



Annual Report for WyomingPBS Fiscal Year 2021

Respectfully submitted by Terry Dugas, General Manager of WyomingPBS

Summary

COVID-19 had a significant impact on WyomingPBS. However, in a strange turn of fate, the impact was largely positive. Because people were hesitant to leave their homes, they consumed more media during this time. This included more of WyomingPBS.

On a six-month average, 69,121 unique viewers aged 2+ watch WyomingPBS at least once a month.

WyomingPBS videos were watched online over 13 million times on the YouTube and PBS Video channels. Facebook users watched over 1.3 million minutes.

WyomingPBS created a total of 43.5 new hours of content in Fiscal Year 2021, two hours more than in Fiscal Year 2020. The network aired locally produced content 354 times totaling 202.5 hours.

In addition, WyomingPBS created a total of 101 hours of non-broadcast content in Fiscal Year 2021.

WyomingPBS believes more teachers and students used WyomingPBS LearningMedia as part of a distance learning / ZOOM strategy. In Fiscal Year 2021, 41,000 users watched educational learning objects 159,500 times on WyomingPBS LearningMedia.

In addition, donations increased to the WyomingPBS Foundation. The Foundation believes Members responded to fundraising appeals because they were consuming more WyomingPBS content. The WyomingPBS Foundation raised \$961,483 and returned \$232,655 to WyomingPBS to fund local productions.

The Federal CARES / American Recovery Act funding enabled WyomingPBS to make critical improvements to the network's broadcast infrastructure without asking for support from the State.

The most significant negative impact on WyomingPBS was the loss of an additional 10% of its workforce. The only ongoing source of funds for staff is State Aid. When State Aid is cut, the staff must be cut. Due to the staff cuts, the popular and important series *Farm to Fork Wyoming* was cancelled.



Fiscal Year 2022 will be an important time for WyomingPBS. WyomingPBS's statewide debates will precede the November elections. The national quality documentary *Fossil Country* will premiere in March of 2022. An upcoming four-part series on Mental Health will address a critical issue impacting, in one way or another, all of Wyoming's citizens. A new series focusing on the outdoors called *Wyoming Wild* is in production. And ongoing productions of *Capitol Outlook*, *Wyoming Chronicle*, *Our Wyoming* will continue to tell Wyoming's stories.

WyomingPBS will also continue to provide quality, vetted educational materials to teachers.

WyomingPBS looks forward to continuing its mission of service to the people of Wyoming.



Personnel Status

As with other State Agencies, in Fiscal Year 2021, WyomingPBS's State Aid was reduced by 10%, or approximately \$175,000 a year. Since State Aid is the sole funding source for staff, WyomingPBS reduced staff by 15%, or 4 people. 2 people came from Administrative and 2 were from the Production staff. This left WyomingPBS with 18.5 FTE remaining to operate the state network, down from 23.5 FTE just four years ago.

In the Spring of Fiscal Year 2021, WyomingPBS added one FTE to fulfill a request from the Legislative Service Office for increased Legislative Streaming. This is a one-year appointment, funded by unrestricted Federal CARES Act dollars.

WyomingPBS's Five Major Goals

1) Continue the outstanding tradition of local productions at WyomingPBS

a) [Wyoming Chronicle](#)

In Fiscal Year 2021, WyomingPBS created 22 new 30:00 *Chronicles*. *Chronicle* featured interviews with University of Wyoming President Dr. Edward Seidel, authors C.J. Box and James Chandler, and the late Senator Mike Enzi. *Chronicle* also reported on issues such as Beef Distribution, Personal Online Security, the COVID-19 Vaccine, and Wyoming's Energy Future. *Wyoming Chronicle* programs aired 180 times across WyomingPBS's main and digital channel.

For Fiscal Year 2022, *Chronicle* plans to create 26 30:00 programs.

b) [Farm to Fork Wyoming](#)

Because of staff reductions noted above, only two new *Farm to Fork* programs were created in Fiscal Year 2021, "School Greenhouses" and "Farmers Markets in the New Normal." However, the series continues to air, with 29 telecasts in Fiscal Year 2021.

c) [Our Wyoming](#)

Ten new episodes of WyomingPBS's "digital first" series, *Our Wyoming*, aired in Fiscal Year 2021. These short features premiere online and on social media, then are broadcast. In Fiscal Year 2021, these videos have been viewed over 300,000 times online.

In addition to the online delivery, these features were broadcast 93 times on WyomingPBS's main and digital channel.

The most popular stories were "Wyoming Stewardess School," "Fossil Butte," and a profile of Wyoming basketball legend "Kenny Sailors."

