

Funding Climate Journalism at Scale

Recommendations from the Climate News Task Force

Climate journalism is at a critical inflection point. To make the changes needed to address the climate crisis, we need to reach more people with more engaging and more impactful coverage of it. We need to document not only the devastating impacts of climate change but also the innovative, exciting solutions - and what's holding them back. Yet the crisis in the media industry and the onslaught of disinformation means fewer people have access to accurate, credible climate information from independent sources. To turn the tide, we must act now to invest in climate journalism at scale.

In the last three years, the number of Americans reporting that they hear about climate change weekly has decreased sharply, while nearly 10,000 journalists have lost their jobs. And since 2005, more than one-third of local U.S. news outlets have closed, leading to measurable declines in civic engagement and political participation. More than 11 million environmentally concerned citizens did not vote in the 2024 U.S. presidential election, with devastating consequences for our democracy and our climate. As a result, U.S. climate science and journalism are facing threats from the highest levels of government.

The current amount of philanthropic funding for climate journalism is less than \$50 million per year, which is a tiny fraction of the more than \$1 billion spent annually on climate disinformation and fossil fuel company communications. To compete, the 12 member news outlets of the Climate News Task Force recommend that philanthropic donors work together to greatly increase funding for climate coverage, aiming to double the amount of annual funding within five years. We also recommend improving how funds are distributed and supporting efforts by news outlets to collaborate with each other.



We propose three options for funder collaboration that could be implemented either separately or in combination:

- **Climate Journalism Pooled Fund:** A large pooled fund would support editorially independent climate journalism at scale by providing multi-year, general operating support grants for climate news outlets.
- **Press Forward Climate:** An aligned giving group within the Press Forward program would bring together local and national climate donors to spur, fund and support collaborations between local and national climate news outlets.
- **ClimateNewsMatch:** An expert council would connect thoroughly vetted and highly recommended climate news outlets and funders and serve as a clearinghouse for advice and analysis for donors and journalists.

In addition to increasing funding, these strategies will increase the speed and impact of grantmaking by strengthening relationships between philanthropy and news outlets and by improving the sustainability and reach of journalism. Working together, funders and news outlets have a unique opportunity to change the trajectory of climate journalism - and, ultimately, of climate change itself.

About the Climate News Task Force



Launched in February 2025, the Climate News Task Force (CNTF) is a collaboration bringing together a dozen diverse news organizations that produce or publish climate news. CNTF supports collaboration between newsrooms by (1) developing new relationships, tools and platforms for sharing content and resources; and (2) developing consensus recommendations for philanthropic donors seeking to support climate journalism at scale.

The 12 CNTF members represent a wide range of nonprofit news outlets and regional collaborations with experience covering climate change:

Grist

Grist is a nonprofit, independent media organization dedicated to reporting on climate change.

CANARY MEDIA

Canary Media reports on the transition to clean energy and solutions to the climate crisis.

floodlight

Floodlight investigates the powers stalling climate action.



Wisconsin Watch uses journalism to make Wisconsin communities strong, informed and connected.

Sentient

Sentient is a nonprofit news outlet reporting on factory farms and their impact on the world.

HighCountryNews

A nonprofit independent magazine of unblinking journalism that shines a light on all of the complexities of the West.

DRILLED

Drilled is a global, multimedia investigative newsroom focused on climate accountability.

THE XYLOM

The Xylo grows healthy, interconnected communities across the world.



A non-profit newsroom that publishes Mother Jones, produces the Reveal radio show/podcast, and is home to CIR Studios, an award-winning TV and documentary film unit.



The Mountain West News Bureau is a daily and investigative news collaboration between major market public radio stations in seven states and NPR.



Planet Detroit's journalism amplifies local voices, holds power accountable, spotlights solutions, and inspires hope in Michigan and across the Great Lakes.



A journalism collaborative covering the nation's largest watershed.

CNTF is steered by staff at the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, Floodlight, and the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. The effort is supported by grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Meliore Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation, with additional support from the Heineman-Russell Family Foundation. Contact CNTF at cntf@newscollaborative.org.