



**PROPUBLICA**

REPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS

JANUARY-APRIL 2021

**Cover:** Nearly 50 members of ProPublica's reporting staff collaborated to create a database of publicly uploaded videos showing the scene at the U.S. Capitol riot.

# The News Now

With a new administration in the White House — and as the pandemic perhaps begins to ebb — ProPublica once again confronts a transformed news agenda. In the first part of this year, we responded with speed and innovation to breaking stories, scrutinized how the government is handling stimulus efforts and economic recovery, and illuminated how people's lives are affected by the long-term damage inflicted by the pandemic.

## Visualizing the Insurrection

On Jan. 6, the nation watched in horror as hundreds of people stormed the Capitol, sending legislators and the vice president fleeing for their lives and injuring police. Within days, computational journalist Jeff Kao received thousands of videos publicly uploaded by Trump rallygoers and insurrectionists to the social media site Parler, which had been archived by a programmer before it was taken offline by its host. Nearly 50 members of ProPublica's reporting staff worked together to quickly publish [an interactive timeline of more than 500 videos taken at or around the Capitol](#), providing one of the most comprehensive records of the infamous day at a moment when the public needed it to truly understand what had happened.

This work led to significant impact. Clips from the videos have been used by the FBI to identify and charge suspects. In February, images from ProPublica's timeline were also used by House managers during the second impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump.

In partnership with Frontline, reporter A.C. Thompson also looked into the [white supremacist organizations that took part in the assault](#). That report-



*Our collection of Parler video clips from the insurrection offers a unique experience of the historic event through hundreds of participants' eyes.*

ing yielded "[American Insurrection](#)," a documentary that probes the far-right groups and leaders responsible for threats and violence at the Capitol, exploring how they were emboldened and encouraged by Trump, as well as how individuals across the country were radicalized.

## Accountability for the Stimulus

In 2020, after Congress earmarked hundreds of billions of dollars for the Paycheck Protection Program to help small businesses weather the crisis, news apps developers Moiz Syed and Derek Willis built a searchable database of loans approved by lenders and disclosed by the Small Business Administration. But the government only released the details of loans for more than \$150,000. This limited amount of data left us with questions about the effectiveness of the government's response: Were the people who were supposed to get help actually getting it? What about small businesses? Rural businesses? Minority-owned businesses? Were they getting enough? Too much?

Last November, as part of a coalition of news organizations, we won a lawsuit in federal court forcing the SBA to also release information on the remaining loans. In March, ProPublica updated its PPP database with the newly released data, increasing our number of [searchable loans from 650,000 to nearly 9 million](#). This has not only given us a much better picture of the applicants and recipients of PPP loans; it is allowing reporters across the country to parse that data and hold the government and others accountable. Through April, our PPP loan database has received more than 13 million page views.

ProPublica reporter Lydia DePillis explored two major ways in which relief is not reaching those who need it most. While much had been written about the recession being hard on minority business owners, in March she highlighted [deeper problems facing Black entrepreneurs](#). We analyzed the data and found that Black business owners are turned down more often for loans, even when credit risk is taken into account. And while all levels of government used to have much stronger minority-owned business participation requirements in their procurement policies, over the years those have been weakened considerably.



*Danette Wilder (center) runs a rubber company with her brother Delonzo and half-sister Gwendolyn. Theirs is among the many Black-owned businesses that face compounding disadvantages. (Andrew Cenci)*

DePillis also uncovered an SBA rule that [disqualified individuals or businesses in bankruptcy from getting relief through the PPP](#). The agency had battled in court against bankrupt companies attempting to apply for the program, and it didn't change course even after Congress explicitly passed legislation last December allowing it to do so. Two weeks after our story, however, the SBA quietly reversed the policy with the release of new guidance. Now, thousands of debtors who filed under Chapters 11, 12 and 13 are eligible for PPP loans.

## Revealing Pandemic Costs in Schools

While debate over school closures amid COVID-19 has mainly focused on infection rates, ProPublica dug deeper into the pandemic's toll on the emotional health of teenagers. In March, reporter Alec MacGillis looked at outcomes in two neighboring border

towns — one in Texas, where schools stayed open with masking and social distancing, and one in New Mexico, where the schools closed and sports were canceled. While the disease burden was quite similar, [in Hobbs, New Mexico, teens suffered tremendously](#).

