



Report on the
PBS Diversity Initiative on Content

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I. Introduction

In 2007, PBS approached the Ford Foundation about funding the development of a strategic approach to help guide public media in ensuring content diversity across multiple platforms. How should PBS approach content diversity in the 21st century, and how do we ensure content diversity as broadcasting transitions to a digital environment?

Diversity has always been a core value of public broadcasting, including serving as a guiding principle in the PBS Editorial Standards and Policies alongside editorial integrity, quality and local station autonomy.

Being vigilant in our goal to assure that PBS content fully reflects the pluralism of our society is an on-going process and responsibility. It is a constant goal, and there is always room to be better. It requires open and honest discussions. And more importantly, it requires long-term commitment and leadership.

With support from Ford, PBS took a fresh and candid assessment of the current primetime content on public television. We also looked introspectively and began developing a plan that engages the leadership within the public broadcasting system in a more focused and, ultimately, more accountable way. This first year of the Diversity Initiative served as a necessary and fundamental research and development phase. It created the opportunity for substantive conversations with stakeholders throughout the public television system that allowed PBS to identify strengths and challenges, outline priorities, and propose options for going forward.

Over the grant period, we sought opinions and recommendations from producers, community and industry leaders, and public media stakeholders. We learned through thoughtful conversations and convenings that there is a strong desire to ensure that PBS content reflects the diversity of our society. Led by Haydee Rodriguez, director of the PBS Content Diversity Initiative, results from those discussions – and recommendations – have been captured in this report. But beyond satisfying the grant requirements, we also challenged ourselves to envision the PBS we want to be in the 21st century.

Part of the acceptance of what this challenge entails is already embodied in our children's programming. As you'll find in the report, there was strong agreement that PBS does an exemplary job in ensuring diverse content in programs for our children. We exceed beyond expectation not because of mandate but by intent because starting with our children is one of the most important and effective places to start. The work we have begun in interactive media also holds great promise in engaging a more diverse audience. For example, Internet users on pbs.org and pbskids.org are already significantly more diverse than the overall audience of users in the United States. Recent data indicates that pbs.org indexes high for African-Americans, Latinos and Asians against the overall Web population across the country.

As we found during this research phase, defining "success" in content diversity is inherently challenging. Once a percentage goal is reached, is our work done? For PBS, that's only a beginning.

On behalf of the leadership team at PBS and the PBS Board of Directors, we are grateful to the Ford Foundation for taking a leadership role in this discussion and helping public media set a course to ensure that content diversity continues in a new era of broadcasting.

II. The PBS Diversity Initiative on Content

A. Overview

To be ever more valuable to the nation, we in the public television community must emphasize inclusion. We must reach out and include an ever more diverse population on our boards and in the management and staffs at our stations as well as within our producer community and national organizations.

In a strong democracy, all citizens must have a sense of their own worth and feel that their achievements and aspirations are recognized and understood – that they can fully participate in the affairs of our time – that they can make their mark. With domestic issues becoming more complex, international relations more strained, and the distance between rich and poor, literate and illiterate, ever widening, public television has the opportunity – and, yes, the obligation – to bind the nation together, forging a rich, diverse, and powerful human mosaic focused on educational opportunity, cultural vitality, responsible citizenship, and liberty of conscience for all.

Mary G.F. Bitterman
Chair, PBS Board, 2005-2007

Excerpted from her acceptance speech of the 2006 Ralph Lowell Award

Over the past year (2007-2008), the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) has been engaged in research and convening activities to help create new strategies for ensuring diversity in public television program content. Supported by a generous grant from the Ford Foundation to the PBS Foundation, this work is part of a larger diversity initiative, which includes the Leadership Development Program being conducted under the direction of the PBS Board's Diversity Task Force. The goal of the initiative is to ensure that PBS and its member stations fulfill their mission to reflect the nation in all its diversity, with particular emphasis on reaching under-served audiences.

The following report describes the work to date of the PBS Diversity Initiative on Content and its findings, which have been gathered through research, extensive interviews, and a major convening of public television stakeholders. It includes important findings regarding PBS's current status in content diversity and identifies areas of greatest impact as key to success.

The recommendations compiled for this report are made with the caveat that new resources are required for their realization. Throughout the past year, discussion participants frequently cited public television's financial constraints as an inhibiting factor in reaching its diversity goals, particularly in the hiring, training and retaining of new talent. While the issue of diversity is far more complex and sensitive than budgets alone, it is clear that dedicated funds will be needed to achieve the desired impact.

