Austin PBS Distribution Pathways

A Creator's Guide to Working with Austin PBS to distribute your film, series, or digital project

Austin PBS

First, let's
talk about
PBS!

PBS MEMBER STATIONS

Local stations (like us!) are ***members*** of PBS.

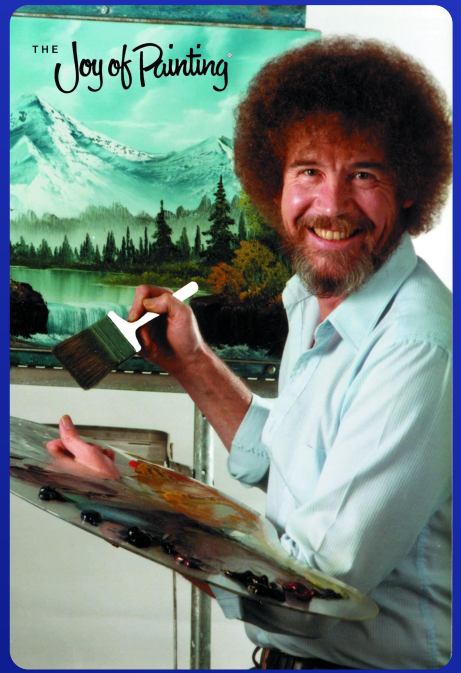
Some programs (like *Finding Your Roots, Newshour*, and *Frontline)* air at the same time all over the country - that's about 60% of the schedule.

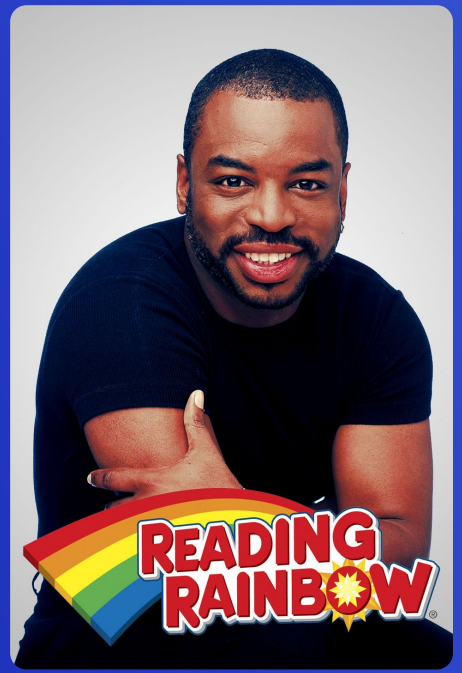
Other than that, ***PBS member stations fill their schedule with content they choose (that's about 40% of the schedule)***.

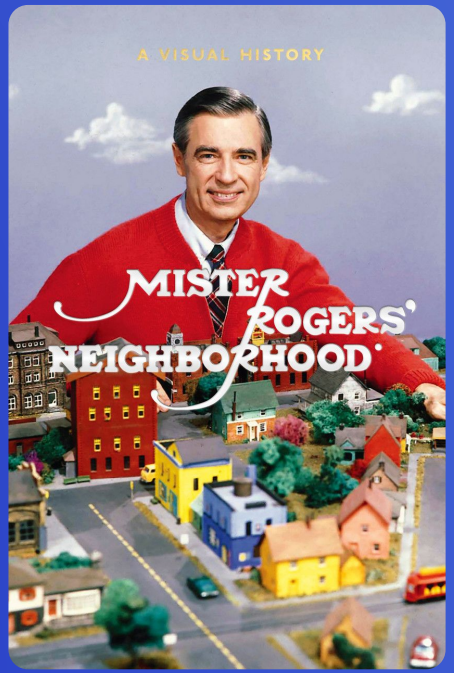
Stations operate independently. The saying goes: "***If you know one station, you know one station.***"

When You Think of PBS...

