

2026 NETA Conference

2026 Accepted Breakout Sessions

Pre-Conference Sessions

Don't Waste a Crisis: Fundraising Strategy for a Shifting Landscape

The funding landscape for public media has shifted dramatically. Federal uncertainty, technological disruption, generational change, and evolving donor expectations aren't coming: they're here. Whether you work in education, content, community engagement, or station leadership, the future of your organization's funding is part of your story too. The good news? This moment is an opportunity, if you move with intention. This working session is designed for public media professionals who know something has to change but aren't sure where to start and what their role should be. You'll assess where your station actually stands, identify where your energy will have the most impact from whatever seat you sit in, and leave with a concrete plan for the conversations that need to happen next, with internal and external communities.

Learning Objectives:

1. Assess your station's current fundraising readiness across key dimensions (resources, culture, infrastructure, and leadership posture) and identify your highest-impact opportunities.
2. Define your role in your station's fundraising future from your specific position, whether you lead, manage, or influence, without overstepping into your development team's lane.
3. Leave with a concrete action plan for the conversations that need to happen next, with internal teams and external communities, to position your station to thrive in a shifting funding landscape.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Bring a general sense of your station's current funding mix and your own role in donor or community relationships.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This session is designed for public media professionals at any station size or license type who are navigating funding uncertainty and want to move strategically. Education staff, content managers, community engagement leads, and station leadership will all find relevant tools and discussion. University licensees facing dual pressures from both institutional and public media funding shifts may find this particularly timely.

Tracks:

Finance, Marketing & Communications, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Alice Ferris, GoalBusters Consulting
2. Jim Anderson, GoalBusters Consulting

Organizational Evolution and Elevating Strategic Thinking

for public media professionals, drawing exclusively from the principles of leadership and organizational transformation based upon more than 30 years of experience in and from one of the world's largest and most complex organizations, the US Department of Defense.

The landscape for public media is currently a time of super stress and chaotic challenge.

Leadership is tested most in times of transition and transformation. Whether you lead a department or an entire station, this moment is a clean sheet and an open field in which to run if you move with advanced alacrity. This working session is designed for senior leaders who recognize that the old ways of operating are no longer sufficient and want to shift toward a mindset that is long-term, iterative, and real-time.

You will learn to distinguish between mere activity and purposeful direction, assess your organization through the lens of initiating structure, and leave with a top view roadmap to navigate the strategic horizon.

Learning Objectives:

1. **Assess Organizational Readiness:** Evaluate your station's posture by "initiating structure"—reading, researching, and relating to data and details—to move past "flying by the seat of your pants."
2. **Elevate Strategic Horizons:** Learn to balance the "Close Fight" (urgent tasks due in 5–7 days) with the "Strategic Horizon" (longitudinal thinking for projects 30 days to 12 months out).
3. **Define Your Role in the Inverted Pyramid:** Adopt a leadership posture where your primary responsibility is to make everyone else in the organization successful by providing authority and intention.
4. **Draft an Action Plan:** Leave with a concrete top view roadmap—a summary of strategic goals to share with stakeholders to invite feedback and course corrections to meet milestones and requirements.

Target Audience: Public media senior leaders and professionals (Education, Content, Community Engagement, and Leadership) navigating a shifting landscape who want to *outthink, outpace, and outmaneuver* the challenges of the current landscape.

Speaker:

1. Shawn W. Campbell, Brigadier General, US Air Force (Retired)

60-Minute Sessions

Aging or Growing? A Diagnostic for Stations That Want to Survive the Next Decade

Every organization sits somewhere on a lifecycle, and the symptoms of aging are hardest to see from the inside. Risk-taking quietly becomes risk-avoidance. Internal politics start outranking community service.

This working session hands leaders an honest mirror: using organizational lifecycle frameworks and Greater Public's Hierarchy of Audience & Donor Needs, you'll run a guided self-diagnosis to locate where your station actually stands — not where the strategic plan says it does.

Then we'll map the route from survival mode to a station that models the future and co-creates it with its community. You'll leave knowing your station's real age, and the first move to reverse it.

Learning Objectives:

1. Apply the Adizes Lifecycle methodology to different functions within a station (i.e. People, Operations, Governance, Product)
2. Utilize Greater Public's Hierarchy of Audience & Donor identify areas where the station's process or politics do not align with the needs of the community.
3. Form a community of others through discussion to help brainstorm actions that can get your organization moving forward.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Nothing!

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

The Organizational Life Cycle Framework applies to organizations of all sizes, though driving change can be harder in very large ones.

Tracks:

Finance, Human Resources, Professional Growth & Station Innovation, Radio

Speakers:

1. Andrew Leitch, Greater Public

Best Practices in Production Management and Rights & Clearances”

With budgets shrinking and institutional knowledge walking out the door in the current climate of severe belt-tightening, it's getting increasingly difficult for public media companies and the independent producers who partner with them to produce high quality content. How can you adequately account for responsibilities like production management or rights and clearances when the folks who did those jobs for you were laid off? Well, you're in luck. Join production management expert Ria Gazdar and rights and clearances expert Joe Basile -- who collectively have half a century of experience working with and for media companies to get the most out of the production process -- for a presentation outlining some best practices for PM and R&C that will help your organization do more with less.

Learning Objectives:

1. The importance of communication at all stages of the production process, from kickoff meeting to post-production, so the entire team is on the same page.
2. Identifying a few key deliverables/documents that memorialize valuable information while also comprehensively tracking rights, all of which helps to generate interest in, and ancillary distribution for, the finished production.
3. Making prudent, cost-saving decisions about the use of archival material by negotiating bulk agreements with established vendors and/or targeting free or low-cost providers.
4. Passing along some best practices gleaned from years of experience working with Legal when it comes to releases, fair use and third-party clearances.
5. Guidelines on creating and maintaining accurate production budgets, including maintaining systems to monitor and track actuals against the budget, thereby flagging variances.
6. Generating regular cost reports to support decision-making, project oversight and assistance with cash flow forecasting and funding requests for ongoing productions.

Tracks: content, station innovation

Speakers:

1. Ria Gazdar, NETA
2. Joe Basile, NETA Consulting, Joseph T. Basile LLC

Built to Adapt

Public media stations cannot afford to operate in “waiting mode.” As budgets tighten and staffing capacity shifts, the challenge is no longer simply doing more with less, it is learning how to operate differently at lower resource levels, without sacrificing mission impact or staff sustainability.

In this breakout session, WKAR Public Media will share a practical case study of how we redesigned our operating approach after significant capacity shifts.

WKAR will also share a Change Transformation Wheel that emerged as a practical sense-making tool during this period. The wheel became a way to name and organize iterative change already underway, identify what steps were missing, and create a repeatable approach to future redesign.

Participants will learn to apply this wheel and a set of practical tools to diagnose challenges at their own station.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify practical tools and frameworks for leading organizational change within public media environments facing financial and operational disruption.
2. Evaluate existing workflows, staffing models, and content strategies through exercises focused on effort, impact, sustainability, and audience alignment.
3. Apply the Change Transformation Wheel to develop actionable strategies for restructuring teams, refining workflows, and building long-term organizational adaptability.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

This session is designed to be highly practical and interactive. While we will walk through WKAR’s experience navigating significant organizational change following funding losses and staffing reductions, the session is ultimately focused on helping attendees think through challenges within their own organizations. Attendees will leave with frameworks, templates, and exercises they can adapt for their stations, including tools related to strategic planning, workflow redesign, organizational restructuring, and change management. No prior expertise in organizational development or change management is required — just a willingness to rethink traditional approaches and engage in collaborative discussion.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This is specifically designed for any station, but I do think small stations or those facing stronger funding or resource challenges would most benefit.

