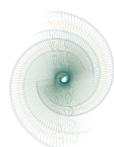




# Yolo County News & Information Ecosystem

---

*September 2025*



**YOLO LOCAL**  
community, built one story at a time

**IMPACT** ARCHITECTS



## Yolo County News & Information Ecosystem

This report was prepared for Yolo Local, a project of Davis Media Access (DMA), in partnership with Impact Architects and community-engaged journalist jesikah maria ross.

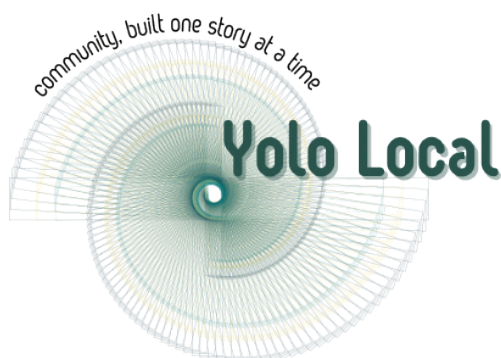
This report was written by Lindsay Green-Barber and Abigail Chang of Impact Architects, with contributions from Autumn Labbé-Renault of Davis Media Access and jesikah maria ross.

Design by Impact Architects and Del&Co

Cover image by Autumn Labbé-Renault

© 2025 Impact Architects

Content may be reproduced, shared, or disseminated with appropriate attribution.



### Yolo Local Statement of Purpose

In the void left by shrinking news coverage in Yolo County, Davis Media Access (DMA) is working to build a civic information project for Davis and beyond. We've named this project Yolo Local.

We believe the shrinking of local newsrooms and corresponding loss of vital news and information affects every aspect of community life. When information is scarce or inequitable, civic engagement is diminished and our communities suffer.

### About Davis Media Access

Davis Media Access (DMA) was originally incorporated as public access channel Davis Community Television (DCTV) in 1988. Our mission is to enrich and strengthen the community by providing alternatives to commercial media for local voices, opinions and creative endeavors. DMA is committed to strengthening localism through media and is proud to support platforms for local expression.



# Contents

Forward: Coming Full Circle	1
Introducing Yolo Local	3
Introduction	5
Yolo County at a Glance	7
Approach	10
Community	18
Information Providers	24
Local Information Needs & Trust in News	28
Conclusion and Next Steps	43
Appendices	44

# Forward: Coming Full Circle



I first met Autumn Labbé-Renault when we were students at UC Davis in the late 80s, both of us part of launching a new community newspaper called Farmer Bob's Sometimes News & Local Review. Quirky, yes, but also impactful, with an 8,000-copy print run each month distributed across Yolo County. We wanted a new and different kind of journalism, one that covered lesser-known topics and people, so we rolled up our sleeves to make it happen.

We became friends, stayed in touch, and years later I helped to bring her on staff at Davis Community Television (DCTV) — now [Davis Media Access](#). DCTV was where I first learned to use media for community development, through free access to TV equipment and training so that I could document local issues and host community screenings to talk about them. I became such a [public access TV](#) evangelist that DCTV hired me to run its training program, launching my career in community media.

A few years later, Autumn and I had the chance to collaborate together again, this time as part of a working group to launch [KDRT 101.5](#), a low-power radio station run largely by community programmers.

So, was I surprised when Autumn reached out to me two years ago, wanting to bat around an idea that ultimately grew into Yolo Local? Not a bit. I'd seen the decline of our local media and how that was negatively impacting our county. Our first conversation about it felt like kismet: I'd been wanting to work in my hometown after years of doing community media nationally and internationally.

At that point in time, I was part of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's [America Amplified](#) initiative, coaching public media newsrooms around the country on how to involve communities in their reporting process. The goal: to build trust while producing news that is relevant and reflective of the communities they serve. While all the stations deeply understood the need to engage communities in identifying what news they needed and where to distribute those stories to best reach them, the workflow of many of these legacy newsrooms worked against that.

At the same time, I was deeply involved with [News Futures](#), a small, nimble collective of visionary civic media practitioners experimenting with how to meet community information needs and build community power through the act of news making. These folks were generating fresh and powerful new approaches to journalism while struggling to find sustainable funding streams.

I literally had feet in two worlds — both grappling, though in different ways—towards the shared goal of creating news and information for civic health. I wondered how I might bring these experiences together and apply them in the place I call home.

Enter Yolo Local.







PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNY TAN

Jesikah Maria Ross and Yolo Local Working Group members in a meeting during the information needs assessment phase.

Over my career — from Davis to around the globe — I have consistently witnessed how game changing it is for people to tell their own stories, to be seen and heard by professional media makers, and, even better, how the most useful news and information gets produced when communities and professionals work together. It's really what has animated my whole professional life.

In these times of social unrest, civic distrust and news aversion, initiatives like Yolo Local bring me hope, and I am beyond thrilled to be part of a local movement to create equitable, actionable community news and information in my home county.

”

*Jesikah Maria Ross*  
Community-Engaged Journalist

# Introducing Yolo Local



The seeds of Yolo Local were sown during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when our team at Davis Media Access (DMA) had to rapidly retool an entire community media nonprofit.

As DMA was busy setting up and learning new remote production tools, we also pivoted to help dozens of our volunteers, and dozens of other community-based organizations, to take their programs and events virtual. Particularly memorable was the November 2020 election — when we capped off a completely virtual season of election programming featuring 27 nonpartisan candidate statements — with a live election-night show that featured five hosts and 16 guests appearing virtually from various parts of the county.

Let me pause here to note all of this was accomplished by a nonprofit with a staff of nine, a small board, and dozens of committed volunteers. Not commercial media, not public media. But homegrown, public-education-government access and Low-Power FM radio kind of media, with its historic funding in steep decline, and an iron will to survive and serve. While based in Davis, DMA is the only such center in Yolo County, and our partnerships stretch countywide.

By Nov. 2020, I was eight months into producing and hosting the weekly “The COVID-19 Community Report” on KDRT 95.7 FM, DMA’s low-power community radio station. With prior career experience as a reporter and editor, I had set out to document how the pandemic was impacting people and organizations around Yolo County. Over the course of 15 months, I connected with folks from all over the county and emerged with a few clear takeaways.

The first was that our local newspapers were all experiencing an accelerated pace of struggle. For community members, this meant it was increasingly difficult to get current, local news in those dizzying days of vaccine development and deployment — not to mention information about the impacts on local government, school communities, businesses, and community- and faith-based organizations. These were the conversations I had on air, and the ones that followed me into every meeting and every masked encounter.

The second was how disconnected the four cities and unincorporated areas around the county can be, with most reporting confined to geographic boundaries. Here we were, navigating this immense collective trauma, with much of the public health and safety information driven by the county, not on a city-by-city basis. We’d never been more “one Yolo” — and yet, not.

Lastly, this sparked an ongoing conversation within DMA, one where I became increasingly curious about what solutions DMA’s technical infrastructure and expertise, paired with our strategic relationships countywide, might offer. I wrote a concept paper outlining my thoughts, then took it to my longtime friend and nationally recognized community-engaged journalist jesikah maria ross. If my curiosity was the spark, then that meeting was the fuel that activated everything else, and set in motion the community news and information needs assessment known as Yolo Local.

This project truly would not have evolved in the way it has without jesikah’s encouragement, vision, and connections around the country. I am also profoundly grateful to her for brokering an introduction to and fantastic working relationship with Impact Architects.





Critically, jesikah encouraged me to shift my narrative away from the term community journalism to civic information, consistent with the conversations happening around the country that I have since joined — with organizations such as the Alliance for Community Media, News Futures, and Free Press Media Power Collaborative. This was a narrative about greater equity, about the ways and places where journalism had further marginalized underserved communities.

Together we set out to find out what people needed and wanted from their local information providers — and we reached out to those same providers to better understand their challenges. Following an accelerated engagement process carried out in partnership with the Yolo Local Working Group, this report documents what we learned along the way.

In interviews and at events around the county, people have shared with us how they'd like to see their communities represented in local media in ways they are not. How finding news and information in a language they can understand is difficult. How baseline community information—about public health, transportation, jobs, climate, food and safety—is uppermost on many minds. Why coverage of community meetings is important. And lastly, how they'd like to see stories about unsung heroes, community efforts, and everyday people's successes.

I began this process with curiosity about what was possible and conviction that DMA and its projects have a role to play here in filling some of the gaps in our information ecosystem. Both feelings remain, which is amazing! It's been a steep learning curve, with a too-fast timeline and a daunting workplan, including raising \$50,000 for the process. It's also taken place against a backdrop of national chaos and in an unprecedented time for media in general.

Yolo Local unfolded because DMA occupies a space in Yolo County that no one else does, one that already serves as a conduit for large amounts of civic information. In a first-of-its-kind pilot for both Impact Architects and a community media center, we set out to demonstrate the ways that DMA's sector-spanning relationships could strengthen the local information ecosystem in Yolo County, and we've created a roadmap for how other media centers might also do this.

We need out-of-the box thinking — for funders to re-evaluate the value, impact, and potential of community media organizations. DMA engaged this many stakeholders in four months — imagine what we could do with enough funding to sustain us while we build out a civic media project.

I'm holding gratitude for what's been learned, what's to come, and for all who have embraced this effort along the way. My thanks especially to DMA's board and staff for supporting this vision, to Lindsay Green-Barber and Abigail Chang of Impact Architects; jesikah; the Yolo Local Working Group, and my family and friends for listening to me incessantly talk about this work.

”

*Autumn Labbé-Henault*  
Executive Director, Davis Media Access

# Introduction

Yolo County, home to more than 220,000 residents, sits to the west of California's state capital, Sacramento. The county has many assets. It has a strong agricultural industry and is home to the University of California, Davis, an internationally recognized university that specializes in agriculture. Yolo County has a public library system that serves the full county. County and city governments generally make their work publicly available for residents, posting meeting agendas and recordings online.

However, the county's residents face inequality in wealth and resources. While per capita income is \$43,607, similar to the U.S. overall, the Yolo County Housing & Human Services Agency [found](#) that the median annual income for a farmworker was only \$20,000, and 76% of farmworkers are considered extremely or very low-income.

The county is diverse, with no racial majority. Nearly 43% of residents identify as white, and about one-third of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino/a, with many working in the county's agricultural industry.

The news and information ecosystem of Yolo County is best described as fragmented. There are a number of outlets based in and serving the county, including print newspapers, digital-first outlets, and broadcast radio and TV. Many news sources based outside the county also reach local residents, including a number of outlets based in Sacramento County. However, local news sources serving Yolo County have faced the same market challenges as those across the country and globally: decreased advertising revenue, a digital transformation, and shifting audience expectations and preferences. As legacy media have been forced to downsize their reporting staff, newsletters and independent publications have popped up. We did not find any examples of formal coordination or collaboration across publications, other than content sharing across legacy newspapers that have shared ownership. In conversations with news organizations, they expressed interest in better coordination and possibly even collaboration across the sector; however, they emphasized the need for an entity to do the organizing.



Community members say they are frustrated by the fragmentation of the news and information ecosystem. In surveys, interviews, and roundtable discussions, residents of Yolo County say that it is difficult to access a number of outlets to get a comprehensive view of the local news. Residents also say that the cost of legacy newspaper subscriptions can be prohibitive. Residents who are primarily Spanish-speaking say that there is little to no journalism produced in their preferred language. And finally, residents who are people of color and immigrants shared that their experiences and perspectives are often either left out of or misrepresented by legacy news organizations.

Based on this assessment of the news and information ecosystem, we have identified the following opportunities for Yolo County.



# Opportunities

**Spanish-language, bilingual, and other media serving Hispanic and Latino/a communities:** While The Winters Express publishes a one-page Spanish-language insert in its print product, we found no other consistent journalistic source of news and information in Yolo County that specifically serves Hispanic and Latino/a communities. It's particularly notable that the county lacks a local news outlet that provides Spanish-language or bilingual (Spanish and English) content for residents, considering that 36% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino/a and nearly 20% of residents speak Spanish at home. Local outlets, such as KYWS in partnership with Davis Media Access (DMA), have led one-off projects to reach Spanish-speaking communities and others, such as a voter education initiative. However, there's an opportunity for funders and journalism support or backbone organizations to help fill this gap, including by supporting the hiring of bilingual journalists, facilitating collaborations and resource-sharing to promote Spanish-language content, and organizing community engagement and listening opportunities to better understand the information needs of Hispanic and Latino/a residents of the county.

**Backbone institution for the news and information sector:** There is currently no backbone organization or structure connecting individuals and organizations working directly in the information production sector, including journalism. A backbone organization can play an important role in coordination and collaboration, including: generating and distributing new resources like funding; coordinating the sector to ensure important stories and communities are covered; and facilitating collaboration among different information producers, especially across mediums and platforms. In Yolo County, news organizations said that, as a starting point, it would be helpful to have a backbone organization to serve as an "assignment editor," create a local shared content wire service, provide access to photography (through a photobank or access to a photo journalist), and provide support to create content for primarily Spanish-speaking residents.

**Covering critical topics, inclusively:** In community engagement efforts, including the survey, Yolo County residents said that they want and need more in-depth coverage of public meetings and affairs that goes beyond simply reporting on meeting minutes, more coverage of the agricultural industry, including from workers' perspectives, more education reporting, and generally more inclusion of the perspectives and experiences of immigrants and people of color in the community.

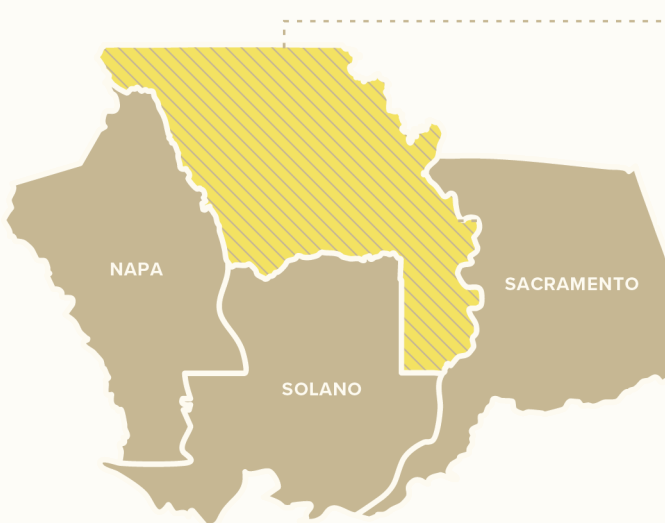
**Resource hub:** In addition to original reporting and analysis, there is opportunity to create a centralized resource hub to connect local residents with community resources, including from nonprofits and government agencies. Making public information directly accessible — available on preferred platforms and in preferred languages — has not traditionally been the role of news companies, but recently, new media organizations like Outlier Media in Detroit, MI; Documented in New York City; City Bureau in Chicago, IL; El Tímpano in Oakland, CA; and more have been showing the value of directly connecting their communities with resources.



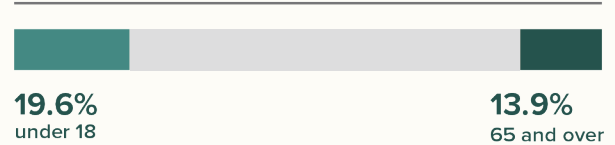
# Yolo County at a Glance

## Community Indicators

Community data is from the county's [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#) page, the Census [Urban and Rural](#) data tables, and the 2023 [American Communities Survey](#) as of January 28, 2025. Voting data is from the [California Secretary of State's office](#) and the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS) [Voting and Registration](#) data tables.



