

FAQ

Is Franklin TV my cable company?

We are Franklin's Public Access TV studio. That means Franklin residents may use our studio and equipment to create programs for our Public Access TV channel – for free. The Franklin TV access studio facilities and equipment are managed by Franklin Community Cable Access, Inc.

We are a nonprofit organization operating under an agreement with the Town of Franklin.

If your cable TV service is not working, please call your service provider for assistance.
Comcast (1-800-COMCAST) or Verizon (888-470-8765)



What is Public Access TV?

Federal law provides that states or local communities may establish franchise agreements with cable TV service providers wishing to market their services locally. Under such agreement, a city or town may require its cable operator(s) to provide what the Telecommunications Act of 1984 calls "Public, Educational, or Government (P/E/G) Access" channels on the local channel lineup. These PEG channels are available for use by citizens, schools and municipalities. Such channels must provide equal access to all prospective users and serve as public forums for free expression. In Massachusetts, many franchise agreements also require cable operators to provide video facilities, equipment and funding to towns.

Most access centers are funded by a cable franchise fee (a small percentage of your cable bill). This fee pays for a studio facility, video equipment, and a small staff to manage the studio, train local citizens in TV production, and schedule programs on the public access channels. In sum, the essence of public access programming is do-it-yourself TV.

How do public access centers operate?

Most access centers operate under one of three organizational arrangements:

- ~ as an independent corporation, often a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, charitable educational org.
- ~ via a municipality or a school system through fees from cable subscribers.
- ~ directly by the cable service provider as part of its agreement with the community.

An access center may be a Public Access facility where citizens or groups have equal access to produce their own TV programs. It may be an Educational TV facility, often located in a school and operating primarily for educational purposes. It may be a Municipal or Government facility that records and cablecasts local government meetings and events. Many access centers maintain two or all three P/E/G channels in their communities.

For more information on Access Studios, contact The MA Dept. of Telecommunications and Cable at (800) 392-6066 or <http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/government/oca-agencies/dtc-lp/>

What channels are Franklin TV's programs shown on?

We provide programming on three local channels: Public Access, Educational Access and Government Access. Our channel assignments vary by cable carrier.

Our Public Access channel,
All-Access TV
is on Comcast 8, Verizon 26



Our Educational channel,
Franklin Pride TV
is on Comcast 96, Verizon 28



Our Government channel,
Town Hall TV
is on Comcast 11, Verizon 29



Do access centers produce TV programs?

Access centers are TV studios, but unlike broadcast stations they are not fully staffed with TV producers, camera operators and technicians. An access center is more like a combination school and equipment library where individuals, groups and nonprofit organizations can learn to use video production equipment to make their own TV programs. They then have free access to equipment and cable channel time to produce and cablecast their programs to local communities.

Note that Public Access service does not obligate a center to provide staff to carry out citizen requests to create specific programs. Limited staff and resources are available primarily for training and technical assistance.

Many access centers are required by their communities to cover government meetings. Some centers also cover key events of broad community interest such as local holiday parades and celebrations, school graduations, recitals and sports.

All centers strive to promote the production of TV programs by and for their local communities.

Can I have my own program on Franklin TV?

As a Franklin resident you have access. This is the central purpose of local access TV. If you have something to say, we help you say it – even if we don't agree with it. Local Access TV is the first amendment writ large. If you have an opinion, a hobby, expertise or a passion for something that you enjoy and would like to share, then perhaps you have a TV program in you.

I think I have a good idea for a TV program. How do I make it happen?

Let's get together. We can help you make your good idea a great idea. We can help you make your great idea happen. If you would like to have a program of your own, we provide training, expert guidance, advice, support and most of the resources you will need. And yes, it should be fun. Taken step-by-step, basic TV production is not that complex. The ability to produce simple yet interesting TV programs is well within the grasp of most people.

Program copyright and ownership

We include a copyright notice in the end credits of programs that we help you to create.

Example language:

Program copyright 2015 by Franklin TV and (the program's creator).

Our mission is to cablecast local TV programs created by and for our community. Legally, we maintain both a right and obligation to show your program over our access channel, scheduling it at various times as we deem appropriate. Once we run your program our mission is complete. So, what becomes of your program after that?

You created it. You own it.

We give you a DVD of your program. You may do with it as you wish. You may freely publish, duplicate and distribute your program, including posting it on the internet.

What about using other copyrighted material within my program?

Franklin TV takes copyright infringement seriously and cannot run any program that includes someone else's creative work without express permission or under a licensing agreement. This includes music, video, pictures, graphics, art and/or scripts, whole or in part.

Program Scheduling: When and how often will my program be shown?

Typically, public access programs on Franklin TV are scheduled to be shown perhaps two to four times in a given week for two to four weeks, schedule permitting. Our weekly program guide is posted to our Franklin.TV website on Saturday morning. The program guide can be downloaded and/or printed for your convenience. We also regularly display the upcoming programs for each day on each of our channels. While we will consider requests to show programs at specific times, we reserve the right to schedule all programs as we deem appropriate.

You can also view selected programs on demand through our website.

What video formats can Franklin TV accept for a cablecast?

Our preferred format is either a DVD or a similar quality MPEG mediafile. We do have some capability to transfer videotape formats to DVDs and MPEG files for cablecast.

Are there restrictions regarding content that can be shown on Franklin TV?

There are FCC laws regarding local community standards, pornography, profane language, hate speech and safe-harbor viewing hours. Beyond such regulations, we cannot and do not censor content. However, we do have the right to determine cablecast times and frequencies of airing.

Programs may be submitted to us by Franklin residents who are 18 or older. Programming must not contain commercial advertising, calls to action, or libelous or slanderous language. Obscenity and pornography are illegal and prohibited at all times. We restrict extreme violence, indecency and profanity. We air such programs only between the hours of 11pm and 4am. You must sign an agreement to indemnify and save harmless Franklin TV from liability of any kind that might arise from the cablecast of your program.

We also evaluate programs for technical deficiencies that may render them too difficult to play.

How do I request a program from another town be shown on Franklin TV?

If a program is being produced in another access center that you would like to see in Franklin, the first step is to get (or be) a local sponsor; a Franklin resident who can submit a formal request for us to carry that program. You also need to obtain permission from the program's producer and arrange for us to receive a copy of the program.

Conversely, can I watch Franklin TV programs outside of Franklin?

You can access many of our programs online through our website. Go to the home page for each of our three channels. All government meetings are also available online through Franklin's municipal website. If you enjoy a program series originated by Franklin TV, you can contact the access center in your local community for details on how our programs also may be carried by your local access center.

Can I use the Franklin TV studios or equipment for personal projects?

Under our nonprofit charter Franklin TV provides free equipment, facilities and training only for creating programs that will be shown on our local channels. Franklin residents must be 18 years old (minimum) with appropriate training or demonstrated experience in equipment use and care.

Our equipment and facilities are not available for free to create personal or commercial projects. Our charter does permit us to provide production services to underwriters and grant donors.

Can Franklin TV cover an event for my nonprofit group or organization?

As a nonprofit organization we strive to support other groups that support our community. You may e-mail us at info@franklin.tv or call 508-541-4118 to inquire about possible event coverage. We will try to arrange for a staff member or volunteer to record your event. Please contact us as far in advance of your event as possible.

However, given our limited resources we ask that you consider recruiting volunteers from your group who can operate a video camera and audio equipment. We provide the instruction and equipment. Optionally, you may also use your own camcorder and editing software to produce your program(s) and provide us with a DVD or MPEG media file. We will evaluate your program's technical video and audio quality to determine its suitability for cablecast.

Perhaps you would like to publicize a nonprofit event on our Community Bulletin Board.

What is the Franklin TV Community Bulletin Board (CBB)?

Our Community Bulletin Board is a way for local nonprofit groups, schools, civic organizations and municipal departments to spread the word about their mission and purpose, as well as meetings and events deemed of interest to Franklin cable subscribers and the community at large. We usually update our Bulletin Board twice a week.

How do I submit my message to Franklin TV's Community Bulletin Board?

Email your information or notice to cbb@franklin.tv. Remember - Who, What, When, Where, Why, but please be concise. Also include a contact name, phone number, and if you have one, a website address where folks can find more information. See examples of Community Bulletins on our Access channel. When your TV notice is ready to run we can also email you an image file. You can include it in your own newsletter or printed material as you wish.

