

So, you want to start or fund a collaborative?

Local Media Project at
Solutions Journalism Network



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Introduction

The Local Media Project (LMP) is a multi-year initiative launched by Solutions Journalism Network (SJN) in 2019 with support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to strengthen and reinvigorate local media ecosystems.

Since its inception, the LMP has catalyzed 15 solutions-oriented collaboratives, nearly all of which are self-sustaining or well on their way to independent financial vibrancy. Each collaborative – over a two-year residency – reported on the most pressing challenges in their communities, changed entrenched narratives, engaged with their audience in new ways, developed business plans, tracked their impact, and forged new paths to sustaining and maintaining a permanent responsive local news hub. You can read about all of these projects – as well as their accomplishments – on our initiative [webpage](#).

Of course, none of these accomplishments happened overnight. Along the way, there was a lot to learn. Collaborative members learned not only from their fellow participants, but from counterparts in other cities and states. In turn, the LMP team learned from their experiences and relationships and from each other.

As the presence of these solutions hubs grew, so did the interest in the model. The question was often simple: “Could I do this too?” to which we’d always answer a resounding *yes*. Of course, the next question is always “How do I start?”

We’ve gathered our most frequently asked-for documents, links, and resources in this guide. Our hope is that it’s one way to start answering these vital questions.

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Links to guide, toolkits and research

Collaboration (General)

- [The Reentry Project: A Collaborative Playbook](#)
- [Strategies for Tracking Impact: A Toolkit for Collaborative Journalism](#)
- [Impact Tracking Guide](#)
- [The Collaborative Sustainability Guide](#)
- [Collaborative Journalism Workbook](#)
- [Pearls of Wisdom from Savvy Project Managers: The Launch](#)
- [Pearls of Wisdom from Savvy Project Managers: Keeping it Going](#)

Research

- [Collaborative Scaffolding: The Key to Successful Collaborative Journalism](#)
- [Lessons from 9 Solutions Journalism Network collaboratives](#) (VIDEO)
- [Collaboratives: You have to want to be there](#)

Community Engagement

- [Gathering Toward Solutions: A Community Event Playbook for Journalism Collaboratives](#)
- [Engagement Toolkit](#)
- [Community Councils in Journalism Collaboratives: Early Evidence of Impact](#)
- [Asset Map Toolkit](#)

Memorandum of Understanding Example 1

Scope

The [collaborative name] will focus on [topic]. We will not advocate for particular solutions. Instead, we will investigate potential solutions and make the public aware of those solutions through journalism and engagement activities.

Timeline

Funding from [Funder] runs out in [TIMELINE]. We will work together in [TIMELINE] to fundraise for the Collaborative to make it a permanent network. Our goal is for the collaborative to be sustainable without support from [Funder].

The Nature of Collaboration

- The Collaborative includes newsrooms and community partners. The newsrooms are responsible for producing news content. The community partners are responsible for helping elevate that content and creating and participating in meaningful public engagement. Community partners also contribute their subject expertise and guidance on news coverage and engagement activities.
- Member organizations will assign one person to serve as a representative or point of contact to the Collaborative.
- Member organizations will promote Collaborative articles and events on their platforms via their organization's social media, newsletters, etc.
- Every partner organization is expected to participate in at least one initiative in [Year/Grant Term]. The initiatives are:
 - Sustainability: This group will create a plan to raise funds for the Collaborative so we can continue beyond [Year/Grant Term].
 - Stories: This group will determine/guide execution of high-impact stories.
 - Youth engagement: This group will find ways to expand our reach to youth/teachers. We want to work with schools/teachers to introduce data, video and stories that will help them with [topic].
 - Rural engagement: This group will find ways to expand our reach to rural [audiences].
- Other organizations may be interested in joining this Collaborative. Existing partners will decide by a majority vote whether/how to incorporate other interested parties.

- This is a voluntary collaboration. If at any point a collaborating outlet would like to remove themselves from the project, they may do so with the understanding that any project funds or shared resources being used by the outlet would be withdrawn and/or no longer made available.

Financial Decisions

[Funder] funding cannot be used for salaries or OT for partner employees. The funds can be used for the following, though this is not an exhaustive list: travel for reporting, collaborative events, collaborative products, promotion, freelancers, equipment.

Financial decisions are made by Collaborative members—typically by a majority vote of the members in attendance when the relevant decisions are being made. For example, newsroom editors would vote on journalism travel pitches.

The Project Manager will have a budget of \$3,000 to spend on Collaborative-related travel and overhead (such as subscriptions to Mailchimp for our newsletter, Google storage drive, food for Collaborative events, Collaborative equipment, etc.)

Community Engagement

The collaborative partners will help plan, promote and participate in relevant community events over the course of the project and will focus on this year’s goals of outreach to [audience]. These events will seek to bring together the various stakeholders in this issue: legislators and policy-makers, journalists, experts, grassroots organizations and community members impacted [topic].

Partners will consider including innovative or non-traditional forms of reporting and engagement for this project such as, for example, gamifying [topic], creating quizzes based on the reporting, creating lesson plans for educators, and other methods.

How Newsrooms Work Together

We share the common goals of:

- Breaking down competition between partners in relation to covering the [topic].
- Working toward the greater good of raising awareness of the [topic] and reporting on solutions.
- Creating excellent content about the [topic] by reducing duplication of efforts and sharing our resources and talents.
- Having a wider platform for our work.

We commit to the following overarching responsibilities:

- Editors and reporters who work on Collaborative content will be trained in solutions journalism
- Not every solution proposed is a valid solution. Before promoting we will use our best journalistic judgment to vet the solution, who is behind it and their motivations. The solution stories shared by the Collaborative should meet the 4 pillars of solutions journalism: response, evidence, insight, limitations.
- Newsrooms will notify the Collaborative — through the Project Manager or via Slack— stories they are working on pertaining to **[topic]**.
 - They will strive to do so with plenty of notice so that partners from different media can plan accordingly.
- No paywalls for Collaborative content including stories funded by the Collaborative.
- Stories produced with Collaborative funds are available for all members to use at the same time.
- We will work in the spirit of collaboration. Stealing ideas will not be tolerated. Keeping the Project Manager informed of upcoming coverage is crucial to foster collaboration and eliminate misunderstandings.
- Newsrooms and freelancers will abide by the [SPJ Code of Ethics](#) and National Press Photographers Association [Code of Ethics](#).
- We will track the impact of the stories.
- In some instances, the originating outlet(s) may be given initial temporary exclusivity for a story.
 - When an originating newsroom has committed resources above and beyond—for example, paying for travel or otherwise spending money it normally wouldn't—it can embargo stories. It should keep in mind the needs of partners in other mediums to ensure they can publicize the story before it becomes stale.
- Newsroom partners are not required to publish/broadcast every story produced by the collaborative. However, the hope and expectation is that all newsroom partners will all leverage this collaboration by publishing a significant portion of the journalism.
- There may be student production. Partners will decide whether they want to publish/air their reporting as newsroom pieces. This is not mandatory.

How many and what type of stories?

