PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

EDUCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY AND CIVIC LEADERSHIP

America’s Public Television Stations are committed to educating America’s children, training America’s adults for better jobs, providing essential public safety communications services, creating a well-informed citizenry that considers issues in a civil and constructive manner, and using a portion of our licensed spectrum to enhance telehealth, national security, Smart Cities connections, transportation efficiency, precision agriculture and more.

There are 158 nonprofit, locally controlled public television licensees operating 356 public television stations, which are deeply rooted in the communities they serve. Their public services in education, public safety and civic leadership go far beyond exceptional broadcast programming, enhancing the lives of millions of Americans every day.

Public media has always been at the forefront of responding to the many challenges facing our nation. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, public television stations in all 50 states stepped up to provide a variety of new services including broadcasting teacher-created lessons, using station spectrum to transmit digital educational content to students without broadband, coverage of State and local health briefings, and expanded local programming to address the health and economic crisis.

A PUBLIC SERVICE PARTNERSHIP

FY 2022 FUNDING REQUESTS

- Up to $565 million for CPB
- $20 million for Interconnection
- $30 million for Ready To Learn
- $20 million for Infrastructure
EXPANDING ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

SERVICES EXPANDED WHILE FUNDING SHRANK
Throughout the pandemic, local public television stations have greatly expanded their programming and services to meet local needs, while facing serious threats to private and State funding, and a massive operational shift to a largely remote workforce.

PUBLIC SAFETY
Local public television stations opened their airwaves to local, State and federal officials to update the public and share essential public safety information. Many stations hosted daily coverage of their Governor’s health updates and served as pool reporters for other news media in their States. As a backbone to the nation’s mobile alerting system (WEA), public television helped deliver over 500 COVID-related alerts to mobile phones during the first 10 months of the pandemic.

CIVIC LEADERSHIP
With access to State legislatures limited, many public television stations served as the “C-SPAN” of State governments to ensure that residents continued to be connected to their State’s governing process — enhancing civic discourse and democracy. As our nation grappled with issues of racial injustice, local public television stations served as a safe space to convene the public and reflect the rich diversity of the communities they serve.

EDUCATION
When America’s schools closed suddenly in March 2020, public television stations in all 50 States stepped up to provide a variety of new educational resources to help students, teachers and families continue the learning process remotely and work to enhance educational equity for all students, regardless of access to broadband, including:

- Devoting the entire daytime broadcast schedule to curriculum-aligned educational content, in blocks by grade.
- Creating partnerships with State and local education agencies to provide standards-based, curriculum-aligned, teacher-directed instruction over-the-air, online and on mobile apps.
- Delivering learning content to students without broadband/Internet access through datacasting, which uses a slice of our broadcast spectrum to send the same instructional material used by students on the internet to the devices (computer, Chromebook, tablet, smartphone) of students without internet access. Stations in SC, IN, PA, SD and KY are moving forward to provide these services to rural students that lack broadband. Other stations throughout the country are exploring similar partnerships.

50 STATES
With public television stations providing expanded educational resources for at-home learning

23+ MILLION
Students and families reached by public television broadcast content during at-home learning hours in the first 8 weeks of the pandemic

21+ MILLION
Children, parents and educators engaged with public television's digital content during the first 8 weeks of the pandemic
The annual federal investment in public media, through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) -- over 70% of which goes directly to local stations -- is the foundation of public media’s extraordinary public-private partnership. With this support, local public television stations:

- Provide the only preschool education for more than half of America’s children.
- Enhance the education of millions of K-12 students with curriculum-aligned, teacher-ready, interactive digital learning tools and more.
- Provide life-saving public safety communications capabilities for missions ranging from early earthquake warning to school shooting scenarios.
- Equip the citizens of the world’s most important democracy with the facts and diverse perspectives they need to make well-informed decisions.

Yet, CPB funding was frozen at $465 million for 10 years — and public television stations lost $100 million in purchasing power to inflation over that decade. Level funding curtailed our ability to meet current needs and invest in technology for the future.

We request up to $565 million in two-year advance funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to ensure that America’s public television stations can recover their lost purchasing power, invest in the future, and meet the growing needs of the American people in education, public safety and civic leadership.

