

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **DETROIT JOURNALISM ENGAGEMENT FUND ANNOUNCES \$322,000 IN SUPPORT TO INNOVATIVE REPORTING EFFORTS**

*Local media outlets will receive grants from the Fund, a partnership between Knight Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan*

**Detroit, Michigan** – Six projects, involving collaborations between 13 southeast Michigan organizations, will receive \$322,000 from the [Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund](#) to increase quality journalism and help better inform communities. This is the first round of support awarded by the fund, which focuses on addressing issues of civic concern through innovative approaches to reporting and community engagement.

The Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund is supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, in partnership with the Ford Foundation and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. It aims to strengthen local coverage with a mix of different projects and approaches and is designed to help journalists involve community residents in the reporting process. The fund also seeks to support regular workshops and convenings of media partners and grantees to exchange best practices and learn about other successful journalism and engagement models that might be replicated in Detroit.

The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan issued an open call for ideas from media-specific organizations and community organizations with a media partner earlier this year; applications closed in November 2017. Since the applicant pool was so strong in the initial year of the grantmaking program, the funders provided an additional \$102,000 to add to their original commitment of \$220,000.

Through the projects from the six partnerships, the 13 organizations will work towards increasing the quality and reach of journalism in the region, with an emphasis on civic engagement, innovation and the equitable recovery of Detroit. The six projects include:

- \$100,000 to the **Michigan Chronicle**, in partnership with **ARISE Detroit**, to implement a citizen journalism program in three Detroit neighborhoods to cover the lives of residents,

including the Linwood/Dexter, Southwest Detroit, and Livernois/McNichols communities. The coverage will appear in the Michigan Chronical and will focus on social and economic factors in each neighborhood, such as the status of the small business environment and quality of schools.

- \$74,000 to **Outlier Media**, in partnership with **Investigative Reporters and Editors**, to expand Outlier Media's operation to target an additional 100,000 Detroiters with information about utility costs and initiatives, and to offer these residents the opportunity to work with journalists to have their information needs around these issues met. Outlier Media is a unique news and information service delivered entirely over SMS ("text messaging") for low-income news consumers in Detroit.

- \$50,000 to **WDET**, in partnership with **City Bureau**, to pilot an approach to increase engagement in and coverage of public body meetings in the Detroit area with the assistance of Detroit residents trained and acting as citizen journalists. The coverage will be aired on WDET, Detroit's public radio station. City Bureau is a Chicago-based nonprofit journalism lab that trains journalists to produce locally responsive coverage.

- \$48,000 to **Detroit Public Television**, in partnership with **Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD)** and the **University of Michigan's Detroit Metro Area Community Study**, to develop content for DPTV's "Other Detroit" series building off of CDAD member organizations' connection to neighborhoods and DMACS' local public polling data.

- \$30,000 to **Riverwise Magazine**, in partnership with the **James and Grace Lee Boggs Center for Nurturing Community Leadership**, to support the creation of journalism workshops to assist and encourage community members to write for the magazine, thus building access and skill for citizen journalists. Riverwise Magazine is a quarterly magazine with a primary mission to be a community-focused and community-supported publication.

- \$20,000 to **Tostada Magazine**, in partnership with **Allied Media Projects**, to support stories written by journalists of color focusing on the region's food system. Tostada Magazine is an online multimedia platform that intends to shift the conversation in Detroit food journalism to focus primarily on the voices of the city's diverse communities.

Support for the fund is part of Knight Foundation's \$2.4 million commitment to expand local reporting in Detroit and Southeast Michigan and involve community residents in telling the story of Detroit's future.

"Ensuring that all of our diverse communities have the information they need to contribute to our city, and the opportunity to share their own stories, is vital to building a stronger, more engaged Detroit," said Katy Locker, Knight Foundation program director for Detroit. "In that spirit, these projects will help to build essential connections between news providers, community organizations and city residents."

"The collective projects funded through the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund's pilot grantmaking program will strengthen local journalism by deeply engaging with and listening to new and old audiences across the region," says Katie Brisson, vice president, programs for the

Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. “We look forward to seeing the results of each project and what we can potentially learn from their experiences in bolstering quality local journalism.”

Thanks to an additional Ford Foundation investment, the Fund has also invested in the social media development for New Michigan Media and its partner organizations, which include: the Arab American News, the Detroit Jewish News, the Latino Press, the Michigan Chronicle, and the Michigan Korean Weekly. A two-year award has been made to hire a Community Engagement Manager to help broaden their reach and deepen connections to the communities they serve.

“Now more than ever we understand that it is critical to support quality, community-informed journalism that reaches all Detroiters,” said Kevin Ryan, Detroit program officer of the Ford Foundation. “I am excited about the groundbreaking projects which will be bolstered by these innovative media collaborations, but beyond that I’m eager to see the amazing stories that will emerge.”

The fund is administered by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. For more information on the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund, please visit [cfsem.org/journalism](http://cfsem.org/journalism).

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**The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation** is a national foundation with strong local roots. We invest in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Our goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which we believe are essential for a healthy democracy. For more, visit [knightfoundation.org](http://knightfoundation.org).

**The Ford Foundation** is an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization. For over 80 years it has worked with courageous people on the frontlines of social change worldwide, guided by its mission to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement. With headquarters in New York, the foundation has offices in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. For more, visit [fordfoundation.org](http://fordfoundation.org).

**The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan** is a full-service philanthropic organization leading the way to positive change in our region. As a permanent community endowment built by gifts from thousands of individuals and organizations, the Foundation supports a wide variety of activities benefiting education, arts and culture, health, human services, community development, and civic affairs. Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed more than \$951 million through nearly 62,000 grants to nonprofit organizations throughout Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, St. Clair, and Livingston counties. For more information, please visit [www.cfsem.org](http://www.cfsem.org).