



2022 RETROSPECTIVE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Irving Washington

ONA'S MISSION IS TO

*inspire and support innovation
and excellence in digital journalism*

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Thank you, Irving Washington

Get involved in ONA's work and mission in 2023

Acknowledgments

About the 2022 Retrospective

The Online News Association (ONA) is on a mission to inspire and support innovation and excellence in digital journalism. This retrospective tells the story of the work and impact we accomplished in 2022.

The pandemic continues to impact how we convene, work, learn and rest, but we were thrilled to be able to safely and effectively gather together again.

The team at ONA spent the year delivering programs that responded to the needs of our community members during a time of continued uncertainty and change. Amazing partners collaborated on virtual and in-person offerings and trusted us with new ways of doing things. And throughout the year, ONA members stepped up to support our mission.

In 2022 we saw more than 5,200 people engage in programs beyond the annual membership, including cohorts, volunteer opportunities and fellowships and events, including the return of our in-person annual event, the Online News Association Conference (ONA22), held in Los Angeles in September. Our activities focused on:

- Innovation training in ONA's signature way
- Advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the digital journalism industry
- Meaningful networking opportunities and connections
- Building skills to forecast and navigate industry trends
- Expanding career development resources

We were also pleased to honor finalists and winners in the 2022 Online Journalism Awards each day of ONA22, including a ceremony closing out the convening. From facilitating workshops on newsletter innovation and fighting online harassment to swapping ideas around emerging social media platforms and volunteering to make our largest hybrid event in three years a success — thank you for supporting us in 2022. We look forward to seeing how you get involved in 2023. ■

Highlights by the Numbers



5,216

People who engaged with ONA programs beyond annual membership, including cohorts, volunteer opportunities, fellowships and events

2,872

People who received training through ONA's programs



37%

Program participants who contributed to feedback surveys (Target: 20%)

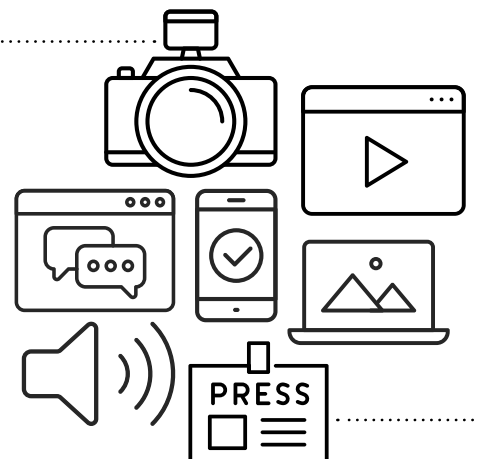


78%

Survey respondents who reported a valuable connection made at a meetup or event (Target: 75%)

96%

Survey respondents who reported an ONA training will be immediately impactful on their work (Target: 75%)



Innovation Training and Community Building



01

ONA22: Together again



The 2022 [Online News Association Conference](#) (ONA22) held Sept. 21–24 in Los Angeles, delivered an array of resources for the broader journalism community.

Podcasts, recordings from sponsored sessions, notes, photos and stories by the ONA22 Student Newsroom are all available for anyone to access.

Over four days, the annual conference gathered nearly 2,000 participants, with about 82% of attendees joining in person and the rest connecting through our virtual conference platform.





The community engaged in wide ranging discussions across key areas of innovation in journalism, including:

- Audience development and metrics
- Emerging technology
- Innovative news storytelling
- Leadership and culture
- Product and revenue strategies

We hosted a diverse group of nearly 250 speakers to present at 87 conference sessions. These educational and sponsored learning opportunities ranged in scale from small-table information sharing to ballroom-filling keynotes, and in complexity from lean-back listening experiences to intensive workshops.