...you probably think of these folks... *...but did you know...*



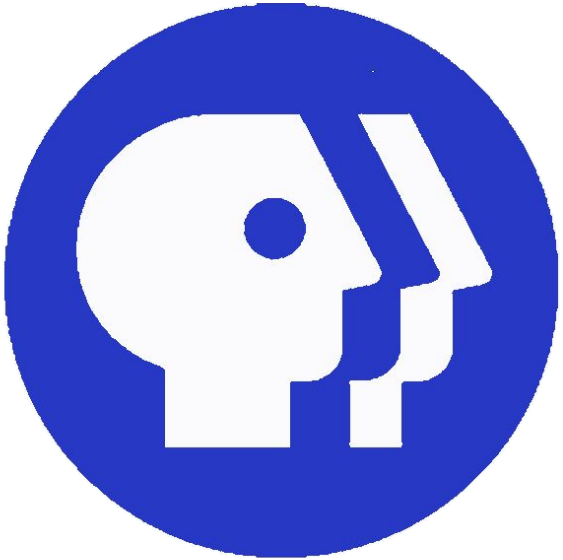




When You Think of PBS...

...you probably think of these folks... *...but did you know...*

they all **owned their content.**



Think About it Like This...

They are the original content creators + PBS is the original YouTube =

You create & own your content.
PBS provides a platform for you to distribute it.

But who helps you get your content into the system?

Well, there are a few different ways:

- ➔ POV (produced by American Documentary)
- ➔ Independent Lens (produced by ITVs)
- ➔ Reel South (produced by a group of Southern stations)
- ➔ Through a National Multicultural Alliance (NMCA) - Includes Latino Public Broadcasting, Black Public Media, Vision Maker Media and more
- ➔ Directly through PBS
- ➔ Partnering with a local station!

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let's deep dive into this one!

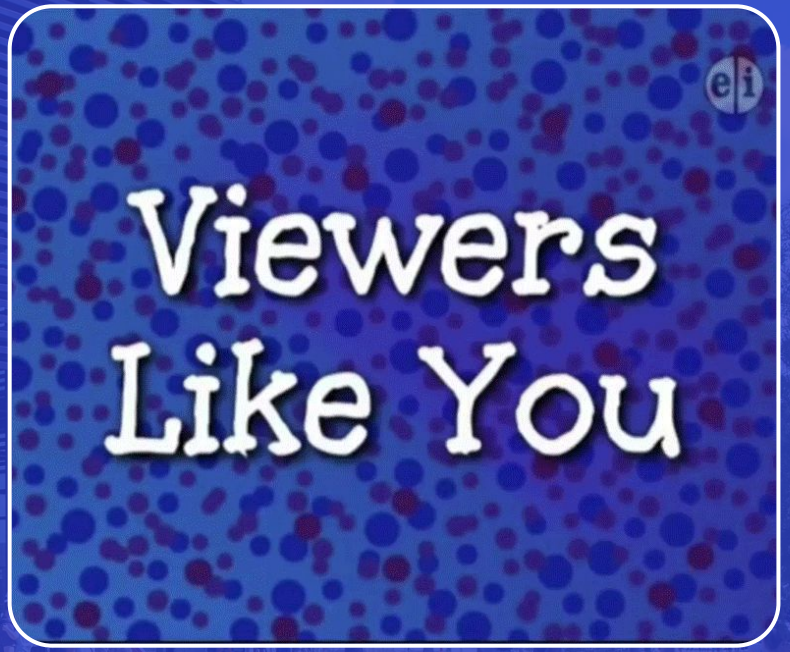
Alright, now let's talk about Austin PBS!

Austin PBS is your community-supported, locally owned PBS station in Central Texas serving 22 counties

Mission: Educate, inspire, and entertain Central Texas communities with content and services that reflect our cultural diversity and leverage their creativity

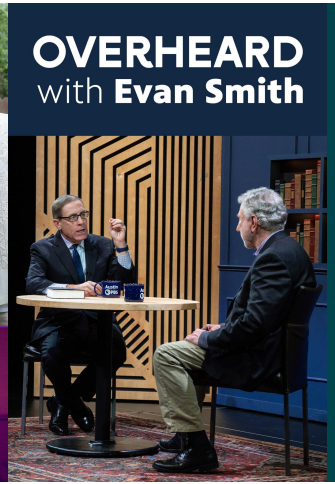
You can watch us on:

