

# Choosing the Right Media for Newcomer Programming

## Using Multimedia in Programming for Newcomers

Caseworkers often spend valuable time walking clients through the same basic processes again and again. Multimedia resources, like short videos, allow service providers to communicate more efficiently by replacing repetitive, time-consuming one-on-one explanations with accessible and scalable resources. Creating a brief tutorial once in an accessible format and sharing it broadly ensures information is delivered consistently while freeing up staff time. Videos, in particular, allow clients to access information when it's convenient for them and are especially effective for individuals with lower literacy or limited English proficiency. By integrating multimedia into newcomer programming, you can expand capacity, improve clarity, and devote your energy to more intensive case needs.

## A Decision-Making Guide for Resettlement Service Providers

**Purpose:** This tool helps service providers determine *when* to create media and *which* media format best supports their program goals and aligns with their staff capacity, newcomer needs, and available resources.

### How to Use This Tool

Work through each decision point in the guide. Your answers will direct you toward the media format that best fits your context. There is no single “right answer”; simply select the format that aligns with your program’s objectives and the unique needs of the newcomers you serve.

*Note: Switchboard does not endorse any individual product, platform, or for-profit corporation.*

## Decision Point 1: What Are You Trying to Teach?

**Question:** What type of content do you need to deliver to newcomers?

Consider whether your content is:

- **Process-driven and visual:** showing how to do something step by step, like riding the bus, navigating a doctor's office, or securing a car seat
- **Skill-building:** practicing interactions, like job interviews or citizenship tests
- **Information-heavy:** explaining concepts, rights, or procedures

**If your content is process-driven and visual** → Continue to [Decision Point 2](#)

**If your content involves skill-building through practice** → Virtual reality (VR) with interactive elements may be worth exploring. Continue to [Decision Point 2](#)

**If your content is primarily information-heavy** → Consider using written guides, infographics, or narrated presentations before investing in creating your own media. Continue to [Additional Resources](#) for more guidance on creating your own media.

## Decision Point 2: Is your team ready?

**Question:** What is your staff's comfort level with learning and troubleshooting new technology?

Assess your team based on these three factors:

1. **Patience:** Does your team have a high tolerance for trial-and-error learning and technical glitches?
2. **Willingness to troubleshoot:** Will staff persist when technology doesn't work as expected?
3. **Curiosity:** Does your team get energized by experimenting with new tools?

**If you answered "yes" to all three** → You have strong staff readiness and interest. Continue to [Decision Point 3](#).

**If you answered "yes" to one or two** → Start with simpler formats like basic mobile video tutorials. You can build toward more complex formats as staff confidence grows. Continue to [Decision Point 4A](#)

**If you answered "no" to all three** → Focus on building staff digital confidence first. Consider starting with existing videos from trusted sources before creating your own. See the [Additional Resources](#) below for more guidance on creating your own media.



## Decision Point 3: What's Your Budget Reality?

**Question:** What resources can you realistically allocate to creating and delivering this media?

Consider:

- One-time hardware costs or free trials for a limited duration of time (cameras, headsets, editing software)
- Ongoing costs (software subscriptions, device maintenance, Wi-Fi access)
- Staff time for content creation, filming, editing, and client support
- Number of available staff members to create new media

### Budget Scenarios:

#### Scenario 1:

Minimal budget (\$0–\$50)

Little availability (2–3 staff members)

Restricted time (24 hours for media production)

- **Best fit:** Quick mobile video tutorials using smartphones you already have
- **What you can do:** Film short process demonstrations; edit on free mobile apps (e.g., CapCut, KineMaster); share via a messaging app (e.g., WhatsApp) or text
- **Continue to:** [Decision Point 4A](#)

#### Scenario 2:

Moderate budget (\$50–\$500)

Moderate availability (4–5 staff members)

Adequate time (24–50 hours for media production)

- **Best fit:** Enhanced mobile videos or basic 360° videos viewable on smartphones
- **What you can add:** Mobile phone to VR adapters (e.g., Google Cardboard), basic 360° camera rental, better editing capabilities
- **Continue to:** [Decision Point 4B](#)

#### Scenario 3:

Substantial budget (\$500–\$2,000)

Large team (6–10 staff members)

Substantial time (More than 50 hours for media production)



- **Best fit:** Full 360° VR programming with dedicated headsets
- **What you can do:** Purchase VR headsets (e.g., Meta Quest headsets), create immersive 360° environments, develop reusable content library
- **Continue to:** [Decision Point 4C](#)

### Decision Point 4A: Quick Mobile Video Tutorials

You've identified that **quick mobile video tutorials** may work best for your program.

