

**HOW TO MAKE PUBLIC BROADCASTING  
ACCOUNTABLE TO YOUR COMMUNITY**

**A Manual for Activists**

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**CITIZENS FOR INDEPENDENT PUBLIC BROADCASTING**

## CIPB Mission Statement

Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting (CIPB) is a national membership organization dedicated to putting the public back into public broadcasting so that all Americans can join in the debate about our nation's future. At the national level, CIPB is building a coalition to promote an independently funded and publicly accountable Public Broadcasting Trust. At the community level, CIPB supports chapter initiatives to democratize programming on local public broadcasting stations. **This manual will show you how.**

We believe that our democracy requires some space in our vast system of communications that serves people as citizens, not just consumers. This would be space where programs are not driven by selling audiences to advertisers, where controversial issues can be explored without censorship, and minority voices can be heard without concern for ratings.

This was the Carnegie Commission's mandate for U.S. public broadcasting: to serve as an alternative to commercial broadcasting, be "a forum for controversy and debate" and "a voice for groups in the community that may otherwise be unheard" so that we can "see America whole, in all its diversity." The increasing concentration of media into fewer and larger corporate giants makes public broadcasting's unique mission more imperative than ever. Over the years, public broadcasting has made many distinguished contributions to this mission. Unfortunately, political and economic constraints have prevented a good service from fulfilling its great promise.

Public broadcasting in other modern democracies typically enjoys independent and substantially higher sources of revenue. In contrast, U.S. public broadcasting's dependence on government appropriations, corporate underwriting and affluent subscribers brings with it pervasive pressures to restrict grant support and airtime to programs that meet the approval of those who control the purse strings.

Seventy-five percent of public broadcasting's support comes from the public, through taxpayers, individual contributors, tax-exempt public colleges, universities and foundations. However, almost all of that goes for operating expenses. In contrast, corporate money is used to sponsor specific programs, accounting for about 30 percent of the PBS National Program Service (NPS). Worse, PBS underwriting guidelines ban program support from public interest groups and organized labor. Despite conservative claims of "liberal bias," this typically ensures national programming that is either bland or conservative.

Three stations provide more than 60 percent of the PBS national schedule while more than 300 do not contribute anything. While independents account for 20 percent of national programming, most of their productions are channeled through the same three "presenting" stations: Boston (WGBH), New York (WNET) and Washington (WETA). Even if they are accomplished filmmakers, PBS officials generally do not consider public interest advocates to be respectable journalists worthy of support.

As a consequence, U.S. public television stations typically feature nightly and weekly programs about Wall Street and business news, but no regularly scheduled programs that examine the economy from the perspective of workers, consumers or environmentalists. NPR and PBS news programs duplicate the same reliance on establishment voices as commercial network news. Very few stations produce public affairs programs for their local community.

Even the non-commercial nature of the service is under assault. There are more co-production deals with commercial partners looking for lucrative back-ends. There are e-commerce services and partnerships with retail outlets. In 1995, former PBS Program Director Kathy Quattrone complained, “Many program decisions are being based not on the program value they bring but what kind of a deal it can bring.”

Five-second underwriting acknowledgements have expanded into 30-second commercials, including enticements on children’s programs for junk food and theme parks. Former PBS Director Bruce Christensen has warned that, unless the funding problems can be solved, public broadcasting “will become a commercial medium in the next century.”

Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting has developed a proposal to create a Public Broadcasting Trust (PBT) that is independently funded and publicly accountable (see Page 26 for details). Such a trust would generate \$1 billion a year to underwrite innovative, noncommercial programming for both national and local audiences.

The PBT would take public broadcasting off the federal dole, remove corporate underwriting and free the service to pursue its mission with editorial integrity. CIPB’s proposal also calls for new measures to protect stations from undue pressure by state and local politicians to ban or edit programs and to ensure that local boards are truly diverse, have a clear sense of mission and recruit and reward station managers for measurable public service.

Who would pay for it? Strange, but true, despite billions in profits, commercial broadcasters pay no fee for their use of the public’s airwaves. It is the only public resource (e.g. oil drilling, cattle grazing, etc.) for which no fee is paid. A small tax on spectrum use, spectrum transfers and/or broadcast advertising would provide all that is needed for the PBT. In 1998, a national poll found that four out of five Americans favor such a proposal.

## **ACTIVISMWORKS**

To put the public interest back into public broadcasting will require citizen activism at the local as well as national levels. Fortunately the historical record is clear: activism works. In past years commercial television has been a battleground between network executives and various constituencies over programming. Groups representing racial and ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, women, conservative Christians, anti-violence advocates,

family planning advocates and others have brought pressure to bear on the commercial networks and their affiliates.

Such groups have used a diversity of tactics---threats of sponsor boycotts, pressuring network affiliates, national letter-writing campaigns, press conferences and staged events, petitioning Congress, filing suits, FCC complaints, and lobbying the television industry. To be sure, some of these have been censorship campaigns. Even there, however, the target sometimes has been graphic and gratuitous violence or racial and ethnic stereotypes. Other campaigns have promoted more in-depth examination of social issues, like homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia.

These days more than 150 organizations actively lobby television producers with ideas for stories, characters or props designed to communicate their message to TV viewers. Nearly one-fourth of American teens have indicated that they learned about birth control from TV and movies. The 1988 “designated driver” campaign was the brainchild of a Harvard professor and was inserted into the story lines of 160 prime-time shows. Surveys indicate that, only one year later, two-thirds of U.S. adults got the message and more than half of adults under 30 had served as a designated driver.

In 1999, a large coalition of minority civil rights groups organized to protest the lack of ethnic diversity on the networks’ fall prime-time lineup. Of the 26 new comedies and dramas premiering in fall 1999, not one featured a minority in a leading role. The NAACP, National Latino Media Council and Asian American groups launched a fall “brownout” of ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox and met with network executives.

The networks were seized with a sudden urgency to add minority characters. Eight popular series added African-American, Latino or Asian characters. CBS announced a new series about several generations of a Mexican-American family in New York. ABC ordered the development of a one-hour series based on an African-American detective. Eventually there emerged a fully developed plan for hiring more minorities at all levels of the broadcasting industry.

Citizen action set limits on President Nixon’s assault on public television. The proposed cancellation of *Washington Week in Review* provoked 15,000 complaints, which resulted in the reinstatement of the program. When funds were cut for *Tony Brown’s Journal*, 100 African-American viewers picketed outside a CPB board meeting and funding was restored.

Over 1977-78, The National Task Force for Public Broadcasting, led by DeeDee Halleck and Larry Hall, crafted legislation that opened up community advisory boards, increased opportunities for minorities and women, provided more support for independent producers, and increased access to PBS’ satellite system for national distribution.

In 1987, members of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers presented testimony to Congress that independent producers faced an increasingly “closed system” in gaining access to PBS. At the same time, more stations were broadcasting commercial network reruns like *Lassie*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, and *Star Trek*. In response, Congress directed the CPB to establish the Independent Television Service (ITVS). Funded by a

“set aside” from CPB, ITVS was charged with increasing access for independent producers to the public broadcasting system and promoting greater PBS program “innovation and diversity.”

By 1997, the ITVS subsidy had grown to \$7.6 million and the organization had funded more than 200 projects. Despite occasional showings of ITVS productions, however, Director Jim Yee conceded, “The PBS schedule has not really changed in the last several years. There is very little room for original programming.” Still hopeful, Yee says it took only about 200 hard working people and good timing to get Congress to create ITVS. While it will take a more sustained effort to make it work, we are starting with a legislative mandate and Congressional appropriation thanks to activism in the past.

My book, *Air Wars: The Fight to Reclaim Public Broadcasting* (Beacon Press, 2000), describes the work of public broadcasting activists in Chicago, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Jacksonville and other cities. Their efforts included press conferences and media events, letter writing campaigns, station meetings, demonstrations, and even a boycott. The latter involved setting up an escrow account to which people were invited to pledge or contribute instead of to the station. The moneys (in the tens of thousands) collected were used to underwrite continued opposition and as leverage in station negotiations.

These various actions resulted in reserved educational channels being saved from sale, members being appointed or elected to stations’ boards of directors and/or community advisory boards, members getting space for views in the station magazine, public interest series like *Rights and Wrongs* and *We Do the Work* being added to regular schedules, local broadcast of award-winning documentaries rejected by the PBS National Program Service, and other accomplishments.

The system is responsive to rational appeal and, if that fails, to political pressure. If pressure only comes from corporate and reactionary political forces an already compromised system will continue to decline. The place to start is in our own communities, with our own public broadcasting stations, pledged to serve us and supported by our taxes and contributions. By rallying those who should care, those who have the most to gain, we can make a difference.

## **HOW THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE WORKS**

The first thing to understand is that the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR) are not broadcasting networks, but membership organizations. It is precisely the decentralized nature of these services that provides the opportunities for local groups to impact programming on their community stations.

The **Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)** acts as the fiscal agent for public radio and TV. CPB makes budget submissions directly to Congress and receives such funds as appropriated. The CPB budget for fiscal 2000 is roughly \$300 million. This supports about 350 TV and 700 radio stations. CPB, in turn, provides funds to the **Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)**, **National Public Radio (NPR)** and **Public Radio International (PRI)** for production and operating expenses. PBS controls the scheduling,

promotion and transmission of programs to member stations. In parallel fashion, NPR is a program service for CPB-subsidized public radio stations.

Nearly three-fourths of CPB funds are passed through to individual member stations in the form of Community Service Grants. The stations use these grants partly to pay dues for the PBS National Program Service (NPS). Every year, PBS makes about 2,500 to 3,000 hours of programming available to member stations via satellite. However, membership terms vary significantly. In fact, stations are free to subscribe to as little as ten percent of the National Program Service and still use the PBS name and logo.

To enhance funding and promotion, PBS encourages member stations to adhere to a common national schedule. However, such common carriage program requests are not to exceed 350 hours a year (roughly seven hours a week) and “normally” not more than two hours per night. That means that even full subscription member stations only transmit a fraction of all National Program Service offerings.

All program decisions are made by the local Program Director in consultation with the Station Manager. In fact, one-third of the average station’s schedule consists of outside acquisitions purchased with its CPB Community Service Grant.

The same is true of CPB supported radio stations. Only about half of them carry the signature NPR programs, *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*. Beyond that, even those stations vary significantly in terms of programming, some featuring classical music, others jazz and still others public affairs. In short, what you get on PBS or NPR in your town is nowhere near all there is to get. This gives local citizens excellent opportunities to broaden their community stations’ program schedules.

