

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

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

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The future of our democracy depends on just, transformative media policy and legislature 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 it media policy is covered, there is an enormous disconnect between it and the people it affects.

With these gaps in mind, The Media Consortium, a network of the country’s leading progressive, independent, media outlets, proposes 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. The six-month, proposed pilot program includes three organizing components:

* Education: **Ongoing connections and conference 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. In addition, 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.
* Reporting: **Support for regular and consistent reporting/analysis by four media outlets on media policy news, events, breakdowns and more.** With support from the Media and Democracy Fund, The Media Consortium will establish a small reporting fund dedicated to media policy issues. From this pool, TMC will provide $5,000 to four media organizations (who are members of The Media Consortium) to dedicate to media policy reporting for six 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 7.5 million people. The MediaWires project also has extensive reach on social networks, including Facebook and Twitter.

These three elements will close the gap between legislature and the citizenry, ultimately helping to change the debate around media policy in our country and shore up our democracy in the process.

The Media Consortium is in the ideal strategic position to build out and execute this pilot program. We have implemented programs that engage our members in educational and collaborative reporting opportunities, and created new media initiatives to build the impact of our members’ reporting on specific issues. We understand the reporting strengths of each of our members. Our past work sets us up to be the ideal organizers for this initiative. We request a $33,600 grant from the Media and Democracy Fund to launch and implement this pilot program.