

MISSOULA COMMUNITY ACCESS TELEVISION PRODUCERS HANDBOOK

Part-I Introduction

Welcome to Missoula Community Access Television! The staff and facilities of Missoula Community Access Television (MCAT) are here to help you explore television production and communication via your community television center. This handbook is intended to guide and assist you when using MCAT's resources. If you have any questions about this handbook or the services MCAT offers, please ask the staff.

As with any effective service organization, MCAT will be constantly growing and changing to serve the needs of our community. Let us hear from you about how we can improve our services.

MCAT Mission

MCAT is incorporated in Montana as a nonprofit corporation and received 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service on May 8, 1990. The mission of MCAT, as stated in our bylaws, is to promote the spread of information and exchange of views, ideas, and opinions within the community of Missoula by providing channel time, equipment and training to as many organizations and people as we humanly can.

MCAT Method

Missoula Community Access Television, the City of Missoula and Bresnan Communications maintains a neutral position regarding the content of public access programming produced or sponsored by Missoulians for the MCAT channel. We do not censor or edit programs provided by producers. Producers warrant that their programs do not violate local, state or federal laws as outlined in a program contract which is signed and submitted prior to the initial cablecast of each show. We are neutral –you- as the producer are responsible for the content of your program.

This neutral position supports First Amendment rights. Through community access television, local people can speak for themselves through programs they produce for the cable system.

Missoula Community Access Television affords an opportunity for residents and organizations within the City of Missoula to create a community dialogue in which they communicate their interests and concerns as producers and receivers of television programs.

MCAT community access television operations, which gives training, equipment and channel time to citizens on a nondiscriminatory first come, first served basis, are based on one of the oldest and most basic human needs – the need to communicate our ideas and achievements with each other. In doing so, we tell the stories which create and sustain our culture.

Community access television is an important tool for making our free speech guarantees under the First Amendment a reality in the electronic age. Congress recognized the importance of access television in the Cable Communications Acts of 1984 and 1992, and Telecommunications Act of 1996, and called access “the video equivalent of the speaker’s soapbox” and “the electronic parallel to the printed leaflet.”

Brief MCAT History

During the late 70s and early 80s, community members and civic leaders in Missoula became aware of the phenomena of “access television” which was cropping up throughout the nation. Because there is such a wealth of cultural, artistic and intellectual diversity in Missoula, these folks were certain that community access television would be a valuable outlet for local talent and an avenue for civic dialogue about important issues. *In 1988, the City of Missoula and TCI Cable, reached an agreement that supported the formation of Missoula's first public access television station.*

The 1984 and 1992 Cable Acts and Telecommunications Act of 1996 stipulate that municipalities have the right to negotiate a franchise with their local cable companies that, in addition to having a franchise fee based on the company's gross revenues, has provisions for equipment and channel space for access television. Why can a city exact a fee from a cable company? Because the cable company uses the "rights of way," the alleys that belong to everyone in order to deliver a service and make a profit. Public Access Television is one of the ways a cable company is legislated to pay rent to the community in exchange for using some of the community's property.

In 1988, the City of Missoula signed a 15 year franchise agreement with Telecommunications, Inc. (TCI), (later purchased by AT&T Broadband, now purchased by Bresnan Communications and then purchased by CableVision aka "Optimum") which includes a 5% cable franchise fee on the company's gross revenues, up to two channels for access programming, and provisions for maintaining equipment, and the ability to cablecast live from some public facilities and area schools. This agreement was renewed in 2003 for another 15 years with the new cable provider, Bresnan Communications.

The volunteers who had been working as negotiators with the City of Missoula during this process created a new organization to provide education and administration for the television station and MCAT was born! A contract between the City of Missoula and MCAT has been renewed periodically since 1989. A significant portion of the franchise fees that are collected by the City from Bresnan Communications are forwarded to MCAT to provide funding for this television station. The City of Missoula owns the equipment and MCAT leases the equipment from the City for \$1 a year.

PEG Access Defined

MCAT supports three types of television access service - Public, Education and Government, also known as PEG access.

What MCAT does for the public

Public access is the most diverse programming at MCAT. Any individual or group may produce a program on any subject for cablecast by MCAT as defined under Programming Policy. Program topics are as varied as the people in our community. Subjects can cover arts, entertainment, public affairs, religion, education or information. Public access is a means for people to express their creativity, explore important issues and exercise their First Amendment rights through television.

