



NEW JERSEY
CIVIC INFORMATION
CONSORTIUM

JULY 2021

ANNUAL REPORT FY2021

PREPARED BY

NJ Civic Information Consortium Board

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July 31, 2021

Dear Governor Murphy, Senate President Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Coughlin, and Director O'Mara-Van Driesen:

On behalf of the Board of Directors I am pleased to submit the annual report of the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium (the "Consortium") in accordance with P.L.2018, c.111 and P.L.1991, c.164.

The Consortium was formed in response to the decline and loss of local news and civic information across the state. As the Legislature declared in the bill creating the Consortium, "The people of New Jersey need accurate, relevant, timely, and trustworthy news and information to be civically engaged, make informed voting decisions, and work toward common solutions in their communities." It is the lifeblood of democracy.

With \$500,000 in funding for grants to local news and information organizations provided in the FY21 State Budget—the first such public support of local news in the United States—the board developed grant guidelines, called in March for applications, and received 74 creative and interesting proposals from nearly every county in the state. After review by a committee of the board, 14 grants of approximately \$35,000 each were awarded in May, totalling some \$490,000.

While it is too early in the implementation process to report on grantee progress, suffice to say that there is a lot of interest and excitement about their work, which includes plans for a Spanish language internet radio program, two new community news organizations, and several efforts to train residents and New Jersey youth in media making, among others. A common thread in this initial cohort of grantees is a clear focus on filling information gaps, and several of our grantees aim to serve some of New Jersey's most vulnerable and marginalized people.

We are grateful for your support and that of the Legislature, as well as that of Higher Education Secretary Brian Bridges and his staff. We are especially appreciative of the additional \$1 million provided to the Consortium in the FY22 State Budget. Through more robust civic discourse and engagement and the success of our grantees, we hope to develop the case for annual funding of this vital work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Daggett".

Christopher J. Daggett
Chairperson, Board of Directors

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY CIVIC INFORMATION CONSORTIUM

The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium is a registered New Jersey nonprofit organization that funds initiatives to benefit the State's civic life and meet the evolving information needs of New Jersey's communities.

A first-in-the-nation project, the Consortium builds on the foundation laid by public media in the United States, and reimagines how public funding can be used to address the growing problem of news deserts and misinformation, and to support more informed communities. The Consortium provides grants for projects that achieve the following goals:

- Improve the quantity and quality of civic information in New Jersey communities.
- Give residents enhanced access to useful government data and public information through innovative applications, platforms, and technologies.
- Train students, professionals, and community members in the practice of community storytelling, journalism, and media production.
- Nurture better civic engagement and dialogue within and between New Jersey communities.
- Better meet the information needs of low-income communities and racial and ethnic communities that have been underserved by the media.
- Invest in research and practices that can help media outlets become more closely connected to their audiences and more sustainable without government support.

Under state law, the Consortium and the State of New Jersey do not have ownership in any project funded by a Consortium grant. In addition, under state law the State of New Jersey and the Consortium are prohibited from exercising editorial control over any project funded by the Consortium.

The state of New Jersey created the Consortium in 2018 in response to the growing local news crisis impacting communities across the state's 21 counties. Led by the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization Free Press, a broad stakeholder coalition of thousands of residents, universities, journalists, lawmakers and more crafted the Civic Information bill as a way to fund innovative media and civic technology projects in New Jersey for decades to come.

The Consortium has its roots in a history of projects and advocacy to grow access to local news and information across New Jersey, including work by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State University.

The Consortium brings together five of New Jersey's leading institutions of higher education – The College of New Jersey, Montclair State University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rowan University and Rutgers University – in partnership to address the lack of access to local news and information. The Consortium is eligible for funding from the State of New Jersey and can obtain funds from private

foundations, individuals, and other charitable organizations. Montclair State University serves as the host university for the Consortium.

The Consortium, housed within Montclair State University, is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors, which includes representatives of the five member universities.

By bringing together these five comprehensive public universities, the Consortium can leverage the individual strengths of each university and utilize them in a unique synergy to benefit New Jersey residents. Each member university has identified its individual focus areas and will use them as part of the Consortium's strategy to address news deserts statewide.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium was established in 2018 with the passage and signing of P.L.2018, c.111 (C.18A:64-94, et. seq.). A budget appropriation of \$500,000 was allocated from the FY21 State Budget. Since that time, the following has been accomplished:

- Appointment of all 15 members of the Board of Directors (Appendix A).
- Monthly meetings of the Board of Directors, beginning in March 2020.
- Registration as a nonprofit organization under the NJ Nonprofit Corporation Act.
- Submission to the IRS of Form 1023, requesting tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3).
- Submission to the NJ Division of Revenue in Treasury for exemption from state sales taxes.
- Designation of Montclair State University as the host university for the Consortium.
- Establishment of bylaws (Appendix D) and a conflict of interest policy (Appendix E).
- Conflict of interest statement signed by each board member (Appendix E).
- Election of officers of the Board of Directors (Appendix B).
- Establishment of board classes (Appendix A).
- Creation of a website, Facebook page, and Twitter account, at njcivicinfo.org, facebook.com/njcivicinfo and twitter.com/njcivicinfo
- Signing of a Grant Agreement between the Officer of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) and the Consortium (Appendix C).
- Opening of a Consortium bank account (Valley Bank).
- Transfer from OSHE to the Consortium, and deposit into the Consortium bank account, of the \$500,000 state appropriation.
- Conducting of a listening campaign, including 30 Zoom sessions and 188 surveys, reaching 400+ residents across New Jersey (Appendix G).
- Board of Directors approval of grant guidelines and grant application (Appendices F and H).
- Public release (March 3) of grant guidelines, call for applications, and frequently asked questions (FAQs), with March 31 deadline for submission (Appendices F and H).

- Receipt of grant applications (74, Appendix J) and selection of 14 grantees (Appendix K).
- Disbursement of nine grant checks totaling \$311,787.96.
- Applications submitted to foundations for funding totaling \$375,000.
- Appropriation of \$1,000,000 in FY22 State Budget.

Due to the uncertainty of funding beyond FY21 and the associated difficulty of attracting candidates for such a short time period, the Board of Directors elected to review and award FY21 grants without staff assistance. All of the initial grant work was completed through board committees and full board meetings. Accordingly, the entire \$500,000 FY21 appropriation is going toward grants and training of grantee organizations. No other expenses will be incurred.

The board agendas and meeting notes can be found at www.njcivinfo.org.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

Much of 2020 was spent on administrative issues related to the creation of the Consortium. From our first board meeting in March 2020, we held monthly meetings and related committee meetings to establish by-laws, create a conflict of interest policy, open a bank account at Valley Bank, register as a non-profit with the New Jersey Division of Revenue and the Internal Revenue Service, and file for sales tax exemption with the New Jersey Division of Taxation. We also signed a grant agreement with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), the department through which the Consortium's state appropriation flows. We were aided by a pro bono attorney in much of this work.

One of our first actions was to designate Montclair State University as host university for the Consortium. We made this decision based on the background of the Center for Cooperative Media, housed in the School of Communication and Media. The Center has been instrumental to all that we have accomplished over the past year by providing valuable back office support services, graphic design, website design and outreach. Their efforts enabled the Consortium to direct all of its state funding to grantmaking. This has been invaluable since we are an all volunteer organization and board. We wish to thank Stefanie Murray and Joe Amditis from the Center for their hard work and support.

We have established a social media presence with Facebook and Twitter accounts, at facebook.com/njcivinfo and twitter.com/njcivinfo. We have used these to promote the work of the Consortium, including our grants process. We also have established a website (www.njcivinfo.org).

Our board consists of gubernatorial and legislative appointees, along with members appointed by the presidents of our five member universities. These members then appointed four additional board members, with one representing the media sector, one representing the technology sector, and two representing the state at-large. The full board consists of 15 members. The legislation creating the Consortium encourages the board to use these seats to add diversity to the board and also requires the

appointments to be bipartisan in nature and not be of state employees. Using these requirements we worked to identify and recruit four board members. Attached in Appendix A is a full list of board members and board classes.

We also elected our inaugural group of officers to lead the board. This includes:

- Chairperson: Christopher J. Daggett
- Vice Chairperson: Maurice Hall
- Secretary: John R.D. Celock
- Treasurer: Molly de Aguiar

Please note that Vice Chairperson Maurice Hall, the appointee from The College of New Jersey, stepped down from the Board of Directors in July 2021 following his appointment as provost of Bennington College in Vermont. His seat on the board will be filled in due course by the president of The College of New Jersey and a new vice chairperson will be elected by the board.

GRANTS PROCESS

For the Consortium's inaugural round of grants, the board developed guidelines after a statewide virtual listening tour, research and much deliberation by our grants committee. We aimed to address New Jersey's most pressing civic information needs, inviting applicants to be creative and entrepreneurial. We also aimed to meet the directives of our enabling legislation and the intent of the State Legislature. Above all, our goal was to make sure our guidelines fit the needs of the entire state.

The virtual listening tour touched more than 400 people across the state and was made possible through the help of an outreach consultant retained by support from Free Press, through a grant received from Democracy Fund. This process included a statewide survey that garnered 188 responses and 30 virtual listening sessions that reached every county in New Jersey.

The board wanted to make sure young people were a key part of our outreach program. We hosted a special statewide youth outreach session, which was co-moderated by two high school students.

These sessions and the survey played an important role in shaping our grant guidelines by providing key insights and comments. We learned a lot about the civic information landscape of New Jersey that supplemented previous research efforts across the state. The comments we received covered a wide range of topics, including public health, urban areas, rural communities, news deserts and local government information. Our participants included educators, community advocates, nonprofit leaders, students, local government officials and media leaders.

“Public money should be targeting the most unlikely people to develop and fund the news on their own,” one participant said.

“People need more trust in their news sources and the only way to do that is for those outlets to present information in an unbiased, educated, and unproblematic manner,” another participant shared.

The Consortium would like to thank everyone who participated in these sessions. We could not have developed our grant guidelines without them. We also would like to extend a special thanks to our youth session co-facilitators, Mira Mehta of Westfield High School and Justin Zimmerman of the Union County Academy of Information Technology in Scotch Plains, along with their school leaders, Margaret Dolan, the recently retired Westfield Superintendent of Schools; Mary Asfendis, the principal of Westfield High School; Gwendolyn Ryan, Union County Vo-Tech Superintendent of Schools; and Colleen Gialanella, principal of the Union County Academy of Information Technology.

We used the information gathered from these sessions to develop our three core areas for the inaugural round of grants. Those areas are:

- Community health projects, including those related to the Covid-19 pandemic and its after effects.
- Local government transparency and information
- Growing the journalism pipeline and training

We also invited projects across the realm of our portfolio and encouraged creativity from those looking to apply for grants. During the application process, the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State hosted three public information sessions and fielded numerous inquiries about the grant program.

To maximize our \$500,000 state appropriation, the board set a \$35,000 maximum for each grant. This allowed us to award up to 14 grants.

We received 74 grant applications from around the state, all of which were reviewed by our grants committee. Applications were judged based on the project intent, the goals of each project, and the budgets. We took care to ensure the entire state was represented, that all core grant areas were addressed, that news deserts were filled, and, in particular, that communities of color, immigrant communities and rural communities were represented.

The grants committee and board discussions were lively and intense and the decisions were tough as we had many good applications and a finite pool of funds. At the end of the process, we awarded 14 grants that we believe will address a wide range of local news and information needs in New Jersey.

Our inaugural recipients cover communities across our state. This class includes projects to address information needs of Spanish speaking farm workers in South Jersey, fill news deserts in Salem and

Warren Counties, develop journalism training programs for students, increase local government transparency, increase civic awareness for Trenton students, and document the work to solve water quality issues in Newark. Many projects are led by women and people of color, as well as by journalists, non-profit organizations and community leaders.

We are excited that a project in Old Bridge is an outgrowth of an organic community driven group and another project in Blairstown is community driven from the ground up, demonstrating that New Jersey residents are very interested in working together to address their news and information needs.

We are excited that we have programs that provide journalism training and civic education for youth. As an organization that consists of public research universities, we are committed to involving New Jersey's entire education community in our efforts. Growing New Jersey's journalism pipeline will help our state going forward.

We have encouraged many of those who did not receive grants in our first round to apply again. There were many unique and exciting projects we were unable to fund that will have a positive impact on our state. There indeed is a strong commitment to growing New Jersey's local news and information ecosystem and we look forward to nurturing that interest.

The inaugural grantees are:

- Beyond Expectations, with a grant of \$33,875.50, will continue its outreach work with young people in Burlington County by launching "be.tv eStudios," an initiative that provides students with the resources they need to better participate in immersive interactive learning.
- The Blairstown Enhancement Committee, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will address the loss of local-news outlets by launching the Greater Blairstown News Project. This effort will provide residents with vital and timely government announcements about public health and safety, and foster greater connection to and awareness of local issues across northwest New Jersey.
- The Bloomfield Information Project, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will launch a community-reporter corps pilot program that trains residents in news gathering, writing, and production and provides paid reporting assignments that prioritize the information needs of underserved populations in the surrounding community.
- Cosecha, with a grant of \$35,000.00, a New Jersey grassroots organization run by and for Latinx immigrants, will work with Rutgers University to establish Radio Popular, a twice-weekly Spanish-language internet-radio program for the state's Spanish-speaking immigrant community.
- The Conservatory of Music and Performing Arts Society, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will support Let My People Learn-HistorVic Education, a project that helps young people learn more about the workings of local governments and how policies and laws impact their communities.
- The weekly Hammonton Gazette, with a grant of \$34,765.00, will make its news coverage more representative of Hammonton's southern New Jersey community. The paper will offer news

articles in Spanish and initiate outreach to seasonal agricultural workers and more permanent members of the local Spanish-speaking community.

