



Macomb Township Access Channel Procedures, Standards and Guidelines

Operations

Macomb Township Government Access is a 24-hour; 7 days a week government access cable channel carried on Comcast channel 5 and is programmed and operated under the direction of the Macomb Township Supervisors Department.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Macomb Township Government Access (MTGA). Is comprised of the Broadcast Media Manager, Media Technician and an Access Producer/Writer. The Broadcast Media division will be under the direct supervision of the Macomb Township Supervisors Department.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

MTGA is committed to providing viewers with quality programming covering a broad range of local government information and services.

Macomb Township and **MTGA** will accomplish this mission by providing the following:

- Information on local government services
- Explanations of the function of government
- General information to the public about meetings and government-sponsored events
- Emergency and public safety information
- General announcements of government entities
- Program coverage of government events, such as facility openings, recreational and cultural events, and meetings of government boards and committees

MTGA is NOT a public access channel. Access to **MTGA** is restricted to governmental entities and only **MTGA** sponsored events will be broadcast. Appropriate programming will include but not limited to:

- Public service announcements (PSAs) of government-sponsored events and services
- Informational or instructional programs on various government agencies and government-sponsored services
- Public meetings of government policy-making boards/commissions

- Emergency service operations for natural and man-made disasters, or weather phenomena, etc.

III. OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. The **MTGA** Broadcast Media Manager shall oversee the various phases of production for programming aired on **MTGA**. **MTGA** is responsible for televising local government meetings, government-sponsored activities and events, local high school sports, providing video production training as needed, and offering limited technical assistance to other agencies including other departments within Macomb Township.

B. The production of quality video programs requires experienced technical support.

C. It shall be the policy of **MTGA** to cooperate with all related news agencies (commercial, educational, and industrial) to the extent that cooperation will not interfere with the operation of **MTGA** or its Procedures, Standards and Guidelines.

D. **MTGA** recognizes the jurisdiction of the Federal Communications Commission guidelines pertaining to television programming. All such guidelines will be adhered to in the approval of programs for broadcast. Accordingly, the following representative programming applies.

1. Programs containing obscene, offensive or defamatory material/language shall not be broadcast on **MTGA**. Community standards of good taste will be adhered to at all times. It shall be the responsibility of each contributing entity to assure that programs submitted to **MTGA** shall not contain such material/language.

2. Programs containing copyrighted materials will not be broadcast without proper copyright authorization. Individuals submitting programs for broadcast are responsible for obtaining all necessary copyright clearance, and shall hold **MTGA** and Macomb Township and other government entities participating, harmless in any case of copyright infringement.

3. Copyright for creative properties (original scripts, music, artwork, etc.) shall accrue to the owner/creator of said property. Agreements between the owner/creator and **MTGA** will contain the following assurance:

(a) owner/creator shall grant **MTGA** copyright clearance for the use of the property in an agreed-upon manner;

(b) each party agrees to notify the other of any distribution of the program;

(c) programs will not be sold, commercially distributed or loaned without prior approval of the Broadcast Media Manager.

4. Programs, which have as the primary purpose to promote commercial/profit-making services, products, trade or business will NOT be broadcast on **MTGA**.

5. **MTGA** will not endorse any consumer products.

6. Discussion of any partisan issues approved for broadcast NOT adhering to equal time guidelines will NOT be broadcast on **MTGA**. (Also see Section O.2.(d).)

E. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

MTGA will prioritize programming based on availability of airtime as follows:

1. Local government entities and agencies located in Macomb Township for use in connection with official government and government-sponsored activities.
2. State and Federal government agencies for use in connection with their official non-partisan government and/or government-sponsored activities that affect the interests of local governments in Macomb Township.
3. Programs originated by and/or produced by non-profit group(s) must be related to, approved and sponsored by agencies referenced in E.1. and E.2. above.

F. PROGRAMMING

MTGA shall consist of seven basic programming modes:

1. Gavel-to-gavel coverage of meetings; generally Board of Trustee meetings, hearings, workshops and other programming as may be determined from time to time by the sponsoring government entity/agency. **MTGA** broadcast coverage of any public comments at meetings will consist of a 'wide shot' to include all members of the board and the person(s) making comment at the designated public comment podium. It will not be the policy of **MTGA** to show 'close up shots' of members of the audience at any time during the production of meetings.
2. Tape-delayed public meetings and other government-sponsored activities. It is the intention of **MTGA** to present gavel-to-gavel coverage of meetings which will then be aired tape-delayed and unedited. Please note that any behavior or comments at meetings that does not meet the criteria set forth in section H and section D.1 of this document will be removed (edited out) from all broadcasts.

