



THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT

FREE • INDEPENDENT • NEWS



» 2026 IMPACT REPORT

Stories only **local news** can tell



This year marks The Light's fifth anniversary serving the people of the New Bedford region.



The traditional five-year anniversary gift is wood, and while we don't expect any presents, the theme of deep roots and lasting durability seems fitting. Our community-centered, nonprofit journalism is here to stay, and we're more committed than ever to our mission.





OUR MISSION

We inform and nourish the civic culture of New Bedford and surrounding towns by providing **in-depth, fact-based journalism and a broad platform for diverse community voices**. The Light helps educate the public on the vital role of a free press in bolstering our democracy.

▶ ACCOUNTABILITY JOURNALISM



Fire Department starts formal safety inspections at Whaler's Cove

Our mission to inform the community includes holding those in power accountable to the community.

Ever tried to wrestle a bone out of a dog's mouth? That's The Light when we're trying to get at the truth. We ask tough questions to drive real change — for the better.

After we uncovered the absence of fire inspections at a New Bedford assisted living facility, the Fire Department began inspections for the first time in 18 years.

An investigation into a local nursing home revealed that it had been cited more than any other nursing home in the commonwealth — and more than 99 percent of the nursing homes in the country. The Light's stories prompted a state senator to call on the commonwealth to fine the facility.

Last summer, we shared the traumatic experiences of five New Bedford immigrants who were held at various detention facilities. Our reporting was cited at the Burlington Town Meeting and residents passed a resolution asking the federal government to stop using the facility as a detention center.



City nursing home cited for failing to stop physical and sexual abuse



“ What readers say:

Just made an extra one-time donation on top of my monthly one. Thank you for your courageous reporting on immigration.”

► EXPLANATORY REPORTING

We unpack the most pressing issues in and around New Bedford so residents understand what's happening and can make their own decisions as a result.

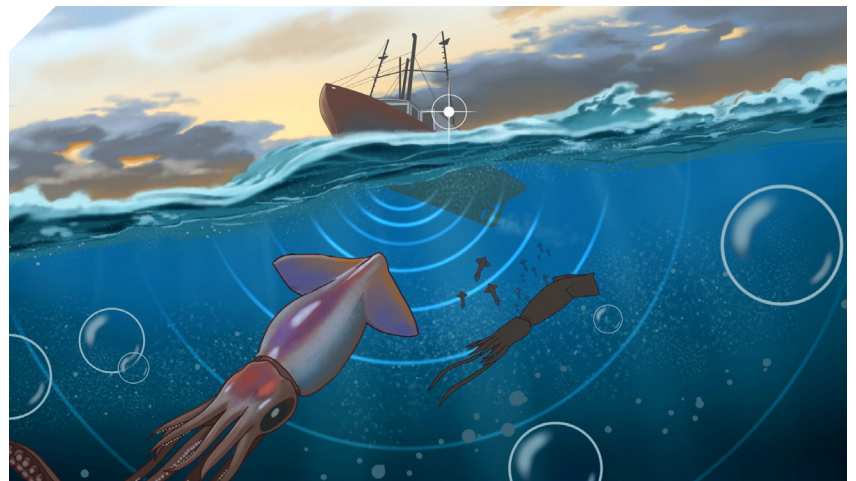
After we revealed that New Bedford has one of the highest concentrations of landfills and waste transfer stations in Massachusetts, more than 300 residents attended the next public hearing on a proposed transfer station. The Board of Health ultimately rejected the proposal, though that decision is now under appeal. Our continued reporting will keep the community informed.

Our offshore wind tracker is critical to understanding New Bedford's regional economy and the future of the energy industry. Not only did Gov. Maura Healey include it in her climate report, but The Light informed discussion and debate among academics, legal scholars, labor leaders, and industry experts.

The Light also reported on an innovative proposal to help scallop fishermen diversify their income. Under this program, scallopers could chase far-flung species such as starfish, squid or moon snails or convert their trawlers for scientific research.



