

MICHIANA PUBLIC BROADCASTING CORPORATION

CENTER FOR PUBLIC MEDIA

Michiana Access Television
PRODUCER HANDBOOK

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MICHIANA ACCESS TELEVISION

PRODUCER HANDBOOK

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WELCOME!

I am very happy to welcome you to Michiana Public Broadcasting Corporation's ("MPBC") Center for Public Media. The production and technical home of MATV – Michiana Access Television. Thank you for your participation!

We are also the home to WNIT, Michiana's PBS station, but don't confuse the two. While we share much of the same facility, we are two distinct entities. The programs you produce or provide for MATV do not appear on WNIT. Your programs will appear on Comcast cable channel 99 and AT&T U-Verse channel 99. DirecTV and DISH do not provide public access channels.

You are not an employee of MPBC and cannot represent yourself as such. Under MPBC's official policies, a Public Access Producer is considered a Volunteer.

The production services provided to you, free of charge, are being funded by local governmental units: the City of South Bend, City of Mishawaka, and St. Joseph County. MPBC is contracted to provide a certain amount of production time per month. That amount of production time provided varies by the amount of funding from the sponsoring governmental units. Currently, funding provides for 23 hours of studio production per month. When we have more Michiana Access TV Channel Producers than production time available, we must allocate this time on a rotated "first come" basis.

You are not required to produce your program here, at the Center for Public Media, for it to appear on MATV. We accept programs produced elsewhere as long as they conform to some basic technical standards.

Michiana Public Broadcasting Corporation is passionate about providing opportunities for citizens to have a video forum to express their views, art, or talent.

This HANDBOOK provides some rules for procedures and conduct. In order to participate at our MPBC facility you must agree to follow the policies in this Handbook. Otherwise, while we will schedule your program(s) on MATV, you will be required to produce them elsewhere. We're not trying to make life complicated; we just require a structure where we can serve as many people as possible in a safe, civil, and friendly environment.

Our staff and volunteers look forward to working with you on Michiana Access TV. We want you to have a good experience.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Ramirez
Coordinator for Michiana Access TV

HISTORY OF MICHIANA ACCESS TELEVISION

Public access television is a form of non-commercial media where ordinary people can create television programming which is played OVER cable TV specialty channels called Access Channels. Public-access television was created in the United States between 1969 and 1971 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) when Part 76 of the FCC Rules and Regulations was amended.

In some communities Public Access Television often has multiple channels for public, educational, and government access television. Sometimes the acronym “PEG” is used for these **P**ublic, **E**ducational, and **G**overnment channels. PEG Channels are typically only available on cable television systems. In Michiana we currently have one Access Channel shared for all purposes, Channel 99 on Comcast and AT&T U-Verse.

Public Access came to Michiana in the 1970’s when Indiana Cablevision was the primary operator of the area’s cable systems. Indiana Cablevision was sold to Heritage Cablevision which was acquired by TeleCommunications Inc.(TCI), which was purchased by AT&T, which itself was sold to current owner Comcast. Public Access had been available for about 40 years when in September, 2007, Comcast discontinued the service in the region.

Since then, MPBC, along with a group calling themselves Public Access Michiana (PAM), as well as other local citizens, advocated to local government units to revive the Public Access Channel in St. Joseph County. These efforts were successful and a contract was awarded to Michiana Public Broadcasting Corporation. Michiana Access TV was reborn in October, 2012, with limited funding provided by the City of South Bend, City of Mishawaka, and St. Joseph County.

While Michiana Access TV and PBS station WNIT operate from the same building, PBS is much different than Public Access. The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), to which WNIT is affiliated, is Public Television (not Public Access), an educational television broadcasting service of professionally produced, highly curated content. PBS programming bears little resemblance to public-access television. Content on WNIT is broadcast as a television signal over a 22 county region, and is not a cable-only channel.

However, although different entities, Public Access and Public Broadcasting share the same spirit of providing information and service to our community.

Eligibility to Participate

Residents and employees of St. Joseph County, Indiana must be the producers “of record” for a Public Access Program. Participants on the program may be from other areas, but are the responsibility of the registered Public Access Producer.

