



## **Underwriting Procedures and Guidelines Made Simple**

(see FCTV's Services and Policies Guide for details)

FCTV encourages you to seek financial or in-kind material contributions for your productions; you may seek the support of Underwriters and Grantors at any time during the pre-production, production, or post-production of your program. You must adhere to the following guidelines when you plan to solicit or receive contributions on behalf of your program:

1. Before making any solicitations for program funding, you must meet with FCTV staff regarding your plans. At that meeting, we will review with you the policies and procedures governing underwriting solicitations and credits, and help you draft a budget and a schedule of credits. No solicitation may be made on behalf of a program unless FCTV has given its prior written approval. FCTV's name may not be used in connection with any program or solicitation without its prior written approval.
2. You must explicitly inform all prospective underwriters that you are a community producer acting on your own behalf – not an FCTV official, and that FCTV does not assume any responsibility for your program.
3. All underwriting funds must be paid directly to FCTV. FCTV will reimburse you for your expenses upon the presentation of receipts. After the completion of your program, all remaining funds will remain in FCTV's custody.
4. All underwriting funds must be used for production expenses only, such as the costs of videotape, music rights, set supplies, and talent. Since your membership dues cover only a small fraction of the actual costs associated with your production, 40% of your budget will be allocated to offset FCTV's facility and staff time costs.
5. Because FCTV's facilities may not be used for personal gain, the producer and members of the production crew may NOT be paid for their efforts. Use of FCTV facilities for commercial, profit-making, or private use under the pretense of creating Public Access programming is a Major Violation of FCTV's policies. If you would like to raise funds in order to get paid (and pay your crew) for your efforts, you must enter into a Rental Agreement with FCTV and pay FCTV's reduced market rates for use of the production facilities. In this instance, FCTV still must pre-authorize all solicitation materials or grant applications involving use of FCTV facilities, but all underwriting funds will be paid directly to you the producer.



Because FCTV's non-profit status prohibits us from running commercial advertising on Channel 13, you must adhere to the guidelines governing what kinds of donor acknowledgments are permissible. The following summarizes what FCTV's Services and Policies Guide describes in more rigorous detail. **If you are ever in doubt as to what is permissible practice, consult FCTV staff.**

PERMISSIBLE Material for Underwriter Acknowledgments:

1. Logos and/or corporate slogans which identify and do not promote;
2. Value neutral descriptions of a product line or service;
3. Brand and trade names and product or service listings;
4. Visual depictions of up to two (2) specific products. However, products may not be shown in use;
5. Showing the outside of an underwriter's business, because a building may be the only possible representation of an underwriter's product;
6. Location information and telephone numbers, provided you don't ask the viewer to take any direct action (see Prohibition #3 below).

PROHIBITED Material for Underwriter Acknowledgments:

1. Qualitative or comparative language or claims;
2. Price information;
3. Solicitation of direct viewer response of any kind, such as "...buy one today...", "...give us a call at...", or "...visit our showroom located at...";
4. Use of official company "spokespersons" doing video testimonials or audio voice-overs. Generic employees are acceptable; use of the station's "official voice" in local underwriting credits is preferred;
5. Music with lyrics. This does not preclude use of musical signatures that are part of a company's corporate identity, provided the signature is not an advertising jingle.

As producer, you have the freedom to establish your own schedule of credits, providing different kinds of acknowledgments for different levels of support. When devising your credit schedule, the variables you have to work with are:

- Credit length: 10-, 15-, 20-, or 30-second spot?
- Type of credit: Graphics only, shot of business card, full-motion video, audio voice-overs with any of these?
- Frequency: Plays at beginning, middle, or end, or any combination?

To insure that your donors are satisfied, it only makes sense that donors who give more should receive more, and those who give the same amount should receive the same type and amount of credit. Don't get yourself in the position where a donor can say "How come so-and-so got better credits?"

Finally, producers who are smart and appreciative make it a point to follow up with donors to see if they are satisfied and to thank them for their support. You want the donors to jump at the chance of supporting your next program.



## **Underwriter's Disclosure Form**

*Producers: Give this form to all prospective underwriters. You and anyone choosing to underwrite your program must complete and sign the Disclosure and Agreement Forms where indicated.*

This letter serves to introduce you to the Falmouth Community Television (FCTV) and its association with \_\_\_\_\_, a Member of FCTV and an independent Public Access producer using FCTV's facilities, equipment, and channel time.