- If I Can, You Can Inc., with a grant of \$35,000.00, will help revitalize the online neighborhood news franchise TAPinto.net in Salem County, with the goal of sharing news articles across New Jersey towns to create a more sustainable information ecosystem.
- The Newark News and Story Collaborative, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will train community members to tell their stories and produce news that fills information gaps in local and national media.
- The Newark Water Coalition, with a grant of \$34,930.00, will create Newark Community Voices, a digital media and community organizing training program for Newark youth. The program will produce and distribute multimedia health and environment stories that center Newark community information needs.
- The Facebook group Old Bridge NJ Residents, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will create a comprehensive and searchable archive of local government activity spanning more than two decades. The tool will be made available to area residents and journalists.
- The Paterson Alliance, with a grant of \$33,000.00, will manage the library-based Paterson Information Hub to provide the community with training in citizen journalism and news production technology. The alliance will also convene local events to assess community information needs.
- The collaborative Stories of Atlantic City, with a grant of \$34,982.46, will pilot an initiative to train community members to serve as reporters covering the local city council and planning and education board hearings. The initiative will develop new ways to engage community members in the decision-making processes that impact their lives.
- The hyperlocal Trenton Journal, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will train more local contributors to increase the frequency of its editorial output and help change the narrative about what it's like to live in Trenton.
- Princeton-based health information website VaccinateNJ.com, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will add more features to its online resource to help residents statewide — including native Spanish speakers and others in underserved communities — get real-time information about vaccination appointment locations and vaccine availability.

LESSONS LEARNED

Creating a statewide non-profit organization is an educational process as much as it is a management process. We have learned a lot as we have implemented the enabling legislation and created the Consortium. These lessons have given us perspectives that have shaped our work over the past year and going forward.

Shortly after our first board meeting, we shifted our operation entirely online as everything changed with COVID-19 causing the world to shut down. We learned clearly as a state and nation that public

health and public information are closely linked. Accordingly, we made public health related projects one of the three core areas for our first round of grants.

The university partnership aspect of the Consortium was also uncharted territory. We learned that we need to encourage our potential grantees to have conversations early with potential university partners to establish relationships. The board played a big role in matching universities with grantees who needed partners, and that will have to be a key consideration of our process going forward. Our member universities were also navigating this process for the first time, and we learned quite a bit about the kind of paperwork that will be required for future grants that directly involve them, particularly in those instances where the university acts as fiscal sponsor. These issues have delayed us in sending five of the grant checks. The need for fiscal sponsorship support for these grantees was unexpected, and the board is looking into how it may be able to better connect future grantees with financial infrastructure.

Additionally, a handful of our grantees in the first round intended to launch entirely new news organizations. Starting a new business is not an easy task and we learned that these grantees need additional support beyond funding to be successful.

LOOKING FORWARD

Building on the enthusiasm across the state following the first round of grant funding this spring, and with the FY22 State appropriation of \$1 million, we look forward to starting a second round of grants. Our target is to issue a call for applications at the beginning of October, with a goal of awarding a new round of grants in December/January.

As we plan for the new round, we also will revisit the three core focus areas we used in the first round and determine if they should be changed, updated or replaced. We consider the focus areas a continual work in progress and know that as New Jersey's information needs evolve, our grant focus areas should adapt.

We have scheduled the three statutorily required annual public hearings for North, Central and South Jersey in September. We view these hearings as an important part of our work, assisting us in reviewing our grant guidelines and making any other changes as needed to our processes. While the overall thrust of our work remains the same, the details of what is needed to grow local news and information will evolve.

We will conduct the 2021 public hearings virtually for the ease of people across the state and in recognition of potential public health issues due to COVID-19. We also will continue outreach to various groups around the state to promote the next round of grants, with a focus on communities from which we did not receive applications during the first round.

Prior to the call for applications, we will determine the amount of money to allocate in the second round and consider if we should move to a rolling grant program to increase our flexibility and responsiveness. We intend to widen geographic and demographic representation in future rounds of grant applications, and are planning to expand outreach to communities statewide to achieve this goal.

Our goal is to use the \$1 million state appropriation for grants and other services for our grant recipients, and to secure external financial support for core administrative functions. We view our role as stewards of taxpayer funds, using the grants to invest in the growth of civic information across New Jersey.

Our work with grant recipients does not end when we send a check. We intend to create a cohort program where we will offer grant recipients access to training, experts, and information to help grow their programs. Awarding a grant does not mean success for a program; a cohort approach will enable us to utilize the entire local news and information ecosystem to assist grantees. We also will continue working with faculty and staff of our member universities to engage them in the efforts of the Consortium and to identify new avenues of research and service to grantees.

We are cognizant of the need to engage in continuous outreach across the state about the Consortium, our grant program, and the general issues of local news and information. We will continue to partner with other groups focused on improving the New Jersey news ecosystem. Our host university, Montclair State—through the Center for Cooperative Media—is also highly engaged on these issues.

We are excited about the future of the Consortium. Our inaugural grant recipients have programs that we believe will positively impact the state. We look forward to seeing this impact and to helping them succeed. We also are excited about the level of interest in the Consortium, as evidenced by the number of applications we received in the first round and the continued interest in our organization.

The Consortium is off to a good start, but much remains to be done to address the news and information gaps in our state. We are confident and optimistic about our efforts and where we are headed.

Appendix A

New Jersey Civic Information Consortium
Initial Board and Classes
June 17, 2021

Appointee and [Appointing Authority]	Director Class	Initial Term (years)
Kevin Rooney [Assembly Minority Leader]	2021	1
Robin Wilson-Glover [Consortium Board (Media)]	2021	1
Christopher Daggett [Montclair State University]	2021	1
Dena Mattola-Jaborska [Governor 1]	2022	2
Charles Powers [Senate President]	2022	2
Carl Hausman [Rowan University]	2022	2
Marisol Mendez Peron [Consortium Board (Technology)]	2022	2
Michael Rispoli [Governor 2]	2023	3
John Celock [Senate Minority Leader]	2023	3
Kevin Belfield [New Jersey Institute of Technology]	2023	3
Therese Edwards [Consortium Board (Pubic)]	2023	3
Molly de Aguiar [Assembly Speaker]	2024	4
Maurice Hall [The College of New Jersey]	2024	4
Juan Gonzalez [Rutgers University]	2024	4
Maria Lopez-Nunez [Consortium Board (Public)]	2024	4

Appendix B

Appendix B

New Jersey Civic Information Consortium Board of Directors Officers, 2021 February 12, 2021

Chairperson: Christopher J. Daggett
Vice Chairperson: Maurice Hall
Secretary: John Celock
Treasurer: Molly de Aguiar

Appendix C

Appendix C



State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

P.O. Box 542

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0542

TELEPHONE: (609) 292-4310

FAX: (609) 292-7225

E-mail: oshe@oshe.nj.gov

PHILIP D. MURPHY
GOVERNOR

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
LT. GOVERNOR

BRIAN K. BRIDGES, PH.D.
ACTING SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

GRANT AGREEMENT
BETWEEN

THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
AND
THE NEW JERSEY CIVIC INFORMATION CONSORTIUM

This Grant Agreement (Agreement) is entered into by and between the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), a public agency of the State of New Jersey and The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium (the "Grantee"), a non-profit entity established pursuant to P.L. 2018, 111 C.18A:64-94 (the "NJCIC Law") with the intent to provide grants that support news and information that benefit the State's civic life and meet the evolving information needs of New Jersey's underserved communities.

The purpose of the partnership between OSHE and the Grantee is to strengthen local news coverage, community information, civic technology and civic engagement across New Jersey. Pursuant to this Agreement, OSHE will provide funding to implement goals and strategies for capacity building and increasing enrollment, improving student completion, and reducing financial burdens on students.

I. GRANT AMOUNT

Based on the representations in Grantee's application and in this Agreement, OSHE awards Grantee a grant in an amount of \$500,000 (five hundred thousand dollars) (the "NJCIC Grant").

II. PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSIBILITY

A. Grantees shall use the funds provided pursuant to this Agreement to support activities related to promoting the NJCIC and/or advance research and innovation in the field of media and technology to better inform the State's communities to benefit the State's civic life and evolving information needs. The members of the Consortium are five

State public institutions (The College of New Jersey, Montclair State University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rowan University, and Rutgers, the State University).

- B. Grantee shall use the funds provided pursuant to this memorandum to implement a comprehensive program between November 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 in compliance with the requirements of the NJCIC Law.
- B. All monies expended pursuant to paragraph A of this section must be spent or encumbered by June 30, 2021.
- C. The Grantee agrees to attend and participate in activities that may be convened by OSHE in furtherance of the NJCIC. The activities may include, but are not limited to: in-person periodic meetings, webinars, and collaborative events with multiple institutions to examine best practices that can be utilized for the sustainability of the NJCIC program.
- D. Compliance with Existing Laws
Grantee, agrees to comply with all federal, state, and municipal laws, rules, and regulations in the performance of this Agreement that are generally applicable to the activities in which the Grantee is engaged in the performance of said contracts. These laws and regulations include, but are not limited to the NJCIC Law.
- E. Dissemination
 - 1. All public events, activities, curricular materials, press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations, and other documents produced with funds provided pursuant to this agreement must state clearly that the project partnership is administered by OSHE and that OSHE is a partner in the project partnership. The only official name to be used in describing the overall program is "The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium" and no other institutional-specific branded name shall be used in official communication about the grant.
 - 2. Content of materials. Subject to any specific requirements that apply to the grant, the Grantee may decide the format and content of project materials that it publishes or arranges to have published.
- E. Reporting
 - 1. The Grantee shall provide interim and final reports to OSHE regarding the completion of their programmatic responsibilities as detailed in paragraphs A and B, above.

2. The interim report must show actual grant related expenditures and progress on activities through February 26, 2021 and is due no later than March 15, 2021. The final report is due by August 1, 2021, and will provide information for entire term of this Agreement. The final report must show actual grant related expenditures and progress on activities through June 30, 2021. A template will be provided for these reports.
3. Other requests for information may be made to the Grantee as needed for state reporting requirements.
4. The Grantee shall meet upon request with OSHE to discuss strategies for effectively achieving the programmatic objectives.

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

During the term of the Grantee's award from OSHE, the Grantee must not engage in any work, paid or unpaid, that creates an actual or potential conflict of interest with the State. Such work shall include, but is not limited to, directly or indirectly competing with the State in any way, or acting as an officer, director, employee, consultant, stockholder, volunteer, lender, or agent of any business enterprise of the same nature as, or which is in direct competition with, the business in which the State is now engaged or in which the State becomes engaged during the term of Grantee's award from the State, as may be determined by the State in its sole discretion. If the State believes such a conflict exists during the term of this Agreement, the State may ask the Grantee to choose to discontinue the other work or resign employment with the State.

IV. TERM

The term of this Agreement shall be from November 1, 2020 to August 1, 2021, subject to state appropriations.

V. BUDGET

- A. The total NCIC grant amount to be made available by OSHE to Grantee under this Agreement is \$500,000. The Grantee must submit the budget for grant activities for State fiscal year 2021 utilizing the provided template and have the budget approved by the State prior to expending funds. Any funds received under this grant will not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted for programs or service of the same or similar type.

- B. The Grantee may transfer amounts up to \$10,000 among its administrative budget line items as required to carry out the purposes of the grant. Transfers exceeding \$10,000 towards administrative budget line items require prior approval from OSHE and will be treated as a modification to this Agreement. Any request for a budget modification should be in writing and should include a revised budget.

C. Program Income

Program income shall be defined as gross income earned by Grantee utilizing funds awarded pursuant to this Agreement. Such earnings include, but will not be limited to, income from service fees, sale of commodities, usage or rental fees, and royalties on patents and copyrights.

1. Interest earned of \$250 or more in a fiscal year on advance payments of grant funds shall be reported in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Agreement.
2. Unless the Agreement provides otherwise, the Grantee shall have no obligation to OSHE with respect to royalties received as a result of copyrights or patents produced under the Agreement.
3. All other program income earned during the Agreement period shall be added by Grantee to funds received from OSHE under the Agreement and used by Grantee to further eligible program objectives as set forth in the Agreement and the NJCIC Law, if possible; otherwise, said funds are to be returned to OSHE.

D. Grantee's Monitoring of Program Performance

1. Grantee shall constantly monitor the performance of grant-supported activities to assure that time schedules are met, projected time-bound objectives are accomplished, and other performance goals are achieved pursuant to the terms of this Agreement.
2. Grantee shall inform OSHE in writing of the following types of conditions which affect program objectives and performance as soon as they become known:
 - a. Problems, delays, loss of personnel, including previously identified sub-grantees, sub-consultants, or adverse conditions which will materially affect the ability to attain project objectives, prevent the meeting of time schedules and goals, or preclude the attainment of project activities by established time periods. This disclosure shall be accompanied by a statement of the action taken, or contemplated, and any requests for OSHE assistance needed to resolve the situation.

