

## How Mentoring Organizations Can Engage With Public Media

### What is public media?

Public media refers to [PBS](#) and [NPR](#) member stations. In general, content on these stations is produced by media professionals. Public media is often confused with public-access television. Public-access channels are also non-commercial, but their content is produced by members of the general public.

Public media stations are independently owned and operated. Most are either PBS television stations or NPR radio stations, however some belong to both organizations (these are called dual-licensees). Both PBS and NPR stations feature national and local content. National content usually comes directly from PBS and NPR, while individual stations often produce their own local content.

### Why should I engage with public media?

Like many non-profit organizations, public media stations have a public service mission, and unlike commercial television and radio stations, public media organizations often have education, outreach and/or community engagement departments that support their mission.

In the past 5 years, public media has taken a special interest in individuals and organizations (including mentoring orgs.) that are keeping students on the path to high school graduation through an initiative called [American Graduate](#). Hundreds of public media stations across the country have participated in American Graduate in some form or fashion.

### How can I engage with public media?

PBS stations and dual-licensees can be a valuable partner in raising awareness about your organization and the issues your work addresses. From event space, to news and public affairs programs, to educational activities, your local station probably has many no/low-cost resources for your organization. Follow the steps below to get the conversation started.

1. Search for your local PBS station website.
2. Look for the "Contact Us" section.
3. Call or email your local PBS station and ask to speak to an education, outreach, or community engagement specialist.
4. Tell them you heard about the American Graduate initiative and want to learn more about how your local station engages with your community.
5. Ask about educational and community resources/programs, opportunities to be featured on local programming, participating in upcoming events/screenings, space rentals & other services, & station reach (broadcast, social, newsletters etc.).
6. Explain your organization's mission and tell them what you can offer. Examples may include: distributing station materials/resources at your events, discounted or free space rental (if you have a space), cross-promotion of relevant station programming (tell them what assets you have and their reach: website, social, newsletter etc.).
7. Ask to be added to any station newsletters. Keep an eye out for opportunities to collaborate. Offer to add your station contact to your newsletter so they can do the same.
8. Even if you don't identify a specific opportunity to collaborate right away, check-in on a regular basis with your station contact. You never know when a new project or initiative has started and this will help keep you at the front of their mind for relevant opportunities.

### What should I do if all of this seems overwhelming?

Email Amanda Granger, Project Manager, American Graduate Day ([grangera@wnet.org](mailto:grangera@wnet.org)). She is happy to set up a call to talk you through engaging with your local station.