# How to Make & Test Videos (with Limited Time & Money)

**A Guide for Legal Services Organizations**

If you create print publications to inform your communities about their legal rights and responsibilities, videos can amplify your educational outreach efforts. This guide will help you start making and field-testing videos within a few weeks and with minimal cost.

## Why make videos?

- Many people learn through visual and moving images, rather than text alone
- Videos can complement your in-person educational outreach events
- Videos posted online counteract misinformation by changing search results
- Videos can connect viewers to your print publications and direct services

This guide is for you if you work at a legal services organization with limited time and money AND

- You have never made a legal education video OR
- You have made a legal education video, but don't know how (or even if) it works for your community.


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## 1 Ask your community to suggest a topic.

Listen to what your front-line service providers (hotline advocates, legal assistants, and lawyers in walk-in clinics) tell you about what legal questions or misconceptions come up again and again. For example, when we asked service providers in our community about video topics, we heard:

*"We get so many calls from people AFTER they lose their housing voucher because they didn't understand the rules. Wouldn't it be great to educate people about the rules before it's too late to help?"*

*"Lots of H-2A workers don't know that they may have to file income taxes, but they can get into trouble if they don't file. How can we warn them about tax preparer scams and also teach the basics about taxes?*

*"We have a lot of seniors here who need Power of Attorney documents and Living Wills. Can you come teach us about changes in the law?"*

## Video Topic Ideas

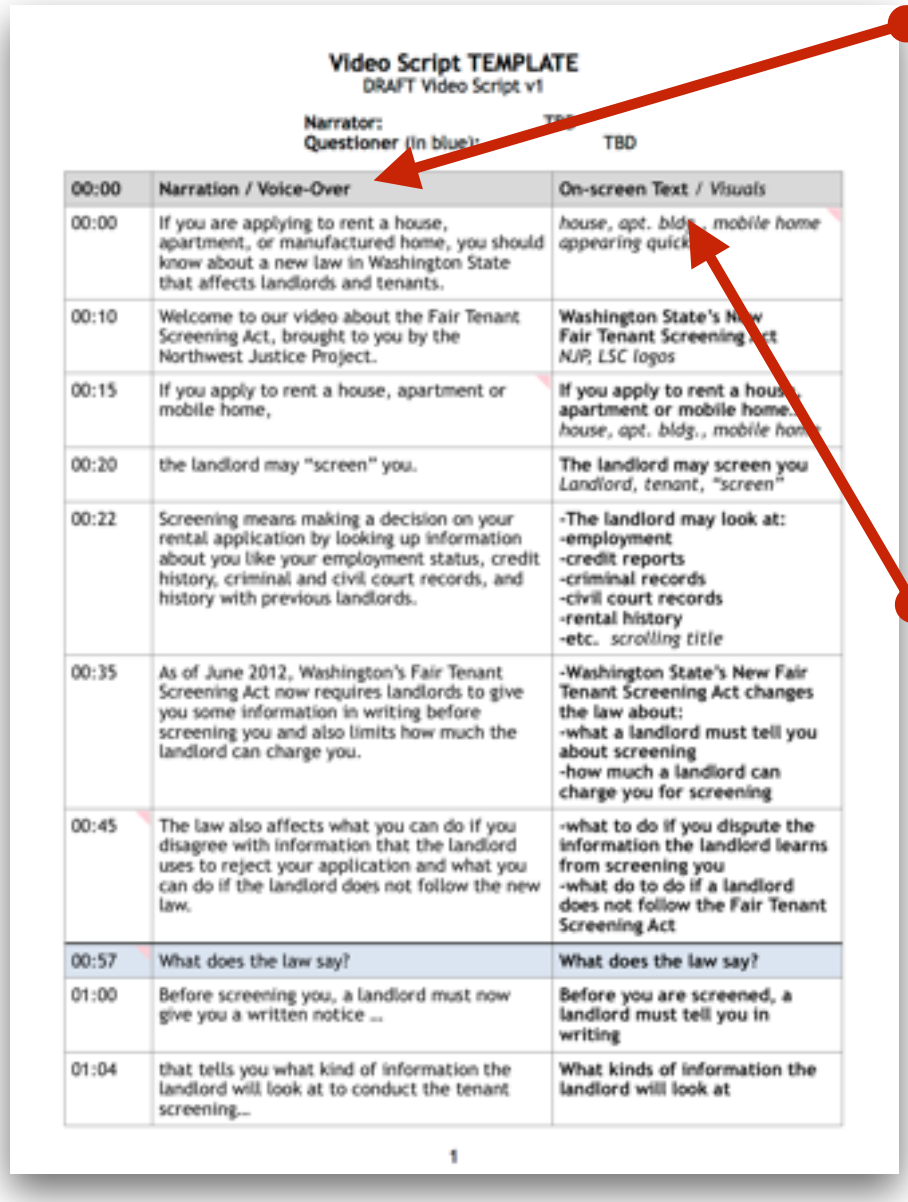
- Give a **step-by-step guide** about what to expect in a legal process
- Show what a legal document looks like, where can you get a sample, and how you fill it out
- Debunk a **common misconception** about the law, and tell the facts
- Explain where to get more information to avoid legal trouble in the future

