

## ***America at a Crossroads***

A Request for Proposals (RFP)

Sponsored by

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Washington, D.C.

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The *America at a Crossroads* initiative represents a major effort by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to fulfill its mandate to promote programs that inform, enlighten, and enrich the public dialogue about crucial public affairs issues and enhance the knowledge and citizenship of all Americans. This initiative focuses on the post-9/11 world and how it has affected the American imagination as well as our political, economic, cultural and social realities, our security and our relationship with other nations.

### **1. Introduction.**

America has reached a crossroads. Today, as at the dawn of the Cold War, we are entering a new era in our relationship to the world. We are witnessing historic transformations of foreign relations, domestic policy and politics, strategic doctrine, and aspects of culture, with consequences that will reverberate for years.

*America at a Crossroads* (“*Crossroads*”), a major CPB public-affairs initiative, aims to inform our civic conversation and advance the national and international debate through incisive, innovative television programs that address some of our most pressing issues: the duration and direction of the war on terrorism, the use of American power against states that harbor terrorists, preemptive military action, unilateralism, America's international role and image, regime change, homeland security, civil liberties conflicts, and all the other still-unfolding aftereffects of 9/11.

CPB seeks programs that examine and explain where we are and where we're going as a nation--programs that elevate, enlighten, entertain, and, most importantly, rise above the minutiae of the moment and see the big picture. Ultimately, CPB seeks programs that reveal something new and important about ourselves, our world, and our future.

CPB seeks producers who can look ahead and anticipate what Americans will be discussing in the years ahead--and what they should be discussing. In order to encourage path breaking ideas, CPB will consider programs in virtually any genre--including public affairs, history, science, investigative journalism, religion, culture, and satire--so long as they are consistent with *Crossroads* funding criteria and appropriate for national prime-time broadcast to a general public television audience.

The nature of *Crossroads* demands perspectives from across the political and philosophical spectrum, including from individuals whose views resist categorization.

CPB funding decisions will seek balance across the initiative as a whole. CPB solicits programs reflecting strong viewpoints. Factual rigor, objectivity and fairness are always required.

To ensure maximum impact, CPB intends to commit significant funds to *Crossroads* over the next several years. In an important departure from tradition, CPB also intends to provide the bulk of production funding where appropriate, rather than expecting producers to seek a substantial proportion of total costs from other sources. This will help ensure that urgent, controversial programs get on the air in a timely fashion.

We invite qualified producers, independent organizations (think tanks, universities, schools of journalism, NGOs) and potential partners to consider submitting a proposal.

## **2. Proposal and Grant Making Stages.**

The *Crossroads* initiative envisions a three stage proposal and grant/contracting process. Individual proposals should be submitted for: (1) Research and Development, (2) Production, and (3) Dissemination (including distribution, promotion, educational uses, web sites, outreach, etc.). CPB intends to review proposals and award grants on an ongoing, rolling basis, on the schedule set forth below. CPB is under no obligation to review proposals that are not received by the deadlines stipulated herein.

CPB may modify the criteria, guidelines, and requirements in this RFP, including deadlines, without prior notice and at its sole discretion. CPB will post modifications universally applicable and updates on the *Crossroads* page at [www.cpb.org/grants/crossroads/](http://www.cpb.org/grants/crossroads/). In addition, *Crossroads* applicants are bound by the CPB Terms Applicable to Proposals, located at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/termsandconditions/>.

### **Phase 1: Research and Development**

R&D proposals (2-4 page narrative) will be accepted until June 1, 2004.

CPB anticipates that R&D grants will generally range from \$25,000 to \$100,000. Most R&D proposals will be funded at the low/mid range of this spectrum, with the higher range reserved for programs requiring extensive research and/or international travel. Within these budget ranges, CPB will support up to 100 percent of individual R&D budgets.

