



# Supporting Newsrooms Through College Volunteerism

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# Introduction



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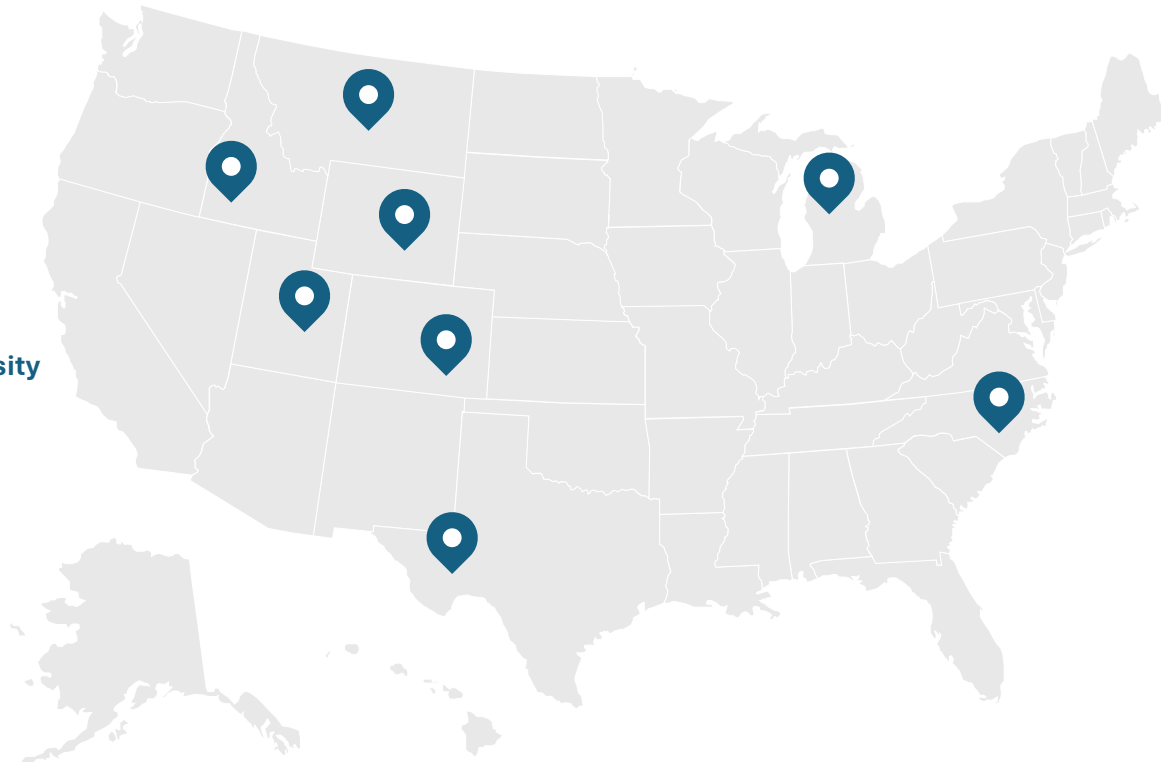
# News deserts exist in abundance across the US

