



STORIES.

n June 17, 2019, Joshua Benton, the director of Harvard's Nieman Journalism Lab, published an essay that discussed just how emotionally overwhelmed people are by the news. Around the world, audiences are increasingly avoiding news. But the major complaint is less about its reliability than about how depressing it is - and how powerless they feel when they consume it. "'It can have a negative effect on my mood' is consistently a bigger factor in why people avoid news than 'I can't rely on news to be true," Benton wrote.

His top recommendation: to recapture readers, news should include solutions. (He even suggested that SJN send his article to potential funders — an idea with which we agreed.)

4 — SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM NETWORK

Six years ago, when we founded SJN, our goal was to show that solutions journalism wasn't 'lite news' or a weekend 'add-on', but rather vital reporting that needed to be done rigorously and systematically — reporting that should, in fact, be a core element of everyday news. There's much more work to be done — but we are heartened by how this practice, in a relatively short time, has gained legitimacy in many parts of the world.

Our most recent survey of our news organization partners found that 90 percent reported "broad institutional support" for solutions journalism and 97 percent planned to continue the approach. We now have online resources for journalists in 12 languages — all created in response to international demand. Our SolutionsU platform has thousands of stories serving as a real-time 'heat map' revealing how communities far and wide are responding to a wide array of challenges.

What is increasingly clear is that solutions journalism is not just a useful tool for journalists. It's critical to the national debate about how to save journalism. It's also essential for stimulating civic agency and reweaving a healthly, more equitable social fabric.

As this report shows, our journalism partners are using solutions journalism to strengthen ties with their communities, increase trust, sharpen accountability, drive impact and, critically, bring in new sources of local revenue. Two decades after the digital transformation of the news delivery system, journalism is finally facing up to the need to transform its content — the very definition of "what is news." We can no longer provide a steady diet of dysfunction, violence and failure. It is not a true mirror of the world, nor a product people want — much less want to pay for. And to call this "the news" sows polarization, social alienation and mistrust.

It is a terrifying time for journalism, but also a time of possibility. The news organizations that survive this era will do so because they have chosen to offer better journalism: stories that people want and society needs. SJN will continue to develop and teach the practice of solutions journalism. But our larger job now is to make the case that the future of journalism depends in no small part on telling the whole story.





SJN launched our "Renewing Democracy" project in May: a project to catalyze reporting projects in at least 100 newsrooms across the nation, focused on democratic renewal, particularly in communities in which social injustice, a sense of powerlessness, or cultural conflict run deep. These projects encourage news organizations to show how and where civic agency and collaborative action are emerging and demonstrating power. The majority of project published or underway involve bottom-up community efforts to change the status quo or overcome conflict. Some exceptional early stories include:

BOISE STATE PUBLIC RADIO BOISE, ID <u>examined</u> how a citizen-driven campaign to expand Medicaid eligibility overcame Idaho's restrictive ballot initiative law.

WBEZ, CHICAGO'S NPR AFFILIATE, sent reporters to San Francisco to explore the city's Financial Justice Project, the first project within a city treasury to reform how fees and fines impact low-income residents. The resulting story, "Fees and Fines," connected the reporting to Chicago's need, where debt is saddling some of the city's most vulnerable residents.

LAW@THEMARGINS launched "We are the immigrants," a five-part series reporting on immigration issues in regions across the U.S., showing how some of the nation's newest residents are reinvigorating democracy in the face of increasing national tension.

We have expanded our work at the intersection of collaboratives and solutions journalism with our Local Media Project. This is an initiative to strengthen local media ecosystems through the development of transformational models of journalism that seek to leverage increased audience engagement and achieve financial sustainability. Following successful efforts in Philadelphia, New Hampshire and Montana, SJN received \$5 million, the largest grant in its

history, to establish sustainable, collaborative news hubs in 15 communities across the United States over the next five years. Participants in the existing and aspiring collaboratives include entrepreneurial digital startups, legacy newsrooms, public media and commercial TV stations, as well as universities and respected local institutions, such as libraries. They will be catalyzing high-impact solutions journalism and engagement activities that heighten civic activation, strengthen the connection of citizens to the news, and provide new revenue streams for participating news organizations.

We are accelerating our expansion outside the United States as well. Our basic solutions journalism toolkit is available in 12 languages – most of the translations completed with the cooperation of local journalism development organizations abroad that will spread the curricula to their networks. In partnership with Science Africa, we've seeded the solutions approach in East Africa, building capacity among a targeted group of Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Ugandan journalists to produce high-quality solutions stories – and to spread the practice to their professional peers. We also have received a grant to partner with a Colombian organization to bring solutions journalism to South America – and we're discussing similar arrangements in India and Canada.





