

American Journalism Project |

Vice President, Newsroom Strategy

The American Journalism Project is seeking a Vice President of Newsroom Strategy for its Startup Studio team to guide, shape, and ensure the successful creation of new local newsrooms around the country, and to play a critical role in catalyzing excitement for and investment in local news.

The VP, Newsroom Strategy will enable the next wave of the nation's largest local news startups by helping to hire, onboard and support founding newsroom leaders as they launch new organizations. They will also play a critical role in partnering with local leaders in designing editorial strategies that implement concepts derived from our research into community information needs.

This is a unique opportunity to join a growing, national movement to rebuild local news in communities across the country in a way that better serves the public, while being sustainable and independent. AJP has raised over \$160 million for the cause so far, and aims to catalyze enough investment in nonprofit local news to create a \$2 billion sector by 2040, full of thriving, equitable, public service-oriented newsrooms that increase civic engagement and make communities work better for their residents.

Who we are

We're an entrepreneurial team that's passionate about journalism, civic engagement, and how local news plays a unique role in shaping our democracy. We help build and grow sustainable local news organizations all over the country — through financial investment, venture support, and movement building — that are governed by, sustained by, and look like the public they serve. AJP has raised over \$150 million for the cause so far, and aims to catalyze enough investment in nonprofit local news to create a \$2 billion sector by 2040, full of thriving, equitable, public service-oriented newsrooms that increase civic engagement and make communities work better for their residents. [Learn about our grantees.](#)

Our team is deeply connected to our mission and supportive of each other's goals and overall well-being. We aim to be an organization where everyone feels heard, respected, and valued. We are an entirely remote, distributed team and strive to maintain a healthy, fun, and productive workplace, working alongside smart, energetic colleagues who enjoy one another and the work. [Meet our full team.](#)

Our values

- *Local First:* We know that local journalism must serve and be led by local communities. We make a practice of listening to, and making decisions with – not for – those communities, and connecting them to find strength in each other.
- *Bold Leadership:* We understand the severe economic challenge facing local news and thus democracy, and we embrace a sense of possibility with courage, urgency, and perseverance.
- *Constant Learning:* We recognize the unknown in front of us. Therefore, we operate with humility and a commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration.
- *Commitment to Equity:* We commit to creating a better, more diverse, and more inclusive news media that advances human and civil rights. We actively fight against injustice and racism, and that starts with doing the work ourselves.
- *Integrity:* We accept the responsibility of earning trust every day. We operate with honesty, transparency, dignity, and respect, and without allegiance to party, ideology, profit, or power.

Your team

Our venture philanthropy is catalyzing the nonprofit field by building a portfolio of multi-stage organizations. We invest growth capital in existing organizations, we are seeding new organizations in partnership with philanthropy and we have incubated talent-led startups prior to their launch.

You will join a team responsible for supporting this portfolio, and be focused on supporting pre-launch organizations to establish outstanding newsroom strategy and operations. You will report to the head of the Startup Studio, and work closely with a team of dedicated staff and partner consultants who together are responsible for launching exceptional nonprofit local news startup organizations such as Signal Ohio (which operates [Signal Cleveland](#) and [Signal Akron](#)) and Free Press Indiana (which operates [Mirror Indy](#)).

The position

This role is part of a bold program that has been developing over the last few years, and there are few, if any examples in the country with exactly this job description. People from a variety of journalism backgrounds are encouraged to apply, and will get extensive on-the-job training on all of the unconventional skills involved. Successful candidates will be passionate about the role local news plays in communities and care deeply about its future; they will have daily newsroom experience, be eager to learn about the latest most

innovative practices in local journalism and digital media, and have an interest in strategy, operations, and management.

Successful candidates will also be excellent and persuasive writers. In addition to incubating new newsrooms, the VP, Newsroom Strategy will be creating content and materials critical for educating investors and talent about nonprofit news models, and persuading funders and news consumers across the country to care about, and champion, public service journalism.

In this role you will have the following responsibilities:

Newsroom incubation

- Bring top journalism talent into local news. Proactively recruit public service-minded journalism talent at all levels to AJP-supported organizations, draft exciting job descriptions, shepherd the hiring processes for key talent in new newsrooms, then mentor and support that talent through launch.
- Partner with journalism entrepreneurs and startup leaders going through our incubation program and shepherd their newsrooms through successful launch.
- Work with local news startups to develop impactful content strategies that reflect the mission and vision of their organizations, and help them translate that strategy into newsroom structures, staffing plans, editorial workflows, and performance management, while raising standards for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the industry.
- Work with newsroom leaders on internal and external communications about their strategy, plans and hiring roadmaps, and help ensure alignment with gaps identified in AJP's local information needs research
- Learn and execute on the AJP's best practices and methodologies related to content and community engagement strategy and execution, organizational design, building equitable and inclusive workplaces, talent recruitment and management, systems setup and implementation, and all the other components of starting new newsrooms.
- Gain an intimate, execution-level understanding of best practices across the country in public service local journalism, stay up to date on lessons from the field about how to make them successful and scalable, and incorporate those lessons into AJP's incubation methodologies.
- Participate in the creation and oversight of startup newsroom budgets; responsible for managing vendors related to editorial, communications, and marketing

