



MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY MEDIA, INC.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

Revised January, 2025

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Statement of Mission and Purpose:

Massachusetts Community Media, Inc. (MassAccess) is a non-profit, 501(c)(6), [membership-based], advocacy agency, guided by a volunteer board of community media professionals. Our goal is to ensure the future vitality of Massachusetts-based community media centers by developing educational workshops, monitoring legislation, utilizing technology to inform and enhance community media centers, as well as acting as government liaisons to inform supporters across Massachusetts regarding the current political landscape in regards to media.

I. Membership

All persons, firms, corporations, organizations, institutions and other entities who subscribe to the purpose of Massachusetts Community Media, Inc. (MassAccess), and who support the Corporation by participation, or with a contribution of money, service or equipment, shall be eligible for membership in the Corporation. The Board of Directors of MassAccess has established a membership fee, which shall be posted annually.

A. Types of Membership

Non-Profit Organizational Membership shall have the following privileges:

- Full access to services and content offered at MassAccess.org
 - Full upload and download on Mass Media eXchange (MMX), the MassAccess file sharing server
 - Ability to post classifieds on MassAccess.org
 - Ability to post and view in the forum
- Discounted admission to all MassAccess events
- Up to six individuals listed under the membership

Business Membership shall have the following privileges:

- Full access to services and content offered at MassAccess.org
 - Full upload and download on MMX, barring any commercial content
 - Ability to post classifieds on MassAccess.org
 - Ability to post and view in the forum
- Discounted rates for MassAccess vendor opportunities
- Up to six individuals listed under the membership
- One post on the Vendors & Tech thread of the MassAccess forum on the first Wednesday of each month.

Individual Membership shall have the following privileges:

- Full access to services and content offered at MassAccess.org
 - Full upload and download on MMX
 - Ability to post classifieds on MassAccess.org
 - Ability to post and view in the forum
- Discounted admission to all MassAccess events
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B. Requirements for Membership

In order to be a member of MassAccess, a person or organization must meet the following conditions:

- Provide proof of residence or corporate address; or affiliation with any organization, school, or government agency.
- Must agree to the Policies and Procedures document upon registration.
- Pay the required membership fees.
- Individuals listed under Organizational or Business memberships must be either employees of the organization/business or members of the board of directors of the organization/business.

C. Term of Membership and Membership Fees

All memberships are recognized as active from the date of dues payment. Memberships will expire one year from the date of payment.

Members should strive to keep their membership active. If members do not renew by their membership expiration date, all membership privileges will be suspended until membership is renewed.

The board of MassAccess will post any changes to the annual membership fees by January 1st.

D. MassAccess Board of Directors

Members in good standing wishing to help promote the mission of MassAccess are encouraged to apply for a seat on the MassAccess Board of Directors. Initial board terms vary in length from 1 to 3 years and the composition of the board will be announced at the MassAccess Annual Meeting. The number of Board seats shall not exceed eleven.

Seats for existing members are staggered so that there are expiring terms of board members each year. By September 1st of each year, directors with an expiring term shall declare whether or not they will seek an additional term by notifying the acting President.

By December 1st of each year, MassAccess will announce on the forum and by other means, the number of available seats for upcoming terms. Members wishing to apply for a seat on the Board of Directors may apply in writing by submitting a letter of intent and resume to governance@massaccess.org.

Board seats shall be granted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors and shall be announced in early January of each year.

The MassAccess Board of Directors shall name officers for the Board. At any time, the Board may name a President, a Vice President, a Clerk and a Treasurer. Active board members may be nominated by other board members or nominate themselves for board positions by informing the sitting President in writing by January 1st of each year. Officers of the Board shall be announced at the Annual Meeting in late January.

E. Board Committees

In an effort to promote productivity and inclusion, the MassAccess Board of Directors will set up advisory committees. The committees shall be set at the discretion of the acting President of the organization.

Each member of the Board of Directors must sit on at least one committee at all times during their board term. There is no limit to how many committees on which a board member may sit.

MassAccess members or members of the general public may be asked to serve on committees alongside directors. Members of committees may be appointed by the chair of each committee or members in good standing may email governance@massaccess.org to apply for a committee position at any time.

The Board of Directors may, when deemed necessary, form committees outside of the regularly established committees. Such committees may form and dissolve as circumstance dictates.