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Yes

Tracks: Human Resources

Speakers:

1. Ashlee Smith, WKAR

Convening Connection: Leveraging Your Station Headquarters for Maximum Community Connection

You have a new space, not sure what to do with it? Have an existing community space that you think could serve your station and community more?

How do you move beyond viewing your headquarters as a workplace and instead activate it as a community asset?

And how do you invite people in if they've historically felt public media exists "outside" of their lived experience?

Drawing from the experience of WOSU Public Media's Ross Community Studio in Columbus, Ohio, session explores how public media stations can transform their physical spaces into hubs for connection, creativity, and revenue generation. Participants will learn how purpose-built, flexible media space can simultaneously advance mission, deepen community trust, and create sustainable income streams. Demonstrating how community access and financial sustainability can coexist.

Learning Objectives:

1. How your station can become a destination, not just a distributor
2. Reducing barriers to authentic community partnership and long-term relationships.
3. Rental pricing and operational models for success

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

WOSU opened a rental and community engagement space in 2022. This session will focus on learnings so far and invite others to consider the applicable ways they can redefine their HQ to create welcoming space for their audiences, whether or not rentals are part of the current or future equation.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Any station positioned to invite the community into their HQ.

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Marketing & Communications, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Sarah Sykes, WOSU Public Media
2. George Davis III, WOSU Public Media

Doing More with Less: Turning Grants Into Community Impact

PBS Wisconsin's Community Engagement and Video Promotions teams have grown a beautiful collaboration that allows both teams to expand their work – while maximizing budgets! At a time when public media stations are being asked to do more with fewer resources, grant-funded work offers a mission-aligned way to deepen community trust, extend impact, and get creative with content. This interactive session shares practical frameworks for finding the right grants, building authentic community partnerships, and turning funding into lasting, multiplatform work through real examples and peer exchange.

Learning Objectives:

1. Cross-departmental collaboration
2. How to maximize your budget
3. Short length format storytelling

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

We plan to create a collaborative session, please feel comfortable sharing ideas and/or brainstorming with us!

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Stations who would like to deepen community relationships and get creative with content.

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Content, Marketing & Communications, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Heather A. Reese, creative manager, PBS Wisconsin
2. Dulce Vlisidesm, PBS Wisconsin

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the FCC (But Were Afraid to Ask!)

As we roll into the upcoming FCC license renewal cycle, and as FCC Chairman Carr seems to have broadcasters in the crosshairs, this session will guide participants through key FCC regulations affecting radio and TV stations, including Public Inspection Files, EEO reporting, and ownership rules. Learn enforcement priorities, avoid common violations, and implement effective compliance strategies to ensure your station operates within legal requirements and stays current with regulatory changes.

Learning Objectives:

1. Keep current on FCC obligations
2. Prepare for the upcoming FCC license renewal cycle
3. Ask questions of an FCC attorney

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

No prior knowledge needed.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

All licensees.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

N/A

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

No

Learning Tracks:

Professional Growth & Station Innovation, Radio

Speakers:

1. Brad Deutsch, Foster Garvey P.C

From Broadcast to Browser: Reinventing the Daily Talk Show for YouTube

This roundtable explores how Hello Houston was conceived as a digital-first, daily two-hour livestream on YouTube (that also airs on radio), and why PBS stations can no longer treat digital video as secondary. Attendees will get a candid case study on the strategic decisions behind launching the show, the marketing and audience-building approach, and the editorial workflows required to publish daily content at scale. Audience members will leave with concrete, replicable strategies to launch, adapt, or strengthen livestreamed programming that grows audience and extends public media's reach.

Learning Objectives:

1. A practical framework for launching a digital-first show: How to make the strategic case internally, design a format that works for YouTube and other platforms, and align it with station goals.
2. Audience growth and launch strategy: Lessons learned from positioning, promotion, and iterating on a daily show to build consistent live and on-demand viewership.
3. A sustainable content playbook: How to plan daily segments, manage editorial workflows, and efficiently publish livestreams and clips to drive ongoing engagement and growth.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

This is an interactive session with a moderated roundtable discussion and questions and answers from the audience guiding the discussion

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Stations of all sizes can apply lessons from this presentation.

Tracks:

Content, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Mark Norris, Houston Public Media
2. Josh Adams, Houston Public Media
3. Kyle Claude, Houston Public Media
4. Laurie Ramirez, Houston Public Media

From Classrooms to Communities: Meeting the Digital Wellness Moment

From classroom cell phone bans to increased accountability for social media platforms, how can stations be a player in this digital wellness moment? In this session, explore how stations are uniquely positioned to leverage their trusted brand, educational mission and local partnerships to help audiences navigate unprecedented challenges related to media consumption, misinformation, social media behaviors and the rise of artificial intelligence in everyday life.

You will hear how your PTV colleagues are innovating to meet the moment by expanding their mission to foster media literacy skills across age bands and making digital wellness a cornerstone of their work. Discover how this critical focus can move beyond schools and becomes a station-wide strategy serving a broader community need.

Fellow stations are successfully developing programs and resources that you can use to begin a program at your station, or build on existing initiatives in early childhood, K-12 professional development or youth voice.

This session will include a fun collaborative think tank bringing together ideas, experiences and practical strategies to level up digital well-being initiatives across the age spectrum.

Learning Objectives:

1. Leave with at least one concrete next step for piloting, strengthening or scaling a digital wellness initiative within their station or local community.
2. Collaborate with peers to surface shared challenges, promising practices and partnership opportunities related to digital wellness and media literacy work.
3. Gather the latest resources from successful programs for early learning, K-12 professional development, and youth voice

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Be aware if your state or community has cellphone bans, media literacy or AI literacy actions or legislation as a reference point.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Any size station could benefit.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Yes

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Maybe

Learning Tracks:

Education

Speakers:

1. Betsy Peisach, Maryland Public Television
2. Almetria Vaba, KQED
3. Krista Respass, Maryland Public Television

From Outreach to Infrastructure: Reimagining Community Engagement in Public Media

Community engagement has evolved from outreach and events into a strategic, cross-departmental practice that strengthens relevance, trust, and sustainability across public media organizations.

This interactive session introduces the Community Engagement Learning Path (CELP) and the Capacity Continuum, including frameworks designed to help stations align listening, content, partnerships, distribution, and evaluation around community priorities.

Participants will explore how engagement can function as an organizational infrastructure rather than a standalone initiative. Through guided reflection and interactive activities designed for both in-person and virtual attendees, participants will assess their station's current engagement approach, identify opportunities for growth, and leave with actionable strategies they can apply immediately.

Ideal for leaders and staff across content, education, development, marketing, and engagement teams.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how community engagement has evolved in public media and why it is increasingly essential to station relevance and sustainability
2. Explore the Public Media Model for Engagement and the Capacity Continuum as practical planning and assessment tools
3. Leave with actionable tools and strategies that can support alignment, planning, and long-term community impact

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

No prior knowledge of the Community Engagement Learning Path is required. Attendees are encouraged to come prepared to reflect on a current initiative, partnership, or engagement challenge from their station that they can apply during the interactive portions of the session.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This session is designed for public media professionals across departments, including: Community Engagement, Education, Content & Programming, Development, Marketing & Communications, Station Leadership. The session is intentionally scalable for stations of all sizes and engagement maturity levels, including small stations, joint licensees, and university licensees.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

No

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Yes

Learning Tracks:

Community Engagement

Speakers:

1. Dani Iannelli, PBS
2. Laura Dick, PBS
3. Susan Mitchell, New Mexico PBS

Future Forward: The Next Gen Wave of Public Media

Public media excels reaching young kids through PBS KIDS and older audiences through documentaries, dramas, and news programming. But somewhere along the way, we lose a generation.

