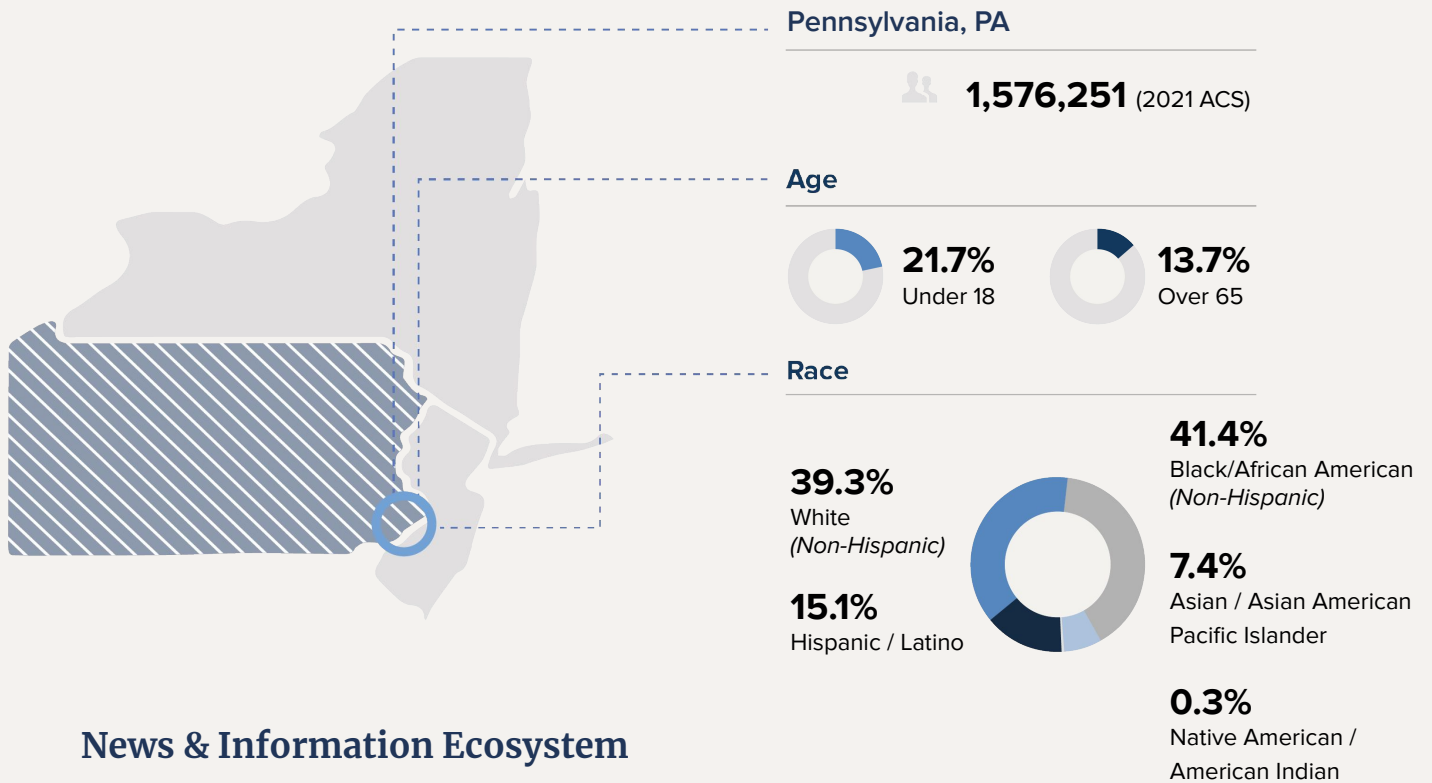

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

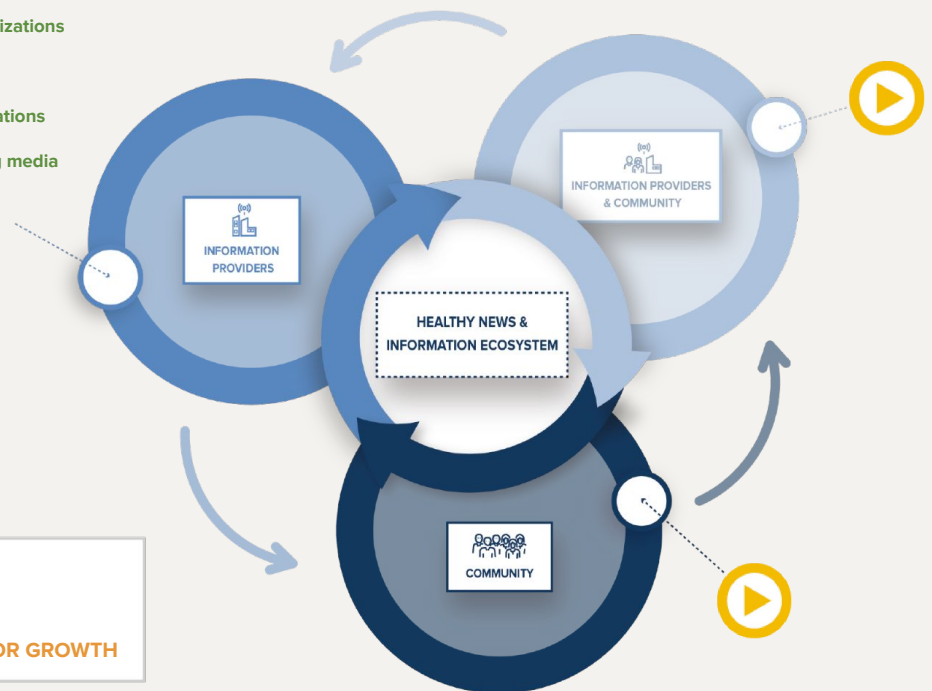
Philadelphia, PA



News & Information Ecosystem

- Number of journalism organizations
- Types of media
- Business models of organizations
- Diversity and BIPOC-serving media
- Collaboration
- Journalism funding

- STRONG**
- AVERAGE**
- OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH**



Key Elements



Philadelphia has a high number of news organizations for its population, but low diversity in its business models and formats.



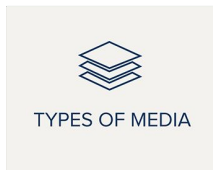
Collaboration is a key feature of Philadelphia's news ecosystem. Philadelphia has a robust environment for collaboration as a result of the investments made by organizations such as the Lenfest Institute and the Independence Public Media Foundation.



Philadelphia Inquirer, the major daily newspaper, records and reports on staff diversity, and it has also conducted independent source diversity audits. WHYY has published staff and source diversity figures but does not make them publicly available regularly.



Philadelphia has a strong presence of BIPOC-serving and community media, including multiple news outlets for Black and African American communities, Hispanic and Latino communities, and Asian communities.



Newspapers and digital media dominate Philadelphia's news ecosystem.



The majority of news outlets in Philadelphia are independent, for-profit news organizations.



Philadelphia has had a high amount of philanthropic investment per capita from 2019 to 2021 compared to other Knight cities.



Philadelphians have about average positive perceptions of their local news media, though a lower than average percent of people say their local news includes people like them in their stories.

Summary

Philadelphia is the sixth-largest city in the United States, with an estimated population of 1.59 million. The Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington MSA is the seventh-largest in the country, with a population over six million. The MSA is inclusive of counties in four states (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland), reflecting Philadelphia’s unique geographic location, with suburbs stretching into all three neighboring states. Forty-one percent of Philadelphia’s population identifies as Black or African American, 39% white, 15% Hispanic or Latino and 7% Asian.

Philadelphia’s ecosystem is stronger than many, with high philanthropic investment per capita, high institutional support, and strong collaborative initiatives. There are significant BIPOC-serving media outlets in Philadelphia, although there is opportunity for even more given the size of its Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian/Asian American communities, particularly as these communities report being underserved in their information needs. While there has been a very high amount of previous investment in Philadelphia, future investment should look more closely at closing the information gaps for diverse communities of Philadelphians that have not previously been served by, or represented in, the news and information ecosystem.

