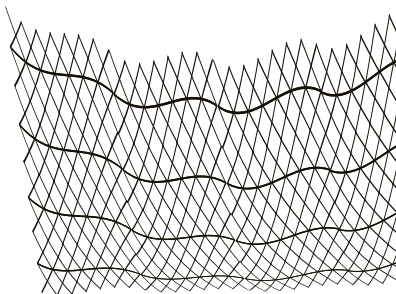


★  
HOW WE ORGANIZE THE ALLIED MEDIA CONFERENCE ZINE

VOL. 1



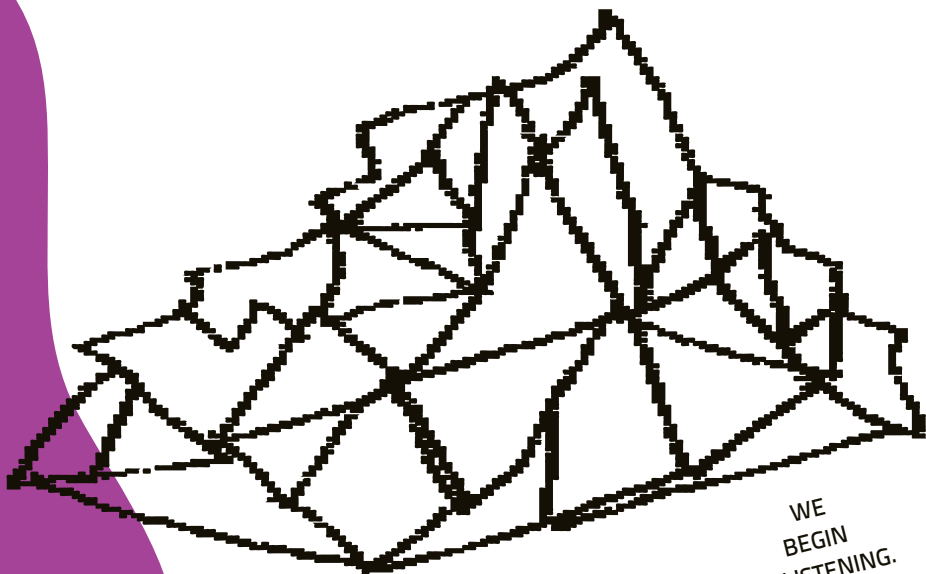
**ALLIED  
MEDIA  
CONFERENCE**





CREATE CONNECT TRANSFORM

# ALLIED MEDIA CONFERENCE



WE  
BEGIN  
BY LISTENING.

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# AMC Tracks, Practice Spaces, & Network Gatherings

=

T/PS/NG

PRONUNCIATION: tip'sing

## Introduction:

Welcome to the first volume of our **"How We Organize the AMC"** zine. In this zine we are focusing on the fine art of organizing AMC tracks, practice spaces, and network gatherings (T/PS/NGs), the core content types of the Allied Media Conferences.

The intended audience for the zine are coordinators of T/PS/NGs, but hopefully others will find these materials interesting as well.

In 2013, we will celebrate our 15th annual Allied Media Conference, which is an amazing accomplishment made entirely possible by our network of volunteers, coordinators, organizers, sponsors, presenters, performers and attendees.

This zine attempts to aggregate some of the organizing models and collective wisdom of the AMC network. We hope this knowledge-sharing makes AMC organizing smoother, more rewarding and fun, and we hope it offers some inspiration for other similar gatherings.

### **Cheers to another 15!**

Morgan Willis, Jenny Lee, Mike Medow  
(AMC Zine Co-Editors)

# Background

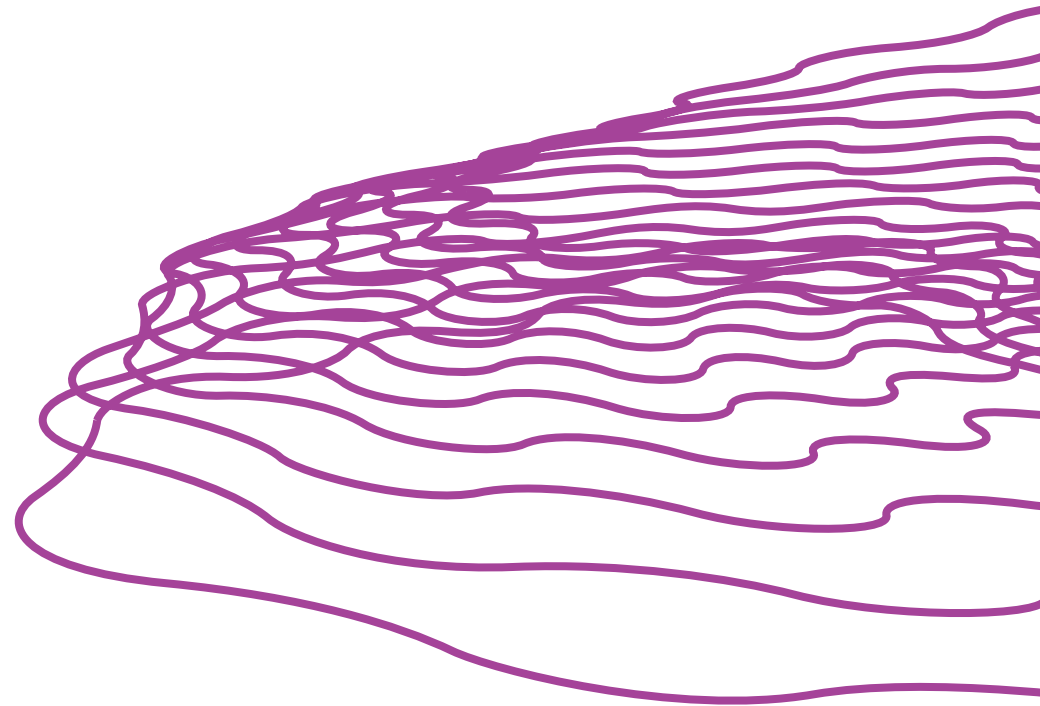
## ALLIED MEDIA CONFERENCE: A BRIEF HISTORY

The Allied Media Conference emerges out of 14 years of relationship-building across issues, identities, organizing practices and creative mediums. Since the first conference (then called the Midwest Zine Conference) in 1999, people have been compelled by the concept of do-it-yourself media. With the shift to Allied Media in 2005, the AMC began to attract more people who are interested in using participatory media as a strategy for social justice organizing. Our definition of ‘media’ has grown over the years to include everything from breakdancing to broadcasting community radio and building web applications.

BY THE TIME Allied Media Projects and the AMC moved from Bowling Green, OH to Detroit in 2007 more young people, queer people, people of color and low-income communities were participating in the conference. More artists and organizers from Detroit were participating and bringing with them the lessons from the city’s creative media and social movements. In moving the conference to Detroit and connecting with the city’s movement legacy and current practices of transformation, AMP began advancing a new model for how national conferences can relate to their host cities. Following the first AMC held in Detroit, in 2007, legendary Detroit activist Grace Lee Boggs wrote:

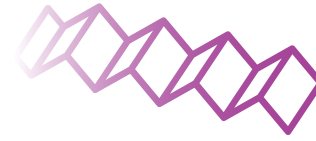
*At this conference, a new generation of youthful movement-builders came out of obscurity. Emerging in a special time in which there is an explosion of activity in the fields of alternative media, alternative education, and alternative ways of doing politics, they have accepted the challenge to direct this explosion towards a new movement to transform society.*

Every year new national networks of social justice organizers, artists, educators and technologists make the AMC their point of convergence to share skills and develop strategy. Every year we face new challenges and opportunities. As a result, the work of organizing the conference changes constantly, and there is no perfect formula for how we do this work. Embedded into every conference organizing cycle are a set of principles, which AMP has distilled from our network after years of listening.