- News coverage will include news, data, illustrations, video and more showing the impact on families and communities, investigating solutions relevant to the problem and conducting critical analysis of government actions to tackle this problem.
- The project will be solutions oriented— but not every story must be a solutions story. What’s important is that the project, as a whole, reveals and investigates both the challenges of [topic] and as well as credible responses to those challenges.
 - Collaborative together will publish in [Year/Grant Term]:
 - Total of 100 stories about the [topic]
 - Total of 40-50 solutions stories
- Each partner has control over whether content they produce can be published by others by designating them as “collaborative stories” or not. This allows partners to retain control of content they generate. Any issues should be brought to the Project Manager’s attention.

What topics are included?

- TBD

Stories that aren’t included but can be shared:

- TBD

How To Share Stories

- *Republication:*
 - Stories designated as part of the Collaborative can be republished by partners and will be posted on [collaborative website]. Stories and photos/graphics will be posted in the Slack channel #stories-to-share.
 - Editing - Partners may use any elements of Collaborative stories which are part of the originating newsroom content, suitable for use in their publications. However, if any significant editing is needed -- for space limitations in print, for example -- partners agree to check edits with the originating newsroom.
 - Republished stories must include:
 - originating newsroom’s name
 - originating author’s byline

- Collaboration tagline, which can run at the beginning or end of the story: *This article is published through the [collaborative name] and is funded by [Funder].*
 - You can also run our Collaborative logo, found in this [LINK] folder.
 - Use of photos/graphics: Such assets will only be used for Collaborative stories. Original newsroom and photographer/designer must be credited.
- *Collaborative-produced content*
 - Stories funded by the Collaborative or brainstormed together will be available for all members to publish at the same time, using an embargo system.
 - We will recirculate and boost solutions stories explored in [Year/Grant Term] by creating distribution plans for relevant reporting. We will update pieces as needed and recirculate the work in our networks and others.
 - Newsrooms may add a subsection on their own website that will be a dedicated home for content related to this project.
 - The newsrooms will make efforts to collaborate across media boundaries. We understand that not every story will be trans-media, but we view cross-newsroom projects as great opportunities to extend the reach of the reporting. This approach to reporting could include:
 - Co-reporting stories: Certain stories will lend themselves to multimedia story-telling and/or reporting from two or more newsrooms. Partners and the Project Manager (PM) will proactively seek out these opportunities.
 - Spin-off stories: Some written stories can be adapted for radio, for example, without a lot of extra effort. In these cases, newspaper and audio reporters will record (and, if possible, edit) short interviews with sources that can be incorporated into a radio- scripted version.
 - Group project: a specific reporting project in which all collaborative members will participate in some way.
 - Partner interviews: In some cases, reporters may appear as guests to discuss their stories on other partners' broadcast programs.
 - Similarly, partner newsrooms bring diverse resources. One outlet may be stronger in social media, another in web design, another in video game production. We will look for opportunities to share and leverage partners' skills and assets across the network and we encourage any resource sharing that strengthens the collaborative.

Back-end Coordination

The partners and PM will agree to share pertinent data, resources and final pieces via Google drive. There will be a shared story budget describing stories in the pipeline, with author, art, deadline, and any other info the group needs.

It is expected that every outlet will inform the Project Manager of the project stories they are working on in a timely manner. For any and all cross-newsroom production, roll-out will be agreed upon by the newsrooms who have reported the story, in coordination with the PM.

Project Manager Role

The Project Manager will coordinate coverage in line with the editorial goals set by the network partners. She will:

- Be the voice and leader of the project, ensuring that it is staying true to its vision and managing the relationships between the partners
- Be responsible for ensuring that project’s reporting, as a whole, is meeting the goals and strategies set by the partners; the PM is the person responsible for thinking about what broader story our reporting is telling
- Convene monthly (or more frequent, if needed/desired) conference calls or in-person meetings to reflect on the project’s coverage; discuss concerns and problem solve; adjust goals and strategy; and determine near-term editorial priorities
- Encourage and seek to facilitate as much multimedia and/or cross-newsroom coverage as possible
- Act as spokesperson for the project
- Reinforce the solutions approach by offering guidance on potential story ideas, reporting strategies, research resources, sourcing and potential models
- Act as “traffic cop:” be the central-keeper of the reentry story pitches/plans of each participating outlet. In the case of conflicting or overlapping story plans, the PM will act as moderator and decision maker, looking for, whenever possible, ways to meld the reporting so that the efforts and integrity of each newsrooms’ work is maintained.
- Carry-out “quality control” on the project as a whole—identifying gaps in coverage and flagging inconsistencies
- Offer feedback on major text pieces to ensure that the piece meets our shared standards for high-quality reporting and comprehensive coverage. The PM will not do line edits or adjust the tone of the piece. Each outlet is encouraged to have their reporters’ and outlet’s voice shine through the story-telling that comes out of this project.

- Update the website with new reporting
- Allocate and keep track of project funds, meeting notes, overseeing google drive, etc.
- Social media promotion
- Event Planning for Community Engagement elements of the project

Other Deliverables

In addition to the reporting itself, the project will aim to produce other valuable deliverables which may include: building an e-mail listserv of people interested in these issues and this reporting; tracking of any legislation or policy introduced (or lawsuits filed); aggregating and sending out weekly links to local and national outlets.

Metrics & Impact

Partners will establish a method for tracking the content produced and its impact over the course of this project. We expect participating newsrooms to send reports about traffic and engagement time on digital pages, and participate in staff and audience surveys.

Governance

While the [Funder or Partner] is initiating and sponsoring this collaboration, they are stewards not directors. Their interest is in helping newsrooms do high-quality and high- impact solutions-oriented reporting. Ultimately, what this collaboration does is up to the newsroom partners. Formal governance questions will be decided by a majority vote of newsroom partners; in the case of a tie vote, the partners will seek [Funder or Partner]'s mediation.

[Funder or Partner] will not participate in day-to-day editorial decision-making, unless asked to do so by the newsroom partners, but will stay abreast of the collaborative's work and trajectory.

A [Funder or Partner] representative will participate in the monthly conference calls, will provide feedback on published/broadcasted work, and offer guidance and technical assistance on applying the solutions approach to the project. They will be available for editorial consulting on specific stories, if desired. They will also host trainings on asset framing and complicating the narratives for newsroom partner staff and any likely freelancers involved in this project.

We understand that the success of the project is dependent on dedicated funding. Funders will have no role in the day-to-day operations of the project or in the editorial decisions of the newsroom partners.

[SIGNATURES BEGIN ON NEXT PAGE]

Memorandum of Understanding Example 2

Editorial Scope

The focus of this project is [topic].

This is broad. Over the next 4 months, the newsroom partners will narrow the gauge, agreeing on a core list of issues, questions, and/or tensions to focus on.

- [Potential question 1]
- [Core issue suggestion]
- [Area of tension]
- [Potential question 2]
- [Potential question 3]

The project will be solutions oriented— but not every story must be a “solutions story.” Each newsroom partner will be expected to produce at least one solutions-oriented story per month (either online or in print/radio). As for the rest of the reporting, some stories will simply establish and describe problems; others could be powerful profiles of the people at the heart of this project. There will be “hybrids”—stories that reflect only some elements of solutions reporting. What’s important is that the project, as a whole, reveal and investigate both the challenges of recidivism and reentry as well as credible responses to those challenges in the [location] and elsewhere.

Timeline

- This is a [xx] month project, with the possibility of extension, if funding is available and if desired by the collaborating institutions
- The target launch is [MONTH] [YEAR].
- We will hold at least three community events during the project’s one-year duration; the first within the first three months of the project.

