



**NEW JERSEY**  
**CIVIC INFORMATION**  
**CONSORTIUM**

**FP** Free Press  
Action

## **An Open Letter to New Jersey Leaders: Please Reinstate Funding to Protect Local News**

We, the undersigned, represent a broad coalition of New Jersey residents, organizations, and community leaders who believe high-quality local news and information is a public good that our communities need and deserve. **We write to urge action by our elected officials to restore \$2.5 million in funding for local news in the FY2027 State budget.**

Local news is critical to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of New Jerseyans. It keeps residents informed, guaranteeing their access to the information they need to be educated on the issues that impact their daily lives and meaningfully engage with their communities.

In the proposed New Jersey FY27 budget, **funding has been cut for the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium (NJCIC), a first-of-its-kind initiative created by the State of New Jersey in 2018 to provide resources for trustworthy, community-based news and information sources statewide.** Cutting funding for NJCIC puts support and resources for the local news ecosystem at risk; New Jersey communities already experience limited access to local news – and even news deserts – and this loss of funding would further limit their access.

**This issue is not partisan – strong local news benefits *everyone*.** According to [an April Rutgers-Eagleton Poll](#), the majority of New Jersey residents support a trustworthy and robust local news ecosystem, no matter their political affiliation. The poll finds that **64 percent of Republicans, 64 percent of independents, and 66 percent of Democrats in the Garden State would like to receive more news about their community. Further, over half say the same about statewide news: 56 percent would like to see more reporting on New Jersey as a whole.**

The NJCIC is a vital force in restoring local news coverage in NJ, with over \$12 million in media outlets investments since 2021. It is supporting innovative, public-interest newsrooms and projects that touch every corner of the state. Without sustained investment in NJCIC, the state risks losing an essential component of the civic infrastructure that keeps our residents informed, connected, and engaged, because these organizations rely on the Consortium’s funding to serve their communities.

Communities with more quality news and information have [higher rates of voting, volunteering, community engagement, and a healthier environment](#). New Jersey, however, has **seen a 67% decline in**

**its newspapers since 2005 and many residents feel left in the dark about what's happening around them.**

**Here's how NJCIC is investing in a more informed New Jersey:**

- Social media has fundamentally reshaped how information spreads, but it has also amplified the speed and scale of misinformation and disinformation. That is why NJCIC funds trustworthy media outlets that collectively receive over 1M+ unique visits per month (12M annually).
- NJCIC-funded media outlets have published over 30,000+ stories and news briefs. The outlets are geographically diverse, located in 18 of 21 counties.
- 1 in 4 New Jersey households access an NJCIC-funded news site per month
- New Jersey is home to many award-winning and hard-working reporters. But only one state in the country has fewer reporters per capita, which is why NJCIC has supported training programs that have added 220 journalism jobs and launched 109 journalism careers.
- NJCIC has also trained more than 1,600 community storytellers and reporters

**We stand united to protect local news, and urge our state representatives to do the same.** Invest in the local news system our communities statewide rely on to ensure all New Jerseyans have access to trustworthy civic information.

**We call upon New Jersey elected officials and the Governor's office to restore a minimum of \$2.5 million in funding for NJCIC in the FY27 budget.** We also call upon our fellow New Jersey residents, organizations, and community leaders to join us in standing up to protect and support our local news ecosystem.

Strong communities are built on strong local journalism. **In the FY2027 State budget, please restore the FY2026 \$2.5 million in funding for the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium.**

**Organizations**

AAPI NJ

Action Together Burlington County

Action Together Gloucester County

Action Together New Jersey

Atlantic City Focus

Bayard Rustin for Social Justice

Black Swallowtail Media Agency

BlueGreen Alliance

BlueWaveNJ

Camden Parent & Student Union

Carpenters Union

CATA - Comite de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agricolas

Central Desi

Citizen

Clean Water Action  
Clinton Hill Community Action  
Daily Targum  
DemCast New Jersey  
Editor, DOVERNOW Magazine/DOVERNOW.com  
Fair Share Housing Center  
Faith in New Jersey  
Follow South Jersey  
Food & Water Watch  
Friends of Metcalf Park  
Front Runner New Jersey.com  
Gathering Ground  
Heady NJ  
Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey  
HudPost  
IDEA Center for the Arts  
Industry Media Arts  
Informed public citizens make better decisions.  
Ironbound Community Corporation  
JAG -The Jersey Access Group  
Jersey Access Group  
Journalism + Design at The New School  
LATINO SPIRIT MEDIA  
League of Women Voters of New Jersey  
LNN USA dba Hammonton Gazette  
Maher Charitable Foundation  
Meet Her At The Gate  
Melanin and Maternal Wellness  
MercerMe.com/Editor  
Montclair Local  
MorristownGreen.com / Editor, publisher  
Muslim.com  
New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Jersey Council for the Humanities  
New Jersey League of Conservation Voters  
New Jersey Policy Perspective  
New Jersey Urban News  
New Jersey Working Families Alliance  
New Labor  
NJ Civic Information Consortium  
NJ Pen Media Group  
NJ State House News Service

Ocean County Visibility Brigade  
Operation Grow Inc.  
Public Square Amplified  
Rebuild Local News  
Returning Citizens Support Group  
Ridge View Echo  
Salvation and Social Justice  
South Jersey Climate News  
South Jersey Emerging Journalists Project  
South Jersey Forward  
The College of New Jersey  
The Gem Project, Inc.  
The Jersey Vindicator and Planet Princeton  
The News of Salem County LLC  
The Signal at The College of New Jersey  
The Signal Newspaper, TCNJ  
The Village Green  
The Woodbury Warbler  
Tow Center for Digital Journalism  
Trenton Journal  
United Progressive Democrats  
US Latino Affairs Initiatives  
VillageGreenNJ.com  
VoteLight Inc.  
Waterspirit  
Wayne Hills High School  
Weehawken Gazette

### **Individuals**

Assemblywoman Eleese Evans, Ret. (board chair of NJ Black Issues Convention)  
Brian Delk (freelance journalist)  
Dylan McNulty (communications professional)  
Justin Auciello (independent media professional)  
Katrina Janco (independent media professional)  
Pamela Barroway (independent media professional)  
Jennifer S. Higgins (president of AFT New Jersey)  
Robin Wilson Glover (retired journalist and educator)