



**CPB Radio and Media Strategy Departments
Request for Proposals
Strengthening Local Journalism, Round Two
Targeting the South and Northwest
March 3, 2010**

Round Two Target

In 2009, CPB released a request for proposals (RFP) for Strengthening Local Journalism that called for the creation of Local Journalism Centers (LJCs). CPB is now in the process of awarding grants to five groups of public television and radio stations that are forming LJCs. Two regions of the US are not represented by these LJCs, the South and the Northwest. This RFP is exclusively for stations in those regions.

Background

At a time when the landscape of journalism is rapidly changing, public media stations are expanding their commitment to public service news reporting and are becoming primary news sources for more and more people. While audiences recognize stations' important contributions, additional steps are needed to strengthen station capacity and fully realize their potential as leaders in journalism.

CPB seeks to enhance the ability of public television and radio stations to create high quality journalism by supporting the establishment of multimedia reporting collaborations or Local Journalism Centers (LJCs) among small sets of stations in the South and Northwest. Each LJC will hire a diverse team of skilled journalists to provide an editorial focus on one particular topic area (content vertical), providing deep and meaningful coverage from a diversity of perspectives that will establish the LJC as a widely recognized resource on that topic. Recommended topic areas include the environment and education. By working together, stations can leverage each other's resources and pools of knowledge to provide more and deeper coverage.

This RFP seeks proposals from groups of 3-6 stations located in the South and Northwest willing to form LJCs that will result in an elevated quality and quantity of journalism designed to better serve their collective audience. The LJCs should create compelling content and community engagement opportunities that include audio, video, text, photos, blogs, social networking, dynamic syndication, and mobile applications. Proposals should address all the elements that will be needed to create a successful LJC, including personnel, training, infrastructure, community engagement, and research, and should describe the nature of the broadcast, online and other forms of content that will be produced.

Proposed projects should be conducted over a 24 month time period. The resulting projects should represent models for enhancing local journalism that can be replicated by other groups of stations. All LJC content will need to be available nationally through a soon-to-be developed common public service media online news platform/architecture

(aka the Public Media Platform) and conform to PB Core standards. CPB expects stations to commit to sustaining the LJC after the two-year grant period has ended.

Proposal Requirements

Applicants responding to this RFP will present proposals that outline the creation of a Local Journalism Center (LJC). For the purposes of this RFP, an LJC is defined as a group of 3-6 public media stations (television, radio, joint licensees) that agree to hire a diverse team of journalists producing multimedia vertical content around a single shared editorial priority. The goal is for each LJC to become the “go-to” resource on the selected topic. Recommended topics are the environment and education, however, CPB will also consider other areas relevant to the applicants’ region.

Eligible Regions

Applicants responding to this RFP must have the majority of their LJC stations located in one of two regions, the South or the Northwest. For the purposes of this RFP, the South is defined as the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. For the purposes of this RFP, the Northwest is defined as Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The LJCs may include stations from other states that are contiguous with either region, as long as the majority of stations in the LJC are located in the states outlined above. For example, an eligible LJC from the South comprised of five stations may have three stations (the majority) located in one or more of the states outlined above, and two located in contiguous states such as North Carolina or South Carolina.

Lead Station

Stations proposing to form an LJC will need to designate a Lead Station which will serve as the grantee and will head the project. The Lead Station must:

- be located in one of the two regions – the South or the Northwest – defined above.
- currently have at least three full-time news/public affairs staffers and produce local news content daily.

CPB will not consider proposals that do not have a Lead Station that meets these minimum requirements or otherwise lacks the capacity to serve as the grantee and project head.

Staffing

The team of journalists staffing the LJC must be new hires. The intent of this initiative is to add capacity at stations and not to re-assign existing staff. Each LJC should commit to a recruiting process that results in a diverse pool of applicants and hiring of a diverse team of journalists who bring strengths individually and collectively in broadcast, online and digital reporting. Other staffing structures may be considered, however, CPB strongly recommends a staffing structure that includes:

- An experienced full-time editor devoted entirely to the LJC, who assigns and coordinates coverage; guides and instructs reporters; and edits content to ensure accuracy and high quality.
- An adequate number of reporters (at least one reporter at each station) who are comfortable working on multiple platforms, including online or digital media.
- An experienced full-time senior managing facilitator (or similar position), who manages the non-editorial activities such as community engagement.

Given the recent layoffs in some media companies, there is an opportunity to reach out to seasoned journalists who may bring new skills and perspectives to public media to participate in LJCs as appropriate.

Output

The combined resources of the LJC stations would produce comprehensive coverage of the selected issue through on-air broadcasts and robust digital content and resources, including audio, video, text, blogs, user curated content, interactive elements, etc. The content produced would represent a diversity of perspectives and would primarily serve local listeners and users. The content should also be structured to be integrated into other larger-scale public media projects, i.e., an integrated online news platform, and must be optimized for search and syndication.

