



## New Jersey Civic Information Consortium awards \$1.55M in renewal grants to 16 NJ news outlets



(L-R) Consortium grantees: Adrienne Romero (Slice of Culture), Ernabel Demillo (Slice of Culture), Neidy Gutierrez (Slice of Culture), Kenneth Miles (Trenton Journal), Consortium Program Officer Ayinde Merrill, Melissa Helmbrecht (Hopeloft), and Paul Avery (Ridge View Echo).  
**Photo by Glenn Clark**

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**07/29/2024** – The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium is pleased to announce the awarding of 16 renewal grants, totaling \$1,552,168, to news outlets across the state. This marks a significant milestone as the Consortium transitions from one annual grant cycle to rolling grant funding, enabling more flexible and responsive support for local news in the state. The renewal grants were approved at the Consortium's June board meeting.

These grantees represent a diverse array of community-focused initiatives, ranging from grassroots journalism and civic engagement to youth journalism programs.

"The Consortium is proud to continue supporting these organizations that are playing an important role in fostering informed communities across New Jersey," said Chris Daggett, Board Chair and Interim Executive Director of the Consortium. "By transitioning to rolling grant funding, we aim to become a more effective and transformative funder of local news in the state."

The next round of renewal grant applications, as well as new grant applications, are scheduled for consideration at the September meeting of the board.

After a thorough review process, the projects listed below were selected for renewal grants.

For more information about the Consortium and its grant programs and application deadlines, please visit [www.njcivicinfo.org/grants](http://www.njcivicinfo.org/grants).

## Renewal grants:

**Atlantic City Focus – \$100,000:** This is ACF’s first renewal grant, which will continue to support local journalism and storytelling, the development and distribution of a civic engagement guide for the 2024–2025 election cycle, and the creation of an online database that offers access to information on community resources.

**Black in Jersey – \$120,000:** To support Black in Jersey’s team retention, expansion, and continued reporting. Black in Jersey specializes in restorative narratives about communities of color, informs New Jersey community members through news reporting, and trains citizen journalists. This is Black in Jersey’s third grant from the Consortium.

**Camden Parent & Student Union – \$100,000:** This is CPSU’s first renewal grant from the Consortium, which will continue to support civic education workshops about the voting process, staff expansion, and the development of a podcast to train community members on media literacy and community journalism.

**Central Desi – \$100,000:** This is Central Desi’s first renewal grant from the Consortium, which will continue to support Central Desi as a reliable and consistent source for high-quality journalism for South Asians through its fellowship program, the hiring of staff and freelancers, and the development of community engagement strategies. Central Desi’s fellowship program cultivates college students as future journalists in New Jersey and trains them to report, write, and engage with local communities by covering the South Asian American community.

**Civic News Company – \$100,000:** This grant will support Chalkbeat Newark and its commitment to fostering civic engagement in Newark public schools through: in-depth reporting on school segregation litigation and federal Covid relief spending; adding a state education policy reporting fellow; a texting service to inform the community about school board actions; a 2024 school board election guide; and first-person student essays published through Chalkbeat Newark’s Student Voices program. This is Chalkbeat Newark’s first renewal grant from the Consortium.

**Community Info Coop (The Jersey Bee) – \$80,000:** This is The Jersey Bee’s fourth consecutive grant from the Consortium, which will support The Jersey Bee’s expansion in Irvington, Newark, Orange, and East Orange and the rollout of a Bloomfield-specific food and resource textline.

**Front Runner New Jersey – \$120,000:** This is Front Runner New Jersey’s third consecutive grant from the Consortium, which will continue to support Front Runner New Jersey and its commitment to covering stories about the African American and Latino communities of South Jersey.

**Hammonton Gazette – \$52,478:** This is Hammonton Gazette’s third consecutive grant for this project, which aims to provide pertinent and consistent news and information to the

area Spanish-speaking community, offer income opportunities for Spanish translators, and create roles for bilingual journalists.

**Hopeloft (Follow South Jersey) – \$94,690:** This is Follow South Jersey’s fourth consecutive grant from the Consortium, which will continue to support Follow South Jersey in providing young journalists with valuable life and career experience, prioritizing those who are marginalized for various reasons and delivering vital news and information to the residents of southern New Jersey.

**Industry Media Arts – \$100,000:** This is Industry Media Arts first renewal grant, which will continue to support Industry Media Arts through its Journalism Mentorship Program, developed for students looking to learn more about journalism, media studies, and media production. Students completing the program will receive a certificate and digital badge credential.

**New Labor – \$100,000:** This is New Labor’s first renewal grant, which will continue to support New Labor in its community journalism training and research program, alongside producing a podcast on temp agency worker conditions.

**NJ Spotlight – \$100,000:** This is NJ Spotlight’s third consecutive grant to support a Report for America corps member to expand health coverage by focusing on child welfare and mental health in underserved communities, at the intersection of the COVID-19 pandemic, health inequity, and rural New Jersey.

**Saint Peter's University (Slice of Culture) – \$120,000:** This is Slice of Culture’s third consecutive grant from the Consortium. Slice of Culture is a group of young BIPOC storytellers who are bringing civic engagement to Jersey City and Hudson County through a series of how-to projects and informational stories targeted to immigrant families and communities of color. SoC is opening doors to aspiring journalists who are committed to strong, local journalism and stories that matter to the community.

**The Ridge View Echo – \$120,000:** This is Ridge View Echo’s fourth consecutive grant, which will continue to support its efforts to address the loss of local news outlets by reporting on Blairstown, Frelinghuysen, Hardwick, and Knowlton—all Warren County communities with no other dedicated local news sources. This initiative provides residents with vital and timely government announcements about public health and safety, fostering greater connection to and awareness of local issues across northwest New Jersey.

**Trenton Journal – \$120,000:** This is the Trenton Journal’s fourth consecutive grant from the Consortium, which will continue to support training local contributors to increase the frequency of the Trenton Journal’s editorial output. The grant will help bridge information gaps and connect communities in Trenton. The Trenton Journal focuses on addressing the disparities faced by the Black and Brown communities in Trenton using solutions-based journalism through newsletters, videos, and audio stories.

**Wayne Hills High School – \$25,000:** This is WHHS’ first renewal grant from the Consortium, which will continue to support the digital journalism program for students in Wayne

Township.

**About NJ Civic Information Consortium:** The [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. 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 support more informed communities.