

### **Membership Screening Questionnaire**

The Media Consortium is a network of the country's leading, progressive, independent media outlets. Our mission is to amplify independent media's voice, increase our collective clout, leverage our current audience and reach new ones. We believe it is possible and necessary to seize the current moment and change the debate in this country. We will accomplish this mission by fulfilling our 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

Our members take part in all levels of decision-making for a variety of collaborative projects. **This questionnaire will help us better understand your organization and why you want to join The Media Consortium.** In order to be considered for membership or associate membership, all interested parties must respond to the attached questionnaire, agree to our core values and commitments (separate doc), and meet the qualifications outlined below. We are committed to recruiting organizations that bring diversity of audience and platform (radio, print, video, multimedia content) to our membership body.

Any information gathered during this process is for private consideration by the Media Consortium's membership committee and will not be released without the permission of the organization applying for membership.

### **Media Consortium membership can take the following forms:**

#### **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 pursuing 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 MC-facilitated meetings, communications, and projects. They are also encouraged to actively participate in the Media Consortium's governing committees.

**Cost:** Participating members pay annual dues according to a sliding scale. Dues are based on an organization's annual budget.

### 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 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 pursuing 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, are part of the MediaWires project and can take part in content collaborations. Associates are not eligible to participate in TMC projects that require additional staff and financial investments, such as the Incubation and Innovation Labs or the Independent Media Internship program. Associates are also not eligible to be a part of TMC governance committees, but as their organization grows, they can scale up into full membership.

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.

**Cost:** \$150/year for organizations w/2 or more staff, \$75/year for single-person enterprises.

**Please return this questionnaire to Erin Polgreen at [erin@themediaconsortium.com](mailto:erin@themediaconsortium.com).**

1. Tell us about your organization's mission and vision.
  - 1. Truthdig ([www.truthdig.com](http://www.truthdig.com)) was founded to be a model for Internet journalism that would utilize the enormous potential of this new media platform to fill the void left by the collapse of traditional journalism.**
2. Why do you want to join The Media Consortium?
  - 1. We've been a member in the past and would like to renew.**
3. How do you see your organization as a fit for The Media Consortium? Would you like to be an associate or full member?
  - 1. We'd like to be a full member.**
4. How would you describe your primary audience in terms of size, diversity/demographics, lifestyle and geography?
  - 1. Truthdig reaches an audience of more than 9 million unique users annually, who are highly informed, well read, and often seek multiple points of view. This national audience is centered in the key urban areas of New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, Portland, Washington D.C., Minneapolis, Houston, and Denver. The majority identify themselves as liberal/progressive, politically active, environmentally conscious.**
5. What is your operating budget?

**1. Under \$500,000 annually**

6. How many staff do you have?

**1. 10–15**

7. What are your primary platforms? (e.g., print, radio, online, video, tv, books, social networks, etc.)

**1. Online, Radio**

8. How do you reach your audience? Please list subscriptions, online presence, listservs, or any other platforms (e.g., YouTube, MySpace, FaceBook) that your organization uses to engage your audience.

**1. [www.truthdig.com](http://www.truthdig.com); weekly newsletters; RSS feeds; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Truthdig Radio**

9. What infrastructure is your organization looking to build? (e.g., advertising, web strategies, technological innovations, editorial planning, etc.)

**1. All of the above**

10. Does your organization have any areas of expertise that could be helpful to The Media Consortium and its members?

**1. Our effort over the last five years has been widely recognized by winning numerous prestigious awards, including three Webbys for Best Political Blog in the world and top national and local honors from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Los Angeles Press Club. We are glad to share what we know while at the same time learning from our colleagues.**

11. How does your organization fit into the progressive media network? (e.g., media producer, distributor, monitor, reform/justice, etc.)

**1. We are a progressive media site.**

12. Is your senior management willing and able to contribute to Consortium discussions, meetings, and projects?

**1. Yes.**

13. Who will be the primary MC contacts for your organization? (We recommend one editorial contact and one business contact.) These representatives will be expected to attend MC meetings, convey pertinent information regarding our projects to your staff, and ensure that your organization is involved in MC-related projects and conversations. If these contacts are unable to participate, who will serve this role in their place?

**1. Zuade Kaufman, Publisher**

**1. Alternate: Lucy Berbeo, Assistant Publisher**

**2. Peter Scheer, Managing Editor**