

Public Media and Journalism Program

WYNCOTE FOUNDATION

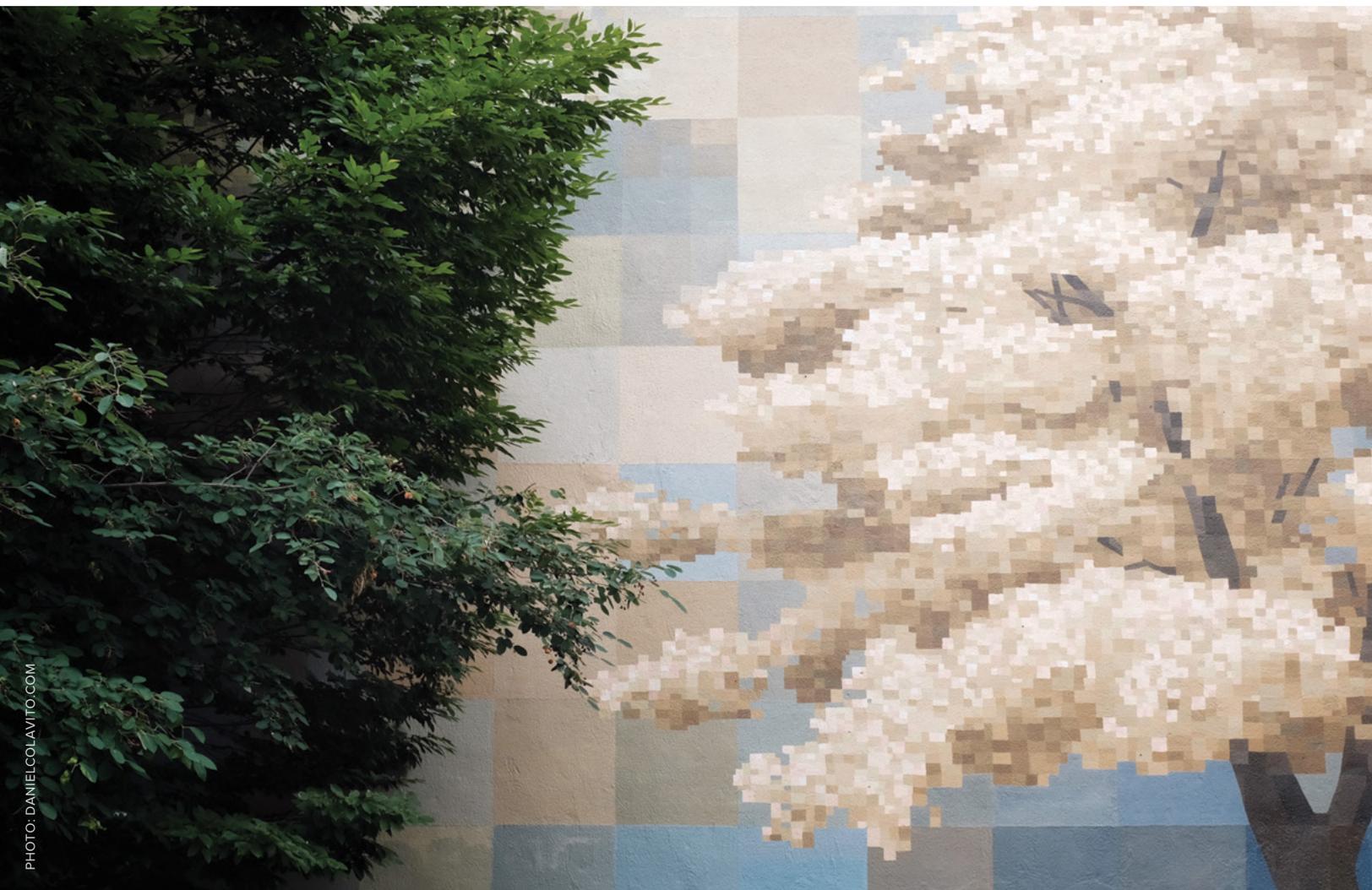


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Wyncote Foundation | **PUBLIC MEDIA AND JOURNALISM**

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MISSION AND STRATEGY STATEMENT

Wyncote Foundation works to further a thriving public media ecosystem that is vital to animating and sustaining democracy’s public sphere. By public media we mean mission-driven media produced in the public interest, including legacy CPB-funded public broadcasting, digital-first enterprises, and independent makers producing news, educational, and cultural content that engages the public and stimulates community dialogue.

Public media provides essential information and analysis, invites civic engagement, and furthers cultural and creative expression. Public media and a vigorous free press serve to create a “public commons” in the spirit of other important civic assets such as parks, libraries, colleges, and cultural institutions.

