

ANNUAL REPORT

JERSEYBEE.ORG
@JERSEYBEE NEWS

2024



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR



As many local and national news organizations face a crisis of relevance, it's hard for us not to recognize things are going differently for The Jersey Bee.

This year, The Jersey Bee saw its most significant growth yet, expanding its service to 12 towns and cities in Essex County and adding staff to provide essential hyperlocal news and information and community programs.



We've set industry standards with new technology, equitable event design, community-led reporting, youth media making, civic dialogue, and reparative media strategies.

But the most meaningful part has been hearing from people who've made The Jersey Bee part of their life because it's evidence that what we're doing works.

As you'll observe in this report, we're building a broad, diverse movement for local news and civic engagement in the heart of Northern New Jersey by enabling public participation in civic life.

We're more than a local news provider. We're an information hub – a platform for people to find ways to engage with locally sourced, quality civic information that makes our community healthier.

That's what makes us stand out. Our goal is to support a community where people are more informed, connected, and equipped with the resources they need to thrive.

At The Jersey Bee, we're not only responding to our community's needs; we're building trust, inspiring civic pride, and creating a model for public service local news in the 21st century.

In 2025, we'll deepen our impact and strengthen our service through fundraising, product developments, and new collaborations.

And we invite you to shape and support our work at this critical time. Because bees work best when they work together.



Simon Galperin

Executive Editor and Founder

BUILDING AN AUDIENCE FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

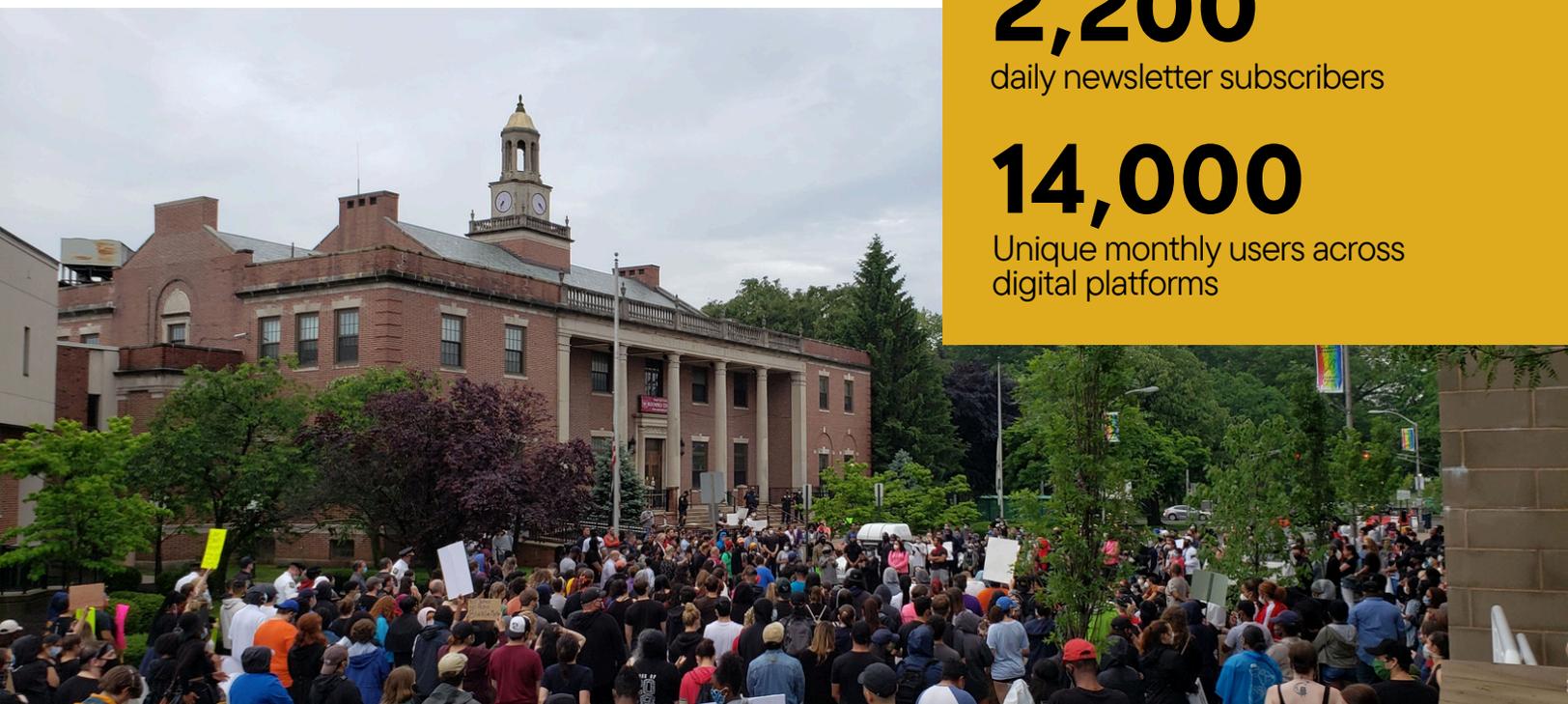
The Jersey Bee made it easier for people to stay informed and engaged in their community. 2024 survey respondents said our reporting helped them take civic actions, including attending community meetings, discussing local issues, voting, signing a petition, volunteering, contacting a public official, meeting someone new, and accessing or sharing resources.