MCAT provides a forum for civic clubs, educational groups and not-for-profit organizations through the production of a talk show called *What's Up Missoula*. Hundreds of people from all areas of Missoula life have appeared on the program as guests. If you belong to, or know of an organization that would like a chance to appear on the program- let us know! MCAT also provides media assistance grants to nonprofit organizations, or clubs that are sponsored by nonprofit organizations. The grant consists of 8 to 12 hours staff time to produce a program about the organization. Typically organizations have used the grants to record conferences or performances, or for the creation of organization profiles, volunteer training and recruitment or to highlight a particular service or event. As of 2005, MCAT has donated over \$300,000 of in-kind services to Missoula organizations.

What MCAT does for Education

Christian Ackerman, MCAT's principal video instructor, offers a mentoring program for high school student throughout the City of Missoula. Christian facilitates the completion of Senior Projects and extends training to high school students of all ages. MCAT also provides support for students through the University of Montana's Office of Civic Engagement. This program provides Ameri-Corps teachers who assist in teaching media literacy to young media.

MCAT provides live coverage of the Missoula County Public School system School Board meetings on a regular basis. Other School District meetings include Curriculum & Development, Personnel, Negotiations and Policy, and Finance & Operations Meetings. The service also includes replays of previous meetings.

What MCAT does for Government

MCAT contracts with the City of Missoula to provide 1400 hours a year of video service. The video services take the form of various program threads that are seen throughout the year. MCAT covers City Council, which includes all City Council Committees, Planning Board, Design Review Board, County Board of Adjustment, City Board of Adjustment, Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, (TTAC) Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee, (TPCC) and Neighborhood Forum meetings. MCAT creates information public service announcements, profiles of city department functions and goals and highlights of various issues facing city government and citizenry. Government programs appear on MCAT's Civic Channel 11.

Volunteers

The success of MCAT rests with its volunteers. A volunteer Board of Directors governs MCAT with 9 members. All MCAT Board meetings are open to the public and your input is encouraged and welcomed.

As a volunteer, you keep MCAT alive. MCAT has only a small paid staff, so volunteers are our lifeblood and the opportunities for volunteers here are plentiful. You can assist in training, operations, administrative functions, be a board or committee member, be a producer or technician. Not only will you be contributing your time, knowledge and interest to a unique community resource, you'll have a good time doing it. MCAT is an exciting and creative place to be!

MCAT Staff

The MCAT staff currently includes Joel Baird, General Manager, Lori Hudak, Program Manager and Producer, Christian Ackerman, Producer Mentor and Education and, Ron Scholl, Media Grants Producer. MCAT also employs Rick Phillips, Government Meeting Producer, and Craig Holtdorf, School Board Producer. All volunteers are equal and have no authority over other volunteers unless professional staff has delegated this authority. If you know of a community service program that can offer pay or credit for working at MCAT, please let us know.

Location of Facility

MCAT's offices and studio are located at 500 North Higgins, Suite 105, on the lower level of the Circle Square Building. The north door into the building is open during normal business hours, and is handicapped accessible. Our Spruce Street ramp entrance, under the MCAT awning, is very popular.

MCAT's mailing address is:

MCAT
P.O. Box 8749
Missoula, MT 59807

Our telephone number is (406) 542-MCAT (or 542-6228). Our fax number is (406) 721-6014 and our e-mail address is mcat@mcat.org. You can also visit our home page on the World-Wide Web at www.mcat.org.

Hours of Operation

MCAT's regular drop-in hours are Tuesday through Friday from 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The facility will be open and staff present during these times except on holidays – MCAT observes the same holidays as the City of Missoula. Please arrange your visits during our business hours, or set up an appointment with the staff for other days and times.

PART II-Policies and Fees

All of the policies outlined below are intended to help you make the best program possible. If you have any questions or comments, please discuss them with us. We need your input!

First Come, First Served

MCAT equipment and facilities are available on a first come, first served, nondiscriminatory basis. Any individual or organization may have access to television production training, equipment, facilities and channel time as long as their use of access is non-commercial and complies with these rules and procedures.

Nondiscrimination

No person will be denied training, equipment, facilities or channel time on the basis of race, sex, religion, political affiliation, age, creed, color, national origin or ancestry, previous legal status, sexual orientation, or mental or physical handicap.

Eligibility

MCAT's current service area is the City of Missoula. The City of Missoula contracts for MCAT services and pays for them through cable franchise fees collected from cable TV subscribers. City residents are therefore subsidized in their use of MCAT. County residents currently pay no franchise fees and Missoula County does not financially support MCAT. Non-city residents can use MCAT by paying all user and training fees at double the rate charged City residents.

Annual User and Training Fees

The contract signed by MCAT and the City of Missoula in January 1994 requires MCAT to charge user fees and training fees, to be used for an equipment replacement/repair/depreciation fund for city-owned equipment.

