

PRESS FORWARD VERMONT

Press Forward Matching Challenge

NOVEMBER 13 – 1:00 p.m.

Today

5	min	Welcome and introductions
15	min	Matching challenge overview
10	min	How the match works
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20	min	Questions and answers

Your PRESS FORWARD VERMONT Team



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What Is the Press Forward?

A national effort to strengthen local news so communities stay informed, connected, and engaged. The Vermont Community Foundation is proud to lead this work in VT.

Bringing people together to chart a vision for the future of local news, laying the groundwork for **informed strategic investments** in the local media landscape

Mobilizing funders in collaboration with local communities and the news sector

Investing in the **sustainability, innovation, and reach** of the local news sector

Improving the **long-term sustainability of the sector** and ensure that **local news provides the coverage Vermonters want and need**

LOCAL NEWS DAY

A National Day of Action Connecting Communities with Trusted Local News

Thursday, April 8, 2027

Partnership Deck

Press Forward X Matching Challenge

Matching Challenge Overview



What Is the Matching Challenge?

A pilot that triples money raised for local news in Vermont

The Press Forward Matching Challenge is a new national campaign to raise money for local newsrooms, timed around Local News Day on April 8, 2027.

During the campaign, gifts to participating newsrooms will be tripled.

Press Forward and Press Forward Vermont match audience gifts, up to a cap.

$1M committed by Press Forward to the pilot

12 participating local chapters

3X every dollar raised is tripled

Press Forward X Matching Challenge

Program Goals

1 **Strengthen newsroom fundraising capacity**
Newsrooms receive training, templates and a match to run audience revenue campaigns.

2 **Put new money into local news**
Audience contributions to participating newsrooms are tripled.

3 **Demonstrate impact and a replicable model**
Document results for funders, and test a model more chapters, partners, and newsrooms can repeat.

Press Forward Vermont Program Goals

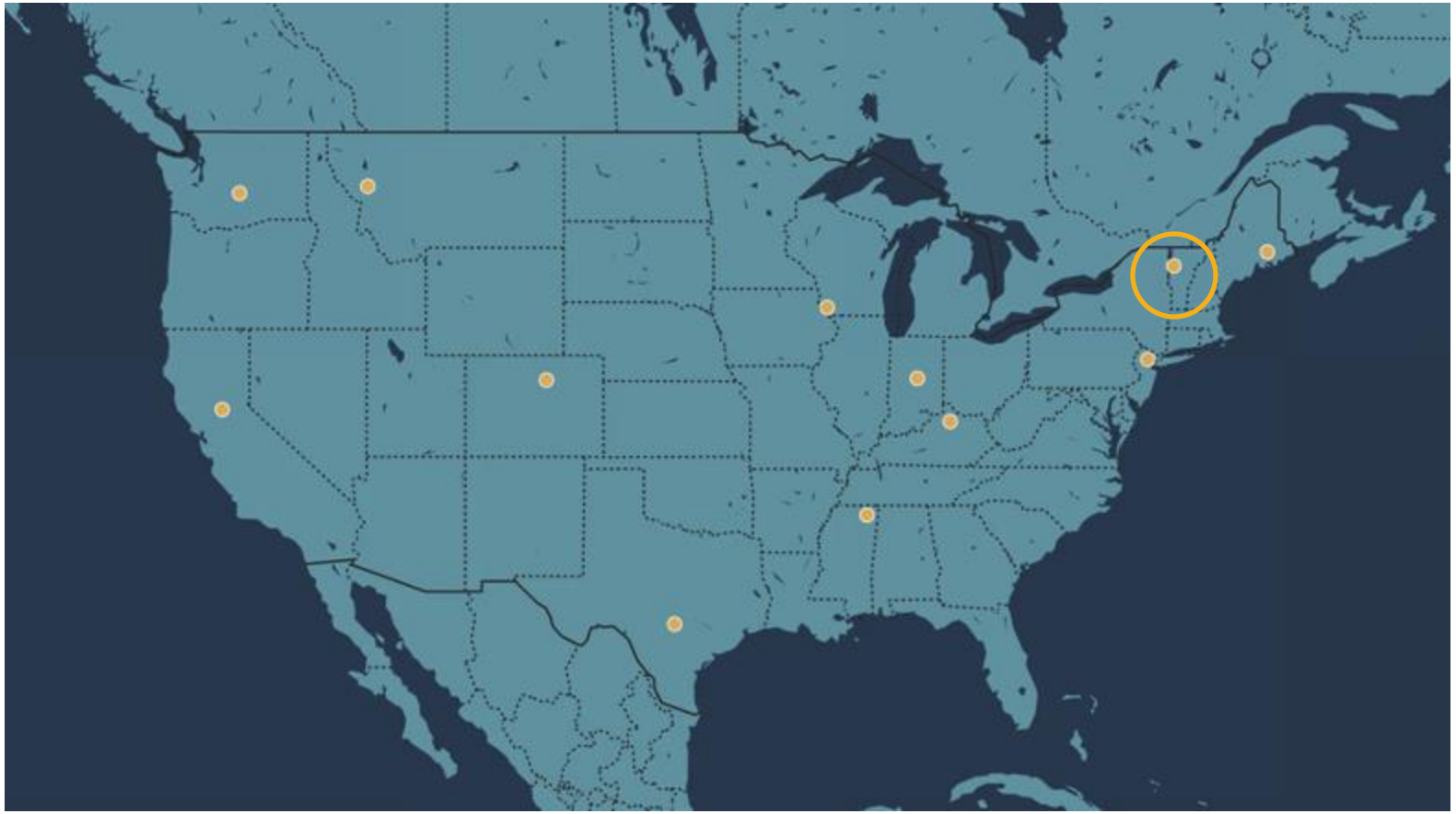
1 **Engaging a broad range of newsrooms**
We are looking for regional representation across a diverse mix of platforms