“—

Jersey Bee has been THE reason I've been able to access and participate in my local community!

- 2024 audience survey respondent

A 2020 protest against systemic racism in Bloomfield, N.J. The Jersey Bee won a New Jersey Society of Professional Journalism award for our community-led reporting on policing the following year.



75%

respondents report taking civic action as a result of reporting

2X

continuing annual subscriber growth

90%

new subscribers in new markets

2,200

daily newsletter subscribers

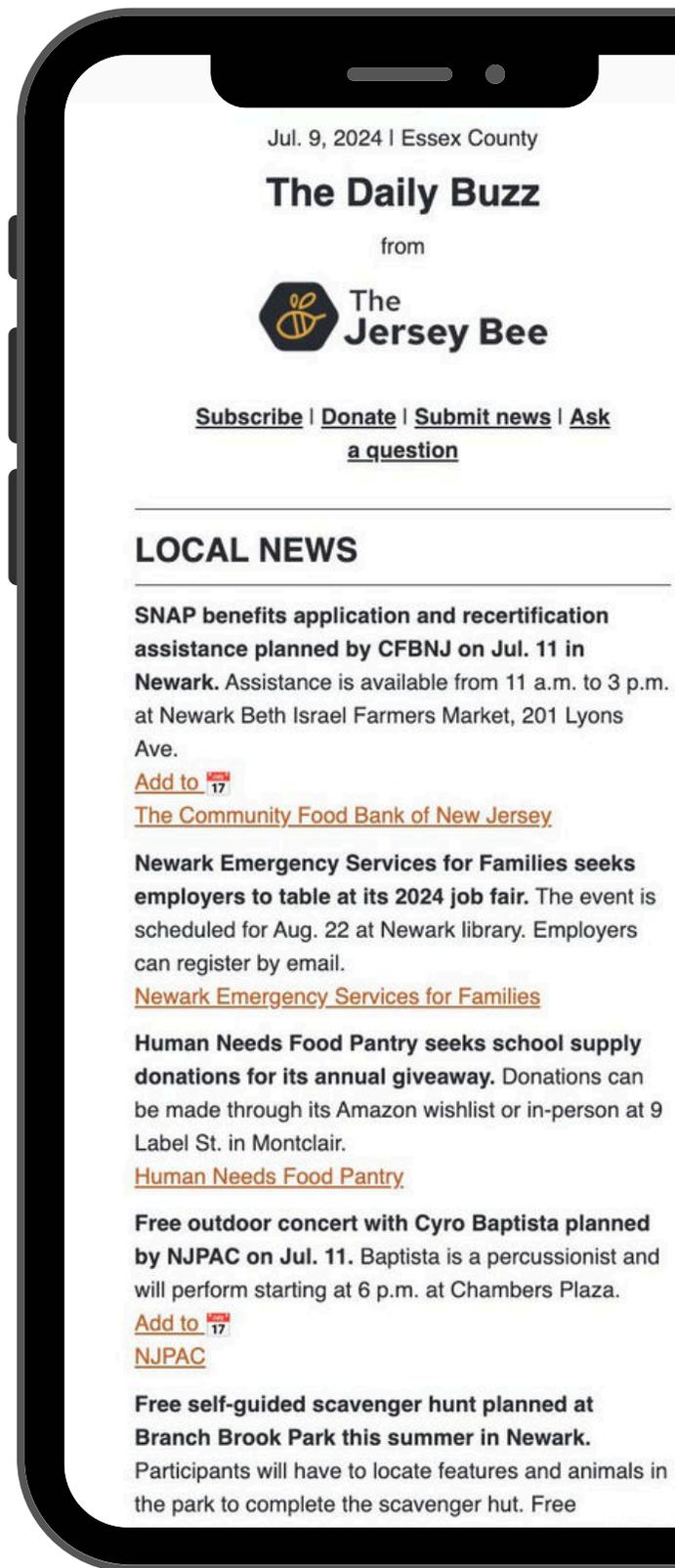
14,000

Unique monthly users across digital platforms

TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION TO MEET LOCAL INFO NEEDS

The Jersey Bee's 13 daily newsletters, website, events calendar, and social media were produced through a publishing platform built by us to respond to the challenges community members face following what's happening where they live.

The Jersey Bee's platform leverages community listening, automation, and generative AI to aggregate, curate, and redistribute local news and information from hundreds of sources into accessible formats, improving information access and discovery for BIPOC and working-class audiences.



5K+

local news
briefs produced
annually

1 in 6

briefs provided
access to aid
and resources

1 in 3

briefs provided
access to local
events

10%

briefs provided
access to
volunteering

A BILINGUAL FOOD ACCESS HUB AND TEXT MESSAGE SERVICE

The Jersey Bee produced new reporting and resources for food insecure residents, expanding our bilingual food access hub and mutual aid text message service from one to 12 communities at jerseybee.org/food.

The Jersey Bee reported on food systems for food insecure people and produced content like our mini-zine to improve access to resources in our community. We distributed hundreds of zines through tabling and partnership.



34,000

text messages sent since service launch

50+

households served weekly

70+

social service providers and food pantries followed

2

public health equity coalitions joined



The Jersey Bee launched a project to investigate solutions to segregation in Essex County, highlighting local voices and hosting events to build a shared understanding of the movement for reparations, in collaboration with Next City, which chose our organization as a host for its Equitable Cities Fellowship.

