

## Expanding SBA's Paycheck Protection Program to Provide Financial Relief for University-Licensed Public Broadcast Stations

**Issue:** The Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP") was created to provide a direct incentive for businesses and nonprofit organizations to keep their workforce on the payroll during the coronavirus crisis. Unfortunately, nearly half of public radio and television stations have been ineligible because of SBA affiliation and size rules. Although some public broadcasters have obtained PPP loans, stations licensed to colleges and universities face barriers to PPP relief.

**Proposed Solution:** Congress should modify the PPP to include public radio and television broadcasters of any size and ensure university licensees are eligible for PPP relief. One way to do this: modify the bipartisan, bicameral Local News & Emergency Information Act, S.3718/H.R. 6897, to address the unique needs of public media and university licensees – and include it in the next coronavirus relief bill.

With a few modest changes, the Paycheck Protection Program could help additional nonprofit public broadcasting entities, including stations licensed to universities and colleges. SBA's PPP is handled by congressional Small Business Committees, separate from emergency funding requests for public media via the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (handled by Appropriations committees) or for colleges/universities (led by Education Committees).

**Challenge:** As Congress negotiates the next (and possibly last) coronavirus relief bill, lawmakers and staff are being deluged with requests from a number of struggling constituents and industries, some facing revenue losses of 40% or 50% or more since the pandemic hit. Any additional PPP relief will be tightly tailored for the hardest hit industries. We need to raise some noise and present a compelling financial case for public media, so we make the cut into the final coronavirus relief package.

**What you can do:** Stations that have been excluded from PPP assistance should write to their lawmakers and tell their story. Help show Congress why public media desperately needs and deserves immediate emergency PPP relief. You can send the sample letter as is, or, even better, *customize it* for your station.

Consider adding station-specific examples of a new local program or initiative to respond to the COVID pandemic, as well as a few facts and figures to illustrate your station's immense financial challenges in the months since COVID struck and ahead. To make a persuasive case for relief, focus on revenue sources and time periods that have been hardest hit.

Here are a few examples:

- In the last quarter or # months, our station has faced \$\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_% drop in underwriting and/or membership revenue.
- After COVID struck and businesses, organizations, and events closed down due to health concerns, \_\_\_% of our business underwriting/sponsorship was cancelled.
- At the beginning of this fiscal year starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, our university eliminated/reduced crucial support, resulting in \$\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_% budget loss.
- Without financial relief, we may be forced to lay off or furlough ## employees, representing \_\_% of our workforce.
- Revenue losses have forced us to furlough ## employees and/or reduce hours by \_\_% for ## employees. With PPP relief, we could put these employees back on the payroll full-time.

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