The town of 39,000 saw three youth suicides over the past year. The situation mirrors national trends: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found the proportion of mental health visits to the emergency room by adolescents increased 31% from March to October 2020, compared with the same months in 2019.

In April, Deputy Managing Editor Eric Umansky reported on [an unscientific New York City rule that](#)

[ordered the closure of public schools if testing found two positive COVID-19 results](#), regardless of the school's size and even if the cases were apparently unlinked. We contacted 10 epidemiologists and physicians, nearly all of whom said the policy didn't make sense. Days after the story's publication, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced an end to the city's rule.

## Continued Local Focus

This year, ProPublica is also continuing to put new resources toward increasing local accountability. In April, our Local Reporting Network partner Miami Herald reported on Florida's Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Association (NICA), a program designed to reduce doctors' malpractice bills that strips parents of brain-damaged newborns of their right to sue. Instead, the program offers a one-time payment and promises to cover medical expenses. Yet NICA has [frequently denied or delayed help for struggling families](#) — sometimes spending tens of thousands more in legal fees fighting requests for benefits than it would cost to help parents who depend on the program to care for their children. Hours after the initial story was published, the state's chief financial officer initiated an audit of the program. By the end of the month, Florida lawmakers passed sweeping legislation to increase benefits and protections for families of brain-damaged babies, including mental health services, parental representation on the program's board of directors and retroactive compensation of \$150,000.

Other local work has included investigations with our partners at the Texas Tribune on [how Texas repeatedly failed to protect its power grid against extreme weather](#), which led to the state's power crisis in February. A follow-up piece with the Tribune and NBC News focused on [carbon monoxide poisonings of Texans who tried to keep warm by running their cars inside garages](#). At least 11 people died in one of the few



*After power went out in millions of homes across Texas in mid-February, many families ran charcoal grills or cars to stay warm, unaware of the dangers. (Leland Foster for ProPublica/The Texas Tribune/NBC)*

states that does not require carbon monoxide alarms in homes. Reporters from our team in the Midwest illuminated how dozens of Missouri homeowners who used state-supported “clean energy” loans to fix their houses ended up [trapped in debt and could soon see their homes sold at auction](#).

As the year unfolds, many more investigations are underway, and we hope you'll follow along as we continue to cover this pivotal moment in the history of our nation.

# Impact

The most important test of ProPublica is whether our work is having impact. We measure our impact not in terms of audience size or honors, but in real-world change. In addition to the impact previously mentioned, our journalism in the first few months of 2021 spurred change in a number of important areas.

## **Congressional Investigators Confirm Our Findings on COVID Profiteers**

In 2020, ProPublica reported that, soon after the COVID-19 crisis set in, the federal government tossed aside its many rules on contracting to give out billions of dollars to just about anyone who said they could provide supplies necessary to combat the coronavirus. In one story, we showed how the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services paid tens of millions of dollars to develop low-cost portable ventilators that the contractor never delivered. In March, House Democrats investigating the response to the COVID-19 pandemic released their early findings. According to correspondence obtained by congressional investigators, Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro, the point person on the ventilators deal, pressured various agency officials to reward politically connected or otherwise untested companies with hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts.

## **Unqualified COVID Contractor Pleads Guilty to Fraud**

In May 2020, ProPublica published an investigation into government contracts for personal protective equipment, uncovering individuals profiting from the government's bungled handling of the pandemic. In one investigation, we reported that a vendor with no experience in providing medical supplies received \$38 million in federal contracts to provide N95 masks



*The Trump administration promised at least \$1.8 billion to 335 first-time contractors pledging pandemic-related supplies, often without thorough vetting of their backgrounds. (Lisa Larson-Walker)*

at inflated prices to Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals. In the course of our reporting, we asked the VA about this deal. It terminated the contract almost immediately and referred the case to the inspector general for investigation. In February, the contractor, Robert Stewart Jr., pleaded guilty to three counts of making false statements, wire fraud and theft of government funds in U.S. District Court, including charges that he lied to the VA.



