

Section 5: Audio and Video Products

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Introduction

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) produces numerous video and audio products. Staff in the Office of Communications and Knowledge Transfer (OCKT) have experience producing these products and will assist AHRQ project officers, other AHRQ staff, or contractors.¹ **Anyone considering developing a video or audio product to convey an Agency- or project-related promotional message, or as a teaching or training tool produced under contract, must consult with OCKT staff prior to project initiation.** The consultation will include a discussion to determine if a video or audio product is the appropriate medium for the intended purpose.

Before beginning any work on a video or audio product, you should be able to answer basic questions about your proposed product, such as the product's purpose, audience, and funding. The checklists at Appendix 5-C (AV Checklists) can assist you with creating your product.

It is also important to identify how your video or audio product will be delivered to OCKT. For more specific guidance on delivery file types and containers, please review Appendix 5-B (AHRQ Technical Delivery Guidance). In addition, if your video will be distributed via YouTube, please reference Appendix 4-B (AHRQ YouTube Video Submission Checklist).

Production and Contracting Considerations

Before beginning video or audio production, you will need to consider format and contracting issues. These include product length, features (such as interactivity or animation), availability and cost of background (b-roll) video or music, and hiring actors. OCKT staff can recommend video production vendors that have created successful products for AHRQ.

Video and audio products require AHRQ review, and, depending on the purpose and topic, also may require review by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). You should determine at the outset who the reviewers will be and how they will review the product (for example, as a group or individually). OCKT, working with you or a designee, will determine if your product requires HHS approval; if it does, OCKT will work with you to collect the required information and then will submit it to HHS. Time for reviews and approvals should be reflected in the project's timeline.

Other items you must consider or accomplish when creating a video or audio product on behalf of AHRQ include:

- **Understand Your Project Goals:** The first step in any process is to determine the goals or desired outcomes. Goals (for example, training,

¹Most of the information in Section 5 is required for contractors and is not intended for grantees. Grantees may use any of the information, checklists, or releases if they wish, but they are not required to send completed or signed versions to AHRQ.

consumer education, meeting presentation) should be clearly identified before beginning any video or audio project and should be coordinated with key OCKT personnel.

- **Understand Your Target Audience(s):** Once you understand your goals, you can determine exactly who you need to reach with your video or audio communications activity. It's possible that you may determine that a video or audio product is not the best way to reach your audience. However, you must clearly identify your audience before you try to craft a message that will resonate with them and prompt them to take the appropriate and desired action. OCKT staff will help ensure that your product is targeting the proper audience.
- **Identify the Type of Audio or Video:** For disseminating AHRQ's messaging through audio and video, there are primarily four types of video or audio products that should be developed: **Narrative, Instructional, Informational, and PSA.** Working with OCKT on the type of video or audio product from the beginning of your project will ensure that your videos are constructed to meet the needs of AHRQ's target audiences. For more information, please reference Appendix 5-E (Identifying Type of Audio or Video Product Needed).
- **Develop a Realistic Production Schedule:** Prior to production of a video or audio product, create a production schedule that highlights the key benchmarks in preproduction (planning), production, and post-production (editing and distribution). In addition, identify key decision points where you will need AHRQ's input so that the production stays on schedule. Always remember to build in time for feedback and consultation with OCKT throughout the production process.
- **Develop an AV Production Script:** An AV production script is a two-column script. For a **video product**, the right column contains a list of audio sources for the script, including but not limited to: dialogue, voiceover narration, on-camera narration, music, etc. The left column of the script is reserved for descriptions of the accompanying visual elements of the video, including but not limited to, B-roll, graphics, stage direction, text, etc. For an **audio product**, the right column contains only the dialogue or narration; the left column lists the speaker and any required sound effects. For video, remember that all audio must be covered with video or your audience will be watching a black screen. For audio, remember that your listening audience cannot see facial or hand gestures. Above the actual script, you should list all of your speakers and their roles (if they are actors), at least one sentence about what the script is about, and the length you think your final, edited production will be. Please consult with OCKT staff regularly throughout the scripting phase.

- **Determine the Proper Length of Your Product:** The proper length of your video or audio product will be established in the scripting phase of the project. Appropriate video and audio products lengths are subjective in nature and require expert input that accounts for type, audience, and distribution platforms. Please coordinate with OCKT staff from the onset of the scripting phase to determine the proper length for your video or audio products.
- **Distribute and Collect Talent Releases:** Every person who is recognizable in the video or can be heard distinctly on an audio product must sign a talent release form that permits the product to be distributed. The type of release used is determined by the person’s role in your product. OCKT staff can assist you with releases. Samples appear in Appendix 5-D (AV Releases).
- **Create an Evaluation Plan:** Evaluation is a critical means of measuring the success of any video or audio project produced on behalf of AHRQ. Prior to embarking on the production of your product, identify how you will determine success based on the purpose of your product; for example, you could count the number of podcast streams or downloads, or the number of CME certificates issued.
- **Provide a Call to Action:** For any video or audio product, you always should include some type of “Call to Action” so viewers or listeners know what to do with the information you’ve given them. For example, this might be as simple as providing a URL or phone number to allow users to receive a consumer brochure, find out about other AHRQ information on the topic, or view a list of other training opportunities.
- **Maintain Consistent Branding:** When creating video and audio products on behalf of AHRQ, always maintain a consistent color palette, sound design, logo design, and graphic treatment with existing AHRQ materials. If you are creating a series of video or audio products, make sure to create and use an open and close that looks and sounds the same for all video and audio products in that series. Ensure that the video or audio product you create is aligned with the AHRQ Web site on which it is being hosted or distributed. Work with OCKT staff to ensure that your video or audio product contains all the proper branding elements. Consult Section 7 (Branding Design Element Specifications) from the AHRQ Publishing and Communications Guidelines. Please note:
 - Products prepared under contract to AHRQ must include the HHS/AHRQ branding and may not contain contractor logos
 - The HHS/AHRQ branding is used only for official AHRQ-sponsored products
- **Identify the Funding Source:** Somewhere in your video or audio, you must state that the product was “Produced by the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services.” A video also must include the branded HHS/AHRQ logo. Consult Section 7 (Branding Design Element Specifications) from the AHRQ Publishing and Communications Guidelines.

- **Determine Proper Delivery Format:** Prior to developing your video or audio product, please refer to Appendix 5-B (AHRQ Technical Delivery Guidance), where you will find all the necessary requirements for approved delivery of your final product to OCKT. In addition, if your video will be distributed through YouTube, please refer to the YouTube Checklist that can be found in Appendix 4-B (AHRQ YouTube Video Submission Checklist). Working with OCKT staff from the beginning of your project will ensure that you are developing products that can be used in the way you intend.
- **Comply With Section 508:** Any material that is funded by the U.S. Government must comply with the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.² Specific language about compliance should be written into contracts or task orders that include any audio or video product. Examples of proper formats for transcripts can be found in Appendix 5-A (AHRQ Standards for Contractors Developing Multimedia Products). All video products must be captioned. For captioning requirements specifically related to video to be delivered for YouTube distribution please reference Appendix 4-B (AHRQ YouTube Video Submission Checklist).

Additional Information

To discuss specific projects or to obtain additional guidance on audio or video products, please send an email to MultimediaSupport@ahrq.hhs.gov.

²Section 508 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. More information is available at:

- Section 508 Law and Standards (<http://www.section508.gov/section508-laws>)
- Making Files Accessible (<http://www.hhs.gov/web/508/accessiblefiles/index.html>)
- Myths and Facts About 508 (<http://www.hhs.gov/web/508/508myths.html>).