Northwest Justice Project

# 2 Write a script with words and movement.

**Sometimes the hardest step is to sit down and write a draft script. First, tame your fear.**

There are going to be several— maybe a dozen or more drafts. Write the first draft quickly — in an hour or less. If you already have a written publication on the topic, you have a head start. **Read it aloud** or have someone else read it to you. What pictures come to mind?



**Video Script TEMPLATE**
DRAFT Video Script v1

**Narrator:** TBD
**Questioner** (in blue): TBD

| 00:00 | Narration / Voice-Over | On-screen Text / *Visuals* |
|---|---|---|
| 00:00 | If you are applying to rent a house, apartment, or manufactured home, you should know about a new law in Washington State that affects landlords and tenants. | *house, apt. bldg., mobile home appearing quick* |
| 00:10 | Welcome to our video about the Fair Tenant Screening Act, brought to you by the Northwest Justice Project. | **Washington State's New Fair Tenant Screening Act** *NJP, LSC logos* |
| 00:15 | If you apply to rent a house, apartment or mobile home, | **If you apply to rent a house, apartment or mobile home.** *house, apt. bldg., mobile home* |
| 00:20 | the landlord may "screen" you. | **The landlord may screen you** *Landlord, tenant, "screen"* |
| 00:22 | Screening means making a decision on your rental application by looking up information about you like your employment status, credit history, criminal and civil court records, and history with previous landlords. | **-The landlord may look at:**<br>**-employment**<br>**-credit reports**<br>**-criminal records**<br>**-civil court records**<br>**-rental history**<br>**-etc.** *scrolling title* |
| 00:35 | As of June 2012, Washington's Fair Tenant Screening Act now requires landlords to give you some information in writing before screening you and also limits how much the landlord can charge you. | **-Washington State's New Fair Tenant Screening Act changes the law about:**<br>**-what a landlord must tell you about screening**<br>**-how much a landlord can charge you for screening** |
| 00:45 | The law also affects what you can do if you disagree with information that the landlord uses to reject your application and what you can do if the landlord does not follow the new law. | **-what to do if you dispute the information the landlord learns from screening you**<br>**-what do to do if a landlord does not follow the Fair Tenant Screening Act** |
| 00:57 | What does the law say? | What does the law say? |
| 01:00 | Before screening you, a landlord must now give you a written notice … | **Before you are screened, a landlord must tell you in writing** |
| 01:04 | that tells you what kind of information the landlord will look at to conduct the tenant screening… | **What kinds of information the landlord will look at** |

1

**Here is a script template.** In one column, write voice-over (narration)— what viewers will hear. Write about one sentence per row. Each sentence takes about 8 to 12 seconds to say out loud in English. Aim for a video that is shorter than 3 minutes long. Pare your script down to 25 - 30 sentences.

Many lawyers want to put every accurate legal detail into the script, like writing an outline or a brief. Beware of this tendency. People will stop watching if the video is too long or crowded with unfamiliar terms or concepts.

Next to each sentence of narration, describe a visual image or movement. If you run into difficulty, read the script to a non-lawyer. Ask them what pictures come to mind?

**Write the most important sentences first.** Repeat important sentences in the middle and remind viewers of the most important sentence again at the end of the video.

