

Emma Sedlak

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Cleveland-based journalist specializing in local government transparency and community-driven storytelling. Combines award-winning communication skills as a national debate champion with technical proficiency in public records research and data tools. Dedicated to uncovering systemic patterns and making complex policy accessible to local communities.

Education

Pitzer College GPA: 3.77 <i>Honors BA in Political Studies and Philosophy</i> Relevant coursework: “Why Democrats Lost Ohio: Realignment, Capture, and Nationalization in Northeast Ohio” thesis, Longform Journalism Practicum, Advanced Logic, Law and Politics, Building Political Parties, Foreign Relations of the US	Claremont, CA 2021-2025
Hawken School GPA: 3.7 2019-2020 Speech and Debate President. 1x National Champion, 2x National Finalist in Congressional Debate. Initiated bias training for Speech and Debate judges.	Gates Mills, OH 2016-2020
School for Ethics and Global Leadership A selective, residential program on ethics, leadership, and public policy.	Washington, DC Fall 2018

Experience

Freelance Community Reporter • Cover local government, education, and transportation in Cleveland. • Skilled at turning complex policy issues into clear, community-focused stories. • Interview public officials, nonprofit leaders, and residents to gather key facts. • Scrollytelling using Custom HTML blocks in WordPress.	Signal Cleveland September 2025-Present
Documenter • Attend Cleveland-area public meetings (city council, school board, and county committees) and produce detailed notes on discussions, votes, and public comments. • Document key decisions and policy debates in real time to provide reliable source material that supports newsroom reporting and community transparency.	Cleveland Documenters May 2022-Present
Digital Editorial Media Intern • Pitched, researched, and authored original news articles focusing on local politics and community news within a fast-paced, high-volume digital newsroom	Scene Magazine June–August 2021

Projects & Community Engagement

Cleveland Police Discipline Database • Reviewed over 1,500 public records from Cleveland police disciplinary hearings dating back to 2017, extracting key details and standardizing data in AirTable for a searchable public database. • Identified patterns and trends in disciplinary actions and helped translate findings into clear visualizations to support public transparency and accountability.	November 2025-Present
Community Listening Fellowship • Interviewed 75 Cleveland residents about their concerns for the 2025 local elections. • Summarized community feedback into a clear, people-centered agenda shared with candidates, media partners, and voters.	May-September 2025
Circle of Solidarity • Facilitated reading and discussion between incarcerated participants and community members, focusing on literature about the prison industrial complex.	January 2024-May 2025
Border Angels • Participated in monthly water drops, hiking five to eight hours along the US-Mexico border near San Diego to strategically distribute water, food, and emergency blankets.	March 2024-May 2025