

# Amplifying Voices in Local News Through Academic and Community Partnerships

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A NONPROFIT PLAYBOOK AND GUIDE

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## THE TOOLKIT:

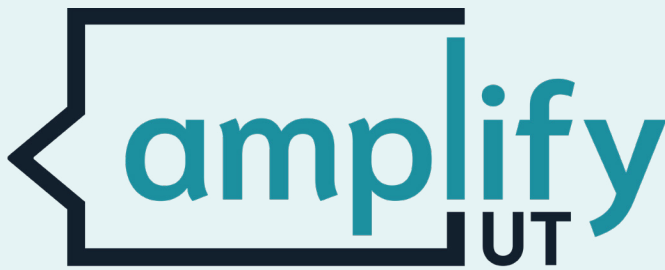
“Toolkit” pages are located throughout the playbook and are identified by a light purple highlight and Amplify Utah logo at the top of each page.

These pages are intended to be printed out, used as “how-to” guides and given to author and media partners.

# Overview

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The goal of Amplify Utah is simple: to find, support and amplify Utah's diverse voices. We do this in deep partnership with emerging journalists, media and nonprofit partners and the communities they serve.



Amplify Utah, The Salt Lake Tribune and Salt Lake Community College partnered in 2020 to launch a project aimed at bridging the gap between young people and news media organizations.

Amplify Utah's first project, "Amplifying Voices with Community College Journalists," magnifies the voices of student journalists and their communities by partnering with news media organizations to publish student-authored stories produced as part of their coursework or through student media organizations.

Making stories from emerging journalists available through mainstream media outlets fills a crucial gap in news coverage: content that connects to a young, diverse local community.

Most importantly, the project expands the scope of representation in news media. For news media organizations, this helps create revenue opportunities through increased engagement from new readers.

Since its inaugural year, Amplify Utah has expanded on the framework of its core project by facilitating collaboration between emerging journalists across higher education institutions and news media organizations statewide to forge new partnerships and serve more community members.

The Amplify Utah project was designed to be an adaptable framework. The Amplify Utah playbook is a resource for those interested in replicating or creating an Amplify project in their own communities.



# How it works

## 1. EMERGING JOURNALISTS

tell stories from their communities.

Amplify Utah's student journalists have covered stories on homelessness and poverty, racial discrimination, women's issues, life in prison and other critical issues.

## 2. CONNECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

develop and navigate pipelines, pathways and partnerships, and maintain a content repository.

Amplify Utah has connected SLCC and University of Utah journalism students with news outlets like the Salt Lake Tribune, KRCL and PBS Utah. These partnerships are implemented through memorandums and collaboratives.

## 3. MEDIA PARTNERS

publish, air and share content from emerging journalists and collect project data.

Amplify Utah's media partners can access content from an online repository called the Story Room. Content can be picked up and published by multiple partners; competition and restricted ownership take a back seat to representation.

**Everybody has a voice, but not everybody has a platform.**

Amplify Utah fills gaps within journalism by creating pipelines and pathways for broader communities to engage with media outlets. The project models how emerging community journalists, such as college students, can add diverse perspectives to traditional local news organizations.

**Simply put, the goal is to amplify unheard voices as often and as broadly as possible.**



Through collaboration, the project propels each partner toward achieving distinct organizational goals: Emerging journalists gain community-engaged and paid work experience, while media outlets gain a source of growing readership and revenue. Now more than ever, amplifying diverse news coverage is critical; we cannot begin to understand the world around us if we don't see, hear or consume stories from across all communities.

# Impact report

Since the first student story published in April 2021, Amplify Utah's work to share diverse stories from emerging journalists has led to big impacts for partners and communities. As of June 2024:

**125** stories published by media partners since the project began

**Hundreds of thousands** of page views of stories from the project published on media partner platforms

**200+** students enrolled in collaborative journalism courses at Salt Lake Community College and the University of Utah

**80+** student authors aired or published work through media partnerships

**1200+** posts, stories and reels produced by Amplify Utah and partners across social media platforms

**12** Amplify Utah student journalists hired as staff or interns by local media

**2** seats on Amplify Utah board held by current students



Amplify Utah was established to facilitate this project and ultimately has grown to support other programs that align with its mission, including incorporating student-driven Solutions Journalism projects.

The organization was created with the idea of replicability in mind and the hope that others could establish similar organizations or initiate similar projects to amplify local voices within their own community, following Amplify Utah's experience as a template.

Amplify Utah continues to expand the project to engage more partners, include volunteer writing coaches and editors, and host community engagement events such as roundtables and town halls.

