



2025 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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I am a retired teacher, so I
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I wish I could. I feel all
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to keep public radio & TV
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Sincerely,
Alice Lawson

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WQPT Station Supporter

Our Mission:

As a public media service of Western Illinois University, WQPT PBS actively serves a diverse audience throughout West Central Illinois and the Eastern Iowa region. WQPT PBS and our supporters are committed to providing free access to lifelong learning and entertainment, fostering educational success and cultural competency within our communities.



Now celebrating our 42nd year as the Quad City region's local and trusted public television station, WQPT PBS provides educational and civic leadership services on television, in classrooms, and in the community at large. We are uniquely positioned to serve the needs of our community by providing households in our region free access to public television programming and outreach activities designed to educate, entertain, and inspire. Our programming and outreach include local history, culture and community partnerships.

WQPT is a community partner, working collaboratively with other non-profits who share our passion for systemic early childhood education through programs that equip children with the skills needed to succeed in their educational endeavors. We support education at home, in the classroom, and throughout the community. We operate with a public service mission, not with commercial interest. Through our community partnerships, we provide and support education through in-person and on-air programming.

Children with positive educational experiences from birth to age eight are more likely to graduate, become productive members of society, have higher employment rates, and lower involvement in criminal activities. During 2025, WQPT partnered with teachers to place 3,694 free books in the hands of at-risk children through our First Book Program. Our annual Multilingual Education Conference for local educators is a credited, continuing education opportunity. This year's conference was attended by 150 local educators and explored diverse topics in the theory and practice of multilingual education.



2025 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

Now celebrating our 42nd year, the founding of WQPT resulted from the community's need for a public television station that would serve eastern Iowa and western Illinois. At that time, the Quad Cities region was one of two metropolitan areas in the country not served by a local public television station. Today, WQPT continues to serve the region as a respected and innovative public broadcasting provider. We are committed to supporting education—at home and in the classroom. We personally interact with our community to form meaningful partnerships and provide educational, entertaining on-air and streaming programming and in-person educational outreach that inspire lifelong learning in the Quad Cities region. While our license is held by Western Illinois University, WQPT is self-sustaining and receives no direct cash support from the University.

As the Quad Cities' only locally owned PBS station, WQPT's mission is to help create a better community by providing educational resources for the Quad Cities region. Being referred to as a "TV station" does not begin to express what we do. We transcend television by employing an integrated educational model, which includes in-person educational outreach, to complement the educational programming we broadcast over-the-air and on-line. As a result of the success of our integrated strategic direction, WQPT continues to dedicate resources, including a full-time education director, to in-person educational outreach.

We partner with schools and organizations in our community to inspire and support lifelong learning for all. To supplement the educational outreach of our 2,271 hours of on-air and streaming PBS KIDS programming, we provided a number of local initiatives this past year. We continued partnering with teachers to place free books in the hands of at-risk children through our First Book Club. This year, we distributed 3,694 books to children in need. In addition, in the past 12 months we were able to interact with more than 8,000 people through various local events and in local classrooms. In October, we invited the public to bring their children to the Western Illinois University Campus for one of the Quad Cities' largest family events, Imagination Station. This educational day features interactive skill-building activities, make-and-take crafts, free books, and tons of fun. Our education director, with the help of community volunteers, spends the summer months partnering with local libraries to host "Summer of Adventure," where we bring fun to story time across the entire region. Each child attending gets a PBS KIDS Summer Activity Booklet and access to awesome online resources for kids and parents. Each spring, WQPT hosts our annual Multilingual Education Conference for local educators as an accredited, continuing education conference. This year's conference was attended by 150 local educators and explored diverse topics in the theory and practice of multilingual education for students from early childhood to adults. We provided a keynote presentation and breakout sessions, along with opportunities for community organizations and vendors to share information.

In summary, with education at the forefront of our mission, we emphasize PBS KIDS and educational outreach programs focusing on children, parents, and educators. From Imagination Station to our Multilingual Education Conference, to our support of the WIU-QC Parent Mentor Program with workshops and ESL classes, to our celebration of America's 250th Anniversary, we inspire both children and adults by making education entertaining. WQPT also shares the availability of our educational tools with parents, educators, and children through emails, Facebook, YouTube, our website, and other social media avenues.

WQPT's digital and broadcast infrastructure also play a significant role in the region's emergency alert system. Our communications facilities are necessary to ensure first responders, emergency personnel, public messaging, and 911 communications are functional during periods of emergency.