#### This format works well when:

- The process you're teaching happens frequently
- Clients need step-by-step visual guidance
- You want content that clients can reference anytime on their own phones
- Your team wants to start small and build skills gradually

#### Your next steps:

1. Identify 2–3 processes clients repeatedly struggle with
2. Create a simple shot list (What scenes do you need to capture?)
3. Use the pre-production planning template (see [Switchboard's Creating Quick Tutorial Videos for Clients microlearning](#))
4. Film multiple takes with a smartphone
5. Edit using free mobile apps
6. Share via platforms clients already use (e.g., WhatsApp, text, social media)

**Required staff skills:** Basic smartphone operation, willingness to film yourself or others, comfort with simple editing

**Estimated time investment:** 24 hours per minute of video (planning, filming, editing)

### Decision Point 4B: 360° Videos for Smartphone Viewing

You've identified that **360° videos viewed on smartphones** may work best for your program.

#### This format works well when:

- Clients need to understand a physical environment before visiting it
- Immersion (seeing all angles of a space, like a school cafeteria or clinic waiting room) adds value. (Read the blog post [How 360° VR Videos are Transforming Refugee Resettlement](#) to see examples of immersive video.)



- You want more impact than standard video but can't invest in headsets yet
- You have partnerships that allow filming in key locations

### Your next steps:

1. Identify locations that would benefit from 360° exploration
2. Secure permission to film in those locations
3. Use the pre-production planning template (see [Switchboard's Creating Quick Tutorial Videos for Clients microlearning](#))
4. Rent or purchase a 360° camera (e.g., Insta360 models start around \$450)
5. Film 360° footage for your video tutorial according to your pre-production plan from Step 3
6. Learn basic 360° editing ([Insta360 Studio is free](#)) with the Switchboard Innovation and Digital Access (IDiA) team, and complete your client-facing video tutorial
7. Share videos via links clients can open on their phones

**Required staff skills:** Moderate technical comfort, ability to coordinate filming logistics, patience for learning new software

**Estimated time investment:** 24–50 hours per video (location coordination, filming, editing, quality checks)

### Decision Point 4C: Full VR Programming with Headsets

You've identified that **immersive VR with dedicated headsets** may work best for your program.

#### This format works well when:

- You want to create truly immersive, low-stress practice environments for clients
- You have multiple program areas that could benefit from VR content
- You can commit to ongoing technology maintenance and staff training
- You have leadership support for innovation and experimentation
- You plan to create a content library over time

### Your next steps:

1. Review the complete VR toolkit (see [Switchboard's Getting Started with Virtual Reality guide](#))
2. Conduct a thorough needs assessment with staff and newcomers
3. Identify a technology lead on your team
4. Secure funding for 4–5 VR headsets (e.g., Meta Quest headsets at \$250 each)



5. Submit a [Switchboard IDiA Team technical assistance request](#) for training on the use of VR in resettlement
6. Start with one pilot program area before expanding
7. Create 360° content using the steps outlined in **Decision Point 4B**
8. Upload your video tutorials to your VR headset to create immersive environments for your clients (see [Uploading 360° Videos to a Virtual Reality Headset](#))
9. Establish client consent and safety procedures (See [Additional Resources](#) for more guidance.)
10. Create a feedback system to continuously improve content

**Required staff skills:** High technical curiosity, problem-solving mindset, ability to manage multiple devices, comfort teaching technology to others

**Estimated time investment:** Significant upfront investment (30+ hours for setup, training, first content creation), then 50 hours per new VR experience.

## Next Steps

Multimedia tools offer powerful opportunities to expand how your programs for newcomers can share information and provide support. Whether your team starts with simple smartphone tutorials or is ready to explore immersive VR environments, the most effective approach is the one that fits your staff capacity, resources, and the real needs of the communities you serve.

As you consider integrating multimedia into your programming, focus on sustainability, accessibility, and collaboration. If you need more guidance on media making, review the additional resources below or submit a [technical assistance request](#) to Switchboard's IDiA team.

## Additional Resources

### Learn More about Media Making

- **Blog:** [Co-creating Virtual Reality Videos to Support Newcomer Youth](#)
- **Blog:** [The Eight Stages of Co-creation: Tips for Refugee Service Providers](#)
- **Archived Webinar: Video Series:** [Supporting Afghan Newcomers' Mental Health through Digital Literacy](#)
- **Microlearning Video:** [Creating Quick Tutorial Videos for Clients](#)



- **Blog:** [How 360° VR Videos Are Transforming Refugee Resettlement](#)

### Client Consent and Safety

- **Guide:** [Collecting Client Feedback Data](#)
- **Forum:** [Meta's Safety Center](#)

### Media Making Alternatives

- **Toolkit:** [Using AI in Service Delivery - A Readiness Framework](#)
- **Video Series:** [Supporting Afghan Newcomers' Mental Health through Digital Literacy](#)
- **Written Resource:** [How States and Other Refugee Service Providers are Using Infographics to Engage Communities](#)
- **Blog:** [Innovative Ways Newcomers Are Using Technology](#)
- **Guide:** [A La Carte Digital Literacy Resources](#)

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