



PHILADELPHIA MEDIA FOUNDERS EXCHANGE PROGRAM LEADERSHIP (2022-2025)

Strengthening BIPOC-led media through narrative intervention, leadership development, and community-centered business strategy

Project Snapshot

- **Project Name:** Philadelphia Media Founders Exchange
- **Timeframe:** 2022–2024
- **Location:** Philadelphia, PA
- **Lead Partner:** The Lenfest Institute for Journalism

Key Narrative Goal: Narrative Intervention

Before this work, a dominant and harmful narrative suggested that BIPOC media entrepreneurs lacked the resources and capacity to build sustainable institutions that serve hyperlocal communities with trustworthy news and information. The exchange intervened by pairing culturally competent curriculum design with structured coaching, community gatherings, ecosystem-supported learning, and hands-on work sprints. The project aimed to interrupt deficit narratives by demonstrating that BIPOC founders not only lead essential media platforms but can grow sustainable, community-rooted enterprises when resourced with intention and care.

Our Role: Listen, Synthesize, Educate, Activate

Listen

Love Now Media listened deeply to the aspirations of The Lenfest Institute and directly to the needs, fears, and ambitions of BIPOC media founders who sought clarity on business formation, content development, and funding pathways.

Synthesize

We distilled ecosystem insights, survey data, coaching feedback, and narrative themes into metrics and patterns that revealed business growth, revenue needs, and organizational challenges across all three cohorts.

Educate

We refined and facilitated a bi-weekly curriculum that blended business modeling, revenue strategy, operational planning, and journalistic practice, supported by expert coaching and peer learning across the Philadelphia ecosystem.

Activate

We designed and hosted a Revenue Summit that connected entrepreneurs to funders, partners, and practical opportunities. Fellows shared their work publicly, strengthened their value propositions, and cultivated partnerships that expanded visibility and opened new revenue pathways.

Love Now Media's Process

1. Conducted ecosystem listening grounded in founder needs, narrative gaps, and business challenges.
2. Designed and facilitated culturally competent curricula for three annual cohorts with bi-weekly programming and coaching.
3. Created in-person learning environments, technical workshops, and peer exchanges to deepen trust and strengthen leadership.
4. Advised the development of the advanced cohort, increasing grant support and expanding coaching for scaling and sustainability.
5. Produced the PMFE Revenue Summit, connecting founders to revenue opportunities, partnership prospects, and media ecosystem allies.
6. Monitored and synthesized data to track growth in budgets, confidence, business clarity, collaborations, and revenue strategies.

Reach and Participation

- **Fellows directly engaged:** 24 (three cohorts, 2022–2024)
- **In-person attendees across program gatherings:** ~150
- **Partners and collaborators:** Black and Brown Founders, The Enterprise Center, Common Ground Management, PhillyCAM, Penn Creative, WURD Radio, URL Media, REC Philly, Comcast, Knight-Lenfest Local News Fund, Independence Public Media Foundation
- **Communities reached:** Black, Latinx, Haitian, Indonesian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander communities
- **Digital reach:** Fellows' combined platforms expanded visibility through newsletters, podcasts, radio shows, social video, and online journalism, with year-over-year increases in audience engagement documented in program surveys.

Outcomes and Impact

- **Business growth and revenue strategy shifts:**
Fellows gained clear financial planning skills, revisited operational budgets, and revised revenue models. Many expanded offerings through newsletters, sponsorships, multimedia content, membership models, and service-based work. Projected operational

budgets increased significantly, reflecting more realistic planning for sustainability.

- **Narrative visibility and representation:**

BIPOC-led outlets increased production of community-centered journalism, launched new media products, and developed partnerships that elevated narratives historically excluded from mainstream outlets.

- **Leadership confidence and organizational development:**

Fellows reported increased confidence as entrepreneurs, greater clarity in business vision, and deeper capability to manage teams, collaborations, and partnerships.

- **Community empowerment:**

Media founders strengthened direct relationships with their audiences, reinforced trust, and expanded coverage of Haitian, Indonesian, Latinx, Black, and AAPI communities through multimedia, bilingual platforms, and community engagement.

- **Collaborations and ecosystem integration:**

Partnerships across outlets resulted in joint projects, shared reporting, resource exchanges, cross-cultural storytelling, and expanded access to production spaces and local business development resources.

- **Public recognition and institutional credibility:**

Fellows' achievements included awards, new partnerships, expanded media presence, and opportunities to represent Philadelphia's media ecosystem on regional and national stages.

What This Proves

This project proves that Love Now Media's approach can transform harmful narratives by pairing deep listening with culturally competent education, measurable data, and community-centered activation. It demonstrates that BIPOC media founders thrive when the ecosystem invests in their leadership, supports their business foundations, and values the stories they bring forward.