

THE  CITY

**ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020**

Our stories are driven by people and data, allowing us to capture the spirit and the demands of a vibrant, world-class city brimming with local stories.



Dear New Yorkers,

We're proud to present THE CITY's first-ever annual report, which brings together the highlights of our extraordinary first year. THE CITY debuted on April 3, 2019, with a clear and crucial mission: to serve the people of New York with hard-hitting, high-impact reporting. One-plus year and more than 1,200 stories later, we've established ourselves as New York's go-to news source, seeking accountability — and generating action.

We have made our presence known across the city, from the streets of the five boroughs to the corridors of power in City Hall and Albany. We have dominated the city's most critical beats, from housing to justice to fiscal responsibility to transportation. Our stories are driven by people and data, allowing us to capture the spirit and the demands of a vibrant, world-class city brimming with local stories.

When we launched last April, our goal, in part, was to lay the groundwork for a new kind of independent, nonpartisan local news outlet. We wanted to lead not only through our journalism,

but by creating a national model for the kind of professionally run, financially sustainable news operation our democracy requires to survive. What we didn't realize then was that we were also creating a foundation that would allow us to serve our city during one of the most challenging periods in modern history.

As the dual diseases of COVID-19 and systemic racism rose to the forefront of New York's consciousness, THE CITY's response became our proof of concept: no local news operation was in a better position to cover these crises. Our focus on accessible, persistent, and results-driven comprehensive coverage took our mission — and our traffic — to new heights.

As we move into a “new normal,” there is no news organization more capable of reporting on the recovery and transformation of New York than THE CITY. We're on the front lines of social, political, and fiscal debates, providing a critical forum for ideas and accountability. We're here to cover the most important election in decades: the 2021 race for mayor and other major city offices. Our trustworthy reporting and rapidly growing readership ensure that both policymakers and voters have accurate information on the most vital issues facing the city.

Most importantly, with every story, we're out to show that, even as other media outlets reduce local coverage, we'll always be here, looking out for the people of New York.

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'John Wotowicz' and the second is 'Jere Hester'.

*John Wotowicz, Publisher,
and Jere Hester, Editor in Chief*



WHO WE ARE

[THE CITY](#) launched in April 2019 as an independent, nonprofit, digital news platform dedicated to hard-hitting reporting. We serve the people of New York by producing consistent, high-quality, and high-impact accountability reporting. Our work is free to all and does not require a subscription. Instead of charging for access, we rely on the support of members, donors, and sponsors.

In a little over a year, THE CITY has managed to achieve a level of success that takes some news institutions years to accomplish.



THE CITY was created in response to a crisis — despite its status as one of the major media capitals of the world, New York City has become one of the country’s worst news deserts. As local news platforms shut down or are dramatically downsized, the impact on broad, consistent reporting on local affairs in the nation’s largest city has been nothing short of catastrophic. “What had been a crisis has become an emergency, akin to a health epidemic, and time is not on our side,” Kyle Pope, publisher of the Columbia Journalism Review, wrote of New York City’s local news ecosystem in 2018. At a time when the city’s population (nine million) and budget (\$95 billion) are larger than ever, the number of local reporters has plummeted.

All of this comes at a time when local reporting is more important than ever. In the coming months and years, the city will confront the daunting challenges of recovery from the coronavirus crisis, tensions between police and the community, and the looming November 2021 elections, when nearly every major city and borough office will be up for grabs — potentially reshaping New York as we know it for the next several years. No matter what you think of as New York’s most important priority or pressing need, it will not be effectively addressed without local reporting.

In a little over a year, THE CITY has managed to achieve a level of success that takes some news institutions years to accomplish. What started as a mission to bring expanded local cover-

age to New York City has evolved into the premier destination for in-depth news and analysis of the city, garnering attention from everyone from elected officials to everyday New Yorkers to national news personalities.

THE CITY’s [diverse team of 20 journalists](#) is on the ground in all five boroughs, delivering essential reporting and critical information to the public, and holding the city’s leaders and institutions to account. Our team reports across a wide range of topics including the [economy](#), [justice](#), [public safety](#), [transportation](#), [health](#), [housing](#), [education](#), [politics](#), [government](#), and the [environment](#). As COVID-19 spread across the city, our data reporting team developed one of New York’s most followed [coronavirus trackers](#), which serves as a core resource for our [extensive reporting on the impact of the crisis](#).

We’re also proud to be a resource and partner to other news organizations, collaborating to produce high-quality accountability reporting, and encouraging republication and reuse of our stories throughout the broader nonprofit and for-profit news media ecosystem.

