



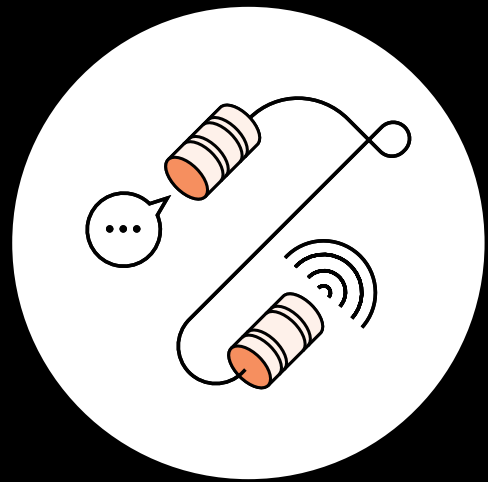
# ***AN INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT***

**OF SOUTH FRESNO AND SURROUNDING RURAL COMMUNITIES**

JULY 2019

# INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

## SOUTH FRESNO & SURROUNDING RURAL COMMUNITIES



### ABOUT THIS REPORT:

The Listening Post Collective is a community media initiative that works with local partners to engage, inform and support communities across the U.S. that are underserved by mainstream news coverage. We believe information changes lives.

The Listening Post Collective is a project of Internews, an international nonprofit that works globally to build healthy media ecosystems where they are most needed. After working for 30 years to increase access to vital information in challenging environments in more than 100 countries, Internews recognized that the very same information problems — lack of trust in the media, lost community connection and populations entirely left out of the conversation — were growing in the U.S. as well.

With local journalism outlets closing or downsizing, communities across the U.S are losing access to critical sources of information that hold power to account and help people make informed decisions about their lives. Our mission is to build healthy information ecosystems that are a direct response to people’s informational needs, resulting in more connected, empowered and inclusive communities.

Borrowed from environmental studies, the term “information ecosystem” describes how communities exist within particular information and communication systems. Within these systems, information is created and shared through word of mouth, key community members, phone, the Internet and more. An assessment of an information ecosystem looks at the flow, use, trust and impact of news and information. Read more about Internews’s framework [here](#).

Through our place-based practice, the Listening Post Collective works with community groups, local funders and journalism professionals to improve information ecosystems in underserved areas. We perform deep information ecosystem assessments; identify information needs, gaps and opportunities; and work with local partners to design community-driven projects that improve information access.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

- **Olivia Henry** is an engaged journalist living in Sacramento. She is currently a student in the Community Development master's program at UC Davis and an engagement fellow at Capital Public Radio. Olivia was the engagement editor at the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism and engagement manager at KALW Public Radio.
- **Jesse Hardman** is a public radio reporter, writer, media developer, videographer, and journalism educator based in Los Angeles. He created the Listening Post, a community engagement project in New Orleans that served as the basis for the work of the wider Listening Post Collective. He works with Internews to inspire similar community engagement media strategies around the US. Jesse is a regular contributor to NPR, and has also written for Al Jazeera America, the Guardian, Le Monde Diplomatique and other outlets.

## ABOUT THE COMMUNITY LIAISONS:

- **Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales** is a community member of Cutler-Orosi. He is a painter and a poet, as well as an aspiring urban designer. A Chicano and DACA recipient, he is concerned by Latinx cultural issues and immigration issues. He hopes to contribute greatly to his community in the future.
- **Aaron Frisby** is a local youth developer and a community advocate for southwest Fresno. He is passionate about encouraging and educating the younger generation to get involved in their communities.
- **Chali Lee** is a rising senior at Clovis High School where he is president of the Asian Club and co-creator of the Diversity Club. He is a Hmong Youth Leader with Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries' Young Men's AAPI group as well as the Fresno Boys and Men of Color program.
- **Rocky Vang** is a recent graduate of Edison High School in Fresno. Growing up in southeast Fresno, he noticed that young Hmong people were struggling, particularly when it came to education, compared to other cultural groups. Joining the Youth Leadership Institute's Boys & Men of Color Program, he found a space to connect with his peers around those struggles and address them through community outreach. He is an incoming freshman at UC Berkeley where he plans to pursue a premedical degree and aims to organize with and mentor other students of color.

*This report is supported by a grant from The James Irvine Foundation.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Listening Post Collective conducted the following information ecosystem assessment in South Fresno and nearby rural communities between January and July 2019. Our aim was to take stock of how residents get and share news; listen to their priorities and understand how coverage of those issues impacts their ability to thrive. We also wanted to learn from grassroots news-sharing projects that fill information gaps, despite a lack of resources and formal training.

The communities we visited are among the most diverse in the country and home to generations of people working to build healthy, equitable neighborhoods. As part of that objective, residents said they want to improve their access to high-quality local news and information so they can make the best possible choices for their families and communities.

Underpinning this work is our belief that information is an essential ingredient for healthy communities. Research shows that local news **builds** a sense of place, and that a **connection** to community media is a key factor in “neighborhood belonging, collective efficacy, and civic participation.” Reductions in local news coverage is **tied** to diminished voter knowledge of candidates, fewer people planning to vote and less competitive elections. Government costs **have increased** in places where watchdog journalism is weak and investigative reporting can **yield** robust economic benefits for society.

This report is based on more than 60 interviews with community leaders and media makers, eight community listening sessions and nearly 600 surveys with residents.

Four community liaisons attended job fairs, swapmeets, schools, church services, grocery stores and more to do this listening.

### **Local news has a part to play in meeting residents’ basic information needs.**

When we asked residents what they wanted from local news, people asked for concrete information that would help them keep their families safe, healthy and housed. People wanted to know about after-school programs for children; rising utility rates; housing, food and immigration resources; and water and air quality. We heard that community organizations often fill these information gaps — how does journalism resource and equip residents around these topics?

### **Fresno is a city of many languages. Its news should be, too.**

Most of the journalism produced in Fresno and surrounding communities is in English. A language other than English is spoken in **44 percent** of Fresno County households, **52 percent** of nearby Tulare County households and **46 percent** of Madera County households, according to U.S. Census estimates.

Options are limited for people who want local journalism in Spanish, and the sources that do exist often have a broad regional focus that is not specific to the local population. Univision 21, the most commonly mentioned source of news for Spanish-speakers we met, covers a huge geographic area spanning six counties. Tulare County Supervisor Eddie Valero said the rural communities he represents are neglected by this system: He said he heard Tulare County described as the “armpit” of regional news.



A citrus orchard in Cutler-Orosi, one of the communities we included in our assessment.  
Photo: Olivia Henry.

This wide lens poses a challenge to community information bearers. Lilia Becerril, the moderator of two popular Facebook groups for families in South Fresno, told us that, because she has a hard time finding enough local Spanish-language news for her sites, she runs English-language articles through Google Translate to create summaries in Spanish for her members. Germán Quiñonez, a local organizer who serves as the director of neighborhood development for Every Neighborhood Partnership, said journalists need to zoom in closer than regional channels can.

**“We need a lot more of that grassroots, really place-based information to be in the frontlines more often.”**

**—Organizer  
Germán Quiñonez**

Three Fresno-based outlets — two television stations and a radio station — share local journalism for those who want their news in Hmong, most of whom are elders. The children and grandchildren of those elders told us that, while these stations fill critical information gaps, they also want to see improvements in the news shared on those channels and the development of new sources that bridge generations.

**Community information bearers fill critical gaps.**

While they are not reporters, people like Facebook page moderator Lilia Becerril, KBIF 900 AM radio host Gurdeep Singh Shergill and Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability organizer Pedro Hernández all serve as key information bearers and interpreters. Each uses a form of media — a Facebook page, a radio show, flyers — to share messages in a language that fits their audience. Residents told us these people act as bridges between their communities and local news outlets, agencies and leaders.

“Gurdeep [talking] on one issue can result in a dozen people calling me. Lilia can result in two dozen people calling me,” Fresno City Councilmember Miguel Arias said. “[If] Channel 30 covers something, zero people call me. It’s middle-class folks who it speaks to.”



Gurdeep Shergill hosts a Punjabi-language radio show on KBIF 900 AM and frequently shares local news, community meeting information and event dispatches on his Facebook page.

Organizer Hernández said a core aspect of his job is to supply residents with information they want. “If there are questions about how we can get roads, I’ll look up funding sources and develop a fact sheet and host a conversation with folks, too,” he said. Although he serves in an advocacy role, Hernández said there are many parallels between his job and that of a reporter.

“The difference between news and what I do is [that] I do it in meetings, [it’s] more engaging, more of a dialogue.”

### **Representation and ownership matter.**

Residents emphasized the importance of media created and delivered by people from their community. Hmong residents told us KMPH Fox 26 anchor Gia Vang was a huge source of pride who drew many people to watch the station who may not have otherwise. “They trust [someone] who looks like them, someone who they’re familiar with,” KBIF radio host Ka Shoua Thao said.

Members of Fresno’s black community underscored the value of local black media. Residents told us Fresno’s black newspaper, the California Advocate, was working on behalf of their interests. When the Advocate faced financial troubles in 2016, Saint Rest Baptist Church Pastor D.J. Criner **told** the Fresno Bee: “When the African-American community needs to be heard, if no one else will hear us, the California Advocate will do so.”

Radio host Jamila Harris volunteered at several other local stations before working at black-owned station KOFB. She said a member of one station’s management team harassed her when she discussed black issues on air. At yet another station, she felt her show simply was not supported. “Black-owned media is important so we can have the freedom to express ourselves [and] have the conversations we need to have without fear of anything,” she said.

### **Residents asked for transformational journalism, not just transactional coverage.**

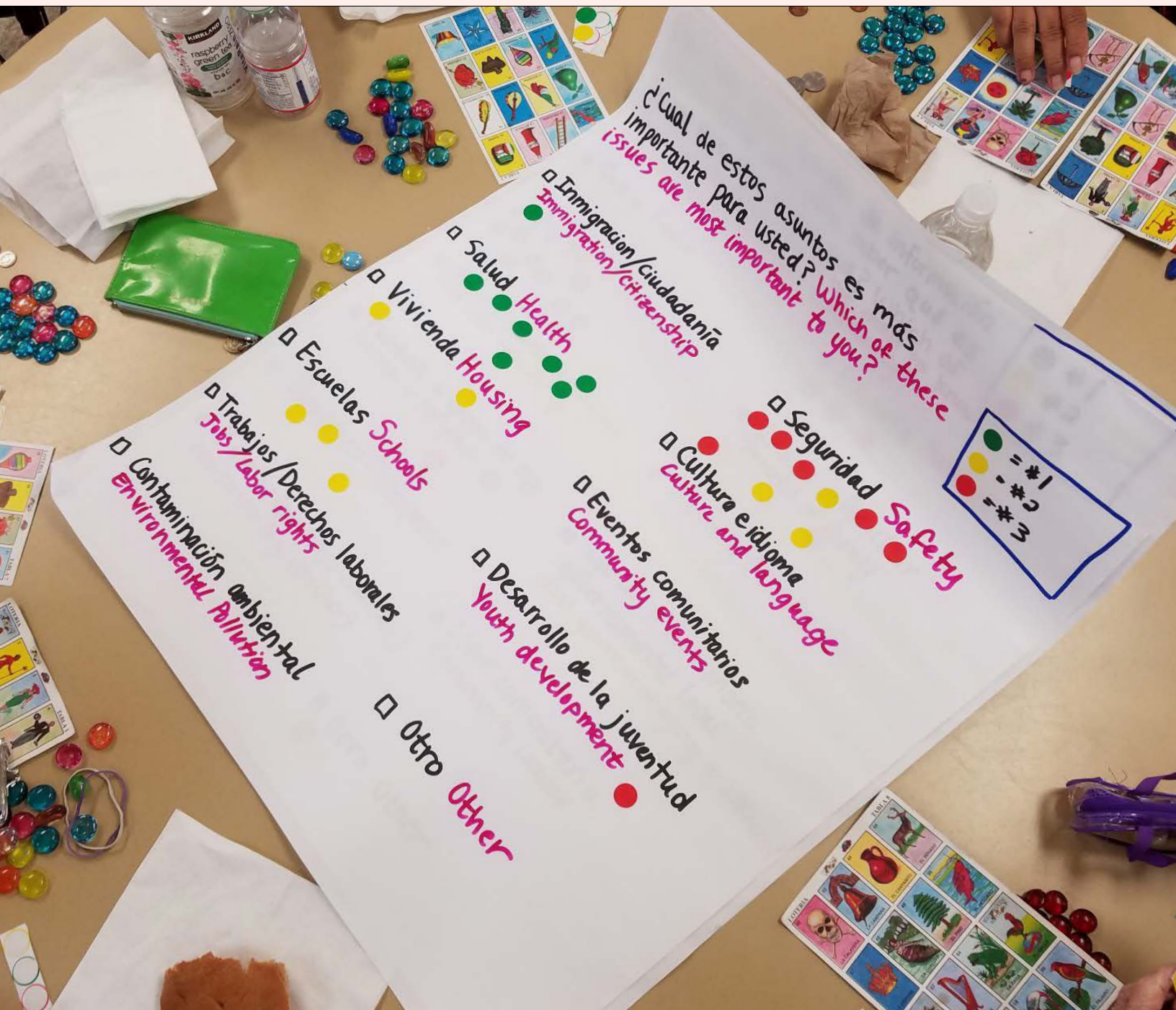
People from many different communities described a transactional attitude toward local news. Some residents saw it as a

tool to promote events or resolve specific problems like uncollected trash cans or broken sidewalks. Rev. Dr. Floyd Harris, an assistant pastor at New Light For New Life Church of God in West Fresno, called on reporters to name and tackle the structural issues that broke the sidewalk in the first place. "A journalist is a doctor. They diagnose the problem." Reporting again

and again on symptoms does not advance solutions, he said.

Mai Thao, a community organizer born and raised in Fresno, agreed, adding: "I think we still have a lot of gaps when it comes to critical analysis of social issues and how that impacts the Hmong community."

Elders at the Cutler-Orosi Senior Center participate in a voting exercise as a part of a listening session. Photo: Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales.



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## BACKGROUND

Fresno is California's fifth largest city, with about half a million residents. The city is **49 percent** Latino, with most of those residents claiming Mexican heritage. Twenty-seven percent of residents are white, 13 percent are Asian, eight percent are black, four percent are two or more races and one percent are American Indian or Alaskan Native. Fresno is home to sizeable refugee groups, among them the second-largest Hmong community in the U.S. **Forty-three percent** of Fresno city residents speak a language other than English at home and **19 percent** of children in Fresno Unified are English-language learners.

Fresno is the largest city in the San Joaquin Valley, a 275-mile stretch of California's interior valley that is the state's agricultural engine. Surrounding communities are also heavily Latino and draw resources, services and some of their news from the larger Fresno market.