### **About FCTV**

Falmouth Community Television is a membership-based, non-profit corporation whose mission is to help all Falmouth citizens and institutions realize their potential through the medium of cable television, and to encourage and facilitate their fullest participation in the production and distribution of quality programming by and for the Falmouth community. At FCTV, Falmouth citizens obtain hands-on training in video production techniques and media literacy, and enjoy free access to professional television equipment for the purpose of creating community programming that provides a unique, valuable, and locally-relevant option in non-commercial programming.

Membership in the Corporation is open to all individuals who reside, work, or have taxpayer status in Falmouth, and to all organized groups with offices in Falmouth. The annual Dues are just \$30 for individuals and \$75 for organizations. Most of FCTV's services, including training in TV production and use of our equipment and time on Channel 13 to create and distribute non-commercial programming, are provided free to Corporation Members.

Once trained and certified in the use of FCTV's facilities, Members may use them to produce non-commercial programs for cablecast on Public Access Channel 13. FCTV encourages but in no way requires Public Access producers to seek underwriters who will provide material consideration for their productions, through cash grants or in-kind donations of goods or services. These contributions must be used only for activities related to that specific production, to cover such things as the cost of videotape, set supplies, music rights, etc. In exchange for these donations, producers may offer under-writers on-air acknowledgment of their support, subject to the guidelines outlined below.

### **Producer's Relationship to FCTV**

Prospective program underwriters should also clearly understand that public access producers using FCTV's facilities are not employed by FCTV, and do not represent FCTV in any official capacity. They are strictly independent volunteers, using FCTV's facilities to produce programs on their own behalf and for the good of the community. They cannot make any commitments on behalf of FCTV, and FCTV does not assume any responsibility for their programs. FCTV's name may not be used in connection with any program without its prior written approval.

### **All Program Content Must be Non-Commercial**

Per the Corporation's by-laws and policies, its Agreement with the cable operator, and its tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, no commercial content is allowed on the Public Access Channel. Commercial content includes, but is not limited to, product placement, advertisements of products or services of for-profit entities, qualitative or comparative descriptions of products or services, or testimonials for the purpose of commercial exploitation. Political advertising is also prohibited.

### **Specific Guidelines for Underwriting Acknowledgments**

While producers have the latitude to set their own schedule of on-air acknowledgments for specific levels of support, all acknowledgments must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. All acknowledgments shall open with "Support for the following program has been provided in part by..." or something substantially similar. Contributors of products



or services may be acknowledged in the credits with specific references to the type of their donation. For example, "Catering provided by..."

2. Acknowledgments may include the following:
  - a. Logos and/or corporate slogans which identify and do not promote;
  - b. Shots of the outside of an underwriter's business;
  - c. Location information and telephone numbers, provided you don't ask the viewer to take any direct action (see #3c below).
  - d. Value neutral descriptions of a product line or service;
  - e. The mention of brand and trade names and particular products only if necessary for identification purposes; (For example, "ComputerWorld, authorized dealer of IBM computers" is OK, but "Stop & Shop, this week featuring a sale on Maxwell House coffee" is not.)
  - f. Visual depictions of up to two (2) specific products in a value-neutral setting, provided they are not shown in use.
  
3. The following practices convey a more "commercial" impression and are NOT permitted:
  - a. Qualitative or comparative language or claims;
  - b. Price information;
  - c. Solicitation of direct viewer response of any kind, such as "...buy one today...", "...give us a call at...", or "...visit our showroom located at...";
  - d. Use of official company "spokespersons" doing video testimonials or audio voice-overs. Generic employees are OK; use of the station's "official voice" is preferred;
  - e. Moving products displayed in use on the air;
  - f. Product sounds (e.g., motor starting in a Champion spark plug credit);
  - g. Music with lyrics. This does not preclude use of musical signatures that are part of a company's corporate identity, provided they are not advertising jingles.

**FCTV Acts As the Banker**

While the responsibility for program content and delivery rests solely with the Public Access producer, all underwriting contributions must be disclosed to and pre-approved by FCTV staff and all funds must be paid directly to FCTV, which will reimburse the producer for their production expenses upon the presentation of satisfactory receipts.

