

# Proof Positive

IMPACT REPORT FY 2023–2024

Our radically new approach  
to local news funding  
produced its first successes





## A Message from Our Founder

**I founded The Pivot Fund to take a radically new approach to journalism grantmaking—one rooted in trust, community, and equity. In 2024, our first cohort of grantees proved this approach works. Notably:**

- **Monica Pirela's Notivisión Georgia** became the first Hispanic outlet in Central Georgia to win a regional Emmy.
- **April Ross's BeeTV** attracted new advertisers with sports coverage to bridge LaGrange's historic Black-White divide.
- **Elizabeth Galarza's Pasa la Voz Noticias** launched a profitable event production business that sustains her growing newsroom across coastal Georgia and South Carolina.

Traditional philanthropy would have overlooked these remarkable women: Pirela, a Venezuelan immigrant broadcasting from her garage; Ross, a Black woman working to keep a local cable station afloat; and Galarza, a daughter of migrant farmworkers who began publishing hurricane safety info via Facebook.

The Pivot Fund saw something different: Journalists building a more inclusive future for local news. We found them by asking communities: *"Who do you trust for news and information—not just in a crisis, but every day?"*

**In Fiscal Years 2023–24 (July 2022–June 2024),** we made our first investments in seven Georgia-based outlets. In FY24, we renewed five of those grants and added two new grantees. Most grants ranged from \$150,000 to \$200,000—intentionally sized to unlock transformational growth. Beyond funding, we provided support across editorial, revenue, and operations.

These outlets quickly expanded their reach and proved **community trust is a powerful foundation for audience growth**. More importantly, they showed trust can be converted into revenue—by offering valued services, from cultural festivals to obituary notices, even in historically underserved markets.

In FY24 we also **scaled our research and consulting work nationally**. Building on the success of our media landscape analyses in Georgia, the Joyce, MacArthur and McKnight Foundations tapped us to map the news ecosystems in four Great Lakes states.

The challenge of building an equitable and inclusive news ecosystem across the U.S. remains enormous but now, we have a proven model to meet it. We are grateful to the foundations that share our vision and the extraordinary news entrepreneurs who show us what's possible.

**Let's build a new future for local news success—together.**

**Tracie Powell**

Founder of The Pivot Fund

# The Three Pillars of Our Work

Each of our three focus areas supports and enhances the other two.

## Research + Consulting

We provide custom research and analysis of local news landscapes and consulting to bridge gaps between funders and grassroots news outlets.

## Grantmaking + Support

We channel meaningful levels of funding and culturally competent support to grantees who have earned trust and generated revenue in historically underserved communities.

## Thought Leadership

We contribute innovative, evidence-based insights to address challenges and encourage solutions in funding local news.



# Transformational Grantmaking

The Pivot Fund's unique approach identifies and supports promising local news outlets in underserved communities. How do we do it?



1

## Community Driven Selection Process

We focus on identifying local news outlets that have built trust within their communities, uphold strong journalistic values, and generate revenue.

2

## Strategic Investment for Change

Our grants are designed to empower publishers to enact meaningful change. This includes funding that enables them to hire additional staff and expand their operational capabilities.

3

## Comprehensive Support for Growth

Publishers serving historically marginalized communities are usually business-savvy, but digital publishing is a fast-moving field. We provide culturally competent wraparound services tailored to their unique needs, enhancing their sales, fundraising, technology, management, administrative, and editorial functions.

## FY2023–2024 GRANTEES

285 South  
Baltimore Beat  
BeeTV

Davis Broadcasting +  
Courier Eco Latino  
NotiVisión Georgia

Pasa la Voz Noticias  
Tomorrow Pictures

PHOTO: APRIL ROSS OF BEETV AND TRACIE POWELL, FOUNDER OF THE PIVOT FUND

The Pivot Fund invested in its first round of grantees early in fiscal 2023, with a focus on Georgia. Read some of our grantees’ stories of growth and success in fiscal 2023–24:

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

BeeTV bridges the racial divide in LaGrange, Georgia

BeeTV founder April Ross knows about reporting the news. April did work for traditional news outlets, in production. With BEE-TV (Now TV33), she finally gets to report on camera. After breaking a major story, the owner of a local cable-access TV station in LaGrange invited her on air to do news reports—and ended up selling her the station.

