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# **Evaluation of the CPB-funded National Minority Consortia**

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## **Executive Summary**

This report is intended to provide both an evaluation of the current state of the National Minority Consortia and recommendations to guide future goal setting and behavior. It is the result of seven months of reporting by the Coats2Coats team, including: site visits to each NMC organization; review of financial documents, carriage reports and strategic plans; interviews; and surveying stakeholders.

The evaluation covered a wide range of factors – collaboration, operations, governance, content, engagement and revenue development among them. Given that all of the NMC organizations have recently completed Inspector General audits of their operations, we focused broadly on best practices in administration and financial oversight rather than on compliance issues. Our recommendations focus at the strategic level rather than on tactical, day-to-day operations.

At its core, this report encourages a reconsideration of the working relationship between CPB and the NMC. This relationship should take the roles and responsibilities of all organizations into account, moving toward an approach defined by a collaborative communication style and built on clear, shared goals. It should focus on the future, with deeper emphasis on changing media consumption habits and demographics.

From the outset, we attempted to focus not on re-litigating past issues, disputes and disappointments, but instead on the potential for the NMC to inform a diverse and innovative future for public media. It is clear from our interviews with stakeholders, especially those within the NMC and CPB, that the relationship between these organizations has been largely defined by past experience.

For that reason, the key recommendation of this report is that CPB and the NMC undertake the work of building a dialogue based on mutually agreed upon goals, using a facilitator steeped in organizational development to guide that process.

Only when the dialogue between CPB and the NMC is goal-oriented and focused on a collaborative working style can progress be made on the other recommendations in this evaluation.

Beyond this issue, six areas of focus inform our evaluation. These six areas, along with headlines of our recommendations, are:

### **Creating consistent, actionable reporting on financials and content distribution**

The NMC quarterly reporting to CPB drives much of the administrative activity within each organization, and serves as the key touch point for interaction with CPB. Our recommendations in this area are built around the following goals:

- To provide uniform information, so each NMC reports the same types of data in a consistent manner.
- To ensure that contract administration meets CPB and Inspector General requirements.
- To use data visualization tools so that the information is synthesized in a more timely manner and becomes more directional and actionable for setting goals and understanding impact.
- To make reporting efficient so that the NMC staff have time to focus on more impactful tasks, such as station outreach, talent development and digital innovation.

### **Refocusing the metrics for gauging NMC performance**

Our reporting confirmed that the NMC believe they need to place heaviest emphasis on achieving PBS common carriage in order to meet CPB's expectations. While common carriage is important in reaching the largest potential broadcast audience, the contemporary media world is far too fragmented for a single metric to suffice.

PBS common carriage cannot encompass the diversity of channels that may make use of NMC content, nor can it entirely reflect the magnitude of underserved audiences that the NMC was created to

reach. To address the larger agenda, we envision an evaluation matrix designed to emphasize impact in addition to eyeballs and to recognize the contribution of transmedia platforms instead of a single broadcast channel.

In our reporting, NMC staff and stakeholders concurred that digital platforms represent the greatest opportunity for the NMC to reach diverse audiences and develop diverse talent that will participate in the public media system, now and in the future. We believe metrics applied to the NMC need to include success in transmedia platforms, especially digital media.

### **Elevating the NMC's role in experimentation in form, platform and audience engagement**

Media audiences are changing. Demographically, the universe of potential viewers is evolving toward a younger, more ethnically diverse makeup. Media consumers make use of multiple devices and channels to engage with content each day. Expectations of media experiences are tilting toward active, engaging dialogue and away from the legacy model of passive consumption.

The NMC are well positioned (and in fact intended) to connect with these new audiences and to make use of new forms of expression. Understanding how to produce content that connects with and engages audiences will heighten the impact of the NMC going forward. We urge development of concrete goals and specific deliverables to reward experimentation and uncover best practices that will serve the NMC and, by extension, CPB.

### **Mining the NMC's potential to develop talent for public media**

Our reporting found the NMC make deep connections to diverse creative communities. By leveraging these communities more effectively, the NMC can become resources to the public media ecosystem, both for new producing talent and for new ideas that spur projects to connect with diverse audiences.

Right now, there is no systematic way of tracking talent development and its impact on the broader system. Creating a plan to document networks reached by the NMC and to unleash opportunities in a more systematic way will serve not just the NMC, but also stations and the system as a whole.

### **Focusing on revenue development and diversification beyond CPB funding**

Revenue diversification is a stated goal for CPB and the NMC. But like any skill, diversification and development of revenue streams must be learned.

The NMC understand the importance of diversifying their revenue. Some have demonstrated their willingness to undertake that task. There have been limited, small-scale experiments in this area as well as inclusion of revenue diversification in long-range planning. But there is a lack of skill to carry out the plan and achieve that goal. Training is essential if revenue diversification is to be achieved.

### **Unleashing the power of community dialogue and engagement**

Over the course of our reporting, we have seen multiple examples of NMC projects that move beyond content distribution to engage with audiences and content creators (CAAMFest, PIC's Hawaiian Media Makers Conference, NBPC's 360). Media – including public media – are learning that engagement is a key prerequisite to connect and communicate with audiences.

Identifying smart experiments and documenting results are essential to guiding a smart engagement strategy. For the NMC to develop skill in engagement requires creating bandwidth for staff to focus on the task. It also requires cultivating deeper relationships with stations, content creators and media distribution organizations both inside and outside the public media system.

Building these networks – and developing the tools to manage the resulting relationships – will pay dividends for the NMC and the broader public media system.

The report that follows will cover the common issues among the NMC organizations; recommendations to guide the NMC mission; and findings regarding the individual NMC organizations. An appendix to this report provides detail about surveys and interviews that informed the findings.

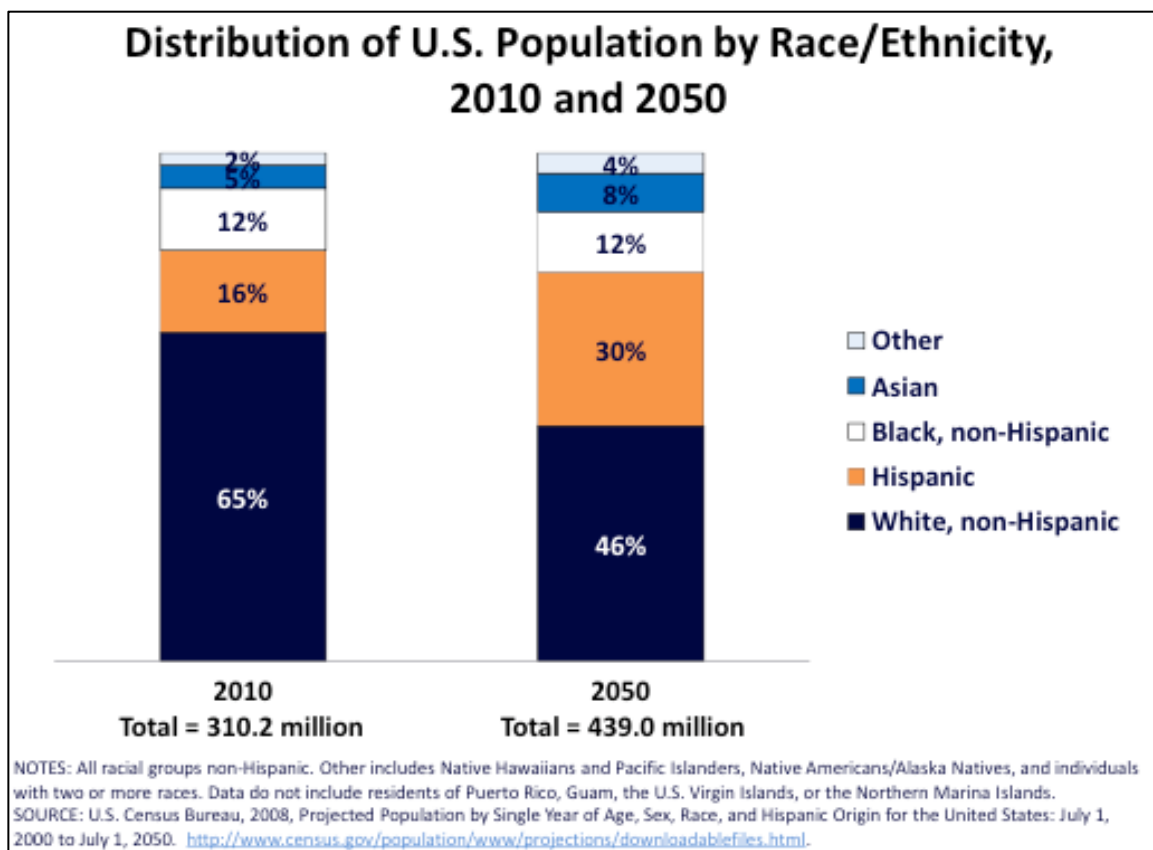
## **Section I: The NMC in Context**

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting contracted Coats2Coats to evaluate the National Minority Consortia across a spectrum of impact measurements for the period of 2010 through 2013. That evaluation begins with an acknowledgement of the NMC's place in a rich and evolving nexus of public media, shifting demographics and media consumption.

We begin with the demographics of a country that soon will become majority minority.

In 2014, the U.S. population was 318.8 million. Hispanic/Latino populations stood at more than 16 percent of the population. African Americans represented 12 percent of the population, and Asians had reached 5 percent of the total.

Census projections show just how rapidly this picture is changing. By 2050, minorities will surpass non-Hispanic white Americans to become the majority in the United States.



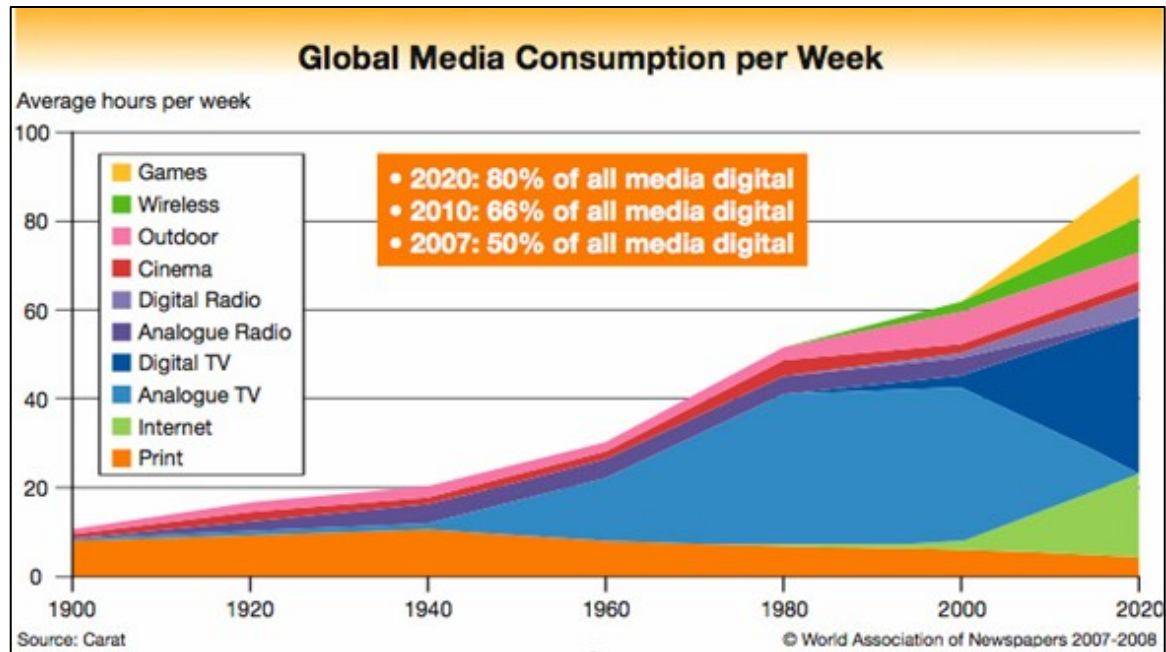


The NMC were intended to fund and develop programming to reflect this diversity. They also are charged with identifying and developing diverse talent for public media. It is an ongoing challenge, played out in an environment in which the need is becoming more pronounced as the nation's demographics continue to shift.

A session at the 2015 PBS Annual Meeting focused on the NMC and its role in meeting this challenge. "If we are going to secure our future, we need to make ourselves more accessible to diverse communities," said KQED senior VP and Chief Content Officer Michael Isip in that session. "In our recruitment, we need to use the NMC to network out to talent in these communities."

Others in station leadership say that, despite changing demographics, awareness remains an issue. "In my experience - and I've been here forever - the GMs are generally not connected with diverse cultures at all," said Leslie Wilcox, President & CEO of PBS Hawaii, during a site visit at PIC in Honolulu. "They don't consciously discriminate, but ... I don't see them casting a wide net for talent."

Concurrent with these shifts in national demographics, media have undergone tectonic shifts and disruptions that have fundamentally changed how communities of all ethnicities are informed, connect and engage. The NMC were created shortly after the first basic cable network was created - Ted Turner's superstation WTCG (which later became WTBS) in 1976 - and only five years after HBO launched via satellite. The Internet was a text-based, packet-network system for the Department of Defense and, while waning in popularity, citizens band radio was the mobile phone of the day.



Media consumption has shifted to digital, with analog TV being the most disrupted – largely by the Internet and by digital TV. By 2020, 80 percent of all media will be digital. For the NMC – and all of public broadcasting – this creates existential questions about content creation, distribution and audience engagement. The point was made at the PBS Annual Meeting by Toby Chaudhuri, VP of Strategic Communications and National Partnerships at PBS, who said, “There is no mainstream. There are multiple streams.”

While that shift is already well underway, the public media system remains largely focused on broadcast – and, within the medium, specifically on primetime programming. That focus has driven rewards and tensions in the system around not just platform but diversity of content.

Based on the popularity of such primetime shows as “Downton Abbey,” “Antiques Roadshow” and the Ken Burns series “The Roosevelts: An Intimate History,” PBS had the fifth-largest primetime household rating among networks during the 2013-14 season, according to Nielsen NPower. At the annual meeting, Beth Hoppe, PBS Chief Programming Executive and General Manager, General Audience Programming, told more than 1,200 attendees that “19 of

the 21 prime time hours we program were up” and “Sunday night viewership has increased 45 percent in the past three years.”

Some executives at the station level question that strategy. “We’re relying on a ton of imported British drama, and in effect under-investing in our own ability to produce things,” said Steve Bass, President and CEO of Oregon Public Broadcasting. “I don’t think that, long-term, you can build a sustainable public media strategy by buying a lot of programming. How do we reflect diversity in a strategy like that?”

Tensions over diversity in programming erupted a year ago when WNET announced it was going to move PBS documentary showcases *Independent Lens* and *POV* – programs that often feature NMC-funded films – from its main channel and replace them with reruns of PBS arts programming. Independent filmmakers protested, leading WNET, PBS, ITVS and American Documentary Inc. to launch a four-month “listening tour” on the subject.

As we further consider the context surrounding the NMC, it would be shortsighted to ignore the national dialogue on race and ethnicity, especially as it has evolved in the last year. The rise of social media and cellphone video has enabled the entire country to experience the events in Ferguson, Baltimore, Charleston and other parts of the country without the filter news organizations traditionally provided. The conversation about race has played out in real time and at the grassroots level, organized by hashtags like “Black Lives Matter.”

College campuses have become center stage in the dialogue about race, as students push the conversation to increasing prominence. Demonstrations at the University of Missouri in fall 2015 resulted in the resignation of the university’s president. The results may be less dramatic at other colleges, but the protests have demonstrated a willingness by young people to push past talk to action while also exposing their deep distrust of traditional media forms and outlets. These are seminal events in the lives of Millennials, certain to influence their thinking both about race and about media.

Thinking about how to provide cross-generational context for this dialogue is an important role for public media to play, but just as important is the connection to diverse voices – both in terms of content makers and audiences. The NMC can play a valuable role as a resource for the broader public media system. In fact, after the Charleston church shooting, National Black Programming Consortium Executive Director Leslie Fields-Cruz wrote a powerful blog post pointing to the resources NBPC can provide to advance the national dialogue on race – and included links to content from the other NMC organizations as well.

Given that context, the NMC sit at the intersection of what public media audiences looked like in the past and what they will look like in the future. More than ever, these groups represent an opportunity for public media to leverage the NMC as incubators for innovation.

## **Section II: Common Issues Among the NMC**

From the beginning of the evaluation, we recognized that each NMC organization is distinctive, and that it would be a mistake to approach the five groups as a unit.

There are rich opportunities for collaboration – and in fact, NMC members share best practices, opportunities and solutions for common problems regularly. But each NMC group establishes its own priorities for reflecting diverse voices and needs within their spheres of influence, and each manages unique challenges that arise as a result.

Taking the diversity of the NMC into account, there remain core issues and opportunities that apply to all five organizations. We explore those core issues in this section of the report; a separate section delves deeper into specific opportunities and challenges for each organization.

We begin by exploring the shared strengths of the NMC.

### **The NMC and Changing Media Landscape, Demographics**

As we documented in the introduction to this report, media and public dialogue in the United States face continued waves of change. Disruptive innovation is reshaping media, with new technology and applications arriving daily. At the same time, national demographics are shifting dramatically, moving America toward a majority-minority nation.

Public media has to adapt to these realities. We know from our experience in for-profit media that adaptation is too mild a term: transformative change is the only rational response in order to remain relevant.

CPB has an opportunity to look to the NMC as a laboratory of sorts in their approaches to content and engagement with diverse

audiences. Properly executed, what the NMC learn could provide best practices to the broader public media universe.

NBPC's experimentation with NBPC 360 is a promising example of what can happen when an NMC group works at the intersection of changing media and diverse audiences. A new funding initiative of NBPC, this program aims to help launch both non-fiction and fiction serial projects and digital interactive work, with an emphasis on new and emerging talent. An attractive component is linking producers to relationships with PBS stations for guidance and support.

"We have to train folks to begin producing stories in the ways people are watching. That is going to need to shape the way documentarians tell stories," said NBPC Board Chairman Eric Easter. "You still get film schools that want to do that long-form documentary, and that is just not how people are watching now. We'll need to shift into more episodic, more short-form. And that is also the easiest way to get (new content creators) seen. That is a critical disconnect, things that go into black holes and just don't get seen."

It is clear that the other NMC organizations are watching this effort closely. There is a real excitement in conversations about NBPC 360 as a potential model for developing new content forms, distributed through new platforms and created by emerging talent.

But this approach is risky, based on metrics by which the NMC currently are evaluated. Digital innovation doesn't deliver immediate returns in terms of broad audience or common carriage on PBS. The opportunity for the NMC organizations, and for CPB, is to build more support for innovation into reporting metrics, and to develop structured methods for documenting impact and sharing best practices throughout the system.

## **The Value of the Network**

In every site visit, we were struck by the power of each organization's network of contacts and supporters. Viewed

holistically, connections among staff members, board members, content creators and partnering organizations result in a powerful support and distribution system.

Content creators, especially, testified to the value of these networks. Media makers describe NMC organizations as residing at the center of a network that provides connection to both resources and audiences. Producers look to the NMC for funding but also for knowledge that can further their expertise in everything from developing technical skills to finding other sources of funding to making audience connections.

“This is like a huge web,” said Ciara Lacey, a filmmaker in Hawaii and PIC grantee. “That interconnectivity that PIC provides is so important. How to build that network is an important question — we can’t all stay in a bubble. The advocacy element for distribution and station relations is hugely important from my perspective. They’ve been very good at community outreach and community building.”

