BUSINESS

KERA loses $2.7 million overnight as public funding cuts hit North Texas broadcasters

KERA says it was "prepared" for a new era of less public financing.

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The building sign of public broadcaster KERA is seen past a fence, on Thursday, June 26, 2025 in Dallas.

SHAFKAT ANOWAR / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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KERA is preparing for a future with less public funding after Congress approved $9 billion in public broadcasting and foreign aid cuts.

Along with other public broadcasting institutions in Texas, the Dallas radio station found itself in crisis mode on Friday.

According to KERA, Congress passed legislation late Thursday that shrank the station's balance sheet by $2.7 million overnight, denting an annual budget of approximately $30 million.

The bill is now headed to President Donald Trump's desk, and he is expected to approve it.

"We are incredibly disappointed in this Congressional action," KERA president and CEO Nico Leone told *The Dallas Morning News*.

"But KERA has provided essential services to North Texans for more than 60 years, and that's not going to change," he said.

In a memo to staffers that was circulated late Thursday, the executive called the action "a defining moment for our industry. But we are prepared."

The shifting mood in Washington signaled a new era for news organizations, one in which the century-defining commodity of taxpayer-subsidized broadcasting finds itself with less money and political support.

For KERA – named over sixty years ago with call letters said to represent "a new ERA in broadcasting" — the irony is all too apparent.

If not restored or offset with new funding, the federal funding cuts leave KERA with an 8% gap in its annual budget.

According to its audited financial statements, the broadcaster reported over $41 million in total revenues, contributions and other support in fiscal year 2024.

A statement from KERA said the funding helped support local, fact-based news, music and arts programming, educational children's programs and resources, and more.

KERA operates multiple stations in Texas, including KERA News, KERA FM, KXT 91.7, KERA TV, and Arts Access, a community-funded initiative in partnership with *The News*.

Now the station is forced to look elsewhere for financial support; according to the staff memo, KERA was already prepping for a future with less funding.

“As we’ve discussed and planned for some time now, we will launch immediate fundraising campaigns on air and online starting [Friday] morning — including a live membership campaign on KERA News and a heavy rotation of messages on KERA TV, KXT and WRR,” Leone wrote.

According to Leone, community members are already stepping up to ensure the information they care about isn’t lost.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting funds more than 1,500 locally operated public media stations nationwide. Since 1967, CPB relied on federal funding to support public broadcasting, which is doled out to NPR, PBS and local stations.

Federal funding cuts mean the revenue stream will “zero out funding for public media for the next two fiscal years,” Executive Vice President and General Manager of PBS News, Michael Rancilio, said in a statement.

Local stations rely more heavily on federal funding, and without it, many will rely on member contributions for the future.

“In an increasingly complex information landscape, safeguarding this mission is more critical than ever,” Rancilio said. “We can only do this with your ongoing support.”