



Regional Journalism Collaborations

February 5, 2015

Deadline for response: April 10, 2015 at 5pm ET

OVERVIEW

CPB seeks to increase the capacity of public radio and television stations to create high-quality original and enterprise journalism by supporting Regional Journalism Collaborations (“RJC”) that will establish reporting partnerships between multiple station newsrooms in a state or region.

Each RJC should be driven by a focused editorial strategy that is of common interest to the communities served by the RJC and that will result in more original and enterprise journalism and more “news of distinction” in identified topic areas (“**Editorial Strategy**”). The objectives of the RJC are to leverage public media’s network of local stations to provide stronger local news service to the public media audience and to increase the flow of locally-produced content of national interest to the signature national programs. An additional objective of the RJC is to expand the diversity of public media’s journalism workforce and coverage to reflect the racial and ethnic diversity and range of perspectives throughout America.

CPB defines news collaborations or strategic alliances as **groups of stations (or producers) entering into formal agreements to work together as an editorial unit under common leadership for the foreseeable future**. RJC applications will be accepted from regional groups of at least three (3) CPB radio/television grantees with current combined news staff of at least eight (8) full-time journalists, and RJC will be supported over a 24-month time period leading to a formal and ongoing journalism partnership. RJC may also want to consider working with other local/regional news organizations that bring relevant and diverse perspectives to coverage (e.g., ethnic newspapers).

Each RJC must designate a lead editorial executive position (“**Editor**”) and plan to produce broadcast and digital news content to be used locally on RJC and other stations, with some stories or series made available to major national news programs (e.g., *All Things Considered*, *Morning Edition*, *Marketplace*, *The World, Here and Now*, *The Takeaway*, *Reveal*, *PBS NewsHour*, *Nightly Business Report*, *FRONTLINE*) (collectively “**National Program Partner(s)**”).

The resulting projects should represent models for enhancing local journalism by allowing more focus on original/enterprise reporting and by fostering innovation that can be replicated by

other groups of stations. Proposals must address all the elements that will be needed to create a successful RJC, including: grant administration and partner participation; personnel and editorial structure, including a diversity plan; editorial focus and strategy; content and content deliverables; community engagement plan; promotion plan; timeline; measures of success; and plans for sustainability beyond CPB funding. Proposals must also describe the nature of the broadcast, online, social media, mobile and other forms of content that will be produced. RJC's must plan to use the Public Media Platform ("PMP") for digital asset distribution. RJC's that include both radio and television stations are considered more competitive.

CPB expects to make two-year grants to three (3) to four (4) new RJC's.

BACKGROUND

Over the last several years one of CPB's priorities has been to augment journalism quality and quantity 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 CPB support in this area resulted in the Northwest News Network (N3), Project Argo, Local Journalism Collaborations ("LJC's"), and various Education reporting initiatives. Several of these collaborations were recently profiled by the [Pew Research Center's Journalism Project](#).

GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Grant Administration and Partner Participation

CPB defines news collaborations or strategic alliances as groups of stations (or producers) entering into formal agreements to work together as an editorial unit under common leadership for the foreseeable future. We are looking for a commitment from the RJC's that the stations will operate as one news operation under common editorial leadership in an ongoing partnership around the editorial focus of this partnership ("**Editorial Focus**"). Creating these RJC's will require commitment from station leadership to manage organizational change, both internally and externally.

Over the course of the last several years, the LJC's have developed best practices that should help inform and guide the development of the RJC's (see the [LJC Guidebook](#)). Applicants should incorporate the findings from the Guidebook into the planning of their RJC as appropriate.

The paragraphs below outline the major elements of the grant work scope and required activities.

Lead Station

Each RJC 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, enter into agreements with each RJC partner and distribute grant funds to both its Partner Stations and collaborating online or other news organization(s), if applicable ("**Partners**").

- The Lead Station is responsible for all grant reporting to CPB, including financial reporting.
- The Lead Station must execute agreements (“**Partner Agreements**”) with all Partners 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/>.