- b. Favorable developments or events which enable meeting time schedules and goals sooner than anticipated or that result in the expansion of activities beyond those originally projected.
- 3. OSHE may, at its discretion, make site visits to:
 - a. Review program accomplishments and management control systems.
 - b. Provide technical assistance as may be required.
 - c. Perform fiscal reviews to ensure grant funds are being properly expended in a timely manner.

VI. RECORDKEEPING

The Grantee will maintain records that adequately identify the source and application of funds, the services rendered, and the individuals served. All source documents must be retained in compliance with the retention and access requirements for records as provided under State statute. The Grantee will provide source documents to OSHE within five (5) working days of request.

Source documents include both program and accounting records. The Grantee's employees working directly on the "New Jersey Civic Information Consortium" grant will maintain records of time and effort. Program source documents include but are not limited to institutional plans and reports, student contact and enrollment forms; event/session/seminar sign-in sheets; course attendance records; program schedules; event evaluation forms; and diagnostic instruments and results. Accounting source documents include, but are not limited to, paid bills, cancelled checks, payrolls, and time and attendance records.

VII. RECORD RETENTION

Except as otherwise provided, all financial and programmatic records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to the Agreement shall be retained by the Grantee in accordance with applicable State record retention law. Prior to the end of the applicable retention period, OSHE will notify the Grantee if accounting and financial records relating to grant activities need to be maintained beyond legal requirements, and upon such notice, the Grantee will transfer the requested records to OSHE.

VIII. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

Grantee hereby assures OSHE that:

- A. The activities and services to be performed under the Agreement will be administered by or under the supervision of the Grantee.
- B. Any funds received under the Agreement shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted for programs or services of the same type.
- C. The project shall be operated in compliance with all applicable New Jersey State Laws and the NJCIC Law.
- D. Grantee will submit project reports as specified in the Agreement, including information relating to the achievement of project objectives. Grantee will keep project records and afford access thereto as OSHE may find necessary to assure correctness and verification of the reports.
- E. This Section shall survive termination of this Agreement.

IX. RELEASE OF GRANT FUNDS

- A. Upon the execution of the Agreement by the parties, an initial payment of fifty percent (50%) of the total funds awarded under this Agreement shall be made by OSHE to the Grantee.
- B. A second payment of fifty percent (50%) of the total funds awarded under this Agreement shall be made by OSHE to the Grantee no later than March 15, 2021, but only subsequent to the review and approval of the second quarter report by OSHE as per Section II, paragraph E of this Agreement.
- C. At OSHE's discretion, a sum, within the limits described in the Agreement, may be retained from contract payments, pending receipt of the final reports described in the Agreement.

X. NO THIRD PARTY BENEFICIARY

Nothing in this Agreement is intended or may be deemed to create or confer any right, action, or benefit in, to, or on the part of any person not a party to this Agreement.

XI. NO ASSIGNMENT

Grantee shall not assign or transfer any interest in this Agreement.

XII. TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION

- A. If the Grantee fails to comply with the Agreement award stipulations, standards, or conditions, and such failure has continued after written notice by OSHE, with such notice detailing Grantee's noncompliance and providing the Grantee with an opportunity to cure said noncompliance, OSHE may upon thirty (30) days written notice to Grantee, temporarily suspend the Agreement and withhold further payments;

prohibit Grantee from incurring additional obligations of the Agreement funds pending corrective action by Grantee; or decide to terminate the grant in accordance with paragraph C below. Prior to the effective date of any such action OSHE shall provide Grantee with the opportunity to provide a written response to such action. OSHE shall allow all necessary and proper costs which the Grantee could not reasonably avoid during the period of suspension provided that they meet the provisions of OMB Super Circular.

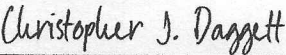
- B. OSHE may terminate the Agreement, in whole or in part, upon thirty (30) days written notice, whenever it is determined that Grantee has failed to comply with award stipulations, standards, or conditions, and has not cured the noncompliance. OSHE shall promptly notify Grantee, in writing, of the determination and the reasons for the termination together with the effective date and shall provide Grantee with an opportunity to respond to such reasons.
- C. The parties may terminate the Agreement in whole, or in part, when both parties agree to do so in writing. The parties shall agree upon the termination conditions including the effective date and in case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. Grantee shall not incur new obligations for the terminated portion after the effective date, and shall cancel any outstanding obligations that are cancellable.

XIII. AMENDMENT

No amendment to this Agreement shall be effective unless in writing and signed by both parties.

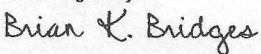
ON BEHALF OF THE NEW JERSEY CIVIC INFORMATION CONSORTIUM

Christopher J. Daggett, Board Member

DocuSigned by:

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Signature Date 1/15/2021

ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr. Brian K. Bridges, Acting Secretary of Higher Education

DocuSigned by:

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Signature Date 1/18/2021

Appendix D

EXECUTION VERSION

Appendix D

Bylaws of
THE NEW JERSEY CIVIC INFORMATION CONSORTIUM
A New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation

EXECUTION VERSION

ARTICLE 1 NAME

Section 1.1 Corporate Name

The name of this corporation is the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium (the “Consortium”).

ARTICLE 2 OFFICES

Section 2.1 Office(s)

The principal office for the transaction of the business of the Consortium may be established at any place or places within the State of New Jersey by resolution of the Board. The Board also may at any time establish branch or subordinate offices at any place or places where the Consortium is qualified to transact business.

ARTICLE 3 MEMBERS

Section 3.1 Member Universities

The members of the Consortium are The College of New Jersey, Montclair State University, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rowan University, and Rutgers, The State University.

ARTICLE 4 PURPOSES

Section 4.1 General Purpose

The Consortium is organized under P.L. 2018, c.111, and the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act as a supporting organization exclusively for the benefit of, to perform the functions of, or to carry out the purposes of the member universities. The purpose of the Consortium is to advance research and innovation in the field of media and technology to benefit the State’s civic life and evolving information needs by (i) leveraging the resources, knowledge, and expertise of its member universities to bolster public-interest journalism, civic information, and media innovation; and (ii) providing grants and support to collaborations between member universities and local media organizations that support news and information to benefit the State’s civic life and meet the evolving information needs of New Jersey’s underserved communities.

ARTICLE 5 LIMITATIONS

Section 5.1 Political Activities

The Consortium has been formed under P.L. 2018, c.111, and the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act for the charitable purposes described in Article 4, and it shall be nonprofit and nonpartisan. No substantial part of the activities of the Consortium shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Consortium shall not participate in or intervene in any political campaign (including the publishing or distribution of statements) on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

Section 5.2 Prohibited Activities

The Consortium shall not, except in any insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purpose described in Article 4.

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ARTICLE 6 DEDICATION OF ASSETS

Section 6.1 Property Dedicated to Nonprofit Purposes

The property of the Consortium is irrevocably dedicated to charitable purposes. No part of the net income or assets of the Consortium shall ever inure to the benefit of any of its Directors or Officers, or to the benefit of any private person, except that the Consortium is authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article 4 hereof.

Section 6.2 Distribution of Assets Upon Dissolution

Upon the dissolution or winding up of the Consortium, its assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of all debts and liabilities of the Consortium shall be distributed to such organization(s) organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes, as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or to the New Jersey state government, for a public purpose, as the Board of Directors shall determine.

ARTICLE 7 DIRECTORS

Section 7.1 Number

The authorized number of directors of the Consortium (“Directors”) shall be 15, as set forth in P.L. 2018, c.111.

Section 7.2 Qualification and Term

The Directors shall be appointed based on the qualifications set forth in P.L. 2018, c.111 and the Board shall make every effort to strive for diversity and balance of representation according to gender, race, ethnicity, and geography within any limits allowed under law. No more than two of the four Directors appointed by the Board shall be of the same political party. Each Director shall serve a term of four years, except that the Director representing the New Jersey media sector shall serve an initial term of one year and the Director representing the New Jersey technology sector shall serve an initial term of two years. No board member shall serve more than two four-year terms.

Section 7.3 Corporate Powers Exercised by Board

Subject to the provisions of P.L. 2018, c.111, the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act, and any other applicable laws, the business and affairs of the Consortium shall be managed, and all corporate powers shall be exercised, by or under the direction of the board of Directors (the “Board”). The Board may delegate the management of the activities of the Consortium to any person or persons, management company or committee however composed, provided that the activities and affairs of the Consortium shall be managed and all corporate powers shall be exercised under the ultimate direction of the Board.

Section 7.4 Resignation and Other Vacancies

Any Director may resign by delivering a written resignation to the Chairman and Secretary of the Consortium. The Chairman or Secretary of the Consortium shall inform the appointing authority of the resignation and request a new appointment. All vacancies caused by the death, resignation or removal of a Director shall be filled by the original appointment authority, who shall be notified by the Chairman or Secretary of the Consortium, and any such directors appointed to fill such vacancies shall serve on the Board only for the unexpired term. The Chairman or Secretary of the Consortium shall notify the original appointment authority within ten days of being notified of the vacancy. All such appointments to fill in vacancies shall be made by the appointment authority in a timely fashion. .

7.4.1 Removal

The Board may by resolution of a majority of the Board declare vacant the office of a Director who has been declared of unsound mind by an order of court, or convicted of a felony, or found by final

EXECUTION VERSION

order or judgment of any court to have breached a duty under the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Section 7.5 Regular Meetings

Each year, the Board shall hold at least one meeting, at a time and place fixed by the Board, for the purposes of election of Directors, appointment of Officers, review and approval of the corporate budget and transaction of other business. This meeting is sometimes referred to in these Bylaws as the “annual meeting.” Other regular meetings of the Board may be held at such time and place as the Board may fix from time to time by resolution.

Section 7.6 Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board for any purpose may be called at any time by the Chairperson, or the Vice Chairperson (if any), or the Secretary, or any two Directors.

Section 7.7 Notice of Meetings

7.7.1 Manner of Giving

Except when the time and place of a regular meeting is set by the Board by resolution in advance (as permitted by Section 7.5), notice of the time and place of all regular and special meetings shall be given to each Director by one of the following methods:

- (a) Personal delivery of oral or written notice;
- (b) First-class mail, postage paid;
- (c) Telephone, including a voice messaging system or other system or technology designed to record and communicate messages; or
- (d) Facsimile, electronic mail (“e-mail”) or other means of electronic transmission if the recipient has consented to accept notices in this manner.

All such notices shall be given or sent to the Director’s address, phone number, facsimile number or e-mail address as shown on the records of the Consortium. Any oral notice given personally or by telephone may be communicated directly to the Director or to a person who would reasonably be expected to promptly communicate such notice to the Director. Notice of regular meetings may be given in the form of a calendar or schedule that sets forth the date, time and place of more than one regular meeting.

7.7.2 Time Requirements

Notices sent by first-class mail shall be deposited into a United States mail box at least four days before the time set for the meeting. Notices given by personal delivery, telephone, voice messaging system or other system or technology designed to record and communicate messages, facsimile, e-mail or other electronic transmission shall be delivered at least forty-eight hours before the time set for the meeting.

7.7.3 Notice Contents

The notice shall state the time and place for the meeting, except that if the meeting is scheduled to be held at the principal office of the Consortium, the notice shall be valid even if no place is specified. The notice need not specify the purpose of the meeting unless required to elsewhere in these Bylaws.

Section 7.8 Place of Board Meetings

Regular and special meetings of the Board may be held at any place within the state that has been designated in the notice of the meeting, or, if not stated in the notice or, if there is no notice, designated by resolution of the Board. If the place of a regular or special meeting is not designated

EXECUTION VERSION

in the notice or fixed by a resolution of the Board, it shall be held at the principal office of the Consortium.

7.8.1 Meetings by Telephone or Similar Communication Equipment

Any meeting may be held by conference telephone or other communications equipment as long as all Directors participating in the meeting can communicate with one another. All such Directors shall be deemed to be present in person at such meeting.

Section 7.9 Quorum and Action of the Board

7.9.1 Quorum

A majority of Directors then in office (but no fewer than two Directors or one-third of the entire Board, whichever is greater) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except to adjourn as provided in Section 7.11.

7.9.2 Minimum Vote Requirements for Valid Board Action

Every act taken or decision made by a vote of the majority of the Directors present at a meeting duly held at which a quorum is present is the act of the Board, unless a greater number is expressly required by P.L. 2018, c.111, the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act or these Bylaws. A meeting at which a quorum is initially present may continue to transact business, notwithstanding the withdrawal of Directors from the meeting, if any action taken is approved by at least a majority of the required quorum for that meeting.

7.9.3 When a Greater Vote Is Required for Valid Board Action

The following actions shall require a vote by a majority of all Directors then in office in order to be effective:

- (a) The annual budget of the Consortium;
- (b) Approval of contracts or transactions in which a Director has a direct or indirect material financial interest as described in Section 10.1 (provided that the vote of any interested Director(s) is not counted);
- (c) Creation of, and appointment to, Committees (but not advisory committees) as described in Section 8.1;
- (d) The dissolution of the Consortium; and
- (e) Removal of a Director as described in Section 7.4.1.