# Allied Media Projects Network Principles

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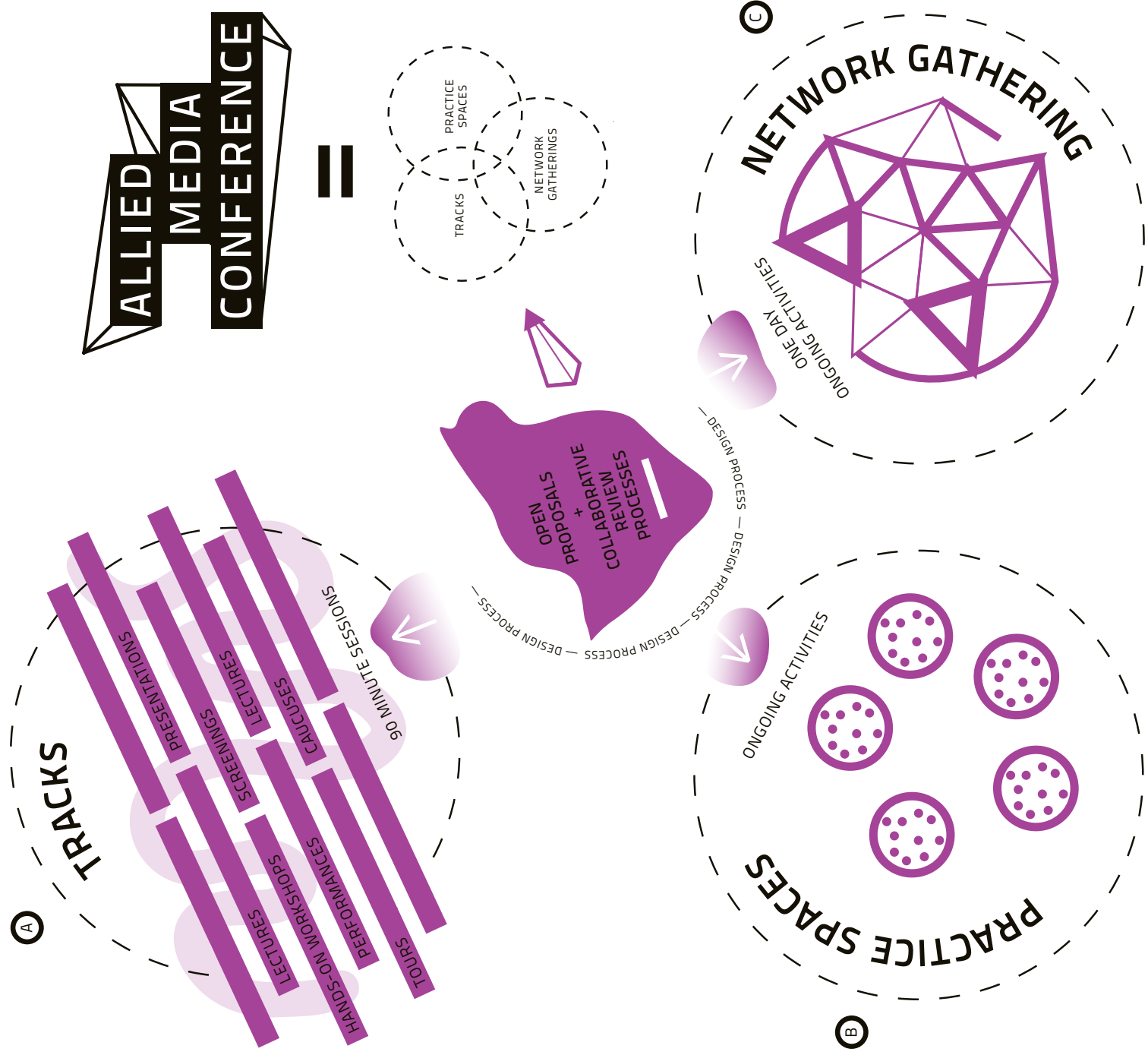


- ▶ We are making an honest attempt to solve the most significant problems of our day.
- ▶ We are building a network of people and organizations that are developing long-term solutions based on the immediate confrontation of our most pressing problems.
- ▶ Wherever there is a problem, there are already people acting on the problem in some fashion. Understanding those actions is the starting point for developing effective strategies to resolve the problem, so we focus on the solutions, not the problems.
- ▶ We emphasize our own power and legitimacy.
- ▶ We presume our power, not our powerlessness.
- ▶ We spend more time building than attacking.
- ▶ We focus on strategies rather than issues.

- ▶ The strongest solutions happen through the process, not in a moment at the end of the process.
- ▶ The most effective strategies for us are the ones that work in situations of scarce resources and intersecting systems of oppression because those solutions tend to be the most holistic and sustainable.
- ▶ Place is important. For the AMC, Detroit is important as a source of innovative, collaborative, low-resource solutions. Detroit gives the conference a sense of place, just as each of the conference participants bring their own sense of place with them to the conference.
- ▶ We encourage people to engage with their whole selves, not just with one part of their identity.
- ▶ We begin by listening.



# ALLIED MEDIA CONFERENCE



A

## TRACKS

- TOURS
- HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS
- LECTURES
- PERFORMANCES
- CAUCUSES
- SCREENINGS
- LECTURES
- PRESENTATIONS
- 90 MINUTE SESSIONS

B

## PRACTICE SPACES

- ONGOING ACTIVITIES

C

## NETWORK GATHERING

- ONE DAY ONGOING ACTIVITIES

**A** TRACKS

A Track is a series of 90 minute AMC sessions held together by a shared theme. It may contain a combination of lecture/presentations, hands-on workshops, screenings, performances, tours, and caucus meetings.

**B** PRACTICE SPACES

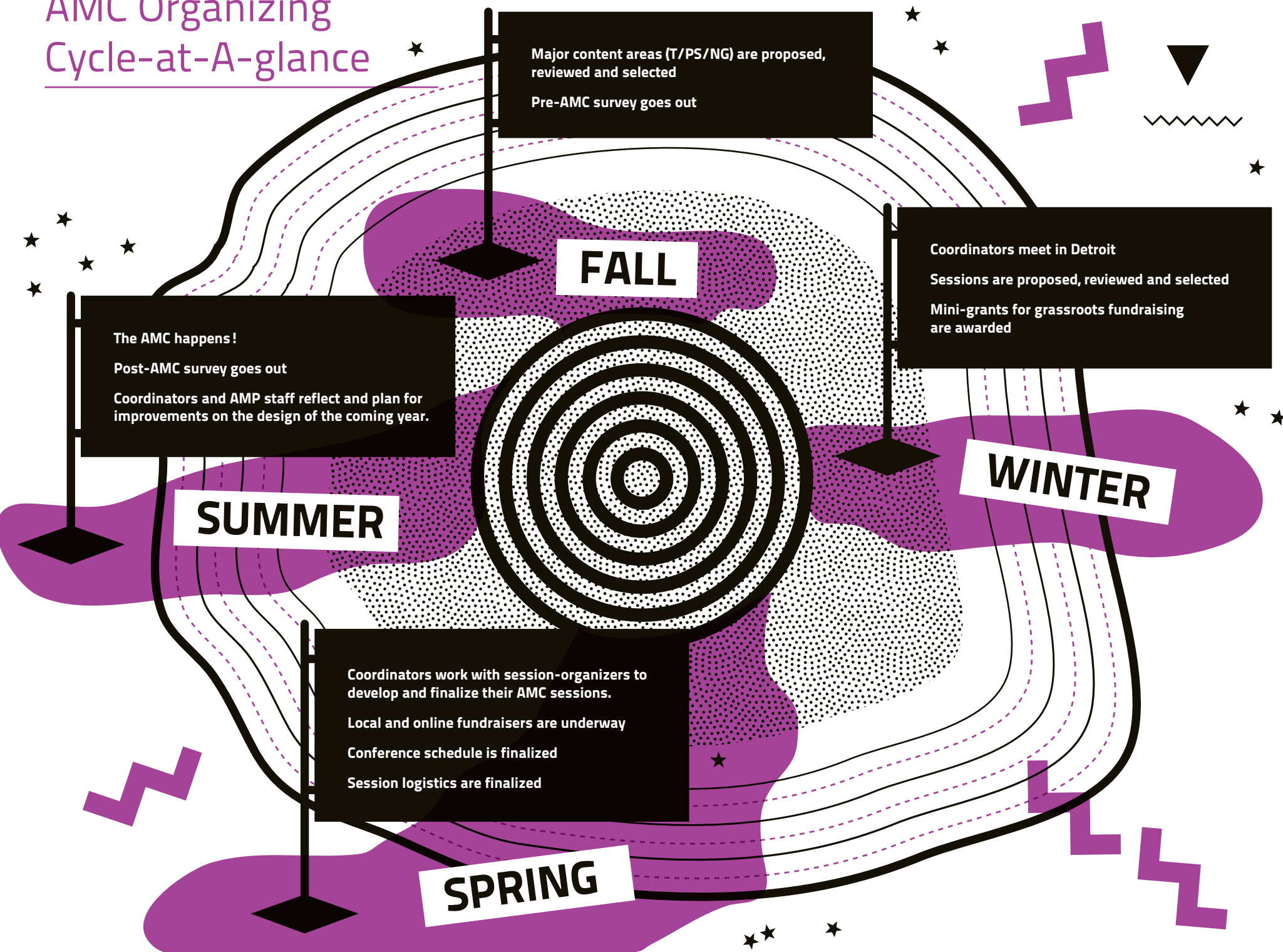
A Practice Space is a Track that happens in one place throughout the whole weekend, with a focus on hands-on activities. They often feature 'ongoing activities' like building a radio transmitter, which might take all weekend. They may also offer open studio hours for unstructured, collaborative exploration.