Partners

Partners 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. Partners must also ensure they spend, track and report on the use of grant funds in accordance with the rules of the CPB grant award. In addition to the minimum number of public media stations, RJC’s may include local/regional nonprofit online news organizations and ethnic newspapers to expand their journalism reach, diversity, and skills.

Personnel and Editorial Structure

In order to synchronize the day-to-day work of each of the combined newsrooms, insure focus on original and enterprise reporting, and communicate effectively with National Program Partners, each RJC must hire or designate a fully dedicated editorial leader (“**Editor**”), decide on the editorial staff structure, and develop a focused written Editorial Strategy. CPB will pay 100% of salaries for RJC Editors in Year 1 and 50% of their salaries in Year 2. The Editors must dedicate 100% of their time to the RJC in Year 1 and Year 2.

The proposal must include a brief description of the roles of the current eight (8) reporters and of the editorial personnel to be hired or assigned to successfully carry out the RJC’s Editorial Strategy. These new positions would include Beat and/or Editorial Focus Editors, Reporters or Producers, Data Journalists, Partner Manager or Partner Facilitator (collectively “**Personnel**”). CPB will pay 50% of salaries for RJC Personnel in Year 1 and 25% of their salaries in Year 2. CPB will not fund existing positions at any of the Partner organizations unless the position dedicates no less than 50% of his/her time on the Editorial Focus. The Partner Manager/Facilitator must dedicate 100% of their time to the RJC in Year 1 and Year 2.

Diversity

CPB has a commitment to the principle of diversity. The proposal must include a description of a diversity plan (“**Diversity Plan**”) to implement a recruiting process and hiring criteria for the Personnel that would expand the diversity of the public media journalism workforce.

Editorial Focus and Editorial Strategy

Each RJC must create distinctive, original content with areas of specific Editorial Strategy. Applicants must identify an initial Editorial Focus for the RJC, i.e., what three (3) to five (5) areas of coverage will they focus their efforts on? In addition, under this grant, CPB will require the RJC to develop a written Editorial Strategy during the first six (6) months. Applicants can build costs associated with development of an Editorial Strategy into their proposal and budget.

This Editorial Strategy will permit the RJC to build expertise and produce in-depth coverage not offered by other media. The Editorial Strategy should be 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.

Content and Content Deliverables

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

- Depth of reporting – uses multiple sources, providing background and context.
- Diversity of sources - uses sources beyond “official” voices, including subject matter experts and real people affected by the issues.
- Explanation and context - answers “how” and “why” questions, anticipating what’s next.
- Data analysis - provides empirical analyses and accessible depth to the national, regional and local trends behind the subject matter.

Content Forms

RJCs must produce broadcast and digital content, including audio, video, text, photos, blogs, maps, interactive elements, databases and other digital content (“**Content**”). In addition, RJCs should create Content appropriate for distribution through social networking, national syndication, and mobile applications. Each RJC will have to determine what mix of Content packaging adds the greatest value.

Content Usage

RJCs must create Content that is relevant to each Partner and to National Program Partners. By developing relationships with each Partner’s newsroom and with national program producers, the Editor will assign stories and approaches that resonate with each Partner’s audience and potentially with a national audience. Just as national broadcasts must make stories relevant to a wide audience, the Editor and editorial team should work to find and shape stories that are relevant in all Partners’ coverage areas. The expectation is that each Partner will broadcast or use each story produced.

Content Deliverables

Each RJC must commit to producing a specific number – as determined to be an appropriate minimum by the RJC – of Content treatments (“**Treatments**”). Treatments

are defined as significant instances of original reporting that may be packaged as feature reports, series, 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 RJC evolves 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 RJC needs a means of distributing content among the Partners as well as publishing content online. The Public Media Platform <http://publicmediaplatform.org/> (“PMP”) offers such digital resources. The RJC is required to work with the staff of the PMP to create a method for sharing its digital assets among the Partners and determine how to interface with any legacy digital distribution systems, or must provide a strong rationale for using another system. Reasonable direct costs incurred to interface the RJC with the PMP are eligible to be funded under this grant program.