Section 7.10 Waiver of Notice

The transactions of any meeting of the Board, however called and noticed or wherever held, shall be as valid as though taken at a meeting duly held after regular call and notice, if (i) a quorum is present, and (ii) either before or after the meeting, each of the Directors who is not present at the meeting signs a written waiver of notice, a consent to holding the meeting, or an approval of the minutes. The waiver of notice or consent does not need to specify the purpose of the meeting. All waivers, consents, and approvals shall be filed with the corporate records or made a part of the minutes of the meeting. Also, notice of a meeting is not required to be given to any Director who attends the meeting without protesting before or at its commencement about the lack of adequate notice. Directors can protest the lack of notice only by presenting a written protest to the Secretary either in person, by first-class mail addressed to the Secretary at the principal office of the Consortium as contained on the records of the Consortium as of the date of the protest, or by facsimile addressed to the facsimile number of the Consortium as contained on the records of the Consortium as of the date of the protest.

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- Section 7.11 Adjournment
A majority of the Directors present, whether or not constituting a quorum, may adjourn any meeting to another time and place.
- Section 7.12 Notice of Adjournment
Notice of the time and place of holding an adjourned meeting need not be given, unless the meeting is adjourned for more than twenty-four hours, in which case personal notice of the time and place shall be given before the time of the adjourned meeting to the Directors who were not present at the time of the adjournment.
- Section 7.13 Conduct of Meetings
Meetings of the Board shall be presided over by the Chairperson, or, if there is no Chairperson or the Chairperson is absent, the Vice Chairperson (if any) or, in the absence of each of these persons, by a chairperson of the meeting, chosen by a majority of the Directors present at the meeting. The Secretary shall act as secretary of all meetings of the Board, provided that, if the Secretary is absent, the presiding officer shall appoint another person to act as secretary of the meeting. Meetings shall be governed by rules of procedure as may be determined by the Board from time to time, insofar as such rules are not inconsistent with or in conflict with these Bylaws, with P.L. 2018, c.111, or with any provisions of law applicable to the Consortium.
- Section 7.14 Action Without Meeting
Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Board may be taken without a meeting, if all members of the Board, individually or collectively, consent in writing to the action. For the purposes of this Section 7.14 only, “the Board” shall not include any interested Director. Such written consent shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote of the Board taken at a meeting. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board.
- Written consent may be transmitted by first-class mail, messenger, courier, facsimile, e-mail or any other reasonable method satisfactory to the Chairperson.
- Section 7.15 Fees and Compensation of Directors
The Consortium shall not pay any compensation to Directors for services rendered to the Consortium as Directors, except that Directors may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties to the Consortium, in reasonable amounts as approved by the Board and within the limits of funds available to the Board.
- Section 7.16 Non-Liability of Directors
The Directors shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or other obligations of the Consortium.

ARTICLE 8 COMMITTEES

- Section 8.1 Committees of Directors
The Board may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Directors then in office, create one or more Board Committees (“Committees”), each consisting of 2 or more Directors, to serve at the discretion of the Board.
- Section 8.2 Meetings and Action of Board Committees
Meetings and action of Committees shall be governed by, and held and taken in accordance with, the provisions of Article 7 concerning meetings of Directors. Minutes shall be kept of each meeting of any Committee and shall be filed with the corporate records. The Committee shall report to the Board from time to time as the Board may require. The Board may adopt rules for the governance of any Committee not inconsistent with the provisions by these Bylaws. In the absence of rules adopted by the Board, the Committee may adopt such rules.

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Section 8.3 Quorum Rules for Board Committees

A majority of the Committee members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Committee business. A meeting at which a quorum is initially present may continue to transact business, notwithstanding the withdrawal of Committee members, if any action taken is approved by at least a majority of the required quorum for that meeting.

Section 8.4 Revocation of Delegated Authority

The Board may, at any time, revoke or modify any or all of the authority that the Board has delegated to a Committee, increase or decrease (but not below 2) the number of members of a Committee, and fill vacancies in a Committee from the members of the Board.

Section 8.5 Advisory Committees

The Board may create one or more advisory committees to serve at the pleasure of the Board. Appointments to such advisory committees need not, but may, be Directors. The Board shall appoint and discharge advisory committee members. All actions and recommendations of an advisory committee shall require ratification by the Board before being given effect.

Section 8.6 Powers of the Board

Subject to P.L. 2018, c.111 and Article 3 hereof, the Board, shall, amongst other things, have the power to decide the timing of grants, the manner of making grants, and the selection of grant recipients by the Consortium, and in otherwise directing the use of the income or assets of the Consortium.

ARTICLE 9 OFFICERS

Section 9.1 Officers

The officers of the Consortium (“Officers”) shall be a Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Other than the Chairperson, these persons may, but need not be, selected from among the Directors. The Board shall have the power to designate additional Officers, including a Vice Chairperson, who also need not be Directors, with such duties, powers, titles and privileges as the Board may fix. Any number of offices may be held by the same person, except that the Secretary and the Treasurer may not serve concurrently as Chairperson.

Section 9.2 Election of Officers

The Officers shall be elected by the Board at the annual meeting of the Consortium for a term of one year, and each shall serve at the discretion of the Board until his or her successor shall be elected, or his or her earlier resignation or removal. Officers may be elected for unlimited consecutive terms.

Section 9.3 Removal of Officers

Subject to the rights, if any, of an Officer under any contract of employment, any Officer may be removed, with or without cause, (i) by the Board, at any regular or special meeting of the Board, or at the annual meeting of the Consortium, or (ii) by an Officer on whom such power of removal may be conferred by the Board.

Section 9.4 Resignation of Officers

Any Officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Consortium. Any resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of that notice or at any later time specified in that notice; and, unless otherwise specified in that notice, the acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Any resignation is without prejudice to the rights, if any of the Consortium under any contract to which the Officer is a party.

Section 9.5 Vacancies in Offices

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause shall be filled in the manner prescribed in these Bylaws for regular appointments to that office,

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provided that such vacancies shall be filled as they occur and not on an annual basis. In the event of a vacancy in any office, such vacancy shall be filled temporarily by appointment by the Chairperson, and the appointee shall remain in office for sixty days, or until the next regular meeting of the Board, whichever comes first. Thereafter, the position can be filled only by action of the Board.

Section 9.6 Responsibilities of Officers

9.6.1 Chairperson of the Board

The chairperson of the Board (the “Chairperson”), if any, shall be a Director and shall preside at meetings of the Board and exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may from time to time be assigned to him by the Board or prescribed by these Bylaws.

9.6.2 Vice Chairperson

The vice chairperson of the Consortium (the “Vice Chairperson”) shall, in the absence or disability of the Chairperson, perform all the duties of the Chairperson and, when so acting, have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon, the Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board.

9.6.3 Secretary

The secretary of the Consortium (the “Secretary”) shall attend to the following:

- (a) Bylaws - The Secretary shall certify and keep or cause to be kept at the principal office of the Consortium the original or a copy of these Bylaws as amended to date.
- (b) Minute Book - The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a minute book as described in Section 12.1.
- (c) Notices - The Secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the Board in accordance with these Bylaws.
- (d) Corporate Records - Upon request, the Secretary shall exhibit or cause to be exhibited at all reasonable times to any Director, or to his or her agent or attorney, these Bylaws and the minute book.

9.6.4 Treasurer

The treasurer of the Consortium (the “Treasurer”) shall attend to the following:

- (a) Books of Account - The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct books and records of accounts of the properties and transactions of the Consortium, including accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains, losses, capital, retained earnings, and other matters customarily included in financial statements. The books of account shall be open to inspection by any Director at all reasonable times.
- (b) Financial Reports - The Treasurer shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, and certify, or cause to be certified, the financial statements to be included in any required reports.
- (c) Deposit and Disbursement of Money and Valuables - The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all money and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Consortium with such depositories as may be designated by the Board; shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the Consortium as may be ordered by the Board; shall render, or cause to be rendered to the Chairperson and Directors, whenever they request it, an account of all of his or her transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Consortium; and shall have other powers and perform such other duties incident to the office of Treasurer as may be prescribed by the Board or these Bylaws.

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9.6.5 Additional Officers

The Board may empower the Chairperson, or executive director, to appoint or remove such other Officers as the business of the Consortium may require, each of whom shall hold office for such period, have such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these Bylaws or as the Board from time to time may determine.

Section 9.7 Executive Director

As set forth in P.L. 2018, c.111, the Board shall appoint and employ an Executive Director who shall serve as the chief executive, administrative and operational officer of the Consortium. The Executive Director shall oversee all operations of the Consortium, work with the Board of Directors to fulfill the Board's goals and plans, oversee all staff, serve as a spokesperson for the Consortium and oversee grant making and fundraising, and fulfill any other requirements as set forth in P.L. 2018, c.111. The Executive Director shall attend all meetings of the Board and shall make a report to the Board at every Board meeting on his or her activities and the activities of the Consortium. The Executive Director shall determine Consortium staff liaisons for each Board Committee. The Executive Director shall maintain records of the Consortium in accordance with State law and these Bylaws and work with the Secretary to maintain records in the custody of the Secretary. The Executive Director shall work with the Chairperson, Treasurer and such other Committees as required on setting the annual budget. The Executive Director shall provide orientation to all new Board members. The Executive Director shall follow the guidelines set forth in P.L. 2018, c.111 for hiring of additional staff based on decisions made by the Board. The Executive Director shall look at ways to collaborate with the host university or other member university in order to share staffing, startup, operating, administrative and other costs, as noted in P.L. 2018, c.111.

ARTICLE 10 **TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN CONSORTIUM AND DIRECTORS OR OFFICERS**

Section 10.1 Transactions with Directors and Officers

10.1.1 Interested Party Transactions

Except as described in Section 10.1.2, the Consortium shall not be a party to any transaction with any corporation, firm, association, or other entity in which one or more Directors or Officers has a material financial interest.

10.1.2 Requirements to Authorize Interested Party Transactions

- (a) By the Board of Directors - The Consortium shall not be a party to any transaction described in Section 10.1.1 unless:
- i. the Consortium enters into the transaction for its own benefit;
 - ii. the transaction is fair and reasonable to the Consortium at the time the transaction is entered into;
 - iii. prior to consummating the transaction or any part thereof, the Board authorizes or approves the transaction in good faith, by a vote of a majority of Directors then in office (without counting the vote of the interested Director(s)), and with knowledge of the material facts concerning the transaction and the interested Director's(s') or Officer's(s') financial interest in the transaction;
 - iv. prior to authorizing or approving the transaction, the Board considers and in good faith determines after reasonable investigation that the Consortium could not obtain a more advantageous arrangement with reasonable effort under the circumstances; and

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- v. the minutes of the Board meeting at which such action was taken reflect that the Board considered and made the findings described in paragraphs (i) through (iv) of this Section 10.1.2(a).

(b) By a Committee - A Committee shall not approve a transaction described in 10.1.1 unless:

- i. the Committee approves the transaction in a manner consistent with the standards set forth in Section 10.1.2(a);
- ii. it was not reasonably practicable to obtain approval of the transaction by the Board prior to entering into the transaction; and
- iii. the Board, after determining in good faith that the two above-enumerated conditions of this Section 10.1.2(b) are satisfied, ratifies the transaction at its next meeting by a vote of the majority of the Directors in office without counting the vote of the interested Director or Directors.

10.1.3 Material Financial Interest

A Director or Officer shall not be deemed to have a “material financial interest” in a transaction if the contract or transaction is part of a public or charitable program of the Consortium, and it (1) is approved or authorized by the Consortium in good faith and without unjustified favoritism, and (2) results in a benefit to one or more Directors or their families only because they are in the class of persons intended to be benefited by the program.

Section 10.2 Loans to Directors and Officers

The Consortium may advance money to a Director or Officer for expenses reasonably anticipated to be incurred in the performance of duties of such Director or Officer, if in the absence of such advance, such Director or Officer would be entitled to be reimbursed for such expenses by the Consortium.

Section 10.3 Interlocking Directorates

No contract or other transaction between the Consortium and any corporation, firm or association of which one or more Directors are directors is either void or voidable because such Director(s) are present at the Board or Committee meeting that authorizes, approves or ratifies the contract or transaction, if (i) the material facts as to the transaction and as to such Director’s other directorship are fully disclosed or known to the Board or Committee, and the Board or Committee authorizes, approves or ratifies the contract or transaction in good faith by a vote sufficient without counting the vote of the common Director(s) (subject to the quorum provisions of Article 7); or if (ii) the contract or transaction is just and reasonable as to the Consortium at the time it is authorized, approved or ratified.

Section 10.4 Duty of Loyalty; Construction with Article 11

Nothing in this Article 10 shall be construed to derogate in any way from the absolute duty of loyalty that every Director and Officer owes to the Consortium. Furthermore, nothing in this Article 10 shall be construed to override or amend the provisions of Article 11. All conflicts between the two articles shall be resolved in favor of Article 11.

ARTICLE 11 INDEMNIFICATION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Section 11.1 Agent

For purpose of this Article 11, “Agent” means any person who is or was a Director, officer, employee, or other agent of the Consortium, or is or was serving at the request of the Consortium as a Director, officer, employee, or agent of the Consortium.