The R&D proposal should present the producer's story idea and concept but not a detailed or fully developed program. The purpose of the R&D phase is to test the merit of the story idea and to flesh it out. R&D work will range from library research, to location scouting, to writing a detailed shooting script, or to securing commitments from prospective featured on/off-camera spokespersons/sources, archival material, etc. R&D activities might include travel to a foreign country to find characters and obtain access, filming a host to test his/her on-camera abilities, or conducting archival film research to seek/secure new material.

The R&D proposal should outline the producer's vision, premise, and basic approach. It

should clarify the themes that will be explored, identify key personnel, and explain preliminary plans for format, structure and storyline. The R&D proposal should outline what storyline will be pursued and developed, and describe what work will be done during the R&D phase to accomplish it, as well as why it is necessary.

In addition to technical expertise, where appropriate, the R&D proposal should identify an illustrative sampling of the policy and scholarly experts who will be tapped to help guide the R&D and production of the film. The R&D proposal should also indicate any commitments that will be secured from partners central to the program, or materials to be prepared and gathered during R&D, such as archival film and sample footage.

At the conclusion of the R&D period, the producer will be required to submit a brief written R&D report (2-3 pages) plus a full accounting of expenditures. All R&D grant recipients will be required to report and account for all expenditures and submit any required deliverables prior to being considered for a production grant.

Following the submission of the R&D report, R&D grant recipients will be invited to CPB, along with key members of the team, to review their R&D findings, show sample footage, and discuss follow-on intentions. (Grant applicants may include this expense in their R&D proposal.) CPB may invite outside experts to join the discussion. At this time CPB will also review production proposal criteria (Phase 2), including guidelines, requirements for production budgets, and respond to questions, requests, or special considerations.

All R&D grant recipients will be required to execute the *Crossroads* R&D Agreement that will be posted on or about March 15, 2004 at [www.cpb.org/grants/crossroads/](http://www.cpb.org/grants/crossroads/). All applicants should review these R&D grant agreement terms prior to submitting a R&D proposal. Neither the terms of this R&D Agreement, nor the standard CPB Terms and Conditions that address related and additional issues, are negotiable. Find the Terms and Conditions at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/termsandconditions/>.

Any party that receives a R&D grant pursuant to this RFP will be required to agree that for two (2) years following the execution of the R&D grant agreement, it will not transfer or license to any other party any rights of any kind to, under, or in the funded project's activities or products without CPB's advance written consent. In the event that CPB makes a final decision not to fund a project beyond the R&D Phase, consideration of whether to provide such consent will be at CPB's sole and absolute discretion.

A *Crossroads* R&D Grant cannot be used to support fundraising.

CPB strongly recommends, but does not require, that *Crossroads* applicants participate in the R&D phase.

## **Phase 2: Production**

Applicants participating in the *Crossroads* R&D phase must submit, unless waived by CPB, a production proposal after completing the R&D project and submitting the required report summarizing that activity. Producers who do not participate in the R&D phase may submit production proposals beginning June 15, 2004. Production proposals will not be accepted after September 15, 2004.

Production proposals should include a full description of the program, the television treatment and approach. The narrative should explain the topic and its importance, indicate what unique perspective and expertise the applicant brings, and map out the plan. Indicate the length of the program envisioned. If a limited series is envisioned, indicate the number and length of the individual programs and describe the individual episodes. Describe how experts, advisors, and partners will support or participate in the project.

Production proposals should sharply define the topic and issues, and contain a thoroughly crafted and detailed storyline and format, production timeline, and budget. The proposal should explain how the intellectual content and analysis will be integrated into the storyline and identify the principal materials available for production, as well as those that will be developed during production. In addition, producers are encouraged to incorporate U.S. and/or international advisers from the public policy, national security, human rights, think tank and academic communities, as appropriate to the proposed project's theme and content.

Production proposals should include letters of commitment from all key personnel. Note any plans to seek non-CPB funding.

All production proposals must conform to the PBS broadcast quality specifications found at <http://www.pbs.org/producers/guidelines/>.

In addition to the production grant deliverables specified in the Agreement, the grantee will be required to submit a dissemination proposal as discussed below.

