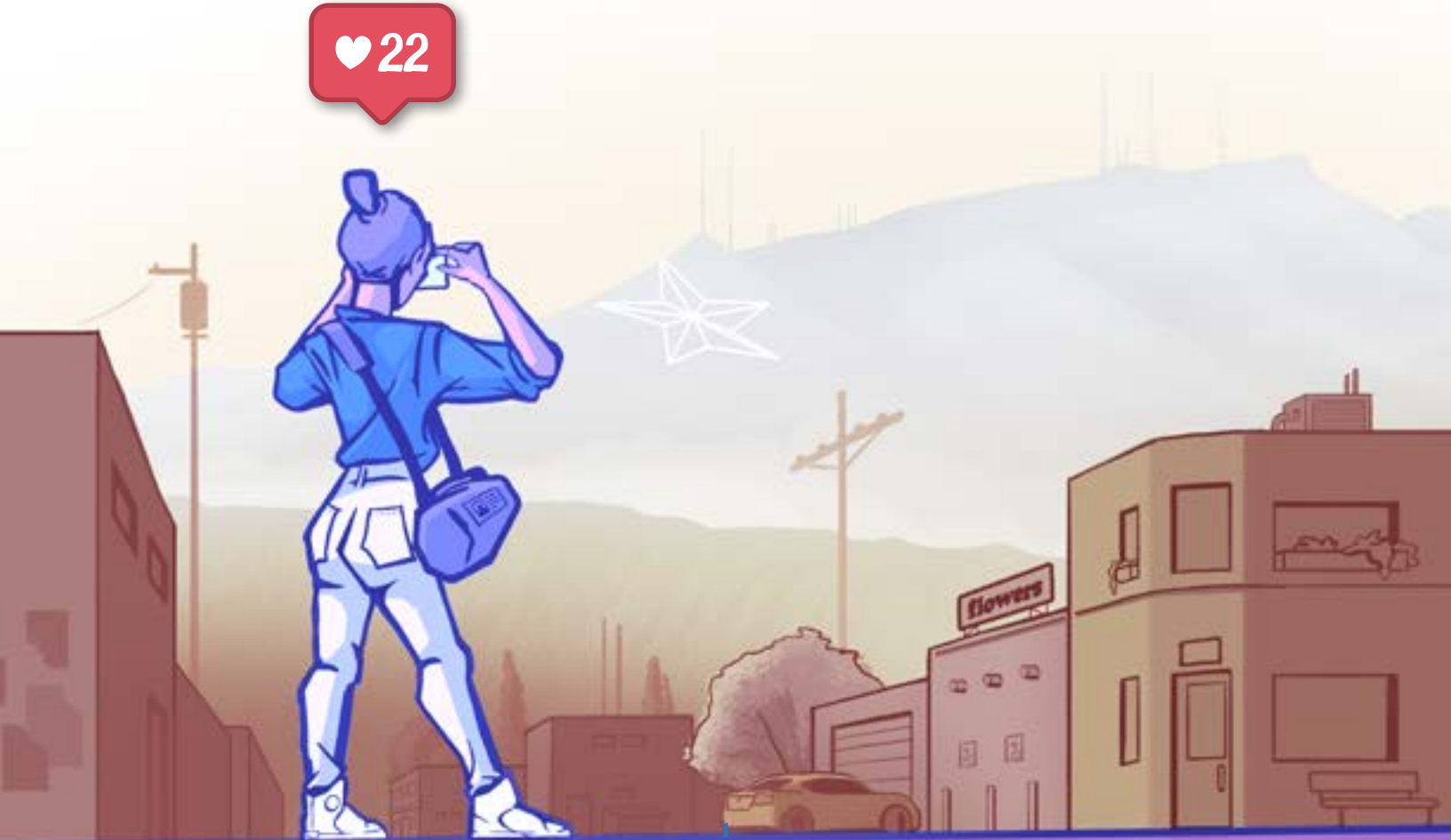


EL PASO MATTERS |

2022 Impact Report



When El Paso Matters started publishing in February 2020, we had two key goals: to provide strong accountability reporting on local government, and to provide accurate coverage of border issues to offset the false narratives that take hold in political and national media circles. In our third year of publishing in 2022, the El Paso Matters team showed why those initial goals are so important.

