

NewsMatch

ANNUAL REPORT 2025





Prepared by the



**Institute for
Nonprofit News**

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Introduction

Communities across the country faced a tumultuous year in 2025. From large-scale reductions in federal funding for social programs, catastrophic natural disasters, and a rise in immigration enforcement, people turned to nonprofit news to understand the impact on their communities and find resources. Nonprofit newsrooms across the Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) Network played a vital role in serving the public with accurate news and information, all while navigating the impact these changes had on their own organizations.

During times like these, reliable, fact-based journalism is essential, as is the financial support that sustains it.

INN's NewsMatch exists to help newsrooms build that support. In a culture where most Americans don't pay for news, the program provides a proven pathway to convert audiences into donors and deepen community investment in journalism. It democratizes philanthropy. This is news powered, in part, by the people.

The results are significant: newsrooms that participated in NewsMatch between 2021 and 2025 increased their unique donors by 24%. In 2025 alone, more than 100,000 first-time donors contributed to 407 participating nonprofit newsrooms through the campaign, a 34% increase from the previous year, demonstrating growing public willingness to back trusted independent news with their wallets.

NewsMatch is a reliable tool to broaden newsrooms' donor bases at a time when the funding landscape for journalism remains uncertain. Newsrooms cannot become overly reliant on institutional philanthropy for support, particularly as foundations face increasing pressure to address other urgent and growing community needs.



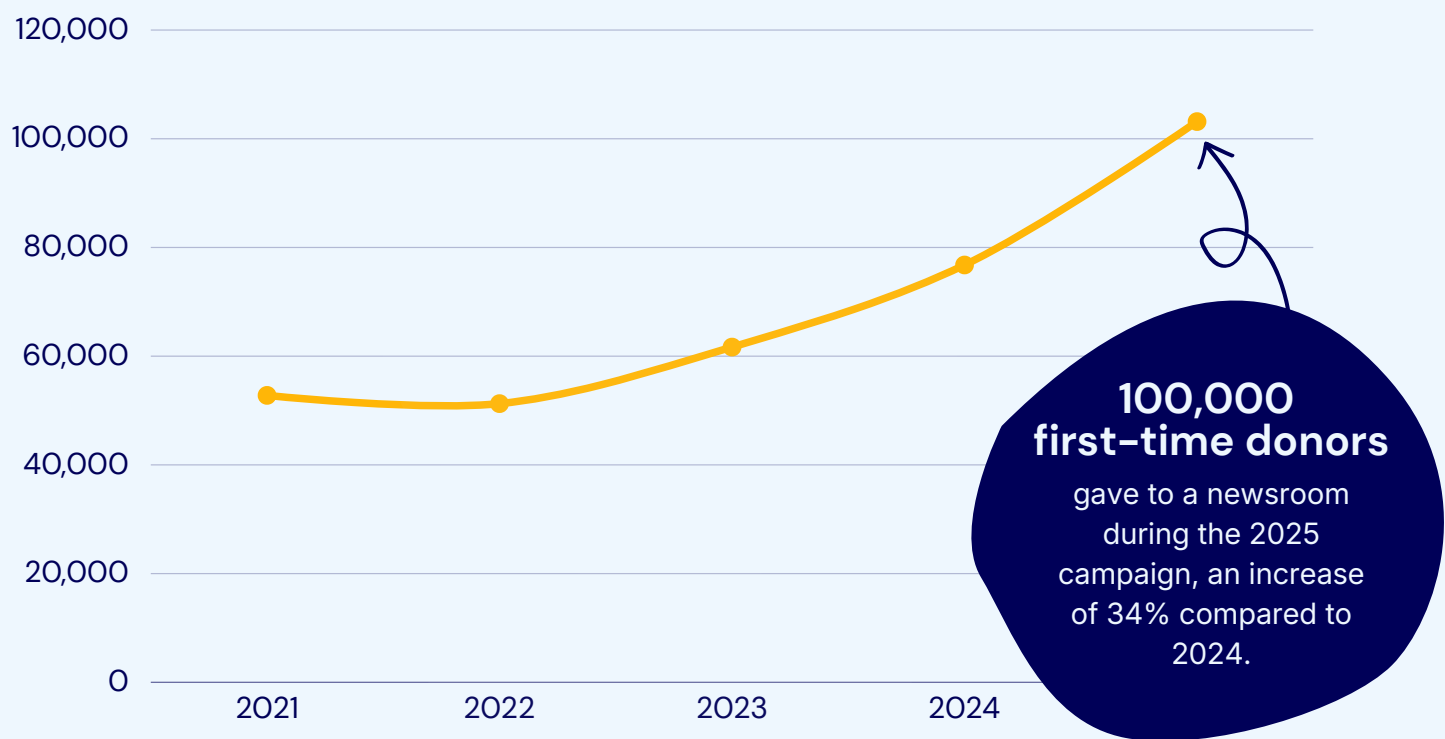
NewsMatch helps nonprofit newsrooms build diversified portfolios rooted in their own communities. In 2025, over 1,200 local match funders, including major donors, community and family foundations, and small businesses, supported newsroom campaigns, with local match funds surpassing national program funding for the fourth consecutive year. These investments reflect a shift toward community-driven sustainability.

