

CHARLOTTE JOURNALISM COLLABORATIVE

IMPACT REPORT



JANUARY 2023

About us



Finding solutions, informing communities, together.

To strengthen local journalism and encourage greater connection

between reporters and Charlotte residents, Solutions Journalism Network launched the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative (CJC) in 2019. The CJC is a partnership of seven major media companies and other local institutions focusing on issues of major importance to the Charlotte region.

values

We choose courage over comfort.

- We report for truth, even when the truths are unpopular or uncomfortable.
- We explore alternative, creative ways of reaching audiences with an eye towards impact.
- We utilize our collective power to research and voice solutions to city crises even when powerful people and institutions are invested in maintaining the status quo.

We act in service for our community.

- We remain hyper focused on the problems facing Charlotte residents.
- We seek solutions for community health and well-being and aim to strengthen the overall connections with the local news ecosystem.
- We present news that resonates with and reflects diverse communities.
- We intentionally create opportunities for diverse communities to engage.
- We share information that helps residents navigate complex situations.

From the director

“We all want a city that is thriving and equitable for everyone,” Rudisill said. “Local news is a very important part of that.”

*from “How the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative is experimenting with events revenue”
Collaborative Sustainability Guide, 2022*

In October, I attended the Independent News Sustainability Summit in Austin, Texas. While there, I met colleagues from across the country working to empower independent local journalism. And, as I have witnessed throughout the past few years, there continued to be a healthy buzz about the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative and the work we are doing here in North Carolina. For a few years now, we’ve been referred to as “the State of Collaboration,” and that is most prevalent here in the Queen City.

Since 2019, major media outlets and non-profit organizations have worked together in Charlotte to address critical issues that residents face through collaborative and solutions journalism. Our project has been focused on uncovering those stories and solutions that help us stop housing harm, but the collaboration has not stopped there. The CJC amplified important news and information during the coronavirus pandemic. We helped bring people together to share their stories and work on the problems we face through town halls and an inaugural summit. We got creative with local artists and changed the way news happens -- creating partnerships between previously competing newsrooms that now go way beyond the work of the CJC.

The CJC created a model that inspires other news organizations throughout North Carolina and the U.S.

I’ve talked with new collaboratives in California, Maryland, Delaware, Idaho, and Texas, to name a few. Last month, I received an email from as far away as Scotland, and this past Fall, we partnered with N.C. Local News Workshop to provide a series of introductory courses on building collaboration.

Our work is getting noticed because it is supporting a thriving local news ecosystem. But, we know there is more work to do. The CJC partners are dedicated to providing a platform and structured community journalism partnership that supports the future of Charlotte in its work, serves as a trusted source of news and information, and addresses the problems that are most important to our city’s residents.

We can’t do this alone. We need your support. We need local funding to grow the infrastructure that makes this work possible. We need community members to share their stories and we want to make sure that the collaborative is addressing the needs of neighborhoods that have previously been underserved by local news media. **Collaboration is based on the primary truth that together, we can do more than any one of us can do alone.**

I invite you to join us in 2023. Whether you participate in our annual Summit, log on to a virtual town hall, or find a way to financially support this collaborative local news community, we look forward to working with you to make Charlotte, our home, a place that is connected, informed and thriving.



Chris Rudisill, Director

Charlotte Journalism Collaborative
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Sponsorship and vendor applications are available for the 2023 Summit.

Email Chris Rudisill at director@charlottejournalism.org for more information.

What we report



Solutions Journalism

The CJC is modeled on the Solutions Journalism Network method of investigating and reporting news with a primary focus on solutions to community problems.

Stop housing harm in Charlotte.

From rent control to housing fundraisers, dozens are trying to come up with solutions -- wanting to make sure everyone can afford to have a roof over their heads. Through rigorous and collaborative journalism, the CJC is focused on addressing the issue, expanding the conversation and informing our community.

Nearly 300 stories on affordable housing have been published and shared by the CJC

Since launching in 2019.

COVID-19 Coverage kept Charlotte communities informed.

While not shifting from its original focus, the CJC expanded coverage by sharing vital news during the coronavirus pandemic.

How we connect



Our role as a “convener”

Since its formation, the CJC has prided itself on the fundamental goal of centering the community in the project. From in-person events to virtual panel discussions and town halls, we’ve held these conversations. We’ve had 1-on-1 talks with local housing advocates, hosted our first community housing information fair, and brought together local leaders, advocates and journalists to have conversations about affordable housing in our community at the inaugural Local News Impact Summit in May.