**C** NETWORK GATHERINGS

A Network Gathering is a day-long mini-conference convened by a local or national network on the Thursday before the AMC. They provide space for groups to do strategic planning, media-making and other activities that support their year-round organizing and collaboration.

\*Outside of these three content types there are individual sessions, music showcases, bowling and karaoke parties, opening and closing ceremonies and a slew of participant-organized auxiliary activities, like soccer and thrift store escapades.

# AMC Organizing Cycle-at-A-glance



Major content areas (T/PS/NG) are proposed, reviewed and selected  
Pre-AMC survey goes out

**FALL**

Coordinators meet in Detroit  
Sessions are proposed, reviewed and selected  
Mini-grants for grassroots fundraising are awarded

**WINTER**

The AMC happens!  
Post-AMC survey goes out  
Coordinators and AMP staff reflect and plan for improvements on the design of the coming year.

**SUMMER**

Coordinators work with session-organizers to develop and finalize their AMC sessions.  
Local and online fundraisers are underway  
Conference schedule is finalized  
Session logistics are finalized

**SPRING**

# COORDINATING YOUR T/PS/NG

“I have found the key to successful collaboration and collectives are: having a shared vision and goals, clearly-defined roles, honest communication about capacity, strong systems of accountability, and the ability to scale back if needed.”

- Diana Nucera, AMC2012 Media A Go Go Lab Coordinator / AMP Co-Director

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## COORDINATOR'S SHORTLIST

As a T/PS/NG coordinator, this is the list of things you and your team will do between December and June. Each item applies to all T/PS/NGs unless otherwise noted:

- Assemble your Coordination Team and assign roles
- Complete and distribute the pre-AMC content survey
- Write the final description/vision statement for your TPSNG
- Attend the Coordinators meeting in Detroit
- Create and implement an outreach plan
- Create and implement a fundraising plan
- Create and share a customized call for session proposals and circulate it (Tracks and Practice Spaces) or design your agenda (Network Gatherings)
- Review session proposals
- Make recommendations for final content to AMP staff (Tracks and Practice Spaces)
- Facilitate session changes and mergers (Tracks and Practice Spaces)
- Promote your T/PS/NG to the world
- Support your T/PS/NG participants in making travel and housing arrangements
- Find and coordinate volunteers (Practice Spaces)
- Conduct an internal debrief with your coordinating team
- Participate in the AMP reflection and evaluation process
- Get ready for next year!

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# Core Roles of a T/PS/NG Coordinating Team

IT'S EVERYONE ON YOUR COORDINATING TEAM'S RESPONSIBILITY TO:

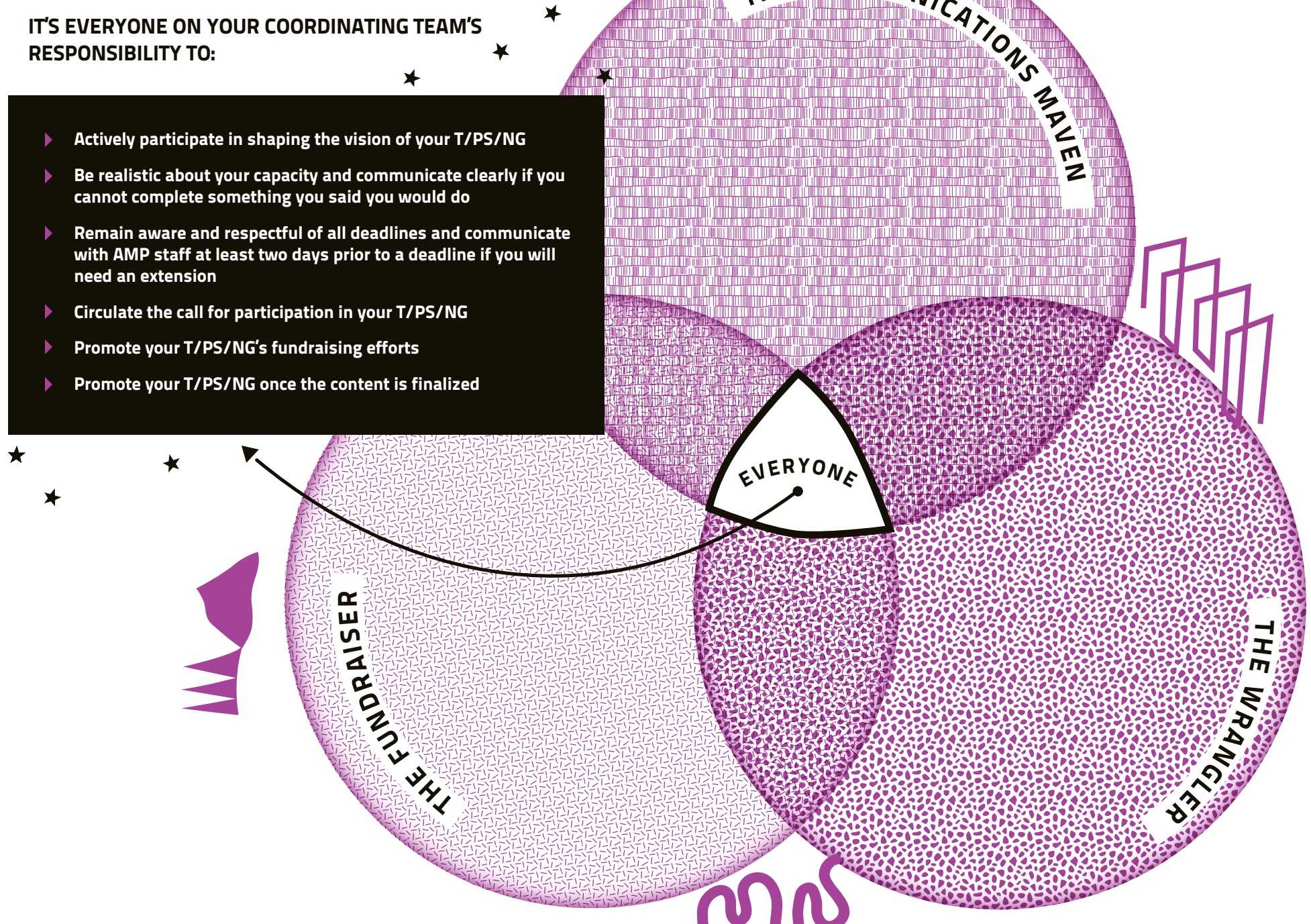
- ▶ Actively participate in shaping the vision of your T/PS/NG
- ▶ Be realistic about your capacity and communicate clearly if you cannot complete something you said you would do
- ▶ Remain aware and respectful of all deadlines and communicate with AMP staff at least two days prior to a deadline if you will need an extension
- ▶ Circulate the call for participation in your T/PS/NG
- ▶ Promote your T/PS/NG's fundraising efforts
- ▶ Promote your T/PS/NG once the content is finalized

THE COMMUNICATIONS MAVEN

EVERYONE

THE FUNDRAISER

THE WRANGLER



# The Wrangler

**KEY WORDS:** FACILITATE ORGANIZE CONSISTENCY

## IT'S PRIMARILY THE WRANGLER'S JOB TO:

- Keep communication flowing among coordinators.
- Keep track of deadlines and tasks.
- Be the point person of communication with AMP staff.
- Organize/schedule regular coordinator meetings.
- Develop coordination tools (like spreadsheets, to-do lists, listserves)
- Facilitate group brainstorming and problem-solving.

**Do you answer yes to the questions below?  
If so, you may be the Wrangler.**

**16** **Y / N** Do you like herding cats?  
Sometimes getting everyone on a call at the same time, especially if you are dealing with multiple time zones can feel like cats herding. Are you a natural cat whisperer?