DEEPEN JOURNALISTS' SKILLS TO REPORT IN HIGH CONFLICT SETTINGS

SJN commissioned and published Amanda Ripley's essay "Complicating the Narrative," which went viral among journalists. It was groundbreaking research that changed how journalists think about the power of their questions to shape responses, drawing from how reporters can learn from mediators in high conflict zones. Nieman Lab covered it, it was in API's newsletter, WNPR did an hour interview with Amanda, Education Writers Association did a podcast episode with her, and Amanda discussed the piece on Wisconsin Public Radio. The essay was translated into German by Krautreporter.

In November, we hosted our second Solutions Journalism Summit, our annual gathering of some of the best and brightest journalists rigorously reporting on problems facing communities and how people are responding to those social problems. Over 2.5 days, we hosted 90 attendees from 25 states and 7 countries. We explored best practices, impact evaluation, public engagement, newsroom culture change, and collaborations that can strengthen the work and lead to greater impact. In post-summit surveys from 2018, 81 percent of attendees said the summit exceeded their expectations, 97 percent said they gained new insights and tactics that will help them further their work, and 88 percent left with a better understanding of the importance of solutions journalism and SJN.







countries

PARTNER WITH J-SCHOOLS TO TEACH SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM TO THE NEXT GENERATION

SJN's engagement with universities has increased the breadth and impact of our work in an exciting number of new ways. This included the launch of our first <u>Solutions</u> <u>Journalism Educators Academy</u> at the University of Oregon's George S. Turnbull Portland Center. The Academy is an initiative of the Catalyst Journalism Project at the University of Oregon.

We currently have five "Beacon" schools, serving as reference points for the expansion of this approach in journalism education. At Oregon, the approach focuses on both investigative reporting and photo journalism; at Pepperdine it's broadcast journalism; at Temple it's community-driven reporting; at University of Georgia it's data journalism; and at Arizona State it's creating a model to incorporate solutions journalism into the "basic training" fundamental reporting classes required of every student.



CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

This <u>story</u> about professor Brent Walth provides an insightful look at how he learned to blend the teaching of investigative journalism and solutions journalism for his students to create a richer and more inspiring curriculum.

PARTNER WITH OTHER UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS TO TEACH BUSINESS, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND HUMANITIES... USING SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM

SolutionsU is a resource-rich online platform that connects learners to solutions stories about responses to the world's challenges. We tripled the number of SolutionsU registrants in 2018. SolutionsU identifies, vets and tags solutions journalism stories in one searchable database: the Solutions Story Tracker. This searchable database features 6,700+ solutions stories produced by 1,400+ journalists from 900+ news outlets in 160+ countries. The stories cover a wide variety of people, communities, and institutions working to respond to critically important issues and advance change around the globe.

We support educators in developing curriculum that integrates solutions journalism stories into the teaching of a broad range of disciplines, such as business, anthropology, journalism, sociology and environmental studies. At the college level from 2016 to 2018, 77 educators in 63 institutions integrated resources from SolutionsU into 122 courses, impacting 5,023 students.

In addition, at the middle and high school levels, 5 educators integrated SolutionsU into 8 courses, impacting 309 students.





Assistant Professor Marcy O'Neil used solutions journalism to create seven story collections on topics ranging from environmental movements to political activism, as well as two assignments and an honors project. Her customized course materials address specific course learning objectives and inspire students with the knowledge of what is possible in the world of social change. For example, after they read about solutions to food waste, several of her students approached the cafeteria about reconsidering the size of the portions they were serving. After they read a story collection on labor movements, another group visited a local apple orchard to explore the labor conditions there. Says O'Neil, "These stories take my students out of the realm of the theoretical, and into thinking about how these issues play out in the real world. It shows them how important it is to act."

WINNING AWARDS

In 2018, solutions journalism projects won 35 awards. In June, Resolve Philly's Jean Friedman-Rudovsky attended the first ever Philadelphia Reentry Coalition awards. Any reentry organizations or key stakeholders in the city could nominate formerly incarcerated individuals who are doing exceptional work, and other groups making a difference would receive recognition. "Hundreds of people gathered to celebrate friends and loved ones who were overcoming odds," said Friedman-Rudovsky. The Reentry Project also won the community engagement APME prize in 2018—the second year in a row one of SJN's partners has done so (in 2017 the award went to Minneapolis Star Tribune for its solutions journalism series on deradicalization in the Twin Cities' Somali community).