At Franklin TV we use PowerPoint to create and animate our bulletins. You can download and take a look at our Powerpoint template. It contains useful guidelines and examples. You can create a PowerPoint slide about your group's event and email it back to us at cbb@franklin.tv. Note that a TV image can display only a limited amount of text. Our examples offer insights on how to say a lot within the limited space of a TV frame. If you have questions or would like additional help you may also visit our studio weekdays. Please call first.

On what channels will my CBB notice appear?

Notices by the public and non-profit groups appear on our Access channel, All Access TV. Notices for schools or education events appear on our Education channel, Franklin Pride TV. Notices from town or state government appear on our Government channel, Town Hall TV.

How can I get more information about a bulletin or program that I saw?

We always greatly appreciate your comments, good or bad, and we're happy to answer questions about our community bulletins and programs. It means that you're watching and supporting us. Thanks.

Just email info@franklin.tv or call us at 508-541-4118.

MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

How do I become a member of Franklin TV?

Surprise!

As a Franklin resident you already are. (Who knew?)

Groucho Marx once quipped,

“I would never join any group that would accept someone like me as a member.”

Well, we’re a fairly egalitarian bunch, and like it or not, you’re in. (Congratulations!)

Your membership really matters when you donate or participate. Be part of our Franklin TV family by getting involved. How? Consider volunteering.

Volunteer? Me? What does that mean?

What would you like it to mean? Making TV programs is a collaborative effort, and there are many enjoyable ways to help out. Why volunteer if you won’t enjoy it? At Franklin TV we rely heavily on volunteers to produce and cover many worthy local events. Access centers like Franklin TV have members from all walks of life engaged in hands-on TV production. Some folks want to develop new skills in TV production. Some have an interest in specific program topics and create much of the programming produced at access centers. Parents of student athletes often produce and cover school games. The League of Women Voters might cover a town meeting. A town department might appoint a staff member to prepare information for a department program or service that needs publicizing. Many access centers recruit college and high school interns to help produce programs.

If you would like to help in the production of a program or cover a specific Franklin event, we have just two words for you.

“Thank you!” (However, we try to say them a lot.)

We would love to hear from you. Call 508-541-4118.

Are the hosts of your programs paid?

Our hosts and producers are most often volunteers. They enjoy participating in local TV and collaborating on projects.

I’d like to volunteer, but I don’t have an idea for a program.

No idea necessary. Join a group that’s working on someone else’s program or just hang out and observe until you decide what you would like to do.

Do I need special technical skills to volunteer?

Nope. You just have to be interested in learning. We provide hands-on training and guidance in whatever areas of interest you wish to explore.

I'd like to learn about TV production. Where do I start?

The best way to learn is by doing. Check out our recommended video production resources.

Do you have formal school internships? If so, what are the requirements?

We take our internships seriously. That means we teach. No prior experience is necessary. We're small. That means bigger opportunity for interns to step up and develop skills through hands-on experience than they might find at larger organizations. Just talk to your adviser at your college to coordinate the necessary paperwork for school credit before you intern with us.

Can I buy a DVD copy of a Franklin TV program?

Many of our locally produced programs are available for purchase both in standard DVDs and HD/Blu-Ray DVDs. We ask \$20 for the first DVD and \$10 for each additional copy. Proceeds from DVD sales help us to defray our operating costs. (Thanks!) Just email info@franklin.tv or call us to make arrangements. Note that we do not archive all of our past programs. We can't provide copies of programs that are not produced at Franklin TV. However, we can provide the contact information for the producer of a particular program.

Can you edit/copy part of a program where I appear?

Yes, we can. For \$50.00 we will edit and copy to DVD your specific program segment. We recommend that you be present to guide our staff in order to edit things just the way you want. You can then upload the edited segment to your site. When uploading content, note that we often include a copyright notice at the end of many of our programs. We add the copyright notice on your behalf as a producer or participant in the program.

How can I arrange a tour of the Franklin TV studio facility?

With our limited staff and a full production schedule we are not always able to conduct formal group tours. However, you are most welcome to come by for a visit. Just call ahead and make sure someone is available to show you around.

Feel free to contact us at Franklin TV with any other questions you might have about access television or producing your own programs.

And, as always –



Thanks for watching!

Franklin TV is a member of The Alliance for Community Media and MassAccess. These Frequently Asked Questions are prepared by Franklin TV, other public access TV centers and massaccess.org to help you learn more about public access TV.

Thanks especially to Paul Berg, NewTV, Newton, MA for his contributions.