



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (“RFP”)  
Research and Development: Civic Content and Engagement Initiative**

**RESPONSE DEADLINE: Friday, July 12, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. ET**

**I. PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Public media has always played an important role in our democracy through content that educates, informs, and inspires. As part of public media’s participation leading up to America’s 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2026, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (“CPB”) **seeks to engage a public media station (“Lead Station”) to research and develop and execute a civic content and engagement initiative (“Initiative”)**. This initiative will amplify stories of individual Americans from all walks of life who are contributing to their communities and acting on their “civic spark” – the defining moment or experience that made them realize they could make a difference through volunteering, community engagement, or public service.

Through the editorial guidance of a Lead Station, this initiative will provide local public media stations across television and radio licensees the multimedia tools and resources needed to create and distribute short-form, digital-first content that captures these stories and reach new audiences. Public television and radio stations across the country are already serving diverse communities, working in partnership with parents, teachers, veterans and military families, faith-based organizations, non-profits, and local business leaders to focus on addressing polarization, challenges, and opportunities within their communities. Building on local stations’ trusted reputation and by featuring community members serving America today – each in different, creative, locally important, and personally fulfilling ways – this initiative will inspire younger generations to continue the work required to help our democratic republic thrive.

CPB is a founding partner of More Perfect, a bipartisan initiative to engage institutions and Americans in renewing American democracy, and a partner of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission (“America250”), a nonpartisan commission to commemorate America’s 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In alignment with the goals of these national partnerships, this two-year initiative represents a commitment by CPB in FY 2025-2026 to highlight public media’s role in advancing civic learning and civil discourse.

This initiative is expected to unfold over two phases: an initial research and development phase, followed by a second phase comprising of a larger cohort of public radio and television stations that will produce and distribute short-form multimedia content to their local communities. Phase I is expected to begin no later than September 13, 2024, with an initial 8-month term through May 31, 2025 (“Phase I”). It will include:

- researching and developing the Strategic Plan and framework for this Initiative’s lifecycle.
- providing sub-grants to a pilot cohort of public radio and television stations; and
- developing digital-first, station-generated content prototypes that leverage multimedia platforms and expand audience reach.

At the conclusion of Phase I, if the Lead Station successfully fulfills all Phase I requirements, the Lead Station would be expected to serve as the “Executive Producer” in Phase II through 2026.

## II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Each applicant must identify the following within their proposal:

- An External Research Firm (“Evaluation Partner”).
- 4-6 public radio and television stations, diverse in licensee-type to collaborate with the Lead Station in developing station-generated content prototypes, with at least one radio station and one television station.
- 1-3 local, regional, and/or national partners to support and inform the development of the Initiative.

During Phase I, the Lead Station will:

- Collaborate with CPB’s established national partners, such as More Perfect and America 250, local, regional, and other national partners identified by the applicant, and the pilot cohort of a small group of public radio and television stations identified by the applicant, to produce short-form multimedia content that will serve as **Content Prototypes** to seek feedback from a range of stakeholders. These prototypes will inform branding guidelines and content distribution.
- Develop a **Strategic Plan** that reflects the research performed, as defined below, a proposed budget for Phase II, and a content distribution model. The Strategic Plan will include multimedia content distribution Guidelines and Resources to inform a formatted approach in producing and distributing accessible content and building new partnerships on the local, regional, and national scale, including stations diverse in licensee-type. The Lead Station will distribute these guidelines as a resource to participating public radio and television stations in Phase II of this Initiative. At a minimum, the Guidelines should include:
  - Templated Prompt(s) for “civic spark” interviews to promote engaging storytelling across diverse demographics.
  - Participant and Appearance Releases for “civic spark” interviews conducted with community members.
  - Creating “civic spark” content prototypes for short-form content to be distributed on multiple media platforms.
  - Branding and Promotions Guidelines, including a strategic marketing strategy that can be personalized for each station community with local and national branding templates.
  - National partnership opportunities.
  - Best practices for local community engagement.
  - Expectations for local data collection and submission.
  - Audience Demographics of participating stations’ communities.