As a public media provider, WQPT is a member of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). In 2008, we converted our PBS membership status to become one of only 17 stations in the country serving their community through PBS' Program Differentiated Plan (PDP). Our PDP status allows us to access PBS' National Program Service (NPS) programs, and it provides us with additional local programming opportunities to better serve our community. Since the Des Moines-based Iowa PBS signal is also broadcast in our market, our PDP status allows us to serve our community through unique public media viewing opportunities.

We air a reduced number of PBS' NPS programs (25% or less), with the remainder of our schedule comprised of other public media content that would otherwise be unavailable to our viewers. WQPT broadcasts two channels, 24 hours a day, delivering enriching programming to a potential viewing audience of approximately 335,000 households representing a population of 824,000. In addition to programs that originate from national sources, we also generate local content. We are now in the 15th year of our locally produced program, "The Cities," the region's only public affairs program. The Cities provides a forum for other nonprofits to share their work and serves as a non-partisan venue for elected officials and candidates running for local, state, and national offices.

The community's recognition and response to our award-winning documentaries and educational outreach serve to encourage us as we expand our on-air and streaming programming and complement it with virtual and in-person outreach activities. To celebrate the nation's 250th birthday, we have undertaken a new initiative, "WQPT 250." As part of this initiative, we are asking community members "What's your civic spark?" We have now recorded the answers of 37 community members, including elected officials, nonprofit leaders and community volunteers.

On September 25, 2025, in partnership with the Putnam & Hauberg Museums, and Moline High School, we provided local screenings and discussion panels to raise our region's awareness of THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, a new six-part, 12-hour documentary directed by Ken Burns, Sarah Botstein and David Schmidt that examines how America's founding turned the world upside-down. In addition to discussing the excerpts from the documentary, these local screenings included discussions of the often overlooked history of the role our Quad City community played as the location of the western-most battle of the war. One report of the battle said 700 Sauk warriors withdrew without resistance and watched as the Americans burned their village. The members of our discussion panel included local authors and historians. We were especially honored that Johnathan Buffalo, the historian of the Meskwaki Nation, agreed to serve as one of our panelists, to share the viewpoint of the indigenous people that were targeted in this local battle. Through our community partners, we addressed all ages, including school age children.

Having mentioned First Book, we'd like to expand a bit on this, one of our longest running programs. It is an outreach program that provides five free books to at-risk children by partnering with the teachers of Title 1 classrooms. Through the years, we have had the honor of delivering upwards of 400,000 free books to children from low-literate, low-income, English-as-second-language, rural, and special needs families.

As we move forward, WQPT will continue to provide in-person outreach to complement our over-the-air and streaming programming, thereby ensuring that we are delivering quality educational opportunities in a variety of ways. To illustrate how this combination works, we'd like to share the story of Allison, a local early childhood and special education teacher and mother to 6 children. First, as a mother raising her children, Allison always found PBS KIDS educational content aired on WQPT to be inspiring, and incited a love for learning and questioning as her family watched it together. In her classroom, she's grateful for our in-person outreach, and for WQPT's education director, who visits her students, reads to them and shares free books with them to take home to their families. Allison has recorded an on-air testimonial in which she thanks WQPT and expresses her hope that our efforts to educate and inspire youth continues.

With the recent rescission of Federal funding nationwide (53% of our budget), moving forward WQPT will need to rely more heavily on local funding provided through community support, including viewer memberships and donations, foundation grants and corporate support. While we do receive modest support from The State of Illinois grants, it comprises less than 4% of our total budget.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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First Book

First Book Club is an outreach program that provides five free books per year to at-risk children by partnering with Title 1 classrooms. By supporting classroom teachers, First Book Club has grown to play a vital role in supporting education and diversity in the Quad Cities region. Through the years, we have had the honor of delivering more than 400,000 free books to children from low-literate, low-income, English-as-second-language, rural, and special needs families. In 2025 alone, we placed 3,694 books into the hands of children.



Summer of Adventure

During the summer of 2025, WQPT PBS made guest appearances at 31 locations, including 15 libraries throughout our region. We provided the opportunity to watch a PBS KIDS program, listen to a story, and participate in a fun learning activity. Each child received a PBS KIDS Summer Activity booklet and learned how to access to free online resources on PBS KIDS that provide additional learning opportunities at home.



