

## **How to Create a Powerful Public Service Announcement (PSA)**

### **What is a PSA?**

Public service announcements, or PSAs, are programs that remind people of something that the public needs to know. PSAs can create awareness, show the importance of a problem or issue, convey information, or promote a behavioral change. PSAs are 30-60 seconds long, so careful researching and planning must be done to craft an impactful announcement with a short length.

### **Step 1: Find Your Purpose**

When finding a purpose for your PSA, ask yourself, what do you want the world to know? What topic do you want to bring attention to, or what do you want to change about a topic? Pick a topic that is important to you, or that should be important to your community. You should cover only one subject per PSA. Topics may include health, safety, literacy, or available government or volunteer services.

### **Step 2: Research**

Research the subject you have chosen and make sure you have the latest facts and information. Let's say you want to convince people to get a flu shot. What facts or statistics will show how important it is? Remember to gather the most up-to-date information; you want to be convincing, but also accurate.

### **Step 3: The Hook**

The hook goes at the beginning of your PSA. A hook serves to reel the audience in and get their attention. What is going to get someone interested in what you are telling them? Is humor appropriate? Do you start with a question? Do you open with a startling but true statistic? How will you convince them to listen to what you have to say?

### **Step 4: The Facts**

After the hook, come the facts you collected in Step 2: Research. Be precise and be selective in what you say. Saying too little may leave someone unconvinced. Saying too much may bore them.

### **Step 5: The Call to Action**

What can the listener do now that they are aware of the situation? Should they get a flu shot? Call their congressman? Check the batteries in their smoke detector? This will be an outcome of Step 1: Find Your Purpose.

### **Step 6: Record and Edit**

Make sure you are close enough to your recorder for your voice to sound strong. Your pronunciation should be clear, and you should talk at a steady pace. After recording, edit out any mistakes. Your final recording should be 30-60 seconds. A PSA that isn't within this time frame is a sign that your script should be edited, and then re-recorded. If your PSA is shorter

than 30 seconds, add more relevant information to your script. If your PSA is longer than 60 seconds, review your script and cut out any information that isn't needed, or reword sentences to make them shorter. No matter how you edit your script, make sure that the main message and facts are still included, so that the announcement is short, but powerful. You may choose to open and close your PSA with a short snippet of free-to-use instrumental music. Choose this carefully so that it matches the overall tone of the PSA.