

# FUNDING JOURNALISM:

## A Guide to Philanthropic Support for Canadian Media

May 2024

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PhiLab

**caj** The Canadian Association of Journalists  
L'Association Canadienne des Journalistes

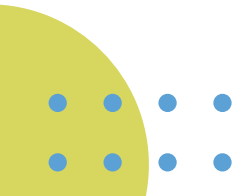


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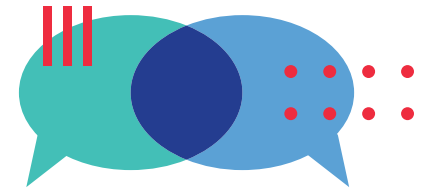
## A Guide to Philanthropic Support for Canadian Media

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# Philanthropic support for journalism: Word on the street



## \*Journalists say:

“I’ve tried in the past to create relationships with Canadian philanthropists, but there is so little information available on even who to contact.”

“I’m really interested in how this funding gets communicated to readers and if they believe when publications say the philanthropic organization doesn’t sway coverage.”

“Because journalism funding at scale is just taking off, I believe many small and medium foundations still need to be coached through the importance of editorial independence. Let’s get some common grant contract language going and share it around.”

“There are better ways to fund journalism than relying on charity from philanthropic organizations. I’m not big on relying on handouts that may end up coming with strings attached - implicitly if not explicit(ly).”

\* Comments from Canadian Association of Journalists member survey

## Funders say:

“High-quality, in-depth, investigative journalism from outlets like The Narwhal and The Local raises the level of public awareness of important and often complex issues. It helps shed light on the individuals and communities impacted by issues core to our work, and fosters an informed citizenry essential to advancing the public good.”

Jamison Steeve, President & CEO,  
Metcalf Foundation

“Community journalism enables a proliferation of grassroots perspectives that brings depth and nuance to stories and in so doing, strengthens democratic engagement.”

Julia Howell, Chief program officer,  
Toronto Foundation

“Foundations in Canada are committed to making a difference with the resources they steward. We are seeing more and more interest in new approaches, like supporting public-interest journalism to help communities access quality, reliable information about important issues.”

Jean-Marc Mangin, President & CEO, Philanthropic Foundations Canada

## About this resource

*Funding Journalism: A Guide to Philanthropic Support for Canadian Media* is part of Inspirit Foundation's ongoing effort to bridge the information gap between philanthropy and journalism in Canada. It is the third resource in a series that includes:

- ◆ [Funding Journalism, Strengthening Communities](#) (May 2023), five case studies highlighting philanthropic support for journalism across the country; and
- ◆ [Funding Journalism: A Guide for Canadian Philanthropy](#) (November 2023), a practical guide containing information and tools for foundation staff and boards interested in supporting journalism, published in partnership with the Local News Research Project at Toronto Metropolitan University and Philanthropic Foundations Canada.

This guide, the last in the series, is the result of Inspirit's collaboration with [the Local News Research project](#) and the [Canadian Association of Journalists \(CAJ\)](#). It provides practical tools for Canadian media interested in exploring philanthropy as a revenue source. The target audience includes journalists, newsroom leaders and publishers at nonprofit and for-profit journalism organizations, educators involved with university and college-based journalism initiatives, journalism associations and others with an interest in the future of journalism.

The guide's contents build on existing research in Canada and other jurisdictions, as well as on the practical experience of the authors. It also draws upon the results of a survey distributed by the CAJ in the fall of 2023 that invited association members to share questions and comments about philanthropic funding for journalism.

## About the authors:

### Ana Sofía Hibon

Program manager, [Inspirit Foundation](#)

Inspirit is a public foundation based in Toronto that supports arts and media to advance an inclusive and pluralist Canada. Over the past five years, Inspirit has supported a wide range of journalism initiatives and collaborated with philanthropic peers in this space.

### April Lindgren

Professor, School of Journalism, Toronto Metropolitan University and principal investigator for the [Local News Research Project](#).

The LNRP's news philanthropy research is supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant awarded to PhilLab, [the Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Research Network](#).

### Brent Jolly

President, [Canadian Association of Journalists](#)

The CAJ is Canada's largest national professional organization for journalists from all media. The CAJ's primary roles are to provide its members with high-quality professional development and to engage in public-interest advocacy on issues related to journalism and the public's right to know.

### Thank you!

Jeanette Ageson,  
François Cardinal,  
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on this work as it  
progressed.

# Introduction

The story of philanthropic support for quality journalism in Canada is an evolving narrative of mutual need and mutual benefit.

News organizations are struggling on multiple fronts with challenges that undermine their ability to produce and distribute journalism that serves the public interest. The erosion of advertising revenue, combined with the public's [reluctance to pay](#) for news, means multiple revenue sources are now a necessity. Sharp [declines](#) in referral traffic from X (formerly Twitter) and Meta, which [banned](#) Canadian news content on Facebook and Instagram in response to the federal government's Online News Act, make it more difficult for media outlets to [reach audiences](#).

Philanthropic funding, whether in the form of grants from charitable foundations or donations from individuals responding to public campaigns, is gaining traction as a way to address revenue shortfalls. Fifteen per cent of respondents in a recent international [survey](#) of media leaders said philanthropy will likely be *important* or *very important* for their organization in 2024, up from 12 per cent in 2020. Fifteen per cent also highlighted the growing importance of donations from individuals, up slightly from 13 per cent four years earlier.

In an era when Canadians' trust in the news media is in steady [decline](#), philanthropic support for quality journalism creates opportunities for newsrooms to:

- ◆ produce high-impact, often costly, investigative reporting that serves the interests of the public and illustrates how journalism can make a difference in people's lives;
- ◆ publish content that is accessible to a wider audience and not limited to subscribers who can afford to pay;
- ◆ add to newsroom staff in a way that makes editorial teams more diverse and representative of the communities they cover; and
- ◆ fund coverage of underrepresented and misrepresented groups and issues that have been historically [neglected](#) by many news outlets.

In Canada, individual donors are supporting news outlets they believe in. At the same time, more philanthropic foundations are recognizing the democratic value of quality journalism, even as reporting on the complex social, economic and environmental issues they care about grows increasingly scarce. Funders are also embracing the idea that journalism can advance their goals, because it:

- ◆ equips people with the trustworthy information they need to vote, hold power accountable and have a say in decisions that affect their communities in daily life and during emergencies;
- ◆ puts issues that are important to people, funders, and the wider non-profit and charitable sector on the agenda of policy makers and the public; and
- ◆ introduces into the public domain information and ideas that can influence or challenge dominant narratives, change minds and spur action.



## Quality journalism

This guide defines quality journalism as the act of reporting and disseminating originally produced news and stories that serve the public interest. Quality journalism maintains independence from the vested interests of those it covers and demonstrates a commitment to accuracy and transparency in reporting methods, regardless of the platform.

Philanthropic support for journalism in Canada has emerged in a variety of forms. Newsrooms with a track record of producing stories that matter to people in their communities have successfully appealed for public donations. By our count, about three dozen foundations, including a growing number of first-time funders, have also stepped up to fund for-profit and nonprofit media. The results include [award-winning reporting on workplace issues in Ontario](#), more comprehensive [coverage of climate change](#) and other environmental issues in Manitoba, and the [growth of Indigenous journalism education](#) opportunities in Saskatchewan.

