

Report for Wikimedia Foundation, Grant The Racial Equity in Journalism Fund at Borealis Philanthropy Date: July 28, 2022

Overall

Metric	Achieved outcome	Explanation
1. # of active editors involved	28	Each of our newsroom partners have editors that are actively involved in the work that the Racial Equity in Journalism Fund facilitates.
2. # of new editors	9	We added nine editors in 2021 and look to add more this upcoming Fall 2022.
3. # of individuals involved	60 + all partner newsroom audiences	Each news organization has at least two staff members who participate actively in the work of the REJ fund. However, it takes both their full staffs and their audiences to make this work happen in a way that's sustainable into the future.
4. # of new images/media added to Wikimedia articles/pages	0	It's very possible that we had images and media added to Wikimedia articles/pages. Many of our newsroom partners themselves have Wikimedia pages that they're periodically updating. However, we don't have a good system to track this and could use support with that in the future.
5. # of articles added or improved on Wikimedia projects	0	It's very possible that articles were added or improved. Many of our newsroom partners have their own Wikipedia pages and they're also producing content that's cited in other pages. However, we don't have a good system to track this and could use support with that in the future.

6. Absolute value of bytes added to or deleted from Wikimedia projects	0	We don't have a good system to track this and could use support with that in the future.
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Telling your program stories - all programs

In 2021 REJ made 28 grants to BIPOC led media entities serving diverse communities across the US, with half as renewals from 2020. The Fund's second grantee cohort all serve audiences that have been historically underserved by white-led and corporate media: Black, Native, and Latine people, immigrants, refugees, rural communities, and poor and low-income people. Grantees also represent a wide range of geographic areas throughout the country - from Georgia, to Washington state and from the Northern Great Plains region to Georgia - with a focus on Southeast and Midwest locales with few reliable information sources for BIPOC communities. Recognizing that journalism takes many forms, the REJ Fund is resourcing news organizations utilizing a variety of mediums including print, digital (online, video, podcast) and broadcast tv/radio. The Fund also prioritizes investment in local media and outlets in news deserts—which have always been essential and are especially critical during a public health crisis.

Capacity building and technical assistance:

Since mid-2021, REJ Fund has hosted 11 capacity building and technical assistance webinars, including: Facebook engagement, creating memberships, elections coverage, fundraising, and leveraging audience analytics. We partnered with Parse.ly, NCI Shift, Google Project SHIFT, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Center for Cooperative Media, Lawyers for Reporters, and the Center for Public Integrity to provide additional training, and support. We've also partnered with the Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press to provide legal support. We hope to implement more customized 1:1 coaching in various areas, and create peer learning and collaboration opportunities among grantees, which was difficult through the pandemic. Upcoming training/coaching opportunities include topics such as digital security, finance, and fundraising.

The REJ Team has both advised on and shared new funding opportunities with grantees such as the Facebook Accelerator and Community Grant, Emerson Collective, AJP, Glen Nelson Center, International Women's Media Foundation, and Google New Initiative.

One of the challenges and lessons learned was that legacy organizations tend to need more support from a change management as well as technical standpoint. Not all legacy groups have the readiness or internal capacity to go beyond their traditional approaches developed around their print product. While we try to assess readiness for change as well as plans for diversifying their revenue model aligned to their content/product strategy and clearly articulated capacity building strategies, this has not always worked in practice. Even as REJ more fully develops its peer learning and curriculum for future cohorts, REJ will need to partner with training organizations that have a specific focus on legacy transformation.

Impact: Newsroom Partners

While the first round of grants in 2020 were made to support identifying business models and strategies for growth and innovation, the second cycle of REJ grantmaking - which continued support to the 15 existing grantees and adding a new cohort of 13 grantees - landed a year into the COVID-19 pandemic. Grant partners have now spent over two years shifting a variety of aspects of their work to address how they would cover a pandemic, through the course of a pandemic that we now know is disproportionately impacting communities of color, as individuals of color make up a large percentage of "frontline workers" and hourly wage earners, have

higher rates of comorbidities and are less likely to have access to healthcare and are more likely to experience racism if and when they do seek care. Quickly following the onset of the pandemic, grant partners were faced with covering a “second pandemic” of police murders and brutality and a surge of anti-Black, and anti-Asian racism. They also had to contend with covering an incredibly contentious national election cycles filled with disinformation and misinformation, much of which stoked hate and was directed at communities of color. More recently, newsrooms have covered cycles of backlash, natural disasters exacerbated by white supremacy, violent action by white supremacists and the impacts of reduced access to reproductive and gender affirming healthcare, which are all issues that journalists of color report on and are disproportionately impacted by. REJ grant partners have stepped up in numerous ways in this moment to provide timely, factual information to communities of color.