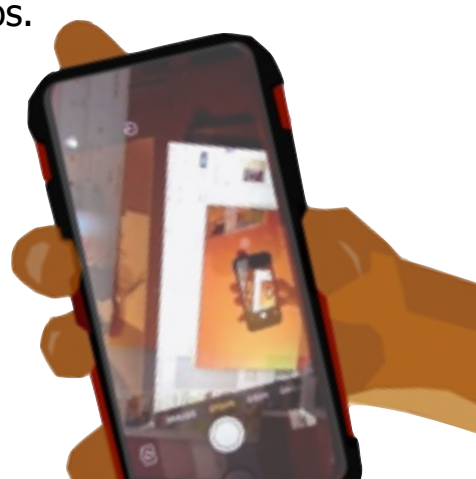
**Keep it simple.** If a shorter word works, use it. If you can cut out a word, cut it. Use everyday words and if you must use a legal term, define it as soon and as simply as possible.

**Read the script aloud to someone else.** Everything sounds different when you hear it so it will be much easier to notice clunky sentences and legal-ese. If they say something sounds wrong, they're probably right. Try to fix it.

# 3 Create a series of visual images with text.

**Use PowerPoint, Apple's Keynote or another presentation software to create a series of slides.**

**"But I can't even draw a straight line!"** Luckily, the computer can! Simple outlines can be as effective as "realistic" drawings. **Ask your community and colleagues for help.** Do any of your colleagues know a kid who draws comics? Do you have any contacts at local art schools? You can also use free images available on **ShareLawVideo.com**, at the **end of this guide** or **use your phone** to take original photos.



At first start with one slide per sentence of narration. You can make a basic one-minute video with about 12 slides held on screen for 5 seconds each. Use text, sparingly and strategically, in a title screen or to introduce key words.

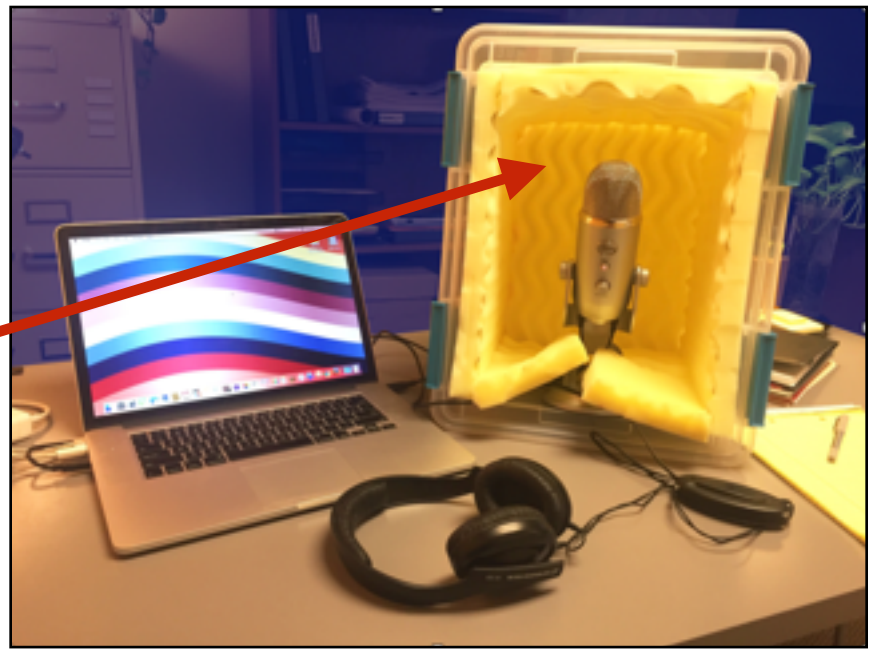
Once you have a very rough draft of the visuals and on-screen text, **export** the presentation into individual **image files: PNGs or JPEGs.** Keep the images in one file folder to import into a video editing software later.

# 4 Record voice-over narration.

Use a desk-top microphone, like the **Blue Yeti** which plugs right into your laptop with a USB cable.
Save the voice-over as an **MP3** or **WAV audio file** to import into the video editing software later.

If you have to record in an environment with ambient noise (like your office), you can make a simple, desktop "sound-booth" by lining a plastic storage bin with egg-crate mattress foam.

You can record voice-over tracks with certified interpreters in other languages. You can record the voice-over in one "take" and edit out mistakes later, using video editing software.



