

Scripps Howard Fund and Journalism + Design Lab announce 2026–27 Community College Experiential Journalism Grant recipients

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CINCINNATI – The Scripps Howard Fund and the Journalism + Design Lab at The New School are excited to announce the four recipients of **2026–27 Community College Experiential Journalism Grants**. This new initiative is a collaboration between the Scripps Howard Fund and the J+D Lab, which supports innovative community college programs across the U.S. South that train students and community members to get, share and act on reliable local news and information.

Building on the momentum of the Journalism + Design Lab's [Community College Civic Info Challenge](#), the CCEJ grants provide one-time awards of up to \$15,000 to help community colleges strengthen and expand existing community journalism programs. The grants, made possible by the Scripps Howard Fund, are specifically designed to support colleges in the Journalism + Design Lab's Civic Info Challenge cohort. The goal is to help grow experiential learning opportunities that enable participants to produce journalism that meets local information needs in their communities.

"This is the second year we have invested in community colleges," said Mike Canan, the Scripps Howard Fund's senior director of journalism strategies. "We see the value that these types of programs can provide. It made sense for us to partner with Journalism + Design to accelerate community colleges that are already growing when it comes to producing journalism and preparing students."

Grantees will participate in a collaborative cohort facilitated by the Journalism + Design Lab and supported by the Scripps Howard Fund. Through regular cohort and 1:1 meetings, peer learning and mentorship, the colleges will share and document successes, challenges and best practices for designing and sustaining innovative models for community-based journalism.

The grantees represent a range of creative approaches to experiential learning — from training student information ambassadors and supporting community storytellers to building regional journalism collaboratives and creating new partnerships with local newsrooms. Each program shows how community colleges can strengthen local news infrastructure by serving as hubs that identify, support and expand the grassroots ways that people gather and share news and information.

The grantees are:

- **Florida State College at Jacksonville — Civics Peer Information Ambassador (CPIA) Initiative (Program Lead: Naita Guine)**
To launch a new student ambassador program that will train six to eight students to serve as trusted information stewards within their communities. Through partnerships with the FSCJ Library and *The Florida Tribune*, students will receive training in information literacy, ethical communication and fact-based storytelling while helping strengthen civic information flow in Northeast Florida.
- **Houston City College — Houston City Voices (Program Leads: Carlton Abernathy, Fred Batiste, Carolyn Cross and Ashley Rhodes-Watkins)**

To expand experiential journalism through a hands-on media internship program where students produce and publish stories driven by community needs. Students will receive training in reporting, podcasting, video production, live-streaming and civic interviewing before publishing work across HCC's student media platforms, building professional portfolios while serving Houston audiences.

- **Jones College — Mississippi Community Journalism Collaborative (Program Leads: Kelly Atwood and Edgar Simpson)**

To create a collaborative community journalism network at community colleges across southern Mississippi, anchored by a new noncredit certificate program at Jones College that teaches digital media skills to residents of underserved communities. The noncredit courses, to be shaped by community listening in each place, will emphasize project-based learning and prepare participants for a range of outcomes, including freelance journalism and community information entrepreneurship,

- **San Antonio College — San Antonio Community Journalism Cooperative (Program Leads: Dr. Pedro Cabrera and Ethan Rocke)**

To establish a community-centered journalism cooperative that brings together students, local news organizations, nonprofits, and community partners to address civic information needs. Through flexible newsroom partnerships such as fellowships, collaborative reporting projects, course-embedded assignments, and freelance opportunities, students will work alongside faculty and professional journalists to produce journalism that serves real audiences while expanding reporting capacity across San Antonio's news ecosystem.

The Scripps Howard Fund/Journalism + Design Lab Community College Experiential Journalism Grant program was inspired by the Journalism + Design Lab's [Community College Civic Info Challenge](#). The Challenge, which launched in 2025 thanks to a generous grant from the Lumina Foundation, celebrated and funded eight community colleges around the South as they explored innovative ways to support the flow of reliable local news and civic information in their surrounding communities. Read the program report, "[Community College Civic Info Challenge: Takeaways from an interactive design summit](#)," to learn more about the Challenge colleges' community journalism programs and explore learnings from the cohort's gathering in Asheville in fall 2025.

To learn more about the Scripps Howard Fund and how it supports journalism education initiatives across the country, visit scripps.com/fund.

To learn more about the Journalism + Design Lab, visit journalismdesign.com.

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About the Scripps Howard Fund

The [Scripps Howard Fund](#), a public charity established by [The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NASDAQ: SSP), is dedicated to creating informed and engaged communities through journalism education, childhood literacy and local causes. At the crossroads of the classroom and the newsroom, the Fund is a leader in supporting journalism through scholarships, internships, minority recruitment and development and First Amendment causes. The Scripps Howard Awards stand as one of the industry's top honors for outstanding journalism. The Fund's annual "If You Give a Child a Book ..." childhood literacy campaign has distributed thousands of new books to children in need across the nation. The Fund partners with Scripps brands to create awareness of local issues and support organizations that build thriving communities. The Scripps Howard Fund administers funding for the Scripps Howard Foundation, a private foundation established in 1962 to advance charitable causes important to The E.W. Scripps Company and the Scripps and Howard families.

About the Journalism + Design Lab at The New School

The Journalism + Design Lab is an initiative at The New School that seeks to strengthen the flow of reliable news and information in underserved communities throughout the U.S. Using a systems perspective and design strategies, J+D Lab activates community colleges and other trusted civic institutions as local news infrastructure, co-creating programs and pathways that nurture grassroots networks and equip more people to produce, share, and act upon reliable information. To date, J+D has partnerships with community colleges and local newsrooms in more than 20 communities across 11 states, and has mobilized more than \$500,000 to directly fund and grow programs with local partners.
