The world needs journalists and journalism now more than ever.

In 2023, the Institute took great steps to serve as many journalists as possible with what they needed, when they needed it. In her first year as Executive Director, Beth Francesco and her staff grew the Institute’s reach 25 percent, to 9,443 individuals across the U.S. and beyond. Those journalists have come to rely on the Institute’s online training programs, daily journalism newsletter, career support and skill-building opportunities.

In the pages of this annual report, you’ll learn how the Institute has ramped up programming to champion essential reporting and writing skills, beat-specific reporting, and press freedom issues.

Our efforts to spotlight and amplify best practices in our industry shine in our programs and published resources. And we’re committed, with the National Press Club, to removing press freedom barriers affecting journalists in the U.S. and around the globe.

Your support this year made our team’s work possible. As we look ahead to what, no doubt, will be an unpredictable 2024, we hope we can continue to count on you.

Together, we’re powering journalism in the public interest.
Our Mission

The National Press Club Journalism Institute promotes an engaged global citizenry through an independent and free press, and equips journalists with skills and standards to inform the public in ways that inspire a more representative democracy. As the nonprofit affiliate of the National Press Club, the Institute powers journalism in the public interest.

The Institute accomplished this mission in 2023 by:

- Offering 17 virtual and in-person public programs designed to increase journalists’ well-being and enhance the quality of their work, in addition to partnering with newsrooms to deliver custom, needs-based training
- Serving a global community of more than 4,800 subscriber journalists and media leaders through our afternoon industry newsletter
- Administering $30,000 in scholarships for student journalists at the high school, college, and graduate level, with an emphasis on students from underrepresented backgrounds
- And, with the National Press Club, advocating for unjustly detained journalists and those facing significant safety and other barriers to their newsgathering efforts

The Institute is a 501(c)(3) educational organization and the nonprofit affiliate of the National Press Club (Tax ID 52-1750908).

2023 Board of Directors

President: Gil Klein, past National Press Club president, University of Oklahoma
Treasurer: Paul Merrion, former Crain’s Washington Bureau
Secretary: Andrea Edney, past National Press Club president

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- Danielle Coffey, News Media Alliance
- Sam Feist, CNN
- Mike Freedman, past National Press Club president (deceased)
- Mara Gassmann, First Amendment attorney
- Doug Harbrect, past National Press Club president
- Tom Huang, The Dallas Morning News
- Rick Hutzell, Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation
- Jen Judson, past National Press Club president, Defense News
- Anita Kumar, POLITICO
- Paul Minehart, Syngenta
- Eileen O’Reilly, 2023 National Press Club President, Axios
- Mizell Stewart III, Kent State University Emerging Leaders, LLC
- Emily Wilkins, 2024 National Press Club President, CNBC

Staff:
- Beth Francesco, Executive Director
- Bara Vaida, Director of Training
- Holly Butcher Grant, Operations Manager
- Mitch Harle, Development Manager
2023 Programs

Journalists from around the world advanced their skills and careers through the Institute’s 2023 programming on techniques for newsgathering, writing, and ethical ways to use artificial intelligence in reporting.

Guest experts highlighted press freedom trends and provided tips for journalists’ safety while working. They supplied insight on timely topics including vaccines, covering a government shutdown, and reporting on campaign finance issues. For the first time since March 2020, the Institute also hosted in-person training, including programs on using information databases and building a freelance business.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID

“I appreciate the opportunity to gain wisdom directly from experts, as well as the chance to get to experience what these professionals are like as actual people. Well done, very enjoyable and informational!”

“I wish I’d had the breadth of this information while working as a journalist. It would’ve added more depth to my reporting and made my searches for data/information easier and more efficient.”

“Because of this program, I will continue efforts to diversify my newsroom and think more about centering stories from the perspective of who’s affected.”