Community Indicators	National Average, 2021	Philadelphia Baseline, 2020	Philadelphia, 2021	Trending
Economics				
Median Household Income	\$69,021	\$43,744	\$49,127	Improving
Per Capita Income	\$37,638	\$26,557	\$29,644	Improving
Poverty Rate	11.6%	24.9%	23.1%	Steady
Education				
High School Degree	88.9%	84.0%	85.7%	Steady
Bachelor’s Degree	33.7%	29.0%	31.2%	Steady
Resources & Infrastructure				
Households with Computer	93.1%	84.0%	88.5%	Improving
Broadband Access	87.0%	74.0%	80.5%	Improving
Universities	20	48	48	Steady
Population per University	32,690	33,001	32,839	Steady
Libraries	27	52	53	Higher
Population per Library	23,693	30,463	29,741	Steady
Community Satisfaction ¹	60.9%	60.8%	66.0%	Improving
Voter Turnout of most recent election	66%	66.0%	46.0%	Declining
Prior Information Needs Study	Yes/No	Yes	Yes	
Prior Ecosystem Study	Yes/No	Yes	Yes	

Information Needs

Stakeholders noted a high demand for news in the city, as communities are generally engaged and have clear ideas about what they need and want from news organizations. This is reflected in the high rate of

1. Community satisfaction is measured by Share Care in partnership with Boston University, <https://wellbeingindex.sharecare.com/interactive-map/?defaultState=GA>.

penetration of newspapers in Philadelphia at 28.4%, the second-highest of all Knight cities.² According to the Gallup/Knight American Views survey, TV is the most cited source for daily news, although this decreased from 74% in 2020 to 50% in 2022.³

In 2022, the Gallup/Knight survey found that 57% of residents agree that local news organizations can be relied on to deliver the information they need. However, according to Sarah Glover, vice president of News and Civic Dialogue at WHYY, many residents and news providers question whether community information needs are being met generally, and whether the news ecosystem is living up to its potential.

An ecosystem assessment conducted by the Center for Media Engagement found that there are perceived gaps where the public is dissatisfied with media coverage. Across the city, residents gave local media “mediocre” ratings on how well they represent them and their neighborhoods. They also felt that local media aren’t offering “solutions to problems facing my community,” and that they are doing below average with respect to coverage of some issues, the lowest performance ratings being for: infrastructure, roads, and transportation; sanitation; trash removal and cleanliness; the poor, poverty, and homelessness; and traffic and parking.⁴ This same analysis also found use gaps whereby there are outlets that cover specific issues and/or neighborhoods of interest to residents, but the information is not reaching audiences. For example, there is a local media source, *West Philly Local*; however, West Philadelphia residents indicated only “modest agreement” that there are enough stories about their neighborhood, suggesting that this publication might not be reaching local residents.

The ecosystem assessment conducted a survey with Philadelphians and asked where they turn for information about Philadelphia. The top sources of news and information were television (69%) and social media (68%). More than half also said they get information from family, friends and colleagues (59%) and from websites or apps (52%). Forty percent said they get information from the radio, and only 30% of respondents said they get information from print or digital newspapers.⁵ When asked to name specific sources they’d used for news about Philadelphia in the previous 30 days, more than half of respondents named television stations (ABC, Fox, and NBC).

2. Daily average circulation is a composite average based on data from Alliance for Audited Media, which includes the daily average of print, print replica and print nonreplica editions of newspapers, four reporting dates for 2019 and two for 2021. Household penetration rate is the average daily circulation divided by the number of households in Philadelphia, according to the Census Bureau’s 2021 American Community Survey (ACS).

3. Responses to the Gallup/Knight American Views Survey are not statistically significant for Philadelphia in 2022 and instead can be considered information to be analyzed together with other data sources. In 2022, there were only 113 respondents from Philadelphia.

4. Natalie Stroud, Caroline Murray, Emily Graham, Yujin Kim, and Alex Curry, “The News Philadelphians Use: Analyzing the local media landscape” (February 2023),

<https://files.constantcontact.com/12ac0ed3401/dba9ae8a-c817-45c4-9cb3-47e734b72334.pdf?rdr=true>.

5. Stroud, et. al, “The News Philadelphians Use,”

<https://files.constantcontact.com/12ac0ed3401/dba9ae8a-c817-45c4-9cb3-47e734b72334.pdf?rdr=true>. 17.