B. PBS and Diversity

Diversity: A Core Value

Diversity has always been a core value of public television. In 1967 the first Carnegie Commission urged public television to “*help us see America whole, in all its diversity.*” The Commission stated that public television programs “*should help us know what it is to be many in one, to have growing maturity in our sense of ourselves as a people.*” It should, in short, be the “*clearest expression of American diversity, and of excellence within diversity.*”¹

More recently, the value of diversity in public television program content was reaffirmed as part of the 2005 review, “*PBS Editorial Standards and Policies,*” which includes diversity among the program service’s guiding principles (the others being editorial integrity, quality, and local station autonomy):

“The goal of diversity also requires continuing efforts to assure that PBS content fully reflects the pluralism of our society, including, for example, appropriate representation of women and minorities. The diversity of public television producers and funders helps to assure that content distributed by PBS is not dominated by any single point of view.”²

The Demographic Realities

What was the Carnegie Commission’s vision in 1967 is a necessity for public television today. Minorities, now roughly one-third of the U.S. population, are expected to become the majority in 2042, with the nation projected to be 54% minority in 2050. Some highlights from the most recent U.S. Census projections:³

- The Hispanic population is projected to nearly triple, from 46.7 million to 132.8 million, during 2008-2050. Hispanics’ share of the total population is expected to double from 15% to 30%. Nearly one in three U.S. residents is expected to be Hispanic.
- The African-American population is projected to rise from 14% in 2008 to 15% in 2050.
- The Asian population’s share is expected to rise from 5.1 to 9.2%.
- The non-Hispanic, single-race white population is projected to lose population in the coming century and comprise 46 percent of the total population in 2050, down from 66 percent in 2008.
- The number of people who identify themselves as being of two or more races is projected to more than triple.

¹ Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, *Public Television: A Program for Action* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), 14.

² *PBS Editorial Standards and Policies*, adopted June 2005, PBS Web site, www.pbs.org.

³ U.S. Census Bureau News, “An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury,” press release Aug. 13, 2008, www.census.gov.

If public television is to hold up a mirror to American society, then it must reflect this burgeoning diversity both on-screen and off, behind the cameras and in the corporate offices.

Today all television channels—commercial as well as public—are experiencing a decline in audience share, due to the ever-increasing numbers of channels and competition for viewers' time from the Internet and other technologies. In this intensely competitive arena, strategies for building audiences must take into account both the changing nature of the audience as well as new means of distribution. Diversity is not only central to public television's mission: it is essential if public television is to attract and retain viewers, now and in the future.

Public Television Minority Employment and Audience Data

The decentralized nature of the public television system (see *Appendix A*) has always challenged those who seek a statistical portrait of its programs and performance: record-keeping varies greatly across the system. Some of the survey results that bear on the issue of diversity in public television can be found in Appendix B.

The 2007 Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) report, *Public Broadcasting's Services to Minorities and Diverse Audiences*, indicates that while overall employment in public television decreased by 2.3% in 2007, the percentage of minority employment increased from 18.7% to 19.2%.

PBS and our member stations are committed to serving diverse communities and to celebrating and integrating them into our business activities, content development, governance and leadership. Beyond policies and mandates, diversity is a core operating principle for both the national organizations - CPB and PBS - and the system. As separate parts, and together as a whole, we are dedicated to the vital mission of increasing diversity at all levels of our organization.

For example, the PBS Board of Directors reflects this organization's ongoing commitment to inclusive representation. The 27-member board is made up of 30% minorities and 33% women, and among its standing committees, advisory groups, and task forces is the Diversity Task Force. In 2007, the task force established the Leadership Development Program (LDP), a key initiative designed to promote excellence and diversity in the system's ranks, and fulfill the critical need to secure and expand the next generation of leaders in public media.

Under the direction of the Board and the organization's executive officers, the corporate office of PBS, in Arlington, Virginia, works hard to continue to build the diversity of its staff and leadership. PBS's recruitment efforts focus strongly on diversity. As of June 30, 2008, 30% of PBS employees were minorities, with 42% of new hires coming from a diverse background. PBS efforts to recruit a diverse staff and management continue to be an important operating factor in the way PBS conducts business.