Our data reporting team developed one of New York’s most followed coronavirus trackers.



“
THE CITY continues to shine a light on the systemic inequities that leave the most vulnerable at highest risk. We hold those in power accountable and tell stories that would never otherwise be heard.
”

“
We speak truth to power and fight for the underdog. We seek out voices often ignored by other news outlets. We listen more and provide coverage that matters without fear or favor.
”



OUR IMPACT

The ultimate value of THE CITY's reporting is the positive impact it has on the lives of New Yorkers. Our goal with both breaking news and long-term reporting is to generate accountability and action, and raise awareness and engagement around the issues and decisions that are most important to New Yorkers. Here are just a few examples of how our reporting has already driven impact across critical topics:



JUSTICE

In June 2019, we reported that Layleen Polanco, a 27-year-old transgender woman who died while held on \$500 bail at Rikers Island, was in solitary confinement at the time of her death. **Our story sparked headlines in *The New York Times*, *The Daily Beast*, *Rolling Stone*, and more.** It also prompted calls for the abolishment of solitary confinement from Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, as well as from top local leaders.

Our persistent reporting spurred the city jails oversight board to propose rules sharply limiting solitary confinement. In June 2020, de Blasio announced disciplinary action against 17 jail officials. Three days later, he announced plans to end solitary confinement in city jails.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

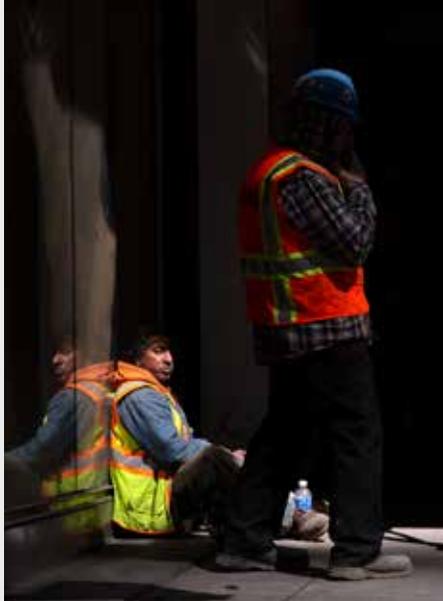
In May 2019, we published a secret state education department report that showed a huge five-year surge in complaints filed by the parents of special education students seeking services for their children. The report also revealed that it took an average of seven months to close a complaint.

In the months that followed, we teamed with the nonprofit education reporting outlet Chalkbeat to examine the system and found that at one point, one hearing officer had more than

1,700 open complaints on his docket. We also discovered a two-tiered system that favors parents with the means to fight legal battles and pay for private services while waiting for resolution. We interviewed scores of parents who responded to our outreach through questionnaires and attended our public meeting on the topic.

In the wake of our stories, **state legislators proposed reforms to make it easier to hire hearing officers.** Our work became the blueprint for a class action lawsuit filed in February by parents seeking an overhaul of the system. And our articles helped inspire some parents to work to open their own schools to better serve their children's needs.





WORKER SAFETY

On Sept. 12, 2018, an immigrant construction worker named Luis Sánchez Almonte was buried alive when his Brooklyn worksite caved in amid a storm. Media interest in his story ended with the recovery of his body 28 hours later. However, when THE CITY launched seven months later, **we reported that federal OSHA investigators had found that supervisors ignored warnings of a possible cave-in**. The fine: \$63,647. We later learned that Almonte was one of at least a dozen construction workers whose deaths on the job went officially unreported to authorities by building owners and contractors, in violation of the law. Brooklyn prosecutors took notice: on Nov. 21, 2019,

manslaughter charges were brought against a construction company operator, foreperson, and engineer. The manslaughter charges, very rare in a construction accident case, were appropriate, said Brooklyn DA Eric Gonzales, for a death that was “the direct result of owner recklessness and neglect.”



CAMPAIGN FINANCE

In April 2019, we obtained a city Department of Investigation report that found Mayor Bill de Blasio had violated conflict of interest rules after being warned repeatedly not to solicit donations for his nonprofit from individuals actively seeking favors from his administration. Within weeks of our attention-getting

story, the city’s Conflict of Interest Board codified prohibitions on de Blasio-style fundraising tactics and added \$25,000 fines for violations.

As he launched his ill-fated run for president, de Blasio engaged in similar practices. **We found he tapped two PACs he set up to help local and national Democrats for his own campaign expenses** — and even claimed his presidential announcement video wasn’t a campaign expense. We revealed that multiple donors gave to both PACs as well as de Blasio’s campaign — essentially skirting contribution limits. We also revealed the hundreds of thousands in taxpayer dollars spent on de Blasio and his wife’s NYPD campaign security detail.