WHYY has built out its community and engagement team to attempt to better understand and serve the community. This team is embedded into its newsroom, and the organization holds in-person community listening sessions. One recent example was a listening session on gun violence in the city, featured in a podcast series, in which more than 100 people attended. WHYY plans to conduct a follow-up through a community barbeque in spring 2023 and use the moment to ask how the organization is doing “in a non-transactional way,” said Glover. As part of this work, WHYY developed a News and Information Community Exchange (N.I.C.E.) program, which connects journalists and grassroots content creators with WHYY. WHYY looks to N.I.C.E. partners to share perspectives and news from communities and neighborhoods typically “left out of mainstream news,” and partners benefit from WHYY’s reporting resources and experience.⁶

While Philadelphia is a rich market with lots of competition, residents’ information needs still often outweigh supply. Stakeholders noted in interviews that Philadelphia might have the opposite of a news desert—some call it news jungle—where residents may be inundated with information from all sides. News providers could do a better job of producing less, but better or more relevant content, they suggest.

Among the city’s stakeholders, there’s a belief that there is enough history, assets around community organizing and knowledge, skill, and expertise in place to build up and strengthen the existing ecosystem and reimagine it in a way that meets information needs. But there are many people left out, said Molly de Aguiar, president of the Independence Public Media Foundation. “Philadelphia has a robust news and information landscape, but it’s often siloed by race, ethnicity, class, neighborhood, etc., and coverage of issues often caters to those who can pay for the news, rather than serving everyone’s needs.”

Information Providers

Philadelphia has a large number of news organizations and has remained steady since the 2020 baseline assessment. The major shift was in name but not in kind, as in 2020 *Chalkbeat* absorbed the *Philadelphia Public School Notebook* to become *Chalkbeat Philadelphia*. *Chalkbeat* is a national nonprofit with local newsrooms throughout the country. The emphasis remains on K–12 education in the city. The Center Media Engagement ecosystem analysis found that there are coverage gaps in many Philadelphia neighborhoods, as well as a lack of coverage of issues that residents find to be important, such as sanitation, trash removal and cleanliness.⁷

6. N.I.C.E. FAQ, WHYY, <https://whyy.org/nice/faq/>.

7. Stroud, et. al, “The News Philadelphians Use,” <https://files.constantcontact.com/12ac0ed3401/dba9ae8a-c817-45c4-9cb3-47e734b72334.pdf?rdr=true>, 25.

Philadelphia Inquirer is the city's daily newspaper, and as with many major metropolitan dailies, it went through a series of ownership changes in the 1990s and 2000s until its last owner, Gerry Lenfest, donated the paper into nonprofit ownership by the Lenfest Institute for Journalism. Since then, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* has been run as a public benefit corporation with nonprofit ownership, the first of its kind. According to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, it reaches 10 million people a month through its print and digital publications, newsletters, apps and live events.⁸ While the *Philadelphia Inquirer* has made efforts to radically transform, both in terms of its content and its staffing, to more accurately reflect Philadelphia, progress has been uneven.

WHYY, Philadelphia's successful local public media organization, has also increased its efforts to more deeply engage diverse communities across Philadelphia, both in reporting and distribution. Some of this work has been done on its own, while other work has been in partnership with other media organizations in Philadelphia.

Many stakeholders keep the definition of a healthy local news ecosystem top of mind in their work, as a north star that they follow, said Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, co-founder and co-executive director of Resolve Philly. She noted that legacy institutions in particular often face challenges to pivot to new models in community engagement or equitable journalism, noting that there's still a tendency to write about marginalized communities rather than for them.

There are a number of print publications serving immigrant communities in Philadelphia, and there is opportunity to engage with these organizations both for reporting purposes, as well as to build their digital capacity to reach and engage audiences through digital platforms.

8. About the Inquirer, Philadelphia Inquirer, <https://www.inquirer.com/about/>.

BIPOC-Serving Media

Philadelphia has strong BIPOC-serving media, including *Al Día*, *El Hispano*, *El Sol*, WUVP, WWSI and *Impacto Latino* serving the Spanish-speaking community; the *Philadelphia Sunday Sun*, *Philadelphia Tribune*, Scoop USA, WURD and Fun Times Magazine serving the African American/Black community; the *Korean Phila Times* serving the Korean community; and the New Mainstream Media newspaper’s *Metro Chinese Weekly* and *Metro Viet News* serving the Chinese and Vietnamese communities, respectively.

