



Request for Grant Proposals

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES: Enhancing the Diversity, Capacity and Quality of Local and National News

December 11, 2013

Deadline for response: February 3, 2013 at 5pm ET

OVERVIEW

CPB seeks to support the efforts of small groups of news-oriented public radio stations (“Partnerships”) working collaboratively to produce original reporting around important topics, known as “beats” or “content verticals.” The two-year grants are intended to support station-based journalism that will increase the range of perspectives heard locally, regionally, and nationally, by adding more points of view from across the country, and expand the conversation on important topics. Each Partnership will need to work closely with national editors at NPR, PRI and APM to contribute original reporting on their chosen “beat” to the national newsmagazine programs.

Stations that form these Partnerships may be geographically disparate and individual stations may choose to participate in more than one Partnership. Each Partnership should include a minimum of 3 stations. Each Partnership will hire an editor, and dedicate at least one multi-media reporter per station (a new hire or re-assigned existing staff, full or part-time) to cover each beat and produce content to be used locally on partner and other stations and nationally on the major national flagship programs (e.g., *All Things Considered*, *Morning Edition*, *Marketplace*, *The World, Here and Now*, *The Takeaway*). Each reporter must spend a minimum of 50% of their time creating content for the topic. Examples of topics for the beats or content verticals include: military veterans, education, health, transportation, technology, or coastal issues. However, Partnerships can select a topic of their choice.

- CPB expects each Partnership to demonstrate a significant financial commitment over a two-year period. CPB anticipates providing two-year grants of up to 50% of the funding for the reporter position(s) and up to 50% of the funding for the Editor position in Year One and up to 25% of the funding for each position in Year Two.

BACKGROUND

Over the last several years one of CPB’s priorities has been to enhance journalism in local public media. CPB believes that building local journalism capacity strengthens the local-national partnership that enables public media to address the information needs of local communities and the entire country. Initial investments in this area resulted in Project Argo, Local Journalism

Centers, and Education reporting. CPB continues to believe that public media stations can leverage each other's reach, audiences, and resources to achieve more impact and greater public service by working together than they can alone. Enhancing the capacity of public media stations to create high quality original journalism remains a high priority.

GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Grant Administration and Partner Station Participation

These Partnerships require commitment from the participating stations. In the course of the last several years, the Local Journalism Centers have developed best practices that should help inform and guide the development of the Partnerships. See the Local Journalism Center Guidebook at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/425/LJC-Guidebook-2013.pdf>. Applicants should incorporate the findings from the Guidebook into the planning of their Partnership as appropriate. The paragraphs below outline the major elements of the grant work scope and required activities.

Lead Station

Each Partnership must designate a Lead Station ("**Lead Station**") that serves as the fiscal agent for the CPB grant. CPB will enter into a grant agreement with that Lead Station which will, in turn, distribute grant money to its partner stations ("**Partner Stations**").

- The Lead Station is responsible for all grant reporting to CPB, including financial reporting.
- The Lead Station must execute agreements ("**Partner Agreements**") with all Partner Stations that clearly state each party's responsibilities under the grant project and adhere to all CPB grant agreement terms and conditions.
- The Lead Station must ensure that all project content and activities adhere to an editorial code of ethics such as the Code of Editorial Integrity developed for public media, available at <http://pmintegrity.org/>.

Partner Stations

Partner Stations must agree to execute all of their required activities to ensure successful completion of the grant and to provide grant reporting information to the Lead Station in a timely manner. Partner stations must also ensure they spend, track and report on the use of grant funds in accordance with the rules of the CPB grant award.

Personnel

In order to improve the quality of reporting, each Partnership must hire an editor ("**Editor**") and assign one reporter per station ("**Reporter**") dedicated to creating content for the beat or content vertical. Preferably, the Editor position should be a new hire, although a reassignment of an existing position is allowable if fully dedicated to that Partnership. The Reporter positions may be new hires or may be re-assigned existing staff, full or part-time. Applicants should present a compelling case for how the Editor and Reporter(s) will best serve the needs and requirements of the Partnership.

Content Production and Distribution

Topic

Each Partnership must create distinctive, original content on a single topic (“**Topic**”). By focusing on a single Topic, the Partnership can build expertise and produce in-depth coverage not offered by other media. Focus on a single Topic also provides an opportunity to build online audience that is driven by search. The Topic should be framed in a way that is broad enough to allow for a rich exploration of its various facets but narrow enough to easily make editorial choices about what to include and what not to include.