An additional nine *Our Wyoming* features are planned for Fiscal Year 2022.



(d) Legislative and Political Coverage

- 1) Because of the COVID crisis, WyomingPBS's contract to live stream Legislative Committee Hearings was reduced to six hearings, covering 12 days, totaling 96 hours. These hearings are now hosted on the Wyoming Legislature YouTube channel, so WyomingPBS no longer has access to audience numbers.
- 2) WyomingPBS continued with the responsibility for broadcasting and live streaming Governor Gordon's COVID and related Press Briefings. WyomingPBS covered 14 Press Briefings which have been viewed over 648,000 times.

3) [Capitol Outlook](#) aired four 30:00 specials focusing on COVID and five 60:00 and one 30:00 episodes of Legislative Coverage. WyomingPBS also broadcast and live streamed the annual “State of the State” and “State of the Judiciary” addresses. These programs were broadcast 68 times across WyomingPBS’s main and digital channels.

4) [Debate Coverage](#)

In Fiscal Year 2021, WyomingPBS continued its long tradition of producing balanced political debates. Due to the number of candidates in the field, two debates for the Republican U.S. Senate Primary race were produced. One debate for the Democratic U.S. Senate Primary race was held. For the General Election, a debate for the U.S. Senate and the U.S House of Representative seats were held.

These five debates were telecast 18 times. They were also live streamed and were available as video on demand. The online videos were viewed almost 34,000 times.

(e) Feature Documentaries

1) WyomingPBS did not produce any new feature documentaries in Fiscal Year 2021. However, pre-production began on a major series and a national documentary scheduled to air in Fiscal Year 2022.

a) The film, *Fossil Country* weaves a riveting narrative of eccentric fossil hunters, geologists, commercial dealers, tourists, museum curators and professors of paleontology, all digging underneath layers of rock in southwestern Wyoming - called the ‘Green River Formation’.

This area is known worldwide as an extraordinary vertebrate graveyard. Once, a great lake and a subtropical environment now is an extraordinary window looking back in time. Fish, sting rays, even alligators swam in these waters, while the surrounding environment was tropical and full of other kinds of vertebrates - from ancient three-toed horses, to bats and strange birds. They are frozen in death, preserved in high definition detail trapped in the sediment and rock.

The estimated cost of *Fossil Country* is \$120,000. Funding will come from Wyoming Foundations, businesses, and if necessary, the State managed WPBS Production Endowment.



- b) The major series, with a working title of *Mental Health*, will have four episodes looking at four critical mental health issues facing Wyoming citizens. Each show will include personal stories from Wyoming people experiencing mental health challenges as well as interviews with experts to provide context and to educate the audience. Each show will conclude with contact information for mental health resources.

The estimated cost of *Mental Health* is \$250,000. Funding will come from private donations, Wyoming Foundations, businesses, and if necessary, the State managed WPBS Production Endowment.

Total Hours of Broadcast Content

WyomingPBS created a total of 43.5 new hours of content in Fiscal Year 2021, two hours more than in Fiscal Year 2020. The network aired locally produced content 354 times totaling 202.5 hours.

Non-Broadcast Content

WyomingPBS created a total of 101 hours of non-broadcast content in Fiscal Year 2021. 98 hours consisted of Legislative and Government hearings. 3 hours were 20 episodes of “Story Time with Wyoming Authors,” a children’s series.

2) Provide engaging and meaningful community outreach

WyomingPBS was selected to participate in the “Well Beings” initiative, a nationwide public media campaign addressing the mental health needs of Americans.

WyomingPBS produced a live, in-person panel discussion focusing on the effects of social media on youth mental health. [Living Life Online: The Impact of Social Media on Youth Mental Health](#) was held at the Boys and Girls Club in Casper on June 22, 2021. It was broadcast on WyomingPBS’s main and secondary channels and was live streamed on Facebook and YouTube.

The discussion focused on cyber-bullying, the effects of social media on self-esteem, as well as anxiety and depression, which can start as early as the 2nd grade.

The panel included a Neuropsychologist/School Psychologist, a School Resource Officer, an Independent film producer of *Angst, Like, and Screenagers*, and a young adult who has suffered from the effects of mental illness from a young age. The panel was moderated by WyomingPBS Public Affairs Producer Craig Blumenshine.





3) Increase signal coverage for the station

- a) WyomingPBS used Federal CARES and American Recovery Act funds to order new, more powerful transmitters for Casper and Laramie and a new, more powerful translator for Cheyenne.

Due to worldwide shortages of electronic components, the equipment was not delivered until Fiscal Year 2022.

