

2023-2024

RJI Fellows Six-month Impact Report



María Arce



Tamoa Calzadilla



Jennifer Mizgata



Arjuna Soriano



Celia Wu



Ariel Zych



Stacy Feldman



Kate Maxwell

Each year the Reynolds Journalism Institute empowers a cohort of Fellows to transform their expertise into **accessible, free and innovative resources** for the journalism industry.

News organizations can use the tools from the **2023-2024** class of **RJI Fellows** to support journalists in reporting after **natural disasters**, foster healthy **newsroom culture** to prevent burnout, raise the voices of **marginalized communities**, and address other critical needs.

In the six months since the Fellows presented their projects in a **public webinar** on March 15, 2024, their resources have found wide interest across the industry.

Used by

150+

Newsrooms

300+

Journalists

Presented to

1,000+

People

30+

Conferences & Demos

2023-2024 Fellows

- **María Arce**, [ARENA](#)
- **Tamoa Calzadilla** and **Factchequeado**, [Guide for Journalists Covering Latino and Spanish-Speaking Communities](#)
- **Stacy Feldman**, [Pop-up Community Newsroom Toolkit](#)
- **Kate Maxwell**, [the Local News Go Bag](#)
- **Jennifer Mizgata**, [Building News Culture](#)
- **Arjuna Soriano**, [Community Sports Reporting Toolkit and Playbook](#)
- **Celia Wu** and **Global Press**, [Global Press Style Guide Google Chrome Extension](#)
- **Ariel Zych** and **Science Friday**, [Getting Started with Sensitivity Professionals](#)

Spotlight

Here's a closer look at some of our Fellows' projects and their impact on local news.

[Local News Go Bag](#)



Kate Maxwell presents the Local News Go Bag at the Online News Association's 2024 annual conference on September 20 in Atlanta



A great example of a proactive approach to preparing for crisis' coverage.

early user

The Local News Go Bag has been presented at conferences and webinars such as SRCCON, Rural Roundtable, and ONA, as well as cross-industry gatherings like the annual Natural Hazards Research workshop. The Local Independent Online Publishers newsletter spotlighted it as "One Great Idea" and it's been featured in [Editor & Publisher](#).

Local newsrooms across the United States—from **large urban startups** to **small rural outlets**—have used The Local News Bag to create or refine their **emergency operation plans**. Many newsrooms have used the resource to advocate for management support in disaster preparedness and to prioritize community engagement initiatives.

The Local News Go Bag serves as an ongoing resource for **community-centered disaster coverage**, providing reporters with actionable information, tools, and resources to meet critical information needs during times of crisis.

Guide for Covering Latino and Spanish-Speaking Communities



Tamoia Calzadilla speaks about misinformation with Félix de Bedout June 23, 2024 on Univision's *Al Punto*

Journalists have learned how to address misinformation affecting Latino communities through **presentations** of this guide at over **10 conferences**, including API's Local News Summit, the News Literacy Project, and the International Symposium on Online Journalism (ISOJ).

Members of Factchequeado's Spanish-language newsroom network received training in debunking myths, reaching Latino communities effectively through WhatsApp, utilizing tools like Google Lens and Invid, and detecting AI-generated images. The guide has been shared with more than **90 media organizations** and over 13 journalism programs including at Florida International University, UCLA, and Rutgers.

This bilingual toolkit offers **17 practical tools** and **methods** to **combat misinformation** and address **information deserts** within Latino and Spanish-speaking communities.

“The guide... is very useful, especially for people venturing into the world of fact-checking, as they can find everything in one place and with examples.

Tal Levy, Editor, elDetector

Getting Started With Sensitivity Readers

GRADE LEVEL	MINUTES	SUBJECT	STEM PRACTICES	ACTIVITY TYPE
6 - 8	1-3 hours	Life Science	Planning and Carrying Out	

Download the Hack Your Brain **booklet** in **English or Spanish**, print a **one-page planner** in **English or Spanish**, or **sign up** for the Hack Your Brain newsletter to receive a daily email with all the fun. If you get stuck, there are **hints and solutions** available in **English and Spanish**.

Got questions? Need disability or language accommodations? Send us an email at educate@sciencefriday.com.

NEWSLETTER SIGN UP

The Sensitivity Reader guide has been shared with the membership of LION Publishers, INN, and Gather, giving journalists a fresh approach to keeping their newsrooms' style guides up-to-date and inclusive.

Science Friday's education team used the toolkit to **minimize ableism** in the design of the educational activities for their Hack Your Brain program.

This toolkit supports newsrooms in sourcing, selecting, compensating, and collaborating with editors whose responsibility it is to **prevent the marginalization** of specific communities and identities.

“This kit helped us identify blindspots and address them, improving the overall quality of the work and reducing the potential for harm.

Sandy Roberts, Education Program Manager, Science Friday

Following toolkit recommendations, Science Friday translated Hack Your Brain into Spanish and included instructions for disability accommodations

Amateur Radio Emergency Newsroom Alliance (ARENA)



ARENA trains reporters to share **critical information** and **alerts** in the aftermath of a **natural disaster** by working independently and in tandem with local ham radio operators. With training and equipment, ARENA members stand ready to keep communities informed when it matters most.

ARENA's approach to disaster communication has been presented at the Radically Rural workshop, the Online News Association's annual conference, and the Natural Hazard Workshop.

And in a more comprehensive pilot approach, seven reporters from two newsrooms—El Vocero de Puerto Rico and Global Press Journal's Puerto Rico bureau—have received **radio equipment**, obtained General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) **licenses**, and participated in **training** and **drills** with local ham radio operators and the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Puerto Rico team.

María Arce distributed 250 copies of the ARENA booklet at the Online News Association's 2024 annual conference September in Atlanta



El Vocero and Global Press reporters train with the Puerto Rico Community Communication and Amateur Radio Emergency Service teams in March 2024 at the Emergency Management Office in Caguas, Puerto Rico



After Hurricane Maria's impact, the communications system's fragility became visible. This radio represents an auxiliary tool that allows me to continue my work, even in extreme cases like the one we have already experienced.

Gabriela Meléndez, associate reporter,
Global Press Journal

Building News Culture



Photo credit: Fig Media

Jennifer Mizgata speaks at the “Building Work Culture” session at LION’s 2024 Independent News Sustainability Summit on September 6 in Chicago

“

I just completed the Building News Culture course... It’s a fairly light lift, but it inspired some heavy reflection. As a leader in a newsroom, I endeavor to be part of the change.

course participant

Two partners have committed to **translating** Building News Culture to reach new audiences: LION Publishers will produce a **Spanish** version and Médianes will create a **French** translation.

To date, more than **300 people**, including **news leaders** from Fort Worth Report, VT Digger, Wisconsin Watch, Cedar Rapids Gazette, The Marshall Project, Globe and Mail, and The Washington Post, have taken the course.

This six-week newsletter course empowers news leaders who want to build culture with actionable steps that anyone aiming to make change can use. Subscribers receive weekly emails that explore how **culture** shows up in news organizations, complete with frameworks and examples of **policies, programs, and practices**.

Who we are

The Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) empowers journalists with knowledge, tools and funding to strengthen journalism through practical innovation.

Learn how to apply for fellowships, get involved, and implement tools and workflows from the Reynolds Journalism Institute in your news organization

Fellowships

rjionline.org/about-rji-fellowships/

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