### ***What you can do to improve local programming***

First, citizens are free to propose the production of a local program, either as a regular series or occasional special. If your station already produces a local news or public affairs program, then it simply is a question of negotiating the choice of topic(s) and/or guest(s) for future programs. In fact, the local series producer should appreciate your help in suggesting new topics and guest experts.

If there is no convenient slot, new local program(s) can be designed to supplement a nationally distributed program, bringing the general discussion down to the situation at home. For example, PBS documentaries on school choice, drug abuse prevention, neighborhood conflict resolution, domestic violence, wages and other workplace issues, hate crimes, or whatever can be supplemented by a local discussion of the problem(s) in your community.

A half-hour studio discussion can be produced for as little as \$4,000-6,000. Since national PBS underwriting guidelines do not apply to local stations, you are free to raise money from any source: local foundations, philanthropists, churches, unions, public interest groups or even large numbers of small donors. Finally, the station itself might be able to come up with money, in-kind contributions or a more efficient strategy for producing the show.

For example, in 1994, I proposed a program on domestic violence to my local public TV station, based on the 1993 Academy Award winning short documentary, *Defending Our Lives*. I arranged with the producer to lease the film for broadcast at a discounted rate. The Station Manager made it a two-hour special edition of a normally one hour weekly issue-oriented talk show. I helped with the guest list and proposed that the station's pledge lines be used for both call-ins and for shelter referrals. The ten lines received 100 phone calls in just one hour.

It is even simpler still to influence the acquisition of programs. Fully one-third of the average station's programming schedule consists of non-PBS acquisitions. Stations use their community service grants and other funds to purchase these programs from up to 300 or so syndicators. The American Programming Service and the Central Educational Service are major acquisition services that assist stations in buying products from distributors.

*The PBS National Program Service does not offer The McLaughlin Group*, but it is carried by as many as 300 PBS member stations. Does your station carry a progressive version of *The McLaughlin Group*? Does it carry *Wall Street Week*, but not *Livelihood*? As a resident, taxpayer and maybe even subscriber you have a right to ask for programs that are alternative to the right wing shock jocks, cable TV scream shows, and beltway punditocracy.

Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting's web site ([www.cipbonline.org](http://www.cipbonline.org)) will support local chapters by acting as a clearinghouse for resources and strategies, local chapter actions and accomplishments, and award-winning program series and films that are suitable for broadcast on your station. Our recommended films are annotated and organized by subject. Also available is contact information and fees for holders of broadcast and video rental rights.

## **STARTING A CIPB LOCAL CHAPTER**

For the first meeting of your proposed local CIPB chapter, invite only friends and people politically close to you. Prepare for the call with some research-based talking points that state your concern succinctly. A basic appeal of our campaign is that it opposes censorship and promotes active citizenship through more and better public affairs programming. It always helps to inform people that local stations do not carry even all that is available through PBS or NPR and, moreover, have budgets for independently produced alternative shows to supplement the national schedule. If people respond positively, give them permission to invite others in their network to your meeting.

Start the meeting with introductions to each other, giving name and organizational affiliation. Go over the agenda to see if there are any changes or additions, and then set a reasonable time limit for the meeting to end (90 minutes to 2 hours) and stick to it. If people have a personal experience or strong point of view regarding public broadcasting, this would be a good time to state it briefly.

When you have developed consensus that there is a problem and some energy for doing something about it, you can move on to discussing the benefits of forming a local CIPB

chapter. You might want to share CIPB brochures and watch and discuss the CIPB video, *Put the Public Back Into Public Broadcasting: If We Don't Do It, Who Will?* You should end the meeting by picking a convenient time and place and listing people you think might be interested in joining you for the first general meeting.

### *Building a coalition*

CIPB supports chapters composed of unrelated individuals, group representatives or members of an existing organization (e.g. a union local, public interest group or church committee). We recommend the benefits of coalition building. As compared to a single-issue group, the coalition's obvious advantages are more leaders, a broader membership base and more resources for the campaign.

A coalition also provides a more compelling public interest argument. For example, it is much harder for the media to explain away discrimination against many groups than against one. Finally, because of its size and diversity, a coalition is more newsworthy to the media than just one group.

There are potential disadvantages of a coalition as well. If groups vary greatly in size and resources, you must devise a decision making process that respects constraints on the larger, more conservative organizations while still being democratic. For example, Pittsburgh's Alliance for Progressive Action gives each of its 50 member-groups one vote, but requires 75 percent approval for an action. Coalitions must be willing and able to make many compromises, especially regarding tactics.

A CIPB coalition is easier than most to maintain for several reasons. First, the primary objective is to increase public broadcasting coverage of public interest issues and perspectives. This enhances civic debate and citizen engagement generally, a positive benefit for all public interest groups. Second, an ongoing programming relationship with the local station will provide opportunities for each group's issues to be addressed over time. Third, the CIPB program of action, for the most part, requires conventional tactics and modest resources. Fourth, even fundraising events planned to benefit the CIPB coalition provide opportunities for participating groups to promote their own work to others through announcements, literature tables and the like.

In building your coalition, it is best to focus on choosing representatives that have worked together before and/or know and trust each other. You do not need a core of more than 10-20 people to launch a successful chapter. Through outreach events and general recruitment, you can build a paper membership of 100-300 people who will respond to specific requests (e.g. donate money, attend events, write letters, etc.). In response to an important issue, this membership can expand into the thousands, as was the case with the Save Pittsburgh Public Television campaign to block the transfer of WQED's second public television license to an ultraconservative religious ministry.

The CIPB national office can be another source of recruits. We are developing partnerships with national public interest, labor, religious and educational organizations. Through them we recruit interested members who are willing to participate in chapter building. Our Outreach Coordinator uses sophisticated software to identify all persons in

your community who have expressed such an interest. Check with us if you are looking for people to join you in this effort.

### *First general meeting*

In anticipation of the general meeting, you might contact your local (public TV and/or radio) station and get a list of its bylaws, Board of Directors and Community Advisory Board, and schedule of upcoming board and committee meetings. Look at the names and affiliations of the board of directors and community advisory board. Is there anyone you know who might advise you on how to approach the station? You might pass the lists around at the meeting for others to identify contacts. Some discussion of how to use these resources discretely would be in order.

Are there public interest, labor, or progressive church groups represented on these boards? If not, this lack of diversity might partially explain the lack of diversity in programming. This also can be an issue for your coalition. Advice from station management on how to nominate representatives from your coalition to the station's Board of Directors and/or Community Advisory Board can be another item on the meeting's agenda.

For the first general meeting, select a location that is well known and conveniently located. It can be a church, school, union hall, even a large private home. It is better to select a room that is a bit too small than one that is much too large. Arrive at least a half-hour in advance to set up. Try to have a beverage and some sort of snack available. Make sure someone takes notes to be reviewed at the next meeting as well as sent to all those who expressed interest but couldn't attend.

Be certain to begin meetings with mutual introductions. Always pass around an attendance list to gather or confirm the name and contact information for everyone who attends. You also may want to institute a buddy system in which veterans are required to have contact with the new person before the next meeting. At such time, he or she can check on their understanding of how things went and invite them back.

A good way to begin the formal meeting would be to show the CIPB video. After, pass out the brochure and walk people through it a section at a time, including CIPB's goal to improve local and national public broadcasting service, long-term through a Public Broadcasting Trust and short-term through local chapter actions. At appropriate intervals, ask if there are any questions or comments. Once the overall plan is understood and agreed to, you should move on to discuss concrete activities and future meetings.

One strategy might be to mix business with education by ordering and previewing videos of alternative programs from CIPB's web site. The videos selected also could be proposed to your local PBS station for broadcast or, if appropriate, provide the program for a local "Banned by PBS" film program and fund raiser.

Make sure all people at the meeting are given things to do, even if it is only contacting others. If you have a sufficient number of committed people, you may want to establish small task forces or committees (2 to 5 people) to carry out decisions of the group in between general meetings. A **coordination task force** will need to schedule and arrange

future meeting site(s), send out notices, coordinate a phone tree and arrange for beverages and snacks. Never leave a meeting without deciding on the time and place for the next meeting. In fact, things will go much smoother if you can agree on a regular meeting time and place.

An **educational task force** should have specific responsibility to order, assign, and return videos to distributors. All members at educational meetings can preview short videos. Interested members can review longer videos for a group report and recommendation. An **outreach task force** can concentrate on recruitment. A **media task force** can focus on press relations. A **fund raising task force** can estimate the group's resource needs for the coming year, develop a realistic expense budget, list all possible sources of funds by category (e.g. direct mail, benefits, etc.), and estimate the income that can be raised in each area. In a coalition, some of these resources may be available in-kind through participating organizations.

Members need to feel that the group is making progress and that it's worth their time and effort to stay involved. Members also need to feel that their skills are adequately utilized in tasks they enjoy and that they are appreciated for their contributions. Publications and events are a good time to acknowledge everyone.

You may want to periodically (e.g. every 3-6 months or so) review assignments and ask people if they want to change roles. If people like what they are doing and are effective in their roles, there may be no need to rotate roles. On the other hand, it does provide a pretext for replacing people who are not doing the job without making it personal. Rotating responsibility or leadership also keeps some people from being overused and burning out while it involves people who feel left out. In addition, it can spread skills and strengthen the group.

People join organizations for many reasons, in addition to supporting the cause. This may include the fellowship of likeminded people, the opportunity to develop new skills, the chance to contribute to the common good, the gratification of feeling useful, or the thrill of being in the news and part of change. Members who can meet some of these needs in your group are more likely to work hard, make compromises and last longer.

Allow for members to add agenda items up until 7-10 days before the meeting. If possible, funnel such suggestions through the appropriate task forces or committees. Prioritize the items and try to avoid too packed an agenda. When the agenda is set, send it out with the meeting reminder. Do not allow other items to be introduced except under "new business" and then only if time permits.

Try not to let the meeting run any longer than the agreed upon hour and a half or two hours. People tend to become frustrated and overtired after a while. Don't leave a topic unless you have developed a plan of action or decided definitely to drop it. If an issue is unresolved and some want to continue while others must leave, schedule the discussion for a special meeting or, at least, the first item on the agenda of the next regular meeting. That way people will not feel manipulated or left out.

Also, try to make the meetings fun. If possible, arrange for beverages and snacks. Take a short break for refreshment or other needs. Schedule special meetings for video previews and discussion. Encourage members to have dinner before the meeting or drinks after. By the end of the evening, construct a phone tree so that notifying participants becomes a shared task, with each person calling two others. Always end each meeting by discussing who is responsible for any next steps and where and how to recruit new members.

