

Editor's Guide to the Local Journalism Initiative

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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 local 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 original local civic journalism for underserved communities. The content produced will be made available to Canadian news media organizations for re-publication 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.

What can my LJI reporter cover?



The civic journalism 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.

It is the publisher's responsibility to ensure the LJI reporter is professional, that their reporting is balanced and fair and adheres to Canadian Press standards, and that they abide by the editorial policy in force at your company.

What is my LJI reporter permitted to do?



The LJI reporter creates new, original local civic journalism. This is journalism that covers the activities of the country's civic institutions or subjects of public importance to society. The LJI story must be localized, showing the local impact to make it immediately relevant to the local community.

Examples of civic institutions include, but are not limited to: courthouses, city halls, band councils, school boards, hospitals, law enforcement, courts, fire departments, Crown corporations, government agencies, federal Parliament or provincial legislatures.

Journalistic quality of the work is important. Journalistic practices, ethics and standards must be used in crafting the story. The purpose of the LJI is to inform citizens about local issues. Your publication's role in investigating and independently reporting on local issues 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. However, 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. The story can become really interesting when the reporter engages the community by interviewing 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, private citizens, 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?



LJI funds cannot be used to produce stories that do not cover a civic institution or put forward a civic issue of importance to the target community. This does not mean those stories are not interesting or important for the readers; they just cannot be considered LJI content. For example:

- Opinion pieces, first-person stories, and columns cannot be produced by the LJI reporter. The reporter must do journalistic work and speak to the relevant people to build the story.
- Advertising features and local business profiles cannot be produced by the LJI reporter.
- Stories giving the play-by-play and final score of the local hockey game do not qualify as LJI content.
- Concert reviews, restaurant reviews, community events coverage and breaking news coverage do not qualify unless they cover a civic issue of importance for society.
- News release rewrites and rewrites of information provided in news conferences are not civic journalism.
- Stories 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 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 LJI content?



LJI news publications must post LJI stories and other LJI content (e.g., photos) produced by the LJI reporter to the LJI News Centre's Superdesk at the time of first publication online or in print. This is a key requirement. This ensures that content is available in a timely manner for other news organizations to re-publish. For assistance with the Superdesk, contact the LJI supervising editor at The Canadian Press at LJI-IJL@thecanadianpress.com.

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



Yes, you may. In fact, we encourage it! Browse the LJI News Centre regularly for stories of interest to your readers. 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]**.

Canadian news organizations are permitted to republish content produced by LJI reporters, regardless of whether they employ an LJI 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

As a news organization receiving LJI funding, you 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 your news organization does not have these policies, News Media Canada provides templates with the funding agreement that you may adapt to suit your needs. News organizations will be expected to enforce and adhere to these policies.

Your news organization 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/>.

Your news organization must ensure, to the extent possible, that the journalist hired has no familial relations with owners, officers or employees of the news organization in question.

Your news organization is the employer of your LJI reporter and will be responsible for hiring, training, supervising, and monitoring the performance of LJI reporters.

Questions?



If you have questions about any aspect of the LJI, ideas about your LJI project, or would like clarification about the requirements, visit our website at www.localjournalisminitiative.ca or contact News Media Canada personnel:

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