## What to expect from this guide

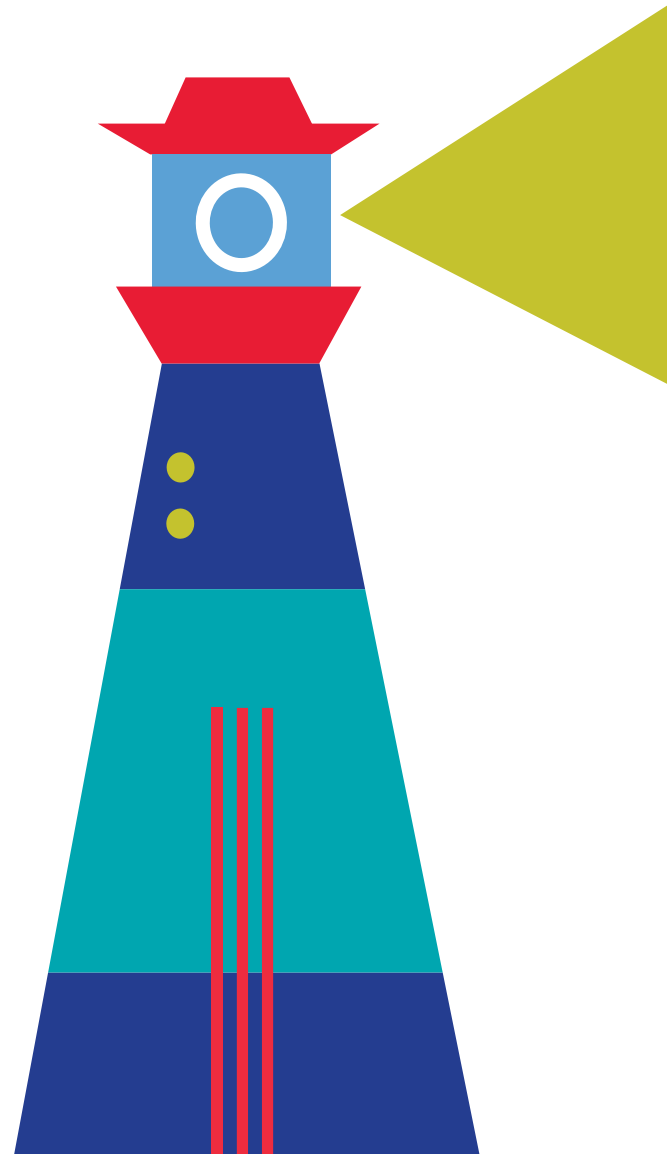
For the relationship between philanthropy and journalism to flourish, the two sectors, with their distinct language, culture, and networks, need a shared understanding of their respective fields.

This guide equips journalism organizations with best practices for initiating and managing relationships with philanthropic foundations in particular. It does not delve into public fundraising campaigns, as that is a separate topic deserving of its own manual.

Readers will find practical guidance on how to navigate the philanthropic sector, identify the right donors, frame requests for money, and measure the impact of their work. The guide reviews recent tax and regulatory changes that have made philanthropic support for journalism more viable in Canada. It also outlines how journalism philanthropy – the term used throughout this text to refer to philanthropic support for journalism – can support efforts to address long-standing concerns about the misrepresentation and underrepresentation of some groups.

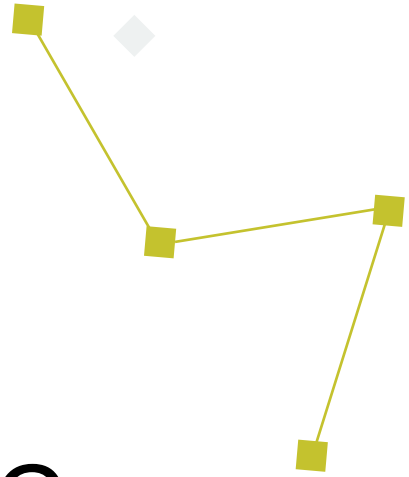
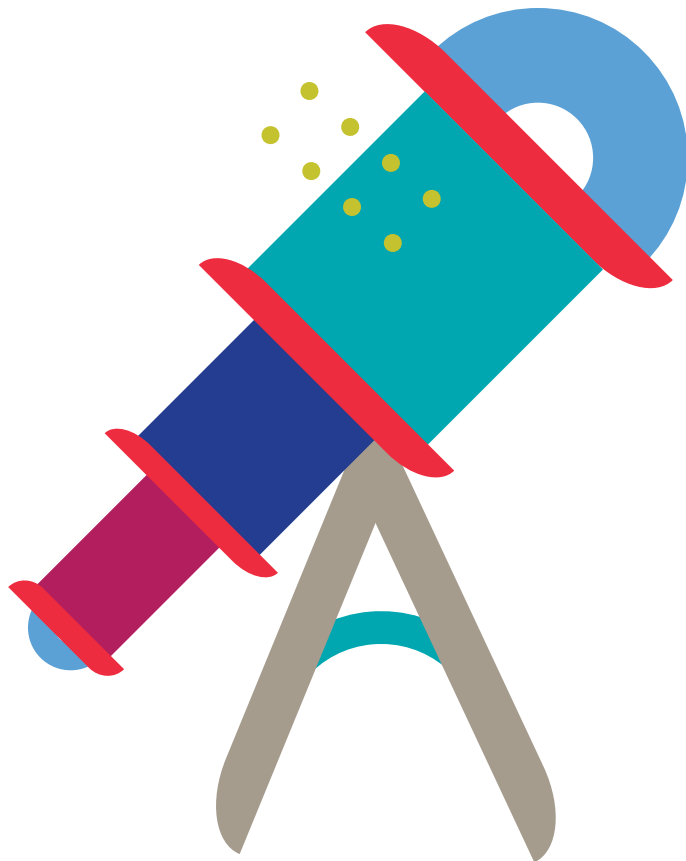
Finally, this resource addresses concerns about real and perceived conflicts of interest and threats to editorial independence can arise when journalists accept philanthropic support from funders that have their own agendas.

Philanthropic dollars alone cannot repair the journalism industry's tattered balance sheets. In 2021, total television, radio and newspaper [advertising revenues](#) were \$3.5 billion less than in 2012. By comparison, foundations in Canada dispersed about [\\$10 billion](#) to support *all* types of causes in 2021. While philanthropic funding for media in Canada is still limited, we nonetheless found compelling evidence that even the modest commitments to date have supported journalism that makes a difference.



Section 1

# Journalism philanthropy: The landscape



Understanding how the philanthropic sector is structured, how it works, and where the money comes from is the first step for any journalism organization considering an appeal for funds. In Canada, there are three potential sources of charitable support for media.

### ◆ Donations from individuals

Growing revenue through appeals for one-time or monthly donations requires investing time and money to build relationships with audiences. Newsrooms such as [La Presse](#) or [The Narwhal](#), which are both registered journalism organizations, can issue tax receipts to donors. To date, however, there are only [11](#) RJOs in Canada.

The vast majority of journalism in the country is still produced by for-profit organizations, though there is a small but growing number of nonprofit outlets. Although these outlets cannot issue receipts for tax purposes, some are nonetheless successfully appealing to the public for donations. The for-profit [Winnipeg Free Press](#), for example, launched a [campaign](#) marking its 150th anniversary in late 2022. To date, that ongoing campaign has raised more than \$120,000 from “patrons,” most of whom also buy subscriptions.


### ◆ Gifts from high net-worth individuals

These donors give individually and sometimes create family foundations or establish donor advised funds to channel their giving. They may be more willing to support startups or less conventional projects, whereas other donors might prefer to fund established news organizations and tried-and-true initiatives. While examples are limited in Canada, the Desmarais family in Quebec gave [La Presse](#) [\\$50M](#) when the newspaper transitioned to nonprofit status. Other affluent individuals have helped seed initiatives such as the [Investigative Journalism Bureau](#) at the University of Toronto and [TVO's Ontario Hubs](#).

### ◆ Funding from charitable foundations


Foundations are registered charities and independent legal entities that make grants to other charities or deliver programs on their own. These activities are paid for with gifts received from donors and/or income generated from endowed funds. Canadian foundations, which collectively hold more than [\\$120 billion in assets](#), are [required](#) to disburse a minimum of five per cent of total assets every year on their own activities or through gifts to registered charities, registered journalism organizations or other qualified donees.

The more than [10,000](#) public and private foundations in Canada vary significantly in terms of size, staff numbers and governance – factors that shape their funding and decision-making processes. They typically collaborate with Canada's 86,000+ other charities and social purpose organizations to advance missions related to health, the environment, the arts, housing, and other areas. Journalism, however, has not traditionally been a funding priority.