**Y / N** Do you like liaison-ing with AMP staff?

**Y / N** Do you like being a person who knows the answer to 'WHEN IS \_\_\_\_\_ DUE?'?

"A good facilitator can pull a to-do list out of a conversation and remind others what they agreed to do before the conversation ends."

- D. Nucera

# The Communications Maven

**KEYWORDS:** CONTENT PEOPLE VISIBILITY

## IT IS PRIMARILY THE MAVEN'S JOB TO:

- Lead the session-recruitment process (for Tracks & Practice Spaces) or agenda-development process (for Network Gatherings)
- Develop your T/PS/NG's 'brand" (take the lead on drafting language, designing logos, making fundraiser graphics or flyers)
- Be the primary social media representative for your T/PS/NG (create and manage Twitter, FB, or other social media accounts)
- Collaborate with other T/PS/NGs to develop collaborative content
- Lead the process of giving feedback to presenters/ participants in your T/PS/NG as they finalize the outlines and descriptions of their sessions.

**Do you answer yes to the questions below?  
If so, maybe you're the maven.**

**Y / N** Do you take pleasure in well-crafted sentences, stunning visuals and other vehicles of clear communication that make ideas irresistible?

**Y / N** Do you find yourself speaking about the AMC to random people more often than you would like to admit?

**Y / N** Do you use/understand FB, tumblr, twitter, pinterest or other sites on which people share cool/critical information?

**Y / N** Are you a natural collaborator who seeks out the interconnectedness of all things?

# The FUN(d)raiser

**KEYWORDS:** STRATEGY IMAGINATION MOTIVATION

## IT IS PRIMARILY THE FUN(D)RAISER'S JOB TO:

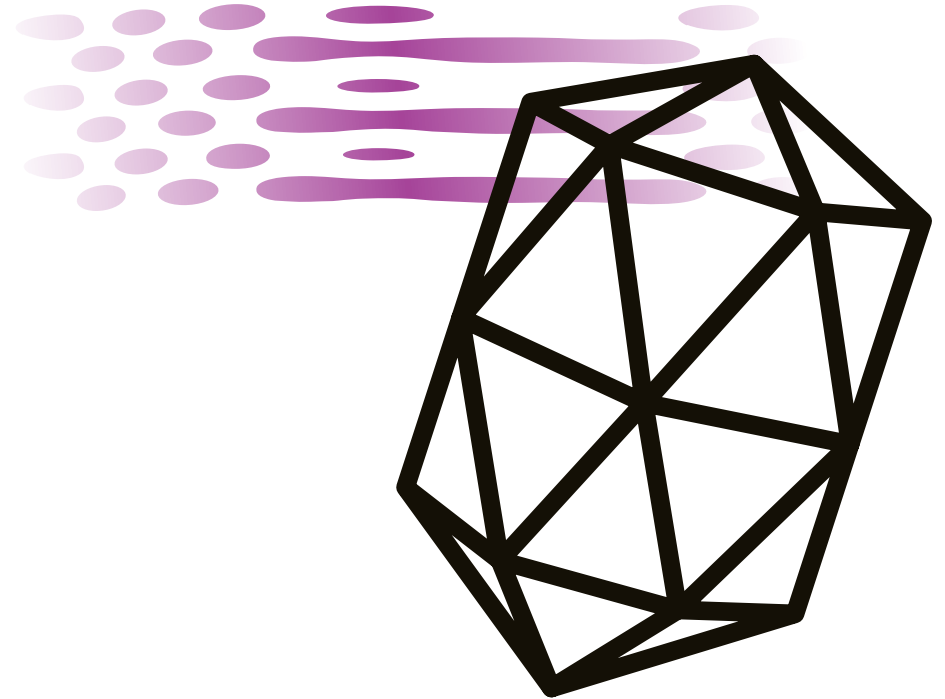
- Lead fundraising strategy brainstorms with the team, and their implementation
- Research fundraising tactics that have worked in the past
- Be the point of contact with the AMPstore (store.alliedmedia.org), if your T/PS/NG is selling products or collecting donations through the store.
- Create and manage the budget for your T/PS/NG
- Write the mini-grant proposal for your T/PS/NG with input from your fellow coordinators
- Track spending and receipts and submit the final report for the mini-grant
- Keep the whole team engaged and excited about fundraising efforts

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## Do you answer yes to the questions below?

If so, YOU move the cheese!

- Y / N** Are you either: not terrified of money or willing to become unterrified of money?
- Y / N** Do you like to make ambitious plans and do impeccable follow-through on those plans?
- Y / N** Are you good at inspiring people to donate time, energy and money? Are you good at saying thank-you when they do?
- Y / N** Do you enjoy making and using systems for tracking income and expenses?
- Y / N** Do you have a passion for making the AMC more accessible to people who currently can't afford to participate?



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# 10 Ways to Start Organizing Your Team Now

**THE FIRST STEP  
TO A HEALTHY  
COLLABORATION  
IS MAKING SURE  
EVERYONE IS ON THE  
SAME PAGE.**

DIANA NUCERA



START

- ➔ **Connect.** Get the names, phone numbers, email addresses, tumblrs/fb/twitters/etc of ALL coordinators in one place. (Suggestion: Create a listserv, or group on a social media site)
- ➔ **Build the description for your T/PS/NG.** Start by collecting the visions of each member of your coordinating team (in written form or verbally). Choose one person who will synthesize these into an initial draft. Allow everyone a chance to edit that draft until it feels right to the whole team. (Suggestion: Use a collective editing platform like Google Docs or PiratePad so everyone can participate.)
- ➔ **Take GREAT notes.** After every meeting or conversation you should have recorded in your notes: brainstorm, decisions, looming questions, next steps and to-do lists. (Suggestion: take notes in a single Google Doc or PiratePad throughout the whole process, adding new notes at the top, rather than emailing out the notes after each meeting. This helps reduce email apathy).
- ➔ **Divide up the three main roles.** Wrangler, Communications Maven, Fun(d)raiser. Make sure this decision is recorded in the notes.
- ➔ **Set a regular meeting time.** Create a shared calendar or phone/contact tree reminder system. Also, consider using Google Hangouts, which allow you to video chat with multiple people at a time and share documents while chatting.
- ➔ **Create a logo.** This will help tremendously with promotion and fundraising for your T/PS/NG. (Suggestion: Ask for the support of other T/PS/NG coordination teams if you don't know how to make one.)
- ➔ **Seek out intersections.** Where are there opportunities to overlap/collaborate with other coordination teams? Some of the most visionary sessions and effective fundraisers have been the result of T/PS/NG collaborations.

# Month-by-month Checklist for Coordinators

## JANUARY

- ❑ Confirm your T/PS/NG coordinators
- ❑ Determine the management structure for your team
- ❑ Create and distribute the call-out for participation in your T/PS/NG
- ❑ Create your fundraising timeline - decide who will receive payments from donors and distribute funds to presenters/coordinators; decide what online payment method you will use
- ❑ Create a list of questions with your Coordinating Team that your representative(s) will bring with them to the Coordinators Meeting in Detroit.

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## FEBRUARY

- ❑ Have first coordinator check-in call with AMP staff
- ❑ Apply for a mini-grant for your T/PS/NG from AMP
- ❑ Create promotional elements: logo, FB page, etc.
- ❑ Recruit session presenters
- ❑ Submit session proposals
- ❑ Launch fundraising projects
- ❑ Prepare session review plan

## MARCH

- ❑ Finish recruiting for and submitting session proposals.
- ❑ Review session proposals (see full description of the session review process on page 36.)
- ❑ Submit final list of 10 session recommendations to AMP staff (only for T & PS)
- ❑ Continue fundraising efforts

## APRIL

- ❑ Have second coordinator check in call with AMP staff
- ❑ Work with presenters to finalize long and short descriptions of their sessions
- ❑ Promote your T/PS/NG
- ❑ Continue fundraising efforts
- ❑ Work with session organizers to submit ALL final logistics and content info for their sessions

## MAY

- ❑ Distribute funds that have been raised for presenter travel and housing support
- ❑ Make travel plans to AMC
- ❑ Plan volunteer orientations (only PS)
- ❑ Finalize your agenda (only NG)
- ❑ Promote your T/PS/NG
- ❑ Make sure all coordinators and presenters in your T/PS/NG have registered for AMC2013

## JUNE

- ❑ Complete final fundraising efforts
- ❑ Promote your T/PS/NG
- ❑ Make sure all coordinators and presenters in your T/PS/NG have ground transportation info
- ❑ Have an awesome time at the AMC
- ❑ Submit post-AMC evaluations/reflections

## JULY

- ❑ Submit final reports for mini-grants
- ❑ Complete the Post-AMC General Reflections Survey
- ❑ Complete the Post-AMC Coordinator Reflections Survey
- ❑ Have coordinator debrief call with AMP staff

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# Fundraising

## WHAT AM I FUNDRAISING FOR?

Each T/PS/NG fundraising team will come up with their own strategy for raising funds and how they will allocate money. The ultimate fundraising goal is:

To make the AMC more accessible to people who are essential to the awesomeness of your T/PS/NG but who need some level of financial support in order to attend.