**You Can Provide General Support to FCTV**

Thank you for your interest in Public Access and FCTV! You may also wish to make an unrestricted donation to FCTV to help us reach our overall service and programming goals. For information about the various avenues for supporting FCTV and the benefits you may receive for your support, please do not hesitate to call FCTV at (508) 457-0800.

We have read and are familiar with the information provided on this Underwriter's Disclosure Form and agree to abide by its provisions.

Underwriter's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Producer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Underwriter's Agreement

*Producers: This form must be completed by you and anyone choosing to underwrite your program. You and the underwriter must also read and sign the attached Underwriter's Disclosure Form.*

I agree to support this production: \_\_\_\_\_

Produced by: \_\_\_\_\_

For this period (not more than 1 year or 52 episodes): \_\_\_\_\_

With a donation of (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Underwriter's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Underwriter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make check payable to FCTV, and mail to:  
Falmouth Community Television, 310 Dillingham Avenue, Falmouth, MA 02540. Thank you!*



## **Underwriting Authorization**

*Producers: Make sure that you have read and thoroughly understand the information below. The form must be completed by you and submitted to and approved by FCTV staff before you may begin to solicit underwriting support for your production.*

### **What Is Underwriting and Why Is It Important?**

Falmouth Community Television (FCTV) encourages but in no way requires community producers such as yourself to seek financial support or contributions of goods and services for your productions. Any such payment of monies or in-kind donations of goods or services (other than one's time) is considered underwriting, and should be acknowledged in your program. Underwriting is distinct from advertising, both in its intent and its on-air presentation. Underwriters are those who want to support your program and are satisfied with a public thank-you; advertisers are those who want to promote themselves and expect commercial time. Because of FCTV's non-profit status, commercial advertising is prohibited on the Public Access Channel. But consistent with our aim to facilitate quality programming that develops loyal audiences and encourages as many participants and supporters from the local community as possible, FCTV encourages you to seek underwriting support for your productions. Such efforts pay-off in several key ways:

- You increase the community's awareness of and stake in the success of your show;
- You build a reservoir of funds dedicated specifically to improving the production values of your own program;
- You help offset FCTV's actual costs of facilitating your production, thus freeing up more funds to expand FCTV's facilities and services; and
- You help the underwriter gain more public exposure and community goodwill.

### **What are the Guidelines for Soliciting Underwriters?**

You must adhere to the following guidelines if you plan to solicit or receive underwriting contributions on behalf of your program.

1. No solicitations may be made on behalf of a program or program series until you the producer have met with FCTV staff regarding your plans and have received written authorization to proceed. Such authorization shall indicate the period of time or number of episodes in a specific program series for which the producer's underwriting activities are approved, not to exceed one year or 52 episodes, whichever comes first. You may initiate this process at any time during the pre-production, production, or post-production of your program. FCTV's name may not be used in connection with any program or solicitation without its prior written approval. FCTV staff will help you draw up a budget sheet itemizing all costs, advise you on appropriate techniques for acknowledging underwriters, and support your solicitation efforts.
2. You must explicitly inform all prospective underwriters that you are a community producer acting on your own behalf - not an FCTV official, and that FCTV does not assume any responsibility for your program.
3. You must provide Underwriter's Disclosure and Agreement Forms to all prospective underwriters. You and anyone choosing to underwrite your program must complete and sign these forms where indicated, and submit to FCTV staff for approval.
4. All underwriting contributions must be disclosed to and pre-approved by FCTV staff, and used only for activities directly related to the specified production, to cover such things as the cost of videotape, music rights, set supplies, and crew refreshments. Since



your membership dues cover just a small fraction of the actual costs associated with your production, 40% of your budget will be retained by FCTV to offset the real costs associated with your use of the facilities.

5. Because FCTV's facilities may not be used for personal gain, the producer and members of the production crew may NOT be paid for their efforts. Use of FCTV facilities and/or equipment for commercial, profit-making, or private use under the pretense of creating Public Access programming is a Major Violation of FCTV's policies, as outlined in the Violations section of this guide. If you wish to raise funds in order to get paid (and pay your crew) for your efforts, you must enter into a Rental Agreement with FCTV and pay FCTV's reduced market rates for using FCTV property. In this instance, FCTV still must pre-authorize all solicitation materials or grant applications involving the use of FCTV facilities and/or equipment, but all underwriting funds will be paid directly to you the producer.
6. All underwriting funds must be paid directly to FCTV, which will reimburse you for your expenses upon the presentation of satisfactory receipts. At the conclusion of the time period specified in the Underwriting Authorization, FCTV ordinarily assumes custody of all remaining monies and durable goods, but reserves the option of requiring you the producer to promptly and properly dispose of them.
7. Time on the Public Access channel is NOT for sale. Any solicitations made or contributions received on the contingent expectation of receiving exposure on the Public Access channel are subject to FCTV's Underwriting Policies, whether or not the producer used FCTV's production equipment and/or facilities.

