


NewsMatch

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Frequently Asked Questions

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NewsMatch 101

What is NewsMatch?

NewsMatch is the largest collaborative fundraising campaign to support nonprofit news in the U.S. The program centers on a matching gift model that leverages the support of national funding partners to generate support from individuals and local supporters for hundreds of independent media outlets that produce fact-based news and information.

What is the purpose of NewsMatch?

The long-term vision for NewsMatch is to ensure relevant and reliable news for every community across the U.S. by strengthening the financial sustainability of news organizations that are nonprofit, nonpartisan, and dedicated to public service. NewsMatch has four strategic objectives to achieve this goal:

- ▶ Increase the number of people that support nonprofit journalism
- ▶ Grow local and regional investments from philanthropic institutions and major donors
- ▶ Develop and strengthen sustainable fundraising capabilities within newsrooms
- ▶ Increase awareness and public support for nonprofit journalism

How does the program work?

NewsMatch is a catalytic solution to grow and expand who funds the news in our communities. The program is powered by three components:

- ▶ The core element of the program is a matching gift campaign. Funders pool their resources to match individual donations made to newsrooms. By sparking individual giving, NewsMatch can ultimately increase a community's news resources.
- ▶ The second is a learning and training component. Throughout the year, the Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) and News Revenue Hub provide news organizations with toolkits, training, and coaching to help build their development skills. This increases their NewsMatch success and also their year-around ability to diversify and grow revenue in support of public service reporting and run sustainable news outlets.

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- ▶ And the last component is all about building awareness. NewsMatch leverages the collective group of funders, newsrooms, and partners to amplify the value of quality journalism and help audiences and other supporters discover and give support to the news in their community.

How does the program define success?

There are a number of ways NewsMatch defines success, one of the leading indicators is its effectiveness to broaden philanthropic support for nonprofit news.

- ▶ Since NewsMatch began, the number of national funding partners supporting newsrooms with matching funds has grown from 1 to 18 in an individual campaign year.
- ▶ Over 350,000 individuals have donated to support a newsroom for the first time during NewsMatch.
- ▶ In 2022, newsrooms secured an additional \$5.5 million in matching funds from nearly 800 major donors, local foundations, and small businesses, surpassing the total amount of matching grants from national partners for the first time in the program's history.

In addition to expanding the pool of supporters, the program also defines success by growth in total dollars raised as a result.

- ▶ Total dollars received by newsrooms during the NewsMatch campaign period now exceeds \$271 million since 2017.
- ▶ National funding partners have awarded more than \$25 million in unrestricted grant dollars to support nonprofit news through matching funds and goal-based bonuses.
- ▶ \$246 million has been raised by the newsrooms themselves from individuals and additional local matches from community foundations, local businesses, major donors and more.
- ▶ Total dollars raised by newsrooms during the campaign (\$246 million) through individual donations and community matches is nearly 10x the amount awarded by NewsMatch directly (\$25 million). The program only matches a fraction of individual donations, but newsrooms express an intangible value of matching funds to generate awareness, cultivate new relationships with local funders, and engage major donors.

Lastly, NewsMatch also measures success by the fundraising skills and capabilities gained by newsrooms. This is largely measured qualitatively and demonstrated by the indicators above. Many NewsMatch participants receive the training and tools to set up their initial fundraising operations through the program and, as a result, generate individual donor revenue for many years and well beyond the campaign period.

Which newsrooms participate in NewsMatch?

NewsMatch supports actively publishing U.S. nonprofit news outlets that produce original reporting as a public service. Participants range from hyperlocal neighborhood news outlets through national and global publications. All participants must be members in good standing of the Institute for Nonprofit News (INN).

INN membership is open to independent, nonprofit news organizations that:

- ▶ Produce high-quality and original journalism that serves their communities through trustworthy information and encouraging civic engagement

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- ▶ Maintain editorial and operational independence
- ▶ Are transparent in their sources of funding
- ▶ Comply with membership standards for ethics and best practices in nonprofit journalism

Who runs NewsMatch?

NewsMatch is a collaborative effort between newsrooms, funders, and industry service organizations.

Since its inception, the program has been supported by a consortium of 30 funders and supported through the Fund for Nonprofit News, an open collaborative fund at [The Miami Foundation](#). The Foundation oversees the fiscal administration of NewsMatch funds.

The program is managed by the [Institute for Nonprofit News \(INN\)](#), a nationwide network of 400+ independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan news organizations. In addition to coordinating the program, INN also provides support to participating organizations through group and individual training around fundraising, building local match funders, and more.

[News Revenue Hub](#) serves as a key learning partner that creates a series of time-saving turnkey resources and learning resources to help newsrooms run successful individual donor campaigns.

For Newsrooms

How do newsrooms receive money through NewsMatch?