During Phase I, the Lead Station will also work with the Evaluation Partner identified in their proposal to inform the Initiative and the Lead Station's work. The Evaluation Partner will:

- Conduct an **Environmental Scan** with the goal of understanding how this Initiative fits into the national context of civic engagement-related initiatives external to CPB and public media, and to clarify the differentiating characteristics. While applicants are expected to propose a scan to support the Initiative development needs and fit within the time constraints of Phase I, final parameters may be subject to further refinement following the award of the grant. A summary report from the Environmental Scan will inform strategic planning at the Initiative level and inform guidance for participating stations.
- Participate in the planning process and strategic meetings in Phase I.
- Gather feedback from a range of stakeholders (e.g., in focus groups) on prototype station-generated content (short-form videos) and summarize the feedback.
- Plan an evaluation of the initiative, including developing a **Measurement Framework and Data Collection and Analysis Plan** in collaboration with the Lead Station. This includes identifying success metrics for the project and associated measures that all participating stations will be able to collect; a strategy for locally collecting data in partnership with participating stations; and a plan for aggregating and analyzing the data at the project level to inform future community engagement investments, including Phase II of the Initiative.

If the Evaluation Partner fulfills all requirements of Phase I, it may continue to serve as the Evaluation Partner throughout Phase II as determined by the Lead Station and CPB.

The Lead Station will provide regular updates to CPB and its Board of Directors throughout the project lifecycle regarding research activities. During Phase I, at least **4** in-person or virtual meetings are expected between the Lead Station and the CPB Executive Office and the Office of External Affairs, including one at the start of the project; one in which the Evaluation Partner presents interim findings; one to discuss the content prototyping; and one at the end of the project to present and discuss the overall findings included in the final report.

The Lead Station will be required to deliver a **Final Report** at the conclusion of Phase I. This written report will compile all project requirements into a succinct narrative, including:

1. An **Executive Summary** that provides a detailed report and analysis of the research and work conducted by both the Lead Station and the Evaluation Partner.
2. A packaged collection of the successful **Content Prototypes** and a final written narrative detailing why these prototypes were successful, and with which target audiences and station demographics.
3. A final proposed **Strategic Plan** for Phase II of the Initiative should include guidelines and resources that include a multimedia digital strategy and partnership opportunities, a plan for ongoing engagement with national partners, and the data collection and analysis plan.

The Lead Station will include engaging and detailed charts illustrating the data collected and the results provided by the Evaluation Partner. During the data collection process, CPB may require interim materials, such as graphs, charts, or summaries of the results-to-date for CPB use, including to provide to its Board of Directors or use at industry meetings. The Lead Station will be expected to provide the interim materials upon request.

### III. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must include the following information in the order specified.

1. **Technical Proposal** (Microsoft Word, Adobe PDF or PowerPoint)

Technical proposals must be submitted in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF as a written narrative (10 pages maximum, not including appendices) clearly outlining:

- **Cover Sheet** to include primary contact information:
  - Organization Name
  - Name of Primary Person of Contact and Title
  - Mailing Address
  - Email Address
  - Telephone Number
- **Executive Summary**: a written narrative summarizing the applicant's qualifications and experience in providing editorial oversight as an engaged public media leader. This includes experience in managing a research-intensive project and/or campaign, managing and allocating sub-grants, creating short-form, multimedia content, and building new partnerships. Applicant's summary should identify:
  - **3-5 local, regional and/or national partners** beyond CPB's established national partners, to support and inform the development of the Initiative.
  - **4-6 public radio and television stations**, diverse in licensee-type to collaborate with the Lead Station in developing station-generated content prototypes, with at least one radio station and one television station, to participate in a small pilot cohort.
  - an external **Evaluation Partner** to conduct R&D in collaboration with the applicant. The Evaluation Partner should have relevant expertise and experience in similar projects with a structured team and personnel in place to conduct this work. Please include an overview of the Evaluation Partner's qualifications, including:
    - Proposed approach to the research and collaborative work required.
    - 2-3 examples of successfully completed projects with a similar scope within the past five years, along with URLs or PDF copies of related final project reports, if available.
    - Staffing plan, including the number and qualifications of staff assigned to the project, their responsibilities, and number of estimated hours broken down by task. Applicant should attach a biography and relevant professional backgrounds for each assigned staff member on the Evaluation Partner's team.

- Applicant's Executive Summary should also include:
  - 2-3 examples of similar projects the applicant has completed in the past 10 years, along with URLs or PDF copies of related final project reports.
  - Outline of past, current, or planned station content or civic engagement activities related to America's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, if applicable.
  - A cover letter from the General Manager or President and CEO of the station detailing their interest in leading this work.
- **Project Narrative:** a detailed description of the applicant's proposed approach to managing the Initiative described, including the applicant's approach to ensuring project deliverables are completed within the expected timeline with a clear understanding of challenges that may need to be addressed during this initial research and development ("R&D") phase.
- **Project Personnel Overview:** detailed outline of the Applicant's personnel structure, including number and qualifications of personnel assigned to the project, their responsibilities, and number of estimated hours broken down by task. Content and editorial personnel, project management leads, and legal expertise are required. Applicant should attach a biography and relevant professional backgrounds for each assigned staff member.

## 2. Cost Proposal

Cost proposals should be provided to CPB in Microsoft Excel format and must include the following:

- A detailed line-item Budget with Budget Narrative. Budget categories may include:
  - Lead Station's Personnel Rates, including staffing descriptions (pay and time allocations)
  - Evaluation Partner's Personnel Rates, including staffing descriptions (pay and time allocations)
  - Estimated number of hours assigned per staff per task.
  - Estimated Travel Costs, including destination, number of days, transportation, lodgings, etc.
  - Supplies
  - Cost of any additional subcontractors, including consultants and partner stipends.
- Estimated travel and out-of-pocket expenses to attend at least 4 meetings (in person). Please note that only travel expenses that comply with CPB's published guidelines are subject to reimbursement. **(See Exhibit A)**

#### IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria and associated weights:

Criteria	Weight
<p><b>Project Personnel and Station Capacity</b></p> <p>Demonstrated capacity to serve as the Lead Station in Phase I and become “Executive Producer” for Phase II of this Initiative, including the legal and content and editorial personnel required.</p> <p>This information will be gathered from the Executive Summary and Project Personnel Overview provided.</p>	45%
<p><b>Qualifications and Experience</b></p> <p>Demonstrated experience and qualifications in providing editorial oversight to become “Executive Producer” for subsequent phases of this Initiative as outlined in the Executive Summary.</p>	20%
<p><b>Project Narrative</b></p> <p>A thorough project management approach to implement the Initiative within the expected timeline with a clear understanding of challenges that may arise during the process and how to address them.</p>	15%
<p><b>Cost and reasonableness</b> of the proposed budget.</p>	20%

#### V. TIMELINE

Below is the anticipated timeline and due dates for the project.

Activity	Date
Request For Proposal (RFP) Posted	Monday, May 20, 2024
Request Access to CPB’s Grants Management System (GMS)	May 20 – July 1, 2024
Deadline to Submit Questions	Monday, July 1, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. ET
Responses to Questions Posted	Wednesday, July 3, 2024
Proposal Submissions Due	Friday, July 12, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. ET
Proposal Selection	Friday, August 16
Anticipated Contract Execution	Friday, September 13
Submit Final Report to CPB	May 2025

## VI. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants must submit separate technical and cost proposals through CPB’s electronic grants management system (“GMS”).