*Some NYPD officers who police the sex trade, driven by overtime pay, go undercover to round up as many “bodies” as they can with little evidence. (Daniel Stolle, special to ProPublica)*

### **Alaska Attorney General Resigns (Again) After Sexual Misconduct Exposed**

In August 2020, ProPublica and the Anchorage Daily News published an investigation showing that Alaska Attorney General Kevin Clarkson sent hundreds of text messages to a younger state employee (at least 558 messages in March alone) inviting her to come to his home. Hours after we published our story, Clarkson resigned as attorney general. Clarkson was replaced by Acting Alaska Attorney General Ed Sniffen, who resigned in January after ProPublica and the Daily News began asking questions about allegations of sexual misconduct decades earlier with a 17-year-old girl. The state has also launched an investigation into the allegations.

### **Wrongfully Convicted Man Compensated With \$1.4 Million**

In a 2017 partnership with Vanity Fair, we reported on the case of Fred Steese, a Las Vegas man who spent 21 years in prison for a murder he didn't commit. Despite his being proven innocent, prosecutors demanded he agree to an Alford plea — a deal that allows defendants to maintain their innocence while at the same time pleading guilty and accepting the status of a convicted felon. After our story, Steese was granted a full pardon. Under a new Nevada law that compensates exonerees for each year wrongfully spent in prison, in March 2021 Steese received \$1.35 million for his 18 years of imprisonment. The funds will give him a level

of stability he hasn't had in nearly 30 years, including the ability to purchase a house of his own.

### **New Law Stops Discriminatory Drivers License Suspensions**

In 2018, ProPublica reported on how Black motorists on Chicago's West and South sides are disproportionately harmed by license suspensions over unpaid tickets, part of a series on how the city's ticketing and debt collection systems have burdened the poor and led to tens of thousands of bankruptcies. In February, Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed a massive criminal justice bill that, among other measures, will restore the driving privileges of some 11,000 people by July and puts an end to suspending driver's licenses for failing to pay traffic fines.

### **Health Insurance Transparency Mandated**

In February 2019, ProPublica and partner NPR News published an investigation documenting the hidden cash and gifts health insurers pay to influence independent insurance brokers who advise employers on which insurance to choose for their staff. This influence ultimately helps determine the health coverage for about 150 million Americans. The 2021 coronavirus relief bill, signed by President Joe Biden in March, included mandates for brokers to disclose to employers how much they make from insurance carriers and vendors.

### **New Measures Address Racialized Policing of Sex Work**

In December 2020, ProPublica revealed that undercover operations in New York City aimed at arresting sex workers or their clients have led to numerous allegations of false arrest and sexual misconduct. We reported that NYPD officers who police the sex trade, driven by overtime pay, routinely go undercover to round up as many “bodies” as they can with little evidence or oversight and that almost everyone arrested was a person of color. In January, Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez announced that he is vacating more than 200 warrants related to prostitution and will dismiss the underlying charges. In February, the state legislature repealed a law making it illegal to loiter for purposes of prostitution, which ProPublica reported had been used to discriminate against transgender people. In March, Mayor de Blasio released a second draft of his criminal justice reform plan that includes his intention to form a task force to address problems with how the city polices the sex trade.

## **NYPD Watchdog Group Discloses Only Two Officers Disciplined for Protest Abuses**

In March, ProPublica detailed the lack of disclosure about Black Lives Matter protest cases by New York City's Civilian Complaint Review Board. Despite more than 700 complaints about New York Police Department officers abusing protesters last summer, emails obtained by our reporters showed that CCRB leaders discouraged staff from confronting the NYPD about a lack of cooperation on investigations into the abuse. The CCRB declined to disclose how many officers are facing misconduct charges until days after our story was published, when the agency revealed that only two officers so far have faced serious disciplinary charges.

## **Sweeping NYPD Reforms Proposed**

A series of 2020 ProPublica investigations revealed that New York Police Department commissioners have used their authority to overturn Civilian Complaint Review Board recommendations for punishments for police misconduct, as well as rulings by department hearing officers and even guilty pleas agreed to by police officers. We found that officers have also been promoted to senior positions in the NYPD despite lengthy records of civilian complaints alleging misconduct. In January, the New York City Council announced legislation that would reshape the NYPD and strip final disciplinary authority from the commissioner. In March, state legislators also introduced a bill to strip the NYPD commissioner of final authority over disciplinary determinations.