As the city and surrounding areas continue to diversify, local populations have become younger. The average age in Fresno is around 32. These shifts are reflected in local politics: voters elected a majority Democratic and Latino city council in November 2018, the first time the council has seen a **Latino majority** in a decade. A U.S. congressional district that includes parts of Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Kern Counties **flipped** Democratic in 2018 after decades of Republicans holding the seat.

## RACE/ETHNIC POPULATION - FRESNO COUNTY, 1970 - 2010

Race/ Ethnicity	1970		1980		1990		2000		2010	
	Population	Percent Share	Population	Percent Share	Population	Percent Share	Population	Percent Share	Population	Percent Share
White	268,418	65%	316,895	61.6%	338,595	50.7%	317,522	39.7%	331,144	33.7%
Hispanic	104,177	25.2%	150,790	29.3%	236,634	35.5%	351,636	44%	492,449	50.1%
Black	20,370	4.9%	24,557	4.8%	31,311	4.7%	40,291	5%	46,797	4.8%
Asian							63,029	7.9%	92,099	9.4%
Pacific Islander	20,088	4.9%	22,379	4.3%	54,110	8.1%	682	0.1%	802	0.1%
Other					6,840	1%	26,247	3.3%	20,187	2.1%
Total Non-White	144,635	35%	197,726	38.4%	328,895	49.3%	481,885	60.3%	652,334	66.3%
Total Population	413,053	100%	514,621	100%	667,490	100%	799,407	100%	983,478	100%

Sources: 1970-2000, U.S. Census; 2010, State of California Department of Finance



An advertisement for a new housing development in West Fresno built by the Lennar Corporation. Fresno's footprint has more than doubled since the 1970s. Photo: Olivia Henry.

Sprawl and annexation **more than doubled** Fresno's footprint in the past 50 years. As the city grew north, poverty in core neighborhoods **deepened**. Fresno's metro area has the highest rate of concentrated poverty in the nation, according to a 2018 **analysis** by 24/7 Wall Street published in USA Today.

Environmental health issues profoundly shape — and shorten — life in South Fresno. A combination of agriculture, industry, freeways and topography contribute to dismal air quality; the American Lung Association **ranked** Fresno worst in the nation for year-round particle pollution. Not all neighborhoods bear that

load equally. Mapping tool **CalEnviroScreen** placed dozens of South Fresno census tracts in the top percentile for vulnerability to pollution, compared to just one top-percentile tract north of Shaw Avenue, the city's de facto north-south boundary. Pollution is part of the reason Central and southwest Fresno have the **worst life expectancy** in Fresno County.

These communities are home to generations of people building healthy, equitable neighborhoods in the face of significant challenges. Residents told us that access to high-quality local news and information is critical to those efforts.

## FRESNO'S MEDIA LANDSCAPE

The media landscape of Fresno and surrounding communities is as varied as the population, thanks to audiences that segment by age, language, and trust — sometimes within a single street or home. Given this rich environment, our overview is not comprehensive but reflective of the news and information sources most often mentioned by community members we spoke with.

Internews takes an “all-hands-on-deck” approach to understanding a community’s local information ecosystem. Professional news organizations are a key part of this system, but so are residents, advocates, schools, community organizations, churches, libraries and more. Our goal is not to conflate these sources, but rather show the scope of how people get and share community information.

### TV:

- The Fresno-Visalia television market **includes** just over half a million homes in Mariposa, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings and Tulare Counties. The market’s English-language news broadcasters include Fox 26, CBS 47, NBC 24 and ABC 30. The latter has the largest audience by far.

ABC 30 organizes two community advisory councils, one for adults and one for youth, that meet quarterly. The station’s president and general manager Dan Adams said members are selected based on the geographic and ethnic communities they come from. At each meeting, staff give presentations about how the station works, solicit feedback on recent coverage and ask about community

issues or upcoming events. Adams said these conversations regularly generate coverage.

- Univision 21 is the region’s largest Spanish-language TV news channel. Community members often told us the station’s 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. program, Arriba Valle Central, is a staple in their news diet. Telemundo 51 is a more recent addition to local Spanish-language news; it **launched** its one-hour daily newscast in 2015.
- Two Fresno-based, Hmong-language television stations air local news: Hmong TV Network began broadcasting in 2010 and HmongUSA TV in 2011. Both are available on free over-the-air channels and streaming online. Hmong TV Network President Ying Fang told us that, each day, his wife gathers local, state and national stories from mainstream news sources and the anchors deliver them in Hmong for the 8 p.m. newscast. Fang said stories about Hmong people in the U.S. are of particular interest; they often draw content from Google News alerts for Hmong surnames such as Xiong and Vang.
- Fresno’s Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) is a nonprofit organization that trains community members in broadcast skills and rents equipment at low-cost. The organization maintains a public access channel available to Comcast and AT&T cable subscribers and streams online. It airs content by community members who’ve completed their training.

CMAC Executive Directory Bryan Harley told us programmers often approach them seeking to fill gaps in

local media. Disappointed in television programming for young children, Don and Roshell Franklin developed an animated show called Welcome to Fresberg about the adventures of eight young people. After arts and culture reporter Don Munro was laid off from the Bee, he created his own **nonprofit news outlet** and a monthly CMAC show to continue his beat.

Another program that aims to address news gaps is ONME News, an online outlet serving black communities in the Central Valley. CEO Julia Dudley Najieb and COO Lennice Najieb produce a two-hour program on CMAC's public access channel each week. Dudley Najieb, whose family is from West Fresno, said her goal is to challenge powerful interests: "For us to progress as a community, we have to know what's going on. The fruit stuff I leave for other outlets to do. We try to cover the stuff that people have not known about for years."

### Radio:

- Nielsen rankings **place** KMJ, an English-language news talk station, at the top of the ratings for public affairs radio in the Valley. NPR affiliate station Valley Public Radio is based in Fresno and airs local news and national programming. English-speaking residents we met more commonly mentioned hearing local news on commercial music stations such as B95, Mega 97.9, Q97 and 101.5 KGFM.
- Radio Bilingüe is the most robust news and public affairs channel serving Spanish-speaking audiences. The station is based in Fresno, and it manages a network of member, repeater and affiliate stations across

the U.S., Canada and Mexico. La Hora Mixteca serves Mixtec speakers and their families. Radio Bilingüe was commonly cited as a source of news among community leaders and organizers.

- Residents also mentioned receiving local information from commercial stations such as 101.9 La Buena, 92.9 La Preciosa, Amor 92.1, 100.3 La Unika Mexicana, 107.1 Los Exitos, 107.5 La Jefa and 107.9 Zona MX. Amor 92.1 and 107.5 La Jefa are owned by Univision.
- La Campesina, a Visalia-based nonprofit station operated by the Cesar Chavez Foundation, was popular among Tulare County residents. General Manager Jorge Guizar said their mission is educational but music and entertainment are the station's main draw: "If people feel like they're being educated, they'll change radio stations, which is why we insert 50-second information shots."
- KBIF 900 AM is a commercial station that airs Hmong programming Monday through Friday and Punjabi shows on the weekends. General Manager Tony Donato said the station is funded by a mix of advertising revenue, public agencies' PSAs and brokered programming. Donato told us he doesn't subscribe to metrics services, but instead gauges the station's audience size by the area's demographics, number of phone calls from the community, report-backs from advertisers and the response to public campaigns. He said that after airing a City of Fresno PSA about a motor oil recycling event, one location was so inundated by KBIF listeners it had to close early.



Jamila Harris (left) and Darren Miller (right) co-host a Thursday public affairs program on KOPF. Miller announces a weekly community calendar the start of each show. Photo: Olivia Henry.

The station streams online, through an app and via a designated phone line; weekend host Gurdeep Singh Shergill says Punjabi truck drivers often call the number to listen when they travel beyond KBIF’s signal range. Shergill says his four-hour show is a bridge for Punjabi speakers who may not have access to or a connection with English-language news outlets in the same way.

- KOPF is a low-power radio station best heard in Fresno’s downtown, Chinatown and southwest neighborhoods. Patrick Okoegwale founded the station in 2016. His son Jamall told us his father wanted to give Fresno’s black voices and listeners a home on the dial. The station currently airs two public affairs programs hosted by people active in local politics: Tuesday’s show is hosted by former city council member Cynthia Sterling

and Gwendolyn Morris, who ran for state assembly in 2016. Thursday’s program is co-hosted by Daren Miller, who currently serves on the Fresno County Board of Education.

#### **Newspapers:**

- Daily newspaper The Fresno Bee is owned by the McClatchy Company. The Bee also produces **Vida en el Valle**, a free, weekly, bilingual newspaper with a circulation of 156,000. A former Bee staff member estimated today’s newsroom is a quarter the size it was in the early 2000s. According to 2018 McClatchy figures the newspaper has a daily print circulation of about 56,000 and about 1.7 million average unique monthly visitors. One local policy expert we spoke to said that, while the Bee remains the city’s tentpole news organization, rounds of layoffs

and shrinking coverage have many wondering about the paper's future.

Despite the challenges in the newspaper industry, Fresno Bee reporter Brianna Calix told us there's no place she'd rather be.

"I feel fortunate that I'm able to work in the place I call home," Calix said. "This place truly is ground zero for all of the most pressing issues facing our state and country."

- The California Advocate is Fresno's black newspaper. Founded in 1967, the newspaper currently publishes monthly and one month out of the quarter is available only online.

The Advocate prints Q&As with city leaders, event notices, local election endorsements and some national content. Subscriptions cost \$40 a year. Staff distribute copies in black neighborhoods and churches between Bakersfield and Stockton.

- The Community Alliance is a free monthly newspaper aimed at progressive audiences in the San Joaquin Valley. Much of the content is op-ed-style writing submitted by community members. One recent issue included articles about Fresno's recycling crisis, uninsured and undocumented residents, the 2020 census and local event summaries. A portion of the newspaper is dedicated to Spanish-language articles.

Each year the California Advocate publishes photos of black students graduating from local high schools and colleges. Several people we met mentioned how much they value this issue. Photo: Olivia Henry

## The California Advocate Newspaper

May-June, 2019 PAGE C1

# 2019 FUSD GRADUATES

## FRESNO UNIFIED ~ PAGES C1 - C8



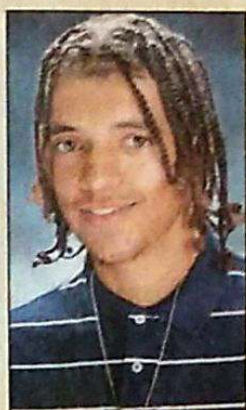
ZAKIA ASHLEY  
Edison High School



CHARNAE BAILEY  
Edison High School



NATHANIEL BREWER  
Edison High School



DAEQUAN BROWN  
Edison High School



ZORYA BROWN  
Edison High School



JOHN BRYANT  
Edison High School

- Txahwb Magazine is published annually on the occasion of Fresno's Hmong New Year. Editor Lar Yang said the editorial content is mostly interviews with Hmong business leaders. The only other print publication Hmong residents knew of was the Hmong Tribune, a newspaper published by Steve Thao between 2011 and 2016.
- El Pique is a free weekly newspaper in Spanish. Publisher Maria Barajas uses Facebook and Facebook Live to share event information, resources and interviews.
- In Tulare County, some research participants mentioned Gannett-owned newspaper the Visalia Times-Delta as a source of information. Others lamented the disappearance of several Spanish-language newspapers in the area including the Times-Delta's El Sol, which **shuttered** in 2011.

### Social Media and More:

In addition to the social media profiles and apps of traditional news outlets, homegrown Facebook groups are an important part of the information ecosystem.

- In South Fresno, three women moderate page COMUNIDAD UNIDA, Informa, Opina, Pregunta, Avisa!! (559 area), which shares low-cost resources, services, activities and news with Latino families. Lilia Becerril, one of the group's co-founders and administrators, often posts links to news stories, flyers and community meeting notices. She is vigilant about misinformation, insisting on approving all posts: "If we don't know them, we don't accept them."
- In smaller rural towns, Facebook pages serve as community bulletin boards. In groups such as "Cutler-Orosi News" and "You know you're from Ivanhoe when..." residents post events, news stories and questions. El Quinto Sol de America Program Director Isabel Arrollo said her organization shares notices through buy-and-sell Facebook pages in rural towns.
- In Fresno's African-American community, Facebook is a central organizing platform. Advocates, pastors and event promoters have large followings, often tagging up to a hundred people in posts about community meetings, events and politics.
- Facebook pages are one key way the Hmong community connects with each other, both within Fresno and across the country. Hmong American Experience, a page created by UC Merced lecturer Seng Vang in 2016, shares positive news and photos related to Hmong life in the U.S. Vang said the page is a counterweight to mainstream news outlets that he says usually only cover Southeast Asian refugee communities when something has gone wrong. Hmong Woman Today is another popular Facebook page, and its co-founders host a Facebook Live program each week.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To better understand how residents receive local news and information, we listened to hundreds of residents, community leaders and local media makers.

### **Conversations with community-based organizations and leaders**

We talked to 39 faith advocates, organizers, nonprofit leaders, educators, elected officials and residents — anyone who had something to say about how information flowed in their community. Some of our standard questions included: Who is effectively delivering news and information to your community? How is information shared among residents? If you were the editor of a local news outlet focused on your neighborhood, how would you deliver news and what story would you cover this month? For the names of people we spoke with, see Appendix A.

### **Conversations with media**

We also interviewed 23 media makers — editors, reporters, Facebook page managers, radio show hosts and more — and in some cases visited their workplaces. Our standard questions included: What are the most effective channels you use for talking to your audience? Are there certain topics or concerns your audience members ask for information about? What gaps are you trying to fill when it comes to serving the public? What gaps remain? For the names of people we spoke with, see Appendix B.

### **Monitoring the media landscape**

During this assessment, our team watched what was being covered by news outlets, as well as information the community was sharing in its own spaces. We joined Facebook groups, picked up flyers, read church bulletins and attended community meetings.

Community liaison Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales surveyed residents at the Selma Flea Market. Photo: Olivia Henry.





- YouTube is another important source of news and information, particularly in the Southeast Asian and Hmong communities. People told us they seek out news, music and folk stories from Laos, Thailand and Vietnam on YouTube.
- Residents told us teleconference calls are another source of Hmong-language news, information and entertainment. In a 2016 [article](#) published in the International Journal of Communication, University of Wisconsin Professor Lori Kido Lopez explains that the free calls — which can have thousands of open

lines — often mimic radio broadcasts. Some calls include participatory discussions, with a host assigning numbers to speakers and calling on them. Some are entirely crowdsourced, Lopez wrote: “He loved calling in to programs on which callers simply took turns singing Hmong songs, one after the other, until they grew tired of singing.”

In areas where legacy media fails to meet information needs, residents have found innovative and grassroots alternatives. We share more of those strategies in our data findings section.