In the wake of our reporting, a nonpartisan watchdog group filed a complaint with the Federal Elections Commission against de Blasio, citing our work as it accused him of running a campaign finance “shell game.” The FEC investigation is ongoing. Meanwhile, the city Department of Investigation has launched an ongoing probe into de Blasio’s use of taxpayer funds for his campaign security efforts.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

In 2018, the City Council gave \$42,500 to each of the city’s 59 community boards to help them better serve their neighborhoods. In May 2019, we discovered one board used the money to buy a \$26,000 SUV — which we found parked in front of the home of the board’s manager. Mayor de Blasio called for an investigation. But we weren’t done: **We uncovered dubious spending by boards around the city** that included \$20,000 for landscaping (using a banned chemical), \$23,000 in board-branded tote bags and other swag, and thousands of dollars going to nonprofits tied to board members.



Thanks to our reporting, the City Council banned vehicle purchases with the funds. Two months later the Council issued more extensive rules that included requiring full board votes on any proposed purchase over \$10,000 and sharply restricting uses of the funds.

CLIMATE

In October 2019, we published a story revealing that more than 80% of properties in coastal flooding areas are without flood insurance, despite the severe damage wrought by Superstorm Sandy seven years earlier. Our reporting also found that fewer residents in flood zones have flood insurance

than before Sandy hit. **We also reported that a \$3 billion plan to repair and reinforce public housing complexes** badly damaged by Sandy was mired in apparent corruption and delays. Our work propelled a City Council hearing on storm preparation.



PUBLIC SAFETY

In the spring of 2019, we published an investigation that found calls to 911 reporting what the NYPD then termed EDPs — “emotionally disturbed persons” — had nearly doubled over the previous decade, rising every year and in every precinct. We also revealed at least 14 instances from 2016 to early 2019 of the police killing mentally ill people after responding to emergency calls where cops arrived on the scene with no idea of a person’s psychiatric history.

Our reporting found that long-promised reforms, some under the umbrella of ThriveNYC, the mental health initiative spearheaded by New York City first lady Chirlane McCray, had fallen far behind or by the wayside. These included plans to train all officers on how to deal with people in mental distress, to create elite teams of mental health professionals and cops, and to establish “diversion centers” to which police could take people in emotional turmoil.

Our series of stories reignited the public conversation, spurring hearings and calls to action by top public officials, including Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. In

October 2019, the city revealed a new action plan that addresses most of the issues raised in our reporting.



FAST ACTION

At a time when many New York newsrooms have scaled back their coverage of the boroughs outside Manhattan, THE CITY is proud to have a team of five borough-based journalists to drive impact on the neighborhood level. Our stories often get quick results, helping us forge deeper connections with the community.

- In April 2019, we published a report highlighting the need for changing tables at the Bronx County Building. A week after the article was published, diaper-changing tables were installed on four of the busiest floors of the building.
- In April 2019 we reported that a traffic signal at a dangerous Brooklyn intersection had been out of commission for weeks. A day later, a new one went up.
- In July 2019, a few days after we reported that crosswalk markings were missing from a busy half-mile stretch in the Bronx, new lines were painted.
- In July 2019, we revealed that an advertised suicide hotline phone on the Triborough Bridge pedestrian pathway didn't exist. Just hours later, the MTA installed one.
- In February 2020, we revealed that a working wheelchair lift at the Queens Supreme Courthouse was inaccessible because of a dispute between city and state workers over whose job it was to turn the key. After we inquired, the city took responsibility.



PUBLIC HOUSING

Some 400,000 New Yorkers — more than the populations of New Orleans and Cleveland — live in public housing. The aging housing system, now overseen by a federal monitor after years of corruption and mismanagement, needs an estimated \$40 billion for repairs and upgrades — including eradicating everything from lead to mold.

No other news organization has covered the people living in the 325 developments overseen by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) more extensively than THE CITY. And no other news organization's work has achieved so much impact. Some examples:

- In October 2019, we revealed how low-level NYCHA managers had doled out thousands of no-bid repair contracts totaling over \$250 million to a select few vendors — ignoring corruption warnings. In many cases, the work was performed by NYCHA employees instead of the contractors. ***Our report immediately prompted a fraud investigation by HUD, and a month later spurred a probe by NYCHA's monitor.***
- In June 2019, we exposed how NYCHA employees scouring apartments for evidence of lead paint in some cases used dust wipes that were long-expired — rendering results useless. Our report, which coincided with a rise in the number of children poisoned by lead, immediately sparked a probe by the city's Department of Investigation.
- In June 2019, we revealed that NYCHA had failed to conduct regular inspections of more than 700 playgrounds at its developments — even after an audit found that 70% were in disrepair. After we reported on the broken promises — and highlighted dangerous conditions that led to injuries of children — a massive, ongoing inspection and repair effort began. We're still watching.