Newsrooms can generate funds through up to five NewsMatch funding methods:

- ▶ National pooled matching funds awarded to organizations with operating budgets below \$1 million, where the program has the greatest impact in developing individual donor bases.
- ▶ Partner matching funds supporting newsrooms of any size that cover specific topics or communities.
- ▶ Local matching funds secured by newsrooms to increase their campaign match goals.
- ▶ Bonuses awarded to newsrooms that hit certain target performance metrics such as securing first-time donors or local matches.
- ▶ Individual donations that may be doubled or tripled by the NewsMatch pool matching funders. Generally, individual donations are matched by up to \$1,000 each.

In what ways do newsrooms benefit from participating in NewsMatch?

Besides receiving unrestricted funding through main fund matches, partner fund matches and bonuses, NewsMatch enhances newsroom sustainability by giving them the tools they need to establish a replicable fundraising strategy. Newsrooms receive a variety of training opportunities that help them learn about best practices for digital fundraising, cultivating major donors and enlisting local match funders, audience development, and much more. They can also take advantage of individual coaching tailored to their specific needs. Through the Campaign Toolkit, participants are equipped with language and messaging that can be tweaked and utilized for campaigns outside of NewsMatch as well.

How do you prepare newsrooms to participate in the campaign?

Newsrooms receive training through webinars as well as individualized coaching which can help them learn and implement best practices for executing a digital fundraising campaign. Newsrooms are plugged into the network of services offered by INN to help them beyond individual fundraising. News Revenue Hub produces a comprehensive campaign toolkit which provides newsrooms with the tactical resources they need to execute their campaigns, including email and graphic templates, key messaging points, social copy, and more.

Can large organizations participate in NewsMatch? What is the benefit for them?

Yes, organizations with operating budgets above \$ 1 million can and do participate in NewsMatch. All active INN members (regardless of size) are eligible to receive partner funds and goal-based bonus awards. In 2022, the 50 participants with the largest budgets received an average of nearly \$14,000 each in NewsMatch funds. Sixty-eight percent received partner funds and 88% received goal-based bonus payments.

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In addition, newsrooms with operating expenses over \$1 million still receive full access to NewsMatch's learning offerings like webinars and peer-to-peer info exchanges. The organizations also continue to receive access to time-saving resources like the Campaign Toolkit — a library of emails, banner ads, and social media assets that can be customized to run a year-end campaign.

What information are newsrooms expected to report to receive NewsMatch funding?

After the campaign has ended, NewsMatch asks all participating newsrooms to complete the INN Index Survey, the most comprehensive study of the state of nonprofit news. As part of the reporting process, newsrooms are asked a series of questions about their year-end campaign performance, including total amount raised from individual donors during this period, total donations received, total unique donors, total new recurring donors, total first time donors, number of local match funders in designated categories and the corresponding amount raised in those local match funding categories. This data has been tracked year-over-year since 2017 and is used to identify overall trends as well as trends among certain newsroom cohorts (i.e. newsroom with a certain operating budget range or by launch years, etc.)

Operations and Funding

Who supports NewsMatch?

In 2023, NewsMatch is supported by a consortium of 14 program funders including Democracy Fund, Heising Simons Foundation, Inasmuch Foundation, Independence Public Media Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Jonathan Logan Family Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Loud Hound, Maida Lynn, Vere Initiatives, Walton Family Foundation, William and Flore Hewlett Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation. In-kind support also is provided by The New York Times. The Fund for Nonprofit News is managed by The Miami Foundation.

What do these funders support?

In addition to funding the national pool matching fund, these foundations provided fundraising, communications and other in-kind support as the program developed and worked with capacity-building and operational partners The Miami Foundation, the Institute for Nonprofit News and News Revenue Hub to manage applications, verification and processing of donations, create and distribute shared campaign materials, provide technical support and capacity-building programs for NewsMatch participants.

What does it cost to run the campaign? What portion is invested in newsrooms?

In 2022, NewsMatch program expenses totaled \$5.9 million. Overhead accounted for 9% of actual expenses absorbed by the NewsMatch fund, which includes marketing and communications, fundraising, administration, research and evaluation, and program management expenses. The remainder represents direct support to newsrooms in the form of matching grants or bonuses and capacity-building programs and services (91%).

In 2022, a significant portion of capacity-building training and services provided by INN and News Revenue Hub was funded independently and not by the NewsMatch fund. In 2023, a greater share of capacity-building programs and service expenses will be funded by NewsMatch; however, program management expenses are expected to remain close to 11% of the total budget.

What is the difference between national matching funds, partner funds, and local matches?

- ▶ National matching funds are secured by the program and awarded to organizations with operating budgets below \$1 million.
- ▶ Partner matching funds are secured by the program targeted towards newsrooms (regardless of size) covering specific topics or communities.
- ▶ Local matches are secured by newsrooms independently to increase their pool of campaign match funds.