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- Work closely with other team members as they provide similar incubation support to newsroom leaders on audience strategy.
- Manage newsroom-related vendors and contractors in the incubation process, and provide editorial input on other proposals and contracts as needed.
- Travel expectation: travel needs will vary situationally and by project, but we roughly expect it to be one trip per month, for 2–3 nights per trip.

Movement building

- Contribute to fundraising efforts by telling the story of editorial programs and own the creation of a compelling, clear case for support and corresponding materials that will be used throughout the incubation process. Audiences will include partners, grantmakers, and individual donors. Materials will be used for sales and fundraising, and may include media kits, slide decks, and fundraising websites that get results.
- Contribute to writing, editing, and quality control for all communications about our incubation projects, including press releases, grant applications and funding proposals, grant reports, stakeholder updates, and other materials used in garnering support for the startups.

Background and skills

We know not all strong candidates will have all the skills we list. That's OK. Research shows that women and people of color are less likely to apply for a position if they don't meet every skill listed. At the American Journalism Project we are committed to creating a better, more diverse, and more inclusive news ecosystem, and that starts with doing the work ourselves. So if your past experience doesn't align perfectly, but you know this is the role for you – please tell us!

An ideal candidate will have...

- Significant experience working in daily newsrooms and an understanding of complex editorial workflows with multiple dependencies and moving parts.
- Management experience (in any field) preferable but not required. Interest, readiness, and willingness to learn leadership and management best practices are a must.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to synthesize large amounts of information and clearly communicate key insights, with a strong grasp of business concepts and numbers. Must be a persuasive communicator.

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- An understanding of the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion in workplaces, newsrooms, and coverage; willingness to learn and coach others through operationalizing equity and inclusion.
- Meticulous attention to detail and accuracy in documentation.

This role is a fit if you are...

- Excited about gaining hands-on experience building, leading, and growing sustainable news organizations, while putting your journalism skills and experience to impactful use.
- Enthusiastic about tackling challenges in a fast-paced startup environment, and have the stamina to continuously experiment and see projects to completion that help nascent news organizations succeed.
- Willing to think outside the box to solve problems for which there are no blueprints for solutions.
- Highly empathetic; you have an affinity for collaborative work, love for mentoring and inspiring others, and doing whatever it takes to get them to successful outcomes.
- Accustomed to working in environments where feedback is liberally given and taken.
- Intellectually curious, a strategic thinker and an innovative problem-solver, including a proven ability to create and manage organizational change.
- A person with strong personal responsibility and accountability, results-oriented, adaptable, skilled at situational management (including being able to manage up, laterally, and down).
- A person with passion for making the country a better, more equitable and just place for its residents by helping to build a new local news ecosystem across the U.S.

Compensation & benefits

Our total compensation package is competitive in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors, and we are committed to supporting our team with what they need to show up every day, ready to bolster the local press our democracy deserves.

We benchmark our salaries against similar organizations, and use a scale that considers job complexity and magnitude of responsibility to determine role levels and corresponding base salaries, as well as offer regular opportunities for salary increases. The salary range for this position is \$153,095 – \$168,405. Read about our benefits [here](#).

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What to expect in the hiring process

Our approach to hiring is to create a consistent and transparent process for all candidates. A cover letter, resume, and three to five clips (you may optionally include non-article writing samples), are required to apply. We hope to fill this role as soon as possible, though the hiring process can typically take from a few weeks to several months. We will do our best to communicate with you about timing expectations throughout the process.

Candidates who advance to later rounds of this process can expect multiple interviews with members of our hiring committee. Semi-finalists will be asked to complete a written assignment designed to help us understand your thinking and approach to the role, and you will be offered an optional prep session to ask any questions that will help you put your best foot forward in this process. We aim to truly get to know you, to help you fully understand the role you're applying for, and to get to know your prospective team.

Please submit an application [through our portal](#). If you have any questions please feel free to email careers@theajp.org with "VP, Newsroom Strategy" in the subject line.

The American Journalism Project is dedicated to equal employment opportunities for all applicants and employees. The American Journalism Project encourages people of all races, colors, national origins, ancestries, creeds, religions, genders, ages, disabilities, veteran status, sexual orientations, and marital statuses to apply.