1. Annual User Fees

- A. \$20.00/individual; \$95.00/community organizations
- B. Upon application and payment, producer has access to all MCAT equipment and facilities that they have been certified to use (subject to existing procedures).
- C. Payment anytime during month entitles use through the same month next year (For example, payment March 1 or March 31 - expiration March 31 the following year).
- D. Fee is not required to cablecast programming produced locally (or by a City resident) without using MCAT field or editing equipment.
- E. Annual Users are entitled to sponsor imported programming for cablecast at no additional fee. Non-users will be charged an Annual User Fee for cablecast of imported programs for one year.

2. Training Fee

- A. No charge for basic policy orientation to learn about MCAT's history and operation.
- B. \$20 one-time training fee for all areas of MCAT equipment and facilities.

3. Equipment Maintenance Fees on Third Party Agreements

- A. 20% of total compensation paid to producer(s).
- B. All producers must pay the annual user fees listed above. (See discussion of Third Party Agreements below)

4. Dubbing Fees

Each MCAT producer is allowed one \$2 dub of his or her finished program on dvd. Additional dubs can be made for \$10 per DVD. A Dub Request Form should be filled out and a staff member will make the dub in the order received. No dubs will be made without the express permission of the producer.

Third Party Agreements for Paid Producers

MCAT encourages and supports all producers pursuing excellence in programming. The Third Party Agreements allow community organizations to pay a stipend to certified MCAT producers to produce non-commercial programs to run on MCAT. Third Party Agreements are not intended to promote competition between MCAT producers and the private sector and are allowed only when a program cannot feasibly be produced by the private sector.

The following guidelines are intended to create a cooperative partnership between MCAT, independent producers and community organizations. Third Party Agreements must be signed by the certified MCAT producer, an MCAT official and an authorized organization representative. Third Party Agreement Forms may be obtained at MCAT.

The agreement warrants that all parties understand that:

1. An Equipment Maintenance Fee will be paid to MCAT in the amount of 20% of the producer's compensation for only that segment of the program produced using MCAT equipment. A copy of the producer's budget must be made available to MCAT staff before production begins and all Third Party Producer projects must be approved by the MCAT program director.
2. Programs produced with MCAT equipment and/or facilities are intended for cablecast on access channels and may not be used for commercial purposes or for the solicitation of funds. A community organization may sell copies of programs in order to recover production costs. Income from such sales may not exceed the cost of production.
3. Incidental to cablecast on MCAT a program may generate revenue. In that case MCAT will be compensated retroactively in the amount of 20% of net revenues or at the rate on the MCAT Use Value Schedule.
4. Upon payment of annual user fees, access equipment and facilities are available to all individuals and organizations in the community for use in the production of programs for the community access channels.
5. Access producer may not charge third parties for use of access equipment, facilities or channel time. Any programming produced with MCAT equipment and facilities will be non commercial in nature.
6. Ownership of the copyrights of programs produced under Third Party Agreements is to be negotiated between the producer and the sponsoring community organization before production begins.

House Rules

1. The MCAT staff reserves the right to refuse service to any person whose actions hinder the activities of access producers or staff members. People who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be denied access to equipment and facilities. Such persons may be asked to leave the access facility;
2. Smoking is not permitted in the building;
3. No food or drink is allowed in the Control Room or Editing Suites;
4. No glass bottles are permitted in the Studio without permission of MCAT staff;
5. Staff authorization is required for any long distance / collect phone calls, or use of directory assistance;
6. Personal phone calls must be restricted to 2 minutes or less;
7. No firearms are allowed on the premises;
8. Office supplies are not available for use by producers;
9. No programming can be cablecast without MCAT staff authorization;
10. No alcohol or illegal drugs are permitted on the premises;
11. No unauthorized equipment maintenance or disassembly;
12. No bicycles allowed inside the building;
13. After use of equipment, return all settings to "home" positions;
14. No unauthorized removal of signs, posters, banners, or notices posted by MCAT staff or Board of Directors.
15. Producers may be limited to 4 consecutive hours of MCAT staff support per day.

Rule Violations, Sanctions, and Loss of Privileges

To ensure that the community access equipment and facilities remain available and in good working order, the following rules have been established. Any access producer or staff member may report rule violations to the General Manager. In the case of minor violations, upon verifying that a rule violation has occurred, the General Manager will issue a written statement to the producer describing the rule violation and sanctions.

Major Violations

Major violation results in immediate suspension from use of equipment, facilities, and series time slots. If the General Manager, at his or her discretion, determines that a major violation has occurred, the user shall be

suspended for up to 90 days for the first violation. Subsequent suspensions are for up to one year each and require re-certification. Upon review by the Board of Directors, the length of time may be modified. Where damage or loss of equipment and/or facilities has occurred, suspension is in effect until full compensation is made or until an installment payment contract is signed with MCAT. There is no written warning prior to suspension in cases of major violations.