Community liaison Chali Lee holds up an example of the survey he used for this assessment.  
Photo: Olivia Henry.



### Surveying residents

The heart of this assessment was listening to almost 600 residents talk about how they get local news and how they want to be served in terms of topics and delivery. We met with residents in two ways: surveying in communities and holding group listening sessions.

The four-question surveys were based on those used in previous information needs assessments. María Eraña, Radio Bilingüe Program Director, offered valuable input on phrasing and methodology. We chose not to ask demographic questions and we made the contact information question optional in an attempt to make respondents feel comfortable in participating.

## HOW DOES NEWS FLOW IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY?

1. Which of these information sources do you rely on the most to know what's happening in your community? (pick 3)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Station               | <input type="checkbox"/> School                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend or family member              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local news website          | <input type="checkbox"/> Church                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook or Facebook Group  | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government, agency or official |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Community leader                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter (i.e. Next Door) | Specifics: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community organization      | _____   |

3. Which of these issues are most important to you? (pick 3)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration/Citizenship | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Culture and Language |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Events     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schools                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Development    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs/Labor Rights       | <input type="checkbox"/> Voting               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Pollution | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____          |

4. What's a specific community issue that you feel like needs to be covered better?

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We would love to stay in touch with you about our ongoing project to improve news and information sharing around Fresno and the Central Valley. Please share a best way for us to follow up with you, preferably a cell number or email.

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This survey was translated into Spanish and Hmong. Internews hired four community liaisons — Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales, Aaron Frisby, Chali Lee and Rocky Vang — who together collected 595 surveys.

### Community listening sessions

We held eight listening sessions in partnership with community-based organizations, often with the generous support of Radio Bilingüe Program Director María Eraña. Our session design followed a format designed by Madeleine Bair, who ran workshops for the Listening Post Collective's information ecosystem assessments in [Oakland](#) and [Sonoma County](#). Each session lasted between 20 and 90 minutes. See Appendix C for details about session formats.

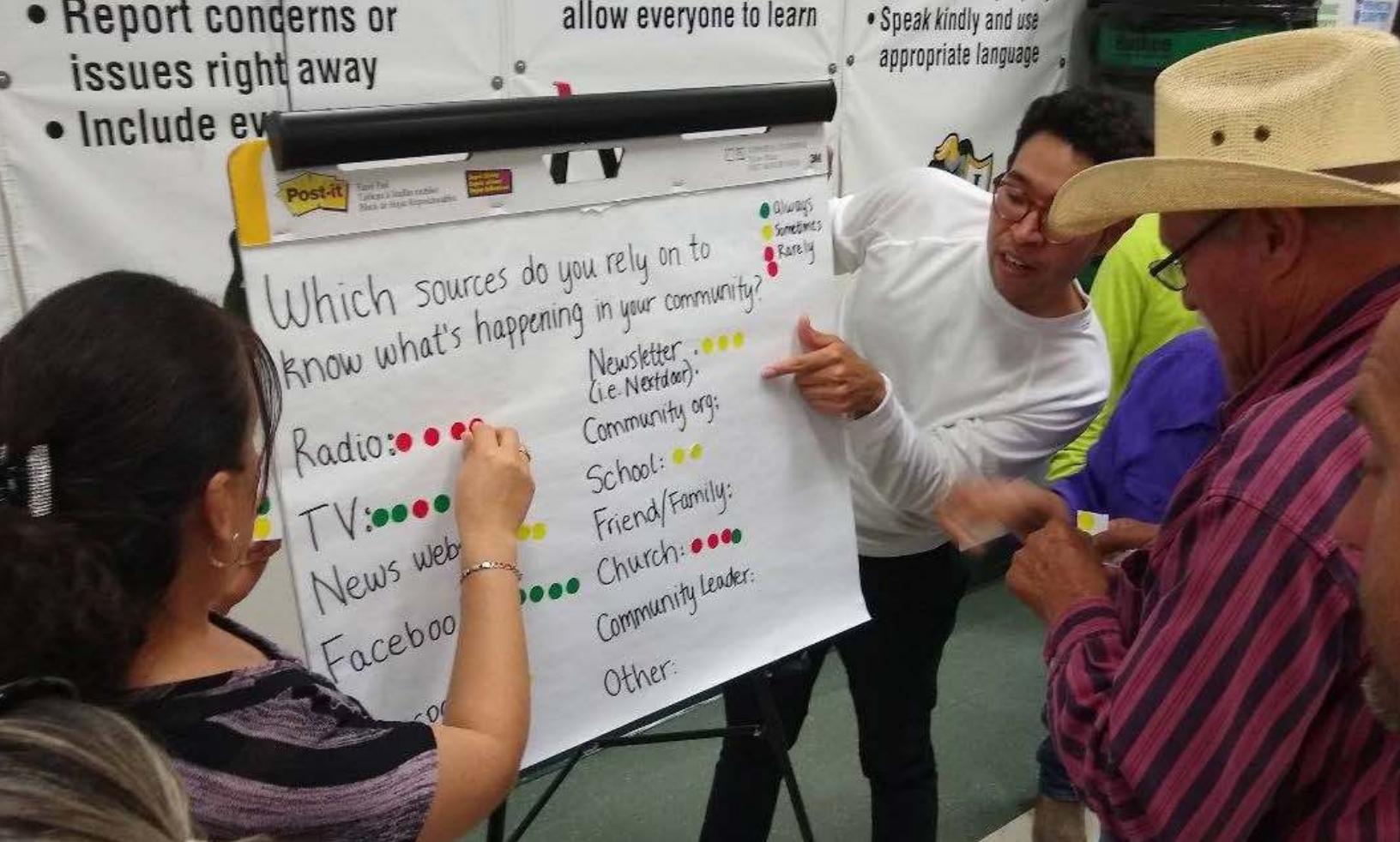
### Disclaimer on our approach

This assessment is not an academic or rigorous research study. Instead we hope to provide a detailed snapshot of what the information ecosystem looks like in four communities using anecdotes and qualitative data. Our approach was far from comprehensive and we acknowledge that many important San Joaquin Valley voices and communities were not included in this project.

Our survey design was imperfect on purpose. The answer options to the first two questions are a mix of the source of information (e.g. a community organization's independent research) and its method of delivery (e.g. a Facebook post). For that reason, our conversations with community leaders and media makers — who have the benefit of years of on-the-ground observation — informed and refined our understanding of residents' information habits.

Our survey table at Soul Food Fest in West Fresno. Photo: Olivia Henry.





Ivanhoe residents use dots to indicate the top three sources they trust for community information. Photo: Olivia Henry.

Other flaws in our survey methodology were not so intentional. For one, our community liaisons quickly discovered that many survey-takers missed the “pick three” and “rank top three” instructions. So we asked all subsequent participants to ignore those directions, instead inviting them to choose as many options as they wished. In a more serious flaw, some of the survey options were accidentally dropped in the process of translating: Some Hmong-language surveys did not include the option for “church” in question one, and some Spanish-language surveys did not include the “voting” option in question two.

We grouped our survey and listening session data in four rough categories:

- Latinos in South Fresno

- African-Americans in South Fresno
- Hmong and Hmong-Americans in South Fresno
- Latinos in surrounding communities

We sorted data into these categories based on the location where we surveyed, the type of event we were attending and our own observations. Because we did not collect demographic information, we can’t say with certainty that all of our participants would group themselves in this way. For example, someone we spoke with at the Selma Flea Market might in fact reside in South Fresno. Or a person who completed survey at a Latino cultural event may not identify as Latino.

## DATA FINDINGS

### Latinos in South Fresno

## Methodology Summary

**Surveyors:** Aaron Frisby, Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales, Olivia Henry

**Number of Surveys:** 75

**Surveying Locations:**

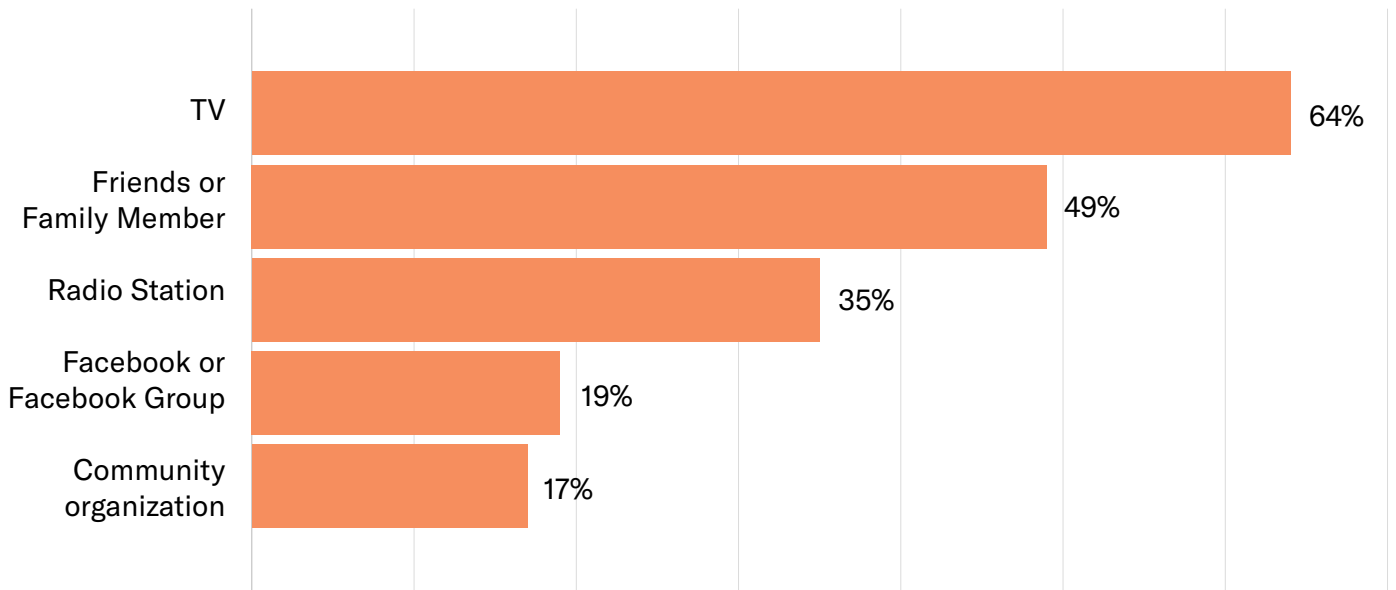
- Food giveaway at Maxie L. Parks Community Center
- Food giveaway at Mary Ella Brown Community Center
- Immigration resource event at West Fresno Elementary School
- Cherry Auction swap meet
- Southeast Fresno neighborhoods

**Listening Sessions:**

- *Hidalgo Elementary Parents Group:* El Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño organizes this parent group in partnership with Abrienda Puertas and First 5 Fresno. Sessions are held in Spanish and Mixteco. Olivia Henry and Juan Carlos visited a group of about seven participants for a 20-minute listening session.
- *Burroughs Elementary Parents Group:* Jacqueline Fritz, a bilingual parent liaison at the southeast Fresno school, organizes this regular gathering for Spanish-language parents. Olivia Henry and María Eraña visited a group of about 15 participants for a 45-minute listening session.
- *Every Neighborhood Partnership's Resident Leadership Cohort:* Every Neighborhood Partnership organized this six-month resident leadership program with Latina neighborhood organizers from South Fresno. Olivia Henry and María Eraña visited the cohort for a 30-minute listening session with about 10 participants.

Note: Latino is a broad category that includes many different identities and communities, in which many languages are spoken.

## How do you get local news and information?



Among Latinos in South Fresno, television was the most-selected source for knowing what's going on, followed by friends/family, radio stations, Facebook and community organizations. When asked for specific channels, people largely cited Univision 21, ABC 30 and Telemundo 51.

At the same time, some residents told us they were troubled by the tone of local television news. One Hidalgo Elementary School parent said the regular coverage of shootings and robberies was “psychologically traumatic” for children and she refused to watch it around them. Another woman commented that fear was part local television’s business model. Other feedback about local television news from that listening session included:

- “No está enfocada en servir.” *It’s not focused on service.*
- “Nos confunde.” *It confuses us.*
- “Generan una alarma para asustar las personas.” *They cause alarm to frighten people.*

We heard similar sentiments among Latinos outside of Fresno, too. Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District Superintendent Yolanda Valdez said she appreciated Univision’s early morning program *Arriba Valle Central*, but “Spanish media does a lot to scare people. I have to talk down my own parents, relieve their worry and anxiety about what they’re seeing in the news.”

It is hard to know whether television’s high score in our survey results is based on preference, habit or ease of access. Unlike other options in our survey, television is free, delivered in a variety of languages and uses widely available and simple technology.

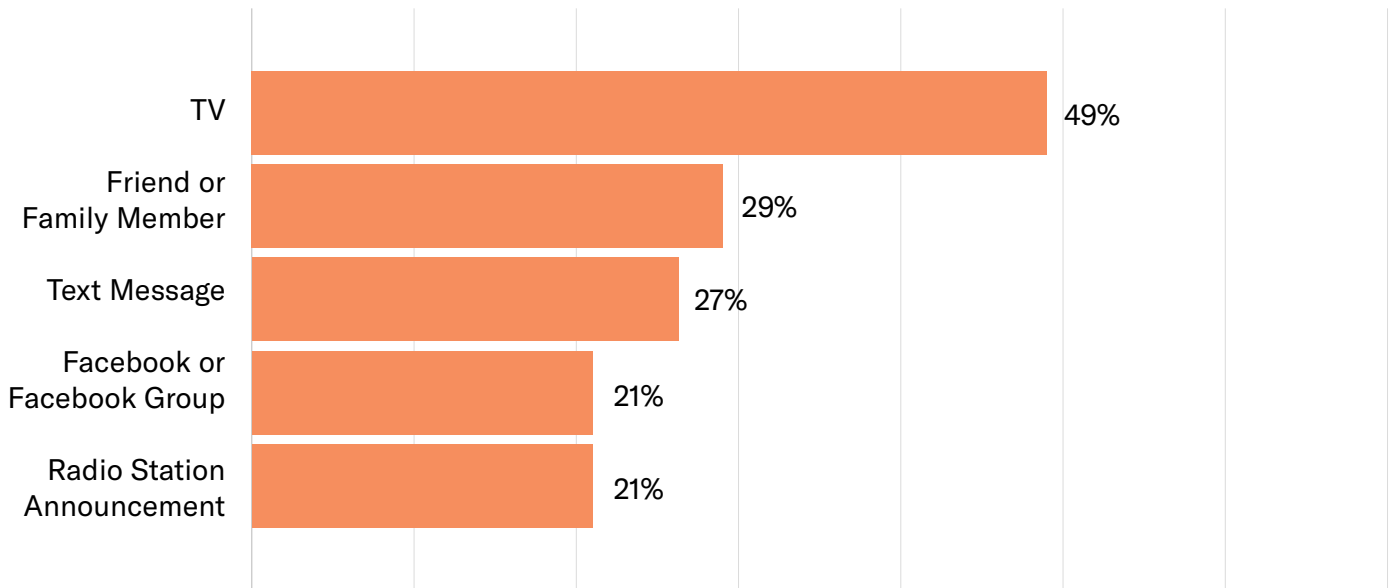
When it came to radio, residents most often talked about La Buena 101.9, Amor 92.1 and La Jefa 107.5 — the latter two are owned by Univision. People in positions of leadership were more likely to say they listened to Radio Bilingüe: Facebook page moderator and community leader Lilia Becerril said she listens to Radio Bilingüe and the

organizer of the Burroughs Elementary School group said of the station: “Yo sé que sí es cierto.” I know it’s true.

