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Why Philanthropy for Journalism

The first statewide journalism fundraising lab has completed its seventh session with PNA members creating locally funded journalism projects that have growth out of deep community listening sessions. The goal of this lab is for news organizations to understand the philanthropic process, be able to pitch local and national funders and secure funds to help sustain journalism that matters to their communities.

Journalism philanthropy is a new concept. Not every organization is eager to jump into this pool, and rightly so. How do you approach funders who may ask why they should fund a legacy, for-profit organization? News leaders may not feel comfortable making this pitch.

Be transparent about the need.

When interviewing industry leaders who have been successful in funding journalism, there is a common best practice when pitching individual donors, corporations and foundations: Communicate *why* we need their help. We cannot assume our communities understand the impact disruptive forces have had on our industry, nor should they. As we meet with donors, it is an opportunity to share our industry's history and illustrate the evolving sustainability model for journalism. Successful news organizations are transparent and upfront with the rising costs of quality journalism.

When we approach funders, we must spend a good amount of time on the problem we are trying to solve. This is not a paragraph on a slide - it is the pitch. When we fully illustrate the need, we move a donor to give.

Why Philanthropy? Newspaper support models have been disrupted.

1990s

Enter the Internet moving readers to jobs, auto and real estate web sites



1980s

Robust local advertising and home delivery subscription revenue were the financial backbone of a healthy newspaper



2000s



Digital continues to disrupt with the explosion of social media - Google and Facebook monopolizing digital advertising market share

TODAY

Civic journalism has taken hold in communities across the U.S. with individual donors, corporations and nonprofit foundations supporting newsrooms with investments in important local issues including health, environment, education and investigative reporting.