Section 11.2 Third Party Actions

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Any person who was, or is, or hereafter shall be an Agent of the Consortium shall be indemnified by the Consortium against his or her reasonable costs, disbursements and counsel fees (hereinafter “Expenses”) and liabilities paid or incurred in satisfaction of any judgment, fine, penalty or settlement (hereinafter “Liabilities”) in connection with any pending, threatened or completed civil, criminal, administrative or arbitral action, suit or proceeding, and any appeal therein or therefrom (hereinafter “Proceeding”) involving such Agent by reason of his or her being or having been an Agent, other than a Proceeding by or in the right of the Consortium if (a) such Agent acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Consortium; and (b) with respect to any criminal proceeding, such Agent had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any Proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction or upon plea of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not of itself create a presumption that such Agent did not meet the applicable standards of conduct set forth in this Section.

Section 11.3 Actions by or in the Right of the Consortium

The Consortium shall indemnify an Agent against his or her Expenses in connection with any Proceeding by or in the right of the Consortium to procure a judgment in its favor which involves the Agent by reason of his or her being or having been such Agent, if he or she acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Consortium. However, in such Proceeding no indemnification shall be provided in respect of any claim, issue or matter as to which such Agent shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct, unless and only to the extent that the court, administrative agency, or arbitrator in which such Proceeding was brought shall determine upon application that despite the adjudication of liability, but in view of all circumstances of the case, such Agent is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such Expenses as the court, administrative agency, or arbitrator shall deem proper.

Section 11.4 Mandatory Indemnification

The Consortium shall indemnify an Agent against Expenses to the extent that such Agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in any Proceeding referred to in Section 11.2 or Section 11.3 above in defense of any claim, issue or matter therein.

Section 11.5 Procedure for Effecting Indemnification

Any indemnifications under Section 11.2 or Section 11.3, unless ordered by a court, may be made by the Consortium only as authorized in a specific case upon a determination that indemnification is proper in the circumstances because the Agent met the applicable standard of conduct as set forth in Section 11.2 or Section 11.3. Such determination shall be made (a) by the Board of Directors, acting by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the Directors who were not parties to or otherwise involved in the Proceeding, or (b) if such a quorum is not obtainable or, even if obtainable, and such quorum of the Board of Directors by a majority vote of the disinterested Directors so directs, by independent legal counsel, in a written opinion, such counsel to be designated by the Board of Directors.

Section 11.6 Advancing Expenses

Expenses incurred by an Agent in connection with a Proceeding may be paid by the Consortium in advance of the final disposition of the Proceeding if authorized in the manner provided in Section 11.5 upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the Agent to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that he is entitled to be indemnified as provided in this Article.

Section 11.7 Scope of Bylaws

The indemnification provided by this Article 11, (a) shall apply to the Agent and the legal representative or representatives of the Agent and (b) shall not exclude any other rights to which an Agent may be entitled under the Bylaws of the Consortium or by agreement or otherwise.

Section 11.8 Insurance

The Board may adopt a resolution authorizing the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of any Agent, against any liability asserted against or incurred by any Agent in such capacity or

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arising out of the Agent's status as such, whether or not the Consortium would have the power to indemnify the Agent against the liability under the provisions of Article 11.

ARTICLE 12 CORPORATE RECORDS, REPORTS AND SEAL

Section 12.1 Minute Book

The Consortium shall keep a minute book in written form which shall contain a record of all actions by the Board or any committee including (i) the time, date and place of each meeting; (ii) whether a meeting is regular or special and, if special, how called; (iii) the manner of giving notice of each meeting and a copy thereof; (iv) the names of those present at each meeting of the Board or any Committee thereof; (v) the minutes of all meetings; (vi) any written waivers of notice, consents to the holding of a meeting or approvals of the minutes thereof; (vii) all written consents for action without a meeting; (viii) all protests concerning lack of notice; and (ix) formal dissents from Board actions.

Section 12.2 Books and Records of Account

The Consortium shall keep adequate and correct books and records of account. "Correct books and records" includes, but is not necessarily limited to: accounts of properties and transactions, its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains, and losses.

Section 12.3 Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

The Consortium shall keep at its principal office, the original or a copy of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws as amended to date.

12.3.1 Maintenance and Inspection of Federal Tax Exemption Application and Annual Information Returns

The Consortium shall at all times keep at its principal office, and/or electronically, a copy of its federal tax exemption application and, for three years from their date of filing, its annual information returns. These documents shall be open to public inspection and copying to the extent required by the Code.

Section 12.4 Annual Report; Statement of Certain Transactions

The Board shall cause an annual report to be sent to each Director within 120 days after the close of the Consortium's fiscal year containing the following information:

- (a) The assets and liabilities of the Consortium, including the trust funds, as of the end of the fiscal year;
- (b) The principal changes in assets and liabilities, including trust funds, during the fiscal year;
- (c) The revenue or receipts of the Consortium, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for this fiscal year;
- (d) The expenses or disbursements of the Consortium for both general and restricted purposes during the fiscal year;
- (e) A statement of any transaction (i) to which the Consortium was a party, (ii) which involved more than \$50,000 or which was one of a number of such transactions with the same person involving, in the aggregate, more than \$50,000, and (iii) in which either of the following interested persons had a direct or indirect material financial interest (a mere common directorship is not a financial interest):

- (1) Any Director or Officer of the Consortium;

The statement shall include: (i) a brief description of the transaction; (ii) the names of interested persons involved; (iii) their relationship to the Consortium; (iv) the nature of their

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interest in the transaction, and; (v) when practicable, the amount of that interest, provided that, in the case of a partnership in which such person is a partner, only the interest of the partnership need be stated.

- (f) A brief description of the amounts and circumstances of any indemnifications or advances paid during the fiscal year to any Officer or Director under Article 10 or Article 11.

Section 12.5 Annual Report to Governor, Legislature, Public Hearings

The Consortium shall annually report to the Governor and to the State Legislature on the activities of the Consortium and make the report available on the Consortium's website, and annually hold public hearings as required by P.L. 2018, c.111.

Section 12.6 Providing Information to Member Universities

For each taxable year, the Consortium shall provide each member university all necessary documents and information as required by Treasury Regulations section 1.509(a)-4(i).

Section 12.7 Directors' Rights of Inspection

Every Director shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect the books, records, documents of every kind, and physical properties of the Consortium. The inspection may be made in person or by the Director's agent or attorney. The right of inspection includes the right to copy and make extracts of documents.

ARTICLE 13 EXECUTION OF INSTRUMENTS, DEPOSITS AND FUNDS

Section 13.1 Execution of Instruments

The Board, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, may by resolution authorize any Officer or agent of the Consortium to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Consortium, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no Officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Consortium by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable monetarily for any purpose or in any amount.

Section 13.2 Checks and Notes

Except as otherwise specifically determined by resolution of the Board, or as otherwise required by law, checks, drafts, promissory notes, orders for the payment of money, and other evidence of indebtedness of the Consortium shall be signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by the Chairperson.

Section 13.3 Deposits

All funds of the Consortium shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Consortium in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board may select.

Section 13.4 Gifts

The Board may accept on behalf of the Consortium any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the charitable or public purposes of the Consortium.

ARTICLE 14 CONSTRUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

Unless the context requires otherwise, the general provisions, rules of construction, and definitions of P.L. 2018, c.111 and the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act shall govern the construction of these Bylaws. Without limiting the generality of the above, the masculine gender includes the feminine and neuter, the singular number includes the plural, the plural number includes the singular, and the term "person" includes both the Consortium and a natural person. All references

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to statutes, regulations and laws shall include any future statutes, regulations and laws that replace those referenced.

ARTICLE 15 AMENDMENTS

Section 15.1 Amendment by Directors

The Board may adopt, amend or repeal these Bylaws. Such power is subject to the following limitations:

- (a) Where any provision of these Bylaws requires the vote of a larger proportion of the Directors than otherwise is required by law, such provision may not be altered, amended or repealed except by the vote of such greater number.
- (b) No amendment may extend the term of a Director beyond that for which such Director was elected.
- (c) If bylaws are adopted, amended or repealed at a meeting of the Board, such action is authorized only at a duly called and held meeting for which written notice of such meeting, setting forth the proposed bylaw revisions with explanations therefor, is given in accordance with these Bylaws, unless such notice is waived in accordance with these Bylaws.

Appendix E

Appendix E

The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium

Conflict of Interest Policy
Adopted December 17, 2020

Article I.
Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium's (Consortium) interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the Consortium or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Article II.
Definitions

1. Interested Person

Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

2. Financial Interest

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Consortium has a transaction or arrangement,
- b. A compensation arrangement with the Consortium or with any entity or individual with which the Consortium has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Consortium is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Article III.
Procedures

1. Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

- a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/ she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the Consortium can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement isn't reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Consortium's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy

- a. If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

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- b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Article IV. Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b. The names of the persons who were present for discussion and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Article V. Compensation

- a. A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Consortium for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- b. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Consortium for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that members' compensation.
- c. No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Consortium, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

Article VI. Annual Statements

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with governing board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
- b. Has read and understands the policy,

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- c. Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- d. Understands the Consortium is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Article VII. Periodic Reviews

To ensure the Consortium operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and doesn't engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Consortium's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and don't result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or in an excess benefit transaction.

Article VIII. Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the Consortium may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

**THE NEW JERSEY CIVIC INFORMATION CONSORTIUM
ANNUAL STATEMENT REGARDING CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

I, _____, as a Director of the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium (the “Consortium”), affirm the following as of the date listed below:

1. I have received a copy of the Consortium’s Conflict of Interest Policy (the “Policy”), adopted by the Consortium pursuant to a resolution passed by the Board of Directors on May 20, 2021;
2. I have read the Policy, and I understand the provisions of the Policy;
3. I agree to comply with the Policy; and
4. I understand that the Consortium is a charitable organization and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities that accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

I understand that it is my duty, so long as I am a director, officer, committee member, or key employee of the Consortium, to comply with the Policy. I agree to annually review the Policy and sign a statement attesting to my review of, and compliance with, the terms of the Policy.

Signed:

Name:

Title(s): Director

Date: May 20, 2021

Appendix F

Groundbreaking New Jersey Initiative Announces Inaugural Series of Grants to Fund Local News and Information

MONTCLAIR, NJ — On Thursday, the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium announced its inaugural round of grants, a milestone in the years-long effort by residents, journalists and local organizations to invest public funding to foster more informed communities.

The Consortium has awarded 14 news-and-information initiatives with grants of up to \$35,000. Grant recipients come from every part of New Jersey; their work focuses on diversifying journalism, improving government transparency and providing community-health information, among other issues.

The Consortium represents a first-of-its-kind state model for public funding to support quality local journalism, promising media startups and other efforts meant to better inform people and promote civic engagement. The state of New Jersey provided \$500,000 in funding for FY2021.

In 2017, a broad coalition of universities, journalists, advocates, lawmakers and state residents began working together to create the Civic Information Consortium. With State support, the Consortium will continue to provide grants for local journalism and civic technology projects, with an emphasis on efforts designed to better serve low-income communities, communities of color, immigrants and rural residents.

“Thanks to the bipartisan foresight of the legislature and governor, New Jersey has set a national precedent for public funding to inform and engage local communities through the groundbreaking legislation that created the Consortium in 2018,” said Civic Information Board Chair **Christopher J. Daggett**. “Today’s announcement marks a new beginning for civic information in New Jersey. These grants are funding 14 innovative projects aimed at bolstering access to local news and information, increasing access to community health and training more people in journalism. We

received 74 applications this round, from almost every county in New Jersey, which shows a tremendous interest in the Consortium's mission. We look forward to working with these grantees and thank everyone who applied for this inaugural round of grants."

"The grants committee had a tough time picking grant recipients from the 74 applications we received," said Civic Information Board member **Therise Edwards**. "This is a testament to the creative and civic-minded spirit of groups across New Jersey. "The grants awarded in this round touch urban, suburban and rural New Jersey and a wide array of issues. The Consortium is thrilled that several of the grantees will be engaging student populations to become active advocates for their communities. We are excited to see the positive impact these programs will have for New Jersey residents."

The inaugural class of grantees:

- **Beyond Expectations** will continue its outreach work with young people in Burlington County by launching "be.tv eStudios," an initiative that provides students with the resources they need to better participate in immersive interactive learning.
- The **Blairstown Enhancement Committee** will address the loss of local-news outlets by launching the Greater Blairstown News Project. This effort will provide residents with vital and timely government announcements about public health and safety, and foster greater connection to and awareness of local issues across northwest New Jersey.
- The **Bloomfield Information Project** will launch a community-reporter corps pilot program that trains residents in news gathering, writing, and production and provides paid reporting assignments that prioritize the information needs of underserved populations in the surrounding community.
- **Cosecha**, a New Jersey grassroots organization run by and for Latinx immigrants, will work with Rutgers University to establish *Radio Popular*, a twice-weekly Spanish-language internet-radio program for the state's Spanish-speaking immigrant community.
- The **Conservatory of Music and Performing Arts Society** will support Let My People Learn-HistorVic Education, a project that helps young people learn more about the workings of local governments and how policies and laws impact their communities.
- The weekly **Hammonton Gazette** will make its news coverage more representative of Hammonton's southern New Jersey community. The paper will

offer news articles in Spanish and initiate outreach to seasonal agricultural workers and more permanent members of the local Spanish-speaking community.