Many viewers grow up with public media, then drift away during their teen and young adult years before possibly returning later in life. One of our biggest struggle and question in public media is, how do we keep that connection going? How do we create content and experiences that speak to younger audiences where they are now?

In this session, South Carolina ETV shares ideas, experiences, and real examples of what it looks like to engage the “missing middle” audience through digital content, creative storytelling, and youth participation.

Drawing from NextLens an Online Film Festival that showcases work from high school and college filmmakers and artists, the presentation explores how giving young people a platform to create and share stories can build stronger connections with public media. The session will also look at digital series designed for younger audiences (Emerging, What’s Wild, Curiosity Trek) and how some of that content is being used in classrooms and educational settings.

This conversation is about more than just attracting younger viewers. It’s about making public media feel relevant, welcoming, and connected to the next generation of storytellers, creators, and audiences.

Learning Objectives:

1. Building authentic connections with Gen Z and young adult audiences
2. Creating educational partnerships and curriculum integration through digital content
3. Creating pathways for youth participation in public media through Community Engagement

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

The session focuses on the “missing middle” audience. The age group that often disconnects from public media after childhood PBS KIDS engagement and before returning later in adulthood.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Educators, producers, station staff, storytellers, and community engagement professionals interested in audience development and youth connection.

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Content, Education, Marketing & Communications, Professional Growth & Station Innovation, Youth Media

Speakers:

1. Chris Olivas, South Carolina ETV
2. Andrew Davis, South Carolina ETV

Inside the Box: How PBS Educators Are Reimagining Learning with Standards-Aligned Learning Kits

PBS stations are uniquely positioned to meet growing out-of-school learning needs. As trusted educational partners with access to high-quality content and strong community relationships, we have an opportunity to expand our impact in new and scalable ways.

This session highlights a proven solution designed for the PBS system: standards-aligned, ready-to-use learning kits that can be developed once, shared broadly, and adapted locally by stations nationwide. Built around trusted PBS KIDS content and resources from PBS LearningMedia, these turnkey kits equip schools, libraries, camps, and community organizations to deliver engaging, hands-on learning experiences with confidence—providing all necessary materials, lesson guides, and implementation support in one package.

Together, we will explore how these replicable kits can be created, adapted, and shared across the public media system to reduce duplication, accelerate innovation, and expand community impact. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and a collaborative framework for developing, scaling, and exchanging kit-based learning initiatives that strengthen educator and library partnerships and extend the reach of PBS education in their communities.

Learning Objectives:

1. Explore how PBS stations can meet out-of-school learning needs with ready-to-use, standards-aligned, learning kits that can be shared system-wide and adapted locally.
2. Identify the essential components of effective learning kits and explore a shared-resource framework to increase system-wide efficiency, innovation, and impact.
3. Gain practical strategies and actionable ideas to expand educational impact, deepen community partnerships, and deliver scalable learning experiences in local markets.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Bring curiosity about scalable, shared-resource models and willingness to think collaboratively across the PBS system.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Small or large PBS stations and anyone in public media who prioritizes community, event, or educational engagement.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Yes

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Maybe

Learning Tracks:

Community Engagement, Education

Speakers:

1. Diane Kroplin, ThinkTV
2. Deb Tschirhart, Public Media Connect - ThinkTV | CET
3. Lisa Sensale Yazdian, Public Media Connect - ThinkTV | CET

Mergers, Acquisitions, and Operating Agreements: Lessons Learned from Northeast Ohio

Ideastream Public Media was formed in 2003 through the merger of WCPN-FM and WVIZ-TV, creating one of the first joint licensee organizations in the country to better serve Northeast Ohio with public radio and television service. Since then, Ideastream has successfully acquired a classical music radio station and executed two Public Service Operating Agreements with university-licensees in Northeast Ohio.

In this session, Ideastream leaders will share lessons learned from two decades of mergers, acquisitions, and operating agreements. Session leaders will explain the options available to stations seeking to collaborate and expand, discuss financial and human resources implications of consolidation, and discuss the future of public media consolidation.

Learning Objectives:

1. Learn from one station's experience implementing successful mergers, acquisitions, and operating agreements.
2. Explore the financial models available to stations seeking to reduce costs and preserve or expand service through consolidation.
3. Learn how to create a positive employee culture and integrate compensation and benefits structures through consolidation.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Public Media is changing and entering a period of innovation, collaboration and potential consolidation. This session will share real-world examples of mergers, acquisitions and operating agreements and talk about the Financial and HR implications and lessons learned.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Any station or organization looking to collaborate and potentially consolidate with another station or licensee.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Yes

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Yes

Learning Tracks:

Finance, Human Resources

Speakers:

1. Faith Noble, Ideastream Public Media

Mission in Motion: Leading People Through Change in Public Media

Public media has always adapted to meet the changing needs of communities. Today's challenges require thoughtful leadership and intentional people strategies. While disruption is unavoidable, how supervisors/managers/HR respond can strengthen trust, build culture, and foster organizational resilience.

This interactive session provides practical frameworks and tools that HR professionals and organizational leaders/managers can use to lead confidently through disruption while positioning their organizations for long-term success. Focus areas will include communication, change management, employee support, workforce planning, organizational resilience, and culture strengthening.

Learning Objectives:

1. Apply practical change management strategies to lead employees through organizational disruption.
2. Identify workforce planning and organizational resilience practices that strengthen culture and prepare organizations for future challenges.
3. Develop an action plan that fosters trust, supports employee well-being, and advances the mission during periods of change.

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Yes

Learning Tracks:

Human Resources

Speakers:

1. Sonja Pasquantonio, Connecticut Public

One Workplace, Multiple Generations: Now What?

This engaging and interactive session explores the realities of today's multigenerational workplace, from Baby Boomers and Generation X to Millennials and Generation Z. Participants will take a closer look at how each generation's experiences have shaped the way they communicate, collaborate, lead, and approach work. Through audience participation and practical case studies tailored to public media organizations, attendees will uncover both the challenges and strengths that come with generational diversity. The session will provide actionable strategies for turning generational differences into opportunities that strengthen teamwork, improve communication, spark innovation, and create a more connected and effective workplace culture.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the defining characteristics, workplace values, motivations, and communication styles of the major generations represented in today's workforce.
2. Examine how generational experiences influence approaches to collaboration, leadership, and workplace expectations within public media organizations.
3. Apply practical strategies to leverage generational differences in ways that strengthen communication, foster collaboration, and create a more inclusive and effective workplace culture.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

N/A

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Open to all station types

Tracks:

Human Resources, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Dani Iannelli, PBS
2. Paula Garcia, PBS

Policy of Trust: Why It's Time to Rewrite Your Station's AI Policy

Public media is undergoing a profound transformation. In the past, our digital workflows were predictable. In the present, generative and agentic AI tools have rapidly infiltrated our stations, offering incredible efficiencies but also introducing unprecedented risks to our journalistic integrity, financial resources, and the environment. To secure our future, public media organizations must transition from ad-hoc AI experimentation to strategic, mission-aligned governance.

