

The Issue

Local media outlets like television and radio broadcasters and newspapers are critical to the nation's COVID-19 response, but we need your help to keep our communities connected to local news they can trust.

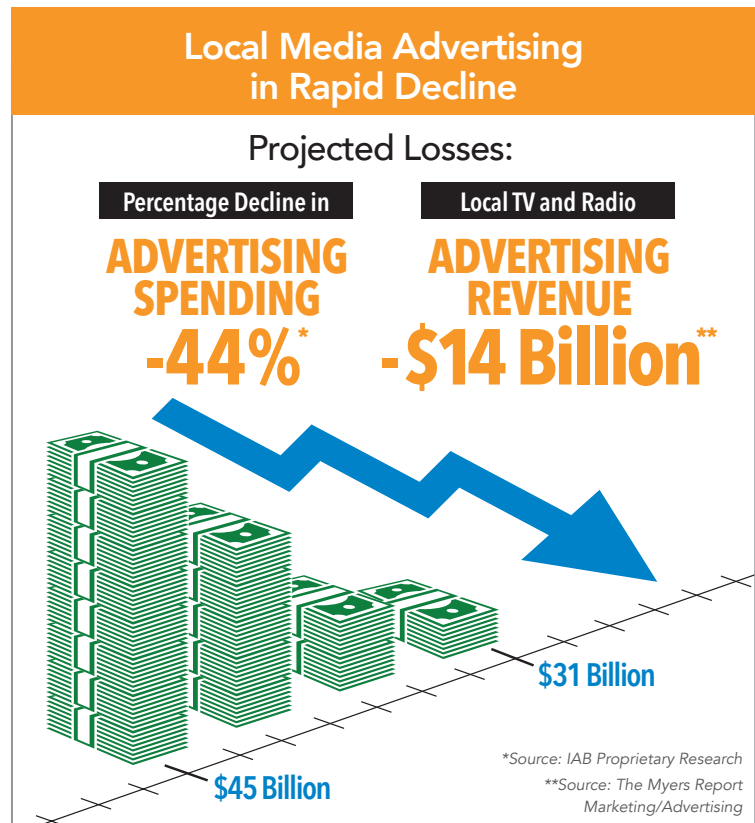
Here's Why

Communities across the country are impacted in different ways by this deadly pandemic, making the role of local, trusted news sources more important than ever. Many industries are facing challenges that were unimaginable just a few short months ago, and local media is no different as advertising revenue, the lifeblood of free, over-the-air broadcasting, has cratered with the economy at large.

Local media outlets are working around the clock, often in dangerous conditions, to deliver critical and timely information to their communities. News publishers and local broadcasters have maintained their operations, provided a wide range of information at no cost, worked to protect employees in often dangerous conditions and – most of all – kept isolated individuals and families connected to their communities.

Over-the-air radio and television rely on advertising revenue to provide their services for free. Local media outlets, large and small, saw immediate and precipitous advertising cancellations when the first shelter-in-place orders were enacted; that revenue has continued a rapid decline during the last two months. Specifically, most local broadcasters have seen advertising decline more than 50 percent compared to this time last year and some are seeing cancellations approaching 90 percent compared to the year before. Industry experts expect that the full impact of revenue losses will be between \$5 and \$10 billion as businesses remain closed. Losses like these threaten the local journalism and lifesaving information broadcasters provide, which cannot be overcome without help from the federal government.

Some communities are already seeing local newspapers and broadcasters go out of business and that trend will only continue unless the government provides meaningful relief for the industry. Unfortunately, this threatens to rob communities of vital and trusted news sources during an unprecedented pandemic.



Last month, 240 members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to President Donald Trump outlining the immediate threat that the COVID-19 crisis has thrust on local broadcasters and newspapers. Those policymakers urged the administration to direct federal agency advertising dollars to local media and to incentivize stimulus dollars to be spent on local advertising. Additionally, 74 senators sent a letter to the Office of Management and Budget asking it to coordinate and prioritize federal agency advertising budgets to be spent on local media during the pandemic.

These two letters convey the strong bipartisan support in Congress to direct federal advertising spending to local media, but more is needed to ensure that local news outlets make it through this national emergency.

The Bottom Line

Specifically, local media needs Congress to:

- **Continue oversight of the administration** to prioritize existing and future federal agency advertising funds to be spent with local broadcasters and news publishers.
- **Include language in future stimulus or appropriations bills** that would provide more guidance to agencies on federal advertising spending, prioritizing agency advertising through local media and ensuring that intended audiences are getting the messages they need.
- **Appropriate additional federal advertising funding** in future stimulus or appropriations bills that are distributed across local media sectors and equitably allocated across large, medium and small communities.

Local broadcasters and newspapers serve a vital role in educating the public and keeping Americans safe during this pandemic. Please act now to ensure news outlets can continue to provide this critical service to their local communities.

**Source: IAB Proprietary Research, Coronavirus Ad Spend Impact: Brands, Agencies and Other Buyers, April 2020, published 4/29/20.*

***Source: The Myers Report Marketing/Advertising 2000-2025 Spending Data and Forecasts Updated 4/10/20. Includes sports and political advertising data. Multiple sources used – details available upon request. May be republish with attribution to The Myers Report and link to myersreports.com.*