These publications are largely print publications with little to no digital presence. The Lenfest Institute conducted focus groups that suggested that these media are not always reaching the community members they aim to serve as community members were unaware of the publications or aware but did not go to them as a source of news.

Information Providers	Knight Communities, Average, 2022	Philadelphia Baseline, 2020	Philadelphia, 2022	Trending
Number of Organizations				
(newspapers, television stations, radio stations, and digital)	34	56	55	Steady
Population per Organization	27,162	28,287	28,659	Steady
Daily Average Circulation (Major Daily)	N/A	183,349	77,924	Declining
Household Penetration Rate	15.2%	-	28.4%	
Platform Breakdown⁹				
Newspapers	36.8%	48.2%	50.9%	Steady
Television Stations	31.3%	12.5%	12.7%	Steady
Radio Stations	10.9%	5.4%	5.5%	Steady
Digital only	18.5%	30.4%	30.9%	Steady
Business Models Breakdown¹⁰				
Nonprofit	11.2%	19.6%	18.2%	Steady
Public Media	11.5%	3.6%	3.6%	Steady
National Broadcast Chain	24.4%	12.5%	12.7%	Steady
National Newspaper Chain	6.0%	0.0%	0.0%	Steady
Independent For-Profit	46.4%	60.7%	65.5%	Higher
BIPOC-Serving Media				
African American / Black	2.25	5	5	Steady
Hispanic / Latino	3.5	6	6	Steady
Asian / Asian American	0.4	3	3	Steady
Diversity				
Staff Diversity Transparency		3		
Source Diversity Audits		1	1	Steady
Collaboration		Developed and Institutionalized	Developed and Institutionalized	Steady
Journalism Funding				
Philanthropic Dollars over the 3 previous years ¹¹	\$3,837,794	\$19,300,000	\$12,500,000	
Funders	13	60	37	
Recipients	8	30	19	
Invested Per Capita	\$5.94	\$12.18	\$7.93	Declining

9. The percentage of news outlets that publish on specific platforms in Philadelphia.

10. The percentage of news outlets that have specific business models in Philadelphia.

11. Philanthropic investment is based on the Media Impact Funders and Candid database, which pulls data from organizational 990s. These data include only institutional funders, not individual donors. There is also a lag in the data as a result of both the timing of organizations’ tax filings and the process of tagging grants. While this data is far from perfect, it is the only current data source with respect to philanthropic funding for media.

News Outlets Based in Philadelphia

	Independent	National Chain	Nonprofit/University	Public Media
Digital only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad Street Review Frankford Gazette Fun Times Magazine Generocity Green Philly Philadelphia Weekly Scoop USA University City Review 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Billy Penn Catholic Philly Hidden City Pennsylvania Capital-Star Philadelphia Philadelphia Obituary Project Resolve Philly Spotlight PA The Philadelphia Citizen 	
Print and digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Al Día</i> <i>Business Journal</i> <i>Chestnut Hill Local</i> <i>El Hispano</i> <i>El Sol</i> <i>Jewish Exponent</i> <i>Korean Phila Times</i> <i>Legal Intelligencer</i> <i>Metro Chinese Weekly</i> <i>Metro Philadelphia</i> <i>Metro Viet News</i> <i>Northeast Times</i> <i>NW Local</i> <i>Philadelphia Daily News</i> <i>Philadelphia Free Press</i> <i>Philadelphia Gay News</i> <i>Philadelphia Magazine</i> <i>Philadelphia Public Record</i> <i>Philadelphia Sunday Sun</i> <i>Philadelphia Tribune</i> <i>South Philly Review</i> <i>Southwest Globe Times</i> <i>Star News Philly</i> <i>Uptown Standard</i> <i>West Philly Local</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Philadelphia Inquirer</i> 	
Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WURD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KYW 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WHYY
Television		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCAU WPHL WPVI WTFX WUVP WWSI 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WHYY-TV

Diversity

Philadelphia's largest media outlets, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and WHYY, have both struggled with inclusion on their staff, as well as diversity and representation in their content. In the summer of 2020, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* committed itself to having a staff that represented the city overall and to more accurately and fairly reporting on diverse sectors of the community. However, by many accounts, it has fallen short of this promise. In February 2022, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published a story reported and written by independent reporter Wesley Lowery and edited by Errin Haines titled "Black City. White Paper."¹² This story is an accounting of the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* "failed attempts at newsroom integration, and current efforts at internal reckoning." This article digs into the paper's history, but also documents the ways in which it did not live up to its 2020 commitment to build a culture of inclusion for its staff, which remains ongoing work for the institution.