Unlike public broadcasting systems in other countries, American public television was created to be decentralized and locally autonomous. PBS is not a network; it is membership organization that provides services to stations that are completely self-directed. PBS provides a wide range of programming, educational and technical services to its 356 member stations to help them serve their communities. In many communities across the country, the public broadcaster is the only locally owned and operated media option.

Across the nation, stations vary greatly in size, organizational capacity, and structure. Many are small organizations. For example, more than half of PBS licensees have budgets of \$5 million or less. Also, a number of stations are part of a larger institution, such as a college, university, state broadcasting commission or school district, which hold the operating license. These licensees have widely divergent hiring and reporting practices and policies. In spite of these differences, however, the system does make significant efforts to track important trends.

One important source of data is the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's report of activities that support greater diversity, which is presented to Congress on an annual basis. The report gives some basic numbers regarding employment within the public broadcasting system. The 2007 edition of *Public Broadcasting's Services to Minorities and Diverse Audiences* states that, while overall employment in public television decreased by 2.3% in 2007, the percentage of minority employment increased from 18.7% to 19.2%.

In addition, data from key stations show that diversity is a critical part of day-to-day business, and stations' efforts show a concerted commitment to enhance diversity in core areas, from content to overall staffing.

Audience Data

Nielsen audience data show that the PBS audience in ethnic TV households has changed little from 10 years ago, with the exception that PBS is doing a slightly better job serving Spanish-origin homes than before.⁴ Outside of the category of Spanish-speaking homes, however, PBS's reach in ethnic TV households has dropped in a manner consistent with PBS's overall audience decline -- PBS's weekly cume rating has declined by about 3% each year in the past ten years, with even steeper declines in the most recent two broadcasting seasons.

The CPB-commissioned *Program Carriage on Public Television—2000* is the most recent content analysis available within the public television system. The *study* found: "PBS designated 18.8% of programs as featuring minorities. This figure is down significantly from 25% in 1998. This change, though, does not necessarily reflect a decrease in minority-oriented programs, but rather a coding change within PBS's record-keeping. Typically, these programs were characterized as African-American (10.9%) or "multi-racial" interest (3.9%). Children's

⁴ Source: Nielsen Television Audience, custom weekly cume analysis for PBS, average of one sample week per month during January, February, April, May, July, September, October and November each year, 1996-97 through 2006-07.

programming accounted for the majority of minority programming (57.7%). Less than 7% of minority programming was seen in primetime.”

PBS Board Takes Action on Diversity

Throughout its history and at both the national and the system levels, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) has strived to reflect a diversity of perspectives and a diversity of cultural and gender representation. PBS knows that in order to serve our nation, it can and must do more to attract broader and more diverse audiences. In 2005, the PBS Board adopted a “resolution promoting the cultivation of excellence and diversity in leadership within the public broadcasting system” which:

“Urges that the national public broadcasting entities and the affinity groups work cooperatively on increasing the opportunities for leadership development and for diversity among the ranks of system leaders and, further, that a strategy for instituting a national leadership development program be created for the purpose of cultivating excellence and diversity in emerging leaders, and in order to meet our collective responsibility for good governance and stewardship of the public broadcasting system.” (PBS Board Resolution, June 2005)

In addition, the Board created the **PBS Diversity Task Force** (“Task Force”), which identified the need to develop a next generation of system leadership that reflects the diversity of this nation. The Task Force, charged with carrying out the resolution, has oversight responsibility for a two-part plan designed to meet the resolution’s goals. The two initiatives are:

- a. Development of succession planning strategies through a leadership training program that identifies and provides critical skills to persons with high leadership potential in an effort to promote excellence and diversity in the system’s ranks; and
- b. Development of multiple strategies to impact diversity in public television content across multiple platforms.

PBS approached the Ford Foundation and requested funding for a diversity initiative that included the Leadership Development Program and a Diversity in Content Initiative. This report is devoted exclusively to the Diversity in Content Initiative.

III. The PBS Diversity Initiative on Content: Actions

As a result of a Ford Foundation grant to the PBS Foundation, PBS has been engaged in research and convening activities as the basis of a plan to broaden diversity in ways that impact content. Actions undertaken in fulfillment of that grant are as follows:

A. Establishment of the Content Advisory Team

PBS began by establishing an internal Content Advisory Team to guide the research process. Lead by John Boland, PBS Chief Content Officer, the group helped establish project goals and identify potential interview participants.