In an era of rapidly changing technology, shifts in individual behavior, and strong market forces, it is not enough to support public media in its current form and practice. Wyncote takes a systems approach—often with others—to encourage innovation and adaptation in legacy institutions, and for experimentation and scaling of actors offering new approaches to content creation, distribution, and engagement. We focus on trends and interconnections. At least half of what we do, beyond making grants, is learning and sharing ideas with thought leadership across nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

WYNCOTE’S WORK FEATURES SIX APPROACHES IN PUBLIC MEDIA AND JOURNALISM:

1. Supporting the necessary evolution of legacy public broadcasting
2. Investing in new approaches to the sustainability of accountability journalism
3. Supporting accountability journalism in the Greater Philadelphia Area and Pennsylvania
4. Supporting independent production in public media
5. Field-building in public media
6. Using media to strengthen civic and cultural institutions

1 Supporting the necessary evolution of legacy public broadcasting

DECADES OF SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC MEDIA have provided us with a sharper perspective on the urgent need for change in public broadcasting, which we see as an essential pillar of the public media sector.

Legacy public broadcasting leadership must accelerate its adaptation to a changing world, characterized by audiences moving beyond broadcast to digital and social channels, the increasing diversity of American society, and a polarized public square. This current context presents obstacles to tradition-laden broadcasters who must adapt, yet offers opportunities for increased service and relevance.

Wyncote support encourages legacy public broadcasting to attract and engage new, diverse, digital audiences through innovative programming and practices. Wyncote also supports local and independent production within our region that reflects new approaches to public service and encourages civic engagement.

- **Localore: Finding America** is a continuing project of the Association of Independents in Radio (AIR), that matches independent producers with local public radio and television stations to create rich, diverse stories using new approaches to storymaking that have demonstrably drawn younger, more diverse people and communities to engage with public media. This project is the latest stage of an effort to connect creative producers with legacy public broadcasters and demonstrate the role unique voices can play in stimulating change in station culture and audience engagement.



Localore: Finding America. (Image courtesy of AIR)

- Since 2007, **WORLD Channel**, based at WGBH, has offered a 24/7 program stream of diverse, curated content that encompasses global and domestic issues including award-winning documentaries, insightful examinations of pressing issues, and rebroadcast of POV/

Independent Lens content from the main PBS program service. Wyncote has offered advocacy, introductions, and opportunities to showcase WORLD's value to local public television programming. WORLD has expanded its coverage during a period of increased competition from other PBS programming.

- **Local That Works**, a joint effort of *Current* and Public Media Futures Forums, showcases strong local public media initiatives that provide unique coverage of regional issues of interest. The initial Local That Works competition drew 113 nominations, illustrating that imaginative local programming is within the reach of stations of all sizes and that public media's trusted voice can deepen a community's engagement in cultural, educational, and civic matters. The 2017 winner, KWIT-FM Siouxland Public Media in rural Sioux City, Iowa, sponsored a series of public dialogues around the experience of immigrants in their community working in the meat industry.

2 Investing in new approaches to the sustainability of accountability journalism

THE COLLAPSE OF THE BUSINESS MODEL OF LEGACY JOURNALISM has decimated newsrooms and resulted in a corresponding reduction in coverage of public issues and investigative reporting at the national, state, and metro level. At the same time, nonprofit digital startups have energetically tried to fill the gap but have confronted the twin challenges of sustainability and scale.

Wyncote has approached these field-wide problems by supporting adaptation and innovation. Wyncote funds journalism in the Greater Philadelphia area and the state of Pennsylvania. Beyond the region, support focuses on initiatives that link and scale journalistic resources regionally, nationally, or both.

- Wyncote supported development of an updated edition of “[Journalism and Media Grant Making: Five Things You Need to Know, Five Ways to Get Started](#),” a primer for funders considering support for journalism in specific regions or within areas of grantmaking interest. Informed by an advisory group of foundation leaders, it includes ways philanthropy might support journalism, offers guidance on editorial independence and sustainability, and offers a full range of background reading and examples from across the country.
- Founded in 2016 when the owner of the Philadelphia Media Network donated that company to the Philadelphia Foundation, the [Lenfest Institute for Journalism](#) has two goals. First, to help legacy media institutions adapt to contemporary digital imperatives and build broader, diverse audiences. And second, to support innovators to test new business models and technology-supported journalism. Wyncote has directed its funding toward endowment in order to provide steady revenue to sustain strong leadership of the Institute.
- Recognizing the key role that research and development may play in developing digital tools for journalism innovation, Wyncote endowed a chair at [Temple University’s Klein College of Media and Communications](#) to build digital depth and expertise for the Philadelphia media ecosystem and beyond. Temple was able to attract an internationally-respected leader in the field who had led digital innovation at the *Guardian* and the *New York Times*. Having developed the tool that made possible the international collaboration uncovering the Panama Papers, he is working closely with the Lenfest Institute in addition to his faculty responsibilities at Temple.



*Journalism students at work, Klein College of Media and Communications.
(Photo courtesy of Temple University)*

4 Supporting independent production in public media

INDEPENDENT FILM AND MEDIA have long struggled to fulfill an integral role in public media. Independent media offers diverse content, broader social awareness, and new opportunities for engagement within communities of interest beyond traditional public media audiences. Diversification of the documentary form has created new opportunities for distribution and use in civic engagement.

