenfest, and the Philadelphia Journalism Collaborative, the Lab united broadcast, print, and digital newsrooms around a shared mission. The outcome was richer reporting that helped communities recognize and address the real barriers holding people back from economic opportunity.

OUTCOMES

- *48 newsrooms participated in a multi-market, shared reporting effort*
- *Five major partners supported research access, training, and cross-newsroom coordination*
- *Public website published featuring project context, research, and coverage*
- *Industry playbook will capture lessons from collaborative data journalism*



Victoria Mejicanos
Reporter, The AFRO

“The Economic Opportunity Lab allowed me to make a tangible impact in the city of Baltimore. This not only reinforced the importance of local journalism for me, but also allowed me to remind our audience why it matters.”

Word In Black

OUR IMPACT

Word In Black celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2025, and enjoyed a year of tremendous growth. Data and research divisions were launched thanks to funding from Knight Foundation and MacArthur Foundation.

A data platform was built to leverage the collective audience from the 10 founding publishers. The research division conducted the first two projects on organ donation and breast cancer.

The expanded newsroom focused on health, education, religion, climate justice and more. A shared head of audience growth was hired to work with the 10 publishers.

75%

Word In Black's audience grew by 75% in 2025

2

Word In Black completed two research reports

NEW

Data platform built with custom dashboards for each publisher



Liz Courquet-Lesaulnier
Managing Director,
Word In Black

“Word In Black’s year-long On Borrowed Time series asked tough questions about organ donation and inequity in health care. Across nine stories, we examined why Black Americans remain underrepresented among organ donors and how policy choices – like race-based medical calculations – shape access to life-saving transplants. ... This is the work we do: journalism that exposes systemic inequities and centers the people living with their consequences.”

Branded Content Project

OUR IMPACT

The transformative work of **The Branded Content Project**, now in its seventh year, surpassed \$120 million in revenue generated by participating publishers since inception. In 2025, BCP hosted five dynamic Cash Camps, including two exciting specialty cohorts focused on cause marketing and video and audio content, aligning with the needs of both advertisers and audiences.

BCP expanded to six talented sales and operations experts and kept this community thriving through personalized coaching, collaborative working groups, energizing Big Branded Calls, and the must-read Branded Buzz newsletter. Fresh advertiser research with Borrell Associates delivered the timely insights this network needed to grow strategically and build sustainability. Support from Knight Foundation, the Local Media Association, and the Local Media Consortium powered these programs to help local media flourish.

“Branded Content is now a featured marketing option in our media kit and when we present to clients. Several branded content packages have already been sold, leading to increased revenue and a powerful new marketing option for our marketing partners.”



Michael Shapiro
Founder and CEO
TAPinto

\$120M

\$120+ million in revenue since the project's inception in 2019

300+

300+ media companies participated with BCP

5

5 Cash Camp cohorts launched in 2025

900+

Over 900+ Branded Badges awarded since launch in 2020.

LMF Local News Fund

OUR IMPACT

The Local Media Foundation **Local News Fund** supports LMA's mission to ensure a healthy future for local journalism by reinventing business models for news. The fund raises and administers donations to provide new resources for local journalism, news coverage, related community outreach, and public awareness and education regarding critical issues and subjects in communities across the United States.

In 2025, funded initiatives included a wide range of projects: protecting the Great Lakes, in-depth local reporting, new storytelling technology, internships and the renovation of a historic building including the preservation of 100+-year-old archives. Participants range from large local media brands to small startups, and from all parts of the country.

OUTCOMES

- *More than \$2.7 million raised, an increase of 108% year-over-year*
- *The fund supported the work of 48 news organizations*
- *Thousands of donations from individuals, DAFs, foundations and high-net-worth people*



"The Local Media Foundation has proven to be an invaluable partner by providing the infrastructure needed to receive philanthropic support, so we can focus on journalism."

Kate Sacamano
Chief Marketing Officer, The Columbian

News is Out

OUR IMPACT

Now in its fourth full year, **News is Out: A Queer Media Collaborative** solidified its role as a hub for LGBTQ+ media collaboration, research, and public-facing programming.

In 2025, News is Out hosted events on mental health, LGBTQ+ travel, and history, culminating in a World AIDS Day partnership with Gilead Sciences. The series expanded public engagement and reinforced a focus on health, culture, and community.

