

## What are the benefits of a video production project?

Video projects may be a way to reach out to partners who are hard to engage with more traditional preparedness projects. Here are some of the special attributes of an average preparedness video production:

- People can contribute small increments of time, so even very busy community partners can participate. For example, technical advisors who review and comment on a draft of your video may need to spend no more than 20 minutes at the task... usually, when it's convenient for them;
- You may have a timetable for your project... but you don't have to have any deadlines. This makes the entire endeavor more relaxed;
- Participation in any phase of this project provides the opportunity for informal networking, from which your partners will benefit as much as you;
- Because a video project may use borrowed equipment and volunteer hours, the cost is minimal in terms of funds and paid staff hours;
- Community partners you have never worked with before may find this project irresistible... for example, parent associations, small businesses in your community... any group you would like to reach out to;
- The end result of the project will be a tangible, shareable product that provides recognition of the contribution of all participants;
- The end result will be tailored to the needs of your target audience;
- It's fun to make movies – participants will actually enjoy themselves;
- Last but definitely not least, a project such as this can engage disaster response volunteers in a way that keeps them interested and feeling rewarded.

## How do I get started with a preparedness video project?

First, keep in mind that the process of making a preparedness video is as valuable as the end product, because you can use the process to build bridges with potential new preparedness partners in your community. However, you want to have a useful end product as well, so start out by choosing a worthwhile subject/topic for your video. Choose something that is small-scale enough to be manageable – you want to be able to do your topic justice in a five or ten minute video. Select something that reflects the needs of your community, and that is relevant to your community partners and their interests. Once you have a subject you're satisfied with (**"the story"**), determine:

- Who is your target population (**"the audience"**)?

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- How much of your time and money will you spend (“**the budget**”)?
- Who has the expertise and interest to work on this project (“**the talent**”)?
- Who will help you coordinate this project (“**the producers**”)?

## **Whom should I reach out to for help and participation?**

With whom would you like to build new partnerships in your community? And with whom would you like to strengthen and expand your working relationships? Because people can participate without a huge time commitment, you may find almost everyone you ask agreeing to help – especially as content reviewers or technical advisors. Meanwhile, for the actual nuts and bolts shooting and postproduction of your video, we suggest you go straight to your Medical Reserve Corps and other volunteer preparedness groups. A project like this will give the volunteers a chance to make a positive contribution to the public health of their communities... besides, it’s fun, and it may be a welcome change from training and exercises. And don’t forget schools! Many high schools, colleges and universities have film programs; there’s a lot of talent and expertise there, and possibly the opportunity to build or strengthen more of those preparedness bridges.

## **Okay. How much is this really going to cost?**

In all seriousness, this project should cost you no more than \$400 or so. Here’s how:

- Borrow the equipment you’ll need – a video camera with editing software (these programs are very easy to use, even for beginners), a laptop, a tripod, a microphone, and whatever props are featured in your story;
- “Cater” your sessions with potluck from the volunteers themselves;
- Charge one of your volunteers or staff with crafting press releases for free publicity.
- Costs you will incur include the cost of media – for example, DVDs, which may cost about \$1.00 each – and of course the cost of the Gala Premiere or Sneak Preview you will hold to celebrate the completion of your project. Here’s another networking opportunity! A nice evening out with food should run \$200 or \$300.

## **What are some of the positions we’ll need to fill to make our video?**

To start with, you and your coordinating colleagues will be the producers. Depending on how much time individuals want to spend, some of the remaining positions can be combined. For example, for our video the same person managed props, sets, lighting, and locations. Here’s a basic adaptable list of video crew jobs: scriptwriter; storyboards; location scout; sets; props; lights; videographer; director;

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actors/demonstrators; still photographer; music; sound recording; voiceover talent; titles, captions and credits; editor; publicity; translators; and anything else essential because of the nature of your particular subject matter.

## **What's the next step?**

Come up with a script/storyboard you like, and give it to your volunteers to commit it to film. As producer, you can participate as much or as little as you like. This project doesn't have to reflect slick Hollywood production values – it's okay that it's a homemade video. You will polish it up as you go along. When you have your first draft, begin the process that will continue until you have your video exactly the way you want it:

### **Review – Revise – Repeat**

This is the point at which you can use your video to build new relationships with potential preparedness partners in your community. Bring copies of the video with you wherever you go and invite people to review its contents for you, from their particular perspective. Not only will you get useful insights for your video – you'll be connecting with others in your community in a new and memorable way. This method has worked amazingly well for us; we have invited many, many people from many disciplines to spend just 15 minutes or so watching our little clip and answering a few questions about the material and how we can make it better, and the response we have had has been excellent. You're asking people for their opinion. You're making them your technical advisors. You're thanking them in the credits of your video, and you're inviting them to your Gala Premiere Opening Night celebration. This is a fun way to build new relationships that goes beyond the exchanging of business cards.

## **So after many drafts and lots of fun and adventure, we have a good five-minute clip. Now what?**

If your homemade video answers a pressing preparedness need in your community, you may decide you want a professionally produced version of your project. Again, without spending money, this may be possible if you take your clip and ideas to your local college or university, where there may be great interest in participating in a community service project such as this. Their videographers may be willing to produce a professional version of your video clip for you.

It may not be necessary to professionally produce your clip – it may do your subject matter justice just the way it is. In that case, here are some ways you can share it with members of your community:

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- Post it on your website, your MRC's website, or other preparedness websites
- Print up some DVDs for distribution to your target audience
- Take your video on a "Road Show," talking to groups in your community
- Post your video on YouTube, FaceBook, or MySpace etc.
- Show it on cable TV

Finally, because of the way amateur video editing software works, it is possible to make a video in one language and then simply replace the titles and voiceover in any other language you choose. You will need a translator, someone to type in the new titles, and someone to read the new voiceover, but otherwise your video will be adaptable to use for all the other languages in your community.

## **Where can I go for more information, or additional specific suggestions?**

Contact our coordinators:

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