

### RESPONDING WHEN JOURNALISTS NEED US MOST

When a journalist faces a legal crisis, time is of the essence. No phone number is more important than a newsroom's lawyer— but fewer news organizations have their own counsel now, and legal bills can destroy an independent journalist. **That's why the Reporters Committee's free Legal Hotline and rapid response capacity are so critical.**

Rapid response is part of the Reporters Committee's origin story. We were founded in 1970 at a time when the nation's news media faced a wave of government subpoenas asking reporters to name confidential sources. Just a few years later, recognizing the immense need for a place to go for legal help, the Reporters Committee set up a free hotline to provide a single point of contact for journalists with general legal questions and urgent matters.

- Five decades later, in August 2023, our attorneys sprang into action when local police raided the office of the Marion County Record, along with the home of its publisher, Eric Meyer, in Marion, Kansas. We helped the paper obtain a local attorney and rallied a national coalition of news organizations condemning this blatant violation of the First Amendment. Our fast, coordinated response helped get results: Within days, the prosecutor withdrew the search warrant. The police chief who authorized the raid later resigned, and the newspaper's seized materials were returned.
- Reporters Committee attorneys were also quick to respond to unlawful arrests that prevented journalists from reporting the news. After NewsNation reporter Evan Lambert's arrest while covering the aftermath of a train derailment and chemical spill in Ohio, lawyers from the Reporters Committee filed a lawsuit on his behalf. The lawsuit resulted in an \$80,000 judgment to compensate Lambert for the wrongful arrest.
- And when Los Angeles radio journalist Josie Huang was unlawfully and violently arrested while covering a racial justice protest, we provided her with free legal representation, securing not only a \$700,000 settlement but a precedent-setting agreement with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department requiring it to train its officers on newsgathering rights.



### ELECTION AND PROTEST PREPAREDNESS

Never is the Reporters Committee's rapid response capacity needed more than during election cycles and protests. The 2016 and 2020 general elections saw repeated violations of newsgathering rights when **journalists covering political protests faced abuse, attack, confiscation of equipment, and detention and arrest.**

Civil unrest frequently results in violations of press freedom, as journalists seek to report on the interactions between protesters and police. During the nationwide racial justice protests of 2020, calls to our Legal Hotline spiked — and they remain consistently high.

As the 2024 election approaches, the Reporters Committee is reinforcing its rapid response capacity, training journalists about their rights when reporting on campaigns and elections, and working to ensure that police are properly trained for interactions with reporters at protests.

In October 2023, we spearheaded a meeting of law enforcement and newsrooms with the U.S. Department of Justice to provide better protections for the press covering demonstrations. We will train journalists and police in the new DOJ guidance before the 2024 elections.

## LOCAL RESOURCES

**Journalists in small markets covering local communities are squeezed from every direction: They face media consolidation, layoffs, and shrinking resources, including diminished legal support.**

The Reporters Committee supports local journalists through our Local Legal Initiative and ProJourn, which connects newsrooms with pro bono help in corporate legal departments and law firms and increases the supply of pro bono lawyers trained in pre-publication review and access to public records.

Both programs are generously supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.



Dedicated local journalists break important stories and overcome secretive government bureaucracies with legal aid from the Reporters Committee. **Our legal work in support of these journalists is helping to change policy and restore transparency and accountability in local government.**

- In Memphis, our **Tennessee** Local Legal Initiative attorney sued on behalf of a coalition of newsrooms to successfully access thousands of pages of records and video footage following the fatal police beating of a Black man, Tyre Nichols.
- A lawsuit our **Pennsylvania** Local Legal Initiative attorney brought on behalf of journalist Brittany Hailer resulted in a precedent-setting legal win, forcing Allegheny County to release autopsy records after inmates die in prison.
- And our **Colorado** Local Legal Initiative attorney helped a media coalition obtain video of an unlawful closed meeting where Denver Public Schools changed its security policies following a school shooting.
- With the expansion of the Local Legal Initiative to **Indiana** in 2023, even more journalists will have access to dedicated pro bono legal expertise.