### *Recruitment*

Recruitment should be an ongoing process. Priority should be given to officers or, at least, active members who could represent participating organizations. Where possible, go through a mutual friend, colleague or public figure in the community. Appeal to people's self-interest. Remind them that all public interest groups must perform public education and outreach and have suffered from commercial and public media neglect.

Advise recruits that coalitions in other communities have achieved positive reforms and that CIPB stands ready to support all such local initiatives. Assure them that their participation will make a difference and encourage them to come or send a representative to your next meeting. Finally, propose that meetings will be conveniently located, short, educational, offer refreshments and provide an unusual opportunity to meet many other community leaders.

To grow your coalition, you might request permission from organizers of other community events to display literature and make a brief announcement as part of their program. Offer a P.O. Box, email, web site, fax and/or telephone number so that people can get on your mailing list and receive notification of your next meeting. Alternative bookstores, coffee shops, restaurants and taverns, campuses, union halls and churches are excellent places to put up posters and leave stacks of literature.

### *Facilitator*

A good facilitator is essential. The facilitator's role is to help everyone feel involved and effective. This requires that the facilitator remain neutral. If the facilitator has a personal stake in the discussion, it is better to assign the role to someone who does not. For these reasons it is best to routinely rotate the facilitator's role among your members. This also serves to establish that it is group norms rather than personalities that guide group processes.

The facilitator makes sure that all items on the agenda are covered, enforces agreed upon time limits, keeps the discussion from getting too far off the topic, gently discourages side talk, constrains anyone from continually dominating the discussion, encourages quieter members to share their ideas, makes sure that everyone who wishes to speak gets a chance, synthesizes the discussion into a proposal, calls for a decision, moves the agenda, and suggests breaks where appropriate.

For many decisions, a majority vote may provide a sufficient "sense of the meeting" and decide the issue. Where it appears that the group is split, it would be useful to employ a consensus process. Members should articulate their concerns so that compromises and

alternatives can be offered. The objective of the consensus process is not to empower a minority to block group action. Rather, it is to facilitate a compromise that does not violate anyone's core principles or interests. For the process to work, the majority must be willing to listen actively to the minority's essential concerns and try to find a way to address them satisfactorily. At the same time, the minority finally must be willing to support a decision even if they still have some reservations.

Conflicts are a natural part of social life. Members must learn to distinguish between conflict the group can live with and conflict it cannot live with. Assume good will and avoid blaming any person or faction for the conflict. In fact, conflicts provide an opportunity to improve communication and clarify understanding. Try to identify exactly what the problem is and whose problem it is. It is more constructive to criticize a person's actions than it is to criticize the person. This makes it possible to establish consensus on norms while maintaining inclusion.

## **NEGOTIATING WITH THE STATION**

When you feel your group is sufficiently large and cohesive, devote a meeting to plan your approach to the station. The focus of this meeting should be how to influence station officials to respond positively to your program recommendations. It is best to agree on a specific set of limited demands for the first meeting. If you are successful in developing an ongoing relationship with station officials, you can make other requests later. For example, you might propose a labor program this week or month, an environmental program next. Or you might suggest a locally produced series that covers a range of issues and perspectives. There are many possibilities.

Decide who among you should attend the meeting at the station (not too many) and determine the optimum times for such. Have one of those volunteers write the letter and a couple more advise on revisions. Address the letter to the Station Manager and copy it to the Program Director. Ask for a response within the next couple of weeks. Set a time for your next meeting to review progress.

Try to make your first requests concrete and reasonable so that station officials will not feel threatened. For example, you might want to propose that the station pick up one of the alternative program series described on our web site ([www.cipbonline.org](http://www.cipbonline.org)). Propose an informal partnership to station officials in which your coalition provides active support in station membership recruitment and fundraising efforts around the program(s) being proposed. Indicate the size of your combined membership base and newsletter circulation. You also might indicate that you have volunteers for the station's boards and would like to have them actively considered for the next appointment(s).

Call the station after one week to confirm that the letter has been received. If they cannot confirm, offer to fax a copy. If, by your next meeting, you still haven't heard from the station, write another letter, expressing your disappointment, allowing for the possibility of oversight, and reminding them that you are concerned citizens and subscribers who have offered your support and deserve consideration. This time, you may wish to fax your letter and then send it. You be the judge as to whether this is the time to remind

station management also that you are activists who have access to the media and are not afraid to use it.

Do not settle for anything but a scheduled meeting with the program director and/or station manager. Like many other institutional leaders, too many of those in public broadcasting are adept at politely putting off members of the public who usually just grumble and give up. Private telephone conversations, invitations to write or phone in suggestions, referral to the community advisory board and/or any other superficial public relations gestures should not satisfy you. You may agree to meet with the Community Advisory Board (CAB), but only if the station also proceeds with your meeting with the Station Manager and/or Program Director. You can use your meeting with the CAB to learn from them about what they do and to educate them about what they could do.

If you get your meeting, make sure you have at least 30-minutes to one-hour uninterrupted. Let them run the meeting, but make certain they have read and considered your request(s). Be polite but firm. Do not lose your temper. That will only confirm whatever prejudice they might have against activists. On the other hand, be persistent. If you have used this manual to prepare for the meeting, you will be able to reply effectively to any attempts to divert and discourage you.

#### *If they do agree*

If station officials agree to start airing a program, ask how many episodes and when they will be scheduled. Argue for a regular and reasonable time with the program listed by its name in all station schedule releases. This is the only way you will be able to build an audience, which, after all, is the goal of this campaign.

If you reach verbal agreement on any proposal(s), send a letter immediately to document agreements reached and copy it to everyone who attended the meeting. Have a clear timetable for implementation of the agreement and monitor it on a regular basis. Be prepared with next steps if things get off track. Publicize the agreement through all the newsletters in your coalition and urge members to write in appreciation and support when the agreement is implemented. Keep your word and work to build an audience for the program(s) now being aired.

#### *If they resist agreement*

Make it clear, you are not objecting to any current station programs, only asking for inclusion in the name of diversity and balance. Your constituencies want to be served also. Be prepared to counter statements about how many hours on your issues the station or PBS national already has broadcast. Even when documented, such lists typically account for only a small fraction of total offerings and are beside the point. The station broadcasts thousands of hours a year, has a mission to provide alternative programming and there is no agreement on how much is enough.

Be prepared to counter objections that the station has no discretionary money for alternative programming. All stations have such discretionary program acquisition funds. Besides, many alternative programs are underwritten by tax-free foundations and, thus,

available to stations by satellite downlink at no cost. Be prepared for objections that the program's funding comes from the wrong sources (i.e. labor or public interest groups). First of all, such barriers apply only to programs on the national service and even they are subject to interpretation and negotiation. Local stations have no such barriers.

Be prepared for objections that the program(s) are unbalanced advocacy, not educational programming. Remind them that the standard of "balance" is meant to apply to the whole program schedule, not to any particular programs in the schedule. Business programs are not required to include socialists or labor representatives. Military programs are not required to include pacifists, religious programs atheists or cooking shows vegetarians. As such, your program(s) are packed with useful information and are meant to balance *The McLaughlin Group*, William Buckley's *Firing Line*, Ben Wattenberg's *Think Tank*, *Wall Street Week*, *Nightly Business Report* and all other conservative public affairs and business oriented shows already on the station's schedule.

Be prepared to counter statements that serious public affairs programs get low ratings or low pledge response. The whole point of public broadcasting is to serve minorities without concern for ratings or dollars. Moreover, you are offering broad-based support not currently available to them. Be prepared for objections that the law does not allow the station to delegate program authority. While true, stations also are required to serve the "entire community." Station officials violate no laws by negotiating additions to the schedule to fulfill their mission.

Be prepared for objections about "program quality." Whatever you propose will be acceptable for broadcast and probably already is carried by other stations. The quality issue typically is a red herring, especially for stations that broadcast old black and white commercial network reruns. The only relevant questions should be: Is the program professionally produced and does it offer a public service? Cite the program's awards, provide a sample copy with promotional materials and emphasize the public service it will perform.

#### *If they refuse or stall*

Obviously, we hope that you need go no further than to demonstrate that you are savvy about how the system works and earnest about working with the station to broaden programming and membership. Unfortunately, as even the CPB notes, some station officials are too proprietary about programming and not open to working with the public. For your purposes, this is where it gets interesting. By refusing to cooperate with a reasonable request from a legitimate coalition, station officials have handed you your first issue and the chance to grow your movement. There are many actions available to you. For one, you can organize a letter writing campaign to the station echoing your demands.

The station is bound by law to keep a record of all such correspondence. This record can be copied for inclusion in challenges to a station's license renewal or complaints to the FCC. You may not have to go that far. The campaign itself might persuade the station of broader interest in your demands. At the least, officials might recognize that it makes for bad public relations to continue to ignore them. It would be wise to keep your own record of all such correspondence in case this proves not to be sufficient.

## USING THE MEDIA TO MAKE CHANGE

If the previous stated tactics should fail, you must escalate the campaign by taking your concerns to the popular media. The alternative newsweeklies typically are open to investigative reporting and in-depth features by freelance writers. They also are more willing to criticize the establishment. Publication in these media reaches a surprisingly large number of people like you. Always ask that whatever is published be tagged with contact information for your campaign, like a P.O. Box, email, web site, fax and/or telephone number. This is a great way to recruit new members.

The daily paper reaches many more people and will publish shorter letters to the editor, especially if it gets several on the same subject. Your group may wish to coordinate several submissions to make the point that this is a problem of more general concern. Make sure letters are brief (100-200 words) and to the point, word processed and checked for punctuation, grammar and spelling. Other letters typically published in the paper can be a guide. Wait a week and then call to determine that it has been received and whether they plan to publish it. If the answer is no, ask them how you might succeed next time.

It also is possible to call and negotiate space for an opinion editorial (op-ed) on the subject. Call the editor or his/her assistant and ask them for procedures for such submission (e.g. length, format, etc.). The typical op-ed is 700 words, no more than 1,000. If you have a professional title that suggests authority, use it. If not, get someone in your coalition with name recognition to write or, at least, co-sign the op-ed. If you have built a coalition around this mission, use that to identify you. If not, get permission to sign the op-ed as a representative of your organization. Assure the op-ed editor in your cover note that the piece has not been submitted to any other paper remotely near their market.

With both letters and op-eds, find a contemporary hook that will interest readers in your angle on the issue. It could be a recently published news story, op-ed or letter, research study, pending legislation, etc. Framing your event as part of a “trend” often works. In the news business, three events are enough to be considered a trend.