F. Member Complaint Response

In the event that a MassAccess member contacts the organization regarding issues or conflicts with members, staff members, board members, town officials or other individuals or groups, MassAccess may choose to adopt a role of facilitator in hope that further communication may resolve the issue. Concerning this effort, the MassAccess board will take the following steps:

1. Complaints brought to MassAccess board members will be discussed within a meeting of the MassAccess Governance Committee.
2. A member of the Governance Committee will be assigned as a facilitator to the issue. This member will craft a written response to the complainant within a reasonable amount of time – usually within 2 business days.
3. With the permission of the complainant, the facilitator will contact the person or parties being cited in the complaint to hear the opposing viewpoint.
4. If all parties are amenable, the facilitator will attend a meeting or phone call with the opposing parties in an attempt to aid dialogue.
5. The facilitator will follow up with both parties in an attempt to move the situation toward resolution and/or to decide if further action is warranted.

In some cases, MassAccess may actively advocate for a member, individual or organization. In such instances, advocacy must be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Advocacy from MassAccess may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Letters of support
2. Attendance and/or testimony at meetings or hearings
3. Outreach to other organizations or advocacy agencies

MassAccess reserves the right to remain neutral or take no action regarding any reported issue or conflict. To be considered a formal complaint, reports regarding issues or conflicts must be submitted in writing.

If a member or individual files a formal complaint against a MassAccess board member, the procedures shall remain the same, except for the board member in question being disqualified from meetings or decisions regarding the complaint.

G. Solicitations of Advice

MassAccess board members shall be available to community media professionals – both member and non-member – as trusted and learned advisors. At times, these advisory instances may go beyond the scope of typical PEG operation and into the realms of the political or the legal. No MassAccess board member should be giving advice in these situations without following these steps:

1. The MassAccess board member in question should inform the party seeking advice that they will confer with their colleagues and re-engage within a reasonable amount of time – usually within 2 business days.
2. The instance should be reported to the President, Vice President and Chair of the Governance Committee.
3. A member of this group will be assigned to craft a written response based on general consensus of the group and report back to the party seeking advice either directly or through the MassAccess Board member originally contacted.

H. Official Partner Organizations

MassAccess eagerly engages in collaboration with like-minded organizations. At times, organizations may be listed as Official Partner Organizations. Partner Organizations may or may not be members of MassAccess. In order to qualify as an Official Partner Organization of MassAccess, a majority approval of the Board of Directors must be attained and the following criteria must be met:

1. Organizations must be similar in mission, philosophy or vocation.
2. Organizations must be willing to sign an Official Partner Organization Agreement Form.

MassAccess may choose, by a majority approval of the Board of Directors, to end a partnership without notice and for any reason.

If partnering with membership organizations, MassAccess may choose to trade memberships or adjust pricing for membership.

MassAccess shall not be beholden to any Official Partner Organization other than in mutual support. The details and extent of each collaboration may be different.

MassAccess may choose, by a majority approval of the Board of Directors, to offer a complimentary business membership to any organization.

II. Membership Benefits

A. Forum

The MassAccess forum is an email access to a community of MassAccess members, composed of PEG professionals. The forum is a tool that may be utilized by members in good standing for the purpose of research, inquiries, collaboration, etc.

A member can submit a question to the community by logging into their account on the MassAccess website and navigating to the forum. Questions or comments must be of professional nature, and of viable use to a PEG professional.

The following is prohibited from the forum:

- Profanity and deliberately offensive or provocative comments;
- Inappropriate, suggestive or graphic images, videos or external links;
- Advertising commercial products or services or solicitations; Businesses may contribute one post of this nature to the Vendors & Tech thread on the first Wednesday of each month only. Any pricing information is prohibited.
- Insignificant contributions such as responding on thread with “agreed”, “LOL”, etc.

Businesses may only solicit business on the forum on the first Wednesday of the month. They may reply to specific questions or requests from our members or message people directly at any time.

Members may make recommendations to other members regarding equipment, software or services in response to a question by another member. However, specifics about price and financial exchange should be made in private messaging. Under no circumstances should a member be making unsolicited recommendations of goods, products or services.

Behavior on the forum deemed to be inappropriate will be reviewed by the MassAccess Governance Committee to decide if action is warranted. The committee reserves the right to indefinitely or permanently suspend forum privileges should violations of the above stated policies occur.