Community Engagement

Community engagement can play a significant role both in building the RJC’s reputation as a resource on areas of coverage included in the Editorial Strategy and in strengthening the Partners in their role as valued community institutions. Community engagement may also provide revenue opportunities for the RJC. Successful engagement creates a virtuous circle between the Content producer and the community member, building an ongoing, two-way relationship based on trust and authenticity. Tools such as social media, websites, the Public Insight Network, in-person meetings and events, and outreach partnerships allow journalists to listen to and learn about what the community is saying and thinking about the coverage and about relevant issues. Journalists can then use this information to enrich their Content and make it more compelling to community members. The same tools allow both Content producers and community members to share the Content, which builds audience and reputation.

Each RJC must craft its own community engagement strategy that is specific to its Editorial Strategy and communities. The National Center for Media Engagement published an [Engagement Guide for Producers](#) that may be helpful in gaining more insight into the benefits of community engagement.

Promotion Plan

Each RJC must have a coverage promotion plan (“**Promotion Plan**”). The Promotion Plan should include a description of how the Partners will brand RJC content. This is an important consideration that may affect other aspects of the RJC.

Tools for promotion include (but are not limited to):

- Regular schedules of on-air promos that point listeners, viewers and users to where they can consume the Content on air and on the web.
- Partner website tiles that prominently promote the Content and link to another partner’s website or RJC website/webpage.
- Optimizing RJC web Content for search.
- Social media campaigns, particularly around special series or programs.
- Events.
- Media outreach and advertisements in other media.

Timeline

Each RJC must provide a timeline for key grant program activities during the 24-month grant term (“**Timeline**”), for example planning meetings, hires completed, written editorial strategy developed, etc.

Measures of Success

Each RJC must articulate measures of success (“**Measures of Success**”) that will track progress on various aspects of the RJC. Measures of Success should include goals and metrics for:

- Amount of journalism (for example, carriage by Partners, carriage by National Program Partners, 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, digital analytics, etc.).
- Quality of journalism (for example, award nominations, coverage referenced in other media, etc.).
- Efficacy of the RJC (for example, surveys among Partners, etc.).

The Lead Station should report the RJC’s progress against its Measures of Success each quarter to representatives of the Partners as appropriate and to CPB as a deliverable.

Sustainability Beyond CPB Funding

Each RJC must explain how they envision supporting the ongoing collaboration once CPB funding comes to an end (“**Sustainability Plan**”). Sustainability is one of the elements that CPB will consider when reviewing grant applications.

Partnership Agreement

A result of collaboration discussions and planning will be a partnership agreement (“**Partnership Agreement**”) which defines the relationship between the Partners. The Partnership Agreement must be signed by each Partner. The Partnership Agreement must include evidence of the commitment by the Partners to sustain the RJC beyond CPB funding.

CPB Funding Credits

Partners must recognize CPB funding support for the Grant Project by including a CPB logo (in accordance with CPB standards and approval) on each Partners website, and on the RJC website if applicable, in a prominent location consistent with the recognition provided to the Partners' other funders. The Partners must also provide CPB with reasonable on-air credit over the course of the normal broadcast of programming credits (including during podcasts) and with online acknowledgements on Partner websites, as space is available.

On-air credit language should read as follows, "(RJC/Editorial Focus) reporting is funded in part through a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting." Applicants may propose alternate language subject to CPB approval.