Given the success of public media, and its potential to do so much more for so many, it is sound public policy to increase federal funding for this valuable service that provides an exceptional return on investment.
FUNDING REQUESTS

INTERCONNECTION

FY 2021 APPROPRIATED: $20 MILLION
FY 2022 REQUEST: $20 MILLION

The interconnection system connects the 158 public television licensees to PBS, other national public television distributors, State and regional public television networks, and individual producers to distribute television programming and related materials.

The interconnection system covers all 50 States, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories, making it essential to public television’s work supporting national alert and warning communications.

READY TO LEARN

FY 2021 APPROPRIATED: $29.5 MILLION
FY 2022 REQUEST: $30 MILLION

Ready To Learn uses the power of public television’s on-air, online, mobile and on-the-ground educational content and engagement to build science, math and literacy skills of children ages two to eight, especially those from low-income families.

A funding level of $30 million is requested to further enhance the impact of Ready To Learn created content and the quantity and scope of local station outreach to the kids, families, teachers and schools that need it the most.

INFRASTRUCTURE

FY 2022 REQUEST: $20 MILLION

Public broadcasting requests funding for the Next Generation Warning System within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s FEMA Federal Assistance grants. This new competitive grant program will enhance public broadcasting stations’ ability to provide alert, warning and interoperable communications and incorporate emerging technology in those life-saving activities.

Public broadcasting has long been a committed partner with the public safety community. That work depends on reliable and resilient public broadcasting infrastructure, which this program will support.
For over 50 years, educational programming for young children, the hallmark of public television, has helped multiple generations get ready to learn in school and succeed in life. This free, universally available content has been proven to close the opportunity gap between children from low-income families and their more affluent peers.

A few years ago, local public television stations across the country partnered with PBS to bring a first-of-its-kind, free PBS KIDS 24/7 channel to their communities. As a result, time spent viewing PBS increased by 86% among low-income families, 58% in broadcast home and 62% in rural homes.

This service has played an important role in reaching at-home students this year, with stations dedicating large portions of their broadcast hours across their channels to grade specific, curriculum-aligned programming.

PBS LearningMedia provides free access to tens of thousands of State curriculum-aligned digital learning objects — including videos, interactive lesson plans and more — for use in K-12 classrooms and at home. This service has been widely used throughout the pandemic by students and teachers alike, with users growing by over 240%.

Public television operates the largest nonprofit GED program in the country. Additionally, public television stations are leaders in workforce development, creating hundreds of online instructor-led certification courses to train and retrain hundreds of thousands of adults, and the American Graduate initiative, is helping to address the skills gap.

**EDUCATIONAL IMPACT**

- **240%** Increase in PBS LearningMedia users during the pandemic
- **60%** Kids (2-8) watched PBS KIDS last year
- **10%** Higher achievement scores when PBS LearningMedia resources were used
- **80%** Growth in PBS Parents users during the pandemic
PUBLIC SAFETY

Public broadcasters commit a portion of their broadcast spectrum and infrastructure to public safety communications through datacasting partnerships with federal, State and local public safety, law enforcement and first responder organizations — connecting these agencies with one another and the public, saving lives and property.

All of these services depend on reliable public television infrastructure, and that infrastructure depends on federal funding.

DATACASTING

• America’s Public Television Stations have partnered with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to offer local first responders datacasting services that use the broadcast spectrum to help first responders send critical information and video to each other during times of crisis.

• Through these datacasting partnerships, public television stations use their infrastructure and broadcast spectrum to securely transmit essential encrypted information to responders in the field in real-time without the capacity constraints of traditional mobile or broadband delivery.

• The Department of Homeland Security’s Science and Technology Directorate has conducted several successful pilots throughout the country that, in addition to other local initiatives, demonstrate the effectiveness of public television datacasting in a range of use cases, including:

  - Flood Warning and Response
  - Enhanced 911 Responsiveness
  - Over Water Communications
  - Faster Earthquake Warnings
  - Interoperability
  - Rural Search and Rescue
  - Large Event Crowd Control
  - School Safety

EMERGENCY ALERTS

Public television has partnered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system that enables cell subscribers to receive geo-targeted text messages in the event of an emergency — reaching them wherever they are in times of crisis.

In the first 10 months of the pandemic, over 500 COVID-19 alerts have been sent out to mobile devices using this system.

This same digital infrastructure provides the backbone for emergency alert, public safety, first responder, and homeland security services in many States and communities, including many local stations that serve as their States’ primary Emergency Alert Service (EAS) hub for severe weather and AMBER alerts.
CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Public television regards its viewers as citizens rather than consumers.