### Here's a list of things coordinators have fundraised for in the past:

- ▶ Travel stipends for coordinators and presenters
- ▶ Housing stipends for coordinators, volunteers and/or presenters
- ▶ Travel & housing costs for children or personal assistants who may need to accompany coordinators and presenters
- ▶ Food for T/PS/NG caucuses at the AMC
- ▶ Childcare costs for presenters or coordinators who have to leave their kids at home in order to attend the AMC
- ▶ Stipends for coordinators to offset the number of volunteer hours spent organizing their T/PS/NG
- ▶ Up front costs related to fundraising (supplies, performance fees, venue rental fees, etc.)

**NOTE:** You are not expected to fundraise for all of these things

## WHAT SUPPORT DOES AMP PROVIDE?

### Before the AMC

- ▶ A \$200 travel stipend for one coordinator from your team to attend the January Coordinators meeting in Detroit + ground transportation and meals for the duration of the meeting.
- ▶ The opportunity to apply for a \$500 mini-grant to seed your T/PS/NG's fundraising efforts (available between Feb and May).

### At the AMC

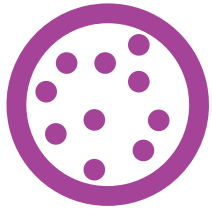
- ▶ Complimentary registration for members of your coordinating team
- ▶ Complimentary registration for up to 4 presenters per session in your T/PS/NG.
- ▶ Complimentary registrations for up to 4 volunteers per Practice Space and Network Gathering.
- ▶ A limited number of housing stipends for presenters only\*
- ▶ A complimentary shuttle to and from the airport for coordinators and presenters during the AMC
- ▶ All necessary A/V and supplies for each T/PS/NG, within reason



PRESENTERS  
WILL HAVE THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST  
HOUSING STIPENDS IN  
THEIR SESSION  
PROPOSAL FORM



# Questions to Ask Before/During/After Fundraising



## BEFORE:

- Who has experience in fundraising?
- What do we need to fundraise for?
- What do we need to start?
- Who will keep track?
- What is our capacity?
- Why is this work/effort important?
- Who can help us?
- What are our major concerns?
- Where can we get some mula?



## DURING:

- How is this going?
- Do we need to readjust our plan?
- What else could make this go better?
- Are people around us excited? Do they know?
- What are other T/PS/NG doing that's working?
- Do we need more support?
- Are we keeping track of our budget?
- Have we checked in w/ AMC staff?



## AFTER:

- What went well?
- What could've gone better?
- What did we learn?
- How much did we make?
- Did we grow our community?
- What challenges will we watch out for next time?
- How can we effectively share our successful strategies?
- Have we said 'Thank you'?



# A Basic Recipe for Successful Grass Roots Fundraising

by Moya Bailey and Zachari Curtis of Shawty Got Skillz

"People are buying into a community or an idea that they support and they should understand how their money furthers that goal as well as see some evidence of their gift beyond getting you and your crew to AMC."

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## INGREDIENTS:

- ▶ Seed money
- ▶ Motivated Money Makers
- ▶ Easy online payment options
- ▶ Something fun to do or buy!

## DIRECTIONS:

The first step is to gather a little bit of seed money. Even \$100 will help you with your fundraising projects. Put a little in and you'll get a lot out. Buy your party supplies, or materials you'll need for food or other products you will be selling.

Next, stir in some Motivated Money Makers! It's super important to find people who don't mind asking for money to do it. This is not the time to be coy or passive. Get your friends who have no shame, who really feel comfortable making the hard sell, even

if they may only be tangentially connected to the project, to do the asking. It makes a big difference to have a strong bold voice doing a pitch at an event or in a video.

Finally give folks a little something! It can be an experience that they enjoy (a house party), food ( a bake sale), or even a zine! We are not in a world of something for nothing and people are more likely to give if they feel an exchange is taking place. People are buying into a community or an idea that they support and they should understand how their money furthers that goal as well as see some evidence of their gift beyond getting you and your crew to AMC.

## THE SHAWTIES USED THE MONEY TO:

- ▶ Reimburse Shawties for travel to AMC
- ▶ Pay friends who offered their skillz for our parties
- ▶ Buy alcohol and other party supplies
- ▶ Support our fundraising for 2013!

It's important to thank people for their contributions in whatever way is appropriate. We post thank yous on our tumblr and send out emails to folks who gave their time. Some folks who give prizes or hand-write thank you notes and updates. It usually ends up generating more generosity.

**TIP:**  
**Be careful not to overspend!**  
 You don't need a full bar at a house party! Give people 2-4 options and you are all set!

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# Some Awesome Fundraising Plans that have Worked!



## THE PHILADELPHIA EPIC EVENT (2011)

**Philly Stands Up!** threw “The Hunger,” a fundraising effort to bring folks from all over North America to participate in the Allied Media Conference’s Growing Safer Communities track.

- ▶ A \$500 mini-grant from the AMC paid for the space rental and DJs, and members of PSU fronted another \$500 to cover drinks, promotional materials, and supplies.
- ▶ In a month of outreach, we had solicited donations from more than 30 contributors. Their art, gift cards, and offers of skills peppered the walls of our ‘gallery.’”
- ▶ By 9PM, the space had filled up because no one wanted to miss Life’s a Drag, the Attic Youth Center’s notorious Drag Troupe. When the performance ended at 10PM, we closed the art auction and kicked off the dance party with local DJ Precolumbian and New York friend Shomi Noise.
- ▶ Bar favorites included both local brews and cheap beer, liquors that had been infused for weeks with local herbs and a whole table of snacks and nonalcoholic beverages.
- ▶ It was important to us that this space was youth friendly and large enough that guests had more social options than just drinking or dancing. A guest photographer and fly costume selection made the photobooth particularly popular.
- ▶ We made sure to have printed and posted statements

declaring, ‘this a Safe(r) Space” and had clearly marked Mediators on hand [looking good in neon arm bands] who stayed sober and were around to help navigate conflict and keep an eye on the vibe, safety and intention of the space.

- ▶ Over 200 attendees came out to party and support Transformative Justice and the AMC. The \$2,700 we raised helped bring magnificent people to Detroit, and made the Growing Safer Communities track one of brilliance and robust action.



## IMMUNE POWER PACKS FOR THE HEALING JUSTICE PRACTICE SPACE (2011 & 2012)

**The Healing Justice Practice Space (HJPS) worked with an herbalist to develop Immune Power Packs, filled with natural remedies for overworked activists. They sold most of them through the AMPStore ([store.alliedmedia.org](http://store.alliedmedia.org)), and sold the remaining items at the AMC.**

- ▶ The HJPS spent their \$500 AMC mini-grant fronting the supplies for the Power Packs. They advertised by writing an article for the AMC blog and advertising to their networks as well as potential attendees to the AMC.
- ▶ They sold the Immune Power Packs and collected donations on the AMPStore, which AMC attendees were already using to register for the conference-- like candy in the check-out line, but way better.
- ▶ As a result of the fundraising, all HJPS coordinators and volunteers who required travel stipends were able to receive support, and a leftover balance was carried forward for 2013 fundraising efforts.

# 3

## INDIE GOGO CAMPAIGN FOR DETROIT FUTURE YOUTH TO ATTEND AMC2012:

Five people coordinated this effort, with dozens more promoting and canvassing. Ultimately over 109 people donated to the the DFY IndieGoGo campaign.

- ▶ Organizers spent part of their \$500 AMC mini-grant to create promotional media (video, posters, icons, etc.) for their campaign.
- ▶ DFY offered 'perks' for donors ranging from participation in a skate party (\$5), to a DFY-curriculum mixtape (\$500).
- ▶ Through donations, they surpassed their \$5000 goal.