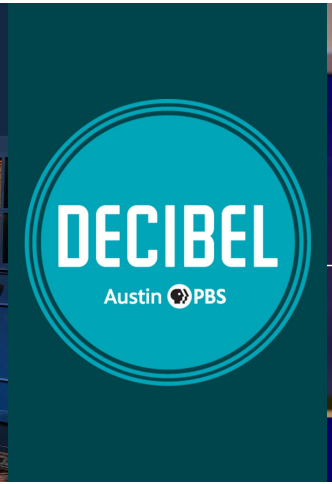
- Over-The-Air TV (antenna sold separately!)
- Online via our Linear Livestream
- On demand via the PBS App



We Make Content

*also known as **"Austin PBS Originals"***

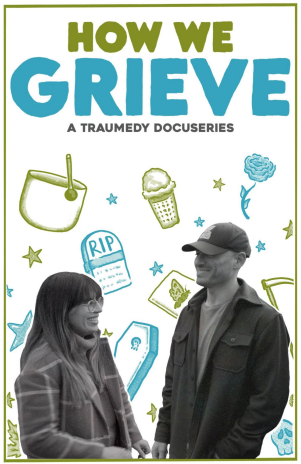




(yes, your favorite music festival is named after one of our most popular programs!)

We Distribute Content

*also known as **"Austin PBS Presents"***



All of these projects have **local** ties and **national** appeal.

mir Kaljikovic stocksy.com/987783

THE PBS APP

Did you know that you can watch all of the previously mentioned content and **MUCH MORE, right now, for FREE,** in the PBS App?

Here's how! On Your:

- **TV:** *instructions vary based on the type of television you have. See here.*
- **Laptop:** *pbs.org (make sure to localize)*
- **Phone:** *by downloading the PBS app*

mir Kaljikovic stocksy.com/987783

Ways to Work With Austin PBS

PRESENTING STATION

We can serve as your *presenting station* for national distribution.

LOCAL AUDIENCE

We can broadcast and stream your film or series *locally* on Austin PBS.

SHOWCASE YOUR PILOT or SHORT

We can put your series pilot in the PBS App as you pursue funding.

FUNDING INITIATIVES

We can keep you informed on funding opportunities we offer.

Let's Dig Deeper Into All Of This...

PRESENTING STATION

WHAT'S A PRESENTING STATION?

City of Songs

The Route to Emancipation

A Presenting Station is a local PBS affiliate (us!) that supports independent producers (you!) in navigating the release of their program into the national public media marketplace!

Support We Provide:

- Letter of Support
- Guidance During Production
- Serve as liaison between you and the public media distributor
- Promotional support - Austin PBS promotes all of our presenting station content via social media and newsletters
- Providing Viewer Trends
- Bridging the Gap for other opportunities within public media (PBS Learning Media, hosting screenings, etc.)

CRITERIA

Here are some things we like to think about when agreeing to commit as your Presenting Station

- Filmmaker/producer based in Texas OR content set in Texas
- High Production value
- Strong Producing Team
- Journalistic Integrity
- Compelling Storytelling
- Timely and Relevant
- Alignment with Austin PBS's core operating principle to focus on programming that discovers, reflects, and brings to life the essence of Central Texas
- Alignment with Austin PBS's mission, vision, and values
- National appeal

Review Process

Once you submit, we'll review and get back to you within 3-4 weeks. A committee at Austin PBS reviews your work against the judging criteria and determines if the partnership would be a good fit.

Once Your Program is Selected...

Step 1:

We'll both sign an MOU to solidify our partnership. The MOU outlines our responsibilities and expectations throughout this distribution process.

Step 2:

We'll work with you to:

- Select a distributor (*there are three main ones*!)
  - ➔ APT
  - ➔ NETA
  - ➔ PBS+
- Choose your program's release date (*also known as feed date*)
- Apply for distribution with selected distributor (*this includes providing them with technical information, a list of funders, and a fine-cut of the film*)
- Ensure packaging is in-line with public media S&P
- Technical QC of broadcast file

Moving Together

PACKAGING FOR PUBLIC MEDIA

This is a non-exhaustive list of how you can expect to package your content for public media:

If your program is already packaged, it will need to be ***repackaged*** *in accordance with the following items.* ***Prepare and expect to engage with your edit until we approach the finish line!***

Live From the LBJ Library with Mark Updegrove

Captions: FCC certified captions are required for all programs

Edits: minor edits may need to be made to adjust for any flagged content

A Ratings Icon: will be added to the program (we'll tell you which one!)

