



## Emergency Legislative Relief Priorities

*April 20, 2020*

- 1. Expand and Clarify the Payroll Protection Program:** Many local newspapers and broadcasters exist within larger organizations and are not able to benefit from the Payroll Protection Program. These local media outlets are essential businesses that are gathering and reporting the news in their communities and have been harmed by the COVID-19 crisis and should be eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) using a similar framework applied to restaurants and hotels. Congress should also clarify that, under the PPP, local newspapers can use loans for printing and production expenses. In many communities without the newspaper being printed and delivered there is no local news.
- 2. Fund Federal Advertising Campaign in Newspapers and Other Local Media:** Direct current US government advertising campaigns to local news publishers (the Census being an example). Further, provide the Department of Health and Human Services, the Small Business Administration and other relevant agencies with an additional \$5 billion for direct funding of print and digital advertisements, at market rates, with local news publishers.\* These ads could carry information on medical resources, status of testing sites, data from the CDC, access to small business loans and other critical governmental information. Spends should be equitably portioned across large, medium and small publishers.
- 3. Support Journalism Jobs in Local Communities:** Establish immediate relief to support every full-time journalist employed for a full 12-month period, beginning March 1, 2020, to local news publishers.\* This relief needs to be accessible asap in order to sustain our newsrooms.
- 4. Establish a tax credit for local small-to-medium businesses (SMBs) to invest locally for marketing**  
Businesses in local communities have suffered greatly as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. A tax credit for small-to-medium sized businesses to advertise in local media in their community would help stimulate economic activity on Main Street which would help both local retailers and the local newspaper.
  - Provide SMBs up to \$2,500 credit (\$5,000 in 2020 to immediately mitigate COVID-19 crisis) against federal tax liability for advertising with any local media organization within their state.
  - 100% of credit available for use with any local/state organization

*\*Local news publishers are defined as organizations:*

- Whose primary business is the publication of news & information about current events
- Employ professional journalists and pay them market rates of compensation
- 51% of whose readers (print and digital) live within a single Designated Market Area
- Have met the conditions above for at least two (2) consecutive years immediately prior to the enactment of the Act

## ***Longer-Term Priorities for Sustaining Local News Publishers***

- **Provide a Subscription Credit:** Establish an individual tax credit for subscriptions to local news publishers, up to a maximum of \$750 per year (based on average subscription rates of \$62.50 per month for home delivery)
- **Support the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act:** If we want local news publishing to continue to exist for future crises our communities will face, then Congress should also immediately pass the Journalism Competition & Preservation Act, which has been introduced in both chambers of Congress on a bipartisan basis and will start to address the inequities in how quality journalism is treated and valued by the major digital advertising platforms

*On behalf of its approximately 1,500 newspaper and associate member companies, America's Newspapers is committed to explaining, defending and advancing the vital role of newspapers in democracy and civil life. We put an emphasis on educating the public on all the ways newspapers contribute to building a community identity and the success of local businesses.*

*For more information, contact:*

Dean Ridings, CEO, [dridings@newspapers.org](mailto:dridings@newspapers.org) | 847-282-9850 ext 5 | [www.newspapers.org](http://www.newspapers.org)