



Video Development for Online and In-Person Training

STANDARDS AND REVIEW PROCESS GUIDE

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Introduction

Background

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) that advances the practice of community policing in state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. The knowledge resources available from the COPS Office provide essential information in the form of developing the capacity of law enforcement to implement community policing strategies; by providing guidance on promising practices through the development and testing of innovative strategies; by building knowledge about effective practices and outcomes; and by supporting new, creative approaches to preventing crime and promoting safe communities.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as violent crime, nonviolent crime, and fear of crime.

The COPS Office Training Initiative was established to provide guidance to COPS Office training providers and program managers on instructional design, promising practices, and the process by which training will be reviewed, approved, and delivered by the COPS Office. To learn more about COPS Office training, visit the training tab on the COPS Office website: <https://cops.usdoj.gov/training>.

The goals of the COPS Office Training Initiative are as follows:

- Establish a common process for the development of COPS Office training course.
- Manage quality control through a series of review and approval checkpoints before movement to the next development phase.
- Establish a process for peer reviewing and vetting training content, style, format, and quality in a manner comparable to other COPS Office products and services.
- Establish clear outcome expectations of all training initiatives between program managers and awardees.
- Maintain COPS Office training products and services by keeping them current, relevant, and applicable to the law enforcement field.
- Prepare COPS Office training for accreditation through national law enforcement training accreditation programs.

Training guiding principles

Any training or training materials developed or delivered with award funding provided by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services is to adhere to the following guiding principles:

1. Trainings must comply with applicable law.

In developing and conducting training under the award, recipients (and any subrecipients) shall not violate the Constitution or any federal law, including any law prohibiting discrimination.

2. The content of trainings and training materials must be accurate, appropriately tailored, and focused.

The content of training programs must be accurate, useful to those being trained, and well matched to the program's stated objectives. Training materials used or distributed at trainings must be accurate, relevant, and consistent with these guiding principles.

3. Trainers must be well-qualified in the subject area and skilled in presenting it.

Trainers must possess the subject matter knowledge and the subject-specific training experience necessary to meet the objectives of the training. In selecting or retaining a trainer, recipients (or sub-recipients) should consider such factors as the trainer's resume and written materials, interviews with the trainer, observation of other trainings conducted by the trainer, feedback from other entities with which the trainer has worked, training participant feedback and evaluations, and the general reputation of the trainer.

4. Trainers must demonstrate the highest standards of professionalism.

Trainers must comport themselves with professionalism. While trainings will necessarily entail varying teaching styles, techniques, and degrees of formality, as appropriate to the particular training goal, professionalism demands that trainers instruct in the manner that best communicates the subject matter while conveying respect for all.

Definitions

Training

Training refers to the teaching and learning activities undertaken to help members of an organization acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes needed by a particular job or organization. Training is driven by specific goals and objectives, but it is an ongoing process, requiring continuing self-reflection and evaluation.

- **Learning outcomes and objectives.** Objectives describe what learners should be able to know and do after training. Learning outcomes establish the criteria by which the training will be judged a success. Training objectives and learning outcomes should be aligned with an employee's position and with the organization's goals and mission.
- **Self-reflection and evaluation.** Self-reflection should be a conscious process of critically analyzing the training material and testing understanding and retention; it is an internal check on the progress and outcomes of the training. Evaluation is the external check; it should consist of setting goals, in accordance with the learning outcomes and objectives, and conducting pre-and post-testing and a final course evaluation to ensure those goals are met.

In-person training

In-person training refers to training that is instructor-led and where the participants and instructors are in a classroom setting together.

Online training

Online training refers to training conducted via an interactive internet browser-based learning system. Online training is anywhere, anytime instruction. For the purpose of this guide, online training is considered to be either self-directed and self-paced or live instructor-led online training.

New video development

Developing a video refers to the process of producing video content. There are three stages of video production: (1) pre-production, (2) production, and (3) post-production. Pre-production involves all of the planning aspects of the video production process before filming begins. This includes reviews and approvals, scriptwriting, scheduling, logistics, and other administrative duties. Production is the phase of video production, which captures the video content (moving images and videography) and involves filming the subject(s) of the video. Post-production is the action of selectively combining those video clips through video editing into a finished product that tells a story or communicates a message and is 508-conformant (see "Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973" on page 3 of this guide).