Start by stating the problem clearly and establishing its seriousness. Use short, active sentences and short paragraphs. Try to express moral indignation about an injustice while avoiding excessive rhetoric. Frame your concerns in terms of broader values and in positive, rather than negative terms. You want to motivate those already sympathetic to take action while not alienating middle-of-the-road people new to the issue. Use published facts to document points and cite your sources.

The values that inform CIPB’s work are accuracy, professionalism and journalistic integrity; fairness, diversity and balance; organizational accountability and openness to the tax-paying public; and protecting the public interest through a public trust that provides public service. For example, you might indicate that this is not an issue of special interests dictating programming. Rather, the issue is public access to and public service from a taxpayer-subsidized public trust. The issue also is respecting the Congressional mandate that justifies public broadcasting’s reserved frequency and public

financing. That mandate is to provide information and views that are alternative to the corporate controlled commercial media, to reflect the full diversity of the station's community of service.

Establish the locus of blame. At this stage, you have exhausted your efforts to change things quietly through private channels and you are attempting to mobilize pressure. Personalize your targets at the station, whomever they are. Appeal to ethics and hold the target up to their own policies or public statements. If possible, dramatize your failure to be served and why others should be concerned. A brief anecdote can be very effective in driving home a point.

Since you might be criticized as extremists, try to make it easy for readers to identify with you and your group. At the same time, polarize your target by giving it a negative image. A useful tactic is to craft a contrast that typically evokes strong feelings (e.g. David vs. Goliath, responsible citizen vs. haughty bureaucrat, friendly community vs. impersonal corporation, etc.). You might be surprised to find that many others recognize these characterizations based on their own unhappy experiences with the station.

Appeals to guilt and anger typically alienate people. Rather, you should appeal to people's beliefs about the necessity and propriety of standing up. Emphasize the themes of social responsibility, hope for improvement and the virtue of participation. Drive toward precisely the conclusion you want readers to take away with them and tie it to some concrete action people can take. There is no sense getting people worked up if you can't suggest an outlet for their outrage. Persuade people that actions can be effective and that change is possible.

Finally, be prepared for your op-ed or letter to be shortened or revised. Ask if you can be consulted on that process. Newspaper editors know their stuff, but they cannot judge better than you which points you are more willing to sacrifice to get under the word limit. Of course, all of these rhetorical elements also are fundamental to any partisan campaign literature you may distribute to potential recruits. The primary difference is that, with the latter, you have greater license to dramatize and fewer constraints on length, calls to action and contact information.

### *Talk radio*

Talk radio is another medium for your message. Talk radio reaches millions of people and includes a wide spectrum of political opinions. The fact that it tends to be dominated by conservatives, in part, reflects the failure of progressives to participate. Progressives need to learn the rules and get into the game. You can start by finding the right shows for your topic and being persistent in trying to get on as a caller or booked as a guest.

Be succinct when you talk to the screener. If you have a prestigious sounding title, use it. If possible, claim relevant personal experience. If you are in line to be a caller, ask "Where am I in line?" and keep track. Meanwhile, keep listening to the show so that you can revise your points and make comments that build on what already has been said.

Once on, turn down your radio. An effective opening is to acknowledge that the host and/or certain previous callers have made good points and then use that as a springboard for your own statement. Have notes at hand, so that you can support your arguments with facts and references. Start with your most important point and then pause briefly for reaction. Think in terms of 30-60 second sound bites and get right to the point. Try not to get nervous. Pretend you're talking to a friend.

If you are invited to be a guest, ask to be interviewed from the studio rather than from a phone. Your voice will sound better and you'll be kept on the air longer. Warm up your voice and body while waiting to get into the studio and ask for headphones when you are seated. Take advantage of the opportunity to chat with the host prior to going on and during breaks. If he or she gets to know you, you have a better chance of being invited back. Also, you might learn about other program opportunities. Don't talk about your subject except when on the air or you might get confused about what you already have covered.

Personal experience is irrefutable and, if told entertainingly, makes for good radio. Practice posing your issues succinctly and show some passion and a sense of humor. Bring notes to remind you of specific facts and references, but don't read a prepared statement. Clarity and emotional intensity make for good talk radio even if it isn't the perfectly chosen word. Also, summarize numbers (e.g. "just over a third" instead of "34.9 percent"). Try to achieve intimacy, as if you're talking to a friend. Talk at natural volume and speed, not too loudly or slowly. Use vocal inflection to emphasize points and avoid hemming and hawing.

Tell your supporters to call while you are on the air, with questions that will allow you to expand on your group's position. Use every question (whether from friend or foe) as an opportunity to explain your position in more detail. Be conscious of the time remaining. If you have an important point to make and it has not yet come up, simply change the subject. Advise the host that you have something important to add to the discussion and go right ahead with your statement.

By the same token, it also is good to occasionally ask the host or caller a question, especially if it highlights an apparent inconsistency in their position. If either host or caller is hostile, it also breaks the momentum of their attack, puts them on the spot, gives you some breathing room, and makes the interview more conversational. Keep your cool. This is just a battle, not the war. If a host or caller personally attacks you, consider it a victory. You will win the sympathy of many listeners. Lighten it up so that people know that one can be passionate about an issue and still be a regular person. Humor is a good antidote for people who are quarrelsome.

Don't hesitate to speak over a caller if you want to pick up on a point that he/she is passing over. Many stations have technology that allows your voice to come through. It also is all right to occasionally concede a minor point. In fact, you might be wrong and you will appear to be reasonable. Above all, announce your organization's name and phone number and/or web address frequently. Ask the host to close by requesting such from you one last time. Finally, you might ask a friend to tape your appearance so that you can learn by listening for the next time.

### *Press briefings/Editorial meetings*

If you still haven't received the respect you deserve, it is time to move your campaign from the editorial page onto the news page. This could mean pitching a news story to a reporter, holding a press conference or staging a media event. Whatever you choose to do, it is key to develop and maintain cordial relationships with any and all reporters who are likely to cover your story. Appreciate the fact that they are not all the same. Moreover, they work under constraints like editors, deadlines, competing assignments, space limitations and the like.

If you call reporters to pitch a story, be prepared with various hooks. It can be a calendar hook (like a national holiday), a milestone (like the anniversary of an event), a special event, a new twist on an old story, a local slant on a national story, a dramatic human interest story, an ongoing controversy, anything celebrity related, or a new announcement, among other possibilities.

You might consider starting with a requested press briefing or editorial meeting at the paper. Call the Managing Editor. Clearly state the purpose of the session, describe whom you will bring and discuss who the paper might have present at the meeting. Try to have reporters, editorial staff and editors there. Schedule it for late morning during the business week (after morning in-house meetings and well before deadline). Bring a diverse group of not more than five or so. Don't expect more than thirty minutes.

At the meeting, introduce your delegation and respond cordially to introductions to the paper's staff. State the purpose of the session and review past coverage of your issue(s) (both good and bad). Where appropriate, point out errors and offer praise. Indicate what kinds of expertise and connections members of your groups have. Ask how you can help with background information, expert commentary, and reaction quotes.

You might present an overview of the kinds of events and future press releases your group is considering so as to measure the paper's response. You might even pitch various news story ideas with hooks that might work for readers. Ask for permission to call people in the room and get extensions and fax numbers. If you really want to make an impression, leave behind press kits. Plan a follow up meeting.

If reporters call, make sure to call them back promptly. Help them to meet their deadlines. If you aren't available, get someone who is. Compose sound bite quotes that are likely to be printed without editing. If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it and offer to check and get back. Be prepared to fax statements or materials. Check periodically to see if they know what you're talking about. You are always closer to the issue than others.

When being interviewed, don't just answer questions. Respond to questions. This isn't a quiz, but an invitation to offer your perspective on the matter in question. Condense your issue into two or three strategic key messages. Organize these messages around concise statements of the problem, the solution and your call to action. Stay on these messages as

much as possible. The more you repeat them, the more likely it is that this is what the reporter will use.

### *Media event*

The next level of action would be to stage an event for members, potential recruits and the media. This could be a rally, major speaker, film showing, or concert designed to attract large numbers of people. The CIPB web site ([www.cipbonline.org](http://www.cipbonline.org)) lists films and videos that could serve as the program for an event. We also can help book a national speaker for a CIPB local chapter fundraiser. Finally, in some cases, we can provide small matching grants to cover expenses.

In Pittsburgh, Phoenix and elsewhere, activists have filled local cinemas with showings of award-winning documentaries that had been rejected by the PBS National Program Service. Such showings have been staged under the banner, "Banned by PBS." Short speeches, literature tables and collections have supplemented these premiers. Sometimes, the cinema books the film(s) for a longer run. In such case, the cinema might make the space available for your event at no cost in exchange for your free promotion and anticipated concession sales. You also can arrange for the local paper(s) to review the film and/or write a background feature on your group. When done properly, events like these can be promoted on talk radio as well.

When planning a film event, you will need to expand the events committee to provide support for the many necessary tasks: budgeting, fundraising, bookkeeping and banking; arranging for a venue, projector and qualified projectionist; setting the price and printing, distributing and collecting the tickets; designing and placing posters; direct mail solicitation (e.g. procuring appropriate lists, designing literature, and inserting and mailing); newspaper and radio publicity. Other costs may include insurance and cleaning up. Posters should go up 10 days to 2 weeks in advance and newspaper ads a week in advance.

A speaker event may require as much as six weeks lead-time. Here, your immediate concerns are booking the speaker(s) and hall and covering their fee(s) and expenses. In addition, you will need to be sensitive to sound and light needs. The promotional needs are the same as above, but there are more opportunities for media publicity. Try and get your speaker to come early enough and stay late enough to do local media.

Contact all local papers and offer your speaker for interview. Also contact interview, general interest and talk shows on both radio and TV for interest. Include UHF, PBS and cable stations. Work out a reasonable schedule of appearances for your speaker. The idea is to promote your cause while still respecting your speaker's need to rest for the main event. At all events like a film concert or speech, collect names and contact information from attendees and give them a brochure and other literature to take home.

### *Arranging for media coverage*

Media coverage is an essential part of any action. Especially when illustrated with photos, such reports spread news of your group's concerns far and wide. Failure to get

coverage is discouraging to participants and gives others the message that your movement is not newsworthy. Therefore, it is imperative that you properly inform all local newspapers and TV and radio stations a few days in advance of the event.

