

Underwriters (also referred to as “corporate sponsors,” “sponsors,” “corporate supporters”) play a vital role in IPR’s goal to develop a sustainable funding model that allows our network to thrive. Iowa Public Radio has an open access policy regarding our underwriters, meaning that we do not pass judgment on the character of our contributors. Iowa Public Radio may accept or reject underwriting from any business or organization at its discretion. For instance, IPR will not accept any underwriting from businesses or organizations that promote illegal products or services.

Each prospective underwriter is reviewed in an attempt to prevent potential conflicts of interest and listener misperception or confusion regarding the underwriter’s role and influence on programming. Underwriting from controversial businesses and organizations is reviewed by at least two members of the underwriting team and the Development Director.

Political or advocacy underwriting

Iowa Public Radio does not accept political or “issue” underwriting. Any underwriting that expresses a view on a public issue or supports or opposes a political candidate is rejected.

Underwriting from advocacy groups is permitted, but the content of the underwriting message must not advocate for any position. Advocacy groups receive extra scrutiny from IPR’s underwriting team. Underwriting from advocacy groups is reviewed by at least two members of the underwriting team and the Development Director. In certain cases, Iowa Public Radio will also consult our FCC attorneys.

Wording of underwriting announcements

Iowa Public Radio supports and follows the FCC’s guidelines for non-commercial stations to ensure that on-air sponsorship announcements are informational, not promotional. Each announcement is reviewed to ensure that it meets this and several other criteria, including the following:

- (1) announcements don’t use qualitative or comparative language (“best,” “convenient”)
- (2) announcements don’t make any reference to price (“APR,” “free”)
- (3) announcements don’t use “call-to-action” wording (“visit us,” “try now,” “inviting listeners to...”), or wording that can be considered an inducement to make a purchase (“risk-free,” “money-back guarantee”)

Following the FCC’s guidance, Iowa Public Radio makes reasonable good faith judgments when approving underwriting script copy.

Iowa Public Radio holds non-profit underwriters to the same standard as for-profit underwriters. All underwriting copy must follow the FCC guidelines for non-commercial stations.