## Continent

North America

## News deserts, highest density

Washington, Nevada, Utah,  
Wyoming, Colorado, Texas,  
Michigan, North Carolina

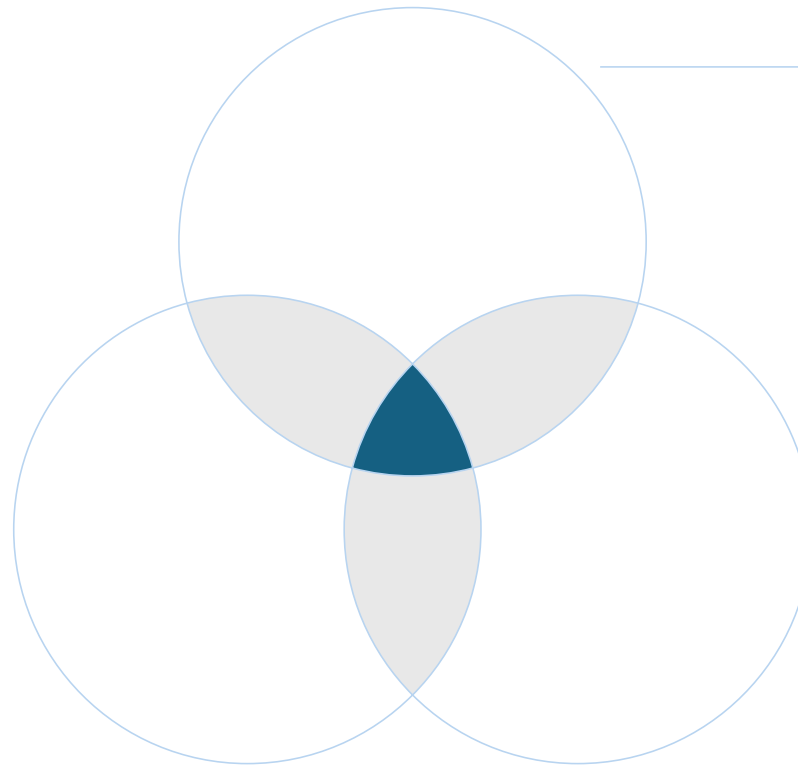


Keywords: maps

# Primary Causes of News Deserts

## Institutional/Educational Gaps

- Schools cutting journalism programs
- **Lack of trained advisors or mentors**
- Limited student newsroom funding
- Few pipelines for young reporters



