



## Our Underwriting Credit FAQ for public television producers

### Who must be credited as an underwriter?

1. **All entities** contributing to a program/series on public television must be acknowledged. Those who **contribute financially**, by providing funds for the production, are called **program underwriters**. The FCC requires that they be identified in relation to the programs funded.

### What is the purpose of underwriting credits?

2. The purpose of underwriter credits is to identify the entities that have provided funding for the production. Identification is limited to name, location, business purpose. Established corporate slogans may be used to identify the funder as long as they do not include a call to action.

3. The entity identified as the underwriter must be the actual contributing entity.

### Where are underwriting credits placed?

4. Underwriters **must be identified at the conclusion** of a program. Underwriters *may* be identified at the beginning of a program as well. If the program's content is controversial, the underwriters must be identified at both the open and the close of the program.

5. Underwriters are not identified in the program production credits.

6. Underwriters may not receive a "special thanks" credit. "Special Thanks," which are part of the production credits, are reserved for those who provided *in-kinds goods and/or services*, not program funding.

7. When one underwriter is identified, **all must be identified**, in an "underwriter pod," separate and distinct in style from the program's production credits.

### When? And for how long?

8. By and large, **all entities** underwriting a series must appear on all episodes of the season being underwritten.

9. The underwriting announcements (a/k/a "the pod") may not exceed one minute (1:00.)

10. You may acknowledge as many underwriters in one minute as will comfortably fit, but no single underwriter's credit may exceed fifteen seconds (0:15.) PBS allows 30-second underwriting credits for their primetime programming and the *Newshour* and *only* if the underwriter has contributed more than \$ 2.5 million to the program production.

11. No underwriter should exceed 20 words past "this program is made possible by X."

## Furthermore...

12. An underwriter credit may not contain qualitative claims, calls to action, comparisons, pricing information, or any other language that is deemed promotional.
13. A product manufactured by an underwriter may be mentioned once at the head of the underwriter credit, immediately following identification. (Example: WidgetCo, maker of Widgets). The brand name may not be repeated.
14. No more than five products or services may be mentioned or listed. (Example: SewCo, makers of yarn, thread, patterns, needles, and thimbles.)
15. The use of people in underwriter credits is strictly regulated by the FCC. Consult with us before including any underwriter credit featuring people.
16. An underwriter credit may not feature a sung jingle. Music is allowable; music with words is not.
17. Slogans that contain calls for action, qualitative claims, pricing information, or other objectionable language are not allowable even if they are established. (Example: "Get Met - it pays," even though well established as a slogan for Metropolitan Life insurance company, is not allowed because it is a call for action.)
18. Product placement, or *the perception* of product placement, must be avoided.
19. "Pay-for-play" arrangements --- i.e., featuring a location, product or service in exchange for production funding -- are forbidden.

Finally, save post-production time and expense by discussing your underwriter credits' content and placement with your contact at NETA Programming. They are here to help.

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