Such notice typically takes the form of a press advisory, designated “For Immediate Release.” The advisory should be brief (preferably one-page) and punchy. It should have a catchy headline and direct lead with a “hook” at the beginning. It should be organized into short paragraphs and sentences, starting with who, what, where, when, how and proceeding to why. The why may be provided by sound bite quotes. If there are to be speakers, list them. Avoid excessive rhetoric or jargon. In short, write the release in such a way that as much of it as possible can be used easily by the reporter in writing the story.

Basically, the advisory and following release should establish who you are, what you are trying to accomplish, your guiding philosophy, your strategic plan, and everything one needs to know about the event being announced. Make sure there are no typos, dates are correct and contact name and number are provided.

Send the press advisory by fax seven days or by mail ten days in advance of the event. Send a longer press release again by fax three or four days in advance and follow up by telephone just one or two days in advance to confirm receipt of the release and offer any help needed. Finally, use every contact with the media as an occasion to nurture your relationships with reporters as a source for good stories and an expert on particular issues.

Press conferences are appropriate where you have an announcement to make that is difficult to dramatize or where you lack the time or resources to stage a full-scale media event. While easier than a media event, a successful press conference still requires much planning and hard work. The conference should be held in an accessible and comfortable location at a convenient time. Mid-morning or mid-week is best. Avoid Mondays and Fridays or late afternoons. Also, be mindful of competing events.

It is a nice idea to provide refreshments, especially if the conference is scheduled over the lunch break. Press people should be advised beforehand of such and that a press kit will be provided. The press kit should include an agenda, list of participants with biographies, brief background of the issue to date with people involved and goals, fact sheet, and clippings of past coverage. Have a press table where reporters and photographers can sign in and be greeted and introduced to the speakers.

Plan your event to be no more than 30-60 minutes with no more than three or four people speaking no more than five minutes each. It is best if speakers have prepared their remarks, included some tight ten-second sound bites and can make a transcript available. Remind speakers they should stick to the agreed upon message and respect the agreed upon tone for the event. The primary reason for more speakers is to present diversity and strength.

Have a moderator who provides introductions, moves things along, and facilitates the question-and-answer session at the end. It is a good idea to animate your press conference with visually interesting presentations, as long as they are short. This may include flip charts, handouts, slide or video presentations to illustrate your main points.

If your conference is scheduled to be televised, make sure people wear gray, blue or brown suits and dresses with pastel shades for shirts and blouses. Avoid patterns, plaids, florals, checks, stripes or dots as well as big jewelry, buttons and slogans. Wear make-up if necessary. Before going on, ground yourself with deep breathing.

Don't be distracted by the crew or camera. Focus on the reporter, try to keep your hands under control and put the emotional intensity into your face and voice. Alternatively, holding a prop sometimes illustrates your point. Don't repeat the question in your answer, but respond directly with your key messages or sound bites about five to twelve seconds long. On news radio, the sound bites can be longer; 20-30 seconds on public radio, about half that on commercial radio.

If appropriate, introduce a personal reference in your answer (e.g. as "a longtime resident, member, consumer, etc.). Don't worry about looking or sounding a little theatrical. This is television. If you make a mistake, stop and ask if you can start again. It is an easy matter for them to edit the tape.

### *Taking it to the streets*

More controversial events would be protests, demonstrations, or pickets. The press usually covers such events if they satisfy newsworthy criteria of being local, big, unusual, dramatic, and visually interesting. At the same time, these militant actions are risky. Failure to attract a crowd, for example, will give the impression that your movement is weak and not worthy of attention.

One way to facilitate a gathering and the likelihood of media coverage is to choose a visible, well-known and/or strategic location. Perhaps there is an area with convenient parking and access that has featured memorable rallies in the past. A busy street corner always is better than a side street with little pedestrian traffic and no adjoining public spaces. Plan for foul weather. Establish an alternative day or space where the demonstration can be moved.

If it is a picket or demonstration, you need to be at the site of the target. For example, a group in San Francisco finally got KQED-TV's attention when it made public plans to project an Oscar-winning documentary that had been banned by PBS and KQED from the parking lot onto the wall of the station's headquarters. Organizers announced that was the only way the program would be "shown on KQED—literally." The film was promptly scheduled.

Gathering a number of people in a good location in pleasant weather is not enough. Your contingent must be well organized and distinguishable from the general mill. This requires signs with catchy slogans, energetic chants, eye-catching costumes, maybe a speaker's stand or music, perhaps a picket line or even a sit down. The colorful demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in late 1999 are a good example. Against the backdrop of costumes depicting endangered species, the mainstream media finally granted airtime to labor leaders.

One goal of demonstrations is to make a spectacle of yourselves and provide the media with good photo opportunities. Another goal is to get the crowd involved. People who take action are more likely to reaffirm their beliefs and commitment in the aftermath. Public participation is more likely to happen if you all look like you are enjoying yourselves. If your members are too serious and consider demonstrations like this undignified, your demonstration will not succeed.

Make certain that clearly written leaflets are available for people to read and take away with them. The leaflet should explain who is protesting, why and how others can get involved with your campaign. Any single demonstration is just a part of a larger process. You may want to set goals for the demonstration (e.g. members recruited, money collected, media coverage, even concessions by your target) against which to evaluate your success. Such discussion should acknowledge people's contributions and what was done well, what needs improvement and how to keep the momentum going.

It is important that the group conduct an evaluation after each action. Was the action implemented successfully? If not, how can the group improve the next time? Did it achieve the desired results? If not, why not? What else needs to be done? Keep good records. Include files on past donors, media coverage, samples of past work, etc. The benefits are many: graphics can be re-used, contract providers can be dropped or consulted again, budgeting can be based on realistic estimates, documentation can enhance grant proposals, etc.

## **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

Public stations pay nothing for their privilege to broadcast, are tax exempt, and receive generous subsidies from taxpayers, subscribers and volunteers. All public broadcasters are bound by the FCC Act of 1934 as amended to operate in the "public interest, convenience and necessity." Stations also are obligated to obey CPB rules and regulations. The FCC Act makes clear that the CPB may not distribute any of its funds to any public broadcast station that does not comply with its provisions regarding the openness and accountability of stations.

Stations are required to give "reasonable public notice" of all meetings. Such notice must go beyond "advertisements in the 'Legal Notices' section of a newspaper," to include "on-air announcements...notices or advertisements placed in the radio and television schedules sections of local newspapers and in the program guides published by many stations" as well as "written notices" to groups and organizations with whom the station normally has business.

In short, stations must make an effort to determine who will be interested in attending meetings and place notices likely to reach those persons. Accordingly, your group can request notification of all meetings by mail with sufficient lead-time to be able to send representative(s). If the station fails to comply, you have the basis for an FCC complaint. The next step is to have an attorney write a letter requesting such information, copied to the FCC and CPB.

All stations also are required to open to the public all meetings of its governing board, community advisory board, and any other advisory board to the governing board (including all committees). Such meetings should be scheduled at a time and place convenient for most people to attend. Moreover, people attending such meetings are not required to provide names or any other personal information. In short, except under particular circumstances, there is no justification for closing any meeting to the public nor making members of the public feel uncomfortable in attending such meetings.

If a meeting or portion of a meeting is closed for “those exceptions recognized by law,” the station must “within a reasonable period” provide a written explanation of its reason(s). Such exceptions refer to matters of legal privilege and confidentiality involving individual employees, litigation, or financial transactions in which premature disclosure would compromise the organization’s business interest.

In addition to open meetings, PBS member stations are required by law to comply with the FCC’s and CPB’s “open records” provisions. At a minimum, stations must keep available for public examination annual financial reports filed with the CPB, and all financial information accompanying any agreements or funding for production assistance or training. The Act further stipulates that all stations should maintain a “public inspection file” containing all “required financial records” and to provide “arrangements” for photocopying “at cost.” Such file also should include:

- A copy of the station’s current FCC license and copies documenting any FCC-approved modifications in the license;
- Contour maps;
- Copies of applications pending before the FCC or the courts;
- Copies of short-term license renewals until no longer relevant;
- List of contracts required to be filed with the FCC;
- Material relating to an FCC investigation or complaint;
- Ownership reports and related material;
- Annual employment reports and related material broken down by job category by gender, race, and national origin. Stations also must submit a model EEO Program designed to assure equal employment opportunity for women and minority groups;
- Information about the use of the station by legally qualified candidates for public office;
- Special reports on employment practices;
- Citizen agreements having to do with programming, employment or other issues of community concern;
- All requests for broadcast time made by a candidate for public office;
- A list of programs that have provided their most significant treatment of community issues during the preceding three months, including time, date, duration and title;
- A list of donors supporting specific programs, to be kept for two years after the program airs; and
- A copy of an FCC publication called *The Public and Broadcasting*, which explains “how the public may participate in broadcast licensing and related matters.”

According to the FCC, “Members of the public may inspect the entire contents of a station’s public file at any time during regular business hours; no prior appointment is required for this. FCC rules permit machine reproduction of material available for public inspection, provided the request is made in person and the requesting party pays the reasonable cost of reproduction.”

A station that maintains part of its file on a computer database must provide you a computer terminal with which to review the file. If the station’s file is located outside of its community of license, you may request copies of material in the file over the phone. Stations that wish to cooperate with the spirit of these regulations also may post their public file over the Internet. Ask the station if this is possible.

In addition, the Internal Revenue Service requires that all not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organizations keep their Form 990 and Schedule A tax returns for the past three years “available for public inspection upon request.” These latter documents include the salaries of the station’s five highest-ranking officials. If the station refuses to provide the IRS documents, you can get them by using IRS Form 4506-A. Contact your local IRS office and get Instructions for Form 990, Instructions for Schedule A and Form 4506-A.

#### *Station violations of FCC and CPB regulations*

If a station violates any of the above regulations you have cause for a complaint. Perhaps your state, like Florida, has a fairly liberal sunshine law that requires public agencies and their contractors to divulge their records to the public. If so, you may appeal to the courts for redress of grievance. If no such local law is available, you may complain to the CPB that the station has violated the terms of their community service grant and request intervention. Finally, you may complain to the FCC.

The FCC advises that it cannot concern itself with requests for or objections to particular programs. The only exceptions to this are cases of obscenity, indecent language when children are likely to be in the audience, lottery information or solicitation of money under false pretenses. On the other hand, the FCC is concerned that stations meet standards of openness and accountability to the public. The FCC recommends that you first submit your complaint to the station. If your concerns are not satisfactorily resolved at that level, you may submit your complaint to the FCC. You should do it promptly after the event to which it relates and include at least the following information:

- The full name and address of the complainant;
- The calls letters and location of the station;
- The name of any program to which the complaint relates and the date and time of its broadcast. This applies only to matters of personal attacks or endorsements of a political candidate or piece of legislation;
- A statement of what the station has done or failed to do which causes you to file your complaint. Be as specific as possible: Furnish names, dates, places and other details;
- A statement setting forth what you want the station and/or the FCC to do; and
- A copy of any previous correspondence between you and the station concerning the subject of the complaint.

