

For Immediate Release: September 26, 2018
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Presenting THE CITY, A Nonprofit Digital News Startup Providing In-Depth, Nonpartisan Coverage Of New York

@TheCityNY Readies For Launch With \$8.5M In Funding And A Distribution Agreement With New York Magazine

Jere Hester Will Serve As Editor-In-Chief

NEW YORK - A major new nonprofit digital news organization focused on New York City, called THE CITY ([@TheCityNY](https://www.thecityny.com)), is about to begin staffing up with top New York City journalists, and it will launch later this year with the mission of adding a vigorous and contemporary new voice to New York journalism. Announced today are the journalism organization's major donors and team of well-known journalists, as well as its advisory board.

THE CITY will focus on accountability journalism for a broad audience, will collaborate with other news outlets to further build the local media ecosystem, and will cover some of the most important beats in New York City. These include transportation, housing and real estate, climate change, healthcare, immigrant New Yorkers and criminal justice — as well as the politics of City Hall and Albany.

The [Charles H. Revson Foundation](#) brought forward the formative idea of THE CITY, and the nonprofit digital news startup has already received \$8.5M in seed funding from Revson, [Craig Newmark Philanthropies](#), the Leon Levy Foundation, Texas Tribune founder John Thornton, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Miranda Family Fund at Hispanic Federation, and the Richard Ravitch Foundation. Until this new entity receives approval for IRS tax-exempt status, the [Lenfest Institute for Journalism](#), which has provided financial and strategic planning for THE CITY, will act as its fiscal sponsor.

The Editor-in-Chief of THE CITY will be Jere Hester, former Daily News city editor and leader of the award-winning newsroom at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York. THE CITY also announced that it is gearing up for a first hiring wave of approximately 15 journalists. The business side of the new outlet will be overseen by Executive Director Kai Falkenberg, former First Deputy Commissioner of New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment and Forbes editorial counsel.

THE CITY has inked a comprehensive partnership with *New York Magazine* encompassing technology, editorial, and distribution. Leveraging the magazine's content management system Clay and distribution network, which attracts more than 40 million unique visitors per month, will accelerate the news outlet's launch, as will the potential to collaborate with *New York's* editorial staff, led by its award-winning editor-in-chief, Adam Moss.

“THE CITY is going to deliver the kind of high-impact news New Yorkers expect and deserve. This is an ambitious project that brings together the best values of tough urban journalism and the tools of a new media landscape,” said **Ben Smith, Chair of the Board**. “This new, digitally native publication is built to engage this diverse city on the biggest stories that matter to everyone — the crises in transportation and affordability, the battle for the city’s future — and to force political leaders to respond to what matters to their citizens.

“As a news consumer, I look for day-to-day journalism that informs my neighborhood and holds local leaders accountable,” said **Craig Newmark, founder of craigslist and Craig Newmark Philanthropies**. “I’m proud to support THE CITY in its work to provide the world’s media capital with much-needed, public-interest reporting.”

Executive Director Kai Falkenberg said: “There is a glaring need for the kind of game-changing reporting that THE CITY will provide, telling the stories that would otherwise not be told, and providing the kind of accountability journalism that we so desperately need. Our funders share our belief that you can’t solve big city problems if you don’t know they exist. That’s where THE CITY’s spotlight will shine.”

Julie Sandorf, President of the Charles H. Revson Foundation, said: “Recognizing that robust and authoritative local journalism is the lifeblood of New York’s civic infrastructure, the Charles H. Revson Foundation is proud to have conceived and initiated THE CITY. By providing a dependable source of comprehensive local coverage, THE CITY will equip New Yorkers with a solid working knowledge of their public institutions, communities, and the economic and social forces that affect their lives.”

Editor-in-chief Jere Hester said: “New York City is a big place with lots of stories to tell and THE CITY is dedicated to covering them in a thoughtful, comprehensive way. THE CITY is going to meet New Yorkers where they are - on mobile devices. New Yorkers consume lots of news and THE CITY is going to aggressively hold the powers in New York accountable. We’re going to build a newsroom that reflects the city – as well as the mix of skills needed to thrive in the fast-changing journalism world. We’re looking for journalists who can break news – and get action.”

