

PRESS RELEASE

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NJ Council for the Humanities receives \$339k community journalism grant

Collaboration with Journalism + Design at the New School will create statewide grassroots journalism training program in partnership with NJ community colleges

(Camden, NJ) – The New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJCH) has received a \$339,000 grant from the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium to fund the development of a statewide grassroots journalism training program with community colleges around New Jersey. This program presents a vital opportunity to strengthen communities and create trusted information hubs at a time when many NJ residents are seeking to become more informed and media savvy.

The program, a collaboration between NJCH and Journalism + Design at the New School, will equip citizens with skills to tell the stories of their communities through the creation of new, free, noncredit certificate programs at community colleges. Journalism + Design and NJCH piloted a similar training program in South Jersey in spring 2022 as part of NJCH’s [Democracy and the Informed Citizen](#) initiative.

The grant represents both the largest individual grant NJCH has ever received and the largest award in NJCIC’s [recently announced round of funding](#).

“Helping New Jersey communities do the work of local journalism in new and creative ways will be central to the future health of our state and its democracy,” said NJCH Executive Director Carin Berkowitz. “Community colleges, which have long excelled at democratizing learning and meeting local needs, are the perfect sites for this project, as they foster the exchange of ideas and opportunities for understanding among their diverse populations.”

The program will be led by Valerie Popp, Director of Strategic Initiatives at NJCH, and Cole Goins, Engagement Lead in the Journalism + Design program at The New School. The training program will begin in 2023 with the selection of community college sites and continue through 2024. It will add to a burgeoning set of community-driven local journalism efforts across New Jersey that are centering residents’ voices and building collaborative networks between mediamakers and the communities they cover.

[Journalism + Design](#) is an undergraduate program at The New School and a lab dedicated to nurturing a resilient free press that serves a healthy democracy. Through workshops, events, and community-based programs, J+D equips journalists, students and community members with the tools they need to become stronger information leaders.