B. Director of the Diversity Initiative/Content Appointed

In October 2007, PBS appointed Haydee M. Rodriguez, J.D., as director of the Diversity Initiative on Content for a one-year term. Ms. Rodriguez had served as executive director of Maryland's Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs since 2005. Prior positions include projects/outreach coordinator for Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.); executive director of a community-based, multi-purpose services center in Baltimore; and special assistant to Kurt L. Schmoke, then mayor of Baltimore. Ms. Rodriguez is a graduate of the Baltimore Jewish Council's Leadership Development Program and of the Greater Baltimore Committee Leadership Program. She holds a B.A. in Philosophy from Loyola College and a J.D. from the University of Maryland School of Law.

C. In-Depth Interviews

The project director conducted 78 in-depth interviews with a wide variety of professionals, including members of the public television station community, the National Minority Consortia, independent producers, PBS employees, and professionals working in cable and commercial television. A list of interviewees and the methodology used can be found in *Appendix C*.

D. Convening of Stakeholders

In addition to the 78 interviews, some 40 individuals met at PBS on July 1, 2008, to further explore the issues of content diversity. This meeting of key stakeholders included representatives of national organizations and station executives, station producers and independent producers and filmmakers, and PBS and CPB staff. The complete list of participants can be found in *Appendix D*. Detailed notes from the breakout sessions can be found in *Appendix E*.

E. Secondary Resources: Research

PBS also conducted a thoughtful review of materials published by domestic and international media organizations regarding their independent attempts to support greater diversity among their workforces. Some resources were shared privately, others obtained from public records. The consistent themes offered in these secondary materials echo the verbal and written

feedback drawn from the 78 internal and external interviews. A bibliography of secondary resources can be found in Appendix F.

F. Local Station Efforts

Because of PBS's decentralized, membership-based organizational structure, it is important to examine and acknowledge the many efforts underway at the station level. From a feasibility standpoint, we could not include all 356 stations in this report. For this phase of the diversity initiative, we focused on the major producing stations. A sample of their collective diversity initiatives can be found in Appendix G.

G. A Note on Methodology: Qualitative, Not Quantitative

Unlike a commercial network, PBS is a decentralized membership-based system made up of autonomous television stations. Record-keeping varies widely between the stations, making it difficult to pursue a purely statistical approach. Accordingly, the research undertaken for this initiative was qualitative rather than quantitative. Qualitative research approaches an issue without a set number of solutions and allows for unexpected outcomes to emerge. Qualitative reports are meant to be directional only, and should not be projected into numerical solutions.

IV. The PBS Diversity Initiative on Content: Findings

A. Findings of the Individual Interviews

Through the series of one-on-one conversations with 78 television professionals, a number of common themes emerged regarding the current state of diversity in public television and the television industry as a whole. Those themes are summarized below.

1. What Did We Learn from the Individual Interviews?

- a. **A Long-Standing Commitment:** Participants agree that PBS offers thought-provoking, challenging programs that not only educate but also inspire. Participants also believe that PBS has a long-standing commitment to diversity: *"PBS has a worthy commitment, yet it is also one that's continually challenged by resources."* Many agree that *"The distinguishing difference of PBS is that there's an expectation that different voices are given a platform on which to speak on important matters."*
- b. **Greater Diversity is Welcome:** Respondents believe that increased diversity of both content and staff is both welcome and necessary. Respondents believe that public television strives to be more relevant. Participants report that diversity, *"is not an issue, it is the issue."* The issue of diversity is perceived as critical, highly sensitive, complex, and at present, not well-defined.
- c. **Omission not Commission:** The public television community recognizes that a lack of diversity across the public television landscape is not a calculated decision: *"If it's (the lack of diversity) a sin, it's one of omission not commission."* Respondents report that they have never had overt obstacles in supporting diversity. Public television professionals face different challenges such as budget restrictions to create new positions and low turn over .
- d. **Children's Programming Success:** Respondents remark that efforts to include diversity in public television children's programming content are exemplary and highly successful. The children's programming production teams across the system lead the industry in supporting on-air diversity.
- e. **A Fresh Approach is Needed:** Participants agree that the existing strategies for enhancing diversity in primetime programming is not enough. While respondents appreciate tools like the Producers Academy, and some applaud on-going series such as *Independent Lens* and *P.O.V.*, they report that the existing techniques to support diversity are not sufficient.

