

June 1, 2023

## NEW News Lab Report to Funders: Promising Trends Sustained



We are pleased to present you with our final report for Season Three of the NEW (Northeast Wisconsin) News Lab and initial stories from Season Four — a period running from April 15, 2022 to May 15, 2023. As this marks the completion of two years of coverage produced by NEW News Lab, this report also summarizes overall metrics and key takeaways to inform future collaborative efforts involving news organizations, funders and other stakeholders.

NEW News Lab is a local news collaboration in Northeast Wisconsin advancing in-depth local reporting. The collaboration includes:

- ❖ [FoxValley365](#)
- ❖ [The Post-Crescent](#)
- ❖ [Green Bay Press-Gazette](#)
- ❖ [The Press Times](#)
- ❖ [Wisconsin Public Radio \(WPR\)](#)
- ❖ [Wisconsin Watch](#)

The [University of Wisconsin-Green Bay's Journalism Department](#) is an educational partner. Microsoft has provided financial support to the [Greater Green Bay Community Foundation](#) and [Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region](#) to fund the initiative, and the foundations themselves and additional community partners have stepped up with generous financial support as well.

The mission of the NEW News Lab, developed by the news partners, is to “collaborate to identify and fill information gaps to help residents explore ways to improve their communities and lives — and strengthen democracy.”

Together, the news partners developed a [decision-making matrix](#) to help determine news coverage priorities, with each news outlet maintaining full editorial independence and a commitment to freely sharing the coverage produced by members of the NEW News Lab. The partners embrace financial transparency to protect the integrity of the journalism, and all content produced by the news partners is shared at no cost with other news outlets.



*Sheila Deverney (right) and Gabby Sorano line children up to go inside after playing in the playground on Friday, April 21, 2023, at the Antigo Child Care Center in Antigo, Wis. This story about how a community pulled together to establish a day-care center for its children is part of the NEW News Lab's series Families Matter. (Tork Mason / USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin)*

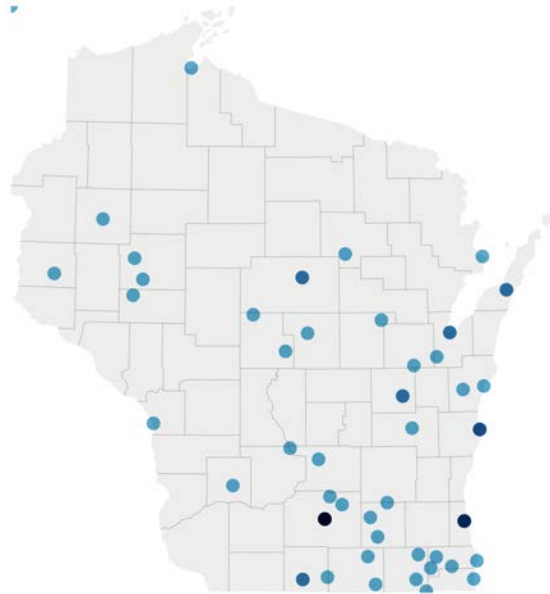
We are happy to report that the NEW News Lab has been extremely successful in producing in-depth stories of interest to the residents of northeast Wisconsin that would not have been possible without the generous support of Microsoft, the community foundations and other supporters. As has been true since Season One, funding has allowed the news outlets to add reporters to cover northeastern Wisconsin, while producing unexpected synergies that span beyond the project to enrich Wisconsin's local news ecosystem.

As we have stated before: We remain excited by the NEW News Lab's successes — which dramatize how an infusion of resources into a local news ecosystem can lead to the rapid generation of collaborative journalism, a deepened commitment to public-service reporting and the development of longer-term approaches to increasing and improving and sustaining the flow of reliable information to residents. This approach offers the potential to strengthen the fabric of communities, and our democracy.

## Section 1: Audience Reach

Our successes have now been sustained for two years.

The totals so far: Stories produced since June 1, 2021 by the six NEW News Lab partners have been picked up by more than **125 news organizations nationwide**, including more than **75 in Wisconsin**, reaching a **total estimated audience of more than 23 million people** in more than a dozen states.



In the most recent period for which metrics are available, from April 15, 2022 through March 20, 2023, **119 news organizations**, including **66 in Wisconsin**, picked up NEW News Lab reports, as illustrated in this state map. The coverage reached a **total estimated audience of 6.3 million** — 5.2 million online and 1.1 million in print. The news outlets were in six other states, the District of Columbia, Canada and Russia. More than 30 reports were picked up on **Microsoft Start**, a distribution channel for three of our news outlets, reaching more than 90,000 people.

