# Editorial Integrity for Public Media

# A Working Group Report from the Editorial Integrity Project

# Adopting and Strengthening Local Policies

# Recommended Actions for the Editorial Integrity Project and

# Resource Materials to Motivate, Guide, and Support the Field

The Editorial Integrity Project is a collaboration of

public television’s Affinity Group Coalition and public radio’s Station Resource Group.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Like many nonprofit organizations across the country, public media organizations provide essential information and services to millions of people and organizations daily. Our public media inform, educate and enlist people to learn more and be engaged in a civil society including the democratic process. And, like many nonprofit organizations, public media is a sector within our country that is increasingly impacted by fiscal challenges, leadership shifts and political conflicts that threaten its very existence. Professionals in the field are appropriately concerned that these forces threaten to erode the very essence of what distinguishes public media – the overriding promise that it is a public trust.

Certainly, integrity and accountability standards exist for all nonprofit organizations, but when it comes to public media, the platform where it sits creates a level of constant visibility that is undeniable. It means a new level of internal scrutiny which targets renewed attention to integrity must be developed from within public media organizations. While this self assessment must be led by station management it must also enlist all others who contribute to the station including licensees and trustees of boards, volunteers and each and every employee who comes to work each day intending to fortify that public trust.

**WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

Each member of the workgroup demonstrated extraordinary commitment to advancing their individual organization’s role in achieving the greatest level of adoption of ethics codes as well in helping other stations in achieving the same.

The following recommendations were some overarching conclusions of the workgroup as they relate to how to engage public media colleagues nationally in adoption of a code:

**1.** **WHEN ENCOURAGING USE OF “THE CODE”, DIRECT STATION LEADERS TO THE NINE POINT SUMMARY OF THE CODE OF EDITORIAL INTEGRITY.** This recommendation simply reorganizes the vocabulary used in referencing the core documents of this project. As we engage station leaders in using “The Code” as a resource for their own station’s work, the nine point summary document should be the first resource offered. (See Appendix, page 16) The broader elaboration of “The Code”, which is an 18-page document also referred to as the “Guidelines” will remain available in its current form on the website. The nine-point summary is more likely to promote action than the lengthier document.

**2.** **ENGAGE STATION LEADERS IN ADOPTING A CODE**. The following steps and timeline should be presented as part of a broad scale effort to encourage this collective action:

* Facilitate understanding of the need for adopting Codes of Integrity at stations nationwide. Timeline: Immediate
* Engage with key stakeholders to develop, update or review policies / a code. Providing the summary version of the “Code of Editorial Integrity” is a great start. Use the larger document “Guidelines for Local Policies” to begin a conversation within your station to develop your own local guidelines. (See Appendix, page 16) Timeline: 3 – 12 months.
* Encourage the strengthening of the culture of integrity throughout organizations through activities that regularly engage staff with the Code and the station’s own guidelines. Timeline: Ongoing.

**3. REFRAME THE PROJECT FROM EDITORIAL INTEGRITY TO ONE THAT FOCUSES MORE ON INTEGRITY AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVE:** The workgroup shared considerable discussion around the fact that terminology may influence whether a station leader understands the urgency to integrate this initiative at their station. Additionally, terminology can suggest that a project is so broad or all-encompassing that it may cause further delay in a leader prioritizing the initiative. The workgroup encouraged that the branding, positioning and terminology of this initiative can help or hinder stations in participating. There was considerable concern that the term “editorial” integrity would leave station staff to conclude that the effort was only intended to engage colleagues in the news department. The process of reviewing a station’s ethics issues requires vigorous exercise and continuous dialogue among all people within an organization which led the workgroup to make this recommendation.

4. **CREATE A CAMPAIGN THAT EDUCATES AND “CALLS FOR ACTION”.** A campaign should be developed that employs all the strategic and presentational elements of any well-constructed sales/marketing campaign. The campaign should focus on engaging public media leadership in the urgent need for their stations to adopt a code of integrity. As outlined later in this report, the workgroup felt the campaign should sell the “case” for renewed focus on ethics with messages that outline the burning platform all public media face. Such a campaign should solicit opinion from station leaders through focus groups or interviews to ensure that the message is one that will be received and adequately call leaders to act on the need to adopt a code and a process that integrates it station wide.

**5. HAVE LEADERSHIP PEERS DELIVER THE CAMPAIGN MESSAGE.** The workgroup identified that leadership peers within the industry would be an excellent conduit for sharing the urgency of this exercise and the need for station leaders to take action. Messengers of the campaign should include the leadership within the affiliated radio and TV affinity groups and other associations that demonstrate an understanding of both the size and scope of different station experiences.

**6. USE STORIES TO EDUCATE, ENLIST AND ENGAGE.** Stories of ethics related challenges are some of the most compelling cases for station self-analysis and discovery. As part of this project, the workgroup put out a call for “Integrity Tales” which is outlined later in this report. The “Tales” submitted brought candid voices to the project validating the need for a review and adoption of integrity codes. The recommendation is that stories are compelling engagement tools and should be solicited further for use as learning tools for internal staff development.

**7. OUTLINE DIFFERENT METHODS TO ACHIEVE THE WORK AT STATIONS.**  As multiple methods and processes for adopting a code continue to be outlined by future work groups, a mix of different processes will be critical. The fact is that different stations have different governance and licensee structures which can impact the process of adopting a code. Stations that report to university licensees / boards as compared to community licensees / boards will need to consider differing forms of engagement. Additionally, smaller versus larger organizations may face different opportunities and challenges. Further exploration of examples that share alternative models is encouraged.

**8. DEVELOP AN EXPLICIT RESOURCE BANK FOR STATIONS TO USE IN ENGAGING THEIR INTERNAL TEAMS:** Station leaders and other champions of this effort will need tools to engage their staff and other stakeholders. Having supportive tools for stations such as checklists, illustrations, case studies, webinars and workbooks as ready resources will be important. Some resources were created during this project and are outlined in this document.

**CASE STATEMENT**

***TRUST is what public media organizations are built on.***

***TRUSTWORTHINESS must be protected in a constantly changing environment***

***TRUST is earned.***

When the Workgroup on Adopting and Strengthening Local Policies concluded hours of discussion around the issue of “why a code is needed and why now”, these were the primary points that surfaced. The discourse concluded with members stating that the core of what stations’ produce every day is currently being threatened by fiscal, political and organizational challenges. And, those threats can easily erode the integrity of an organization if not closely monitored.

**Why This? Why Now? Renewed Attention to Trust and Ethics**

In its early meetings, the workgroup members outlined the challenges as including but not limited to the fact that the media universe has changed—and continues to change radically.

* Information moves faster.
* Opinions are more freely and widely shared via social media.
* More than ever, one person, or a small group, can participate in media quickly and with great reach.

The role as public media organizations serving communities is evolving and placing renewed attention on organizational ethics. These changes are causing station leaders around the nation to look for solutions to guide staff, volunteers and themselves as leaders in making sound, sustainable decisions of the highest integrity. A Code of Editorial Integrity can help. While there is trust that every station is working to do its best, the nature and evolution of our environment challenges each of us daily.