Amplify Utah's work deeply connects with the communities it serves and has generated increasing support since inception:

**\$3,210** donated on 2022 Giving Tuesday from 36 individual donors

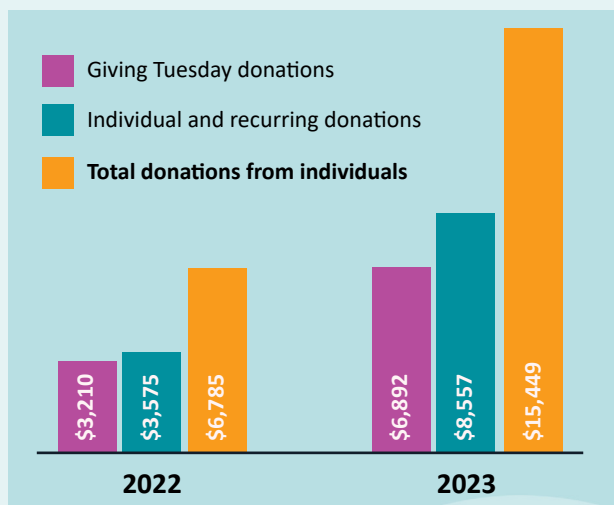
**\$6,892** donated on 2023 Giving Tuesday/End of Year Push from 61 individual donors

**\$3,575** donated in 2022

**\$8,557** donated in 2023

**36** individual + recurring donors in 2022

**77** individual + recurring donors in 2023



**\$6,892** Newsmatch dollars in 2023

**\$1,000** Faculty Champion funding in 2023 from the Center for Community News

**\$5,000** Annual project funding from the University of Utah's Department of Communication and College of Humanities

**100%** Board giving year over year since inception

Amplify Utah is deepening its impact by building on the the original project in new ways and forging new partnerships:

- » **Utah College Media Collaborative**, which unites student newsrooms at four Utah colleges and universities to encourage collaboration covering stories related to gun violence at school, in partnership with PBS Utah
- » **Community Storytelling with KRCL**, which brings emerging journalists on air for a weekly news radio takeover
- » **Great Salt Lake Collaborative**, which brings together local media outlets, education and science centers, and students to tackle Solutions Journalism stories on the crisis at the Great Salt Lake

Amplify Utah was built to be replicated by other states and communities, and organization representatives have participated in panels, discussions and workshops with colleges in Maryland, Vermont, Texas, Nevada and Georgia, offering guidance in creating similar projects.

# Project partners



## Authors

Emerging journalists identify and report on stories of impact.

EXAMPLE: SALT LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
Resources within the college support student journalists by providing guidance and facilitating collaboration.



## Connector organization

AMPLIFY UTAH

Amplify Utah shares information about the initiative on its website. The organization acts as a wire-like service, archiving all content in an online repository called the “Story Room” for access by media partners.



## Media partners

News media organizations, such as legacy news partners and member-supported community media, publish content on their platforms and collect data to support the project.

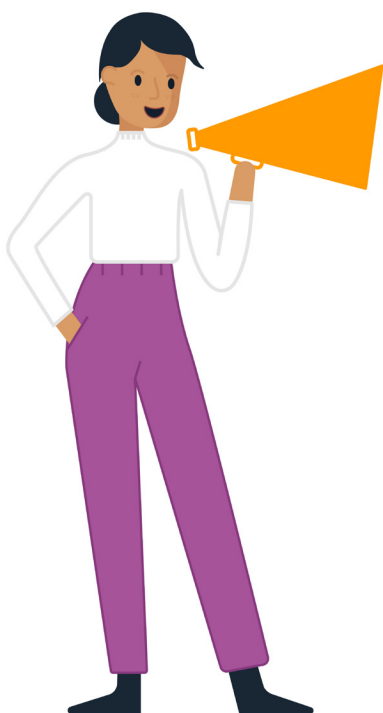
EXAMPLE: THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE  
The Tribune selects and publishes student work from the online Story Room and publishes those stories on its website and in print. The Tribune collects engagement data for stories published through the project.

# Initial project partners

**Amplify Utah**, a nonprofit organization in Salt Lake City, works to increase diversity in local media by developing, fostering and growing news readers through diverse storytelling and by amplifying voices not often represented in mainstream media. The organization was founded in 2020 by Marcie Young Cancio, an assistant professor at the University of Utah and veteran newspaper reporter, magazine editor and television and digital news manager.

**Salt Lake Community College** (SLCC) is Utah's largest and most diverse two-year college, serving about 60,000 students on 10 campuses and online.

**The Salt Lake Tribune** has served the Salt Lake metropolitan area for 150 years, providing independent and exceptional journalism to the community. The Tribune became the nation's **first nonprofit metropolitan daily** in 2020.



The core project was designed for **adaptability** and **growth**. Amplify Utah partnered with SLCC and The Tribune during the project's inaugural year, and has since grown to involve higher education institutions statewide, multiple media organizations, and community collaboratives.

- » See a timeline of new projects on [page 23](#).
- » Learn how other organizations can develop similar initiatives on [page 30](#).



# Project timeline

The inaugural project was built and piloted by Amplify Utah, SLCC and The Tribune over the course of one year. The timeline below aligns with that duration. However, for those replicating or adapting the project, the timeline may vary based on individual circumstances, partners and needs.

## PRE-LAUNCH

1. Identified and confirmed project partners.
2. Secured project funding.

See Amplify Utah's activity timeline on [page 22](#).

## PROJECT LAUNCH

### Connector Organization

#### Amplify Utah

1. Developed project team, including a Board of Directors and primary point of contact for each partner.
2. Built website and Story Room with local web development company.
3. Developed branding and marketing materials.
4. Created social media presence on all platforms.
5. Began outreach for additional partnerships and project expansion.

### Authors

#### SLCC Students

1. Revised journalism coursework encouraged students to seek a broad range of voices and experiences to expand diversity in local news coverage.
2. Students worked with course faculty to pitch, write and edit stories for publication.
3. Student media outlets published stories.
4. Students uploaded stories to the Story Room for access by media partners.