- **If I Can, You Can Inc.** will help revitalize the online neighborhood news franchise TapInto.net in Salem County with the goal of sharing news articles across New Jersey towns to create a more sustainable information ecosystem.
- The **Newark News and Story Collaborative** will train community members to tell their stories and produce news that fills information gaps in local and national media.
- The **Newark Water Coalition** will create Newark Community Voices, a digital-media and community-organizing training program for Newark youth. The program will produce and distribute multimedia health and environment stories that center Newark community-information needs.
- The Facebook group **Old Bridge NJ Residents** will create a comprehensive and searchable archive of local-government activity spanning more than two decades. The tool will be made available to area residents and journalists.
- The **Paterson Alliance** will manage the library-based Paterson Information Hub to provide the community with training in citizen journalism and news-production technology. The alliance will also convene local events to assess community-information needs.
- The collaborative **Stories of Atlantic City** project will pilot an initiative to train community members to serve as reporters covering the local city council and planning and educational board hearings. The initiative will develop new ways to engage community members in the decision-making processes that impact their lives.
- The hyperlocal **Trenton Journal** will train more local contributors to increase the frequency of its editorial output and help change the narrative about what it's like to live in Trenton.
- Princeton-based health-information website **VaccinateNJ.com** will add more features to its online resource to help residents statewide — including native Spanish speakers and others in underserved communities — get real-time information about vaccination appointment locations and vaccine availability.

Created by the state of New Jersey in 2018, the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium is an independent, nonprofit organization that funds initiatives to benefit the State's civic life and meet the evolving information needs of New Jersey's communities. The Consortium has five member universities, The College of New Jersey, Rutgers University, Rowan University, New Jersey Institute of Technology

and, acting as the host university, Montclair State University. A first-in-the-nation project, the Consortium builds off the foundation laid by public media in the United States, and reimagines how public funding can be used to address the growing problem of news deserts and misinformation, and support more informed communities.

Download this press release. (<https://njcivicinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2021/06/CIC-Announces-Groundbreaking-New-Jersey-Funding-Initiative-.pdf>)



NEW JERSEY
CIVIC INFORMATION
CONSORTIUM

INFORMATION ABOUT GRANTS FROM THE NJ CIVIC INFO CONSORTIUM

Ver esta página en Español (<https://njcivicinfo.org/grants-esp/>)

We just announced our inaugural series of grants to fund local news and information! Click here to learn more. (/announcements)

New Jersey Civic Information Consortium project grantmaking guidelines

Updated June 3, 2021

The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium, a first in the nation initiative to grow access to local news and information, is now accepting applications for its inaugural round of grant funding. The Consortium was created by the State of New Jersey in

2018 to grow access to civic information statewide and spark innovative media projects in communities lacking access to news and information.

The Consortium will consider applications from all parts of the state, but is especially interested in proposals that focus on better serving communities of color, immigrant communities and rural communities.

The Consortium is focusing on three key areas for these initial grants, based on the following current pressing information needs of New Jerseyans:

- News and information that promotes community health, including information surrounding the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on our communities.
- Reporting and civic technology projects that make government information more accessible and hold public officials accountable.
- Diversifying New Jersey's journalism pipeline, media education and journalism/storytelling training in communities that lack trusted news sources and/or where coverage is one-dimensional and doesn't meet community needs.

Eligibility

The state law forming the Consortium requires that groups receiving grants work in partnership with a faculty member, graduate student or program at one of the Consortium's member universities. **You do not need to have a partnership formed when applying for a grant. The Consortium can connect you with an interested faculty member, graduate student or program at a member university.** The member universities are Montclair State University, Rutgers University, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rowan University and The College of New Jersey.

Please note in your application if you have a partner or will need one. Questions about potential partnerships can be directed to the Consortium at info@njcivicinfo.org (<mailto:info@njcivicinfo.org>). Decisions about university partnerships are made by the member universities. Grant applicants and member universities will finalize details of a partnership. In accordance with state law, member universities have to contribute a 10-percent match of the grant. This can be in the form of administrative support, advisory services, or other in-kind support.

The Consortium is committed to making sure grant recipients can find a university contact to talk with about a potential partnership.

The Consortium, the member universities and the State of New Jersey will not hold any financial or ownership stake in any project and cannot exercise editorial control over any project approved and funded by the Consortium.

Grants

Grants in the first round will be capped at \$35,000. A Consortium grant is meant as seed money or project funding and not as an ongoing source of funding for an organization.

Process and deadline

Please complete the application at www.njcivicinfo.org/grants (<http://www.njcivicinfo.org/grants>) by **11:59PM eastern time on Wednesday, March 31, 2021**. Applications will be screened by a panel consisting of Consortium board members. This panel may contact you for follow-up information. Final decisions will be made the Consortium Board of Directors.

You can read more below about the consortium's vision and guiding principles for grantmaking.

Vision

New Jersey residents have access to accurate, useful, and engaging local news and information, allowing them to better participate in civic life and create thriving, healthy communities.

Guiding principles

In order to achieve this vision, the Civic Information Consortium will seek to support ideas and projects that do the following:

Perform a public service: Public funding for media in the United States historically has focused on supporting public-service news and information that fills gaps left by commercial media. The ongoing local news crisis in New Jersey has widened these gaps and left many communities without access to important information about where they live. Our grantmaking will continue the rich legacy of public funding for media by supporting news and information that performs a public service and supports civic engagement in media-deficient communities.

Center community information needs: People need access to a variety of news and information in order to have their basic needs met, to participate in their community and civic life, and to thrive and fully realize their potential. Too often, though, local media systems fail to meet people's information needs – such as, reporting that demonstrates a problem without offering actionable solutions, the lack of information sources in languages other than English, or disseminating news in ways that don't actually reach those who can most benefit. The information needs of New Jersey residents are at the center of our work, and we will dedicate resources to projects that allow greater access to news and information that improve people's lives.

Support media that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive: A media system that does not reflect and lift up the rich racial, ethnic, and class diversity of New Jersey cannot serve it adequately. This is true for both the people who make up these institutions, as well as the stories they tell and information they prioritize. The Civic Information Consortium believes it is fundamental to support a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive media system in order to create more informed and engaged communities and build a future generation of media makers that look and sound like New Jersey.

Promote media by, with, and for: It is essential that people can participate and lead in the creation of media. Listening, engagement, collaboration, and community ownership are essential priorities for the Consortium, and we will seek to support projects that democratize the journalistic and media-making process, promote equitable collaboration, center community participation and needs, and build the capacity for everyday people to shape what local news looks like.

Provide training and education: Media is something we all consume, but doing so with rampant disinformation available across platforms has promoted distrust in community institutions. And historically, the privilege of creating media has not been available to people, of all backgrounds, unless they have the resources to do so. Better understanding how media works and creating it go hand in hand. Educating people how to discern fact from fiction, responsibly consume media, and tell their own stories with impact is critical in order to strengthen news and information at the community level.

Strengthen networks and infrastructure: No single outlet or project alone will be able to wholesale improve access to local news and information around New Jersey. Many conditions are required to create more informed communities and sustainable local media across the state; one of those is the ability to build and strengthen the overall ecosystem of how people access news and information. Efforts that build capacity,

promote learning and cross-sector collaboration, and provide essential services are necessary to support those performing the essential functions of journalism and media-making.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who is eligible to apply for funding?

The Civic Information Consortium provides grants for initiatives to benefit the State's civic life and meet the evolving information needs of New Jersey's communities. All grantees must have evidence of a collaboration between at least one member of the faculty or graduate student of a consortium member university and at least one local community organization, media organization, or technology-based organization.

Funding can only be provided to nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status. If your organization does not have 501(c)(3) status, then the partner university can act as the fiscal agent.

Do I have to have a university partner to initially pitch a project?

You do not need a university partner to apply for a grant from the Consortium, but you will need one to receive a grant. If you do not have a university partner, we will work to connect you with an interested faculty member or graduate student at one of the five member universities. The universities make their own decisions on whether or not to work with a project.

What role does the university partner play?

The role of the university partner is up to you and your university partner to develop. The role can be one of an advisor or consulting resource that you can tap for advice and guidance. The role could be one of a more hands-on manager or resource to provide strategic direction. The role can also be to provide administrative support. Preferably, we would like to see the university partner's role be more than administrative support to include some sort of advisory role, but the specific role is to be determined by you and the partner.

Under the state law creating the Consortium, university partners provide a 10 percent match towards the project. This can be additional funding or an in-kind contribution. This match can come in the form of back office support, research, staffing, student support or more. This can also be in the form of time provided by a faculty member or graduate student. This can be determined between the grantee and the university partner.

When will I hear back from you about the status of my application?

The deadline to apply is 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 31. The review process will start after the application due date and we hope to make decisions later this spring. We may reach out to you during the review process with any questions.

Who should fill out the application? Do you need one application per project?

The application should be completed by the project manager or leader, ideally a member of the project team who is the best point of contact. Applications should be limited to one per project.

What is the grant period?

The grant period is for up to one year of application approval, and projects should be completed during this time period. Grantees are expected to be in communication with the Consortium to provide updates on their activities and anticipated timeline. The Consortium will work with grantees to develop a timeline for updates during the grant period.

Will I have to file a report after the grant period ends?

Yes, you will need to submit a report to the Consortium after the grant period ends. The Consortium will work with grantees to determine appropriate documentation for your project.

How will I reference the source of this money in any publication?

To name how your grant is funded, you can say something along the lines of: *“This project is funded by a grant from the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium, an independent nonprofit organization that received public funding to support quality local journalism, promising media startups and other efforts meant to better inform people.”*

How detailed of a budget do you need?

We'd like to know how you plan on spending the grant, but we understand there may be unexpected costs. So include what you anticipate the money being spent on, which could include how the money will be split among project partners, staffing, payment of freelancers or community members, events, and any overhead costs.

What can I use the money for?

The money can be used for project costs such as back office support, research, staffing, student support, etc. We don't need to know the exact details, but we need an estimated budget and how the money is shared with partners.

What if we need more than the maximum amount allowed to do our project?

Unfortunately, at this time we can't provide additional funding to projects beyond their grant. We know these initial grants may not be able to cover everything you intend to do, so we encourage you to be intentional about how you are budgeting for this project. We'll have future opportunities to apply for grants, and we'd encourage those who received initial funding to continue to apply for more funding at that time.

What if we don't spend all the money?

Money awarded by the Civic Information Consortium should be used to support the project you apply for. If you haven't spent all the funds awarded, we'll work with you to extend the timeline of your project or find other ways that the funds can be used to achieve the outcomes of your project.

How should the money be split between entities? Does it have to be split in any certain ways?

Nope! That'll have to be determined by the collaborators on the project.

What paperwork will you need from me to disburse the grant?

Proof of IRS nonprofit status or that you intend to use the collaborating university as the fiscal agent.

What if our project runs into problems after it starts and we need to change its focus?

Things change, and we will work with grantees in case any major shifts in focus occur. We are investing in your project and project partners, so we're confident that you'll be able to do amazing work, even if it looks a little different from what you originally pitched.

Does state money mean state control?

No. While we receive public funding, we are an independent nonprofit overseen by a board of directors. The state law creating the Consortium specifically states that the State of New Jersey, the Consortium and the member universities do not have editorial control or any ownership stake in any project funded.

Can an organization submit multiple distinct projects for consideration?

Yes. You can submit an application for any project that you believe would meet the criteria to receive a grant.

What if you haven't answered my question in these FAQs?

Let us know! We know we haven't anticipated everything. Email info@njcivicinfo.org (<mailto:info@njcivicinfo.org>). You can also join one of our upcoming informational sessions with Consortium board members. Click [here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/info-session-about-the-nj-civic-information-consortium-grant-process-tickets-143832357453) to learn more and RSVP. (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/info-session-about-the-nj-civic-information-consortium-grant-process-tickets-143832357453>)

The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that funds initiatives to benefit the State's civic life and meet the evolving information needs of New Jersey's communities. Questions? Contact the Consortium via email at info@njcivicinfo.org (<mailto:info@njcivicinfo.org>).

Appendix G

ARE YOU INFORMED?



NEW JERSEY
CIVIC INFORMATION
CONSORTIUM



with support from
Free Press
Action

Statewide Outreach Campaign 2020/21
Findings Report 4/5/21



SOCIAL
IMPACT
STUDIOS

ARE YOU INFORMED?

How do you know what's happening in **YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY**? We want to know.

"Are You INFORMed NJ?" is a public-engagement campaign hosted and run by Social Impact Studios in 2020/21 on behalf of NJ Civic Information Consortium with support from Free Press Action Fund.

