



Solving
FOR THE
Future

2025 IMPACT

AMERICAN PRESS INSTITUTE



“API has been at the forefront of recognizing the challenges facing journalists and newsrooms and creating training and support that fits the moment.”

— Joel Christopher, Knoxville News Sentinel

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Taking time to reflect



This past year was an excellent reminder that change is inevitable, and it's how we respond that matters most.

While media and journalism leaders have become acutely familiar with volatile conditions over the past decade, 2025 felt particularly marked by uncertainty.

Between the unknowns of artificial intelligence, economic instability and growing distrust of once-trusted institutions, local and community news organizations were put to the test.

I'm proud that the wide range of news leaders who engaged with the American Press Institute throughout 2025 chose to nurture pockets of hope and possibility while faced with mounting pressures. Together, we explored innovative ways to connect communities with the information they need to thrive.

This was no happy accident, though. API has now spent 80 years honing our role as a consistent, steady force for media and journalism leaders, laser-focused on guiding news organizations through times of great instability.

In 2025, API created spaces for leaders to come together to think boldly about workplace culture, diversification of revenue streams, civic discourse

and more. We celebrated the more than 200 news organizations that participated in the Table Stakes program, platformed dozens of news leaders' first-hand findings and analyzed hundreds of thousands of articles and sources through our products.

Through every touchpoint, we prioritized a sense of connection, belonging and shared learning.

I hope you'll find that this report reflects the significant role API's community plays in shaping our approach to fostering healthy, responsive and resilient news organizations.

We take great care to apply insights from every person who attends a Local News Summit, participates in one of our cohorts, uses our products or informs our research. Your contributions power API's community of learning and advance a brighter future for journalism.

We are deeply honored that news organizations choose to turn to API when they need to find a clear path forward. Now and always, API aims to ease the burden and shine a light for media and journalism leaders searching for their very own trusted adviser, problem solver, connector and educator.

Thank you for putting your trust in API.

Sam Ragland

Samantha Ragland

2025 interim executive director & senior vice president, American Press Institute

Embracing the opportunities ahead



In my 30 years in the news industry, I've experienced more than my fair share of change. But I've never seen a moment quite like this one. Audience habits, technology and civic expectations are shifting.

At the same time, newsroom leaders are being asked to adapt at a pace that is both exciting and difficult to sustain.

I stepped into the role of the American Press Institute's executive director in December 2025 because I believe this work matters and because I know what it feels like to be in the trenches. As a newsroom leader, I looked to API for guidance, training and peer support at pivotal moments in my own career.

Nearly 25 years ago, I attended my first API leadership training as a new city editor at the Asheville Citizen-Times. I attended another weeklong session several years later. And in 2015, I joined the first Table Stakes metro newsroom cohort when I was the new managing editor at The Dallas Morning News. Those experiences were more than professional development. They reminded me that solving hard problems alongside peers is essential to sustainable journalism. That hasn't changed.

What has changed are the pressures on local and community media. People have less time, more information is competing for their attention and new AI-driven tools are reshaping how content is

created and consumed. Yet the core need is the same. People still want trustworthy information and meaningful connections that help them make sense of their communities and feel like they belong.

That's where API comes in.

As we enter our 80th year and our next chapter, API is doubling down on its role as a community-oriented solutions lab. We are here to help media leaders test ideas, share what works and build lasting organizational practices that strengthen local news.

Whether you have been in API's orbit for decades or you are just discovering our work, know that we are ready for this moment. The challenges ahead are real, but no one needs to face them alone.

API is here to help you navigate what comes next.

Robyn Tomlin

Robyn Tomlin

Executive director, American Press Institute

In the 80 years since API's founding, the challenges facing the press have evolved, but API's commitment to providing a welcoming and collaborative space for media and journalism leaders to think boldly remains the same.

Whether we're helping a news leader diagnose the root of a problem or catalyzing a new strategic direction for an organization, our mission and vision drive every aspect of our approach.

Our mission

We support local and community-based media through research, programs and products that foster healthy, responsive and resilient news organizations.

Our vision

We envision an inclusive democracy and society, where communities have the news and information they need to make decisions and thrive.



2025: A snapshot of our impact

In a year marked by unpredictability, API leaned into what we do best: connect, educate, advise and problem solve.