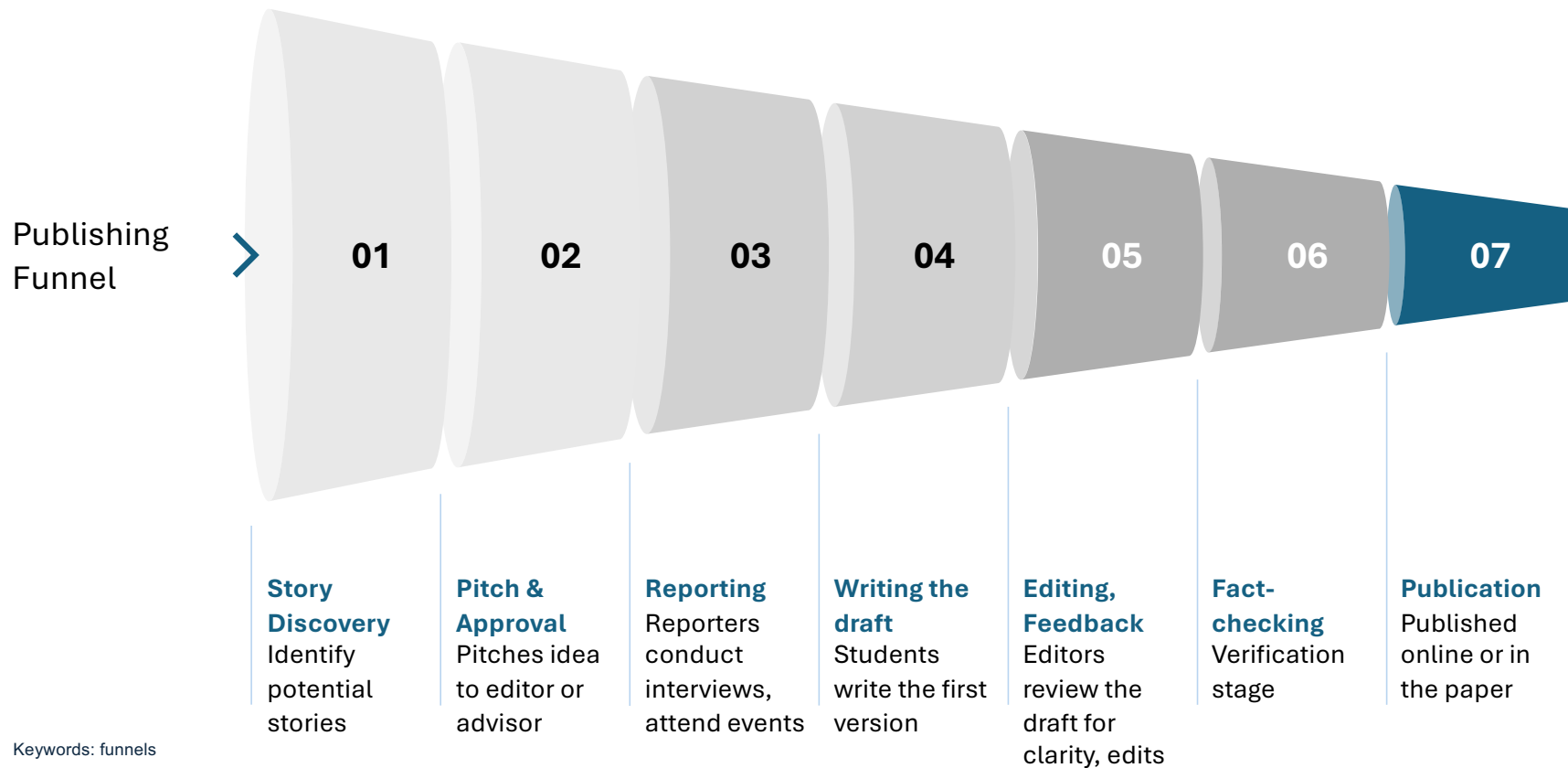
## Economics Pressure

- Collapse of print advertising revenue
- Local businesses shifting ads
- Rising printing/distribution costs
- Media consolidation

## Community & Access Barriers

- Rural or underserved communities with fewer resources
- Low media literacy or engagement
- Language barriers
- **Limited professional/advice backed by experience**

# The lifecycle of a journalism article, high school



# An interesting white paper out of USC Annenberg

Local news coverage is declining

Implication: New models are needed to produce journalism

Student journalists represent an underutilized reporting force

Implication: Students can contribute to local news ecosystems if properly trained

Mentorship is critical for sustainable student journalism

Implication: Mentorship structures are essential to scaling student journalism

Retired journalists are an untapped resource

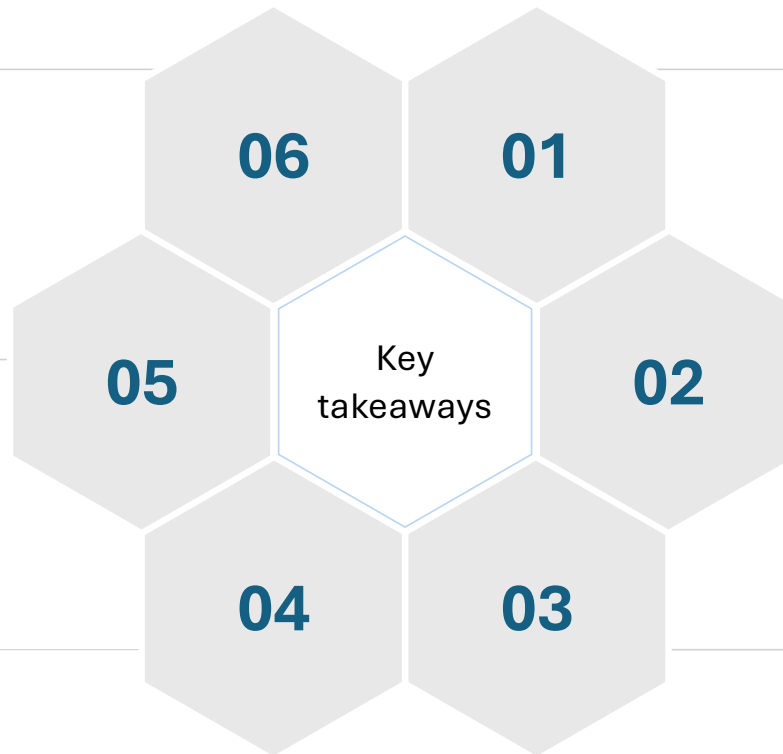
Implication: there is a large pool of journalism talent that is currently underutilized

