

**The Media Consortium, a project of the Foundation for National Progress**

**Proposal Summary: Media Policy Reporting and Education Pilot Program**

**Date: February 15, 2011**

**Contact: Tracy Van Slyke/tracy@themediaconsortium.com**

The future of our democracy depends on just, transformative media policy and environment that connects citizens to the information and news that shapes their lives. Despite the great importance of media policy, there is a dearth of reporting on the issue. When media policy is covered, an enormous disconnect between the technical aspects of the issue and its affect on real people remains.

With this gap in mind, The Media Consortium, a network of the country’s leading independent media outlets is launching a **Media Policy Reporting and Education Pilot Program** that will raise the issue of media policy to a new level of public awareness by supporting quality reporting and efficient content delivery to a diverse set of constituencies. The proposed pilot program includes three organizing components:

* Education: **Ongoing connections and briefing calls organized between Media Consortium members and media policy experts.** The Media Consortium has a history of organizing expert calls to train and educate members about the future of media industry. We have organized over a dozen such calls within a four-month time frame in 2010 alone for our Incubation and Innovation Lab program. The connections made between reporters and the media policy experts will not only inform reporting throughout the pilot program, they will also help to inform reporting and analysis for the long-term. Call topics include: net neutrality, access to broadband, public media and the future of journalism, new policies impacting mobile. We will bring in experts working both in the beltway and on the ground.
* Reporting: **Support for regular and consistent reporting/analysis on media policy news, events, breakdowns and more.** The Media Consortium has established a small reporting fund dedicated to media policy issues. From this pool, TMC is providing $5,000 to four media organizations (who are members of The Media Consortium) to dedicate to media policy reporting for three months. Organizations will be chosen according to diversity of platform, diversity of audience, and organizational capacity to participate in the program.
* Distribution: **Bi-weekly blogs rounding up the best reporting on media policy from Media Consortium members that are also distributed across the blogosphere.** The Media Consortium’s current MediaWires program is the perfect opportunity to raise the profile of the pilot program’s reporting. The four MediaWire blogs are picked up by 35 partners and media organizations, reaching a total aggregate audience of 7 million people. The MediaWires project also has extensive reach on social networks, including Facebook and Twitter.

These three elements will close the gap, help change the debate around media policy in our country, and shore up our democracy in the process. The pilot program will kick off in February and last through May. The National Conference for Media Reform in April will also be a major event that will be used as a resource during this program’s launch.

**Scaling up**

The Media Consortium has built a solid foundation for this program with funds generously contributed by the Media and Democracy Fund. But, with additional support, we can greatly the diversity, reach and influence of this content.