“We give to things that matter to us or that we care deeply about. (It’s) not unlike what happens in church. You pass the collection plate and you give to the church because you love it. If you really love something, you care about it, you want to nurture it, you want to sustain it.”

Paul Samyn, Editor, *Winnipeg Free Press*





# Foundation facts

## A **public** foundation:

- is a corporation or a trust that has only charitable purposes;
- typically receives funding from a variety of arm's-length donors;
- generally gives more than 50% of its annual income to other registered charities, and may also carry out its own charitable activities; and
- must have more than 50% of its governing board at arm's length from one another.

### Public foundations come in a variety of forms, including:

- [\\*community foundations](#), which are geographically based, can run their own programs, and redistribute money from local donors to charities (e.g. [Vancouver Foundation](#));
- [\\*charitable intermediaries](#), which manage funds from individual and philanthropic donors and grant to social purpose organizations (e.g. [CanadaHelps](#) or [Makeway](#)); and
- other stand-alone public foundations, which manage assets that come from a variety of other sources (e.g. [Inspirit Foundation](#)).

## A **private** foundation:

- is a corporation or a trust that has only charitable purposes;
- receives more than 50% of its funding from a single source with significant control over the foundation, typically through representation on its governing board;
- carries out its own charitable activities and/or funds other organizations, usually other registered charities; and
- typically has less than 50% of its governing board at arm's length from one another.

### Private foundations typically include:

- family foundations, which are usually funded by an endowment established by a gift/series of gifts from a family and are governed in part or in whole by the donor and family members (e.g. [Trottier Family Foundation](#)); and
- [\\*corporate foundations](#), which operate as legal entities separate from a corporation and are typically funded by the corporation's customers (e.g. [Home Depot Foundation](#)) or by donor advised funds established by its clients (e.g. [Aqueduct Foundation](#), which is managed by ScotiaTrust).

\* Many community foundations, charitable intermediaries and corporate foundations work with donors through [donor advised funds](#), which are becoming increasingly popular in Canada. The donor (or their proxy) advises on how funds are distributed, but all administrative and financial matters are controlled by the foundation. In Canada, there are no requirements mandating public transparency of donor details, so it may not be possible to identify who is behind the fund.

Section 2


# A roadmap for foundation fundraising



Journalism organizations that are considering philanthropy as a revenue source need to ask themselves if this is the best way forward. Would the time and effort required be better invested in developing a [membership strategy](#) or running a public fundraising campaign?

If awarded, multi-year grants from foundations can, in some cases, generate more substantial revenue than campaigns soliciting donations from individuals. On the other hand, pursuing foundation support requires investing significant time and resources in a proposal that may never be funded. Variables outside of applicants' control – including changes in funders' priorities, budgets, and staffing – can have a significant impact on the likelihood of securing funding or whether it will remain available over time.

Journalism organizations that decide to pursue philanthropic support can take steps to position themselves for success and reduce the chances of being overwhelmed by the process. These steps are discussed in the roadmap below.



“Fundraising and donor relations are a field of practice. If there is no one available in-house to focus their energies on this, beware – it’s much more work than you think.”

[Jeanette Ageson](#), Publisher, *The Tyee*



## I. Before asking for money

### Assess whether your organization produces journalism [that matters](#) to your [intended audiences](#)

Gather evidence that demonstrates your coverage:


- ◆ is a trusted source of information for your community and audience;
- ◆ represents community members in its coverage and in its newsroom;
- ◆ equips members of the public with [information they can act on](#) in daily life and during emergencies;
- ◆ tells unique stories that have not been told before;
- ◆ plays a role in connecting communities;
- ◆ asks and provides answers to the questions your audience is interested in; and
- ◆ has had an impact on the communities you work in. For more information on the role of impact measurement, see [Section 3.IV](#).

### Develop a [donor disclosure policy](#) and publish it on your website

Preserving public trust requires being radically transparent about your funding sources. Before approaching funders, decide on your newsroom's guidelines for accepting and disclosing donations, including anonymous contributions. See [Section 3.II](#) for further guidance.

### Come to terms with providing free access to philanthropy-supported journalism

Journalism that is funded by philanthropy serves the public interest by making timely, reliable news and information available to the largest possible audience. Many funders will require pulling down paywalls to ensure equitable access to the content they support.




**Tip:** Meet with a diverse range of community members and leaders to identify their general issues of concern and ideas for solutions. Information gathered on [‘listening tours’](#), for instance, can be used to demonstrate how your work – and your funding proposal – address community needs.

## II. Once you are ready to start fundraising:

### Identify prospective funders

Start small and, where appropriate, think local. Do not expect to secure multi-year grants from large, national foundations right away. [Best practices](#) suggest it is better to begin with more modest fundraising campaigns before seeking larger donations. You can then point to a fundraising track record in applications for larger, multi-year grants.

Given that journalism philanthropy is so new in Canada, you may end up pitching to funders with little or no experience in this field. Before making the case for your work to a funder, you may need to provide some background on how funding journalism can advance philanthropic objectives and [the mechanisms for how this can be done](#).



**Tip:** Consider taking a course on fundraising, especially if the charitable sector is new to you. [CharityVillage](#), the [Association of Fundraising Professionals](#) and the Lenfest [News Philanthropy Network](#) offer online resources and courses.

## Find a funder

There is no centralized list of journalism funders in Canada. Here are ways to identify prospective supporters:


- If your news organization focuses on local news or reports on a specific geographic region, identify local funders in your area (e.g. community or corporate foundations).
  - Community Foundations Canada has an [interactive map](#) that lists more than 200 community foundations. Community foundations in [Vancouver](#), [Ottawa](#), [Toronto](#), [Winnipeg](#), [Edmonton](#), and other cities have supported journalism in the past. In the [United States](#), community foundations have also taken the lead in creating local funds or strategies to support news.
- Philanthropic Foundations Canada's [member list](#) includes a number of private and public foundations across Canada. There are also paid databases such as [GrantConnect](#), that list funders and funding opportunities.
- Check out the lists of donors disclosed by other journalism organizations on their websites.
- If your news organization covers a specific issue, identify funders working in this area.
  - Look for formal or informal networks of funders with shared interests, sometimes known as 'funder affinity groups.' Examples include: the [Early Child Development Funders Working Group](#), [Environment Funders Canada](#), and [The Circle](#) (which works to align the philanthropic sector with Indigenous practices and principles).
- Look for international funding opportunities. Examples include reporting grants available from the [Pulitzer Center](#), the [Institute for Journalism and Natural Resources](#), the [International Center for Journalism](#) and the [International Women's Media Foundation](#).

### Narrow down the list of potential funders

Investigate the most promising funder prospects by scanning foundations' websites, social media channels, annual reports, and [CRA profiles](#). Familiarize yourself with the potential funder's mission, funding priorities, grant guidelines, board members, and past grantees.

At this stage, you should find out:

- ◆ *What are the foundation's funding priorities?* Assess if the funder's focus aligns with your reporting beats or upcoming projects, and/or whether it includes a commitment to strong democratic institutions, civic engagement or other ideals that are advanced by quality journalism.
- ◆ *What types of funding do they offer and would these models work for your organization?* Certain foundations might focus on fellowship programs or research initiatives, while others might be open to project-based proposals or organizational support.
- ◆ *How much is the typical grant awarded by the foundation?* This is helpful so you don't request too much or too little money.
- ◆ *How does the foundation's application process work?* Clarify if the funder accepts requests year-round or works around specific deadlines.




**Tip:** Not sure if your project fits with the funder's priorities? Request a brief chat. Keep in mind that [most foundations](#) do not have paid staff, so securing an actual call might be difficult.