Similarly impressive audience estimates were generated for NEW News Lab reports submitted in [2022](#) and [2021](#).

Print and online audiences were estimated to be in the hundreds or thousands per story for the local news organizations, reaching audiences most directly affected by the issues explored in the coverage. The largest audiences, estimated at more than 1.5 million per story, were generated by the global pickups by Yahoo! News. While most readers did not have direct connections to the issues in northeast Wisconsin, the news partners recognized the value in conveying reliable information to residents in other locations to strengthen the flow of ideas and the fabric of society.

Because news organizations rely upon a variety of methods to estimate audience size, the news partners agreed to use Wisconsin Watch's well-established approach to ensure the use of a uniform methodology. Wisconsin Watch used its statewide distribution system to send out several of the stories to editors across Wisconsin.

The estimated audience reach figures were generated by Wisconsin Watch using industry standards. Because actual readership numbers for specific stories are not readily available from other news outlets, Wisconsin Watch uses circulation numbers of Wisconsin newspapers from the Wisconsin Newspaper Association to estimate the size of print audiences. To estimate online audience numbers, Wisconsin Watch uses information from Meltwater, a global online clipping service that draws upon data from Similarweb, a web analytics firm. Audience sizes are estimated through formulas that take into account each news organization's print circulation and typical website traffic counts. Broadcast pickups so far

have been limited to use of stories on WPR, which supplied estimates of its typical audiences for the programs on which the reports aired.

On any given story, the actual viewership may vary from the estimate developed by Wisconsin Watch.

## Section 2: Story Summaries During This Period

Every partner produced robust NEW News Lab coverage, much of it involving collaboration with other news outlets.

### Wisconsin Watch and WPR

Wisconsin Watch produced a wide variety of stories for NEW News Lab, including the largest project ever tackled by Wisconsin Watch in its 15 years. In collaboration with WPR, Wisconsin Watch completed a three-years-in-the-making [Open and Shut podcast](#) and [online series](#), a seven-part investigation into the checkered legacy of two northeast Wisconsin district attorneys. WPR described this as “an exciting opportunity for our organization to partner on a high-impact, high-quality project that capitalized on our varied capacities and resources. The podcast has had the largest audience of any limited-run, narrative series distributed by WPR and has already won several awards.” Open and Shut has been downloaded more than 160,000 times.



*Phoebe Petrovic reports on Plank Road in Kaukauna, at the scene of the murder of Shanna Van Dyn Hoven on Jan. 15, 2020. Petrovic was the host, reporter and co-producer of Open and Shut, a joint project of Wisconsin Watch and WPR. (Dee J. Hall / Wisconsin Watch)*

During this season, Wisconsin Watch produced another story for its NEW News Lab [Imperiled Shores](#) series launched in 2021. This story by Mario Koran focused on [ongoing problems along the Lake Michigan shoreline](#) caused by a massive seawall installed by a small private college.

Koran also produced a three-part award-winning series on the culture wars that erupted in Kiel, Wisconsin over this Northeast Wisconsin community's efforts to become more welcoming for [LGBTQ+ students](#) and [students of color](#). This series won first place in the Milwaukee Press Club contest for [best explanatory reporting](#).

As part of NEW News Lab, Wisconsin Watch produced a major story about how Oshkosh Defense, one of northeast Wisconsin's largest employers, [was benefiting from millions of dollars in local and state subsidies while creating lower-paid jobs in other states](#). Another story revealed how a northeast Wisconsin prosecutor was charging voters with [felony voter fraud for honest mistakes](#), such as listing a P.O. Box as a home address.



*Amy and Dan Wempner, with their son, Armand, 18, at their home in Kiel, Wis. The Wempner family filed a bullying complaint with Kiel High School, where their eldest had attended. Since then, the neighbors and friends of this small community have turned their backs. The school wanted to implement diversity training, however far right-wing residents have complained, setting off a series of bomb threats against the schools, library, city hall, and police department. Meanwhile, the Wempner are afraid to even be seen in town. (Lianne Milton for Wisconsin Watch)*

Wisconsin Watch published several stories produced by collaborators, including the [Appleton Post-Crescent](#) and the [Green Bay Press-Gazette](#).

The trust and relationships we all have developed because of NEW News Lab sparked additional collaborations.. For example, Wisconsin Watch produced a NEW News Lab story about the [positive impact of Afghan evacuees on northeast Wisconsin](#) and the way local residents had helped them succeed in their new lives in America. This story was produced in partnership with the Green Bay Press-Gazette, which contributed photography.