This interactive session explores why your first generation AI policy is no longer enough. Drawing on recent efforts to build a comprehensive, public-facing AI policy, this session will guide attendees through the necessary evolution of AI guidelines. We will discuss how to establish firm editorial "red lines," manage the hidden financial and environmental costs of AI deployment, protect your station's intellectual property, and leave opportunities for digital discovery in an era where AI now a layer between creation and consumption. This session will provide a roadmap for transforming your AI policy into a tool for transparency, sustainability, and public education.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the core components of a modern AI policy
2. Explore rules around when and how to disclose AI use
3. Understand how to mitigate the hidden impacts of AI

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

The best offense is a good defense, and a good defense in the age of AI is an intentional policy.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Anyone with oversight of policy and/or station governance.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

N/A

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

No

Learning Tracks:

Finance, Human Resources

Speakers:

1. Peter Clowney, Nebraska Public Media

Reimagining the Archive: Transforming Documentary Films into Short-Form Educational Content

The session shows how Vision Maker Media (VMM) transformed a long-form documentary archive into primary-source modules that support state-mandated social studies standards and inquiry-based learning by creating short, curricular-friendly digital episodes designed for children and classrooms. The session serves as a marriage between good pedagogical approaches for teaching social studies and the creation of short student-friendly videos. The pedagogical framework driving this session is built on inquiry-based learning, and demonstrates how digital-first strategies like short-form chunking can revitalize archives for modern classroom environments. The session explores how public media stations could use this model to expand educational outreach, strengthen community partnership, and engage younger audiences on digital platforms.

Public media has a unique mandate and responsibility to serve the entire community by highlighting the specific histories of their region and viewers. The session explores how VMM repurposed its film archive into short episodes to tell cohesive stories, introducing elementary students to Native history, heritage, and contemporary experiences while employing basic tenets of sound instruction.

Participants will be asked to consider how they can develop a similar model for community-centered programming that leverages station assets and ensures historical authenticity while connecting with underserved rural and regional audiences. Participants will brainstorm a plan so their stations can leverage this model to expand their educational offerings, engage younger audiences online, and build relationships with educators and communities. Presenters will also share insights from YouTube analytics, audience engagement strategies, and cross-promotional opportunities for stations.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will know the most effective pedagogy to promote real learning in social studies.
2. Participants will understand how to employ those learning strategies in short form videos.
3. Participants will be able to use YouTube analytics to make evidence-based decisions regarding their current or future videos.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Real learning is the result of positive changes to long-term memory. As such, educators and producers of educational content, should be familiar with the Three-Box Memory Model and structure educational decisions around this framework.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Producers of educational content. It could apply to stations of any size, but those with their own content would benefit the most.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

We did not receive any specific funding for our project.

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?
No

Learning Tracks:
Community Engagement, Content, Education

Speakers:
1. Patrick O'Meara, Vision Maker Media

Rethinking Performance Reviews: Evaluating Their Value and Exploring Better Approaches

Performance reviews have long been a cornerstone of employee development and organizational accountability, yet HR leaders are increasingly beginning to question whether traditional review processes still deliver meaningful value. This session will explore the benefits and limitations of current practices and discuss alternative approaches that may better support employee growth, engagement, and organizational success. Through discussion and practical examples, attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how to assess their existing process and determine whether a different approach may better meet the needs of their organization.

Learning Objectives:

1. Evaluate the intended purpose of performance reviews and assess whether current practices effectively support employee development, accountability, and organizational goals.
2. Assess the impact of various performance management methods on employee engagement, performance, and culture.
3. Examine emerging performance management approaches that may enable participants to enhance or redesign their organization's approach.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

This is an interactive session that encourages attendees to move beyond traditional approaches to the performance review process and explore emerging strategies to increase employee engagement, alignment with strategic objectives, and enhancing overall culture.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

HR professionals, organizational leaders

Tracks:

Human Resources

Speakers:

1. Kate Midgett, Nine PBS

Small Teams, Big Demands: The CALM Playbook for Leading Through Change

Public media professionals are being asked to do more than ever before—often with limited resources, growing expectations, and increasingly complex stakeholder groups. Whether leading productions, digital initiatives, fundraising campaigns, educational programs, community engagement efforts, or station-wide projects, success depends on the ability to navigate competing priorities while keeping teams aligned and moving forward.

This interactive panel brings together leaders from across public media to explore how they create clarity, build trust, align stakeholders, and maintain momentum during periods of growth, change, and uncertainty. Using the CALM Framework (Clarity, Alignment, Lead with Trust, Momentum) as a guide, panelists will share real-world examples, lessons learned, and practical approaches for leading cross-functional work when resources are stretched and priorities compete.

Attendees will leave with actionable strategies for building alignment across departments, strengthening collaboration, reducing friction, and leading through change—regardless of station size or organizational structure.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify common barriers to cross-department collaboration and organizational alignment
2. Explore practical leadership approaches for navigating competing priorities and limited resources
3. Learn strategies for building trust and influence across teams without direct authority
4. Develop tools for maintaining momentum during periods of organizational change
5. Gain insights from leaders representing different public media roles, organizations, and station sizes

Audience:

Managers, producers, project managers, department leaders, emerging leaders, and anyone responsible for coordinating work across multiple teams or stakeholder groups.

Who Benefits Most:

Especially valuable for small and mid-sized stations where staff frequently wear multiple hats and cross-functional collaboration is essential to success, while remaining applicable to organizations of all sizes.

Format:

Panel Discussion + Audience Q&A

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

This session is designed for professionals who regularly work across departments, manage competing priorities, and lead projects through influence rather than direct authority.

Attendees should expect an interactive discussion focused on practical leadership strategies, real-world examples, and actionable takeaways that can be applied immediately within their own organizations.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Public media organizations are navigating increasing demands with limited resources, requiring leaders at every level to build alignment, foster collaboration, and drive results across departments. This session combines leadership principles with practical experiences from public media professionals working in content, operations, marketing, community engagement, and organizational leadership roles. Attendees will leave with strategies that can be adapted regardless of station size or organizational structure.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Yes

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Yes

Learning Tracks:

Human Resources, Marketing & Communications, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Stephanie Dale, Austin PBS

Social Media: Breaking New Ground, Making New Models, Reaching New Audiences

Social video remains an explosive area of growth for public media, but many stations continue to struggle with articulating the value and power of quick, phone-based production techniques to create meaningful content. Since 2022, the CPB-funded American Graduate: Jobs Explained initiative has provided tools and resources to 25 stations in communities across the country that have disrupted traditional workflows, built new production models, and demonstrably reached new audiences. This session will provide an overview of the digital transformation occurring at stations across the system, as well as how stations can leverage social media as a pathway to local funding and community impact in a post-CPB world.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will understand how social video can change traditional public media production models.
2. Participants will understand how social video can provide data and audience insights which can be responded to in real time.
3. Participants will understand how social video can be leveraged with local organizations and funders to support station sustainability.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Social video is the wave of the future that's already crashed on us.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

All stations, in particular those that want to embrace new audiences and create new models for production.

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Content, Education

Speakers:

1. Christopher Czajka, The WNET Group
2. Additional Station Representative(s), TBD
3. Kerry Edelstein, Research Narrative
4. Tarana Parekh, American Graduate: Jobs Explained, WNET

Speed Learning, Speed Networking: A Content PLC Exchange

What if you could leave a conference session with a dozen new contacts, half a dozen new ideas, and a clearer understanding of what your peers are doing across the system?

This highly interactive networking session combines the energy of speed dating with the practical value of peer learning.

Participants will rotate through a series of facilitated conversations focused on content, audience engagement, community partnerships, digital innovation, collaboration, and other emerging challenges facing public media stations.

Rather than sitting through presentations, attendees will share successes, lessons learned, questions, and ideas in rapid-fire exchanges designed to maximize both learning and connection. Along the way, participants will discover new approaches they can adapt at their own stations while building relationships with colleagues who share similar interests and challenges.

Whether you're looking for a solution to a current problem, a new collaborator, or simply inspiration from across the public media system, this session offers a fun and engaging way to tap into the collective knowledge of your peers.

NOTE: Make sure to fill out your profile on Pheeploop. Through the session you will be connecting with other station folks through the Conference App!