# 4

## PHILADELPHIA SPELLING BEE (2009, 2010, AND 2011)

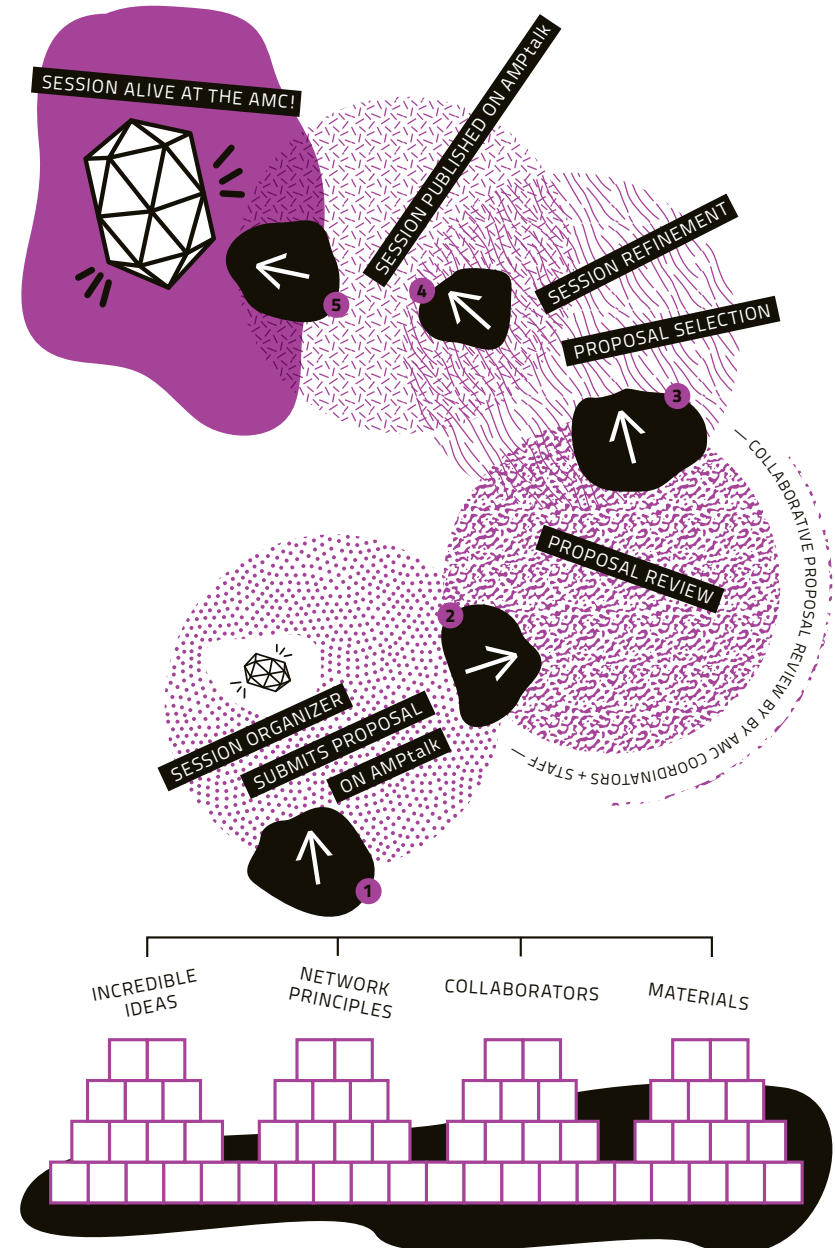
This took place in conjunction with the Philadelphia delegation's fundraising efforts.

- ▶ Three coordinators planned the event. They charged a \$5 entry fee to the spelling bee. Prizes were donated.
- ▶ They spent \$100 on food and liquor, and got an addition \$100 in food and drink donated. Approximately 150 people attended
- ▶ From entry fees and refreshment sales they grossed \$1,000, leaving about \$900 in funds raised after costs.
- ▶ Special touches: Hand-engraved plaque prizes for the winners!

# Session Planning

At the end of the day, the success of AMC Tracks and Practice Spaces comes down to the quality of the sessions housed within.

## LIFE CYCLE OF A SESSION





**THE PARTICIPANTS  
ARE BRILLIANT.  
DON'T FORGET THAT -  
DON'T BE FULL OF  
YOUR OWN ANSWERS  
AND STORIES,  
LEAVE AS MUCH SPACE  
AS POSSIBLE TO FILL UP  
FROM THEM,  
BE IN AN EXCHANGE.**

ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN,  
AMP BOARD MEMBER AND AMC  
FACILITATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE

## Tip Sheet! How to Recruit Sessions

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This primarily applies to Track and Practice Space coordinators, but Network Gatherings should consider designing their agendas through a similar process.

**Create an incredible call out.** This should include: a description of your Track or Practice Space (ideally with a hot logo), some examples of the kinds of content you're looking for, and contact information for the person on your team who is available to answer questions.

**Spread the word.** Post your call for proposals on email listservs, websites, and all manner of social media. Go to events where the content is relevant to your T/PS and talk to people one-on-one, or host information sessions via conference calls.

**Target people.** Make a list of people who you'd like to formally invite to apply and send them personal invites. Be prepared for some ambivalence and maybe even some 'no thank yous'. But be persistent! Oftentimes the people with the most valuable knowledge to share are the most reluctant to see themselves as 'presenters.'

**Be clear about the process.** Make sure the potential presenters know that their session will need to be proposed and reviewed before it is officially accepted to the AMC.

**Offer support.** Some of the folks applying are new to the AMC as presenters (or maybe even attendees). Be available to answer questions, provide feedback.

## AMC Session Review and Selection Process

Session review happens within the AMPtalk website (talk.alliedmedia.org). All coordinators will receive email instructions for how to participate in the review process on AMPtalk. The review period generally lasts for one week, in which time, all coordinators are responsible for reviewing session proposals submitted under their track and all sessions submitted under at least one other track.

Session review is a good way to engage members of your coordinating team who want to help out but don't have capacity to play one of the three 'Core Roles.' Sessions review requires about three hours of time, it's fun, and it's a huge help to AMP Staff, who ultimately make the final decisions about AMC content.

Once your team has completed it's reviews, you will be asked to get together as coordinators and create a final list of your teams 'Top 10' sessions that you recommend be included in the AMC. You will receive specific instructions over email for how/where to submit your final list.

AMP Staff take the recommendations from all T/PS/NG coordinating teams, synthesize them with our staff reviews, and then reconcile our selections with the physical limits of conference space and time. We make the final decisions on what gets accepted, rejected and merged into the final AMC content, relying heavily on the recommendations from coordinating teams.

## What Makes Awesome AMC Sessions?

As a T/PS/NG Coordinator your role is to work with session presenters in the months leading up to the AMC to design the most awesome sessions possible. The tips below are a good starting point in this process.

### IN GENERAL, AWESOME AMC SESSIONS:

- ▶ **Have a clear connection to media and communications.** Our definition of media includes everything from breakdancing, to building your own radio station, to web-design, fashion-design and everything in between.
- ▶ **Emphasize strategies rather than issues.** Sessions that help us name the problem are important, but they can't stop there. Make sure your session incorporates media-based organizing strategies towards solutions.
- ▶ **Are interactive and creative.** Structure your session to make the information accessible to multiple learning styles. This may include a mix of: small group conversations, visual presentations of information, handouts, games and creative expression.
- ▶ **Foster collaboration.** We love AMC sessions designed by multiple organizations or individuals. Even better, connect your session to an ongoing organizing process that extends beyond the conference. While collaboration is strongly encouraged, we also welcome workshops from individuals and groups.

### TIPS FOR AWESOME HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS

- ▶ Recognize when something should actually be two separate sessions, versus trying to pack too many things into one
- ▶ Be prepared for multiple skill-levels in the room.
- ▶ For pop-ed sessions that rely more on interaction than presentation, make sure there are awesome participants who will feed the 'group knowledge' of the room.
- ▶ Know your subject matter inside-out and hold the energy of the room with strong facilitation.
- ▶ Break down complex skills and ideas into easily digestible pieces that allow participants to jump in, build confidence and quickly shift from learner to teacher.
- ▶ Provide clear and inspiring examples at the beginning of the session.
- ▶ Provide handouts and other materials to take home.

