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**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Summer Reese, Executive Director, (510) 849-2590 Email: [summer@pacifica.org](mailto:summer@pacifica.org)

**Pacifica Foundation Radio: Employees Laid-off At WBAI-FM To Receive Severance Pay**

Pacifica Foundation Radio is pleased to announce the payment of severance obligations to employees laid off in August of 2013 due to financial difficulties at Pacifica's flagship New York City station [WBAI-FM \(99.5 FM\)](#)

WBAI's troubles after it was ejected from its headquarters in downtown New York City by Hurricane Sandy and relocated to Brooklyn, New York have been extensively covered in the New York City media including the Village Voice and the New York Times.

Despite a herculean fundraising campaign in the spring of 2013, the station was not able to recover from the loss of over a half a million dollars in income from the wrecked pledge drive in the winter of 2012 and several months of homelessness that ensued after the station could not return to its office and studio facilities. In July of 2013, it was forced to announce that the majority of its employees would have to be laid off due to the inability to pay them and the station would maintain with a skeleton-level crew.

Employee medical benefits have been retained for the past year, but the station has been unable to fully meet severance pay agreements for many employees who had been with WBAI for years, a painful situation for them, the station and the entire radio network.

Executive director Summer Reese comments "It is with a great sense of relief that I can announce finally today that all severance obligations have been met and I sincerely thank the current and former employees of WBAI and the SAG-AFTRA bargaining unit for their patience as we worked through this troubling situation".

In this 65th anniversary year, the grandmother of public radio hopes to update its technological footprint with several digital content delivery initiatives, stabilize the NYC station which suffers from a wildly expensive radio tower site on the Empire State Building, and redefine community engagement and local broadcasting in an era of worldwide connections within seconds.

Pacifica's 100+ employees and 2,000 volunteer unpaid staffers produce over 600 hours of audio content every week, from alternative public affairs discussions of depth and context to explorations of every musical genre imaginable, and community collectives that give voice to perspectives rarely heard on other media outlets. The Pacifica Archives, holds 60 years of unique historical content including interviews with countless political and cultural icons of the 20th century. Over 180 affiliated stations access Pacifica-produced radio content via the Audiport distribution system maintained by Pacifica.

Started in 1946 by conscientious objector Lew Hill, Pacifica's storied history includes impounded program tapes for a 1954 in-air discussion of marijuana, broadcasting the Seymour Hersh revelations of the My Lai massacre, bombings by the Ku Klux Klan, going to jail rather than turning over the Patty Hearst tapes to the FBI, and Supreme Court cases including the 1984 decision that noncommercial broadcasters have the constitutional right to editorialize, and the Seven Dirty Words ruling following George Carlin's incendiary performances on WBAI.

65 years later, Pacifica stands at the forefront of dizzying changes to the media landscape. It brings two central assets to the challenges that lie ahead: a mission statement that has never been more relevant to an increasingly troubled world, and rich human resources in the 2000+ community participants who share their creative talents and their commitment to a better world.

*Pacifica Foundation Radio operates noncommercial radio stations in New York, Washington, Houston, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay Area, and syndicates content to over 180 affiliates. It invented listener-supported radio.*

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