

The State of South Florida Local News: Community Needs & Opportunities

Press Forward >>
South Florida

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South Florida radio host Mj Smith, who made his mark at AM 1490 WMBM before joining WLRN.

This Is About More Than News. It’s About Our Communities.

We live in a moment of constant information overload. Every day brings a flood of social feeds, noisy neighborhood chats, and endless text threads. People aren’t lacking access to information. If anything, they’re drowning in it.

What’s increasingly hard to find is something far more essential: verified, trusted information about our own communities.

South Florida is facing urgent, deeply local challenges — from rising seas to rising housing costs. In a region as complex and fast-moving as ours, people need reliable reporting that helps them understand what is true, what is changing, and what action they can take.

Press Forward South Florida is committed to ensuring people have access to reliable, trusted sources of knowledge they need to navigate their daily lives and make informed decisions on critical issues.

Strong communities need strong, community-centered sources of news.

Local news helps boost civic engagement and is a critical tool for identifying and solving problems. It’s a powerful antidote to the spread of misinformation.

And in times of crises, like natural disasters and public health emergencies, local news means more than just headlines — it’s a community lifeline.

This is especially vital for immigrant populations, multilingual households, and underserved neighborhoods. Ensuring that residents can access relevant, trustworthy information — in the languages they speak and through the channels they use — is essential.

That is why this assessment matters. To build a stronger local news and information ecosystem, we must first understand it.

The State of South Florida Local News: Community Needs and Opportunities examines how people across the region access and engage with news and information, where gaps and inequities exist, and what communities identify as their most pressing information needs. It also provides insight into the current state of local news providers, including their reach and range of work.

Equally important, this report looks ahead. It identifies actionable opportunities to invest in local journalism, support innovation, and amplify impact across the region.

Because even amid a challenging media environment that has resulted in shrinking newsrooms and reduced resources, we should recognize what hasn’t been lost. Across South Florida, dedicated journalists continue to show up for their communities every day. From veteran reporters at major outlets to independent news entrepreneurs to student journalists just beginning their careers, there is no shortage of talent, hustle and heart in South Florida.

We hope this report serves as both a resource and a call to action for funders, journalists, civic leaders, and community members alike. Together, we have an opportunity to reimagine local news in South Florida and to ensure that every resident has access to the information they need to thrive.

ABOUT PRESS FORWARD SOUTH FLORIDA

Press Forward South Florida is a coalition of South Florida community foundations committed to mobilizing resources, building partnerships, and fostering innovative approaches that support and sustain a thriving local news and information ecosystem.

Our coalition includes the **Community Foundation of Broward, Coral Gables Community Foundation, Key Biscayne Community Foundation, The Miami Foundation, and Ocean Reef Community Foundation**. This work is made possible with support from **Knight Foundation, Press Forward** and other donor partners. As a locally driven chapter of a growing national initiative, we are also part of the national Press Forward network of 48 local chapters across the U.S. working to strengthen their communities through news and information.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This ecosystem analysis was commissioned by **Press Forward South Florida's** coalition of five community foundations: the **Community Foundation of Broward, Coral Gables Community Foundation, Key Biscayne Community Foundation, The Miami Foundation,** and **Ocean Reef Community Foundation.**

Because of the geographies served by our coalition members, this report focuses on the counties of Monroe, Miami-Dade and Broward.

It aims to identify the most significant information gaps for residents of this region, support the growth and sustainability of newsrooms, and pinpoint where new investments can be made to have the greatest impact.

Ultimately, this report is designed to support the goal of Press Forward South Florida: ensuring South Florida residents have access to the reliable and relevant news they need to engage in civic life and address community challenges.

This research initiative includes both qualitative and quantitative data, including:

- **A Community Survey:** An administered survey that garnered 1,276 weighted responses.
- **Interviews:** 58 interviews conducted with local civic leaders, public officials, community activists, and journalists.
- **Focus Groups:** Eight focus groups held with residents from demographic groups less represented in the survey.
- **Media Diary Study:** A one-week detailed media diary study completed by 53 participants.
- **Content Analysis:** An analysis of one month of stories from three local flagship newspapers: the Miami Herald, Sun Sentinel, and El Nuevo Herald.
- **Contextual Data:** Compilation of regional demographic, economic, and political trends.
- **South Florida News & Information Provider Database:** A catalog of local news and information sources surfaced during our research, which is available on the [Press Forward South Florida website](#).

Research and writing was conducted by the [American Journalism Project](#), [Florida International University's Jorge M. Perez Metropolitan Center](#) and [Lee Caplin School of Journalism & Media](#), and journalist Ariel Zirulnick, with editing and additional support provided by [Impact Architects](#).

For more information about our research partners and methodology, visit the [Appendices](#).

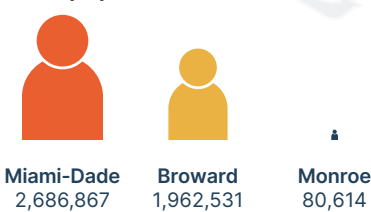
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South Florida at a glance

Although South Florida is united by many of its assets and challenges, these three counties are also quite distinct from each other, pointing to a need for regional, county, and city-level news and information solutions.

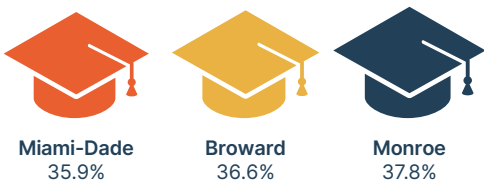
Total population



Median household income



% of population 25 and older with bachelor's degree



All stats above from U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 1-Year Estimates

BROWARD

Race and ethnicity
White, not Hispanic: 30.0%
Black, not Hispanic: 27%
Hispanic of any race: 33%

% foreign-born
37.8%

Median age
42

MONROE

Race and ethnicity
White, not Hispanic: 63.6%
Black, not Hispanic: 7.2%
Hispanic of any race: 24.8%

% foreign-born
20.1%

Median age
49

MIAMI-DADE

Race and ethnicity
White, not Hispanic: 12.6%
Black, not Hispanic: 13.9%
Hispanic of any race: 69.1%

% foreign-born
54.8%

Median age
41

MIAMI-DADE

More than two-thirds of Miami-Dade County's 2.7 million residents identify as Hispanic and of various nationalities. Cubans represent the largest group, with almost 1 million Cubans or people of Cuban descent living in the county, followed by Colombians and Venezuelans. (When we mention a non-American national group, we are referring to both immigrants from that country and people of that ancestry.) Miami-Dade also has a sizable non-Hispanic Caribbean population, with approximately 89,000 Haitians and 25,000 Jamaicans. From 2013 to 2023, the county experienced significant declines in both White (-14%) and Black (-15%) populations, reflecting potential outmigration, gentrification, or shifting housing affordability.¹

BROWARD

Broward County is home to nearly 2 million residents, and no single racial or ethnic group comprises a majority. Much of Miami-Dade's Caribbean population has migrated north to Broward in recent years. Today, there are about 105,000 Haitians and 92,000 Jamaicans living in Broward County. Broward has a much larger percentage of Black or African-American residents than the other two counties (27%) and in the past decade it has become more Hispanic. One third of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, although, unlike Miami-Dade, there is no dominant Hispanic national group.

MONROE

Monroe County is home to more than 80,000 residents. It remains majority White, non-Hispanic (64%), although its Hispanic population is slowly growing. Cubans account for the largest number of non-American residents there (approximately 11,000).

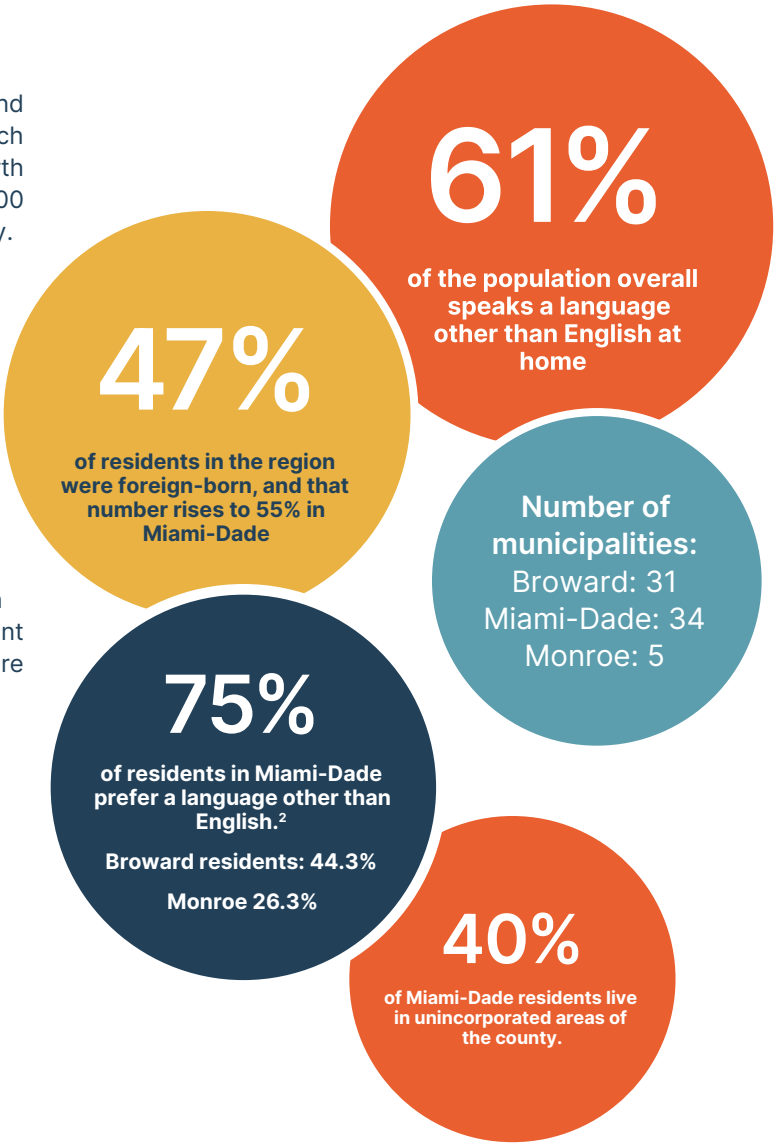
¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Department of Commerce

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Department of Commerce

THE CHALLENGE

In 2023, the three counties had a combined population of more than 4.7 million residents.

Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties share many features and issues that impact residents' quality of life and bind them together as a region, but each county is also shaped by distinct population characteristics, economic structures, and government systems.



As with many metropolitan areas, South Florida struggles with high housing costs, traffic and congestion, and overall rising costs of living. Nearly half of survey respondents (49%) cited housing affordability as a top challenge, significantly more than any other issue. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing are considered “cost burdened.” In 2023, two-thirds of renters in every South Florida county fell into this category, along with nearly half of homeowners.³

The climate and environment challenges facing South Florida are unique and supremely urgent, including extreme heat, rising sea levels, limited urban tree cover, waste management, saltwater intrusion, and “sunny day” flooding.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The region — especially Miami-Dade County — faces substantial barriers to civic engagement.

Both Miami-Dade and Broward had voter turnout below the state average in the 2024 general election. (Miami-Dade had the third-lowest voter turnout of Florida’s 67 counties.³) Notably, turnout for registered voters in Monroe was higher than the statewide average.⁴

The region’s transitional demographics, high percentage of foreign-born residents and high newcomer turnover are cited as key barriers to civic engagement, which includes activities such as volunteerism, attending public meetings, and charitable giving. Many civic nonprofits in the area are underfunded, with 43% of those in Miami-Dade operating on budgets under \$250,000, which limits their capacity for outreach and sustained impact.⁵

TURNOUT AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS: 2024 NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION



3 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Department of Commerce
4 Florida Department of State, Division of Elections. “Election Results.”
5 The Miami Foundation: Civic Engagement in Greater Miami



From right: Paula Bosler of Haj Media, WPLG Channel 10 reporter Aaron Maybin and his newsroom colleague, photojournalist Josh Salazar, at a Key Biscayne event.

Key Insights

The State of South Florida Local News: Community Needs & Opportunities is intended to establish a shared, baseline understanding of the complex South Florida information landscape. This research examines how residents access, trust and engage with local news and information.

As we consider how to support this dynamic and vibrant region with high-quality, inclusive and accessible local news, we hope this research helps identify opportunities for investment and innovation that can strengthen and sustain local journalism.

South Florida’s news and information ecosystem can best be described as noisy, fragmented and uneven — making it difficult for residents to track, evaluate and verify.

Residents across Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties navigate a crowded mix of traditional news outlets, hyperlocal publications, social media platforms, messaging apps and informal community networks to stay informed. As a result, important information often must appear in multiple places to reach broad public awareness. Language barriers, limited source attribution, and misinformation circulating through informal networks leave many residents struggling to identify trustworthy information.

Residents trust local media — even as many feel excluded from it. Sixty-one percent of survey respondents agreed that “local news can be trusted to get things right,” 65% said it helps them “be a better citizen,” and more than half believe local news holds leaders accountable. Fewer than 40% of respondents agreed with the statement ‘I feel people like me are seen and represented in local media,’ while 34% disagreed. Among Black respondents, disagreement was even higher — 47% said they do not feel represented in local media.

Social media plays a central role despite lower trust. Sixty-six percent of South Floridians get local news from social media at least a few times a week, while 50% rely on social networking forums such as WhatsApp and Facebook groups. Focus group participants ranked these sources among their most-used channels for local information but among their least trusted, while traditional media remained among the most trusted sources.

Local TV still enjoys relatively high engagement compared to other traditional media: Sixty-four percent of our survey respondents got their news from local TV newscasts at least a few times a week, compared to 41% from radio or 32% from newspapers.

Residents want practical, community-focused news. Top information needs identified by residents were:

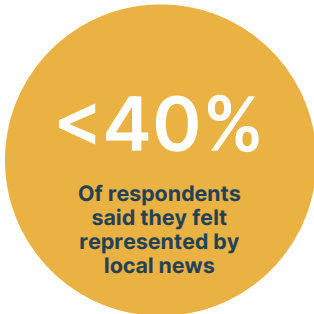
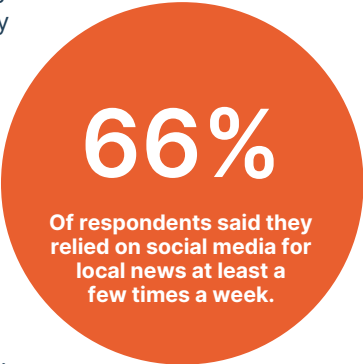
1. **Government**
2. **Housing affordability**
3. **Jobs and the economy**
4. **Local activities, entertainment and culture**

Most municipalities receive little regular coverage. Residents consistently expressed a desire for more neighborhood and community-level reporting that helps them navigate daily life.

Coverage gaps vary across the region. Miami-Dade still benefits from a relatively strong volume of original local reporting, but much of it is focused on the City of Miami. News struggles to reach audiences in a crowded information environment and often does not cross into Spanish- or Creole-language media. Broward has experienced a steep decline in original reporting, while Spanish-language coverage has not kept pace with demographic change.

Smaller and closer-knit Monroe County presents a different picture. Local news production is limited to a few under-resourced outlets, but strong coordination across the wider information network helps residents get the information they need. Even so, community leaders want deeper coverage and say major outlets tend to pay attention to the county only when a hurricane is approaching.

Recent immigrants face an even wider information gap. Interviews conducted with focus groups and with community leaders noted that recent immigrants struggle to access information about immigration policies and government programs. Critical information about policy changes and social support is often accessed through trusted nonprofits and churches, or less reliably through word-of-mouth and via WhatsApp.



Key Opportunities

- **Greater collaboration between news and information providers, especially on shared community information needs**
South Florida is fortunate to have an abundance of local news and information sources in multiple formats, languages, and business models, from legacy players to tiny, hyperlocal startups. Together they produce a substantial amount of local, original reporting, particularly in Spanish. There is a significant opportunity to support further coordination across this field, especially around shared community information needs. Many of these news outlets might not have wide reach, but they do have strong name recognition and deep trust in the communities they serve and tell stories that might otherwise not get covered. Better collaboration could also help ensure that essential information is shared across languages, platforms, and communities, ensuring reach and equity.
- **Support ecosystem coordinator roles**
The South Florida news and information ecosystem is busy, but fragmented. In other ecosystems, news organizations are brought together through collaboration, content sharing, and joint investigations. An ecosystem coordinator or coordinators are responsible for supporting the ecosystem as a whole. These coordinators can fill a number of roles: helping organize capacity building, advocating for local media in conversations with funders and policymakers, and acting as an anchor for shared services and reporting collaborations. In South Florida, this type of coordination could significantly strengthen the resilience and visibility of local outlets.
- **Fill in municipal coverage gaps**
South Florida’s legacy news cuts have led to a “main city” focus, leaving smaller municipalities underserved. A need for deeper, localized coverage — including government, activities, and culture — is clear. While this research identified at least a dozen hyperlocal publications in the region, many are fragile, and the strongest serve relatively affluent areas. This presents a clear opportunity to strengthen and expand existing outlets to cover more municipalities, potentially boosting civic engagement and other forms of public participation.

- **Strengthen regional coverage**
Many of South Florida’s greatest challenges and assets don’t start and stop at county lines, but are rarely covered as regional issues. There is an opportunity for journalism that connects the dots between the three counties, elevates solutions that are working in one place, and brings people together to address shared challenges.
- **Focus more journalism on acute challenges and information needs.**
Service journalism is a type of journalism focused on providing practical, actionable information and advice to help people solve problems and make their lives easier. This style of reporting emphasizes meeting the audience’s needs directly, with a focus on utility and relevance.

There is an opportunity to provide more service journalism on shared challenges such as housing affordability, jobs, and immigration policies, and focus accountability journalism on broken systems that exacerbate these issues.
- **Fund local news to strengthen other critical issue areas.**

South Florida has an active and committed philanthropic community that invests meaningfully in education, youth development, the arts, climate, and other pillars of civic life. Yet investment in local news and information — the infrastructure that helps residents make informed decisions across all of those areas — remains nascent. There is a clear opportunity to unlock greater impact across issue areas and mobilize funder networks to support local news and information.



“The South Florida media landscape — like any place — is fractured, but even more so here: cultural fractures, language fractures, geographic fractures.
— South Florida community leader

South Florida Community Information Needs

SECTION SNAPSHOT:

This section is a scan of information needs in South Florida, drawing from a regional survey, focus groups, interviews, and a media diary study across Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties. Researching residents’ needs requires us to take a more expansive view of “news,” one that includes all sources of information, not just conventional journalism.

This research explores residents’ trust in news, the platforms they use to access information, key civic and topical challenges, and the specific needs of communities traditionally underserved by media, helping to identify gaps between what news outlets provide and what residents need to feel informed and engaged in their daily lives and communities.

METHODOLOGY :

Through our community listening efforts, including focus groups, interviews and a survey, we set out to answer four overarching questions:

- What do people trust and value when it comes to local news?
- How is local news and information reaching people?
- What are South Floridians’ greatest challenges and information needs?
- How do the answers to these questions vary across the region’s geographic and demographic communities?

Survey findings are based on a regional survey of 1,276 Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe residents conducted by the FIU Jorge M. Pérez Metropolitan Center in spring 2025. The survey is exploratory and offers directional insights into local information needs. Because the sample was self-selected, results should be interpreted with this context in mind as it may indicate higher levels of civic engagement and news consumption. Survey responses were weighted for age, educational attainment, race/ ethnicity, and county of residence to ensure balanced representation. The survey was distributed through multiple channels, including via an email campaign to registered voters in the three counties, accounting for 40.5% of responses.

See Appendices for a detailed overview of weighting methodology, survey respondents, and media diary and focus group participants.

KEY FINDINGS

HABITS

- Residents named more than 100 local information sources, including hundreds of other media sources like nontraditional media and national news outlets, pointing to a dynamic but fragmented information environment that is difficult to navigate and hard to trust.
- Social media dominates local news habits, as do user-moderated social media forums like WhatsApp and Facebook groups, which are relied upon despite being acknowledged as less trustworthy than established brands like major dailies and TV news stations.
- But that’s especially true for younger South Floridians: Media habits for 18-34 year-olds are mobile-first and reliant on social-media, 30-54 year-olds use a blend of digital and traditional news sources, and 55+ year-olds rely heavily on traditional, appointment-style TV consumption.

PERCEPTIONS

- While South Floridians generally consider local news to be trusted and accurate, there are significant differences in satisfaction and trust across different demographics.
- Black respondents reported much lower trust in local news and felt less represented, voicing frustration with overwhelmingly negative coverage focused on crime.
- Overall, less than 40% of residents felt they were represented in local media.

NEEDS

- Local news is not widely perceived as providing the information residents need to participate in or navigate their communities, especially around the region’s dominant issues like housing affordability and immigration.
- Survey respondents expressed a strong desire for more information on government (seeking clarity on how decisions are made and how they affect them) and local activities, culture, and entertainment (seeking to feel more rooted and engaged in their communities).
- Housing affordability was cited as the top community challenge across every demographic and county.
- Immigrant communities face a lack of reliable, accurate information, particularly for those who don’t consume English news. Critical information about policy changes and social support is often accessed through trusted nonprofits, churches, or word-of-mouth, especially via WhatsApp.

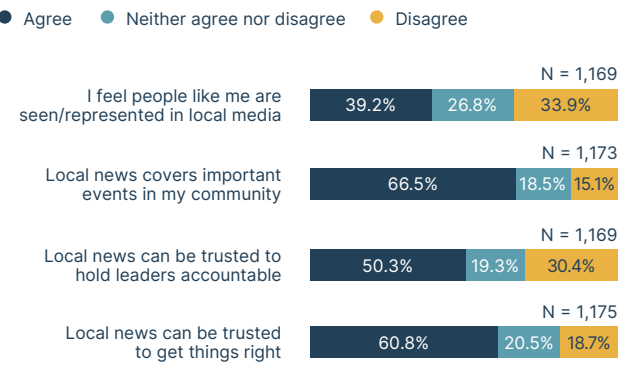
SOUTH FLORIDA
COMMUNITY SURVEY

VIEWS ON LOCAL NEWS

South Floridians generally give local news decent marks for accuracy, coverage choices, and accountability. More than 60% of respondents agreed with the statements “Local news can be trusted to get things right” (61%) and “Local news covers important events in my community” (67%). Just over half of respondents agreed that “Local news can be trusted to hold leaders accountable.”

Representation remains a significant concern. Thirty-nine percent of respondents agreed with the statement “I feel people like me are seen/represented in local media” and 34% actively disagreed — the largest source of disagreement across all statements.

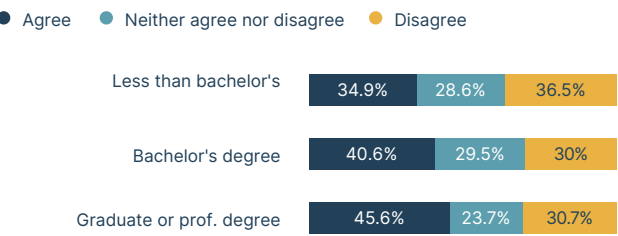
We asked survey respondents to weigh these statements about South Florida’s local news media.



These concerns about representation were amplified when survey results were analyzed by educational attainment and race/ethnicity.