### Media Partner

#### The Salt Lake Tribune

1. Built a separate landing page on its website to host content from the project.
2. Ensured the landing page was in front of the paywall and accessible from the home page.
3. Reviewed and selected stories on a rolling basis from the Story Room for publication.
4. Highlighted project content on social media platforms to maximize reach.
5. Collected data on engagement indicators for published stories.

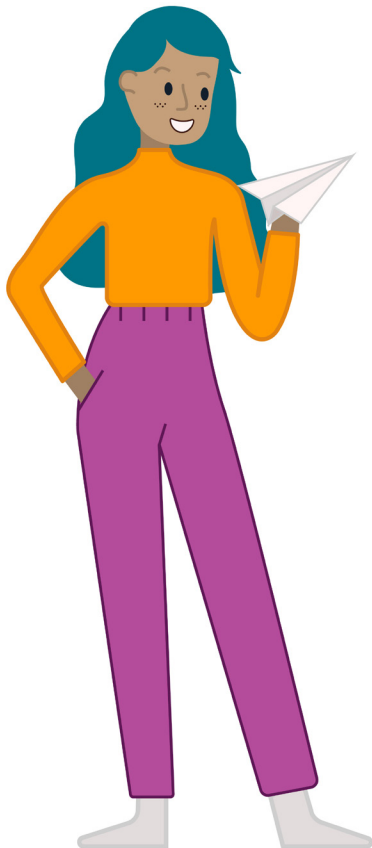
# Authors

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The project relies on diverse emerging journalists to write, edit and report stories that reflect their communities. Amplify Utah initially partnered with The Salt Lake Tribune and Salt Lake Community College, tapping into its existing journalism and media writing program to connect with student authors.

Community colleges, whose open-admissions processes tend to be more accessible to populations historically marginalized in higher education, are particularly positioned to both benefit from and fulfill this role effectively. While many community colleges have active student media efforts, this initiative is innovative in its collaboration with local media outlets.

Amplify Utah has expanded to engage emerging journalists at colleges and universities across the state, including the University of Utah.



Community colleges are not the only option for author partnership.

Other opportunities to connect with authors include:

- Four-year colleges that do not have similar existing programs
- High schools that do not have similar existing programs
- Local writing centers and select non-profit organizations

# HERE'S HOW THE PROJECT IS MOVING COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES AND STUDENTS TOWARD KEY OUTCOMES:

## GOAL:

Bolster student media programming

## APPROACH:

- Partnerships provide access to new opportunities, such as grant funding, to support media and journalism projects.
- Sharing student journalism through media partners increases awareness of the quality of student programs.

## GOAL:

Enhance opportunities for students and alumni

## APPROACH:

- Affiliation with media partner organizations and Amplify Utah enhances journalistic work done by students and alumni associated with the project.
- Collaboration with media partner organizations and Amplify Utah provides an opportunity for students to gain real-world experience and skills.
- Student reporters are paid stipends and have the opportunity to publish work in more places.

## GOAL:

Increase experience-based curriculum and community-engaged learning offerings

## APPROACH:

- The project encourages students to seek out impactful stories showcasing broad voices and experiences, deepening their understanding of issues within diverse communities.
- Students develop professional relationships with diverse sources and enter future endeavors with a commitment to amplifying all voices in their reporting and storytelling.
- College and university partners benefit from a program that both amplifies the diverse stories of its student body and offers real-world application for students to be part of the changing dynamic in coverage of diverse and broad-ranging issues.



## HOW IT WORKS

1. Student journalists discover, pitch and report on stories of impact and relevance to their communities.
2. With editorial guidance from faculty and other college-based resources, student journalists write and revise high-quality stories for submission.
3. Authors submit completed work to the online Story Room hosted by Amplify Utah. To do this, student authors register for an online account and log in to the Amplify Utah website, where they can upload content through the submission page.
4. Once student work is selected by a media partner, stories are published and viewable on the media outlet's webpage and are featured across digital platforms.



### TIP:

#### ENCOURAGE STUDENT AUTHORS TO WRITE "EVERGREEN" STORIES

Evergreen stories are not tied to a specific date or breaking news. As a result, they can be rolled out over time and have potential to be picked up by multiple news organizations regardless of creation date. Consider evergreen stories as a way to have relevant content available to publish year-round, rather than limited to the semester schedule of college courses.



## Who are authors?

Emerging journalists can include:

- Journalism and media writing students
- Documentary film, television production and photography students
- Young adults engaged in community-driven storytelling outside of a college or professional setting
- Young adults involved with a student-based media center, such as SLCC's [Student Media Center](#)
- Young adults working with a student news outlet, such as SLCC's [The Globe](#)

## What resources can help students find stories and create high-quality content?

Resources at SLCC include:

- Journalism and media writing faculty
- Stories inspired by student experiences and personal communities
- Student groups and clubs
- [Thayne Center](#) for Service and Learning
- [Student Engagement, Experience, and Achievement](#)
- [Institutional Equity, Inclusion and Transformation](#)

## How can student-authored stories connect to college coursework?

- Participating journalism classes, media writing classes, documentary film, television production and photography classes can build their curriculum around the project.
- At SLCC, students in media writing courses develop their stories over the semester. The workflow of the course is structured to guide students through the development, writing and editing process. Students submit completed stories as a final project at the end of the semester, and on occasion, throughout the course.

