



Memorandum of Understanding Your Voice Ohio / Ohio Media Project

This memorandum is intended to guide and support collaboration among Your Voice Ohio / Ohio Media Project (OMP) members. This memorandum is not intended to compel legal or any other binding obligations upon OMP members.

Purpose

The Ohio Media Project, through Your Voice Ohio, seeks to:

- Produce quality journalism on the issues that matter most to Ohioans.
- Rebuild relationships of mutual trust between Ohioans and Ohio media.
- Connect Ohioans across the state through shared discussions and shared understanding of important issues.
- Engage and support communities across Ohio, especially those underserved by traditional news media, including communities of color, rural communities, and low-income communities.
- Conduct experiments and pilot projects related to audience engagement, revenue generation, digital innovation, journalistic approaches, and more, and disseminate results throughout the collaborative.
- Explore the culture of journalism and reinvigorate the traditional roles of journalists in service to citizens.

Outcomes

Ohioans will:

- Have higher levels of trust in their local media outlets.
- Be better informed about local and state issues, and understand how issues in their communities relate to similar issues elsewhere.
- Be more civically engaged, with more Ohioans working to address challenges or otherwise be involved in their communities.
- Feel greater connection to others around the state.
- Be better able to differentiate local media from the national press.
- Protect and preserve their interests in and through local news media.

Journalists will:

- Have better tools and information to deliver more sophisticated reporting about their communities.
- Have better information about what approaches best serve audiences and promote financial sustainability.
- Better understand the lives of people in their community.
- Be more engaged with and connected to their audiences.

Decision Making

Decisions that significantly impact the purpose, direction, or operations of the collaborative will be made via consensus or majority-vote among the members. Decisions dealing with the day-to-day work of the members will be decided by those involved.

Working Together

While not all members will be able to offer the same resources to the collaborative, all members must participate consistently in order to maintain access to the efforts and materials of the collaborative. Each member must assign a contact or point person from their organization to serve as a representative of the Ohio Media Project. Members are also strongly encouraged to assign reporters and other staff to support *Your Voice Ohio* activities, relative to their capacity. The goal here is to support each organization and one another in serving our communities.

We will:

- Ensure that reporting, materials, and other projects are accessible and valuable to members regardless of media type or reporting format.
 - We will “translate” content from print to broadcast, and vice versa.
 - We will share materials over Google Drive.
- Commit as members to deliver content as promised on deadline.
- Manage internal communications via Email and conference calls.
- Allow all Ohio Media Project members access to and the ability to host *Your Voice Ohio* content on their own platforms.
- Allow members the freedom to edit OMP content (articles, videos, etc.) without materially altering the content to fit each’s unique organizational needs.
- Produce and deliver content on a regular basis to maintain a consistent brand identity.

Financial Responsibility

Participation in the Ohio Media Project does not necessitate any financial obligations among members. Partners will seek grant and other funding to support activities directly related to the collaborative.

Branding

This collaborative effort should be referred to publicly as “*Your Voice Ohio*.” The constituent members constitute the Ohio Media Project. Suggested language for promotion is “*Your Voice Ohio*” and/or “*Your Voice Ohio*, an initiative of (your news outlet) and the Ohio Media Project.” *Your Voice Ohio* is a nonpartisan effort to produce more relevant, powerful journalism based on the needs and ambitions of Ohioans and Ohio communities.

Guiding Principles

Our work is informed by the following principles:

- *Truth to Empower*
 - We believe power resides with the people, particularly when they're informed.
 - We will provide the information Ohioans need to help our audiences and communities make informed decisions, hold public officials and others accountable, and solve problems in their communities.
 - Our journalism will be based on authentic sources, keen editing, and strong fact-checking.
- *Engaged*
 - We will actively engage and listen to our audiences and communities.
 - We will ask and empower citizens to participate in local journalism.
- *Inclusive*
 - We will work to better engage and support people of color, LGBTQ Ohioans, immigrants, rural Ohioans, and others traditionally left out of dominant narratives and storytelling.
 - We will source information and produce journalism that reflects multiple, diverse perspectives.
 - We will assist underserved Ohioans in becoming stronger participants in the news process.
- *Transparent*
 - We will be clear about our roles and missions in our communities.
 - We will clearly explain our processes, approaches to journalism, and how we make decisions.
- *Accountable*
 - Our work will lead to clear impacts in our communities on behalf of our communities.
 - We will evaluate our work to ensure we're having a positive impact in our communities.
- *Relevant*
 - We will refine and tailor coverage to fit the specific needs of our audiences and communities.
 - We will produce stories through the eyes and with the voices of diverse Ohioans so that more Ohioans see themselves in the news.
- *Flexible*
 - We will respond to new challenges and opportunities as they emerge, while remaining faithful to our principles.
- *Collaborative*
 - We will seek opportunities to share our talents and resources to better serve Ohioans.