

# Vanessa G. Sánchez

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I'm a reporter with experience in investigative, enterprise and breaking news reporting for web and print. In my role, I focus on health emphasizing equity issues. My most recent stories have exposed disparities at the intersections of maternal health and race and mental health and policing.

## REPORTING EXPERIENCE

### **Investigative reporter, Searchlight New Mexico** **Sept. 2022 – Present**

I produce investigative and enterprise stories on topics that include maternal health, worker shortages, mental health, DD waiver programs in New Mexico, the Navajo Nation and the U.S-Mexico border. I pitch ideas, analyze data, file record requests, build sources in various communities and write stories.

- **Maternal health disparities:** An [investigation](#) into how access to maternal health has shrunk over the last few years, putting countless women and infants at risk. I found that a nonprofit hired to reduce maternal deaths and injuries in hospitals did not fulfill its contract. Following publication, the nonprofit's board resigned. A senator is considering drafting legislation to improve maternal health outcomes.
- **Mental health and policing:** New Mexico cities hoped to reduce tragedies by sending trained civilians to answer mental health calls instead of police. Despite the investment, [our investigation found](#) Albuquerque police shot and killed at least four people last year during mental health crises. The department hit a 10-year high for police shootings that year. [A second story](#) reconstructed through 911 calls, police reports, witnesses and family members the tragic last hours of a man with a mental illness killed at the hands of Albuquerque police.

### **Bradlee fellow and intern, The Washington Post** **Sept. – Dec. 2021 | June – Aug. 2022**

As a Bradlee fellow and intern, I generated ideas, analyzed data and wrote stories for the local, national education, local government and politics desks. My stories included breaking news, enterprise stories and coverage of the 2022 primary elections.

- **COVID- 19 disparities:** I visited two coronavirus hot spots (an immigrant neighborhood and areas around poultry-processing plants in Maryland) to document how health and economic disparities persisted after two years of pandemic.
- **Food inequity:** I found that D.C. has the country's highest rate of senior food insecurity. And while the city has several programs providing access to healthy meals, some seniors have fallen through the cracks.
- **Lack of representation in D.C. schools:** I found that teachers in D.C. are more racially diverse than the national average, but the city's public and charter schools have struggled to resolve a deficit of Latino teachers and male teachers of color.
- **Immigration:** I [broke a story](#) about how a network of D.C. nonprofit organizations scrambled to help migrants who arrived from Texas and Arizona.

### **Reporter, Howard Center for Investigative Journalism** **Jan. 2021 – May. 2022**

Howard fellow, lead reporter and writer of three national investigative stories.

- **Migrant workers safety protections:** An award-winning investigation about how three states and the federal government failed to protect migrant workers processing seafood in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. I pitched the story, led a team of reporters, collected data and translated the story into Spanish. After publication, the Mexican embassy visited migrant camps to collect information about potential violations of workers' rights.

- **States lottery advertising:** I led a team of reporters, traveled to Texas and Virginia to find lottery players and wrote a story about how lotteries spend more than a half-billion dollars a year on pervasive marketing campaigns.
- **Printing Hate:** A series of stories into how white-owned newspapers incited terror in America. I traveled to three sundown towns in Kentucky to write [a story](#) about how the state's newspapers blamed Black victims for lynchings. A second [story](#) explored how the Black press used photographs of lynchings to shock the world. I was selected to write the introduction of the project along with editor DeNeen Brown.

### **State House reporter, Capital News Service**

**Jan. – April 2022**

- Pitched, wrote and covered stories at the intersection of health and immigration during the 2022 legislative session at the Maryland State House.

### **Freelance reporter for various publications**

**Oct. – May 2021**

- Wrote and pitched stories focusing on immigrant-related issues in publications including The Baltimore Brew, El Tiempo Latino and La Voz Unida.

### **Founder of La Máquina de Escribir**

**Feb. 2015 – June. 2018**

- Produced multiplatform content. Edited and copy-edited books and research papers for colleges and art institutions in Ecuador. Worked for a bimonthly magazine and traveled around the country covering stories about Indigenous communities and alternative economies.

## **SKILLS**

Bilingual: Spanish-English  
Data analysis: R and Excel

FOIA requests  
Audio: Adobe Audition

Research: PACER, NexisLexis  
Video: Adobe Premiere

## **EDUCATION**

- Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland, College Park, Md., M.J. May 2022.
- Faculty of Philosophy. University of Cuenca. Bachelor's in Literature and Audiovisuals. Ecuador. 2017.

## **OTHER EXPERIENCE**

- Spanish Teacher: Taught Spanish to second language learners and senior high schoolers.
- Interpreter: Worked as a 1:1 interpreter in a group home for individuals with disabilities in Baltimore City. The position included interpretation for a Spanish-speaking young man, teaching living skills and de-escalating crises.

## **RECOGNITIONS**

- Top of the Rockies, multiplatform division, 3rd place. Searching on their own. April 2023.
- Shaufler Prize in Journalism (student category), Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. Mega Billions: The great lottery wealth transfer. March 2023.
- Roy W. Howard Fellow: Selected among dozens of candidates for a yearlong investigative journalism fellowship. September 2022.
- Bradlee Fellow: Named a Bradlee Fellow, a program created inside The Washington Post in recognition of the courage and integrity that legendary Washington Post Executive Editor Benjamin C. Bradlee instilled in his newsroom. June 2022.
- Punch Sulzberger Innovator of the Year Award, News Leaders Association, Printing Hate. May 2022.
- IRE Medal and Award (large student category), Investigative Reporters and Editors, Printing Hate. April 2022.
- 2021 Mark of Excellence (student team category), Award in Region 2, Society of Professional Journalists, investigative division, 1st place. U.S. deems migrant seafood workers 'essential' but limits their COVID-19 protections. March 2022.