2. What Are The Challenges We Face?

There are a series of challenges that respondents in the one-on-one interviews commonly cited as critical barriers to enhancing diversity throughout public television:

- a. **Compartmentalization:** Interviewees suggest that diversity within the public television community is highly compartmentalized, with regard to staffing and on-air programming. The concern is that *“people of color get hired on shows about people of color.”* Also, the existing scheduling strategy of *“ethno-centric content that is clustered in specific months of the year”* is seen as isolating diverse programming to just one month per year.
- b. **Small Talent Pool:** Respondents say that there are real obstacles in finding new and diverse talent within the public television system. They also get very few job applicants who are minorities. The talent pool is perceived as limited and Caucasian-dominant, particularly in certain geographic parts of the country.
- c. **Not Enough Openings:** A common perception is, *“there aren’t that many positions available. You’re not going to ask someone to give up their job.”*
- d. **Beyond Public Television:** Participants recognize that diversity is an issue beyond the boundaries of public television. Respondents are mindful of the challenges in creating diverse professional and educational communities throughout American society: *“It’s a national issue.”*

3. Assumptions for Action

The interviewees shared many ideas about what assumptions should guide future diversity efforts. The most frequently-cited were:

- a. **Beyond Quotas:** There’s a belief that *“simple quota systems and numerical evaluations are not going to be very productive.”* A successful and acceptable diversity strategy must move beyond metrics as quotas and into a disciplined philosophy of consistent integration.
- b. **Start with Staffing:** Through actively supporting a diverse workforce, content will become more varied and will reflect greater diversity. Placing priority upon staff diversity will lead to greater diversity of story-telling.
- c. **De-Compartmentalize:** A healthy approach to diversity will result in a better reflection of American society. Diversity should not be boxed in. *“Take a page from ‘Heroes’ or ‘Lost’ – make the content inherently diverse.”*
- d. **Long-Term:** The commitment to diversity needs to be sustained and on-going.

4. Proposed Strategies

In addition to identifying the challenges of increased diversity in the public television system, the interviewees offered some practical strategies for improving current practices.

- a. **Build Relationships:** Cultivate a network of diverse colleagues as an ongoing source of professional guidance and support. Maintain an active dialogue with diverse professionals both internal and external to the public television system through informal and organized means. Draw upon the National Minority Consortia to support this initiative.

- b. **Establish a Database:** Build a directory of diverse professionals involved in producing content.
- c. **Leadership Must Do It:** Having “people of color at the top levels of our industry sets a strong, inspiring example. “
- d. **Fund New Positions:** Commit funds to support new talent. Build programs to pay salaries for newly established fellowships that run for one to two years. Many participants cited CPB’s former Minority Training Grants, which brought a new and diverse group of producers into the public broadcasting community.
- e. **Incorporate Project Advisors:** Evaluate the PBS KIDS area as a “*model for best practices.*” Children’s programming relies heavily on advisors to guide and instruct the editorial process. Work to emulate this approach with the primetime schedule.

B. Findings of the Convening of Stakeholders

In July 2008, PBS hosted a “convening” of key industry stakeholders to invite dialogue on diversity and to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement. The meeting built upon previous interviews and surveys. The 40 participants included: PBS Board members and key staff; decision makers at the major producing stations; station managers; members of the National Minority Consortia; station programming and content executives; and independent filmmakers and key executives from CPB. A complete list of attendees can be found in Appendix D.

The stated purpose of the convening was to:

- Explore the current diversity efforts within the public television community at the national and local levels;
- Assess the current opportunities and challenges for enhancing diversity within public television;
- Examine media-industry best practices related to the achievement of diversity in content areas and identify possible benchmarks; and
- Identify and prioritize opportunities for improving diversity in content areas throughout public television.

At the meeting, stakeholders identified key areas of focus:

- Leadership
- Diversity
- Decision-making
- Leadership vision
- Hiring practices

- Resources
- Programming

Subgroups then explored each key area in breakout discussions. Each group further defined its key area and developed possible strategies to meet the opportunities (See *Appendix E*). By mapping the detailed Convening brainstorming notes to each area of focus, some observations emerged.