Adam Moss, editor-in-chief, *New York Magazine*, said: “We look forward to supporting this important journalism, publishing it to our audience, and collaborating on ambitious projects. We believe that our partnership with THE CITY provides a new, replicable model for how nonprofit and for-profit journalism can work together, building on successful collaborations *New York* has had with organizations like ProPublica and the Marshall Project.”

Shelby White, Founding Trustee of the Leon Levy Foundation said: “The Leon Levy Foundation is delighted to launch this critically important enterprise to strengthen civic life in New York through excellent journalism along with our partners the Revson Foundation and Craig Newmark Philanthropies.”

Mitra Kalita said: “New Yorkers need and deserve a new kind of journalism. This venture blends a belief in shoe-leather reporting with digital reach and savvy. We will hold power to account, even as we help audiences access and better understand their government, from tax bills to report cards.”

Dick Ravitch, a director of the board, said: “The quality of our government and our politics is profoundly affected by the quality of the local media. This new effort will have a significant impact on the level of public knowledge about the events in our city and thus will affect the decision-making process to the public’s benefit.”

The news outlet will also benefit from an Advisory Board that consists of some of the city’s most prominent and respected journalists. On that Board are: [Nicole Bode](#), [Jim Dwyer](#), [Juan Gonzalez](#), [Elizabeth Green](#), [Anna Holmes](#), [Debby Krenek](#), [Brian Lehrer](#), [Errol Louis](#), [Tom McGeeveran](#), [Adam Moss](#), [Sam Roberts](#), [Tom Robbins](#) and [Dick Tofel](#).

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About Jere Hester

Jere Hester is a veteran NY journalist who spent more than three years as the city editor for the New York Daily News. Since 2006, Hester has run a digital news site at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. Under his direction, the NYCity News Service has become known for producing high-impact, multimedia special reports, including “[Stop the Mold](#),” a collaboration with the Daily News that spotlighted the scourge of mold in city public housing developments. One recent [News Service report](#) that went viral revealed that nearly half of public schools cafeterias were hit with at least one critical violation in 2017 – spurring [a vow](#) of action by the mayor and [calls for legislation](#) demanding restaurant-like posted cleanliness grades for cafeterias. Since 2007, the NYCity News Service has earned more than 130 national and local awards, including being named by Editor & Publisher as the best site of its kind in the nation three times in the last five years. In 2015, the news service won the inaugural Mark of Excellence “best-in-show” award from the Society for Professional Journalists, beating out more than 4,100 entries.

About Kai Falkenberg

Kai Falkenberg served for the last two years as the First Deputy Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment. In that capacity, Falkenberg expanded the Agency’s role beyond film, television and theatre to include journalism, publishing, podcasting and digital content. She spearheaded the creation of the nation’s first publicly funded [VR/AR lab](#), negotiated the return of the Grammy Awards to New York City, launched [One Book, One New York](#), the nation’s largest book club, and founded the first ever [Freelancers Hub](#), a center that provides free services and training for independent workers, among many other projects. A media lawyer and former Forbes writer, Kai brings a unique blend of management, business, public policy and media expertise to this project.

About Craig Newmark Philanthropies

Craig Newmark Philanthropies was created by craigslist founder Craig Newmark to support and connect people and drive broad civic engagement. The organization works to advance people and grassroots organizations that are getting stuff done in areas that include trustworthy journalism, voter protection, gender diversity in technology, and veterans and military families. For more information, please visit: CraigNewmarkPhilanthropies.org.

About the Charles H. Revson Foundation

The Charles H. Revson Foundation (www.revsonfoundation.org) operates grant programs in Urban Affairs, Jewish Life, Biomedical Research, and Education. In New York City, the Foundation supports the development of thriving communities and broad access to knowledge and information through strengthening the City's community and social infrastructure such as public libraries, affordable housing and civic spaces, and local journalism. The Revson Foundation believes that an engaged and informed public is the bedrock of a great city.

About the Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. We invest in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Our goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which we believe are essential for a healthy democracy.

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