

FISCAL YEAR 2025



ANNUAL REPORT

Building a Learning
and Publishing
Ecosystem



MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER

A TURNING POINT

Each year, this report offers a moment to pause and reflect on what this work is making possible — and to thank the readers and supporters who help sustain it.

Five years after Shaheen Pasha and I founded Prison Journalism Project, we find ourselves at a point of real alignment, where our work across learning, publishing and audience engagement are reinforcing one another. We are seeing strong literacy gains alongside greater confidence, rigor and professional judgment from our writers. Our stories reached a new level of consistency and recognition, with PJP firmly established as a trusted source of first-person reporting from inside U.S. prisons. We have published over 2,600 stories, making us the largest publisher of true stories from incarcerated writers.

What we are building is an ecosystem for lived-experience journalism — one that strengthens public understanding while providing training in skills that support people during and after incarceration. At its core, this work is about who gets to participate in public discourse. When people who have long been excluded are able to report on their own lives with credibility and context, it begins to rebuild trust — and strengthens the civic conversation that democracy depends on.

Our commitment now is to build on this foundation: to expand access to journalism-based learning, continue to deepen the quality of our editorial work, and ensure that more incarcerated writers can participate in shaping how incarceration is understood.



Yukari Kane
Co-founder & CEO, Prison Journalism Project

OUR MISSION

Prison Journalism Project is an independent, national nonprofit initiative that trains and publishes incarcerated writers so they can share impactful stories, shed light on the U.S. prison system, and shift the narrative about life behind bars. We aim to develop leaders who can challenge stereotypes and influence broader conversations about incarceration while also gaining professional development skills.

PJP STAFF AND LEADERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS

30%
Female staff

44%
Incarceration-
impacted staff

40%
BIPOC staff

75%
Female board members

33%
Incarceration-
impacted board members

58%
BIPOC board members

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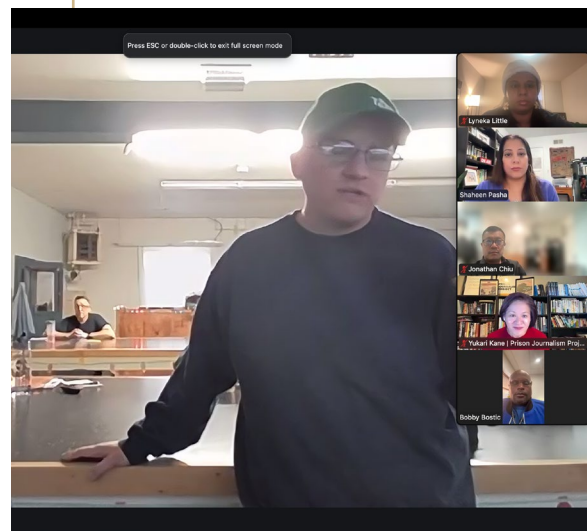
Audience Engagement
Director Lyneka Little and
Director of Learning Clare
Hammor attend the 2025
Connecting for Justice
Conference.



Celebration of Writers.



Writers from Eastern Oregon
Correctional Institution speak
at the Celebration of Writers.



Members of the board of
directors in New York.



830 +
Writers

The largest publisher
of writing from
inside U.S. prisons

238 stories published in 2025,
a 25% increase from 2024

44
States
(incl. D.C.)

Quadrupled PJP Inside's
readership to 8,200+
per issue

10,000 +
Newsletter subscribers

350,000 +
Readers

2,600 +
Stories in our archive

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As board chair for Prison Journalism Project, I am honored to write to you as we reflect on a pivotal year in the organization's history. In 2025, PJP reached its five-year mark, a moment when our work truly came into full view.

Voices that
were once
excluded are
now shaping
public
conversation.

From the beginning, PJP was founded on a simple but powerful belief: The people most affected by the prison system should be the ones telling its stories. Today, that belief has become a national platform for lived-experience journalism that is changing how incarceration is understood.

In 2025, incarcerated writers reached more readers than ever. More than 350,000 people engaged with PJP's journalism online, while access inside prisons expanded significantly through tablet distribution and a growing presence in prison libraries nationwide. Voices that were once excluded are now shaping public conversation.

The quality and influence of this work continue to grow. PJP writers published with leading media organizations, sparking conversations among policymakers, educators and advocates. One

writer's essay on menstruation in prison, co-published with *The Guardian*, helped illuminate an everyday reality rarely acknowledged. Another writer's piece on outdated prison technology went viral globally, opening new audiences to the lived experience of incarceration.