1. While ethics and integrity seem intuitive, the reality is **all members of** **a station’s staff, all of its volunteers and public broadcasting’s national leaders can inadvertently make mistakes** that cause serious ethical concerns in the absence of solid editorial and ethical policies. Leaders have an obligation to construct a roadmap for unified and thoughtful decision making.
2. Continued support from the federal government brings a **level of scrutiny** that requires proactive ethics policies.
3. **Changing funding models** and methods bring a heightened level of scrutiny.
4. **Social media** opens organizations up to challenges to traditional understandings of ethical behavior. This is especially true as stations integrate the use of social media by the station, and especially the station’s employees. Where does the media organization begin and individual end?
5. **There is a need to articulate the understanding about how our organizations can fulfill both journalistic responsibilities and the capacity to convene communities around public issues.** Many stations have embraced “community engagement” as a service role and a core way of doing their work. Engagement is built on partnerships and shared objectives. While engagement does not intrinsically include advocating for public policy, or social or personal action, it is a role that is perceived as different from a traditional journalistic process.
6. Public broadcasting organizations **need to be poised to address the very real challenges and threats** in our changing landscape.
7. **The greatest shifts in station leadership are occurring now** with more than half of decision makers retiring nationwide and welcoming the new generation of station leadership.
8. Without team policy work, **stations are vulnerable**. Proactive plans and policies work best not when trouble happens, but rather as a solid foundation to guide our work.

The workgroup concluded all these points are reasons to revisit how trust and integrity, ethics and editorial decision-making cuts across every person within an organization. There was clear endorsement that now is the time to help all public media organizations understand their role in building and sustaining the public’s trust.

**What Are We Asking of Station Leaders?**

There was also clear understanding that adopting a Code of Organizational Editorial Integrity is much less about taking the language from the Editorial Integrity Project website and simply inserting a station logo at the top of the document. Through the experiences of the stations represented on the board, the workgroup emphasized that the exercise of engagement with all station stakeholders would be the critical factor in helping station leaders integrate the concepts into the culture of the organization. In the end, station leaders are being asked to accomplish the following with general timeline expectations as follows:

* Understand the need for adopting a Code of Integrity (Appendix – page 17). Timeline: Immediate
* Engage with key stakeholders to develop, update or review policies / a code. A full version of the Code of Editorial Integrity is a great place to start. Timeline: 3 – 12 months.
* Strengthen the culture of integrity throughout the organization through activities that regularly engage staff with the Code and the station’s own guidelines. Timeline: Ongoing.

**A Campaign is Required to Express the Urgency**

As the workgroup was coached to refine their original prose laden “case statement” it became clear that they intuitively preferred to develop a campaign to express urgency to their colleagues across the country. Broad narratives that read well quickly became annoyances to the workgroup as their collective media savvy took grip of the need to create a “Call to Action” for station leaders.

The work group felt the future campaign would have the following important aspects:

1. Be distributed in digestible pieces, likely electronically through email or list servs to station leadership. It should provide links to resources that could guide recipients to additional information, including tools and process guides that would be hot-linked within “Call to Action” messages.
2. Several messages should be sent over a strategic time period to keep the message alive and remind people of the resources available.
3. Messages would be distributed through respected peers so that the note would include the endorsement of a radio or TV station leader that had either completed this effort or a sector leader whom people would care to receive the message from. Examples of other station experiences and their completed codes would be made readily available in these messages.
4. Ultimately webinars that inform and even facilitate the process of discussion of ethics within stations was encouraged. Use of stories (internal and external) and best practices that could be repurposed as “case study exercises” were encouraged for these national learning sessions. While this point speaks more to process, the workgroup members saw it as an important part of the service that any campaign focused on action would provide.

The work group created several proposed campaign messages which are located in the Appendix starting on page 16 of this document.

**INTEGRITY TALES**

Stories define us. Throughout history, listening to and telling stories have moved people. When engaging people in understanding the need for change and focused outcomes, stories can be a powerful way to provide context and meaning to what might otherwise be a collection of forgettable facts.

At least as importantly, stories help the listener imagine themselves in the circumstance. Even in institutions of higher learning, there's a growing body of research that points to the power of narrative not just as a way to engage people, but as the only way to change deeply entrenched views.

With the value of story sharing in mind, the workgroup decided to put out a call to colleagues across the nation for their “Integrity Tales”. They solicited stories that outlined situations where standards and judgment were tested in areas related to programming, fund raising and governance. The call requested that the respondents share their real-life examples of what ethics challenges within their stations in key categories:

* Fundraising and development
* Managing volunteers / in-kind assistance
* Editorial guidelines / journalistic issues
* Social media
* Commitments to inclusiveness, engagement, and community partners
* Boards of all sorts (licensees, community advisory boards, friends groups, etc.)

The call for “Integrity Tales” was sent twice to over 2,000 public media colleagues across the nation in February and March 2013. It was the largest outreach effort for this project to date. It reached out to professionals from every discipline within a station including development, management, news and programming. The request was sent via emails and list servs and to multiple points of contact within the same stations.

The response was clear. Respondents openly shared their ethics dilemmas with the tandem message that a deeper understanding and integration of ethics principles is required across all units within their organizations. The stories included a station that during a gubernatorial election worked with a polling partner that used a bad sample leading to a heavy skew in data published to a station that received an open records request via a posting on their Facebook page. One respondent even outlined how poorly developed underwriting contracts at his station eventually led to staff embezzlement charges and a conviction.

The responses to the call for “Integrity Tales” demonstrated that public media colleagues endorse the movement toward establishing clearer codes of integrity that guide station staff, volunteers and other stakeholders. Their experiences were candid reflections of the situations they have had to problem-solve sometimes with a code of ethics assisting and other times not.

Continuing to encourage these stories and collecting / cataloging them is something the workgroup believes would be important for future projects. “Integrity Tales” can be repurposed into case studies that station staff could use in regular discussions concerning ethics dilemmas. Whether presented as a “story problem” of sorts for individual units and entire stations to work through together or as part of a larger, national webinar, the stories are compelling tools for learning how to problem solve. They also provide a deeper understanding of why adopting codes of integrity is a critical exercise for all staff across a station.

An example of an Integrity Tales submission can be found in the Appendix of this document, page 23.

**THE PROCESS OF REVISITING INTEGRITY PRINCIPLES**

**AT STATIONS NATIONWIDE**

When changing or re-enforcing the culture in any organization, the broad sentiment is that what is required is an understanding of the need for the change as well as the ultimate outcome, the individual’s role in producing that outcome and continuous dialogue about achieving the results.

When re-enforcing a culture of integrity it is not about adopting a proper rule book. As such, the work group concluded that while a terrific resource, thrusting the current Code of Editorial Integrity on stations should be less the objective. Instead more attention should be focused on engaging stations in spending the time to discuss each of the areas where an organization may fall victim.