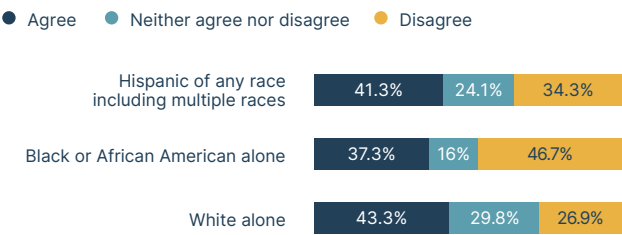
Respondents without a bachelor’s degree indicated feeling less represented in media than their counterparts with bachelor's, graduate or professional degrees.

I feel people like me are seen/represented in local media



In our regional survey, Black respondents reported much lower rates of satisfaction and trust in local news and information. They felt less represented in local media than their Hispanic and White counterparts. Among Black respondents, nearly half (47%) didn't feel represented in local media.

I feel people like me are seen/represented in local media



Black respondents were also more likely to express frustration with the negativity of coverage and the lack of diverse perspectives.

Two focus groups with Black residents — one in Miami- Dade County and one in Broward County — offered important context for these findings. Participants repeatedly voiced frustration with how negatively Black communities in South Florida are portrayed in the news, saying coverage focuses almost exclusively on crime, depicting Black individuals as either perpetrators or victims. In one focus group, participants noted that coverage tends to focus on the poorest neighborhoods, ignoring the full spectrum of Black communities in South Florida. One Miami-Dade participant recalled being afraid of his own community as a child because of the way the news portrayed it.

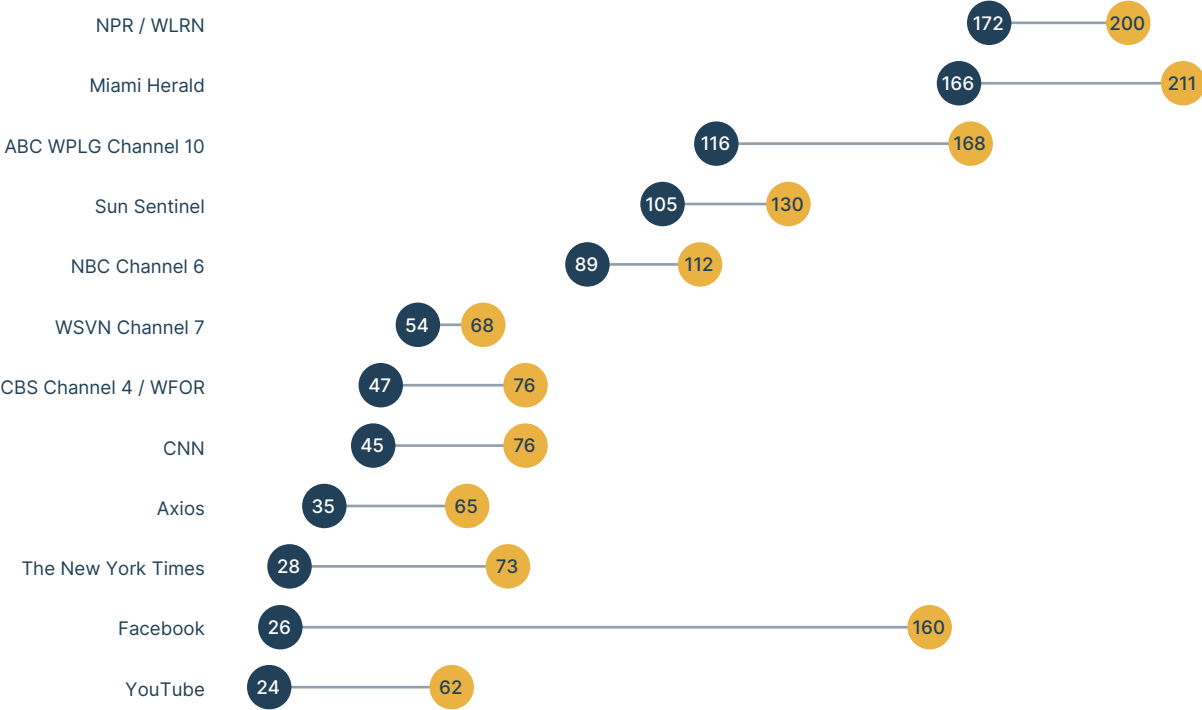
“The news is supposed to inform you on things to be cautious about and inform you on what’s going on around you. But if everything we have to look out for is people like us, that feeds into the negative stereotypes about African-American people.”

— Focus group participant

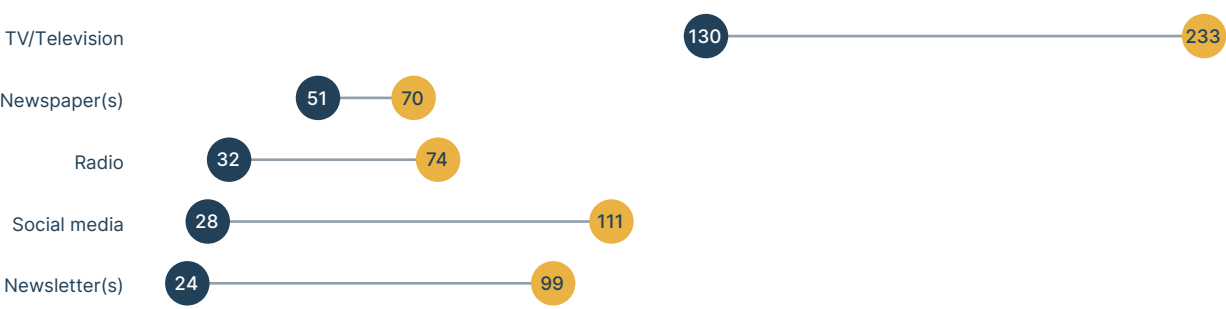
What sources do you trust the most for local news and information?

What sources do you turn to most often for local news?

Outlets



Formats



LOCAL NEWS: SOURCES YOU TRUST VS. SOURCES YOU TURN TO

There’s a clear gap between what South Floridians access for local news and what they *trust*. In our survey, respondents identified Facebook, social media platforms in general, and newsletters among their top 10 most-accessed sources, yet these same platforms ranked much lower for trust. In focus groups with Miami-Dade and Broward residents under 30, participants acknowledged that they tend to rely on social

media for news despite knowing that it isn’t a reliable source. They also noted that the algorithm made their feeds hyper-partisan.

This suggests that South Floridians recognize the unreliability of much of the information they’re getting on newer platforms — and that established news brands, even those accessed less frequently, still hold higher trust value. (Answers to these open-ended questions were not weighted.)

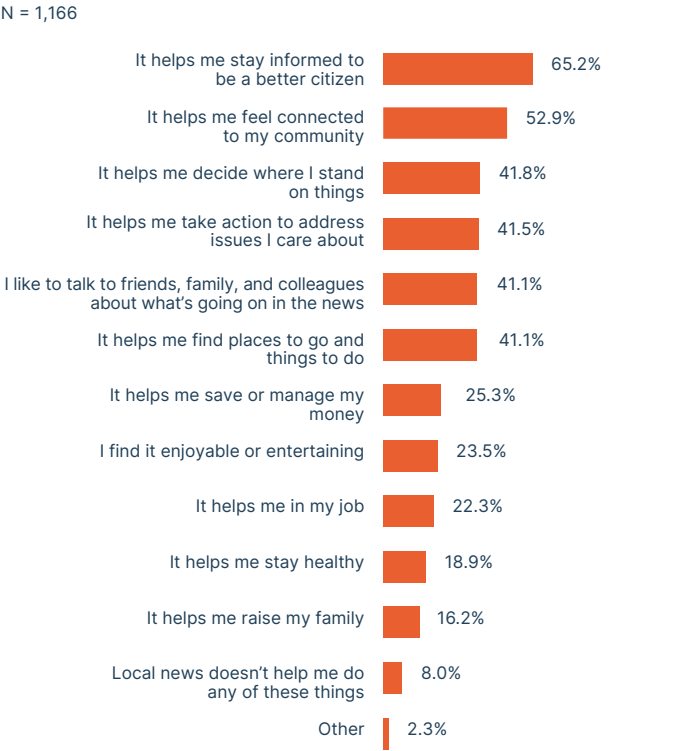
'WHY DO I SEEK OUT LOCAL NEWS?'

Respondents' top four reasons for seeking out local news make one thing clear: Staying informed and staying civically engaged go hand in hand.

When asked why they seek out local news and information, more than 65% of people said it was because by helping them stay informed, they could be a better citizen. More than half (53%) said local news and information helps them feel connected to their communities. And 42% said local news helps them decide where they "stand on things" and "take action to address issues" they care about. Forty-one percent said “It helps me find places to go and things to do.” Fewer people said that local news helps them with their basic needs, like helping them save or manage their money (25%), helping them with their job (22%), helping them stay healthy (19%), or helping them raise their families (16%). These responses point to an opportunity for local outlets to make their coverage more practical and relevant to residents’ daily lives. This gap is especially evident when compared to the topics people most wanted more information on, which tended to align with enjoyment and basic needs.

Those who selected “Other” reasons for following local news most often cited safety, situational awareness, and emergency preparedness.

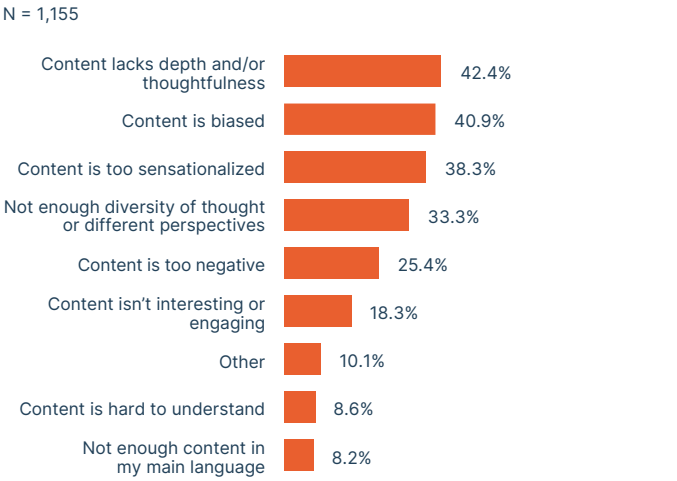
Which of the following are reasons that you seek out local news and information?



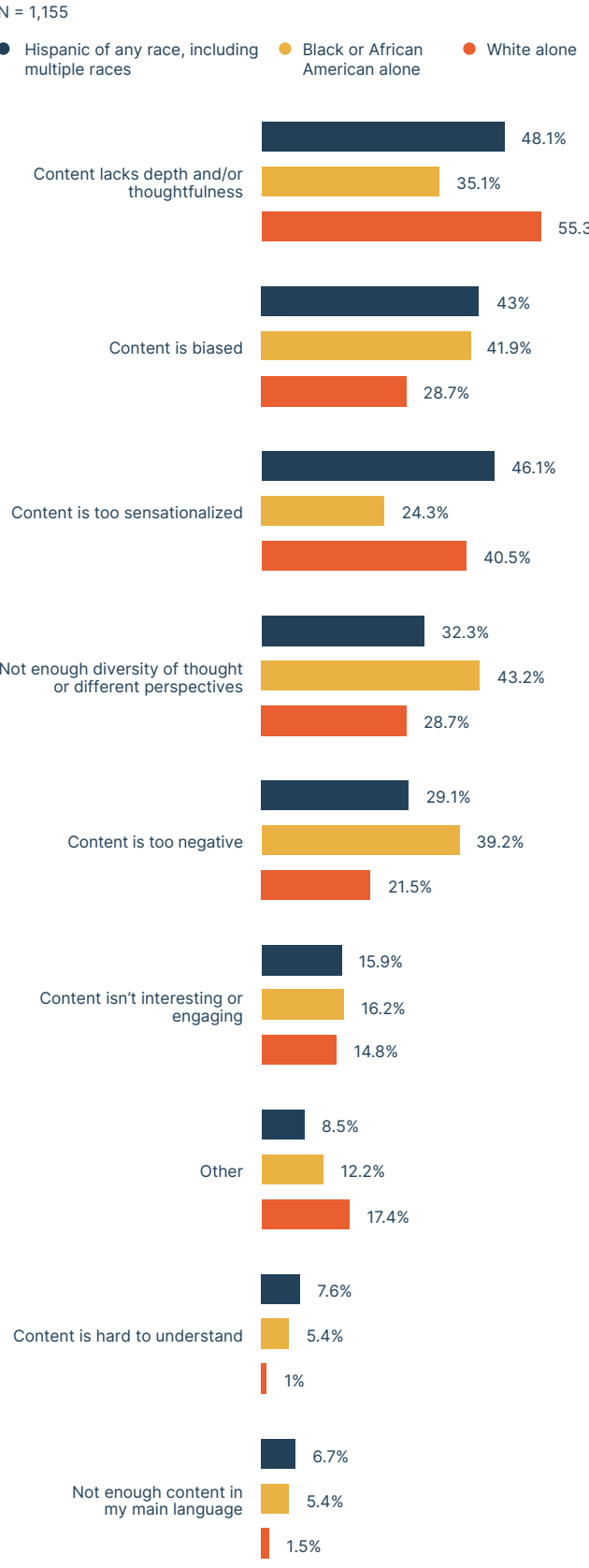
'WHAT FRUSTRATES ME THE MOST ABOUT LOCAL MEDIA?'

When asked what frustrates them most about local media, four themes rose to the top: a lack of depth and/or thoughtfulness, bias, sensationalism, and limited diversity of thought or perspectives.

What is most frustrating when it comes to engaging with local media?



What is most frustrating when it comes to engaging with local media?



There was substantial variation in the top answer when analyzing responses by racial and ethnic groups.

- White respondents were most likely to be frustrated with the content's lack of depth or thoughtfulness (55%, compared to 48% of Hispanic and 35% of Black respondents).
- Hispanic respondents were most likely to be frustrated with content being too sensationalized (46%, compared to 24% of Black and 41% of White respondents).
- Black respondents were most likely to be frustrated with the content being too negative (39%, compared to 29% of Hispanic and 22% of White respondents) and the content not having enough diversity of thought or different perspectives (43%, compared to 32% of Hispanic and 29% of White respondents).

FRAGMENTED AUDIENCES, UNEVEN ACCESS

We found that many South Floridians rely on sources not traditionally recognized as “news outlets,” and that trust, habits, and satisfaction with local media differ sharply across racial, ethnic, and other demographic lines.

Participants defined “community” in varied ways: some referred to their city or neighborhood, while others focused on their ethnic or religious group. Some spoke about their circles of family, friends, and where they choose to spend their time. Regardless of how they defined it, there was a yearning for coverage that feels closer to their daily lives.

A key theme in focus groups was audience fragmentation and a lack of shared public priorities. Respondents described fractured, distrustful, or polarized audiences, with most residents consuming only brief news snippets, often via social media. Echo chambers, misinformation, and declining news habits make it harder to reach large, diverse constituencies with verified information. Fragmentation also erodes any shared sense of public priorities.

In most communities today, there is significant distance between where information is originally produced and where and how it eventually reaches a news consumer. In fact, there are so many intermediaries today — social media networks, news aggregators, and now AI search results and tools — that it is difficult for a news consumer to know where the original information came from.

This is also true of South Florida, particularly in Miami-Dade and Broward, where information gaps are deepest for lower-income, peripheral, or minority communities. News about policy changes, social supports, and emergencies struggle to break through to those with lower levels of formal educational attainment, new immigrants, and Black or Haitian communities. Many rely on churches, community

organizations, and word-of-mouth for essential information — patterns that also appeared in our survey data.

HUNGRY FOR HYPERLOCAL NEWS

In focus groups with recent immigrants, Haitian residents, and Black community members, we heard a strong desire for more positive and community-driven news, and stories about local success, civic heroes, cultural life, and solutions — not just problems, scandals, or disasters. In focus groups and interviews, many criticized local media for focusing on crime, controversy, or “bad news” while neglecting the achievements and history of diverse neighborhoods.

South Floridians also spoke about the need for hyperlocal, community-oriented coverage that told the stories of their cities and neighborhoods — something they said they once found in the Miami Herald’s *Neighbors* section or in the Sun Sentinel before newsroom cuts. Monroe was the exception due to the small, close-knit population and interconnected nature of the county’s information networks.

Our survey respondents reported high levels of local civic engagement and volunteerism, although because this was a self-selected survey, respondents may likely to be more civically engaged than the general population. More than half of survey respondents said they had voted (71.2%), given money or food to someone in need (66%), attended a local event or arts performance (66.4%), or volunteered (53.7%) in the past year.

Younger residents (ages 18-34) were much less likely than older respondents to have attended a public meeting, voted in a local election, or donated to a political party or candidate. But they were the most likely to have attended a local event such as a festival, picnic, parade or street fair (82% responded yes).

Hyperlocal coverage of government activity, arts, and culture in smaller municipalities and those outside the urban core could help residents participate in public life more frequently by highlighting opportunities that are close to home and/or feel immediately relevant to their daily lives.

CRITICAL GAPS: BRIDGING LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DIVIDES

As described in the South Florida “At a Glance” section, nearly half of all residents (47%) in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties were born outside the U.S. — and that rises to 55% in Miami-Dade County. However, information needs and challenges vary greatly depending on country of origin, immigration status, and levels of education and income, both before and after arrival in the U.S.

During the focus group conducted with Haitian and Haitian-American residents, participants highlighted the community’s progress in South Florida, particularly in politics, and immense cultural pride.

The desire for asset-based, nuanced, and culturally relevant coverage drives continued support for Haitian-serving media, even among those who do not rely on Creole-language coverage.

But despite a number of news outlets serving immigrants in some capacity, our community-listening efforts revealed a lack of reliable, accurate coverage that meets critical information needs, especially for those with limited English proficiency.

In focus groups and interviews, immigrants and people who work with these communities expressed the need for information more tailored to their circumstances and shared how hard it is to get that information unless you know the right person. For example, many government programs have specific eligibility criteria and requirements that aren’t reflected in the high-level information available, requiring immigrants to go to nonprofit organizations for personalized advice.

The head of a Broward-based non-profit dedicated to serving immigrants said the lack of information can be a challenge. “Our clients come with very specific questions that the big outlets don’t provide answers for — changes to [Temporary Protected Status], for example. Those questions are being answered by social media, friends, and it’s all speculation,” he said. “Benefits and things like that — we help clients access them and navigate all of it.” The non-profit created their own partial remedy: an internal newsletter with essential information for staff to relay to clients.

IMMIGRATION INFORMATION: ‘LIKE PLAYING TELEPHONE’

Immigration topped the list of topics Hispanics wanted more information. In our regional survey, 22% of Hispanic respondents cited immigration as a top community challenge, compared with 11% of Black respondents and only 6% of White respondents. Hispanic respondents also expressed a much greater demand for more information on immigration (14%, compared with 3% of Black respondents and 5% of White respondents).

To better understand these findings, we held two focus groups in Spanish — one in Broward and one in Miami-Dade — and a third in Miami-Dade in Creole, each in partnership with a trusted nonprofit organization. We also conducted several interviews with community and civic leaders who work closely with immigrant communities. Among these conversations, several themes emerged.

Participants said there isn’t enough information available — and what does exist is hard to access, not completely accurate, outdated, and not in “everyday language.” Not everything gets translated into Spanish and Creole. Many official sources of information are not user-friendly, especially in non-English languages, which is a particularly big challenge for older immigrants who may lack technical literacy. Little of the information is formatted for easy sharing on heavily utilized platforms such as WhatsApp.

This gap leads to heavy reliance on word-of-mouth communication which, while well-intentioned, can easily spread misinformation. During the Broward Spanish-language focus group, participants expressed a strong wish for local news to provide “real-time” information that is “informative” and “verifiable.” Given how quickly immigration policies have shifted during the Trump administration, participants said it is difficult to know if the information they receive is current.

“It’s like playing telephone when you’re in school. One person is getting direct facts, but by the time it reaches the end of the line it’s inundated with untruths. The actual truth often gets lost.”

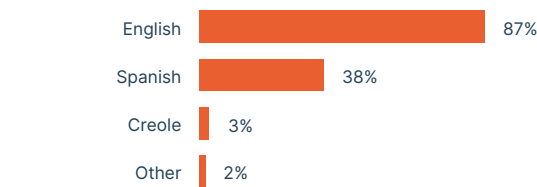
— Community leader

SMALL BUSINESSES ARE ALSO STRUGGLING AND STIGMATIZED

One example that community leaders surfaced when reflecting on how local news could better serve residents is to provide accurate, timely, and relevant information to help South Floridians, and especially small business owners, navigate the current administration’s immigration crackdown. Immigrant-run and immigrant-serving small businesses are often the backbone of neighborhoods with a high concentration of immigrants, providing both practical and emotional support in the form of flyers with essential information, news from home, and familiar goods. The recent immigration crackdown has reduced foot traffic and reduced the spending power of their most loyal customers. Business owners are struggling to find the information they need to keep their doors open and continue to serve their important roles in their communities.

And finally, recent immigrants feel isolated and stigmatized. They said what news coverage does exist often portrays immigrant communities negatively and fails to highlight their successes or their efforts to integrate and contribute economically. There was a clear call for news coverage that offers solutions, is less sensationalized, and is more grounded in the realities of their community. “We don’t have the tools as a community to get the attention of the media to cover our stories,” said one community leader in an interview.

In what language(s) do you access local news and information?



N=1,177. Respondents could select as many options as applied

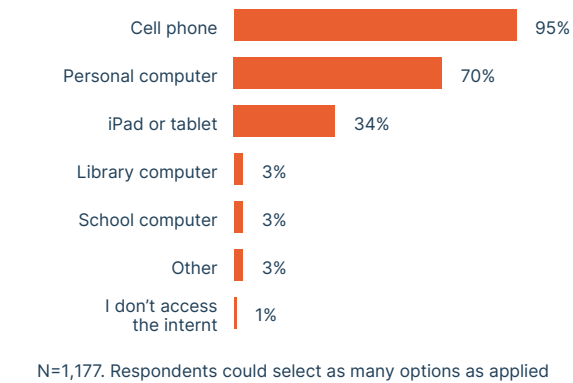
“Where we’re from we felt unsafe due to crime. Here we feel unsafe because Americans believe we are not part of the community.”

— Participant in a focus group centered on immigrant communities.



Ambassador Susan Esserman presents an Esserman-Knight Journalism Award to Churchill Ndonwie, Syra Ortiz Blanes, and Ana Claudia Chacin, part of the team behind The Miami Herald's series Caught in the Crackdown. The investigative series covered the 2025 federal immigration crackdown, challenging government claims about detainees' criminal records, exposing cases of people mistakenly detained, and documenting inhumane, overcrowded conditions at South Florida ICE facilities. The annual awards ceremony honors excellence in South Florida investigative and public service journalism.

How do you access the internet?



PLATFORMS

In most communities today, there is often a gap between where information is originally produced and how it is eventually consumed. And in South Florida, while the majority of local news and information is still produced by newspapers, local TV stations, and radio, that’s not necessarily where residents end up accessing it.