- Kaiser Health News and THE CITY launched a collaboration initially focused on providing KHN with access to the Tracker's underlying data. The clarity, frequency, and credibility of the Tracker led to a high volume of requests for the underlying data, which we have made available to the public via GitHub.
- We received inquiries from researchers at Columbia University, Stanford University, and other institutions, and our work was cited in an MIT study on the virus' spread in New York.
- **Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer** announced that she was replacing Johns Hopkins' globally-embraced coronavirus data site with our Tracker as her office's definitive source for coronavirus-related data.
- Senior Data Reporter Ann Choi appeared on CBSN to discuss the genesis and development of the tracker.

COVID-19 NEWS THURSDAY 4/23/2020

Update

Manhattan Borough President **Gale Brewer**

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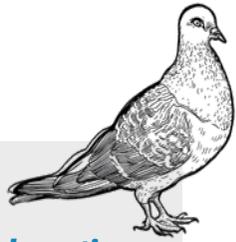
Friends,

It's Thursday, April 23, 2020.

For the last five weeks, we've begun with reporting the [Johns Hopkins COVID case tracker](#) accounting of confirmed cases (which includes people who got better), and the cumulative death count.

But Johns Hopkins has a lag, so going forward we'll now relay the count prepared by nonprofit news site *The City*, which consolidates and cross-references data from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Governor's office, and several private sources, including the Johns Hopkins tracker. [Visit their page here](#) and see how robust their data are.

At press time, [TheCity.nyc's](#) COVID-19 tracker shows Manhattan has 17,803 confirmed cases and 1,805 deaths; New York City as a whole has 141,754 confirmed cases and 15,411 deaths.



“This is my 3rd meeting. I care very much about community + how information that effects my community & all of BK.”

“The effort you all are making to collect and distribute relevant information/news to workers in NYC is inspiring and appreciated.”

ENGAGEMENT

Besides having an impact on the lives of New Yorkers, our goal is to actively engage them around the news most relevant to their communities. Engagement at THE CITY is both a tool for journalism as well as an effort to increase reach and readership. These efforts are inextricably tied. THE CITY uses live events (The Open Newsroom), analogue (text, fliers) and digital (website, social media, newsletter, crowdsourcing) to engage New Yorkers. We also send a membership newsletter to communicate with our donors.

THE OPEN NEWSROOM

In order to report for all New Yorkers, THE CITY has to reach all New Yorkers. Part of that mission is fulfilled via [The Open Newsroom](#), a series of neighborhood convenings that help us explore ways to make local news collaborative. The Open Newsroom, run in partnership with the Brooklyn Public Library, brings New Yorkers together to discuss the issues that are most relevant to them. We use the insights from these meetings to learn what news and information is most important to community members and to ensure that we’re responsive to the community’s needs.

Since our launch of The Open Newsroom in July of 2019, we have held 20 meetings (in-person and virtual), with roughly 400 participants. The meetings helped us identify important neighborhood issues as affordable housing, access to transportation, access to fresh food (and other food-related issues), safety concerns, and education. We were able to connect participants directly to reporting we had previously done on these topics. We were also able to work with attendees to report on delays in [repairs in NYCHA housing](#), [grocery store closings](#), and [housing issues in East New York](#).

In March, after the coronavirus pandemic halted in-person meetings, we transitioned The Open Newsroom to virtual community gatherings. The response demonstrated a clear need for providing in-depth, trustworthy information to New Yorkers who care about an array of important local issues.

Those attending The Open Newsroom come from dozens of neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs and are often not part of our traditional audience. We expect the program to continue to expand not just our reach but our sourcing to enrich our coverage.





We have crowdsourced information and stories from more than 5,000 New Yorkers.

CALLS TO ACTION, CROWDSOURCING, AND ENGAGEMENT REPORTING DURING A PANDEMIC

With the onset of the coronavirus crisis, engagement has become more important than ever. The pandemic changed the way we report. We've had to figure out new ways to reach people, listen to them, and report on issues most important to them. We had an easier time with this than many news organizations because we had spent the previous year giving New Yorkers various avenues to share their stories with us.