Most of all, producers valued the guidance and access to the public media system that the NMC provide. Over and over, we heard that it is the wealth of experience in building connections and navigating the system that helps introduce and nurture talent.

“I see, with LPB, that there is a real value in helping Latinos access the system,” said veteran filmmaker Phillip Rodriguez. “Latino populations in this country are still relative newcomers. Helping these newcomers access media and filmmaking — which requires confidence, even arrogance, capacity and funding — has a utility.”

“They supported me a lot as a filmmaker, not just supporting the film,” said Grace Lee, a CAAM grantee and producer of *American Revolutionary*. “This film took 10 years to make, and in the early stages when I was, in earnest, trying any way to get it made, Don Young from CAAM recommended me to the PBS Producers’ Academy. So I got a chance to meet a lot of people and understand how the whole system works.”

Because the current reporting process focuses on films and content as the primary NMC work products, the value of the network in developing emerging voices and talent for the system is under-documented and, consequently, under-valued.

## **Challenges and Opportunities for the NMC**

Our reporting identified three areas of challenge and opportunity for the NMC:

- Communication with CPB and documentation of impact
- Strengthening partnerships and collaboration, particularly at the station level
- Revenue diversification

### **Communication with CPB and Documentation of Impact**

The primary point of communication between the NMC groups and CPB is through quarterly reports. By their nature, these reports reflect one slice of NMC work, documenting financial accountability for both administrative and grantee funds, as well as content distribution and carriage.

There is no doubt that rigorous financial accountability is an absolute necessity, and there certainly is value in understanding where NMC programming finds a home. We heard from NMC executive directors that recent shifts in reporting away from narratives and toward spreadsheets have improved the process, making it easier and more transparent. Implicit in that viewpoint, however, is the fact that the previous process was time consuming and opaque. While the current system achieves better results, more improvement is needed to make reporting both useful and user-friendly.

Reporting issues center on three areas:

First is **frequency of and lack of continuity in reporting**.

Conversations with NMC staff and CPB personnel confirmed our



impression that quarterly reporting is not the best cycle for comprehensively documenting NMC financial activities and content distribution.

Given the pace of content creation/filmmaking, and the attendant pace of funding allocation, meaningful reporting would better fit a six-month time horizon. This six-month window is short enough to maintain accountability but long enough to reflect true progression in funding and deliverables obtained from grantees.

A lack of continuity characterizes the reporting relationship on both sides. NMC members complain that new direction from CPB on how to comply with grant language can require changes in metrics without warning or much discussion. Each time this happens, changes must be digested and implemented by the NMC staffs.

It is clear to us that, broadly speaking, financial reporting and report generation are not organizational strengths of the NMC groups. While there are individuals within the organizations who have abilities in these areas, the bench is not deep.

Couple that lack of organizational strength with the fact that each NMC group hews to its own budget and accounting processes, and the result is unnecessary reinvention of the wheel each time the reporting period rolls around. In our research, we found that spending on the same items might be documented five different ways, across five different budget formats and five different accounting categories.

Lengthening the time between reports isn't likely to resolve this problem; developing common budgets, financial accounts and reporting processes is a necessary next step.

The issue of documenting carriage is just as fraught. Creating spreadsheets that document where programs were carried results in a flat, one-dimensional experience that is little better than a tally sheet. Distribution is more dynamic than that, particularly outside the primetime arena. The goal should not be simply documenting that

programs were carried, but overlaying carriage with mapping programs. This can help identify both gaps that could be addressed and opportunities for deepening station relationships and community outreach.

On their own initiative, the NMC organizations have been experimenting with reporting in visual format, using the Tableau web application, that allows for visualization of a range of financial, demographic and distribution factors. Originating with an experiment at Vision Maker Media, organizations began feeding financial data and carriage information into Tableau. The result is a strongly visual and dynamic presentation that is easily updated. The greatest value of this is that the information can be tracked over time and compared to the latest data, providing directional information that can be used to guide decision-making about investments of time, money and effort.

The visualization project currently is on hold because the graduate student who implemented Vision Maker's solution completed his coursework and moved on. But the concept holds great promise as a method for developing reports to track relevant information and derive actionable data.

The second issue is **what the reports don't explain about NMC activities and their impact.**

Financial accountability is foundational for any organization that makes grants with public funds.

But reporting that focuses on financial accountability at the expense of other activities is certain to miss important issues of impact and best practices. We believe that is the case with the current NMC/CPB relationship.

We heard from stakeholders on both sides that the current structure provides line of sight into how money is spent and on the timeline for achieving deliverables.

Because quarterly reports serve as the basis of the interaction between the NMC groups and CPB, they also shape the nature of conversation. What is left out is dialogue about innovation, about talent development, about community engagement, about potential partnerships and about best practices that could inform work within the NMC and the system.

The third issue is that the **relationship between the NMC and CPB is built largely on issues of contract enforcement and compliance, leaving insufficient room for dialogue about mission and goals.**

Financial reporting and regulation are tools that are essential to achieving impact: Organizations must take care of the fundamentals in order to build and maintain trust that work is done properly.

The emphasis on the PBS common carriage metric creates expectations that aren't easily met, given the availability of programming slots and the pace at which content is generated.

Financial and carriage reports aren't, in themselves, impact. There is a hunger within the NMC for more substantive dialogue with CPB, for shared goal setting and for discussion about what is working, where there are opportunities, which risks are justified. This conversation has to be intentional, because it will not happen organically based on the current reporting relationship.

### **Strengthening partnerships and collaboration, particularly at the station level**

When we began this evaluation, we wanted to assess opportunities for deeper collaboration among the NMC organizations.

While there is always room for improvement, we were pleased to find that the NMC place high value on collaboration and sharing among the organizations. Deep and regular communication happens outside of scheduled calls and meetings at public media events. The conversation goes deep into the organizations, from executive

directors to staff. NMC groups look for opportunities to work together on content and talent development; share best practices; and work on mutually beneficial projects, such as the Tableau visualization effort.

Beyond their relationships with peer organizations and with CPB, the greatest opportunity for strengthening NMC collaboration lies within the public media system itself. Each NMC organization has key relationships within public media. Considering the limited bandwidth within each organization, thinking more strategically about building collaborations and partnerships inside the system is vital. Developing a digital strategy for engagement could offer a smart focus, given that all organizations have needs in these areas.

While major market stations and distribution organizations know about the NMC groups and their work, many mid-market and smaller stations profess less familiarity. Developing a shared strategy for ongoing outreach – informed by information on audiences and opportunities that the Tableau visualization project could help reveal – might help elevate the NMC as sources of not just programming but also expertise.

### **Revenue diversification**

Members of the National Minority Consortia have sought to augment funding from CPB in a number of ways. These include:

- Foundation grants
- Membership and donations
- Corporate giving
- Underwriting
- DVD sales of NMC-funded/produced content
- Events
- Merchandise

While this list is broad, overall success in raising funds to support the NMC missions has been meager, inconsistent and unfocused. In site visits and interviews, all the groups discussed their need to find significant sources of revenue to fund production of diverse content,

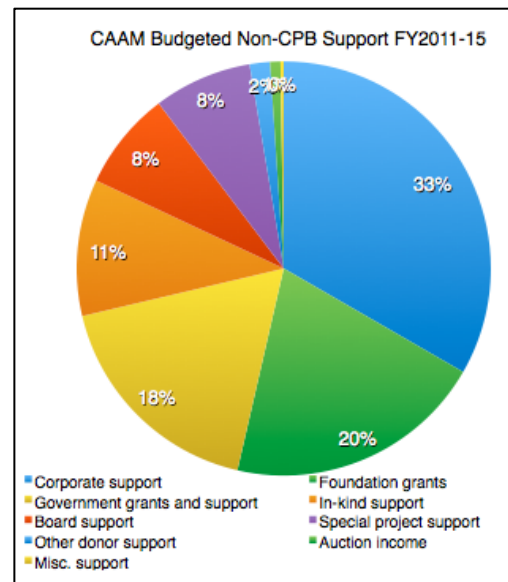
help public media reach new audiences and develop relationships and expertise in independent film. They are not as clear about where to find such funds – or how to access them.

For example, in 2012 and 2013, PIC earned more from investment income than from donors, royalties, sales of videos and books, and other categories.

	CPB grant revenue recognized	Funds released from temporary restrictions	Investment income	Other income	Sales of videos, books, and other products – net	Royalties income	Unrestricted contributions and donations	Total revenue and support
FY 2010	\$1,028,001.00	\$178,116.00		\$27,145.00	\$9,725.00		\$138.00	\$1,243,125.00
FY 2011	\$1,231,892.00	\$52,894.00	\$2,367.00	\$32,849.00	\$25,879.00		\$6,930.00	\$1,352,811.00
FY 2012	\$1,658,919.00	\$0.00	\$52,256.00	\$2,137.00	\$10,759.00	\$1,480.00		\$1,725,551.00
FY 2013	\$1,483,752.00	\$17,015.00	\$34,974.00	\$12,705.00	\$13,853.00	\$14,077.00		\$1,576,376.00
FY 2014	\$1,547,524.00	\$35,420.00	\$39,068.00	\$9,265.00	\$7,864.00	\$6,651.00		\$1,645,792.00
Total	\$6,950,088.00	\$283,445.00	\$128,665.00	\$84,101.00	\$68,080.00	\$22,208.00	\$7,068.00	\$7,543,655.00

CAAM has secured other funding sources for specific films, such as a \$100,000 MacArthur Foundation grant for “Wounds We Carry” and \$200,000 from the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation for the “Relocation Arkansas” documentary. The majority of CAAM’s success in procuring grant funds has been related to CAAMFest.

CAAM appears strongest among the NMC in generating non-CPB revenue, with revenues from CAAMFest delivering a large part of that income. It also has robust film distribution sales and rentals, and a solid base of membership. All of this adds up – non-CPB revenue accounts for around half of CAAM’s revenue, sometimes as high as 63 percent. This is the best of all NMC organizations and shows the strongest pace for growing even further beyond what it receives each year.



“You can just see from our charts and plans and budgets that you just get up to this level and \$1.5 million is a healthy amount over \$1.3,” said Stephen Gong, CAAM executive director. “But we could clearly be at \$2-3 million, and the impact would still keep growing and growing. I don’t know how much larger I’d want CAAM to be at all, against continuing to raise other money.”

In its 2013-15 business plan, LPB emphasized three goals that are straightforward and attainable, but also integral to the future success of the organization. It added an additional goal of increasing diversity of financial support. This section names several ways this could be done – specifically, corporate fundraising, foundations, endowments and individual donors – and theorizes that achieving other goals will help achieve this one.

LPB’s goal in its 2013-15 strategic plan was to increase revenue from foundation grants to 15% of the total, endowments to 6%, corporate contributions to 5% and individual donations and membership to 2%. LPB’s interest in further diversifying its revenue demonstrates that it recognizes there is a limit to effectiveness if it remains more than 90 percent reliant on government funds.

In order to attain its fundraising goal, LPB said it would need to hire a consultant to develop a strategy for corporate appeals.

Likewise, NBPC highlighted revenue diversification as a key goal in its 2011-2013 business plan. NBPC targeted corporate funding and sponsorships, foundations, individual donors and service fees as possible opportunities for funding. (In data cited in its business plan, 90 percent of the “service fees” category were government-related monies.)

Despite this ambitious goal, in 2011, NBPC’s success in non-CPB funding came from just four sources – Comcast (\$2,500), Ford Foundation (\$100,000), NEA (\$50,000) and New York State Council on the Arts (\$5,000).

Aside from CPB funding, Vision Maker Media earned other revenue primarily from video sales, grants, and donations. (It noted \$22,220 in underwriting in 2011, but that was the only year in which it generated revenue on such a scale.) VMM also notes in-kind contributions as non-CPB sources of funding.

Those categories represent a strong and diversified revenue wheel. The fact that VMM has driven more than \$100,000 per year from video sales points to a possible best practice for other NMC members – despite difficulties of rights management, the fact that NMC grants to filmmakers generally are not enough to secure rights and the trend away from physical media (DVDs, CDs, books) to digital delivery.

Within the other categories, though, there are inconsistencies and concerns.

- Contributions: A highly disproportionate share of donations to Vision Maker come from the state of Nebraska. In the period from 2010 to 2015, Vision Maker reported 246 donations, including 57 from Nebraska. While an organization dedicated to Native American media might not receive donations from all 50 states, it conceivably could find success in raising funds from residents of states with a high Native American population, such as New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma and Alaska. However, these states combined for just 20 contributions (compared to Nebraska's 57).
  - Interestingly, these states performed somewhat better in media sales than in donations, with Alaska's 1,656 sales exceeding Nebraska's 1,367, and the other three also performing fairly strongly by comparison (Arizona: 949, New Mexico: 648, Oklahoma: 491). This implies to us that Vision Maker has opportunities for publicizing their mission and encouraging people to contribute
- Other grants: This category swings widely year-to-year, showing no sign of building on previous successes. For example, in 2010, VMM received \$75,600 in other grants; in

2011, it logged \$1,208; in 2012 that category sprang to \$160,754; and in 2013 it halved to \$74,337.

These examples point to a shared need for all NMC members. Revenue generation outside of what they receive from CPB is not a core skill or focus at any NMC group. There are experiments and some successes, but we did not find the kind of consistent effort needed to develop an ongoing, sustainable earned revenue strategy.

While no one interviewed or surveyed for this evaluation expects the NMC groups to be self-sufficient, it's clear that they must grow new revenue streams to be successful in their mission and to grow beyond their current state.

Building and executing on a revenue strategy will be different at each organization because their communities are different. While a larger reliance on foundation funding may work for LPB and NBPC, PIC may need a revenue wheel more reliant on underwriting and merchandise sales. Expanding VMM's donor base seems an obvious priority, while further leveraging the revenue potential of CAAMFest is worth pursuing.

At the station level, NMC content has sometimes been used to assist PBS stations during pledge drives to show diversity of audience and value – but not consistently and in some cases not at all.

Revenue diversification, like partnerships and collaborations, needs to be part of a holistic strategy and not viewed opportunistically. As media usage continues to change, some opportunities (DVD sales) will wither; looking for opportunities that align with mission and audience, and pursuing those strategically, will be key to success.



### **Section III: Analysis Items from The Request for Proposal**

The request for proposal for this evaluation project outlined several specific areas for inquiry. In this section, we will report on our findings in those areas generally, while providing specific input about performance within each NMC organization.

#### **Impact of Funded Broadcast and Digital Content**

Each of the organizations has customized its approach to developing content with impact based on their own particular mission, communities and audience targets. We'll review each of those strategies below.

In general, these factors are true across all the NMC:

- Common carriage and placement in the national schedule remain the primary impact metric for broadcast content.
- Opportunities for placing content in those spots are limited; the number of hours is finite and the competition to fill them is considerable.
- Each NMC organization has developed strategies and relationships to get their content in front of as many eyes as possible.
- While approaches to digital strategy vary, all of the NMC organizations are recognizing that there are real opportunities here, especially with young and emerging audiences.

This last point is especially important. As mobile viewing and cord-cutting increase, the need to have a strong digital strategy will become vital for any content organization seeking to remain relevant.

In the section that follows, we'll review the key strategies that distinguish the approaches of each NMC organization to creating impactful content for broadcast and digital channels.

## **CAAM**

Perhaps the best case study for impactful content from CAAM is the “Life on Four Strings” film. In this instance, CAAM served as the production company for the film, mentoring and advising the film’s director in producing his first feature. The film, completed in 2012, aired on PBS in 2013 with a rebroadcast in 2014.

This is a film that was commissioned by CAAM. CAAM leveraged fund-raising, built outreach efforts and community events, such as a premiere accompanied by a concert by the film’s subject. CAAM leverage digital platforms as well, with content such as an online contest for ukulele players.

“Life on Four Strings” exemplifies CAAM’s current approach to developing impactful content: Moving beyond content acquisition and distribution to take a greater role in developing high-impact content with potential for national audiences, building community engagement and digital “hooks” along the way.

It’s a strategy that focuses on developing content with high potential for national audiences and a “long tail” – content that has value on air, online and in person. And it is a strategy that calls for involvement by CAAM in all facets of the process: developing content, placing content, developing an engagement and events strategy and executing on it.

## **LPB**

Of all the NMC organizations, LPB is focused most intensely on getting content into the national schedule. The intensity of that focus has paid dividends in the amount of content that appears on PBS; by the common carriage metric, LPB is the biggest success story in the NMC.

To do this, LPB focuses grants on production and completion of films destined for PBS. This has meant a strategic decision to give fewer grants and focus on accelerating the production timeline. For example, “Children of Giant” received two, \$100,000 LPB grants to

enable production and post-production, shortening the timeline and getting the film to air more quickly.

The other key part of the strategy has meant building a strong brand in *Voces*, creating a unifying element for its content that build recognition and leverages a reputation for quality. LPB has pursued a targeted market strategy to build momentum for its content in cities that are key to the national strategy.

One result of this focus is that producers, even established ones, look to LPB as an organization that can open doors to national audiences.

With the emphasis on content for national broadcast, LPB puts less focus on shorter form and digital-specific content. The emphasis on content for national audiences extends to digital content as well, by aiming to fund digital productions that have the greatest potential for use by PBS.org.

LPB's strategy is an integrated one and drives decision-making from start to finish in terms of what content to pursue and the methodology to use.

## **NBPC**

Among the NMC, NBPC has made the biggest shift in terms of strategy and approach away from reliance on traditional broadcast audiences and toward building a digital future.

This shift influences how NBPC looks against the existing, broadcast-centric metric. But the changes are likely to pay dividends by building new competencies in digital media and connection to new and emerging audiences.

NBPC is making this shift by maintaining a strong presence in broadcast with programming that is core to its mission: "180 Days" in national programming and AfroPop as a strong program brand distributed broadly.

The transition into digital content that started with content like “Black Folk Don’t” has reached a new level with NBPC 360, a fascinating experiment in producing innovative, impactful content *and* developing new talent pools at the same time. While the content does not have the reach that broadcast does right now, the capacity NBPC is building is vital to impact in the digital age.

## **PIC**

PIC faces challenges of distance and community size. That said, PIC has been following tested strategies for developing impactful content by building a unified brand. Pacific Heartbeat provides a consistent identity for PIC content, allowing it to develop a following among stations on the continent.

PIC has the strongest strategic planning process of any NMC, and that is reflected in its approach to impactful content. PIC recognizes the value of partnering and relationship building to enhance coverage, working closely with ITVS, with other NMC partners (CAAM, Vision Maker).

PIC leverages its relationship with the World Channel as initial distributor of Pacific Heartbeat. The strategy there of airing first on the The World Channel and then making content available at the station level has built awareness for PIC.

PIC has been focused on building relationships at the station level and with distribution partners as part of the strategic plan, with an eye toward raising awareness and identifying more opportunities for distribution of the content it is developing.

## **Vision Maker Media**

Vision Maker’s approach leverages long-tail content and relationships, taking advantage of the educational strategy and outreach.

“Standing Bear’s Footsteps” is an excellent case study in content with long-term impact. The film received exposure on the PBS

National Program Service. It's continuing to enjoy active use by schools, and has served as the basis for an e-book. A Great Plains Symposium on the subject was held in 2015.

"Warrior Women," which is currently in production, holds some of the same potential. Produced by leveraging funding with ITVS and Firelight Media, the plan for "Warrior Women" also involves community events.