Major violations are as follows (but not limited to):

1. Abuse, theft, or vandalism of equipment and facilities;
2. Return of equipment in damaged or unworkable condition, beyond normal wear and tear, or failure to return equipment through intent, negligence, loss or theft;
3. Use of equipment and facilities for a purpose not related to production of a program for community access cablecast;
4. Use of MCAT equipment and facilities for commercial or profitable intent;
5. Removal of equipment from MCAT without proper check-out procedures and/or without signing a Checkout Contract;
6. Reserving or checking out equipment or facilities for use by a non-certified producer or a producer on suspension;
7. Unauthorized attempted equipment maintenance, disassembly, or re-wiring;
8. Smoking or use of alcohol or controlled substances in the facilities;
9. A community producer who represents him or herself as “MCAT staff”;
10. Threatening and/or verbally abusing staff, volunteers, or users at the MCAT facilities, including attempting to intimidate by means of yelling and/or profanity, any disruptive behavior, or deliberately sabotaging any project;
11. Having firearms in the facilities;
12. Submitting a program with potentially objectionable content without a viewer advisory notice;
13. Returning equipment more than 24 hours beyond scheduled return time without prior authorization from MCAT staff;
14. Sexual Harassment;
15. Failure to submit a signed Third Party Agreement before receiving payment for labor or production costs associated with a community access production in which MCAT equipment and/or facilities were used;
16. Any unauthorized use of MCAT equipment and/or facilities.

Minor Violations

Minor violations remain on record for six months. A minor violation will result in the following actions:

1. Written warning for the first minor violation;
2. Final written warning for the second minor violation;
3. Suspension from equipment and facilities for the third minor violation.

An initial suspension from equipment and facilities is for up to 90 days; subsequent suspensions are for up to one year each. Upon review by the Board of Directors on a formal appeal, the length of time may be modified. Staff will file a written report on any suspension.

Limited Suspensions for Some Minor Violations – If a user receives three minor violations for the following reasons only:

1. Continued failure (more than three times) to cancel an equipment or facilities reservation prior to the reservation time;
2. Continued tardiness (more than three times) in excess of 15 minutes in claiming reserved equipment or facilities without an extension authorized by an MCAT staff member.

Such a producer would receive a limited suspension from equipment usage pertinent to the violation, instead of a complete suspension from the entire facility for 90 days. For example, edit reservation violations would result in suspension from the edit suites, but would allow the producer to continue to work on crews for studio

productions or use the portable cameras. MCAT staff determines the appropriate suspension based upon the nature of the no-show minor violations.

Minor Violations are as follows (but not limited to):

1. Failure to cancel an equipment or facilities reservation prior to the reservation time;
2. Late return of equipment (more than 15 minutes), without extension authorized by MCAT staff;
3. Failure to vacate studio or editing facilities when the next scheduled producer has arrived;
4. Returning dirty equipment;
5. Leaving trash or debris in studio or editing facilities;
6. Eating or drinking in the edit suites or control room;
7. Operation of equipment or use of facilities in an incorrect, unsafe, or inappropriate manner that might result in damage, including leaving doors to the facility open, or leaving props and/or furniture in inappropriate or unsafe places within the facility;
8. Tardiness in excess of 15 minutes in claiming reserved equipment or facilities without an extension authorized by an MCAT staff member;
9. Reserving or checking out equipment for another producer unless specified and approved in advance;
10. Removal of videotapes from the tape library or cablecast area that have been scheduled for cablecast without prior knowledge of MCAT staff;
11. Removal of completed programs that are on MCAT-owned tape stock from the MCAT facility;
12. Non-approved self-sign up for equipment or facilities reservations on Facil;
13. Unauthorized equipment use by non-certified crew;
14. Using MCAT phones for personal calls over 2 minutes;
15. Using MCAT office supplies or office equipment, including the photocopier, without prior permission from an MCAT staff member;
16. Unauthorized removal of signs, posters, banners, or notices posted by MCAT staff or Board of Directors.

Appeal of Sanctions

A producer may appeal any sanctions by making a written statement to the Board of Directors. If suspension from equipment and facilities use is imposed, the suspension will remain in effect throughout the appeal process. When requested to do so by the Board of Directors, the General Manager will investigate the circumstances surrounding the sanction and will return a written report to the producer and Board within two weeks. The Board will consider the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Expulsion from MCAT

If a producer has been suspended from the use of equipment and facilities due to a major violation for a period of time of more than one year (more than two major violations), the Board of Directors by a majority vote, may revoke and/or reinstate that producer from the use of MCAT facilities.