Since the launch of THE CITY, we have asked readers for help reporting through calls to action via SMS or email, or questionnaires embedded in our stories. ***We have crowdsourced information and stories from more than 5,000 New Yorkers*** about [special education](#), [food access](#), [accessibility](#), [renters fees](#) and much more. This participation helps us understand the issues New Yorkers are facing in real time, allowing us to adjust our coverage or inform future coverage.

For example, we've crowdsourced nearly ***2,000 responses from parents, teachers, administrators and advocates*** about special education in New York schools. We've written [numerous stories](#), from a group of moms starting [a school for dyslexic students](#) to the [cost of student evaluations](#) to the [challenges and concerns with remote learning](#), all fueled by our crowdsourcing efforts.

This groundwork enabled us to quickly shift our newsroom toward online engagement when the pandemic hit — allowing us to both source important accountability stories and fill an information gap for our readers. ***We created questionnaires*** for [healthcare workers](#) and [nursing home employees](#), we asked workers how they were [commuting](#), and we created a general call to action for anyone with [questions, concerns, or experiences](#) they wanted to share about the coronavirus.



Engagement at THE CITY is both a tool for journalism as well as an effort to increase reach and readership.

To date, we've heard from more than 2,000 New Yorkers. Their experiences and questions helped us tell dozens of stories and [create a handful of guides](#) including:

- [Guide to NYS Unemployment Benefits](#)
- [What to Know if You're an Essential Worker](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself Against Scams During the Coronavirus](#)
- [How to Donate Supplies to New York Hospitals in Need](#)
- [How to Access Food](#)
- [Laundromats and Washing your Clothes](#)
- [Paying Rent During the Crisis](#)
- [Post-virus Recovery Guide](#)

We've responded in some way to every single person who has reached out with a question.



NEWSLETTERS

Our daily newsletter is a strong measure of a reader's loyalty and interest in THE CITY's journalism, making it an incredibly important way to analyze our relevance, growth, and loyal reader engagement. Our [newsletter](#) contains a short, conversational summary of our daily new stories and is designed to drive traffic to the site. It's delivered to subscribers weekday mornings, along with a weekly roundup of our stories every Sunday.

The newsletter has shown strong and early success with 35,000 total subscribers. In March and April alone, as the coronavirus crisis generated a surge in both stories and audience, we added more than 3,000 new subscribers. Our open rate on the newsletter is nearly 45% (by contrast, the media industry average hovers around 25%).

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

We view membership — when our readers and newsletter subscribers decide to make a financial commitment to THE CITY — as the ultimate level of audience engagement. THE CITY began establishing a membership base by recruiting donors from our general readership not long after our launch, through calls to action on our website, targeted outreach to newsletter subscribers, and through social media. Our readers responded with enthusiasm. We've held four membership campaigns between our launch in April 2019 and November 2020, raising nearly \$600,000 from more than 3,500 members giving between \$1 and \$10,000.



OUR METRICS

In just our first year of publication, THE CITY has developed a robust and rapidly growing audience. We launched in April of 2019 with 370,000 pageviews. By April of 2020, we were garnering more than two million monthly pageviews, signaling our emergence as the “go-to” essential source of critical information for New Yorkers.