The following 2 disclaimers will air after all Macomb Township meetings broadcast on **MTGA**:

"The opinions expressed by any member(s) of the public during any period of public comment do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Macomb Township Board of Trustees or MTGA and are solely those of the presenter. The Macomb Township Board of Trustees and MTGA hereby expressly disclaim any and all responsibility or liability for any defamatory or slanderous statements expressed by any member of the public during any such period."

"Any unauthorized re-broadcasting of any video, audio and/or still image of this meeting is strictly forbidden without the written permission of Macomb Township."

3. Locally produced programs to inform the public of services and programs provided by local government. Such programming shall only be used when appropriate to the Procedures, Standards and Guidelines.
4. Outside source programs may be acquired for use. Such programming shall only be used when appropriate to the Procedures, Standards and Guidelines.
5. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) – **MTGA** will accept and broadcast prepared PSAs according to the program selection criteria. All PSAs shall be submitted only on DVD, DVCPRO, Mini DV or ½" S-VHS videotape. (S-VHS being the poorest quality).
6. Promotional announcements (electronic bulletin board messages) for government-sponsored events and activities are acceptable for broadcast on **MTGA**. However, promotional announcements for events, activities of charities, or outside organizations which the government has no official interest or sponsorship shall NOT be broadcast.

The Broadcast Media Manager shall resolve any questions regarding message appropriateness.

7. Local high school sporting events including Utica, Utica Eisenhower, Macomb Dakota, L'Anse Creuse North, Lutheran North and New Haven.

G. PROGRAM REVIEW

1. Programs submitted from eligible applicants are evaluated on the following criteria: (not necessarily in order of importance)

- Citizen interest
- Governmental nature
- Broadcast quality
- Compliance with programming restrictions
- Public service/Safety needs

2. The Broadcast Media Manager or designee, prior to airing, may choose to preview outsource programs for **MTGA**. **MTGA** program submission process is as follows:

(a) program is submitted to **MTGA** for review.

(b) program is reviewed and any changes needed are made. The Broadcast Media Manager reserves the right to exercise editorial discretion with regard to **MTGA** programming according to the Procedures, Standards and Guidelines set forth and contained herein. Review shall be the sole responsibility of the local government entity submitting the videotape(s). Videotape portions may be used as segments of other documentary programming. Insertion of alphanumeric information, visual aids, or clarification pertaining directly to board agendas may be allowed. Other programming or approved PSAs may be inserted during recesses called during meetings.

(c) if the program is accepted as submitted, it can then be scheduled for airtime.

(d) requests for review, revision, or clarification of program content will be honored in order for the program to be aired.

(e) the review process should be completed within ten (10) working days.

3. A denial for access may be appealed to the Township Board of Trustees. The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Township Supervisor. Failure to file the appeal within twenty-one (21) days will be deemed a waiver of the right to appeal.

H. PROGRAMMING RESTRICTIONS

Programming on **MTGA** shall adhere to the following restrictions:

1. Programming is prohibited and can be edited that contains:

- (a) any blatant advertising of a commercial product or service nature;
- (b) any information concerning any lottery, gift enterprise, or similar promotion offering prizes based in whole or part upon lot or chance;
- (c) any direct solicitation of funds;

(d) any material that would violate any Federal, State, County or Township statute or law;

(e) any material that promotes religious beliefs or religious philosophies;

(f) any obscene, indecent, defamatory material, and it is the responsibility of each submitting entity to assure **MTGA** of same;

2. Programming not prohibited previously must conform to the following criteria:

(a) Programming policy shall be to provide non-partisan information concerning the operations and deliberations of government.

(b) **MTGA** is not intended as a mechanism for building support for a particular policy, program, issue, party, platform, or individual. Candidates, who have qualified (declared) for election to any elective office, shall not be permitted to make individual statements on **MTGA** regarding their elections/candidacy. Within 30 days of an election or primary, current elected officials can participate only in the performance of their official duties. All Macomb Township elected officials shall not host or participate in programs to be broadcast outside of regularly scheduled Board Meetings, Workshops or Special Meetings.

I. SCHEDULING OF PROGRAMS AND PRIORITY

1. **MTGA** is responsible for the approval of all programs and scheduling of same programs on **MTGA**.

2. The Broadcast Media Manager or designee will establish the program schedule for **MTGA**. The scheduling of programming (to include local government meetings) takes place only after it has been determined that (1) the program meets all the programming guidelines established; and, (2) any affected agency has approved its release.