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify practical ideas and strategies from peer stations that can be adapted to their own content, engagement, or operational goals.
2. Expand their professional network by building meaningful connections with colleagues across public media who share similar interests, challenges, and areas of expertise.
3. Discover opportunities for future collaboration by identifying common priorities, complementary strengths, and shared challenges across stations.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

This is not a traditional presentation—it's an interactive experience. Attendees should come prepared to participate, share ideas, ask questions, and make new connections.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This session is designed for public media professionals who are looking to learn from peers, expand their network, and discover practical ideas they can bring back to their stations.

Content leaders, programmers, journalists, digital strategists, audience engagement professionals, marketing and membership staff, education teams, and station managers will all find value in the conversation.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

N/A

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Maybe

Learning Tracks:
Content, Radio, Youth Media

Speakers:

1. Tabitha Safdi, SCETV
2. Ashlee Smith, WKAR

State Of Fundraising

Join CDP for a deep dive into fundraising performance across public media as we explore the National Reference File (NRF), the largest collection of station fundraising data, to gain valuable insight into fundraising trends, changing file demographics and donor behavior. In a year that has seen significant upheaval to the public media funding model, we'll shine a light on the wave of new donors acquired across the system in 2025, looking closely at their subsequent giving behavior, engagement and early retention numbers. Participants will leave with an up-to-date readout of the fundraising landscape in public media and practical advice on steps they can take to improve results in their own programs.

Learning Objectives:

1. A keen sense of current fundraising trends impacting local stations
2. First year "crisis" donor behavior and giving insights
3. Best practices and tactics to be employed by every station

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

This session will provide analysis of the most current data available providing timely insight into post-recession fundraising trends.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This is applicable to stations of all sizes and types, relevant to station leaders and development/fundraising personnel.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Sure

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

No

Learning Tracks:

Community Engagement, Finance, Marketing & Communications, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Deb Ashmore, CDP
2. Darren Winckel, CDP

Stop Being Gross: Building Donor Journeys That Improve Net Revenue

Nonprofit teams often make decisions based on what looks best in a single channel report. The problem is that donors do not behave in channels. They move through experiences.

An email can “win” while the full effort loses once you account for staff time, creative load and downstream impact. A campaign can look strong on short term revenue while weakening retention. And when multiple teams contribute across mail, email, web and on air, attribution can reward the loudest touchpoint instead of the most effective system.

This session focuses on a practical operating model for measuring and improving fundraising performance using a donor journey lens, with an emphasis on net value. We’ll walk through a straightforward framework for:

*Defining what “net” means for your organization (time, cost, and value over time)
Using segmentation and predictive indicators to prioritize the right audiences and moments
Designing a testing cadence that improves results without overwhelming the team
Using peer benchmarking responsibly to learn faster, validate choices and avoid chasing noise*

You’ll leave with a small set of templates and decision rules you can use immediately, even if your data and staffing are imperfect.

Learning Objectives:

1. Define a net value scorecard that accounts for effort, cost, and value over time
2. Measure performance as a journey, not isolated channel results
3. Prioritize high impact opportunities using segmentation and risk indicators

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

No data team or specific platform required. This planning will function with imperfect data and real staffing limits.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Anyone who owns fundraising results across multiple channels, at any station size. Especially useful for small and mid-size stations with lean teams and limited analytics.

Tracks:

Marketing & Communications, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Frank Auer, CDP

Symphony in a Suitcase: Exploring European Sounds, History, and Culture with Rick Steves, The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and Public Media Connect

Rick Steves' Europe: A Symphonic Journey weaves together imagery, storytelling, and Romantic-era pieces to take viewers on a tour of 19th century Europe. The special premiered April 1, 2025, but the collaboration that made this project possible continued.

This session describes how the education team at Public Media Connect worked with Rick Steves and The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra to create a dynamic, standards-aligned curriculum to make the content and concepts highlighted in the Symphonic Journey accessible and engaging to students in grades 3-12.

We'll explain how responsibilities were divided to create over 30 curriculum and professional development videos and a learning guide. We'll also dive into the key components of the curriculum: The Orchestra and its Families, Romanticism, Nationalism, the structure of our country overviews (Almanac, Sounds, Sights, and Things to Do), and the array of Supplemental Materials created to deepen understanding.

Learning Objectives:

1. Formulate an understanding of how partnerships operate to create sustainable structures for addressing educational outcomes.
2. Identify opportunities for actively engaging students around music, history, and culture.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

N/A

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Stations with the capacity to design educational material and leverage partnerships and those looking for content to share with educators.

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Education

Speakers:

1. Lisa Sensale Yazdian, Public Media Connect - ThinkTV | CET
2. Colin Scianamblo, CET
3. Diane Kroplin, ThinkTV
4. Kara Hutchinson, SOITA

You Used To Have To. Now You Don't. You Still Need To. Adopting and Implementing Governance and Operational Practices to Protect Your Station

As public media navigates its new world without Federal funding and CPB requirements, maintaining the trust of viewers and listeners is vital for continued station support. Viewers and listeners invest in local public media because they support and appreciate the services their local stations provide. Additionally, though, public media must be the “best practices” industry to maintain donors’ trust that their local stations will remain good stewards of hard-earned funds. To do this, these best practices must be centered around concepts that CPB previously required stations to implement, such as: transparency; financial stewardship and risk mitigation; good governance and objective operations; and community reflection, involvement and service.

This session will illustrate the basic steps a station should take to build and comply with internal practices and teach attendees about adopting and implementing policies and procedures that simultaneously maintain the public’s trust and fulfill business objectives.

Learning Objectives:

1. This session will teach attendees how to adopt and implement internal practices that promote good governance and protect station resources from waste, fraud and abuse.
2. Participants will learn about actions they can take to implement programs that promote compliance with best practices and protect their station.
3. Participants will hear answers to frequently asked compliance, good governance, and risk mitigation questions, including issues related to former CPB requirements.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

There are no prerequisites for this session, although a general knowledge of former CPB requirements and good governance/financial stewardship best practices will be helpful.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

All stations would benefit.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Not applicable although the presentation will address resource allocation in building the operational practices that will be discussed.

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Yes

Learning Tracks:

Finance, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Robert Winteringham, Public Media Consulting Group

Ziggy's Arts Adventure: Bringing Arts Education to Educators and Communities

What does local production with national distribution look like in the digital streaming post-CPB era? In this workshop, participants will discover how to leverage existing relationships with community partners and other affiliates to produce and distribute original content using cost-effective, scalable methods. Sharing their experience collaborating to produce and distribute Season 3 of the award-winning children's arts education series Ziggy's Arts Adventure, LPB, SCETV, and WKNO will provide insight into lessons learned, steps to replicate the process, and samples of all the materials developed to facilitate the necessary partnerships and programming with introductions from LPB President C.C. Copeland.

Learning Objectives:

1. Attendees can expect to learn how to partner with community organizations to bring digital and hands-on programming opportunities to diverse communities who would most benefit.
2. Attendees will learn how to organize and leverage multi-affiliate partnerships to create and distribute content
3. Attendees will learn how to structure programming and independent evaluation for immediate and long-term success

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Ziggy will be in attendance live to help discuss this grant-based learning opportunity provided by Louisiana Public Broadcasting that brought together SCETV, WKNO, and LPB to create and distribute original digital and in-person programming.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Any station or licensee would benefit from this session.

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Content, Education

Speakers:

1. Elizabeth Foos, Louisiana Public Broadcasting, Foos for Thought
2. Felicia Peat, WKNO
3. Roni Henderson, SCETV
4. Sabrina Jeffcoat, SCETV

90-Minute Sessions

Beyond Borders: What Public Media Can Learn from the World's Best Storytelling

Experience a taste of INPUT, one of the world's most respected gatherings for public media professionals. Unlike festivals, competitions, or markets, INPUT is built around a simple but powerful idea: great storytelling deserves thoughtful conversation.