17 free, public trainings

3,365 Program registrations

2,676 first-time participants

90% survey respondents who said programs met or exceed expectations

94% survey respondents who said their work would change because of attending an Institute program

50 instructors - 62% identify as women, and 40% from underrepresented backgrounds
... Having three panels all with differing POVs was helpful, insightful for someone new or veteran to the field. ... LOVED LOVED LOVED the diversity of the speakers - age and race and culture. I felt seen as a Black woman.”
The Latest is the Institute’s afternoon industry newsletter that reaches nearly 5,000 reporters, editors, news leaders, and communication professionals Mondays through Thursdays.

In addition to original reporting on critical issues that journalists face, such as creating accessible journalism, overcoming barriers to public records and information, covering natural disasters, and launching news products, The Latest features:

- Daily craft advice on reporting, writing, and editing
- Career guidance for job-seekers and employers
- Timely tip sheets, webinars, and other resources

156 editions of The Latest in 2023

4,885 subscribers to The Latest

52% average daily open rate for The Latest
“The newsletter is an immensely valuable tool for all journalists at any stage of their career.”

“It’s even more vital now that your newsletter draws together so many important strands of news for our attention, and on a daily basis. Many thanks to you for your sterling efforts!”

“Great training and information. Keeping the craft professional!”

“I read many similar summaries by other organizations, and in my opinion, the Institute’s is the best!”

“Love NPCJI. The newsletter is among the best in a crowded space and one of my must-ish must-reads. Many compliments!”

‘Be prepared’: CBS News correspondent on hallway interviews, cultivating sources

Covering the tumultuous House of Representatives Speaker race has been a test of endurance for D.C.’s congressional reporters. And heading into a presidential election year, political coverage will continue to dominate headlines.

The Institute reached out to Nikole Killion, congressional correspondent at CBS News, to learn more about her reporting process, how to build connections on Capitol Hill, and advice for emerging journalists hoping to break into political reporting.

Walk us through your strategy for hallway interviews. What questions do you ask to get beyond a politician’s spin?

MONTHLY UPDATES

The Institute shares its monthly newsletter to more than 5,300 subscribers interested in training, networking events, scholarship opportunities, and press freedom efforts.

5,365 subscribers to monthly newsletter

47% average open rate for the monthly newsletter

Advertise in our newsletters: Email institute@press.org for details.
The Institute promotes an independent and free press to ensure the public has full access to information that affects their lives. With dedicated volunteers and the National Press Club, we hold accountable those who restrict journalists in their pursuit of the truth. We help journalists obtain the tools to break barriers to a free press, and we salute journalists who overcome obstacles to report the news.

2023 JOHN AUBUCHON PRESS FREEDOM AWARD HONOREES

The Aubuchon Press Freedom Award is given each year to honorees who bravely push to disclose the truth in trying circumstances.

Evan Gershkovich, Domestic honoree
Gershkovich is a reporter for The Wall Street Journal, where he covers Russia, Ukraine, and the former Soviet Union. In March 2023, he was arrested in Russia while on a reporting trip and accused of espionage, making him the first American journalist detained in Russia on such charges since the Cold War. The Journal vehemently denies the allegations. President Biden and news organizations worldwide have joined the Journal in calling for Gershkovich’s immediate release.

Iranian journalists Niloo far Hamedi and Elaheh Mohammadi, International honorees
Hamedi and Mohammadi were among the first journalists to report on the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini in September 2022. Asmini’s death set off some of the largest demonstrations in Iran in years, and Hamedi and Mohammadi’s coverage led to their unjust arrest. After being detained for 13 months, both women were sentenced in October to more than a dozen years in prison for what we know to be false charges of national security conspiracy and collaborating with the United States.

“Every day, I’m struck by the incredible courage and unrelenting determination of journalists to deliver the unbiased truth to the public. As Evan remains in prison, we are continually amazed by the solidarity shown by news organizations and journalists worldwide for one of their own.”
Danielle Gershkovich, Evan’s sister

74
Statements condemning attacks on journalists and barriers to a free press, issued with the National Press Club

13
Amicus briefs and letters to support press freedom cases the Institute joined in 2023
Fifteen years after coming to the U.S. legally and seeking refuge, Mexican journalist Emilio Gutiérrez Soto received word September 2023 that the Board of Immigration Appeals ruled him eligible for asylum.