All Public Access services are provided on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, or any other legally protected classification.

If a Producer is under the age of 18, an adult, 18 or over, must sign the Producer Agreement as the responsible participant.

Non-Commercial Nature

Public Access is “non-commercial.” Commercial advertising (“commercials”), like those shown on network television stations, and programming designed to promote the sale of products or services (“infomercials”) are not permitted. Recognition of sponsorship or underwriting of your program is limited to a simple graphic and/or verbal announcement of the name of the sponsor(s).

Your sponsorship proposals should not represent these messages as “ads” or “commercials.” They are neither. They are simply informational announcements acknowledging the financial support of your sponsor(s). Your sponsors will not appreciate expecting one thing and getting another.

Solicitation materials and presentations to potential sponsors must clearly identify that the program is on the Public Access Channel and not associated with MPBC, WNIT, PBS, Comcast, AT&T U-Verse, the City of South Bend, City of Mishawaka, or St. Joseph County.

Legal Responsibility

The Producer of each program is solely responsible for the content and presentation of the program. The Producer is the owner of the intellectual content of the program. As such, the Producer assumes all legal liability for any consequences of the production or cablecast of the program. The Producer must follow all laws and secure all rights to any content of the program, including music rights, talent releases, copyright authorizations, and other licenses and approvals. Do not take this lightly. Music organizations have been very aggressive protecting use of their music.

Michiana Public Broadcasting Corporation, nor the City of South Bend, City of Mishawaka, St. Joseph County, IN, Comcast, and AT&T U-Verse exercises any editorial control over the content of your program and accepts no responsibility for the content, views, and opinions expressed on MATV programs.

Libel, Slander, Obscenities and other Nasty Stuff

While Public Access television is a haven for free speech, it doesn't mean that anything goes.

No program which contains any material previously found by a court of competent jurisdiction to subject the Producer, or supplier of a program, to prosecution under any local, state, or federal law for the production or presentation of obscene material, libel, slander, invasion of privacy, copyright infringement, trademark infringement or any other speech not protected by the First Amendment is permitted.

But, note, that "obscenity," "slander," and other forms of unprotected speech can only be determined through due process of law. MPBC does not have any authority to determine the legality of any program content. You must consult your own attorney for anything in question.

Be careful of what you say, have your facts straight. Being sued for libel and slander are expensive to defend. Being on Public Access does not give you a free ride.

Building Access and Security

Building security is critical at every media outlet, and important for everyone's safety. To assist MPBC's building security, staff members are issued electronic keycards only for the areas in which she/he primarily works. Access Program Producers will not be issued key cards and access will only be allowed in designated areas. Please see a MPBC staff member if you need access to a non-designated area.

Security cameras are placed at strategic locations around the building.

Contacts

To reach a Michiana Access TV Coordinator please call 574-288-7876 or email michianaaccessstv@gmail.com for assistance.

Building Protocols

Michiana Public Broadcasting Corporation (WNIT) and MATV are fortunate to operate in a spacious, beautiful facility that was acquired in 2010. Your cooperation in maintaining its appearance and cleanliness is extremely important. We have more guests than ever before in the history of MPBC and we ask that all Michiana Access TV Producers help maintain and preserve the appearance and durability of our workplace, equipment, and furnishings. Your cooperation is appreciated!

You will be using professional video production equipment and, in the same manner, we ask you to conduct yourself as a “professional” in your role as a Michiana Access TV Producer.

Our building rules are based on these principles: Respect People, Respect Equipment, and Respect Space.