PJP's impact is also measurable in education and literacy. Writers in our certification program are demonstrating measurable literacy gains, reinforcing the value of journalism as a pathway for skill-building and future opportunity.

As we look ahead, PJP is focused on expanding access even further: deepening tablet-based learning, broadening participation across literacy levels, advancing our Women First commitment and redesigning our publication to better reflect the full arc of the prison experience. These priorities are ambitious — and they are possible because of you.

On behalf of the board, thank you. Your support makes this work possible, and we are grateful to be part of it with you.



Cristi Hegranes
Board Chair

HOW CHANGE HAPPENS

PJP's work is grounded in a simple idea:
When the storytellers change, the story changes.

By training incarcerated writers, supporting them in publishing their work, and amplifying their voices, we help shift public understanding of incarceration while building skills that support reentry and long-term opportunity.

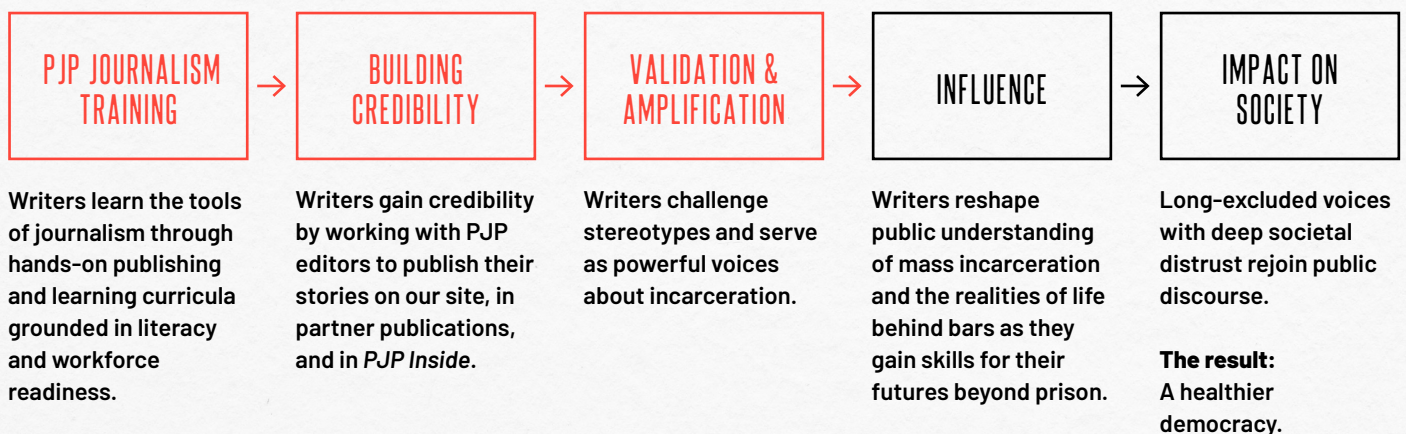
Our approach moves from skill-building to storytelling to impact.

Learning: Writers build journalism, literacy and workforce skills through structured training programs.

Publishing: Writers produce and publish stories with editorial support, reaching broader audiences.

Impact: Writers influence public understanding and gain skills that support opportunities beyond prison.

We believe in the power of true stories to open minds and shift perspectives—and by training incarcerated writers, we are changing the story of mass incarceration in the United States.



WHAT WE'RE BUILDING

A Learning and Publishing Ecosystem

Scaffolding support for incarcerated journalists at all stages of their career.



Learning

The PJP learning ecosystem includes our handbook course, our Learning+ cohorts and our education magazine *PJP Inside*, as well as collaborations with our education partners Edovo and Poetic Justice.



PJP LEARNING+

edovo



Publishing

PJP writers were published on the PJP website and copublished in partnership with other news organizations including *The Guardian*, *USA Today*, *The Marshall Project*, *Reckon News*, *Public Source*, *Pittsburgh's Public Source* and *Minnesota Reformer*. Independent publishing by our writers appears in *The Marshall Project*, *Al Jazeera English*, *The Humanist*, *The New York Times*, *The Morning Call* and others. Additionally, our team presented at Investigative Reporters and Editors and the South Asian Journalists Association.



Impact

To amplify the work of our incarcerated writers, PJP founded a chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and co-founded the Stillwater Awards. PJP special projects have earned finalist honors from Online News Association, LION Publishers and Poynter.



"AN OP-ED I WROTE RECENTLY
ABOUT MY QUEST FOR COMMUTATION
WAS PUBLISHED IN
THE MORNING CALL THIS WEEK.