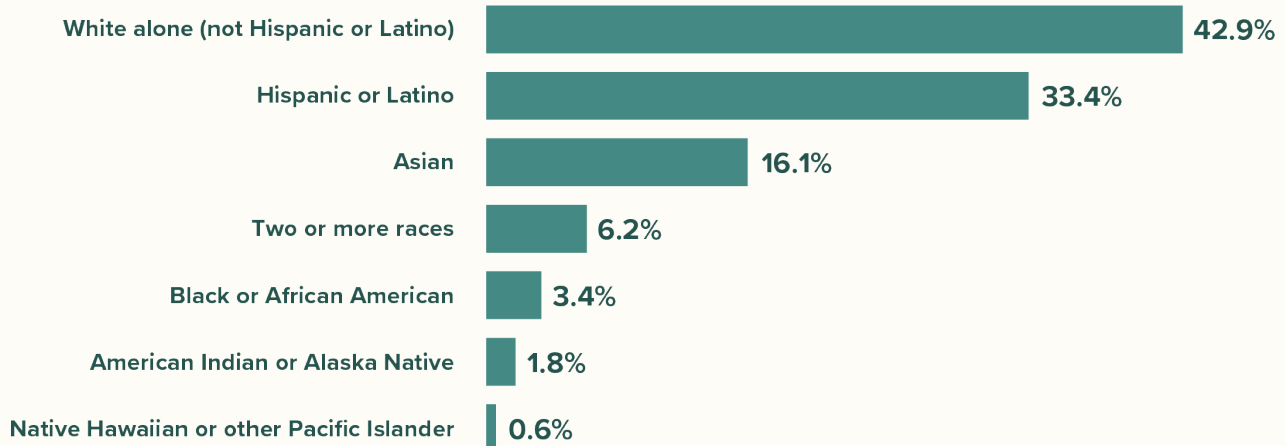
### Age



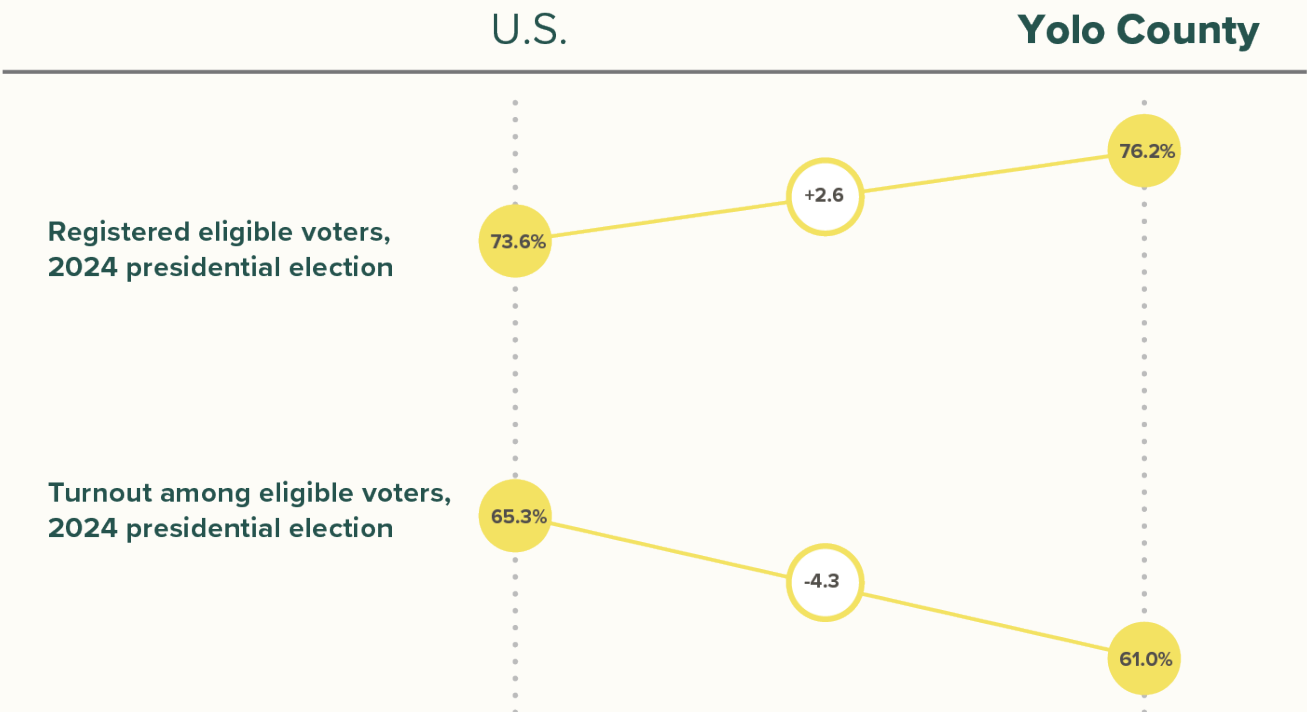
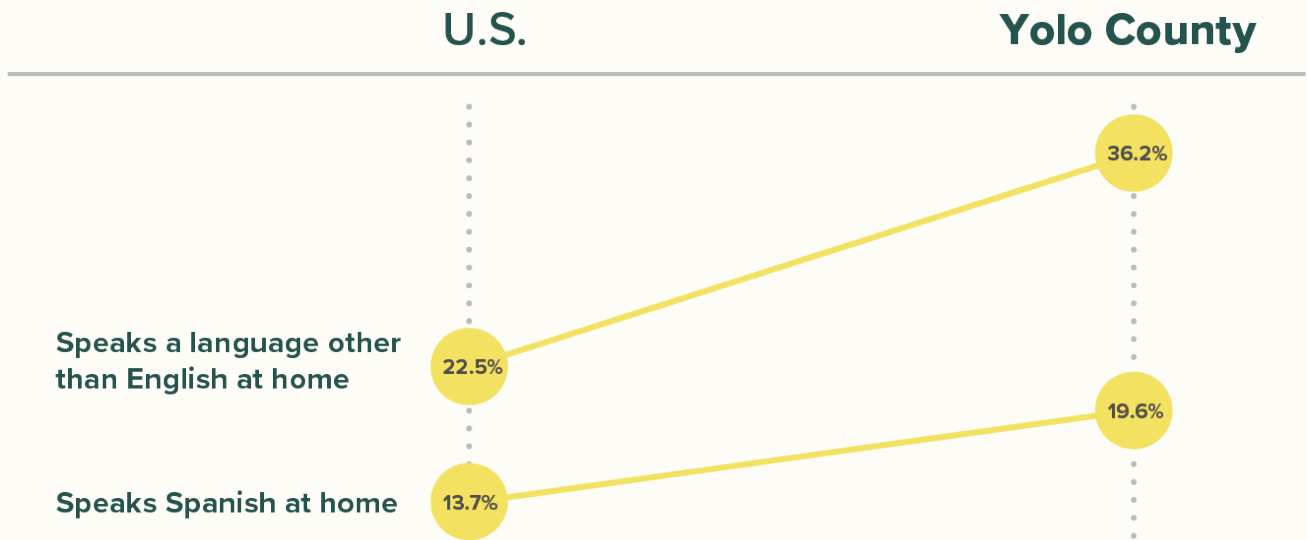
### Population



## Race and Ethnicity



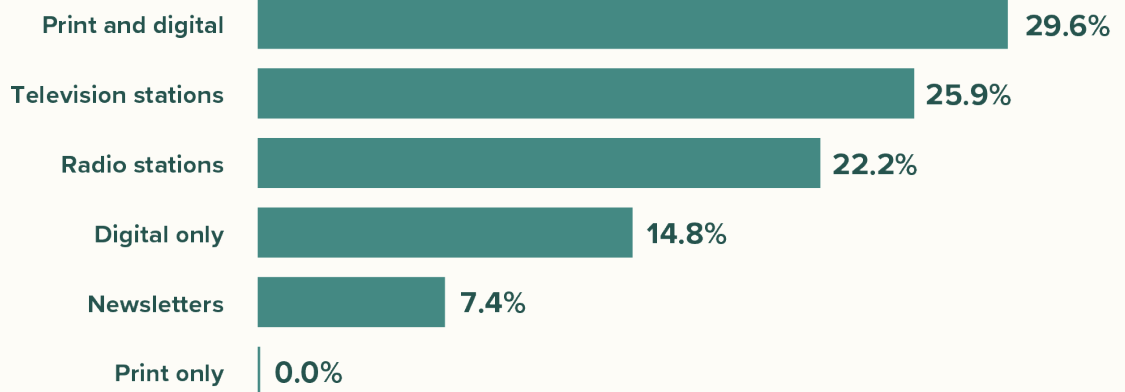




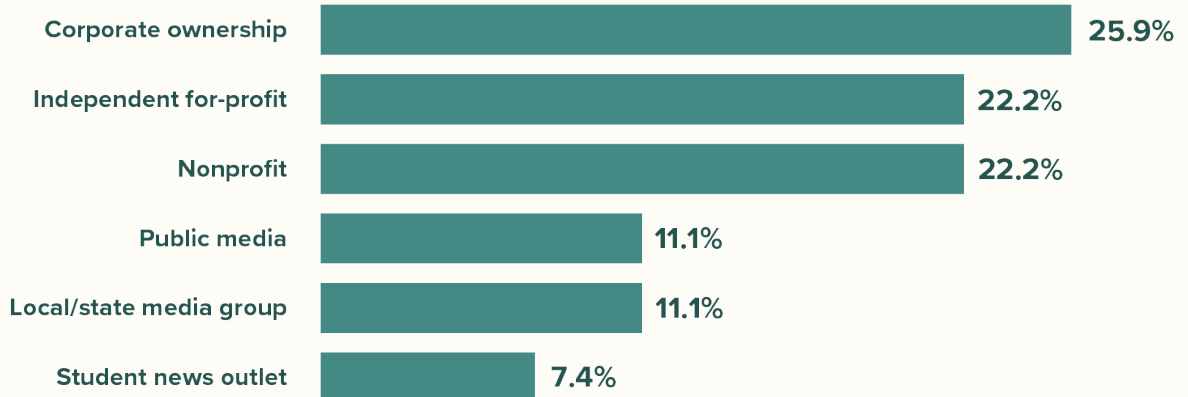
## Information Providers Serving Yolo County

The charts below show all local news providers we identified as serving Yolo County, including both organizations in the county and those based outside the county doing original reporting for local residents. Data for information providers is an aggregation of information from the 2024 [State of Local News Project](#), the [Center for Community Media](#), the [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#), the [INN network directory](#), the [National Federation of Community Broadcasters](#), and local broadcast affiliate lists, based on versions of these data sources accessed in early 2025. We also included information providers mentioned by local residents in community engagement activities that took place throughout spring and summer of 2025.

### Distribution Method



### Ownership Structure





# Approach

This local news and information ecosystem assessment draws on both qualitative and quantitative data to present a snapshot of Yolo County — both the supply of local news and information and the community's demand. Impact Architects applied our Local News and Information Ecosystem Framework in order to set a baseline for ecosystem health and to identify strengths and opportunities.

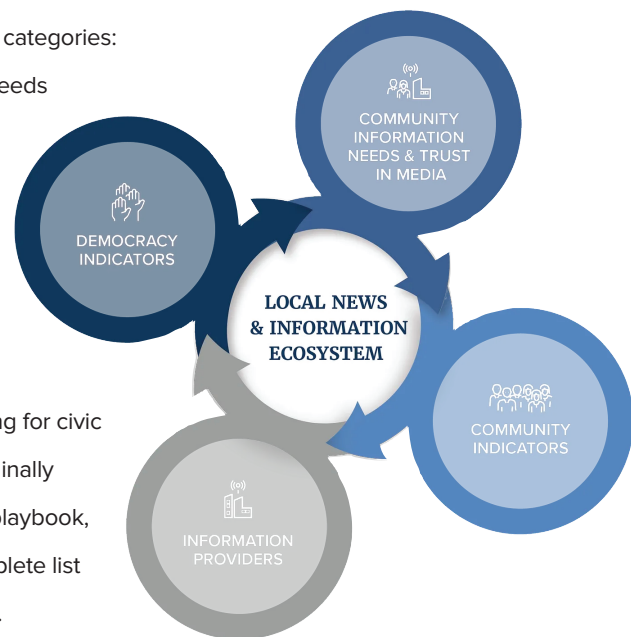
While this project employed IA's Ecosystem Framework to gather quantitative data, it had the added benefit of significant qualitative data gathered by IA, Davis Media Access (DMA), DMA's community engaged-journalism consultant jesikah maria ross, and a working group of Yolo County residents. It is unique in IA's body of ecosystem work in that this project was done in partnership with a community access media organization, rather than a funder or news ecosystem backbone organization. DMA's deep community knowledge and relationships proved invaluable in bringing a variety of residents' perspectives into the research process.

## I. Applying IA's Local News and Information Ecosystem Framework

In total, IA documented more than 70 indicators across four categories:

community, information providers, community information needs and trust in media, and civic engagement and democracy.

Research — peer-reviewed, academic, and industry — has demonstrated that all indicators included in this framework connect to the health of local news and information ecosystems and community health. Study after study has shown that accurate, trusted local news and information has positive outcomes for communities, including for civic engagement and local democracy. This framework was originally developed in 2020 and has been updated regularly. A full playbook, updated in 2024, is free for communities to use.<sup>1</sup> For a complete list of indicators, definitions, and data sources, see Appendix A.



### A. Community indicators

In order to document the characteristics of an ecosystem's population, IA's framework relies on publicly available data,

<sup>1</sup> To read more of IA's news & information ecosystem work, see our [website](#) and [playbook](#).

including data from the [U.S. Census Bureau](#),<sup>2</sup> [National Center for Education Statistics](#), and the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#). We also referred to data compiled in Listening Post Collective and Information Futures Lab's [Civic Information Index](#).

## B. Information providers

To document all news and information providers in an ecosystem, we use a multistep process that pulls from various databases of local news organizations. However, we recognize that even with this five-part search for local news sources, there are likely outlets that we did not encounter. Specifically, we could not systematically identify local podcasts, community newsletters, or community-specific social media groups, such as local Facebook groups. And given the dynamic nature of local news, the lists may have changed from the time of compilation to the time of publication. While we primarily focused on news organizations based in Yolo County, we know that many residents get their news from outlets based in neighboring counties, and especially Sacramento County, home to California's state capitol and served by many local, state, and national media entities. We've endeavored to include these outlets as well — so long as they do original reporting in Yolo County — based on what we heard in community engagement activities, open-ended survey questions, and informal community conversations.

We included news and information providers that, at the time of compilation, were publishing at least some original news content for or about Yolo County communities. We also looked to ensure that each news and information provider on our list had at least one staff member.

IA's information provider mapping draws upon the following data sources:

1. [State of Local News Project](#): We searched for the outlets listed for the county in the State of Local News Project's 2024 map and manually checked each entry to ensure that outlets were still publishing original local content.
2. Broadcast TV: We manually search for locally based [ABC](#), [CBS](#), [NBC](#), [PBS](#), [Fox](#), Univision, and Telemundo affiliate stations, but not their local satellite stations.
3. Broadcast radio: We manually searched [CPB](#) and [NFCB's](#) maps and included local broadcast stations.
4. [Center for Community Media](#): We searched CCM's [Asian](#), [Black](#), and [Latino](#) Media Maps and Directories and included outlets in those databases.
5. Stakeholder contributions: We added any outlets mentioned in survey responses and community engagement activities that had not already surfaced through one of the above lists/databases.

---

<sup>2</sup> We include indicators such as population size, rurality, population per square mile, age, race and ethnicity, language, households with a computer, broadband access, formal education levels, median household income, per capita income, and poverty rate.

We categorized every publication based on three dimensions. First, we noted outlets' primary distribution medium (print only, digital only, print and digital, television, or radio). Next, we classified outlets by business model (nonprofit, public media, corporate ownership, local/state media group, independent for-profit, and student news outlet). While we know there are differences between newspaper holding companies — which can include hedge fund ownership, ownership by a large media company like Gannett, or ownership by a smaller regional company — we consider a paper to have “corporate ownership” if the company that owns them has media holdings in multiple states. Finally, we determined if the outlet served a particular demographic community and identified which community. We also identified news and information providers' owners and categorized them to the extent possible — for example, we identified a newspaper owned by MediaNews Group, a publisher owned by Alden Global Capital, and categorized it as “hedge fund.”

In order to determine the amount of philanthropic investment in the ecosystem, we relied on the Media Impact Funders and Candid [database](#). This database pulls from foundations' 990s, so it lags (at least) one year behind. Given the limitations of this dataset, we looked at philanthropic dollars invested over the previous three years (2022, 2023, and 2024), as well as the total number of funders and recipients of grants. Finally, we calculated philanthropic investment per capita based on the number of residents in Yolo County.