Type or word-process your complaint. State the facts fully at the beginning. Avoid repetition or exaggeration. If you think a specific law or regulation has been violated, indicate what it is. If your complaint does not allege a substantial violation of statute or FCC rules or policy or if it is inadequate in presentation, the FCC will explain such in writing. If your complaint is substantial and documented, the FCC will investigate by letter or, in rare instances, by field inquiry.

The imposition of sanctions may range from monetary forfeitures (not exceeding \$10,000) to revocation of license or denial of an application for renewal of license. If FCC staff rule that there has been a violation, it may recommend to the Commission that sanctions be imposed upon the station. The imposition of sanctions involves formal proceedings, which may include a hearing. If such occurs, you may be invited to submit a sworn statement or appear to give testimony before an administrative judge. If the staff concludes that there were extenuating circumstances it may note the violation but not recommend a sanction.

Stations are most accountable every five years when they must submit their license for renewal. At such time, you may file a “petition to deny” in which you raise your public interest objections. At this time, the station’s failure to provide programming that serves the needs and interests of the community becomes relevant. So also do discriminatory employment practices and a pattern of abuse of regulations concerning openness and accountability. You may raise an informal objection or file a petition to deny the station’s license renewal application.

The FCC will either deny your petition and grant the application, deny your petition and set the application for hearing on issues other than those you have raised, or grant your petition and set the application for hearing on some or all of the issues you have raised. If the application is granted, you may petition for reconsideration. At this level the standard of evidence is rigorous. You will need an attorney. Allegations must be supported by affidavit of a person or persons with personal knowledge of the facts. You should make certain that you are in a position to participate. Finally, despite your best efforts, it’s a fact that the FCC very rarely denies a license renewal or transfer application.

While getting the station’s license denied is unusual, following this procedure still stands a good chance of effecting a change in the station’s policies or practices. The fact that the challenge could take months or even years, cause the station negative public relations and costly legal and administrative fees is an inducement for the station to recognize your complaint and to negotiate. This might result in a citizen’s agreement between the station and your group or a direction by the FCC to the station to take remedial actions. The FCC must approve any such citizen’s agreements to ensure that no personal monetary benefit is gained.

To be sure, this is a whole lot of trouble. Nevertheless, with good counsel and solid backing it is possible. More importantly, you can use the threat of objection or petition to deny renewal or transfer to gain leverage with the station otherwise unavailable. More immediately, these actions will be newsworthy and should promote your group and put the station on the defensive. Since they are dependent on good public relations to

maintain their subscriber contributions, rational station managers may consider obeying the law or better serving the public to be preferable to a public confrontation over their uncompromising control of governance and programming.

## **PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE: A PUBLIC BROADCASTING TRUST**

Public broadcasting in America could achieve the financial security required for editorial independence if it were structured as an independently funded public trust, comparable to the Red Cross or Little League Baseball. This would take it off the federal dole, remove corporate underwriting, and free public broadcasting to pursue its mission with editorial integrity.

To support innovative, diverse, noncommercial programming for both national and local audiences, an independent public broadcasting service would require at least \$1 billion in insulated annual program funds, in addition to current levels of operational support from state governments, individual subscribers, and foundations. Corporate donations would be briefly acknowledged and restricted to general system support.

### *Structure*

One model of how such a service might be organized would be in the form of a new Public Broadcasting Trust (PBT) that would replace the President's patronage appointed Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). It also would take over the satellite distribution systems now administered by PBS and NPR. In contrast to the CPB, the PBT Board of Trustees would be insulated from direct political pressure.

The PBT would have nine members with appointments made by representatives of the public broadcasting community (3), educational community (3) and President's Commission on the Arts and Humanities (2). The PBT managing director would be the ninth member, selected by the original eight board members. All members would serve staggered six-year terms. Participants in the nominating process would include representatives of public television and radio stations, independent producers, and associations for school administrators, teachers, academics, librarians, and school boards.

One half of the PBT's funds would go into commissioning, producing, and distributing programs as part of a national service to local stations. The national television service would be administered through a Television Program Department, itself divided into a Division of News and Public Affairs and a Division of Cultural and Educational Programming.

This programming, with funds for promotion, would be offered to local public stations free-of-charge. Thus, the Department would provide for a daily in-depth news program, documentaries, specials and coverage of special events as well as arts, entertainment, dramatic, and children's programming. Consistent with the unique mission of public broadcasting, there would be a premium on public affairs and cutting edge artistic presentations presented in prime time.

Within the Program Department, there would be a National Independent Program Laboratory, with its own director and advisory board. This Laboratory would support independent productions for consideration by both local stations and the national service. The other half of the PBT's funds would be passed through to local television and radio stations to produce and acquire programs of interest to their specific communities. Since local program production is disproportionately costly, this fund would support productions that few stations now undertake for their community.

In addition, there would be a Radio Department to distribute funds to national programming services, like NPR and PRI, as well as independent producers. The Radio Department would commission new programs as well as support existing programs, all of which would be offered to local stations via satellite. The Radio Department also would make grants to local radio stations to produce national programs and program segments. These would be offered to local stations for their own choosing.

### *Funding*

At present the U.S. enjoys a \$1 trillion budget surplus, in addition to a \$2 trillion Social Security surplus. Just two percent of the \$1 trillion surplus (\$20 billion), invested at five percent interest, would provide \$1 billion a year to fund public broadcast programming in perpetuity. With voter ignorance high and participation at an all-time low, what a wonderful investment in our democracy that would be. This makes it very clear that the main obstacle to this reform is not lack of funds, but lack of political vision.

Any proposal for funding a Public Broadcasting Trust must respect the following criteria: Is it fair, is it sufficient, and is it reliable? Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting generally favors proposals that tax corporate profits rather than citizens and consumers for public broadcasting services.

A December 1998 poll by Lake, Snell, Perry and Associates found that only 19 percent of the public knew that broadcasters pay no fee to use the public's airwaves. Once advised of this fact, almost two-thirds of those with an opinion favored charging broadcasters for any additional airwaves, including airwaves for digital TV. This poll also found an overwhelming 79 percent of the American public favoring a proposal to require commercial broadcasters to pay 5 percent of their revenues into a fund to support public broadcasting programming.

Over the past several years, the FCC has conducted 14 spectrum auctions, raising more than \$23 billion for the federal treasury. The value of remaining unsold channels is estimated at between \$70 billion and \$100 billion. If placed in appropriate interest bearing instruments, \$20 billion in spectrum auction proceeds (20 to 30 percent of the total) would provide \$1 billion in annual trust revenue in perpetuity.

Others have proposed a tax on the sale or transfer of commercial broadcast licenses. A 5 percent tax (to be paid by the seller) on the sales of television and radio licenses transferred in 1997 would have generated the billion dollars needed. Such a method of financing public broadcasting would be fair and sufficient. The major problem with this

mechanism is that since sales fluctuate in response to economic conditions, the flow of money would be less reliable than certain other sources.

Advertising in the U.S. is a \$200 billion a year business. In 1997 advertisers spent almost \$50 billion just on television and radio. Since broadcasters and corporations realize huge profits from using the public's airwaves, it would be fair to expect them to help support an alternative public, noncommercial system. A 2 percent tax on broadcast advertising would generate \$1 billion for a public broadcasting trust fund. This amount likely would grow by at least 5 percent annually.

An annual spectrum fee on the revenue of commercial broadcasters may be the one device that is most fair, sufficient, and reliable. In 1993, the Twentieth-Century Fund Task Force estimated that a 2 percent spectrum fee would produce \$1 billion in annual revenue. Given the profit potential of digital broadcasting, such revenues could be expected to increase with time.

### *Local community accountability*

The culture that governs the current system has been years in the making and, without structural intervention, will persist. New measures are needed to protect public service broadcasting from the banning or editing of broadcasts by state and community-level politicians and to ensure that boards are truly diverse, have a clear sense of mission and recruit and reward station managers for measurable public service, rather than profit-making ventures.

The thrust of these new measures would be to empower local communities to actively oppose censorship and advocate for the full diversity of their programming needs. For starters, stations would be required to observe existing FCC rules and regulations. This would include posting board and committee meetings widely and making them open to the public. This also would include providing members of the public with easy access to complete public inspection files, including financial reports and correspondence with viewers and listeners. A properly functioning Public Broadcasting Trust would supervise random accountability audits. There would be procedures to identify non-compliance and to facilitate compliance on threat of loss of funding.

It is essential that boards be chosen in such a manner as to ensure diversity by race, gender, age, community, and field of service. A diverse board would make policy discussions broader and more inclusive, better survey the interests of public constituencies and provide easier access for station promotion efforts. Boards also must be educated and equipped to provide effective oversight of management on behalf of the community. A possible contribution to this goal might be to establish a system for subscriber election of board members.

Another requirement would be to empower Community Advisory Boards to perform their designated function. They should have routine access to active program proposals, ongoing production schedules and alternative program sources. They also should be engaged in active outreach to the community to solicit evaluations and assess needs. All of this would be guided by a program policy developed by the Board of Directors. And,

of course, all of this would be subject to final approval by professional management and staff. Finally, the PBT would provide financial incentives for local program development.

*Government accountability*

The proposed PBT would be accountable to both the legislative and executive branches of the federal government. The General Accounting Office would conduct a biennial financial audit to ensure fiscal responsibility. Every 10 years there would be an investigation, hearings and a report with suggested legislative changes prior to renewal of the mandate. Both a Presidential Commission and Congress would be involved in the process.

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Federal Communications Commission.

Ratner, Ellen (1997) *101 Ways to Get Your Progressive Issues on Talk Radio*. New York:  
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Ryan, Charlotte (1991) *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*. Boston: South End Press.

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## RESOURCE GUIDE

What follows are a variety of sources and services that will support those of you who wish to promote media democracy in your community, especially as it relates to coverage of social problems and progressive positions on public broadcasting.

### I. MEDIA TRAINING FOR ACTIVISTS

#### Books

The most recent, comprehensive and inexpensive “resource Rolodex” for media activists is edited by Don Hazen and Julie Winokur. *We the Media: A Citizens’ Guide to Fighting for Media Democracy*. New York: The New Press, 1997.

