

EXECUTIVE BRIEF · MAY 2026

Election Coverage by Generation.

Where content delivered and content desired align — and where they don't.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

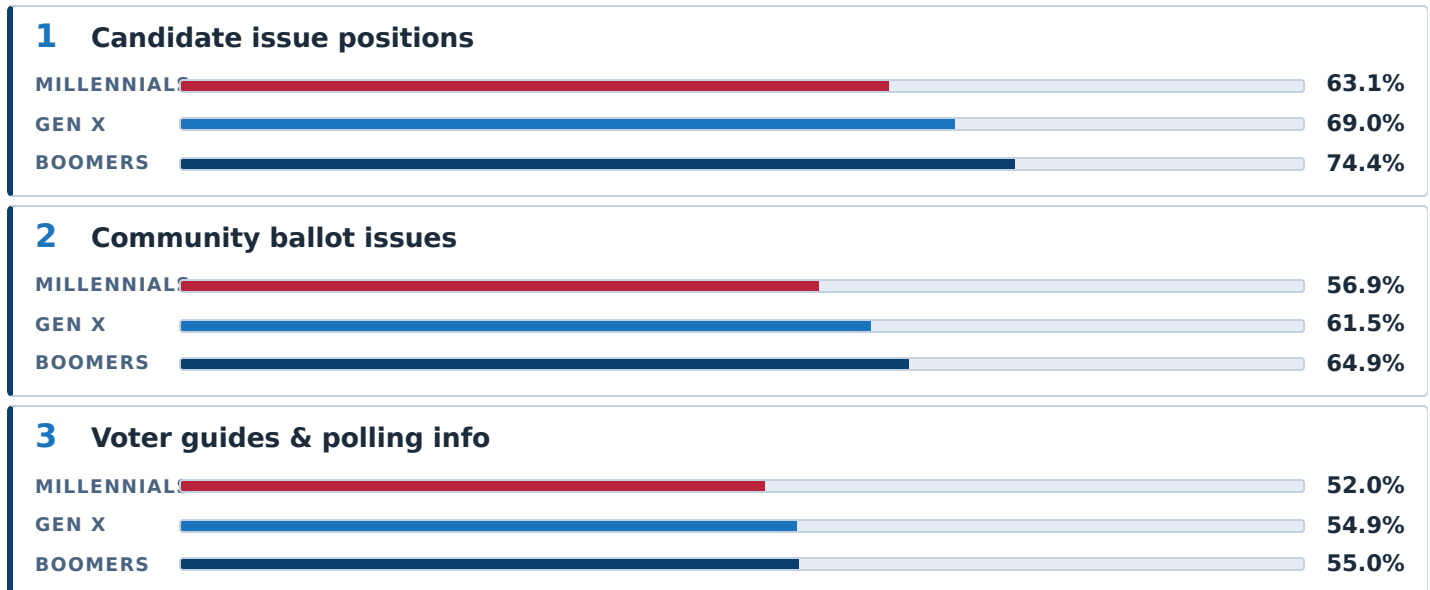
Voters from every generation want substantive election coverage from their local newspaper. The America's Newspapers Local Media Roadmap Study — a national survey of more than 3,000 American adults conducted by Coda Ventures — finds that candidate issue positions, ballot guides, voter information, and candidate profiles rate as extremely critical across Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers.

What varies by generation is the format mix and which coverage types matter most to whom. This brief shows where the patterns hold, where they break, and how each generation wants the coverage delivered.

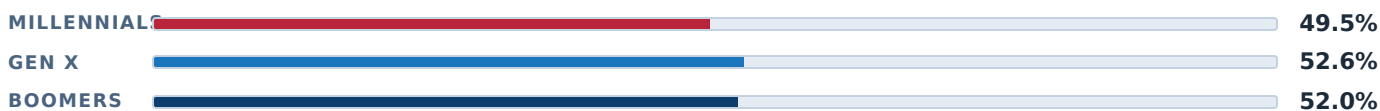
THE FUNDAMENTALS

Five coverage types rate as extremely critical in every generation surveyed.

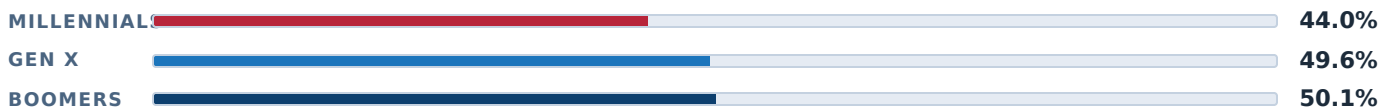
More than 44 percent of voters in every generation rate each of these as "extremely critical" — the top of the survey's importance scale. These are the coverage types readers expect from their local newspaper.