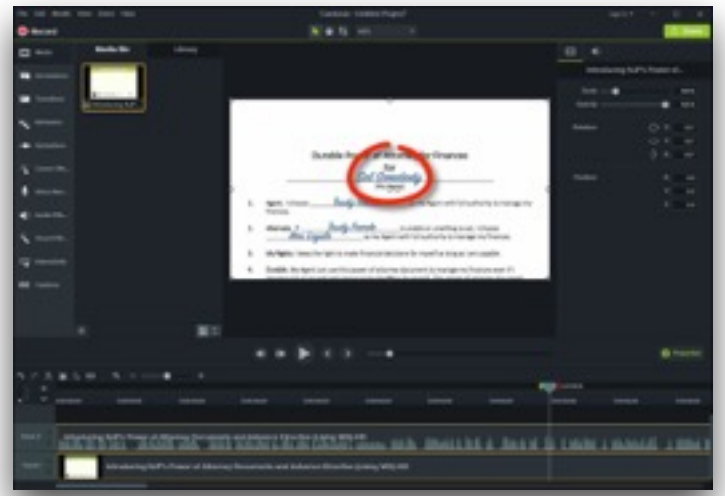
# 5 Edit audio tracks and images in a video editing program.

Build up stages in a Keynote slideshow to create the illusion of animation.

Both **PowerPoint** and **Keynote** have dozens of built-in animation effects. Your images can swoop in, fly out, or disappear in a flash. While still in PowerPoint or Keynote, **play and record** your presentation (with all its flashy animations) using a video screen-grab software, like **Camtasia**. Export the recording as a **video file, like MP4 or WAV.**

**Camtasia, iMovie** and other video editing programs will allow you to import video files, still images (from your slide presentation), and audio files simply by **dragging and dropping files** from your desktop. Once you have all your images and audio tracks together, you can adjust the timing of each visual image to correspond with the voiceover.

**Camtasia** also allows you to highlight important words or images with "call-outs" like circles and arrows, and to zoom in and focus.



## Why not use live actors?

Some people assume videos must look like TV with live actors moving around a courtroom. However, live action can cost a lot in time, sets, props, lighting, and especially audio expertise and equipment to get consistent quality. Also, having to memorize lines can be surprisingly difficult and time-consuming for non-professional actors.

Simple animation with voice-over allows for more flexibility to make changes quickly, to respond to immediate feedback from the community, reflect changes in the law and to record versions in other languages.

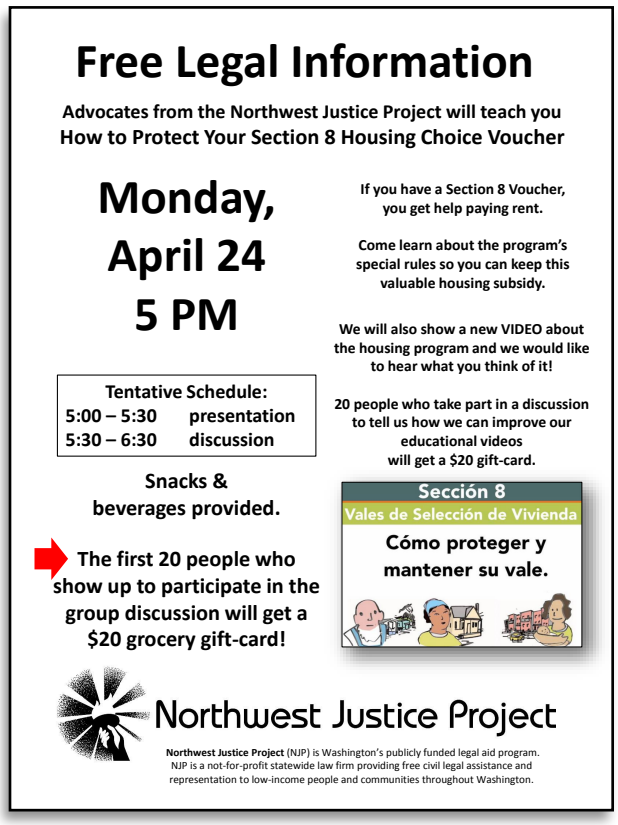
# 6 Show the video to a community group… and listen!

**Your first draft video is just the initial "hello" in a continuing conversation with your community.**

You probably already have connections to a senior center, housing program or social service provider where your community members reside or gather. You should make every effort to meet the community in their space and make accommodations in the time, place and structure of the event to ensure you have enthusiastic volunteers. For example, you may need to visit a senior center in the morning, while you may need to visit a farmworker housing project after 5 p.m. when the residents are off work.

