

How to create a cable tv show about affordable housing

1. **Call the public access or PBS station to gauge their interest.**
2. **Send follow-up information to the station:**
 - Letter thanking them for their interest; (see sample a)
 - A description of your concept for the broadcast; (see sample b)
 - Video copy of an earlier production, if any.
3. **Call the studio to arrange the following:**
 - Set up a date and time to tape the broadcast;
 - Determine if it is necessary to meet with the studio before the production;
 - Get directions to the studio;
 - Find out what you need to give the studio prior to taping (i.e. credits, CG list, logo, etc.).
4. **Decide on a guest list of community leaders or housing experts you would like to have on the show .**
5. **Send information to potential guests:**
 - A letter introducing your idea for the show; (see sample c)
 - The description of your concept for the broadcast.
6. **Call your guests to obtain and convey the following information:**
 - Confirm date for taping;
 - Confirm date for conference call/practice session;
 - Ask if they want a copy of the video;
 - Ask if they know how to get to the studio;
 - Explain that you will send a long list of questions for them to review.
7. **Send to your guests:**
 - Letter thanking them for participating; (see sample d)
 - List of potential questions; (see sample e)
 - Directions/map, if necessary;
 - Information on what to wear on television; (see sample f)
 - NPH's Affordable Housing Video, if necessary.
8. **Create a smaller, more specific list of questions based on the comments of the potential guests.**
9. **Send an updated list of questions to your guests.**
10. **Send to the studio/moderator:**
 - Outline of the show/script; (see sample g)
 - Credits - Credits should include the names of the producer, production supervisors, host, and guests;
 - Character generator list - guests' name, title, and organization in order of appearance;
 - A sign for the opening of the show; (see sample h)
 - Updated list of questions;
 - Any other information they might need.

a. Sample letter to public access or PBS station

date

name

title

organization

address

Dear <name of contact person>:

I am writing in regards to the telephone conversation we had earlier this week. We are very eager to begin working with you to create a television program on affordable housing in the <city or county >.

I have enclosed a copy of our "Concept for Broadcast," which outlines our vision for the program and what we hope to achieve. I have also included a copy of the television program that we produced a few months earlier in <city or county>. We are hoping to produce a similar show in <city or county>, but one that talks with community leaders in <city or county> and focuses on the most important issues in this region.

Thank you very much for your interest in our program. We are looking forward to working with you to create an informative and interesting program.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. My phone number is <number>.

Sincerely,

name

title

organization

b. Sample "Concept for Broadcast"

The <your organization>, in cooperation with the <your co-host, if any> is pleased to propose the following concept for Broadcast on your station related to affordable housing in the Bay Area.

The growing demand for housing and high cost of rent is an increasingly newsworthy item, particularly with the impact of welfare reform. Affordable housing developments are needed to provide low-wage workers with a stable base from which to work and be productive members of society. This program will help to bring visual images, local examples and factual information to decision-makers, community leaders and members of the general public who may have the opportunity to impact the availability of affordable housing in their community.

Since 1977, the median home price in the Bay Area has increased about 200%... In Santa Clara county, only 4,000 housing units became available during a time period in which 38,000 jobs were created... More than 60% of the public safety employees in Marin County live outside the county.

Video/Discussion Format

<Your organization> and <your co-host> propose the development of a program on affordable housing. There are two possible formats for this show. The first idea is to create a 30-min program, consisting of a short video followed by a "roundtable-discussion" among community leaders. A second option is to have a one-hour show, similarly designed, but with a live call-in portion. Through either of these format, it is our intent to present concrete information regarding affordable housing, accompanied by visual images of successful affordable housing developments in <city or county> and around the Bay. (Alternatively, the video is available to be shown on its own or in an existing show or format of your own.)

NPH Video

NPH is the regional "trade association" of non-profit housing developers, advocates, attorneys, architects and local government representatives. As part of its community outreach efforts, NPH has produced a broadcast-quality video on affordable housing. (The total running time of this piece is 9:20.) The video is an educational piece designed to inform the public about contemporary affordable housing developments in the Bay Area, including Willow Court in Menlo Park, San Mateo County. The video provides interviews with community leaders, police and residents along with footage of successful developments. (A 30 second Public Service Announcement is also available.)

