

A stylized graphic of a newspaper page. On the left, there are three vertical columns of text represented by black outlines of rounded rectangles. Below these are several horizontal black lines representing text. A large, light blue speech bubble with a black outline is positioned on the right side of the page, containing the main text. The background is white with a light blue vertical bar on the far left.

Introducing the
PNA Foundation
Journalism Training
Certification Program
April 2025 - March 2026

If you are new to the editorial department or are interested in honing your journalism skills and knowledge, get ready to embark on an exciting educational journey.

The PNAF's yearlong Journalism Training Certification Program will equip you with the essential skills and industry insights needed to thrive in a newsroom.

News media experts will share practical advice and tips on interviewing techniques, story structure, writing ledes, understanding local and state government, First Amendment rights, implementing ethical standards, utilizing AI, and avoiding burnout.

Each webinar will be held noon to 1 p.m. one Monday a month, April 14, 2025 through March 9, 2026. Participants are encouraged to attend every session in real time; however, the webinars will be recorded for on-demand viewing if there is a scheduling conflict. Registrants must complete all sessions to receive a graduation training certificate at the end of the program.



JTCP Program Sessions

April 14, 2025

Reporting Basics: Navigating Local Journalism

Explore the core skills every journalist needs, including how to hit the pavement to uncover compelling stories, find and cultivate reliable sources, conduct effective interviews, and navigate the latest copyright laws and ethical considerations. This webinar will provide valuable insights to help you tell impactful, well-researched stories that resonate with your audience.

Moderator:

Jan Murphy, director of government affairs, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association

Invited Panelists:

Rich Lord, managing editor, PublicSource (Pittsburgh) | **Charlie Thompson**, reporter, PennLive/The Patriot-News (Harrisburg) | **Jim Lockwood**, reporter, The Times-Tribune (Scranton)

May 12, 2025

Writing Primer – Part 1: Mastering Story Structure and AP Style

Strong writing is the foundation of great journalism. During this webinar, the key elements of story organization and structure will be broken down to help you craft clear, compelling narratives that engage readers. You will also gain a solid understanding of Associated Press Style, the industry standard for news writing, and hear insider tips from experienced journalists on how to refine your writing for accuracy and impact.

Moderators:

Jan Murphy, *director of government affairs*, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association |

Barbara Hough Huesken, *legislative affairs consultant*, PNA

Invited Panelists:

Mike Wereschagin, *assistant managing editor, data and investigations*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette |

Mark Scolforo, *reporter*, The Associated Press | **Amy Worden**, *managing producer and enterprise editor*, PennLive/The Patriot-News (Harrisburg)

June 9, 2025

Writing Primer – Part 2: From Lede to Publication - Writing, Vetting and Legal Considerations

Impactful journalism goes beyond great storytelling, it requires accuracy, fairness and legal awareness. In this second writing primer, we will cover the essentials of writing compelling ledes, developing strong story ideas and angles, and ensuring your reporting is both engaging and responsible. Learn how to vet your story, conduct a pre-publication review and avoid legal pitfalls, including the risks of defamation.

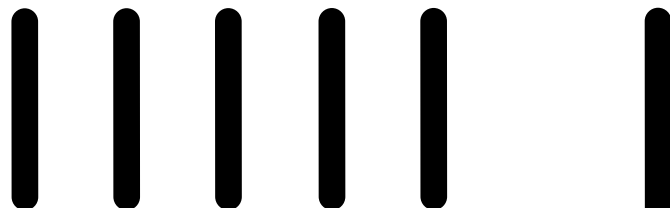
Moderator:

Angela Coulombus, *investigative reporter*, Spotlight PA

Invited Panelists:

Michael Berry, *partner*, Ballard Spahr LLP (Philadelphia) | **Jennifer Nelson**, *senior staff attorney*,

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press (Washington D.C.) | **Mike Wereschagin**, *assistant managing editor, data and investigations*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



July 14, 2025

It is a Balancing Act – Managing Multiple Roles

Today's journalists wear many hats. In this session, we will explore strategies for effectively executing duties that range from writing and editing to capturing compelling visuals and engaging audiences on social media. We will also discuss how to leverage digital platforms for storytelling and best practices for sharing content responsibly.