### TIP:

#### CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO COLLABORATE ACROSS DISCIPLINES

SLCC journalism students collaborate with film and photography students to create captivating content for digital platforms. Visual and video components engage readers and are well-suited to sharing across social media platforms.



# Author terms & agreements

When an author submits work to the Story Room, they are asked to agree to Amplify Utah's terms and conditions. This is an important component of the partnership and ensures that authors understand how their work will be used.

View Amplify Utah's terms and conditions below as an example. These submission terms and conditions are viewable on the website, located on the FAQ page, and authors are prompted to review them when submitting work.

Please feel free to use or adapt this example provided from Amplify Utah.

## Amplify Utah Submission Terms and Conditions:

Student and community journalists submitting content for publication by Amplify Utah and any of our media partners, by association, agree to our terms and conditions. These terms apply to any content submitted to us for publication, including stories, digital content, images, video, graphics, data, letters or other correspondence.

When you submit to Amplify Utah, you agree that you have created this content or have received permission from the owner to publish all or any part of the content. You (or the owner of the content) own the copyright of the submitted work, but through your submission, you grant us unconditional, irrevocable, non-exclusive, royalty-free, fully transferable and perpetual license to use, publish or transmit, or to authorize third-parties to use, publish or transmit your content in any format and on any platform, either now known or hereinafter introduced.

You acknowledge and agree that when you provide us with content, you are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of that content and have verified all submitted information, including, but not limited to, facts, data, names, titles, quotes and attribution. You acknowledge and agree that the views expressed by you and other users of this content do not necessarily reflect the views of Amplify Utah or our media partners. You acknowledge that Amplify Utah and its media partners have the right to pre-screen, monitor or review content provided by you and other users. Amplify Utah and its media partners may edit submitted content for length and may contact the author/creator with clarifying questions prior to publication.

We and our media partners reserve the right to cut, crop or edit your content at our or their discretion. We reserve the right to refuse publication and may remove your content from use at any time. We accept no liability in respect to content submitted by users and published by us or our media partners.

You ensure the content you submit is not obscene, offensive, threatening, harassing, libelous, defamatory, deceptive, fraudulent or plagiarized, invasive of another's privacy or otherwise illegal. You ensure the content you submit does not infringe any patent, trademark, copyright or other intellectual property or privacy right of any party or individual.



# Story examples

In its first year, more than two dozen student-authored stories published in The Tribune through the project. [View published stories on the Salt Lake Tribune website](#). You can also see examples on Amplify Utah's website in the [Story Room](#). See highlighted stories and learn about some of the authors below.

"I am from Anchorage, Alaska, and I am of the Tlingit - Eagle Clan, Unungan + Athabascan Nations.

The partnership with Amplify Utah helped voices and perspectives like mine be seen and given importance ... Stories and representation in local media lets others know they aren't alone, that their experience matters and to keep going.

I have never seen Native issues shared directly from the Native perspective, and I am so grateful that Amplify Utah and The Tribune believed in me and my story enough to share it with our community."

**Read the full story from Valene Peratrovich:** [Where Indigenous mascots have changed in Utah and beyond](#)



"I grew up in Gaffney, South Carolina and now live in American Fork, Utah. For my day job, I am a swim coach for a local club. I grew up very poor in the rural south, and sports were always an outlet for me. All kids deserve to participate in sports and have the same great experiences I had. Working with Amplify Utah and SLCC helped me give those swimmers [a platform to share their stories]."

**Read the full story from Kirsten Buker:** ['It's about more than swimming': How a community came together to support Rose Park and Glendale youth](#)

**"WHEN I'M AT A MEET, I NOTICE THERE AREN'T A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT LOOK LIKE ME, BUT I DON'T FEEL DIFFERENT. EVERYONE IS THERE TO COMPETE."**

"I chose this story because it was something I could personally relate to. One of my classmates brought up the topic of 'third culture' children who have experienced their parents' cultures along with their country's culture. When it came up in class, I recognized it as my own experience, and I knew I wanted to hear from other people who grew up similarly."

Having my voice heard as a Latina woman means a lot to me personally, but having a story about the Hispanic community be published means even more. I feel that seeing yourself represented in the media can be a very validating experience when your culture has been historically misrepresented and underrepresented."

**Read the full story from Samantha Herrera:**  
[Living "in between": How children navigate two cultures at once](#)



"I went out one day with my barber friend with the idea of cutting hair for people experiencing homelessness, and decided to make a TikTok out of it."

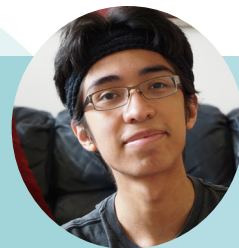
It went viral with millions of views, and we knew this was something that needed to be heard even further. We decided to make a longer, more serious form of the experience through a mini-documentary.

Life is all about community, no matter your title or situation, we all need to look out for each other in order to create positive change in our world. Amplify Utah gave us the opportunity to tell this story to thousands of people."

**Watch the video from James Seo:**  
[Free haircuts give 'renewing feeling' to people experiencing homelessness in Salt Lake City](#)









“It is rare to see stories of youth involvement in local government; is this because youth are less inclined to participate in local government, or is it perhaps that youth involvement is not covered enough? Both, maybe?”