**Helping Staff Understand the Initiative and the Path to Complete the Work**

As noted in the recommendations of this document, while a campaign is required to capture the attention of station leaders, a process and set of tools is also needed to facilitate their work in adopting a code. The workgroup prepared materials that are intended to be useful to stations and could seed any future project that collates a guide to getting this work done.

There was clear consensus among work group members that the path a station takes, both in time invested and process created, is a far greater indicator of the integration of the code at a station. Some stations who have invested in this effort have taken two to three years to engage in the work to finalize a code. Even in these cases, the dialogue concerning how the code is applied never ends and that is a critical part of what stations need to understand when embarking on this work.

Much has been written by experts in organizational change management that applies to the work that stations are assuming in creating and adopting their codes of integrity. As an example, author and Harvard Business Professor School John Kotter has written extensively on his “Eight Stage Process of Creating Major Change” which includes establishing a sense of urgency; creating a guiding coalition, communicating the change vision and empowering broad-based action within teams. Kotter’s final step, anchoring new approaches in the culture, can only be achieved by educating, enlisting and engaging people throughout an organization in the process of work.

**Process Tools**

The workgroup completed several pieces intended to be useful in any practical “how-to” guide that is produced in the future.

1. As station leaders start to advance the concept of outlining this work with other managers and stakeholders, the following tools may assist planning and initial communication:

* Process Tool A outlines a roadmap that organizations can consider as they plan the steps they will take in engaging stakeholders in the process. (See Appendix, page 27)
* Process Tool B defines the internal role of the leader(s) seeking to lead change. (See Appendix, page 29)
* Process Tool C and Process Tool D can be helpful in facilitating the messaging of how broad station wide participation is required. This language may be especially useful in communicating with managers within stations. (See Appendix, pages 30 and 31.)

1. To facilitate a greater understanding of why and how all units have a role in informing and adopting their station’s Code of Editorial Integrity, a visual “Bubble Chart” (Process Tool E) depicts how a code of ethics has the potential of rippling out to all facets of an organization. (See Appendix, page 32)
2. Understanding the stories of other organizations can motivate and inform the direction stations take as they organize their path to developing their codes.

* Process Tool F is the narrative experience of how witf established that station’s “Principles and Guidelines for Organizational Ethics and Editorial Integrity”. (See Appendix, page 34.) That station’s guidelines can be found at pmintegrity.org/newguidelines.cfm.
* Process Tool G is the narrative outline of “Wisconsin Public Broadcasting’s Path to a Contemporary Code of Editorial Integrity and Staff Ethics”. The fact that Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television have a university licensee is part of this story. The guidelines for Wisconsin Public Broadcasting are available at pmintegrity.org/newguidelines.cfm.
* Process Tool H outlines decision making toward reinvigorating a review of guidelines at WUWM Milwaukee Public Radio. (See Appendix, page 39)

1. As they start, stations are encouraged to do self assessments of where they are today. Process Tool I is an Organizational Integrity Assessment Template and provides an assessment that can inform where gaps may exist and areas of immediate concern. This would be a tool a managers group and other units could use as a first exercise in their process. A complete bank of other assessment tools is available through the University Station Alliance and available for use at <http://www.us-alliance.org/>.
2. For stations that enjoy robust community partnerships, Process Tool J can serve as a template for a community outreach partnership planning document. Community partners are also a critical stakeholder group in understanding issues of integrity as stations move into this space. Currently in use at Nine Network in St. Louis, this document illustrates the complexity of partnership inputs and outcomes for a station. (See Appendix, page 45) A complementary resource entited “Editorial Partnerships” can be found at the Editorial Integrity for Public Media website at http://pmintegrity.org/pm\_docs/EditorialPartnerships\_001.pdf

**THE ORIGIN OF THE EDITORIAL INTEGRITY PROJECT**

**WORKING GROUP**

**Evolution and Focus of the Project**

The Editorial Integrity for Public Media Project has convened several journalists to address issues which are important to the sustenance of continued integrity in public media. Among many valuable reports and tools developed, one of the products of these work groups is the Code of Editorial Integrity.

In January 2013, the work group to address Adopting and Strengthening Local Policies was convened. The original charge of the workgroup was to develop a “how to” process to help stations in using the previously developed materials, with particular focus on encouraging station leaders to adapt or adopt the Code of Editorial Integrity.

**Work Group Participants**

**Convener / Lead Organization**

This project was initiated by Editorial Integrity for Public Media which is a collaborative project of the [Affinity Group Coalition](http://www.ptv-agc.org/), which is made up of representatives from seven membership organizations of public television stations, and the [Station Resource Group](http://www.srg.org/), an alliance of leading public radio stations focused on strategy, policy, and operational innovation. The National Educational Telecommunications Association, [NETA](http://www.netaonline.org/), is providing organizational support.

Editorial Integrity for Public Media is led by Byron Knight, Emeritus Director Wisconsin Public Broadcasting, and Tom Thomas, co-CEO of the Station Resource Group, as project directors.

**Facilitator**

Jeanan Yasiri Moe, served as the group’s facilitator/moderator. Yasiri Moe was Executive Director of the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Center for Nonprofits (2007-2013) and is a 20 year volunteer of Wisconsin Public Television serving on the “Friends” board and as a development volunteer.

**Work Group Members**

Eight station executives and other national public media leaders comprised the workgroup and included:

* Craig Beeby, Executive Director, University Station Alliance
* Malcolm Brett, Director, Wisconsin Public Broadcasting
* Dave Edwards, General Manager, WUWM Milwaukee
* Doug Eichten, President and CEO, DEI (Development Exchange)
* Cara Williams Fry, SVP & Chief Content Officer, WITF, Harrisburg, PA
* Morgan Holm, Vice President, News and Public Affairs, Oregon Public Broadcasting
* Amy Shaw, Senior Vice President, Community Engagement, Nine Network, St. Louis
* Brian Sickora, President and CEO, WSKG, Binghamton NY

**Project Outline**

The workgroup met over three large-group teleconference meetings and several subcommittee sessions starting in January and running through March 2013. Three subcommittees were formed from the outset to address key areas the working group believed would advance the initiative: a) build a case statement; b) generate stories of integrity issues and c) outline the processes stations could take to complete adoption of a code.

Throughout the three month period, workgroup members participated in a total of 12 meetings, performed outreach across the nation to other public media peers and created substantive content that ultimately became the content outlined in this report.

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**Summary of the Code of Editorial Integrity**

**Local Public Media Organizations**

**Code of Editorial Integrity**

Our purposes are to support a strong civil society, increase cultural access and knowledge, extend public education, and strengthen community life through electronic media and related community activities. The public’s trust in our organizations, content, services, and relationships is fundamental to achieving these purposes.

We earn the public’s trust through the quality and excellence of our work, the inclusion and reflection of the diversity of our communities, and a commitment to defined professional standards and practices.

We take specific steps to ascertain and understand community needs, issues, and interests; to assure respect and civility in our forums and discussions and impartiality and objectivity in our coverage of complex and controversial matters; and to be accessible, accountable, and transparent to those who use our services and the community as a whole.