In our survey, we found that social media dominates local news habits: 66% of respondents get local news and

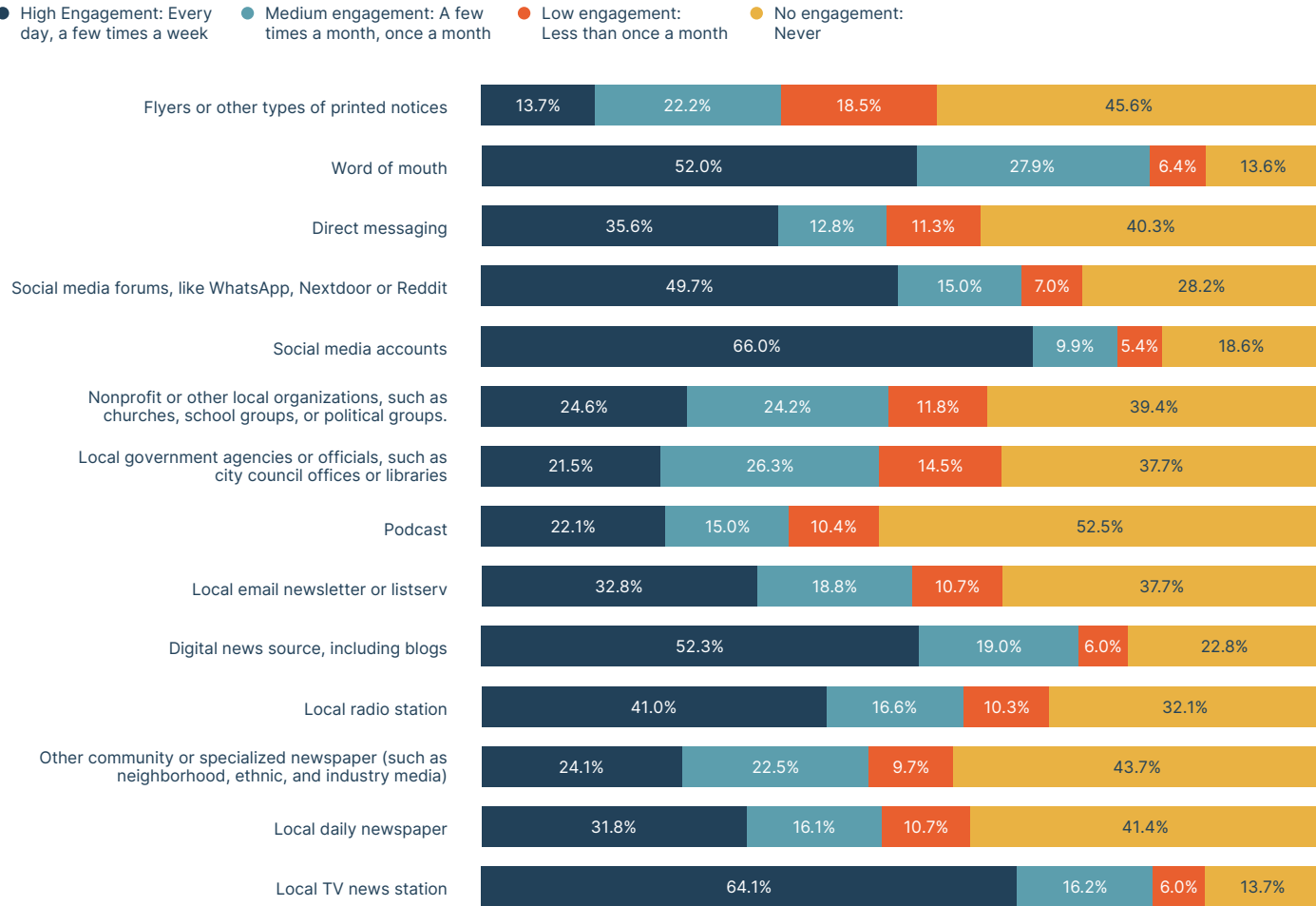
information from social media at least a few times a week, and 50% do so through social media forums and direct messaging such as Facebook groups and WhatsApp. More than half (52%) get local news and information from word-of-mouth.

In Monroe, interviewees called Facebook groups the “the coconut telegraph,” while in Miami-Dade people described seeing major news first on the social media account Only in Dade. In Broward, residents of all ages described themselves as glued to social media and online rumor mills, creating significant fact-checking challenges.

Local TV news remains highly popular, with 64% of South Floridians reporting high engagement, including more than half across all racial and ethnic groups.

Digital news sources, such as blogs, also ranked highly, with 52% of respondents reporting high engagement. Newspaper readership, however, is polarized: 32% of respondents reported high engagement with a local daily newspaper, while 41% reported none at all. The data for newspapers includes both print and online readership. Survey respondents were asked how often they turned to a specific source of news, regardless of whether they accessed it digitally.

In the past twelve months, how often did you get local news content and information from each of the following types of sources, regardless of whether you access them digitally or not?



Although podcasts are increasingly popular as a source for news and information generally, that is not true of local news in South Florida. More than half (53%) reported never getting local news from podcasts.

Those with less than a bachelor’s degree — 66.1% of South Florida residents ages 18 and over⁶ — were the most likely to have high engagement with local TV news stations (75%) and to have no engagement with text-based formats, whether a legacy format like a daily newspaper (46% reported no engagement) or an online text-based format (27% reported no engagement with digital news sources and 42% reported no engagement with local email newsletters).

South Floridians rely on a diverse and extensive mix of sources for news and information, toggling between a variety of sources any day of the week. When asked in an open-ended question, “What sources do you turn to most often for local news and information?” survey respondents

offered 419 different sources, many of them not local or not traditional news.

National news sources showed up prominently in those 419 sources, pointing to a nationalization of news habits. We saw the same pattern in our media diary study, conducted in April 2025, in which participants were prompted several times over a seven-day period to record their media consumption. Responses were saturated with national political coverage, particularly coverage of the Trump administration and federal policies (trade tariffs received particularly high attention). There was very limited recording of South Florida news.

In focus groups, participants spoke about the challenge of having an abundance of local news and information sources but limited time, bandwidth, and expertise to evaluate them.

6 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Department of Commerce

MEDIA DIARIES: DIFFERENT AGES, DIVERGENT MEDIA HABITS

To complement our community survey, we asked residents of Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe Counties to complete a four- to seven-day diary of the media they consumed. We received 53 viable responses. There were clear trends by age groups.

The 18–29 group shows mobile-first, social-media-dominated media habits:

- Social media is central to daily engagement, with websites and occasional TV or news apps supplementing.
- Mobile devices dominate, with computers filling niche or task-specific roles.
- Media consumption aligns with personal downtime (lunch, evenings, before bed) rather than structured daily schedules.
- Long sessions are common, suggesting deep scrolling, video watching, or extended conversations rather than brief check-ins.
- Traditional media like TV plays a supporting role, unlike in older demographics, and print/radio are almost absent.

The 30–54 group exhibits a blended digital-traditional media profile:

- Social media is central, but TV and messaging apps remain relevant.
- Mobile phones are the main device, with television as a strong complement and radio as a commute companion.
- Consumption is spread across the day, with evening and lunch as the main peaks.
- Engagement often lasts 30+ minutes, but many quick sessions (5–15 minutes) suggest intermittent checking throughout the day.

The over-55 group exhibits traditional, appointment-style media habits:

- Heavily anchored to television, particularly in the evening.
- Mobile phone use supplements TV, possibly for social media or online news.
- Engagements are typically 15–30 minutes or longer, suggesting dedicated viewing or listening rather than quick check-ins.
- The rhythm of consumption is tied to mealtimes and late evenings, with fewer instances during transit or early morning routines.

PLATFORM DEEP DIVE



LEGACY NEWSPAPERS, PRINT, AND DIGITAL

In the community survey, less than a third of respondents (32%) said that they get news and information from a local daily newspaper at least a few times per week, although more than half of respondents over the age of 65 (52%) turn to newspapers. It’s notable that 41% of respondents said they never get news from a local daily newspaper. More than half of respondents (52%) said they get news from digital news sources at least a few times a week, which includes legacy newspapers publishing online, but also includes blogs. Another quarter (24%) said they regularly get news and information from other community or specialized newspapers.

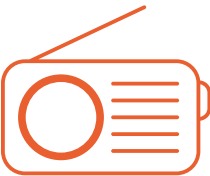
Less than half of survey respondents identifying as Hispanic (47%) reported accessing local news through a newspaper at least a few times a month, compared with 59% of those who identify as Black or African American and 62% of those identifying as White.



TV

Although local TV news is not the largest source of original reporting in South Florida, it plays an outsized role in how people get news and information. In our regional survey, 64% of respondents reported getting local news from TV at least a few times a week, and another 16% reported getting local news from TV at least once a month. Only social media showed higher rates of engagement. Reliance on TV was particularly strong among those with lower levels of educational attainment – 75% of survey respondents without a bachelor’s degree reported getting news from local TV at least a few times a week.

Survey data shows the strength of television news in Spanish-language communities in particular. Sixty percent of Hispanic respondents said they get news from local TV at least a few times a week, compared with 43% for local radio and 32% for a local daily newspaper. When asked to name specific sources, Telemundo was the most-cited Spanish-language outlet, followed by Univisión.



RADIO

Forty-one percent of all survey respondents said they get news and information from the radio at least a few times a week. Survey respondents who identified as Black were the most reliant on radio, with nearly three-quarters (74%) saying they get news from the radio at least a few times per month.

WLRN South Florida Public Radio was most cited as the top trusted local news source, and the third most frequently accessed source of news and information for South Floridians in an optional open-ended survey question. The closure of the Corporation of Public Broadcasting will seriously affect WLRN’s revenue, and it remains to be seen if and how the station will be able to fill budget gaps through other pathways, such as membership and individual giving among residents.

Spanish-language radio is a force in the region and a vital source of cultural connection for both recent immigrants and those whose families have lived for generations within South Florida’s Latin American diaspora. But as noted in the information providers case study on page 47, there are well-documented concerns of some stations repeating mis- and disinformation. More than half of all respondents identifying as Hispanic (56%) report medium to high engagement with local radio in any language.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Two-thirds of all survey respondents (66%) said they get news and information from social media at least a few times a week, half (50%) said they do so from social media forums (e.g., Facebook groups, Nextdoor, and Reddit), and more than a third (36%) said they get news and information from direct messaging (e.g., SMS or WhatsApp).

The youngest age cohort showed an even more pronounced inclination toward social media. Among 18-34 year-olds, more than three-quarters of survey respondents (78%) reported getting local news multiple times a week from social media. Focus group participants younger than 25 also showed a higher preference for social media — but also a high degree of skepticism about the quality of information they were getting on these platforms. Participants shared that they often fact-check information they see on social media by Googling it as well. They shared that they often felt overwhelmed by conflicting and incomplete information and struggled to discern what was credible and relevant. While this 18-34 cohort will continue to seek out news and

information, and likely at higher rates as they age, they’re unlikely to shift to legacy platforms.

providers might tailor coverage to better serve specific communities.



WORD OF MOUTH

More than half of survey respondents (52%) said they get local news and information via word of mouth a few times a week, and another 28% said they do

at least a few times a month. This is in line with findings in other community information needs studies across the U.S. and findings from polling by the Pew Research Center and others. Survey respondents identifying as Black or African American reported the highest rates of reliance on word of mouth, with 65% saying they get news this way at least a few times a week, and another 26% saying they do so a few times a month.

TOP CHALLENGES,
TOP INFORMATION NEEDS

SHARED REGIONAL CHALLENGE:
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Traditionally, news organizations have focused their resources on covering politics, government, and broad community “issues.” But when coverage isn’t grounded in what residents say are their biggest daily challenges, journalism can feel out-of-touch. And while news coverage shouldn’t be guided only by public perception, by deciding which topics they cover, the angle through which they cover them, and the volume and frequency with which they do so, local news sets the agenda. In South Florida, residents shared a desire for local news providers to make better use of their agenda-setting power.

In our survey, we asked two closed-response questions back-to-back:

- Which of the following are the three biggest challenges in your community?
- What topics do you wish you had more information on?

Together, these questions help us understand both residents’ material needs and what kind of information they need to address those needs. By analyzing responses by age, race and ethnicity, education level, and county, we can identify where media outlets and other news and information

Housing affordability is a unifying challenge across all three counties — and just about the only one.

Nearly half of all survey respondents (49%) cited housing affordability as a top challenge — far ahead of the second-ranked issue, crime and public safety (28%). Housing affordability is also cited as the top challenge in every age group, among respondents at every level of educational attainment, across all racial and ethnic groups, and in both Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

Housing costs have climbed steeply in the last decade while income has not kept pace. When adjusted for inflation, median household income in Miami-Dade increased by only 4% from 2019 to 2023, while housing costs jumped 28%. Two-thirds of renters across all three counties are now considered cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing.⁷

The housing crisis is particularly acute for Black South Floridians. Sixty-two percent of Black survey respondents cited housing affordability as their top challenge (compared to 48% of Hispanic and 47% of White respondents). Black respondents also selected homelessness as a top challenge three times more often than Hispanic and White respondents, though it’s unclear if this reflects a respondents’ own personal risk of falling into homelessness or concern about unhoused individuals in their communities.

Among White and Hispanic respondents, homeowners’ insurance was the second most-cited issue — another cost-of-living concern. The average annual premium for a \$300,000 home in Florida now exceeds \$5,000, more than twice the national average. Flood insurance is mandatory in flood-prone areas, and each update to federal flood maps adds more homes to high-risk zones, further increasing the financial burden on homeowners. This is not just a problem for homeowners, as rising insurance costs are passed on to renters in the form of higher rents.

For younger residents, there’s a general sense of financial hopelessness. Respondents aged 18 to 34 ranked housing affordability first and jobs second among their top challenges. In focus groups, many described being unable to afford to move out of their parents’ homes or struggling to find jobs with competitive wages, even for highly skilled roles.

	Top challenges	Top information needs
Broward	1. Housing affordability: 43% 2. Homeowners’ insurance: 32% 3. Crime and public safety: 29% 4. Jobs and the economy: 23% 5. Homelessness: 23% N=483	1. Housing affordability: 29% 2. Jobs and economy: 28% 3. Government: 25% 4. Local activities, culture, and entertainment: 21% 5. Homeowners’ insurance: 20% N=480
Miami-Dade	1. Housing affordability: 53% 2. Crime and public safety: 27% 3. Public transportation & traffic: 27% 4. Jobs and economy: 24% 5. Government: 21% N=607	1. Government: 32% 2. Housing affordability: 29% 3. Jobs and economy: 23% 4. Local activities, culture, & entertainment: 23% 5. Crime and public safety: 17% N=607
Monroe	1. Housing affordability: 74% 2. Environmental resilience and natural disasters: 46% 3. Health, including mental health: 40% 4. Homeowners’ insurance: 32% 5. Government: 29% N=90	1. Government: 44% 2. Environmental resilience & natural disasters: 31% 3. Housing affordability: 30% 4. Local activities, culture, & entertainment: 22% 5. Politics including elections: 18%. N=90

We received 90 survey responses from Monroe County, which is too few to weigh responses by age, race and ethnicity, or level of education. As a result, we include insights from the unweighted Monroe County data here. Miami-Dade and Broward County information is weighted by different demographic variables.

Where Monroe County residents get their news
“at least a few times a week”

- Social media accounts: 76%
- Digital news sources: 73%
- Social media forums (e.g.,WhatsApp groups): 68%
- Word of mouth: 59%
- Local daily newspaper: 46%
- Local government agencies or officials, such as city council offices or libraries: 40%
- Local TV news: 26%

Monroe residents rely even more heavily on social media than the rest of the region, with 76% of respondents getting news from social media accounts at least a few times a week. Only 26% of survey respondents in Monroe reported getting news from local TV at least a few times

a week, compared to 64% across all three counties. This is likely a function of the fact that Monroe is part of the South Florida Designated Media Area and Miami-Dade County dominates coverage.

Monroe as an Outlier

The differences in top challenges and information needs in Monroe County reflect the realities of being a small, geographically isolated island community — less room to build combined with a high percentage of second homes owned by nonresidents put even more pressure on housing costs. Meanwhile, natural disasters pose an even greater threat there. Its geographic isolation and small population also affect the quality of health care available to residents, who are slightly older than the rest of South Florida.

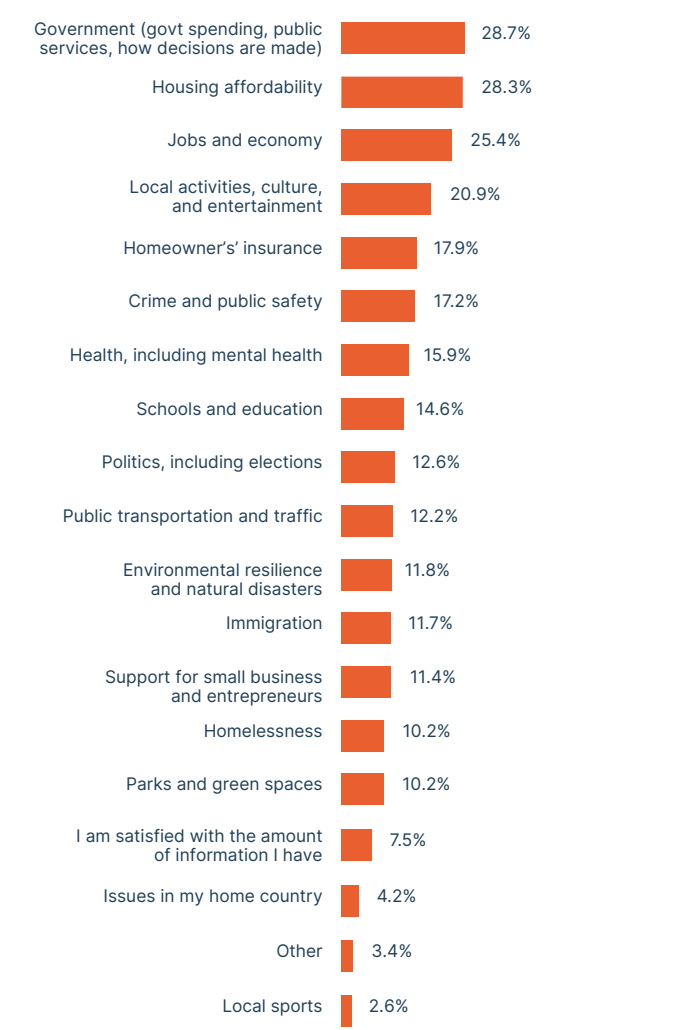
7 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Department of Commerce

For all South Floridians, cost-of-living challenges closely align with information needs. When survey respondents were asked what topics they wished they had more information on, “housing affordability” and “jobs and the economy” ranked among the top three. Respondents without a bachelor’s degree were especially likely to desire information about jobs and the economy.

As a community leader noted in an interview: “We don’t have enough housing, we don’t have enough services in some areas, we don’t have enough food in some areas... we need to have more coverage as to why so that residents and community stakeholders can be more aware and be more honest with each other.”

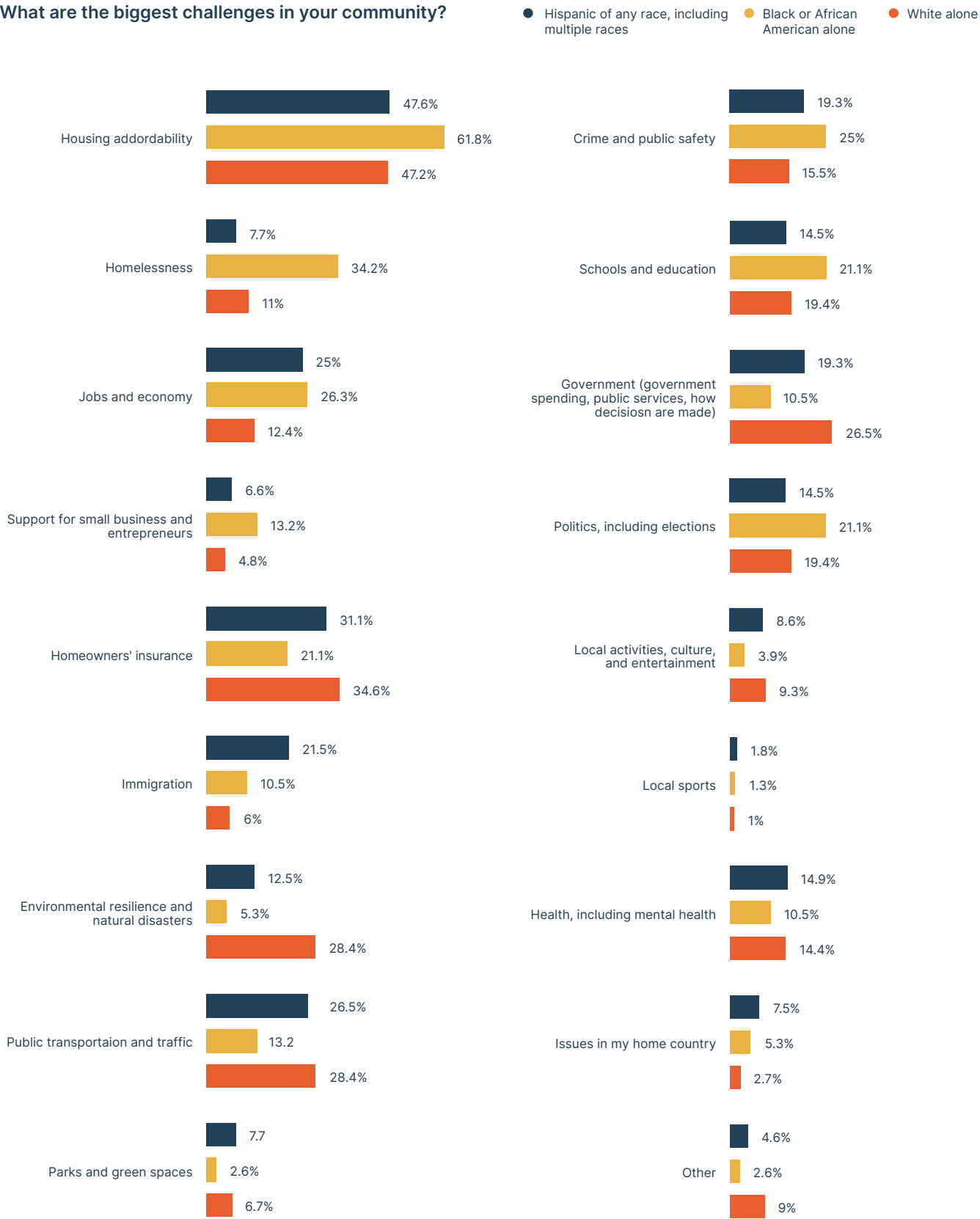
OTHER CRITICAL ISSUES

What topics do you wish you had more information on?