### **Phase 3: Dissemination**

Close to the completion of production, production grantees will be required to submit dissemination proposals.

Dissemination grants will support the final phase of the project, reaching diverse audiences through the initial broadcast and other means, including promotion, publicity, and outreach. CPB anticipates that dissemination grants will generally not exceed \$100,000.

The dissemination plans of each individual project will be part of a comprehensive effort on behalf of the *Crossroads* initiative as a whole. This comprehensive effort will be developed and managed by one or more umbrella organizations selected by CPB, such as public television stations or outreach specialists.

CPB may elect to fund any of the elements of the required dissemination proposal for individual projects. As a condition of receiving funding, all *Crossroads* films will participate in this comprehensive dissemination effort. Producers must acquire and convey all the necessary rights to make this possible.

Upon completion of the production phase of the program, or shortly before, producers will be required to meet with CPB to discuss dissemination strategies for their particular program and how it fits into the larger *Crossroads* outreach and dissemination plan. Individual program producers will be required to work closely with the umbrella organization(s) managing the dissemination of the *Crossroads* initiative. Following these discussions, the production grantee will be required to develop and submit a

dissemination proposal to CPB that will also include a promotion and publicity strategy and plan.

### **3. Eligibility.**

To be eligible to receive a *Crossroads* grant, the proposed program proposal must:

- \* be submitted and sponsored by a film producer, production company, public television station, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, university, school of journalism/film studies, or other educational institution.
- \* demonstrate that the applicant has the capability to produce at a high professional level appropriate for national prime-time broadcast to a general public television audience.
- \* set forth a plan for translating one or more *Crossroads* themes into a television program that will contribute significantly to public understanding.
- \* demonstrate that the applicant has conducted adequate research and sought the views of a sufficiently broad range of experts to have a clear, informed, and concise understanding of the issues that will be examined in the project.
- \* demonstrate that the program will be timely and topical when broadcast.
- \* contain one signed original CPB Submission Release Form, located at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/tvrelease.html>.
- \* Proposals without signed release forms will not be read.
- \* conform to the requirements specified throughout this RFP.

### **4. Rights.**

Given the high level of proportionate funding for individual *Crossroads* film projects, CPB intends to require extensive rights in the film projects and related materials, in addition to the rights identified in CPB's standard Terms and Conditions found at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/termsandconditions/>.

Although CPB will not require producers to transfer copyright ownership, producers should expect to provide CPB with the transferable, exclusive worldwide right to broadcast, use, distribute, copy and publish the film project and all of its elements in any medium now existing or hereafter developed in perpetuity, but will only be required to clear North-American TV rights for six releases in four years, home video and audiovisual rights in North America for a seven year period, and standard PBS on-line rights. Producers will also be required to grant to CPB the transferable right to incorporate or "package" the films as part of a series if CPB elects to do so, which may include an introductory segment involving a host or otherwise.

### **5. Guidelines and Criteria.**

\*Applicants are encouraged to take advantage of CPB's and public television's unique competitive edge by offering the American public a comprehensive, interesting, provocative, and entertaining examination of these critical issues by revealing deeper meaning and insight. Projects should distinguish themselves in their content, form,

artistic quality, and depth from what already has, and is likely to be, broadcast in commercial media outlets.

\* Applicants are encouraged to consider ways to expand their program's audience reach and impact by developing partnerships as may be appropriate and to incorporate follow-on or add-on educational components and related partnerships to their television production proposal. For example, that might include interactive, web based, and/or classroom versions with special materials. This work will be done in partnership with the organization managing *Crossroads* dissemination, as outlined in the description of Phase 3 above.

\* CPB seeks proposals that reflect views from across the philosophical, political and policy spectrum including ideas from individuals whose views resist categorization. CPB funding and selection decisions will ensure balance among perspectives across the initiative as a whole. CPB especially solicits programs that reflect strong viewpoints. Intellectual honesty, factual rigor and fairness are always required.