In our first two years, we focused on unmatched coverage of the impacts of COVID-19, and bringing investigative reporting back to El Paso. We continued to build on that work in 2022, but two stories dominated El Paso last year: the struggles of District Attorney Yvonne Rosales, and an unprecedented humanitarian challenge as tens of thousands of people crossed the border and sought temporary shelter in our community. El Paso Matters journalists played an important role in telling these stories accurately and with important context.

Our journalists also provided needed information in a variety of other areas. Our election coverage was unmatched in depth and breadth. We produced guides in the primary and general elections that were used by tens of thousands of voters to help decide for whom they would vote. Our partnership with PBS El Paso provided a unique video guide to the City Council elections. As property values rose and governments set their budgets and tax rates this summer, El Paso Matters journalists constantly challenged efforts to mislead the public about the true impact of proposed tax rates. Our solutions-focused journalism looked at how other police departments were responding to the opioid crisis. Within weeks of our reporting, the El Paso Police Department for the first time began wider deployment of Narcan – which can save lives if administered quickly – in patrol cars.

This important work was noticed. El Paso Matters almost tripled the size of our audience in 2022 from the prior year. This growth came at a time when most local news organizations in the country were seeing audience declines.

This kind of dedicated and impactful journalism requires money and resources. In 2022, El Paso Matters generated about \$1.6 million in revenue, almost twice what we generated in 2021. Most of that money came from national foundations and corporations that recognize the importance of El Paso, and the need for high-quality journalism in our community. We hired a major gifts director to build more high-dollar support. Our NewsMatch campaign at the end of the year raised more than \$85,000, exceeding our \$80,000 goal. Almost 600 individuals donated to El Paso Matters in 2022. Yet this is not nearly enough to build the type of newsroom that the people of El Paso increasingly need, especially as legacy news organizations continue to decrease in size and cease production of core beats and information that the community has traditionally relied on.

This past year showed the increasing importance of having an independent nonprofit news organization reporting on El Paso. We still have a lot of work ahead. We need to hire more reporters to cover even more significant issues. We need to do more to tell the unique success stories of El Paso. We need to reach more young people, and more people in East and Northeast El Paso. We need to provide more Spanish content. As a nonprofit newsroom, we'll need the help of our audience and community in paying for that.

Thanks to all those who read El Paso Matters and make donations to support our work.

Robert Moore, Founder and CEO

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Our reporting has *impact*

Here are some of the El Paso Matters stories that had significant impact on El Paso in 2022.



Reporter René Kladzyk produced a [three-part series that looked at how Narcan, when quickly administered, can prevent opioid overdose deaths](#). The El Paso Police Department did not widely deploy Narcan in patrol vehicles, a step taken by many other police agencies across the country. Kladzyk traveled to Tempe, Arizona, to examine how that city’s police department overcame resistance to deploying Narcan, and the impact of that decision. Within weeks of the series, the El Paso Police Department [began a wider deployment of Narcan in patrol cars](#).

The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision striking down Roe vs. Wade had immediate impacts on El Paso and the surrounding region. Women and gender reporter Victoria Rossi and health reporter Priscilla Totiyapungprasert continually documented how the ruling was changing El Paso and the nearby region – including how Las Cruces was becoming a [battleground in the national abortion debate](#) and how an El Paso woman [took risks](#) to help others obtain abortions.