## III. Getting on a funder's radar:

### Build relationships with prospective funders and donors

This is perhaps the most important step for journalism organizations seeking funding. It takes time and there is no one way to do this, but here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Send an introductory email or a letter of inquiry, ask a shared acquaintance to make an introduction, or introduce yourself at a funder's event.
  - ◆ Former journalists who now work at foundations and understand the importance of journalism can become allies and open doors. Often, they work in foundations' communications departments.
- ◆ Once contact has been made, request an introductory call.
  - ◆ Ahead of the meeting, share a one- or two-page brief that describes your proposed project and includes examples of past coverage. Funder calls are often short – use the time to discuss your work, not introduce it.
- ◆ Don't assume that a funder understands why journalism is important to their community and mission, or the extent to which Canadian journalism is under threat. Also don't assume they are familiar with the mechanics of funding journalism. This is an [emerging area](#) in Canadian philanthropy.



**Tip:** Direct funders to information [on the challenges journalism faces](#) across Canada and how the loss of quality journalism affects the communities and issues foundations care about.

## IV. Making the ask

### Be realistic about getting funding for general operations

In an ideal world, pitches for multi-year funding for general operations would receive a warm reception. In reality, this is rarely the case, as operational support is limited in Canadian philanthropy. A more realistic way forward for most journalism organizations will involve asking funders to support a specific project. Examples include requests for money to support ongoing beat coverage, a special series on an issue, or expanded coverage of a geographic area or community.

### Adhere to the funder's application requirements

Clarify application details and deadlines, as these will vary significantly by funder.

### Craft a [compelling proposal](#) that:


- ◆ describes the need for the project and explains why your organization is best-placed to address it;
- ◆ explains how you will reach audiences;
- ◆ uses data and engaging characters to tell a story;
- ◆ shows how funding will support public interest journalism instead of private gain – a particularly important point to make in the case of applications from for-profit newsrooms;
- ◆ describes how the project will be carried out;
- ◆ describes your team, including the expertise and demographic profile of reporters, editors and organization leadership;
- ◆ explains how the project's impact will be measured;
- ◆ includes a realistic budget outlining how the funds will be spent and what resources your organization will commit. It should build in funding to cover project overhead costs and decent wages for journalists and freelancers; and
- ◆ requests multi-year funding where possible.

## V. After the application is submitted

### Be patient and expect paperwork

Funding applications are typically vetted by foundation staff or individual board members who make recommendations to the organization's board of directors. Wait times and processes vary greatly by foundation.

If your funding request is approved, a funding agreement will follow. The agreement should include clauses about [editorial independence](#) and [impact measurement](#). If your request isn't approved, don't give up. Keep in touch with funders about your latest work so you are top of mind if money becomes available.




**Tip:** Before submitting a formal proposal, ask for as much clarity on timelines as possible so you understand how long it may take to get a decision. If your application is approved, ask the funder about reporting requirements and deadlines so you can reserve time for the paperwork to come.

### Maintain your relationships with funders

Funding recipients will have to report on the impact of their work and account for how the money is spent. Consider producing a publicly available annual report with information about your journalism and its impact, your staff, and all major funding sources and their contributions. Annual reports can support future fundraising efforts.

Ask current supporters – and those who have turned you down – to suggest other sources of funding, make introductions, and keep you posted on potential opportunities.

Keep funders informed about your work. Share stories as they are published, invite them to events hosted by your organization, and keep them informed about community engagement efforts.



**Tip:** There should be a regular point of contact for funders. To avoid real or perceived funder influence on coverage, this person should ideally not be a member of the newsroom.

## Tools and resources

- ◆ [Grantwriting Workbook](#): The Lenfest Institute offers information for journalism organizations on how to write a compelling grant application. It also regularly offers [free or low-cost training sessions](#). While some of the material is particular to the United States, many of the tips are applicable to Canadian publishers.
- ◆ [The Lab for Journalism Funding](#): The Local Media Association shares tips and tactics for how to develop productive funding relationships.
- ◆ [Four things you need to know before signing that grant agreement](#): Nicole Campbell, CEO of Build Up Advisory Group, shares critical components to include in agreements.
- ◆ [Prenups for Partners](#): This site provides tactics and tools for organizations who are partnering on a project or initiative. It is particularly aimed at media-makers, storytellers and creatives.

**Section 3**

# Navigating the details





# I. Regulatory landscape and funding mechanisms

Journalism organizations do not have to be registered charities or even nonprofits to receive philanthropic funding. In recent years, foundations and for-profit journalism organizations have also found ways to make funding relationships work. The Canada Revenue Agency has also adapted its rules in ways that create more opportunities for journalism philanthropy.

For philanthropic purposes, journalism organizations fall into two broad categories based on their incorporation type and tax status:

- **Category 1: Qualified donees**
- **Category 2: Non-qualified donees**

## Category 1: Qualified donees

Organizations that are qualified donees can receive gifts directly from foundations, is tax exempt, and can issue receipts to individual donors for tax purposes. In journalism, qualified donees include:

### Registered journalism organizations (RJOs)

The RJO designation was introduced by the Canadian government in 2019, as part of a set of [new measures](#) to support journalism. Journalism organizations must apply to and meet specific Canada Revenue Agency requirements to receive the designation. As of April 24, 2024 there were [11](#) RJOs in Canada. See more details on [page 19](#).

#### Example:



[La Presse](#) is a **registered journalism organization** that receives **grants** from private and public foundations. It also receives donations from individuals and provides charitable tax receipts.

### Journalism initiatives housed at registered charities or at organizations that are qualified donees, such as universities or colleges

#### Examples:



[The Walrus](#) is a **registered charity** that regularly publishes a magazine, produces events and trains emerging professionals in publishing and nonprofit management. It has received foundation funding via **grants**.