I NEVER WOULD HAVE HAD THE COURAGE
TO PUT MYSELF OUT THERE
IN SUCH A VULNERABLE WAY
IF NOT FOR EVERYTHING I'VE BEEN
LEARNING THROUGH PJP."

— Jamie Silvonek, PJP contributor since 2024 and Learning+ Associate Reporter (Pennsylvania)



OUR PRIORITIES IN ACTION

In 2025, we focused on expanding access, deepening outcomes and strengthening how our work reaches and serves our communities.

Scaling Access

- Expanded access to *PJP Inside* through our partnership with the Edovo prison education platform and making it available in print in 345 prison libraries across 42 states.
- Introduced lower-barrier entry points to engage writers across a range of literacy levels.
- Increased participation across geographies and demographics by partnering with prison education programs and developing women-first initiatives.

Deepening Outcomes

- Launched and expanded Learning+, a multi-year training pathway for advanced writers to become PJP reporters covering people, events and changes at their facilities.
- Integrated literacy and workforce readiness more deeply into all programming by redesigning materials to make them more accessible.
- Strengthened coaching and editorial support to help writers produce high-quality, publishable work.

Expanding Influence

- Increased national visibility through partnerships with major media outlets.
- Earned recognition through awards and industry engagement, including our virtual chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.
- Reached broader audiences through increased digital and print distribution.

Prison education programs and partners in **13 states** used our handbook to teach journalism.

Added **57** new writers from **21 states**

1:1 mentor match for Year 2 reporters

90% of writers who completed the first course in the handbook program improved by two literacy levels.

45 writers in Society of Professional Journalists chapter

11 Stillwater Awards

More people than ever are entering the pipeline to develop their voices.

Writers are not just participating and publishing powerful stories — they are building durable skills.

Stories from inside are reaching — and shaping — national conversations.

FROM WRITERS TO CORRESPONDENTS



PJP's Learning+ program builds opportunities for advanced writers.

About the Program

This year, we launched Learning+, a three-year program that provides intensive training and frequent publishing opportunities for a cohort of writers. Participants are invited based on their previous work with PJP's learning and editorial programs.

Learning+ writers receive regular assignments, mentorship and a stipend to support their work as they develop writing and reporting skills and learn about all aspects of the editorial process.

After completing the program, writers will be invited to become PJP correspondents, maintaining a professional relationship with our organization while building connections at other publications.

49 writers
enrolled in
Learning+

80%
completion
rate on first
assignment

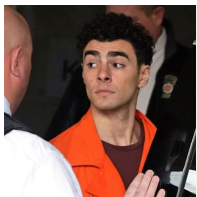
Half
of enrollees were
women

Learning+ builds on the skills writers develop through our handbook program, ensuring that our writers have access to in-depth journalism learning that provides literacy building opportunities and workforce readiness development.

SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE

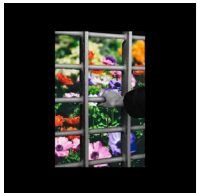
TOP 10 STORIES

These were the most-clicked stories on Prison Journalism Project's website in 2025.



When Luigi Mangione Came to Our Prison
VAUGHN WRIGHT

1



What Execution Day Is Like at a Texas Prison
CESAR HERNANDEZ

2



What It's Like to Have Your Period in Prison
KELSEY DODSON

3



What Extreme Cold Feels Like in Prison
PJP CONTRIBUTORS

4



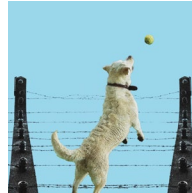
I'm Fighting for My Freedom Using Outdated Technology
JORGE LUIS ALVARADO

5



The First Time I Showered in Prison
CHRISTOPHER DANKOVICH

6



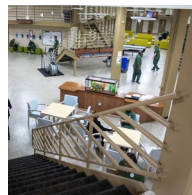
How I Spend Sundays in a Pennsylvania Women's Prison
JAMIE SILVONEK

7



The Surprising Power of Getting Your Picture Taken in Prison
PETER RANDLE

8



The Progressive Scandinavian Model Comes to an Idaho Prison
JAMES MANCUSO

9



In My Prison Cell, a Cat Lives Out Its Life
DAVID MCQUAID

10

238

Stories published in 2025

Because of you, incarcerated writers were able to tell their own stories.

