

Efforts underway to launch national public service cable TV network

[Jill Warren Lucas](#) | April 4, 2013

Cheryl Hawkins is a big believer in the power of cable television to influence social good. "The mission is to make media more available to under-represented voices," says Hawkins, president of [Prosperity Media](#), which is based in Washington, D.C., home to numerous nonprofits and foundations. "Our goal is to create a national [public service cable television network](#) that supports nonprofits, which would participate in and provide programming. They could educate the public about their cause, raise funds and recruit volunteers."

Prosperity Media reports that it has secured a start-up grant from the Washington Technology Group to launch the public service network on D.C. cable channel in fall 2013. Within six months, Hawkins expects programming to be broadcast throughout the Virginia-D.C.- Maryland market.

We're in conversation with several of the major cable distribution providers," adds Hawkins, who is optimistic that programming will be available to national viewers within 18 months.

While the network likely will start with four-to-eight hour blocks of programming, which will be repeated throughout the day, Hawkins envisions an operation similar to C-Span's round-the-clock coverage of public service government programming. Talk shows, conferences and other platforms will be added over time.

Currently, Hawkins is soliciting regional and national nonprofits to provide content, such as public service announcements or other general use video content posted to their website. "Everyone knows how hard it is to get PSAs on the air today," she says. "This will help to share the message."

Hawkins says that United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, American Red Cross and the Goodwill Foundation are among the major organizations that have expressed interest in providing program content. She also is working on securing the rights to replay telethons in which top artists and celebrities lend their support to a cause.

Prosperity Media is applying for grants and will use the network to help its own fundraising efforts. Proceeds will enable it to not only broadcast but generate content for nonprofits that see the network as a way to expand their message.

"Our whole idea is to do this at no cost to nonprofits," Hawkins says. "They're already struggling. We're trying to add to their ability to generate additional donors and supporters."

Hawkins encourages grantmakers and nonprofits to visit <http://www.publicservicecable.net/> to learn more about the network and to register for updates.