The CJC was formed to strengthen local journalism & encourage greater connection between reporters and Charlotte residents.

Charlotte News Club

In 2022, the CJC launched a weekly local news conversation group with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. The program is continuing to evolve and will incorporate more behind-the-scenes experiences in 2023.

IMPACT



Photo by Alvin C. Jacobs Jr., @acjphoto

The work of the CJC continues to impact local policy decisions and the local news community. We asked our partners how they've experienced this impact and included those answers in this report in three primary categories: COMMUNITY, POLICY AND ECOSYSTEM.

Community

When the CJC formed, its members committed to leverage the power of their shared resources to advance stories for the greater good that no one of them could mount on their own.

Building trust in times of need – The power of collaboration was especially evident in the beginning days of the coronavirus pandemic. The CJC quickly pivoted to share important information and stories with a broader audience and within the span of a week, organized a series of virtual town halls where journalists asked community members how the coronavirus was affecting their lives. Leaning on the partnership with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, the CJC created a neutral ground where we could build greater trust with the community. The CJC, with the library's support, has since served as a physical and online convenor for the community. While news organizations have struggled to meet community members where they are, the CJC puts them first in its planning, programs and coverage. We incorporate 1:1 and small group conversations to stay engaged and be an integral part of a community grassroots effort to address important issues.

Reaching new audiences AND new collaborators – Published by the CJC in partnership with BOOM Charlotte, PANDEM!C: Stories of COVID-19 chronicles first-person accounts of people impacted by the coronavirus in 2020. Each story is based on one published by members of the CJC and translated visually by a local Charlotte artist into a comic book form. The project was designed to accelerate the connection between local news and the public and reach new underserved audiences through Instagram. In the span of the project, followers to the CJC Instagram page grew to 463 people with continued growth since, and our media partners' Instagram following grew an average of 25%. More importantly, engagement on the platform has not diminished and those who came for the graphic novel are now engaging on the issue of affordable housing.

The project also expanded collaboration beyond traditional news outlets. By partnering with a local arts group, the CJC brought local artists into the storytelling process and then

distributed 2,500 free copies of the graphic novel to the public through local library branches, museums, art events and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) system. The director of virtual learning and media services at CMS later said, “It highlights the importance of journalism, and of the idea that everyone’s story matters.” Participating artist, Wolly McNair described the collaboration as a “game changer and hopefully will be something others use to model ways they can tell stories.”

Inspiring local development and planning – The solutions journalism stories from the CJC have inspired influential readers, specifically real estate developers, who are now creating solutions right here in Charlotte. After watching a Charlotte Journalism Collaborative story about a shipping container apartment complex in Nashville and hearing renewed energy from a city council member and the mayor about the concept, a local designer emailed an alternative proposal to Mayor Vi Lyles, Council Member Renee Perkins Johnson and Housing Task Force Member T. Anthony Lindsey. All responded enthusiastically. While the proposal wasn’t a carbon copy of the one in our reporting, it launched outside-the-box thinking that would decrease construction costs to create more affordable housing options, as stated by the designer.

The CJC is also having conversations about ways to increase programming and reporting in 2023 that identifies and addresses the specific needs of Charlotte’s Latino population so that those stories play a role in future planning.

Policy

One of the most significant impacts of the CJC can be found in its connection and relationship with city and county leadership. The Collaborative has provided an opportunity where media outlets can use their combined power, while also presenting a unified, non-threatening persona to be a key player in addressing community challenges. This doesn’t diminish our role in holding leaders accountable, but more strongly unites us in serving the public.

Catalyzed public conversation about the imminent risks an estimated 250,000 renters faced as the COVID-related eviction moratorium was about to end – A CJC series of stories explained multiple facets of the housing crisis and provided solutions from programs in Seattle, San Francisco, New York and Cleveland that were successfully helping renters with services such as free legal representation – leading Legal Aid of North Carolina to urge the enactment of local and state laws to help renters and Rep. Alma Adams to call for an extension of the moratorium and supplemental resources.

Raised new ideas to city and county leadership – Following a collaborative investigation into the most vulnerable neighborhoods where evictions during the pandemic were occurring, a reporter for the CJC looked at “Right to Council” laws in other cities. The reporting led to Great Neighborhoods Chairman Malcolm Graham expressing interest in the solutions that were uncovered in the story.