**ProJourn**

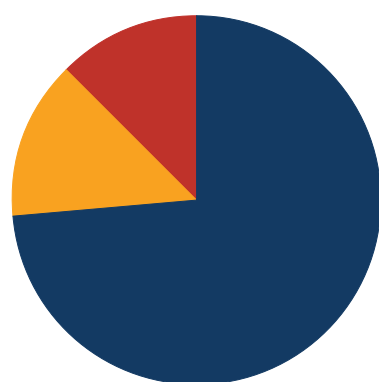
**In 2023, ProJourn helped newsrooms break big stories — and protected them from legal risk, all at no cost.**

- KNKX in Washington State relied on ProJourn's donated legal services before it went live with an award-winning investigation of alleged misconduct by coaches in a youth soccer league.
- **Civil Eats** won a James Beard award for a five-part series on the labor and health abuses facing workers in the animal agriculture sector, which was supported by ProJourn's vetting services.
- ProJourn is now expanding its legal service offerings in response to the needs of nonprofit media startups. We are linking these newsrooms with law firms and corporate legal partners that can assist them with **governance, contract, and 501(c)(3)**-related legal expertise to sustain these organizations and keep their communities informed.
- ProJourn launched an **Advisory Committee** with industry leaders in law, technology, journalism, and philanthropy, chaired by Thomas R. Burke of Davis Wright Tremaine LLP and Sima Saraffan of Microsoft, to provide strategic guidance for the program.

# ANNUAL FINANCIALS

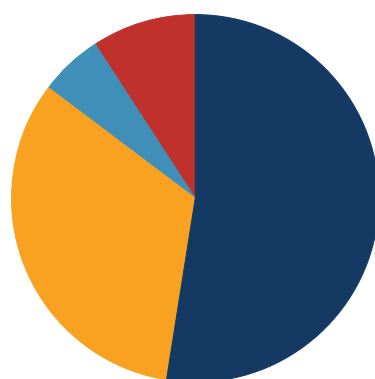
The following information is from the Reporters Committee's Audited Financial Statement for the fiscal year spanning Jan. 1, 2023, through Dec. 31, 2023.

## FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES, ACCRUAL BASIS



- Legal Defense and Research  
\$4,802,449
- Fundraising  
\$913,234
- Management and General  
\$807,705

## REVENUE



- Contributions and Grants  
\$2,488,708
- Special Events  
\$1,547,024
- Program Services  
\$269,309
- Interest and Dividends  
\$421,839

## ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND FUND BALANCES, ACCRUAL BASIS

### Current Assets

Cash and equivalents	\$ 1,539,066
Contributions and grants receivable	\$ 1,123,501
Prepaid expenses	\$ 91,649
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 2,754,216</b>

### Other Assets

Grants and contributions receivable-long term, net of discount	\$ 241,895
Investments	\$15,102,930
Property and equipment, net	\$ 321,249
Operating lease right-of-use assets, net	\$ 1,943,168
Security deposits	\$ 36,595
<b>TOTAL OTHER ASSETS</b>	<b>\$17,645,837</b>

**TOTAL \$20,400,053**

### LIABILITIES

#### Current Liabilities

Accounts payable	\$ 60,043
Accrued expenses	\$ 212,187
Accrued vacation	\$ 153,612
Operating lease liability, current portion	\$ 362,100
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 787,942</b>

#### Other Liabilities

Operating lease liability, net of current position	\$ 2,119,177
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**TOTAL \$ 2,907,119**

### NET ASSETS

#### Without Donor Restrictions

Undesignated	\$ 7,074,125
Board designated quasi-endowment	\$ 1,228,622
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS</b>	<b>\$ 8,302,747</b>

With donor restrictions	\$ 9,190,187
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**TOTAL \$17,492,934**

Our work over the past 12 months would not have been possible without the generous support of our individual and institutional donors, many of whom are identified in this annual report. The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Copies of current financial statements are available on our website at <https://www.rcfp.org/annual-report/>. You can also receive them upon request by contacting the Reporters Committee at 1156 15th Street NW, Suite 1020, Washington, D.C., 20005 or by telephone at 202-795-9300.

