

South Dakota Public Broadcasting

Strategic Plan FY2026–2028

Executive Summary

South Dakota Public Broadcasting has always been more than a broadcaster. Across television, radio, and digital platforms, SDPB connects South Dakotans to one another, to their government, and to the world. This three-year strategic plan — covering fiscal years 2026 through 2028 — reflects the organization's commitment to building on that foundation while adapting to a changing media landscape, evolving audience habits, and new financial realities.

The plan was developed collaboratively across SDPB and Friends of SDPB leadership and is organized around four strategic directions, each with defined first-year accomplishments, 90-day implementation steps, clear accountability, and measurable success indicators. Together, these directions chart a course toward a stronger, more sustainable, and more innovative SDPB.

Telling Our Story

SDPB produces exceptional local content — but has historically underinvested in telling its own story. This strategic direction focuses on raising organizational visibility, growing digital audiences, and converting passive viewers and listeners into active supporters.

Key first-year priorities include increasing readership on SDPB's press pages, improving newsletter open rates and click-throughs, growing digital support conversions by 10%, expanding local program traffic on PBS, NPR, YouTube, and Apple News, and establishing a standard that five major projects per year budget 10% of their costs to public relations. Success here means more South Dakotans know what SDPB does — and more of them choose to support it.

Leading Through Innovation

SDPB has a strong track record of taking chances and building meaningful partnerships. This direction focuses on accelerating that momentum — financially, technologically, and editorially.

The most significant first-year goal is growing total fundraising to \$7 million (excluding endowment gifts), setting a new baseline for annual non-endowment revenue. Alongside that, the organization will write a new Integrated Digital Strategy with a benchmark of 10% audience growth across platforms, formalize workflows for three new external collaborations in key areas including legislative coverage, elections, high school activities, and education, and redefine SDPB's role as the gold standard for open government coverage in South Dakota.

Two additional priorities reflect the broadening scope of this direction. SDPB will reimagine how it funds educational outreach — with a goal of generating \$200,000 annually in private funding to support the Education team and its work. And the organization will position its broadcast spectrum as a resource for state emergency communications and redundancy, integrating SDPB's statewide infrastructure into emergency and public service operations in ways that strengthen resilience across South Dakota.

Imagining a Sustainable Future

This direction tackles the financial architecture of SDPB's long-term health. The work spans organizational planning, revenue diversification, and significant capital investment — grounded in a clear-eyed view of both current strengths and real vulnerabilities.

First-year efforts include establishing an internal advisory group to identify and align on organizational mission priorities, developing a comprehensive multi-year budget for all departments and programs, exploring new revenue opportunities with a goal of generating \$100,000 in new revenue by end of FY2027, raising tower lease rents by 5–10% upon renewal, and growing endowment commitments to \$30 million. Friends of SDPB will play a central role, raising the base level of philanthropic support to help backfill funding gaps and ensure the organization can fulfill its mission for years to come.

Two new initiatives expand the ambition of this direction considerably. SDPB will create a pilot program to develop South Dakota-based learning resources — targeting \$30,000 in initial revenue to produce the pilot and securing funding to begin full program work in FY2028. And the organization will pursue \$5.5 million in funding to modernize SDPB's interconnection infrastructure and master control center, mitigating operational risk and positioning the organization for the next era of broadcasting.

Developing Our Team

The people of SDPB are its greatest asset. This direction is about building the infrastructure around them — so that talented staff can grow, new employees can thrive, and the organization is ready for the transitions ahead.

In the first year, SDPB will ensure every employee has an annual professional development goal and plan, launch a consistent onboarding program for all new hires beginning in FY2027, grow intern opportunities from 2 to at least 5 per year (with \$45,000 in funding secured to support paid positions), build a sustainable contractor pipeline with \$60,000 in associated funding, and put a succession pipeline in place to protect institutional knowledge and prepare the next generation of SDPB leaders.

Looking Ahead

The FY2026–2028 Strategic Plan is both an expression of confidence and a commitment to change. SDPB enters this planning period with genuine strengths: dedicated staff, loyal audiences, strong donor relationships, a reputation for quality, and a track record of resilience. The plan builds on all of it.

What follows in the full plan are the specific implementation steps, timelines, coordinators, and success indicators that give these four strategic directions their teeth. Taken together, they represent a shared vision for what SDPB can become — and a clear-eyed map for getting there.