Pre-existing videos

Pre-existing videos are videos that are already developed and available for use as a finished product. All uses of pre-existing videos should not violate copyright infringement laws and have proper permissions for inclusion in the course. All pre-existing videos should also follow section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 if included in COPS Office-sponsored training. For all pre-existing videos, the steps outlined in this guide do not apply. All pre-existing videos should be approved by your COPS Office Program Manager and included in the peer review and vetting process of the online or in-person course.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to require federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities. The law (29 U.S.C § 794 (d)) applies to all federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use EIT. Under section 508, agencies must give employees with disabilities and members of the public access to information comparable to the access available to others. Specifically, video should contain closed-captioning and audio description options. Electronic publications should be created in HTML, fully tagged PDF, or accessible text file format, and all websites must be fully conformant with section 508 accessibility standards. For more information on section 508 accessibility requirements, consult <https://www.section508.gov/>.

Course design document (CDD)

The CDD is an outline or matrix of the course content that allows the awardee to summarize the course prior to developing the course. The CDD should be developed and approved by the COPS Office prior to developing any new videos for the course.

COPS Office Training Portal

The COPS Office Training Portal is the online training gateway for all COPS Office-funded training. All videos must be compatible with the COPS Office Training Portal: <https://copstrainingportal.org/>.

Development of Training Videos

The following steps outline the COPS Office development, review, approval, and production process for creating videos that will be used with in-person or online courses.¹ This guide serves as an accompaniment to the two COPS Office Curriculum Standards and Review Process Guides.

Prior to following these steps, ensure that the CDD, which is outlined in both the Online and In-Person Curriculum Standards and Review Process Guides (<https://cops.usdoj.gov/training>), is approved by the COPS Office. The CDD is the first step to developing an online or in-person course and informs the COPS Office of the scope, objectives, exercises, length, and audience for the course. The CDD should include information about where (in which module) the video in development will reside as well as a brief description of the video.

I. Video planning and script development

STEP 1. VIDEO DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION

Discuss with your program manager the proposed development plan and content for the video. This will ensure everyone is on the same page prior to developing the formal plan outlined below. Your program manager will work with you to establish a date and time for this discussion. If subsequent discussions are needed prior to the development of the video plan, your program manager will inform you to not proceed until all parties agree.

STEP 2. DEVELOP A VIDEO PLAN

Develop a plan for the video. Include the content, narrator, participants, location, script overview, and purpose. In the plan, include how the video will achieve 508 conformance (<https://www.section508.gov/>).

Once the plan is developed, send the plan to your program manager for review and approval. Your program manager will review the plan for content, applicability to the training, methods, and expertise in subject matter. Once the review is complete, your program manager will send either revisions or approval to move to the next step. If revisions are requested, make those revisions and send the revised version to your program manager for a final review.

If any changes are recommended that you decline to make, you will need to write a memo to your program manager outlining which changes you decline and your reasons. Your program manager will review this memo and enter it into the COPS Office review process, which could take up to two weeks. During this time, do not move forward on the course until you have your program manager's approval. The COPS Office may determine that you still need to make the changes. All memos related to this determination will be saved in your official award folder.

1. For videos that are standalone deliverables or that will be used in training *and* as standalone videos, please consult your COPS Office program manager.

STEP 3. DEVELOP THE VIDEO SCRIPT AND STORYBOARD

Develop the full video script. Include all text, scenes, participants, and stage directions (if applicable). If the video script is an interview, include all interview participants, interview questions, and interviewee answers (if applicable). Once the video script is complete, send the script and storyboard to your program manager for review. Your program manager will review the video script and storyboard for content and adherence to the COPS Office mission and vision. Once the review is complete, your program manager will send either revisions or approval to move to the next step. If revisions are requested, make those revisions and send the revised version to your program manager for a final review.

If any revisions are requested which you decline to make, follow the process for declining revisions described in [Step 2. Develop a video plan](#) and await your program manager's response.

STEP 4. PEER REVIEW

Not all video scripts for in-person and online courses will need to go through peer review. Your program manager will inform you if the video script and storyboard needs peer review. If peer review is needed, follow this step. If peer review is not needed, move to [Step 5. Vetting](#).

Peer review is the process of experts (law enforcement, researchers, academics, etc.) reviewing the script or storyboard (or both) for relevance and applicability to the field. Most peer-reviewed documents have three external reviewers. The review is confidential, so you will not know the names of those reviewing your materials.