In a five-page opinion sent to Gutiérrez’s lawyer, Eduardo Beckett, the BIA ruled that an El Paso immigration judge’s two decisions against Gutiérrez were “clearly erroneous.”

“It has been a long journey, and these past 15 years have been difficult. But today, justice has won,” Gutiérrez, 60, said from Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he now resides. He was 45 when he fled Ascensión, Chihuahua, Mexico, after a confidential source told him that his reporting on the military’s efforts to shake down locals had made him a marked man. In Mexico, journalists are routinely targeted by drug cartels and corrupt government officials.

The ruling is a victory for the National Press Club, the Institute, and numerous press freedom organizations. The Press Club and Institute became involved in the Gutiérrez case six years ago, after inviting him to accept the John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award on behalf of journalists in Mexico.

“I hope that my case will shine a light on the need to protect those journalists in Mexico and around the world who are working and risking their lives to tell the truth.”

Emilio Gutiérrez Soto

GUTIÉRREZ SOTO RULED ELIGIBLE FOR ASYLUM

FIGHT CONTINUES TO #BringAustinHome

Aug. 14, 2023, marked 11 years since award-winning photojournalist Austin Tice was abducted in Syria. Tice, a Georgetown graduate, law student, and Marine Corps veteran, was detained near Damascus in 2012 while covering escalating conflict in the region.

The National Press Club and the Institute have worked closely with the Tice family advocating for Austin’s swift and safe release. The Club hosted several press conferences and discussions on Austin’s case in 2023, and the Institute joined forces during World Press Freedom Week on an “Action for Austin Day.”

On Nov. 18, the third Run For Austin Virtual 5K raised further awareness and public support for Tice. Runners showed their support across 14 states, and the event raised more than $7,000 to help support the Tice family’s effort to bring him home.

Tice was the 2015 recipient of the John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award. An exhibit including his notebooks, awards, and well-worn Chuck Taylors is available to view at the Eric Friedheim National Journalism Library overseen by the Institute.
KRISten WelKer Honored with Fourth estate Award

The 2023 Fourth Estate Award Gala took place in the National Press Club ballroom on Nov. 28, 2023, bringing together journalists, communicators, and supporters from around the world to recognize excellence in a year of extraordinary challenges.

In addition to Welker, the evening honored:

- **Evan Gershkovich**, Wall Street Journal reporter, John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award (domestic)
- Iranian journalists **Niloofar Hamedi** and **Elaheh Mohammadi**, John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award (international)
- **Kat Stafford**, Reuters’ global race and justice editor, Neil and Susan Sheehan Award for Investigative Journalism

The gala is the primary fundraiser supporting the National Press Club Journalism Institute. With support from ticketholders and generous sponsors, the Institute raised just over $200,000.

“We are confronting a crisis of trust in our institutions, in government, and yes, in media as well. And so it has never been more important to revitalize the spirit of the Fourth Estate, to hold those in power to account and those who seek positions of power to account for their words and their actions, to respect our readers, our viewers, our listeners enough to know that we don’t need to shield them from the complexities of the world in which we live.”

Kristen Welker, “Meet the Press” moderator and 2023 Fourth Estate Award honoree
The Institute has expanded its training portfolio to include designing programs for news and communications organizations that meet their specific professional development needs.

The Institute’s clients grew in 2023, as did the topics covered:
- Editing for Excellence: Helping writers grow
- Enterprise Journalism: Strengthening a story’s impact
- Coaching and Fixing: How editors help writers (even on deadline)
- Writing tools for communicators
- Mastering the Pitch: PR
- Tackling dis- and misinformation as leaders

Contact Executive Director Beth Francesco to schedule a custom training.