The goal of the campaign is to engage with people across the state to strengthen and reimagine how New Jersey gets quality news & information at the local level by:

- Hearing about their experiences with local news & information
- Finding gaps and guiding funding for the NJCIC
- Gathering recommendations and ideas from the grassroots level
- Raising awareness to bolster civic engagement & participation in NJCIC & Free Press

BY THE NUMBERS

30
Zoom
LISTENING
SESSIONS

21+
COUNTIES

1 Youth
3 Citywides
3 Statewides
4 Regionals

400+
PEOPLE ENGAGED

20% 100%


of All Zip Codes of All Counties

188
SURVEYS TAKEN

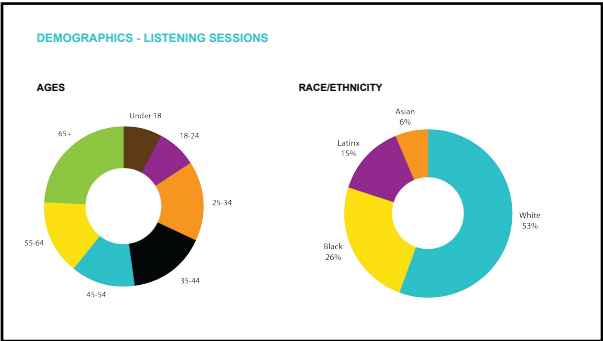
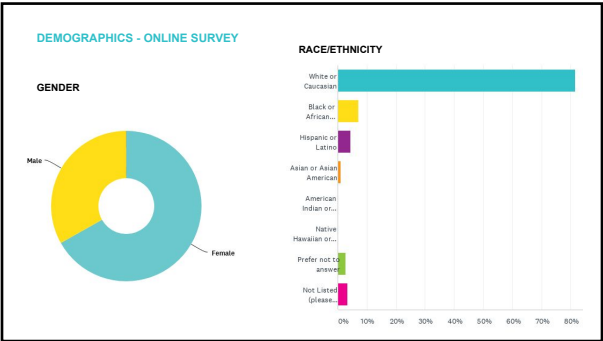
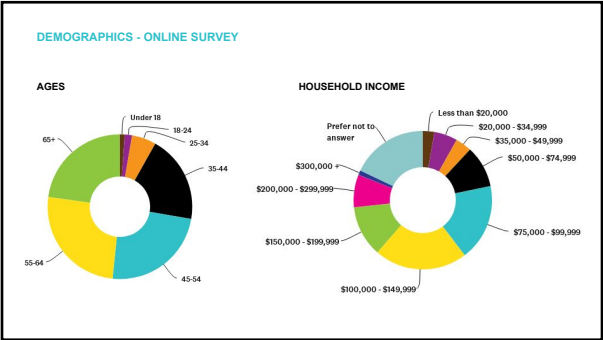
3 LANGUAGES

offered in English/Spanish/Chinese

10k+
NJ ONLINE REACH



Industry-standard sample size for 8.8 million with 95% confidence & 5% Error Margin = 385



SUMMARY ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

We set an ambitious goal to reach 1000 people in NJ. We set our sights on hearing from someone in every zip code plus broad-based engagement as an approach to hitting that number. While we reached more than 10k NJ residents through all outreach channels and directly engaged more than 400 people across the state in every county, the zip code coverage has held steady at about 20%.

We found that Zoom Listening Sessions had small turnout, but high-quality participation. Given the pandemic and Zoom fatigue, it was not surprising that we saw more direct engagement through the survey, which could be taken at any time, was more private, and required less of a time-commitment.

Overall, we gathered the information that we set out to find and engaged new people in the issue of local news & information in New Jersey. We heard enough common themes from wide-ranging experiences, that we believe we can represent a solid cross-section of people's connection to local information and civic engagement.

We would still like to get to more zip codes and diverse voices, though. Toward that end, we would like to propose the following as a follow-up to this project:

- Create a simplified survey that takes even less time to take
- Run that new survey through 2021 to reach more zip codes & representation of 2020 NJ Census Data
- Social Impact Studios will host the survey, promote it, and pull data from it monthly throughout 2021 at no additional cost.

IDENTITY DESIGN



NEW JERSEY
CIVIC INFORMATION CONSORTIUM



NEW JERSEY
CIVIC INFORMATION
CONSORTIUM



NEW JERSEY
CIVIC INFORMATION
CONSORTIUM

CAMPAIGN PROMOTION



ONLINE SURVEY Highlights

ARE YOU INFORMED?



“I worry for our society as newspapers have downsized and disappeared.”

DEMOGRAPHICS

LANGUAGES

#1

English
Spanish

#2
#3

Spanish
French
German
Portuguese
Persian

Polish
Haitian Creole
Russian
Italian
Mandarin

WHAT LOCAL NEWS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU? - #1

policy safety City activities Schools info NJ community events
 New York government NJ.com
 local government development Politics
 Times news State Local pandemic town Council
 Local politics Covid Education Community Events
 weather COVID-19 health happenings County Township
 information

WHAT LOCAL NEWS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU? - #2

safety Economic Schools state government issues Education
 Health Covid Crime State County Arts news
 weather Local traffic town Politics events
 environment government initiatives NJ.com social justice
 Community public actions Information

WHAT LOCAL NEWS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU? - #3

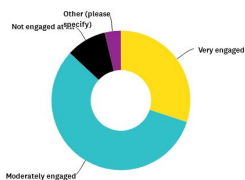
NJ School Local sports Local government Town state politics
 issues community public news sports Local
 current events events County weather businesses Crime
 entertainment COVID Education

WHAT DOES 'CIVIC INFORMATION' MEAN TO YOU?

“ I think that it means being a responsible person by maintaining awareness of the things that are going on around you. When you are a more engaged person, you can spread awareness about the things that matter to your community.”

“ Factual, actionable, accessible to all both in language used and channel of distribution.”

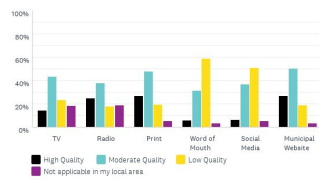
Q21 What is your level of engagement with civic information?



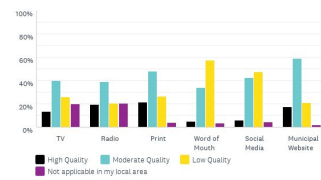
#1 LOCAL SOURCE OF NEWS & INFORMATION?

Times Press website NJ newspaper Star Ledger Tap
 Nextdoor Tap into Record local Media Facebook
 Borough website Patch Daily town groups News
 New Brunswick Today nj.com Trenton None channel Social media

Q15 How much do you TRUST local news & information sources?



Q17 What is the QUALITY of local news & information sources?



#1 STATEWIDE SOURCE OF NEWS & INFORMATION?

state TV WNYC media Star Ledger NY Times
 New Jersey Record NJ northjersey.com
 NJ.com online news None NJ Spotlight Twitter
 Star-Ledger Local newspaper

HOW HAS THE LOSS OF LOCAL NEWS AFFECTED YOUR COMMUNITY?

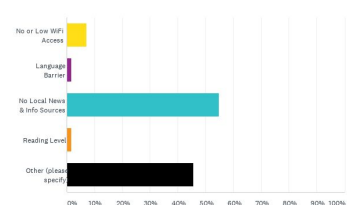
“I feel like we have a lot of local online platforms keeping us updated, so I haven't really felt much of an impact. I do miss the presence and importance of the Star Ledger - I feel their disappearance more-or-less from Newark was a tough blow to our local news, but that has been filled in by so many other online sources.”

“Politicians and others are not under any scrutiny.”

HOW DO YOU SEEK OUT AND SHARE NEWS & INFORMATION?

via via subscribe postings sources LeontiaTalks community site
 local newspaper text google person NJ area follow
 county websites Patch news outlets share social media accounts
 Twitter groups NJ.com using local news
 neighborhood newspaper NextDoor online radio
 social media Television news TAP Facebook
 Asbury Park Press local paper websites sites email
 social Internet facebook page read NJ Spotlight TV word mouth
 town journalist Facebook groups orgs tapinto daily
 local paper northjersey.com friends talk mostly via newsletter
 township

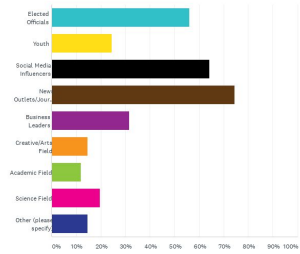
Q14 What barriers get in the way of you receiving local news & information? (check all that apply)



WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW MORE ABOUT?

town area local need going committee
community new issues township meetings people
budget county seems plans website state available
decisions made laws decisions city school local level
elected officials building make happening know resources meetings
development government time business housing wish knew
town council information board meetings news politics
events officials local government Candidates

Q13 Who do you think will influence news & information the most in the future? (check all that apply)



[READ MORE HIGHLIGHTS - Raw Notes 1](#)

[SEE FULL ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS HERE](#)

LISTENING SESSIONS

Highlights

ARE YOU INFORMED?



“Public money should be targeting the most unlikely people to develop and fund the news on their own.”

What we heard about **Personal Experience** with local news & information

The Top Common Themes

- Dispersed information across so many channels is making it hard to manage information.
- Municipal websites aren't great. People feel they have to be very proactive to seek out and navigate information locally.
- One size will not fit all. What people need in a commuter community is going to be very different than what they need in a close-knit localized community.
- Paywalls came up frequently as a barrier to news & information.

“It's very difficult to find local news anywhere but social media. There are no longer local newspapers or radio stations.”

Attendees share their own **Perspectives**
on the news & info eco-system, culture & habits

The Top Common Themes

- People are very concerned about bias, specifically in local news & information sources.
- It is often up to a dedicated "champion of information" to take on the stewardship to get information out there.
- In almost every session, people expressed the need to educate the public about the role of government and nature of civic engagement.
- Many people said that there was a silver-lining of the pandemic in Zoom public meetings that they wouldn't have normally been able to attend.

"People need more trust in their news sources and the only way to do that is for those outlets to present information in an unbiased, educated, and unproblematic manner."

Recommendations & Advice for the
Consortium to fill gaps and guide funding

The Top Common Themes

- Many people in different communities suggested that the funds be used on centralized infrastructure first.
- Young journalists need to be trained and there needs to be a viable career path for them.
- Media literacy should be a top priority. Many people throughout the sessions expressed concern about a disconnect between what's happening locally and what people think is happening based on hearsay.
- Fund the news deserts that have the most people who have the least access.

"If the legacy news & information sources don't run the stories written by young or community-member journalists, then the effort to recruit them is totally wasted."

We heard a lot of interesting and surprising
Inspired Ideas

The Top Common Themes

- Create a vetted, coordinated, statewide clearinghouse for access to local news & information in one place. And/or "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for Media"
- Develop training programs on how to be an effective "community journalist"/ambassador.
- Use technology to gamify/dashboard/push notification information so it can be really interactive, including alternative currency for funding.
- Support entrepreneurial ventures by offering sustainability workshops on running media outlets.
- Leverage libraries as trusted hubs of local info

"If I could create a new local source of news & information I think it would be great to support the use of technology to create unobtrusive digital kiosks of information that could be somewhere centrally located where people could park their car and go get the latest information off of a touchscreen."

[READ MORE HIGHLIGHTS: Raw Notes 2](#)

TAKE-AWAYS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION/FUNDING

- **People are seeking a reliable infrastructure for local news & information that is organized and stewarded by a trusted authority.** This isn't necessarily in the form of *curated* content. Instead, what elevated to the top was a desire for some form of standard, un-biased, and sustainable infrastructure. People want to have choices and to discern for themselves how relevant the content is for them personally. But they want that to be easily accessed, trusted, and actionable in one place. *Projects that elevate un-biased practices; explore viable delivery models; and/or seed centralized infrastructure may help address this resounding need.*
- **There was a common concern about the lack of understanding of the role that news & information plays in civic engagement.** This was less about media literacy than it was about people being fully educated, informed, and activated for democratic participation. *Projects that include civics education and practices; decision-maker transparency and accountability; and/or social enterprise models for media business may provide a way to address this concern.*
- **Now is the moment to leverage the awareness raised.** The people who participated at all levels were eager to voice their opinion, but also eager to be part of a solution. We strongly recommend dedicated follow-up outreach to engage them directly. *Projects that support outreach and continued dialog can amplify your own ongoing efforts to engage people across the state - especially if they are coordinated.*

Please feel free to reach out with questions:
Ennis Carter
Director
Social Impact Studios
ennis@socialimpactstudios.com
267-257-6706

**THANK
YOU**

Appendix H



Apply for a grant from the NJ Civic Information Consortium

👋🛑 STOP! BEFORE YOU START THIS APPLICATION YOU MUST READ AND REVIEW THIS GRANT INFORMATION PAGE: <https://njcivicinfo.org/grants>.

NOTE: Airtable does NOT save the information you enter into this form before you click the "Submit" button. You are advised to work on your application in another program and paste the information into the appropriate form field when ready.

Last name *

Email *

Phone number *

Affiliated organization *

Briefly describe your organization in 3-5 sentences. *

Website (if applicable)

Affiliated university *

NOTE: If your project does not have a consortium university partner and is selected, we will work with you to find a suitable partner.

- ☐ The College of New Jersey (TCNJ)
- ☐ Montclair State University
- ☐ New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT)
- ☐ Rowan University
- ☐ Rutgers University
- ☐ I don't have a Consortium university partner yet

Other project collaborators (if applicable)

Other contact for your organization related to this proposal

Project focus *

Please select as many as applicable.

- ☐ Community health
- ☐ Government transparency and accountability
- ☐ Diversifying journalism pipeline, training, education
- ☐ Other (see next question)

If you selected "Other," please indicate the focus area of your project

Amount requested (up to \$35,000) *

Please briefly describe your project or idea *

Be sure to include details about how it meets the criteria of the Civic Information Consortium's call for applications and a sense of the timeline of the project, as well as any information about partners.