More than 70 sponsors helped to bring the conference to life and hosted over two dozen in-person and virtual networking events. Sponsors included media organizations, nonprofits and foundations, technology companies and educational institutions. ■

As part of the annual conference survey, respondents shared what they took away from their time at ONA22:

92%

Making brand new connections

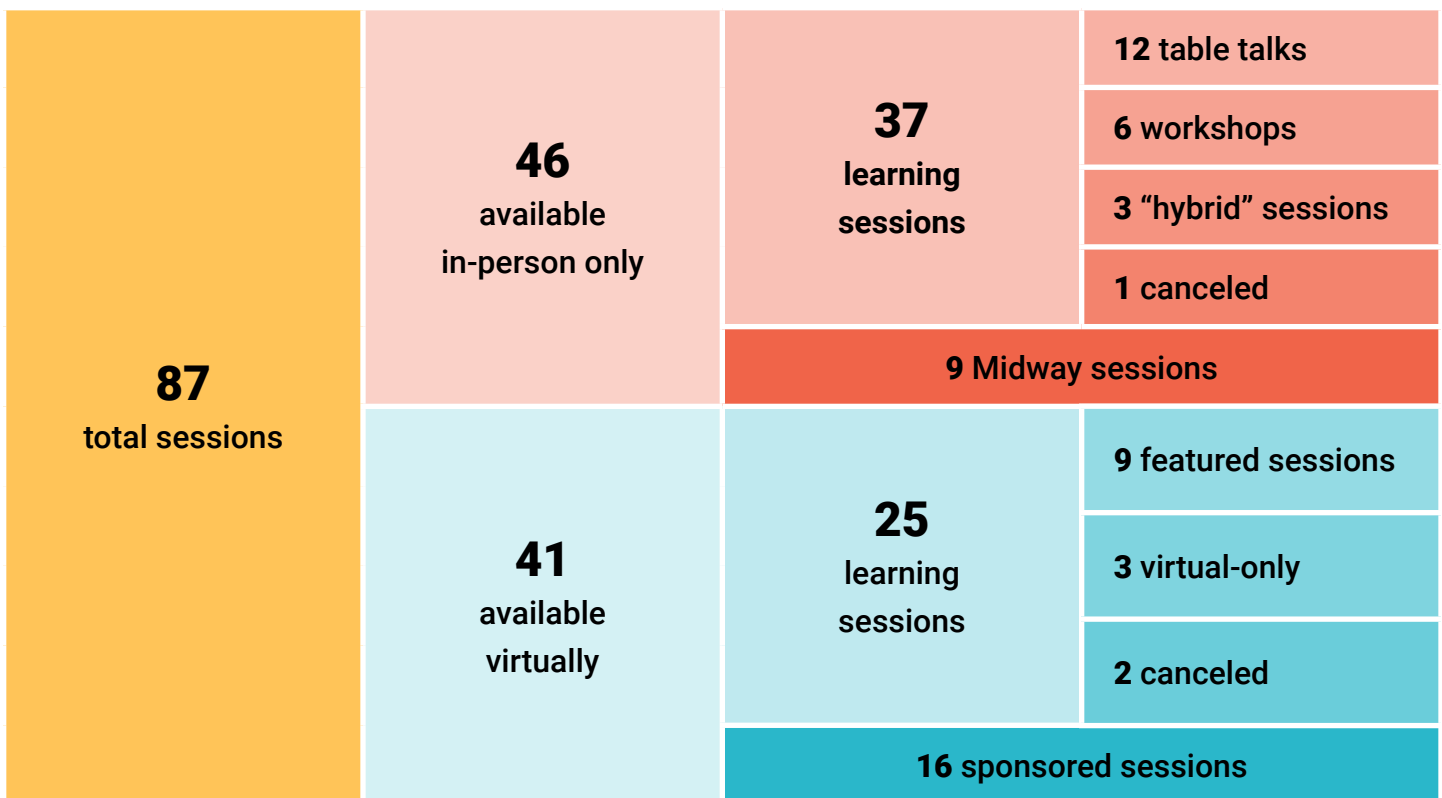
76%

Reconnecting to colleagues they know

91%

Reporting that training will be immediately impactful in their work

SESSION BREAKDOWN



PRESENTER DEMOGRAPHICS

Women	67%	Local newsroom	40%
LGBTQ+	22%	International	13%
Latinx	15%	Host state	24%
Presenters who are people of color	38%	Non-coastal U.S. newsrooms	41%

Networking events



ONA continued gathering community members who are working in similar roles and tackling similar problems through virtual networking events.