Developing deep diversity of thought is a critically important aspect among public television leadership. This must inform all decisions, policies, and plans, and there is a need for clarity of purpose through an updated vision and strategic direction that identifies the intended future audience. Guided and informed by deep diversity of thought, this updated vision and strategic direction resolves the relative needs for core versus growth audience, and guide all work on talent, resource allocation, and programming content.

The break-out group discussions brought out differing perspectives and values regarding public television's "core" or traditional audience and the potential for increased viewership among growing ethnically diverse communities. A clear vision of diversity is required on this matter and must become a compelling driver of decisions across PBS and public television. Thus, it should incorporate the inclusive thinking from the convening.

Further increasing the diversity of public television's senior leadership will help ensure that sufficient breadth of perspectives is available for future decision-making. Realizing the benefits of these perspectives will require developing "full inclusion."

C. Findings of the Secondary Research

The consistent themes offered in these secondary materials echo the verbal and written feedback drawn from the 78 internal and external interviews:

- Greater diversity of staff supports greater diversity of content;
- Change begins at the top with direct support from the CEO and other top executives;
- Building a database of multi-cultural editorial and creative professionals will broaden the base of human resources and expand diverse programming;
- Enhanced diversity is achieved through consistent consultation with diverse professionals to support both program selection and the editorial process; and
- Recruitment of diverse employees at senior levels is a hollow strategy if we do not also measure the retention of these employees.

Diversity at Commercial/Cable Networks

The prominent commercial networks and cable channels that we contacted provided a variety of critical insights into their corporate approach to enhancing diversity of content and staffing.

- **The organizations have hired professionals dedicated to improving diversity. These individuals sit at the highest levels of the organization, in “head” and “vice-president” positions.** The word “diversity” is included in their senior professional titles. The common understanding is that starting at the top will lead to greater success throughout the organization. In addition, there’s an emphasis on recruiting diverse mid-level management with the idea that these individuals will move into executive roles in the future.
- **The networks recognize diversity to be an imperative rather than an option.** They speak of diversity as a business goal, one that is measured in concrete audience numbers (Nielsen ratings), and corporate sponsorship success. They recognize the power of relationship-building in strengthening the diversity of their work-force. They talk of expanding their relationship with a broad group of diverse professionals prior to posting an available position. The goal is to enhance familiarity and comfort with potential candidates and identify potential avenues for referrals. One way to achieve this goal is through multiple and ongoing informational meetings. Through this process, they build databanks to support a growing pool of potential applicants and resources.
- **Some have also developed metrics to track the level of diverse representation both on-air and behind the camera.** While this measurement strategy is new, there is a deep commitment to continuing to learn about the network’s actual commitment to diversity in practice.

For a bibliography of secondary source materials, see Appendix F.

V. Recommendations & Next Steps

The one-on-one interviews in the Diversity in Content Initiative provided a necessarily open and comfortable space in which to candidly and confidentially address a critical but sensitive issue. The convening of industry stakeholders allowed a diverse group of public television representatives to challenge one another in the search for solutions. In sum, this first year of the Diversity Initiative served as a necessary and fundamental research and development phase. This initial chapter created the opportunity for substantive conversations with stakeholders throughout the public television system that allowed PBS to identify strengths and challenges, outline priorities and propose options for going forward.

What follows is a list of key challenges that emerged from discussions and meetings; and recommendations—with subsets—suggested by participants for this first phase of the initiative. It's important to note that implementing the recommendations in this report will require not only additional resources but dedicated cooperation within PBS's decentralized system. Moving forward will necessitate a great deal of deliberate and collaborative effort.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Identify, hire and promote key, competitive, and qualified individuals.
 - A. Build a national talent database of ethnically diverse professionals.
 - B. Seek funding to build a fellowship program for minority professionals.
 - C. Enhance content review and approval process.
 - D. Amplify and augment brand visibility nationally and locally
2. Build on the significant representation of diversity on pbs.org.
 - A. Create a "Diversity in Public Television" Web site.
3. Develop baseline data on diversity.

Details on the implementation of each recommendation follow.

1. PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP

Challenge: A common thread from the convening discussions, particularly in the "Leadership Diversity" and "Decision-Making" working groups, was the strongly perceived **need for enhanced diversity in public broadcasting leadership and content decision-making teams**. This message also came through in many of the individual interviews. Typical is this quote from the convening: "*Leadership diversity – at the stations, national affinity groups and board level - makes every other priority fall into place.*" Participants expressed the need for more cultural diversity in many aspects of decision-making including vision, hiring, mentoring, programming, and producing.

