

Wisconsin Public Media**University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Public Media and Educational Communications Board**pbswisconsin.org wpr.org

Oct. 23, 2026

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Attachment: Photo of Sarah Ashworth, photo credit: Tom Krueger

Sarah Ashworth named PBS Wisconsin and Wisconsin Public Radio's first Executive General Manager

Sarah Ashworth has been named Executive General Manager of PBS Wisconsin and Wisconsin Public Radio.

The appointment was announced today by Jordan L. Siegler, Executive Director of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Public Media, and Marta Bechtol, Executive Director of the Educational Communications Board, following a nationwide search for this new leadership position directing the two public media services that serve statewide audiences in Wisconsin. Ashworth will officially begin in this role Nov. 29.

Ashworth has served as WPR's Director of Radio for more than three years. Ashworth's 25 years of public media experience also includes work as Vermont Public's head of content as well as newsroom roles at Minnesota Public Radio, New Hampshire Public Radio, WAMU and KBIA in Missouri. Ashworth also served as an Assistant Professor of Journalism at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Under her leadership, Vermont Public and NHPR won national Edward R. Murrow awards for overall excellence.

Raised in Minnesota, Ashworth became interested in public media while pursuing her journalism degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She has taught radio journalism in Russia and China and has been a leadership fellow with the Sulzberger program at Columbia University and with Public Media Women in Leadership.

As Executive General Manager, Ashworth will lead both PBS Wisconsin and Wisconsin Public Radio as the services' first unified leader. Under her direction, both services will build on their award-winning statewide educational, cultural, journalistic and community-focused local programming to better serve audiences across Wisconsin.

With offices, transmitters and employees in communities throughout the state, PBS Wisconsin and WPR are the only locally owned and managed statewide media networks serving Wisconsin.

“Public media was invented in Wisconsin,” Siegler said. “I am excited that Sarah will guide a future of public media in our state that further centers our services’ work on our audiences, not on the platform we use to reach them. This combined focus will allow us to better serve the state, tell more Wisconsin stories across all platforms and meet our audiences where they are.”

“I am excited to watch Sarah’s leadership shape our service to Wisconsin,” Bechtol said. “Sarah is a thoughtful, innovative, audience-focused leader who understands public media’s impact – and its possibilities. Under her leadership, we will see educational, cultural and Wisconsin-focused programming thrive and grow.”

“I am honored to be named the first Executive General Manager of PBS Wisconsin and Wisconsin Public Radio,” Ashworth said. “Our legacy of service is the strongest in the nation and I understand, and am humbled by, the responsibility to lead these two organizations at this moment.

“I want WPR and PBS Wisconsin together to be the place where Wisconsinites choose to spend the majority of their media time and time in person. I want people to love and trust these organizations and find value in them that’s worth supporting. And, I want our service to be here working to serve all Wisconsin residents for generations. PBS Wisconsin and WPR working together in new ways will help us keep public media centered on communities and help connect people to each other.”

PBS Wisconsin and Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) are services of UW-Madison’s Division of Public Media and the Educational Communications Board. Together, they serve communities statewide through trusted journalism and Wisconsin storytelling, educational resources and lifelong learning, music and cultural programming – on air, online and in person through live events, freely accessible to all and powered by community support. More at pbswisconsin.org and wpr.org.