In October, a group of advocates in Charlotte that form the Housing Justice Coalition presented a 31-point plan to Charlotte City Council. The first item on its list of demands included a call for city and county governing bodies to “fund and enact the Right to Counsel that would guarantee representation for tenants in eviction proceedings.”

Empowering officials to put money where its needed – In early 2022, the CJC analyzed sales data in five area counties identifying thousands of homes, condos and townhouses acquired by single-family investment companies over the course of a year. Nate Morabito with WCNC reported on the findings with help from CJC staff in February. Payton Guion with The Charlotte Observer did additional investigations and reporting in the months ahead, including a Pulitzer Center feature in May that further reported on the scale and impact on tenants, neighborhoods and first-time buyers. Following this extensive focus by the CJC and its members, Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners approved \$500,000 in its budget for the county manager’s office to conduct more research on corporate-owned rentals and how they impact residents. In addition, U.S. Rep. Alma Adams expressed concern over the encroachment of corporate landlords during her questioning of Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen referring to the news from Charlotte-Mecklenburg.



Photo by Alvin C. Jacobs Jr., @acjphoto

Our increased collaborative reporting on affordable housing and solutions to the crisis continues to increase conversations from city to state leadership and the CJC uses its power to connect with others on the issue as an invested community organization. In an April Charlotte City Council meeting, Mayor Vi Lyles proposed a housing summit to further explore what can be done to address the problem. In May, the CJC held its inaugural Impact Summit on Affordable Housing and engaged directly with the mayor in a private call on future planning and ways we can work together. Since then, the CJC director has had regular meetings with the city’s Director of Housing & Neighborhood Services. We know our work is having an impact on decision-making and planning at the local level, and it continues to push leaders to use information and solutions in their development ideas.

Ecosystem

The partnerships and collaborative learning of the CJC has had an overwhelming impact on our local news ecosystem.

Saving local news voices – In one example, Jim Yarbrough from Qnotes expressed that the publication, the only LGBTQ-specific newspaper in the Carolinas, may not have survived the pandemic if it hadn't been for the resources, connections and opportunities that came via the CJC. Before being part of the Collaborative, Qnotes didn't have much experience in grant-funded journalism. Since joining the CJC, they have received over \$275,000 in additional grants and donations including a Google News Initiative Innovation Grant, three additional Solutions Journalism Network reporting grants, an N.C. Local News Lab Fund grant, GNI News Equity Fund and more. In addition, the news organization was introduced to the Local Media Association and was able to set up a fiscal sponsorship to create the Carolinas LGBTQ Journalism Fund. This shared knowledge has been most impactful among our smaller, niche publications (Qnotes, La Noticia and QCity Metro) that are vitally important to the communities they serve.

New tools and resources – Partners have also learned from each other when it comes to news products and tools. Several of the partners are now members of Newpack or utilize its open-source publishing platform. The CJC was able to test tools like Distributed Media Lab and immersive virtual reality programming. Even the graphic novel distribution model was something the partners individually would not have likely tried on their own but has created a lasting impact on how news can be delivered that has since been an example for other collaboratives, journalism schools and more. In 2020, the CJC used its combined resources to offer training from the Racial Equity Institute to all newsrooms and associated staff. It is just one example of how training and resources can stretch further through the collaborative model.

Additionally, reporters regularly support each other and in 2023 are planning a cross-newsroom training where they share individual talents, specialties and tips.

Building relationships that go beyond the CJC – The partnerships formed from the CJC have made collaboration more accessible and welcomed in the Charlotte journalism community. From the perspective of one of our smaller outlets, it has allowed them to be in the "same room" as some of the larger newspapers. Content beyond our topic area is more regularly shared and amplified across audiences. For Ju-Don Marshall at WFAE, it meant that when they were searching for a partner to launch the station's Race and Equity project they didn't have to look far. WFAE and La Noticia have built a relationship that has included cross-publication, a shared reporter and community programming. The NPR station has also had extensive partnership with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library that has included research, programming and community listening. These relationships have been easy to develop because of the foundation set by the CJC.

Reporting together – Journalists in previously competing newsrooms are now working together. With biweekly meetings led by the CJC director, reporters share ideas and contacts or find ways to work on stories together. The work of the CJC is strongest when these opportunities for collaborative reporting come together. Early in the pandemic, the reporters approached Mecklenburg County Health Director Gibbie Harris for an interview together. The request coming from multiple news outlets utilized a power that individually wouldn't have existed and got a quicker response. Reporters from three newsrooms conducted the interview via Zoom and the materials were shared with all partners. Reporters also helped each other when field work was limited due to the pandemic. In one instance, a reporter from WFAE served as a camera person for a reporter from WCNC, and the two shared their video content with the full partnership.

