



For Immediate Release

Nine journalism collaborative projects share in more than \$110,000 to address community information needs in Cleveland and Akron

Cleveland Foundation and Akron Community Foundation also partner to bring City Scrapers open-source technology to Northeast Ohio

CLEVELAND (Dec. 19, 2019) – Akron Community Foundation, The Center for Community Solutions, the Cleveland Foundation, The George Gund Foundation and the Knight Foundation today announced more than \$110,000 in journalism grants to address community information needs in Akron and Cleveland.

The funders came together to support hyper-local media, community organizations, resident media makers and legacy newsrooms as they collaborate to spark innovation, experimentation and learning. These projects are aimed squarely at supporting residents where information is needed most – at the neighborhood level – while also establishing new information partnerships in service to Northeast Ohio communities.

The priorities of this initial round of grantmaking were to:

- Create topic-based collaborative journalism projects that respond to community information needs and that explore and elevate solutions.
- Encourage media outlets to explore the strengths and resources already present in the region, and to build trust among these communities.
- Conduct restorative journalism that reframes community narratives to spotlight resident resilience and neighborhood progress, lifting up perspectives that are often not reflected in the traditional news media.

The nine collaborative efforts span 22 media organizations and individual journalists and nearly 30 community organizations. The projects included in the initial information needs cohort are:

- **Black maternal health & infant mortality** – This project will use restorative journalism by empowering women in Cleveland to tell their first-person narrative via a number of channels, including written stories, radio and photography.
- **Witness protection and rights** – This collaboration will help close a gap in understanding about the safety and rights of those who witness crime, while pushing for solutions that could promote a safer system in Cleveland.
- **Basic information needs in Woodhill Estates** – This project will involve and inform residents of the 80-year-old public housing development on Cleveland’s East Side around pending changes as a result of a proposal to rebuild the estates.
- **Literacy** – This collaborative will explore how media partners and other community organizations can come together to build a culture of reading at Charles Dickens Elementary School in Cleveland’s Mt. Pleasant neighborhood in order to address the K-3 literacy rate.
- **Food insecurity** – With 59 percent of Cleveland residents living in food deserts, this project will provide a platform for residents in the MidTown, Glenville and Kinsman neighborhoods to tell their stories through a number of different channels. It will strive to better connect residents to food and other key resources around health and well-being.

- **Eviction** – This collaborative will tackle the issue of eviction and tenant rights in Akron and Cleveland across a number of communication platforms from the perspective of both tenants and landlords, ultimately producing a tenant’s guide in both English and Spanish.
- **Infant mortality** – This project will address the issue of infant mortality in Akron and Cleveland in a two-pronged approach: 1) educating traditional media audiences about how bias and racism play into the treatment of women of color; and 2) use storytelling across a number of social platforms to reach and inform the most at-risk residents of these two communities.
- **Basic information needs in Buckeye-Shaker Square** – By empowering the residents of the Buckeye-Shaker Square neighborhood via a central news hub and first-person storytelling, this collaborative aims to arm residents with the information necessary to advocate for their own well-being.
- **Safety and representation** – This restorative journalism project will engage the residents of the Goodyear Heights neighborhood in Akron to elevate an unheard community perspective in regard to the importance of safety and representation at Reservoir Park Pool and access more generally to recreation opportunities.

City Scrapers Debuts in Northeast Ohio

Akron Community Foundation and Cleveland Foundation have partnered with Chicago-based [City Bureau](#) to bring the organization’s open-source City Scrapers technology to Northeast Ohio. It includes public meeting dates, times, locations and records from more than 150 government agencies at the city and county level in [Cleveland](#) and [Akron](#), all standardized in a single location for the first time – and free and open to journalists and residents alike. To date, there is information on more than 1,600 public meetings and 1,700 official documents such as meeting minutes, agendas and notices for Northeast Ohio.

City Bureau was founded in Chicago in 2015 and expanded to Detroit in 2018. The organization’s mission is to “bring journalists and communities together in a collaborative spirit to produce media that is impactful, equitable and responsive to the public.”

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About the Cleveland Foundation: Established in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is the world's first community foundation and one of the largest today, with assets of \$2.5 billion and 2018 grants of more than \$104 million. Through the generosity of donors, the foundation improves the lives of residents of Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties by building community endowment, addressing needs through grantmaking and providing leadership on vital issues. The foundation’s program areas include: arts and culture, economic and workforce development, education, environment, neighborhoods, and youth development and social services. For more information, visit www.ClevelandFoundation.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).