



## RECENT TRENDS IN FRANCHISING

### BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT DURING FRANCHISE RENEWAL

#### I. PARTNERING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- A. Build and maintain a strong, positive relationship with local government staff/officials and PEG access
  - 1. Discuss renewal with City staff in advance of the opening of the renewal “window”
  - 2. Try to create an environment of **collaboration**, rather than City issues vs. PEG access issues
  - 3. Budget for the renewal process
    - a. Sometimes the CMC/PEG access organization pays for the needs assessment
      - i. Get “buy-in” from LFA and its negotiator(s)/attorney
      - ii. Resolution from City Council/Selectmen acknowledging that the needs assessment conducted by the CMC/PEG access organization is being prepared for the City/Town as part of the renewal process
    - b. Needs assessment can be the foundation for a strategic plan aimed at achieving long term financial sustainability and meeting future community media needs (*more later*)
- B. Build an educated renewal team
  - 1. Create or be a part of the franchise renewal leadership team
  - 2. Include community leaders, PEG access leadership, and City staff
    - a. Initial key leaders meeting to educate about renewal and outline the renewal process and timeline
- C. City officials and staff, PEG access board and staff, and community leaders should be briefed on renewal basics, anticipated process, and timeline
  - 1. Initial and ongoing
- D. Build a renewal workplan/timetable

## **II. DOING YOUR HOMEWORK: COMPLIANCE REVIEW AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- A. What Homework?
  1. Compliance Review = Past Performance
  2. Needs Assessment = Current/Future Needs & Interests
- B. Why are these tasks important?
  1. Building a legal case
- C. Four reasons for denial of a request for renewal
  1. Poor quality of service
  2. Failure to have financial, legal, technical qualifications
  3. Failure to comply with the terms of the expiring franchise
  4. Proposal fails to meet the future community needs and interests, in light of costs

## **III. CREATING LEVERAGE**

- A. Past Performance Compliance Review
  1. Franchise fee/financial review of cable operator
  2. Franchise compliance review
  3. Technical review of the cable system
  4. Public input gathered during needs assessment process
  5. Report that documents the findings of all activities and makes recommendations
- B. Needs Assessment Process
  1. Focus groups (constituency-based)
  2. On-line survey(s)
  3. Telephone survey
  4. Stakeholder meetings/interviews
  5. Gathering strategic and communication plans
  6. Review of current PEG access operations
  7. Evaluate PEG access equipment, facilities, and services
  8. Public hearing
  9. Report that documents the findings of all activities and makes recommendations
- C. How do findings in compliance review and needs assessment build leverage?

## **IV. BUILDING LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY**

- A. Needs assessment can create the foundation for the development of a strategic plan aimed at long term financial sustainability . . . if done properly!
  1. Taking the needs assessment data to the next step