The story highlights this topic, demonstrating that local involvement is not delegated to older individuals within a certain demographic. The story speaks for itself, and it may also speak to youth from different backgrounds throughout the valley.”

**Read the full story from Cristian Martinez:** [South Salt Lake may rename Columbus building. A student started the conversation](#)



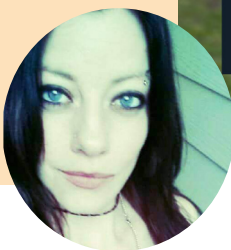


“YOUR VOICE, ESPECIALLY AS A YOUTH, MATTERS. YOU ARE THE ONES ... WHO WILL BECOME THE DECISION MAKERS.”

“I saw a video someone had made about deadnames, and I had never heard the term or even thought about the impact names could have. But when I saw the video it made so much sense and seemed like it should be common sense.”

What happens in your community matters. We all live here together, we need to strive to understand everyone so we can all live harmoniously. Everyone deserves to live the best life they can live but that’s not possible when some people get left behind.”

**Read the full story from Leilani Miller:** [Utahns talk about their deadnames and what they think when they hear them now](#)



“[IT IS] INHERENTLY MISGENDERING, WHICH NEVER FEELS GOOD BUT FEELS MORE JARRING WHEN BEING MISGENDERED HAS BECOME RARE.”

# Media partners

Media partners bring stories sourced through the project to a public platform. Non-profit news organizations are well suited to this role because they are already connected to their community and can pursue projects that align with their mission. Amplify Utah has developed partnerships with the Salt Lake Tribune, [KRCL 90.9](#) and [PBS Utah](#).

## HERE'S HOW THE PROJECT IS MOVING NEWS MEDIA PARTNERS TOWARD KEY OUTCOMES:

### GOAL:

Increase diverse viewpoints in coverage

### APPROACH:

- Emerging journalists develop content relevant to their diversity within their communities. Their stories become a source of more representative voices for news media partners without requiring significant financial resources.
- Partnering with colleges, universities and Amplify Utah creates a pipeline for bringing diversity to the newsroom.

### GOAL:

Increase engagement from young audiences

### APPROACH:

- Collaboration with colleges and universities builds a positive image of the media and awareness of local news outlets within the student community.
- By offering free or very low-cost subscriptions to students and faculty, young people build a relationship with news media organizations.

### GOAL:

Encourage additional financial support from existing donors

### APPROACH:

- Sharing content from emerging journalists for free on digital and social platforms encourages diverse and non-traditional audiences to pay for subscription-only content.
- The community partnership serves as a new appeal to existing donors.

# Media partners



## HOW IT WORKS

1. Media partners visit the Story Room at [amplifyutah.org](https://amplifyutah.org) to see content available for publication. (Media partners agree to Amplify Utah's [terms of agreement](#) before publishing student work.)
2. An editor selects a story they want to publish through their media outlet. A story can be picked up and published by multiple media partners. The goal is to amplify voices and stories of representation as broadly as possible.
3. The media partner runs the story. Stories are published as free to access and in front of any existing paywalls.

### TIP: DISTINGUISH STUDENT-AUTHORED CONTENT FROM NEWSROOM CONTENT

Stories are published with the student's byline, and include the following language to distinguish student work from that of the media partner staff:

- At the top of the story (below the byline and offset in italics): "This story is jointly published by Amplify Utah and [media partner name], in collaboration with [college name], to elevate diverse perspectives in local media through student journalism."
- At end of story: [author name] wrote this story as a journalism student at [college name]. It is published as part of a new collaborative with Amplify Utah.

4. Stories are housed on a distinct landing page on the media partner's website and featured on social media platforms.



### Who could be a media partner?

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- Media partners could include: nonprofit news organizations, student media and approved news sharing collectives or collaboratives.
- Traditional for-profit media organizations could also adapt this project with modifications around author stipends and fiscal structure.
- Amplify Utah has partnered with the Salt Lake Tribune, KRCL 90.9, PBS Utah and the Great Salt Lake Collaborative.
- Amplify Utah launched a cross-campus collaborative, the Utah College Media Collaborative, to bring together student-led newsrooms from four public Utah universities and colleges in partnership with PBS Utah.

### What resources does a media partner need in order to participate in or initiate a project like this?

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- A dedicated team member to coordinate with partners, select stories and potentially work with authors. This team member will engage with the connector organization regularly.
- Financial resources to pay stipends. Stipends can also be provided through a connector organization such as Amplify Utah or other funding partners.
- A media partner could implement a project like this directly with a community college or other author partner, however this may require more human resources such as a committee or team to effectively manage the project.

