

2025

**ANNUAL IMPACT
REPORT**

A Black-led, community-focused, free nonprofit newspaper serving Baltimore — and our strongest year of reporting yet.



Baltimore Beat is a newspaper for the city we love — not the city as others imagine it. This year we kept doing what matters: asking hard questions, telling the stories that get missed, and showing up free, in print, on the corner.

— LISA SNOWDEN, PUBLISHER



THE BEAT AT A GLANCE

Baltimore Beat is a nonprofit newsroom with no paywalls, ever. We publish online as stories break and print biweekly, distributing across every quadrant of the city.

Civic information is a public good. People make better decisions about their lives, their neighborhoods and their city when they have access to real local news. That's why everything we publish is free.

We cover arts, culture, criminal justice, education, housing and the political decisions shaping Baltimore. Our reporters are from here and write for the people who live here.

In 2025, our reach doubled and our reporting produced real accountability at city hall and in state agencies.

INFORMATION ABOUT, BY & FOR BALTIMORE.

MEASURED IMPACT

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

417

STORIES PUBLISHED

Across print & digital

20,000

PAPERS PRINTED BIWEEKLY

Up from 10,000 in 2024

180+

DISTRIBUTION POINTS

In every quadrant of the city

2.1M

WEBSITE PAGEVIEWS

All-time high

7

FULL & PART-TIME STAFF

3 full-time, 4 part-time (end of 2025)

\$0

COST TO READERS

Free, forever

SNEAK PEEK • JAN 1 - MAY 4

2026 VS. 2025, YEAR-TO-DATE

+31%

INDIVIDUAL DONOR REVENUE

\$37,250 vs. \$28,481

+100%

ONE-TIME GIVING DOUBLED

\$10,240 vs. \$5,108

\$7,216

MONTHLY RECURRING REVENUE

+16% year over year

602

ACTIVE RECURRING DONORS

+17% year over year

+3,772

NEW NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

In just over four months (Jan – May 2026)

2,312

TOTAL DONATIONS

+19% year over year

SIX IMPORTANT STORIES

*The reporting that defined our year — investigations that moved agencies,
and community stories no other Baltimore outlet covered.*

01 ACCOUNTABILITY

LEADER OF NORTH AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT HAS A HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS. FORMER EMPLOYEES SAY HIS MISTREATMENT CONTINUES

What began as an article about multiple women's allegations of abuse, retaliation, and stalking quickly turned into a larger investigation, which uncovered years of wrongdoing and abuse of power.

THE REVELATION

Baltimore Beat's reporting surfaced credible allegations against a director of a state agency — both from sources who came to us with their stories and from the public record.

After ignoring internal reports of misconduct for months, government officials quickly moved to begin an investigation shortly after our first story published. The report on that investigation was leaked to us, a clear signal of the trust we had built through our persistent reporting.

IMPACT: STATE AGENCY ACTION • ONGOING COVERAGE



CREDIT: PATRICK SIEBERT / GOVERNOR WES MOORE'S OFFICE

02 PUBLIC HEALTH

IN BALTIMORE'S DRUG WAR, PUBLIC SAFETY COMES BEFORE PUBLIC HEALTH – AND NEARLY EVERYONE IMPACTED IS BLACK

A data-driven look at who carries the cost of drug enforcement in a city still treating overdose as a crime.

THE INVESTIGATION

This series required extensive data analysis of more than 70,000 arrest records alongside fatal overdose data — both dating back more than a decade.

Our reporting combined arrest records, public health data, and first-person accounts to show how enforcement choices fall overwhelmingly on Black residents.

THE READERSHIP

The piece became one of the year's most-read investigations and highlighted the city's failures to address drug use without interventions from the police or criminal justice system.

IMPACT: CITED IN POLICY HEARINGS • USED IN HARM-REDUCTION CURRICULUM



CREDIT: DE' SHAUN

03 POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

"THE SYSTEM FAILED HER SON": THE MOTHER OF DONTAE MELTON JR., WHO DIED IN POLICE CUSTODY, TELLS HER STORY

A portrait of grief, advocacy, and a family still looking for answers.

THE REPORTING

Our reporting on Melton's death and other police killings in summer 2025 looked closely at the police department's policies around crisis response — and how they had failed to meet their self-imposed goals for officer training and protocols on responding to behavioral health crises.

THE IMPACT

When other outlets had moved on, the Beat stayed with the family and kept eyes on the city's systemic failures in responding to people experiencing behavioral health crises.

IMPACT: CONTINUED COVERAGE • FAMILY ADVOCACY SUPPORT



CREDIT: COURTESY OF ELESHEIA GOODE

04 PUBLIC HEALTH

THE REC CENTER AS OASIS

We spoke with some of the city's celebrated and unsung heroes: the rec center employees pouring into and building up young people.