Imagination Station:

October 11, 2025 marked another year of enjoyment for everyone attending WQPT's Imagination Station. This FREE community event connects children & their families with PBS resources that make learning fun & exciting. With activities supported by nearly 100 community volunteers, the event offered educational activities focused on literacy, science, technology, engineering, math & the arts. Costumed PBS KIDS characters hosted unique learning stations with games, stories, make-and-take crafts & give-a-ways, employing the learning concepts of their specific PBS KIDS program.

Partnerships:

We collaborate with many local non-profits and educational organizations to leverage our impact, without duplicating services. Our partners include Iowa and Illinois school districts, Spring Forward, Head Start programs, daycare centers, Putnam Museum, Hauberg Museum, Bettendorf Family Museum, Butterworth Center, Mercado, Friends of MLK, TMBC at the Lincoln Center, Quad City Botanical Center, Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, local cultural and historical centers, and area libraries.

Sustainability:

While our license is held by Western Illinois University, WQPT is a self-supporting department, responsible for raising all funding needed to operate. We are focused on growing local contributions from our supporting members, as well as our local sponsorships and grants to help fill the void left by the loss of federal funding in 2025. With the continued support of our viewers and funders (our supporting members have grown to more 4,000 people), we are confident in our ability to adapt our business model so that we are able to sustain and continue our mission. It is our responsibility to ensure that all residents of our region continue to have free access to educational public broadcasting and to integrated educational resources.



WQPT's 2025 Imagination Station featured PBS KIDS characters hosting unique learning stations with educational activities.

Educational Outreach Impact:

Valerie Pennock, a teacher at Hayes Elementary in Davenport, loves WQPT's First Book Program selection, and the many cultures showcased to represent the diverse families within her district. WQPT's classroom visits create a connection to the books her students receive and further supports their love of reading.

Allison Dounoulis is an early childhood and special education teacher with the Moline School District and mother to 6 children. Allison always found PBS KIDS educational content aired on WQPT to be inspiring, and incite a love for learning and questioning as her family watched it together. In her classroom, she's grateful for our education director's visits, where she reads to students and shares free books with them to take home to their families.

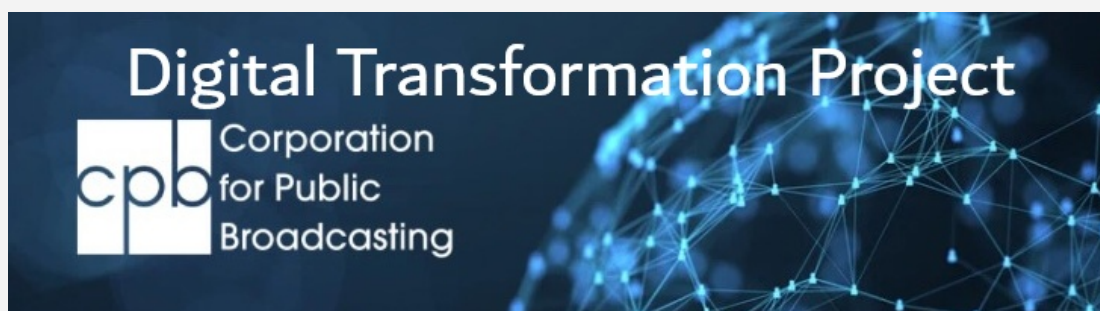


2025 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT NEW INITIATIVES



VOLUNTEER WITH WQPT

WQPT is giving back this year as we celebrate America's 250th birthday, and we have invited the public to join us in civic engagement opportunities. As part of our America 250 initiative, beginning in 2025, and continuing through 2026, we will volunteer at a different local non-profit each month.



Prior to the loss of federal funding, WQPT was proud to be chosen by the CPB as one of the first 50 Public Media Stations in the nation to participate in the Digital Transformation Program. This year-long initiative fostered innovation across the public media system by teaching stations like WQPT the best strategies and tactics to transform our digital operations and culture to meet the needs of our changing local audiences. Participating as a station team, we learned core strategies, tools, and practices. Our station project was The Cities, where we focused on growing our on-air audience through social media promotion, while driving audience engagement with new viewers through “shorts” created for our YouTube channel. The Digital Transformation Program helped WQPT prepare for the future by accelerating our digital development and learning best practices for achieving audience and revenue growth.

WQPT believes it is important to provide our community with lifelong learning opportunities. The programming flexibility of our PDP status allows us the opportunity to share local and regional productions with our viewers.