The Rules

1. MPBC has zero tolerance for violence, threats of violence or violent/intimidating language.
2. Handguns and other weapons are NOT permitted in the building.
3. Sexual Harassment and other unlawful harassment is not tolerated.
4. Use of or transfer of illegal drugs is prohibited.
5. Profane, obscene, or crude language is inappropriate and unprofessional. Use respectful, constructive language when you communicate.
6. Do not visit building areas not designated for your use.
7. Do not use equipment or other building facilities without permission.
8. There will be no tolerance for willful damage to equipment or MPBC property.
9. Do not put beverages near equipment. Liquids and electronics do not mix. Just ask your cell phone.
10. If there is an accident creating a spill or damage, let an MPBC staff member know quickly.
11. Per Indiana law, No smoking in the building nor within 8 feet of entryways.
12. Please eat food in designated areas.
13. Please leave restrooms clean and neat. Everyone appreciates a clean restroom. Plungers are available in restrooms to unclog toilets. Please use them if necessary. Do not flush personal hygiene items and foreign objects.
14. Protect your personal belongings. MPBC is not responsible for any losses or items left behind. We do not provide any personal storage facilities. Items left are at your own risk. Periodically, unclaimed items are gathered and donated to a charity. There will be no tolerance for thefts or attempted thefts.
15. Turn your cell phone to vibrate when in the building and especially in studio or production areas.
16. Security and safety is the responsibility of everyone. Please make sure the door closes securely when you exit the building. Do not prop any doors open.
17. Please do not interfere or interrupt the broadcast operations of WNIT.
18. Cooperate with MPBC staff. Insubordinate conduct is not acceptable.
19. In case of a severe weather warning and the need to seek shelter or a safe place, keep away from windows and go to the designated area in the basement to wait for an all-clear message. MPBC staff will assist you.
20. Be careful in the studio. There are lots of wires and cables on the floor. Do not climb on ladders or commit any unsafe act. Ask the MPBC staff for assistance.
21. In cases of emergencies, call 911 and then alert an MPBC staff member.
22. Any other circumstance that in MPBC's sole judgment is unsafe or inappropriate will not be permitted.

Rule violations could result in a suspension of your MPBC building and production privileges.

We hope you agree that all these rules are reasonable and to everyone's benefit. Michiana Public Broadcasting Corporation will review the status of any Michiana Access Television Producer who is in violation of these rules. The MPBC building is private property and we reserve the right to suspend building access privileges, at our sole judgment, if deemed necessary.

Concerns about us

Operational, production and scheduling questions should be directed to the MATV Coordinator:
574-288-7876

If there are any concerns regarding the conduct of a staff member or questions about our rules, please contact the MPBC Production Department Manager by calling 574-675-9648.

Unresolved issues may be directed to the City of South Bend's Director of Public Works, who oversees Michiana Access TV for the participating governmental organizations.

We realize we're not perfect. MPBC will try our best to give you great service and a terrific experience. But, we sometimes make mistakes. Please realize that MATV is a work in progress. We will continually strive to improve and become more efficient.

Operational Procedures

Now that you know all the basic ground rules, it is time to get down to the business of producing your Public Access television program.

MPBC has developed procedures that are designed to allow the maximum number of productions possible within the budget parameters of the City/County contract. We want this to be a good experience for you and a good one for us, as well.

All communications should go through the MATV Coordinator. This position is periodically rotated among MPBC staff members, but you can always reach the Coordinator through the MATV phone number: 574-288-7876 or by email at michianaaccessstv@gmail.com.

Getting Started

You are already doing it. You are reading the Handbook and learning the ground rules and procedures. At the end of this Handbook, please sign the acknowledgement and agreement form. Once we have your signed Agreement, we can proceed.

Orientation

We will schedule a time for new Access Producers to visit, get acquainted, tour the facilities, see what “stock” sets and props are available, and review production procedures. You will learn what production equipment will be available to you. Staffing will be supplied by MPBC staff and volunteers.

Scheduling Studio Time

More and more people are discovering Public Access and requesting production and program times. We are very busy. As you are aware, our MPBC contract with the Cities and County is for an amount that limits the number of hours we can devote to production. While we try to get everyone in, during busy times it is “first come, first served” for available slots. Due to limited available “prime” times, and conflicting requests or priorities, the MATV Coordinator may need to cancel a scheduled production without much notice. The Coordinator will make every attempt to reschedule your production time at a later date if at all possible. Please understand that schedules may be interrupted for a variety of reasons.

