

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES



MISSION AND VISION

Trucha has always been committed to showcasing a narrative of the Rio Grande Valley from a more holistic and progressive lens. As a multimedia nonprofit organization, we aim to uplift and shift the culture and social movements of migrant and queer communities in the RGV through sharing stories, community journalism, videography, and creative programming. Our vision is to cultivate a grassroots narrative of the frontera with movement journalism, documentaries, artistic opportunities, local partnerships with organizations, and building a strong foundation of storytellers throughout the Texas borderlands.

To ensure that our mission is reflected through our social channels and website, we've developed our Editorial Guidelines. These guidelines help our editors, community journalists, and team members represent our values through our content and writing— may it be an article or social media post.

Ultimately, these guidelines ensure that every piece of writing provides thoughtful, inclusive, and high-quality content for our audience.

VALUES

COMMUNITY: At the core of our values is our commitment to fostering a safe community of journalists, activists, creators, movement leaders and change makers. We do this through the implementation of hosting events, presentations, and workshops that help educate and inform our community about a variety of social causes.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY: We believe in highlighting diversity through the history and stories of the people and culture of the RGV.

TEAMWORK: We believe in collaboration with locals, groups, organizations, and movements to foster community and supportive environments.

TRUTH: We believe in truth-telling, respecting people's voices, and honoring their stories.

RESPECT: We believe in treating each other with empathy, compassion, and respect.

WE DO NOT CONDONE bullying, harassment, anti-LGBTQIA+, anti-immigrant language, and hurtful belief systems.

WE DO NOT TOLERATE anyone who impedes on bodily autonomy and choice.

NO sexism, racism, fatphobia, transphobia, ableism, hate.



OUR AUDIENCE

We want to engage with people from many walks of life, whether it's your tia, neighbor, professor, or friend. We want to reach the students at STC and UTRGV, the local activists fighting for civil and environmental rights, the artists, the dreamers and the community.

Our content centers around grassroots issues in the RGV, and we wish to reach the people who may not know what's happening in the Valley in hopes of making meaningful conversations happen.

At our core, we aim to shift negative narratives of the RGV perpetuated by mainstream media by highlighting our stories via community journalism and creativity.

YOUR WRITTEN VOICE

As a community journalist, your voice matters. Our most engaging articles contain well-researched information and highlight the writer's voice. For your personality to shine, try picking a topic you're passionate about writing.

TOPICS WE COVER

When writing an article, keep our mission in mind. Articles must be centered around grassroots content in the Rio Grande Valley.

We publish articles and produce content covering two pillars— Arts & Culture and Social Justice. Often, the subject matter will intersect.

Note: Links are to previous articles and resources for inspiration.

ARTS & CULTURE


We encourage articles about RGV arts, music, and culture, which include exclusive interviews, upcoming exhibitions, social critiques, and arts-based events.

- Multidisciplinary, Visual/3D, Traditional Media, Digital, and [Exhibitions](#)
- Photography, Archival Films, [Documentaries](#), Local Theatre, Film Festivals
- Upcoming and Breakthrough Bands/Solo Musicians, [RGV Regional Music](#)
- Dance: Fólklórico etc.
- [Poetry Organizations](#), Writing Groups
- [Local Podcasts](#)
- #PURO956 Culture



SOCIAL JUSTICE

We stand for human rights. We stand for our community, our gente, and our neighbors. We aim to highlight local groups, organizations, and current events focused on the marginalized/underrepresented in the RGV:

- 
- Gender/Identity
 - ◆ Local LGBTQIA+ Issues/Representation including updates on [legislation](#)
 - ◆ Women's Rights
 - ◆ [Killing of Latinas in the RGV](#)
 - Education
 - ◆ [Book Bans](#), [Board of Education](#)
 - ◆ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - Immigration
 - ◆ New legislation surrounding DACA and [Dreamers](#)
 - ◆ Asylum seekers (queer and trans)
 - ◆ Undocumented families, mixed-status families, [Immigration Stories](#)
 - Race & Class
 - ◆ Latinx, [Black](#), Indigenous & [POC Rights](#)/Representation
 - ◆ Labor Rights & Activism, Events by [La Union del Pueblo Entero \(LUPE\)](#)
 - ◆ Truth About [Borderlands](#)
 - Reproductive Justice & Abortion Access
 - ◆ [Updates](#) and Movements by local activist organizations
 - ◆ Abortion Access & Fake Clinics
 - [Voting](#), Local and State Elections
 - Environmental Issues/Sustainability in the [RGV](#)
 - ◆ Environmental Racism
 - ◆ Impact of large corporations on the region, [SpaceX](#)
 - ◆ Food deserts and Agroecology practices in the region
 - Mental Health
 - ◆ [Survivors of Sexual Assault](#)
 - ◆ [Suicide Rates Amongst Latinos](#)
 - ◆ [Machismo/Marianismo in Queer Relationships](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:

