

## WHY PUBLIC RADIO IS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

**It extends service.** More than 900 locally-staffed, locally-licensed and locally-programmed public radio stations employing some 10,000 people serve as a primary source of local news, community information and music to more than 260 million people living in the United States who have access to a public radio signal.

**It provides more local coverage.** Public radio stations are locally-owned and locally-staffed, and programming responds to the needs of the community – 29% of programming on an average public radio station is locally-produced. In rural areas, local stations are often the only source of free and high-quality local, national and international news, music and cultural programming. In rural states such as Alaska, public radio stations provide information and communication services in areas that are so isolated and sparsely populated that few commercial broadcasters reach them. More than half of rural public radio stations like these rely on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) for 25% or more of their annual budgets.

**It promotes public-private partnerships.** Combined with other local funding sources, public radio stations have become reliable conveyors of essential programming. The revenue base for the comprehensive system of public radio stations includes funds appropriated by Congress to CPB, which in turns makes grants to local stations. The relatively small investment—amounting to only 37 cents per American per year—is leveraged by stations to attract local investments and financial support from businesses, listeners, state and local governments and universities. For every federal dollar invested through CPB, stations raise on average more than \$6 on their own.

**It reaches disabled Americans.** Reaching un-served and underserved audiences is central to public radio's service-oriented mission. This includes the hearing impaired and the blind and low-vision communities. Public radio stations in every major market in the United States transmit radio reading services—essentially, broadcasts of community volunteers reading newspapers, magazines and other publications—for blind and low-vision Americans. Moreover, stations help purchase and distribute special digital receivers to local listeners who rely on these services. "Captioned radio," a groundbreaking technology that enables deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans to "listen" to radio will be available very soon.

**It serves as a communications lifeline.** Public radio is a communications lifeline during times of emergencies, especially when the power grid is down. FEMA routinely advises the public to make sure that radios with batteries are on hand when major storms approach. When people are instructed to evacuate, car radios become a primary instrument for receiving information about the emergency situation including evacuation routes and evacuation center locations. Effective emergency warnings allow people to take actions that save lives, reduce damage, and reduce human suffering. Dedicated public radio personnel have continued broadcasting through multiple crises such as the 9-11 terrorist attacks, Hurricanes Andrew, Hannah, Katrina, Rita and Gustav, blackouts, wildfires, ice storms, earthquakes and floods.

**It promotes free and universal access to music.** Public radio has created a valuable partnership that connects audiences to music and all those who devote their lives to it—performers, singer-songwriters, musicians, lyricists and composers. More than 100 stations have full-time music formats and it is estimated that music accounts for about one out of every three hours of public radio listening. Classical, jazz, folk and AAA are music formats that are often only found on public radio stations in many communities and entire states. In dozens of communities nationwide, the local public radio station is the only free and universally available source of music from these genres. This preservation role is complemented by the important promotional role public radio stations play in music today. Local stations actively highlight in-studio performances by emerging artists and local music events spanning all music genres. As online outlets proliferate, audiences increasingly turn to their local public radio stations as trusted sources for information on new artists and events.