Community organizations, while not very commonly selected in our surveys, are an important part of how residents get

local news and information. At Hidalgo Elementary, one parent said El Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño answers any and all questions she has. She joked that she grouped the center under the friends/family category because, “Es como familia.” *It’s like family.*

### If a news outlet wanted to reach you, what would be the best way to do it?



When asked how they want to receive news, residents’ most common answer was television, followed by friends/family, text message, Facebook and radio announcements. People said they received texts from Fresno Unified and the Mexican consulate, as well as WhatsApp messages from St. Anthony Mary Claret Catholic Church in southeast Fresno.

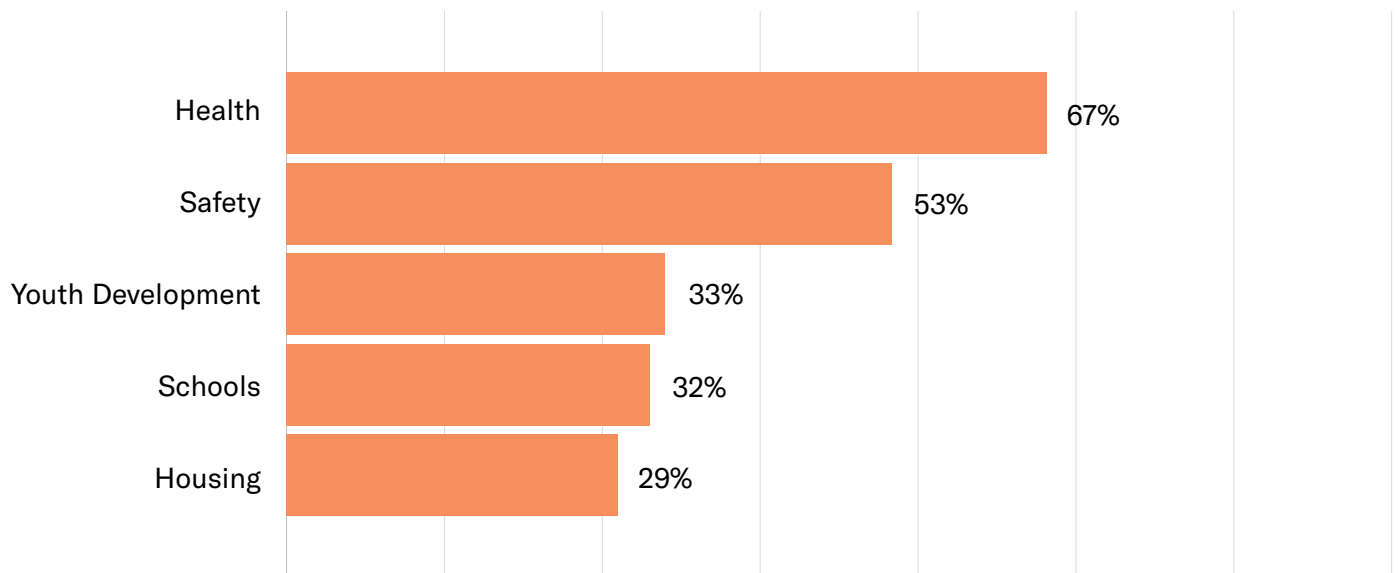
People commented that there was no “in-person” option on our survey, saying workshops and meetings were how they liked to learn about complex topics. For example:

- A Burroughs Elementary parent mentioned how much she learned in classes at the Cesar E. Chavez Adult Education Center, which is operated

by Fresno Unified School District. During the same listening session, another parent said she trusted information delivered by a live person who is looking her in the eyes.

- A member of Every Neighborhood Partnership’s Resident Leadership Cohort said meetings hosted by community organizations are the best way to grasp issues beyond the superficial understanding she might glean from the news.
- At a food giveaway at a West Fresno community center, one person asked why news outlets didn’t show up and table outside the food distribution line as other service organizations often do.

### Which of these issues are most important to you?



This survey question and the open-ended one that follows it — “What’s a specific community issue that you feel needs to be covered better? — were meant to elicit topics about which residents want more news or information. Health was the most common answer; residents said they cared about healthcare for those without insurance, assistance for low-income people and air quality. The second most common answer was safety; people said they cared about street crimes, home invasions, feral dogs, neighborhood clean-ups and the condition of streets and sidewalks.

School issues dominated our listening sessions with Latinos in South Fresno. Two school shootings happened around the U.S. the week we visited Burroughs Elementary and parents said they wanted more news about school safety and emergency notification systems. A Burroughs Elementary parent also said she wanted a reporter to look into high school counselors — other

parents echoed her complaint that counselors don’t push their children to take challenging courses. “They’ll tell the kids, ‘Do what you want,’” one parent told us.

Parents in two separate listening sessions said they wanted journalists to help them understand how Fresno schools identify and educate children with special needs. One person said language barriers and immigration status discourages some parents from complaining to school staff about their child’s case.

Other listening session participants said it was hard to get information about immigration topics. One woman waited three hours for her appointment at the Mexican consulate and walked away without a resolution. “You can’t trust them,” she told us. Another woman said she didn’t know which legal services to recommend to her cousin for fear of directing her to a scammer. Many people said they wanted more information about citizenship.



## African-Americans in South Fresno

### Methodology Summary

**Surveyors:** Aaron Frisby, Olivia Henry

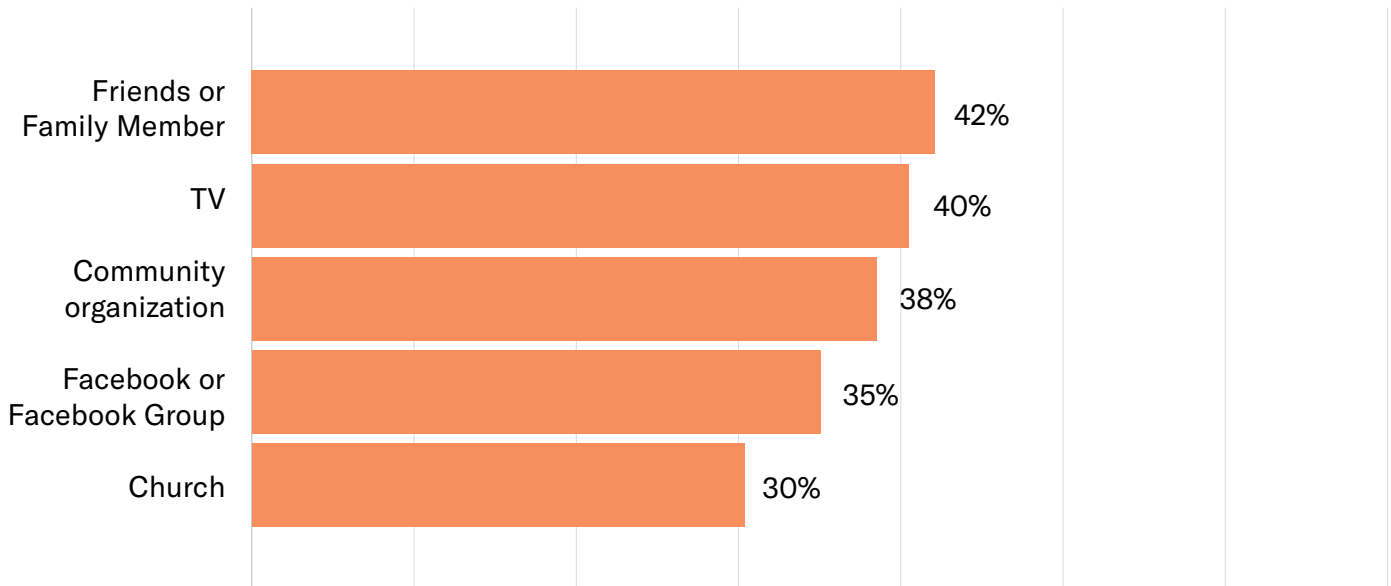
**Number of Surveys:** 173

**Surveying Locations:**

- Services at Westside Church of God
- Services at New Light for New Life Church
- A community meeting at Image Church
- A community workshop about anti-displacement policies
- A community meeting with Fresno City Councilmember Miguel Arias
- A networking event sponsored by the Fresno Black Chamber of Commerce and Black Leaders Organizing Change
- A youth development program at the Fresno Freedom School
- A farmer's market at Saint Rest Plaza
- A job fair at West Fresno Middle School
- Fresno Juneteenth
- Fresno Soul Food Festival
- West Fresno Pocket Park
- FoodMaxx supermarket
- Door to door in West Fresno

**Note:** We largely surveyed African-American residents at locations in West Fresno. Many people we spoke to are connected to the neighborhood by family, faith or culture even if they don't live there themselves.

## How do you get local news and information?



Black community members most commonly said friends and family were their source of local news and information, followed by television, community organizations, Facebook and church. Asked what television channels they watch, people most often cited ABC30, in addition to KSEE24 and CBS47.

Some residents described local television news as a tool to fix problems. A woman attending Fresno's Soul Food Fest told us her green bin was rarely collected, saying she told a waste management company employee: "I'll just call [CBS]47 On Your Side and let them ask the questions."

Resident Debbie Darden was more optimistic about the power of national television news to address problems. Darden, who heads the Golden Westside Planning Committee, said she wrote to ABC World News Tonight anchor David Muir inviting him to tour West Fresno, look into the policies that have allowed infrastructure to degrade and highlight opportunities.

"[Local stations] are not putting emphasis on that, there is some injustice there," Darden said. "We don't mind working with you locally, but we want to see change, we want you to see what people are going through."

Television news was integral to resolving one West Fresno community member's problem during our assessment. In April, a tree root broke a water pipe connected to 100-year-old Corine Reed's home, more than tripling her water bill. Her daughter, Aline Reed, called Rev. Dr. Floyd Harris, Jr. Harris who interviewed Reed on Facebook Live. ABC 30 then broadcast its own **story** and the next day **reported** that "an anonymous donor stepped in to cover the plumbing and water costs and the city decided to waive any late payment penalties for the past six months."

For Rev. Dr. Harris, this story evidences the need for citizen journalism. Harris has hosted his own radio show on different stations for years. He also creates flyers and newsletters he shares door to door, at barber shops, bus stops, donut shops and other West Fresno community spaces.



Rev. Dr. Floyd Harris photographs children at The Fresno Freedom School, a program he founded. Harris teaches older children how to document events using Facebook Live. Photo: Olivia Henry.

**“Media doesn’t have to be the newspaper. You are the newspaper, you are the TV.”**

**—Rev. Dr. Floyd Harris**

Many African-American residents we spoke with were frustrated with their representation in general market news outlets. Aaron Foster, an organizer with Faith in the Valley, said television news in particular can fail to offer a well-rounded picture of the neighborhood.

“If someone gets shot, then they’ll show that in infinite. They should follow up a funeral with a more human story.

To humanize him by telling what he did that was good,” Foster said. “Turn the TV off and the problem goes away, there’s no true connection to the story.”

Similar comments from our conversations include:

- “We know mainstream, but mainstream don’t know us,” said a worshipper at Westside Church of God of local news.
- A Soul Food Fest attendee implied that local news organizations sweep inequities under the rug because they take advertising dollars from developers. “There’s no trust with the media here, there’s half-truths to start with.”



A newspaper box outside the California Advocate office sells copies for 50 cents. Photos: Olivia Henry

In suggesting topics reporters should look into, survey participants wrote:

- “How media sees black people”
- “Report news equally. When a non-black person commits a crime list their color as well.”

**“We know mainstream, but mainstream don’t know us.”**

**—Westside Church of God congregant on local news**

Many community members said they valued the California Advocate, pointing to its annual black graduates issue and attention to community events. People lamented its diminished publishing schedule — once weekly, the paper now publishes bimonthly with one online-only edition per quarter.

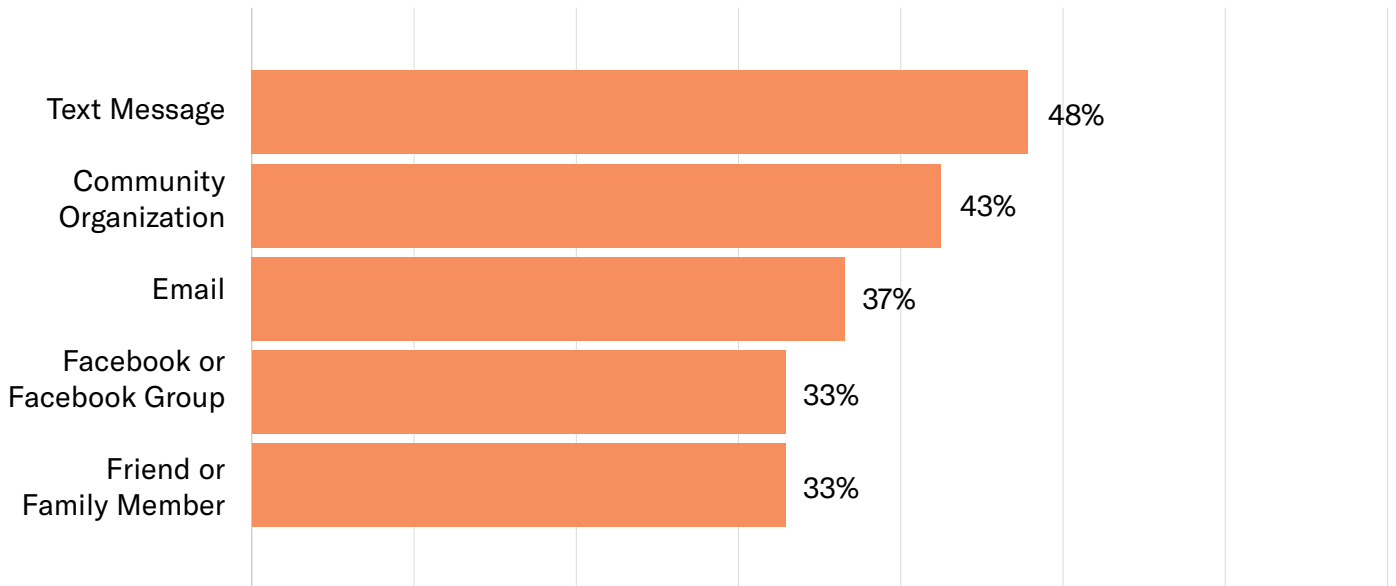
Both media makers and residents stressed the value of black media in Fresno.