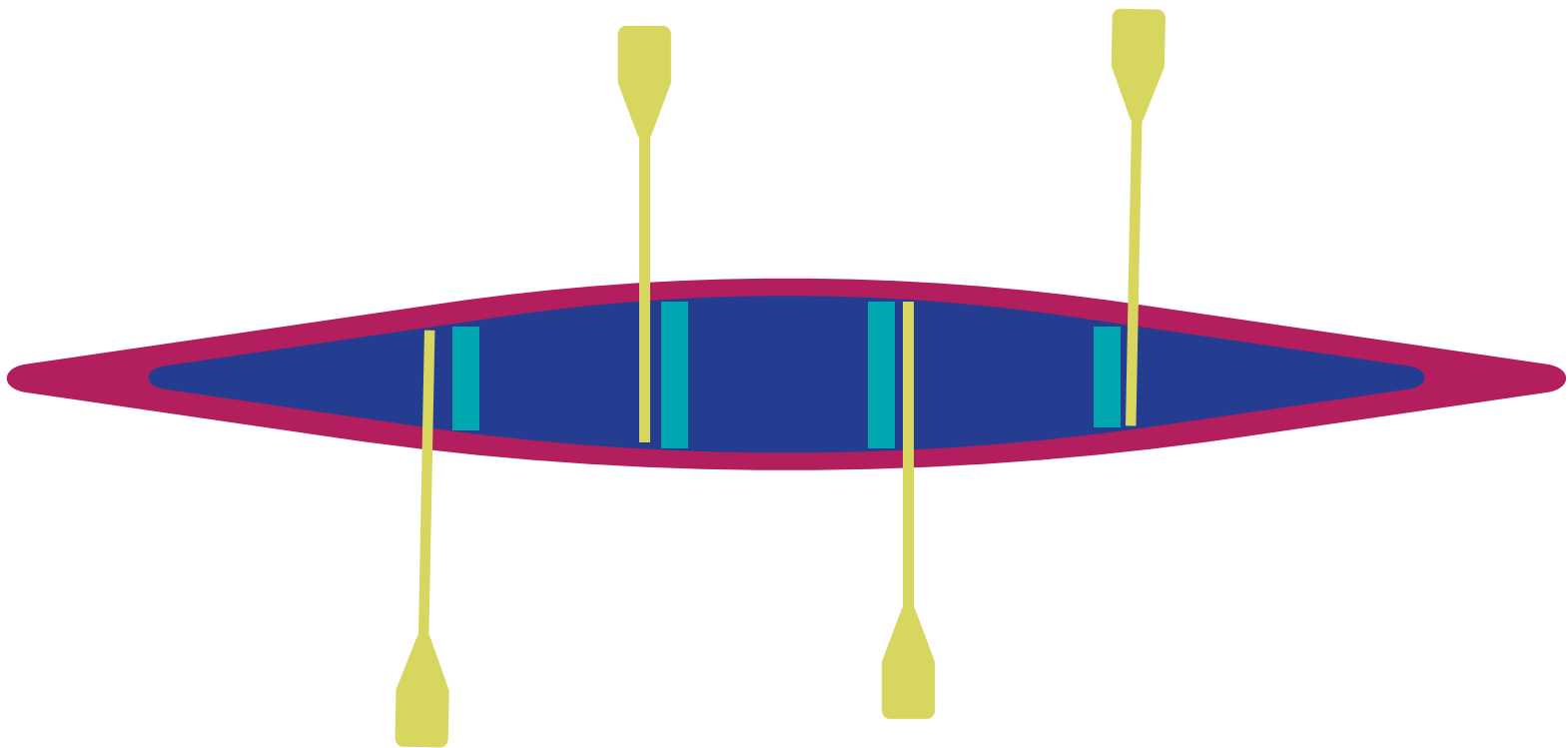


[The Indigenous Communications and Fine Arts](#) program is a journalism education initiative at First Nations University (FNU). Its work includes a recently announced Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Journalism; CFNU Radio, a streaming radio service and teaching lab for students; and [pikiskwêwin](#), an Indigenous language podcast platform. The program has received foundation funding via **grants** to FNU, a **qualified donee**.

## \*Working with a nonprofit board of directors

- **Understand the difference between nonprofit and for-profit governance:** “Newsroom leaders need to understand that board members are responsible for overseeing the work of the executive director or top leadership position. If you’re recruiting people to be on your board, those people are your new bosses, so choose mindfully.”
- **Clarify your board’s role:** “Some boards are working boards who are expected to help fundraise and do day-to-day work. Some are governance boards who only handle very high-level issues and do what they are legally required to do, which is review and approve financials, appoint an auditor, and oversee the performance of the executive director.”
- **Consider potential ethical issues:** “It needs to be made clear to the board members and externally that the board doesn’t influence story selection or the publishing process unless they are a working board and that is a part of their duties. Usually, nonprofits tend to want community or business leaders with lots of influence and connections to serve on their boards – this can be tricky as journalism is expected to hold institutions to account. So just be aware of the optics or real conflicts that could be present by having certain board members.”

**\*Tips from Jeanette Ageson, Publisher, *The Tyee***



## To-do list for becoming a registered journalism organization (RJO)

### Secure designation as a qualified Canadian journalism organization (QCJO)

#### A QCJO **must**:

- operate in Canada;
- produce original news content that does not promote the interests of an organization, an association, or its members;
- regularly employ two or more journalists; and
- satisfy an independent advisory board that will rule on requirements regarding the production of original news content and adherence to journalistic processes and principles, including:
  - verification of information before publication;
  - rebuttal opportunity for those criticized;
  - an honest representation of sources; and
  - a practice of correcting errors.

### Operate as a nonprofit

#### A nonprofit **must**:

- operate for social welfare, civic improvement, sport, recreation, pleasure, and/or any other purpose except profit;
- establish a board of directors;
- abide by Canada Revenue Agency rules that say it cannot issue donation receipts for income tax purposes; and
- abide by Canada Revenue agency rules that say it cannot use its income to personally benefit its members.

### Receive registered journalism organization (RJO) designation from the Canada Revenue Agency, thereby becoming a 'qualified donee'

#### Among other requirements, an RJO **must**:

- operate as a nonprofit and be established as a corporation or trust;
- refrain from making its income payable to any proprietor, member, shareholder, director, trustee, or like individual;
- be primarily engaged in the production of original news content and ensure all business activities relate to journalism;
- have board directors that operate at arms-length of one another;
- refrain from promoting the views of any one person or group of people; and
- not accept gifts from any one source that represents more than 20% of its total revenue.

“Obtaining RJO status was not easy, but it means we are now recognized by major donors, to whom we can issue tax receipts for donations. Our transition (from for-profit to RJO status) allowed us to diversify our revenue sources through philanthropy and other means, and is proving essential to our long-term survival and our mission of providing information for the benefit of all.”

Florence Turpault-Desroches, Vice-president of communications and philanthropy, *La Presse*



## Category 2: Non-qualified donees

Journalism organizations without qualified donee status are considered ‘non-qualified donees’. They can run public fundraising campaigns, but cannot issue receipts to donors for income tax purposes. They can also receive funding from foundations, but additional steps are needed. In journalism, non-qualified donees include:

Nonprofit news outlets and journalism associations that do not have RJO or charitable status.

For-profit news organizations

### How to access philanthropic funding as a non-qualified donee

Foundations can partner with for-profit and nonprofit journalism organizations if the work aligns with the funder’s charitable purpose. Some common arrangements between funders and non-qualified donees include:

#### a. Contract agreements:

A foundation can directly hire an individual or organization as a contractor to carry out specific activities on its behalf. This type of intermediary may be a nonprofit or for-profit organization.

##### Example:



[IndigiNews](#) is an independent news organization that is a part of Discourse Community Publishing, **a for-profit news operation**. It covers issues important to Indigenous communities and has received funding from foundations via **contracts for services**.

#### b. Agency agreements:

A foundation can directly use an agent, in this case, a journalism organization, to carry out activities on its behalf. The foundation must be able to demonstrate direction and control over the funding provided to the news outlet.

##### Example:



[La Converse](#) is a digital **non-profit news organization** that serves communities traditionally underrepresented and misrepresented in Quebec and Canadian media. It has received funding from a number of foundations via agency agreements.

#### c. Gifts via a partnership with a charitable intermediary:

Some foundations have bylaws or policies that prevent them from directly supporting organizations that do not have charitable status. In these cases, they may transfer funding to an intermediary charity that can in turn transfer the money to a non-qualified donee (in this case the journalism organization.) For these arrangements to function, the intermediary’s charitable mission must align with the proposed work and it must provide oversight as required by the CRA.

##### Example:



[The Investigative Journalism Foundation](#) is a **non-profit news organization** that has received foundation funding through a **charitable partner**.

#### d. Grants to non-qualified donees:

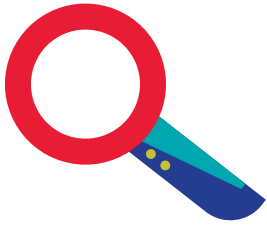
In late 2022, Canada’s Income Tax Act was amended, making it easier for nonprofit and for-profit organizations to access funding from foundations.

Non-qualified donees can now receive gifts/grants from a foundation if the funder’s charitable objectives permit it. The funder must conduct due diligence over expenditures, put an accountability mechanism in place, and ensure the activities supported align with its charitable purposes. The [CRA guidelines](#) for these types of relationships were finalized in late 2023.

While there were no journalism-related precedents at the time of publication, these new rules *may* pave the way for nonprofit and for-profit journalism organizations to receive funding directly from foundations.

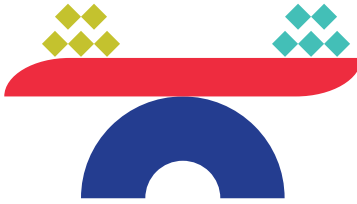


## Best practices



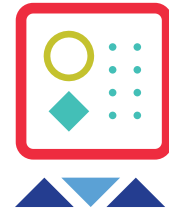
### Review your options

Whether you are an RJO, a charity, a nonprofit or a for-profit journalism organization, talk to prospective funders about what funding arrangement could work best. In some cases, a foundation's terms of incorporation or board may prevent it from providing support of any kind to non-qualified donees.