The Nature of Collaboration

As of [MONTH] [YEAR], the collaborative project includes the following newsroom partners: [list].

Other participating institutions include [list].

We will make a concerted effort to bring at least one [location] publication and at least one Television Station into this core group.

In addition, we are aware that other **[location]** outlets may be interested in participating in this collaborative project. The existing partners will decide soon whether/how to incorporate other interested parties. Also, partners will seek to include the reporting of freelancers in this project.

The newsrooms will make reasonable efforts to collaborate across media boundaries. We understand that not every story will be trans-media, but we view cross-newsroom projects as great opportunities to extend the reach of the reporting. This approach to reporting could include:

- Co-reporting stories: Certain stories will lend themselves to multimedia story-telling and/or reporting from two or more newsrooms. Partners and the Project Editor (PE) will proactively seek out these opportunities
- Spin-off stories: Some written stories can be adapted for radio, for example, without a lot of extra effort. In these cases, newspaper and audio reporters will record (and, if possible, edit) short interviews with sources that can be incorporated into a radio-scripted version.
- Group project: a specific reporting project (i.e. following the lives of a certain group of former inmates; final angle or idea TBD) in which all collaborative members will participate in some way.
- Partner interviews: In some cases, reporters may appear as guests to discuss their stories on other partners' broadcast programs.

Similarly, partner newsrooms bring diverse resources. One outlet may be stronger in social media, another in web design, another in data graphic production. We will look for opportunities to share and leverage partners' skills and assets across the network and we encourage any resource sharing that strengthens the collaborative.

This is an entirely voluntary collaboration. If at any point a collaborating media outlet would like to remove themselves from the project, they may do so with the understanding that any project funds or shared resources being used by the outlet would be withdrawn and/or no longer made available.

Publication and Output

- The newsroom partners will decide on a project title, logo, image, and tagline (i.e. This article is part of the TKTK collaboration). These project ID's will, whenever possible, accompany all stories, and will be used by all partners.
- The partners will also agree on standing text available from the project's central webpage (and elsewhere if desired) that explains the project's goals and motivation; as a matter of transparency, this text should identify the sources of funding.

- There will be a standalone central project webpage to feature all stories, possibly on Squarespace. All stories will appear on this website in some form; it is still up for discussion if the central webpage will display or have embedded the entirety of every story or just some or if readers/listeners/viewers will be directed to originating sites.
- If possible, we will have some web-based persistent content, such as [idea].
- There will be a concerted effort to include appealing and informative graphics and explainers related to the issue of [topic]. Partners will decide if these features run only on the central web page or on their own sites too.
- Newsrooms can decide to add a subsection or special page on their own website that will be a dedicated home for content related to this project, if they so choose.
- Online cross-posts: All stories produced for the project by newsroom partners and the shared reporter are, in theory, available for publication/broadcast by any newsroom partner but will always give credit to where the reporting originated. However, the partners believe that the most advantageous cross-posting strategy will be for each site to run headlines, deks and/or short summaries of project pieces on their sites with links back to the originating outlet(s).
- In some instances—decided on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the PE—the originating outlet(s) will be given initial temporary exclusivity for a project story before any content is available for publication on other websites.
- Any print publication is welcome to publish any of the project’s reporting but will always give credit (byline, outlet, tagline) when doing so
- Newsroom partners are not required to publish/broadcast every single story produced by the collaborative. However, the hope and expectation is that all newsroom partners will all leverage this collaboration by publishing a significant portion of the project’s content.
- There will be student film production and long-form writing produced for the benefit of this collaborative. Partners will decide, in time, whether they want to work with those student reporters to edit and then publish/air their reporting as newsroom pieces. This is not mandatory. Partners will also decide whether the students’ finished products will air only on the project’s central webpage or on newsroom websites as well.
- Depending on final funding amounts, the partners and the PE may decide it advantageous also include some documentary film reporting
- Partners will consider including innovative or non-traditional forms of reporting for this project such as, for example, having returning citizens or their families do some of their own story-telling.

- The collaboration will make every effort to translate project pieces into Spanish. If there is a story that directly relates to the lives of a sector of the population that does not speak English as a first language, the PE or Project Coordinator (PC) will make sure the article is translated into the primary language of the subjects of the piece (using project funds).

Editorial requirements

- We recognize that every participating outlet is distinct in its size, strengths and output capabilities. Therefore there is no minimum number of stories that every newsroom is expected to produce. Of course, participation in this collaboration means that every newsroom is excited to cover the topic of [topic] over the course of the year.
- At the outset, these are the minimums of staff produced pieces that each partner can commit to:
 - o [outlet]: 1 story/month
 - o [outlet]: 1/month
 - o [outlet]: 1 longform piece
 - o [outlet]: 1/month
 - o [outlet]: TBD
 - o [outlet]: TBD
- All major or enterprise text reporting will be passed to the PE when nearing a final draft for conceptual input. The PE is responsible for the timely reading and feedback on these pieces. Editors will take this feedback under consideration but are not obligated to incorporate the suggestions.
- It is every newsroom partner’s responsibility to send links of published/aired stories or broadcasts to the PE and PC so that they can keep track of all project work.

Community Events

The collaborative partners will help plan, promote and participate in at least three community events over the course of the project (or just after). These events will seek to bring together the various stakeholders in this issue: legislators and policy-makers, journalists, experts, members of the business community, grassroots organizations, legal scholars, community organizations in areas particularly affected by [topic].

Other Deliverables

In addition to the reporting itself, the project will aim to produce other valuable deliverables which may include: building an email listserv of people interested in these issues and this reporting; tracking of any legislation or policy or lawsuits filed that comes out of project

reporting; aggregate and send out weekly links to national or international [topic] related news; a web-based public repository for comprehensive and accurate information related to [topic].

Back-end Coordination

The partners and PE (and PC) will agree to share pertinent data, resources and final pieces via google drive. There will be a shared online story budget describing stories in the pipeline, with author, art, deadline, and any other info the group needs.

Newsrooms and reporters will agree to use the central data set and term definitions agreed-upon by the group prior to the launch.

It is expected that every outlet will inform the Project Editor of the project stories they are working on in a timely manner. For any and all cross-newsroom production, roll-out will be agreed upon by the newsrooms who have reported the story, in coordination with the PE. For the timing of simpler stories, we all know we cannot hold back the news. However, participating newsrooms will, whenever possible, take into consideration that they are working on a collaborative project and, if requested by another partner or the PE, will consider adjusting or postponing a story or coverage for the good of the collaboration.

Metrics and Impact

We will establish an impact-tracking tool for all partners to use over the course of this project. We expect that participating newsrooms to send the PE or PC reports about traffic and time on page; participate in staff and audience surveys and use the impact tracker.

