



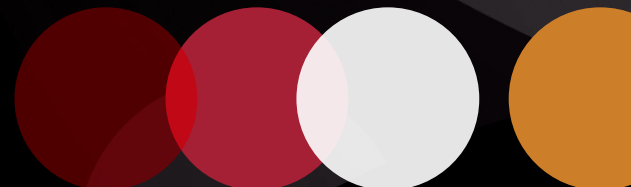
Standing for Truth


2023

Annual Impact Report



inewsource.org

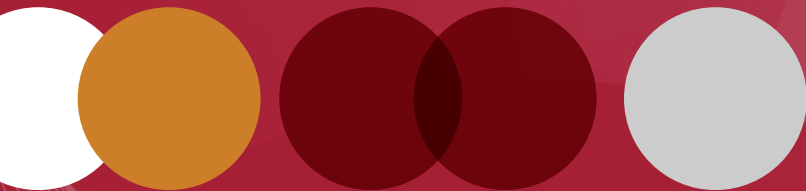




inewssource is a nonprofit, nonpartisan newsroom dedicated to improving lives in the San Diego region and beyond through impactful, data-based investigative and accountability journalism.

Founded in 2009 as one of the first nonprofit newsrooms in the country, *inewssource* is independent of special interests and committed to being a vital public service for San Diego's diverse communities. Community members also inform and help sustain our newsroom. We are tremendously grateful to our supporters who make our work possible.

This report is for you.





More Determined Than Ever to Serve

As a local nonprofit newsroom, we feel an immense responsibility for making lives better and more equitable through solid, credible, in-depth reporting. We strived toward that mission this past fiscal year with stories that had both a wide and individual impact. Thank you for making that possible.

Yet there is much more to do and *inewssource* can't do it alone. The news landscape here has been slowly bleeding for years, and it's sadly becoming more dire. The consequence is a less-informed voting public, fewer in power held to account and more misinformation filling the voids.

San Diego County is home to more than 3 million people, and it includes 18 incorporated cities, more than 40 school districts and dozens of towns and community centers. What decisions are elected officials making? How are they spending tax money?

Let us assure you that the challenge makes us more determined than ever to serve by building our reporting team and finding innovative ways to engage and empower communities in local democracy.

