

# #PubMediaEducates

## PUBLIC MEDIA'S EDUCATION WORK: CONTINUING LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In December 2019, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting set out to document the current education work of public media television and radio stations in the 2020 Survey of Station Education Work. This effort offered a descriptive picture of the Who, What, and How of public media's powerful contributions in communities nationwide. Yet, as the study was reaching completion, COVID-19 changed everything.

While COVID-19 affects almost every aspect of our daily lives, its impact is especially pronounced for schools. Educators are using virtual delivery to ensure continuity of instruction for more than 50 million students across the country. The 2020 Survey has illustrated how stations are uniquely situated to fulfill public media's education mission—a mission that has only intensified since the pandemic hit.

This addendum to the original survey provides fast facts that address public media's rapid response to education-related needs in spring and early summer 2020. Public media professionals have leveraged capacity in existing education content, and created and distributed customized programming and services to meet the pandemic-heightened needs of school systems and educators alike, reaching 99% of American households where broadcast technology is available. Public media's unique and local infrastructure coupled with education-specific expertise continues to benefit students nationwide when disruption requires the type of innovation public media naturally provides.

### CHALLENGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

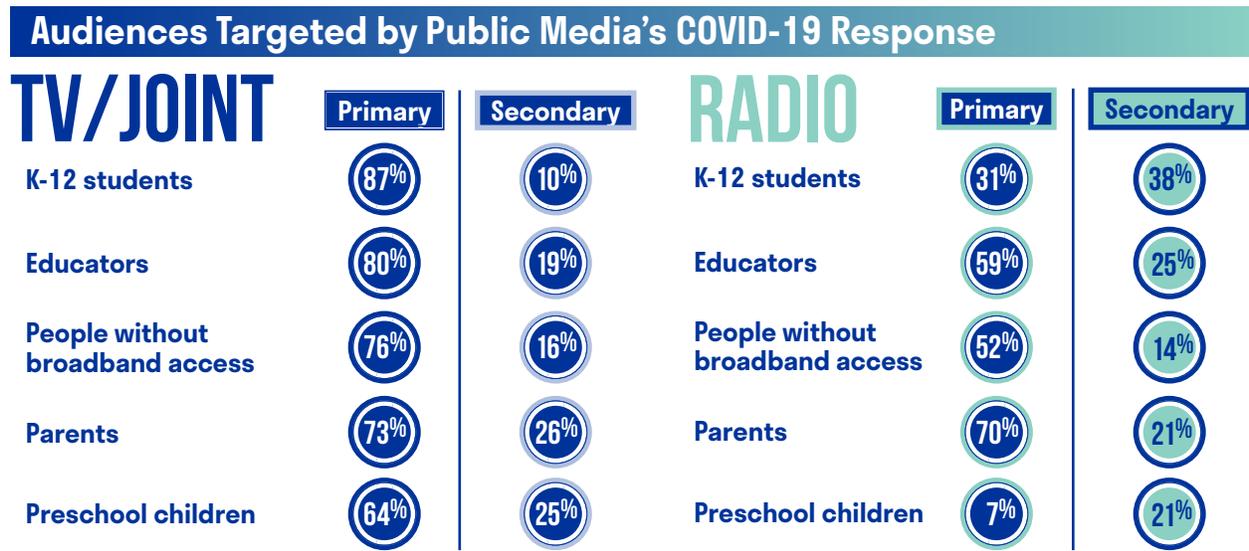
**A spring 2020 study conducted by the non-profit Common Sense Media illustrates COVID-prompted distance learning challenges faced by students and families across the United States. They found that:**

- More than 50 million K-12 public school students are learning remotely from home.
- 30% of these students, or 9 million, lack either adequate internet connectivity or technology to fully engage in distance learning.
- Roughly 10% of public school teachers live in households without adequate internet connectivity.
- The above trends are especially prevalent in rural communities, and are disproportionately faced by people of color.

## PUBLIC MEDIA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE: WHO

Public media's pandemic efforts build upon its existing education work for students of all ages, their parents, and their teachers. The 2020 Education Station Survey illustrated the general finding that television/joint stations frequently target school-aged children and their teachers, while radio stations more frequently serve parents and grandparents of school-aged children in their education work.

These general trends are reflected in COVID-19-specific survey responses. The following infographic presents the percentage of survey-responding stations that are targeting each audience as part of their COVID-19 response.



## PUBLIC MEDIA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE: WHAT

While the “WHO” of public media’s COVID-19 response largely reflects amplified service to existing audiences, things diverge away from business as usual when the “WHAT” of this work is examined.