## **Prosecutor Issues Policy Against Charging Juveniles with Minor Offenses**

In July of last year, ProPublica Illinois partnered with the Detroit Free Press and Michigan's nonprofit newsroom Bridge to report on Grace, a 15-year-old who was sent to juvenile detention for not doing her online coursework during the pandemic. Our story brought national attention to her plight, including the trending #FreeGrace hashtag and local demonstrations, leading to her release that same month. In January, the Washtenaw County prosecutor cited ProPublica's reporting when announcing a new policy directive that instructs the prosecutor's office to avoid charging juveniles with minor offenses that are best resolved outside of the criminal justice system.



*Lisa Howze places flowers at the graver marker for her mother, Palestine, who died after her nursing home refused to send her to a hospital. (Cornell Watson)*

## **Lawsuit Challenges Nursing Home Liability Protections**

In January, ProPublica reported on hastily passed laws early in the pandemic meant to shield health care workers and nursing homes from lawsuits. North Carolina's legislation offered broader protections than most states, precluding individuals from seeking claims that weren't related to COVID-19 even in cases of gross negligence such as the death of a woman named Palestine Howze. Howze's family believes she died from an improperly treated bedsore and the nursing home's unwillingness to send her to the hospital for treatment. In the wake of ProPublica's reporting, the Howze family is pursuing a case against the Treyburn Rehabilitation Center in Durham. This is the first lawsuit in the nation to challenge liability shield laws.

## **New York AG Finds Nursing Home COVID Policy Contributed to Deaths**

Citing ProPublica's June 2020 investigation into the spread of COVID-19 within nursing homes, U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski joined other Republicans on the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis in urging the attorneys general of New York, California, Michigan, New Jersey and Pennsylvania to investigate these states' orders requiring long-term care facilities to accept COVID-19 patients and the impact of these policies on vulnerable nursing home populations. In January, the New York state attorney general



*Alice Stebbins, former executive director of the California Public Utilities Commission, outside her former workplace. (Andri Tambunan, special to ProPublica)*

released a report echoing ProPublica's early reporting that this policy had likely contributed to a significant loss of life. The report also raised questions about the true number of nursing home residents in the state who have died of COVID-19, estimating that the state undercounted thousands of deaths.

### **Audit Uncovers (More) Missing Money From California Regulatory Agency**

In December 2020, ProPublica Local Reporting Network partner Bay City News published a story about whistleblower Alice Stebbins, a former executive director of the California Public Utilities Commission, which regulates privately owned public utilities. Stebbins had been fired in 2020 after she reported \$200 million missing from accounts meant to fund programs for the state's blind, deaf and poor. Our reporting uncovered flaws in the State Personnel Board investigation that led to her dismissal. A February 2021 audit conducted by the California Department of Finance echoed ProPublica's reporting, finding CPUC's accounting to be "inaccurate and incomplete."

### **Dating Sites Invest in Background Checks for App Users**

In a 2019 partnership with Columbia Journalism Investigations, ProPublica reported on the use of online dating apps by sex offenders to attack other users, as well as on the billion-dollar industry's resistance to legislation that would improve the safety of its products. In March 2021, dating site company Match Group announced a seven-figure investment in Garbo, a nonprofit organization that helps dating app users conduct background checks, with plans to make it available to users in the future for an additional fee. Also in March, U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky introduced the Online Consumer Protection Act that would, among other things, require dating platforms to enforce their rules designed to prevent fraud and abuse and hold them accountable when they do not.