Vision Maker is reaching out as well to build content relationships in other public media arenas. For instance, Vision Maker is working with Inside Energy, a Local Journalism Center funded by CPB, to develop content on the intersection of energy exploration and Native lands issues.

### **Effectiveness of Operations and Administration**

The NMC organizations have struggled in the past with administrative issues, but our evaluation shows signs of significant progress here.

In some of the organizations, this is the result of new leadership and a fresh set of eyes on processes. The Inspector General reviews have served a valuable role in identifying areas for improvement and standardization, and the NMC organizations have taken those reviews very seriously and constructively.

This evaluation team regularly looks at non-profit organizations in other areas of our work. Overall, we would place the NMC in the mid tier of organizations we have reviewed in terms of systems of tracking and oversight of finances, projects under way and deliverables. All of the organizations were able to provide us with strategic plans, current budgets, detailed carriage reports and a review of their long-term contract tracking process.

The fact that the organizations are tracking a far-flung group of grantees, over a long period of time, makes contract tracking the most time-consuming and inconsistent piece of the administrative puzzle. It is a challenge to keep current with such a wide-ranging

group of grantees, some of whom may no longer be producing content actively. The fact that the grantees themselves – creative individuals working on shoestring budgets – are not the strongest administrators only adds to the complexity. We were impressed with the efforts of the NMC to educate and prepare grantees for this aspect of their work.

This is an area that bears further study to understand opportunities for a more uniform, centralized process.

A real opportunity for strengthening the NMC operationally lies in the Tableau data collection and visualization project. This effort, initiated by Vision Maker Media and adopted by the full NMC, would result in more common data sets and more actionable information. It would make tracking content use, audience metrics and contract/grantee information cleaner and more uniform.

A review of the administrative issues by organization follows:

### **CAAM**

- CAAM recently had a change in personnel in its finance and administration position. With fresh eyes in this role, the organization embarked on a six-month effort to clean its data and ensure contract administration was up to date.
- The Tableau project was a prod in this effort, because data would need to be more uniform and current for input into the database.
- Contract administration tracking is an area of increased focus, as it is for all the NMC. CAAM has spent considerable energy on tracking older contracts and the status of content over the full time horizon.
- CAAMFest adds a dimension to administration and operations that is not present in the other NMC organizations. Tracking for this event, which in many ways functions more like a traditional nonprofit organization, requires systems for tracking ticket sales and issues related to event management.
- Of the NMC organizations, CAAM was behind the curve in terms of the systems and process that track contracts,

deliverables and financials. The data cleanup effort and the review of contracts have helped bring CAAM up to speed. CAAM will be one of the major beneficiaries of the Tableau project, as it helps create more common reporting while continuing to allow for organizational differences (such as CAAMFest).

- CAAM's Strategic Plan was a bit disconnected from the organization's tactical execution. While it provides a clear guiding mission and specifics around key tactics necessary to support that mission, it did not seem connected to organizational decision-making on a practical level. As the organization puts together its next strategic plan, this should be an area for increased focus.

## **LPB**

- The tight focus on national programming helps to unify the reporting and accountability pieces. With a common target come more uniform processes.
- LPB has focused its resources intensely on getting content produced and finished on a rigorous timeline to air. This led to decisions to outsource marketing of content, a smart investment of resources in terms of providing focus and expertise. This also provides a more consistent source of feedback on outreach and results.
- Like CAAM, LPB has been engaged in more rigorous tracking of contracts across the longer term. The need for this long-term tracking represents an opportunity for a more centralized and uniform approach, rather than continuing to draw on resources within individual NMC organizations to perform such a similar, specialized task.
- LPB's strategic plan is tightly focused and includes specific, measurable goals. It is clear that the plan guides LPB in its decision-making in almost every way, from the projects it funds to decisions about which tasks to do internally and which to outsource/partner to do.

## **NBPC**

- NBPC's strategic plan is the driving force in the organization's move to a more digital focus. The nature of that strategy – keeping an anchor firmly in the broadcast world while stretching to reach new audiences on new platforms – means that impact has to be tracked iteratively.
- That has implications for the administration and reporting process that NBPC is working to meet. NBPC is moving into a more asynchronous grant cycle, with NBPC 360 looking at shorter funding timelines that traditional film production would require.
- NBPC staff is very aware of these differences and is tracking across multiple planes simultaneously. This has made for a daunting challenge in keeping track of both shorter term and longer term grantees, and has definitely increased the internal workload to meet reporting requirements.
- NBPC is a best-practice organization when it comes to providing grant recipients with checklists up front outlining what will be required in terms of reporting on both the progress of their work and their spending against the grant. This is hugely helpful in the reporting process – and more importantly, in ensuring there are no surprises and that work is progressing appropriately.

## **PIC**

- We identified PIC's strategic plan as a best practice. It is thorough, aligned to mission and (most importantly) actionable. PIC has taken the essential next step of developing a detailed tactical plan, with deliverables tracked along a timeline for each fiscal year.
- This practice is important for two reasons: 1) it makes reporting a cleaner process across all factors; 2) most importantly, it helps the organization focus on tasks that impact the overall strategic goal.
- PIC's financial reporting is another best practice. PIC does an exemplary job of maintaining accurate, up to date financial reporting. PIC uses QuickBooks and has set up clear, uniform budgeting and accounting categories, which helps with



deriving actionable financial reports. This makes not only for better reporting to CPB but for better decision-making on the ground.

- PIC's operational and administrative process suggest opportunities for common approaches to budgeting and accounting, as well as best practices for building effective strategic plans.

### **Vision Maker Media**

- Vision Maker benefits tremendously on the administrative and operational front from its relationship with NET. NET's guidance on financial planning policy led Vision Maker to eliminate an earlier issue with deficit spending.
- Vision Maker is now on the NET/University of Nebraska timekeeping and payroll system, which represents significant savings and provides clear documentation.
- NET's chief financial officer serves as treasurer of the VMM board, which brings an additional level of rigor to their operations. He has assisted in keeping track of production contracts and royalty payments, as well as in evaluating the producer grant process.
- Having this level of financial and systems expertise as part of the board has served Vision Maker well and could be a model to consider for the NMC overall.
- Vision Maker was the leader in investigating and testing the Tableau data visualization project for the NMC.

### **Role as an Incubator of Diverse Public Talent/Effectiveness of work with Independent and Station-based Producers**

Through our site visits and interviews, it became clear that the two areas are deeply linked in the work of the NMC. In fact, there may be no other factor in reviewing the effectiveness of the NMC that more permeates all the work than these functions.

The NMC takes seriously the roles in developing diverse talent and in serving as an important connection point for producers. The networks each organization has built within its own communities (both broadly defined and within the producing community) is

significant and, we would posit, a resource for public media that would not be easily replaced or duplicated.

Beyond their own networks, the NMC organizations have connections and line of sight into other networks that are not generally a part of the public media community. While this is true for all of the NMC, it is especially valid for PIC and Vision Maker, which work in smaller diverse communities with smaller pools of producing talent from which to draw. In both of those cases, the organizations are viewed as touchstones in the broader community, assets that provide connection and storytelling capacity that aren't found anywhere else.

The key, then, is how to leverage the power of these connections more effectively for both public media and, more broadly, in service to audiences. Some of the responsibility lies with the NMC organizations themselves; all of them are undertaking more concerted outreach efforts.

What follows is a summary of each organizations role in talent incubation and work with producers:

### **CAAM**

- As CAAM has evolved, the approach has shifted to move beyond program acquisition and distribution to training and developing future storytellers. The mission has evolved from being a media gatekeeper to more focus on the types of stories being told and the variety of storytelling methods.
- Generating ideas and commissioning filmmakers to develop those ideas has become a key part of CAAM's evolution to a more "full service" organization when it comes to working with filmmakers/grantees.
- Part of the filmmaker commissioning process is looking for filmmakers who are "on the cusp." The project then can be a way of developing that filmmaker and embedding him/her into the NMC/public media system
- The Yee Fellowships have shifted their focus to align with this, providing more funds and closer mentoring and emphasizing a

mid-career approach: “a career counselor of sorts who can help guide professional development.”

- CAAM is more focused on articulating the unique value it can provide for diverse talent and producers: What were you producing before, and where was it being seen? Did we achieve placement into broader audiences?

## **LPB**

- LPB’s focus on maximizing visibility through national broadcast defines its relationships with producers: LPB evaluates proposals with this goal in mind.
- Producers who work with LPB support and appreciate this approach. Young producers know they will get significant support in terms of feedback that will make their content stronger.
- Experienced producers view LPB as a valuable liaison with PBS and national groups.
- LPB works with producers to hone their content, ensuring that even “rough” cuts will be strong and demonstrate appeal to broader, national audiences.
- The strategy of making fewer grants for larger sums means that producers have a leg up on other fund-raising efforts they must pursue to make their films. LPB support is “proof of concept,” and that can help filmmakers shorten their production timeline – a significant pain point.
- This approach, compared to other NMC approaches, could affect the number of younger, less experienced producers in the pipeline. To compensate, LPB works with NALIP on training and outreach.

## **NBPC**

- NBPC’s shift in approach to focus on experimentation in shorter formats and more digital content is opening up new pathways for producers and talent to access the system.
- NBPC 360 is a promising approach to talent development because it looks at content/talent/distribution holistically instead of as separate points in the process.

- The 360 process gave producers the opportunity for rich feedback – even for those who did not eventually win financial support.
- Connecting grant recipients to PBS stations that will provide guidance and incubation of their work is a best practice – it provides professional development while embedding emergent producers inside the system.
- NBPC understands this is an iterative process. Its Digital Open Call reached a producing community of about 200 to 250 producers and drew 60-70 applications each time. NBPC used that as an opportunity to build community; by the 360 Open Call, 1,000 producers registered in the producer portal, with 160 to 170 applications.

## **PIC**

- Given its geographic challenges and small producing community, it is vital for PIC to view itself as a node in the larger filmmaking and content community in the Pacific Islands. The organization and its leadership embrace this role.
- PIC works directly with producers and grantees to hone proposals, organize their projects and approaches to filmmaking and develop plans for finding funding.
- PIC recognizes the challenges of training and professional development for its producer community. PIC provides a steady source of support and feedback and leverages the network of filmmakers effectively not just for connection but for professional development.
- The Hawaiian Media Makers Conference is highly valued among content creators in the Pacific Islander community as an opportunity for mutual support, gathering ideas and trading experiences and skill sets.
- PIC's connection into the system cannot be overstated as a value to the producing community. A small, physically distant community must have someone facilitating connection into the public media system. PIC provides that, and works very hard to build strong station relationships and connections to other public media organizations.

### **Vision Maker Media**

- Given the size and geographic distribution of its producing community, Vision Maker has defined its role in terms of professional development/training and connection to the system.
- More than any of the NMC organizations we assessed, Vision Maker faces a skills development issue in its producing community. The staff uniformly defines the lack of production expertise in Native America as a major challenge.
- Vision Maker has a training producer on staff who works with people in the field, helping develop skills on the job.
- Vision Maker works actively in training in formal settings such as producer conferences and with other filmmaking organizations such as Sundance and Tribeca, helping to provide connection and skills development for emergent filmmakers.
- Recognizing that it may be easier to reach audiences across wide geographies through digital platforms, Vision Maker has begun to extend its training into that arena. A “hackathon” with Tribeca was a successful event, developing a wide range of ideas for deploying digital technology for telling Native American stories.

### **Growth of Diverse Public Media Audiences/Work with stations and organizations to expand public media’s reach into diverse communities**

Measuring the impact of the NMC in growing diverse audiences is tricky business. While we might be able to posit correlation based on currently collected data, causation would be extraordinarily difficult to prove.

That said, the value of creating and broadcasting more diverse, inclusive content is an intuitive part of expanding diverse audiences. Doing that both in traditional channels and on emerging digital platforms is another intuitive step. And bringing more diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, experience and background fully into the

public media system is perhaps the most intuitive step of all, in that it builds a framework, support system and deep knowledge/ understanding that enable all of this work.

The NMC see their role in the system as vital to the growth of diverse audiences. Developing diverse talent is a piece of that equation. Working with stations and other organizations that are part of or supportive of public media is another key piece.

Here are some of the ways the NMC is developing that capacity:

### **CAAM**

- CAAM has worked with KQED in San Francisco consistently to identify opportunities for its grantees. As CAAM moves more into the content incubation role, the staff has continued to reach out to KQED; together, they designed “Off the Menu” and secured PBS funding.
- CAAM experimented with station partnerships for community outreach for “Last Days in Vietnam,” working directly with stations in Alaska, Nashville, Syracuse and Nebraska.
- CAAM’s partnership with WUNC and the Greensboro Historical Museum on the documentary “This is My Home Now” built connections into a part of the country not often thought of for content on the Asian American experience.
- CAAM works closely with ITVS, also based in San Francisco, to look for points of leverage in terms of funding and distribution of content.
- CAAMFest’s appeal to diverse attendees in San Francisco, and its growing reputation as a destination event for filmgoers, is connecting producers and their content directly to audiences. CAAMFest plays an important role for CAAM in making its value proposition to an influential audience and connecting that proposition to the public media brand.

### **LPB**

- LPB has the strongest ties as an NMC organization to PBS and has developed an ongoing, productive dialogue that is mutually beneficial to both organizations. Producers see LPB as a vital

- link to PBS, and PBS views LPB as a source of high-quality content.
- LPB has focused its station outreach demographically and geographically, building partnering relationships with stations where the potential for impact is high. LPB uses these relationships both in an advisory role and as a means of promoting content and developing community engagement strategies.
  - LPB is working to strengthen the relationship with KOCE (PBS SoCal), recognizing the potential for mutual benefit – leveraging high-value Latino content for PBS SoCal, and developing relationships for LPB.
  - LPB has developed high-value partnerships with NALIP for training and with the Los Angeles Latino Film Festival, which provides exposure for LPB producers to a key community.

### **NBPC**

- NBPC leveraged relationships with stations to support NBPC 360, a unique content, distribution and talent development initiative.
- By embedding NBPC 360 recipients in PBS stations, NBPC is providing professional development, identifying pathways for content and building connections between emerging talent and the public media system.
- NBPC draws on its relationship with The World Channel to gain exposure for AfroPop, an important piece of the ongoing broadcast mission.
- NBPC is deeply connected to the larger African-American film producing community and is able to provide guidance and networking among producers as well as links to public media opportunities.

### **PIC**

- PIC maintains strong connections to stations and public media organizations, both to build awareness of its own work and connections to its filmmaking community.

- A PIC staff member commutes between San Francisco and Honolulu once a month, keeping PIC connected to organizations like ITVS and CAAM.
- PIC has two positions on its board for public television station representatives, an important piece of building connection and providing insight into needs/issues at the station level.
- PIC is working to build a stronger, more collaborative relationship with PBS Hawaii; the CEO is on PIC's board, and their partnership on Pacific Heartbeat opened the door for a deeper relationship.
- PIC's executive director has a reputation within the system as a strong networker, someone who builds and maintains relationships at the station level – an essential component for this organization.

### **Vision Maker Media**

- Vision Maker's relationship with NET provides more than just administrative support and office space. The two organizations work hand-in-glove, supporting each other's content initiatives, sharing equipment and skills, and leveraging each other's contacts and engagement approaches.
- Vision Maker uses data about its target audiences to focus outreach to specific markets. That has helped Vision Maker identify opportunities for community screenings and events that connect with hard-to-reach Native American viewers.
- Vision Maker has been a leader in collaboration among the NMC organizations, particularly through the Tableau project.
- Vision Maker's focus in partnering and connecting tends to be within the Native community, where the need for that effort is considerable. Rededicating itself to fostering connection within the public media system is a goal.

### **Ability to leverage CPB's funding to raise additional funds**

This is the area that needs attention and development across the entire NMC. CAAM has done the most consistent job of diversifying its revenue stream, driven largely by the strength of its unique asset in CAAMFest. While all of the organizations have revenue



diversification as part of their strategic plans, moving from plan to execution has proven difficult.

With that in mind, we will call out specific best practices and challenges by organization in this aggregate section:

### **Financial diversification**

- CAAMFest creates a distinct revenue stream for CAAM – between \$150,000 and \$200,000 in ticket sales and as much as \$126,000 in festival sponsorships. CAAM leverages the event as well, using it as the springboard for an experiment in crowdfunding and adding CamFeast as a natural extension of the film event. This is a strong case study in leveraging an existing asset into new revenue streams.
- Vision Maker Media has hired a fundraising consultant to help with strategies and prospecting for new resources. Bringing in expertise to address specific challenges could be a wise investment, if it produces actionable results.
- NBPC's board has made a commitment to building a diverse revenue stream and has a firm grasp of both the challenges and the opportunity. The commitment to bring in a consultant to work directly with the team on honing the strategy and moving to implementation reflects the seriousness with which NBPC is approaching this work.
- As we have noted elsewhere in this report, we found no lack of willingness to confront the issues of revenue diversification and a deep understanding of the need to do so. But expertise on both strategy and execution is lacking. This is a problem that is best addressed holistically, through revenue diversification training and coherent execution strategies.

## **Section IV: Internal Focus and Culture**

We have outlined the common issues that shape the mission, tactics and effectiveness of the NMC organizations. In this section, we examine ways that internal focus and culture result in behaviors and omissions that compromise effectiveness.

These findings stem from similar themes that arose repeatedly in our reporting. We have framed discussion around these issues using CPB's core values: collaboration, partnership, innovation, engagement and diversity.

### **Collaboration**

If collaboration is defined as working with another party to create or produce something together, then the relationship between CPB and the NMC does not pass that test.

NMC organizations and CPB interact most directly and regularly within the quarterly reporting cycle. At best, these connections are transactional: CPB directs the NMC to provide information in a particular format, and the NMC feed data back, in varying degrees of detail and completeness. As will be seen in the recommendations section, we propose specific tactics to improve the accuracy, timeliness and completeness of these reports.

It is clear that the relationship between CPB and the NMC is clouded by history rather than focused on a collaborative approach to the future. The result is conversations between the NMC and CPB that almost exclusively revolve around contract administration and nothing else. Specifically, there is little or no dialogue about opportunities for increasing diverse, innovative content and advancing the public media system.

This represents a lost opportunity for all stakeholders: CPB, the NMC, stations, producers, and, ultimately, public media audiences. The NMC have experience and knowledge to share. They are connected to valuable networks that remain under-developed or

entirely absent in other sectors of public media. CPB is unable to hear NMC input because the discussion channel has been narrowed to a focus on compliance and enforcement.

CPB staff and the NMC executive directors have monthly calls, and that could provide a platform to build conversation about best practices and opportunities. The NMC executive directors also touch base with frequency, both 1:1 and as a larger group; the relationship among the executive directors is good, a solid asset to build upon for the future.

In surveys and interviews, we asked NMC and CPB staff to describe the potential opportunities to improve relationships. The quotes are real; we have concealed speakers' identities in order to assure that people would speak freely on a sensitive topic. These quotes reflect both specific experiences and perceptions of how relationships and value are viewed:

“I think the first thing lacking is good advance conversation with CPB about intent,” one NMC staff member responded to our survey. “We might have good ideas about making a report or system better or suggest a platform to use. Right now, reports seem dictated by bureaucratic fiat, many times post facto. This seriously hampers the ability of (the NMC) to implement quickly and successfully. ...No one has been asking us to have a dialogue about reports, or work plans, or implementation, or contracts.”