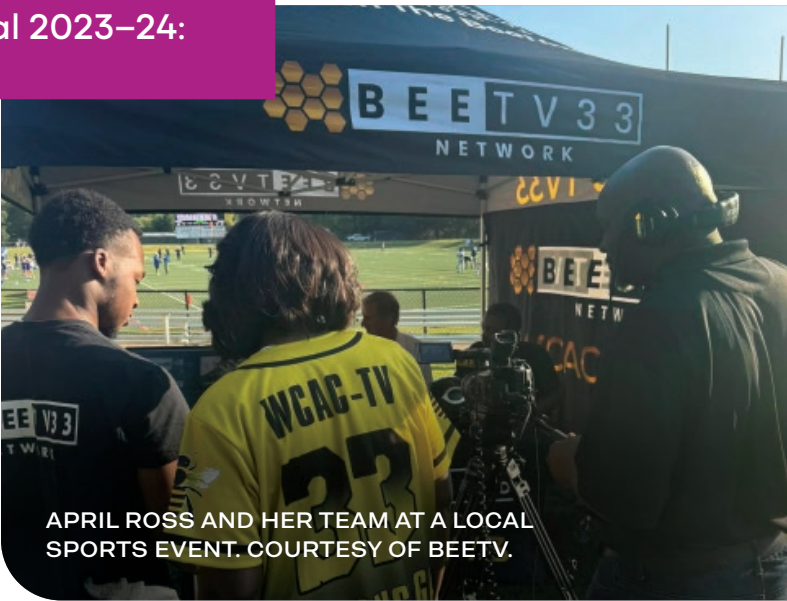
The Pivot Fund heard about Ross from both Black and white LaGrange residents and decided to invest. Ross’s first hire was a (white) sports director who helped dramatically expand coverage, with ad revenue following. BeeTV has now developed into a round-the-clock news station that covers stories that previously went unreported, including the murder of Keenan Leonard, which the NAACP highlighted as a hate crime.

BeeTV’s ubiquitous coverage of community events has drawn followers from across historically segregated LaGrange and Southwest Georgia, showing how local news can be a unifier. Ross’s focus is now on technical upgrades that will increase the channel’s impact and reach.

PIVOT FUND SUPPORT

\$150,000 FY2023

\$192,000 FY2024



APRIL ROSS AND HER TEAM AT A LOCAL SPORTS EVENT. COURTESY OF BEE TV.



APRIL ROSS IN THE COMMUNITY. COURTESY OF BEE TV.

Thank you to the Pivot Fund for allowing me to ‘BEE’ a part of the cohort. I have been able to make a bigger, faster impact in my community because of the grants I received. I was able to generate new revenue and invest in our business. We now operate the station on an automation server.”

April Ross  
Founder of BeeTV in LaGrange, GA





COMMUNITY MEMBERS HONOR PASA LA VOZ AT A LOCAL PARADE. PHOTOS ON THIS SPREAD COURTESY OF PASA LA VOZ.



PASA LA VOZ COVERAGE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY PROTESTS

## GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

### Pasa la Voz expands to profitability with Pivot Fund support

Pasa la Voz, which started as a Savannah, GA-based Facebook group sharing hurricane safety tips in Spanish, used Pivot Fund support to grow into a profitable, self-sustaining news outlet serving Spanish-speaking communities along the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina.

Publisher Elizabeth Galarza used Pivot's initial \$150,000 investment to expand the Savannah outlet's journalistic reach, acquiring the Spanish-language outlet in Charleston and merging it into Pasa la Voz Noticias. Facebook followers doubled to 28,000, while a new website attracted 862,000 monthly visitors.

Pasa la Voz journalism has connected families with disaster resources, helped factory

workers recover stolen wages, and helped the mainly immigrant residents of a mobile home park get connected to the municipal water supply.

Leveraging that trust, Galarza used Pivot funding to dive into community events, securing \$90,000 in marketing and sponsorship contracts in 2023.

"Pasa la Voz is a pillar of support and a trusted source of information for Savannah's Spanish-speaking community," says Galaraza, the daughter of migrant farmworkers. "From natural disasters to community celebrations, we ensure our audience has access to vital resources, uplifting stories, and timely advocacy."

## 862k

monthly website visitors, representing a 5x increase

## 2x

growth in Facebook followers, from 15,000 to 28,000

## \$127k

of revenue generated through 2024 El Grito festival.