Wyncote has supported intermediaries such as ITVS and American Documentary, which have strong track records in identifying talent, providing technical and financial support for completion and distribution of work, and developing strategies for civic engagement. Within the region, Wyncote also supports community engagement around select productions with high impact potential, especially when linked to national or regional broadcasts.

- With Wyncote support, award-winning filmmaker Thomas Allen Harris has brought through pilot stage a new series called **Family Pictures USA**, which captures the diversity of the American experience through family photographs. Family Pictures USA uses first person interviews to tell the stories reflected in family photographs, brought to life by descendants and accompanying historical documentation. The series is being considered for PBS/WORLD Channel broadcast.



Sharing photos and stories. (Photo courtesy of Family Pictures USA)

- The **Wyncote Fellows** program is designed to stimulate interaction between independent documentary filmmakers and public television station leadership. A select group of “lean-in” station leaders (already showing interest in documentary film) attend the biennial International Documentary Association conference to learn more about using documentaries to build audience interest and engagement. In a mirror exchange, Wyncote sponsors documentary and media makers to attend the PBS Annual Meeting, with introductions to interested station leadership and panels illustrating opportunities for innovative programming using documentary film.

5 Field-building in public media

AMONG PUBLIC BROADCASTERS, exchanges of thinking and practice are frequent but rarely result in significant change. Wyncote creates forums and opportunities where research, innovation, and promising practices can be showcased and then built upon by committed leadership in the field. In limited circumstances we have supported platform innovations designed to serve multiple media entities.

- The **Public Media Futures Forums** have built a body of expertise around many issues facing public broadcasting through in-depth interviews with thought leaders, presentation of research findings at key convenings, and problem-solving workshops tapping the best minds in the field. Examples of work prepared for the more than 30 forums include an analysis of public media fundraising techniques, refining topline digital analytics, and considering opportunities to reconfigure National Public Radio News network to optimize digital capacity and grow journalism strength in member stations. Along with *Current* and Current.org, the Forums operate the *Local that Works* competition.
- **Current and Current.org** are essential sources of news and information for public service media. Without them, daily news, updates, and in-depth coverage about public broadcasting would shrink to occasional features that miss important stories and trends in a rapidly changing environment. Since its migration

to American University with Wyncote assistance, *Current* has expanded the depth and scope of coverage, modernized its website, and grown as a thought leader in the field.



For the 50th anniversary of the Public Broadcasting Act, Current offered insightful essays on the field's future. (Image courtesy of Current)

- “**Investing in Local Journalism, Public Media, and Storytelling: Examples from Place-Based Foundations**” is a new report profiling nine place-based foundations’ media funding strategies. The report describes programmatic approaches, highlights representative grants, and incorporates links to further information and resources.

- Because local public station engagement is a critical part of building support and new audiences, Wyncote underwrote a multi-station initiative led by St. Louis TV9 to position participating stations as convener/leaders in their local communities. That groundwork shaped the approach many stations used during CPB’s **American Graduate** initiative, resulting in high school graduation improvements, new partners within the community, and increased support for the stations and participating non-profits.

6 Using media to strengthen civic and cultural institutions

NEW AUDIENCE BEHAVIORS AND EXPECTATIONS make it imperative that cultural and educational institutions become full participants in the reconfigured digital media landscape. New digital capabilities can extend community service and reach, and help welcome new, diverse audiences.

Wyncote has commissioned high-quality resource guides that can help cultural institutions directly and inform the investments made by philanthropy. In its own region Wyncote has selectively supported digital innovation by area cultural institutions.

- In 2014, Wyncote commissioned a report built on case studies of 40 legacy cultural organizations that were nominated by their peers as digital media innovators. **Like, Link, Share** drew themes from the case studies, and an accompanying website provided descriptions of these innovators' work with links to further information, evaluations, and press reports for each organization. The widely cited report has helped countless cultural institutions to innovate in their digital practices and resulted in numerous conference presentations and workshops.



A student conducts the Philharmonia's digital orchestra in this featured project from Like, Link, Share. (Photo courtesy of Philharmonia Orchestra, London, UK)

- In 2016, Wyncote commissioned **Wanderway**, a free online course that walks participants through the building blocks of successful digital engagement. The course has helped hundreds of individual artists, small cultural organizations, and creative small businesses tackle the basics of digital innovation, tailored to size and readiness. Workshops based on the course materials were held throughout 2017.
- In 2015-2016, Wyncote funded the Philadelphia Museum of Art's (PMA) **Online Digital Analysis** project, enabling a comprehensive assessment of the museum's website, digital offerings, and experiences. The project director worked closely and collaboratively across departments, integrating marketing, design, educational, and curatorial content. These investments in improving the museum's online presence have had a direct effect on PMA's ability to reach broader and more diverse audiences and to build effective, innovative technologies. The project also advanced the museum's strategic plan, providing new ways for visitors, on-site and virtually, to experience and engage with collections.



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