COVID-19 is requiring public media professionals to take risks and try new things to meet the education needs of schools, teachers, parents, and children during this public health challenge. These include changes to traditional departments and team structures, and their relationships with educators to design, produce, and review content.

In addition to producing content for hundreds of thousands of students, their parents, and their teachers, stations are helping teachers become better online instructors and working with them to optimize the content they deliver. We asked surveyed stations to describe the content and educator dimensions of their COVID-19 work. The following table summarizes their responses.



creating new educational content

offering content from other sources

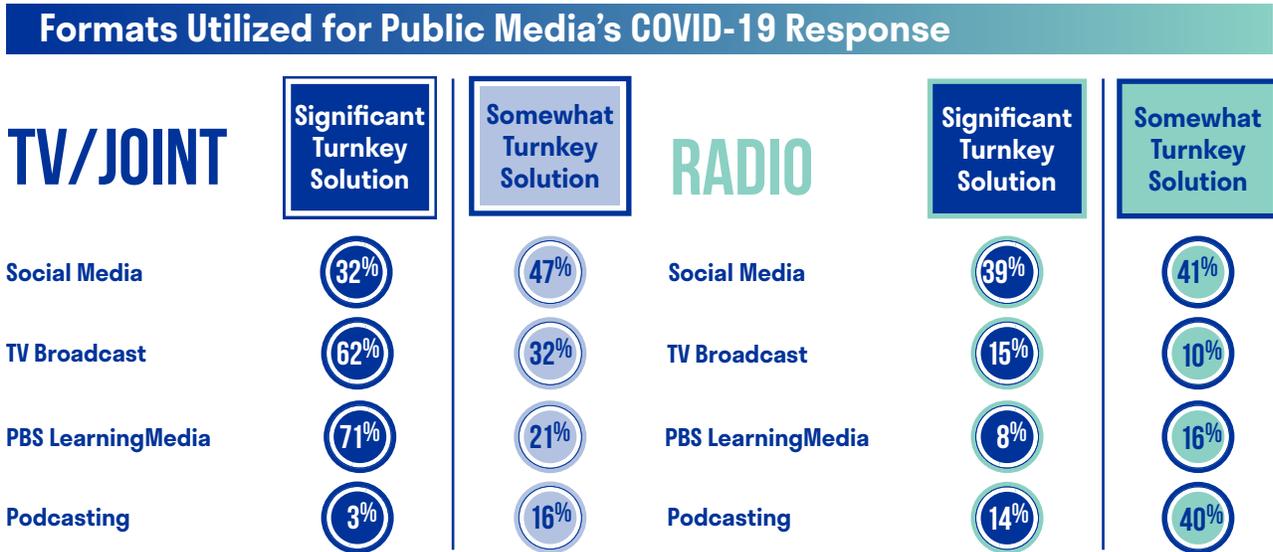
working with educators to develop content for broadcast and/or other distribution

inviting educators to vet our content and inform/tailor our programming

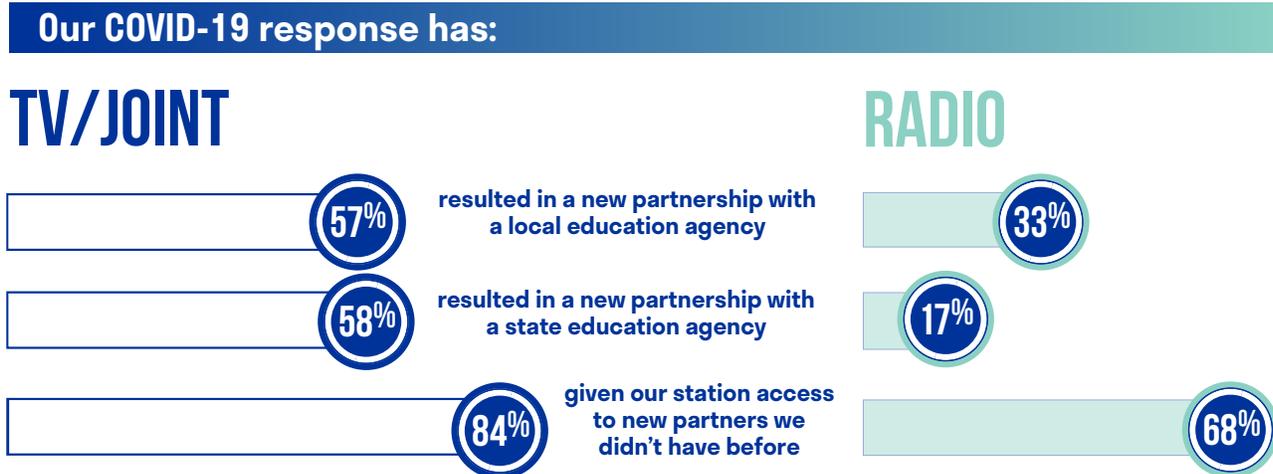
# PUBLIC MEDIA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE: HOW

Because it is already embedded in communities and has proven expertise working with multiple platforms and formats to deliver content, public media began its COVID-19 response on favorable footing. From broadcast programs accessible to 99% of Americans to education content delivered through social media and podcasts, public media's COVID-19 response has provided significant and diverse opportunities for learning.

