



Request for Proposals (RFP) Editorial Integrity & Executive Leadership Initiative

FILING DEADLINE: January 16, 2024

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) seeks an entity to design and implement a professional development fellowship initiative for station managers who oversee public media newsrooms (“Initiative”). The Initiative will engage 50 fellows (“Fellows”) in small cohorts, over a timeframe of two years, with a customized curriculum of onsite and virtual training and activities, supported by ongoing mentoring and coaching, to improve the knowledge and expertise of these managers.

Over the past several years, many public media stations have hired new station managers, many of them overseeing newsroom operations. These locally owned and operated newsrooms are a critical source of fact-based information in their communities, helping audiences distinguish fact from fiction, responding to sometimes life-threatening public emergencies, and contextualizing complex issues impacting their lives and communities. Even as public media continues to be a trusted source of information, Americans’ overall trust in media is at a historic low.¹ Meanwhile, the rapid news cycle and increasing pressure to develop more public media presence across more platforms are pushing newsrooms to produce content at unprecedented levels.

At a time when the craft of journalism is under increased scrutiny, it is critical that public media general managers that oversee newsrooms have the support and training they need to uphold public media journalism’s highest editorial standards, including accuracy, fairness, objectivity, balance, and transparency. Station managers impact every part of the newsroom operation – from enforcing editorial firewalls to establishing workplace culture, overseeing budgets to greenlighting innovation, managing crisis response to partnership development. The Initiative will provide training in all these areas and will also create relationships among the Fellows with the objectives of advancing system collaboration and strengthening public media’s local-national journalism service.

The Initiative will provide a customized curriculum that incorporates the distinct needs of each Fellow, which could include station managers who are first-time news managers, experienced journalism leaders who are new to public media station management, and managers leading newsrooms at stations licensed to state governments or universities. The goals (“Goals”) of the Initiative are:

- To build the organizational leadership skills of public media station managers who oversee newsrooms;
- To equip these leaders with the tools they need to enforce clear editorial firewalls and make ethical decisions in high stress, high stakes news situations;

¹ Gallup: [Media Confidence in U.S. Matches 2016 Record Low](#) (19 October 2023).

- To support institutional evolution and accelerate change in public media newsrooms, so that they can better meet the information needs of communities;
- To create mutually supportive cohorts for these station leaders, so that they see themselves as part of a larger public media ecosystem; and,
- To provide ongoing training, coaching, and support.

II. ABOUT CPB

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (“CPB”) is a private, not-for-profit, non-governmental corporation authorized by Congress in 1967 through amendments to the Communications Act of 1934. CPB is exempt from taxes under Section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. CPB promotes non-commercial public telecommunications services (television, radio, online, and digital) for the American people. CPB also provides financial support and a variety of services to more than 1,400 locally owned and operated public television and radio stations nationwide. Such support helps guarantee universal access to public broadcasting’s educational services and programming and ensures that stations can exchange program materials through a national system of interconnection.

CPB supports public media journalism to ensure that the American public has access to high-quality local, regional, and national reporting — the basis of an engaged, civil society. Public media represents a major source of fact-based news, meeting the information needs of communities across the country. CPB funding helps public media provide content that is fair, accurate, balanced, objective, transparent and created in a manner consistent with stations’ and producers’ editorial independence. CPB helps public media producers develop content and engage in practices that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

Through years of strategic investments, CPB has cultivated a network of local and regional public media news organizations that, in partnership with national producers, strengthens public media’s role as a trusted news source. Leveraging public media stations’ local ownership as a foundation for nationwide collaboration, CPB has invested more than \$44 million since 2009 to launch more than 40 local, regional and single-topic collaborations as well as joint regional newsroom operations. These partnerships have connected 150 public media stations in 43 states and the District of Columbia, providing the basis for a vibrant multimedia network of local newsrooms with national reach. CPB is also increasing the ability of local stations to cover state government, distributing \$2.25 million in grants in 2023 that support coverage that is distributed and shared across the state. CPB recognizes the importance of ensuring editorial integrity in public media newsrooms, supporting initiatives including the Editorial Integrity & Leadership Initiative, which trains news directors and editors, as well as the Public Media Journalists Association’s Editor Corps, which provides on-call editorial support to stations, especially those in small markets and rural areas.

