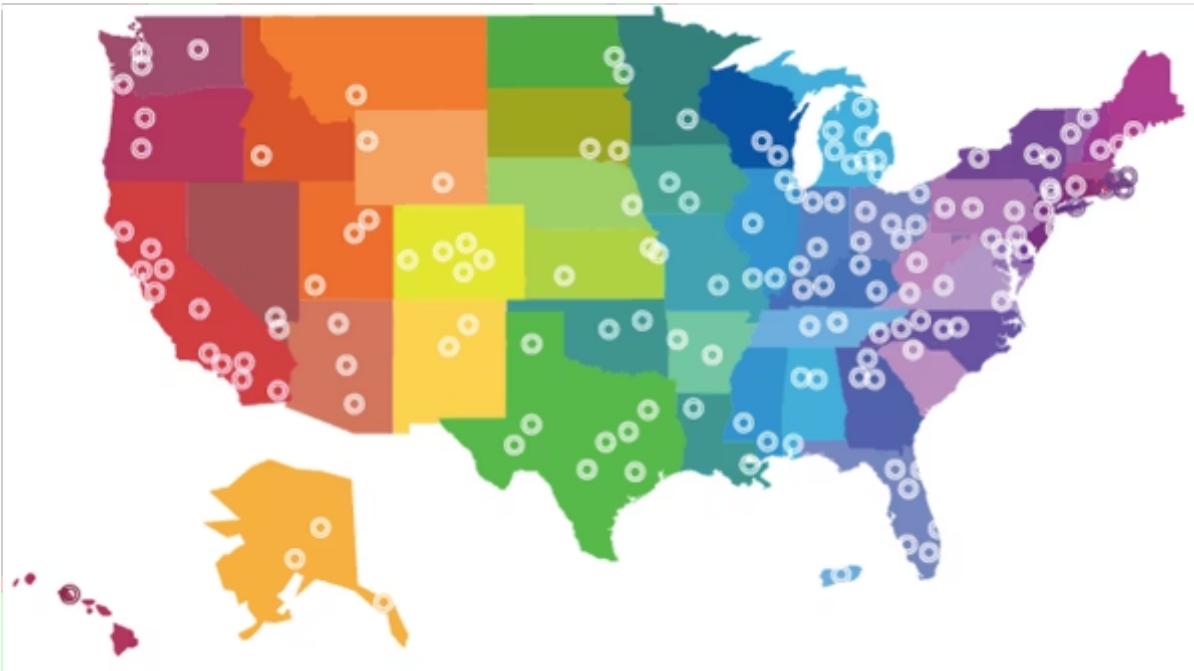


About Public Media Company



Public Media Company is a nonprofit consulting firm dedicated to serving public media. We leverage our business expertise to increase public media impact across the country.

For a quarter-century, Public Media Company has worked in partnership with organizations in urban and rural communities to find innovative solutions and build local impact. We have worked with more than 400 organizations in all 50 states, and we're currently coordinating the Public Media Bridge Fund to help stations hit hardest by defunding.

Welcome Back to Collaboration U!

AT THE TOP OF THE HOUR

Sharing 301

Tales from the Collaborative Front: A Panel Discussion

HOSTS

Gabrielle Jones

& Rick Holter

Directors
Public Media Company

GUESTS



Vanessa de la Torre

Chief Content Officer
Connecticut Public



Tami Graham

Executive Director
KSUT in the Four Corners region



Nico Leone

President & CEO
KERA in North Texas

ARCHIVED AT [PUBLICMEDIA.CO/COLLABORATION-U](https://publicmedia.co/collaboration-u)

- Sharing 101: How to Build a Collaborative
- Sharing 201: The Secrets of Sharing — Findings from PMC's Shared Services Research



Collaboration U Reading List



Find tools, checklists and guides to collaboration at PMC's resource site, LocalNewsCatalyst.org



Station Strengthening Exercises

[A roadmap for station leaders](#) on clarifying strategy, building resilience, and financial benchmarking.



Funder Pitch Tool

[AI-powered help](#) for crafting the perfect grant narrative



Local Media Ecosystem Analysis

[Understand your community](#) with data tools, and map out where your station fits.