A major milestone was completion of the LGBTQ+ Media Mapping Project, funded by the MacArthur Foundation. It documented challenges facing LGBTQ+ media nationwide, generating new data for funders, journalists and advocates related to news deserts, ownership, revenue pressures, and audience demand.

Queer Media Day returned for a second year, doubling fundraising. News is Out also convened twice for strategy, partnered on the Gilead Choose U campaign, and launched a health newsletter—advancing a more sustainable queer media ecosystem.

OUTCOMES

- \$82,500 in national advertising revenue via strategic partnership with Porter Novelli for the Choose U / Gilead Sciences campaign
- Audience growth and engagement, reaching 10,000+ email subscribers
- \$4,000 raised for the inaugural LGBTQ+ Media Day, establishing a new annual fundraising platform
- LGBTQ+ Media Mapping Project, presented at NLGJA, the Association for LGBTQ+ Journalists conference



Matt Simonette

*Publisher
Windy City Times*

“Being part of News is Out has strengthened our ability to do local journalism while staying connected to a national conversation. The collaboration gives publishers space to share resources, align on coverage that matters, and collectively push for a more stable future for queer media.”

Oklahoma Media Center

OUR IMPACT

In 2025, the nonprofit **Oklahoma Media Center** began presenting quarterly Journalist Stipend Awards to three outstanding journalists. These prizes honored extraordinary coverage of local communities.

In the spring, OMC hosted the Media and the Mind event, featuring sessions with seasoned journalists and educators training on relevant topics. American Press Institute's Samantha Ragland also led a session on industry burnout and how to manage stress within the profession. The event was attended by over 50 journalists, including college students.

In the fall, OMC held its first public-facing fundraiser. *Friends of the Free Press* presented a screening of the "Bad Press" documentary, followed by a Q&A with the film's star, director, impact producer and an Indigenous journalist terminated for challenging tribal censorship. The event drew over 100 attendees, including representatives from 20 tribal nations in Oklahoma, and raised funds for OMC and the nonprofit Indigenous Journalists Association.

"Working with Blue Engine through the Oklahoma Media Center quickly, easily and directly helped elevate the service OU Daily provides to our community, deepened the learning of our student staff and strengthened our fiscal outlook...Our business teams leveraged those successes to generate tens of thousands of dollars in new ad buys as well as more than double the number of donor gifts received."



Seth Prince
Director of Student Media
University of Oklahoma

\$300K

raised in grants to support local journalism in Oklahoma

50+

journalists attended OMC's Media and the Mind training, and 100+ attended Friends of the Free Press fundraiser with Indigenous Journalists Association

10

OMC collaborators participated in a Blue Engine digital revenue training funded by OMC that paid immediate dividends to those newsrooms

Solving Sacramento

OUR IMPACT

Experimentation, expansion, and growth defined the **Solving Sacramento** collaborative in 2025. With support from a two-year, \$250,000 City of Sacramento grant, the newsroom expanded beyond its core coverage of housing, homelessness, economic equity, and the environment to build a robust arts journalism program spotlighting Sacramento's creative economy. In 2025, Solving Sacramento hosted live music events, led arts journalism trainings, and produced a biannual print zine, Sac Art Pulse, laying the foundation for an arts hub planned for 2026.

The collaborative also deepened coverage of Sacramento's Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities through a \$6,000 grant supporting freelance writers and photographers. A \$25,000 grant from The California Endowment enabled reporting on local impacts of Trump administration actions, documenting funding instability threatening community organizations. Solving Sacramento added new community and news partners and, with Google News Initiative support, hired a Director of Business Development to strengthen long-term sustainability.

OUTCOMES

- *Published 185+ original stories, cross-published over 370 times by our news partners*
- *Hosted five Hangout Gigs Live music events, including at local music venues, bookstores, generating \$3,500 for Solving Sac and turned into videos and podcasts*
- *Trained 20 people (virtually and in-person), including how to cover the arts, and several have become paid freelance contributors*

“Money keeps the lights on. Solving Sacramento did something harder: It got independent newsrooms to stop working in parallel silos and start working together. That shift – from isolation to collaboration – made the journalism stronger and more sustainable.”



Jeff vonKaenel

President & CEO

Sacramento News & Review

LMA Board of Directors

Board Chair



Toby Collodora
Senior Manager,
Engagement & Retention
Star Tribune Media Co.