In March, we partnered with the News Product Alliance to host a meetup for those looking to move into a [news product role](#), featuring wisdom and tips from **Mandy Jenkins**, Head of Product at Factual, and **Tony Elkins**, Product Director at Gannett. In August, we invited newsletter producers, editors and strategists to join us for an idea swap hosted with ONA board member **Elana Zak**, Head of Newsletters at Politico.

Community members also hosted in-person and virtual networking events through [ONA Local](#), our volunteer-led geographic meetup program. We saw groups in different regions get together throughout the year, including in Spain, Philadelphia, Atlanta, San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Events touched on product management, freelancing, audience engagement and more.

And to close out 2022, ONA co-hosted a meetup with the American Press Institute in December titled “Beyond Twitter and Meta: What’s next for news on social media?” This robust conversation centered around what’s next as these tech companies pull back from journalism. ■

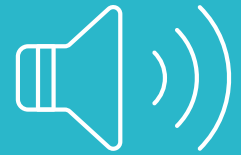
ONA Career Day



ONA hosted its first stand-alone Career Day in March connecting recruiters with people seeking new opportunities, and providing educational offerings about both recruiting and career development.

The event saw more than 500 attendees and over 20 recruiting organizations. As part of the programming, we offered a resume database for recruiters and a resume help desk for attendees exploring their next career moves. Nearly 300 people added their resumes to the database, and 60 people took advantage of the help desk's tailored support. ■

ONA on Air



The volunteer [ONA22 Audio Team](#) produced a new season of the [ONA on Air podcast](#), capturing stories, inspiration and learning highlights from our week at the annual conference in Los Angeles.

Charlotte Norsworthy, Editorial Director for The Red & Black, and **Kim Fox**, Professor of Practice, American University in Cairo, led the team as co-chairs. ■

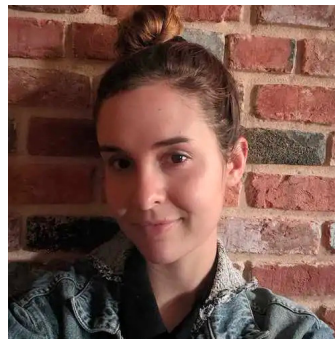
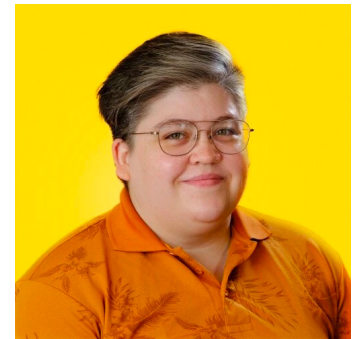
Fellowships for emerging journalism talent



2022 MJ Bear Fellowship

MJ Bear Fellowship Chairperson **Amy Eisman** retired from her role this year and nominated 2011 fellow **Laura Amico** as the new chair. With Laura's guidance, the committee selected six journalists under age 30 who are pushing digital innovation to participate in the 2022 fellowship, which includes attendance to the annual conference, a three-year ONA membership and participation in workshops and panel discussions tailored to the group's goals and projects. Clockwise from top left:

- **Alex Castro**, Senior Social Media Producer, GMA Network
- **Caitlin Hernández**, Southern California Public Radio
- **Jessica Lee**, Senior Assignments Editor, Snopes
- **Myrka Moreno**, Audience Engagement Producer, The 19th
- **Tazeen Pathan**, Data Consultant, Freelancer
- **Claire Thompson**, Associate Editor, Grist ■





HBCU Digital Media Fellowship at ONA22

Five students were selected to participate in the HBCU Digital Media Fellowship. They worked with lead mentor **Michael Grant** to produce content focused on product thinking. All fellows received complimentary ONA memberships and all-access passes to ONA22, where they had the opportunity to connect with industry leaders and peers.