#### **What are the Guidelines Governing Underwriting Credits?**

Per the Corporation's by-laws and policies, its Agreement with the cable operator, and its non-profit, tax-exempt status granted under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code, no commercial content is allowed on the Public Access Channel. Commercial content includes, but is not limited to, product placement, advertisements of goods or services of for-profit entities, qualitative or comparative descriptions of products or services, or testimonials for the purpose of commercial exploitation. Political advertising is also prohibited.



Because of FCTV's prohibition on commercial content, you the producer must adhere to the following guidelines governing what kinds of underwriting acknowledgments are permissible and what kinds are disallowed:

1. All acknowledgments shall open with "Support for the following program has been provided in part by..." or something substantially similar. Contributors of products or services may be acknowledged in the credits with specific references to the type of their donation. For example, "Catering provided by..."
2. Underwriting Acknowledgments may include the following:
  - a. Logograms<sup>1</sup> and/or corporate slogans which identify and do not promote;
  - b. Shots of the outside of an underwriter's business;
  - c. Location information and telephone numbers, provided you don't ask the viewer to take any direction (see prohibition #3c below);
  - d. Value neutral descriptions of a product line or service;
  - e. The mention of brand and trade names and particular products only if necessary for identification purposes; (For example, "ComputerWorld, authorized dealer of IBM computers" is OK, but "Stop & Shop, this week featuring a sale on Maxwell House coffee" is not.)
  - f. Visual depictions of up to two (2) specific products in a value-neutral setting, provided they are not shown in use.
3. The following practices convey a more "commercial" impression and are NOT permitted:
  - a. Qualitative or comparative language or claims. A good rule of thumb to follow: Use nouns and verbs, stay away from adjectives;
  - b. Price information;
  - c. Solicitation of direct viewer response of any kind, such as "...buy one today...", "...give us a call at...", or "...visit our showroom located at...";
  - d. Use of official company "spokespersons" doing video testimonials or audio voice-overs. Generic employees are acceptable; use of the station's "official voice" is preferred;
  - e. Moving products displayed in use on the air;
  - f. Product sounds (e.g., motor starting in Champion spark plug credit);
  - g. Music with lyrics. This does not preclude use of musical signatures that are part of a company's corporate identity, provided it is not an advertising jingle.

### Any Suggestions?

As producer, you have the latitude to establish your own schedule of on-air acknowledgments, providing different kinds of credits for different levels of support, subject to the guidelines above. The variables you have to work with are:

- Credit length: Is it a 10-, 15-, 20-, or 30-second spot?
- Type of credit: Does it consist of graphics only, shot of business card, full-motion video, or include audio voice-overs with any of these?
- Frequency: Does it play at the show's beginning, middle, or end, or a combination?

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<sup>1</sup>The term "logogram" means any aural or visual letters or words, or any symbol or sign, which is used for the exclusive purpose of identifying any corporation, company, or other organization but not promoting the products, services, or facilities of such corporation, company, or organization.



To insure that your underwriters are satisfied and treated fairly, it makes sense that those who give more should receive more, and those who give the same amount should receive the same type and amount of credit. (Producers who are smart and appreciative also make it a point to follow up with underwriters to see if they are satisfied and to thank them for their support.) But if you are thinking about it in terms of making a commercial for them, chances are you're going to run into trouble; remember, underwriting spots are about thanking them for their support, not plugging their product or service. FCTV urges you to view a copy of the Sample Acknowledgments video, and to seek the advice of staff to insure the appropriateness of your acknowledgments.



## Underwriting Authorization - Part 2

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acting as producer, hereby request permission to seek underwriting support for the following program or program series: \_\_\_\_\_ for the time period specified herein (not to exceed one year or 52 episodes, whichever comes first): \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and thoroughly understand FCTV's policies regarding underwriting and all of the guidelines described in this Underwriting Authorization, and I agree to abide by them.

Producer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for Denial or Conditions for Approval: