



# Support for Participation in TV Multi-Station Master Controls GRANT GUIDELINES

This program will assist eligible public TV stations with grants to pay for equipment or fees that are required to participate in existing multi-station master control projects.

## BACKGROUND

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The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (“CPB”) has made a concerted effort to encourage local public stations to allocate fewer of their resources toward duplicative infrastructure and operations and more toward the provision of locally-relevant content and services. As evidenced by cost benefit analyses conducted by multi-station master control projects funded by CPB<sup>1</sup>, for many public television stations, participation in multi-station master control projects can offer one of the most straightforward ways to improve operational efficiency, develop economies of scale and secure long-term sustainability.

A centralized multi-station master control provides playback architecture, content ingest, file storage and 24/7 operator control of local stations’ content streams. Participation in a multi-station master control requires multichannel connectivity via point-to-point fiber or some other appropriate bandwidth. While multi-station master control hubs are designed to replace and manage stations’ technical on-air operations, each participating station retains full control of its brand/identity, its program schedule, and its provision of local programming.

An applicant for this grant program will be a single station or licensee. (See ELIGIBILITY below.) A multi-station master control will be an existing centralcast hub that offers station service agreements for outsourced master control services.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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This program will assist public TV stations with grants to pay for equipment or fees that are required to participate in existing multi-station master control projects.

Priority for grant support will be given to stations that are likely to encounter difficulty in securing capital equipment funding (based on market size, type of service, location or other circumstance), with the highest priority among these being rural stations.

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<sup>1</sup> CPB has provided initial support to two multi-station master control projects: Centralcast, LLC operated from WCNY in Syracuse, New York, and Digital Convergence Alliance, centered at WJCT in Florida.

Grant support is available for:

- Last-mile fiber or other connectivity;
- Special automation, storage, remote control or other equipment or needed at either the station or the centralcast facility;
- One-time entry or operational fees for joining the multi-station master control. Such fees must effectively reduce or eliminate the grantee station's master control equipment "refresh and replace" costs for several years.

Please also note that priority will be given to grantees that plan to participate in multi-station master control projects that are currently operated by public television stations and organizations.

## ELIGIBILITY

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An applicant must meet CPB's TV Community Service Grant ("CSG") general eligibility criteria, must have been entitled to receive CSG funds for the current CPB fiscal year, and, under the terms of the CSG agreement, must be entitled to expend CSG funds for operations for station(s) for which the grant is being submitted, and must be in good standing, with no outstanding CPB audit or other issues. Stations must be in sound financial health, as evidenced through financial data provided to CPB annually.

An applicant must continue to meet the eligibility criteria outlined above during the course of the application process and throughout the grant period. If at any time during the application process or, if awarded, the grant period the applicant ceases to meet the criteria above, the applicant must immediately notify CPB.

## CPB FUNDING

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CPB will provide grants of up to 50% of total project costs for eligible budget items (outlined above), up to \$50,000. Each application is subject to a business and technical review to determine eligibility of items for funding.

Applications will be accepted until December 31, 2013. However, once CPB has made grants totaling \$1 million, the grant program will be closed.

If an application is selected for grant funding, the project activities (i.e., the transition of operations to a multi-station master control facility) must be completed by June 30, 2014. All grantees will be required to make five-year minimum commitment to the multi-station master control which they are joining.

CPB reserves the right to adjust project dates as needed.

## REQUIRED APPLICATION ELEMENTS

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- A. COVER PAGE** – Include the grant program (“Support for Participation in TV Multi-Station Master Controls”), and applicant information: station call letters and CSG ID, primary contact name, mailing address, e-mail address and phone number.
- B. NEED/OPPORTUNITY STATEMENTS** – Provide a narrative describing:
1. Provide a narrative describing why the station has encountered or expects to encounter a significant level of difficulty in raising funds for capital equipment.
  2. Provide a description of how participation in a multi-station master control will:
    - a. Create efficiencies by lowering costs for operations, equipment refreshment or depreciation (include a cost/benefit analysis if possible);
    - b. Align with the station’s long-term strategic plan;
    - c. Improve the station’s content and service capacity and performance.

*Evaluation Criteria: Compelling case for the project based on station need; strong prospects for increased operational efficiency; and, likelihood of performance improvements. Evidence that station is financially sound, based on CPB’s review of station financial data provided annually.*

- C. PROJECT PLAN** – Provide a narrative and charts or visuals comprising key information regarding how the project will be conducted, including:
1. Process for selecting the multi-station master control provider;
  2. Process for managing the transition to a multi-station master control provider (including roles and responsibilities for specific station and provider personnel);
  3. Project timeline.