2024 PASA LA VOZ DAY OF THE DEAD FESTIVAL



Pasa la Voz Noticias, as it is now known, had already demonstrated the value of community trust during the pandemic when state and local health officials bought advertising to reach Spanish-speaking community members. With Pivot funding, it dove into community events, securing \$90,000 in marketing and sponsorship contracts in 2023.

In 2024, Pasa la Voz produced the El Grito festival, which was attended by the mayor of Savannah and generated \$127,000 in revenue. Then Pasa la Voz moved into concert production, bringing in visiting artists in partnership with Enmarket Arena, a state-of-the-art, 9,500-seat venue in downtown Savannah.

Pasa la Voz projected it would generate more than \$400,000 in revenue in 2025 between El Grito, the Day of the Dead, and Enmarket events. However, immigration raids have put a chill on public events in Latino communities.

“

The support we received from the Pivot Fund was instrumental in helping us grow during a critical period, and we remain deeply appreciative of the role you played in our development. Your investment in our mission has played a crucial role in enabling us to grow, forge meaningful connections and build partnerships that have strengthened our organization.”

*Elizabeth Galarza  
Founder of Pasa la Voz Noticias  
in Savannah, GA*

#### PIVOT FUND SUPPORT

**\$140,000** FY2023

**\$200,000** FY2024

## GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

### NotiVisión Georgia earns Emmy award and attracts new funding

**NotiVisión** CEO and founder Monica Pirela was a journalist in Venezuela before settling in Warner Robins, Georgia. With husband Jay Cruz as cameraman, she started broadcasting on Facebook and Instagram, then syndicated on Spanish-language radio, sharing news with radio stations in Atlanta, Augusta, and southern Georgia. They produced segments inside their garage, which they turned into a TV studio.

With the support of the Pivot Fund, NotiVisión Georgia has grown into a trusted media outlet, hiring editor Rafael Navarro, launching innovative projects, and fostering meaningful connections with its audience and local organizations. It earned a regional Emmy Award for its investigative series on domestic violence, “Esperando un Milagro,” and attracted \$65,000 in new funding in 2024.



The Pivot Fund represents a critical turning point for NotiVisión Georgia. The growth we’ve experienced—the learning opportunities, the doors that have opened, the valuable connections made, and the knowledge we’ve gained—would not have been possible without the support of the Pivot Fund.

This support has been essential to our progress, and renewing it is vital for us to continue our mission. Without it, our ability to operate, produce meaningful content, and maintain visibility in the community would be significantly compromised.”

*Monica Pirela*  
CEO and founder of NotiVisión Georgia in Warner Robins, GA

## \$65k

in new funding attracted in 2024

#### PIVOT FUND SUPPORT

**\$150,000** FY2023

**\$150,000** FY2024

PHOTO TOP: MONICA PIRELA AND RAFAEL NAVARRO CELEBRATE THEIR EMMY AWARD. PHOTO BOTTOM: PIRELA AND NAVARRO AT A COMMUNITY EVENT. PHOTOS COURTESY OF NOTIVISIÓN GEORGIA. PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE: WANE HALES OF COURIER ECO LATINO.





## GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

### Davis Broadcasting and Courier Eco Latino create new revenue streams

**Davis Broadcasting**, Georgia's largest Black-owned radio network, has served African American and Hispanic audiences in Columbus and Atlanta for 36 years with music, culture, community news, and sports.

**The Courier Eco Latino**, a bilingual newspaper for Columbus' African American and Latino communities, shifted to a one-man, online-only operation during the pandemic. President/Publisher Wane Hailes adapted by launching CEL TV on YouTube and partnering with Davis Broadcasting on political events.

The Pivot Fund's investment deepened this collaboration and sparked major growth. Davis Broadcasting hired a digital advertising director who generated more than \$100,000 in his first six months, while teaching dozens of small businesses how to use digital ads effectively.

With Pivot Fund support, Courier Eco Latino hired a new editor-in-chief, launched a new website and newsletter, and built an obituary platform for Columbus families, projected to generate \$60,000-\$90,000 per year.

Ultimately, Davis did not embrace its new digital business line, and Courier Eco Latino continued alone the next year as a Pivot grantee. But Hailes continues to host a twice-weekly newscast on Davis airwaves.