### **C. Community information needs and trust in media**

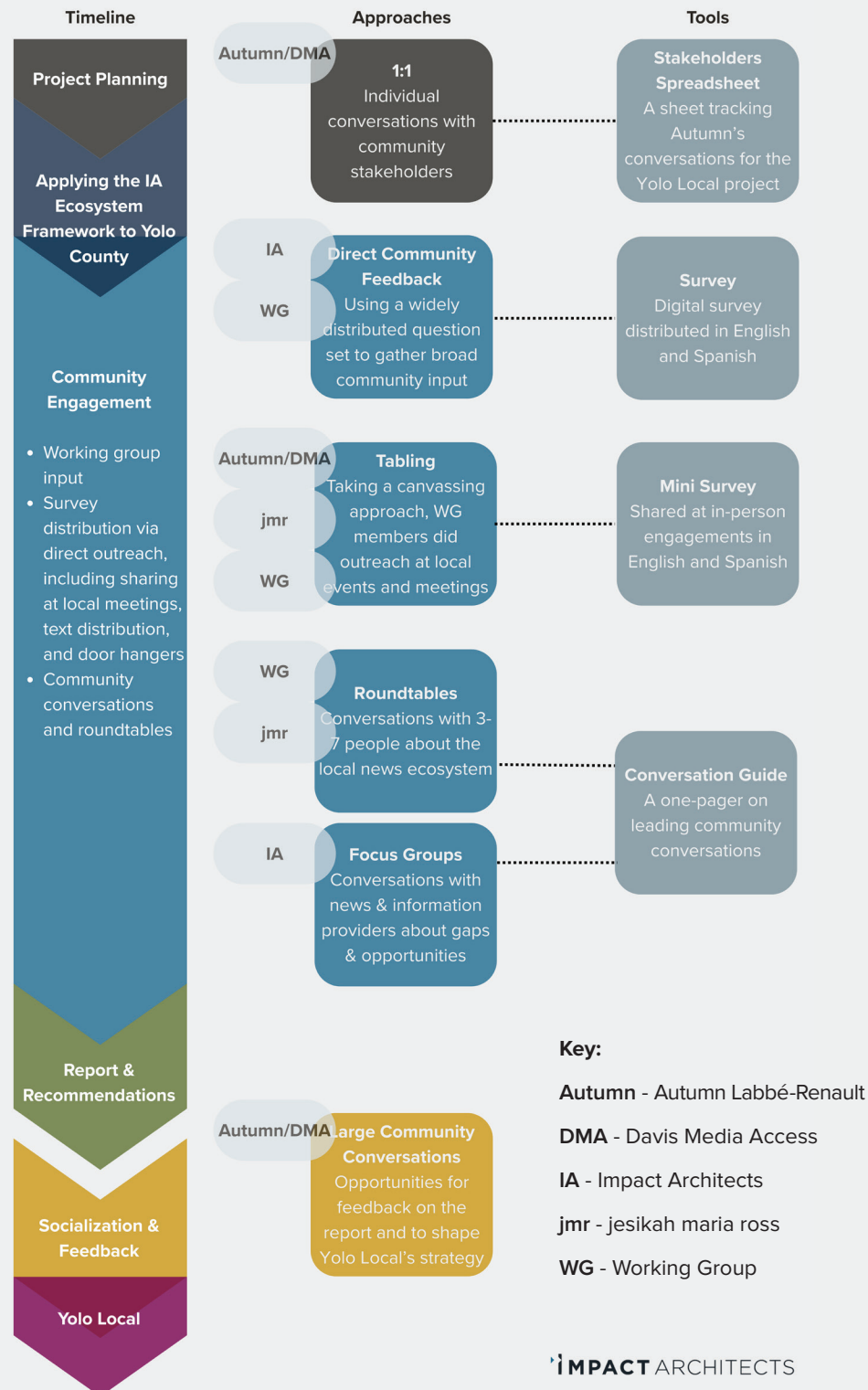
For this report, in order to document the degree to which residents' information needs are being met by the ecosystem's news and information providers, as well as levels of trust in media, we relied on a set of questions we fielded via a digital survey shared through more than 100 local networks and individuals. We analyzed responses to gauge the degree to which respondents feel they have local news and information sources that are providing them with the information they need, whether there are stories they feel local news outlets should cover or cover differently, and whether there are local news sources in their community that they trust. Details about the distribution tactics are elaborated in the community engagement section below.

### **D. Civic engagement and democracy**

We included a set of indicators to assess the health of civic engagement and democracy in Yolo County. We looked at voter turnout in the most recent election, as well as the percentage of registered eligible voters. To this we added the 2024 [Cost of Voting Index](#) (COVI), which scores the ease or burden of voting in U.S. states. We also wanted to understand what local government information and access might look like, and we assessed the websites for the county and the four cities. The framework also includes additional indicators about press freedom — drawn from The [U.S. Press Freedom Tracker](#) — documenting instances of physical intimidation and regulatory incidents. We've also included data compiled in Listening Post Collective and Information Futures Lab's [Civic Information Index](#) with respect to volunteerism and charitable giving in Yolo County.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKFLOW

A visualization of project approaches & resources





## II. Community Engagement

### A. One-on-one conversations

Prior to the formal launch of this research project, Autumn Labbé-Renault, executive director of DMA, held almost 50 conversations with community members across Yolo County. She reached out to elected officials, city staff, educators, nonprofit leaders, business owners, journalists and activists — all of whom were part of DMA's established partnerships. During these conversations, respondents shared with her the following reflections about the local news and information ecosystem:

- There is an understood decline in frequency, vibrancy, reach, and accessibility among legacy publications.
- There is a resulting lack of coverage of local meetings, such as city councils, commissions, school boards, and more, and the coverage that does exist is primarily a straight reporting of the agendas and discussions without additional reporting or analysis.
- Participants relayed their frustration in dealing with a fragmented media landscape, including the difficulty of reaching stakeholders and interested parties.
- Community members say that the algorithmic changes to social media platforms make distribution, reach, and engagement with local news content much harder.
- There was a clear sense that something needs to be done.

There were two direct outcomes from these meetings:

- DMA secured an initial \$15,000 in funding from the City of Davis and two County supervisors to support this news and information ecosystem research.
- With these committed resources, DMA approached jesikah maria ross to get feedback on the initial concept of Yolo Local, which directly led to formation of the needs assessment approach and the development of the Working Group.

### B. Working Group

DMA solicited applications for and selected a group of 11 local residents to serve on a Working Group that would help advise, shape, and implement the community information needs assessment phase of the project. The process of setting up the working group was guided by Autumn and jesikah maria ross' expertise in community engagement and knowledge of the county, as well as the data gathered as part of the application of IA's framework. jesikah maria ross designed and facilitated the Working Group meetings.

Working Group members contributed five to ten hours a month to the project between April and July 2025 and received a \$150 stipend. During that time, they were asked to:

- Attend a two-hour in-person kickoff celebration
- Attend a monthly, 75-minute, remote working meeting May through July



- Actively contribute to guiding the assessment efforts by:
  - a. Helping to identify community resources, including individuals, organizations, and venues;
  - b. Tabling at two to three community events across those months to share information about the project, gather input, and conduct the surveys;
  - c. Circulating the digital survey via their networks;
  - d. Partnering with area agencies, nonprofits and community groups to distribute the digital survey;
  - e. Reviewing and providing feedback via email in between meetings.

### **C. Direct community outreach**

In order to include as many community perspectives as possible, the Working Group conducted direct community outreach via a widely distributed digital survey, available in both English and Spanish. This project used IA's standard community information needs, preferences, and habits survey as a starting point, and IA adjusted the survey to meet the specific needs of Yolo County and dig into questions surfaced through the quantitative data. The full survey protocol is available in Appendix E.

In total, the survey received 569 responses, more than IA has ever garnered through a self-distributed survey. The large number of responses is a reflection of DMA's deep community connections, the effort put into wide distribution through personal and organizational relationships, and targeted community outreach.<sup>3</sup> A list of survey distribution channels is available in Appendix B.

Survey outreach included sharing the survey through dozens of individuals, networks, and organizations, such as:

- A column in The Davis Enterprise, written by Autumn Labbé-Renault
- Advertisements in newspapers in Davis, Winters, and Woodland
- An educator who shared the survey with students via school networks
- Arts Alliance Davis, countywide arts alliance
- County supervisors
- DMA's own social media accounts
- Mutual Housing, a 501(c)3 that builds and manages affordable housing complexes in CA, which texted the survey to its residents in the county
- Nonprofits throughout DMA's network
- Postcards distributed at Woodland Community College
- Public information officers in all four cities, who pushed out the survey through their institutional social media accounts
- The Davis Parents Facebook group

---

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the 569 survey responses, we also received 339 responses that we chose not to include in our analysis as the respondents' ZIP codes were not within Yolo or Sacramento Counties.

- Yolo Community Housing Authority, a county agency that works to make housing available for all residents of the county, which distributed the survey to their networks
- Yolo County Regional Resilience Collaborative

#### **D. In-person community engagement**

In addition to the digital survey, DMA and the working group led in-person community engagement activities to have one-on-one and group conversations to hear more about residents' information needs and preferences. These engagements took two main forms: tabling at public events and roundtable discussions.

##### ***Tabling***

When tabling, DMA representatives (staff and/or working group members) engaged with community members first in conversation. The goal for each engagement was to move community members through three steps:

1. Engage an individual with a big-picture question posed by the Yolo Local representative.
2. Build a relationship between the individual and Yolo Local with conversation and follow-up questions.
3. Ask the individual to respond to a short digital survey, available in both English and Spanish.

IA and DMA began with an assumption that tabling at community events would yield a great deal of engagement, but that was only partially true. Where it worked, it really worked — Yolo Local representatives tabled at Songs in Solidarity in Winters, the Davis Pride Festival, the Woodland Senior Services Fair, the Yolo County Library at the Friends of the Davis Public Library Book Sale, Yolo Housing National Night Out, and combined office hours for U.S. Representative Mike Thompson (CA-04), California State Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (CA Assembly-04), and Yolo County Supervisor Lucas Frerichs (District 2). However, the Working Group encountered several unexpected impediments to tabling:

- The start-up date for the Working Group fell after many notable events in April had passed, and thus Working Group members had limited opportunity to lead tabling efforts.
- DMA created a single tabling kit that Working Group members said was too large and difficult to pick up and drop off for tabling events. Instead, Working Group members wanted individual, small, portable setups.
- Working Group members had limited time and ultimately chose to dedicate their energy and resources to other aspects of community engagement, such as survey distribution.

Ultimately, there were not a sufficient number of short digital surveys completed to be useful for analysis.

##### ***Roundtables & Additional Engagement***

In total, DMA's Autumn Labbé-Renault, Jesikah Maria Ross, and Working Group member Alejandra Cuevas Rash conducted three formal roundtable conversations and engaged in other conversations that informed this report. IA developed a conversation guide to help ensure roundtable conversations followed a similar structure, then compiled findings based on notes from these conversations.

Towards the end of the assessment phase, Autumn conducted engagement and conversed with participants at events in Winters, including events geared toward serving low-income and Hispanic or Latino/a families, as well as several music and cultural events. She also conducted four interviews with leaders from the African American communities in Davis and Woodland because she felt engagement with Black and African American residents had not been as robust as hoped.

Additionally, Jesikah and Alejandra met with Rodrigo Lopez, Agricultural Labor Coordinator for Yolo County who coordinates with [Yolo Works](#), a nonprofit that serves workers in the agricultural industry, to get direct input on what types of information would be most useful for Spanish speaking agricultural workers. Alejandra also conducted a deep-dive roundtable with organizational representatives from local nonprofits serving Hispanic and Latino/a community members.

IA led two local media focus groups in June and July, including both traditional and new media. Of the 19 people invited, seven people participated across the two conversations. A list of participants is available in Appendix C.

These activities were crucial in providing broader context to the quantitative and qualitative data we collected, as well as in providing a deeper view into some of the trends found in the data. That said, we recognize that they represent only a small number of perspectives and experiences in the county. As DMA rolls out the report, organizers envision broadening engagement through continued conversations with stakeholders at events both planned and organic.



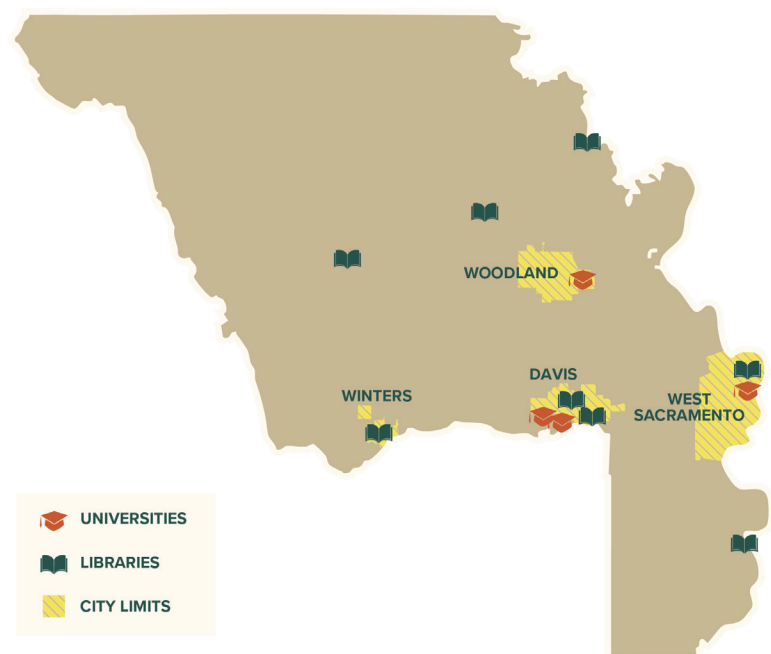
# Community

To understand a news and information ecosystem in a given region, it's important to understand the communities that live there, not just the quantity or types of local news outlets. This is because the “strength” of a local news ecosystem depends on how well it meets community needs. Data on local infrastructure, institutions, and resources can help us understand where it may be challenging for communities to access local news. And information about community demographics, including the languages spoken in a given region, can help us gauge how well existing news providers reflect the population. In urban areas with high levels of internet connectivity, language diversity, and a wide range of ages, the media ecosystem would need to be similarly diverse, delivering relevant information in preferred languages through various digital pathways. Alternatively, a robust news and information ecosystem serving a rural community with an aging population and gaps in broadband access might have more broadcast or print outlets, or perhaps digital offerings on platforms preferred by their audience, such as Facebook.

In this section, we present an overview of Yolo County's community based on a combination of U.S. Census Bureau and other government data, county data sources, and qualitative information generated through community engagement. This information provides a snapshot of the community, including community demographics, while also helping to illuminate potential opportunities and challenges for building a news and information ecosystem that can more effectively reach and engage all segments of the community.

## Overview

Yolo County, situated to the northwest of the state capital in the Sacramento Valley, is home to 220,544 people, according to Census Bureau estimates. At 1,014.73 square miles, Yolo County is smaller by land area than most of California's 58 counties, and 92.0% of residents lived in areas classified as urban as of the 2020 Census. However, stakeholders describe a strong rural identity in the county, noting that it contains significant agricultural land. The county is home to four cities — Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland, the county seat — in addition to many unincorporated communities and smaller towns. The county is also home to the



Demographics		
	U.S.	Yolo County
<b>Age</b>		
Under 18	21.7%	19.6%
65 and over	17.7%	13.9%
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>		
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino/a	58.4%	42.9%
Hispanic or Latino/a	19.5%	33.4%
Asian	6.4%	16.1%
Two or More Races	3.1%	6.2%
Black or African American	13.7%	3.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.3%	1.8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.6%
Russian	0.6%	1.9%
<b>Language</b>		
Language other than English spoken at home	22.5%	36.2%
Spanish	13.7%	19.6%

*Unless otherwise noted, data is from the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts pages for Yolo County and the United States. Russian population data is from "TOTAL POPULATION," Table B01003 of the 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates and "Selected Population Profile in the United States," Table S0201 of the 2023 ACS 1-Year Estimates Selected Population Profiles. Language data is from the Census Bureau's Yolo County and United States profiles. Accessed January 2025.*

with one-third of residents identifying as such. This is a larger proportion than the Hispanic and Latino/a population in the U.S. (19.5%), though it is slightly smaller than that for California as a whole (40.4%). Just over 16% of residents identify as Asian alone, nearly 38% of whom identify as East Asian, 3% as Central Asian, 20% as South Asian, and 17% as Southeast Asian. Just over 6% of the county identifies as multiracial, and almost 43% identify as white. The region also has [significant](#) Russian and Ukrainian communities, and about 2% of Yolo County residents identify as Russian, compared to just 0.6% of the U.S. population. More than a third of county residents ages five or older speak a language other than English at home, according to Census Bureau data, and 19.6% speak Spanish at home, compared to 13.7% nationally. While language spoken at home should not be conflated with level of English proficiency, this number can still be helpful for understanding what languages residents may prefer when consuming local news.