THE REPORTING

Many of them had grown up in the city's rec centers and chose their career paths because of the people who supported them.

"The recs were an extension of our family. That's what has been taken away today for kids that don't have access like we had."

— BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG, FORMER MAYOR OF BALTIMORE

IMPACT: THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTMENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE



CREDIT: CHRISTIAN THOMAS

05 ARTS & CULTURE

HOME OF THE REALEST: MULLYMANIA

In addition to launching Best Beats, a music column highlighting new releases from local artists, we wrote about local legends and traced their musical upbringing through the city.

THE STORY

"Mullyman's roots run deep in a musical West Baltimore family. Like any true Baltimorean, he doesn't hesitate to let you know where he's from — the intersection of Bentalou and Riggs. The cover of Mullymania shows an image of that exact corner behind him... His grandfather, Cornell Muldrow, was a noted jazz pianist."

IMPACT: LOCAL MUSIC COVERAGE • NEW "BEST BEATS" COLUMN LAUNCHED



CREDIT: CHRISTIAN THOMAS

06 HISTORY

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING MEMORY: BALTIMORE'S BLACK ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS ARE STILL STANDING TALL

Amid federal funding cuts trying to erase Black history and historians, we spoke with leaders of several local institutions about the importance of their work and their dedication to preservation.

THE REPORTING

When protecting Black art, history, and culture is in their name, museums and archives can't run from who they are when that work comes under fire — nor do they want to.

"It's so important to preserve memory... It is very easy to rewrite a story when the only people who know the truth are dead. If you don't have archives, if you don't have collections, if you don't have the griots and the storytellers, who is going to tell the truth?"

— TERRI LEE FREEMAN, REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM

IMPACT: STORYTELLING AND HISTORY



CREDIT: FAITH SPICER

★ YEAR THREE • BLOCK PARTY

SUMMER JAM.

We hosted our third-annual Summer Jam party — a free, all-ages block-party celebration of the paper, our readers, and the communities who keep us going.

Partnering with Baltimore organizations who share our values turned the event into a real cross-section of the city in motion.

111

ATTENDEES

3

PARTNER
ORGS

III

ANNUAL
EDITION

PARTNERS: NAMI BALTIMORE • CLLCTIVLY • THE REAL NEWS NETWORK



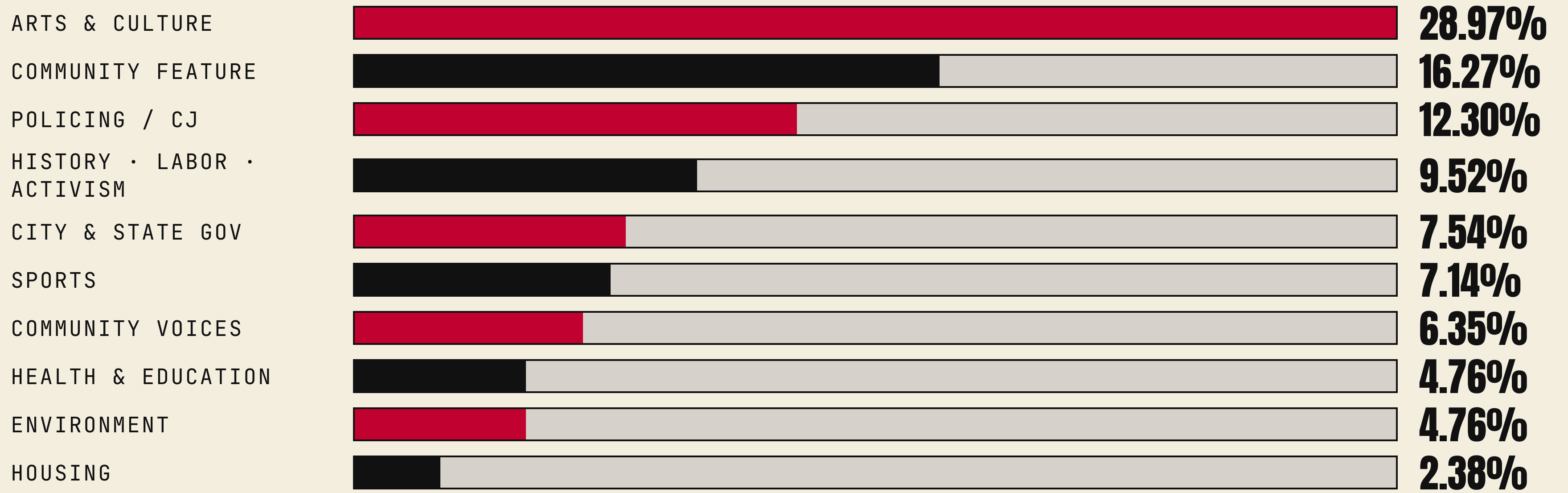


I wanted [Lisa Snowden], a Black woman who is an experienced journalist, to succeed in running and maintaining a newspaper that represents the everyday people in Baltimore.