API AS A CONNECTOR

"API's events have not only introduced me to new and useful concepts that I can use in my day-to-day work, but they've also introduced me to a whole new group of fellow news leaders and broadened my network of people I can reach out to for support."

— Eric Marsh Sr., Philadelphia Center for Gun Violence Reporting

■ **23 events and convenings**, including 3 API Local News Summits and 12 webinars that covered topics such as trauma-informed leadership, diversifying revenue streams and civic discourse across generations

■ **3 learning cohorts**, organized, designed and facilitated by API, focused on experiments and projects related to workplace culture, revenue strategies and creator-newsroom collaborations



API AS AN EDUCATOR

"Engaging with API's initiatives has helped our organization make strategic choices about where we devote resources and establish collaborations that increase our capacity."

— Bill Ketter, CNHI, LLC

■ **21 guest essays published**, highlighting first-person insights from news leaders, non-news experts and news advisory committee participants

■ **24 Better News case studies published** about local and community news leaders experimenting with revenue strategies, building community partnerships and collaborating with trusted messengers



API AS AN ADVISOR

"The API team is a force of nature and a powerful source of advice and encouragement. They've propelled me forward in meaningful ways."

— Lizzie Schiffman Tufano, Block Club Chicago

■ **90+ coaching calls and trainings** to guide news leaders through challenging moments



API AS A PROBLEM SOLVER

"API is always focusing on the main issues in the industry and offering clear, practical solutions. I really appreciate this steady focus and clear guidance for making positive changes."

— Ashley Harper, Charlottesville Tomorrow

■ **32 grants totaling \$128K awarded** to local news organizations to advance innovation and community engagement, while absorbing the risk

■ **660,037 articles analyzed** through Metrics for News

■ **239,875 sources analyzed** from Source Matters partners



API's milestone moments

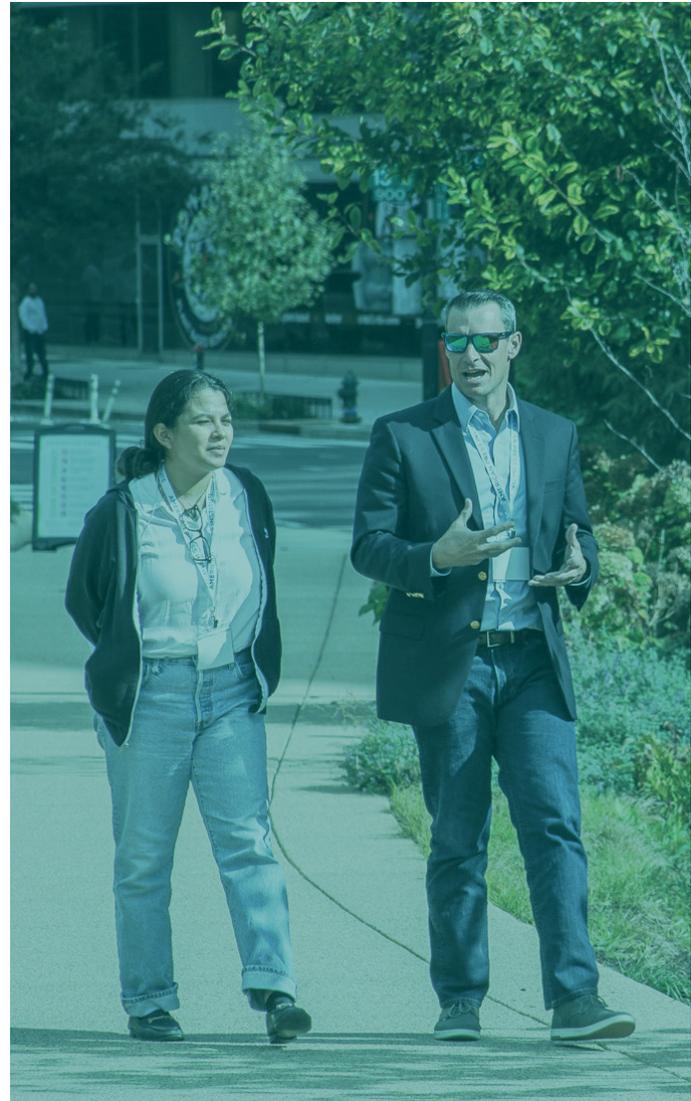
2025 was a year of evolution, progress and expansion.

