

Penfield Community Access Channel Policies and Procedures



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Penfield Community Access Channel Policies and Procedures

I. Overview

A. PCTV Public Access Channel Policies and Procedures:

Penfield Cable Access TV Public Access Channel (PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL) exists as part of the FCC's directive that Cable TV providers (such as Time Warner) designate certain television channels for community use. This is known as PEG Access (Public, Education and Government Access). For your reference, relevant excerpts from the FCC Public Access Rules and Regulations are included in Section VII of this document.

The purpose of PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL is to provide community access programming that informs, educates, instructs or entertains residents, groups, communities and neighborhoods in the Town of Penfield. PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL provides Penfield residents and organizations with the facilities, equipment and staff guidance necessary for the production and airing of community access programming. This document communicates the policies and procedures that exist to enhance and permit fair coordination of requests for PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL services and resources. In this document, residents who use PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL services and resources are referred to as "community producers."

All community producers agree to use PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL equipment and facilities for non-commercial purposes that benefit the Penfield community in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this document. As part of its cable franchise agreement, PCTV also supports Government Access TV on the Government Access Channel (GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL). is operated by the Penfield Town Government for the sole purpose of government programming or programming designated by the Penfield Town Board. PCTV is supported by a staff of employees and volunteers managed by the "Cable Coordinator." A Cable Advisory Board (CAB) of town residents supports PCTV staff and serves an advisory role on behalf of the Penfield Town Board. While this document primarily makes references to "video" and "videotape," it is important to stress the spirit of these policies and procedures is intended to address all contemporary and future media.

All supporting documents may be found at www.penfieldtv.org or upon request to the PCTV office.

II. Programming, Policies and Procedures

A. Programming

PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL programming is characterized by video productions, a community bulletin board and a scrolling ticker. Program content for each is described as follows:

Video Productions

PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL video production content for individual programs and program series typically includes:

- Club and organization productions
- Educational topics
- Religious topics
- Political topics

Community Bulletin Board

- PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL community bulletin board messaging typically includes:
- Public notices
- Not for profit group announcements
- Cross-promotion of Government Access Channel

Ticker

The PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL Scrolling ticker typically includes:

- Date and time
- Priority messages
- Public safety messages
- Associated Press Headline News

B. Access and Fees

The following policies and procedures, adopted by the CAB, and approved by the Penfield Town Board, govern PCTV priorities, scheduling, resources and use of equipment and facilities. To begin:

1. Broadcast access to PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL is free to all Penfield residents and Penfield-based not for profit institutions and organizations. Proof of residency and non-profit status is required.
2. Inquires regarding current fees should be directed to the Cable Coordinator.

C. Program Priority Policy

Use of PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL and cablecast equipment is based on the availability of channel time and is prioritized as follows:

1. Live programming.
2. Pre-taped programming provided by
 - a. Staff.
 - b. Penfield Residents or not for profit groups or organizations using PCTV facilities for production.
3. Pre-taped programming provided by Penfield residents and not for profit groups or organizations produced by outside resources.
4. Pre-taped programming provided by community access television stations within Monroe County that is of general interest to the Penfield Community.
5. Programming provided by other sources that are of general interest to the Penfield Community.

D. Program Scheduling Policy

The following policies apply to PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL program scheduling:

1. PCTV staff will determine the program schedule to ensure appropriate balance of programming, audience interests, and the facility's physical ability to broadcast the programs in the submission queue.
2. Programs will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis.

3. Time slots will be determined by PCTV staff
4. There is NO guaranteed or contractual time slot permitted due to playback capabilities and limitations. However:
 - a. Series programming will typically be assigned a regular time slot for the convenience of viewers.
 - b. The greater the lead time of a submission, the greater the chances of securing a desired time slot.

E. Program Content

The community producer bears sole responsibility for the content and materials used in all programs. PCTV and the CAB reserve the right to review all programs. Each submission will be accepted only after its producer reads and signs a Cablecast Request Form and Producer Agreement and Indemnification Form.

