



# Annual Report

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# Executive Summary

## Program Overview

The Scripps Journalism Journey Initiative (JJI), launched with the financial backing of Google, supports mid-career print and digital journalists transitioning to video-driven storytelling, improves news coverage in underserved communities and enhances journalism quality across Scripps' broadcast newsrooms.

The program launched in 2022 as a multi-year pilot program, and since then Scripps has been adapting the program to support journalists through this career transition within Scripps newsrooms.

## Community & Industry Impact Snapshot

JJI reporters have produced an impressive number of stories, and many of those stories had a profound impact on the communities they served – even garnering multiple Regional Emmy nominations for their important work. Examples include:

- Investigative reporting from JJI reporters led to tangible policy changes, including new legislation in Utah regarding school "seclusion rooms" and increased scrutiny on senior "elopement" laws in Arizona
- Community-focused reporting helped bring gun victims' families and city police together in Detroit to create a new police unit aimed at increasing communication about unsolved crimes
- Enhanced coverage of underserved communities, including dedicated reporting on housing issues, healthcare access and government accountability
- Exclusive interviews and specialized reporting on critical issues and politics, including a one-on-one pre-election interview with President Donald Trump

## Retention Success

- 14 of 19 total JJI reporters remain in broadcast news; 13 still with Scripps
- Second cohort achieved 100% retention entering 2025

## Industry Leadership

- JJI staff conducted journalism workshops at NAHJ and NABJ conferences, generating positive feedback and new recruitment opportunities
- Cohort members led skill-sharing sessions within Scripps newsrooms on specialized topics including FOIA requests and character-driven reporting

**"We gained a veteran journalist with deep pockets of sources and years of market knowledge. But even more important than that, we gained a mentor to many of the younger journalists in our newsroom. I can't express enough how grateful I am for this program. Simply put – it has made our newsroom stronger and made our journalism better. And when that happens, our community wins."**



**-- Aaron Mason, Senior  
Director of News,  
WKBW (Buffalo)**



*Steve Sebelius, KTNV (Las Vegas)*

## Raising the Bar

We acknowledge the challenges in shifting careers from mostly text-based reporting to video-driven storytelling, and we've learned about effective ways to support this career transition. Since the program launched, we have evolved and strengthened our training opportunities based on real-time feedback from our cohorts.

We have focused our training and development efforts on four main areas:

- Core Journalism
- Visual Storytelling
- Newsroom Acumen
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

In particular, we've prioritized skill development in the areas of writing to video, visual storytelling, working at an increased pace, on-camera presence and shooting and editing best practices.

We've also evolved our internal training program to include:

- More structured and skills-focused boot camps
- The addition of skill sprints to reinforce learnings from boot camps
- Tailored monthly zoom sessions incorporating feedback
- Tracking of qualitative data to identify areas in which cohort members need additional training and skill-building

The transition to an MMJ role is particularly challenging because of all of the skills needed to do the job. This is especially true for any journalists who do not have prior video shooting or editing skills. We continue to look for ways to better support the transition to this role for future cohorts.



*Taylor Stevens, FOX13 (Salt Lake)*

# JJI IMPACT

Our second cohort not only produced an impressive number of stories, but many of those stories had a profound impact on the communities they served.

# JJI Impact

***Here are some additional examples of the impact our JJI reporters have had in their communities:***

- Salt Lake City's Taylor Stevens's very first story on the unhoused in Utah was nominated for a Regional Emmy in the Societal Concerns News category.
  - Stevens's continued reporting on the use of so-called school "seclusion rooms" led to legislation to end certain practices and tighten enforcement and accountability.
- Cleveland's Michelle Jarboe received two Regional Emmy nominations for her work on food stamp theft and on a neighborhood battle over a birthing center.
  - Jarboe also led WEWS' coverage of the Cleveland Browns stadium battle with the city, as well as provided in-depth coverage of the future of Cleveland's downtown revitalization efforts.
- Cincinnati's Keith BieryGolick's reporting helped a family end an 18-year battle to obtain green cards, and helped an unhoused woman find a home for her and her mother.
- Buffalo's Maki Becker covered multiple breaking news stories, and her work helped lead to breakthroughs in cold case investigations. She also started a video podcast series on cold cases with anchor/reporter Ed Drantch.
- San Diego's Craig Harris's work led to a citation for a community group home, and he helped a veteran in his battle to erase an unfair \$25,000 water bill.
- Kadia Tubman of Scripps News was part of the Disinformation Desk before the '24 elections; then transitioned into a "day-wrap" role, often combining with fellow JJI cohort member Jennifer Glenfield, to provide explainers of national issues to local audiences across the country via quick-turn packages and live talkbacks with anchors at multiple Scripps stations.
- Las Vegas's Steve Sebelius nabbed an exclusive one-on-one pre-election interview with President Donald Trump and answered viewer election questions.
- Harm Venhuizen provided coverage from Wisconsin's state capitol for two Scripps stations -- Milwaukee and Green Bay. Manuelita Beck, a former political editor at newspapers, provided similar legislative coverage in the politically charged state of Arizona for ABC15 in Phoenix.
- Detroit's Jasmin Barmore helped bring gun victims' families and city police together to create a new police unit aimed at bettering communication efforts around unsolved crimes.
- Baltimore's Maria Morales provided exclusive coverage from an underrepresented community following the Key Bridge collapse.
- Tucson's Eddie Celaya created daily neighborhood coverage of his midtown and downtown community and continued his specialized reporting of Arizona's cannabis industry.
- Denver's Angelika Albaladejo was part of a large ABC News investigative project on oil and gas wells across the country, and her work was featured nationally via the network.
- Scripps News's Daniel Lathrop provided real-time updates on social media for presidential debates and worked closely with the network's Supreme Court reporter to provide timely updates on the judge's decisions in Trump cases.