2 **Reaching newsrooms who are new to audience campaigns and drives**
As more than just a fundraising push, this a great opportunity to build new skills and capacity

12 Participating Chapters

Our local chapter joins 11 others across the country

Blue Grass (KY)
Central Valley (CA)
Colorado
Indiana
Iowa
Maine
Mississippi
Montana
New Jersey
San Antonio
Vermont
Washington



Partners

Local News Day

A national day of action connecting communities with trusted local news, on April 8, 2027.

Mightycause

A nonprofit fundraising platform with contribution pages, campaign tools and donor management.

Training Partners

Press Forward will provide participating newsrooms with a campaign readiness training program in early 2027.

Newsroom Resources and Training

What selected newsrooms receive

Matching grant

A triple match on eligible individual gifts raised in April 2027, up to $10,000

Campaign in a box

Campaign plan, sample messaging, a customizable case for support, and email and social templates.

Cohort kick-off

Press Forward and Press Forward Vermont convene the newsroom cohort the week of Jan. 25, 2027.

Virtual training

Audience Fundraising and messaging training for newsrooms, February to March 2027. Participation is required.

Fundraising platform

Optional access to Mightycause, for fundraising pages, contribution collection, and reporting.

Promotion

Campaign amplification through Press Forward, Press Forward Vermont, and partner channels.

Newsroom Fundraising Training

Virtual workshops provided by Press Forward, February to March 2027

Responsive to Experience

Tracked training sessions for newsrooms with different levels of fundraising experience.

Practical Approach

Hands-on, practical work. Newsrooms use sessions to build components of their April campaign, using templates.

What newsrooms work on

- **Fundraising principles**
  Goal-setting, and growing your prospect list
- **Messaging**
  Making your ask and value propositions with templates
- **Campaign calendar**
  April plan across email, social, offline and events, peaking April 8
- **Campaign performance**
  Tracking sheet and baseline numbers to see which messages work
- **Plan review**
  Live feedback on campaign plans before the April 1 launch
- **Fundraising Platforms and Support**
  Mightycause page setup and fiscal sponsorship

Newsroom participation in the training program is required.