**AVERAGE
MONTHLY
PAGEVIEWS**



945,874

**AVERAGE
MONTHLY
MENTIONS/
REPUBLICATIONS**



200

NOTE: January-November 2020

MEMBERS



**Nearly
4,300**

**NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS**

35,000

**EVENT
ATTENDEES**

400

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

TWITTER



33,000

INSTAGRAM



6,600

FACEBOOK



4,100

NOTE: As of November 2020



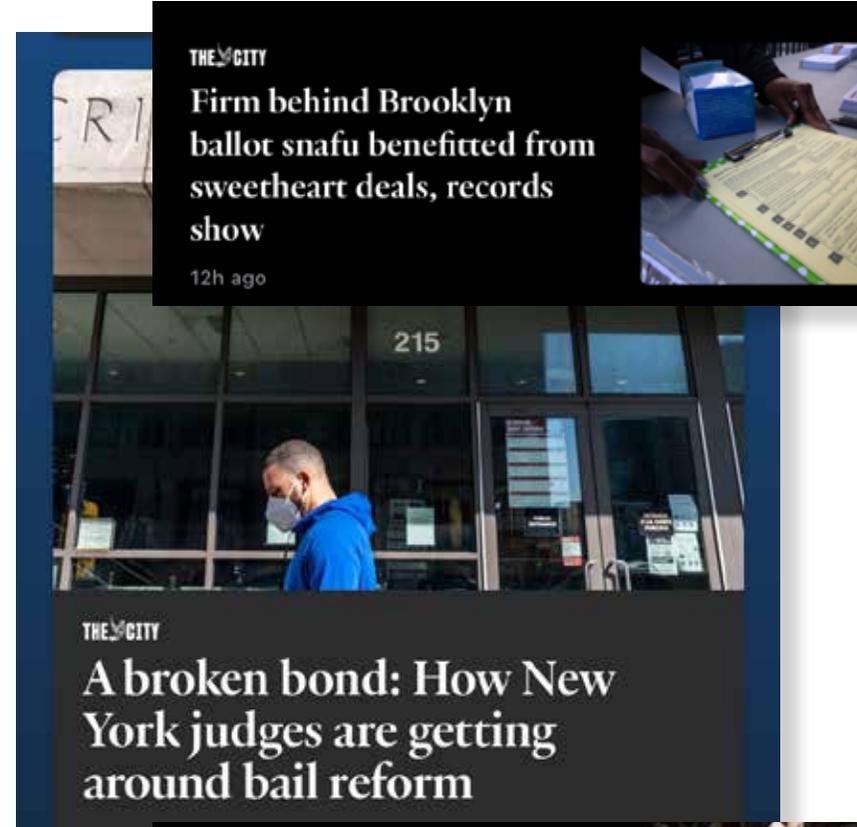
“Your articles feature in-depth reporting on issues that other media skim over or don’t cover at all. The issues are borough based and are the ones important to the poor, middle class, working people!”

MOVING OUR WORK FORWARD

COLLABORATION

One of the cornerstones of our mission is being a resource and partner to other news organizations. Very early, we demonstrated our commitment to that mission by working closely with numerous nonprofit news partners. Since our launch, we’ve teamed with The Marshall Project, ProPublica, and WNYC/Gothamist on NYPD accountability coverage, as well as Documented on immigration stories and Retro Report on evictions in New York City. We’ve also developed an unusual collaborative reporting and publishing relationship with the national nonprofit education site, Chalkbeat. Not only are we co-publishing stories, but we also undertook a unique collaboration to publish a series on special education. The award-winning result was an excellent example of how enterprise journalism can be strengthened through partnerships and can move the dial on this historically under-reported issue. Our early success could serve as a model for other emerging local nonprofit media operations.

We have also been able to broaden our reach through various content distribution partnerships with larger news outlets, including deals with Business Insider, Spectrum News and Apple News. The common impetus for all three partnerships was simple: THE CITY was filling a significant void in local coverage, and we were doing it exceptionally well. The relationship with Spectrum and Apple News is particularly noteworthy given the breadth of their reach. Our robust partnership with Spectrum News includes regular media appearances by our reporters as well as consistent republication of our stories on Spectrum’s News mobile app. Apple News also regularly republishes and features our stories, using us as one of its trusted sources on it’s New York-oriented news.



Our work has been cited and mentioned in The New York Times, Politico, and The Atlantic.

Community engagement is a pivotal part of how we operate our newsroom. It has led to collaborations with Brooklyn Public Library, Queens Public Library, The Lincoln Center, the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY, Columbia University, Univision, and Frontline. For example, we teamed with CUNY and Columbia University on ***MISSING THEM, an evolving citywide obituary database of people who died from COVID-19***. The database is part of a larger project to track and memorialize New Yorkers who have died from the virus, using engagement methods like questionnaires and callouts.

RECOGNITION

What began as a mission to bring expanded local coverage to New York City has evolved into a premier destination for in-depth news and analysis of the city, garnering attention and making an outsized impact.

It is especially encouraging to receive acknowledgement from our respected peers in the industry. THE CITY has won 16 awards, including two medallions and a merit award from the Silurians Press Club, Editor & Publisher “EPY” honors for the best site of its kind and size in the nation, and an Excellence Award from the New York Press Photographers Association. The New York Association of Black Journalists and the News-women’s Club of New York are also among the organizations that have recognized our work.

We’ve been honored to see the positive reception to our work and the willingness of others to put a spotlight on our work. ***For example, our reporters are welcomed regulars on***



WNYC, CBSN, and PBS, with the list of media appearances and speaking engagements steadily growing. THE CITY’s work is also often cited by local and national outlets such as The New York Times, Politico, and MSNBC, and has been republished regularly by a number of outlets including amNewYork, Bklyner, Univision, and the Queens Daily Eagle.



AWARDS

While reader engagement and the impact of our reporting are the most important measures of our success, awards are an indicator of the strength of THE CITY's reporting, and we're thrilled that we are already the recipient of many honors.

