

Annual Sponsorship Program

2026–2027 Partnership Opportunities

Empowering Local Journalism. Connecting Communities.

Executive Summary

The AIOS Community News Network is building a sustainable model for local digital journalism. Each community paper in our network serves as a trusted source of hyper-local news, connecting residents with the stories that matter most to their neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and civic life.

This sponsorship program offers businesses, tourism development authorities (TDAs), Chambers of Commerce, and civic-minded organizations a unique opportunity to directly underwrite local journalism while reaching an engaged, community-focused audience.

Our model is simple: **one Master Sponsor and six Category Sponsors** per community paper, creating an exclusive, high-visibility partnership that funds ongoing local news coverage.

Program Overview

Each community paper in the AIOS network operates with a structured sponsorship model designed for clarity, exclusivity, and measurable return on investment.

Sponsorship Structure

- **1 Master Sponsor** per community paper — \$5,000/year (\$417/month)
- **6 Category Sponsors** per community paper — \$2,500/year (\$209/month) each

Total Revenue Per Paper: \$20,000/year (1 Master + 6 Category Sponsors)

Minimum to Launch: \$5,000 (Master Sponsor commitment initiates publication)

The Six Content Categories

Each category sponsorship is tied to one of the six core editorial pillars of every AIOS community paper:

Local News	Sports	Business	Lifestyle	Education	Events
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Each category sponsor receives exclusive branding within their chosen section, ensuring zero competition for attention within that editorial vertical.

Sponsorship Tier Details

MASTER SPONSOR — \$5,000/Year

The Master Sponsor is the flagship partner of the community paper. This is the most prominent position, with top-of-page visibility and inclusion across all editorial categories. The Master Sponsor's brand becomes synonymous with the community's trusted news source.

Master Sponsor Benefits:

- Premium banner ad on homepage (persistent, above the fold)
- Logo and branding on ALL six category pages
- Featured placement in every email newsletter issue (52+ per year)
- Two branded content/advertorial articles per month (24 per year)
- Social media mentions across all AIOS platforms (minimum 4 per month)
- Recognition as "Presenting Sponsor" at all community events covered by the paper
- Quarterly performance report with impressions, clicks, and engagement data
- Exclusive — only one Master Sponsor per community paper

CATEGORY SPONSOR — \$2,500/Year

Category Sponsors own a specific editorial section of the community paper. This creates a natural alignment between the sponsor's brand and the content their audience cares about most.

Category Sponsor Benefits:

- Display ad within the sponsored category section
- Logo and "Sponsored by" branding on the category landing page
- Inclusion in email newsletters featuring their category (estimated 2–4 per month)
- One branded content/advertorial article per month (12 per year)
- Social media mentions tied to category content (minimum 2 per month)
- Recognition at community events related to their category
- Quarterly performance report
- Exclusive within category — only one sponsor per section

Benefits Comparison

Benefit	Master (\$5K)	Category (\$2.5K)
Homepage banner ad	✓	—
Category section ad	All 6 sections	1 section
Newsletter features/year	52+	24–48
Branded articles/year	24	12
Social media mentions/month	4+	2+
Event recognition	All events	Category events
Quarterly analytics report	✓	✓
Exclusivity	Site-wide	Within category

Payment Options

We offer flexible billing to accommodate different organizational budget cycles:

Annual Payment (Preferred)

- Master Sponsor: \$5,000 paid in full at signing
- Category Sponsor: \$2,500 paid in full at signing

Monthly Payment Plan

- Master Sponsor: \$417/month (12-month commitment required)
- Category Sponsor: \$209/month (12-month commitment required)

Note: Annual prepayment sponsors receive priority placement and first right of renewal for the following year.

Ideal Sponsor Profiles

Tourism Development Authorities (TDAs)

TDAs are natural Master Sponsors. Their mission—promoting tourism and economic development—aligns perfectly with site-wide visibility across all categories.

- **Best fit:** Master Sponsor or Lifestyle/Events Category
- **Pitch angle:** Every visitor who reads your community paper is a potential tourist

Chambers of Commerce

Chambers are built to support local business, making them a natural fit for Business or Events categories.

- **Best fit:** Business or Events Category Sponsor
- **Pitch angle:** Your members ARE the stories we cover

Auto Dealerships & Major Local Businesses

Large local businesses often have significant advertising budgets and a desire to be seen as community pillars.

- **Best fit:** Master Sponsor or Sports Category
- **Pitch angle:** Be the name the community sees first, every day

School Systems & Community Colleges

Educational institutions with journalism programs benefit from sponsoring the Education category.

- **Best fit:** Education Category Sponsor
- **Pitch angle:** Fund the platform that trains your next generation of journalists

Healthcare Systems & Hospitals

Health systems gain trusted community visibility through the Lifestyle category.

- **Best fit:** Lifestyle Category Sponsor
- **Pitch angle:** Trusted news + trusted care = natural partnership

Banks & Financial Institutions

Community banks and credit unions gain strong brand association through the Business category.

- **Best fit:** Business Category Sponsor
- **Pitch angle:** Your brand alongside the stories driving local commerce

Sales Approach & Timeline

Phase 1: Secure the Master Sponsor (Weeks 1–4)

The Master Sponsor is the keystone. Their commitment enables launch of the community paper.

- The largest employer or most visible business in the community
- The local TDA (if applicable)
- Regional healthcare systems

Key message: *"Your sponsorship launches this paper. You'll be the founding partner of your community's trusted news source."*

Phase 2: Build Category Sponsors (Months 2–6)

Once the paper is live with the Master Sponsor, use early content and traffic data to sell category sponsorships.

- Approach natural category fits first (Chamber = Business, School = Education)
- Use initial traffic metrics as proof of audience
- Offer "Founding Category Sponsor" designation for early commitments

Phase 3: Full Roster & Renewal Pipeline (Months 6–12)

By month six, target a fully sponsored paper. Begin building renewal conversations.

- Quarterly sponsor check-ins with analytics reports
- Begin renewal conversations at month 9
- Offer multi-year discounts for early renewal (suggested: 10% discount for 2-year commitment)

Why Sponsor an AIOS Community Paper?

- **Exclusivity:** Limited to 7 sponsors per paper—your brand won't compete with dozens of advertisers
- **Community Trust:** Association with local journalism builds authentic credibility no ad buy can replicate
- **Hyper-Local Reach:** Every reader lives, works, or invests in your community
- **Measurable ROI:** Quarterly analytics including impressions, click-through rates, and newsletter engagement
- **Civic Impact:** You're directly funding local journalism—a tangible community investment your customers can see
- **Content Integration:** Branded content and advertorials embedded alongside trusted editorial—not interruptive display ads

Next Steps

1. Schedule a discovery call to discuss your community and goals
2. Select your sponsorship tier and preferred category (if applicable)
3. Review and sign the sponsorship agreement
4. Provide brand assets (logo, copy, links) for onboarding
5. Launch! Your sponsorship goes live with the community paper

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