

Nonprofit News Awards highlight the impact of investigative journalism

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, August 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 2023 Nonprofit News Awards (INNYs) showed that nonprofit newsrooms often take the lead in holding government officials accountable, a vital role as the traditional newspaper industry continues to shrink.

Whether investigating the high death rate at a county jail, tracing the source of cancer-causing chemicals in a state's drinking water, or revealing lenience around accusations of sexual abuse in the U.S. Army, reporting by nonprofit newsrooms led directly to changes in policy and practice at all levels of government — even in global commerce.



Cassie Haynes and Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, co-founders of Resolve Philly, won the 2023 Service to Nonprofit News Award.

“

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Sue Cross, INN CEO

The third annual awards, presented by the [Institute for Nonprofit News](#), also recognized Resolve Philly's leaders Jean Friedman-Rudovsky and Cassie Haynes with the Service to Nonprofit News Award, hailed Virginia's Cardinal News as Startup of the Year, and welcomed the Kansas City Defender's Ryan Sorrell as Emerging Leader of the Year.

Winners of the Best Investigative Journalism Award included the startup [Arizona Luminaria](#), whose investigation of the high death rate at the Pima County Jail revealed a pattern of abuse and was cited by officials

calling for accountability. New Mexico In Depth revealed that the state's death rate from alcohol-

related causes was three times the national average, a report credited with leading the governor to create an Office of Alcohol Prevention.

Wisconsin Watch unearthed evidence that Milwaukee Tool, an iconic American brand, was using prison labor in China to manufacture its work gloves. It prompted the U.S. Department of State to look into the allegations. And a collaboration of Texas Tribune, ProPublica, and Military Times showed that the U.S. Army was treating those accused of sexual abuse more leniently than those accused of other crimes, prompting calls for a congressional investigation.

Deep reporting, often including data analysis, characterized the winning work in several other categories as well. A Flatwater Free Press series linked the source of cancer-causing nitrate and uranium in Nebraska's water to fertilizer for corn and prompted the state legislature to introduce four new water quality bills. It won a Best Explanatory Journalism Award.

The Center for Public Integrity analyzed federal data to find an estimated 300,000 homeless students were not being counted by their schools, cutting them off from available aid. Sharing the data prompted The Seattle Times, Street Sense Media, WAMU/DCist, and others to produce original, localized stories, prompting Congress to increase funding for homeless students. The organization earned a Breaking Barriers Award.

Community Champion Award winners included Mission Local, whose reporting halted a plan to equip San Francisco law enforcement with lethal robots, and Open Vallejo, which revealed the destruction of evidence in police shooting cases. Photographer Yesica Prado of San Francisco Public Press, for her part, triggered an overhaul of city procedures for dealing with the homeless after she documented the human toll of a crackdown on homeless residents by Berkeley police.

Close to 2,000 newspapers have shut their doors since the early 2000s, and many surviving newsrooms have cut investigative teams in response to shrinking budgets. Research has shown that watchdog reporting can maintain trust in civic life, make public officials more accountable to their constituents and save taxpayers money.

"Nonprofit newsrooms support our civic life by holding the powerful accountable to the communities they serve, a vital function in our democracy," said Sue Cross, INN executive director and CEO. "These awards also are a testament to the ways nonprofit journalists are building communities, civic engagement and finding new ways to make sure everyone has access to the news they need."

Other awards highlighted innovation in news gathering and distribution, like Sahan Journal's audio-only newsletter, delivered via SMS, to reach Minnesota's Somali community. Two outlets that received Breaking Barriers Awards amplified the experiences of the historically silenced prison population; both Voices of Monterey Bay and The Appeal made current and former inmates central to reporting projects — contributing to the growing awareness of the need for criminal-justice reforms.

[See the full list of award winners and finalists](#)

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Andrew Sherry

Communications Partners

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