### TIPS FOR AWESOME PRESENTATIONS

- ▶ Create gorgeous visual aids
- ▶ Select a dynamic, well-prepared moderator who can draw out the brilliance of panelists
- ▶ Select a moderator who can gracefully prevent 'long-talkers' and 'tangent-lovers' from dominating or derailing the conversation.
- ▶ Facilitate two or more conversations between panelists prior to the AMC so that they are familiar with each other and can build off each other's ideas.
- ▶ Make sure presentations don't focus narrowly on one person/project/identity; aim to draw out universal relevance.
- ▶ Test your technology well in advance (video-conferencing technologies always seem to break at the most inopportune moments...)

- ▶ Structure the presentations to be really short, followed by well-facilitated group discussion
- ▶ Use creative mediums for gathering and synthesizing questions and input from the audience (pieces of paper, twitter, SMS, etc.)
- ▶ If you want to have participants 'introduce' themselves, use a quick-and-dirty method that will take up no more than 10 minutes of your session. Ex: have people introduce themselves to the person next to them.

### TIPS FOR AWESOME STRATEGY SESSIONS AND CAUCUSES

- ▶ Be clear in the description: is this session for a particular group only? Are particular groups especially encouraged to attend?
- ▶ Make strong agendas that include discussion of 'the problem' but allow enough time to shift to discussion of solutions.
- ▶ Make sure to get participants' email addresses so post-AMC follow-up can happen.
- ▶ For caucuses that feel way too short for the topic, try focusing the conversation on the question, 'how do we want this to show up at next year's AMC?'



## On (Not) Merging Sessions

AMC session proposals are some of the most beautiful things to read. As T/PS/NG coordinators, going through the review process you may experience a strong desire to accept EVERYTHING and you'll tell yourself, 'we can make it work, if we just merge these TEN sessions into TWO!'

When wielded haphazardly, session mergers can result in unhappy presenters and watered-down content. But when carefully orchestrated, an AMC session merger can be a match-made-in-heaven that yields long-term collaboration between groups who might not otherwise have connected.

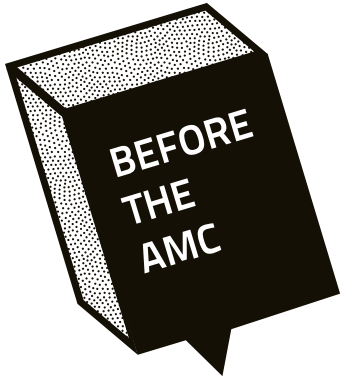
Before you recommend that sessions be merged, your coordinating team should assess whether or not you can devote the necessary energy to making a merger successful.

**Ensuring a successful merger might involve any or all of the following:**

- ▶ Writing an email to presenters, pasting each of their original session descriptions and explaining what each group stands to gain from the collaboration
- ▶ Writing a new session description that merges the essence of the ideas contained in both/all of the original session descriptions
- ▶ Proposing a session structure that fairly allocates time to all presenters
- ▶ Distributing registration and housing scholarships fairly between the groups of presenters
- ▶ Having one-on-one conversations with presenters to make the case for the merger individually, if they have reservations about it but don't feel comfortable expressing them to the other group (s)
- ▶ At the end of the day, if there isn't a mutual desire for collaboration, you will need to make the tough call of which session should be accepted.



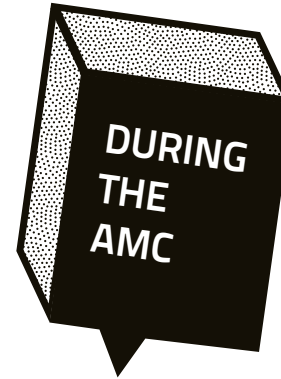
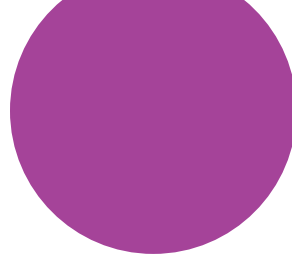
# Communicating with Presenters



## BEFORE THE AMC

- ▶ Introduce yourselves to the session presenters. You will receive a spreadsheet from AMP staff with the final list of accepted sessions for your Track or Practice Space, including their contact info.
- ▶ Determine, based on your fundraising plan, what level of travel, housing and registration support your team will be able to offer to presenters. Communicate this offer to the relevant recipients.
- ▶ Share grassroots fundraising ideas with presenters and encourage them to start fundraising early to cover the difference between what they need and what your team can cover.
- ▶ Support each session through the process of developing their final session content and logistics info and submitting it via the AMPtalk website.

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## DURING THE AMC

- ▶ Encourage presenters to use AMPtalk for session comments and documentation.
- ▶ Encourage presenters to participate in all the elements of the conference (parties, sessions, caucuses, tours, etc !)
- ▶ Propose a caucus or 'wrap-up" session that allows all of the presenters in your T/PS/NG to meet and strategize together.

## AFTER THE AMC

- ▶ Send emails, notes of love and appreciation and support for all the hands that contributed to your T/PS/NG.
- ▶ Encourage presenters to fill out the Post-AMC Reflections survey
- ▶ Follow-up in the Fall and see who wants to help coordinate a Track or Practice Space for the coming year!

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# Logistics

Logistics are the invisible hand that ensures everything works, from your fundraising campaigns to effective communication with presenters. The first rule to this and any magic is to be prepared.

## LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE AMC

### Registration

We need everyone to register so that we have an accurate count of AMC attendees, and so that everyone has a badge with their name (correctly spelled) on it when they show up at the AMC. People who have been awarded complimentary registrations will receive coupon codes prior to the AMC that they can redeem in the AMPstore when they register.

## 44 Housing

A list of all available housing options can be found on the AMC website. In general, we recommend that large groups stay together in the Wayne State dorms because they are conveniently located next to the conference facility. People who have been awarded housing stipends will receive coupon codes prior to the AMC that they can redeem in the AMPstore when they register.

### Travel

The AMC does not provide travel scholarships. Instead, we provide \$500 mini-grants to coordinators of T/PS/NGs and Delegations who spend the months prior to the AMC turning that \$500 into one or two or three (or more!) thousand dollar travel funds through their grassroots fundraising efforts. Coordinators decide collectively how they will distribute travel funds to presenters in their T/PS/NG. This mini-grant strategy allows the AMC to dramatically increase the total amount of travel

scholarship money available and grow our network's fundraising capacity in the process.

### Ground Transportation

The AMC provides a complimentary, wheelchair-accessible shuttle to and from Detroit Metro Airport for all presenters and coordinators. We also provide wheelchair accessible shuttles to and from nighttime events during the conference for all participants.

### Childcare

The AMC provides complimentary childcare for all ages during the daytime hours of the conference program. Arrangements can be made for nighttime childcare upon request. Parents and guardians must fill out a childcare application upon arrival at the AMC, prior to leaving their child in childcare. The Kids Transform the World Practice Space works in conjunction with childcare to provide fun, educational, exploratory sessions for kids ages 4 and older.

### Food

The AMC provides a light complimentary breakfast on Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings of the conference. Conference participants purchase their own lunches and dinners from local restaurants. Every year, AMP works to provide more healthy, affordable, and easily accessible food options for AMC participants. We work within the restricted rules of Wayne State Campus catering policies, which do not allow any outside food to be sold or consumed in their buildings.

### Documentation

The AMC provides a range of documentation tools for T/PS/NG Coordinators, session presenters and conference participants in general. Every session is associated with hashtag that allows us to collect comments about that session on our online discussion platform, AMPTalk. AMPTalk also provides a 'prate pad" or



collective note-taking tool for every session. We live stream at least one session per session block and volunteer videographers, and photographers help document the rest of the conference.

### A/V & Supplies

Presenters submit requests for audio / visual equipment and other supplies, after their proposal has been selected. AMP staff do their best to meet all a/v and supplies requests, within reason. During the conference, each room has an A/V volunteer who helps troubleshoot issues that may arise.

### Scheduling

The AMC is a gigantic rubix cube. When crafting the final schedule, we have to consider: presenter availability, diversity of content within each session block, anticipated audiences for concurrent sessions, room sizes and space requirements, and availability of A/V equipment. We also consider the overall flow of content within a track, and throughout the conference as a whole. We want the AMC to be experienced as a progression through layers of ideas, relationship and strategies. Coordinators should encourage all of their presenters to make their needs clear on the session finalization form.



## AMPTalk

AMPTalk ([talk.alliedmedia.org](http://talk.alliedmedia.org)) is a discussion and organizing system for our network. It is the primary online space for organizing and communication related to the AMC.