2020

Editor & Publisher - EPPY 2020 Awards

1. Best Photojournalism on a Website less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - ["Coronavirus in NYC"](#) | THE CITY
2. Best News or Event Feature on a Website with less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - ["Coronavirus in New York"](#) | THE CITY
3. Best Use of Social Media/Crowd Sourcing on a Website with less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - ["Chalkbeat and THE CITY"](#) | THE CITY
4. Finalist for Best Use of Social Media/Crowd Sourcing on a Website with less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - The CITY for "The City's Staff"
5. Finalist for Best Photojournalism on a Website less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - THE CITY for "Seeking Justice in New York"
6. Finalist for Best Innovation Project on a Website with less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - THE CITY for "Missing Them"
7. Finalist for Best Investigative/Enterprise Feature on a Website with less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - Who's Policing You?
8. Finalist for Best Use of Data/Infographics on a Website with less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - The CITY for "Coronavirus Tracker"
9. Finalist for Best Collaborative Investigative/Enterprise Reporting on a Website less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - THE CITY for "Chalkbeat and THE CITY"
10. Finalist for Best Investigative/Enterprise Video on a Website with less than 1 million unique monthly visitors - THE CITY for "Flirting with Disaster: Flood Zones in New York City"

Silurians Press Club Excellence in Journalism Awards, 2020

1. Commentary Medallion: Greg B. Smith, Josefa Velasquez, Yoav Gonen, THE CITY, [The de Blasio Files](#) and [The NYPD's Mental Illness Breakdown](#)
2. Feature News Photography Medallion: Ben Fractenberg, THE CITY, [Homeless Face an Elusive Refuge In the Subway](#)
3. Breaking News Merit Award: Christine Chung and Josefa Velasquez, THE CITY, [Election Night in Queens](#)

New York Press Club Journalism Awards, 2020

[Nellie Bly Cub Reporter](#): Claudia Irizarry Aponte, THE CITY

Deadline Club Awards, 2020

Finalist for Newspaper or Digital Feature Reporting: Ese Olumhense, THE CITY, ["20 Years After Killing of Amadou Diallo, What's Changed"](#)

2020 Online Journalism Awards

Finalist for "Excellence in Newsletters" - THE CITY SCOOP

American Planning Association 2020 Award

New York Metropolitan Chapter Award - For THE CITY's coverage of communities underserved by other media outlets, particularly in the Bronx.

2020 National LION Publishers Awards

Collaboration of the Year - Special education reporting with Chalkbeat.

From the judges: *"This is a great example of two newsrooms contributing their unique strengths to produce a story and, through this collaboration, increase its impact. Bravo!"*



AWARDS



2019

New York Press Photographers Association, 2019

Excellence Award, 85th Annual Photography & Multimedia Contest, 2019 Year in Pictures and Multimedia Contest: Ben Fractenberg, THE CITY, [Taking Flight](#)

Editor & Publisher - EPPY 2019 Awards

1. Best Collaborative Investigative/Enterprise Feature: Mazin Sidahmed and Claudia Irizarry Aponte, Documented and THE CITY, [On the Brink of Being Homeless in a "Sanctuary City"](#)
2. Best News or Event Feature: A Solitary Death Sparks Prison Reform Push (some of our stories about [Layleen Polanco](#))
3. [Best Daily News Site](#)

Editor & Publisher - National Finalists, 2019

1. Best Investigative/Enterprise Feature on a Website with under 1 million unique monthly visitors: The de Blasio Files, THE CITY
2. Best News or Event Feature with under 1 million unique monthly visitors: A Solitary Death Sparks Prison Reform Push, THE CITY
3. Best Community Service with under 1 million unique monthly visitors: Broken Promises: NYC's Public Housing Mess, THE CITY

The Newswomen's Club Of New York, Inc. 2019 Front Page Award

Local Reporting - Breaking News: Christine Chung, THE CITY, [How Tiffany Cabán Went From Nowhere to the Verge of Victory](#)

New York Association of Black Journalists Media Award, 2019

Best General Feature, Online Media: Ese Olumhense, THE CITY, [20 Years After the NYPD Killing of Amadou Diallo, His Mom Asks: What's Changed?](#)

LOOKING AHEAD

THE FUTURE

Over the last year, we've embodied the symbiotic relationship between local news and democracy. Dozens of our stories have generated the type of tangible impact New Yorkers deserve. And we're just beginning.



“New York City needs independent journalism! Happy to support a publication dedicated to holding those in power accountable and keeping NY strong.”