“What gets in the way of ... doing our best work is the lack of clear communication of CPB's expectations. In the last three years, an overall feeling of uneasiness has grown about CPB's lack of direction for the NMC and the lack of communication from CPB about what is considered important to them regarding programmatic funding, system-wide initiatives (i.e., American Graduate) and thematic campaigns (i.e., Veterans Coming Home.),” an NMC staff member wrote. “CPB not sharing their diversity strategies and expectations with the NMC makes us feel shut out.”

“Could we do more face-to-face with CPB? Could we get a better

understanding of what is important in the reporting? Is it the awards? Is it the carriage? We need a better sense of the priorities we're all working toward and then have those priorities drive the reporting," one NMC staff member told us.

"The story we need to tell through reporting is: What have we done for these communities? What impact did these productions have? How did they impact communities of color?" a CPB staff member told us. "These kinds of stories are lost. In the ideal world, we'd be more (NMC) focused in our reporting. We'd ask them about how they are serving their community, not how fast are you getting the money out the door."

For the NMC to succeed and thereby contribute to enriching CPB's mission, the relationship between the organizations needs to shift to a truly collaborative model.

**This is the load-bearing beam of this entire report: Unless and until parties on all sides are able to move past old perceptions and patterns of behavior, the impact of the NMC will necessarily be stunted. Working toward common goals and common measurements is essential to restore healthy relationships and to assure future success.**

## **Partnership**

The NMC are well positioned for building effective partnerships, standing at the intersection of producers, creative communities, distributors, audiences, funders and educators. The NMC possess valuable partnerships and networks that not only serve the consortia's mission, but also could be tapped to create value for CPB and for the public media ecosystem, in general.

For the NMC, the required frequency of reporting and prescribed areas of emphasis define the relationship with CPB. Reporting intervals do not align with the cycles of filmmaking. Time expended in creating detailed documentation of expenditures deprives the organizations of human resources for other activities, such as station

relations, community outreach and talent development.

The reports themselves do not reflect the actual impact of content funded by CPB. Under the present structure, this is an unrecoverable opportunity cost.

Perhaps the greatest missed opportunity is a fuller relationship between the NMC and PBS stations. There is no doubt that this relationship could be rich and mutually beneficial: the NMC want stations to carry and leverage their content, and stations need both content and deeper understanding of their increasingly diverse communities as a pathway to cultivating more diverse audiences.

Congress recommended that CPB “improve integration of minority programming and producers into the system.” Programmers in the system express the view that NMC programs meet standards, in general. However, stations also feel that the NMC do not take a strong leadership role in promoting their work or engaging with stations to achieve maximum impact.

We heard repeatedly from station programmers that the NMC are viewed as subject matter experts on community issues, and that the NMC’s imprimatur is an important indicator of quality. We find that program leadership could be broadened to encompass innovation, talent development and community engagement. In order to do so, the NMC need to focus more externally, on stations and audiences, and less internally, on their peer organizations and especially CPB.

Imagine that the NMC are on a stage. Beyond that stage is an audience filled with stations and their communities. Behind the stage is CPB. The NMC perform with their backs to their audience, facing CPB for direction, feedback and approval.

To become effective partners, the NMC need to face their audiences. Doing that requires shifting priorities for NMC staff; a refocused relationship with CPB, in which common goals guide future behavior; and more direct outreach efforts, moving beyond current insularity among NMC organizations.

## **Innovation**

CPB's core values include innovation to guide strategic investment. In the current transmedia environment, media innovators increasingly exploit channels outside national, primetime broadcasts. Digital technology plays a major role in production and distribution through secondary broadcast frequencies, over-the-top services and on-demand streaming.

The NMC believe that current metrics for success place the highest value on aggregate broadcast audience and national distribution. Such measures do not take into account the potential for targeting specific audiences with programming in formats that are not necessarily broadcast-friendly.

This is true for all audiences, but for historically under-served communities, the transmedia environment looms even larger. Younger, diverse audiences are present in broadcast, certainly; but opportunities to reach these audiences with shorter, non-traditional programming formats through digital – especially mobile – channels are considerable.

Any innovation strategy involves risk. Developing producers likely will not deliver work at the same level as experienced talent, and may take longer to complete it. New channels likely will not deliver the same audience as established broadcasts, at least initially, and may require more effort to achieve exposure and impact.

Nonetheless, addressing the “digital” component of CPB's business plan entails strategic investment in some higher-risk activities in order to assess potential for future dialogue and diversity. Broadcasters interviewed for this report see diversifying the form and channels of delivery as a necessity to serve future viewers on all platforms.

In fact, station leadership and NMC board members stressed that they see developing digital capacity as the critical issue facing the NMC – and they emphasized the need for CPB to place higher value

on digital as an area for opportunity and growth.

“There is always pushback when I talk to CPB that ‘this (the NMC) is about broadcasting, this is about broadcasting.’ I dealt with this in print as well, the idea that we’re cannibalizing ourselves. But in my experience, people find their way. We’re talking about different audiences on different platforms. When people find their way to the different platforms, it is important that PBS be there. We’re going to have to think about shorter formats, and what the right combination is for those platforms.” – Eric Easter, board chair, NBPC.

“I think the NMC have the right to be frustrated. They have a mixed message of what the placement is. Their success has been gauged on how much content they push to PBS. I think that their success has to be gauged on their value to the whole public media system. The NMC have always been about the future; PBS by its nature has to be about today, right now. The NMC’s job is to keep putting this in PBS’ face and saying this is what the future looks like.” – Chris Hastings, executive producer and editorial manager WORLD Channel/WGBH

### **Engagement and Diversity**

CPB’s core values include engagement and diversity. Diverse audiences may be expected to respond positively to content created by diverse producers. Reaching diverse populations requires content delivered in formats suitable for networks in which these audiences reside.

For the NMC, the case for developing new talent and new forms of content is clear. However, CPB metrics place relatively less weight on content or visibility outside of primetime broadcasts. The consequence of this practice is that coaching and development of inexperienced voices is not measured, so the NMC have little incentive to make it happen. Likewise, without a clearly defined metric for non-broadcast media, fewer works are created outside of traditional broadcast forms.

By defining impact more broadly – including facets of developing talent, outreach to communities, innovative content and reaching specific, diverse audiences – CPB would improve the entire ecosystem. The NMC would be emboldened to pursue a wider array of programs and demonstrate greater latitude in spending their allotted funds. The organizations could effect meaningful change in the makeup of the talent pool, better supporting CPB’s core values.

With more diverse content created by more diverse producers and representing more diverse voices, opportunities for engagement are heightened. Meeting audiences where they live allows for media organizations to focus on listening and responding rather than traditional, one-way broadcasting. In a transmedia world, the emphasis is on conversation. The most valuable media move beyond reaching passive viewers to generating active engagement.

We see the NMC naturally moving toward deeper engagement: the continued evolution of CAAMFest; NBPC’s 360 Project; PIC’s Hawaiian Media Makers Conference; all are examples of building richer dialogue and more engaging conversations with producers and, by extension, with audiences. CPB and the NMC must work together to develop shared values and means of tracking the impact of this engagement among diverse creative communities and audiences.

While programming is important, it is in some respects the byproduct of deeper change that the NMC can bring to public media: new, more engaged audiences and new talent who can contribute to the system long into the future.

“The NMCs really provide that service of bringing more diversity into the system, in terms of subject matter, talent, perspective, under-served areas. It is critical that we don’t just look one way. PBS is really the only variety station left, everybody else has picked a niche. That adds to the confusion and the difficulty of navigation. It is still the place to come where the variety should be embraced” – Leslie Norman, WNET



“In San Francisco, about a third of the population is Asian. So CAAM isn’t seen as a minority organization, and this isn’t seen as hyphenated stories — they are American stories. Having a more diverse country doesn’t mean we don’t need to talk about difference any more. It means we have to talk about it openly and celebrate it.”  
– Vincent Pan, CAAM board

“We can’t solve any problems in this country if we can’t solve for diversity. It’s our job in public broadcasting to take on these tough conversations, these tough challenges, and I think you have to do that from the top down all the way through the system. If you’re just trying to fix it through programming, you’re missing the bigger pieces that need to be fixed. The NMC (are) an important piece of that solution.” – Sally Jo Fifer, president and CEO, ITVS.

## **Section V: Recommendations**

The underlying assumption of these recommendations is that, by building organizational capacity, the NMC can focus on developing talent, serving as subject matter experts, acting as a relationship resource for the public media system and experimenting with transmedia content.

Accomplishment in these areas can have broad impact in developing best practices for public media as audiences diversify and media usage continues to migrate to digital platforms.

### **Talent development: Building the capacity of diverse voices for public media**

- The NMC should focus on developing a meaningful way to track diverse content producers who have been supported by the organizations. Over the past 35 years, the NMC have identified, funded and nurtured hundreds of diverse filmmakers, but there is no real way to track how many, or to understand the ongoing impact that these producers have on public dialogue. This “NMC Talent Board” could be a go-to resource for public media, a first stop for content producer jobs, before posting to the usual minority job boards. Customer Relationship Management tools and practices – common at the station level in managing donor relations – can provide a model for thinking about how to track producer relationships across the NMC. Ideally, this process will involve input from other public media organizations, such as PBS and ITVS.
- The NMC should work with PBS and local stations to lead a discussion on the changing American workforce as the “minority majority” becomes a reality, to help public media stations more accurately reflect the diversity of their communities. Beyond demography, this approach also should focus on emerging digital skills, platforms and delivery systems, serving millennial audiences and other major shifts in

media. The NMC reach communities and thought leaders who are likely off the radar of local PBS stations; this perspective is invaluable.

- CPB should include the NMC in any diversity-funded programs for training and content development. Leveraging expertise at the NMC level for such programs would help ease concerns about perceived snubs and, more importantly, avoids wasting money in needless duplication of effort.
- Each NMC entity should offer a program similar to NBPC 360. Such programs at each NMC member may not lead to dozens of new productions for *POV* or *Independent Lens* in the first year, but will serve as an efficient and dynamic way for public media to attract new diverse talent.
- The NMC should incorporate talent fairs into events such as CAAMFest, highlighting paths for employment and further work within public media. Station and PBS/CPB personnel should attend these events and also lead breakout sessions on public media opportunities. This would also serve to tie NMC entities into the larger public media system.
- A continued role for R&D funding in the NMC mission should be assured. We know that it can take a long time for R&D investment to pay off, given the piecemeal nature in which filmmakers finance their work. But we've heard over and over from producers that the NMC are among the few sources of R&D funds that can provide a breakthrough for emerging talent. Developing benchmarks for R&D funding – and perhaps tying this funding to innovative programs modeled on NBPC 360 that provide both funding and a support system – is an important way of understanding the impact this type of support can have.

## **Defining a shared NMC/CPB digital strategy: Building capacity for innovation**

- CPB should clarify investment parameters for the NMC in digital media. There remains a lack of clarity about how much digital spending is too much by CPB standards. Defining those parameters, or better yet, developing a decision-making matrix around content investment that is opportunity-based rather than governed by dollar caps, would give the NMC the safety net they need to venture deeper into digital content.
- CPB and the NMC should develop digital goals and outcomes as fundamental elements in reporting on activity and impact. We would urge that the NMC and CPB heed the lesson of goal setting around broadcast content, and focus here on impact in terms of community engagement and dialogue rather than on metrics that measure impressions and clicks. Focusing on what actions audiences and communities take with digital content (sharing it, talking about it, organizing around it) is a better indicator of impact than visits and views.
- The NMC should convene conversations with PBS Digital to gain deeper insight into the network's short-term and long-term strategy and tactics, with an eye toward identifying opportunities for NMC content and aligning with the NMC's own vision for digital.
- Use of R&D funds as fuel for digital efforts should be encouraged. Digital media channels are ideal incubators to develop storytelling skills and audience engagement practices on a much more accelerated timeline than is possible in broadcast.

## **Reporting and communications: Building the capacity for impactful work**

- The NMC should move from a quarterly reporting calendar to a biannual one. Too much time is spent reporting modest progress. This is a needless pain point on both ends.
- The NMC should develop a consistent budgeting and accounting process, using the same accounting system (i.e., QuickBooks) with the same account taxonomy and naming structure. This would allow for financial reports to be pulled quickly and consistently across all organizations.
- The NMC should leverage the existing effort to develop a visual format for reporting data and overlaying it with demographic and geographic mapping. The Tableau application allows for greater richness of reporting, the ability to visualize data and, most importantly, to cohesively tell a story that provides actionable information in close to real time. This could complement or supplant the current system, which requires a stack of spreadsheets and a Rosetta stone to answer simple questions across the NMC.
- The NMC should centralize this reporting. A small staff (1-3) that does this consistently, working in the same templates and platforms, would streamline the process at the NMC level, eliminate interpretative reconciliation work at CPB and guarantee expertise in the preparation. (As noted, this varies across NMC organizations.)
- The NMC also should centralize ongoing station communications. Promoting the NMC should not be limited to promoting programs as they come to air, which is usually handled now by a station relations consultant. The NMC should be communicating with stations, PBS and NPR continuously, in order to be seen not just as content providers but also as resources for connections and expertise. When events that shape the national dialogue on race and ethnicity

are in the news, the NMC need to be there in conversation with public media organizations as guides to content and experts, as well as connection points with diverse audiences.

- These centralized positions for financial reporting and station communications (in all, 3-5) should be housed at one of the NMC offices and should be funded out of the 5 percent of sequestration dollars that were not returned to the NMC. (Again, for reference, CPB cut all funding by 10 percent during the sequestration, then restored it, but restored 5 percent to the NMC. Whatever the reason, this was seen as punitive.) That would be ample money to fund this centralized effort while freeing NMC resources to focus on content, talent development and engagement. It also aligns reporting and creates the opportunity for better strategic decision-making, based on data analysis and more consistent communication with stations.
- The NMC should use a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) strategy and tools for contract administration. Documenting all touch points with producers, creating a tracking history and proactively establishing reminders necessary for contract administration tasks would create transparency and consistency in this process.

### **Funding/Revenue: Building Financial Capacity**

- CPB funding should remain equal to current levels. Increasing the funding to the NMC would be ideal, but the 2012 sequestration should serve as a reminder that public funding is not guaranteed, and any growth in the NMC's budgets will need to be developed externally.
- CPB funding should continue to be equally distributed among the five NMC entities. We heard suggestions that the NMC budget be divided based on size of ethnic population, which would funnel the most money to LPB and NBPC, some to CAAM and very little to PIC and VMM. Given the small amount

- of public funding allotted to the NMC in the aggregate, this suggestion would have little actual effect – basically, shifting a few thousand dollars one way or the other – and would be so politically fraught (if not outright offensive) that any consideration of it should be abandoned.
- The NMC should aggressively pursue external funding. In order to qualify for public funds, each year PBS stations must have a minimum of Non-Federal Funds Secured, known as NFFS. The NMC should develop its own set of standards to set expectations for developing external funding sources.
  - CPB should provide training for NMC members in best practices of building revenue. The public media system – as well as nonprofit entrepreneurs outside the system – offers many models for significantly and consistently growing revenue. This should include obvious means such as foundation and corporate funding, but also should explore the experimental (crowdfunding) and administrative (board members who help build revenue).

**CPB/NMC relations: Building capacity through a shared understanding of mission and goals**

- We recommend a session with CPB staff and the NMC executive directors to discuss goals moving forward. We recommend that Rose Gailey, an organizational consultant who has worked with public media, facilitate this discussion. This meeting would occur after all parties have reviewed this report, and would focus on:
  - Discussing common vision and goals aimed at serving increasingly diverse audiences through multiple content channels and platforms
  - Creating mechanisms for accountability and continued communication, building a framework for going forward
- In follow-up work, concentrate on refocusing the metrics used to evaluate NMC impact.

- We've noted in this report that current metrics are heavily weighted toward PBS broadcast. As audiences continue to evolve and behavior shifts, metrics need to shift.
- The NMC and CPB need to develop *shared* metrics, based on the experiences and stakeholders connected to all these organizations.
- Metrics should reflect both eyeballs and impact: Who saw the content and *to what end?* What did they do with it?
- This means tracking digital, social, events and educational uses as rigorously as viewership.
- Align reporting on these metrics to the Tableau data visualization project.



## **Supporting Material**

Supporting material is intended to amplify on the findings of this report, providing insight into our reporting process.

This section includes:

- Profiles of each NMC organization
- An overview of the feedback we received in the surveys conducted with NMC staff and public media stakeholders.
- A listing of each source interviewed for this report.

## **NMC Profiles**

### **CAAM**

The Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) is headquartered in San Francisco. The group was founded in 1980, partially in response to availability of ethnically focused program funding from CPB. The goal of the organization, known originally as the National Asian American Telecommunications Association, is to create works for public broadcasting and to challenge stereotypes of Asians in mainstream media.

“We’re here to tell a broader story about a diverse America,” said Executive Director Stephen Gong. “Legacy media and theatrical film never have been kind to our stories. We can aggregate deeply understood stories for a narrow but passionate audience.”

CAAM was among initial funders for “America by the Numbers,” a series on diversity issues that has aired on PBS since 2012. CAAM also commissioned “Life on Four Strings,” a documentary that aired on PBS in 2013.

CAAM’s major community outreach initiative is CAAMFest, an annual showcase for Asian American films. The event has evolved to include works by Asian filmmakers and the agenda has been expanded to encompass music, food and interactive programming.

Coats2Coats’ evaluation team visited the CAAM offices in San Francisco during April 2015. In addition to interviews conducted on site, evaluators spoke with stakeholders in the San Francisco area and in other parts of the country, as well as overseas. Interviewees at PBS stations and in the producing community also contributed to the review.

Key challenges for CAAM include assuring compliance with CPB funding requirements, establishing protocols for producer contracts, normalizing reporting for activities such as the film festival and

accurately reflecting the organization's involvement in training and production. In concert with other NMC groups, CAAM is attempting to develop tools to help assess the impact of its work in the community and to convey a more nuanced view of its unique value to CPB.

An overarching issue is diversity within the Asian American demographic, which ranges from long-established groups such as Chinese, Japanese and South Asians to more recent arrivals such as Vietnamese and Southeast Asians.

"I mean, these are completely different cultures and different languages," said Gong. "How do you meaningfully present a program or an organization's services to them? For us, it's one of the ultimate challenges, but also an opportunity."

### **Financial reporting**

For CAAM, CPB's reporting requirements required changes in the organization's accounting practices and corporate culture. CPB-mandated timelines for reporting and the spreadsheet-driven report narrative drove the group to find different solutions. In the words of one CAAM officer, "Those solutions have come with sacrifice for CAAM."

From the perspective of the organization, its mission includes production, distribution, education and innovation. But from the group's viewpoint, CPB is focused primarily on broadcasting activities and less on entrepreneurial aspects.

For CAAM, this occasionally has resulted in conflict – particularly when changes to budget lines dictated operational changes, although that was not the intent. Requirements imposed by CPB have led CAAM to pay closer attention to precision and accountability in recordkeeping.

When another NMC group began a project to visualize audience and performance data in order to achieve greater understanding of impact and effectiveness, CAAM discovered that its existing data

was inadequate to the task. Bringing historical data up to snuff took seven months.

CPB requirements helped reveal organizational shortcomings and cast stark light on CAAM's ability to document fulfillment of its contract. Within the context of more consistent reporting, CAAM argued for latitude to explore opportunities over a longer timeframe.