*Mohammad Ali Afshar, right, and Hedaiatullah Azim participate in an English class on April 14, 2022, at Faith Lutheran Church in Allouez, Wis. Before fleeing the country, both defended the U.S. Embassy in Kabul as part of the Afghanistan military’s special operations. (Sarah Kloeping/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin)*

## The Press Times

For its series on Breaking the Cycle: Addressing generational patterns, The Press Times explored five areas of generational cycles and how they are being addressed in the northeast portion of the state.

As generational cycles occur, negative patterns and traits are known to transfer through multiple generations through learned behavior and family dynamics. The reports cover the areas of physical health, education, mental health, housing and substance use.



## Post-Crescent, Press-Gazette, FoxValley365

In 2022, the teams at FoxValley365, the Green Bay Press-Gazette and The Post-Crescent collaborated on a year-long project called [Home is Here: Stories behind the census](#). The phrase “Home is here” comes from a business leader whose family fled Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War, speaking about the

Among experience in the region, but it applies equally to other racial and ethnic groups who call northeast Wisconsin home. Over 2022, this series posed a simple question — Who are we? — in a variety of settings, from traditional news interviews and informal conversations to formal community town hall events. The goal? To spark a dialogue that helps us better understand who we are, and more importantly, decide who we want to be.

That dialogue continues. In May 2023, several Home is Here sources were interviewed for WPR [Wisconsin Life](#) stories that will be featured in upcoming weeks — an example of the synergies created by the ongoing collaboration.

Content in the series includes:

- Two columns, the first [introducing the series](#) and a second encouraging residents [to share their stories](#) with our journalists.
- The series launch news article began with a troubling story from an Asian-American community leader: “We had a case where people were being egged again, and people were being vandalized at their place. Our elderly are not feeling safe to walk in the street or go shopping because people were screaming at them and yelling at them to go back to their country.” [‘Home is here’: Northeast Wisconsin's surge in diversity forged by opportunities, grit and an inclusive vision.](#)
- A summary of the 2020 census: [Diverse cities, whiter suburbs, dying farms: 5 ways northeast Wisconsin has changed.](#)
- Exclusive interviews with two of the Green Bay Packers top executives: [‘It opens your eyes’: How Green Bay Packers leaders Mark Murphy, Marcia Anderson learned about the power of diversity.](#)
- An analysis of how the Census Bureau made strides in fully counting members of [Wisconsin’s Indigenous communities.](#)
- How updated racial categories used in the 2020 Census better captured the [full diversity of people](#) in northeast Wisconsin.

- A short history of how [Hmong people first came to Wisconsin](#) and how '[Hmong people are truly American, if not more American than most Americans.](#)'