Like cities across the country, El Paso housing prices rose sharply in 2021 and 2022 because of an imbalance of supply and demand. As a result, property valuations for tax purposes rose sharply, creating concerns that property tax bills also would go up. Analysis by Robert Moore showed that rising valuations were [disproportionately affecting working-class neighborhoods](#). Reporting from Elida S. Perez and Moore consistently pointed out that state law had several protections for homeowners that would limit property tax increases. But renters, who had no such protections, [would face sharp tax increases](#) because of rising valuations and tax rates proposed by local governments. Our reporting also [challenged claims made by city officials](#) about the impact of proposed tax rates. In the end, City Council [approved steeper cuts to the property tax rate](#) that resulted in lower tax bills for El Pasoans.



In a deeply reported story, Victoria Rossi examined how District Attorney Yvonne Rosales had [dismantled a domestic violence program](#) that was viewed as a national model. It was the first of many stories that El Paso Matters produced in a year-long investigation into the District Attorney's Office. Other stories showed how [hundreds of criminal cases](#) were dismissed because of inaction by the prosecutor's office, and how a [mysterious email purportedly from the family of a Walmart shooting victim](#) seemed to be linked to Rosales' office. Rosales and her allies retaliated by alleging in court filings that El Paso Matters was part of a "conspiracy" against her. They also filed a complaint with the IRS seeking to [strip our 501c3 designation](#), a move that if successful would kill a nonprofit news organization. By December, Rosales had [resigned from office and repeatedly invoked her Fifth Amendment rights](#) against self-incrimination when questioned in court about her actions.



From late August through the end of the year, El Paso saw a huge increase in the number of migrants crossing the border. Though the migrants were only passing through on the way to other U.S. locations, their arrival began to strain El Paso's humanitarian network. Immigration reporter Cindy Ramirez, photographer Corrie Boudreaux and their colleagues [told important stories about the migrants and about how El Paso responded](#).

El Paso Matters focuses heavily on education coverage because the issue is so important to our community. For much of 2022, we had the only two local reporters focused on education coverage. K-12 reporter Molly Smith broke a number of important stories, including the possible [abuse of office by a Socorro school trustee](#) that was revealed in 33 hours of audio tapes his wife submitted to the district. Higher education reporter Daniel Perez told the story of how the [pandemic robbed UTEP freshmen of their high school experience](#), and how that might impact their time in college.

In-depth reporting doesn't always mean focusing on a community's challenges. It also means celebrating the things that make the El Paso-Juarez region unique. Our reporters told the stories of political pioneer [Alicia Chacón](#); the delayed [centennial celebration of the Kentucky Club](#); the [New Mexico mushroom farmer](#) trying to make food more sustainable; and the path to redemption for [UTEP basketball star Tim Hardaway](#).

What makes El Paso Matters’ reporting *unique*

An important motivation behind the creation of El Paso Matters was to fill important gaps in El Paso journalism. As a result, we’ve created several reporting focus areas – often called “beats” – to create coverage of the kinds of topics that are important to our community but often go uncovered or undercovered.

Women and gender

Women make up more than half of El Paso’s population, and they are disproportionately impacted by a number of challenges – poverty, child care availability, health care availability and domestic violence, for example. The LGBTQ community is an important force on the border with its own unique challenges. But reporting on women and gender issues had never been a focus for an El Paso journalist until Victoria Rossi joined El Paso Matters in 2021. Her reporting on topics such as child care, employment discrimination, domestic violence, women’s history, and challenges faced by families with transgender children has brought to the fore important issues and important voices that otherwise would have been dismissed.

Health care

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the unique vulnerability of border residents to health-care challenges. But that vulnerability has been present for decades. Despite the threat posed by illnesses such as diabetes and infectious diseases, and the growing importance of health care in our regional economy, El Paso hadn’t had a reporter devoted to health care in more than 20 years. That changed with the arrival of Priscilla Totiyapungprasert at El Paso Matters in 2022. In just a few months, she provided unique coverage of women’s health issues, unique approaches to diabetes care, and the connection between health and agriculture.