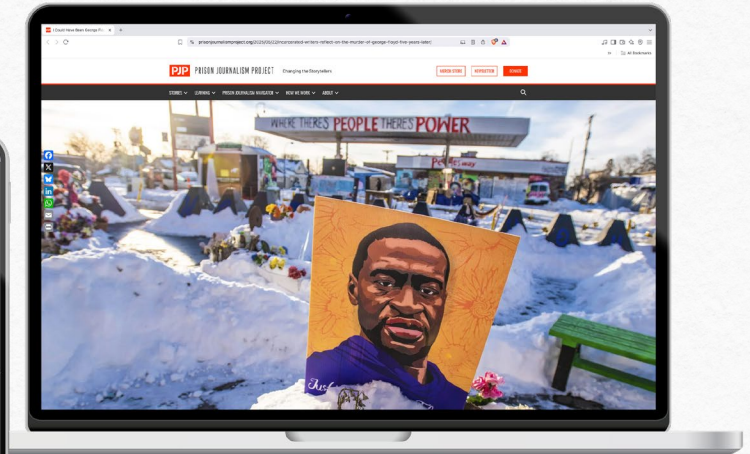
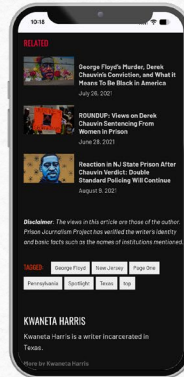
I Could Have Been George Floyd

We decided to do this project because George Floyd's life story was one that many people in prison recognize and connect with. The project was an opportunity for PJP writers to tell a bigger truth about what many people in prisons face in this country before, during and after incarceration.

– **Mason Bryan, Editorial Director**

5 contributors from 3 states

→ Read more



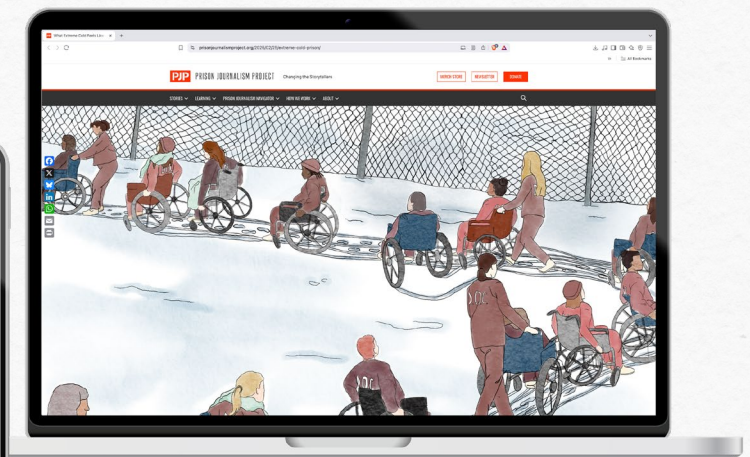
What Extreme Cold Feels Like in Prison

After the success of our extreme summer heat project in 2024, we felt the natural next step was covering extreme winter cold. While extreme heat is a more dire issue for incarcerated people, prisons throughout the country are still inadequately prepared for frigid weather, especially with the more recent extreme cases of cold tied to climate change. Prison Journalism Project contributors described winter behind bars – and the small dignities that could make it more bearable.

– **Wyatt Stayner, Deputy Editor**

27 contributors from 17 states

→ Read more



A WRITER'S JOURNEY



James Mancuso (right), alongside fellow Learning+ Associate Reporter Patrick Irving (center) and Patrick Irving's stepfather (left), at a peer mentorship program graduation in Idaho.

A WRITER'S IMPACT

James Mancuso is a writer and poet incarcerated in Idaho. In 2023, he heard about PJP from the back of a litigation guide.

James was inspired to write for PJP after realizing that Hawaiian men at his private facility in Arizona spent more time in solitary confinement and had a more difficult grievance process. At the time, James had no professional journalistic experience. He has since published nine articles on our website, started his own newsletter, participated in our handbook program, and joined Learning+ as an associate reporter.

In 2025, James' reporting contributed to national discussions about restorative justice and influenced policy

conversations within DOCs. Last July, PJP published James' article "[The Progressive Scandinavian Prison Model Comes to an Idaho Prison](#)," which reported on a new unit at Idaho State Correctional Institution that officials modeled after Northern European rehabilitative prison frameworks. The piece became our ninth-most-read article of 2025.

Less than a month after publication, an avid PJP reader sent the story to the office of the New Jersey corrections ombudsperson, opening a dialogue about PJP's work in the state. The ombudsperson later met with PJP leadership to discuss our work.

James' most recent Learning+ reporting assignment about wild critters at his facility can be found on our website.

"What stands out to me the most about working with PJP is their investment in us incarcerated journalists and the humanity they try to portray in what they published. I'm proud to be a part of that."