### **Sick Day Payouts for Cops Found to Be Illegal**

In February, the Asbury Park Press published an investigation in partnership with ProPublica's Local Reporting Network about how New Jersey police officers collect millions of dollars by exploiting their union contracts for additional retirement benefits beyond





*Seawalls protect homes in Oahu, Hawaii. (Darryl Oumi, special to Honolulu Star-Advertiser)*

generous pensions. Problems ranged from a retired officer who received a 14-karat gold filled badge worth \$7,000 to more common benefits like the ability to sell back unused sick days, systems of well-paid “extra duty” work and end-of-career payments. All of these perks come at a major cost to New Jersey taxpayers. As of 2019, municipalities across the state were in debt for at least \$492 million for unused sick time and vacation days. We reported that a state law, passed in 2010, meant to stop huge retirement payouts for unused sick days was not being followed. In March, New Jersey’s acting state comptroller released a report examining one town that deemed the types of payments reported by ProPublica as illegal. In a follow-up story, ProPublica identified 25 towns making such payments. Some said they would cease the practice and may require officers to repay the money.

### **State Audit Finds Officials Failed to Track Funds for Improving Jails**

In 2019, ProPublica and the Sacramento Bee, a ProPublica Local Reporting Network partner, published a series of investigations that exposed how California’s efforts to reduce the population of state prisons have led to overcrowded and dangerous, increasingly deadly conditions in its county jails. Shortly after our reporting, state Sen. Sydney Kamlager requested that the Auditor of the State of California conduct its own investigation. In March the auditor released its report, which found that the county commissions that monitor the California Board of State and Community Corrections failed to adequately track billions of dollars intended for improving county lockups and rehabilitating offenders.

### **Feds Investigate Lender That Sued Borrowers During Pandemic**

In 2020, ProPublica and the Texas Tribune investigated Oportun Inc., a Silicon Valley-based installment lender that caters to Latino immigrants, and found that it was continuing to sue borrowers even after they lost jobs because of the pandemic. In March 2021 we reported that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau launched a federal investigation of the company in response to our reporting.

### **Lawmakers Push Oversight for Overcharging Utility**

In October 2020, ProPublica Local Reporting Network partner the Richmond Times-Dispatch investigated why Virginia residents were paying the highest electricity bills in the country. They reported that the state’s largest utility, Dominion Energy, had influenced legislation that effectively hobbled the state agency responsible for regulating utilities. In January, a bipartisan group of Virginia lawmakers backed a legislative package that would restore authority to Virginia’s State Corporation Commission and potentially result in the return of millions of dollars of “over-earnings” to residents.

### **Congress Demands Answers on Meatpacking Industry’s COVID Deaths**

In 2020, ProPublica published a series showing that meat companies’ mismanagement of the pandemic, combined with the federal government’s failure to ensure that plants took appropriate precautions, have contributed to the pandemic’s dramatic toll on meatpacking workers and their communities. In February, the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis announced an investigation into JBS, Smithfield Foods and Tyson Foods, three of the nation’s largest meat companies, which had “refused to take basic precautions to protect their workers” and had “shown a callous disregard for workers’ health.” They are also scrutinizing the government’s shortcomings in protecting meatpacking workers.

### **Hawaii Legislature Moves to Change Policies That Erode Beaches**

In 2020, ProPublica published a series with the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, a Local Reporting Network partner, revealing how policymakers are undermining laws and regulations intended to protect the state’s critical beaches, which are eroding at an alarming



*Most of South Carolina's magistrate judges aren't lawyers, but their decisions can have lasting effects on the vulnerable people who come before them. (Franziska Barczyk)*

rate. In the multimedia project, the reporting team showed the destruction resulting from seawalls built by wealthy landowners, which has already wiped out nearly one quarter of the state's beaches. Citing ProPublica's reporting on the use of sandbags and draped heavy tarps by homeowners, in February the legislature introduced bills that would force their removal within three years under threat of significant fines.

### **Oregon Lawmakers Seek to Reverse Timber Tax Cuts**

In 2020, ProPublica Local Reporting Network partner Oregon Public Broadcasting joined with the Oregonian to investigate the timber industry, reporting on how the state's preferential treatment for wealthy corporations has had detrimental effects on both the local economy and the environment. Among other findings, the reporting team revealed that the tax-funded agency Oregon Forest Resources Institute

worked to discredit academic research and acted as a lobbying and public relations arm for the timber industry. In February, Oregon's lawmakers filed dozens of bills aimed at reversing decades-old timber tax cuts that deprived counties of billions of dollars, as well as eliminating the quasi-governmental Oregon Forest Resources Institute. This was the state's most consequential session for forest policy and will potentially funnel large sums of money back into local governments for schools, infrastructure and public safety needs that hadn't been adequately funded for years under the previous policies.