Our standards apply to all the content we produce and present, regardless of subject matter, including news, science, history, information and cultural content. They apply across all the channels and platforms we use – broadcasting, online, social media, print, and in-person events.

**GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT FOR THE COMMON GOOD**We govern our activities in ways that promote the common good and the public interest and that reflect our commitment to integrity and trustworthiness. These obligations supersede personal and institutional agendas.   
  
**IDEAS, CULTURE AND FORUMS WITH RESPECT AND CIVILITY**We contribute to the civic, educational, and cultural life of our communities by presenting a range of ideas and cultures and offering a robust forum for discussion and debate.  
  
**JOURNALISM THAT REPORTS EVENTS AND ISSUES WITH ACCURACY AND INTEGRITY**We pursue facts about events and issues in our communities and other important matters that affect people’s lives with accuracy and integrity.

**INCLUSION AND REFLECTION OF OUR COMMUNITIES’ DIVERSITY**The integrity of our work is strengthened by incorporating the diversity of demography, culture, and beliefs in our communities and the nation into our work and our content.

**TRANSPARENCY IN PROGRAM SELECTION AND CONTENT CREATION**We share with our audiences and the public the mission-based and practical reasons for our program choices. We seek to be transparent in how we gather and report news and create other content.

**TRANSPARENCY IN FUNDRAISING**We aim for respectful relationships with our donors and clear understanding among donors and others about our fundraising operations. We acknowledge the sponsors of our programming and disclose the terms on which we obtain such support.

**PREVENTING UNDUE INFLUENCE**We assure that our editorial process is free from undue influence. We take care in deciding from whom we seek and accept funds and in setting boundaries with respect to those who contribute.

**CONSISTENT EDITORIAL STANDARDS IN PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS**We bring our standards into editorial partnerships and collaborations through which we expand our capacity to serve, add to the perspectives we share with our audiences, and enhance the timeliness and relevance of our work.

**EMPLOYEE ACTIVITIES BEYOND THEIR PUBLIC MEDIA WORK**The actions of our employees, even when “off the clock,” affect public trust in our integrity, credibility, and impartiality. We expect employees to uphold our integrity in their personal as well as their professional lives.

**CAMPAIGN TOOL A: A CALL TO ACTION**

**The Editorial Integrity Project is calling for a Reinvest**

**In the Process of Adopting a Code of Organizational Integrity**

**TRUST is what public media organizations are built on.**

Are firewalls in place for local funding for locally produced programming? Should staff participating in political activities? Are board members interjecting themselves into the programming and news decision processes?

**TRUSTWORTHINESS must be protected in a constantly changing environment.**

The media universe continues to change radically. Our station leadership is changing with over half of our managers retired or retiring. Our role as public media organizations serving our communities are evolving and placing renewed attention on organizational ethics.

**TRUST IS EARNED.**

The entire industry wins when we develop and implement a Code of Organizational Integrity. Without team work developing policy, **stations are vulnerable**. A fully understood code provides ready answers to regular conflicts. **We need to articulate how our organizations can fulfill both journalistic responsibilities and the capacity to convene communities around public issues.**

**Why Renewed Attention to Trust and Ethics**

1. We have an obligation to construct a **roadmap** for unified and thoughtful decision making.
2. With continued support from the federal government brings a **level of scrutiny** that requires proactive ethics policies.
3. **Changing funding models** and methods bring a heightened level of scrutiny.
4. **Social media** opens organizations up to challenges to traditional understandings of ethical behavior.
5. We **need to be poised to address the very real challenges and threats** in our changing landscape.

**What it Takes to Integrate the Code in Your Station’s Culture**

A written Code of Organizational Integrity is a practical guide that serves as a decision making tool for internal and external constituents.  **Strong leadership**, **effective** **processes, and on-going engagement** are the byproducts of an effective Code

**Get Started -- Initiate Your Station’s Code of Organizational Integrity**

An excellent code has been developed by dozens of system leaders with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (**CPB**). The code is available to help you start your station’s work on adopting these principles or customizing them into your own document.

**In the end, integrity standards must be established, maintained, & protected.**

**Get more information at Editorial Integrity for Public Media**

**http://pmintegrity.org/**

**CAMPAIGN TOOL B: A CALL TO ACTION**

**The Practical Solution: A Code of Organizational Integrity**

A written Code of Organizational Integrity is a practical guide that serves as a decision making tool for internal and external constituents.  Why?

* A contemporary code signals an organization’s stewardship of best practices in journalism and beyond.
* “Having done the work” of articulating and implementing a code signals your organization is committed to the highest ethical and editorial standards AND is effectively promoting and applying those standards internally.
* In connecting external audiences to your code, an organization demonstrates integrity and sound management.

A fully understood code also provides ready answers to regular conflicts. It offers a road map, day-to-day, to recognize that change is a constant. It outlines clear expectations of roles and responsibilities for all staff, volunteers, board, licensees and for you as leaders.

**CAMPAIGN TOOL C**

**Compelling Reasons to Initiate Your Station’s Code of Organizational Integrity**

If you don't create a culture of Organizational Integrity and adopt a Code, this could happen to you and your station.

\* You could be sued

\* You and your boss could lose your jobs

\* Your license holder could get in trouble

\* You could lose your 501C3 exemption

\* You could lose local or federal funding

\* You could lose underwriters

\* You could lose members and major donors

\* Personal reputations could be ruined

\* You could foster a dysfunctional staff

**Integrity Tale Submission**

**WSKG & Hydraulic Fracturing / February 2013**

**Current Situation**

New York State has yet to make a decision as to whether or not it will allow hydraulic fracturing for natural gas trapped in the Marcellus Shale formation directly below WSKG’s primary coverage area. This put’s WSKG at ground zero for the debate between industry supporters and land-owner coalitions and those against fracking who believe it would “rape and pillage” the environment (actual statement from a listener). Both WSKG Radio/TV and NPR have provided programming and extensive reporting on the topic. WSKG has a Marcellus Resource Page on our website that contains links to both local and national reports.

WSKG does not have a formal Editorial Policy (we will soon). However, we have been operating under the informal policy that we will not accept funding from organizations or individuals who either have an advocacy position (e.g. Friends of Responsible Gas Drilling or the Sierra Club) or from companies that are in the industry (including law firms who “specialize” in gas-drilling leases).

**Interesting Issues**

WSKG has wrestled with a couple interesting issues in applying our informal policy. And I believe that even with a formal policy in place, these issues would require some thought and interpretation/explanation of said policy.