Following the leak of the Roe v. Wade decision earlier this year, El Tecolote Newspaper began the work to produce a special print edition and podcast episode dedicated to the importance of reproductive health among the Latine community. The Atlanta Voice has begun partnering with doctors offices and other medical institutions to distribute news about Black women’s health. Knowing that reproductive rights will be decided at a local level makes this information even more important now.

We’ve even seen ways that the support for communities our grantees provide comes full circle with their communities supporting them.

During Cicero Independiente’s end of the year fundraising campaign, different artists supported them by launching their own fundraising campaigns using their art and design skills. Some of their efforts were profiled in this [article](#). Cicero Independiente was so inspired by their efforts that they decided to plan for this more intentionally in 2022.

What is clear is that conditions on the ground and in communities are going to continue to change, and more than ever people need reliable, accessible and culturally relevant information to keep them safe, healthy and informed. Community-based BIPOC journalist organizations are a critical source for this information, and investing in them is more vital than ever. And we have an imperative to ensure that philanthropy invests in these organizations and this work to scale.

Impact: Policy

We have been focusing on building the relationships between grantee partners to build the trust to collaborate editorially and as a base that can organize and advocate for their needs. At a recent convening of newsroom partners, we asked the question: “What would it take for us [as a network of 28 grantees standing for racial equity in journalism] to move from survival to thriving together?” Some of the comments made and endorsed most by other participants included:

- Government funding and policies to prioritize BIPOC media ownership
- Long term government advertising contracts
- Reparations

We are considering what our role is in supporting organizations as they take on this work and also considering what kind of matchmaking we can do between organizations well versed in journalism policy change. In the interim, however, the staff team has been able to represent the fund and contribute to policy strategizing regarding journalism policy at the municipal, state, and federal level while building relationships with and learning from people worldwide influencing journalism policy internationally. We would be very interested in learning more from Wikimedia grantee partners globally who may be involved in solutions or visions for sustainable news and information infrastructure into the future, especially those working closely with indigenous and minority communities outside of the US.

Sustainability and Fundraising:

When REJ launched in 2019, it began with commitments of \$3.6M from five funders. Since then we have been able to secure almost \$20M in additional commitments through 2024. While not all original funders have or will continue to support the REJ Fund, we are encouraging our current core REJ donors to grow their commitments, while we are also trying to bring new donors into this work. This will be especially critical as we are seeing a retreat from racial equity and diversity commitments that many funders made in 2020 during the racial justice uprisings already occurring. Several organizations that we have been in relationship with have launched separate efforts to invest in BIPOC media that a number of REJ grantees have been included in.

This work is long overdue, but necessary for sustaining and supporting a diverse BIPOC journalism ecosystem. We need this work and this resource mobilization now more than ever, but whether those efforts will also be sustained is a question in this more challenging economic environment. What we know is true, nonetheless, is that investing in journalism led by people of color, for their communities is critical to ensuring communities have access to culturally appropriate and relevant information in their language helps ensure healthy, safe communities and a strong democracy.

Revenues received during this period (6 month for progress report, 12 months for impact report)

See attached report

Spending during this period (6 month for progress report, 12 months for impact report)

See attached report

Compliance

Are you in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations as outlined in the grant agreement? **Yes**

Are you in compliance with provisions of the United States Internal Revenue Code (“Code”), and with relevant tax laws and regulations restricting the use of the Grant funds as outlined in the grant agreement? **Yes**

All activities conducted by Borealis Philanthropy were and are consistent with its status under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) which remains unchanged since the proposal and related materials were submitted to Tides Advocacy. Borealis Philanthropy warrants that it is in full compliance with its grant letter dated 06/17/2021 and that, if the grant was subject to any restrictions, all such restrictions were observed.