

# WTMJ wins Walter Cronkite Award for pandemic unemployment investigation

June 3, 2021

**CINCINNATI** – For journalism that seeks truth, examines inequities, serves the public and demonstrates the indispensability of a free and trustworthy press, WTMJ, the Milwaukee-based NBC station owned by The E.W. Scripps Company (NASDAQ: SSP), has won a Walter Cronkite Award for its 2020 investigative series, "[Unemployment System Collapse](#)."

During its monthslong investigation launched in March 2020, the TMJ4 I-Team regularly reported on Wisconsin's overly complicated and neglected unemployment system, which collapsed under the pressure of the pandemic. The team's investigation found that policies implemented years before, coupled with missteps made early in the pandemic, led to thousands of people being stuck waiting for unemployment benefits, some becoming homeless in the process.

The TMJ4 I-Team used social and broadcast media to allow struggling Wisconsinites to tell their own stories and collaborated with nonprofit news service Wisconsin Watch to obtain open records, documents and data used in the series.

As a result of their investigation, the TMJ4 I-Team has helped 83 people in its community collect nearly \$400,000 in unemployment back pay.

The Walter Cronkite Award jury commended the TMJ4 I-Team's "great storytelling and selfless tenacity" as "a great example of journalism as a public service."

"At the onset of the pandemic in 2020, Scripps stations across the country made a commitment to cover the most pressing issues in their communities," said Local Media President Brian Lawlor. "The TMJ4 I-Team's investigation into the state's unemployment system is a powerful example of the important role of local TV news. We're extremely proud of the TMJ4 I-Team's dogged persistence to shed light on this problem."

The 2021 Walter Cronkite Awards will be presented at a virtual ceremony this summer.

## **About Scripps**

[The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NASDAQ: SSP) is a diversified media company focused on creating a better-informed world. As the nation's fourth-largest local TV broadcaster, Scripps serves communities with quality, objective local journalism and operates a portfolio of 61 stations in 41 markets. The Scripps Networks reach nearly every American through the national news outlets Court TV and Newsy and popular entertainment brands ION, Bounce, Grit, Laff and Court TV Mystery. Scripps is the nation's largest holder of broadcast spectrum. Scripps runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and is the longtime steward of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, "Give light and the people will find their own way."

## **Media contact:**

*Kari Wethington, The E.W. Scripps Company, 513-977-3763, [Kari.wethington@scripps.com](mailto:Kari.wethington@scripps.com)*