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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 14, 2010

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**BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY:
PUBLIC MEDIA CORPS LAUNCHED TO BRIDGE BROADBAND DIVIDE**

(WASHINGTON, DC – June 14, 2010) – While home broadband adoption continues to rise, with an average of well over 60% of Americans having high-speed internet available in their homes, African Americans, Latinos and people in low-income brackets continue to lag behind by double-digit margins.

As the recently released National Broadband Plan, *Connecting Communities*, clearly states, “broadband technology can only make a valuable contribution to our civic dialogue if everyone has access to it. As the Internet increasingly becomes the standard platform for receiving information, those who do not have high-speed access to the Internet will be left completely out of the civic dialogue.”

The National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC), with over 30 years of experience providing public media access and training in minority communities, is therefore pleased to announce the selection of 15 Fellows from a highly competitive pool of applicants to kick off the beta launch of the Public Media Corps in Washington, DC. The Public Media Corps (PMC) is a new national service that recruits and trains Fellows to work in public media institutions, public schools, libraries, community centers and other hubs to drive broadband adoption and close this “opportunity divide” by creating new access points and patterns of use in diverse communities using public media assets, content and social media tools.

NBPC Executive Director Jacquie Jones called PMC a transformative model, “The Fellows will work as a cohort with the goal of creating an ecosystem that connects public media and community partners to address broadband adoption in all of our communities.”

Although studies conducted by the Pew Research Center have documented continued growth in broadband adoption rates since 2007 among minority groups, wide disparities still exist with a perceived lack of relevance often named as a key reason for slow adoption, a factor often cited as more significant than cost.

The PMC Fellows will marry technological tools with proven social organizing methods and relevant content to address this barrier using community-guided strategies and interactive and social media for the predominantly Latino and African American residents of Columbia Heights and East of the River, respectively.

Each Fellow will serve a full-time paid six-month residency in one of 13 local partner organizations to develop interactive web-based and mobile applications, design and run training programs for parents, teachers, students, social service providers and community leaders and connect communities to public media infrastructure partners, including PBS and local stations WHUT-TV and WETA.

“For decades, WHUT has been connecting the African American community to Howard University through broadcast and higher education. The PMC offers us new strategies for transforming public media for future generations and connecting diverse communities to timely and relevant information and resources,” said Jennifer Lawson, General Manager of WHUT-TV.

Brenda Jones of the Parklands Community Center said the fellowships are especially important in bad economic times. “During a time of drastic cutbacks in funding, capacity building in terms of technology is a real challenge for small community organizations like ours. The PMC will provide the technology support and

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training that we need to effectively use social media strategies to help us continue our mission to enhance the quality of life of low-income and disadvantaged residents living East of the River."

"PBS and its member stations look forward to working with the Public Media Corp to help ensure universal access to technology and content that educates our nation's children, improves civic engagement across communities, and encourages every American to achieve their full potential in the Digital Age," added PBS President Paula A. Kerger.

PMC fellows have a wealth of training and experience, and are residents of the Washington Metropolitan area but hail from places as diverse as Texas, New York, Trinidad and Tobago, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many have studied and worked in other countries including the Philippines, Mexico and Peru, and their professional experiences range from journalism to design, from film and digital production to international development.

Introducing the 2010 inaugural class of the Public Media Corps:

Kibwe Chase-Marshall – video and digital producer and designer
T. Je'Nein Farrell – former professor, producer, videographer and director
Brennan Gerald – virtual brand and marketing consultant
Khalil Gill – illustrator, web designer and educator
Robin Hamilton – freelance writer and television reporter
Ivana Jackson – recent journalism graduate
Mike Janssen – writer and public media professional
Molly McDonnell – journalist and web designer
Gerardo I. Medrano – former researcher, curator and education specialist
Ashley Mosley – video producer and community organizer
Selina Musuta – radio producer and DJ
LaToya Peterson – blogger and new media entrepreneur
Olivia Rubagumya – journalist and human rights media programmer
Danielle Scruggs – photographer, writer and blogger
Ariel Valdez – journalist and musician with public radio experience

The PMC's local partners include:

Anacostia Community Museum; Anacostia Neighborhood Library; Anacostia Senior High School - Sojourner Truth Academy and Charles Drew Academy; Ballou Senior High School; CentroNia; Latin American Youth Center; Parklands Community Center; PBS Interactive; Spingarn STAY; WEEA (Morgan State University Radio); WETA; WHUT-TV (Howard University Television); WPFW (Pacifica Radio).

The PMC beta program runs from June 21-December 17, 2010 and will build capacity for a national program by documenting the beta project, building toolkits tailored to local needs and local patterns of use for digitally marginalized communities. More information about the Fellows, Partners and the PMC is available at www.publicmediacorps.org.

About the National Black Programming Consortium

The National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) works to increase capacity in diverse communities to create, distribute and use public media. Throughout its history, NBPC's mission has been two-fold: building capacity in new generations of creators of social issue media and broadening the pool of stakeholders in public media institutions. Over the past five years, in addition to supporting producers who create programming for public television and other platforms, NBPC has convened and mentored over 500 digital media professionals in its innovative New Media Institute (NMI). While the focus of the NMI has been professional development for media makers using next-media technologies, NBPC created the Public Media Corps (PMC) to address an urgent need in our communities at the grassroots level. The PMC is created as a framework for supporting creative, sustainable and community-initiated methods for addressing the broadband divide in underserved communities using public media content and tools to drive broadband adoption and create new patterns of use.

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