

Metcalf

University of Rhode Island · Metcalf Institute

BRINGING CLIMATE READY NEWSROOMS TO COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE

Metcalf Institute is ready to expand its innovative climate and environmental science reporting model to local newsrooms across the country.

As the climate crisis affects more and more communities, local news outlets are being asked to communicate increasingly complex climate and environmental science with fewer resources, smaller staffs, and more political pressure than ever before.

To meet this moment, Metcalf Institute created the Climate Ready Newsrooms fellowship to help local news outlets build capacity across newsrooms because climate coverage can no longer be confined to a single person or a single beat. By bringing together staff across all beats – breaking news, sports, culture, housing – newsrooms build shared scientific knowledge, editorial priorities, source networks, and strategic behavior changes that support durable climate reporting with limited resources.

Metcalf's model, which focuses on climate science literacy and confidence, has been tested across New England with **17 newsrooms and more than 100 journalists trained and coached from 2024 to 2026**. The fellowship has shown measurable growth and improvement in local climate and environmental science coverage. It has also helped to advance organizational changes that embed accurate, accountable, consistent climate coverage over the long term.



...A lot of people out there care about climate but aren't talking about it. To better serve our readers, the *Banner* decided to start its Encyclopedia Climatica project to hear directly from community members about what burning questions they have about the climate and environment. We'll do the reporting and give the answer to the question with context to how it fits into the lives of our readers."



AVERY BLEICHFELD, SCIENCE EDITOR

The Bay State Banner
Roxbury, MA

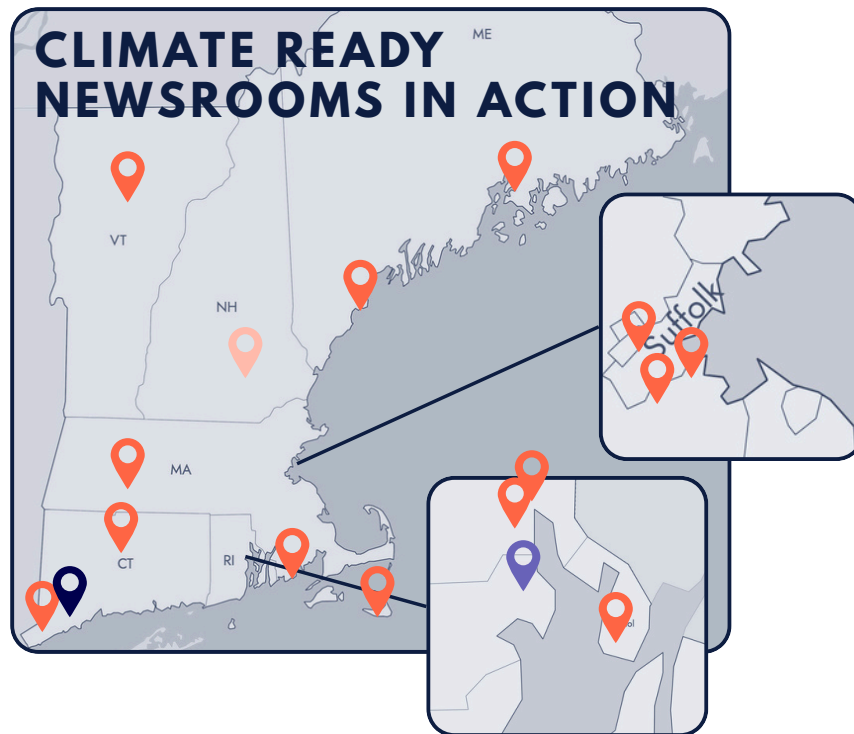
Each cohort of Climate Ready Newsrooms supports 10 local newsrooms. The fellowship includes:

- **Interactive Training:** Six 90-minute virtual workshops led by University of Rhode Island scientists and Metcalf Institute staff and alumni, focused on translating complex scientific research into compelling news stories relevant for local communities.
- **\$1,000 Stipend:** Each newsroom receives a small stipend to support at least one editor and one reporter's efforts to embed the training within the newsroom.
- **Coaching:** Three months of one-on-one coaching by Metcalf Institute's journalism experts to help embed long-term strategies for sustaining accurate and accountable local climate and environment coverage.
- **Evaluation:** Pre- and post-fellowship surveys and interviews to evaluate the program's impact and make improvements for future cohorts.

With proof of concept established in the northeast, Metcalf Institute is now seeking philanthropic partners to bring this model to local newsrooms in regions across the country.

ABOUT METCALF INSTITUTE

Since 1997, the University of Rhode Island Metcalf Institute has been building bridges between professional journalists, scientists, and community members, with millions of people around the world reading, hearing, and watching nuanced coverage of climate and environmental issues delivered by Metcalf journalism alumni. Metcalf launched the Climate Ready Newsrooms fellowship in 2024 to develop a training model that achieves change not just for individual journalists, but entire newsrooms. Metcalf envisions an expansive science communication network that engages in informed, inclusive discourse and actions about science to catalyze communities to take action.



Beacon Media (Warwick, RI)

At Beacon Media, a small local publisher of three weeklies, stories on climate and environmental solutions had been rare. After Metcalf's training on science-supported solutions journalism, reporters Rosegalie Cineus and Greta Schuster set a goal of each writing one solutions story per month. They have published stories on a native plant co-op, new flood mitigation tactics from the Warwick Sewer Authority, a food waste diversion program at a local elementary school, and a shoreline resiliency project from a local nonprofit. By adding climate discussions to weekly meeting agendas and covering a solution every month, Beacon Media took a small, sustainable step that meaningfully grew its climate reporting capacity.

WSHU Public Radio (Fairfield, CT)

WSHU Public Radio had done extensive environmental reporting, but hadn't focused its attention on covering extreme weather events that directly affect its communities. Inspired by Metcalf's virtual training on climate attribution science, WSHU developed a 22-page climate emergency protocol guide, with resources and templates for radio scripts, web articles, and social media posts covering before, during, and after a storm. The guide ensures anyone at the station is prepared and confident in their ability to respond accurately and effectively during this type of breaking news situation.

New Hampshire Public Radio (Concord, NH)

At NHPR, climate coverage was strong, but siloed under climate reporter Mara Hoplamazian. To expand its coverage notably in breaking news, it named general assignment reporter Kate Dario as its fellowship point person. Dario not only became a second major source of climate and environmental reporting at the station, but brought breaking news to the climate beat. After a national newspaper revealed internal ICE documents showing plans for a new immigrant detention center in Merrimack, N.H., Dario and Hoplamazian together were the first to report that the proposed site was in a PFAS contamination zone, raising serious health concerns for future detainees. Plans for the facility were scrapped after intense public backlash.

Investing in a National Rollout of Climate Ready Newsrooms

A national rollout of the Climate Ready Newsrooms fellowship **will require an investment of ~\$200,000 per year, or \$1,000,000 over five years.** The funds will support training and coaching for five regional fellowship cohorts of 10 newsrooms each for a total of 50 newsrooms, as well as providing stipends to the newsrooms.

To learn more about how you can invest in the future of local environmental reporting, please contact Mel Thibeault, Metcalf Institute Donor and Alumni Engagement Manager, at mel.thibeault@uri.edu.
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