Education

Our schools, colleges and universities play a significant role in shaping El Paso’s culture and economy. That’s why El Paso Matters has dedicated two journalists to education coverage. At times in 2022, they were the only two journalists in El Paso dedicated to that crucial topic. Molly Smith’s reporting on K-12 education in 2022 exposed abuses of power by a school trustee, the hiring of superintendents at El Paso’s two largest school districts, and the learning challenges in the wake of COVID-19. Our higher education reporters – first Jewél Jackson, then Daniel Perez – tracked how El Paso Community College and the University of Texas at El Paso were innovating and adapting to new challenges.

Working with partners

One economic reality for now is that no single local journalism outlet is going to have enough resources to do everything its community needs. That's why El Paso Matters has entered into a number of partnerships and collaborations in 2022.

Puente News Collaborative

This unique binational and bilingual partnership brings together a number of news organizations in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez to focus on key regional topics. Since its founding in 2021, the Puente News Collaborative has produced important work on border health and immigration issues. The collaborative includes La Verdad in Juarez and El Paso Matters, KTEP public radio, UTEP's journalism program, KVIA-TV, KINT-TV, the El Paso Times, and El Paso Inc.

PBS El Paso

During both the primary and general elections in 2022, El Paso Matters and PBS El Paso partnered to produce video content that allowed voters to compare candidates. During the general election, the partnership resulted in a unique video series that allowed voters to compare City Council candidate stances on five key issues.