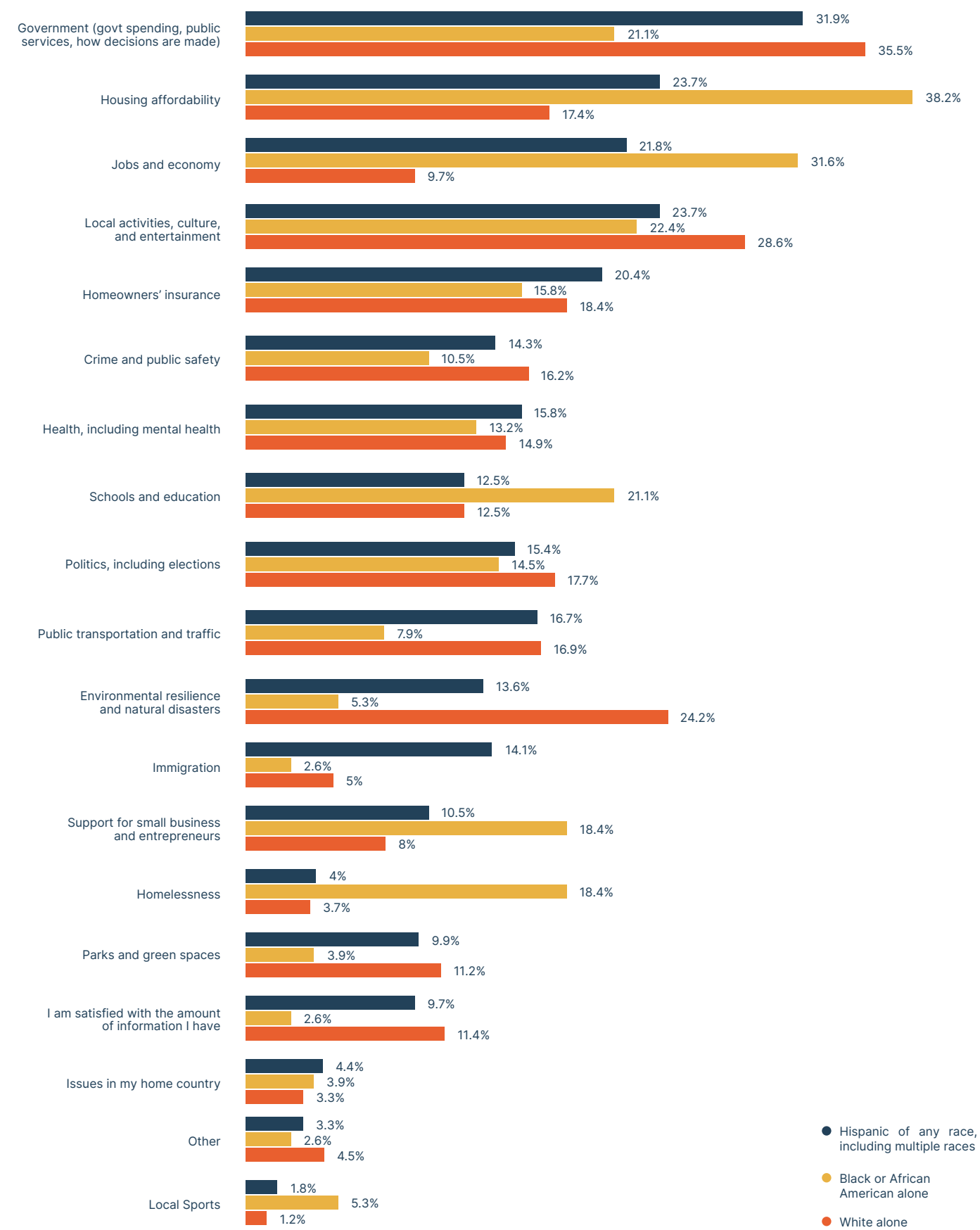


When a region faces an affordability crisis this severe, it can be difficult to draw attention to other systemic issues that have less immediate effects — such as climate change. While South Florida faces mounting threats from hurricanes, extreme heat, flooding, and sea level rise, only 10% of respondents selected environmental resilience and natural disasters as one of their top three community challenges (ranking 12th out of 18 options). Community leaders expressed a desire for journalists to help residents connect the dots on difficult issues. According to a community leader in an interview, “We have above and beyond any place in the country the most knowledgeable scientists. We should be the epicenter of solutions for climate issues, resilience, and health care...There’s definitely a gap in information. Citizens don’t know what is happening.” Beyond housing, responses about top community challenges vary substantially by age, race, and level of education. Residents in all three counties

What are the biggest challenges in your community?



What are the most pressing information needs in my community?



also want more coverage of government and local activities, culture, and entertainment.

When asked “What topics do you wish you had more information on?” South Floridians most often selected “government,” with 29% choosing it as their top topic. Government ranked highest across all age groups and levels of education and was among the top five topics across all racial and ethnic groups.

This finding is notable given that, at least in Miami-Dade County, local government receives substantial coverage from outlets like the Miami Herald, WLRN, and Miami Today, although coverage of local government tends to skew toward City of Miami and County Hall, not the dozens of other municipalities in the county. This desire for more government coverage — defined as government spending, public services, and how decisions are made — despite its prevalence points to a gap between what gets covered and what feels useful to residents. Although survey respondents did not have the opportunity to elaborate on their answers, we asked similar questions in focus groups and interviews. In these settings, participants indicated that they want clearer, more accessible explanations of what local leaders are doing to address challenges facing South Florida residents.

In an interview, one community leader said, “I don’t think that we are aware at all what those city commissioners are doing, let alone the county commission, let alone those task forces and subcommittees making decisions on transportation and how money is being spent on big infrastructure projects. We are clueless... I think all of us focus more on national news, the ones who make the most noise, without realizing the things happening in our community that are more important.”

In addition to wanting more clarity and accessibility around government, residents also expressed a strong desire for coverage that helps them navigate and participate in everyday community life. “Local activities, culture, and entertainment” ranked among the top three topics across every age group and racial and ethnic group — another unifying information need. Among the 3% of “other” survey responses, arts and culture appeared most frequently. Taken together, these findings suggest that people across South Florida crave information that helps them feel rooted and engaged in their communities.

In interviews, arts leaders echoed this sentiment, lamenting the scarcity of consistent cultural coverage and describing how they’ve had to build their own storytelling capacity as news outlets have pulled back. “There’s no one who is consistently covering us. So we rely on social media, that’s all we can do... and hope somebody reads it,” a local arts leader said.

Yet our analysis of the Miami Herald and other news providers revealed a meaningful amount of arts and culture reporting, and outlets such as South Florida PBS, the Miami New Times, and Broward Palm Beach New Times — along

with Artburst Miami, which is dedicated to arts coverage — continue to produce cultural reporting.

The disconnect between available coverage and expressed demand points to a deeper issue: While arts and culture stories exist, they may not be reaching or resonating with South Florida’s geographically dispersed and diverse communities.

We also noted an absence of “news you can use,” such as events calendars that highlight accessible, geographically diverse cultural activities. This presents an opportunity for news and information providers to invest in more service-oriented, accessible arts and culture coverage — the kind that helps people discover local events, understand community traditions, and engage with their neighbors. This coverage can help build trust and serve as an entry point to deeper civic information needs.

Some community-based outlets are already demonstrating what this looks like. Black Miami-Dade, founded in 2020 by journalist Nadege Green, pairs hyperlocal storytelling with community history, publishing primarily on Instagram (@blackmiamidade) but also collaborating with other media outlets and hosting in-person events. Its early traction underscores the demand for cultural coverage that feels relevant, rooted, and proximate to people’s daily lives.

“Sometimes when I’m watching the news, I feel like it has nothing to do with the realities that I’m facing. It doesn’t correspond to my identity or my needs,” a focus group participant said.

MEDIA DIARIES: WHAT WAS USEFUL OR INTERESTING?

We asked residents of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties to complete a five- to seven-day diary of the media they consumed. We received 53 viable responses.

One of the questions on the survey asked respondents: “What was most useful or interesting in your media consumption today? Why?”

Responses clustered into several broad categories:

- News and current events (predominantly national in nature, including politics and policy)
- Entertainment (sports, music, and other leisure media)
- Practical information (weather, traffic, health and cooking tips, financial advice)
- Social and personal updates (friends’ and family life events, for example)
- Humor and light content (memes, funny videos)

Explanations as to why the information was useful or interesting revealed four overarching types of utility:

- Relevance to personal life decisions (safety alerts, traffic, health advice, financial implications)
- Curiosity and learning (gaining new knowledge, learning skills)
- Emotional connection (entertainment, humor, inspiration, or uplifting messages)
- Social context (content to share or discuss with others)

These explanations could be useful for news providers as they consider how to approach local coverage and make it feel more relevant to South Floridians’ lives.

Sample responses:

- Useful was the afternoon traffic report, I was able to change my route as a result.
- That the deadline for tax in Florida has been extended to May 1st.
- I learned how to fix my clogged bathtub.
- Humor because the world is a mess right now.

Service journalism focuses on providing practical, actionable information and advice to help people solve problems and make their lives easier. It answers specific reader questions through “how-to” articles, explainers, and consumer guides, but can also include in-depth analyses and interactive tools. As Neiman Lab has covered, this style of reporting emphasizes meeting the audience’s needs directly, with a focus on utility, relevance, and providing value to the reader.⁸

Nonprofit organizations are increasingly filling this service journalism gap, improving their distribution and engagement strategies to ensure essential information reaches residents. Local legacy news outlets could do far more to be a part of that network.

New organizations, such as **Documented** in New York City, **Sahan Journal** in Minnesota’s Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, **Outlier Media** in Detroit, and others, are finding that when news organizations help people get their basic needs met by regularly producing and resurfacing service journalism, they can build trust with communities that currently feel ignored. Over time, deeper engagement can surface the systemic issues that warrant deeper investigation — creating a virtuous cycle built on listening, trust and results.



Local journalism icon Bea L. Hines, the first Black woman to write for the Miami Herald, joins journalist and Black Miami-Dade founder Nadege Green on stage at Sweat Records. In honor of the centennial of the Harlem Renaissance, Black Miami-Dade collaborated with Sweat Records to transform the Little Haiti vinyl record store into a community classroom.

8 Graves, Lucas. “Build for a Crisis: Ideas for the Future of Local News.” *Nieman Lab*, March 18, 2021.

News & Information Ecosystem

SECTION SNAPSHOT:

This section provides an overview of South Florida news and information providers, examining the quantity, type, and quality of content produced by local media outlets across Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties. To understand the current landscape of news outlets and local media, we assembled a database of local news sources, analyzed a month of content from three legacy newspapers, reviewed the content of dozens of other organizations, and interviewed several local community and media leaders.

CONTEXT

For the purpose of better understanding the information providers of South Florida, we primarily focused on these questions:

- What media outlets do South Floridians have access to?
- What content are those outlets producing?
- How much of it is original, local, and addressing core community information needs?

We found that Monroe is quite distinct from Miami-Dade and Broward and thus we analyzed its news ecosystem separately.

Monroe is much smaller than Miami-Dade and Broward (fewer than 81,000 residents) and is geographically isolated, and as such, it functions as both a county and hyperlocal community. The majority of Monroe County residents are native English-speakers, meaning there is less need for multilingual news solutions. And while the information providers in Miami-Dade and Broward are siloed and do not have a practice of coordination or collaboration, Monroe has a more interconnected information network in which news, government, nonprofit, and word-of-mouth nodes of information work together. We'll share more about Monroe's unique information ecosystem later in this section.

KEY FINDINGS

- **South Florida's information ecosystem includes more than 100 news and information providers but can be difficult to navigate: Finding trusted, relevant information often depends on language, geography, and digital access.** The news and information ecosystem includes a crowded mix of traditional news outlets, hyperlocal publications, social media platforms, messaging apps and informal community networks that can feel fragmented and difficult to track, evaluate and verify. The sheer number of providers doesn't guarantee that every community has equal access to reliable local news.
- **Traditional print, broadcast, and radio outlets remain the region's dominant players, carrying decades of institutional recognition and established trust.** At the same time, these newsrooms — particularly legacy newspapers in Miami-Dade and Broward — have faced sustained financial pressures consistent with trends across the industry that significantly reduce staffing and capacity for in-depth, original, community-focused reporting.
- **The region is well-positioned for greater investment in service journalism, investigative reporting, and accountability journalism,** building on residents' strong desire for increased coverage and in-depth, explanatory information especially on local government, education and housing affordability.
- **Zip codes matter: Many municipalities and neighborhoods across South Florida lack regular, dedicated news coverage, with smaller cities and unincorporated areas experiencing the least reach.** For residents in these communities, staying informed about local decisions, services, and civic life often means relying on social media, word of mouth, or larger regional outlets that can't cover neighborhood-level detail.
- **A new generation of hyperlocal outlets is taking root across South Florida.** While these community-rooted newsrooms are a promising signal for the ecosystem's future, these outlets would benefit from stronger connective infrastructure to help them grow and sustain their work.
- **Influential social media accounts and community-based platforms — including Only in Dade and neighborhood WhatsApp groups — have become vital information sources.** These emerging platforms are reshaping how information circulates in South Florida, particularly for younger residents and immigrant communities.
- **Language is another barrier to access: English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and other language communities often end up in separate information silos, with little overlap between them.** Building stronger cross-language bridges is essential — not only so every South Floridian has equal access to critical civic information, but so residents can understand and connect with the stories, struggles, and everyday lives of others across their community.
- **Monroe County has developed a tightly connected information network,** with a small set of local journalism, government, and community organizations working closely together — a model of interdependence worth understanding and supporting as the ecosystem evolves.
- **There is a meaningful opportunity for a coordinating entity to strengthen the field:** An ecosystem coordinator or backbone institution would help outlets do together what none can do alone, such as fostering editorial collaboration, supporting local news entrepreneurship, and enabling shared backend and operational services across the region.

9 Philip M. Napoli, Sarah Stonbely, Kathleen McCollough, & Bryce Renninger (2016): Local Journalism and the Information needs of Local Communities, Journalism

	Miami-Dade		Broward		Monroe	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total information providers*						
	77	--	69	--	36	--
Information providers by medium**						
Print and digital	25	32.4%	19	27.3%	12	33.3%
Digital only	55	71.4%	54	78.3%	20	55.5%
Television	14	18.2%	15	21.7%	7	19.4%
Radio	20	26%	14	20.3%	13	36.1%
Information providers by language***						
English	58	75.3%	55	79.7%	28	77.7%
Spanish	17	22.07%	12	17.4%	7	18.4%
Haitian Creole	5	6.5%	5	7.2%	0	0%
French	3	3.9%	3	4.3%	0	0%

These numbers are current as of April 9, 2026. For the most up-to-date status and a detailed explanation of how we categorized news providers, you can visit the South Florida News and Information Provider Database at pressforwardsouthflorida.news.

*Many news outlets serve more than one county so a news outlet could be counted in multiple counties.
**“Digital only” includes all digital formats, not just websites.
***If a publication publishes in more than one language, they are counted in each language.

ABOUT OUR DATABASE OF “LOCAL NEWS AND INFORMATION PROVIDERS”

When Press Forward South Florida launched in 2025, there was no central, regularly updated list of local news and information providers serving the region. We created the **South Florida News and Information Database** — searchable by format, language, and other features — to provide a clearer picture of our community’s landscape.

Press Forward South Florida has chosen to define “news and information providers” relatively expansively. We recognize that there are many sources of useful local information that would not meet the traditional definition of “news,” including content creators, Facebook groups, WhatsApp groups, nonprofit organizations, and marketing agencies. We define “local” as being produced by, for, and about communities within the boundaries of Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties. If a provider also reaches into Palm Beach County or Collier County, we included them in the South Florida News and Information Database as long as they also serve residents of one or more of Press Forward South Florida’s three counties. If an outlet does not serve South Florida as a geographic area but does serve a community with significant presence in South Florida, such as the Haitian Times, we include them in the database. News and information providers providing statewide coverage relevant to South Florida are also included in this database. In the South Florida News and Information Database we differentiate between news

providers, information creators, and information curators.

We know that the list of information creators and curators included in the database is large but not comprehensive, as we only included those who came up during our landscape scan. The scan included a regional survey that received more than 1,200 responses. We’ve included an online form alongside our database so people can suggest their own additions to this list.

Explore the **South Florida News and Information Database**, and offer feedback, on the [Press Forward South Florida website](https://pressforwardsouthflorida.news).

ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS

We found that South Florida is a dense local news ecosystem, with more than 100 local news and information providers, from commercial media to student-run newspapers to hyperlocal publications. As such, this report will not reference every news and information provider but will instead provide a picture of the quantity and types of news and information circulating in South Florida overall, as well as in specific communities.

In an information ecosystem, there is often at least one anchor newsroom that produces a significant amount of the original, local reporting, which may then be shared, amplified, and further reported on by other newsrooms and others in the information ecosystem — such as nonprofit organizations, social media accounts, and WhatsApp groups.

Miami-Dade has an anchor newsroom with the Miami Herald, but Broward and Monroe both benefit and suffer from their proximity to Miami-Dade. They are often covered as part of the larger regional market, but as newsrooms become more strained, reporting resources are often focused on the metro Miami area.

Similar to trends across the U.S., traditional broadcast and print media still dominate local news production, but newsletters, blogs, social media and other forms of user-generated content have carved out significant space when it comes to information consumption. This multi-platform reality signals a shift toward news consumption that is both diverse in format and personalized.

Legacy media platforms — whether print, radio, or television — publish a steady stream of content as they compete to hold audience attention in a crowded market. This shift toward quicker, reactive coverage isn't unique to South Florida — it reflects a national trend, as declining ad revenue and a changing digital landscape have left local newsrooms across the country with fewer resources for in-depth reporting.

Existing journalism providers’ capacity for original reporting and community coverage has shrunk to a main-city focus, leaving smaller cities and unincorporated areas with reduced or no coverage. Even in the City of Miami, the best-covered city in the region, residents say they need more hyperlocal coverage to access relevant news and information. Municipal governments other than the City of Miami are minimally covered, creating gaps in visibility, accountability, and connection to civic life that comes with regular local reporting.

10 [Knight Communities Healthy News & Information Ecosystems 2023](#)

A growing number of hyperlocal and community-specific outlets are emerging across South Florida, though they remain few relative to the number of neighborhoods and communities that could benefit from this kind of coverage. This is a segment of the ecosystem with room to grow, both in reach and in the range of neighborhood life it captures. In both our regional survey and focus groups, residents expressed a desire for the news to capture a fuller spectrum of neighborhood life, many requesting that media outlets balance negative stories with other positive ones.

Language also divides the local media landscape. As Impact Architects noted in the 2023 Knight Communities Healthy News & Information Ecosystems report on Miami-Dade, “the ecosystem in South Florida, especially in Miami-Dade County, functions as two ecosystems,¹⁰ with little interconnection between the English- and Spanish-language media in the area — and significant differences in the volume and quality of local news available.”

South Florida’s ethnic, in-language, and community media play a vital role in reflecting the experiences of residents of color, low-income communities, and immigrants — experiences that general-market publications often underreport. These outlets are frequently trusted, deeply connected sources of information for the communities they serve. Like many local newsrooms, though, they often lack the resources to cover the full range of issue areas that are relevant and important to their communities.

The influx of new residents to the region adds to the challenge, underscoring the need for local news that cultivates sustained civic engagement and fosters stronger community connections.

Despite South Florida’s diverse population and shared challenges, residents have a strong sense of local identity and a lack of interaction among and between communities. This focus on the hyperlocal, while maybe an indicator of community pride, creates a fragmented landscape where broader connections are limited. As one community leader noted, “I think it’s hyperlocal – Hialeah, Hialeah, South Dade, South Dade... people are still very local. Because of the way we’re physically structured, the communities are not really interacting.”

But that hyperlocal focus, paired with a fragmented media landscape, can leave residents disconnected from the shared challenges facing communities across the region. Some of South Florida’s biggest challenges — housing affordability, natural disasters, extreme heat, sea level rise, and transportation — don’t start and stop at county lines. But there are opportunities to increase regional coverage and collaboration across news providers, as explored later in our content analysis of major newspapers in the region.

STAKEHOLDERS’ NOTES

In interviews, stakeholders identified the following challenges for the region.

SHARED REGIONAL CHALLENGES:

- **Diminished local newsrooms and resulting coverage gaps:** Every county’s main legacy outlet has sharply reduced staff and coverage. Interviewees frequently mentioned shrinking newsrooms, less government reporting, greater reliance on press releases, and less investigative and enterprise journalism. People in all three counties reported significant gaps in coverage of local and county government, education, housing and affordability, community life, and positive local stories. Multiple interviewees said that crucial meetings, decisions, or scandals now go unreported.
- **Desire for more investigative and accountability journalism:** Interviewees across counties wished for more “real” reporting — investigations, deep dives, series, and follow-up coverage — rather than event recaps or press-release rewrites. Many express nostalgia for a time when local journalists had the capacity and independence to dig into public corruption, complex policy, or persistent social problems.
- **Financial pressure on journalists:** Low pay, high cost of living, lack of institutional support, and burnout are nearly universal among journalists in all counties. Interviewees cited high turnover and newsroom exodus, explaining that reporting job salaries can’t sustain locals. “No one can afford to live here,” was a common refrain in both Miami-Dade and Monroe media interviews. This exodus has sharply reduced the number of reporters who know their communities well and have the experience to dig deep.

MIAMI-DADE AND BROWARD-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES:

- **Siloed media ecosystems:** Both counties have multiple languages, geographies, and cultures, leading to media “bubbles” (e.g., ethnic media, neighborhood blogs, issue silos, WhatsApp groups). This fragmentation limits cross-community understanding and coordinated civic response.
- **Under- and misrepresentation of immigrant communities and people of color:** Interviewees agreed that large immigrant communities are often covered only in “crisis” or negative terms, rather than ways that uplift, inform, or celebrate their complexity or contributions. Language silos mean critical information doesn’t circulate evenly.
- **Spanish-language and Haitian/Creole media are essential but not always reliable:** Trusted Spanish- and Creole-language news organizations are a primary source of information for many communities across South Florida. However, residents also navigate a fragmented information environment that includes social media, messaging networks, online forums, and talk radio, where inaccurate or misleading information can circulate.
- **Uneven regular coverage of local government and civic life:** Interviewees said coverage of city and county commissions, zoning, public meetings, and local budgeting is inadequate or inconsistent. Major municipal decisions often fly under the radar unless they become politicized or disastrous.

NEWS PROVIDERS BY FORMAT

PRINT & DIGITAL NEWS SOURCES

The region is served by three legacy newspapers that provide a significant portion of the original local news coverage for the three countries: the Miami Herald, the Sun Sentinel, and El Nuevo Herald.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

To better understand the coverage provided by the three legacy newspapers serving South Florida, we conducted a content analysis for a one-month sample of coverage published in March 2025 by the Miami Herald, the Sun Sentinel, and El Nuevo Herald. Content from March 2025 was chosen because it was a month of “representative” content without significant national stories (e.g., elections) and when the outlets should not have experienced any staff shortages due to holidays or summer vacations.

The sample included:

- Miami Herald: 2,050 articles published, 1,260 originating in Miami Herald newsroom
- El Nuevo Herald: 1,027 articles published, 472 originating in El Nuevo Herald newsroom (they also published 87 partner stories, mostly translations from The Miami Herald)
- Sun Sentinel: 2,372 articles published, 867 originating in Sun Sentinel newsroom

This analysis informed our description of news providers in the region, helping us understand the volume of coverage on key topics, the quantity of original reporting published by the newspapers, and the depth of reporting.

Miami Herald

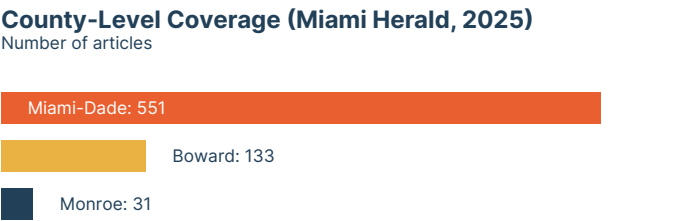
The Miami Herald serves as an anchor newsroom — the chief producer of original, local reporting — for the entire South Florida region, not just Miami-Dade County, and thus received deeper analysis than other news sources.