Roundtable Discussion

For the discussion segment of the program, we propose a 20-minute roundtable discussion among local community leaders and affordable housing representatives. This section could be longer depending on the format that you choose. The discussion portion of the program would respond to, and expand on, concepts raised in the video, with an emphasis on examples of affordable housing in <city or county>.

Local panelists, include <your invited guests>. <Your moderator> would be available to moderate. We would limit the number of persons on this panel and adjust our format according to your suggestions.

As we envision the program, we believe it would serve a significant community service by informing the public about the critical need for affordable housing in the Bay Area, and how affordable housing developments are a positive addition to the community.

For more information regarding this proposal, please contact <name, organization> at <phone number>.

c. Sample outreach letter to potential guests

date

name

title

organization

address

Dear <name of contact person>:

I am writing to express my interest in having you participate in a television program on affordable housing which will be aired live on <date>. The program will also air later in the month on the public access station in <city>.

This program, organized by <your organization> and <your co-host, if any>, will combine a video produced by <NPH> with a roundtable discussion with community leaders. We hope that the roundtable format will provide community leaders and housing developers in <targeted city> with the opportunity to express their views about affordable housing and inform the citizens of this region of the major issues related to this topic. We feel that you could play a key role in this discussion and hope that you will consider participating.

I will call you soon to answer any questions that you may have and discuss the possibility of your participation. I have included a copy of our "concept for broadcast" which was sent out to the public access station. Hopefully, this sheet will provide a good explanation of our goals in developing this program.

If you have any immediate questions, please feel free to contact me at <phone number>. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

name

title

organization

d. Sample "Thank You" letter to guests

To: <Your guest>

From: <Your name>

Re: Affordable Housing Special Program

Date:<Date>

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the special program on affordable housing in <city or county>. This 30-minute program, organized by <your organization and co-host> is designed to respond to some common questions and concerns about affordable housing. The focus of the show will be on the major issues that are important to the <city or county> community.

The television program will begin with a broadcast of the NPH video Affordable Family Housing: A bay Area Tour, which will be followed by a roundtable discussion featuring <name of guests>. <Name of moderater/organization>, will be moderating the discussion.

I have included a copy of the potential questions that we may ask during the roundtable discussion. Since I have included far more questions than it would be reasonable to answer in 20 minutes, I would ask that you or one of your staff members look over the attached list of questions and select the four or five topics that you feel would be most relevant to the discussion. Once you have selected those questions, please call me at <phone number> or fax me at <fax number>, and I will revise the list according to your suggestions. I would appreciate it if you would fax that list back to me by the end of the day on <date>.

The show will be taped on <date> in the <name of studio> located at <address>. To get there, take <give directions>. You should park at <parking instructions>. Come into the lobby and ask for <contact person>. Since the studio will need time to prepare you, please arrive by <time>.

We will be holding a conference call/practice session on <date/time> to run through the show and answer any question you may have. I look forward to speaking with you then.

If you have any questions, please contact me at <phone number>. Once again, thank you for your time and enthusiasm about this project.

e. Sample List of potential questions to ask your guests

To: <Your guest>

From: <Your name>

Re: Potential questions for roundtable discussion

Here is a long list of potential topics that could be discussed during the roundtable discussion portion of the show. I would appreciate it if, to help limit the questions, you would select the four or five most important questions that you think should be asked and fax the list back to me at <your fax number>. I can then rewrite the list according to what you think are the most important issues in the <city or county> community. Additionally, if you feel that I have left off an important issue, please write that on the list. If you could get back to me by the end of the business day on < date> I would really appreciate it. Thank you for your assistance.

Focus on City/County

1. What types of affordable housing complexes have been developed in <city or county>? What is the average size of these developments?
2. How have these developments worked so far? What has been the response from the community members - neighbors and business?
3. Why is <city or county> involved in creating affordable housing. What is the goal?