1. The NPR ANGA (American Natural Gas Alliance) underwriting has been a dagger in our side - see email exchange below. We’ve received dozens of these emails from angry listeners outraged that we would accept ANGA funding; most are less civil than this one. We’ve played the “we don’t have any control over NPR card” and most listeners understand, but many still stop supporting us.
2. The daily local *Capital Pressroom* talk show that we carry produced by nearby Syracuse (WCNY) public radio station recently accepted support from the Natural Gas industry. This is a little trickier than NPR because we could easily pull this one-hour show in our schedule, but have decided not to at this point.
3. WSKG was approached by a commercial video production company, who is a tenant in our building and a good business partner, to rent our television studio for a week of productions. They mentioned that it was to produce infomercials for the natural gas industry. We declined to rent them the space. We felt that even though the payment would come from the production company, we knew that they were paying us with “industry” money.
4. We received an unsolicited $6,000 gift from a foundation that was in the name of a business that was unfamiliar to WSKG. As we did some research we realized that a gentleman who is a long-time WSKG member and faculty member of a local University started this foundation. The company that he started in the same name as the foundation manufactures and sells devices that are used in the gas drilling industry. The device was not exclusively used in hydraulic fracturing, it was also used in traditional drilling circumstances as well, but it appeared that the recent boom in the hydraulic fracturing increased the financial position of the company. We decided to keep this gift because it was a membership contribution, not programming underwriting. This gift also caused us to reflect on the fact that it is not appropriate to dissect membership contributions to look for the source of an individual gift.

These are just four examples of issues that arise at a news organization providing coverage on a very controversial – and very personal – issue. This issue is dividing our community and WSKG has tried to remain as unbiased as possible. Unfortunately we’re finding that when you take a position down the middle, it invites attacks from both sides.

**Email Exchange with a Member**

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 2:53 PM

To: WskgComment

Name: *<<Name of Writer Removed>>*

Subject: Hydrofracking and my membership to WSKG

Regarding: Membership

Comment:

Today I came to the unfortunate decision of cancelling my 10 or more years or uninterrupted membership with WSKG.

I believe that as a public radio, WSKG has the important responsibility of being a "provider of true information". The information that a public radio station decides to broadcast becomes a powerful message to the listener, that thinks "if public radio says it, it is true". Unfortunately I have been listening to programs on hydrofracking for natural gas that do not provide true information about hydrofracking in PA and so many other parts of our country and the world. And particularly, it is painful to listen to the advertising of ANGA (natural gas alliance) on WSKG public radio, assuring that they bring millions of jobs and energy to the world. When WSKG decides to use ANGA as an underwriter, making the public radio waves available for corporate lies, it is not caring any more for their listeners.

I hope I can be a listener and member of WSKG again in the future; a WSKG that provides good information to the community it serves.

*<<Name of Writer Removed>>*

----Response: Wednesday February 6, 2013----

Dear *<<Name of Writer Removed >>,*

I read your comment with both appreciation and concern--appreciation, for your long-standing support of WSKG and concern, because there are some misunderstandings in our community about ANGA, NPR and WSKG.

I'd like to take a moment to see if I can clear up the ANGA issue.  The ANGA credits you hear on our programming are part of NPR's program feed. WSKG does not receive funding from ANGA and, in fact, we've decided not to accept funding from either side of the fracking debate (industry or opponents) for the foreseeable future.  The reason we've opted for this approach is to preserve our credibility in our coverage of the issue.

We have no control over NPR's fundraising decisions.  While public radio member’s stations have a majority of seats on the board of NPR, we do not have control of day-to-day decisions made at NPR headquarters.  Early on when ANGA to underwrite some NPR programming, I explained our dilemma to our station representative at NPR and how this could be misunderstood by our audience.  Unfortunately, while they understood our predicament as a station right in the middle of the debate over hydraulic fracturing, they did not reverse their decision.  I'm confident that NPR's firewall between fundraising and editorial decisions is strong, so I'm not worried about their coverage at the national level, but the perception it creates among our listeners has been a problem.

I've spoken to many listeners who share your concern about the ANGA credits and all I can do is assure them (and you) that decisions made at NPR in no way affect our local editorial decisions, nor do I feel they infiltrate NPR's news operation.  I understand how it appears, but I assure you that WSKG is not receiving any money from companies involved in hydraulic fracturing.  There's nothing we can do about the messaging by NPR's underwriters that air on our stations.  We are required to carry NPR's national credits as a condition of airing the programming.

I'm also concerned about how you feel about our coverage.  Since we've done a considerable number of local and regional reports, as well as talk programs on the Marcellus shale debate and also aired a number of programs and segments produced by other entities such as StateImpact PA and NPR, I would appreciate knowing what programs you feel have misrepresented the situation in PA.  I respectfully add that we find that this issue is one that listeners are so passionate about, that both "sides" can complain about the same programming segments as being an example of our or NPR's "bias" on the issue.  It's often a turn of phrase or a tone of voice that people react to.  We have made every effort to report on and discuss the matter with accurate information, but if we have failed on the facts, I'd appreciate a specific example that we can look into.  If you can provide this, it would help me greatly in understanding your concern about our programming.

Again, I cannot stress enough how much your support is appreciated.  First and foremost, we are here to serve the public interest and it's the support of listeners like you that is the foundation of what we do.  If you have any questions about what I've written or have some specific examples of erroneous reporting, please feel free to reply directly to this email or call me at 607-729-0100 x339.

Thank you.

Ken Campbell

Director, Radio Programming and Operations

WSKG Public Broadcasting

Binghamton, NY

**PROCESS TOOL A**

**Road Map to Organizational Integrity Excellence**

*Dear Station Leader,*

*So you have decided to lead your station to Organizational Integrity Excellence. Now you are probably asking yourself, but how do I get there? Where do I start? Here is a set of directions that we hope you will find helpful.*

*Editorial Integrity Steering Committee*

**The Road to Organizational Integrity Excellence**

**Milepost #1**

Go to pmintegrity.org and review the Code of Editorial Integrity. Many of your colleagues throughout public media pitched in to create this very important document. Also review other policies and guidelines that are linked to that site.

**Milepost #2**

Gather the leadership of your Board, Friends Group, the people you report to at the university and your staff leadership team and discuss this journey. Reach a shared sense of what is organizational integrity, why is it important, why now, why is it everyone’s job.

**Milepost #3**

Develop a small task force from the above groups and assign them the role of developing a plan for the journey to excellence. That plan will include a priority level, breakdown work into projects, responsibilities, time lines, cost and a chart of the order that projects will be undertaken, what will success look like for each project.

We recommend:

1. Original Content – Editorial Standards
2. Programming Decisions – Editorial Standards
3. Programming and Content funding – Code of Ethics
4. Organizational – Code of Ethics
5. Board and Volunteer Code of Ethics

**Milepost #4**

Another task force should review all of your current policies/guidelines, including those of your license holder, that relate to organizational integrity and identify areas needing improvement. This task force should also identify missing policies. Lists of needed policies and samples are available at pmintegrity.org.

**Milepost #5**

Armed with the task force Project Plan and the review of all current policies, the entire group from Milepost #2 should decide on which projects should be tackled in what order. The proposal to the group could best be made by the CEO. Once there is a shared sense of what needs to be done, by whom, the work should begin. Regular progress reports should be made every two weeks to the whole group.