Part III-Programming

Introduction

The MCAT equipment and facilities exist for the purpose of producing non commercial programming to be cablecast on our community access channel (as opposed to productions with commercial intent or personal “home movies”). MCAT serves as a forum where you can freely express yourself subject only to the provisions stated in our Programming Policy.

Credits

All programs produced with MCAT equipment and facilities and any copies must state: “This program was produced in whole or in part with equipment and facilities provided by Missoula Community Access Television (MCAT).”

Programming Policy

Any program submitted for scheduling must be accompanied by a signed Program Contract. Any minor (under 18) must have an adult co-signer. The party signing the Program Contract assumes liability for program content and warrants that the program does not contain the following:

1. any advertising or material that promotes any commercial product or service or lottery;
2. any unlawful use of copyrighted material;
3. any material that is libelous, slanderous or defamatory of character; or material that is an unlawful invasion of privacy;
4. any material that violates state or federal law relating to obscenity;
5. any solicitation or appeal for funds (Programs may describe fund-raising events or projects, but may not contain a repetitive emphasis on financial need or direct requests for funding.);
6. any material that violates local state or federal laws.

A request for airtime must be made at least three (3) weeks in advance of the proposed cablecast date. Except for live programming, tapes must be handed in with your Program Contract before they are assigned a cablecast date and time slot unless prior arrangements have been approved by the Program Manager. Taped Series programs not completed or handed in to MCAT staff at least 48 hours before cablecast time may not be aired.

1. Programs produced with MCAT equipment and facilities are intended for cablecast on an MCAT channel, not for personal or commercial use. MCAT programs may be used as supporting documentation for grant and employee applications.
2. Access producers retain ownership of the creative rights to the programs they produce, and may register and establish a copyright at their discretion.
3. All access programming offered for cablecast shall be made available for viewing at the studio seven (7) days after cablecast. Programs on MCAT tape stock must be catalogued and stored on site by MCAT staff.
4. MCAT has first rights to cablecast any program in which the access producer has made use of MCAT equipment and/or facilities. Such programs must be cablecast on MCAT's channel prior to, or concurrent with presentation on any other television system, and prior to any other form of distribution or presentation. Once a program is submitted for scheduling, it may not be removed from the premises.
5. By requesting access to equipment and facilities, access producers agree that MCAT may use portions of their program for non commercial, promotional purposes.

The individual producer or organization who submits programming for cablecast on MCAT bears all legal responsibilities for the content of the program.

Channel Use

Use of MCAT channel time is scheduled on a first come, first served basis with a 13-week time slot commitment for series programming.

When time limitations require that choices be made between offered programming, the following priorities apply when scheduling timeslots:

1. Locally produced programs / productions by Missoula residents;
2. Exchanges with other community TV centers;
3. Imported programs with some local production;
4. Imported programs with local sponsorship only.

Late Night Programming

MCAT wants to give guardians a means of controlling the viewing by children of potentially objectionable programming as well as notifying individuals of such programming so that they may make informed cable-viewing choices.

While giving such notification, we support all forms of expression on cable television in accordance with FCC regulations and other relevant laws.

Therefore, some of the channel time from 10:30 p.m. until 5 a.m. will be available for programming that may be inappropriate for children or sensitive viewers.

After discussion with the producer this standard disclaimer will run at the head of the program:

“The following program contains material which may be offensive to some viewers or may be inappropriate for viewing by children. Viewer discretion is advised.”

Promotion for such programming will also include the above message.

Sponsorship of Imported Programming

Non-locally produced programming will be cablecast only if it is part of an exchange with other community television centers, or if it is sponsored by an individual or organization within the community. Local sponsors of such programming shall be responsible for obtaining clearance to cablecast the program, shall include their name, local address, and telephone number with the program, and will pay for all shipping costs. If a sponsor of imported programming is not an annual user who has paid their fees, a \$20.00 Annual User Fee will be charged to the local sponsor to cablecast the show. There is no charge for imported programs to an MCAT producer who is current with their Annual User Fees. MCAT may include non-sponsored, satellite programming to be used as “fillers” in the program schedule.

Requirements for Live Programs

An access producer must request a time slot for a live program no less than three (3) weeks in advance. Depending upon the complexity of the production, a planning meeting with the MCAT Program Manager may be required. Live series programming must follow series requirements as listed below.

Requirements for Series Programming

1. A series is three or more programs of similar content that have a regular air day and time. A series can be live or taped;
2. A series may be aired weekly, monthly, semi-monthly, etc. at the producer’s choice or availability of channel time;
3. Individual producers are guaranteed up to three (3) hours (local or sponsored programming) of channel time a week including replays. Non-profit organizations may schedule/sponsor up to 7 hours a week, including replays. However, MCAT may use “fillers” of any length, as needed, in the program schedule. They can include satellite programming, tape delayed or live non-scheduled programming, re-runs of library archive programming or community message board used to display P.E.G. information and announcements;
4. Series producers should understand that their current timeslot cannot be guaranteed for more than three months at any time;
5. Producers agree to provide a minimum of one new show per month or risk having their timeslot filled with other programming;
6. Except for live programming, shows must be delivered by the producer to MCAT a minimum of (3) three business days before each of their timeslots as scheduled for cablecast unless other arrangements are made with the Program Manager. This is to allow time for computer processing in our playback system. Producers that miss this three day deadline risk having their timeslot filled with other programming;
7. New series producers/sponsors will be granted a regular timeslot after three (3) programs are submitted for cablecast in compliance with the provisions outlined herein. New series will be given a temporary open timeslot until the next quarter. At this time, the producer/sponsor can bid on other timeslots (see below);
8. Local programs (programs produced locally that may contain material from an outside source such as websites, videotape or DVDs) will be scheduled for two play dates, including one prime time. Imported programs (programs that are brought in from an outside source with no local production) will be scheduled for one play date only, at any available timeslot;

MCAT Bidding Policy for Series Timeslots

The MCAT channel benefits from a lot of producer participation and cooperation. Finding day or evening program time for everyone is difficult. To help keep our programming fair to every producer, every existing or new series will be requested to bid for or re-bid for a timeslot, along with their Program Contract renewal, as described below. If a producer does not wish to bid for a particular timeslot, the Program Manager will assign the best available timeslot to their program.

MCAT will continue to operate on a first come, first served basis. No seniority is offered or recognized to any single producer, sponsor or organization. Bids are based on available timeslots, along with the running time of each series program, not on program content or the producer.

MCAT schedules ongoing series starting each quarter (January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1). Producers of on-going series have the option of bidding for time slots the 10th week of each programming quarter. Please note that the Program Schedule is finalized three weeks out for publication in local TV listings. By the 10th week of each quarter, each producer must inform MCAT staff of their intention to cancel or renew the series for an additional 13 weeks by signing a new Program Contract and submitting a timeslot bid. Due dates will be posted and send out each calendar year.

1st quarter: Bids due December 15.

2nd quarter: Bids due March 15.

3rd quarter: Bids due June 15.

4th quarter: Bids due September 15.

Most producers will re-bid for their current timeslot and for the most part there will be no other bids. However, in the event that two or more producers desire the same timeslot, the conflict will be resolved by the following steps:

1. Applying Scheduling Priority (i.e. A local production takes precedent over an imported production)
2. Communication/mediation between producers requesting the same time slot along with staff and/or Board of Directors, if requested
3. Lottery system as last and final conflict resolution if above methods fail.

MCAT will work with all producers to attain their desired timeslot.

Series programs that lose their timeslots through the bidding process will be given choice of best available or open slots. No series will be taken off the schedule due to this process, unless conflicts cannot be resolved.

Requirements to Bid for a Series Timeslot

1. All series producers may bid on any timeslot(s) that is offered by MCAT;
2. Producers may bid on a prime time and non-prime time timeslot for replay;
3. Only one timeslot per week for imported series. No replays will be given;
4. Producers submitting more than one series for a timeslot must do so as a separate bid;
5. Each producer and their program must adhere to all of the MCAT Rules and Regulations pertinent to program policy;
6. Producers will accept and bear complete responsibility for the content of each program. Each producer will complete and sign a MCAT Program Contract for EACH program submitted as a record of a three month (or less) commitment.

Timeslot Lengths & Program Durations

Producers may only bid for timeslots of equal duration time as their program (example: if your current program is 30 minutes long or under, you may only bid for a timeslot up to 30 minutes long or under).

One prime time (5pm – 11pm) slot may be bid and one non-prime time replay slot may be bid. 10pm to 5am is time for “viewer discretion” programming. Producers are required to only bid for timeslots after 10pm if their program(s) contains any form of adult content or is inappropriate for children or sensitive viewers.

Making a Bid for a Timeslot

1. Make a bid for a timeslot if you have read and understand this document. Please ask any questions BEFORE making a bid.
2. A Series Timeslot Bidding Form and Program Contract must be filled out and handed in to the Program Manager at the given dates.
3. Bids will only be accepted through a completed Series Timeslot Bidding Form returned in person, by Fax or mail. (Please no emails.)