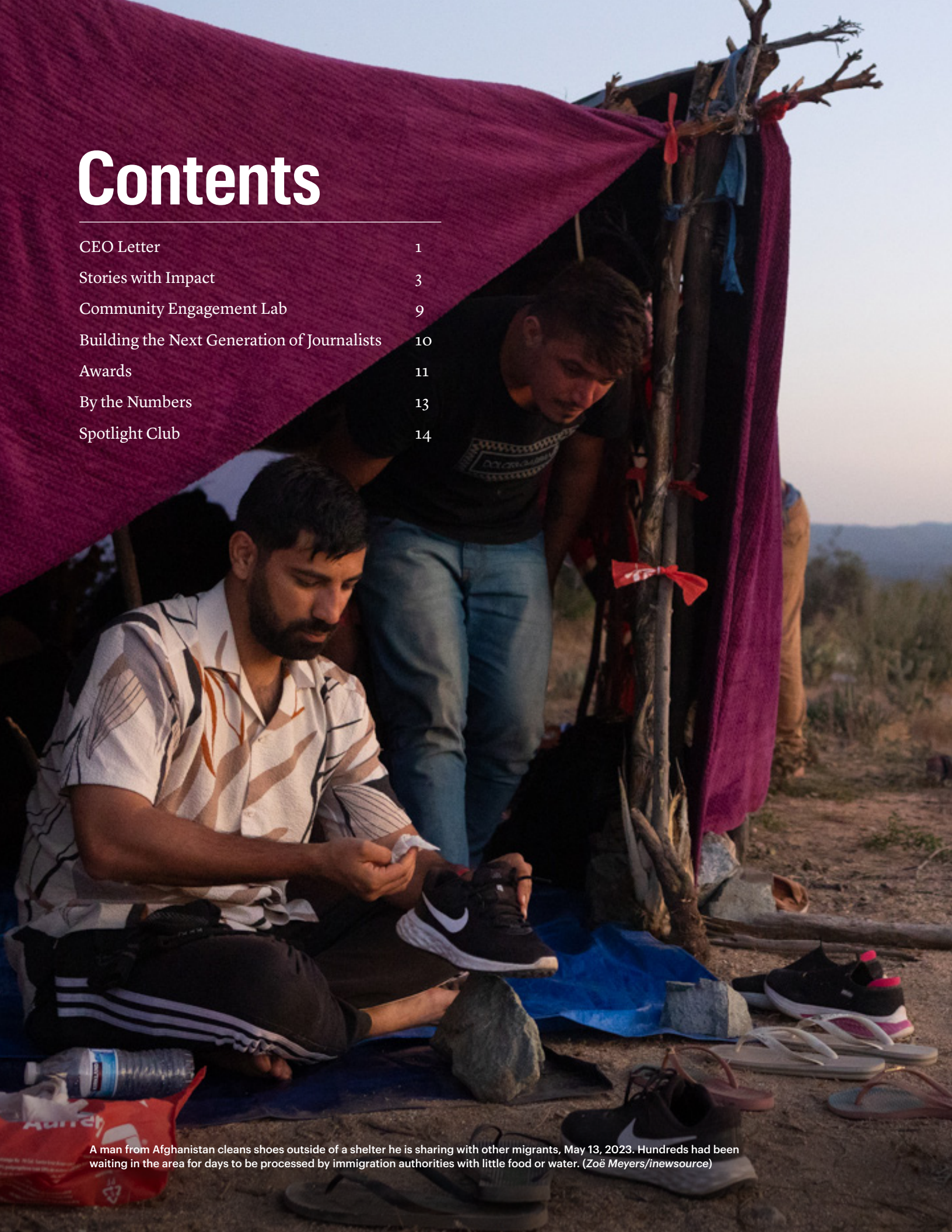
Thank you for standing with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lorie Hearn".

Lorie Hearn
CEO, Editor and Founder

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A man from Afghanistan cleans shoes outside of a shelter he is sharing with other migrants, May 13, 2023. Hundreds had been waiting in the area for days to be processed by immigration authorities with little food or water. (Zoë Meyers/inewssource)

Stories with Impact

Impact remains the gold standard for *inewssource* reporting. That means our work results in positive change and better lives.

We published more than 160 stories this past year, including groundbreaking coverage that led to changes in government spending policies, faster aid to asylum seekers, the arrest of a prominent San Diego neo-Nazi for a hate crime, and more.

We also launched an Investigative News Fund to power and sustain our newsroom.

Here are highlights from some of our most impactful work during the year, made possible with your support.



San Diego Association of Governments leaders are seated during a Jan. 13, 2023 meeting. (Sandy Huffaker/inewsourc)

New SANDAG Policies, Resignation Follow Public Scrutiny

inewsourc dug deep into a series of controversial audit findings and exposed mismanagement of public funds by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), including lavish restaurant spending and credit card misuse.

With a \$1 billion annual budget, SANDAG is a taxpayer-funded planning agency that helps make transportation and other long-term regional decisions.

Following the public scrutiny, the agency adopted new policies for credit card use. The embattled CEO, Hasan Ikhtrata, announced his resignation. Our reporter also won the Gloria Penner Award for Political Affairs Reporting from the San Diego Society of Professional Journalists for her in-depth coverage of the agency's poor policies and financial mismanagement.



SANDAG Executive Director Hasan Ikhtrata and Deputy CEO Coleen Clementson attend a SANDAG board meeting in San Diego, May 13, 2022. (Zoë Meyers/inewsourc)



A group of migrants from Brazil rest under the shade of a makeshift shelter in the Jacumba wilderness on May 12, 2023. Hundreds had been in the area for days with little food and water and no shelter while waiting to be processed by Customs and Border Patrol. (Zoë Meyers/*inewssource*)

Federal Immigration Officials Respond to Stranded Migrants

inewssource was the first to report that hundreds of migrants wanting to make asylum claims were stranded in the Jacumba wilderness with little shelter, food or water following the rollback of Title 42, a COVID-19 pandemic-era policy that allowed immigration officials to swiftly turn back migrants seeking asylum at the border.

