

# How to Start a Community- based Publication

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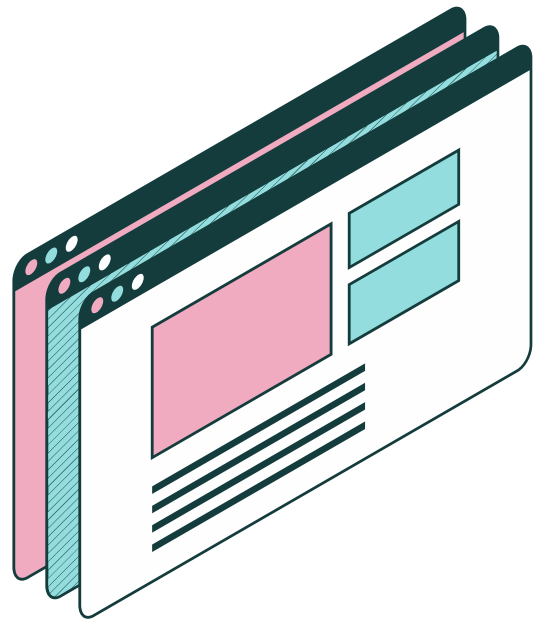
**February 2021**

**GUÍA DE RECURSOS**  
para inmigrantes e indocumentados



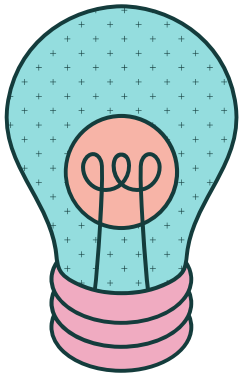


# Identify a community you may want to serve





# Begin with a survey of that community



Identify key nonprofits and community based organizations and talk to the leaders of those groups. Try to understand what issues their constituents are most concerned with and possibly which geographic areas you can focus on.



Survey community members. Ask them what media they read and how they consume it. What do they like about the media that currently exists? What do they not like? These answers will guide your publication.



Try to figure out what the most popular platform is in that community. That will determine your distribution strategy. Is it WhatsApp? Is it via text message? Is it Signal? The goal is to understand the most natural platform for your audience. You do not want them to have to learn any new behavior. It should be as easy and simple as possible.



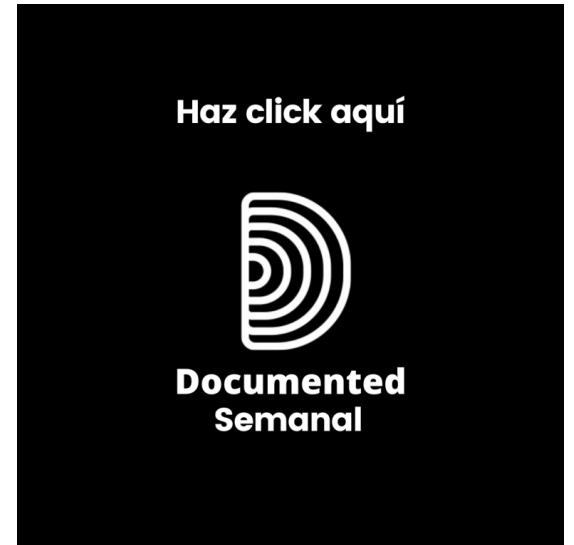
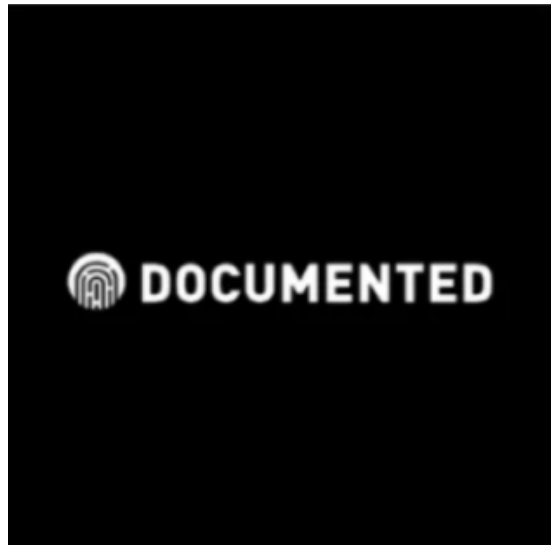
# Plan your editorial strategy