SHARING KEY INSIGHTS

■ **Concluded** the Table Stakes Local News Transformation Program, which saw more than 200 news organizations participate over 10 years. To capture learnings from the organizations that participated in the program, API published [The Digital Transformation Guide](#).

■ **Shared** [API's Guide to Influencer Collaborations](#), a 12-part resource that walks newsrooms through what partnerships with content creators look like, including how to find the right influencer, how to safeguard against ethical concerns and how other newsrooms are experimenting with this approach.

■ **Partnered** with the News Revenue Hub to help local news leaders earn new forms of revenue in the evolving information landscape. As part of the collaboration, API and the News Revenue Hub hosted three webinars focused on peer learning: How the Nashville Banner embraces local identity and history, How The Forward grows audience across generations and How influencer collaborations can help news deepen community connection.





CHARTING API'S FUTURE

■ **Welcomed** API's new executive director, Robyn Tomlin, who will build and expand upon the progress outgoing executive director Michael Bolden made during his tenure.

■ **Expanded** the mission of API's product strategy team, which manages our [Metrics for News](#) and [Source Matters](#) tools. Led by API's new vice president of product strategy, Yoni Greenbaum, this team focused much of the year on supporting existing partners and fostering 60 new relationships across publishers, funders and journalism support organizations.



In 2026 and beyond, API's products will become even more of a focus as news organizations seek to build deeper trust with their communities.

Here's how Source Matters is connecting news leaders with critical information:

"Source Matters isn't just a data collection tool — it's a mirror that shows newsrooms who they are missing and a motivator to be more intentional about inclusive sourcing. It helped our newsroom build trust by ensuring more communities felt genuinely seen, heard and represented in our coverage."

— Sherkiya Wedgeworth-Hollowell,
formerly of Colorado Public Radio



Listening to our community

Effective community listening is a vital part of creating compelling journalism that resonates, builds trust and moves people to action. Through trainings, case studies, products such as Source Matters, conversations at our Local News Summits and beyond, API is shaping how news organizations across the country think about community engagement.

At API, we practice what we preach. It's why we distribute an annual survey to the media and journalism leaders who engaged with API in one form or another, so we can learn what's working and how we can best meet our community's needs.

Our 2025 Impact Survey was completed by 85 media and journalism leaders from across the country, representing a range of newsroom sizes, focus areas and demographics.



Here's what we heard:

- **88%** say that API has contributed to their knowledge and growth as a journalist.
- **82%** have learned new skills through API, which has increased their confidence in navigating and/or being successful in the journalism industry.



- **81%** report API has helped create solutions for challenges facing local journalists, newsrooms and/or the news industry.
- **87%** are satisfied with their API experience.

"API's guidance has helped us become more sustainable, more responsive to our community and more confident in our strategy so we can succeed long-term. API teaches us how to fish."

— Garry Pierre-Pierre, URL Media

Capturing transformative impact in action

API takes the concept of “learning out loud” seriously.

We encourage each media and journalism leader who engages with API to share their wisdom so that others can benefit. And in return, API analyzes and synthesizes these learnings to advance a brighter future for journalism.

Case studies, like the ones that follow in this Impact Report, are an opportunity to highlight those findings and spotlight some of the organizations that have partnered with API to collaborate, innovate and advance solutions for their communities.

Throughout 2025, our projects and initiatives sought to strengthen our democracy, inspire more inclusive workplaces, build trust and provide news organizations with the tools to be operationally sound.



Building trust through strategic collaborations

How API helped expand Factchequeado's approach to combating disinformation

Factchequeado, a nonprofit organization closing the information gap in Spanish for more than 68 million Latinos, is now the largest collaborative effort against disinformation in Spanish in the U.S.

Research shows that one in five U.S.-based Latino adults prefer to get their news through social media. However, many social media creators lack the training to navigate the rise of mis- and disinformation on social platforms, putting creators' credibility and the quality of their content at risk.

As part of API's Influencers Learning Cohort, Factchequeado:

■ **2024:** Realigned their partnership strategy around working directly with content creators. A collaboration with a news content creator contributed to a 60% year-over-year increase in social media traffic.

■ **2025:** Developed a culturally relevant training to help creators produce quality and accurate content. This training was delivered virtually to creators in Ecuador, and an in-person training was held in New York in early 2026.