— James Mancuso

COMPOUNDING EFFECTS

Impact That Endures

Beyond publication, writers build confidence, develop professional skills and contribute to public conversations that shape how incarceration is understood.

- More than 90% of writers in certification programs improved literacy levels.
- Stories produced through PJP are reaching national audiences through major media partnerships.
- Our audience reach is growing across web, newsletter and social platforms.

 PJP's Bluesky audience grew **83%** to **27,280** since the beginning of the year

 LinkedIn grew **14%** to **6,500**

 Instagram followers increased nearly **25%** to **6,712**

 Prison Journalism Project's posts on Reddit have been viewed more than **1.3 million** times.

26

LOOKING
AHEAD

27

KEY PRIORITIES

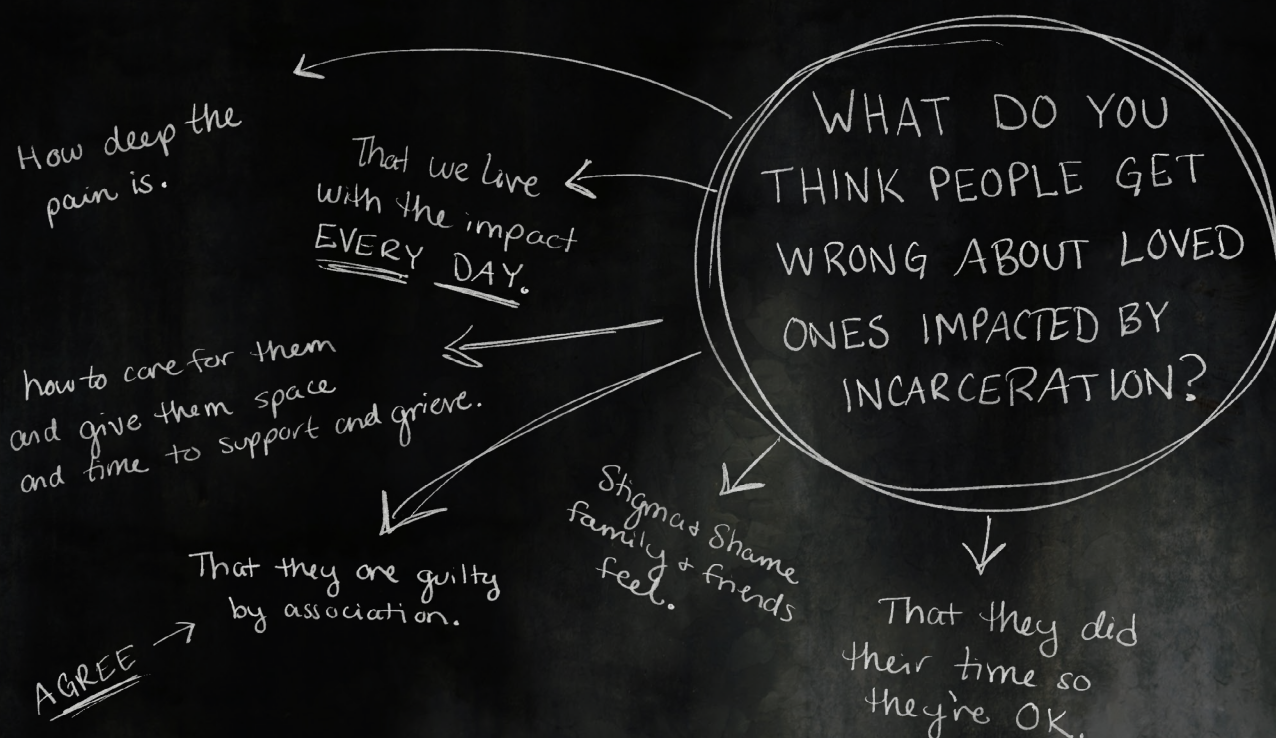
Expand access to journalism-based literacy and workforce training so incarcerated people from all education backgrounds can strengthen core communication skills through tablet-based video courses, Learning+ and a new literacy assessment under development.

Bring more writers into the pipeline by broadening participation across literacy levels and creating simpler, more inclusive entry points into both learning and publishing.

Advance our Women First commitment by growing dedicated pathways for incarcerated women and launching a special project that elevates their experiences in a system built for men.

Redesign our digital publication to make the prison journey clear and more accessible, helping families, educators, advocates and communities better understand the end-to-end experience of incarceration.

Deepen engagement with the audiences most connected to this work — formerly incarcerated writers, families and their supporters — while building a stronger base of loyal readers.