Roles

The Project Editor will coordinate coverage in line with the editorial goals set by the network partners. S/he will:

- Be the voice and leader of the project, ensuring that it is staying true to its vision and managing the relationships between the partners
- Be responsible for ensuring that project's reporting, as a whole, is meeting the goals and strategies set by the partners; the PE is the person responsible for thinking about what story our reporting is telling on a whole
- Convene monthly (or more frequent, if needed/desired) conference calls or in-person meetings, attended by at least one representative from every news- room partners, to reflect on the project's coverage; discuss concerns and problem solve; adjust goals and strategy; and determine near-term editorial priorities.
- Encourage and seek to facilitate as much multimedia and/or cross-newsroom coverage as possible.
- Consult the project's editorial advisors (if established) regularly for input and discussion

- Act as spokesperson for the project
- Reinforce the solutions approach by offering guidance on potential story ideas, reporting strategies, research resources, sourcing, and potential models.
- Act as “traffic cop:” be the central-keeper of the reentry story pitches/plans of each participating outlet. In the case of conflicting or overlapping story plans, the PE will act as moderator and decision maker, looking for, whenever possible, ways to meld the reporting so that the efforts and integrity of each newsrooms’ work is maintained.
- Carry-out “quality control” on the project as a whole—identifying gaps in coverage and flagging inconsistencies
- Offer feedback on major text pieces to ensure that the piece meets our shared standards for high-quality reporting and comprehensive coverage. The PE will not do line edits or adjust the tone of the piece. Each outlet is encouraged to have their reporters’ and outlet’s voice shine through the story-telling that comes out of this project.
- If unfamiliar with the solutions approach, the PE will make a commitment to work close with [Funder or Partner] staff to learn about the method and make sure the project is solutions oriented as a whole

Depending on a variety of factors, there may also be a Project Coordinator who would have the following responsibilities:

- Website maintenance and updating
- Various administrative responsibilities including allocating and keeping track of project funds, meeting notes, overseeing google drive, etc.
- Social media promotion
- Event Planning for Community Engagement elements of the project
- Securing translation for project stories

Governance and the Role of [Funder or Partner]

While the [Funder or Partner] is guiding and sponsoring this collaboration, we view ourselves very much as stewards rather than directors. Our interest is in helping newsrooms do high-quality and high-impact solutions-oriented reporting.

Ultimately, what this collaboration does is up to the newsroom partners. Formal governance questions will be decided by a majority vote of the core newsroom and participating institutions, and the project editor; in the case of a tie vote, the partners will seek [Funder or Partner]’s mediation.

[Funder or Partner] will not participate in day-to-day editorial decision-making, unless asked to do so by the newsroom partners, but will stay abreast of the collaborative’s work and trajectory.

A [Funder or Partner] representative will participate in the monthly conference calls, will provide feedback on published/broadcasted work, and offer guidance and technical assistance on applying the solutions approach to the project. We will be available for editorial consulting on specific stories, if desired. We will also host one training, geared towards the issue of reentry for newsroom partner staff and any likely freelancers involved in this project.

[Funder or Partner] is responsible for finding project funding (though any additional funding ideas or avenues provided by partners are welcome) and we understand that the success of the project is dependent on dedicated funding. The funding it seeks will cover/be available for:

- Pre-launch data collection
- Travel grants for local reporters
- PE salary
- PC salary (if needed)
- Video production (in-house or freelancer)
- Freelancer contributions for written or radio pieces
- 3 community events
- Translation
- Support and opportunities for the returning citizens community

The sources for this project’s funding have yet to be determined. But funders will have no role in the day-to-day operations of the project or in the editorial decisions of the news- room partners.

Memorandum of Understanding Example 3

This document describes the purpose of the [collaborative], members, expectations, the process of collaboration and funding.

1-Scope

The focus of this project is on the enormous challenge of affordable housing in the [location] metro area. Reporting and projects will illuminate the journeys of area residents seeking housing in a market where costs continue to rise rapidly, to help build sustainable lives and showcase the housing challenge. Coverage will include news, data, illustrations, video and more showing the impact on families and communities, investigating solutions relevant to the problem and conducting critical analysis of government actions to tackle this problem. Given the magnitude of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Collaborative has made the decision to also include issues surrounding the pandemic in its reporting for the near term. The [collaborative] reserves the right to make any other pivots – with funder approval – should any other pressing issue arise. The collaborative will decide when to return to the original focus.

- The first phase of the project was launched in [MONTH] [YEAR] and extended to the end of [MONTH] [YEAR], when results were reported to [FUNDER] for their final report to the [ENTITY], which is providing financial support.
- The second phase of the project launched in [MONTH] [YEAR] as the [collaborative] became part of the [INITIATIVE]. Funding will be available from this initiative for [xx] years, ending on [MONTH] [YEAR].
- Grant funding is intended to launch the current collaborative and go beyond it. The larger goal is for this effort to prove so valuable to all media partners that it becomes permanent, with additional funding generated locally, with fundraising assistance from [CONSULTING PARTNER].

2-Partners

As of [MONTH] [YEAR], the collaborative includes the following newsroom partners: [list].

Other regional media may be interested in participating in the group. Existing partners will decide whether, when and how to incorporate others as interest arises.

3-Collaborative Process

By taking part in this project, media and other partners agree to collaborate with each other to report, edit, package and publish news content that appears in each partner's news products, including online, broadcast radio and TV, digitally, in print and other media, with a focus on relevant solutions to the problem, using the approach supported by the [CONSULTING PARTNER] as much as possible.

The group agreed to call itself the [collaborative], and use this name as the group identity. Partners agree to use the name and logo to identify the group and content where appropriate.

The Project Title is “xx” The [collaborative] agrees that the Project Title and its logo will be the dominant brand for this project in identifying collaborative news content, and will be used by all media partners when publishing content.

News Budget. Project coverage will be planned by Partners through regular meetings, email and conference line discussions, and other tools, and posted on a shared [collaborative] News Budget shared among members and maintained by the project Director. Partners will keep the Director informed of new stories and changes.

Website. A central project webpage will feature all [collaborative] Project stories, hosted by the [library]. All stories will appear on the site, either as full content packages or links to the originating media sites. The website will also promote the [collaborative] work and serve as a general project reference and summary for the project. It is expected that all collaborative members will promote the central website and suggest content to populate it.

Content Sharing. The expectation is that partners will publish all or a significant portion of the project’s collaborative content. Because of the high-profile nature of the Affordable Housing issue, it is expected that not all stories originate from the collaborative. We expect three main types of stories:

- Collective stories/content that we plan, report and publish together, tapping into [collaborative] collective funds and resources as needed. These we designate “Collaborative stories,” meaning all partners can publish them in full.
- Stories from individual outlets that are still designated “Collaborative stories.” These stories should be posted in the [collaborative] site with a link back to the media partner’s story.
- Stories that would likely have been done regardless, and do not involve [collaborative] resources. These we hope partners will also share by designating them for sharing via URL links, but this is optional.

Here is the method for managing the process:

- Cross-Publish - Each partner is able, though not required, to publish in full any other partner’s story about the central content subject (affordable housing) that has been designated a Collaborative story.
- Designated stories - Each partner has control over whether content they produce can be published by others by designating them as “Collaborative stories” or not, as shown in the News Budget. This allows partners to retain control of content they generate. Any special issues should be brought to the Director’s attention.