DISSEMINATE SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM STORIES BROADLY TO INFORM, SPARK NEW IDEAS, AND SEED GREATER DEMAND FOR SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM

In 2018, we hired nine Story Fellows to vet and tag stories in the <u>Solutions Story Tracker</u>. The fellows reviewed over 4,000 stories and grew the database by over 2,800 stories, doubling the number of stories in the database. These professionals also worked on external presentations and projects that utilized knowledge from the database:







Marie Von Haften, Megan Kamerick, and Emma Zehner mined the Solutions Story Tracker to find the most important and potentially bipartisan solution to gun violence. They produced a knowledge package about Red Flag Laws, which included an introductory 5-minute video, a collection, and a 45-minute panel discussion. This package was shared on Capitol Hill.



Serena Deutch created a Solutions
Story Map of Detroit that mapped
where solutions are happening
throughout the city and the
solutions coverage. The Renewal
Project, affiliated with The Atlantic,
republished her map on their website.



Leslie Cory interviewed journalists about how to report on solutions over time and compiled her analysis in a compelling report. Cory also participated in an SJN Twitter chat on Climate Change.



Mike Yates interviewed local Rochester, NY artists about their rights as workers in this radio interview.



Maria Esquinca created a <u>visual</u>
<u>collection in a video format</u>
about How Communities Are
Responding to ICE.



Areeba Haider composed a <u>Best</u>

<u>Practices Guide</u> on how local
governments can innovate their data
and forms to better serve citizens.



Megan Kamerick interviewed executives from Crossroads for Women for a radio program on how women can exit incarceration successfully.

In May 2018, we launched the Response: a weekly email with three solutions stories illustrating responses that work, pivoting off the latest news moments. The first curator of the Response was Marie Von Haften, who was a 2018 Story Fellow and now our Database Assistant.

We partnered with organizations and nonprofits to integrate solutions stories into their established platforms, workshops or trainings. Our stories complement and advance the work of these partners, while increasing the reach of solutions stories worldwide. For example, Google Assistant's Tell Me Something Good started as a six-month pilot (as of late 2019, it is still ongoing) to expand the reach of solutions stories and to present a new delivery mechanism for the content of news organizations doing response-oriented reporting. These one-a-day solutions stories, curated and summarized by our team and available on voice demand via Google Assistant, are pulled from the Solutions Story Tracker.

AS OF 2018 END

14,027

ournalists trained

newsroom collaboratives with eighty-six

languages in
which our core
curriculum
in solutions
journalism
is offered

sixteen

J-Schools teaching solutions journalism

3,385

members in our network who are journalism industry professionals

3,143

non-journalist members building demand for solutions journalism (tripled!)

engaged news organizations

examples of solutions journalism in our Solutions Story Tracker

newsrooms we've trained

since inception

At the college level from 2016 to 2018,

77 EDUCATORS in 63 INSTITUTIONS integrated resources from Solutions U into 122 COURSES, impacting 5,023 STUDENTS.

WHYIT MATTERS.

WASHINGTON: THE SEATTLE TIMES **O**-

The Seattle Times' "Education Lab" generated interest among funders for other solutions-focused beats, most urgently, Seattle's homelessness crisis. The Times' proposed coverage to explain causes of the city's homelessness and to examine potential responses in Seattle and elsewhere. That framing resonated with philanthropic and corporate funders. The Seattle Foundation, BECU, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Campion Foundation, the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Raikes Foundation, Schultz Family Foundation, Seattle Mariners and Starbucks together invested \$525,000 for the first year of Project Homeless, which launched in 2018, and \$328,500 so far for year two.

O MONTANA: THE FLATHEAD BEACON

To build awareness, compassion and outrage about the problem of missing and murdered Indigenous women, The Flathead Beacon in Montana created the first database tracking this problem in the United States, and examined what people across the state were doing in response to this problem. The Beacon's project is published on a website focused on the issue, with powerful family stories. The series has helped to build urgency around the issue. In December, the U.S. Senate Passed a bill addressing missing and murdered Indigenous women—Savanna's Act—which requires better and more data collection and law enforcement protocols in these cases. It was sponsored by 18 senators, including Montana's Sen. Jon Tester.

O WYOMING: WYOMING PUBLIC RADIO

As part of **WPR**'s "I Respectfully Disagree" series, reporter Melodie Edwards convened a group in coal-reliant Campbell County, Wyoming, where hate crimes against Muslims have rattled the community, for a conversation about tolerance and the future of their community. "I've heard from a lot of people that they felt like they were on the edge of their seats, expecting chaos to break out," said Edwards. "Made for gripping listening, I guess. Everyone says I need to do more of them."