It may take several weeks to plan and promote the event. The flyer at the right shows examples of what you can offer your community members to honor their contribution to the videos:

- free legal information with a lawyer (including Spanish interpreter, where necessary, during a Q&A session)
- the opportunity to share opinions and feedback
- light snacks and beverages
- gift cards to a local grocery store or general retailer




**Create a comfortable, confidential space.**
Strive to create an informal atmosphere where people feel relaxed enough to speak out loud in front of a group. Make sure to remind people that what they say will remain anonymous, and that participation is voluntary. Ask for informed consent to record audio and take notes. You can introduce the discussion with these reminders:

*"**You are the experts.** The video is being tested, not you. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know if this video works and how to make it better. Any honest opinion you can give us will help us improve the video and help other* [farmworkers / seniors / domestic violence survivors] *understand their legal rights and options.*

***Everything you say will be anonymous (confidential).** We will not gather anyone's name nor contact anyone after the event. But we will be taking notes about what you are saying and we would like to record the discussion with this audio recorder. We want to make sure we remember and understand your suggestions as accurately as possible. No one will be able to know "who said what." This event is **voluntary.** If anyone doesn't consent to be recorded, you can leave at any time, and do not need to tell us why.*

## Packing Checklist for Field-Test

- Laptop Computer (to play video and to record audio)
- HDMI cable (to connect the laptop to a flat-screen TV)
- Computer speakers (in case the facility does not have a TV)
- Audio recorder (to record the group discussion)
- Legal pads and pens (for the group members to take notes)
- Snacks (coffee, tea, water, baked goods, fruit and veggies)
- Gift cards (to a local grocery store or general retailer)
- Facilitator's field-testing questions, pen and paper

The groups can be as few as 8 or as many as 20. The session should last about 1 to 1.5 hours maximum. After that, people can lose energy.

Ideally, you would be able to do more than one field test for each video- until you reach the point where no new ideas about the video are coming in from the community. Most likely, you may only be able to conduct one— but one is much better than none!

# 6 (continued) Show the video and listen!

**Group interviews require active listening and empathy. Knowledge of the specific legal issues helps!**

At a minimum, you should have a discussion facilitator (who is also an attorney), an assistant and an interpreter, as necessary. The assistant can handle technological logistics and record notes, allowing the facilitator to be a fully engaged host with un-divided eye contact.

The facilitator should welcome each individual as they arrive. Once the event starts, the facilitator should explain the format and purpose of the event, and then show the video to be tested.

You are not testing the viewers' knowledge or ability to absorb information from the video, but rather your ability to communicate successfully through the video. Ask about their opinions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings.

The facilitator should begin the discussion with general questions about videos (e.g., "How many people are used to looking for information on YouTube?") and then cover each specific aspect of the video (words, visuals, color, audio quality). The discussion wraps up with more general questions about what the group members want from legal services, what topics they want to see covered, and how they want to learn about legal issues.

Often, group members will ask specific legal questions ("Who can be a witness for a living will?" or "Can I add a family member to a housing voucher?"). Reserve time at the end to respond, saying "That's a good legal question, I'm going to write it down and talk about that at the end during the Q&A. For now, let's continue with our discussion about the video." Questions centered around legal knowledge may highlight communication gaps in the video. **If multiple people ask questions about an issue you covered, you should change your video.**

# 7 Change the video based on community feedback.

**Analyze your notes and transcripts to look for patterns. Admit communication errors freely.**

Make a transcript from the audio recording and highlight feedback, both positive and negative. Some questions and comments will show **information gaps** in the videos where pertinent information wasn't covered at all. You may be surprised by these questions and realized that you missed the issue— but the audience found it! These gaps will make themselves apparent in the discussion through repeated legal questions from the group members, and in your facilitator's responses.

Although you may have covered an issue, there still may be questions and confusion. **A pattern of comments may expose information mishaps** where viewers need further or alternative explanations. Another pattern of comments may reveal that many people missed an issue that you thought you covered. You will need to re-write you script and shift the emphasis through repetition, re-organization or visual images or animation. For example, you may discover in a discussion with seniors that there is still confusion about the definition of "Durable" in a video about Power of Attorney Documents. You may find it necessary to re-write the script to clarify the concept.

The discussion may **reveal cultural context** in your viewers' lives that will lead you to alter the tone of your video. For example, you may learn that many domestic violence survivors are fearful about revealing information to the housing authority. You may need to change the tone of your video when directing them to talk to their housing case managers about household and income changes.

Of course you will receive **direct recommendations** about style or content, including specific suggestions about what would work better or what was not working. One example: "The white lettering on the yellow background is very hard to read." These may be the easiest corrections to make.

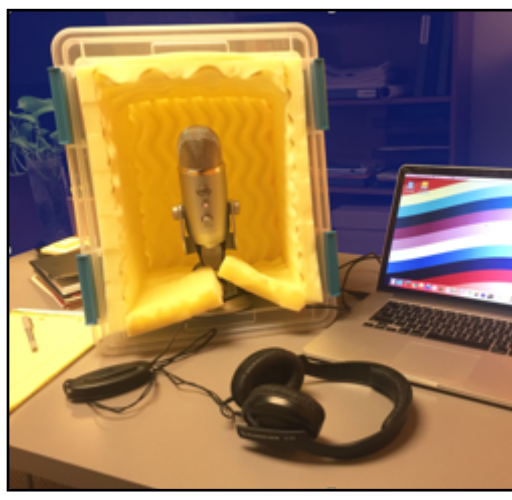
# Recommended Resources, Software, & Hardware for Legal Services Organizations

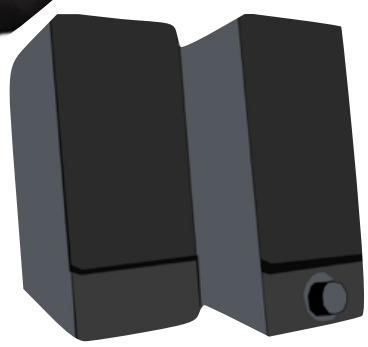
Explainer Academy™
by Common Craft

**explaineracademy.com**

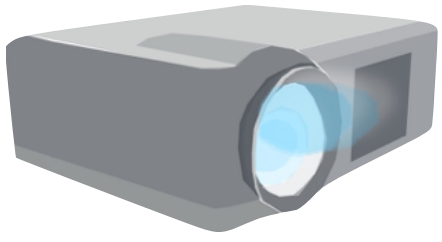
For additional online training on how to make short instructional videos, check out the **Explainer Academy by Common Craft** where you can find an excellent **DIY Media Maker Course** with step by step demonstrations of easy but powerful animation techniques. Also the **DIY Explanation Master Course** can teach you how to anticipate your audience's confusion, and to understand your own "curse of knowledge" (the more you know about a subject, the harder it is to imagine not knowing).

| Video Production Package Sample Costs | | |
|---|---|---|
| Computer | Any | $1200 |
| Smartphone | Any | $600 |
| Microphone | **Blue Yeti** | $100 |
| Soundbooth | Plastic tub / foam | $20 |
| Editing Software | **Camtasia** | $199 |
| Speakers | Any | $80 |
| Projector | Any | $200 |
| Audio Recorder | **Tascam DR-05** | $100 |
| Training | **Explainer Academy** | $549 |
| Guidebook | **Reaching Your Readers** | $0 |
| Guidebook | **Focus Groups, 5th ed.** | $40 |
| | | $3088 |



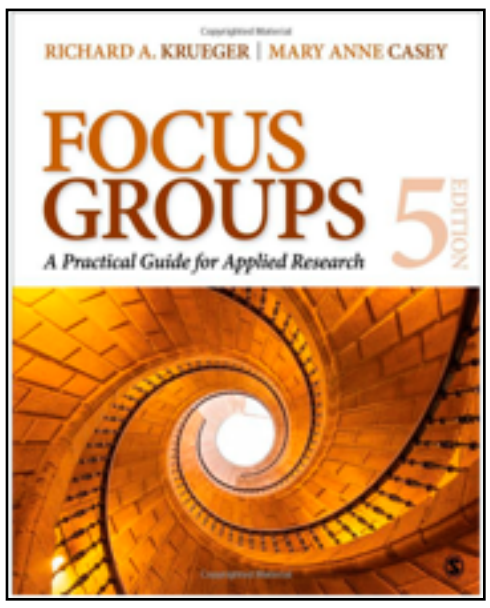


**Reaching your readers: A field testing guide for community groups www.lss.bc.ca.**



**Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research (5th Edition)**

For excellent tips and details about conducting and learning from facilitated group discussions to improve your public legal educational efforts, read both **Reaching Your Readers** and **Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research.** Together, these essential well-written and experience-tested guides cover the basics of starting your own field-testing projects.

