



Tri-State Public Radio Music Collaborative Membership Study

Produced by Paragon
in partnership with Public Media Company
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About The Collaborative

Four leading public radio music stations pulled together in 2025 to create a significant new partnership called the **Tri-State Music Collaborative**.



WQXR

Classical



WSHU

Classical



WBGO

Jazz



WFUV

Triple A

This pioneering initiative is dedicated to expanding the stations' collective reach, deepening audience engagement, and enriching the public radio music experience for everyone involved. Experiments have yielded new insights. Data and research are combined to drive decisions, programming is being shared across stations, and events are creating touchpoints for music fans in and around New York City.

Why did these stations decide to collaborate?

**Shrinking audience and
revenue**

**Changes in music
consumption**

A rising tide lifts all boats

About the Research

Public Media Company's role was to facilitate collaborative discussions and overall strategic focus.

Paragon conducted research in two key areas:

Digital Audience Development

These audits:

- Analyzed each station's digital marketing presence
- Provided industry-specific data-driven improvement suggestions
- Identified target areas to enhance content distribution
- Developed customized digital strategies specific to each station's unique goals

Membership Cultivation

Research was also done to understand the dynamics of membership for a public media music station, including:

- Donor preferences for ongoing vs. one-time donations
- Traditional vs. non-traditional donation methods
- Most effective appeals and incentives
- Development of updated fundraising guidance to attract new donors
- Creating a sustainable financial model for all participating stations

About the Membership Study

Paragon surveyed members of the four Tri-State stations to gauge support for collaborative efforts.



Methodology

Online survey of station members



Research subjects

Study reached out to the stations' members and other addressable audiences (on-air, via email blast)



Sample Size

- 1,200 members total
- 300 per station



Timeline

Survey was in the field April 24-June 9, 2025.



Topline Findings



Collaboration Support

The collaboration has **strong member support**, with interest in collaborative initiatives that strengthen public radio's mission across the Tri-State area.



Significant Revenue Potential

59% of members would be likely to provide a **separate and additional donation** to a collaborative effort beyond their current donation to serve local music communities.

Collaborative Strategies

A few key collaborative strategies emerged as the most promising ways for Tri-State Music Collaborative stations to work on "in concert."

Marketing & Branding

The collaboration should determine the best name and logo to use and add it to each station's communications, website, primary newsletter, and social media sites to boost station awareness and ensure audiences and potential audiences understand the benefits the collaboration will provide to members and the community.

Newsletters

Two co-branded newsletters should be launched: one highlighting local events and music events, and one geared to family events.

Collaborative Strategy: Fundraising

The extensive research revealed a few areas that all stations could benefit from, especially in the light of the loss of federal funding.

Messaging

- Use **key messaging** in all fundraising efforts – “local,” “supporting public radio” and “supporting music”
- **Educate** members on how the collaboration will work, what purpose it serves and how any funds raised will be divided and used
- Emphasize that a donation to the collaboration supports the **mission of public radio** and serves the station(s) with which members are loyal
- Act with urgency to launch **joint fundraising efforts** to seize on heightened awareness that public radio needs financial support

Joint Activities

- Add a **collaborative donation option** with renewals and new memberships with a fixed number or percentage to support the collaboration
- Plan a **joint fund drive** to raise awareness of the collaboration among each station’s audience
- Activate **events**, including concerts, member activities and food trucks, that raise funds while also increasing awareness about what the collaboration aims to do
- Use **on-air appeals** directly from hosts, businesses and local artists
- Offer **different collaboration member levels** as well as opportunities to support the collaboration at **lower-priced events**

Member Preferences

- Members prefer website donations over cash apps, crowdfunding or social media giving, but **non-traditional giving options** will widen awareness and donations over time
- **Discounts** at music venues, pre-sale tickets and exclusive events are more enticing incentives than member gifts

Collaborative Strategy: Shared App

One key recommendation was to build and launch a collaborative local events app



App Branding & Access

- Brand as a market-wide local events app that is promoted by each station
- Each station's app should include a tab for the market wide local events app

Music Focus

- Local music events and concerts should be the central feature

Cultural & Curated Events

- Include non-music cultural events curated by each station
- Designate family-friendly events