- b) Looking to Fiscal Year 2022.**

The new Casper transmitter was delivered, installed, and authorized by the FCC. It has been on the air since October, 2021. The new Cheyenne translator has been on the air since November, 2021. The Laramie transmitter has been installed and is undergoing testing.

The older Cheyenne translator will be moved to Rawlins, replacing a lower power translator there.

These upgrades will significantly increase the availability of Wyoming residents to receive WyomingPBS over the air.

4) Improve the Network's broadcast and on-line capabilities

- a) WyomingPBS expanded its access to viewers through a partnership with PBS. The over the air channel can now be watched, for free, through the PBS Video App on Roku, AppleTV, Amazon Fire, Chromecast, and on Smart TVs from Samsung and Visio. The app is also available on cellphones and tablets.
- b) In addition to streaming through the PBS app, four channels can now be viewed live through the WyomingPBS website: the main channel, PBS Create / WPBS Encore, FNX (a Native American network) and PBS Kids.
- c) The WyomingPBS main channel is also available on the streaming service YouTubeTV.

5) Provide high quality educational content for Wyoming teachers

- a) In the summer of 2020, WyomingPBS featured local Wyoming children’s authors in an online series titled [Story Time with Wyoming Authors](#). The authors recorded themselves reading one of their books. WyomingPBS packaged the videos with original graphics and branding and released a new story weekly. The initiative was in response to numerous libraries across the state cancelling their summer story time events. A DVD of all of the recordings was sent to every public-school librarian at the beginning of the 2020/2021 school year.

Story Time held a live story time virtual event in May at Big Horn Elementary in Sheridan, where Wyoming author Mary Fichtner and her daughter and illustrator Roslyn read one of her “Rusty the Ranch Horse” books to the entire school. Mary and Roslyn took questions from classrooms following the reading.





- b) In Fiscal Year 2021, **41,000** users watched educational learning objects **159,500** times on [WyomingPBS LearningMedia](#).

During that Fiscal Year, WyomingPBS Education coordinated curriculum and video content for 18 new localized LearningMedia resources. These learning objects and lesson plans are available, at no charge, to teachers across the country.

In addition, nine new learning objects and lesson plans were added to the Wind River Education Project collection.

Lessons on “State of Equality: Wyoming Women Get the Vote,” “Compost Worms,” “Atomic Fracking,” “Japanese Internment in Wyoming,” “Prisoners of War,” “Natural Trap Cave,” “Ferret Town,” “Hot Springs State Park,” “Bee Keeping,” “Wyoming Stewardess School,” “No Indians or Dogs Allowed,” “The Bozeman Trail,” “Native American Veterans” and others were added to the portal.

These videos and lesson plans are available to teachers nationwide at <http://wyomingpbs.org/learningmedia>.

- c) WyomingPBS also provided five virtual events for educators and parents, training them on the PBS LearningMedia portal and showcasing the PBS Kids website and app. A PBS LearningMedia training was also held with the Cowboy State Virtual Academy. In addition, WyomingPBS attended two Wyoming Innovations Conferences and the Wyoming Principles Conference, all of which were held virtually.

