

Ready To Learn: A Successful Public-Private Partnership

Ready To Learn leverages public-private partnerships using the power of public television's on-air, online, mobile and on-the-ground educational content to deliver educational media to almost all American children between the ages of two and eight, especially those from low-income families.

The open licensing requirement jeopardizes the future viability of the Ready To Learn program. This can be addressed by adding public television entities to the limited exceptions provided for in the draft rule.

- Ready To Learn is a competitive grant program at the Department of Education that was first authorized in 1992, and most recently in 2015 as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- Ready To Learn grants have supported the production and enhanced the academic rigor of numerous public television broadcast series and digital content, including: *Peg + Cat*, *Odd Squad*, *SuperWhy*, *Sid the Science Kid*, *The Electric Company*, *Martha Speaks*, *Word World*, and *Between the Lions*, among others.
- Ready To Learn content is distributed to kids, parents, teachers and caregivers and helps them make the most of these television, online and mobile media resources in schools, pre-schools, homeschools, Head Start, libraries, mobile learning labs and other community organizations.
- Ready To Learn's math and literacy content is rigorously tested and evaluated. Since 2005, more than 100 research and evaluation studies have shown that Ready To Learn literacy and math content engages children, enhances their early learning skills and allows them to make significant academic gains, helping close the achievement gap.

Open Licensing Requirement for Direct Grant Programs

Public television supports the goal of widely distributing educational content. This is a key part of both the public television universal service mission established by the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 and the Ready To Learn program which requires grantees to have the capacity for the development and national distribution of content.

- Ready To Learn content is aired by 350 public television stations, reaching almost every household in America and 71% of all American children ages two to eight watch PBS.
- Digital content created through Ready To Learn is available to 1.8 million educators through PBS LearningMedia, and several other PBS websites make content available to parents and kids.

While public television is already meeting the goal of widely distributing grant created content, the proposed open licensing requirement would most likely make it impossible for public television to continue creating and distributing content through the Ready To Learn program.

- Ready To Learn grant funding is critical seed money, but millions of dollars in additional funding is needed to complete projects. It would be impossible for producers to secure the needed upfront funding if all rights and control of the content were assigned to the general public.
- The open licensing requirement would make Ready To Learn content subject to derivative works that would not maintain public television's commitment to research-based, high-quality educational content. This would jeopardize the trust that parents and educators place in public television as a safe source of educational media for kids.
- The loss of Ready To Learn content would have a negative economic impact on the 148 local public television stations that use this content in their broadcast and on the ground educational outreach activities. It would be impossible for most stations to replace this high quality content, increasing their costs and reducing the educational impact in their community.

The open licensing requirement jeopardizes the future viability of the Ready To Learn program. As such, we respectfully request that public television entities be added to the list of exceptions in the proposed rule.