B. Website

The MassAccess.org website is a free resource available to the public, with additional member-only functions for members in good standing. The website houses current information related to PEG television trends and legislation.

All content on the website must be of non-commercial nature, however, MassAccess reserves the right to maintain certain areas of the site for sponsors, vendors, and/or supporting businesses.

Anyone who requests to contribute content to the website may submit articles of concern to PEG Media Stations or a related field, which will be posted at the discretion of the Board of Directors. It is the sole discretion of the MassAccess Board of Directors what gets added to the website. These decisions are final.

To view member-only content, members in good standing must be logged in. Instructions on how to log in to the website can be gathered by emailing membership@massaccess.org.

C. Job Board

The Job Board is a free feature available for members in good standing. Members may post their own jobs, but final editing decisions remain at the discretion of the MassAccess Board of Directors.

Members in good standing may log on and post an available job by visiting their “My Account” page and clicking on “Post a Job”.

All job postings must contain the name of the organization, employment type, apply by date, job description and contact information. Job postings may remain on the website for up to two weeks after the “apply by date”.

Non-members may use the job board for a one-time fee which is posted alongside annual membership fees. The fee and the job description can be submitted on the MassAccess.org website.

D. MMX

The Mass Media eXchange (MMX) is an online program sharing platform that MassAccess provides for its membership. This tool is free of charge and available for Individual, Organizational and Business members.

Login credentials for MMX can be acquired by emailing membership@massaccess.org. Because not all members of MassAccess use MMX, MassAccess does not automatically generate these credentials.

MassAccess members using MMX will receive a one month grace period each year in order to ensure that membership is current. Those who have not renewed their membership by January 31 of any given year will see their usage suspended.

As long as membership is kept current, login credentials will not change year to year. Members should make every effort to protect and save these credentials in the event of personnel change.

Although every attempt will be made to expedite acquisition of login credentials, new members or those who allow membership to lapse should allow up to ten business days to acquire new credentials.

In the case of Organizational and Business memberships, MMX login credentials must be shared company-wide. There is no individual access to MMX among Organizational or Business members.

Members wishing to utilize MMX must agree to policies and terms set forth by the managing corporation. Members need not be users of the managing corporation to utilize MMX.

Unless specifically requested by the member, in the case of evergreen programming, MassAccess reserves the right to remove programming from the MMX server after a period of two years.

The views and opinions of programs available on the MMX are those of the programs' producer and do not necessarily reflect those of MassAccess, its Board of Directors or its membership.

The MassAccess Board of Directors, through a majority vote, may require any uploaded program to attach the above disclaimer.

Although MassAccess firmly believes in freedom of speech, certain content must be prohibited. Such content includes:

- Any commercial programming or advertising
- Any material which constitutes libel or slander
- Obscene or pornographic material
- Unauthorized use of copyrighted material
- Material which violates the privacy of others
- Material which violates local, state or federal law
- Material which is deemed to be "hate speech"

While MassAccess may mention programs in promotional highlights, the direct promotion of member-produced programs is the responsibility of the producer.

While MassAccess would prefer that equal time be offered to political candidates when uploading content to MMX, MassAccess will not reject political program uploads if equal time has not been offered by the producer.

Understanding that most community media centers have their own policies regarding underwriting or program sponsorship, MassAccess reserves the exclusive right to remove programming deemed to be commercial by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. A member of the Board will contact the contributor and cite specifically why the program or programs were removed. Members will be allowed to re-upload said programming if and when the specific commercial nature of the content is removed.

MassAccess reserves the right to limit the amount of space one individual, business or organizational member stores on the MMX at any given time.

D. Events

MassAccess offers annual events in an effort to foster education, resource sharing and professional development. The most up to date information on MassAccess events can be found at massaccess.org/our-events.

Throughout the year, MassAccess holds a series of Meet and Greets around Massachusetts, typically at different community media facilities. These are member-only events.

Webinars are held periodically and cover a variety of topics of importance to members. Webinars may be led by either a MassAccess representative or interested vendors. Webinars are open to all MassAccess members.

The MassAccess Annual Meeting will be held in person or online each January.

MassAccess may hold other open or member-only events, which will be advertised to the membership and online at massaccess.org.

MassAccess events should be considered a public gathering and there should be no expectation of privacy. MassAccess will document events with still pictures and video and reserves the right to use these captured images for promotional material.