In 2019, WHYY, the public media station, did an extensive cultural competency audit, including a staff and source diversity report, and committed itself to improving its internal culture as well as its relationships with diverse sectors of Philadelphia.¹³ While it has not published updated staff demographic information, WHYY has partnered with organizations and acquired others, like the nonprofit Billy Penn, in order to diversify its content and reach and engage more Philadelphia residents.

From the resident perspective, according to the 2022 Gallup/Knight American Views survey, only 58% of respondents said that the diversity of a news organization's journalists is very or somewhat important to them when deciding what outlet to turn to for information, a smaller percentage than in other Knight resident communities.

Collaborations

Philadelphia has a strong environment for collaboration and is often cited by stakeholders in other cities as a model to learn from. In particular, Resolve Philly, an organization born out of a one-time collaborative that has collaboration at its core, has led the charge, approaching collaboration from a relationship-building perspective and helping to cement the culture among the city's participating news institutions. For Resolve

12. Wesley Lowery, "Black City. White Paper," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 15, 2022, <https://www.inquirer.com/news/ing2/philadelphia-inquirer-racism-equity-diversity-black-journalists-20220215.html>.

13. Andrea Wenzel, "Sourcing Diversity: WHYY and the Rocky Road To 'Cultural Competency,'" Tow Center, September 30, 2019.

Philly, according to Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, the timing was right in the city's news ecosystem, where people were in a state of wanting to try new things. [Broke in Philly](#), a collaborative reporting project of more than 20 organizations launched in 2018, focused on economic mobility in the city. Resolve Philly emerged from the initiative and dramatically changed the ecosystem, which before had been a notoriously competitive environment.

“This level of editorial integration is incredibly novel,” said Friedman-Rudovsky, co-founder and co-executive director of Resolve Philly. “I don’t know of any ecosystem that’s doing what Philadelphia is doing in terms of collaboration, and solutions journalism that has been incorporated as standard practice.”

Local Journalism Support Organizations

Philadelphia has a robust philanthropic community that supports news. In particular, the Lenfest Institute for Journalism, founded in 2016 by the cable television entrepreneur Gerry Lenfest, is squarely focused on supporting and sustaining the future of local journalism in Philadelphia and across the country. Upon founding, the initiative was granted an endowment of \$20 million, along with ownership of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The institute gives grants, develops partnerships and funds research in pursuit of three goals: high-impact journalism; news technology and innovation; and diverse, growing audiences. In 2022, the Institute [released metrics](#) to measure the impact in Philadelphia’s media ecosystem, the result of a year of work among the organization and its partners, to “track success, hold ourselves accountable, and share what we’re learning with our partners and the broader community.”

Diana Lu, director of the Knight-Lenfest Local News Transformation Fund, noted that unlike in some other major cities, in Philadelphia, philanthropy does not have a strategy or shared vision for funding journalism, with journalism goals instead following national strategies, highlighting this as an area of opportunity for the immediate future.

In addition to the Lenfest Institute, a number of other local foundations and organizations are involved in supporting local news in Philadelphia, including Independence Public Media Foundation, the Philadelphia Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, the William Penn Foundation, Temple University and the Scattergood Foundation. National funders are also invested in the ecosystem, including the Knight Foundation with its investments in the Lenfest Institute.

Case Study: A New Vision for Philadelphia Community Media at Independence Public Media Foundation

Independence Public Media Foundation (IPMF) was founded in 2019 following WYBE’s 2017 relinquishing of its broadcast license as part of the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) Broadcast Incentive Auction. WYBE received a one-time payment of \$131.5 million, which it used as an endowment for IPMF. As a new institutional funder with the legacy of a small broadcaster’s vision for how media can create and connect community, IPMF is working to support community-driven media making and storytelling. According to IPMF, the foundation is “committed to transforming the Greater Philadelphia region into a hub for community-owned media, redefining the role of community in philanthropy, and evolving to best meet the needs of the people we serve.”¹⁴

IPMF has expanded the notion of what comprises Philadelphia’s news and information ecosystem, supporting documentary film, community organizing, internet connectivity, youth media training and more, all with the goal of strengthening the community as a whole. Molly de Aguiar, IPMF’s president, says that broad definition of media captures the varied ways that people get information relevant to their lives, from vaccines to what’s going on in their neighborhoods. “Our lens is community ownership of the media, of the tools to do media making, of opportunities to be heard and visible,” de Aguiar said, adding that IPMF’s focus is on news, information and storytelling that helps communities build power.

