

# 2025-2026 IMPACT REPORT



# THANK YOU FOR MAKING LOCAL NEWS A PRIORITY

Growth has been a consistent theme over the past few years at Bay City News Foundation, and we are proud to report how much positive impact that has meant for our readers and the communities we serve.

Each of the four pillars of our mission have advanced significantly:

**Filling the gaps.** We expanded into a 13th county by merging with The Mendocino Voice, bolstering a small digital outlet and providing more critical information about local government, emergency preparation and cultural touchstones to readers. We now cover communities from Mendocino to Marin to Monterey, publishing on both LocalNewsMatters.org and MendoVoice.com.

**Partnering with others.** As a partner newsroom of the California Local News Fellowship program, we mentored three emerging journalists who not only gained great experience, but also helped amplify rural, environmental and criminal justice reform issues.

**Creating pathways.** We've provided paid summer internships to 60 college students, who learned fundamental journalism skills and published articles on important topics like lead abatement and immigrant farmworker communities. We also became the official fiscal sponsor of Mosaic Journalism initiative and the Contra Costa Youth Journalism program, which trains high school students from underserved school districts.

**Embracing technology.** We received national recognition from the Local Media Association for our ambitious use of AI to collect and distribute results during the 2024 election. This was one of six AI experiments that we have tried and shared publicly to help local newsrooms harness this powerful technology in an ethical and responsible way.

Our hybrid model works. Combining a legacy newswire that serves dozens of media outlets in the region with a public-service nonprofit has built our sustainability and resulted in more reporting, more readers and more community impact.

Thank you for your continued support,



Katherine Ann Rowlands  
Founder and Executive Director,  
Bay City News Foundation

# COMMUNITY IMPACTS



## ELECTION PROJECTS

With support from Reynolds Journalism Institute and American Press Institute, our team launched two significant voter-connection projects. The first used AI to scrape election results data across all 13 counties — a project that was shared in a public playbook and that we are continuing to iterate on in 2026. The second project launched a TikTok account and other initiatives to provide registration and ballot information to new voters.

“News organizations can take this playbook and build something that serves the needs of their own audiences,” said Randy Picht, RJJ executive director. “This is a real, tested strategy that has already made positive impacts in the Bay Area, and I look forward to seeing its influence spread.”



## CONTRA COSTA YOUTH JOURNALISM

The Contra Costa Youth Journalism (CCYJ) program, a fiscally sponsored project of Bay City News Foundation, continues to gain regional and international recognition. Recently featured as an impactful nonprofit in the Leshner Newsmakers Speaker Series and on KTVU News, the program also received an international award from Global Youth & News Media. CCYJ provides paid journalism training for high school students, empowering the next generation of journalists while strengthening the future of local news.

“CCYJ reminds me that my voice has power, and I can use that power to share the lesser-known, but equally important, stories about people in my community.” — Loujain Habibi, high school journalist.



## RADIO PARTNERSHIPS

BCNF brought our local reporting to the airwaves with two new radio partnerships. Through a first-of-its-kind collaboration with Radio Sausalito, reporters Ruth Dusseault and Leslie Katz debuted two weekly shows: Local News Matters, a roundup of key Bay Area stories, and Bay City Beat, a curated guide to arts and cultural events. Meanwhile, The Mendocino Voice teamed up with NPR-affiliate KZYX Radio to expand local news in Mendocino County.

These radio partnerships have allowed us to engage new audiences in Mendocino and Marin counties. In 2026, we are working to deepen those relationships and build our impact through these programs.

# PUBLIC SERVICE JOURNALISM

## EXPANDED REPORTING



New investments in 2025 expanded Bay City News Foundation’s public-service reporting across Northern California. A Marin Community Foundation grant is supporting a dedicated reporter and photojournalist whose coverage is freely shared with local news outlets and residents. A California Arts Council grant sustains arts and culture reporting across 13 counties via websites, newsletters and radio segments.

## LEADERSHIP RECOGNIZED



Bay City News Foundation publisher and executive director Katherine Ann Rowlands received national recognition for leadership in rebuilding sustainable local journalism. She appeared on the What Works podcast to discuss the nonprofit acquisition of The Mendocino Voice, was named a Hometown Headliner by Macalester College ('88), and was granted an alumni award from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism ('89).

## JOURNALISM AWARDS



Last year, our journalists earned recognition for excellence in reporting and commentary. California Local News Fellow Steve Brooks was honored for commentary published in Time Magazine, Local News Matters and Prism, while Sarah Stierch received recognition for Best Scoop for reporting in Mendocino County. Bay City News journalists also received multiple honors from the San Francisco Press Club.

## CAPTURING OUR IMPACT: RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

We track our reporting impacts daily, and we are proud to report that over the last year, our work sparked policy discussions, shaped local debates and received recognition from key stakeholders, including government agencies, media outlets and advocacy groups.

