2025-2026 IMPACT REPORT



BCN
BAY CITY NEWS
FOUNDATION

THANK YOU FOR MAKING LOCAL NEWS A PRIORITY

Growth has been a consistent theme since starting Bay City News Foundation in 2018, and we are proud to report how much positive impact that has meant for our readers and the communities we serve.



Filling the gaps. We expanded into a 13th county by acquiring The Mendocino Voice and will continue looking for ways to bolster small digital outlets and provide more critical information about local government, emergency preparation and cultural touchstones to readers. We now cover communities from Mendocino to Marin to Monterey and our 2026-29 Strategic Plan sets us up for expansion.

Partnering with others. As a partner newsroom of the California Local News Fellowship program, we have mentored four emerging journalists who not only gained great experience, but also helped amplify rural, environmental and criminal justice reform issues. We started collaborating with all news outlets in Marin County to lift the whole ecosystem with more impactful journalism.

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 support two high school training programs: Mosaic Journalism and Contra Costa Youth Journalism.

Embracing technology. We received national recognition from the Local Media Association for our ambitious use of AI to collect and distribute local election results, a model that could help newsrooms across the country. This and other uses of AI are now highlighted in Bay City News Labs, a new innovation division that will bring attention to the tools, threats and opportunities on the horizon so we can harness this powerful technology in a responsible and ethical away.

Our hybrid model works. Combining a mission-driven, versatile nonprofit with a legacy newswire for powerful distribution has led to more journalism, sustainability and 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, RJI 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 Lesher 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. They have examined disparities in voter turnout, gaps in food security, unspent environmental cleanup funds, AIDS funding at risk, inequitable access to nature, young artists advocating for the arts in San Francisco, AI in the urban landscape, and how cities are protecting themselves from fire risk, among many others.

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

BAY CITY NEWS LABS

BCNF was selected to be part of the Fire Up entrepreneurship program through the Maynard Institute and we are using the opportunity to launch a new innovation division called Bay City News Labs. We will work to mitigate the threat of AI undercutting audience traffic - a challenge facing all news organizations - and share what we learn from this and other experiments with technology.

GNI AI SUSTAINABILITY LAB

With a cohort of other newsrooms seeking to responsibly harness the power of AI, we are using the GNI AI Sustainability Lab this year to better track the impact of our journalism. We can use new tools to automate the process of seeking and collecting feedback from sources and readers to document that ways our stories change lives, influence policies and generate change today and over time.

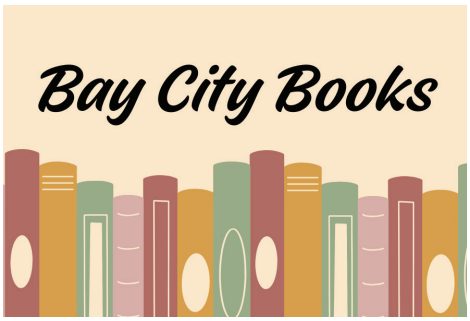
NATIVE TRUTHS

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.

MARIN NEWS MATTERS

With support from the Marin Community Foundation, we are dedicating reporting resources to this county and giving the content away for free to readers and other news outlets to bolster local journalism and improve civic engagement.

OUR LATEST FEATURES



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



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:



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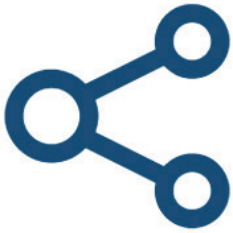
Bay City News Foundation
900 Hilldale Avenue,
Berkeley, CA 94708

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.

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