3. Regularly Produced **MTGA** Programs

This form of programming will be given regular time slots around which individual programs will be scheduled. Programming is subject to be changed without warning by the Broadcast Media Manager.

4. Individual **MTGA** Programs

Individual programs produced or acquired on a one-time only basis will be scheduled around regular programs and their regular time slots.

5. Emergency Programs

Emergency programs are defined as last minute and/or high- priority programming. They must still meet all programming requirements. The Broadcast Media Manager may “bump” any programming during its respective time slot to schedule the emergency program.

6. First Priority

Tape delayed official public meetings of the Macomb Township Board of Trustees.

7. Second Priority

Approved programs submitted by departments and agencies under the supervision and sponsorship of local governments.

J. VIDEO PROGRAM SUBMISSIONS

1. Programs must conform to format specifications (that is, "broadcast quality," inclusion of bars/tone, slate, countdown etc.). If programs requested meet established criteria, they can then be assigned airtime according to priority, subject matter, and topical nature as contained herein.
2. In the case of an appearance by an elected official other than at public meetings, the Broadcast Media Manager shall determine if the official is participating in accordance with the criteria established in these guidelines. If it is determined that the official is not in conformance with the criteria established, that portion of the program must be removed or edited to ensure that the program is in compliance. If the program originator or producer refuses to remove or edit the portion in question, the program itself may not be aired. After approval by affected agencies, departmental programming may be modified or edited to meet guidelines.

K. DUPLICATION

1. DVD's of public meetings will be retained for one (1) month from the original date of the meeting. DVD's are not official records of public meetings but may be authorized for dubbing under the guidelines set forth in this document.
2. Requestors of copies of meetings aired on **MTGA** will be charged a fee associated with the dubbing process. All fees will be paid at the time of ordering. Copies will be dubbed into a DVD or VHS format supplied by **MTGA**. The copy shall include the entire meeting, program or event without editing. **MTGA** will NOT custom-edit portions of any program nor provide raw footage of any production. If dubs are mailed a \$5.00 postage and handling charge will be added and must be paid at the time of the request. Request forms are available at the **MTGA** office.
3. All programming produced by **MTGA** shall be copyrighted and may only be reproduced for personnel, non-commercial home use by individuals. Retransmission or any unauthorized use of **MTGA** programming (in part or whole) is strictly forbidden without the written consent of the Macomb Township Broadcast Media Manager.

L. VIEWER COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

1. **MTGA**, under the direction of the Broadcast Media Manager, may distribute viewer comment forms to monitor viewer satisfaction with programming on **MTGA**. **MTGA** may also develop and distribute annual surveys and questionnaires to determine viewership statistics and input through local cable providers.

M. PROGRAM LOGS

1. A daily log will be kept of all programming broadcast during each twenty-four hour period. Log information will include program title, airtime, length of program.

N. MTGA VOLUNTEERS

1. Only qualified volunteers may be used to assist in the production of **MTGA** programming. Volunteers will be trained in the care and use of video production equipment and receive experience by participating in the production of **MTGA** programs. Volunteers, upon authorization of the Broadcast Media Manager can also undertake special video projects as a part of their service to Macomb Township. **MTGA** recognizes the valuable contribution of volunteers in the programming effort.

O. TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND PRODUCTION SERVICES

1. Programs from five minutes to one hundred and twenty minutes are preferred. However, programs of any length are accepted subject to availability of time. All programs should be labeled with program title, episode (if applicable), and length. A contact name and phone number should also be printed on the label.

2. All programs submitted for broadcast from an outside source producer will be previewed by **MTGA** for the following technical criteria:

(a) Technical quality – Video and audio quality must be acceptable levels as determined by **MTGA** staff.

(b) Relevance of Subject Matter of Content– subject matter must be of interest to the general audience and serve a governmental purpose.

(c) Relevance and Appeal– program must be relevant to the needs and interests of Macomb Township residents.

(d) Absence of Advocacy– if eligible, community issues programming must adhere to equal time guidelines. Every effort must be made to present all points of view.

(e) Absence of Defamatory Material– subject matter that slanders or libels individuals or organizations will not be broadcast. (Also see section H.)

3. Programming and PSAs shall be submitted on DVD, DVCPRO, Mini DV or ½” S-VHS videotape only (S-VHS being of the poorest quality). All programs shall have at least thirty (30) seconds of color bars and tone, slate describing the program and a ten (10) second countdown at the head of the program and at least ten (10) seconds of black at the end of the program.