The program's long-standing impact is the result of deliberate evolution in response to a changing field. NewsMatch is no longer solely a year-end fundraising campaign supported by national funders. Over time, INN has transformed the program into a year-round engine for donor engagement and capacity building.

As INN's NewsMatch enters its second decade, its mission remains clear: to grow and expand who funds the news and fortify the sustainability of the field. By catalyzing new philanthropic investment, strengthening newsroom fundraising capabilities, and creating more opportunities for people to give throughout the year, the program is building a broader and more resilient funding base for nonprofit journalism.

Building newsroom support from communities

NewsMatch is driving community investment in nonprofit journalism and helping INN members develop a more durable funding model by both operating as a proven mechanism to drive small-dollar donations while also offering pathways for major donors, local foundations, and small businesses to support the trusted news that sustains their communities.



For the fourth year in a row, newsrooms secured more of their own match funding – \$8.9 million in 2025 – than they received from the national NewsMatch matching pool.

1,255 local match funders

including major donors, community foundations, and small businesses, were secured by the newsrooms themselves.



Building impact year-round

Newsrooms can utilize the NewsMatch format throughout the year to maximize engagement with their audiences and generate new donors, as demonstrated by our pilot “Documenters on Duty” campaign.

The Documenters program, a network of 30 newsrooms and civic institutions across the country, is committed to providing communities nationwide with a public records via participatory civic media. In 2025, a year when the issue of government accountability was in full focus, NewsMatch and the team at City Bureau launched a dedicated campaign to support the Documenters network.

For one week in September, Documenters on Duty supported 17 Documenters sites, 13 of which were INN members, offering match funds and supporting campaign materials.

Leveraging the campaign assets, fundraising training and match funds provided by NewsMatch, the 13 INN newsrooms brought in over \$81,648 in individual donations during their Documenters on Duty campaigns from more than 745 unique donors (nearly a third of whom gave for the first time).

What we learned:

Matching funds inspire action. Eight of the thirteen INN participants reported that they would not have executed a fundraising campaign in conjunction with Documenters without the match opportunity.

Dedicated campaigns attract new donors. 31% of donors during this campaign were first-time donors, compared to 24% across the full NewsMatch 2025 cohort. This signals that seeding additional campaigns throughout the year offers a highly promising opportunity to engage first-time donors.



We look forward to using the lessons we learned through “Documenters on Duty” to facilitate additional fundraising campaigns throughout the year.

Building newsrooms' fundraising skills and success

As part of NewsMatch, INN equips newsrooms with the tools and training they need to successfully activate a fundraising campaign.



Tools

Participants received a comprehensive campaign toolkit, developed by our partners at News Revenue Hub, including email templates, graphic display ads, social copy, direct mail copy, guides to engaging staff in fundraising, and much more. Newsrooms also have access to complimentary wealth-screening through INN, enabling them to identify donors secured during NewsMatch who have the potential to give more.



Training

INN shifted the training format in 2025, moving away from webinars to embrace short-form on-demand video tutorials and newsletters, paired with high-touch one-on-one coaching, all of which centered around reinforcing fundraising best practices.

This change enabled newsrooms to access the information they were looking for when they needed it and gave them space to troubleshoot newsroom-specific circumstances or challenges through individual coaching. Newsrooms responded favorably to this shift.

23

Webinars +
on-demand training

170

Coaching sessions

290

newsrooms served



“Beyond the revenue, NewsMatch fosters a sense of shared purpose and experimentation across nonprofit newsrooms, helping teams strengthen their fundraising practices while feeling supported through an intense and important season.”

– Religion News Service | Columbia, Missouri

On-demand training included:

- Setting effective campaign goals
- Best practices in donor stewardship
- How to plan and run an in-person fundraising event

Building awareness of the impact of nonprofit news

In 2025, INN produced a series of print and digital ads that ran in the New York Times during the campaign to promote supporting the INN Network – “500 newsrooms that can’t be bought.”

140,000+
impressions

“

“As a local news organization, it bolsters our credibility to participate in this nationwide fundraising effort while focusing on getting support from our community. Readers feel good about supporting local news that is part of the larger movement to provide public-service journalism.”

– Limestone Post
Bloomington, Indiana



**500 NEWSROOMS
THAT CAN'T BE
BOUGHT**

**ACCOUNTABLE TO COMMUNITIES,
NOT CORPORATE INTERESTS**

As corporate media consolidates and local newsrooms close, communities are losing access to independent reporting that serves them, rather than shareholders. But reliable news coverage strengthens civic engagement and promotes government accountability at all levels.

The 500 independent, nonprofit newsrooms that belong to the Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) are funded by readers and philanthropy, not owners chasing returns.

Your gift to NewsMatch unlocks millions of dollars in matching funds for independent reporting accountable to the people.

