

**Asheville Citizen-Times**  
**WNC Local Information Cooperative (WNC LINC)**  
**Memorandum of Understanding**

The Asheville Citizen-Times, as a participant in the Networked Journalism Project sponsored by American University's J-Lab Institute and funded by the Knight Foundation, will partner with a select number of community news and information sites across Western North Carolina. The goals of this one-year, grant-funded project called WNC LINC are to:

1. Develop a collaborative model that offers news and information to WNC's varied readers.
2. Explore how the collaboration can further enhance the news and information provided by each individual site and as a cooperative.
3. Increase traffic and engagement among readers for network partners.
4. Develop a business model that benefits each partner's business and readership.
5. Analyze the collaboration in order to strengthen the partnership and its collective goals.
6. Explore how the collaboration can be expanded and/or sustained over time.

This proposed Memorandum of Understanding includes the following components and expectations:

**Expectations for all participants**

1. Produce content that is honest, fair, well-researched, thoughtful, non-libelous and non-offensive to the partnership, and maintain a strong foundation in ethical news and information gathering.
2. Communicate regularly about live or advance coverage of news or information on your site that may be of interest to other partners.
3. Include the WNC LINC widget in a prominent spot on each partner's homepage.
4. When appropriate, promote WNC LINC through any of the following: cross-links, tweets (hashtag #wnclinc), video, RSS feeds, banner positions, logo inclusions and/or other methods as they are developed.
5. Cross-link related content among partner sites, when appropriate and feasible.
6. Strive to credit the source of original postings and/or stories even if a partner does new and original reporting.
7. Experiment with cooperative news and information gathering and shared content across multiple platforms, including stories, photos, video, tweets (hashtag #wnclinc), interactive maps, document sharing, etc.
8. Develop and share information on your individual goals for and analysis of participation.
9. Share the impact of the partnership on your site, including traffic information and other measures of impact.
10. Explore ideas for a revenue-sharing business model, including discussing and agreeing to participate in, when appropriate, advertising and other methods of revenue generation.
11. Remain flexible and willing to adjust as network experiment progresses.
12. Think creatively about technical and other partnership needs.
13. Think creatively about how to expand and sustain the partnership.
14. Network participation does not mean that independent reporting, newsgathering or writing about another partner will begin or cease. For example, being a WNC LINC partner does not mean an AC-T reporter would report or not report on news and/or events related to another partner, its actions, policies, employees and/or representatives.
15. Partners have the right to exit the network at any time.
16. Use the partnership to have fun, be innovative and think and act creatively.

**Expectations for community news and information sites**

1. Provide a reasonable amount of exclusivity to the network and contact the partnership first in breaking news situations, rather than our competitors.
2. Offer reasoned feedback on the success and challenges of the partnership.
3. Communicate regularly with your partners, the project co-managers and your key contacts at the Citizen-Times.
4. Submit partnership progress reports as indicated on the project timeline.
5. Participate in group meetings as indicated on the project timeline.
6. Submit invoices for network participation payments as indicated on the project timeline. Partners are encouraged to invest their grant money into some aspect of their news/information gathering, reporting operations and/or website or other platform development.
7. Explore ways to develop and collaborate with partnership, either among all the partners or through individual partners.

**Expectations for the Asheville Citizen-Times**

1. Provide the technical foundation for the partnership, including, but not limited to, creation of WNC LINC homepage/portal widget.
2. Share information, ideas and resources with WNC LINC partners about the networks being created by the other four news organizations participating in the J-Lab project.
3. Provide resources to build a business foundation for the partnership.
4. Offer reasoned feedback on the success and challenges of the partnership.
5. Communicate regularly with all partners and with J-Lab about the progress of the network project.
6. Coordinate the WNC LINC project through the one-year grant period, at minimum.

**Statement of Intent**

I have read and understand the WNC Local Information Cooperative's Memorandum of Understanding and wish to participate in the partnership.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

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Name of Website, blog and/or news organization