In this interactive mini-INPUT session, participants will screen a standout program selected from INPUT 2026 and engage in a facilitated discussion modeled after the INPUT experience. Together, we'll explore the editorial choices, creative risks, ethical considerations, and audience impact behind the work while considering how its lessons can be applied in our own communities and organizations.

Whether you're a producer, journalist, digital creator, programmer, or station leader, this session offers a unique opportunity to step outside your daily workflow, gain fresh perspectives from global storytellers, and discover new approaches to public media content.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify creative, editorial, and production choices that contribute to compelling public media content.
2. Discuss emerging trends in public media storytelling and how they can be adapted within their own organizations.
3. Analyze how innovative storytelling techniques can strengthen audience engagement and public service impact.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

No prior knowledge of INPUT is required. Participants should come prepared to watch a thought-provoking public media program and engage in a facilitated discussion about storytelling, editorial decision-making, audience impact, and creative innovation. This session is designed to be interactive and reflective, offering attendees the opportunity to learn from an international perspective while considering practical applications for their own work.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This session is ideal for public media professionals who create, commission, curate, or support content, including producers, journalists, digital content creators, programmers, station leaders, educators, and independent filmmakers. Attendees who are interested in storytelling innovation, audience engagement, editorial excellence, and learning from international perspectives will find particular value in the discussion.

Tracks:

Content

Speakers:

1. Tabitha Safdi, South Carolina ETV

Beyond Broadcast: Building Trust, Telling Stories, and Convening Communities Through Public Media

Great public media doesn't begin with a camera: it begins with relationships.

Join three public media professionals representing local stations, independent filmmaking, and national content distribution as they share a practical framework for building trust, creating authentic community-centered stories, and extending impact far beyond the broadcast.

Through award-winning documentaries, community partnerships, educational initiatives, and public engagement strategies, attendees will discover how relationship-driven storytelling can strengthen audience trust, amplify underrepresented voices, and position public media as a catalyst for lasting community impact.

Whether you're producing content, leading community engagement, or growing audiences, you'll leave with practical ideas and replicable strategies to help your station move from relationships to stories, and from stories to meaningful community change.

Tracks: Content

Speakers:

1. Mario Novoa, Film Bliss Studio
2. Patrick O'Meara, Vision Maker Media
3. Lorena Aguayo-Marquez, WGVU

Beyond The Event: Building Strong Community Connection

As public media organizations work to build deeper relationships with children, caregivers, and their community, many are rethinking how educational content, community partnerships, and local initiatives can work together to create meaningful and lasting impact. As part of that shift, stations are increasingly exploring how to create opportunities for families to learn together, regardless of what those families may look like.

This session will explore the real-world evolution of projects connected to history, literacy, civic learning, and intergenerational engagement. Presenters will share lessons learned, unexpected challenges, and practical examples from initiatives that grew beyond their original scope. Attendees will discover strategies for designing scalable, cost-effective, mission-driven engagement experiences and leave with adaptable ideas for connecting content, partnerships, and community engagement efforts in their own markets.

Learning Objectives:

1. Attendees will explore how stations are rethinking family engagement experiences to encourage continued learning and deeper community connection across generations.
2. Attendees will examine ways educational content, community partnerships, and local engagement efforts can work together to support more connected and intentional family engagement strategies.
3. Attendees will leave with scalable and adaptable ideas, planning approaches, and real-world examples that can help strengthen educational engagement initiatives at stations of all sizes.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

No prior knowledge is required. This session is intended for anyone interested in family engagement, educational outreach, community partnerships, and audience development. Attendees should be willing to reflect on their own work and participate in collaborative discussion.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

All stations can benefit from this session. While examples may vary in scale, the focus is on adaptable engagement strategies that can be implemented by small, medium, and large stations alike.

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Maybe

Learning Tracks:

Community Engagement, Content, Education

Speakers:

1. Chris Doucette, WUCF
2. Dr. Arionna Ralleigh, Nine PBS

Don't Wait for the Next Great Program — Build It: How our Local Science Show Reached 3.8M Views and Became a Classroom Favorite

Ready to revolutionize your station's impact? Discover how Alabama Public Television and science content creator and educator Mister C joined forces to launch DIY Science Time — generating 3.8M views across platforms, including 1.1 million views on PBS LearningMedia. Unlock the secrets to co-producing, co-creating, and co-distributing content that reaches audiences, extends your brand, and forges powerful community connections.

Stations and creators are stronger together. This session explores how to leverage the credibility of public media and the engaged social followers of independent creators to reach broader, more diverse audiences.

Content staff will walk away with a clear understanding of the benefits of creator partnerships and the practical steps to creating content together. Education staff will discover how DIY Science Time became a classroom favorite— curriculum-aligned and teacher-approved. It's proof that the right creator partnership can produce content that serves your community on-air, online, and in the classroom.

Don't wait for the next great program to land in your lap — build it yourself with this lively, moderated panel session that will challenge and inspire you to rethink how to approach content creation. Come ready to participate! Through videos, quizzes, hands-on activities, and live science demonstrations, you'll get an inside look at our content creation process and walk away ready to make your own.

Whether you're in content, education, or community engagement — if you've ever thought "we should be making something like that," this session will show you how to make it happen.

Learning Objectives:

1. Learn how to build content creator partnerships — Identify station-driven topics, connect with the right content creators, and develop co-production strategies that expand capacity.
2. Amplify content— Learn about reaching audiences through broadcast & digital platforms using NETA distribution, PBS App, PBS LearningMedia and social media to maximize impact and grow your audience
3. Evaluate and grow— We will share our growth metrics to show the mutual value created by the partnership. Plus, hear Mister C's take on why working with PBS is a major opportunity for content creators!

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Come ready to think differently about content creation. Before attending, we encourage you to reflect on a few things: Who in your community is already creating content you wish your station was making? Think locally, statewide, and even nationally. What unique resources does your station offer that would make you an attractive partner to a creator — facilities, distribution, credibility, audience reach? Where are the content gaps in your community and programming lineup? What topics, voices, or formats are missing? What do you actually want to produce? Come with ideas, ambitions, and an open mind.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This session would benefit small stations, large stations and universities who are looking to find creative and efficient ways to produce media.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Yes

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Yes, Maybe

Learning Tracks:

Community Engagement, Content, Education

Speakers:

1. Heather Daniels-Whitson, Alabama Public Television
2. Heather Cornell, Mister C, LLC
3. Kevin Cornell, Mister C, LLC
4. Mary Latocha, Alabama Public Television

From Neighborhoods to Numbers: Community-Inspired Family Math Across Three States

Early math experiences really add up! They have the power to shape children's trajectories in school and life. This session will provide attendees with the opportunity to experience how an early math family engagement model can be adapted and transformed to meet their unique community needs along with the tools to get started tomorrow. Family Math is a research-based, bilingual program developed by PBS SoCal that builds math confidence, positivity, and knowledge. Attendees will hear from three stations – two community licensees and a statewide network – about how they innovatively implemented Family Math with families and educators across Southern California, Texas, and Alabama. Each station serves geographically and demographically diverse communities, providing recommendations for station implementation, scale, and impact nationwide. We will also share fundraising strategies and impact measurement to support program sustainability along with the full breadth of early math resources available to stations including the bilingual Peg + Cat Family and Community Learning Workshops.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will understand how early math experiences positively influence children's long-term educational and life outcomes and learn about the goals and structure of the program.
2. Participants will assess how an early math community model can be adapted for diverse communities and analyze implementation strategies used by community and statewide station licensees.
3. Participants will reflect on how this model can be scaled and sustained in various settings to support long-term community impact, including fundraising strategies.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Whether you have been working with families in your community for years or are just beginning your community engagement work, this session is for you. At a time when our system needs innovative thinking the most, join us to see how three stations did what local stations do best – taking a model and creatively transforming it to have local resonance and impact.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Our session would be most beneficial for stations that have on-the-ground community engagement initiatives for children and families or are looking to start similar programs. The presenters of this session are from different station types: community licensees and a statewide network, demonstrating that the takeaways from this session will be applicable to a wide range of station types. Stations of any size would benefit from the breakout session.