Median household income in Yolo County is \$88,818 and per capita income is \$43,607, both of which are slightly higher than the national averages, based on Census Bureau data. According to a 2024 farmworker survey conducted by the Yolo County Housing & Human Services Agency (HHS), median annual income for a

University of California, Davis as well as three local community college locations: Davis Center at Sacramento City College, West Sacramento Center at Sacramento City College, and Woodland Community College. The Yolo County Library system serves the community with seven branch libraries, which have a collective 52,126 registered users and recorded more than 292,000 library visits in 2022, the last year for which we have [data](#). Library visitors can also use the South Davis Montgomery Library, based in Marguerite Montgomery Elementary School, during its twice weekly public library hours, and [plans for a new library](#) in Davis are in progress.

Yolo County is demographically diverse, with no racial majority. The county has a large Hispanic and Latino/a population,

farmworker was only \$20,000. Just over a quarter (26%) of farmworkers fall into the very low-income category, meaning they make between \$24,251 and \$40,400 annually, while more than half (51%) are considered extremely low-income, with an annual income of \$24,250 or less. These numbers, when compared with the per capita income for the county as whole, suggest significant income inequality.

Overall, the county's poverty rate is higher than the national average — 15.3% compared to 11.1% nationally. When compared to the state of California, Yolo County's median household and per capita income are both lower, with median

income for the state being \$96,334 and a per capita income of \$47,977, while the percentage of persons in poverty for the state is 12.0%. MIT's [living wage calculator](#) — which determines the living wage for a geographic area based on the local cost of basic goods and services like housing, food, and child care — estimates that a single adult with no children would need to make just under \$56,000 before taxes to cover basic expenses. Census Bureau data for [gross rent as a percentage of income](#) shows that about 60% of households in the county are rent burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on rent, a higher proportion than that for [California overall](#) (53.3%).<sup>4, 5</sup> Furthermore, the county HHSA's 2024 survey of farmworkers found that 28% of people surveyed shared a home with another family, and 12% reported three or more individuals per bedroom.

Taken together, these data suggest that residents of Yolo County face a high cost of living and are experiencing higher levels of poverty than residents of many other counties in California, as well as relative to the U.S. overall. When it comes to the local news and information ecosystem, this can inform a number of factors. Subscription costs may be too much for many residents' budgets, and many may also not have time to keep up with local news

Economics & Resources		
	U.S.	Yolo County
<b>Income</b>		
Median household income	\$75,149	\$88,818
Per capita income	\$41,261	\$43,607
Poverty rate	11.1%	15.3%
Cost of living	--	\$55,984
Median annual income (farmworkers)	--	\$20,000
<b>Education</b>		
High school degree	89.1%	88.4%
Bachelor's Degree	34.3%	44.1%
<b>Digital Resources</b>		
Households with a computer	94.0%	95.8%
Households with a broadband internet subscription	88.3%	91.7%

*Unless otherwise noted, data is from the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts pages for Yolo County, California and the United States (accessed January 2025). Cost of living data is from the MIT Living Wage Calculator, 2025. Farmworker income data is from the Yolo County HHSA's 2024 Yolo County Farmworker Assessment (n=301).*

4 U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, "Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months," American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25070, accessed on September 11, 2025, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2023.B25070?q=Yolo+County,+California&t=Income+and+Poverty:Renter+Costs>.

5 U.S. Census Bureau, "Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income," <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2023.B25070?q=California&t=Income+and+Poverty:Renter+Costs>.

or engage with local issues if they are working to keep their households afloat.

Overall, Yolo County residents have higher levels of formal education than the U.S., likely due to the presence of the University of California, Davis in the county. While the county is roughly on par with the U.S. number when it comes to the percentage of people ages 25 or older who have a high school diploma (88.4%), the percentage of people with a bachelors or higher degree is nearly ten percentage points higher than the national figure at 44.1%.

*Residents of Yolo County face a high cost of living and are experiencing higher levels of poverty than residents of many other counties in California, as well as relative to the U.S. overall.*

Digital accessibility, a key factor in evaluating access to local news and information sources, is relatively strong in Yolo County. Just under 96% of households have a computer — such as a desktop or laptop computer, a tablet, a smartphone, or another portable wireless computer — which is on par with the national number (94.0%). And 91.7% of households have a broadband internet subscription, compared to 88.3% of households nationally. However, it's worth noting that these numbers do not tell us what access looks like across county geography and where internet access is least prevalent. Interestingly, the [state broadband map](#) shows large clusters of “priority eligible” locations — unserved locations where speeds range from less than 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload to no access to broadband at all — in the city of Davis. This could be because the city is more densely populated than other parts of the county, but it's still notable that access is limited even for some residents of urban areas. The southern tip of Yolo County to the west of State Route 84 appears to be particularly underserved based on the state broadband map.

## Civic Engagement

Yolo County voting [data](#), published by the California Secretary of State's office, shows that 61.04% of all eligible voters cast a ballot in the [November 2024](#) general election, slightly above the state turnout (59.97%) and slightly below the national turnout (65.3%).<sup>6</sup> There were 118,047 registered voters in Yolo County as of the November 2024 election, and a total of 154,827 eligible voters. We also know that community members may be engaging with civic issues in other ways beyond voting, such as giving to a local cause, volunteering their time, or attending a public meeting. [Listening Post Collective](#) and [Information Futures Lab's](#) Civic Information Index ranks U.S. counties based on their performance in key areas, including civic participation. The [index shows](#) that Yolo County sits in the middle of the pack, performing better than nearly 50% of

6 National numbers are from the Census Bureau's “Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2024,” Table 3. National turnout is an estimate based on reported voting among respondents to the Current Population Survey and the voting age, citizen population, as estimated by the Census Bureau. For more on how the Census Bureau determines turnout and registration, as well as the limitations of these methods, see “About Voting and Registration” at <https://www.census.gov/topics/public-sector/voting/about.html>.



counties when it comes to civic participation.<sup>7</sup> The index also shows that the rate of formal volunteering for California, a part of the overall civic participation score calculation for the county, was 18.3% based on data from 2021 — lower than all but 3.6% of U.S. counties. But while the state is ranked low relative to others, it's not that far off from the U.S. number for the same year (23.2%), suggesting formal volunteering is low in the U.S. as a whole.<sup>8</sup> Charitable giving in Yolo County is high relative to the rest of the U.S.: Just over 1% of total adjusted gross income for residents of Yolo County is claimed as charitable contributions, a larger percentage than that of nearly 70% of U.S. counties.<sup>9</sup> However, while charitable giving might be higher than many other communities in the U.S., it's still a small percentage of residents' income.

Access to local government officials, public meetings, and public meeting resources can also significantly impact residents' ability to participate in local civic processes and conversations. Our exploration of the [Yolo County government website](#) found that the county provides clear information about county-level elected officials, including listing names, bios, and contact information for all of them.<sup>10</sup> County advisory boards are clearly documented and include a description of their purpose, a list of members, and a list of vacancies. Residents also have access to an archive of meeting agendas for the Yolo County Board of Supervisors and meeting recordings for the county supervisors, the planning commission, Yolo County Housing, the Assessment Appeals Board, and the Yolo Habitat Conservancy. Meeting dates, times, and agendas appear to be posted ahead of time, allowing residents to plan to participate or follow discussions relevant to them. The county includes some built-in accessibility features on their website, though, notably, meeting recordings do not include captions, and many features may be difficult to navigate for residents with limited English proficiency.

The websites for Yolo County's four cities all included basic information about elected officials, such as their names, contact information, and brief biographies.<sup>11</sup> They also all publicized dates, times, and agendas for city council meetings ahead of time. Most also posted minutes or videos of past meetings. For example, [Winters offers recordings of past meetings](#), as well as an agenda, for residents. Some cities noted that their meetings are also broadcast on local TV. Residents can also tune into Davis Joint Unified School District Board of Education meetings through DJUSD.tv, an education access channel run by DMA. Similar to the county site, one of the main accessibility challenges for engaging with local government in Yolo County's cities may be residents' preferred languages. Translation options were limited, and while browsers often offer options for translating web pages, this does not extend to documents offered only as PDFs or to meeting audio and closed captioning.

---

7 As of this writing, the Civic Information Index's civic participation score includes five metrics: 2020 voter turnout, social associations per 10,000 people, volunteer rate, adjusted gross income claimed as charitable contributions, and 2020 Census response rate.

8 Data is from the American Communities Survey Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement from 2021: <https://data.americorps.gov/stories/s/AmeriCorps-Civic-Engagement-and-Volunteering-CEV-D/62w6-z7xa>

9 Volunteerism across the U.S. declined precipitously during the pandemic in 2020. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that volunteerism is rebounding as of 2024, although it remains to be seen what this will look like over the longer term.

10 Our evaluation is based on a search on February 14, 2025.

11 Our evaluation is based on a search on February 19, 2025.

While information for the county and four cities is generally public and accessible, we do not have data about the degree to which it is used by local residents. In interviews and focus groups, community members suggested that they are aware the information is available, and that their frustration with local media is based on their perception that media have access to the same meeting agendas, notes, and recordings that residents already have access to and do not provide additional reporting or analysis of these materials.

Furthermore, the lack of information in languages other than English means they are not accessible to many residents. These gaps underscore a key role that news and information providers could play in the county:

provide comprehensive analysis of information from the

array of local government entities, and make the information and analysis available in preferred languages.

*A key role that news and information providers could play in the county: provide comprehensive analysis of information from the array of local government entities, and make the information and analysis available in preferred languages.*

# Information Providers

We found seventeen outlets based within Yolo County that serve residents with local news and information, in addition to at least eleven outlets based in surrounding communities that we identified as doing original reporting on Yolo County.<sup>12</sup> All outlets based in the county provide coverage in digital formats, with some offering both print and digital, and others offering digital and broadcast content. There is not currently a backbone organization serving the ecosystem with pooled philanthropic funding, editorial coordination or collaboration, or audience and community engagement support.

We identified four print and digital newspapers in Yolo County that are owned by national or California-based media companies: The Woodland Daily Democrat, The Davis Enterprise, The Winters Express, and The West Sacramento News-Ledger. All four require a paid subscription to access content digitally and/or in print. The Democrat is owned by MediaNews Group, a national newspaper publisher owned by the hedge fund Alden Global Capital. The Enterprise and The Express are owned by McNaughton Media, a family-owned company that also has publications in Solano and El Dorado Counties. The News Ledger is owned by Messenger Publishing Group — based in Carmichael, CA — which

Distribution Method & Ownership Structure (based in county)						
	Corporate ownership	Independent for-profit	Local/state media group	Nonprofit	Public media	Student news outlet
Digital only		The Davisite		ACEsTooHigh.com The People's Vanguard of Davis		
Newsletter		Comings & Goings The Wary One				
Print & digital	The Woodland Daily Democrat	The Dirt	The Davis Enterprise The Winters Express West Sacramento News-Ledger	Valley Voice		The Aggie
Print only						
Radio				KDRT** KYWS		KDVS
Television				Davis Community Television**		

\*Newsletters distributed via Substack.

\*\*Projects of DMA. DMA also runs DJUSD.tv, Educational Access Cable TV from the Davis Joint Unified School District.

12 For details on how we identified local news outlets, see “Information Providers” in the Approach section.

Distribution Method & Ownership Structure (all)						
	Corporate ownership	Independent for-profit	Local/state media group	Nonprofit	Public media	Student news outlet
Digital only		2		2		
Newsletter		2				
Print & digital	2	1	3	1		1
Print only						
Radio		1		2	2	1
Television	5			1	1	

*Table includes outlets based outside of the county that provide original news content to residents*

publishes newspapers in six California counties. We also noted one print and digital newspaper with independent for-profit ownership: The Dirt, a Davis-based, monthly community newspaper owned by local resident Hanna Nakano.

The county has a few nonprofit news outlets, the largest being Davis Media Access (commissioner and collaborator in this research initiative). The county is also served by the investigative nonprofit news outlet The People's Vanguard of Davis, which has a particular focus on local courts. The nonprofit organization RISE, Inc, which serves rural communities in the county, puts out a free monthly community publication called Valley Voice. The California Aggie, the student-run newspaper of UC Davis, also provides local coverage. Yolo County is also home to a number of blogs and newsletters created and run by former reporters and editors of local newspapers, with original commentary and reporting and serving relatively large audiences across the county.

With respect to broadcast news in Yolo County, there are three community radio stations providing public affairs coverage: KDRT, run by DMA; KDVS, a student run station; and KYWS, based in West Sacramento. Davis Community Television (cablecast/digital), a project of DMA, also serves the county. Residents are also served by radio and television stations based outside of Yolo County's borders, such as CapRadio, Sacramento's NPR affiliate; KVIE, the Sacramento-based PBS station; and national broadcast affiliate stations of cable networks ABC, CBS, FOX, and NBC. On September 16, Sacramento's PBS affiliate, KVIE, launched [Abridged](#), a digital-first community journalism brand with dedicated coverage in Yolo County.

We did not find any news sources specifically dedicated to serving Hispanic and Latino/a communities in the county. However, The Winters Express prints a once-a-week Spanish-language insert for their print newspaper product. We also know that Spanish-speaking communities may be relying on sources outside the county, such as Univision, or non-traditional news and information sources, such as Facebook groups, WhatsApp groups, community organizations, or faith leaders. For example, Radio Santísimo, a Catholic radio station based in Sacramento, broadcasts in Spanish and serves Yolo County residents. In focus groups, local news providers noted a need for additional Spanish-language capacity on the news gathering and production side, as well as for news publication and audience engagement.

Notably, UC Davis' student-run newspaper, The Aggie, used to publish Spanish-language coverage online, though the paper has not published new stories to the [Español vertical](#) for more than a year. Even so, this example points to potential opportunities for partnerships to strengthen Spanish-language coverage in the county, drawing on the resources and expertise of local institutions like the university.

In general, legacy news organizations in Yolo County, including the print newspapers, have faced challenges similar to those faced by commercial media across the U.S.: declining advertising revenue, leading to reduced newsroom size and ability to cover local stories, resulting in dissatisfaction with the product and the cost of subscriptions. In our media focus groups, local journalists said that this vicious cycle has left legacy newsrooms without the human resources required to adequately cover the breadth of local news stories.

In Yolo County, we found little formal collaboration or coordination among journalism outlets. Two newspapers, The Davis Enterprise and The Winters Express, are owned by McNaughton Media and are able to reprint each other's content. However, outside of this content sharing, we found no other examples of coordinated and/or collaborative reporting. Collaboration in an industry that has historically been characterized by intense competition is difficult. However, in other communities across the U.S., backbone organizations designed to serve an entire local news and information ecosystem have stepped in to play a coordinating role to build networks, relationships, and work flows that encourage collaboration in service of meeting community information needs. Backbone organizations can also play a role in generating and distributing additional resources — often from philanthropic sources — across the ecosystem to incentivize and support collaborative work. News organizations in the county said, in the immediate term, they would appreciate an organization to serve as a sort of “assignment editor,” ensuring that important stories across the county are covered by at least one organization, and facilitating a content sharing agreement to make these stories available to all outlets through a local wire service.

In addition to resource constraints, news organizations in more rural parts of Yolo County say that they face staffing and turnover challenges. One rural newspaper said that they often hire young reporters fresh out of school, provide valuable on-the-job training, and then are used as a stepping stone when that reporter gets a higher paying job in a larger market a year later. And while senior staff said they are happy to provide training and have new energy in their newsrooms, it takes longer than 12 to 18 months to build trust and relationships in the community for reporting purposes.

Finally, Yolo County news organizations say they face challenges reaching audiences in new and/or nontraditional platforms. For example, those working in newspapers said they understand that many in their current and potential audience prefer to get news and information via social media, but the organizations do not have the resources — financial or human — to produce social content. Organizations with limited staff even have difficulty getting quality photographs to accompany their stories and would benefit from a local photobank and/or a fractional-time photojournalist.



# Ideas & Opportunities: Backbone Organizations

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for local news and information backbone organizations. Backbone organizations can fill a number of roles, from fundraising and distributing grants and resources and providing back-end shared services to newsrooms, to leading community engagement efforts and spearheading collaborative reporting efforts. Below are five examples of different models for backbone organizations.

