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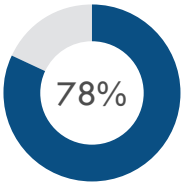
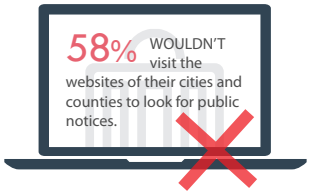
WHY PUBLIC NOTICES SHOULD BE IN PRINT AND ONLINE

1 THE PUBLIC WOULD RATHER GET THEIR NOTICE IN THE NEWSPAPER



A survey conducted by Mason Dixon Polling & Research in December of 2023 shows that nearly 8 out of 10 Floridians say that state and local governments should be required to publish public notices in the newspaper on a regular basis.

According to the same study, most Floridians (58%) were unlikely to seek out public notices if they were posted on a government web site and not available in a printed or online newspaper.



Based on FPA's own data collection for 2021, our members reach 5.6M readers per week. A newspaper's web audience is typically 10 times larger than most city or county websites, and Florida newspaper sites reach 53 million unique only online users in any given month.

2 PLACING NOTICES ON GOVERNMENT WEBSITES IS A BIG GOVERNMENT SOLUTION TO CURRENT FUNCTIONING PRIVATE SYSTEM

• The current private system works. Newspapers are required to post notices to their own more trafficked site for free and also must upload to www.floridapublicnotices.com, which has more traffic than many city or county websites on its own, is easily searchable and is available to the public for free. Currently, newspapers provide e-mail notification of new legal notices when they are printed in the newspaper and added to the newspaper's website. Such e-mail notifications are provided without charge. This can easily be done for all notices around the state at www.floridapublicnotices.com

• Under the current law, people find notices when they are looking for other information in a newspaper. Without newspaper notice, there is no proactive "push" and notices will only be seen by people who look for them.

• Not a "subsidy." Publishing notices online is neither cheap nor free and newspapers have made these investments already whereas the government will need start from scratch and incur costs. If government recreates all the functionality in the current private notice process - archiving notices, making them easily available online, aggregating, etc. - there will be considerable costs. FPA has spent $200K+ on its website and ongoing costs are $40 – 50k per year.

3 GOVERNMENT POSTING OF GOVERNMENT NOTICES ON GOVERNMENT WEBSITES REMOVES THIRD-PARTY NEUTRALITY

Making government officials responsible for notifying the public on their own websites carries with it a potential for abuse. For example, it may create the temptation to change or manipulate the timing of public notices. If a scheduled public notice is not published or contains false information, the newspaper is more likely to catch the mistake.

4 PUBLIC NOTICES MUST BE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE

A million Floridians do not have Internet access (5.1%), according to a Nielsen Scarborough report from 2019.

Large segments of Florida's population, including elderly and minority populations cannot afford computers and monthly access fees.

DO NOT HAVE INTERNET ACCESS

14%	10%	4.4%	9.4%	16.2%
65 and over	50 and over	Hispanics	African Americans	Low Income Households

5 LOSS OF PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS

The brunt of the bill will fall on small and midsized newspapers who rely much more on providing these services to local government (and the associated revenue) than a typical metropolitan daily. These papers will be severely impacted by downsizing reporters and personnel even though they are providing important services to local officials and citizens. Some will go out of business and the replacement will be local government personnel.

Sources: Mason Dixon Polling & Research, 2023; Nielsen Scarborough 2019, R1 Multimarket - Florida (Jan. 2019 - May 2020)