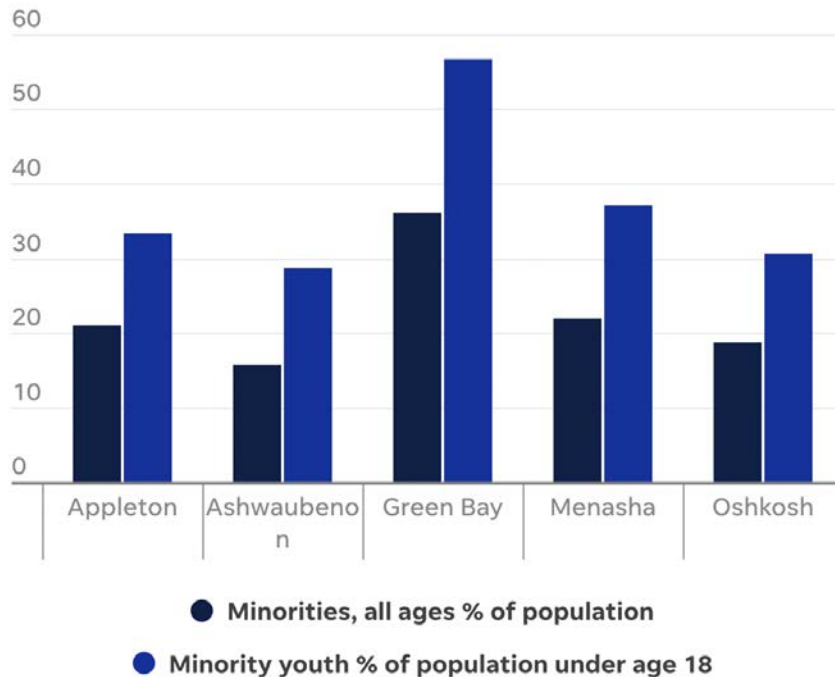


- [A video of a community forum](#) on Facebook Live moderated by FoxValley365's Henry Sanders and related story: [Here's how Green Bay, Fox Valley DEI specialists make the case for inclusion in workplaces.](#)
- How some [41 languages are spoken in schools](#), reflecting the diversity and experiences of students enrolled in school across the region.
- Why Latino people moved to [northeast Wisconsin](#) and how they've shaped the economy and found the American dream.
- [How churches, mosques and temples support anchor diverse communities in Green Bay, Appleton and Oshkosh.](#)
- Why [political power lags](#) even as minority populations grow in the region.
- Seven [eye-opening things we learned](#) by diving into northeast Wisconsin census results, then talking to people.
- How the process of becoming inclusive will be '[a long rollercoaster ride](#)' in northeast Wisconsin.
- Why [Black organizations put Juneteenth](#) front and center across Wisconsin.
- A [guide to northeast Wisconsin organizations](#) devoted to racial and ethnic diversity.



## Minority youth as a percentage of the population under 18 years old

This chart shows percentage of youth under age 18 who are Black, Asian, Native American, other races and multiracial as a percentage all of youth under age 18 and the percentage of minorities of all ages in the cities' populations.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

So far on 2023's Families Matter project, The Post-Crescent and The Press-Gazette have collaborated on a variety of stories about issues facing Wisconsin families, including:

- [One in 5 could have dyslexia, but Wisconsin students, parents feel school support falls short](#)
- [Should Wisconsin fund child care like it does roads? Here are some solutions to the child care crisis](#)
- [It takes a village: How collaboration helped a small northern Wisconsin city add crucial child care](#)
- [Wisconsin families matter. Here's how 6 newsrooms, 2 community foundations and Microsoft aim to help](#)
- [Many kids missed dental care during the pandemic. Luckily, these dentists visit schools for free](#)
- [Six-week waits, 1 counselor for 8 rural districts: These are some of the hurdles facing youth mental health](#)

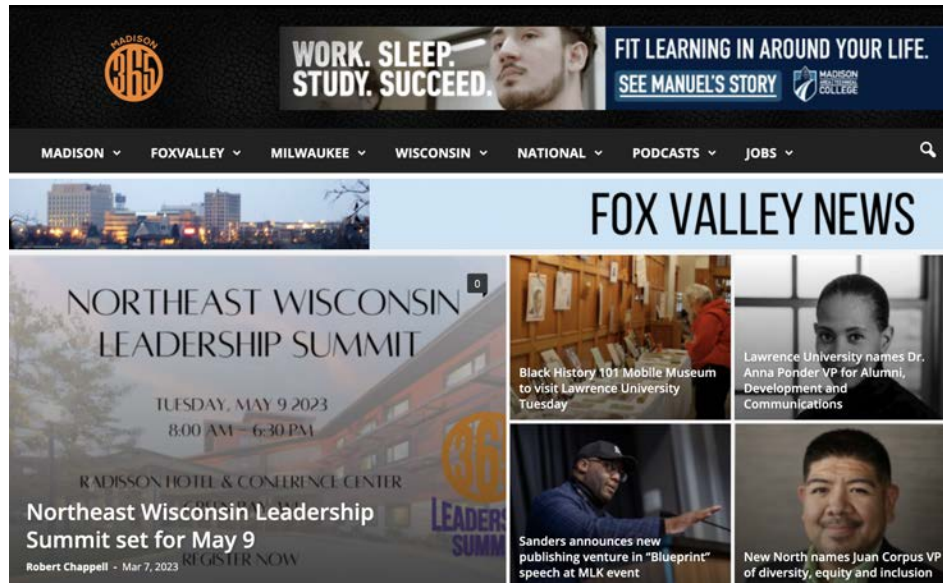
- [As 1 in 8 kids go hungry and schools struggle to feed kids, Wisconsin has a chance to turn the tables](#)
- [The new Wisconsin family? 1.7 kids, no picket fence and child care costs more than college](#)



*Destiny Desotell sits with her daughter, Madelyn, while talking about finding child care at Encompass Early Education & Care's Bellin Health Center location on Feb. 24, 2023, in Allouez, Wis. This story about dropping fertility rates and dearth of child care is part of the Families Matter series. (Sarah Klopping / Green Bay Press-Gazette)*

## FoxValley365

In addition to the projects mentioned above, in collaboration with the Press-Gazette, FoxValley365 published a report on a local church paying a voluntary tax to Indigenous people for which Wisconsin Watch provided photos. It also launched a new business publication with Northeast Wisconsin as one of its key coverage areas, and highlighted several entrepreneurs, small businesses and people of color in business leadership roles.



### Section 3: Collaboration Hiring

The investments by Microsoft, the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation and Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region have allowed all of the news partners to expand their staffs, either temporarily or through permanent hires.