### **South Carolina Governor, Legislators Act to Reform Magistrate Judge System**

In November 2019, Charleston's Post and Courier, a Local Reporting Network partner, exposed how South Carolina's system for selecting magistrate judges is rife with politics and flawed oversight, providing fer-

tile ground for incompetence and corruption on the bench. The investigation found that magistrates, who handle hundreds of thousands of lower court cases a year, are often politically connected insiders, most of whom have never practiced law. In January, South Carolina lawmakers prioritized their scrutiny of local magistrate judges. More than a half-dozen pre-filed bipartisan bills targeting magistrate reforms received endorsements in interviews with key members of the 23-person state Senate Judiciary Committee, which would review any proposal before a floor vote. In addition, Gov. Henry McMaster included magistrate reform in his annual State of the State address, laying out a plan to require all magistrates to be practicing lawyers with a clean record.

### **Arkansas Pushes to Revoke Jail Time Statute for Falling Behind on Rent**

In October 2020, ProPublica and the Arkansas Non-profit News Network reported on a state law that effectively criminalizes poverty by allowing landlords to seek criminal charges, which can result in jail time, for tenants who fall even a single day behind on rent and do not vacate a property within 10 days. While other states paused evictions during the height of the pandemic in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's national moratorium on evictions, Arkansas continued to prosecute and evict tenants throughout the pandemic. Prompted by our reporting, in March state Rep. Nicole Clowney introduced a bill that would repeal the state's criminal "failure to vacate" statute. The bill faces considerable resistance from landlords whose cases are handled by local prosecutors, which allows them to avoid the cost of hiring attorneys for eviction proceedings in civil cases.

### **Youngstown, Ohio, Puts Company on Notice for Broken Promises**

In 2020, the Business Journal and ProPublica examined the use of financial incentives in Youngstown, Ohio. The city bet big on Chill-Can, promoted as the world's first self-chilling beverage can, giving the developer massive tax breaks and \$1.5 million to build a \$20 million campus. It also purchased and demolished the homes of roughly a dozen residents to make way for the plant. In exchange, the company said it would create hundreds of jobs, but four years later, no jobs have materialized. In March, city officials held a press conference and sent a letter to the developer and



*Larry Jegley, the prosecutor of Arkansas' Pulaski County, has stopped bringing criminal eviction cases against tenants who fall behind on rent. (Joshua Asante, special to ProPublica)*

its CEO, putting them on notice that they may have to repay the \$1.5 million in grant funding, lose their tax incentives and face potential litigation for defaulting on their lucrative development agreements.

### **Senate Committee Chair Demands Answers on Facebook Censorship**

In February, ProPublica investigated how tech giants like Facebook handle censorship requests made by authoritarian governments. We obtained internal emails showing that, in 2018, while Turkey was in the midst of a military offensive against Kurdish minorities in neighboring Syria, Turkish government officials requested that Facebook block posts from the People's Protection Units, a mostly Kurdish militia group. In stark contrast to Facebook's public stance on freedom of speech, the company ultimately sided with Turkey's demand to block the pages. In March, Sen. Ron Wyden, chair of the Senate Finance Committee, demanded that Mark Zuckerberg provide answers to questions about the company's decision-making policies, saying, "Facebook's decision to censor content raises serious questions about the company's commitment to values like free expression, particularly as authoritarian leaders around the world grow bolder in their efforts to silence criticism."

# What People Are Saying

We ask donors why they gave to ProPublica. Here's a sampling of recent answers.