As some of the last locally controlled and operated media, public television stations are deeply committed to localism and programming that reflects the rich diversity of the communities we serve. We help citizens and communities understand the issues they face locally and regionally — enabling them to develop solutions based on reliable information and rooted in community partnerships.

- As our nation grappled with issues of racial injustice, civil unrest and challenges to our democracy, local public television stations served as a safe space to convene the public and reflect the rich diversity of the communities they serve.

- Local public television stations serve as the “C-SPAN” of many State governments, providing access to the State legislative process, Governors’ messages, court proceedings and more.

- Public television provides more community public affairs programming, more local history and culture, more candidate debates at every level of the election ballot, more specialized agricultural news, more community partnerships to deal with issues of concern like veterans’ affairs and the opioid crisis, and more civic information of all kinds than any other service in the media universe.

- Through such programming as American Experience, American Masters, PBS NewsHour, Frontline and the works of Ken Burns, public television tells the story of America more thoroughly and authoritatively than any other service in the media universe.

#1
IN PUBLIC TRUST
For the 18th year in a row, public television is the most trusted American institution

2ND
BEST USE OF TAXPAYER FUNDS
Public television ranked behind only military defense

$1.44
Approximate annual cost of public media per American
READY TO LEARN

Ready To Learn uses the power of public television’s on-air, online, mobile and on-the-ground educational content and engagement to build science, math and literacy skills of children between the ages of two and eight, especially those from low-income families.

- First authorized in 1992, and most recently reauthorized in 2015 as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act, Ready To Learn is a competitive grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

- Ready To Learn investments have supported the production and academic rigor of PBS KIDS series: Molly of Denali, Elinor Wonders Why, Peg+Cat, SuperWHY!, Odd Squad and other iconic kids’ programming.

- Ready To Learn leverages a national-local partnership among CPB, PBS and local public television stations that helps teachers and caregivers make the most of these media resources locally — including online and mobile apps as well as television — in schools, preschools, homeschoools, Head Start and other daycare centers, libraries, mobile learning labs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and community centers.

- Ready To Learn has proven to be particularly helpful to preschool age children from low-income communities who have access to Ready To Learn’s innovative learning tools and targeted on-the-ground outreach.

- Ready To Learn’s science, math and literacy content is rigorously tested and evaluated to assess its impact on children’s learning.

- Since 2005, more than 100 research and evaluation studies have shown that Ready To Learn literacy and math content engages children, enhances their early learning skills and allows them to make significant academic gains, helping bridge the opportunity gap.

- Ready To Learn content improves early math and literacy skills
  - 14% increase in knowledge of numbers, operations and algebraic thinking
  - 25% increase in skip counting
  - 21% increase in naming letters
  - 37% increase in letter sounds
The Government Accountability Office has found there is no substitute for federal funding to ensure universal service for public television. As directed by the Public Broadcasting Act, the vast majority of the federal appropriations to CPB goes directly to local stations to support their local public service work. These Community Service Grants (CSGs) support local stations' work in education, public safety and civic leadership.

Local public television stations are able to attract an average of $6 in non-federal funds for every federal dollar they receive. The relatively modest federal investment ensures that stations can reach all citizens regardless of their location or ability to pay for media services.
THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

Public television is poised for a future of public service more focused, comprehensive and versatile than ever before in its 50-year history.

With the voluntary adoption of a new ATSC 3 “Next Gen TV” broadcast standard over the next few years, public television stations will pursue these missions with unprecedented mobility, interactivity, addressability, signal strength and spectrum efficiency.

This common mission focus and these technological advances will make it possible for us to:

• **Educate more children and train more adults**, more creatively and effectively, expanding learning platforms well beyond the television set.

• **Protect more lives and property in more communities** everywhere, through enhanced use of our licensed spectrum to provide reliable emergency communications.

• **Provide essential civic leadership** with initiatives ranging from combating the opioid crisis with community partners, to serving as the “C-SPAN” of State governments, to telling the stories of hometown America as no one else can.

This exciting vision of service and progress for public television depends on a growing federal investment in our work and our infrastructure.

Such an investment in our missions and modern technology **will pay extraordinary dividends to the American people**, in the form of a better educated society, safer communities and a more secure country, and a citizenry well prepared to lead the world’s most important democracy.