

Dear All,

With a new administration and congress, changes are expected and often bring federal funding for public broadcasting into play.

WPM is monitoring this situation very closely, as information occurs almost daily.

What can you do to help?

You can share your thoughts about public radio service in Wyoming with legislators, both in Congress and in the Statehouse. You can also record or write a testimonials expressing your thoughts about the value of WPM. It's easy to do. Just go to:

<http://wyomingpublicmedia.org/programs/i-love-wyoming-public-radio>.

WPM shares public opinion with Congress and with Wyoming leadership, and we keep your comments and testimonials on file.

Update

- The appropriation for the CPB is booked two years in advance, which is designed to provide a buffer between funding and changes in the political climate. Therefore, funding has been secured for FY2018 and FY2019, but has not yet been distributed. Technically, these appropriations could be rescinded, but it would take a big act of Congress to make that happen.
- Funding for the current fiscal year, FY2017, has been distributed to the CPB, and first payments have been made to stations, including WPM.
- Annual funding for the CPB has been level at \$445 million for several years. This amounts to about \$1.35 per American per year. The federal government is projected to spend about \$4 trillion this year, as a comparison.
- The White House budget office has drafted a list of nine programs that President Trump could eliminate to trim domestic spending – including the Corporation for Public Broadcasting ([*The New York Times*](#)).

CPB FAQs

What is CPB's role in public broadcasting?

The CPB is distinct from both NPR and PBS. It is not a broadcaster, but a private corporation created by Congress in 1967 with two primary functions: to serve as a firewall between partisan politics and public broadcasting, and to help fund programming, stations and technology.

How much CPB funding does WPM receive?

WPM receives approximately \$300,000 CPB funding annually. This comes to us in direct dollars. In addition, WPM receives the same amount \$300,000 in indirect services.

What is the difference between the direct and indirect funding?

Direct funding is distributed directly to WPM. It buys programming, pays for operating costs such as salaries, equipment, training, travel to remote location for reporters, among others. Indirect funding is a pooled fund that stays at CPB and is used to support services that public broadcasting stations could not purchase on their own because of substantial costs or intricate legal negotiations. These include items such as negotiation for music rights that allows WPM to playing of artist recordings on air, negotiating streaming rights that allow WPM to stream its signals online and reach people who do not have access to radio service. Aggregating together in this way allows broadcasters to realize substantial savings while providing excellent service to Americans.

What would happen if WPM lost CPB funding?

It would effectively remove one critical piece of WPM funding which is made up of individual donors, businesses and corporations, the University of Wyoming, and CPB. It would diminish our ability to purchase programs like *Morning Edition*, drive out to fix transmitters in remote Wyoming, or pay for an employee. In short, it would cripple WPM. Wyoming's population is not large enough to sustain another \$300,000 of funding from the public, plus the indirect \$300,000 of industry support.

Couldn't the University of Wyoming pick up the slack?

The UW allocation to WPM's operating budget has remained static for the last 15 years, and decreased in 2016 as a result of cuts mandated by the governor and legislature. There is little hope of increasing UW's appropriation to WPM at this time in Wyoming's depressed economy. On the other hand, UW has been instrumental in taking WPM's multi-year Infrastructure Improvement request to the state legislature in 2014 and 2016. To date WPM received \$1.5 million of a \$5 million projected expenditure to upgrade aging site equipment. This allows WPM's signal to reach most of Wyoming.

Why does public broadcasting need federal funding?

Federal funding is essential to the funding mix that supports public broadcasting. CPB funding provides critical seed money and basic operating support to local stations, which then leverage each \$1 of federal funding to raise over \$6 from local sources — a tremendous return on the taxpayer investment.

Federal funding provides essential support for public broadcasting's mission to ensure universal access to high-quality, non-commercial programming that educates, informs, enlightens and enriches the public, with a particular focus on the needs of underserved audiences, including children and people of color.

In many rural areas, public broadcasting is the only source of free local, national and international news, public affairs and cultural programming — and with such small populations they often rely more heavily on federal funding. Without it, these stations would likely be unable to continue to provide local communities with news, information, cultural and educational programming that they currently provide, and could even go off the air altogether.

In addition, the CPB helps negotiate music rights for all public stations and provides administrative support, allowing stations to aggregate together for cost-effective sharing of information, research and services.

WPM thanks our colleagues at Vermont Public Radio and in the public broadcasting system for sharing data for this report.

This is the latest from our NPR governmental rep office. Just arrived February 28, 2017.

“The President will address a Joint Session of Congress which sets in motion the release of budget instructions to federal agencies calling for \$54 billion in increased spending for FY 2018 to the Department of Defense, and \$54 billion in decreased spending for non-defense entities. It has been reported that the State Department and the Environmental Protection Agency are expected to take a large share of these cuts. It is also possible that the Administration’s budget proposals will include recommendations about public broadcasting funding. We will share details on this matter as they become available.”

“It is worthwhile to remember that these proposals are guidelines to agencies. While Congress may incorporate some or all of the Administration’s recommendations, it is under no obligation to follow these guidelines or vote on the exact proposal the President delivers. The Administration is expected to release a pared-down “skinny budget” the week of March 13 and a fuller list of budget requests by either the end of March or early April. The House and Senate will pass their own budgets and work to reconcile those differences in a final version. The House and Senate are expected to begin work on their respective FY 2018 budgets in April. We will continue following these budget developments and will provide updates as we know more.”

Sincerely,

Christina Kuzmych
General Manager
Wyoming Public Media



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