In California, the **Central Valley Journalism Collaborative (CVJC)**, founded by the James B. McClatchy Foundation, the Central Valley Journalism Collaborative is building a nonprofit model to safeguard local journalism, sustain public service reporting, and protect press freedoms. CVJC supports the local news ecosystem in the Central Valley through direct investments in newsrooms and by employing journalists to fill critical reporting gaps.

**City Bureau** is both a Chicago-based newsroom and a civic information hub with programs in Chicago and other cities throughout the country. City Bureau's Documenters Network, which operates in more than 20 communities across the U.S., trains and pays community members to attend local public meetings and report on what occurs.

The **Colorado Media Project** is a funder, catalyst, and advocate in the Colorado news and information ecosystem. The organization makes grants to local news organizations in the state, facilitates connections and collaborations, and commissions research for the field.

**KOSU**, a local public radio station with studios in Stillwater and Oklahoma City, is an informal backbone organization in the Oklahoma news and information ecosystem, collaborating with news outlets and other organizations and institutions in the state.

The **New Mexico Local News Fund** is a local funder in the New Mexico news and information ecosystem. The organization supports several programs, including a Local News Accelerator, run in partnership with the Local Media Association, a six-month cohort-based program that offers training and coaching in philanthropic fundraising to local news outlets. The organization also offers an incubator program for news startups and spearheaded the Southern New Mexico Journalism Collaborative, among other initiatives.

# Local Information Needs & Trust in News

While Yolo County is by no means a news desert, we sought to better understand to what extent local news is trusted by residents, meets their information needs, and is accessible. To answer these questions, we used a combination of a community survey (available in both English and Spanish), working group perspectives, community roundtable discussions, and one-on-one interviews with local residents (see the “Approach” section for more details on community engagement efforts). Given the high percentage of residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a, we analyzed this group’s survey responses both as part of the overall community, but also in comparison with other respondents. When there are notable differences between the two groups of residents, we have shared those findings.

## Interpreting the Results: How we asked about race and Hispanic or Latino/a origin

With 85% of survey respondents identifying as white, it’s fair to say that this group is overrepresented in the data considering the size of the population identifying as white alone in Yolo County (42.9%). However, we wanted to provide some additional information about how we asked about respondents’ race and Hispanic or Latino/a identity so that readers can better understand what these numbers mean.

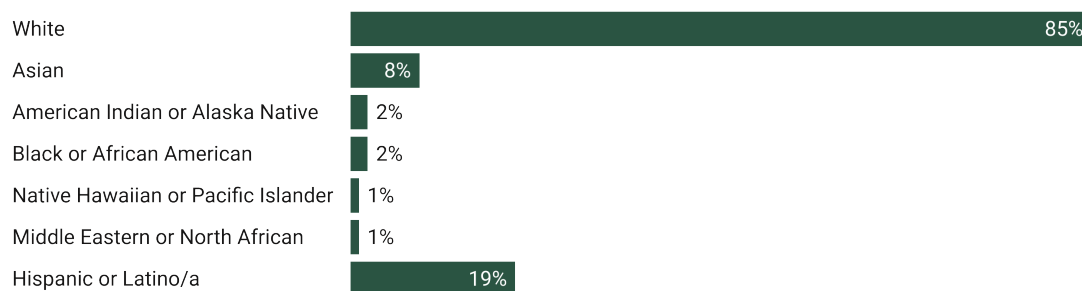
Because of how we asked about race and ethnicity, some of the 85% of respondents who selected “white” in our survey are mixed race or of Hispanic or Latino/a origin. When we asked survey respondents about their race, we told them to select all options that applied to them. So, for example, a respondent might select both “white” and “Asian.” We then reported the data for the percentage of selections for each race. So the respondent who selected both “white” and “Asian” is counted in both the “white” and “Asian” bars of our chart showing respondent race. We know that 4% of survey respondents selected multiple race options, and 2% selected “white” and another race. So even accounting for mixed race participants, the vast majority of survey respondents identify as white.

We asked about Hispanic or Latino/a identity separately from race because people of Hispanic or Latino/a origin can be of any race. (Asking this question separately from questions about race aligns with the practices of many other survey-administering organizations and institutions, [including the U.S. Census Bureau](#).) We found that a total of 19% of respondents, across all races, identify as Hispanic or Latino/a. Nine percent of survey respondents who answered our question about Hispanic or Latino/a origin indicated that they are both white and Hispanic or Latino/a. Census Bureau data shows that 33% of Yolo County residents identify as Hispanic or Latino/a, meaning that this group is underrepresented in our survey results relative to the population of the county.

## Who Took the Survey?

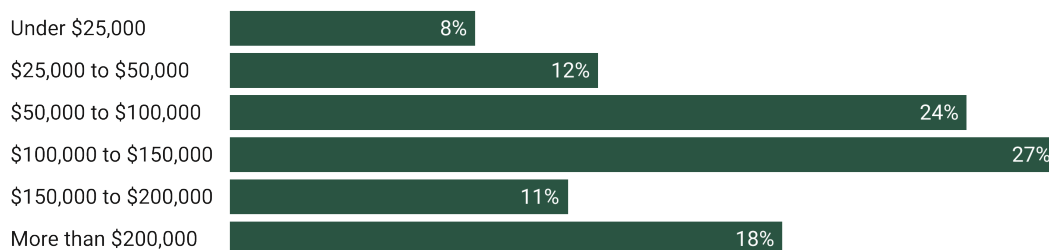
The survey includes information from 569 respondents whose ZIP codes are in Yolo or surrounding counties (primarily Sacramento County, with one respondent from Solano County). There's a relatively even distribution of age groups and income levels across respondents, with no age group representing more than 19% and no income range representing more than 27% of the sample. There's less diversity in race/ethnicity, gender, and political views, than in the county as a whole, as respondents are, as a pool, more white (85%), female (67%), and liberal (69%) than the county. We asked respondents if they are of Hispanic or Latino/a origin, and 19% of respondents indicated they are (nationally, 20% of U.S. residents are of Hispanic or Latino/a origin, while 33% of Yolo County residents identify as such). In raw numbers, we received 435 responses from Yolo County residents that indicated they do not identify as Hispanic or Latino/a, 100 responses from those who did (regardless of race), and 34 survey responses where participants did not answer the question. Overall, 4% of respondents selected more than one race option, and 2% of respondents selected white and another race.

## Most respondents identify as white in terms of race, while about one-fifth identify as Hispanic or Latino/a



*We asked respondents to identify Hispanic or Latino/a origin in a separate question. The 19% includes respondents who selected a separate option for race. n=524, n=534*

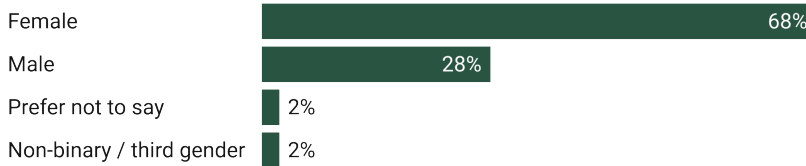
## About half of respondents have annual household incomes between \$50-\$150,000.



n=526

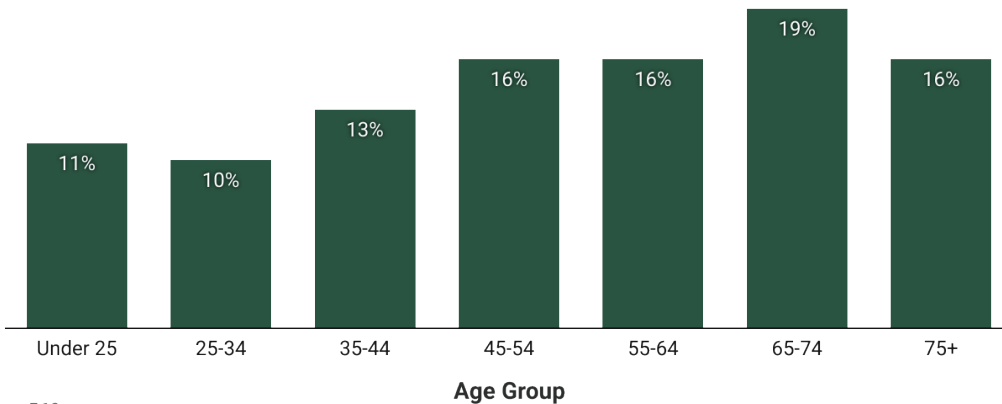


## About two-thirds of respondents identify as female.



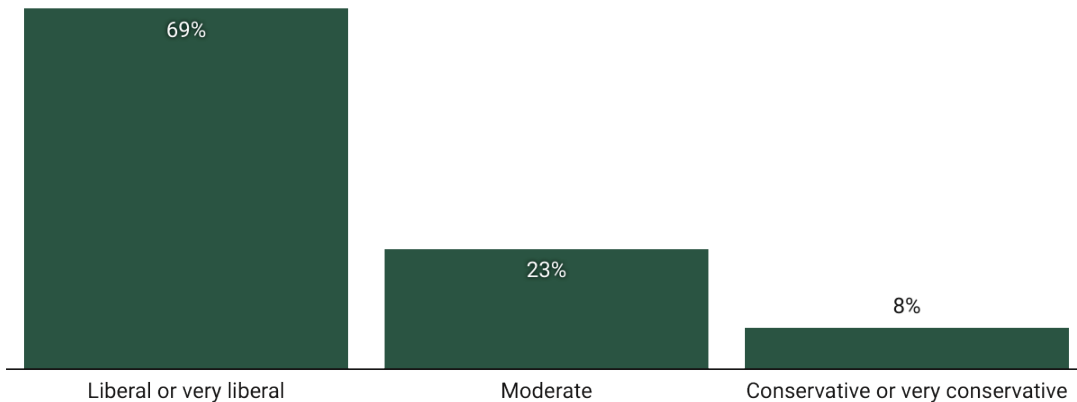
*n=564*

## While about one-third of respondents are 65 or older, there's relatively even representation across all age groups.



*n=569*

## About two-thirds of respondents are liberal or very liberal.



*n=542*

## Information access

As described in the Information Providers section above, there are a number of news and information sources serving Yolo County residents that are based in Yolo County or in neighboring counties. However, the presence of local news outlets in a community does not mean that the reporting is accessible to local residents in terms of language, format, or cost.

To surface consumption habits and identify opportunities for local providers, we asked survey respondents to indicate where they get local news and information. The vast majority of respondents (88%) are aware of at least one newspaper that serves their local community, while awareness is lower for other platforms. The relatively small percentage of respondents who say they are aware of television and radio news sources is likely due to the fact that many local broadcast outlets cover geographic areas beyond Yolo County.

## As far as you know, in your local community, is there at least one...

Local newspaper

88.0%

Local online forum or discussion group, such as a community Facebook group, Nextdoor group, or Listserv

68.0%

Local newsletter, blog, or website

50.0%

Local radio station

48.0%

Local TV news station

32.0%

*n=552*

We also asked respondents where they actually get their local news. In the community survey, the three most commonly reported modes for accessing local news and information are not news platforms, but instead are: word of mouth, social media, and local social networks (such as a community Facebook group). The most commonly accessed traditional news platform is a local newspaper, which almost half of respondents identify as a source where they get local news.

*The three most commonly reported modes for accessing local news and information are not news platforms, but instead are: word of mouth, social media, and local social networks (such as a community Facebook group).*

## Where do you get local news and information?

More respondents get their news via word of mouth, social media, or local social networks than any other medium.

Word of mouth

64%

Social media (Instagram

55%

Local social networks

51%

Local newspaper

48%

Local government agencies or officials, such as city council offices or libraries

38%

Local newsletter or listserv (including Substack)

34%

Local/regional TV news station

31%

Local organizations, such as churches, school groups or political groups

30%

Local/regional radio station

30%

A news source that publishes online ONLY

24%

Text message (SMS, iMessage, WhatsApp)

21%

Podcast(s)

7%

*n*=569

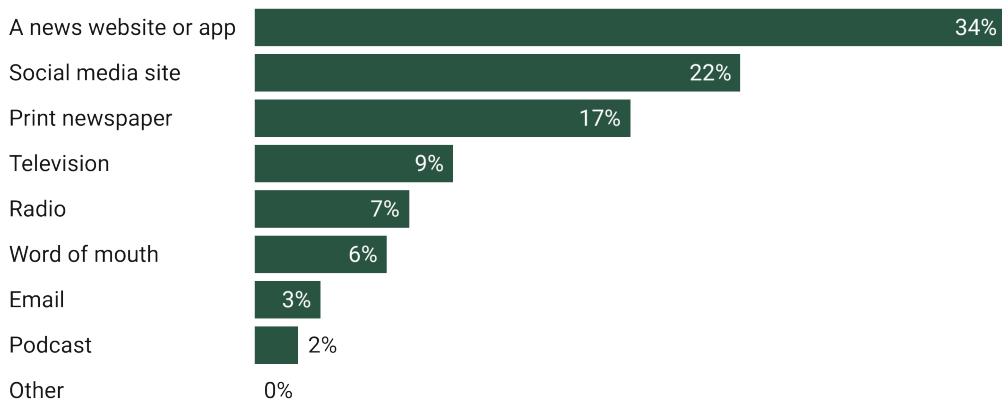
While word of mouth, social media, and social networks are the most common *sources* of local news and information, they are not the most commonly cited *preferred* way to get news. About one-third of respondents say a news website or app is their preferred way of getting local news and information, and about one-fifth prefer social media. Very few respondents say they prefer word of mouth, even though that's the most common way respondents report getting local news.

The most frequently used social media sites for news and information are Facebook (67%), Instagram (46%), and Nextdoor (37%). No other social media platform is used by more than 20% of respondents.



## Respondents mostly prefer news websites and social media as sources of local news and information.

What is your preferred way to get local news?



*n=553*

## Facebook is easily the most commonly used social media platform for local news and information.

Which social media platform(s) do you use to get local news and information?

Facebook



Instagram

Nextdoor

LinkedIn

TikTok

Bluesky

X (formerly Twitter)

Discord

Truth Social

*n=459*



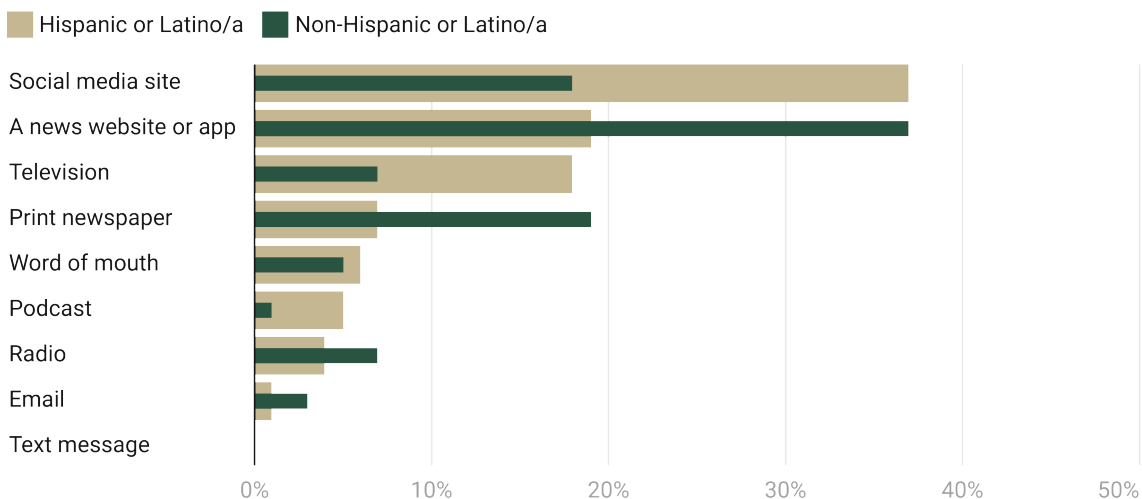
We compared responses from those who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a with those who do not to surface any differences in preferences and platforms for accessing news among these groups. More Hispanic or Latino/a respondents prefer social media (37%) for getting local news and information compared to non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents (18%), while more non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents prefer news websites (37% compared to 19%) and print newspapers (19% compared to 7%). Both sets of respondents prefer Facebook (60% for Hispanic and Latino/a respondents, 53% for non-Hispanic or Latino/a) and Instagram (52% and 34%) as social media sites to get local news and information. The notable differences are with usage of TikTok, which more Hispanic or Latino/a respondents report using (29% compared to 7%), and Nextdoor, which more non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents report using (34% compared to 14%).