- **Briana Alvarado**, Howard University
- **Leah Clark**, Xavier University of Louisiana
- **Kassidy Jack**, Clark Atlanta University
- **Brian Jeffries**, Morgan State University
- **Kailyn Rhone**, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University ■

Student Newsroom and Innovation Lab



Eighteen mentors volunteered to work with 20 undergraduate and graduate school students in the Student Newsroom and Innovation Lab, which returned to an in-person format for the first time since 2019.

The ONA22 newsroom produced over [30 stories](#), developed a TikTok strategy to cover the conference and networked with sponsors and partners such as Content Authenticity Initiative, StyleB, Google, Microsoft and The Atlanta Journal Constitution. Students also connected with the MJ Bear Fellows, HBCU Fellows and other students and new professionals throughout the conference week. ■

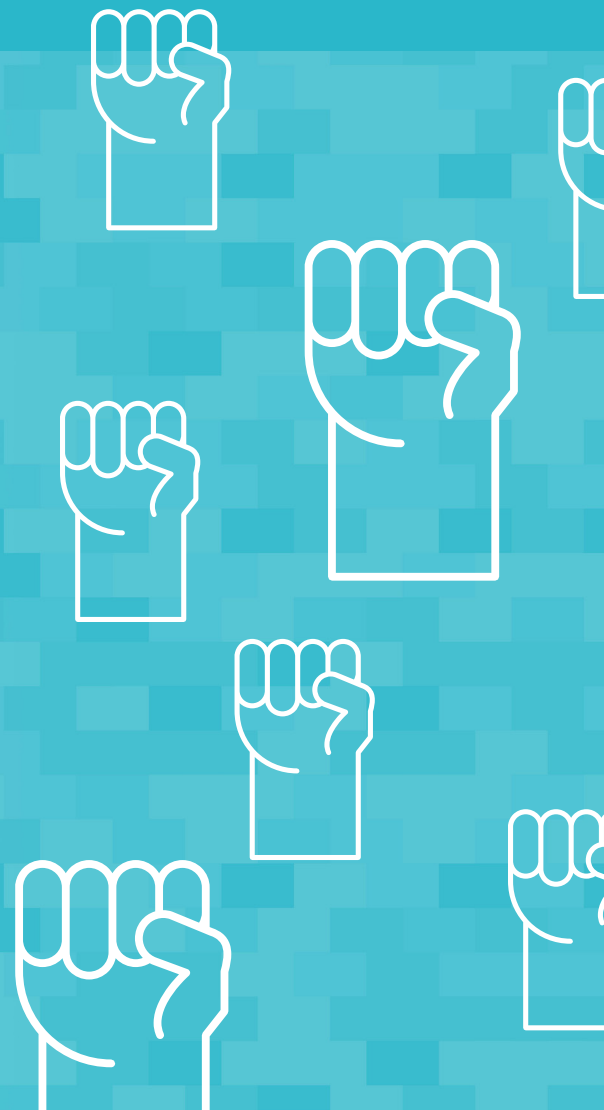


“This experience was one I will never forget. I met journalists from publications I grew up reading with whom I now stay in contact, learned so many new skills, and have new clips under my belt. I recommend everyone apply to these opportunities, even if you don’t think you have much of a chance getting accepted — you may be surprised by your own abilities.”

— Gabby Allen, American University

Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Journalism

02



Promoting pay equity



ONA led a three-part series of community conversations on pay transparency in partnership with OpenNews and The Maynard Institute for Journalism Education.

ONA Program Coordinator **Diana López** and travel journalist **Victoria Walker** kicked off the series during the SRCCON 2022 conference by leading a session on the most common excuses to not implement transparency around pay and compensation — and how to respond. Fourteen journalists contributed to a [playbook of comebacks for the pay transparency naysayers](#).