\* Applicants are welcome to develop partnerships with foreign filmmakers, broadcasters, and other entities to broaden the project's perspective and audience reach. Creative international partnerships could enhance the project's quality, appeal, and reach by adding important elements--including new perspectives and unique film footage, and international co-broadcast arrangements.

\* Foreign applicants are encouraged to develop partnerships with a U.S. counterpart.

\* Applicants are encouraged to consider forming an advisory group of subject matter experts with whom the project's producers can consult and draw expertise in designing and implementing the project's themes, story line, and narrative. CPB believes that regardless of any editorial positions taken by the film, they are most persuasively presented when informed by alternative and opposing views.

\* Proposals should try to anticipate developments two to three years from initial R&D submission to ensure that productions will be relevant at the time of broadcast.

\* In order to encourage path breaking and bold ideas that will germinate new approaches, new themes, and new stories, CPB will consider programs in a range of genres--including public affairs, history, science, investigative reporting, religion, culture, and satire--so long as they are consistent with *Crossroads* eligibility, criteria, guidelines, and proposal submission requirements.

\* Major strands may apply for special individual programs, but not long term program funding.

\* Children's programming is not eligible for *Crossroads* funding.

\* Before submitting a proposal, please read the contract and the Terms and Conditions found at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/termsandconditions/>. CPB will not tailor individual contracts. Provisions are not negotiable.

## **6. Crossroads Applicants' Pre-proposal Conferences.**

**a. Locations/dates.** Given the size and uniqueness of the *Crossroads* initiative, CPB intends to host a series of half-day pre-proposal conferences to ensure that prospective applicants are clear on the initiative's objectives, criteria and procedures. Potential applicants are invited to attend at their own expense. The meetings are currently scheduled as noted below. Those who wish to attend are kindly asked to follow reservation/RSVP procedures carefully. See Paragraph 6c, below.

**Los Angeles conference**, March 31st, 3-6 PM, at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel, 1755 N. Highland Avenue, Hollywood, CA 90028 (Directions: 323-856-1200). RSVP deadline: 5pm EST, March 22, 2004. Co-hosted by KCET and the Latino Public Broadcasting.

**New York conference**, March 10th, 3-6 PM, at the National Museum of the American Indian, George Gustav Heye Center, 1 Bowling Green, New York, NY 10004 (Directions: 212-514-3700). RSVP deadline: 5pm EST, March 5, 2004. Co-hosted by the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the National Black Programming Consortium, POV and WNET.

**San Francisco conference**, March 29th, 3-6 PM, at the Palm Room, San Francisco Film Centre, 39 Keyes Avenue, The Presidio, San Francisco, CA 94129 (Directions: 415-561-3456). RSVP deadline: 5pm EST, March 22, 2004. Co-hosted by the Independent Television Service, KQED and the National Asian American Telecommunications Association.

**Washington D.C. conference**, March 5, 3-6 PM, at CPB's Blair Board Room (second floor), 401 9<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington, DC 20004. (Directions: <crossroads@cpb.org>). RSVP deadline: 5pm EST, March 3, 2004. Co-hosted by PBS, WETA and WHUT.

Based upon regional and local demand and CPB budget constraints, CPB may schedule additional meetings.

**b. Audio Tape.** The Washington DC Pre-proposal Conference will be audio taped. Individuals unable to attend one of the scheduled meetings may request a copy of these taped proceedings.

**c. RSVP procedures.** All reservations will be confirmed exclusively through e-mail communications. To attend a pre-proposal conference, please RSVP to <[rsvp-proposalconference@cpb.org](mailto:rsvp-proposalconference@cpb.org)>. Indicate which *pre-proposal seminar (by city)* and the *number of attendees* in the subject line of your RSVP reservation. (Example subject line: "*New York/2 attendees*"). In the message text, write each attendee's name, organizational affiliation, title, postal and e-mail address, and telephone number. Due to space considerations, no more than three persons may represent an individual organization. CPB gratefully acknowledges the co-host organizations' assistance.