While few survey respondents said they currently get local news and information via podcasts, in a roundtable discussion with Hispanic and Latino/a community members, as well as in one-on-one conversations with other residents, the DMA team heard that residents would like a podcast. One resident said, “I honestly like to listen to things, so a local podcast that touches on news from around the county — I’d probably sign up for that.”

*“I honestly like to listen to things, so a local podcast that touches on news from around the county — I’d probably sign up for that.”*

## Hispanic or Latino/a respondents tend to prefer getting local news from social media, while non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents prefer news websites.

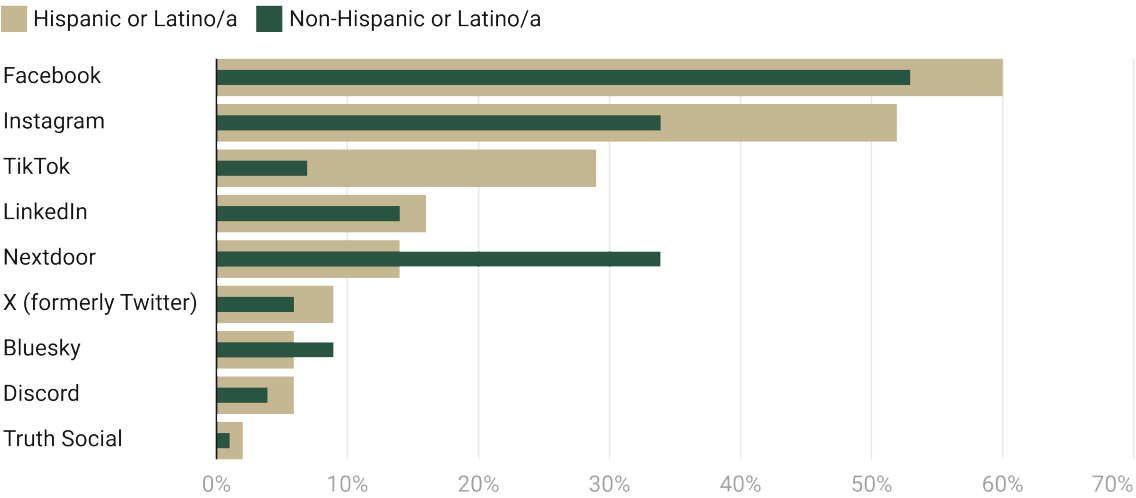
What is your preferred way to get local news?



n=553

**Facebook and Instagram are commonly used by all respondents, but a larger percentage of Hispanic or Latino/a respondents use TikTok, while more Non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents use Nextdoor.**

Which social media platform(s) do you use to get local news and information?

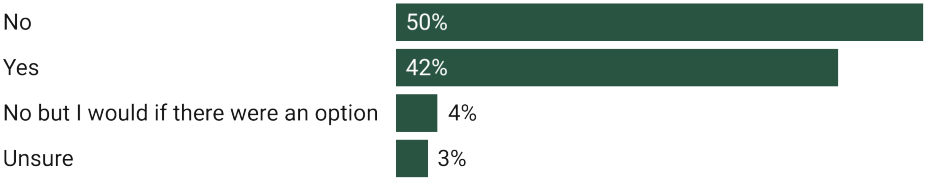


n=459

In our survey, some respondents said that while they prefer to get their local news and information via a print newspaper, it’s not an option for them due to cost or accessibility. Overall, 42% of respondents said they pay for local news, and 4% said they currently do not, but they would if there were an option available to them. In general, a higher percentage of non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents said they pay for local news than Hispanic or Latino/a respondents, 46% compared to 27%. Compared with Pew Research Center’s findings that only 15% of U.S. residents report paying for any local news, it appears, at least on the surface, that the proportion of Yolo County residents paying for news is relatively high.<sup>13</sup> However, we assume that at least some

**Less than half of respondents pay for local news.**

Do you pay for access to local news and information through a print or digital subscription?



n=567

13 Elisa Shearer et al. “Americans’ Changing Relationship With Local News,” Pew Research Center. Published May 7, 2024. <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2024/05/07/americans-changing-relationship-with-local-news/>

of the divergence is a result of survey respondent bias, with those who are more engaged in the local news ecosystem being more likely to complete a survey about the news ecosystem.

While the cost of a subscription to a local news source was cited as a barrier to accessing local news for about one-fifth of respondents, the primary barrier cited by nearly half of all respondents (44%) was a lack of news sources in their area. Few respondents overall identified language or technology as barriers, although those who did were almost exclusively Hispanic or Latino/a. Language as a barrier to accessing local news and information is

echoed in the Yolo County HHSA's 2024 farmworker survey, which found that “language barriers” are a stressor for 43% of farmworkers, making it difficult to access public services and information.

*The primary barrier to accessing local news — cited by nearly half of all respondents (44%) — was a lack of local news sources in respondents' area.*

## A lack of local news sources was the most common barrier to accessing local news among respondents.

Do you feel you have any barriers to accessing local news and information?

There aren't enough local news sources in my area



The cost of a subscription to local news is too much for my budget



There aren't enough local news sources in my preferred language



Technological barriers (no internet connection, don't own a device, etc.)



*n=483*

A total of 74 respondents provided an open-ended response to the question about barriers to accessing local news. Most (85%) of the responses pertained to either the quality or availability of local news options. Many of the respondents indicated that cost itself was not necessarily prohibitive, but that given the high cost of subscriptions, it was not worth the money because local newsrooms (particularly newspapers) are reducing staff — which limits coverage — and have reduced print schedules and delivery areas.

Another dozen respondents said that the fragmentation of the local information ecosystem was a barrier to accessing adequate local news (almost as many as respondents who identified language and technology as barriers, 15 each).

One respondent wrote: “The news coverage is very fragmented. Events are in the Davis Dirt, general news is in the Enterprise, critical evaluation is in the Vanguard, etc.” Another wrote: “There are plenty of sources but not one that gathers them all, always have to hunt from one to another to get the full update.” These and other respondents seem to want a trusted and locally rooted news aggregator to simplify access.

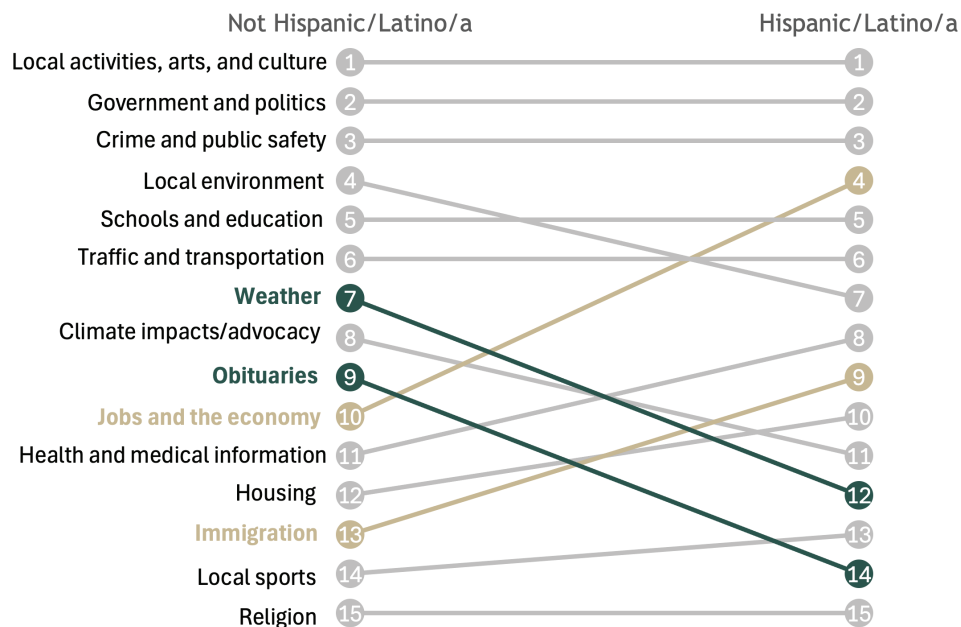
*“The news coverage is very fragmented. Events are in the Davis Dirt, general news is in the Enterprise, critical evaluation is in the Vanguard.”*

## Role of Local News

Local news plays many roles in communities, connecting residents across differences to create a sense of community identity and cohesion, informing people about a variety of topics, holding government and corporate entities accountable, and more.

In Yolo County, survey respondents indicated that the most important topics for local journalists to cover are local activities, culture, and entertainment; government and politics; and crime and public safety. Non-Hispanic or Latino/a and Hispanic or Latino/a respondents generally agree on the most important topics, although there are some differences.

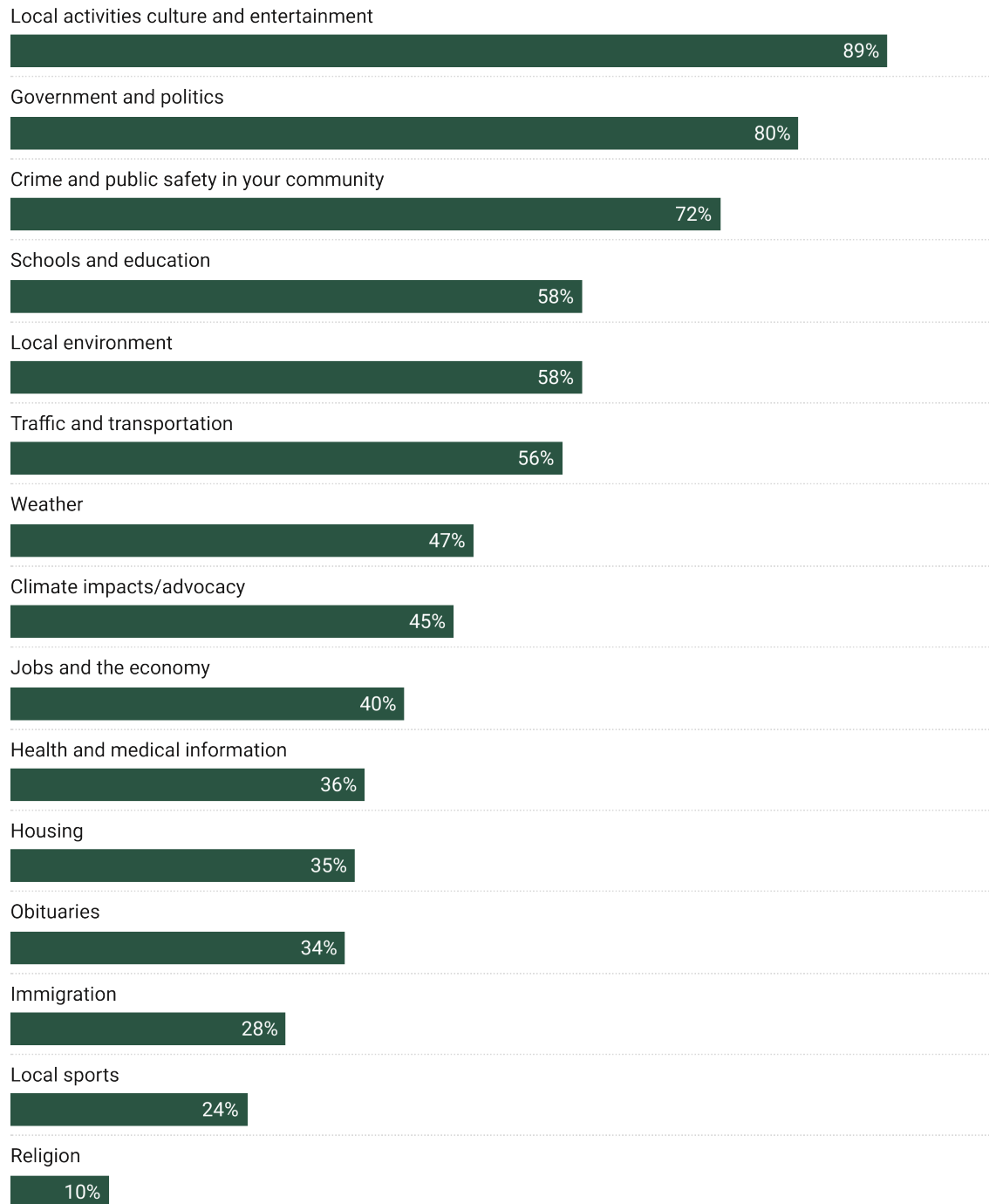
**Jobs and the economy and immigration are important topics for Hispanic/Latino/a respondents; non-Hispanic Latino/a respondents place more importance on weather and obituaries.**



n=569

## Local activities, government and politics, and crime and public safety are the most selected topics among respondents.

Which topics are important for you to get information about locally?



*n*=569

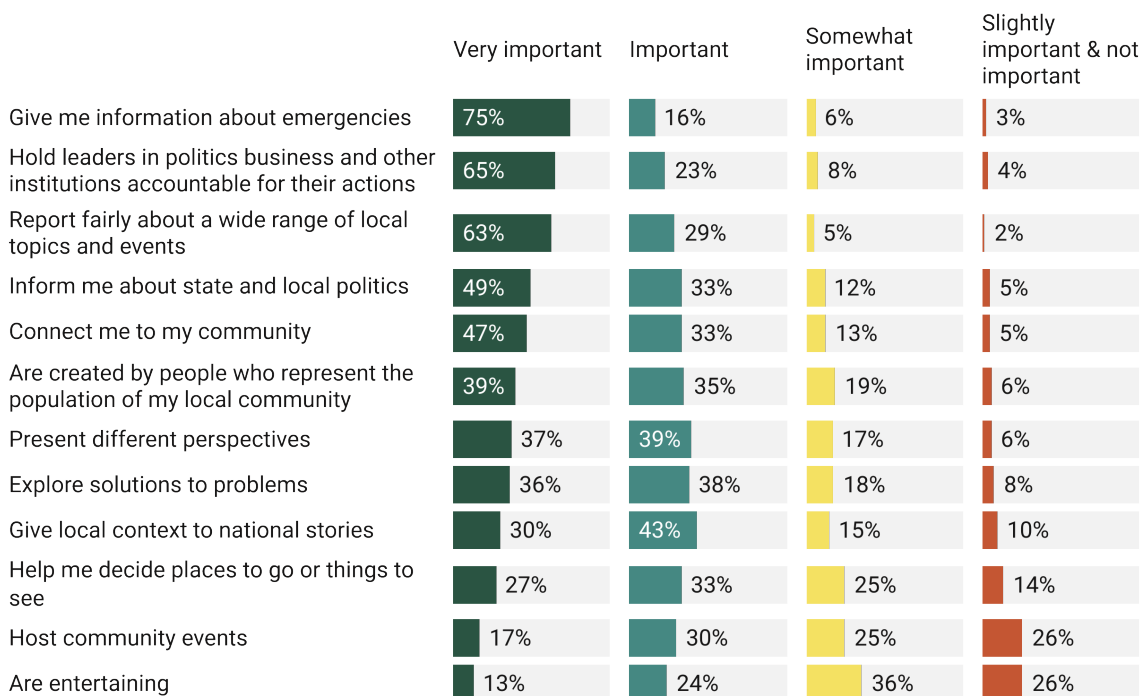


The former group more frequently selected everyday news, such as weather and obituaries, while the latter group of respondents more frequently selected jobs and the economy and immigration, matters that might have significant impact on their daily lives.

More generally, respondents stated that information about emergencies, holding leaders accountable, and reporting local news fairly and accurately were the most important roles for local news and information. Overall, respondents put much less importance on matters like being entertaining and hosting community events. While Hispanic or Latino/a and non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents generally agree on the importance of the roles of local journalism, there are notable differences in three categories. Hispanic or Latino/a respondents place more importance on local news being entertaining, as 32% of Hispanic or Latino/a respondents say doing so is “very important” compared to 9% of non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents. Hispanic or Latino/a respondents also place more importance in local news that’s “created by people who represent the population of my local community” (53% very important compared to 36%). On the other side, more non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents say that it’s very important for local news to “report fairly about a wide range of local topics and events” (64% very important compared to 59%).