Founded in 1903, the Herald, with 24 Pulitzer Prizes, is one of the nation’s most distinguished local newspapers. Despite steep staff reductions since 2008 (from roughly 450 people in the late 1990s to about 100 in 2022), the paper continues to cover local government at multiple levels, including the Miami-Dade County Commission, numerous city commissions, the school board, and municipal operations.

The Herald’s investigations have resulted in government reforms and policy changes. Recent examples include the Pulitzer-winning Broken Promises series on local civic project failures, the Birth and Betrayal series that spurred reforms to Florida’s birth injury program, and Shakedown City, which triggered multiple state and federal investigations into Miami’s mayor. The Herald’s Julie K. Brown was awarded a Pulitzer Prize special citation in 2026 for her reporting that exposed Jeffrey Epstein’s abuse and the justice system failures that shielded him — work that continues to reverberate around the world nearly a decade after her groundbreaking series Perversion of Justice first published.

Our content analysis aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the Miami Herald beneath these highlights. Of 2,050 unique articles published in March 2025, 1,260 (75%) originated in the Herald newsroom. The rest were mostly partner or paid content, often from major newswires, distribution partners, or other newsrooms owned by McClatchy, the Herald’s parent company that acquired the paper in 2006 after its purchase of the Knight Ridder newspaper chain. Focused on those 1,260 original articles, we analyzed how the Miami Herald newsroom contributes to the South Florida news ecosystem. “Local” refers here to Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe; “South Florida” refers to the broader region, including Palm Beach County.

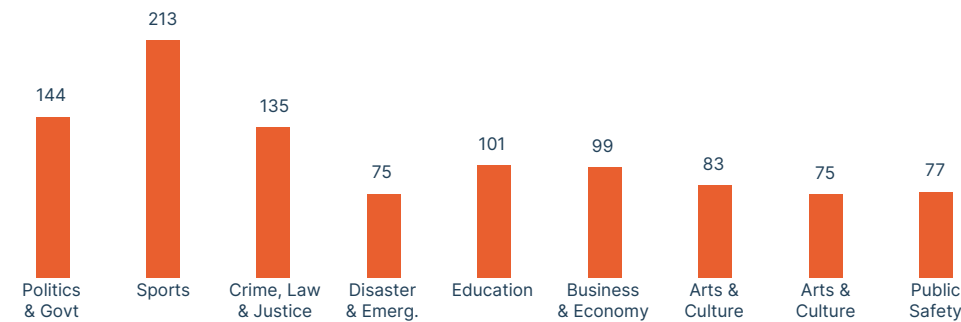
Volume of local reporting: More than half of the 1,260 original stories were local, with 44% of coverage (550 stories) concentrated on Miami-Dade County. The Herald also produced 330 stories about South Florida more broadly and 535 stories about the state.



Geographic distribution: Analysis of the Miami Herald bears out the perception that coverage is hyper-concentrated in the urban core: 84% of stories about Miami-Dade County touched on the City of Miami. There is little reporting about the 33 other municipalities in Miami-Dade County — home to more than 2.3 million residents — and of their governments, businesses, schools, and neighborhood events.

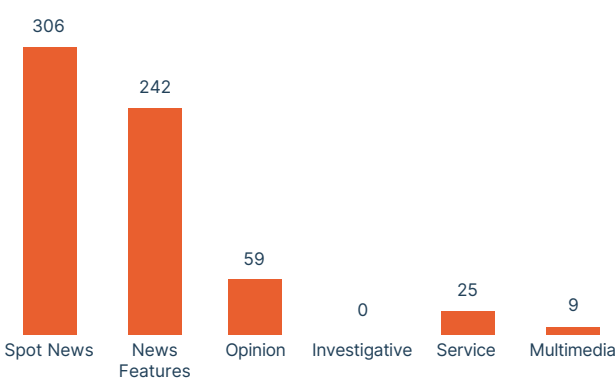
Depth of local reporting: There is a strong emphasis on immediacy: 48% of local stories were daily news coverage (“spot” news), and 38% were news features, extending coverage beyond official announcements but still tied to the news cycle. Investigative reporting was assessed against the standard used by Investigative Reporters and Editors, the premier nonprofit advocacy organization for investigative journalism worldwide. According to that standard, a story must surface information that an individual or institution actively sought to keep concealed. These results should be read in light of how investigative journalism works. A major investigation reflects months of effort and appears only intermittently, so a single month — even a representative one, may not capture a newsroom’s investigative capacity. In the case of the Herald,

Local Coverage Breakdown by Type of Story (Miami Herald, March 2025)



the sampled month itself carries that work’s downstream traces: stories not investigative in themselves but detailing legislation responding to Herald investigations.

Miami Herald Local News Coverage by Type
(March 2025)



Alignment with community needs: Politics, government, crime, and sports were prominent topics, while housing, affordability, transportation, and jobs were covered far less frequently.

While some described South Florida as a “news desert,” the Herald continues to produce an impressive volume of original stories that also get picked up and built on by other newsrooms in the region. Similarly, while political and governmental accountability were viewed as lacking, the Herald devoted a significant share of its reporting to these areas. This suggests that concerns are less about output and more about distribution, depth, and community relevance. Paywalls may also contribute to this disconnect.

Finally, although interviewees lamented a loss of arts and culture coverage, the Herald produced notable reporting on arts, entertainment, and sports, indicating a divergence between the quantity of cultural coverage and its ability to reach South Florida's diverse demographics.

Sun Sentinel

The Sun Sentinel has historically been an anchor newsroom for Broward County. The Sun Sentinel, owned by Tribune Publishing, has won three Pulitzer Prizes — including a 2019 Public Service award for exposing failings by school and law enforcement officials before and after the deadly shooting rampage at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Of 2,372 articles published during the month of March 2025, only about a third (867) were produced by Sun Sentinel staff. The rest were partner or paid content, often from other publications of parent company Tribune Media, major newswires, and other news sources with distribution agreements with the Sun Sentinel.

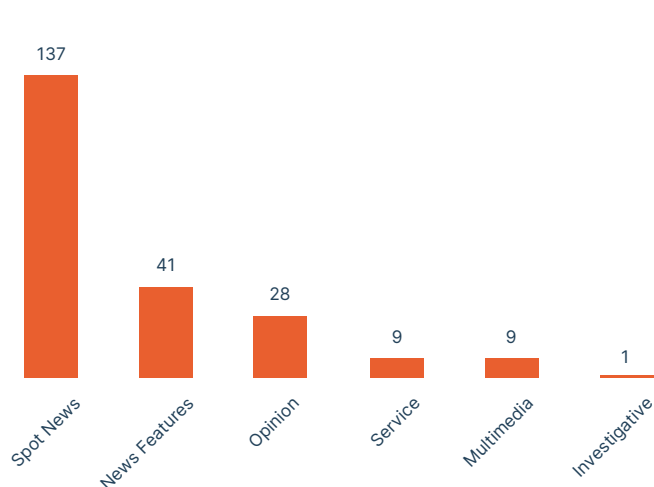
Among the 867 articles produced by the Sun Sentinel, 225 stories provided local coverage, meaning they directly addressed Miami-Dade, Broward, or Monroe counties. Of those 225 local stories, 142 were about Broward, the Sentinel’s home county. When the volume of original, local reporting from an anchor newsroom is low, it affects the whole ecosystem because radio and television news and smaller print and digital outlets have less reporting to relay, repackaging, or do additional reporting on.

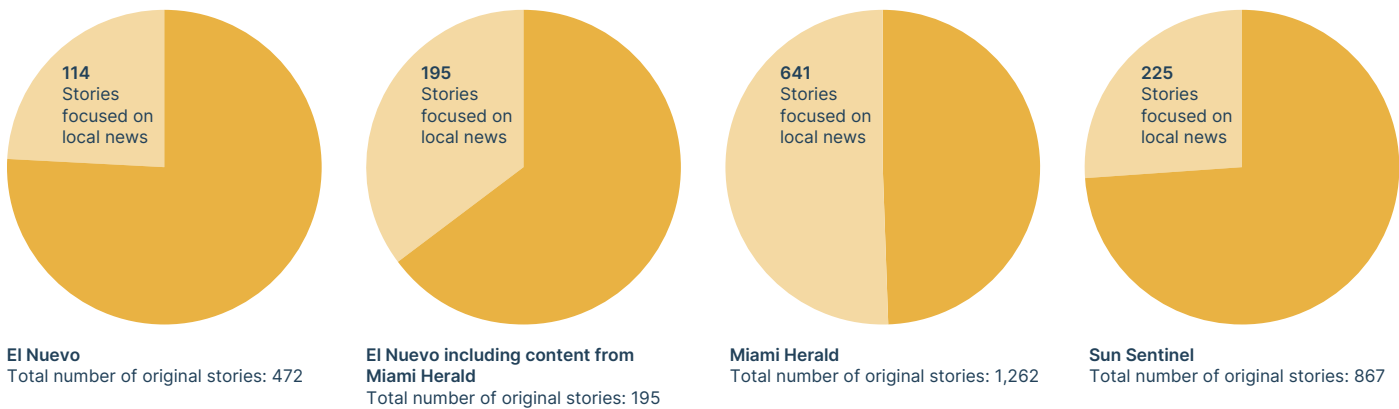
Focusing on the 225 stories about Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties, the topical breakdown demonstrates both breadth and imbalance of coverage. Sports accounted for the largest share of stories (36%), followed by education (24%). Nearly a third of the stories in the education category were about high school or college athletics. Housing, health, labor, and environmental issues received far less attention.

Story types also tended toward immediacy: Nearly two-thirds of local stories were daily news coverage, and another fifth were in-depth reporting.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while the Sun Sentinel contributes to the South Florida information environment, its coverage is diffuse in geography and heavily weighted toward breaking news. Core accountability functions — particularly investigative reporting and sustained attention to housing, labor, and climate — remain under-resourced.

Sun Sentinel Local News Stories by Type
(March 2025)





El Nuevo Herald

El Nuevo Herald is the Spanish-language sister publication of the Miami Herald, sharing ownership, newsroom resources, and reporting while producing journalism tailored to South Florida’s Spanish-speaking audiences. El Nuevo Herald contributes to South Florida’s Spanish-language news ecosystem through two distinct but complementary channels. Of the 1,072 articles El Nuevo Herald published in March 2025, 472 were authored by its newsroom staff. The outlet also published 87 additional local stories through partnerships, primarily translations of Miami Herald articles.

El Nuevo Herald’s collaborative model allows it to focus its original reporting on topics of particular interest to Spanish-speaking communities, while ensuring broader civic news reaches these audiences through translated content. We focused our detailed analysis on the 472 original articles to understand the newsroom’s distinct editorial role within the South Florida news ecosystem.

Of El Nuevo Herald’s 472 original stories, 114 focused on Miami-Dade, Broward, or Monroe counties (what we define as “local” for the purposes of this analysis). When translated Miami Herald content is included, the total local coverage expands to approximately 195 stories — resulting in a robust local news source for Spanish-language readers.

A substantial share of El Nuevo Herald’s original stories were national or international in scope, particularly focused on Cuba and Venezuela. This reflects the paper’s distinctive editorial priorities in serving South Florida’s Spanish-speaking communities with coverage tailored to their specific interests and connections.

Across topical areas, the newsroom’s original reporting gave significant attention to politics, immigration, crime and public safety, natural disasters, and sports. Coverage of housing, affordability, labor, education, and health was minimal, though some of these gaps may be partially addressed through translated content.

As with the other two newspapers included in this content analysis, El Nuevo Herald’s original reporting is largely about the news of the day: nearly 60% of local stories were classified as spot news (i.e., daily news coverage), while one fifth were news features. Investigative work — which requires more time and resources — was almost absent, with one such story recorded. While service journalism accounted for 16% of coverage — higher than the Miami Herald’s — its overall scale remained small.

Taken together, these findings suggest that El Nuevo Herald effectively employs a collaborative model that leverages both original, community-focused reporting and translated content that ensures Spanish-speaking audiences have access to relevant civic journalism. While this partnership expands the total volume of local news available in Spanish, the limited investigative journalism and gaps in coverage of critical local issues like access to affordable housing and the impacts of climate crises remain areas where Spanish-speaking audiences may be underserved.

Some of the service journalism gaps are filled by emerging Spanish-language publications such as **eITOQUE**, which launched “Abogados Confiables” in July 2025 to help Cubans in the U.S. find trustworthy immigration lawyers.¹¹ Meanwhile, smaller legacy players such as **Calle Ocho News** fill some of the hyperlocal gaps.

11 ["Encuentra representación legal confiable con recomendaciones de otros inmigrantes," El Toque, July 15, 2025](#)

COVERAGE OF BROWARD COUNTY

While the Miami Herald produced more than 600 stories about South Florida — mostly Miami-Dade County — as noted in the content analysis section, during the month that we analyzed its coverage, the Sun Sentinel produced 225 stories about South Florida in the same period, including 152 about Broward County itself.

Regional players fill some of the gaps:

- The Miami Herald published 133 stories that touched on Broward County during the same period (11% of its original stories that month), indicating a small but consistent interest in Broward. In October 2025, it announced the launch of three hyperlocal Broward publications: Miramar News, Pembroke Pines News, and Coral Springs News.
- WLRN has a Broward County bureau and one dedicated reporter, with others regularly covering the county.
- All of the major television news stations include Broward County in their remits to varying degrees.
- The Miami Times includes southern Broward in its coverage area.

Still, coverage from regional players cannot replace consistent, on-the-ground reporting of Broward-specific issues and news. Hyperlocal and community outlets also fill the gaps in certain areas, which we expand on below.

DIGITAL FIRST OUTLETS

While South Florida has not seen the same explosion of independent, online local news startups that has occurred in some other metro areas of similar size (e.g., Chicago and Philadelphia), a limited number of early players like **Florida Bulldog** and **Political Cortadito** are still going, and newer, hyperlocal outlets like **Coconut Grove Spotlight** and **Hy-Lo News** show promise (we explore hyperlocal coverage in greater depth below). However, overall growth has been limited.

In some cases, these outlets are filling key gaps identified by survey respondents, focus group attendees, and interviewees, providing investigative or hyperlocal coverage. Founded in 2009 by former Miami Herald investigative reporter Dan Christensen, **Florida Bulldog** (formerly Broward Bulldog) was one of the first digital-native nonprofit newsrooms in the state.

The Bulldog focuses on watchdog reporting about the Broward County Commission, Broward municipal governments, and South Florida regional agencies, although as its name suggests, it occasionally covers news in other parts of the state.

And **Political Cortadito**, founded and run by former Miami

Herald reporter Elaine de Valle (“Ladra”), is an award-winning, free watchdog blog known for breaking stories ahead of mainstream outlets. De Valle’s confrontational, ambush style of journalism has exposed abuses of power, questionable spending, residency violations, and absentee ballot schemes. Her work is frequently cited by local and Spanish-language media covering Miami politics.

Television

Local TV news is sometimes overlooked as a provider of local civic information. But TV remains one of the most powerful reach engines in any market, especially among older adults and those with lower levels of education. And TV’s reach extends far beyond the evening broadcast. Residents also follow on-air personalities on social media, see clips of broadcast segments on YouTube, and get push alerts from apps affiliated with TV stations — even if they never tune into a live broadcast.

We cataloged 18 television news stations in the region, most of them broadcasting in English. The South Florida designated market area (DMA) spans Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe — TV news is regional by design — but, as with newspapers, coverage heavily tilts toward Miami-Dade. Community leaders in Broward and Monroe told us repeatedly that their counties receive far less attention.

“In Broward, we’re lost between Miami-Dade and Palm Beach and don’t have our own stations. ... We’re a 2 million population here and we don’t have representation on TV or in the media,” one community leader said in an interview.

While South Florida’s television stations carry plentiful local news, the limitations of segment lengths (typically 30 seconds to 1.5 minutes) make them predisposed to spot news and lacking in breadth or depth. Even television stations broadcasting 40 or more hours of news programming per week repeat stories frequently, limiting the number of unique stories that can be covered; weather and traffic are updated multiple times per broadcast, and regional, state, national, and global stories must also be included.

Local TV coverage showed a marked emphasis on crime, often relying on police reports with little additional context or original reporting. Many stations do have investigative units, but these tend to focus on consumer issues — such as **WPLG’s** reporting

on hidden auto-lease fees by local car dealerships that later prompted a state attorney general investigation.

Among the local stations, WPLG is notable for the amount of hours it devotes to local news, thanks in part to the end of its seven-decade run as an ABC affiliate in 2025. It has filled the programming gap by dramatically expanding local news and sports programming, significantly expanding the amount of locally produced television news available in South Florida. (WPLG Local 10 anchor Calvin Hughes serves on Press Forward South Florida’s advisory council.)

Even the most robust local television news program is limited in the amount and depth of local civic information it can bring to the ecosystem. One important exception is severe weather: During hurricanes, local TV plays an essential role in real-time public safety information, and meteorologists are among the most trusted figures in local news across demographic groups. Many South Florida meteorologists are household names, with social media followings that rival their stations.

TV stations are often hungry for high-quality content but lack the time or staffing to pursue more ambitious reporting, pointing to an opportunity for more partnerships with other local news outlets. Collaborative models — in which print and digital outlets supply enterprise reporting and TV provides amplification — would allow each to do what they do best and move high-quality civic information into wider circulation.

Spanish-language **WSCV Telemundo 51** and **WLTV Univisión 23** also step up to play the role of anchor newsrooms, showing a significantly higher share of local coverage than their counterparts in other cities. Together, they air more than 30 hours of local newscasts each week — mirroring a strong audience appetite for television news.

Both stations structure their schedules around multiple daily newscasts emphasizing spot and breaking news — crime, traffic, public safety, and immigration enforcement among the dominant themes. While each outlet occasionally tackles broader issues — immigration policy, government accountability — their newsroom investment and airtime distribution remain firmly weighted toward the daily news cycle rather than sustained explanatory or long-form reporting.

Our analysis found that Telemundo and Univisión, together with the previously examined El Nuevo Herald, all produce an impressive volume of original, local Spanish-language reporting. In fact, these outlets produce more original content than you see in many other markets with similarly sized Spanish-speaking populations.

Radio

WLRN 91.3 FM is South Florida’s primary NPR member station. It offers national programming through NPR and an estimated 12-17 hours of original programming weekly, including The Florida Roundup. In our regional survey, respondents named NPR/WLRN as the third most accessed news source (after “TV/television” and the Miami Herald) and first in trust. (During tabulation our research team combined all responses that cited either NPR or WLRN. Answers to these two questions were not weighted.) Its newsroom, which shares content with outlets like the Miami Herald, produces podcasts and digital reports and is well-positioned as a regional news provider, reinforced by its role in the Florida Public Radio Emergency Network (FPREN).

“Public radio still has soul, that’s why people love it. It feels close or personal or accessible.”

– Community leader interview

However, WLRN is hampered by its smaller staff and budget compared to peers. The defunding of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in 2025 dealt a financial blow,¹² as did a reduction in state funding¹³ that year. Earlier in the year, it also lost \$460,000 in state funding. WLRN’s broadcast license is held by the Miami-Dade County School Board, while South Florida Public Media Group, a subsidiary of Friends of WLRN, manages day-to-day operations and editorial content. This split structure drew public scrutiny in September 2025, when the school board sued the station’s management over a contested plan to expand into Palm Beach and Martin counties, and outside journalism organizations, including the Society of Professional Journalists, raised concerns that stronger school board control could compromise WLRN’s editorial independence. The dispute was resolved in 2026 through a settlement that both secured WLRN’s management for at least seven years and cleared the way for the expansion to proceed.¹⁴

In addition to these financial and legal headwinds, WLRN also faces the same challenge that all public radio stations face: audiences that are shifting from traditional radio broadcasts to digital platforms. WLRN connects with viewers via an app, has debuted a WhatsApp channel and has increasingly found ways to partner with local news organizations to expand its reach. One notable collaboration: WLRN and the Miami Herald’s 2025 “Killer Train” investigation into safety failures along Florida’s Brightline corridor was later named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Local Reporting.



Mike Majchrowicz and Caitie Muñoz of WLRN News.

CASE STUDY: SPANISH-LANGUAGE RADIO

Radio remains extremely popular among Spanish speakers, especially older, first-generation immigrants. But Spanish-language radio has endured the loss of several iconic brands in recent months, as well as longstanding criticism that stations often amplify false narratives, especially around elections and public safety.

After the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection, a coalition of nonprofits found that hosts on **Radio Mambí** (WAQI 710 AM) and **Actualidad** (1040 AM) repeated false claims of election fraud, blamed Black Lives Matter for the attack, and labeled Democrats as “communists.”¹⁵ A joint investigation by the Miami Herald and Florida International University ahead of the 2022 midterms found similar patterns.¹⁶

These studies identified a recurring pattern: Spanish-language stations often echo partisan talking points, circulate unverified claims, and blur the lines between news, commentary, and speculation. One community leader lamented, “Spanish radio, it’s an echo chamber... sometimes when I listen to Spanish news and I’m like, ‘What are you saying? This is not accurate at all.’ This is what our residents are taking to heart, it’s what they believe is true.”

In 2022, a Democrat-led investor group bought two of Miami’s leading Spanish-language radio stations – Radio Mambí and WQBA 1140 AM, known as **La Cubanísima** – in an attempt to “make its programming more politically moderate and journalistically fact-based.” The effort struggled editorially and financially and the new owner, Latin Media Network, effectively shut down both stations in 2025.¹⁷

The loss of Mambí and La Cubanísima’s news-and-talk radio format, iconic fixtures of Cuban exiles’ media diets for decades, was deeply felt by many in South Florida.

As political analyst Fernand Amandi told El Nuevo Herald’s Sarah Moreno in a story about Radio Mambí’s closure: “It’s a big blow, whether we like the station’s political leanings or not.” He went on to note that stations such as Mambí created forums where Cuban exiles “had voice and representation before having influence or political power.”

Meanwhile, younger Spanish speakers are finding a new generation of conservative-leaning personalities on social media, such as Alex Otaola, whose YouTube channel “Cubanos por el Mundo” has more than 700,000 followers. His media brand, Hola Ota-Ola, appeared among frequently cited sources in our regional survey.

12 Axios Miami. “Congress Cuts NPR, PBS Funding, Affecting South Florida’s WLRN.” Axios, July 17, 2025.

13 WLRN. “Florida Slashes \$460,000 from WLRN.” Instagram, July 3, 2025.

14 Brugal, Sommer. “Miami-Dade school district settles legal battle with WLRN management.” Axios, May 14, 2026.

15 Prospero Latino, Latina Comunica, Florida Rising, and Miami Freedom Project. “Disinformation in Miami After the Capitol Insurrection.

16 Miami Herald Staff. “See for yourself: How big an issue is misinformation in Miami’s Spanish-language media?.” Miami Herald, accessed November 14, 2025.

