



# Ford Foundation records, Public Broadcasting, Satellite Project

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Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue  
Sleepy Hollow 10591

[archive@rockarch.org](mailto:archive@rockarch.org)

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Rockefeller Archive Center
<b>Creator:</b>	Ford Foundation
<b>Title:</b>	Ford Foundation records, Public Broadcasting, Satellite Project
<b>ID:</b>	FA1518
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1965-1968
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1 Cubic Feet 3 boxes (2 letter document containers and 1 half-letter document container)
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .

### Preferred Citation

Information regarding the Rockefeller Archive Center's preferred elements and forms of citation can be found at <https://rockarch.org/collections/access-and-request-materials/#citations>

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## Biographical / Historical

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From 1965-1968, the Ford Foundation worked on a goal to ultimately provide free educational television across the United States utilizing satellite technology. On August 1, 1966, the Ford Foundation submitted a statement to the FCC that proposed the creation of a satellite system to serve both noncommercial television (informational, cultural, and instructional) and commercial television. The Foundation consulted Bell Labs and IBM on the feasibility of the project. The Foundation did not seek to own or operate a satellite system, but it was prepared to establish a nonprofit domestic satellite corporation with trustees representing noncommercial and commercial broadcasters, foundations, schools, universities, and government.

The FCC lacked the policy guidelines to fully implement the project and the satellite was never realized. With the goal of promoting free public television, the Foundation announced that it would support the endeavors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting which was established in 1967 by an act of the United States Congress. The Foundation also created its own Office of Public Broadcasting at this time. The Ford Foundation established the Public Broadcast Laboratory (PBL) for a two-year demonstration of the power of national interconnection for noncommercial television.

The Ford Foundation first made grants in the field of media and communications in 1951, when funds were provided to the Radio and Television Workshop for the production of broadcast programming. Through 1977, the foundation gave over \$295 million to develop public television stations, networks and content.

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## Scope and Contents

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The collection is composed of reports, correspondence, memos, and contracts that were originally stored in binders for the Ford Foundation's educational satellite project. Materials from the FCC, Howard Dressner, Fred Friendly, McGeorge Bundy, Verne S. Atwater, Richard Catalano of the Ford Foundation and David Ginsburg of the Law Offices of Ginsburg and Feldman are featured throughout the collection.

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## Arrangement

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The collection is arranged into one series numerically by original binder number:

1. Project Binders, 1965-1967

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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## Immediate Source of Acquisition

This material was transferred to RAC in 2019 by the Ford Foundation and ingested by RAC as one box of Accession 2019:015.

## Conditions Governing Access

Open for research with select materials restricted as noted. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC.

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## Processing Information

Standard processing by Katie Martin, April 2019.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Ford Foundation
- Television in education -- Satellites

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## Collection Inventory

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### Project Binders, 1965-1968

Title/Description	Instances	
Satellite Project - Volume I, 1965-1966	box 1	folder 1

### Scope and Contents

FCC Notice of Inquiry

Minutes -- Satellite Team Meeting

Biographical Data

## Miscellaneous

Satellite Project - Volume II, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 2
Satellite Project - Volume III (3 folders), 1966	box 1	folder 3-5
Satellite Project - Volume IV (2 folders), 1966	box 2	folder 6-7
Satellite Project - Volume V, 1966-1967	box 2	folder 8
Satellite Notebook - Number 6 (3 folders), 1967	box 2	folder 9-10
	box 3	folder 11

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