## **7. Proposal Components and Format.**

Proposal text should be prepared in 12 point Arial, Times New Roman, or Courier font, with a 1 inch margin on all sides. Proposal submissions should include the following components, with all written material organized and labeled as follows:

a. Crossroad Program Title Page (1 page) to include:

Project Title

Producer/Sponsor's Name, Affiliation, Contact Information

b. CPB Submission Release Form at <<http://www.cpb.org/grants/tvrelease.html>>

c. Proposal Narrative

\* One paragraph Summary Statement of the program.

\* Full description of the proposed activity/program in accordance with the relevant phase in Paragraph 2 above.

d. Project Timetable (1 page).

e. Key Personnel and Qualifications Summary, as follows:

\* Identify key project staff/talent. Attach resumes and production credits, as appropriate.

\* Identify, and briefly describe the credentials of project expert advisors and partners (including foreign). Attach individual resumes and/or institutional resume credentials as appropriate to the proposal.

\* Submit Letters of Commitment/Agreement as applicable.

\* Submit samples of previous film work only when specifically requested by CPB. Cassettes and other materials will not be returned.

## **8. Proposal Budget and Format.**

\* R&D proposals should provide a one-page, line-item budget covering all expenses, including travel, consultants, staff time, and overhead. The budget must also indicate sources and amounts of any non-CPB funding requested and received.

\* Production and dissemination budgets must be comprehensive. Sample budget formats are available from CPB on request.

## **9. Submission of Proposals.**

a. One signed original and two copies of each *Crossroads* proposal, accompanied by the signed original "release form," should be express mailed to:

*America at a Crossroads*

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Attn: Television Programming Department

401 Ninth Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20004-2129

- b. In addition, an electronic copy of the proposal must be sent by e-mail to: <[crossroads@cpb.org](mailto:crossroads@cpb.org)> in MSWord or Acrobat. Do not mail diskette copies.
- c. Proposals will not be accepted via fax or hand delivery.
- d. Neither proposals nor any other submitted materials, including sample tapes or CDs, will be returned.

## **10. Review, Selection, and Announcement.**

Although Crossroads R&D proposals will be accepted, reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis, all Crossroads proposals must be received by June 1, 2004.

An applicant who receives an R&D grant may submit a production proposal anytime after submitting the post-R&D report and final deliverables. CPB recommends that all producers who receive R&D funding meet with CPB before submitting a Phase 2 production proposal.

For producers who do not participate in the *Crossroads* R&D phase, production proposals will be accepted beginning June 15, 2004 through September 15, 2004. CPB is under no obligation to consider or review late proposals or proposals that do not conform to the eligibility, guidelines, criteria, and formats as set forth here.

Each phase of the *Crossroads* review process is expected to follow these general steps:

Step 1. Each proposal received will be acknowledged upon receipt.

Step 2. Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated internally according to *Crossroads'* published eligibility, criteria, and guidelines, and the demonstrated capacity and experience of the applicant and team.

Step 3. Proposals determined to be viable will be reviewed by at least two outside experts selected by CPB. CPB may also form an Advisory Panel to assist in the selection process.

Step 4. Following staff consultations with expert reviewers, CPB program staff may request a meeting with applicants to discuss proposed activities or budgets.

Step 5. Selection decisions will be announced on a rolling basis as individual contracts are awarded. Those proposals which are not selected for funding will receive a notification within approximately 30 days after the final determination.

## **11. RFP Q/As and Modifications.**

Questions regarding the *America at a Crossroads* initiative should be submitted in writing to <[crossroads@cpb.org](mailto:crossroads@cpb.org)>.

A summary of the relevant (and not privileged) questions submitted and the corresponding CPB replies, as well as updates and modifications to this RFP, including any deadline extensions and other important information, will be posted on the *Crossroads* page at <[www.cpb.org/grants/crossroads/](http://www.cpb.org/grants/crossroads/)>.