Maynard Institute Co-Executive Director **Martin Reynolds** followed up in conversation with Media 2070's **Alicia Bell** and **Diamond Hardiman**. Earlier in the year, Media 2070 had exposed the daily struggle for fair wages through their documentary on Black journalist Elizabeth Montgomery, who struggled to “pay rent or buy groceries” on the salary she received working for a major U.S. newsroom.

The series concluded with a panel discussion at ONA22 moderated by ONA's **Diana López** and Open News Executive Director **Erika Owens**. The session highlighted the personal experiences of journalists **Carrington Tatum** and **Elizabeth Montgomery** as they have sought equitable pay within an inequitable system. ■



The Pipeline Isn't the Problem



Leading up to ONA Career Day, we worked with Media Bridge Partners' Hannah Wise and John Davidow to offer a workshop for recruiters on effective and equitable hiring practices.

The session aimed to get beyond pointing to the "pipeline problem," an excuse for organizations who haven't developed strong, diverse candidate pools, and to examine the journalism industry's hiring practices through the lens of inclusivity, diversity and belonging.

Participants created a list of hiring do's and don'ts during the session to take back to their own newsrooms and teams, and we shared [curated resources and collaborative notes](#) with Career Day attendees and the broader journalism community. ■

Expanding access to conference registration



The annual conference is ONA's primary fundraiser that allows us to carry out our mission. We rely on the proceeds to provide free learning and networking events, fellowships, training for local organizers, toolkits and other actionable resources all year.

In 2022, we adjusted our approach to conference registration to make it more accessible to organizations with fewer resources while still meeting our fundraising goals. We introduced tiered registration pricing, with the lowest rates offered to freelancers and people representing smaller organizations that have 50 or fewer employees. Plus, making the conference a fully hybrid experience allowed us to introduce virtual-only passes as an option for attendees – as well as sponsors – unable to join the event in Los Angeles but wanting to connect, learn and network with the community.

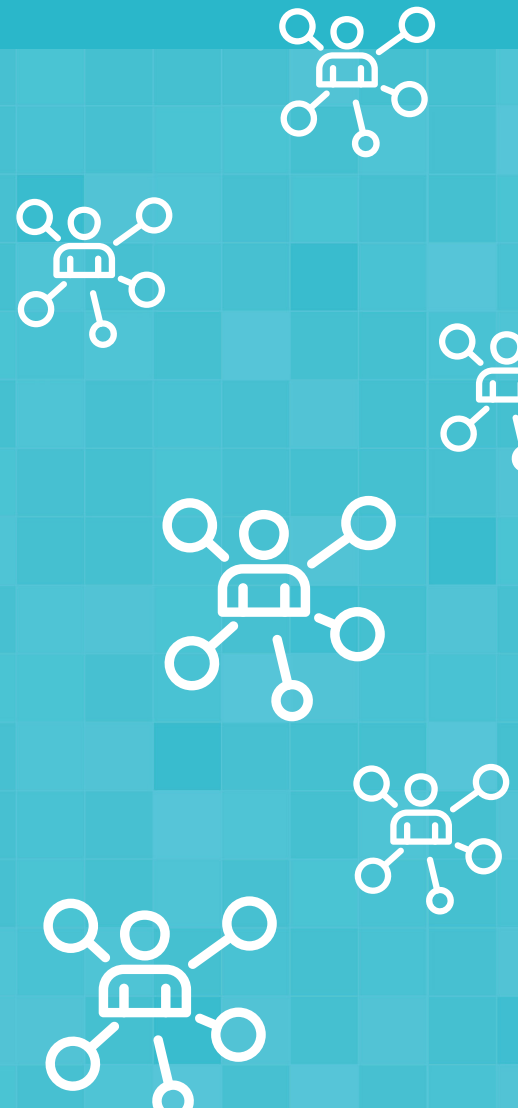
We also cultivated more partnerships to expand scholarship offerings. In total, we awarded 156 scholarships that provided complimentary registration, and all recipients could choose whether to attend ONA22 in person or virtually.

