



TO: Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)
Members of the Public

FROM: Blake Kaiser-Lack, Assistant Deputy Director of External Affairs and
Operations

DATE: March 24, 2026

RE: **Public Notice of the California Civic Media Program Advisory Board**

A meeting of the California Civic Media Program Advisory Board is scheduled to take place on **April 3, 2026** from **1:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.** Please note that all Advisory Board members in attendance will participate remotely.

Meeting Details:

Date: April 3, 2026
Time: **1:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.**
Location: Virtual Via Zoom | In-Person Option at Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (1325 J Street, Suite 1800, Sacramento, CA 95814). 1325 J St. is a secured facility that requires visitors be screened and access is limited to GO-Biz's offices on the 13th floor

Zoom Webinar Details (please register at the following link): https://gobiz-ca.gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_D5dqpq8QTIK_xvygAPEQnw

Meeting ID: 824 8826 5172

A copy of the meeting agenda and meeting materials are attached for your reference.

This notice and the agenda are available on the GO-Biz website at business.ca.gov/california-civic-media-program. If you have any questions regarding this meeting, please contact Blake Kaiser-Lack at CaCivicMedia@gobiz.ca.gov or write to the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, 1325 J Street, Suite 1800, Sacramento, CA 95814.

The meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. Requests for disability-related modification or accommodation should be made at least five business days prior to the meeting and should be directed to Blake Kaiser-Lack.



California Civic Media Program Advisory Board

April 3, 2026

1:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

Location: Virtual via Zoom | In-Person Option at Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (1325 J Street, Room 1834, Sacramento, CA 95814).

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Roll Call
- II. Consideration of Minutes
 - a. Public Comment
 - b. Vote
- III. CA Civic Media Program Third-Party Administrator Introductions
- IV. Program Guidelines and Modeling Presentation
 - a. DRAFT Eligibility Guidelines and Definitions included in Attachment B
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Next Steps and Adjournment



ATTACHMENT A: Draft Meeting Minutes

California Civic Media Program Advisory Board
February 20, 2026
1:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Location: Virtual via Teleconference | In-Person Option at Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (1325 J Street, Suite 1800, Sacramento, CA 95814)

MINUTES

Open Session

I. Welcome & Roll Call

Director Myers called the meeting of the Civic Media Program (Program) Advisory Board (Board) to order at 1:37 p.m.

Board Members Present via Teleconference: Arturo Carmona, Chuck Corra, Erik Cushman, Julian Do, Sean Emery, Jeff Glasser, Marian Kaanon, Julie Patel Liss, Regina Wilson

II. Guidance from Statute

Director Myers summarized the five goals of the Program listed in California Government Code.

III. Introduction of Advisory Board

Director Myers thanked the Board Members for being a part of this body and invited them to introduce themselves and highlight their priorities. Assistant Deputy Director Kaiser-Lack called upon each board member.

In their introductions, Members Carmona, Do, Kaanon, and Wilson laid out their goal of allocating funding equitably and prioritizing underserved and underinvested communities. Members Corra and Kaanon highlighted the importance of supporting newsroom sustainability. Member Emery focused on the creation and protection of journalism jobs. Member Glasser described his organization's advocacy engagement related to the Civic Media program and requested the funding be spent expeditiously and inclusively of all types of newsrooms.



IV. Consideration of Mission Statement

Director Myers informed the Board that the proposed mission statement was created from an initial draft from the California State Library and the goals of the Program statute. Director Myers proceeded to read the proposed mission statement and asked for feedback.

Member Patel Liss suggested adding a line that information produced be accurate and well-sourced. Member Kaanon suggested striking “the ability” from the first sentence for directness. Member Do suggested adding a line about prioritizing underserved communities. Member Wilson submitted updated language with those edits as follows:

“Every Californian deserves access to accurate, well-sourced information about their community. By expanding access to local, ethnic, and community media, supporting newsroom sustainability and diversity, and strengthening California’s press corps to reflect the communities it serves, the Civic Media Program aims to close information gaps, empower people to participate in civic life, and build stronger, healthier, more connected communities across the state.”