For more information, see www.cpb.org.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

Proposals for this RFP should address the following scope of work. CPB will work with the successful Applicant (“Applicant”) to create a final design and implementation plan for the

Initiative.

1. Initiative Design

a. **Training** – Develop a training curriculum (the “Training”) that identifies and addresses the greatest challenges facing public media newsrooms today. The curriculum must address, but should not be limited to, best practices and ethical decision making as it applies to the following topics:

- station mission and editorial policies;
- editorial firewalls and conflicts of interest;
- community partnerships;
- crisis management and communications;
- community and audience literacy;
- resource management and newsroom finances;
- risk tolerance and change management;
- working with boards and license holders;
- media law and labor practices.

The Training curriculum must:

- include a proposed panel of advisors who will inform the program’s design and execution;
- outline how much time will be spent on each topic and which topics will be addressed through virtual meetings and which ones will be discussed in person, depending on public health guidance regarding convenings;
- describe when and for how long Fellows will have access to ongoing mentoring and coaching, during and/or beyond the contract term; and,
- include sample reading or study materials for Fellows.

b. **Coaches and Mentors** – Identify coaches and mentors who will lead and/or participate in the Training and/or will work individually and with small groups of Fellows on an ongoing basis.

c. **Operations of the Program** – Identify the ideal number of cohorts and cohort size to train 50 Fellows during the Initiative, over a 2-year timeline. Identify the location(s) for one (1) in-person training per cohort, if public health guidance permits; the presentation mode for the virtual sessions; and the method of ongoing mentoring and coaching.

d. **Assessment** – Develop a survey (“Survey”), with input from a third-party evaluator, that will be given to each Fellow at the beginning of the Training and again at the end of the Training to determine whether the Fellow has gained editorial leadership expertise and skills. Define specific goals and outcomes for the Training and the Fellows for use in the Survey, to help trainers assess the effectiveness of the Initiative and adjust the curriculum as needed.

2. Fellow Application and Selection Process – Design and develop the application and selection process for the Fellows, including a list of criteria for selection. The selection

process must include CPB, the coaches and/or mentors involved in the Training, and editorial leaders from public media. The target audience for the Fellows are current public media station managers who oversee stations with newsrooms.

3. Evaluation – The Applicant for this RFP will identify an independent third-party evaluator (“Evaluator”) for the Initiative, subject to CPB’s approval. The Evaluator will use qualitative and quantitative measures to assess the Initiative’s success (the “Final Evaluation”).

The Final Evaluation must include, but not be limited to:

- a. Analysis of responses to the Surveys given to the Fellows to assess the quality of the Training.
- b. Interviews with at least 50% of the Fellows to assess the value and relevance of the Initiative in their editorial work, the expertise of the coaches and mentors, and recommendations for improving the Initiative.
- c. Interviews with the coaches and mentors to assess the overall execution of the Initiative and recommendations for improvements.

The Final Evaluation should take 6-8 weeks to conduct, summarizing the results, with any recommendations made in a report to CPB and the selected Applicant. The Evaluator may need to present the findings to CPB, upon request.

IV. PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

The Applicant must provide separate Technical and Cost Proposals to CPB.

1. The Technical Proposal must include:

- a. A statement of the Applicant’s approach describing the proposed actions the Applicant will take to deliver on the Goals of this Initiative, how the Applicant will execute the Scope of Work as well as a timeline for the Scope of Work, and Initiative deliverables.

