

FAQs about The Scripps Howard Fund's Student Media Sustainability Project

What is The Scripps Howard Fund's Student Media Sustainability Project?

This is a one-of-a-kind pilot program that will help student news organizations improve their ability to cover their campuses for years to come by improving the ways the newsroom connects with the audience, how the news organization gains revenue and how the news organization's structure impacts its longevity.

What kind of news outlets are you looking for?

This program is looking for independent college media organizations — that is, run by students with no university oversight or prior review. News organizations at public and private four-year schools are welcome to apply, as are those at community colleges.

Are high school programs eligible?

No, this is for college and community college newsrooms only.

What are you looking for in a great application?

Students (and professionals, too, if you have them!) working in campus newsrooms who demonstrate:

- A commitment on the editorial and financial sides of the student newsroom to devote an entire school year to this process, as well as working together cooperatively across departments.
- A commitment to examine and improve content and revenue practices.
- A willingness to examine the way your organization is structured to ensure its longterm health.

How many student news outlets will you take?

At least four; possibly five. It is unlikely that we would accept two news organizations from the same university, so if possible, don't compete — apply together!

Does it matter what type of news organization we are?

No. TV stations, newspapers, radio stations and digital-only outlets are eligible to apply.

How long will the project take?

The project will last two semesters: fall 2026 through spring 2027.

What is the time commitment for selected programs?

A primary contact or point person should plan to spend 5-10 hours a month working with Scripps Howard personnel and specialized coaches. Other students will be involved 2-4 hours per month.

Accepted organizations will commit three teams or committees, each dedicated to one of the three pillars of audience, revenue and governance. Those committees can comprise both students and professional employees of the student media organization (adviser and director involvement is encouraged, but not mandatory).

Additionally, each selected news organization must commit to assembling project team members for a two-day, in-person, on-site training in your newsroom.

When will we find out if we've been selected?

Applications, which opened Jan. 20, will close Sunday, April 12 at 11:59 p.m. Selected schools will be notified by May 1.

How long will it take me to apply?

The application process should take 30-60 minutes. You can save your application and come back to it if you need more time.

How is the program structured?

Selected news organizations will begin with a two-day, in-person training orientation near the start of the school year with Scripps Howard Fund personnel that will include an assessment of the program's three pillars: audience, revenue and governance practices.

The team will then be divided into three committees based on those pillars, and spend the remaining academic year engaged in activities around their selected areas.

Over the course of the academic year, organizations will work with our team of consultants and coaches to:

- Conceptualize, experiment with and launch new revenue ideas.
- Set measurable goals and chart progress throughout the course of the year.
- Implement improved audience engagement tactics that increase the organization's news value on campus.
- Work to codify or improve internal and external governance documents, practices and employment rules to improve the student media experience and ensure editorial independence.

I am an adviser or director of student media. Am I allowed to apply?

Advisers and student media directors at fully independent student news organizations are welcome to apply, with the understanding that students will participate as well.

Our leadership will change from the fall 2026 to the spring 2027 semester. Is that a problem?

Program participants should anticipate and plan for any leadership changes, including a different editor-in-chief, to ensure that their participation is not adversely affected.

I have a question that this FAQ doesn't address. What should I do?

You can attend our Feb. 5 webinar at 5 p.m. Eastern — [register here](#) — or you can email Barbara Allen at bob@collegejournalism.org.