 **DONATE TODAY!**
inn.org/give/NewsMatch

NewsMatch
Powered by INN

Photo: Abigail Vito Nelly for Mission Local, INN member based in San Francisco, CA.

Program Budget

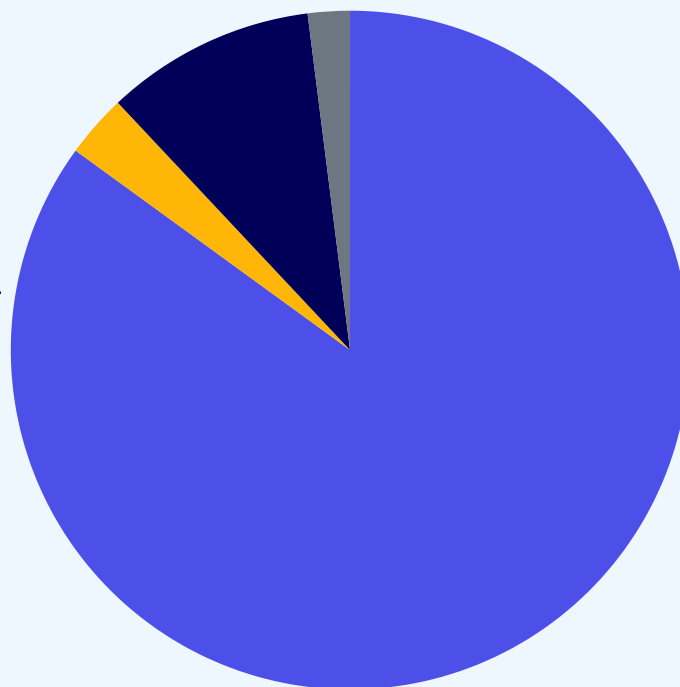
\$8.4M raised in 2025

85%
Direct payments to newsrooms through matching funds and goal-based bonuses

3%
Capacity-building

10%
Program management

2%
Projected carryover



Funding Summary

Fund	Newsrooms	Total payout
Main fund <i>Newsrooms with annual operating expenses of under \$1 million are eligible for up to \$15,000.</i>	279	\$3.6M
Partner funds <i>Regional or interest-based funds designated to newsrooms that align with parnters' funding strategies.</i>	314	\$2.5M
Bonuses <i>Lump sums awarded to newsrooms that hit certain predetermined fundraising milestones.</i>	319	\$984K

A note about NewsMatch funding:

All funds generated by and granted via NewsMatch are **100% unrestricted** - meaning newsrooms can use them in whatever way they need. Participants expressed particular gratitude for this in 2025 when rapid response to changing conditions on the ground was more crucial than ever.

Building customizable funding options for partners

In pursuit of bringing more and increasingly diverse funding sources to the field of nonprofit news, NewsMatch offers flexible pathways for funders to support newsrooms serving geographic areas or covering topics that align with our philanthropic partners' priorities. These included the rural partner fund, philanthropic access partner fund, education partner fund, a newly launched public media partner fund, and ten regional funds, demonstrating funders' increased interest in nonprofit news and NewsMatch's unique ability to adapt to funders' needs.

2025 Partner Funds

Rural: 129 newsroom recipients

Education: 119 newsroom recipients

Philanthropic Access: 91 newsroom recipients

Public Media: 23 newsroom recipients

Regional + local (10 total funds): 282 newsrooms

3 of 4 first-time NewsMatch funders launched dedicated partner funds in 2025.

Partner Fund Spotlight

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supported a dedicated public media partner fund to generate support for NPR and PBS affiliates in the wake of the CPB funding rescission. Community members stepped up to support these organizations; public media members who participated in NewsMatch in 2024 and 2025 saw gains in total donors during their campaigns.

“

At a time when a significant source of public media support was lost, NewsMatch helped us mobilize our community... The match created urgency, built donor confidence, and reinforced the idea that local news is a shared community responsibility.”

– WXPR

Rhineland, Wisconsin

Building the future

The program's durability lies in our ability to continuously adapt to increase its impact. It began with a focus limited to small-dollar donors, then expanded to include pathways for place- and issue-based funders through partner funds, as well as major donors and small businesses through local matches secured by newsrooms.

Through these strategic evolutions, NewsMatch helps nonprofit newsrooms establish stronger, more sustainable revenue streams.

As we look to the future of the campaign, we plan to continue that momentum by:

- **Catalyzing philanthropy to increase investments via NewsMatch**, creating tailored opportunities for Press Forward local chapters and bringing more nontraditional journalism funders to the field
- **Advancing newsroom skills to generate individual giving**, helping them convert their audiences to donors and secure local matches
- **Activating collective fundraising campaigns throughout the year** to generate additional giving moments for newsrooms

We hope you'll join us in bringing more supporters to nonprofit news.



Our supporters

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Wyncote Foundation
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NewsMatch is a collaborative fund held at
The Miami Foundation

**First-time funder*



Thank you

For more information on
INN's NewsMatch and
how you can support its
future, contact
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