### Throughout the process of organizing the AMC, you will use AMPTalk to:

- ▶ Create a profile with your photo and relevant info about yourself
- ▶ Submit and edit session proposals
- ▶ Review session proposals
- ▶ Submit content and logistics information for AMC sessions
- ▶ Send and receive direct messages with other AMC coordinators
- ▶ Use the Housing, Rideshare, and Opportunities forums to offer resources and share information before during and after the AMC
- ▶ Browse past AMC sessions
- ▶ Post, read and comment to the Newswire. Add +1 to stuff that you like.
- ▶ ...and see recent articles of interest on the Newsfeed.

# Tips for Practice Space Organizing

## **GREAT FOR TRACKS AND NETWORK GATHERINGS TOO!**

by Triana Kazaleh Sirdenis

The Healing Justice Practice Space (HJPS), like other Practice Spaces, are living experiments of exploration during the Allied Media Conference. Our space focuses on health, healing, and the centrality of healing justice in organizing and movement building. The HJPS provides individual and collective healing, with the goal of creating and sustaining an environment of wellness and safety for conference participants. The space welcomes the contributions of volunteers who are interested in or are practitioners of various medicine and healing arts, including crisis counseling, herbalism, reiki, massage, acupuncture, yoga, energy and bodywork, dance/movement, art therapies, etc.

These are some of critical reflections for organizing a Practice Space that I've gathered over the past few years of coordinating the HJPS.

### **Prioritize visioning work.**

Begin (or continue) to wonder individually and collectively. Take time to reflect and idea cluster. Ask yourself and your team lots of questions. Reach for things that were previously not possible. Create time and space for this early on. Determine what everyone's strengths are and bring new people on board. It's okay and often really helpful to have people who are brand new to the AMC be part of your coordination crew.

### **Create guiding principles to shape your work.**

This may be especially helpful later on. It can be useful to have a set of beliefs that shape how and why you organize, when you get in tough situations or conflicts, or when you have those

moments of **'what are we doing'**? The Allied Media Projects Network Principles are a model of this. For us, it grounds our presence when we are able to synthesize our healing justice values with those that make the AMC come alive.

### **Keep things sustainable for your team.**

Ask each other to self-identify personal challenges and issues of accessibility. Sometimes the line between work and organizing are unclear and it helps to create boundaries. For example, are there certain days that your co-coordinators have off? Respecting this time is crucial. Don't glorify overworking and being busy.

The time after the AMC is ideal to reflect on what worked well and what flopped. Ask yourself if this process was sustainable for you personally. Was it okay for your emotional, spiritual, physical, and financial health? If not, re-evaluate what it was that wasn't okay and determine if this is something you want to experience again. If you are a new coordinator, what kinds of things do you need to feel healthy through this process?

### **Look at your roots, call on your networks, and create a web.**

Don't do this work alone! Reach out to people doing similar work and avoid re-creating structures that already exist. Build upon previous work by connecting with your allies. Set up calls with other organizers to get their input. Create a web of folks you can call on throughout the process. For us, we consistently worked with Creating Collective Access and other healing justice, disability justice, and transformative justice organizers at almost every step of the process from our initial proposal, healer application process, orientation, and creating best practices. Use AMPtalk to connect with folks in the AMP network. This is a very useful tool throughout the coordination process.

### **Make everything as accessible as you can as soon as you can, including language.**

I had a conversation with a friend about a few healers and

practitioners who came to one of our sessions and were not very engaged. My friend said they just didn't get it. How do we make them get it? I thought about it for a second. Maybe we are the ones not getting it. Yes, that happens too. A lot. Using accessible language and starting at points of commonality are important for bringing together lots of different people. Avoid highly technical and activist-y language or if you want to be able to talk/write/draw/dance like that, know that that experience will be limited to only include certain people.

AMP provides a lot of resources on making your T/PS/NG more accessible for folks with disabilities, chronic illness, pain, trauma, and chemical sensitivities. Get these resources as soon as you can because they should shape how you organize. Improving accessibility in our spaces is a big deal. There are a lot of small things you can do in sessions to make people feel more comfortable and safe like asking what kinds of pronouns people would like you to use or asking if holding hands (or any kind of touch) in an activity is alright. Create other ways to do an activity if touch is not okay.

### **Fundraise early.**

Use the AMP mini-grant to build a fundraiser that excites and uplifts your work. The AMP network can help you promote your fundraiser during the months prior to the AMC. Start this early and promote it in several different ways. We did general outreach to listservs, Facebook, Twitter, and AMPtalk and targeted outreach (i.e. personal emails) to family, friends, and fellow organizers.

### **Organize your volunteers.**

It may be necessary for you to create different types of volunteers for your space to fulfill different roles. For us, healers and practitioners, were obviously key to our work. We also had space keepers, which are like general volunteers. After the first year, we realized we needed another layer of support that

could hold down the space during conference time when the coordinators couldn't be there. We now call these volunteers point people. You may not need all these different types of volunteers but sometimes it is helpful to make distinctions between everyone's roles to make the space run smoothly.

### **Convey information in multiple ways.**

Create different opportunities to orient your volunteers. We offered an in-person and online orientation. Our orientation happened two months in advance of the AMC and included important information on accessibility, creating a scent free space, scope of practice, and boundaries of participation.

### **Be an AMC participant too.**

After our first year, our coordinators felt like we barely got to attend sessions. This past year, we put energy into making sure the practice space was staffed enough by point people so that the coordinators could actually experience the rest of the conference. We created a beautiful ecosystem in our space and felt really good about the folks who were holding it down when we weren't there. It was actually really great how little the four of us had to be in the space.

### **You are also learning.**

Create space for people to learn. In our practice space, we had a handful of folks who had been accepted as a healer/practitioner who we were unsure about how they would vibe in the space. These were usually people who do great work but don't describe it in the same (often politicized) way we talk about health and healing. We wanted to make a space where people could practice in a radically different setting than they were used to. We also really needed this space to feel safe and comfortable for everyone. There were several times when we needed to check ourselves, our prejudices, and preferences. If people are not a 'natural fit' for your space, within reason, create support or set up boundaries so they can best learn, share, and build in your practice space. This includes you too.

**Not everything is possible.**

Since our practice space deals directly with sensitive work, there were a few individuals that were not a good fit because of issues of safety and accordance of best practices. These people did not get accepted to practice in the space but were definitely welcomed to the conference as participants.

Be upfront about limitations and expectations for being in the space. For example, we limited bodywork sessions to a half hour so more people could be seen. We also prohibited people from selling products or promoting business in the space. Sometimes there needs to be limits on how people connect within your practice space. Be clear about this early on.

**Get feedback: People definitely have things to say.**

Coordination for our practice space begins with feedback from the previous year. We use this to reflect on our process and to shape our work in the coming year. If this is your first year, build this into your post-AMC timeline. You can create a feedback form using Google Forms or Survey Monkey. Send this out right after the AMC while ideas are still fresh in people's minds. Give a deadline to complete it by. AMP also sends out a general survey and a coordinators survey which is useful to review.

**Be succinct.**

Be really clear with your words and avoid lengthy emails as much as possible. This was a common suggestion from our feedback form. If you do have a lot of information in an email and everything is really important, just say it upfront. Have others proofread your writing if you want. The AMC can be confusing. Make things simple and clear but don't over explain.

**Make a timeline, visit it often.**

Create a timeline for the year. Create a more detailed timeline for the month or two prior to the AMC. This might mean assigning tentative tasks on a weekly or daily basis for the month of June.

**Plan for the Coordinators Meet Up.**

In January, there is a Coordinators Meet Up which gives us the opportunity to collaborate and further develop our work. Set up times that your coordination team can get on a call or chat during this weekend. There will be a lot of opportunities to digest the information at the Meet Up with your team. Make efficient use of this time.

**Try different technologies and types of communication.**

For us, since we are organizing long distance, using Google Hangouts is great. It's free and we can actually see each other which makes a big difference for trying to make deeper connections with people. The other online tools we heavily rely on are GoogleDocs, free conference calls, Doodle, and Pirate Pad.

**Grow other leaders.**

There are always a handful of people who are deeply interested in the coordination work and may or may not be ready to step up. Take the time to get to know these folks during the conference. Open up spaces for them to stretch and lead, whether this is facilitating a meeting, the opening or closing ceremony, or asking them to collaborate on a project. Offer people opportunities to share their gifts. Foster their growth because they are beautiful assets to our community. Someone somewhere fostered this in you.

# Notes

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COLLECTIVE  
WISDOM  
OF THE  
AMC  
NETWORK!