Jamila Harris, who co-hosts the show *In Touch with Lady J and the Miller Boys* on KOFF, used to volunteer at other Fresno radio stations. She said a member of one station’s management team harassed her when she discussed Black issues on air. At yet another station, she felt her show simply was not supported.

“Black-owned media is important so we can have the freedom to express ourselves, have the conversations we need to have without fear of anything,” she said.

Of the four communities we surveyed, the African-American community was the only one to rank “church” among their top five sources of trusted news and information. People most commonly mentioned Pastors D.J. Criner, B.T. Lewis and Paul Binion as trusted information-bearers. West Fresno churches also regularly host community meetings and forums.

### If a news outlet wanted to reach you, what would be the best way to do it?



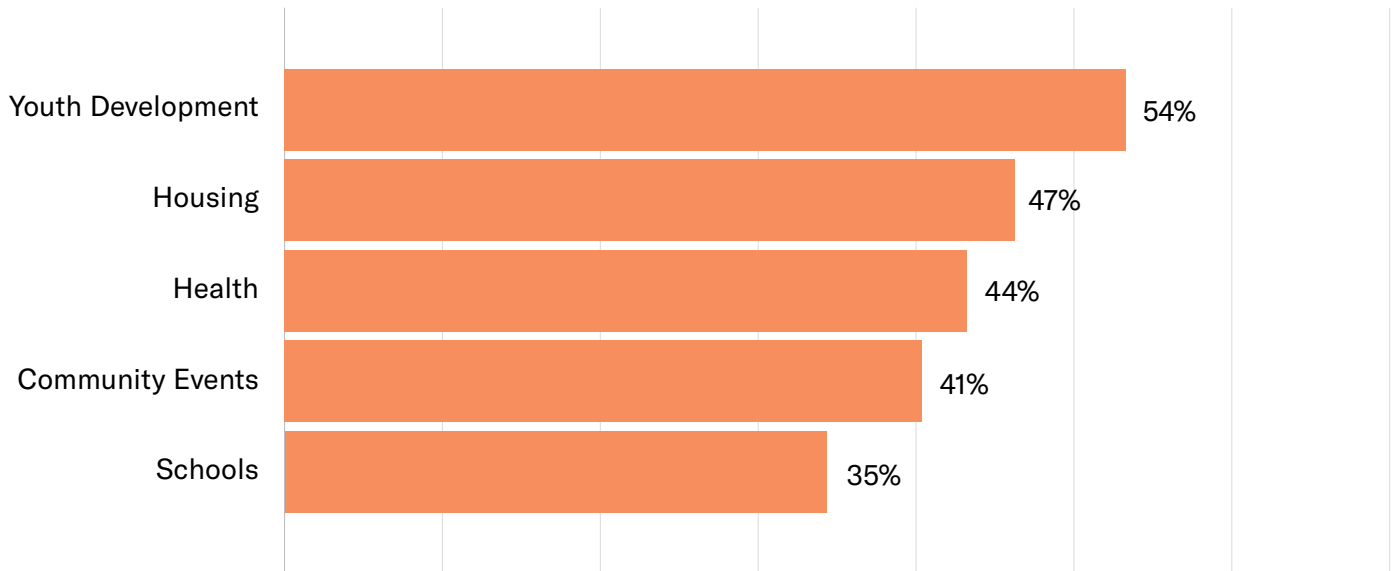
Text message was the most common choice for how black community members want news outlets to communicate with them, followed by community organizations, email, Facebook and friends/family. ONME News CEO Julia Dudley Najieb told us she texts and Facebook messages her articles to community members. When it comes to community organizations, people said they trusted information delivered by West Fresno Family Resource Center, Take A Stand Committee, Bringing Broken Neighborhoods Back to Life, Fresno Black Chamber of Commerce and Fresno Vibe.

Many other people told us Facebook was a fundamental way information is passed around in West Fresno. Janice Sumler, chief executive officer of Take A Stand Committee, told us Facebook is her channel of choice to boost events. Pastors, advocates and event promoters often tag up to 100 people in posts.

Organizer Aaron Foster pointed out that relying on Facebook can exclude generations above and below him: “Facebook is good but the young kids say Facebook is for old people. You have to have something that’s universal.” Beyond age-based echo chambers, Foster was concerned about language and race-based information silos, too.

Mail delivery was not an option in our survey, but some African-American community members mentioned they would like to get neighborhood news that way. Resident Debbie Darden recommended: “[They should] put together a list of things taking place in West Fresno, put it on a card and send it out!”

### Which of these issues are most important to you?



Black community members ranked youth development as the top issue they cared about, followed by housing, health, community events and schools. Youth development and education were also the leading topics people mentioned in our fourth question about specific stories journalists should look into. Some of those suggestions include:

- “What can youth do to come together, we all need to be on the same page”
- “Community events, stuff for kids”
- “Doing more for youth to stay off the streets, summer jobs, programs”
- “Welfare of kids, education and school”
- “Children and opportunities”
- “Things which matter: jobs, education, the youth!”
- “Really I think that the community needs to come up with more activities (free) for youth to keep busy + out of trouble :)”

- “Education, after school programs”
- “More opportunities for teens to be involved”
- “Things for youth to feel safe”

Although not an option in our survey, development was also a common concern of black community members, particularly of people connected to southwest Fresno. The physical infrastructure of the neighborhood reflects decades of disinvestment. Redlining and restrictive housing covenants **segregated** black Fresnoans into this neighborhood in the first half of the 20th century. Redlining also hobbled efforts to build high-quality housing and retail, and zoning encouraged heavy industry to take root nearby. The construction of Highway 99 in the 1950s destroyed swaths of existing homes, fouled the air and created another incentive to build industrial facilities.

The community has a long tradition of organizing to advance its own priorities and protect health, however. Concerned Citizens of West Fresno, helmed by resident Mary Curry, led a 12-year-long



Maxie L. Parks Community Center is one of two locations of the West Fresno Family Resource Center. Residents told us they are important spaces for community events, youth programs, meetings and food giveaways. Photo: Olivia Henry.

campaign that forced meat-rendering company Darling International to move operations away from the neighborhood. Residents also pushed for a large portion of the \$70 million [Transformative Climate Communities grant](#) to be invested in southwest Fresno.

In our surveys, residents asked for more information about development projects and plans — including the Southwest Specific Plan; the construction of high-speed rail in their backyard; and the slated city college campus and connected projects. Some specific comments include:

- “Going to tear down stuff on the west side”
- “Development. We need more money here, they take our money.”

- “Lack of development in West Fresno”
- “Southwest Specific Plan”
- “Health impacts of land use/industrial sites”
- “A better public process”
- “The divide between north and south Fresno”

Wanting to be apprised of community meetings and cultural gatherings was another frequent request from black residents. One community member we surveyed at a job fair put it bluntly: “Community events need to be better advertised.” The neighborhood is at the heart of many public processes and a raft of community meetings: During our

assessment there was a workshop on creating an anti-displacement plan, a meeting about the possibility of funding an anti-violence program, input meetings on the selection of a new city police chief and a report-back on the new city council member's first 100 days.

Take A Stand Committee CEO Janice Sumler said community meetings can be hard to keep track of without a centralized, trusted calendar. "If we have a system set up so information is given on a timely basis, we would have much better turnout, particularly around 93706, city council decisions, development decisions, whatever is going around here."

**"Many of our residents don't know about it or they hear after an ordinance is passed. They're reactive instead of proactive."**

**—Take A Stand Committee CEO Janice Sumler**

## **Hmong Community Members in South Fresno**

### **Methodology Summary**

**Surveyors:** Chali Lee and Rocky Vang

**Number of surveys:** 184

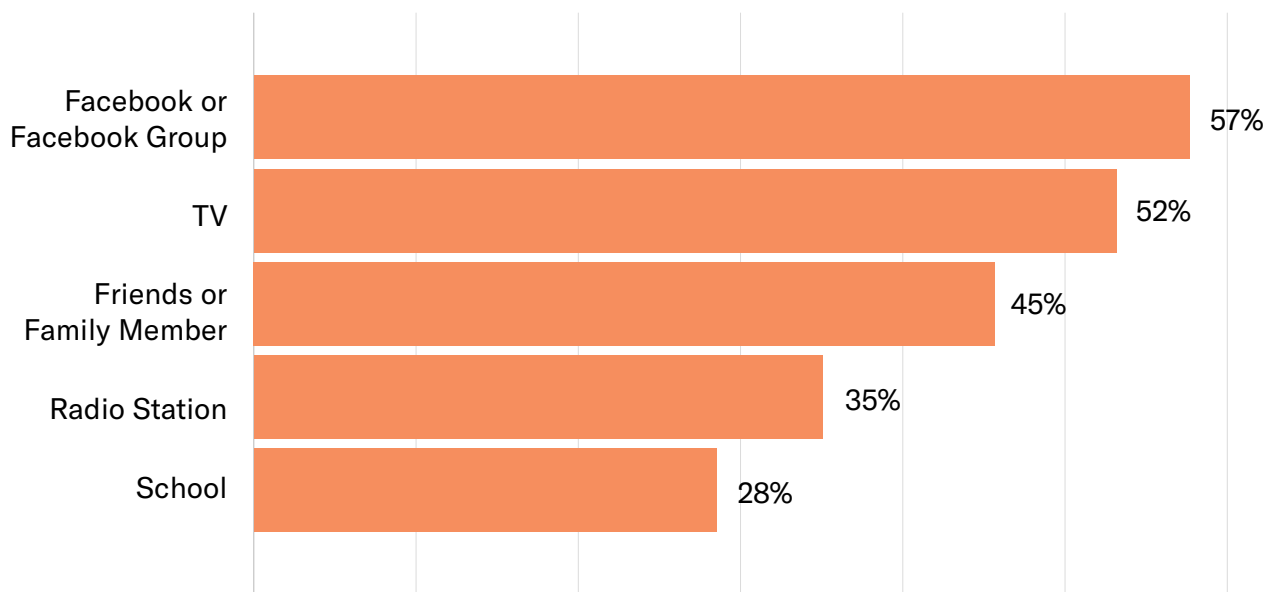
**Surveying Locations:**

- Fresno Hmong & Queer Group
- Fresno State Hmong Student Association
- Lee Education Health and Family Institute
- Clovis High School
- V-Nai Mini Mall
- Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries
- TC Freshmeat Supermarket
- Asia Supermarket
- Fresno Fairgrounds swap meet



**Listening Sessions:**

*Fresno Hmong and Queer Group:* This group was formed in 2018 with the help of civic advocacy organization Hmong Innovating Politics. Olivia Henry and Rocky Vang visited for a 60-minute listening session with about 12 participants.

**How do you get local news and information?**

Among members of the Hmong community we surveyed, Facebook was the most common way people said they received local news and information, followed by television, friends/family, radio and schools. People we spoke with mentioned several influential Facebook users and pages:

- Hmong American Experience, a page curated by UC Merced lecturer Seng Vang, shares news articles related to Hmong life in the U.S. Vang and his team also share pictures and posts from community members. During our assessment, the page often boosted images of Hmong college graduates — Vang said this was part of a campaign to promote higher education among Hmong youth.
- Hmong Women Today is a professional network that offers women both online and offline community. Cofounders Annie Lee and Choua Step Chang host weekly Facebook Live shows, manage Facebook groups and organize in-person gatherings. Their live videos, delivered in a mix of Hmong and English, are usually interviews with Hmong women doing compelling work.
- Some KBIF 900 AM programs connect with audience members using Facebook Live. Youth-focused program Gen X is one of those. After eight Hmong teenagers died by suicide between 1998 and 2000, the station developed the show to provide an outlet for young people — at the time

GenXers — to hear their perspectives represented.

Today the show has four Millennial hosts who rotate shifts Monday through Friday. On Facebook Live, audience members request songs, ask questions and interact with hosts. One of the hosts, Cher Peek Lee, is a photographer and entrepreneur with a large Facebook following of his own.

Host Vila Xiong, who graduated from Fresno State with a journalism degree, said the show serves as a touchstone for people across the country. “People say they tune in because I’m losing my Hmong, especially in places where there aren’t a ton of Hmong people like in New York. This show brings them back home.”

When it comes to television news sources, older respondents were more likely to say they watched Hmong-language channels. For monolingual elders, Hmong television, radio and YouTube channels can be their only media sources for local news and information.

Those channels are also valued community media spaces: On the day we visited KBIF, station manager Tony Donato was preparing to air a funeral announcement, a service they often provide for free. When Cheng Yang, a Hmong language teacher at Edison High School in southwest Fresno, gave his students an assignment to write letters to veterans of the Hmong Special Guerilla Units, one of the local Hmong TV stations invited the kids to read their letters on air.

Vila Xiong and Ka Shoua Thao are two of the four hosts of Gen X, a show aimed at younger listeners of KBIF 900 AM.



Organizer Mai Thao told us KBIF 900 AM also builds that sense of community. “Even if you’re a super local business owner with little boutique shop of Hmong goods, you can totally advertise. For community events, PSAs are either free or affordable for info to go out from the county, Hmong community members or organizations. A lot of the Hmong nonprofits have regular showings on radio and on TV, too, in some cases. It’s like the one place where you can get any or all types of information,” she said. “I was literally listening on my drive, it was a testimonial of a Hmong herb someone was selling from Minnesota. Then you turn and it’s talking about local propositions, you can tune in and hear Hmong music...”

KBIF Gen X host Ka Shoua Thao used to work at Hmong TV Network and said when the station went off the air for a month to prepare for the transition to HD, it “sort of caused a panic.” Elders from the housing complex across the street her office

marched in asking why they couldn’t get the station to work.

Respondents below the age of 40 or 45 were more likely to cite English-language stations such as ABC 30, KMPH Fox 26 and KSEE 24. Hmong TV Network President Ying Fang, who is in his 40s, told us: “A lot of people around my age and younger would do that because they know English or they grew up here,” Fang said. “We don’t have a good amount of younger viewers, so we’re always struggling for that.”

Hmong American Experience page creator Seng Vang, also in his 40s, said what discouraged him from watching Hmong television was less about language and more about journalism. He said Hmong-language media, especially television, lacks staff with formal training to produce and source news, and that poses a problem for younger people socialized in a professionalized media environment: “That’s why the second generation don’t trust that media.”

The July 8 broadcast of Hmong TV Network included a story on Mayor Lee Brand vetoing several budget items put forward by the city council.



