

Washington Filmworks

Locations on a Budget

Whenever possible we always suggest hiring an experienced location manager, but when you are working on a low budget project, the best asset that you have is yourself. Be professional when approaching potential locations. Here are some tips about how to put your best foot forward!

Where to find locations:

- You can browse Washington Filmworks' [location database](#) to get a feel for the types of locations Washington has to offer. Please note that some of the location listings in our database exist to show a general “look,” not a specific filming location. If you have any inquiries about locations you see on our database, please email Info@WashingtonFilmworks.org for more information.
- Scouting for an office or studio space? You can find options on venue booking websites like [Peerspace](#) or [Regus](#).
- Searching for a home? Check out [Airbnb](#) or [VRBO](#) for a variety of residences for rent. (When you rent a space through one of these platforms, be fully transparent with the owner about your intentions for using the space as a film set and provide details about the project.)
- Interested in shooting in a National/State Park or Forest? Take a look at the [resources on our website](#) with information on how to obtain permits for filming in these areas.
- Ask around! Use your network to find different location options that friends, family, or peers have access to.

When approaching a location, have these resources at your fingertips:

- Letter with project synopsis, filming dates/times, impact, size of crew, your contact information
- A Location Agreement (See example agreement [here](#))
- [WA State Production Code of Conduct](#) as well as [Guidelines for Private Property Owners](#) –providing these documents when approaching local businesses or home owners about using their property as a filming location will help them understand the impact of a production.
- Some properties might require your production to provide an insurance certificate, a listing of local production insurance companies can be found [here](#).

Offer private property owners incentives for the use of their property:

- Invite them for a set visit
- List them in the credits
- Offer them an invitation to your screening
- Offer your footage/photography to be used for promoting their business

After securing your location, it is important to notify other local businesses and residents about the impact of your production by using a **community notification letter** (See an **example letter** [here](#))

Have you chosen to shoot in a public space, street, or sidewalk? Be prepared and get a permit in advance:

- Even if a location is public property, you still need to check if your production will need a permit to film there. It is important to [get a permit](#) so that your shoot is not interrupted by authorities.
- Permits are based on individual jurisdiction, so do your research on who best to contact, if you aren't sure, you can reach out to us at Info@WashingtonFilmworks.org with your questions.

Are you planning on using a Drone? You need a permit for that!

- To fly a drone as a commercial pilot in the state of Washington you are required to follow the requirements of the [FAA's Part 107 Small UAS Rule \(Part 107\)](#).
- Many public locations, such as parks, require a special permit for the usage of Drones. Make sure you have the proper permissions before filming.

Location Scouting Fundamentals

Location scouting plays a major role in the pre-production and production stages of filmmaking. When scouting for a location, here are a few things to consider:

Recommended Tools:

- Camera/Phone
- Pocket-size notebook and pen
- Measuring tape
- Your business cards

Gather Essential Data:

- Confirm with owner or site manager that the location is a possibility for filming.
- Get contact information of primary location contact; name, address, phone, email.
- Is the location affordable?
- Are there sound issues (traffic, airplane flight patterns, trains, factories)?
- Is this location on public or private property? Will the location require a permit?
- Will this location require the hiring of police officers for traffic control or foot traffic?
- Is there electrical access?
- Consider access to the location; is there an elevator, big hills, tough corners?
- Get an idea of where you would handle equipment staging, extras holding, catering, tech truck parking, crew parking, restroom facilities.
- What effect will production have on nearby businesses or neighborhoods? Will there be a need to canvas the area?

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Photography Tips:

- Shoot everything at the location even if you are only looking at specific portions of the location; interiors, exteriors.
- Whenever possible, take a video touring the location.
- Take a photo of the owner's or site manager's business card. If you do not get a business card, take a picture of your notebook when you write down the contact information.