4 Candidate profiles



5 Voting records



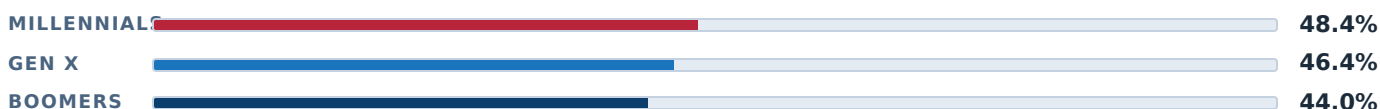
SOURCE: LOCAL MEDIA ROADMAP STUDY · CODA VENTURES · % RATING "EXTREMELY CRITICAL"

— THE PATTERN SHIFTS

Two coverage types reverse the typical generational order.

Millennials rate candidate interviews and public meetings as extremely critical at higher rates than Boomers. The gaps are small but they run the other way from the rest of the survey, and both formats hinge on direct candidate access.

6 Candidate interviews MILLENNIALS LEAD



7 Public meetings with candidates MILLENNIALS LEAD



— HOW TO ENGAGE EACH GENERATION

Same content. Different packaging.

The fundamentals don't change. What changes is where each generation reads and which formats hold their attention.

Boomers Issue positions, voting records, ballot guides — in the formats they already trust.

COVERAGE THEY PRIORITIZE

- Candidate issue positions
- Community ballot issues and ballot-measure analysis
- Voting records
- Voter guides and polling information
- Editorial endorsements and editorial board work

WHERE AND HOW THEY READ IT

- Long-form print stories
- E-edition / digital replica
- Morning email briefs
- Endorsement editorials
- Detailed analysis pieces

Gen X

Depth and access. The voter generation that wants both.

COVERAGE THEY PRIORITIZE

- Candidate profiles (their distinctive priority)
- Candidate issue positions
- Community ballot issues and explanations
- Voter guides and polling logistics
- Local-impact coverage: schools, taxes, services

WHERE AND HOW THEY READ IT

- Mobile-first reading on phone and tablet
- Email newsletters, morning briefs and afternoon wraps
- Podcasts and audio summaries
- Short-form summaries with links to depth
- Data visualizations and explainer graphics
- Mix of print and digital across the household

Millennial

Primary-source access in their formats.

COVERAGE THEY PRIORITIZE

- Candidate interviews
- Public meetings and town halls with candidates
- Candidate issue positions with direct quotes
- Community ballot issues with primary-source context
- Voter guides with embedded video and audio

WHERE AND HOW THEY READ IT

- Recorded video candidate interviews
- Audio podcasts and Q&A series
- Live-stream coverage of town halls and public meetings
- Social-first formats: vertical video, shareable clips
- Mobile push notifications and text-message alerts
- Event transcripts with timestamped quotes

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Newspaper readers vote at higher rates than non-readers — and the gap widens in local races, where small turnout shifts decide outcomes.

STATE / NATIONAL ELECTIONS

74% of newspaper readers report voting
vs. **59%** of non-readers — a 15-point gap

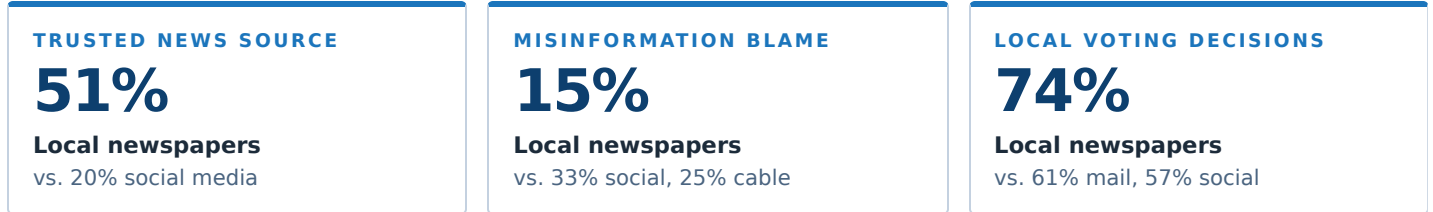
LOCAL ELECTIONS

61% of readers vote nearly every time
vs. **40%** of non-readers — a 21-point gap

— THE TRUST FACTOR

The trust factor favors local newspapers.

Voters trust local newspapers more than they trust other news sources surveyed. The pattern holds across age, party, and region, and it shows up most clearly when readers decide where to turn for voting decisions.



The trust is a brand position editors already hold. It carries over to new formats as long as those formats keep the same standards as the work already on the page.

The content doesn't change. Packaging and delivery are what build engagement — and reinforce the trust readers already give to local newspapers.

— ABOUT THE ROADMAP STUDY

What it is, why it exists, and how it was collected.

The Local Media Roadmap Study is the research base for America's Newspapers strategic guidance to member newspapers. America's Newspapers commissioned it to find out what readers want from local newspaper coverage and where what's being delivered today drifts from what readers actually want.

Coda Ventures conducted the survey. **More than 3,000 American adults across nine census regions** rated the importance of local newspaper coverage types and the formats they prefer for that coverage. The data carries a **±1.8% margin of error at 95% confidence.**

The companion Trust in Media Study used the same methodology to measure voter trust across news sources, political advertising channels, and voting-decision influences.