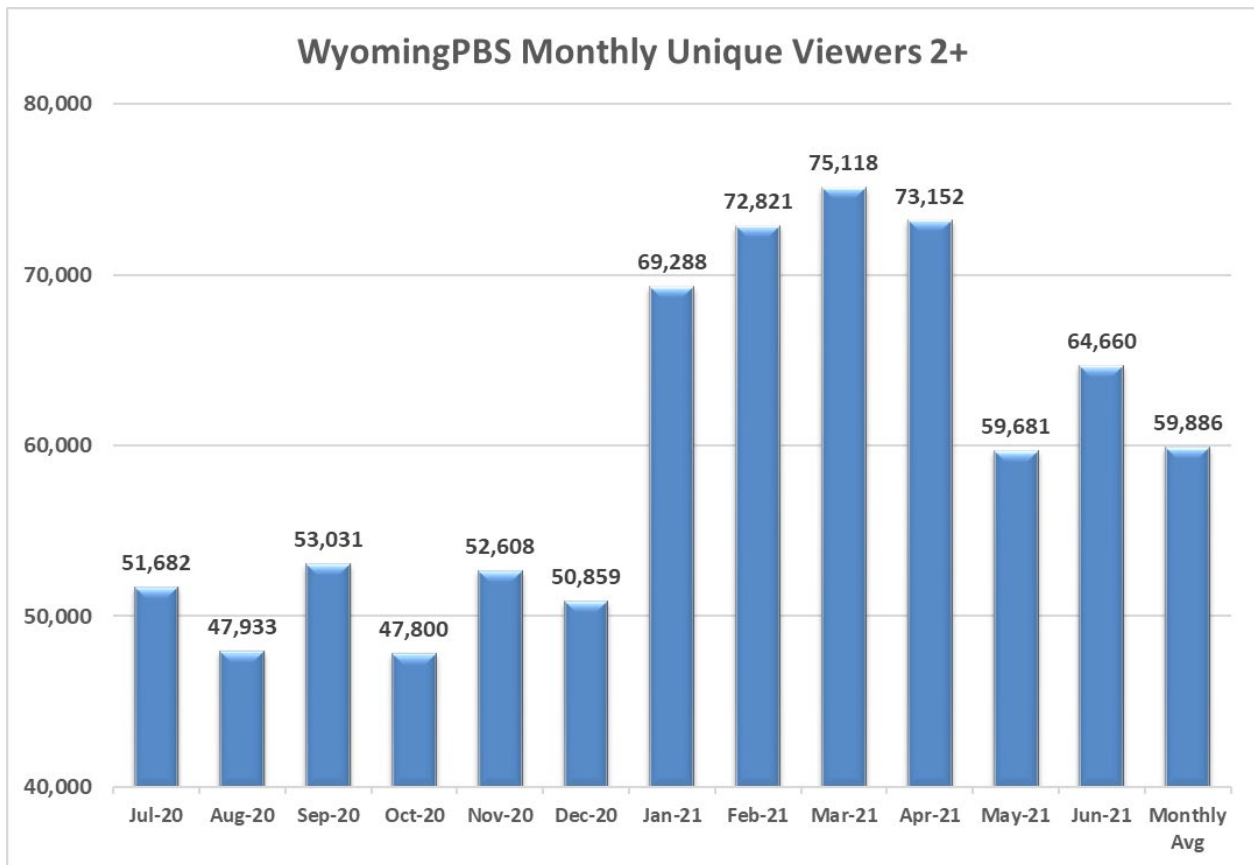
The WyomingPBS Audience

- 1) WyomingPBS audiences consistently watch their favorite shows. *Antiques Roadshow* appeared in the top ten viewed shows in eleven months, usually the most viewed program. *NATURE* appeared in the top ten in seven months. They also like British Drama and Mystery programs, with various titles appearing nine times in ten months.

Audiences are also keenly interested in news and public affairs, especially Wyoming news and public affairs. The *NewsHour* appeared in the top ten during nine months. *Wyoming Chronicle* and *Capitol Outlook* also appeared in the top ten in two months.

Other Wyoming themed programs in the top ten were *The Bozeman Trail*, placing first in October of 2020, *Ferret Town* placing first in December of 2020, and *Arctic Dance: The Mardy Murie Story* placing ninth in March of 2021.

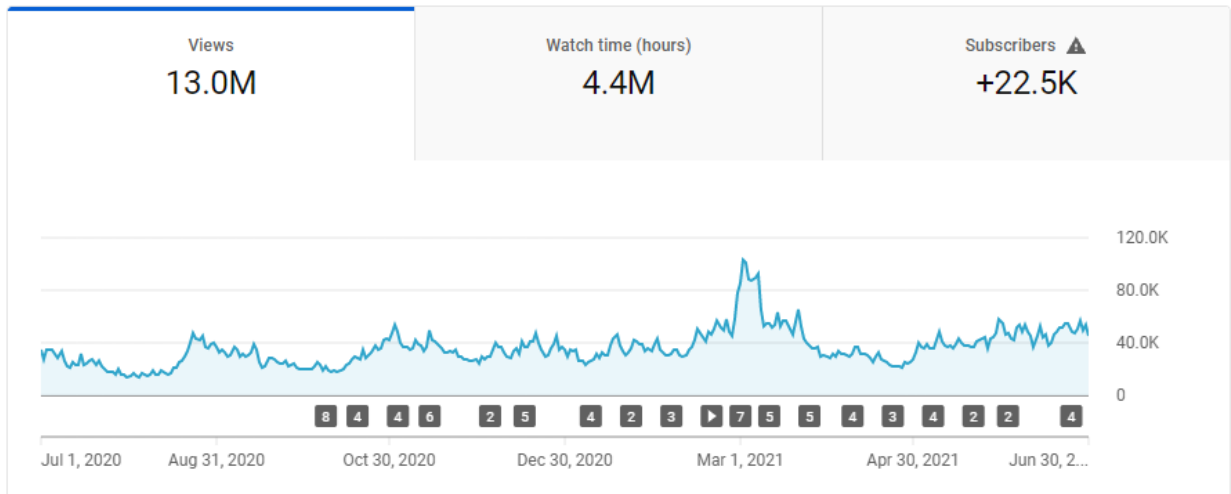
2) On a six-month average, **69,121** unique viewers aged 2+ watch WyomingPBS at least once a month. As expected, the WyomingPBS audience varies wildly from month to month. Factors that influence viewing are weather, competition, and the programs broadcast by WyomingPBS. In addition, the Nielsen Research Company constantly tweaks its measurements, making longitudinal analysis difficult. As the monthly graph below shows, Nielsen revised its methodology in January to better measure viewing from “cord cutters” using the Internet. The monthly average, above, includes the six months since the last Nielsen adjustment.