Scheduling production time should be made well in advance through the MATV Coordinator. Our main avenue of scheduling is through our website at www.michianaaccessstv.org. The MATV Coordinator can provide you with instructions on using the website. If you do not have access to the internet, please call the MATV Coordinator to discuss the matter, and you can then request your time period over the phone.

Because the amount of hours of studio production are limited, you need to be able to contact the MATV Coordinator at least 24 hours before your scheduled taping date to cancel/reschedule if needed. If you do not talk to the MATV Coordinator ahead of time, and you end up being a “no call no show” for your

scheduled production time slot, or you cancel the same day of your scheduled taping, this will count against you. Three unexcused absences in a 12 month period will be counted punishable by a 6 month production suspension. After that 12 month period, the count will restart. After a first suspension, if the problem persists for another 12 months, the next penalty will be a 12 month suspension and thereafter.

We take this very seriously because the funding for the studio time is limited and we do not want to waste such precious time. Every situation is different and we understand. If an emergency arrives, please try and contact the coordinator soon after the emergency to explain. Otherwise, it will count against you.

Pre-Production

Planning is everything. Do your planning before you get to the studio. Line up and prep your guest(s), collect all your props and have all of your materials organized. Please send in any lists of graphics that need to be created early at least 24 hours in advance of your production date. Alert us to any special circumstances. Should your graphics not be submitted in advance, we may not be able to create them in time for your production.

Loaner Equipment?

Sorry, MPBC does not have equipment to loan out for production on location. Nor, do we have editing facilities to supply.

Planning and Confirmation

Days before your production, develop your plan (“format”) and a “rundown” for your program. The rundown is a minute by minute description of what you will be doing on your program, at what time into the program. It should show a list of graphics and when they go into the program. Ask our Access Coordinator for an example to follow.

The production staff will need your rundown to follow along and prepare the proper camera shots. If you have graphics, send them to the Access Coordinator in advance. Keep a rundown for yourself so you can keep your program “on-time.”

Call your potential guests to make arrangements for their appearance. Give them directions. The day before your Day of Production, confirm their participation and any logistic details. Discuss their participation and brief them on the topics you will be covering.

Day of Production

Remind your guests, once again. Arrive at the studio early and organize your thoughts and materials. Take a little time to relax, get composed, put on make-up, rehearse, or any other preparation you need. Go over production details with the Access Coordinator.

You have a firm 90-minute time period to produce either 2-half-hour programs or 1 one-hour program, from set-up through tear-down. Programs must be fully finished by the end of your production time. Your organizational skills and efficiencies will determine how much you can actually produce. MPBC requires the MATV Coordinator to keep track of each producer's time so as to avoid delays and backlog of productions and the resulting added expenses. Should you run out of production time, through no fault of MPBC / MATV, your production-in-progress may be halted even though it may not be finished.

Use your production time wisely. Should you go over your set-up time, the time differential will be taken away from your actual production time. The next Producer on the schedule will not appreciate you running into his/her time.

When your production is completed, gather your things and exit the studio as quickly as possible to allow the next Producer to set up.

The "tighter" the schedule becomes, the stricter we must become enforcing production time limits.

Studio Safety

We want you to be safe while working in the studio. Cameras, audio, and lighting equipment utilize cables which are often on the studio floor. Please watch where you step.

Leave any work on ladders or plugging in equipment to the studio staff. Please do not go into areas not designated for your use. Let the staff move sets and props.

Stay aware of your surroundings, walk carefully, let your eyes adjust to the dark and light areas in the studio before moving around.

Copy of your Program

MATV will provide you with an mp4 file your program for you through a shared Google Drive folder. Your file should be available within 72 hours after the program has been recorded. DVD copies if required are available upon request, up to 4 copies. Our facility is not set up for duplication. For additional copies, appropriate cost(s) can be received by the MATV Coordinator.

Program Scheduling

Your program will be scheduled one specific time period in a specified week. It may run randomly at other times.