"Doing it a year at a time, contract by contract, is part of the issue," said executive director Gong. "I do think a longer term commitment, like a strategic plan, a two- or three-year cycle would be better.

"We would need to be able to develop a coherent, strategic plan for public media, with an evaluation process that's set up within that."

### **Redefine the metric**

As with the other NMC groups, CAAM has begun taking a broader view of the impact of the work it funds. Public screenings, educational venues and digital channels have become part of the organization's ecosystem. Taking a closer look at the makeup of audiences and reaction to filmmakers' work contribute other components to the impact equation.

Vision Maker Media led a project to create flexible, interactive visualizations of audience data. Other NMC organizations, including CAAM, added their data to the effort, which uses the Tableau web service.

"To me, what's exciting is that if you load them in correctly, you have this amazing flexibility to really drill down and to tell these stories in different ways," said Gong. "It builds into these preexisting maps that show a diverse, changing America. You can layer your stats over where all the Asian-Americans are."

In CAAM's view, visualizations are a means to broaden the conversation around performance metrics. Tableau analytics have the potential to reveal underlying dynamics in audiences, market by market. The visualizations may point the way for further research.

As organizer of CAAMFest since 1986, the organization derives value from public showings of films about the Asian American experience. Programming outside of television broadcast is a “strength” of the organization, Gong said. It also presents an opportunity to assess the impact of the films on non-Asian Americans.

“Thirty percent of our festival goers are Caucasian,” said Gong. “They like film and they're curious about cultures.” In 2013, CAAM relaunched its film festival as a cultural event that nonetheless remains tied to an overall mission of creating content for public broadcasting.

“You have to integrate them eventually,” said Gong. “There’s no assured future for a niche film festival because film festivals were there to launch films into theatrical distribution – but there’s no theatrical distribution anymore. This is what public media could be.”

CAAM also sees potential in using the festival to heighten impact of broadcast productions. The crossover extends to promotional campaigns.

“We've integrated more of the PBS story into our marketing and communications,” said Debbie Ng, CAAM’s director of development. “It's an instant thing where you can take the traditional long-form documentary but you can extract and make it more palatable to an audience that isn't as into PBS.”

Filmmakers report that CAAM assisted them with networking and outreach upon completion of their work. Some of that expertise was honed through experience with the film festival.

CAAM views community events as an essential step to achieving meaningful impact. Its community initiatives are strategic, targeting specific communities in distinct geographic areas and working in tandem with established Asian American community groups.

“What we now know we need to focus on is how to bring local stations in, and particular titles, with particular communities,” said Gong. “Real impact, not just broadcast. But how do you start to change in a mid-sized city?”

This city-by-city approach is mirrored by other NMC groups. However, a concern voiced by all is that CPB accords community contact lower priority than broadcast impressions, especially primetime broadcast. CAAM seeks to leverage more channels to connect with their communities, including person-to-person events, digital sharing and content distribution.

### **Talent development**

From the beginning, CAAM was conscious of the need to cultivate creative talent in the Asian American community. Training and employing future storytellers is reflected in CAAM’s programming and in the organization’s growing role as film producer.

CAAM’s move beyond program acquisition and distribution has created friction, at times. It ran counter to CPB’s purpose in restructuring funding to gain more visible and immediate results.

“It’s rough in the space of a year and half to lose positions, to lose infrastructure, to lose money, to be forced to make three, four more grants, more productions,” said Gong. “That’s more production, but that’s not strategic.”

For CAAM, the path to developing more meaningful and impactful content has been to take a more active role in its production. Longtime staffers perceive the mission as one that evolved along with the group’s ambitions.

Don Young, CAAM’s director of programming, has been with the organization since 1996. He characterized CAAM’s initial, content-driven mission as “urgent” and “serious.” A primary goal was getting more stories on the air. He now feels that times have changed.

“The last two strategic plans have been a concentrated effort to build up our capacity to do more than just re-grant, to have a much more hands-on role,” he said. “We’re taking the role of producer and distributor more seriously.”

CAAM served as the production company for “Life on Four Strings.” The film’s director, Tadashi Nakamura, acknowledged CAAM’s mentoring and advice through the making of his first feature. He pointed specifically to CAAM’s role as liaison that allowed him to connect with more experienced directors who helped him conceptualize the work.

“I was grateful for opportunity but nervous going in,” the director recalled. “Because of CAAM’s support, I was able to pull it off and feel confident.” His CAAM contact became a trusted advisor, Nakamura said, urging him to be “accountable” to the public television audience and connecting with key players within PBS.

Other filmmakers echo the importance of developing content creators for the future. One filmmaker came to CAAM as a neophyte, attracted by CAAMFest. Starting out as a volunteer, he eventually received funding for three feature films.

“I owe my career to CAAM,” Leo Chiang said, pointing to the organization’s willingness to take a chance on media makers of color. “It’s the validation, not just financial support. It pushes us to move forward.”

Chiang also served as a panelist for open calls at CAAM and ITVS. He viewed CAAM’s role as curator for films that are not yet broadcast ready. He also witnessed how the group leverages its resources.

“It’s not always the biggest factor, but it’s a key factor,” he said. CAAM panels seek distinctive stories created by filmmakers that serve the community and have the potential to contribute for years to come, he said.

“There’s that talent development piece,” Gong concluded. “How to make better works with more impact.”

### **Revenue development**

In CAAMFest, the organization has a platform for revenue, outreach and research. This has stimulated new approaches to funding, including crowdsourced campaigns and focus on donor engagement.

Four out of five festival attendees said the screenings made them feel “inspired,” according to a CAAM audience survey. Seventy-six percent said they experienced “new appreciation for a different culture” and 78 percent reported gaining insight from the experience.

Based on a series of ticketed events, CAAMFest generates a distinct revenue stream – between \$150,000 and \$200,000 in ticket sales and as much as \$126,000 in festival sponsorships. The event also served as springboard for a crowdfunding campaign in lieu of CAAM’s annual funding appeal.

The goal of the initial campaign was to take a strategic approach to the existing email contact list (14,000 names), seek out influencers in the community and engage them as partners in the effort. CAAM board members were recruited to help, as well.

The campaign raised more than twice its dollar goal, with more than half the total coming from new donors. Open rates for email messages rose. Moving forward, the organization seeks to mine the connections it has made.

CAAMFeast is seen as an opportunity to leverage still more of the group’s assets. Programming promotion is integral to the event, where attendees mingle with fans, celebrity chefs and honorees from CAAM documentaries.

“We’ve come to realize that there is no better way to convey the Asian American experience than through stories about food,” said



Gong. “It’s only natural that CAAMFeast represents the best way for us to celebrate our work, our heritage, and our champions.”

### **Community dialogue**

As with other NMC groups, CAAM uses its creative work as an entry point for dialogue with the community – both Asian Americans and the public at large. CAAMFest is the most visible example. Events built around individual films such as “Life on Four Strings” also engaged and involved audiences in multiple cities.

“Every one of us come to CAAM on a personal level, each of us is touched by it,” observed CAAM board chair Dipti Ghosh. Filmmakers see community events as an important means for outreach, including theatrical and academic markets for their work. Stations use films as unique attractions during fundraisers and other events.

“The stories become a vehicle that help us understand how we can seek to understand instead of to judge,” said Vincent Pan, board member. “The number of non-Asian Americans who connect with our content really helps us to accomplish that goal.”

Looking ahead, some within CAAM see community events as a way to counter diminishing primetime television broadcast audience numbers.

“It could be a wonderful way for public media to really start to matter again,” said Gong. “We know what a lot of the issues are in those communities. Let it happen with people meeting face to face, that’s the way they start to have a more integrated approach.”

Furthermore, CAAM is pursuing strategies to engage communities of interest on digital media. Gong believes this approach can amplify CAAM’s reach and impact.

“That’s part of the lessons from social media,” he said. “Identity communities strongly coalesce when they can be in conversation.” He describes a future with a “mission-driven map” of the mission for CAAM and, by extension, for public broadcasting.

## **Accomplishments**

A signature production for CAAM is “Life on Four Strings,” a documentary film directed by Tadashi Nakamura. The subject of the film is Jake Shimabukuro, a ukulele virtuoso from Hawaii. The film was a co-production of CAAM and PIC.

“Life on Four Strings” was completed in 2012. The film aired on PBS in 2013, with a rebroadcast in 2014.

One CAAM staff person referred to the production as a “high-water mark” in the organization’s history. CAAM commissioned the film and leveraged funding from CPB, NEA and individual donors to carry out development, production and marketing. Another NMC group - Pacific Islanders in Communications – also assisted with the production.

The film opened doors to outreach and community events, including an online contest for aspiring ukulele players: The winner was selected to perform onstage, alongside the star of the film.

Looking back on the experience, the film’s director recalls, “the movie literally would not have happened if not for the resources provided by CPB – they wouldn’t have been able to hire me and the production wouldn’t have been able to go ahead.”

CPB funding flowed through CAAM to the filmmaker, but the CAAM name also was an asset: “It being a CAAM production brought a lot of legitimacy to the film, which brought access to resources, as opposed to me, an independent filmmaker, just calling and asking.”

CAAM organized a premiere for the film in San Francisco with a concert by the artist. A similar event was held in Washington, D.C. Publicity for both events was driven in part by CAAM’s network of email contacts and social media lists.

Promotion for “Life on Four Strings” included custom on-air spots for stations in Hawaii, the musician’s home state. This individual station engagement model is now being used for other films.

CAAM’s mission is to use CPB funds to develop “system friendly” programming, according to Young, CAAM’s program director: “Work that is accessible but mission-driven. Can you do something that will invite someone outside your community in? Can you create work that is emotionally accessible?”

### **Vision Maker Media**

Vision Maker Media is the successor to Native American Public Telecommunications, founded in 1976. VMM states that supporting Native media is its “fundamental vision.” According to its mission statement, Vision Maker aspires to the role of “curator of Native voices in public media in a rapidly changing world.”

The organization has identified multiple constituencies for its programs, including: “American Indians and Alaska Natives; tribal nations, Indian organizations and Native communities; public television and radio; and the general public and global audience.” Vision Maker serves this broad population in a variety of ways, including training, advocacy and policy development.

The organization’s “key strategy” is developing “strong partnerships” with Native groups such as tribal nations and Native communities. But the “ultimate goal” for Vision Maker is “reaching the general public and the global market...for the dissemination of Native produced media that shares Native perspectives with the world.”

Unique among the NMC, Vision Maker publishes an online list of values that inform its activities. These values include: sharing with the world, collaboration in programming, creativity in all efforts, and honoring Native culture, heritage, wisdom, stories and storytellers.

“We can be a connection point for Native American media and culture, doing something that we can do that no one else is doing,”

said executive director Shirley Sneve. “I see this as a real need if we are going to save our legacy, our heritage. This is work that needs doing, and we’re on the road to do it.”

Given the broad scope of its activities, Vision Maker developed creative ways to stretch the budget. One such tactic was an alliance with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET).

Vision Maker is housed at NET’s building, on the campus of the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. NET enforced a financial planning policy that led Vision Maker to eliminate deficit spending. Now, the organization benefits in other ways.

“Being in this great relationship with the public television station really helps us on infrastructure, saving money, giving us resources for things like training,” said Sneve. NET’s chief financial officer “got [Vision Maker] using more and more of NET’s services for free.”

Sneve and NET officials agree that bringing Vision Maker under the university’s timekeeping and payroll system represents significant savings. Among other programs, Vision Maker is planning a producer training workshop to be held at NET, which will make use of NET staff for hands-on education.

NET regularly rents equipment and studio space to Vision Maker. In this way, Vision Maker is able to accomplish more production at higher quality than would be possible in isolation, according to the group’s creative services producer.

Still, finding producer talent in the Native community can be a challenge.

“My biggest frustration in this job is the shallow [talent] pool,” said director Sneve. “How can we increase our skill levels?”

To address this need, Vision Maker has formed partnerships with tribal governments, Native organizations, colleges and schools.

Vision Maker's producer takes field trips to nurture relationships and recruit aspiring media makers.

The group hosts a meeting of producers every year, both to increase knowledge and widen the support system. "It's been so helpful at these producer trainings to put these guys in the same room to talk with each other and support each other on their own projects," observed Sneve.

Vision Maker hires Native people for its production crews whenever and wherever it can. Sometimes, projects are undertaken as much for their educational value as for on-air potential.

The organization also played a part in cultivating partnerships among all the NMC groups. An intern broached the idea of using Tableau to visualize and analyze data being gathered by the group. After seeing the results, this opportunity was extended to the other NMC.

Vision Maker is working to lessen reliance on CPB dollars and to broaden the base of financial support for all activities. Networking with Tableau users and other groups in the community is designed to help discover ways to enhance individual fundraising. A new strategic plan is intended to establish the foundation for growth, with business plans built around each goal.

Overall, Vision Maker remains dedicated to producing broadcast content, but also keenly aware of its special challenges.

"You get people...telling everyone that the Native Americans just don't have anyone of the caliber to do the work. And I can't argue...but that hurts," said Sneve. "We're having to develop people. We're trying to get filmmakers who will employ Native Americans in meaningful ways."

### **Streamline/centralize financial reporting process**

Vision Maker took the lead in moving NMC reporting from narratives and spreadsheets to including data visualization as a way to better understand impact. This initiative makes use of the Tableau web

app, which is widely used in business and industry, as well as by nonprofit organizations.

Data visualization may be used to document and analyze content reach and financial performance, as well as audience and clearance metrics required by CPB. These efforts have the potential for streamlining the reporting process and for identifying high-value production opportunities.

“I think our reach is a lot bigger than we think, and our impact is lot greater than we think,” said VMM’s assistant director Georgiana Lee. “The Tableau project... helps us to see opportunities and best practices from the other consortia, to take advantage of those within our organization and for our constituents.”

The scope of the Tableau visualization project has broadened to include all NMC groups. Even though the graduate student who launched the effort has moved on, continued focus on visualization by Vision Maker and the other NMC will point the way toward telling a better, more complete and more nuanced story of the groups’ achievements and help each organization develop clear, actionable goals.

### **Refocus the metric**

Programmers and PBS personnel acknowledge that Vision Maker productions receive less exposure in primetime broadcast than shows from other NMC groups. The reasons are many: modest quantities of material, productions not made to PBS standards, widely scattered Native communities, little awareness of Indian Country issues in mainstream society. Vision Maker staff feel the pressure, as well.

“The dilemma in common carriage is that we don’t have the high quality Native producers to feed into that strand,” said a VMM staffer. As a result, much of the group’s effort goes into “developing Native producers, going through NETA, getting them in the door, developing the [production talent] pipeline.”

Particularly for Vision Maker, emphasis on common carriage and national broadcast appears counterproductive. In terms of impact, targeted “narrowcasting” may be more effective, focusing on particular outlets at the intersections of interest and population.

Another opportunity to re-examine the metric for success is in the area of digital media. Even though the PBS mission suggests digital distribution has value, current reporting practices belie this stated goal.

For Vision Maker, it may be easier to reach disparate audiences across wide geographic areas with a digital-first strategy. Podcasts and vlogs are two storytelling forms that serve as digital complements to traditional feature-length films and short subjects.

Documenting success in this field means incorporating analytics into the definition of impact. It also suggests putting more investment toward digital media.

One example is the "hackathon" hosted jointly by Vision Maker and Tribeca Film Studio at the Institute for Native American Arts. The event attracted dozens of participants, ranging from storytellers to app developers. The outcome was a profusion of possible ways to employ 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology in the service of stories with enduring value.

After the event, Vision Maker launched a new media fund. However, finding sufficient resources remains a problem.

“We are only allowed to invest \$70,000 in new media every year,” said Sneve. “We had a proposal this year for a producer who wanted to do a web series, a great way to raise our profile in Indian Country. It is good enough to appear on PBS Digital. But the producer’s proposal was for \$135,000.”

### **Develop new talent, establish a pipeline**

Producers, station personnel, network staff and Vision Maker employees all cited a lack of production expertise in Native America.

They characterized the problem not only as a shortage of sufficiently skilled personnel, but also a lack of developing new talent.

Vision Maker is active in training – both in formal settings such as producer conferences, and informally, in the field, by hiring up-and-coming Native American filmmakers to serve as crew members for VMM-funded productions. The organization continues to search for other ways to increase the flow of new talent.

“I would love to see the NMC groups do joint producer training, to be able to work together. There is nothing like that in PBS right now,” said Lee. She also expressed a desire for more focused training, specific to VMM.

“We really need to bring in CPB, PBS and more from the [program] strands, to be able to introduce them to the producers,” she said.

For Vision Maker, feeding the pipeline also means introducing creative storytellers who already may be familiar with production tools to the grammar of public media.

“We have an opportunity to bring all these filmmakers together and show them documentary film,” said Lee. “They don’t know that. We’re the only ones that do what we do in Indian Country.”

“They need more opportunities to work with people in the field,” agreed Boots Kennedy, Vision Maker’s training producer. He stressed the value of on-the-job experiences over educational events like classes and workshops: “You can deconstruct the stories, but working under an experienced editor or storyteller is different.”

As long as Native American storytellers work largely outside the public media system, Vision Maker faces continuing challenges not just in reaching larger audiences but also in assuring a reliably steady flow of new content to illuminate and explain cultural and historical context. Attracting and developing new talent promises to pay potential dividends not only for Vision Maker but also for CPB and mainstream viewers across North America.



**Diversify the revenue stream**

As with other NMC groups, Vision Maker relies heavily on CPB grants to finance its operations. The organization has moved proactively to explore other sources of funding, especially for activities that correspond to VMM's strategic plan. The group hired a fundraising consultant to help prospect for new resources.

The strategic partnership with NET is a unique asset for VMM in the revenue area. NET's chief financial officer also serves as treasurer for the VMM board. This has allowed some of the university's rigorous financial control and review practices to "rub off" on the NMC group, he said.

As part of the review process, the CFO has assisted VMM in identifying "efficiencies" in staffing and in the evaluation of producer grants. University staff assist Vision Maker in keeping track of production contracts and royalty payments. By having VMM's employees on the university payroll, potential human resources and compliance issues are "buttoned up," he said.

A common refrain among the NMC organizations is the negative effect of sequester-driven budget reductions on capacity, particularly in fundraising. For VMM, a difficult situation became worse. Positions were consolidated or eliminated as pressure grew to find more outside funding.

"We're not in the same situation as [other NMC groups], who have a broader base of support. We're that much behind them," said Mary Ann Koehler, Vision Maker's CFO. "The Native world is just coming around to the idea of philanthropy.

"The needs of the Native peoples are so basic, that getting on that hierarchy is tough," she said. "Broadening the interest and the support is really an important piece of trying to build that support, that future."

### **Cultivate and promote community dialogue**

Vision Maker has distinguished itself with the depth and diversity of its community connections. In establishing links to organizations from tribal media to government to schools, Vision Maker takes relationships seriously. Moreover, the group evaluates board members and community advocates in terms of new relationships they can bring to the table. Still, there is room for improvement.

When it comes to individual stations, Vision Maker is more visible. Using data to focus outreach on specific markets has led to engagement on multiple levels.

Like other NMC groups, Vision Maker has hosted community screenings for its productions in local markets. And, the group documented its success in connecting with hard-to-reach viewers.

“It was so great to see theaters full of Indians,” said Lee. “It would be great if [CPB personnel] came and we could have that kind of conversation about some of the events they have going on.”

