**Media Consortium Membership FAQ**

**What is the Media Consortium?**

The Media Consortium is a network of the country’s leading, progressive, independent media outlets. Our mission is support and grow the impact of the independent media sector.

**Who Are TMC Members?**

The Media Consortium was founded in 2005 by Mother Jones, the Nation, LinkTV, Democracy Now, and AlterNet. They remain members. We are committed to recruiting organizations that bring diversity of audience and platform (radio, print, video, multimedia content) to our membership body.

For a list of our current members, go to www.themediaconsortium.org

**What Do Members Do?**

The Media Consortium really is a “consortium”—though we hire a staff, we are run by our members. Members decide on the direction of the Consortium, set policy, and suggest and approve initiatives. Members will vote on your application for membership!

**Current Committees:**

Coordinating Committee: This is our governance committee

* Executive Committee: CC-level leadership committee; reviews and mentors TMC staff
* Finance Committee: Reviews financial reports—all members eligible to participate, but must include at least 3 CC members
* Personnel Committee: Organized as-needed

Membership Committee: Approves all new members; sets membership policy

Program Committee: Works with E.D. to develop annual meeting program, and gives feedback on programming through the year.

**What is Required to Become a TMC Member?**

The Consortium has two membership levels, full member and associate member.

Members

A participating member of The Media Consortium must adhere to the following criteria:

* Members must publish original journalistic or media content, which can be defined by the intended social impact or informative nature of content, and whether or not the content was reviewed for editorial and factual accuracy by staff before publication.
* Potential members must have a history of collaboration with other media organizations, or at least the capacity to do so.
* Member organizations promote social, racial, and economic justice; they commit to pursing these values as they apply to hiring practices, audience outreach, editorial policies, and ownership.
* Member organizations thrive on collaboration and member input; participants commit to "playing well with others."
* Send delegations of senior staff to at least one Consortium meeting per year.
* Invest resources and staff time in the development of The Media Consortium and TMC-sponsored activities so that we can create strong, collaborative relationships among independent media organizations.
* Potential members must be able to participate in 50% of TMC projects as their organization currently stands, including:
	+ Have staff bandwidth to mentor and support interns
	+ Have content that can work in the MediaWires Project
	+ Have vision/infrastructure to support participation in II Labs
	+ Be able and willing to attend TMC meetings or participate in TMC governing committees.

**Other qualifying criteria include** an organization’s capacity to:

* Bring significant audience size and reach to the Consortium’s projects
* Support and disseminate strong, independent journalism.
* Help build the national presence and influence of independent, progressive media. This assistance could include regional or local media organizations that help achieve national impact, as well as organizations that serve a national audience.
* Reach important audiences and communities not represented in the Consortium’s current membership, including people of color, geographic locations, youth and more.

*An organization does not need to meet all of these criteria, but it must meet at least one to be considered for membership.* Members are eligible to vote and participate in TMC-facilitated meetings, communications, and projects. They are also encouraged to actively participate in the Media Consortium's governing committees.

Associate Members

Organizations eligible for Associate Membership include aggregators, bloggers, organizations with small staff, local media outlets, and media-focused technologists. In general, these organizations will be at a stage that they do not currently fit within the full membership criteria or cannot fully participate in TMC projects. This is an ideal membership level for organizations that are have been in operation for less than 3 years.

Associate members of The Media Consortium must adhere to the following criteria:

* Have a history of collaboration with other media organizations, or at least the capacity to do so.
* Member organizations promote social, racial, and economic justice; they commit to pursing these values as they apply to hiring practices, audience outreach, editorial policies, and ownership.
* Member organizations thrive on collaboration and member input; participants commit to "playing well with others."
* Send delegations of senior staff to at least one Consortium meeting per year.

Associate members attend annual meetings, participate in the TMC listserv, and can take part in content collaborations. Associates must apply to participate in TMC projects that require additional staff and financial investments, such as the Incubation and Innovation Labs.

In order to scale up to full membership, Associate Members must demonstrate organizational capacity to collaborate, have an institutional history of more than 3 years, be producing original content, and have the financial and staff capacity to participate in top-tier consortium projects. The membership committee must also approve any move to full membership in the Consortium.

**What are Membership Dues?**

Membership dues are progressive (0f course) based on annual budget and staff. Questions about membership dues may be directed to the E.D., but they will be addressed confidentially by the Membership Committee. Membership dues go towards covering the annual conference and the executive director’s salary.