



## Press Forward New Mexico launches to revitalize local news around the state

*Thornburg Foundation, New Mexico Local News Fund will co-lead the initiative with goal of raising \$3M over five years*

**February 21, 2024** – Press Forward New Mexico, a collaborative of local funders, has launched with the goal of catalyzing a local news renaissance in New Mexico that will reshape the local news landscape and re-center local journalism as a force for community cohesion, civic participation, and government accountability. The group's aim is to raise \$3 million over five years from local foundations and major donors, and potentially have that matched by the national Press Forward initiative. Press Forward NM is co-led by the Thornburg Foundation and the New Mexico Local News Fund at the Santa Fe Community Foundation. The Local News Fund has created a private-public partnership for local news with the support of the State Legislature.

Launched in 2023 by a coalition of 22 national funders and donors, Press Forward has a goal of raising unprecedented resources to revitalize local news, spur proven models and solutions to address the local news crisis, and close longstanding inequities in journalism coverage and practice. The national initiative has a commitment from funders to spend more than \$500 million over five years to support local news.

In [December](#), Press Forward announced a network of local chapters: affiliates of the national initiative that are anchored and driven by local funders. Today, funding leaders in New Mexico, Colorado, New Jersey, North Carolina, Mississippi, Wyoming, and Texas join the expanding network.

“The Thornburg Foundation strongly believes in the power of local journalism and its power to inform and educate the public, increase government accountability, and strengthen our democracy, said Allan Oliver, Executive Director of Thornburg Foundation. “We are excited to

participate in a coalition of New Mexico funders in Press Forward, which will help bring national investment and help strengthen trusted news in communities around our state.”

“We are thrilled to help lead the new coalition of New Mexico funders in Press Forward,” said Allan Oliver, executive director of Thornburg Foundation. “We are a big believer in the power of local journalism to be a key watchdog of the government, helping keep elected officials honest and our democracy stronger. Press Forward is a powerful, collaborative way for us to help bring national dollars to the Land of Enchantment and strengthen trusted news in communities around the state.”

Press Forward New Mexico will offer philanthropic leaders, civic-minded individuals, and regional foundations the opportunity to pool their dollars to support a robust network of independent news outlets that are serving the information needs of New Mexico’s diverse communities. Press Forward philanthropic partners include the Albuquerque Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico, McCune Charitable Foundation, New Mexico Foundation and Santa Fe Community Foundation.



**New Mexico  
Local News  
Fund**

**Thornburg** Foundation



**ALBUQUERQUE  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**  
trust • equity • integrity • accountability



**McCUNE**  
CHARITABLE  
FOUNDATION



**NEW MEXICO  
FOUNDATION**

**SANTA FE  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**



**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**  
OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO

## Opportunities

The New Mexico Local News Fund has been supporting newsrooms in the state since 2018, helping them become more sustainable and serve more communities with news and information.

“Bringing Press Forward to New Mexico will be transformative to our local news ecosystem,” said Rashad Mahmood, executive director of the Local News Fund. “The chance to collaborate with top foundations and funders in our state to support local news is a game-changer for our underserved communities who often struggle to get the news and information they need.”

Current projects of the Local News Fund include:

> [\*\*Local News Fellowship Program\*\*](#): In partnership with the University of New Mexico’s School of Communication and Journalism, the Fund has placed recent journalism school graduates into newsrooms around the state, helping to build a pipeline of diverse journalists that work here in New Mexico. The program has support from foundations as well as the State Legislature through the Department of Workforce Solutions, helping to double the size of the program in 2023-24.

> [\*\*Southern New Mexico Local News Collaborative\*\*](#): The Fund manages a long-term collaborative of diverse news outlets and community information organizations in the southern part of New Mexico to cover health equity, broadband and other key issues. The Collaborative has had numerous community listening events and includes a feedback loop for publishers.

> [\*\*Local News Accelerator\*\*](#): This grant program has served dozens of news outlets around the state, including community radio, public media, community newspapers, nonprofit news outlets and more. The Fund supports their businesses with grant money, along with regular peer meetings and targeted consulting to make sure they are diversifying revenues and becoming sustainable.

> [\*\*Matching Campaign\*\*](#): Each December, the Fund supports publishers by giving each participating newsroom the opportunity to receive up to \$5000, in a dollar-for-dollar match for donations, subscriptions and memberships they receive during the campaign. Last December, the Fund helped 20 newsrooms [raise more than \\$245,000](#).

> [\*\*Local News Incubator\*\*](#): The Fund worked with Tiny News Collective to support four news startups in Mora, Zuni Pueblo, Las Cruces and the International District of Albuquerque. The Incubator focuses on communities without adequate access to sources of local news to ensure that every community in New Mexico has the news and information they need to thrive.

## **Governance**

**Steering Committee:** The members of the Steering Committee will set the strategy and priorities for the fund. This group will meet regularly to discuss directions for the initiative, and will be led by Thornburg Foundation and the New Mexico Local News Fund. Other Steering Committee members include Albuquerque Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico, McCune Charitable Foundation, New Mexico Foundation and Santa Fe Community Foundation.

**Advisory Group:** Press Forward NM will invite key community stakeholders and local news publishers to play an advisory role. The group will be between 8 and 10 individuals as chosen by the Steering Committee and will meet once per quarter.

Learn more about Press Forward NM here: <https://www.pressforwardnm.org>

### **About the Thornburg Foundation**

The Thornburg Foundation, based in Santa Fe, advances systemic change that serves the public, using an evidence-based strategic approach to solve systemic problems that impact people and communities. We fund strategic initiatives by granting to organizations aligned with our strategies in the areas of land and agriculture, k-12 education, good government reform and water policy. We partner with grantees to share non-partisan research and build collective expertise on policy issues, maximizing opportunities for systemic change by leveraging public and private dollars. We lead with expertise and collaborate with policy makers, issue experts, and other grant makers to identify, develop and advocate for nonpartisan policy solutions and ensure effective policy implementation. Learn more at <https://www.thornburgfoundation.org/>

### **About the New Mexico Local News Fund at the Santa Fe Community Foundation**

The New Mexico Local News Fund at the Santa Fe Community Foundation aims to grow the ecosystem of local news across our state to better serve the information needs of all New Mexicans. To accomplish that ambitious goal, we work with both existing newsrooms and trusted community organizations. Our goal is ultimately for everyone to have access to the local news and information they need to thrive. The New Mexico Local News Fund is a fiscally sponsored project of the Santa Fe Community Foundation. Learn more at <https://www.nmlocalnews.org/>

### **About Press Forward**

Press Forward is a national movement to strengthen our democracy by revitalizing local news and information. A coalition of funders is investing more than \$500 million to strengthen local newsrooms, close longstanding gaps in journalism coverage, advance public policy that expands access to local news and scale infrastructure the sector needs to thrive. Press Forward is housed at [The Miami Foundation](#). For more, visit [pressforward.news](https://pressforward.news).

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For more information about the New Mexico Local News Fund or Press Forward New Mexico, contact Rashad Mahmood at [rashad@nmlocalnews.org](mailto:rashad@nmlocalnews.org)