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Sofía Mejías-Pascoe (center) reporting in San Diego on Nov. 30, 2021. Mejías-Pascoe is one of three journalists moving into new investigative reporting roles at inewsource. (Zoe Meyers/inewsource)
Our Impact, Together

Now, more than ever, we at inewsource are privileged to serve San Diego and Imperial counties with our in-depth and trustworthy accountability reporting.

Over this past year, we strived to safeguard what matters to you by listening, investigating and shining a white hot light on what could be better. We know trust is earned, and there are many good reasons people don’t trust the “media.” Newscasts are riddled with analysis and opinion. There is a media outlet to cater to every political bent and misinformation floods the internet, social media and perhaps your inbox.

This annual report is a celebration of our mission, our work and our impact for local communities, together. Reader support powers our newsroom and for this we are grateful. In these pages, I hope you will feel and continue to share our passion for the essential role credible information plays in our democracy.

With gratitude for your support,

Lorie Hearn
CEO, Editor and Founder
Mission

inewsource is a nonprofit, nonpartisan newsroom dedicated to improving lives in the San Diego region and beyond through impactful, data-based investigative and accountability journalism.

Vision

Betrayals of the public trust are revealed and rectified, wrongdoing is deterred, and inequities are illuminated thanks to inewsource’s deep, dogged, fact-based reporting.

Values

Truth
Transparency
Collaboration
Community
Stories with Impact

Impact is the gold standard for inewsource reporting. That means our work resulted in positive change, better lives. We published more than 90 stories in FY22. Those stories led to state and federal investigations to help struggling veterans, a new state law to protect farmers, greater local vaccine availability and an end to illegal police practices. Here are highlights from our work.
San Diego County changed its public-facing COVID-19 vaccine policy to make it easier for individuals without a photo ID to get vaccinated following an inewsource investigation.

The county had required a photo ID and proof of age to receive a vaccine at its clinics. That documentation can be harder for those without legal status in the U.S. to provide, and photo ID requirements caused confusion and made vaccinating undocumented individuals more difficult in communities with already low vaccination rates.
Police departments stop illegally sharing data

Most police agencies spend thousands of dollars every year to collect drivers’ location data by scanning license plates. Our reporting revealed that five departments in San Diego County were sharing that information illegally with hundreds of other law enforcement agencies across the country.

Within months, all five departments ended or suspended the practice of illegally sharing license plate reader information with out-of-state agencies.

License plate data contains private information, which could be used by anyone who has access to find out where someone is going and who they spend their time with. The vast majority of information collected had nothing to do with solving crime or protecting the public.
California adopts new state law to protect farmers

In February 2021, inewsource told the story of an Alpine chicken rancher rejected for fire insurance. He wasn’t alone. Our reporting found that California farmers in high fire-risk areas like San Diego County’s backcountry were being dropped by insurance companies at increasingly high rates, seriously threatening San Diego County’s $1.8 billion agricultural industry.

Our reporting contributed to a new state law in July 2021, when Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 11. The bill made farmers eligible to insure their buildings against fire damage. Introductory language for the bill cited inewsource’s original reporting.

Clockwise:
1. Burn scars from the Valley Fire are seen from Hidden Glen Road in Alpine on Jan. 29, 2021. The 16,390-acre fire started on Sept. 5, 2020. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)
2. Nathan Rakov works at the computer in his home office, which is part of a converted barn on his Alpine ranch, Jan. 29, 2021. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)
3. Pigs eat fruit tossed to them by ranch owner Nathan Rakov in Alpine on Jan. 29, 2021. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)
4. Burn scars from the Valley Fire are seen along Lyons Valley Road in Alpine on Jan. 29, 2021. The 16,390-acre fire started on Sept. 5, 2020. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)
For much of the last century, San Diego County was racially divided. In many areas, only white people were allowed to purchase or rent homes. These racial restrictions, also known as covenants, proliferated across the U.S. in the first half of the twentieth century and continued to be added to property deeds even after their enforcement was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1948.

inewsource partnered with National Public Radio and several of its member stations to determine the scope of racial covenant language nationwide. In San Diego, our reporting unveiled more than 10,000 real estate documents with clauses that excluded people of color and other groups, such as Jews and Hindus.

As a result, San Diego County officials made digitized historic property records more easily accessible by the public. A new state law also aims to make it easier to uncover and remove racially restrictive language.
Under a 2018 law, the U.S. government agreed to cover medical costs for veterans inside and outside the veterans affairs health care system to ensure they wouldn’t go without needed care.