In addition to content production, LJCs are expected to conduct community engagement activities – through events, meetings, partnerships, social media and other means – that will inform, enrich and promote the LJC coverage. The community engagement activities will allow the public to provide input, share their expertise and experience, and assist the stations in widening their perspectives on the selected topic.

Training and Evaluation

Training and on-going evaluation are essential parts of the LJC. In order to enhance the stations' ability to create high quality journalism, the LJC should provide its staff with the tools and opportunities to upgrade their skills as multimedia content creators. Each LJC should also have a process for evaluating its work and applying evaluation findings to continually increase the quality of its journalism. Stations submitting proposals should determine what training and evaluation resources will be needed to make the LJC successful.

Sustainability

CPB intends to provide a significant level of funding for any selected LJC for the first two years of its operation. CPB will also require participating stations to provide a level of investment that reflects their commitment to the project. CPB expects LJCs that are funded to be self-sustaining by the end of the two-year grant. Proposals should include an explanation of how the LJC will achieve sustainability.

Letters of commitment

Proposals must include letters of commitment from the General Managers/CEOs of participating stations stating their willingness to take part in the LJC and support for the Lead Station. For proposals selected for funding, CPB will require in its grant agreement that the Lead Station have written agreements with all LJC partner stations stating each party's responsibilities and contributions (cash and in-kind).

Other requirements

CPB will require the LJCs to share their learnings and best practices with each other and to connect their digital infrastructure. CPB will also require the participating stations to take part in the Public Media Metrics project, which helps stations measure and analyze their web strategies using Google Analytics. In addition, CPB will require that stations conform to PB Core metadata standards to facilitate sharing of content and enhance search functions.

Goals of this RFP

This RFP seeks proposals submitted by groups of 3-6 public broadcasting stations that intend to create sustainable, multimedia reporting LJCs that will allow them to strengthen their local journalism capacity, deepen their audience's understanding of the selected issue, and, consequently, better serve their communities. The resulting projects should create models of capacity building that can be used by other stations. The projects should also demonstrate how LJCs can better reflect the diversity of the audiences they serve. Finally, the projects should demonstrate new models for utilizing multiplatform content development and syndication that engage audiences to improve their understanding of critical issues in the community.

Application Criteria

Grants will be awarded to one Lead Station which will serve as the administrator and fiscal agent of the LJC. An LJC should consist of 3-6 stations which are not licensed to the same entity. The majority of stations and the Lead Station must be located in the South or the Northwest. The application must include letters of commitment from the CEOs/General Managers of the collaborating stations.

Proposals will be evaluated based on how completely and clearly they:

- Describe the issue to be covered by the LJC and why it was selected.
- Describe the benefits to the community and the participating stations that would be achieved by the LJC.
- Describe the characteristics of the LJC's primary and other targeted audiences.
- Describe why the particular stations proposing to collaborate are properly aligned to do so, and why the chosen Lead Station is the appropriate entity to serve as the grantee.
- Describe the current journalistic capacity of each station, particularly the Lead Station. The Lead Station needs to currently have at least three full-time news/public affairs staffers and produce local news content daily.
- Describe the proposed staffing structure of the LJC and the relevant skills necessary to be successful. Please provide a proposed organizational chart and short job description or bio of key staff.
- Describe the recruiting and hiring practices that will achieve hiring a diverse team of journalists.
- Describe the proposed LJC activities (reporting, community engagement, partnerships, meetings, etc.)
- Describe the investments needed to achieve a successful LJC (training, infrastructure, research, etc.)
- Describe the multiplatform content (video, audio, mobile, etc.) to be produced and key applications (i.e. social networking, Facebook, Twitter) that would be utilized as a result of the project. Please describe how it would be broadcast as well as distributed and/or syndicated using digital media platforms. Also, describe how the digital applications and platforms would be supported and maintained.
- Describe how the LJC would achieve sustainability by the end of the grant period.
- Describe how the LJC would measure success for the project.
- Present a project timeline with project milestones.

- Present an appropriate detailed budget for the project. CPB recognizes that the Lead Station may incur additional costs for administration of the project but excessive overhead will not be permitted.

Successful applicants to this RFP will:

- Have experience providing daily, weekly and/or special project local news coverage.
- Have experience working collaboratively with other organizations, especially other public media entities.
- Demonstrate innovative thinking in how stations can leverage each others' assets to strengthen local journalism.
- Place a high value on representing and reflecting diverse perspectives as well as recruiting and hiring diverse staff.
- Demonstrate the creative use of technology in facilitating the communications and activities of the LJC.
- Have a track record of implementing budgets that are cost effective and sustainable.

QUESTIONS?

CPB's staff is available to help you develop your ideas and proposals and to answer any questions. For information, please contact Kathy Merritt at kmerritt@cpb.org or (202) 879-9631.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Apply at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/252/application.html>.

