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New Jersey Civic Information Consortium releases draft framework to reimagine public media in New Jersey

Report outlines vision for a modern statewide public media system built on local journalism, broadcast, digital innovation, and sustained funding

March 23, 2026 — The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium (NJCIC) today released a draft report that underscores the vital role statewide public media plays in ensuring the people of New Jersey have access to trusted news and information and makes the case for expanded state investment. The upshot - New Jersey needs a modern statewide public media system to strengthen local journalism and combat misinformation, expand civic information, and ensure residents across the state have access to arts, culture, sports, and education programming.

Responding to the recent elimination of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the upcoming transition in the state's public broadcasting system, NJCIC convened a group of policy leaders from across the state to reimagine the future of NJ's public media and commissioned a report based on their key findings and recommendations. Meeting regularly over three months, this "Design Team" included experts from journalism, academia, philanthropy, community organizations, and media institutions across New Jersey.

The report is now open for stakeholder and public comment. It offers a shared vision and operational framework for a more innovative, effective and sustainable public media system to serve New Jersey. It argues for greater innovation, collaboration and public investment, recognizing rapid changes in media consumption, declining local news capacity, and increasing demand for reliable civic information.

"We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make New Jersey's public media system the strongest in the country, at a time when residents need reliable, community-rooted news and information more than ever," said Mike Rispoli, Senior Director, Journalism and Civic Information at Free Press. *"People across New Jersey want reliable sources of news and information that educate, inspire, and reflect their experiences while holding institutions accountable."*

Key among the report's findings is the need for a more coordinated, sustainable statewide structure that distinguishes three core functions: 1) statewide content production and

distribution, 2) ecosystem collaboration and field support, and 3) public funding and grantmaking for public broadcasting, local journalism and civic information. Working together, these functions will strengthen the infrastructure that supports journalists, creators, artists, educators, athletes, and storytellers across the state.

The report proposes a long-term plan, with a first-year public investment of \$11.9 million and \$55 million over five years, supplemented by foundation, membership, and sponsorship funding to support both a statewide public media service and the broader civic information ecosystem. The goal is to create an enduring and nimble statewide infrastructure capable of supporting investigative reporting, regional coverage, community engagement, and digital and broadcast distribution, fueled, in part, by continued grantmaking to local news outlets by the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium.

“This represents an important step in reimagining how public media can serve New Jersey,” said Lisa Sahulka, Executive Director of the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium. *“The goal is to ensure that every community in our state has access to trusted news, cultural and sports programming, civic information, and storytelling that reflects the full diversity of New Jersey.”*

The proposed framework and budget were developed by a consulting team including [Due East Partners](#), [Public Media Company](#), and [Free Press](#), who worked alongside the Design Team to review national benchmarks, assess New Jersey’s media landscape, and develop potential governance, operational, and financial models for a reimagined system. Public Media Company led the business and budget modeling, drawing on 25 years of experience working with public media institutions across the country.

“This visioning process brought together leading experts in New Jersey and nationally to design an innovative, yet homegrown public media system for the Garden State that builds on what’s working and addresses what’s not,” said Lauren Maddox, Co-Founder, Due East Partners. *“The ultimate goal is to ensure people across the state can access trusted, timely news and civic information through public media that is of New Jersey, by New Jersey, for New Jersey.”*

The full report is now available [here](#) for stakeholder input and public comment. To submit feedback, please complete [this short survey](#). Free Press and Due East will host listening sessions with key stakeholders through early April—including legislators, journalists, community leaders, educators, and philanthropic partners. Feedback will be summarized and incorporated into the final report expected later this spring.

About the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium

The [New Jersey Civic Information Consortium](#) is an independent nonprofit organization established by the State of New Jersey in 2018 to strengthen local journalism and civic information across the state. Through grants, research, training programs, back-office support, and collaboration with media organizations and community partners, the Consortium works to ensure New Jersey residents have access to reliable information that helps increase civic participation and enhance community life.

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