III. MassAccess Board of Directors Onboarding Policies

MassAccess Board seats are not elected, they are appointed by the existing board. As stated in Article IV of our bylaws: To become a Director, a person shall be nominated by a Director and elected by a majority of the Board of Directors. The following policies apply to members interested in joining the board and/or to existing board members making decisions on board applicants.

A. Board Calendar Year

1. Unless otherwise noted, board terms will begin at the Annual Meeting – typically the last week in January.
2. By September 30 of a given year, the President will inform any expiring board members that their term is coming to an end.
3. By November 15 of a given year, board members with expiring terms must notify the President if they will be seeking another term.
4. By December 1 of a given year, the membership will be notified as to the number of available seats to be occupied on board, the terms, and how to apply.
5. December 31 of a given year will be the last day of service for expiring board members and the deadline for applications for available board seats.

B. Applications for Available Seats

1. Applicants for available seats on the MassAccess Board of Directors do not need to be active MassAccess members or be community media professionals. Any individual who wishes to further the mission of the organization and is over the age of 18 is welcome to apply.

2. Applications consist of letters of intent and current resume. The Board of Directors may change the address year to year, but electronic applications are preferred. Applications may be submitted to governance@massaccess.org.

3. Individuals or members of their immediate families who represent for-profit organizations in any official capacity may apply for open board seats. However, only one representative or close relationship of a representative of a for-profit organization may serve on the board at one time. Final determination of official capacity or close relationship belongs to the MassAccess board.

C. Nomination Process

1. Applications are first reviewed by the Governance Committee. The committee reserves the right to reject any applications received after the posted deadline.

2. Applicants may be asked to interview in person or virtually with the Governance Committee.

3. The Governance Committee will meet within the first two weeks of January of a given year to vote on a slate of candidates to be presented to the full board. Desired qualifications include but are not limited to:

a. Proven dedication to the community media field or non-profit realm.

b. Understanding of the operation and financial machinations of community media, especially in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

c. Possession of specific skills being sought after by the Board of Directors.

d. Time flexibility and willingness to work.

4. The Board of Directors will meet prior to the Annual Meeting to vote on the slate of candidates. In the case of multiple candidates, each candidate is voted on individually and new members are elected by a majority of voting board members.

5. The Board of Directors reserves the right to define the length of the term being offered to new board members. No probationary periods are to be offered and the minimum term is one year. The maximum term is three years.

6. Candidates may be asked to interview in person or virtually with the Board of Directors.

7. Newly elected board members will be notified by the President or designee at least one week before the Annual Meeting. New members of the board will also be announced by electronic means such as the MassAccess Forum or on Social Media.

8. The Board of Directors may reserve applications from candidates who are not elected in case vacancies arise during the course of the year. MassAccess reserves the right to fill in vacated terms with applicants elected by a majority vote.

D. Election of Officers

1. From Article V, Section 1 of the MassAccess Bylaws: *The officers of the corporation shall be a President, a Clerk, a Treasurer, and such other officers elected or appointed in such manner as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine.*
2. Terms of officers shall be one year from the date of the Annual Meeting.
3. By November 1 of a given year, the current President will inform the current board that nominations for officers for the following year are open.
4. Interested parties shall inform the President of their intentions in writing via electronic communication. The deadline for nominations is January 15 of any given year.
5. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Officers for the year will be announced at the Annual Meeting.

III. Scholarships and Awards

MassAccess offers scholarships and grants for application, at the Board of Directors' discretion. The scholarship, or award will be awarded on an objective and nondiscriminatory basis.

A. Scholarship

MassAccess may award a yearly scholarship to an applicant who is enrolled in either an undergraduate or graduate degree granting program in media arts, broadcast journalism, community & public service, government administration, public education administration or teaching.

The amount awarded is not posted. Deadlines for applications are April 1st for the following school year. The application process will be posted by the Board of Directors on the MassAccess website yearly, along with the materials, information, and applications.

No grants or scholarships may be awarded to an officer, manager or trustee of the organization, nor to a member of the selection committee. Family members of these individuals are also not eligible to receive grants or scholarships.

The applicant does not need to be a MassAccess member.

MassAccess may also offer applications for scholarships to the MassAccess hosted events when finances allow.

B. Grants

When possible, the MassAccess board shall endeavor to make an agreed upon amount of annual funding available for grants. By April 1 of each year, the MassAccess board will announce the amount of funding available and the maximum amount per project that may be requested.

