

paper MEDIA GUIDE

PITTSBURGH ALLIANCE FOR
PEOPLE-EMPOWERED REPORTING



**Journalism built by workers,
with the community.**

paper ▶ OUR STORY

In October 2022, the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh went on strike against the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette over violations of federal labor law and the removal of production workers' health care. Over three years, we garnered local and national support to stay on the picket line.

We also continued to cover the people of Pittsburgh through our strike publication, the Pittsburgh Union Progress. Working with meager strike pay and fundraising to keep ourselves and our families afloat, we wrote award-winning stories and tapped into communities that had felt ignored by the city's mainstream media landscape while elevating the voices of the working class.

After winning every court battle, we returned to work in November 2025. On Jan. 7, 2026, we were told the Post-Gazette would be closing. Immediately, we rallied our neighbors who had supported us through the strike to form **PAPER — the Pittsburgh Alliance for People-Empowered Reporting**.



paper OUR STORY



Our initial PAPER meetings reinforced what we'd confirmed on strike: the region's working people have been failed by publications like the Post-Gazette, and we had an opportunity to build something better. So we made it PAPER's mission: **to serve as a source of communication and connection that reflects the needs of working-class people in the region.**

In April 2026, the billionaire-led Venetoulis Institute for Local Journalism bought the Post-Gazette and on May 1 — International Workers' Day — purged 80% of the former strikers on staff. That action, while devastating, proved to us that a worker-led news outlet in Pittsburgh has never been more necessary.

We found that a **multistakeholder cooperative model** fit our vision for a publication: one that truly serves Pittsburghers, with journalists who can shape the newsroom in ways that outlets owned by billionaires with fat-cat executive salaries won't allow.

paper ▶ ABOUT

Why did we choose a multistakeholder cooperative model?

Research shows they're more resilient, stable and grow faster. Other journalists, who were similarly retaliated against by their employers, have successfully united to create worker-led newsrooms, including cooperatives. In fact, successful media cooperatives have existed around the world for years.

We chose a multistakeholder model, where workers and readers have a say, because it's clear to us that Pittsburgh residents don't feel heard by traditional media. This model will allow us to be responsive to the community and for Pittsburghers to feel more connected to their media sources. We believe local journalism is best steered by those with a stake in their community, and that expanding accessibility and accountability through this model is a structural way for us to foster connection.

paper ▶ WHO WE ARE

The founding members of PAPER's [now in-progress daily news outlet](#) are former strikers from the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh. We are award-winning journalists — including the [2019 Pulitzer Prize](#) for coverage of the Tree of Life synagogue shooting. We have decades of combined experience in reporting, photography, copy editing and design. We are labor activists who are dedicated to covering Pittsburgh with honesty, purpose and care.

NATALIE DULEBA

ERIN HEBERT

STEVE MELLON

HELEN FALLON

ROB JOESBURY

PAM PANCHAK

ANDREW GOLDSTEIN

JOE KNUPSKY

RANDY STOERNELL

paper ➔ **NUMBERS**

Our local cooperative news model, once launched, would be **the first of its kind in Pennsylvania.**

PAPER already has **nearly \$5,000 in recurring monthly donations** from community supporters to fund events, including our town halls, and set-up costs for development of the news outlet itself, which includes business planning, branding and identity design, editorial planning, audience engagement strategy and more.

We built a pro-labor audience through the Pittsburgh Union Progress, which ceased publication at the strike's end with **4,484 subscribers.** With Pittsburgh's core population diversifying and getting younger, we see room to grow and have the community support and respect to foster that growth into the future.

The engagement statistics for the PUP's regular newsletter, based on unique opens, reinforce this strong foundation:

**Average newsletter
open rate: 52.7%**
(weighted)

**Median newsletter
open rate: 51.9%**

**Average click/open
rate: 8.3%**

**Median click/open
rate: 7.7%**



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