17 Miami Herald Staff. “Radio Mambí going off the air in a tough year for Spanish-language media” Miami Herald, accessed November 14, 2025

HYPERLOCAL, TOPIC-SPECIFIC, AND IDENTITY GROUP-SERVING MEDIA

South Florida is home to a number of longstanding outlets with strong name recognition that serve distinct audiences. These organizations play important roles in the civic information network, providing original coverage of topics that are highly relevant to their service community and may otherwise go unreported. However, they often struggle for adequate reach, revenue, and impact. Greater collaboration — through content sharing and partnerships with larger players — could help amplify their reporting and strengthen the region’s overall news ecosystem.

Black Press

The region is home to outlets serving South Florida’s Black community. The **Miami Times**, founded in 1923, is South Florida’s oldest and largest Black-owned newspaper. The weekly broadsheet has a circulation of nearly 15,000 and serves the Black community from Homestead to South Broward. Its small newsroom produces comprehensive coverage focusing on local government, education, criminal justice reform, and community issues affecting Black residents. The weekly **Westside Gazette** serves Broward’s Black community with inspirational and civic-minded coverage. Much of its circulation still comes from churches purchasing copies to distribute to congregants, and the outlet also produces a weekly YouTube podcast, 2 Minute Warning, which typically focuses on local politics.

Haitian Creole Media

Florida is home to more than 500,000 Haitians — about 58% of the total Haitian population in the U.S. — with 39% residing in Miami-Dade or Broward counties.¹⁸ South Florida has several news outlets that focus on meeting the community’s linguistic and cultural needs. Many Haitian residents described these outlets as essential, given what they see as overwhelmingly negative and deficit-focused coverage of both the Haitian community and Haiti in mainstream media. (The Miami Herald’s coverage of Haiti by reporter Jacqueline Charles was often mentioned as an exception.)

News outlets across formats serve South Florida’s Haitian community, with some providing Creole-language programming, like radio station **WQVN Piment Bouk**. The small newsroom consists primarily of Haitian-American journalists and community contributors who understand both Haitian culture and Miami politics. WQVN’s civic news coverage focuses on immigration issues affecting Haitian refugees and immigrants, community development in areas

like Little Haiti, education, municipal services, cultural events, and political developments both locally and in Haiti. For Haitian-Americans who face language barriers in English or Spanish-language media, the station serves as a crucial civic information source. Interview subjects also highlighted the influence of **WLQY**, a commercial Creole-language AM music station that doubles as a civic platform. The station allows individuals, nonprofit organizations, and political groups to purchase airtime — often for several months at a time — to share information, mobilize the community, and reach audiences in their own language. And of **Piment Bouk**, one community leader said, “Piment Bouk is the CNN of Haitian radio. ... Haitian radio is still king in Miami.”

The **Haitian Times**, a free publication that bridges the generational and geographical gaps among Haitians, covers both Haiti and Haitian-American communities. It provides national stories alongside local reporting, especially from South Florida, due to the size of the local Haitian population. And **Island TV** — which broadcasts programming in English, French, and Creole — serves Haitian and broader Afro-Caribbean communities throughout the region.

Industry Publications

South Florida has a robust set of outlets focused on business and industry, reflecting the region’s reputation for entrepreneurship and the influence of start-up culture. These include outlets like **Miami Today**, a print-first, business-focused weekly newspaper, and **South Florida Business Journal**, a digital first business publication, each with local coverage focused on economic development, municipal finance, and policy impacts on business, and government contracts across the region. **Refresh Miami** produces original reporting on local startups, funding rounds, and tech company developments, operating both as a specialized news outlet and a community connector for South Florida’s growing tech industry.

Hyperlocal Outlets

Cuts at legacy news organizations across the region have forced these outlets to reduce headcounts, and subsequently their focus has narrowed to covering the largest cities, leaving most smaller municipalities underserved. Local residents lament the loss of neighborhood-level news across the region, particularly the Miami Herald’s Neighbors section. One community member said, “What I loved about Neighbors is that ... you got to see what is happening in your immediate area in a way that felt special. ... It was the heart of the community in a way that you don’t see anymore.”

At the onset of this research project, the Miami Herald had just launched hyperlocal publications in Broward County — **Miramar News**, **Pembroke Pines News**, and **Coral Springs News** (which gives Coral Springs two hyperlocal news sources, the other owned by the TAPinto network of hyperlocal digital news sites).¹⁹ It has not made any similar efforts in Miami-Dade.

Our research identified at least a dozen hyperlocal publications, including legacy-print players like **Miami’s Community Newspapers**, and newer, born-digital players striving to fill the gap in different pockets of the region, all with different structures, business models, and content offerings.

Founded in 2015 by Janey Tate, **Hy-Lo News** occupies a space between news and creators. The free, hyperlocal digital news outlet began as a Facebook-based blog in response to mainstream media’s lack of coverage of Black communities and their concerns. Hy-Lo News now covers a broad range of topics with particular emphasis on local government accountability, school board issues, municipal politics, and cultural events — especially in communities in northwest Miami-Dade such as Miami Gardens and Opa-locka. The nonprofit news outlet **Coconut Grove Spotlight** provides free, accessible coverage of life in Coconut Grove and surrounding neighborhoods. The small newsroom, which relies on volunteer editors, civic leaders, and a rotating roster of paid freelance reporters, publishes original reporting twice a week alongside commentary, briefs, and letters to the editor.

The **Key Biscayne Independent**, owned by the nonprofit Miami Fourth Estate, is a small hyperlocal outlet that nonetheless claimed three finalist spots in the 2025 Esserman-Knight Journalism Awards celebrating outstanding investigative and public service reporting in South Florida. **The Coral Gables Gazette**, which ceased publication in 2012 after a 16-year run, returned in a digital-only format in February 2025.

And the TAPinto network, which includes more than 95 independently owned and operated local news and digital marketing platforms in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Florida, has three publications in Broward County: **TAPinto Coconut Creek**, **TAPinto Parkland**, and **TAPinto Coral Springs**. Each site has a local owner and provides original, daily news reporting, with a strong focus on crime and public safety, profiles of local businesses, restaurant reviews, real estate development, and event coverage.

The surge of hyperlocal outlets, and recent additions to this sector of the local news landscape, suggest that there’s opportunity for growth — especially considering what we heard from local residents about the information needs

and desire for more neighborhood-level coverage. Even so, the network is fragile, uneven, and disconnected, and with few exceptions taking root in relatively affluent areas. Hyperlocal news in general could benefit from coordination and a closer look at where the gaps are, geographically and demographically, and what is filling them.

Social media and non-traditional information providers

In our regional survey, two-thirds of respondents said they get news from social media accounts at least a few times a week, and half reported getting news from social media forums such as WhatsApp groups at least a few times a week. That percentage rises even higher among those between the ages of 18 and 34, the youngest age cohort in our survey.

Online influencers and WhatsApp groups are reshaping how information circulates in South Florida. The traditional information distribution pipeline — formal press releases → newspaper, TV, and radio news → public conversation — is being replaced by a new dynamic where tips are shared directly with Instagram accounts like Only in Dade or dropped into WhatsApp groups that reporters may or may not be part of. These informal networks can now drive the local agenda, especially in niche and hyperlocal contexts, and have increasing influence over countywide conversations.

Only in Dade operates as a unique, free form of citizen journalism that has evolved from a meme page into a significant local media presence, with almost 2 million Instagram followers and substantial local impact. Founded in 2013 by Lenny Carter as a Facebook hobby and later expanded to Instagram, the platform began as user-generated content sharing bizarre Miami-Dade occurrences but has inadvertently become a primary source of breaking news for many locals. The operation now employs approximately 10 people working from a Coral Gables headquarters, with business mogul Emilio Estefan purchasing half the company in recent years to expand into film, comedy, and live events.

Only in Dade’s local coverage demonstrates breadth, from breaking news about building collapses and emergency incidents to local government policy updates, municipal decisions, and community safety issues. The platform’s content curation involves screening thousands of user-submitted videos daily.

Despite its popularity, Only in Dade has faced criticism for sensational or exploitative posts, including incidents involving violence, public disputes, and behaviors that some say reinforce negative stereotypes about Miami. Still, its influence is notable. Traditional news outlets regularly

18 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Department of Commerce

19 Alex Mena and Mike Garbett. Miami Herald. Herald launches hyperlocal news sites in Pembroke Pines, Miramar and Coral Springs. October 1, 2025



Hy-Lo News publisher Janey Tate speaks at a Press Forward panel focused on hyperlocal news alongside (from left): Press Forward's Graham Ringo, Deirdre Conner of the Florida Trib and Shaun O'Connor of the the Independent Florida Alligator.

source stories from their content, and even official city government social media teams respond directly to posts, making Only in Dade an essential voice in Miami-Dade's local information landscape. And one community leader noted, "Anything that makes Only in Dade gets talked about in the office." And Only in Dade has a Broward-based counterpart, Only in Broward, that is growing in popularity but doesn't yet match Only in Dade's influence.

WhatsApp groups serve as real-time, peer-to-peer news networks — circulating information through links, screenshots, and voice notes. These spaces often include politicians, activists, community leaders, and residents in direct conversation, as seen in groups such as #miamitechlife, Miami ≠ Atlantis, and Coral Gables Discussion Group. The app is especially valuable in crisis situations and within immigrant and diasporic communities, who adopted it early because it allowed them to make international voice calls for free. In an interview, a community leader said, "The community lives on WhatsApp... even when you can't write you can leave voice messages or send pictures of documents."

In our media diary study, which tracked residents' media consumption over the course of a week, Hispanic participants showed a particularly high reliance on messaging apps. This reflects both WhatsApp's popularity in Latin America and its role in maintaining cross-border connections. Civic leaders working with immigrant communities noted that WhatsApp frequently dwarfs all other information sources in reach and influence.

For many users, WhatsApp helps mitigate concerns around bias or mistrust in mainstream media. Accessibility barriers, including limited internet access, literacy challenges, and language differences, are often overcome through audio notes or translated summaries shared by trusted peers.

There are, however, some limitations. News acquired through a WhatsApp group may not be verified or contextualized, and key facts or perspectives may be missing. Group administrators can also exclude voices they disagree with, shaping narratives in subtle but consequential ways.

COORDINATION & COLLABORATION ACROSS THE ECOSYSTEM

There is opportunity in South Florida to create a coordinating or backbone organization — the kind of intermediary that can strengthen the field, as NC Local,²⁰ the New Jersey Civic Info Consortium,²¹ and COLab²² have in North Carolina, New Jersey, and Colorado. Backbone organizations are not funders (although they often facilitate grants). Instead, they focus on training and advocacy, ensuring local media has a voice in philanthropic and policy discussions, while also acting as an anchor for shared services and reporting collaborations.

These organizations also nurture local news entrepreneurship, connecting local startups to national resources that can help them anticipate and navigate sustainability challenges. In some regions, funders have created dedicated entities for this kind of field- and capacity-building work; in others, universities have taken the lead, as Elon University did in hosting NC Local during its early years. Public media has also played an anchoring role for reporting collaborations in other states.

Although South Florida has long been known in national journalism circles as a proving ground for reporters, when it comes to coordinated, networked support systems, there is a gap. Local chapters of affinity organizations such as the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the National Association of Black Journalists provide valuable community and professional development, but they primarily convene individual journalists, not newsrooms. Local journalism schools have historically focused more on student development than on becoming hubs for the local media ecosystem.

Florida Atlantic University was until recently home to the The Invading Sea, a regional climate and environmental reporting initiative. The Invading Sea began as a rare collaboration among competing South Florida news organizations — the Sun Sentinel, Palm Beach Post, and Miami Herald editorial boards, with WLRN as a news partner — who agreed not only to share opinion content but to coordinate its publication, eventually growing to more than 25 media partners across Florida. The project later moved from its founders to FAU which hosted it from 2023 to 2026. The site is currently on hiatus.²³

Florida International University's Caplin News has taken on collaborative projects as well, notably the bilingual series *No puedo vivir aquí / I Can't Afford To Live Here*, which

examined the region's affordability crisis from a number of perspectives. The project saw the university's journalism students working in partnership with multiple newsrooms: WLRN News and Telemundo 51, which itself is part of a bilingual local news partnership with NBC 6 by virtue of their shared ownership under NBC Universal.²⁴

The young journalists at FIU haven't been the only noteworthy collaborators to partner with WLRN: The public radio station's newsroom has increasingly turned to collaborative projects and content-sharing, in part out of necessity due to funding cuts, teaming up with a range of local talent in the process. That includes the Killer Train series mentioned earlier in this report. The impact of that partnership, which earned the Miami Herald and WLRN a Pulitzer nod, was almost immediate. Within days after the stories ran, the federal government released \$42 million in rail safety funding for the Brightline corridor.



FIU student journalist Patricia Varas was one of the contributors to No puedo vivir aquí/ I Can't Afford to Live Here, a collaborative effort between the school's Caplin News, WLRN News and Telemundo51.

20

[NC Local News Hub](#)

21

[New Jersey Civic Info Consortium](#)

22

[Colorado News Collaborative](#)

23

[The Invading Sea. "The Invading Sea."](#)

24

[21 WLRN. "Affordability Crisis Series." Accessed June 1, 2026.](#)

**MONROE COUNTY:
CLOSE-KNIT AND INTERCONNECTED**

Due to its size and geography, Monroe County operates as a hyperlocal community and countywide network, so we analyzed its information ecosystem separately. While Miami-Dade and Broward counties struggle to stitch together fragmented and uncoordinated information ecosystems, Monroe’s news and information providers are deeply interconnected. As one focus group participant noted, “[The Keys is] a community that wraps its arms around its people.”

There are three main information providers serving Monroe County. **The Keys Weekly** was mentioned far more often as a go-to source — credited for being more engaged and timely. The once-daily **Key West Citizen**, by contrast, was frequently criticized for thin coverage and declining relevance. Independent journalist and former Keys Weekly reporter Gwen Filosa (operating as **Key West Newswire**) has built a strong following by providing immediate, on-the-ground coverage, especially via Facebook and Substack. Her work — cited regularly in interviews with civic leaders, focus group discussions, and our regional survey — is viewed as a highly trusted source of local informaton.

While Monroe’s almost 81,000 mostly English-speaking residents are served by multiple local sources, civic leaders we interviewed agreed that truly local, deep, issue-based reporting and breaking original news are in short supply. Overall, interviewees weren’t asking for more outlets, but for faster, more authoritative, and better-vetted coverage of big issues. Leaders and residents acknowledged that the Miami Herald, WLRN, and major South Florida television stations occasionally cover Monroe County but complained that it is often overlooked unless a hurricane is imminent — leaving residents dependent on local, specialized sources.

“We don’t have a major news outlet. They only come when there’s a major hurricane. The things that are pertinent to our daily lives go un-broadcasted or unaddressed,” a community leader said in an interview.

Monroe County residents instead rely heavily on a close-knit network of local journalism, government resources, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders to stay informed.

Radio remains a major source of news for Keys residents, especially during emergencies, but Facebook is the dominant source for news and community information. Local groups, influencers, and official agencies use the platform for posting updates, events, and even breaking stories.



Reporter Gwen Filosa, a Pultizer prize-winning independent journalist, helps keeps Keys residents informed via her Key West Newswire reporting.

A handful of Facebook groups — such as “Locals Helping Locals – Key West” and “What’s Up Florida Keys? LOCALS ONLY” — came up repeatedly as reliable sources of information. They are today’s “coconut telegraph,” one local leader told us. Community-based gossip columns and forums (e.g., Key West Uncensored, Florida Keys Locals) are also widely read. But many community leaders also expressed concern with how quickly misinformation can spread when locals rely so heavily on these sources.

Residents also cited Conch Life, government apps, and the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office’s social media accounts as important tools for staying updated on community matters. Informal community groups, like a local moms’ group and direct communication with elected officials, were also noted as critical sources for trustworthy and relevant information.

OPPORTUNITIES

A robust local news ecosystem is critical for fostering civic engagement and cultivating a healthy, thriving community. While South Florida is characterized by a unique, diverse, and active ecosystem, it is also facing significant challenges. This report’s research identifies key opportunities to strategically support a sustainable, equitable, and ultimately resilient local news and information landscape across the region.

Greater coordination of news and information providers, especially on shared community information needs

South Florida is fortunate to have an abundance of local news and information sources in multiple formats, languages, and business models, from large, regional players to tiny, hyperlocal startups. Together they produce a substantial amount of local, original reporting — more than you see in many other major metro areas, particularly in Spanish. There is a significant opportunity to support further coordination across this field, especially around shared community information needs. Many of these news outlets might not have wide reach, but they do have strong name recognition and deep trust in the communities they serve and tell stories that might otherwise not get covered. Better collaboration could also help ensure that essential information is shared across languages, platforms, and communities, ensuring reach and equity.

Support ecosystem coordinator roles

The South Florida news and information ecosystem is busy, but fragmented. In other ecosystems, news organizations are brought together through collaboration, content sharing, and joint investigations, and an ecosystem coordinator or coordinators are responsible for supporting the ecosystem as a whole. These coordinators can fill a number of roles, and help organize capacity building, advocate for local media in conversations with funders and in policy discussions, and act as an anchor for shared services and reporting collaborations. In South Florida, this type of coordination could significantly strengthen the resilience and visibility of local outlets.

Fill in municipal coverage gaps

South Florida’s legacy news cuts have led to a “main city” focus, leaving smaller municipalities underserved. A need for deeper, localized coverage — including government, activities, and culture — is clear. While this research identified at least a dozen hyperlocal publications in the region, many are fragile, and the strongest are concentrated in wealthier areas. This presents a clear opportunity to strengthen and expand existing outlets to cover more municipalities, potentially boosting civic engagement and other forms of public participation.

Strengthen regional coverage

Many of South Florida’s greatest challenges and assets don’t start and stop at county lines, but are rarely covered as regional issues due to a lack of strong regional players and an overreliance on reactive, quick-turn stories. South Florida already has several newsrooms that cover all three counties — just not consistently and not in depth. There is an opportunity for journalism that connects the dots between the three counties, elevates solutions that are working in one place, and brings people together to address shared challenges.

Focus more journalism on acute challenges and information needs

Service journalism is a type of journalism focused on providing practical, actionable information and advice to help people solve problems and make their lives easier. This style of reporting emphasizes meeting the audience’s needs directly, with a focus on utility, relevance, and providing value to the reader. There is an opportunity to provide more service journalism on shared challenges such as housing affordability, jobs, and immigration policies, and focus accountability journalism on broken systems that exacerbate these issues.

Fund local news to strengthen other critical issue areas.

South Florida has an active and committed philanthropic community that invests meaningfully in education, youth development, the arts, climate, and other pillars of civic life. Yet investment in local news and information — the infrastructure that helps residents make informed decisions across all of those areas — remains nascent. There is a clear opportunity to unlock greater impact across issue areas and mobilize funder networks to support local news and information.

OPEN QUESTIONS FOR THE
WORK AHEAD

We commissioned this research to establish a shared baseline understanding of the South Florida news and information ecosystem — and to spark conversation, collaboration, and new ideas about how we can better serve the region’s information needs.

Below are some open questions that warrant further exploration over the next few years with our partners in media, academia, philanthropy and the broader South Florida community:

- What opportunities and gaps exist in South Florida’s journalism education and talent pipeline?
- How financially resilient are local newsrooms, and what do they need most to ensure sustainability?
- Who makes up South Florida’s informal information ecosystem — and how might we map and strengthen it over time?
- Where do the information needs of different immigrant communities align, and where are they distinct?
- What are the implications of young people’s media habits for news sustainability and a healthy information ecosystem?

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Miami-Dade and Broward are two of the most populous counties in Florida, while Monroe — home to roughly 81,000 residents — is significantly smaller. The economic landscape also varies: Miami-Dade and Broward are urban hubs with robust employment sectors in healthcare, retail, and professional, scientific, and technical services, as well as tourism. Monroe’s economy is heavily reliant on tourism, reflecting its island geography and natural environment.

Demographically, Miami-Dade stands out for its high concentration of Hispanic residents (nearly 70%), while Monroe has an older, predominantly White population. In Broward, no single racial or ethnic group holds a majority.

Each county is governed by an elected Board of County Commissioners, which serves as the legislative body responsible for setting policies and budgets. However, there are differences in what decisions are made at what levels of government. Almost all of Broward County is incorporated, so most of the governance functions fall to the municipalities, but much of Miami-Dade and Monroe are unincorporated. In those areas, the county government is the only local governing body.

Miami-Dade and Broward have younger populations (median ages of 41 and 42, respectively), compared to Monroe County’s median age of nearly 49. The counties share similar percentages of residents with a bachelor’s degree (36-38%), but there are substantial differences in median household income. In 2023, the median household income in Monroe was \$88,870, compared to \$72,311 in Miami-Dade (which has a higher cost of living) and \$74,531 in Broward.

The high cost of living, lifestyle choices, and career opportunities elsewhere have led to domestic outmigration, particularly among the middle class. Since 2020, Miami-Dade’s population has grown by only 1% annually, driven primarily by international migration. Between 2023 and 2024, approximately 67,000 more residents left Miami-Dade for other parts of the United States than moved in, but the county gained 124,000 new residents from international migration²⁵. (This low growth rate defies the conventional wisdom that Miami’s worsening traffic is due to population growth. It’s more closely tied to rising housing costs, which have pushed many residents farther out from the urban core, lengthening

commutes and increasing transportation costs.) The average reported income of households moving out of Miami-Dade in 2022 was about \$99,000, compared to households moving in, whose average income was nearly \$176,000.²⁶

The area continues to maintain its reputation as the “gateway to Latin America,” but the departure of middle-income residents is a warning sign. Although Miami-Dade remains globally attractive, it is becoming harder to afford or sustain for many existing or domestic residents, potentially impacting local workforce composition, housing demand, and long-term planning.

Broward’s positive net migration has also been driven by large international in-migration. In 2024, Broward gained almost 57,000 new residents through international migration but lost 26,000 through domestic outmigration. Monroe saw positive international migration of 942 residents but negative domestic migration of 1,374.²⁷

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Among the three counties, Miami-Dade has the largest economy, with nearly 1.5 million employees, a \$2.7 billion gross regional product (GRP), and over 120,000 employer firms.²⁸ The passengers and cargo arriving through the Port of Miami and Miami International Airport are major economic drivers.

The top three industries by GRP are finance and insurance; professional, scientific, and technical services; and wholesale trade. While these three sectors lead in value in both Miami-Dade and Broward, in Monroe County, the leading sector for both jobs and GRP is accommodation and food services — essentially the tourism industry.

The region is also known for its robust entrepreneurial activity. In 2024, Miami-Dade and Broward counties led the state of Florida in new business formations (211,415 combined), accounting for 33% of new businesses in the state.²⁹ However, most employer firms in the area are micro-establishments, with about 83% employing fewer than 10 people. Only about 2% of firms employ more than 100.³⁰

This high proportion of small-sized firms, combined with

25 [U.S. Census Bureau, County Population Totals and Components of Change: 2020–2024, Vintage 2024, U.S. Department of Commerce.](#)

26 [IRS Migration Data, SOI tax stats - Migration data | Internal Revenue Service](#)

27 [Ibid.](#), p. 8

28 [Lightcast, Labor Market Data, accessed via Analyst platform](#)

29 [U.S. Census Bureau, Business Formation Statistics – Annual County Data, Center for Economic Studies, U.S. Department of Commerce](#)

30 [U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 County Business Patterns](#)

significant employment in lower-paying industries such as retail, accommodation and food services, and healthcare, contributes to South Florida’s relatively low wages compared to other dense urban counties.