## \$100k+

in new revenue generated by newly hired digital advertising director in his first six months



Our journey from a small operation to a thriving digital platform was catalyzed by the incredible impact of the Pivot Fund. Initially, our business was a one-person operation, driven by passion but limited by resources. However, with the support of the fund, we expanded our team to include two dedicated editors and eight talented freelance writers. This expansion not only enhanced our capacity to produce high-quality content but also allowed us to manage an increasing workload more efficiently."

*Wane Hailes  
President / Publisher of Courier Eco Latino  
in Columbus and Atlanta, Georgia*

#### PIVOT FUND SUPPORT

**\$276,500\*** FY2023

**\$75,000\*** FY2024

*The Pivot Fund's support in FY2023 included both Davis Broadcasting and Courier Eco Latino. In FY2024 it included Courier Eco Latino only.*



We need to better understand how people consume news, and the Pivot Fund has a unique lens to help with that. By asking communities of color who they trust for their news and information, they can surface important players that we might miss because they don't always look like traditional news publications."

*Hugh Dellios*  
Journalism Program Manager  
The Joyce Foundation





# Research + Consulting

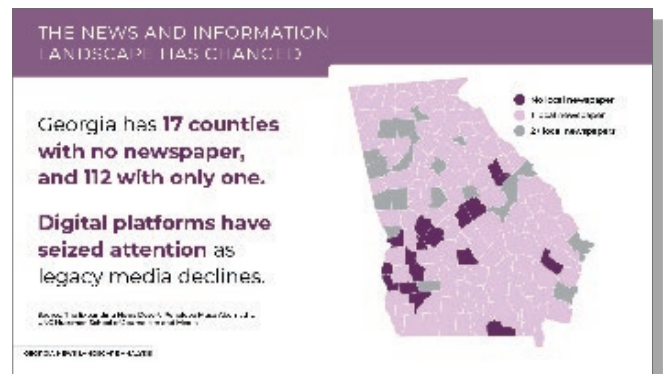
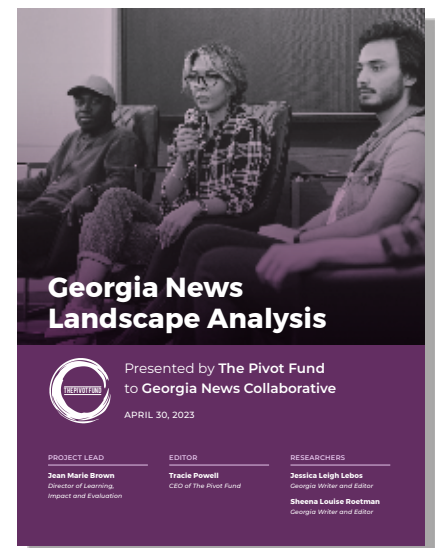
Consulting revenue grew to \$1,005,000 in fiscal 2024 from \$54,000 in fiscal 2023 as the MacArthur, McKnight and Joyce Foundations engaged The Pivot Fund to conduct local news landscape analyses in four Great Lakes states. The first of those reports was published in late 2024, after the end of our fiscal year, with the others landing in 2025.

In FY2024, we published an analysis of the Georgia news landscape for the Georgia News Collaborative. This built on the first report we did, in 2022, which created a foundation for our first round of grants and a template for our future state-level news landscape reports.

## Georgia News Landscape Analysis

As Georgia becomes more diverse, local news has never been more important. Yet Georgia's local news landscape is unstable, incomplete, and unequal. Legacy media is struggling with business challenges and trust issues. This report analyzes the landscape and recommends listening to the innovators who are meeting the information needs of diverse citizens in our multicultural democracy. Download it here:

[bit.ly/georgia-news-landscape-report](https://bit.ly/georgia-news-landscape-report)



# Thought Leadership

The Pivot Fund's goal of channeling \$500 million to local news outlets in historically marginalized and underserved communities is a call to collective action, not something to do alone. Founder Tracie Powell writes and speaks extensively about how journalism funders can build the new, inclusive news and information landscape that communities crave – and avoid inadvertently recreating the inequities of old.

PUBLISHED JULY 2022–JUNE 2024

## Original Research

**Architects of Necessity: Learning from BIPOC publishers how to make journalism philanthropy more effective**

*International Society for Online Journalism (ISOJ) 9/5/2023*

**"These dollars are not reaching BIPOC newsrooms"**

*Tracie Powell and Meredith Clark  
NiemanLab 9/25/2023*

**Georgia News Landscape Analysis**

*The Pivot Fund 10/26/2023*

**How to fund and sustain news outlets created by and for people of color: Insights from The Pivot Fund podcast**

*The Journalist's Resource 5/10/2022*

## Speeches

**2023 Media ChangeMaker of the Year**

*Mercer University Center for Collaborative Journalism 2/3/2023*

**The Nuts and Bolts of Media Grantmaking**

*Media Impact Funders 10/24/2023*

**Multicultural Media & Correspondents Association honors "2024 Sheroges in Media"**

*BIPOC XChange Portal 4/28/2024*

## Panels + Podcasts

**Can Local News Fix the Crisis in Democracy?**

*GMBH 10/4/2023*

**Meet the Baltimore Sun's other new owner, Black entrepreneur Armstrong Williams**

*The Pivot Fund Pod 3/21/2024*



## Op-eds

**Upstart News Outlets are Leading a Media Revolution in Communities of Color. Grant Makers Should Take Notice.**

*Chronicle of Philanthropy 9/13/2022*

**Dear Sunnylands, Make More Room for BIPOC, LGBTQ, and Rural Media Leaders at the Table**

*Nieman Reports 2/17/2023*

**Opinion | In a new era of journalism, philanthropy must pivot**

*Poynter 9/7/2023*

**The year we see the future of local news won't look like its past**

*Nieman Lab 12/2023*

**Opinion | What a spat over non-profits in Baltimore reveals about support of Black-led newsrooms**

*Poynter. 2/6/2024*

**'Fair Fight' and Beyond: As Racial Reckoning Funds Run Dry, Black Nonprofits Brace for Impact**

*Capital B 2/26/2024*

**Water for the Desert**

*PBS 3/5/2024*

PHOTO: PIVOT FUND FOUNDER TRACIE POWELL IS AN MMCA "SHEROES IN MEDIA" 2024 HONOREE

## Press + Profiles

**Tracie Powell, the Badass Fighter**

*1/22/24 Funtimes*

**Tracie Powell: A beacon for BIPOC journalism**

*Afro News 4/22/2024*

**Founder of The Pivot Fund on a mission to amplify BIPOC community-based news**

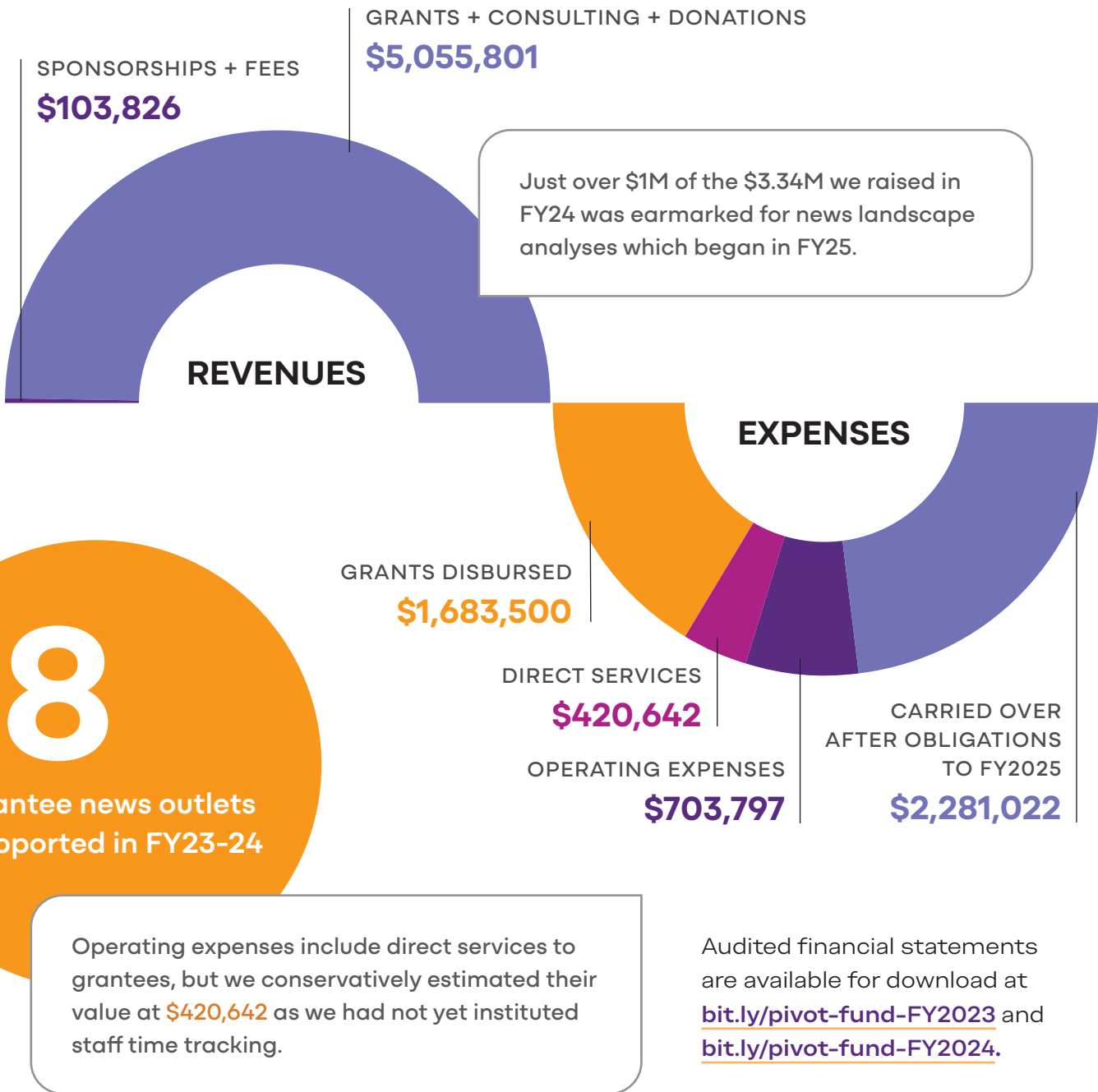
*PBS/WABE 5/31/2024*