### Be mindful of your team capacity

It takes dedicated time and resources to engage funders or to shift business models by, for instance, transitioning to a nonprofit structure or applying for registered journalism organization status.



### Seek external support

Connect with peers and explore how other Canadian news organizations have received foundation funding. Gather external perspectives, including legal advice where needed.



## Tools and resources

- ◆ [News Giving Roadmap](#): The U.S.-based Institute for Nonprofit News offers a free curated database of guides, templates and tools to support news outlets in establishing sustainable fundraising practices.
- ◆ [Registered journalism organizations](#): On this page, the federal government lays out the process for becoming an RJO and provides a [list of existing RJOs](#).



## II. Maintaining editorial and managerial independence

The alignment between philanthropy and journalism in their commitment to the public good, while strong, is not without tensions. Indeed, [concerns about conflicts of interest and protecting editorial independence](#) at all stages of relationships with funders were top of mind for the majority of those who participated in the CAJ survey that informed this guide.


Conflict of interest issues can arise when a news outlet produces journalism on a topic where the funder is actively involved or seeks to create change. This can spark accusations that the funder is purchasing coverage to advance its own agenda, and that the journalism organization is complicit.

Ethical issues also come into play in situations where a funder – either deliberately or because they are unfamiliar with the norms of editorial independence – attempts to influence coverage. In the past, news outlets typically had many advertisers, and that tended to reduce the impact if one of them took exception to a story and threatened to withdraw their business. These days, journalism organizations that are reliant on a limited number of donors (or advertisers for that matter) are potentially more vulnerable if one of them threatens to cut support.

[Declining public trust in the news](#) requires that concerns related to real or perceived conflicts of interest and editorial independence be addressed proactively and transparently.

Conflicts of interest accusations, for instance, will have less traction if a journalism organization can point to a track record of producing stories on an issue that predates accepting money from a foundation with an active interest in the same topic.

The preservation of editorial independence should also be enshrined in formal agreements where all parties sign off on an agreed-upon set of rules. Full disclosure of funding sources and published policies outlining journalism organizations' commitment to editorial independence can help reassure the public that stories are produced without external meddling. They can also be used by journalists and the public to hold media accountable. Finally, journalism organizations should ideally develop business strategies based on multiple revenue streams to reduce dependence on a single source.



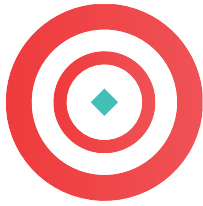
“What if an outlet uncovers something in its investigation that’s the opposite of what the foundation thought it would find? Does that get funded again? ... Do you feel awkward about publishing that story that bites the hand that feeds you?”

[Karyn Pugliese](#), Editor-in-chief,  
*Canadaland*





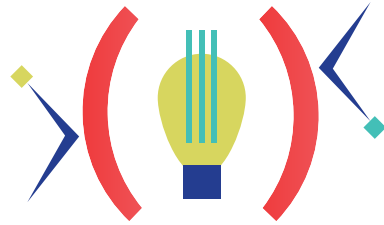
# Best practices



## Be true to your mission

Projects supported by philanthropy should be consistent with work your organization is already doing or had planned.

- Be prepared to say 'no' if a funder wants to support a project that is not a newsroom priority.
- Set up an internal review process to determine whether to accept funds for coverage of an issue where the funder is actively involved.



## Protect editorial independence

Make no promises about what stories will say in advance, never offer pre-publication review or post-publication edits, and ensure that funding agreements clearly state that editorial direction and control rest solely with your organization.

- Where it is appropriate, direct funders to the best practices outlined in [Funding Journalism: A Guide for Canadian Philanthropy](#).



## Practice radical transparency

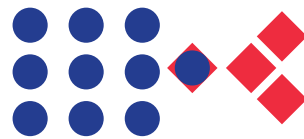
Publish the names and contribution amounts of funders that donate above a certain threshold. If a funder supports a specific series, include a public-facing acknowledgement with the content.

- If you report on a funder, the same editorial standards used for all sources/subjects should apply. Every story should disclose your relationship.
- If you accept money from a donor advised fund, do not just list the name of the fund – name the person behind the fund. If you cannot access that information, it is best not to accept the gift.



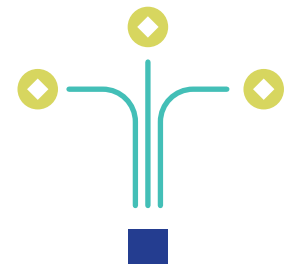
## Publish your donor disclosure policy

Include guidelines on the type of philanthropic money you will accept and your policy on accepting and disclosing anonymous donations.



## Minimize contact between editorial staff and funders

Ensure fundraising responsibilities, including managing donor relationships, are handled by management. Do not ask reporters to fundraise for their stories.



## Diversify revenue sources

Aim to secure financial support from a variety of sources to reduce the real or perceived influence of any one funder.



## Tools and resources

- ◆ [Sample Ethics Policy](#): This template is provided by PressForward, a Canadian organization working to support and advocate for independent newsrooms.
- ◆ [Ethics Guidelines](#): The Canadian Association of Journalists provides guidelines to ensure fair, accurate and comprehensive reporting.
- ◆ [Donor financial transparency](#): The Institute for Nonprofit News shares guidance on creating donor disclosure policies.
- ◆ [Journalism and Philanthropy: Growth, Diversity and Potential Conflicts of Interest](#): Media Impact Funders and the Lenfest Institute share trends in journalism philanthropy based on a 2023 survey of U.S.-based funders, nonprofit and for-profit news organizations. Watch a panel discussion about the report [here](#).
- ◆ [Guidance on philanthropic funding of media and news](#): The American Press Institute shares guidelines for funders and outlets, with a focus on journalistic independence.

### Sample template

#### Inspirit Foundation includes the following language in contracts for journalism grants:

##### **Journalistic Ethics and Independence**

The Grantee will employ all applicable ethical and/or journalistic standards applicable to the production and publication of content.

Inspirit does not endorse, influence, edit, or vet journalistic content in advance of or following any publication.

##### **Recognition, Publicity and Communications**

To uphold best practices for a transparent and ethical support of journalism, Inspirit will be recognized as a funder of the Grantee's on all published materials and communications – print, digital, audio, and other media – relevant to this agreement. If Inspirit funding is to support the Grantee's work at large, Inspirit will be publicly named as a supporter of the Grantee's work on the organization's website, and other public facing materials and reports where appropriate, using the template provided below:

*Support for [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s work has been provided by the Inspirit Foundation. Inspirit does not endorse, influence, edit, or vet journalistic content in advance of or following any publication.*



### III. Equity considerations in journalism philanthropy


Since 2021, the Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ) has published an annual [survey](#) that paints a sobering portrait of the lack of diversity in many Canadian newsrooms. The CAJ's [2023 survey](#) received responses from 273 newsrooms employing 6,035 journalists. It found that:

- ◆ about three-quarters of journalists at the responding news organizations identify as white – this compares to 68.8 percent of the Canadian population as a whole;
- ◆ about half of the participating newsrooms employed no Black or Indigenous journalists and more than half employed no journalists from Middle Eastern or Latin American backgrounds;
- ◆ the majority of journalists from racial or ethnic minority communities were concentrated in part-time and intern roles and in a handful of large news operations – i.e. more than half of Indigenous, Black, Latin American, Middle Eastern and multiracial journalists worked at CBC or Radio-Canada; and
- ◆ about seven out of 10 newsrooms had no Indigenous or visible minority representation in the top three editorial leadership positions.

This lack of diversity in newsrooms has contributed to the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of [Indigenous Peoples, racial and ethnic communities](#) and other groups in Canadian news coverage over the years. A growing body of [research](#) also shows that diversity in newsroom leadership matters because top editors can influence who is hired, how stories are covered, and the representation of different communities in the media.


Canada's philanthropic sector also has [a long way to go](#) when it comes to equity, diversity, and inclusion within its ranks and [grantmaking practices](#).

