

[FCC Underwriting Rules for Noncommercial Radio and TV - A Seminar on the Issues](#)

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Fines for noncommercial broadcasters who air acknowledgments of their donors and contributors that sound too much like commercials have been a problem area for many noncommercial educational radio and television stations, and have resulted in significant fines from the FCC. The FCC allows "**enhanced underwriting announcements**" that identify a sponsor, what their business is, and where they are located, but such information must be provided in an objective, non-promotional manner. Earlier this week, I conducted a seminar for noncommercial broadcast stations who are members of the **Maine Association of Broadcasters** and the **Connecticut Broadcasters Association**. During the seminar, we discussed the FCC rules that govern fundraising done on such stations. The PowerPoint slides from that presentation are available [here](#), and provide an outline of the FCC rules on **underwriting**, promotions, fundraising and related issues, with samples of announcements that have led to FCC fines for noncommercial stations.

We have written many times about FCC issues related to fundraising and other matters relevant to noncommercial stations. We have written articles about cases where the FCC fined stations for enhanced underwriting announcements that were too enhanced, and violated FCC standards by containing **prohibited calls to action, inducements to buy, price information or qualitative claims** (see, for instance, articles [here](#) and [here](#)). [Another article](#) discussed **fines issued by the FCC for improper underwriting announcements where the announcements were of excessive length**, and where the announcement ran in programming that was not originated by the station and from which the station received no consideration. [Another article](#) discussed the **FCC prohibition on noncommercial stations interrupting their regular programming to raise funds for charitable groups other than the licensee**. You can scroll through other articles we have written on other legal issues for noncommercial broadcasters by clicking [here](#). Watch our blog for other issues that relate to noncommercial broadcasters to stay up-to-date on the latest developments about which you should be aware.

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