[Associated Press](#)

[United We Dream](#)

[Equality Texas: Legislative Bill Tracker 2023](#)

EDITING PROCESS FOR JOURNALISTS

STEP 1 - VIRTUAL MEETING

If your pitch is taken under consideration, the Editor will schedule a 15-30 minute chat with you to discuss the article pitch in further detail, editorial guidelines and contract details.

STEP 2 - ONBOARDING & DEADLINE

The editor will send an email with MOU and W9 forms for the community journalist to review, sign, and return.

Journalists will also receive a copy of the Editorial Guidelines to review. The first draft's deadline will also be included.



STEP 3: FIRST DRAFT

Email your first draft by deadline in .DOCX format or share Google Doc link to the editor by the deadline provided. Editor will review and add initial comments, suggestions, and changes. Community journalists are expected to make changes accordingly and send a second draft by the new deadline provided.

STEP 4: FINAL DRAFT

Community journalists should expect to write up to 3 drafts. Editor will make a copy of the final draft and make final changes to prepare the article for publishing.

STEP 5: PAYMENT & PUBLISHING

After finalizing the word count, the editor will email an invoice to review, sign, and return. The article will be published on Trucha's website and shared throughout our social media platforms.

PLEASE NOTE

- Always maintain professional communication with the editor via organization email only.
- Do not share the article draft with anyone other than Editor prior to publishing. Sharing a draft could result in contract termination.
- Trucha retains the right to edit your submission to ensure clarity, focus, and alignment with our values. Trucha will pay for your work but is under no obligation to publish your writing; publication is tentative, not guaranteed.


ETHICS

REPRESENTATION

Ultimately, we believe in honoring the stories of the community, especially members willing to share their stories with Trucha. As a community journalist, you are representing the values of Trucha.


Using representation for your personal advantage, gain, or power while under contract with Trucha is a direct violation of our Values and will result in immediate termination.

BEST PRACTICES FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS



If your article involves conducting interviews with community members, we ask that you adhere to our values. Violation of our values will result in the immediate termination of your contract with Trucha. Please follow our practices for conducting interviews:

- Do not contact potential interview subjects before negotiating MOU with the editor.
 - ◆ Once MOU is approved, you may begin initial contact with the interviewee.
- Maintain professionalism at all times:
 - ◆ Requests for interviews should be sent via email when possible.
 - ◆ Always ask for permission to record the interview.
- Be sure to research your topic

- 
- Have a set of questions ready for the interviewee.
 - ◆ If the interviewee requests, you may send questions in advance to help them prepare only after consulting with your editor.
 - ◆ If the interviewee is uncomfortable answering specific questions, respect their boundaries and move on with the rest of the interview.
 - Set clear expectations with the interviewee:
 - ◆ Confirm interview format: email, phone call, video chat, or in-person.
 - ◆ Set a clear date and time for the interview.
 - ◆ If the interview is through email, set an appropriate deadline for the interviewee to respond.
 - Conduct the interview. Here are some tips:
 - ◆ Be timely.
 - ◆ Actively listen.
 - ◆ Refrain from interrupting interviewee while they speak with remarks like “mhm.” This helps with transcribing and recordings.
 - ◆ Always thank interviewees for their time.
 - ◆ Provide the interviewee with final product.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON HOW TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS & BEST PRACTICES:

[National History Day: Guidelines for Conducting Oral History Interviews](#)

[Writer's Digest: 10 Interviewing Tips for Journalists](#)

[Oral History Association: Principles & Best Practices](#)

[Society of Professional Journalists: Code of Ethics](#)


ARTICLE FORMAT

Please use the [Article Template](#) to ensure you are following our format.

ILLUSTRATIONS

As of May 2023, Trucha offers the option to include 2 illustrations created by local RGV artists from our Illustrator Pool. Illustrations must be requested as soon as possible.