Center for Community Change. *How to Tell and Sell Your Story—Part I: A Guide to Media for Community Groups and Other Nonprofits*. Oakland, CA: Chardon Press, 1997. <http://www.commchange.org>

Center for Community Change. *How to Tell and Sell Your Story—Part II: A Guide to Developing Effective Messages and Good Stories About Your Work*. Oakland, CA: Chardon Press, 1998. <http://www.commchange.org>

Charlotte Ryan. *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1991. <http://www.lbbs.org/sep/sep.htm>

Ellen Ratner. *101 Ways to Get Your Progressive Issues on Talk Radio*. National Press, 1997.

Jason Salzman. *Let the World Know: Make Your Cause News*. Denver, CO: Rocky Mountain Media Watch, 1995. <http://www.bigmedia.org/publication.html>

#### Training programs

Advocacy Institute  
1707 L Street, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 659-8475  
Fax: (202) 659-8484  
<http://www.advocacy.org>

*The Institute’s work includes: advocacy leadership development, movement building, strategy development and analysis, advocacy skills building, facilitating alliance building, strategic counseling, and networking of advocates from all over the world.*

Berkeley Media Studies Group  
2140 Shattuck Avenue, #804  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
Tel: (510) 204-9700

Fax: (510) 204-9710

*The Group provides media advocacy training for diverse populations (including community groups, journalists and public health professionals) to develop skills to access the news media, frame public health issues, and advance healthy public policy.*

SPIN (Strategic Progressive Information Network)

77 Federal Street, 2nd Floor

San Francisco, CA 94107

Tel: (415) 284-1420

Fax: (415) 284-1414

[congress@igc.org](mailto:congress@igc.org)

<http://www.spinproject.org/spin/index.html>

*SPIN offers mostly free public relations consulting, including comprehensive media training, intensive media strategizing, and ongoing support.*

We Interrupt this Message

National Office

965 Mission Street, #220

San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel: (415) 537-9437

Fax: (415) 537-9439

New York Office

226 West 135th street, 4th floor

NY, NY 10030

Tel: (212) 694-1144

[hcutting@interrupt.org](mailto:hcutting@interrupt.org)

*A national non-profit media training center and communications firm challenging media stereotypes about race and poverty. Interrupt provides traditional media training to grassroots and public interests advocates as well as innovative trainings in message development and media activism. Interrupt currently partners with advocates in media campaigns around education, crime and welfare.*

### **Media consultants**

Communications Consortium Media Center

1200 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20005-1754

Tel: (202) 326-8700

Fax: (202) 682-2154

[info@ccmc.org](mailto:info@ccmc.org)

<http://www.ccmc.org/main.htm>

Communication Works

Pier 9 Embarcadero, Suite 116

San Francisco, CA 94111

Tel: (415) 255-1946

Fax: (415) 255-1947

[info@communicationworks.org](mailto:info@communicationworks.org)

<http://www.communicationworks.org>

Fenton Communications

DC Office

1320 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 5th Floor

Washington, DC 20036

Tel: (202) 822-5200

Fax: (202) 822-4787

New York Office

260 Fifth Avenue, 10th Floor

New York, NY 10001

Tel: (212) 584-5000

Fax: (212) 584-5045

[fenton@fenton.com](mailto:fenton@fenton.com)

<http://www.fenton.com>

Griffen/Wirth Associates

Peter Wirth

702 South Beech

Syracuse, NY 13210

Tel: (315) 476-3396

Institute for Public Accuracy

915 National Press Building

Washington, DC 20045

Tel: (202) 347-0020

Fax: (202) 347-0290

<http://www.accuracy.org/contact.htm>

The Mainstream Media Project

101 H Street, Suite E

Arcata, CA 95521

Tel: (707) 826-9111

Fax: (707) 826-9112

<http://www.fas.org/pub/gen/mmp>

Media Research and Action Project (MRAP)

Boston College

Department of Sociology

426 McGuinn Hall

Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3807

Tel: (617) 552-8708

Fax: (617) 552-4283

Co-Directors

William Gamson: [gamson@bc.edu](mailto:gamson@bc.edu)

Charlotte Ryan: [rayn@bc.edu](mailto:rayn@bc.edu)

[http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/cas/soc/mrap/contact.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/soc/mrap/contact.html)

Millennium Communications Group, Inc.  
1150 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 872-8800  
Fax: (202) 872-8845  
<http://www.millencom.com>

Public Media Center  
466 Green Street  
San Francisco, CA 94113  
Tel: (415) 434-1403  
Fax: (415) 986-6779  
[info@publicmediacenter.org](mailto:info@publicmediacenter.org)  
<http://www.publicmediacenter.org>

Vanguard Communications  
1019 19th Street, NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 331-4323  
Fax: (202) 331-9420  
<http://www.vancomm.com/>

## **II. ALTERNATIVE MEDIA RESOURCES**

### **News services**

Alternet  
77 Federal Street, 2nd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
Tel: (415) 284-1420  
Fax: (415) 284-1414  
[alternet@alternet.org](mailto:alternet@alternet.org)  
<http://www.alternet.org>

American News Service  
289 Fox Farm Road  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
Tel: (800) 654-NEWS  
Fax: (802) 254-1227  
[media@americannews.com](mailto:media@americannews.com)  
<http://www.americannews.com>

Association of Alternative Newsweeklies  
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 822  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 822-1955  
Fax: (202) 822-0929  
<http://www.aan.org>

Independent Media Institute  
*Formerly Institute for Alternative Journalism*  
77 Federal Street, 2nd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
Tel: (415) 284-1420  
Fax: (415) 284-1414  
[thausman@iaj.xo.com](mailto:thausman@iaj.xo.com)  
<http://www.independentmedia.org>

Independent Press Association  
PO Box 191785  
San Francisco, CA 94199-1785  
Tel/Fax: (415) 896-2456  
<http://www.indypress.org>

### **Periodicals & publications**

*Adbusters*  
1243 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC  
V6H 1B7 Canada  
Tel: (604) 736-9401  
(800) 663-1243  
Fax: (604) 737-6021  
[Adbusters@adbusters.org](mailto:Adbusters@adbusters.org)  
<http://adbusters.org/magazine>

*American Journalism Review*  
University of Maryland  
1117 Journalism Building  
College Park, MD 20742-7111  
Tel: (301) 405-8803  
Fax: (301) 405-8323  
<http://ajr.newslink.org/ajrtoc.html>

*The American Prospect*  
5 Broad Street  
Boston, MA 02109  
Tel: (888) 687-8732  
<http://www.prospect.org>

*Columbia Journalism Review*  
700 Journalism Building  
2950 Broadway  
Columbia University  
New York, NY 10027  
Tel: (212) 854-1881  
Fax: (212) 854-8580

<http://www.cjr.org>

*Current*

1612 K Street, N.W., Suite 704

Washington, D.C. 20006

Tel: (202) 463-7055

Fax: (202) 463-7056

[current@ix.netcom.com](mailto:current@ix.netcom.com)

<http://www.current.org>

*Current is a biweekly newspaper about public broadcasting.*

*EXTRA!*

Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR)

130 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street

New York, NY 10001

Tel: (212) 633-6700

Fax: (212) 727-7668

[jnaureckas@fair.org](mailto:jnaureckas@fair.org) (Editor: Jim Naureckas)

<http://www.fair.org/extra/index.html>

*EXTRA! is a bimonthly magazine focusing on the news media.*

*The Independent Film & Video Monthly*

AIVF

304 Hudson Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10013

Tel: (212) 807-1400

Fax: (212) 463-8519

[info@aivf.org](mailto:info@aivf.org)

<http://www.aivf.org>

*In These Times*

2040 N. Milwaukee Avenue, 2nd Floor

Chicago, IL 60647-4002

Tel: (312) 772-0100

Fax: (312) 772-4180

<http://www.inthesetimes.com>

*Media and Values*

Media Action Research Center

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1901

New York, NY 10115

Tel: (212) 865-6690

Fax: (212) 663-2746

*Mother Jones*

731 Market Street, Suite 600

San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel: (415) 665-6637

Fax: (415) 665-6696  
<http://www.motherjones.com>

*Media File*

Media Alliance  
814 Mission Street, #205  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Tel: (415) 546-6334  
Fax: (415) 546-6218  
[info@media-alliance.org](mailto:info@media-alliance.org)  
<http://www.media-alliance.org>

*MS. Magazine*

20 Exchange Place, 22nd floor  
New York, NY 10005  
Tel: (212) 509-2092  
Fax: (212) 509-2407  
<http://www.msmagazine.com>

*The Nation*

33 Irving Place  
New York, New York 10003  
Tel: (212) 209-5400  
Fax: (212) 982-9000  
<http://www.thenation.com>

*The Progressive*

409 E. Main Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53701  
Tel: (608) 257-4626  
Fax: (608) 257-3373  
<http://www.progressive.org>

*Propaganda Review*

Media Alliance  
814 Mission Street, #205  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Tel: (415) 546-6334  
Fax: (415) 546-6218  
[info@media-alliance.org](mailto:info@media-alliance.org)  
<http://www.media-alliance.org>

*Public Citizen*

1600 20th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
Tel: (202) 588-1000  
<http://www.publiccitizen.org>

*Rethinking Schools*  
1001 E. Keefe Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53212  
Tel: (414) 964-9646  
Fax: (414) 964-7220  
<http://www.rethinkingschools.org>

*St. Louis Journalism Review*  
Webster University  
470 E. Lockwood, Room 414  
St. Louis, MO. 63119  
Tel: (314) 968-5905  
Fax: (314) 963-6104  
<http://www.websteruniv.edu/~review>

*UTNE Reader*  
1624 Harmon Place, Suite 330  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
Tel: (612) 338-5040  
Fax: (612) 338-6043  
<http://www.utne.com>

*Z Magazine*  
116 Botolph Street  
Boston, MA 02115  
Tel: (508) 548-9063  
Fax: (508) 457-0626  
<http://www.lbbs.org>

### **III. MEDIA SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **Organizations**

Adbusters Media Foundation  
1243 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC  
V6H 1B7 Canada  
Tel: (604) 736-9401  
(800) 663-1243  
Fax: (604) 737-6021

[Adbusters@adbusters.org](mailto:Adbusters@adbusters.org)  
<http://www.adbusters.org/information/foundation>

*A global network of artists, writers, students, educators and entrepreneurs who want to launch the new social activist movement of the information age. To this end, Adbusters Media Foundation publishes Adbusters magazine, operates their website and offers its creative services through PowerShift, their advocacy advertising agency.*

Alliance for Community Media  
666 11<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 806  
Washington, DC 20001