Ongoing weekly time periods are not guaranteed, but we make our best efforts for Producers who create weekly programs or are "regular" contributors. The MATV Coordinator will work with producers to find appropriate times to schedule your program. MATV encourages producers to submit requests as far in advance as possible, the minimum recommended is 4 weeks. A series producer must maintain a

regular production schedule whereby at least two new shows are produced per month. Producers who fail to meet criteria may lose their assigned time slot without prior notification.

Please note, Michiana Public Access Television reserves the final right to determine the placement of a program on the MATV program schedule.

How long will your program run on the Access Channels?

The total number of times your program will play in a week depends on the number of other programs that are scheduled. MATV operates 24-hours per day, 7 days a week. While your program has been given a specific time period during the week, it may have multiple other plays in random rotation with other programs.

With your permission, your program may be played beyond one week.

Program “Bumps”

In the television business, we call that a “preemption.” Yes it can happen, but it doesn’t happen often, but it can for various reasons, such as the live coverage of a City Council meeting running long. Of course, we will reschedule your program as quickly as we can.

We anticipate with the growth of governmental meetings coming to MATV program scheduling and “bumps” may be more complicated. We appreciate your understanding.

Outside Production

Programs produced elsewhere are welcome on MATV. Preferred format for delivery would be a file via Google Drive (set up by coordinator) or some other file transfer system. MXF files are preferred but please discuss with coordinator about other options.

Please make arrangements for timely delivery of your program to the MATV Coordinator. Since MATV is responsible for transmission quality we ask producers who bring in their programs from outside production facilities to deliver the programs to the MATV Coordinator at least 24 hours in advance for weekday programs. Programs that air during the course of the weekend must be in by 5:00 PM Thursdays. If the producer fails to bring the program in within these deadlines, while we will make every effort, MATV will not guarantee the program will play as scheduled.

Programs delivered on time will typically air without any problems. However equipment issues and human mistakes may create issues. When this occurs the MATV Coordinator may repeat an old episode.

Publicity

MPBC posts a program schedule on the MATV website (www.michianaaccessstv.org), but does not otherwise publicize individual programs. That's the responsibility of the Producer.

If you publicize your program, remember to indentify your programs as being on Michiana Access TV, Channel 99, on both Comcast and AT&T in St. Joseph County. You are not on WNIT or affiliated with PBS.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT
MICHIANA ACCESS TELEVISION
PRODUCER HANDBOOK

I, _____ (name of Producer), **certify** that I have received and read the Michiana Access Television (MATV) Producer handbook. I understand that if I have any questions, I may ask them of the MATV Coordinator or the Michiana Public Broadcasting Corporation (MPBC) Vice President of Production.

Further, I understand that this handbook is intended for informational purposes only. It does not contain all of the information I will need during the course of my participation in MATV. From time-to-time, I will receive additional information through various notices, written as well as verbally. MPBC management is committed to continually reviewing and improving upon its policies for MATV production. Accordingly, the policies, rules and procedures outlined in this handbook are subject to review and change by management at any time. Input is always welcome. The most up-to-date policies and procedures are on the MATV website.

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless Michiana Public Broadcasting Corporation, the City of South Bend, the City of Mishawaka, the County of St. Joseph, IN, Comcast, and AT&T U-Verse from any legal actions that may arise from my Program(s). If legal actions occur, I agree to pay all attorneys for their full defense.

I understand that my participation as a MATV Producer to receive production services at the MPBC facility is based upon following the policies, rules and procedures in this handbook, and any subsequent directives. MPBC reserves the unconditional right to terminate unsatisfactory or disruptive relationships. Producers have the option of providing material produced at other facilities.

Michiana Access TV Producers are not employees of Michiana Public Broadcasting Corporation, WNIT or any other MPBC entity. There are no expressed or implied promises of employment.

By signing below, **I agree** to become a Producer on Michiana Access Television, for the period starting with the date of signature to December 31, 2021, and adhere to the policies, rules, and procedures of the current version of this Handbook, any published updates, and staff directives.

SIGNATURE OF PRODUCER: _____

Date of Signature: _____

Contact Information: _____