Board of Health denies controversial waste transfer station in Far North End



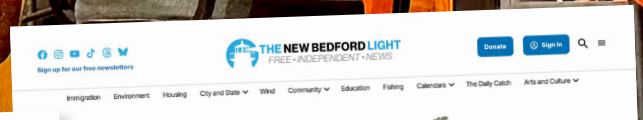
Researchers work to give scallop boats a new purpose

“ **What readers say:**

When the history of offshore wind as the world's predominant electricity source is written, your reporting will be in the first few chapters.”

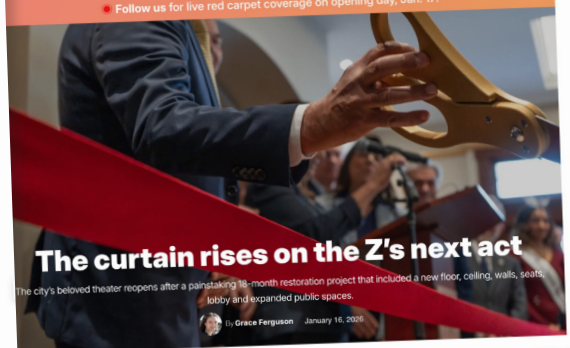


▶ ARTS AND CULTURE



ZEITERION REOPENS

Follow us for live red carpet coverage on opening day, Jan. 17!



The curtain rises on the Z's next act

The city's beloved theater reopens after a painstaking 18-month restoration project that included a new floor, ceiling, walls, seats, lobby and expanded public spaces.

By Grace Ferguson January 16, 2025



Follow us for red carpet coverage on opening day, Jan. 17!

ZEITERION REOPENING

Countdown until showtime:

0 days 22 hours 41 minutes 55 seconds

1920s



We take the “nourish” part of our mission seriously.

One way we do that is by uplifting New Bedford’s vibrant culture. After a \$37 million restoration, the Zeiterion reopened in January. The Light pulled out all the stops, including red carpet and opening night coverage and a look back at the theater’s history and the brothers behind the marquee.

We featured scores of local artists, spotlighted the arts center Hatch Street Studios, and launched Treasures, which highlights local places and events. If you missed this year’s Moby-Dick reading at the Whaling Museum, never fear — The Light published a diary of the marathon event.

“ What readers say:

Your Arts and Culture Section is worth a big, big contribution. Thank you for the superb presentation of the Art, Music and Local Celebration Events.”



► COMMUNITY

Throughout all our work, we center our community and celebrate its diversity.

Last summer, we honored the Cabo Verdean community, which has played a prominent role in New Bedford's history since the early 19th century, on the 50th anniversary of the country's independence.

After we reported on the city's decision to close the nation's only Portuguese language-focused library, people rallied to keep it open.

When the Blizzard of '26 dumped record amounts of snow on the South Coast, we didn't only bring you useful information. We asked you directly to share your experiences and then used that input to publish a map of streets that remained unplowed 48 hours after the storm.

Speaking of winter, one of our favorite photos of the past year is this Street Style snapshot on the next page of a local resident braving the brutal temperatures in a matching fur coat and hat.