- Applicants should develop their own Topic. Examples of possible topics include: education, health, transportation, military veterans, or coastal issues.

Content Characteristics

Whether short or long form, on-air or digital – in order to gain a reputation as a resource/expert on the Topic – the Partnership should produce content that seeks to go beyond the superficial and exhibits:

- Depth of reporting: Multiple sources, providing background and context.
- Diversity of sources: Use sources beyond “official” voices, to include subject matter experts and real people affected by the issues.
- Explanation: Answers “how” and “why” questions, anticipating what’s next.

Content Forms

Partnerships must produce broadcast radio content along with audio, video, text, photos, blogs, maps, interactive elements, databases and other digital content. In addition, Partnerships should create content appropriate for distribution through social networking, syndication, and mobile applications. Each Partnership will have to determine what mix of content packaging adds the greatest value.

Content Usage

Partnerships must create content that is relevant to each Partner Station. The packaging and subject matter of the content will determine usage of the content. By developing relationships with each Partner Station’s newsroom, the Editor will assign stories that resonate with each station’s audience and take story angles that make the subject matter relevant to each audience. Just as national broadcasts make stories relevant to a wide audience, the Editor should work to find stories that are relevant in all the Partner Stations’ coverage areas. The expectation is that each Partner Station will broadcast or use each story produced. Each Partner Station should link back to the central place where the content is delivered online, whether that is one of the station websites or an independent topic-branded site.

National Distribution of Content:

Each Partnership is required to work closely with the national editors at NPR, PRI and APM and offer content for inclusion in the national newsmagazine programs or other national programs.

Content Deliverables

Each Partnership must commit to producing a specific number – as determined to be an appropriate minimum by the Partnership - of content treatments (“**Treatments**”). Treatments are defined as significant instances of original reporting that may be packaged as feature reports, news spots, blog entries, interviews, slide shows, maps and graphics, reporter debriefs, and long form reports, among others. The formatting of a Treatment for another platform is not considered a separate Treatment unless significant additional reporting is undertaken or significant additional content is produced in the formatting process for the new platform. As the Partnership learns, it may choose to expand its reporting plans, but for decision-making and planning purposes, there should be a minimum number of proposed treatments.

Digital Infrastructure

Each Partnership needs a means of distributing content among the Partner Stations as well as publishing content online. Applicants will need to consider what digital distribution platforms and content management systems will need to be in place to facilitate the needs of the Partner Stations. NPR and PRX offer such digital resources. Whatever digital infrastructure a Partnership chooses to employ, applicants should ensure that it will be able to interface with the Public Media Platform, now under construction.

Promotion

Each Partnership should have a promotion plan. Tools for promotion include (but are not limited to):

- Regular schedules of on-air promos that point listeners and users to where they can consume the content on air and on the web.
- Partner Station website tiles that prominently promote the content and link to a Partnership website or webpage.
- Optimizing Partnership web content for search.
- Social media campaigns, particularly around special series or programs.
- “Friend-raiser” events; pledge specials.
- Media outreach.

The promotion plan should include agreement on how the Partner Stations want to address branding of the Partnership. The LJs used one of two approaches, either branding the LJ as a separate entity with its own identity outside of the station brand or co-branding the LJ with the station identity. This is an important consideration that may affect other aspects of the Partnership.

Metrics

Each Partnership must create a metrics dashboard (“**Dashboard**”) that will track progress on various aspects of the Partnership. The Dashboard should include goals and measures of:

- Amount and quality of journalism (for example, carriage by Partner Stations, carriage by national producers, etc.).
- Engagement (for example, Facebook and Twitter followers, website comments, attendance at community meetings, etc.).
- General Reach (for example, radio and TV audience data, website usage data, etc.).
- Efficacy of the Partnership (for example, surveys among Partner Stations, etc.).

The Lead Station will distribute the Dashboard each quarter to representatives of the Partner Stations as appropriate and to CPB as a deliverable.

Sustainability Beyond CPB Funding

Each Partnership should provide an explanation for how their collaboration will continue once CPB funding comes to an end. Sustainability is one of the elements that CPB will consider when reviewing grant applications.