What started as a group of migrants stranded in the desert after crossing into the U.S. through a gap in the border fence swelled into a sprawling encampment of more than 700 people.

After our reporting, federal immigration officials dispatched personnel to the desert encampment to help process migrants and move them to safety more quickly. Months later, San Diego County officials declared a humanitarian crisis as authorities



A group of migrants from Colombia wait by make-shift shelters in the Jacumba wilderness, May 13, 2023. (Zoë Meyers/*inewssource*)

continued to see impact from the collision of changing asylum rules, global migration patterns and the limited capacity of federal agencies to process arriving migrants.



Arley Adcock sits outside of his hotel room in San Diego, June 9, 2022. (Zoë Meyers/inewssource).

Resident Saved from Becoming Homeless Again

Our reporting prevented a San Diegan from being evicted while exposing systemic flaws in a program intended to find housing for people experiencing homelessness.

San Diego County spent millions during the COVID-19 pandemic to temporarily house people with nowhere to safely isolate in hotels. As the local emergency came to an end, officials sought to secure permanent housing for participants in need. But some were slipping through the safety net, despite the backing of two government agencies, one private company and millions of dollars in public funding.

Arley Adcock faced eviction from his apartment after being told he was thousands of dollars behind on rent, even though he had a housing voucher that was supposed to cover his full portion. Our questions and subsequent reporting revealed the voucher had



Arley Adcock sits next to his dog, Cheyenne, and looks out the window of his new apartment in San Diego on May 2, 2023. After being sheltered by county-run hotel programs during the pandemic he faced eviction. (Zoë Meyers/inewssource)

expired after no one filed the necessary paperwork to extend it—a job that belonged to the contractor the county hired to manage the multimillion-dollar program. The county and housing agency reversed course and extended his voucher.

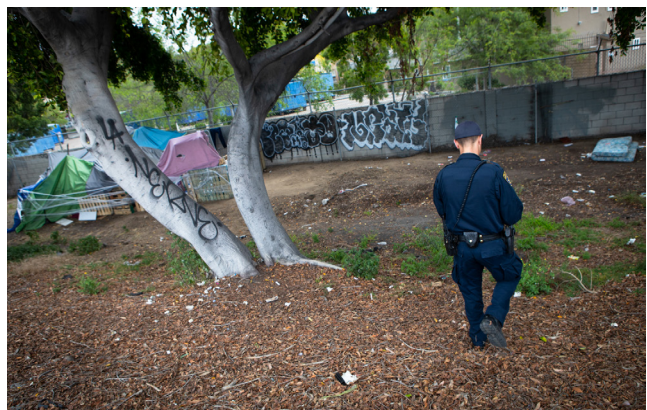


Anita Fisher looks toward a photo of her son at her home in Spring Valley, Aug. 16, 2022. She had him placed in an involuntary mental health conservatorship to get help, but he was able to leave before getting treatment. (Zoë Meyers/*inewssource*)

Investigation Reveals Serious Gaps in California’s Mental Health System

inewssource spotlighted one of the most hotly debated aspects of California’s mental health system: conservatorships. Our six-month investigation revealed serious gaps in a system elected leaders have targeted for expansion to address the homelessness crisis, including in San Diego. State law allowed citizens who have severe mental illness and have been deemed “gravely disabled” to be placed under a conservatorship. That often means a public guardian, employed by a county office, can make medical treatment decisions for a person and, if needed, place them in a psychiatric facility.

We also found that Imperial County officials routinely keep people on psychiatric holds for longer than 72 hours, often in ill-equipped facilities and without a formal hearing required by law. Some people subject to back-to-back holds in the county had not known it was illegal until reading our stories.