Application Procedures

All applications must consist of:

1. Summary paragraph (Microsoft Word or Adobe format), a written (no longer than 200 words) summary including:

- Name of applicant and primary contact information.
- Names of all 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 RJC that outlines:

- The group of radio, television, and/or online or other news organizations applying for the grant, their existing news production capacity, why they are coming together to form an RJC, and why the chosen Lead Station is the appropriate entity to serve as the CPB grantee.
- The targeted National Program Partner(s).
- The areas of Editorial Focus, to be developed into a written Editorial Strategy for the RJC.
- A list of existing news staff and the proposed staffing structure, and the Diversity Plan.
- The Content and Distribution Strategy, including national distribution and proposed Content deliverables with minimum numbers of Treatments to be produced.
- The Community Engagement Plan.
- The Promotion Plan.
- The Timeline.
- The Measures of Success.
- The Sustainability Plan to continue the collaboration once CPB funding concludes.

3. Letters of Commitment from CEO(s)/General Manager(s) of Lead Station and Partners

- 4. Itemized Project Budget** (Microsoft Excel spreadsheet) showing revenues and expenses associated with the RJC for the two-year grant period. It should include a budget narrative (Microsoft Word or Adobe format) that describes how costs were calculated. Budgets may include indirect cost rates covered by other, non-CPB funding sources.¹

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., April 10, 2015. Proposals in either Microsoft Word or PDF format (along with a budget in Microsoft Excel format) must be submitted via e-mail to: Erin Day at eday@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 Partners and organizational/editorial structure.
2. Capacity of applicants to execute the project.
3. Proposed Editorial Focus and Content deliverables.
4. Extent of possible impact of the RJC.
5. Prospect of sustainability beyond CPB funding.

¹ CPB funds shall not be used to pay any overhead or indirect expenses.

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 decision 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 Erin Day at eday@cpb.org or 202-879-9809.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Proposals submitted in response to this open call for grant applications by an applicant ("Applicant") shall be valid for at least 60 days following the application deadline.

Proposals shall be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Applicant's proposals to meet the requirements of this application. Neither multiple nor alternate proposals will be accepted. An Applicant should give specific attention to the clear identification of those portions of its proposal that it considers confidential, proprietary commercial information or trade secrets.

The selected Applicant shall be responsible for all products and services required by this Application. Subcontractors must be identified and a complete description of their role relative to the proposals must be included in the Applicant's proposals.

By submitting an offer in response to this application, an Applicant, if selected for award, shall be deemed to have accepted the terms of this application. Any exceptions to this application must be clearly identified in the proposal. A proposal that takes exception to these terms may be rejected.

As part of the application review process, CPB may share materials, data, other information and analyses (collectively, "Information") with Applicants. As a condition of receiving such Information, Applicants responding to this application shall be deemed to agree to protect, preserve and maintain all such Information on a strictly confidential basis, and to promptly return to CPB upon its request all tangible copies of such Information in your possession.

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 application.

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. Additionally, each Applicant agrees to indemnify CPB with respect to the aforementioned guarantees.

PREVIEW OF GRANT REQUIREMENTS

- A. Grant payments will be contingent upon the delivery of specific components related to project implementation, including but not limited to reports on the progress and results of spectrum related strategic decision-making process.
- B. Grantees will be required to certify final project costs and grantee match.

CONDITIONS OF AGREEMENT

CPB will require all grant recipients to agree to these terms and conditions and does not plan to modify them for individual grant recipients.

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. Applicants 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 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 3 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. (Applicants will additionally ensure that any subcontractors or consultants under the agreement shall also maintain such records for the period specified and under the same terms);
3. Maintenance, for 3 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. No funds provided by CPB will be used (i) for any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the United States Congress or any State legislative or (ii) to conduct any reception or provide any other entertainment for any officer or employee of the Federal Government or any State or local government; and
6. Applicants will be required to indemnify and hold CPB harmless from and against all 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 the operative agreement; or (iii) Applicant's performance under the project.
7. Applicants will be required to provide documentation as to actual costs; and
8. The agreement will be governed by construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia without regard to its conflict of law provisions.

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

CPB will be provided with non-exclusive rights to use and copy the reports created as deliverables for this project.

CPB will not be responsible for any costs incurred by an Applicant in preparing and submitting a proposal, or in performing any other activities relative to this solicitation.