JULIAN MERCER

JOURNALIST

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Journalist with 8+ years reporting city government, education, and public safety stories for regional newspapers and a wire service. Cultivates sources, verifies facts, and files accurate stories on deadline across print, web, and newsletter formats.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Reporter Jul 2022 - Present
Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL

- Cover city hall and public schools, filing two to three stories a week and breaking news on deadline.
- Led a four-month investigation into school bus contracts that prompted a board audit and drew 180,000 page views.
- Maintain a source list of more than 150 officials, advocates, and residents, and verify each key claim with two sources.
- Mentor two interns each summer on records requests and interview prep, with both producing published stories.

Staff Reporter Jan 2021 - Jun 2022

- Reported on neighbourhood development and public safety, producing about 120 published stories over the period.
- Filed 25 public records requests that supplied data for three enterprise stories and a long-running series.
- Checked budget and crime figures with city analysts and corrected the record on two stories, which kept readers and editors confident in the coverage.
- Wrote a weekly newsletter item that helped grow the subscriber list by roughly 6,000 readers.

Reporter Aug 2019 - Dec 2020
Austin American-Statesman, Austin, TX

- Covered county government and courts, attending hearings and filing same-day stories with clear, accurate summaries.
- Corrected zero published factual errors in the final year by checking names, figures, and quotes against records.
- Shot and edited short videos for web stories that earned above-average viewing time among local news content.
- Interviewed over 200 sources for a series on housing costs that was cited in a city council debate.

Associate Reporter Jun 2018 - Jul 2019
Associated Press, Austin, TX

- Wrote short wire stories on state legislature and local news that were picked up by member papers.
- Updated breaking stories quickly as details emerged, following AP style and attribution standards.
- Compiled election night results from county sources into accurate briefs for editors.

CORE SKILLS

Reporting | Interviewing | Investigative research | Public records requests | Fact-checking | AP style | Breaking news | Feature writing | Video editing | Newsletter writing | Source development | Social media reporting | CMS publishing | Data journalism | Excel

EDUCATION

B.S. in Journalism, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Evanston, IL

CERTIFICATIONS

Google News Initiative Training Center Certificate | Society of Professional Journalists Member | First Aid and CPR Certified