Educational Communications Board

BOARD POLICIES

For questions and/or concerns, please contact:

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Educational Communications Board
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Madison, WI 53713
Phone: (608) 264-9600 https://ecb.org/contact/

Educational Communications Board
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POLICY PREFACE

The Educational Communications Board (ECB) is created by Wis. Stats. 39.11-14.

ECB policy is formally adopted by its governing directors (Wis. Stats. 15.57) at regular meetings and is indefinite in duration. For easy reference, the policies are grouped by subject and numbered within each subject area. Policies incorporated in other published documents such as Wisconsin Statutes and/or Administrative Code, are referenced by number or hyperlink where appropriate.

These policies were reviewed, revised and approved by the ECB on October 16, 2026 and replace all previous versions.

BOARD OPERATIONS

101 Policy Adoption Process
102 Board Member Designees
103 Board Roles and Relationships
104 Evaluation of the Executive Director
105 Agency Staff Appointment Authority
106 Strategic Planning
107 Joint Agreement to Operate Wisconsin Public Radio and PBS Wisconsin

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION and FINANCIAL MATTERS

201 Enterprise Activities
202 Gifts, Grants and Bequests
203 Audit
204 Financial Reporting
205 Travel Policy

FACILITIES & TRANSMISSION

301 Tower and Excess Capacity Use
302 Office/Facilities Use
303 Satellite Terminal Operation Policies
304 Carriage of ECB Services

PROGRAMMING

401 Programming Framework
402 Instructional Programming
403 Media Library and Archives and Extended Use Rights
404 Planning, Programming and Scheduling Guidelines
405 Non-commercialism and Underwriting
406 Special Events, Community Outreach, Entertainment and Sports

407 Political Programs
408 Distribution of Licensee-produced Materials
409 Wisconsin Public Radio Network Services
410 Non-discrimination

FUNDRAISING

501 Program Funding Standards and Practices
502 Support/Friends Groups
503 Development/Fundraising Activities

PERSONNEL

601 Health and Safety
602 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action
603 Reasonable Accommodations

CONTENTS

BOARD POLICIES **1**

POLICY PREFACE **2**

CONTENTS **4**

BOARD OPERATIONS **6**

101 Policy Adoption Process 6

102 Board Member Designees 6

103 Board Roles and Relationships 6

104 Evaluation of the Executive Director 6

105 Agency Staff Appointment Authority 7

106 Strategic Planning 7

107 Joint Agreement to Operate Wisconsin Public Radio and PBS Wisconsin 7

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE **8**

201 Enterprise Activities 8

202 Gifts, Grants and Bequests 8

203 Audit 9

204 Financial Reporting 9

205 Travel Policy for Board Members 9

FACILITIES AND TRANSMISSION **10**

301 Tower and Excess Capacity Use 10

302 Office/Facilities Use 10

303 Satellite Terminal Operation Policy 11

304 Carriage of ECB Services 11

PROGRAMMING **12**

401 Programming Framework 12

402 Instructional Programming 12

403 Media Library and Archives and Extended Use Rights 13

404 Planning, Programming and Scheduling Guidelines 13

405 Non-Commercialism and Underwriting 13

406 Special Events, Community Outreach, Entertainment and Sports 14

407 Political Programs 14

408 Distribution of Licensee-Produced Materials 14

409 Wisconsin Public Radio Network Services 15

410 Non-Discrimination 15
FUNDRAISING 16
501 Program Funding Standards and Practices 16
502 Support/Friends Groups 16
503 Development/Fundraising Activities 17
PERSONNEL 19
601 Health & Safety 19
602 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action 19
603 Reasonable Accommodations 19

BOARD OPERATIONS

101 Policy Adoption Process

All official policies of the Educational Communications Board (ECB) shall be readily accessible to Board members, agency staff and the general public on the agency's website at ECB.org.

The Board shall review its policies from time to time. Additions, modifications or deletions shall be brought forward for consideration and action at the request of the Board Chair or Executive Director during regularly scheduled meetings.

Policies may be reviewed at any time at the request of a Board member.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

102 Board Member Designees

In accordance with Wisconsin Statute Chapter 15.57(1), the Secretary of the Department of Administration, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President of the University of Wisconsin System, and the Director of the Technical College System may appoint designees.