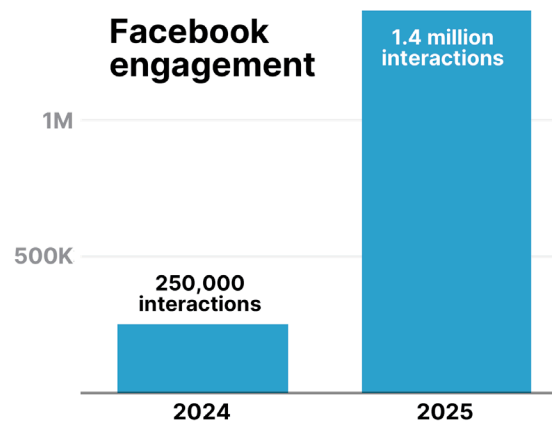




► REACH AND RECOGNITION

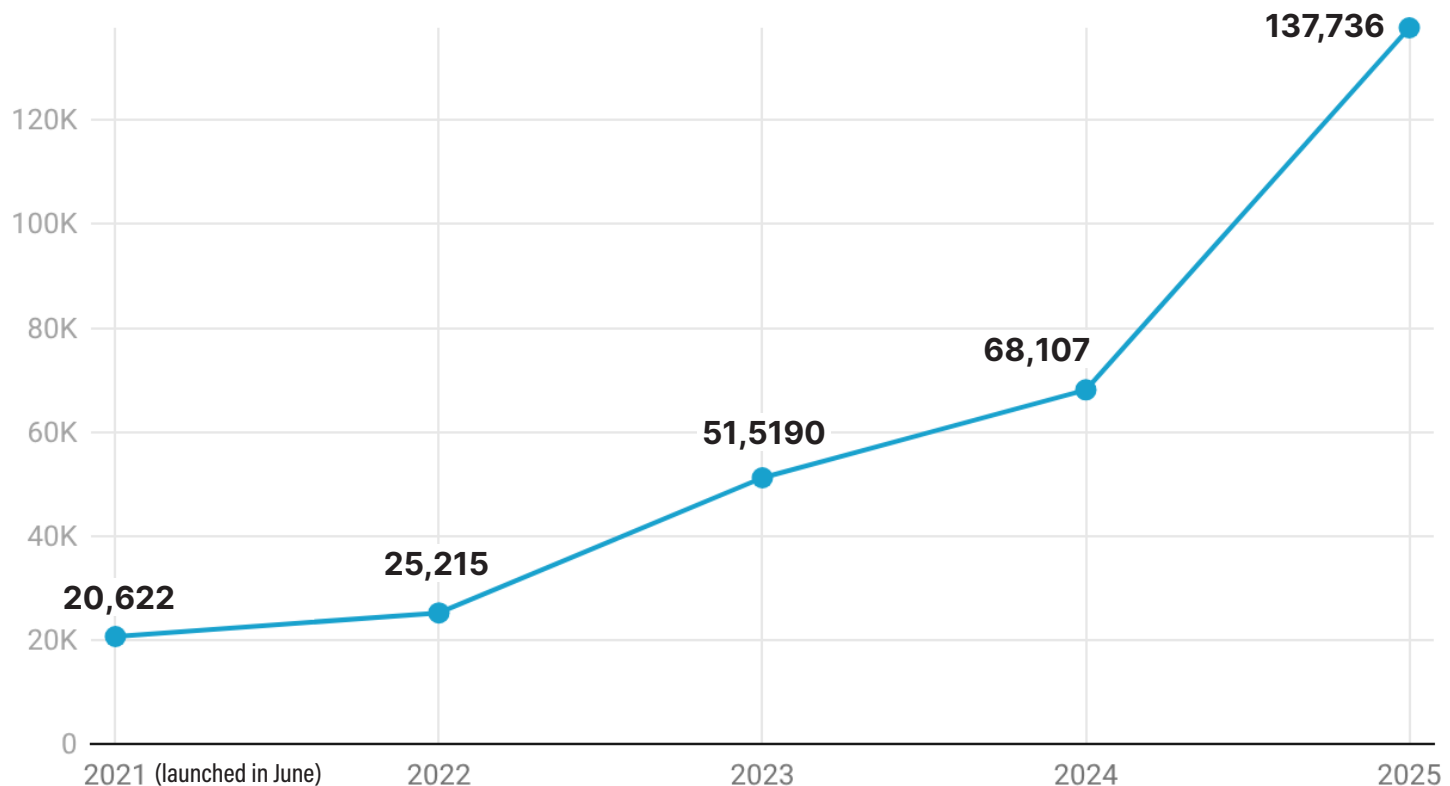
Our independent, community-centered journalism is reaching more people than ever.

Over the past year, average monthly visitors to our website doubled. But we're not just a website. You can find our reporting across multiple platforms, because we believe in meeting people where they are.



73%
increase in total social media followers from 2024 to 2025

Increase in average monthly website visitors





Recognition of The Light's work stretches throughout and beyond the South Coast.

Our journalism won 19 reporting, visual, and design awards from the New England Newspaper and Press Association and the New England chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.

Our immigration reporting was also named a finalist in the Institute for Nonprofit News contest. In addition, The Light won a Climate Ready Newsrooms fellowship from the University of Rhode Island's Metcalf Institute to bolster our climate and environment reporting.

We also believe in the power of collaboration to broaden our impact. This year, we teamed up with local weeklies on a South Coast school absentee/tardiness project and established new internship partnerships with Boston University and Emerson College, plus strengthened our existing South Coast internship program.

