News Deserts are Increasing

200+
200+ counties in the US now have no newspaper at all

1,800+
1,800+ communities in the US no longer have a dedicated local news source

DO YOU LIVE IN A NEWS DESERT?

In the U.S. 200 counties do not have a local newspaper. Half of all counties - 1,540 - have only one newspaper, usually a weekly.

Source: UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media
Dramatic Drop In The Number Of Local Reporters

Since 2004, there has been a **57% decline in newspaper newsroom employees**, from 72,000 to 30,820.

Academic studies show that collapse of local news has led to **lower voter turnout and bond ratings, more corruption, waste, air pollution** and corporate crime.

As a result, “no one is watching the storehouse.”
Fewer reporters means crucial issues and communities are under-covered.

Not covered:

- Bad Drinking Water
- Inadequate Healthcare
- Injustice In Courts
- Corruption At City Hall
- Failing Schools
- Solutions That Work
The absence of local reporting has deep impact.

The result:

- More corruption
- Less competitive elections
- Weaker municipal oversight
- A decline in civic engagement
- A rise in injustice
Report for America is a national service program that places talented journalists—corps members—into local newsrooms to report on under-covered issues and communities.
HOW IT WORKS

Newsrooms identify critical coverage gaps & apply to host corps members
Newspapers, television, public radio stations, nonprofit, commercial
Judges pick critical coverage gaps from newsrooms

Innovative news organizations

Outstanding journalists
National competition for Report for America corps members
RFA Team Reviews Applications

Best reporters selected from applicants to fill critical coverage gaps in local newsrooms
Targeted corps member training
Managed by local editors

Reporters on the ground in communities

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AN INNOVATIVE 3:1 MATCHING MODEL

Funding model for first year corps members:

50% salary: Report for America & its national philanthropic partners

25% salary: From the newsroom

25% salary: From local funders*

*We offer our local partners training, toolkits, and coaches to raise local philanthropic support
A MULTI-YEAR FUNDING COMMITMENT

**Year 1:** Report for America pays half of first year corps members’ salary. The other half is matched by the host newsroom and the local community.

**Year 2:** Report for America pays 33% of the salary for the corps member.

**Year 3 (optional):** Report for America pays 20% of the salary for the corps member.
Report for America Supports Journalism Where Cutbacks Hit Hard

The crisis in local journalism has become a crisis of democracy

Advance the Common Good, Big Donors, by Saving Journalism
Since 2017, Report for America has placed nearly 600 journalists in ~200 local newsrooms.

In rural and urban areas across 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam

Serving a mix of under-reported issues and under-covered communities (some are considered "news deserts")
2023–2024 Newsrooms

~200 host news organizations

~300 corps member positions

13% rural newsrooms

61% non-profit news organizations

9% Black or Latino-owned newsrooms

News organizations include radio; TV; daily, weekly/bi-weekly and monthly newspapers; news services; digital
2023–2024 Beats

Education
Environment
Diversity (including BIPOC, ethnic communities, immigration, and race)
Religion
Gender
Seniors and Aging
Sports
Health
Climate Change
Criminal Justice
Photography
... and more
Additional Beat Opportunities

- **Mississippi River Basin AG & Water Desk and Report for America** – 10 reporting positions funded by the Walton Foundation in 31 states.

- **Religion Reporting** - Report for America is expanding its support of newsrooms interested in deep reporting on stories where faith meets gender, education, politics, and democracy itself. Report for America currently has 7 host newsrooms featuring religion reporting beats. This support is made possible by the Henry Luce Foundation and Radiant Foundation.
Report for America corps members are producing award-winning journalism in newsrooms across the country. These are just a few examples of awards received in 2021.

Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting

Livingston Award Finalists (2)

Top Ten Military Veterans in Journalism

National Press Foundation Poverty and Inequality Award

National Award for Education Reporting

National & Regional Edward R. Murrow Awards (multiple)
Who Can Apply?
WE’RE LOOKING FOR...

Any news organization (non-profit or commercial) committed to providing objective, civically important local journalism, including:

- public radio stations
- newspapers
- digital narrative sites
- commercial TV stations
- community media centers
Is there an important need? Are there under-covered topics, communities or geographic areas? What is the beat you’ll create for Report for America corps members to help fill your news gap?

WHAT WE LOOK FOR

- **Identify an important coverage gap** in your community that you aim to fill, and a good description of the proposed beat
- **Demonstrate interest in and willingness to fundraise.** Newsrooms selected to the program will commit to raising 25% of the local share from the philanthropic community to build stronger community support for journalism. We will help you develop initiatives that will contribute to the sustainability of your newsroom.
- **Present evidence of good editing and mentoring** for your newsroom
- **Startups must have published for one year** before applying for corps member. This is to ensure that your leadership team is well-established.
- **Articulate plan to distribute the content** for maximum impact and for assessing success

**NOTE:** Corps member positions are not fellowships or internships. They are full time positions with a two-year commitment and an option to re-up for a third year.
What Are The Benefits?
REPORT FOR AMERICA NEWSROOM BENEFITS

- Passionate reporters covering designated essential beats
- Unlock a **third revenue stream of philanthropy** with the help of our local sustainability and development team
- Expand your newsroom coverage: we pay 50% of the corps member’s salary the first year; and 33% the second year
- Access to a network of over 200 like-minded host newsrooms
- We ultimately want you to expand and grow your newsroom through our partnership
What’s the Application Timeline?
2024–2025 NEWSROOM APPLICATION TIMELINE

- **Newsroom application opens**
  Early July 2023

- **Final application deadline**
  September 18, 2023

- **Newsroom partners announced**
  Early December 2023

- **Corps member year begins**
  July 2024
Sign Up for Updates

Scan the QR code below or visit www.reportforamerica.org/news-rooms.
An initiative of
STAY IN THE LOOP.

Questions? Email us: recruitment@reportforamerica.org

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @report4america

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