



PBS American Portrait Photographer/Videographer Brief

Background

PBS American Portrait is a national storytelling project, aligned with PBS's 50th anniversary celebration, that seeks to define what it really means to be an American today. By inviting audiences across the country to be heard and share their stories through their own words and images, PBS American Portrait will ultimately capture the state and spirit of our nation.

PBS American Portrait begins as a platform for user-generated content participation, inviting people across the country to contribute photo, video and text submissions. Everyday American people will answer specific American Portrait prompts with their own unique thoughts, words, beliefs and experiences. We will ultimately begin to find that we, as a nation, have much more in common than we realize. A few example prompts include:

- I was raised to believe...
- The tradition I carry on is...
- What keeps me up at night is...
- When I step outside my door...
- Most days I feel...
- I took a risk when...

In addition to the UGC element of the initiative, PBS will create a multi-episode documentary set to air in early 2021. The series will use the story submissions as a jumping off point, diving deeper into themes and throughlines that emerge from the UGC. This project has no political affiliations and will be focused on the American people, their beliefs, their traditions, and their experiences.

Talent

PBS American Portrait is seeking storytellers with a keen eye and a documentarian mindset to help capture stories that represent authentic diversity within the communities they have access to, as told through photography and/or video. Each storyteller will contribute 5 submissions, using their creative discretion to represent their subjects in as truthful a manner as possible. We are looking for artists who want to represent the way they see America through the people they know: utilizing image, sound, and story to capture compelling narratives and untold American stories.

Overall Objective: Storytellers

You will be part of a team of 100 videographers and photographers across the country (2 in every state, 1 rural, 1 urban) who have a passion for capturing experiences unique to the communities they have access to.

Creative Direction:

Keep in mind that this is a *visual storytelling project*. We're looking for a diversity of stories from authentic voices, and we're counting on you to use a discerning eye in helping capture those stories. Help give access to an otherwise hidden gem. Capture the moment, the humor, the irony, the innocence, the honesty— any or all of the above, and more. We encourage you to visit a wide range of places that can garner diversity within content submitted. Some examples could be:

- Flea/Farmer markets
- Bowling alleys or other fun activity locations
- Outdoors (a person's front yard, on a farm, in nature, etc)
- Indoors (cooking a special meal in the kitchen, telling stories in the living room, etc.)
- Populations who might not have the ability or access to tell their own stories

Please ask yourself these questions: **do you find the submission interesting from a visual and story standpoint? Does it intrigue you, and would it make you want to view other stories from the initiative?**

Overall, visual variety is key: photographic portraits, objects, different lens lengths, timelapses, slow motion, times of day, etc.

Deliverables

Each storyteller will be asked to submit 5 submissions. You can use your discretion as to which of the 14 American Portrait prompts you would like to ask your subjects, but please submit only the best 3 per subject. If there is only one prompt that is terrific, and you've put a lot of work into that piece, that's also fine. Think about which prompts best fit their story.

Each storyteller is responsible for submitting the required releases and paperwork to ensure that all of the footage is able to be used by PBS. (Paperwork will be provided to you for this purpose.) There should be no participants filmed or photographed under the age of 13, and if you film or photograph someone between 13 and 18, you'll need to have a parent or guardian submit a release for them. In addition, please steer clear of overtly political content. Submissions will be rejected if there is hate based language or content included. Please avoid music, logos, and other potentially copyrighted material.

There are no technical specifications for these submissions - it is up to the discretion of the storyteller. They could be filmed or photographed with a smartphone or using professional equipment. Please do your best, however, to ensure that each subject can be heard, and that your artistry and creative eye is part of the submission.

Each response to a prompt can be in the form of a photograph, a gallery of photos, or a video. The video can be edited with b-roll, but that is not a requirement. 80% of video submissions should be between 20-60 seconds, and if there is a longer piece, it should earn its length. Think story, not seconds. Each prompt should come with a caption that should read in the first person, from the subject's perspective.

Throughout your participation, you will be asked to provide bi-weekly updates on content collected and submitted to the PBS American Portrait website. You will correspond with Rebecca Blumhagen who will be available to answer questions and help you with reporting and compensation. You will be provided with a packet with the release forms that you need, and a link to a submission portal where you will submit all the releases and submission materials.

Compensation

This is work for hire and paid on receipt of 5 submissions (\$150 total).

Relevant Links

Homepage: <https://www.pbs.org/american-portrait/>

Social:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/americanportraitpbs/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/PortraitPBS>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/AmericanPortraitPBS/>

Relevant storytelling projects for visual reference:

[Humans of New York](#)

[Family of Man](#)

Some submissions that we love:

My Saturday Night looks like:

- [Maliha](#)
- [Tony](#)

When I Step Outside my Front Door:

- [Blair](#)
- [Tucker](#)