# TOOLKIT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### What happens after a story gets published?

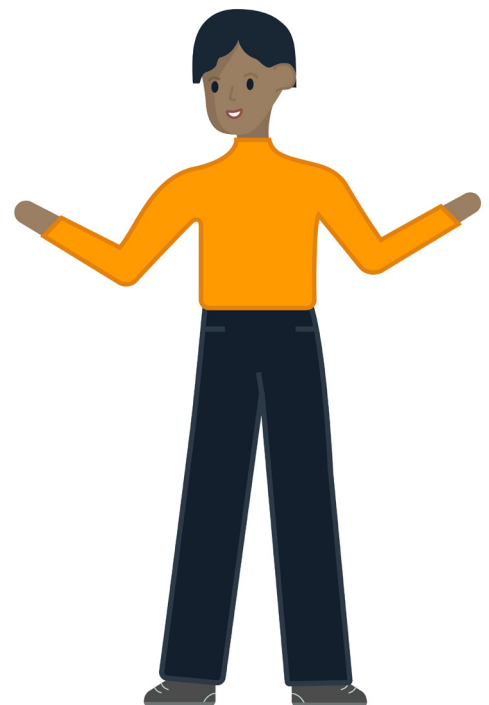
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- The story is permanently housed on the media partner's website, highlighted on social media and pushed through print editions and newsletters to subscribers.
- The story may be picked up by other media organizations.
- The media partner collects data on story traffic and engagement and shares engagement with connector organization.
- The author is paid a stipend through dedicated funds provided through the partnership. For this project, stipends are provided by Amplify Utah.

#### TIP:

##### **PUBLISHED STORIES ARE FREE TO ACCESS**

Amplify Utah's media partners place all stories from the partnership in front of their paywall, meaning anyone can read the story without a subscription. These stories are an opportunity to draw new audiences to the media organization, and accessible content engages more readers.



# Media terms & agreements



Please feel free to use or adapt this example provided from Amplify Utah.

## Amplify Utah Media Publishing Partner Terms and Conditions:

Media partners interested in publishing student and community author work through Amplify Utah agree to our terms and conditions. These terms apply to any content pulled from the Story Room content repository on the Amplify Utah website and includes stories, digital content, images, video, graphics, data, letters or other correspondence.

When downloading and publishing any content from Amplify Utah, media partners understand and agree there is no exclusive right to the content and that stories pulled from Amplify Utah may also be published or aired by other media organizations.

Media partners agree to pull all author content from the online repository, or Story Room, on the Amplify Utah website, unless a recorded and defined alternative has been established. Media partners agree to publish all Amplify Utah author content in front of online paywalls and may not profit directly from author content or work downloaded or received from Amplify Utah.

Amplify Utah authors (or the owner of the content) own the copyright of the submitted work, but through their submission, grant Amplify Utah unconditional, irrevocable, non-exclusive, royalty-free, fully transferable and perpetual license to use, publish or transmit, or to authorize third-parties to use, publish or transmit their content in any format and on any platform, either now known or hereinafter introduced.

Amplify Utah and its media partners have the right to pre-screen, monitor or review content provided by authors and other users and may edit submitted content for length and/or contact the author/creator with clarifying questions prior to publication. Amplify Utah and media partners reserve the right to cut, crop or edit author content at our or their discretion. Amplify Utah reserves the right to refuse publication and may ask a media partner to remove author content from use at any time. We accept no liability in respect to content submitted by users and published by us or our media partners.

Media partners will credit the author by full name and/or byline on any Amplify Utah content published or aired, regardless of platform. Media partners will include the following language at the top/beginning of any published Amplify Utah author content online, in print or broadcast: This story is jointly published by nonprofits Amplify Utah and [Media Partner] to elevate diverse perspectives in local media through student and community journalism.

Amplify Utah will pay authors one-time stipends for publication of work by the initial media partner to publish each story/content. Nonprofit and public media organizations may publish author content pulled from the Amplify Utah Story Room for free by agreeing to these terms and conditions. For-profit media organizations may need to make additional agreements, terms and conditions with Amplify Utah prior to publication and becoming a media partner.



# The connector: Amplify Utah

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Founded in the summer of 2020, Amplify Utah launched with the mission to amplify stories not often heard in local news media by bringing together student journalists and local media. Now, Amplify Utah works with colleges and universities across the state, including the University of Utah and SLCC, to bring more emerging storytellers into the program and work with additional media partners to publish their work.

The first student story published in April 2021, and in the three years since, Amplify Utah has published more than 125 pieces by nearly 80 student journalists that reached hundreds of thousands of people across the Greater Salt Lake Valley.

Collaboration has not stopped after the first project. Amplify Utah's original project framework was designed to be replicated, both within the organization and by other organizations seeking to bring greater representation to newsrooms through partnership.

- » See a timeline of Amplify Utah's projects on [page 23](#).
- » Read about ways to replicate Amplify projects on [page 30](#).

## **Amplify Utah's role as a connector organization:**

1. Facilitate partnerships between author partners and media partners.
2. Act as a wire-like service, housing journalistic content in the Story Room.
3. Provide information on the project and develop new partnerships through community outreach and marketing.

Amplify Utah connects existing resources together to facilitate new projects and link together what is already happening across the community. Amplify Utah may also work in partnership with colleges and universities and local media organizations to create collaborative projects.

# Project timeline

## PRE-LAUNCH

1. Amplify Utah founded in 2020 and incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.
2. Identified and confirmed project partners.
3. Secured and allocated funding for the project.
  - Depending on project circumstances, securing funding may mean allocating organizational budget funding or securing external funding such as grants or philanthropic funding.
  - The initial project year was made possible by funding from the Google News Initiative to Amplify Utah and The Tribune. For more details on the initial project budget, see [page 24](#).