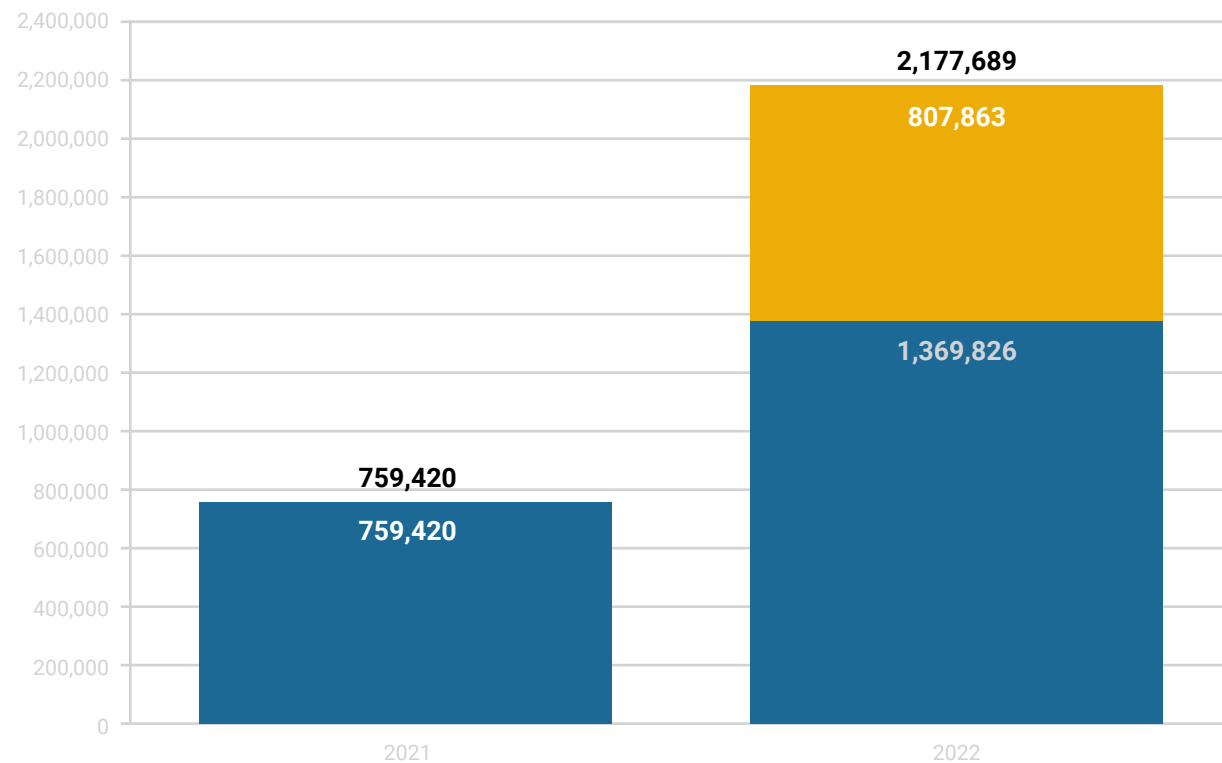
Voter guide partners

Informative voter guides have been a part of El Paso Matters from our creation. In 2022, we worked with several partners to reach broader audiences with our guides. In the 2022 general election, we produced guides in both English and Spanish, and did them in print as well as in digital format. We worked with partners such as the El Paso Public Library, KINT-TV, Literarity Book Store and EPISO/Border Interfaith to get important election information to voters.

Audience growth

In a year when local news organizations across the country saw sharp declines in audience, El Paso Matters saw strong growth in 2022. The number of times our stories were read online almost tripled compared to 2021. This shows us that more and more people are becoming aware of our work, and that we're filling an important and critical need in the region's news and information ecosystem.

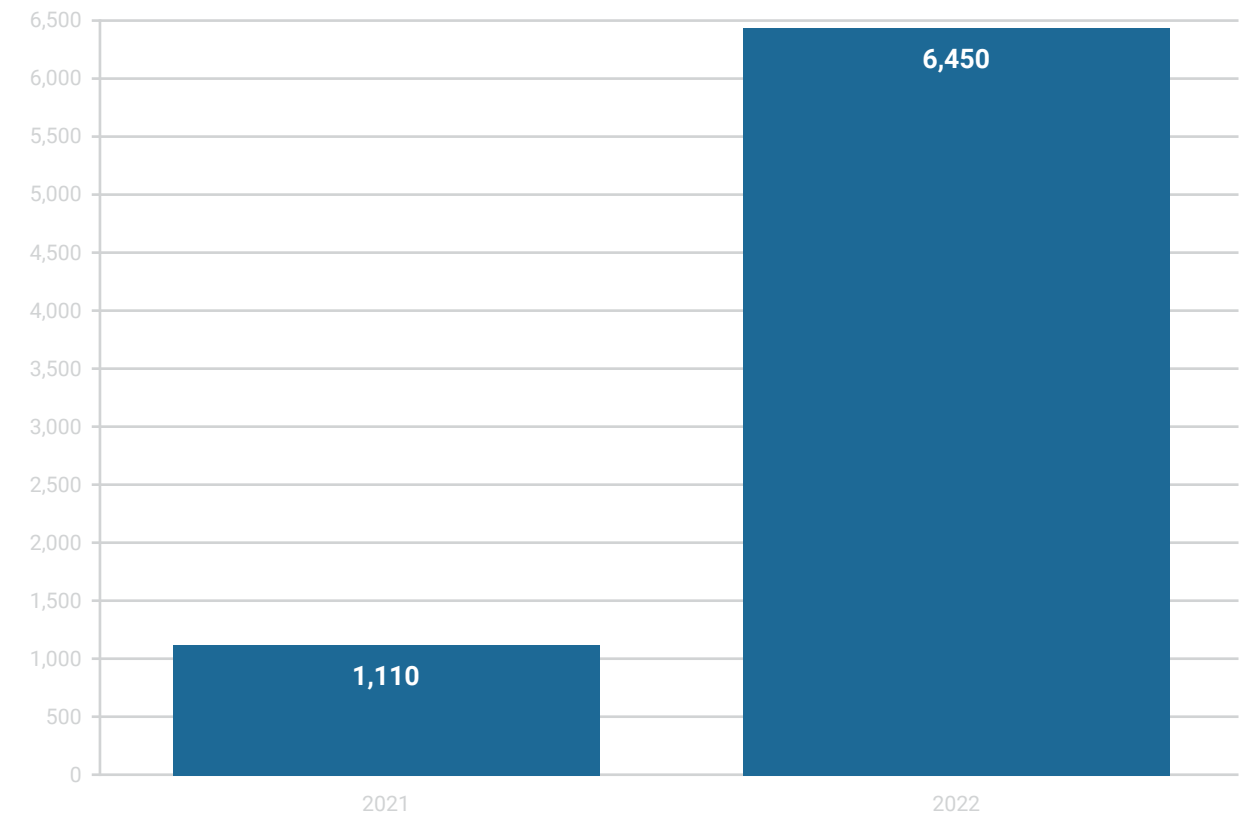
Readership on elpasomatters.org grew by 87% in 2022 compared to the prior year. In 2022, El Paso Matters and Wisconsin Watch were chosen by Microsoft to pilot test an effort to add smaller local news organizations to Microsoft Start, which has provided news and information from larger news organizations across the country. That platform brought us more than 800,000 additional page views, bringing our total readership growth to 187%.