- Story planning - For stories that involve collaborative reporting among two or more Partners, production and publishing plans will be agreed ahead of time and coordinated with the Director.
- Credit - Partners agree to credit the originating newsroom(s) along with the collaborative. For example: "This story was produced by xx and is shared as part of the [collaborative] project on Affordable Housing" and include the Project Title logo.
- Editing - Partners may use any elements of "collaborative" stories which are part of the originating newsroom content, suitable for use in their publications. However, if any significant editing is needed -- for space limitations in print, for example -- partners agree to check edits with the originating newsroom.
- Website - Partners will be expected to post content on the [collaborative] website. Stories will be posted no sooner than 24-hours after initial publication on the originating news sites, with exceptions agreed ahead of time. Collaborative stories will appear in their entirety, and other non-collaborative stories will appear with an excerpt and URL links, unless otherwise approved to appear in their entirety.
- Adaptation - Partners will make an effort to provide adapted versions of content for other partners where practical, through tools such as Google Docs to be decided as needed. For example, short versions of longer video footage for partner use.
- Coordinate - Newsrooms will take into consideration that they are working on a collaborative project and, if requested by another partner or the Director, will consider adjusting or postponing a story or coverage to facilitate collaboration.

This is an entirely voluntary effort. If at any point a media partner would like to leave the project, they may do so with the understanding that any unspent project funds or shared resources would be withdrawn and re-allocated to other partners.

4-Community Events, Public Engagement

The collaborative partners will help plan, promote and participate in at least three community events over the course of the project. These events will seek to bring together the various stakeholders in this issue: audiences of media partners, citizens, community leaders, legislators and policy-makers, journalists, experts, members of the business community, grassroots organizations and legal scholars.

5-Metrics, Impact

[Collaborative] partners will establish a method for tracking the content produced and its impact over the course of this project. We expect participating newsrooms to send the Director reports about traffic and engagement time on digital pages, and participate in staff and audience surveys.

6-Project Director Role

The Director is expected to do the following:

- Provide day-to-day leadership for the media partners in their work to report, edit and publish solutions-focused news.
- Offer high-level feedback on major stories to ensure shared standards for quality reporting and coverage.
- Convene and lead regular meetings of the collaborative. This includes building and distributing meeting agendas, finding meeting space and distributing meeting notes.
- Provide constructive feedback that both highlights outstanding work and points to the needs for improvement.
- Provide coordination, planning, member approval and follow-through of activities to support collaborative content publishing plans, including administration of grant contracts, grant funds, invoices and payables, event planning, maintenance of the [collaborative] budget and expenditures, and drafting of any reports needed by [FUNDER] for audit, grant or other purposes.
- Oversee the [collaborative] in cooperation with the library and [collaborative] partners. This will include a plan to ensure the site is regularly refreshed with new content.
- Plan and oversee social media support and additional distribution methods as assigned.
- Act as spokesperson for the project where needed.
- Oversee any additional contracted staff or interns of the Collaborative.
- Oversee fundraising initiatives of the Collaborative.
- Other expectations are shown in the contract and memorandum that is part of the PDs agreement with [FUNDER].

7-Governance, SJN Role, Grant Funding

While the [FUNDER] is guiding and sponsoring this collaboration, the key and daily decisions are up to the newsroom partners. Issues and questions where there is not a clear consensus will be decided by a majority vote of the newsroom partner representatives and participating institutions; in the case of a tie vote, the PD will decide and seek [FUNDER]'s involvement if needed.

8- Project Funding

This section outlines the source and uses of grant funds for the second phase of the [collaborative] project in [YEAR] and [YEAR].

Details: Grant funds are provided by the [FUNDER] as part of a x-year initiative (each collaborative participating for x years). The overall grant period for the [collaborative] runs from [MONTH] [YEAR], to [MONTH] [YEAR]. This is divided into two reporting and funding periods:

- Period 1 – [MONTH] [YEAR], to [MONTH] [YEAR], with payments disbursed upon collaborative approval and submission of request
- Period 2 – [MONTH] [YEAR] to [MONTH] [YEAR], with payments disbursed upon collaborative approval and submission of request

- Total funds available for media partners and [collaborative] activities from [FUNDER]: [amount] for each period

Grant fund uses: Grant funds can be used in general to support new tools and services not already in place or available in partner newsrooms. For example:

- Travel expenses for partner journalists, staff, but not backfill for existing staff.
- In cases where existing staff has special or essential skills or experience relevant to [collaborative] work and not otherwise available, funds can be used provided the partners agree.
- Website related expenses.
- Non-staff resources for reporting, photography, videography and other news related purposes, such as freelancer contributions.
- Community event costs, such as space rental, food and beverage, and related costs including flyers, social-media and advertising expenses, including advertising in partner publications where appropriate and approved by the group.
- Data analysis as part of the reporting process.
- Translations of content as needed.
- Video production if desired, for documentary or other purposes.
- Project Director compensation.
- Additional staffing and intern costs in support of the project, where appropriate and approved by the Collaborative partners.

[FUNDER] has reporting obligations in [MONTH] [YEAR], [MONTH] [YEAR], [MONTH] [YEAR]. As such, the collaborative should aim to have the bulk of their activities for each period, including any capstone events, completed by [MONTH] or [MONTH] of each year.

Signatures on following page(s).

Editorial Ethics Guidelines

COLLABORATIVE NAME and our reporters and editors will follow the Society of Professional Journalists' official Code of Ethics. [They are spelled out explicitly at this link](#). If you have questions on any of the tenets, click on the hyperlink for the tenet for a break-out screen with additional information and references. If your question isn't answered, please email **PROJECT MANAGER NAME AND CONTACT** and they can direct you to our editorial guidelines committee, if necessary.

*There is one additional rule that isn't explicitly spelled out in the SPJ guidelines that **COLLABORATIVE NAME** is asking our partners to follow. Please see below.*

Independence, and sharing stories with sources beforehand:

For this rule, we are following NPR's Ethics Handbook, [in the section on "Independence."](#)

"For purposes of accuracy and fairness, there are times when we may want to review portions of a script with a source or read back a quotation to ensure we captured it correctly. We may also play audio or read transcripts of an interview to a third party if the purpose is to get that party's reaction to what another person has said. Otherwise, however, the public is the first audience for our work — we don't preview scripts or stories in advance of their broadcast or posting with sources, subjects of coverage or other parties outside NPR."

Use of anonymous sources

Borrowed from NPR: *We ask these questions first and always speak with an editor or publisher before using anonymous sources: Is the person going to be in danger if we use a full name? Is the subject sensitive and could the story come back to haunt the person because it will be on the Web forever? How hard have we tried to get other sources who are willing to tell their stories and go fully on the record?*

Senior editors must be consulted before granting anonymity and when the story is written, it must be clearly explained why the source is anonymous - Such as "The hospital worker didn't want her name used because her boss said that he would fire anyone who spoke to reporters."

Workflow Guidelines Example

Step 1: Preparation for your story.

The lead story partner (editor or publisher) discusses with their reporter or producer the focus of the story they'd like to submit to **COLLABORATIVE NAME**.

Every story should follow the tenets of the [Solutions Journalism model](#), even if it's not directly highlighting a solution; the Society of Professional Journalists' [code of ethics](#); and strive to include collaboration of some kind, whether that be through co-reporting or working to make sure the content fits multiple publishing platforms (radio, TV, etc.) The pillars of solutions journalism are here: <https://www.solutionsjournalism.org/>

Because of these requirements, it's best if you do some research in advance while developing your pitch.

If you need help refining the story before pitching, you may have your reporter/producer attend our biweekly Reporter-Editor Talk (**MEETING INFO**). Story meetings are open to all writers who want to talk about a project and find collaborators. Project Manager **NAME AND CONTACT** can send you the Zoom invitation and answer any questions.

