

Media Credentials Procedure

Media may attend daily court proceedings that are open to the public and do not require a media credential issued by the Department. ***Media credentials are not required to attend court, observe proceedings, take notes, or write stories. Credentials are necessary to take part in a media pool, to use electronic devices, and other privileges designated for media representatives when permitted by decorum orders issued by judges.***

High-profile cases may require a request for a media credential from the Department. Credential requirements for specific high-profile cases are provided in the case's media plan, published online or requested from the Department's Communications Team.

The Colorado Judicial Department (Department) issues media credentials to those entities and individuals as defined in Colorado Supreme Court Rules, Chapter 38, Rule 3, Media Coverage of Court Proceedings, detailed below.

The Department and judicial officers may reserve the right to restrict the number of media credentials issued if space is limited at a trial, hearing, or event.

Credentialed Media Outlets

Rule 3. Media Coverage of Court Proceedings

(a) Expanded Media Coverage: A judge may authorize expanded media coverage of court proceedings, subject to the guidelines set forth below.

(1) Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

(A) "Proceeding" means any trial, hearing, or any other matter held in open court which the public is entitled to attend.

(B) "Photograph" and "photography" mean all recording or broadcasting of visual images, by means of still photographs, videotape, television broadcasts, motion pictures, or otherwise.

(C) "Expanded media coverage" means any photography or audio recording of proceedings.

(D) "Judge" means the justice, judge, magistrate, or other judicial officer presiding over the proceedings. In proceedings with more than one judge presiding, any decision required shall be made by a majority of the judges.

(E) "Media" means any news gathering or reporting agency and the individual persons involved, and includes newspapers, radio, television, radio and

television networks, news services, magazines, trade papers, in-house publications, professional journals, or any other news reporting or news gathering agency whose function is to inform the public or some segment thereof.

Acceptable job roles include, but aren't limited to:

- Editor
- Producer
- Director (for broadcast, print, or radio/audio)
- Reporter
- Digital Reporter
- Assignment Editor
- News Desk Editor
- Writer
- Copywriter
- Columnist
- Photographer
- Videographer
- Anchors
- Broadcasters
- Camera operators and engineers
- Sound Mixer
- Social Media Coordinator (for broadcast, print, or radio)

Freelance journalists may be required to demonstrate proof of assignment from a newsworthy outlet as defined in Rule 3, as well as contact information for the publication's editor and/or editorial staff. Evidence of ongoing journalistic work is also acceptable.

Administrative, analyst, sales, marketing, public relations, publishing, brand manager, and non-technical job roles do not qualify as accredited media.

Press Credentials for Independent Journalists

Independent journalists without formal press credentials may apply for media credentials from the department. An independent journalist is defined as an individual who regularly produces original news reporting, analysis, or documentation of events for the purpose of informing the public. Independent journalists operate without organizational control but adhere to recognized journalistic ethics, including accuracy, verification, and professional conduct.

These entities and individuals may apply for media credentials as long as they meet the following function-based criteria:

- Applicant regularly produces news content

(Last update: July 2026)

- Applicant's primary content must be news reporting or analysis, not entertainment, lifestyle content, personal branding, or commercial promotion.
- The content produced is considered journalistic and not promotional
- The applicant adheres to basic ethical standards.

Applicants must regularly engage in news reporting or journalistic coverage of courts or legal matters. Content must be journalistic or newsworthy; personal video diaries, opinion pieces, or sponsored content do not qualify. Applicants must demonstrate that their work is produced for journalistic purposes, not for promotional or advocacy purposes. Journalistic content includes reporting, analysis, or documentation of events. Promotional content includes advertising, sponsored content, or material created primarily for commercial marketing.

Applicants must attest to following a recognized journalistic code of ethics and maintaining editorial independence from organizational control by political, advocacy, or special-interest entities, which refers to independence from organizational control rather than independence from the subjects or topics they report on.

Applicants whose content is produced for advocacy, persuasion, or political organizing do not meet the standard of editorial independence required for journalistic credentials; this does not restrict journalists who report on political or advocacy topics.

Requestors must adhere to any extended media coverage orders, decorum orders, court orders, or guidelines for covering an event, trial, hearing, or proceeding, whether provided in writing or verbally.

Applicants whose primary work consists of personal commentary, entertainment content, sponsored content, influencer activity, or promotional material are considered content creators and are not eligible for media credentials unless they independently meet all journalistic criteria listed in this policy.

When and How to Apply for a Media Credential

Media credential requests must be received at least three days before deadlines established by judicial officer orders. The Department reserves the right to reject any requests or applications received after the deadline. Submitting a request/application does not guarantee credentials.

Requirements for media credential requests must be submitted with the following information for consideration to the Chief Communications Officer:

1. Provide proof of assignment from a news-producing organization or demonstrate independent journalistic activity covering courts or legal matters.
2. Written explanation of the use of any video, audio, or still photography requested and intended for broadcast or publication.

3. Applicants may provide evidence of:
 - (a) 18 months of coverage, or
 - (b) a clear journalistic mission and recent coverage of legal matters.
4. Names and contact information of current editors, producers, or editorial leadership, if available. Independent journalists may satisfy editorial-contact requirements by providing their own professional contact information.
5. Documentation of revenue sources showing support from readership, viewership, advertising, or subscriptions, optional. Revenue derived primarily from influencer partnerships, brand sponsorships, or platform-based creator monetization is considered promotional and does not qualify as journalistic revenue.
6. Copies of editorial standards or ethical guidelines outlining fact-checking practices, professional conduct expectations, and editorial independence from political, advocacy, or special-interest organizations
7. Applicants may provide audience metrics, when available, to assist in verifying publication activity.
8. Usernames and direct links to all digital platforms associated with the outlet.

All media credentials will be issued by the Chief Communications Officer or their designee, and a decision will be made based on the criteria listed in this policy. Credentialing decisions shall not be based on agreement or disagreement with the applicant's reporting, opinions, or viewpoints.

Appeal Process

Applicants receiving a denial may submit an appeal through the appeal process, which includes a request for a written explanation of the denial. An appeal may be submitted to the State Court Administrator's Office.

To apply for a media credential, send the required information to Suzanne.Karrer@judicial.state.co.us a minimum of three days before the event, hearing, or proceeding. Incomplete applications will not be processed. The three-day requirement may be amended by presiding judges' EMC orders. Include the case number, date, time, and location information in email requests.