This partnership has also strengthened our capacity for research. With thousands of renters behind on their payments in Charlotte following the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, journalists from five news outlets along with volunteers from the library and interns from Queens University physically went through nearly 700 eviction case files. Following this research, three reporters produced a major feature story with bylines from three news outlets.

Most recently, CJC partners took on a new collaborative challenge. Using four reporters from different media outlets and a handful of researchers, the group sought out ideas from other cities comparable to Charlotte. How can these projects impact development locally? How can we make Charlotte a city that seeks out innovative solutions to shape our future, while increasing opportunities to develop our own? The series examines tenant resources in Austin, a neighborhood training program in Philadelphia, community benefit models in Asheville and developer and non-profit partnerships in Nashville. Each story ties the solution to a specific project or initiative in Charlotte and in the first quarter of 2023, the Collaborative plans to host programming that brings the organizations in our reporting together with local organizations here for interactive virtual panel discussions.

These connections strengthen the local news community and through our partnership with the Knight School of Communication, are staged to provide a broad experience for future journalists through internships and freelance writing opportunities.

The collaborative has proven to be effective in Charlotte and provides a model that can be shared throughout the country. Rachel Glickhouse from News Revenue Hub recently commented that the CJC serves as a model for what can happen when a collaboration is supported and allowed to grow. While the impact of journalism can sometimes be difficult to measure precisely, the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative has increased capacity, fostered sustainability and more thoroughly investigated the issues that our community faces and how we might address them together.

The stories

Nearly 300 stories on affordable housing have been published and shared by the CJC.

These are just some of those stories. View more at charlottejournalism.org



From Brooklyn to Ballantyne: The story behind Charlotte's affordable housing crisis

by Pam Kelley, CJC June 17, 2019

The first statement story published by the CJC becomes a must-read in the community and lays the groundwork for the project ahead.

YIMBYs say yes to urban density and affordable housing

by David Boraks, WFAE September 17, 2019

As an episode for WFAE's "Finding Home," the story investigates a community in Atlanta, where residents are proponents of affordable housing.



Seattle program makes homes affordable in a pricey market. Is it a model for Charlotte?

*Lauren Lindstrom, The Charlotte Observer
by December 10, 2019*

Seattle and Charlotte have both experienced a boom in millennial populations. This story reports on the city's use of land banks to propagate new developments.

West Charlotte is rapidly gentrifying. How this nonprofit wants to make homes affordable.

*by Lauren Lindstrom, The Charlotte Observer
December 10, 2019*

The community land trust model has existed in the U.S. for 50 years but is new to Charlotte.





Family is saved from being thrown on the street thanks to community support.

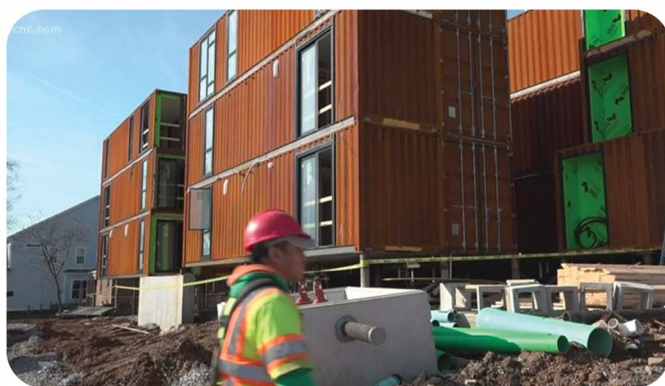
by Diego Barahona A., La Noticia
February 17, 2020

Community members step up to help when a family facing eviction in a Charlotte area community can't find an affordable alternative.

Nashville's shipping container apartments could be inspiration for Charlotte

by Nate Morabito, WCNC February 20, 2020

Curiosity led Morabito to Nashville to see how contractors were fashioning apartments from used shipping containers, inspiring developers and designers in Charlotte.



Fighting gentrification: an LGBTQ project in Houston is part of the solution to affordable housing

by Chris Rudisill, Qnotes March 19, 2021

Stories of Houston's Third Ward and Charlotte's Historic West End read nearly identical. This story looks at a project that's creating affordable housing for the city's LGBTQ community.