We encourage partners to work with journalists of color and from other traditionally marginalized groups. Our list of freelancers: **[LINK]**

Step 2: Pitch your story to the collaborative.

The lead story partner must fill out the story proposal sheet **[LINK]** and submit it by **DESIGNATED CUTOFF TIME** in order for the proposal to be discussed during the **DAY** meeting that same week.

Votes will be held at the partners' meetings on the following **DAY** so that every partner can have a say in approving the stories. Partners may vote by email if they are not present. Stories must have a **XX** percent vote. (We have **XX** members)

Make sure to indicate in the pitch if the reporter/producer is in need of training or story mentoring, especially if they are new. Please ensure they can come to the writers' meetings. It's good to get mentoring early to help make sure the Solutions Journalism Model is used to produce a high-quality story. This benefits everyone.

Step 3: Refinement.

The lead story partner and their reporter or producer should discuss and refine the focus of the story based on input from collaborative partners. The discussion should include specifics on

which sourcing and interviews will be important to support the tenets of Solutions Journalism along with the framing of the story.

If you realize that the story needs to be significantly changed or it does not fit the Solutions Journalism rubric, the partner should fill out a new story proposal sheet and submit it for discussion at the next meeting of **COLLABORATIVE NAME** voting members. Once again, partners must vote on the new adjusted story

The lead story partner arranges to accept report funding, and arranges for the distribution of project funding.

Step 4: Reporting and creating the story.

The reporter/producer proceeds with reporting and creating the story. Support is available if they run into roadblocks while reporting or writing - they can attend our Reporter-Editor meetings to get help and mentorship.

When they're finished writing/creating, they put it into a Google Doc in a NEW Google Folder with format "Story name - writer name," directly into the REVIEW folder **[LINK]** in the **COLLABORATIVE NAME** group drive. The writer (and photographer or graphic designers, if using) are responsible for putting in any images/graphics/charts/audio/video pieces that are running with the story. These files go into the SAME FOLDER.

Step 5: First review by lead story partner.

When a draft of the story is completed and ready for review, the lead story partner should give feedback on the structure, content, completeness, accuracy and whether the elements of a Solutions story are met. As much as possible, the editor should correct any spelling and grammar errors. If the editor notices any big problems with the story - we're talking about ethical issues, if additional sources need to be found, and if major cuts and revisions are needed - the writer will need to rework the story. These issues ideally should be worked out before the next step. The writer should be aware that they may have to rewrite, edit and re-report as needed.

Step 6: Story is submitted to the editorial sub-committee.

The lead story partner - once they complete their review - submits the Google Folder link to the editorial sub-committee, a group which has the structure described below, via an email (their emails are below). Both the lead story partner and the reporter should make sure they receive email notifications from Google Drive for comments on the story.

The editorial sub-committee reviews the story within five business days of it being submitted if it is a longer story/project; within three business days if it's shorter/needs to be more timely.

Step 7: Story is edited by the sub-committee.

The edit sub-committee adds constructive comments, questions and corrections to the story. As much as possible, the “suggestion” and “comment” features should be used on Google Drive to accomplish this task. The committee will try to work with writers as much as possible to shape up the story and the Reporter-Editor meetings are a great way to get mentoring help before writers get to this stage. Finally, each committee member who reviews the story will mark that they have done so at the top of the page, along with a timestamp. The writer/producer then makes the changes under supervision of the lead story partner. If there are any concerns about the edits, the writer or lead partner can request a short meeting to go through the edits.

Step 8: Finishing touches and story transmission.

Once at least three edit sub-committee members review the story and have indicated they are satisfied, the original editor will take a final look at the story. If it’s satisfactory, the lead partner will move the story folder over to the “READY TO USE” [\[LINK\]](#) folder.

The lead story partner will share a link to the story folder with [PROJECT MANAGER](#) via email. If there are a series of stories, please include a mini-hed with slug/file names for all of the stories on top. [PROJECT MANAGER](#) will then package the story up in a single, clear email and send out to the entire collaborative. The email will describe the story, give the date of publication and note if the story has photos/other components.

Partners will be given at least 24 hours notice or longer to prepare to use the story. The story will be available to all publications for use at the **SAME TIME**.

Step 9: Report any success metrics to [COLLABORATIVE NAME](#).

Anyone who shares the story should report back to [PROJECT MANAGER](#) about any success metrics of the story. [METHOD: EMAIL, FORM?](#)

These include: If anyone was helped from resources we shared or created; if some kind of concrete change has happened with policy; if a story got particularly good feedback/comments/discussion going; if the story has strong page views, likes, shares and other analytical information.

About the editorial sub-committee

[DESCRIPTION AND LIST OF MEMBERS WITH EMAILS](#)

Project Editor Job Description 1

The project editor is expected to provide day-to-day leadership for the partners/participant media companies in their work to report, edit and publish news coverage about the selected issue/topic of major community interest.

This includes the following activities:

Meetings

Organize and lead regular meetings of the Collaborative and representatives, including:

- Compilation and distribution of meeting agendas
- Ensuring adequate meeting space
- Notification of meetings
- Compilation and distribution of meeting notes.

Agreements

Lead the effort to complete agreements needed as part of or required by [FUNDER], including but not limited to these:

- *Master Agreement* between [FUNDER] and participant media organizations.
 - This governs the terms of participation by collaborative members, interaction between each organization and [FUNDER], and mechanisms for distribution, expenditure and tracking of grant funds.
- *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* agreement between members of the collaborative.
 - This describes how the group will operate, the topic/subject for news coverage, the ways in which members will utilize available grant funds, ways in which members will work together on news coverage and content publishing, and understandings for public engagement events planned as part of this project.

Engagement

- Build a plan for engagement activities, including:
- Independent or supplemental activity tied to community gatherings
- Larger collaborative events
- Use of audience engagement tools

Distribution

Build a distribution plan including:

- Establishing/enhancing a social media presence
- Exploring targeted communications
- Populating and updating the website

Assessment

Build plan to identify and begin to collect desired data and anecdotal information with an

eye toward final reports (both the collaborative's report to [FUNDER] and [FUNDER]'s eventual report to funder/s).

Ongoing Project Development

Collaborate with [FUNDER] staff and potential funders on the future of the project, including articulation of proposal and budgeting. Meet with partners, potential funders and community members to gather information and feedback, and work with [FUNDER] to create a dynamic proposal for a self-sustaining entity.

Admin tasks

- Maintain running knowledge of collaborative budget expenditures
- Provide support to partners in event planning and execution
- Liaise with [FUNDER] to ensure proper invoicing and payment

Web site

- Oversee conception, evolution, and expansion of the collaborative website
- Build and execute a plan to ensure the site is populated with content and updated as needed with fresh content

Project Editor Job Description 2

The [Collaborative Name] seeks a talented and experienced part-time project editor and manager to oversee and organize the collaborative work of the organization.

The [Collaborative Name] is part of the [FUNDER/ INITIATIVE] whose mission is to spread the practice of rigorous reporting of social problems towards solutions that change community outcomes.

The [Collaborative Name] is made up of the following organizations who seek to cover and respond to [community's topic]:

[List of participating organizations]

Qualifications:

Your professional experience has demonstrated leadership capacity within the journalism field.