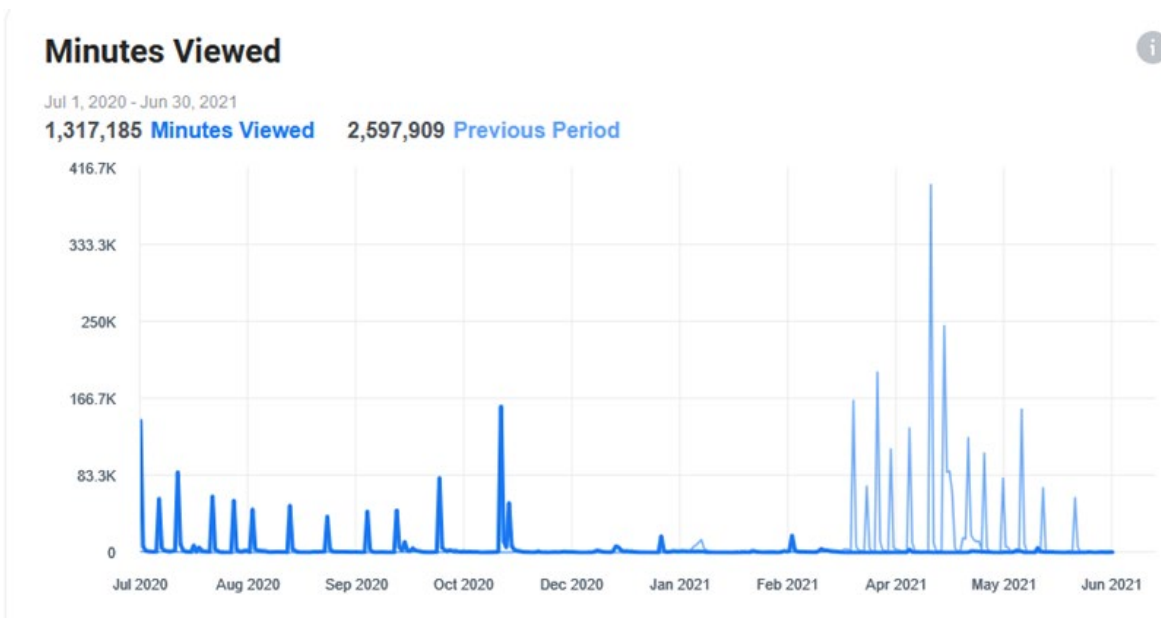
3) The addition of live streaming the WyomingPBS main channel through the PBS app and the WyomingPBS website added an additional **1,600** monthly unique viewers.

- 4) In Fiscal Year 2021, WyomingPBS continued its expansion of Facebook and YouTube as online video channels through the “digital first” series *Our Wyoming* and through Facebook and YouTube live streaming. Due to COVID related online viewing, WyomingPBS’s online viewing continued at a record pace. On YouTube, alone, WyomingPBS videos were viewed over **13 million times**.

In the selected period, your channel got 13,035,570 views



Facebook calculates viewership by minutes rather than by views. As the graph below shows, WyomingPBS videos were viewed **1.3 million minutes**. This is a reduction from Fiscal Year 2020 due to airing fewer live events such as Press Briefings.





The WyomingPBS Foundation

The WyomingPBS Foundation is a separate non-profit organization, tasked with raising funds to support the efforts of the WyomingPBS network. The WyomingPBS Foundation had a successful Fiscal Year 2021, raising \$961,483.

Of the \$961,483, \$672,072 came from the Members of WyomingPBS. \$37,000 came from state funds administered by agencies like the Wyoming Humanities Council and the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund and private foundations like the BNSF Foundation and the MRB Family Foundation. \$94,706 came from corporate underwriters. The balance came from dividend interest and other sources.

The Foundation provided a total of \$232,655 in support to WyomingPBS in Fiscal Year 2021 to fund local productions.