Moderator:

Stephanie Zeigler, *managing editor of content*, LNP | LancasterOnline

Invited Panelists:

Janet Pickel, *web content editor*, PennLive/The Patriot-News (Harrisburg) | **Min Xian**, *local accountability reporter*, Spotlight PA | **Dan Victor**, *senior editor*, The New York Times

August 11, 2025

Comprehending Local and State Government in Pennsylvania – A Guide for Journalists

Covering government affairs requires a solid understanding of how local and state systems operate. In this session, we will break down Pennsylvania's government structure, from municipal offices to state agencies, and explain whom to contact for information. We will also walk you through the legislative process, helping you track how laws are made and policy decisions are shaped. Additionally, you will learn how to read municipal budgets and understand millage rates, key skills for analyzing public spending and tax policies.

Moderator:

Brad Bumsted, *former Harrisburg bureau chief*, LNP | LancasterOnline

Invited Panelists:

Jan Murphy, *director of government affairs*, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association | **Steven Caruso**, *Capitol reporter*, spotlight PA | **Scott Coburn**, *counsel and education director*, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors

September 8, 2025

Access & Transparency – Navigating the Sunshine Act and First Amendment

Transparency is the foundation of accountable journalism. During this webinar, we will discuss the basics of Pennsylvania's Sunshine Act, your rights under the First Amendment, and how to effectively use the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association as a resource. Learn how to access public records, work within the scope of open meetings laws, and develop best practices for covering government meetings with confidence.

Panelists:

Melissa Bevan Melewsky, *media law counsel*, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association | **Paula Knudsen Burke**, *senior supervising attorney*, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press



October 13, 2025

Unlocking Public Records – A Guide to Pennsylvania’s Right-to-Know Law

Access to public records is a powerful tool for journalists. This webinar will provide a primer on Pennsylvania’s Right-to-Know Law, including how to file RTK requests, what information is accessible, and strategies for processing and navigating requests and appeals. Learn how to handle denials, work through the appeals process, and ensure transparency in government operations.

Moderator:

Melissa Bevan Melewsky, *media law counsel*, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association

Invited Panelists:

Terry Mutchler, *Obermayer partner and chair of its Transparency and Public Data Practice*

(Philadelphia) | **Joy Ramsingh**, *open government advocate*, Ramsingh Legal (Harrisburg) |

Liz Wagenseller, *executive director*, Pennsylvania Office of Open Records

November 10, 2025

First Amendment, Court Access and Legal Updates – Navigating Press Rights in the Current Legal Landscape

This session will provide critical insights into how legal and policy shifts are influencing transparency and press rights in Pennsylvania’s court system. We will explore the intersection of First Amendment rights and court access in Pennsylvania, focusing on how current policy changes and legal issues under the new administration are shaping press freedoms. You will also learn about the Unified Judicial System, public access policy, the new Clean Slate law, and how these developments impact your ability to access court records and proceedings.

Moderator:

Melissa Bevan Melewsky, *media law counsel*, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association |

Paula Knudsen Burke, *senior supervising attorney*, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

Invited Panelists:

Michael Berry, *partner*, Ballard Spahr LLP (Philadelphia) | **Heather Murray**, *associate director*,

Cornell Law School First Amendment Clinic | **Sara Rose**, *deputy legal director*, ACLU of Pennsylvania



December 8, 2025

Ethics & Bias in Journalism – Implementing and Maintaining Standards

In today's media landscape, ethical reporting and minimizing bias are essential for ensuring trust and credibility. In this session, we will discuss how to maintain principled standards and practices in your writing and reporting, including utilizing diverse news sources to safeguard and enrich fair, respectful and inclusive coverage. Best practices for sharing content responsibly on social media so your work maintains integrity across platforms will also be examined.

Moderator:

Chris Baxter, CEO & president, Spotlight PA

Invited Panelists:

Joyce Davis, opinion editor, PennLive/The Patriot-News (Philadelphia) | **Sarah Anne Hughes**, deputy editor, Spotlight PA | **Hurubie Meko**, reporter, The New York Times | **Tara Bradley-Steck**, directing fellow of the the Duquesne University Institute for Ethics and Integrity in Journalism

January 12, 2026

Staying Safe on the Job – Best Practices for Journalists

Journalists may find themselves in unpredictable situations when covering breaking news, public events or interacting with officials. This webinar will provide safety best practices for reporters, including how to manage interactions with public officials, navigate potentially volatile situations, and protect yourself while covering events. We will also discuss public safety protocols within the newsroom to ensure a secure work environment.