ARIZONA: THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR O

The Arizona Daily Star, a daily in Tucson co-owned by Gannett and Lee Enterprises, had reported intensively on the state's foster care crisis, including soaring numbers of child neglect cases and removals. "We really did want to differentiate our reporting by looking at what could be done," says reporter Emily Bregel. Bregal and her colleague Patty Machelor wanted to surface ways to help families and protect children without unnecessarily removing kids from their homes. They sought to visit states that had engineered more effective approaches to caseworker training and retention and improved the relationship between child welfare workers and the parents they serve. The Community Foundation for Southern Arizona awarded the Daily Star \$26,000. The resulting project, "Fixing our foster care crisis," launched in March 2018.

NEW MEXICO: STATE LEGISLATURE O-

The New Mexico state legislature has <u>launched a review</u> of how the state's liquor laws can better encourage economic development of small breweries in rural areas, citing the success of a small brewery in Truth or Consequences, NM, as reported in a story last fall by Heath Haussamen from SJN's New Mexico collaborative project.

OHIO: YOUR VOICE OHIO O

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and members of the state's opioid task force are working with Your Voice Ohio to share insights from their solutions reporting on the opioid crisis. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also asked YVO for help identifying emerging solutions, particularly best practices in prevention, treatment, and recovery. This includes YVO's solutions database and community-specific addiction and recovery resources available for distribution to 37 media partners in Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia.

O MARYLAND: THE BALTIMORE SUN

Reporter Doug Donovan's covered landlord licensing policy and civil right to counsel for a series on Baltimore rent courts called "Dismissed" by **The Baltimore Sun**. One of the solutions highlighted has been implemented in Baltimore and is being hailed as the most significant reform to rental housing licensing in more than 50 years in Baltimore. The latest follow up on that program is here.

O NEW HAMPSHIRE: NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER

The **New Hampshire Union Leader**, New Hampshire's biggest daily paper, has secured philanthropic funding to support three solutions-focused beats, each with a dedicated full-time reporter. "Silver Linings," a year-long initiative, supported by the Endowment for Health, focuses on issues of the state's aging population. "Beyond the Stigma" explores the substance abuse and mental health crisis, with funding from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, NAMI New Hampshire, and private individuals.

O OHIO: RICHLAND SOURCE

Jay Allred of the **Richland Source** raised \$67k for dedicated solutions reporting. Jay sold "newsroom partnerships"—not traditional advertising, and not sponsored content. He promised supporters to steer all revenue into solutions journalism—like restricted funds with full transparency; recognition and thanks across media platforms and at events; and quarterly updates with his newsroom. "Raised from nearly 20 separate sources," said Allred. "No strings attached. Just do the best work possible on behalf of the community."

TENNESSEE: THE TENNESSEAN O

After **The Tennessean**'s yearlong series <u>The Costs of Growth and Change</u> in Nashville came to a close, reporter David Plazas observed: "The impact has been great in print and online readership, surpassing any Tennessean editorial series in recent years... People are paying attention. Moreover, I believe we together have created a powerful conversation in Nashville that is keeping this issue of growth and change in the forefront, even if progress is not always as quick as we would like." The conclusion of the series was followed by a public forum, which led to a conversation about key issues Nashville will be facing in 2018: housing affordability, quality of life and inequality.

NATIONAL: THE FULLER PROJECT

The Fuller Project, a two-year-old organization dedicated to investigative coverage of women's issues, won a \$400,000 grant from Humanity United in July to report on human trafficking with a strong solutions focus. Says Liz Baker, communications director at Humanity United: "This is an opportunity for us to better understand the potential of solutions journalism. It's not something we've delved into in our media funding in the past. I'd like to explore what kind of impact it can have."

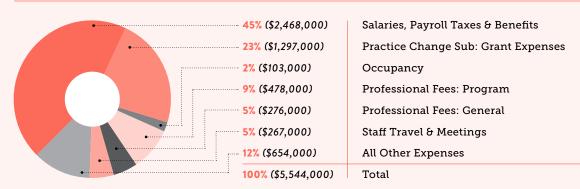


OVERVIEW.