Through documents and interviews, inewsource showed how the VA is taking away health care options from veterans, despite the law. These efforts caused gaps in care, questionable cancer treatment plans and cutoffs in mental health care for suicidal patients.

Members of Congress called the findings “shocking” and “disgraceful.” One lawmaker pointed to the story during a Senate Veterans’ Affairs committee hearing and asked the VA Secretary to address the findings. A national VA spokesperson told inewsource that following our reporting, the San Diego VA submitted requests for additional staffing and began an audit process to ensure veterans get access to needed health care. The story was published in partnership with USA TODAY and featured on the front page of newspapers across the country.
Life-saving investigation prompts local, state and federal inquiries

An *inewsourse* investigation revealed widespread drug use in the once-renowned Veterans Village of San Diego rehab program for struggling vets. Our reporter also found violence, a severe staffing shortage and multiple overdoses.

Veterans Village receives more than $17 million a year in funding from county, state and federal government agencies, which supports rehabilitation, employment, housing and other services.

The *inewsourse* reporting prompted state and federal investigations and a freeze on new admissions by county officials, as the death toll rose to five this year. Its chief operating officer resigned. The campus remains under investigation by authorities as we go to press with this annual impact report.

“I would hug you if I could. Thank you. Thank you for being our voice. I can’t express how much your work means to me. To us.”

- Veterans Village resident
Building the Next Generation of Journalists

Coaching and mentoring the next generation of investigative journalists is a core part of the mission of inewsource.

This year, we expanded this important area of our work into a comprehensive workforce program that has had – and will have – a lasting impact on our communities: Introducing young people to the role journalism plays in a healthy, local democracy and helping them build careers in service to this region.

Highlights of our program in action:

- In the spring of 2022, we offered our first high school internship and chose two more for a paid learning experience in the summer.
- We boosted our paid college internships from two per semester to three. Our past interns are serving constituencies large and small in newsrooms across the country.
- We doubled our Report for America corps members from one to two in June. This national program places early career journalists in full-time jobs in newsrooms like ours where they can build reporting skills and connect with communities they cover.
- We continued to employ our “returnship” recruiting philosophy, which means we strive to bring San Diego County natives – who have left the area for school or work – back home to practice their media skills in communities where they grew up.

We have plans to broaden this commitment with new programs to involve everyday citizens in information gathering and to train more journalists of color to lead investigative newsrooms. 2023 will be a key time to invest in our workforce.

Our first high school intern, Natalia Wornovitzky, then a junior at Francis Parker, spent a week with inewsource in March 2022. Pictured here with inewsource Investigative Data Coordinator Jill Castellano. (file photo/inewsource)

Top photo: Crystal Niebla, infrastructure and government accountability reporter and Report for America corps member. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)
Awards

*inewsource* journalists won 32 local and national awards for investigative series and reporting on topics ranging from the toll of COVID-19 to outside money shaping some of San Diego County’s biggest election races.

The awards recognize some of our most impactful journalism exposing inequity, injustice and government’s failure to protect the public.

**Excellence in Health Care Journalism**

*Association of Health Care Journalists*

Investigative (Small)

Public Health (Small)

**Excellence in Journalism**

*San Diego Press Club*

At Large: Wildcard: Election Coverage

Best Radio/Podcast Entry

Honorable mention, Online and Daily newspapers: Business & Financial

Second place, Online and Daily newspapers: Election Coverage

Third place, Online and Daily newspapers: Criminal Justice

Third Place, Online and Daily newspapers: General News

**San Diego Area Journalism**

*Society of Professional Journalists, San Diego*

2021 Distinguished Coverage Award

First place, Audio Division – Feature Story

First place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Business Story

First place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Education Story

First place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Health Story

First place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Housing/Development Story

First place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Investigative/Enterprise Story – Series

First place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Political/Government Story

First place, Photography/Headlines Division — Photo Essay

First place, Video Division — Community Services Program or Series

Second place, Audio Division – Feature Story

Second place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Crime/Courts Story

Second place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Environment Story

Second place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Housing/Development Story

Second place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Political/Government Story

Second place, Digital Division — Multimedia Presentation

Second place, Photography/Headlines Division — News Photo

Third place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Business Story

Third place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Crime/Courts Story

Third place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Education Story

Third place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Health Story

Third place, Daily Reporting and Writing Division — Political/Government Story

Third place, Photography/Headlines Division — Photo Essay
By the Numbers

This fiscal year, we exceeded the $2 million mark in revenue for the first time, with continuing support from our community. The growth enabled us to hire a full team and provide more coverage of stories and sustainability of our nonprofit business. In 2020, we received a transformational grant to hire revenue generating positions, which then would increase our funds to be able to hire more reporting staff. Since then we’ve doubled our team to 22 staff. We are grateful for our supporters who helped advance inewsource’s mission. We received yet another unqualified annual audit and remain in sound financial standing, since our founding 13 years ago.