Among the three counties, average annual earnings in 2023 were highest in Miami-Dade at nearly \$79,000, followed by Broward at about \$75,000, and Monroe at \$58,000.³¹ Earnings have risen over time due to a tighter labor market and increased economic diversification.

In Miami-Dade, the leading sector for employment growth is the professional, scientific, and technical services sector, which experienced a 25% increase in employment from 2019 to 2024. This sector encompasses tech companies, marketing firms, accounting firms, engineering firms, law firms, and many other specialized businesses.

In Broward County, this same sector grew by 18%, surpassed only by transportation and warehousing, which saw workforce growth of 27%. Even Monroe County shows signs of economic diversification. While tourism continues to grow and is still its largest sector in both jobs and GRP, its growth has been surpassed by professional, scientific, and technical services; wholesale trade; and even manufacturing.³²

Economic diversification could alleviate some of the region’s cost-of-living challenges. In 2023, 45% of households in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe were cost-burdened, spending more than one-third of their income on housing. The affordability crisis is especially acute among renters, one-third of whom spend over half of their income on housing.³³

GOVERNMENT

All three counties operate under a home rule charter, which grants them certain autonomy from the state in organizing their government and delivering services. Each county is governed by an elected Board of County Commissioners — 13 commissioners in Miami-Dade, nine in Broward, and five in Monroe.

The counties maintain a separation between legislative and executive functions, though the structure and strength of the executive branch vary. Miami-Dade has a strong executive mayor, elected countywide, who oversees all administrative departments and implements policies set by the Commission. In Broward and Monroe, the Commission appoints a County

Administrator to manage day-to-day operations.

The counties also have separate city and county governments, each with distinct responsibilities.

One major difference among the three is the size of Miami-Dade’s unincorporated area, which is home to nearly 40% of residents and receives services directly from the county. In Broward, fewer than 20,000 residents live in unincorporated areas. About 54% of Monroe County residents live within its five municipalities.³⁴

This county-municipal structure creates multiple layers of government with varying degrees of visibility. Miami-Dade is the largest county, with 34 municipalities, of which the largest are the cities of Miami, Miami Beach, and Hialeah. In Broward, the largest of its 31 municipalities are Fort Lauderdale, Pembroke Pines, and Hollywood. Monroe’s best-known and largest city is Key West, the southernmost point in the continental United States.

ISSUES FACING SOUTH FLORIDA

Across South Florida, income growth has not kept pace with the rising cost of living, especially housing. Despite efforts to expand and improve transit, the lack of large-scale public investment has left many commuters facing severe traffic congestion and high transportation costs. The Miami area now ranks fifth in the U.S. and 11th globally for worst traffic congestion.³⁵

Extreme heat and rising sea levels affect transportation planning and the durability of infrastructure, while ongoing challenges include limited urban tree coverage, waste management, saltwater intrusion, and frequent “sunny day” flooding. South Florida’s geography and density make it especially vulnerable to hurricanes. The risk is highest in Monroe County, where the state requirement that the entire population must be able to evacuate within 24 hours limits the number of housing units that can be built.

The economic challenges in South Florida, including concerns about government spending, property taxes, and stagnant incomes that fail to keep pace with inflation, draw significant attention to the counties’ budgeting process.

31 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Department of Commerce
32 Lightcast, *Labor Market Data*, accessed via Analyst platform
33 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Department of Commerce
34 Ibid.
35 The Miami Foundation, *Transportation and Mobility Issue Spotlight*, April 2025

Government funding

As the largest of the three counties, Miami-Dade also has the largest operating budget — more than \$12.7 billion in the 2024-25 fiscal year. Combined, the county, its municipalities, and the local school board (which operates independently from the county), had budgets totaling over \$27 billion. In Broward, the combined budgets totaled almost \$20.4 billion, while in Monroe, the figure was just over \$1.4 billion.³⁶

Local governments in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties rely heavily on property taxes, tourism-related revenues, and state and federal aid to fund essential services. Despite growing demands for infrastructure, housing, and climate resilience investments, local governments are increasingly constrained by state preemption, which limits their authority to raise new revenues or enact local solutions such as rent control, wage regulations, or environmental ordinances.

Miami-Dade has proposed tools like resilience bonds and expanded impact fees to address climate and housing challenges but must operate within state-imposed tax caps. Broward manages revenue from its voter-approved one-cent transportation surtax and is advocating for greater flexibility in using tourism taxes to support broader community needs. Meanwhile, Monroe County, with its small population and high climate vulnerability, depends heavily on tourism taxes and external funding to maintain critical infrastructure.

Housing affordability

Housing costs have climbed steeply in the last decade and income has not kept pace. When adjusted for inflation, median household income in Miami-Dade increased by only 4% from 2019 to 2023, while housing costs increased by 28%.

Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing are considered “cost burdened.” In 2023, two-thirds of renters in every county fell into this category, along with nearly half of all homeowners.³⁷

In the third quarter of 2025, the median sales price of a single-family home had climbed to \$660,000 in Miami-Dade, up from \$365,000 in 2019. In Broward, the median sales price of a single-family home increased from \$365,000 to \$624,000 for the same period. Monroe County has a more limited housing inventory and higher sales values, which increased from \$605,000 to \$895,000.³⁸

36 Final budget documents extracted from each respective county website: calculations by the FIU Jorge M. Pérez Metropolitan Center.
37 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Department of Commerce
38 MIAMI Association of REALTORS®, *South Florida Market Stats*
39 Bankrate. “Average Homeowners Insurance Cost in November 2025.” *Bankrate*. Last modified November 1, 2025.
40 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), *National Risk Index – County-Level Report Viewer: Miami-Dade County*, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Rising housing costs are driven by a combination of geographic, political, and economic factors, particularly in Miami-Dade County. In addition to newcomers’ higher income levels, the following are also significant factors.

- Limited land for development:** With the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Everglades to the west, both Broward and Miami-Dade have a shortage of land to develop. In Miami-Dade, allowing development beyond the Urban Development Boundary is usually contentious. Development in Monroe County is limited by the state because of evacuation considerations. Despite Florida’s Live Local Act, which aimed to expand workforce and affordable housing across the state, residents often oppose development because of concerns for overpopulation and transportation challenges.
- Rising insurance costs:** Homeowners across Florida are experiencing steep increases in insurance premiums. The average annual premium for a \$300,000 home in Florida has reached more than \$5,000 — more than twice the national average.³⁹ Homeowners must also purchase flood insurance, and with each update to federal flood maps, more properties are designated as being in high-risk flood zones, further increasing the financial burden on homeowners. Rising insurance rates don’t only affect homeowners; higher costs are also passed on to renters in the form of higher rents.
- Rising costs for condo owners:** In the wake of the Champlain Towers South collapse in Surfside, new legislation was enacted to strengthen building safety regulations. These laws require condominium associations in buildings three stories and higher to maintain adequate financial reserves, conduct periodic structural inspections, and invest in continued building maintenance. As a result, many condo owners have faced significant special assessments and increased monthly fees to comply with the new safety standards.

Hurricanes

Rising temperatures increase the intensity of hurricanes. Miami-Dade County is ranked among the top counties in the U.S. with the highest risk for expected annual loss of infrastructure and agriculture due to natural hazards.⁴⁰

Three tropical cyclones (Debby, Helene, and Milton) affected South Florida in 2024, the year before this research was conducted. Milton, which was one of the strongest Gulf of Mexico hurricanes on record, produced a record-setting 15 tornadoes across the southern Florida peninsula, with two of these reaching winds estimated above 130 mph.⁴¹

The higher risk from wind and flooding events contributes to the rising cost of homeowners’ insurance, a growing concern across the region. In our regional survey, **25% of respondents** identified homeowners’ insurance as a top challenge in their community. Strict building codes implemented after Hurricane Andrew in 1992 contribute to the higher housing costs. Andrew caused \$26.5 billion in damage, mostly in Miami-Dade County. At the time, it was the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history.⁴²

Transportation

In our regional survey, **20% of respondents** identified public transportation and traffic as a top challenge in their community. Public transit in South Florida, especially in Miami-Dade County, is facing a significant decline, with ridership dropping by 11 million across Metrorail, Metromover, and Metrobus over the 2023 and 2024 fiscal years.⁴³ Contributing factors include infrequent and unreliable service, rising competition from ride-sharing apps, and fragmented transit governance that limits regional coordination.

Miami-Dade commuters face longer travel times, averaging 30.9 minutes compared to the U.S. average of 26.8 — amounting to nearly 1.5 extra days spent in traffic annually. Infrastructure is also lagging, with only 49.4% of non-interstate roads rated in “good” condition. The county’s All Transit Performance (ATP) score of 6.5 ranks it 28th out of 268 counties, well below top performers like New York (9.9) and Denver (7.8).⁴⁴

41 National Weather Service Miami-South Florida Forecast Office, *South Florida 2024 Weather Summary*, U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

42 Chris Dolce, “Ten Most Costly Hurricanes in U.S. History,” *The Weather Channel*, May 24, 2013

43 Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works, *Ridership Technical Reports*

44 The Miami Foundation, *Transportation and Mobility Issue Spotlight*, April 2025

Appendix B: Methodology

The assessment employed several research methodologies to generate both qualitative and quantitative data about the South Florida information ecosystem. Data were collected and analyzed by the Florida International University’s Jorge M. Perez Metropolitan Center and Lee Caplin School of Journalism, the American Journalism Project, and research coordinator and journalist Ariel Zirulnick.

Context

FIU’s Jorge M. Perez Metropolitan Center compiled contextual data on regional demographic, economic, and political trends that shape information needs.

Survey

FIU’s Jorge M. Perez Metropolitan Center administered a community survey that garnered 1,276 responses. Responses were weighted to ensure balanced representation. All analysis and results in the report are weighted, unless otherwise noted.

Focus groups

FIU’s Jorge M. Perez Metropolitan Center conducted eight focus groups with residents, from underrepresented communities across Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties, focusing on Black/African American, Haitian, Hispanic, and youth populations, and utilizing English, Haitian Creole, and Spanish. Focus groups, while including a small number of residents, are critical for bringing in perspectives of community members that are often underrepresented, including in the community survey for this research.

Media diary

FIU’s Lee Caplin School of Journalism recruited residents to keep a detailed media diary study for one week. Fifty-three participants completed the diary. Because of the small sample size, the media diary should be understood as a supplementary lens on the behaviors reported in our regional survey, similar in function to a focus group. It offers useful context but should not be treated as a standalone source of insight into regional media behavior.

Interviews

AJP and Ariel Zirulnick led interviews with 58 local civic leaders across all three counties, including public officials, community activists, and journalists.

Information providers

AJP created a comprehensive catalog of local news and information providers, now available on the [Press Forward South Florida website](#).

Content analysis

AJP conducted content analysis on one month of stories from the region’s three flagship newspapers — the Miami Herald, Sun Sentinel, and El Nuevo Herald. Content was from March 2025, chosen because it is a month of “representative” content without significant national stories (e.g., elections) and when the outlets should not have experienced any staff shortages due to holidays or summer vacations.

The FIU Jorge M. Perez Metropolitan Center fielded a regional survey of Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe residents from March 3, 2025, through May 19, 2025. The survey was designed to gauge local information needs and news habits. It received 1,276 valid responses.

The sample was self-selected, meaning respondents volunteered to participate rather than being randomly selected. To improve representativeness, rake weighting was applied to align the sample with known population benchmarks across key demographic variables (age, race/ethnicity, and education). Respondents were invited to opt for inclusion into a raffle for an Apple iPad.

Questionnaire development

The Metropolitan Center designed the survey, with contributions and feedback from Press Forward South Florida, the American Journalism Project, and the Local News Impact Consortium. Once questions were decided upon, the questionnaire was programmed for web administration with Qualtrics, a leading platform for creating and distributing web-based surveys.

Eligibility

Any Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe resident above the age of 18 was eligible to complete the survey.

Mode of data collection

The primary mode of data collection was online, with 1,232 responses collected via the web survey. This survey consisted of three campaigns, an anonymous campaign for respondents who scanned a QR code or used an anonymous link (58.3% of responses), an email campaign with registered voters in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties (40.5% of responses), and a paid social media campaign for younger residents (1.2% of responses).

The survey also had an in-person component, with in-person survey collection (including paper surveys and iPad offline survey collection) conducted on the following dates at food distribution locations by FIU Metropolitan Center staff for a total of 144 in-person responses (11.3% of total responses):

- April 10, 2025, at the Freedom Lab in Liberty City, Miami, Miami-Dade County
- April 19, 2025, at Deerfield Beach Community Cares, Deerfield Beach, Broward County
- April 24, 2025, at Bridge to Hope, Cutler Bay, Miami-Dade County
- May 02, 2025, at Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Church, Oakland Park, Broward County

The survey was available in English (90.5% of responses), Spanish (9.3% of responses), and Creole (0.2% of responses).

Respondent demographics and weighting

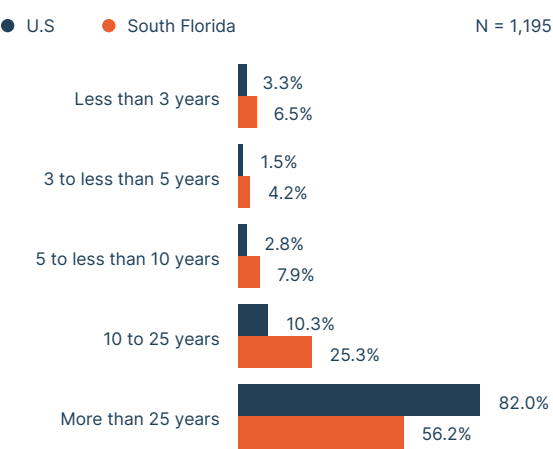
Rake weighting was employed to adjust the sample distribution to align with known population benchmarks across key demographic variables – age, race and ethnicity, and education. This iterative procedure involved calibrating the sample weights so that the marginal totals for each category matched those from authoritative sources such as the U.S. Census or American Community Survey, 2023 1-Year Estimates. The overall weights were based on the combined figure of the three counties for each of the variables. The county-level analysis relied on county-specific weights.

Respondent demographics

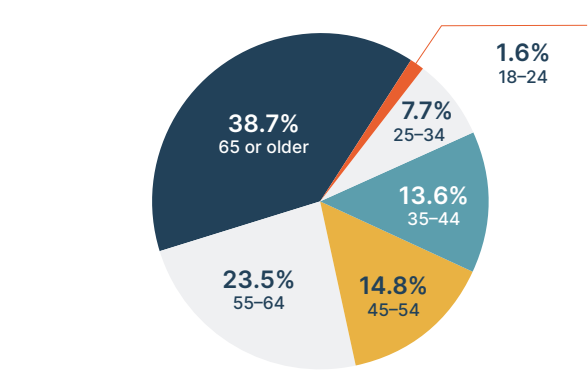
County of residence

- Miami-Dade County: 51.2%
- Broward County: 41.8%
- Monroe County: 7.1%

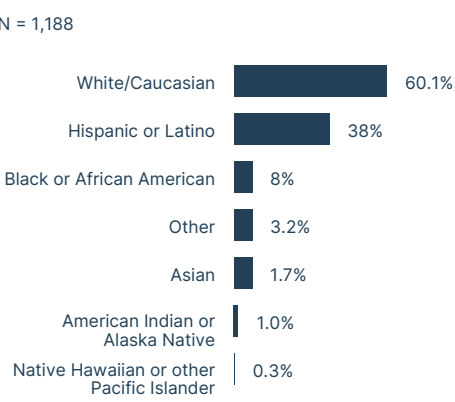
Length of time residing in the U.S. and South Florida



What is your age?



What is your race/ethnicity?



Respondents were asked to select their race and ethnicity. As they could select more than one option, percentages exceed 100.

Among the ‘other’ responses, the largest group consists of individuals who specified a particular

ethnic or national background not typically listed in standard survey options, such as Cuban,

Haitian, and, in single instances, Brazilian, Puerto Rican, Jamaican, Greek, German, Italian, Armenian, Central Asian, South Indian, Native South American, European, and Arab/Arabic. Several respondents identified as Multiracial, Biracial, or used blended descriptions such as “Indian heritage / Caribbean.” A notable portion of respondents also expressed discomfort with,

objection to, or refusal to categorize their race or ethnicity.

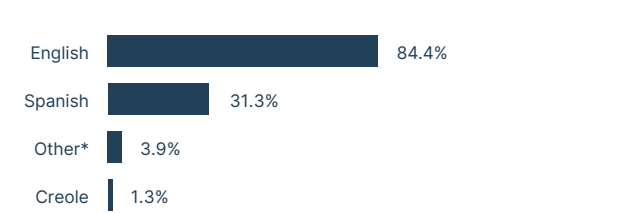
Gender

- Female: 55.3%
- Male: 42.2%
- Prefer not to say: 1.8%
- Other: 0.8%

Language spoken at home

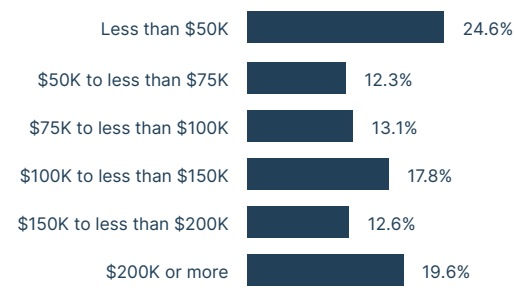
As they could select more than one option, percentages exceed 100.

Language spoken at home

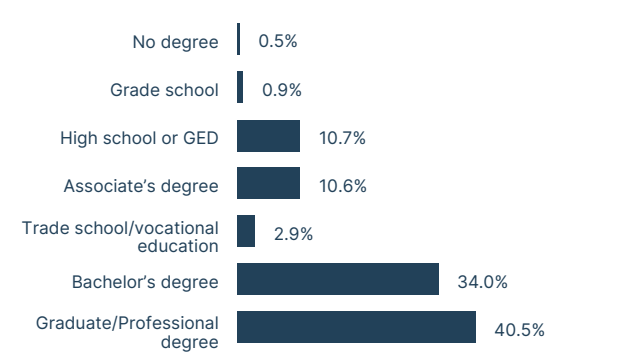


*Portuguese was by far the most frequently mentioned language in “Other.”

What is your household income?



What is the highest degree or level of schooling you have completed?



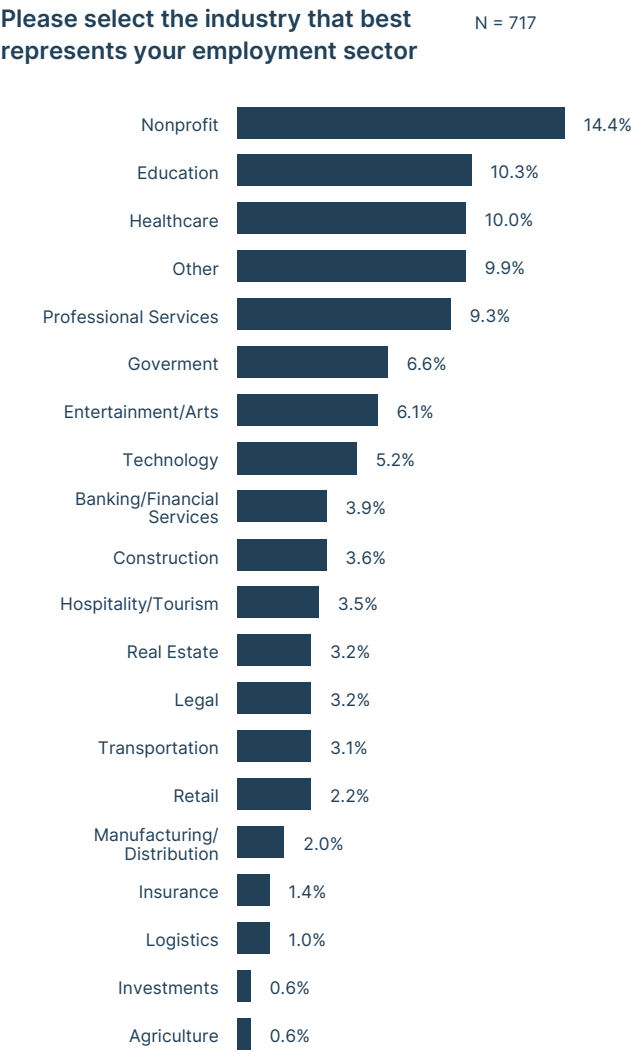
Employment status and industry of employment

- Employed full-time: 48.1%
- Retired and not working: 25.8%
- Employed part-time: 8.9%
- Unemployed and seeking work: 5.6%
- Retired but returned to the workforce: 3.7%
- Disabled or too ill to work: 2.0%
- Other: 2.8%
- Stay at home, not seeking work currently: 1.7%
- Student: 1.4%

N=1,188

Among the “Other” responses, the most frequently mentioned status was self-employed or independent.

Those who indicated they were employed fulltime, part-time or retired but returned to the workforce were asked a follow-up question to select the option for their employment sector.



HOW WE WEIGHTED RESPONSES

Unweighted and Weighted Totals for County, Age, Educational Attainment and Race and Ethnicity

County of Residence				
	Unweighted		Weighted	
	Count	%	Count	%
Broward	533	41.8%	488	41.5%
Miami-Dade	653	51.2%	669	56.8%
Monroe	90	7.1%	20	1.7%
Total	1,276	100%	1,177	100%
Age				
	Unweighted		Weighted	
	Count	%	Count	%
18-34	111	9.3%	307	26.1%
35-54	340	28.5%	405	34.4%
55-64	281	23.5%	200	17.0%
65+	463	38.7%	265	22.5%
Total	1,195	100%	31.6%	100%
Educational Attainment				
	Unweighted		Weighted	
	Count	%	Count	%
Less than bachelor's degree	304	25.5%	778	66.1%
Bachelor's degree	405	34.0%	245	20.8%
Graduate or professional degree	483	40.5%	154	13.1%
Total	1,192	100%	31.6%	100%
Race and Ethnicity				
	Unweighted		Weighted	
	Count	%	Count	%
Hispanic of any race, including multiple races	456	38.7%	629	53.4%
Black or African American alone	76	6.5%	226	19.2%
White alone	599	50.9%	244	20.7%
Other races (Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, Other)	25	2.1%	44	3.7%
Two or more races (not Hispanic or Latino)	21	1.8%	35	3.0%
Total	28.7%	100%	31.6%	100%

Responses were weighted utilizing the raking method for age, educational attainment, race/ethnicity, and county of residence to ensure no groups within these categories were over or underrepresented in the survey analysis.

Educational attainment was used as a proxy for income, as more respondents filled out that question than the income question. Raking adjusts the total from the overall sample total to the total for each variable, where a weight is applied. In other words, since the race question had 1,177 usable responses, the weighted analysis is based on 1,177 cases.

For age, age groups were combined to reduce categories into the following groups 18 to 34 (9.3% of responses), 35-54 (28.5%), 55 to 64 (23.5%), and 65 or older (38.7%). The educational attainment categories were combined into less than bachelor’s degree (combining less than high school, high school diploma or equivalent, some college, associate’s and vocational training or 25.5% responses), bachelor’s (34.0%) and graduate or professional degree (40.5%).