*“The best, most consistent investigative journalism is happening at ProPublica. You write the stories that I need to read, about injustices needing correcting — and sometimes they actually get corrected! Other newspapers run a few Pulitzer Prize entries every year; you write them month after month.” —Betsy H.*

*“ProPublica has been doing excellent work reporting on the climate crisis and investigating those who are knowingly and actively making the climate crisis worse. I have found immense value in the climate migration series done in collaboration with The New York Times Magazine, as well as the investigations into the timber industry in Oregon. I encourage your team to continue pressing forward with investigating these critical issues.” —Jenny G.*

*“I donated because for the last few years ProPublica kept me sane. Whether it's a topic I know a lot about or one that's totally new to me, your articles are always impressively interesting and insightful. They make me want to live another life as an investigative journalist. Thank you for all you do to keep us honest.” —Deborah L.*

*“I teach big data ethics at the University of Washington, and I use your GitHub repositories as an example of how to do data-driven journalism and why to do it well.” —Jonathan M.*

*“I am a retired, blue collar pensioner. I am well educated. I want unbiased, independent, well written and relevant stories about the major issues in our society. ProPublica is among the very best sources I can find, and I have the time to look around. ProPublica is an organization worth supporting.” —Allen W.*

*“I began taking interest in ProPublica after reading about the Naval disaster published by ProPublica. After reading that, and making a point of looking for more of your work, it became apparent that this publication is not run of the mill, copycat or sensationalist. It takes a lot — courage, stamina, persistence, intelligence and the inclination toward quality — to get to the real details of the truth. For writers to pursue the thread of a potential story in this way, rather than merely meeting a publishing deadline, shows they have integrity and the support to make that happen.” —Lee G.*

# Recognition for Our Work

Much of our best work from last year has been honored in recent months.

Our investigation on **how the meatpacking industry ignored pandemic warnings**, exposing essential workers to COVID-19, won the George Polk Award in Journalism in the health reporting category, the Association of Health Care Journalists Award for business and the National Institute for Health Care Management General Circulation Journalism Award.

Our reporting on **racial disparities in diabetic amputations and kidney care** also won the George Polk Award in Journalism in the health reporting category, received the Association of Health Care Journalists Award for health policy and was a finalist for the National Institute for Health Care Management General Circulation Journalism Award.

ProPublica editor-in-chief Stephen Engelberg won the **Goldsmith Career Award for Excellence in Journalism**.

“**The NYPD Files**” won the John Jay/Harry Frank Guggenheim Award in Criminal Justice Reporting for series, the Nakkula Prize for Police Reporting (NYPD



*Our investigation provided a comprehensive look at meddling inside the CDC from a White House determined to prioritize President Trump’s message over public health. (Leonardo Santamaria, special to ProPublica)*

files) and was a finalist for the Investigative Reporters and Editors’ FOI Award.

Our story on a **New York State Supreme Court judge with early onset Alzheimer’s** won the Meyer “Mike” Berger Award.

“**Unheard**,” a series with the Anchorage Daily New on Alaskan sexual assault survivors, won the

Ancil Payne Award for Ethics in Journalism, was a finalist for the Anthony Shadid Award for Journalism Ethics and received honorable mention for the National Press Photographers Association’s Best of Photojournalism Award in the innovation category.

“**Inside the Fall of the CDC**” won the Association of Health

Care Journalists Award for investigative and received honorable mention from the White House Correspondents' Association Katharine Graham Award for Courage and Accountability.

Our series on **climate migration**, co-published with the New York Times Magazine, won the Overseas Press Club Whitman Bassow Award for international environmental issues.

Reporting by the Connecticut Mirror, a ProPublica Local Reporting Network partner, on **the connection between housing and school segregation** won the National Award for Education Reporting in the investigative category and a New England Newspaper & Press Association Award for investigative/enterprise.

Our **video detailing how COVID-19 killed so many young Black men** won the National Press Photographers Association's Best of Photojournalism Award in the category of race and identity.

Our **video on the coronavirus in nursing homes** won the National Press Photographers Association's Best of Photojournalism Awards in the pandemic category.

ProPublica Local Reporting Network partner New Mexico In Depth's reporting on an **Albuquerque hospital where pregnant Native women were singled out for COVID-19 testing** and separated from their newborns after delivery won the SPJ Top of the Rockies contest in the public service reporting category.

A collaboration between ProPublica, New Mexico In Depth and the News & Observer on **how nursing homes became coronavirus hot spots** won the SPJ Top of the Rockies contest in the pandemic reporting category.