Director Myers moved to public comment. Assistant Deputy Director Kaiser-Lack confirmed there were none. Director Myers called for a motion to approve the mission statement as revised (quoted above).

Action Moved/Seconded: Member Carmona/Member Glasser

Yes: Members Carmona, Corra, Cushman, Do, Emery, Glasser, Kaanon, Patel Liss, Wilson

No: None

Abstained: None

V. Third-Party Administrator for Public Funds

Assistant Deputy Director Kaiser-Lack walked the Board through the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development’s (GO-Biz) decision to contract with a third-party administrator to administer the Program’s state funds. GO-Biz sought an entity with expertise in journalism grantmaking and one that could independently process applications to protect press independence.

Assistant Deputy Director Kaiser-Lack shared that GO-Biz had selected the James B. McClatchy Foundation (JBMF) as the third-party administrator after a competitive bidding process. JBMF is a California-based nonprofit with a track record of administering multimillion-dollar journalism and newsroom grant programs. The entity will work with Journalism Funding Partners, the organization selected by Google as



the third-party administrator for the private funds, to disburse the funds based on the finalized state process.

VI. Civic Media Program Structure & Next Steps

Assistant Deputy Director Kaiser-Lack walked the Board through GO-Biz's findings on the two main approaches to developing a grantmaking program. This has been informed over the past five months of engagement with a broad array of stakeholders. First, a project-based model, where organizations apply for funding with specific proposals in mind, could be considered. This model has been used in the New Jersey's Civic Media Consortium. Second, the state could take a formula-based approach, where entities receive funding based on a pre-determined funding formula. Illinois, New York, and Canada run programs using this model.

Assistant Deputy Director Kaiser-Lack summarized guidance from statute on the selection of a model. California Government Code includes language that GO-Biz may consider the use of a pro rata system for private funds. Additionally, public funds are directed to be prioritized for local and community news organizations. Given the Program's limited, one-year funds, prioritization and limitations may need to be put on the funding to prevent the dilution of awards like per newsroom or revenue caps. Additionally, GO-Biz will plan for one unified application process.

Assistant Deputy Director Kaiser-Lack described the three priorities GO-Biz is taking into account when selecting a Program design: expediency, accessibility, and impact – and walked the Board through the Program timeline: finalizing a contract with JBMF by April, setting guidelines in spring, opening applications in the summer, and making awards by the fall.

Director Myers opened the discussion to comments from the Board. Member Glasser opposed caps for individual newsrooms, citing the intent of past legislation that intended similar funding to support those newsrooms most impacted by digital advertising. Member Kaanon agreed that private funds could support larger organizations and wanted to see these funds support growing jobs in journalism. Member Carmona agreed with having no grant caps but that public funds should prioritize ethnic and community media. Member Do was open to a cap or a hybrid model to ensure an equitable distribution. Member Patel Liss proposed the idea of a net revenue cap over a revenue cap given the fuller picture it could provide about an outlet's finances. Member Patel Liss supported the idea to require accountability metrics if news organizations lay off journalists within two years of receiving grant dollars. Member Emery concurred with that point on layoffs. Member Wilson introduced the idea of pulling from past small business procurement legislation (AB



2019, Chapter 370, Statutes of 2022) to inform the approach of the Program. Director Myers said GO-Biz would explore this idea.

Member Do noted that a pro rata model would benefit larger organizations more, and Director Myers brought up the idea of giving bonus points to regional news outlets. Member Glasser warned that deprioritizing larger corporate outlets does not take into account their reporting that serves underrepresented communities. Member Wilson gave a counterpoint, arguing that there is a limited amount of funding and smaller outlets would receive significantly less funding if they were not prioritized in some fashion. She requested information on past set asides for ethnic and local media in other proposed programs. Member Patel Liss raised the idea of breaking the Program into separate funding streams allocated by the size of outlets to help with allocation.

Member Cushman laid out the importance of setting definitions to help the Board align on eligibility for program funding and requested GO-Biz and the Board take on that task. Director Myers concurred with bringing that topic to the next board meeting. Member Cushman then proposed the idea of surveying each of the respective Member's organizations to compile data to help inform Program design. Board members were open to taking on that task and looked to GO-Biz for next steps.

