

Chicago Public Media®

WBEZ 91.5 FM VOCALO™ 89.5 FM THIS AMERICAN LIFE® SOUND OPINIONS®
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For Immediate Release

WBEZ FM LAUNCHES ‘PLEDGE-FREE STREAM’ DURING SPRING FUNDRAISING DRIVE

Beta Test Eliminates Messaging During Pledge Drive Broadcasts

CHICAGO (February 25, 2014) – Chicago-based **WBEZ 91.5 FM**, one of the country’s premier public radio stations, will launch its first Pledge-Free Stream for the duration of the Spring pledge drive starting March 6: an audio stream that allows qualifying members to listen to a web version of the WBEZ broadcast without hearing the pledge drive. Qualifying members are those who give \$15/month or more as part of WBEZ’s [High Fidelity](#) program, along with those who are members of the [Leadership Circle](#). Other listeners are invited to sign up for this access by making a one-time donation of \$40, or joining High Fidelity at the \$15/month level. To sign up, or for more information on this service, visit WBEZ.org/pledgefree starting today.

“We’re experimenting by adding this to the range of special offers and exclusive events that members already get access to. We want to say ‘thank you’ to our loyal members who have stuck with us year in and out with an opportunity to listen to the station they know and love outside of our pledge drives,” said Jillian Shepherd, Chicago Public Media Membership Director. “And although we are investing extra resources to pull this off, giving back the trusted news and engaging stories that our listeners look to us for seems like the best reward, maybe even more than a mug,” she quipped.

WBEZ FM is one of the only major market public radio stations to provide this pledge-free stream, joining WQXR (New York), WHYI (Philadelphia), and KQED (San Francisco). The quarterly pledge drives, which vary in length from 2-9 days, are WBEZ’s most important method of fundraising, from which the station aims to raise over half of its revenue.

The station will consider the pledge-free stream to be a success if there are a large number of signups and those that do take advantage of the stream are happy with the service.

About Chicago Public Media

WBEZ 91.5 FM is operated by Chicago Public Media, an institution that creates award-winning content for people seeking to learn more about the issues and ideas that affect our community, our nation and our world. Chicago Public Media produces programs such as *This American Life*, *Sound Opinions*, *Wait, Wait...Don’t Tell Me!* (a co-production with NPR), *The Morning Shift with*

Tony Sarabia, Worldview, The Afternoon Shift with Niala Boodho and Radio M. In addition to WBEZ, it operates Vocalo 89.5 FM/90.7 FM, a web/radio service that seeks to expand the reach of public media. For more information, please visit www.chicagopublicmedia.org

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