The race question in the survey allowed for multiple selections. These were recategorized into new mutually exclusive race variable for weighting purposes and cross tabulation analysis in line with the American Community Survey’s race and Hispanic ethnicity guidelines⁴⁵ under Hispanic or Latino and Race of White alone, Black alone, Hispanic of any race, other races (in our case for other given South Florida’s demography other races includes Asian, American Indian, Pacific Islander, and other fill-ins where the race/ethnicity could not be assumed), and two or more races (except Hispanic). Open-ended responses were analyzed to determine the categorization of respondents by race and ethnicity. Other race responses were used for categories where respondents selected other but not one of the close-ended categories, and did not indicate a race, being biracial, or some form of Hispanic origin, but instead included a national origin, and include responses like Arab American, Haitian, and European, among others. In cases where other was selected as well as a race option from the list, the closed-ended race was kept (except if the open-ended indicated Hispanic origin or a second racial/ethnic group different from the first, like one who indicated being American Indian and in the comments Puerto Rican). Commentary responses where a specific race or ethnicity was not mentioned were excluded. After this process, the categorization by race/ethnicity in mutually exclusive categories was: Hispanic of any race including multiple races (38.7%), Black or African American alone (6.5%), White alone (50.9%), other races including Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian and other responses (2.1%), and two or more races not Hispanic or Latino (1.8%). The frequencies for each variable were analyzed for

45 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates.

a total of 1,177 weighted cases.

The data was then divided and analyzed for Miami-Dade and Broward County respondents separately with weights applied to each sample based on each county’s demographic data for educational attainment, age, and race/ethnicity.

In order to assess differences across demographic groups, the JPMC team conducted cross-tabulation analysis using the following as independent variables: the recoded age variable with fewer categories used in the weighted analysis, the recoded race/ethnicity variable used in the weighted analysis, and the recoded educational attainment variable with fewer categories used in the weighted analysis. These responses are unweighted and show the percentage of respondents within each demographic group who indicated a certain response.

The cross-tabulation analysis was conducted for five substantive questions that gauge: media sources, community challenges, topics for more information, views on the local news media, frustrations engaging with local media, and civic participation.

METHODOLOGY: FOCUS GROUPS

From May 27, 2025, through July 02, 2025, the FIU Jorge M. Perez Metropolitan Center conducted eight focus groups, each lasting on average 1.5 hours, with a total of forty-seven adult participants who participated until the end of the discussion.¹ The focus groups were intended to dive deeper into the survey results with specific communities and are not statistically representative samples.

During the focus groups, two FIU staff members were present, a moderator and a notetaker. Five of the seven in-person discussions were coordinated at community partner sites, while two were conducted at the FIU@I-75 campus. The Monroe County group was conducted online via Zoom to recruit participants from diverse parts of the Florida Keys.

The focus group dates, locations, target communities, and languages are as follows:

- May 27, 2025, at 10 North Group: Miami-Dade Black/African American group, conducted in English, 8 participants
- June 11, 2025, at Sant La: Miami-Dade Haitian group, conducted in Haitian Creole, 9 participants
- June 17, 2025, at Hispanic Unity of Florida: Broward Hispanic group, conducted in Spanish, 7 participants
- June 18, 2025, at Bridge to Hope: Miami-Dade Hispanic group, conducted in Spanish, 6 participants
- June 26, 2025, at Habitat for Humanity of Broward: Broward Black/African American group, conducted in English, 6 participants
- June 30, 2025, at FIU at I-75: Broward youth group (ages 18 to 30), conducted in English, 3 participants
- July 01, 2025, at FIU at I-75: Miami-Dade youth group (ages 18 to 30), conducted in English, 4 participants
- July 02, 2025, online via Zoom: Monroe County group, conducted in English, 4 participants

Focus group participants were recruited with collaboration from community partners who hosted groups, recruited participants, or shared the focus group flyer with their contacts at Bridge to Hope, SantLa, Hispanic Unity of Florida, 10 North Group, Habitat for Humanity of Broward, and the Florida Keys Healthy Start Coalition.

A registration link was created for the groups on Microsoft Forms, and participants were selected based on various demographic factors, including age, gender, race, and ethnicity. To verify that participants were real residents of their communities, screening calls were conducted after email selection of participants. During these calls, participants were asked to verify their demographic and contact information.

Additionally, all but one group was conducted in-person with community members, the exception being Monroe County. During this meeting, participants were asked to confirm their address of residence in the Florida Keys privately. Discussion participants received \$50 digital Amazon gift cards for their time.

The focus group questionnaire script was created in consultation with The Miami Foundation’s project manager and with input from the American Journalism Project. The script questions aimed to collect qualitative information that would complement the quantitative analysis of the survey questions. The community section of the script focuses on how a typical resident describes their community, its strengths, and community challenges.

The second section focuses on information sources and challenges with local media and local news. It asks

participants about their ability to obtain the information they need for their top challenges, their sources for news and information, coverage of important community issues, frustrations engaging with local media, representation in the news, and what they wish from local news.

The FIU team translated the script into Spanish while partners at Sant La translated it into Haitian Creole. During focus groups, participants were asked to provide answers on the worksheet for the first four questions, and each question was then discussed. The next two questions were discussed without appearing in the forms. For the final question, “I wish local news would...”, participants were given large notes to complete that sentence. These were then compiled into a large sheet, and participants indicated what they wrote and why they wrote it. The questionnaire responses were recorded into an Excel spreadsheet for reference.

METHODOLOGY: CIVIC AND COMMUNITY LEADER INTERVIEWS

In addition to the survey and focus groups, the research team also conducted 58 civic or community leaders across Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties to get their perspective on the strengths and gaps of the South Florida local media ecosystem. Interviews were conducted on video or by phone and lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. We recruited interview subjects across the following seven categories.

- Journalism practitioners and executives
- Public officials and political professionals
- Academic experts
- Community and religious leaders
- Advocacy leaders
- Business and philanthropic leaders
- Highly engaged professionals

These interviews were conducted on background, meaning that the information shared can be used but cannot be attributed to a specific or named person.

METHODOLOGY: MEDIA DIARY STUDY

We asked residents of Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe Counties to complete a five- to seven-day diary of the media they consumed. The survey and feedback software company Qualtrics, a SAP subsidiary, was contracted for recruitment, panel management and respondent incentive distribution. We included responses from 53 individuals in our analysis. The study was conducted in April 2025. Participants received a gift card or rewards points if they submitted reports for at least four days in a 7-day period.

Given the small sample size, the media diary serves as a complementary qualitative input that helps illuminate patterns surfaced in the regional survey. Its findings are directional and not intended to represent independent or generalizable insights about media behavior in the region.

Qualtrics attempted to recruit a sample based on quotas that reflected demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, etc. of the populations of Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties. The following table shows the characteristics of the final sample of participants who met the 4-day criteria.

COUNTY	Number	Percent
Miami-Dade	32	60.4
Broward	20	37.7
Monroe	1	1.9
AGE		
18-29	18	34.0
30-54	27	50.9
55+	8	15.1
GENDER		
Female	36	67.9
Male	17	32.1
RACE/ETHNICITY		
Black	13	24.5
Hispanic (any race)	25	47.2
White	15	28.3
EDUCATION		
Less than a Bachelor’s degree	27	50.9
Bachelor’s degree	20	37.7
Graduate/professional	6	11.3

While the relatively small sample size means that findings should be interpreted with caution and not generalized too broadly, the diary method offers unique advantages over other research approaches. By capturing day-to-day behaviors, choices, and contexts, these self-reported records provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of how individuals interact with media.

We define “anchor newsrooms” as a news organization that generates the largest quantity of original reporting within a media ecosystem. Original reporting by anchor newsrooms is often repackaged and republished by other information providers in the ecosystem, including by some that might actually have a larger reach than the anchor newsroom itself. As a result, the impact of an anchor newsroom on a media ecosystem is much larger than its direct reach would suggest. In South Florida, our research identified three anchor newsrooms: The Miami Herald, El Nuevo Herald, and the Sun Sentinel.

To study these anchor newsrooms, we downloaded and analyzed all coverage published on their websites for a particular month of “normal” coverage, then focused on those stories originally reported by the newsroom. We selected March 2025 to avoid election seasons that might skew coverage, as well as possible short staffing in summer and winter holidays. It is worth noting that this analysis precedes the current administration’s immigration crackdown and falls outside South Florida’s peak extreme weather and flooding months. This analysis should be understood as a preliminary, point-in-time analysis which we hope to repeat during outlier months, including those with more frequent extreme weather events.

We categorized stories by geographic focus (county and main city), topic, and story type, using the following definitions:

- Spot news: Real-time daily news reporting on a specific event, without citing additional reporting besides information provided by original sources
- News features: Original, sustained reporting citing more than one source but written into the news cycle
- Investigative: In-depth reporting initiated by the newsroom that uncovers and publishes information not already publicly available
- Service: Articles written primarily to inform readers how to navigate a challenge or access goods or services
- Multimedia: Reporting where the primary format is not written text
- Opinion: editorials, columns, and reviews

We contracted with freelancers drawn from journalism graduate schools and research professionals to read the articles and tag them with the appropriate story type, geographies covered, and topics covered. The aggregate of these findings is used to calculate the final numbers. Analysis of El Nuevo Herald was done by bilingual journalism students.

Appendix C: Local New Provider Snapshots

You can find a full list of South Florida news and information providers at [PressForwardSouthFlorida.news/database](https://pressforwardsouthflorida.news/database). Below are snapshots of providers that we heard about during interviews, focus groups, and on the community survey.

Television

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TV

WSVN Fox 7 (Channel 7): WSVN is the flagship station of locally owned Sunbeam Television. In August 2025, the station became a dual-network affiliate, carrying Fox programming and launching “ABC Miami” on a subchannel after replacing WPLG as the market’s ABC affiliate. “Today in Florida,” a six-hour weekday morning news block from 5-11 a.m., anchors their weekly coverage. The station has won eight Suncoast regional Emmys for coverage.

WTVJ NBC 6 (Channel 6): WTVJ is NBC’s owned-and-operated station for South Florida. The station has ranked first or second among English-language local newscasts since the early 2000s, earning six Emmy Awards and 21 nominations. Meteorologist Steve MacLaughlin has led the way on these awards, serving dual roles as meteorologist and climate change reporter. He and meteorologist John Morales are trusted voices on both natural disasters and climate change.

WPLG Local 10 (Channel 10): WPLG, owned by Berkshire Hathaway, ended its ABC affiliation in August 2025 and expanded from 56 to 93 hours of local news programming a week, making it by far the largest contributor of local TV news in the region and among the most robust local news programming operations in the country. (Disclosure: WPLG Local 10 anchor Calvin Hughes serves on Press Forward South Florida’s advisory council.)

WFOR CBS Miami (Channel 4): WFOR-TV is CBS’s owned-and-operated station, based in Doral and operating as CBS Miami with 24/7 streaming. WPBT (PBS) partners specifically with WFOR for hurricane coverage with special captioning services.

WPBT South Florida PBS (Channel 2): WPBT is the flagship PBS station for Miami-Fort Lauderdale. The local newsroom focuses on educational and cultural content rather than daily civic reporting, while PBS NewsHour provides comprehensive national and international coverage. Public affairs shows such as “Your South Florida” examine local government and

community issues from an educational rather than breaking-news perspective.

SPANISH-LANGUAGE TV

WSCV Telemundo 51: WSCV functions as one of two flagship Telemundo stations nationwide, along with the New York market station. It has achieved remarkable ratings success: in 2022 it became South Florida’s leading television station in total households and key demographics across morning, early evening, and late news programming — regardless of language.

WSCV broadcasts multiple daily local newscasts at 5 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 6 p.m., and 11 p.m., with the station adding a 5 p.m. newscast in 2016 as part of expanded local news coverage. The station’s local coverage demonstrates substantial depth and breadth, with comprehensive reporting on immigration enforcement, local criminal cases affecting the Hispanic community, government accountability issues, and municipal affairs. Recent coverage includes detailed reporting on high-profile murder cases, immigration detention policies, local government decisions, and community safety concerns.

Operating from shared facilities with NBC affiliate WTVJ, WSCV leverages both local

and national Telemundo infrastructure to provide extensive coverage. The station

maintains investigative reporting capabilities through Telemundo 51 Investiga and consumer

advocacy programming through Telemundo Responde. Under Vice President of News Lilieth Heredero, a veteran journalist with BBC experience, WSCV continues to serve as an essential local information source for Miami-Dade’s Hispanic-majority population.

WLTU Univisión 23: WLTU Univision produces approximately 14.5 hours of locally produced newscasts weekly. Its coverage includes comprehensive reporting on immigration issues, government accountability, criminal justice, and community safety. The station also produces distinct local programming, including morning and evening newscasts, digital-focused Miami content, sports programming, and public affairs shows.

Operating from the NewsPort facility shared with national Noticias Univision, WLTU leverages both local and national

Spanish-language resources to provide civic coverage that bridges national Hispanic issues with their local manifestations in Miami-Dade, making it an essential local information source for the county’s majority Hispanic population.

Some of the service journalism gaps are filled by emerging Spanish-language publications such as **e!TOQUE**, which launched “Abogados Confiables” in July 2025 to help Cubans in the U.S. find trustworthy immigration lawyers.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, smaller legacy players such as **Calle Ocho News** fill some of the hyperlocal gaps.

Alternative media

Miami New Times and Broward Palm Beach New Times: Originally founded in 1987 as The Wave and later acquired by Village Voice Media, Miami New Times has become one of South Florida’s leading alternative publications. It launched the Broward Palm Beach New Times in 1997. The publication has built a strong reputation for covering stories that mainstream media often overlooks or ignores, with particular focus on Miami’s political landscape, government corruption, and municipal affairs that can lead to real-world impact, including criminal convictions of public officials and policy changes. The newspaper has won numerous prestigious journalism awards for their civic coverage. They also provide a substantial amount of arts, culture, entertainment, and dining coverage.

Haitian community media

WQVN (1360 AM / Radio Piment Bouk): WQVN serves South Florida’s Haitian community with Creole-language programming. The small newsroom consists primarily of Haitian-American journalists and community contributors who understand both Haitian culture and Miami politics. Formerly known as WKAT, this station has a rich history in Miami radio, including early ties to Larry King, who hosted morning shows from Pumpernik’s restaurant on Miami Beach, interviewing entertainers such as Jackie Gleason and Frank Sinatra. WQVN’s civic news coverage focuses on immigration issues affecting Haitian refugees and immigrants, community development in areas like Little Haiti, education, municipal services, cultural events, and political developments both locally and in Haiti. For Haitian-Americans who face language barriers in English or Spanish-language media, the station serves as a crucial civic information source.

WLQY (1320 AM): Interview subjects also highlighted the

influence of WLQY, a commercial Creole-language AM music station that doubles as a civic platform. The station allows individuals, nonprofit organizations, and political groups to purchase airtime — often for several months at a time — to share information, mobilize the community, and reach audiences in their own language.

Island TV: Operating from North Miami since 1996, Island TV is a 24-hour Caribbean-focused television network serving Haitian and broader Afro-Caribbean communities throughout the region. The station broadcasts programming in English, French, and Creole across three channels covering news, general entertainment, and specialized programming in music, arts, drama, and community affairs. While its core audience is Haitian, Island TV includes content from across the Caribbean. It reaches viewers through cable, satellite, and streaming platforms, with concentrated viewership in Florida and Latin America. The network also offers over 4,500 free on-demand programs.

The Haitian Times: Founded in 1999, The Haitian Times is a free publication that bridges the generational and geographical gaps among Haitians. Covering both Haiti and Haitian-American communities, it provides national stories alongside local reporting — especially from South Florida, due to the size of the local Haitian population. The newsroom has reporters in the region to support its coverage.

THE BLACK PRESS

The Miami Times: Founded in 1923, The Miami Times is South Florida’s oldest and largest Black-owned newspaper. The weekly broadsheet has a circulation of nearly 15,000 and serves the Black community from Homestead to South Broward. Its small newsroom produces comprehensive coverage focusing on local government, education, criminal justice reform, and community issues affecting Black residents.

Westside Gazette: Founded in 1971 by Levi Henry and now run by his son, Robert Henry, the Broward-based Westside Gazette is guided by the motto “A positive paper for positive people.” The weekly publication serves South Florida’s Black community with inspirational and civic-minded coverage. Much of its circulation still comes from churches purchasing copies to distribute to congregants. The outlet also produces a weekly YouTube podcast, 2 Minute Warning, which typically focuses on local politics.

Business & Industry

Miami Today: A print-first, business-focused weekly newspaper, Miami Today provides local coverage centered on economic development, municipal finance, and government business impacts. It’s known for in-depth, consistent coverage of local issues, particularly in Miami’s urban core, and remains a go-to read for business and civic leaders.

South Florida Business Journal: A digital first business publication with local coverage focused on economic development, municipal finance, and policy impacts on business, and government contracts across the region. Most South Florida Business Journal stories require a paid subscription, though select stories and newsletters are free to access.

The Real Deal: The Real Deal South Florida serves as the region’s leading source for real estate news, offering daily coverage of major transactions, development projects, and policy impacts across Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. Primarily digital, with quarterly print editions, it also hosts the region’s largest real estate forum, drawing more than 6,000 industry professionals.

Refresh Miami: The region’s primary news and networking hub for the technology and startup ecosystem, Refresh Miami produces original reporting on local startups, funding rounds, and tech company developments, Supported by partnerships and sponsorships, Refresh Miami operates both as a specialized news outlet and a community connector for South Florida’s growing tech industry.

Hyperlocals

Our research identified at least a dozen hyperlocal publications, including legacy-print players like Miami’s Community Newspapers and Westside Gazette, and newer, born-digital players striving to fill the gap in different pockets of the region, all with different structures, business models, and content offerings. But the network is fragile, uneven, and disconnected, and could benefit from coordination and a closer look at where the gaps are and what is filling them. Below we highlight a selection of hyperlocal publications to show the diversity of approaches serving the region.

Miami’s Community Newspapers: Founded in 1958, Miami’s Community Newspapers is one of Miami-Dade’s oldest local news operations. Operated by Miller Publishing and led by publisher Michael Miller, it runs a network of suburban papers, including **Aventura News, Sunny Isles News, Doral Tribune, Miami Beach News, Brickell Tribune, Miami Gardens News, Coral Gables News, South Miami News, Kendall Gazette, Palmetto Bay News, Cutler Bay News,** and **Pinecrest Tribune**. While community newspapers often rely heavily on announcements and press releases, Miami’s Community Newspapers produces deep hyperlocal coverage of city governments, schools, business developments, and neighborhood events. The company employs more than 30 people; generates roughly \$5.7 million in annual revenue; maintains active social media, community talk shows, and podcasts; and reaches 95,000 newsletter subscribers. It also republishes stories from WLRN and serves as Miami-Dade’s official newspaper of record for legal notices, probate announcements, and Department of Labor PERM ads.

Hy-Lo News: Founded in 2015 by Janey Tate, Hy-Lo News occupies a space between news and creators. The free, hyperlocal digital news outlet began as a Facebook-based blog in response to mainstream media’s lack of coverage of Black communities and their concerns. Hy-Lo News now covers a broad range of topics with particular emphasis on local government accountability, school board issues, municipal politics, and cultural events — especially in communities in northwest Miami-Dade such as Miami Gardens and Carol City. Hy-Lo has expanded to include podcasts and the outlet maintains an active social media presence and newsletter.

Coconut Grove Spotlight: A nonprofit outlet operated by Miami News Trust, Inc., Coconut Grove Spotlight provides free, accessible coverage of life in Coconut Grove and surrounding neighborhoods. The small newsroom, which relies on volunteer editors, civic leaders, and a rotating roster of paid freelance reporters,publishes original reporting twice a week alongside commentary, briefs, and letters to the editor. Coverage spans neighborhood politics, development battles, cultural life, and community institutions, with recent stories examining issues like election reforms, the future of Miami Marine Stadium, and changes at local schools.

46 [El Toque. “Encuentra representación legal confiable con recomendaciones de otros inmigrantes.” El Toque, July 15, 2025.](#)

Key Biscayne Independent: Operated by Miami Fourth Estate, a nonprofit whose board includes several journalists with experience at well-respected national news organizations, Key Biscayne Independent is a small newsroom with one full-time staff member and the occasional freelance contribution. The largest portion of coverage appears to be national wire service stories, although they also regularly republish stories from WLRN and occasionally produce original reporting on Key Biscayne politics and cultural life as well as an occasional local podcast called “Anti-Social Podcast.” Owner Miami Fourth Estate states on its website that its mission is to “build hyperlocal, nonprofit journalism in all of Miami-Dade’s neighborhoods and municipalities.” In 2023, Miami Fourth Estate launched a second publication, Liberty City Independent, but at the time of this report’s publication it appeared to be carrying mostly national wire and WLRN stories.

TAPinto: The TAPinto network includes more than 95 independently owned and operated local news and digital marketing platforms in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Florida with three publications in Broward County: TAPinto Coconut Creek, TAPinto Parkland, and TAPinto Coral Springs. Each site has a local owner and provides original, daily news reporting, with a strong focus on crime and public safety, profiles of local businesses, restaurant reviews, real estate development, and event coverage.

The Miami Herald’s new hyperlocal Broward publications: At the onset of this research project, the Miami Herald, the Miami Herald had just announced the launch of hyperlocal publications in Broward County — Miramar News, Pembroke Pines News, and Coral Springs News (which gives Coral Springs two hyperlocal news sources).⁴⁷

47 [Alex Mena and Mike Garbett. Miami Herald. Herald launches hyperlocal news sites in Pembroke Pines, Miramar and Coral Springs. October 1, 2025](#)

Appendix D: About Our Research Partners

The [Jorge M. Perez Metropolitan Center \(JPMC\)](#) is one of 34 academic/research centers at Florida International University (FIU), Miami’s public research university. The JPMC was created in 1997 as a local urban think tank in the Miami-Dade County area. Since 1997, the JPMC’s reach has expanded to government and nonprofit clients throughout South Florida. The FIU JPMC has a record of providing technical and consulting services in the areas of economic development and housing policy; performance management, evaluation and survey research; applied economic and demographic research; local government planning and management; and public finance. Since 2008, the JPMC has been designated as a Census Information Center (CIC) that serves as an effective vehicle for disseminating information and data produced by the Census Bureau to underserved communities.

The [Lee Caplin School of Journalism & Media](#) at Florida International University (FIU) is a nationally recognized program that prepares students to lead in today’s rapidly evolving media landscape. The school blends skills-based training, theoretical learning, and real-world experience, offering programs in digital journalism, broadcasting, multimedia production, interactive media, animation, and game media.

The [American Journalism Project \(AJP\)](#) is the first venture philanthropy organization dedicated to local news. AJP makes catalytic investments in nonprofit news organizations and partners with communities to launch new outlets. Since 2019, AJP has invested in dozens of local news outlets, providing them with capital, strategic guidance, and operational expertise to grow their reach and impact. Through a local philanthropy partnerships program, AJP works with civic leaders, place-based funders, and community foundations to conduct community listening, study local information ecosystems, and design solutions that address information gaps in their communities. By strengthening and scaling a sustainable field of local news organizations, AJP is working to ensure that people have access to the trusted, independent local journalism they need to participate in civic life.

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Report editor

[Impact Architects](#) specializes in strategy and research to catalyze social change through journalism and media. They work with news organizations and media makers, philanthropists, and researchers, bridging the gap across sectors.

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