Your professional experience has demonstrated success in managing cross organizational projects.

You know how to meet a deadline, and how to keep partners on task and focused on project goals.

You are familiar with project management software such as Asana or Basecamp and can use them successfully.

You can convene meetings, conference calls or webinars as needed to reflect on the project's coverage or adjust the project's goals and strategy, successfully determining near-term editorial priorities.

You can produce and disseminate a story budget reflecting the plans of participating newsrooms led by partner reporters.

You can offer guidance on potential story ideas, reporting and engagement strategies, research resources, sourcing, and potential models.

You can provide backstop editing for other stories, as needed, to ensure consistency and coordination.

Expectations

You will provide day-to-day leadership for the partners/participant media companies in their work to report, edit and publish news coverage about the selected issue/topic of major

community interest in the area.

You will offer high-level feedback on major stories to ensure shared standards for high-quality reporting and coverage

You will reinforce the solutions approach by offering guidance on potential story ideas, reporting strategies, research resources and sourcing.

You will organize and lead regular meetings of the collaborative and representatives, including compilation and distribution of meeting agendas, ensuring adequate meeting space, notification of meetings and compilation and distribution of meeting notes.

You will provide quality control on the project, identifying gaps in coverage and flagging inconsistencies.

You will provide coordination, planning, member approval and follow through of activities to support collaborative content publishing plans, including administration of grant contracts, grant funds, invoices and payables, event planning, maintenance of the [Collaborative] budget and expenditures, and drafting of any reports needed by [FUNDER/ INITIATIVE] for audit, grant or other purposes.

You will oversee the collaborative website in cooperation with the partners. As part of this, build a plan to ensure the site is populated with content and updated as needed with fresh content.

You will plan and oversee social media support.

You will act as spokesperson for the project where needed.

Payment and Other Details

TBD

Responsibilities of the Collaborative Example

1. It articulates clear goals for The Reentry Project:
 - a. Build a community around this issue
 - b. Shed light on an underreported topic
 - c. Understand the real dynamics of the re-entry process
 - d. Overcome prejudices and bring excluded groups into the conversation
 - e. Monitor the spending of the funds that have been granted to the city towards this effort
 - f. Compare with best practices in other locations
 - g. Inspire a new engagement of different stakeholders to advance productive community behaviors (such as connecting formerly incarcerated individuals with business for job opportunities)
2. It defines mechanisms to execute on the project:
 - a. Individual reporting
 - b. Joint reporting (by two or more partners)
 - c. Sharing editorial deliverables among all partners
 - d. A website that will serve a number of purposes (more on this below)
 - e. Pre, concurrent and post social engagement to generate community interest and involvement
 - f. (more on this below)
3. It discusses resources necessary to accomplish the above:
 - a. Hiring a project editor to coordinate the work
 - b. Creating teams within the participating organizations (editors, reporters, videographers, infographic artists)
 - c. Incorporating students in some kind of role
4. It explores funding options

Editorial Calendar Example - Google Doc

Month	Stories	Events	Administrative
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phila Inky - Beyond the Bars • WHYY - Former inmates offer advice to new RISE director • Next City (Giving Building Materials and Ex-Inmates a Second Chance in Baltimore) • El Zol (Convo from inside Graterford about education) • WURD (Interview with Rob Rosa) • Muhlenberg (Video piece about former inmates engaged in voter registration) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General meeting Jan. 11 • Funding meeting Jan. 31
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHYY (Solutions piece on lack of educational standards for kids in juvenile facilities) • The Notebook (further angles w/WHYY on above) • El Zol (Convo from inside Graterford, topic TBD) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding meeting Feb. 28
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • El Zol (Convo from inside Graterford, topic TBD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First reentry lunch with Judges/Lawyers (Proj. Editor is asking Judge Nelson Diaz to host and help) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding meeting March. 28

		populate) • Screening of Solitary & panel at Wilma Theater (Mural Arts)	
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHY (Get a job) • Next City (feature about STAR program) • El Zol (Convo from inside Graterford, topic TBD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public discussion of the arts and criminal reform at Eastern State Pen. (Mural Arts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding meeting April 25
May		Second reentry lunch (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding meeting May 30
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next City (Halfway houses - this multimedia piece is slated for summer, exact timing TBD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyond the Bars Summit (Philadelphia FIGHT & ICJ) • Writings on the Wall exhibit (Mural Arts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding meeting June 27
July		July Third reentry lunch (TBD)	
August			
September		September Fourth reentry lunch (TBD)	
October			
November		City Council hearing on reentry project findings (TBD)	Produce eBook of collected project pieces

