**Grant Purpose: Briefly describe the grant purpose in 255 characters or less.**

This grant will support The Media Consortium’s efforts to place our members on the path to long-term sustainability and at the forefront of tomorrow’s media landscape. It will also support the creation and dissemination of high-impact journalism.

**Summary: To include the following information: The organization's mission, a list of current programs and activities, and the grant request (purpose, goals & objectives of the proposed programming)**

The Media Consortium is pleased to submit a renewal proposal for its general operations to The Arca Foundation. The Media Consortium’s mission is to amplify independent media's voice, increase its collective clout, leverage current audiences and reach new ones. It accomplishes its mission by fulfilling five strategic principles:

* Foster Collaboration and Coordination
* Build and Diversify Media Leadership
* Focus on Audience Development
* Bring Money and Attention into the Sector
* Support Innovation in Journalism and Business Models

From networking to audience development, from paid internships to creating the space and skills to evolve for a 21st century media environment, The Media Consortium is deepening and launching core programs essential to strengthening the impact and sustainability of its members.

Each of The Media Consortium’s projects fulfills one or more of these principles and the overarching mission of the organization. They include:

Follow the MoneyIn addition to the general operations proposal, The Media Consortium is pleased to submit a proposal on behalf of itself and eight journalism organizations, including *Mother Jones, The Nation*, The Nation Institute, the Huffington Post Investigative Fund, The American Independent, *The American Prospect, ColorLines* and *Facing South.* **Please see the separate proposal for more information about this project.**

Organizing Member Meetings and Networking Spaces Since its inception, The Media Consortium has organized regular in-person member meetings that provide a critical space for our members and allies to nurture collaborations (and collaborative projects), build concrete relationships and think beyond day-to-day organizational struggles. Using a 1-2 day retreat format, we catalyze forward-thinking and creative strategies that will help the independent media sector thrive in the 21st century.

Independent Media Internships In order to increase diversity in the sector, we need to create more entry points for journalists of varying economic and social backgrounds. Many independent media outlets don’t have the resources to pay a full-time intern, which makes it difficult for low-income young people to participate. To address this issue, the consortium launched its “Independent Media Internships” program. Interns are placed with MC member organizations for a three-month, full-time, paid editorial internship.

MediaWires: Building Audiences Through Aggregation and Strategic Distribution  
The MediaWires project showcases the first-rate independent journalism produced by our members, brings their work to larger audiences and builds the influence of their journalism in the public debate through creative online distribution strategies, including aggregation and syndication partnerships.

Understanding and Building Audiences Through List Analysis Understanding an audience's size and how they interact with media has been part of the consortium’s strategic focus since the beginning. But times have changed since we last looked at who was reading, watching and listening to independent media. Technological tools, like Twitter, are creating a broad swath of new media consumption habits, and the 2008 presidential election engaged millions of citizens in a previously unheard of manner. As a major step in 2009, Catalist—a company that houses one of the most comprehensive databases of 250 million voter-aged in the country—work with TMC and 15 of its members to provide free modeling analysis that details demographic overlays that compare audiences not only to other Media Consortium outlets, but to the nation as well.

The Big Thaw: Charting a New Course for Journalism Looking towards the future, we believe that there is a unique opportunity to reshape the playing field for independent media. Ideas and projects around the future of journalism, community building, outside economic factors and new technologies are being brought into this process with the release of our report, *The Big Thaw: Charting a New Future for Journalism*. In late 2009 and throughout 2010, The Media Consortium is using this report as the foundation for generating conversation among members, outside partners, universities, and more to lay out the critical role and needs of the progressive, independent media landscape. In addition, The Media Consortium staff will continue to detail and demonstrate the impact of the progressive, independent media sector and its members at conferences, in the press and among key partners.

Incubation and Innovation Lab

The Incubation and Innovation Lab is The Media Consortium’s dynamic new program to support its members in conducting rapid prototyping as a low-cost way to test new business, technology and content development models at a scale that they would not be able to achieve alone.

This two-part program helps our members research, discuss and experiment with new business, publishing and editorial models that take advantage of the new, web-enabled reader/publisher relationships. The two components to this program are the Digital Refresh Workshop and Small Group Labs.

Support from The Arca Foundation would shore up these and other projects that will help our members turn this moment of crisis into a key opportunity. We're building a stronger, better future for independent media together.

In 2008, The Media Consortium submitted separate proposals for its general operations and its special (and successful) year-long project, “Live From Main Street.” The Arca Foundation was generous and supportive of both endeavors. The Media Consortium’s core work continues to be essential for the development and implementation of special projects such as Live From Main Street and *Follow the Money*. Without The Media Consortium, the likelihood of such cutting edge and critical programs would greatly diminish. That’s why we ask for your continued support of both The Media Consortium’s general operations and its special financial editorial collaboration project, *Follow The Money*, in 2010.

**Budget and Fundraising for 2010**

The Media Consortium’s projected 2010 budget is $408,000. Funds already committed include support from The Open Society Institute and The Surdna Foundation with additional projected revenue from membership dues. Additional funds will allow us to increase support for our members and grow projects with concrete benefits for the sector. The Media Consortium’s 2010 budget allocates $204,000 for personnel and administrative costs, including organizational support, travel, legal, and website hosting. The balance of $175,000 is allocated to direct program expenses for projects that fulfill The Media Consortium’s goals and strategies.

The Media Consortium provides space and resources for independent media outlets to think big and beyond quick fixes. Our projects are focused on long-term gains for our members. At the same time, we are dealing with media organizations that are already economically pinched and a media system mired in an apocalyptic moment. Consortium projects feed collaboration and the support of high-impact media making, and create a strong foundation for a sustainable and high-impact independent media sector. These projects and the workings of The Media Consortium are core to the network’s ongoing work and success. Additional funds will be sought for our highly anticipated Follow The Money program.

The Media Consortium continues to draw support from its members, funders and allies, and our initiatives are positively impacting the independent media sector. Therefore, on behalf of the dozens of journalism organizations that make up The Media Consortium, we seek a renewal grant of $50,000 from The Arca Foundation.

**Organization Structure & Administration: Identify the role and responsibilities of key board members, staff, volunteers and members.**

**Tracy Van Slyke is the Media Consortium’s Project Director.** She works to organize effective partnerships and innovative projects that will change the terms of the American political and cultural debate as well as create a cooperative infrastructure that supports a sustainable future for independent media. She oversees the development and implementation of all major TMC initiatives and fundraising efforts.

**Erin Polgreen is the Senior Program Associate.** She manages the Media Wire and Independent Media Internships projects. Erin also coordinates the Membership Committee and provides support around fundraising and member engagement strategies.

**Jeanne Brooks is the part time Program Assistant.** She provides support around the Independent Media Internships, and also assists with outreach, logistics and meeting planning.

The Media Consortium is governed by a Coordinating Committee that is chaired by Rinku Senn, Director, Applied Research Center/*ColorLines.* Other committee members include:

Jason Barnet: Director, The Uptake

Steve Katz: Publisher, *Mother Jones*

Ann Friedman: Deputy Editor, *The American Prospect*

Linda Jue: Director, George W. Williams Center for Independent Media

Kathy Spillar: Executive Editor, *Ms. Magazine*

Johanna Vondeling: Editor, Berrett-Koehler Publishing

Julie Bergman-Sender: Director, Balcony Films