Such designee appointments shall be in writing to the Board Chair.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 4/12/13
Adopted 7/14/06

103 Board Roles and Relationships

The Board shall establish overall policies which give direction to the Executive Director and the professional staff for the day-to-day operations of the agency.

Requests for information by Board members should be directed to the Executive Director.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 4/12/13
Adopted 7/14/06

104 Evaluation of the Executive Director

The Executive Director shall have an annual performance review conducted by the Board in compliance with Wisconsin Administrative Code, Section ER 45.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 4/12/13
Adopted 7/14/06

105 Agency Staff Appointment Authority

The Executive Director shall approve on behalf of the Board personnel actions involving ECB agency staff.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 4/12/13
Adopted 7/14/06

106 Strategic Planning

Oversight of strategic planning is one of the Board's primary responsibilities. The Board shall develop and implement a strategic planning system with a three-year review cycle. That system shall be presided over by the Executive Director. The planning documents resulting from such system shall address major policy issues as well as providing supporting information in sufficient detail to explain and justify changes proposed in programs, services and facilities.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

107 Joint Agreement to Operate Wisconsin Public Radio and PBS Wisconsin

In accordance with Wis. Stats. 36.25(5) and 39.14(4), it shall be the policy of the Board to enter into a joint agreement with the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to operate the entities identified as Wisconsin Public Radio and PBS Wisconsin. The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin's authority for operation is delegated to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Public Media. Wisconsin Public Radio and PBS Wisconsin shall be comprised of the respective radio and television licenses held by the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board and the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.

The joint agreement shall be executed in writing by the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board and the Executive Director of the Division of Public Media at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The agreement will be annually reviewed and modified as necessary.

Annual and longer-term goals and strategic directions shall be developed. Annual budgets shall be prepared that carry out the intent of the agreement.

It shall be understood that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) does not allow a broadcasting licensee (in this instance the ECB) to cede control over its programming and stations operations to any other entity, and that each licensee retains final responsibility for the stations for which it holds licenses.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 5/3/19
Adopted 7/14/06

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

201 Enterprise Activities

Activities which are deemed by ECB management to be of an enterprise nature may be entered into by ECB staff provided:

- The enterprise is in keeping with the mission of the ECB and its operations.
- The enterprise to be undertaken is not in violation of any relevant state and federal regulations.
- The Executive Director brings to the Board for its approval a complete description of significant projects, including details of the obligations and responsibilities of all parties concerned and projections of estimated expenditures and revenue, as well as workload impact on ECB staff, facilities and other affected resources and operations.
- Funds received from participation in revenue-producing activities are to accrue to the programmatic and operational benefit of the ECB.
- Contracts for enterprise activities are subject to State of Wisconsin procurement policies and procedures.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

202 Gifts, Grants and Bequests

The Board may accept gifts, grants, bequests, and other devices from private, public and governmental sources consistent with Wis. Stats. Chapter 20.225(1)(g) and donor intent. The Wisconsin Public Broadcasting Foundation authorized by Wis. Stats. 39.12 may also accept such gifts.

The use of the monies received will reflect the provisions and purposes intended by the donor or grantor, subject to approval by the Executive Director.

Certain gifts should only be accepted after being approved by the Board. These include but are not limited to:

a. cash (including checks and online donations);
b. in-kind contributions;
c. grants, honorariums, or prizes;
d. sponsorships;
e. gifts of stocks, IRA Rollovers, or Donor Advised Funds; and
f. legacy gifts.

Generally, costs associated with the acceptance of a gift such as attorney fees, accounting and other professional fees, will be borne by the donor. The Board Chair will inform the Board of any conditions attached to the gift. Subject to Board approval, the Board may elect to delegate acceptance of gifts to the Chair of the Foundation.