El Paso Matters page views, 2021 vs. 2022

■ WEBSITE ■ MICROSOFT START

The number of subscribers to our free weekly newsletter grew almost *sixfold*.

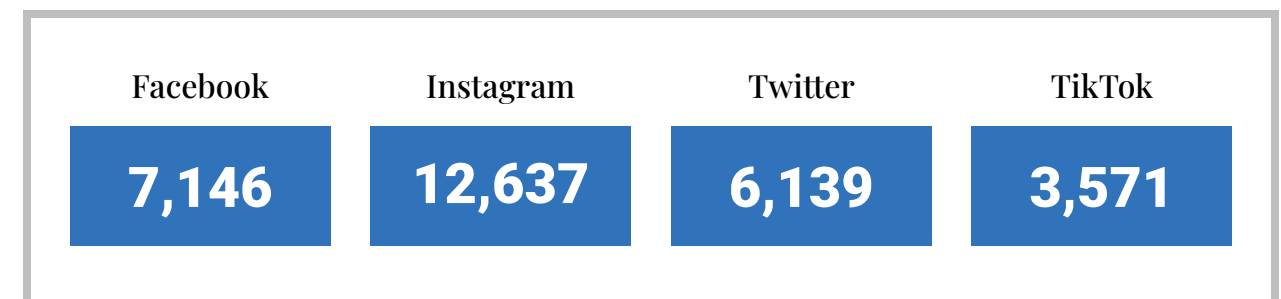


El Paso Matters Newsletters subscribers as of Dec. 31

Social Media:

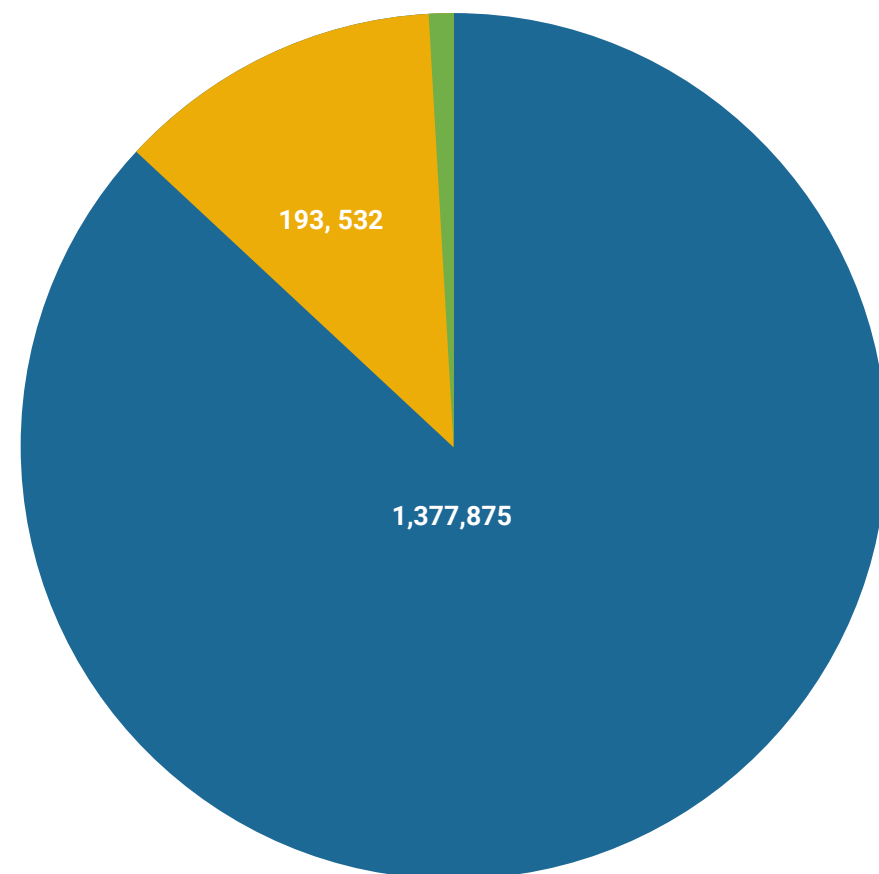
In 2022, El Paso Matters significantly increased our reach on social media. On Facebook we reached 770,826 unique users, a 114.2% increase from the previous year. On Instagram we reached 186,395 unique users, up 55.1% from 2021.

Total followers:



Supporting El Paso Matters

Part of what makes El Paso Matters unique is the nonprofit model that funds our journalism. Legacy media has long relied on advertising to fund its work, but that business model has broken as advertising shifted to big digital platforms. El Paso can't have the journalism it needs by relying on outdated business models. As a nonprofit, El Paso Matters relies primarily on philanthropic support – everything from large foundation grants to small individual contributions – to pay for our journalism. Here's the source of our \$1.6 million in revenue in 2022.



El Paso revenues by source, 2022

■ FOUNDATION OR CORPORATE GRANTS ■ INDIVIDUAL DONORS ■ SPONSORSHIPS

El Paso Matters by the numbers:

- 584 individual donors since our founding in 2019
- 336 new donors in 2022
- Our donors come from 28 U.S. states
- The number and amount of donations grew by more than 40% from 2021 to 2022

What our donors say about El Paso Matters:

El Paso Matters is invaluable to the community.

- Cynthia B

I am a native of El Paso. El Paso Matters is an excellent, deep-delving news source.

- Christina C

I appreciate quality investigative journalism about our community and the binational region.

- Kathleen S

I believe in free journalism and the importance of local journalism!

- Jack M

Strong, independent and objective journalism is essential to democracy and good governance.

- Erich M

Top donors to El Paso Matters since our incorporation in 2019.

\$500,000 and Above

American Journalism Project, a one-time grant to build sustainable business practices

\$250,000 - \$499,999

Emerson Collective

\$100,000 - \$249,999

Arnold Ventures

El Paso Community Foundation

Meta Journalism Project (formerly Facebook Journalism Project)

Microsoft

\$20,000 - \$99,999

Collaborative for Gender and Reproductive Equity

El Paso Electric Co.

Feeding America

Inasmuch Foundation

Kasco Ventures Inc.