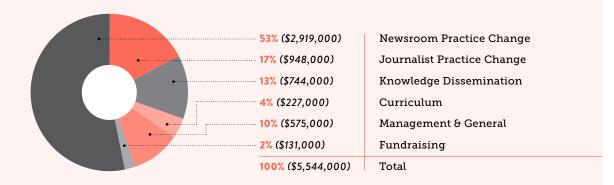
The Solutions Journalism Network's expenses were \$5,543,659 in 2018, an increase of 67.4% from 2017 spending of \$3,312,176. This was a function, in part, of SJN entering into 55 subgrant commitments totaling \$1,244,570 with newsroom partners in 2018, an increase from 9 subgrant commitments in 2017. SJN's headcount also grew to 31 staff members in 2018 from 25 in 2017, which drove an increase in payroll spending to \$2,468,388 in 2018 from \$1,546,957 in 2017.

Total programmatic expenses associated with newsroom collaborations, knowledge dissemination and SJN's individual journalist network accounted for 87% of SJN's total expenses in 2018, up from 78% a year earlier. SJN's overhead ratio, including expenses associated with fundraising, was 13% for 2018 as compared to an overhead ratio of 21% in 2017.

2018 EXPENSE BY CATEGORY



2018 EXPENSES BY PROGRAM AREA



\$5,069,806
Total revenue in 2018



Amount SJN committed to newsroom partners in 2018

FOUNDERS

DAVID BORNSTEIN

CO-FOUNDER & CEO

David Bornstein is a journalist and author who focuses on social innovation. He co-authors the "Fixes" column in The New York Times "Opinionator" section. His books include "How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas," "The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank," and "Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know."



TINA ROSENBERG

CO-FOUNDER & VP FOR INNOVATION

Tina Rosenberg is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author. She co-authors the Fixes column in The New York Times "Opinionator" section. Her books include "Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America," and "The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts After Communism," which won the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award. She has written for dozens of magazines, including The New Yorker, Rolling Stone, Foreign Policy and The Atlantic. She is the author, most recently, of "Join the Club: How Peer Pressure Can Transform the World."



COURTNEY MARTIN

CO-FOUNDER

Courtney E. Martin is an author, blogger, and speaker living in Oakland. She is also the author of five books, including "Do It Anyway: The New Generation of Activists," and "Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters: How the Quest for Perfection is Harming Young Women." She is Editor Emeritus at Feministing.com, and her work has recently appeared in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Christian Science Monitor, and MORE Magazine, among other national publications. Courtney has appeared on the TODAY Show, Good Morning America, MSNBC, and The O'Reilly Factor, and speaks widely. She is the recipient of the Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics and a residency from the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Centre. She is also a facilitator for The Op-Ed Project and a strategist for the TED Prize.



To meet the rest of the SJN team, check out our staff page.

BOARD MEMBERS



DAVID BOARDMAN CHAIR

David Boardman is Dean of the School of Media and Communication at Temple University in Philadelphia.



DAVID BORNSTEIN MEMBER

David Bornstein, SJN's co-founder and CEO, is a journalist and author who focuses on social innovation.



SUSAN DAVIS
VICE CHAIR

Susan Davis is an author, public speaker and a civil society thought leader on social entrepreneurship and sustainable development.



T. MORGAN DIXON
MEMBER

T. Morgan Dixon is the co-founder and CEO of GirlTrek, the largest health movement for Black women in America.



DEAN FURBUSH
CHAIR AUDIT
COMMITTEE

Dean Furbush is
CEO and General
Manager of
Foodkick, New
York's premier ondemand grocery
delivery service.



MARSH MEMBER

Barnaby Marsh is the co-founder of Saint Partners.



COURTNEY
MARTIN
MEMBER

Courtney Martin is an author, blogger, and speaker.



TINA ROSENBERG MEMBER

Tina Rosenberg is a Pulitzer Prizewinning journalist and author.



TRABIAN SHORTERSMEMBER

Trabian Shorters is a social entrepreneur with over 20 years of experience.



DOMINIC ROVANO ADVISOR

Dominic Rovano serves in an advisory role to the Finance and Audit Committee.

FUNDERS.

Annie E. Casey Foundation
Arnold Foundation
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Catherine Hawkins Foundation
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
Democracy Fund
Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation
Einhorn Family Charitable Trust
Emerson Collective
Endowment for Health

Enlight Foundation
Ford Foundation
Heising-Simons Foundation
Horace Goldsmith Foundation
Jeannie Tseng & Colin
Rust Charitable Fund
Knight Foundation
Lenfest Institute for Journalism

LOR Foundation

NoVo Foundation

Porticus Foundation
Rita Allen Foundation
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
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Tow Foundation
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