What could Charlotte look like with multi-family housing in single-family neighborhoods

by Lexi Wilson, WCNC March 26, 2021

As the Charlotte 2040 Comprehensive Plan nears approval, Wilson explores what a decade-old plan in Portland looks like today.



In Denver, tiny homes take on affordable housing. In Charlotte, zoning presents an obstacle.

*by Mona Dougani, Queens Univ. News Service
March 26, 2021*

As rents rise and affordable living options rapidly dwindle in Charlotte, one might think the city would welcome the idea of tiny house villages.



'Going to be the big one:' Renters, advocates brace for end of eviction moratorium

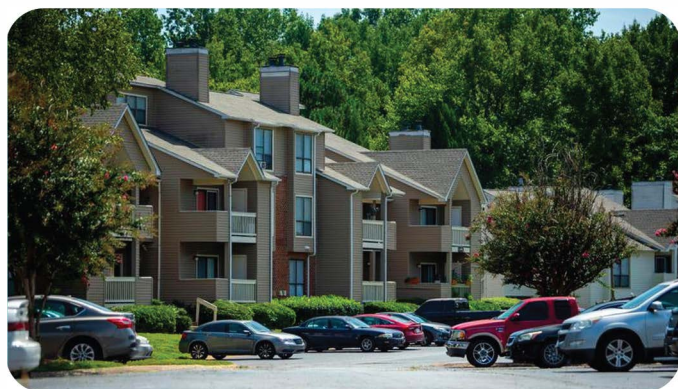
*by David Boraks, Lauren Lindstrom
and Nate Morabito, CJC July 1, 2021*

CJC reporters team up to examine more than 700 eviction orders issued between Oct. 2020 and April 2021, despite a federal moratorium.

These Charlotte ZIP codes saw high evictions, despite federal moratorium

*by Lauren Lindstrom, The Charlotte Observer
September 3, 2021*

Further examination of eviction cases reveals that evictions occurred in three of Charlotte's most vulnerable areas.



Where the historic Plato Price School once stood, Habitat for Humanity will build 39 affordable homes

by Sarafina Wright, QCity Metro September 10, 2021

More than 50 years after the school closes, dozens of alumni gathered to celebrate a symbolic groundbreaking.





With investors knocking, Charlotte HOAs are starting to change their rules

by Lauren Lindstrom, *The Charlotte Observer*
October 4, 2021

A Charlotte townhouse community's covenant to restrict corporate investors presents a solution to this growing problem.

Absent from court: Where are the tenants who miss their eviction hearings?

by Lizzie Kane, *CJC* December 1, 2021

A missed eviction hearing results in an automatic eviction for renters. A CJC reporter talks with renters to uncover the barriers they face in Mecklenburg County.



Single-family rental companies acquiring thousands of homes

by Nate Morabito, *WCNC* and David Griffith, *CJC*
February 5, 2022

The CJC analyzes sales data in five area counties, identifying thousands of homes, condos and townhomes acquired by single-family rental investment companies over the course of a year.



Charlotte church bringing affordable housing to Uptown following land donation

by Jesse Pierre, *WCNC* March 28, 2022

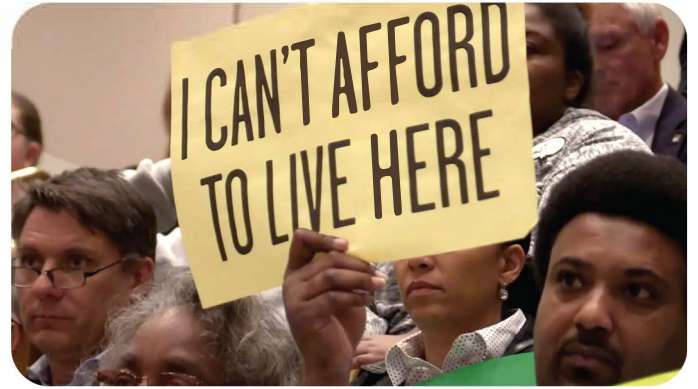
The Charlotte Housing Opportunity Investment Fund and the Black Economic Development Fund invested \$21 million into a project that inspires more solutions.



Despite record spending, Charlotte's housing crisis persists

by Glenn Burkins, QCity Metro April 5, 2022

After 20 years and more than \$218 million spent, the city of Charlotte is no closer to solving its housing crisis and members of City Council called for a "housing summit."