The board shall appoint a Grant Committee to review applications, which will be accepted April 1 - June 30 of each year. The Committee shall make a recommendation to the MassAccess board no later than the September meeting of the board, and successful applicants shall be notified by October 1.

MassAccess grants will be available for both capital and operational purposes. Applying for a grant to help toward a larger capital purchase is acceptable.

Interested parties should fully read details in the annual grant application, as information may change year to year.

The decisions regarding grant awards shall be made solely by a majority vote of the MassAccess board of directors without bias. These decisions are final. The MassAccess board reserves the right to award any amount of funding, or none at all.

C. Awards

MassAccess may choose to give awards to members, directors or legislators who are deemed to have been helpful in the ongoing progression of community media.

If and when awards are given as well as specific award recipients will be decided by majority vote of the Board of Directors.

IV. Sponsorships

MassAccess offers sponsorship opportunities to vendors who serve community media centers of Massachusetts. MassAccess provides the following structure for sponsors, however, the Board of Directors has the right to reject or change sponsorships with individual vendors.

A. Annual Sponsorship

Annual sponsorships are offered in a tiered system in order to include a variety of vendors with different budgets. Annual Sponsorships are year-round. The sponsorship begins on January 1st, but accommodations can be made for late submissions. Annual Sponsorships expire on December 31st each year.

MassAccess will determine the rates for annual sponsorship on a yearly basis. Rates will be made available to interested parties as soon as possible each calendar year.

Rates will be released to previous sponsors via email and made available on massaccess.org. No preferred treatment will be granted to one vendor over another.

If a vendor applies during the middle of the year, Annual Sponsorships will be prorated and vendors will be charged a discounted monthly rate.

Once an Annual Sponsorship has been requested, MassAccess must receive payment within 10 business days.

All updates to the website, correspondences, and other tangibles provided to the vendors will occur within one month of the release of the sponsorship rates for that year.

Some annual sponsorship levels include a business membership to MassAccess. These memberships are subject to the same restrictions and parameters as organizational or individual memberships. Unless otherwise specified, memberships expire on December 31st of each year.

B. Event Sponsorship

MassAccess will also offer sponsorships for their annual events, including but not limited to the Fall Meet & Greets. These sponsorships are also multi-tiered in order to accommodate all budgets.

MassAccess will determine the rates for event sponsorship on a yearly basis. Rates will be made available to interested parties as soon as possible each calendar year.

Rates will be released to previous sponsors via email and made available on massaccess.org. No preferred treatment will be granted to one vendor over another.

Event Sponsorship is granted on a first-come, first-served basis by contacting the MassAccess Sponsorship Chair and is subject to event space limitations. Once an Event Sponsorship level or Exhibitor spot has been requested, MassAccess must receive payment within 10 business days.

MassAccess reserves the right to include additional sponsorship opportunities for any event, should the opportunity arise.

MassAccess reserves the right to alter benefits offered for event sponsorship if the chosen venue does not support said benefits.

V. Violations

Members are encouraged to resolve difficulties on an individual level. If a resolution is not achieved, the Board of Directors is authorized to issue warnings, and suspensions of MassAccess membership privileges. If requested in writing, an appeal may be submitted to the Board of Directors for further review.

A. Major Violations

Major violations will result in suspension of membership privileges for an amount of time determined by the Board of Directors. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Commercial or profit-making using MassAccess tools such as the MMX or forum.
- Verbal, written, or physical abuse of other MassAccess members or representatives in relation to MassAccess provided services.
- Unruly, rowdiness and/or abusive behavior at a MassAccess hosted event.
- Falsifying forms or documents.

B. Minor Violations

Minor violations may result in written warning. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate use of the MMX, job board, or forum.

C. Representation

The Board of Directors of MassAccess are the only individuals authorized to represent the Corporation. MassAccess members should not state or imply that they represent MassAccess in any fashion other than that they are members of the organization.

VI. Right to Refuse

MassAccess Board of Directors reserves the right to refuse the participation in events and activities to any individual who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or who interferes with the orderly conduct of business.

VII. Interpretation

Whereas the implementation of these policies is subject to interpretation, decisions shall be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

VIII. Appeals

Members wishing to appeal an action of a MassAccess Director may submit a written appeal to the President of the board to communicate the problem or complaint. After receipt, the Board of Directors will provide a written response within 15 days.