TRT: total run time standards are 26:46 (30 min program) and 56:46 (60 min program)

Funding Pod: if you received funding from external individuals or organizations, you'll need to add a funding pod to the beginning and end of the program to disclose all funders

Production Credits: adjustments may need to be made for length and content

Outcue Logos: Austin PBS's and the distributor's outcue will be added to the program. Your production company's logo can also be included.

Pan Pals

OTHER THINGS TO EXPECT

Some other things to consider when it comes to public media distribution:

Timeline: it takes 4-6 months to get a completed film or series out

Assets to Deliver:
- Program
- App File
- Promos (a :30 second and :15 second)
- Promotional Images
- Program Descriptions
- Music Cue Sheets

Rights Terms: Usually 3 or 5 years

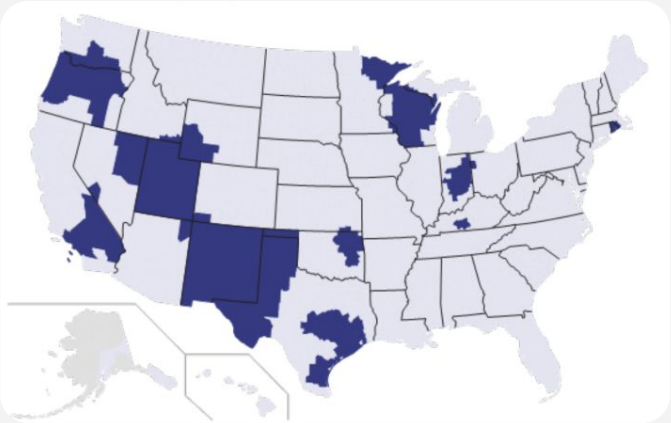
Exclusivity: Public media rights are typically exclusive for broadcast, but *non-exclusive* for steaming, which means you can make other distribution deals. **Remember, you own your content!**

Station relations representatives have relationships with programmers nationwide and will help ensure your program plays in as many markets as possible. They like to get on board four (4) months before your release date and can cost anywhere from $10-20k for a four-month campaign. If you're interested in hiring a rep, we can connect you with them as you approach your release.

STATION RELATIONS REP

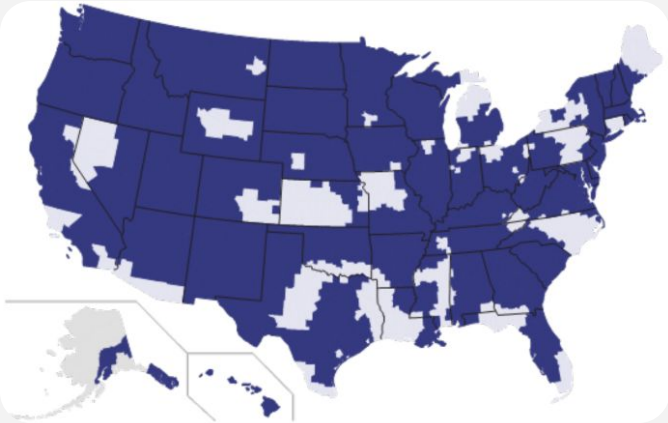
Reps help increase your program's carriage (carriage is what % of markets played it)

All Station Coverage Map of the <u>same show.</u>



Before they hired a rep.

After they hired a rep!



LOCAL AUDIENCE

LOCAL AUDIENCE

The difference between local and national release:

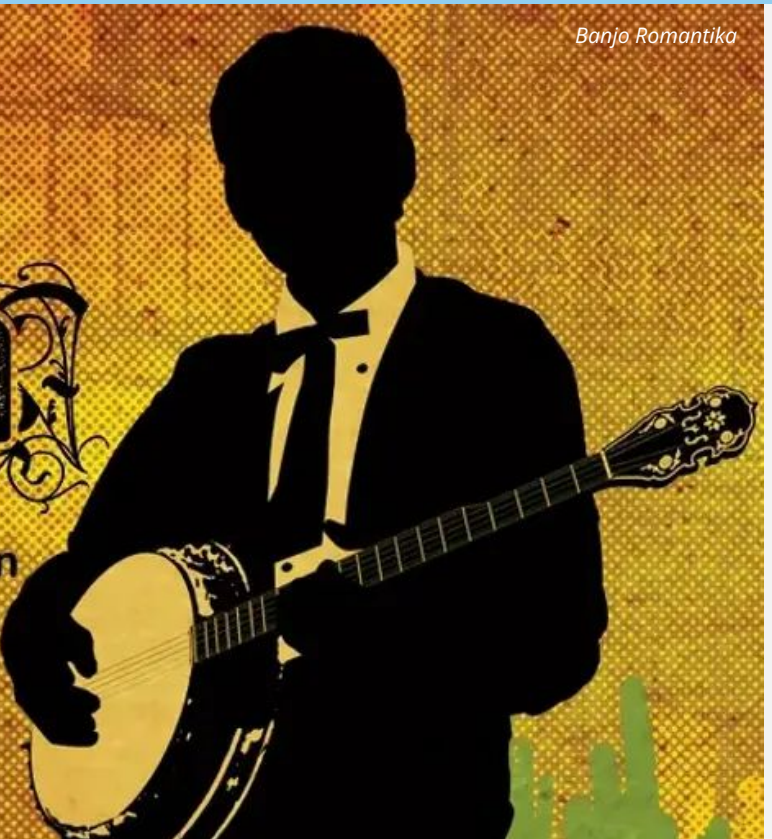
- local releases only air in our market (on Austin PBS) as well as on our linear livestream
- local releases may or may not get put on the PBS app, depending on the licensing agreement we hash out with you
- local releases usually require less assets to be delivered

Your Program is a Great Contender for Local Air <u>Only</u>:

- if your program is hyper specific to Central Texas
- if you don't have desires to take your program out to other markets nationally
- if you want an anniversary airing of an older program

Faders Up: The John Aielli Experience

OTHER THINGS TO EXPECT



Some other things to consider when it comes to local air:

- **Packaging:** if not already, then your program will need to be edited into compliance with public media S&P (FCC certified captions, inclusion of a funding pod, adhere to standard TRTs)
- **Timeline**: after we've reviewed and confirmed our wish to air your program, you can plan to deliver assets 6 weeks before airdate
- **Assets to Deliver:**
  - Program
  - Promo (:30)
  - Promotional Images
  - Program Descriptions
  - Music Cue Sheets

SHOWCASE
YOUR PILOT OR
SHORT FILM

PILOTS

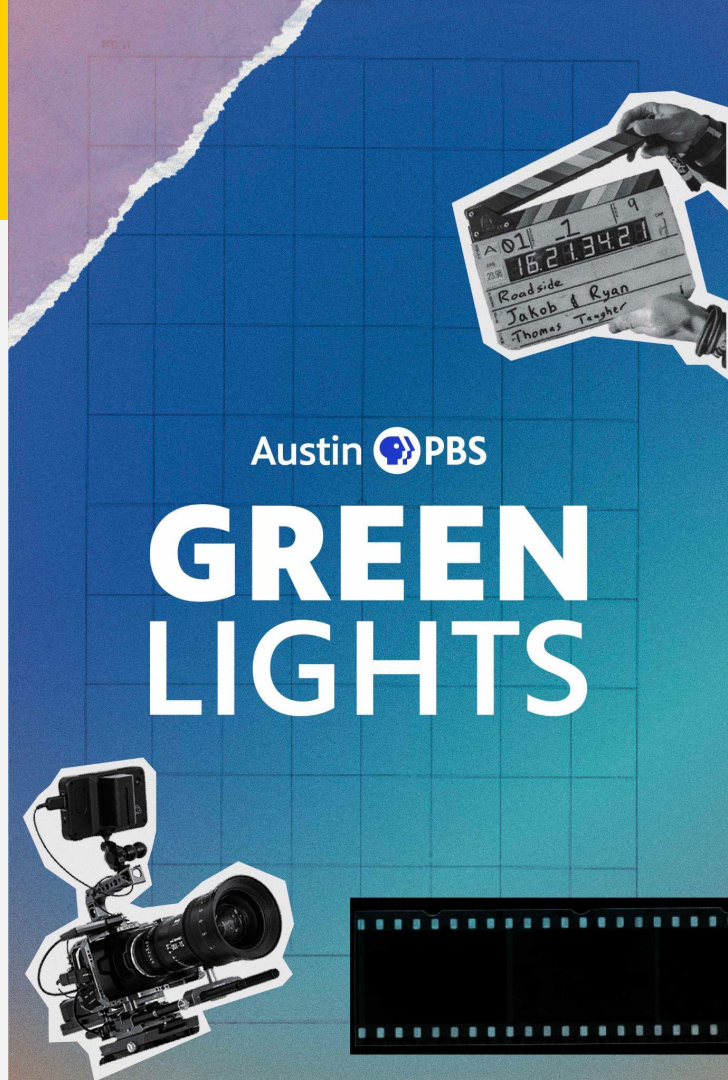
Many producers come to us with a completed pilot while they continue to fundraise.