WyomingPBS Budget Review and Projections

Fiscal Year 2021 Income vs. Expense

In Fiscal Year 2021, WyomingPBS received income of \$4,400,384 against expenses of \$3,300,091.

The income of \$4,400,384 exceeded projections due to two unexpected infusions of money. WyomingPBS received over \$268,000 in past due Royalty Payments from PBS. And WyomingPBS received over \$745,000 in American Recovery funds from the Federal Government.

In a report prepared for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, WyomingPBS estimates needing \$2,300,000 for critical Engineering capitol expenses through Fiscal Year 2023. The excess income over expense in Fiscal Year 2021 will be placed in reserve for these Engineering expenses.

Fiscal Year 2022 Income vs. Expense

In Fiscal Year 2022, WyomingPBS estimates income of \$3,594,518 against expenses of \$3,932,746.

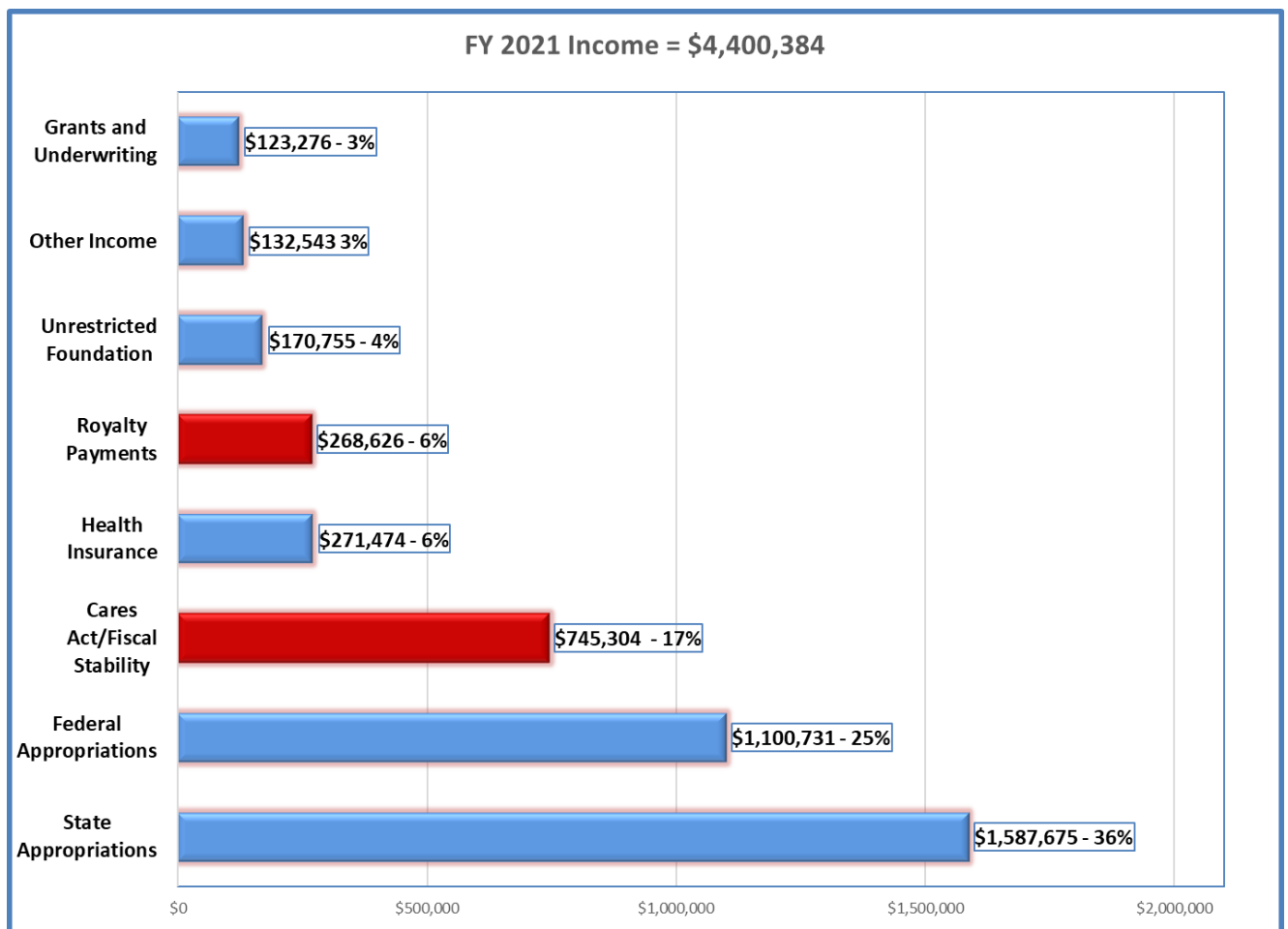
The increase in expenses comes from replacement of aging Engineering equipment as noted in **3) Increase signal coverage for the station**, above. The shortfall will be made up from the reserve created in Fiscal Year 2021.