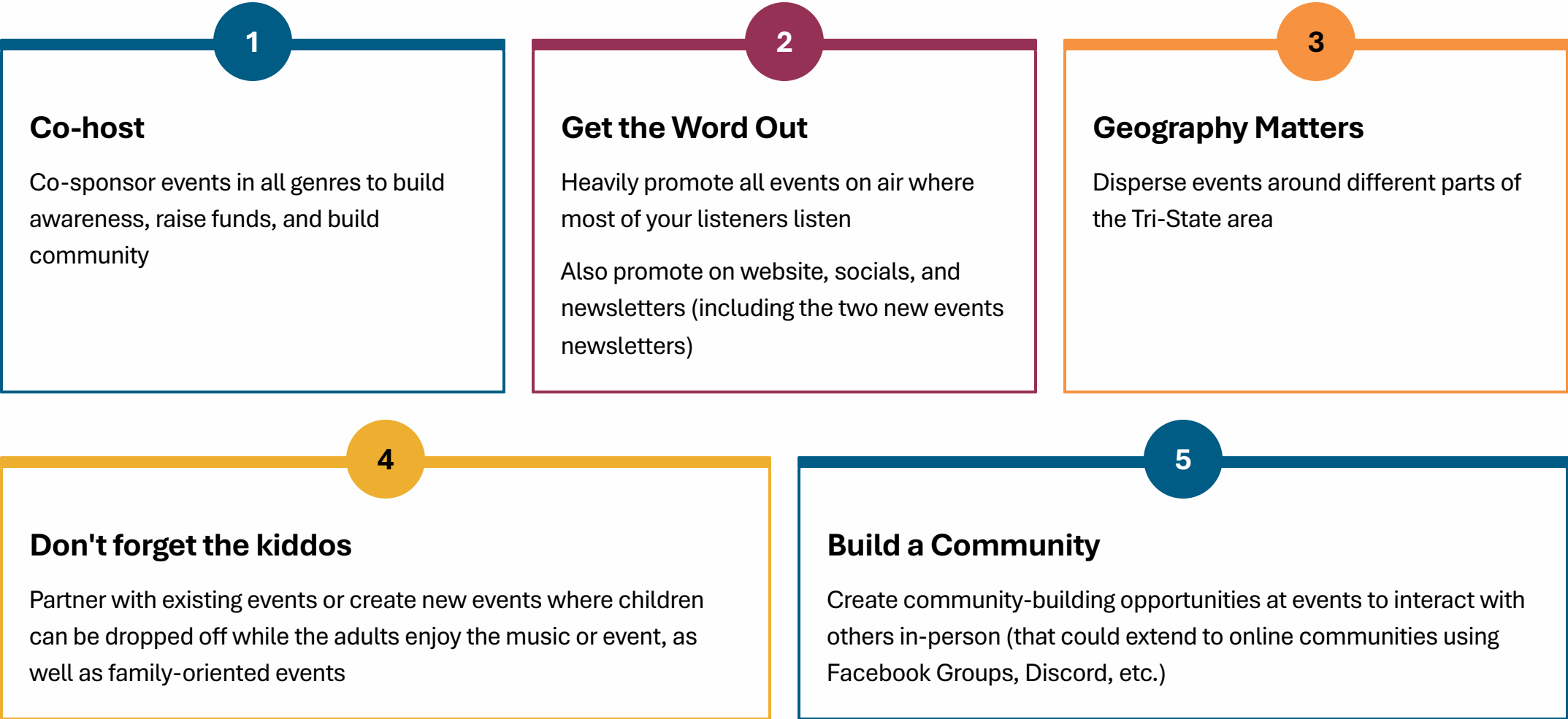
Station Integration

- Each station should curate and post their own station-specific events calendar on their website for station events and all events of interest to that audience
- The station-specific events calendars should link to the marketwide app on station websites, apps, socials, and newsletters (including the two new events newsletters)
- Each station should air daily events calendars (live is best for daily changes) that points to their own app and website for their events calendar, while acknowledging that a market-wide events calendar is also available there



Collaborative Strategy: Events

The Tri-State Stations also could pool their efforts in building awareness for public media music stations in the area via joint event planning and implementation.



Strategic Partnerships

When banded together, the Tri-State Music Stations can also scale broad and compelling partnerships that will be much more impactful than one station working alone.



Target Existing Events

Partnerships with existing major events in the tri-state area that would benefit from on-site station participation (live music, recorded music, booths) and promotion from all four stations



Streaming Services

Consider partnerships that the collaboration could form with streaming services such as Spotify



Charitable Organizations

Consider partnerships and co-sponsorships (including events) with local and national charitable organizations that are supported by members

Questions? Want to know more?



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