Send your bid to: Program Manager, MCAT, P.O. Box 8749, Missoula, MT 59807 or FAX 406-721-6014.

Media Assistance to Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations, or clubs sponsored by nonprofit organizations are encouraged to make use of MCAT's Media Assistance Grant. The grant will provide up to twelve hours of MCAT staff, equipment and channel time to assist your nonprofit organization in creating a public service announcement, covering an event important to your group or profiling the services your organization provides. This program is available on a first-come first-served basis. Contact us for details and an application form.

Community Bulletin Board

MCAT accepts non-commercial public service announcements and messages to be displayed by character generation. Please submit legible (preferably typed), concise information either by mail, e-mail, FAX or in person at least two weeks in advance of requested cablecast date. Sorry –we need a written record of announcement and messages can not be taken via phone.

Presentation Assistance

MCAT has a video projector which is available for checkout under the following circumstances

- 1) Persons using the projector must be or become MCAT members; they must attend a basic orientation workshop, pay an annual user fee and be certified in training specific to the operation and care of the video projector. Producers can hold no more than two reservations slots on each area of equipment at one time: editing, studio, camera or projector.
- 2) The video projector use is restricted to presentations to groups, rather than private home use. Persons using the projector must provide evidence of group presentation, including, if appropriate, announcement on MCAT's community calendar.
- 3) MCAT does not want to compete with local merchants who provide rental services. Therefore, if admission is charged to a presentation in which the MCAT video projector is used, MCAT will be compensated 20% of the receipts, or \$90.00 whichever is less. Because the bulb on the video projector is short-lived and expensive, producers will be asked to pay a \$10 bulb use fee for uses not involving an admission fee.
- 4) Groups using the MCAT projector will be asked to run a brief promotional announcement describing MCAT's services before each screening of their program.

PART IV-How to get certified on equipment

Getting Started

Attendance at a basic training meeting is a prerequisite to enrollment in training workshops and certification on access equipment regardless of prior experience or other access training. The purpose of the orientation meeting is to educate you about the community access mission and the availability of equipment, facilities and channel time. You will also be able to sign up for training workshops during the orientation meetings.

Basic workshops will be offered at least once a month. If you have a special hardship, it is possible to fast-track training with individual training if circumstances warrant, -talk to a staff person about your needs! Also, if you have a group of 10 or more people interested in working on the same project, MCAT will try to set up a special workshop for your group if staff time permits.

Training and Certification

Training workshops are limited in size because of the need for participants to get hands-on experience with the equipment. Classes are usually offered the second Tuesday of each month. Call for dates and times. If you must cancel your reservation, call 542-MCAT as soon as possible.

Beginning television training at MCAT is given in the following areas:

- Field (Portable Cameras) Production/Videography
- Editing
- Control Room/Directing
- Studio Camera Operation
- Multi-Camera Remote Production.

Specialized workshops on additional topics are taught according to demand. Certification occurs upon completion of the class and payment of training fees.

Upon payment of Annual User Fees, producers are authorized to use any community access equipment and facilities for which they are certified. The following types of production equipment and facilities are available:

1. Field or Portapak Equipment
Used for location shoots. Portapaks There 3 Canon GF10's, 3 Kodak Zi8, 3 Canon Vixia cameras that use mini-dv tape. All portapaks come with accessories like headphones, remote control, tripod, handheld microphone and connection cables. Specialty microphones and lighting are available on request.
2. Studio
Used for 'live' or videotaped programs, the studio includes use of the control room, two or three 3-chip cameras, intercom, recorders, switcher, character generator, lights and audio gear, including a phone for live call-in shows.
3. Editing Systems
Editing Suites #1, #2, #3 and 4 feature IMACs with Final Cut Pro editing system. Editing Suite #5 is a tape to tape system with a special effects generator and title generator.

Production Planning

Each producer must register a "project" for each new production prior to reserving facilities or equipment. Factors that staff will consider in approving each project include:

1. Hazardous shooting conditions;
2. Experience of producer vs. complexity of project;
3. Compliance with MCAT program policy;
4. Scheduling of and demand for equipment.

If your plan is not approved, staff will help you to make appropriate changes.

Crew Positions and Selection

Finding the right television production crew is essential to the success of your program. The program producer is responsible for recruiting a production crew. All members of your crew who will be operating MCAT equipment must be certified. MCAT maintains a file of certified volunteers which can serve as a clearinghouse for potential crew members.

Contracts

The access producer is required to complete a simple but binding contract before using MCAT equipment or facilities. In signing the contract, the producer agrees to indemnify and reimburse MCAT for all damage to or loss of any equipment or facilities due to neglect, abuse, theft, or other causes while such equipment and facilities are signed out to the producer. The producer and the designated crew members listed on the contract are the only persons authorized to operate the equipment. The contract also contains a statement of compliance with MCAT rules and procedures.