Training creators to protect trusted information

While Factchequeado previously developed trainings and resources to increase media literacy, the 2025 API Influencers Learning Cohort project presented a unique challenge. This new training had to reach professional content creators, each with an established brand and audience. Factchequeado aimed to design a training that felt accessible and supportive, rather than prescriptive.

To address this, the training identified a shared pain point among creators: how to protect credibility and relationships in a growing environment of false information, while maintaining a creative voice. With the help of a \$3,000 grant and coaching from API, the curriculum was built around steps every creator already follows — planning, recording and publishing — so new skills could integrate seamlessly into existing workflows.

Scaling the impact

The modular, scenario-based training curriculum will be the foundation for launching the Latino Content Creators Network ahead of the 2026 elections. The project also sparked interest from nationwide partners to replicate and adapt the training to other contexts at the local level.

"API excels at structuring and facilitating its cohorts in a way that keeps participants genuinely motivated and engaged. The energy and momentum of the sessions, along with the team's consistent openness and willingness to support, create an environment where meaningful progress actually happens."

— Olivia Rivarola, Factchequeado

A data-driven approach to subscriber satisfaction

With API's Metrics for News, Newsday found unexpected ways to connect with audiences

Newsday is a legacy news organization based on Long Island, New York, serving an audience with a strong local identity.

Since 2018, Newsday has used API's [Metrics for News](#) analytics tool, which helps identify patterns across data sources and ways to align everyday coverage with long-term audience engagement that both serves their communities and contributes to their sustainability.

By using Metrics for News, Newsday:

- **Uncovered** audience enthusiasm for new beats and niche topics, which led to the creation of multiple content initiatives and staff positions.
- **Increased** subscriber acquisition and revenue year-over-year by connecting Newsday audiences with the information they both want and need.
- **Discovered** how to make national news more relevant by identifying the intersecting local angles.

Making audience part of the daily conversation

Newsday had two primary goals when it brought MFN into its newsroom: build stronger data literacy and adopt data-informed decision-making to drive revenue. With MFN, data has become a critical part of how the Newsday team makes decisions and builds relationships with the Long Island community.

From data to strategy

MFN metrics have enabled Newsday to track the content and stories that resonate most with its audience, leading to tangible results:

- **2023:** Listened to audience interests and hired a reporter to cover restaurants and real estate, increasing digital subscriber acquisition by nearly 25 percent.
- **2024:** Added seven positions to build out new content initiatives and coverage areas, informed by data on what content performs best.
- **2025:** Doubled conversions on travel content by experimenting with both hyperlocal and nostalgic travel angles.

"Heavily utilizing the data from Metrics for News has enabled us to grow our audience at a time when the economy is under pressure and people are less willing to pay for their news. We've found success by leaning into our understanding of who our audiences are and what they respond to."

— Shawna VanNess, Newsday

Uncovering creative pathways for impact

How API's advising catalyzed an innovative program with student journalists

Stet News is a nonprofit, independent news site focused on Palm Beach County, Fla., that was started to fill the gap in news and civic information across the area.

Engaging the next generation

After three grant applications fell short of funding a “Documenters”-style news program, the Stet News team attended a pro bono advising session with API.

Stet News' leadership sought API's perspective on next-gen topics, pluralism and community engagement. When the conversation turned toward a new vision of serving Gen Alpha, something “clicked.” Stet News recognized the importance of engaging the next generation of news readers and writers, but until now, they didn't see it as a path for their community project.

“I suddenly got unstuck. Talking to API reoriented us to a different way of looking at the program, and I don't think we'd be off the ground without that conversation.”

— Carolyn DiPaolo, Stet News

“API is creating a community in local news that allows us to create community back in our own hometowns.”

— Liz Capozzi, Stet News

Expanding media literacy for high school students

Following the advising session with API, Stet News launched the Community Voices program in partnership with Inlet Grove Middle and High School. Community Voices engages students in local journalism and civic involvement in Riviera Beach, which is home to a \$500M development project that previously lacked media coverage. As the city and school district undergo significant change, student reporting is a solution for the information gap.

For months leading up to their first assignment, students spent their lunchtime with Stet News' co-founders to learn about journalism ethics, the workings of municipal government and how to detect misinformation.

Fostering community connection through news coverage

Informed by API's guidance and support, the initiative empowers students to understand and report on local news and fosters a sense of belonging and community engagement. Students are learning the importance of being civic participants and driving meaningful conversations about the changes in their community, while being paid for their reporting.

