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**PUBLIC NARRATIVE TO ASSUME STEWARDSHIP OF CHICAGO INDEPENDENT MEDIA ALLIANCE FROM RICJ**

*Chicago media resource organization, longtime CIMA supporter and member, Public Narrative will operate the media alliance starting February 15*

**CHICAGO, IL, FEBRUARY 15, 2024** – Since launching the Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA) in 2019, the Reader Institute for Community Journalism (RICJ), Inc. has been proud to convene a coalition of over 60 independent, local, and community-driven media entities covering communities throughout the Chicago area, representing more than 80 outlets. RICJ collaborated closely with Public Narrative to envision the future of CIMA, and together, the parties agreed with PN’s longstanding and proven track record in fostering diverse voices and empowering all that make up our local media ecosystem, that Public Narrative would assume full operational responsibility of the Alliance effective Thursday, February 15, 2024.

While RICJ is transferring all of its stake in CIMA to Public Narrative, it will remain a CIMA member.

“We are thrilled to find in Public Narrative a strong partner who can take CIMA into the future,” said Solomon Lieberman, CEO and publisher. “CIMA, the brainchild of the great Tracy Baim, is one of the most important efforts in local news this century, and we know the Public Narrative team will protect that legacy.”

Over the last four years, participating CIMA members raised over \$700,000, including matching foundation funds and collaboration grants, using CIMA’s free collaborative fundraising program. Alliance members advocated for equity in the 2022 executive order that resulted in redistributing [City of Chicago advertising spending](#). CIMA members also advocated for a pooled fund for journalism in the city.

“When I first joined the *Reader* as publisher in 2018, I knew it provided a platform for me to try to bring all community media together to lift all boats,” said Tracy Baim. “Former co-publisher Karen Hawkins, our first CIMA director Yazmin Dominguez, and I worked alongside our



members to make significant, lasting media change. I'm excited for the next chapter, and my paper, *Windy City Times*, will remain engaged in CIMA."

In addition, [Public Narrative partnered with CIMA](#) in June 2023 to create the [Chicago Independent Media Directory](#)—a database of independent, local media outlets in the United States' third-largest media market—which launched alongside the relaunch of Public Narrative's own [Chicago Media Guide](#).

"In 35 years, Public Narrative has served Chicago journalists and newsrooms. Stewarding the Chicago Independent Media Alliance is a tremendous opportunity to deepen our engagement with Chicago's media ecosystem," said Jhmira Alexander, MPA, president and executive director of Public Narrative. "Additionally, it is an honorable responsibility to help enhance the already exemplary media space that is recognized as a growing model for innovation and collaboration in journalism across the country."

#### **ABOUT READER INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY JOURNALISM (RICJ)**

The Reader Institute for Community Journalism is organized and operated to educate, advance, and inform public discourse through local, independent journalism in the Greater Chicago metropolitan area. RICJ operates and publishes the Chicago Reader, which creates and curates political and cultural coverage by and for Chicago, including highlighting underrepresented communities and stories.

#### **ABOUT PUBLIC NARRATIVE (PN)**

Founded in 1989, Public Narrative is a Chicago-based nonprofit that facilitates training, programming and resource building focused on cultivating media literacy, uplifting community voices in media, and shifting narratives around public health, public safety, and public education. Public Narrative is the publisher of the Chicago Independent Media Directory and the founding manager of the Chicago Media Guide.

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