Reservations

Equipment and facilities are available to certified producers on a first come, first served basis. Reservations can be made in person or by phone if your project is on file and you have paid your current Annual User Fee. Reservations should be made as far in advance as possible! You must be certified by MCAT staff for the equipment which you are scheduling.

A producer who is more than 15 minutes late in claiming reserved equipment or facilities forfeits the equipment or facilities unless MCAT staff authorizes an extension. Please call if you will be late, and the equipment will be held for you if possible.

Each MCAT producer is limited to two sign-ups on portable equipment, two on editing equipment and two on studio equipment at any one time.

Back to back reservations are not permitted. However, producers may place a “stand-by” reservation on equipment or edit time no more than 24 hours before intended use and only if the equipment is available.

Using Computer Editors: Time & Storage Capacity Limits

Although computer video editing technology continues to improve, there are limitations facing a shared public facility like MCAT. There is only so much video storage space we can offer producers for a guaranteed amount of time. Producers will be guaranteed the use of a computer edit station for up to two weeks consecutively. Producers may use computer editing stations longer if there are no other producers waiting to use the video storage drives. When a waiting list develops for video storage drives, the producer who has had a video storage drive longest will be the first to go. That producer will have two consecutive working days to finish or store their work.

Cancellations

Access producers with reservations who are unable to use them are asked to notify staff as soon as possible so that other producers can use these resources. Notification of any cancellation is required prior to reservation time.

Portapaks–Check in/out

We ask that producers be realistic and efficient in their time requests for Portapaks. Taking equipment out of the community requires special permission, and arrangements should be made on your Pre-Production Plan and with the staff. Field equipment can be checked out for up to three days if needed.

Please allow 15 minutes when checking equipment in and out. Although MCAT makes every effort to assure that all equipment is in good operating condition, it assumes no responsibility for equipment failure.

Any malfunctions must be noted on the equipment/facilities contract. Remember you are liable for returning the gear in the same condition as when you checked it out! A certified MCAT producer who is current with MCAT User Fees must sign the contract before the equipment leaves the premises. You are required to return all equipment at the check-in time specified on the equipment contract.

Studio / Editing

Scheduling of studios and editing suites is generally limited to four-hour blocks of time, with two sign-ups at any one time. If no one is scheduled immediately after your block, you may stay until another producer is scheduled. Editing facilities use time may be subject to change depending on technical upgrades and increased usage. Allow 15 minutes before the end of your reserved time to clean and organize the facility for the next producer.

Use by Minors

Certified producers under the age of 18 must have an adult co-signer in order to use the MCAT equipment and facilities. When the adult and minor(s) co-sign the equipment and facilities contract the adult accepts full responsibility for loss or damage on behalf of the minor(s).

Equipment Damage and Loss

If equipment is damaged or lost while under contract to an access producer, the producer will have equipment privileges suspended until full compensation is made or until an installment payment contract is signed with MCAT. In the event that the producer fails to meet the terms of repayment, the producer shall be suspended from all equipment and facilities privileges; the case may be submitted to the MCAT Board of Directors on appeal.

Dubbing

As an access producer you are entitled to one dub of a completed access program without a dubbing charge on a tape of acceptable quality that you supply.

Dubbing fees will be charged for any additional copies in accordance with established videotape dubbing rates. Any dubbing must be cleared with staff in advance. No dubs will be made without the express permission of the producer, except for the aforementioned promotional use by MCAT.

Underwriting-Contribution of Goods and Services

An access producer may give credit to an individual, company or organization which underwrites any of their production costs. Credit may be given through the use of a title at the beginning or end of the program which identifies the contributor. Each display shall be no longer than 15 seconds and may include the contributor's name, address and telephone number.

Technical Standards

Programs submitted for cablecast should:

1. Be on VHS or S-VHS tape, or DVD recorded at the standard speed;
2. Have a clear beginning and end;
3. Have a clearly marked running time (in minutes and seconds from the first frame of interest to the last frame of interest, not including color bars and black);
6. Label media with running time and title.

In cases where MCAT staff finds a program source media unsuitable for cablecast, staff will return the material to the producer and advise on how the problem can be corrected or avoided in the future. Technically unsuitable means that video and/or audio quality is too poor to be cablecast effectively, or that the material itself is hazardous to MCAT equipment.

Music

MCAT has a music and sound effects library cleared for your use. Other music you may wish to use may be copyrighted and you must have the rights to use it in your production. We will enforce copyright law.