During their review of the documents, the peer reviewers fill out a peer-review questionnaire and provide a rating for the course. When the reviewers are finished, your program manager will review their feedback and ratings and share them with you. Your program manager will ask you to make the recommended changes. If the reviewers recommended any changes that you decline to make, you will need to write a memo to your program manager outlining which changes you decline and your reasons. Your program manager will review this memo and enter it into the COPS Office review process, which could take up to two weeks. During this time, do not move forward on the course until you have your program manager's approval. The COPS Office may determine that you still need to make the changes. All memos related to this determination will be saved in your official award folder.

It takes four weeks for the peer reviewers to read the materials and provide comments. If changes need to be made to the materials, that will occur after the four-week review period. You will work with your COPS Office program manager to determine a timeframe for completing the finalized script.

STEP 5. VETTING

Once the peer-reviewed, draft script or storyboard is finalized, your program manager will send it through the DOJ vetting process. The purpose of vetting is for the DOJ to review the course for organizational conflicts of interest and any implied endorsements of products or services. Your program manager might ask you to send the documents in a specific format for vetting. When vetting is finished, your program manager will review the vetting feedback and share it with you. Your program manager will ask you to make any recommended changes. If any changes are recommended that you decline to make, you will need to write a memo to your program manager outlining which changes you decline to make and your reasons.

Your program manager will review the memo and enter it into the COPS Office review process, which could take up to two weeks. During this time, do not move forward on the course until you have your program manager's approval. The COPS Office may determine that you still need to make the changes. All memos related to this determination will be saved in your official award folder.

Vetting typically takes two weeks; it is highly unlikely that it will take less time, though depending on the length of the script it may take longer. Most vetting clears during the two-week period with few to no changes identified. If changes do need to be made to the script, this will occur after the two-week review period. You will work with your COPS Office program manager to determine a timeframe for completing the finalized draft script or storyboard.

II. Video production

STEP 1. PRODUCTION PREPARATION

Ensure that all equipment, participants, scenes, locations, etc. are prepared. Work with your program manager to determine the production date(s) and time(s), as your program manager might want to be on site for production. Ensure that any required disclosures are signed and that participants are prepared and ready for their roles. Research the current local, state, and federal health and safety regulations that could impact the actual recording of the video.

STEP 2. PRODUCTION

Once approval is provided by your program manager, produce the video. Ensure that all audio and visuals are clear and concise. Ensure that local, state, and federal protocols are followed during recording to ensure everyone's health and safety during the process.

STEP 3. EDITING

Edit the video as needed to develop the draft video. Provide the draft video to your program manager for review. Your program manager will review the draft video and provide any recommendations for revisions. Make those revisions—or write a memo declining them according to the process outlined in [Section I, Step 2. Develop a video plan](#) on page 4 of this guide—and send a final draft (pre-508 conformance) to your program manager.

STEP 4. 508 CONFORMANCE

Perform the necessary steps to ensure the video meets 508 conformance requirements for captioning and formatting. For more information on section 508 accessibility requirements, consult <https://www.section508.gov/>.

Once the video is 508 conformant, send it to your program manager for review and approval. Your program manager will review the video for 508 conformance. If revisions are requested, make those revisions. If there are no revisions, move to including the video in the training course.

III. Video inclusion

At this point, you are approved to use the video in your training. For online courses, ensure the technical requirements are met for the online course. These requirements can be found in the training tab of the COPS Office website at <https://cops.usdoj.gov/training>, are outlined in the awardee's cooperative agreement, and can be provided by your program manager. For in-person courses, ensure the video files or video link are easily accessible for course instructors.

Before course delivery or launch, ensure that all requirements in the applicable Curriculum Standards and Review Process Guide, cooperative agreement, and any other COPS Office requirements are met. Courses cannot be delivered or launched without your program manager's approval.

IV. Post-COPS Office-funded training

The COPS Office reserves the right to deliver training even after the funding source for the training is complete. The COPS Officer serves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the training in part or in whole for Federal Government purposes and to authorize others to use the training. The full outline of the right to use is detailed in every cooperative agreement and can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR 200.315 (b)).

The COPS Office will retain a right to use and distribute any video developed with COPS Office funding either as part of the training or for other Federal Government purposes. The awardee also has the right to continue the use of the video in collaboration with or outside of the training.

For more information on this and how it relates to the training as a whole, consult the applicable Curriculum Standards and Review Process Guide as well as your program manager.



COPS

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To obtain details on COPS programs, call
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at cops.usdoj.gov.