Our journalism has prompted responses from policymakers. The mayor of Antioch initiated talks to save an Amtrak station after our coverage of a protest. A San Jose official tracked a bill’s progress after it was highlighted in our reporting. Community voices were amplified, with opponents of San Francisco’s West Portal traffic plan crediting our coverage for slowing the process and organizers of an ICE strike praising our portrayal of detention’s impact on families.

Education and media institutions have also taken note—teachers, school districts and symposium speakers have cited our work, and major outlets like ABC7, KTVU and KPIX have used our reporting in their coverage. Our stories have gained extended reach by being featured or reshared by Wikipedia, the ACLU and BallotReady.



# INTERNSHIPS & MENTORING



## SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION

Each year, we offer paid college-level internships, hands-on newsroom experience and one-on-one mentorship to up to 12 aspiring journalists. Our interns take on daily assignments, sharpen their reporting skills and build strong portfolios to launch their careers.

As a capstone to the program, each intern produces an in-depth reporting project focused on critical issues across the 13 counties we serve, from Mendocino to Monterey. Projects from the 2024 cohort examined disparities in voter turnout, gaps in food security and unspent environmental cleanup funds. The 2025 cohort's work brought attention to AIDS funding at risk, inequitable access to nature and young artists advocating for the arts in San Francisco.

CHECK OUT  
THEIR WORK



“My internship at BCNF was truly life-changing. This is a newsroom that genuinely values young journalists, not just with words, but with trust, mentorship and hands-on experience. I was treated as an equal, encouraged to bring creative ideas forward and supported in turning them into real contributions. This internship was unlike any I have been a part of. BCNF isn’t afraid to experiment or evolve, and being part of such a forward-thinking team deepened my commitment to the field and opened my eyes to what journalism can be when it embraces change.”

Ciara Zavala, 2024 Intern  
Current Impact & Digital Product Manager

# WHAT'S NEXT

## GRANT-FUNDED INITIATIVES

### TRUSTING NEWS COHORT

BCNF was selected to be part of a cohort focusing on building AI literacy for our audiences. We are developing and sharing educational materials and resources to equip our readers with the skills to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of AI. We continue to seek ethical, transparent ways to use AI for research and content distribution.

### LMA LAB FOR JOURNALISM FUNDING

Through the "Sustaining Rural Voices: A Fundraising-Driven Journalism Initiative," BCNF is working on strengthening its fundraising strategies to support a dedicated reporter to cover underserved rural Mendocino County. A combination of sponsorships, small recurring donors and project-based campaigns will ensure a sustainable future.

### NATIVE TRUTHS

In partnership with Mendocino College, BCNF is hosting listening sessions with tribal community members to identify gaps in mainstream coverage of Indigenous issues and cultural life in Mendocino County.

### RURAL NEWS NETWORK PARTNERSHIP

As part of a national reporting series team, we reported on Mendocino County's workforce development programs and how they are adapting to the clean energy transition.

## OUR LATEST FEATURES

### *Bay City Books*



Local News Matters' monthly newsletter covering the literary world, including local authors, events and publishing trends.

SIGN UP FOR THE  
NEWSLETTER



A dedicated wine and agritourism section on The Mendocino Voice, featuring industry insights, event coverage, and local storytelling.

CHECK OUT THE  
NEW SECTION



### TRAILBLAZERS



A spotlight on women making a difference in their communities, featuring in-depth profiles and inspiring stories.

READ ABOUT THE  
TRAILBLAZERS



# OUR SUPPORTERS

## SUPPORTERS OF OUR WORK

Bay City News Foundation is grateful to our partners and institutional funders who have helped us grow and do impactful work since we began in 2018. They include:



Hogan-Newton Fund of the Miami Foundation

# SUPPORT BAY AREA NEWS

## HELP TO STRENGTHEN OUR IMPACT

### STAY CONNECTED



Subscribe to our Local News, Arts & Culture, and Monthly Books newsletters.

### DONATE ONLINE



Make a secure contribution online now to support this important work.

### DONATE BY CHECK



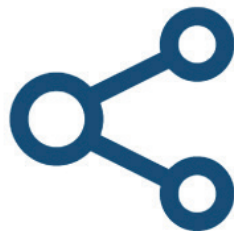
Bay City News Foundation  
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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Your donations allow us to pay journalists to cover local news that matters to the Bay Area and Northern California communities. Bay City News Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, Federal Tax ID #83-0654488. Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Your support goes towards:



Providing on-the-ground local news reporting and filling geographic and topical gaps.



Connecting newsrooms and building regional partnerships with other journalists.



Testing new technology to gather and distribute news in the ways consumers want to get it.



Supporting the next generation of journalists with internships and training.



BAY CITY NEWS FOUNDATION