Member Criteria

Adopted by MDDC Press Association Board of Directors September 2026

Active membership is open to news organizations based in or principally serving Maryland, Delaware, or the District of Columbia that are primarily engaged in producing and distributing original news and information concerning matters of public interest through ethical professional journalism.

Eligible organizations may include newspapers, magazines, digital news organizations, broadcast television stations, radio stations, podcast organizations, nonprofit news organizations, and other news media whose principal mission is the regular dissemination of news and public affairs.

To qualify for Active Membership, an organization shall:

1. maintain an established organizational identity, including a fixed name and principal office;
2. have operated continuously for at least one year;
3. be principally devoted to the regular dissemination of local, regional, state, national, or public affairs news;
4. produce original journalism, with at least fifty percent (50%) of its editorial content consisting of original, fact-based reporting, analysis, or other independently produced journalistic work;
5. employ or regularly engage professional journalists or editors responsible for producing or supervising editorial content;
6. maintain editorial independence, with editorial decisions made without prior approval by government or another outside entity.
7. disclose, as part of its membership application, its ownership or governing structure, including:
    - beneficial ownership, where applicable;
    - governing board, if organized as a nonprofit;
    - the individual primarily responsible for editorial oversight; and
8. not receive more than fifty percent (50%) of its gross annual revenue from:
    - political organizations described in Section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code; or
    - organizations exempt under Sections 501(c)(4), 501(c)(5), or 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Funding from governmental entities, religious organizations, educational institutions, public broadcasting entities, charitable foundations, or other grant-making organizations shall not, by itself, disqualify an applicant, provided the organization demonstrates editorial independence consistent with the MDDC bylaws.

The Board of Directors may require an applicant to provide information or documentation reasonably necessary to determine compliance with these requirements, including documentation concerning editorial independence, governance, ownership, or funding sources. Determinations of eligibility shall be made by the Board of Directors in its sole discretion.