PCTV is not responsible for mechanical or equipment failure or damage to media. PCTV recommends that a copy be made of masters before submission. It is recommended that the Community Producer keep a copy of the media if it is of critical nature.

F. Content Standards and Restrictions

1. All programs submitted for cablecast or Community Bulletin Board are subject to review by PCTV staff to ensure compliance with the following:
 - a. Commercial, obscene, lottery, and purely personal programming cannot be cablecast;
 - b. If a program may be offensive to some audiences, or is of a mature nature, the producer must inform PCTV upon submission. PCTV may require the producer to include appropriate warnings at the beginning and in other sections of the program. Any program listings may also show warnings. PCTV may require the program be scheduled in a late-night time slot. Upon request, the CAB will provide guidelines specific to potentially offensive programming.

- c. Financial underwriting for a program must be acknowledged. Commercial advertising and pricing information is prohibited (refer to "Donor Acknowledgement Guidelines," Section II-G2).
 - d. Fundraising programs may only be produced on behalf of non-profit organizations that have been designated by the state or federal government as tax-exempt charitable organizations. Certificate of Registration with the New York State Attorney General's Division of Public Charities or letter from the Internal Revenue Service indicating classification in Section 501-3C of IRS Code will be required. PCTV staff and the CAB will review fundraising for community-related activities on a case-by-case basis as possible exceptions to this rule.
2. PCTV may place before programming a notice disclaiming editorial responsibility or control of program content.

G. Fundraising and Donor Acknowledgement

1. Fundraising Guidelines

- a. No program cablecast on PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL may contain commercial advertisements or promote a commercial product, service, business, trade, or profession. Program length commercials are also prohibited.
- b. Community producers are encouraged to seek commercial underwriting and/or grants from foundations, government agencies and/or private businesses to help fund their programs.
- c. To acknowledge underwriting or grants, please follow standards set for Donor Acknowledgement Guidelines (see Section II-G2).
- d. Community producers are encouraged to share their ideas with PCTV staff in order to avoid duplication of efforts, to encourage collaboration with other producers, and to gain the benefit of staff expertise. When proposed program ideas are particularly meritorious or are closely in line with PCTV priorities, PCTV staff – with prior approval from the Cable Coordinator – may write letters of support that producers may take to potential funding sources.
- e. Designated public access channels and equipment are available to approved community producers on a first-come, first-served basis. To aid those wishing to prepare proposals for funding, PCTV staff will determine an approximate value for these services.

Producers preparing proposals are encouraged to meet with PCTV staff while preparing budgets to ensure accurate figure estimates.

- f. Community producers must accurately identify themselves to potential funding sources. Community producers may not represent that they are employees of PCTV, indicate that PCTV is a co-producer of a program, or otherwise misrepresent their relationship with PCTV. Violations of this rule may result in suspension or termination of PCTV privileges.
- g. Community producers shall describe to donors the type of acknowledgement they will receive at the beginning and end of the program (see "Donor Acknowledgement Guidelines," Section II-G2b).
- h. PCTV requires community producers to disclose all funding received for a program.

2. Donor Acknowledgement Guidelines

- a. While commercial advertising is not permitted on PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL, it is required that programs acknowledge all support received from businesses, foundations, or other sources.
- b. Community producers shall acknowledge donors with announcements similar to those seen on PBS stations. Announcements may include a donor's name, logo, and up to a 15 word description. The announcement may not be displayed longer than 15 seconds. The description may:
 - i. include product line or services, location and phone number;
 - ii. identify but not promote the donor - it must be value neutral, and not include comparisons or quality judgments (e.g. "the best pizza in town," "lowest prices," "delicious food").
 - iii. mention particular products only if necessary for identification purposes. (e.g., "Computerland, authorized dealer of IBM computers," but not "Star Market, this week featuring a sale on Maxwell House coffee").
- c. Donors shall be acknowledged only at the beginning and end of programs, with the following exceptions:

- i. during programs longer than one hour, announcements may be made during natural breaks, e.g. half-time of a game;
 - ii. acknowledgement of donated prizes may be made when the prize is given away, e.g., "We're about to give away a turkey donated by Victory Supermarket."
- d. Intentional depiction of a donor's logo or advertising ("product placement") should be avoided, e.g., a camera should not zoom in on signs.
- e. Commercial providers of products and services used in a program's production may be credited at the end of a program. Such credits can include the product and service, such as "Costumes provide by...," and otherwise must follow the rules for displaying a commercial underwriting credit listed above.

