

Frequently Asked Questions About Public Broadcasting

CONTACT CPB

[General Comments](#)

[CPB Office of the Ombudsmen](#)

[CPB Office of the Inspector General](#)

[What is the difference between CPB, PBS, and NPR?](#)

[Who pays for public broadcasting?](#)

[Who creates the programs?](#)

[Who operates the stations?](#)

[How many public broadcasting stations are there?](#)

[Why do programs air at different times in different places?](#)

[How can I get a program on the air?](#)

APR 7 2009 00

What is the Difference Between CPB, PBS, and NPR?

CPB

Private corporation created by the federal government.

Does not produce or distribute programs.

Funded by the federal government.

[Learn more about CPB](#)

PBS

Private, non-profit media enterprise owned and operated by member stations.

Distributes programming to 348 public television stations across the country.

Funded by CPB and member stations.

www.pbs.org

NPR

Private, non-profit media enterprise owned and operated by member stations.

Produces and distributes programs.

Funded by member stations.

www.npr.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[What is the difference between CPB, PBS, and NPR?](#)

[Who pays for public broadcasting?](#)

[Who creates the programs?](#)

[Who operates the stations?](#)

[How many public broadcasting stations are there?](#)

[Why do programs air at different times in different places?](#)

[How can I get a program on the air?](#)

Who Pays for Public Broadcasting?

The biggest single source of revenue for public broadcasting entities is membership. Membership contributions to local stations and "Friends of..." groups provide critical support for public broadcasting.

By law, 95% of CPB's appropriation from the federal government goes to support local television and radio stations, programming, and improvements to the public broadcasting system.

Public Broadcasting Revenue Reports

[Fiscal Year 2005](#) 138KB

[Fiscal Year 2004](#) 136KB

[Previous Revenue Reports](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[What is the difference between CPB, PBS, and NPR?](#)

[Who pays for public broadcasting?](#)

[Who creates the programs?](#)

[Who operates the stations?](#)

[How many public broadcasting stations are there?](#)

[Why do programs air at different times in different places?](#)

[How can I get a program on the air?](#)

Who Creates the Programs?

The programs that you hear and see on your favorite public broadcasting stations come from a variety of sources. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting does not produce or broadcast programs. CPB awards grants to create programs that air on public broadcasting stations.

Program Development and Production

Public broadcasting stations

Independent producers

The National Minority Consortia

National Public Radio (NPR)

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

Public Radio International (PRI)

American Public Media

Program Distribution

American Public Media

As the nation's second largest producers of public radio programming, American Public Media produces more than 20 radio series and specials for public radio heard by over 14 million listeners each week.

American Public Television (APT)

APT brings more than 250 series and specials to public television each year. APT serves as an essential funding and distribution option for producers, while offering public television stations program choices, which they elect to broadcast on a title by title basis.

Independent Television Service (ITVS)

ITVS funds, distributes and promotes independently produced television programs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between CPB, PBS, and NPR?

Who pays for public broadcasting?

Who creates the programs?

Who operates the stations?

How many public broadcasting stations are there?

Why do programs air at different times in different places?

How can I get a program on the air?

National Educational Telecommunications Association
(NETA)

NETA distributes about 2,000 hours of programming each year to stations nationwide.

National Public Radio (NPR)

NPR operates a national satellite program distribution system, with uplinks for public radio stations and other producers.

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

PBS funds the creation and acquisition of programs for its member stations and distributes those programs through American television's first broadcast satellite system.

Public Radio Exchange (PRX)

PRX is an Internet-based service through which stations audition, review, and license programs from other stations, independent producers, and international broadcasters.

Public Radio International (PRI)

PRI distributes programs to its affiliate stations throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and Guam. PRI also distributes a number of international programs such as the BBC World Service.

Who Operates the Stations?

Radio

Universities operate most public radio stations, such as KUNM-FM, Albuquerque, licensed to the University of New Mexico. These stations usually offer distinct program schedules, since they often are not linked together into statewide or regional multi-station networks.

[NPR radio station finder](#)

[PRI radio station finder](#)

Television

Nonprofit community organizations, or state government agencies operate most public television stations. State government stations are typically linked into multi-station networks that air a common program schedule statewide, such as Maryland Public Television.

[PBS television station finder](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[What is the difference between CPB, PBS, and NPR?](#)

[Who pays for public broadcasting?](#)

[Who creates the programs?](#)

[Who operates the stations?](#)

[How many public broadcasting stations are there?](#)

[Why do programs air at different times in different places?](#)

[How can I get a program on the air?](#)

DEFINITIONS

Stations are full-power radio and television transmitters licensed by the Federal Communications Commission.

Licensees are community organizations, colleges or universities, local authorities or state governments, which hold the FCC licenses for CPB-supported stations.

Grantees are the entities to which CPB makes station grants. They may consist of single stations, or groups of co licensed stations. For television, grants are made on a licensee basis.

Why do programs air at different times in different places?

When does a program air?

To best serve their local communities, public broadcasters determine their stations' program schedule. Contact your local station to find out when a program may be scheduled to air.

Find Your Local Station

[PBS television station finder](#)

[NPR radio station finder](#)

[PRI radio station finder](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[What is the difference between CPB, PBS, and NPR?](#)

[Who pays for public broadcasting?](#)

[Who creates the programs?](#)

[Who operates the stations?](#)

[How many public broadcasting stations are there?](#)

[Why do programs air at different times in different places?](#)

[How can I get a program on the air?](#)

How can I get a program on the air?

Here is a typical way that program producers get their shows on public broadcasting. This should not be regarded as step-by-step instructions for producing a program that will be aired. There is no one "right" way.

Secure at least partial financing in order to produce the program.

Begin production. Depending on the scope of the program, you may complete production on your own, or you may require assistance from additional funders or a radio or television distributor.

If more funding is required at this stage, it may be appropriate to seek a grant from CPB and/or additional sources.

[CPB Grants](#)

[Other Funders of Public Broadcasting Programming](#)

[Grant Proposal Writing Tips](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[What is the difference between CPB, PBS, and NPR?](#)

[Who pays for public broadcasting?](#)

[Who creates the programs?](#)

[Who operates the stations?](#)

[How many public broadcasting stations are there?](#)

[Why do programs air at different times in different places?](#)

[How can I get a program on the air?](#)