**Milepost #6**

Once the project teams have completed their work and it is deemed to be excellent work, plans on how to implement the policies/guidelines should be prepared by each project team.

**Milepost #7**

Station leader should invite representatives of the Editorial Integrity Steering Committee to review the policies/guidelines and plans for implementation. Following the review repairs can be made.

**Milepost #8**

It is now time for the adoption of the complete set of Organizational Integrity Policies/Guidelines and acceptance of implementation plan by full Board of Directors, Board of the Friend’s Group and license holder executives.

**Milepost #9**

Implementation begins and progress is periodically review by staff leadership.

**You have reached your destination – Organizational Integrity Excellence**

**PROCESS TOOL B**

**Integrity – The Leadership Process**

Developing integrity standards and protocols must involve the top station leadership. As manager, you should be framing the message of what the station is, how it works, why it is important, and how integrity is protected.

**How do you frame the discussion?**

As a manager you are an interpreter. The station manager must lead up as well as lead down.

* ***Lead up*** – A significant part of your job is managing upward. There is a need to help the licensee administrators and/or board to understand that ethics is as much of a responsibility as are the finances. You know the language, value, and importance of the station, and you must translate them effectively.
* ***Lead down*** - You also have to translate the licensee’s needs and values to the station staff. You must be the conduit that brings them together to protect and not interfere.

Outside third party’s standards should not define the station’s values. You must take the lead. If you don’t, someone else will eventually.

The work does not get done over a weekend. Consider how this discussion fits into the calendar for the key station staff and management, plus licensee administrators, and board stakeholders. The more time spent developing standards and protocols with participation by all stakeholders, the more likely integrity standards will be embraced and protected.

The ideal time to start this planning process is when there are no external pressures\* forcing quick decisions and short-sighted responses. However, if your station is undergoing external pressures and the station has no integrity standards in place, you must develop them and your timeline will probably be stressfully shortened.

**\*What are the triggering events or external pressures?**

* New station or board leadership
* Change in licensee leadership
* New programming leaders
* Major format changes and capital campaigns
* Infusion of new resources from a key funder
* Political climate
* IRS reviewing 990’s
* Partnerships with other nonprofits

**PROCESS TOOL C**

**What it Takes to Integrate the Code in Your Station’s Culture**

Adoption of a code requires **leadership.**

It also requires a **process** that facilitates discussions with station stakeholders over a year or more. Your process in creating your code is critically important as it builds a culture of understanding and adaptation within your station.

Finally, regular **engagement** with the practices and realities of the code of organizational integrity is also necessary:

* **Leadership**: Adopting a code must be driven by the highest levels of the organization, while encouraging other champions to surface throughout the organization as well. Station leadership includes CEOs, General Managers, senior management team members, board members, license holders and perhaps others.
* **Process**: While initiated by your leadership team, creating the policy can be accomplished by organically seeding discussion from within your station. The process should draw interdisciplinary station partners from journalists to programming professionals to promotions and development staff to engineers to the table. Diverse professional voices can fully influence and integrate a policy that everyone must eventually own. Depending on a station’s licensee arrangement, volunteers and/or board members also have valuable contributions to a process of reviewing ethics policy.
* **Engagement**: Once adopted, your station should make it a practice to review its integrity code annually with the board and senior management. The entire staff should feel they can discuss their decisions and actions regularly without fear, but with the expectation that multiple perspectives and experiences will lead to sound, credible practices and decisions that advance your public service mission.

The investment your station makes in adopting a code of organizational integrity reaps a far reaching benefit – one that results in a collectively participatory process of consultation and articulation of a code among your station’s diverse stakeholders. When that process engages all who are subject to the standards, those people understand the integrity of the code, their role in upholding the code and the expectations of trust and integrity placed on them by their community.

**PROCESS TOOL D**

**Getting Started -- Initiating Our Station’s Code of Organizational Integrity**

An excellent code has been developed by dozens of system leaders with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). The Code of Editorial Integrity is available at pmintegrity.org and is available to help us start our station’s work on adopting these principles or customizing them into your own document.

**In the end, integrity is a constant that doesn’t change.**

But the circumstances in which we exercise that integrity and the range of services and public expectations surrounding our work may change significantly- often in unpredictable ways. Those circumstances can challenge the trust that others have in us.

While a Code of Organizational Integrity cannot substitute for good judgment exercised in stressful and highly visible situations it can provide the basis for exceptional decision-making in stressful circumstances.

Our Code of Organizational Integrity can also be the catalyzing influence that allows all within our organization to reinvest in their role to help communities fully trust the integrity of our work every moment you are on the air, working with our community, serving the public interest.

**PROCESS TOOL E**

**BUBBLE CHART: The Ripple Effect of a Code of Organizational Integrity**

**This chart illustrates a few concepts:**

1. Working from the inside two bubbles out provides a grounding that all Editorial Standards and/or Code of Ethics relate to the content and services our audiences experience. The **Editorial Standards** provide the guidance to ensure that the **craft** of creating original content meets the highest editorial standards whether that “craft” is practiced internal to the organization or externally (purchased programming).
2. The third bubble, Programming & Content Funding, relates to the funding of locally produced or purchased content. These guidelines, **Code of Ethics**, govern the **conduct** of those involved with securing funding to support content production and/or acquisition. These are separate guidelines from the Editorial Standards.
3. The fourth and fifth bubbles include staff, Board and volunteers. The **Code of Ethics** also governs these individuals’ **conduct** and establishes guidelines of varying degrees of stringency depending on their role.

Ultimately, we are creating these Editorial Policies for American citizens not for our stations. These policies will help insure that our audiences can trust our ability to produce and distribute (“craft”) unbiased content (Editorial Standards) and to conduct our business activities in an ethical manner (Code of Ethics).

**PROCESS TOOL F:**

**Motivation and Process Behind witf’s Principles and Guidelines Policy**

Motivation to review **witf’s** *Principles and Guidelines for Organizational Ethics and Editorial Integrity* began with a push back from our Sales department for Content’s refusal to air a PSA on our TV station. Our policy was challenged because we were about to lose money, this was a multi-station buy and it was an “old” policy that some people did not understand because they didn’t see the harm in airing PSAs. This particular PSA spot was focused on introducing a program for elderly assistance offered by the Commonwealth of PA and the on-camera presence was the current Governor of PA. This PSA was slated to air during an election season (even though the Governor was not running for re-election).

 The Sales Manager and SVP of Sales became more confused (and I understand why) when they learned that other PBS stations within our state agreed to air the PSA.

We never ran the piece even though there were some revenue generators at our station who did not agree with the decision.