To gain access to GMS, please send an email request to **Camille Morgan**, director of External Affairs and Engagement ([cmorgan@cpb.org](mailto:cmorgan@cpb.org)) no later than Monday, July 1, 2024. Include “GMS Access Request: RFP for Civic Content and Engagement Initiative” in the subject line. In your request, please provide your name, title, phone number, organization name, address, and organization web address. CPB will provide access to eligible applicants within two business days. Please note that even if your organization has an existing account with CPB’s electronic GMS, you must still contact Camille Morgan to request access to this specific RFP.

Technical proposals must be in PDF format. Cost proposals must be in Excel format. Each uploaded file must be less than 10Mb in size and file names may not contain any of the following special characters: ~ “ # % & \* : < > ? / \ { } |.

Any questions concerning this RFP must be submitted in writing to Camille Morgan by Monday, July 1, 2024. The questions and CPB’s responses will be posted on CPB’s website ([www.cpb.org](http://www.cpb.org)), without attribution on Wednesday, July 3, 2024.

CPB may request applicants with the top scores to meet with CPB senior management via video conferencing. If so, CPB will notify the selected applicants of the time and date.

Proposals must be submitted through GMS no later than Friday, July 11, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. ET. CPB will not consider applications submitted after this time.

## VII. CPB TERMS

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP shall be valid for at least 90 days following the closing date.

CPB is not responsible for loss or damage to materials submitted with or in support of this RFP. Upon submission, said information shall become CPB’s property (exclusive of any intellectual property rights contained and identified in such submission), and CPB is not required to return the same. CPB is not responsible for any violation of copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret, or other rights that may result from disclosure made in response to this RFP. Additional terms follow.

1. **Solicitation.** Solicitation by CPB of proposals does not constitute an agreement by CPB to extend funding to any party for the project under consideration. CPB may, in its sole discretion, elect not to pursue this project.
2. **Multiple Applications.** Neither multiple nor alternate applications will be accepted.
3. **Confidential Information.** The applicant should clearly identify any portion of its proposal that it considers confidential, proprietary commercial information, or a trade secret.
4. **Subcontractors.** The selected Applicant shall be responsible for all services required by this RFP. Applicant must identify all subcontractors and advisors and include a complete description of their roles in its proposal.

5. **Exceptions.** If Applicant is selected for funding, it is deemed to have accepted the terms in this RFP. Any exceptions to these terms must be clearly identified in its proposal. CPB, at its sole discretion, may reject proposals that include exceptions.
6. **CPB Information.** If CPB shares any materials, data, information, or analyses (collectively, “Information”) with Applicant, Applicant shall be deemed to agree to protect, preserve and maintain all such Information on a strictly confidential basis, and to promptly return to CPB, upon its request, all tangible copies of such Information provided to Applicant.
7. **Proposals.** By submitting a proposal, Applicant grants to CPB the right to duplicate, use, disclose, and distribute all of the materials submitted for purposes of evaluation, review, and research. In addition, Applicant guarantees that it has full and complete rights to all information and materials included in its proposal. Applicant also guarantees that all such materials are not defamatory and do not infringe upon or violate the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party.
8. **Costs.** CPB will not be responsible for the costs of preparing and submitting proposals or any other activities related to this solicitation.

## **IX. CONDITIONS OF AGREEMENT**

If a proposal is selected for funding, the successful Applicant will be required to sign a binding agreement (Agreement). Until both parties have signed the Agreement, there shall be no express or implied commitment by CPB to compensate Applicant for any work performed. Any work commenced before then shall be at Applicant’s own risk and expense.

The applicant must guarantee that, among other things, any work it undertakes is not defamatory and will not violate or infringe upon the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party. Applicant must also agree to indemnify CPB against any loss resulting from breach of any of the representations and warranties in the Agreement.

