

UTAH ENERGY WORKFORCE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Beginners Guide to Documentary Filmmaking:
story development, framing, audio and more...



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
ENERGY DEVELOPMENT
Advancing Utah's Energy Future



INTRODUCTION

Making a short documentary film involves three key phases:

- Pre-production (story development and scheduling)
- Production (filming interviews and footage – also known as b-roll)
- Post-production (editing and uploading to [website])

Whether you are an aspiring filmmaker or just beginning, the below guide details what you'll need to accomplish in each phase in order to successfully craft a five minute long documentary film for the Utah Workforce Scholarship Program.

PRE-PRODUCTION – STORY DEVELOPMENT

The first phase of making a documentary, pre-production, involves developing the storyline and scheduling filming. Here are some questions to answer in pre-production:

- What energy resource story do you want to tell? Choices include any of the following:
 - Conventional resources -- oil, gas, and coal
 - Renewable resources -- wind, solar, geothermal, and hydro
 - Energy Efficiency & Conservation – Efficient building design and technology
- What elements do I need to gather in order to tell that story? According to the scholarship guidelines:
 - Profile 2-3 energy companies (or other energy stakeholders – for example scientists, professors, non-profit representatives, government officials, etc.)
 - Conduct two interviews per location, including, for example, a general manager and production worker
- What types of questions should I ask in my interview? Craft questions that explore:
 - ...the company's operations
 - ...how the energy resource/technology works and supplies power
 - ...the resource's impact on Utah's overall energy economy and landscape
 - Ask follow up questions as they arise in the interview
- What kinds of footage (b-roll), do I need to capture?
 - B-roll of the facility and its operations
 - B-roll of the items captured in the interview – for example, an oil rig pumping or solar installation
 - Remember to get a variety wide, medium and close-up shots (more on this in Production)

PRODUCTION – FRAMING, LIGHTING, AUDIO

The second phase of making a documentary, production, involves filming interviews and footage (b-roll) to tell your story. Here are some tips and tricks to make your video look professional.

Camera Types

From smartphone to camcorder, any of these cameras will produce the type of quality needed for your scholarship submission.

Tip: Smartphones film at 30 or 60 frames per second (fps). To enhance the look of your film, download an application that allows you to film in 24 fps. That is cinema quality frame rate.



Framing

The cameras featured above should ideally be mounted on a tripod in order to get stable, quality shots – you can purchase one for less than \$20. Consider these basic principles when filming:

Rule of Thirds



Imagine your frame is divided in thirds both horizontally and vertically. Frame your interview or item of focus along the two vertical lines to make for a more compelling picture. *Don't forget to have your interviewee look into the open space.*

Also, film your interview away from walls and corners. This will add depth to your image and allow the viewer to focus on the subject, rather than the background.

Basic Camera Moves

- Pan: the framing moves left and right
- Tilt: the framing moves up and down
- Zoom: the framing moves in and out (close or far without leaving)

Basic Shots

Filming a variety of shots per subject will help supply you with options during the editing process. See the below example including a wide, medium, close-up and extreme close-up of a crew working at an oil rig.



Wide



Medium



Close Up



Extreme Close Up

Lighting

Being able to see your interview and b-roll clearly is crucial. If it doesn't look good on your camera, it won't look good during editing. While you may not have access to a lighting kit, keep these tips in mind:

- Outdoors: look at where your light source is coming from. If you're conducting an interview when it is sunny outside, face your camera away from the sun and your interviewee (or subject of focus) towards the sun. This guarantees that your subject will be well lit and not backlit (silhouetted)
- Indoors: if your interviewee's face looks dark or shadowed, move him/her around until they are in front of a light source (window, lamp or in the largest portion of an overhead light)

Audio

Being able to hear your interview is of equal importance. Follow these tips:

- Make sure your camera is close enough to the interviewee to hear what they are saying clearly.
- Interview in a quiet location (be mindful of background noise on location)
- Try using an extra cellphone to record the audio of your interview. You can accomplish this by using the audio record app on your iPhone and putting in the shirt pocket of your interview. During editing you can add that audio track under the video track.

POST-PRODUCTION – EDITING

The last phase of making a documentary, post-production, involves editing the interviews and b-roll into a 5-7 minute documentary. Consider the following tips:

- You do not have time to include entire interviews - watch your interviews carefully and pick the most informative and compelling aspects to tell your story.
- Watch your b-roll footage and edit in the clips that most apply to what the interviewee is talking about. For instance, if they are talking about how solar panels are installed on rooftops, show footage of solar panels being installed on rooftops, etc.

Editing Software for MAC and PC

There are several editing platforms available for use, including two free options that come with any MAC or PC computer. Click on the links below for instructions on how to edit with each platform.