The Richmond Times Dispatch won the Virginia Press Association award for investigative reporting for a Local Reporting Network project about a **utility company's lobbying efforts against legislation meant to lower residents' electric bills**.

Our reporting on **mismanagement of federal COVID-19 contracts** was a finalist for the Scripps Howard National Journalism Awards in the excellence in business/financial reporting category.

Our video "**Deadly Restraint: How a Man in Psychiatric Crisis Died in Custody**" won third place in the Pictures of the Year International competition for documentary news reporting and received honorable mention in the National Press Photographers Association's Best of Photojournalism Awards in the investigative edit category.

A series of stories by ProPublica and the Chicago Tribune examining **how the pandemic exposed inequities in Illinois education** was a finalist for the National Award for Education Reporting in the news (large newsroom) category.

Our investigation revealing how the **child car seat maker**

**Evenflo put profits over child safety** was a finalist for the Selden Ring Award for investigative reporting.

Our reporting about "Grace," a **15-year-old who was jailed for not doing her online schoolwork**, was a finalist for the Taylor Family Award for Fairness in Journalism.

"**State of Denial**," an Arizona Daily Star investigation with the ProPublica Local Reporting Network into Arizona's Division of Developmental Disabilities, was a finalist for the Anthony Shadid Award for Journalism Ethics.

An investigation by ProPublica Local Reporting Network partner Maine Monitor into **how Maine handles legal services for the poor** was a finalist for the American Bar Association Silver Gavel Award for multimedia.

Our **news applications and data visualizations** won 19 honors from the Society for News Design. Our story with the Honolulu Star-Advertiser on Hawaii's disappearing beaches won a Bronze Medal for page design, and our project on police use of force on protesters won a Bronze Medal for public service. We were recognized with SND Awards of Excellence in the categories of climate change, art direction, page design, infographics, illustrations, use of data, public service, and the individual portfolios of Lena Groeger, Ash Ngu, Al Shaw and Moiz Syed.

## ProPublica Partners, January–April, 2021

- Advocate [Baton Rouge/  
New Orleans]
- AL.com
- Anchorage Daily News
- Arizona Daily Star
- Arkansas Nonprofit Network
- Asbury Park Press [NJ]
- Bay City News [CA]
- Chicago Tribune
- The City
- Desert Sun [Palm Springs, CA]
- Frontline
- The Frontier [Oklahoma]
- Georgia Health News
- Honolulu Star-Advertiser
- Kansas City Star
- Maine Monitor
- Miami Herald
- **MIT Technology Review**
- MLK50: Justice Through  
Journalism [Memphis]
- Mountain State Spotlight [WV]
- NBC News
- New Mexico In Depth
- News & Observer [Raleigh, NC]
- New Yorker
- New York Times
- Oregonian
- Oregon Public Broadcasting
- **Palm Beach Post**
- Philadelphia Inquirer
- Post and Courier  
[Charleston, SC]
- The Public’s Radio  
[Rhode Island]
- Richmond Times-Dispatch
- Sacramento Bee
- St. Louis Post-Dispatch
- **Spotlight PA**
- Texas Tribune
- Washington Post
- WNYC
- Youngstown Business Journal

*New partners marked in **bold**.*

## ProPublica By the Numbers

<b>9,400,000*</b>	Page views on ProPublica platforms per month on average	<b>DOWN 10%</b>	vs. 2020
<b>5,500,000</b>	Off-platform pages viewed on Apple News, Microsoft News, Google News and SmartNews per month on average	<b>DOWN 48%</b>	vs. 2020
<b>3,900,000</b>	Unique visitors to ProPublica.org per month on average	<b>DOWN 48%</b>	vs. 2020
<b>191,000</b>	Pages republished under Creative Commons per month on average	<b>DOWN 77%</b>	vs. 2020
<b>420,000</b>	Newsletter subscribers	<b>UP 6%</b>	since December
<b>921,000</b>	Twitter followers	<b>UP 2%</b>	since December
<b>462,000</b>	Facebook followers	<b>FLAT</b>	since December
<b>88,000</b>	Instagram followers		
<b>16,000+</b>	Donors		

*\* Note: views on platform in March and April 2020 were up 99% over 2019; off platform growth was even greater.*