PRESS VS. POLITICIANS SPELLING BEE

A Washington, D.C., favorite, the 2023 ‘Press vs. Politicians’ Spelling Bee took place Sept. 20, 2023, and brought much B-U-Z-Z to the National Press Club and Institute. The Bee, a fundraiser for the Institute, pitted five members of Congress against five D.C. journalists in a spelling battle that left the audience in stitches. The journalists triumphed over lawmakers in the Bee, with Amy Wang of The Washington Post winning for a second consecutive year.

“...We had an incredible time attending and supporting this unique competition, where the press and politicians battled it out with words, all in good spirits! Even better, part of the proceeds from this event were directed towards the Journalism Institute, an organization dedicated to defending press freedom worldwide. ...Here’s to a future where the press continues to thrive - and we will be returning as a sponsor in 2024!”

Jeanot Tapp, Vice President, Client Services for Publir
In classrooms and labs throughout the country, student journalists are developing the skills and passion to deliver news to their communities. In 2023, the Institute expanded its work supporting the future of journalism through special programs, scholarship opportunities, and career preparation.

“I am so grateful to receive this honor from the National Press Club. ... It is mind-blowing to me that this kid from St. Louis is interning with the team at NBC’s “Andrea Mitchell Reports” in Washington D.C. Journalism is truly a passion for me, and this opportunity was made possible thanks to the generosity and support of the National Press Club/Journalism Institute. Words cannot express how appreciative I am, and I cannot wait to take the next step of my career in D.C.”

Komlavi Adissem, Spring 2023 Lewis Scholarship recipient

INSTITUTE HOSTS NATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP CENTER STUDENTS

More than 70 high school seniors aspiring to careers related to journalism toured the National Press Club in June and spent part of their day discussing how to combat mis- and disinformation. Joining as part of their National Student Leadership Center summer program, the students learned about their own susceptibility to “fake news” before exploring their roles in stopping the spread of misinformation in their journalism and in their personal lives.
The National Press Club Journalism Institute relies on a variety of support to provide top-quality programming and experiences for journalists and the public they serve. Grants from foundations, as well as corporate sponsorships, workshop fees, and individual donors, helped sustain and expand our work in 2023. Investment income supplements our operations. Thanks to our variety of generous supporters, the Institute met its fundraising goals in 2023.

**Fiscal Responsibility**

Percentages are based on a 2022 audit by Jones, Maresca & McQuade, PA, the most recent available audited figures.

**Operating Funds**

- **6.4%** Interest & dividends
- **3.4%** Educational programs & member services
- **5.1%** Management & general
- **3%** Fundraising
- **11.5%** Special events
- **11.5%** Contributions
- **1.4%** Other revenue
- **.5%** In-kind contributions
- **65.3%** Stock donation
- **3.2%** Educational programs
- **86.7%** Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation **

**Expenses**

- **6.4%** Interest & dividends
- **3.4%** Educational programs & member services
- **5.1%** Management & general
- **3%** Fundraising
- **11.5%** Special events
- **11.5%** Contributions
- **1.4%** Other revenue
- **.5%** In-kind contributions
- **65.3%** Stock donation
- **3.2%** Educational programs

**Until fall 2022, the Institute was the fiscal sponsor of the now independent FJMF.**

**148** Total number of donors to general operating fund

**79** Number of first-time donors to the general operating fund

**32** Number of fundraising event sponsors
Thank you to the generous donors who supported the Institute’s programs, events, and operational work in 2023.

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David Wharton
Laura Zasoski
Kate Zaykowsk
Collaboration is critical to any organization’s success. In 2023, the Institute partnered with outstanding organizations and sponsors to plan innovative programming and to fight for press freedom. We closely value these relationships.
CONTACT US

For more about the Institute’s mission and impact, press freedom work and special initiatives:

Beth Francesco, executive director, bfrancesco@press.org

For more on how to financially support the Institute’s growing body of work:

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For information about the Institute’s professional development and training programs:

Bara Vaida, director of training, bvaida@press.org

For inquiries related to our newsletters, scholarships, and library services:

Holly Butcher Grant, operations manager, hgrant@press.org

SUPPORT OUR WORK

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