Editorial Calendar Example - AirTable

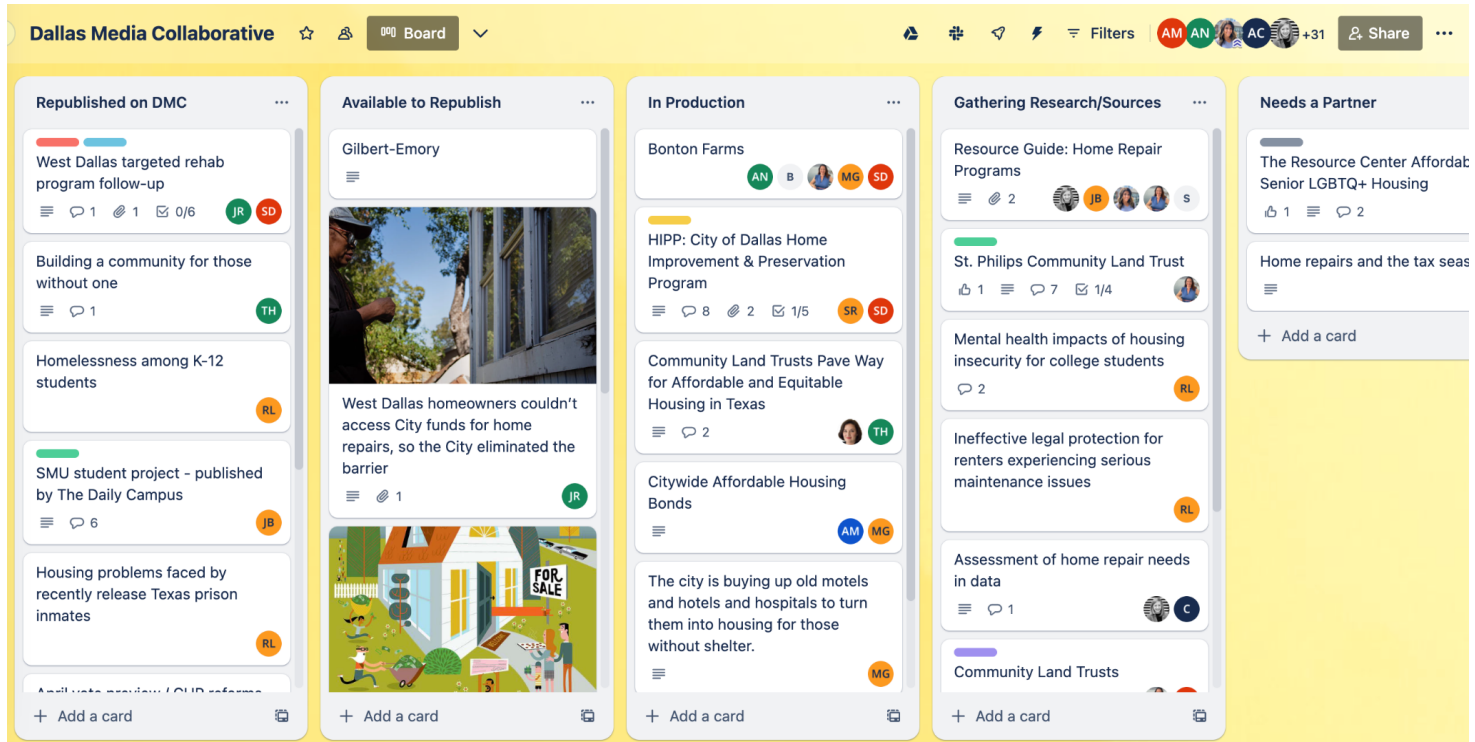
Content pipeline | Use this data

Hide fields | Filter | Group | Sorted by 1 field

Headline	Status	Publish date	Type	Tags	Sub-headline
1 UNC Charlotte study sheds light on Charlotte's struggle with corporate landlords	Published Website	5/3/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	
2 Once incarcerated, now this Charlotte man shows others the path to a second chance.	Published	5/2/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	
3 Habitat for Humanity building affordable housing in west Charlotte	Published	5/1/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	
4 Group to offer more affordable housing options in Charlotte	Published Website	4/26/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	
5 Charlotte OKs \$23.64 million for developers to build 625 housing units. See where	Published Social E-newsletter	4/25/2023	Supplemental	Affordable Housing	
6 City awards Black real estate developer \$5.8 million for affordable housing	Published E-newsletter	4/25/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	
7 There's a 'flurry' of NC housing bills. What's in them, and what might pass?	Published E-newsletter	4/24/2023	Supplemental	Affordable Housing	
8 Charlotte leaders looking to cut down on rising home prices	Published Website Social	4/24/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	
9 With COVID relief money set to end, where should Charlotte renters in need go?	Published Social	4/19/2023	Supplemental	Evictions	
10 9 affordable housing projects hoping to build in Charlotte	Published Website	4/14/2023	Supplemental	Affordable Housing	
11 Affordable housing helps combat the displacement of residents in west Charlotte	Published	4/6/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	
12 NC law prevents cities from controlling rent prices. Could this bill change that?	Published	3/29/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing Evict	
13 Families could be stable Charlotte housing advocates work to help families in the face o...	Published E-newsletter	3/25/2023	Solutions	Evictions	
14 Charlotte needs more housing. Could looser zoning restrictions help?	Published	3/25/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	
15 Meet and chat with The Charlotte Observer staff at our next mobile newsroom		3/23/2023	Engagement	Community	
16 'Quite a ways to go' Mecklenburg County community leaders work to help veterans faci...	Published E-newsletter	3/22/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	
17 Charlotte's Belmont neighborhood takes on affordable housing	Published Social Website	2/25/2023	Solutions	Affordable Housing	

500 records

Editorial Calendar Example - Trello



Story Pitch Form - Example

Story Proposal Form

Please enter your story proposal to be considered for collaborative funding

Outlet name

Email address

What is your story topic?

Who is working on this story? (Please provide contact information)

Story proposal: what is it you want to report on?

Proposed publication date

How is this story a solutions story? You may want to review the four pillars of solutions journalism and/or review the "Ten Noble Questions"

How much funding are you requesting for this story? If you are not yet sure, please provide a range/estimate.

For what will the funds be used?

- Writing
- Editing
- Photography/visualizations
- Other:

Please provide a breakdown of how much you will spend in each of the categories listed above.

Publishing Plan Template

Title

En Español

Needs: (This can be any immediate needs from the partners/reporters for the project that you might need to highlight. This would be a place to put top-line updates for everyone to see.)

Pitch

What:

Lead Reporter:

Other Reporters:

Additional information (if needed):

Publication Plan

STORIES OR ELEMENTS SHOULD NOT BE PUBLISHED PRIOR TO _____. See schedule below for details.

CURRENT STATUS: Ex: Drafts completed and reviewed by_____

Due Date: Final text completed and uploaded to Google Drive for translation by _____ . Notify _____

All Project Files

SEE FOLDER <INCLUDE LINK> FOR FINAL FILES FOR PUBLICATION

Photos: FOLDER <INCLUDE LINK>

Any special instructions:

Translation(s): FOLDER <INCLUDE LINK>

Any special instructions:

ALL EDITS OR REQUESTS FOR EDITS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO <PROJECT MANAGER EMAIL> and not made directly in files. Requests for edits for individual publications will need to be approved by <INITIAL PUBLISHING PARTNER> in advance.

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

(Things that go here may include broadcast plans or on-air radio plans that coincide, precede or follow a print story, or vice versa. Try to find ways that collaborative partners can create additional content that furthers a story's or project's audience and provides additional perspectives.)

REPUBLISHING/PROMOTION TRACKER

Include all published dates and links, promotions and programs. Follow up with audience data if available.

Media/Community Partner	Publish Date	Promotion/Publish (include link if applicable)	Audience

Publishing Plan Must-Haves

1. **Due dates!** Even when these may change a bit in the course of your planning, it is important to set some expectations for all the partners to work toward. For instance, you may not have an exact publishing date worked out but you can set a Draft Due date.

2. **Who is the owner?** Even if multiple reporters are working on a single project, I would recommend having one person serve as the “lead reporter.” This puts someone in charge of working to make sure the group meets their own deadlines and allows you to help coordinate.

3. **File links** – make it easy for people to access materials including photographs, interviews, video/audio files, etc. from the document. This encourages people to always start from your planning document so you are able to guide the project (and include notices/updates you want them to see).

4. **Tracking chart** – I’ve started to include this in the plan so that partners are recognizing the importance of following impact.

5. **Publishing plan** – Outline the publishing plan so that it is clear what is allowed and when. For instance, if the collaborative is working on a project together they may decide to all publish on the same date. If it is a story being led by one partner but shared or being supplemented by other stories from the partnership, you may want the initiating partner to publish first. I send out an email to all the partners with updates when things are ready to publish that includes a link to this planning document and any necessary folders.

Shared Tagline Example

XXX is one of the 15 news organizations in the Philadelphia Reentry Reporting collaborative [hyperlink: <https://reentryreporting.org>], a solutions-oriented journalism initiative focusing on the challenges of prisoner reentry

Asset Map Questionnaire - Sample

Name:

Organization:

How many staff or volunteers do you have at your organization?

What are your staff/volunteers good at – what are the gifts they bring to your organization?

Do you have physical office space? Do you have equipment (camera, speakers, copy machine, etc.) that could be used/borrowed by a collaborative member?

What is your current relationship with your community (i.e. who is your audience?)

How is money spent/allocated? For example, is it granted out to organizations? Does a grantmaking committee make decisions?

When are your publication deadlines?

What have you talked about doing but haven't done yet? Dream BIG! What's possible for your organization or yourself?

What are you passionate about personally?

Do you have a personal skill you want to share? Knitting, cooking, painting etc.

Asset Map Artistic Rendering - Sample

Courtesy of the [New York & Michigan Solutions Journalism Collaborative](#)

Artist: [r design & printing](#)