CPB Funding Credits

Partner Stations must recognize CPB funding support for the Grant Project by including a CPB logo (in accordance with CPB standards and approval) on each Partner Station’s website and on the Partnership website, in a prominent location and consistent with the recognition provided to the Partner Stations’ other funders. The Partner Stations will also provide CPB with on-air credit during the normal broadcast of programming credits, including podcast(s) as space is available.

On-air credit should be as follows, “(Topic) reporting is funded in part through a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.”

Other

If the Partnership wishes to include other project elements, such as multi-media training for the Editors and Reporter(s), the use of experts to assist with collaboration skills, etc., these may be addressed in the grant application.

CPB will not provide funding for such elements but will consider them as part of the project workscope.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

All applications must consist of:

1. Summary paragraph (Microsoft Word or Adobe format)

Summary paragraph (no longer than 200 words) including:

- Name of applicant and primary contact information.
- Names of all station participants.

- A short overview of the approach to reporting being proposed.
- The amount of the grant request.

2. Project Narrative (Microsoft Word or Adobe format), a written (maximum of 10 pages) description of the proposed LJC that outlines:

- The group of radio stations applying for the grant, their existing news production capacity, why they are coming together to form a Partnership, and why the chosen Lead Station is the appropriate entity to serve as the CPB grantee.
- The Topic to be covered and why it was selected.
- The target audience for the content.
- The proposed staffing structure.
- The Content and Distribution strategy, including national distribution and proposed content deliverables with specific numbers of Treatments to be produced.
- The Promotion strategy.
- How success of the Partnership will be measured.
- How the Partnership will continue its collaboration once CPB funding concludes.

3. Letters of Commitment from CEOs/General Managers of Lead and Partner Stations

4. Itemized Project Budget (Microsoft Excel spreadsheet) showing revenues and expenses associated with the Partnership for the two-year grant period. It should include a budget narrative (Microsoft Word or Adobe format) that describes how costs were calculated, particularly any overhead costs. CPB does not have a set limit for overhead for these types of grants. However, CPB would prefer to see grant dollars going to direct costs rather than overhead. Overhead is one of many elements that CPB considers when reviewing grant applications.

CPB may ask follow-up questions or request additional materials during review of the project application.

Do not submit content samples, unless requested by CPB staff.

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

The deadline for submission is 5:00 P.M., February 3, 2013. Proposals in either Microsoft Word or PDF format (along with a budget in Microsoft Excel) must be submitted via e-mail to: Jeff Luchsinger at jluchsinger@cpb.org.

Submissions beyond the deadline will not be considered. Each application received will be acknowledged via email upon receipt.

CPB is not responsible for loss or damage to the material submitted, or for any unauthorized use or misuse of the submitted materials by any third party. 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.

Solicitation by CPB of applications 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 an application, 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 application. 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.

SELECTION CRITERIA

CPB will use the following nonexclusive factors to review and evaluate applications:

1. The proposed Partner Stations and Topic.
2. Capacity of applicants to execute the project.
3. Proposed deliverables.
4. Extent of possible impact of the Partnership.
5. Prospect of sustainability beyond CPB funding.
6. Reasonableness of budget.

REVIEW AND SELECTION

CPB staff will review the applications. CPB may request additional detail and may choose to seek input from outside experts who will advise CPB regarding each application's merits. While we may seek outside input and advice, selection decisions are CPB's alone. CPB may choose not to fund any applications. It is CPB's discretion how many projects it will fund and at what grant amounts.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions as you prepare your written application, please contact Jeff Luchsinger at jluchsinger@cpb.org or 202-879-9703.

CONDITIONS OF AGREEMENT

If an application 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) 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;
- (2) 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;
- (3) Compliance with equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies;
- (4) Applicants who plan to engage sub-contractors will be expected to provide assurances that the prices obtained for any such services are fair and reasonable;
- (5) 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;
- (6) 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 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;
- (7) Applicants will be required to represent and warrant that no funds provided by CPB shall be (i) used for any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the United States Congress or any State legislature (26 §U.S.C. 501(c)(3)); or (ii) used to conduct any reception or provide any other entertainment for any officer or employee of the Federal Government or any state or local government (47 §U.S.C.396, D(k)(2(A)); and

(8) Applicants will be required to indemnify and hold CPB harmless from and against all actual or alleged claims, damages, liabilities, costs and expenses (including legal fees) arising out of or related to (i) any alleged or actual breach of any representation or warranty in the operative agreement; (ii) any other default by such applicant of any term or provision of operative agreement; or (iii) applicant's performance under the Project.

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