

BGA Names Ruby L. Bailey Editor of Illinois Answers Project

December 5, 2023



Ruby L. Bailey, a seasoned newsroom leader with a deep appreciation of the power of journalism to prompt positive change, is joining the Better Government Association's Illinois Answers Project as editor-in-chief.

Bailey joins Illinois Answers from USA Today, where she served as consumer editor. Prior to that, she was opinion and public engagement editor at the Indianapolis Star, and she previously served as executive editor of The Missourian, in Columbia Missouri.

At USA Today, Bailey led projects that focused on the impact of the Fair Housing Act on Black homeownership and diversity in the C-suite of corporations after the murder of George Floyd. At the Indianapolis Star, she reported and wrote columns that gave voice to people often overlooked by the power structure of the city. Bailey also has advocated for the power of solutions-focused journalism, following intensive solutions training undertaken in 2019.

“Ruby is a natural leader with a proven track record of enabling journalists to do their very best work. She connects actively with communities she covers so their voices are heard. Ruby has led incisive reporting projects and her outwardly focused mindset will help connect us to our journalism and community partners,” said David Greising, president of the BGA. “Under Ruby’s leadership, the BGA’s Illinois Answers Project will produce journalism that exposes wrongs, finds solutions, and has a positive impact on the people of Illinois.”

“My life’s work and mission is empowering communities through journalism,” said Bailey. “I can think of no better place than the Illinois Answers Project to lead a group of journalists committed to that important work for the people of Chicago and Illinois. Together, we will delve deeply into the most pressing problems and give residents the information they need and deserve to effect the change in our communities.”

A journalism graduate from Wayne State University, with a masters in theology from Biola University, Bailey got her start in professional journalism in Flint, Michigan before returning to her native Detroit. At the Detroit Free Press, she produced award-winning coverage about tensions between Muslim and Black residents after the shooting of a Black man at a gas station. Bailey later served as Washington Bureau correspondent for the Free Press and was embedded with the U.S. Navy during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Bailey serves on the boards of the Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting and the Missouri Press Foundation. She will begin her leadership for the Illinois Answers Project newsroom on Jan. 2, 2024.

The BGA, which is celebrating the 100th year of its founding, in 2022 began publishing the Illinois Answers Project, an investigative and solutions-focused website focused on public safety and accountability; education; equity and economic opportunity, and government finance and accountability. The BGA in late 2021 received a commitment of up to \$10 million from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, to make possible a major investment in solutions reporting and civic outreach that enhances the impact of Illinois Answers Project journalism.

In 2022, the BGA was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Local Reporting for its coverage, with the Chicago Tribune, of failures in fire safety by the City of

Chicago that contributed to more than 60 deaths over four years.