Highlights of what those resources looked like during the most recent reporting period:

#### Wisconsin Watch and WPR

Simply put, without funding from the NEW News Lab, Wisconsin Watch's most ambitious and expensive project, [Open and Shut](#), would not have happened. To complete the podcast and online series, Wisconsin Watch and WPR pooled resources from the NEW News Lab, hiring freelance producer Nina Earnest and freelance editor Karen Given. These highly skilled professionals also command high hourly rates; the editor's rate was \$125/hour.

Wisconsin Watch also used tens of thousands of dollars in NEW News Lab funding to pay for extensive legal review of Open and Shut by Madison attorneys Aaron Dumas and Christa Westerberg of Pines Bach.



Funding from the NEW News Lab allowed both newsrooms to prioritize Open and Shut over other pressing duties by providing salary support for nearly two dozen staff, interns and fellows from Wisconsin Watch and WPR. In all, we estimate the total cost of the podcast — salaries, freelancers, legal review, travel and other expenses — at over \$300,000.

## Post-Crescent and Press-Gazette

Financial support of the NEW News Lab has allowed both newsrooms to bolster their reporting staffs, including a native Spanish speaker who allowed them to translate the following stories:

- [Banqueros de Green Bay encuentran audiencia entusiasta en clase de educación monetaria en español; planean otras](#)
- [Nueva directora de Casa Alba Melanie, Amanda García, creció en comunidad hispana de Green Bay: encontró una carrera en defensa y educación](#)
- [Ciudades diversas, suburbios más blancos, granjas moribundas: 5 formas en que ha cambiado el noreste de Wisconsin](#)

In addition, reporter Jelissa Burns' position is directly supported by support from the lab. Jelissa is a regional business reporter at the Post-Crescent who covers personal finance, consumer issues, jobs and employment, and residential housing. Jelissa moved into this new job at the end of February 2022, filling a position that was intentionally crafted to continue the momentum and connections that had been created through our coverage in partnership with the NEW News Lab. Jelissa is a 2021 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

The Green Bay Press-Gazette used its allocation of \$11,750 in August 2022 to support its community fundraising share of the salary of its Report for America Corps member Danielle DuClos, who covers K-12 education and is a core member of the Families Matter reporting team. Families Matter is the series all NEWS Lab partners are partnering on in 2023.

The Post-Crescent used its allocation of \$11,750 in August 2022 to support its community fundraising share of the salary of its Report for America Corps member Madison Lammert, who covers early childhood education and the child care industry. Madison also is a core member of the Families Matter reporting team. Lammert is the only full-time reporter in Wisconsin exclusively covering these issues.



*NEW News Lab funding has been used by the Appleton Post-Crescent and the Green Bay Press-Gazette to support the salaries of three reporters, from left, Jelissa Burns, Danielle DuClos and Madison Lammert.*

At **The Press Times**, NEW News Lab funding made it possible to hire stringers to take on some of the work of the editor-in-chief, so she could focus on the Families Matter series. That included many hours of reporting and editing — research, reading books on generational dynamics, studying case files, speaking with northeast region organizations and organizing the information gathered into an accurate reflection of what was gleaned from the research.

**FoxValley365** has more than doubled its full-time reporting staff (from two to five), supported by a number of funding sources, one of which is NEW News Lab.

## Section 4: Impact

Mario’s **Wisconsin Watch** stories about the culture wars in Kiel, Wisconsin had massive impact, leading local residents to [rally around their embattled superintendent](#) and prompting the resignation of a far-right school board member. In part on the strength of those stories, Mario secured a [one-year New York Times fellowship](#) to continue working in the Wisconsin Watch newsroom while pursuing an investigation of the Wisconsin state prison system.

One reader wrote this tribute to the positive effect of Mario’s reporting:

“I cannot overstate the importance to and impact his reporting has had on my own community. Prior to his reporting, there was virtually no coverage on the facts. Misinformation and lies ran rampant with negative real-world consequences for both our public institutions and local democracy,” Kiel resident Oliver Kornetzke wrote in a thank you email to Wisconsin Watch. “His reporting, without a doubt, helped save our community by allowing the citizens of Kiel — armed with the truth — (to) pull away from the grips of a small fringe group of very hateful individuals.”

**Open and Shut**, the **Wisconsin Watch-WPR** podcast that exposed the nearly unchecked power of prosecutors, has received [statewide, regional and national honors](#) from the [American Bar Association’s Silver Gavel contest](#), the Radio Television Digital News Association’s [regional Edward R. Murrow Awards](#) and first place from the [Milwaukee Press Club](#) for best podcast. In addition, Wisconsin Watch

reporter Phoebe Petrovic and freelance producer Nina Earnest are finalists for their roles on Open and Shut for the national [Livingston Awards](#), which recognize outstanding work by journalists under age 35.