Together, these priorities aim to shift public understanding of incarceration, inform policy conversations and create stronger pathways for literacy, confidence and workforce readiness.

OUR WOMEN FIRST FOCUS

In late 2024, we formally set our Women First commitment. With women's incarceration rates doubling men's — and most incarcerated women being mothers and sole caretakers — we felt an urgency to support incarcerated women in shaping their own narratives.

This year, we laid the groundwork through our education programming. Our Learning+ Year 1 cohort consists entirely of women, and this summer we partnered with Poetic Justice for the second time to run an opinion-writing workshop for incarcerated women at two facilities in Oklahoma.



Poetic Justice participants and staff alongside PJP staff at Dr. Eddie Warrior Correctional Facility in Taft, Oklahoma.



Stories from the workshop have been published in PJP's publication as well as *Tulsa World* and *The Guardian*.

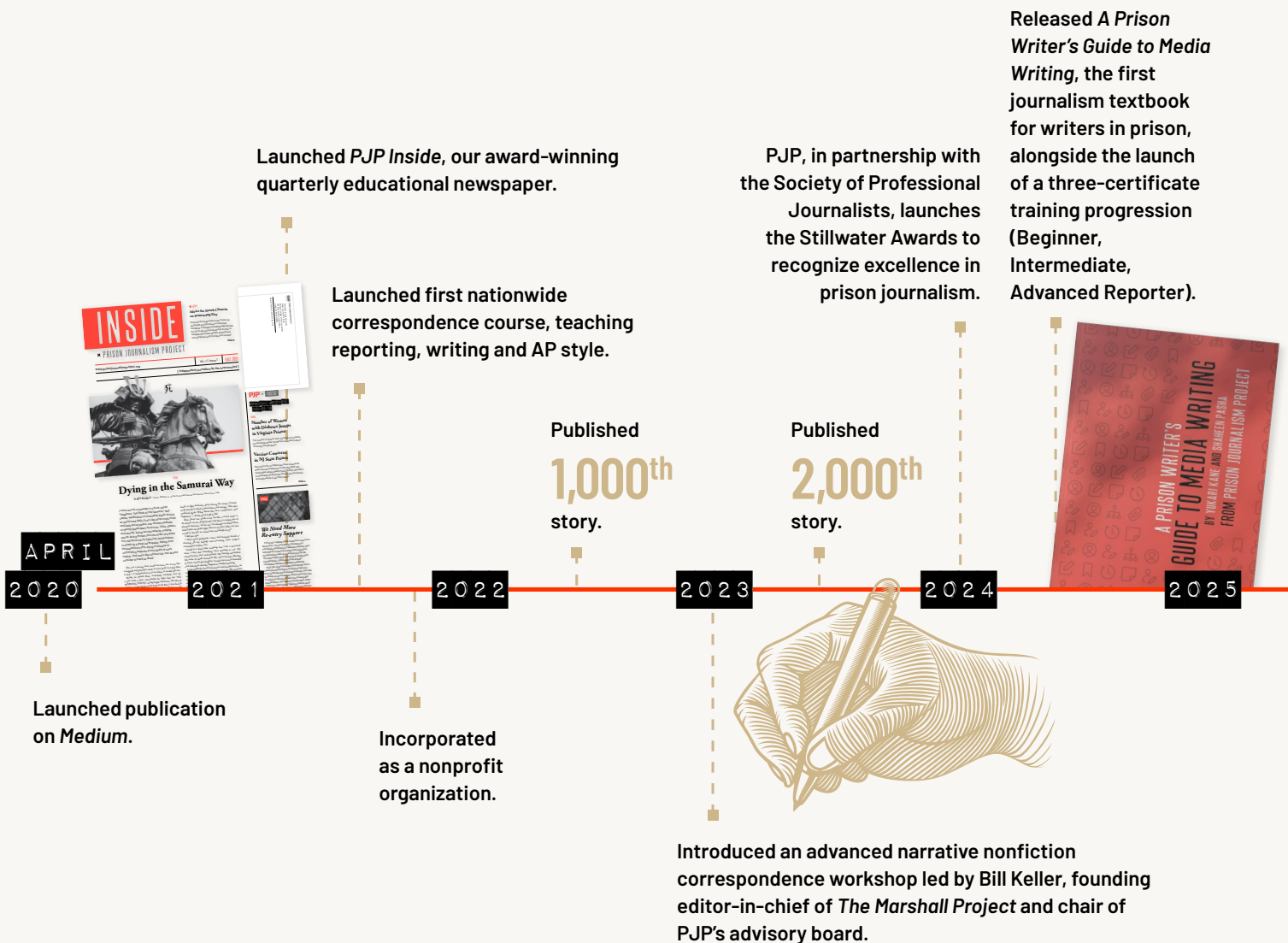
We are prioritizing women in our programs to help share compelling stories, achieve economic mobility and break the cycle of incarceration.