# OUR SUPPORTERS

The Reporters Committee is deeply grateful to all individual and household supporters. The list below represents all individuals and households who donated over \$1,000 in 2023 and are recognized as part of our Leadership Circle. Due to space considerations, we cannot include the names of every single household who supports us, but we appreciate each and every donor who makes our work possible.

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Kristin and H. A. Zisson

# INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

Foundation, corporate, media, law, and nonprofit funding support is critical for the Reporters Committee's continued impact. We are grateful to organizational supporters that contributed over \$1,000 in 2023, listed below by category. Due to space considerations, institutional funding at lower levels is not included, but we are grateful to all of our institutional funding partners.

## CORPORATIONS

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The Klarman Family Foundation  
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The Nararo Foundation  
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The Snider Foundation  
The Steinman Foundation  
Stella P. Holt Foundation  
Sustainable Grantmaking Partners Fund  
TEGNA Foundation  
The Tess Memorial Fund  
Ward Creek Foundation

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Davis Wright Tremaine LLP  
Foley Hoag  
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News/Media Alliance  
The Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters  
Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association  
Tennessee Association of Broadcasters  
University of Missouri School of Journalism  
Wallace House Center for Journalists at the University of Michigan



# FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AWARDS SPOTLIGHT



The Reporters Committee honored pioneers in journalism and law at the 2023 Freedom of the Press Awards in New York. The event raised more than \$1.7 million to support and defend the free press for years to come.



Photo by Meridith Kohut

The 2023 Freedom of the Press Awards honored (from left to right): Glenn Cook, executive editor, and Rachel Aston, photographer, for the Las Vegas Review-Journal; Pierre G. Thomas, chief justice correspondent for ABC News; Martha Minow, 300th Anniversary University Professor at Harvard University; Rebecca Landsberry-Baker, executive director of the Indigenous Journalists Association; and Ashton R. Lattimore, editor-in-chief of Prism. Lizzie Johnson, local enterprise reporter for The Washington Post, shared the Catalyst award with Aston and Cook, but could not attend the event.

## CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



**MARTHA MINOW**  
300th Anniversary  
University Professor  
Harvard University



**PIERRE G. THOMAS**  
Chief Justice Correspondent  
ABC News



**REBECCA LANDSBERRY-BAKER**  
Executive Director  
Indigenous Journalists  
Association



**ASHTON R. LATTIMORE**  
Editor-in-Chief  
Prism

## CATALYST AWARD



**RACHEL ASTON**  
Photographer  
Las Vegas Review-Journal



**GLENN COOK**  
Executive Editor  
Las Vegas Review-Journal



**LIZZIE JOHNSON**  
Local Enterprise Reporter  
The Washington Post

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**Paul Steiger**, *ProPublica*

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**Sandra Torry**, *Freelance*

**Judy Woodruff**, *PBS/The NewsHour*

Our staff of more than 30 legal, communications, finance, development, and other experts, including legal fellows, ensure we can provide high quality legal support for journalists. [Meet them at rcfp.org/staff/](https://www.rcfp.org/staff/)



SCAN TO MAKE  
A DONATION

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press provides pro bono legal representation, amicus curiae support, and other legal resources to protect First Amendment freedoms and the newsgathering rights of journalists.

Donations to the Reporters Committee help to protect the right to gather and distribute news; to keep government accountable by ensuring access to public records, meetings, and courtrooms; and to preserve free speech and a free press, as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

**DONATE EASILY AND SECURELY AT [RCFP.ORG/DONATE](https://www.rcfp.org/donate) OR BY SCANNING THE QR CODE AT LEFT.**

Have questions about donating appreciated stock, donor advised funds, or other non-cash giving, or supporting the Reporters Committee in your estate plan? Email [giving@rcfp.org](mailto:giving@rcfp.org) and we'd love to talk through your options.

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## NATIONWIDE PRESENCE

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