Moderator:

Paula Knudsen Burke, senior supervising attorney, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

Invited Panelists:

Tom Murse, vice president of journalism, Pennon, and executive editor, LNP|LancasterOnline | **Nadine Hoffman**, deputy executive director, International Women's Media Foundation (Washington D.C.) | **Mickey Osterreicher**, general counsel, National Press Photographers Association (Athens, GA.) | **Molly Eichel**, deputy managing editor, live and breaking news, The Philadelphia Inquirer

February 9, 2026

Mental Health and Wellness – Covering Trauma While Protecting Yourself

Journalists often report about difficult and emotionally charged topics, from trauma and grief to sexual assault, which can take a toll on mental well-being. This webinar will address the unique challenges faced by reporters, offering strategies for covering sensitive stories with care and responsibility while prioritizing your own mental health. We will discuss burnout prevention, coping mechanisms for handling distressing assignments, and best practices for maintaining emotional resilience in a demanding industry.

Moderator:

Jan Murphy, *director of government affairs*, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association

Invited Panelists:

Dan Nephin, *staff writer*, LNP|LancasterOnline | **Gillian McGoldrick**, *Harrisburg reporter*, The Philadelphia Inquirer | **Jenna Wise**, *reporter*, PennLive/The Patriot-News (Harrisburg)

March 9, 2026

Artificial Intelligence in the Newsroom - Leveraging Technology While Upholding Journalistic Standards

Artificial intelligence is transforming the news media industry, offering powerful tools for research, content creation and audience engagement. Can journalists responsibly integrate AI into their work? This webinar will explore how and why journalists may use AI, its scope in modern newsrooms, and the ethical considerations that come with it. We will examine both the positive and negative impacts on local journalism, discussing best practices for ensuring accuracy, transparency and editorial integrity.

Moderator:

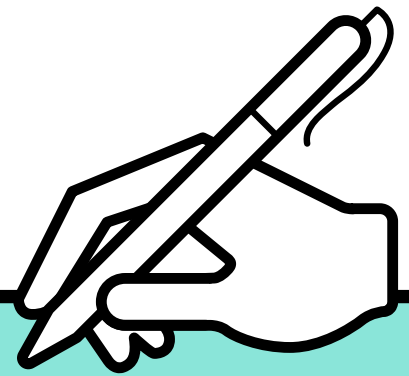
Mike Wereschagin, *assistant managing editor, data and investigations*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Invited Panelists:

Jim Neff, *deputy managing editor*, The Philadelphia Inquirer | **Stan Wischnowski**, *executive editor and vice president*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette | **Matt Martin**, *Pennsylvania & Ohio group editor*, Gannett | **Burke Noel**, *president*, PA Media Group

Spring 2026 - Graduation Luncheon - Details to be Announced

Register Today



For as little as \$20 a month, you will gain access to a comprehensive year-long editorial training program, that provides expert-led webinars designed to build and refine your journalism skills. For less than the cost of a daily cup of coffee, this is an affordable and invaluable investment in your professional growth. Whether you are new to the field or looking to sharpen your expertise, this budget-friendly solution ensures that you stay ahead in today's fast-paced media landscape.

Twelve Sessions

PNA Member – \$240 | PNA College Member – \$120 | Press Association Member – \$350 | Nonmember – \$495

Six Sessions

PNA Member – \$180 | PNA College Member – \$90 | Press Association Member – \$275 | Nonmember – \$350

Three Sessions

PNA Member – \$125 | PNA College Member – \$65 | Press Association Member – \$175 | Nonmember – \$225

One Session

PNA Member – \$50 | PNA College Member – \$25 | Press Association Member – \$75 | Nonmember – \$95

Please complete the registration form online at panewsmedia.org/pnaf-jtcp, and send a letter of support from an editor or publisher by Monday, March 24, to foundation@pa-news.org. Please include “***PNAF Journalism Training Certification Program***” in the subject line of the email.

If you have questions, contact **Teresa Shaak** at teresas@pa-news.org or 717-703-3003.



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