California Highway Patrol Officer Jesse Matias approaches an encampment along the side of the freeway in San Ysidro, April 28, 2022 and responds to mental health crisis calls. (Zoë Meyers/*inewssource*)

As we went to press with this report, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill expanding the conservatorship law to encompass people with a severe substance use disorder, such as chronic alcoholism, and no longer requiring a co-occurring mental health disorder.



A photo of the exterior of the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam.
© Anne Frank House / Photographer: Cris Toala Olivares

San Diego Neo-Nazi Charged with Hate Crimes in Europe

inewssource reporting on extremism in San Diego helped police identify a prominent San Diego neo-Nazi as a suspect for hate crimes in Europe. In San Diego, like elsewhere across the country, hate crimes are on the rise and hate speech and conspiracy theories can fuel violence against marginalized groups.

Our reporting included telling how Chula Vista resident Robert Wilson fled San Diego to Poland after being charged with a hate crime against his neighbor. Wilson is a public figure of an American neo-Nazi hate group with members connected to 11 criminal cases or arrests across the U.S. He was then seen in Poland and subsequently in the Netherlands, where he was found guilty of projecting antisemitic text onto the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and sentenced to two months in prison. Wilson had already spent three months in jail while awaiting trial.



A still from a video showing part of a laser projection of an antisemitic message on the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam on Feb. 6, 2023. The incident garnered widespread condemnation.

Our reporting was part of a project with KQED in San Francisco and other NPR stations chronicling extremism in California. In San Diego, the Anti-Defamation League reported a 54% increase in hate incidents in the first nine months of 2023.

Community Engagement Lab



Justin Rushing (left), director of growth and partnerships, moderates an *inewssource* community forum on homelessness and displacement at UC San Diego Park & Market on June 28, 2023. (Sandy Huffaker/*inewssource*)

***inewssource* centers our work on understanding, engaging and serving communities. This past year, we created a Community Engagement Lab to scale this important work and our leadership in community-centric reporting.**



People fill the San Diego City Council chambers at a hearing over an ordinance that would ban encampments on public land in the city, April 13, 2023. (Zoë Meyers/*inewssource*)

The lab will test and innovate bold, new ways to engage and add value for communities and expand the impact of our public service reporting. This includes innovation in the user experience on our

website and all other platforms, working directly with communities where they are through outreach and community forums, and bringing a nationally heralded program called Documenters to San Diego to document hundreds of public meetings and strengthen the infrastructure of civic life.

The Conrad Prebys Foundation and James Silberrad Brown Foundation were first in supporting our innovation in community engagement work during the year. The Adams Endowment Fund, Parker Foundation, and Richard and Carol Hertzberg joined these supporting partners as we entered our new fiscal year.

The new *inewssource* Documenters program is based on a very old idea: Democracy works best when everyone is engaged and involved.

Building the Next Generation of Journalists

We expanded our work to build the next generation of journalists, mentoring and training paid interns and two Report for America corps members as part of this national service program that supports journalists to report on undercovered communities and issues.

The Report for America early career journalists, both Latinas and first-generation college graduates, deepened our public service for San Diego’s diverse communities, with reporting on equity issues ranging from the way communities get new parks to school discipline policies and special education.



Andrea Figueroa Briseño, *inewssource/Report for America* education reporter, visits Perkins K-8 School in Barrio Logan. (*Kristian Carreon/inewssource*)



My community inspires me to show up every day and do my job. It’s a beat that’s often undercovered. But with San Diego home to some of the largest school districts in California, there’s a lot at stake. San Diego has also become more diverse over the years, and I strive to include the voices that are not often heard. I hope my journalism can be of service to the community.

- Andrea Figueroa Briseño, *inewssource/Report for America* education reporter



This included spotlighting disproportionate discipline and suspension rates faced by Black students in special education in the San Diego Unified School District and the long wait in the district, often past the 60 days approved by law, for early learners to be assessed for special education needs.