Tel: (202) 393-2650

Fax: (202) 393-2653

[acm@alliancecm.org](mailto:acm@alliancecm.org)

<http://www.alliancecm.org>

*A nationwide membership organization with regional chapters, ACM publishes Community Media Review, and Community Media Connection. ACM promotes media literacy and access.*

Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF)

304 Hudson Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10013

Tel: (212) 807-1400

Fax: (212) 463-8519

[info@aivf.org](mailto:info@aivf.org)

<http://www.aivf.org>

*AIVF, with nearly 5,000 members internationally, offers support and resources to independent artists, including The Independent Film & Video Monthly and several books.*

Benton Foundation

1800 K Street NW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Washington, DC 20006

Tel: (202) 638-5770

Fax: (202) 638-5771

[benton@benton.org](mailto:benton@benton.org)

<http://www.benton.org>

*Since 1981, the Benton Foundation has worked to realize the social benefits made possible by the public interest use of communications. Bridging the worlds of philanthropy, public policy and community action, Benton demonstrates and promotes the use of digital media to engage, equip and connect people to solve social problems.*

Center for Commercial-Free Public Education

1714 Franklin Street, Suite 100-306

Oakland, CA 94612

Tel: (510) 268-1100

[unplug@igc.org](mailto:unplug@igc.org)

<http://www.commercialfree.org>

*A national non-profit organization that addresses the issue of commercialism in our public schools. The Center provides support to students, parents, teachers and other concerned citizens organizing across the U.S. to keep their schools commercial-free and community-controlled.*

Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT)

1634 "Eye" Street NW, Suite 1100

Washington, DC 20006

Tel: (202) 637-9800

Fax: (202) 637-0968

<http://www.cdt.org/>

*CDT works to promote democratic values and constitutional liberties in the digital age. With expertise in law, technology, and policy, CDT seeks practical solutions to enhance free expression and privacy in global communications technologies.*

Center for Investigative Reporting

530 Howard Street, Suite 206

San Francisco, CA 94105-3007

Tel: (415) 543-1200

Fax: (415) 543-8311

<http://www.muckraker.org>

*Produces investigative reports for all media, provides investigative and editorial-consulting services to all media and nonprofit groups, conducts internships program and classes for journalism students and others.*

Center for Media Education (CME)

2120 L Street, NW Suite 200

Washington, DC 20037

Tel: (202) 331-7833

Fax: (202) 331-7841

<http://www.cme.org>

*Founded in 1991 to carry on the work of Action for Children's Television, CME's primary focus is on children and is dedicated to improving the quality of the electronic media. CME fosters telecommunications policymaking in the public interest through its research, advocacy, public education, and press activities.*

Center for Media Literacy (CML)

4727 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 403

Los Angeles, CA 90010

Tel: (323) 931-4177

Fax: (323) 931-4474

<http://www.medialit.org>

*CML's mission is to bring media literacy education to every child, every school and every home in North America through a variety of means including literacy educational materials and media literacy workshops, teacher trainings, seminars and special events.*

Citizens Communications Project

Institute for Public Representation (IPR)

Georgetown University Law Center

600 New Jersey Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20001

Tel: (202) 662-9535

Fax: (202) 662-9634

[gulcivr@law.georgetown.edu](mailto:gulcivr@law.georgetown.edu)

<http://www.law.georgetown.edu/clinics/ipr/telecom.html>

*The Project attempts to harness the benefits of new technologies, such as the Internet and digital television, for the public and ensure access, limit excessive concentrations of power, and promote diversity in traditional communication technologies.*

Citizens for Media Literacy (CML)

34 Wall Street, Suite 407

Asheville, NC 28801

Tel: (828) 255-0182

Fax: (828) 254-2286

<http://www.main.nc.us/cml>

*CML links media literacy with the concepts and practices of citizenship. CML promotes citizens' responsibility for free speech rights, provides assistance to citizen activists and journalists, publishes media analysis and criticism, and promotes public access to media.*

Cultural Environment Movement (CEM)

PO Box 31847

Philadelphia, PA 19104

Tel: (888) 445-4526

Fax: (215) 204-5323

[cem@libertynet.org](mailto:cem@libertynet.org)

<http://www.cemnet.org>

*CEM is an international coalition of over 250 organizations and 6300 individuals united in working for gender equity and general diversity in mass media employment, ownership and representation.*

Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR)

130 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street

New York, NY 10001

Tel: (212) 633-6700

Fax: (212) 727-7668

[fair@fair.org](mailto:fair@fair.org)

<http://www.fair.org>

*FAIR is a national media watch group that sponsors and publicizes studies of media content in an effort to correct for corporate bias and imbalance. FAIR advocates for "greater media pluralism and the inclusion of public interest voices in national debates."*

Free Press Association

PO Box 15548

Columbus, OH 43215

Tel: (614) 291-1441

*Maintains speakers bureau of reporters, editors, publishers, new photographers, and freelance writers to educate the public about a range of first amendment issues.*

Fund for Investigative Journalism

5540-32nd Street, NW

Washington, DC 20015

Tel: (202) 362-0260

[fundfij@aol.com](mailto:fundfij@aol.com)

<http://fij.org>

*The Fund for Investigative Journalism gives grants, ranging from \$500 to \$10,000, to reporters working outside the protection and backing of major news organizations and seeking help for investigative pieces involving corruption, malfeasance, incompetence and societal ills in general as well as for media criticism.*

Grassroots Media Network

1602 Chatham

Austin, TX 78723

Tel: (512) 459-1619

[gnn@grassrootsnews.org](mailto:gnn@grassrootsnews.org)

<http://www.onr.com/user/gnn/culture.html>

*Seek to support and expand the movement for democratic communications worldwide without regards to barriers imposed on us by any government, corporate or other body. Exist to be an alternative to the corporate and government media, which do not serve the struggle for liberty, justice and peace, nor enable the free expression of creativity.*

INFACT

46 Plympton Street

Boston, MA 02118

Tel: (617) 695-2525

Fax: (617) 695-2626

[infact@igc.apc.org](mailto:infact@igc.apc.org)

<http://www.infact.org>

*National grassroots organization seeks to stop life-threatening abuses by transnational corporations and increase their accountability to people around the world. Since 1977, educates the public about dangerous abuses of power by giant corporations and organizes millions of people to take action to change corporate behavior.*

Media Access Project

1800 K Street NW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Washington, DC 20006

Tel: (202) 232-4300

Fax: (202) 887-0305

<http://www.mediaaccess.org>

*Public interest law firm that works to assure that the print and electronic media inform the public fully and fairly on important social problems. MAP participates in conferences and congressional hearings and advises and represents local and national organizations seeking to make broadcast stations more responsive in programming and employment.*

Media Alliance

814 Mission Street, #205

San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel: (415) 546-6334

Fax: (415) 546-6218

[info@media-alliance.org](mailto:info@media-alliance.org)

<http://www.media-alliance.org>

*Encourages cooperation among writers, photographers, editors, broadcast workers, public relations people and others around mutually agreed upon projects that advance progressive positions on the issues affecting society.*

Media Education Foundation (MEF)  
26 Center Street  
Northampton, MA 01060  
Tel: (800) 897-0089 or (413) 586-4170  
Fax: (413) 586-8398

<http://www.mediaed.org/enter.html>

*MEF is a nonprofit educational organization devoted to media research and production of resources to aid educators and others in fostering analytical media literacy because a media literate citizenry is essential to a vibrant democracy in a diverse and complex society.*

Media Network  
39 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street. #403  
New York, NY 10011  
Tel: (212) 929-2663  
Fax: (212) 929-2732

*Operates clearinghouse of media products, sponsors film and video presentations and works with community groups to set up film and speaker programs.*

Media Watch  
PO Box 618  
Santa Cruz, CA 95061-0618  
Tel: (800) 631-0618  
Fax: (408) 423-6355

<http://www.mediawatch.com>

*Challenge abusive stereotypes and other biased images commonly found in the media. Does not believe in any form of censorship, especially the silencing of marginalized groups. Media Watch distributes educational videos, media literacy information and newsletters to help create more informed consumers of the mass media.*

National Citizens Communications Lobby  
Box 1876  
Iowa City, IA 52244-1876  
Tel: (319) 337-5555  
Fax: (319) 337-9019

[njohnson@inav.net](mailto:njohnson@inav.net)

<http://www.nicholasjohnson.org>

People for the American Way  
2000 M Street, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (800) 326-PFAW  
Or (202) 467-4999  
Fax: (202) 293-2672

[pfaw@pfaw.org](mailto:pfaw@pfaw.org)

<http://www.pfaw.org>

*People For the American Way organizes and mobilizes Americans to fight for fairness, justice, civil rights and the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. PFAW lobbies for progressive legislation and helps to build communities of activists.*

Project Censored

Communication Studies

Sonoma State University

1801 E. Cotati Avenue

Rohnert Park, CA 94928-3609

Tel: (707) 664-2500

Fax: (707) 664-2108

[project.censored@sonoma.edu](mailto:project.censored@sonoma.edu)

<http://www.sonoma.edu/ProjectCensored>

*Every year, Project Censored publishes a list of the leading stories ignored by “corporate” or “mainstream” media.*

PR Watch

Center for Media and Democracy, Inc.

520 University Avenue, Suite 310

Madison, WI 53703

Tel: (608) 260-9713

Fax: (608) 270-9714

[74250.735@compuserve.com](mailto:74250.735@compuserve.com)

<http://www.prwatch.org>

The Center for Media & Democracy is a nonprofit, public interest organization funded by individuals and nonprofit foundations and dedicated to investigative reporting on the public relations industry. The Center serves citizens, journalists and researchers seeking to recognize and combat manipulative and misleading PR practices.

Rocky Mountain Media Watch

Box 18858

Denver, CO 80218

Tel: (303) 832-7558

Fax: (303) 832-7558

[paulklite@idcomm.com](mailto:paulklite@idcomm.com)

<http://www.bigmedia.org>

*Based in Denver, RMMW monitors local media and helps citizens access the news media. It issues regular publications based on national studies of local television news coverage, among other activities.*

*Tyndall Report*

135 Rivington Street

New York, NY 10002

Tel: (212) 674-8913

*Publishes content analysis of national TV news outlets.*

Union for Democratic Communications  
Communications Department  
University of San Francisco  
2130 Fulton Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117 USA  
[femrich@chat.carleton.ca](mailto:femrich@chat.carleton.ca)

*Organization of researchers, teachers, media producers and community activists committed to fostering critical perspectives in communication theory and media production. Stages annual meeting, facilitates publication and media production, and publishes the Democratic Communiqué.*

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