

The Crisis in Local News

**Even before COVID-19, the crisis
in journalism had become a
crisis for our democracy.**

Local coverage has been decimated.

Residents no longer get the information they need to understand the critical issues facing their community, to make good decisions for their family, and hold elected officials accountable.

News Deserts Were Spreading...

THE DENVER POST

Denver Post staff in 2013 when they won the Pulitzer prize for coverage of the Aurora high school shooting. **The black silhouettes are reporters who no longer work there.**



1,300

Newspapers have closed in
the last 10 years

200

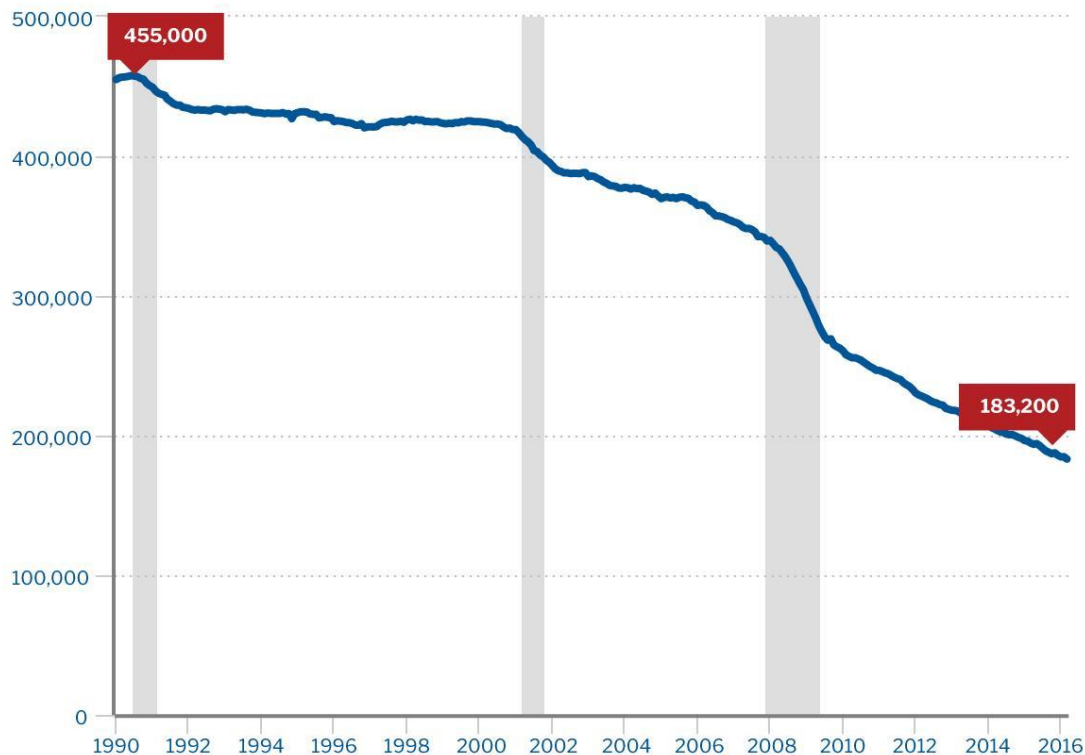
counties in the US have no
newspaper at all

*In 2004, 1 in 8 reporters were in just
NYC, DC or LA.*

In 2017, it was 1 in 5.