## Respondents most frequently identified emergency information, accountability, and fair reporting as very important.

Thinking specifically about the role of news and information in your local community, how important is it that outlets do the following?



n=568

## Trust in news and information providers

In general, trust in news and information has been declining over the past 20 years. In 2025, according to Pew Research Center, about two-thirds (67%) of U.S. adults said they trust national news organizations, while 80% said they trust local news organizations. Only 41% of adults said they trust social media sites for information.<sup>14</sup>

### More respondents say their community has a trustworthy and accessible source of local news.

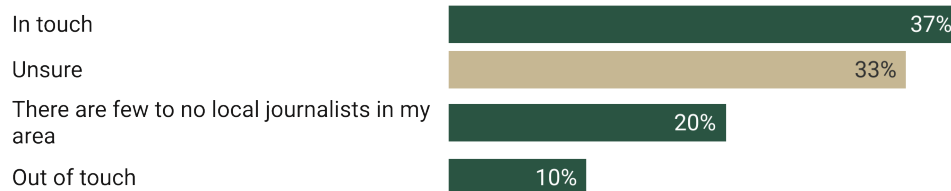
Do you feel your community in Yolo County has a trustworthy and accessible source for local news and information?



*n=563*

### About one-third of respondents aren't sure whether journalists are in-touch with their local community.

Overall, would you say that local journalists in your area are mostly in touch or out of touch with your local community?



*n=567*

Forty-three percent of respondents said their community has a trustworthy and accessible source of local news, a larger percentage than those who said they do not. However, it's just as notable that nearly one-third of respondents said that they were unsure. This could reflect a lack of confidence in judging trustworthiness, uncertainty about accessibility, or both. Similarly, while more respondents said that local journalists were in touch with their local community than said they were out of touch, about one third of respondents said that they were unsure. The results for both of these questions were more or less the same for Hispanic or Latino/a and non-Hispanic or Latino/a respondents. Overall, this suggests that residents' trust in local news and information is tepid, and that community engagement efforts by local journalists and/or

14 Elisa Shearer et al. "Republicans have become more likely since 2024 to trust information from news outlets, social media." Pew Research Center. Published May 8, 2025. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/05/08/republicans-have-become-more-likely-since-2024-to-trust-information-from-news-outlets-social-media/>

journalism organizations could do important work to build closer relationships with the community.

When asked how local news organizations could increase trust in local news, survey respondents most frequently selected increasing accuracy/factual reporting and community engagement. The emphasis on factual reporting is not necessarily a reflection about the lack of factual reporting in Yolo County, as it is home to numerous credible news organizations that adhere to professional standards and acknowledge mistakes when they occur. The result is more likely about perception, which is more challenging to change. Community engagement and hiring reporters who live and work in specific communities are, however, two ways that can begin shifting that perception.

*When asked how local news organizations could increase trust in local news, survey respondents most frequently selected increasing accuracy/factual reporting and community engagement.*

## Responses indicate that fact-based reporting and community engagement are important for increasing trust.

What are the most important actions local news organizations could take to increase your trust?

Increase accuracy/factual reporting

44%

Increase community engagement

40%

Hire journalists from my community

32%

Increase transparency about how reporting gets done

30%

Reduce bias

27%

Increase transparency the organization's makeup and revenue sources

27%

I already trust local news

24%

Don't know

8%

I can't/won't trust local news

1%

n=554



In addition to surveys, DMA staff, contractors, and working group members held community roundtable discussions to better understand specific segments of the community's unique information needs and preferences. One roundtable conversation with Hispanic and Latino/a community members, hosted by a working group member who is a native Spanish speaker, highlighted what residents feel local news organizations are getting wrong about their communities: Community members said they have a sense that news organizations focus on negative stories about Hispanic and Latino/a communities and other minority groups, playing into stereotypes and missing stories about the contributions of these communities. In the words of one participant, “We grew up not seeing a lot of representation of successful Latinos in media — professionals, people making positive contributions. We don’t see stories of farmworkers in our media or how they contribute. There are no stories about how immigration contributes to our country.”

*“We grew up not seeing a lot of representation of successful Latinos in media — professionals, people making positive contributions. We don’t see stories of farmworkers in our media or how they contribute. There are no stories about how immigration contributes to our country.”*

Across community roundtable conversations and one-on-one interviews, the DMA team received consistent feedback, as well as constructive ideas about how the local news and information ecosystem could better serve community members. The team heard that people who need information largely are not going to a website to seek it out, and even if they do try, they become overwhelmed because there are, on the one hand, too many places to go to look for local information, and, on the other hand, little available in preferred languages or that represents their communities accurately. One community member who identifies as a single Black woman said she has been laid off several times since the pandemic and was paying her mortgage through gig economy jobs. She noted a lack of time and funds to track down information, thereby relying on what she could find easily online.

*The team heard that people who need information largely are not going to a website to seek it out.*

Community members said they would benefit from a single hub where they could access accurate information about “everything from where to get food or seek shelter from the heat or cold.” Residents emphasized that there won’t be a “one-size-fits-all strategy,” but instead there need to be bespoke engagement approaches for diverse sectors of the community.

# Conclusion and Next Steps

Yolo County is a community with significant assets: engaged local residents with diverse backgrounds and experiences, a world-class university and community colleges, public libraries, locally rooted nonprofit organizations, and a number of locally based sources of news and information. At the same time, local residents face a fragmented information landscape, making it costly — both in terms of time and actual dollars — to find and access relevant local news and information. But community members have a desire for more content, including deeply reported stories, and want this content to be delivered in preferred formats — digitally and through social networks.

The deepest unmet need in Yolo county appears to be among Spanish-speaking and immigrant communities. There is a lack of reporting in, for, and by these communities, and the reporting that is there isn't accessible due to a combination of language and cost (paywalled).

This is a moment of opportunity: There is desire among local journalists and information providers to coordinate, and possibly even to collaborate, but in order to do so, the news and information ecosystem requires a backbone organization to lead the charge. Given DMA's long history in the community, trust among peers in the journalism sector as well as among local residents, and its motivation, DMA's nascent initiative, Yolo Local, could serve as this backbone.

Yolo Local can connect information providers across the county, building networks and trust, while simultaneously developing new and innovative ways to reach and engage all sectors of the community. It could serve as an "assignments" desk to ensure that all important stories are covered, and create the infrastructure for a county wire service for freely shared and accessible content. Yolo Local could produce Spanish-language content based on the reporting already happening in the county, exploring partnerships with other community-based organizations to distribute information, and it could support the creation of more visual, digital-first content.

Based on this landscape assessment, the connections built through the research and community engagement processes, and the momentum on the ground, Yolo Local is well-positioned to convene media partners in order to chart a path forward for strengthening the local ecosystem, working to ensure every resident has accessible, trustworthy, relevant local news.



# Appendices

## Appendix A: Indicators, Definitions, and Data Sources

Measuring your Local News and Information Ecosystem		
	Definition	Data Source
Community Indicators		
Demographics		
Population	Total Population (July 1, 2023 population estimates)	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Population living in urban areas	Percent of population living in an urban area	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Urban &amp; Rural</a>
Population per square mile	Number of residents per square mile	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Under 18	Population under age of 18	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
65 and over	Population age 65 and older	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	Population identifying as white alone	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Hispanic or Latino	Population identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a alone	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Black or African American	Population identifying as Black or African/American alone	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Asian	Population identifying as Asian alone	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Two or more races	Population identifying as two or more races	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
American Indian or Alaska Native	Population identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native alone	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Population identifying as Native Hawaiian and other pacific islander alone	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Russian	Population identifying as Russian	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau ACS</a>
Language		
Speaks a language other than English	Population age 5+ that speak a language other than English at home	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau County Profile</a>
Speaks Spanish	Population age 5+ that speak Spanish at home	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau County Profile</a>
Speaks another Indo-European language	Population age 5+ that speaks another Indo-European language at home	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau County Profile</a>
Speaks an Asian or Pacific Island language	Population age 5+ that speaks an Asian or Pacific Island language at home	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau County Profile</a>
Economics		
Median household income	Median household income of population (in 2023 dollars)	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Per capita income	Per capita income of population (in 2023 dollars)	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Poverty rate	Population below poverty level	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>



## Measuring your Local News and Information Ecosystem

	Definition	Data Source
Cost of living	Pre-tax income required to cover basic goods and services in the county like housing and food for a single adult with no children	<a href="#">MIT Living Wage Calculator, 2025</a>
Median annual income (farmworkers)	Median annual income for a household of one among farmworkers in the county	<a href="#">Yolo County Farmworker Assessment 2024</a> , Yolo County Housing & Human Services Agency
<b>Education</b>		
High school degree	Population age 25+ with a high school diploma or its equivalent.	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Bachelor's degree	Population age 25+ with a bachelor's degree from a college or university, or a master's, professional, or doctorate degree.	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
<b>Resources &amp; Infrastructure</b>		
Households with computer	Households with a computer, including desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones, and other portable wireless computers	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Broadband access	Population with a broadband internet subscription	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts</a>
Institutions of higher education	Number of institutions of higher education, including colleges, universities, and trade schools	NCES ( <a href="#">cities</a> ), NCES ( <a href="#">states</a> )
Population per institution	Population divided by number of institutions of higher education in the community	--
Libraries	Number of libraries, library branches, and bookmobiles in the community	Institute of Museum and Library Services, <a href="#">Library Search &amp; Compare</a>
Population per library	Population divided by number of libraries in the community	--
<b>Civic Engagement &amp; Democracy</b>		
<b>Voting</b>		
Registered eligible voters	Registered eligible voters as of most recent even-year election (2024)	U.S. Census Bureau <a href="#">Voting and Registration</a> data (Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2024, Table 3), <a href="#">California Secretary of State's office</a> data
Voter turnout	Percent of eligible voters who participated in most recent even-year election (2024)	U.S. Census Bureau <a href="#">Voting and Registration</a> data (Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2024, Table 3), <a href="#">California Secretary of State's office</a> data
<b>Voting Access &amp; Rights</b>		
Cost of Voting Index (COVI) Score	An index of scores for the ease/burden of voting in U.S. states. Higher numbers indicate a higher cost/burden for voting. (state)	<a href="#">COVI 2024</a>

## Measuring your Local News and Information Ecosystem

	Definition	Data Source
Election/voting litigation	Litigation that challenges some aspect of the state's redistricting, voting, or elections policy	Democracy Docket <a href="#">database</a>
Election/voting policy	Bills that could or have recently altered voting and elections policy in the state	Manual research, Ballotpedia <a href="#">tracker</a>
<b>Civic Engagement</b>		
Civic Participation Index	Civic Information Index score for Civic Participation	<a href="#">Civic Information Index</a>
Formal volunteering	Participation in formal volunteering (state)	<a href="#">Civic Information Index</a> , Current Population Survey Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement 2021
Charitable giving	Total adjusted gross income for residents of the county claimed as charitable contributions	<a href="#">Civic Information Index</a> , IRS Statistics of Income 2021
Availability of public meeting materials	Are boards/committees making minutes, agendas, and other materials available before/after meetings?	Manual research, municipality websites
Accessibility of public meeting materials	Are meeting materials in accessible language, offered in languages other than English, in video/audio form, and offered with closed captioning?	Manual research, municipality websites
Availability of information about local officials	Are board/committee members' names and bios on local government websites? Are board and committee descriptions on local government websites? Is contact information available for all elected officials?	Manual research, municipality websites
<b>Press Freedom</b>		
Physical intimidation	Number of incidents of physical intimidation of journalists from 2023 through 2024 (county)	<a href="#">U.S. Press Freedom Tracker</a>
Regulatory incidents	Number of regulatory incidents that restrict media operations and/or production abilities from 2023 through 2024 (county)	<a href="#">U.S. Press Freedom Tracker</a>
Regulatory policy	Policies proposed that would restrict media operations and/or production abilities	Manual research
<b>Information Providers &amp; Community</b>		
Prior Information Needs Study	Presence of any prior information needs study	Manual research
Prior Ecosystem Study	Presence of any prior information or journalism ecosystem studies	Manual research
<b>Information Needs Assessment</b>		
Information needs, access, and trust survey	We conducted a survey of Yolo County residents, with a complete protocol available in Appendix E.	Self-distributed survey

## Measuring your Local News and Information Ecosystem

	Definition	Data Source
<b>Information Providers</b>		
Number of organizations	Number of journalism organizations serving the county	<a href="#">State of Local News Project</a> , INN network <a href="#">directory</a> , Center for Community Media at the Craig Newmark School of Journalism <a href="#">maps &amp; directories</a> , <a href="#">Corporation for Public Broadcasting</a> , <a href="#">National Federation of Community Broadcasters</a> , Local broadcast affiliates ( <a href="#">ABC</a> , <a href="#">CBS</a> , <a href="#">NBC</a> , <a href="#">PBS</a> , <a href="#">Fox</a> , Telemundo, and Univision), and stakeholder contributions (any outlets mentioned in interviews or focus groups that are not surfaced in one of the above lists).
Population per organization	Population divided by number of journalism organizations serving the county	--
<b>Mediums</b>		
Print and digital	Number of news and information providers in the community that publish in print and digitally in the community, such as newspapers, alt weeklies, or magazines.	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Digital	Number of news and information providers in the community that only have a digital presence, such as a news website or social media-based news provider	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Print only	Number of news and information providers in the community that are print-only, such as print-only newspapers, alt weeklies, or monthly magazines	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Television	Number of broadcast television stations in the community	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Radio	Number of broadcast radio stations in the community	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Newsletter	Number of print and/or digital newsletters in the community	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
<b>Business Models</b>		
Independent for-profit	Number of independent, for-profit, news and information providers in the community	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Local/state media group	Number of information providers owned by a local or state media group, meaning a locally-based company that owns multiple news properties	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.

## Measuring your Local News and Information Ecosystem

	Definition	Data Source
Corporate ownership	Number of news and information providers owned by a multi-state organization, including those owned by national newspaper chains like Gannett or hedge funds like Alden Global Capital, as well as national broadcast companies	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Nonprofit	Number of nonprofit journalism organizations in the community, meaning those with 501(c)3 status, not including NPR stations or PBS affiliates	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Public media	Number of public media outlets in the community, including NPR stations and PBS affiliates	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Student news outlet	Number of student-run news outlets in the community, meaning those affiliated with a college or university	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
<b>Community Media</b>		
Black / African American	Number of media outlets in community produced for and by African American, Black, or Afro-Caribbean communities	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Hispanic / Latinx	Number of media outlets in community produced for and by Hispanic or Latino/a communities, or in Spanish	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Asian / Asian American	Number of media outlets in community produced for and by Asian communities	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Indigenous / Native American	Number of media outlets in community produced for and by Indigenous or Native American communities	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	Number of media outlets in community produced for and by Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander communities	See “Number of organizations” Data Source list.
<b>Diversity</b>		
Newsroom diversity	Demographics of journalists in journalism organizations in the community	Manual research
Source diversity	Demographics of sources quoted in the journalistic output of the community	Manual research
<b>Collaboration</b>		
Collaboration	Number of formal collaborations in the community over the last 12 months	Manual research, <a href="#">Collaborative Journalism Database</a>
<b>Journalism Funding</b>		



## Measuring your Local News and Information Ecosystem

	Definition	Data Source
Philanthropic dollars over the 3 previous years	Number of philanthropic dollars invested in media and information in the community from 2022 through 2024 ("Journalism, news and information" and "Media content and platforms" grants filters). For the county, manually searched for and included only grants to local news and information providers.	<a href="#">Foundation Center - Media Impact Funders</a>
Funders	Number of philanthropic funders invested in media and information in the community from 2022 through 2024 ("Journalism, news and information" and "Media content and platforms" grants filters). For the county, manually searched for and included only grants to local news and information providers.	<a href="#">Foundation Center - Media Impact Funders</a>
Recipients	Number of recipients of philanthropic funding for media and information in the community from 2022 through 2024 ("Journalism, news and information" and "Media content and platforms" grants filters). For the county, manually searched for and included only grants to local news and information providers.	<a href="#">Foundation Center - Media Impact Funders</a>
Grants	Number of grants for media and information in the community from 2022 through 2024 ("Journalism, news and information" and "Media content and platforms" grants filters). For the county, manually searched for and included only grants to local news and information providers.	<a href="#">Foundation Center - Media Impact Funders</a>
Invested Per Capita	Philanthropic dollars divided by total population of the county	--

## Appendix B: Community Engagement Activities

We engaged with local communities through a variety of activities, including one-on-one conversations, roundtables, tabling, and distributing the survey. The below list excludes off-the-record conversations.