We offered five types of scholarships:



Boosting Women's Leadership in Journalism

03



Women's Leadership Accelerator



The 2022 Women's Leadership Accelerator brought 26 exceptional women journalism leaders together for a year of coaching, learning, connection and development.

The accelerator continues to be an engine for change in the industry. Selected from more than 200 applicants, this year's cohort members have already secured new roles, led workshops and sessions at ONA22 and other major journalism conferences and garnered international recognition. They also have consistently supported each other through both accomplishments and challenges — a testament to our commitment to nurture meaningful connections and career-long support for cohort members and the broader network of accelerator alums.

“I cannot recommend this program enough. I've found my people, my brainstormers, and the most brilliant, empathetic women in the cohort via this fabulous program by ONA.”

**— Sapna Satagopan,
Senior Product Director,
CalMatters**





“It was one of the most amazing experiences I’ve had in my career. I’ve been supercharged by the amazing women that mentored us and the extraordinary fellow mentees.”

– **Gabriela Torres**,
Head of BBC World
Service Social
Team, BBC

In addition to off-the-record discussions and coaching with some of the most esteemed senior leaders working in the industry today, the cohort received complimentary registration to ONA22, direct access to ONA Career Day, a workshop on leading for introverts and optional additional one-on-one coaching between formal gatherings as part of their cohort experience. ■

“Being a part of ONA’s Women’s Leadership Accelerator was one of the best things I’ve done for myself professionally in a very long time. The year-long process connected me to women across the world and I was able to learn from an amazing group of journalists. The ONA annual conference was the icing on the cake. I returned to my newsroom refreshed and equipped with leadership skills.”

– **Donesha Aldridge**, Executive Producer of Digital Content, WXIA 11Alive

Online Journalism Awards

04



Online Journalism Awards



The 2022 Online Journalism Awards (OJAs) received more than 1,000 entries across 23 award categories. The OJAs expanded opportunities for recognition this year by introducing three new awards: Topical Reporting: Olympics and Paralympics Coverage, Excellence in Social Media Engagement and the 3M Truth in Science Award.

The OJAs proudly presented a total of \$57,000 to 12 projects thanks to sponsors SmartNews, The University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications, 3M, The University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and McKinsey Publishing.

Over 200 volunteers completed a two-step review process, recognizing 165 finalist projects around the world and a record number of 54 OJAs awarded. Thank you, volunteers!



ONA also bestowed four special awards to journalists whose work and dedication to the industry has created a long-lasting impact on the community.

- **S. Mitra Kalita**, Co-Founder of URL Media and Co-Founder of Epicenter-NYC, for the [Impact Award](#)
- **Michelle Johnson**, Boston University Associate Professor of the Practice Emerita, for the [Rich Jaroslovsky Founder Award](#)
- **Serhii Korovainyi**, a photojournalist based in Kyiv, Ukraine, for the [James Foley Award for Conflict Reporting](#)
- **Manori Wijesekera**, Training Manager at Global Press, for the [ONA Community Award](#)



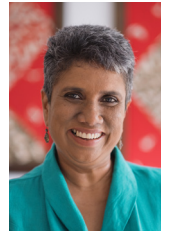
S. Mitra Kalita



Michelle Johnson



Serhii Korovainyi



Manori Wijesekera

Winners for the 2022 OJAs and ONA's special awards were honored through video announcements and in person during a ceremony at ONA's annual conference (ONA22) in Los Angeles. The 2022 OJAs banquet and ceremony, generously sponsored by Andscape, marked our first large-scale in-person awards celebration since 2019.

ANDSCAPE



Expanding the Ecosystem of Journalism Support Organizations



05

Capacity support to kickstart The Pivot Fund's mission



ONA established a [fiscal sponsor relationship with The Pivot Fund](#) to help kickstart their mission.