As part of the ripple effect from that initial advising session, Stet News has also been integrated into API's network and participated in multiple API Local News Summits in 2025.

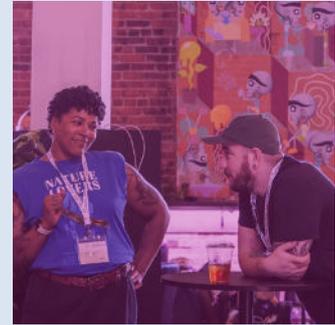
Fostering long-lasting peer connections

API specializes in facilitating authentic, long-lasting relationships that help media and journalism leaders thrive long beyond their engagement with our team.

These relationships span industries, areas of expertise and geography. We are immensely proud that 100% of our API Local News Summit participants leave saying they met someone new and that these new introductions frequently turn into meaningful connections.

The **summits and cohorts** that API organizes are designed to make an impact for a lifetime, not a moment.

By bringing together media and journalism leaders, as well as experts in complementary industries, to share their experiences and exchange ideas, API is helping expand networks and build peer groups that can weather tough industry moments.



Local News Summits

Local Identity, History and Sustainability

For the first Local News Summit of 2025, API convened nearly 70 news leaders and experts from non-news spaces in Nashville, Tenn., to discuss how to leverage history, nostalgia, archives, community markers and partnerships to build products, services and experiences that drive revenue.

Journalists often focus exclusively on news values like accuracy, trustworthiness, independence and fairness. While these elements are vital, local media has the power to do even more. The conversations in Nashville homed in on how local news can add value to communities by helping people make informed decisions, building connections between the past and present, enriching conversations through nuance and bridging individual differences.

“I was working on a nostalgia-based documentary project prior to the Nashville summit, but we didn’t yet have a home for distribution. Thanks to conversations at the summit, a related book project was brought to my attention, and we decided to pair the film with the book as a package. Because of API, we’ve been able to establish collaborations that increase our capacity for engagement and reaching new audiences.”

— Drew Trafton, Forum Communications Company

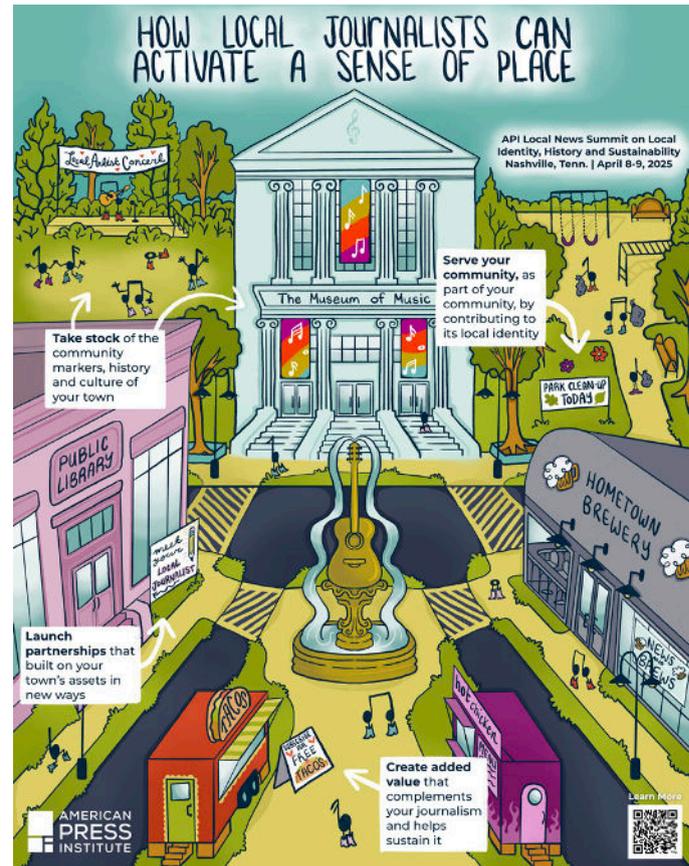


ILLUSTRATION: SYLVIA ASUNCION-CRABB

News leaders left the summit with the conviction that leaning into local identity and history can inspire a sense of belonging among neighbors, help residents form social bonds and enable people to take action to improve their communities.