All applications must consist of:

- Application Form**, filled out in its entirety.
- Project Narrative**, a written (maximum of eight pages) description of the project that addresses the points of the Application Criteria above.
- Letters of Commitment from CEOs/General Managers of collaborating stations**
- Itemized Project Budget**, the financial plan for the project presented in spreadsheet format, tailored to the request, and identifying how each line amount was calculated. (For additional guidance, see the accompanying [budget information sheet](#).)

Do not submit content samples, unless requested by CPB staff. You may include a website address where samples of the proposed program or other relevant work may be found.

Do not submit proposals by fax or U.S. mail. They will not be accepted.

DEADLINE

Receipt at CPB by 5pm Eastern Time on **Wednesday, April 14, 2010**.

REVIEW AND SELECTION

The process will begin with CPB staff review. CPB may forward applications to outside experts, who will advise CPB regarding each project's merits and consistency with the RFP's goals and criteria. Most funding decisions will occur no sooner than 10 weeks after submission. While we seek input and advice from outside experts, funding decisions are CPB's alone.

OTHER

Projects selected for funding may receive requests for additional detail, including project timeline and cash flow projections. CPB may ask applicants to work with other individuals or institutions to achieve proposed outcomes.

CPB is not responsible for loss or damage to the material submitted. Any submission to CPB shall become the property of CPB (not including any intellectual property rights contained in such submission), and CPB is not required to return any submitted materials to any applicant. CPB is not responsible for any violation of copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret, or other rights that may result from disclosure made by response to this RFP.

Solicitation by CPB of proposals does not constitute an agreement by CPB to extend funding to any party for the project under consideration. CPB may, in its sole discretion, elect not to pursue this project in any manner.

By submitting a proposal, each applicant grants to CPB the right to duplicate, use, disclose, and distribute all of the materials submitted for purposes of evaluation, review, and research. In addition, each applicant guarantees that the applicant has full and complete rights to all of the information and materials included in the proposal. Each applicant also guarantees that all such materials are not defamatory and do not infringe upon or violate the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party.

Conditions of Agreement

If a proposal is selected for funding, applicants will be required to sign a binding agreement. Until both parties have signed an agreement, no express or implied commitment has been made to provide financial support. Applicants are not authorized to commence work until the agreement is fully executed. If applicants opt to commence work, they do so at their own risk. No oral or written statement other than the signed, written agreement will govern or modify the relationship.

As a condition of agreement, applicants must guarantee that, among other things, any work they undertake on behalf of CPB is not defamatory and will not violate or infringe upon the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party. Contractors must also agree to indemnify CPB against any loss resulting from breach of any of the guarantees contained in the agreement.

Those receiving funds from CPB must be able to comply with a number of requirements that will be included in the operative agreement. These requirements include but are not limited to:

- (1) A demonstration of adequate financial support to complete the work for which they have been contracted and to deliver reports and/or other intellectual property created pursuant to the Agreement;
- (2) Maintenance, for three years following receipt of relevant funds, of all financial records to the project, which records shall be accessible to CPB, and to the U.S. Comptroller General or other representatives for examination and audit purposes;
- (3) Maintenance, for three years after approval of a final financial report, of a complete file of all subcontracts and other agreements, licenses, clearances, and other documents related to the work undertaken, copies of which shall be made available to CPB on request;
- (4) Compliance with equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies;
- (5) Applicants who plan to engage sub-contractors will be expected to obtain competitive bids, and to provide assurances that the prices obtained for any such services are fair and reasonable;
- (6) Applicants will be required to provide documentation as to actual costs, and provide supporting detail demonstrating that all costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to the requirements and objectives of the work undertaken; and
- (7) All research and materials created, developed, compiled or produced pursuant to or as a result of this project (including but not limited to all reports) will be considered ordered and commissioned by CPB as works made for hire under the copyright laws, and made in the course of services rendered. If, for any reason, the proposed research and materials to be provided are not considered works made for hire under the copyright laws, then the applicant will be required to assign all right, title and interest in and to such research and materials to CPB. Applicants further agree that neither they, nor any of their subcontractors, will have any copyrights or other intellectual property rights whatsoever in any research and/or materials created, developed, compiled or produced by them or by any subcontractor, or by any third party participating in the preparation of research or materials for this project.

Other material terms and provisions will be set forth in the documents provided to the applicant that successfully completes the selection process.

All Applicants are advised to familiarize themselves with these [Grant Requirements](http://www.cpb.org/grants/termsandconditions/) before applying. In advance of submitting any proposal, Applicants should read the Terms and Conditions for Television, Radio and Other Media Production Grants (November, 2002) which is currently posted at the following site:
<http://www.cpb.org/grants/termsandconditions/>.

Proposals that initially do not receive funding may be resubmitted up to three times. After that, Applicants must obtain prior approval from CPB before a given proposal may be resubmitted.