IMAGES

- 
- Email all photos to the Editor directly.
 - JPEG or PNG format.
 - You may provide 2 images (minimum) for your article that are engaging, insightful, and/or informative.
 - Images may include photos you've taken, photos you've sourced elsewhere, and/or photos you have permission to use.
 - Always include credits in the photo captions.

REFERENCES

Be mindful that the sources and references you share are factual and reliable sources. Include a minimum of 3 sources in your article for readers to reference through hyperlinks.



LANGUAGE & PROOFREADING

Under no circumstances should you write anything containing profane, racist, sexist, homophobic, or transphobic language.

Do not use language that directly endorses candidates during election seasons. However, you may write about any important bills and social issues that are up for debate.

Please refer to the following guidelines for writing with inclusive language:

- [American Psychological Association: Inclusive Language Guidelines](#)
- [Jericho Writers: A Writer's Guide To Inclusive Language](#)
- [Writer: Inclusive Language \(Interactive Guide\)](#)

NOTES ON PROOFREADING

Always proofread your article before submitting the first draft to your editor:

- Include headline and subtitles (if applicable)
- Don't forget to link your sources
- Check your spelling and grammar
- Make sure you're following AP guidelines

Ask yourself these questions when proofreading:

- Is there a clear argument?
- Does the article flow well for the intended audience?
- Do all your paragraphs support your argument/topic?
- Do you have a clear introduction and conclusion?
- Is the title representative of the article?

RATES

We pay our community journalists according to the type of article submitted:

LONGFORM FEATURE

An in-depth investigative piece and/or a well-researched article digging into social justice topics: LGBTQIA+, environmental, reproductive justice, immigration, health, education and regional history/culture.

- **Word count: 800-1,200 words**
- **Rate: \$0.50 per word**



OP-ED/COMMENTARY

Well-researched articles on specific social issues that carry strong opinions yet align with our mission.

- **Word count: 600-800 words**
- **Rate: \$0.40 per word**

Q&A FEATURES/INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

In-depth interviews/highlights on specific community groups, members, artists, and/or organizations of the Rio Grande Valley. Explores the intersectionality of social justice, arts, and culture.

→ **Word count: 600-800 words**

→ **Rate: \$0.40 per word**

INSTAGRAM ARTICLES

Small pop culture stories/current happenings that affect the RGV. These articles may also include topics on community art/culture events, short community highlights, and voting. All of these stories will live on our [Instagram](#).

→ **Word count: 250-300 words**

→ **Rate: \$.30 per word**

MEDIA PARTNERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

We support the following media partners and organizations:

[Texas Signal](#)

[The Texas Tribune](#)

[Texas Standard](#)

[PBS NewsHour](#)

[Houston Defender Newspaper](#)

[The Black Wall Street Times](#)

[Buffalo's Fire](#)

[Cicero Independiente](#)

[Documented](#)

[Campus Echo](#)

[El Informador](#)

[El Tecolote](#)

[Enlace Latino NC](#)

[Epicenter NYC](#)

[Flint Beat](#)

[Georgia Asian Times](#)

[Hy-Lo News](#)

[Indian Country Today](#)

[International Examiner](#)

[Jackson Advocate](#)

[La Noticia](#)

[Media Justice](#)

[Migrant Roots Media](#)

[Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service](#)

[MIWISCONSIN](#)

[MLK50](#)

[Mysko Media](#)

[New York Amsterdam News](#)

[Osage News](#)

[Outlier Media](#)

[PULSO](#)



[PushBlack](#)
[PeoplexPlastic](#)
[QCityMetro](#)
[Radio Indigena \(El Mixteco\)](#)
[Sahan Journal](#)
[Scalawag](#)
[Shift Press](#)
[South Seattle Emerald](#)
[The St. Louis American](#)
[The Atlanta Voice](#)
[The Objective](#)
[THE TRiIBE](#)
[TransLash](#)
[Vinegar Hill Magazine](#)
[WURD Radio](#)

RESOURCES

The following resources inspired Trucha's Editorial Guidelines:

[Impact Instagram](#)
[UT Dallas Editorial Guidelines](#)
[Texas Observer Pitch Guidelines](#)
[Impact Magazine Writer's Guidelines](#)
[The Do's and Don'ts of Article Writing](#)
[The Texas Tribune Republishing Guidelines](#)
[Outlier Media: Republish Our Work](#)
[LGBTQIA Resource Center: Mission, Vision, Values](#)