“I’m less inclined to listen to [Hmong] radio and watch TV because I don’t think it’s a really good source of [news] information,” echoed organizer Mai Thao. “It’s hard to distinguish what is true and not true.”

Zoua Vang explored those concerns in her 2008 [master’s thesis](#) about Hmong radio. Vang grew up in Fresno and was an anchor on KSEE 24 between 1999 and 2004. Her research found that 50 percent of Hmong radio news stories cited zero sources and 60 percent of newscasts included personal opinion. She noted that many of the advertisements and sponsorships were voiced by news anchors.

Fifteen years after Zoua Vang’s tenure at KSEE 24, people still mentioned her as a point of pride. Another Hmong anchor, Gia Vang, announced she was leaving KMPH Fox 26 during our assessment. Almost every community member we spoke with commented what loss her departure was. One article about her new position in the Twin Cities received more than a thousand reactions on the Hmong American Experience page.

Lucky Siphongsay, program manager for Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, said Gia Vang was embraced by the community: “People follow her on Facebook, they make comments, they even come through the door talking about her.” Community member Maiyer Vang agreed: “Professionals will watch her, I even think elders will watch her, just to know they have a Hmong person on Fox 26.”

ABC 30 was cited as a news source by younger Hmong community members. One person told us her sister likes ABC 30 because of its educational Children First

programming. ABC 30 was also an primary source of local news for Shai Chang, one of the Fresno Hmong & Queer Group leaders. Chang sits on the station’s Youth Advisory Council. He said staff asked him to download the station’s app and give feedback.

“As the youth we don’t really watch quote unquote TV, so we don’t see TV news. That’s one of the things they are trying to figure out.”

Other members of the Hmong community have a bitter association with channel 30. In 2015, the station reported on the murder of 33-year-old Zyang Vang by her abusive ex-husband. According to testimony Vang gave during 2004 annulment proceedings, the couple had an arranged marriage that began when Vang was 12 years old. Vang said the marriage included a bride price paid to her parents.

ABC 30’s April 2 [story](#) began with this lede: “The revelation that a murdered Fresno woman was sold to the man who killed her when she was just 12-years-old has raised questions about the Hmong culture.”

Community members told us the station’s reporting turned a tragic incident into an attack on Hmong culture. They said ABC 30’s description of Hmong marriage customs was not only incorrect, but drew attention from the issue of domestic violence. The coverage sparked an online petition with nearly 3,000 signatures demanding ABC 30 apologize.

President and general manager Dan Adams said one of the station’s advisory council members alerted the newsroom to the community’s reaction. Adams invited a group of Hmong community leaders to ABC

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Edison High School teacher Cheng Yang kindly translated our survey into Hmong for this assessment. Surveyor Rocky Vang is a Yang's former student.

30 to talk through what happened. He said staff walked away with more context and an understanding of how those stories could have been told with greater sensitivity.

“Had we not had the advisory council, we may not have received a phone call like that,” Adams said. “That’s how it’s supposed to work.”

Hmong Tribune Publisher Steve Thao was part of the group that spoke to Adams. Read his version of events [here](#) on page six.

KBIF host Ka Shoua Thao says the sting lingers, though. “The community at large is like, ‘Do you sell your daughters?’ When that happens it’s hard to regain trust. Elders remember that.”

**“We’re still largely portrayed as immigrants. A part of the community, but a separate entity.”**

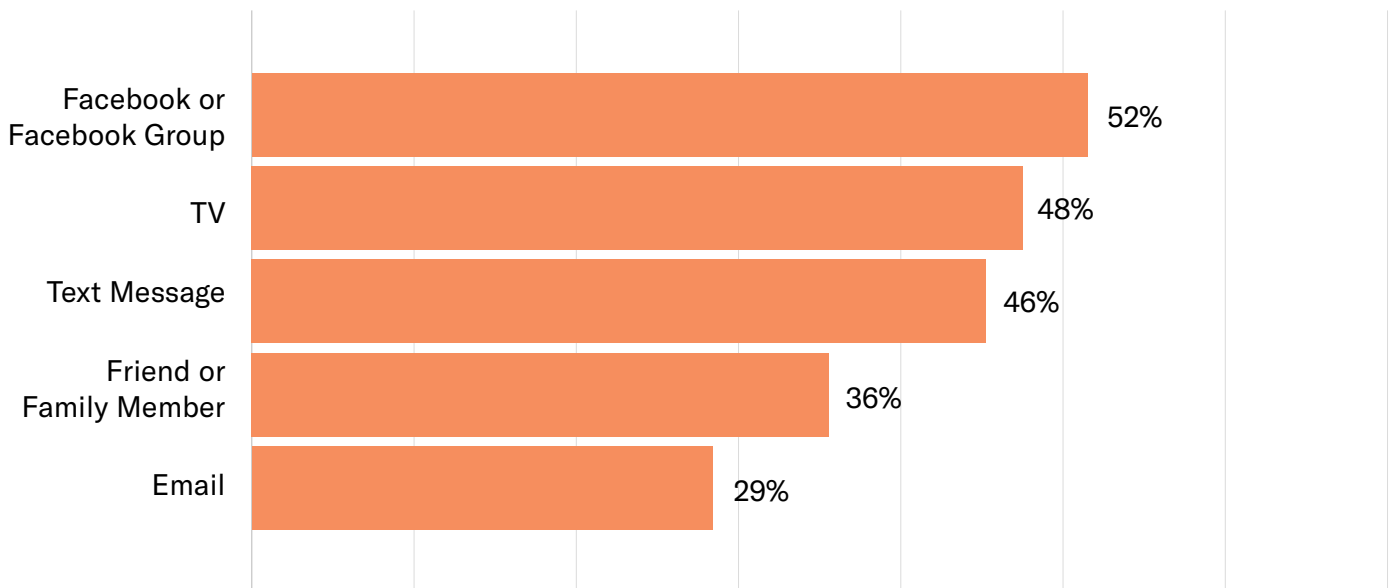
**—Ka Shoua Thao**

The incident spurred teacher Cheng Yang to include cultural lessons in his Hmong-language class curriculum at Edison High School. Because the schools train children to cite sources like ABC 30 as fact, Yang said, his students weren't equipped to critically receive what they were hearing.

"You have the young people who do not know everything about Hmong culture but believe anything from a reputable news station. So they believe everything, right? 'Oh my gosh, my culture's so bad.'"

Yang said he hopes this classroom provides a space for context, facts and discussion that helps kids navigate generational and cultural differences. That's something he wants from Fresno's local news, too. He said those bridge news outlets are missing, something FIRM's Lucky Siphongsay agreed with. Siphongsay said for people his age, their legacy media options are either ethnic outlets catered toward elders or general market news where Southeast Asians are can be invisible or othered. "The transition from second generation, they're in need of a media presence," he said.

### If a news outlet wanted to reach you, what would be the best way to do it?



Facebook was the top choice for how Hmong community members wanted to be contacted, followed by television, text message, friends/family and email. May Gnia Her is the executive director of Stone Stoup, a community organization that runs a daycare serving 40 percent Hmong families. Her said she reaches parents her own age through Facebook, but for people in her parent's generation, tabling at the grocery store is as important a messaging

tool as Hmong TV or radio. People also told us the Fresno Fairgrounds swap meet is another space where they reach Hmong community members.

YouTube was not among our survey options, but many community members wrote it in. As a platform, it seems to bridge generations. Young people we spoke with said they watch peers' video channels. Gen X hosts Ka Shoua Thao and Cher Peek Lee

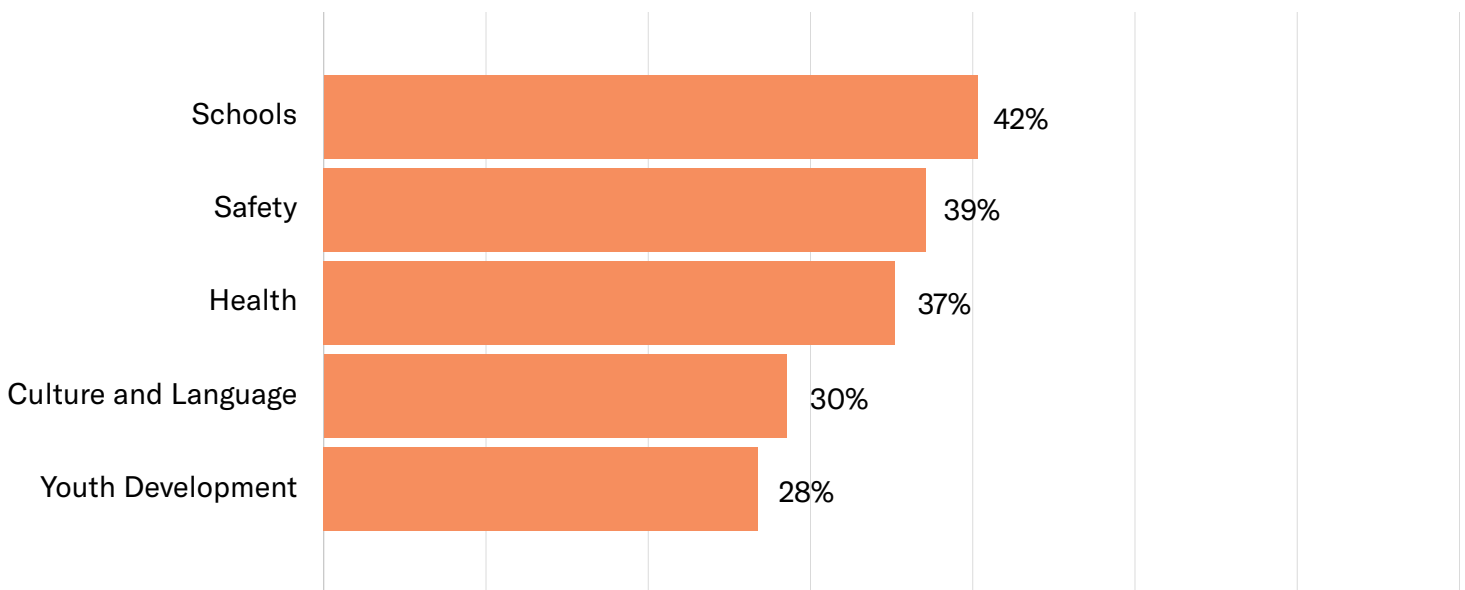
both have their own YouTube shows, for example. People also described elders as dedicated YouTube users.

“[Elders] get on a Youtube channel or video and it just plays throughout the day,” Mai Thao told us. “In particular it’s international news based in the home country. My aunt really likes the channel where they tell folk stories. It’s literally this lady telling old Hmong folk stories. She’ll be on that for days, but with the algorithm other videos come through.”

Again and again, people told us the messenger can be more important than the message. “The information we send, you need trust. Cultural groups don’t have rapport with outsiders sharing information,” Lucky Siphonsay said.

Hmong Innovating Politics community organizer Katie Moua agreed, saying that family can be the ultimate arbiter of truth. “If something comes on one of the local news stations and your family member says something different, your family would be more trusted even if the facts were against them because that family member comes first.”

### Which of these issues are most important to you?



School was the most-selected topic that Hmong community members cared about, followed by health, safety, culture/language and youth development. Even when they selected other categories, our community liaisons noted they were talking about kids: Survey participants said they cared about the safety of young people, their health, and their retention of language and culture.

Some of the specific story suggestions people offered were:

- “Low graduation rates for Southeast Asian students in high school and high drop-out rates in college”
- “Improving cultural awareness in schools throughout the community”

- “Foreign language classes in schools”
- “Youth needs to connect back to culture”
- “Youth needs to continue learning Hmong language”
- “How to encourage students to pursue higher education”
- “Mental health amongst Hmong youth and students”
- “Youth safety (especially at night)”

FIRM’s Lucky Siphongsay said if he were a news editor, he would assign someone to report on graduation rates among different groups — Hmong, Laotian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Thai, Khmu, Mien and more — and lift up solutions. A 2019 Fresno State **analysis** found that while Hmong students perform academically on par with other groups, they graduate later and at lower rates. Just three percent of Hmong students who enter as first-time freshmen graduate in four years compared to 15 percent of students across the university.

### Latinos in rural areas

## Methodology Summary

**Surveyors:** Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales

**Number of Surveys:** 161

### Surveying Locations:

- Summer Night Lights event in Ivanhoe
- The Speedy Mart in Ivanhoe
- Ivanhoe Town Council
- Guadalajara Meat Market Supermarket in Ivanhoe
- An immigration resource fair at Raisin City Elementary School
- Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Selma
- Selma Swap Meet
- An immigration resource Fair at Virginia Lee Rose Elementary in Madera
- United Farm Workers rally in Madera
- Family Dollar in Orange Cove
- A.C. Supermarket in Orange Cove



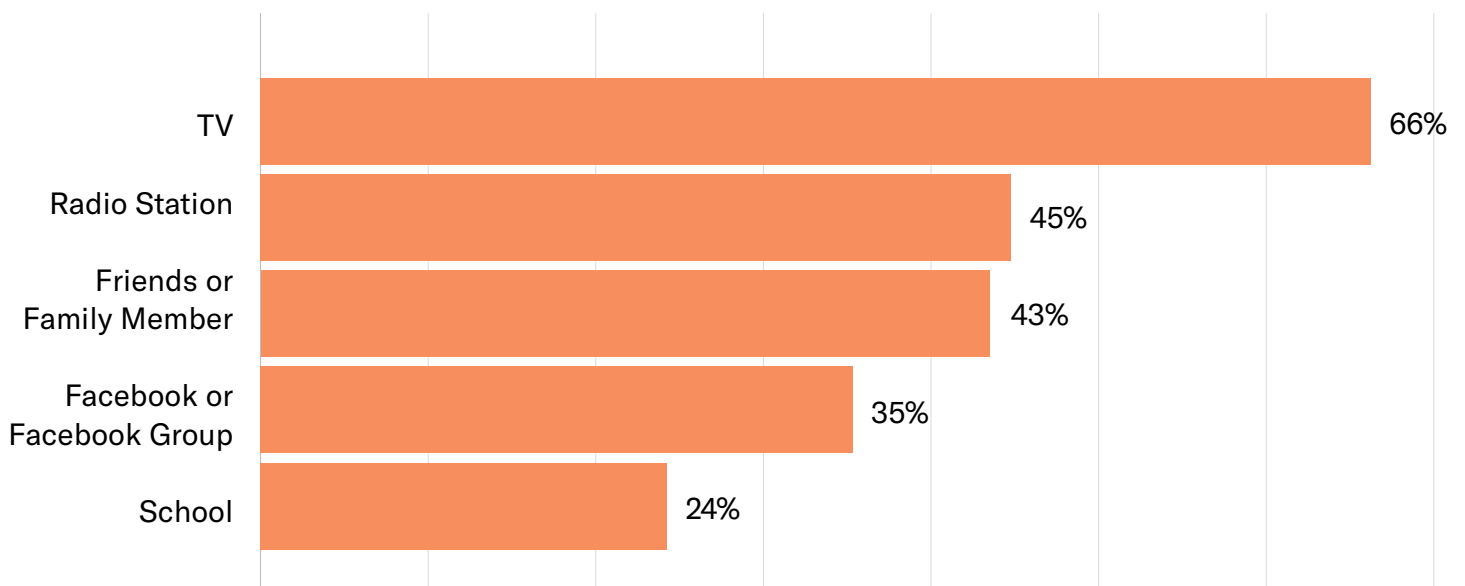
- Family Education Center in Cutler
- Little Caesars in Orosi
- Orosi Swap Meet
- Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District Board meeting
- Cinco de Mayo Carnival in Dinuba

### Listening Sessions:

- *El Quinto Sol Community members:* Lindsay-based community organization El Quinto Sol promotes arts and culture as civic engagement. They host leadership councils in unincorporated communities and advocate on issues such as clean water and pesticides. Olivia Henry and María Eraña visited a group of about 25 people who are part of El Quinto Sol's network.
- *Cutler-Orosi Senior Center:* This senior center is operated by Community Services Employment Training. Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales visited a group of about 10 participants for a 60-minute listening session.
- *Ivanhoe Town Council:* A group of residents in the unincorporated community of Ivanhoe formed this council in 2018 and are working to become a 501c3. The group meets monthly. There were 25 participants on the day that Olivia Henry and Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales visited for a 20-minute listening session.