Charlotte churches donate land, buildings for affordable housing

by Nick de la Canal, WFAE May 31, 2022

While land may be a challenge, churches are stepping forward including Caldwell Presbyterian Church, with plans to convert an unused building into 21 apartments.

Once a Charlotte hotel, The Rise welcomes its first tenants into affordable apartments

by Charlotte Kramon, The Charlotte Observer August 4, 2022

A former hotel has been converted into an affordable apartment complex and a phased move-in for 88 individuals gets underway.



Charlotte becomes first NC city to pass protections against income discrimination

by Genna Contino, The Charlotte Observer August 24, 2022

Charlotte becomes the first city in North Carolina to implement protections against source of income discrimination.

A Solutions City



Since its launch, the CJC has provided the framework for joint reporting, creative partnerships, increased capacity and broader reach among audiences in need of important news and information.

Solving affordable housing requires a collaborative effort. You have to get out into the communities and think about the big stories that need to be told. The CJC was launched with the intention of creating stronger relationships with audiences through the practice of solutions journalism.

In our most recent collaborative project, CJC partners investigated ideas and projects from four other cities: Nashville, Philadelphia, Austin and Asheville. Journalists from four Charlotte news outlets joined forces to tell these stories.

We set out to answer whether what works in those places could be part of Charlotte's panacea -- a Solutions City, of sorts.

It is yet another example of how the CJC can deliver stories together that not one of them is able to do alone. Like other projects from the collaborative, the series includes distribu-

tion across print, digital, tv and radio, multiplying its reach across Charlotte communities.

Through this project, we also discovered the vast ways that Charlotte has also become "a solutions city" over the course of the CJC's first three years. We believe it is, in part, due to the inspiration our journalism has created.

One thing is for sure -- the conversation has definitely shifted.

**Read Solutions City at
charlottejournalism.org**

Illustration by Mariano Santillan



In the early months of the pandemic, information and unanswered questions about the new coronavirus were coming from everywhere.

"COVID seemed like this big, scary monster," said Chris Rudisill, director of the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative. The collaborative, or CJC, is a consortium of [seven] area media outlets and other institutions working to strengthen local journalism.

"We were hearing from a lot of people in the community that they almost didn't know what to listen to," he said.

CJC wanted a creative way to get relevant, reliable information to people who might not be reading or tuning into traditional news sources. They sought something that combined the visual punch of a 1950s-style monster movie poster with the integrity of solid news reporting.

Their answer? A graphic novel called **"THE PANDEMIC: Stories of COVID-19."** A joint project of CJC and the artist-led BOOM Charlotte art and performance showcase, it's a collaboration of eight area journalists and eight local artists that shares how COVID-19 has affected the lives of real people in Charlotte and beyond.

Stories of impact

This free comic book style collection launched online in October 2020. New chapters, in English and Spanish, were released every two weeks through February 2021 at charlottejournalism.org, as well as on Instagram (@clt_boom and @cltjournalism). A printed version was released in the Spring of 2021.

Each chapter tells a specific story of impact. That includes the obstacles of navigating the medical system as an undocumented immigrant, the emotional strain and isolation COVID-19 causes for a gay couple who both get sick and the trauma of losing a job and experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.

The graphic novel also looks at the community response and whether those efforts, from contact tracing to virtual hospitals, were effective.

This excerpt from "Artists, journalists collaborate on graphic novel about COVID cases in Charlotte," by Liz Rothaus, The Charlotte Observer, has been edited for clarity. Read the original story at charlottejournalism.org/graphic-novel.

Photo by Josh Henderson, The Charlotte Observer

WE T A E R C

Incubation

Nine local partners in Charlotte form a new reporting collaborative, with Solutions Journalism Network and the Knight Foundation.

“Gone are the days when a single news organization had the resources to dominate local news coverage, or when multiple news organizations would enter fierce competition to ‘win’ on the same local story”

- Nieman Lab report, March 14, 2019

Formal Debut

1 The collaborative made its formal debut on March 14, 2019. The partners unanimously agreed to combine resources toward publishing an array of stories on affordable housing, whenever possible looking beyond Charlotte for fresh ideas and strategies to report. A top priority of the CJC is to change the conversation in town on affordable housing.

Can we talk?

2 Queens University and the Foundation for the Carolinas hosted a two-day event introducing the theory and practice of SJN’s “Complicating the Narratives” initiative, which teaches journalists and community members listening and interviewing techniques.