Press Forward X Matching Challenge

Press Forward X Matching Challenge

How the Match Works



How the Match Works for Newsrooms

Every eligible dollar raised from your audience is tripled, up to match cap

Newsroom raises	Chapter adds	Newsroom total
$1,000	$2,000	**$3,000**
$2,500	$5,000	**$7,500**
$5,000	$10,000	**$15,000**

How it works

Each newsroom's match is capped at $10,000.

Newsrooms that raise less than their cap still earn a match based on what they do raise.

Newsroom Timeline: January to June 2027

The challenge period runs April 1 to 30, with Local News Day on April 8



What Counts Toward the Match

Eligible gifts raised in April 2027 are tripled, up to each newsroom's cap

- Gifts from individuals, not businesses or foundations
- Pledged and received April 1 to 30, 2027
- Up to $1,000 per individual donor
- New gifts from existing donors
- Recurring gifts or subscriptions started in April

How the match works

$1 → $3

Every eligible dollar a newsroom raises from its audience is matched with $2 from the local chapter matching pool ($1 from the local chapter and $1 from national Press Forward), up to $10,000.

Press Forward X Matching Challenge

How to Apply

EMMA MARKS, GRANTS COORDINATOR



Who Can Apply

Organization type

Nonprofit or locally owned for-profit newsroom

Publishing

Publishes original, local, nonpartisan public service journalism at least two articles/stories a week

Staffing

At least one full-time equivalent journalist based in the community – paid or unpaid

Commitment

Commits to February to March training and the coordinated April 2027 campaign

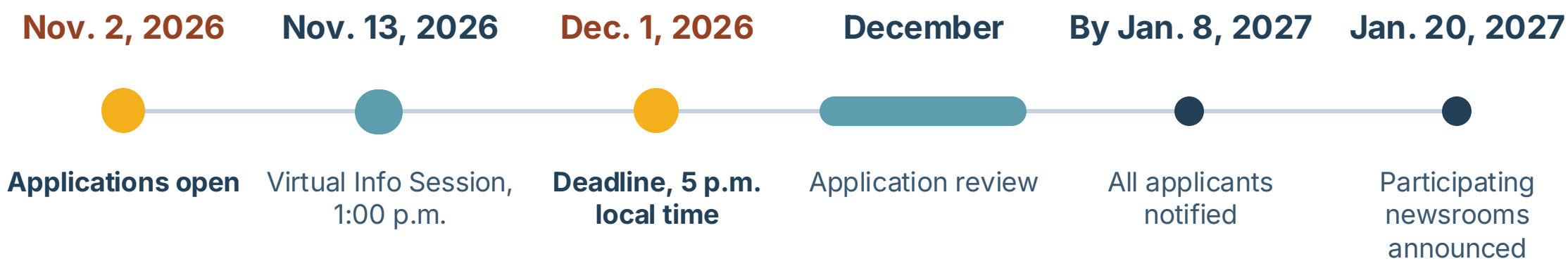
Press Forward Vermont Priorities

Press Forward Vermont will prioritize newsrooms that....

- Represent diverse media/formats/platforms
- Represent diverse geographies
- Are new to audience campaigns and drives
- Have the capacity to take on this program
- Will benefit from this program – both funding and training

Application Timeline

Application and selection, November 2026 to January 2027



How to Apply

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applications are submitted online at vermontcf.org/OGM

Applications are due December 1st at 5pm

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

Create an account

Brief narrative questions

2025 audited financials or end of year financial statement

Fiscal Sponsor Form (if applicable)

TO LEARN MORE

Webpage:
vermontcf.org/pfvt-matching

Technical Support:
Ejohnson@vermontcf.org

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Questions?

Send follow-up questions to HALEY PERO
HPERO@VERMONTCF.ORG