Vision Maker has made the most of educational opportunities, as well. “Standing Bear’s Footsteps” not only received exposure on the PBS National Program Service, but also continues to enjoy active use by schools, under rights that extend into 2016. The program was the basis for an e-book and the centerpiece for a Great Plains Symposium on the subject in 2015.

### **Accomplishments**

In addition to delivering video productions that illuminate Native American culture and history, VMM has played a central role in nurturing collaboration and developing partnerships. These relationships include alliances within the Native community, among producers and educators, and across the NMC groups. The result is greater impact and heightened understanding of Vision Maker’s stories, as well as a foundation for future teamwork.

Vision Maker led the effort to find a better way for the NMC entities to describe their work through data. This promising initiative resulted in the Tableau visualizations mentioned elsewhere in this report.

Although the graduate student who created the Tableau framework is no longer involved, Vision Maker staff has continued to educate themselves about the possibilities for using the tool. Executive director Sneve and her staff attend meetings of other Tableau users to share knowledge and ask questions. The collaborative spirit of the user group is indicative of how Vision Maker approaches production, as well.

“Warrior Women” – currently in production – is a documentary about the role of women in the American Indian Movement during the 1970s. The story is little known, even by other Native Americans.

“That was a pivotal point in our history,” said Sneve. “And you rarely hear about the women who played a crucial role in this.”

The film began as an academic thesis project, but filmmakers worked with Vision Maker to “piece together” funding, Sneve said. Sources leveraged included ITVS and Firelight Media. And the story has a unique voice.

“The production team has women in front of and behind the camera,” she said. “They’ve done a marvelous job telling the story.”

Vision Maker’s partnerships also helped connect filmmakers with the organizers of an endowed lecture in Lincoln, Neb. The filmmakers and subjects of the film will be guest speakers at community lectures and classroom presentations.

“To me, this is an example of how we work with partners to get the very best product we can for PBS audiences and, at the same time, show an aspect of Native American history that nobody knows about,” said Sneve.

## **LPB**

Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB) is located in Burbank, California. The organization was formed in 1998. LPB states it is the “leader of the development, production, acquisition and distribution of non-commercial educational and cultural media that is representative of Latino people, or addresses issues of particular interest to Latino Americans.”

LPB primarily offers grants to producers with track records of success in delivering projects for national broadcast. Unlike some other NMC organizations, LPB devotes the bulk of its funding to production and completion of films destined for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). This direction was the result of a strategic planning process that asked producers what they needed from LPB.

“We focused our work on broadcast production,” said Executive Director Sandie Pedlow. “We want to get programs on the [television] screen. Producers told us, ‘We don't need more training.’ And community engagement? It's just too much.

“We made a strategic decision to give fewer grants but more money in each grant in order to compress the production timeline. We did this with the view of building the Latino audience for PBS.”

Coats2Coats' evaluation team visited LPB in May 2015. The team conducted interviews with LPB board members, officers and staff. Filmmakers and system stakeholders from the Los Angeles area were interviewed, as well.

Challenges for LPB include finding ways to help aspiring producers in the absence of development grants, marketing and promoting completed films, and working with filmmakers to assure that their projects are sufficiently accessible to a national audience.

“You can’t have a small niche story,” Pedlow said. “It’s really about the trailer they present. Producers sometimes don’t know how to present it.”

LPB’s stated purpose is to provide “a voice to the diverse Latino community on public media throughout the United States.” Consistent with its focus on directly funding broadcast production, LPB contracts with outside vendors for station relations, publicity and promotion work. Community engagement activities are accomplished through partnerships, particularly with stations in markets with the largest Latino population.

“Our goal is to bring in audiences from those markets, both on air and online,” Pedlow said. Recently, some station partnerships were canceled amid concern about the time commitment by station personnel and the amount paid to stations by LPB. “Some of these stations are looking at community engagement as profit generation, not as part of the mission,” Pedlow said.

In response, LPB has focused its efforts on a few select markets. In Houston, the group funded outreach activity and partnered with a community organization to host a reception. In Los Angeles, the presenting station for *Children of Giant* aired an interview with the film’s director and created online assets. “That’s something money can’t buy,” said Pedlow.

Response across the system has been uneven. Some stations schedule LPB productions to air late at the night – or refuse to air them at all, on the grounds that ethnic audiences make up a small part of their local population.

“This is what stations are missing,” Pedlow said. “The Latino audience is there in their backyard.”

Given its location in southern California, LPB is uniquely situated to piggyback on the high visibility for broadcast production, in general. One high-value opportunity for the organization has been to present

its work to television critics during the annual Hollywood press tour. LPB brought two films to the critics' gathering in successive years.

As with all the NMC, LPB desires to distinguish itself and the character of the populations it represents.

"Normally, 'communities of color' all fall under one umbrella," Pedlow said. "But it's difficult to compare the communities – they are so different."

### **Financial reporting**

LPB describes CPB's current reporting requirements as "time consuming." Implementation of non-narrative reporting from grantees was perceived to have had an effect on the quality of reports. Like other NMC organizations, LPB sees a focus on spreadsheet data as an obstacle to presenting a nuanced view of their activities.

"The difficulty with the documentation is that it's hard to see the story behind the work: the true impact on U.S. awareness of Latino issues and culture," Pedlow said. Filing reports on a quarterly basis was seen as overkill.

"Something longer than quarterly reporting would make more sense to me," said one LPB staffer. "We tend to select all our projects so that they fall in line with new fiscal year. At the beginning of the year, we give out the majority of our funds. CPB's schedule is not tailored to that."

LPB feels it could fund more films if it had more funds available at one time than it does under the current grant schedule. "We always have a big group [of projects] that's ready to go," said the staff person, suggesting LPB could benefit from more funding at the outset of production.

Annual contracts also put LPB is at a disadvantage in dealing with media makers, the staff said. Since the organization is not the sole

funder but one of several sources, LPB's influence over the production schedule is limited.

LPB has made changes in response to CPB financial reporting requirements. For example, activities such as marketing are outsourced. The organization also has taken steps to document impact in areas being tracked by CPB, such as national primetime broadcast on PBS. But this is an incomplete picture, according to LPB staff.

"Reporting only focuses on the financial component now," said a staff member. "Before, we could show what we are doing as an organization...what we're about."

### **Refocus the metric**

More than any other NMC organization, LPB has embraced the goal of maximizing visibility through national broadcast. In particular, the organization channels funds to productions that it believes have potential for common carriage or NPS clearance.

"Almost all our hours are on PBS - that's where you want to be," Pedlow stated. "You don't want to be on NETA or ITVS."

With the clearly defined goal of reaching a national TV audience, LPB evaluates proposed projects with national programming threads in mind.

As a practical strategy, LPB works to sand off rough edges even before films are seen by any national personnel. The goal is to present "a rough cut, but not too rough."

LBP's practice of awarding large grants for productions likely to receive national exposure also has support among producers and network personnel.

"The quality is stellar," said a PBS' Donald Thoms. "Sandie Pedlow's vision is that her programs hit primetime on PBS. Everything she

chooses and manages is something that is coming to the national schedule.”

Even experienced producers view LPB as a valuable liaison with PBS and national groups.

“I’ve been working in the system for about 30 years but I still have to struggle like anyone else – like a newcomer – and reinvent myself every time I go knocking on that door,” said filmmaker Hector Galan.. “The vital role for LPB is to seed and promote these stories and these films that would be a hard sell to the executive folks at CPB and PBS.”

### **Experiment in form, platform and audience engagement**

With its strong focus on national broadcast, LPB spends relatively less on other storytelling forms, such as short films and digital media. Even in online media projects, LPB aims to fund productions with the greatest potential for use by PBS.org.

Digital media occupy a strategic content niche for LPB. Offering shorter works and accessible forms such as animation can communicate with non-English speakers and new immigrants.

LPB takes a strategic approach to its marquee national production, *Voces*. Elements of the strategy include station relations through a contractor, public relations and communications, and community engagement.

Much engagement activity is outsourced. The organization minimizes direct involvement in favor of partnerships with local stations and, in some cases, community groups.

### **Community dialogue**

LPB fosters community dialogue primarily through partnerships with Latino organizations, both in its home market and around the country. The group’s strategic plan calls for developing an engagement strategy with up to ten PBS stations in markets with the highest concentration of Latinos.



One key partner is the Los Angeles Latino Film Festival, held during alternate years in Hollywood, near LPB headquarters. Screenings and live events help expose LPB producers to a community that is keenly attuned to the media world. LPB-funded projects are shown at similar events.

Also in Los Angeles, LPB partnered with the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP) for training and mentoring activities.

“Why set up all these workshops ourselves?” asks Pedlow. “NALIP does a great job. We go and present at the ‘Doing Your Doc[umentary]’ sessions.”

On the broadcast front, LPB focuses on cities where Latino community groups are most active.

“They've become good outlets,” said an LPB staffer. “In each market, there are local Latino organizations that want to partner with the PBS station or with us to get the message out.” LPB funded community groups directly in Texas and Arizona to screen recent *Voces* productions and to host community events afterward.

### **Accomplishments**

For LPB, a signature production was “Children of Giant,” a documentary film about the Texas community that was the site of exterior filming of the feature movie “Giant,” in 1955. The film aired nationally in 2015 as part of *Voces on PBS*, an umbrella brand LPB established for its marquee productions.

Director Galan approached LPB for funding because, he said, “CPB does series; they weren’t going to do any one-offs.” By placing the film under the *Voces* brand, LPB pursued a strategy of identifying programs that could help PBS grow the Latino audience. The director endorsed using the *Voces* label.

“I wanted to give it a higher profile and give it a signature series of high-quality television programs for everybody, on the Latino experience in America,” said the director. “CPB needs to get behind it; PBS needs to get behind it. Although it’s a limited series, we’re not stealing Frontline’s time slot.”

As part of this high-visibility strategy, LPB now awards fewer, larger grants, both to achieve greater impact and also to speed up the production cycle. “Children of Giant” received LPB’s maximum grant amount – \$100,000 – for production and another \$100,000 for post-production. Previously, the project received \$20,000 for development.

The film also drove partnership with PBS for publicity and promotion. Significantly, PBS contributed to a social media promotional campaign for the film.

Presenting station KOCE (PBS SoCal) raised the profile for the program in its market area with special programming, including interviews and a half-hour segment for its morning program.

“SoCal recognized that they need the presences with Latinos, and we could use this to build relationships,” Pedlow said. “They’ve done a great job with pushing it.”

Despite airing widely in southern California, the Southwest and Texas, *Voces* was not seen in some markets, such as Washington, D.C. Pedlow believes this puts LPB at a disadvantage.

“I was disappointed there wasn't more interest,” she said. “*Voces* has not aired in D.C. or Maryland. If you go on [Capitol] Hill and the Hill can't see it, that's a problem.” Pedlow said some programmers believe their audience is not interested in programming about Latino topics, but that’s not the case.

“The reality is the buying power of Latinos,” Pedlow said. “You've got to show that to stations and tell them Latinos will give money to

their stations. It's this mindset that you can only watch programming about your own culture.”

Voces has served as a jumping-off point for LPB and for branding its work.

“The message: these are the images, the voices, only on PBS,” Pedlow said. “What LPB does, it's about the images and the stories.”

## **NBPC**

The National Black Programming Consortium is located in Harlem, N.Y. Founded in 1979, NBPC “develops, produces and funds media content about the Black experience for public media outlets, including television, digital radio and online.”

NBPC has been at the forefront among the NMC organizations in experimenting with both content forms and platform distribution, while continuing to keep a strong hand in broadcast content. That has meant being willing to take risks with approaches that don't reap rewards along traditional metrics.

It has also meant being willing to fail in the process of learning – an important consideration that the NBPC staff noted to us when we met with them as a group during our site visit in May 2015.

“CPB needs to trust us to make choices based on our knowledge of the audience and the community,” one staff member told us. “They need to trust us to fail sometimes.”

NPBC's experimentation with digital programming and social media, as expressed in content like “Black Folks Don't,” has served the valuable purpose of building confidence and competence in incubating fresh voices and approaches to storytelling. Perhaps most importantly, this experimentation has positioned NPBC

comfortably within a model that recognizes the value of conversation.

The willingness to experiment, coupled with a very intentional and thoughtful board process in developing the most recent strategic plan, place NBPC in the position to achieve breakthroughs in the way the organization develops and supports talent, the way it engages with audiences and communities, and the way it distributes content. The latest, promising expression of this possibility is NBPC 360.

There is much excitement at NPBC and at CPB about NBPC 360, The other NMC organizations are watching this effort closely, and it will be important to share what is learned from the experience. Much of the conversation during our site visit centered on NPBC 360, and that will frame our discussion of NPBC in this section as we review the core issues that framed all of our reporting.

### **Financial Reporting**

Just as we heard with the other NMC organizations, the NBPC staff told us that the reporting process is too frequent and could benefit from further streamlining. One interesting, and significant, issue raised by NPBC is an outgrowth of the organization's simultaneous work on "180 Days" for broadcast and NPBC 360.

With funds being outlaid for both of these projects on different time lines and across multiple years, the complexity of the all the moving parts in terms of reporting and actually releasing funds can be daunting. Delays in fund releases have implications for trust and credibility with producers, as well as practical effects in paying bills and keeping projects moving forward.

"We have to deliver reports and financials for three fiscal years, for '180 Days' and 360, so we're working on 1-2-3-4-5 reports simultaneously, every three months," explained executive director Leslie Fields-Cruz. "So we're constantly running after funding, and then we are constantly running to do the required reporting."

As the NMC launch experiments with shorter funding timelines and asynchronous grant award cycles, like NBPC 360, the cracks in the current reporting system become more obvious.

NBPC does an excellent job of providing their grant recipients with checklists up front that outline what will be required in terms of reporting on both progress of work and spending. This best practice helps both with tracking and with creating a “no surprises” expectation among grant recipients.

### **Redefining the metric**

NBPC has its feet firmly in two worlds – the world of more traditional broadcast and the world of digital innovation and experimentation. By the very nature of that fact, NBPC has been redefining what impact looks like within its decision-making and evaluation process.

The opportunity now presents itself to live that process out loud more, to apply a more rigorous process to understanding what indicators of impact look like with different forms of content appearing on different platforms and reaching more diverse audiences.

A major lesson from NBPC in redefining the metric is understanding that impact is iterative. NBPC’s experimentation with the Digital Open Call process is illustrative. Listen to Director of Digital Initiatives Christian Ugboke’s description:

“From the two years of Digital Open Call, maybe 200 to 250 producers knew about it, and we would get 60-70 applications in an open call. For the 360 open call, because we’d been doing digital open calls and webinars and building community, almost 1,000 producers registered in the producer portal, and we had had 160 to 170 applications.

“Now if every year, you are adding 1,000 producers to the portal, then you have to keep them engaged, with regular webinars, outreach, touchpoints.”

Thinking about how to connect this type of rich engagement process with the metrics that document impact brims with possibilities. Apply a more formal impact measurement process to the NPBC 360 effort could illuminate best practices not just for the NMC but for media more broadly.

### **Talent development**

While NBPC 360 is a fascinating experiment in producing innovative content, where it really shines is in the potential for talent development. That's because NBPC 360 looks at content + talent + distribution holistically, as part of one process with pillars of support built in all along the way.

The fact that the 360 process gave producers the opportunity for rich feedback and support during the Pitch Black final selection process means that even producers who did not win financial support got important and valuable professional development. Connecting grant recipients to PBS stations that will provide guidance and incubation of the work reflects an absolute best practice for how collaboration can unleash public media resources in the interest of talent development, while also building a tangible connection of emerging producers to the system.

"I'm loving this," said Fields-Cruz about the 360 project. "I think we all walked into this with our minds open about what we wanted to see happen. We knew the people who could help us get there. For WNET to pick up two of the projects and house them there – that is what we wanted. Detroit Public Television is working with the producer there on that project. And we're trying to stay connected to the others who didn't get through the pitch process, to help them along. The producer portal is a way of keeping that network going."

### **Revenue development**

In addition to taking smart risks around content and talent development, NBPC has been positioning itself to move in new directions around revenue development.

Thinking differently about revenue was a piece of the board's examination of strategy. Bringing Donna Hardwick in to focus intensely on development issues has been a key step to begin moving from strategy to implementation.

"We are working through the strategy while we are also trying to bring the money in," Hardwick said. "Are we really going to be productive if we can't identify where the best opportunities are for our time? Leslie really understands that, and I think that the board does, too."

Fields-Cruz looks at the revenue development piece as part of a larger conversation about awareness and engagement.

"That's why it is important to build our visibility if we're going to court high dollar donors and develop other revenue streams," she said. "I've told CPB that I want to diversify funding – Lynda Clarke has been very encouraging for us to think about ways to diversify. I like our relationship with CPB and public television, but I also want us to be able to pursue our mission wholeheartedly. We need to develop the revenue that supports that."

### **Community dialogue**

Of all the NMCs, NBPC has the strongest sense of where it sits in the broader conversation, and does more outreach to both the producing community and the audience directly.

This is tied to NBPC's recognition that content is a conversation – and to be relevant, you have to be part of the conversation.

Cultivating the conversation and the resulting networks help position NBPC to be more than a re-granting organization or a content distribution organization, and help leverage its leadership position.

"The key thing we know how to do is take a producer not only from understanding what public media deliverables are but understanding why public media exists," said Ugbode. "We've been the middle ground between the very commercial work and ending up with the

high-end public media work.

“The idea of fostering new voices is so that before Ferguson happens, you are already the place to talk about Ferguson. Within the system, there is that duality between understanding what we’re supposed to be and where the money is. The system loves a new voice once it has proven itself.”

## **PIC**

Pacific Islanders in Communication was established in 1991 and is based in Honolulu, Hawaii. Its mission is to support, advance and develop Pacific Island media content and talent that results in a deeper understanding of Pacific Island history, culture and contemporary challenges.

When viewed from the continental United States, PIC is an organization charged with serving a comparatively small population, represented by a comparatively small producing community. When seen from Honolulu, PIC is a resource and a convener for a Pacific Island media community that is exploring diverse ways of telling their stories. It’s all a matter of perspective.

One valuable piece of perspective for PIC has been the strategic plan that guides the organization’s work. Of all the NMC organizations, PIC has developed the most complete and actionable strategic plan, and the PIC team uses it as a guide for long-term decision-making and for executing on tactics.

“Before, I didn’t know what I could turn down. Now, I can get back to people directly and say ‘sorry, not in our strategic plan, not in our annual plan,’” said Leanne Ferrer, PIC’s executive director. “That helps in dealing with the staff, too, because now we’re all on the same page.”

Part of what makes the PIC strategic plan so powerful is that the organization uses it to create a detailed tactical plan, with



deliverables tracked along a timeline for each fiscal year:

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC) is to support, advance, and develop Pacific Islander media content and talent that results in a deeper understanding of Pacific Island history, culture, and contemporary challenges. In keeping with its mission, PIC helps Pacific Islander stories reach national audiences through funding support for productions, training and education, broadcast services, and community outreach.

**STRATEGIC VISION:**

To enrich the cultural landscape by being the preminent source of Pacific Islander media content.