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### Develop project team

- The project team consists of at least one dedicated point-of-contact person from each partner.
- For Amplify Utah, as a newly founded nonprofit, this also meant creating a board of directors. For a connector organization that is not a new nonprofit, this may mean dedicating time from existing employees or board members to manage the project.

### Build website and Story Room

- Amplify Utah worked with [Third Sun](#), a local web development organization that regularly works with nonprofit organizations, to build its website.
- The website includes the following sections: about, submit your work, the Story Room, playbook, become a partner and contact. The website also includes newsletter sign up and donation links.
- For a small-scale adaptation of the project, the website could be replaced with a simplified file-sharing method such as Google Drive.

### Develop branding and marketing materials

- Amplify Utah engaged Third Sun to simultaneously create branding materials while developing the website. For details on Amplify Utah's branding guidelines, see [page 26](#).



## Create social media presence on all platforms

- Amplify Utah uses [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to share newly published stories and highlight student authors.

## Develop additional partnerships and expand projects

- Amplify Utah expanded author partnerships to include other local colleges and universities, such as the University of Utah. Other possible future partners include high school journalism programs, community writing centers and digital media arts centers geared toward students.
- Amplify Utah expanded its network of media partners, developing partnership agreements and projects with 90.9 KRCL, PBS Utah and more.

### Select Amplify Utah Projects:

- 2021 Partner with the Salt Lake Tribune to publish SLCC student journalism.
- 2021 Air SLCC students on KRCL during weekly RadioActive programming.
- 2022 Founding partner of the [Great Salt Lake Collaborative](#), a Solutions Journalism project bringing together 19 news, education and civic organizations to better inform and engage the public about the crisis facing the Great Salt Lake.
- 2023 Bridge newsrooms at the University of Utah, Utah State University, Weber State University, SLCC and PBS Utah to create the [Utah College Media Collab](#). Read the stories, focused on gun violence at school, [here](#).
- 2024 Partner with the Great Salt Lake Collaborative and the [University of Utah College of Humanities](#) to create an upper-division course focused on west side communities and Indigenous voices connected to the lake. Read stories from the project [here](#).
- 2024 Connect student journalists from the University of Utah, graduates from The Other Side Academy and KRCL radio hosts to create a [community storytelling podcast](#).

# Initial project budget

A table showing a simplified budget for Amplify Utah's inaugural project is outlined below. However, the total cost of initiating a similar project will depend on the scale of operation. The information included here is intended as a guide and as useful context for understanding the logistics of implementing the project. Initial funding for the Amplify Utah project was generously granted by the [Google News Initiative](#).

This project does not have any full-time staff members. Accordingly, the administrative cost line in the table below accounts for all initial project management in establishing Amplify Utah and executing the inaugural project.

## GOOGLE NEWS INITIATIVE

Administration	\$31,700
Amplify Utah website development	\$15,000
Salt Lake Tribune landing page development	\$3,600
Software	\$390
Hardware	\$4,000
Marketing and branding	\$7,000
Student stipends (up to 38)	\$3,800

# Staff and board

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Amplify Utah's current team includes an executive director, the board of directors, a social media producer and newsletter contractor. More information about board members can be found on the [Amplify Utah website](#).

Amplify Utah is planning ahead to increase its operational capacity and be able to launch more programs that make an impact toward its mission.

With new funding, Amplify Utah hopes to expand its team to include the following part-time staff:

- Executive director
- Story and content editor
- Social media and marketing manager
- Project manager
- Grant writer
- Information technology (IT) specialist

Amplify Utah does not currently have any full-time staff members, and additional positions would be part-time.

The executive director and board members are employed outside the organization in addition to part-time and volunteer work on the project. Other roles, such as social media management and website development, have been fulfilled through contracted work.

## TIP:

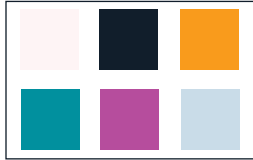
Look for local companies that regularly work with nonprofits to contract for specific projects.

Amplify Utah is a small organization and doesn't have an in-house web developer. We contracted Third Sun, a local company known for working with community nonprofits, to develop our website and branding materials at an affordable rate.



# Branding & marketing guidelines

Amplify Utah developed three logos: a primary, secondary and tertiary to be used in varying situations of readability ranging from large-scale print to small social media watermarks.



A distinct color palette and typeface style guide helps create cohesion across materials. Unified branding is essential to intentionally conveying the organization and project's vision and mission.

Marketing materials were created to be reusable across a variety of digital and print needs including: social media posts, annual reports, website content, collateral and informational products.



Amplify Utah's branding is also replicable; the Amplify Utah logo was developed to be emulated by other organizations hoping to amplify voices in their own communities through a similar project.

**Example:** An "Amplify Texas" organization could be created to leverage the multitude of community colleges in the state to work with nonprofit news media organizations. By using the same branding and logo as Amplify Utah, multiple "Amplify" locations could form a network.

Don't start from scratch. Amplify Utah's branding guidelines and materials were created to be shared, used and adapted. Get in touch with Amplify Utah if you are interested in starting an Amplify organization in your community.

# Navigating roadblocks



Launching this project did not come without challenges, and the project is still experiencing growing pains. While there have already been many successes, initiating a new experiment is never an easy task.