Note: Latino is a broad category that includes many different identities and communities, in which many languages are spoken.

### How do you get local news and information?



Far and away, television was the most common source of local news and information for rural Latino residents, followed by friends/family, radio stations, Facebook and schools. Many of the specific sources people mentioned mirrored those mentioned by Latinos in Fresno, but with a few key differences:

- *Radio claimed a larger share of answers.* In rural areas, 45 percent of Latinos we surveyed said they used radio to learn what's going on. Just 37 percent of Fresno residents said so. Anecdotally, we spoke to more farm workers in rural areas, who told us the radio is often on while they work. Radio wasn't just a way for rural residents to get information, it was a way to share it: Two community organizers, one in Ivanhoe and another in Lindsay, said they called Radio Campesina to announce events. Another Lindsay organizer was clear about who she trusted: "Radio Bilingüe es la verdad. No es mentiras." *Radio Bilingüe is the truth. It's not lies.*
- *Community Facebook groups for rural towns were more commonly mentioned.* In many places, Facebook groups are some towns' digital bulletin board. People called attention to those groups in Dinuba, Cutler-Orosi and Ivanhoe. El Quinto Sol's Isabel Arrollo said "buy & sell" groups in the rural communities she works in are popular ways to share and receive information.

Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales checks out newspaper boxes in his hometown of Cutler-Orosi.  
Photo: Olivia Henry.

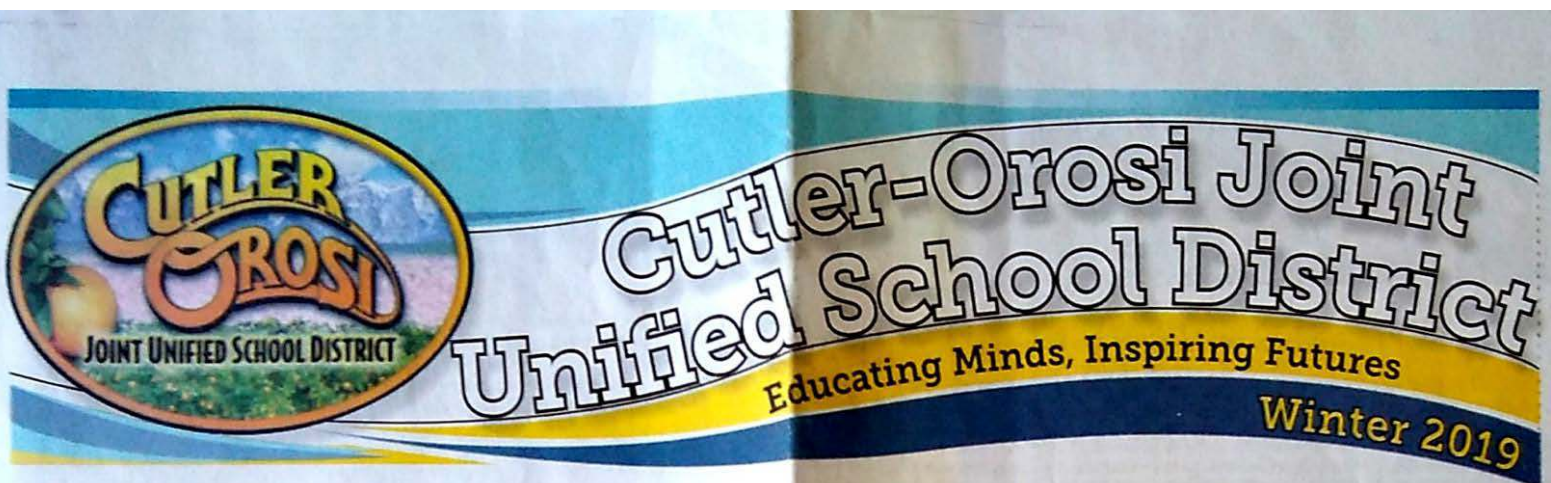


- As in Fresno, schools play an important role in the information ecosystem, but for different reasons. About a third of Tulare County's residents live in unincorporated communities. In many places, schools serve as a critical civic information role — they share community notices, host public meetings and more. School boards are often the most localized elected body. Karina Gallardo, a former organizer with Visalia-based Community Water Center, said that rural schools shared drought information through its recorded message service. Gallardo also said they organize through physical bulletin boards at school sites, teacher announcements, PTA clubs and parent coffee hours.

At a Lindsay listening session, one resident said she gets phone calls from the school even though she doesn't have school-age kids. A resident in Ivanhoe had the same experience: "I'm not a parent, more like a grandparent, but I like to get news about what's happening at the schools. Sometimes they invite community members to events, but I also care about the young people in our community."

In Cutler-Orosi, the school district even puts out its own bilingual newspaper produced by district superintendent Yolanda Valdez. Orosi High School Principal Roberto Vaca described Valdez as an indispensable part of the local information ecosystem — "she's like the mayor of this town."

The Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District publishes a bilingual newspaper five times a year. It's produced by district superintendent Yolanda Valdez. Photo: Olivia Henry



### SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE:

Great things are happening in Cutler-Orosi JUSD. The award of a Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant that will facilitate the integration of the art standards into our curriculum and provide for the purchase of many band instruments and new band uniforms was a great Christmas present in December. A partnership and award from the Central Valley Foundation will also allow us to offer Transitional Kindergarten to more of our youngest students in preparation for kindergarten next school year. Work-based learning opportunities are increasing with the development of industry partners providing our secondary students with invaluable opportunities and internships. Staff and students are working hard as this second half of the school year is underway.

The greatest news of all is that Lowell Continuation High School has been recognized as a Model Continuation School by the State of California. The staff's high expectations and nurturing manner for educating students has been recognized!

We are breaking ground on the Sports Complex this month. The Ground Breaking ceremony is slated for February 14th. We are excited to complete these facility projects that will enhance our athletic opportunities and be an amenity to the community.

We continue to focus on literacy to increase the academic achievement of all students. Please support your students with a quiet place to read and with an established time to do it. We need all students to read

### MENSAJE DE LA SUPERINTENDENTE:



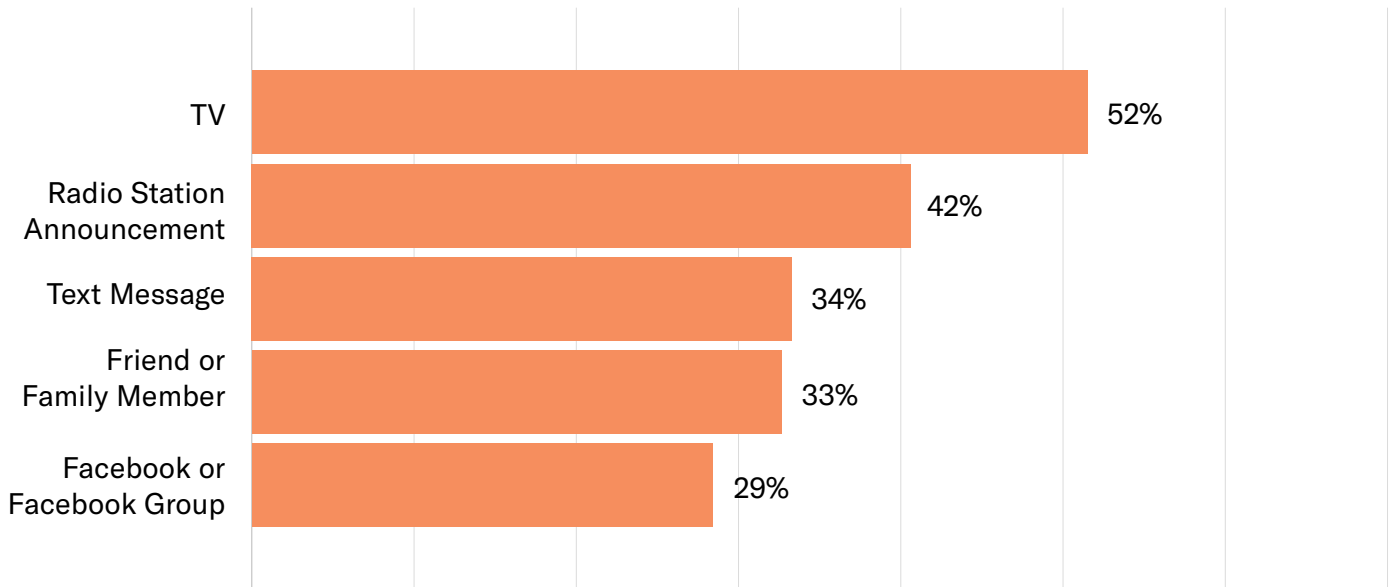
Yolanda Valdez  
Superintendent/  
Superintendente

Grandes cosas están sucediendo en el Distrito de Cutler-Orosi. El premio de una beca de apoyo y enriquecimiento académico para estudiantes que facilitará la integración de los estándares artísticos en nuestro plan de estudios y proporcionará la compra de muchos instrumentos de banda y nuevos uniformes de banda. Esto fue un excelente regalo de navidad en diciembre. Una asociación y la otorgación de una beca del Central Valley Foundation también nos permitirá ofrecer Kinder de Transición a más de nuestros estudiantes más pequeños en la preparación para kinder para el próximo año escolar. Las oportunidades de aprendizaje en la base de trabajo están aumentando con el desarrollo de socios dentro de las industrias que proporcionan a nuestros estudiantes secundarios pasantías y oportunidades invaluable. El personal y los estudiantes están trabajando duro ya que esta segunda mitad del año escolar está en marcha. La más grande noticia de todas es que la Escuela de Continuación de Lowell ha sido reconocida como una escuela de continuación modelo por el estado de California. ¡Las altas expectativas de los empleados y la manera cuidadosa en la que educan a estudiantes ha sido reconocida!

Estamos abriendo camino en el Complejo Deportivo este mes. La ceremonia de inauguración está programada para el 14 de febrero. Estamos muy contentos de completar estos proyectos de instalaciones que mejorarán nuestras oportunidades deportivas y serán un servicio para la comunidad.

Continuamos enfocándonos en la alfabetización para aumentar el logro académico de todos los estudiantes. Por favor, apoye a sus estudiantes con un lugar tranquilo para leer y con un tiempo establecido para hacerlo. Necesitamos que todos

### If a news outlet wanted to reach you, what would be the best way to do it?



When it comes to how rural Latino community members wanted to get news, television was the top choice followed by radio announcement, text message, friends/family and Facebook. As with the previous question, rural residents chose radio

announcements in greater proportions than urban residents. When it comes to information sharing among friends and family, former freelance reporter Juan Santiago explained how it works within his Zapotec community in Madera.

We surveyed at a United Farm Workers rally in Madera. The union was advocating for the Blue Card proposal, which would give undocumented workers a path to citizenship. Photo: Olivia Henry.



**“We don’t struggle to share information, it’s the kind of information. We know everybody. It’s the most solid and constant communication. They are farmers, they talk in the van, it’s the organic way of sharing information.”**  
**—Juan Santiago,**  
**a former freelance reporter**

He continued: “The media is for English-speaking people who are fluent with technology. The population I work with cannot read in Spanish.”

Text messages were a relatively low-ranking way Latinos in rural areas wanted to receive information. Poor cellular service could be one reason why. When we spoke with Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability Policy Advocate Pedro Hernández, he was in the unincorporated, western Fresno County community of Cantua Creek handing out flyers about water contamination door to door — a strategy he picked in part because of bad phone reception and low access to WiFi, he said. That’s not the case everywhere, however. In our listening session in the incorporated Tulare County community of Lindsay, residents voted text messages as the chief way they would want to get news. They told us they get regular texts from schools, the Mexican consulate, health clinics and health fairs.

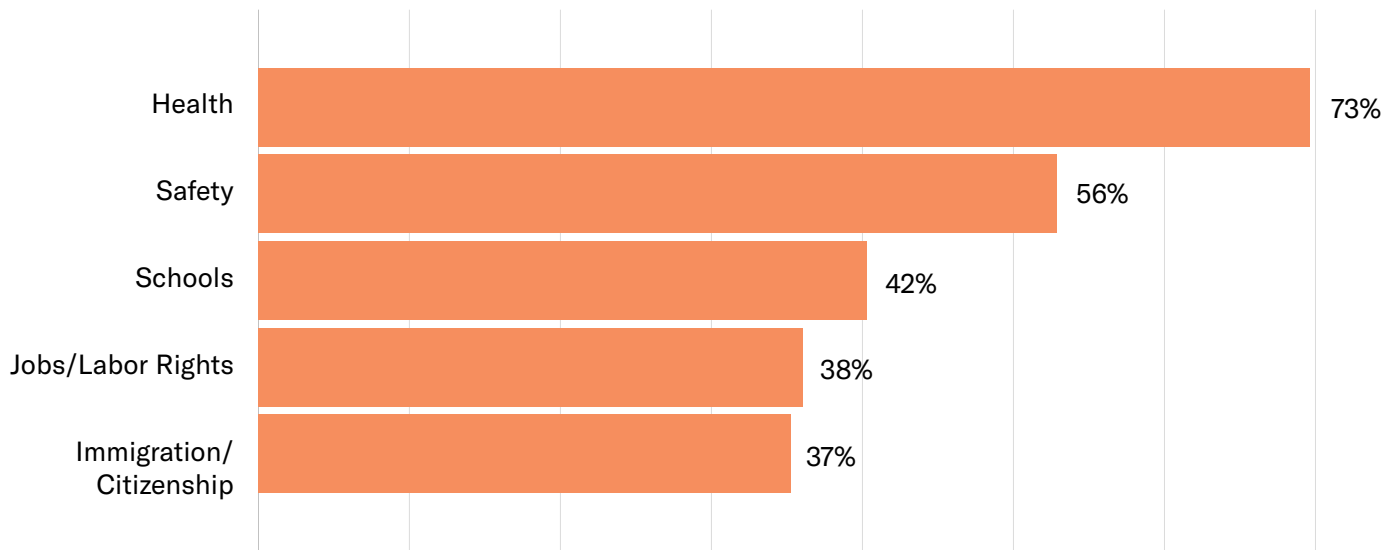
The school district also offers free WiFi to any household where a student lives.