Income

As noted in the graph below, WyomingPBS receives 36% of its income in State Aid. However, without the one-time Federal Cares / Fiscal Stability funding, State Aid would represent 43.5% of the network's income.

\$1,587,675 in State Aid represents a 17% decrease in actual dollars from the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriation.

It's important to note that State Aid to WyomingPBS covers salaries and some Engineering expenses. No State Aid is used to either purchase programs or cover the cost of creating local programs.

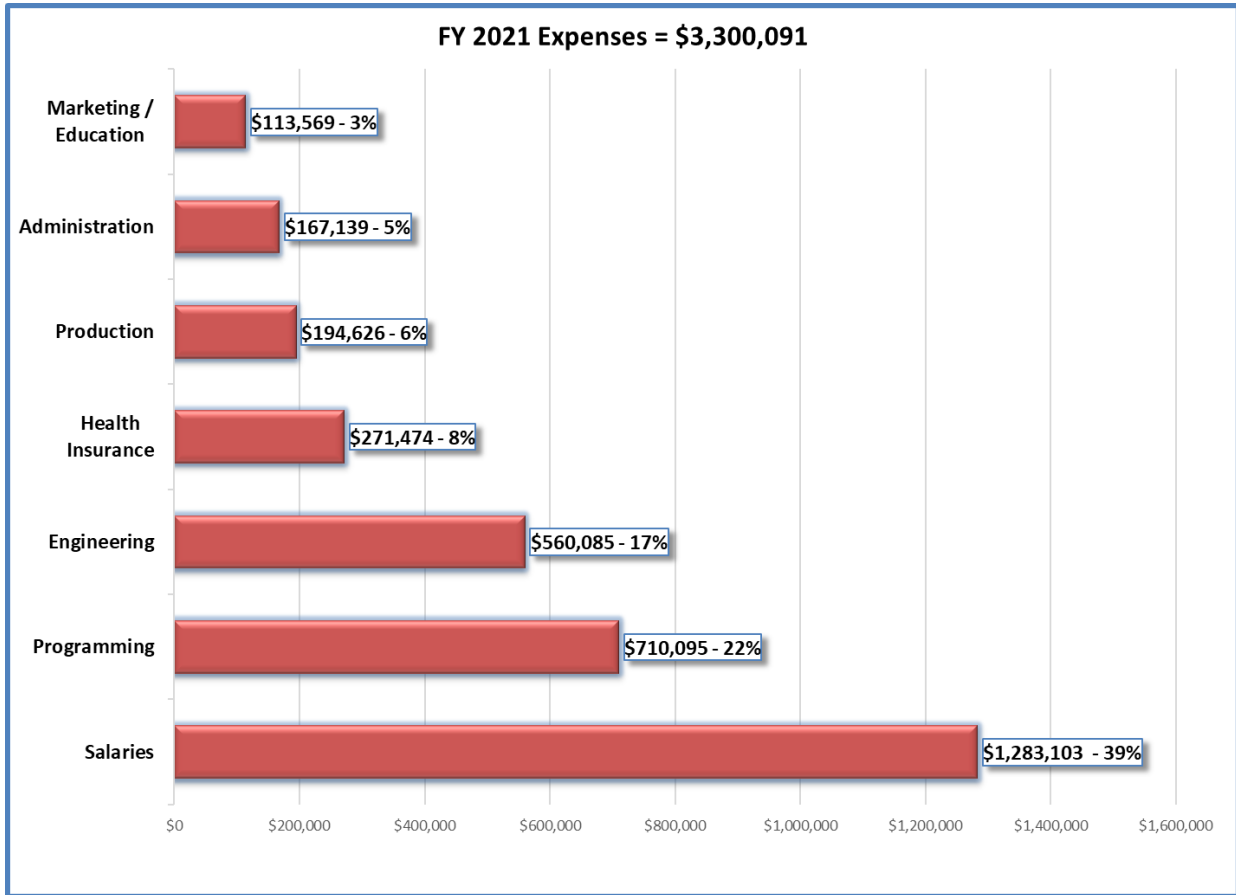




Expenses

WyomingPBS expenses for Fiscal Year 2021 totaled \$3,300,091. This represents a \$650,000 reduction in expenses for Fiscal Year 2020.