Student newsrooms help fill news deserts

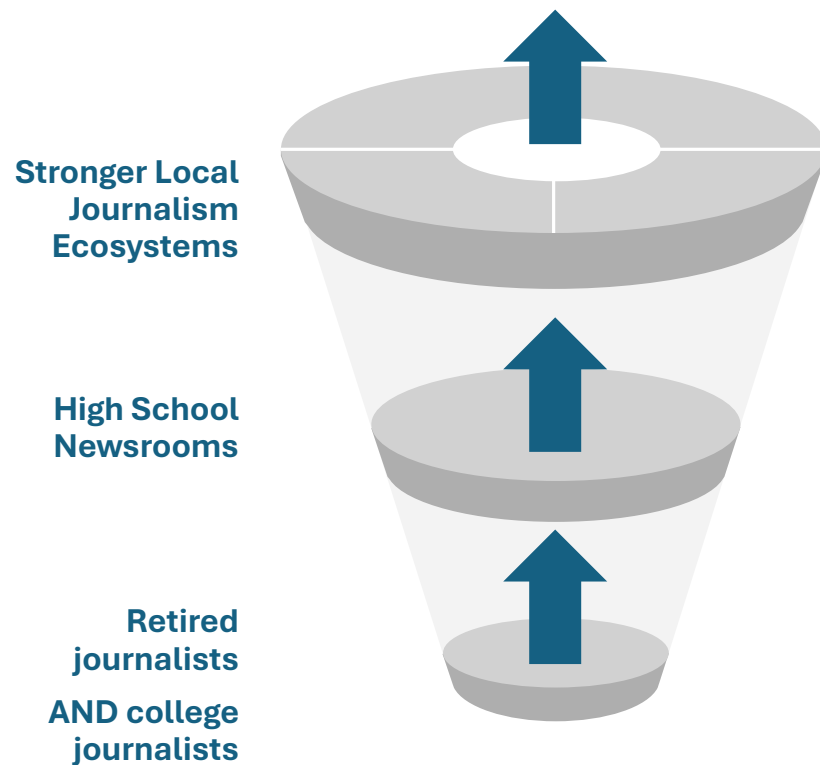
Implication: Student journalism can play a real civic role

Partnerships between institutions are key

Implication: Collaboration between schools, community institutions, etc.. Are key for long-term success



# Expanding the model provided by Annenberg



## Expanding local coverage

When supported by experienced mentors and near-peer college journalists, student newsrooms can help address gaps in local coverage, thus ameliorating news deserts.

## Strengthening student newsrooms

With mentorship and editorial support, high school student journalists can produce meaningful coverage of their schools and communities.

## Expanding the mentorship pool

Expanding the pool from retired journalists to college reporters is key. College reporters already operate within active newsrooms and are built into pre-existing cohorts of volunteer groups.

# Practicing what I preach

## Recruit Volunteers

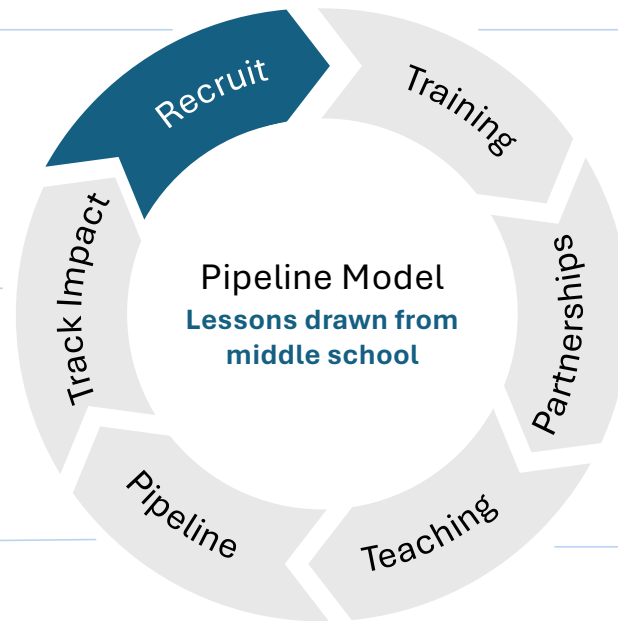
Gathered a group of high school journalists interested in volunteering and mentoring younger students

## Tracking Impact

Measure participation and final outcome

## Strengthen the Pipeline

As 8<sup>th</sup> grade students move to high school, they are more likely to join school newspapers and journalism programs



## Train volunteers

Familiarize the volunteer team with practical journalism volunteerism

## Build School Partnerships

Reach out to district middle schools to establish a journalism program targeting 8<sup>th</sup> grade students

## Teaching journalism

High school volunteers introduce reporting, interviewing, and media literacy to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in volunteer-based lessons

# Redefining journalism as a civic service



## Strengthens Local News Ecosystems

Competent student journalists make for communities with more access to reliable local information and coverage



## Next Generation of journalists

**Near-peer mentorship** helps younger students develop reporting skills earlier and stronger, creating a more diverse journalism pipeline



## Expands Civic Engagement

Treating journalism as a form of civic service encourage college students to see reporting as a way to contribute to their communities and strengthen democracy



## Creates Support for Student Newsrooms

College volunteer cohorts provide a sustainable model for mentorship that can expand support for under-resourced publications



## Makes Journalism Education More Accessible

Volunteer mentorship helps bring journalism education to schools that lack funding



## Cross-Generational Learning

Collaboration between college and high school students provides a window into the lives high school students could envision themselves in as journalists

Questions?

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