

# Executive Summary



**Americans take pride in their local newspapers.** Nearly six in 10 Americans consider the local newspaper in their community an important symbol of civic pride or one of the most important symbols of civic pride in their community (44% and 15%, respectively).



**Most Americans (86%) say everyone should have access to local news,** even if they don't pay for it, but just one in five Americans have supported local news in the past year by subscribing to, donating to or purchasing a membership to a local news organization.



**Political affiliation is important for understanding news subscriptions.** No partisan difference in past subscription rates exists, but Democrats (37%) are much more likely today to pay a monthly or annual fee to access news than are Republicans (25%) and independents (27%).



**No one type of content will help news organizations regain subscribers.** When asked what would make news consumers renew their subscriptions, no common themes emerged, though special content and discounts were the response options chosen most often, each by 31%.



**Age and political affiliation are important lenses for viewing how Americans support local news organizations.** U.S. adults older than 55 are more likely to subscribe, while those 18 to 34 years old are twice as likely as people aged 55 and older to donate to a news organization. Democrats are also more likely to have donated to news organizations (30%) over the past 12 months than Republicans (8%) and independents (17%).



**The public is largely unaware of the financial crisis facing local news.** This study confirms findings from other recent reports that the majority of Americans (56%) erroneously believe that local news organizations are doing well financially.



**There is little consensus about how — or whether — to sustain local newspapers.** Nearly half of Americans (47%) say local newspapers are vital and should be preserved even if they can't sustain themselves financially, and there is deep partisan division about whether those newspapers should be allowed to fail if they can't sustain themselves.



**But, there is evidence that news consumers could become more likely to pay for the local journalism.** When people are told about the financial situation facing local newspapers or the ways in which local journalism supports a healthy democracy, they were significantly more likely to donate to a nonprofit organization that supports local journalism (54%) than were those who did not get such information (40%).



**Americans favor private sources of funding for local news organizations over public subsidies.** Most Americans favor financial support from local residents, philanthropic organizations, individual investors and technology companies. By contrast, most Americans oppose financial support from the federal (66%) or local government (60%).