



BORDER REPORTING FUND

We are experiencing an unprecedented shift in our national identity – and the U.S.-Mexico border is “ground zero” in the resulting national debate. As the United States becomes increasingly populated by Hispanics of Mexican descent, driven by immigration both legal and illegal, KPBS is documenting the trends and delivering the news of the day.

The immigration debate presents a polarized citizenry and a plethora of policy options. To comprehend the complexity of immigration, one must examine the interwoven lives of residents – on both sides of the border. The border region knows these issues first and provides lessons for the rest of the nation.

The border is a defining feature of San Diego/Tijuana region. Yet, it remains severely under-covered by major commercial news outlets.

Covering the border requires commitment to overcome challenges: working in two countries, in two cultures, in two languages. KPBS News chooses to make that commitment.

The Border Reporting Fund assures priority protection of this crucial news beat.

KPBS has devoted more than a decade to reporting news stories in the border region of San Diego and Tijuana. Countless names, issues, ideas, and crises have been uncovered and shared with our radio audience. The majority of focus over the years has been on drugs, drug trafficking, and impact of the drug trade on our communities. This emphasis has been out of necessity. Given the economics of the drug trade and the opportunities for trafficking along the US Mexico border, one would expect KPBS to focus on drugs. Additionally, KPBS’ limited resources necessitate that we focus on the most important story.

Our audience and our community deserve more complete coverage of the busiest border crossing in the world. They deserve to hear voices and share ideas on a greater variety of topics than that of just the violence of the drug trade.

KPBS proposes to create a border desk unit within the station that will allow for greater coverage of this vibrant region. With more than one reporter, KPBS will be able to provide a much richer portrait to our audiences of the life, culture, challenges, and promises of the border region. We will be able to focus more on immigration, healthcare issues, the economy, education, infrastructure, the environment, arts, culture, etc. We will also be able to bring stories from East County and Imperial Valley where the border culture has a much different feel than that near to the coast.

Ideally and dependent upon funding, the KPBS Border Desk will comprise at least two reporters, one web developer, and an editor. The team will work together to identify short and long term stories that deserve to be told. They will treat each story with the kind of sensibility the public

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radio audience expects: respect, integrity, thoughtfulness, and curiosity. The Border Desk team will work seamlessly within our existing editorial structure of the organization to assure that their topics contribute to our overall public service mission. They will work with KPBS' multimedia platform managers to provide comprehensive coverage of the border region.

The Border Reporting Fund provides the following production over a year's time: roughly 150 daily radio news reports; between 30-50 in-depth radio features; an estimated 40 appearances on KPBS radio and TV news analysis programs; plus corresponding web reports and frequent reports for regional and national networks. KPBS Reporters are also available for visits to schools, community groups, and special events.

Our goal is to raise a minimum of \$240,000 for a three-year commitment to the Border Reporting Fund to cover salary, benefits, overhead costs, and costs associated with training and equipment. These costs also include extra mileage and extra time to travel in Mexico, special auto insurance, a Senti pass, a special two-way radio-phone for safety. KPBS also requires a Spanish wire service and special subscriptions to border area newspapers. This funding will support one reporter, Amy Isackson, for three years. We will use this foundation to approach other funders about helping us to expand the desk.

A three-year commitment is necessary to assure continuity of the position and sufficient resources for quality production

We will recognize your support with credits throughout our broadcast schedule for a year.

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