The reduction comes from two sources, salaries, as WyomingPBS reduced its workforce by four, and Engineering, as anticipated expenses were deferred to Fiscal Year 2022.

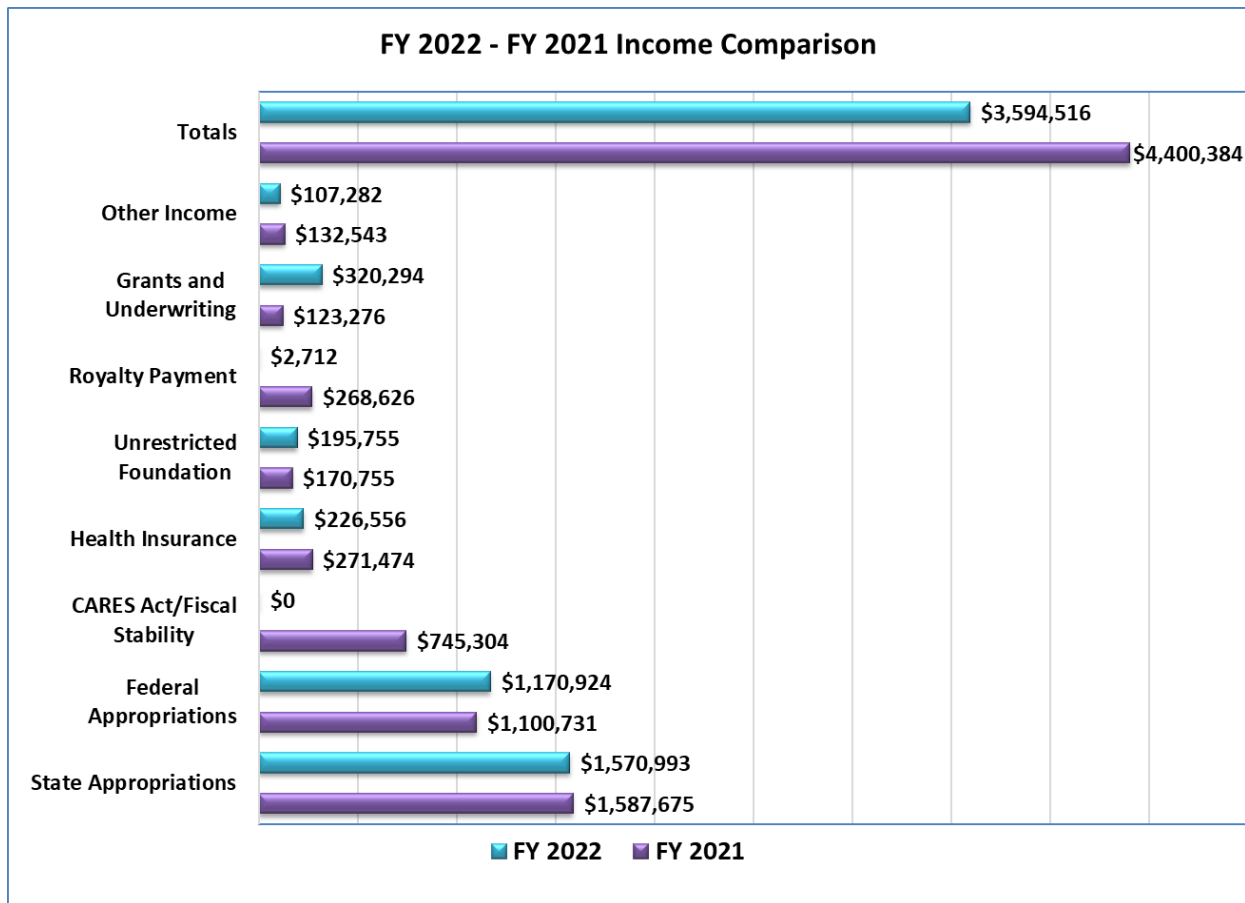


Looking to Fiscal Year 2022 Income

Fiscal Year 2022 Income will be significantly lower than Fiscal Year 2021 due to the loss of Federal CARES Act / Stability funds and the reduction in Royalty Payments.

There will be an increase in Grants and Underwriting, since WyomingPBS is raising non-State funds for two major projects referenced in **(e) Feature Documentaries**, above.

There will be a corresponding increase in expenses in the chart on the next page.



Looking to Fiscal Year 2022 Expenses

Fiscal Year 2022 expenses will be significantly higher than in Fiscal Year 2021. The increases will be in three areas. Production and Marketing/Education will increase as one major documentary finishes and production on a major series begins.

Engineering will increase, using the Federal dollars in reserve to replace transmitters, translators, and other essential broadcasting components.