H. Program Submission Procedure

Submissions of programs will be accepted only after submitter and/or producer reads and signs a Cablecast Request Form and Producer Agreement and Indemnification Form.

Requirements:

1. Every program submission requires Producer identification and Producer broadcast permission.
 - a) When the individual submitting a program is the producer, they will need to complete and sign a Producer Agreement and Indemnification Form.
 - b) When the individual submitting a program is not the producer, PCTV requires the Producer's written permission (on Formal Letterhead), and also a signed Producer Agreement and Indemnification Form signed by the Producer.
2. Each program requires its own unique Cablecast Request Form except for series submissions. Each submission form requires a written description of the program's content. If, for any reason, the content described in a program has been misrepresented or violates the Producer Agreement and Indemnification Form, the program will be pulled from the schedule and the submitter/producer will be notified by phone to retrieve the submission within 30 days. Media

will be returned by mail if the submitter provides a stamped, self-addressed envelope in advance. Media left longer than that will be discarded.

I. Program Dispute Procedure

Programming may be rejected due to 1) poor technical quality or 2) content that does not meet acceptance standards set forth in this document. All disputes arising over the allocation of cablecast equipment, and/or access channel time shall be resolved on a non-discriminatory basis by the Cable Coordinator in a manner that will maximize fairness and diversity of expression.

1. Programming that does not meet technical quality standards set forth in this document will not air. The submitter will be notified of the problem by phone. The dispute can be resolved by using one of the following methods:
 - Withdrawal of program
 - Edit or repair of program to meet standards

2. Programming that does not meet content standards set forth in this document will not air. The submitter will be notified of the problem by phone and the Cable Coordinator will submit the program to the CAB for review. The dispute can be resolved by using one of the following methods:
 - Withdrawal of program
 - Edit or repair of program to meet standards
 - Appeal to Penfield Town Board for review of the program

Appeal: Programs submitted to the PCTV CAB for content review may take approximately one month for review and response in alignment with the CAB meeting schedule. The PCTV CAB will review the submission based on the standards set forth in this document. If the CAB also rejects the program, a further and last appeal can be made to the Penfield Town Board within fifteen (15) working days of the CAB rejection date. Media that does not meet standards of technical quality will be refused and will not be presented to the PCTV CAB for review.

Note: Upon request, the CAB will provide guidelines specific to potentially offensive programming.

J. Sponsorship/Membership

Program “Sponsorship and Membership” opportunities exist. Contact PCTV for additional information.

III. Political Programming

Policies

Programming featuring political content is subject to the same 1) production standards, 2) content standards and 3) scheduling procedures as non-political programming.

Facilities and Equipment

To assure impartiality, PCTV facility, staff or field equipment cannot be utilized in the production of any political campaign programming. Third party alternatives will be suggested. However, if a group chooses to hold an impartial and open debate a group representative can petition the CAB in writing for approval for staff and facility assistance. The CAB will review the request at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Fees may apply.

IV. Media Policies

This document is intended to address contemporary and future media types. Because of the dynamic nature of media technologies, it is important to note the spirit of this document calls for a high degree of technical competency and quality to ensure quality community broadcasts.

A. Media Format and Specifications and Technical Standards

All Program submissions will be accepted in standard formats as described below:

Format: DVD, DVCam, Mini DV, Super VHS, VHS, ¾” U-Matic

Programs should meet minimum audio and video technical standards, which include consistent control track, video and audio. Media must be clearly labeled with the following:

- Individual title
- Name and phone number of the producer
- Exact program length and in-point and out-point

If any of the following requirements are not met, your program will not be scheduled.