**With Midwest expansion, the Pivot Fund tries to put grassroots news sources on philanthropy's radar**

*NiemanLab 3/5/2024*



# FY2023–2024 Financials



**\$2.1M**

in grant funding and direct services contributed to grantees in FY23–24

**87%**

of Pivot Fund grants to its grantees are unrestricted

**\$2.4M**

carries over to FY25 for grantmaking, services, research and consulting



WE START BY LISTENING

“Where do you find news and information you trust?”

## Our People

### Key Staff

FY 2023–2024

**Tracie Powell**

*CEO and Founder*

**Rodney Mahone**

*Managing Director*

**Jean Marie Brown**

*Director of Research, Learning,  
and Evaluation*

### Founding Board of Directors

**Jamaal Glenn**

*Schmidt Futures*

**Alberto B. Mendoza**

*John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships  
at Stanford University*

**Tracie Powell**

*Pivot Fund CEO*

PHOTO: PIVOT FUND FOUNDER TRACIE POWELL  
PRESENTING AT THE 2023 JOURNALISM  
FUNDERS GATHERING

### Founding Advisors

CURRENT AFFILIATIONS

**Fran Scarlett**

*Business Strategist, Coach and Consultant*

**Sewell Chan**

*USC Annenberg School  
Center for Communications*

**Marisol Bello**

*Housing Narrative Lab*

**Pamela Silas**

*Center for Native American  
and Indigenous Research  
at Northwestern University*

**Jennifer Kho**

*Chicago Sun-Times*

For current staff, board and advisors  
please visit **[thepivotfund.org](https://thepivotfund.org)**

# FY2023–2024 Partners

Special thanks to the organizations and individuals that have supported The Pivot Fund through its first few years and beyond.

Anne Avis

Atticus Foundation

Democracy Fund  
*(Founding Supporter)*

Heising-Simons Foundation  
*(Founding Supporter)*

Joyce Foundation

JPB Foundation

Klarman Family Foundation

Lumina Foundation

MacArthur Foundation

McKnight Foundation

New Profit, Inc.

Robert Wood  
Johnson Foundation

Rural Democracy Initiative

Tides Foundation

WES Mariam Assefa

# We're just getting started.

Join us to build a more authentic, inclusive news ecosystem that unites communities and fosters a resilient democracy.

**[thepivotfund.org](https://thepivotfund.org)**



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FRONT COVER PHOTO: JANELLE WILLIAMS AND  
KENYA WHITE IN THE STUDIO AT DAVIS BROADCASTING.  
PHOTO BY DAVIS BROADCASTING.