*Evaluation Criteria: Evidence of vendor selection process appropriate to station’s needs. Likelihood that the project management process and timeline are feasible and will support grant program and project objectives.*

- D. PROJECT BUDGET** – Provide a line item project budget in Microsoft Excel format (with formulas), along with a budget narrative. The Budget must provide sufficient information to fully convey what equipment and/or professional service is being requested, and that the expense requested is supported by the narrative.

Eligible project expenses may include: content storage, encoding devices, decoding devices, playout servers, remote controls, automation and as well as a one-time connectivity expense and one-time operational fees for participation. Staff, travel and administrative expenses may not be included in the project budget. CPB’s grant calculation will be based only on total eligible project expenses.

*Evaluation Criteria: Project Budget that is clear and comprehensive, aligned with the project's objectives and scope, and, with estimated costs and fees that are reasonable and comparable to projects of similar type and size.*

Note that CPB typically performs an engineering review of the equipment planned and cost estimates prior to awarding any funds, and reserves the right to negotiate with applicants regarding the eligibility of certain pieces of equipment.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMELINES**

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**Applications will be accepted until December 31, 2013; however, once CPB has made grants totaling \$1 million, this grant program will be closed.**

Any questions about program guidelines and grant requirements should be submitted by email. They will be answered by CPB staff members, and shared (without applicant attribution) on CPB's website on the page for this grant program using a Frequently Asked Questions format.

Applications must be submitted electronically in Microsoft Word (narrative) and Excel (budget).

**Submit questions and applications by email to:**

**DIANNE YOO**

**Project Manager, Digital Technology Projects**

[dyoo@cpb.org](mailto:dyoo@cpb.org)

*By submitting an application in response to these guidelines, an Applicant, if selected for award, shall be deemed to have accepted the terms of this grant program. Any exceptions must be clearly identified in the proposal. An application that takes exception to these terms may be rejected.*

*CPB is not responsible for loss or damage to the material submitted. Any submission to CPB shall become the property of CPB (not including any intellectual property rights contained such submission), and CPB is not required to return any submitted materials to any applicant. CPB is not responsible for any violation of copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret, or other rights that may result from disclosure made by response to this grant program. 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 in any manner.*

*By submitting an application, each 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, each applicant guarantees that the applicant has full and complete rights to all of the information and materials included in the application. Each 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. Each applicant also indemnifies and*

*agrees to hold CPB harmless from and against any claims, losses, liabilities and damages (including attorneys fees) resulting from any alleged violation of these provisions.*

## **PREVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDED PROJECTS**

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**If an application is selected for funding, the project must be completed by June 30, 2014.**

**Documentation showing at least a five-year commitment to participation in the selected multi-station master control will be required prior to contract execution.**

Grantees will be required to submit the following materials at the conclusion of their project:

- **Project Narrative** – A narrative of no more than five pages in length describing the steps taken during the project.
- **Financial Report** -- A financial report, showing budgeted and actual expenses in the form of the Line Item Project Budget, along with a narrative explaining line variances that are both greater than ten percent (10%) and more than \$1,000.

## **CONDITIONS OF AGREEMENT**

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If an application to this Program is selected for funding, the selected Applicant will be required to sign a binding agreement. Until both parties have signed an agreement, no express or implied commitment has been made to provide financial support. Applicants are not authorized to commence work until the agreement is fully executed. If Applicants opt to commence work, they do so at their own risk. No oral or written statement other than the signed, written agreement will govern or modify the relationship.

As a condition of agreement, the selected Applicant must guarantee that, among other things, any work they undertake on behalf of CPB is not defamatory and will not violate or infringe upon the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party. The selected Applicant must also agree to indemnify CPB and hold CPB harmless from and against all claims, damages, liabilities, costs and expenses (including legal fees) arising out of or related to (i) any alleged or actual breach of any representation or warranty in the operative agreement, (ii) any other default by the selected Applicant of any term or provision of the operative agreement, or (iii) the selected Applicant's performance of the Program.

Those receiving funds from CPB must be able to comply with a number of requirements that will be included in the operative agreement. These requirements include but are not limited to:

1. A demonstration of adequate financial support to complete the work for which they have been contracted and to deliver reports and/or other intellectual property created pursuant to the agreement;

2. Applicants will be required to provide documentation as to actual costs, and provide supporting detail demonstrating that all costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to the requirements and objectives of the work undertaken; and
3. The agreement will be governed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia without regard to its conflict of law provisions.

Other material terms and provisions will be set forth in the documents provided to the Applicant that successfully completes the selection process.

CPB will not be responsible for any costs incurred by an Applicant in preparing and submitting a proposal, or in performing any other activities relative to this solicitation.