- A. Each program must start near the beginning of the tape. There must only be 1 program per tape recorded in SP. One program per title on DVD's recorded in region 0 or 1. No other audio or video should precede the bars, tone and countdown.
- B. Programs should ideally be 28 minutes, 58 minutes or 1 hour 58 minutes in length.
- C. Tapes must begin with at least 40 sec. of color bars and tone (0 dB), countdown and 2 sec. of silent black or video should precede the bars, tone and countdown.
- D. Tapes must have a clear-cut ending point, followed immediately by at least 1 minute of silent black.
- E. Programs must be submitted on as few tapes as possible. A one-hour program, for example, should be submitted on a single one-hour tape, not on two 30-minute tapes. Whenever a program must be submitted on more than one tape, each tape must be formatted as above and labeled correctly and each must indicate sequence for cablecast (i.e. "1st of 2", "2nd of 2").
- F. Programs produced entirely or in part at the PCTV facility must include in the credits an acknowledgment of the PCTV facility, ex. "Produced utilizing Penfield Community Television facilities." All programming submitted or produced by a non-PCTV staff member must contain the following disclaimer at the beginning of each program: "The following program has been produced by an independent producer. The views expressed in this program are that of the producer and not of this station's management, staff, or volunteers. This station is prohibited by law from editing any portion of this program or its content."
- G. All submissions must meet technical requirements. (Video levels must not exceed 100 IRE, audio levels must consistently peak at 0db). Do not submit programs that have been recycled too many times, are of inferior quality, are dusty or dirty, have excessive dropout, or have labels that are flaking or peeling off.
- H. It is strongly recommended that you make a copy of any program you deliver for cablecast. While loss of or damage to media is extremely rare, it is possible. (Many producers keep a copy, but deliver the edit master for cablecast to get the best possible cablecast.)

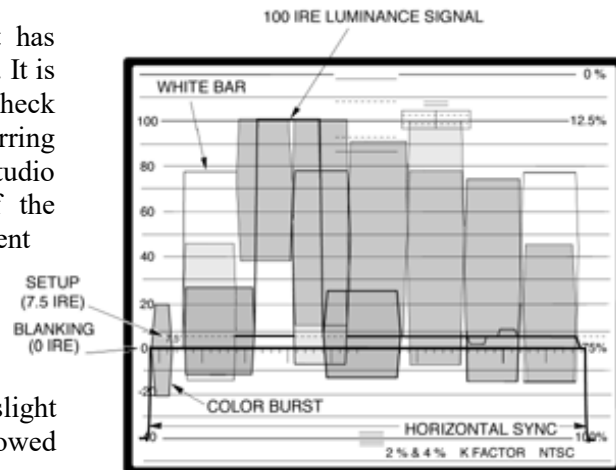
Additional Requirements for Series Programs:

- A. Each Cablecast Request Form covers 3 months or 12 programs, whichever occurs first.
- B. Each program must not run longer than the requested time slot: 28 minutes or 58 minutes.
- C. While it is not required that each program fill every minute of the time slot, it is expected that programs will not run substantially shorter than the requested time.
- D. Each program must be provided on a single, separate tape or separate titles on DVD's.
- E. Each program must be numbered sequentially in the order in which you want them to be cablecast (i.e. "1, 2, 3,...")
- F. Programs not completed at the time of cablecast request must be received at the cablecast facility no later than two business days before scheduled cablecast.

Technical Standards Assistance

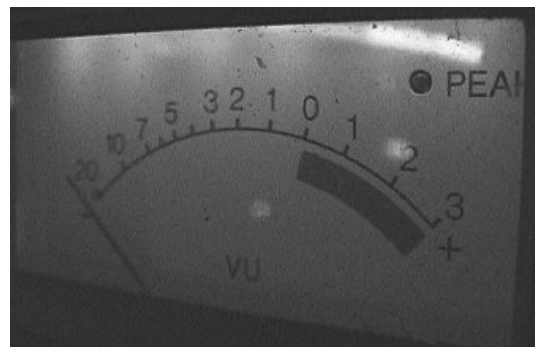
WAVEFORM MONITOR:

The Waveform monitor is an oscilloscope that has been custom configured for television monitoring. It is used to measure the voltage of the signal and to check that all the pulses and scans of the signal are occurring at the proper times. Our primary use for it in studio production is to monitor the signal levels of the picture. These levels must not exceed 100% percent level on the waveform monitor, nor may they drop below 7.5%. Signals that are too high will clip and look like white blobs. Signals that are too low will be completely black. Generally, face tones fall in the 70% range. White with slight detail in it will be around 90-100% and shadowed areas will be under 30% on the scale.



