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Black Public Radio Network Officially Launches as New National Coalition of 15 Stations

Coalition of HBCU and community-based public radio stations joins forces to drive innovation, expand revenue opportunities, and amplify Black voices nationwide.

Houston, TX (June 28, 2026) — At a pivotal time for public media, 15 public radio stations from across the United States have united to launch the [Black Public Radio Network \(BPRN\)](#), a first-of-its-kind national coalition dedicated to strengthening the future of Black public radio through collaboration, innovation, revenue growth, and cultural impact.

Founded by Ernest Walker, President of BPRN and General Manager of KTSU 90.9FM Houston, the network was created to ensure the long-term sustainability, relevance, and growth of public radio stations that serve Black audiences and communities across the country.

BPRN's founding affiliates include 12 stations licensed to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), along with respected public radio brands WBGO New York, THE DROP Denver, and HYFIN Milwaukee. Together, these stations represent a powerful collective rooted in culture, community, music, storytelling, and public service.

The launch of BPRN comes at a critical moment for public media, as stations nationwide face increasing financial pressures, evolving audience behavior, and the need for stronger long-term infrastructure. BPRN was established to help member stations strengthen revenue opportunities, expand national visibility, foster innovation, and create a more unified and sustainable future for Black public radio.

“The launch of the Black Public Radio Network represents a transformative moment for public media and for the communities our stations serve,” said Ernest Walker. “For decades, Black public radio stations have served as trusted cultural anchors, storytellers, and community connectors. BPRN is about bringing our collective strength together to create a sustainable future, expand opportunity, and ensure our voices continue to be heard and valued on a national level.”

As part of its launch, BPRN has entered a six-month strategic planning phase designed to build the network's operational framework, national revenue strategy, and long-term growth plan. To support this effort, BPRN has engaged [Paragon](#) as a consulting partner, with Team Paragon's Mikel Elcessor coordinating the efforts to provide research, strategic guidance, and industry expertise during the network's foundational phase. In addition, [VuHaus Group](#) will support the development and execution of national sponsorship sales opportunities for the network.



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BPRN’s planning phase is also being supported by two highly respected public media leaders who were added to Team Paragon for this project: Jacquie Gales Webb, former VP/Radio at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and Nikki Swarn, former General Manager of KUVU/THE DROP Denver, bringing deep expertise in public media leadership, strategy, and audience development.

“This network is about more than preservation — it is about positioning Black public radio for greater influence, innovation, and impact,” Walker added. “We are building a structure that allows our stations to move forward together with greater strategy, greater visibility, and greater economic opportunity.”

“BPRN represents the kind of intentional collaboration our stations need in this moment,” said Wendy Williams, General Manager of WCLK Atlanta. “There is power in our shared mission, and this network creates new opportunities for growth, visibility, and sustainability while honoring the cultural significance of the audiences we serve.”

“The creation of BPRN is both timely and necessary,” said Maynard Scales, WNSB Norfolk’s General Manager. “This network gives our stations a stronger collective voice and the ability to build toward a future that is more strategic, more connected, and more sustainable for Black public radio. Our network will share content, drive listening and partner with brands in ways we hadn’t previously imagined.”

BPRN is focused on:

- Building national underwriting and sponsorship opportunities
- Driving revenue diversification and long-term sustainability
- Strengthening collaboration across member stations
- Expanding audience engagement and digital reach
- Elevating culturally relevant programming and community impact

With a strong foundation and a clear vision, BPRN is positioned to become a leading force in the future of Black public media.



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About Black Public Radio Network (BPRN)

The **Black Public Radio Network (BPRN)** is a national coalition of public radio stations dedicated to serving Black audiences through music, news, storytelling, and community engagement. BPRN focuses on sustainability, innovation, and collective growth—creating opportunities for stations to expand their reach, strengthen their impact, and build long-term financial stability.

Website: <https://blackpublicradio.com/stations/>

About Paragon

Paragon is a consulting and research firm specializing in innovative strategies for public media, supporting organizations with strategic planning, branding, audience development, and revenue growth.

Website: <https://teamparagon.consulting/>

About VuHaus Group

VuHaus Group is a national sponsorship sales organization serving public media music stations across the country, helping partners expand revenue and increase sustainability.

Website: <https://www.vuhausgroup.org/>

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FOUNDING MEMBER STATIONS

The Black Public Radio Network proudly launches with founding member stations and media organizations representing public media excellence, community engagement, and cultural leadership from across the country.

WBGO 88.3FM – Newark Public Radio (Newark, NJ)

KTSU 90.9FM – Texas Southern University (Houston, TX)

KPVU 91.3FM – Prairie View A&M University (Prairie View, TX)

WCLK 91.9FM – Clark Atlanta University (Atlanta, GA)

THE DROP 104.7FM – Denver, CO

WNCU 90.7FM – North Carolina Central University (Durham, NC)

WEAA 88.9FM – Morgan State University (Baltimore, MD)

HYFIN – Milwaukee, WI

WNSB 91.1FM – Norfolk State University (Norfolk, VA)

WJAB 90.9FM – Alabama A&M University (Huntsville, AL)

KJLU 88.9FM – Lincoln University (Jefferson City, MO)

WRVS 89.9FM – Elizabeth City State University (Elizabeth City, NC)

WSSB 90.3FM – South Carolina State University (Orangeburg, SC)

WURC 88.1FM – Rust College (Holly Springs, MS)

WESM 91.3FM – University of Maryland Eastern Shore (Salisbury, MD)

Together, these organizations represent one of the most significant collaborations of Black-focused public media organizations in the nation.