

THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING FOR ALL

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to support appropriations of no less than \$483 million in advance funding (FY 2011) for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), and reject any rescissions as part of the FY 2009 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.

TALKING POINTS

- **Public broadcasting provides Americans of all ages with a broad range of high-quality arts and cultural programming.** Television programs such as *Great Performances* present the best in music, dance, and theater free of charge to audiences across America. And hit shows like *From The Top* serve as a TV and radio showcase for America's best young classical musicians.
- **Public television and radio stations are often the only source of broadcast arts programming in many rural parts of the country.** More than 80 million Americans view public television and more than 27 million listen to public radio for programming that covers public affairs, science, history, and the arts. Programs such as *Dance in America* bring companies from all corners of the globe into viewers' living rooms.
- **Public television airs arts programming that is not available on commercial television.** There is widespread understanding that public television exists to provide what the market does not. So long as it remains unprofitable to invest in programming that does not reach the highest expected audience numbers in the most favored demographic categories, commercial television will not play that role. For example, the *Legends of Jazz* television series on PBS marks the first time in 40 years that jazz has been the focus of a national network weekly series. Hosted by noted jazz pianist and radio personality Ramsey Lewis, the 13 weekly 30-minute episodes debuted in April 2006 on PBS stations nationwide.
- **The American public views public broadcasting as a good investment of public dollars.** According to a 2007 Roper poll, a majority of the public believe the amount of federal funding PBS receives is "too little." The same poll found that the American public considers PBS the best use of tax dollars among 20 public institutions, tying military defense. In addition, for the fourth year in a row, Americans view PBS as America's most trusted institution among nationally known organizations, followed by "courts of law."
- **Public broadcasters improve the quality of life in their communities by addressing community issues and increasing civic engagement.** For example, Rural California Broadcasting, together with the Sonoma County Library and the Sonoma County Museum, are teaching more than 200 Latino youth to find their own voices through writing, art, and radio and television production. This program supported by CPB and the Institute of Museum and Library Services focuses attention on the positive aspects of Latino life and culture, and the partners aim to decrease self-destructive behavior by Latino youth.

BACKGROUND

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is a private, nonprofit corporation formed to promote noncommercial public telecommunications. CPB was created by Congress in 1967. In the authorizing language, Congress acknowledged public broadcasting's role in transmitting arts and culture. "It is in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of public radio and television broadcasting, including the use of such media for instructional, educational, and cultural purposes."

CPB does not produce or broadcast programs; it awards grants to public broadcasting stations, independent producers, and program development and production organizations such as NPR, PBS, American Public Media,

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BACKGROUND (CONT.)

the National Minority Consortia, and Public Radio International (PRI). CPB distributes roughly \$387 million in federal funds annually to PBS, NPR, and hundreds of public radio and TV stations around the country. CPB also plays an important role in system support, spearheading industry initiatives and conducting system-wide research to help stations better serve their communities.

CPB is the largest single source of funding for public television and radio programming. In 2007 federal spending for public broadcasting was approximately \$1.54 per person in the United States. However, the average public television station receives only a fraction of its revenue from CPB. Public broadcasters raise 85 percent of their revenues from non-federal sources. In addition to federal funding, public broadcasting revenue comes from membership dues, foundations, federal grants and contracts, donations from businesses, state and local governments, individual gifts, endowments and bequests, and public and private colleges and universities.

General appropriations for CPB typically are “advance-funded,” meaning that each appropriations year is actually funding CPB two years in advance. This provides numerous benefits: it insulates programming decisions from political influence; allows stations to leverage the promise of federal funds to raise state, local, and private dollars; and provides the lead-in time necessary to finance long-term projects. In addition, Congress provides funding for several other programs that assist public broadcasting, including funding to help stations meet the federally mandated transition to digital broadcasting in February 2009.

In the FY 2009 budget request, the administration proposes a rescission of \$200 million from the \$400 million already appropriated by Congress for FY 2009, a rescission of \$220 million from the \$400 million already appropriated by Congress for FY 2010, and declines to request advance funding for FY 2011. In the past few years, the Congress has restored both the cuts and the advance funding.