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by Richard A. Krueger, Mary Anne Casey

# Video Guidelines & Test Questions for Legal Services Organizations

| Check your video to make sure you… | Then test your video by asking your viewers… |
|---|---|
| **Write a simple, direct script.**<br>☐ Use active voice. ☐ Use direct address (you/your)<br>☐ Aim at your viewers' literacy level.<br>☐ Remove specialized terms (or simplify and define)<br>☐ Use analogies and stories to explain complex concepts. | ☐ Were there words you didn't quite understand?<br>☐ Are there concepts the video mentioned that are still confusing?<br>☐ Do you have more questions now that you have watched the video?<br>☐ Who do you think this video is for? |
| **Make your video easy to follow and remember.**<br>☐ Use sections to break up the material with short, clear headings.<br>☐ Put the most important information in the first 30 seconds. Repeat it at the end. | ☐ Did the video make sense or was it confusing or hard to follow?<br>☐ What is the main point of the video?<br>☐ What would you tell a friend about this video? |
| **Don't overload viewers.**<br>☐ Use fewer than 150 words per minute.<br>☐ Keep it about 3 - 5 minutes or shorter<br>☐ Make a few points well rather than explain every accurate detail. | ☐ Did the narration go by too fast or just right?<br>☐ Was there too much information to remember?<br>☐ Would you have to re-watch or rewind this video again to understand it? |
| **Make on-screen text readable.**<br>☐ Use an large size with a simple, sans serif font.<br>☐ Don't underline and use ALL CAPS and italics sparingly.<br>☐ Don't put light colored lettering on light background.<br>☐ Keep text on the screen for a minimum of 5 seconds. | ☐ Did the words go by too fast?<br>☐ Did you have trouble reading the words while listening to the narration?<br>☐ Were any words illegible?<br>☐ Would you have liked more visuals or animation? |
| **Create appealing, helpful visuals.**<br>☐ Use visuals that help tell the story.<br>☐ Use visuals that do not distract from the narration.<br>☐ Use visuals and text that complement each other.<br>☐ Use culturally sensitive and inclusive visuals | ☐ Were the visuals distracting, offensive, or patronizing?<br>☐ Or did the visuals help make the video interesting and helpful?<br>☐ Did the movements and animations make sense or did they seem unnecessary? |
| **Remind viewers what to do next.**<br>☐ Emphasize 1 - 3 effective easy-to-remember action points.<br>☐ Direct viewers to more detailed print publications or your organization's contact information. | ☐ Do you know where to look next?<br>☐ Would you share this video with a friend?<br>☐ Would you seek out other videos like this? |

# Video Script Template

| **Min:Sec** | **Narration / Voice-Over / Sound Effects** | **On-screen Text** / Visuals |
|---|---|---|
| 00:00 | If you are applying to rent a house, apartment, or manufactured home, you should know about a new law in Washington State that affects landlords and tenants. | house, apt. bldg., mobile home appearing quickly |
| 00:10 | Welcome to our video about the Fair Tenant Screening Act, brought to you by the Northwest Justice Project. | **Washington State's New Fair Tenant Screening Act**<br>NJP, LSC logos |
| 00:15 | If you apply to rent a house, apartment or mobile home, | house, apt. bldg., mobile home appearing quickly |
| 00:20 | the landlord may "screen" you. | **The landlord may screen you**<br>Landlord drawing<br>Tenant drawing<br>"screen" drawing between them |
| 00:24 | Screening means making a decision on your rental application by looking up information about you like your employment status, credit history, criminal and civil court records, and history with previous landlords. | (scrolling titles)<br>**-employment**<br>**-credit reports**<br>**-criminal records**<br>**-civil court records**<br>**-rental history**<br>**-etc.** |
| 00:30 | | |
| 00:38 | | |
| 00:44 | | |
| 00:52 | | |
| 01:00 | | |
| 01:08 | | |

Most people only watch the first 45 seconds or so of a video, so put the most important ideas at the beginning. You can add more details later for self- motivated viewers along with repetition of main ideas later and at the end.

**Take a screenshot of this page and then crop around the image you want to use in your video.**

# Video Clip Art Starter Pack

# Video Clip Art Starter Pack

**Take a screenshot of this page and then crop around the image you want to use in your video.**