

Press Release Nov 6, 2025

## North Carolina Local News Lab Fund Invests \$590,000 in 23 Local News and Community Organizations

*The Fund's second round of 2025 grants support a wide range of trusted communicators working to make sure everyone in North Carolina can find, trust, and use the news and information they need to thrive*

November 6, 2025 - The North Carolina Local News Lab Fund today announced \$590,000 in grants to 23 local news and community organizations. In a year marked by natural disasters, federal funding cuts, and the need to navigate uncertainty, these investments back trusted journalists and communicators to reinforce a strong local news and information ecosystem that serves communities across North Carolina.

The Fund's grant recipients are trusted local news and community organizations across the state that are ensuring communities can access reliable and useful information and make informed decisions about their lives. Building upon a round of capacity building and emergency public media grants distributed earlier this year, these grants bring the Fund's total 2025 grants awarded across North Carolina's news and information ecosystem to \$1.49 million.

"Local news and community organizations make it possible for people to stay informed about what's most essential – whether it's understanding shifting policies about healthcare and food access, figuring out where to get a flu shot, or making sense of who was on Tuesday's ballots," said **Lizzy Hazeltine, Director of the North Carolina Local News Lab Fund**. "These grants expand and deepen the Fund's support for trusted communicators across the state who are on a mission to keep people safe, healthy, and informed."

### Reinforcing Essential Information Networks

The Fund helps ensure that everyone in North Carolina can find, trust, and use the information they need to thrive. Aligned with this mission, the Fund's latest grant recipients are based in communities across the state and represent a wide range of trusted communicators, including journalists, public health workers, entrepreneurs, community organizers, and storytellers who challenge and shift dominant narratives.

The latest grant recipients also include many organizations facing heightened pressure as the communities they support face ongoing threats and challenges. Among them:

- [Casa Azul de Wilson](#) supports Hispano/Latino youth and families in rural Eastern North Carolina by sharing bilingual information about important topics, including local government, health resources, and education.
- [Emancipate NC](#) provides news and information in communities with high rates of incarceration, juvenile detention, and poverty, and supports these communities in shaping the media narrative about incarceration and police violence.
- [Hola Carolina](#) shares culturally relevant news, information, and recovery resources within Spanish-speaking communities in Western North Carolina.
- [Smoky Mountain News](#) produces accountability journalism tracking Hurricane Helene recovery in Western North Carolina, helping rural communities navigate the many dimensions of their lives in the post-Helene landscape.
- [WFDD](#) broadcasts local news and information about the arts, people, and institutions in the Piedmont Triad and the High Country, and engages youth to tell the stories of their communities.

### Expanded Support in Charlotte

About a quarter of the Fund's latest grant recipients are advancing community-centered journalism and filling information gaps in Charlotte. The Fund has long supported Charlotte-based newsrooms and community organizations. Expanded support is part of the Fund's leadership of [Press Forward Charlotte](#), a collaborative funding effort powered by the generosity of Knight Foundation, Wells Fargo, Gambrell Foundation, C.D. Spangler Foundation, and other Charlotte donors.

The Fund's investments in Charlotte reflect the city's key place in North Carolina's ecosystem and the Fund's ongoing commitment to a wide-ranging statewide strategy, alongside Press Forward North Carolina co-chairs [Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust](#) and [Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation](#).

"Charlotte is a hub for innovation in local news and public media, and the Fund was intentional about supporting that work when we launched Press Forward Charlotte one year ago. Since then, we've seen growth in the number of Charlotte funders investing in local news and information as a crosscutting solution for their issue priorities," said **Sam Spencer, Associate Director of Funder Partnerships at the North Carolina Local News Lab Fund**. "Funders with different backgrounds and focus areas working together can, and are, funding local newsrooms and community organizations effectively and ensure everyone, in Charlotte and beyond, has access to the information they need to thrive."

Grant recipients based in Charlotte include newsrooms such as [The Charlotte Post](#), which has supported the Carolinas' African American communities via local news reporting for the last 147 years. Recipients also include community organizations like [La Coalición Latinoamericana](#), which has helped make civic, economic, and cultural life in North Carolina more accessible to thousands of people over the last 35 years.

Earlier this year, the Fund also supported Charlotte-based public radio station [WFAE](#) and the [Charlotte Journalism Collaborative](#).

### **About the Fund's Grantmaking**

The Fund's grants are selected by a group of national and state experts who bring deep knowledge about local news and information funding, expertise about North Carolina's local news and information ecosystem, and a commitment to North Carolina's communities. [Learn more about the Fund's selection committee here.](#)

The Fund's grantmaking is supported by its national and local [funding coalition](#). This year, [the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#) joins the Fund's coalition of funders with a \$1.2M, three-year commitment to North Carolina's local news and information ecosystem. Among other focus areas, the MacArthur Foundation is committed to strengthening local news across the country by "supporting local trusted newsrooms, accelerating solutions, closing inequalities, and advancing policy for better access to news and information."

### **Fall 2025 Grant Recipients**

- **Acción Hispana - Que Pasa:** \$20,000
- **Asociación De Mexicanos En Carolina Del Norte (AMEXCAN):** \$20,000
- **Davidson Local:** \$20,000
- **Border Belt Independent:** \$20,000
- **Casa Azul de Wilson:** \$30,000
- **Coalición Latinoamericana/Latin American Coalition:** \$30,000
- **Compañeros en las Montañas en Acción (CIMA):** \$30,000
- **El Centro Hispano:** \$30,000
- **Emancipate NC:** \$30,000
- **Hola Carolina:** \$30,000
- **Mountain Xpress:** \$20,000
- **Narrative Arts | Shoresides:** \$30,000
- **North Carolina Housing Coalition:** \$20,000
- **QCity Metro:** \$30,000
- **QNotes Carolinas LGBTQ Journalism Fund:** \$30,000
- **Refugee Community Partnership:** \$30,000

- **Sarah Stevenson Tuesday Forum:** \$30,000
- **Smoky Mountain News:** \$20,000
- **Student Action with Farmworkers:** \$20,000
- **The Assembly:** \$20,000
- **The Election Hub from The Charlotte Ledger:** \$20,000
- **The Charlotte Post:** \$30,000
- **WFDD/Wake Forest University:** \$30,000

For more information about the Fund and their partners, approach, and impact, visit [nclocalnews.org](https://www.nclocalnews.org) and [sign up for their newsletter](#).

### About the North Carolina Local News Lab Fund

The North Carolina Local News Lab Fund is a pooled fund established in 2017 to build a resilient news and information network that serves all of North Carolina. The Fund invests in a diverse range of news and community organizations so that everyone in North Carolina can find, trust, and use the information they need to thrive. As the home of Press Forward's local chapters in North Carolina, the Fund also deepens ongoing partnerships with regional and national funders while continuing to advance the vision of informed, connected, and thriving communities across the state. The Fund was founded by a group of local and national funders at the North Carolina Community Foundation and is now housed at NEO Philanthropy. Learn more at [nclocalnews.org](https://www.nclocalnews.org).

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The North Carolina Local News Lab Fund is a pooled fund building a sustainable and inclusive news and information ecosystem that benefits all of North Carolina.

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