“One of our officers came to work angry... The way he was speaking to us ... and the tone he was using felt devaluing. I was HEATED and wanted to match his energy 2.0. But I saw everything that I have worked so hard to become flash before my eyes. Leading the vision was PJP and the reputation and rapport I am building with people regarding journalism. Instead of matching him, I chose to blast my music and go on about my day. Later, it dawned on me: The ethics, professionalism and training PJP requires us to develop and practice are ultimately transferred into our daily lives and determine the choices we make today.”

– Lucretia Stone, PJP contributor since 2023 and Learning+ Associate Reporter (New Jersey)

TIMELINE

PJP'S TRAJECTORY





Expand access to journalism training, redesign our digital communication, and further our Women First commitment.

2026

2027



Launched Learning+, a three-year training and publishing program designed to provide deeper, sustained engagement with incarcerated writers.

FINANCIALS

SUPPORT THAT MAKES THIS WORK POSSIBLE

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION*

ASSETS

Cash	\$977,432
Accounts receivables	\$978,133
Prepaid expenses	\$25,801
Total Assets	\$1,981,366

LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	\$15,212
Other accrued	\$2,179
Accrued payroll and paid time off	\$24,317
Total Liabilities	\$41,708
Net Assets, Without Donor Restrictions	\$756,532
Net Income	\$1,183,128
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,981,366

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY*

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Donations and grants	100%	\$2,583,075
Programs	0%	\$1,527
Interest income	0%	\$2
Total		\$2,584,604

EXPENSES

Programs	60%	\$837,040
Management and general	31%	\$436,249
Fundraising	9%	\$128,419
Total		\$1,401,708

Note: This financial report is a draft. The audited financial report will be provided once it is finalized.



OUR SUPPORTERS

THANK YOU

Because of you, we have been able to reach more incarcerated writers nationwide and increase the impact of the stories we publish. In 2025, your support allowed us to build new education programs for writers of all levels, pursue our Women First commitment and increase our editorial support to incarcerated writers nationwide.

More readers than ever are connecting to the stories, analysis and reporting of incarcerated journalists. By furthering our mission, your support strengthens democracy, supports economic mobility and creates a more inclusive and just society.

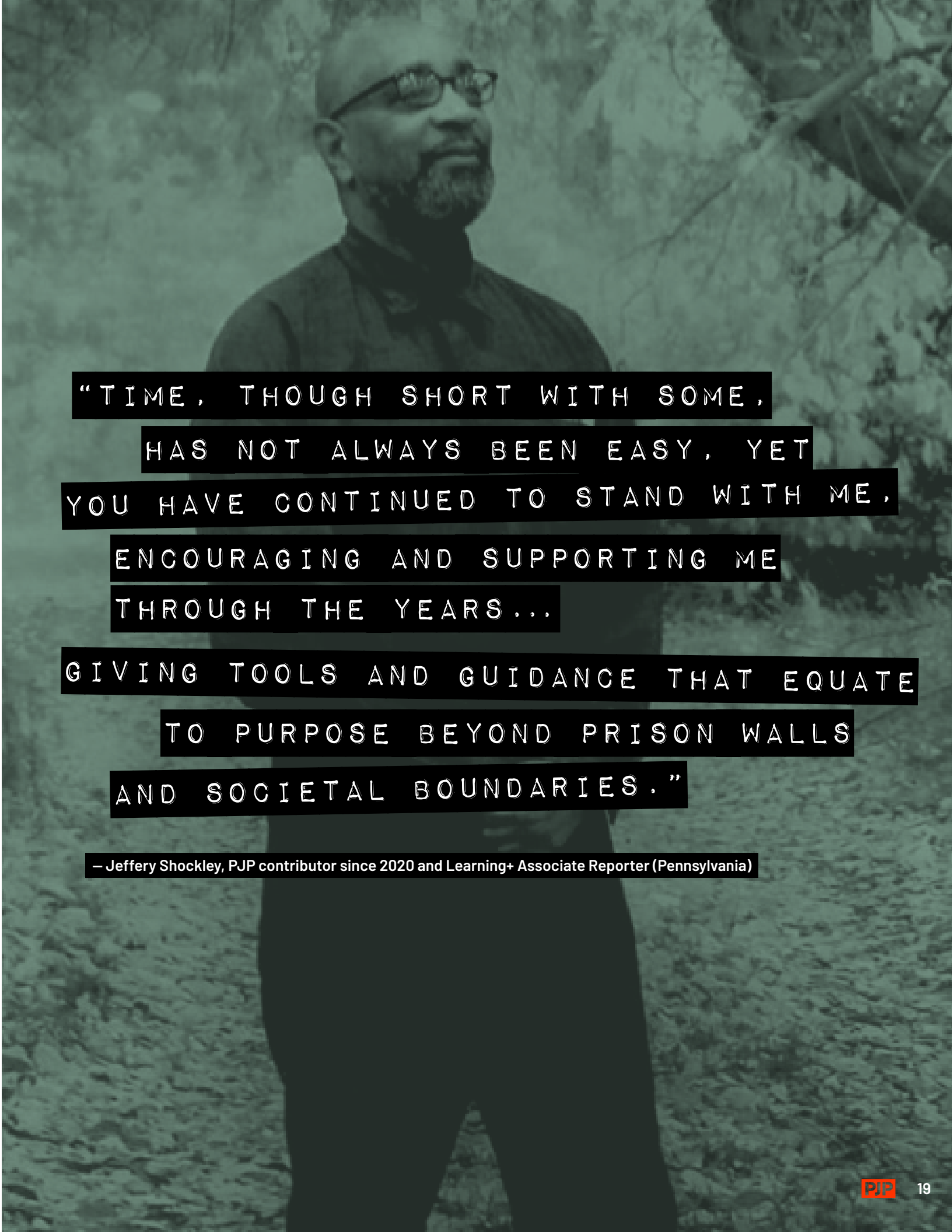
**To keep up with our work in 2026,
follow us on social media.**