Community Engagement Activities	
Outreach Channel	Type
100+ Women Who Care	Presentation
211 Yolo	Survey distribution
Allegra Pickett	One-on-one
AM Radio - West Sacramento	Survey distribution
Andy Jones, UC Davis	One-on-one, Survey distribution
Antonio De Loera-Brust	Survey distribution
Arts Alliance Davis	Survey distribution
Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry	Survey distribution
Associated Students, UCD	Survey distribution
Avid Reader	Survey distribution
Bapu Vaitla	One-on-one
Big Day Downtown	Tabling
Bike Campaign, The	Survey distribution
Blue Devil Hub (Davis Senior HS)	Survey distribution
Bob Dunning	One-on-one
Bridgett Rex	One-on-one
Bruce Gallaudet	One-on-one
California Aggie	Survey distribution
CapRadio	Survey distribution
Catholic Charities of Yolo-Solano	Survey distribution
Center for Regional Change	Survey distribution
Cesar Chavez Easter Celebration	Tabling
Chris Granger	One-on-one
City of Davis	Survey distribution
City of Davis HRC	Survey distribution
City of West Sacramento	Survey distribution
City of Winters	Survey distribution
City of Woodland	Survey distribution
Co Office of Education	Survey distribution



## Community Engagement Activities

Outreach Channel	Type
Co PIO	Survey distribution
Co Sup District 1	Survey distribution
Co Sup District 2	Survey distribution
Co Sup District 3	Survey distribution
Co Sup District 4	Survey distribution
Co Sup District 5	Survey distribution
Comings & Goings - Substack	Survey distribution
CommuniCare+OLE	Survey distribution
Community Mercantile	Survey distribution
Concilio de Yolo	Survey distribution
Congregation Bet Haverim	Survey distribution
Congressman Mike Thompson	Survey distribution
Cool Cuisine	Survey distribution
Cool Davis	Survey distribution
Culture of Community	Survey distribution
Da Vinci Charter parents	Survey distribution
Daily Democrat, The	Survey distribution
Davis Bike Collective	Survey distribution
Davis branch of Yolo library	Survey distribution
Davis Cards & Games	Survey distribution
Davis Chamber of Commerce	Survey distribution
Davis Downtown	Survey distribution
Davis Enterprise, The	Survey distribution
Davis Food Co-op	Survey distribution
Davis Joint Unified School District	Survey distribution
Davis Night Market	Survey distribution
Davis Odd Fellows	Survey distribution
Davis Parents Facebook Group	Survey distribution
Davis Phoenix Coalition	Survey distribution
Davis Pride Festival	Tabling
Davis United Methodist Church	Survey distribution
DCAN	Survey distribution

## Community Engagement Activities

Outreach Channel	Type
Debbie Davis	One-on-one
Delta of Venus	Survey distribution
Democracy Winters	Survey distribution
Dirt Davis, The	Survey distribution
Don Saylor	One-on-one
Donna Neville	One-on-one
Dr. Antoine Haywood	One-on-one
Dr. Lizette Navarette	One-on-one
Ecology Social UCD grad listserv	Survey distribution
Elaine Robert Musser	Survey distribution
Elected Officials Combined Office Hours	Engagement with sticky notes and big question
Empower Yolo	Survey distribution
Eric Johnson, Chris Neklason	One-on-one
Evan Schmidt	One-on-one
First 5 Yolo County	Survey distribution
Food not Bombs	Survey distribution
Freedge	Survey distribution
Friends Meeting House	Survey distribution
Friends of Library - Davis	Survey distribution
Friends of Library - Knights Landing	Survey distribution
Friends of Library - MME	Survey distribution
Friends of Library - West Sacramento	Survey distribution
Friends of Library - Yolo	Survey distribution
Friends of the Davis Library book sale	Tabling, Survey distribution
Gloria Partida	One-on-one
Good and Weird Davis	Survey distribution
Hanna Nakano	One-on-one
Heather Adams	One-on-one
HHSA cultural competency committee	Survey distribution
Hui International	Survey distribution
Informal Palestinian community	Survey distribution
Instagram - several YC groups	Survey distribution

## Community Engagement Activities

Outreach Channel	Type
International House Davis	Survey distribution
J Hardman, G Northern	One-on-one
Jazmin Garcia	One-on-one
Jenebai Lahai	One-on-one
Jenny Tan	One-on-one
Jesse Loren	One-on-one
Jessica Hubbard	One-on-one
Jim Brewer	Survey distribution
Jim Provenza	One-on-one
Josh Chapman	One-on-one
Juelie Roggli	One-on-one
Kate Snow	One-on-one
KDRT PSAs	Survey distribution
KDVS	Survey distribution
Kelly Wilkerson	One-on-one, Survey distribution
Kristen Almanzan Muchmore	One-on-one
KXSE - La Suavecito	Survey distribution
KYWS LPFM	Survey distribution
Latino Radio 97.9 in Esparto	Survey distribution
Laundromats	Survey distribution
Linda Henigan	One-on-one
Logos Books	Survey distribution
LOWV Yolo County	Survey distribution
Lucas Frerichs	One-on-one
Make it Happen Yolo County	Survey distribution
Mary L Stephens Davis Library	Survey distribution
Meals on Wheels YC	Survey distribution
Media focus groups (2)	Roundtable
Mike Wassenaar	One-on-one
Mike Webb, Kelly Stachowicz	One-on-one
Mishka's	Survey distribution
Multiculturalism Rocks	Survey distribution

## Community Engagement Activities

Outreach Channel	Type
NAMI Yolo	Survey distribution
Yolo Community Housing National Night Out	Engagement with sticky notes and big question
Newsbeat	Survey distribution
NJ Mvondo	One-on-one
Petrea Marchand	One-on-one
Preacher Cleveland	One-on-one
Rachel Hartsough	One-on-one
Regional Resilience Planning Group	Survey distribution
RISE, Inc.	Roundtable, Survey distribution
Robin Datel	One-on-one
Rodrigo Lopez, Yolo Works	One-on-one
Russian-language Facebook Page	Survey distribution
Sacramento Regional Community Foundation	Survey distribution
Sandre Nelson	One-on-one
Sandy Holman	One-on-one
Scott Love	One-on-one
Sebastian Onate	One-on-one
Sen. Christopher Cabaldon	Survey distribution
Sheila Allen	One-on-one
Shelly Gilbride	One-on-one
Solar Community Housing Association	Survey distribution
Songs in Solidarity	Tabling
Soroptimist Woodland	Survey distribution
Soroptimist International Davis	Presentation, Survey distribution
Stacie Frerichs	One-on-one
Steady Eddie's	Survey distribution
Sunrise Rotary Davis	Survey distribution
Team Davis-DD youth	Survey distribution
The Culture C.O.-O.P.	Survey distribution
The Wary One - Substack	Survey distribution
Third Space Art Collective	Survey distribution
UC Davis	Survey distribution

## Community Engagement Activities

Outreach Channel	Type
UC Davis Community Relations	Survey distribution
UU Church of Davis	Survey distribution
Valley Vision	Survey distribution
Valley Voice (RISE) Esparto/rural community	Survey distribution
Wendy Weitzel	One-on-one
West Sacramento News-Ledger, The	Survey distribution
Will Arnold	One-on-one
Winters Chamber of Commerce	Survey distribution
Winters Express, The	Survey distribution
Winters Opera House	Survey distribution
Woodland Chamber of Commerce	Survey distribution
Woodland City Hall	Survey distribution
Woodland Community & Senior Center	Survey distribution
Woodland Community College	Survey distribution
Woodland Library Bookmobile	Survey distribution
Woodland Opera House	Survey distribution
Woodland Pride	Tabling
Woodland Public Library	Survey distribution
Woodland United Methodist Church	Survey distribution
Yoche De He Wintun Nation	Survey distribution
Yolo Community Foundation	Survey distribution
Yolo Community Foundation Philanthropy Breakfast	Survey distribution
Yolo Conflict Resolution Center	Survey distribution
Yolo County ACE	Survey distribution
Yolo County CASA	Survey distribution
Yolo County Children's Alliance	Survey distribution
Yolo County HHSA	Survey distribution
Yolo County Realtors Association	Survey distribution
Yolo Crisis Nursery	Survey distribution
Yolo Farm to Fork	Survey distribution
Yolo Food Bank	Survey distribution
Yolo Interfaith Immigration Network	Survey distribution

Community Engagement Activities	
Outreach Channel	Type
YoloArts	Survey distribution
YoloWorks Employment	Survey distribution, One-on-one

### Appendix C: Focus Group Participants

We invited 19 people from news- and information-providing organizations throughout the county and beyond to participate in focus groups. A total of seven invitees attended across the two focus groups.

Focus Group Participants	
Name	Organization
Bill Buchanan	KDRT (Davisville)
Bruce Gallaudet	Online news startup; formerly, The Davis Enterprise
Chris Neklason	California Local
Crystal Apilado	Winters Express
Hanna Nakano	The Dirt
Roberta Millstein	The Davisite
Wendy Weitzel	Comings & Goings



## Appendix D: Working Group Members

Yolo Local Information Needs Assessment Working Group	
Name	Affiliations
Alejandra Cuevas Rash	PhD in Communication Studies; teacher; bilingual consulting; Ethnic Studies development, DJUSD
Alyx Volzer	Business Owner, Massage Therapy Institute; Yolo Sol; LGBTQIA+, community organizer
Anahi Monter	Program Director, Yolo County Children's Alliance; extensive experience working with diverse cultural communities throughout county
Anthony Volkar	Public Information Officer, Yolo County Office of Education; connected to 30,000 students throughout county
Autumn Labbé-Renault (working group steward)	Executive Director, Davis Media Access
Bill Buchanan	Award-winning journalist; retired from UC Davis; Host and Producer of "Davisville" on KDRT
Jenny Tan	Director of Community Engagement, City of Davis; Board Member for Yolo Community Foundation, former Public Information Officer for Yolo County
jesikah maria ross (working group steward)	Community-engaged journalism consultant
Josh Redman	Solar Housing Association; Third Space art Collective; Food Not Bombs, Good and Weird Davis
Laura Galindo	Interim Public Information Officer, Yolo County; Office of Emergency Services; formerly Yocha DeHe Wintun Nation
Leonie Pickett	Teacher (Da Vinci Charter Academy); City of Davis Human Relations Committee Vice Chair; UU Church of Davis
Linda Henigan	ED & Founder, Woodland's Dinner on Main; Founder and former Executive Director, WAVE TV; formerly Woodland Chamber of Commerce
Spencer Bowen	Communication & Strategic Policies Manager, City of Woodland

## Appendix E: Survey Protocol

### Yolo County Local News & Information Survey

Davis Media Access wants to better understand what kind of information Yolo County residents need and want about our communities. This deeper understanding is part of Yolo Local, a project of nonprofit Davis Media Access (DMA). Though based in Davis, DMA has strategic partnerships across the county. We are working with Impact Architects to conduct a countywide survey.

In this survey, we ask you some questions about local news and information, meaning events and issues in your local area that involve more than just your friends or family.

We estimate this survey will take you **less than 10 minutes** to complete. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to.

At the survey's end, you may opt to be included in the raffle drawing for one of four \$50 gift certificates to Nugget Markets.

Your participation is voluntary and your responses will be anonymous. We value your help with this project. Thank you!

If you have questions or would like more information about the survey, please contact Lindsay Green-Barber by email ([lindsay@theimpactarchitects.com](mailto:lindsay@theimpactarchitects.com)).

**Where do you get local news and information? Please select all that apply.**

- ☐ Local/regional TV news station
- ☐ Local newspaper
- ☐ Local/regional radio station
- ☐ A news source that publishes online **ONLY**
- ☐ Local newsletter or listserv (including Substack)
- ☐ Local government agencies or officials, such as city council offices or libraries
- ☐ Local organizations, such as churches, school groups or political groups
- ☐ Local social networks, such as community Facebook groups or Nextdoor
- ☐ Social media (Instagram, Facebook, X, TikTok, etc.)
- ☐ Text message (SMS, iMessage, WhatsApp)
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Podcast(s)



**Which social media platform(s) do you use to get local news and information?**

- ☐ Bluesky
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Nextdoor
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Truth Social
- ☐ X (formerly Twitter)
- ☐ Discord
- ☐ Other (please specify
- ☐ I don't get local news and information from social media

**What news source do you turn to most often for local news and information? Please list the name of ONE specific news organization or other information source.**

**What is your preferred way to get local news and information?**

- ☐ Print newspaper
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Social media site (such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc.)
- ☐ A news website or app
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Podcast
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**Do you pay for access to local news and information through a print or digital subscription?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, but I would if there were an option
- ☐ Unsure

**Do you feel you have any barriers to accessing local news and information? Please select all that apply.**

- ☐ Yes, there aren't enough local news sources in my area



- ☐ Yes, there aren't enough local news sources in my preferred language
- ☐ Yes, the cost of a subscription to local news is too much for my budget
- ☐ Yes, technological barriers (no internet connection, don't own a device, etc.)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, other (please specify)

**As far as you know, in your local community, is there at least one...?**

- ☐ Local TV news station
- ☐ Local newspaper
- ☐ Local radio station
- ☐ Local newsletter, blog, or website
- ☐ Local online forum or discussion group, such as a community Facebook group, Nextdoor group, or Listserv

**Which topics are important for you to get information about locally?**

- ☐ Weather
- ☐ Crime and public safety in your community
- ☐ Traffic and transportation
- ☐ Schools and education
- ☐ Government and politics (including government services, elections, voting)
- ☐ Local activities, culture, and entertainment
- ☐ Local sports
- ☐ Health and medical information (including finding and paying for care)
- ☐ Housing (including finding and paying for housing)
- ☐ Jobs and the economy (including finding jobs, financial decisions and support)
- ☐ Local environment (including sanitation services)
- ☐ Obituaries
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Immigration
- ☐ Climate impacts/advocacy

**Thinking specifically about the role of news and information in your local community, how important is it that outlets do the following?**

	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Slightly important	Not important
Give me information about emergencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Hold leaders in politics, business, and other institutions accountable for their actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Present different perspectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform me about state and local politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explore solutions to problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connect me to my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are created by people who represent the population of my local community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Give local context to national stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help me decide places to go or things to see	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are entertaining	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Host community events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report fairly about a wide range of local topics and events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Overall, would you say that local journalists in your area are mostly in touch or out of touch with your local community?**

- ☐ In touch
- ☐ Out of touch
- ☐ There are few to no local journalists in my area
- ☐ Unsure

**Do you feel your community in Yolo County has a trustworthy and accessible source for local news and information?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

**What is your most trusted source for local news and information? Please list the name of ONE specific news organization or other information source.**

**What are the most important actions local news organizations could take to increase your trust? Please select all that apply.**

- ☐ Increase accuracy/factual reporting

- ☐ Reduce bias
- ☐ Increase transparency about how reporting gets done
- ☐ Increase community engagement
- ☐ Hire journalists from my community
- ☐ I already trust local news
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Increase transparency the organization's makeup and revenue sources
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ I can't/won't trust local news

In your opinion, how can local news organizations improve their coverage of local issues that matter to you?

### Demographics

What year were you born?

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / third gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your zip code?

What is your current annual household income?

- ☐ Under \$25,000
- ☐ \$25,000 to \$50,000
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$100,000
- ☐ \$100,000 to \$150,000
- ☐ \$150,000 to \$200,000
- ☐ More than \$200,000



**What is your preferred language?**

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**Which of the following best describes your race?**

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Middle Eastern or North African
- ☐ Self identify

**Are you of Hispanic or Latino/a origin?**

- ☐ Yes, Mexican
- ☐ Yes, Latinamerican
- ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ☐ Yes, Spanish
- ☐ Other (please specify)

- ☐ No

**In general, how would you describe your political views?**

- ☐ Very conservative
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Liberal
- ☐ Very liberal
- ☐ Other (please specify)





**We are grateful to the  
following for providing  
financial support for this  
needs assessment:**

100+ Women Who Care Yolo County

City of Davis

Our donors who supported  
through the Big Day of Giving,  
annual appeal and match gifts

Yolo County Supervisor Lucas  
Frerichs

Yolo County Supervisor Jim  
Provenza (former)