SOLUTIONS REPORTING WITH LOCAL IMPACT AND NATIONAL REACH



1000s

reached through reporting, explainers, social stories, and podcasts produced

7

local and national co-publishing partners

100+

survey respondents or event attendees

The Jersey Bee reported on historical and present-day segregation to inform community dialogue around what some call a challenging issue. The Jersey Bee held events in Maplewood and Montclair in collaboration with local partners after Newark residents shared the desire to see conversations about social justice happen in communities that have historically benefited from inequality.



“**Conversations like this help us say to our children... ‘No, you didn’t do anything wrong. Here is your history. It’s part of the whole.’**

– Nicole Gray, reparations forum panelist

GROWN ON A FOUNDATION OF COLLABORATION AND LISTENING

The Jersey Bee expanded its listening and engagement programs, unlocking opportunities for collaboration and building new relationships with the people we serve.

The Jersey Bee's virtual reference desk, info needs surveys, and one-on-one engagement efforts helped us understand and respond to community information needs.

The Jersey Bee's approach enabled partnerships with at least **25 local organizations**, including social service providers, mutual aid groups, historical societies, small businesses, and others, as well as **seven local and national news organizations**, to reach new audiences and deepen our impact.



A WORKPLACE WE'RE PROUD OF

The Jersey Bee's staff represents the community it serves.

Our multi-generational staff are mostly women and include people of color, first and second-generation immigrants, parents, LGBTQIA+ people, and people with disabilities.

Employees and interns are paid living wages. Employees receive paid time off, health insurance, monthly technology stipends, and professional development coaching. The Jersey Bee is closed for weeklong breaks in late summer and the beginning of winter to support staff rest and recovery after long periods of deadline-driven production and intensive community engagement.

9.5/10

average employee workplace rating

\$28

minimum wage for employees and interns

1:1.5

maximum worker-to-executive pay ratio



HOW TO SUPPORT THE JERSEY BEE



SMALL BUSINESSES, NONPROFITS, & COMMUNITY GROUPS

INDIVIDUALS

Individuals can support The Jersey Bee as sustaining members at jerseybee.org/support.