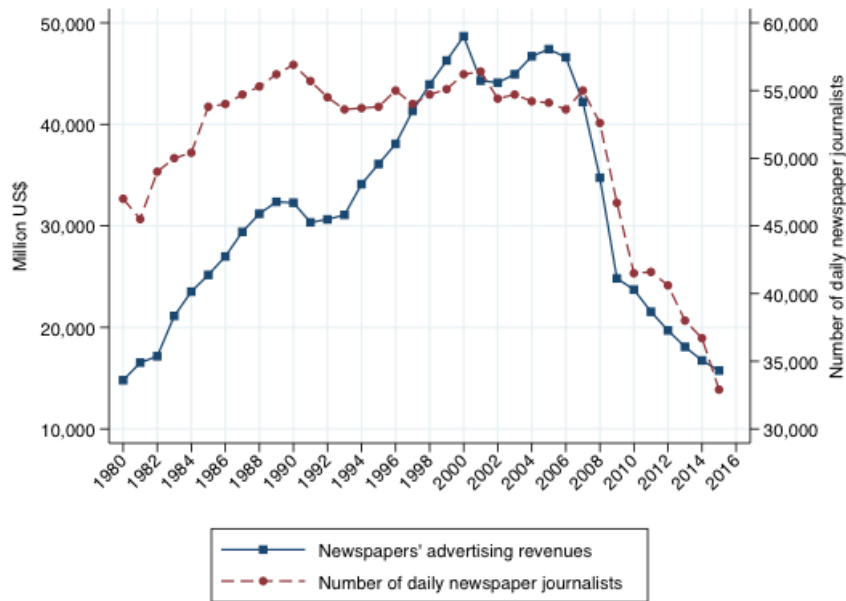
Local Reporting Was Declining...

Dramatic Drop In The Number Of Local Reporters

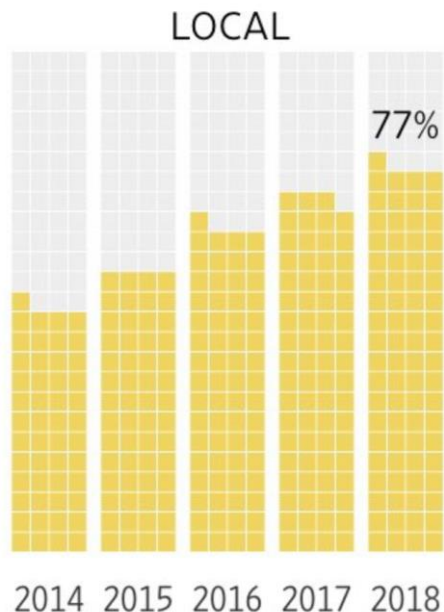


From a peak of nearly **458,000** newspaper reporters in the early 1990s, the number has dropped to about **180,000**.

Ad revenue dropping, as more digital spending goes to platforms



Voxeu



Google and Facebook share of digital ads

eMarketer

We were a strong breeze away from the local news system blowing over...

Local news
readership is up
dramatically

But business Models Are Devastated:

- Local advertising down 50-100% for for-profit newspapers
- Public radio shaken by the impact on their sponsor universities
- Events – the hottest trend in nonprofit revenue – are cancelled
- Foundation support fragile



Right when local reporters are needed
most, the cutbacks intensify

**Roughly 36,000
workers at news
companies have been
laid off, been
furloughed or had
their pay cut**

**The predictions:
Hundreds of
permanent news
closures**

We need...

New models

New government policy

New mindset

New “business models”

The positive changes in commercial local news must accelerate

- Greater focus on reader revenue instead of advertising
- Community engagement and events
- Digital proficiency to reach more people and advertisers

The revolution in nonprofit local news must accelerate

- Hundreds of great new local nonprofits like FlintBeat, MLK50 and Chalkbeat
- Need hundreds more
- Public radio needs to continue to push local journalism
- Deeply rooted in communities through civically important journalism
- Strengthen earned revenue (via AJP and others)
- Better collaboration among nonprofits, national-local models
- \$1 billion more from philanthropy

The growth of hybrid models must accelerate

- National service model (focused on boots on the ground, local match, public service)
- Collaborations between commercial and nonprofit media
- Combine the reach of local TV and newspapers, with the reporting heft of watchdog nonprofits
-



REPORT FOR AMERICA

National service program that places journalists into local newsrooms

- half nonprofit, half commercial
- RFA pays half the salary, help local newsroom raise the rest

225 reporters in 162 newsrooms in the field in June.

Goal: 1,000 reporters on the ground in 2024

Samantha Max, Report for America Corps Member in Macon, GA

New government policy

Government policy must help with the crisis -- and facilitate a better local news system

- Ad spending going to local news
- Replanting strategy
- National service model

A faint, light blue map of the United States is visible in the background, showing state boundaries and major cities. The map is centered on the continental United States, with Alaska and Hawaii also visible.

New mindset: Local journalism as public service

**Community
journalism will only
survive with the
support of the
community**

- Subscriptions
- Much bigger nonprofit sector
- Local journalism as a public service