SAMPLE TIMELINE (For illustrative purposes only)

Months 1-6: Initiative ramp-up; Fellow applications and selection

Months 7-12: Training of cohort; Fellow applications and selection

Months 13-18: Training of cohort; Fellow applications and selection

Months 19-24: Training of cohort; Final Evaluation

2. Qualifications narrative describing the Applicant’s assigned staff’s relevant expertise, experience, and abilities which would enable them to perform and complete the tasks in the Scope of Work. Relevant experience includes, but is not limited to, a track record of working in the media industry and supporting media organizations; diversity, equity, and inclusion coaching expertise; knowledge of public media journalism and newsroom collaborations; and experience fostering journalism collaborations.
3. Not more than three (3) examples of the Applicant’s assigned staff’s experience within the past five years of creating and implementing an editorial leadership program similar to the Initiative. The examples must include a detailed description of the objectives, a detailed description of the outcomes, time requirements, cost, and assigned staff for

each example.

4. Applicant's Cost Proposal must include the following. Please ensure that the Cost Proposal is provided as a separate document as explained in Section VI below.
 - a. A breakdown of the hours and rates for each assigned staff for up to the twenty-four (24) months for the Initiative.
 - b. A breakdown of the hours and rates for the Evaluation.
 - c. The cost of any resources for the Training and ongoing coaching.
 - d. The cost of reasonable travel and accommodation for the Fellows, coaches and mentors for the on-site Training. Each cohort should meet for an in-person gathering if public health guidance permit, and the remaining trainings should be conducted virtually.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA

Responses to this Request for Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria with the associated weight.

1. Quality of the approach (20%).
2. Demonstrated ability of Applicant's assigned staff to perform the tasks described in the Scope of Work (30%), including, but not limited to:
 - a. Editorial leadership development expertise and capacity to execute the Initiative;
 - b. Experience working in the media industry and supporting media organizations;
 - c. Experience in leadership and management training;
 - d. Knowledge of public media journalism and newsroom collaborations.
3. Quality of the work examples (30%).
4. Cost Proposal – the reasonableness of Applicant's cost (20%).

VI. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Applicants must submit technical and cost applications through CPB's electronic grants management system.

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to **Erin Day at eday@cpb.org**. The questions (without attribution) and CPB's responses will be posted on CPB's website. Please include "Editorial Integrity & Executive Leadership Initiative" in the subject line of all emails. **The deadline for submitting questions is Tuesday, November 28, 2023 at 5 p.m. ET.**

CPB will conduct an Applicant webinar ("Webinar") on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 12 p.m. ET to answer questions submitted to CPB. Potential Applicants must register for the Webinar in advance by emailing Ms. Day by Tuesday, November 28, 2023

To gain access to the electronic grants management system, please send an email request to Erin Day at eday@cpb.org no later than Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 5 p.m. ET. CPB will provide access to eligible applicants within two business days. Include "Editorial Integrity & Executive Leadership Initiative" in the subject line. In your request, please provide your name,

title, phone number, organization name, address and organization web site.

Proposals for this RFP are due no later than Tuesday, January 16 at 5 p.m. ET. CPB will not consider proposals submitted after this time.

Technical Proposals may be in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Cost Proposals must be in Excel format.

CPB may request the Applicants with the top scores to meet with senior management at CPB's offices in Washington, D.C. If so, CPB will notify the selected Applicants of the time and date.

TIMETABLE

Below is the anticipated timetable.

ACTIVITY	DATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deadline to submit questions and register for Dec. 5 webinar	November 28, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Webinar• Deadline to request access to CPB's electronic grants management system	December 5, 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposal Submissions Due	January 16, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposal Review and Selection	Jan. 16 - March 30, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contract Drafting and Execution	May 1, 2024

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 in any manner.
2. **Multiple Applications.** Neither multiple nor alternate applications will be accepted.

3. **Confidential Information.** 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.

VIII. 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.

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.

IX. EXPENSE GUIDELINES

Travel expenses incurred by non-CPB staff (including consultants) need to be itemized in the Non-Employee Expense Form. Each expense of \$25.00 or more must be supported by an original receipt. Expenses requiring CPB approval must evidence such approval.

Reimbursement of travel expenses is subject to the following limitations:

1. **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 expense 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.
2. **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, shoe shines, etc., are not eligible for reimbursement.
3. **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.