Circumstances also create challenges. This project kicked off in January 2021, amid the COVID-19 pandemic and had to adapt from its very beginning. Additionally, many newsrooms across the nation were already living out a stressful reality before the COVID-19 crisis hit, combatting declining revenue and readership while maintaining staff and content quality.

In an effort to acknowledge these challenges, as well as provide insight into planning for them and building resiliency into the project framework, some key roadblocks are addressed below.

## CHALLENGE:

### Natural Attrition

Leadership, staff and team members change over time at partner organizations.

With new people come new ideas and new preconceptions. Often times, this can lead to innovations that improve the project in unexpected ways. However, it can also lead to loss of unique information and expertise.

## APPROACH:

- Make a succession plan for project team members, even if it doesn't seem necessary.

A succession plan is critical to organizational resiliency. Depending on the capacity of an organization, this can vary from a detailed how-to handbook to a few sentences jotted down on a document.

- Designate at least one specific staff member from each partner to be the primary point of contact for the project.

Knowing who to contact at each partner organization can preempt miscommunication. Staying in regular communication with each point person as a team through a messaging platform like Slack will also help ensure that critical information is not lost if one team member moves on.



### CHALLENGE:

#### Unexpected Constraints

The introductory journalism class at SLCC was taught virtually due to COVID-19, and restrictions due to the pandemic made it difficult for students to research and follow up on stories in the community.

### APPROACH:

- Set attainable goals based on predictable difficulties and circumstances.

While some setbacks are impossible to foresee, intentional goal-setting means taking an inventory of what can be expected.

Consider a range: What is the upper limit that could possibly be achieved? What minimal amount is almost certainly achievable? Selecting a goal thoughtfully will set the project up for success.

- Make contingency plans based on information gathered from partners.

It is becoming the norm to plan for multiple modalities and last-minute modifications. If the project includes an education setting, consult with the institution early on to understand their processes for how to manage changes to course structure should unexpected circumstances (i.e. a global pandemic) occur.

### CHALLENGE:

#### Consistency

This project has no dedicated full-time team members. Without consistency and follow-through, it's easy to let project activities, goals and deadlines become a second priority to other obligations.

### APPROACH:

- Have a dedicated champion to advocate for the project.

A project like this can be successful without a full-time team member. However, being consistent in following up with partners and regularly bringing the project to the forefront of the agenda are non-negotiables in order for the project to produce meaningful results.

# TOOLKIT

## NAVIGATING ROADBLOCKS



### CHALLENGE:

Coordinating and collaborating across departments within the community college

At the Salt Lake Community College, courses and instructors have predefined curriculums, syllabi and learning outcomes.

Amplify Utah ran into challenges working with courses and students beyond the Journalism and Digital Media department in order to meet publication criteria from The Salt Lake Tribune.

### APPROACH:

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- Take inventory of publication criteria, relevant processes and procedures restrictions while identifying potential media partners.

Knowing what is required from media partners before launching the project enables connector organizations to prepare accordingly and communicate clearly to author partners.

- Communicate with potential author partners early on about changes that may need to be made.

Setting expectations early in the process can remove challenges down the road.

# Future of the project

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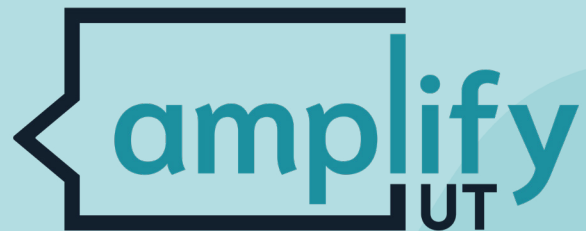
Amplify Utah was established to facilitate the core project and will continue to grow to support other programs that align with our mission. We hope to continue expanding the project to engage more partners, include volunteer writing coaches and editors and host community engagement events such as roundtables and town halls.

The organization was created with the idea of replicability in mind and the hope that others could establish similar organizations or initiate similar projects to amplify local voices within their own community, following Amplify Utah's experience as a template. We hope that by not only developing a project centered around collaboration, but also sharing the tools with others to start projects like this one, more diverse stories and community voices everywhere can be magnified and celebrated.

## Adapting this project

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This is not a one-size-fits-all model. A similar project could be launched in many ways, not just through starting a nonprofit like Amplify Utah. Other opportunities to initiate a partnership include:



- An existing nonprofit with a mission relevant to the project, such as a focus on education, representation or journalism, could add programming guided by this project.
- A nonprofit newsroom could directly connect with a local college, university or writing center to source stories from emerging journalists.
- A community college could initiate a partnership with local news media to publish student stories through their outlets.
- A for-profit newsroom could source content relevant to a reader group they are interested in increasing revenue from by partnering with local writing centers, community colleges or four-year colleges.



# Contacts and resources

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This project was generously funded in its inaugural year by the Google News Initiative in partnership between Amplify Utah, the Salt Lake Tribune and Salt Lake Community College.

A special thanks to our supporters, authors, media partners and the Amplify Utah board of directors.

For more information on Amplify Utah and how to get an Amplify project started in your community, visit [amplifyutah.org](https://amplifyutah.org) or email [marcie@amplifyutah.org](mailto:marcie@amplifyutah.org).



amplifyutah.org  
sltrib.com/amplify-utah  
@amplifyutah on social media

