

PRESS RELEASE

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Four NJ community colleges selected for “Fueling Community Journalism Through NJ Community Colleges” inaugural cohort

Each college will receive an award of \$40,000 to support the development and launch of free noncredit certificate programs in community journalism on their campuses

(Camden, NJ) – Four New Jersey community colleges have received \$40,000 awards from The New Jersey Council for the Humanities and Journalism + Design at The New School to train faculty members and fund tuition-free, noncredit certificates in community journalism at their institutions.

These certificate programs, which will be unique to each college, will be developed by the selected colleges through training and support from NJCH/J+D and other local news experts. Each college will also facilitate partnerships with local media and community organizations to provide pathways for participants of the certificate programs to get involved in local news production. The program aspires to establish and promote community colleges as trusted hubs for news and information, particularly in communities that lack reliable local sources.

The community college awardees are:

- Atlantic Cape Community College, Mays Landing
- Mercer County Community College, West Windsor
- Middlesex College, Edison
- Sussex County Community College, Newton

“As institutions that broaden educational access and serve diverse populations, New Jersey’s community colleges are well-positioned to fuel greater engagement with local news and information,” said Valerie Popp, PhD, director of strategic initiatives at NJCH. “The selected colleges have proposed community journalism programs that tap into their existing strengths in areas such as media and communications pedagogy, student publications, civic education, and more. We’re especially excited to bring together colleges that represent different communities across the state, from rural Sussex County to the Atlantic coast.”

"Each of these colleges bring rich expertise and ideas for growing community journalism programs that will help catalyze greater participation in local news production and distribution," said Cole Goins, managing director of the Journalism + Design lab. "We're eager to learn from and build with the program teams at each institution to nurture thriving news and information networks in their communities."

Beginning in July 2023, representatives from each college will take part in intensive workshops that will explore how to create, facilitate, and sustain certificate programs that incorporate local voices and community needs. Colleges also will have the opportunity to build sustainable connections with local media partners and nonprofit organizations in their regions through a Spring 2024 community journalism/community college convening, as well as through seed grants for the colleges' community partners, supported by NJCH and J+D.

The colleges will launch their inaugural certificate programs in Spring 2024. The program's training activities will be led by Andrew Rodriguez Calderón, a computational journalist with The Marshall Project and adjunct professor in Journalism + Design, along with other journalists and media experts from Journalism + Design and around New Jersey.

For more information about the selected colleges and NJCH's other journalism and humanities efforts throughout the state, visit: <https://njhumanities.org/programs/community-journalism/>.

This project is funded by a grant from the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium, an independent, publicly-funded nonprofit organization that supports quality local journalism, promising media startups and other efforts meant to better inform people.