



Make Your Own *Interview* Videos

A process your center can run on its own to produce testimonial and educational videos.

What you need

- A computer or phone for both participants, and an internet connection for both.
- An account with Riverside or another video recording platform. Riverside has a free tier, limited to two hours of recording at lower resolution, and paid plans lift those limits. Zoom is also possible but has limitations in video quality.
- An editing account with Descript or another editing program. Descript is a user-friendly web-based service, and its free tier is limited to 60 minutes of media per month. This is not necessary if you plan to subcontract the editing.
- A staff member or subcontractor to handle the editing. Subcontractors can be found pretty easily on platforms such as Fiverr and Freelancer, where you describe the job and ask for bids.

1 Ask a consumer or other guest to participate

Send a direct ask.

"We are making a short video about what independent living looks like in real life, and we would like it to be your story."

"It takes about an hour total, including a quick technology check a few days beforehand. We will help you with the technology, so there is nothing you need to figure out on your own."

If you have the resources to offer a gift card as a small honorarium, it might help make up for the effort required on their end.

2 Send the person the questions for the interview once they agree

A starting set to adapt.

- Tell me who you are and what you do.
- What has been a primary obstacle in your efforts to live independently?
- What changed once you started working with the center?
- What does a normal day look like for you now?
- What do you wish people understood about independent living?

3 Send the release form

Send a plain-language media release and get it signed before recording day. Jotform is a simple way to do this.

4 Run a 10 minute technology check

- Make sure to schedule a few days ahead of time so that there is time to troubleshoot in case any in-person support is needed.
- Open the recording link together and confirm the camera, the microphone, and the internet connection.
- If the computer does not work, walk them through how to download the Riverside app from their app store, and then have them click the link on their phone.
- Look at the light on the person's face and at what is behind them.
- Record 30 seconds and play it back.

5 Record on a phone or laptop

For the person being interviewed, computers work well, but you will want to make sure the video quality is adequate during the technology check. If the quality is low, you will likely want to use their phone, since phone camera quality is pretty consistently good whereas computer cameras can be hit or miss. The only added step to using a phone is that they will

have to download the Riverside app if you are using Riverside, whereas on a computer they can use the browser.

The interviewer's sound and video is less important than that of the person being interviewed, unless you intend to show both in the final product. On a computer, Chrome or Edge work best.

If using the phone, make sure they turn it sideways and prop it at eye level to create a wide shot. You can also consider providing them with a stand if propping it at the right level proves too difficult.

6 Interview like a conversation

- Make sure to find the story underneath the answer, asking follow-up questions if necessary, to get at the main points of their story: what they wanted, what got in the way, what changed, and what it means now.
- Ask the person to answer in full sentences that repeat a little of the question, so each answer stands on its own once your voice is edited out. For example, ask them to state the answer like this: "The obstacle I was facing was..."
- Let silences sit for a while. A pause usually means the interviewee is formulating a thoughtful answer, and the sentence after the pause is usually the one you end up using.
- Close with "is there anything I did not ask about that you want people to know?"

7 Edit in Descript

- Upload the recording and Descript writes a transcript. Delete a sentence in the transcript and the video cuts with it, so editing works like editing a document rather than like traditional video software.
- There are ways to clean up the transcript, remove filler words, and make other enhancements to sound and picture. Training materials are readily available online if you search "how to [insert action] in Descript."
- Cut to the strongest three or four moments.

Descript also includes an artificial intelligence feature called Underlord that you can ask to make changes for you. This built-in editing assistant takes plain language instructions: remove the filler words, add captions, tighten this section, build a title card that says this, make a vertical version for social media, provide voiceover description. You can also ask it how to do something rather than telling it what to do, such as how to add your logo or how to match the look of an earlier episode, and it will either walk you through the steps or make the change for you.

8 Optional: hand the file to an editor

If editing is not a good use of your staff time, hire a freelance editor through a platform such as Fiverr or Freelancer and keep the interviewing in house, where your relationships already are.

Send the raw file and a short brief: the finished runtime, captions required, an Independent Living Awareness episode as the reference, and the date you need it back.

9 Cut short clips for social media

- Keep each clip to about 20 to 30 seconds, built around one idea rather than a whole story.
- Add captions to every clip. Captions are an accessibility requirement, and most people watch social video with the sound off, so a clip without captions is a clip most of your audience will scroll past. Automated captions on the platforms are often wrong on names, places, and program names, so burn the captions into the video itself. Those are the ones you can control.
- Put a line of hook text across the top of the frame that says what the clip is about, so someone knows within a second whether it is for them.
- Descript can pull clip suggestions from the full interview, and the same editing assistant will add captions, resize to vertical, and place the hook text for you.

If you are hiring a contractor, ask for the clips as part of the job. Tell them how many you want, the runtime, that captions and hook text are required, and which platforms the clips are going to.