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Education

Speakers:

1. Rosemary Miller, PBS SoCal
2. Melissa Holloway, Austin PBS
3. Tiffany Armstrong, Alabama Public Television

In an AI World, Audience Trust is your Competitive Advantage

This interactive workshop explores how public media organizations can stay indispensable in an AI-saturated information landscape — not by adopting more AI tools, but by deepening community relationships and earning audience trust.

Drawing on Indiegraf's "Sovereignty Strategy" framework and real-world case studies from public media newsrooms, participants will examine practical strategies for embedding engagement into editorial workflows, building trust amid misinformation, and using AI responsibly to strengthen (rather than replace) human connection.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how AI is changing audience behavior and trust.
2. Learn practical audience engagement strategies that strengthen station independence and sustainability.
3. Explore concrete examples of ethical AI and engagement workflows in public media newsrooms.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

This will be an interactive session where participants will engage with our content and leave with actionable engagement and trust-building initiatives tailored to their organization.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Forward-thinking public media organizations of any size, who are willing to dedicate time into turning audience trust into a viable business strategy.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Sure

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Yes

Learning Tracks:

Community Engagement, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Erin Millar, Indiegraf

Joyful Learning Experiences in Your Neighborhood

Join Fred Rogers Productions and our PBS station neighbors to explore impactful ways to bring FRP resources into your community's schools, libraries, and museums.

In this session, station education and engagement teams will:

- *Discover new content: Learn about the new Storytime Collection featuring Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood, Donkey Hodie, and Alma's Way.*
- *Maximize local impact: Hear how peer stations utilize screenings, events, and the FRP Education Impact Advisory to deepen local PBS partnerships.*
- *Shape digital tools: Preview upcoming PBS LearningMedia collections and share your ideas for future station resources.*
- *Gain turn-key assets: Walk away with ready-to-use strategies tailored for diverse educational settings.*

We hope you can join us, neighbors!

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will learn about the initiatives and resources from Fred Rogers Productions
2. Participants will hear from stations and develop new ideas for implementing engagements
3. Participants will think about and share ideas for new collections and resources from FRP and walk away with some new free resources as well.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

This session will be interactive! We want to share out and have participants share as well :)

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

All stations

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Education

Speakers:

1. Mallory Mbalia, Fred Rogers Productions
2. Brittany Smith, Fred Rogers Productions
3. Lauren McDowell, PBSNC

More Ways to Raise: Unlock Generosity Through Non-Cash Giving

Nonprofits spend 90% of their time chasing cash—just 10% of household wealth—while 90% sits in stocks, DAFs, crypto, vehicles, and real estate. Non-cash donors give 6x more with double the retention because it's easy and tax-advantaged.

This session reveals how public media can capture these larger gifts through stocks, DAF grants, crypto, vehicles, and real estate programs. Featuring proven strategies, real donor data, and implementation playbooks from CARS and DonateStock, attendees will learn why non-cash options are critical for sustainability and how to launch donor-centered programs without overwhelming development teams.

Learning Objectives:

1. Learn where donor wealth lives today and why it matters — and how aligning fundraising strategies with non-cash giving preferences can transform philanthropy at your station.
2. Discover how non-cash gifts — stocks, DAFs, crypto, and more — drive larger, more intentional gifts and stronger donor retention compared to traditional cash giving.
3. Explore practical, low-lift ways to expand non-cash giving options at your station — with real-world examples and frameworks that won't overwhelm your team.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Non-cash assets comprise 90% of household wealth and represent \$300 billion in potential funding - most of which is unrealized. We'll show you how to unlock these assets at scale. By making it easy for donors to share their wealth, you can diversify and grow funding, forge deeper relationships and move from transactional to transformational gifts.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This session is aimed at fundraisers, gift processors and marketers seeking to grow and diversify funding.

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Finance, Marketing & Communications

Speakers:

1. Steve Latham, GivingIQ
2. Beth Carter, CARS

Overcoming Obstacles to Win the Impact Game

Impact measurement sounds great in theory. In practice? You might struggle to find the time, internal support, or tools ... all while facing down a funder deadline. Sound familiar?

This session brings together a panel of practitioners for an interactive, game-inspired exploration of strategies for overcoming hurdles and weighing options. Using an impact measurement framework built specifically for real-world public media conditions, we'll address the obstacles that show up in the field:

- *Little to no budget for evaluation*
- *No support from leadership*
- *Not enough people at the table*
- *No access to survey or data collection tools*
- *No evaluation team or dedicated staff*
- *Not knowing what questions to ask*
- *Having to reverse-engineer evaluation after the fact*

In addition to the speakers listed below, presenters may include Anna Long, Analytics Manager at WETA; Victoria Meilink, Director of Organizational Excellence at Nine PBS; Stacy Shaffer, Sr. Director of Marketing Operations & Business Intelligence at PBS SoCal; and Jason Aaron Smith, Administrative Project Manager at PBS Wisconsin.

Learning Objectives:

1. Acquire a practical framework for planning and tracking impact across a project lifecycle
2. Develop strategies to work around common evaluation barriers
3. Learn to present impact findings in ways that resonate with funders and stakeholders

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

There's no question that your work has an impact, but capturing and conveying that impact takes preparation.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This session is for employees at any stage of their evaluation journey. Whether you're starting from scratch or trying to strengthen an existing approach, you'll discover how to do more with what you have.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

N/A

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Yes

Learning Tracks:

Community Engagement, Content, Professional Growth & Station Innovation

Speakers:

1. Katie Koskenmaki, PBS
2. Amanda Hane, Twin Cities PBS
3. Karen Haynes, WETA
4. Taylor Shore, Milwaukee PBS

Rooted in Mission, Relevant in Practice: How Inclusive Practices Strengthen Public Media's Future

Public media is being called to remain rooted in its core purpose while becoming more relevant to the communities it serves. This workshop will explore how inclusive and accessible practices are not separate from public media's mission, but essential to trusted storytelling, local service, community connection, workplace culture, and long-term sustainability. Participants will examine how this work can be framed, practiced, and measured in today's changing environment, and will leave with practical tools for embedding inclusion, access, accountability, and belonging into decisions, systems, and relationships across their organizations.

Learning Objective

1. By the end of this section, participants will be able to: Articulate how DEI are central to public media's mission, relevance, and long-term sustainability.
2. By the end of this section, participants will be able to: Reframe DEI using mission-centered language that connects to trust, public service, storytelling, accountability, and community needs.
3. By the end of this section, participants will be able to: Identify meaningful indicators for measuring DEI progress beyond demographic representation alone.
4. By the end of this section, participants will be able to: Identify practical ways to embed equity into organizational decisions, systems, relationships, and daily practices.

