Our three top priorities are:

1. **Work towards racial equity** within the Media Consortium network and within independent news more broadly.

Manolia is the point person on this priority.  
We will do this work mainly through our TMCinColor program:

* regular video conference calls with the TMCinColor journalist cohort
* biweekly TMCinColor newsletter (already published)
* creating a mentorship pipeline (we've been reaching out to Maynard and other programs to see if we can simply connect with them)
* developing a Code for Equitable Partnerships that will provide values and specific guidance for situations where there is a power differential between partners, such as between small/large outlets, volunteer/staffed outlets, local/national outlets, and outlets run by and serving people of color/ outlets largely run by and serving white communities.

2. **Build a self-sufficient network** that connects independent and community news media with a focus on local -national connections and on outlets that reach communities of color. Our members think of this as building an "asset bank" where the primary assets are each other's editorial and business know-how.

Jo Ellen is the point person on this priority, though much of this work does and will happen with the support of volunteers.  
We will do this work via our new database/website and through regional and virtual meetings:

* peer-to-peer roundtables to share business ideas (we already run two on Salesforce and engagement)
* hold regional meetings in 8 cities to build face-to-face relationships and to recruit outlets that seek to work on a national level and that have a reach into communities of color.
* hire an intern to populate our database with member information and to support members in using that database
* hire our current contractors to add Slack to the website member portal so that members can quickly search for and communicate with each other
* open up the database to a wider range of independent and community media by forging reciprocal relationships with ACM, NFCB, AAN to start (we already are in negotiations with these organizations). Ideally, we would add INN, FIRE and NAMAC.
* continue to hold quarterly phone meetings with the leaders of ACM, NFCB, AAN, INN, AIR, FIRE, NAM and NAMAC.

3. **Develop new methods of distribution** in order to give independent and community news greater reach and to help them make a greater impact.

Manolia is the point person on this priority.

We plan to experiment with a wide range of distribution techniques beyond Facebook and Google SEO:

* hire our current contractors to create an aggregation tool/template that will allow us to create popup websites that aggregate joint storytelling (like rebelmouse before it went enterprise).
* use our current collaborative projects (e.g. sanctuary project) to test doing in-person events for national stories with facebook live and tweet-chat followup for national audiences
* send TMC staff to conferences to learn what others are doing around engagement and distribution techniques. We will use what we learn to develop our own social media as well as to directly support members.

In addition to these three priority areas we will also be doing work in four other areas:

1. project-based work, mainly editorial collaborations. We already have support to do the following and hope to get support for our Sanctuary Project (Manolia):

* Collaborative Storytelling Chicago (Chicago Community Trust) --Manolia is point person.
* Media Policy Reporting (Media Democracy Fund)-- Jo Ellen is point person.
* Just Transitions (Partnership with New Economy Coalition--money via Park Foundation)--Jo Ellen is point person.

2. Advocacy work, especially around legal liability and defense issues and media policy issues--Jo Ellen is the point person.

3. Communicating about our work via our website and weekly newsletter--Jo Ellen is the point person.

4. Holding our annual conference in February 2018--Jo Ellen is the point person but everyone chips in!

I know this all seems like a lot but we are already doing most of these things with Wallace Global Fund general support, which supports one FT staff person at $50,000. The other FT staff person, at $45,000 is paid mainly through project-based work. One of our goals this year, frankly, is to give our staff raises that bring us closer to a living wage, given that we live in San Francisco and New York City.