The Pivot Fund is a new venture philanthropy organization that aims to invest \$500 million in independent, nonpartisan community news outlets led by Black, Indigenous and other journalists of color. It was founded by **Tracie Powell**, a longtime ONA member and a member of the inaugural cohort of the Women's Leadership Accelerator, formerly known as the Leadership Academy for Women in Digital Media.

With ONA's expertise in financial management, grants administration and consulting, The Pivot Fund awarded \$2 million (combined cash support and wrap-around services) in capacity building grants to seven Georgia-based news organizations. The team identified the initial grantees by asking communities of color where they found reliable information. "We start with the community first, and that leads you to the journalism," said Tracie Powell. "It's a different approach than most funders."



Tracie Powell

Inaugural cohort of Pivot Fund grantees



Protecting Press Freedom

06



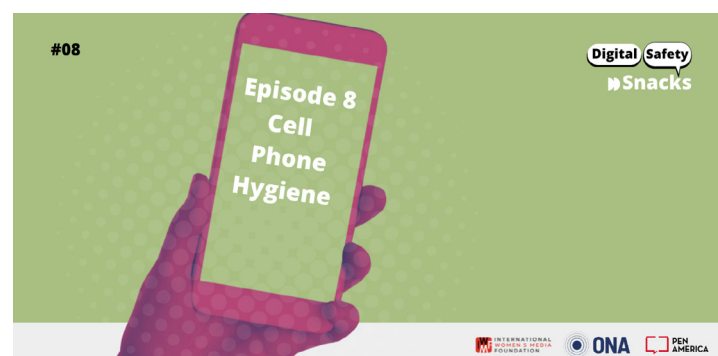
Fighting online abuse



Abusive trolls are increasingly using a variety of techniques to silence and intimidate journalists.

ONA partnered with PEN America and the International Women's Media Foundation to produce a series of eight short videos and four workshops outlining steps journalists can take to help protect themselves against doxxing, hacking and other forms of online harassment.

Each video in the [Digital Safety Snacks](#) series outlines how to adjust security settings in social media apps, or use online tools to reduce the risk of private information being made public. During the workshops, attendees could walk through the steps in real time and ask questions. We also hosted two complementary sessions at ONA22: first, a roundtable discussion on what anti-abuse strategies newsrooms should include in their planning and how to best support journalists experiencing abuse, then a workshop for journalists to shore up their own digital security in advance of the 2022 U.S. elections. ■



Legal Affairs

07



Legal Affairs



The ONA Board of Directors collaborates with media law experts to formulate positions on legal issues that impact our members and other digital journalists. We focus on championing access to information, government transparency and journalists' safety and security.

In 2022, ONA joined with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and other journalism support organizations and publishers on numerous legal amicus and advocacy efforts in local, state, federal and international forums.

Some of the notable efforts include:

- Arguing in a U.S. Supreme Court amicus brief that federal officials should not be shielded from personal liability when they retaliate against individuals for exercising their First Amendment rights
- Challenging a prior restraint against the New York Times over its reporting about Project Veritas
- Proposing modifications to the U.S. Supreme Court's proposed rule regarding sealed documents
- Seeking to ensure public access to court records in court-martial of Seaman Apprentice Ryan Mays, who was found not guilty of setting fire to the USS Bonhomme Richard
- Urging a federal appellate court to hold that Iowa's "ag-gag" law, which restricts undercover investigations into commercial agriculture, is unconstitutional

- Seeking to protect prompt public access to court filings in Vermont
- Arguing for the availability of attorney fees for a news organization that successfully obtained disclosure of police internal affairs file under New Jersey law
- Supporting Gannett and the Associated Press to protect the fair report privilege and single-publication rule in a defamation action by the National Police Association
- Advocating for passage of a federal reporter's shield law

For years, ONA has also been part of a media coalition filing amicus briefs in support of unsealing video recordings of California's Proposition 8 trial from 2010. In October, the recordings were [finally made available](#) to the public after the proponents of continued sealing finally exhausted all of their appeals. ■

What's Next



08

Thank you, Irving Washington



2022 marked the end of Irving Washington's long tenure as part of the ONA team. In July, Irving announced he will move on to a new season of his career after 11 years of service to ONA, including six years as the CEO.