VU MONITOR:

Not all meters with V.U. scales conform to the A.S.A. (American Standards Association) specifications so do not have too much faith in levels indicated by V.U. meters, especially in semi-professional equipment. Normally the reading of 0 V.U. for steady tone, (e.g. 1kHz sinewave) is the only V.U. indication worth relying on. The meter scale is calibrated in decibels. It usually extends below -20dB and up to +3dB. The scale above 0 V.U. is colored red. You should understand that 0 V.U. does not stand for 0dB. The standard level chosen for feeding signals to analogue recording machines is +4 dBu. 0 V.U. therefore usually corresponds to +4 dBu.



All formats must meet the requirements listed in the Format Specifications and Technical Standards.

Each program submitted or produced by a non-staff member must contain the following disclaimer at the beginning of each program:

“The following program has been produced by an independent producer. The views expressed in this program are that of the producer and not of this station’s management, staff, or volunteers. This station is prohibited by law from editing any portion of this program or its content.”

PCTV staff will provide assistance to producers in meeting this requirement. The disclaimer is to be included as part of total production time. Programs produced entirely or in part at the PCTV facility must include in the credits an acknowledgment of the PCTV facility (e.g., “Produced Utilizing Penfield Community Television Facilities”).

V. Equipment and Facilities

A. Studio Equipment and Facilities

Policy

Television production equipment and studio facilities will be made available to all qualified Penfield residents for the sole purpose of creating a video production suitable for playback on PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL. The PCTV Coordinator will determine facility availability based on studio scheduling, production and program values. PCTV staff is not routinely available to edit Community Productions created in the studio, but may offer to assist the Community Producer according to availability and priorities.

Programs must meet all criteria for Public Access Rules & Regulations (see Section VII). Requests to produce a program which, in the Cable Coordinator’s determination, does not meet content standards will be denied. Disputes will be handled as described in this document.

Equipment may NOT be used for the purposes of:

1. Advertisement or solicitation of products, services or business.
2. Obscene or illicit production.
3. Political fundraising.
4. Political campaigning (In order to ensure impartiality, neither PCTV staff, equipment, or facilities can be used in production of political campaign programs.)

Procedure

To use studio facilities and equipment, all Community Producers must:

1. Submit an outline of the production
2. Meet with the Cable Coordinator and complete any additional forms as necessary at that time.
3. Upon project approval the Cable Coordinator will assign studio time based on the above criteria and by determining the Community Producer is appropriately trained in production values and methods. At this time, the Cable Coordinator also will discuss any Fees involved.

PCTV staff will train Community Producers to use studio facilities and equipment. Training will be made available as PCTV workload permits as determined by the Cable Coordinator. A Resource Request Form must be completed and submitted to the Cable Coordinator. This must occur at least 14 business days prior to the usage date (requests will be accepted up to three months in advance of usage date). Upon approval, PCTV staff, facilities and equipment will be scheduled. One complementary DVD, DV or VHS tape will be provided for each project.

Fees may apply (quoted by project or service).

No one will be allowed to use studio facilities and/or equipment unless approved by the Cable Coordinator.

B. Loaning of Television Equipment for Remote Production (Electronic Field Production, EFP)

Policy

Loaning of Television Equipment for Remote Production will be made available to all qualified Penfield residents for the sole purpose of creating a video production suitable for playback on PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL. EFP equipment may be reserved to document events that are of interest to the general population of Penfield. EFP equipment is available on a first come, first served basis. Training on EFP equipment is available to facilitate production for a Community Producer under Public Access Rules and Regulations (see Section VII).