 This motivated us (a joint licensee) to work on updating the principles to understand why we had each one of them and to make sure the rest of the staff understood our policies and why they were important to the entire staff at **witf**. This process took over 12 months:

* Review existing rules/principles with CEO, Continuity Specialist and SVP of Content.
* Highlight those rules/principles which have been challenged by Sales.
* Ask Sales SVP & Manager to review and highlight the items which were of concern to them.
* Continuity Specialist and SVP of Content discussed with News Director, Director of Programming and key on-air talent to see which rules/principles were viewed as most important and most challenged.
* Highlight everything (from the 3 bullets above) which served as “potential” problems and then Sales SVP & Manager discussed with SVP of Content & Continuity Specialist to see what needed to be discussed at the CEO level (basically everything that we could not come to an understanding about).
* Sales SVP & SVP of Content met with CEO & CFO to discuss our points of view and where we stood. CEO made final decisions on rules that Sales & Content leaders could not agree on.
* Continuity Specialist wrote concrete examples of each of the points where interpretation mattered and incorporated that into the policies statement.
* Reviewed results with senior management team, content team, sales staff and development staff. Incorporated suggestions and feedback where appropriate.
* Waited for release of National group’s editorial and ethics policies to make sure we had not missed any critical elements. Incorporated a few changes where appropriate.
* Finalized our policies, received final approval from CEO and shared final with all editorial team and then with each individual department.
* Held a specific All-Staff to review these rules and discuss specifics on the new social media policies.
* Changed/updated the employee handbook to incorporate those changes.
* Created an electronic copy on our internal staff drive for ease of access when/if a question arose.
* Today, if a question or concern over copy, a tagline or a PSA occurs the Continuity Specialist and SVP of Content discuss and make a decision. If push back comes from Sales, we send to our contact at DEI to get his opinion. And then, if there is more push back we have our CEO make the final decision. Since the new principles are in place this rarely happens.

At **witf**, with small teams and then larger teams, we worked for consensus when possible and we created two separate documents - an updated ***witf’s*** *Principles and Guidelines for Organizational Ethics and Editorial Integrity,* and *Principles for Underwriting & Sponsorship*.

*Submitted by Cara Fry, Senior Vice President and Chief Content Officer, WITF Harrisburg, PA*

**PROCESS TOOL G**

**Wisconsin Public Broadcasting’s Path to a Contemporary**

**Code of Editorial Integrity and Staff Ethics**

Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television are joint licensees with a long standing emphasis on news and public affairs programming. Each entity has historically operated independent of one another with regular communication and consultation, but without significant integration. Each had developed and implemented complementary but not identical guidelines with respect to editorial practices.

A series of environmental factors caused Wisconsin Public Broadcasting leaders to take a closer look at editorial integrity practices and overall staff ethics responsibilities. Some of these factors included;

* The work of the Editorial Integrity Task Force
* High profile editorial issues at a number if industry entities
* The proliferation of social media and the dimension that social media practices bring to an assessment of editorial relationships and responsibilities
* The advance of “community engagement” as a key service line with deep partnerships and relationships that don’t resemble journalistic practices
* The significant expansion of paid media and “point of view” news sources, including cable channels and websites that changed the public perspective about our roles in the media firmament
* The political dynamic within our state

Both WPR and WPT are subject to University of Wisconsin staff ethics guidelines which, while published were rarely referenced. The Trustees of the University have affirmed the work of the Wingspread conference. The Trustees retain responsibility for policy while delegating editorial responsibilities and authority to senior administration officials. WPR and WPT guidelines, practices and protocols have traditionally been internally without Board participation.

These documents have long guided WPT and WPR’s work. They were developed through a collaborative process but had not been recently refreshed. WPT also had published an internal “staff ethics guidelines” document as well.

In 2011 management determined that WPR and WPT would be better served by sharing unified guidance rather than “complementary” editorial integrity guidelines for each service. Because radio and TV were of the same licensee and because audiences often conflated one service with the other, leadership collectively concluded that staff and the public would be best served by understanding one set of language and guidance.

WPR and WPT’s senior editorial staff were tasked with drawing the intent and specific guidance from the pre-existing guidelines to craft a single organization wide set of guidelines. They worked at this for some months- while the **Editorial Integrity for Public Media Project was publishing its work.**

**University of Wisconsin policies regarding employee ethics were in place. University Trustee’s policies regarding editorial integrity were also well established and operating responsibilities had been and remain delegated to University administrators and then to the management of WPR and WPT.**

**The first step was to review ethical and editorial guidelines for the institution and for the public broadcasting services (WPR and WPT).**

**At the same time, the editorial staff and management culled examples of ethical guidelines of like organizations including PBS, NPR, RTNDA, New York Times, the Editorial Integrity for Public Media Project and many others.**

**While the journalists worked, management also was also engaged, reviewing drafts, consulting with colleagues in other markets, assessing outside documents and updating general staff from time to time.**

**Management also consulted with University and FCC attorneys during the process about the content and language of prospective guidelines and implementation. Management informed the University administration about the development of new internal guidelines.**

**Over the course of many months multiple drafts of proposed Editorial Integrity policies were exchanged among senior editorial staff and management. Long standing institutional and broadcasting staff ethics policies were reviewed. Those ethics policies internal to broadcasting were refreshed, though largely unchanged.**

**Final documents were distributed to the review team and senior managers, and then posted to intranet. Docs were discussed at all-staff meetings. At one staff meeting a senior WPR manager offered a host of hypothetical situations for staff consideration. This exercise helped affirm the complexity of our operating environment, the necessity of the guidelines and the need for an informed staff that would be making judgments and decisions in a broad range of unpredictable circumstances.**

**All staff are subject to University of Wisconsin Ethics policies and internal “media specific” guidelines. Through a consultative process senior managers and Editorial team identified those among staff who were also subject to more specific and extended expectations of the Editorial Ethics guidelines.**

**References to these documents were incorporated into position descriptions with the note that adherence to guidelines are work requirements. The ethics policies will be discussed the first year of implementation during annual performance evaluations and every year thereafter for those subject to the specific editorial guidelines.**

**This annual discussion will be the basis for reviewing and refreshing the guidelines.**

*Submitted by Malcolm Brett, Director of Broadcasting and Media Innovations,*

*University of Wisconsin.*

**PROCESS TOOL H**

**The Process of Adapting Principles of Editorial Integrity at**

**WUWM Milwaukee Public Radio**

Because WUWM Milwaukee Public Radio has had a robust news department since the mid 1980’s, management has always had to deal with issues of journalistic ethics. Some issues were simple to resolve, and others were more complex. The news director resolved most of them in consultation with the program director. Occasionally, the general manager was brought into the discussion and on several occasions a journalism professor who teaches ethics was consulted. Everything was very ad hoc.

One point of reference was the NPR Code of Ethics. The document was comprehensive, despite reading like a textbook and being void of practical examples. WUWM formally adopted the code, which we posted our website and distributed to all of our staff members. We thought we were covered, as it represented the best thinking of our journalistic heroes at NPR. The document served us well for a very long time.

Imagine my surprise and concern when, as a member of the NPR Board of Directors, I learned that even management at NPR realized that the code was no longer meeting their needs. In 2010, Juan Williams was fired as a news analyst because of remarks he made about Muslims on the Fox News channel. That was not only the catalyst for much internal discussion, but I also learned that even NPR’s code was no longer a policy that employees regularly consulted. It was determined that the NPR code not only needed to be updated, but involvement and training of the staff would be extremely important. Outside consultants were brought in to moderate the work and the Board finally adopted a new code almost two years later. I had a unique vantage point to observe how complex many of these issues were. No one wanted to rush this important process.