The Executive Director, with the monies received, shall establish programs and projects, and be responsible for administration and fiscal control. Funds will be deposited and accounted for in accordance with existing state practices, and in compliance with Wisconsin Statutes.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 10/19/07
Adopted 7/14/06

203 Audit

Annually, at a regular or special meeting, the Board will review the financial statement audit of the ECB, which includes the financial statements of the Wisconsin Public Broadcasting Foundation. The audit report, including the audit opinion and required communications to those charged with governance, will be provided to the Board in advance of the meeting. Representatives of the auditing entity will be present to respond to the questions on the audit.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

204 Financial Reporting

The Board will be provided current financial status reports for the ECB and the Wisconsin Public Broadcasting Foundation in advance of each regular Board meeting.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

205 Travel Policy for Board Members

The Educational Communications Board (ECB) recognizes that Board members may be required to travel or incur other expenses from time to time to conduct business that furthers the mission of the ECB. Board members are subject to all State travel policies and reimbursement thresholds specified in the State of Wisconsin Compensation Plan, Section F, Uniform Travel Schedule Amounts. Subsequently, it is the policy of the Board to reimburse only reasonable and necessary expenses.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/17

FACILITIES AND TRANSMISSION

301 Tower and Excess Capacity Use

It is the policy of the Board to allow for the attachment or installation of antennae and associated appurtenances to agency owned tower facilities by and in the following priority order: state agencies; state educational institutions; local, county, and federal governments; publicly owned utilities; cooperatives and other non-profit organizations having a mission to serve the citizens of Wisconsin.

The Board may also lease tower and associated space to commercial enterprises when the approval of the request will clearly serve the interests of the Board and the State of Wisconsin and the priority order has been met.

The Executive Director shall receive formal requests for use of ECB tower space and associated facilities, and respond to those requests with guidelines and procedures that must be followed to receive further consideration of their request.

The Board's telecommunications facilities may be made available to both public and private entities for excess capacity use when the following conditions are met:

- All legal and staff costs associated with negotiating, coordinating and billing for these uses are recovered;
- A reasonable fee above that associated with recovering costs is received by the ECB for use in funding other telecommunication-related activities;
- When applicable, the local user group agrees to accommodate the excess capacity user;
- All excess capacity programming is clearly identified; and
- An Excess Capacity Use Agreement is entered into which adheres to all Board policies related to revenue-producing activities.
- In the context of digital changes, this policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by senior staff with appropriate recommendations for policy change made through the Executive Director to the Board.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

302 Office/Facilities Use

Board staff shall comply with DOA guidelines regarding the use of ECB office building facilities by outside organizations, including other state agencies, for the purposes of meetings, teleconferences and other gatherings.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

303 Satellite Terminal Operation Policy

In accordance with Wisconsin Statute 39.11(5), (7), (12), (13), (17), and any subsequent amendments or changes to the statutes, the Board will secure, install, operate and maintain satellite communications terminals for the purposes of telecommunicating educational, instructional and other categories of programming as determined by the Board.

The Board shall have guidelines and procedures covering the operation, maintenance and user fees relating to satellite terminal operations.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

304 Carriage of ECB Services

The Board may secure the carriage of broadcast public television programming and non-broadcast programming on Wisconsin cable and satellite systems or other program delivery services such as those provided by telecommunications companies pursuant to FCC rules and regulations. Carriage may also be secured on streaming and online platforms.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 7/12/13
Adopted 7/14/06

PROGRAMMING

401 Programming Framework

It shall be the policy of the Board that Wisconsin Public Radio and PBS Wisconsin programming provides for the educational, informational and cultural needs and interests of the people of Wisconsin and functions in a non-commercial, independent manner that adheres to standards of content excellence and is compliant with FCC regulations regarding non-commercial educational licensure.

The Board's principles, as stated in the *Public Media Code of Integrity* developed by the Affinity Group Coalition and the Station Resource Group, shall be reflected in editorial decisions and programming selection.

The Board shall act as the final public representative to protect editorial integrity, independence, fairness and balance; and shall act as final public authority to fulfill its mission as outlined by statute.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/17

402 Instructional Programming

In accordance with Wis. Stats. 36.25(5) and 39.14(4), ECB and the Division of Public Media at the University of Wisconsin-Madison hold joint copyright for all original productions, though production activities are delegated to the Division of Public Media. Original productions and program-related materials shall comply with FCC regulations for non-commercial educational licenses.

Instructional content under ECB copyright shall be developed in coordination with educational agencies/systems to help advance the educational goals of the state.

The ECB shall not set academic standards nor prescribe curriculum.

The ECB shall not require any person, group, agency or institution to use programs or instructional materials distributed through facilities under its control. Such use shall remain the prerogative of the individual, institution or agency responsible.