Mario's story about the Concordia University seawall became one of Wisconsin Watch's most viewed reports ever, reaching more than 90,000 people through our website.



*In 2007, the Concordia University Wisconsin, in Mequon, Wis., finished fortifying a 130-foot bluff and building a 2,700-foot-long rock wall to buffer waves. The \$12 million project was among the largest built along Lake Michigan in Wisconsin. The project has accelerated erosion on downstream properties from around 9 inches to more than 7 feet per year. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)*

While it relates to an earlier installation of the lab, the Wisconsin Legislature in June is expected to debate comprehensive reforms to the state's building and zoning codes in part due to issues raised by the **Press-Gazette** and **Post-Crescent** in the [No Place to Call Home](#) series, including the chronic lack of affordable housing and a patchwork of regulations from community to community. This demonstrates the long-term impact of content created as a part of this partnership.

The newspapers' [Home is Here](#) project received a 2023 first-place award from the Wisconsin Newspaper Association in the Ongoing/Extended Coverage category. Said the judges: "This is a tremendously thorough look at one region's changing demographics and the various impacts those changes have had. Home Is Here also highlights perspectives of minority populations that are often overlooked."

Feedback from **The Press Times'** Breaking the Cycle: Addressing generational patterns series has included a variety of tips loosely related to the subject, such as a reader who alerted The Press Times to local work promoting public health, a gleaning project at a local farmers' market, a food assistance project at a local after-school program and other community efforts. The series also provides information to the public on programs that can assist them if they are experiencing these challenges.

The WNA awarded a 2023 first place to The Press Times in the Ongoing/Extended Coverage category for its NEW News Lab examination of homelessness, which was produced in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. "This compelling series should move the reader to action on one of the community's most-pressing social needs," the judges wrote.

**FoxValley365** reports that other churches and organizations who read its coverage are now considering making similar voluntary tax payments.

## **Section 5: Reflections on Two Years of Collaboration**

After two years of getting to know and trust each other, setting up the NEW News Lab, dealing with a pandemic, staff turnover, weekly meetings and the challenges of developing and maintaining a common sense of purpose, the six news partners are unanimous on one issue: Let's keep this going.

The news partners were proud to participate in the May 4, 2022 online meeting with funders, community foundations and other stakeholders. We explored the nationwide crisis in local news, why it matters and how NEW News Lab is helping to rebuild local news in Northeast Wisconsin. ([Handout](#) and the [community foundations' page](#) which includes the event video, produced by Microsoft, links to our coverage and a donation portal.)

At the event, the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation and Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region announced that each was contributing \$25,000 in support of NEW News Lab — investments that subsequently have inspired further gifts from a family fund and the Green Bay Packers Foundation. We are excited about opportunities to expand this local fundraising in collaboration with the community foundations and other stakeholders.

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*“Building a statewide network of journalist colleagues has been valuable from a professional perspective. ... The NEW News Lab prompts us to think about our fellow travelers in the news business in a new way.”*

— Robert Chappell, executive editor, 365 Media Foundation

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As an outgrowth of the funders meeting, the news partners undertook further steps to bolster the sustainability of NEW News Lab. We are deeply grateful for the support of Microsoft, which has totaled \$750,000 since 2021, but we know that the long-term sustainability of this work must be locally rooted. We formed a Fundraising Committee, which initially was led by Wisconsin Watch with support from its development team and included representatives of the Press-Gazette, Post-Crescent and FoxValley365.

That committee continues to meet every two weeks to discuss and prioritize opportunities for raising the profile of NEW News Lab and seeking financial support. The goal is to raise \$100,000, \$10,000 of which already has been acquired, during 2023.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to participate along with other community partners in the May 2023 video project in support of NEW News Lab and the other Microsoft local news pilot sites. We look forward to promoting the videos and speaking in support of rebuilding local news, in whatever venues emerge in Wisconsin or across the nation!

We are committed to working together, in a spirit of community service and mutual respect. Each newsroom retains its journalistic independence but recognizes the benefits of a coordinated, collaborative approach to developing — and sustaining — news coverage that informs our communities and strengthens our democracy.

Here are excerpts of reflections provided by each news partner, with minor editing for clarity:

## Wisconsin Watch

NEW News Lab has brought together editors, reporters and visual artists who likely would never have teamed up but for the trust and relationships we have built up through the collaboration.