The next year is critical for all New Yorkers as we draw closer to citywide elections in 2021. THE CITY will gear up its election coverage with in-depth reporting on the candidates and the races in all five boroughs. Our readers will be looking to us more than ever to provide information, insight and resources as they make decisions on choosing NYC's next leaders. We're committed to leading through our journalism — exerting a positive impact on the lives of New Yorkers across a wide spectrum of issues. So we're making big plans for the future.

EDITORIAL EXPANSION

CRUCIAL COVERAGE ON TAP

In the year ahead, THE CITY will be expanding coverage of key areas — including pressing health, fiscal and political issues — as New York recovers and transforms amid an unprecedented period of crisis. The choices made in the months to come will impact the city for a generation or more — demanding our relentless scrutiny.

We're planning people-and-data-driven coverage of the most important municipal elections in at least two decades, when New Yorkers will be picking a new mayor and comptroller, along with three-quarters of the City Council.

Our much-lauded Coronavirus in New York City tracker, which traces the pandemic spread, will expand into a one-stop source for economic and other indicators of the city's evolving comeback.

Our reporting partnerships with ProPublica, WNYC/Gothamist and The Marshall Project will work to hold bad actors within the New York Police Department accountable.

Our focus on the city's fiscal crisis will include keeping a watchdog's eye on the key decisions that will determine whether New York can thrive again as a world capital of business, culture and opportunity while safeguarding its most vulnerable citizens.

And we've got much more in the works — stay tuned.

DIVERSITY

Diversity is a critical component of our editorial expansion. Since THE CITY's inception, we've made a concerted effort to build a newsroom that's reflective of the city's demographics. We're purposeful about the voices we elevate, always ensuring that our stories reflect a diverse range of people. Recent events in the city and around the country — from anti-police brutality and anti-racism protests to corporate and personal reckonings on systemic discrimination — have spurred us to think long and hard about how we can be a bigger part of the solution.



Over the next year, we're reaffirming our commitment to inclusion by continuing to diversify our newsroom, especially at the senior and management levels, through promotion and hiring. We will also ensure that we are engaging more with ethnic and racial professional associations, and make a conscious and deliberate effort to include a greater diversity of sources in our stories — particularly at the “expert” level.

THE FUTURE OF ENGAGEMENT

THE OPEN NEWSROOM

As we work through the pandemic virtually and, eventually, get back into libraries and other trusted spaces, The Open Newsroom will continue to push the boundaries of not only public engagement events, but of how to collaborate and communicate

effectively with the people THE CITY covers. Over the next year, we will move The Open Newsroom into specific topics — starting with issues around rent, employment and food access. The Open Newsroom will use engagement not just to create guides and help produce stories, but to collaborate with community members and institutions to deliver relevant, timely, and equitable news and information.

NEWSLETTERS

We plan to build on the success of our general newsletter with the introduction of additional newsletters, focusing variously on geography, key reporting areas, and major projects.

ENGAGEMENT REPORTING

We'll keep innovating and expanding how we create participation within our journalism, as well as incorporate community contributions into our stories. One way we will do this is through translation. Most recently, with our MISSING THEM project, we've translated the callouts asking people to share stories of loved ones lost to COVID into Spanish, Chinese, Urdu, and Hindi.

We will also look to expand our collaboration with organizations — from local media to community institutions — to reach as many people as we can with projects like MISSING THEM and our NYPD accountability coverage with ProPublica, WNYC/Gothamist, and The Marshall Project.

The future of engagement reporting and crowdsourcing is collaboration. THE CITY plans to continue to trailblaze in this field.

OUR DONORS

THE CITY received extraordinary launch support from lead founding donors the Charles H. Revson Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, and Craig Newmark Philanthropies and its distinguished board. We have now raised over \$12 million from a stellar list of major donors and corporate sponsors, and launched a very successful membership program (donors of up to \$10,000) that has generated more than \$500,000 from more than 2,900 donors.

We are profoundly grateful to everyone who supports our work. Below are the donors who have gifted from our launch through November 30, 2020.

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OUR BOARD

THE CITY's Board of Directors provides extraordinary knowledge, experience, insight and support covering all aspects of its activities. The Board meets quarterly with the editor in chief and publisher to review recent past performance and look to the future. The Board receives a comprehensive quarterly report on editorial activities, audience and engagement metrics, and financial performance, and reviews and approves a detailed annual budget in advance of each fiscal year. Additionally, the Board's Executive Committee and, separately, the Board's Treasurer meet monthly with the editor in chief and publisher.

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NOTE: As of November 30th, 2020