



# Affinity Group Coalition Principles and Practices

## The Affinity Group Coalition

The Affinity Group Coalition (AGC) was founded to serve as a forum for addressing system-wide issues of interest to public television stations. It is a station-led coalition of two representatives each from public television's six major affinity groups – member organizations that represent public television stations based on licensee type, community size and service profile. The charter affinity groups are, the: Beta Group - differentiated stations in multi-station markets; Major Market Group (MMG); National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA); Organization of State Broadcasting Executives (OSBE); Small Station Association (SSA); University Licensees Association (ULA).

The AGC came together in late 2003 and 2004 and formally adopted a charter in 2005. Additional information about the AGC is available at [www.ptv-agc.org](http://www.ptv-agc.org).

## Goals

The Affinity Group Coalition (AGC) exists to enable reliable, productive communications between and among the Affinity Groups in order to:

1. Discuss issues that arise within the public television system and expedite meaningful and credible responses that reflect the station community's stances on issues and concerns;
2. Initiate or encourage special projects identified by the AGC or the Affinity Groups (e.g. AGC Planning Project); and
3. Act as a council of advisors to organizations that seek it out (e.g. CPB, PBS, APTS, NETA).

The AGC's ultimate goal is to strengthen America's public television stations, individually and as a whole, in order to better serve the American public.

## Guiding Principles

### 1. Purpose

- a. The AGC encourages both responsive and proactive consideration of topics that add value to the AGC, Affinity Groups, individual public television stations, and the public television system, including input on planning and budgets.
- b. The AGC seeks timely, two-way and proactive engagement between the national organizations, the Affinity Groups and the AGC. These communications are intended to inform and respect each organization's independent decision-making processes.

### 2. Organizational Structure

- a. The AGC decision-making structure and documents should be simple and transparent.
- b. The AGC strives to remain independent, and truly reflective of the sentiments of a broad base of stations, while recognizing the interests of individual stations.

- c. The AGC seeks a reasonable balance between developing its own agenda and serving as a council of advisors to national organizations.
- d. The AGC seeks consensus when possible, and otherwise, will identify and communicate areas of agreement and differences.

## **Guidelines:**

### **1. Information Sharing**

- a. Open, two-way, communications between Affinity Groups and the AGC shall be sought.
- b. To encourage sharing information in a consistent manner, AGC meeting minutes, and shared documents will be posted on the AGC website and accessible to General Managers or their designees.
- c. To facilitate consistent discussions among Affinity Groups, guiding questions and relevant information shall be posted on the website to be used at the discretion of each group.

### **2. Bringing Issues to the AGC**

- a. In order to facilitate deliberate discussions, issues for discussion at AGC monthly meetings should be presented, when possible, to the AGC Chair or Vice-Chair at least five business days before scheduled AGC meetings. A form for submitting issues to the current AGC leadership is posted at [www.ptv-agc.org](http://www.ptv-agc.org).
- b. Regularly recurring issues for which AGC and station input is requested, such as planning and budgeting by national organizations, should be presented to the AGC Chair or Vice-Chair three-six months in advance, or as soon as the national organization's planning calendar is established. As the AGC's goal is to provide timely input in a deliberative manner, the more regular and consistent the requests for input are, the more thoughtful the response.
- c. AGC members will take issues to their individual Affinity Groups in a timely manner. Affinity Group meeting times will be listed on the AGC website.

### **3. Vetting and Voting on Issues**

- a. To ensure issues will be understood by Affinity Groups in a consistent manner, and everyone has equal access to information, AGC members are encouraged to refer Affinity Group members to relevant information and resources on the AGC website.
- b. For vetting issues at the group level, AGC members will determine the general sentiment of their Affinity Group, range of opinions, and any strong assenting or dissenting comments.
- c. On the less frequent occasions when a system-wide vote is required, a single voting process will be established, such as an on-line survey tool, to ensure that each station responds to the same question in a consistent manner.

### **4. Affinity Group Representation on the AGC**

- a. As the goal of the AGC is to inform and communicate with colleagues, AGC members shall endeavor to understand and represent their Affinity Group's interests.
- b. It is understood however that AGC members have individual perspectives as well. When possible, AGC members shall differentiate their personal opinions from their Affinity Group's opinions.
- c. AGC representation shall be considered for new Affinity Groups if and as they form.

**5. AGC Governance**

- a. Each Affinity Group shall have two representatives on the AGC, preferably including the Chair of the Affinity Group.
- b. The AGC governance structure shall be kept simple and handled by the AGC Chair and Vice-Chair. Ad hoc committees will be appointed as needed.
- c. The AGC shall attempt to meet monthly by phone and at least once a year, face-face, to discuss AGC issues. Other communications may occur as needed.

**6. AGC Staff Support**

- a. On-going administrative and leadership support will enable the AGC to provide meaningful, consistent leadership within the PTV system.
- b. Staff support is expected to fall into the following categories.
  - i. Baseline administrative support for consistent communications.
  - ii. Proactive agenda setting, analysis and research on key issues relevant to the industry.
  - iii. Special project support for AGC or national organization initiated projects, such as the AGC Planning Project.

**7. AGC Funding**

- a. Ongoing baseline operating support will be provided by a combination of sources including the member Affinity Groups (based on a formula that takes into account the Affinity Group's size and financial situation), CPB and other entities.
  - i. AGC operating expenses may include staff support, website maintenance, mailings, cost of monthly phone conferences, face-face meeting expenses, and the cost of survey tools.
- b. Special project funding will be sought on a case-by-case basis.