



4212 Chestnut Street, 3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-222-4201/FAX 215-222-4205
www.scribe.org

Community Visions 2012 **APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

Thanks for inquiring about Scribe Video Center's *Community Visions* project. **There is no formal deadline in 2012. We will review all applications on an on-going basis.** These guidelines should answer your questions about the project, but feel free to call us if you need more information.

Scribe Video Center's *Community Visions* program teaches documentary video and new media skills to members of community organizations in Philadelphia, Chester, and Camden (NJ). *Community Visions* is a part of Scribe's mission, which is:

To explore, develop and advance the use of video, film, audio and interactive technology as artistic tools and as tools for progressive social change.

The program is a powerful way to document community concerns, celebrate cultural diversity, and comment on the human condition. We work with local non-profit groups whose members have important stories to tell but limited access to the means of making documentary. In recent years, groups have made oral histories, documented neighborhood problems, or created neighborhood portraits. The selected groups will make videos or web-based documentary projects about things that are important to their constituents. This is the first year *Community Visions* is accepting proposals for both video- and web-based documentary.

The project is free to the group. Scribe provides the instruction, technical assistance, equipment, tape and other expenses that go into the production of either a videotape or a website. When the projects are complete, Scribe organizes premiere screenings and helps groups plan how they will use their documentaries.

The application process is not difficult, but it does require that groups put a great deal of thought into the proposed project and submit a written proposal. Groups must be willing to make a significant commitment to the project and work closely with Scribe throughout the making of the documentary. We encourage interested groups to contact Scribe so that we can answer their questions and assist with the preparation of their applications.

Community Visions is demanding and exciting, and the resulting documentaries are powerful tools.

How *Community Visions* Works

Once a group's project has been selected, Scribe hires one or two experienced videomakers to be facilitators for the group. The facilitators meet regularly with the members of the community organization who make up the production team. The facilitators and the team develop the idea for the short documentary, prepare a shooting script, and outline a production schedule. Facilitators provide a lot of instruction in such things as strategies for telling the story, using the camera and lighting equipment, editing styles, new media techniques, and much more, as they guide the production team through the entire documentary process. Team members are also strongly encouraged to take workshops at Scribe, often at reduced or free rates.

A *Community Visions* project takes about ten months to complete. Typically, primary shooting takes place in five to ten sessions and editing takes place over two to three months after shooting is complete.

What Scribe does in *Community Visions*

Scribe selects and pays the facilitators. Scribe also provides the equipment, instruction and technical assistance required to design, produce and edit each videotape or new media work. Most of the training occurs on-site in the home community of the participating group. We also offer free workshops at Scribe for participants of *Community Visions*. When each group has finished their documentary project, Scribe organizes a premiere screening and gives the group some assistance (though not financial support) in arranging other viewings and venues. Throughout the process, Scribe staff answers questions, helps trouble-shoot problems, and offers other support and encouragement.

What the community organization does in *Community Visions*

The organization commits "sweat equity" for the duration of the project—typically about ten months, but some projects take a month or two longer. The time commitment for *Community Visions* is significant. The group forms a team of **five to eight** members who will see the project through to completion, including one group member who will be the team leader and the primary contact for Scribe.

During approximately the first twelve weeks, the team meets regularly (perhaps once a week for 2-3 hours), to brainstorm, design and script the project. Over the next two to three months, including some weekends, the team shoots the film. Then a two- to three-month editing phase begins during which the teams typically spend approximately 50 hours assembling their footage into a short video. During all these phases, some members of the team will take Scribe workshops to support their production skills.

The work can be divided up among the members of the production team. We do not expect every person in the group to be present at every meeting, every shoot, or all editing sessions. But we do expect that each member of the team will remain actively involved throughout the entire process, learn aspects of video or New Media story telling, and share in the work—and the excitement.

Videotape or new media work?

Community Visions has traditionally worked with groups to produce documentary videotapes. This year, we are seeking to include projects that use interactive websites as story-telling tools. A new media work may include podcasts, recorded video, cell phone pictures, online discussion boards, and other interactive web components, but the documentary must still be crafted to tell its viewers a story.

Application Process

A selection committee made up of Scribe staff, members of community groups, and past *Community Visions* team members, carefully reviews all written proposal and supporting documents. We interview group members to learn about the group's history, to get a sense of its strength and commitment to the proposed project, and to learn how the video will be used.

The Selection Criteria

In choosing the four groups each year, we look for the following things:

- The group has a reasonably clear vision of the video they want to make.
- The proposed videotape will help the group reach its constituency.
- The group has ideas about when and how the completed videotape will be used on an on-going basis (fundraising may not be the *primary* purpose of the video).
- The group is prepared to make the necessary commitment of time, energy and creativity to the project.
- The group is stable enough to handle the rigors of production.

Priority is given to proposals from groups serving low-income communities. We do not require or expect any prior video or filmmaking experience. Additionally, this year we are making a special effort to reach out to groups that are addressing the following areas:

- The criminal justice system and its impact on communities of Color
- Developing "green" or "greener" transportation options in Philadelphia
- The education system and educational reform
- Reform of the electoral process
- Projects addressing communities in Southwest Philadelphia
- Projects addressing communities in Logan and Olney

Application Guidelines

The application should be no more than **three typed pages**, and it must address the following:

About the group:

What is its mission and how does it work to achieve it? How long has the group existed and what is its history? How active is the group? Who are its constituents and how actively do they support the group? Why is the group relevant to the community or the issue it seeks to represent in its video? What were the group's total revenues and expenses for the last completed fiscal year? *We may ask the group to provide financial and other information during the review process.*

About the proposed film:

What will the video be about? What message does the group want to convey through the video? How will the group use the finished video to reach and motivate its constituents and others?

About the production team:

What are the names of the group members who will be on the team? How long has each group member been involved with the group? How many hours a week is each group member able to commit to the project? Which group member will serve as project coordinator and be the main contact person for Scribe throughout the project?

Please answer all the application questions.

The application should also include **letters of support** from individuals or organizations who support the work of the group, who believe that a video would be important to the community, and who might use the completed production.

All application materials should be hand-delivered or sent via mail with the enclosed coversheet to the following address:

Scribe Video Center
ATTN: Community Visions
4212 Chestnut Street, 3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104

We hope these Guidelines help with your organization's application to *Community Visions*. Once again, we invite you to get in touch with us before beginning your application. We will gladly answer your questions and assist with the application. For further information or any questions, please call Louis Massiah at 215.222.4201 or by email at inquiry@scribe.org.