We have launched a channel in the PBS app called **Austin PBS Greenlights** for projects that we're serving as the presenting station for!

Your project could be a good fit for this if:

- you have a completed pilot episode for a series
  you're seeking funding and need a place to showcase your
- work while you fundraise
  we are serving as your presenting station
- you need a more flexible rights window (pilots live on the
- app for 1-2 years)

You can watch the current pilots HERE!



OTHER THINGS TO EXPECT

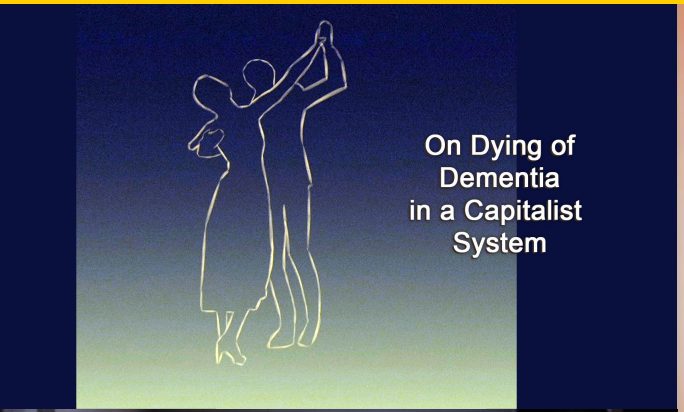
Some other things to consider when it comes to your pilot:

- **Packaging:** if not already, then your program will need to be edited into compliance with public media S&P

- **Assets to Deliver:**
  - Program
  - Promo (:15)
  - Promotional Images
  - Program Descriptions

- **Your pilot is *NOT* a good fit if**
  - we are *not* serving as your Presenting Station
  - you have no plans of pursuing a full series
  - it is outdated content

SHORT FILMS



We can distribute your short film through the PBS app on the **Austin PBS Shorts** channel!

Considerations:

- we accept narrative, documentary, animated and experimental
- full film must be submitted
- rights are non-exclusive

You can watch the current shorts HERE

FUNDING INITIATIVES

FINISHING FUNDS GRANT

Finishing Funds Grant:

- for projects that are strong contenders for public media distribution, but do not have the funding to repackage
- $12,000 to repackage program
- $3,000 in reimbursements to attend conference to promote film

Cycle 1 winning project Price of Paradise is available to stream in the PBS App!

Digital Originals Grant:

- **Prompt**: a reflection and exploration of life and culture in Central Texas
- **Format**: Web series; 5-8 episodes @ 8-10 minutes each
- **Genre**: non-fiction (*note: we are not considering scripted series at this time*)
- **Award:** $35,000
- **Winners:** Two (2)

*Cycle 1 winning projects **Outsidey** (by Evelyn Ngugi) and **David Eats Everywhere** (by David Douglass) premiere on the Austin PBS Youtube channel.*

STAY IN THE LOOP

To stay on the loop on future funding opportunities, be sure to do one (or all) of the following:

Sign up for our newsletter

Follow us on social media

@austinpbs on everything

Other Considerations

On Story

Funding Standards and Practices

A **funder** (sometimes referred to as a sponsor or a production underwriter) is an individual or organization who provides production funds for a film or series in public media.

