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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | The NPR Network Initiative | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Please see below for a note from members of the NPR Advisory Board Working Group. We are excited to share details on the NPR Network initiative and hope you will join us for future discussions.  Colleagues,   The last two years have been extraordinary for all of us. Public radio stations across the country, together with NPR, have provided a remarkable public service to our audiences during a period of political polarization, a racial reckoning, and a global pandemic.   At the same time, the pace of change in the media landscape has accelerated, presenting greater challenges to our ability to serve our communities as vital local institutions.   These challenges of reaching new and more diverse audiences and acquiring new members are not new. But they have taken on greater urgency, and we must find a way to address them and grow in our mission to serve the public together.   Over the last few years, several stations have approached NPR and suggested ways that NPR and stations could work together to find new members and reach new and more diverse audiences.   In 2021, members of NPR’s Board of Directors started working with staff to discuss and further develop these ideas. And in January 2022, we convened a small, diverse group of stations and system representatives to review some concepts and provide feedback.   After several months of discussion, we are excited to share our vision for how we as a network can better serve our communities, reach new and more diverse audiences, and find new members.  It is also clear that we can only do this in partnership with each other – strengthening the connection between local Member stations working with NPR.  Our goals are ambitious. We aim to make our local-national partnership and mission as indispensable to new audiences on digital platforms as it has been to broadcast audiences for more than 50 years.**Together, we want to double the number of people supporting local stations and double revenue for the entire network.**   In order to do so, we need a new way to explain our shared local-national mission, and to talk about ourselves in the way the public sees us: as a cohesive, local-national network.     We need to find ways to introduce local stations to the millions of users of NPR podcasts and NPR.org who are not yet connected in their market, and to build a membership funnel to collect data and raise money from those users for Member stations.  This is not an effort to launch a national membership program managed by NPR. It is an effort to address one of our most pressing issues: to generate new members for stations of all sizes and types.   We need to raise money from users who are not yet connected to stations, based on the content they love, and work to connect those donors to stations.   We need to work together to develop our pipeline of mid-level and major donors for our network.  We need to work together to create more on-demand content to serve our existing audiences and the younger, more diverse audiences that rely on digital platforms, and to create the best experiences possible for these audiences on the platforms we control.   And we need a cohesive marketing effort that both preserves local station branding and connects local stations to the larger force that is the NPR Network.  These proposals represent the work of the NPR Board; NPR executives, and staff; and the Advisory Board Working Group, which comprises the station managers who are signatories to this letter as well as Joyce MacDonald of Greater Public, Sally Kane of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, and Bill Davis from Station Resource Group.  You can [read a full description of these initiatives here](https://click.e.npr.org/?qs=9dbb33509f757cc9ad999f42109c30fe2d4adb12b7f8a1915150b78f43d10c7fe57a3fe1137cc36db7cefbf0617ac095012d8975956bd41a).   These ideas represent a meaningful change to our business model. We believe that a strong partnership and shared goals is our best option to collectively expand our markets, attract new listeners, convert them into donors, and increase our brand awareness.  Over the next few weeks, we will hold a series of webinars to explain these initiatives in more detail. In May and June, we will convene a series of feedback sessions to give you an opportunity to ask questions, provide input, and raise your hand and volunteer to be part of this work.   We’re looking forward to those conversations as an opportunity to share our work, to hear your feedback, and to talk about our future together.   The first webinar will be held on **Wednesday, April 20 at 1:00 PM ET**. Please join us to learn more about the initiative and its core elements and share this opportunity with your teams.    Onward,  Members of the NPR Advisory Board Working Group  LaFontaine Oliver (WYPR + WTMD; NPR Board Chair) John Lansing (NPR) Rima Dael, WSHU John Decker, KPBS Jennifer Ferro, KCRW Myrna Johnson, Iowa Public Radio Nico Leone, KERA Joe O’Connor, WFAE Maria O’Mara, KUER Erika Pulley-Hayes, WAMU Mike Savage, WEKU Jon Abbott, GBH Scott Finn, Vermont Public Radio Rachel Hubbard, KOSU Bill Johnson, WRTI Margaret Low, WBUR Paul Maassen, WWNO + WRKF Caryn Mathes, KUOW R.C. McBride, WGLT + WCBU Tom Michael, Boise State Public Radio | | | |