**STRATEGIC PILLARS:**

1	Deliver quality content about Pacific Islanders to a national audience (CONTENT)
2	Identify professional opportunities and training to Pacific Islanders to get the experience they need to create content for a nation audience (TRAINING)
3	Explore and create strategic partnerships which leads to organizational advantages (PARTNERSHIP)
4	Develop and implement a business plan that ensures the stability of PIC (SUSTAINABILITY)

**PIC ANNUAL PLAN FY 2015  
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Increase programming for a national broadcast.**

**GOAL: PIC will increase programming annually by 20% and will establish at least one relationship with a strong public television station that will help with station relations, engagement, packaging, and possibly fundraising**

<b>Strategy 1 Strengthen and grow the Pacific Heartbeat series footprint within the system</b>					
<b>Tactic 1 Increase number of episodes for PH500</b>		<b>Qtr</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Activity 1	Push programs through pipeline more efficiently	Q1-Q4	CH	MK	Schedule at least two PIC funded programs for PH500
Activity 2	Start curating for upcoming season earlier in the year	Q2-Q3	CH	MK & LF	Lock slate for PH500 by September 2015 to support outreach & engagement activities
Activity 3	Work with PBS Hawaii for acquisitions	Q3	CH	LF	Acquire at least one program for PH500
Activity 4	Actively seek out acquisitions through festivals and distributors	Q2 & Q3	CH	MK & LF	Acquire at least two programs for PH500
Activity 5	Create and implement online submission in-take process	Q3	CH	MK	Receive at least 5 submissions
Activity 6	Use PIC Newsletter & social media to promote film submissions	Q3	CH	AM	Post announcement in June & July newsletter
Activity 7	Use PH & PIC website to promote film submission	Q3	CH	AM	PIC and PH websites updated by May 15, 2015
Activity 8	Contact stations with PI communities to publicize PH submission	Q3	CH	LF	At least one station posts on website or social media properties
Activity 9	Contact cultural and community groups to publicize PH submission	Q3	CH	MK & LF	At least one group posts on website or social media properties
Activity 10	Contact UH ACM to publicize PH submission	Q3	CH	LF	Make at least one contact with a student
Activity 11	Commission PSP project (PH500)	Q4	CH	LF	Fund at least one PSP project to be included in PH600
<b>Tactic 2 Increase system carriage by raising PH profile for 400 &amp; 500</b>		<b>Qtr</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Activity 1	Work with SR consultant to increase system carriage (PH400) by: a) implementing outreach/engagement plan to entice programmers b) mail out 200 programmer packets c) place online Current Ad	Q2	AM	CH	Increase carriage by 2%
Activity 2	Work with outreach/engagement consultant (PH400) to: a) build out PH & PIC social media properties b) produce engagement events	Q2	AM	NT, RT, CH & MK	Increase viewership by 5% and increase social media numbers by 5%.
Activity 3	Update PH website (PH400) by: a) creating PH microsite b) including talk-back section and improving layout for ease of usability	Q2	AM	W2W & CH	Increase website traffic by 5%

Along with their model of strategic planning, PIC is focused on building the kind of community dialogue that can inform their decision-making and increase the impact of their work.

### **Building community dialogue**

Ferrer has had a significant task in front of her, aligning PIC's strategy and tactics, focusing on a long-term vision for content and talent development and strengthening relationships with the producing community, with the public media system and with potential funders for support.

Her efforts have drawn notice and are helping to build broader support for PIC.

“Leanne is a node in this community. She works so hard and she does so much that creates impact,” said Vera Zambonelli, executive director of Hawaii Women in Filmmaking. “The ripple effect is tremendous.”

PIC faces significant distance challenges – the distance among the Pacific Island communities themselves, the distance of the producing community from other filmmakers, the distance to stations and to CPB. But the board and the staff work consistently and intentionally at bridging those distances.

“The difference with PIC ... is that they have two public television representatives on their board, and they are very active,” said Kevin Harris of WETA, a former PIC board member. “PIC is more connected, and Leanne works to make those connections. That is important because in public television, it is like a small town.”

Connections to organizations in the public media ecosystem include the relationship Cheryl Hirasa, PIC director of program development and content strategy, to ITVS. Hirasa worked at ITVS for nine years before joining PIC, and she remains based on San Francisco, providing PIC with a key staff member on the continent.

PIC also has deep connections with the Hawaii State Film Office. Donne Dawson, the State Film Commissioner, is ending her third term as a PIC board member and calls PIC “vitaly important to my day job.”

“PIC helps people develop skills where they’ve fallen short - bring their proposal up to speed, organize their project, find the right funding,” Dawson said. “We don’t have any meaningful means of supporting filmmakers in Hawaii outside of PIC.”

One such filmmaker is Ty Sanga, who was introduced to PIC when he was an undergraduate at the University of Hawaii. PIC has funded short films – notably “Stones,” which was selected for the 2011 Sundance Film Festival. Sanga’s new work, “Family Ingredients” debuted at CAAMFest in 2014 and will air seven episodes in 2016 on PBS Plus.

“PIC is the only thing that brings the native filmmaking community together,” Sanga said. “We all exist in bubbles - we work on projects and rarely get together and collaborate, talk story, talk about what’s going on in Hawaii cinema. All of my filmmaker relationships exist because of PIC or people PIC has brought in.”

### **Redefining the metric**

PIC admittedly has been slower than other NMC organizations to move into digital platforms, but that process is underway now. Part of the reluctance was in watching feedback to other organizations from CPB about how much emphasis to place on digital platforms.

“So we are the last ones out of the gate,” said Ferrer. “But we want to start a digital initiative with short films, letting producers cut their teeth on short films. That is the gap we’ve been working with, losing these young producers who can’t make that leap into documentaries on PBS. This gives us a pipeline, a way to develop those producers’ skills.”

More broadly, PIC staff and board members are looking for ways to redefine the metrics of impact and success.

“One of the things we discussed regularly on the board is what are the metrics of success,” said Ramsay Taum, who recently completed a board term. “The metrics we’re applying now are not the metrics that are going to matter, certainly not in the direction

we're headed.”

Indicators of success can be seen in convenings, such as the Hawaiian Media Makers Conference.

“They’ve been very good at community outreach and community building,” said producer Ciara Lacey, who has received PIC funding. “The Hawaiian Media Makers Conference was just huge. The advocacy element for distribution and station relations is hugely important from my perspective.”

“It’s hard out here in this very small market for people to get the training they need to make the kind of quality productions that meet either local or national standards for broadcast,” said producer Joe Wilson, who has been funded by PIC. “There is a steep curve out here, and they are doing everything they can to maximize networking, relationship building.”

### **Financial reporting**

CPB staff report that PIC does an exemplary job in maintaining accurate, up to date, clear financial reporting.

PIC’s operations manager Jade Villanueva said while PIC doesn’t struggle with creating the quarterly reports – “the reporting part is easy” – the staff would welcome more conversation and feedback.

“The lack of guidelines to create the report is an issue. If there was a set of procedures, guidelines, reference manuals to help, that would be useful. We have the contract to refer to, but it isn’t exactly clear and CPB doesn’t always know what it means, either.”

Villanueva also offers insight into a potential best practice for the NMC: “If everyone had QuickBooks, then we could use standard codes that we input into QuickBooks, then all the categories would align across the organizations,” she said. “We could download our backup, and then CPB could review everything. We could run reports out of QuickBooks that would help us get to more and better reporting, more standard reporting.”

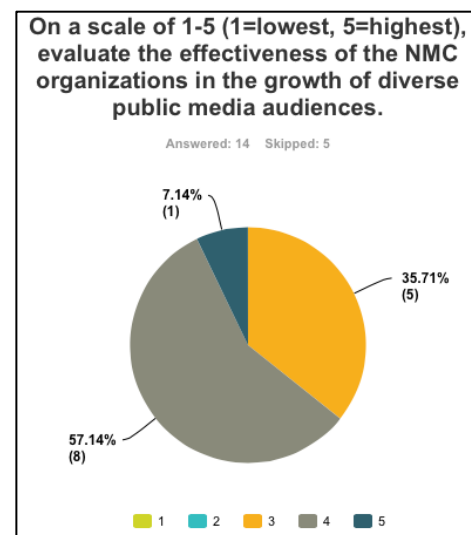
## **Survey Findings**

Coats2Coats developed surveys to document awareness and attitudes about the accomplishments, challenges and opportunities of the NMC. Fielding two distinct surveys – one directed to the staff and board members of the NMC entities and the other to the NMC’s stakeholders in public media – provided a view into where there are shared opinions and potential areas of disconnect. These surveys also informed more in-depth interviews and site visits. A total of 38 respondents completed the surveys – 18 for the internal survey of staff, 20 for the stakeholders survey.

Surveys of NMC stakeholders were completed by personnel from CPB, PBS, other public media entities such as ITVS and NETA, and public media stations. These surveys included scaled rankings regarding the NMC’s overall effectiveness, as well as open-ended questions for respondents to comment more broadly. (The scale on all questions was 1-5, with 1=lowest and 5=highest.) The internal NMC survey was entirely open-ended and encouraged the NMC constituents to comment broadly. We’ll first cover the stakeholder survey results.

In rating the effectiveness of the NMC groups, stakeholders were positive, though not glowingly so, and acknowledged that evaluating the NMC as a group must recognize that these are separate and unique entities.

When asked to rate the effectiveness of growing diverse public media audiences, stakeholders rated the NMC entities 3 or 4 out of 5, that some are more effective (in their view) than others, that there is a desire for the NMC to look beyond normal programming outlets on PBS, and that the NMC are necessary to public media. Some comments:



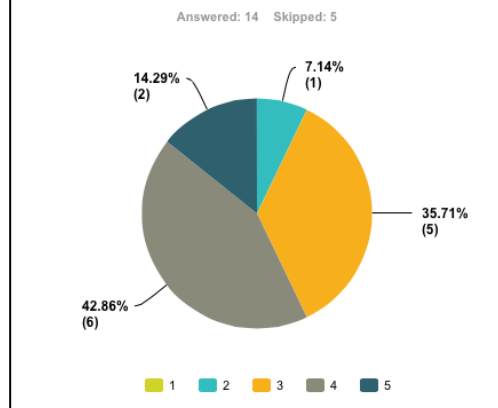
“Viewers want to see themselves represented on television. They want role models.” – PBS program director

“Some organizations (NBPC, LPB, CAAM) are more engaged with the filmmakers in their respective communities while the other two (Vision Maker and PIC) appear to have lower profiles and less connections. None of the organizations presently seem oriented towards audiences and activities that might grow audiences for public media. ... There appears to be little effort, aside from board participation, to connect to public media stations.” – CPB executive

“I wish they would focus on distribution beyond POV and Independent Lens. Frontline, American Masters, American Experience, a PBS special would be great.” – PBS station programmer

Regarding the NMC’s effectiveness in working with other organizations to expand public media’s reach into diverse communities, stakeholders again were middle-of-the-road to positive, particularly in partnering with producing organizations such as ITVS, POV and WORLD. Results again highlighted that the strengths of individual NMC members were not universal. Some respondents also spoke to how events highlight the filmmakers and specific films but not the connection to public media or the broader ethnic community.

On a scale of 1-5 (1=lowest, 5=highest), rate the NMC organizations' ability to work with other organizations to expand public media's reach into diverse communities.

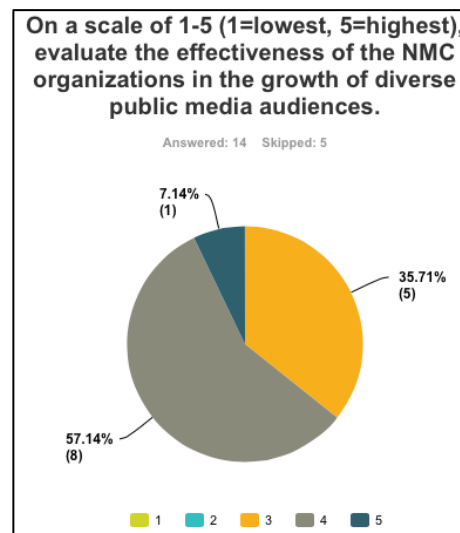


“I think many of them work very well with stations and other organizations. The LPB, as an example, is brilliant working with the press and stations getting their projects mentioned and carried. They

are probably the best. NBPC is the second. They had a pretty good year with the NBPC 360.” – PBS executive

“Events build awareness of specific films, filmmakers and issues but I doubt the residual value of building audiences. I know of specific instances in the past where all of the organizations have worked with other organizations -- LPB working with PBS SoCal, La Raza, NALIP; Vision Maker working with the American Indian Film Festival, Ford Foundation, Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian; and PIC working with the GUAM & Hawaii TV stations, and New Zealand media organizations, but the emphasis has still been on supporting filmmakers not expanding public media's reach.” – CPB executive

Respondents similarly gave the NMC positive marks on their collaboration with station-based producers in developing content for public media. This general ranking did not capture the differing effectiveness levels in each NMC entity, but comments certainly did. Also, respondents pointed to the fact that many producers – independent makers and producers at the stations – may lack awareness of the NMC organizations. They also pointed to the need for the NMC to continually seek out new filmmakers.



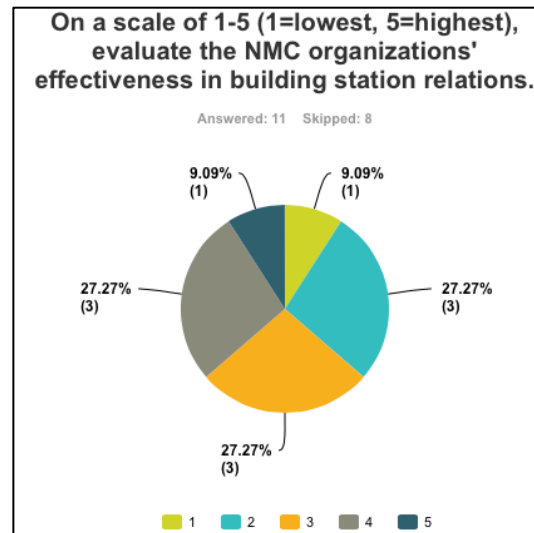
“This is such a general statement. Some of them are so much better than others. Some (LPB-NBPC) have a much higher profile and are better than navigating the system than others. CAAM is also good, but does not seem to have the amount of product.” – PBS executive

“It is critical for them to expand their reach into minority communities and not deal with the same small group of filmmakers. Must create



pipeline for future producers. They are trying to do so.” – PBS station program director

The widest spectrum of opinions appeared when respondents were asked about the effectiveness of NMC groups in building station relations. It was the only question in which the NMC scored below average. Written responses cited a lack of any contact with the NMC groups at the station level, the assumption that NMC entities “hire out” the job of networking with stations and a lack of resources to build meaningful relationships. On the positive side, respondents noted that station outreach picks up when a show makes it to the broadcast schedule and that the NMC groups undertake active outreach each year at the PBS Annual Meeting.



“When the NMC has a show to push, they are aggressive (some more than others) in mounting station relations campaigns. I don't know if there is an ongoing, regular station reach out.” – PBS executive

“At least at my level, I hear very little from or about them.” – PBS station president

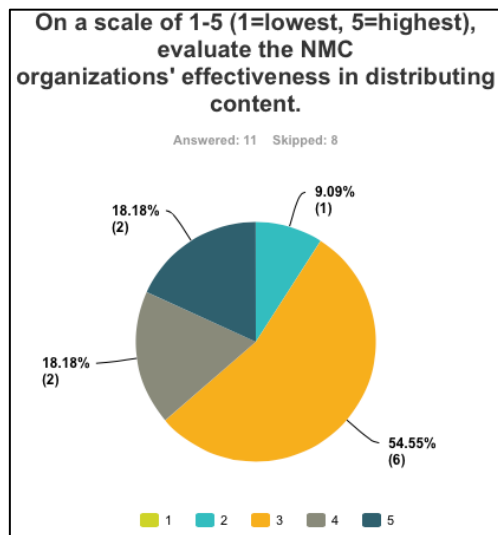
“They seem to all hire out for this. No relationship-building in house, they pay someone to do it.” – PBS station programmer

“Most projects coming from the NMC do not have the resources to hire a station relations person for their projects nor the staff. Only selected projects get that extra support and then only minimally. I



think that the NMC as a group have worked hard to build strong relationships with many of the stations.” – NETA executive

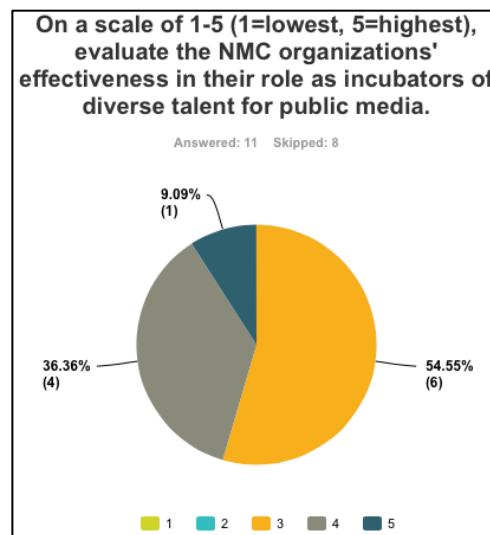
Respondents were so-so on the NMC’s effectiveness in distributing content. Some of this result was due to perceived unevenness among the five NMC entities – with LPB, NBPC and CAAM highlighted for effectiveness more than PIC or VMM. Another common comment was around what each NMC organization can accomplish within its budget.



“Some years it seems like one over the others has more to distribute, or has a BIG show on the NPS. Most likely due to what gets done and by when, this trend won't stop. Since they all give seed money to R&D projects, that later go on to get larger funds from larger orgs, I'm not sure that NMC gets the recognition for all they do.” – PBS station programmer

“Between the PBS series POV and Indie Lens and OTOs and short series through NETA, APT & WORLD they get national distribution and reasonable carriage. Most don't have the budgets to support much marketing, station relations or community engagement efforts.” – NETA executive

A central mission of the NMC is to serve as an incubator for developing diverse talent for public media. Respondents were united in their support of NMC fulfilling this role, and how critical it is to public media. But the middling ranking given to the NMC groups reflects a need for more, better



communication, broader development (again, seeking out and cultivating talent not already identified) and the opinion that not all NMC entities are performing at the same level. More worrisome were respondents who were not aware that the NMC was charged with this mission.

“The NMC does great work but needs to have capacity to really develop and nurture diverse talent and secure opportunities for the talent.” – ITVS executive

“They more than any other funders work with diverse talent and are increasing the pipeline. However, the issues then comes, what plan do they have for building and giving that talent enough work and exposure to make a long lasting career?” – PBS executive

“As a whole, I'm not aware of all of them doing this. I know PIC, CAAM, LPB and NPBC provide mentors. I'm not sure about VisionMaker. Tying in with digital strategy ... could be a way for the entire NMC to do a collective fund that includes funding for a program + trainings.” – PBS station programmer

A common theme of this evaluation is the importance of diversifying platforms – going beyond television – and leveraging more PBS programs to air NMC content. When asked which channels, programs, platforms and events were vital to the NMC achieving its goals, POV and WORLD were mentioned most, with PBS Plus, Create, NETA, APT and others receiving less notice. Respondents acknowledged that, with broadcast, there are fewer hours in the programming day than content produced.

“Frontline is the best hour of TV, get more content on Frontline. Get more content on news/pub affairs (pitch segments) as Election comes forward. Be part of the Election coverage conversation with PBS.” – PBS station programmer

“Having a complicated system provides a variety of outlets and opportunities for NMC content, but at the same time it allows that content to get lost in the pipes.” – PBS executive

In a separate question, stakeholders were asked what the NMC organizations’ strategy should be for digital content. Responses here illuminated the need for strategic alignment throughout the system regarding the role of the NMC in the digital presence of PBS, NPR and at the station level, the need for training, and the desire to see the NMC groups experiment more on digital and social channels to help inform the broader public media system. This last point emerged as a common theme of this evaluation, and was echoed in numerous interviews and site visits.