Main Funding Considerations:

- Funders, or their logos, may not appear in the program's content
- All funders must be disclosed (there is no such thing as anonymous funders in public media!)
- Funders may not have editorial influence over the content and there cannot be even the ***perception*** of editorial influence
- Funders are acknowledged in descending order of most contributed to least contributed. (We help sort out what that looks like)

For more info on PBS Funding S&P, check out our one-sheet!

Fundraising Tips

Fundraising is very challenging. There is no blanket approach to fundraising, rather it is different from project-to-project.

- Consider reaching out to organizations whose mission aligns with the story you're telling and see if they're interested in being a part of your journey by contributing to your production.
- **When you go out for fundraising, target a combination of individuals or organizations**
  - **Ask Yourself how you/program can add value to the work they're doing**
  - **Tell Your Funders who you believe your audience is, how you plan to reach this audience, and why the funder would benefit from getting in front of this audience**
- Do not make promises to funders about how and where their name will appear in the final series (that can only be determined once fundraising is complete)
- As the producer, if you provide funding to your program, you will not be credited as a funder. That is considered self-funding and you (or your production company) will be listed as a producer.

What About Revenue?

While there's no revenue model built into public media distribution, there are ways to generate revenue from your content. Here's what we've seen and recommend:

- **Building Your Brand:**
  - *exclusive members only perks (ex: patreon, substack)*
  - *selling merch*
  - *Youtube adsense (if you plan to also put your content on YouTube)*
- **For Profit Distribution:**
  - *Public Media has a few for profit distribution options that can be explored after a standard public media release*
  - *Distribution deals with streamers (Love Nature, Bitmax, etc.)*
- **Post Distribution Underwriting**
  - *Some producers will go forth and make their projects independently. Once they secure public media distribution, underwriters come on board and they are able to build their payment into this!*

Check out Rick Steves on the 'How I Built This' podcast discussing how he built a profitable brand from his public media show - HERE

Legal Resources

As you embark on your pre-production journey, we highly recommend having a plan to ensure any third-party materials (images, etc.) are cleared for use. Here are some great resources outlining how all of this works:

- Texas Association of Lawyers for the Arts
  - TALA offers pro bono legal services to their members ($75/annual fee) https://talarts.org/membership
  - They can help with: employment agreements, waivers for subjects, providing fair use statements. They do not help with: LLC, insurance, rights clearance.
- New Media Rights
  - New Media Rights offers legal service to artists and they also have a lot of resources/guides, including a web app that can help you determine if and how you'll need to clear third-party materials
- A Guide to Clearances
- Fair Use

Note: Public media stations have a blanket BMI/ASCAP, so you're all covered with the music!

In Conclusion

Ambient Film

WHY PUBLIC MEDIA?

- Public Media is **valued** - *we're the most trusted media institution*
- Public media's legacy of creating and distributing **high quality, fact-based content**
- Public media's legacy of **fostering the talent** of hosts and personalities
- **Ownership of your content**
- **Creative control** of your content (as long as you adhere to our standards and practices!)

Blackademics Television

For More:

Check Out the FAQ on:
austinpbs.org/producers

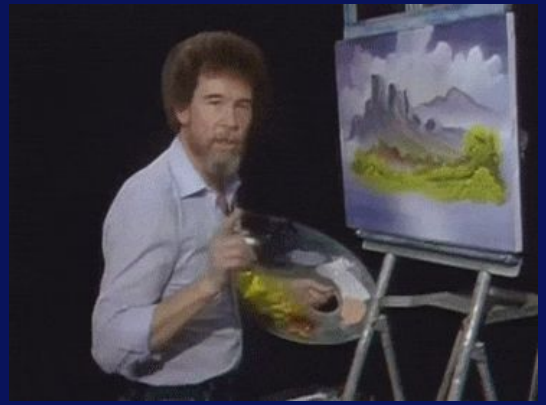
or

Sign up for a virtual info session taking place ***one Thursday each month at 11:00 AM*** by filling out **this form.**

And With That...

Go watch something.

Go make something.



Go be the next Bob Ross...
Or be the first you!

You Create It. | You Own It. | We Distribute It.

Click HERE to submit

THANK YOU!

Reach out to greenlights@klru.org

Austin PBS