*Anne Ryman, ABC15 (Phoenix)*

## Behind the Scenes of Broadcast Investigations

*ABC15 (Phoenix) investigative reporter Anne Ryman is in her third year with Scripps after a lengthy newspaper career. She continues to create impactful community-based stories.*

*Here's a peek behind the scenes into how she does it:*

This is an example of how a tip from readers can result in a series of investigative, accountability stories that end in change.

It started as an email from an Arizona resident to the station. She tipped me off to the tragic death of an 85-year-old grandfather in her neighborhood. He had Alzheimer's and wandered away from his assisted-living facility in July. She had many questions about how something like this happens.

The long-term care industry calls this "elopement," a pleasant-sounding word that actually means something much more troubling. It's when someone who suffers memory loss slips out of a care home, unsupervised, without anyone knowing. In Arizona, the consequences can be deadly in the summer heat.

I was able to convince the daughter of Bob Pollmann (the retired teacher who died in the desert just 800 yards from his assisted-living facility) to do an interview. She was at first reluctant to talk to anyone. But I was able to convince her to share her powerful story.

Using public records such as police reports, body cam videos, medical examiner reports and other documents, ABC15 was able to document at least a dozen deaths in the heat from care homes. This resulted in several stories with my colleague Nicole Grigg, including a push from the Arizona Attorney General for more legislation. Arizona's health department is currently re-writing its regulations and, for the first time, will require assisted living facilities to report elopements to the state health department within three days. Facilities also must put in place precautions to prevent this from happening. These new rules go into effect in July.

More recently, the Attorney General is now intervening in a lawsuit that one family has filed against the care home where their father died. This will allow the state to essentially become part of what would otherwise be a civil lawsuit between the care facility and the family. If approved by the court, the state can introduce evidence, interview witnesses, file court motions, all with the mission of keeping vulnerable seniors safe.



*Kadia Tubman (Scripps News), right, talks with a workshop attendee*

## Newsroom & Industry Impact

JJI staff and cohort members conducted a two-hour workshop at NAHJ on how to think visually about stories. A similar one-hour workshop was provided at the NABJ Conference. Both were well attended and led to at least one new hire for a Scripps station (non-JJI). JJI will conduct a similar workshop at NAHJ in 2025.

As one JJI member who helped conduct the NABJ workshop said, "It was so awesome walking through the Hilton afterward and into the evening and having people who attended the workshop stop me and thank us for having an interactive workshop. One guy told me that was one of the most engaging workshops he attended during the convention, and he really appreciated the hands-on exercise. I hope we can do some version of it again at NABJ25!"

JJI cohort members also helped upskill their newsroom peers by holding sessions on everything from FOIA requests to character-driven reporting and beat reporting – highlighting and sharing their expertise. Cincinnati JJI member Keith BieryGolick, for instance, led a newsroom session on how he is able to incorporate touching, personal moments from his interviews into his packages.

Additionally, much of the material JJI staff has created to prepare cohort members for their career pivot has been used elsewhere throughout Scripps, such as integrating it into our overall reporter onboarding program.

# Additional Findings

- **Coaching:**

- We've continued utilizing both an on-air talent coach and a broadcast writing coach. Coaches attend boot camps (either in person or virtually), hold one-on-one sessions, and share feedback with direct managers to open lines of communication from coach to manager, and from manager to reporter.

- **Direct Managers:**

- We've implemented a goal-setting exercise for direct managers prior to the start of the second cohort. Meanwhile, the addition of executive reporters to many of our newsrooms was an added level of support appreciated by our cohort. Scripps' executive reporters develop and enhance the storytelling skills and abilities of all reporters and MMJs in their newsrooms.

- **Recruiting:**

- Our recruiting efforts have focused on areas of past success, including conducting visual storytelling workshops for non-broadcast reporters at journalism industry events and conferences.



*Maki Becker, WKBW (Buffalo)*

*JJI Phoenix Boot Camp attendees and coaches*





# Looking Ahead

We look forward to continuing the Journalism Journey Initiative. In addition to continuing to hire our own cohort members to work at Scripps stations, we are interested in partnering with other media outlets, including digital nonprofits, to share learnings and best practices throughout the industry. More information on those efforts will be released soon. Anyone interested in partnering with Scripps as a sponsor or participant should contact JJI Program Director Jim Iovino at [jim.iovino@scripps.com](mailto:jim.iovino@scripps.com).



*JJI Phoenix Boot Camp attendees and coaches*