From ONA volunteers to partners to board members, many have described Irving's leadership as "most inspiring" and "legendary."

Irving first joined ONA as a consultant on our first scholarship programs before transitioning to the role of Deputy Director, serving as ONA's second-in-command for four years. Among many contributions, he diversified ONA's revenue and fundraising strategies, expanded global reach and membership and grew the impact of signature programs like the Online Journalism Awards

and the annual conference. In 2017, he succeeded Jane McDonnell as Executive Director and CEO.

With Irving at the helm, ONA doubled its staff, significantly grew investments into innovation training and community building for journalists and championed the movement to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the industry.

As a team, we are grateful and honored to have worked with and learned from Irving over the years. Irving leaves ONA well-positioned as an industry-leading journalism organization and confident in embracing a new leadership chapter in 2023. ■



Get involved in ONA's work and mission in 2023



What's next?

The association will host its second-annual [Career Day](#) in March, with programming focused on how to navigate career development in a recession and getting your resume ready for an uncertain future. The seventh [Women's Leadership Accelerator](#) cohort will gather starting in March, and ONA will also launch additional virtual and in-person gatherings centering women's leadership. We will continue our popular series of [meetups](#) — both in person and virtually — with a focus on newsletters and audience engagement.

The [annual conference](#) and Online Journalism Awards will be hosted in Philadelphia for the first time in the organization's history, Aug. 23-26. And the staff cannot wait to welcome our new CEO, whose vision will shape the organization and its service to journalists.

To stay updated about the latest opportunities and resources from ONA, [subscribe to the ONA Weekly newsletter](#).

If you are interested in exploring partnerships and other ways to invest in ONA's programs and events, contact Chief Strategic Partnerships Officer Jessica Strelitz at jessica@journalists.org. ■

Acknowledgments

ONA's work is possible through the contributions of a talented group of staff, consultants and board members who are fiercely dedicated to the mission.

Irving Washington, CEO

Trevor Knoblich, Chief Knowledge Officer

Jessica Strelitz, Chief Strategic Partnerships Officer

Lauren Anderson, Events and Membership Manager

Bill Brady, Strategic Partnerships Coordinator

Liz Leith, Director of Finance and Administration

Diana López, Program Coordinator

Jason Murtha, Director of Technology

Meghan Murphy, Director of Programs

Kelsey Proud, Learning Director

Karolle Rabarison, Director of Communications

Hollie Schultz, Director of Awards and Community Resources



ONA staff and consultants celebrate a successful ONA22 in Los Angeles.

Consultants

Stephanie Backus

ONA22 Volunteer Coordinator

Julia DiLaura

Development

Brian Duff

ONA22 Learning Consultant

Jackie Fortune

ONA22 Registration Support Consultant

Bridget Gallagher

Development

Tran Ha

Women's Leadership Accelerator

Susannah Brinkley Henry

Design

Stacy Heit

Communications

Hanaa Rifaey

Partnerships Consultant

Leah Rush

Registration and Operations

Alison Schary

General Counsel

Cornershop Creative

Web Consultant

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Head of Newsletters, Politico

Elizabeth Gabriel, Early Career Board Officer

Education Reporter, WFYI

Fergus Bell

Founder & CEO, Fathm

Graham Watson-Ringo

Senior Director of Member Strategy, News Revenue Hub

Imaeyen Ibanga

Presenter, Documentarian, & Senior Producer, AJ+

Niketa Patel

Senior Director of Leadership Programs,
Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism

Rubina Madan Fillion

Director of Strategy, Opinion, The New York Times

Susan Gonzalez

Social Media Strategist, Chalkbeat

Positions current as of December 2022.

