

Criteria	Strong Fit (1)	Moderate Fit (2)	Weak Fit (3)
<b>Constituency</b> <i>Obvious community interest with a defined target audience</i>	Demonstrated buy-in from a defined audience / community of interest that clearly supports the organization's mission and goals	Working towards demonstrated buy-in from a defined audience / community of interest. Initial signs of community interest and appetite for the organization's mission	Lack of demonstrated buy-in from a defined audience / community of interest. No clear signs of whether community appetite for the organization's mission is possible
<b>Market Need</b> <i>Lack of civic news sources; ability to grow</i>	High market need, rapidly declining local news ecosystem	Moderate market need, emerging CNO ecosystem, declining local news	Strong CNO ecosystem with existing national support
<b>Ecosystem Awareness</b> <i>Multiple organizations serve local information needs</i>	Demonstrated interest and ability to be partners across the organization's ecosystem / elevate movement for local, civic news	Semi-understanding of broader market / ecosystem, aware of role other organizations in the space might play, could be viewed as 'competition' or 'threat'	Weak culture or practice around collaboration within ecosystem, mixed reputation among local community
<b>Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion</b> <i>Looks like, led by, and supported by communities served</i>	Demonstrated understanding of different kinds of communities and portrays them richly and accurately. Goes beyond just having a 'diverse staff'. Not only committed to values of diversity, equity, and inclusion but operationalizing them every day	Working towards building a culture in which DEI is operationalized and under continuous improvement	Weak culture or practice around DEI, lack of track record around rich and accurate portrayal of different communities
<b>Nonprofit vs. For-profit</b> <i>Risk to mission and American Journalism Project's core values</i>	Mission driven nonprofit with free core product	Mission driven for-profit in process of converting to non-profit. (E.g., community media that have had low access to nonprofit news sector)	Mission driven for-profit news outlet (e.g. B-corp). Core product is paywalled / subscription only
<b>Community Leadership</b> <i>Philanthropic leadership; reputational buy-in</i>	Demonstrated, committed support from local philanthropy / experienced nonprofit leader	Strong potential for finding local philanthropy / nonprofit leader that will invest money or reputation long term	No local philanthropy / experienced nonprofit leaders that are willing to be invested long term or put reputation on the line
<b>Organization Leadership</b> <i>Range of business management / fundraising experience; ability to be a good partner</i>	Leaders with business management / fundraising experience, drive, passion and competence, as well as a willingness to grow, learn and collaborate. Outside of industry expertise is preferable. Highly engaged board	High potential leadership with some business management / fundraising experience. Improving board	One person on leadership / or staff led by teams whose entire career has been spent on the editorial side of organizations. Limited business experience. Weakly engaged board
<b>Financial Controls &amp; Systems</b> <i>Good stewardship and understanding of money</i>	Strong systems and controls, staff and/or board with financial management experience	Foundational understanding and experience of managing financial systems / controls	Outsourced and highly manual systems and controls
<b>Operating Budget</b> <i>Per market basis, already existing organization</i>	\$500,000 - \$2,000,000. Likely has few, if any, full-time staff focused on revenue	National, regional or statewide organization with focus and operations in local market(s)	< \$500,000 annually. Likely has no full-time staff focused on revenue
<b>Business Plan &amp; Ambition</b> <i>Strategic, comprehensive, process oriented</i>	Full business plan, based on organization experience, with financial models and executive/board buy-in. Demonstrates a process that is comprehensive. Strong desire for growth	Full business plan, based on hypotheticals and projections, likely as a new or young organization, moderate desire for growth	No business plan or desire for growth