Our education reporting is also generously supported by Patricia and Christopher Weil.



Maceo Williams rides to school in San Diego on Dec 15, 2022. He is one of the many African American students in special education at San Diego Unified who are disciplined at higher rates. (*Zoë Meyers/inewssource*)



Melisa Alexandra Castro’s daughter, Michelle, 3, participates in a musical playgroup at The Music Therapy Center in Kearny Mesa on Nov 19, 2022. At her doctor’s direction, Castro asked for her daughter to be assessed for special education. (*Kristian Carreon/inewssource*)

Awards

inews won 21 national, regional and local awards for investigations, in-depth stories and photos in recognition of some of our most impactful reporting. A full list of our awards is on our website. Here are some highlights from the year.

National Association of Black Journalists

Best radio feature reporting

Cheryl W. Thompson, Natalie Moore, Corinne Ruff, Cristina Kim, Roxana Popescu

“Racial Covenants, a Relic of the Past, are Still on the Books Across the Country”

Radio and Television News Association of Southern California

Golden Mike Award

Best Hard News Series Reporting

“Veterans Village”



Taking on the Veterans Village in a military town is not easy, but it is necessary. This series shows how agencies can take action once they are held accountable.

- Judges awarding the Sol Price Award for Responsible Journalism to Investigative Data Coordinator
Jill Castellano



Society of Professional Journalists, San Diego

Gloria Penner Award for Political Affairs Reporting

Jennifer Bowman

“SANDAG coverage”

Sol Price Award for Responsible Journalism

Jill Castellano

“Veterans Village: An investigation”

Audio, Investigative/Enterprise Single Story

First Place

Jennifer Bowman

“More San Diegans could enter mental health conservatorships. But the system is already struggling”

Audio, News

First Place

Cody Dulaney

“A tenant was killed. Employees weren’t surprised.”

Daily Reporting and Writing, Education Story

First Place

Andrea Figueroa Briseño

“Hundreds of San Diego Unified students could need special education. Many wait months for access”

Daily Reporting and Writing, Environment Story

First Place

Sofía Mejías-Pascoe

“Crossing Imperial County’s open desert, migrants increasingly find death”

Daily Reporting and Writing, Government Story

First Place

Crystal Niebla

“Developers paid \$1.8B to San Diego communities, but few reap benefits”

Awards

Daily Reporting and Writing, Housing/ Development Story

First Place

Camille von Kaenel

“San Diego officials said rural homes were safe from fires. They were listening to developers”

Daily Reporting and Writing, Science/ Technology Story

First Place

Sofía Mejías-Pascoe (*inewssource*)

“ICE uses cellphones to track thousands in San Diego, Imperial counties”

Design Elements, Photo Essay

First Place

Zoë Meyers

“12 paths to housing: What happened after San Diego’s hotel shelters closed”



Zoë Meyers, photo and video journalist



My goal in making an image is to bring what I see and feel in a moment to others. At *inewssource* I have the opportunity to do this at a time when there is a growing desert of local photojournalism, which is invaluable because it allows people to see themselves, their neighbors and friends represented in the news. I strive to approach my work with care, fairness and empathy so that people feel those representations are truthful to their own experiences.

