

KERA Faces \$2.7M Loss as Federal Cuts Hit Public Media

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Dallas-based public broadcaster KERA has been dealt a significant financial blow, losing \$2.7 million overnight following federal budget cuts passed by Congress. The reduction, part of a broader \$9 billion rollback in public broadcasting and foreign aid, has left North Texas broadcasters scrambling to close funding gaps and secure alternative financial support.

KERA, which operates several outlets including KERA News, KERA FM, KXT 91.7, KERA TV, and Arts Access, is now contending with an 8% shortfall in its \$30 million annual budget. The cut comes from a bill that passed late Thursday and is expected to be signed into law by United States President Donald Trump. The measure signals a major shift in how public media will be funded going forward, with less reliance on taxpayer dollars and more emphasis on community-driven support.

KERA President and Chief Executive Officer Nico Leone expressed deep concern over the cuts but remained resolute in the station's mission. "We are incredibly disappointed in this Congressional action," Leone told The Dallas Morning News. "But KERA has provided essential services to North Texans for more than 60 years, and that's not going to change." He added that the moment represents a critical turning point for public broadcasting nationwide, but the station is prepared to adapt.

In a memo circulated to staff, Leone outlined immediate steps KERA is taking, including launching fundraising campaigns on-air and online. Appeals for support are already being aired across all of the station's platforms, as KERA looks to its listeners and viewers to help fill the funding void.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which allocates federal dollars to more than 1,500 local public media stations, is expected to receive no funding for the next two fiscal years under the new legislation. This leaves stations like KERA, which serve large regional audiences with fact-based news, cultural programming, and educational content, reliant on community contributions.

Michael Rancilio, Executive Vice President and General Manager of PBS News, emphasized the broader impact, stating, "In an increasingly complex information landscape, safeguarding this mission is more critical than ever. We can only do this with your ongoing support."

Though KERA reported over \$41 million in total revenues and support in the previous fiscal year, the sudden \$2.7 million loss will require significant effort to offset. Still, Leone remains optimistic, pointing to the early response from the North Texas community as a sign of strong public backing.

Founded over six decades ago, KERA has long served as a trusted source of information and culture in the region. The irony isn't lost on many that the station's call letters, originally

intended to symbolize “a new era in broadcasting,” are now being tested in a very different kind of era.