Our work has appeared in publications far and wide — here's a sample:

The New York Times

RTP Rádio e Televisão de Portugal

The Washington Post

MYTimes mytimes.com

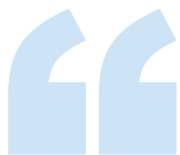
1420 WBSM NEW BEDFORD'S NEWS-TALK STATION

CAI

The Boston Globe

wbur

► REVENUE



I am proud to share that The Light remains on **strong financial footing** thanks to all of you.

In 2025, our revenue reached nearly \$1.7 million. We also ended the year with operating reserves equal to eight months of expenses.

We saw gains across key measures: more donors, more gifts, and more overall support. We also welcomed 265 new donors in 2025. This broad and growing base of support allows everyone in our community to access reliable information at no charge.

I'm especially proud to note that more of our supporters come from New Bedford than any other community in the state — a meaningful sign of local trust and connection.

A free and independent press has always been essential to our democracy. It remains so today. Thank you for your continued support and confidence in our work.

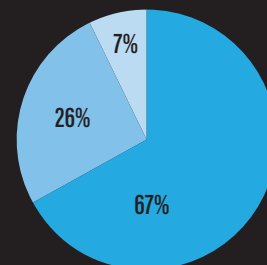
Joel Alvord, Treasurer

Unaudited financial results

Fiscal year 2025 ► Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 2025

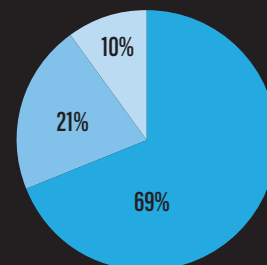
Revenue

Individual donations	\$1,135,314
Grants	\$440,569
Sponsorships & events	\$118,615
Total	\$1,694,498



Operating expenses

Journalism	\$1,179,702
Administration	\$359,040
Fundraising	\$170,971
Total	\$1,709,713



Net assets

Beginning net assets:	\$1,779,306
Change in net assets:	(\$15,215)
Ending net assets	\$1,764,091

▶ LOOKING AHEAD

Three-year strategic plan

We recently wrapped up a six-month strategy process and published our plan on our site as a sign of our commitment to transparency.

The work behind the three-year plan was rigorous and inclusive. We benchmarked our performance against peer organizations and gathered a range of perspectives — more than 50 internal and external stakeholders contributed

through one-on-one interviews and group conversations. We are grateful to all who participated and to those who continue to share meaningful feedback every day. Serving our community would not be possible without you.

Community was our throughline, in fact. At every step in the process, we made sure to tie our strategy to our goal of having the greatest community impact.

We are now focused on our five strategic priorities: 1) Ensure financial success; 2) Sharpen and align editorial identity; 3) Grow audience reach and deepen community engagement; 4) Strengthen talent and organizational capacity; and 5) Strengthen board governance and development.

We look forward to putting the plan into action. And we invite you to hold us accountable.



New Waterfront and Oceans reporter

The Light has been selected as a host newsroom for the second time by Report for America. With the program's support, in July 2026 we will bring on a Waterfront and Oceans reporter to cover the area's maritime economy and coastal environment.

We're excited to be able to devote additional resources to this unique and critical aspect of the New Bedford region.



HOW TO SUPPORT

When you support The Light, you invest in the culture of New Bedford and help make in-depth, fact-based journalism a mainstay of the community for years to come. **Here's how you can help.**



► **Giving financially**

Visit newbedfordlight.org/support-our-publication/ to make an online donation.

Mail a check, payable to:

The New Bedford Light
127 W. Rodney French Blvd., Box 113
New Bedford, MA 02744

Email giving@newbedfordlight.org for other giving options, such as including The Light in your will or trust.

► **More options**

- Host an event
- Subscribe to our free newsletters
- Contribute a tip for our reporters or an essay for our Community Voices section
- Submit an event to our civic or culture calendar
- Spread the word about us to your friends and neighbors



Scan the QR code to learn more about how to get involved.

▶ DONOR APPRECIATION

The Light would not exist without the generosity of the community we serve. Independent, local journalism's beacon shines brighter because of you.

Founding benefactors

Jacobs Family fund of the Jewish Community Foundation

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