Recommendation: Identify, hire and promote key individuals

Include participation in editorial and content decision-making teams, with an eye toward promotion in the future.

Steps in FY09 & beyond:

- a. **To further the goal of increasing ethnic diversity, promote and recruit qualified diverse individuals to take part in decision-making teams involved with content and editorial issues.** A common thread in the individual interviews and the convening on diversity was the sense of bringing more diversity to the senior level. This action has been described as “diverse leadership drives diverse content” and decisions.
- b. **Review existing sourcing, recruiting, mentoring, and internal succession planning processes and define changes to be implemented against a timeline.** Focus on factors such as expanded sourcing of talent in non-traditional channels, professional development, mentoring, enhanced visibility of competitive and ethnically diverse producers, and succession planning.
- c. **PBS Human Resources will work closely with the Chief Content Officer and senior content managers to determine the feasibility of, and to develop strategies on recruitment and advancement.** Despite budget constraints that limit hiring opportunities, PBS HR can continue to assess, and adjust as needed, its sourcing and recruiting processes to help maximize outreach and receptivity to competitive, and ethnically diverse candidates. This may include development of increased cultural sensitivity by recruiters, hiring managers, and leadership.
- d. **PBS Human Resources and senior content managers will explore leadership opportunities for the professional development of current PBS content staff.** PBS should strengthen its focus on developmental opportunities, lateral assignments, and mentoring, especially in the editorial and content areas to increase the diversity of the talent pipeline .

1-A. DEVELOP A NATIONAL TALENT DATABASE

Challenge: The system does not have a clearinghouse or a pool of diverse talent or diverse subject matter experts. Many system representatives remarked that a national database would improve access to ethnically diverse talent and ethnically diverse experts.

Recommendation: Build a national database of ethnically diverse professionals.

Steps in FY09 and beyond: PBS can partner with the National Minority Consortia and ITVS to build a national database of minority producers and subject matter experts that will serve as an easy-to-access resource for public television professionals interested in expanding their networks of ethnically diverse media professionals. Maximizing the already existing relationship with sources that offer diverse talent, PBS and the system can continue to more fully develop those relationships through the Content Summit and Showcase.

1-B. SEEK FUNDS TO HIRE NEW TALENT

Challenge: Budget constraints throughout the system prevent many of the major program strands⁵ from hiring new talent.

Recommendation: Seek funding to build a fellowship program for minority professionals to attain full-time staff positions—producers, assistant producers, directors, writers, editors —on major PBS series production teams (similar to ABC/NBC/FOX case studies).

Steps in FY09 and beyond: PBS should explore funding sources for programs that cover salaries for newly established positions that run for one to two years. Many interview participants cited CPB's former Minority Training Grants. These efforts will need to be sustained to ensure that qualified and competitive candidates are given the opportunity to train and experience professional growth within the system. Given the system's financial constraints, the transition from a fellowship to a fully funded position will need to be explored on a case by case basis.

1-C. ENHANCE CONTENT REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Distributing high-quality content that engages a broad, diverse audience is a key criterion for PBS. To better fulfill this goal, PBS should reassess its content proposal review, RFP, green lighting, R& D, and content acquisition processes .

Tactics may include:

- Increasing the inclusion of diverse content providers at the General Audience and Children's Content Summits;
- Working with and encouraging producers of ongoing icon series to foster diversity in front of and behind the camera; and clearly communicating in requests for proposals and research & development that submissions are expected to reflect America's diversity.

1-D. AUGMENT BRAND VISIBILITY NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY

Critical to the brand's future is the trust and credibility public media engenders from all Americans. Without the expanding faith of diverse audiences in this media enterprise, public broadcasting is less than what it should or could be. It behooves public media to augment its brand footprint and amplify our national stature with diverse audiences through the on-going efforts of promotion, media relations and outreach.

⁵ Major program strands refers to icon series such as NOVA, FRONTLINE, AMERICAN MASTERS, NEWSHOUR, NATURE.

Tactics may include:

- Re-affirm commitment to diverse audiences as advertising, public relations, and outreach campaigns are planned;
- Expand the “media choices” available to ensure access to and engagement with the PBS brand;
- Seek out and support program content that enhances public broadcasting’s commitment to diversity initiatives; and
- Widen the network of media “influentials” to strengthen public media’s commitment.