- Zoë Meyers, photo and video journalist



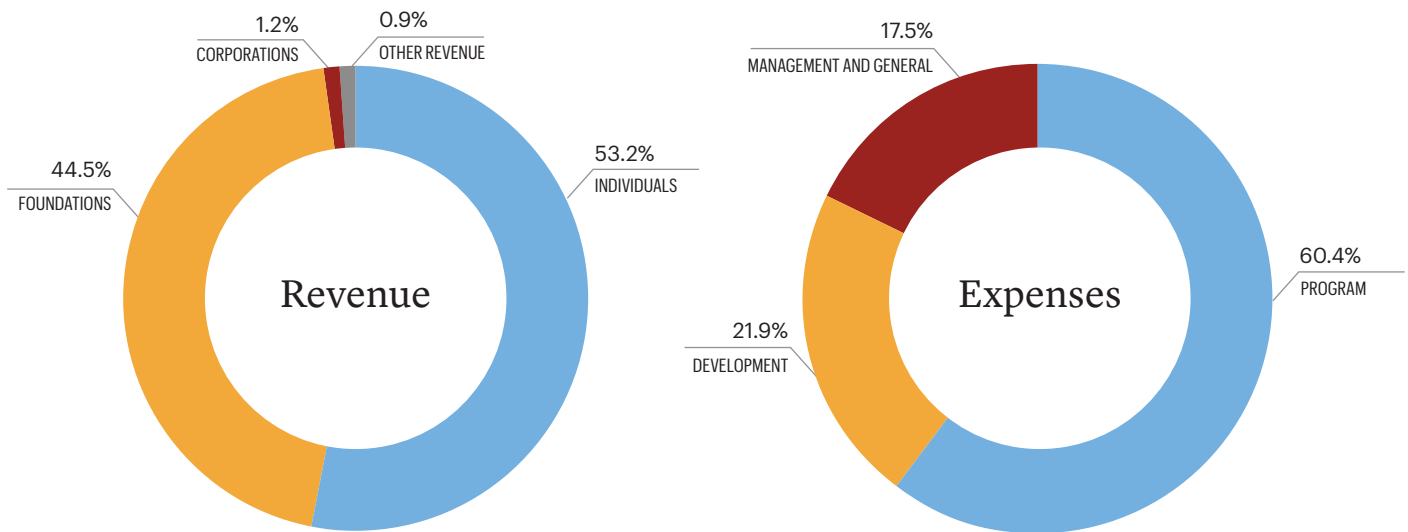
By the Numbers

In FY23, *inewssource* continued to pursue our mission every day. We raised nearly \$1.7 million, including a 26% increase in cash contributions from our growing community of individual donors. This also included significant grant funding from foundations supporting our nonprofit local news and work with communities. Our success begins with each of you.

While our financials show a negative change in net assets, *inewssource* did have commitments of multi-year contributions, previously reported, and restricted revenue to cover related expenses. We ended our fiscal year with a positive balance and plan to continue growing our reserves. We received another unmodified annual audit and remain in sound financial standing as we mark 14 years of operations.

Our complete, audited financial statements are available at inewssource.org/finances

Our Financial Activity July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023



TOTAL REVENUE:	\$1,668,324
● Individuals:	\$888,357
● Foundations:	\$742,524
● Corporations:	\$21,396
● Other Revenue:	\$16,047

TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$2,631,268
● Program:	\$1,591,372
● Development:	\$578,261
● Management and General:	\$461,635

Spotlight Club (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

Thank you to our Spotlight Club members, a growing community of our most generous donors giving \$1,000 or more to protect credible and in-depth journalism as essential to a thriving democracy.

Editor's Circle \$50,000+

Allison & Robert Price Family Foundation
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Amy and Horacio Valeiras
Mary Walshok
Abby Silverman Weiss and Ray Weiss



I'm a big fan of *inewssource* because their stories have impact. They've resulted in congressional hearings more than once, they've gotten people's money back on taxes, they've exposed risky research that endangers patients. They dig until they find the truth and they use data to see patterns.

- Karen Liu, Spotlight Club member



*Indicates monthly donor

Spotlight Club (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

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“
 Many media outlets have reduced
 or eliminated staff. It is vital to our
 democracy and quality of life for
 investigative journalism to flourish.
 - Donna Sevilla, Spotlight Club
 member

“
 Community-level journalism
 is essential to any community
 functioning at its best.
 - Major Garrett, Spotlight Club
 member





San Diego coastline. (Clayton Cardinalli on Unsplash)

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Investigative News Fund

Give to the *inews* Investigative News Fund and power our newsroom for you and your community. The fund directly supports our reporting team, from editors and investigative reporters to emerging journalists.

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Email: members@inewssource.org

Call: (619) 500-3370

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

Other Ways to Give

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Standing for Truth



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