Civic Discourse Across Generations

Across a two-day summit in Denver, news organizations of all types explored a pressing question: How might local media bridge civically-oriented coverage and conversation across generations?

Following a contentious national election where age played a prominent role, it was crucial for news organizations to reflect on how they can represent a range of perspectives — because an inclusive society requires collaboration from all Americans, regardless of age.



The API Local News Summit on Civic Discourse Across Generations centered how to better embrace practices that facilitate local cooperation across generations, with the knowledge that this work matters for our democracy, our social fabric and the sustainability of news organizations.



ILLUSTRATION © 2025 ALLYX CAPEK

"At the summit, it was energizing to hear about the experiments that people have been conducting with real-world examples. That fired up my own imagination about what could be possible in my newsroom."

— Gabriela Resto-Montero, Rocky Mountain Public Media

From the Ground Up:
Cultivating civic discourse across generations



Inclusion, Belonging and Local Leadership

In Washington, D.C., news leaders gathered to discuss how they can better empower residents to lead and influence their community's information ecosystem.

As communities across the country struggle with polarization and social isolation, it's more important than ever for local news organizations to embed themselves in their communities and foster connections among neighbors. For local media to be an integral part of people's lives, news leaders must determine how to involve individuals with deep ties to their communities in the journalistic process.

At the API Local News Summit on Inclusion, Belonging and Local Leadership, news leaders explored innovative ways to recruit local community members to create journalism and to expand civic opportunities for local residents who care deeply about the place they call home.

"Attending the leadership summit gave me the opportunity to meet other media folks who are sharing power with their communities. I didn't have to explain what our newsroom is trying to do! I was able to bring back ideas and real-life examples of how we can go beyond conventional journalism outputs like reporting and documenting."

— Daphne Magnawa, News Relay Network



API LOCAL NEWS SUMMIT ON INCLUSION, BELONGING & LOCAL LEADERSHIP
OCT. 9-10, 2025, WASHINGTON, D.C.

ILLUSTRATED BY Hannah Good

ILLUSTRATION: HANNAH GOOD



Learning cohorts

Cohorts are a key element of API's approach to facilitating peer connection, bold thinking and experimentation. Across the three cohorts that API led in 2025, API distributed 32 grants totaling \$128K and provided coaching and direction to the participating organizations.

■ **Connection + Collaboration Learning Cohort:** API awarded eight local and community news organizations with \$5,000 grants to complete projects related to strengthening internal workplace culture. Each participating organization was an alum of the Table Stakes program and joined the 2024 Local News Summit for Belonging and Collaboration. API supported the cohort through peer-learning calls, where news leaders pressure-tested their ideas and clarified their experiments.

■ **Revenue Experiments Learning Cohort:** API tapped eight news organizations, each of which was a Table Stakes alum, to evolve or iterate upon current revenue experiments. Each organization received a \$5,000 grant to help mitigate the risk of exploring new revenue strategies, with the lessons learned ultimately benefiting the industry more widely. This cohort and the accompanying grants were funded by The Knight-Lenfest Local News Transformation Fund.

"We learned that when your mission is centered on uplifting community voices, authentic storytelling can be a powerful driver of both impact and revenue. This experiment showed us how to align our cultural mission with fundraising in a way that attracts funders, sponsors and supporters who believe in the people we serve."

— Jazmine Brazier, The Atlanta Voice

■ **Influencers Learning Cohort:** API brought 16 organizations together to deepen engagement with the communities they serve through new experiments with creators and trusted messengers. Their plans — each supported by a \$3,000 grant from API and refined with API's help — were designed to build connections with new audiences and serve communities by prioritizing storytelling and positive impact. This learning cohort aimed to deepen understanding of how local influence operates and how newsrooms can effectively participate in this ecosystem without attempting to control it.

Let's strengthen local media, together

In the year ahead, local and community news organizations will encounter new questions to wrestle with, new roadblocks to move and new opportunities to explore.

API exists to guide media and journalism leaders through these defining junctures, turning research and experimentation into practical training and tools that meet the moment.

Our community of news leaders, non-industry experts, funders and partners is what allows us to advance our mission, and we are always looking to expand and strengthen our network.

Do you share our vision for an inclusive democracy and society where communities have the news and information they need to make decisions and thrive? If so, we would love to hear from you.

Contact hello@pressinstitute.org for more information on how API can support you in strengthening local and community news.



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