

# CAL MATTERS

## Making California Better 2022 Midyear Impact Report

### Improving California's Democracy

In this election year, we're delivering the tools Californians need for a functioning democracy: a comprehensive, user-friendly voter guide; well-documented, nonpartisan stories about the most important issues of the day; and the analysis to help you make sense of the information at your fingertips every minute.

Our reporting regularly informs and changes policy. Here are some examples of our impact:

- ▶ A week after [Sameea Kamal wrote](#) that the California was reducing the number of languages for translation of ballots and voter information, the Secretary of State reversed that decision. And her office contacted Sameea to let her know in advance of their announcement.
- ▶ After Mikhail Zinshteyn's story on mistakes in the CSU system's \$500 million student-housing plan, the system revised and [resubmitted its plan](#). An assistant vice chancellor said to lawmakers: "After we learned we misread the program guidelines, we ran multiple financial plans in order to submit revised documents just last week."
- ▶ During a hearing, members of the Assembly Health Committee [repeatedly cited a story by Jocelyn Wiener](#) on problems in the licensing of California nursing homes as they debated ways to improve the regulations.
- ▶ Our [profile of Fernando](#), a Los Angeles man struggling with homelessness, brought this response from the deputy secretary of the state housing agency: "It is the best story I've seen since I've been here about what an individual experiencing homelessness has to go through. And the sidebar about the [five challenges](#) in expanding permanent supportive housing also hit the nail on the head - especially the part about treatment being siloed. I know Secretary Castro Ramírez was also impressed, as were staff at the California Interagency Council on Homelessness."



Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters



Fernando Maya. Photo by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters

## ELECTIONS 2022

---

At CalMatters, we're committed to providing the most complete and accurate information you need to engage with and participate in our state's democracy. Our **voter guide** is at the heart of that commitment. As a guide user and CalMatters member recently put it while donating to us, "**Your voting guides are SO clear and helpful. Thank you for promoting civic duty!!!**" We saw a steady rise of visitors to the guide leading up to the primary election culminating in 578,000 visitors and 2.4 million page views.

And thanks to a generous grant from the California State Library, librarians in the 13,000 libraries across the state will be trained on how to maximize the impact of our voter guide for their local patrons.

**1 in 10** primary election voters visited our 2022 Voter Guide.

## A SPECIAL PROJECT

---

In our groundbreaking 4-part series, **Trial by fire**, California's firefighters describe a broken and depleted fire service suffering a hidden, smoldering crisis. As climate change intensifies California's wildfires, the state's firefighters suffer from the increasing strain of post-traumatic stress disorder. Decisions made while struggling with lack of sleep, long hours and stress could endanger not just the crews, but the public, too. What is the state doing to respond? Overwhelmingly, California's firefighters say, "Not nearly enough."

The series, reported by Julie Cart and edited by Marla Cone, shows the unique impact our individual and institutional members create by supporting some of the nation's best journalists who have unique and storied careers investigating stories such as this.

These stories were distributed across our network of more than 250 newsrooms in the state. In addition, **CBS news stations** around the state featured the story increasing our reach. We expect to see impact as a result of this powerful series and will share updates with you in future reports.



*Illustration by Julie Hotz for CalMatters*

”

The Trial by Fire series reveals an unbelievably appalling situation for firefighters. My hope is that your bringing it to light will result in action.

”

**Johanna Ferman**, M.D.,  
psychiatrist and new  
CalMatters monthly contributor

## THE ACCOUNTABILITY DESK

Lead investigative reporter Robert Lewis and K-12 education reporter Joe Hong teamed up to answer a question many parents had been struggling to find the answer to: How was the \$33.5 billion in state and federal COVID relief funding given to schools spent? What they uncovered was disturbing: financial oversight was scarce as billions in aid poured into California schools - and some districts won't disclose where the money went. For this 2-part series, [Money trail: California's pandemic riches](#), our team spent three months examining school COVID relief spending across the state, reviewing thousands of pages of records obtained through more than 45 public records requests.

Watch for more stories as we continue our examination of the historic infusion of cash into state and local government. Who's getting rich? What's changing? And are the funds being used as lawmakers envisioned?

## AWARDS: RECOGNITION OF OUR QUALITY REPORTING

---

Our reporters and their work continue to be recognized and honored with many local, state, and national [awards](#). Time and time again, judges praise our entries not only for the quality of the reporting and editing but also for the public service our articles provide.



The California News Publishers Association honored CalMatters with the coveted first place award for **General Excellence** for the journalism we produced in 2021. For the first time, we went head to head with the largest and best-known news organizations in the state. Our newsroom brought back a total of 17 awards across various categories - including the first prize in the investigative category (Robert Lewis - [Waiting for Justice](#)) as well as first place for enterprise news story or series (Sameea Kamal - [California Redistricting](#) series)



Two stories by Robert Lewis were among the five finalists for the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award: [Outgunned](#) and [Waiting for Justice](#).



Manuela Tobias won a first place award from the Sacramento Press Club for Housing and Homelessness Coverage.



The Sacramento Press Club also deemed Jocelyn Wiener a finalist in its Impact in Journalism category for her widely-discussed and cited piece: [California's Broken System of Nursing Home Oversight](#).

## THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

---

All of this award-winning journalism - with all its impact - is only possible because of our supporters. We are very grateful for your investment in journalism and our mission: A better California.

Thanks to our supporters, CalMatters has grown steadily over the years:

- › We have a **staff of 55**. More than half are people of color.
- › Our work reaches **1 in 10 Californians**.
- › Our **250+ publishing partners** throughout the state deliver our reporting to their audiences.
- › Our website has had more than **50 million page views** since we launched.

## WAYS TO GIVE

---

CalMatters depends on the generous support of people just like you. In our ongoing effort to make it as easy as possible for you to contribute to our mission, here are some options to consider:

- › Give [online](#)
- › Mail a check to CalMatters: 1017 L Street, #261  
Sacramento, CA 95814
- › Send your gift electronically from your bank account to ours
- › Save on capital gains taxes and receive your charitable tax-deduction by sending us stock
- › Give directly from your IRA
- › Leave a legacy by including us in your will or trust

“

CalMatters is the only publication I have read which offers the kind of salient, objective reporting on matters of which all Californians should be aware.

”

**Penny**, Millbrae

“

This is my state and its politics affect my life. I want to know what's going on, who the players are and what the issues are.

”

**Leslie**, Santa Monica

For more information, go to [calmatters.org/gifts](https://calmatters.org/gifts) or contact Kate Looby, Chief Development Officer, at [kate@calmatters.org](mailto:kate@calmatters.org) or 415-933-0480.

**CAL**  **MATTERS**