 @prisonjournalism

 @prisonjournalism.bsky.social

 @prisonjournalism

PJP is an independent nonprofit organization as defined by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions or gifts to Prison Journalism Project are tax-deductible (EIN 87-3805290). We retain full authority over editorial content to protect the best journalistic and business interests of our organization. We maintain a firewall between news coverage decisions and sources of all revenue. Acceptance of financial support does not constitute implied or actual endorsement of donors or their products, services or opinions. For questions or to make changes to your membership, email memberships@prisonjournalismproject.org or check out our [FAQ page](#). For more information about our policies and business practices, visit our [Policies](#) page.



"TIME, THOUGH SHORT WITH SOME,
HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN EASY, YET
YOU HAVE CONTINUED TO STAND WITH ME,
ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING ME
THROUGH THE YEARS...

GIVING TOOLS AND GUIDANCE THAT EQUATE
TO PURPOSE BEYOND PRISON WALLS
AND SOCIETAL BOUNDARIES."

— Jeffery Shockley, PJP contributor since 2020 and Learning+ Associate Reporter (Pennsylvania)



**Incarcerated writers
made a real difference in 2025.**

We're deeply grateful to every donor
who invested in our mission – you
lit the path toward a more inclusive
and empathetic society.

Major funders

Amanda Weitman	Katherine Suggs
Andrew Chen	Leah Nylen
Anthony Sacco, Jr.	Lee Cruceta
Ari Weinstein	Louise Story
Barbara Shwom	Lynda Mitic
Bill Keller	Lynn Oberlander
Cindy and Devin Wenig	Miami Foundation
Cristi Hegranes	Michele Deitch
Do A Little Fund	Mukul Pandya
Diana Kapp	National Philanthropic Trust
Don Graham	Orlando Watson
Emerson Collective	Overhills Foundation
Emily Kaiser	Parker Krasney and Alli McCullough
Esther Fein	Poynter Institute
Evelyn Nussenbaum and Fred Vogelstein	Public Welfare Foundation
Freda Kong	Roby Hackney
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Jennair Rennie	Steve Seleznow
Jennifer Van Meter	Susan Nyberg
Joseph Grinstein	Tom Carden and Christi Weindorf
Kate Myers and Eric Benson	Vital Projects Fund
	Yukari Kane

HOW TO SUPPORT PJP

When you support Prison Journalism Project, you invest in an incarcerated writer's ability to build skills, publish credible reporting and contribute to a more informed public conversation. You can help by:



Making a **tax-deductible gift** and becoming a PJP member



Subscribing to our **weekly newsletter**, *The Inside Story*



Partnering with us on training or editorial initiatives



Sharing our work with your networks