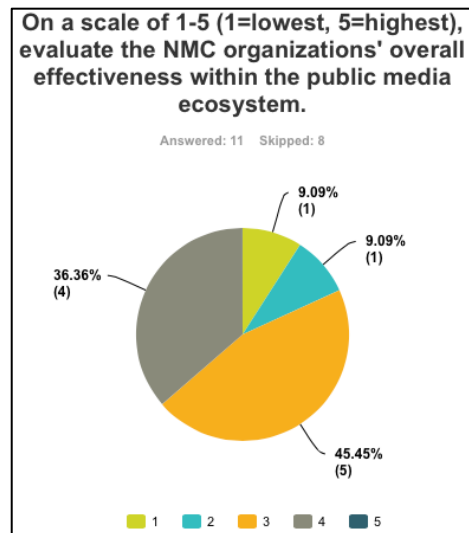
“NMC's Digital Strategy should not be isolated from its Broadcast strategy. Content is Content. And I hope NMC will help lead efforts to blur the lines between Broadcast & Digital. Re: content strategy -- I would like to see a strategy focused on reaching diverse audiences (not just creating diverse content & cultivating diverse storytellers). There's immense opportunity to target, personalize, and distribute content based on a user's interests and & how they consume content / and on which platforms, etc. I'd like to see NMC lead the way in reaching these diverse audiences through breakout cross-platform strategies.” – PBS senior manager

“I think they need to be providing digital content to PBS and stations.” – NETA executive

“All platforms must be considered together, in my opinion. However, (there) are some projects that can and should live on the digital platform...not all has to come to tv...with so little money...it's difficult to do it all.” – PBS executive

”There should be a collective training and workshop to ensure producers of color are capable of producing digital content and they should fund initiatives that generate new content supporting both new and veteran media makers.” – PBS executive

Rounding out the stakeholder survey, respondents were asked to give the NMC a final grade on overall effectiveness. That grade – passing – again reflects the opinion that a middle grade is best when averaging at all NMC entities, that the need for the NMC is great and that there are many opportunities to innovate, build stronger networks and for the public media system to leverage – and support – the NMC for collective good.



“I think they need to do more as a cohesive group, and to make sure at their core, they have the same message.” – PBS executive

“Too much focus on supporting filmmakers and too little vision and leadership.” - CPB executive

(If this (were) broken down by group, I could rate differently. (The) ecosystem implies that they interact, and I find that they consistently try and separate vs. infiltrate the system.” – PBS station programmer

“The NMC provides a valuable service to the field and the system but needs to be updated and aligned with other efforts and develop greater capacity to support producers and reach audiences.” – ITVS executive

### **Stakeholder survey conclusion**

Surveying personnel at PBS, CPB, PBS stations and other public media organizations provided insight into how the NMC are perceived, how some entities are viewed as more effective than others, challenges in communication and collaboration, and the opportunity for the NMC to evolve as an incubator for talent and content delivery models for all of public media. The responses help inform recommendations and next steps.

## Internal Survey

Coats2Coats conducted a survey of NMC personnel at the outset of the evaluation to gather insight into attitudes and insights prior to site visits with each NMC entity. As stated before, these questions were open-ended and qualitative across a range of topics, from mission and platforms to talent and collaboration opportunities.

While there are no ratings in such qualitative responses, Coats2Coats used word-cloud software to draw out common themes. These can be illustrative, as words that are used most often carry the most visual weight. We created these clouds for a select number of questions and provide verbatim responses to add context. Responses are identified below by the NMC organization.

All respondents were clear on the mission of their organization, though stated somewhat differently, echoing their mission statements and the language of their reports to CPB. When asked how they knew their organization's work has impact, however, a more nuanced picture emerged.

**Q: How do you know your organization's work has impact? List any factors that come to mind.**



It's no surprise that having NMC-funded or produced programming air on PBS carries the most weight from NMC members, with the terms PBS, programs, programming, broadcast and carriage standing out. Beneath that, the responses described how such impact is measured, to varying strengths and using a variety of tools, reports and sometimes instinct. They also pointed to how, from a viewer's perspective, there may be several layers of entities credited for the content seen on public media.

"I'd like to say I have definitive ways to measure impact. Carriage reports and after-broadcast phone calls, DVD sales and requests for community screenings. We tell people that most likely anything they see on PBS stations about Native Americans we probably had something to do with, but since our funding credit is the last 3 seconds of the broadcast, they probably already left the room." – Vision Maker Media

"We consider a number of factors to determine our organization's impact: Carriage reports demonstrate NBPC funded content is reaching a wide audience; Nielsen ratings of particular shows that help us measure the impact of a particular NBPC funded program; Digital media metrics such as Google Analytics and Facebook Insight; Capturing the number of participants who attend NBPC webinars, and Ovee Chats; Surveys from producers." – NBPC

"Station carriage, ratings, percentage of Hispanic Households reached, press impressions, social media analytics, number of online streams, # of partnerships developed at the local level, web traffic, awards." - LPB

As with the external stakeholder survey, the platform for NMC content revolved – in some cases pointedly – around broadcast television, with PBS dominating.

**Q: Which carriers are most important to you? Why?**



Respondents acknowledged that getting carriage on PBS is competitive and that they seek alternatives. Other important carriers mentioned by respondents included APT, NETA, PBS Plus and PBS.org.

“PBS and PBS.org. PBS is the largest and most prestigious distributor of public media content. Being picked up by PBS as opposed to a regional distributor (APT, NETA) is an imprimatur of excellence. WORLD: though it doesn't have national distribution it is in 60 major markets and they run content several times after the initial broadcast. A combination of PBS and WORLD is what LPB does regularly to reach viewers.” – LPB

“The correct answer to this question is PBS and all of the national prime time series. However, in the real world, the battle to secure space on the PBS national primetime schedule, and on any of the national strands is extremely competitive. Some of what NBPC funds is not picked up by PBS, PBS Plus, or any of the national prime time series, so channel's like WORLD and distributors like APT and NETA

are just as important to us as are PBS, PBS Plus and the major strands.” – NBPC

**Q: What channels, programs, platforms and events do you see as vital to achieving your mission?**



When looking beyond carriers to platforms, the responses become less system-oriented and more broadly digital. Respondents looked to all platforms where public media are available, including social media and real-life events. That said, members of the NMC continue to acknowledge that having work appear on primetime PBS shows is most valuable to them for reaching broad audiences.

“We stream a lot of video from the website and our YouTube channel, but rarely do we offer full programs. We do podcast interviews with the producer/director and or subjects of all documentaries. We make them available to radio stations (targeting the Native radio stations) through PRX.” – Vision Maker Media

“We look at every possible outlet in public media as valuable opportunity and as a potential way to disseminate our stories. PBS is the main area we focus on and utilize various stands including POV, Independent Lens, American Experience and American Masters as



potential partners. ... Digital platforms are also an important component and we consistently work with the digital World channel and well as pbs.org to showcase our work.” – LPB

PBS “and the distribution various outlets it provides. Other broadcast/cable distributors with whom we have program services agreements (namely Comcast and PBS Learning Media) distributing on VOD, cable and internet Live audiences reached at film festivals, community events and other group screenings Web and social media viewers, both of promotional and original content Educational users (teachers, libraries and members of the general public) distributed through physical media (DVDs) and digital media (streaming and digital sales).” - CAAM

**Q: How do you identify emerging content creators?**



Regarding the collective mission of identifying and cultivating content creators, NMC members reported a number of approaches, many of which are outlined elsewhere in this evaluation. Survey responses mentioned a variety of ways, from the expected avenue of connecting with content creators who apply for funding to intern programs, film festivals and school outreach programs. There was no uniform approach, reflective of different communities, dynamics

and even geography. And, again, there was recognition that NMC entities need to reach out to content creators, not just filmmakers.

“We identify emerging content creators by the individuals who apply for funding. Unfortunately, I think this limits us from reaching a larger pool of content creators. I like that 'emerging content creators' is used, it doesn't limit us to just filmmakers and producers. This would allow us to reach more talents beyond the low amount of Native American filmmakers available to produce for PBS.” – Vision Maker Media

“We identify emerging talent by: PIC’s Media Fund Call Workshops, PIC Screenings Film Festivals, Film Studies programs at universities and colleges, Local production companies, Internships, Word of mouth. While we embrace and train all filmmaker interested in creating Pacific Islander content we specifically look for Pacific Islander filmmakers working on Pacific Islander stories.” – PIC

Training that talent was not a strong suit for the NMC, based on survey responses. Some seek out digital-based and virtual training, some do annual training at events for producers and filmmakers. Much of the training is focused on how filmmakers can better interact with the NMC groups and with public media, have more effective pitch sessions and digital skills. While CAAM is very proactive in this area, LPB said it no longer trained producers.

“We are very focused in our goal in increasing the number of hours of Latino content on PBS. However, we do work with organizations that have the infrastructure and resources to do producer training such as NALIP, Film Independent and others that conduct labs, workshops, mentorship programs, etc.” – LPB

“NBPC does most of their training via webinars. We began using WebEx software prior to 2010, as part of our New Media Institute trainings. Now, we use GoToMeeting. We currently record the webinars and make them accessible for free on NBPC's YouTube page.” – NBPC



of the national signature strands there is very little diversity. This has to change.” – LPB

“There are opportunities that we miss by not being located in a big city—like access to foundations and other funding opportunities, and limited partnership opportunities. CAAM’s film festival is a great example. They attract oodles of audiences. The American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco also attracts large audiences. With a Native population in Lincoln at 2500, we just don’t have the numbers.” – Vision Maker Media

**Q: How could CPB best support the mission of the NMC?**



This question drew several references to the 2012 sequestration, when CPB cut NMC funding by 10 percent (and its overall CPB budget by 5 percent). Beyond a plea for increased funding, though, NMC respondents suggested process efficiencies, improvements in communication, being a vocal advocate of the NMC to PBS stations, clearer objectives, centralized marketing/promotion, and gaining permission to innovate. Some called for CPB to create diversity standards in programming.

“As the largest funder of content development for public media, and providing funding to the public television and radio stations across the system, CPB is in a unique position to lead the change for inclusion of diverse content. Change needs to happen, acceptance needs to happen if we really want the images on public media to reflect the demographics of the country. As a funder, CPB can set guidelines and requirements of the national executive producers of the strands on PBS and the stations.” – LPB

“Acknowledge the changed media landscape and not limit the percentage of program funding based on whether the program is for broadcast or web, or national vs local. In a multi-platform world, even local programs are finding national audiences because of the web.” – NBPC

“To be more conscious that one size does not fit all for us. We have very different communities with very different needs and levels of experience. It would be great too to also have an annual process in which CPB engages us more on what's going on in our communities and what we can design together to be more successful.” – CAAM

## **Sources and Interview Subjects**

### **Center for Asian American Media**

**Dipti Ghosh**  
Board Chair

**Stephen Gong**  
Executive Director

**David Lei**  
Board Vice Chair

**Debbie Ng**  
Director of Development & Communication

**James Ott**  
Director of Finance and Administration

**Vincent Pan**  
Board Member

**Don Young**  
Director of Programs

### **Latino Public Broadcasting**

**Frank Cruz**  
Board Member

**Edward Olmos**  
Chairman of the Board

**Jennifer Ortiz**  
Digital Content Manager

**Luis Ortiz**  
Managing Director

**Sandie Pedlow**  
Executive Director

**Moises Venegas**  
Program Coordinator

National Black Programming Consortium

**Lisa Durden**  
Broadcast Manager

**Eric Easter**  
Board Chair

**Leslie Fields-Cruz**  
Executive Director

**Donna Hardwick**  
Development Director

**Kay Shaw**  
Director of Strategic Enrichment

**Quincy Troupe**  
Board Member

**Christian Ugbode**  
Director of Digital Initiatives

Pacific Islanders in Communications

**Donne Dawson**  
Board Member

**Leanne Ferrer**  
Executive Director

**Cheryl Hirasa**

Director of Program Development & Content Strategy

**Maluhia Kaimikaua**

Management Assistant

**Leah Khara**

Grant Panelist

**Amber McClure**

Communications Manager

**Jason Suapaia**

President

1013 Integrated

**Ramsay Taum**

Former Board Member

**Vera Zambonelli**

Executive Director of Hawaii Women in Filmmaking

**Jade Villanueva**

Operations Manager

**Leslie Wilcox**

Board Member

President & CEO – PBS Hawaii

Vision Makers Media

**Boots Kennedy**

Documentary Producer

**Mary Ann Koehler**

Business Manager



**Danny Ladley**

Director of Mary Riempa Ross Media Arts Center, host of Vision  
Maker Media screenings

**Georgiana (George) Lee**

Assistant Director

**Alison Lotto**

Archives Assistant

**Jessica Rustad**

Marketing Director

**Shirley Sneve**

Executive Director

**Judi Gaiashkibos**

Director

Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs

Public Media Stakeholders

**Miasia Johnson**

Project Manager of Television & Digital Video Content  
CPB

**Joseph Tovaes**

Senior VP for Diversity and Innovation  
CPB

**Jennifer Lawson**

Senior VP of Television & Digital Video Content  
CPB

**Donald Thoms**

VP of Programming  
PBS

**Steve Bass**

President & CEO  
Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB)

**Scott Dwyer**

Program Director  
KQED

**Sally Fifer**

President & CEO  
Independent Television Service (ITVS)

**Kevin Harris**

Vice President & Television Station Manager  
WETA

**Byron Knight**

Former General Manager  
Wisconsin Public TV

**Harris Ravine**

President & General Manager  
KRMA  
Rocky Mountain PBS (RMPBS)

**Andy Russell**

COO  
PBS SoCal

**Trashelta Tyler**

Director of Traffic & Programming  
KCOS

**Jerry Wareham**

CEO

Ideastream (nonprofit broadcasting)

**Gayle Loeber**

Director of Programming

NETA

**Chris Hastings**

Executive Producer and Editorial Director

WORLD Channel

**Lesley Norman**

Production Executive

WNET

**Mark Leonard**

General Manager/CEO

NET Nebraska

**Terry Dugas**

Manager, Content Distribution

NET

**Steve Graziano**

Managing Partner

P3 Public Media

**Randy Hansen**

Treasurer

Board of Directors/Assistant General Manager of NET

## Filmmakers & Producers

### **Marlene Booth**

Filmmaker

Receives funding from PIC

### **Leo Chiang**

Producer, "A Place Called Versailles"

Received funding from CAAM

### **Hector Galán**

Producer, "Children of Giant"

Received funding from LPB

### **Dean Hamer**

Producer, "Kumu Hina"

### **Cristina Ibarra**

Producer, "The Last Conquistador"

Received funding from LPB

### **Ciara Lacy**

Producer

Received funding from PIC

### **Grace Lee**

Producer, "American Revolutionary"

Received funding from CAAM

### **Eren McGinnis**

Producer, "Beyond the Border"

Received funding from LPB

### **Alysa Nahmias**

Producer, "Unfinished Spaces"

Received funding from LPB

**Tadashi Nakamura**

Producer, "Life on Four Strings"  
Received funding from CAAM

**Phillip Rodriguez**

Producer, "Latinos '08"  
Received funding from LPB

**Ty Sanga**

Producer, writer, director  
Received funding from PIC

**Shirley Thompson**

Producer  
Received funding from PIC

**Joe Wilson**

Producer, "Kumu Hina"  
Received funding from PIC

**Lisette Flanary**

Independent Filmmaker

**Heather Giugni**

Filmmaker

## About Coats2Coats

Coats2Coats is a consultancy focused on a media future that is participatory, profitable and mobile. Our clients include for-profit and non-profit media companies, mobile and crowdsourcing startups, universities and foundations funding news innovation. In 2011, Coats2Coats evaluated the CPB-funded Local Journalism Centers and has led the Knight Foundation-funded Community Journalism Executive Training programs for journalism entrepreneurs. We are located in Sarasota, Florida.

Several members of Coats2Coats contributed to this project. Their bios are listed below.



**Janet Coats** is founder the CEO of Coats2Coats and has worked in media for more than 25 years. As a newsroom executive, she focused on collaboration and innovation, building newsroom teams that worked across platforms to create relevant, actionable journalism. Before starting Coats2Coats, she was vice president/news for The News Center, overseeing all news operations for online, print and television in Tampa, Fla. She was executive editor of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, one of the nation's first multimedia newsrooms. She was dean of the faculty at The Poynter Institute. She has served five times as a Pulitzer Prize juror, including chairing the Public Service and Investigative Reporting juries.

**Rusty Coats** is founder and President of Coats2Coats and has worked in media for 25 years. He started his career as a reporter for his hometown newspaper, *The Evening News*, and has worked at papers in Indiana, Maine, Miami and Modesto, Calif. In 1996, he launched modbee.com for *The Modesto Bee*, then went on to run websites for *The Sacramento Bee*, *The Star-Tribune* in Minneapolis and TBO.com, the website for *The Tampa Tribune* and News Channel 8. He also served as Director of New Media for Frank N. Magid Associates and held executive interactive positions at Media General and the E.W. Scripps Co. In addition to other client work, he serves as Executive Director of the Local Media Consortium, which includes more than 70 multiplatform for-profit media companies.



**Nicole Hudson** has spent her career applying digital media to products in industries ranging from Broadway to finance to journalism. A graduate of Northwestern University, Hudson has managed the online brands for shows like *Les Misérables* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, worked on web development, ticketing and calendar conversion and ad network development with clients such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Lincoln Center and tackled online tools and branding for companies like the New Yorker and Goldman Sachs. On the ad agency side, she oversaw national digital campaigns and one-to-one marketing



products for AT&T. She has managed web, print, outdoor and on-air production for TV and radio stations, hotels and real-estate developments. Her 6 years on the business side of the non-profit start-up the St. Louis Beacon have given her a front row seat for the transformation happening in local news and the opportunity that digital platforms bring. She is a co-founder of St. Louis for the Love.



**Loren Omoto** is an instructor at Full Sail University and served as managing editor for TBO.com, the leading news website in Tampa Bay. His content responsibilities include news, entertainment, weather, sports and interactive content for the TBO website, as well as websites of The Tampa Tribune, WFLA-TV and more than a dozen sites associated with Media General newspapers around the region. Omoto worked in public broadcasting for more than 18 years, including stints as a television and radio anchor, Capitol reporter, program producer, production director and director of news and information programming for Minnesota Public Radio's regional news network. Before joining TBO.com, Omoto was an online editor and producer at StarTribune.com in Minneapolis. He's an advocate for newsroom diversity and is a founding member of the Asian American Journalists Association's Minnesota chapter.



**Daniela Velazquez** has honed her multimedia storytelling skills covering news in the often headline-making state of Florida. She worked as an online news producer for Tampa Bay Online (TBO.com) and reported and wrote feature and general assignment stories for The Tampa Tribune and NBC-affiliate WFLA-TV/News Channel 8. She also covered the public safety beat for the Tallahassee Democrat. She's taken her communication skills to companies both big and small, with experience working in corporate communications and marketing at both a Fortune 500 company and a local startup. As a consultant, she helps both corporations and nonprofits alike craft communication strategy, content creation and assists with media relations. She has a Bachelor of Journalism in News Editorial and a Bachelor of Arts in History, both from the University of Missouri-Columbia.