Newspapers did not rank among the top five choices for how people want to be contacted by news outlets. That doesn’t mean there’s no interest in the format. A Lindsay resident told us: “I would love for them to start sending newspapers out, I would love that. We used to get the [Porterville] Reader for free. You kind of knew what was going on that day. Even just a newsletter. [Now] you have to look at the bulletin board of city hall.”

Community organizations also did not place in residents’ top five choices for how they want to get news. Even so, we saw several examples organizations serving as bearers and interpreters of information. Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability organizer Pedro Hernández presented at every Ivanhoe Town Council Meeting we attended, sharing information about how residents could get air monitors and help with well testing. He answered questions and promised to investigate those queries he couldn’t answer. During other group discussions, he offered useful context and translation.

Hernández told us Ivanhoe’s meeting is one of many he attends around the Valley. He said the core of his job is to respond to what he hears from residents: “If there are questions about how we can get roads, I’ll look up funding sources and develop a fact sheet and host a conversation with folks too.”

Hernández said he tries to serve as a watchdog by monitoring the meeting agendas of local agencies and alerting residents to issues of concern. “We try to capitalize on the relationships we have built to spread that information,” he said.



### Which of these issues are most important to you?

Health was the most important topic for Latinos in rural areas. Residents frequently mentioned water quality concerns in surveys and during listening sessions. Some participants in our Lindsay listening session disagreed about whether municipal water was safe to drink. Others said they heard about community meetings addressing water quality but couldn't attend them because of time, a lack of transportation and the driving distance to Visalia. With those barriers, one person commented that when it came to water: "No recibimos información completa." *We don't receive complete information.*

Lindsay residents had also just received a letter notifying them of a planned spraying event to treat pests on grapes and were unsure about the health impacts. Pesticides were also a concern at the Ivanhoe Town Council meeting the day we held our listening session. Ivanhoe residents worried that pesticides sprayed on the surrounding orange groves was causing asthma and cancer.

Other rural residents we surveyed echoed those concerns, writing that they wanted a reporter to look into:

- "Asthma and asthma patients"
- "Aire y agua y sus contaminantes"  
*Air and water contamination*
- "Orange orchards are more heavily sprayed than any other crop field — and Orange Cove has a lot of orange orchards"
- "Pesticides"

On the topic of safety, public infrastructure was rural residents' chief concern: streetlights, stop signs, poor road quality, poor sidewalks or no sidewalks at all. A Lindsay resident told us she fell into a pothole while walking with her granddaughter one night, frightening them both. Residents also complained about wild dogs that have bitten children. One of the Ivanhoe Town Council's main projects has been to advocate for stop signs, street lights and traffic calming.



In many rural communities, schools serve as a critical civic information role — they disseminate community notices, host public meetings and more. The Ivanhoe Town Council meets at the town elementary school. Photo: Olivia Henry.

Survey participants also wrote down:

- “Road infrastructure”
- “Sidewalks and safety”
- “The lack of county funding for streets”
- “No lights on street, not safe to walk at night, town council meetings.”
- “Loose dogs compromising community safety.”

Immigration and labor rights were clear priorities for rural residents. People wanted more immigration resources and information about labor laws. One Lindsay resident told us: “When I’m working on

the field [and I feel sick], they say sit, but just for 10 minutes. I don’t know if this is right or not.” Another community members wanted to know how she could get sick hours. Similarly, survey participants told us they wanted more information about:

- “Salud, inmigración y derechos laborales, para mí, son muy importantes.” *Health, immigration, labor rights are really important*
- “Immigration, citizenship info; environmental pollution; jobs and labor rights.”
- “Information on why field work is paid at a minimum rate, when the work deserves to be paid like higher skilled work.”

## INFORMATION NEEDS AND GAPS

In hundreds of conversations with residents of South Fresno and nearby communities, we heard these four topics mentioned again and again. People wanted more information and news coverage of the following:

**Youth and schools.** Community members wanted information about how to support childrens' academic success and where to find out about after-school programs, youth development groups and mentorship opportunities. People wanted accountability reporting around inequities in the school system.

**Measured coverage of public safety.** Residents asked for more thoughtful, solutions-oriented journalism about crime in their neighborhoods. Many people want news outlets to explore disparities in public

infrastructure such as sidewalks, street lights, street conditions and dumping that pose a threat to public safety. They wanted to know how they themselves could make a difference, asking what phone numbers they should call and when community clean-ups were happening.

**Low-cost or free resources for families.** We spoke to many people seeking information about resources to support their families. These community members asked for news that would help them meet their immediate needs and goals such as where to find food giveaways, affordable healthcare, immigration services and free activities for children.

**Accountability around development.** People wanted journalists to investigate special interests shaping the future of their neighborhoods. This was a common request in West Fresno, where community members wondered how public meetings and planned developments were going to benefit them.

Members of El Quinto Sol's network participate in a listening session. Photo: Olivia Henry.





## INSIGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Our assessment is based on hundreds of conversations with media, organizations, leaders and residents in South Fresno and surrounding communities. Their perspectives helped us develop some ideas to support existing and new efforts to deliver crucial news and information to residents. These ideas are preliminary and we hope they will be revised, remixed and supplanted by people who live and work in the San Joaquin Valley.

1. **Expand the reach of curricula about media literacy and the role of journalism in society.** The Fresno State Institute for Media & Public Trust is working with the Fresno County Office of Education to develop a media literacy curriculum for high school classrooms. One idea is to develop partnerships with newsrooms and community organizations to package aspects of the institute's curriculum to be delivered in a short seminar that travels to churches, parent groups and other community spaces residents identified.
2. **Support a community contributor program for local television stations.** In almost every community we visited, television was residents' leading source of local news. To enhance the connection between network channels and neighborhoods, stations could develop a community contributor program. Residents would receive journalism training and support to produce Facebook Live videos — a tool residents and reporters alike use to share news — for the stations about topics important to their communities.

Contributors could be regularly interviewed about their work during newscasts, as well.

3. **Develop a weekly community civics calendar for West Fresno residents.** West Fresno community members asked for better access to information on community meetings and events. “Whatever is going around here, many of our residents don’t know about it or they hear after an ordinance is passed. They’re reactive instead of proactive,” said Janice Sumler, the CEO of community organization Take A Stand Committee. This calendar, produced in collaboration with key neighborhood organizations and available in English and Spanish, would alert residents to civic meetings that impact their neighborhood and offer background information about the issues to be discussed there.
4. **Create a weekly local news bulletin for rural Spanish-language audiences.** Rural residents we spoke to lamented the decline of local Spanish-language news outlets. Information-sharing networks are alive and well in these communities, but access to regular, local journalism in Spanish or indigenous languages can be limited. This effort would be to aggregate local news relevant to rural residents' information needs (e.g. infrastructure; environmental health; workplace rights and safety; immigration and citizenship; and more) into a weekly bulletin to be shared in different forms. It could be distributed through text messages, radio PSAs or Facebook groups. It could also be shared physically, via printed bulletins shared at schools, community meetings or workplaces.

5. **Create a weekly local news bulletin for Fresno-based Spanish-language audiences.** Fresno organizer Germán Quiñonez told us he sees a need for local news that can zoom in closer than regional outlets can. “We need a lot more of that grassroots, really place-based information to be in the frontlines more often.” This effort would be to aggregate local and neighborhood news into a Spanish-language weekly bulletin to be shared in different forms including digitally — via text message, Facebook live or YouTube — as well as physically via printed bulletins at schools, community meetings and elsewhere.
6. **Make high school and college journalism available to professional outlets.** This would be a collaboration between Hmong, Black and Latino media and local journalism programs at nearby high schools and colleges. Editors and students would connect to pitch and assign story ideas.
7. **Offer professional journalism trainings for local media outlets.** Many community members told us they felt some local media, while important information-sharing initiatives, lack staff with formal training to produce and source news. This would be a series of professional workshops to address issues including fact-checking, ethics, balance and distinguishing editorial versus advertising content.

8. **Create a local information needs fund to which community news providers can apply for grants and assistance.** As Democracy Fund’s Josh Stearns writes in his article “[How We Know Journalism is Good for Democracy](#)”: “Quality journalism is expensive, but when you explore the economic impact of a robust press it becomes clear that a dwindling fourth estate may be even more costly. From saving lives to exposing corruption, local news produces many forms of public benefit that make our governments work better and our communities more sustainable.” As noted in this report, there is a lack of training and resources in the local news and information ecosystem and communities and families suffer as a result.

Because market solutions are not fully driving hyperlocal news products, and because philanthropic investments in local journalism are increasingly vital to the future of the industry, we recommend creating a local fund that directly addresses these gaps. And with this fund, we recommend setting up access to training and networking opportunities so grantees can thrive well beyond their grant cycle. Fostering a network of local philanthropic supporters, vital community media partners and residents who believe in the importance of local news would also have a powerful effect in driving the future of a resilient information ecosystem that can improve the lives of people across the county.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are very grateful to the many people who spoke to us about their passion and vision for their communities. We are especially thankful to the following people who helped us arrange listening sessions: Mayra Becerra, Julie Gurrola, Katie Moua, Isabel Arrollo, Jaqueline Fritz and Oralía Maceda. Many of those relationships were facilitated by María Eraña, who generously gave us feedback on many aspects of this assessment. We also thank Deb Ensor, Maya Lau, Devin McCutchen, Juan Carlos Mosqueda Rosales, Chali Lee and Aaron Frisby for their feedback on this assessment.

## APPENDIX A

### **Conversations with community-based organizations and leaders**

Between January and July 2019, we interviewed the following people about local news and information ecosystems:

- Miguel Arias, Fresno City Councilmember
- Isabel Arrollo, El Quinto Sol de America
- Lucio Avila, Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability
- Mayra Becerra, Ivanhoe Town Council
- Lilia Becerril, COMUNIDAD UNIDA, Informa, Opina, Pregunta, Avisa!! (559area)
- Danielle Bergstrom, Fresnoland
- Paul Binion, Westside Church of God
- AJ Brantley, Fresno City College
- Shai Chang, Fresno Hmong & Queer Group
- Amanda Conley, Central Valley Health Policy Institute
- Debbie Darden, Golden Westside Planning Committee
- Andrew Feil, Every Neighborhood Partnership
- Aaron Foster, Faith in the Valley
- Karina Gallardo, Community Water Center
- Floyd Harris, Fresno Freedom School

- Tim Haydock, Youth Leadership Institute
- May Gnia Her, Stone Soup
- Pedro Hernández, Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability
- Sarah Hutchinson, ACT for Women & Girls
- Andy Levine, Faith in the Valley
- Janice Mathurin, West Fresno Family Resource Center
- Katie Moua, Hmong Innovating Politics
- Myrna Nateras, Pan Valley Institute
- Daniel O’Connell, Central Valley Partnership
- Eric Payne, Central Valley Urban Institute
- Ivan Paz, Better Blackstone
- Germán Quiñonez, Every Neighborhood Partnership
- Aline Reed, Fresno Freedom School
- Gina Rodriguez, ACT for Women & Girls
- Juan Santiago, former reporter and court interpreter
- Lucky Siphongsay, Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries
- Janice Sumler, Take A Stand Committee
- Kimberley Tapscott Munson, Fresno County Board of Education
- Mai Thao, Community Organizer
- Roberto Vaca, Orosi High School
- Yolanda Valdez, Cutler-Orosi Unified School District
- Eddie Valero, Tulare County Supervisor
- Maiyer Vang, Fresno Parent University
- MaiKa Yang, Community Member
- Cheng Yang, Edison High School

## APPENDIX B

### Conversations with media

Between January and July 2019, we spoke with the following people:

- Dan Adams, ABC 30
- Jim Boren, Fresno State Institute for Media and Trust
- Brianna Calix, Fresno Bee
- Sergio Cortes, uSpark
- Rick Curiel, Dinuba Sentinel
- Tony Donato, KBIF
- Julia Dudley Najieb, ONME News
- María Eraña, Radio Bilingüe
- Michael Evans, Community Alliance
- Ying Fang, Hmong TV Network
- Jorge Guizar, La Campesina
- Jamila Harris, KOFP
- Mackenzie Mays, former Fresno Bee reporter
- Paul Myers, Foothills Sun Gazette
- Jamall Okoegwale, KOFP
- Gurdeep Singh Shergill, KBIF
- Kody Stoebig, kNOw
- Ka Shoua Thao, KBIF
- Laura Tsutsui, KVPR
- Seng Vang, Hmong American Experience
- Moua Vang, KBIF
- Monica Velez, KVPR
- Vila Xiong, KBIF
- Lar Yang, Hmongstory 40 & Txahwb Magazine

## APPENDIX C

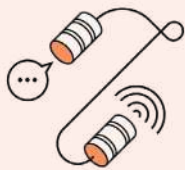
### Community listening sessions

Depending on how much time we had, we completed some or all of the following activities during our listening sessions:

*Sticker voting exercise.* The team prepared three large sheets of paper with the three survey questions (“Which of these information sources do you rely on the most to know what’s happening in your community?”, “If a news outlet wants to share important news with you, what’s the best way to do it?” and “Which of these issues are most important to you?”) and answer options written in marker. Participants were given three dots — one green, one yellow and one red — to represent their first, second and third choices. They then answered each question by placing three dots to indicate their three ranked preferences. After the voting, the group as a whole discussed each question, noting what surprised them and offering specific examples.

*Post-it exercise.* Each participant was given a stack of post-it notes and asked to write down three topics they wanted more news coverage of. Participants posted their responses on a wall and a facilitator clustered them by theme. We then had a short group discussion to start eliciting what information people want on those issues and where they go to find information. If you wrote this, what did you mean? Has it been hard to find information on this topic? When you want information on this issue, where do you turn? What info do you wish you had about this issue?

*Discussion:* What was the last local news story they remember sharing? Where was the story reported? Where did they share it, and why? If you were the editor of a local news outlet focused on your neighborhood, how would you deliver news and what story would you cover this month?



**LISTENING POST  
COLLECTIVE**  
a project of Internews

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