For example, three NEW News Lab partners worked together on a story that had statewide resonance but was focused in Wisconsin Watch's home base of Madison. Madison365 and the Green Bay Press-Gazette reported how a [Madison church was paying reparations to the Ho-Chunk Nation for land taken from the tribe](#) and later used to house the church. Wisconsin Watch provided photography for that story.

Wisconsin Watch also entered a full collaboration on a series of stories exposing [widespread sexual harassment on the Sheboygan Police Department](#) with the Sheboygan Press, a sister newspaper to the Press-Gazette and the Post-Crescent. Wisconsin Watch reporter Phoebe Petrovic and Sheboygan Press reporter Maya Hilty split up reporting duties. Images for the stories were provided by the USA TODAY newspaper group. Wisconsin Watch Managing Editor Dee J. Hall edited and fact-checked the stories, which [prompted the resignation of the most egregious offender](#).

As retired Milwaukee Journal Sentinel editor George Stanley told attendees at the May 12 Milwaukee Press Club Awards, collaboration among for-profit and nonprofit newsrooms is essential to counteract the burgeoning crisis in local news. Such collaboration is made possible by funders dedicated to democracy and a free and vigorous press which is essential to its survival. Stanley, who led the USA TODAY WISCONSIN-Network including the Green Bay and Appleton papers, is right. It's OK to compete — that's how some of the best journalism is produced. But when it makes sense for the good of the audience and the good of a community, media of all stripes must learn to work together. Wisconsin Watch is based on such a collaborative model and is grateful that Microsoft and local funders in the Fox Valley share this vision.

Wisconsin Watch would be pleased to continue participating in NEW News Lab, which has allowed it to tackle crucial projects and tap into previously unavailable collaborative partners and resources.

Overall, the NEW News Lab has run smoothly, thanks in part to coordination by Wisconsin Watch Executive Director Andy Hall with the assistance of Jim Fitzhenry, Ideas Lab Editor for the Milwaukee





Journal Sentinel and the USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin; and Taima Kern, editor of the Appleton Post-Crescent, who has taken the lead on coordinating the editorial output of the NEW News Lab.

One improvement would be better communication with Microsoft and other potential funders about when and how much funding to expect. That will help the partners in deploying resources to tackle the stories we believe need to be told. Thanks to Microsoft and the community foundations for their support of these important projects!

## WPR

The more deliberate partners can be about identifying and understanding the information gaps that exist in their areas and whether outdated understandings of how audiences find and consume news and information plays into those gaps before identifying issues/topics to focus on, the more impact...efforts like this one can have. Public media already operates in fairly collaborative spaces.

The Families Matter project is an exciting development for the collaborative. This project has more of a chance of leveraging the resources of each organization in a manner that makes deeper, more meaningful coverage available to our audiences by focusing the partners on different aspects of a unified issue. I hope the group can build on that kind of collaboration going forward.

## Post-Crescent

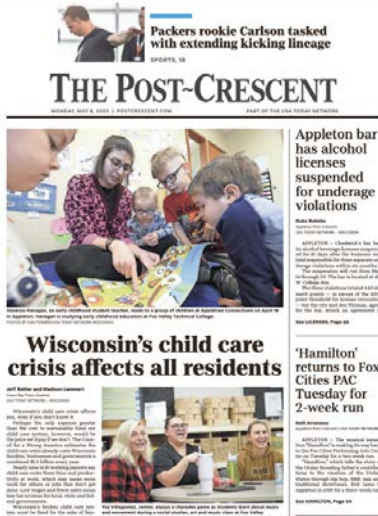
This partnership gave our content a greater reach than it would've had with just our own promotion. It allowed our reporters to reach readers outside of our normal coverage area with stories which are universally Wisconsin.

Reporters and editors were generally receptive to the idea of working alongside other outlets, because they recognized that we can do more when we work together, coordinate efforts and avoid repeating one another. This is something that's already part of the USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin culture,



Owner Tammy Dannhoff conducts clean up time after a play session Tuesday, February 28 2023, at Kids Are Us Family Child Care in Oshkosh, Wis. Dan Powers/Appleton Post-Crescent

The new Wisconsin family? 1.7 kids, no picket fence and child care costs more than college



however, as we focus on collaboration a great deal across our 11 dailies and multiple non-dailies in the state.

The funding has allowed us to set clear priorities and focus on more in-depth reporting. While we would do similar work on our own without this prompt, it is helpful to have that rallying call and that shared purpose with our partners. Plus, it gives readers a story thread to follow. It's one thing to spend the year doing investigations on issues as they pop up, but it's another to pick a major issue, sit down and brainstorm all the potential side tangents and rabbit holes, and then actually pursue those rabbits. This year's project, Families Matter, felt impossibly large at the outset. But as we've continued to report on our share of the content, we've realized it is impossibly large, but that's okay, because we can hyper focus on this piece today and still look at that piece tomorrow.

