



**EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD MEETING**

**Virtual Teams Meeting**

**January 22, 2021**

**9:30 A.M.**

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

**Marta Bechtol, Executive Director**

**Agency Status – COVID Operations**

Recent guidance from DOA instructs that we will continue to telecommute where practicable until at least April 2, 2021. Our staff is well-equipped and comfortable with our temporary arrangements at this point and the agency remains fully operational.

Staff that must work in shared spaces continue to social distance, wear masks, and take appropriate sanitizing measures.

**Annual Audit**

ECB is required to undergo an annual financial audit in order to remain qualified for Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) funding. The team at Baker Tilly began their work with us in mid-November which was unique this year in that the entire process was managed remotely. The workflow was generally uncomplicated and we remained on schedule in spite of the pandemic.

Once again, I'd like to thank our finance team (Aimee Wright, Natalia Sutyagina and Dawn Okon) for their excellent preparation. I'm delighted that our strategic shift to holding earlier audits has been successful and that we are able to present results at the January meeting.

**Budget Updates**

There will likely be no news to report on the agency's biennial budget request until the Governor's budget is released (expected February 16). ECB's biennial request is flat with standard budget adjustments for a total of \$42,596,700 (30% GPR/70% PR).

On the federal side of things, the FY 2021 Omnibus Appropriations bill contained \$475 million for CPB (forward-funded for FY 2023), an increase of \$10 million over the previous budget. It also included \$29.5 million in funding for Ready To Learn, an increase of \$500,000, and an additional \$20 million for the Interconnection. Due to the balance of both the House and Senate, the annual appropriations process is likely to be contentious, but our friends at America's Public Television Stations (APTS) are confident that there is strong bipartisan support for CPB funding. Historically, federal funds have amounted to about 10% of the agency's operating budget.

**Advocacy**



## Educational Communications Board

3319 West Beltline Highway • Madison, WI 53713-4296 • 608.264.9600 • ECB.org

The annual APTS Public Media Summit is being held remotely the afternoons of February 22-23 this year, making it possible for all board members to attend. This is a great opportunity to learn more about public media from a national perspective, and to better understand how to talk about the value of our service. Please let David Cobb know of your interest in attending by the end of today's meeting (January 22).

We are in the process of developing our spring advocacy campaign which will be decidedly different this year due to COVID. Rather than holding our typical one-day event at the Capitol, we will utilize a larger window of time from mid-February through March to contact local legislators and members of Joint Finance by mail, phone, Zoom, etc. I will keep you apprised with specifics as the activities are further fleshed out, and invite all who are interested and able to join the effort.

### **Equity and Inclusion Plan**

In accordance with [Executive Order #59](#), the agency has developed a new three-year [Equity and Inclusion Plan](#) that addresses identified issues and gaps with employment and agency culture. The overarching goals to be addressed are:

- *Recruitment:* ECB will actively address ways our position descriptions, job announcements and hiring practices can be more inclusive.
- *Retention:* ECB will actively address disparities and promote leadership opportunities in marginalized workforce populations.
- *Agency Culture:* Promote a respectful culture free of bias that values diversity, promotes equity, and actively engages inclusion.

Agency activities will be supported by DOA Human Resources and monitored at least semi-annually, and will be audited by the Bureau of Equity and Inclusion.

### **Broadband Access**

Governor Evers designated broadband as a critical state priority in his State of the State address on January 12. The Broadband Access Taskforce is increasing its meeting schedule monthly and accelerating sub-committee work as we prepare for the final report due at the end of the fiscal year.