Meadows Foundation

Miami Foundation via the Institute for Nonprofit News NewsMatch Program

Open Campus Media

Rapoport Foundation

Report for America

WestStar Bank

Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation

Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development

Richard Castro

Martha Hood and Will Jewell

Sam Legate

\$10,000 - \$19,999

Gwen Pulido

Raymond Telles

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Google Journalism Emergency Relief Fund,

Lenfest Institute for Journalism and Local Media Association

Solutions Journalism Network

Walmart Foundation

Walton Family Foundation

Jason and Hallie Kosena

Jack and Carroll Maxon

Ted Houghton

Kelly Tomblin

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Kassie and Joey Ckudre

Ann and Charles Horak

Richard Lange

David Marcus

Rosalinda Natividad

Danny and Marie Olivas

Steve Ortega

Laurie Paternoster

Eric Pearson and Julie Summerford Pearson

Laura Rodriguez

Stephen Tures

Tracy and Steve Yellen

Looking ahead to 2023

The year ahead is critical for El Paso, and for El Paso Matters. Legacy media are facing continuing declines. Our journalists are committed to doing more impactful work in 2023. Ramon Bracamontes, our editor and one of El Paso's most experienced journalists, will lead our journalism efforts, and we can already safely predict some topics that will be of particular focus in the coming year – school board elections in the spring, rebuilding the District Attorney's Office, migration challenges, a session of the Texas Legislature. But we'll also be prepared for the unknown, as we saw right after our launch in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic. After all, no one knew at the beginning of 2022 that the collapse of the District Attorney's Office would be the dominant story of the year.

We also have other priorities as we look to expand our impact. The first is to add more reporting on cultural issues. That starts with our El Paso Matters Book Club, which is the brainchild of Angela Saavedra, our audience development leader. We also will explore how to add more content in Spanish, which is critical for our community. This goes beyond simply translating English content. We need to produce more original journalism that meets the needs of the members of our community who prefer to get news and information in Spanish.

The major goal in our business operation is to diversify our funding streams. El Paso Matters has been fortunate in its first three years to attract significant seed funding from major national and regional foundations and corporations. That has allowed us to build a foundation for a sustainable nonprofit news organization to serve the El Paso region. But all of our largest initial commitments will expire after this year. That means we need to find additional funding sources, especially from within our community, to sustain and grow the important work of our journalists.

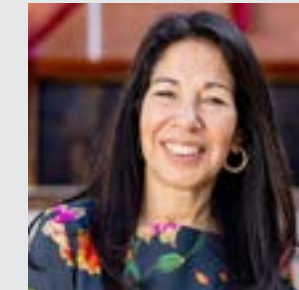
In 2023, we will build a sponsorship program that will allow area businesses to support our work while also connecting with our audience. We're going to do more events, supported by sponsorships, to provide the community with important information. And we will need more philanthropic support from El Pasoans. Kassie Ckudre, our major gifts director, and Alison Westermann, will take the lead on that.

Thank you for helping us to serve El Paso the past three years. We hope that you will continue to be with us as we grow our mission.

Board of Directors



Bill Clark
Co-Owner
Literarity Book Shop



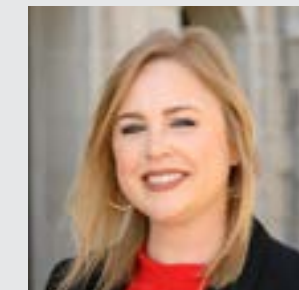
Cindy Conroy
AVP, Director Community
Outreach
WestStar Bank



Martha Hood
Retired Controller
Volunteer, Medical Center of
the Americas Foundation



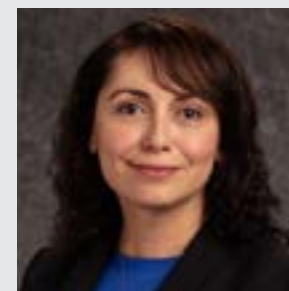
David Marcus
Partner
Marcus, Fairall, Bristol + Co.,
PLLC, Certified Accountants



Veronique Masterson
Assistant Vice president for
Marketing and Communications
Texas Tech University Health
Sciences Center of El Paso



Robert Moore
Founder and CEO
El Paso Matters



Gwen Pulido
Senior Assistant
General Counsel
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Julie Summerford Pearson
Vice President | Business
Technology Solutions
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