Use of program services and materials under ECB copyright shall not be denied to any private, non-public educational agency or institution, nor denied to individuals schooling children within homes, providing such use requires no unauthorized additional expenditure of state funds.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

403 Media Library and Archives and Extended Use Rights

The Board holds all rights to programs, program segments or objects produced or created in accordance with Wis. Stats. 36.25(5) and 39.14(4). It is the policy of the Board to establish, maintain and operate a library and archives of educational programs and related materials under ECB copyright.
ECB shall disseminate information about such programs and make suitable arrangements for the use of such programs and materials by colleges, universities, schools, non-commercial radio and television stations, and other appropriate users as allowed by copyright agreements, and shall inform Wisconsin educational institutions of any changes to the rights policy of ECB.

ECB shall provide extended use rights to Wisconsin's public and private educational institutions, including homeschooling, for programs or segments of programs copyrighted by the Educational Communications Board.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

404 Planning, Programming and Scheduling Guidelines

It shall be the policy of the Board that authority for operational, programming and scheduling decisions shall be delegated to assigned professional staff. Further, professional staff shall follow the Programming Framework in selecting and scheduling programming.

Programming decisions shall not be made solely for the purpose of gaining support, economic or otherwise, of any person or group.

The Executive Director shall be informed of planned programming and scheduling changes at the onset of such planning. This information shall contain intended results of such proposed changes, including anticipated audience impact and reactions.

The Executive Director shall be apprised of operational problems when they arise and throughout their duration as required.

The Board shall be briefed by the Executive Director on significant programming, scheduling, and operational issues at its regularly scheduled meetings and at such other times as may be appropriate.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 5/3/19
Adopted 7/14/06

405 Non-Commercialism and Underwriting

Programs shall be guided by the agency's non-commercial status and not by the sale of goods or services for financial profit. No program may recommend or imply recommendation of one commercial product or service over another similar product or service if any consideration is involved.

Programming shall not advertise or promote the sale of non-program-related products or services.

In accordance with FCC broadcast regulations, programs must identify the funding source by means of an underwriting credit.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

406 Special Events, Community Outreach, Entertainment and Sports

It shall be the policy of the Board that special events programs, including community outreach efforts, designed to inform residents about their state, its policies, communities, agriculture, businesses, industries, cultural life and people are encouraged to the extent they serve the general welfare and quality of life in Wisconsin. Athletic and other unique entertainment programming may be included as part of an overall program schedule.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

407 Political Programs

It shall be the policy of the Board that:

Programs shall deal with political subjects fairly, accurately and responsibly. Qualified spokespersons of significant points of view will be accorded opportunity to support their positions, within the bounds of responsibility and to the extent allowed by time and financial limitations.

The sole purpose of any program dealing with candidates for public office or with issues scheduled for a decision by voters shall be to inform and interest viewers and listeners in the affairs of citizenship.

Political use of public broadcasting services by candidates for public offices shall be governed by FCC regulations.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

408 Distribution of Licensee-Produced Materials

Materials which are the sole property of the licensee will be made available to those organizations or institutions with which the licensee is affiliated.

Materials which are the sole property of the licensee shall be made available to public institutions, public and/or private schools, and other appropriate units within the state at a charge not to exceed the cost incurred in the production, duplication and distribution of these materials.

Subject to copyright restriction, materials which are the sole property of the licensee may be made available for broadcast on commercial radio and television stations, or other platforms; and for purchase by the public as deemed appropriate by management.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 7/12/13
Adopted 7/14/06

409 Wisconsin Public Radio Network Services

It shall be the policy of the Board to collaborate with the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to provide two statewide radio network services and to provide other additional services which may be developed:

WPR News. This network will focus on journalism from Wisconsin, the nation and world.

WPR Music. This network will focus on providing locally hosted classical music, along with other genres such as jazz, world and folk.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 5/20/2024

410 Non-Discrimination

It shall be the policy of the Board that no program shall be for the purpose of discriminating or advocating discrimination against any person or persons.

Programs shall not advocate acceptance or rejection of any religious dogma or belief.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

FUNDRAISING

501 Program Funding Standards and Practices

ECB shall operate in regard to program funding standards and practices as free and independent broadcasting systems, committed to providing programming produced in accordance with the highest ethical, journalistic, and professional standards. In the operation of these telecommunication services, the Board is directed by such standards, by the regulations of the Federal Communications Commission, by relevant state statutes, and by the *Public Media Code of Integrity* (See Policy 305: Programming Framework).