The Agreement will contain additional requirements, including but not limited to the following:

1. **Applicant’s Financial Position.** Applicant must demonstrate that it has adequate financial support to complete the work and to deliver reports and intellectual property set forth in the Agreement.
2. **Record Keeping.** Except for the work that Applicant completes pursuant to a fixed price fee structure, Applicant must maintain documentation that evidences the actual costs of the project (including timesheets or other relatively contemporaneous record-keeping documents) and demonstrates that all costs were reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the requirements and objectives of the work undertaken.

Applicant must maintain, for three years following the termination or expiration of the Agreement, all records related to the project, which shall be accessible to CPB and to the U.S. Comptroller General or other representatives for examination and audit purposes. Applicant must also ensure that any subcontractors, consultants, or other parties engaged under the Agreement shall also maintain such records for the same period and under the same terms.



3. **U.S. Comptroller Audits.** Applicant must provide CPB with a copy of any U.S. Comptroller General audit report issued in connection with the project.
4. **Equal Employment Laws.** Applicant must comply with all applicable equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies.
5. **Governing Law.** The Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia without regard to its conflict of law provisions.
6. **Restrictions.** Applicant is strictly prohibited from using any funds provided by CPB:
  - a. for any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the United States Congress or any state legislature; or
  - b. to conduct any reception or provide any other entertainment for any officer or employee of the federal government or any state or local government.
7. **CPB's Appropriation.** CPB's primary source of funding is appropriations made by the U.S. Congress. Therefore, if CPB's appropriation is reduced and that reduction materially affects CPB's ability to meet its obligations under the Agreement, then CPB and Applicant, at CPB's discretion, may agree to enter good faith negotiations to modify the Agreement.
8. **Research and Materials.** All research and materials created, developed, compiled, or produced pursuant to or as a result of this project (including but not limited to all reports) will be considered ordered and commissioned by CPB as works made for hire under the copyright laws, and made in the course of services rendered. If, for any reason, the proposed research and materials to be provided are not considered works made for hire under the copyright laws, then Applicant will be required to assign all right, title and interest in and to such research and materials to CPB. Applicant further agrees that neither it, nor any of its subcontractors, will have any copyrights or other intellectual property rights whatsoever in any research and/or materials created, developed, compiled, or produced by them or by any subcontractor, or by any third party participating in the preparation of research or materials for this project.
9. **Indemnification.** Applicant will be required to indemnify and hold CPB harmless from and against all claims, damages, liabilities, costs, and expenses (including legal fees) arising out of or related to (a) any alleged or actual breach of any representation or warranty in the Agreement; (ii) any other default by Applicant of any term or provision of the Agreement; and (iii) Applicant's performance under the project.

**Exhibit A**  
**Travel Expense Guidelines**

Travel Expenses must be itemized on CPB's Non-Employee Expense Form. All expenses worth \$25.00 or higher must be supported by original receipts. Expenses requiring CPB approval must evidence such approval. Reimbursement of travel expenses is subject to the following limitations:

- A. Transportation:** Only coach or economy class airfare, rail fare or bus fare will be reimbursed towards travel expenses. If authorized, private automobile use will be reimbursed at the prevailing IRS rate, but not in excess of the lowest available airfare. Taxicab (and rideshare) fare will be reimbursed to the extent reasonable and necessary. Rental car expenses will be reimbursed only when the daily taxi (or rideshare) fare would exceed the per-day car rental rate, or when no other convenient and less expensive form of ground transportation is available. Travelers may rent intermediate-size vehicles.
  
- B. Lodging:** CPB will only reimburse for reasonable, standard rate, single room accommodations and appropriate incidental charges (i.e., tax) on days that the individual is either actively traveling and/or performing work for CPB while in travel status. Incidental expenses incurred for comfort, grooming or personal enjoyment, such as airline and room movies, haircuts, shaving equipment, shoeshines, etc., are not eligible for reimbursement.
  
- C. Meals:** CPB will reimburse for meals up to a total of \$75.00 per day for domestic travel, on days that the individual is either actively traveling and/or performing work for CPB while in travel status, provided that meals are not otherwise furnished or included in connection with an activity.