

Editor's Guide to the Local Journalism Initiative

Updated May 31, 2021

Your publication now has a Local Journalism Initiative (LJI) reporter. This position is funded by the Government of Canada and is subject to a funding agreement with News Media Canada.

This Editor's Guide is intended to provide an overview to help you fulfill the obligations that come with this funding. It does not replace the funding agreement, which is a legally binding contract. Refer to the funding agreement for all terms and conditions.

What is the Local Journalism Initiative?



The Local Journalism Initiative supports the creation of original civic journalism that covers the diverse needs of underserved communities across Canada. Funding is available to eligible Canadian media organizations to hire journalists or pay freelance journalists to produce civic journalism for underserved communities. The content produced will be available to news media organizations across the country through a Creative Commons licence so that Canadians can be better informed.

Created by the Government of Canada in 2019, the Local Journalism Initiative is administered on its behalf by seven administrator organizations, including News Media Canada.

In 2021-2022, News Media Canada is funding LJI reporters for terms starting no earlier than April 1, 2021 and ending no later than March 31, 2022.

What can my LJI reporter do?



The LJI reporter creates new, original civic journalism. This is journalism that covers the activities of the country's civic institutions (for example, courthouses, city halls, band councils, school boards, federal Parliament or provincial legislatures) or subjects of public importance to society.

Journalistic quality of the work is important. The purpose of the LJI is to inform citizens about local issues, and your publication's role in investigating and independently reporting on issues and events of local public importance is crucial.

How is civic journalism different from community news? As an example, let's consider a story about a bake sale. On its own, a bake sale story is not civic journalism—it's community news. But if the bake sale was held because the local school needed funds to buy equipment, or if it was held to raise funds to buy a new ambulance, then coverage of that reason makes it civic journalism. Then the story really gets interesting because the reporter could interview officials from the relevant civic institution (the school board, or the ministry of health), as well as the organizers of the bake sale, local school/health officials, etc.

In other words, any issue that ties into the work of governments at all levels and their agencies can be covered as civic journalism. The objective is to build a more informed democracy. The more civic journalism you produce about local issues and the work of local governments, the more informed and engaged citizens will be in civic discourse and the democratic process.

What is my LJI reporter not permitted to do?



Opinion pieces and advertising features cannot be produced by the LJI reporter.

News release rewrites and information provided in news conferences widely covered by other media are not acceptable as LJI material if there is no local information or reaction gathered by the LJI reporter that makes the story more pertinent to the target area, and different from what is available in other media. The LJI is meant to create new, original civic journalism, not to disseminate government or corporate announcements.

What can my LJI reporter cover?



The mandate of your LJI reporter is detailed in your Funding Agreement, Schedule 'A', which can be obtained from your publisher. **It is important that both you and your reporter understand the mandate, as your project will be regularly monitored by News Media Canada.** Schedule 'A' includes the following:

- Name of the host news media organization;
- Project ID and title;
- Target area – Communities to be covered;
- Summary description of the project;
- Story count – i.e., minimum number of articles to be written;
- Types of articles to be written – e.g., news, in-depth articles, etc.;
- Specific civic journalism topics to be covered.

What are the credit requirements?

All LJI stories written by your LJI reporter must display the LJI reporter's byline wherever you publish the story (i.e., in print and online): **[Reporter Name], Local Journalism Initiative Reporter**

Your news organization's print and online platforms must also display an acknowledgement of financial support from the Government of Canada. This acknowledgement needs to include the Canada Wordmark ("Canada" with the Canadian flag on the final "a").

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The acknowledgment can be anywhere in the print publication and on the website. We recommend displaying it in print on the front page or in the masthead, and online on the homepage or in the footer. It does not have to accompany every LJI story. A complete guide to the public acknowledgement requirements and the downloadable Wordmark can be found on the Government of Canada's website at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/acknowledgement-financial-support.html>

The LJI News Centre: Sharing content for re-publication



The LJI News Centre is an online portal managed by The Canadian Press on behalf of News Media Canada. News organizations can request a user account and password in order to gain access. This ensures that LJI content receives the widest possible distribution and is freely shared with other news organizations invested in the creation of Canadian journalism. Visit the LJI News Centre at www.lji-ijl.ca.

When and how do I share the LJ content?



LJI news publications must post all stories and other content produced by the LJ reporter to the LJ News Centre at the time of first publication, whether that is online or in print. This is a key requirement. This ensures that content is available for other news organizations to re-publish in a timely manner. For assistance, contact the LJ supervising editor at The Canadian Press at LJI-LJL@thecanadianpress.com.

May I re-publish LJ stories produced by other news organisations?



Yes, you may. In fact, we encourage it! Browse the LJ News Centre regularly for stories of interest to your readers. Download them from the News Centre, and when re-publishing them in print or online, include proper credit, which is a byline that reads: **[Reporter Name], Local Journalism Initiative, [Name of Original Publication]**.

News organizations can use content produced by LJ reporters, regardless of whether they employ an LJ reporter. News organizations will be subject to a Creative Commons licence restricting the use of the content to editorial use only and must commit to adhering to basic journalistic standards.

Workplace Policies

News organizations receiving LJ funding must have in place:

- a **hiring policy** promoting diversity and inclusion; and
- a **human resources policy** ensuring employment equity and a workplace that is free from harassment, abuse and discrimination.

If a news organization does not have these policies, they will be provided by News Media Canada as part of the funding agreement. News organizations will be expected to adhere to these policies.

News organizations must also implement and maintain an **editorial policy** that ensures journalists are professional and that their reporting is fair, or otherwise abide by the Editorial Policy of The Canadian Press available at: <https://www.thecanadianpress.com/about/our-team-values/our-news-principles/>.

News organizations will ensure, to the extent possible, the journalist hired has no familial relations with owners, officers or employees of the news organization in question.

News organizations will act as the employer of their LJ reporter and will be responsible for hiring, training, supervising, and monitoring the performance of LJ reporters.

Questions?



If you have questions about any aspect of the LJ, or would like clarification about the requirements, visit our website at www.localjournalisminitiative.ca or contact us:

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