“I Can’t Afford to Live Here”

3 On September 12, 2019, WCNC hosted a sneak preview to the 30-minute public affairs special entitled, “I Can’t Afford to Live Here,” the catch phrase the CJC uses to describe the dilemma faced by thousands of Charlotte residents. Some 70 community members gathered for the event and participated in a post-screening Q&A with a panel of CJC journalists. The special aired on September 14.

Imagine Home

4 Approximately 100 community members attended “Imagine Home: Co-Creating Solutions for Housing in Charlotte” at ImaginOn in Uptown Charlotte on October 13, 2019. A surprising number of attendees provided personal testimonies about affordable housing in Charlotte.

Historical backdrop

5 The CJC published its first story, “From Brooklyn to Ballantyne” on June 17, 2019. The story is a sobering indictment of Charlotte’s housing failures and mistakes, and a reminder that vestiges of the Jim Crow South were woven throughout the history of who lives where -- and how well -- in North Carolina’s largest city.

National stage

6 With early excitement around the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative and the “State of Collaboration” in North Carolina, the Center for Cooperative Media chose Charlotte as host city for its 2020 Collaborative Journalism Summit. Although the Summit eventually had to go virtual due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, Charlotte took “center stage” for collaboration!

New leadership

7 After developing guidelines for the group’s day-to-day procedures and formulating a basic editorial plan and calendar, longtime Charlotte journalist Neil Mara left the CJC to pursue a fellowship from the Reynolds Institute at the University of Missouri. SJN’s Michael Davis served as interim manager before the CJC hired non-profit executive and local journalist, Chris Rudisill to serve as the group’s new Project Director.

Going Virtual

8 To meet the needs of Charlotte community members during the pandemic, the CJC hosted virtual town halls and catalyzed new Spanish-language resources. Conversations touched on affordable housing, but also asked attendees how COVID-19 was impacting daily life.

PANDEM!C

10 The CJC partnered with local artists and BOOM Charlotte to present the news in the form of a comic book. The first installment was published in October 2020.

Black South Rising

9 On June 28, 2020, the CJC kicked off a two-part, virtual program to foster community discussion on racial inequities and injustice, including the connection to Charlotte’s housing history. The program included a screening of VICE’s *Black South Rising* and panel discussion.

Distribution of the graphic novel

11 After securing the organization’s first local grant through the Arts and Science Council, the CJC, in partnership with BOOM Charlotte, printed and distributed 2,500 copies of PANDEM!C: Stories of COVID-19. The project highlighted the collaboration between local reporters and local artists while expanding local audience reach through the public library and CMS Schools.

A Strategic Path forward

12 Partners of the CJC finalized a two-year strategic plan in September 2021 and formalized its core values, purpose and strategy, including the establishment of a fiscal sponsorship relationship with Queens University to launch a multi-year funding and sustainability plan.

The summit



Summit held to discuss affordable housing crisis

Local leaders, activists, journalists and more got to talk about how affordable housing not only impacts the housing market but also the core of the community.

May 12 and 13, 2022

Perhaps the CJC's most innovative measure to date was the Local News Impact Summit on affordable housing on May 12 and 13, 2022 to spotlight the city's affordable housing crisis and relevant responses to it.

The free event included an evening Community Housing Information Fair and brought together community members, city and county leadership, housing advocates, and local news organizations.

Between 25 and 30 people attended on Day 1 at a branch of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. Participants included Housing & Neighborhood Services, Community Link, Dream-Key Partners, Housing Justice Coalition CLT, and Home Again Foundation. WCNC Charlotte produced a "what home means" video. About 100 people attended the Day 2 hybrid event where sessions and panel discussions were moderated by reporters from CJC's media partners.

Post-summit survey responses showed the event was well received by participants and increased awareness of the CJC and its coverage of affordable housing. It also led to productive conversations with housing advocates and meetings with Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles and the city's leader in Housing & Neighborhood Services.

Excerpt taken from "How the Charlotte Journalism Collaborative is experimenting with events revenue," by Melba Newsome, August 23, 2022

Photo by Alvin C. Jacobs Jr., @acjphoto

Sponsorship and vendor applications are available for 2023 Summit.

Email Chris Rudisill at director@charlottejournalism.org for more information.