Almost simultaneously, the Editorial Integrity Project was taking a broader and more station-focused examination of ethical issues. I participated in many conference calls, which once again confirmed for me the difficulty of dealing with many complex issues.

Finally, the Editorial Integrity Project completed its work.

I was no longer convinced that simply adopting a document at WUWM, which was created by any other organization, was appropriate. In fact, I was more convinced that doing so would result in simply one more policy document that people might only refer to at a time of crisis. I wanted more staff buy-in. I also knew that we needed more than one document. This was no longer an issue just for the news department. We needed ethical guidelines for all content creators, for management, for development, and possibly for all other staff members. The station’s management team determined that we needed a working group to start the process of education and understanding. The working group would consist of managers and non-managers from different station departments. Once that group had an understanding of ethical documents prepared by the Editorial Integrity Group and NPR, we believed that a broader station discussion could begin. The ultimate goal is the creation of a practical and living document.

The first challenge is to understand the ethical policies of our licensee and how our own University’s policies on ethical behavior by all employees will impact what we are discussing.

We are also collecting policies that are in place at other public media outlets affiliated with universities.

This is very much a work in progress, but I am pleased that the subject of ethics will have greater and ongoing focus in our organization.

*Submitted by Dave Edwards who is Director/General Manager of WUWM Milwaukee Public Radio and is a former member of the Board of Directors at NPR.*

**PROCESS TOOL I**

**Organizational Integrity Assessment Template**

**Organizational Integrity Review**

***Integrity standards must be established, maintained, & protected.***

This is an attempt to provide a tool that allows self-study that leads to public media leaders and, by extension, their staffs, to understand where they are in addressing the evolving myriad of issues that are challenging public media today. An *Organizational Integrity Review* involves the staff and all the important stake-holders at each respective Public Media entity. The more work accomplished by the local staff and stake-holders, the more successful the process will be.

***TRUST* is what public media organizations are built on.**

***TRUSTWORTHINESS* must be protected in a constantly changing environment.**

***TRUST IS EARNED.***

**Why Renewed Attention to Trust and Ethics**

* With continued support from the federal government brings a level of scrutiny that requires proactive ethics policies.
* Changing funding models and methods bring a heightened level of scrutiny.
* Social media opens organizations up to challenges to traditional understandings of ethical behavior.
* We need to be poised to address the very real challenges and threats in our changing landscape.

**Using the Assessment Template**

The template includes:

* benchmark(s)
* a list of assessment statements that can be ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “this is never the case” to 5 being “this is always the case” (this could be converted to a checklist), and
* a list of supporting documents to be compiled

**Organizational Integrity**

**Benchmarks:**

* The station governs activities in ways that promote the common good and the public interest and that reflect the commitment to integrity and trustworthiness. These obligations supersede personal and institutional agendas.
* The station supports transparency in program selection, content creation, fundraising activities, and collaborations.

Assessment Statements:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5.**  **1 = This is never the case.**  **5 = This is always the case.** | **Staff** | **Board** | **Licensee** |
| **News** |  |  |  |
| The station contributes to the civic, educational, and cultural life of our communities by presenting a range of ideas and cultures and offering a robust forum for discussion and debate. |  |  |  |
| The station reports events and issues with accuracy and integrity. |  |  |  |
| There is inclusion and reflection of our communities’ diversity. |  |  |  |
| News goals are clearly articulated and appropriate to the mission, audience and resources. |  |  |  |
| News coverage is fair, unbiased, accurate, complete and honest. |  |  |  |
| There are consistent editorial standards in partnerships and collaborations. |  |  |  |
| **Fundraising** |  |  |  |
| There is transparency in our fundraising. |  |  |  |
| We take care in deciding from whom we seek and accept funds and in setting boundaries with respect to those who contribute. |  |  |  |
| The station follows generally accepted accounting procedures and complies with all applicable laws, regulations, and Federal Communications Commission requirements. |  |  |  |
| Resources are developed, managed, and allocated in a manner that advances the station’s mission and sustains its financial viability. |  |  |  |

**Organizational Integrity Continued**

Assessment Statements:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5.**  **1 = This is never the case.**  **5 = This is always the case.** | **Staff** | **Board** | **Licensee** |
| **Human Resources** |  |  |  |
| The station’s staff and volunteers have the appropriate education, training, experience, and support to accomplish their work. |  |  |  |
| Staffing is adequate to meet work expectations and needs. |  |  |  |
| We expect employees to uphold our integrity in their personal as well as their professional lives. |  |  |  |
| There is inclusion and reflection of our communities’ diversity. |  |  |  |
| **Programming & Public Service** |  |  |  |
| There is transparency in program selection and content creation. |  |  |  |
| Public service and programs extend the station’s capacity to provide quality life-long learning experience for the public. |  |  |  |
| Continuous evaluation ensures the relevancy and viability of all program offerings serving the public interests and needs. |  |  |  |
| **Social Media** |  |  |  |
| The station’s outstanding reputation and brand is a direct result of the employees and their commitment to uphold community values of Fairness, Respect, Honesty, Trust, and Integrity. |  |  |  |
| Employees always ensure that the business information contained in Internet email messages and other transmissions is accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful. |  |  |  |
| **Governance** |  |  |  |
| The station has a clear sense of mission around which its staff, board, licensee, financial resources, and activities are focused. |  |  |  |
| The station operates from a firm foundation of carefully conceived and regularly revisited bylaws and related core documents. |  |  |  |
| The staff, board, and licensee have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and a commitment to the mission of the station and licensee. |  |  |  |

**Supporting Documents**

**Governance:**

* Station Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives, date created or last reviewed
* Bylaws
* Code of Ethics Policy
* Conflict of Interest Policy/Statements

**News:**

* News and Information Code of Ethics and Practices
* “Statement of Integrity” – The independence of the news department should reflect that it is seen as fair and impartial. A firewall should be in place protecting news and programming independence from outside influences including the licensee’s administration and governing body. The licensee and station administrators should have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
* Policy for Personal Gain, Gifts, Freebies, Loaned Equipment or Merchandise, etc.
* Politics, Community and Outside Activities Policy
* Policy on Underwriting; Foundation Grants; Advertising, Marketing and Promotion; Board-Staff Interactions
* Application and Enforcement of this Code

**Fundraising:**

* Gift Acceptance Policy
* Major and Planned Gift Acceptance Policy
* Underwriting Policy
* Business Plan
* Annual Report
* Capital Improvement Case Statement

**Human Resources:**

* Staff Handbook or Policy Manual
* Volunteer Policy

**Social Media:**

* Social Media Policy and Guidelines

**Programming & Public Service:**

* New Programming Evaluation Guidelines
* Public Service (PSA) Guidelines
* **PROCESS TOOL J**

