



BROADCAST MESSAGING STANDARDS

Public radio is noncommercial and preserves its noncommercial character in both fact and perception. The overall content, and on-air sound, of each sponsorship acknowledgment should be in keeping with the noncommercial nature of public radio. Federal law prohibits advertisements and commercial announcements on public broadcasting stations.

NONCOMMERCIAL MISSION

Sponsor messages are **15 seconds** in length and produced in-house at no additional cost. WAMU accepts sponsorship at its sole discretion and reserves the right to refuse underwriting from any company for any reason.

MUST INCLUDE

- Legal name of the sponsor, to be read immediately after “Support for WAMU comes from...”

MAY INCLUDE

- Non-promotional, value-neutral descriptions of organization, products and services (limit of 3)
- Established corporate slogan (if it is not flagrantly promotional)
- Business address, phone, website
- Corporate mission language that identifies but does not promote or state an opinion
- Duration of time in business
- Information about public events that you sponsor

MAY NOT INCLUDE

- Qualitative language (e.g. award-winning, leading, etc.)
- Comparative language of a sponsor to competitors or industry standards (e.g. better, best, oldest, or mentions of awards)
- A call to action directing the listener to visit the sponsor’s store, redeem a discount, download or purchase an item
- An inducement to buy, sell, rent or lease
- References to price or value
- Personal pronouns (e.g. I, Me, You, Your, or We, unless part of your established slogan)
- Health claims
- Expression of a viewpoint on a controversial issue
- Support or opposition to a political candidate or ballot initiative



Listen to recent WAMU broadcast campaigns across a range of sectors [here](#).

BROADCAST MESSAGING TIPS + TRICKS

- There are multiple steps in WAMU’s approval process, so please initiate the process **at least 5 business days before** your campaign is scheduled to start.
- Write your copy to be no longer than :15 seconds in length, with the WAMU pre-amble included: “Support for WAMU comes from.....”
- Avoid multiple acronyms in a script. Each letter in an acronym can take as much time to pronounce as a word.
- Keep syllables short and simple. Avoid multiple three- and four-syllable words, so that your script doesn’t exceed 15 seconds.
- Avoid lengthy URLs and those with lots of acronyms.
- Provide phonetic pronunciation guides for all names and words that aren’t clearly intuitive.
- Include no more than three proper names per script. Proper names take more time to pronounce. Be judicious when choosing names to include. If the names help clarify your copy and are well-known, include them. Consider omitting lesser-known names.
- Consider omitting mentions of Maryland, Virginia or D.C. in your copy. WAMU listeners know the geography of the Washington region well. Only call out place names when omitting them would confuse the audience or materially affect the value of your message.

Read your copy **aloud 3x** in a conversational tone.

Use a timer on your phone to take the **average time of the 3 reads.**

SAMPLE MESSAGING

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ARTS + ENTERTAINMENT	CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY	DAY / PRIVATE SCHOOL
FEDERAL CONTRACTORS	GROCERY	LAW FIRM
TECHNOLOGY	TOURISM	TRADE ASSOCIATIONS