The following infographic indicates which platforms and formats stations have relied on, and their level of significance as a turnkey solution for delivering content during the pandemic.



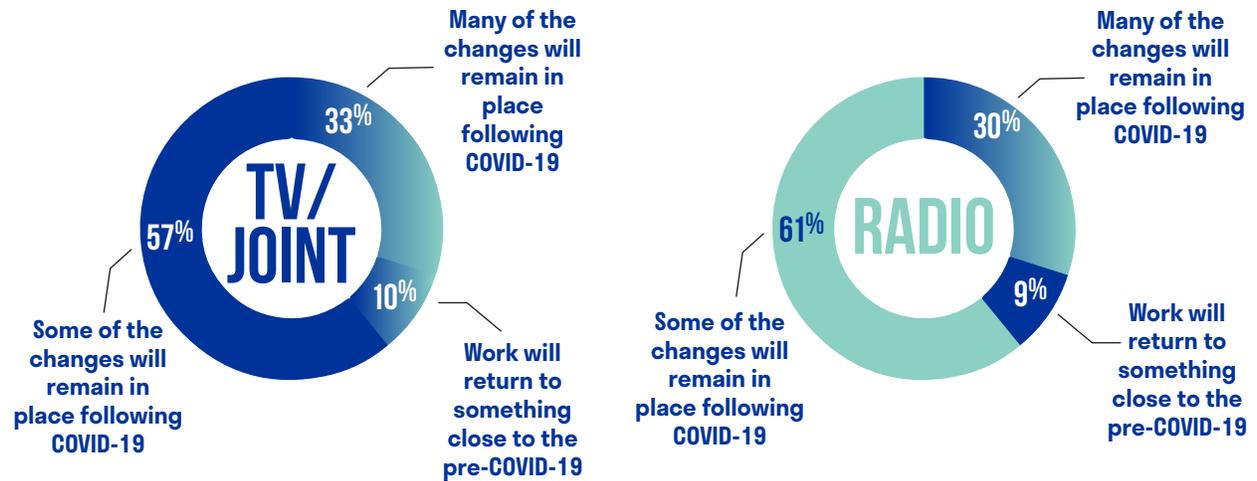
Partnerships also facilitate both content design and delivery, helping public media understand community needs, access target audiences, and deliver high-value content. The COVID-19 response has been fueled by existing partnerships, and new partnerships that have been formalized in response to the pandemic. Surveyed stations described their partnerships specific to the COVID-19 response.



These positive changes to the traditional ways of doing business have been noted by those outside public media. With such recognition, we have noted the changing perspectives of public media professionals' own beliefs about their education work.

But will these changes persist? Or will things return to the pre-COVID-19 state over time? Survey results show that change is here to stay: At least 90% of responding stations indicate that some or many of the changes they've made will remain in place following the pandemic.

## Future Work Process



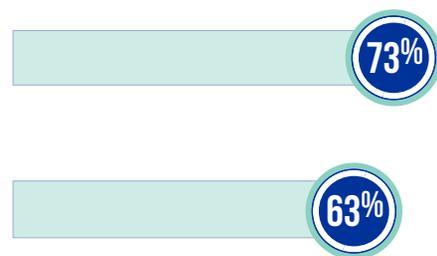
Finally, responding public media professionals were queried about additional changes—the way they're perceived by partners, and the way they think about their own work. The majority of television and radio stations indicate their COVID-19 response has resulted in changed perceptions in both areas.

## Our COVID-19 response has:

### TV/Joint



### RADIO



## METHODOLOGY

This addendum to the 2020 Survey of Station Education Work involved a follow-up survey conducted during June and July 2020. Station general managers received an invitation and were asked to identify the person with the most knowledge of the station's education work to complete the instrument. A total of 242 survey responses were received, with 55 from television stations, 112 from radio stations, and 75 from joint television/radio licensees. Together, a total of 315 public television and radio stations are represented.