— CHARLENE, A BALTIMORE BEAT SUPPORTER

EDITORIAL MIX

COVERAGE AREAS



252 stories total, excluding calendars, crosswords, and tarotscopes. Most other outlets run op-eds from people in positions of power; ours center community members.

WHAT WE PULLED OFF

MILESTONES & COMMUNITY

EDITORIAL MILESTONES

- 01** Published investigative stories that put pressure on local officials and prompted state agency action.
- 02** Launched *Best Beats*, a music column highlighting new releases from local artists.
- 03** Launched *Busy in Baltimore*, a bi-weekly events rundown that grew our email subscriber base.

OFF THE PAGE, ON THE BLOCK

12

COMMUNITY EVENTS HOSTED

Town halls, listening sessions, and newsroom open houses.

850+

ATTENDEES IN PERSON

Residents, organizers, and elected officials in the same room.

6

YOUNG JOURNALISTS MENTORED

Through our high-school and HBCU reporting fellowships.

HOW WE WORK

OUR PHILOSOPHY

01 ROOTED IN BALTIMORE

We fill the void left by traditional media by reporting on Baltimore's underrepresented communities. Our team empowers local writers through direct mentorship, ensuring they gain the professional skills other newsrooms simply don't provide.

03 ON THE GROUND

We show up in person. Our reporters live here, and our stories are rooted in neighborhoods, not assignments.

05 CRAFT

We believe good writing, good design, and a well-made object are themselves a form of respect.

02 FREE & COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED

No paywall. No billionaire owner. The paper you pick up is the paper we make — no one's commercial interests shape it.

04 ACCOUNTABILITY

We ask the questions that institutions wish no one would. Then we keep asking them.

06 LONGEVITY

We're building an institution, not a moment. Our five-year track record is the start.

HONORS

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

2025 • Second Place

PUBLIC SERVICE REPORTING AWARD

Maryland-DC-Delaware Press Association

2025 • Winner

MEDIA AWARD

Baltimore Crown Awards

2025 • Recognized

HAND IN HAND PRIZE - \$25,000

For meaningfully engaging in the ecosystem of Black-led social change in Greater Baltimore.

2025 • Feature

BEST OUTREACH

Baltimore Magazine's Best of Baltimore Awards

SUPPORT

GRANT PARTNERS

Our work is made possible by support from national foundations investing in independent, community-rooted journalism.

THE PIVOT FUND

KNIGHT FOUNDATION

FORD FOUNDATION

DEMOCRACY FUND

PRESS FORWARD

LILLIAN HOLOFCENER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION

MEDIA TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGE.

Publisher and CEO **Lisa Snowden** was accepted into the 2026 cohort of the Media Transformation Challenge.

The fellowship program brings together journalism executives from across the industry and helps them hone problem-solving and leadership skills to lead this industry into the future.

2026
COHORT YEAR

1
BEAT PUBLISHER

FELLOW: LISA SNOWDEN • CEO & PUBLISHER,
BALTIMORE BEAT



CREDIT: MEDIA TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGE

THE PEOPLE

CEO & PUBLISHER

LISA SNOWDEN

01

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

SANYA KAMIDI

02

PHOTO EDITOR

J.M. GIORDANO

03

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

BAYNARD WOODS

04

LAYOUT EDITOR

JOCELYN DOMBROSKI

05

THE YEAR AHEAD

LOOKING TO 2026

01 EXPAND OUR EDITORIAL REACH

Invest in social-media journalists to help explain the important reporting we do and further expand our reach into the community.

03 EXPAND DISTRIBUTION

Our Beat Boxes are valuable touchpoints where community members can find news — and leave water bottles, drug-testing strips, or snacks for others. Funding helps maintain and replace boxes as needed.

05 LAUNCH OUR LEGACY GIVING CAMPAIGN

Invite long-time readers and supporters to plan gifts that sustain the Beat for the next generation.

02 DEEPEN INVESTIGATIONS

Launch a dedicated investigative team funded by a new multi-year grant.

04 INVEST IN YOUNG JOURNALISTS

For many of our contributors, this is their first time writing for a news outlet. We want to invest in training to help them grow in this profession.

06 KEEP SHOWING UP

Free. On the corner. In the neighborhoods. No matter what.

SUPPORT THE BEAT.



SCAN TO GIVE

Give

One-time or recurring at baltimorebeat.com/donate.
Every gift is tax-deductible.

[BALTIMOREBEAT.COM](https://baltimorebeat.com)

Share

Hand this paper to someone. Forward a story. Tell
your people where to find us.

[BIT.LY/THEBEATIMPACT](https://bit.ly/thebeatimpact)

Read

Pick one up at your corner store. Sign up for our free
newsletter.