First Vice Chair



Eric Barnes
CEO
The Daily Memphian

Second Vice Chair



Tracy Brown
Chief Partnerships
Officer
WBEZ Chicago Public
Media

Treasurer



Amber Aldrich
Sr. Advertising Director
The Seattle Times

Secretary



Heather Gray
Station Manager
WRAL-TV/FOX 50, WILM-TV

Immediate Past Chair



Janis Ware
Publisher
The Atlanta Voice



Siobhan "Sam" Bennett
President/CRO
The New York
Amsterdam News



Brock Berry
CEO
Adcellerant



Jim Brady
Principal, Spirited Media
Consulting



Jeff Moriarty
EVP/Chief Product Officer
Nexstar Digital



Ken Doctor
CEO & Founder
Lookout Local



Chase Heatherly
Chief Revenue Officer
Evening Post Publishing



Ethan Holland
Vice President
Draper Digital Media



Sho Rust
CEO/
PubGen.AI



Stephanie Slagle
VP & CIO
Graham Media Group



Judi Terzotis
CEO
Georges Media Group



Sonali Verma
Consultant
Toronto, Canada

LMF Board of Directors

Board Chair



Tanisha Leonard
President
RTM360°

First Vice Chair



Tim Franklin
Senior Associate Dean
John M. Mutz Chair in
Local News
Medill School
Northwestern University

Treasurer



Toby Collodora
Senior Manager
Engagement & Retention
Star Tribune Media
Company

Secretary



Kevin Lloyd
Secretary
Co-founder
ColumbusBlack.com

Immediate Past Chair



Larry Lee
Publisher/Owner
The Sacramento
Observer



Iván Adaime
Founder and
Managing
Director
Studio 8316



Shana Black
Founder
Black Girl Media



Tracy Brown
Chief Partnerships Officer
Chicago Public Media



Deirdre Conner
Publisher & CEO
The Tributary



Leo Cusimano
Publisher & Owner
Dallas Voice



Duc Luu
Director of Sustainability
Initiatives/
Journalism
Knight Foundation



Tom Sly
Industry Consultant



Jane Wooldridge
Industry Consultant

LMA's Purpose Driven Team



Jay Small
Co-Chief Executive Officer



Julia Campbell
Co-Chief Executive Officer



Nancy Lane
Chief Executive Officer Emeritus



John Humenik
Chief Strategy and Operations Officer



Frank Mungeam
Chief Innovation Officer



John Celestand
Director, Knight x LMA BloomLab



Lindsey Leisher Estes
Chief of Staff



Apryl Pilolli
Director, Knight x LMA BloomLab



Robert Walker-Smith
Director, Knight x LMA BloomLab



Janice Norman
Director, Accounting and Finance



Judi Terzotis
Executive-in-Residence



Kristyn Cooper
Director, Journalism Funding Initiatives



Zachary McGrew
Program Coordinator, Oklahoma Media Center



Rob Collins
Project Manager, Oklahoma Media Center



Dana Piccoli,
Project Manager, News is Out



Michel Pelletier
Director of Strategic Partnerships, News is Out



Tracie Campbell
Accounting Clerk



Amanda Moore
Data Entry Specialist



Nina Joss
Project Manager Lab for Journalism Funding



Pinay Jones
Project Manager of Technology Services Knight x LMA Bloomlab



David Stuckey
Audience Growth Manager LMA



Linda Bowers
Director of Business Development and Partnerships Solving Sacramento

Coaches and Consultants



Shannon Kinney
Consultant



Peter Newton
Consultant



Sam Moody
Consultant and Coach
Lab for Journalism
Funding



Sam Johnston
Consultant and Coach
Lab for Journalism
Funding



Jennifer Preston
Consultant and Coach
Lab for Journalism
Funding



Peter Lamb
Consultant



Liz White Notarangelo
Consultant



Joanne Heyman
Consultant and Coach,
Lab for Journalism
Funding



Joaquin Alvarado
Consultant and Coach
Lab for Journalism
Funding



David Arkin
Consultant



Iván Adaime
LatidoBeat



Sena Christian
Solving Sacramento



Jim Brady
Consultant

Funders: Thank You

- AARP
- California Endowment
- Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- City of Sacramento
- Comcast NBCU
- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- Deloitte
- Google News Initiative
- Henry Luce Foundation
- Inasmuch Foundation
- James B. McClatchy Foundation
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- Ray and Dagmar Dolby Fund
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- The Commonwealth Fund
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Walton Family Foundation
- Yield Giving



We invite you
to support
our programs.

Please donate today!



LocalMedia
Foundation