



Ex. I

Department of Transformation and Shared Services

Governor Asa Hutchinson

Secretary Amy Fecher

Director Kay Barnhill

May 18, 2022

The Honorable David Wallace, Co-Chairperson
The Honorable David Hillman, Co-Chairperson
Uniform Personnel Classification and
Compensation Plan Subcommittee
Joint Budget Committee
State Capitol Building, Room 315
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Senator Wallace and Representative Hillman:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) submits a request from the Commissioners of Arkansas PBS requesting authority to pay above the maximum salary of grade SE02 for Courtney Pledger, the current Director of Arkansas PBS.

JUSTIFICATION

Ms. Pledger is currently being pursued by several public broadcasting networks around the nation. Under her leadership, the agency transformed from a legacy public media station to a multi-platform media organization that provides Arkansans with highly relevant local content and services.

In 2021, the network produced "7 Days: The Opioid Crisis in Arkansas," an impactful documentary in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education, which is currently being distributed nationally. The network is currently producing a feature length documentary on the creation of the statues of Johnny Cash and Daisy Bates to represent Arkansas in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capital.

Arkansas PBS is producing multiple projects for national distribution that highlight Arkansas storytellers and Arkansas' important stories to a national audience. The agency has won 8 Emmy awards in the past two years, including the 2021 Community Service Emmy for extensive work in education, civic engagement, public affairs, race relations and early childhood programming. These accomplishments have allowed the network to expanded its broadcast reach from 76% to 96% of Arkansans.

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RECOMMENDATION

Analysis by OPM reflects an average salary of \$182,003 in Southeastern states. Currently, Ms. Pledger's has an annual salary of \$148,137, based on salary, the Office of Personnel Management recommends approval the annual salary of \$180,000.

Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Kay Barnhill, Director
Office of Personnel Management



SECRETARY OF TRANSFORMATION & SHARED SERVICES

05/06/2022

DATE

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501.682.2386

May 5, 2022

Ms. Kay Barnhill
Department of Transformation and Shared Services
Office of Personnel Management
500 Woodlane Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Ms. Barnhill,

The Commissioners of Arkansas PBS are requesting the authority to pay above the maximum salary for the grade of SE02 for the Director of Arkansas PBS, Courtney Pledger.

The Director's current salary is one of the lowest in the nation. In order to retain experienced, competent leadership, we the commissioners of Arkansas PBS are requesting Courtney Pledger's salary be increased to \$180,000.

Our Director's work is nationally recognized, and she is being pursued by other public broadcasting networks. While we know we cannot match those offers dollar for dollar, we hope to be able to make the salary more attractive with the goal of keeping Ms. Pledger in Arkansas.

Under Director Pledger's leadership, Arkansas PBS has transformed from a legacy public media station to a multi-platform media organization that provides Arkansans with highly relevant local content and services.

Innovations have included: "school over the air" when schools closed during COVID 19 and *Rise and Shine* - 6 weeks of daily, original, standards-based programming during the summers to address learning loss in K-5 students; AR-CAN (Arkansas Citizen's Access Network) promoting government transparency through the live-streaming of state government proceedings; the production and statewide broadcast of Arkansas high school sports championships; the creation of agri-business program *Good Roots*; and the live-streaming of the network's local linear broadcast among many other new initiatives.

Over the past year, the network has expanded its broadcast reach from 76% to 96% of Arkansans.

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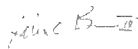
Arkansas PBS tells Arkansas stories. In 2021, the network produced *7 Days: The Opioid Crisis in Arkansas*, an impactful documentary in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education, that is now being distributed nationally. The network is currently producing a feature-length documentary on the creation of the statues of Johnny Cash and Daisy Bates to represent Arkansas in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol. Arkansas PBS is producing multiple projects for national distribution that highlight Arkansas storytellers and Arkansas' important stories to a national audience.

Arkansas PBS has won 8 Emmy awards in just the past two years, including the 2021 Community Service Emmy for extensive work in education, civic engagement, public affairs, race relations and early childhood programming.

Arkansas PBS is essential in providing educational services, professional development, essential programming and as the early warning emergency signal provider for our state. With 102 authorized employees, and a budget of \$14.5 million, we must be competitive nationally to retain forward-looking leadership.

It is due to this extremely high level of performance that Director Pledger is being pursued nationally by other networks, and we Arkansas PBS commissioners ask for your help in retaining her services here in Arkansas.

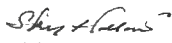
Thank you for your consideration.



John Brown
Chairman



Woody Freeman
Treasurer


Skip Holland
Anne Canada

West Doss
Vice- Chairman



Annette Herrington



Ann Clemmer



Cynthia Nance

Cc: The Honorable Asa Hutchinson, Governor