## Press-Gazette

Our experiences with NEW News Lab have been positive. It has led to greater depth in reporting on some subjects and the partnership amplified those stories to a bigger audience.

We're not sure we ever talked with The Press Times prior to this partnership but because of this, we have. And what you realize, once we're all in the same room, is that we're all journalists working to tell good stories, facing the same type of obstacles with sources, logistics, etc. We speak a common language. The breaking down of barriers is good and a partnership like this may inform the future in journalism.

Each season has improved and our way of communicating with each other and organization have improved, too. When we focus on a particular subject for a season, we realize we don't have to produce all the stories for it, so instead of us and the Press Times both writing about a shortage of school counselors, for example, only one of us has to, and this can help in a world of challenges we all face. Focusing different news organizations on one subject raises the importance of that subject and can lead to change.

## The Press Times



Without the NEW News Lab funding, we would not have had the manpower to pursue this type of story and get this information out into the community to be a valuable resource and catalyst for awareness or change in the northeast region.



The experience we have had with the Microsoft NEW News Lab group at The Press Times here in Green Bay has been nothing short of phenomenal. The ability to do deep dives on stories has been rewarding. In addition, the collaboration between newsrooms has given us a glimpse into the future. It really puts a light on reporting and how we are all in this together to save local journalism.

Years ago when we had the Green Bay News Chronicle and we were in a fierce battle with the Gannett owned Green Bay Press Gazette, we would have never thought of running a Press-Gazette article in our paper. Things have changed. We are all in this together and by sharing articles all of us become stronger and all of us help inform the public about issues in the community where they live.

It has been great collaborating with all of the news entities in northeast Wisconsin, which has allowed us to bring larger awareness to the greater Green Bay community of issues that affect local families.

With the funding, it has allowed us to do deep dives on issues that we never would have been able to afford.

The group that we have here in northeast Wisconsin has been great to work with. The communication and cooperation among those involved has been a bonus to this great program.

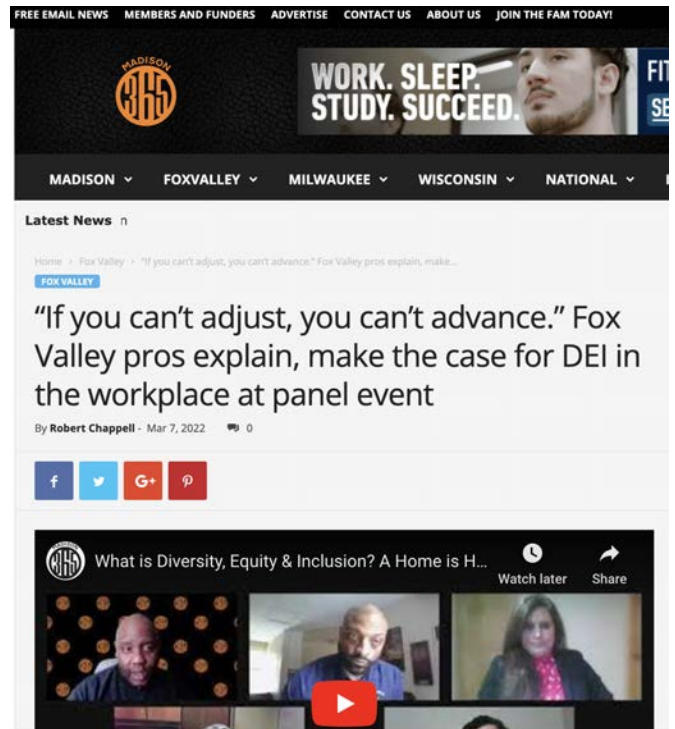
We would like to thank Microsoft for their support of local journalism.

## FoxValley365

We are a Madison-based newsroom covering communities of color. We know that there are strong and growing communities of color in Northeast Wisconsin, and our statewide audience wants to know about those communities and the issues they face. The influx of content covering those communities has been a tremendous asset to that audience.

Additionally, building a statewide network of journalist colleagues has been valuable from a professional perspective. Hiring a Northeast Wisconsin based reporter has proven very difficult, but that's not the fault of NEW News Lab.

The NEW News Lab prompts us to think about our fellow travelers in the news business in a new way.



*On behalf of the six NEW News Lab partners, thank you for your generous support! Your investment in the local news ecosystem allows our teams to explore issues of importance to community residents — improving the quality of life for residents of northeast Wisconsin and strengthening our democracy as a whole.*