Covering The Movement for Black Lives

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The Media Consortium

In the year since the death of Michael Brown, #BlackLivesMatter has grown from a twitter hashtag into a movement. Named the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) in Cleveland by a gathering of 1500 activists on July 24, this well-organized effort has already become a critical element of American political life, from municipal elections to presidential primaries.

News outlets, however, are ill-prepared to cover a Movement that is resolutely by and for black people. [Only 5% of corporate print and radio news journalists are black](http://asne.org/content.asp?pl=140&sl=131&contentid=131). Independent newsmedia has generally done a better job of covering issues relevant to the black community but still has far to go to adequately cover this movement.

The Media Consortium, a national network of independent news outlets, is working to address this need:

1. **Website**

A number of our outlets, such as Colorlines/RaceForward, Democracy Now!, Truthout, Real News Network, Making Contact, and AlterNet have a strong history of employing black reporters and reporting on issues of particular relevance to the black community. The Media Consortium is amplifying this work by curating it on our social media platform, www.blackspringindymedia.org

2. **Webinars**

Working with Race Forward, we have begun a series of webinars to train white reporters on how to understand the multiple frames that can be used to tell the story of race in America, and the ethics of those different frames.

**3. Pooling Resources and Reporters**

Media Consortium staffer Manolia Charlotin, a Haitian American, has attended M4BL events this summer on behalf of all our outlets. She is compiling a list of freelance Black reporters as well as sources among Black leadership which will be available via a private social media network for Media Consortium members.

4. **Outreach to Black Media**

Black newspapers are an important source of news by and for the Black community. The Media Consortium is working to partner with these papers to bring that news to a larger audience.

All this work requires time and money. We are seeking donations and grants for each of these projects. To learn more, please contact joellen@themediaconsortium.com or call Jo Ellen at 415-878-3862