Community Producers must meet with the Cable Coordinator prior to the event to discuss show content and production methods. PCTV equipment is NOT available to residents for personal

use such as weddings, parties or business assignments. All programs must meet the criteria for media scheduling procedures.

Upon availability, first-time Community Producers may borrow equipment one time to practice. If equipment is continuously reserved, evidence of production must be demonstrated, or usage will be denied.

The Cable Coordinator must approve the skills of Community Producers.

Procedure

To use production equipment, all Community Producers must:

1. Submit an outline of the production
2. Meet with the Cable Coordinator and complete any additional forms as necessary at that time.
3. Upon project approval the Cable Coordinator will assign studio time based on the above criteria and by determining the Community Producer is appropriately trained in production values and methods.

PCTV staff will train Community Producers to use studio facilities and equipment. Training will be made available as PCTV workload permits as determined by the Cable Coordinator. A Resource Request Form must be completed and submitted to the Cable Coordinator. This must occur at least 14 business days prior to the usage date (requests will be accepted up to three months in advance of usage date). Upon approval, PCTV staff, facilities and equipment will be scheduled.). One complementary DVD, DV or VHS tape will be provided for each project.

Fees may apply (quoted by project or service).

No one will be allowed to use studio facilities and/or equipment unless approved by the Cable Coordinator.

VI. Community Bulletin Board

The Community Bulletin Board is a text and graphic-based message posting component of the PCTV broadcast. It is primarily used to notify Penfield residents of daily and urgent community news and events.

A. Content Standards

The Cable Access user bears sole responsibility for the content used in Community Bulletin Board messages. PCTV and the PCTV CAB reserve the right to review all submissions.

B. Content Restrictions

All content submitted for Community Bulletin Board is subject to review by the Cable Access Staff to ensure compliance with the following:

- 1) Commercial, obscene, lottery, and purely personal messages cannot be posted;

- 2) Fundraising messages may only be posted on behalf of non-profit organizations that have been designated by the state or federal government as tax-exempt charitable organizations. Certificate of Registration with the New York State Attorney General's Division of Public Charities or letter from the Internal Revenue Service indicating classification in Section 501 of IRS Code will be required. PCTV staff and the CAB will review fundraising for community-related activities on a case-by-case basis as possible exceptions to this rule.

C. Submission Procedure

Penfield residents may submit content for the Community Bulletin Board by completing a Bulletin Board User Agreement Form. Once a Bulletin Board User Agreement has been signed, future Bulletin Board messages may be submitted via email (pctv@penfield.org) for up to one year. The Bulletin Board User Agreement needs to be signed annually.

VII. Federal Communication Commission (FCC) Public Access Rules and Regulations

Excerpts taken from the FCC's May 1998 Cable Television Fact Sheet:

PUBLIC, EDUCATIONAL, AND GOVERNMENTAL ACCESS CHANNELS ("PEG CHANNELS")

Pursuant to Section 611 of the Communications Act, local franchising authorities may require cable operators to set aside channels for public, educational, or governmental ("PEG") use.

Public access channels are available for use by the general public. They are usually administered either by the cable operator or by a third party designated by the franchising authority.

Educational access channels are used by educational institutions for educational programming. Time on these channels is typically allocated by either the franchising authority or the cable operator among local schools, colleges and universities.

Governmental access channels are used for programming by organizations of local government. In most jurisdictions, the franchising authority directly controls these channels.

PEG channels are not mandated by federal law; rather they are a right given to the franchising authority, which it may choose to exercise. The decision whether to require the cable operator to carry PEG channels is up to the local franchising authority. If the franchise authority does require PEG channels, that requirement will be set out in the franchise agreement between the franchising authority and the cable operator.

In accordance with applicable franchise agreements, local franchising authorities or cable operators may adopt on their own, non-content-based rules governing the use of PEG channels. For example: Rules may be adopted for allocating time among competing applicants on a reasonable basis other than the content of their programming. Minimum production standards may be required. Users may be required to undergo training.

Any questions or comments about PEG channels on a particular system should be directed to the cable operator or the local franchising authority, and not to the Federal Communications Commission.