The need for affordable housing

4. Is more affordable housing needed in<city or county>? Is this need growing? Why? By how much?
5. What is being planned to meet affordable housing needs?
6. Is there a need for rehabilitation of existing units as well as the creation of new unites?
7. Are there threats of losing existing affordable housing?

Affordable housing in general

8. What is the definition of affordable housing? Who qualifies for this type of housing?
9. What are the key features of a good affordable housing complex? What is done to ensure that the complexes that are developed have these features?
10. Who lives in these affordable housing developments?
11. We have heard a lot about what affordable housing can do for the individual, but what can it do for a community as a whole? What are the community-wide benefits?
12. How can these developments promote economic and social integration.
13. What amenities are available in these developments?
14. Why is the design of the developments important?
15. How are the affordable housing residents selected?
16. Where exactly does the funding come from for building these houses? Is public money being use? How much? Where does the rest of the money come from?
17. Why is affordable housing important to business and employers?
18. What are business leaders doing to increase the availability of affordable housing?
19. What is the income level to qualify for this type of housing? What is the average income of people in <city or county>.
20. Why is there such a shortage of affordable housing? What can you do to respond to those concerns?
21. What are the crime-rates like in affordable housing developments? How does that compare to crime-rates in other areas? What prevents these complexes from developing problems such as high crime?
22. How do you respond to people who have concerns about the safety of these complexes?
23. I understand that non-profit developers provide most, if not all, of the new affordable housing. Tell us a bit about how these non-profits work?
24. Where does the money come from to maintain these complexes once they are created?
25. Do property values go down in neighborhoods as a result of the development of these complexes?

In Conclusion

26. What is the single most important thing that you think needs to be done to insure that affordable housing developments succeed in the future?
27. What can citizens do to make affordable housing more successful?

f. What to Wear or not wear during the taping of the show

To: <Your guests>

From: <Your name>

Re: Clothes for Affordable Housing Special Program

Date: <Date>

The following is some information about the colors and patterns that look good on television.

Don't Wear:

- Solid white clothes
- Solid red or pink clothes (of any shade)
- Very tight patterns or bold prints
- Clothes with stripes or polka dots

Recommended Wear:

- Solid colors/patterns
- Blue, green, light brown, beige, and purple

Make-Up

It is recommended that both men and women wear a little powder and/or make-up to cut the glare of the lights.

Accessories

- Avoid hats, they shade the eyes.
- Do not wear loose and noisy jewelry, especially noisy earrings, necklaces, and bracelets. The noise will be picked up on the microphone and amplified.
- Notepads and pencils are good accessories to use during the discussion.
- Wear something with a lapel or button front to attach the microphone to.

Also, if you want to bring a cup to drink out of during the show, that is fine. It makes the atmosphere look more natural.

g. Sample of an outline of the show/script

Affordable Housing

TAPE Date/Time:

Time	Video	Audio
0:00	Sign	Music
0:30	Moderator <i>The moderator opens the show with an interesting fact or story to draw the audience in. He may discuss the fact Bay Area housing costs are the highest in the nation and most people know someone who is struggling with housing costs. He then moves from this anecdote to a broader idea, introducing the overall idea of the show. He explains that this is part of a series of television shows on affordable housing around the Bay Area, presented by the <your organization> and the <your co-host>. He gives a brief definition of what affordable housing is and explains why it is such an important issue. Next, he explains the format of the show-video followed by a roundtable discussion with the mayors of the <targeted cities>. He ends by introducing the video, which was produced by NPH.</i>	
2:30	Roll video for 9 min.Affordable Housing Video	
11:30	Moderator	Moderator introduces and interviews the guests
27:00	Moderator	Moderator asks final question to all guests
29:00	Moderator <i>Moderator thanks the guests and the audience. He ends by issuing a challenge to the viewers to get more involved with this issue.</i>	
29:30	Roll Credits	Music

H. Sample of a sign for the show

If you are planning to open the show with a sign of some sort, it could say something like this:

**The Non-Profit Housing Association of
Northern California (NPH)
Presents an
Affordable Housing Special Program**

*Materials produced by the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH)
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