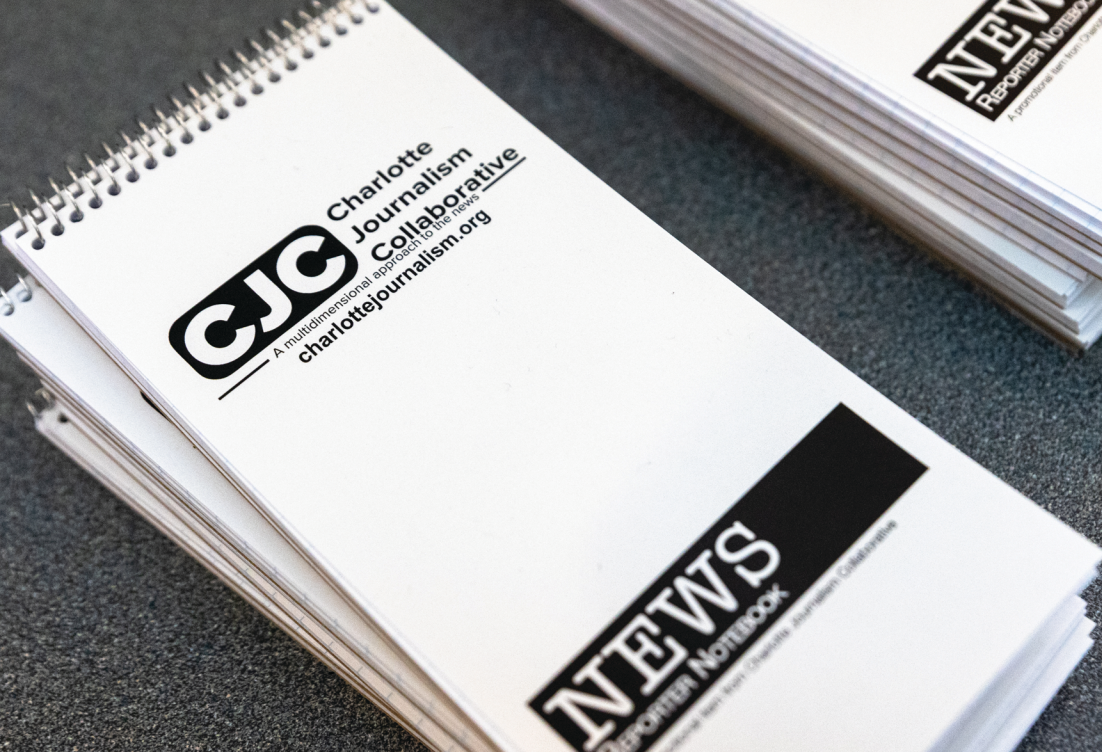


Photo by Grant Baldwin, @cltphotojourn

Who we are

Members of the collaborative include The Charlotte Observer, Carolina Public Press, La Noticia, QCity Metro, Qnotes, WCNC-Charlotte, WFAE 90.7, the Knight School of Communication at Queens University and the Queens University News Service, and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

2023

Last year, the CJC started the work toward advancing our Strategic Plan, formalizing our core values, purpose and strategy. This included the establishment of a fiscal sponsorship relationship with Queens University of Charlotte to launch a multi-year funding and sustainability plan through 2026. Since, we have grown local and regional philanthropic support and are gearing up to launch our 2023 Local News Impact Summit sponsorship opportunities. That support will continue to build on these projects in 2023:

- Collaborative journalism that is focused on investigating solutions and telling the local stories of people impacted by the affordable housing crisis in the Charlotte area;
- Convening of community leaders, housing advocates, neighborhood associations, community groups, and journalists for the 2023 Local News Impact Summit on Affordable Housing in Spring 2023;
- Further programming that builds stronger relationships between local journalists and the community, including opportunities for behind-the-scenes talks and events;
- The premier of a mini-documentary on Charlotte's dispute settlement program as a solution to keeping people housed, produced by students in the Knight School of Communication at Queens University (*in production*);
- Community one-on-one meetings with housing advocates and neighborhood leaders to develop story ideas and gain a deeper understanding of the news and information needs of Charlotte communities;
- Work with city and county leadership to promote solutions journalism as a catalyst for smart community growth and local journalism as part of the city's civic engagement and culture; and
- Capacity development of the CJC to measure impact of local journalism and grow our digital reach.

TEXT

Get involved



Read our stories.

Sign up for the weekly CJC
newsletter.

Send us your ideas.

charlottejournalism.org

    **@CLTJournalism**