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July 7, 2026

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PBS Wisconsin and WPR release first combined Annual Impact Report

Inaugural joint report documents statewide reach, community service and record member support across Wisconsin

MADISON, WI — July 7, 2026 — PBS Wisconsin and Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) today released their first combined Annual Impact Report, presenting a unified view of how Wisconsin's public media services informed, educated and connected communities across the state during fiscal year 2025.

The report, *Keeping Public Media Strong Together in Wisconsin*, reflects how Wisconsin residents increasingly experience public media today: as trusted journalism and Wisconsin storytelling, educational resources and lifelong learning, and music and cultural programming delivered on air, online and in person through live events.

Together PBS Wisconsin and WPR reach every corner of the state through four PBS Wisconsin channels on six television stations, 39 WPR radio stations carrying two statewide public radio music and news services, eight regional bureaus and digital platforms.

The report highlights statewide initiatives combining the strengths of both WPR and PBS Wisconsin, including expanded rural reporting in counties facing growing news deserts; in-depth nonpartisan coverage of the 2025 spring elections; the *Wisconsin Life* series, now in its 12th season and featuring more than 150 stories of Wisconsin's people, places and communities, and the WPR-led Upper Midwest Newsroom regional collaboration.

PBS Wisconsin Education resources drew 919,000+ online engagements and added new chapters to engaging educational series, including *Wisconsin Biographies* and *The Look Back*, free resources for all Wisconsin's learners. The America@250 initiative, launched ahead of the nation's semiquincentennial, drew more than 325 attendees to its kickoff event and seeded 25 Community Conversation mini-grants statewide. Across both services, journalists and producers earned 45 industry awards in 2025.

During fiscal year 2025, PBS Wisconsin and WPR combined to serve more than 583,000 weekly television viewers, 347,000 weekly radio listeners and 235,000 weekly users at wpr.org,

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which is one of public media's top 10 websites. Together, the services aired more than 3,300 local newscasts, published more than 3,600 news articles, delivered 4,000+ hours of locally produced news and talk programming, hosted more than 200 community events that drew more than 44,000 attendees in 65 Wisconsin communities, and supported nearly 5,000 educators through PBS Wisconsin Education's free, classroom-ready resources. Audiences gave PBS Wisconsin-produced programs a 94% overall quality rating, and 93% of viewers surveyed said they trust the news coverage on PBS Wisconsin's flagship public affairs program *Here & Now*.

"For the first time, we're reporting on the impact of PBS Wisconsin and WPR together, because that's how Wisconsinites experience public media today," said Jordan Siegler, Executive Director of Wisconsin Public Media. "Wisconsin invented public media more than a century ago, but the way people experience media has changed. People no longer think of us as radio or TV. They experience us as trusted journalism and Wisconsin storytelling, education, music and cultural programming on air, online and in person in communities across the state. PBS Wisconsin and WPR remain distinct services with independent journalism, but together they reach every corner of Wisconsin. The record member support reflected in this report shows that the people we serve are not just our audience, they are our partners in public media made by, for, about and with the people of Wisconsin."

PBS Wisconsin and WPR are member-supported, with nearly 130,000 members in fiscal year 2025, an all-time high, sustaining the services alongside community partners, foundations and state support. With the elimination of federal funding through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting beginning in fiscal year 2026, that community-powered foundation has become more essential than ever to keeping public media strong, accessible and freely available.

The full 2025 Annual Impact Report is available at pbswisconsin.org/2025-annual-report/ and wpr.org/2025-annual-report.

PBS Wisconsin and WPR are services of Wisconsin Public Media, a division of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and the Educational Communications Board. Together, they serve communities statewide through trusted journalism and Wisconsin storytelling, educational resources and lifelong learning, and music and cultural programming — on air, online and in person through live events, freely accessible to all and powered by community support. Learn more at pbswisconsin.org and wpr.org.

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A service of the Educational
Communications Board and
University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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