Tracks: Human Resources

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session? You do not need to be a DEI practitioner to participate. This session is designed for anyone who makes decisions, shapes culture, serves audiences, leads teams, creates content, supports staff, or builds relationships with communities. Participants should come with one real decision their organization is making, a current system or process within their organizations that may produce inequitable outcomes, a relationship in mind with a community, audience, or staff group that could be strengthened OR a DEI effort they want to reframe, measure, or improve.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session? This session is designed for public media leaders, managers, DEI and HR practitioners, newsroom and content leaders, audience engagement professionals, and anyone responsible for shaping strategy, culture, community relationships, or organizational decision-making.

Speaker:

1. Whitney Maddox, NPR

Start, Grow, or Reimagine Your Youth Media Program: A Hands-On Lab

In this interactive, workshop-style session, participants will begin shaping a youth media program concept that is tailored to their station's capacity and community. Modeled as a "build-your-own" experience, attendees will define or reimagine youth media program goals, identify partners (schools, afterschool programs, community organizations), and map a practical pathway from student media creation to authentic engagement and distribution.

Featuring examples from KQED, WEDU, WHYY, PBS News Student Reporting Labs, and statewide models such as Georgia Public Broadcasting, Wisconsin PBS and Montana PBS Media Mavericks, this session highlights scalable approaches, from classroom-based publishing pipelines to after-school programs. Participants will engage in guided activities, peer feedback, and small-group planning, and will leave with a draft program plan, sample outreach emails, workshop agendas, and adaptable tools to launch or expand youth media efforts in their communities.

Learning Objectives:

1. Assess opportunities for launching or expanding youth media initiatives through classroom, afterschool, and community partnerships.
2. Evaluate station models and identify adaptable strategies for transforming student-created content into meaningful audience engagement across platforms.
3. Select implementation tools and impact measures that support sustainable growth, partner engagement, and audience reach.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Youth media is not only an education initiative. It can also support community engagement, audience development, local storytelling, and content creation. Participants should come ready to explore how youth voice can advance broader station goals.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

Small to mid-size stations trying to start or restart youth media work; Stations with education teams looking to expand beyond early childhood into youth voice; Stations aligning education and newsroom teams to support student journalism initiatives; Joint licensees seeking cross-platform content pipelines (education + production); Rural stations needing low-cost, scalable models

Tracks:

Community Engagement, Education, Youth Media

Speakers:

1. Almetria Vaba, KQED
2. Latoya Desamour, WEDU PBS
3. Lisa Wilk, WHYY
4. Tracey Wiley, Georgia Public Broadcasting

Telling Our Civil Rights Stories: How Local Stations Preserve History Through Media

Public Media and the Civil Rights Movement emerged from the same national moment, one that challenged the nation to expand access to education, information, and participation in civic life. As funding landscapes shift and political pressures evolve, revisiting that shared legacy offers an opportunity to reflect on both the stories we tell and the purpose that guides our work. This session invites participants to serve as thought partners in a collaborative think tank exploring how public media can continue uplifting local Civil Rights stories while remaining responsive to contemporary realities. WEDU PBS, South Carolina ETV, Maryland Public Television, and Alabama Public Television will share how they uncovered and produced powerful regional narratives, and how these stories strengthen trust, deepen community relationships, and keep our mission at the center of our work. Attendees will engage in collective problem-solving, examine models for sustainable impact and partnerships, and contribute ideas for expanding Civil Rights storytelling across the communities we serve.

Learning Objectives:

1. Attendees will learn how to identify and develop meaningful local Civil Rights stories, collaborate with community partners, and translate historical narratives into accessible digital resources.
2. Attendees will gain practical frameworks for producing short form media, designing educator ready materials, and hosting community engagement events such as screenings and panel discussions.
3. Attendees will learn to apply models in their regions to strengthen instruction, support culturally responsive teaching, and build strong connections between stations and their communities.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

No prior knowledge of Tampa's, South Carolina ETV, Alabama's, or Maryland's Civil Rights history is required.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This session is designed for anyone interested in local storytelling, community engagement, or educational media

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Yes

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

Maybe

Learning Tracks:

Community Engagement, Education

Speakers:

1. Latoya Desamour, WEDU PBS
2. Heather Daniels-Whitson, Alabama Public Television
3. Salandra Bowman, South Carolina WTV
4. Travis Mitchell, Maryland Public Television

Think Local, Produce National: Practical Tips for PBS Affiliates

*How do you know if your local content would appeal to a national PBS audience? As the dynamics and needs of public media shift in a fast-changing landscape, more programming produced by local PBS affiliates will be appearing on the national PBS schedule. Get insight and advice from leaders at three stations who are crafting content that PBS will air across the country. Arizona PBS Senior Director of Content Carol Yancho will discuss their new series *Resolve to Solve*; Texas PBS Executive Director Kierstan Schwab discusses Texas Monthly's PBS specials and the PBS PLUS series *The Story*, and the documentary *American Southwest*, and Vice President and Chief Content Officer Travis Mitchell shares MPT's experience presenting *Becoming Thurgood Marshall*. Arizona PBS General Manager Scott Woelfel will moderate this discussion that will include insights, best practices, dos as well as don'ts of producing content for the PBS national schedule.*

Learning Objectives:

1. Insight from PBS on what local content will have national appeal.
2. Guidance on how to scale local content for national audiences including funding and promotion.
3. Tips on what to do and what not to do in scaling content for national PBS.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

The moderator will utilize Sliddo polls at the beginning and at transitions in the session conversation. Questions from attendees will also be solicited and encouraged. Short clips from each show will be shown, and stations will hand out swag items.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

All station sizes interested in producing content that is relevant to the national PBS audience.

Budget, Funding & Grant:

Yes

Would this session be beneficial for radio only stations?

No

Learning Tracks:

Community Engagement, Content

Speakers:

1. Carol Yancho, Arizona PBS
2. Kierstan Schwab, Texas PBS
3. Scott Woelfel, Arizona PBS
4. Travis Mitchell, Maryland Public Television

What Actually Sticks: Turning National Education Projects Into Lasting Local Impact

How can stations turn education projects in support of national initiatives into lasting local impact? In this interactive session, participants will explore how work from The American Revolution initiative's education efforts, including classroom content creation, teacher professional learning events, a themed Youth Media Challenge, and PBS LearningMedia's Teacher Ambassador model, can inform station strategy, including future teacher and school district engagement efforts.

Through brief case studies and guided activities, attendees will identify what made education engagement efforts effective and begin designing or refining their own locally relevant approach to reach students and teachers. Participants will map key partners, define audience pathways, and outline strategies to sustain classroom engagement beyond a single project or grant cycle.

Featuring perspectives from PBS LearningMedia, PBS member stations, and one of PBS LearningMedia's Teacher Ambassadors, this session moves beyond reflection to action. Attendees will leave with a draft education engagement plan, practical tools and adaptable strategies to strengthen local impact using national resources.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify and apply effective engagement models including Teacher Ambassadors, district partnerships, and community collaborations to expand reach, participation, and educator ownership.
2. Assess opportunities to strengthen educator engagement by strategically leveraging national content, local partnerships, and station assets.
3. Identify next steps for developing an educator engagement plan that aligns audiences, activities, content, and distribution strategies with long-term station goals.

What would you like your audience to know before coming to your session?

Attendees should have a general understanding of their station's education or community engagement efforts and come prepared with a current initiative, project, or audience challenge they would like to strengthen. The session is designed for participants to apply concepts directly to their own work and leave with a draft engagement plan.

Who would benefit most from your breakout session?

This session is valuable for education staff, community engagement teams, content producers, and station leaders interested in translating national initiatives into sustained local relationships with educators, schools, and communities.

Tracks:

Education, Youth Media

Speakers:

1. Almetria Vaba, KQED
2. Kathryn Stark, Louisiana Public Broadcasting
3. Nick Ostrem, PBS Wisconsin
4. Sam Hunter-Gibbs, PBS LearningMedia