At first, we were publishing lengthy recaps of the week's news with an eye towards what would be important for immigrant New Yorkers once a week. After feedback from our readers that that was too long, we turned it into a five sentence, five story list of the top stories of the week. After more feedback from our readers who said they would rather listen than read, we turned that post into a short audio clip read by our audio producer and audience editor. This may look different for you. The important part is to open up communication with readers and always seek feedback on your work.



# Launch the platform



Once you have the format of your publication locked down, return to the stakeholders you surveyed to ask them to share it with their constituents. When we started Documented Semanal, a Documented fellow visited community centers and organizations in person to hand out flyers we printed out and told people about the service. Begin publishing your newsletter. We found that a more personal voice helped our audience connect to us more closely. Our audience editor uses his first name when sending out posts and readers come to know it. Continuously ask for questions and feedback to your work.



# Cross post



**Ayuda legal  
en  
NYC**



Our biggest moment of growth came at the beginning of the pandemic. Our audience editor Nicolás Ríos had compiled a comprehensive list of funds and organizations that were distributing money for coronavirus relief. He also made guides on how to apply for them. People were stumbling upon those articles through Google searches and Nicolás included many callouts to sign up for regular updates via WhatsApp. Through conversations with our new subscribers, we were able to understand what the community needs were and used that information to create more guides and articles that people came to through searches.



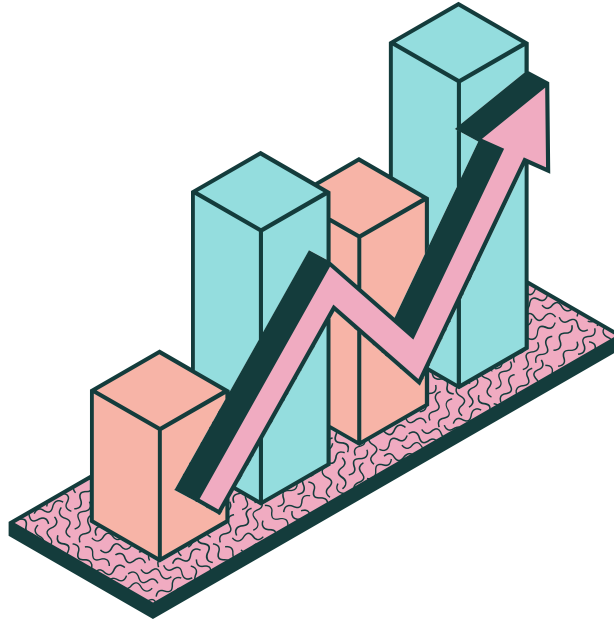
# Converge audiences

As new people started to join and correspond with us, we began to receive more story tips and ideas. We began to assign stories and work with our audience as sources. We publish these stories in Spanish and English and they are always popular in both languages. When we first began publishing, our audience was primarily professionals who work with immigrants. Now, our audience includes more immigrant New Yorkers and our coverage has become increasingly driven by their needs and experiences.

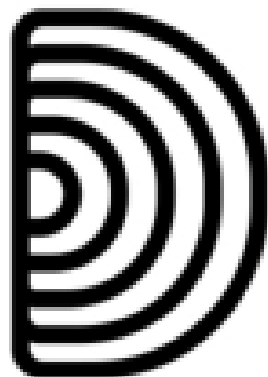




# The most important step: engage



We have been able to do this through Nicolás' policy of answering every single question and message we receive. Our readers know that if they message us, we will respond, which has helped us build a sense of trust with them. Without that, none of this would have been possible.



**This story was made  
with the help of our  
community**

**Become a Member**