Many foundations, however, are [slowly but surely](#) building equity-related considerations into their strategies and funding decisions. Depending on the foundation and on the proposed project, this suggests journalism organizations in search of philanthropic support should expect questions from potential funders about the diversity of their leadership and newsroom staff, efforts to expand the range of voices in stories, and audience demographics.



“A trend has been noted each year of the survey: The more senior the role, the more likely it is to be held by a white journalist and to be a man. The other trend observed is that part-time employees and interns are most likely to be Indigenous or a visible minority and a woman.”

[Canadian Newsroom Diversity Survey Final Report](#)



“You can't underestimate how important and vital it is to see yourself in stories, to see yourself in media, to see yourself respected.”

[Connie Walker](#), Pulitzer Prize-winning Cree journalist from the Okanese First Nation in Saskatchewan



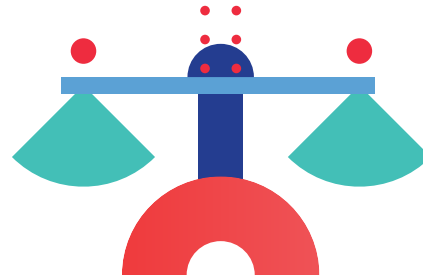


## Best practices



### Conduct an honest assessment of your organization

How diverse is the newsroom and is it representative of the audiences you serve? Who holds the greatest editorial control? What measures are in place to ensure voices from diverse communities are included in your coverage?



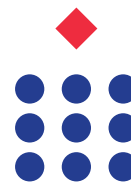
### Build fair pay provisions into grant applications

Grants can be used to fund decent wages and ensure that journalists who are not from affluent backgrounds can afford to build careers telling important stories.



### Participate in the CAJ's annual diversity survey

This will help generate data that news organizations can use to evaluate their own performance and demonstrate commitment to a more equitable journalism sector.



### Support underrepresented leadership in your news organization

Invest in and meaningfully support journalists and media leaders from underrepresented communities who bring more diverse perspectives to your editorial decision making.

## Tools and resources

- ◆ [Canadian Association of Journalists Annual Newsroom Diversity Survey](#)
- ◆ [The Canadian Association of Black Journalists](#), [Informed Opinions](#), [Muslim Sources](#), and the [Indigenous Journalists Association](#) are all groups working to advance representation in media in Canada through the lens of race, gender, religion, geography, age, and other indicators of diversity. All provide free online resources for journalists.
- ◆ [Decolonizing Journalism](#): This book by Anishnaabe journalist Duncan McCue offers guidance to journalists, students and individuals interested in journalism in Indigenous communities
- ◆ [Struggles and successes of BIPOC news leaders](#): LION Publishers shares an overview of the results of a listening survey with Black, Indigenous and racialized media leaders in the U.S. and Canada

## IV. Impact measurement in journalism

Foundations that support journalism want to know if their money is being put to good use and also learn from current initiatives to inform future funding decisions. Expectations will vary, but grant recipients will almost always be required to report on the impact of their work.

This is not always easy. The effects of journalism may not be felt immediately or may take years, even decades, to materialize. Other social, political, and economic factors also come into play, so connecting reporting on an issue to a specific consequence is not necessarily straightforward.

Some journalists worry that requiring impact measurement blurs the line between journalism and advocacy. Richard J. Tofel, founding general manager of the U.S.-based nonprofit ProPublica, [attributes](#) this unease to the fact that reporters ask questions and pursue answers while “advocates know before they begin work the sort of impact they are seeking.”

There are journalists in [Canada](#) and [other](#) countries who believe their job is to unearth and share information that educates the public, and then leave it to the audience to press for change. Others, however, [suggest](#) that “impact is not a dirty word” and that journalists should “embrace the reality that they are, in fact, influential social forces.”

One way to navigate these differences of opinion among journalists is for newsrooms to take the lead in identifying their own impact measurement criteria.

“[Foundations] are not funding our journalism just because they like journalism, they’re funding it because they believe that it contributes to positive change. So we need to articulate what that positive change is going to be and how we’re going to measure it, or they’re going to articulate that,” says Erin Millar, the co-founder of [Discourse Media](#), a digital news organization, and chief executive officer of [Indiegraf](#).

Measuring impact can also benefit journalism organizations, Millar added, because it “helps us to figure out how we’re marketing, how the community sees the value of this work, and helps us tell that story to community members who financially support us.”

Impact measurement comes in various forms. An increase in the number of stories on an issue or community may be all that is expected, and demonstrating that may be all that is required to satisfy a funder’s requirements. Journalism organizations can propose tracking impact in a variety of ways. This can involve:

- ◆ moving beyond tracking how many people interact with content to identifying who interacts with it and the actions or conversations that unfold;
- ◆ looking for evidence of shifts in public awareness or attitudes around an issue;
- ◆ [tracking](#) instances where the perspectives of underrepresented groups are included in news coverage;
- ◆ establishing a system for tracking when and how decision-makers responded to stories;



“It’s tougher when it comes to...journalism to say this story had this impact, because what we’re doing is we’re setting agendas. We’re changing and challenging narratives. And we’re educating and informing the public. There’s a lot of invisibility in that work.”

**Jennifer Hollett, Executive director, *The Walrus***

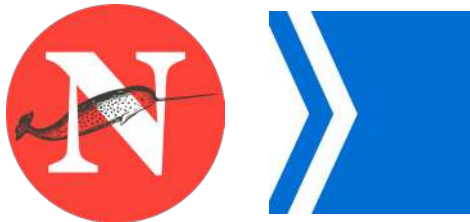


- ◆ identifying and recording ways a grant helped change newsroom reporting or business practices; and
- ◆ reporting on how the funding affected the newsroom's revenues or helped grow its audience.

## Foundation-supported journalism that has had an impact



[Spotlight: Child Welfare](#) is a collaborative journalism project working to improve media coverage of the child welfare system including its impact on Indigenous families. Kevin McCort, president and CEO of the Vancouver Foundation, which supported the project, said the stories have sparked widespread engagement. "We were seeing conversations that were being picked up by others. They were being raised in the legislature, the Question Period, so we could see that there was activity and conversations being started around that work. And so that was, for us, a measure of success."



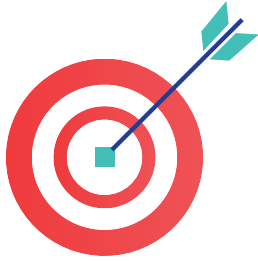
Ontario's auditor general Bonnie Lysyk [praised journalists](#) for their investigative reporting following the release of her report on the provincial government's decision to greenlight housing development on sections of the protected Greenbelt around the Greater Toronto Area. Lysyk's audit in August 2023 concluded that some developers stood to earn billions as a result of the government's decision. After 11 months of dogged reporting by [The Narwhal](#), a registered journalism organization, and the for-profit [Toronto Star](#), Premier Doug Ford caved to public pressure in September 2023 and restored the lands to the Greenbelt.



In 2021, [The Local's](#) pandemic coverage shone the spotlight on the lack of access to COVID-19 vaccines in Peel Region, home to many immigrant and front-line workers. Two weeks after its first story appeared, the Ontario government announced a policy allocating 50 per cent of all vaccines to COVID-19 hotspots, including Peel. The Toronto-based digital magazine is a registered journalism organization [supported by](#) multiple foundations.

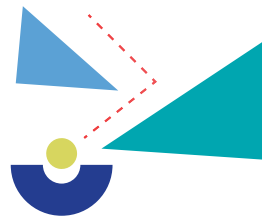


# Best practices



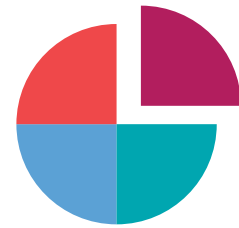
## Take a proactive role in defining impact

In conversations with funders, set realistic expectations about what you're both trying to achieve, what can be measured, the timeframes, the tools that will be used, and the resources required.