2. PROMOTE DIVERSITY ACROSS MEDIA PLATFORMS

Challenge: The increasingly competitive new media landscape is creating more opportunities for distribution among traditional content providers. This in turn brings with it more options for users to find diverse content elsewhere.

Recommendation: Take advantage of the opportunity afforded us by the significant representation of diversity on pbs.org. Data in support of the PBS Web site show that pbs.org indexes very high for African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans (when indexed against the overall U.S. Web population).

The audiences on pbs.org and pbskids.org are significantly more diverse than the overall audience of Internet users in the United States, according to the tracking firm QuantCast. For example, the percentage of Latinos using pbskids.org is 74% higher than the percentage of Latinos across all U.S. Web sites.

QuantCast uses an index system, where an index of 100 equals the average for the entire U.S. Web usage. On that scale, the pbskids.org site indexes 174 for Latinos, 114 for African Americans, and 252 for Asian Americans.

PBS.org (excluding the pbskids.org site) also indexes high for minority users – with African Americans at 111, Latinos at 108, and Asian Americans at 120.

QuantCast gathers these numbers using a panel system (similar to Nielsen for television). Additionally, 76% of the pbs.org audience is under age 50.

Steps in FY09: Continue to track opportunities and usage for initiatives and new content in interactive media, including the participation of PBS Interactive staff in New Media Institute projects.

2-A. SHARE BEST PRACTICES RELATED TO DIVERSITY

Challenge: Finding and sharing best practices as they relate to diversity is more difficult in a decentralized public television system. In May 2005, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters launched a Diversity in Broadcasting Web site to facilitate access to diversity initiatives across the Canadian broadcasting community. It features

the industry's diversity measures, initiatives and activities including research reports, news releases, speeches, training programs, and information on diversity-related events.

Recommendation: Create a "Diversity in Public Television" Web site.

Steps in FY09 and beyond: PBS should explore creating and hosting a "Diversity in Public Television" Web site featuring diversity initiatives throughout the public television community as a resource for colleagues seeking "diversity models" and best practices. The Diversity Web site for the public television community can be housed at PBS.Connect. A second portal can also be created for community stakeholders eager to learn more about the ongoing efforts by the industry to reach out to the nation's increasingly diverse communities. The portal for community stakeholders can be housed at pbs.org. Both can be part of the day-to-day activities currently carried out by the Station Relations (pbs.connect) and Interactive teams (pbs.org).

3. DEVELOP BASELINE DATA ON DIVERSITY

Challenge: At this point, the public television system cannot paint the full picture of its "diverse" content or the diversity of its staff.

As a fundamental starting point, the national organizations, major national producers and the station community need to agree upon how we evaluate diversity at the national level (at PBS and other national organizations) and throughout the system as a whole. We cannot fully develop "metrics" until we have an accurate and solid baseline. Current program databases provide lists of programs with ethnic content but do not express the relationship of the diverse content to the full schedule. Database information also cannot identify the diverse composition of production teams across the board.

Recommendation: PBS, CPB, and major producing stations should consider developing and agreeing upon a methodology to track diversity in content and should explore conducting a program carriage study.

We need to engage in a comprehensive review of categories used to define diversity. We recommend PBS and the major producing stations agree upon a methodology and comprehensive tracking system by which to measure the diversity in front of and behind the camera. Such an activity will define the parameters of diversity and whether, in addition to ethnicity, the parameters should include gender, age, religion and sexual orientation.

Concurrent with the establishment of such categories is the need for data on actual program carriage. The last time a study on public television station program carriage was commissioned was in 2000. The system needs updated data in order to measure progress in the area of diversity. A conversation with PBS, CPB, and other stakeholders will help to address this need.

Steps in FY09: The PBS Content Team should engage CPB and the major producing stations to consider tracking content production during an agreed-upon period of time, e.g., 1-3 months, in an effort to assess diversity within the following categories: key

members of the production team, subject matter, talent, and subject experts, where applicable. At the end of the period, PBS can assess the data and begin to establish metrics for use in qualifying what constitutes a minority production and to thus begin to develop a baseline. Since PBS is not a production studio i.e. NBC, Disney, implementing this recommended strategy will require more discussion.