

**The First Steps towards Starting a Community Radio Station**  
**Compiled by the Staff of NFCB and**  
**The Center for Native American Public Radio**

1. Conduct a frequency search. You must find out if there are any frequencies available. The quick and dirty way is to run through the dial on your radio and see if there is space. Ultimately you will have to hire an engineer. NFCB can suggest several engineers to help. Approximate cost: \$500.00.

2. Form a Board of Directors and incorporate as a non-profit organization, or find a non-profit organization which is willing to sponsor/house you.

3. With the Board, determine the need(s) for a radio station in your community and the mission of the station.

4. Find a tower or another place to put your antenna.

5. Start raising money.

6. Apply for a license from the FCC. We recommend that you use a communications attorney for this process. We can supply names.

7. Become a member of NFCB and start receiving benefits.

8. Find studio space.

9. Keep raising money.

10. With your Board, begin to outline as many policies as you can. Think about: Volunteer management; underwriting policies; employment policies. Think about Programming and programming policies. What kinds of programs do you want? Who will do them? How will you find them? Do you need to train them? How will you change programming? How will new programs get on the air? Who will do program evaluations?

Think about bringing someone from NFCB to conduct planning session with your Board.

11. Raise more money.

We estimate that it will cost \$200,000 just to get the station on the air, and a minimum of \$100,000 per year to operate the station.

**National Federation of Community Broadcasters**  
**1970 Broadway, Suite 1000**  
**Oakland, CA 94612**  
**510 451-8200**  
**[www.nfcb.org](http://www.nfcb.org)**

## Master Control – El Cheapo

<b>Broadcast Tools - ProMix 12 Console</b>	<b>\$1500</b>
<b>M-Audio Powered Monitor Speakers</b>	<b>\$350</b>
<b>Dell Tower PC for Audio Storage / Air Logging</b>	<b>\$1100</b>
<b>2 MXR Large Condenser Microphones with booms</b>	<b>\$350</b>
<b>2 Somewhat quality CD players -several options</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>2 Used Panasonic SL1200 Turntables -complete W/ preamps</b>	<b>\$1000</b>
<b>1 Barebones studio console – Custom fab</b>	<b>\$450</b>
<b>2 3ft. 19" tilt table top rack boxes – Custom Fab</b>	<b>\$300</b>
<b>1 two row patch bay – 19" with 2 doz cables</b>	<b>\$350</b>
<b>2 Sony headphones</b>	<b>\$200</b>
<b>2 Homebrew Distribution amplifiers – Custom Fab</b>	<b>\$350</b>
<b>1 Used EAS system Plus 3X receivers-</b>	<b>\$1000</b>
<b>1 Used DBX DDP Audio Processing unit</b>	<b>\$400</b>
<b>1 lot Audio wire, ground strap, and installation materials</b>	<b>\$450</b>
<b>1 lot Labor for installation of On-Air control room – 80 hrs @ \$15/Hr.</b>	<b>\$1,200</b>

**Total: \$9,500**

Created by Jim Ellinger, Austin Airwaves

## **MAIN STUDIO – Minimal**

ASSUMES AN EXISTING DESK OR TABLE SURFACE FOR EQUIPMENT

### **QTY ITEM EACH TOTAL NOTES**

1 OPTIMUS (RADIO SHACK) SSM 1250 STEREO MIXER CONSOLE (32-3009) 150 150 3  
LINE, 1 MIC INPUTS

1 RADIO SHACK 15-1956 STEREO A/V 4-INPUT SELECTOR 25 25

2 YAMAHA CDX 393 MKII CD PLAYERS 100 200

1 SONY TC WE435 DUAL CASSETTE DECK 140 140

1 RADIO SHACK NOVA 71 HEADPHONES 25 25

1 RADIO SHACK UNIDIRECTIONAL DYNAMIC 12 1/2" GOOSENECK MICROPHONE  
(33-3011) 35 35 NO STAND REQ IF USED W/1250

1 EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM (EAS) DECODER (WITHOUT ENCODER) 800 800

1 CHEAPY BOOMBOX W/DETACHABLE SPEAKERS FOR REFERENCE MONITOR 100  
100

1 CUSTOM BUILT MIC SWITCH (FOR MUTING SPEAKERS WHEN MIC IS ON & VICE  
VERSA) 20 20 PARTS COST ONLY

1 RADIO SHACK ET-216 SINGLE-LINE SPEAKERPHONE - CUSTOM MODIFIED FOR  
ON-AIR USE 50 50

1 misc & wiring parts 150

1 2% shipping costs 33

1 20% contingency 345

**TOTAL - MAIN STUDIO - MINIMAL >> 2073**

Created by Michael Brown, Brown Broadcast Service

# Low Power vs. Full-Power FM Fact Sheet

Prepared by Michael D. Brown  
Brown Broadcast Services  
February 19, 2007

## Low Power FM (LPFM)

- limited to 100w @30m HAAT<sup>1</sup>
- not protected from interference received -- many LPFMs experience severe interference, greatly limiting their coverage areas
- is a **quasi-secondary** service – can get bumped at any time by a full-power station. – however if the FPFM situation is a “move-in” after the LPFM is on the air, the LPFM has a limited right to continue broadcasting as long as it does not *cause* interference inside the FPFM 70dbu contour<sup>2</sup> (but in these cases the LPFM will often *receive* severe interference and be severely compromised)
- co-equal with translators in most regards
- cannot be sold – FCC Rules prohibit transfers, however some transfers have been approved by a waiver, on a case-by-case basis – no money can be paid or received for transferring the license

## Full-Power FM (FPFM)

- minimum 100w @30m HAAT  
maximum 100kw @600m HAAT  
a minimum FPFM is equal to a maximum LPFM
- protected from interference received
- is a **primary** service – can bump most LPFM stations that are “in the way”, as defined by §73.809.
- can bump translators that are “in the way”
- transferrable and sellable in most cases, for any price – NCE FPFM stations in major markets can be worth millions of \$\$

---

<sup>1</sup>Height above average terrain. See §73.313

<sup>2</sup>See §73.809