Community or communities served *

Communities can be defined by geography, identity, or other shared characteristics.

Please describe your project's top three outcomes and how you will know you achieved them. *

Outcomes should specify the expected impact on the community or communities served.

If your proposal involves compensating community members, briefly describe the guidelines and process. *

How do you plan on publicly communicating about your project so that others know about it and can learn from it? *

Does your organization, program, or project include people of color in leadership positions? If so, please explain representation in those roles. *

How does your project create media that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive? *

Please attach total budget for proposed work. *

⬇ Drop files here

Submit

Never submit passwords through this form. [Report malicious form](#)

Appendix I

Groundbreaking New Jersey Initiative Announces Inaugural Series of Grants to Fund Local News and Information

MONTCLAIR, NJ — On Thursday, the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium announced its inaugural round of grants, a milestone in the years-long effort by residents, journalists and local organizations to invest public funding to foster more informed communities.

The Consortium has awarded 14 news-and-information initiatives with grants of up to \$35,000. Grant recipients come from every part of New Jersey; their work focuses on diversifying journalism, improving government transparency and providing community-health information, among other issues.

The Consortium represents a first-of-its-kind state model for public funding to support quality local journalism, promising media startups and other efforts meant to better inform people and promote civic engagement. The state of New Jersey provided \$500,000 in funding for FY2021.

In 2017, a broad coalition of universities, journalists, advocates, lawmakers and state residents began working together to create the Civic Information Consortium. With State support, the Consortium will continue to provide grants for local journalism and civic technology projects, with an emphasis on efforts designed to better serve low-income communities, communities of color, immigrants and rural residents.

“Thanks to the bipartisan foresight of the legislature and governor, New Jersey has set a national precedent for public funding to inform and engage local communities through the groundbreaking legislation that created the Consortium in 2018,” said Civic Information Board Chair **Christopher J. Daggett**. “Today’s announcement marks a new beginning for civic information in New Jersey. These grants are funding 14 innovative projects aimed at bolstering access to local news and information, increasing access to community health and training more people in journalism. We

received 74 applications this round, from almost every county in New Jersey, which shows a tremendous interest in the Consortium's mission. We look forward to working with these grantees and thank everyone who applied for this inaugural round of grants."

"The grants committee had a tough time picking grant recipients from the 74 applications we received," said Civic Information Board member **Therise Edwards**. "This is a testament to the creative and civic-minded spirit of groups across New Jersey. "The grants awarded in this round touch urban, suburban and rural New Jersey and a wide array of issues. The Consortium is thrilled that several of the grantees will be engaging student populations to become active advocates for their communities. We are excited to see the positive impact these programs will have for New Jersey residents."

The inaugural class of grantees:

- **Beyond Expectations** will continue its outreach work with young people in Burlington County by launching "be.tv eStudios," an initiative that provides students with the resources they need to better participate in immersive interactive learning.
- The **Blairstown Enhancement Committee** will address the loss of local-news outlets by launching the Greater Blairstown News Project. This effort will provide residents with vital and timely government announcements about public health and safety, and foster greater connection to and awareness of local issues across northwest New Jersey.
- The **Bloomfield Information Project** will launch a community-reporter corps pilot program that trains residents in news gathering, writing, and production and provides paid reporting assignments that prioritize the information needs of underserved populations in the surrounding community.
- **Cosecha**, a New Jersey grassroots organization run by and for Latinx immigrants, will work with Rutgers University to establish *Radio Popular*, a twice-weekly Spanish-language internet-radio program for the state's Spanish-speaking immigrant community.
- The **Conservatory of Music and Performing Arts Society** will support Let My People Learn-HistorVic Education, a project that helps young people learn more about the workings of local governments and how policies and laws impact their communities.
- The weekly **Hammonton Gazette** will make its news coverage more representative of Hammonton's southern New Jersey community. The paper will

offer news articles in Spanish and initiate outreach to seasonal agricultural workers and more permanent members of the local Spanish-speaking community.

- **If I Can, You Can Inc.** will help revitalize the online neighborhood news franchise TapInto.net in Salem County with the goal of sharing news articles across New Jersey towns to create a more sustainable information ecosystem.
- The **Newark News and Story Collaborative** will train community members to tell their stories and produce news that fills information gaps in local and national media.
- The **Newark Water Coalition** will create Newark Community Voices, a digital-media and community-organizing training program for Newark youth. The program will produce and distribute multimedia health and environment stories that center Newark community-information needs.
- The Facebook group **Old Bridge NJ Residents** will create a comprehensive and searchable archive of local-government activity spanning more than two decades. The tool will be made available to area residents and journalists.
- The **Paterson Alliance** will manage the library-based Paterson Information Hub to provide the community with training in citizen journalism and news-production technology. The alliance will also convene local events to assess community-information needs.
- The collaborative **Stories of Atlantic City** project will pilot an initiative to train community members to serve as reporters covering the local city council and planning and educational board hearings. The initiative will develop new ways to engage community members in the decision-making processes that impact their lives.
- The hyperlocal **Trenton Journal** will train more local contributors to increase the frequency of its editorial output and help change the narrative about what it's like to live in Trenton.
- Princeton-based health-information website **VaccinateNJ.com** will add more features to its online resource to help residents statewide — including native Spanish speakers and others in underserved communities — get real-time information about vaccination appointment locations and vaccine availability.

Created by the state of New Jersey in 2018, the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium is an independent, nonprofit organization that funds initiatives to benefit the State's civic life and meet the evolving information needs of New Jersey's communities. The Consortium has five member universities, The College of New Jersey, Rutgers University, Rowan University, New Jersey Institute of Technology

and, acting as the host university, Montclair State University. A first-in-the-nation project, the Consortium builds off the foundation laid by public media in the United States, and reimagines how public funding can be used to address the growing problem of news deserts and misinformation, and support more informed communities.

Download this press release. (<https://njcivicinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2021/06/CIC-Announces-Groundbreaking-New-Jersey-Funding-Initiative-.pdf>)

Appendix J

2021 Civic Information Consortium applicants

The Hammonton Gazette Inc,
coLAB Arts
Blairstown Enhancement Committee
Talking Eyes Media
NFRPP
HTTV-formerly HomeTowne TV
New Jersey YMCA State Alliance
Rutgers University
Rutgers University and New Jersey's Star-Ledger
Reporte Hispano
Beyond Expectations, Inc.
Cinema Ed
The Newark Community News collective (NCN)
Neighborhood Connections to Health
TAPinto Elizabeth
Stories of Atlantic City, Stockton University
Chalkbeat
InvestigateNJ, Inc., soon to be renamed NJ Data Source, Inc.
Center for Cooperative Media
The Press Republic
vaccinatenj.com/vacunémonosnj.com
InvestigationNJ, Inc., soon to be renamed NJ Data Source, Inc.
VoteLight, Inc.
Essex County College
New Jersey Institute of Technology
Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition
Princeton Community Television, 501(c) (3) applicant
Newark News & Story Collaborative
Cosecha
Lost in Transit (a new startup covering public transit in New Jersey)
American Entrepreneurship Today (R)
Hopeloft, Inc.
Bloomfield Information Project / Community Info Coop
The United States Latino Affairs Initiatives
The Franklin Reporter & Advocate
Newark Water Coalition
Journalism + Design
Clinton Hill Community Action

Nu Media Corporation, a 501(C)(3) dba under NuDigi.Tech™ owner of 26 Blocks Documentary.

Next City

Garden Statement

Visiontimes Media Group/Kanzhongguo Association Inc.

The Asbury Park Media Consortium

Public Intellectuals

Lisa Bonnano

New Brunswick Today LLC

Nu Media Corporation, 26 Blocks Documentary Project

Ironbound Community Corporation

Corporation for New Jersey Local Media

The SelfMade Photojournalism Project

Montclair State University

CivicStory

Corporation for New Jersey Local Media

CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS SOCIETY (COMPAS)

Hammonton Revitalization Corporation - Hammonton Heart & Soul Initiative

MorristownGreen.com

Adrienne Tannebaum

The Standard

The CivicLab

Precious Little Ladies Inc. (PLL)

Mighty Writers

Old Bridge New Jersey Residents

The Newark Times

M.Y.M. Media LLC

If I Can, You Can Inc.

Paterson Alliance, Inc.

Gateway Community Action Partnership

Cape May County Herald

Appendix K

New Jersey Civic Information Consortium
Inaugural Class of Grantees
May, 2021

- Beyond Expectations, with a grant of \$33,875.50, will continue its outreach work with young people in Burlington County by launching “be.tv eStudios,” an initiative that provides students with the resources they need to better participate in immersive interactive learning.
- The Blairstown Enhancement Committee, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will address the loss of local-news outlets by launching the Greater Blairstown News Project. This effort will provide residents with vital and timely government announcements about public health and safety, and foster greater connection to and awareness of local issues across northwest New Jersey.
- The Bloomfield Information Project, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will launch a community-reporter corps pilot program that trains residents in news gathering, writing, and production and provides paid reporting assignments that prioritize the information needs of underserved populations in the surrounding community.
- Cosecha, with a grant of \$35,000.00, a New Jersey grassroots organization run by and for Latinx immigrants, will work with Rutgers University to establish Radio Popular, a twice-weekly Spanish-language internet-radio program for the state’s Spanish-speaking immigrant community.
- The Conservatory of Music and Performing Arts Society, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will support Let My People Learn-HistorVic Education, a project that helps young people learn more about the workings of local governments and how policies and laws impact their communities.
- The weekly Hammonton Gazette, with a grant of \$34,765.00, will make its news coverage more representative of Hammonton’s southern New Jersey community. The paper will offer news articles in Spanish and initiate outreach to seasonal agricultural workers and more permanent members of the local Spanish-speaking community.
- If I Can, You Can Inc., with a grant of \$35,000.00, will help revitalize the online neighborhood news franchise TapInto.net in Salem County with the goal of sharing news articles across New Jersey towns to create a more sustainable information ecosystem.
- The Newark News and Story Collaborative, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will train community members to tell their stories and produce news that fills information gaps in local and national media.
- The Newark Water Coalition, with a grant of \$34,930.00, will create Newark Community Voices, a digital-media and community-organizing training program for Newark youth. The program will produce and distribute multimedia health and environment stories that center Newark community-information needs.
- The Facebook group Old Bridge NJ Residents, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will create a comprehensive and searchable archive of local-government activity spanning more than two decades. The tool will be made available to area residents and journalists.
- The Paterson Alliance, with a grant of \$33,000.00, will manage the library-based Paterson Information Hub to provide the community with training in citizen journalism and news-production technology. The alliance will also convene local events to assess community-information needs.
- The collaborative Stories of Atlantic City, with a grant of \$34,982.46, project will pilot an initiative to train community members to serve as reporters covering the local city council

and planning and educational board hearings. The initiative will develop new ways to engage community members in the decision-making processes that impact their lives.

- The hyperlocal Trenton Journal, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will train more local contributors to increase the frequency of its editorial output and help change the narrative about what it's like to live in Trenton.
- Princeton-based health-information website VaccinateNJ.com, with a grant of \$35,000.00, will add more features to its online resource to help residents statewide — including native Spanish speakers and others in underserved communities — get real-time information about vaccination appointment locations and vaccine availability.

Appendix L

NJCIC LETTERHEAD
Grantees without need for a fiscal sponsor

June 28, 2021

NAME

ORG NAME

Dear Name,

Once again, congratulations on the approval of your grant application by the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium (NJCIC) for a total of [\$] for [project description].

Enclosed please find the grant check.

Pursuant to the original acceptance letter, you have provided NJCIC with the following information:

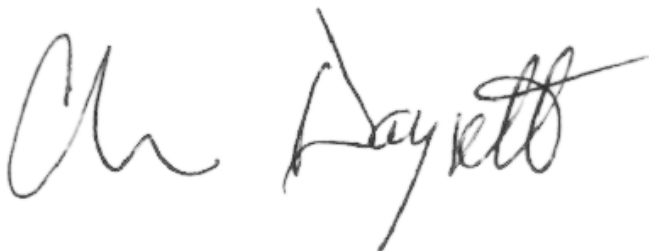
1. Partner university, or partner nonprofit organization, and contact name, email address and phone number.
2. Confirmation of nonprofit registration in New Jersey and IRS status as a tax-exempt organization for the entity serving as the fiscal sponsor for the project.
3. Confirmation of fiscal sponsor acceptance of fiscal responsibility, if fiscal sponsor is not the university partner or grantee organization; and

The grant period for these funds is July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. We will ask you to complete a short questionnaire at the end of the grant period, to serve as a final report. Additionally, we encourage you to keep us posted on your progress, lessons learned, and any questions you may have. We are eager to hear from you and learn from your work.

By accepting this grant, you (or the fiscal agent) agree to maintain your (its) status as a 501(c)(3) corporation, recognized as a public charity under Section 509(a)(1) or (a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code during the grant period and notify NJCIC immediately if the Internal Revenue Service proposes to change or revoke your (its) status. You (or the fiscal agent) also acknowledge and agree to the terms of this grant award and represent that no goods or services were provided by your organization in exchange for this grant.

We wish you all the best in your work!

Sincerely,



On behalf of the Board of Directors
New Jersey Civic Information Consortium



NEW JERSEY
CIVIC INFORMATION
CONSORTIUM



DESIGNED BY
Joe Amditis