Our Results
FY22 (07/01/21–06/30/22)

Revenue

- TOTAL REVENUE: $2,137,768
  - Foundations: $1,346,703
  - Individuals: $741,970
  - Corporate: $9,482
  - Other Revenue: $39,613

Expenses

- TOTAL EXPENSES: $2,148,384
  - Program: $1,511,556
  - Development: $425,106
  - Management and General: $211,721

FY21 (07/01/20–06/30/21)

Revenue

- TOTAL REVENUE: $1,831,247
  - Foundations: $848,954
  - Individuals: $792,025
  - Corporate: $15,645
  - Other Revenue*: $174,623

Expenses

- TOTAL EXPENSES: $1,656,385
  - Program: $1,223,050
  - Development: $242,202
  - Management and General: $191,132

* includes PPP forgiven loan

$306,467

Increase in gross revenue compared from FY22 to FY21

To access our full financial information, please visit inewsource.org/finance or email us at finance@inewsource.org.
Our Supporters

Spotlight Club

A growing community of loyal donors giving $1,000 or more to protect credible and in-depth journalism as essential to a thriving democracy

Major Impact Ambassador

$25,000+

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“I think of the long hours you put in to unearth the facts and your skills and perseverance in documenting them and I’m enormously grateful. Please know many, many of us feel this way. inewsource’s mission and awesome reporters are why I continue to support inewsource with monthly ‘stretch’ donations. We need investigative reporting now more than ever!”

- Ann Zahner, Spotlight Club member and Community Partner
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Honoring the legacy of Jim Brown
MAY 26, 1933 - DEC 17, 2020

Thank you to the James Silberrad Brown Foundation for the largest legacy gift in our history. After graduating from San Diego State University with a degree in Management in 1967, Jim Brown worked as a Program Manager at General Dynamics Electronics before beginning a lifelong career in real estate.

He was an accomplished entrepreneur and very active in the San Diego community, including as a supporter of inewsource with his wife Marilyn Creson Brown since our founding in 2009.

Thanks to this legacy gift supporting strategic growth and audience engagement, inewsource will be able to honor Jim’s longstanding commitment to data-based, investigative journalism.
Ways to Give

Investigative News Fund

Give to the new inewsource Investigative News Fund and power our watchdog reporting. The fund directly supports our reporting team of 10, from editors and investigative reporters to emerging journalists.

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Create a Legacy

We’ve partnered with FreeWill to make it easier than ever to protect what you love – and 100% free. freewill.com/inewsource

Other Ways to Give

Visit: inewsource.org/ways-to-give

Cover photos left to right, top to bottom:

Tom Hom is photographed outside of the North Park home that his family lived in when he was a teenager, Aug. 12, 2021. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)

Dozens of people wait in line for a clothing donation distribution at the Templo Embajadores de Jesús shelter in Tijuana, June 1, 2022. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)

Burn scars from the Valley Fire are seen from Hidden Glen Road in Alpine on Jan. 29, 2021. The 16,390-acre fire started on Sept. 5, 2020. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)

Turquoise Teagle, a former employee at Veterans Village of San Diego, is shown on Feb. 13, 2021, in her prior role working at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Mission Valley. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)

Jennifer Bowman reporting at Southwestern College in Chula Vista, Dec. 2, 2021. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)

Tom Hom points out his siblings in a family photo, Aug. 12, 2021. The family is photographed outside of the North Park home that his family bought at a time when many homes in the neighborhood had restrictive covenants. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)

inewsource Photo and Video Journalist Zoë Meyers photographing children at the home of Steve Wallace, a Jamul resident and member of the Jamul Fire Safe Council, Sept. 1, 2021. (Camille von Kaenel/inewsource)


Vehicles move along Interstate 5 north of downtown San Diego, Jan. 4, 2022. (Zoë Meyers/inewsource)