MAJOR DONORS & FOUNDATIONS

Major donors and foundations can **reach development staff at connect@jerseybee.org** to discuss gifts, grants, or how we can collaborate to meet social impact goals.

LARGE BUSINESSES & INSTITUTIONS

Large businesses and major institutions can **contact community engagement staff at connect@jerseybee.org** to discuss sponsorship, service agreements, or other opportunities to collaborate.

Small businesses, nonprofits, and community groups can **reach community engagement staff at connect@jerseybee.org** to discuss opportunities to advertise, cross-promote, produce programming, or collaborate in other ways.

The Jersey Bee trained Newark high school students and worked with them to co-produce a guide for 16-17-year-old voters in the city who recently gained the right to vote in school board elections.



ABOUT THE JERSEY BEE

The Jersey Bee is a nonprofit civic news organization that works with the people we serve to meet local info needs, increase civic participation, and improve quality of life in East Essex County, New Jersey.

First established in 2020 as Bloomfield Info Project to respond to pandemic-related info needs, the organization rebranded and expanded in 2024 to 12 towns and

cities in Essex County, including The Oranges, Newark, Irvington, Maplewood, Montclair, Glen Ridge, Bloomfield, Nutley, and Belleville.

The Jersey Bee's public service mandate is to pioneer a public utility model for local news that responds to civic information needs of people of color and working-class communities.

The Jersey Bee is program of Community Info Coop and fiscally sponsored by Movement Alliance Project. More at jerseybee.org.

MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY

GERALDINE R.
DODGE 
FOUNDATION

 **NEW JERSEY
CIVIC INFO
CONSORTIUM**

PROGRAMMING SUPPORTED BY

 Institute for
Nonprofit News

Lion
PUBLISHERS

**NEXT
CITY**

**The
Miami
Foundation**

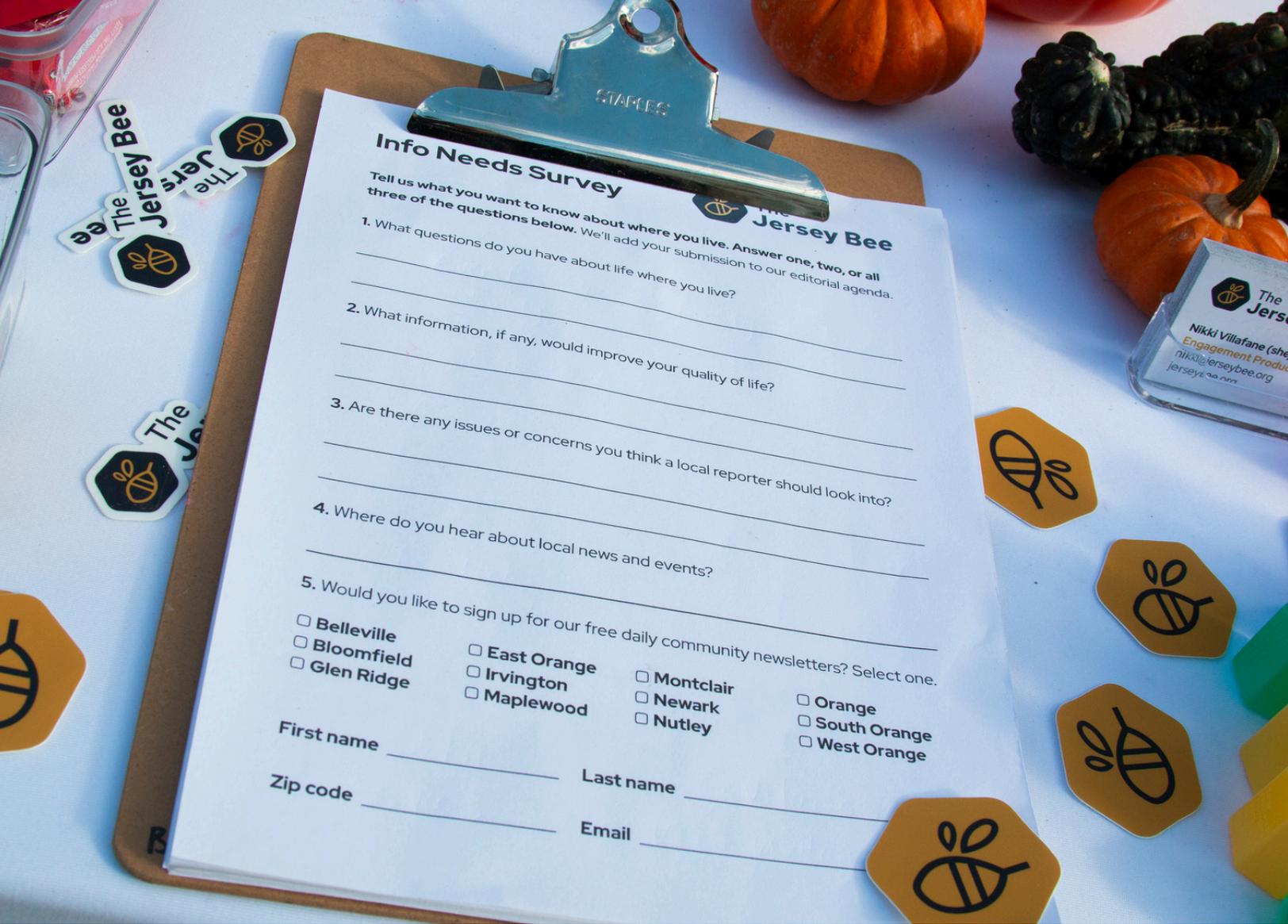
FP
Free Press

NEO.
CREATIVE. INSPIRED
PHILANTHROPY

17 monthly
sustaining
members

33 annual
supporters

1 major
individual
donor



Info Needs Survey

The Jersey Bee

Tell us what you want to know about where you live. Answer one, two, or all three of the questions below. We'll add your submission to our editorial agenda.

1. What questions do you have about life where you live?

2. What information, if any, would improve your quality of life?

3. Are there any issues or concerns you think a local reporter should look into?

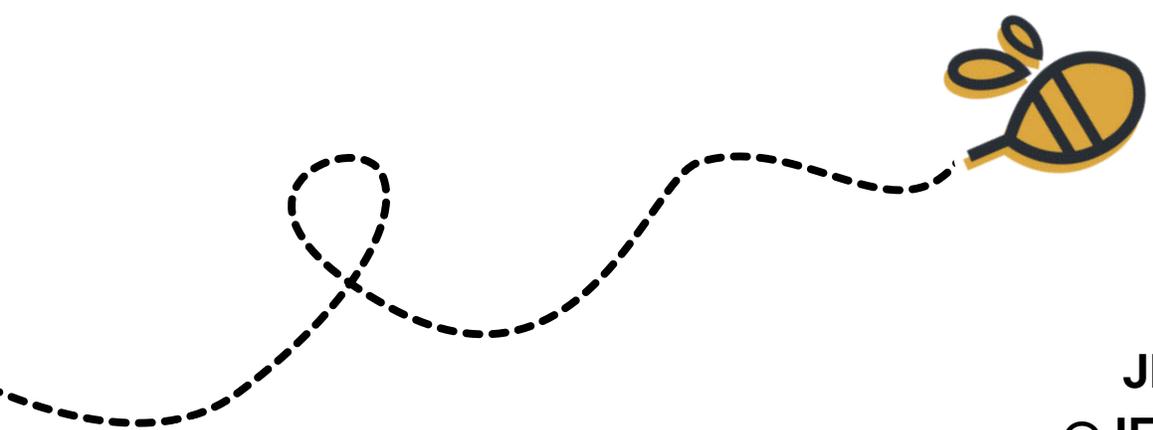
4. Where do you hear about local news and events?

5. Would you like to sign up for our free daily community newsletters? Select one.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Belleville | <input type="checkbox"/> East Orange | <input type="checkbox"/> Montclair | <input type="checkbox"/> Orange |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bloomfield | <input type="checkbox"/> Irvington | <input type="checkbox"/> Newark | <input type="checkbox"/> South Orange |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glen Ridge | <input type="checkbox"/> Maplewood | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutley | <input type="checkbox"/> West Orange |

First name _____ Last name _____

Zip code _____ Email _____



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