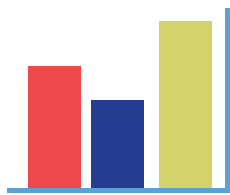
## Stay away from predetermined outcomes

Identifying what a story should say or its potential impact in advance is unrealistic, suggests bias, and could infringe on the principle of editorial independence.



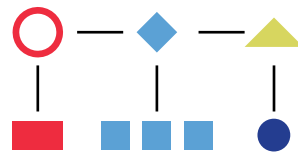
## Budget for impact measurement

Tracking impact requires time and money. Include a budget line covering the cost of impact measurement in grant applications.



## Gather quantitative and qualitative data

Measure reach and engagement through indicators such as page views, shares, and subscriptions. Also collect references to news coverage in legislative debates, city council meetings, and at community gatherings and other fora.



## Embed impact measurement into the workflow

Use [existing impact-measurement tools](#) if possible, or develop a method that works for your team.

- Ask funders if they will accept reports written for other funders.



## Leverage impact data

Data can be useful in grant applications or fundraising campaigns, but also to understand how stories resonate with your audience.




## Tools and resources

- ◆ [IA Impact Tracker](#): Designed by U.S.-based Impact Architects, this is a hands-on tool for defining, measuring, and tracking the impact of journalism.
- ◆ [The Case for Media Impact: A Case Study of ICIJ's Radical Collaboration Strategy](#): This report uses a major investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists to explore journalism impact from various perspectives.
- ◆ [Explaining the why of source tracking](#): The API offers tips for tracking sources quoted in news stories and how news organizations can include voices from traditionally underrepresented communities in their stories.
- ◆ [7 insights into measuring the impact of journalism](#): This article makes the case for journalism impact measurement and outlines how to do it.

Section 4

# Funding models





Journalism philanthropy comes in different forms. The list below, which draws upon Canadian and other examples, identifies activities journalism organizations can propose when applying for funding.

### ◆ General operating costs

Unrestricted funding gives news organizations the flexibility to invest in what they deem to be most important. Canada Revenue Agency rules, however, make this form of funding difficult, especially if a journalism organization operates as a for-profit, does not have qualified donee status, and/or reports on topics that go beyond the foundation's charitable mission.

### ◆ Training and professional development

Capacity building for editorial staff and publishers strengthens journalism organizations. It can also help provide individuals from groups underrepresented in Canadian media with meaningful opportunities to advance in their careers.

### ◆ Beat reporting

Hiring a journalist to report on a specific topic can expand newsroom coverage and fit with a funder's goals. The Atkinson Foundation, for example, is committed to tackling rising inequality by championing decent work, more equitable economic growth and civic engagement that benefits all. To accomplish this mission, it has [funded](#) a work and wealth beat reporter and a democracy renewal reporter at the *Toronto Star*. In Quebec, efforts to boost coverage of international affairs by Quebec-based journalists led to the creation of the nonprofit [Fonds québécois en journalisme international](#). With support from Power Corporation Canada and other private and public funders, it offers international reporting fellowships.

### ◆ Newsroom collaborations

Collaborative reporting and investigative projects involving multiple newsrooms can deepen reporting around issues of public interest and appeal to funders because stories reach a larger audience and funding supports more than one newsroom. The nonprofit [Investigative Journalism Foundation](#), for example, publishes user-friendly public interest political donation, lobbying, and other [databases](#) (some of which are available free of charge). To ensure its work gets the widest possible exposure, the *IJF* partners with [media outlets](#), [post-secondary institutions](#), and other organizations.

### ◆ College and university initiatives and outlets

Working with post-secondary institutions is a way to produce coverage that fills local and national gaps, builds large reporting teams for bigger projects, and creates opportunities for emerging journalists. [Surviving Hate](#) is a collaborative project coordinated by Humber College's StoryLab and the University of Toronto's Investigative Journalism Bureau that has sought to fill the data gap on hate crimes in Canada. Stories produced are disseminated by the [National Observer](#), the [Toronto Star](#), [IndigiNews](#), [TVO](#) and others. This project received [funding](#) from Inspirit Foundation.

### ◆ Matching contributions campaigns

Funders may be open to having their grants leveraged as a fundraising tool to encourage matching individual donations from members of the public. The [NewsMatch](#) program in the United States, for example, uses matching campaigns to help grow funding and fundraising capacity for media outlets.



## ◆ Partnerships that bring together registered journalism organizations and for-profit news outlets

[The Narwhal](#), [The Winnipeg Free Press](#), and the Winnipeg Foundation pioneered this model in Canada. As an RJO, *The Narwhal* receives funding from the Winnipeg Foundation to produce coverage of climate change in Manitoba. Editorial control and the final stories are both [shared](#) with the *Free Press*.

## ◆ Innovative projects

Foundations may be open to funding initiatives that move beyond traditional forms of journalism. Examples include:

### ◆ Community listening projects

[The Green Line](#) runs story circles for journalists and residents from the Toronto communities it covers. It is also working on plans for a [community engagement outpost](#) in Alexandra Park, a downtown Toronto community with a high concentration of newcomers and young Torontonians.

### ◆ Unconventional reporting tools to reach communities that do not typically engage with journalism

[Outlier Media](#), a nonprofit newsroom in Detroit, runs a texting service that automatically delivers housing, utility, and other information to residents. It can also be used to talk directly to an *Outlier* reporter.

### ◆ Citizen journalism initiatives to expand coverage of local politics

Created by *City Bureau* in 2018, the U.S.-based [Documenters Network](#) is a nonprofit civic journalism lab that trains and pays citizens to attend under-reported public meetings and publish the results.

Funders may also be open to supporting organizations that advance a stronger journalism sector and a free press in Canada. For example, the [Canada Press Freedom Project](#), run out of J-Source.ca, receives [support](#) from the Law Foundation of Ontario and the Ken and Debbie Rubin Public Interest Advocacy Fund. The Rossy Foundation funds the [Local News Map](#)<sup>\*</sup>, which [tracks and reports on](#) local news outlets that have launched and closed across Canada.

<sup>\*</sup>*The Local News Map is run by April Lindgren, one of the authors of this report.*

## Section 5

# Bringing it all together

## A checklist

### A. Before asking for money, make sure that you:

- have determined that philanthropy is the best way to secure additional revenue for your work
- can demonstrate that your journalism matters to your audience
- have a donor disclosure policy in place
- are prepared to provide free access to philanthropy-supported journalism

### B. When you are ready to start fundraising, make sure you:

- understand the various ways philanthropy can support journalism in Canada
- identify which funding mechanisms work for your type of organization
- make a list of prospective funders whose funding priorities suggest a fit with your work

### C. To get on a funder's radar:

- send an introductory email or a letter of inquiry, ask a mutual acquaintance to make the connection, or introduce yourself at a funder's event
- request an introductory meeting – and make the most of that time by sharing a short brief describing your proposed project ahead of the call

### D. To make a compelling 'ask:'

- follow the funder's application requirements
- craft a proposal that:
  - describes the need for the project and explains why your organization is best-placed to address it
  - uses data and engaging characters to tell a story
  - shows how funding will support public interest journalism instead of private gain – relevant to for-profit newsrooms in particular
  - describes how the project will be carried out
  - describes your team
  - explains how the project's impact will be measured
  - includes a realistic budget outlining how the funds will be spent, what resources your journalism organization will commit, project overhead costs and decent wages for journalists and freelancers

### E. After the application is submitted – and accepted:

- ensure funding agreements include clauses protecting editorial independence
- understand the funder's reporting requirements
- discuss expectations around impact measurement
- make a plan for keeping the funder informed about your work
- ask funders to suggest other sources of support



Do you have questions or insights about philanthropic funding for journalism in Canada?  
 Are you interested in collaborating? Please reach out to the authors.  
 Contact: Ana Sofía Hibon ([ashibon@inspiritfoundation.org](mailto:ashibon@inspiritfoundation.org))

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