Members asked for clarity on program eligibility. Member Patel Liss raised the idea of including student journalism in the Program. Member Wilson and Member Kaanon warned that funding could become too diluted if student papers were included. Member Corra expressed interest in having GO-Biz explore New Jersey's newsroom program. Member Cushman requested clarity if broadcast news organizations were included in this program. Director Myers clarified they are not excluded from the legislation, though could be based on finalized guidelines. Member Carmona expressed that broadcast was not intended to be included and urged for expediency in disbursing awards sooner than the fall.

Director Myers requested public comments related to this agenda item. Assistant Deputy Director Kaiser-Lack confirmed only one comment request from Greg Little.

Greg Little stated he owns the Mariposa Gazette and is a member of the California Independent News Alliance (CINA). He expressed dissatisfaction with CINA not being represented on the Board and confirmed submission of CINA recommendations to the Board. He agreed with Member Kaanon and warned against funding hedge fund-owned news organizations. On a separate point, he urged the members of the body to bring technology companies to the table to



discuss how the monetization of news content by these companies has impacted the outlets who create that content.

VII. Public Comment / Adjournment

Director Myers thanked the public commenter and without further public comment, Director Myers adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

DRAFT



ATTACHMENT B: Draft Eligibility Guidelines and Definitions

Draft Qualifications:

- I. **Public Disclosure of Ownership:** must have disclosed ownership details either in its print publication or on its website or, in the case of a 501 (c)(3), its board of directors.
- II. **Not-for-Profits:** in the case of a 501 (c)(3), has declared the coverage of local or California news as the stated mission in its filings with the IRS.
- III. **Media Liability Insurance:** carries active media liability insurance coverage and has maintained such coverage continuously over the previous calendar year from the date of application closure.
- IV. **Ethics & Correction Policy:** maintains and publicly displays an editorial policy for error correction and clarification that includes an accessible process for reporting errors or complaints to the eligible local news organization.
- V. **Revenue Minimum:** the organization must have generated at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in annual revenue from its editorial content in the previous calendar year.
- VI. **Broadcast:** persons or entities whose principal business is the distribution of audio or visual programming to the public through broadcast, cable, satellite, or internet based streaming services will not qualify for the Civic Media Program.
- VII. **Political Limitations:** must not be controlled (directly or indirectly) by any of the following disqualified organizations:
 - a. Lobbying firms, political action committees or entities described in Section 527 of the federal Internal Revenue Code; or an organization that maintains Section 501 (c)(4) or 501 (c)(6) status under the federal Internal Revenue Code; and
 - b. Has not received more than 5 percent of its gross revenues in the previous two years from the disqualified organizations listed above.

Draft Definitions:

- I. **Qualified News Organization:** an entity that is legally registered to conduct business within California and has a principal business address in the state. The entity must employ at least one qualified journalist to create, edit, produce, and distribute original, fact-based content concerning state or local matters of public interest through activities, including conducting interviews, observing current events, analyzing documents and other information, or fact checking through multiple firsthand or secondhand news sources.
- II. **Qualified Journalist:** a person who is employed for an average of at least 30 hours per week with primary job duties that consist of providing coverage of



California or local California community news. The role must include tasks such as gathering, developing, preparing, directing the recording of, producing, collecting, photographing, recording, writing, editing, reporting, designing, presenting, distributing, or publishing original news or information that concerns local matters of public interest. The journalist must live in California.

- III. **Qualified Print Publication:** is a local newspaper or news magazine publisher that (1) must have published at least one issue per month in the past 12 months, (2) hold Periodicals mailing privileges from the United States Postal Service, and (3) maintains its known office of publication for the original entry Post Office of Periodicals mailing privileges in California.
- IV. **Qualified Digital News Organization:** is an online entity that (1) must operate with the primary mission to publish news and information about California or a local California community, (2) has published at least one community-related piece per week for the past 12 months and (3) can demonstrate with data on subscribers or digital traffic to have an audience that is at least 33 percent located within California over the previous calendar year.
- V. **Qualified Print Publication and Digital News Organization:** in the case of a hybrid entity that has both print and digital outlets, must meet either the print or digital requirements above.