Windows: Windows Movie Maker -- [Click here for “Getting Started with Windows Movie Maker”](#)



MAC: iMovie -- [Click here for a tip sheet on editing with iMovie](#)

Adding B-roll over interviews

Adding compelling video footage over the top of an interview will help advance the story and let the audience see what the subject is describing. For instance, if the interviewee is talking about how solar panels are installed, edit footage of a crew installing solar panels during that section of the interview. *Make sure, however, that we see the subject's face and title before you add in b-roll, otherwise, the audience won't know who you are talking to.*

Music

Combining music with visuals can help make a film more compelling, influential and emotional. If you decide to use music, make sure that you use non-copyrighted materials. Two good places for music include:

- [Freeplay Music](#)
- [Purple Planet Music](#)

Titles



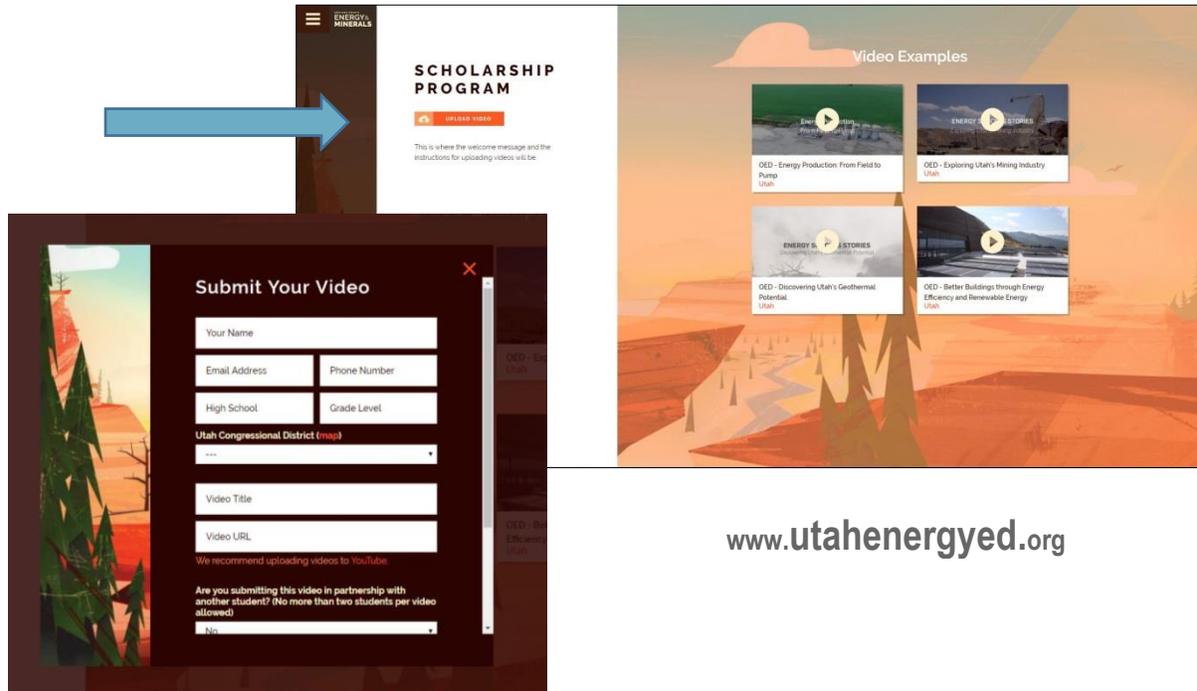
Add the name and title of your subject in a lower-third graphic that you can produce on any editing system, including iMovie and Windows Moviemaker featured above. They should follow this format:

Line 1: Name - *Dr. Laura Nelson*

Line 2: Title - *Executive Director, Governor's Office of Energy Development*

UPLOAD YOUR FILM

Once you have uploaded your video to [Youtube](#) or [Vimeo](#), simply complete the submission form on the Utah Energy & Minerals education website (utahenergyed.org) by copy and pasting the link to your video into the application box.



The image shows a composite of three elements. On the left, a blue arrow points from a dark-themed 'Submit Your Video' form to a white 'SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM' page. The form includes fields for 'Your Name', 'Email Address', 'Phone Number', 'High School', 'Grade Level', 'Utah Congressional District (map)', 'Video Title', 'Video URL', and a dropdown for 'Are you submitting this video in partnership with another student? (No more than two students per video allowed)'. The 'SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM' page has a 'UPLOAD VIDEO' button and a note: 'This is where the welcome message and the instructions for uploading videos will be.' On the right, a 'Video Examples' section displays four video thumbnails with titles: 'OED - Energy Production: From Field to Pump Utah', 'OED - Exploring Utah's Mining Industry Utah', 'OED - Discovering Utah's Geothermal Potential Utah', and 'OED - Better Buildings through Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Utah'. Below these elements is the website URL www.utahenergyed.org.

EXAMPLES

Each quarter, the Governor's Office of Energy Development produces a short documentary on one aspect of Utah's diverse energy and minerals landscape. Similar to the scholarship criteria, these films not only profile Utah's resources, technologies and best practices, but also demonstrate how this robust sector drives Utah's economy and supplies more than 40,000 people with high paying jobs. To view these films, visit utahenergyed.org.



Geothermal



Oil & Gas



Mining



Building Efficiency

QUESTIONS?

For additional questions, please contact:

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