To help assure the free and independent nature of the public radio and television services, the following additional standards and practices have been adopted to provide staff with policy direction in regard to program underwriting:

Editorial control of the programs or series broadcast on ECB stations by the funders or underwriters of such programs or series shall not be permitted. This policy shall be made known in negotiations with underwriting entities, and no exceptions shall be permitted.

Every effort shall be made to avoid the appearance of such control or influence by funders or underwriters of programs or series. This practice shall be given special consideration in instances in which a close commercial association may exist, or appear to exist, between the interests, products or services of a corporation or other underwriting entity and the title, subject or potential subject of a program or series. In those cases in which it might reasonably be assumed by the audience that there may exist a commonality of commercial interests, products, or services on the part of the funding agency and the underwritten program or series, staff must be able to provide assurance that no influence or control on the part of the underwriter has, in fact, been exerted and that none shall be allowed. Further, prior to approval of the underwriting agreement in such instances, program and financial justification must be provided to the ECB and University of Wisconsin Madison management. Underwriting arrangements of this sort in regard to controversial issues are not to be encouraged.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 5/3/19
Adopted 7/14/06

502 Support/Friends Groups

The Board recognizes the value of local support groups to the affiliated State and University licensees. Therefore, the Board will encourage and assist in the development of such groups in a manner determined to be in the best interest of the Board's responsibility to meet the needs of public service media and to achieve the Board's goals and objectives.

The following criteria must be met by any outside organization which has as its primary purpose fundraising, support or promotional activities undertaken on behalf of the Educational Communications Board or any of its operations:

Formal written approval must be obtained from the Board to use the name of the ECB or any of its services in the title of any outside organization which wishes to function in a support capacity by such means as the raising of funds and promotional endeavors.

The organization must be eligible for or in tax exempt status under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code, or, if not tax exempt, the funds designated as being tax exempt donations during the solicitation must be directed entirely to the Wisconsin Public Broadcasting Foundation, Inc. (a tax exempt organization). An annual statement assuring tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service and IRS forms verifying that, demonstrating compliance with Chapter 440 of the Wisconsin Statutes, or other statutes created in the future, shall be filed with the Executive Director.

ECB or other agreed-upon staff shall provide coordination of all fundraising, promotional, or support activities undertaken on behalf of the ECB or any of its operations.

The organization shall provide an annual accounting of their funds as indicated in annual operating and allocation agreements. The organization shall provide audited financial statements and associated management letters from auditors to ECB. Annual budgets of the supporting organization shall be created in accordance with the organization's bylaws and the annual operating and allocation agreements.

It shall be a general principle that funds contributed by organizations shall be presented to the Wisconsin Public Broadcasting Foundation, Inc. for acceptance. Accepted funds shall be administered consistent with the designated purpose, if any. The support organization shall follow specified procedures for transmittal to the ECB of any fundraising proceeds obtained from authorized activities.

It shall be understood that the FCC does not allow a broadcasting licensee (in this instance the ECB) to cede control over programming and stations operations to any other entity, including organizations that provide financial support.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06

503 Development/Fundraising Activities

Activities which are deemed by ECB management to be of a development (fundraising) nature, may be entered into by the agency provided such activities:

- Have been properly budgeted.
- Are planned and instituted in response to identifiable financial need.
- Are in keeping with the general and acceptable development practices of public and well-regarded nonprofit organizations.
- Are properly evaluated for productivity and efficiency, and for acceptability by the listening and viewing audiences.
- Are in accordance with relevant state and federal regulations.

PERSONNEL

601 Health & Safety

The Educational Communications Board is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all its employees. The agency shall do whatever is feasible and reasonable to protect employees and visitors from illnesses and accidental injuries. To meet this commitment, a comprehensive loss control and safety program shall be maintained and incorporated into daily operations.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 7/14/17
Adopted 7/14/06

602 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action

The Board shall adopt the policies of the State and by the FCC regarding Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

Revised 10/16/26
Revised 7/12/13
Adopted 7/14/06

603 Reasonable Accommodations

The Board follows the guidelines and procedures regarding reasonable accommodations consistent with State and federal law.

Revised 10/16/26
Adopted 7/14/06