

# Creating PSAs

Public service announcements (PSAs) are short messages intended to raise people's interest in an issue so that they will take action. PSAs are just one of the many civic actions people can take to make a difference.



A PSA should give your audience at least one idea about what they can do to make a difference. Choose your audience wisely. You want to get your message to people who can actually DO something! For example, if you're creating a PSA that urges people to drive safely, then your audience should not be middle-school students who can't drive. Remember, by creating a PSA you are taking a civic action that will help you move towards the goal of making an impact on your problem or issue.

Before the rise of the Internet and commercial-cable television, people often submitted PSAs to radio and television stations, either as a video or as a script for an announcer to read. Today, these stations rarely publish unsolicited PSAs (or PSAs they did not ask for).

Today, you can create a video PSA, including a digital slideshow saved as a video, and upload it directly to a video-sharing site, like YouTube or Vimeo. If you post a PSA video this way, it has the potential to be viewed by hundreds or thousands of people. You can also share your PSA on social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter.

Remember, the purpose of the PSA is to make others aware of your issue and gain supporters who will take action!

## Tips for creating a PSA:

**Create a clever title.** Titles can entice people to watch the video and make the PSA memorable.

**Compose a clear message.** If you are creating a video, write a script and decide what images you want to show.

**Create a compelling story about why your issue is important.** Use facts, statistics, and personal statements to show why your issue is important and why people should care. Don't forget to include how the listener or viewer can take action.

**Answer the five W's.** To help people understand and care about your CAP issue and project, your PSA must answer: Who, what, when, where, and why? Often PSA's will focus on a person or issue to create a story that answers the five "W's."

**Check for readability.** Read your PSA out loud to make sure you haven't written words that will tongue-tie the narrator or confuse the listener.

**Broadcast media.** Television stations prefer short PSAs of 15- to 30-seconds long. If you are creating a video, try to keep the video to 2-3 minutes.

**Submit your PSA early!** Broadcast stations prefer a lot of lead time.

## Sample PSA for local radio station:

**Length:** 10 seconds.

Right now over half a million Americans are using their cell phones while they are driving. Right now 25% of the teenagers who are behind the wheel are texting. Right now, if you are driving, put down your phone and pay attention

- [Click here for a list of media outlets](#)
- [Click here for more information on video-sharing sites](#)
- [CAP PSA CONTEST](#)  
Create a video PSA and enter it into the CAP Multimedia Contest!

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