Collaboration Resources

Step-by-step guides to partnerships, from how to structure a collaboration to sample MOUs to a Public Media Mergers Playbook





Collaboration U

A Public Media Company Webinar Series

Sharing 301: Tales from the Collaborative Front

A Panel Discussion



TODAY

Sharing 301: Tales from the Collaborative Front



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How Today Will Work

A conversation, not a lecture

Each panelist shares their experience and philosophy

We'll explore what worked, what stalled, and lessons learned

Drop your questions in the chat — we'll answer them at the end

Meet the Panelist: Vanessa de la Torre



Chief Content Officer



- Directs the New England News Collaborative (NENC), a 10-station regional newsroom covering climate, health, racial equity, politics, and the economy across New England
- Under her leadership, NENC grew into a full NPR regional newsroom (July 2024), expanding shared capacity in visual storytelling and multimedia collaboration
- Joined Connecticut Public in 2018 after 11 years at the Hartford Courant
- Now building two "coalition of the willing" task forces: Engineering/Traffic and Audience & Digital Innovation



Meet the Panelist: Tami Graham



Executive Director



- Leads KSUT, based on Southern Ute tribal land in southwest Colorado — including KSUT (NPR news & music), Tribal Radio, and the Tribal Media Center
- KSUT is a founding member of the 21-station Rocky Mountain Community Radio (RMCR) collaborative and affiliate of the Mountain West News Bureau
- One of three station leaders who sued the Trump administration over the executive order barring federal funds for NPR content — a federal judge ruled the order unconstitutional, but too late to stop defunding
- 40 years in public, community, and college radio
- Running point on RMCR's Press Forward-funded shared engineering project: a \$1M initiative for a shared broadcast engineering team, emergency equipment pool, and apprenticeship pipeline



Meet the Panelist: Nico Leone



President & CEO

KERA



- Leads KERA, which includes the North Texas NPR and PBS stations, Triple-A music station KXT 91.7, classical WRR 101.1, the Denton Record-Chronicle, and the syndicated music show "From the Top"
- KERA is lead station in The Texas Newsroom, NPR's first news "hub" and anchor of its Collaborative Journalism Network — now expanding beyond content and into a statewide PBS collaboration
- Partnerships with the Fort Worth Report and The Dallas Morning News
- Before KERA, ran stations in St. Louis and Kansas City, building KCUR into one of the country's most collaborative stations
- A constellation of collaboration: public media, music, digital, and print



Public Media Collabs Are Evolving

All the collaboratives represented here were born as content operations — regional or statewide newsrooms. But today, pressures like defunding are prompting them to explore shared back-office and engineering functions.

What sparked those transformations?



Every collaborative hits rough spots

Historical Grievances

Old wounds between stations don't disappear — they can resurface under pressure.

Small vs. Large

Potential partners at smaller stations worry about being bigfooted — or that collaborations will only address the challenges of large stations.

Protecting Local Identity

Some fear centralized services will sap what makes them distinct. Collaboration can feel like a threat to local control.

Governance Gets Sticky

Who decides? Who pays? Who gets credit? These questions can stall even the best collaborative intentions.

What nearly stopped you — and how did you work through it?

The wins that stick

Do More With the Same

Sharing doesn't always save money — but it does let stations punch above their weight.

What No Single Station Could Do Alone

Collaborative capacity can unlock coverage, audience reach, and resources that were impossible solo.

Surprise Wins

The things that work aren't always the things you plan. Some collaborative gains catch folks off-guard.

What Travels vs. What's Local

Many models work across markets. Others have to be rebuilt from scratch each time.

Where did sharing genuinely reduce cost, improve the work, or reach more people?



Trust: The Foundation of Any Collaboration



Hard to build

It takes time, consistency, and sometimes you have to give something up.



Easy to lose

Without that foundation, one misstep can undo years of goodwill.



Essential to keep

Without it, even the best structure can crumble.

How do you bolster trust — and prevent it from slipping away?



Q&A

Drop your questions into the chat, and we'll attempt to answer them!

Have follow-up questions?

Reach out to rick@publicmedia.co ... alison@publicmedia.co ... gabrielle@publicmedia.co

Lightning Round

One Lesson Learned

... in building a single collaboration ... or a constellation.

One Piece of Advice

...for the station manager, board chair, development chief, or newsroom leader thinking about taking that first collaborative step.

Congrats!

You've Aced All 3 Courses at Collaboration U

Find the decks and recordings from the webinar series on our Collaboration U website.

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