Information Providers & Community*	National Average	Philadelphia	
% Who say local journalists are in touch with the community	63%	58%	Low
% Who have spoken with a journalist	21%	17%	Average
% Who say their local news source mostly covers the area where they live	51%	50%	Average
% Who pay for local news in the past year	14%	16%	Average
% Who say their local news:			
Reports news accurately	71%	76%	High
Keeps an eye on local political leaders	66%	67%	Average
Provides news that they use daily	67%	66%	Average
Covers news stories thoroughly	65%	69%	High
Are transparent about their reporting	62%	65%	Average
Deals fairly with all sides	62%	60%	Average
Includes people like you in their stories	58%	53%	Low

**Data from 2019 Pew Research Center Local News Survey*

14. Our Story, Independence Media, <https://independencemedia.org/our-story>.

In Philadelphia, 58% of respondents of the 2019 Pew Research Center Local Journalism survey believe that local journalists are in touch with the community, though only 17% say they have spoken with a local journalist. Three quarters of residents (76%) believe their local news media reports news accurately; however, only 53% say the local news does well in including people like them in their stories (the Knight Cities average is 56%).

In the 2022 Gallup/Knight American Views survey, 40% of respondents agree that local news organizations care about how their reporting can affect their community broadly and 41% agree that they care about the best interest of their readers, viewers and listeners.

The 2023 published ecosystem analysis by the Center for Media Engagement found more skepticism. The report shows that nearly half of respondents agreed that there “aren’t enough stories about their neighborhood in the news” (46%) and that “people from their neighborhood aren’t in the news” (45%). CME’s survey also asked the extent to which respondents agreed that the local media are in touch with the community, and 34% agreed, while 38% disagreed. While the question is worded differently than the Pew Research Center’s, which asked

specifically about local journalists (not media), this suggests that Philadelphians continue to see local media as not being in touch with local communities and/or are not aware of the relevant outlets. Furthermore, 42% of respondents disagree that news media do a good job of showing what’s going on with people like them, and 43% disagree that the local media are focused on helping people like them. Finally, half of respondents disagree that the local news media offer solutions to problems facing their community.¹⁵ CME’s analysis found that, in general, older residents and democrats had higher assessments of whether local media represent them.

Lenfest Local Media Landscape (CME, 2022)	Agree	Disagree
Neighborhood		
There aren't enough stories about my neighborhood in the news media.	46%	18%
People from my neighborhood aren't in the news.	45%	21%
Stories about my neighborhood are too negative.	32%	29%
There is a good balance of negative and positive stories about my neighborhood.	32%	31%
Stories about my neighborhood quote the wrong people.	25%	23%
Representation		
Local news media covers the issues that are important to me.	39%	34%
Local news media are in touch with the community.	34%	38%
Local news media include people like me in their stories.	32%	37%
Local news media do a good job of showing what is going on with people like me.	29%	42%
Local news media are focused on helping people like me.	26%	43%
Local news media offer solutions to problems facing my community.	23%	50%

15. Stroud, et. al, “The News Philadelphians Use,” <https://files.constantcontact.com/12ac0ed3401/dba9ae8a-c817-45c4-9cb3-47e734b72334.pdf?rdr=true>. 25.

In conversations with stakeholders, we heard that they believe relationships between information providers and community members are improving, in part as a result of sustained collaboration over time.

Opportunities

- **Support for community and BIPOC-serving media:** Community and BIPOC-serving papers serving immigrant communities in Philadelphia would benefit from increased resources to grow their digital capacity in order to reach more of their communities.
Additional resources would also enable them to participate in the robust collaborative efforts in Philadelphia's ecosystem.
- **Shared philanthropic visioning:** Philadelphia has an active philanthropic community supporting its strong news and information ecosystem, and there is an opportunity for these institutions to come together to create a citywide strategy for philanthropic funding.